

# **HMIPS Pre-Inspection Survey Findings**

**HMP YOI Polmont  
July 2023**

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## HMP YOI Polmont, July 2023

### Contents

Executive Summary .....	3
Introduction .....	5
Method and limitations.....	5
Note on presentation of data .....	6
Participant Profile .....	7
Demographic information.....	7
Sample representativeness .....	7
Standard 1: Lawful and Transparent Custody .....	9
Induction .....	9
Treatment in reception.....	9
Standard 2: Decency.....	10
Food .....	10
Toiletries, showering and laundry .....	10
Standard 3: Personal Safety .....	12
Perception of safety.....	12
Abuse, threats, bullying or assault by staff or other prisoners .....	12
Reporting abuse, threats, bullying or assault.....	14
Standard 4: Effective, Courteous and Humane Use of Authority.....	15
Searching .....	15
Accessing personal property .....	15
Standard 5: Respect, Autonomy and Protection against Mistreatment .....	16
Respect .....	16
Consultation with prisoners.....	16
Complaints.....	16
Personal officers .....	17
Engagement with Independent Prison Monitors (IPMs).....	18
Standard 6: Purposeful Activity .....	19
Access to education, training and work .....	19
Fresh air, gym/sports and library access .....	19
Time out of cell .....	20
Religious practice .....	21
Family contact .....	21
Progression and case management support .....	22
Standard 7: Transitions into the Community .....	24

Preparedness for life outside prison .....	24
Support for release .....	24
Standard 9: Health and Wellbeing.....	26
Health assessment on arrival .....	26
Access to health services .....	26
Quality of medical services .....	28
Support for disabilities and long-term health conditions.....	29
Support for issues relating to alcohol, drugs and mental health .....	29
Access to female hygiene products .....	30
Open Question (General Comments): Thematic Analysis.....	31

## **Executive Summary**

### **Background**

This document reports on the findings of the HMIPS pre-inspection survey conducted in HMP YOI Polmont on 10 to 11 July 2023. The questionnaire was distributed to all 285 prisoners held in HMP YOI Polmont on the first day of data collection, with a response rate of 68% (194 responses).

### **Key findings**

The key findings from the survey were:

#### **Standard 1: Lawful and transparent custody**

- Less than three-quarters (71%) of respondents said they were offered an induction on arrival, and 72% reported being treated well on arrival.

#### **Standard 2: Decency**

- Less than half (43%) reported that the quality of the food was good, and less than half (48%) reported always or usually getting enough to eat at mealtimes.
- Most respondents were able to have a shower every day (98%) and have their clothes washed at least once a week (91%).

#### **Standard 3: Personal safety**

- Most respondents (79%) reported feeling safe all or most of the time.
- Twenty-nine per cent said they had witnessed staff abusing, bullying, threatening or assaulting other prisoners, and 22% said staff had done this to them.
- Forty per cent said they had been abused, bullied, threatened or assaulted by other prisoners.

#### **Standard 4: Effective, courteous and humane use of authority**

- Under a third (31%) of respondents felt that they were given a reasonable explanation every time or most times their cell was searched.
- Just over half (51%) felt the system for accessing personal property worked well.

#### **Standard 5: Respect, autonomy and protection against mistreatment**

- Most respondents (77%) said they were treated with respect by staff all or most of the time, including 29% who reported being treated with respect all the time.
- Less than half (42%) of respondents felt that the complaints system worked well.
- The majority of respondents (72%) reported that they had a personal officer, and the majority reported that their personal officer was helpful (76%).

#### **Standard 6: Purposeful activity**

- The majority of respondents reported that it was easy to access education (78%) and skills training (67%). However, just under half said it was easy to access prison jobs (49%).
- Only half of respondents (51%) reported that they had been able to spend at least one hour outdoors in the fresh air during the previous week.

- Most respondents (93%) were able to access the gym at least once a week, and just over half of respondents (56%) reported that they were able to go to the library at least once a week.
- A substantial minority of respondents (42%) reported that they had not been able to spend more than two hours outside their cells during the previous weekday.
- The majority (65%) said they were not able to spend more than two hours out of their cells on the previous Saturday.
- Of those who said they practiced a religion, just over half (53%) said they were well supported to do so.
- Most respondents (75%) reported that the prison gave them an opportunity for in-person visits at least once a week, and just over half (56%) reported that the prison gave them opportunities for video-call visits at least once a week.
- Of those who needed to do courses or programmes to enable them to progress through their sentences, the majority (56%) reported that it was easy to access these courses at HMP YOI Polmont.

### **Standard 7: Transitions from custody to life in the community**

- In total, 24 respondents reported being due for release in the next six weeks. Of these, the majority (87%) reported feeling well prepared for life outside prison.

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

- Overall, the majority of respondents reported that it was easy to access most health services.
- Most respondents said it was easy to access: a doctor (62%); a nurse or nurse practitioner (75%); dental services (61%); mental healthcare (64%); addictions services (73%); a pharmacist (65%); and prison based social work (71%).
- Half of respondents (50%) reported that it was easy to access medical appointments outside the prison; however almost one-third (32%) reported that it was very difficult.
- Overall, the majority of respondents rated each medical service positively. The service from the doctors was rated positively by 76% of respondents; 81% rated the quality of service from the nurses/nurse practitioners positively; dental services were rated positively by 76%; mental healthcare was rated positively by 74%; addictions services was rated positively by 82%; and prison-based social work was rated positively by 80% of respondents.
- Of those who reported having a disability or long-term health condition, just under half reported that the prison supported them well to manage their condition (47%). Over a quarter (27%) felt that they badly supported to manage their condition.
- Of those who said they had needed support for alcohol use while in HMP YOI Polmont, 43% said they had received support which had been helpful.
- Of those who said they had needed support for drug use, over half (54%) said they had received support which had helped them.
- Of those who said they had needed support for their mental health, more than half (56%) reported that they had received support that had been helpful.

## **Introduction**

This document reports on the findings of the HMIPS pre-inspection questionnaire conducted in HMP YOI Polmont on 11 to 12 July 2023.

All 284 prisoners held in the establishment on the first day of data collection were asked to complete the survey, of whom 194 completed and returned the questionnaire, providing a 68% 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 YOI Polmont, including their cell location. This was used to distribute and collect the surveys.

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.

For the small number of children under the age of 18 held in the establishment, extra measures were taken to ensure that the data collection method complied with the HMIPS child safeguarding policy.

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**

HMP YOI Polmont holds male young offenders, and female adults and young offenders, including a small number of males and females under the age of 18. The establishment holds a mix of remand and convicted prisoners and has both protection and mainstream areas for males.

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 reported being aged 20 or under (61%), while 18% were aged 21 to 25. Almost a quarter (23%) were aged over 25.

Overall, 75% of respondents were male, and 25% were female. The majority reported being white (91%) and UK citizens (93%). Most (60%) reported having no religion. Of those who did report having a religion, the most common were Roman Catholic (17%), Church of Scotland (11%), and Other Christian (5%).

Most respondents (59%) were serving a sentence, while 41% were on remand. Of those serving a sentence, 62% were on short-term sentences (fewer than four years), 33% were serving long-term sentences, and 4% were on an indefinite Order for Lifelong Restriction (OLR).

Almost half (46%) of respondents reported having a disability or long-term health condition, and 45% reported being care experienced.

### **Sample representativeness**

HMIPS requested an anonymous breakdown of the prisoner population in HMP YOI Polmont 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 the data provided by the establishment for the whole population of HMP YOI Polmont compares with the sample of prisoners who responded to the survey.

As the table below shows, the survey sample appears closely representative of the whole population based on the available measures of age, sex, ethnicity, citizenship, and prisoner type.



**Characteristics of sample population compared to characteristics of whole population of HMP YO1 Polmont (%)<sup>1</sup>**

	Sample population*	Whole population
<b>Age group</b>		
20 or under	61%	61%
21-25	18%	16%
26 or over	23%	23%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	75%	72%
Female	25%	28%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
White	91%	94%
Non-white	9%	6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Citizenship</b>		
UK	93%	92%
Non-UK	7%	8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Prisoner type**</b>		
Remand	41%	41%
Convicted	59%	59%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

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

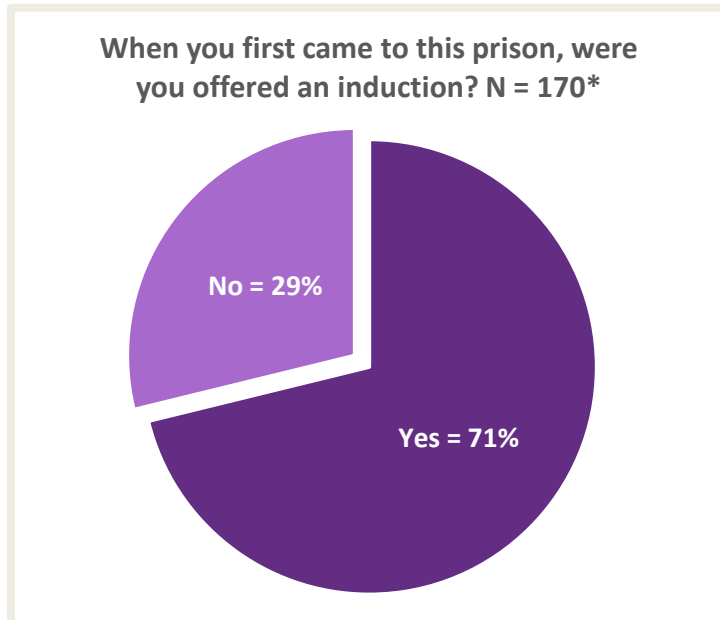
*\*\*Data taken from SPS Population and Accommodation Report (Friday 7<sup>th</sup> July 2023).*

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

## Standard 1: Lawful and Transparent Custody

### Induction

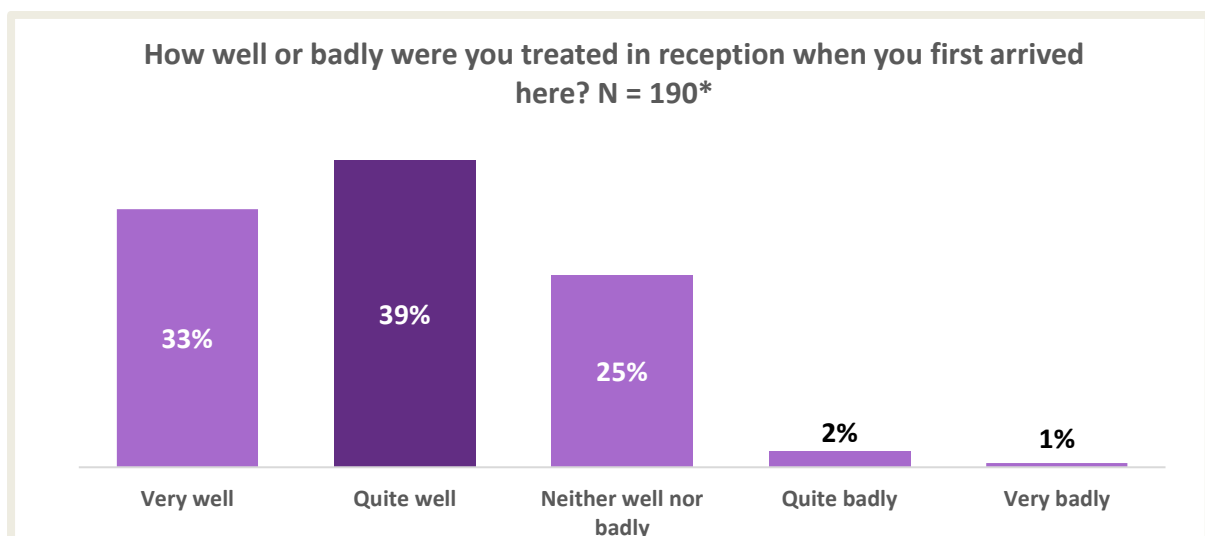
Of those who could remember, the majority of respondents (71%) said that they were offered an induction when they arrived at HMP YOI Polmont, however almost one-third (29%) said they were not.



\*Excluding "don't remember"

### Treatment in reception

Respondents were generally positive about their treatment in reception when they first arrived at HMP YOI Polmont, with 72% reporting that they were treated well, and very few (3%) reporting that they were treated badly.

