



LANCASHIRE
VIOLENCE REDUCTION
NETWORK

Distraction materials at Lancaster Farms
LVRN Evaluation Report
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NIHR | Applied Research Collaboration
North West Coast

Lancaster
University 

Summary of findings

HMP Lancaster Farms is a category C male prison, located in the North West of England.

A feedback survey concerning distraction materials was completed by 29 respondents detained at Lancaster Farms during 2024.

The findings indicate the following of note:

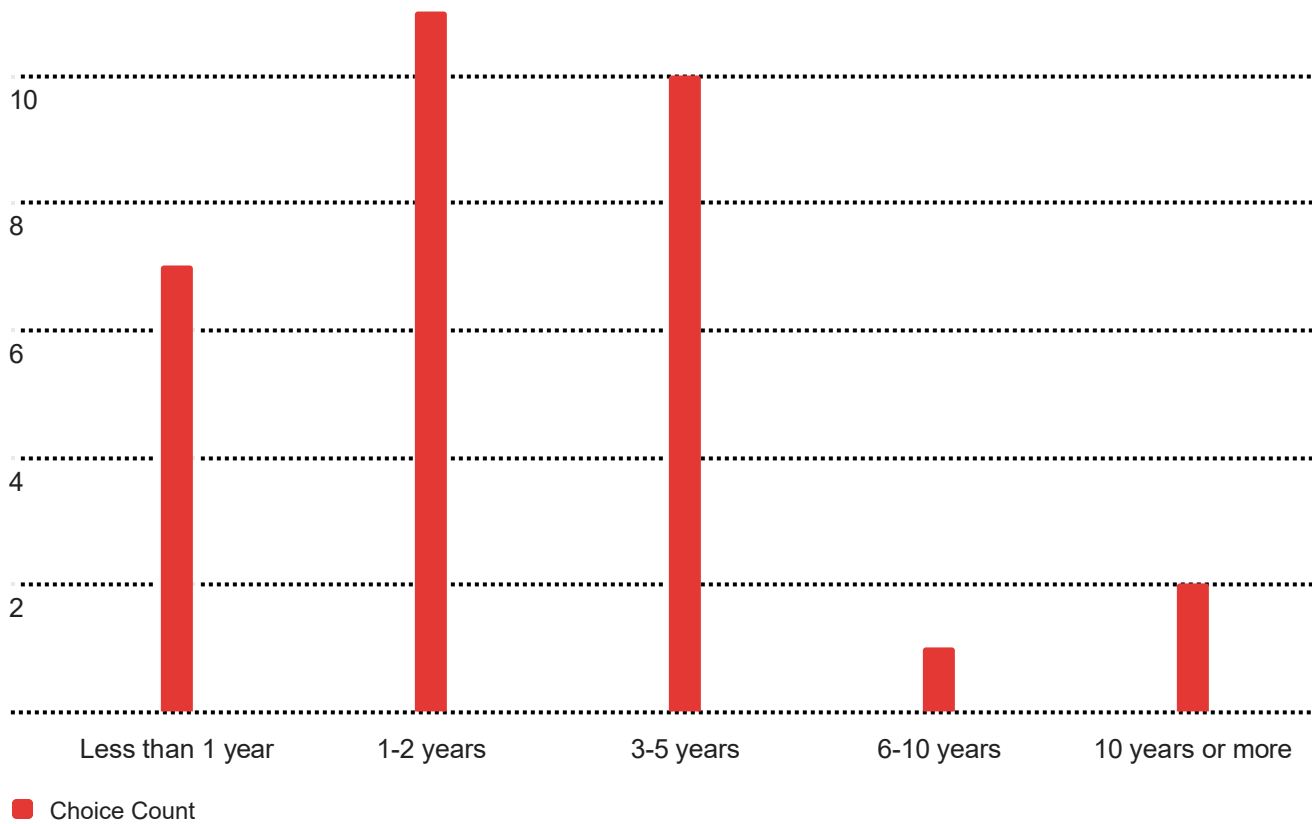
- The majority of respondents (90%, n=26) had been in custody for up to five years on their current sentence. This was not the first time in custody for the majority (63%, n=19).
- When asked if they work with the Neurodiversity lead and/or have a diagnosis of neurodiversity, just over half said no (54%, n=15).
- People mainly found out about the distraction materials through Safer Custody, or other staff members including their keyworker.
- Around a third of respondents said that they had access to materials at all times (31%, n=9).
- The majority of respondents who answered the question 'Do you think it would help you if they were freely available?' agreed that materials should be available at all times (96%, n=26).
- When asked which materials they find most useful, the most popular were matchstick models (25%, n=17), radios (21%, n=14), paint by numbers (16%, n=11) and other craft activities (9%, n=6). Fidget toys, stress balls, handheld games, puzzles and Sudoku were also helpful to respondents.
- When asked why people found the items helpful, notable responses included *'They take my mind off things bothering me and help pass time.'* Also, *'Keeps me busy'* and *'Reduces stress.'*
- When asked what other items respondents would like, suggestions were *'Guitar'* and *'Guides for matchstick models'*.

