Community Justice Scotland
Voluntary Throughcare and Mentoring Support Research – Report
April 2023

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Project background

Community Justice Scotland (CJS) has a remit to promote smart justice based on the best evidence for individuals who are currently serving or have served prison or community-based sentences.

CJS will take over the commissioning process of voluntary throughcare and mentoring services for short-term prisoners in 2024 and is conducting a Strategic Needs and Strengths Assessment (SNSA) to provide a foundation for the planning and delivery of these services in the future.

As part of the SNSA, CJS wanted to conduct research into the reintegration needs and experiences of individuals who are currently or have previously served short term prison sentences or been on remand.

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Progressive was commissioned to better understand what the current services deliver, gaps in services and to develop recommendations for improvements to service design and delivery.

Research was conducted with individuals serving short-term prison sentences and those on remand and individuals receiving throughcare support in the community.

Research was also conducted via an online survey with professional stakeholders to establish the current services offered, delivery of services and suggested improvements

This document reports on findings from depth interviews with individuals with lived experience of prison, as well as findings from the professional stakeholder survey.

Project objectives
Understanding current service delivery and potential improvements

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1. How are the current voluntary throughcare and mentoring services funded by Scottish Government delivered?

2. Who might access current voluntary throughcare and mentoring services?

3. How do people access the services?

4. What needs do those that access services experience that the services can/should address?

5. What are the strengths and challenges in current service delivery?

6. What are the opportunities for improvement?

7. What can be recommended to ensure that services are effective in meeting people's needs and achieving positive outcomes?

Method
Prison and community interviews

Prison in-depth interviews

We conducted **28 in-depth interviews** with individuals currently on remand and serving short-term prison sentences.

Eight of the interviews were conducted in-person at HMP Barlinnie and HMYOI Polmont.

Twenty interviews took place online using Microsoft Teams with prisoners at HMP Edinburgh and HMP Grampian.

Participants were recruited by officers working in each establishment and received £5 in their PPC upon completion of the interview as payment for taking part.

Fieldwork for the prison interviews took place **between 21st November 2022 and 9th December 2022**.

All interviews lasted between 30 and 50 minutes.

Community in-depth interviews

We conducted **12 in-depth interviews** with individuals in the community who were currently receiving voluntary throughcare and mentoring support.

Interviews were conducted online using Microsoft Teams.

Participants were recruited by organisations offering voluntary throughcare and mentoring and received a £10 supermarket voucher upon completion of the interview as payment for taking part.

Fieldwork for the community interviews took place **between 11th and 24th January 2023**.

All interviews lasted between 30 and 50 minutes.

The focus of the research was to gain depth of insight and understanding from these audiences, therefore qualitative research was conducted over robust quantitative research.

Please note that, due to the small sample sizes involved and the methods of respondent selection, qualitative research findings do not provide statistically robust data. Instead, this type of research facilitates valid and extremely valuable insight and understanding.

Method
Professional stakeholder survey

- Research data was gathered using an online survey sent to contacts in Public Social Partnerships (PSPs) and other third sector organisations who provide throughcare and mentoring to short-term prisoners and/or those on remand; as well as to stakeholders working in Justice Social Work, Prison establishments, the Scottish Government, and to other local authority/HSCP stakeholders across Scotland.

- Community Justice Scotland sent emails inviting all available contacts on their databases to take part in research and issued reminders to encourage participation. Contacts were asked to disseminate the survey to others within their organisation. The survey was also promoted on Community Justice Scotland's website and social media.

- The fieldwork period was between the 16th of November and the 22nd of December 2022.

- The total sample size achieved was 205. Questions were not mandatory and base sizes differ where questions were routed to particular stakeholder groups only, and/or where respondents chose not to answer.

- Margins of error (calculated at the 95% confidence level – market research industry standard) for the sample of 205 respondents is between ±1.36% and ±6.84%. Please note this margin of error is indicative, as respondents were self-selecting.

- Only statistically significant differences are reported.

- Where figures do not add to 100% this is due to multi-coded responses or rounding.

- Sub-sample analysis is reported throughout findings where subgroup sizes allow. Data was analysed by:
    - organisation type (PSP & partner organisations/other third sector/prison establishments/Community Justice partnerships/social work/other Local Authority, Health and social care partnership or gov. organisations)
    - providers of throughcare and mentoring vs those who do not provide these services
    - client facing vs non-client facing roles
    - geographic region (where sample sizes allow)

- It is important to note that our sample is not representative of all stakeholders across Scotland as not all have opted to, or been able to, take part.

All work has been carried out in accordance with ISO 20252 guidelines and the MRS Code of Conduct

Method
Ethics

There were ethical implications associated with the qualitative element of this research as it could have potentially made some participants think of distressing personal events that led to their arrest, caused anxiety about support participants may have felt they needed, or caused those in prison anxiety if they did not feel they were prepared for their release. There was also a risk that participants may feel pressured to share details they did not wish to because research was being conducted in a prison or throughcare provider setting.

The project team at CJS gained ethical approval from its own Research and Ethics Committee (REC) as well as SPS (Scottish Prison Service) Research Access Ethics Committee (RAEC). It also obtained ethical approval from one Local Authority that required this prior to stakeholder participation.

There are a number of ways in which risk was minimised during the recruitment process and fieldwork:

- The method (one-to-one in-depth interviews) was chosen in order that participants would not feel obliged to talk about things that they did not wish to share in front of peers.
- Prison teams and organisations in the community who were assisting with recruitment were fully briefed on the nature of the research, target audiences, the interview experience, and participants' right to withdraw.
- Participants in the community were offered the choice of taking part with their mentor present if preferred.
- One interview in a prison setting was completed as a paired depth at the request of participants, who felt more comfortable with this approach.
- Participants were made fully aware of their right to withdraw from the research at any time: this is a GDPR requirement and was made clear to participants during recruitment and at the research interview. It was also made clear to participants that they did not have to answer any questions they would prefer not to.
- Impartiality of language/tone was a key criteria of topic guide design, with questions phrased in a manner to allow participants to feel accepted regardless of how they answer, and participants were not asked details about the offence they had committed/were on remand because of. Questions were assessed for impartiality by both Progressive and the CJS team.
- Participants were signposted to support services and key contacts at the end of interviews.

Please note: quotes used in both qualitative and quantitative results have been redacted to ensure the anonymity of those who made each comment, as has any identifying information in pen portraits (for which names have been changed).
Responses to the online survey have been analysed at organisation type level and not by individual organisation.

All work has been carried out in accordance with ISO 20252 guidelines and the MRS Code of Conduct

Sample

Prison – 28 depth interviews	Community – 12 depth interviews	Stakeholders – 205 (157 completed surveys and 48 partial completes)
HMP Barlinnie: 3 resp. on remand HMP Edinburgh 8 resp. on remand HMP Grampian: 12 resp. serving STP sentences HMYOI Polmont: 5 resp. serving STP sentences In total 11 resp. on remand 17 resp. serving STP sentence	Recruited via third sector organisations and Justice social work: Sisco The Wise Group Fife Justice Social Work Sacro Action for Children Apex North Lanarkshire Justice Social Work	PSP and partner orgs: 70 Other charity/ third sector: 47 Prison establishments: 15 Community Justice Partnerships: 9 Social work: 37 Other Local Authority/ Health and Social Care Partnerships/ gov. orgs:22 Other/Prefer Not To Say: 5
Males: 16 resp. | Females: 12 resp.	Males: 9 resp. | Females: 3 resp.	
21 and under: 3 resp. | 22+: 25 resp.	21 and under: 3 resp. | 22+: 9 resp.	

Limitations of the research

There were challenges and limitations experienced when conducting this research. These should be borne in mind when reading this report.

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Prison recruitment
- Timings and budget did not allow for prisons across all regions to be given the opportunity to participate. Recruitment was restricted to four prison establishments to meet budget provision. There may be further, more localised, views on Voluntary Throughcare & Mentoring Support (VT&M) from those in other prisons that have not been captured by this stage of the research. However, stakeholders working across the prison network were able to contribute through the stakeholder survey.
- Analysis of qualitative findings by geography is limited due to the small sample sizes in each prison and the differences in profile i.e. STP, remand
- Recruitment was restricted by the number of females on remand in particular prisons.
- Anecdotal feedback provided by prisons suggested that as fewer young people have been given STP there was a limited number of young people to recruit from.
- Last minute court dates impacted on final number of interviews conducted.

Community recruitment
- Due to difficulties with throughcare providers finding suitable respondents, the final number of participants in the community was lower than originally planned.
- Depth interviews were conducted remotely to ensure a good geographical spread and to allow for the inclusion of numerous organisations. Some concerns were raised that remote depths did not allow for a rapport to be built with respondents, however with the support of the respondents' key workers/mentors the depths were carried out successfully.

Stakeholder survey
- Response rates were reliant on stakeholders snowballing and issuing the survey to all appropriate contacts. Not all stakeholders have participated, and some gave responses as an individual rather than an organisation response. This should be borne in mind when reading this report.
- Response rates may have been affected by factors such as workload and different distribution methods within organisations.

Despite these limitations, the research includes a good robust sample of stakeholders overall and a good spread of those with lived experience of prison and experience of current voluntary throughcare and mentoring support.

Qualitative findings
(Prison and community interviews)

Support needs

Experience of prison
Support available during sentences varies considerably

- Individuals' **experiences within prison can influence** their likelihood to accept throughcare support.

- There is often **no consistent way of communicating support available within or between establishments**, meaning the process of accessing support is obscured for many.

- For those on remand, due to their sentence or release date being unknown they tend to feel 'in limbo' and support available differs widely.

- Often individuals deal with mental health issues while in prison, meaning they are often **not in the right headspace** to actively seek out the support they need.

- **Prison staff are not seen as always trustworthy or supportive** and therefore prisoners might not seek out support when they need it.

"When you first come into prison, it would be good to have somebody telling you what support is available because there is no one there telling you what support is available during your stay and after."

Female, Remand, Edinburgh

Widely available information and proactive outreach by throughcare organisations can build trust and encourage uptake.

A case study from a participant serving a STP sentence
STP, 6 month sentence, HMP Grampian

This participant is 37 years old, currently serving a short-term sentence at HMP Grampian and has been in custody several times before when she was younger. However, this sentence is the first time she has heard about voluntary throughcare and mentoring support.

This is the first sentence after she had her own place as she was previously homeless. She was staying in temporary accommodation and she was told by other prisoners she can keep it for 6 months.

She is now half-way through her sentence and she heard her house has a smashed window and she is getting bills sent in the post. She has been waiting to hear from her social worker for a month to help deal with the situation but still hasn't heard anything.

She found out about throughcare from a poster in the hallway of the prison and spoke to staff about it and requested the support. She is still waiting to hear back (after a few weeks) with any further information but she is hoping that Shine will help with her travel on release. Would like Shine to meet with her at least a month before her release date (March 2023) to help get things organised.

"I've been in and out of jail before and never had support, I just got released and would be stuck, I wouldn't know what to say to people or do or anything. As I got out of jail I would be stuck and be like 'what do I do now?'. The more I've come into prison, the more I've realised they do stuff that does help you. They do like Shine and job centre and stuff, which I didn't know when I was younger."

Female, STP, HMP Grampian

A case study from a participant on remand
Remand, 6 months in, HMP Edinburgh

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This participant has been on remand at HMP Edinburgh for six months. It's his first time in custody and he's found it mentally and physically challenging. He feels he is treated like a number not as a person and notes how difficult it has been to access medication and mental health support he needs whilst in prison.

He says that information is scarce in the remand hall and even when he asks officers he is unsure when he will hear back about support available. He and his wife have had to fight to get the support he needs in prison and he feels staff can be inconsistent with some being helpful and others not even passing on messages.

He is worried about his release, reintegrating into the community and rebuilding his life. He would like financial and psychological support as well as help with accommodation. He is concerned about how he will find a job with a criminal record and says the current lack of support for those on remand leaves him feeling hopeless.

"It would be very beneficial for someone to talk me through the release and what will happen. Building a rapport with the same worker in person, having a support plan put in place months before release and continue that plan on the outside to get a routine."

Male, Remand, HMP Edinburgh

Support needs
Support is essential throughout and following sentences

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Support needed:
Mental health, addiction, education, employment readiness.

KEY MOMENT

Support needed:
Ongoing admin, routine (work/ regular meetings), mental health support

Arrest　　　**Remand period**　　　　　　　　　　　　**Release**

In community

Release / Sentence　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　**Return to community**

Support needed:
Sort housing, bills, belongings and finances, info on VT&M.

KEY MOMENT

Support needed:
Travel, housing, food, clothing, finances, prescriptions.

Without adequate support prior to release, the cycle of reoffending often continues

*Findings based on all the depth interviews conducted (Lived experience in prison and in community)

Support needs in prison
Help at the start of and during a sentence can be key

Providing support with accommodation, finance, bills and health upon entering prison can **prevent issues arising later on** e.g. rent arrears, losing your property and reduce fears about release.

This support may include **admin tasks and phone calls** which may be difficult for those beginning their sentence or being held in remand for long periods.

Continuity of support received in the community, e.g. mental health and addiction support, throughout and following their prison sentence is important for wellbeing and prepares for life after release.

Preparing for life in the community with relevant support such as the **parenting classes** and **education or employment training** builds confidence and opportunities for a better life in the community. This was specifically mentioned by young people at Polmont.

"I'm getting help with rent as I'm in and out of custody and I have a lot of rent arrears. I was in a council house and the council are still making me pay rent in jail."
Male, STP, HMPYOI Polmont

"I can potentially end up coming back in, because I don't have the same effort out there, like 'ah bugger it, I'll go back in and sort myself out there', I would like if someone would be there when I'm out of jail asking how you've been and stuff like that."
Female, STP, Grampian

Support needs in prison

Early outreach from throughcare provides time to prepare

- Putting support arrangements **in place prior to release relieves anxiety, builds trust** and makes the transition between prison and community smoother.

- Raising **awareness of VT&M early in sentence is important** to allow time to engage.

- Individuals may need **repeated opportunities to engage** as they may not be mentally prepared to plan ahead for release at first.

- When throughcare support begins **2-3 months prior to release**, it allows time to establish a bond between service user and mentor and ensures key measures like housing and benefits can be organised before release.

- If this support isn't in place, individuals may have **heightened fears** about release and will often end up with **no structured plans for life after release**.

- There is currently **a lack of clear and consistent communication about throughcare** in most of the establishments in which people were interviewed in, meaning many are not adequately informed about what the service could offer them.

- This means **proactive outreach offering support options** is essential to ensure awareness and engagement with throughcare support.

> *"I'm worried I will get out and go get my house keys and my house will be gone and I will be back to sleeping rough, I'm raring to get someone to help me for when I get out. I've been waiting to hear from my social worker with an update on my house for a month."*
>
> **Female, STP, Grampian**

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Support needs in prison
Mindset before release depends on support available

- Feelings of anxiety are common prior to release but **attitudes depend on the support available** and level of preparation for resettling in the community.

- Those with previous experience of custody describe the experience of being released with no support as **extremely challenging and isolating**.

- Offering throughcare support that begins prior to release can **build confidence** when in prison to enable them to deal with life upon release.

- Many feel **in limbo** (especially those on remand) as they struggle to access information and support in prison, which can leave them hopeless and frustrated.

- Those with a support network at home or nearby can make a big difference in individuals' mindset. They can be less anxious about their release as they know they have support around them if needed e.g. somewhere to stay, someone to pick them up.

- However, for a small number the individual had carer responsibilities so their absence from this role also caused challenges for their families and additional worries for the individuals.
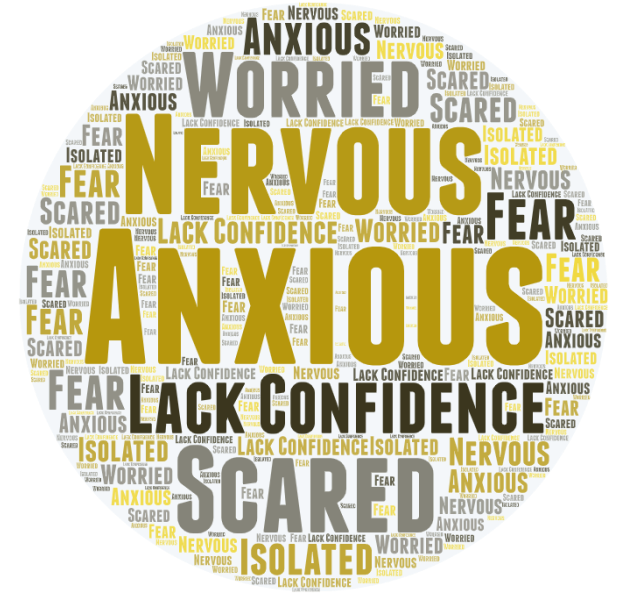
"Your confidence is way down when you come into prison. You are a shell of yourself so you need to try and build that back up before leaving."

Female, Remand, Edinburgh

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Support needs on release and beyond
Meeting basic needs post-release can improve future outcomes

- **Support provided in the initial days after release is vital** to ensure positive long-term outcomes. Providing for individuals' basic needs can give them stability, confidence and headspace to focus on other day to day needs.

- Individuals struggle to concentrate on their wider needs if basic needs like travel, accommodation, finances and food are not met.

- **Travel arrangements**, an initial care package including **food and clothing** and **meeting a mentor on release day** are important.

- **Accommodation** should be organised beforehand and the type of accommodation and location need to be carefully considered i.e. suggestion that hostels should be avoided as they are high risk for those with dependence issues. Location is important as some are at higher risk of being targeted or caught up in compromising situations in certain areas.

- **Prescriptions** need to be organised immediately after release either via the prison or at a pharmacy near the accommodation. Some individuals were released without medication or a prescription, others were released with a prescription but couldn't access a pharmacy in time.

- Setting up a **bank account** as well as **benefits** helps to provide stability from the day of release.

> *"Last time I was in prison I lost my house and then ended up back in two weeks after being released. Without support you end up running around thinking 'f*** this', I'm going back in. You just end up on the drink to cope."*
>
> **Male, Remand, Edinburgh**

People who have re-integrated into the community stated that being supported with their basic needs meant their likelihood returning to prison had reduced significantly and their quality of life improved

Support needs on release and beyond
Embedding structure and routine adds a sense of security

- On release, the **structure and routine experienced in prison disappears** and is replaced with the unknown which can make it easy to return to previous pattern of behaviours.

- Implementing a routine and structure is extremely important following release. This may involve **regular meetings** with a key worker, organising **appointments**, **volunteering, education** or **work**.

- **Continuation** of any health and addiction support received in prison with no delay is important to ensure longer-term stability.

- Regular support and contact from throughcare providers for **at least 3-6 months following release** helps to embed a new structure and provide service users with more independence. However, some particularly vulnerable individuals may need ongoing support, whether that is voluntary throughcare or being directed to other forms of support.

- **Support of families and other support networks** can also play a part in successful reintegration. They can help encourage positive behaviours such as attendance at addiction meetings, job centre appointments etc.