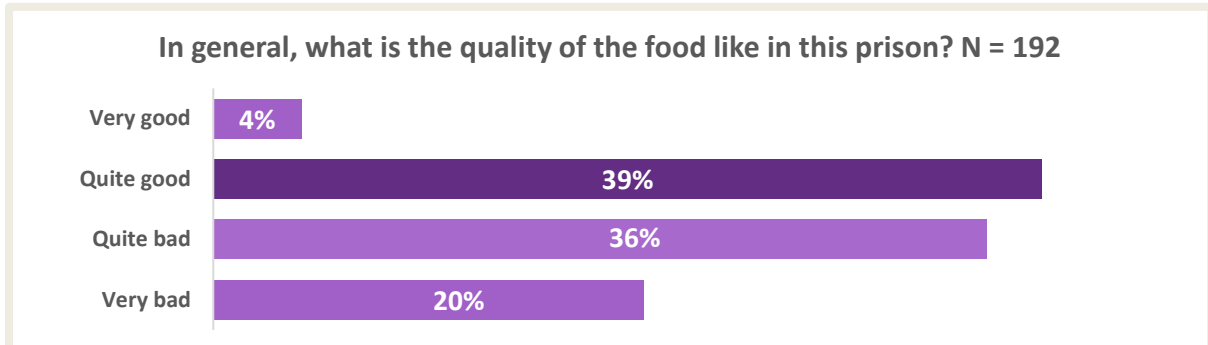


Excluding "don't remember"

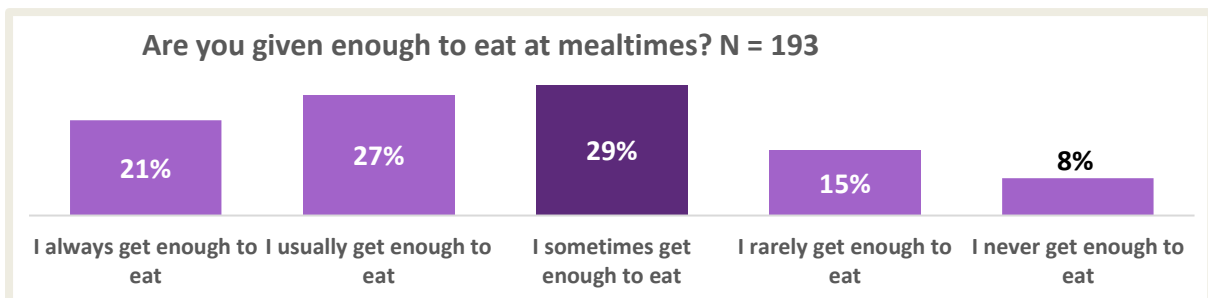
## Standard 2: Decency

### Food

Under half of respondents (43%) reported that the quality of the food was good, while the majority reported (56%) that it was poor.

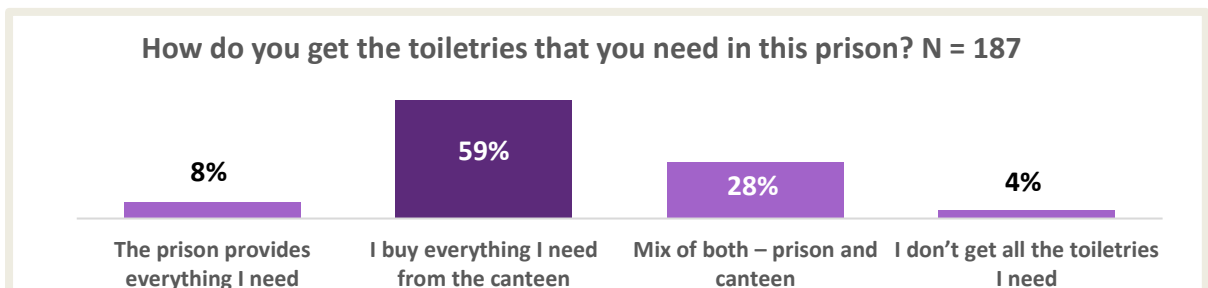


Just under half of respondents (48%) reported always or usually getting enough to eat at mealtimes, while a significant minority (23%) reported rarely or never getting enough to eat.

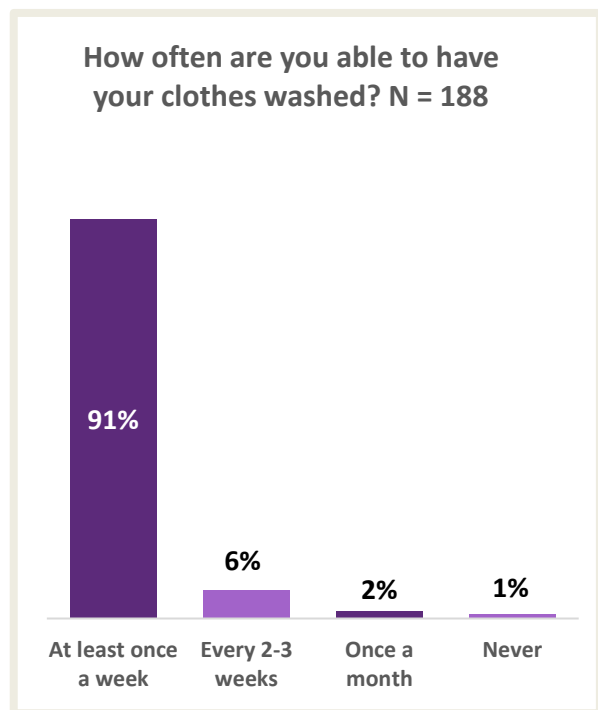
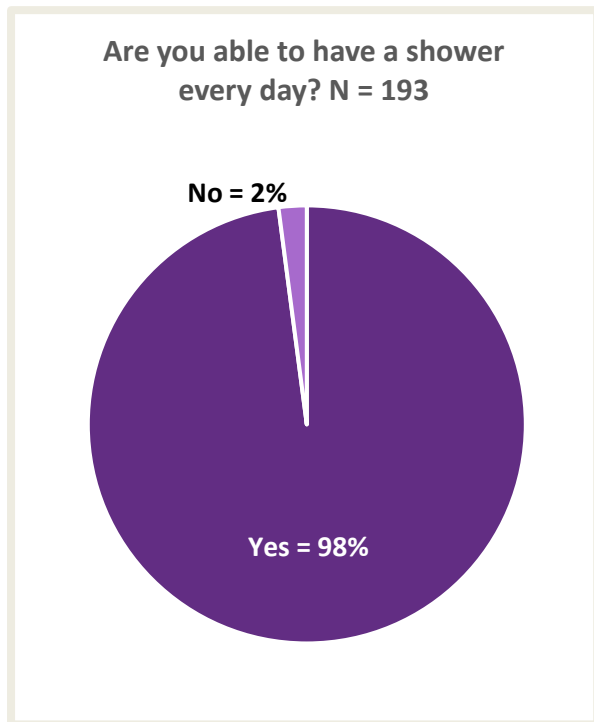


### Toiletries, showering and laundry

Fewer than one in ten respondents said that the prison provided all the toiletries they needed, while the majority (59%) reported buying everything they needed from the canteen.



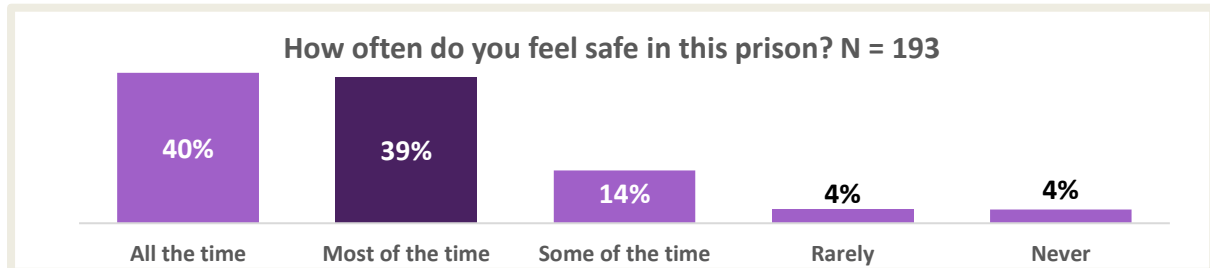
Almost all respondents (98%) said they were able to have a shower every day and the majority (91%) said they were able to get their clothes washed at least once a week.



## Standard 3: Personal Safety

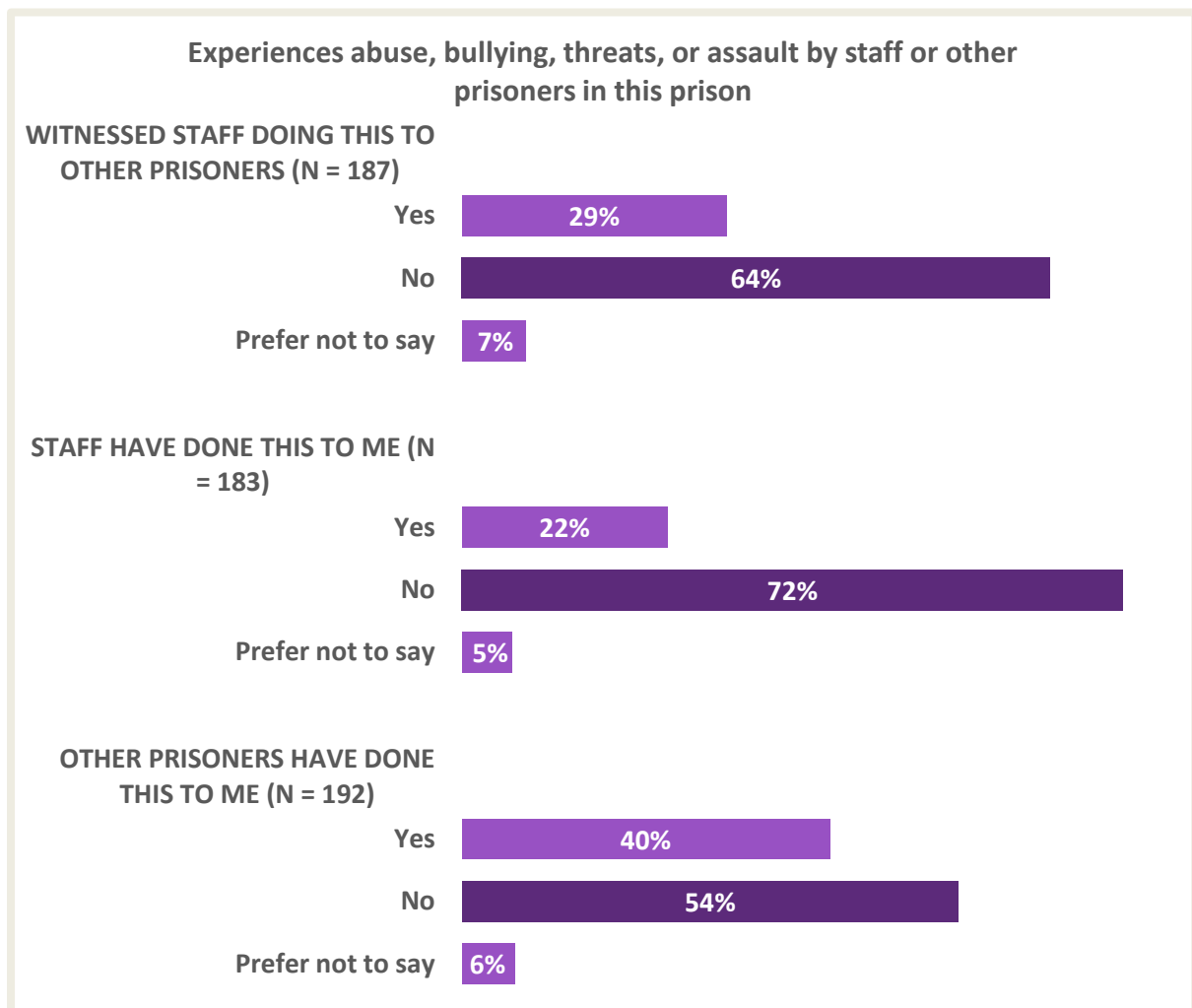
### Perception of safety

Most respondents (79%) reported feeling safe at HMP YOI Polmont all or most of the time, including 40% who felt safe all the time. Just under one in ten (8%) reported rarely or never feeling safe.



