Ethical Standards Commissioner

Applicant Research

AN ANALYSIS OF APPLICANT SURVEYS CONDUCTED FOR APPOINTMENT ROUNDS DURING THE PERIOD 2024

February 2026

ESC

CONTENTS

Executive Summary

This report presents the findings of 51 surveys[1] carried out with applicants for public appointments in Scotland covering the period 1 January 2024 – 31 December 2024. A list of these appointment rounds can be found in Appendix 1. A copy of the questions asked during the applicant survey is included in Appendix 2.

Traditionally, the annual applicant survey report analysed appointment rounds concluded during the financial year. However, in 2023 the Commissioner agreed that to better align with Scottish Government data, which covers a calendar year, the office will now produce reports covering the calendar year which will also align with appointment rounds covered by our annual reports. As a result, this is the second applicant survey report reflecting an analysis of a full year's worth of data. This report will therefore compare findings from the 2023 report to this year's 2024 data. Analysis was carried out on the views expressed by those who reached interview stage and those who did not, first time applicants and people from under-reflected groups such as female applicants, disabled applicants, black and minority ethnic applicants, applicants under the age of 50 and lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT) applicants. Due to the small number of responses received we do not report on Trans figures separately. