



supporting families affected by imprisonment

National Visitors' Centre Survey Report



March 2023



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Introduction



Welcome to the first National Evaluation Report of the annual National Prison Visitors' Centre Survey.

Families Outside are funded by the Scottish Government to employ the National Lead for Prison Visitors' Centres in Scotland to oversee the core grant funding for Visitors' Centres and the Lead supported the Visitors' Centre providers in producing the surveys, distribution, advertising, and collation of results nationally. The Support and Information team within Families Outside also designed this report.

If you have any feedback on this report or how we can make improvements to the annual survey, please contact the National Lead, Jennifer Ferguson, Jennifer.ferguson@familiesoutside.org.uk

Across the 12 Centres a total of 386 adults completed a survey (21 of these online), 28 young people, and 74 Children.

WHEN

The survey took place throughout the month of March and will now take place annually. Visitors were encouraged to provide feedback on the service provided by 12 Centres across Scotland.

Scotland's Prison Visitors' Centres

Each Visitors' Centre is managed by an independent provider.

Logos for independent providers: Community - Faith - Justice, North Valley Inclusion; Early Years Scotland (Investing in our youngest children); the croft; Recovery Enterprises Scotland; Action for Children; CROSSREACH (providing a caring future); Barnardos; Cyrenians; Getting Better Together Project (G&T).

PURPOSE

The purpose of the survey was:

- Contributes towards the evaluation of the prison visitor services.
- Helps to identify where there are gaps in service.
- Opens discussion with the prison the service works alongside to identify solutions.
- Informs new policy and practice.



HOW

- Provided paper copies of the adult and young person surveys within the visitors' centres, information packs, and visits waiting rooms/halls.
- Advertised on info screens within visitors' centres/prisons.
- Made surveys available to complete on the electronic tablets within the centres.
- Displayed the QR poster within the Centres so that visitors could complete the surveys online.
- Shared surveys with community contacts and appropriate stakeholders.
- Advertised through social media – all visitors' centre channels, national sites and SPS channels and newsletters.
- Shared with focus groups and visitor forums.



CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SURVEYS

- **Children's evaluation** was on white boards within the visitors' centres.
- **Young person** evaluation had a QR code to allow completion via mobile phone/computer and gave the young person the option to complete the survey in their own time. Centres were encouraged to think outside the box to facilitate completion for example, providing materials to complete a montage of words within the visitors' centres/during the facilitation of visits for young people to complete. Word bubbles was also a suggested tool that could be used with young people.
- Surveys could be given to individuals in custody and encouraged to give to their families or complete with their child/ren.
- Visitors' Centre staff agreed to decide which survey would be more appropriate depending on age. A suggestion was anyone over the age of 9 would complete the young person survey, but it was recognised every child/young person is different and the decision could be made on a case by case basis.



Local Visitors' Centre National Visitors' Centre Experience Survey – Guidance



A guidance sheet was developed by the National Lead in partnership with the local provider managers. See Appendix 1 for the Guidance document.

FREQUENCY



Annually throughout the month of March.

WHAT AND WHERE

- Paper copies of the adult and young person surveys should be provided within the visitors' centres, information packs, and visits waiting rooms/halls.
- Surveys available to complete on the electronic tablets within the centres.
- Online surveys available for completion.
- Advertise on info screens within visitors' centres/prisons.
- Survey shared with community contacts and appropriate stakeholders.
- Advertised through social media – all visitors' centre channels, national sites and SPS channels and newsletters.
- **Children's evaluation** will be on white boards within the visitors' centres.
- **Young person** evaluation has QR code to allow completion via mobile phone/computer and gives the young person the option to complete the survey in their on time. Materials to complete a montage of words can also be made available within the visitors' centres/during facilitation of visits for young people to complete. Word bubbles is also a tool that can be used with young people.
- Surveys can be given to individuals in custody and encouraged to give to their families or completed with their child/ren.
- Visitors' Centre staff will decide which survey is more appropriate depending on age. A suggestion was anyone over the age of 9 would complete the young person survey, but every child/young person is different and it should be based on the individual.
- Can use incentives such as vouchers & sweets to encourage visitors to complete the survey.



OUTCOMES

- Shared with SPS staff within the prison establishments. Ideas for sharing include: sending through email, staff meetings, Family Strategy meetings, visitor forums.
- Paper copies of the outcomes for visitors and stakeholders available from the Centres.
- Shared with members of the NPVCSG.
- Info screens within the visitors' centre and prisons, newsletters and social media.
- 'You said, we did' within the visitors' centres following the outcomes.



Methods of Promoting the Survey

POSTER

The Families Outside Communications Team designed the poster below, which was then distributed to the local providers for display.



 **National Visitors'** 
Centre Survey Month

Throughout the month of March, Visitors' Centres will provide visitors the opportunity to **have your say!**

Your views are important and help to shape our service.
We want to hear everyone's voice.
There are surveys available for children, young people and adults.

To share your thoughts, you can pick up a copy of the survey from the Visitors' Centre or access it online by scanning the QR code below.

Young people  

Adults  

 **Kids, let us know what you think!** 
Using stickers on the whiteboards around the Visitors' Centre.

 **Thank you!** 

SOCIAL MEDIA

The Families Outside Communications Team designed the following social media posts which were used on Twitter and Facebook throughout the month of March to advertise and encourage completion of the national survey either in person or online.



Prison Visitors' Centres in Scotland @HMPJustVisiting · Mar 31 ...

🗣️ During this month, Visitors' Centres across Scotland have been collecting surveys in order to maintain & improve our services. Today is the last day to give your feedback, either in person or online.

Young people 🗣️ ow.ly/Qmmz50N4uOT

Adults 🗣️ ow.ly/GGyK50N4uOS



Survey Results

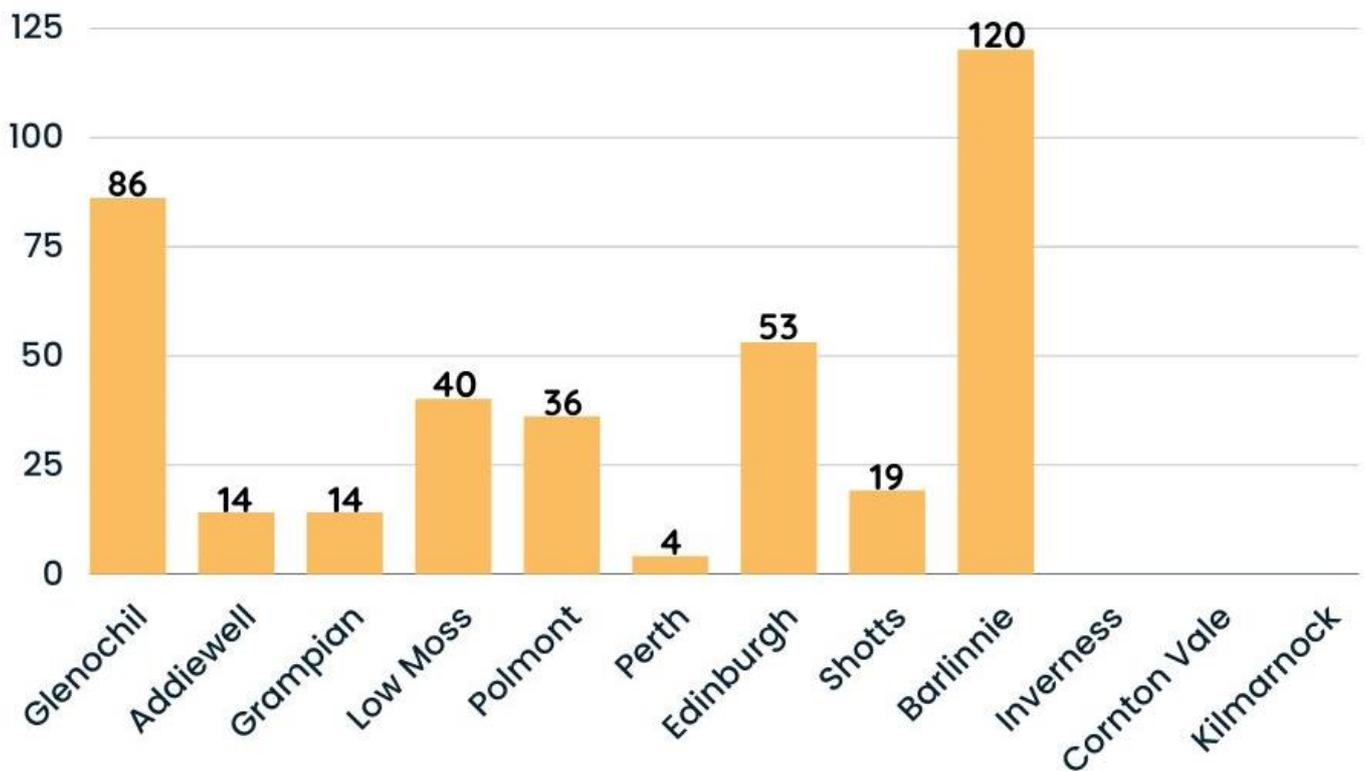


ADULT SURVEYS

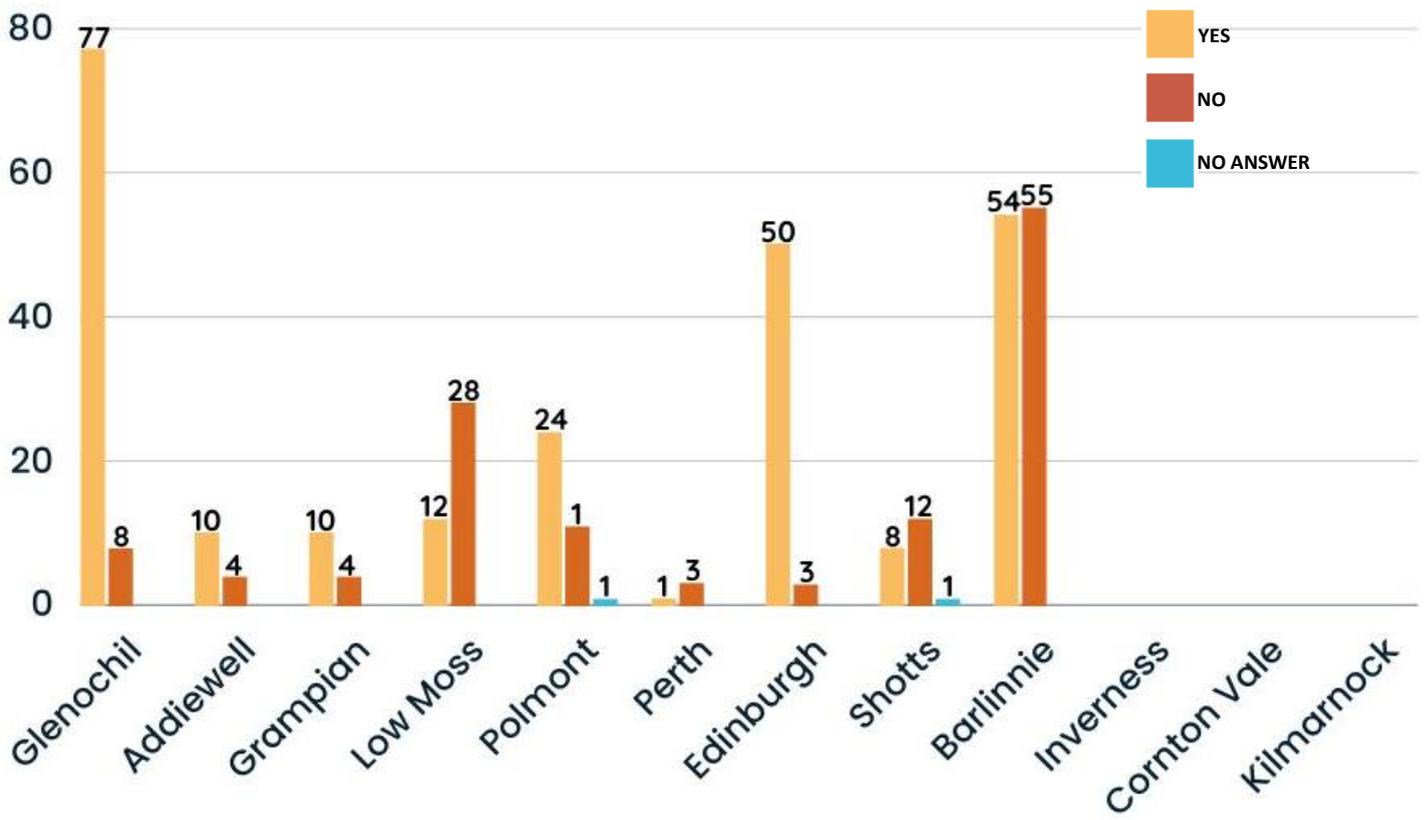
The Adult survey was redesigned in 2023, reducing the number of questions to be answered and ensuring these focussed specifically on the work of the Visitors' Centres, producing results that could be used to inform the work of the independent Visitors' Centre providers.