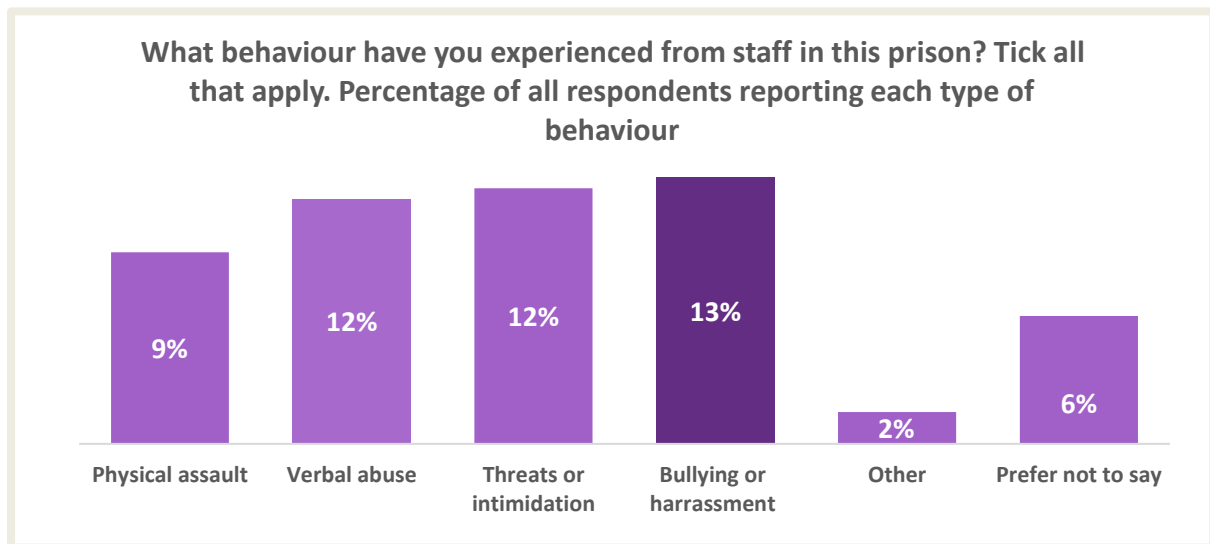
### Abuse, threats, bullying or assault by staff or other prisoners

Just under a third (29%) of respondents reported having witnessed staff abusing, bullying, threatening, or assaulting other prisoners in HMP YOI Polmont, while 22% said staff had done this to them.

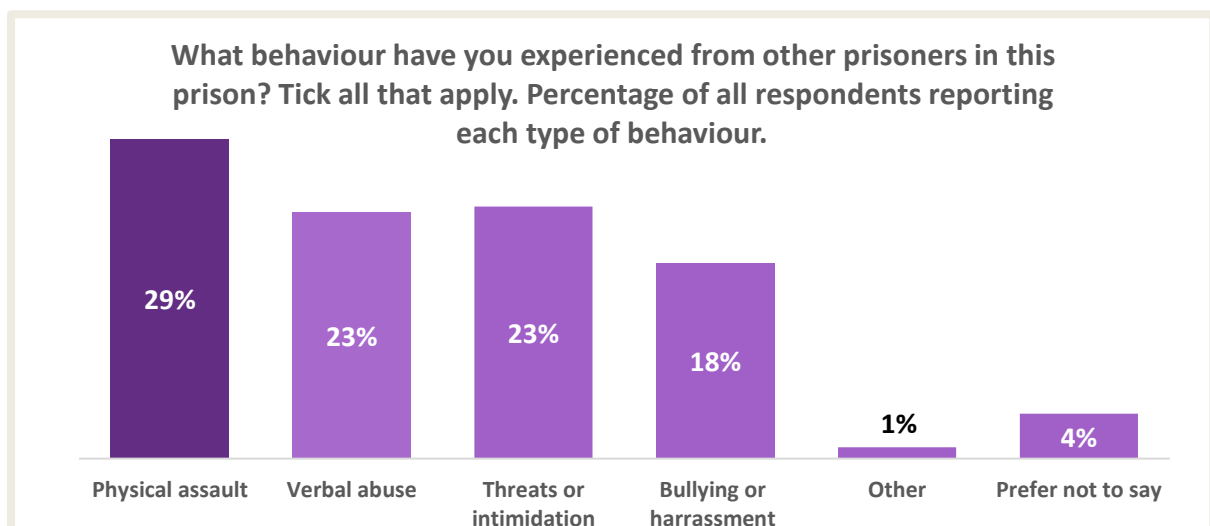


A much higher percentage (40%) reported being abused, bullied, threatened or assaulted by other prisoners in HMP YOI Polmont.

When asked what types of negative staff behaviour they had experienced, 23% of respondents reported at least one form of abusive behaviour, including "other". Out of all 194 survey respondents, 13% reported bullying or harassment; 12% reported threats or intimidation; 12% reported verbal abuse; and 9% reported physical assault.



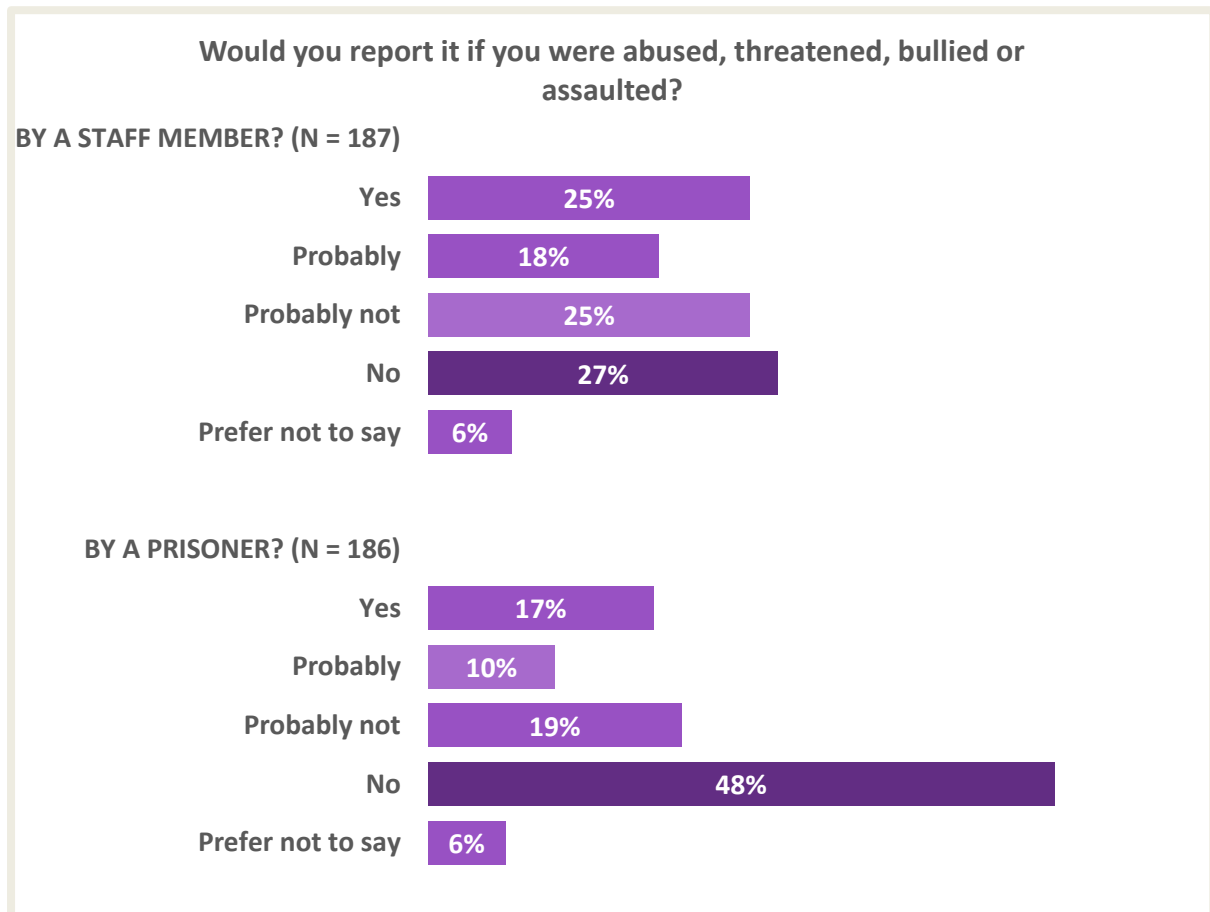
When asked about what types of negative behaviour respondents had experienced from other prisoners, 40% of respondents reported at least one form of abusive behaviour, including "other". Out of all 194 respondents, 29% reported being physically assaulted by other prisoners; 23% reported verbal abuse; 23% reported threats or intimidation; and 18% reported bullying or harassment.



## Reporting abuse, threats, bullying or assault

While 43% of respondents said that they either would or probably would report abuse, threats, bullying or assault by a staff member, just over half (52%) said they would not or probably would not.

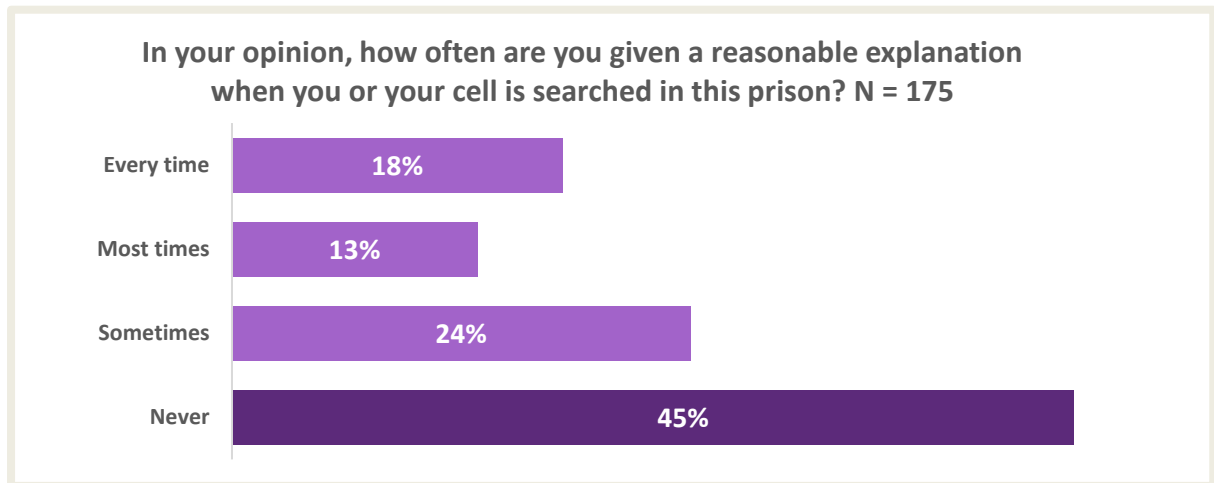
Just over a quarter (27%) said they would or probably would report abuse, threats, bullying or assault by another prisoner, while the majority (67%) said they would not or probably would not.



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

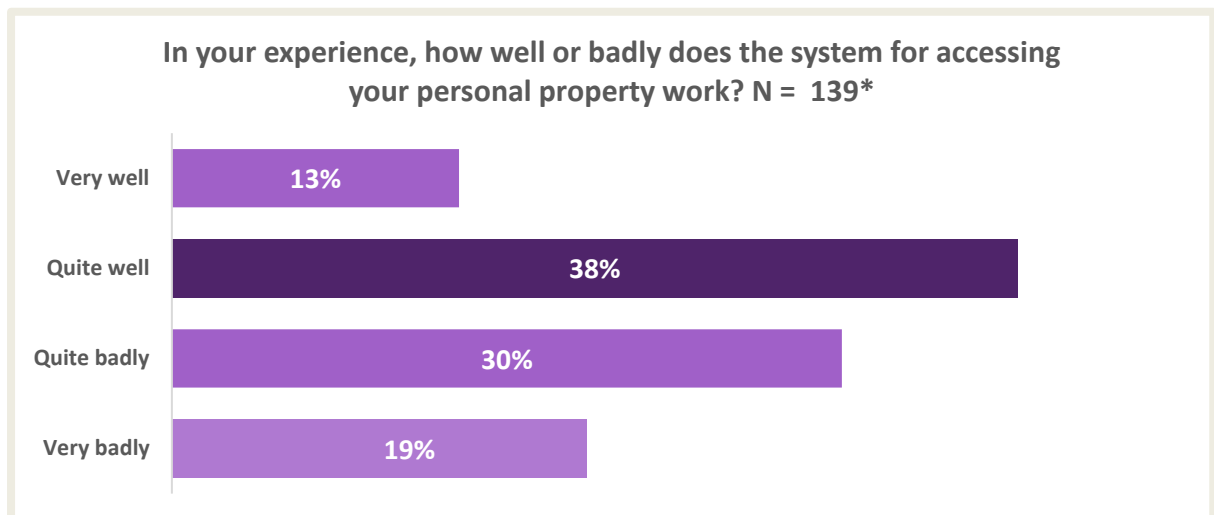
### Searching

Fewer than a third of respondents (31%) felt that they were given a reasonable explanation every time or most times their cell was searched. The most common response was that prisoners were never given a reasonable explanation (45%).



### Accessing personal property

Around half (51%) of respondents felt that the system for accessing personal property worked well, while 49% felt it worked badly.



