

**D. YOUN
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Customer Survey 2020

For the Charity Commission for England and Wales

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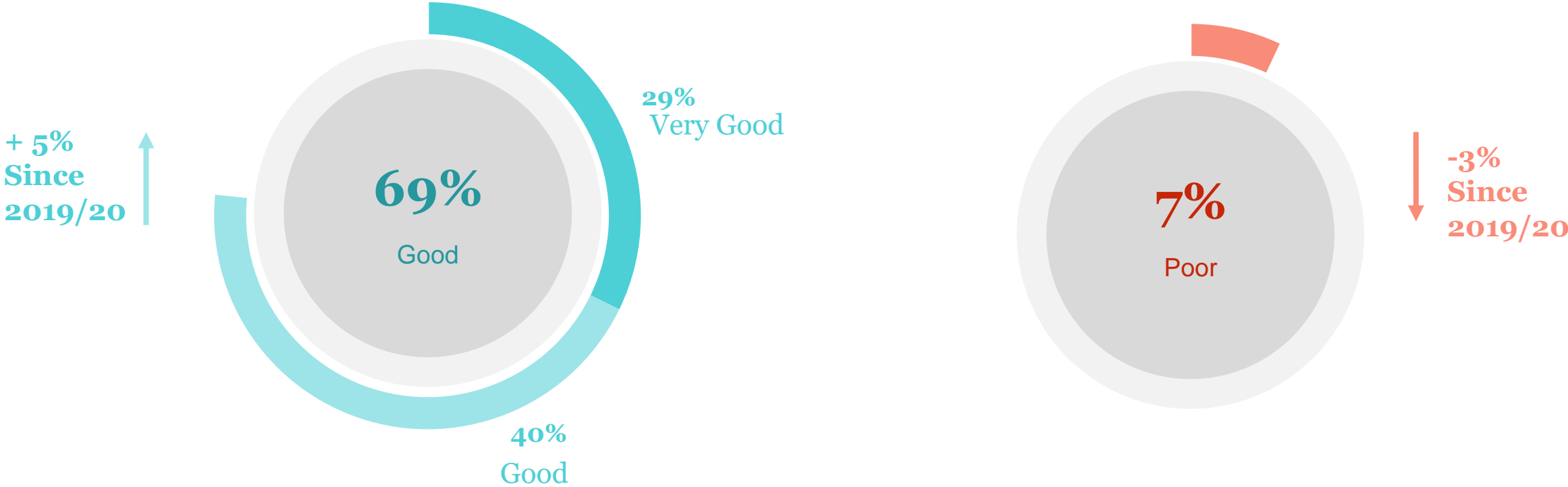
Executive summary

- + **Overall, the Charity Commission's customer service is still rated highly:** two-thirds of surveyed customers say it is good or very good, a slight increase on last year's rating.
- + **There are signs that improvements to guidance and other services have had an effect.** When prompted, around a third suggest some of the Commission's services have improved, and they qualitatively note that there is greater use of plain English and clear headings within guidance.
- + **Customers continue primarily to come into contact with the Commission through its website,** mostly to perform tasks required of them such as updating their details and filing their accounts. The Commission's website and register are rated highly.
- + **As in 2019/20, practical interactions continue to drive positivity.** The register and annual returns processes are rated highly and mostly regarded as intuitive. When able to speak to staff, most customers praise their professional and helpful service.
- + **Those more critical of the Commission's services continue to find the website difficult to navigate and the information they seek hard to find,** despite improvements overall. They believe the Commission needs a more intuitive search engine that produces fewer 'hits' and is clearly differentiated from the wider gov.uk website. Some are concerned that the Commission's information and guidance is not written for people like them, because it is overly technical or is not applicable 'in the real world'. They would like better access to Commission staff to resolve those queries they cannot solve themselves.
- + **Customers have found COVID-19 information useful,** though only a small number have used it.

**The Charity Commission's
customer service is rated highly**

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Views of the Charity Commission's customer service remain positive, with a majority rating it as good



Larger charities are slightly less likely to rate the Commission's services highly

% SUM Good

2019/20

68%

63%

70%

65%

63%

54%

55%

73%

74%

71%

66%

64%

57%

56%

£0 - £10k

£10k - £25k

£25k - £100k

£100k - £500k

£500k - £1m*

£1m - £5m*

£5m

Rating of the Commission's services has improved amongst all customers since last year

% SUM Good

2019/20

71%

69%

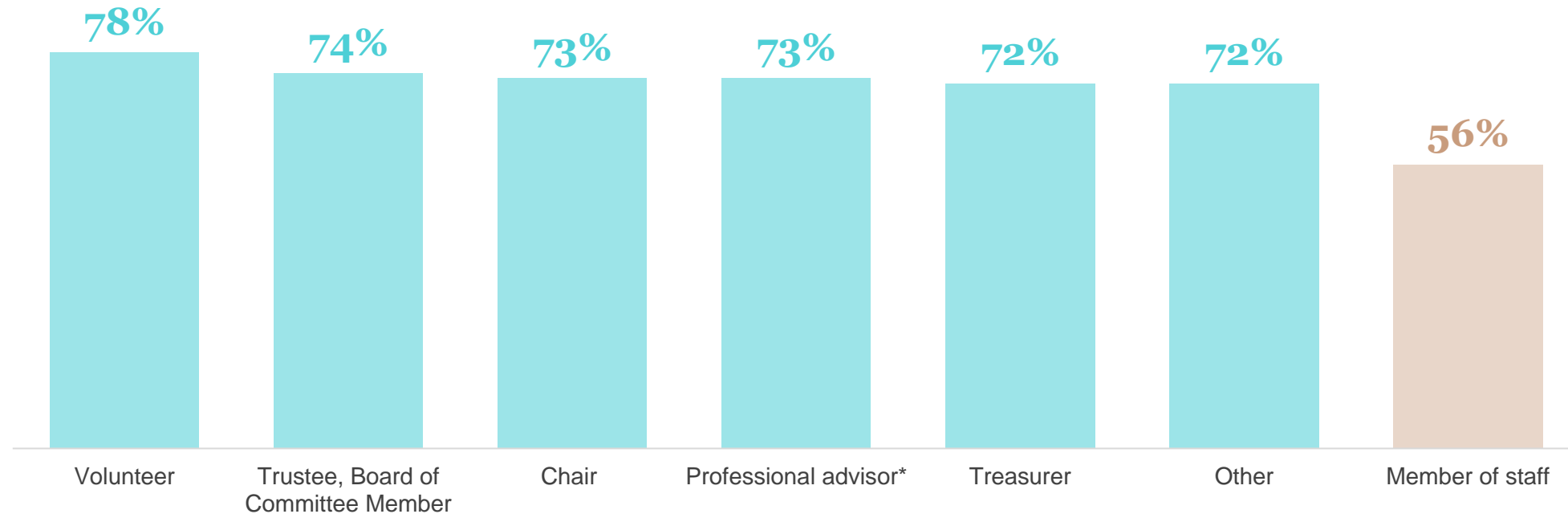
68%

67%

66%

56%

49%



**Contact is made mostly through
the website**

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The majority of contact with the Charity Commission is through its website