Recommendations:

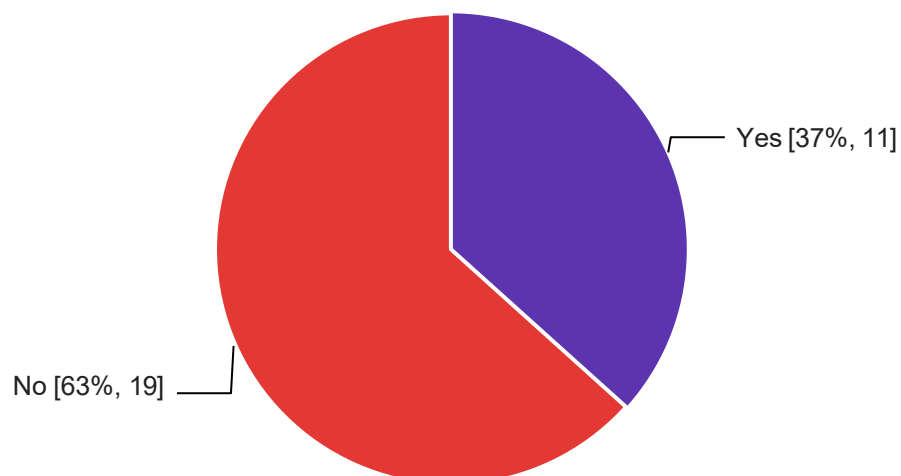
- There is a need for recognition of the benefit of having distraction items made available for detained people, in particular those who identify as neurodivergent.
- There is a need for wider and improved access to these materials. A recommendation is that there should be more choice, and prisoners should be able to access them more of the time.
- Access to items should be tailored to individual requirements, such as musical instruments.
- An important finding is that just under half of all respondents had worked with a Neurodiversity lead. Neurodiversity Support Managers have been in place across all public prisons in England and Wales since 2022. It is important to recognize the importance of these key staff in acknowledging and meeting the requirements of neurodivergent prisoners, and support them to build on their transformative work thus far.

