



# **PRISONERS OVER FIFTY YEARS OF AGE 2017**



**16<sup>th</sup> Survey Bulletin**

**Research, Strategy and Innovation**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### ***Prevalence***

Overall, one in five prisoners (20%) reported being over fifty years of age.

### ***Custodial History***

Under half of prisoners over fifty (46%) had 'never' previously served a prison sentence before, and just over one third had served between 1 and 5 sentences (36%).

### ***Community Sentencing***

Under a quarter (24%) of prisoners over fifty have served a sentence in the community, compared with 45% of all other prisoners. One in ten (10%) have received a custodial sentence as a result of breaching a community sentence, compared with 32% of all other prisoners.

### ***Atmosphere & Relationships***

A similar percentage of prisoners over fifty (88%) as all other prisoners (87%) described the atmosphere in their hall/dormitory in positive terms. They likewise reported positive relations with prisoners and officers in their hall (96% and 95% respectively), comparable to all other prisoners (96% and 92% respectively).

### ***Drug Use***

Just on one in seven of prisoners over fifty (14%) reported that drug taking was a problem for them on the outside, compared with two fifths of all other prisoners (41%).

Of prisoners over fifty, one in six (16%) were under the influence of drugs at the time of their offence, compared with two fifths of all other prisoners (43%).

One in ten committed their offence to get money for drugs (10%) and were receiving treatment for their drug use before prison (8%), less than all other prisoners (16% and 21% respectively).

### ***Injected Drugs in Prison***

One in twenty prisoners over fifty reported that they had injected drugs in prison (4% n=21) compared with all other prisoners (5% n= 107).

### ***New Psychoactive Substances***

One in twenty of prisoners over fifty (5%) reported having used new psychoactive substances prior to coming in to prison, compared with all other prisoners (22%). Around one in twelve prisoners (8%) over fifty reported using new psychoactive substances during their time in prison (compared to 20% of all other prisoners).

### ***Prescribed Methadone***

Over a tenth of prisoners over fifty (12% n=36) reported being prescribed methadone compared with 22% (n=336) of all other prisoners.

### ***Alcohol Use***

Just over one fifth of prisoners over fifty (22%) reported being drunk at the time of their offence, compared with 43% of all other prisoners reporting in the survey.

One fifth (22%) reported that drinking affected their relationship with their family, compared to 35% of all other prisoners. A quarter of prisoners over fifty were assessed for alcohol use upon their admission to prison (24%) and one in ten had received help/treatment for alcohol problems during their sentence (12%).

### ***Smoking***

Just over half of prisoners over fifty reported that they smoked (51%), with 43% stating that they wanted to give up smoking. A higher proportion of all other prisoners responded in the same way (72% and 55%).

### ***Mental Health & Well-Being***

Prisoners were asked questions on mental health through an instrument known as the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale (WEMWBS). Eight in ten prisoners over fifty said that they have ‘been able to make up my own mind about things’ (83%) and have ‘been dealing with problems well’ (79%), and over six in ten have ‘been feeling good about myself’ (65%).

### ***Disability & Long-Term Illness***

Under two fifths of prisoners over fifty (37%) reported having a disability, with 79% of those prisoners reporting that staff knew of their disability; just under half (49%) reported having a long-term illness, with 76% of those prisoners reporting that staff knew of their long-term illness. This is compared to a third of all other prisoners (32%) reporting having a disability and 31% having a long-term illness, with staff knowing of 67% and 62% of those instances respectively.

### ***Exercise & Recreation***

Two fifths of prisoners over fifty (40%) reported having thirty minutes of moderate exercise one or less times per week, compared to 26% of all other prisoners. Two thirds of prisoners over fifty (67%) reported never going to the gym on a weekly basis, compared with 44% of all other prisoners. Three in ten prisoners over fifty (30%) reported not going to recreation on a weekly basis, compared to 17% of all other prisoners.