2019/20

84%

57%

51%

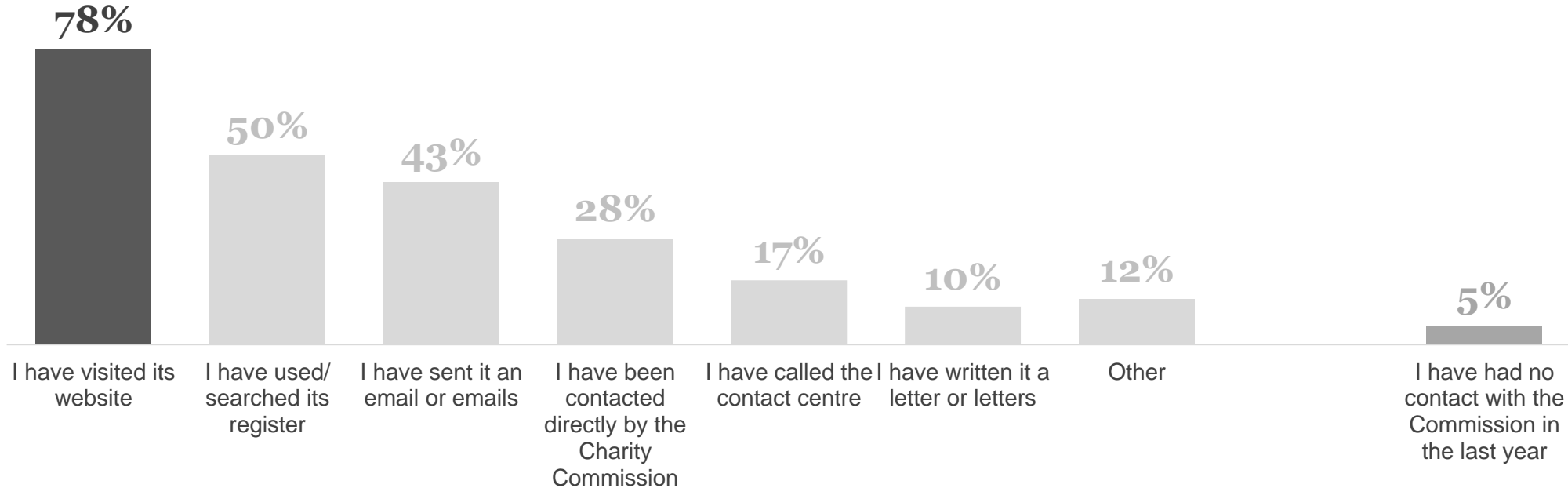
27%

24%

13%

10%

3%

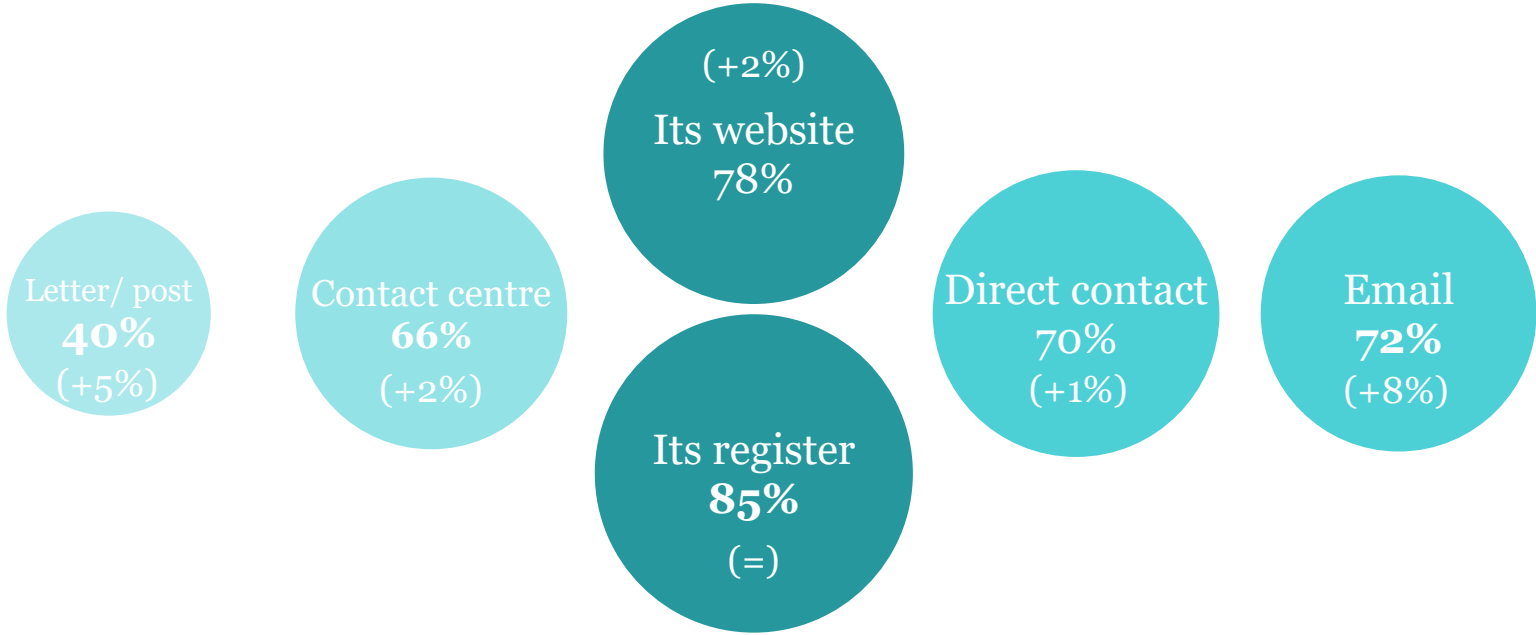


**And interaction with the register
or more practical functions
continues to drive positive
sentiment**

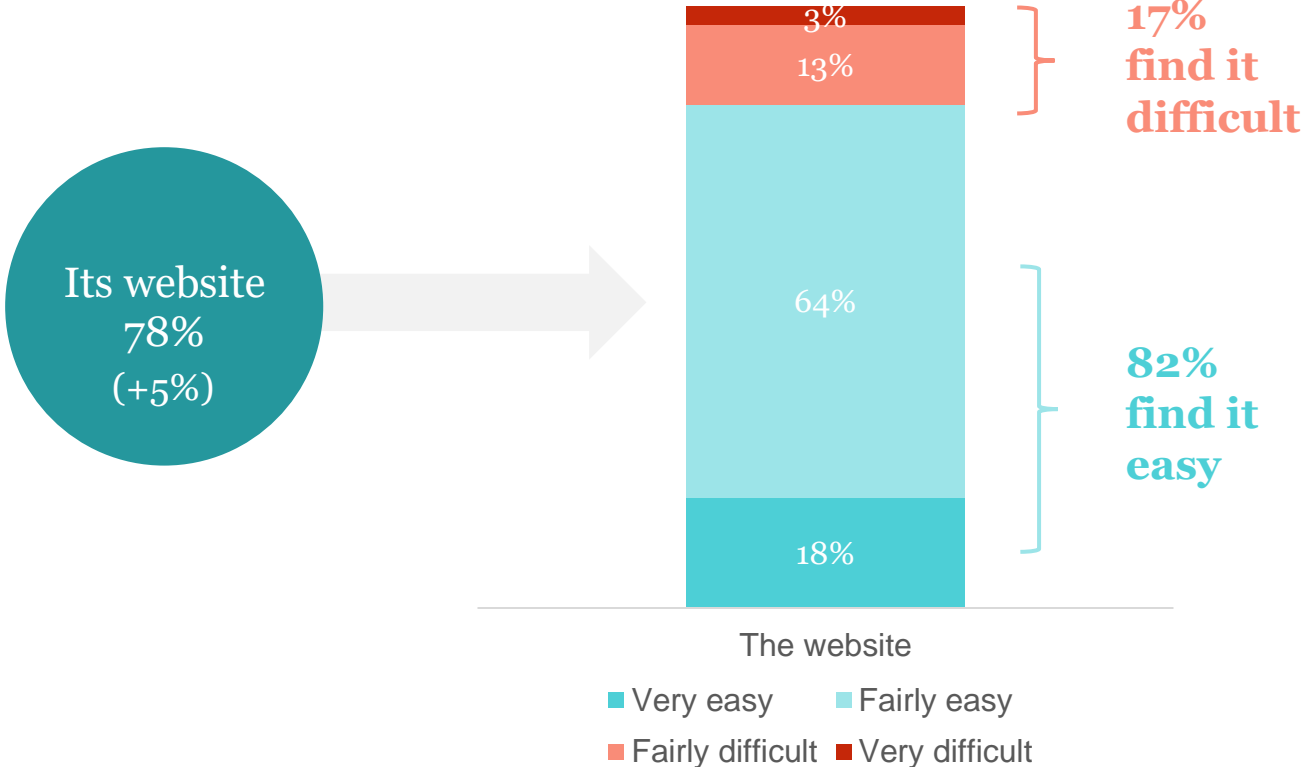
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Of the channels the Commission provides, the register and the website again perform best

% SUM Good



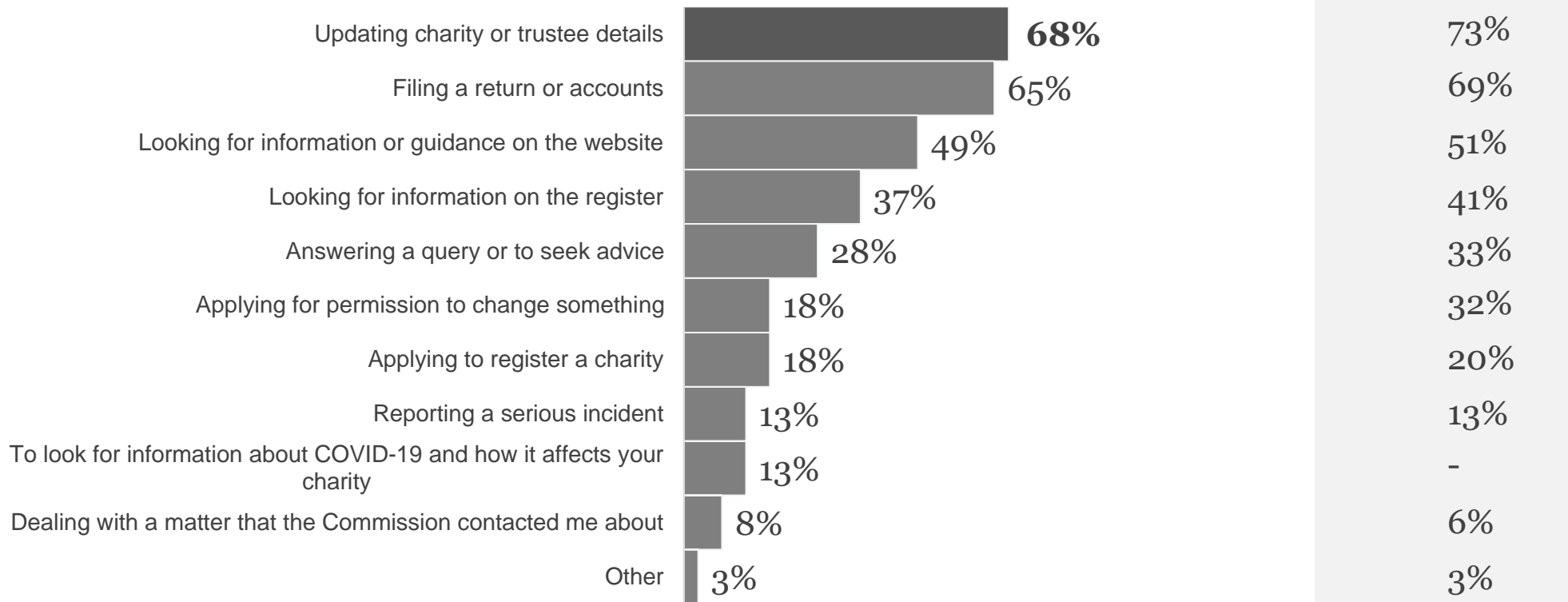
A majority find it easy to find the information they need on the website