Detailed responses

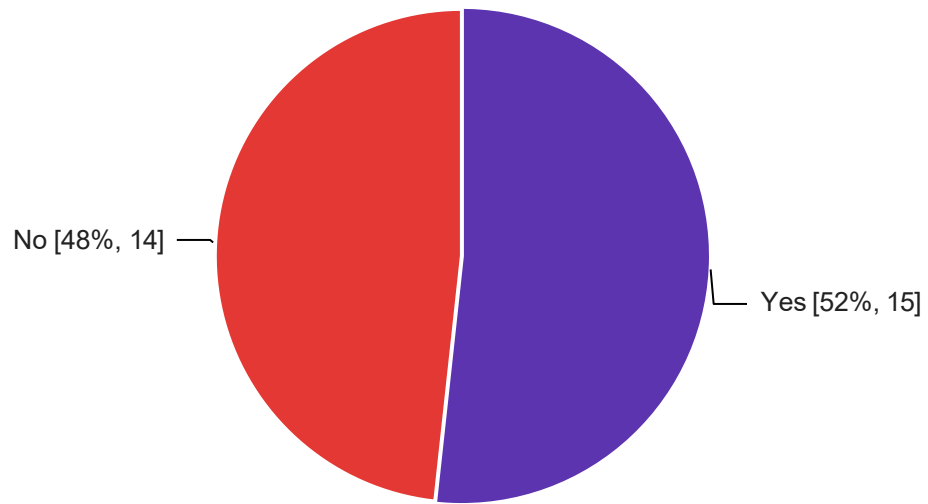
Q1 – How many years have you been in custody on your current sentence?



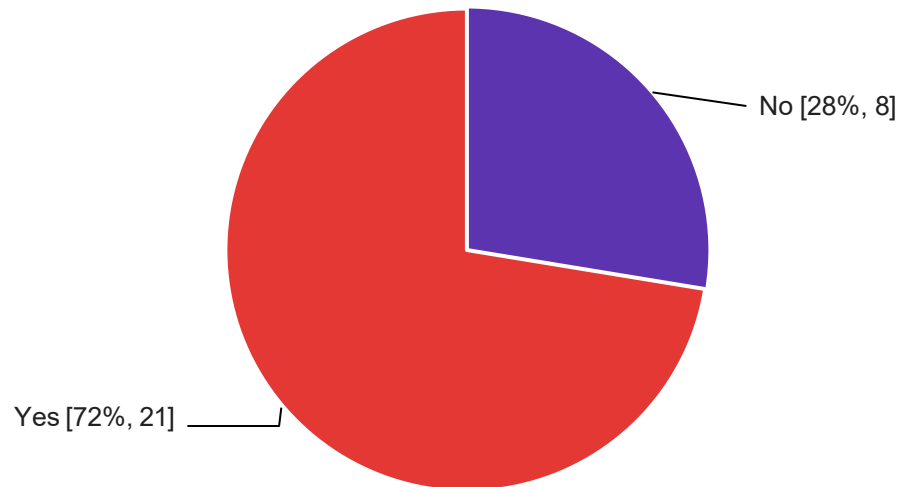
Q2 - Is this your first time in custody?



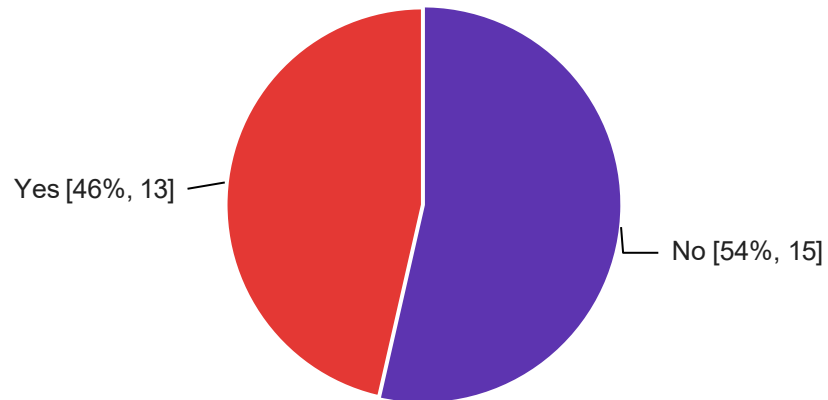
Q3 - Are you a care leaver?



