



Cabinet Office

Triennial Review of The Big Lottery Fund

Summary of responses to Call for Evidence

Report Annex A

June 2014

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Publication date: June 2014

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Contents

Section No.	Topic	Page No.
Section 1	Introduction	6
Section 2	Who responded to the Call for Evidence?	8
Section 3	Views on the functions of the Big Lottery Fund	13
Section 4	Views on the form of the Big Lottery Fund	16
Section 5	Views on the effectiveness of the Big Lottery Fund as a grant making body	20
Section 6	The Big Lottery Fund from the customer's perspective	26
Section 7	Views on how well the Big Lottery Fund is managed as an organisation	34
Section 8	In conclusion	38

List of Tables

No.	Title	Page No.
1	Relationship of survey respondents to the Big Lottery Fund	8
2	Range of grants received from the Fund by survey respondents	9
3	Where respondents work or are based	10
4	Organisations that responded to the Call for Evidence	11
5	Do these functions accurately describe what the Big Lottery Fund does?	13
6	Do you think these functions are still needed?	14
7	Do you think the Big Lottery Fund performs any additional functions?	14
8	Do you think these additional functions are still needed?	15
9	The following characteristics are all features of NDPBs. Which of these do you think are ESSENTIAL for the Big Lottery Fund to operate?	16
10	Do you think an NDPB is the most efficient model for the Fund, or would it be more efficient as another model?	18
11	Do you think that the work of the Fund DOES and SHOULD contribute to Government policy?	19
12	Do you think the Fund strikes the right balance between awarding small grants and funding larger, more strategic programmes?	21
13	Overall, how effective do you think the Big Lottery Fund is as a grant-making body?	22
14	How successful do you think the Fund is in its mission to “bring improvements to communities and the lives of people most in need”?	23
15	How well do you think the Fund works with the voluntary and community sector?	24
16	How well do you think the Fund works with other partners?	25
17	How satisfied are you with your interactions with the Fund?	26
18	When you applied to the Big Lottery Fund for a grant, how much time, attention and support did Fund staff give you through the application process?	27
19	In your experience, is the Big Lottery Fund application process PROPORTIONATE to the grant type and amount being sought?	28
20	If you were successful with at least one funding application to the Big Lottery Fund, what's your experience of HOW LONG the application process takes, from submission through to receiving the grant funding?	29
21	Whatever your answer to the above question, how did the time it took to receive your funding compare with how long the Fund had advised you it would take?	30
22	In your experience, how has the amount of grant management, monitoring and evaluation requested by the Fund been?	31

No.	Title	Page No.
23	If you have ever been unsuccessful in an application for Big Lottery Fund funding, did you feel that you were provided with an adequate explanation and useful feedback?	32
24	Which Lottery distributors, or other funders, have you or your organisation applied to for funding in the past, whether or not you were successful?	33
25	Do you feel that there is sufficient and strong leadership within the Big Lottery Fund organisation?	34
26	Do you feel that there is an appropriate level of skills, experience, independence and knowledge within the Fund?	35
27	Your views on whether the Fund is open, transparent, accountable and responsive	36
28	In your experience, do the staff and senior management of the Fund promote these three organisational values in their professional conduct?	37
29	In your view, how well does the Big Lottery Fund understand what impact its grants make?	37

Section 1: Introduction

The Triennial Review of the Big Lottery Fund (“the Fund”) was conducted to meet the requirement for all government departments to substantively review their Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs) at least once every three years.

As for all Triennial Reviews, the review team examined whether there is a continuing need for the functions performed by the Big Lottery Fund, and whether the organisation should continue to operate in its current form. Concurrently the review assessed whether the Fund’s control and governance arrangements meet the recognised principles of good corporate governance, and examined the structure, efficiency, and effectiveness of the Fund.

More information about the Public Bodies Reform policy, including background on Triennial Reviews, is available on <https://www.gov.uk/public-bodies-reform>

The Call for Evidence

In order to make a full assessment, the review needed to take into account the views of people who have an involvement with, or interest in, the Fund. A Call for Evidence was therefore designed to obtain customer and stakeholder views on the functions, form, effectiveness and efficiency of the Big Lottery Fund as a grant-making organisation. The answers to this survey supplement the other forms of evidence gathered by the review team, which are outlined in Annex G of the Review report.

The Call for Evidence survey was published online from 15 November 2013 to 10 January 2014 on the consultations page of the Gov.uk website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/big-lottery-fund-triennial-review-call-for-evidence>.

Stakeholders were also given the option to submit their response by email using a Word format of the same questionnaire.

Responses received

The review team received a total of 288 completed surveys (256 online and 32 in Word format) and four written submissions, a total of 292 responses. The content of the emailed questionnaires has been data-entered by the review team to ensure that it is included in all the quantitative analysis of responses. The four submissions were also considered as part of the evidence base for the Review.

Collectively, respondents took the time and trouble to provide over 1,600 additional and sometimes very detailed text comments. These presented a very wide and often conflicting range of opinions among customers and stakeholders of the Fund. All were included in the evidence reviewed by the review team and, where representative, some comments are quoted in the Review report.

Presentation and use of data

This document contains a mixture of tables, charts and text. Its purpose is to factually summarise the 288 responses to the Call for Evidence. The review team’s findings, conclusions and recommendations using the Call for Evidence and other evidence are not included here, but can be found in the main body of the Triennial Review report.

Points to note on how data is presented in this document:

- Each table or chart relates to a specific multiple choice question in the survey questionnaire.
- Survey questions have been grouped into logical chapters, i.e. they are not presented in the same order as in the survey questionnaire. The table numbers therefore do not relate to the survey question numbers.
- There were 39 questions in the survey, but for practical reasons this document does not summarise the answers for all of them. For example, the names of individuals who responded to the survey (Question 3) are not included, nor are the answers to Question 20, which enabled people who are not customers of the Fund to skip a set of questions that were irrelevant to them.
- A minority of key questions in the survey were mandatory, but respondents were able to skip questions that were not relevant to them. The number of answers to each question therefore varies, and is provided in the heading for each table.
- The survey provided “Don’t Know” and “Not Applicable” options on most questions. The number of people choosing these options is included in the total number of responses given for each question, and in the associated chart or table. However, where helpful to do so, the covering text summarises the responses. In some instances the text therefore presents numbers that are different from the associated chart or table.
- Wording of the multiple choices in the survey has been abbreviated on some questions in this report in order to fit the table or chart format used.
- For simplicity in the covering text, percentages have been rounded up or down to the nearest full number, ie. without using decimal places. However, percentages are shown to one decimal place in tables and charts.

Confidentiality

The review team is independent of the Big Lottery Fund and of its sponsors within the Cabinet Office, and is committed to ensuring the confidentiality of responses. Copies of individual completed surveys and submissions will not be shared with the Big Lottery Fund, but of necessity they have been filed by the review team which works in the Cabinet Office.

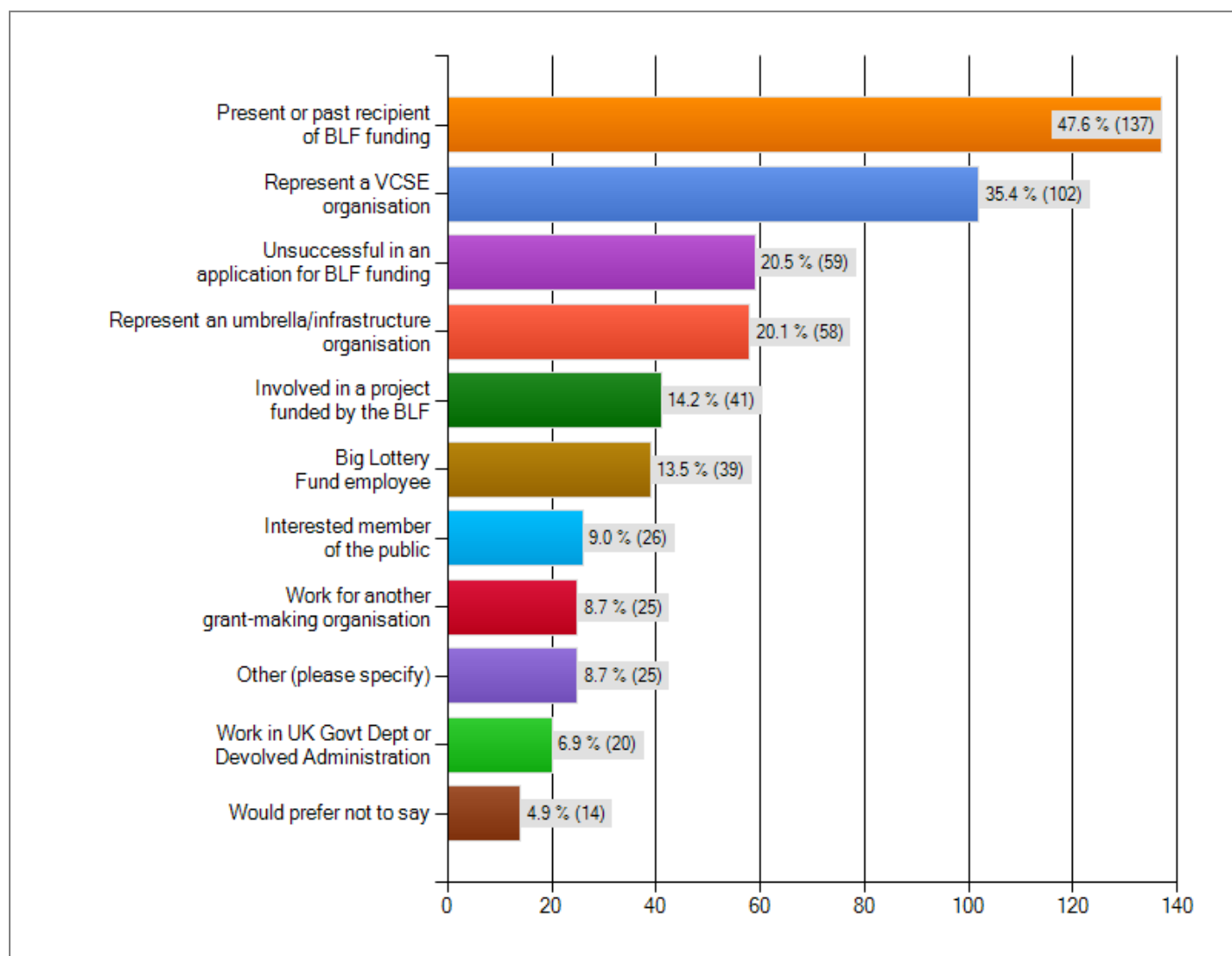
Text responses will be grouped by question and shared with the Fund to inform its 2014 Strategic Framework Review, but these will be anonymised to prevent identification of respondents.

Section 2: Who Responded to the Call for Evidence?

Respondents' relationship to the Fund

Respondents were asked what their relationship is to the Big Lottery Fund, and many chose more than one option.

TABLE 1: Relationship of survey respondents to the Big Lottery Fund (Q1, 288 responses)



The 25 “Other” responses, where an explanation was given by the respondent, included:

- people working in local authorities (8)
- people working in organisations involved with or funded by the Big Lottery Fund (5)
- former employees of the Big Lottery Fund (5)
- organisations currently in the process of applying for Big Lottery Fund grants (2).

114 people responded to the invitation (Question 2) to say how much funding they have received from the Fund and, where relevant, under which funding project/s or programme/s. The answers

show that the respondents are recipients of grants from a wide range of Big Lottery Fund projects and programmes.

TABLE 2: Range of grants received from the Fund by survey respondents

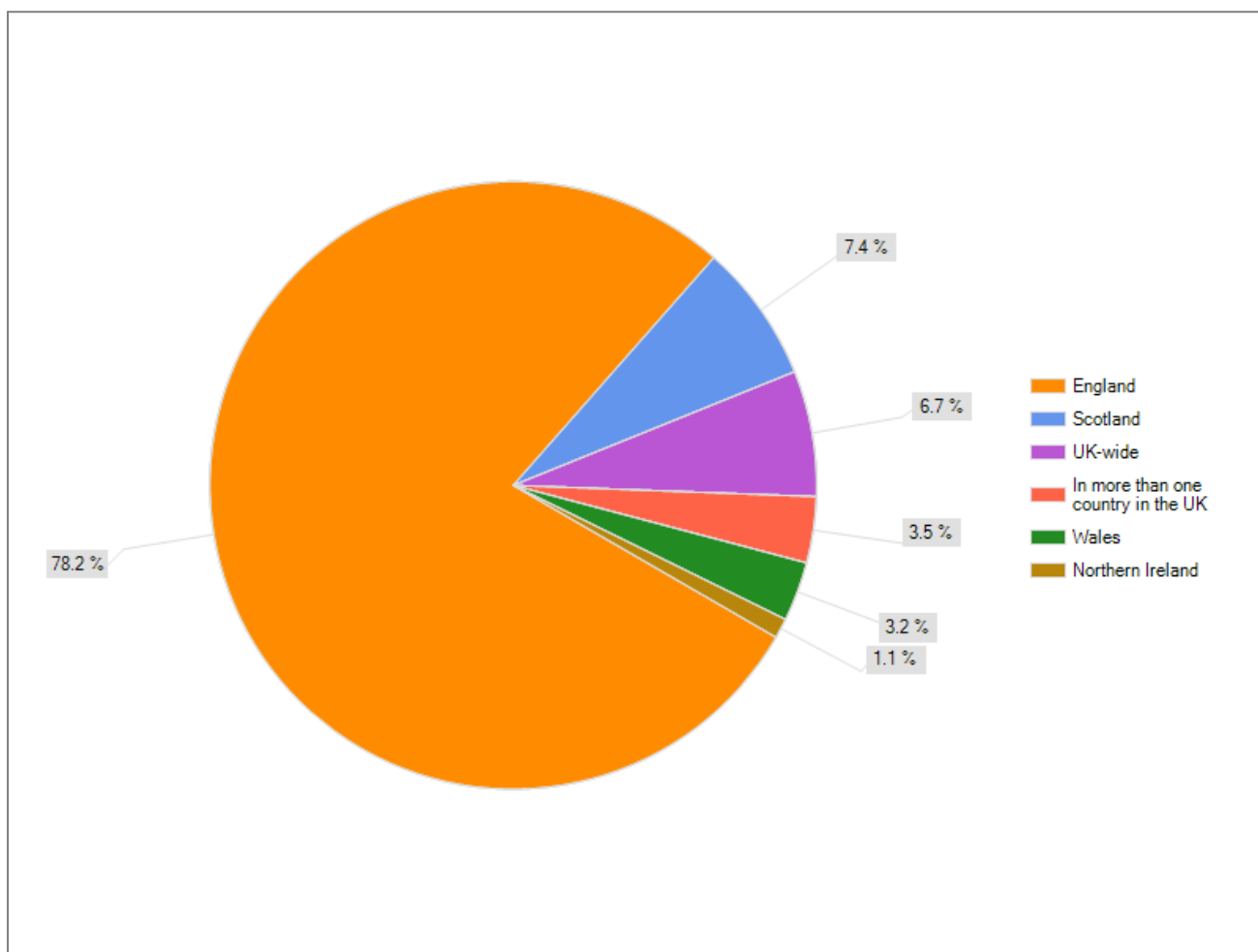
Fund, project or programme	Range of grants received by respondents (totals given, rounded up)
Advice Plus	£350,000
Advice Service Transition Fund	£350,000
Awards for All	£7,000 to £35,000
Awards for All (Wales)	£5,000
BASIS (Building and Sustaining Infrastructure Services)	£200,000 to £1.5 million
Big Local	£1 million
Breathing Places	£10,000
Bright New Futures (Wales)	£860,000
Changing Spaces: Making Local Food Work	£130,000 to £190,000
Communities Living Sustainably	£900,000
Community Voice	£1.4 million
Fair Share	Not given
Family Learning	£157,000
Fulfilling Lives: Aging Better	Not given
Fulfilling Lives: Multiple and Complex Needs	£50,000
Getting Ahead (Wales)	£130,000
International Communities	£500,000 to £2 million
Investing in Ideas (Scotland)	£10,000
Millennium Now Fund	£2 million
Parks for People	Not given
People and Places (Wales)	£290,000
Reaching Communities	£40,000 to £4 million
Reaching Out: Connecting Older People	Not given
Supporting Change and Impact Fund	£600,000 to £970,000
The People's Millions	£60,000
Transforming Local Infrastructure	£180,000 to £400,000
Village SOS	£49,000
Wellbeing Programme	£6 million to £18 million
Young People's Fund	£200,000 to £1.6 million
Young Start	£50,000

Where the respondents come from across the UK

Responses were sought from people and organisations working in all four home nations of the United Kingdom (UK), e.g. the Fund put a link to the survey on each country page on its website as well as on its UK home page.