See Appendix 2 for the Adult Survey template.

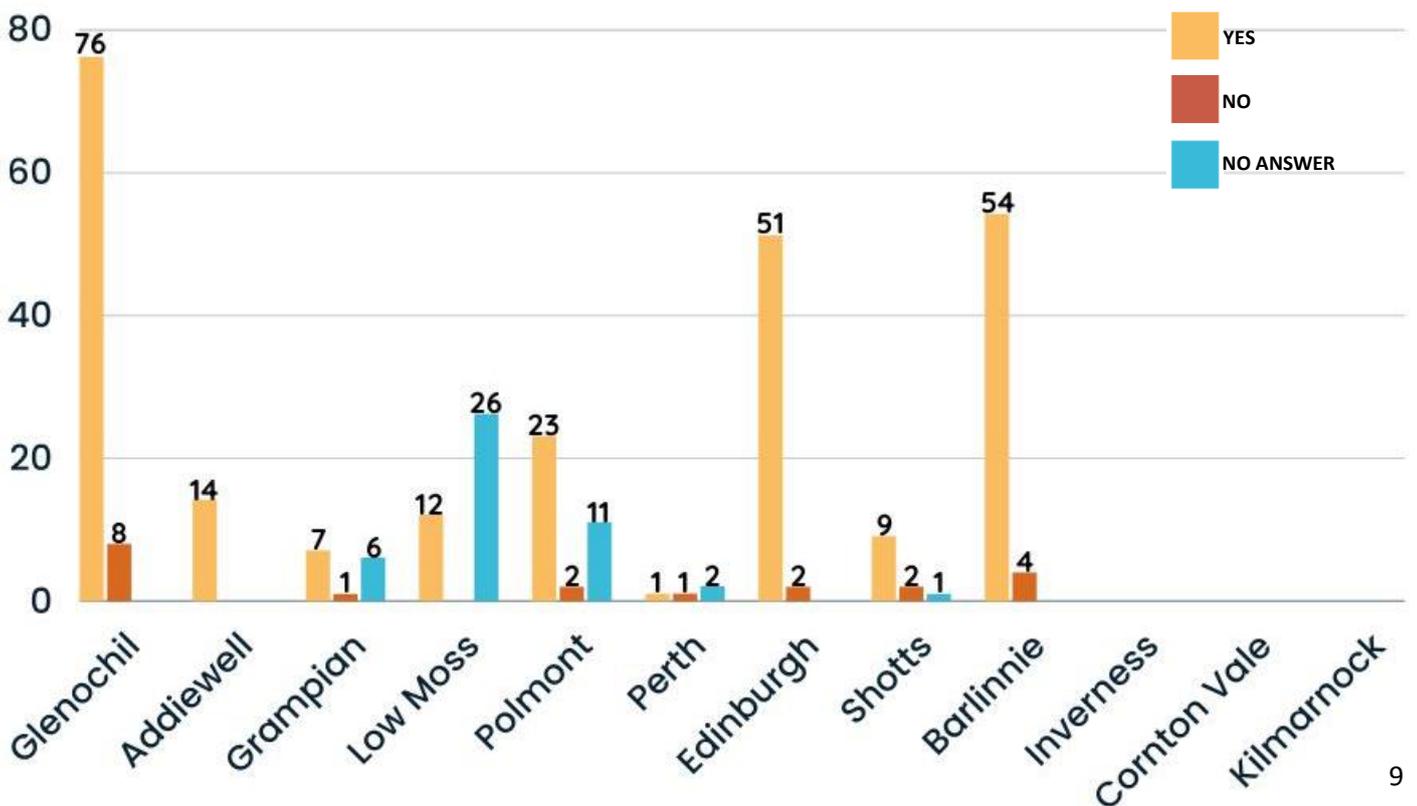
Number surveyed



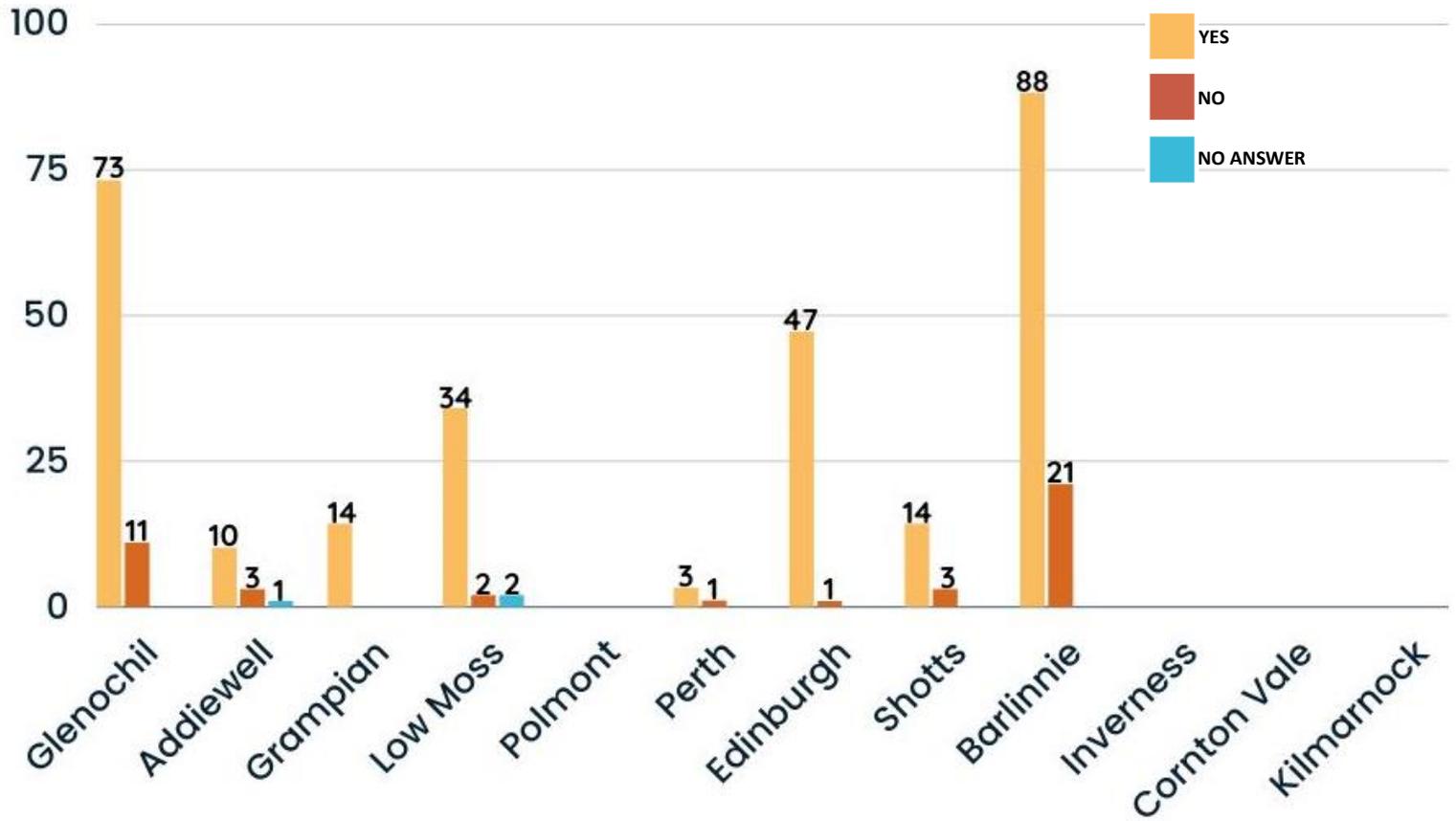
Have you received a visitor information pack?



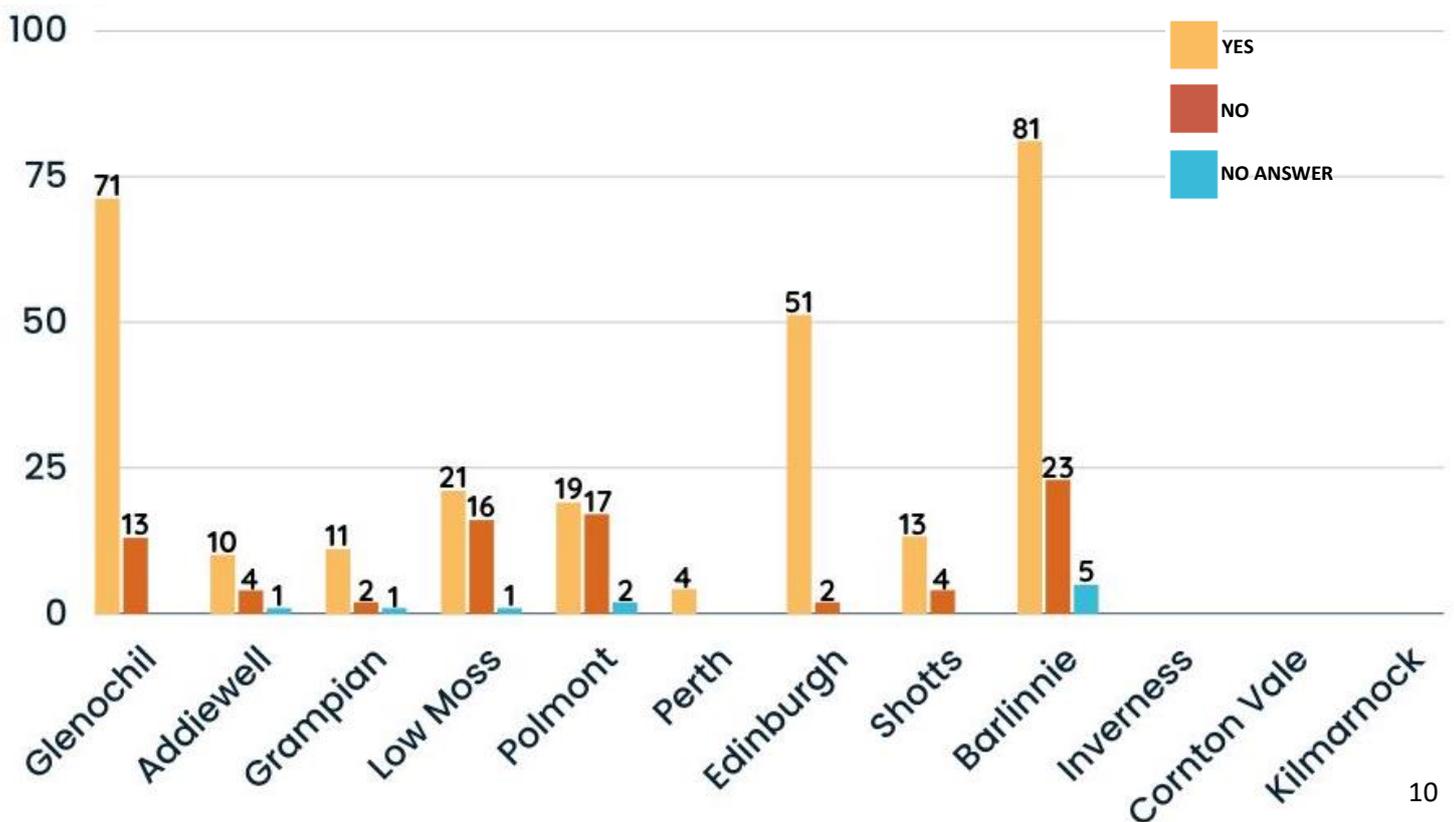
Was it useful?