> *"If I had support after my first sentence I don't think I'd be back here now. It's all about routine, if you are always in and out the cells, that's what you are used to, you know institutionalisation and all that. Having that kind of intervention could have been the difference because I had no life at the time."*
> **Male, Community, Action for Children**

> *"In prison everything is done for you, your washing and meals provided. You are always around 30 people. Then you're thrown out and completely alone."*
> **Male, STP, Grampian**

Key Insights – Support needs

1. Support available during sentences varies considerably.

   - There is often no consistent way of communicating support available within or between establishments, meaning the process of accessing support is obscured for many.

2. Support at the start of and during a sentence can be key.

   - Support with accommodation, finances, bills and health upon entering can prevent issues arising later on.
   - Support with admin tasks, particularly for those in remand over long periods, can help prevent issues worsening
   - Continuity of support previously received in the community, such as mental health or substance misuse support, throughout and following the prison sentence is important for wellbeing.

3. Early outreach from throughcare provides time to prepare (approx. 2-3 months prior to release).

4. Support provided in the initial days after release is vital to ensure positive long-term outcomes and reduce likelihood of returning to prison.

   - Providing for individuals' basic needs can give them stability, confidence and headspace to focus on other day to day needs. Individuals struggle to concentrate on their wider needs if basic needs like travel, accommodation, finances and food are not met.
   - Prescriptions need to be organised immediately after release either via the prison or at a pharmacy near the accommodation.

5. Embedding structure and routine through meetings, appointments etc. adds a sense of security and stability post-release and beyond.

6. Families and other support networks can play a positive role in successful reintegration into the community through providing support upon release, alleviating any concerns at this time, as well as encouraging attendance at meetings and appointments.

Awareness and knowledge of voluntary throughcare and mentoring support

Awareness and knowledge
Low awareness of the term voluntary throughcare and mentoring support

Some individuals in prison establishments recognised the term 'throughcare' and used this regularly. However, a range of language is typically used to describe support and there is a confused understanding of what counts as voluntary throughcare, which can be another obstacle to uptake. Language used includes:

Shine	Listeners	The Hub (Barlinnie)
New Routes	Social workers	Change, Grow, Live (Edinburgh women)
Turning Point	Housing people	
Lifelink	Alcohol support worker	
Mentors	Mental health team	

"I've heard about Shine from other prisoners before. They help you with a lift back to the Highlands, set up meetings for housing and drug support and they can help you get a phone."

Female, STP, Grampian

Awareness and knowledge
Limited knowledge of what throughcare support is available

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- **In prisons very few understood what voluntary throughcare and mentoring entails, what support it includes and when it is offered**, especially as there is inconsistency in service offering and forms of communication with prisoners.

- Among those in prison, there were varying levels of **awareness of different types of support but little clarity on who provides it**.

- Currently the **main source of awareness is other prisoners**, followed by posters and the organisation making direct contact. Some received it previously and assumed they would receive it again, others didn't receive it in the past so were unaware they were eligible for it.

- The most successful form of outreach is the **organisation or mentor making direct contact** and meeting with the individual as this provides an opportunity to explain what throughcare could do for them.

> *"I've been in care before so I've heard of throughcare. It's about getting support in the community with housing and money. I've been offered it through my social worker."*
> **Female, STP, Polmont**

> *"I heard of it in the remand hall but information is scarce. Even if you ask an officer, you're unsure when you will hear back about things like support."*
> **Male, Remand, Edinburgh**

💡 **Communications should be consistent for all and focus on: what support is on offer, who provides it and when it is offered / received.**

Experiences of voluntary throughcare and mentoring support

Experience

Throughcare plays a vital role in post-release outcomes

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- Voluntary throughcare and mentoring has a **hugely positive impact** on those who receive it, enabling them to get back on their feet after release from prison and giving them the tools to reintegrate into the community.

- However, **essential services e.g. for housing, benefits, job seeking are often difficult for people to access** and engage with, meaning throughcare workers become the gateway to accessing further support.

- This does not signal an overreliance on throughcare, though. It demonstrates the **barriers that exist** for many of those who are released from prison when accessing essential services.

- It also means that those who are not offered voluntary throughcare services struggle even more so with reintegration into the community due to the lack of support and assistance with accessing other essential services.

- Without throughcare support, the findings suggest there is a **much higher risk that service users would struggle to establish a stable and secure life** and proceed to engage in riskier behaviours, thus increasing the likelihood that they return to prison.

Essential services

Throughcare support worker

Service user
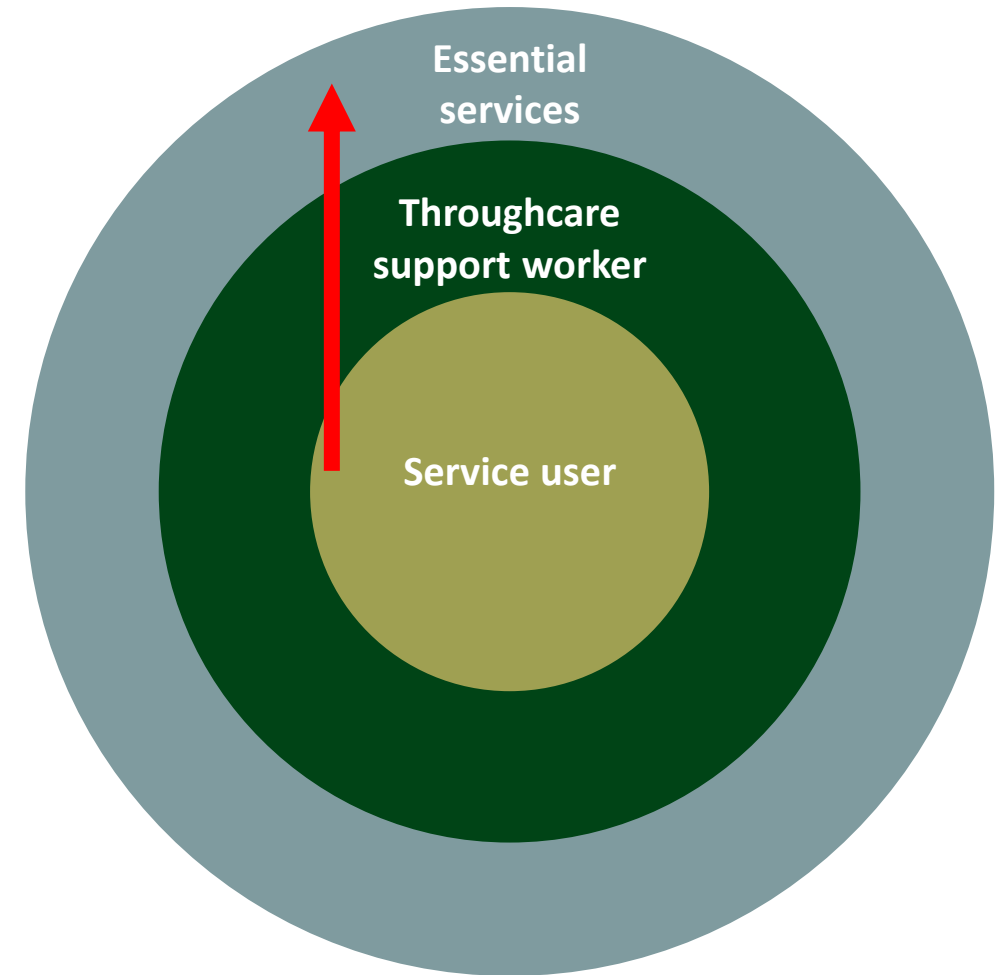
Experience
Most in custody accept support when it is offered

- Most in custody **were happy to take up support** with needs such as housing/ benefits as many were concerned about these in the approach to their release.

- Some had requested support/appointments about specific concerns they had but **most accepted help when offered rather than seeking it out**, or trying to find out what different options may be available to them. Some who had longer to wait before their release described hearing about help others had received and were waiting to see if it would be offered to them.

- There was **some hesitation about engaging with support** expressed however. A few said asking for help was 'not something they did', others mentioned that having to request help through prison officers could be a barrier.

- The most important thing people wanted from a throughcare mentor/keyworker was that they felt the person **genuinely cared and wanted to help** them.

- **Some struggled to get access to their throughcare mentor/key worker** leading up to their release which can increase anxiety and prevent support being offered in time before release.

> *"I accepted the support after finding out from the women in the block when first entering remand. I'm in the process of getting it now but haven't met anyone yet. I'm getting out in April and hoping to hear from them before then."*
>
> **Female, STP, Grampian**

> *"The support could start now so I can plan ahead and get my head around it. I want to get to know the mentor first, I need a while to process and for it not to be spur of the moment."*
>
> **Female, STP, Grampian**

Experience
Holistic support and consultation are key for success

- Those who have received holistic support where one throughcare/key worker provides support for all of their needs were very positive about their experience and felt it **significantly reduced their likelihood of returning to prison**.

- Concerns around support are raised when individuals aren't **consulted throughout about their needs** e.g. not being housed in areas where individuals are well-known and may be at risk.

- Throughcare support enables service users to get their lives back on track as they can **develop structure and routines** in their life, which is especially important for those crucial first few days following release.

- The continuation of throughcare following release helps to provide a **safety net for when issues arise**, providing **a sense of hope and security** for service users which improves their quality of life.

- The provision of **support within the local area/town** where they are living is appreciated and tends to simplify the process of accessing support. This tends to be less common in more rural areas, however examples were given of key workers travelling long distances to ensure support was provided.

"I do think if they had came and picked me up the last time I wouldn't have ended up back here!"
Female, STP, Grampian

"The house I was taken to was a 'scatter flat' back in the area I was picked up from. That doesn't help!"
Female, Remand, Edinburgh

"My mentor helps me with everything I need. We got on straight away. I wouldn't know what to do without the help, it's more than I expected."
Female, Community, Sacro

Key Insights – Awareness, knowledge & experience

1. There was low awareness of the term voluntary throughcare and mentoring support.
2. A range of language is typically used to describe support (referring to the organisation or the person providing support) and there is a confused understanding of what counts as voluntary throughcare, which can be another obstacle to uptake.
3. There is limited knowledge of what throughcare support is available.
   - Varying levels of awareness of different types of support but little clarity on who provides it.
   - Main source of awareness is other prisoners, followed by posters and the organisation making direct contact.
4. The most successful form of outreach is the organisation or mentor making direct contact.
5. Most in custody accept support when it is offered.
6. Voluntary throughcare and mentoring has a hugely positive impact on those who receive it.
7. However, other essential services e.g. for housing, benefits, job seeking are often difficult for people to access and engage with, meaning voluntary throughcare workers become the gateway to accessing further support.
8. This demonstrates the barriers that exist for many of those who are released from prison when accessing essential services and also shows the additional difficulties those who don't have access to a voluntary throughcare key worker might face.
9. Provision of holistic support where one throughcare/key worker provides support for all needs (or assisting with other services beyond VT&M support) was felt to significantly reduced the likelihood of the individuals returning to prison.

Strengths and challenges in throughcare service delivery

Strengths
Throughcare can transform lives and prevent return to prison

- For those receiving support, relationships with key workers/mentors are highly valued. **Relationships are described as being based on trust, and support as being tailored to individual needs.**

- **Key workers are the core node of a network** of wider support. They are relied upon to provide support across every part of service users' lives – often picking up the pieces where other services (health, local authorities, job centre etc.) are lacking. In particular those with complex needs, or who have spent significant periods of time in prison and find navigating outside life more difficult as a result, reported relying heavily on support workers.

- Key workers tend to have good knowledge of other specialist and essential services that they can signpost to and have a good network that they can refer to.

- Mentors/key workers with lived experience of the justice system, or of issues such as living with addiction, were noted as helpful in making clients feel understood and accepted, however even where this was not the case support workers were seen as empathetic and non-judgemental (some contrast was noted with social work support which was perceived differently as having an assessment function). Among those receiving support **voluntary throughcare and mentoring workers were more likely to be felt to be 'for you', rather than 'for the system'.**

> *My mentor helps me with everything I need. We got on straight away. I wouldn't know what to do without the help, it's more than I expected.*
> **Female, Community, Sacro**

Strengths
The current voluntary throughcare model promotes positive outcomes

- Support workers provide **practical help as well as advice and support**, for example taking clients to appointments, attending appointments with them if needed, helping with setting up accommodation (buying basic goods etc.).

- **Plans which people were involved in setting**, and were tailored around their interests e.g. activities/training, contribute to clients feeling respected, and help promote a sense of hope/excitement about the future.

- **Regular face-to-face contact** and activities help to instil a routine, with some saying these had given them a sense of purpose on release which had been critical to them not falling into negative behaviours.

- Service providers premises provide a **safe place for people to go** and spend time.

- **Availability of support workers** (by phone or text) was mentioned as a positive by many receiving support. This meant clients had somewhere to turn for help navigating problems as and when they arose.

> *I am actually asked a lot more what I am up for doing instead of just told what to do.*
> **Male, community, Action for Children**

> *Action for Children isn't just verbal advice, my social worker can tell me to do this and that but I can leave that office and not bother, whereas [Action for Children officer] has actually come and woke me up out my bed and taken me to community service...going out her way to help.*
> **Male, community, Action for Children**

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Challenges
VT&M is responsible for overcoming other services' barriers

- A main source of awareness of voluntary throughcare is communication via the prison establishments, however this can result in **variation and inconsistencies** in how services are being communicated.

- **Cooperation between voluntary throughcare providers, prison establishments, specialist services and other essentials services** is a challenge.

- Individuals reported **obstacles caused by a lack of joined up services** which increased their likelihood of reoffending. Examples of this included physical and mental health services within prisons and externally not always working well together to make sure there is a smooth transition of provision (for example of mental health support, prescriptions etc.); or other essential services not being well equipped to support individuals (e.g. job centre etc.). These add to the challenges for support workers by putting the onus on them to **fill gaps across other service provision**.

- Many individuals need significant support due to multiple needs including mental health issues and other health problems, disabilities, substance abuse issues, domestic abuse, often requiring multi-agency support. The availability of this support (particularly availability of appropriate housing), adds to the challenges faced by VT&M services.

- The voluntary nature of support means **disengagement is a challenge**. Many reported 'not being ready' to engage or to commit to the service at certain points. Understanding of the voluntary throughcare and mentoring offer and its value, and **repeated opportunities to engage** are therefore needed to maximise the chance of successful engagement.

- The **timing** of the support is also crucial. A fine balance between ensuring the individual is ready for the support but also allowing enough time to build a relationship with the key worker is needed. It is important to note that those on remand don't always know their release date so the provision of support can sometimes be offered quite late which limits the time for building trust.

- Availability of services was noted as inconsistent for some, including key workers not being in close proximity to prisons impacting rates of face-to-face in-prison contact e.g. one example of a key worker for someone in Grampian was based in Inverness.

A case study from a participant in the community receiving VT&M
Released from HMP Perth in December 2022

The participant lives in Dundee and was released from a short-term prison sentence in December. He has been in custody multiple times before.

He has only heard of voluntary throughcare and mentoring in the last 5 years and before that he used to get handed some money and end up back in prison. He was first contacted by email six weeks before his liberation date in September 2020. He was told about New Routes (via Apex) and how they can offer support with housing, mental health and finances.

Apex helped him to sort his finances including his rent arrears and organised mental health support. He received support from his mentor for 12 months and he is still able to contact her if needed.

He notes the importance of building rapport with your support worker and says his mentor was superb. He believes that getting this support and having a house rather than sleeping in a hostel makes a huge difference and can help people escape the cycle of reoffending.

"The jail offered me no support but I knew I could contact my mentor, it made a big difference. It's hard to trust someone when you have mental health issues but because she contacted me 6 weeks before my release, I knew she would help me."

Male, Apex (New Routes partner)

Previous custodial sentence vs. No previous experience of custody – Summary of findings

progressive

- Those with previous experience of custody describe the experience of being released with no support as extremely challenging and isolating.

- Those that have been in custody before tend to be more aware of support that is on offer or have existing support in place from previous sentences e.g. social worker.

- Howhever, there were some who had been in custody before that had not heard of voluntary throughcare and mentoring support (this was across previous sentences that were recent and not so recent).

- People who have not previously experienced custody tend to not have heard of voluntary throughcare and mentoring support and stressed that they were given very little information in general. They have less knowledge about the justice system overall.

- A couple of people who have not previously experienced custody stated that they were reluctant to ask prison officers about support on offer, whereas some of those who had been in custody before stated they were comfortable approaching prison officers for information.

Those on remand – Summary of findings

- Females and young people on remand described the same benefits to receiving VT&M, and the same concerns in the run up to release, as those on STP suggesting needs are very closely aligned. However those on remand faced the additional challenge of not always knowing court / release dates, making forward planning more difficult.

- Some mentioned receiving very little information about *anything* including any support that was on offer.

- Not knowing about support that is on offer early enough can result in issues with receiving support in time for release as they don't seek it in enough time or it is offered/arranged very late.

- This can also limit the time for building trust and also for providing relevant support e.g. travel on the day of release or accommodation arrangements.

- Males on remand are not currently catered for via SG funded 3rd sector provided VT&M support. Findings suggest that with increasing lengths of remand periods these people do have a need for support services as they currently feel 'left in limbo'.

- The role that throughcare providers play in filling gaps for other service provision is vital for successful reintegration into the community. Males on remand who are not currently eligible for VT&M struggle even more so with reintegration into the community. Not only do they not have access to VT&M support they also are unlikely to have the additional support with accessing other essential services that is so highly thought of by those who receive this support via their throughcare key worker.

Key Insights – Strengths and challenges

Strengths

- For those in receipt of voluntary throughcare, most described very positive experiences

- Relationships with key workers/mentors are highly valued

- Among those receiving support voluntary throughcare and mentoring workers were more likely to be felt to be 'for you', rather than 'for the system'

- Support is felt to be tailored to individual needs

- Key workers are the core node of a network of wider support – can be heavy reliance on them to help with all aspects of their lives not just specific throughcare support e.g. sign posting to other specialist services, taking them to/attending job centre meetings etc

- Regular face-to-face contact post-release helped to instil a routine

Challenges

- Lack of awareness of what is on offer can impact on take up of support services

- Cooperation between prison establishments, throughcare services, specialist services and other essential services is challenging and varies which leads to inconsistency of provision

- Lack of joined up services provides challenges for throughcare key workers and results in them filling gaps across other services

- The voluntary nature of support means disengagement is a challenge

- Timing of support offered and delivered is crucial. For those on remand sometimes it can be offered too late

- Availability of services was noted as inconsistent for some

Improving throughcare

Improving throughcare
Awareness is the main barrier to engaging with throughcare

progressive

- Within prisons, **lack of awareness of throughcare services and what it can offer** to individuals means that **many are not receiving the support they need**, leaving them feeling worried and alone as they approach release.

- Not knowing about support that is on offer early enough can also result in issues with receiving support in time for release. This was particularly the case for those on remand (who were eligible).

- **Consistent messaging** in prisons about what throughcare is, who offers it and how to access it would increase engagement and encourage those who need support to reach out.

- However, **active communication is needed** from throughcare services themselves to ensure all eligible individuals in prisons are contacted personally to discuss their support needs and improve engagement further.