Although the large majority of responses (78%) came from people and organisations in England and only 12% from the other home nations, a further 10% of responses are from organisations that either work on a UK wide basis, or in more than one country in the UK. These survey responses are not, however, the only source of evidence from the Devolved Administrations, as the review team supplemented the survey evidence for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland through visits, interviews and correspondence.

TABLE 3: Where respondents work or are based (Q5, 288 responses)



Organisations represented in the responses

Excluding survey responses from colleagues in the Big Lottery Fund, government departments and Devolved Administrations, over 100 contributors opted to provide the name of their organisation (see Table 4 overleaf); these demonstrate the wide range of organisations with an interest in the Big Lottery Fund.

TABLE 4: Organisations that responded to the Call for Evidence¹ (listed alphabetically)

4th Cleethorpes Scout Group	Kent CAN
Action in Rural Sussex	Kent County Council
Action with Communities in Rural England	Leeds Community Foundation
Age UK	Leicestershire Centre for Integrated Living (LCiL)
Age UK Lewisham & Southwark	Lincolnshire Community and Voluntary Services
Age UK West Sussex	Liverpool City Council
Alnwick Young People's Association	Living Options Devon
Arley Memorial Hall	Local Government Association
Arts Council England	Local Trust
Arts Council of Northern Ireland	London Borough of Camden
Association of Charitable Foundations	London Funders
Basti Ram	Luton Borough Council
BBC Children in Need	Manchester Alliance for Community Care (MACC)
Bedford Advice Network	Meningitis Research Foundation
Bedford Citizens Advice Bureau	Muslim Public Affairs Committee (MPAC)
Berkshire Community Foundation	National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA)
Birmingham Association of Youth Clubs (BAYC)	National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO)
Bishop of Dorchester	National Council for Voluntary Youth Services (NCVYS)
Blackpool Wyre and Fylde Council for Voluntary Service	Neath Port Talbot Council for Voluntary Service
Bolton at Home	Newcastle upon Tyne
Bolton Council	NICVA
Bournemouth Borough Council	North Bank Forum
Brentwood Council for Voluntary Service	North Yorkshire and York Forum
Brighter Futures	Northside Sporting Group
Burnley, Pendle & Rossendale Council for Voluntary Service	Nottingham Community & Voluntary Services
Bury St Edmunds Volunteer Centre (BSEVC)	Peabody Trust
Cardiff Third Sector Council	Peer Support
Cheshire East Council	Peterborough Rape Crisis Care Group
Chester The GiANT City CIC	Plunkett Foundation
City Life Church, Southampton	Portsmouth City Council
Community Accountancy Self Help (CASH)	Reading Muslim Council
Community Action Suffolk	Remake Scotland
Community and Voluntary Action Blyth Valley (CVABV)	Resolving Chaos CIC
Community Development Foundation	Routeways
Compaid	Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB Group)
Companies House	Royds Community Association
Cornwall Council	Second Step
Council for Voluntary Service Central Lancashire	

¹ This is a list only of the organisation names given by respondents. Other people and organisations responded but chose to remain anonymous. Where people emailed a Word version of the survey but did not include their organisation's name in the survey document, they are excluded from this list. The review team has in some cases researched and expanded the acronyms given by respondents, in order to provide a more reader friendly list of organisations.

Creating Learning Opportunities in Western Somerset (CLOWNS)
 CVS (Community Voluntary Services) Tendring
 Derbyshire Sport
 Devon Community Foundation
 Directory of Social Change
 Discover Filey Development Trust Limited
 Dorset Community Action
 Dorset County Council
 Dudley Council for Voluntary Service
 Dyslexia Lincolnshire
 East Ayrshire Council
 Education Endowment Foundation
 Elcena Jeffers Foundation
 Esmee Fairbairn Foundation
 Essex County Council
 Forces in Mind Trust
 Foresight (North East Lincolnshire) Limited
 Gateshead Council
 Girlguiding Surrey East - Faurefold
 GISDA
 GoodPeople
 Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations (GAVO)
 Hadrian's Wall Farmers' Market at Greenhead
 Halton Borough Council
 Hear Women Organization
 HelpAge International
 Hillside Clubhouse
 Hull City Council
 Hull Community & Voluntary Services Ltd
 Hunts Forum of Voluntary Organisations
 Jobs Education & Training (JET)
 Shropshire Council
 Skelmersdale Community Food Initiative
 Social Enterprise UK
 Social Investment Scotland
 South Yorkshire Funding Advice Bureau (SYFAB)
 Staying Put
 Stevenage Citizens Advice Bureau
 Strings and Things (SATS)
 Suffolk County Council
 Swansea Council for Voluntary Services (SCVS)
 The Association of Panel Members (AOPM)
 The Boys' Brigade - Broomley Grange Outdoor Activity Centre
 The Fragile X Society
 The Harbour Project
 The Knoydart Foundation
 The Lesbian & Gay Foundation (LGF)
 The Peaceful Place Limited
 The Silent Voice Campaign
 Torbay Community Development Trust
 UK Community Foundations
 UK Shared Business Services Ltd (UK SBS)
 UnLtd
 Voluntary Action Leeds and Oblong Leeds
 Voluntary Sector North West
 West Lancashire Council for Voluntary Services
 West Midlands Local Authority Funding Officers Forum
 WHEAT Mentor Support Trust
 Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust (WLCT)
 Wiltshire West District Scout Association
 Wolverhampton City Council
 Women and Children First UK
 York CVS

Section 3: Views on the Functions of the Big Lottery Fund

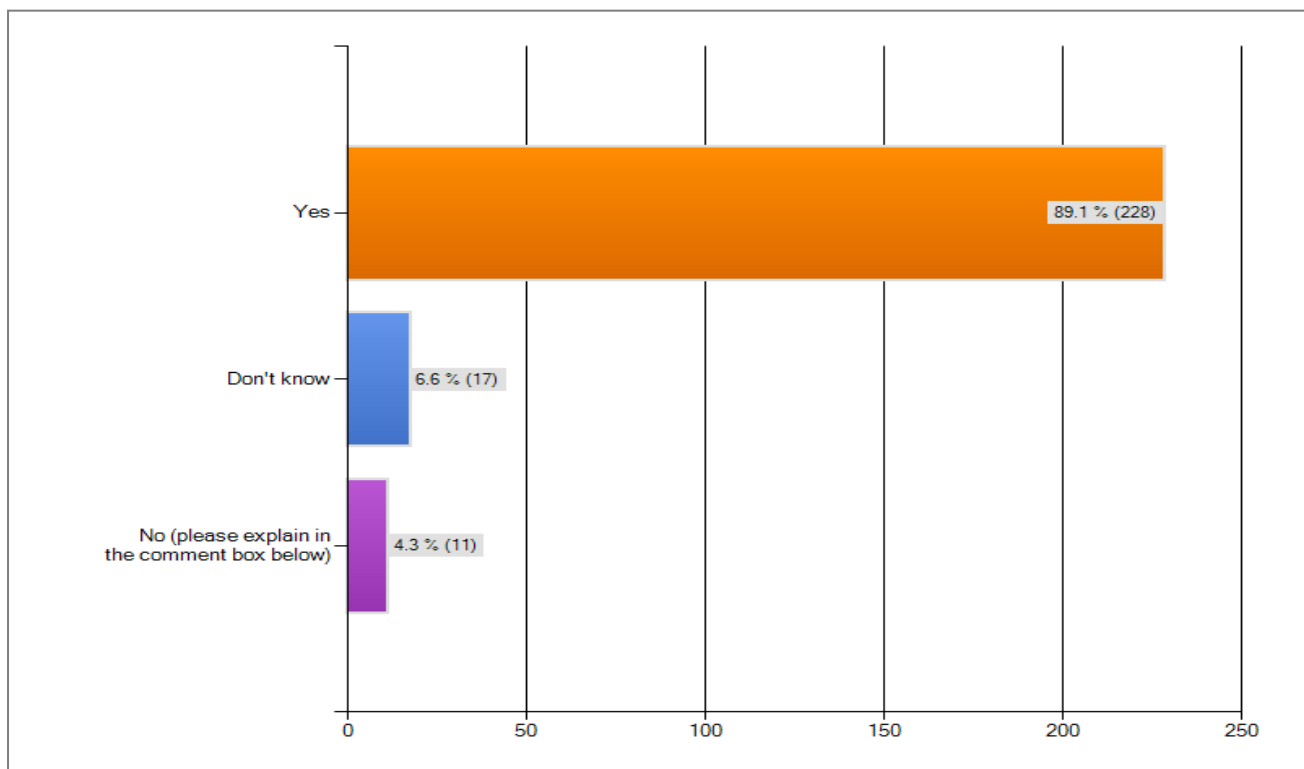
The Fund’s three functions

People were asked their views on the three functions of the Big Lottery Fund, as set out in legislation. These functions are described in Chapter 2 of the Review report, but in summary are to:

1. Distribute funds raised for good causes by the National Lottery, to bring real improvements to communities and the lives of people most in need.
2. Distribute non-Lottery funding on behalf of other public bodies and organisations (third party work).
3. Distribute money, previously held in dormant bank and building society accounts, which has been transferred to the Reclaim Fund Ltd for reinvestment in the community.

Of the 239 people who expressed an opinion on Question 6 (see Table 5), 95% (228) said that these three functions do accurately describe what the Fund does. 11 people (5%) answered “No” to this question.

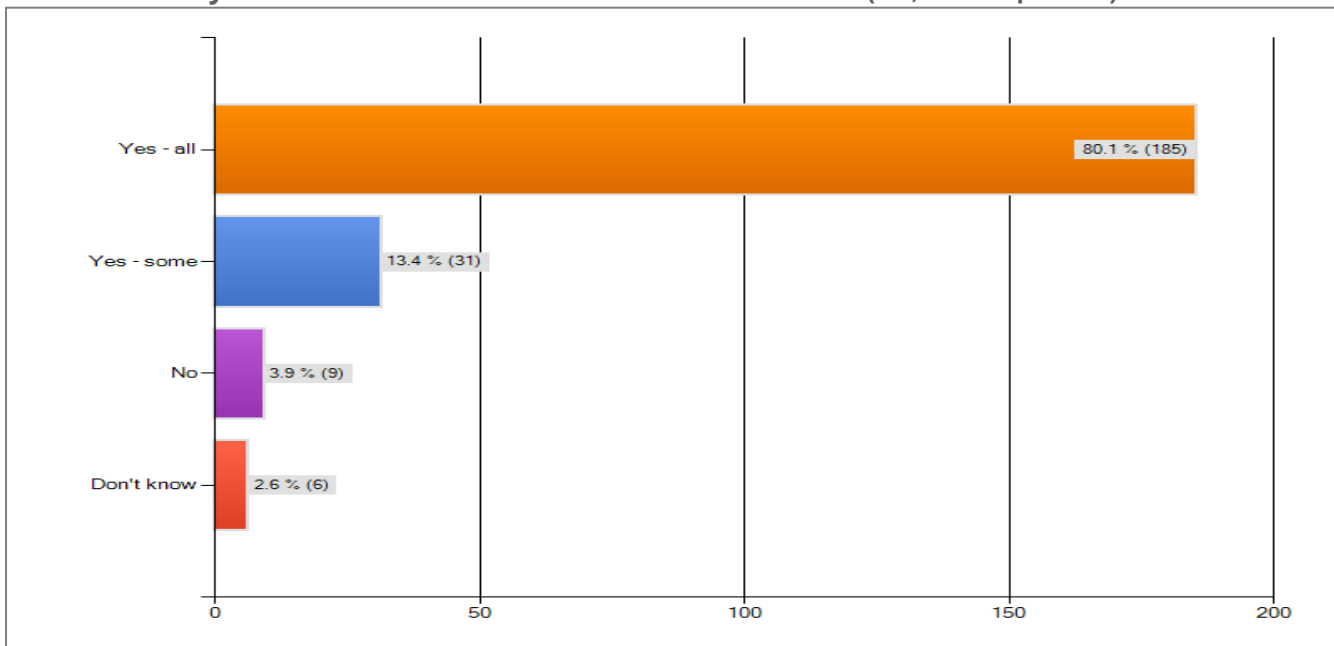
TABLE 5: Do these functions accurately describe what the Big Lottery Fund does?
(Q6, 256 responses)



40 people provided text comments, some of which expressed surprise about the Fund’s involvement in distributing money from the dormant bank and building society accounts and, albeit to a less extent, about the Fund’s work for third parties. Some respondents expressed concern about these functions. The remaining comments are mostly about ‘how’ the Fund fulfils its Lottery distribution function.

There was strong endorsement of the continued need for the three statutory functions of the Fund. Of the 225 people who expressed an opinion in response to Question 7 (see Table 6), 96% (216) thought that some or all of these functions should continue, including 82% who said all three were needed. Nine people (4%) answered 'No' to this question.

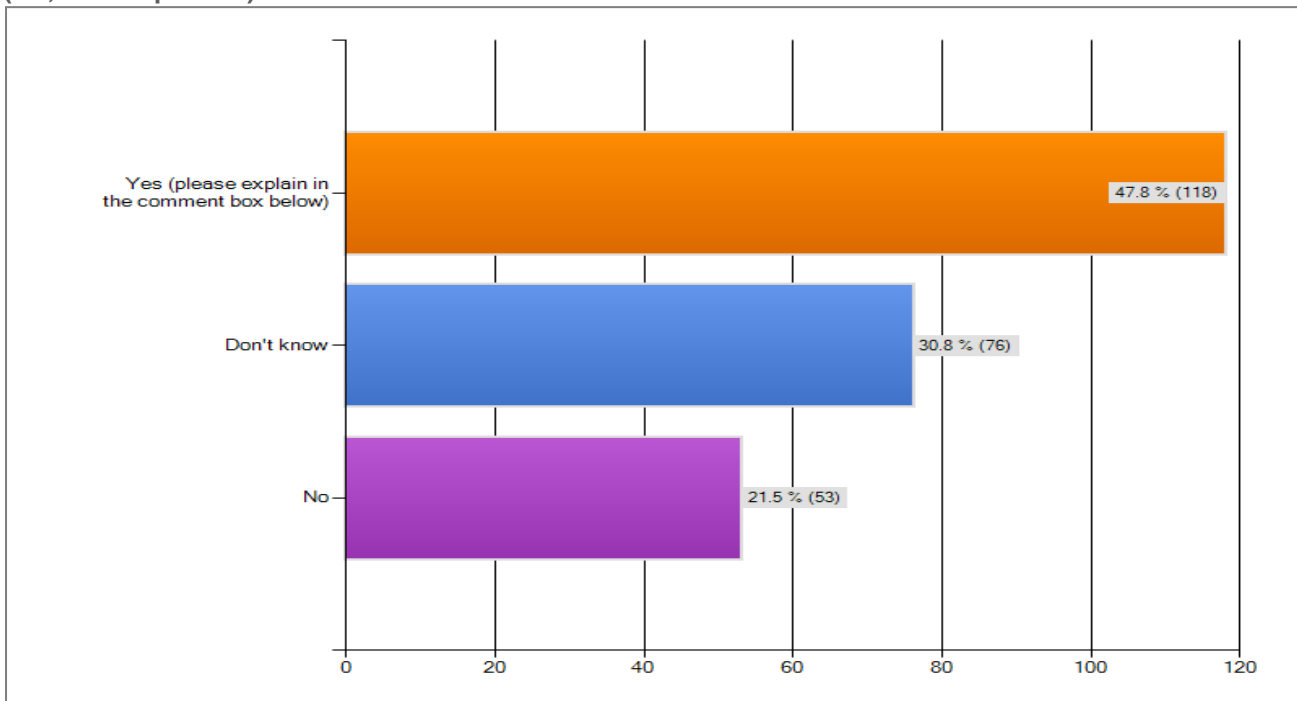
TABLE 6: Do you think these functions are still needed? (Q7, 231 responses)



Other functions that respondents suggest the Fund fulfils or could consider taking on

There was less certainty among respondents about whether or not the Fund fulfils additional functions. Of the 247 people who answered Question 8 (see Table 7), 31% (76) answered that they did not know whether the Fund has other functions or not. Of the remaining 171, 69% (118) answered that the Fund does perform additional functions.

