



Service User Survey 2015 – Headline Results

Background

Objective 1 of the PBNI Business Plan 2015/16 is to develop and implement a strategic approach to Service User engagement that better informs Probation Practice. One of the actions to achieve this objective was to undertake a survey of offenders. This statistical brief highlights the main findings from this survey.

Methodology

The survey was conducted using a hard-copy questionnaire made available to offenders attending for supervision appointments in all PBNI community offices over a two week period in October 2015. Those attending offices for completion of a Pre-Sentence Report, community service or programme session were excluded from the survey.

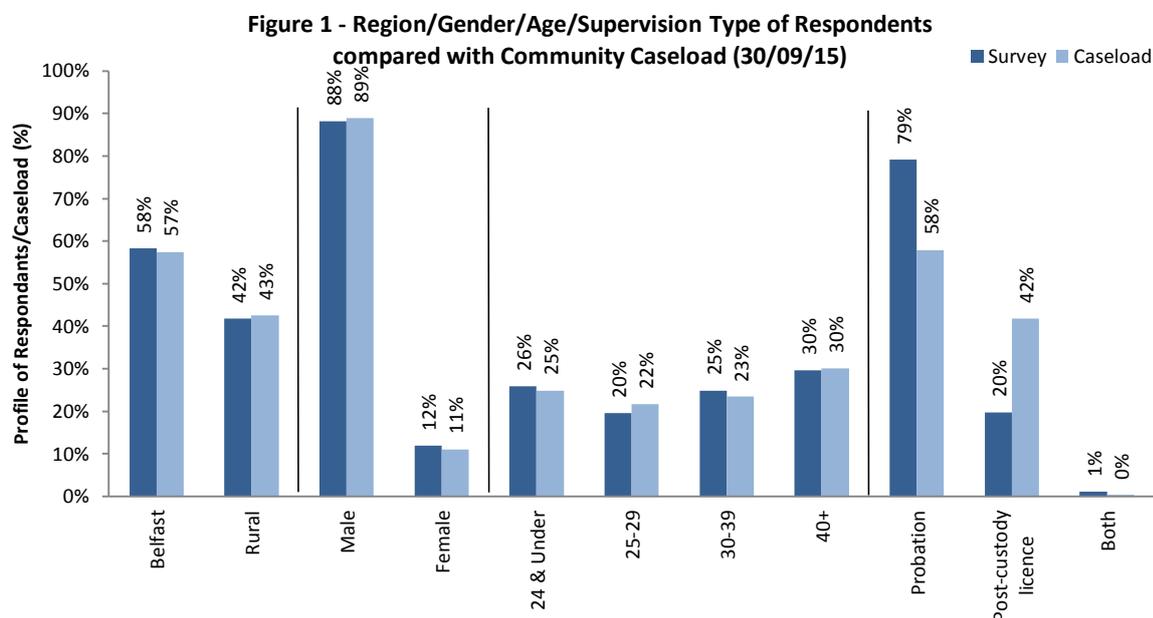
Questionnaires were provided by an administrative member of staff, to be completed by service users before meeting with their Probation Officer. It was estimated that approximately 1,700 individuals would be eligible to complete the survey. A total of 666 completed returns were achieved, resulting in an estimated response rate of 40%. The age, gender and region (Belfast/Rural) profile of the achieved sample was in line with that of the total caseload.

Key Findings

- Findings from the survey were extremely positive, with the vast majority of respondents (87%) satisfied with the service they have received from PBNI.
- In terms of the impact that the relationship with their supervising Probation Officer has made on respondents,
 - 83% agreed that it had a positive impact on their behaviour,
 - 87% agreed that their Probation Officer had made them realise that change was possible, and
 - 92% agreed that they now think more before acting.
- More than three quarters of respondents (78%) indicated that they found it easy to get to their Probation Office and a similar proportion (75%) felt that the frequency with which they met their Probation Officer was about right. It should be noted that approximately 1 in 10 (11%) respondents who indicated they have a disability did not find it easy to get to their Probation Office, compared with just 2% of respondents with no disability.
- Just over two-fifths of respondents (42%) indicated that they did not know if there was a case plan for what they would achieve by the end of their probation/ licence, with a further 12% saying that they did not have a case plan. It should be borne in mind however that 85% of respondents agreed that their Probation Officer has set out clearly what they are expected to achieve.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Figure 1 compares the demographic profile of the survey respondents with the demographic profile of those individuals on the PBNI community caseload at 30 September 2015 who would have been eligible to complete a survey.



The profile of survey respondents by gender, age and region were in line with the PBNI community caseload at 30 September 2015.

Respondents were asked if they were currently on probation or on a post-custody licence and 79% of respondents indicated that they were currently on probation with 20% stating they were on post-custody licence. These responses are not representative of the eligible individuals on the PBNI community caseload at 30 September (58% probation, 42% post-custody licence). This may well have been due to a lack of understanding of the question on the respondents' part, and feedback from some survey administrators indicated that this was an issue.