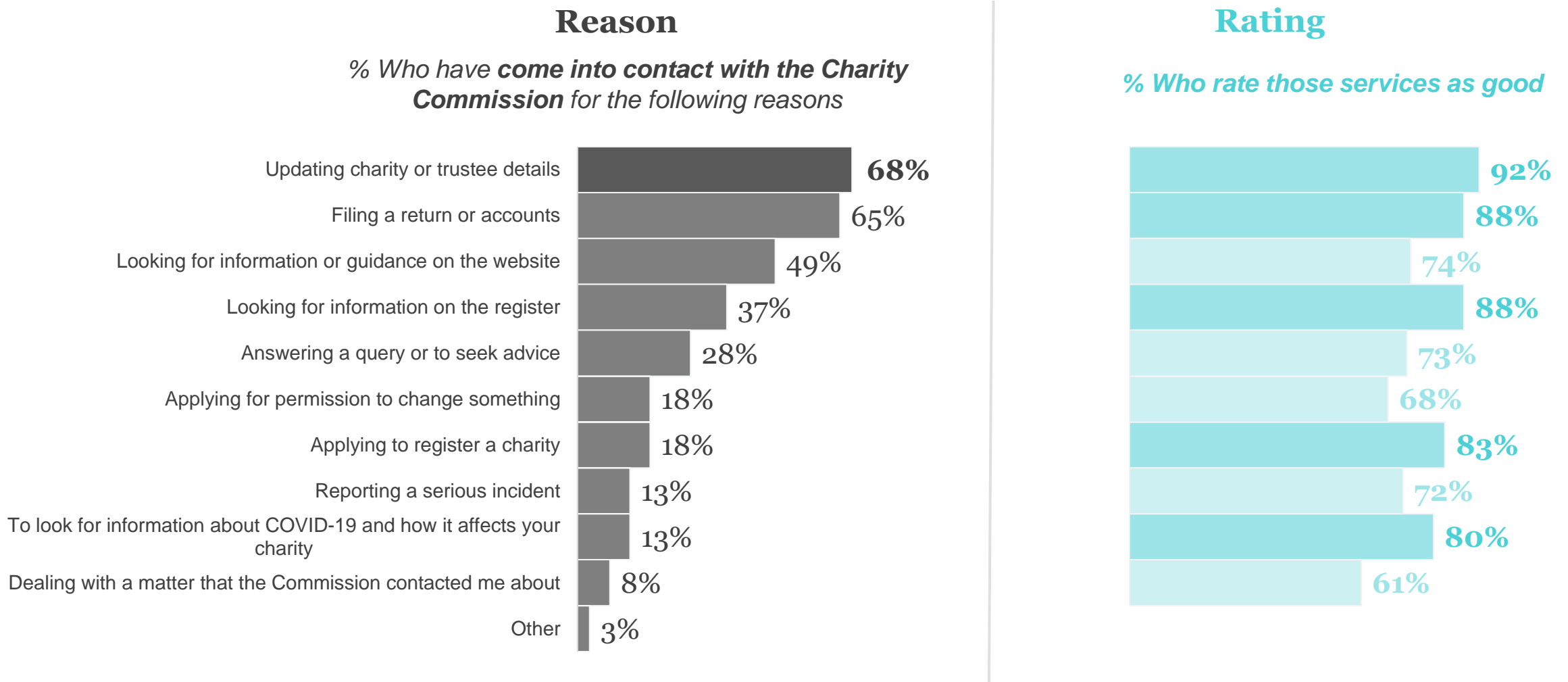
Customers most commonly come into contact with the Commission through practical tasks such as updating their details or accounts

Reason

*% Who have **come into contact with the Charity Commission** for the following reasons*