Some people in prison haven't been reached out to by throughcare and would like to be. It feels like you need to look in the right places for the support or you will get lost in the system, it's easy to be missed if you aren't known.
Male, STP, Polmont

Improving throughcare
Joined-up support would further enhance throughcare

progressive

- Whilst throughcare services often have to be reactive and address issues as they appear, working more closely with prisons and other services, at the pre-release planning stage and upon release, to ensure all support is in place would make reintegration smoother.

- Currently throughcare recipients and providers rely on prisons, job centres and local authorities to provide support in many areas with **providers often having to act as an intermediary** to ensure recipients' needs are met.

- If there were **closer regular communication between providers and other services** to ensure they better understood the needs of individuals after release from prison, there could be fewer hurdles to overcome when accessing each service.

> *The people at the job centre were unhelpful and there was no clarity on when approval would be given for my financial support. The prison was meant to sort my national insurance number, bank account and glasses, they had 2 months and they still didn't do it.*
>
> **Male, Community, Apex (New Routes partner)**

Improving throughcare

Comprehensive, personalised support can transform outcomes

What individuals need

What VT&M should offer

What individuals need	What VT&M should offer
Communications around throughcare which clearly explain what they are eligible for.	Uniform and clear communication of the offering which includes direct outreach in prisons.
Time to build confidence and trust in throughcare providers before release.	Reach out to service users 2-3 months prior to release and form a bond through regular meetings.
Support which adapts to their individual and evolving needs in and outside of prison.	A personalised and adaptable approach and key workers that understand
Preparation including immediate support following release.	Develop a support plan for after release and ensure all basic needs are met in initial days
Ongoing support to embed routine and structure in their lives in the longer term.	Encourage participation in volunteering, education and/ or work to build confidence, independence and routine.

The prison establishments and other essential services also have a role to play in supporting the individual at various stages and communication and coordination between VT&M providers and these services is needed for successful reintegration

Improving throughcare
Support plans need to cover individuals' key needs

Those approaching release need support to prepare for life after release. There are a number of factors that need to be considered prior to release. Public sector organisations and throughcare providers can provide and signpost to this support. These include:

✓ **Permanent accommodation in a suitable location (or good-quality temporary accommodation)**

✓ **Travel arrangements organised**

✓ **Medical needs such as prescriptions and mental health support (particularly for those with addictions)**

✓ **A bank account and financial preparations made including benefits**

✓ **Contact information for support services (ideally a known, trusted support worker)**

✓ **A National Insurance number e.g. for non-British nationals**

This will allow for individuals to be able to move on to fulfilling other needs such as appointments, weekly meetings, relationships, considering employment, volunteering etc.

Key Insights – Improving throughcare

progressive

1. Awareness is the main barrier to engaging with voluntary throughcare and mentoring services.
2. Consistent messaging in prisons about what voluntary throughcare is, who offers it and how to access it would increase engagement and encourage those who need support to reach out.
3. Continued proactive outreach from voluntary throughcare services would help improve engagement further.
4. Joined-up support with other organisations/services would further enhance throughcare services:
   - Prisons at pre-release planning stage and upon release
   - Specialist services e.g. mental health support, addiction support, at pre-release planning and upon release and beyond
   - Essential services e.g. job centres, local authorities upon release and beyond.
5. Provision of support 2-3 months prior to release to allow time to build relationships and trust between key worker and individual (where timelines permit).
6. Development of a support plan for release that covers individuals' key needs:
   - Travel on release day
   - Accommodation
   - Food, clothing
   - Medical needs
   - Finances/benefits/bank account
7. Ongoing support to embed routine and structure in their lives in the longer term

Professional stakeholder findings

Sample profile

About the sample…

The survey link was sent to CJS' contacts in Public Social Partnerships (PSPs) and other third sector organisations who provide voluntary throughcare and mentoring to short-term prisoners and/or those on remand; as well as to stakeholders working in Justice Social Work, Prison establishments, the Scottish Government, and to other local authority and HSCP stakeholders. Links to the survey were also shared via social media and the CJS website.

Contacts were asked to disseminate the survey to relevant staff within their organisation, however it should be noted that response rates may have been affected by factors such as workload and different distribution methods within organisations.

The final sample is made up of all individuals and organisations who responded to Community Justice Scotland's call for participation.

It is important to note that the sample is not representative of all voluntary throughcare and mentoring providers or stakeholders, and that the survey was designed to gather feedback on provision rather than to map services.

Survey questions were not mandatory, and some people skipped questions or did not complete the survey. As a result, the number of people who answered each question varies (base sizes are shown under each chart in the report).

Sample profile

Three quarters of the sample worked for an organisation which provides throughcare and mentoring and therefore have direct experience of current services. Some questions in the survey were asked only of those who currently provide throughcare and mentoring.

There were a mix of responses from those answering as individuals or on behalf of an organisation, and both types of response were received from within some organisations.

To preserve anonymity those responding as an organisation were not asked about how many staff had been consulted/contributed to feedback etc. and responses have not been weighted based on the type of response; however it is recognised that organisational responses mean feedback includes input from more people than indicated by base sizes.

Organisation provides throughcare and mentoring?	#	%
Yes	144	75%
No	44	23%
Unsure	3	2%
Base (all who provided a response)	**191**	**100%**

Type of response	#	%
Individual	120	59%
Organisation	83	41%
Base (all who provided a response)	**203**	**100%**

In a client facing role?	#	%
Yes, all the time	75	37%
Yes, some of the time	53	26%
No	75	37%
Base (all who provided a response)	**203**	**100%**

progressive

Sample profile - organisations

Organisation:	#		#
Access to Industry	1	Police Scotland	2
Action for Children	5	Recovery Enterprise Scotland	2
Aid & Abet	4	Right There	2
Apex Scotland	17	Sacro	11
Barnardos	1	Scottish Government	2
Circle	1	Prison establishment (SPS, Serco & Sodexo)	15
Community Justice Partnership	9	Shine	1
Cyrenians	1	Simon Community Scotland	2
Families Outside	5	Sisco	1
Heavy Sound CIC	2	Social Work Scotland	1
IFIT	3	The Wise Group	14
Local Authority non-justice social work	11	Turning Point Scotland	6
Local Authority justice social work	25	Other*	46
New Routes	13	Prefer not to say	2
Base	**205**	**Base**	**205**

*included 25 third sector/charity organisations and 18 Local Authority/HSCP/Government organisations

Organisation type summary:-
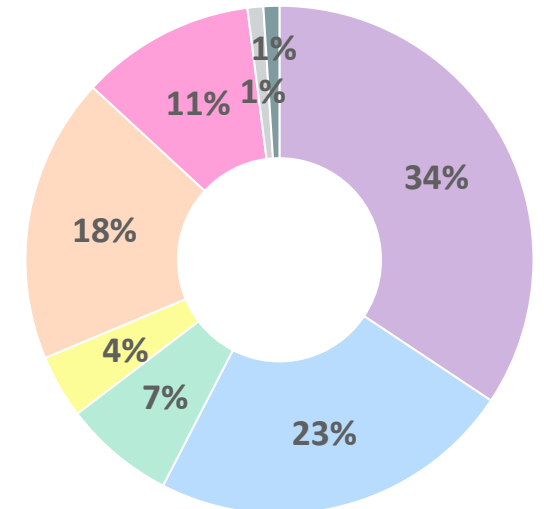
- PSP & partner organisations
- Other charity/third sector
- Prison establishments
- Community Justice partnerships
- Social work
- Other LA/HSCP/Government organisations
- Other
- PNTS

Sample profile - region

Geographical area	#		#		#
National – Scotland	65	East Renfrewshire	1	Orkney Islands	2
National - UK	7	Edinburgh City	5	Perth & Kinross	14
Aberdeen City	3	Na h-Eileanan an Iar	1	Renfrewshire	4
Aberdeenshire	6	Falkirk	3	Scottish Borders	1
Angus	1	Fife	2	Shetland Islands	1
Argyll & Bute	5	Glasgow City	21	South Ayrshire	3
Clackmannanshire	2	Highland	6	South Lanarkshire	4
Dumfries & Galloway	11	Inverclyde	4	Stirling	2
Dundee City	4	Midlothian	3	West Dunbartonshire	2
East Ayrshire	4	North Ayrshire	2	Prefer not to say	1
East Lothian	7	North Lanarkshire	4	Not provided	4
	Base 205		Base 205		Base 205

North Scotland = 10%

National – Scotland = 32%

West central = 26%

East central = 20%

National – UK = 3%

South = 6%
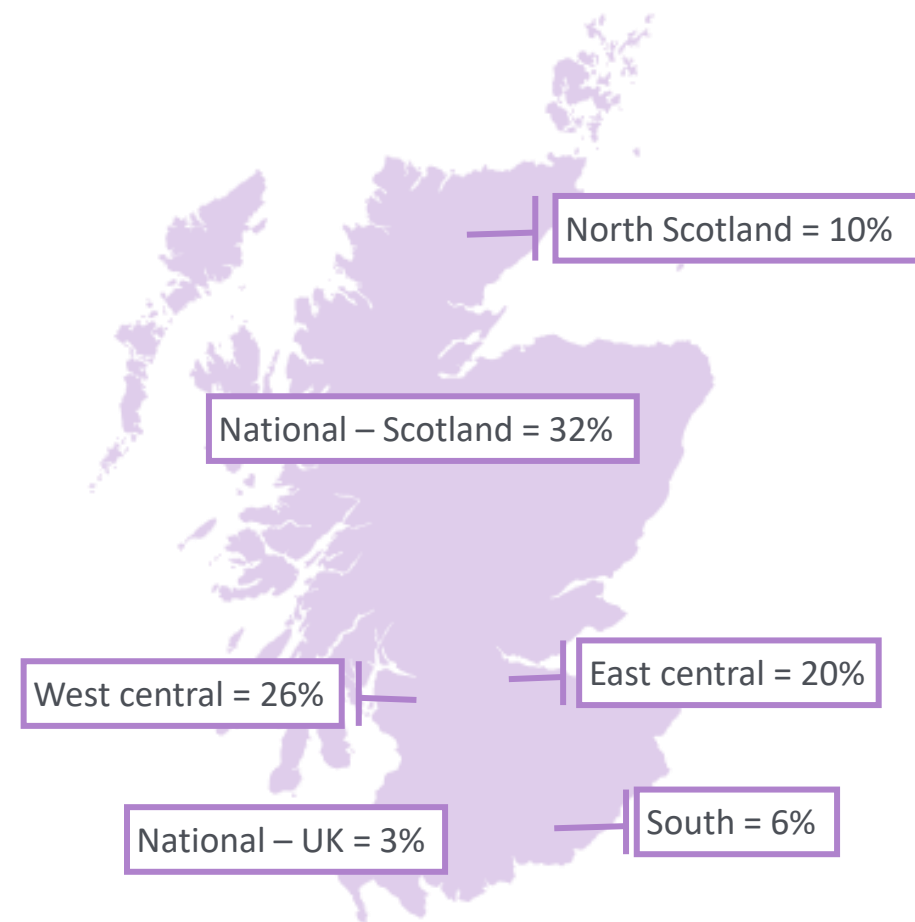
Current service provision

(Questions asked of those working for an organisation which provides throughcare and mentoring only)

The throughcare and mentoring sample

- Respondents to the survey were asked: **Does your organisation provide a throughcare and mentoring service?**

- The majority of the sample (75%) were providers, and these respondents were asked a series of questions about that service, shown in the following slides.

- The sample of throughcare and mentoring (T&M) providers included a range of organisation types, **likely to include <u>both statutory and voluntary</u> throughcare providers. It is important to note this when reading the results.**

Q8. Does your organisation provide a throughcare and mentoring service? *By this we mean provide support that people receive in prison or once they leave, to help them resettle into the community such as finding a home, providing opportunities for work and improved health and wellbeing or mentoring.*

Provide throughcare and mentoring?

Yes	No	Unsure
75%	23%	2%
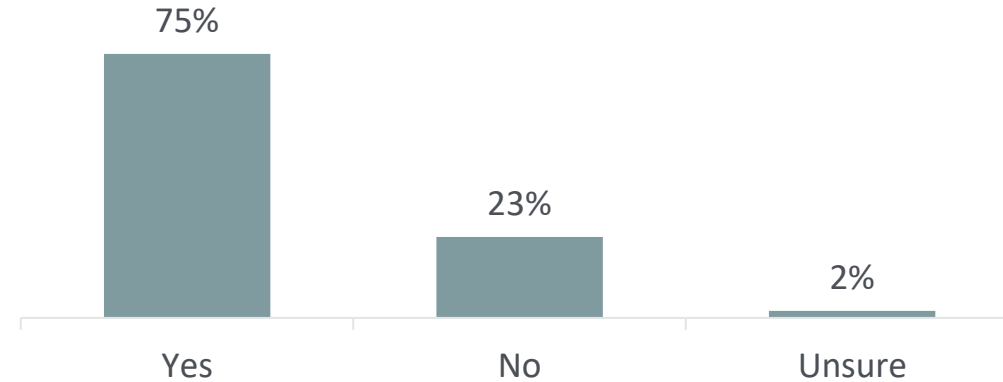
Type of organisation (those who provide throughcare and mentoring only)

PSP & partner organisations	43%
Other charity/third sector	23%
Social work	20%
Prison establishments	6%
Other LA/HSCP/Government organisations	6%
Community Justice partnerships	3%

Base - total sample (all who provided a response): 191
Base - those who provide T&M (all who provided a response): 144

progressive

51

Eligibility for support is impacted by offence type

- Survey respondents from organisations which provide <u>any</u> form of throughcare and mentoring service were asked questions about their services and who these were typically provided to.

- The range of organisations responding (including statutory and non-statutory providers of throughcare) means provision does not mirror VT&M eligibility criteria.

- Most organisations provided support for several age groups and/or genders, with the typical client age range broadly reflecting the age profile of the prison population.

- Across all age groups, organisations that responded were typically providing support to males, however over half provided support to females; a high proportion relative to their numbers in the prison population (4%)*.

- When asked which groups were <u>not</u> eligible for support, offence type was most likely to impact eligibility (47%).

- Offence types which impacted eligibility were noted as: sexual offences (37), Schedule 1 offences, i.e. offences against children (20), offences for which a long-term prison sentence had been issued (14), offences for which a Supervised Release Order had been issued (10), violent crimes (6), individuals already receiving statutory support (3).

Q21. To whom do you typically provide voluntary throughcare and mentoring support? &
Q22. Are there any people not eligible for your service?

Client groups not supported

Individuals with some offence types — **47%**

Individuals released from remand — **30%**

Individuals released from short term prison sentence — **3%**

Annual prison population data for 2021-22 shows approximately 28% of the prison population was on remand**
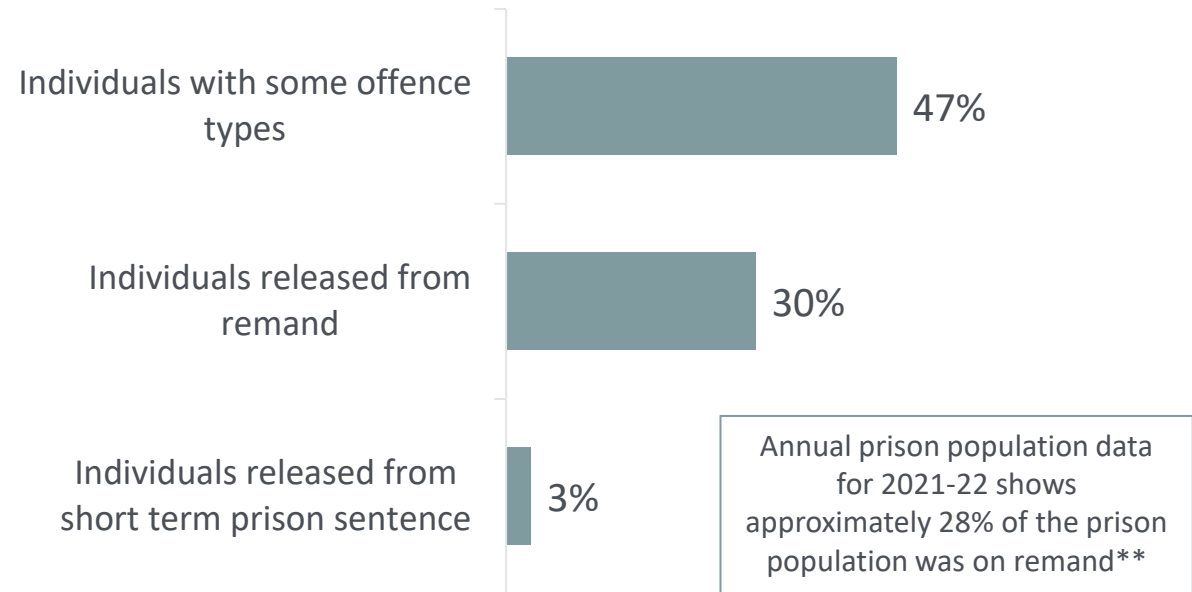
PSP eligibility criteria for Throughcare and Mentoring support extends to all females on remand, serving a short term prison sentence or on a Community Payback Order (CPO) or Drug Treatment and Testing Order (DTTO), all young males on remand or serving a short term prison sentence, and all adult males serving a short term prison sentence.

Base - those who provide T&M (all who provided a response): 120

Support is most likely to be provided on, and in the approach to, liberation

Stage(s) voluntary throughcare & mentoring is provided

- Those providing throughcare and mentoring services were also asked at what stage they provided support, with the option to choose multiple answers.

- Organisations were most likely to provide support in the 3 months prior to liberation, and on the date of liberation.

- PSP/partner organisations were particularly likely to say they provided support in 3 months prior to liberation (81%).

- Support for those on remand was most likely to be provided by other third sector/charity organisations (52% reported providing support on entering remand and 65% on leaving remand). These organisations were also more likely than others to provide support to individuals convicted and awaiting sentencing (45%).

Stage	%
On entering remand	28%
On leaving remand	39%
Convicted awaiting sentence	29%
Soon after sentencing (first half of custodial sentence)	33%
Towards the end of sentence (second half of custodial sentence)	51%
In the 3 months prior to liberation	70%
On liberation date	70%
In the 12 months following liberation	48%
Other	22%
Unsure/Don't know	1%

'Other' responses included support being offered for a set amount of time as of when contact was initiated rather than being linked to a specific point in a client's justice experience

Q9. At what stage do you provide voluntary throughcare and mentoring support to the majority of your clients?

Base - those who provide T&M (all who provided a response): 142

53

Information about VT&M often may not come directly from providers

- Mirroring findings from interviews with those with lived experience, word of mouth was identified as a key information channel about VT&M, particularly among PSP/partner organisations (75%), and other third sector/charity organisations (64%).

- Service representatives attending prisons were equally important, particularly among PSP/partner organisations (85%).

- Information coming from prisons, and services being advertised in prisons, were also critical information sources, underscoring the importance of the relationships between prisons and providers.