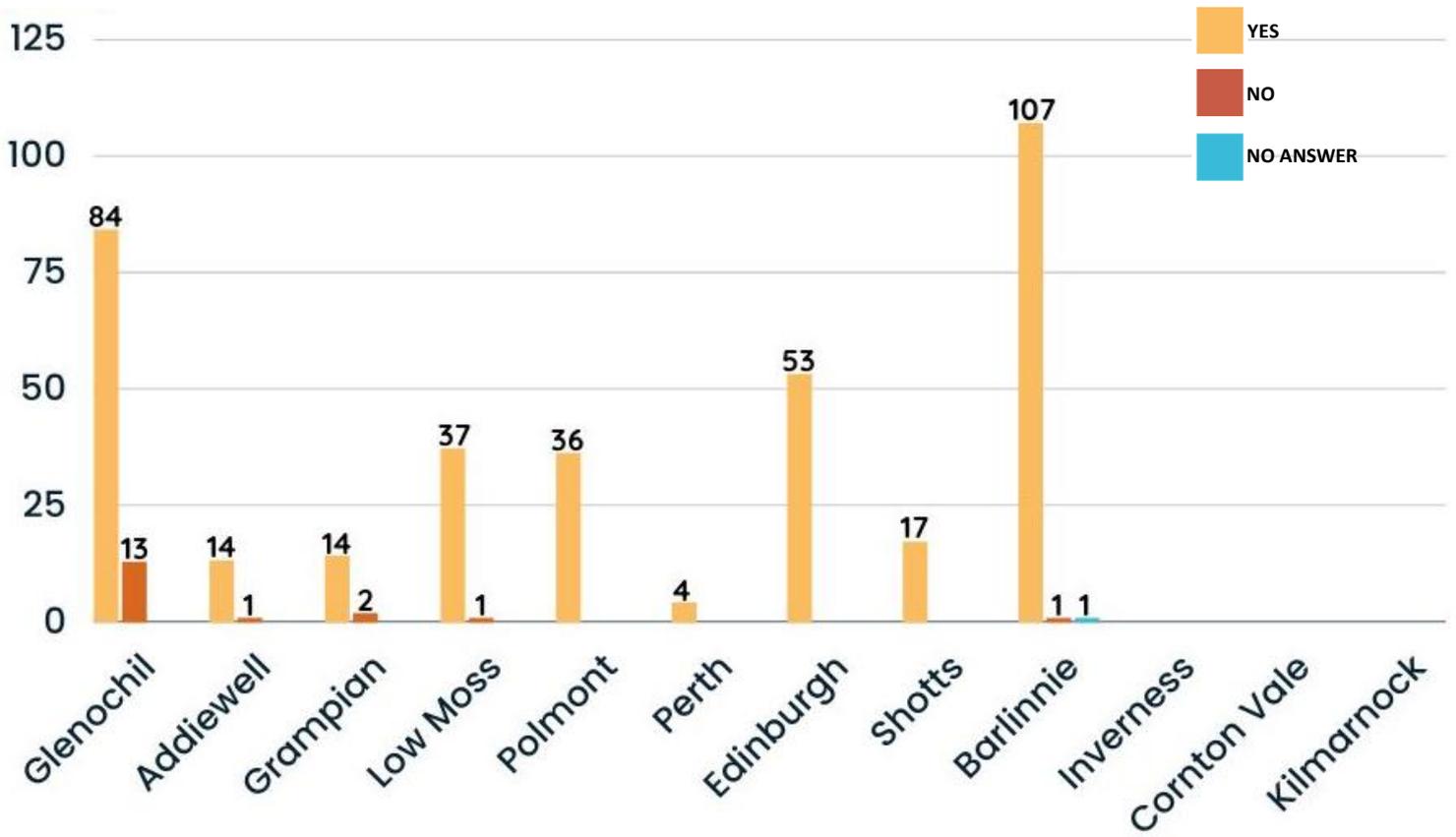
Were you aware of the Visitors' Centre before visiting today?



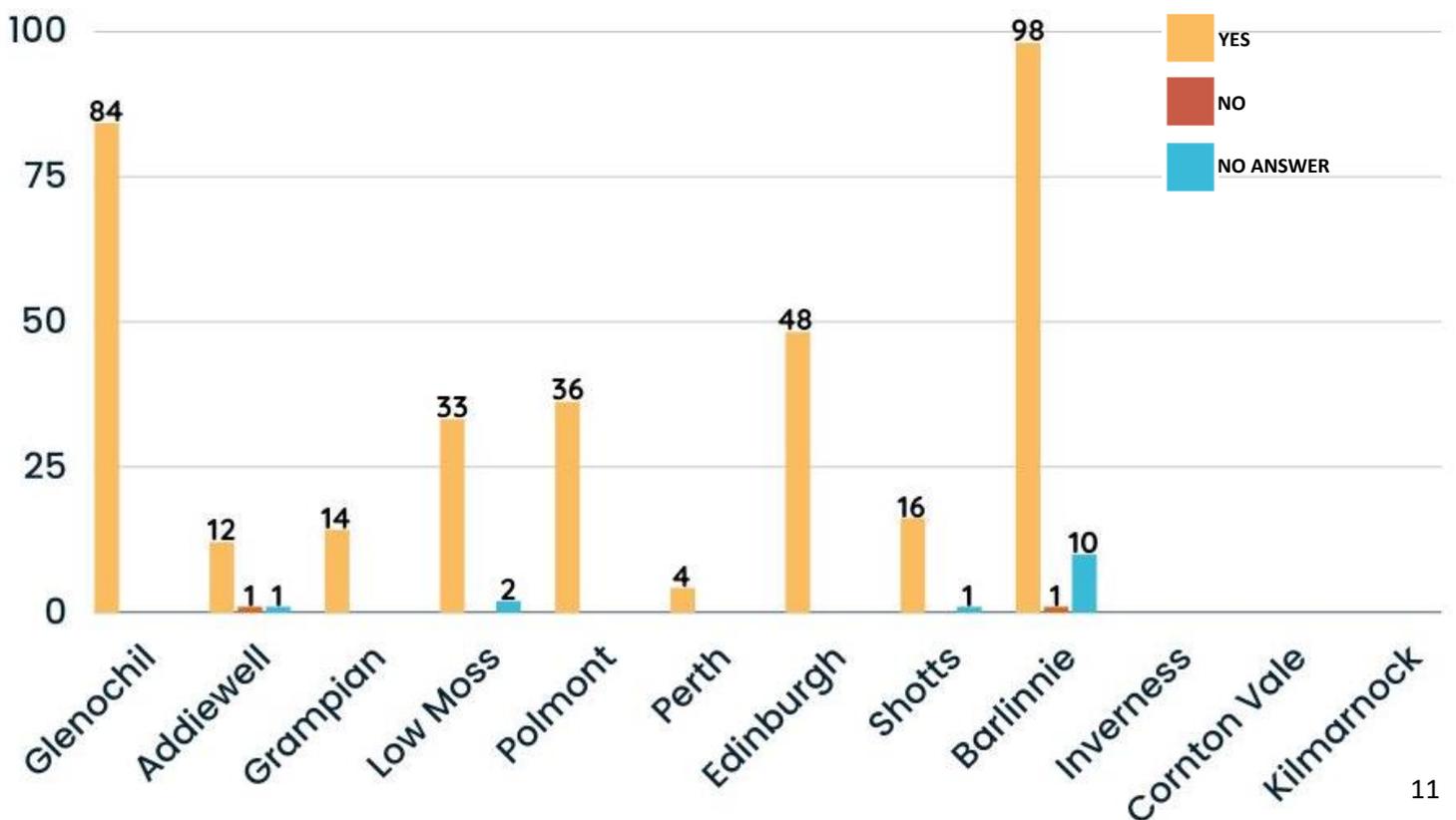
Are you aware that you may be entitled to help with visiting travel expenses?



