



Regulator of
Social Housing

Stakeholder survey results 2020

February 2021



Introduction

This is the third consecutive year that the Regulator of Social Housing has carried out a stakeholder survey and we intend to conduct a similar survey annually.

We carried out the survey in 2020 later in the year than we would normally do due to the coronavirus pandemic.

We have sought the views of registered providers and other stakeholders on a range of issues, including our response to the coronavirus pandemic.

We will use the results to inform

- our performance monitoring
- continuous development of our operational approach
- our corporate planning

Key findings

The number of responses and types of organisations responding were broadly similar to 2019, with the majority being RPs, and the results were very positive.

95% of respondents agreed that

- our approach is co-regulatory
- we meet our objective to be proportionate and minimise interference
- the regulatory framework and our approach to regulation are consistent with our objectives on economic regulation
- our approach to regulation is risk-based and assurance-based
- this approach is reflected in their experience of being a regulated RP or how they understand RPs are regulated
- we take appropriate action in response to referrals where we find consumer standards have been breached and tenants, or potential tenants have been at significant risk of serious detriment

94% agreed that we take action where possible to ensure that confidence in the sector is maintained, and access to finance on competitive terms continues.

Key findings

86% of respondents overall were clear about any information and/or evidence they were asked to provide by the regulator and why.

87% found RSH publications very or somewhat useful.

79% of respondents think that regulatory staff are knowledgeable or very knowledgeable about the complexity of the sector.

Direct contact by letter or e-mail remains by far the communication method preferred by stakeholder, with the website second and speaking engagements third. Views were more mixed on social media.

Key findings – Coronavirus response

The coronavirus pandemic made 2020 a very different and challenging year for our stakeholders.

Registered providers of social housing had to work flexibly to maintain essential services while protecting tenants and staff.

Due to this the RSH decided it was appropriate to change some of the ways we regulate during the pandemic.

The survey has found:

- **93%** of all stakeholders agree the Regulator reduced the regulatory burden during the pandemic.
- **94%** of small providers agree key risks were monitored during the pandemic.
- **97%** of large providers agree our expectations were communicated in a timely and appropriate manner.

Responses

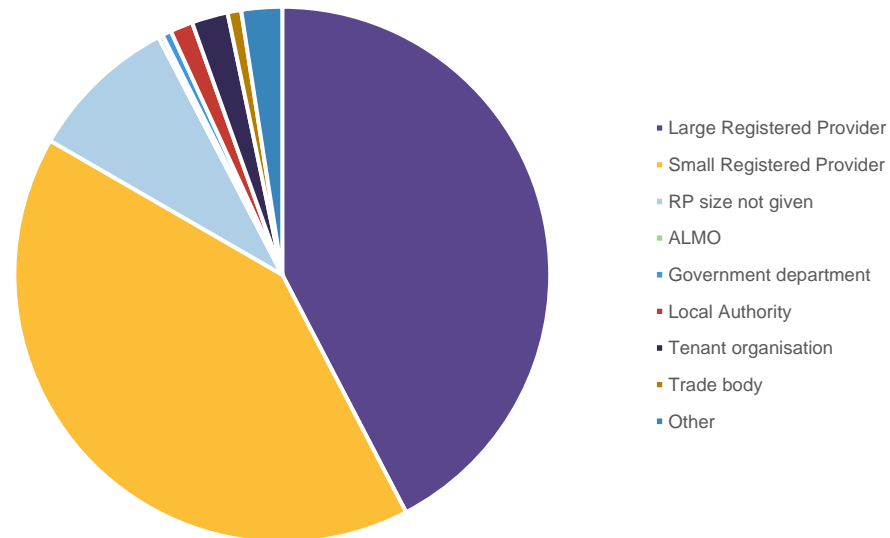
366 stakeholders completed the survey, which is similar to the number (376) of completed responses we received in 2019.

338 (92%) of respondents were registered providers (including local authority registered providers), compared to 82% in 2019.

Other stakeholders responding included charities, tenant organisations, trade bodies and local authorities who are not registered providers.

Which of these stakeholder groups best describes your organisation?	Responses	Proportion of responses
Large Registered Provider	155	42%
Small Registered Provider	150	41%
RP size not given	33	9%
ALMO	1	1%
Government department	2	1%
Local Authority (not a provider)	5	1%
Tenant organisation	8	2%
Trade body	3	1%
Other	9	2%

Proportion of respondents by stakeholder group



Profile of registered provider respondents

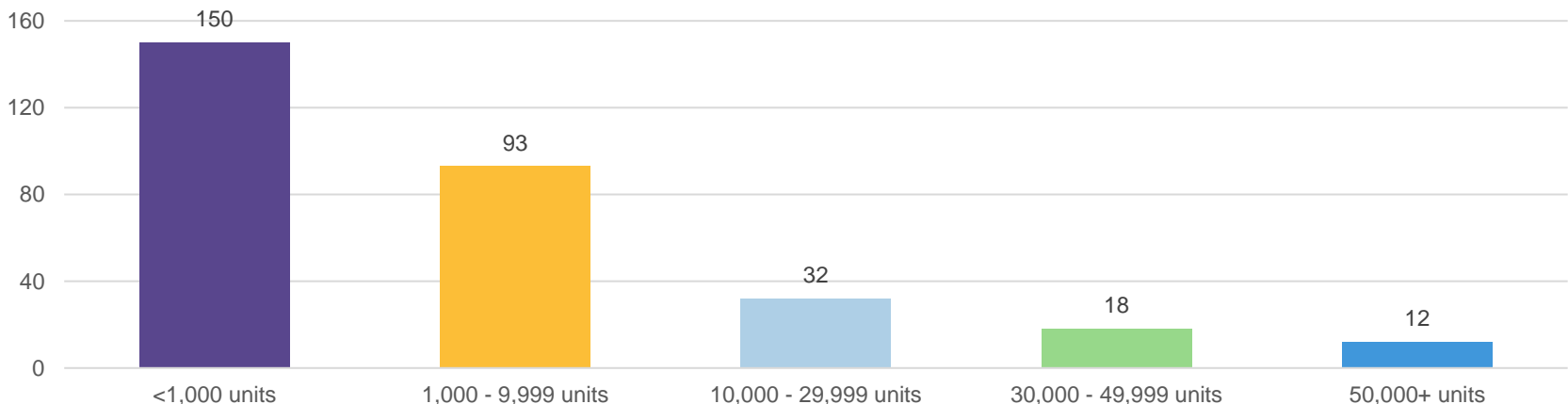
Of the registered providers that responded 155 were large providers (>1,000 units), 150 were small providers (<1,000 units) and 33 did not declare their size.