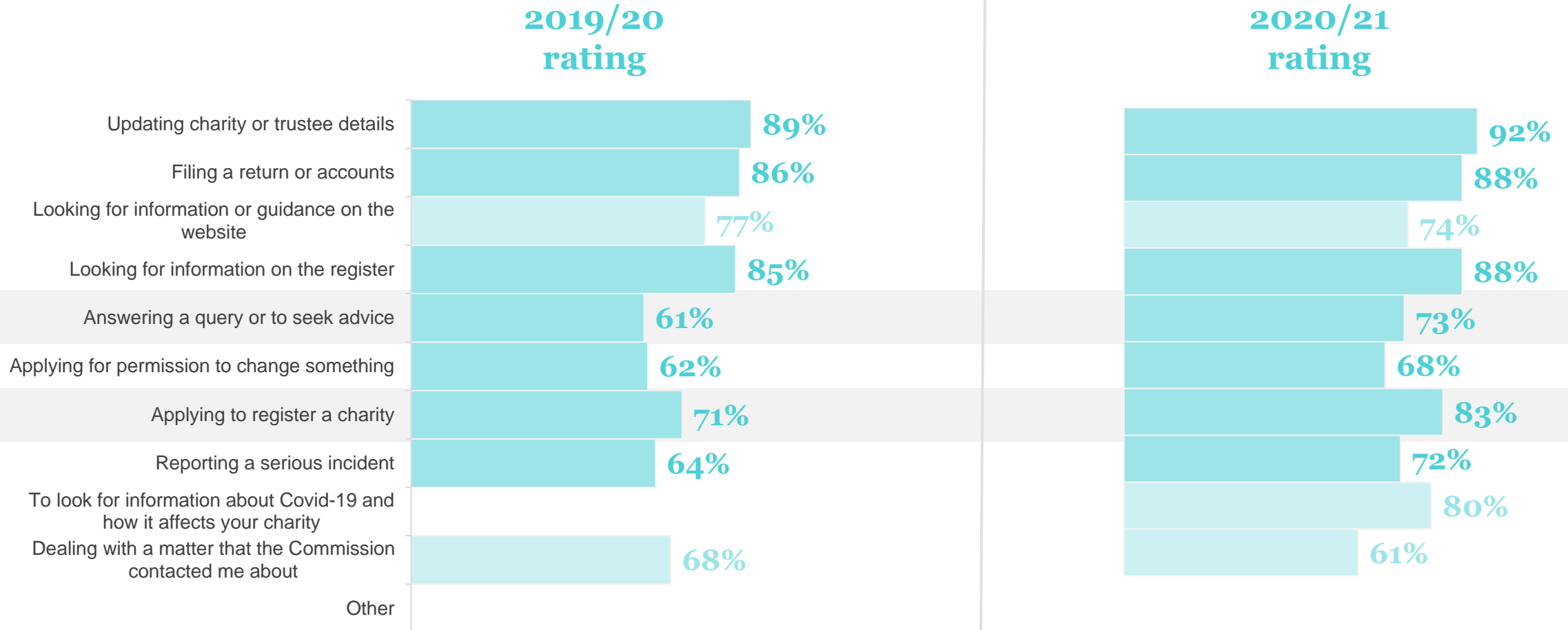
It remains those practical interactions, including updating details and register information, that are rated highest by customers



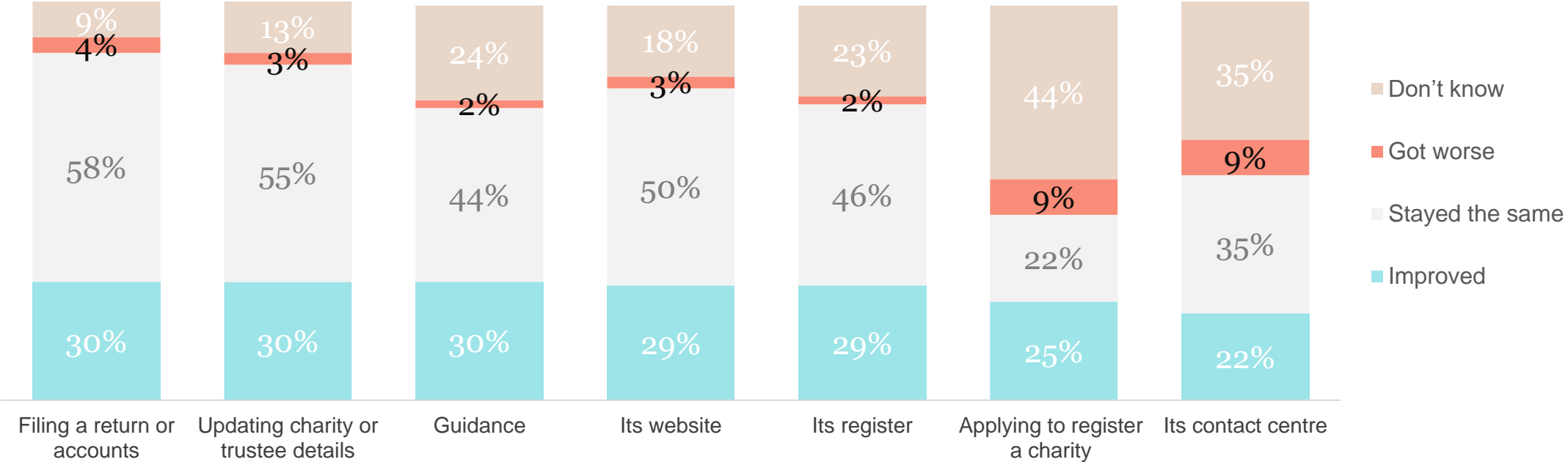
**There has been some perceived
improvement in services since
last year**

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Many services are rated slightly higher than last year, most noticeably by those looking for an answer to a query and registering a charity



When prompted most say the Commission’s services have stayed the same, although a significant minority point to some improvement



Have you noticed any change in the quality of the following services in the last 12 months? Base: Its website (1,049), Its register (740), Its contact centre (242), Filing a returns or account (852), Updating charity or trustee details (891), Apply to register a charity (235), Guidance (1,049)

**Most believe that the
Commission provides helpful
advice and support overall as
well as largely intuitive online
systems**

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THE COMMISSION IS SEEN TO BE MOST HELPFUL IN FOUR KEY AREAS

Helpful & professional staff

- ✓ When able to speak to someone at the Commission, usually via the contact centre or email, customers are impressed with the service they receive
- ✓ Staff are seen to be helpful and professional
- ✓ Some feel the website can be confusing or difficult to navigate, particularly the search function, and so discussing a query with a member of staff is highly valued

The charity register and annual returns

- ✓ As in last year's survey, the register and annual returns system are generally thought to work well
- ✓ There is some recognition that improvements have been made to the layout of the website which some say is clearer and easier to use

General advice and guidance

- ✓ Customers value the wealth of information and guidance available on the Commission's website
- ✓ Many say it is clear, accessible and covers all the key elements those involved in the running of charities need to know
- ✓ Some say guidance has improved in the past year, and has been particularly useful in light of the COVID-19 pandemic

Updating details online

- ✓ Many say the online filing system works well, and they appreciate the ease at which they can update details about their charity online

**THE
COMMISSION
IS SEEN TO
BE MOST
HELPFUL IN
FOUR KEY
AREAS**

Helpful & professional staff

“The contact centre staff were amazing. Prompt, knowledgeable, quick to refer and provide assurance.”

“Being able to speak with a person was helpful at the beginning of the COVID-19 situation.”

“Call centre staff very knowledgeable and helpful.”

The charity register and annual returns

“Filing annual return and updating charity details is very easy. The register is also easy to use.”