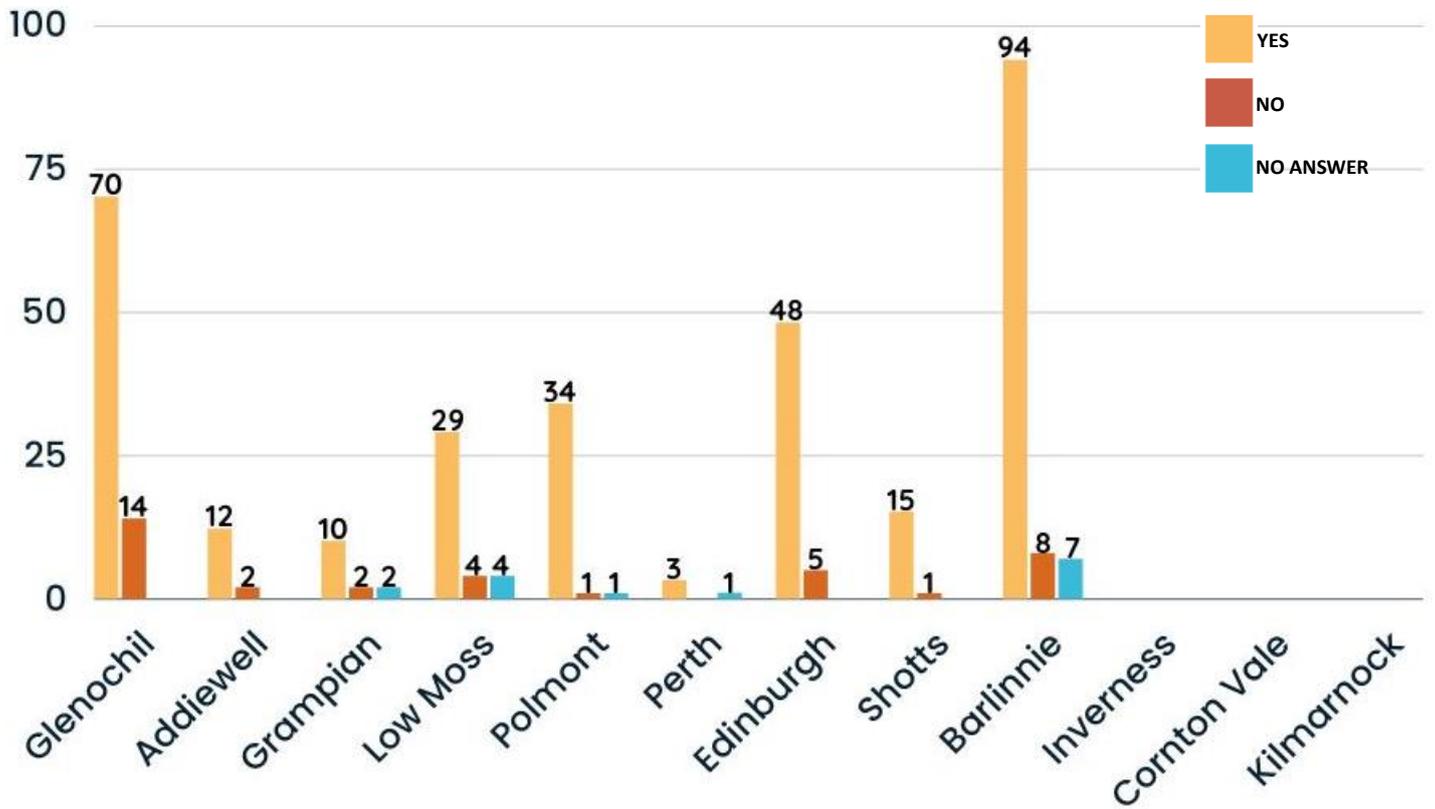
Are the Visitors' Centre staff welcoming and helpful?



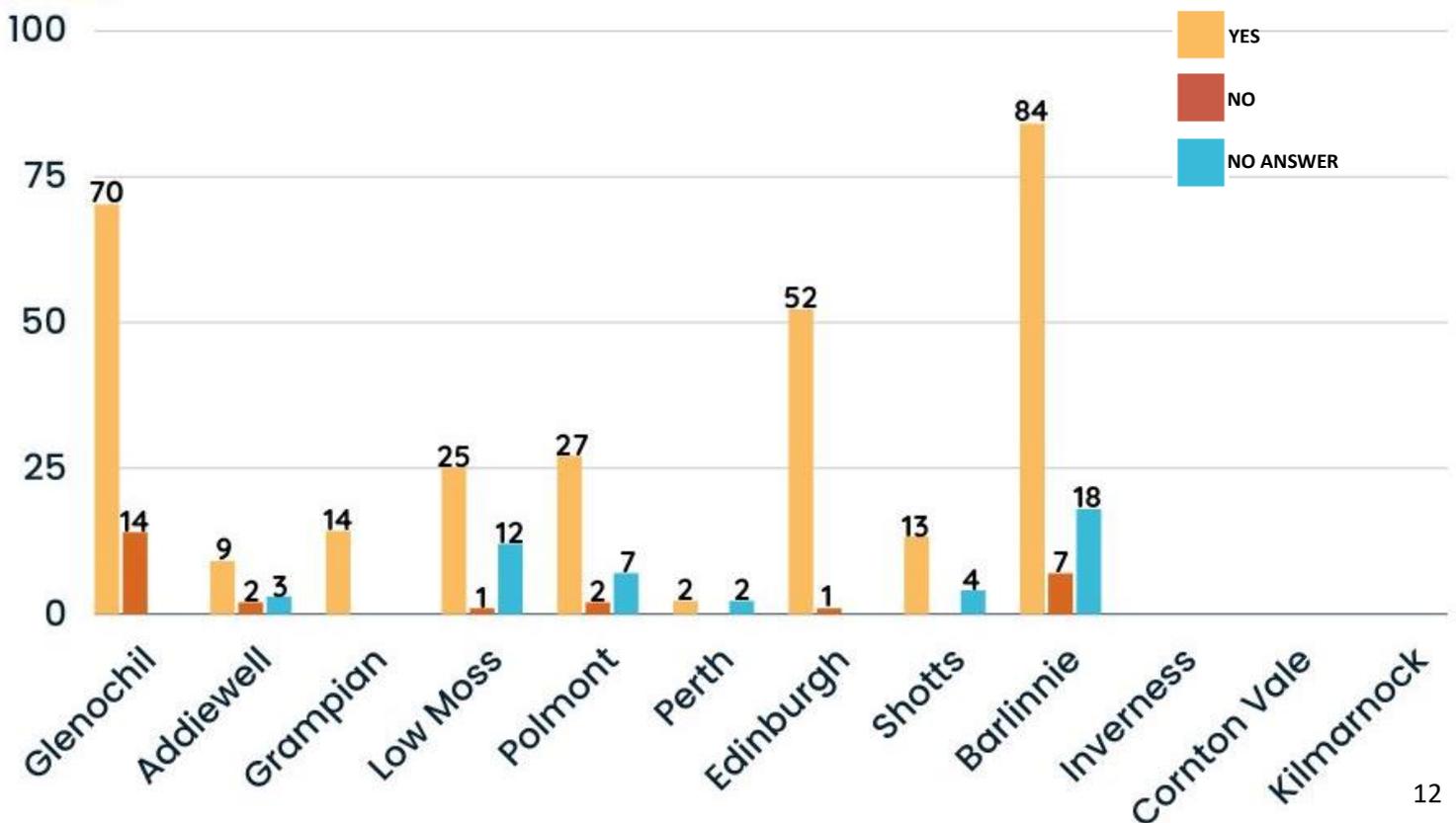
Do the Visitors' Centre staff listen to you, and do you trust them to express your views to the prison?



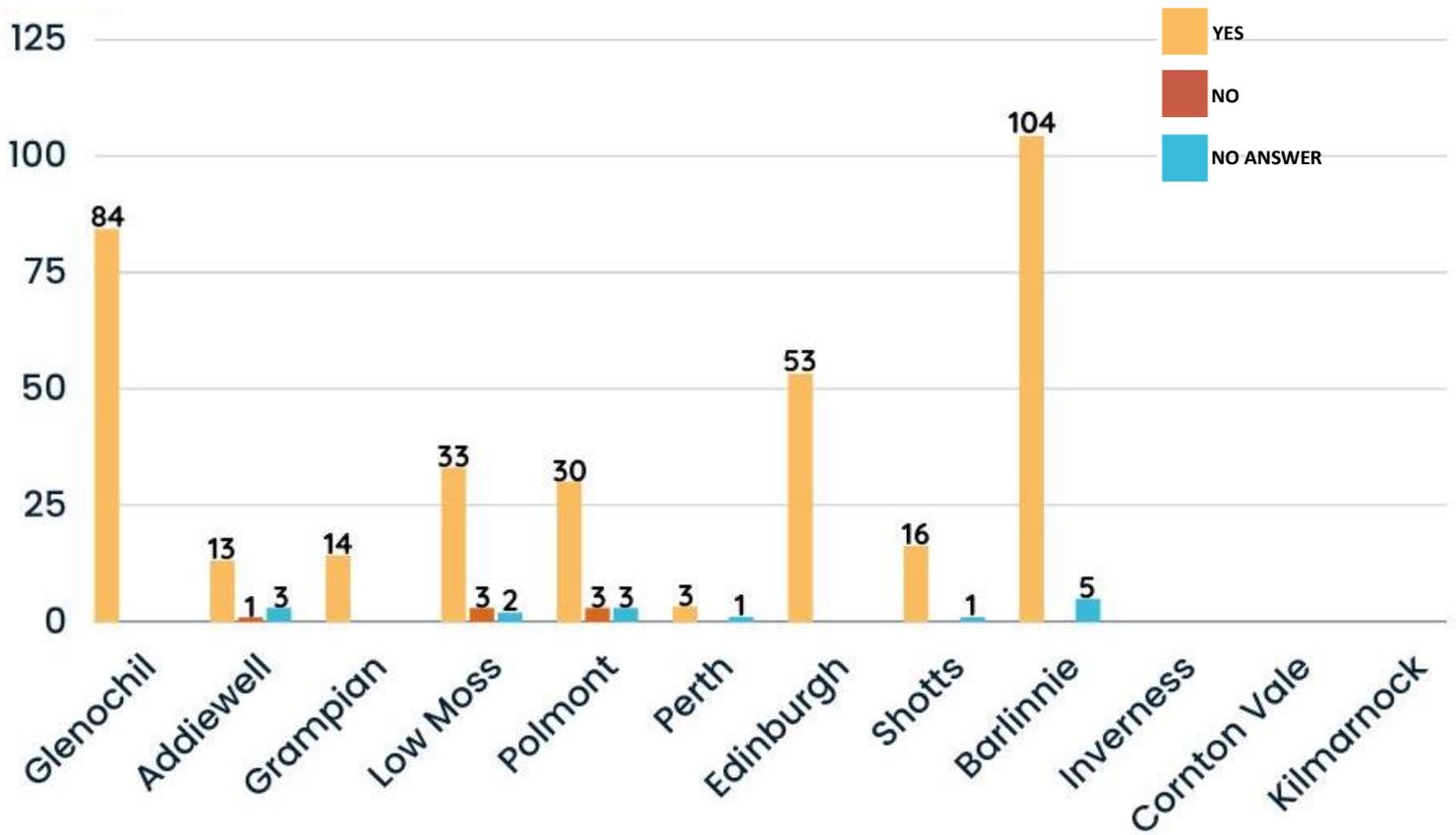
Does the service help you to maintain a relationship with the person in custody?