In addition to the responses from local authorities who are not registered providers, responses were received from 25 local authority registered providers. This is up significantly from 3 in 2019; potentially reflecting increasing engagement due to the coronavirus response and new regulatory returns for local authorities e.g. on rents.

87% of provider respondents classified themselves as housing associations.

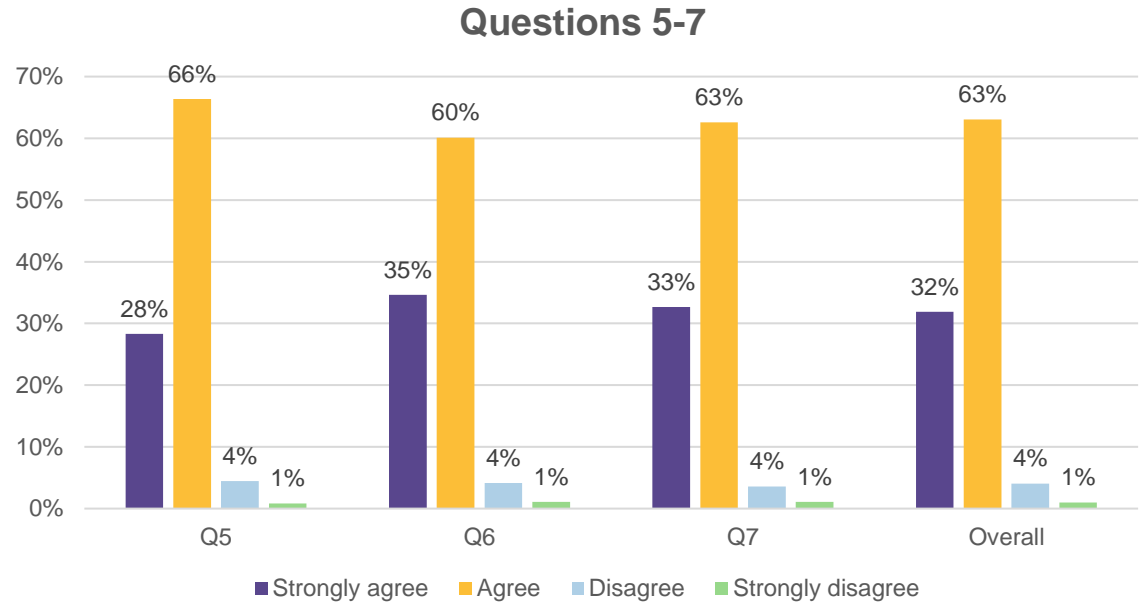
13 for-profit providers responded (up from 10 in 2019), 4% of the total number of respondents.

How many units does your provider own?



Section 1 – Regulatory framework

Questions 5-7: To what extent do you agree that:	
5	the regulator's approach is co-regulatory
6	the regulator meets its objectives to be proportionate and minimise interference
7	the regulatory framework and our approach to regulation are consistent with our objectives on economic regulation



A consistent 95% of respondents agreed with each of these statements, with a total of only 5% of respondents disagreeing in each question.

The highest level of respondents strongly agreeing was for question 6, with 35% of respondents strongly agreeing that the regulator is proportionate and minimises interference.

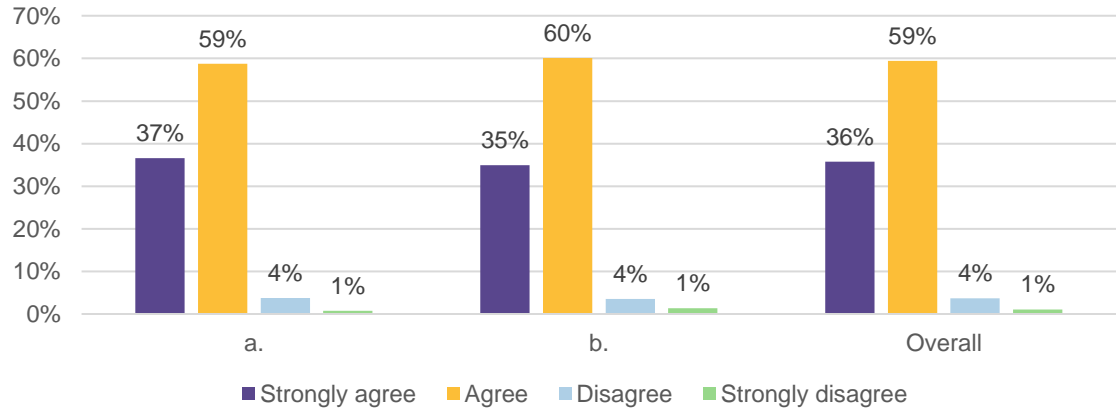
98% of large providers and 93% of small providers responding agree with the statements.