### ***Knife Crime***

Just under one fifth of prisoners over fifty (18%) reported ever carrying a knife, compared to 46% of all other prisoners. A quarter of prisoners over fifty (24%) reported being a victim of knife crime and a fifth (20%) reported having used a knife to injure someone (compared to 40% and 34% of all other prisoners respectively).

One fifth (21%) of prisoners over fifty said they had been convicted of a knife crime,

compared to over a third of all other prisoners (37%). Two fifths (41%) said if they were cautioned for carrying a knife that would stop them, compared to 42% of all other prisoners.

### ***Cleanliness***

More prisoners over fifty rated the cleanliness of prison facilities with a positive score when compared with all other prisoners: halls (90% vs. 83%); toilet area (91% vs. 82%); showers (88% vs. 80%); and cell when first moved in (78% vs. 58%).

### ***Bullying***

A similar percentage of prisoners over fifty reported being bullied by another prisoner or group of prisoners in the last month (15% compared to 16%).

### ***Safety***

One in eight (13%) of prisoners over fifty reported fearing for their safety in prison during the last month, compared with 18% of all other prisoners. Of those prisoners over fifty who reported fearing for their safety: 28% reported that another prisoner made them fear for their safety; 97% a non-uniformed member of staff; 52% a group of prisoners; 87% a group of prison officers (excluding control and restraint); and 80% a prison officer.

### ***Domestic Violence***

Just under a fifth of prisoners over fifty (17%) have been involved in violence against their spouse or partner, compared with all other prisoners (25%).

One in seven over fifty (14%) had at some point been convicted of an offence involving violence against their spouse or partner compared to all other prisoners (21%).

One fifth of prisoners over fifty (21%) had been a victim of violence from their spouse or partner, compared to a third (33%) of all other prisoners. As a child, just under a third of prisoners over fifty (32%) witnessed violence

between their parents/carers, compared to 42% of all other prisoners.

### ***Prison Rules***

Seventy-seven percent of prisoners over fifty reported understanding how to access the Complaints Procedure, with just under a third experiencing difficulties in accessing a copy of the Prison Rules (31%).

Around four fifths of prisoners over fifty gave a positive response with regards to staff dealing with issues fairly (87%) and that staff offered to help them deal with their problems (79%), which was higher than the perceptions of all other prisoners (74% and 69% respectively).

### ***In Care as a Child***

One in seven prisoners (15%) over fifty reported being in care as a child compared to 29% of all other prisoners.

Of those who reported being in care as a child, half (50%) of prisoners over fifty were still in care at the age of sixteen, compared to 58% of all other prisoners.

### ***Preparation for Release***

Fewer prisoners over fifty knew about Throughcare Support Services compared with other prisoners (26% as opposed to 45%). Similarly, fewer prisoners over fifty had accessed services based in the prison to help them prepare for release (21% vs. 30%).

## ***Introduction***

This Bulletin, which deals specifically with prisoners over fifty held by the Scottish Prison Service, is one of a number of thematic commentaries presenting the key findings from the 2017 Prisoner Survey. The Prisoner Survey was introduced to the Scottish Prison Service in 1990 as a mechanism to inform and support the Service's business planning process. The focus of the Survey has expanded over the years.

The Survey continues to focus upon the core elements of prison life: living conditions, family contact, healthcare, relationships, atmosphere and perceived safety. The Survey informs and shapes change by contributing to establishment and corporate business plans.

The Survey was carried out between July and August 2017 on an establishment-by-establishment basis. Prisoners' views were collected by means of a self-completion questionnaire, which was distributed and collected personally by the members of the Survey team or by local staff. The Survey involves all prisoners and all establishments.

The Sixteenth Survey achieved an overall prisoner response rate of 46%.

A total of 587 prisoners over fifty participated in this Survey (20% of those who responded to the survey). Of those:

- 95% male, 5% female;
- 58% 50-59 years old, 31% 60-69 years old, and 11% 70 years old or over.

## ***Custodial History***

Respondents' remand and custodial sentence history is outlined in Table 1. This shows that prisoners over fifty were most likely to report having never been on remand (45%), followed by 1 to 5 times (35%). Just under half of prisoners over fifty (46%) had never previously served a prison sentence, followed by just over a third (36%) having served between 1 to 5 sentences.