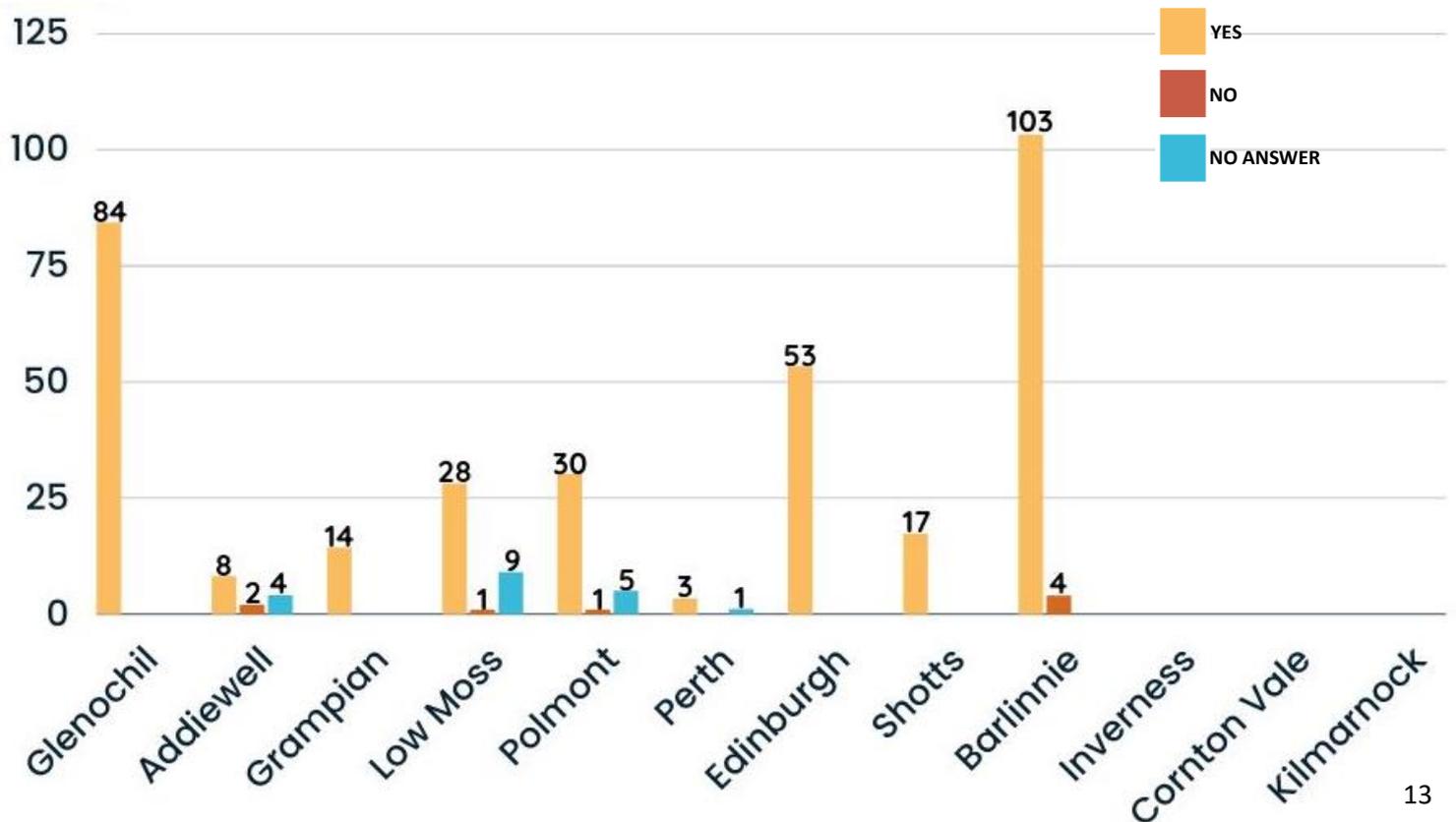
Do you think the Visitors' Centre supports your children to maintain a strong relationship with their family member in custody?



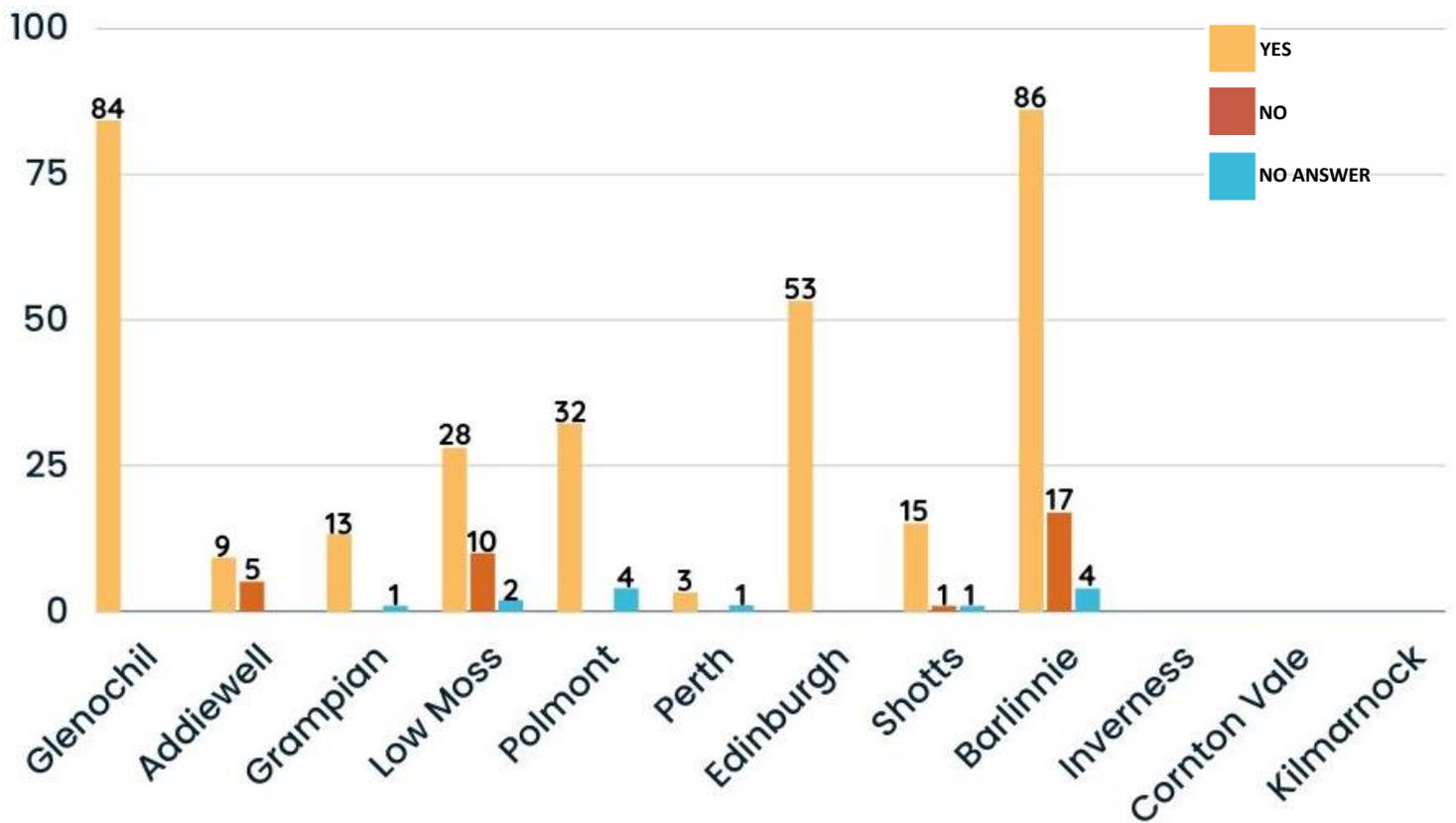
Are the Visitors' Centre opening times suitable?



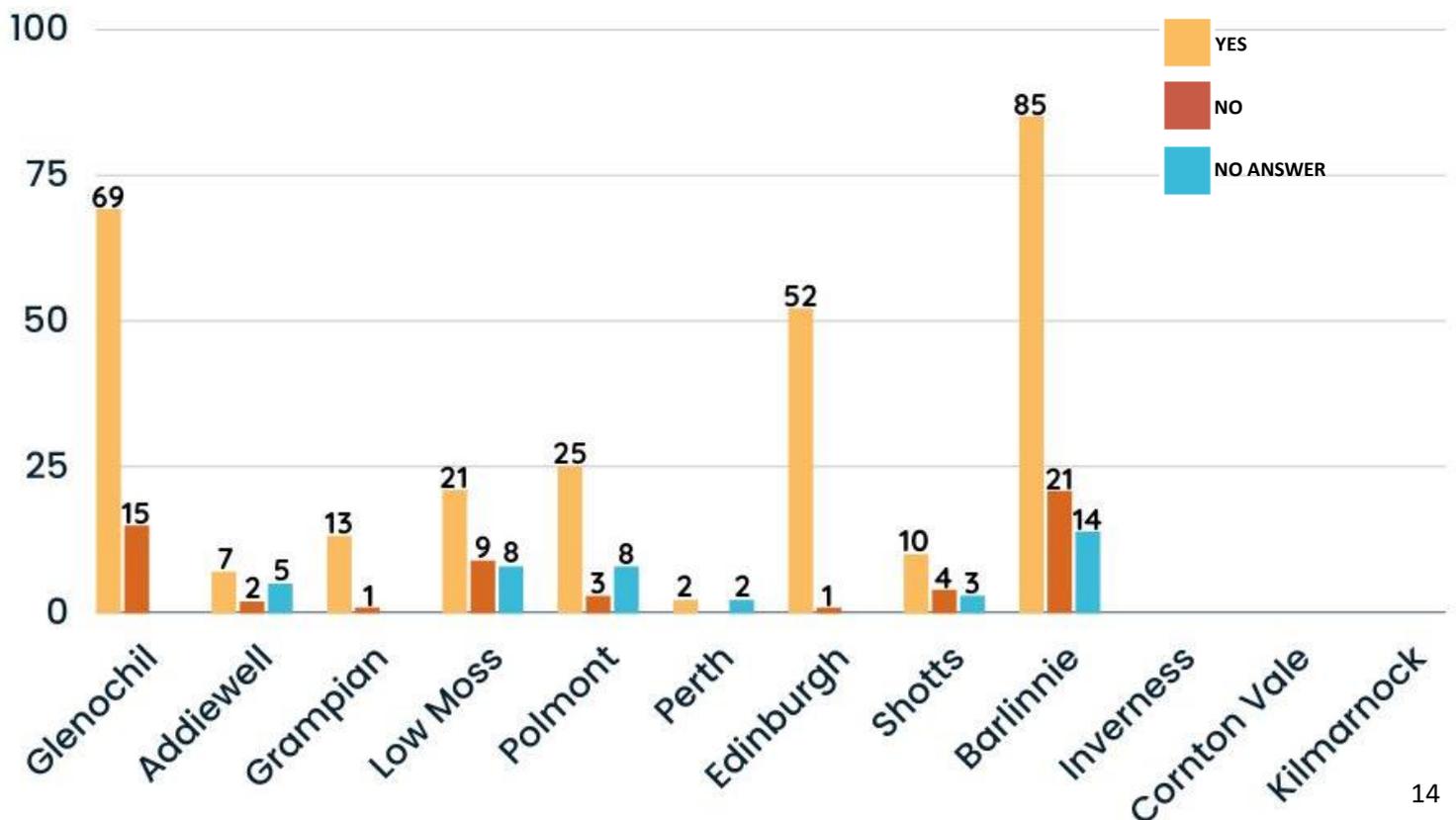
Is there enough information available in the Visitors' Centre, for example, display boards? Posters? Leaflets?