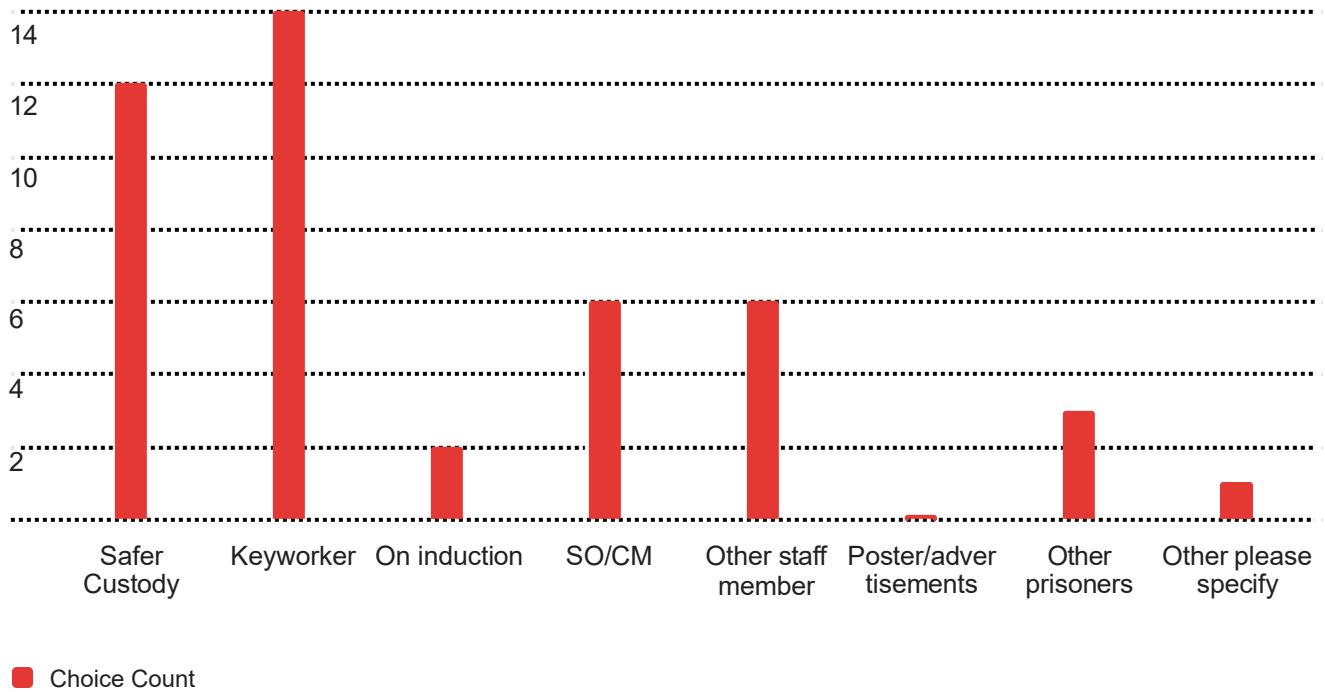
Q4 - Have you ever been on an ACCT or CSIP?



Q5 - Do you work with the Neurodiversity lead and/or have a diagnosis of neurodiversity e.g. ADHD, Autism?



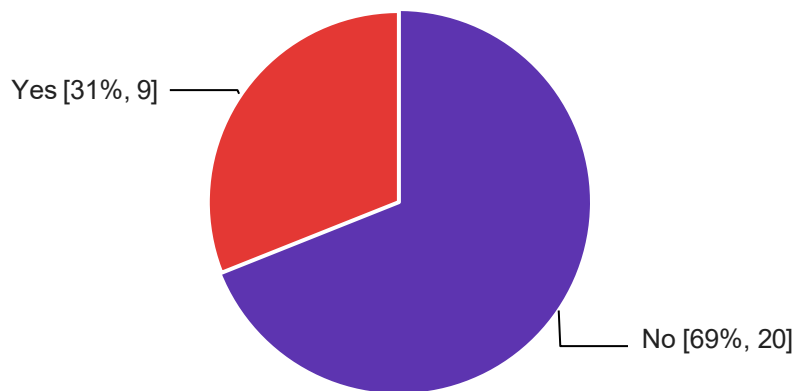
Q6 – How did you find out about the distraction items being available at Lancaster Farms? - Selected Choice