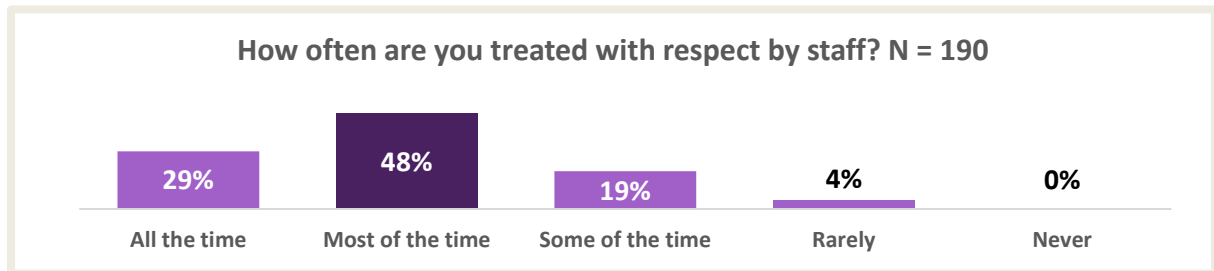
*\*Excludes "don't know"*



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

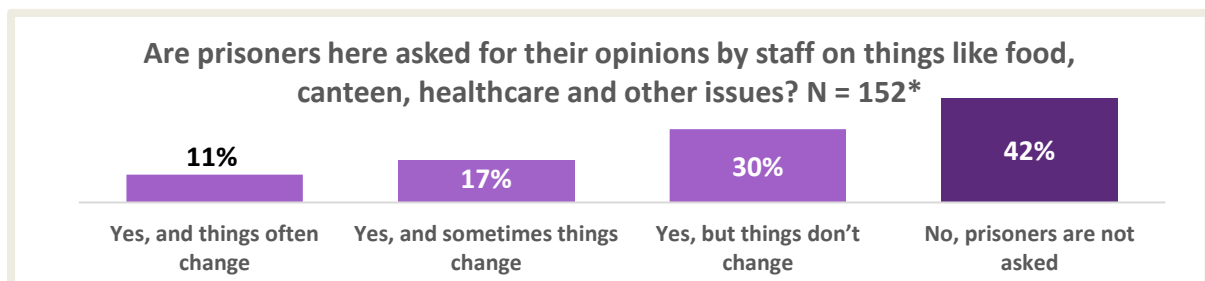
### Respect

Most respondents (77%) said they were treated with respect by staff all or most of the time, including 29% who reported being treated with respect all the time. Very few (4%) reported rarely being treated with respect, and no one reported never being treated with respect.



### Consultation with prisoners

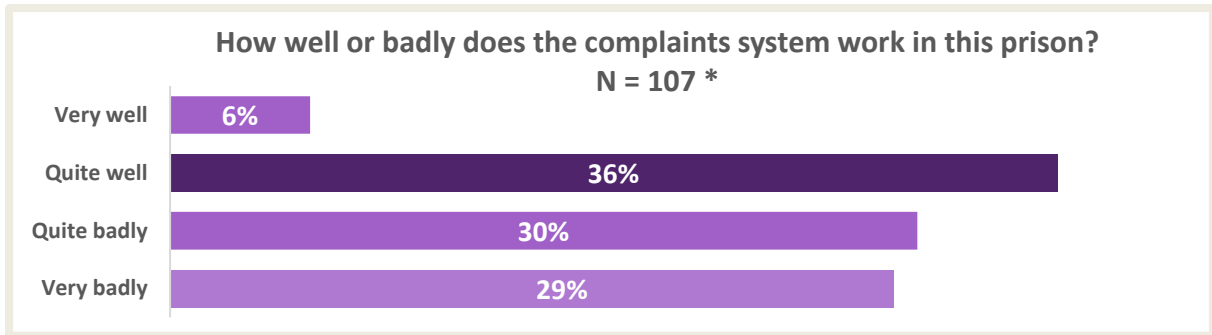
Less than a third (28%) of respondents felt that things sometimes or often changed as a result of prisoners being asked for their opinions about things like food, canteen and healthcare. Almost half (42%) reported that prisoners are not asked for their opinions, while 30% said that prisoners are asked but things do not change as a result.



\*Excluding "don't know"

### Complaints

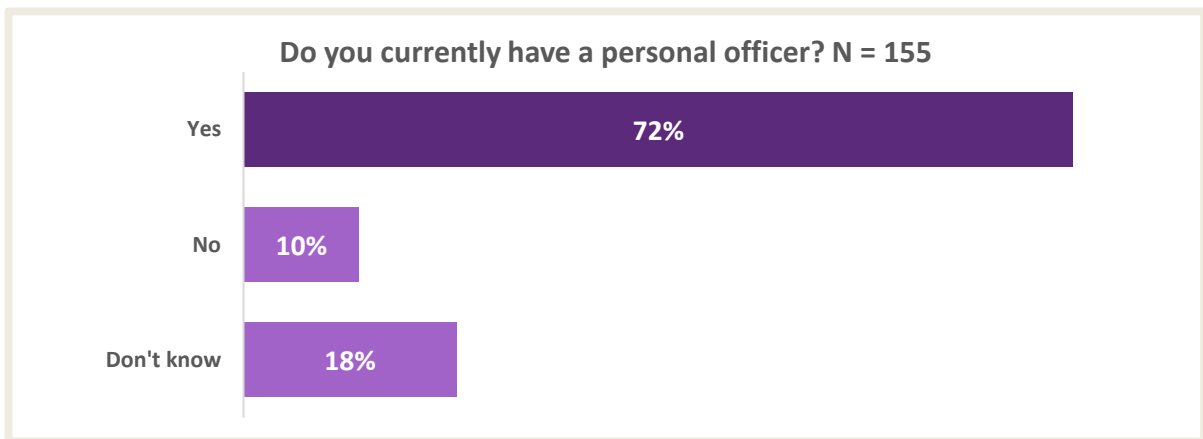
Less than half (42%) of respondents felt that the complaints system worked well, while the majority felt that it worked poorly (59%).



*\*Excluding "don't know"*

### Personal officers

The majority of respondents (72%) reported that they had a personal officer. Convicted respondents were slightly more likely to say they had a personal officer than remand respondents, but this difference was not statistically significant.



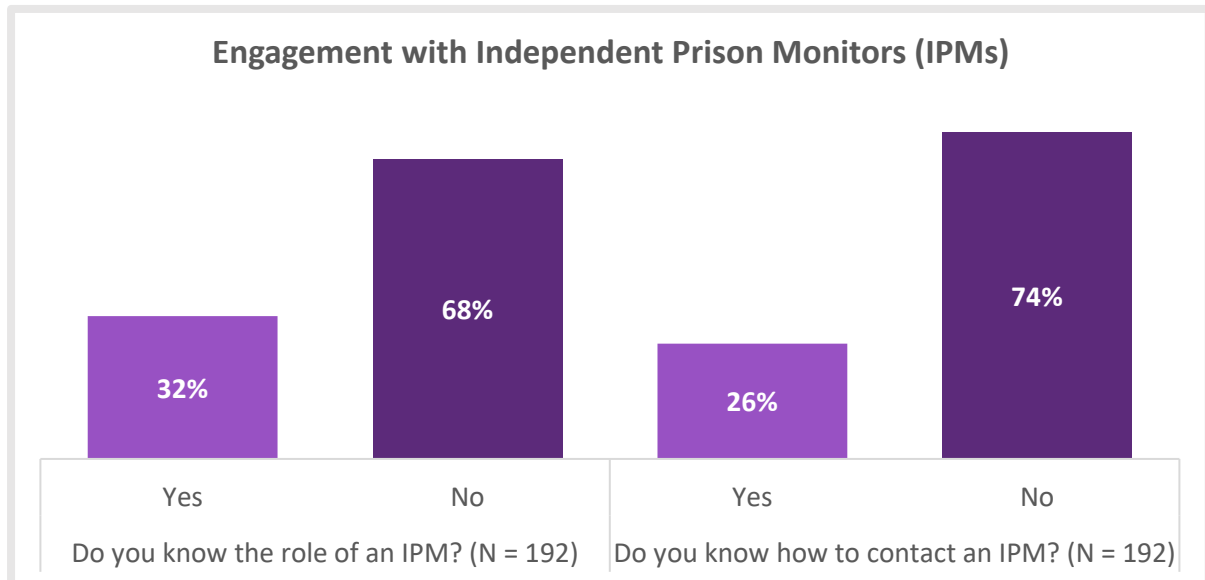
Of those who said they had a personal officer, the majority (76%) reported that their personal officer was helpful, including almost half (48%) who said their personal officer was very helpful. Very few (2%) reported that their personal officer was unhelpful.



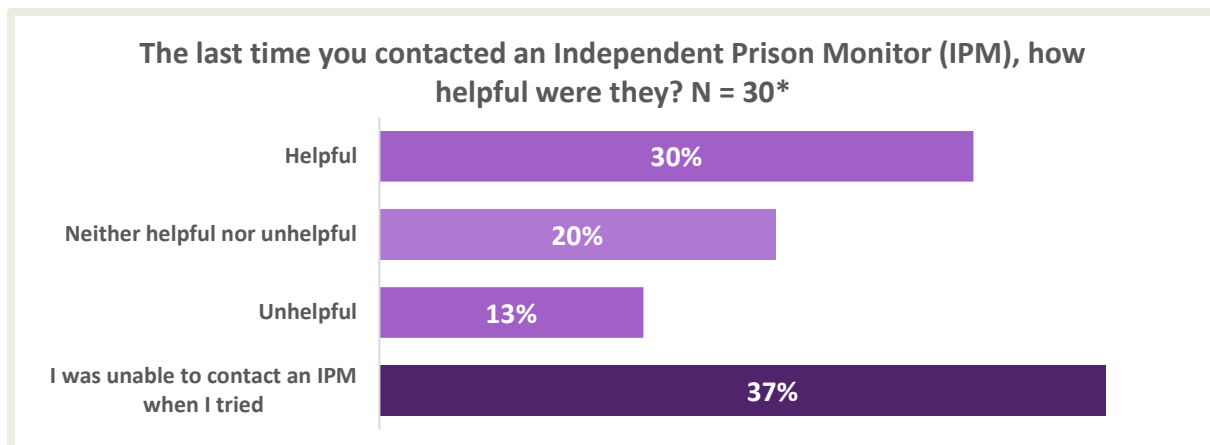
*\*Excluding those who did not have/did not know if they had a PO*

## Engagement with Independent Prison Monitors (IPMs)

The majority of respondents (68%) reported that they did not know the role of an Independent Prison Monitor (IPM), and that they did not know how to contact an IPM (74%).



Of those who had contacted an IPM, just under a third (30%) had found the experience helpful, while 13% had not found it unhelpful. Over a third (37%) reported that they had been unable to contact an IPM when they had tried to do so.