How clients are typically informed

Category	%
Word of mouth	59%
Service rep attends prison to meet those approaching liberation/on remand	58%
Prison informs those approaching liberation date or currently on remand about services	55%
Service is advertised throughout the prison	51%
Service contacts those approaching liberation/currently on remand	49%
Justice social work attends prison to meet those approaching liberation/on remand	37%
Social worker informs those approaching liberation date or currently on remand	32%
Services advertised in/by specialist services	19%
People who have left prison are informed via a third party	18%
Service advertised in/by universal services	7%
Other	13%
Unsure/Don't know	4%

progressive

Q23. How are clients typically informed about your organisation's voluntary throughcare and mentoring support?

Base - those who provide T&M (all who provided a response): 124

54

Pre-release, support with accommodation is most likely to be available

What support is provided <u>pre</u> release

- Pre-release support was lower for those on remand than those serving a short-term prison sentence, in line with eligibility.

- For STP clients most types of support were provided by over half of providers, particularly accommodation, identified as a key support need across interviews with those with lived experience of the justice system.

- For those receiving support whilst on remand provision was highest for the same four areas as STP clients: accommodation, mental health and substance use issues (alcohol and drugs).

- For STP clients, PSP/partner organisation respondents were particularly likely to say they provided support with accommodation, mental health, and support on the day of liberation.

Legend: ■ STP ■ Remand

Category	STP	Remand
Accommodation	65%	31%
Mental health	58%	30%
Drug-related substance use issues	56%	29%
Alcohol-related substance use issues	54%	30%
Links in the community	53%	28%
Guidance / life skills	53%	28%
Personal finance	51%	24%
Specific health needs	51%	27%
Support client on liberation	51%	26%
Advocacy services	46%	25%
Obtaining food, clothing, furnishings etc.	41%	20%
Employment, training or education	41%	23%
General health needs	40%	22%
Supporting client's main support network	40%	20%

Q27. What support is provided by your service at each stage of a client's time in the justice system?

Base - those who provide T&M (all who provided a response): 124

Post release, employment, training or education support is more widely offered.

- While accommodation support was still on offer from many providers, post release support provision was more likely to include elements to provide clients with goals/activities (employment, training or education) or support them to maintain a healthy lifestyle, such as substance abuse and mental health support.

- At both pre and post release, providers were least likely to provide services aimed at clients' support networks.

- For remand clients, other charity/third sector organisations were significantly more likely to be providing each of the listed support options than others.

What support is provided <u>post</u> release
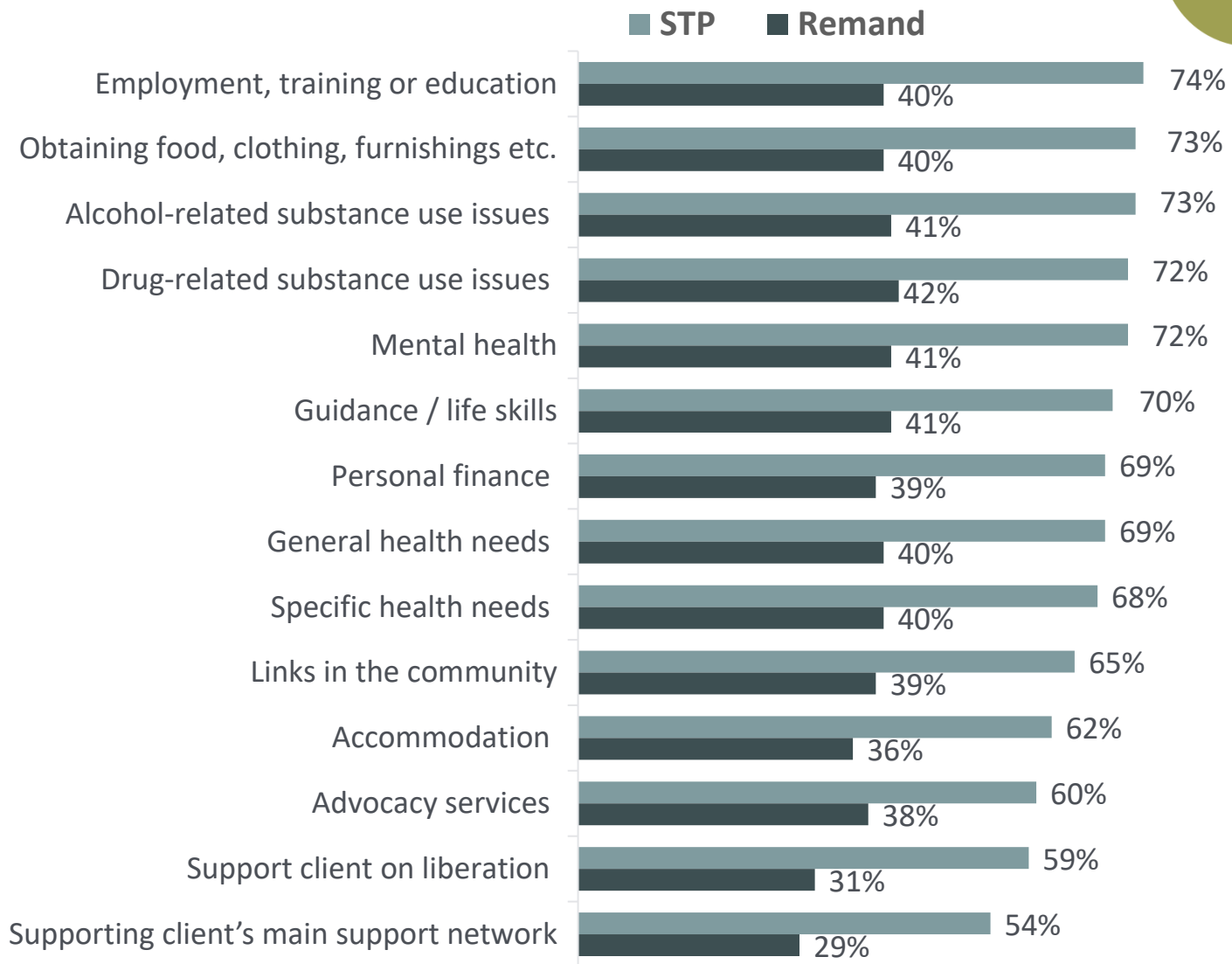
Legend: ■ STP ■ Remand

Category	STP	Remand
Employment, training or education	74%	40%
Obtaining food, clothing, furnishings etc.	73%	40%
Alcohol-related substance use issues	73%	41%
Drug-related substance use issues	72%	42%
Mental health	72%	41%
Guidance / life skills	70%	41%
Personal finance	69%	39%
General health needs	69%	40%
Specific health needs	68%	40%
Links in the community	65%	39%
Accommodation	62%	36%
Advocacy services	60%	38%
Support client on liberation	59%	31%
Supporting client's main support network	54%	29%

Q27. What support is provided by your service at each stage of a client's time in the justice system?

Base - those who provide T&M (all who provided a response): 124

progressive

Almost half place limits on when support can be started

- Just under half of organisations said there was a point beyond which VT&M could not be started, increasing to 65% among those who worked in PSP/partner organisations.

- Where cut off points were in place approximately a third said the cut off point came before or on liberation, with around quarter saying it came after liberation.

- Among those who had another cut off point, 9 said clients had to have signed up for support during their sentence (at any point up to the day before release). 4 said that 12 months after being released was the cut-off. Other cut off points included when clients reached a particular age, and some specified that cut-offs differed according to client group.

Q10. Thinking about your organisation, is there a cut-off point beyond which clients can no longer commence voluntary throughcare and mentoring support? &

Q11. What is the latest point that a client is able to commence voluntary throughcare and mentoring support with your organisation?

Cut-off points for starting support

Cut-off points for starting support in place?

- Yes — 46%
- No — 39%
- Unsure — 14%
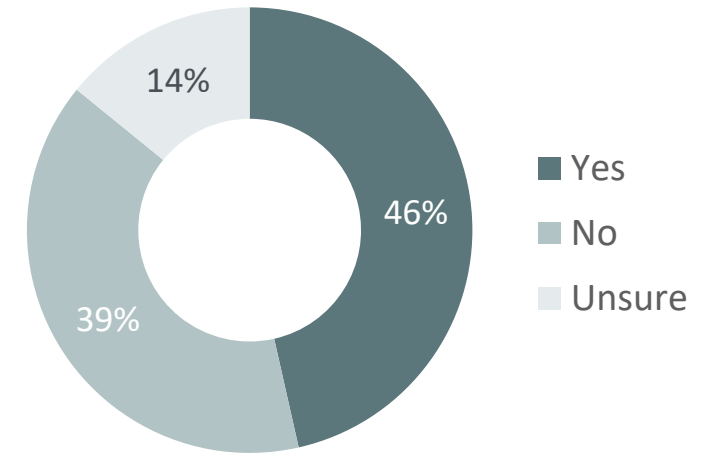
Latest point support can start:

On leaving remand	3%
Soon after sentencing	3%
Towards the end of sentence	2%
In the 3 months prior to liberation	12%
On liberation date	17%
In the 12 months following liberation	23%
Other	38%
Unsure/Don't know	2%
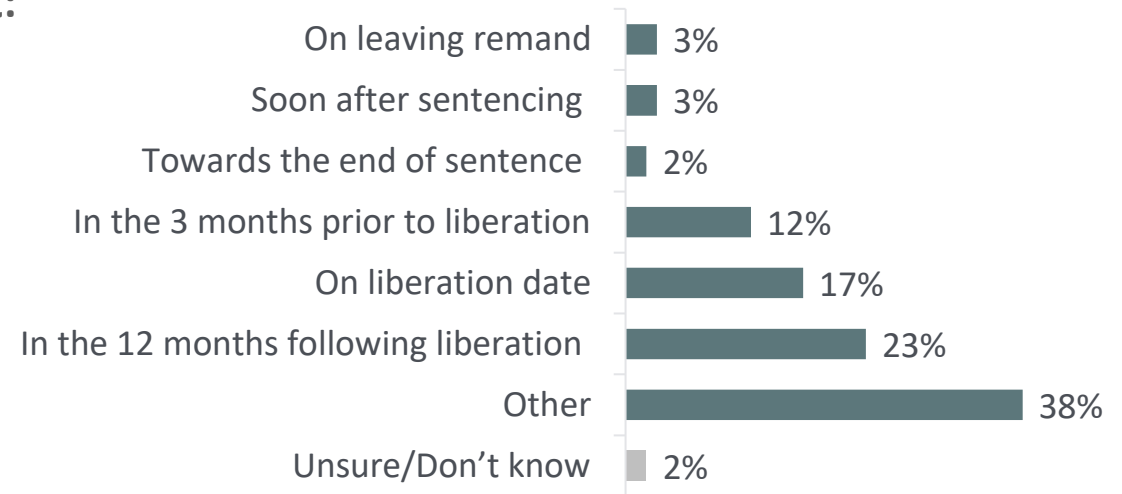
**Base - those who provide T&M (all who provided a response): 142
those for whom there is a cut off point (all who provided a response): 60**

progressive

Most have a time limit on support

- Three fifths said support provided stopped after a maximum time. This was higher among PSP/partner organisation respondents (84%), and Social work respondents (65%).

- The length of support varied across providers but was most likely to be a year after release.

- Those who said they had another maximum timescale were asked to give details of this:– some said they supported clients for a year but when this started could be variable and therefore wasn't typically linked to clients' release date. Others noted that the point beyond which they supported clients could be extended depending on clients' needs and that there was flexibility to allow support to continue.

Q15. Does your organisation have a maximum length of time in which to provide voluntary throughcare and mentoring support to clients? & Q16. What is the maximum length of time that voluntary throughcare and mentoring support is provided by your organisation?

Maximum lengths of support

Maximum length of support in place?

- 8% Unsure (top)
- 58% Yes
- 34% No

Legend:
- Yes
- No
- Unsure
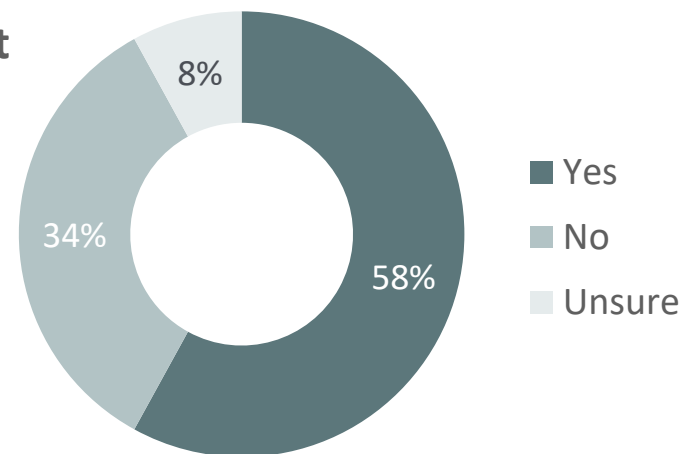
Amount of time past which support is no longer available:

3 months after release from prison	4%
6 months after release from prison	23%
9 months after release from prison	11%
1 year after release from prison	30%
More than 1 year after release from prison	3%
Other	28%
Unsure/Don't know	1%
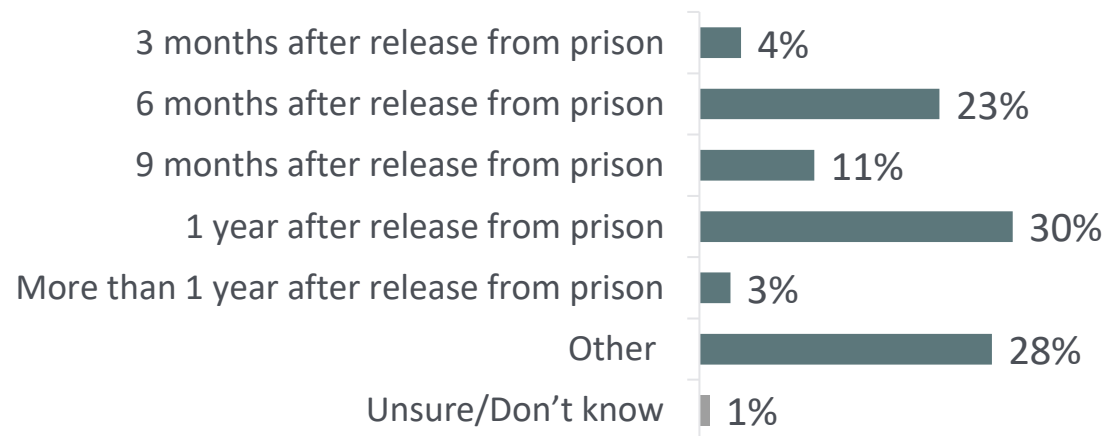
Base - those who provide T&M (all who provided a response): 131
those for whom there is a maximum length of time support is provided (all who provided a response): 74

Client choice is the main reason support typically ends

- Despite maximum lengths of support being in place in many organisations, client choice is the main reason support typically ends (31%), particularly among third sector/charity organisations (46%).

> *This depends on each individual person and what their needs are. We offer a person centred approach and it would be dependent on the needs of the individual. This could be because they choose not to engage. They may feel we have put the supports in place and there is no longer a role for us*
>
> **– Social work response**

How support typically ends
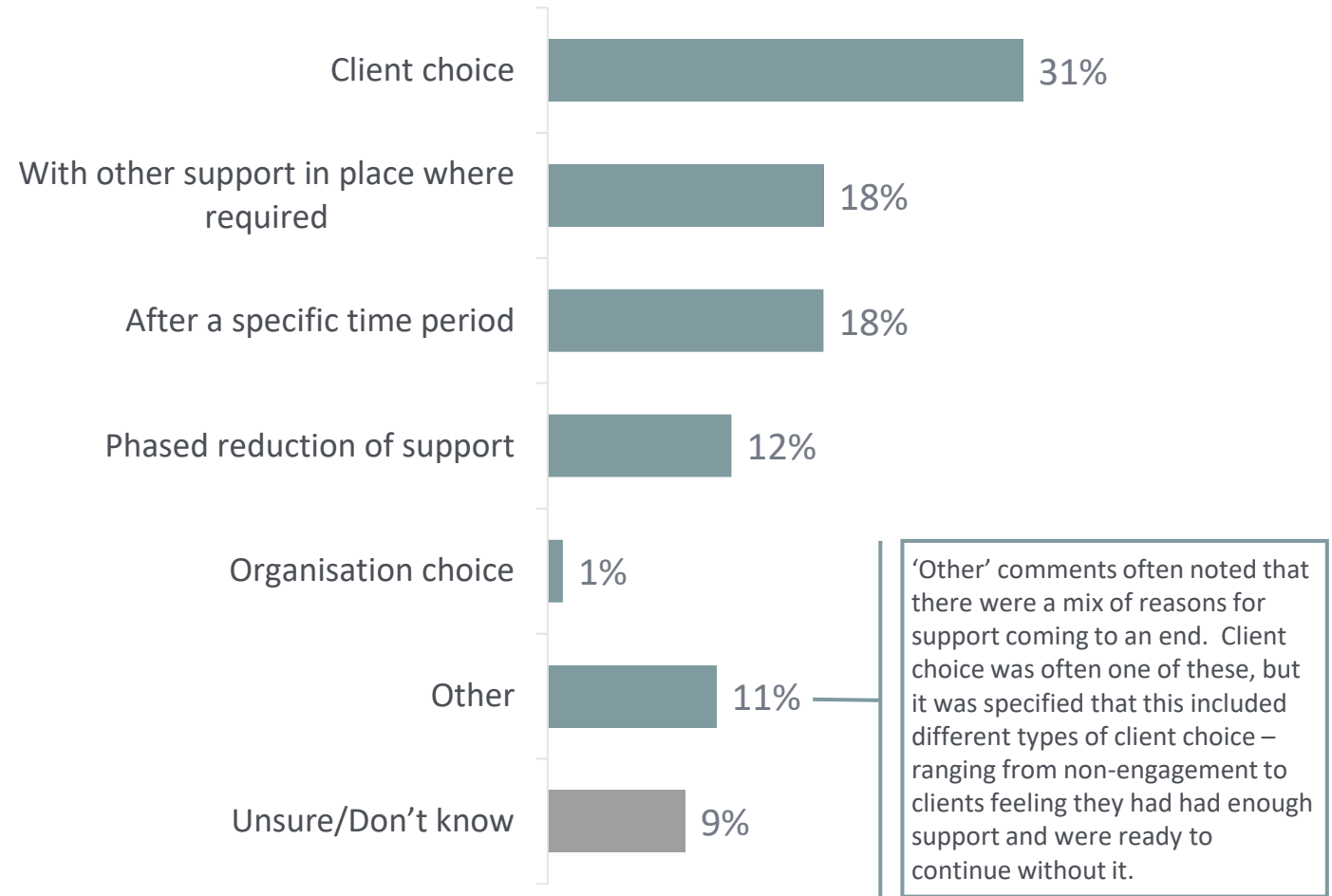
Category	%
Client choice	31%
With other support in place where required	18%
After a specific time period	18%
Phased reduction of support	12%
Organisation choice	1%
Other	11%
Unsure/Don't know	9%

'Other' comments often noted that there were a mix of reasons for support coming to an end. Client choice was often one of these, but it was specified that this included different types of client choice – ranging from non-engagement to clients feeling they had had enough support and were ready to continue without it.