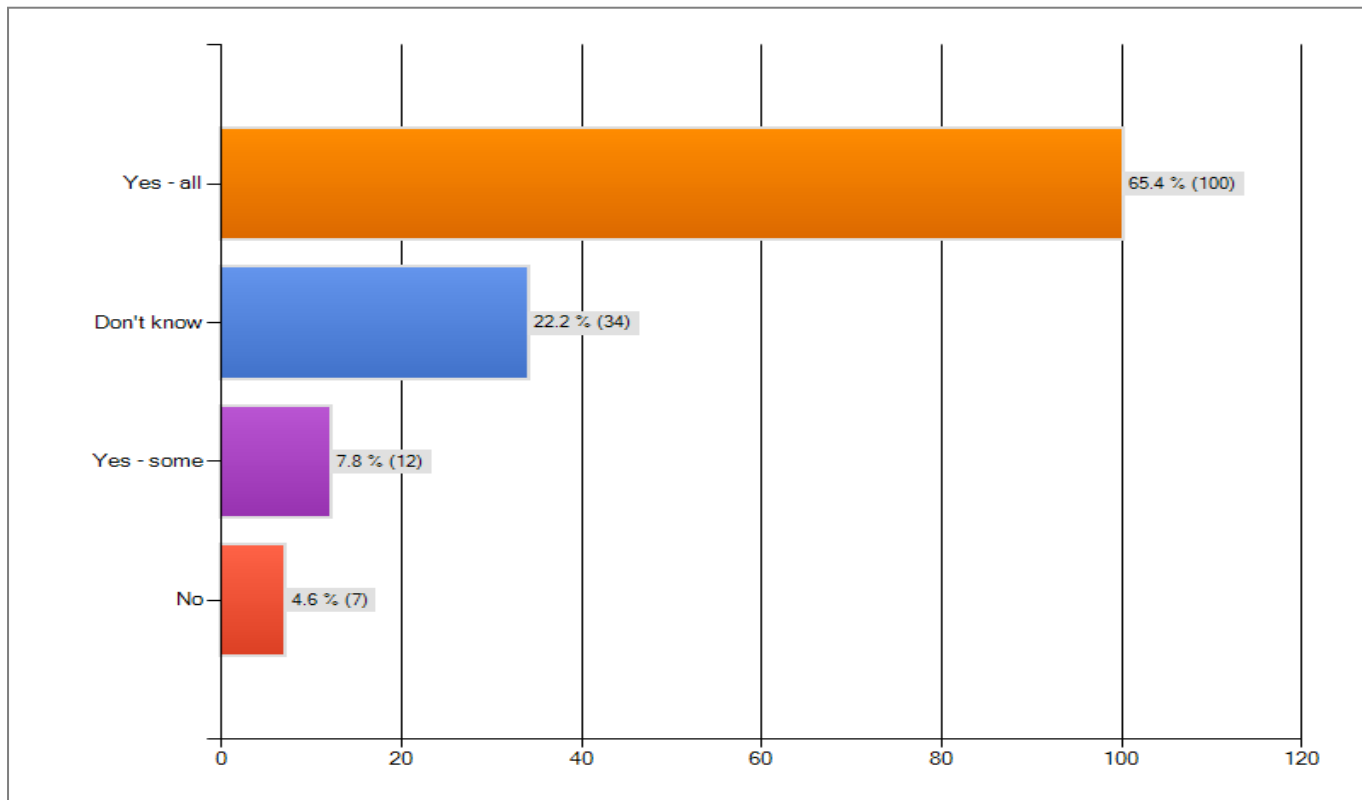
TABLE 7: Do you think the Big Lottery Fund performs any additional functions? (Q8, 247 responses)



117 people provided text comments on this question, providing a wide range of perspectives on whether the Fund is, or should be, providing (a) leadership to the VCSE sector and (b) knowledge sharing, capability and capacity building both to the sector and to individual VCSE organisations. Broadly the comments support the Fund doing significantly more than grant making alone.

There was endorsement of the continued need for such additional functions from the Fund. Of the 153 people who answered Question 9 (see Table 8), 73% (112) thought that some or all of the additional functions they believed the Fund performs are still needed.

TABLE 8: Do you think these additional functions are still needed?
(Q9, 153 responses)



42 people provided text comments on this question. A key theme in these comments is that the Fund's role in the sector is of increasing significance in the current austerity climate, as other forms of funding to the voluntary and community sector contract. Capability and capacity building and development of organisations in the sector are particularly valued.

Section 4: Views on the Form of the Big Lottery Fund

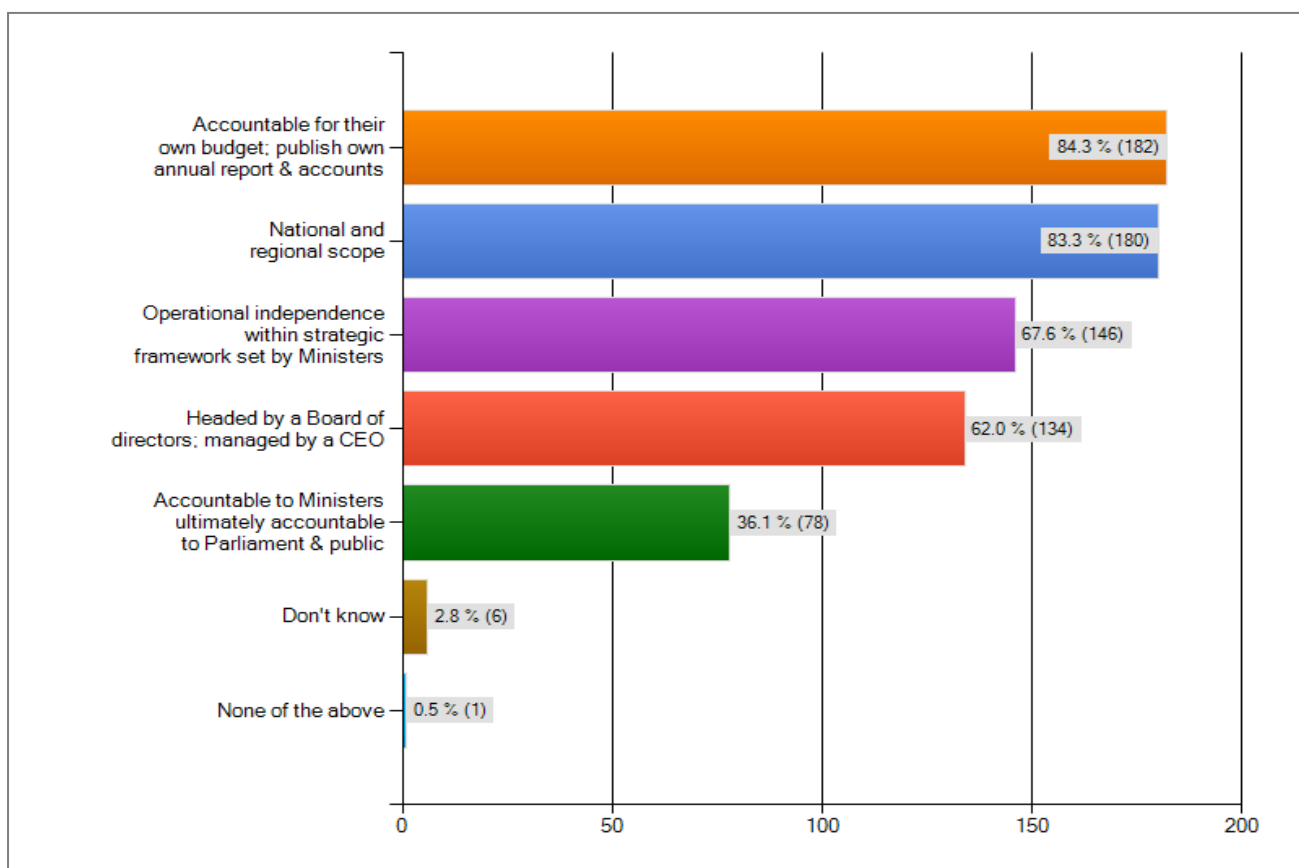
The Fund as a Non-Departmental Public Body

The Big Lottery Fund is a Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB). This means that it makes its own funding decisions within a broad policy remit set by Cabinet Office Ministers, who are ultimately accountable to Parliament and to the public for what the Fund does. Why the Fund was originally established as an NDPB, and what that means for how the Fund works as an organisation, is outlined in the Review report.

More information on what NDPBs are, and how they differ in form and governance from other public bodies, is available online: <https://www.gov.uk/public-bodies-reform>

People were asked their views on whether or not being an NDPB is the most efficient model for the Big Lottery Fund. The survey provided a list of five generic characteristics of NDPBs (see Table 9), all of which apply currently to the Fund, and asked people’s views on which of these are “essential” for the Big Lottery Fund to operate. Many respondents chose more than one option.

TABLE 9: The following characteristics are all features of NDPBs. Which of these do you think are ESSENTIAL for the Big Lottery Fund to operate? (Q16, 216 responses)



The most valued characteristic was the Fund’s accountability to manage its own budget and to publish its own annual report and accounts – 182 people (84%) said this is essential. This was closely followed by the national and regional scope of the Fund, which 180 people (83%) said is

essential. 146 (68%) favoured the Fund working within a strategic framework set by Ministers, whilst operationally having autonomy and independence from Ministers.

Overall, a majority of respondents favoured four out of the five. The least popular option was “being accountable to Ministers against [this] strategic framework, with Ministers ultimately accountable to Parliament and the public”, which was supported by 78 people (36%).

Political impartiality

One of the tests for identifying whether any public body should be an NDPB, operating at arm’s length from its parent department, is that its work must be politically impartial. The survey therefore asked for views (Question 18, 216 responses) on whether the work of the Fund must be politically impartial. This question received an unequivocal 94% “Yes” response.

67 people provided text comments on this topic, many giving a variety of opinions on why the Fund must be politically impartial.

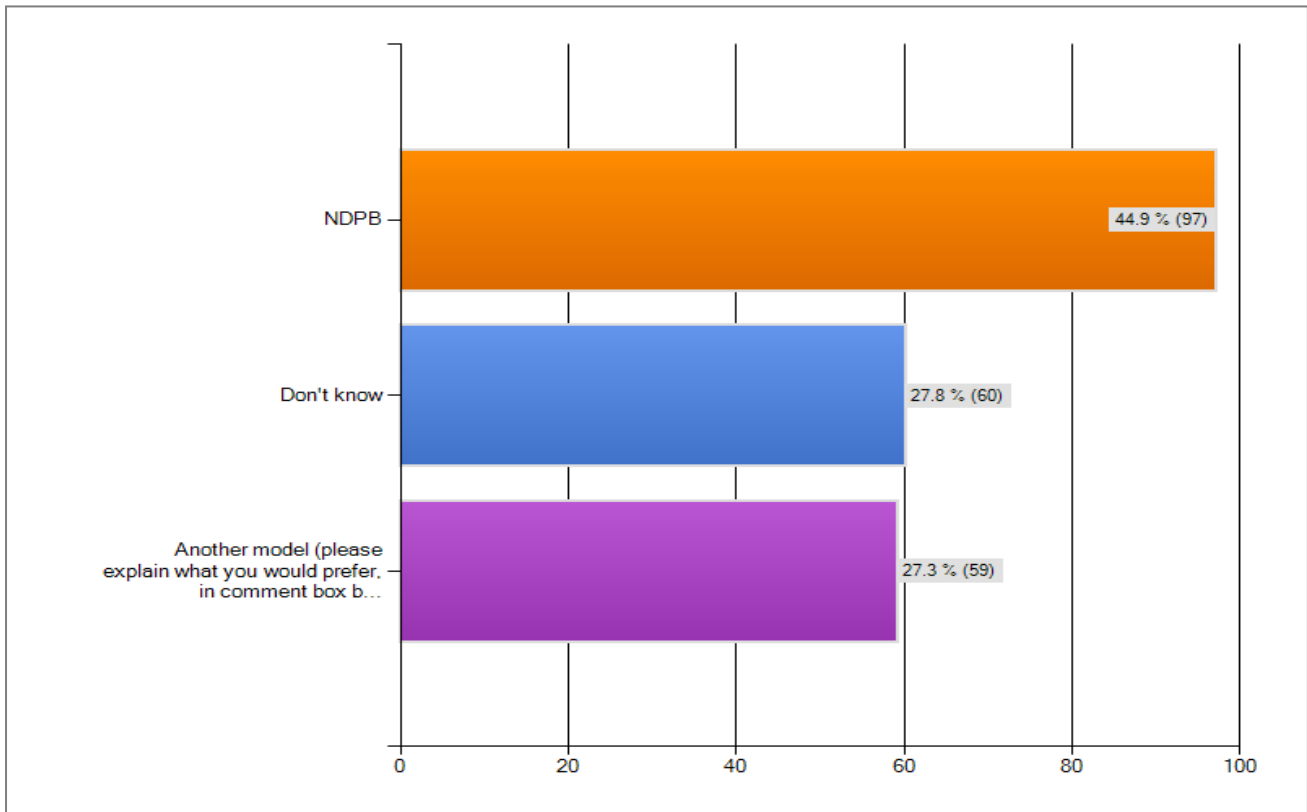
A small number of people suggested a degree of caution on the degree and nature of political impartiality for the Fund.

Alternative organisational models for the Fund

The survey then asked whether or not being an NDPB is the most efficient organisational model for the Fund (see Table 10 overleaf). There was some uncertainty among respondents on this topic, as 28% (60) of the 216 people who answered this question said they did not know. However, of the remaining 156 who did express an opinion, 62% (97) favoured the Fund being an NDPB, while 59 people (38%) favoured an alternative form of organisation.

90 people provided a text comment on this topic. A significant proportion of these supports maintaining the NDPB status quo, while four emphasise the need to maintain strong government scrutiny, even of a more independent body. Others suggest that the Fund should have greater distance from Government, and the alternative model most often suggested for this is that the Fund should move out of the public sector and into the VCSE sector it serves. Two suggest merging Fund activities with other Lottery distributors. These alternative organisational models are explored in depth in Chapter 2 and Annex H of the Review report.

TABLE 10: Do you think an NDPB is the most efficient model for the Fund, or would it be more efficient as another model (for example, if it were moved outside of Government, run by a government department, merged with another organisation, or delivered by another organisation)? (Q17, 216 responses)

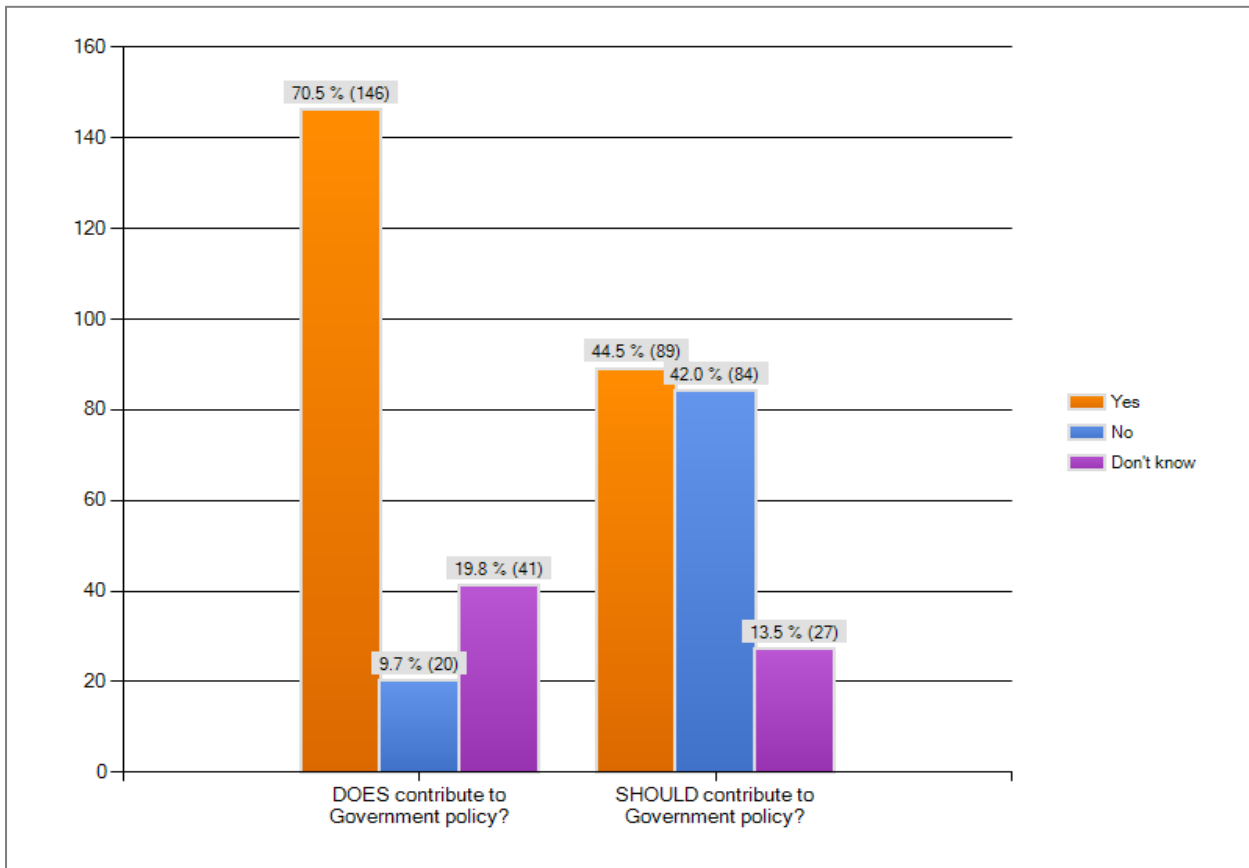


Contribution of the Fund to government policy

Of the 166 people who then expressed a view on whether the Fund’s work “does” contribute to government policy (see Table 11 overleaf), 88% (146) said “Yes”. Views on whether it “should” do so or not were very mixed. Of the 173 people who expressed a view on this question, 89 (45%) said “Yes” it should, and a handful less, 84 (42%), said “No” it should not.