“The new style layout of the register entry is useful.”

“The new website is really good and makes finding basic information easy.”

General advice and guidance

“Clarity about subject matter and detail when needed.”

“Guidance is clear and use of examples has improved.”

“Guides for trustees etc. in pdf format. Very helpful to email on to trustees and clearly worded.”

“Having Covid-19 guidance on governance issues highlighted clearly.”

Updating details online

“In providing charity information to the Charity Commission, the site is user friendly which is very important for slightly older and less capable (in terms of modern technologies) clerical officers like myself.”

“Updating information is straightforward.”

“The layout and procedure for updating Trustees details/information.”

Whilst the Commission is seen to provide detailed and helpful services, ratings for concision and ease of access remain lower

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Services are seen to be comprehensive and detailed, but remain rated least highly for concision

2019/20

72%

71%

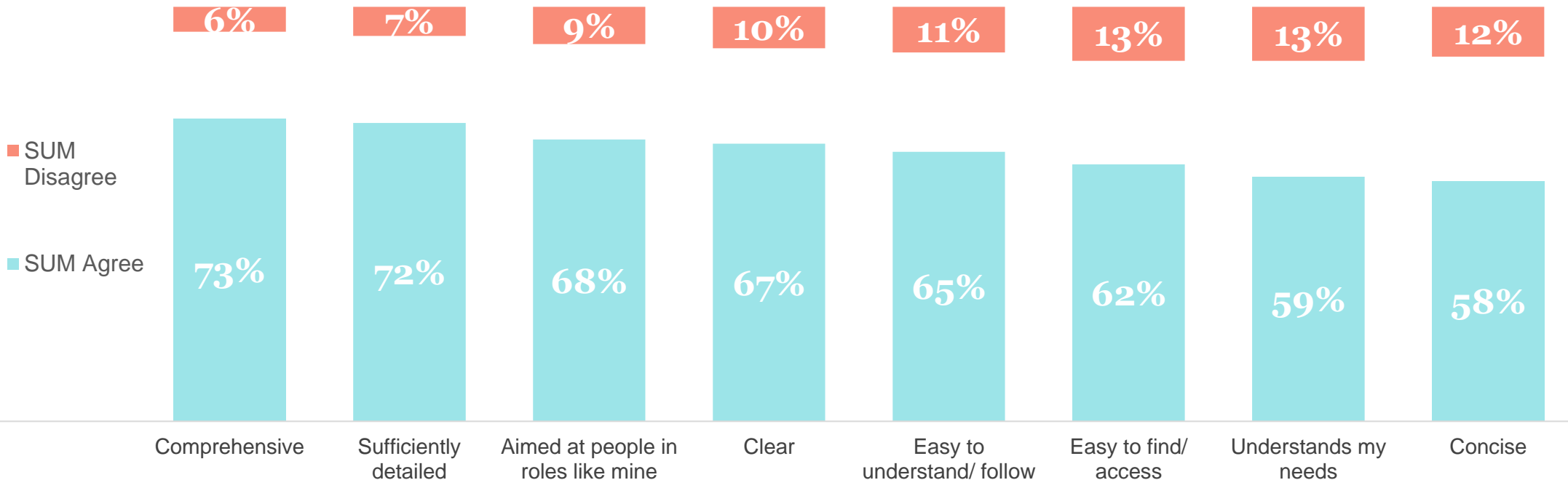
69%

64%

62%

59%

60%



**Indeed, calls for improvement
centre on providing clear &
accessible information for all
customers**

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SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT ARE FOCUSED ON ACCESSIBILITY & EASE OF ACCESS

Clear and accessible information

- ✗ Despite some suggestion that the Commission has improved its website and guidance over the past year, the most common criticisms still relate to 'complicated' information that some feel is inaccessible to those who may be less experienced or work for smaller charities
- ✗ Terminology used is sometimes viewed to be overly complex or legal in nature, and not aimed at 'ordinary' people

Responsiveness

- ✗ Understandably, those frustrated with the website or guidance believe the Commission needs to provide an option to speak to a member of staff to try to resolve queries
- ✗ Some feel the process of contacting the contact centre or email queries can take far too long, leaving them confused or unable to resolve their issue

Website functionality

- ✗ As was prevalent in last year's survey, there are complaints that the website is too difficult to navigate
- ✗ It is seen to be 'clunky' and unresponsive in many areas, such as when using the search function, navigating through guidance or looking for specific information

Interpretation of guidance

- ✗ Some suggest that the Commission fails to advise charities where guidance requires a 'real world interpretation'
- ✗ These people are frustrated with a 'one size fits all approach' which ignores the needs of specific charities or does not account for how the rules may apply to charities in 'real life'
- ✗ This is partly seen to be linked to difficulty in speaking to an advisor or case worker

**SUGGESTIONS
FOR
IMPROVEMENT
ARE FOCUSED
ON
ACCESSIBILITY
& EASE OF
ACCESS**

Clear and accessible information

“The Commission is excessively complex, bureaucratic, impractical and generally unhelpful. Guidance is wordy, often unclear and requires interpretation.”

“I get more informative and supportive advice elsewhere. I don’t feel they are there for the smaller operations.”

“I think that the guidance, whilst good, does tend to throw the reader into loops within the pages of info and you don’t always find what you are looking for.”

The charity register and annual returns

“I would prefer to be able to easily make contact by email, so I have a clear record of what was asked and the response. I find the guidance hard to unpick and unclear/condradictory.”

“It is extremely difficult to make direct verbal contact with an officer.”

“A couple of conversations with the Case Officer resolved, in about 30 minutes, outstanding issues that had been dragging on previously for months.”

Website functionality

“I do think that navigating around the website could be made easier. For example, when I want to log in to my account there is not one place to go to find it I find myself fishing all over the website to find where to log in.”

“I think the website needs a complete overhaul.”

Interpretation of guidance

“I appreciate that hard and fast lines need to be drawn, and the website is clear in this area. However, there are grey areas in the work of a charity, and the charity for which I volunteer has found that help with grey areas is not really available”.

“I think they could sometimes try to be clear in their answers to queries. One gets the feeling that the rules are repeated and left to one’s interpretation.”