Section 2 – Delivery and practice

Questions 8: To what extent do you agree that:

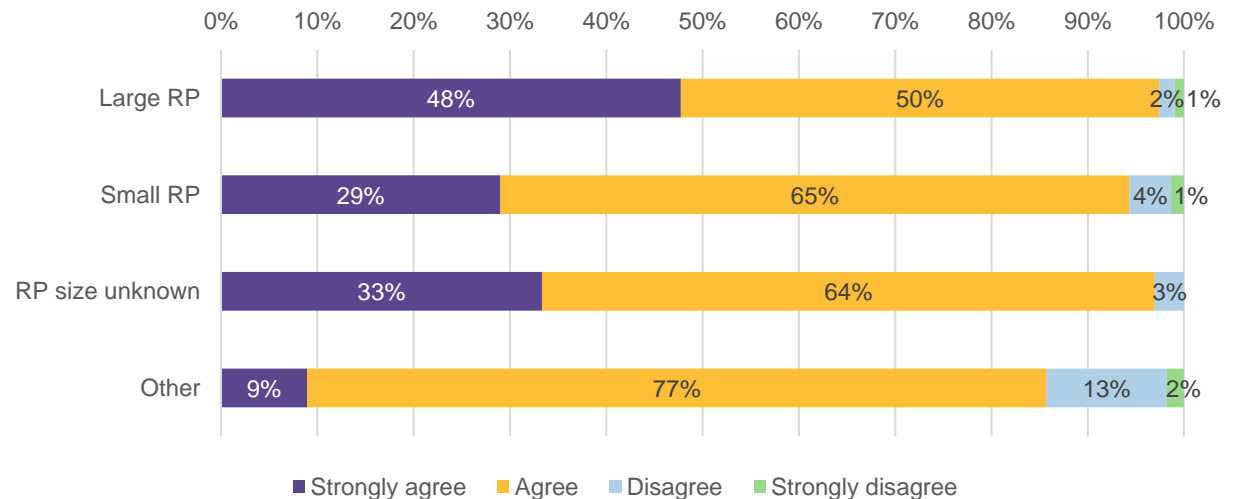
- a. Our approach to regulation is risk-based and assurance-based?
- b. This approach is reflected in your experience of being a regulated RP or how you understand RPs are regulated?

Question 8 by sub-question



Overall 95% of respondents agreed with these statements

Question 8 by stakeholder group



Section 2 – Delivery and practice

Question 9

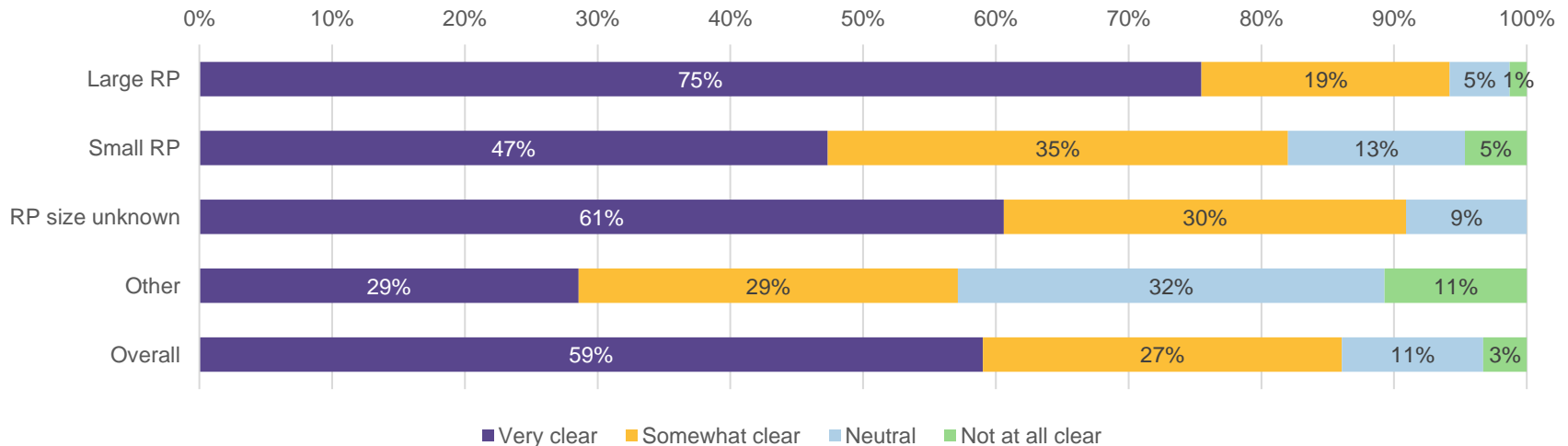
How clear are you about any information and/or evidence you are asked to provide by the regulator and why?

Overall, 86% of respondents are very or somewhat clear about the information or evidence requested, up from 77% in 2019. This includes responses received from other stakeholders who may not receive regular requests for information.

94% of large providers confirm that the information requested is at least somewhat clear, with 75% stating it is very clear.

Across all registered providers, 9 (3%) responded “not at all clear” and 88% answered somewhat or very clear.