More than two fifths (43%) of respondents indicated that they had been on probation or post-custody licence before. This proportion is representative of the PBNI community caseload at 30 September 2015 who have previously been supervised either on a community order or post custody licence (also 43%).

Equality Profile of Respondents

The questionnaire included questions to assist in gathering some Section 75¹ characteristics of survey respondents. Table 1 overleaf presents the proportion of respondents by disability, religious belief and ethnicity. The table shows that approximately one-third of survey respondents (35%) indicated that they had a Mental Health Condition, with a further 12% noting a Learning Disability/ Difficulty. Half of respondents (50%) identified as Roman Catholic, 35% as Protestant, with a further 10% indicating that they had no religious belief. In terms of ethnicity, almost all respondents (98%) were White.

¹ Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 placed a statutory obligation on public authorities in carrying out their various functions, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity across a range of equality groupings.

Table 1: Disability, Religion and Ethnicity Profile of Survey Respondents

Demography		N	%
Disability (n=608)	None	314	52%
	Physical Impairment	51	8%
	Mental Health Condition	210	35%
	Learning Disability / Difficulty	74	12%
	Sensory Impairment	9	1%
	Long Term Illness	68	11%
	Other	22	4%
Religion (n=614)	Roman Catholic	310	50%
	Protestant	216	35%
	Other	26	4%
	None	62	10%
Ethnicity (n=623)	White	609	98%
	Other	14	2%

Survey Results – YOUR TIME ON PROBATION

Getting to your Probation Office

More than three quarters (78%) of respondents found it easy² to get to their Probation Office, 16% stated it was neither easy nor inconvenient and 6% (41 respondents) did not find it easy to get to their Probation Office. Approximately 1 in 10 (11%) respondents who indicated they have a disability did not find it easy to get to their Probation Office, compared with just 2% of respondents with no disability.

Home Visits

Three quarters (76%) of respondents indicated that their Probation Officer had visited them at home, while 24% indicated that they had not been visited at home by their Probation Officer.

Frequency and Duration of Supervision

Figures 2 and 3 below set out the frequency and duration of respondents’ supervision sessions.

Figure 2: How often do you see your probation officer at the moment?

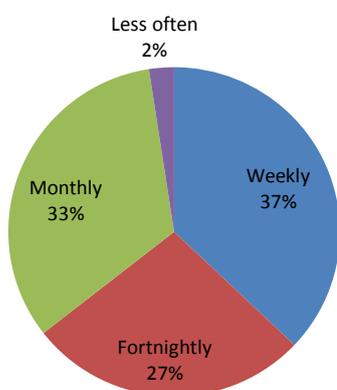
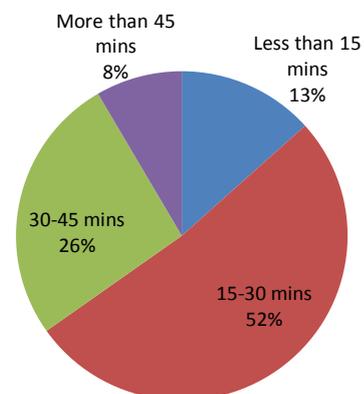


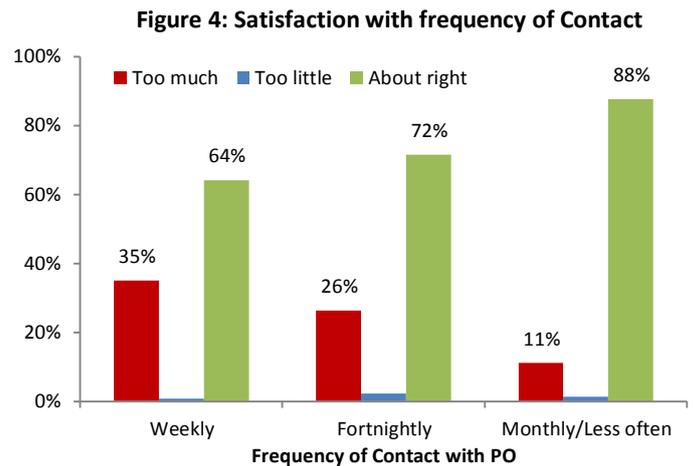
Figure 3: How long would your normal supervision session last for?



² Very Easy/ Easy.

Overall, three quarters (75%) of respondents felt that the frequency with which they met with their Probation Officer was about right and almost one quarter (24%) felt that they met with their Probation Officer too much.

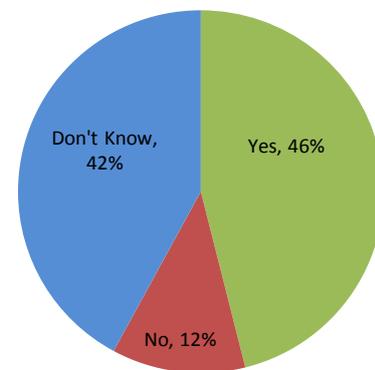
Figure 4 shows that satisfaction with the level of contact increases as frequency decreases, from 64% where contact is weekly to 88% where it is monthly/less often.