Base - those who provide T&M (all who provided a response): 130

Strengths & challenges in current service delivery
Questions asked of all respondents

All clients' needs are not currently considered as being met

- Respondents were asked whether current VT&M provision met all needs. Over half disagreed this was the case, with *strong* disagreement high at 30%.

- This measure is seen differently by those with a more direct interaction with clients than those with a more removed perspective:
  - Net agreement was higher among those who provide T&M (44% vs 14%)
  - Net agreement was also higher among PSP & partner organisations (64%)
  - Net *disagreement* was higher for those in a non-client facing role (67% disagreed that provision currently meets needs compared to 50% of those in a client facing role).

- While numbers are low, there is also some indication of regional differences – those whose organisation was based in the South of Scotland were more positive (83% agreed).

Q5. Thinking about voluntary throughcare and mentoring support in general, to what extent do you agree or disagree that the current provision meets the needs of all clients?

Extent current provision is thought to meet the needs of all clients

Disagree strongly	30%
Disagree slightly	26%
Neither agree nor disagree	5%
Agree slightly	28%
Agree strongly	8%
Unsure/Don't know	2%

Net disagreement = 56%

Net agreement = 36%

Base - total sample (all who provided a response): 203

62
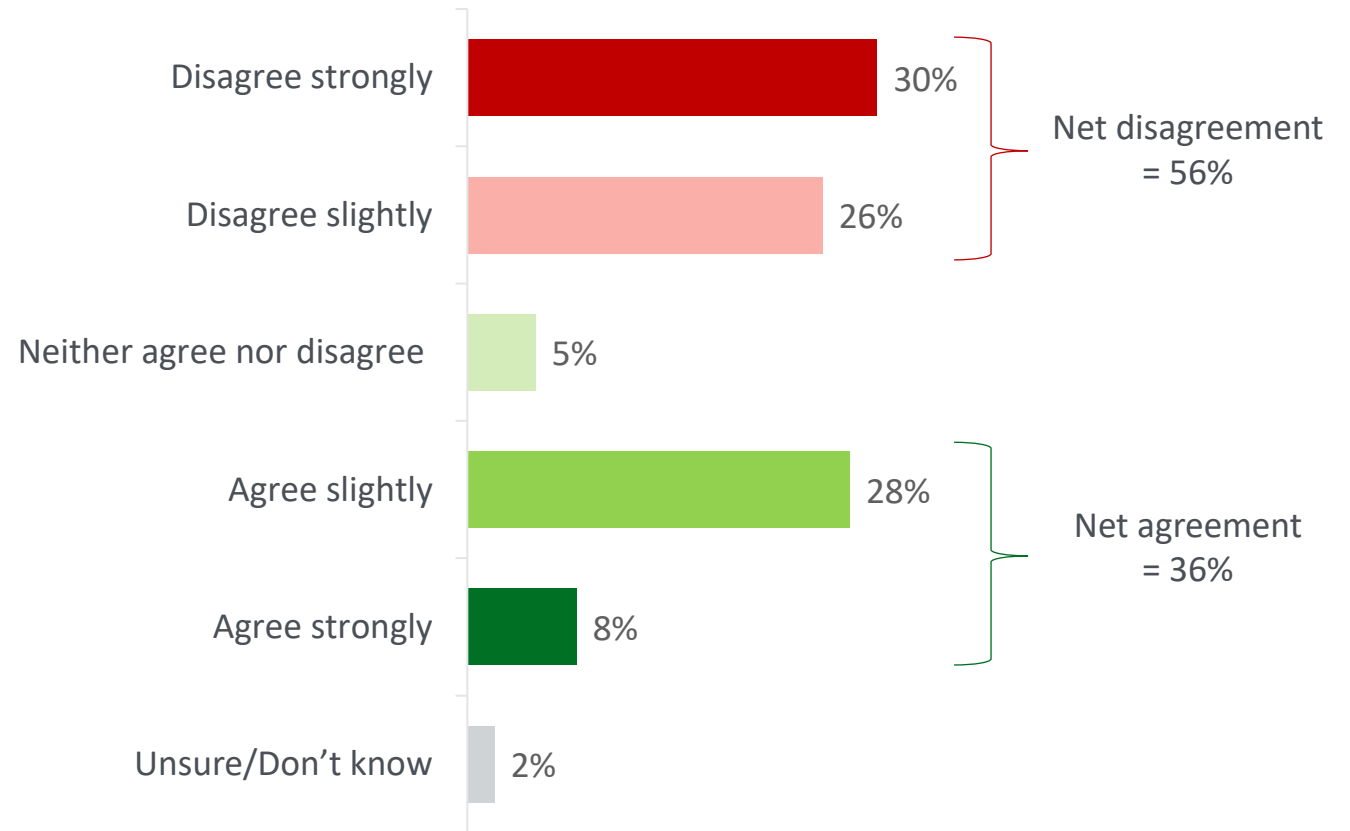
There is lack of consensus around referral routes

- Respondents were also asked if they felt current referral routes were appropriate and timely.

- Opinion was very mixed on this topic, with around a third each answering yes, no, and that they were unsure.

- Similarly, to when asked about provision answering the needs of all clients, opinions varied according to respondents' role:
  - Agreement was higher among those who provide T&M (46% vs 5%)
  - Agreement was also higher among PSP & partner organisation respondents (62%).

Extent current referral routes are thought to be appropriate and timely

35%	33%	33%
Yes	No	Unsure

Q24. Do you think the current routes for referral to voluntary throughcare and mentoring services are appropriate and timely?

Base - total sample (all who provided a response): 171
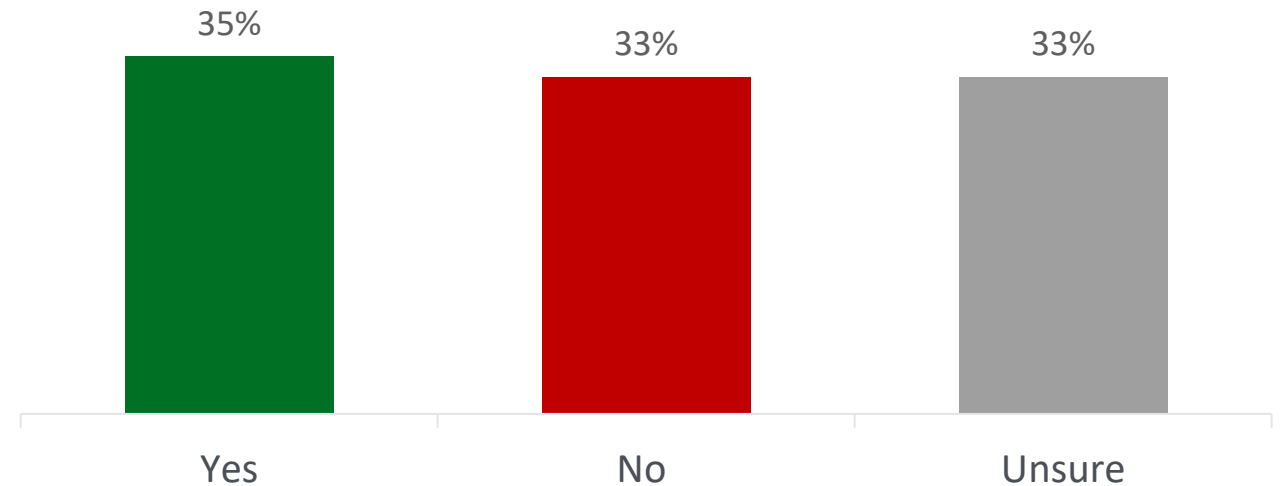
VT&M's person centred/ relationship based approach is valued

- There were many aspects of current VT&M support highlighted as excellent, in particular support being person centred and relationship based.

- The work of mentors with lived experience, and support with housing, were also commented on by around one in five respondents.

- Several of the elements commented on as excellent, were also noted as challenges/being gaps, suggesting provision may be inconsistent across client groups and/or region.

- Alongside positives there were some negative comments, with concerns noted about services struggling to cope with demand and people not receiving help.

Areas where VT&M excels (typed responses grouped into themes)

Theme	%
Person centred/relationship based support	42%
Mentorship/peer support	21%
Housing/homelessness support	20%
Coordination between organisations	16%
Gate liberation/support on release	15%
Help with transition to normal life	14%
Benefits/finance/banking support	14%
Signposting/referrals	13%
Addiction support	13%
Mentions of specific orgs/programmes/providers	13%
Pre release/in prison support	10%
Employment support	9%
Outreach/pro active support	8%
Mental health support	8%
Healthcare support	8%
Trauma informed support	6%
Good support for basic needs (food, clothes etc.)	6%
Preventing reoffending/recidivism	6%
Skills/training/education support	6%
Support for women	6%
Negative comments	17%

37 people opted not to leave a response to this question, selecting the 'unsure/don't know' option instead

Responses below 6% not shown

Base - total sample (all who provided a response): 142

Poor coordination/ communication between services was a top concern

- When asked about gaps in provision, comments were wide ranging rather than being focused on a few areas, indicating there are a complex range of factors which affect provision.

- There was some variation in response across subgroups:
  - PSP/partner organisations were particularly likely to comment on insufficient housing (24%), and mental health support (20%)
  - There were more comments about service provision varying by location (25%), and that overall provision was insufficient to answer need (20%) among those answering as organisations rather than individuals
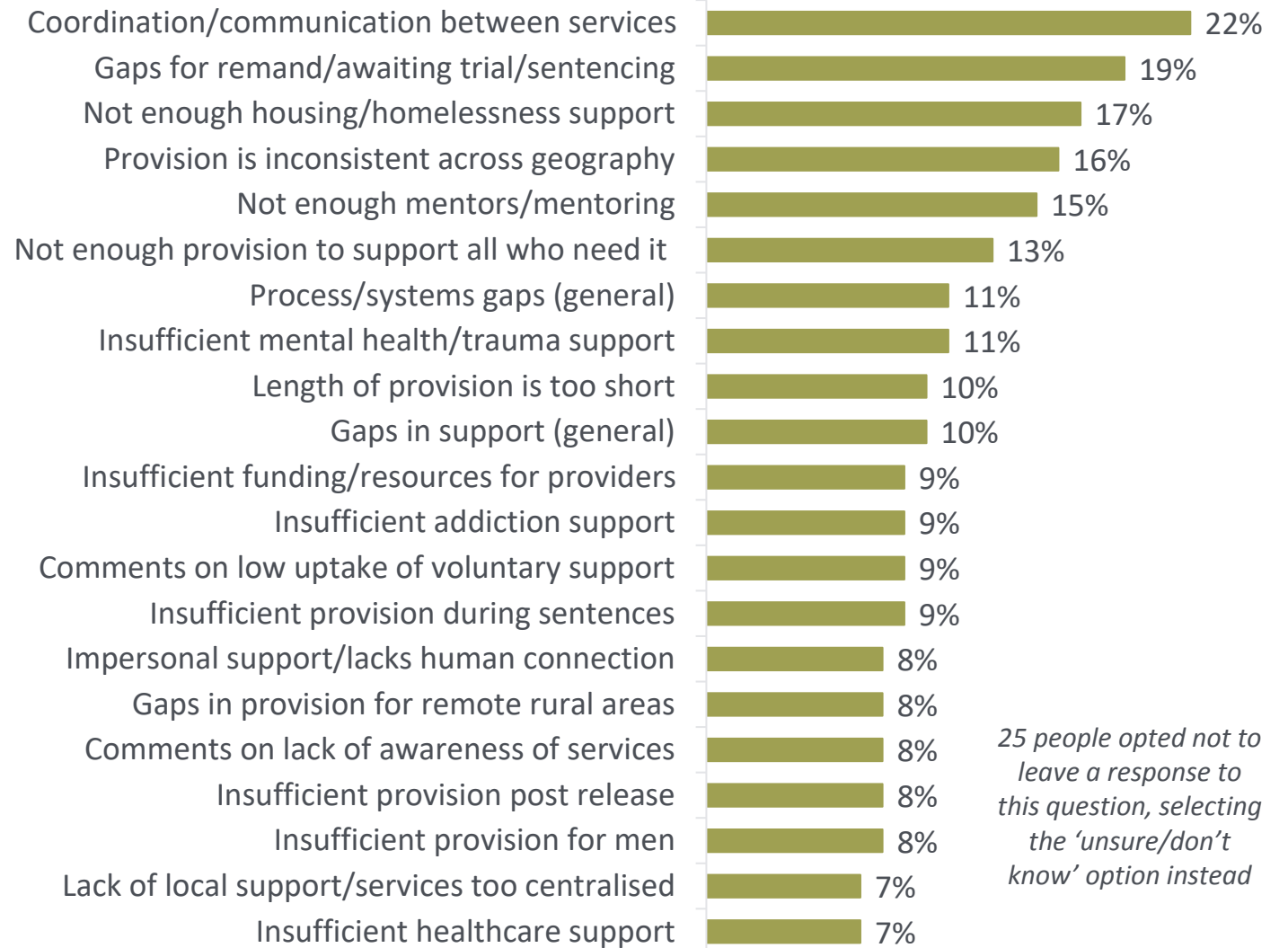 - Those not in a client facing role were more likely than others to comment on low uptake of VT&M (17%), and on a lack of provision for those on remand or awaiting sentencing/trial (30%)
  - T&M providers were particularly likely to comment on the length of provision being too short (15%).

Q6: What, if any, do you think are the current gaps in service provision offered by voluntary throughcare and mentoring support services? Open-ended

Perceived gaps in provision (typed responses grouped into themes)

Theme	%
Coordination/communication between services	22%
Gaps for remand/awaiting trial/sentencing	19%
Not enough housing/homelessness support	17%
Provision is inconsistent across geography	16%
Not enough mentors/mentoring	15%
Not enough provision to support all who need it	13%
Process/systems gaps (general)	11%
Insufficient mental health/trauma support	11%
Length of provision is too short	10%
Gaps in support (general)	10%
Insufficient funding/resources for providers	9%
Insufficient addiction support	9%
Comments on low uptake of voluntary support	9%
Insufficient provision during sentences	9%
Impersonal support/lacks human connection	8%
Gaps in provision for remote rural areas	8%
Comments on lack of awareness of services	8%
Insufficient provision post release	8%
Insufficient provision for men	8%
Lack of local support/services too centralised	7%
Insufficient healthcare support	7%

25 people opted not to leave a response to this question, selecting the 'unsure/don't know' option instead

progressive
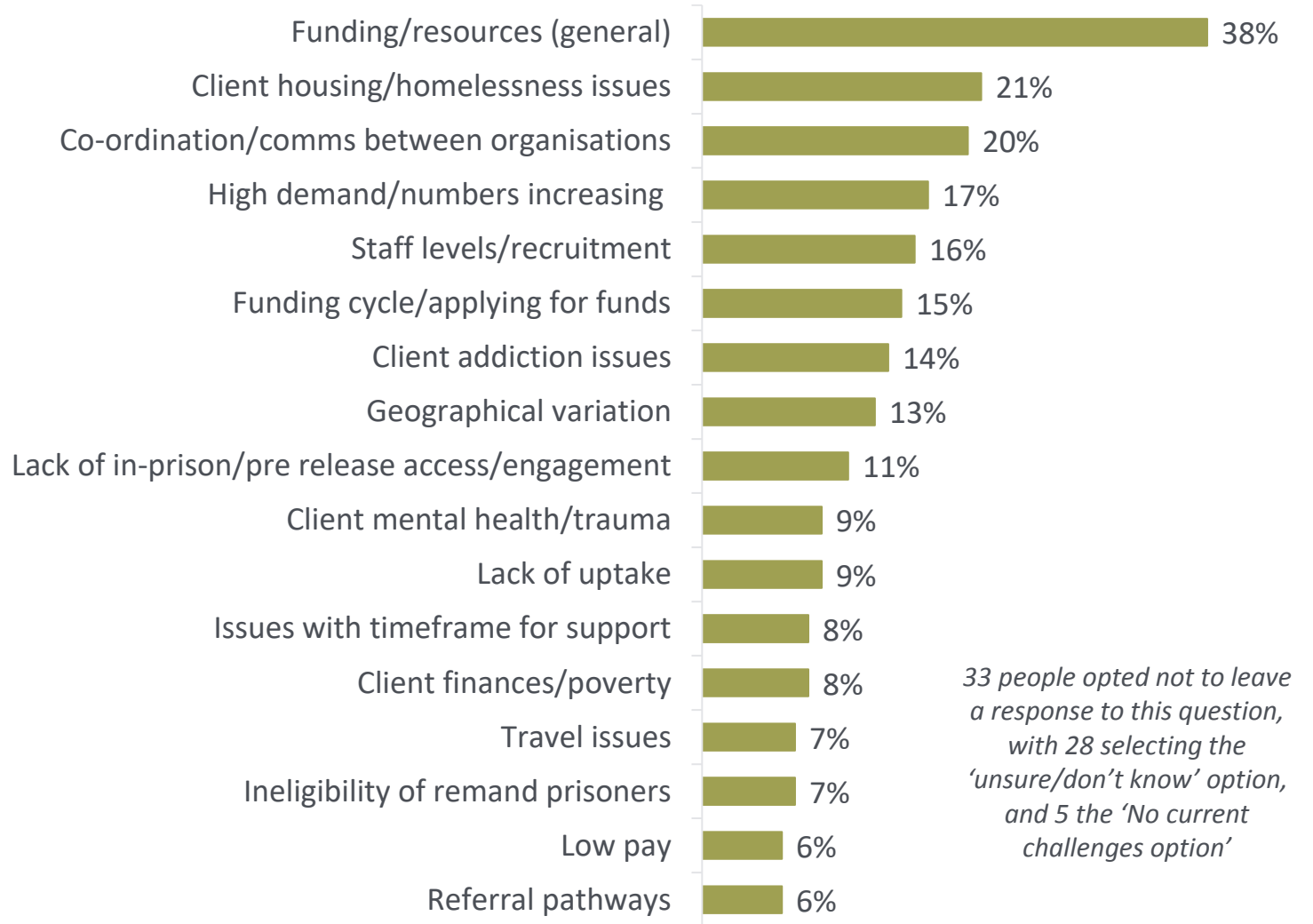
Responses below 7% not shown

Base - total sample (all who provided a response): 172

66

Lack of funding and resources was perceived as a key challenge

- A lack of funding/resources was the main theme in comments when respondents were asked about the current challenges faced by VT&M (38% mentioned this), especially for third sector/charity participants, of whom 62% commented on this.

- In keeping with feedback about gaps in service provision around a fifth commented on poor co-ordination and/or communication between services.

- There were also a number of comments about factors impacting clients directly such as lack of housing and homelessness, addiction (particularly among PSP/partner organisations: 23%), and mental health.

- Those who said they were responding as an organisation were more likely than others to comment on challenges related to funding cycles/applications (26%).