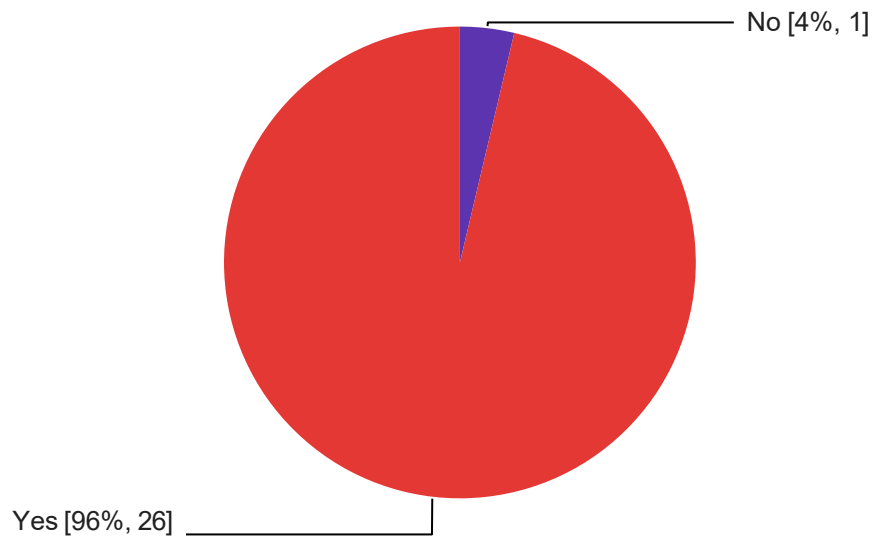
Other please specify - Text

Neuro Diversity Lead

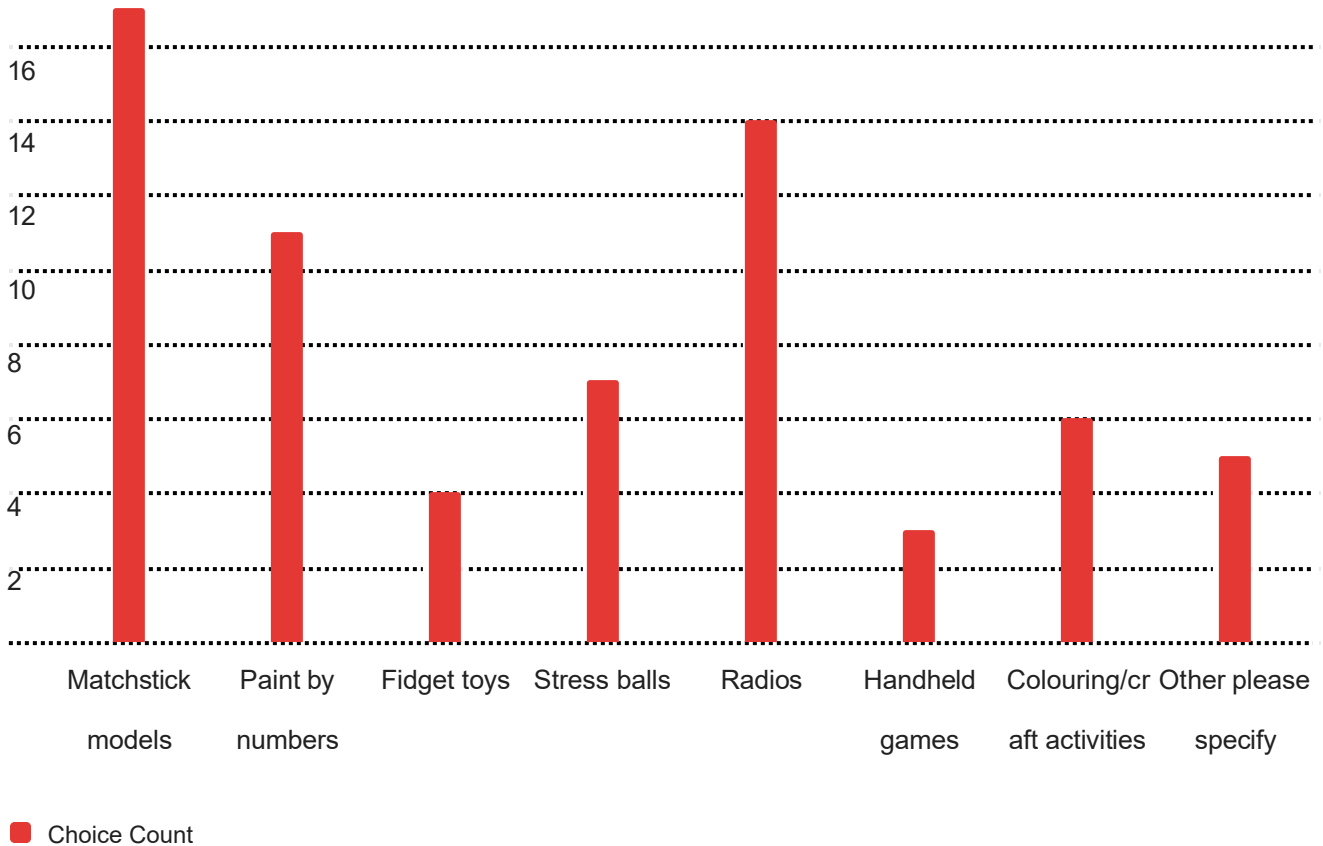
Q7 - Are distraction materials available to you at all times?