103 people provided text comments on this topic. Of these, 43 (42%) explain why and/or how the work of the Fund “should” contribute to government policy. A common theme among these 43 comments is that the Fund should add value to what Government does, as long as the Fund remains autonomous. A smaller proportion of the comments, 29% (30), suggest reasons why the Fund’s work “should not” contribute in any way to government policy.

TABLE 11: Do you think that the work of the Fund DOES and SHOULD contribute to government policy? (Q19, 216 responses)



Impact if the Fund organisation were abolished

All Triennial Reviews are required to consider the option of abolishing the NDPB being reviewed, and its functions, even if then discounting this as a realistic option. This is explored, taking into account a range of other evidence gathered alongside this report, in Chapter 2 in the Review report.

188 people responded to the invitation (Question 15) to say what they think the impact would be if the Big Lottery Fund ceased to exist as an organisation in its current form. Respondent comments largely depend on whether they (a) considered abolition of the Fund without a replacement (57% of the comments made), or (b) assumed that the existing Big Lottery Fund organisation would have to be replaced by some other arrangement for distributing Lottery funds to good causes, and that the impact would therefore depend on the nature of this replacement.

Most of the comments from group (a) expressed dismay at the idea of losing the Fund altogether, using phrases such as *“devastating impact on the most vulnerable communities”*, *“tragic loss”*, and *“huge blow”*. Three people said abolition of the Fund would have little or no impact on them. Group (b) is characterised by one respondent’s comment that *“the impact is if Lottery funds are lost – if Big Lottery Fund ceased to exist you would have to reinvent it”*. Some of the remaining comments suggested potential alternatives to the Big Lottery Fund for distributing Lottery funds, but these ideas vary widely, with no clear common thread.

Section 5: Views on the Big Lottery Fund as a Grant Making Body

Understanding of and views on types of projects funded

157 people responded to the invitation to outline their understanding and view of the types of projects funded by the Big Lottery Fund, and of how the Fund allocates its funding between different types of projects. The purpose of this question was to give the review team a sense of how well the Fund's customers and stakeholders understand its funding priorities and approach. A very wide range of comments were made, across these broad groups of opinion:

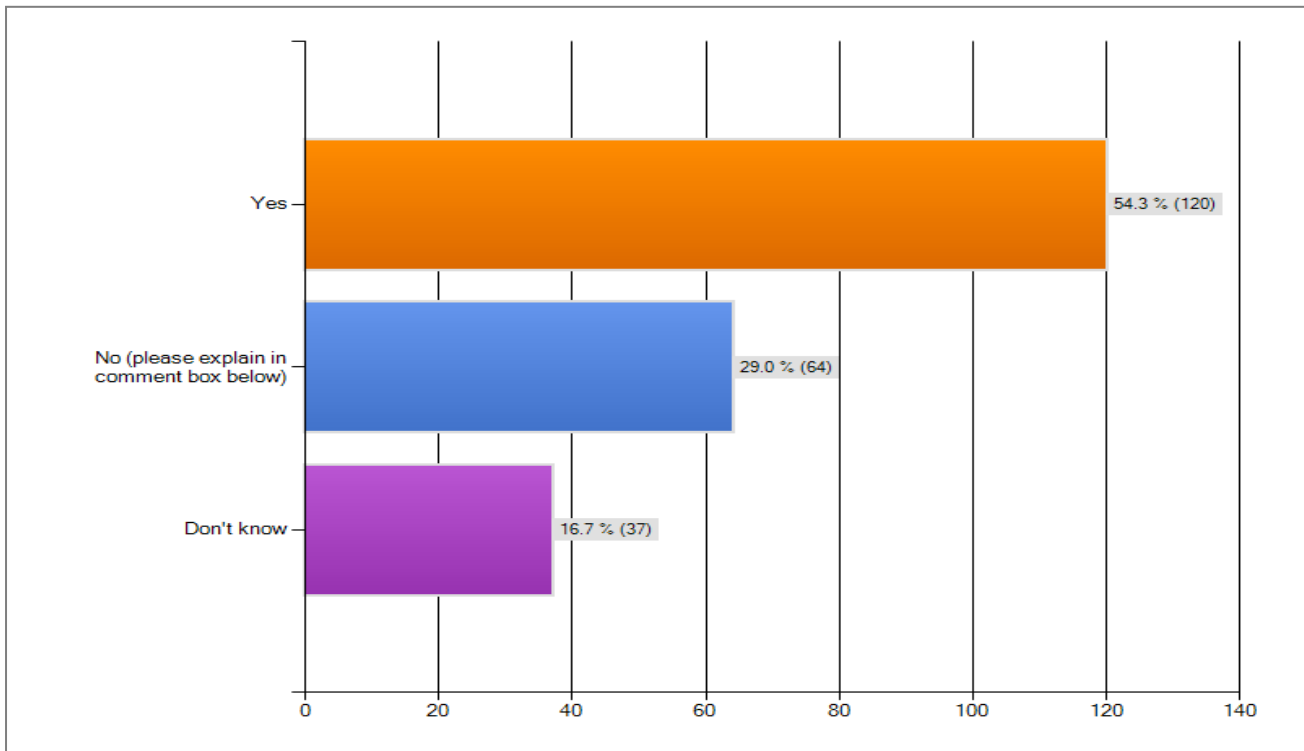
1. those who confidently express a top line understanding of the Fund's grant making priorities and approach, including some who express strong support for these
2. people who know some elements of the Fund's approach, but are less certain about others
3. people who feel they don't know enough about the Fund's grant making priorities
4. those who feel they are familiar with the Fund's grant making priorities and approach, but disagree with some or all of it.

These answers make clear that levels of understanding of the Fund's priorities and approach vary significantly – this may be understandable given the heterogeneous nature of the Fund's large customer base.

The Fund divides its grant making between open, demand-led funds with limited grant sizes, and larger, more strategic and long term, programmes. Of the 184 people who expressed an opinion in response to Question 13 (see Table 12 overleaf), 65% (120) said the Fund does strike "the right balance" between these two forms of funding.

64 people disagreed, while 101 people provided text comments on this topic. Views expressed are mixed. A minority of comments support the current balance. The rest are split between: (a) those that see the open programmes as the most important and want the Fund to prioritise these; (b) those who think the Fund should increase its focus on strategic programmes; and (c) people who did not know or did not specifically answer the question.

TABLE 12: Do you think the Fund strikes the right balance between awarding small grants and funding larger, more strategic programmes? (Q13, 221 responses)



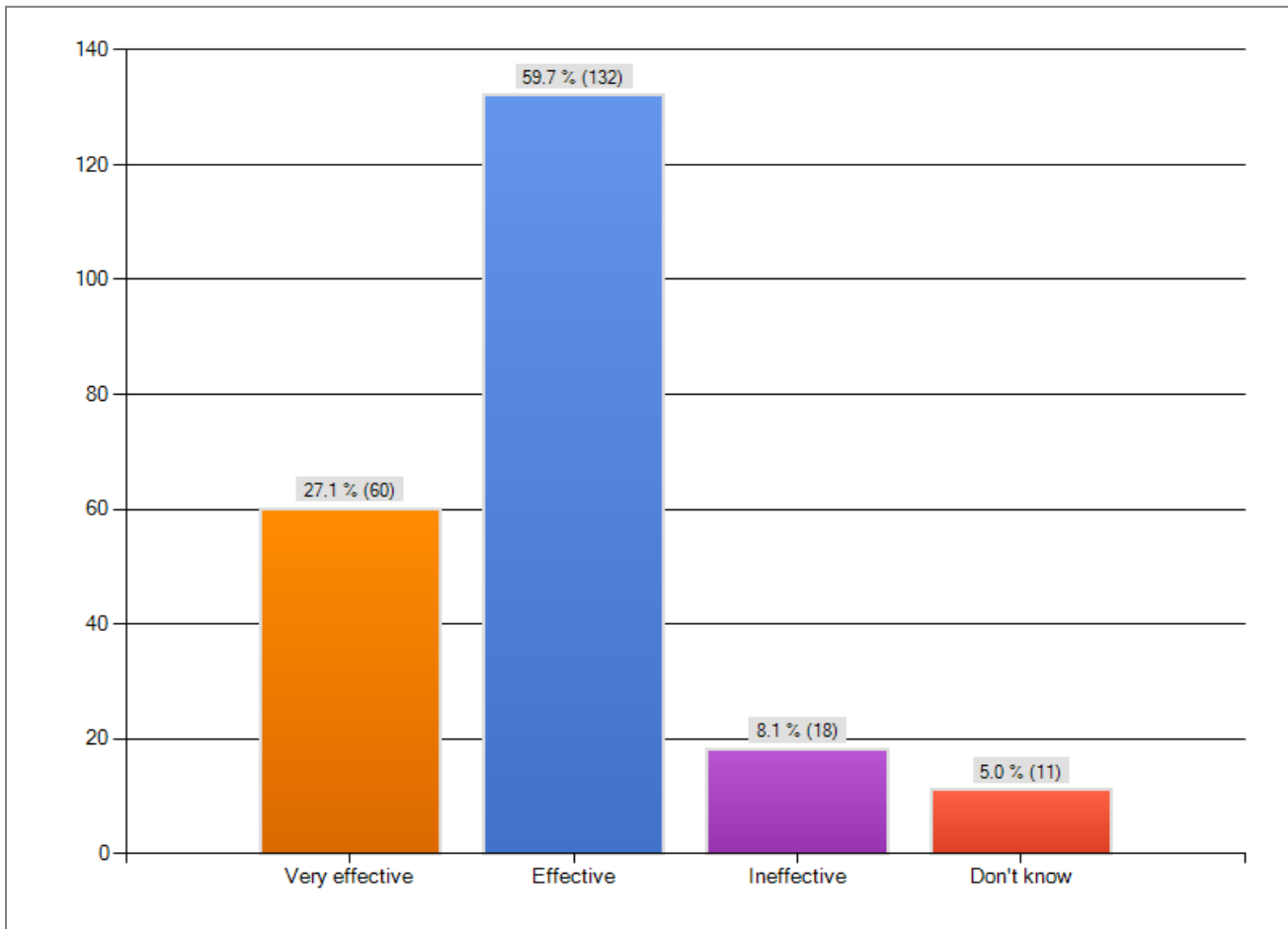
The Fund's effectiveness

The primary function of the Fund is to distribute Lottery funds, in line with its mission to “bring improvements to communities and the lives of people most in need”. A priority for the Triennial Review is therefore to understand how effective the Fund is as a grant making body. The review team’s conclusions on the Fund’s effectiveness, taking into account a range of other evidence gathered alongside this Call for Evidence report, can be found in Chapter 4 of the Review report.

In the survey, 87% (192) of the 221 people who answered Question 10 (see Table 13 overleaf) said the Fund is either “effective” or “very effective”, while 18 people said the Fund is “ineffective” as a grant making body.

83 people provided text comments on this topic. Of these, 14 comments were from people who had answered Question 10 that the Fund is “ineffective”; these comments are, however, outnumbered by the positive comments made by other respondents. A number of people made glowing comments about the Fund and its effectiveness as a grant making body, while the largest proportion of comments included concerns alongside positive feedback. These concerns vary widely, but broadly cover the themes of: bureaucracy and issues with application processes; perceived inequalities in what and who gets funded; levels and nature of grant management; sustainability of funded programmes and organisations; and the Fund’s strategy, priorities, staffing and resources.

TABLE 13: Overall, how effective do you think the Big Lottery Fund is as a grant making body? (Q10, 221 responses)



The Fund’s achievement of its mission

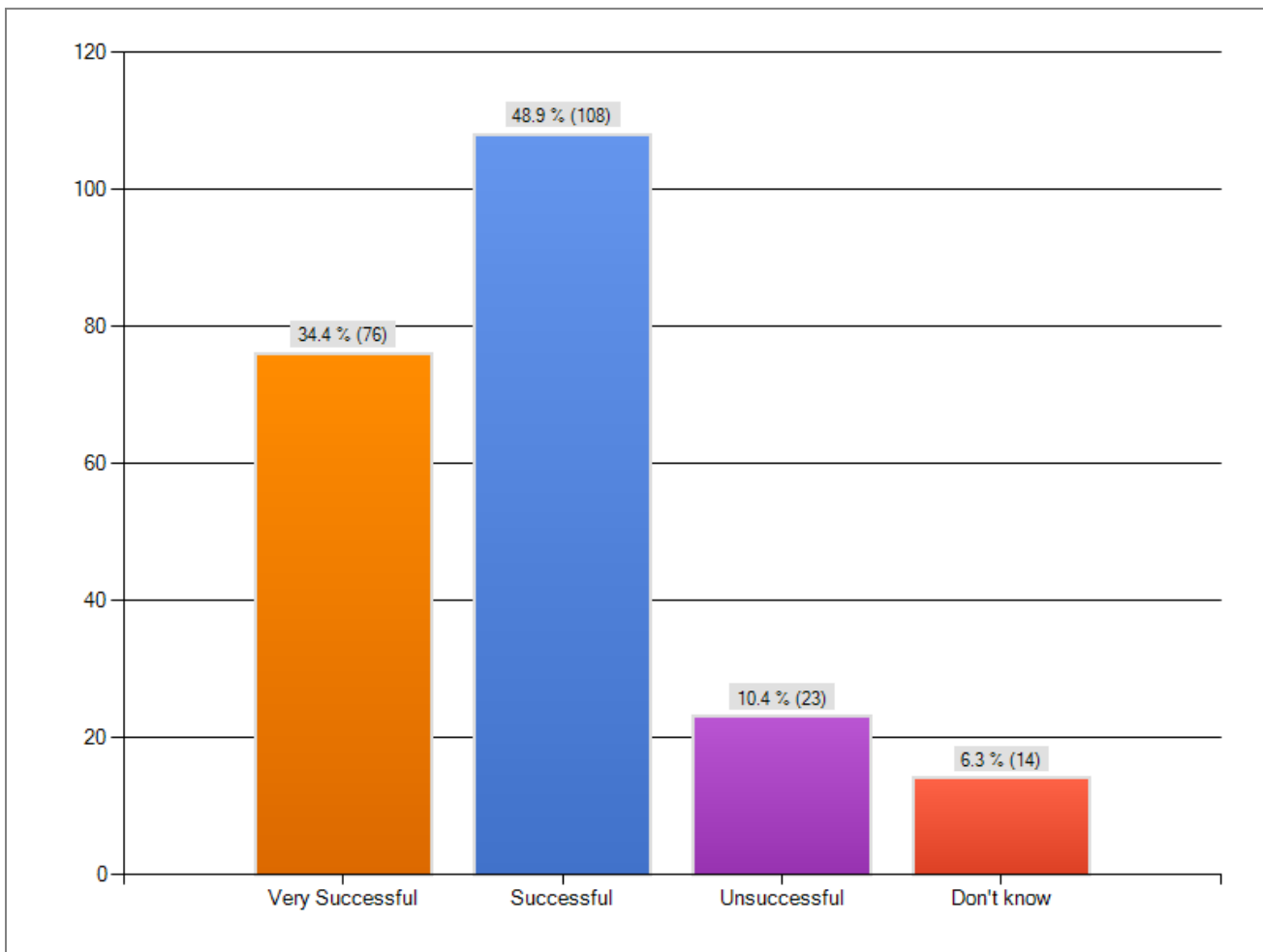
When asked more broadly whether the Fund fulfils its mission to “bring improvements to communities and the lives of people most in need”, 83% (184) of the 221 people who answered Question 11 (see Table 14 overleaf) said it is either “successful” or “very successful” on this.