<b>Table 1. Prisoners Over Fifty 'Custodial History'</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>1-5 Times</b>	<b>6-10 Times</b>	<b>Over 10 Times</b>
<b>Number of times previously on remand</b>	45	35	12	8
<b>Number of times previously on a sentence</b>	46	36	8	10

Compared to all other prisoners, a greater percentage of prisoners over fifty reported never having previously been on remand or served a prison sentence (45% and 46% respectively, vs. 26% and 32% respectively).

## ***Community Sentencing***

A quarter (24%) of prisoners over fifty have served a sentence in the community, compared with 45% of all other prisoners. One in ten (10%) have received a custodial sentence as a result of breaching a community sentence, compared with a third of all other prisoners (32%).

### *Atmosphere & Relationships*

A similar percentage of prisoners over fifty (88%) as all other prisoners (87%) described the atmosphere in their hall/dormitory in positive terms. They likewise reported positive relations with prisoners and officers in their hall (96% and 95% respectively), comparable to all other prisoners (96% and 92% respectively).

### *Smoking*

Just over half of prisoners over fifty reported that they smoked (51%), with 43% stating that they wanted to give up smoking. A higher proportion of all other prisoners responded in the same way (72% and 55%).

### *Drug Use*

One in seven prisoners over fifty (14%) reported that drug taking was a problem for them on the outside and that they were under the influence of drugs at the time of their offence (16%), compared to two fifths of all other prisoners (41% & 43% respectively).

One in ten committed their offence to get money for drugs (10%) and were receiving treatment for their drug use before prison (8%), less than all other prisoners (16% and 21% respectively).

<b>Table 2. Drug Use</b>	<b>Older Prisoners (%)</b>	<b>All Other Prisoners (%)</b>
My drug taking was a problem for me on the outside	14	41
Under the influence of drugs at the time of my offence	16	43
I committed my offence to get money for drugs	10	16
I was receiving treatment for my drug use before prison	8	21
If I was offered help for my drug problem on the outside I would take it	15	43
If I was offered help for my drug problem in prison I would take it	15	44
I am worried that my drug taking will be a problem when I get out	6	26
I was assessed for drug use upon my admission to prison	18	43
I have been given the chance to receive treatment for drug use during my sentence	13	31
I have received treatment for drug use during my sentence	10	28
If yes, did you find the treatment useful?	87	81

Under a fifth of prisoners over fifty (17%) reported having used illegal drugs in prison, and the majority (82%) of those reported that their drug use has changed during their current period in prison (compared with over two fifths of all other prisoners (44%) and 83% of those having changed).

A tenth of prisoners over fifty (10%) reported to having used illegal drugs in the last month, compared to a quarter (25%) of all other prisoners.

<b>Table 3. Change of Drug Use in Prison</b>	<b>Increased</b>	<b>Decreased</b>	<b>Same Use, Different Drugs</b>	<b>Started Using in Prison</b>	<b>Now Stopped Using</b>
<b>Older prisoners</b>	19	21	10	13	37
<b>All Other Prisoners</b>	13	33	12	12	30

### ***Injected Drugs in Prison***

One in twenty prisoners over fifty reported that they had injected drugs in prison (4% n=21) compared with all other prisoners (5% n= 107).

### ***New Psychoactive Substances***

Four times as many prisoners under fifty (22%) reported having used new psychoactive substances prior to coming in to prison, compared with those over fifty (5%). A similar ratio of prisoners over fifty reported using new psychoactive substances during their time in prison (8% compared to 20%).

### ***Prescribed Methadone***

Over a tenth of prisoners over fifty (12% n=36) reported being prescribed methadone compared with 22% (n=336) of all other prisoners.