Question 9 by stakeholder group



Section 2 – Delivery and practice

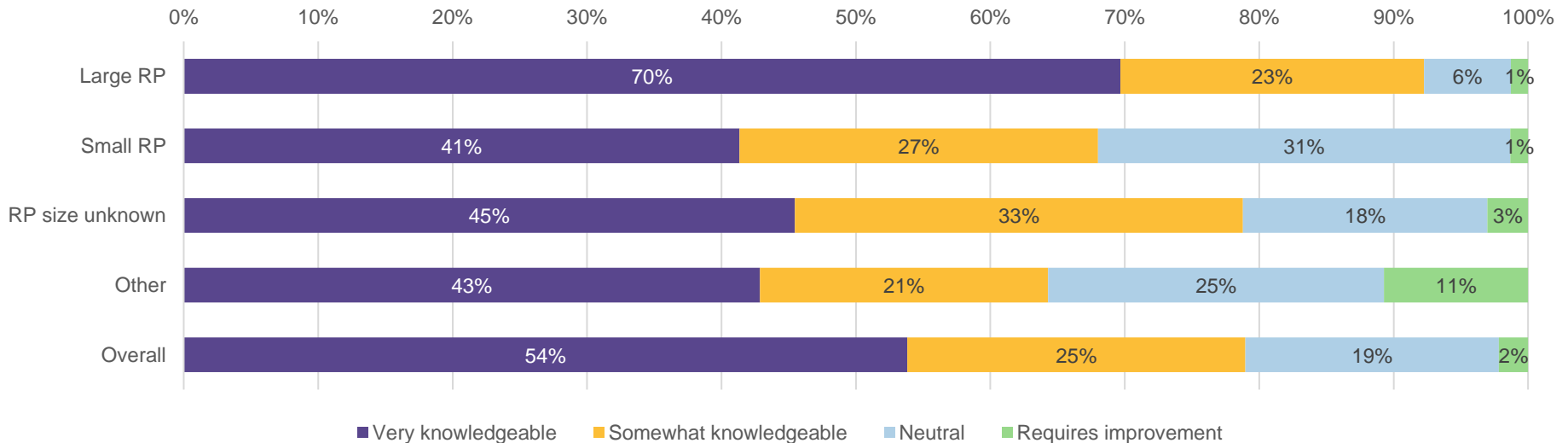
Question 10

From engaging with our regulatory staff, how knowledgeable are they about the nature and complexity of the sector?

79% of respondents agree that the regulator’s staff are knowledgeable about the complexity of the sector, with just 2% overall stating this requires improvement. This is up from 69% in 2019.

93% of respondents from large providers state staff are knowledgeable, with 70% stating staff are very knowledgeable.

Question 10 by stakeholder group

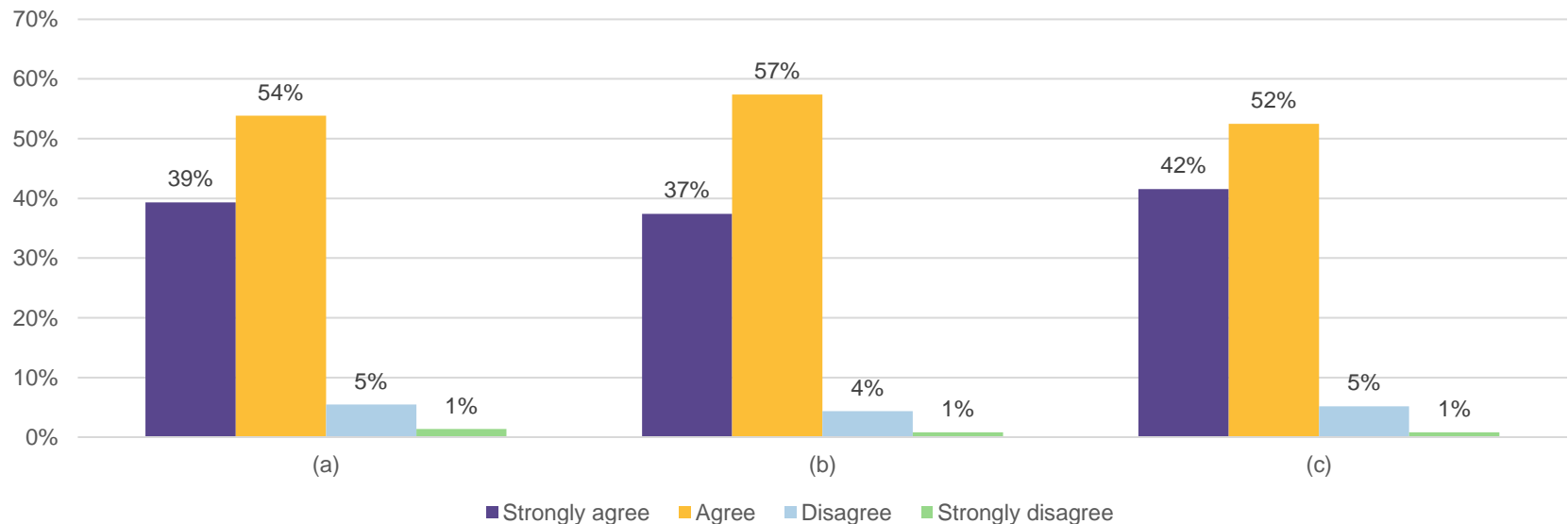


Section 3 – Changes to our regulation during the coronavirus pandemic

To what extent do you agree the Regulator:

- a. Reduced the regulatory burden to enable providers of social housing to focus on the impact of the pandemic on their front-line operations
- b. Monitored the key risks to providers finances and service delivery during the pandemic
- c. Communicated with the sector in a timely and appropriate manner the Regulator's expectations and changes in Government guidance relevant to the sector.

Section 3 by sub-question



Section 3 – Changes to our regulation during the coronavirus pandemic

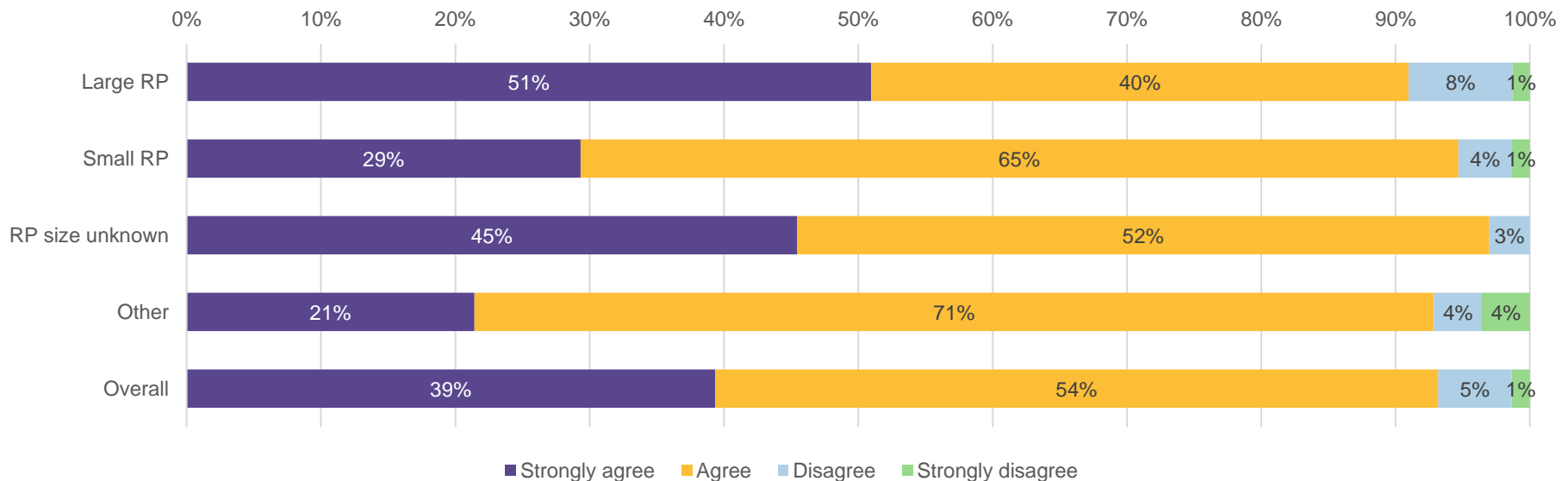
To what extent do you agree the Regulator:

- Reduced the regulatory burden to enable providers of social housing to focus on the impact of the pandemic on their front-line operations
- housing to focus on the impact of the pandemic on their front-line operations

Overall 93% of respondents agreed with this statement, with 95% of small providers and 97% of providers who size was unknown agreeing.

Respondents from large providers were most likely to strongly agree, with more than half (51%) confirming the Regulator reduced the regulatory burden.

(a) Reduced regulatory burden



Section 3 – Changes to our regulation during the coronavirus pandemic

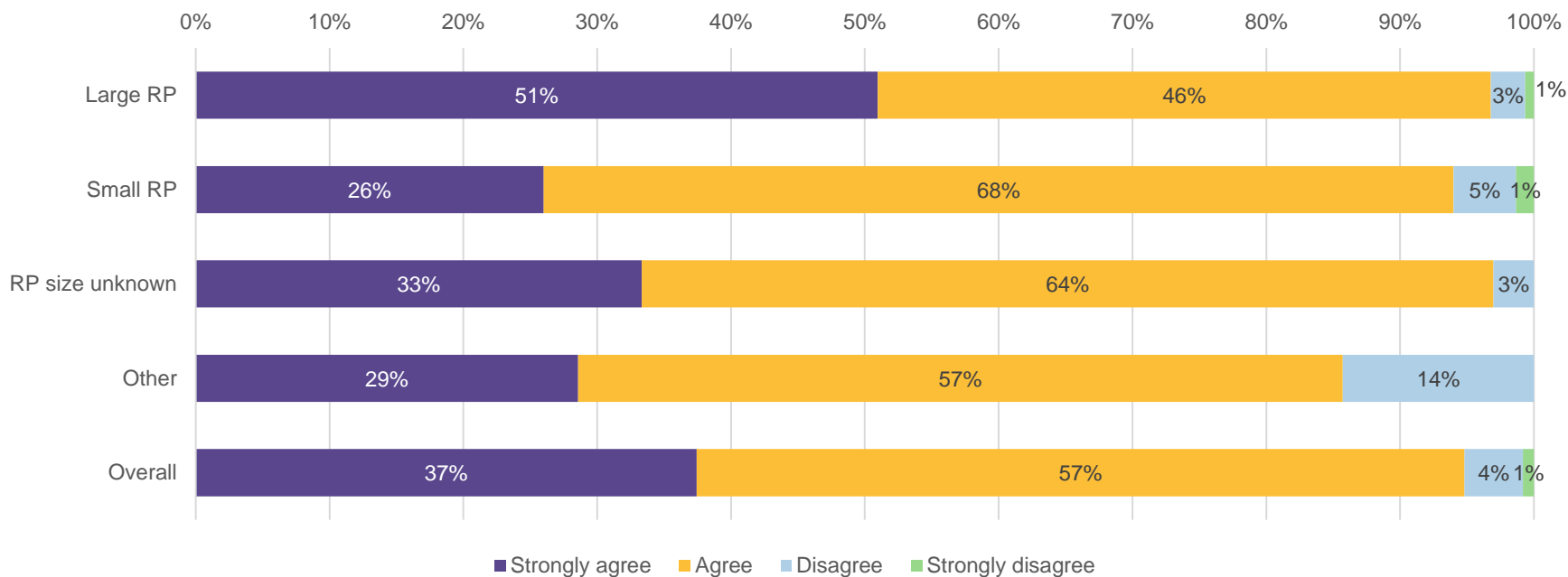
To what extent do you agree the Regulator:

b. Monitored the key risks to providers finances and service delivery during the pandemic

95% of respondents agreed the key risks were monitored, with including 97% of large providers and 97% of providers whose size was not stated.

Only three respondents (<1%) strongly disagreed with this statement.