“Our trustees sometimes feel that they need expert advise to correctly interpret the rules.”

Overall, customers would like to receive more help from staff verbally or guidance that is better tailored to certain audiences or processes

Customers would like...

1. Verbal contact with the Commission

“Ability to book a Zoom/skype conference call to get explanations on requests or seek more information and advice.”

“A phone number to call for clarity on things, if we are not quite sure how to do something - without thinking we will get in to trouble by the Charity Commission if we haven't got it quite right.”

2. More information or guidance on specific processes, e.g., reporting serious incidents, good practice during COVID-19

“The annual return, I totally understand the benefits of updating it but more comprehensive guidance notes would help.”

“Reporting a serious incident could be simpler. I found that I was repeating myself on the multi page form as it was not clear what to write in each box. The guidance notes are no help with this.”

“We are changing to a CIO and it would be good if there was a step-by-step guide that we could understand on what is required and when.”

3. More tailored guidance, e.g., for both smaller and larger charities, supported by more ‘real world’ examples

“A far more intuitive question function. Our charity is a diocese in the church of England and has complicated rules and the generic charity rules don't always cover the depth of question or provide the right level of detail.”

**The few who have not had
contact with the Charity
Commission thought they did
not want or need it**

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The few who have not had contact with the Charity Commission thought they did not want or need it

5% of those surveyed had no contact with the Charity Commission in the last year*

1. I did not want or need any help or contact (85%)*

2. I wanted help with the management of my charity but I did not know that the Charity Commission provided it (4%)*

3. I wanted help with the management of my charity but I got it from another source (3%)*
100% advisory body

4. I wanted help with the management of my charity but did not know where to start (3%)*

5. Other (7%)*

Why customers have not had any contact with the Commission

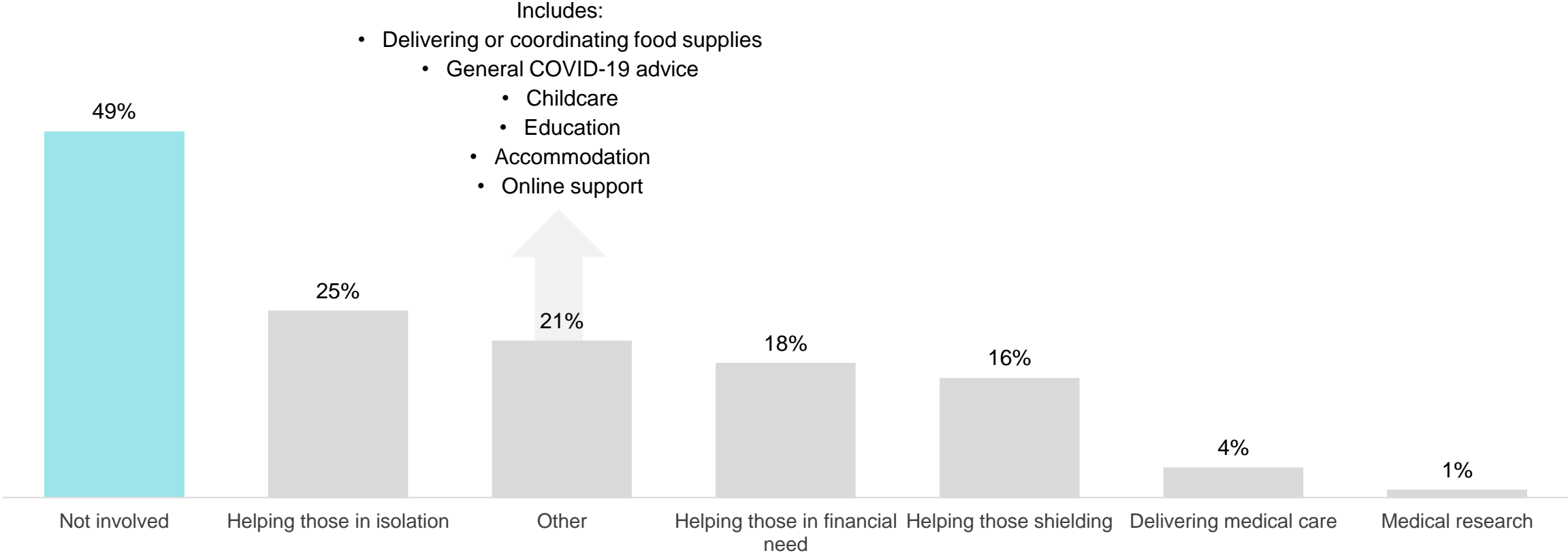
Appendix

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Yonder conducted an online survey of 1,315 participants taken from the Charity Commission's database of charity main contacts. Participants came from a range of charity types, regional areas of focus, and length of tenure. Sample is not representative of the charity register.

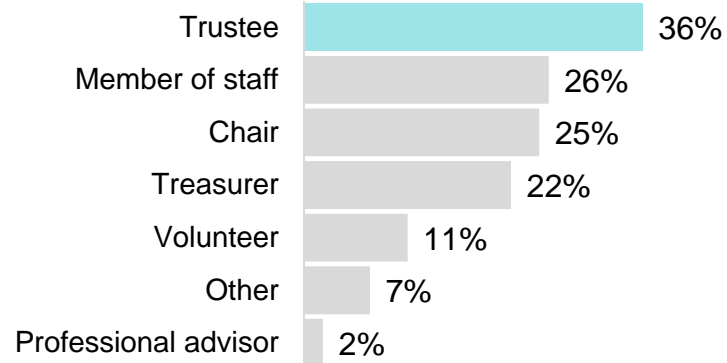
Where relevant, answer options were randomised and scales rotated.