23 people said the Fund is “unsuccessful” in fulfilling its mission, of which 16 made a text comment. Perceptions of short-termism and the difficulties for small organisations and minority groups to secure grants are the clearest messages among these.

A further 72 respondents also provided text comments on this topic, some explaining how and why the Fund is “successful” or “very successful” in its mission, but many suggest improvements they nevertheless would like to see. Particular areas of concern and comment among supporters of the Fund are around sustainability and impact of the projects and programmes funded, whether the Fund is reaching far enough to the communities most in need, and about how well the Fund collaborates.

Broadly speaking, among the wide range of comments on this question, the open demand-led funds appear to be seen as more clearly successful in reaching people and communities most in need than are the Fund’s strategic programmes.

TABLE 14: How successful do you think the Fund is in its mission to “bring improvements to communities and the lives of people most in need”? (Q11, 221 responses)



Suggestions for what else the Fund could do to fulfil its mission

88 people responded to the invitation to make suggestions on anything else the Big Lottery Fund might consider doing, towards its mission of bringing real improvements to communities and to the lives of people most in need. There are several suggestions each for: new funds and funding approaches, how and why the Fund could get closer to its customers, and areas in which more transparency and clarity from the Fund would be appreciated.

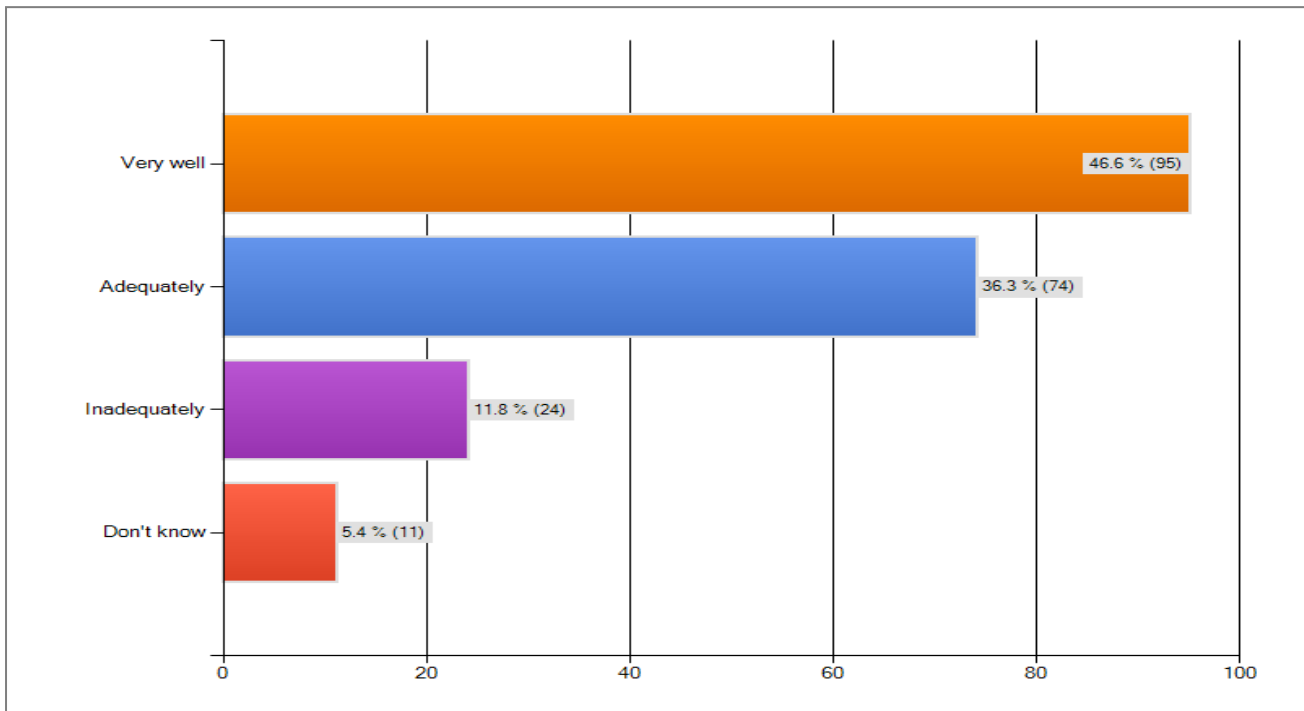
How well the Fund works with its stakeholders

The survey asked about how well the Fund works with other organisations in the grant making world, both in the voluntary and community sector which makes up most of the Fund’s customer base, and potential partner organisations.

With the voluntary and community sector

The largest proportion of respondents, 49% (95) of the 193 people who expressed an opinion in response to Question 31 (see Table 15 overleaf), said the Fund works “very well” with the voluntary and community sector, while 38% (74) said the Fund does this “adequately”. A small proportion (24 people) said the Fund works “inadequately” with the voluntary and community sector.

TABLE 15: How well do you think the Fund works with the voluntary and community sector? (Q31, 204 responses)



85 people provided text comments on this topic, of which 15 are very positive, with the Fund teams in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Leeds getting particular mention. The majority of comments, however, express concerns or give improvement suggestions, sometimes alongside more positive points. The broad themes among these are: requests for more dialogue and interaction, more local connections and engagement (including with infrastructure bodies), better communications and transparency, and concerns about how consistently Fund staff understand the sector.

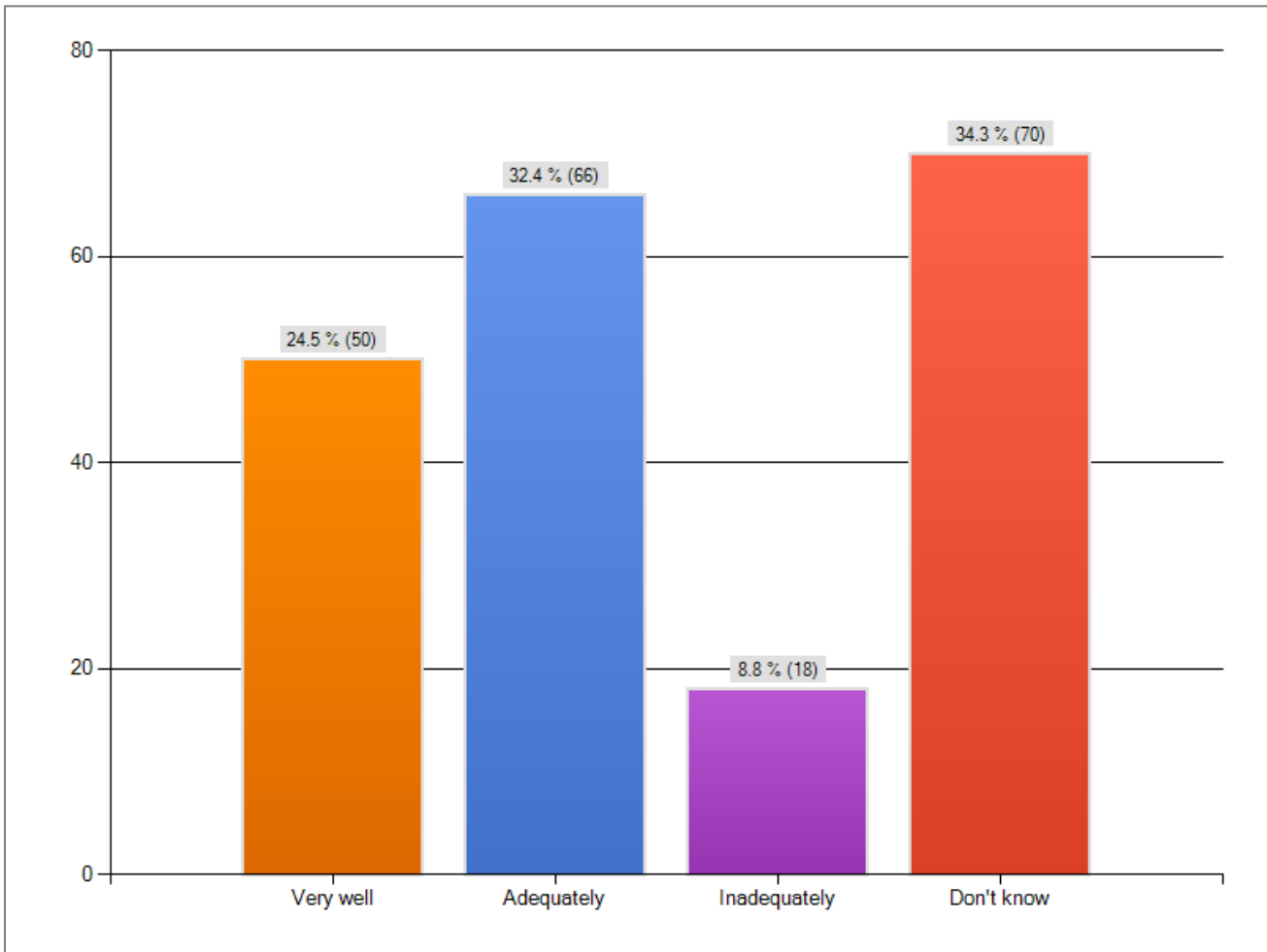
With partner organisations

The other key relationships the survey asked about were the potential partners for the Fund, which can include:

- other Lottery distributors
- other funders
- local authorities
- umbrella bodies
- the private sector
- departments of the UK Government (including Devolved Administrations).

Around a third of the 204 respondents to Question 32 (see Table 16 overleaf) said they did not know how effective the Fund is in engaging with such partners, which is understandable given the range of stakeholder and customer groups that responded to the survey (see Section 2). Of the 134 who did express an opinion, the largest proportion, 49% (66), said the Fund works “adequately” with other partners, and 37% (50) said the Fund does this “very well”. The smallest proportion (18 people) said the Fund works “inadequately” with other partners.

TABLE 16: How well do you think the Fund works with other partners? (Q32, 204 responses)



55 people provided text comments on this topic, but with few obvious themes, even regarding the different types of partner organisations. In some instances mixed and negative comments are balanced by positive views from other respondents on the same topic.

Section 6: The Big Lottery Fund from the Customer’s Perspective

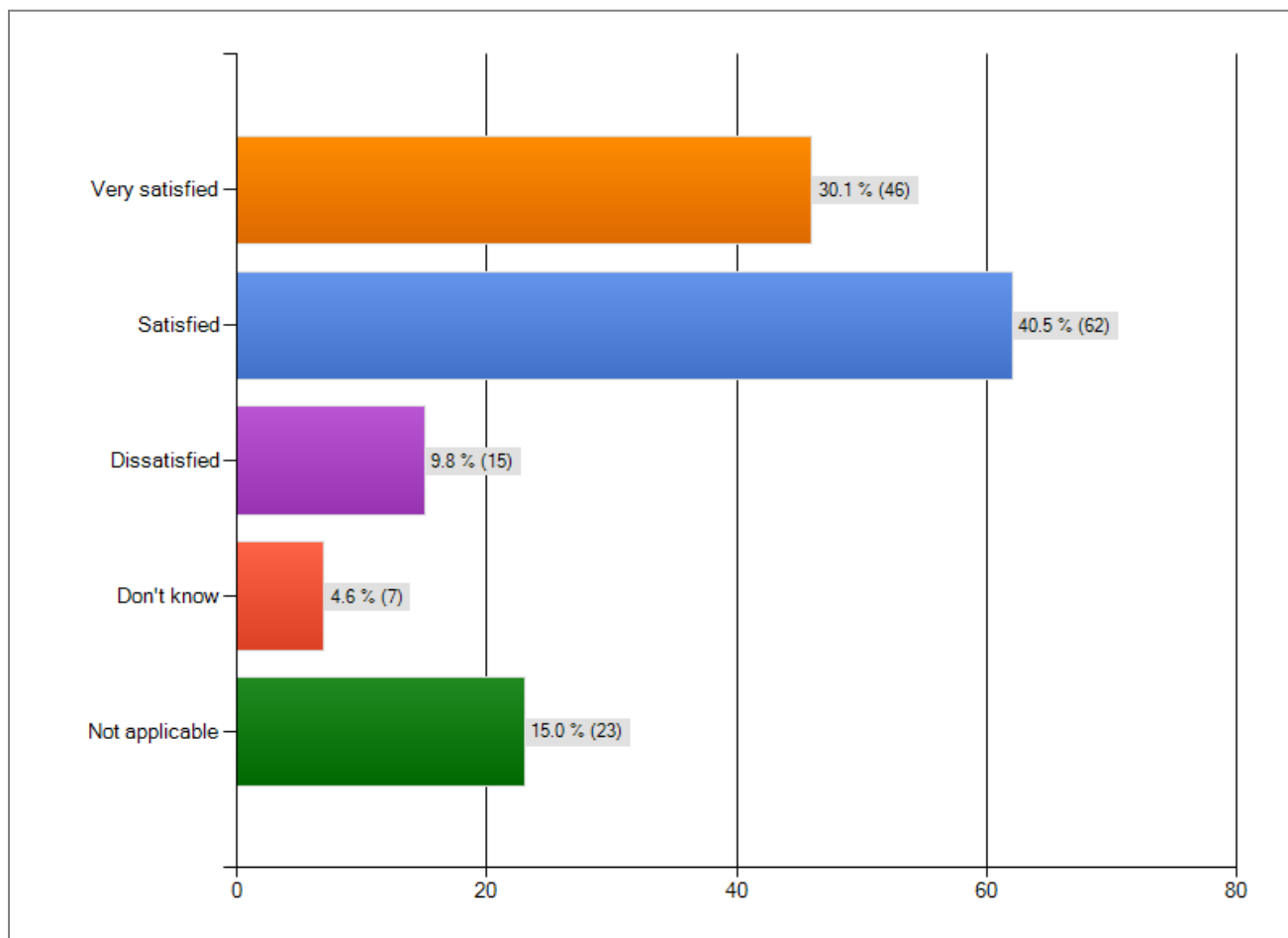
This section of the survey asked grant applicants for their views on the way in which the Big Lottery Fund grants funding to good causes, whether they were successful or unsuccessful in their applications to the Fund, and whether they are a longstanding customer of the Fund or at an early stage of a first application. To understand the customer perspective on the Fund in comparison with other funders, customers were also asked which other grant making bodies they had applied to in the past.

Comments made in response to questions in this section often duplicate or overlap with those made under the section on effectiveness.

The review team considered these answers alongside a range of other evidence gathered on the effectiveness of the Fund, and the conclusions can be found in Chapter 4 of the Review report.