(b) Monitored key risks



Section 3 – Changes to our regulation during the coronavirus pandemic

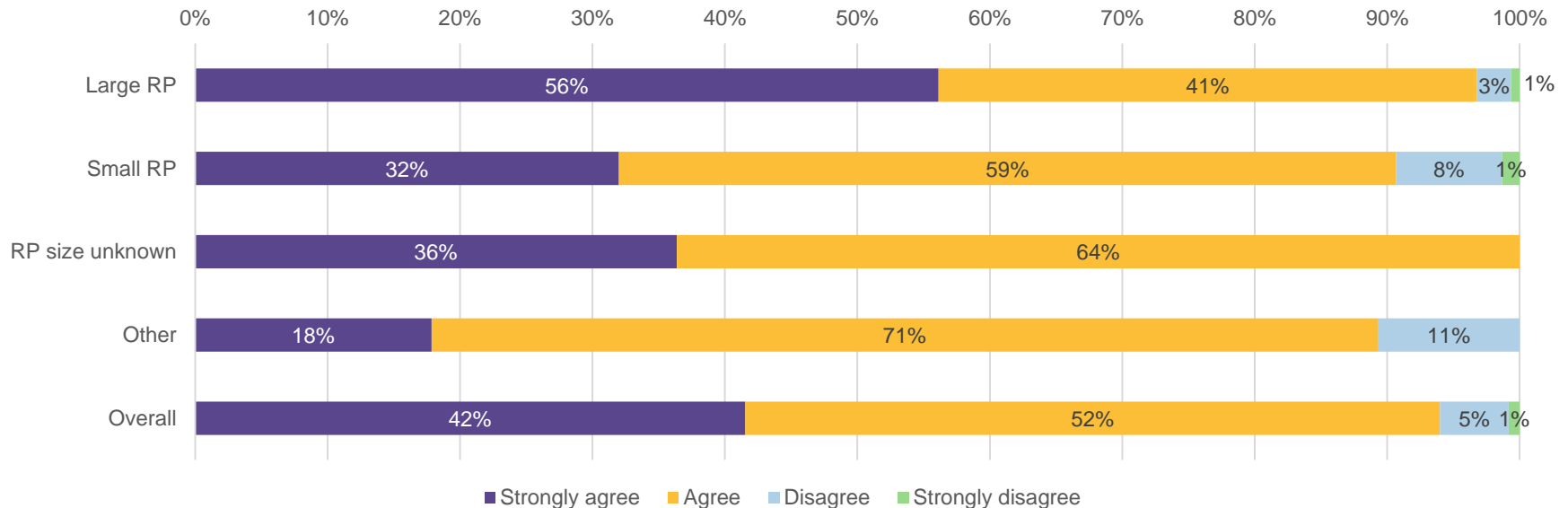
To what extent do you agree the Regulator:

Communicated with the sector in a timely and appropriate manner
 c. the Regulator’s expectations and changes in Government guidance relevant to the sector.

94% of respondents agreed with this statement, with 97% of large providers and 100% of providers whose size is unknown agreeing.

56% of large providers strongly agree that communication was timely and appropriate.

(c) Communicated in a timely and appropriate manner

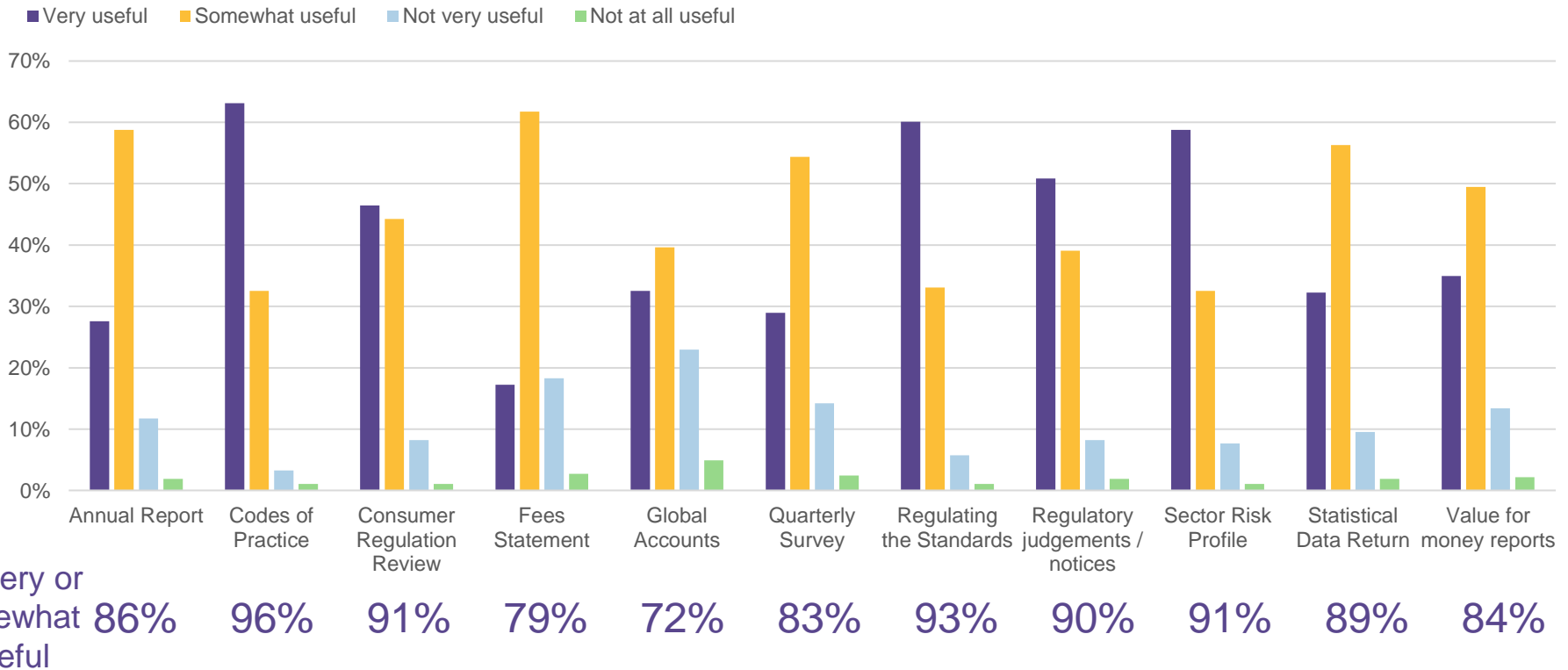


Section 4 – The Regulator

Please indicate how useful you find the following publications:

A high proportion overall (87%) found RSH publications very or somewhat useful, with the Codes of Practice the most useful (96%, of which 63% was very useful).

This is up overall from 84% in 2019.



Section 4 – The Regulator

Responses differed between stakeholder types, as would be expected given the different focus of stakeholders:

- 99% of large providers found the Sector Risk Profile very or somewhat useful with 79% finding it very useful. Regulating the Standards (97%) and the Quarterly Survey (96%) were also reported as somewhat or very useful to large providers.
- 96% of small providers found the Codes of Practice very or somewhat useful, a proportion shared with providers who size was not given.
- Other stakeholders found the Codes of Practice (93%) and Sector Risk Profile (93%) most useful, but found the more financial and technical documents less useful.