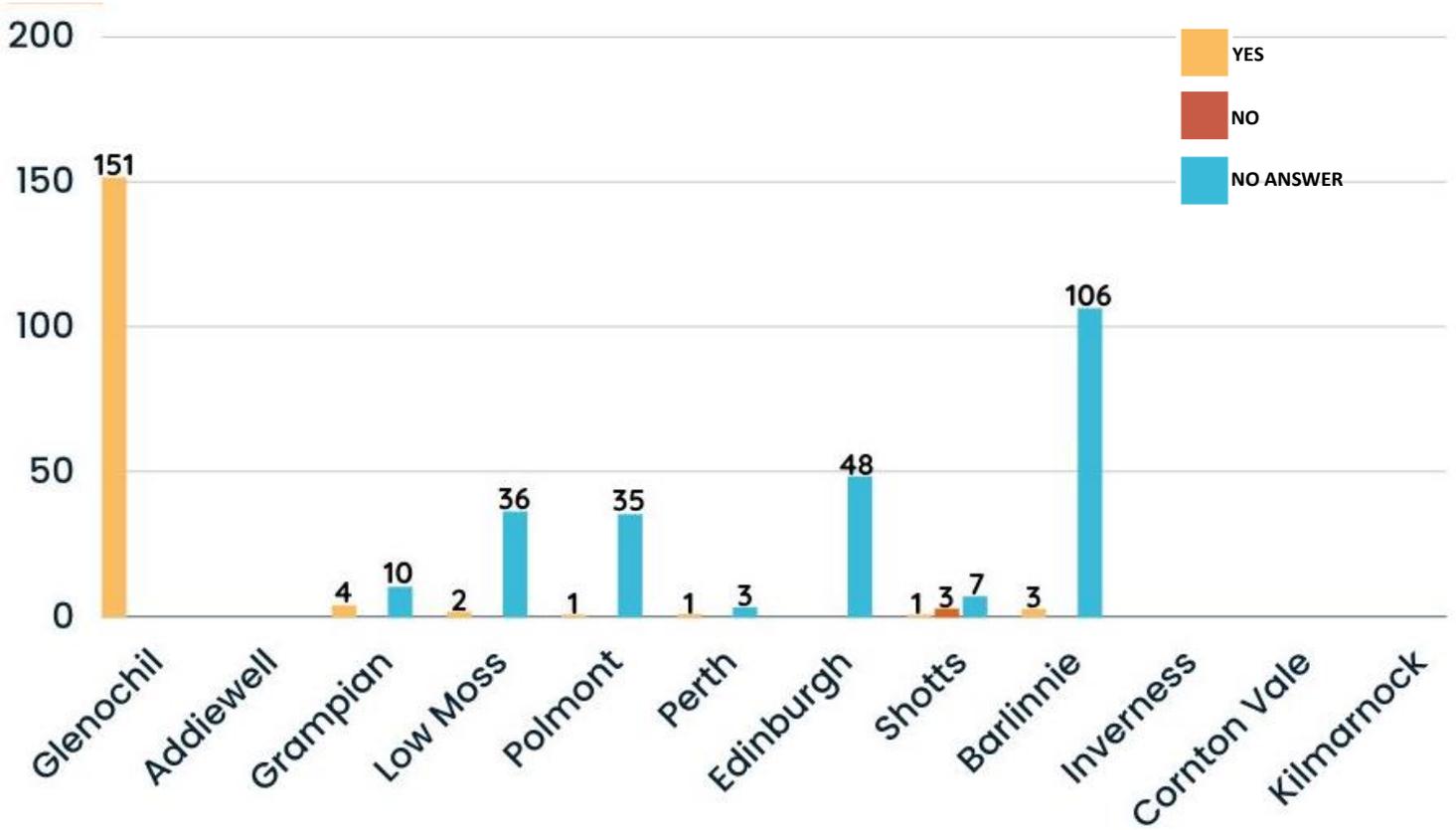
**Are the facilities in the Visitors' Centre sufficient, for example, the children's play area?
Toilets? Refreshments?**



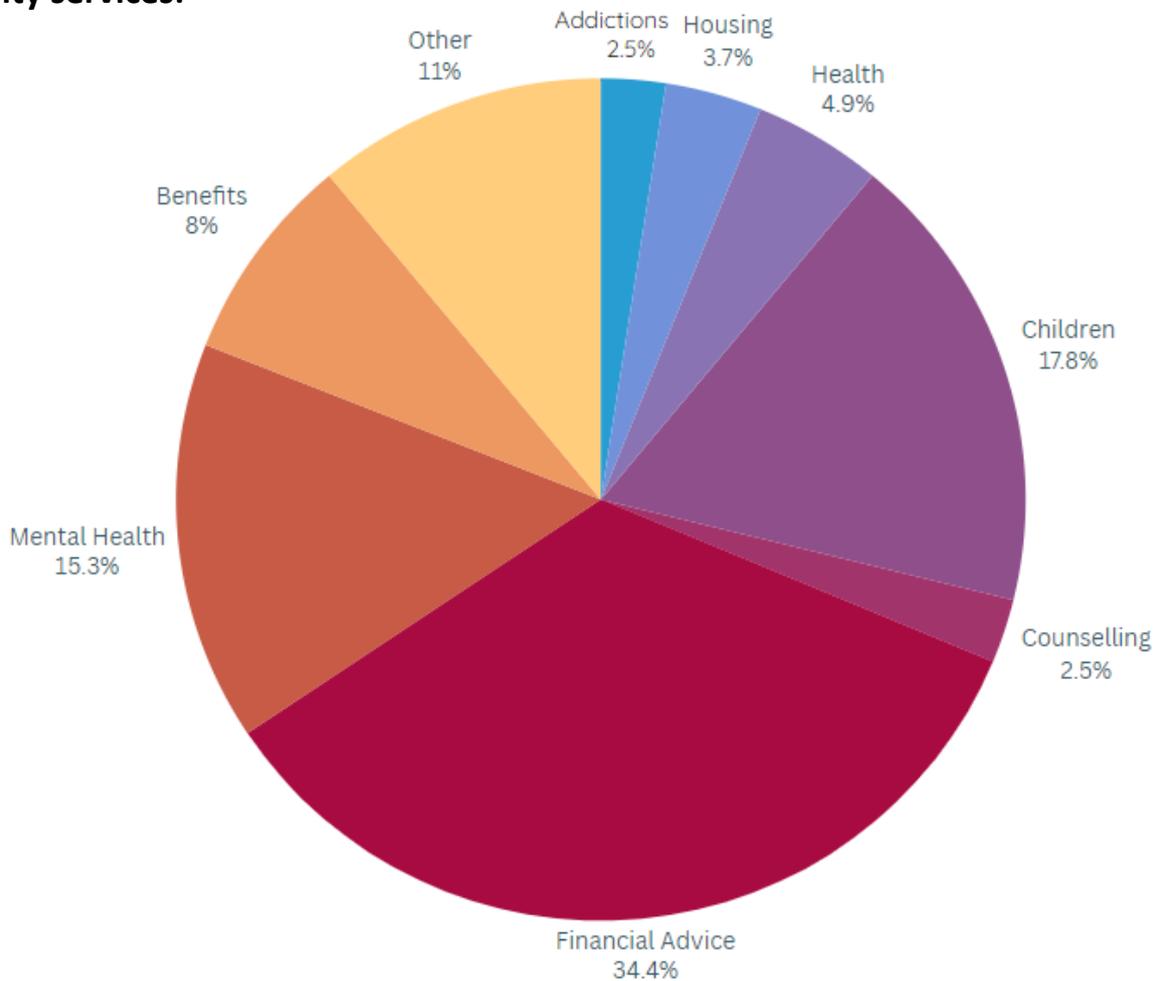
**Has the Visitors' Centre provided useful information on supports available in the community
for you and/or your family?**



Have you been referred to any community services? If so, which?



Community services:



A selection of comments for the national report from the adult survey:



HMP Low Moss

- How about a parents/visitors volunteering group
- Trusted people to work in the visit room to make tea and coffee/ snacks – raise money/ give suggestions. Parents do want to help the system get better
- Staff and settings are welcoming
- The staff have been really helpful and the cup of coffee is a great ice breaker – well done



HMP Grampian

- ...staff have always been friendly and helpful and have made me aware of help that is available and where to find it , if required
- Always made to feel welcome by staff and relaxed atmosphere
- the visitor centre is a good place to spend time before the visit



HMP Addiewell

- You all do a wonderful job. I really appreciate everything you do for our family
- Cyrenians are very helpful & supportive. We all enjoy the bonding visits.



HMP Barlinnie

- The visitor centre staff have supported me for a long time. They are non-judgemental, helpful and just so lovely, I couldn't have visited in the beginning without their support before and after the visits. I suffer with severe anxiety.



HMP Shotts

- Girls are great with my grandkids, makes it less scary having them there. Definitely helps me with my anxiety knowing a friendly face is there.



HMP Edinburgh

- The VC have a lot of inhouse support that we can use and this is amazing



HMP Glenochil

- This is the first time my husband has been in custody, I found visiting for the first time terrifying. The staff in the centre were more amazing and done everything to make me at ease. Without the centre my experience would be a lot different and not in a good way.



HMP Polmont

- I have been a visitor for two and a half years now. The Visitors' Centre has helped me in a way I never imagined. Care. Dedicated staff so kind. Help to understand whatever is bothering a family member. They always help. Can't thank prison visitor centre enough. You are the pride of Polmont.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S SURVEYS

The Young People's survey was designed by the National Lead and Visitors' Centre providers in 2023 – recognising the importance of The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Children - Article 12 (respect for children's views) *"Every child has the right to express their views on matters that affect them, and for these views to be taken into consideration"*.

Note: Young People's Surveys were not completed for HMP Edinburgh, HMP Perth, HMP Glenochil, HMP Barlinnie, HMP Inverness, HMP Cornton Vale, HMP Kilmarnock.

See Appendix 3 for Young People's Survey template and Appendix 4 for drawings from the Young People's Survey.

HMP Polmont



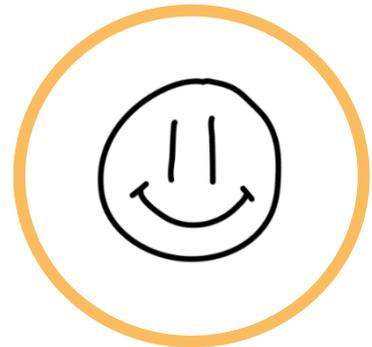
1

survey completed



12

average age of those who completed the survey



1

said the staff were friendly and helpful in the Visitors' Centre

What else would you like to see for young people in the Visitors' Centre?

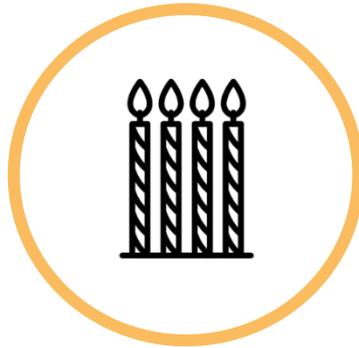


HMP Addiewell



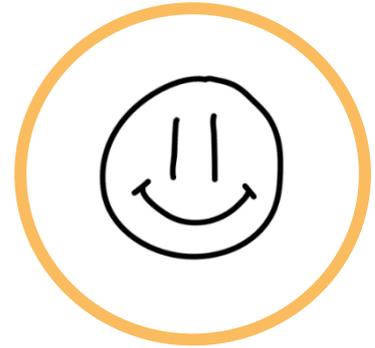
2

surveys completed



11

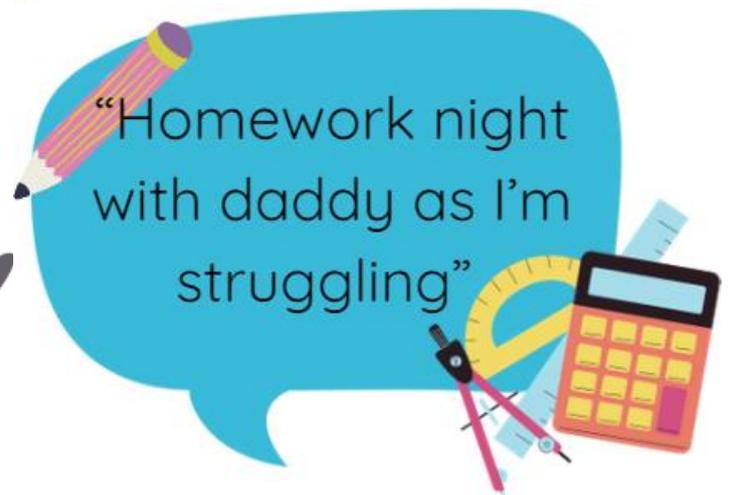
average age of those who completed the survey



2

said the staff were friendly and helpful in the Visitors' Centre

What else would you like to see for young people in the Visitors' Centre?