Challenges faced by VT&M services (typed responses grouped into themes)

progressive

Theme	%
Funding/resources (general)	38%
Client housing/homelessness issues	21%
Co-ordination/comms between organisations	20%
High demand/numbers increasing	17%
Staff levels/recruitment	16%
Funding cycle/applying for funds	15%
Client addiction issues	14%
Geographical variation	13%
Lack of in-prison/pre release access/engagement	11%
Client mental health/trauma	9%
Lack of uptake	9%
Issues with timeframe for support	8%
Client finances/poverty	8%
Travel issues	7%
Ineligibility of remand prisoners	7%
Low pay	6%
Referral pathways	6%

33 people opted not to leave a response to this question, with 28 selecting the 'unsure/don't know' option, and 5 the 'No current challenges option'

Responses below 6% not shown
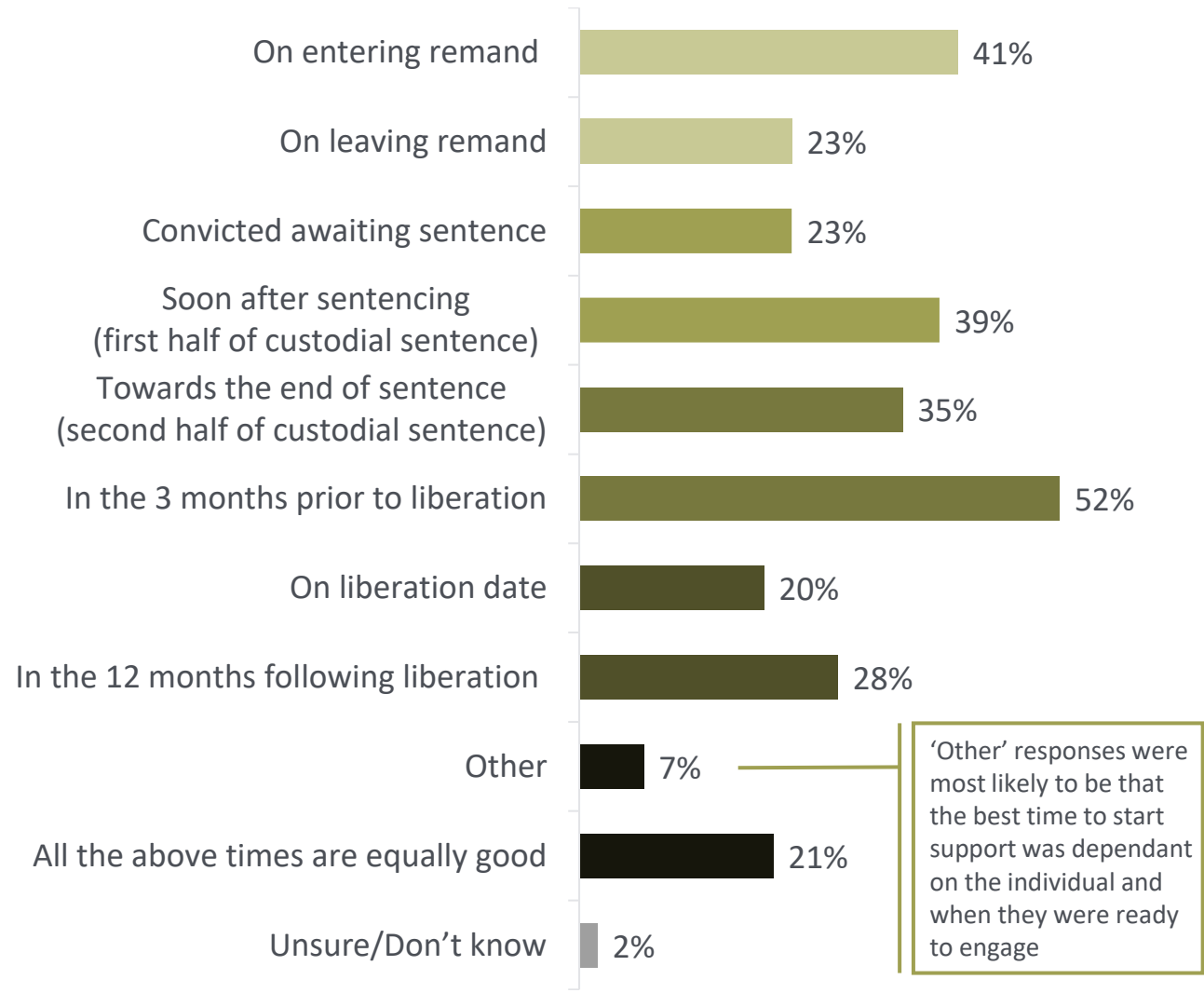
Base - total sample (all who provided a response): 117

Service delivery recommendations

(Questions asked of all respondents OR of those who do not currently provide a throughcare & mentoring service)

The 3 months before liberation are seen as the best time to start VT&M

Best time to start voluntary throughcare & mentoring

progressive

- When asked the best time for VT&M to start most selected a time prior to liberation, however a notable proportion felt that on leaving remand (23%), on liberation (20%), or in the 12 months following liberation (28%), would be the best time to start.

- Those working for an organisation which provides T&M were more likely to select 'in the 3 months prior to liberation' as a good time to start support (58% vs 34% of others).

- Other third sector/charity respondents were more likely than others to say 'on entering remand' (63%) was a good time to start support, as were those <u>not</u> working in a client facing role (55%).

Category	%
On entering remand	41%
On leaving remand	23%
Convicted awaiting sentence	23%
Soon after sentencing (first half of custodial sentence)	39%
Towards the end of sentence (second half of custodial sentence)	35%
In the 3 months prior to liberation	52%
On liberation date	20%
In the 12 months following liberation	28%
Other	7%
All the above times are equally good	21%
Unsure/Don't know	2%

'Other' responses were most likely to be that the best time to start support was dependant on the individual and when they were ready to engage

Q12. At what stage(s) in an individual's sentence do you believe are the best times to commence voluntary throughcare and mentoring support to clients?

Base - total sample (all who provided a response): 181

73

Face to face contact in prisons is considered a key information route

- Two thirds felt service representatives meeting potential clients in prisons was the best way to get information across, with PSP/partner organisations particularly likely to say this (85%).

- When those who currently provide T&M support were asked how their clients typically found out about services word of mouth was the top answer (59% said this was a typical information route), however only around a quarter of respondents thought this was one of the best channels, suggesting there is room to improve how people find out about services.

- Respondents working for organisations who provide T&M services were more likely to say that prisons informing those approaching liberation about services was a good way to inform potential clients (52% vs 24% of other respondents), and were also more likely to say word of mouth was a good information channel (27% vs 10%).

Q25. In your experience what are the best methods of informing potential clients about voluntary throughcare and mentoring support?

Best information routes

Route	%
Service rep attends prison to meet those approaching liberation/on remand	68%
Prison informs those approaching liberation date or currently on remand about services	44%
Service is advertised throughout the prison	41%
Justice social work staff attends prison to meet those approaching liberation/on remand	32%
Service contacts those approaching liberation/currently on remand	29%
Word of mouth	23%
Social worker informs those approaching liberation date or currently on remand	11%
Services advertised in/by specialist services	10%
Service advertised in/by universal services	7%
People who have left prison are informed via a third party	3%
Other	9%
Unsure/Don't know	3%

'Other' responses included:
- comments that a multi channel approach was important to maximise the chance of information reaching all, and at the right time
- Comments stressing the importance of early information provision
- Comments that those with lived experience of support were a good channel for information
- Comments stressing the value of prison based service reps to build relationships and trust
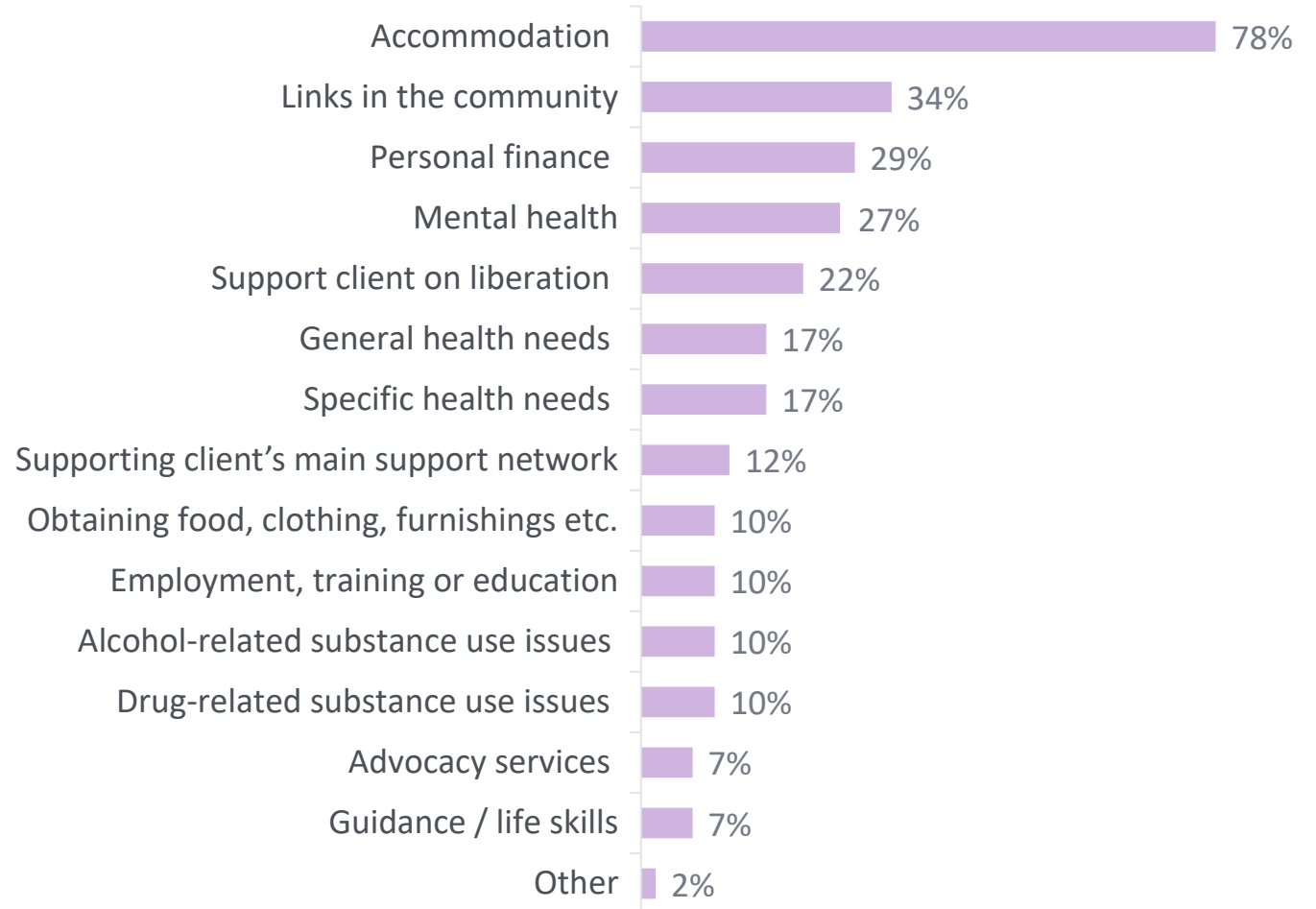
Base - total sample (all who provided a response): 170

progressive

Pre release support with accommodation is seen as critical

Most important support pre release (asked of those who do not currently provide a throughcare & mentoring service only)

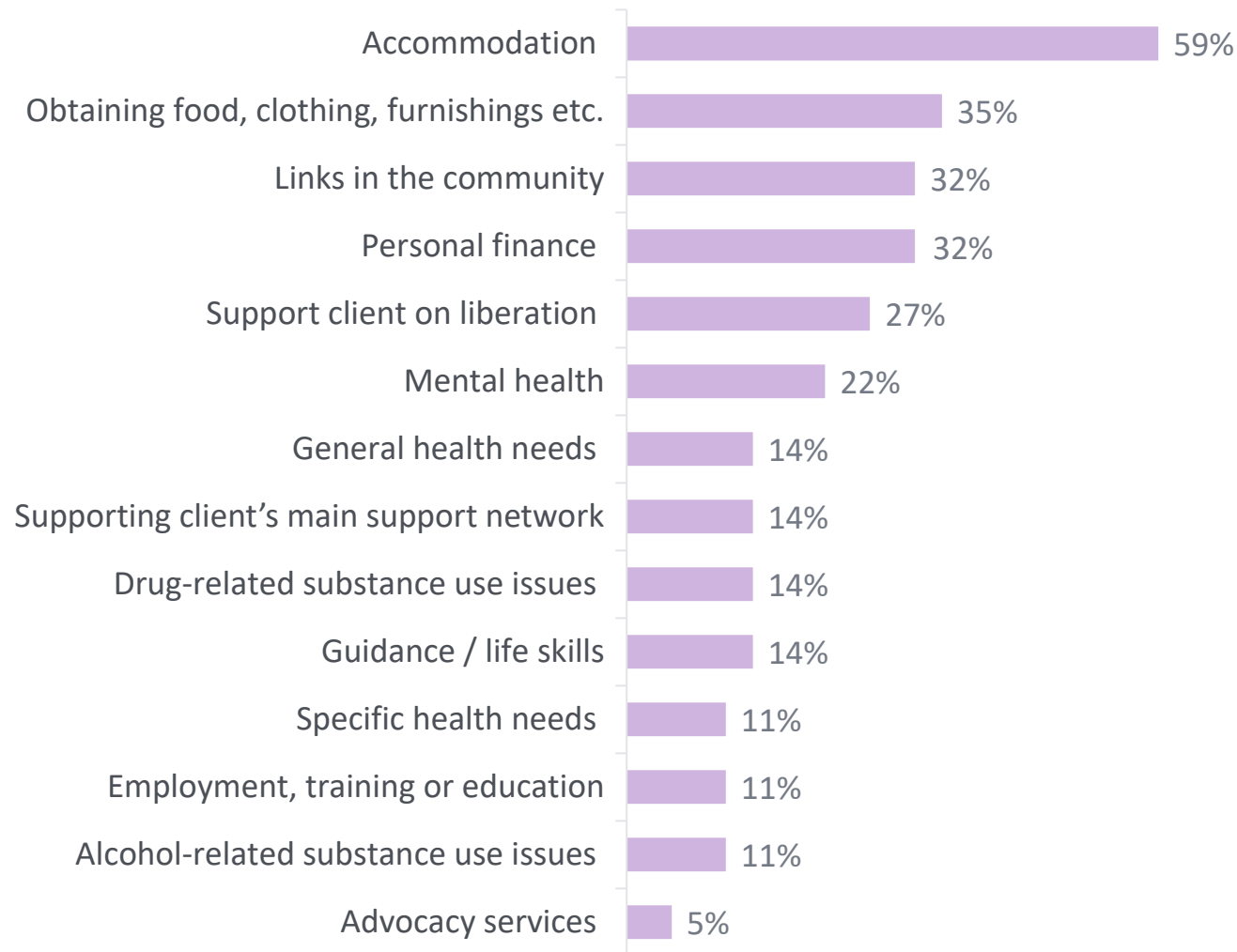- **Almost all, who don't provide T&M services, felt that all the listed services should be made available for sentenced individuals prior to their release (82%)**

- When asked to identify the three most important support options, over three quarters felt accommodation was critical. This is in line with current provision as reported by respondents who work for an organisation which provides a throughcare and mentoring service, of whom 65% said their organisation provided accommodation support for STP clients pre-release, and 31% for those on remand.

- Support with links in the community, personal finance and mental health were seen as the next most important overall.

Category	Percentage
Accommodation	78%
Links in the community	34%
Personal finance	29%
Mental health	27%
Support client on liberation	22%
General health needs	17%
Specific health needs	17%
Supporting client's main support network	12%
Obtaining food, clothing, furnishings etc.	10%
Employment, training or education	10%
Alcohol-related substance use issues	10%
Drug-related substance use issues	10%
Advocacy services	7%
Guidance / life skills	7%
Other	2%

Q29. Of the support options you selected, which are the most important for voluntary throughcare and mentoring services to provide prior to release? (Select top 3)

Base - those who do not provide T&M (all who provided a response): 41

Accommodation was also seen as critical on or after release

- **When asked what support options should be available on or after release three quarters of those who don't provide T&M services said 'all of the above', suggesting there is an expectation that VT&M support should be holistic.**

- When asked to specify the top 3 most important support options accommodation was also considered the most important support option on or after release.

- This is in line with qualitative findings which highlighted accommodation as a critical need, with feedback from many with lived experience suggesting that being in temporary accommodation or hostels on release often contributed to people falling back into negative behaviours such as substance abuse.

- Most other support options were considered in the top three most important by at least some respondents reflecting the diverse needs of the client population.

Q31. Of the support options you selected, which are the most important for voluntary throughcare and mentoring services to provide on or after release from custody? (Select top 3)

Most important support <u>on or after</u> release (asked of those who do not currently provide a throughcare & mentoring service only)
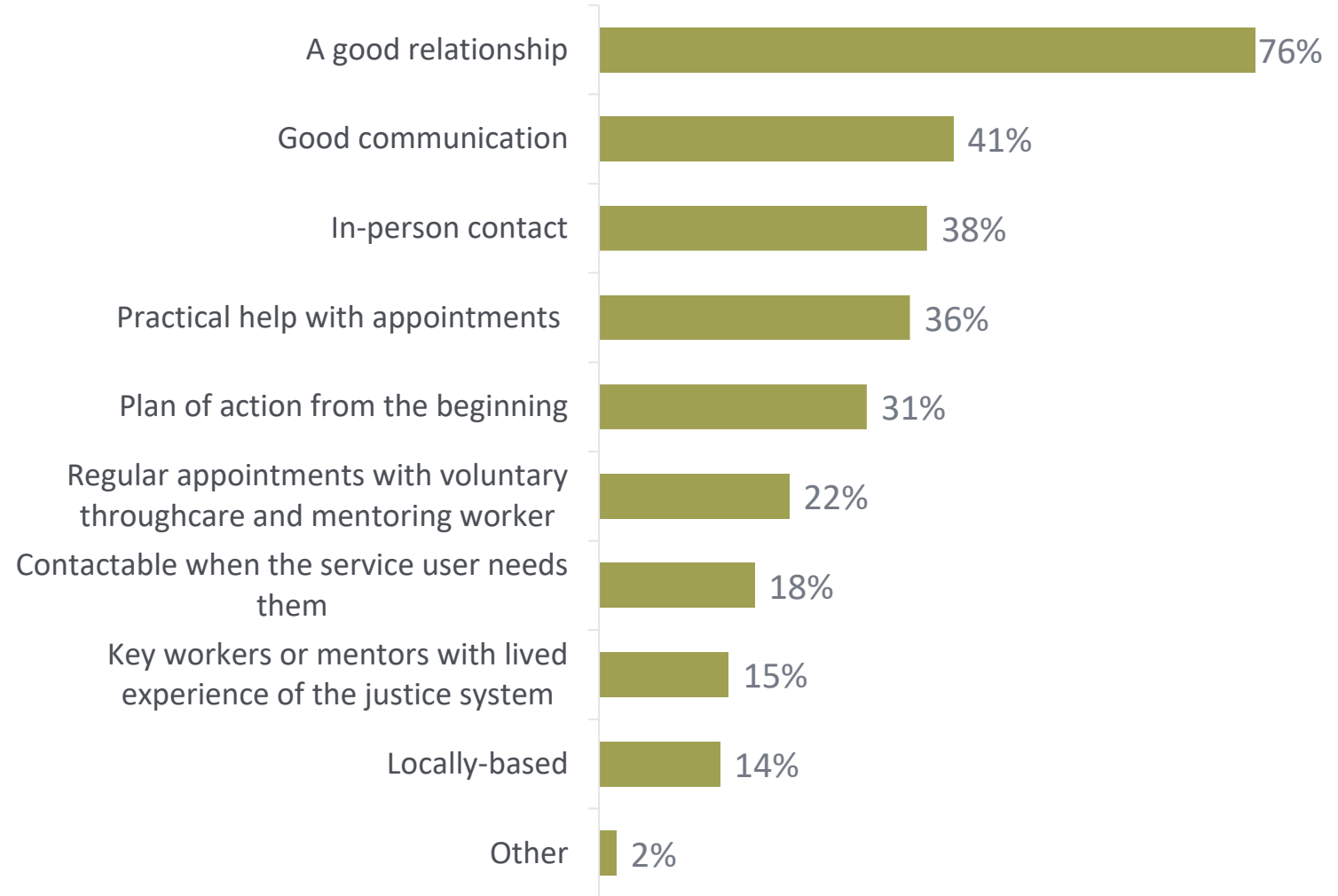
progressive

Support option	%
Accommodation	59%
Obtaining food, clothing, furnishings etc.	35%
Links in the community	32%
Personal finance	32%
Support client on liberation	27%
Mental health	22%
General health needs	14%
Supporting client's main support network	14%
Drug-related substance use issues	14%
Guidance / life skills	14%
Specific health needs	11%
Employment, training or education	11%
Alcohol-related substance use issues	11%
Advocacy services	5%

Base - those who <u>do not</u> provide T&M (all who provided a response): 37

Maintaining engagement is dependent on relationships

Most important aspects in maintaining engagement

- Across the total sample a good relationship was considered the most important element in maintaining client engagement.