All very or somewhat useful	Large RP	Small RP	RP size unknown	Other
Annual Report	90%	83%	94%	75%
Codes of Practice	95%	96%	97%	93%
Consumer Regulation Review	96%	87%	88%	86%
Fees Statement	78%	81%	79%	71%
Global Accounts	88%	60%	67%	54%
Quarterly Survey	96%	72%	76%	82%
Regulating the Standards	97%	91%	88%	89%
Regulatory judgements / notices	95%	84%	91%	89%
Sector Risk Profile	99%	83%	88%	93%
Statistical Data Return	94%	85%	82%	82%
Value for money reports	92%	79%	91%	68%
Overall	93%	82%	85%	80%

Section 4 – The Regulator

Question 13

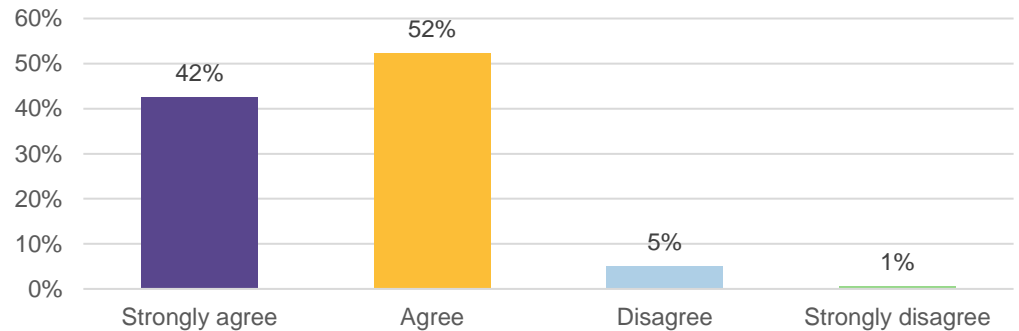
To what extent do you agree that the Regulator takes action where possible to ensure that confidence in the sector is maintained, and access to finance on competitive terms continues?

Overall 94% of stakeholders agreed with this statement. This is up from 91% in 2019.

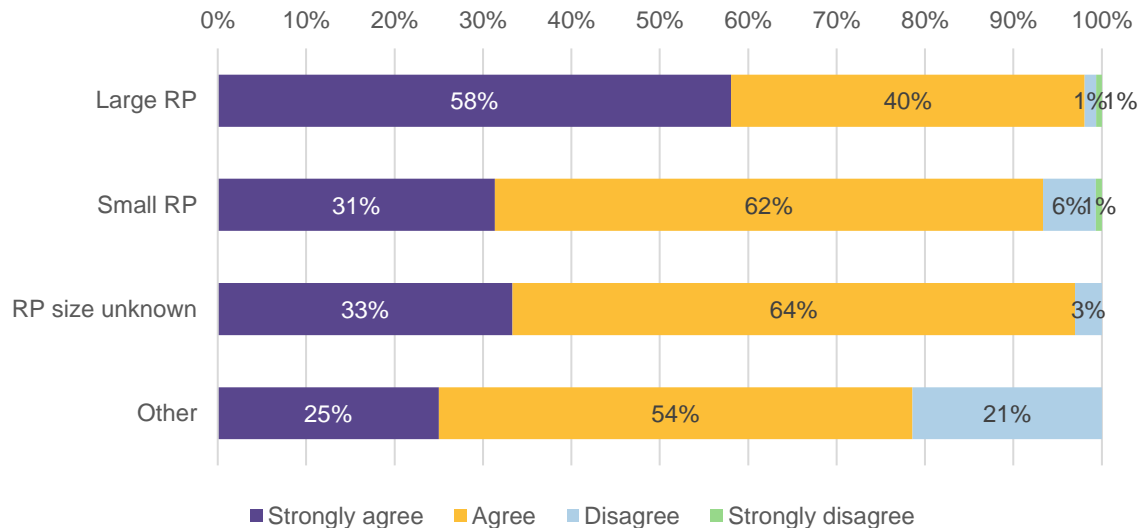
Looking at providers solely, 96% agreed overall, with 98% of large regulated providers agreeing.

Only two stakeholders (<1%) strongly disagreed with this statement.

Q13 responses



Q13 by stakeholder group



Section 4 – The Regulator

Question 14

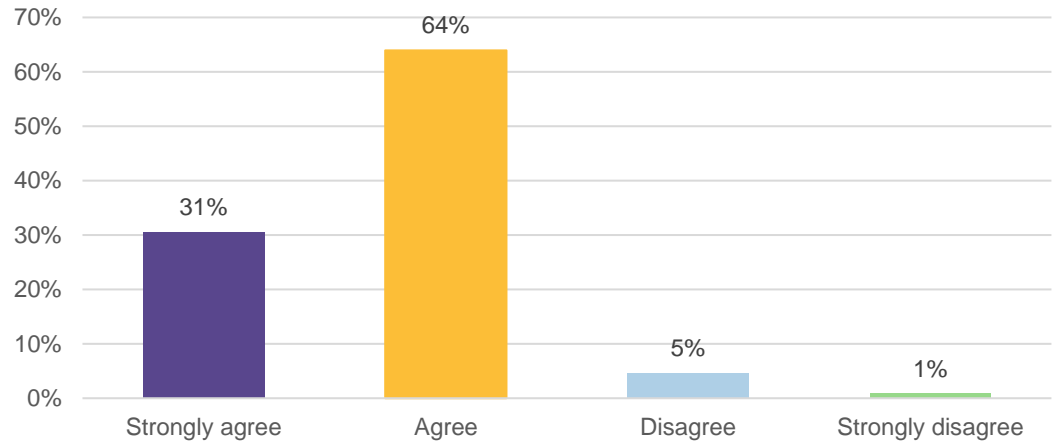
To what extent do you agree that the Regulator takes appropriate action in response to referrals where the Regulator finds consumer standards have been breached and tenants, or potential tenants have been of significant risk of serious detriment?

Overall 95% of stakeholders agreed with this statement- up from 88% in 2019.