Satisfaction with interactions with the Fund

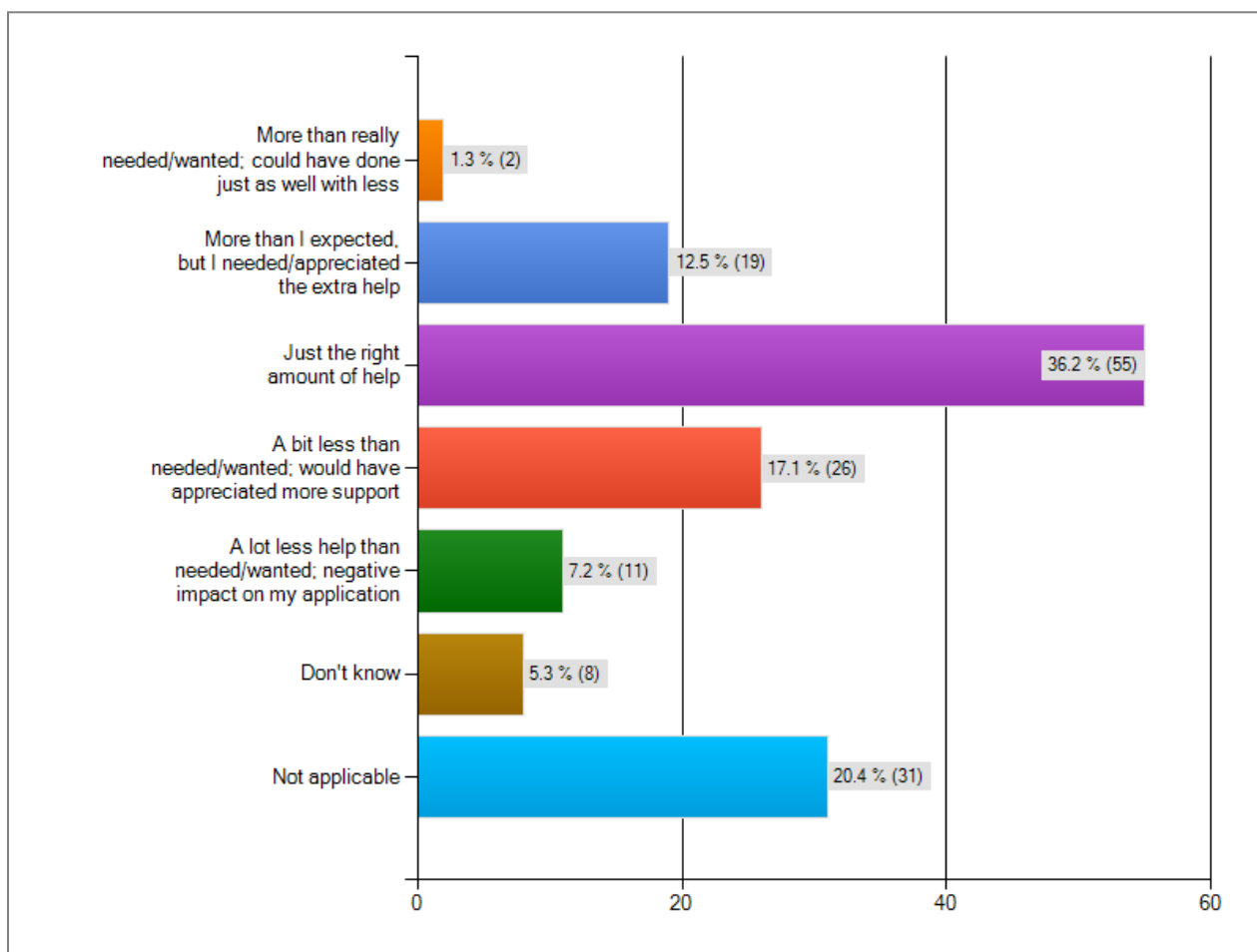
TABLE 17: How satisfied are you with your interactions with the Fund? (Q30, 153 responses)



Of the 123 people who expressed an opinion in response to Question 30 (see Table 17), 88% (108) said they were either “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with their interactions with the Fund.

Satisfaction with support received from the Fund

TABLE 18: When you applied to the Big Lottery Fund for a grant, how much time, attention and support did Fund staff give you through the application process? (Q24, 152 responses)



113 people expressed an opinion in response to Question 24 (see Table 18). Of these, the largest proportion, 49% (55) said they received “just the right amount of help” from Big Lottery Fund staff during their application process; combining this number with the 19 who received more support than they expected but appreciated the extra help, 65% (74) of the 113 respondents expressed satisfaction with the service they received as grant applicants.

The remaining third (35%) expressed a degree of dissatisfaction with the service they received from Fund staff during their application process. Two people said they received an unnecessary amount of input from Fund staff while 37 said the support given to them was insufficient.

62 people provided text comments on this topic.

Customer views on Fund staff

Several comment specifically on the interactions they have had with Fund staff. There is praise for the helpfulness and knowledge levels of funding staff, and these positive comments far outnumber comments about what customers considered to be poor quality service from people they spoke to at the Fund.

Customer views on the Fund’s process and approach

Critical comments were far more often about conflicting advice received, or about difficulties with the overall application process, which customers said they found unhelpful and sometimes time

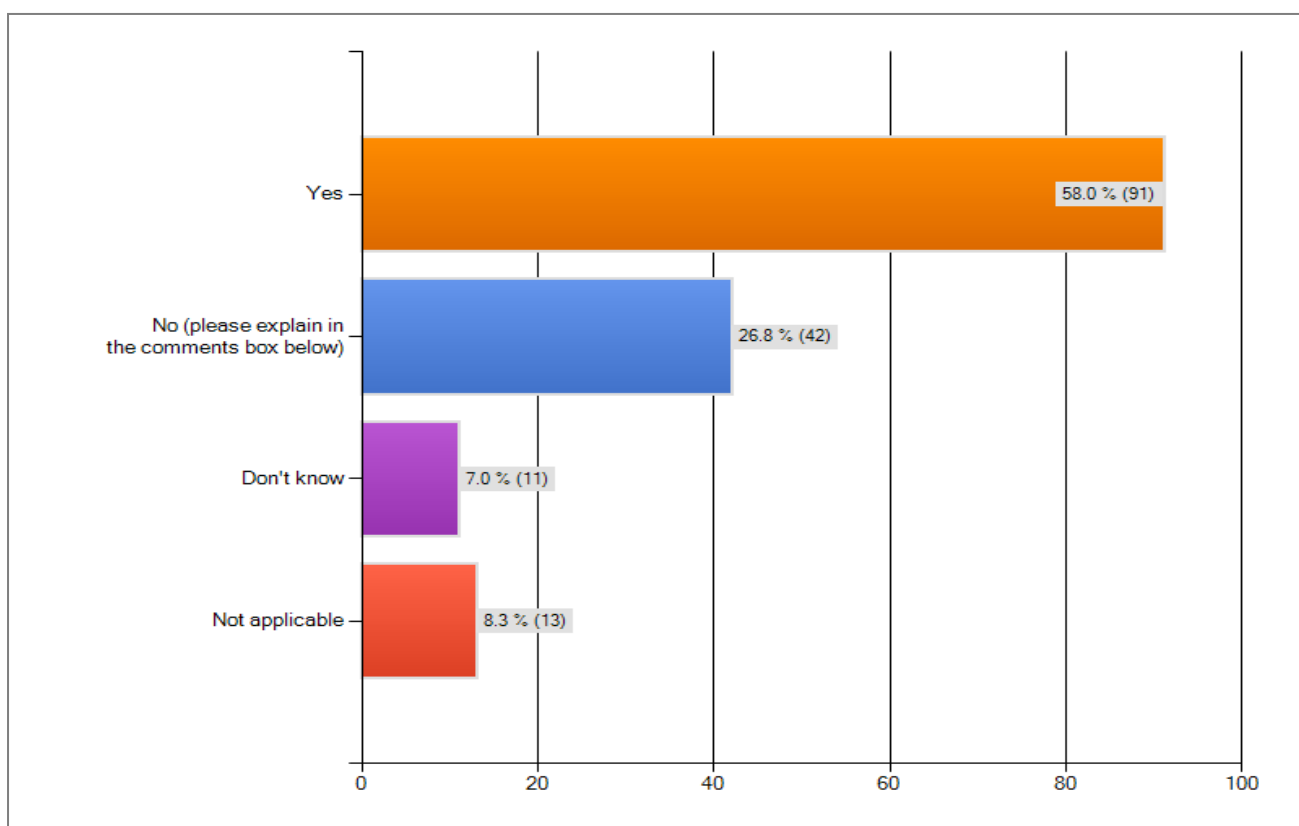
wasting, even when the Fund staff they dealt with were helpful and supportive. However, there was also praise for the Fund’s overall approach to supporting customers.

Satisfaction with proportionality of Fund processes

Given the very wide variety of grants awarded by the Fund, the length and complexity of application processes is not a consistent or accurate measure of Fund effectiveness in this area. The survey therefore asked customers about how appropriate they think the Fund’s processes and timescales are, specifically in relation to the size of grant for which they had applied.

133 people expressed an opinion in response to Question 25 (see Table 19), and of these 68% (91) said the Fund’s application process was “proportionate” to the grant type and amount they were seeking. The remaining 42 people (32%) disagreed.

TABLE 19: In your experience, is the Big Lottery Fund application process PROPORTIONATE to the grant type and amount being sought? (Q25, 157 responses)

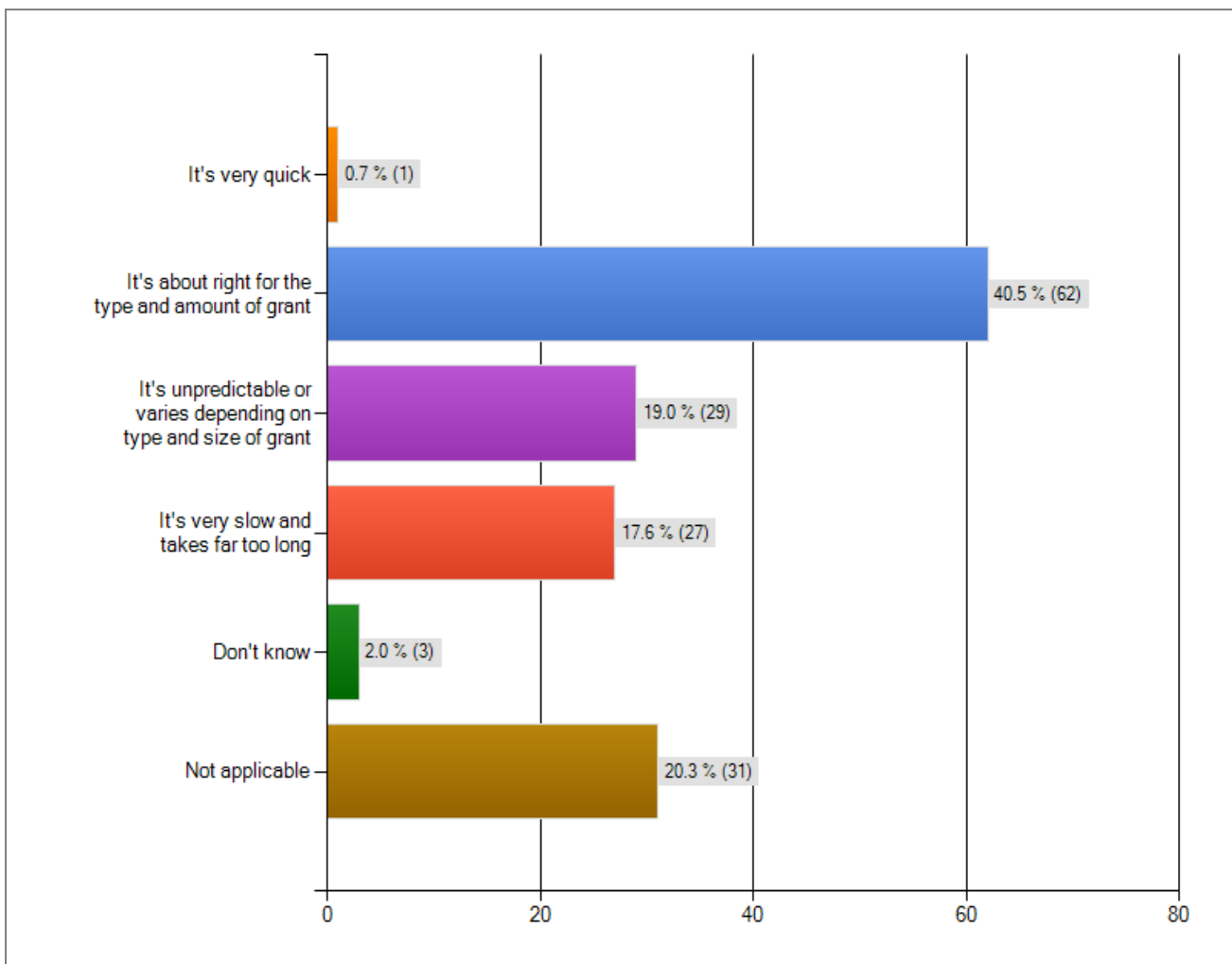


70 people provided text comments on this topic. Opinions vary widely. Some customers think the Fund’s application process is proportionate, even when lengthy and/or complicated, especially for larger grants. Others suggest that, whether or not the application process is proportionate, it is still too complicated and potentially off-putting, particularly for small organisations wanting to apply for grants, even on the demand-led funds. Another group suggests that the application process is not consistently proportionate across all the funds and strategic programmes in the Fund’s grant making portfolio, while others say it is simply disproportionate in their experience (which may be of only one application).

Successful applicants

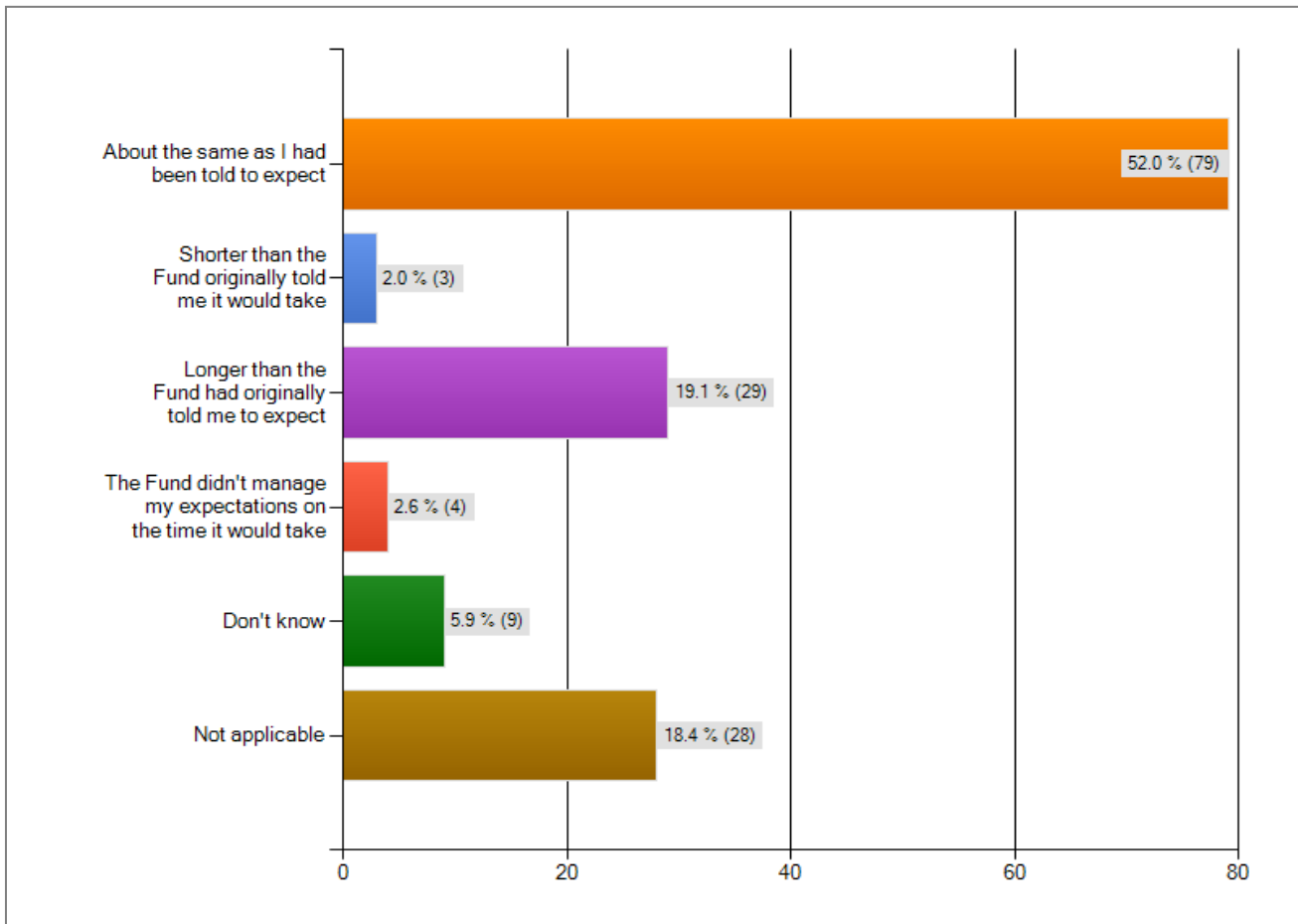
The survey then asked successful applicants their views on how long the end-to-end grant application process takes, right through to receiving the funding. 119 people expressed an opinion in response to this question (see Table 20), of which 52% (62) said the time taken was “about right for the type and amount of grant”. The remaining responses were split fairly evenly between those who said the process is “unpredictable or varies depending on type and size of grant” (24% of 119) and those who said “it’s very slow and takes far too long” (23% of 119). One person said the end-to-end process is “very quick”.