<b>Table 4. Naloxone Use</b>	<b>Prisoners Over Fifty (%)</b>	<b>All Other Prisoners (%)</b>
Have you ever been supplied take-home Naloxone?	6	21
Have you been supplied take-home Naloxone in the past 12 months?	2	9
If yes, were you supplied take-home Naloxone in prison?	50	64
If yes, were you supplied take-home Naloxone in the community?	88	64
Have you ever administered Naloxone to someone else?	4	10
If yes, was this in the last 12 months?	69	35
Has someone ever administered Naloxone to you?	3	8
If yes, was this in the last 12 months?	50	39



## *Alcohol Use*

As shown in Table 5, prisoners were asked a number of questions about alcohol use/dependency inside and outside prison. Just over one fifth of prisoners over fifty (22%) reported being drunk at the time of their offence, compared with 43% of all other prisoners reporting in the survey.

One fifth (22%) reported that drinking affected their relationship with their family, compared to 35% of all other prisoners.

A quarter of prisoners over fifty were assessed for alcohol use upon their admission to prison (24%) and one in ten had received help/treatment for alcohol problems during their sentence (12%).

<b>Table 5. Views on Alcohol</b>	<b>Older Prisoners (%)</b>	<b>All Other Prisoners (%)</b>
<b>I was drunk at the time of my offence</b>	22	43
<b>My drinking affected my ability to hold down a job</b>	11	19
<b>My drinking affected my relationship with my family</b>	22	35
<b>If I was offered help in prison for alcohol problems I would take it</b>	30	41
<b>If I was offered help on the outside for alcohol problems I would take it</b>	31	39
<b>I am worried that alcohol will be a problem for me when I get out</b>	11	21
<b>Have you used alcohol in prison in the last month</b>	2(n=12)	4(n=82)
<b>I was assessed for alcohol use on my admission to prison</b>	24	30
<b>I have been given the chance to receive treatment for alcohol problems during my sentence</b>	19	23
<b>I have received treatment for alcohol problems during my sentence</b>	12	15
<b>If yes, did you find this treatment useful?</b>	86	85

Prisoners over fifty demonstrated less serious drinking habits than other prisoners: one in seven (14%) reported having a drink containing alcohol in the community four or more times a week, and 14% reported consuming 10 or more such drinks on a typical day when drinking in the community (compared with 19% and 34% respectively).

<b>Table 6. Weekly/Daily or Almost Daily Drinking Habits</b>	<b>Older Prisoners (%)</b>	<b>All Other Prisoners (%)</b>
Six or more drinks on one occasion	30	44
Not able to stop drinking once you had started, during the last year	13	26
Failed to do what was normally expected of you because of drinking, during the last year	10	20
Needed a first drink in the morning to get yourself going after a heavy drinking session, during the last year	11	19
Feeling of guilt or remorse after drinking, during the last year	12	22
Unable to remember what happened the night before because of drinking, during the last year	14	21

### ***Disability & Long-Term Illness***

Under two fifths of prisoners over fifty (37%) reported having a disability, with 79% of those prisoners reporting that staff knew of their disability; just under half (49%) reported having a long-term illness, with 76% of those prisoners reporting that staff knew of their long-term illness.

This is compared to a third of all other prisoners (32%) reporting having a disability and 31% having a long-term illness, with staff knowing of 67% and 62% of those instances respectively.

<b>Table 8. Do you require assistance in managing any of the following daily activities?</b>	<b>Older Prisoners (%)</b>	<b>All Other Prisoners (%)</b>
<b>Transferring/moving around the prison</b>	8	6
<b>Washing/personal care</b>	3	3
<b>Toilet use</b>	2	2
<b>Dressing</b>	1	2
<b>Collecting meals</b>	5	3
<b>Eating meals</b>	3	2

Seven in ten prisoners over fifty (70%) who reported requiring assistance also reported receiving said assistance, compared to 34% of all other prisoners.

### ***Mental Health & Well-Being***

Prisoners were asked questions on mental health through an instrument known as the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale (WEMWBS). Eight in ten prisoners over fifty said that they have ‘been able to make up my own mind about things’ (83%) and have ‘been dealing with problems well (79%), and over six in ten have ‘been feeling good about myself’ (65%).