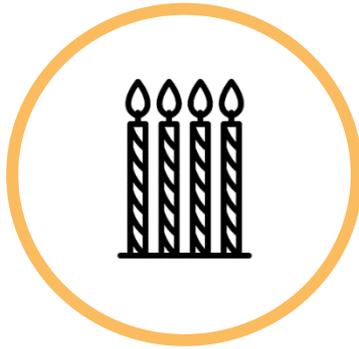


HMP Shotts



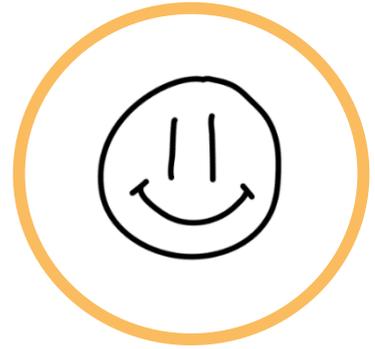
11

surveys completed



13

average age of those who completed the survey



13

said the staff were friendly and helpful in the Visitors' Centre

What else would you like to see for young people in the Visitors' Centre?

“Board games”



“Playing cards”



“Fidgets”



“Fruit tasting”



“Jigsaws”



“Bingo”

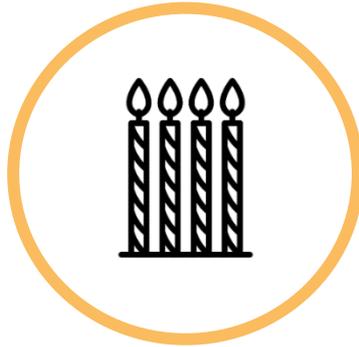


HMP Low Moss



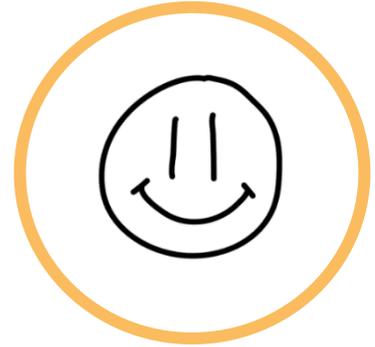
4

surveys completed



11

average age of those who completed the survey



4

said the staff were friendly and helpful in the Visitors' Centre

What else would you like to see for young people in the Visitors' Centre?

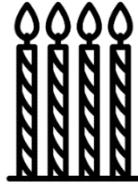


HMP Grampian



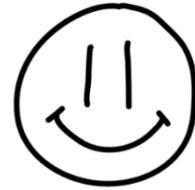
10

surveys
completed



14

average age of those
who completed the
survey



4

said the staff were
friendly and helpful
in the Visitors' Centre

What else would you like to see for young people in the Visitors' Centre?

“Football
table”



“Petting
zoo”



“Gaming
PC”



CHILDREN'S SURVEYS

The Children's survey was designed by the National Lead and Visitors' Centre providers in 2023 – recognising the importance of The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Children - Article 12 (respect for children's views) "Every child has the right to express their views on matters that affect them, and for these views to be taken into consideration".

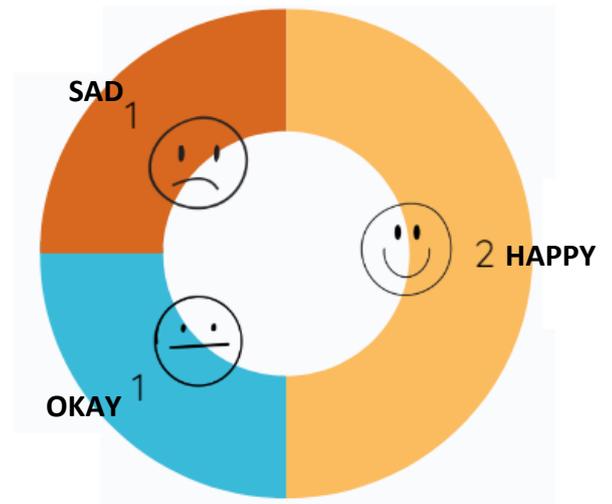
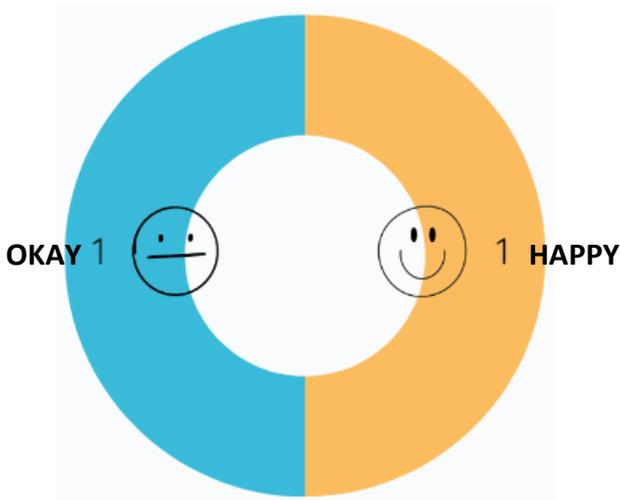
Note: Children's Surveys were not completed for HMP Perth, HMP Glenochil, HMP Edinburgh, HMP Grampian, HMP Barlinnie.

HMP Polmont



Do you like the toys in the Visitors' Centre?

Are the staff in the Visitors' Centre friendly?



What did you do in the Visitors' Centre today?



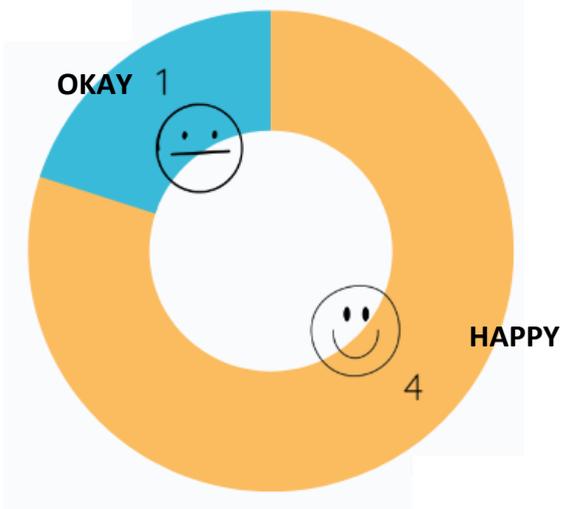
HMP Addiewell



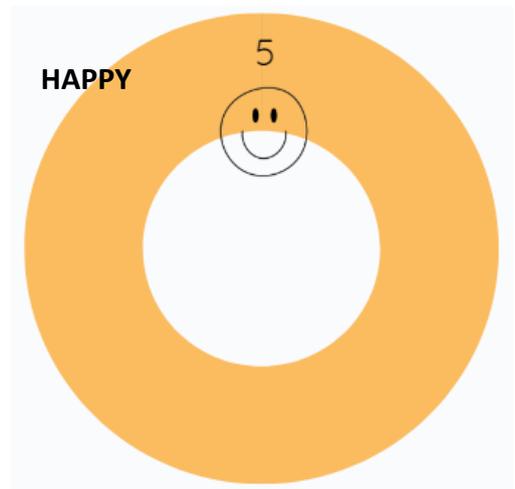
5

surveys completed

Do you like the toys in the Visitors' Centre?



Are the staff in the Visitors' Centre friendly?



What did you do in the Visitors' Centre today?



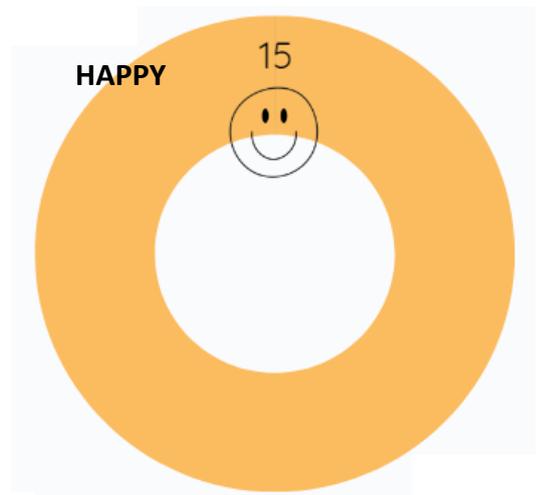
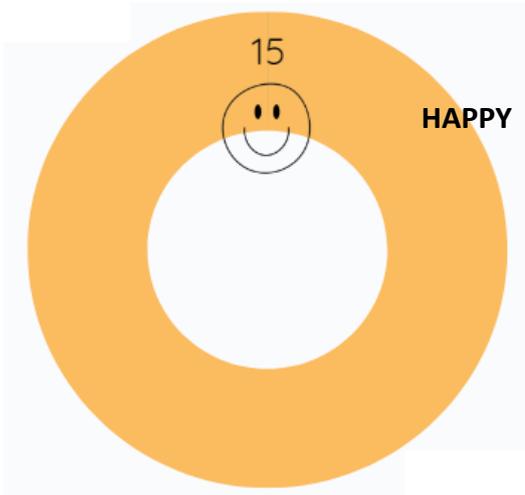
HMP Shotts



15 surveys completed

Do you like the toys in the Visitors' Centre?

Are the staff in the Visitors' Centre friendly?



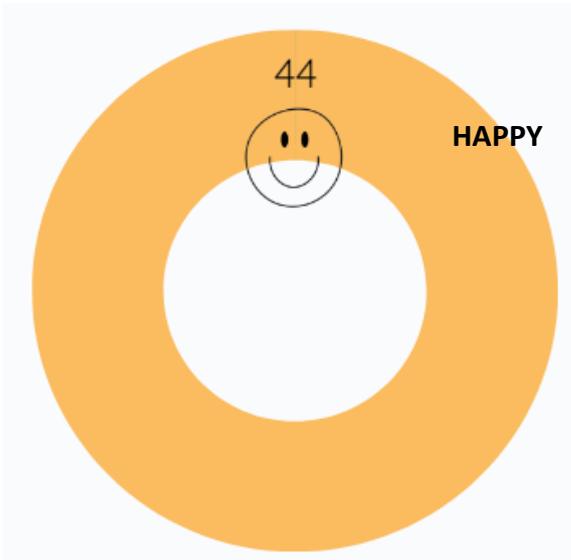
What did you do in the Visitors' Centre today?