TABLE 20: If you were successful with at least one funding application to the Big Lottery Fund, what’s your experience of HOW LONG the application process takes, from submission through to receiving the grant funding? (Q26, 153 responses)



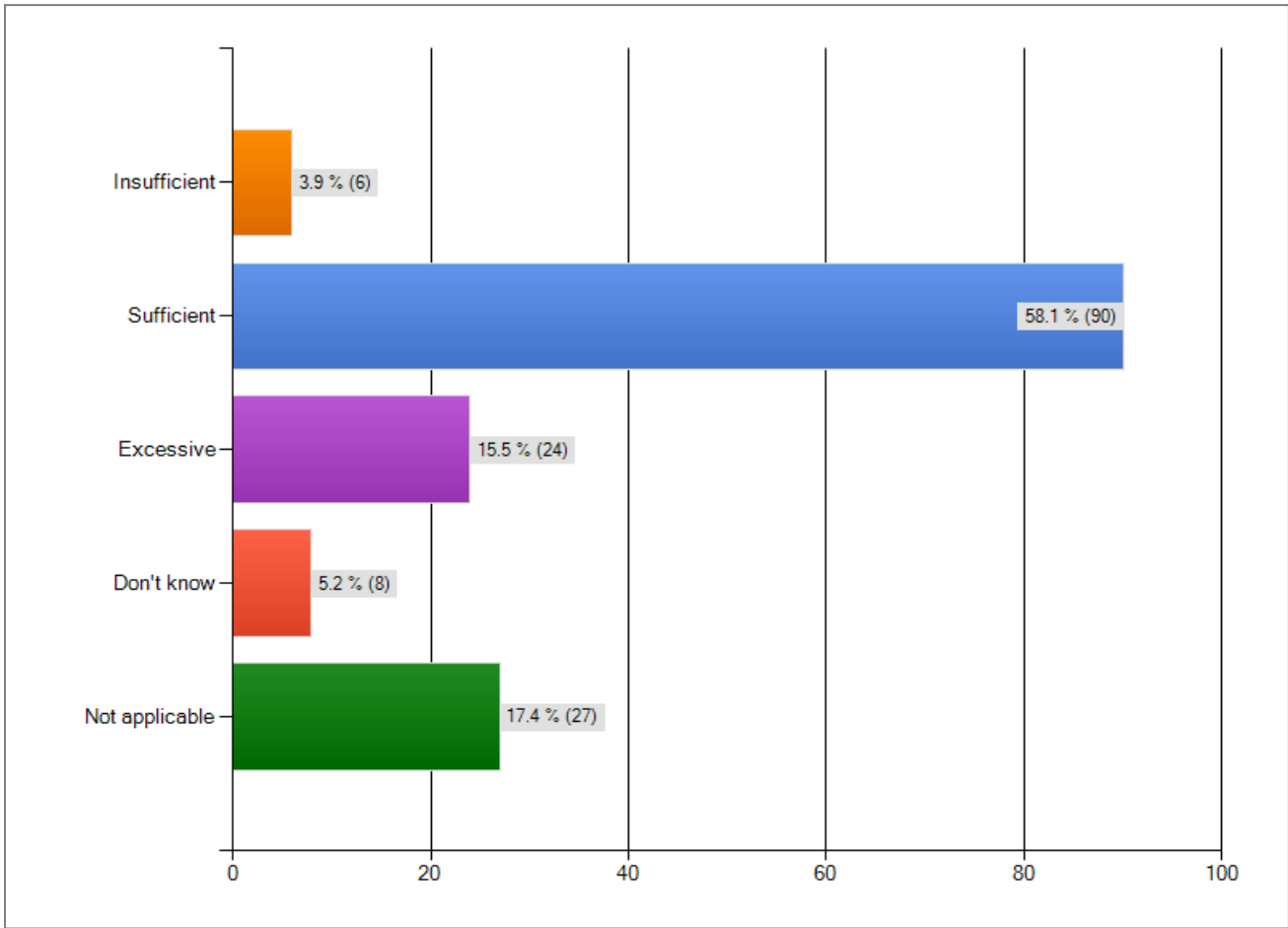
Successful applicants were then asked how well their expectations were managed regarding how long it would take to receive their funding. 115 people answered this question (see Table 21 overleaf), of which the largest proportion, 69% (79), said the time taken was “about the same as I had been told to expect” and 25% (29) said it had taken “longer than the Fund originally told me it would take”. Four people said their expectations had not been managed by the Fund on the time it would take, while three said it was quicker than they had been told to expect.

TABLE 21: Whatever your answer to the above question (Q26), how did the time it took to receive your funding compare with how long the Fund had advised you it would take? (Q27, 152 responses)



Once a grant has been awarded, the Fund then requires a degree of grant management, monitoring and evaluation, which varies according to the size and nature of grant. The survey asked grant recipients their views on the amount of this oversight activity that is requested of them by the Fund. Of the 120 people who expressed an opinion in response to Question 29 (see Table 22 overleaf), 75% (90) said they thought this was “sufficient”, while 20% (24) said this oversight activity was “excessive” and 5% (6) said it was “insufficient”.

TABLE 22: In your experience, how has the amount of grant management, monitoring and evaluation requested by the Fund been? (Q29, 155 responses)

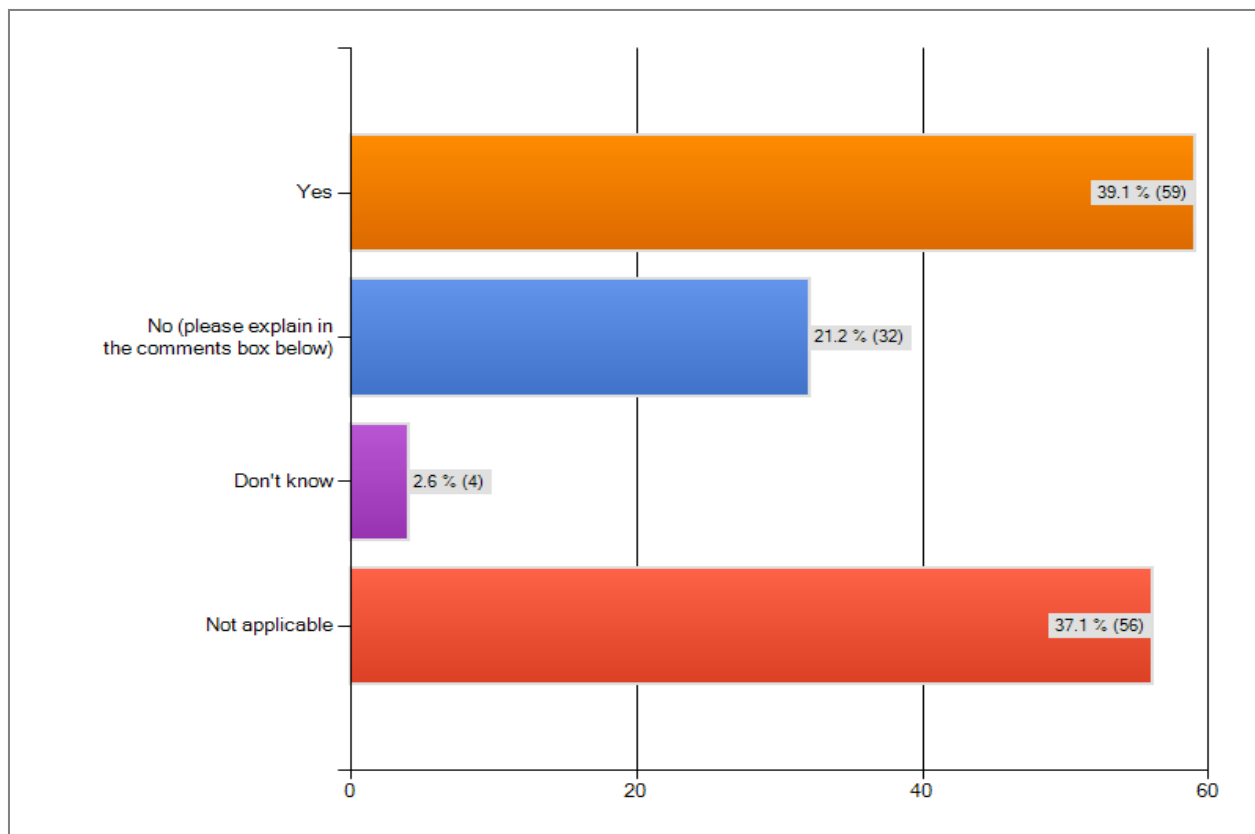


Unsuccessful applicants

A key part of the customer experience for unsuccessful applicants is what happens when their grant application is turned down by the Fund. Applicants value being given an adequate explanation of the reasons why they were unsuccessful, with useful feedback they can use to improve any future applications to the Fund.

More people expressed an opinion in response to Question 28 (see Table 23 overleaf) than said previously (in response to Question 1, see Section 2) that they had been unsuccessful in an application to the Fund. However, of the 91 opinions given, 65% (59) expressed satisfaction with how the Fund dealt with them when turning down their application, while the remaining 35% (32) were dissatisfied with the explanation and feedback received from the Fund.

TABLE 23: If you have ever been unsuccessful in an application for Big Lottery Fund funding, did you feel that you were provided with an adequate explanation and useful feedback? (Q28, 151 responses)



52 people provided text comments on this topic. A small number praise the experience of getting helpful feedback and support from Fund staff after being unsuccessful in a bid. However, most comments express dissatisfaction, particularly with the following experiences:

- generic rejection letters and not being able to subsequently get more tailored feedback from Fund staff
- inconsistent quality of explanation and feedback across more than one bid
- the manner of the rejection being disappointing in not recognising the amount of work that had gone into the bid
- simply not understanding the reason given by the Fund, or disagreeing with it.

Taken collectively, however, all of the comments demonstrate what unsuccessful applicants want and value from the rejection experience.

Customer views on the Fund in comparison with other funders

To help the review team to understand where the Fund fits within the overall landscape of grant applications, respondents were asked which other Lottery distributors they apply to for grants. They were also given a free text box to give the names of other funders to which they apply, and 88 people did so.

TABLE 24: Which Lottery distributors, or other funders, have you or your organisation applied to for funding in the past, whether or not you were successful?

Q21 - Total of 161 respondents (percentages under Yes columns are of this total)	Number of respondents giving an answer on each funder	YES		NO		Don't know or not applicable
		For previous projects	For current and/or future projects	But currently working on 1st application to them	Have never applied to them	
UK-Wide						
Big Lottery Fund	153	95 (59%)	101 (62.7%)	7	5	17
Heritage Lottery Fund	126	34 (21%)	26 (16.1%)	9	39	30
British Film Institute	108	2 (1.2%)	3 (1.9%)	2	62	42
UK Sport	107	3 (1.9%)	2 (1.2%)	3	59	43
England						
Arts Council England	113	19 (11.8%)	12 (7.5%)	5	49	36
Sport England	120	26 (16.1%)	14 (8.7%)	7	47	34
Wales						
Arts Council of Wales	108	0	1 (0.6%)	0	50	55
Sport Council for Wales	109	3 (1.9%)	0	2	47	58
Northern Ireland						
Arts Council of Northern Ireland	108	0	0	3	48	59
Sport Council for Northern Ireland	107	0	0	2	47	59
Scotland						
Creative Scotland	109	1 (0.6%)	3 (1.9%)	2	48	57
Sport Scotland	109	2 (1.2%)	3 (1.9%)	2	48	57
Other funders	97	38 (23.6%)	57 (35.4%)	2	4	28

This table shows that applicants for Big Lottery Fund grants do shop around, with the most overlap being with applications to (among Lottery distributors) Heritage Lottery Fund, Sport England and Arts Council England, and to a range of other funders. The comparatively low numbers of applicants to other Lottery distributors in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland reflect the geographic spread of respondents to the survey itself.

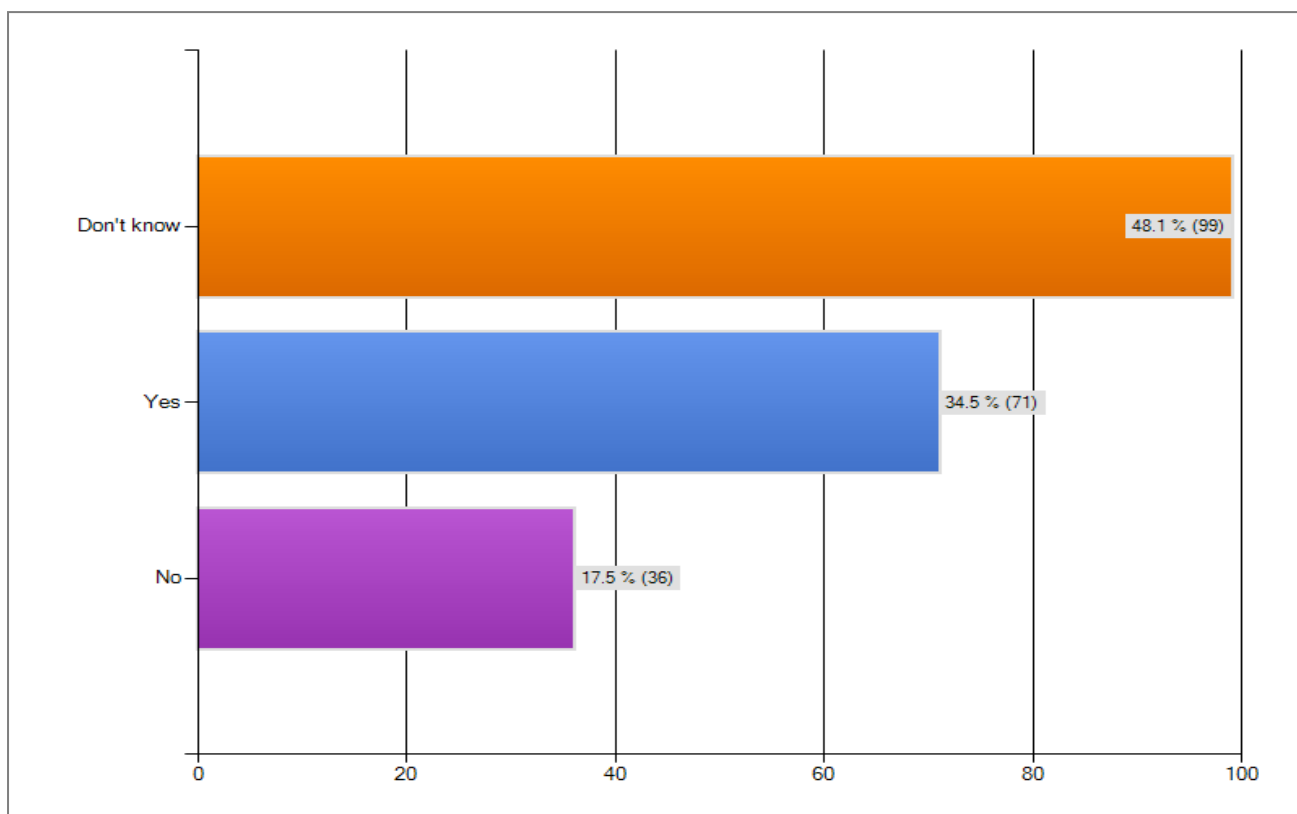
115 people wrote responses to the invitation to tell the review team to say about when and why they have chosen the Big Lottery Fund over other potential funders, and/or vice versa, and 104 people wrote responses to the invitation to say how their experience with the Fund has been in comparison to other Lottery distributors and funders. Positive comments made endorsed the Fund's scale and breadth of grants and general approach to applicants; the Fund's 'fit' with the applicant organisation was also emphasised. In some instances the Fund was seen as the only option. Less positive comments were primarily around bureaucratic application processes in comparison with other funders.

Section 7: Views on How Well the Big Lottery Fund is Managed as an Organisation

This section asked for views on how the Big Lottery Fund is led and managed, and on some areas of the Fund's corporate culture, because these aspects are likely to have an impact on how customers and stakeholders experience their interactions with the Fund. The Review considered the answers below alongside a range of other evidence and reached the conclusions in Chapter 5 of the Review report, on corporate governance.