Q8 - If no, do you think it would help you if they were freely available?



Q9 - What do you find most useful? - Selected Choice



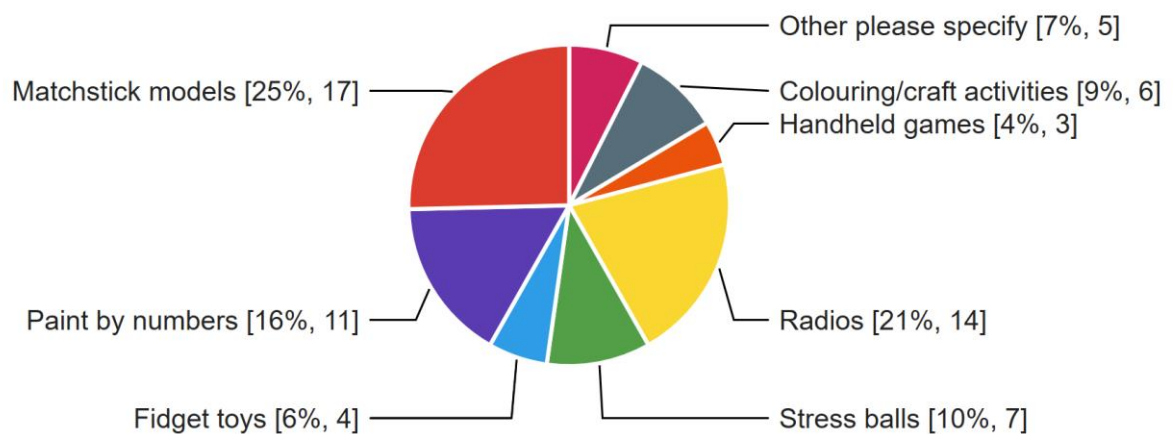
Other please specify

Puzzles

All

Sudoku

Q9 - What do you find most useful? - Selected Choice



What are the benefits of using distraction materials for you? How do they impact you?

They take my mind off things bothering me and help pass time. Good impact on me

When I am on basic

Helps to reduce thoughts and helps with stress

I enjoy doing puzzles it gives me purpose

Good

Keeps my brain busy

Keeps me busy

Concentrate on something

Do you have any further comments or recommendations? Can you suggest items that could be ordered?

Have more

More items like matchsticks

Guitar, guides for matchstick model