Involvement in the COVID-19 pandemic

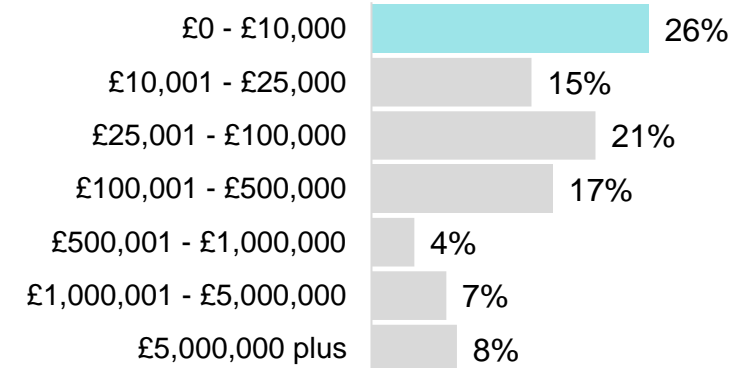


The respondents

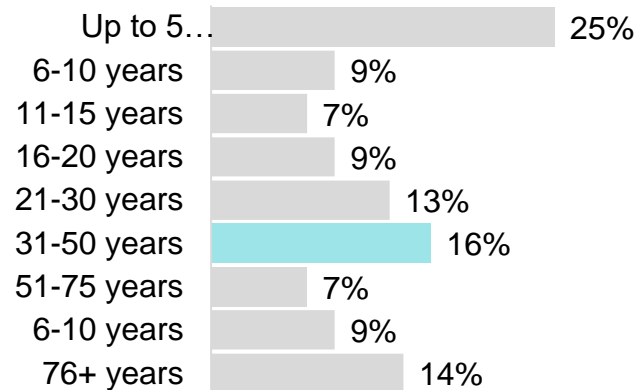
Role



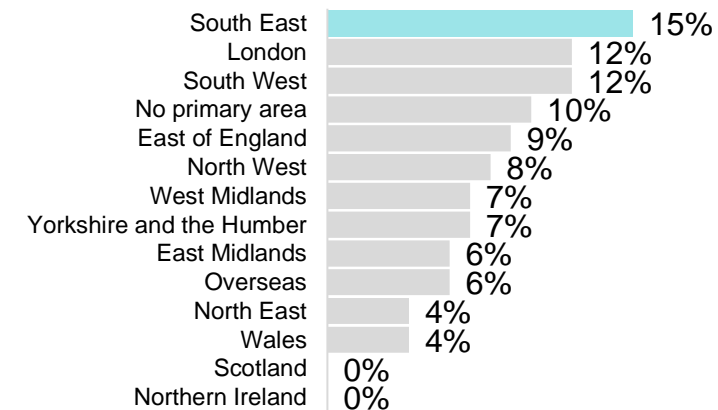
Income



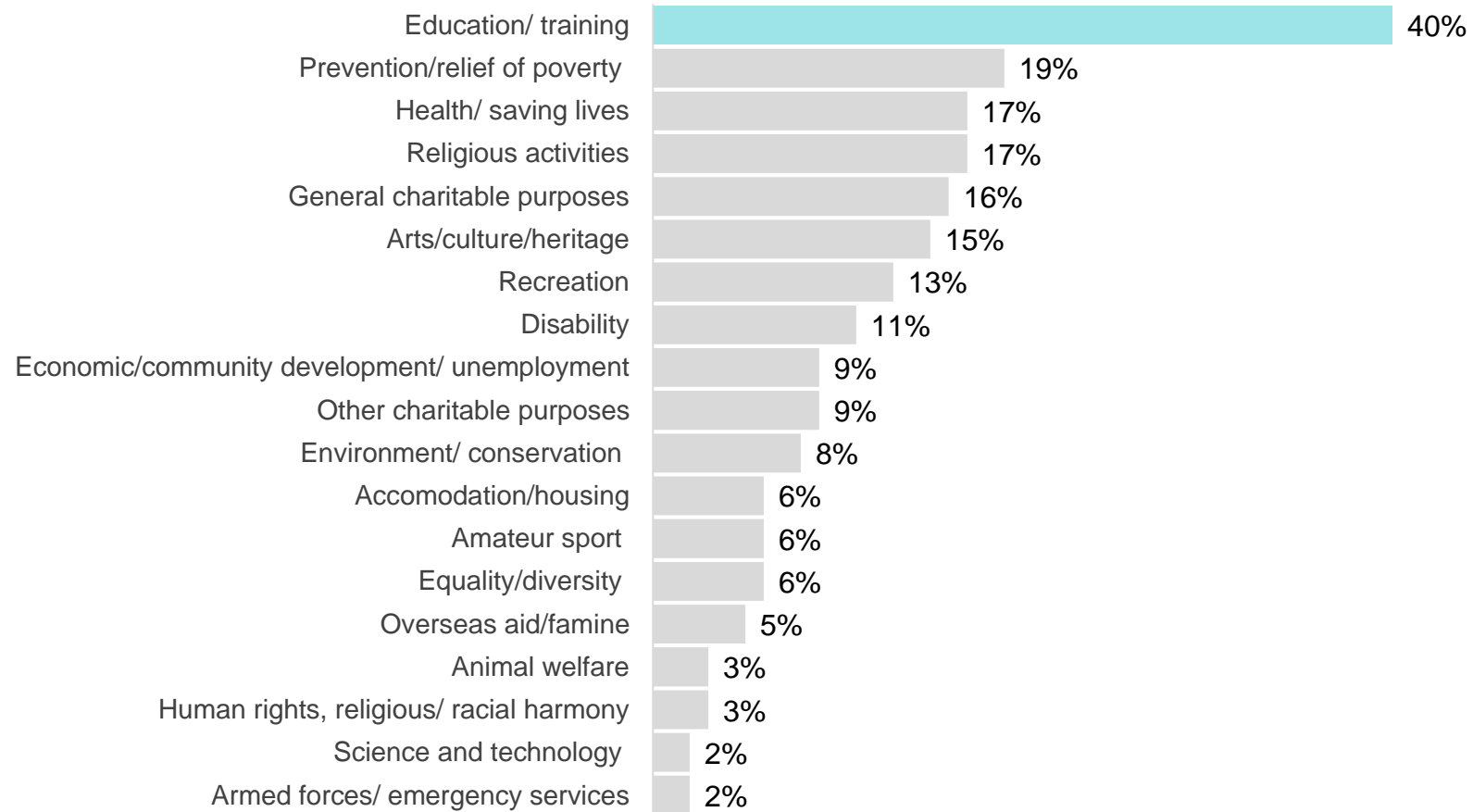
Years operating



Geography (primary area)



Charity remit



Base: All (1,386)

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