Leadership

TABLE 25: Do you feel that there is sufficient and strong leadership within the Big Lottery Fund organisation? (Q34, 206 responses)

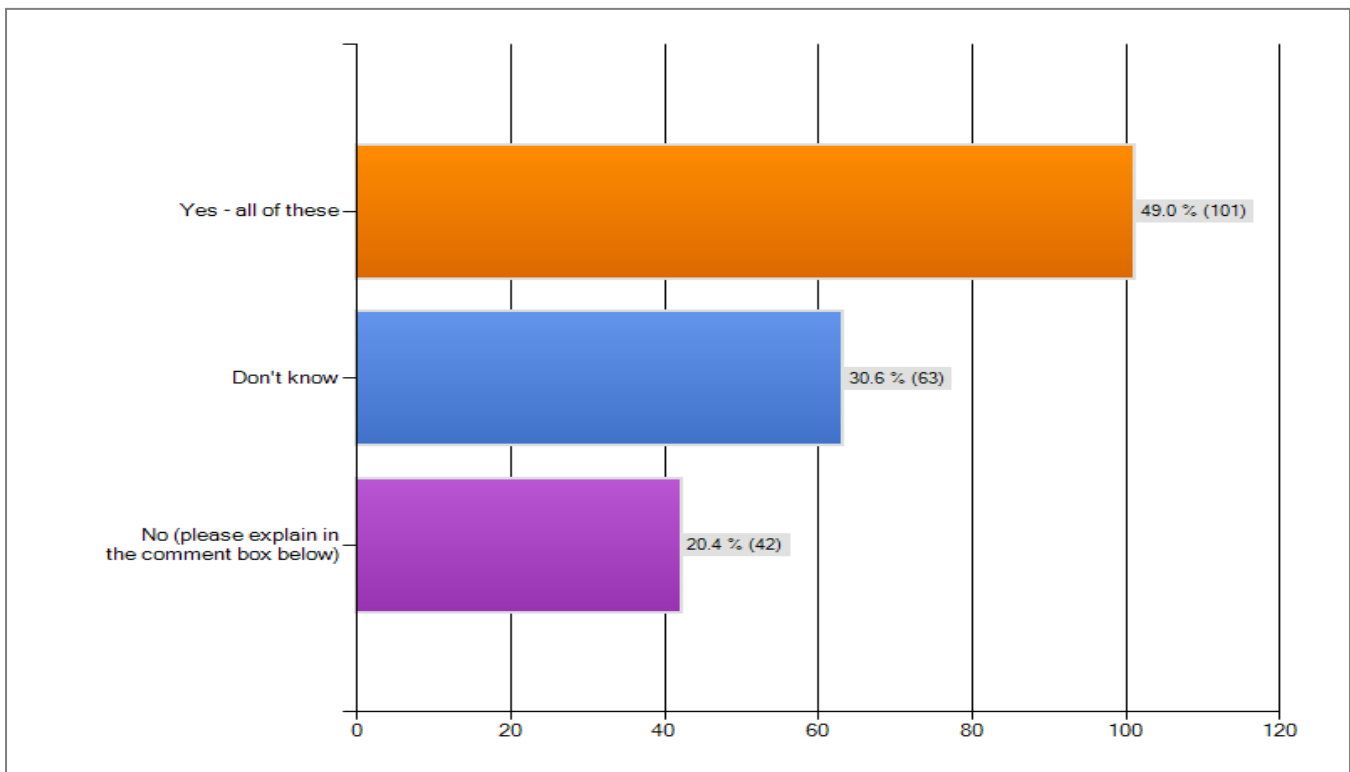


99 people could not express a view on whether the Fund is well led as an organisation (see Table 25). Of the remaining 107 people who gave an opinion on this question, 66% (71) agreed that it is well led, and the remainder said it is not.

Capability

The survey then asked whether there are appropriate levels of skills, experience, independence and knowledge within the Fund (see Table 26 overleaf). Of the 206 respondents, 31% said they did not know the answer. Of the remaining 143 people who expressed an opinion, 71% (101) said that the Fund has appropriate levels of “all of these”, while 42 (29%) answered “No”, although the comments demonstrate that this does not necessarily imply a view that the Fund has insufficient levels of all of these.

TABLE 26: Do you feel that there is an appropriate level of skills, experience, independence and knowledge within the Fund? (Q35, 206 responses)

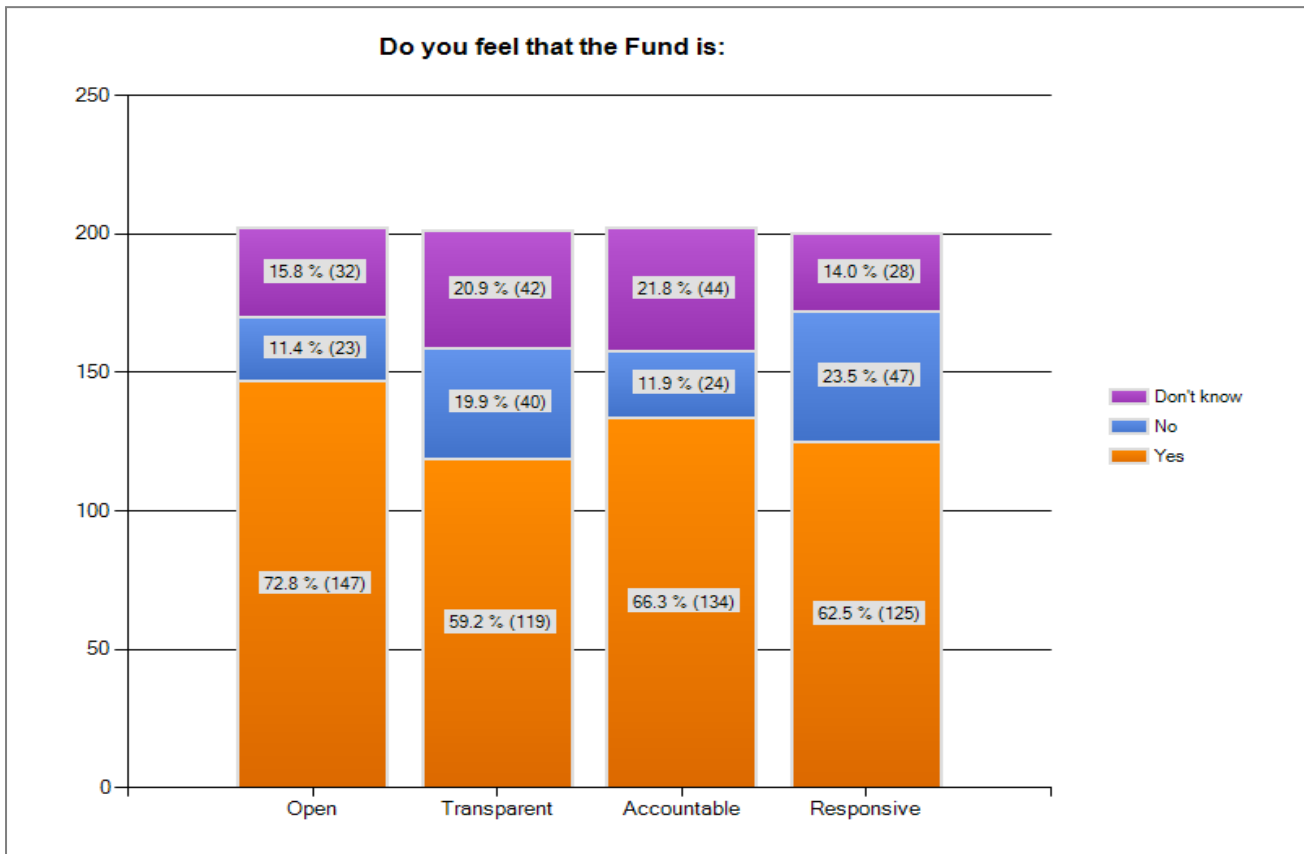


64 people provided text comments on this topic. Some are complimentary but the majority express concerns (sometimes alongside positive comments on one or more of these characteristics), the most common of these being a view that Fund representatives sometimes have insufficient understanding and experience of the VCSE sector, the local community, or of the policy area relevant to the application. A number of people comment on inconsistency across different teams and levels of seniority within the Fund, although some of these comments contradict each other. There are also concerns expressed about inflexibility and a perceived ‘tick box’, process driven, approach from staff. Others comment on independence issues, which have been covered earlier in Section 4 of this report.

Governance characteristics

When asked whether the Fund is an open, transparent, accountable and responsive organisation, (see Table 27 overleaf) the majority of 205 respondents to the question said “Yes” on each of these characteristics, which relate to principles of good corporate governance. However, 24% (47) said it is not “responsive”, and 20% (40) said it is not “transparent”, while between 14% and 22% of respondents did not have an opinion either way on each characteristic.

TABLE 27: Your views on whether the Fund is open, transparent, accountable and responsive (Q36, 205 responses)



50 people provided text comments on this topic, most of which give opinions or specific examples of where and why the Fund does not demonstrate one or more of these four characteristics, but respondents tend not to differentiate in their comments between openness and transparency. Those commenting often describe the Fund as inconsistent, e.g. open and transparent in one area and not in others.

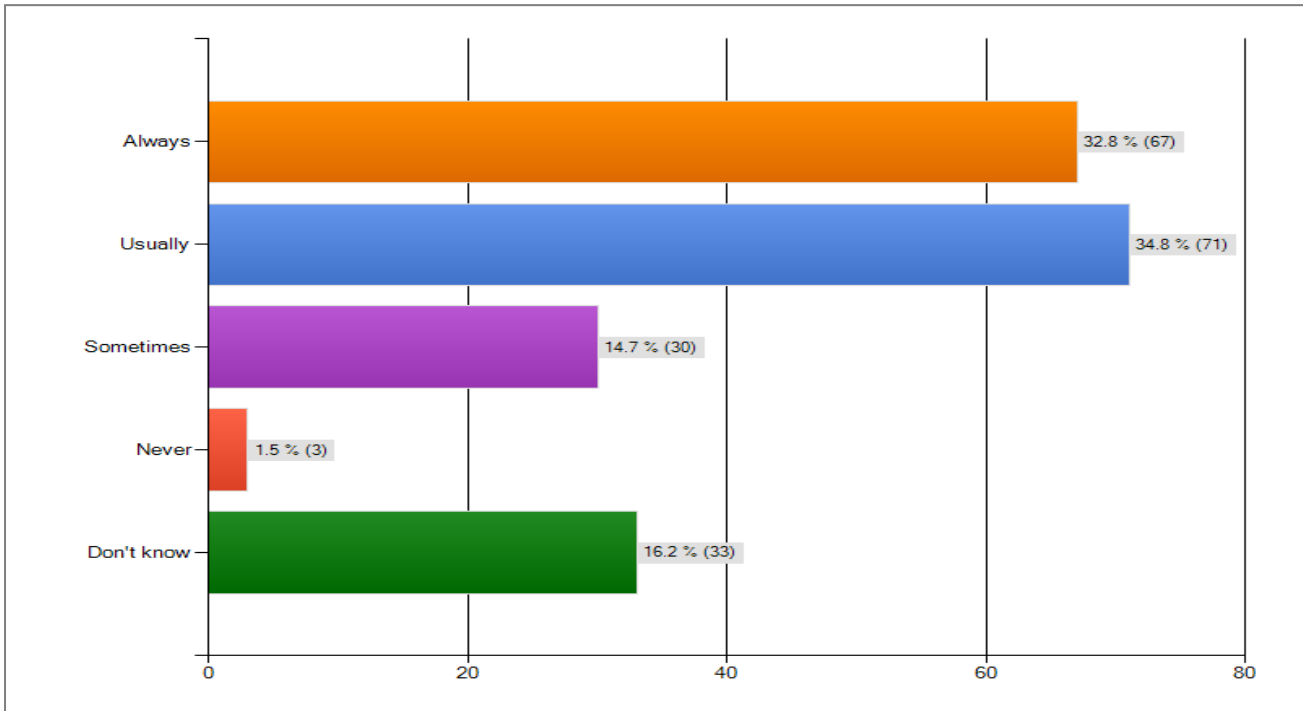
Values

The Big Lottery Fund’s organisational values are:

- being supportive and helpful
- making best use of Lottery money
- using knowledge and evidence.

138 people (81%), out of 171 respondents who expressed an opinion in response to Question 37 (see Table 28 overleaf), said that Fund staff and senior management either “always” or “usually” promote these values in their professional conduct. The remaining 33 respondents answered that Fund representatives only “sometimes” or “never” represent these corporate values.

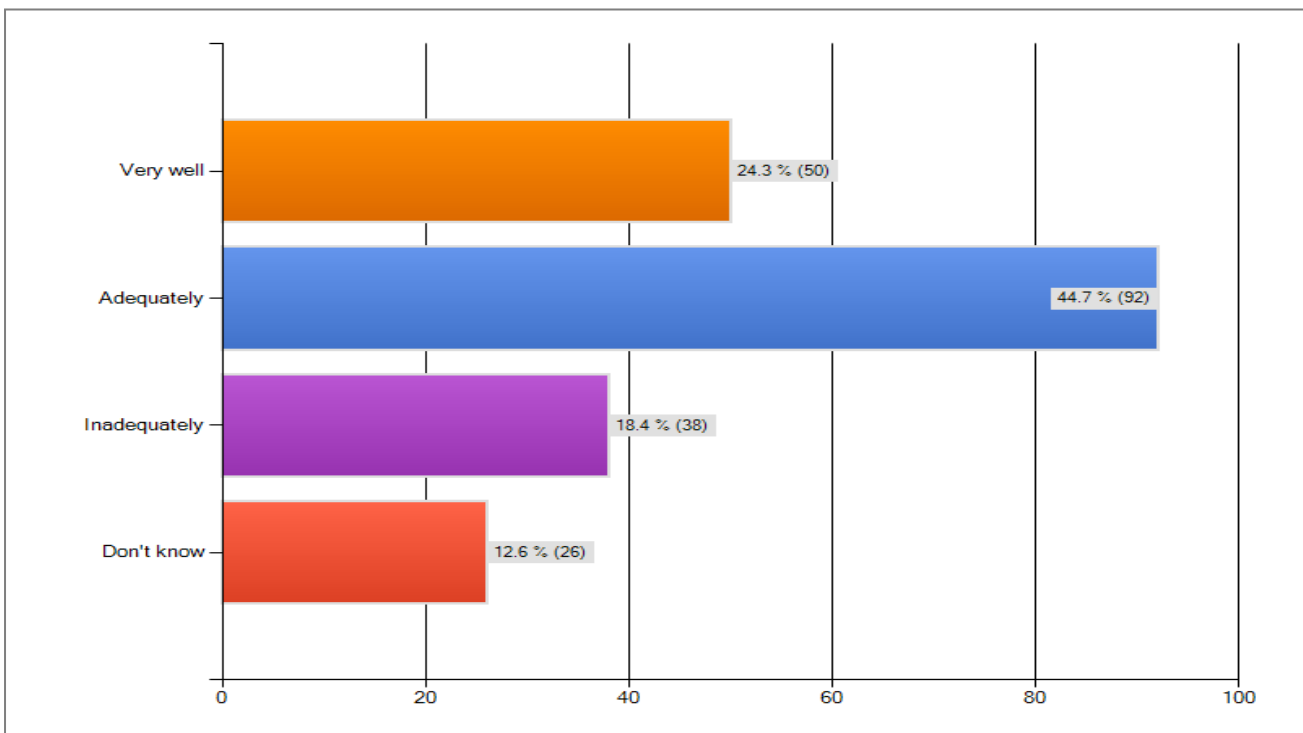
TABLE 28: In your experience, do the staff and senior management of the Fund promote these three organisational values in their professional conduct? (Q37, 204 responses)



Impact

Views on how well the Fund understands the impact of its grants was mixed. Of the 180 people who expressed an opinion in response to Question 38 (see Table 29), only 28% (50) said the Fund understands this impact “very well”, while the largest proportion, 51% (92) said the Fund understands “adequately” and 21% (38) said the Fund has an “inadequate” understanding of the impact of its grants.

TABLE 29: In your view, how well does the Big Lottery Fund understand what impact its grants make? (Q38, 206 responses)



Section 8: In Conclusion

The Call for Evidence survey closed with an open invitation for respondents to make a last comment or suggestion not covered elsewhere in the survey and 82 people took this opportunity, including much praise for the Fund.

**The Triennial Review team wishes to thank everybody who took the time to respond to this
Call for Evidence**