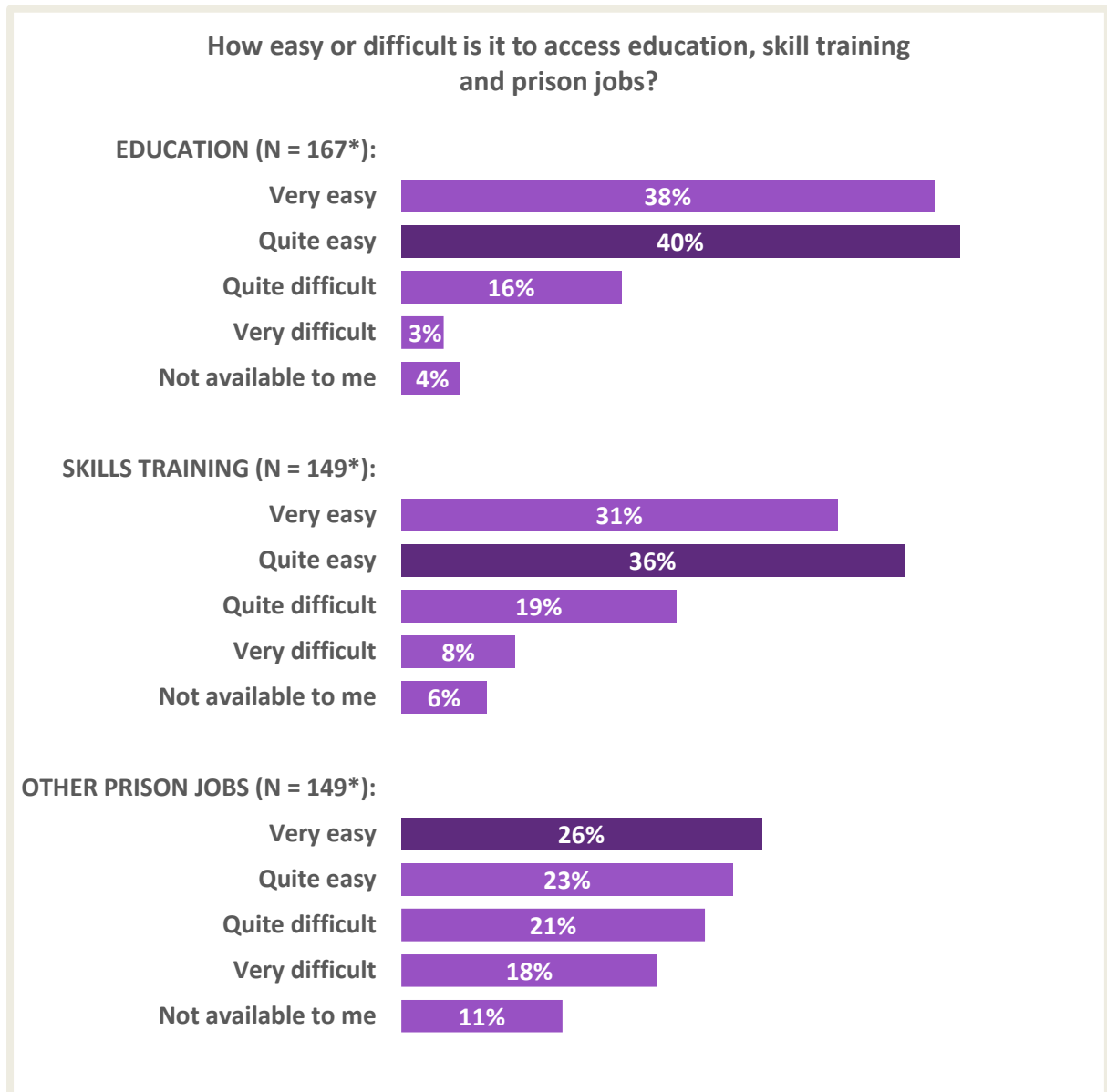


*\*Excluding those who had never tried to contact an IPM*

## Standard 6: Purposeful Activity

### Access to education, training and work

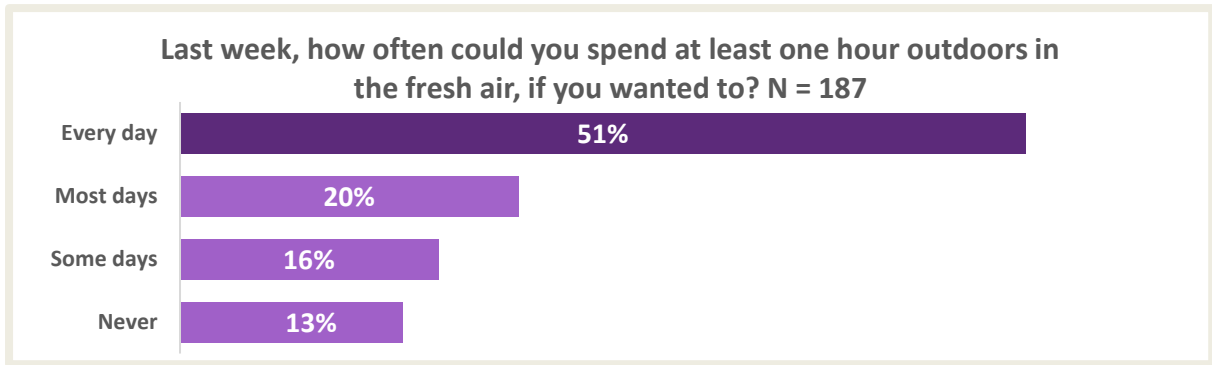
The majority of respondents reported that it was easy to access education (78%) and skills training (67%). However, just under half said it was easy to access prison jobs (49%).



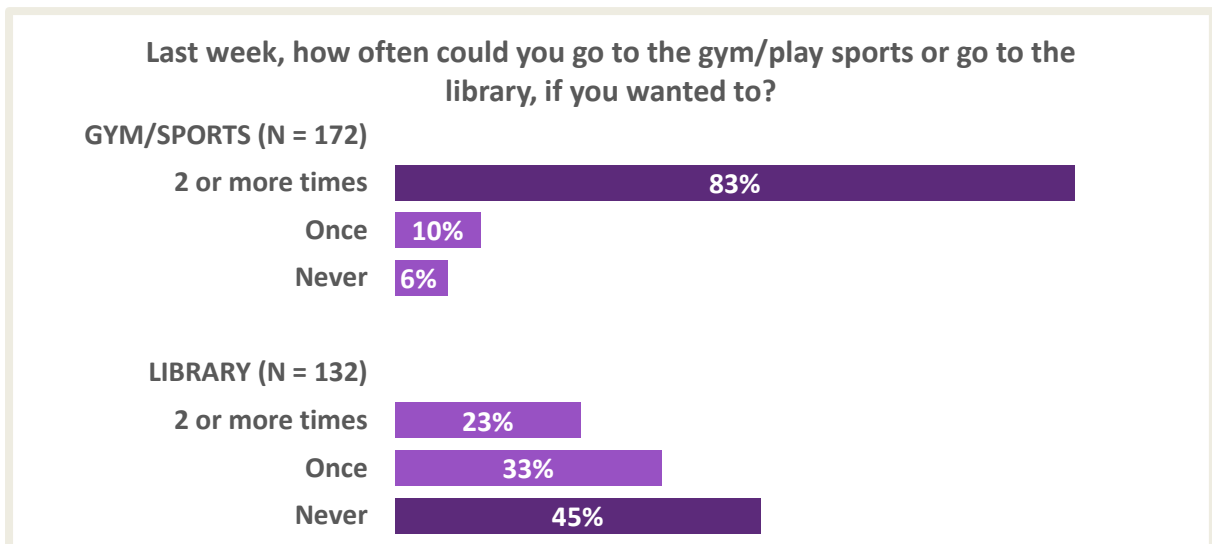
*\*Excluding "don't know"*

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

Only half of respondents (51%) reported that they had been able to spend at least one hour outdoors in the fresh air during the previous week, while more than one in ten (13%) said they had not been able to do so at all.



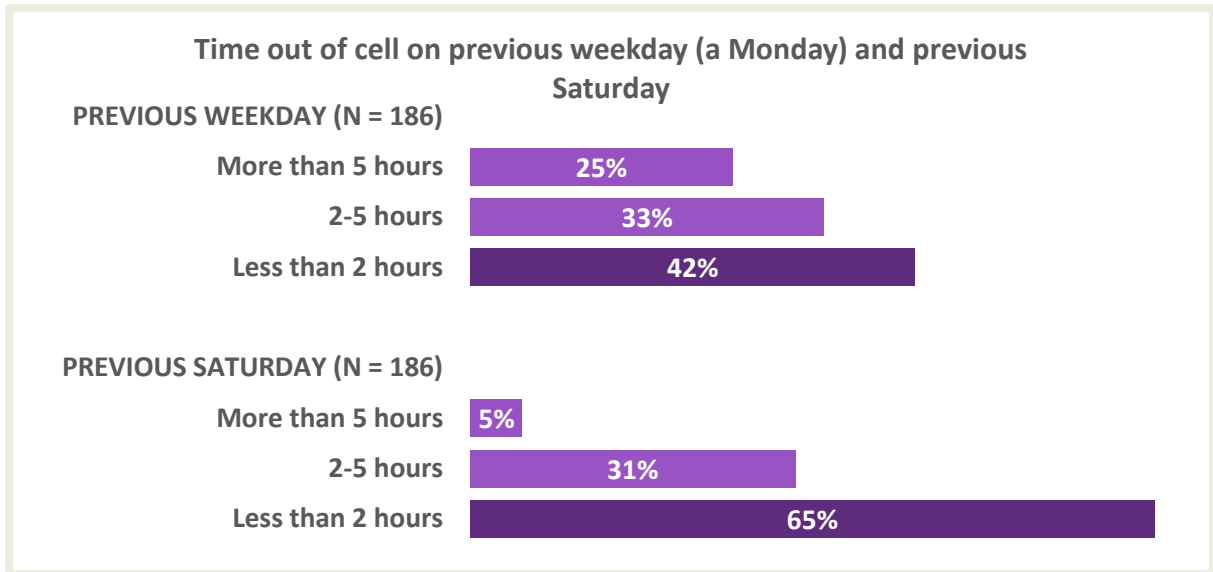
Most respondents (93%) were able to access the gym at least once a week, including 83% who said they were able to go to the gym two or more times. Just over half of respondents (56%) reported that they were able to go to the library at least once a week.



### **Time out of cell**

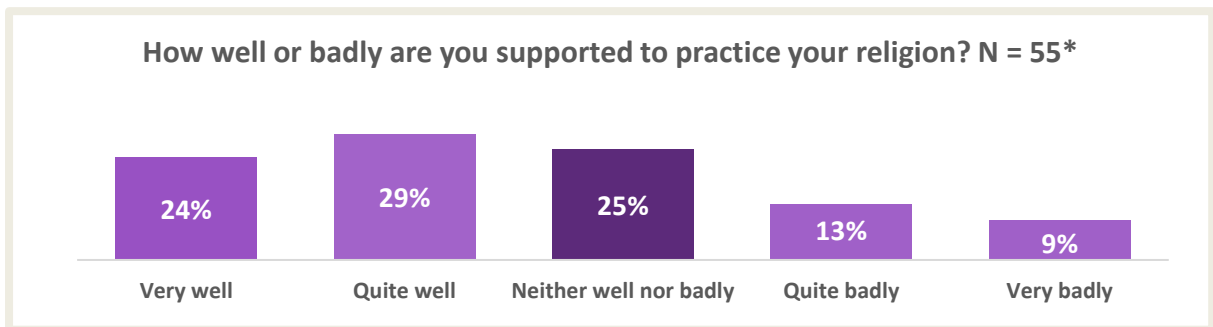
A substantial minority of respondents (42%) reported that they had not been able to spend more than two hours outside their cells during the previous weekday (a Monday), and only a quarter reported having been out of their cells for more than five hours that day.

The majority (65%) said they were not able to spend more than two hours out of their cells on the previous Saturday, with only 5% able to spend more than five hours out of their cells.



### Religious practice

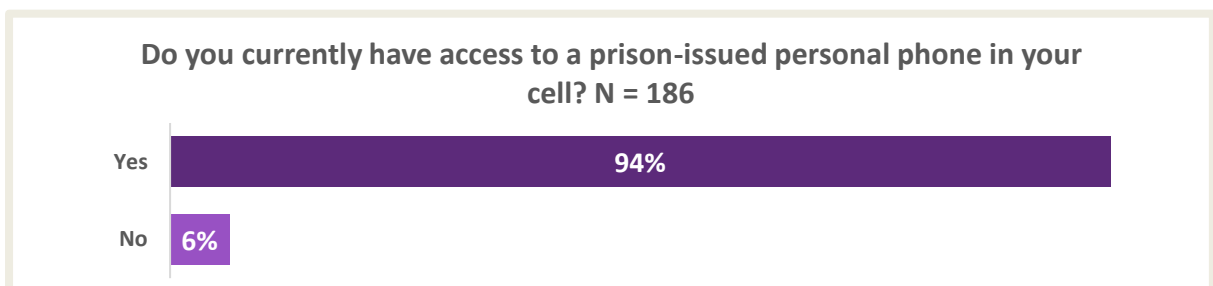
Of those who said they practiced a religion (55 respondents), just over half (53%) said they were well supported to do so, while 22% reported being poorly supported.