- Results are consistent with feedback from qualitative interviews in which the extent to which workers were seen as caring about the individual they were supporting was noted as the most important feature of the relationship.

- Good communication and in-person contact were also important for about two in five.

- Those in a client facing role were more likely than others to say good communication was important (48% vs 28% among those not in a client facing role).

Aspect	Percentage
A good relationship	76%
Good communication	41%
In-person contact	38%
Practical help with appointments	36%
Plan of action from the beginning	31%
Regular appointments with voluntary throughcare and mentoring worker	22%
Contactable when the service user needs them	18%
Key workers or mentors with lived experience of the justice system	15%
Locally-based	14%
Other	2%

Q26. What aspects of a throughcare service are most important in successfully maintaining the engagement with the service user?
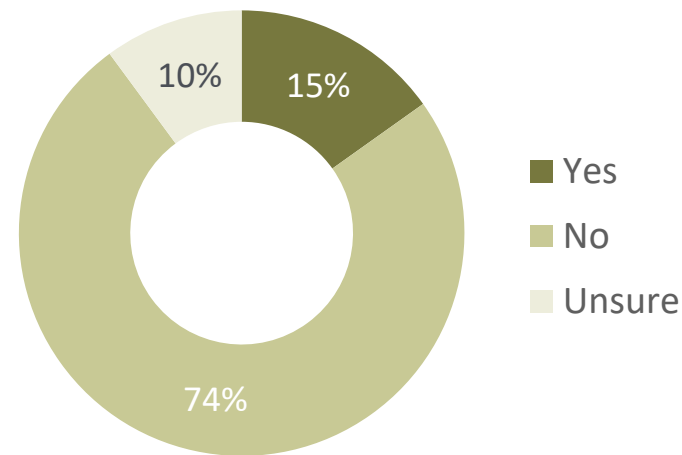
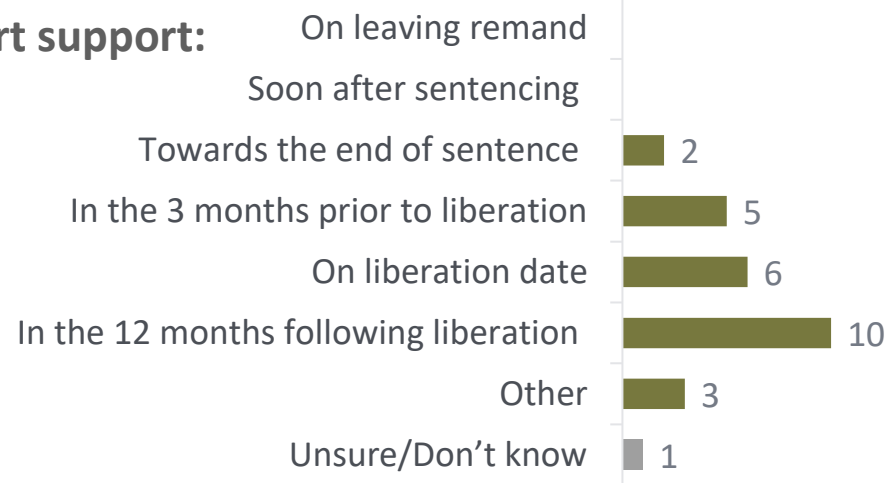**Base - total sample (all who provided a response): 169**

There is little support for a cut-off point for starting VT&M

- Amongst current VT&M providers 46% said there <u>was</u> a cut-off point beyond which VT&M could not be started by their organisation.

- Only 15% of stakeholders overall felt there <u>should be</u> a cut-off point for starting VT&M however.

- Charity/third sector organisation (83%), and LA/HSCP/Gov orgs (90%), were particularly likely to say there should not be a cut off.

- Those who thought a cut-off point should be in place were asked when this should be. The 12 months following liberation was the most common response (10 out of 27 people).

Q13. Do you think there should be a cut-off point beyond which clients can no longer commence voluntary throughcare and mentoring support? &
Q14. What is the latest point that a client should be able to commence voluntary throughcare and mentoring support?

Need for cut-off points beyond which VT&M cannot start?

Legend:
- Yes — 15%
- No — 74%
- Unsure — 10%

Point after which clients should not be able to start support:

Category	Value
On leaving remand	
Soon after sentencing	
Towards the end of sentence	2
In the 3 months prior to liberation	5
On liberation date	6
In the 12 months following liberation	10
Other	3
Unsure/Don't know	1

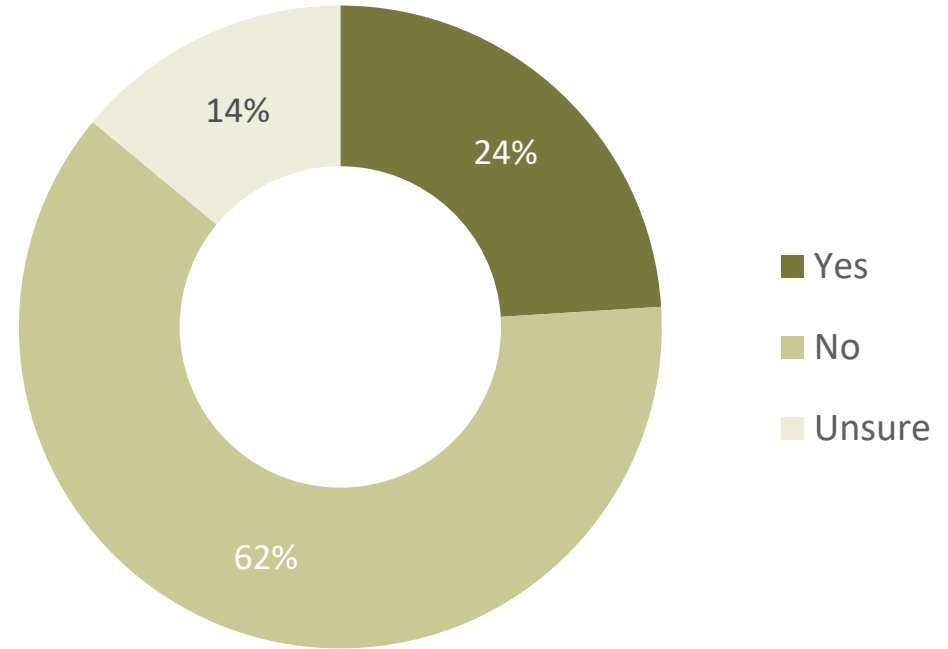**Base - total sample (all who provided a response): 183**
those who think there should be a cut off point (all who provided a response): 27

progressive

A quarter think there should be a maximum amount of time VT&M can be provided

Need for maximum length of time VT&M is provided?

- Just under a quarter said there should be a maximum length of time that VT&M could be provided. This is significantly lower than the proportion of current T&M providers who said there was a maximum length of time T&M was provided within their organisation: 58%.

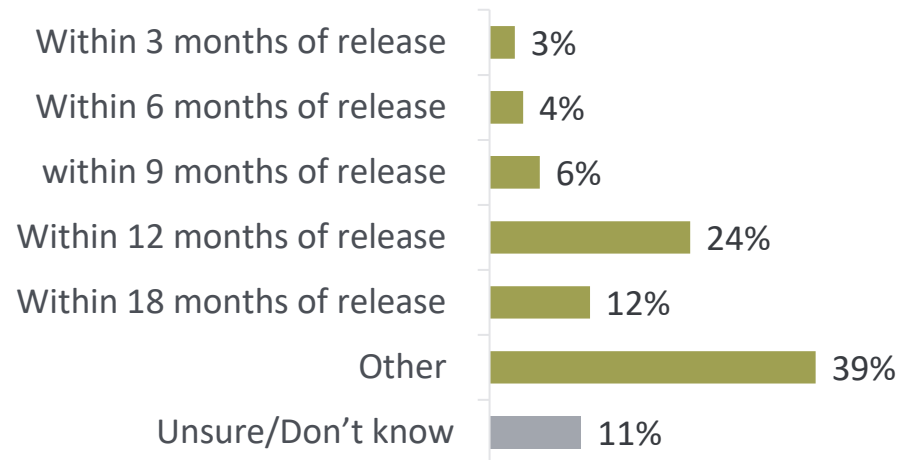- Other charity/third sector respondents were more likely than others to answer 'no' (90%).

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

14%

24%

62%

Q17. Do you think there should there be a maximum length of time in which organisations can provide voluntary throughcare and mentoring support to clients?

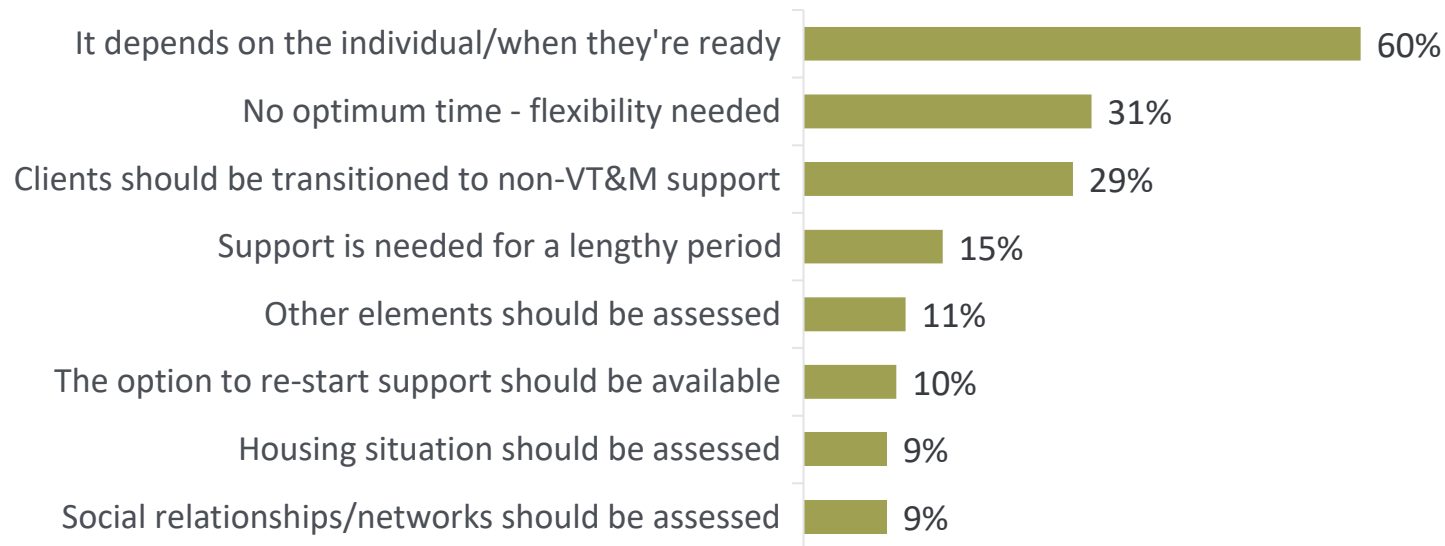**Base - total sample (all who provided a response): 180**

Flexibility was highlighted as important when bringing support to an end

- When asked the best time for VT&M support to come to an end around a quarter said this should be within 12 months of release, with only a minority (13%) thinking it should come to an end earlier.

- Most respondents said an 'other' timeframe would be the most effective however, and when asked what this should be the majority of responses stated that timescales should be based on the individual needs of each client.

- Those who opted to expand on/explain their answer were also likely to specify that decisions should be flexible and made on a case-by-case basis, assessing the client's situation in relation to factors likely to affect them settling into the community such as housing and support networks.

Most effective point VT&M should come to an end

Within 3 months of release	3%
Within 6 months of release	4%
within 9 months of release	6%
Within 12 months of release	24%
Within 18 months of release	12%
Other	39%
Unsure/Don't know	11%

Comments on when VT&M should come to an end:

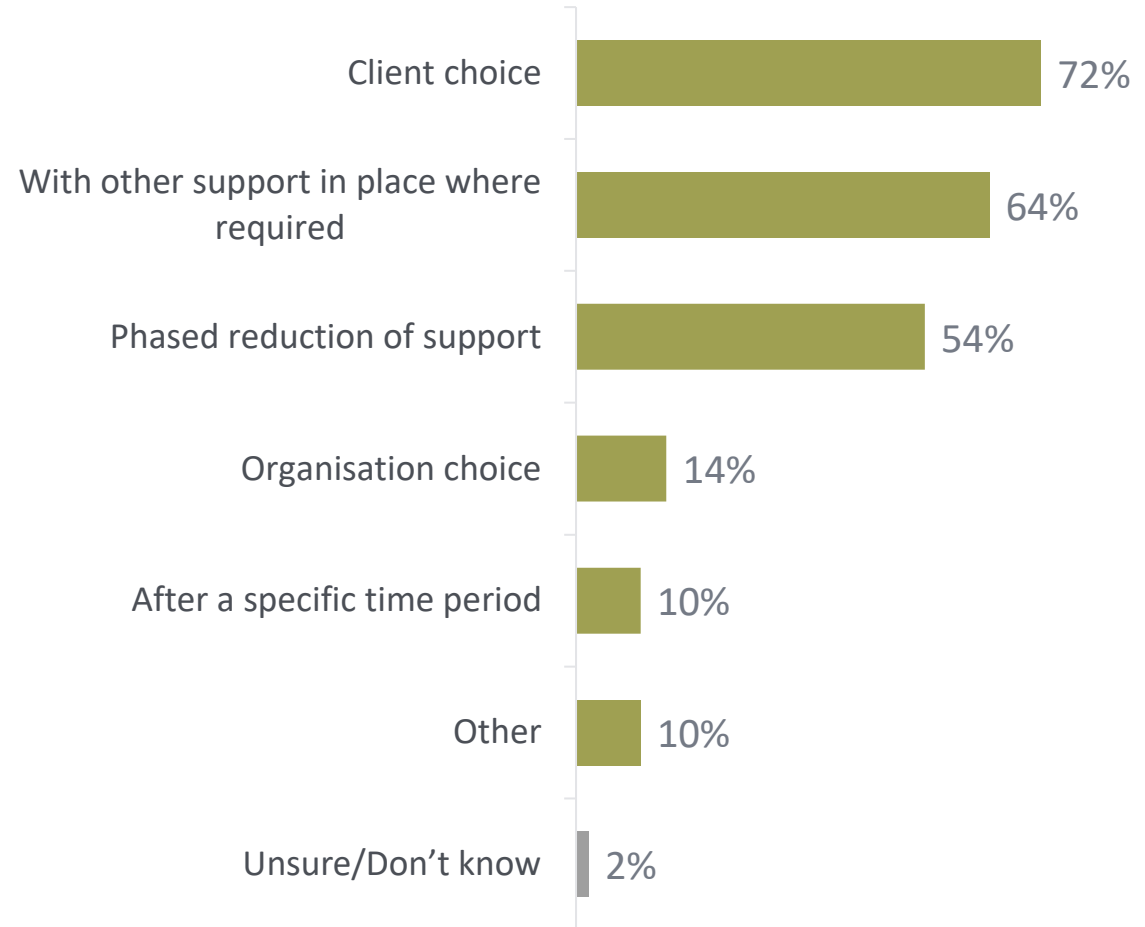|	
It depends on the individual/when they're ready	60%
No optimum time - flexibility needed	31%
Clients should be transitioned to non-VT&M support	29%
Support is needed for a lengthy period	15%
Other elements should be assessed	11%
The option to re-start support should be available	10%
Housing situation should be assessed	9%
Social relationships/networks should be assessed	9%

Q18. When is the most effective point at which voluntary throughcare and mentoring support should come to an end? &
Q18.1. Please use this space to explain/expand on your answer

Responses below 9% not shown   **Base - total sample (all who provided a response): 177/124**   81

Most feel support ending should be determined by client choice

How support should end

- Stakeholders were most likely to say VT&M coming to an end should be the client's choice.

- Over half of respondents also said support should end with other support in place and should be phased out gradually.