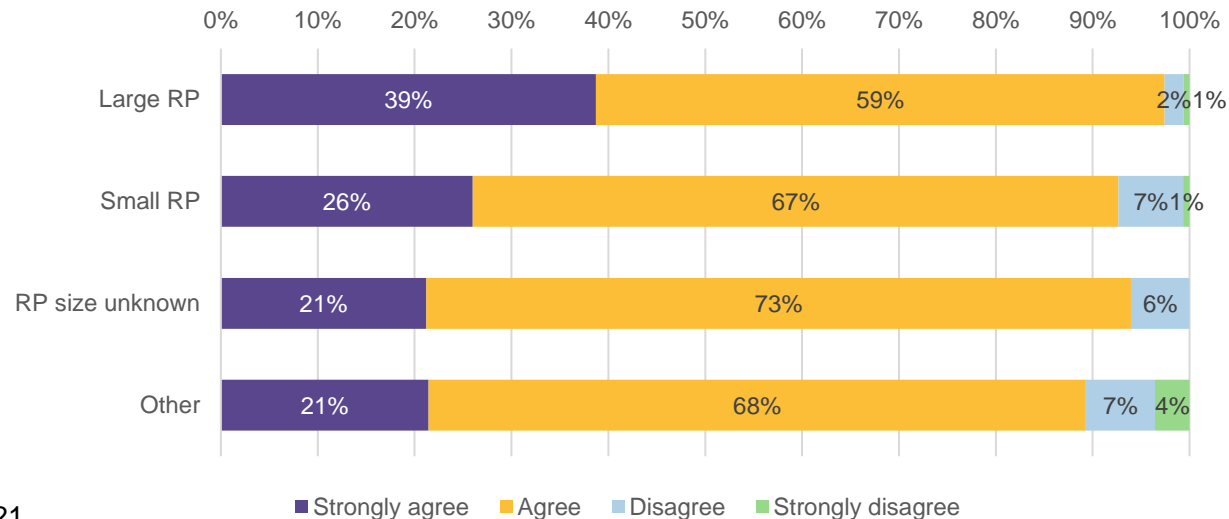
97% of large provider respondents agreed with the statement.

Large providers also had the highest proportion of respondents who strongly agreed (39%)

Q14 responses

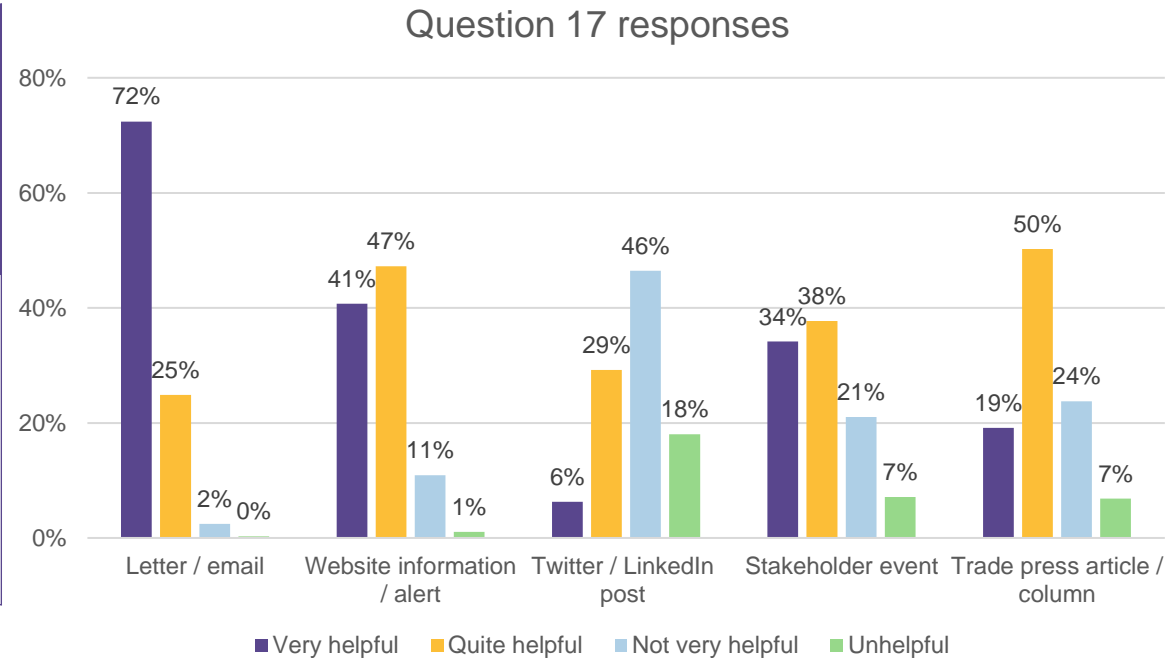


Q14 by stakeholder group



Section 4 – The Regulator

Question 17: Which of the following do you find helpful in getting information about the requirements of our standards, publications and any other news?		All very or quite helpful
Letter / email		97%
Website information / alert		88%
Twitter/ LinkedIn		36%
Stakeholder event		72%
Trade press article / column		69%



Direct contact by letter or e-mail remains the communication method preferred by stakeholders (97% very or quite helpful).

Views were more mixed on social media, with only 36% finding Twitter or LinkedIn very or quite helpful and 18% finding this method of communication unhelpful. This is broadly in line with last year's survey.

Next steps

We will conduct a further stakeholder survey in 2021.

As part of our work to increase engagement with social housing tenants we will explore ways of increasing responses to our 2021 survey for tenants and tenant groups.

In the meantime we will use the results of this survey to inform the Regulator of Social Housing's performance monitoring, corporate planning and regulatory engagement.

In 2020 we also commissioned an evaluation of our In Depth Assessments, which we will be publishing in due course.

We have communicated the results internally and will reflect on the results in our work planning and in our approach to implementing the regulatory measures in the social housing white paper.



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The Regulator of Social Housing regulates registered providers of social housing to promote a viable, efficient and well-governed social housing sector able to deliver homes that meet a range of needs.