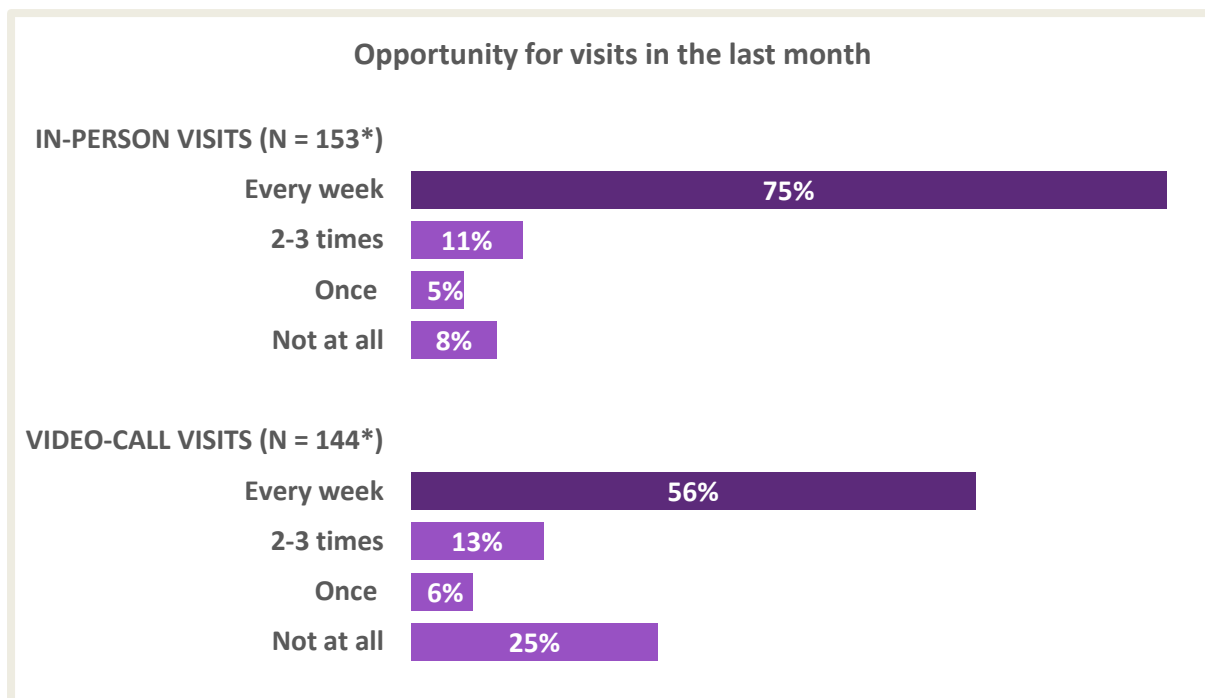
*\*Excludes "I don't practice a religion"*

### Family contact

Most respondents (94%) reported having access to a prison-issued personal phone.

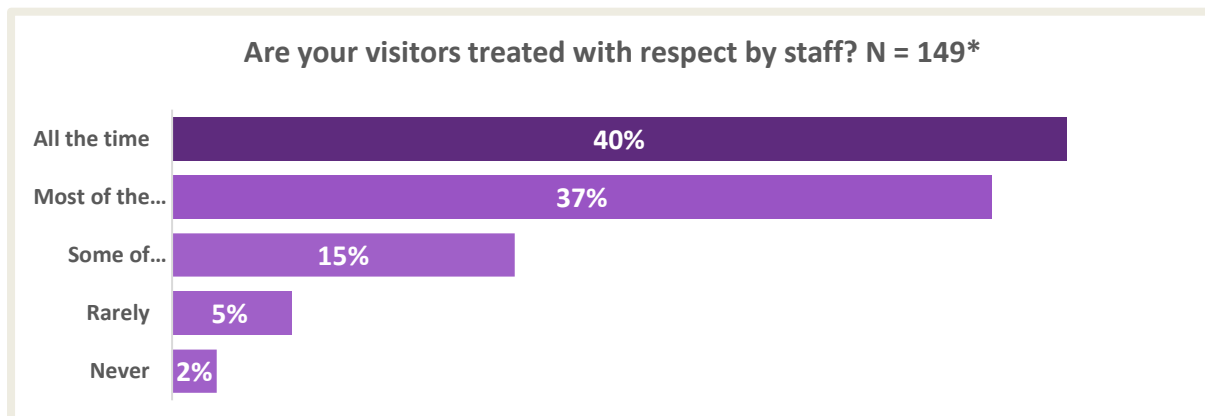


Most respondents (75%) reported that the prison gave them an opportunity for in-person visits at least once a week, and just over half (56%) reported that the prison gave them opportunities for video-call visits at least once a week.



*\*Excluding "don't know"*

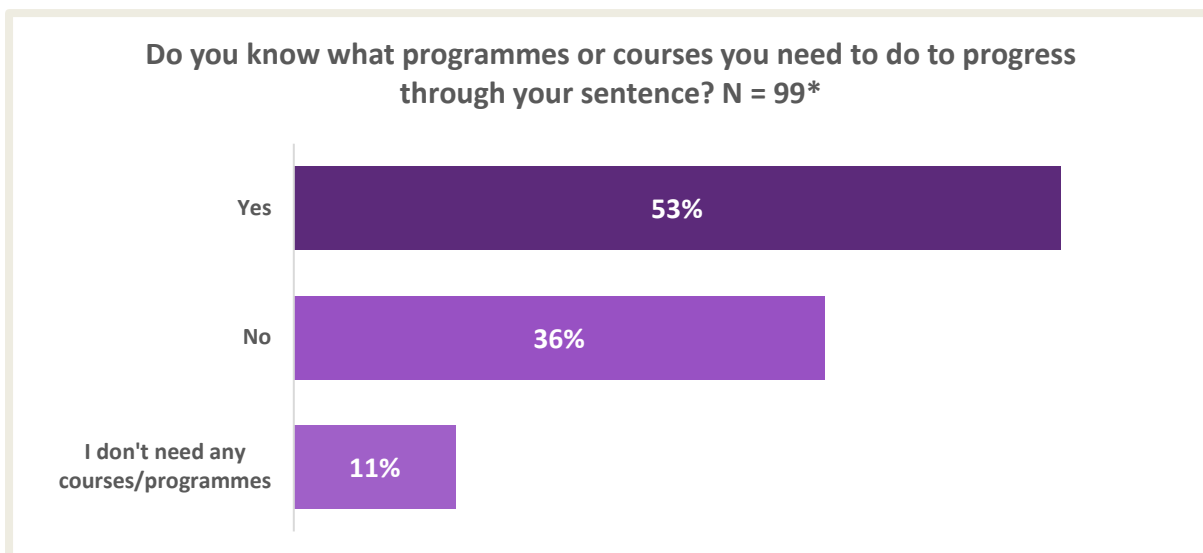
Respondents generally reported that their visitors were treated with respect by prison staff, with 77% reporting that their visitors were treated with respect all or most of the time. A small minority (7%) reported that their visitors were rarely or never treated with respect.



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

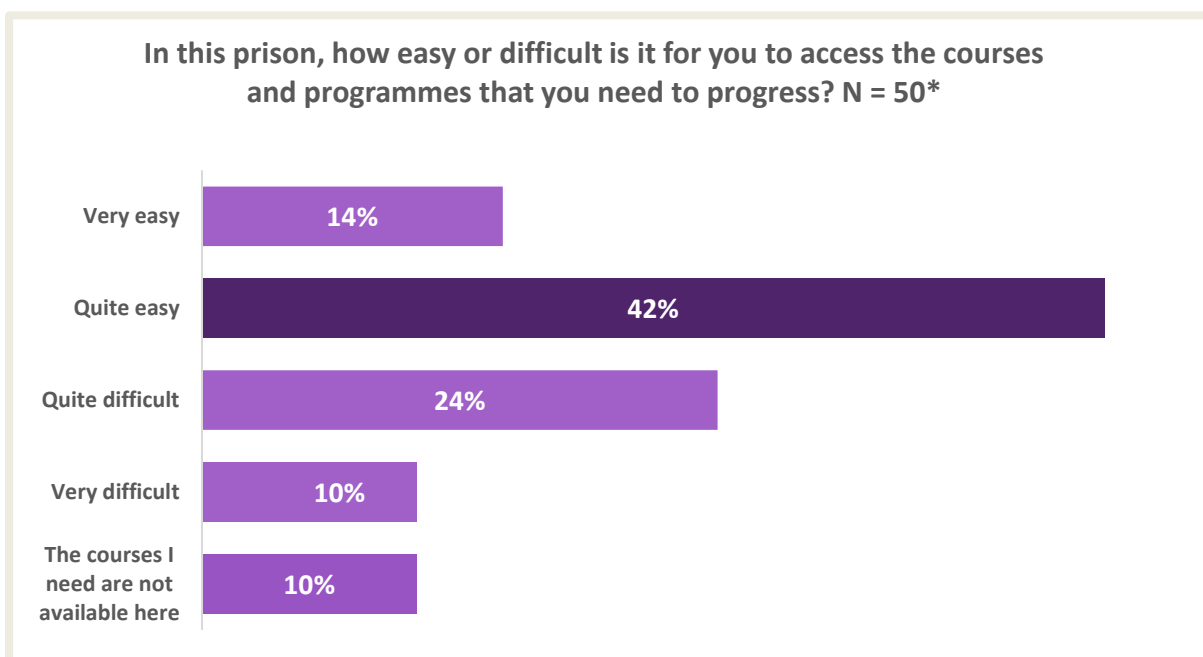
## Progression and case management support

The majority of convicted respondents (64%) reported that they either knew what courses they needed to do to progress through their sentence or knew that they did not need to do any courses. However, over one-third (36%) did not know what courses or programmes they needed to complete.



*\*Convicted respondents only*

Of those who needed to do courses or programmes to enable them to progress through their sentences, the majority (56%) reported that it was easy to access these courses at HMP YOI Polmont. A further 34% reported that it was difficult, and 10% said that the courses they needed to take were not available to them at HMP YOI Polmont.



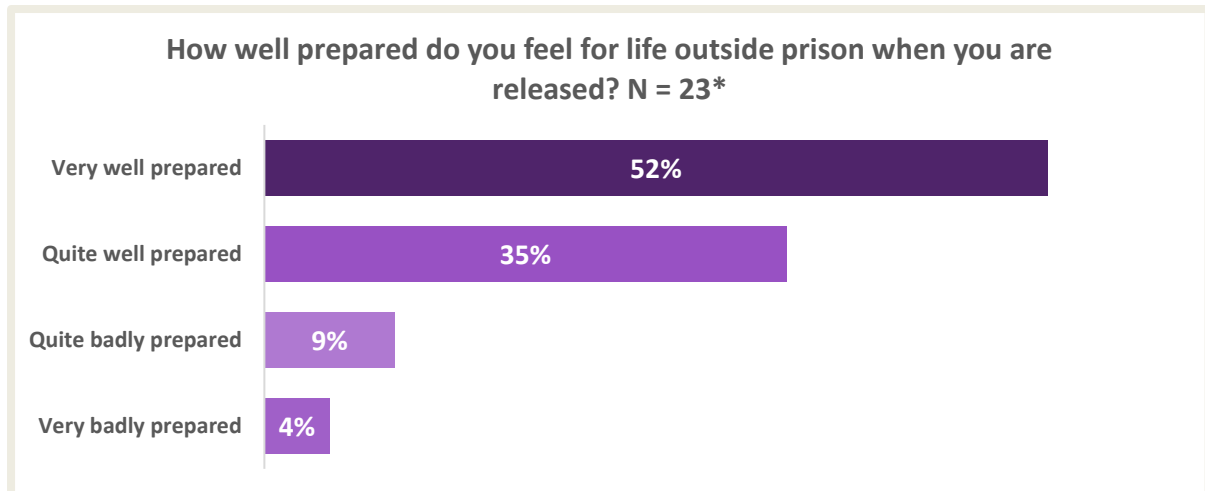
*\*Excluding those who reported not needing any courses/programmes*



## Standard 7: Transitions into the Community

### Preparedness for life outside prison

In total, 24 respondents reported being due for release in the next six weeks. Of these, the majority (87%) reported feeling well prepared for life outside prison.