<b>Table 7. Mental Health &amp; Well-Being</b>	<b>Older Prisoners (%)</b>	<b>All Other Prisoners (%)</b>
<b>I’ve been feeling optimistic about the future</b>	61	68
<b>I’ve been feeling useful</b>	57	56
<b>I’ve been feeling relaxed</b>	69	65
<b>I’ve been feeling interested in other people</b>	56	54
<b>I’ve had energy to spare</b>	56	66
<b>I’ve been dealing with problems well</b>	79	72
<b>I’ve been thinking clearly</b>	81	74
<b>I’ve been feeling good about myself</b>	65	62
<b>I’ve been feeling close to other people</b>	52	51
<b>I’ve been feeling confident</b>	69	65
<b>I’ve been able to make up my own mind</b>	83	84
<b>I’ve been feeling loved</b>	50	52
<b>I’ve been interested in new things</b>	63	64
<b>I’ve been feeling cheerful</b>	65	64

### ***Exercise & Recreation***

Two fifths of prisoners over fifty (40%) reported having thirty minutes of moderate exercise one or less times per week, compared to 26% of all other prisoners. Two thirds of prisoners over fifty (67%) reported never going to the gym on a weekly basis, compared with 44% of all other prisoners. Three in ten prisoners over fifty (30%) reported not going to recreation on a weekly basis, compared to 17% of all other prisoners.

### *Knife Crime*

Just under one fifth of prisoners over fifty (18%) reported ever carrying a knife, compared to 46% of all other prisoners. A quarter of prisoners over fifty (24%) reported being a victim of knife crime, and a fifth (20%) reported having used a knife to injure someone (compared to 40% and 34% of all other prisoners respectively).

One fifth (21%) of prisoners over fifty said they had been convicted of a knife crime, compared to over a third of all other prisoners (37%). Two fifths (41%) said if they were cautioned for carrying a knife that would stop them, compared to 42% of all other prisoners.

<b>Table 9. Knife Crime</b>	<b>Older Prisoners (%)</b>	<b>All Other Prisoners (%)</b>
Have you ever carried a knife?	18	46
Have you carried a knife in the 12 months before coming into prison?	9	24
Have you been a victim of knife crime?	24	40
Have you ever used a knife to injure someone?	20	34
Have you ever been cautioned by the Police for carrying a knife?	11	34
Have you ever been convicted of a knife crime?	21	37
If you were cautioned for carrying a knife would this stop you? Yes?	41	42
Are you a gang member? Yes?	3	8
Will you ever carry a knife again? Yes?	6	18

### *Cleanliness*

More prisoners over fifty rated the cleanliness of prison facilities with a positive score when compared with all other prisoners.

<b>Table 10. Positive Scores for Cleanliness</b>	<b>Prisoners Over Fifty (%)</b>	<b>All Other Prisoners (%)</b>
Hall	90	83
Toilet Area	91	82
Showers	88	80
Cell, when you first moved in	78	58

## ***Bullying***

A similar percentage of prisoners over fifty reported being bullied by another prisoner or group of prisoners in the last month (15% compared to 16%).

## ***Safety***

One in eight (13%) of prisoners over fifty reported fearing for their safety in prison during the last month, compared with 18% of all other prisoners. Of those prisoners over fifty who reported fearing for their safety: 28% reported that another prisoner made them fear for their safety; 97% a non-uniformed member of staff; 52% a group of prisoners; 87% a group of prison officers (excluding control and restraint); and 80% a prison officer.

## ***Domestic Violence***

Just under a fifth of prisoners over fifty (17%) have been involved in violence against their spouse or partner, compared with all other prisoners (25%). One in seven of prisoners over fifty (14%) had at some point been convicted of an offence involving violence against their spouse or partner compared to all other prisoners (21%).

One fifth of prisoners over fifty (21%) had been a victim of violence from their spouse or partner, compared to a third (33%) of all other prisoners. As a child, just under a third of prisoners over fifty (32%) witnessed violence between their parents/carers, compared to 42% of all other prisoners.