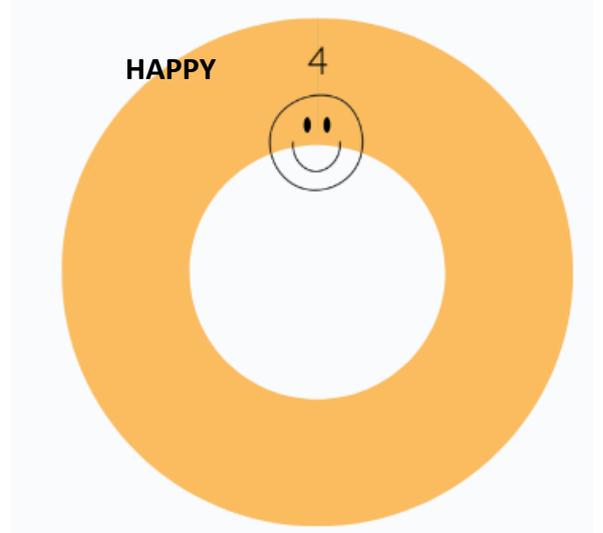
HMP Low Moss



Do you like the toys in the Visitors' Centre?



Are the staff in the Visitors' Centre friendly?



What did you do in the Visitors' Centre today?





8

surveys completed

Do you like the toys in the Visitors' Centre?

Are the staff in the Visitors' Centre friendly?



What did you do in the Visitors' Centre today?



Comments:

"They are nice and give me fruit for the bus"



"Play with me at cars"

"Like to colour pictures and draw"



Reflections and Conclusions



This was the first year of piloting this new Visitors' Centre Survey following a review of the questions by National Lead in consultation with the National Prison Visitors' Centre Steering Group and local provider managers. Visitors' Centres providers were keen that unrealistic expectations were not raised by visitors when completing the survey and that outcomes should inform the work within the Prison Visitors' Centres. The Scottish Prison Service conducts their own national visitors survey and prisoners survey which includes questions directly related to the quality of visits, timings and other aspects which they have direct influence over. The PVC providers can influence discussions around these, however, have no direct power to make the final decision.

Collection of Data:

As noted within the report, 3 of the prison visitors' centres, HMP Cornton Vale, HMP Inverness and HMP Kilmarnock were unable to collect responses to the adult survey.

Young People's Surveys:

Only 28 were completed with zero completed for HMP Edinburgh, HMP Perth, HMP Glenochil, HMP Barlinnie, HMP Inverness, HMP Cornton Vale or HMP Kilmarnock.

Children's Survey:

74 children used the whiteboards and stickers within the visitors' centres to provide feedback. Zero were completed within HMP Perth, HMP Glenochil, HMP Edinburgh, HMP Grampian and HMP Barlinnie.

To improve on the completion of surveys across the estate, next year we will:

1. Begin discussions in January 2024 for the survey taking place in March 2024 – national discussion and sharing of practice and ideas will be facilitated at the National Prison Visitors' Centre Steering Group, National Managers Away Day and Monthly Managers Meetings.
2. Encourage local planning to be undertaken in partnership with the local prison establishment staff and community partners to widen the pool of participants. Hearing from those who don't use the visitors' centres, and why, is also important.
3. 44 of the 74 children's surveys were completed at HMP Low Moss visitors' centre (Early Years Scotland) so it is important to learn from them how they encouraged children to complete the survey and apply this learning across the estate.
4. It is equally important we look at the challenges faced by those visitors' centres unable to gather any feedback and provide support and solutions throughout the survey month. Whilst visitors' centres will use other methods to capture feedback from adults, young people and Children, this national survey is an ideal opportunity to gather national data and therefore influence national response.
5. Online completion – 21 individuals completed the survey online and whilst this was the first year of providing this opportunity, we will look at encouraging more people to use this source. This may include more advertising, reviewing questions to make them easier to complete online, and encouraging partners within prisons and the community to share the link.

6. Awareness raising with partners in the prison and the community - Whilst some visitors' centre providers worked with prison staff to provide surveys for completion within the prison at reception, within visits halls, and to partners in prisons, this wasn't universal. The use of the national poster with QR links was also minimal. The same can be applied to community partners who could be encouraging visitors to complete the surveys.

7. Advertising to raise awareness throughout the month of March could also be improved. Families Outside social media pages, the National Prison Visitors' Centre social media Pages and SPS national comms all shared the social media posts, however, sharing of the posts by the 9 independent providers of visitors' centres would greatly increase awareness.

Appendix

APPENDIX 1

Local Visitors' Centre National Visitors' Centre Experience Survey Guidance

Purpose

- Contributes towards evaluation of the service
- Helps to identify where there are gaps in service
- Opens discussion with the prison if any issues are identified
- Informs new policy and practice

Frequency

Annually throughout the month of March

What and where

- Paper copies of the adult and young person surveys will be provided within the visitors' centres, information packs, and visits waiting rooms/halls
- Surveys available to complete on the electronic tablets within the centres
- Online surveys available for completion
- Advertise on info screens within visitors' centres/prisons
- Survey shared with community contacts and appropriate stakeholders
- Advertised through social media – all visitors' centre channels, national sites and SPS channels and newsletters
- Shared with focus groups and visitor forums
- **Children's evaluation** will be on white boards within the visitors' centres
- **Young person** evaluation has QR code to allow completion via mobile phone/computer and gives the young person the option to complete the survey in their own time. Materials to complete a montage of words can also be made available within the visitors' centres/during facilitation of visits for young people to complete. Word bubbles is also a tool that can be used with young people
- Surveys can be given to individuals in custody and encouraged to give to their families or complete with their child/ren
- Visitors' Centre staff will decide which survey is more appropriate depending on age. A suggestion was anyone over the age of 9 would complete the young person survey, but every child/young person is different and it should be based on the individual
- Can use incentives such as vouchers & sweets to encourage visitors to complete the survey

Outcomes

- Shared with SPS staff within the prison establishments. Ideas for sharing include: sending through email, staff meetings, Family Strategy meetings, visitor forums
- Paper copies of the outcomes for visitors and stakeholders available from the Centres
- Shared with members of the NPVCSG
- Info screens within the visitors centre and prisons, newsletters and social media
- 'You said, we did' within the visitors' centres following the outcomes

**National Visitors' Centre Experience Survey
for use by Prison Visitors' Centres in Scotland**

Thank you for taking the time today to complete this survey. Your feedback is important and improve the service for other children and adults visiting their loved one in custody.



will help

Name of Visitors' Centre:

1. Have you received a visitor information pack? Yes No
 If Yes, did you find this useful? Yes No

2. Were you aware of the visitors' centre before visiting today? Yes No

3. What would have been useful to know before you visited today?

4. Are you aware that you may be entitled to help with visiting travel expenses? Yes No

5. Are the visitors' centre staff welcoming and helpful? Yes No

6. Do the visitors' centre staff listen to you and do you trust them to express your views to the prison?
 Yes No

7. How does the visitors' centre service improve your experience of visiting the prison?

8. Does the service help you to maintain a relationship with the person in custody? Yes No

9. Do you think the visitors' centre supports your children to maintain a strong relationship with their family member in custody? Yes No

10. Are the visitors' centre opening times suitable? Yes No
 (if no, why not?)

11. Is there enough information available in the visitors' centre, for example, display boards, posters, and leaflets?

Yes No

How can this be improved?

12. Are the facilities in the visitors' sufficient, for example, the children's play area? Toilets? Refreshments?

Yes No

How can these be improved?

14. Has the visitors' centre provided useful information on supports available in the community for you and/or your family?

Yes No

Have you been referred to any community services? If so which?

Prison based issues

Counselling

Addictions

Financial Advice

Housing

Mental Health

Health

Benefits

Children

Other

Any other information you feel should be available?

Further comments

Young Person National Visitors' Centre Survey



1. What age are you?.....

2 Are staff friendly and helpful in the Visitors' Centre?



3. What else would you like to see for young people in the Visitors' Centre?.....

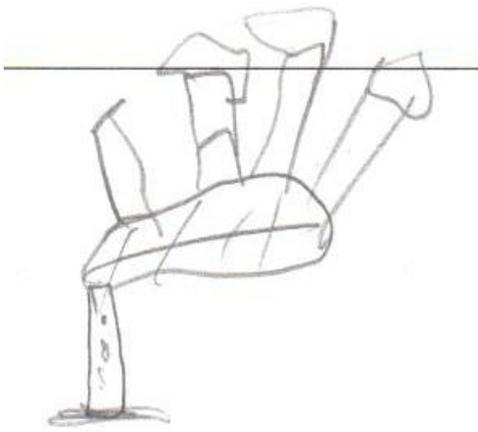
.....

.....

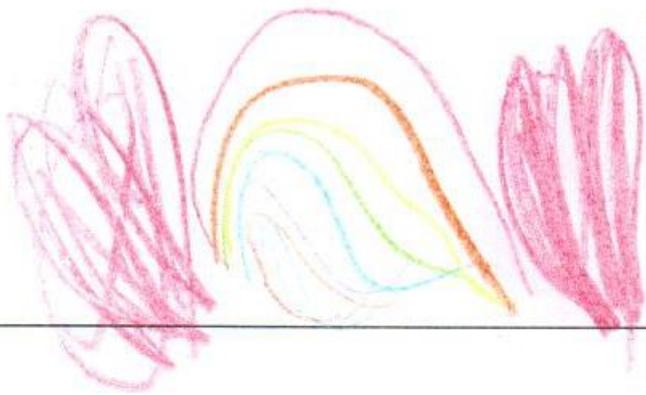
.....

4. Is there anything else you would like to write or draw about your time in the visitors' centre?

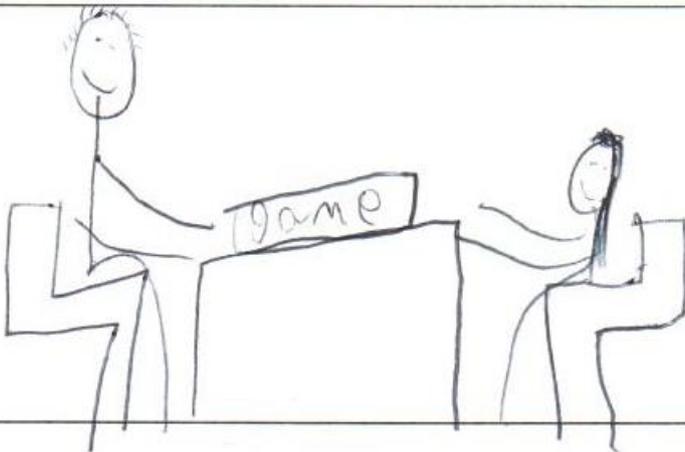
Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.



Sandy
Aged 10
HMP Grampian



Anonymous
Aged 6
HMP Grampian



Anonymous
Aged 9
HMP Grampian

I love to play
and the family hub is so helpful and kind.
😊 Great feedback 😊

Anonymous
Aged 11
HMP Grampian

<p>Do you like the toys in the visitors' centre?</p> <p>Place a sticker on the face</p> <p>Happy OK Sad</p> 	<p>What did you do in the visitors' centre today?</p> <p>Play <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Draw <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Read <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Talk <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Are the staff in the visitors' centre friendly?</p> <p>Place a sticker on the face</p> <p>Happy OK Sad</p> 
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Guidance

This would be a white board in the VC with stickers for the children to use (in some prisons it may have to be within the visits hall following



Scotland's Prison Visitors' Centres



@HMPJustVisiting



Prison Visitors' Centres in Scotland