*\*Those who reported being due for release in the next six weeks*

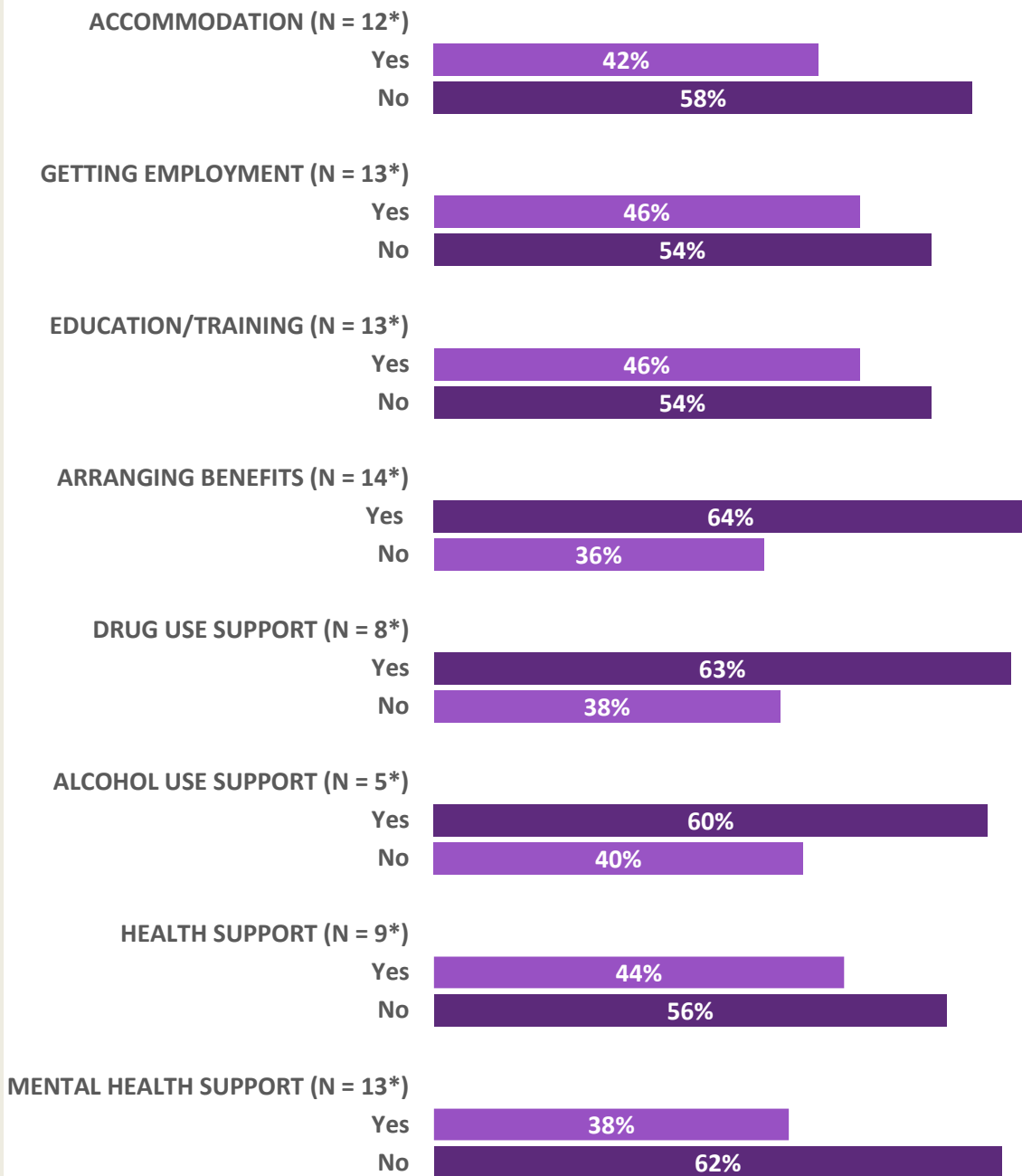
### Support for release

Those due for release were asked about the support they were receiving to prepare for life outside prison. Of those who said they needed support in each area, the majority said that they were getting support for: arranging benefits (64%), managing their drug use (63%), managing their alcohol use (60%).

However, most of those who felt they needed support with arranging accommodation, getting employment, setting up education or training, and support for physical and mental health felt that they were not getting the support they needed.

It should be noted that due to the small numbers answering each of these questions, these results are limited in their reliability.

Of those who said they need support for their release in each of the following areas, do they feel they are getting the support they need to set up the following things?

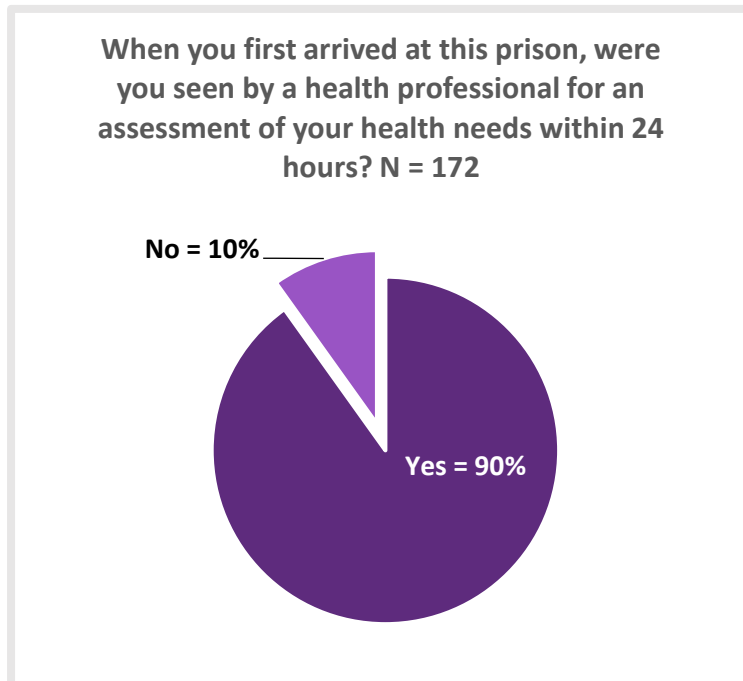


\*Excludes "I don't need this support"

## Standard 9: Health and Wellbeing

### Health assessment on arrival

The majority of respondents (90%) reported that they received a health assessment by a medical professional within 24 hours of arriving at HMP YOI Polmont.



*\*Excluding "don't remember"*

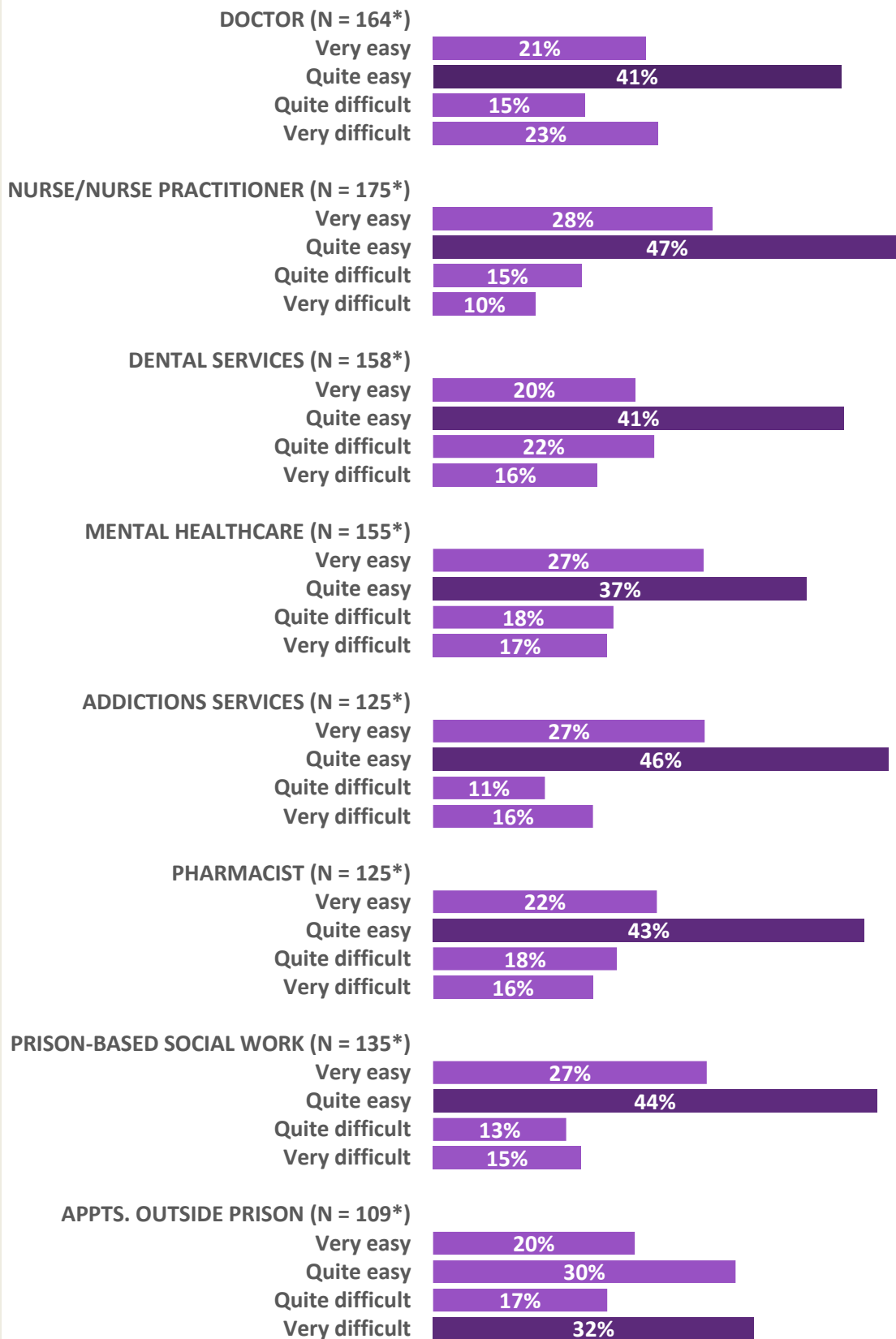
### Access to health services

Almost all (97%) of respondents said that they knew how to access healthcare in HMP YOI Polmont.

Overall, the majority of respondents reported that it was easy to access most health services. Most respondents said it was easy to access: a doctor (62%); a nurse or nurse practitioner (75%); dental services (61%); mental healthcare (64%); addictions services (73%); a pharmacist (65%); and prison-based social work (71%).

Half of respondents (50%) reported that it was easy to access medical appointments outside the prison; however almost one-third (32%) reported that it was very difficult.

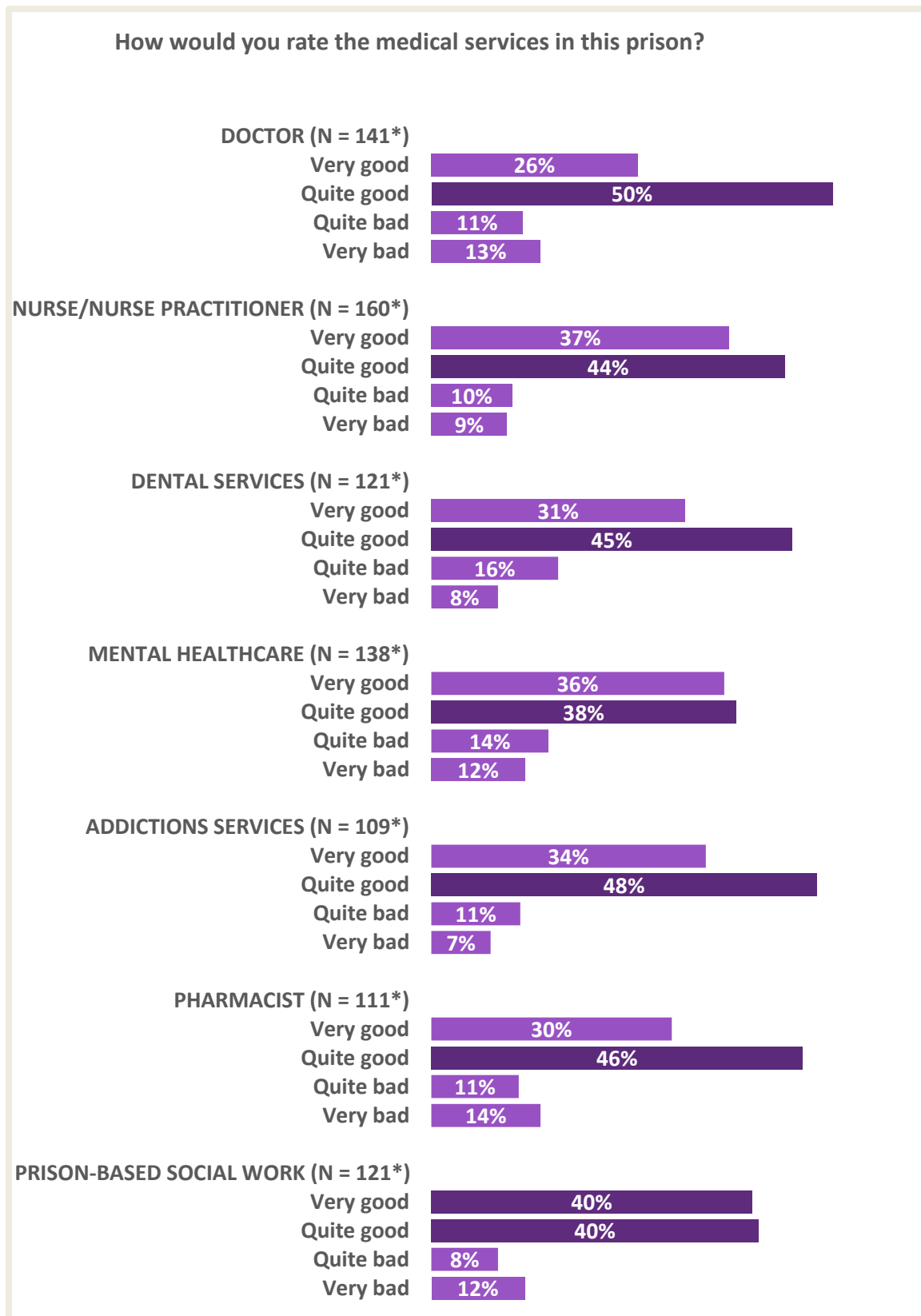
How easy or difficult is it to access health services in this prison?



\*Excluding "don't know"

## Quality of medical services

The chart below shows how respondents rated the quality of healthcare provided at HMP YOI Polmont.