## ***Prison Rules***

77% of prisoners over fifty reported understanding how to access the Complaints Procedure, with just under a third experiencing difficulties in accessing a copy of the Prison Rules (31%). Around four fifths of prisoners over fifty gave a positive response with regards to staff dealing with issues fairly (87%) and that staff offered to help them deal with their problems (79%), which was higher than the perceptions of all other prisoners (74% and 69% respectively).

<b>Table 11. Positive Responses to Prison Rules</b>	<b>Older Prisoners (%)</b>	<b>All Other Prisoners (%)</b>
<b>When I raise an issue with staff it is dealt with fairly</b>	87	74
<b>Staff offer support to help me deal with my problems</b>	79	69
<b>I believe I am viewed by staff as a valued individual in the prison</b>	70	56
<b>I believe that staff care about my wellbeing</b>	76	64

### ***In Care as a Child***

One I seven of prisoners over fifty (15%) reported being in care as a child compared to 29% of all other prisoners.

Of those who reported being in care as a child, half (50%) of prisoners over fifty were still in care at the age of sixteen, compared to 58% of all other prisoners.

### ***Preparation for Release***

Fewer older prisoners knew about Throughcare Support Services, compared with other prisoners (26% as opposed to 45%). Similarly, fewer prisoners over fifty had accessed services based in the prison to help them prepare for release (21% vs. 30%).

## ***Conclusion***

The thematic analysis of the 16<sup>th</sup> Prisoner Survey 2017 presents a complex picture for the experiences of prisoners over fifty, as compared with the rest of the prison population. In some fields, such as positive experiences of their hall's atmosphere, relations with staff/other prisoners and mental health (with a few exceptions), prisoners over fifty demonstrate little difference from other prisoners. On the other hand, in areas such as drug and alcohol use, knife crime and domestic violence, prisoners over fifty report considerably lower problems and challenges.

Considerably fewer prisoners over fifty reported that their drug taking was a problem on the outside (14% vs. 41% of all other prisoners) and a similar proportions reported being under the influence of drugs at the time of their offence (16% vs. 43%). However, while only 17% of prisoners over fifty reported having used illegal drugs in prison, it is notable that a greater percentage of those prisoners' drug use increased (19% vs. 13%), and a lower percentage decreased (21% vs. 33%).

More consistently, fewer prisoners over fifty reported being drunk at the time of their offence (22% vs. 43%) and fewer reported that drinking had a negative impact upon their lives: 11% reported that drinking affected their ability to hold down a job (compared to 19% of all other prisoners), and 22% reported that drinking affected their relationship with their family (compared to 35% of all other prisoners). Drinking habits amongst prisoners over fifty, along with their adverse effects, were also reported as lower than all other prisoners, including an inability to stop drinking once started (13% vs. 26%) and a failure to do what was normally expected because of drinking (10% vs. 20%).

With regard to mental health and well-being, there was no clear pattern to the responses of prisoners over fifty when compared to all other prisoners: in general, the percentages of positive responses were relatively proximate ('feeling use': 57% vs. 56%; 'feeling close to other people': 52% vs. 51%). Prisoners over fifty gave appreciably more positive responses to 'thinking clearly' (81% vs. 74%) and appreciably fewer positive responses to 'feeling optimistic about the future' (61% vs. 68%) and 'having energy to spare' (56% vs. 66%).

This issue of energy is paralleled by the physical well-being of prisoners over fifty: they reported slightly higher instances of disability (37% vs. 32%) and considerably higher instances of long-term illness (49% vs. 31%). However, of note is the fact that a greater percentage of staff knew of the disabilities and long-term illnesses of prisoners over fifty (79% and 76%), compared to the disabilities and long-term illnesses of other prisoners (67% and 62%).

Following on from this, fewer prisoners over fifty made use of exercise and recreation: 40% only had thirty minutes of moderate exercise once or less times per week (compared to 26% of all other prisoners); 67% did not go to the gym on a weekly basis (compared to 44% of all other prisoners); and 30% did not go to recreation on a weekly basis (compared to 17% of all other prisoners).