- Those in client facing roles more likely than others to say support should end according to organisation choice (19% vs 3% of others).
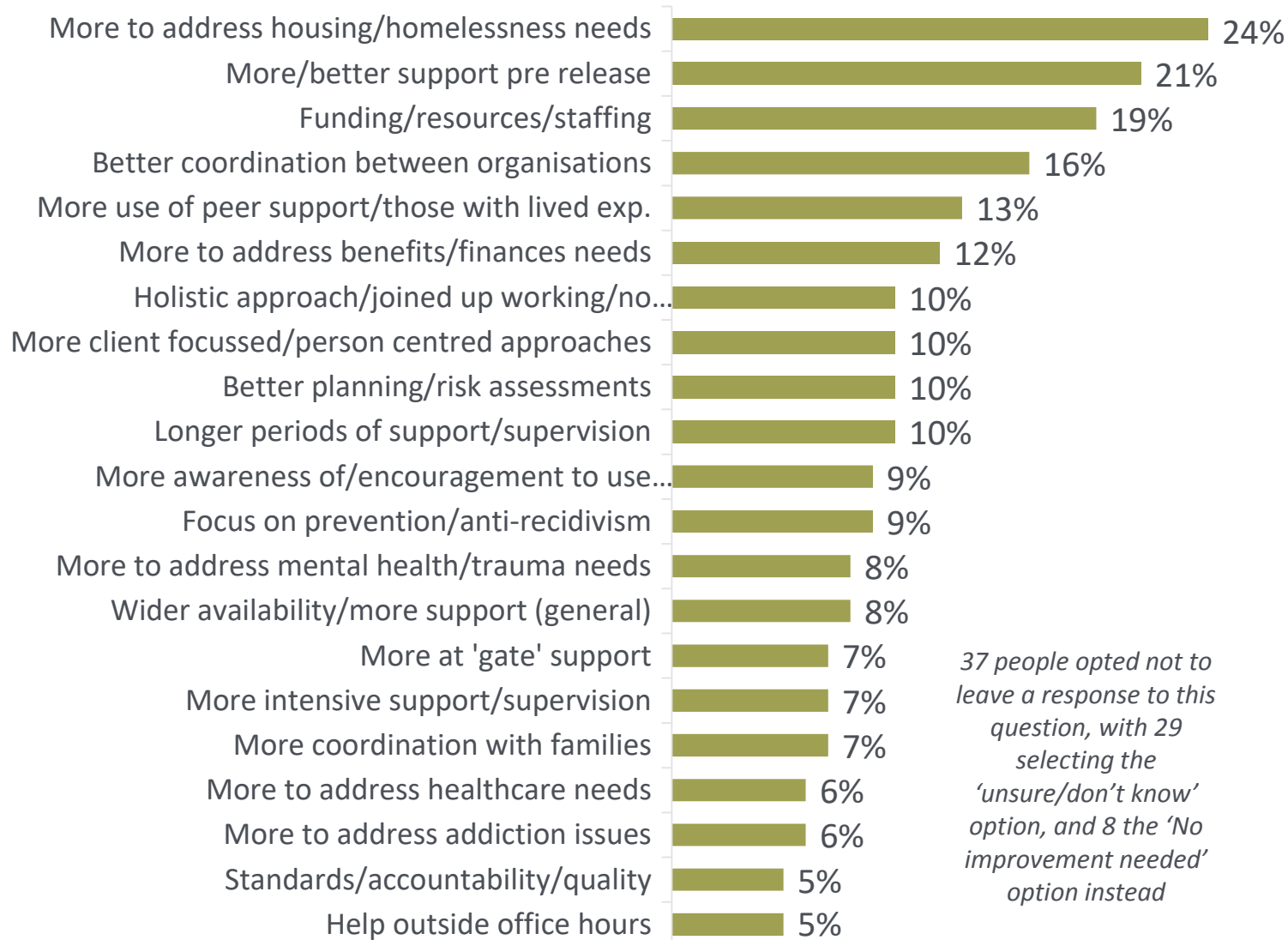

Category	%
Client choice	72%
With other support in place where required	64%
Phased reduction of support	54%
Organisation choice	14%
After a specific time period	10%
Other	10%
Unsure/Don't know	2%

Q20. How should voluntary throughcare and mentoring support come to an end for clients?

82

progressive

Accommodation is a key area where stakeholders feel improvement is needed

- When asked how support could be improved a range of themes were noted across typed in responses.

- Housing/homelessness needs were mentioned by around of quarter of respondents, reflecting the importance of secure accommodation noted across qualitative interviewing and other quantitative findings.

- Pre release support and improved funding/resources/staffing were also mentioned as areas for improvement by around one in five stakeholders.

- Those not working for an organisation that provides T&M were more likely to mention improving awareness of and encouragement to use services (19%), and to suggest more coordination with families (also 19%).

Q35. How could the support provided for people to reintegrate into their community post-release be improved?

How support could be improved (typed responses grouped into themes)

Theme	%
More to address housing/homelessness needs	24%
More/better support pre release	21%
Funding/resources/staffing	19%
Better coordination between organisations	16%
More use of peer support/those with lived exp.	13%
More to address benefits/finances needs	12%
Holistic approach/joined up working/no...	10%
More client focussed/person centred approaches	10%
Better planning/risk assessments	10%
Longer periods of support/supervision	10%
More awareness of/encouragement to use...	9%
Focus on prevention/anti-recidivism	9%
More to address mental health/trauma needs	8%
Wider availability/more support (general)	8%
More at 'gate' support	7%
More intensive support/supervision	7%
More coordination with families	7%
More to address healthcare needs	6%
More to address addiction issues	6%
Standards/accountability/quality	5%
Help outside office hours	5%

37 people opted not to leave a response to this question, with 29 selecting the 'unsure/don't know' option, and 8 the 'No improvement needed' option instead

Responses below 5% not shown

Base - total sample (all who provided a response): 115

Summary and conclusions

Summary and conclusions

Voluntary throughcare and mentoring organisations provide a highly valuable service to their clients, responding to complex individual needs and delivering holistic support to prepare for release from prison and reintegrate into the community. The majority of feedback on support received has been positive; however stakeholders believe that current provision is not meeting the needs of all clients.

Awareness

- Limited awareness of the support available and limited eligibility within the prison population make VT&M significantly harder to access and risks people 'falling through the cracks' as a result, which can lead to an ongoing cycle of reoffending.

- The lack of consistent communication about throughcare services means many rely on word of mouth to hear about it and / or need to ask prison officers about support. This can result in variations in how VT&M is communicated and promoted to individuals.

- Thus, several barriers prevent prisoners from seeking support and proactive outreach from throughcare organisations is needed to increase chances of engagement.

Timely engagement

- Mentors/key workers act as a pillar to help service users navigate life upon release. Developing trust and bonds prior to release is essential to ensure continued engagement with support and to improve outcomes in the long term. Repeated exposure to offers of support during the individual's time in prison will help ensure they are aware of what is on offer at a time they feel ready to engage.

- Release date is crucially important for the individual and has an impact on how the days following release will be. Access to a key worker on this day is important, particularly for those who do not have support networks in place in the community.

- The initial days following relese from prison are often decisive for longer-term outcomes and the presence of throughcare support during this process helps to provide a safety net and motivation to deal with issues both in and outside of prison.

- Offering a breadth of throughcare support is important to meet the complex needs of service users. Ideally, this should last as long as the individual needs it, but otherwise support should continue for at least 3-6 months following release and there should be indications towards further support pathways upon completion of VT&M if needed.

Summary and conclusions

Support provision

- Fulfilling basic needs such as accommodation, travel arrangements, food, clothing etc. are important to ensure the individual can then have the stability and confidence to think about more day-to-day needs e.g. finances, benefits, relationships, appointments, meetings, employment etc.

- Ongoing support that helps the individual have a routine provides structure and a sense of purpose, and helps combat feelings of isolation.

Timing/ length of support provision

- Both qualitative findings and the stakeholder findings suggest that 2-3 months prior to liberation is adequate time to build a relationship and start the support process. This can be particularly challenging for those on remand (females and young people) due to the uncertainty of their release date and length of time they have in prison and therefore they can find out about support too late or be offered it when there is very limited time to plan for their release.

- Stakeholders findings suggest that the end of support should be based on individual needs instead of a set time period, particularly for vulnerable individuals. Typically for just under a third it tends to end by client choice anyway.

Remand individuals

- It is understood that males on remand are not currently catered for via VT&M support. Findings suggest that with increasing lengths of remand periods this audience do have a need for VT&M support services as they currently feel 'left in limbo'. They also face the challenge of sourcing and engaging with other essential services with no or little support.

- Females and young people on remand described the same benefits to receiving VT&M, and the same concerns in the run up to release, as those on STP suggesting needs are very closely aligned. However those on remand faced the additional challenge of not always knowing court / release dates, making forward planning more difficult.

Relationship with other services

- Relationships between prisons and support providers is key in ensuring services are communicated to as providers would wish them to be.

- Research suggests many have complex needs which may require multi-agency cooperation, however stakeholder findings suggest coordination between services is an area for improvement, with both duplication of services and people 'falling through the cracks' a risk.

Summary and conclusions

Lack of funding/resource

- Lack of funding and resources were considered key challenges faced by services, with feedback covering throughcare, prison and essential services. Increasing awareness of the service to ensure all those eligible have access to the service will only exacerbate this further and something to consider for future models of provision.

Accessibility/Location

- Feedback indicated that there is a lack of access to services in some locations, with a general variation in what is available commented on. Stakeholder findings suggested that more remote locations were more poorly served than urban areas.

- Proximity to services was noted as impacting access, particularly for people who are being held at prison establishments that are not local to them and/or the services that are supporting them; for example for individuals in prison at Grampian who had key workers based in Inverness. In turn this was found to impact understanding of services and next steps.

- Support services being local to the individual does help with accessing the services; however it was noted that some key workers have travelled long distances to ensure individuals were provided with support.

Other differences by sub group
- Research did not identify clear differences between the experiences of males and females however this is likely to have been impacted by the small sample size and other factors affecting experiences such as whether participants were serving STPs or on remand. There was some indication however that male participants were more likely to express finding it harder to reach out / be open with how they are feeling, impacting their likelihood to seek support.

- Analysis of stakeholder survey results by organisation type showed other third sector/charity organisations were likely to be main providers of support for those on remand. PSP & partner organisations and others who provide a throughcare and mentoring service were more positive about provision, though many still do not feel the needs of all clients are being met. The main gaps identified by stakeholders were related to communication/coordination between services, eligibility gaps for those on remand or awaiting trial or sentencing, or availability of essential services such as housing and mental health support, both noted by respondents from PSP/partner organisations in particular.

Recommendations

While funding and resource constraints may make some recommendations challenging to put in place, feedback suggests a number of key elements that would help to extend the reach of VT&M and achieve positive outcomes for those eligible for support; and which should be borne in mind when reviewing future models of provision:

- Closer relationships with prisons would help VT&M services to shape the timings and format of communications, in turn improving awareness and understanding of what help is available.

- Inform prisoners about voluntary throughcare and mentoring support upon entry to prison and throughout sentence and clarify what is on offer, who offers the support, how it could benefit them, when they can access it.

- Males on remand have the same needs as those on a short-term sentence and therefore should be offered VT&M support.

- From a client's perspective the name of the support provided is not important, it is the actual support provided that is; however how the support is referred to may be more important to stakeholders and help clarify what VT&M covers.

- Establish initial face-to-face meetings between mentors and service users at least 2-3 months before release and organise regular meetings before release to allow time to sort housing and finances and to develop a relationship prior to release.

- Co-ordinate and communicate with other essential services to ensure the provision of accommodation, travel, finances, medical needs etc.

- Communicate with essential services to support with accommodation provision that is secure, long term and meets the needs of the individual. A system should be put in place (where possible) to avoid certain 'at risk' locations for individual or stays in hostels for those with addictions.

- Provide intensive support on the day of and immediately following release (especially for those who are most vulnerable). Organise travel arrangements, sort belongings and initial care packages and ensure any issues are quickly resolved.

- Ensure mentors are highly flexible around service users' needs with regular contact through meetings and phone calls but balancing this with the necessary boundaries to ensure mentor safety and appropriate working hours.

- Support service users to develop structure and routine in their lives whether it be through work, education or training, volunteering, meetings or something else.

- Offer VT&M to as many prisoners as possible and encourage uptake through direct outreach to individuals. For those who are not eligible, ensure they know what other support may be available to them.

Thank you

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Appendix 1 – additional detail from professional stakeholder survey open ended responses

Geography

- A common theme of feedback relating to geography was that rural and island locations were more poorly served than urban areas (and the central belt in particular). Comments noted both that there were less agencies and services in rural and island areas, and that access to them could be more difficult (due to the time and/or cost of travel). Services not being within easy reach of those being supported was described as a potential barrier to encouraging and maintaining engagement.

- Large geographical areas which may be covered by a small number of workers due to low population numbers was also commented on as problematic, and it was noted that if a significant amount of time was taken up travelling, this meant less time with those needing support.

- Proximity was also noted as an issue for people being held in prisons that weren't local to them or to services that were supporting them, also resulting in reduced ease of access.

…..There are also limited voluntary or third sector agencies working in A&B as there is no main centre of population and service users can be spread in small numbers across the whole area….
- Social work response

…Geographically services in the Highlands have a large area to cover, and travelling to different localities should be taken into consideration from a resource point of view the amount of driving before you even see the individual….
- Other charity/third sector response

…it has been really pretty bad - partly due to the distance and complications of the Clacks prison population mainly being based in Low Moss and Barlinnie and not at Glenochil. I know this is a difficult issue to solve - but there needs to be a commissioned service within Clacks to meet the needs of the local people - having an extended contract from a Glasgow-based org is not suitable…
- Community Justice Partnership response

Geography

- Inconsistency across geography was noted in 16% of comments when respondents were asked about gaps in VT&M service provision. Across this question, and in comments throughout the survey, many general references were made to regional variation and a 'postcode lottery' of support without giving specific detail. This suggests many see this as a widely recognised feature of the throughcare and mentoring landscape.

- Feedback on regional variation included comments on essential services and prison services as well as on VT&M services directly. Varying levels of availability and of quality of services were both commented on, as was variation in systems and processes which could impact on service users' experiences.

- There were a wide range of comments about specific services in different areas, with no single area emerging as being seen as performing particularly poorly, or particularly well.

- Some specific examples of good practice were highlighted, including:
  - Fortnightly Allocations meetings discussing prisoner support needs prior to their release in Midlothian
  - Grampian Case Management Board which was noted as a good forum for information sharing and identifying appropriate services and workers.

I think it is a postcode lottery; some prisons and some local providers are better than others
- Prison establishment response

...in North Lanarkshire there is no support at all for homeless until they are released and have to declare homeless on the day, I think that it should be the same as SLC and Glasgow Council.
- PSP/partner organisation response

...Some prisons provide methadone on morning of liberation while others don't this can become a big problem throughout an already difficult day.
- PSP/partner organisation response

...Moving On supports young men aged 16-24 but only across 5 geographical areas (Renfrewshire, Inverclyde, East Ayrshire, Highlands and Glasgow)...
- Prison establishment response

...There doesn't seem to be support in place for people in HMP Edinburgh outside of Heavy Sound...
- Other charity/third sector response

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Gender

- Across survey responses there were a number of comments underlining gender as a specific need and stressing the importance of providing gender specific services.

- In particular several providers working with women described women with justice experience as an excluded group, often with complex needs relating to trauma, domestic abuse and/or addiction.

- A number of comments included positive feedback for Shine services and a few respondents compared support for women favourably compared to that available for men, most often with reference to a lack of support available for males on remand.

- When asked to identify client groups that require a more tailored support package, several highlighted trans and non-binary service users, noting a need for gender sensitive support.

Gender specific services are key - we need to maintain a female (identify as female) and male (identify as male) specific services
- PSP/partner organisation response

I think our local experience is consistency of support and mentors (particularly Shine) and how women being released (or community referrals at risk of breach) can re-engage with a mentor they know and have engaged with previously
- Social work response

It feels unequal at present between males and females. For females, we do have a great SHINE service which assists with women and this has worked well for a number of years. We also have a specific mentoring post for females via SACRO. There is no service replicated for men.
- Social work response

We would like to highlight the gaps in provision regarding Trans young people, placements for sentence and accessibility of getting the right peer group support.
- Other charity/third sector response

Family

- In line with qualitative interviewing, feedback included a number of comments underlining the potential of family support to positively influence outcomes for those leaving prison.

- Most comments on providing support to the families of those in prison were made when respondents were asked about how VT&M could be improved:– including family members in plans for resettling into the community was seen as a way of increasing the likelihood of the person engaging with those plans, contributing to successful outcomes.

- A few comments were made that availability of family support was inconsistent across different areas however.

- Parents were also identified as a group with needs requiring a more tailored support package by several respondents.

…Those around the person (family, friends etc) should be included so they are aware and can help with encouraging uptake of support
- PSP/partner organisation response

We feel that parents need specific supports. This can be around child protection processes, family functioning, education and parenting
- PSP/partner organisation response

Support needs to be more universal, in that specialisms such as whole family support or employability support should be available across all local authority areas
- PSP/partner organisation response

…Positive family contact means greater likelihood of accommodation, social support, financial support, and links to employment, bearing in mind that the family may need support in their own right to provide this.
- PSP/partner organisation response

…Families are often not included in planning for release but absolutely must be if the person in prison intends to depend upon them for support in any way after release.
- PSP/partner organisation response

Remand

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- Across open ended responses there were a number of comments about support for people on remand, in particular when asked about gaps in current VT&M provision (19% of comments in answer to this question cited provision for remand/awaiting trial/sentencing as a gap, the second most common theme in responses).

- Mirroring qualitative findings, feedback was that males on remand often faced similar challenges to those serving short term sentences but were disadvantaged as they did not have the offer of VT&M.

- Remand was also described as particularly challenging due to the uncertainty of what was going to happen, and because of short notice liberations, making preparing for release and providing timely support more difficult.

Remand is the most unpredictable place for someone to be as they get lost in the system. People need embedded Mentor in the remand hall or a staff single point of contact (SPOC) to inform when someone is liberated without prior notice.
- Other charity/third sector response

I believe that remand customers should have the offer of Throughcare support to allow them to benefit from the assistance and guidance from a mentor. Often, the challenges faced by a customer following period spend on remand replicate those of a customer being released from a sentence, so I fear that remand customers leave prison with housing issues, broken relationships, financial concerns and a host of other primary needs, but currently have to tackle this alone or with very limited support.
- PSP/partner organisation response

Remands, remands, remands! Remands and those released from court with backdated sentences desperately need throughcare support
- Prison establishment response

Complex needs

- Comments mentioned a range of issues that may affect the type and level of support people needed.

- The issues that were mentioned most across the research were addiction and poor mental health, however a range of other factors were also commented on as requiring a more tailored support package including:
  - Trauma experienced individuals & those with Adverse Childhood Experiences
  - Care experienced individuals
  - Neuro-diverse individuals with ADHD and autism noted in particular
  - People with learning disabilities.

- These factors were noted as potential challenges to engagement with services, and as factors meaning people may need high levels of support, particularly if dealing with several of these issues.

ADHD is over represented in the judicial system. 5% of the population would meet the diagnostic criteria for the condition but the stats are 25% adult male prison population 42% young offenders. That's from 5% of the public. There is clearly a huge disconnect and poor understanding of what ADHD is...
- Other charity/third sector response

People with ASN, cannot read or write or have difficulties with communication skills miss out as service leaflets and people in prison completing a self referral through a links form is a complete barrier for people. If the service was opt out, everyone would be seen, spoken with about the service and what the service can offer. At this point if they don't want it they can say no but it is an informed choice..
- PSP/partner organisation response

[challenges are] *Volume, resources, stigma, variety of skill set (a group of people with masked need/ disability/ complex and multi faceted presentations, adverse child hood experiences, substance issues, mental health and autism challenges etc).*
- Other charity/third sector response

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