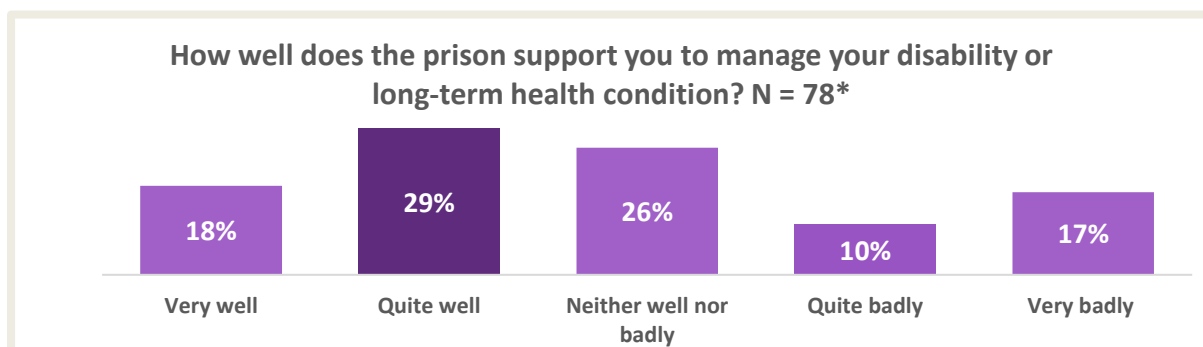


*\*Excluding "don't know"*

Overall, the majority of respondents rated each medical service positively. The service from the doctors was rated positively by 76% of respondents; 81% rated the quality of service from the nurses/nurse practitioners positively; dental services were rated positively by 76%; mental healthcare was rated positively by 74%; addictions services was rated positively by 82%; and prison-based social work was rated positively by 80% of respondents.

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

Of those who reported having a disability or long-term health condition, just under half reported that the prison supported them well to manage their condition (47%), while a further quarter (26%) reported that they were “neither well nor badly” supported. Over a quarter (27%) felt that they badly supported to manage their condition.



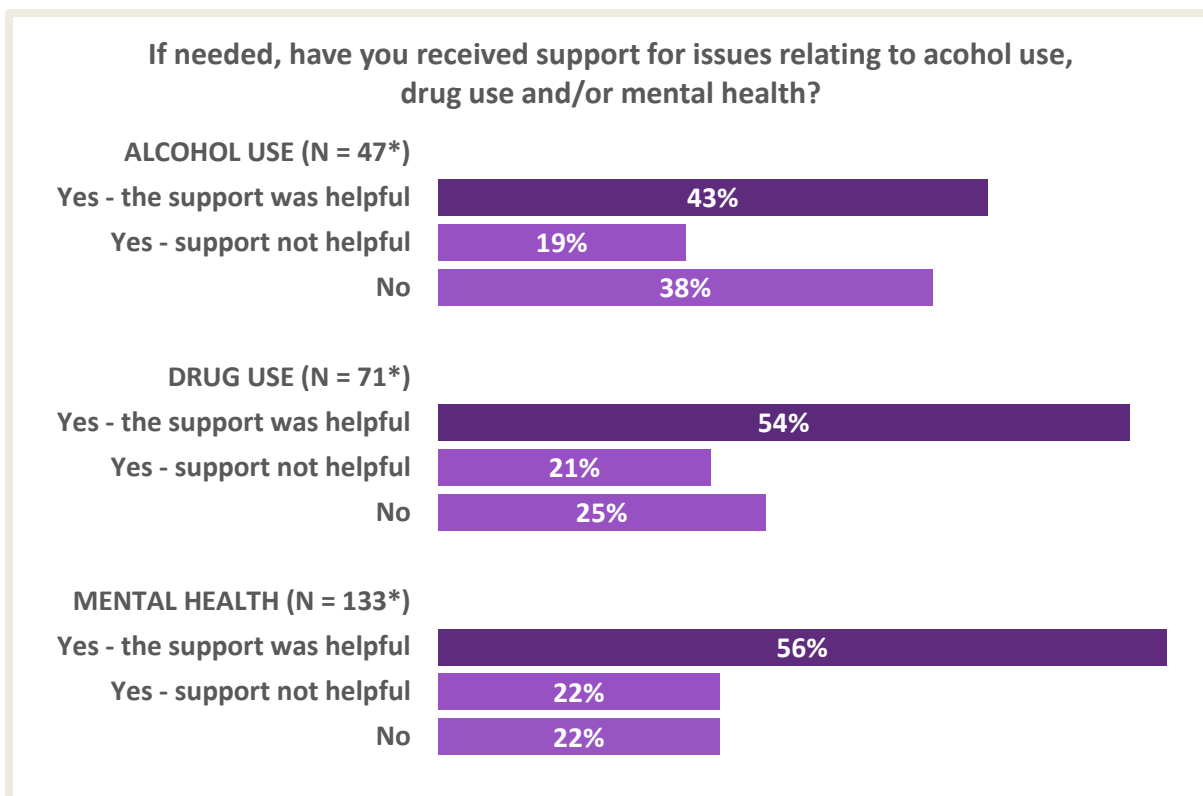
*\*Excludes those who did not report a disability or long-term health condition*

### **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 had needed support for alcohol use while in HMP YOI Polmont, 43% said they had received support which had been helpful. However, 38% reported having received no support, and 19% reported receiving support that did not help them.

Of those who said they had needed support for drug use, over half (54%) said they had received support which had helped them. A quarter (25%) said they had received no support, while a further 21% said they had received support but it had not been helpful.

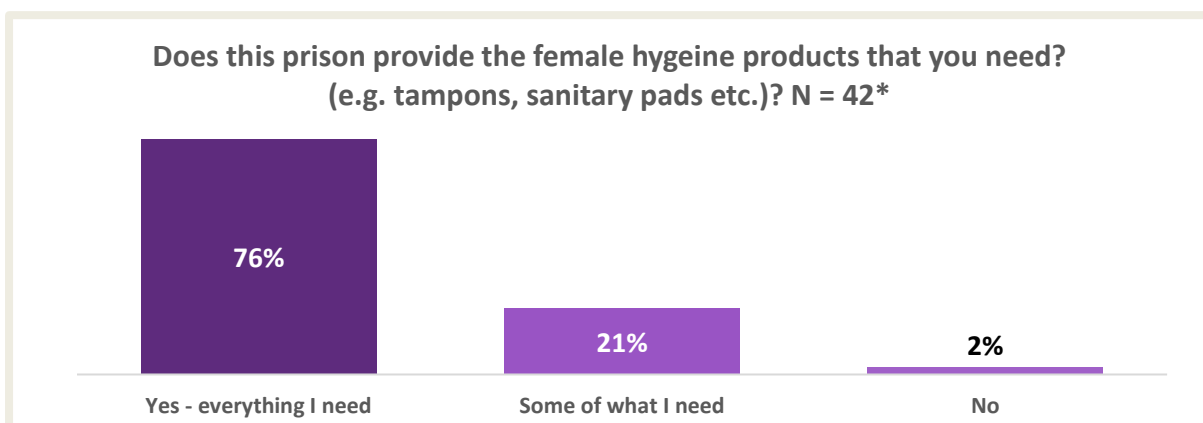
Of those who said they had needed support for their mental health, more than half (56%) reported that they had received support that had been helpful. Of the remaining 44%, half (22%) said that they had received no support, and a further 22% said they had received support which had not been helpful.



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

### Access to female hygiene products

Female prisoners were asked about whether the prison provided the female hygiene products that they needed (for example, tampons, sanitary pads). The majority (76%) reported that the prison provided everything they needed. A further 21% reported getting some of what they needed.



*Figure 11\*Female prisoners only; excluding "not applicable"*

## **Open Question (General Comments): Thematic Analysis**

At the end of the questionnaire, respondents were invited to write any comments they wished to share with HMIPS. These are summarised thematically below. The most common topics respondents commented on were activities and in-cell time, relationships with staff, food, healthcare, and canteen.

### **Purposeful activity and cell time**

The most common theme respondents commented on was the amount of time spent in their cell, and the lack of activities to keep prisoners occupied. A number of respondents reported being locked in their cell for 22 to 23 hours a day, and the negative impact of this. As one commented: "Being locked up for 23 hours daily is really affecting every aspect of my life", while another reported that "[There is] no attempt to rehabilitate. Locked up all day and forgotten about. When we are let out tensions are running high because we're locked up all day every day". Some reported that their only opportunities to leave their cell each day were for 45 minutes of exercise and 45 minutes of recreation, while others commented that these were sometimes curtailed or cancelled. Others reported finding it difficult to cope with longer periods spent locked up during the weekend compared to weekdays.

Respondents suggested that minor changes could help them cope better, for example: longer recreational and exercise time, including at weekends; the opportunity to be unlocked on the hall during exercise time for those who did not wish to go outside; rewarding good behaviour by offering more opportunities to socialise; more activities such as crafts to do during recreation time and while locked up; and more opportunities to play sports and use the gym.

Some commented that some activities available at HMP YOI Polmont had been beneficial for them, such as Barnardo's Youth Work, education and having a job. However, others noted that it is difficult for some people to access jobs or education, leading to excessive boredom.

### **Relationships with staff**

Many respondents commented on their relationships with prison staff. Some reported positive relationships, with respondents describing staff as "fantastic", "always friendly and smiling", "respectful", "brilliant", and "kind and considerate". However, more commonly, comments relating to staff were negative, with a substantial number of respondents reporting that some staff were disrespectful, rude, judgemental, bullying and aggressive towards prisoners. Common issues included reports of staff calling prisoners names, ignoring their requests for help, and breaching confidentiality. Some felt that they did not have an officer they could trust to speak to about issues such as their mental health, and others reported frustrations caused by the sense that different officers operated by different rules from one another.



## **Food**

Food was a common theme in the open comments, with respondents commenting on the quality, quantity and variety of food available. Most commonly, some reported feeling hungry after mealtimes, having not been given enough food to keep them full. Several respondents with specific dietary requirements reported that these were not well catered for, and several commented that there was too little variety on the menus, and that food was often served cold. Some commented that it was difficult to get enough fruit and vegetables, and that there were no facilities available to cook the vegetables available on the canteen sheet.

## **Health and healthcare**

Several respondents left comments relating to health and healthcare. While some commented that the healthcare they had received had been good, a common issue was access to medical appointments, with comments focusing particularly on prison transport failing to take them to appointments outside the prison, and not hearing back when requesting mental health appointments. Some remand prisoners noted that they are not able to see a dentist.

A lack of support for people with long-term physical and mental health conditions and/or disabilities was cited by several respondents as an issue, with some commenting that they were limited in the activities they could do because of a lack of support to manage their conditions. Others reported that some aspects of prison life were particularly challenging as a result of having little support or understanding for their health needs.

A number of respondents noted that they had been taken off medication they had been prescribed outside prison on arrival and highlighted the detrimental effects of this on their mental and physical health.

## **Canteen, phones and PPC**

A common theme in the comments was the price rises in canteen items, without a corresponding rise in wages or PPC allowance. As one respondent put it: "Phones don't cost too much, but I still end up spending most of my canteen on the phone, and things keep going up in cost on the canteen, but my wages don't go up". Some respondents noted that as they do not feel full from the meals provided by the prison, they spend their canteen money on food, meaning that they have little left to spend on phone credit or hygiene products. Requests were also made for more options on the canteen.

## **Personal property**

Some respondents left comments regarding personal property, including the view that it takes too long to access personal property, and that prisoners are not allowed enough personal property in their cells.

## **Physical environment**

A small number of comments related to the physical environment, including comments that the cells and showers do not get cleaned properly; and that the halls are too hot and noisy to sleep at night.

## **Safety**

A small number of respondents reported that they do not feel safe at HMP YOI Polmont. Reasons given for this were: that in some female halls, some prisoners appeared to be suffering with severe psychiatric disorders; offence protection prisoners being mixed with mainstream prisoners; and staff reportedly turning a blind eye to bullying among prisoners.

## **Family contact**

A small number of respondents noted issues with family contact, including issues with video-call visits not working and difficulties for several prisoners whose families live abroad in accessing either phone calls or virtual visits.

## **Progression**

Progression was cited as a problem by a handful of respondents, with comments including long-term prisoners not knowing what courses they needed to undertake; and courses not being available for offence protection prisoners at HMP YOI Polmont, meaning their progression is delayed until they reach the adult estate.

## **Other**

Other less frequent comments included: issues getting personal items back from the laundry; respondents feeling that they were not given the information they needed when they arrived at the prison, and issues with contacting family on arrival; prisoners with protected characteristics feeling that they were not treated equally; concerns about preparedness for release; and issues with the complaints system.