Case Plans

Figure 5 shows that just over two-fifths of respondents (42%) indicated that they did not know if there was a case plan for what they would achieve by the end of their probation/ licence, with a further 12% saying that they did not have a case plan.

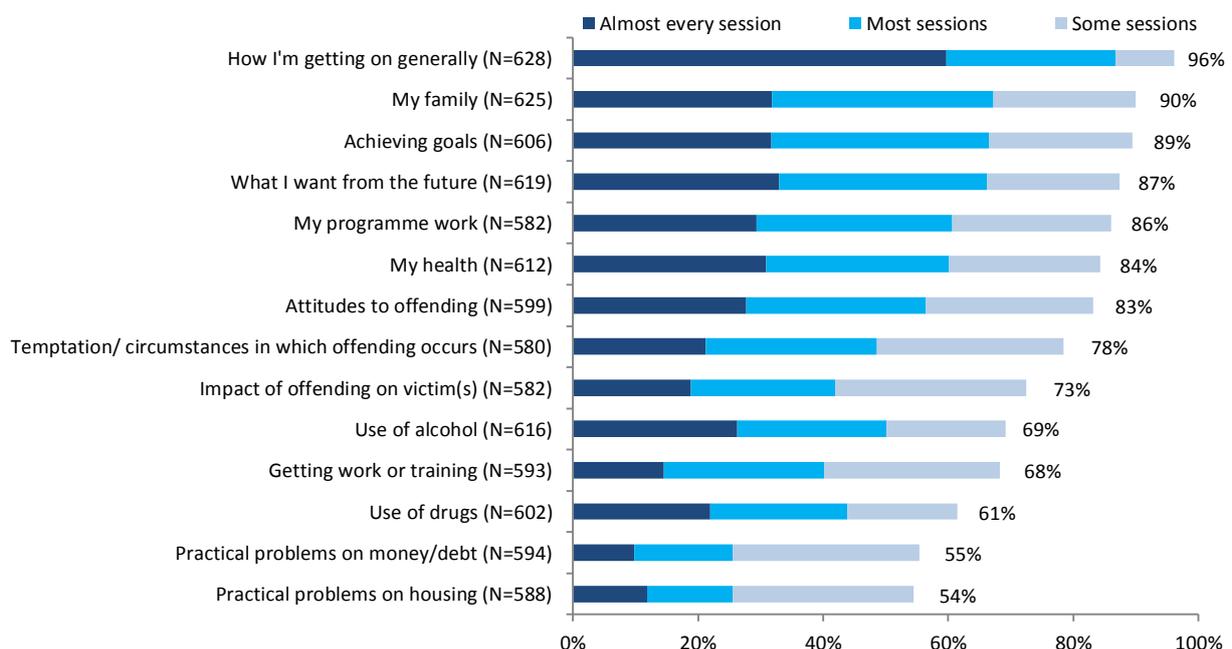
Figure 5: Is there a Case Plan for what you will have achieved?



Supervision Sessions

Figure 6 below highlights the level of discussion at supervision session for some of the key areas. The chart shows that 90% of respondents noted that family issues are discussed at some/most/all sessions. Use of alcohol was discussed with 69% of respondents and the use of drugs discussed with 61%. The most common area for discussion was 'How I'm getting on generally' (some/most/all sessions: 96%).

Figure 6 – What Gets Talked About During Supervision Sessions



Survey Results – YOUR PROBATION OFFICER

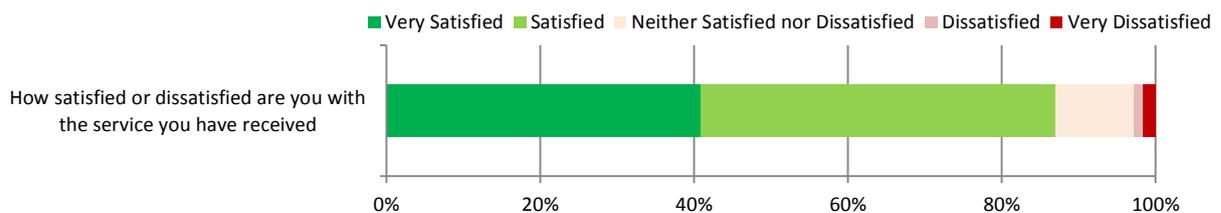
Figure 7 shows the level of agreement³ with a range of statements about the respondent’s relationship with their Probation Officer. Almost all respondents (96%) agreed that their Probation Officer treats them with respect and courtesy, and 94% agreed that they get on well with their Probation Officer. The lowest level of agreement (75%) was with the statement that working with their Probation Officer has had a positive impact on those around me.

Figure 7 – Relationship with Probation Officer



Overall Experience of Probation / Licence

Overall, 87% of respondents were satisfied (46% satisfied, 41% very satisfied) with the service they have received whilst being on probation/post-custody licence. 1 in 10 (10%) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and 3% were dissatisfied (1% dissatisfied, 2% very dissatisfied) with the service they have received.



³ Strongly agree or agree.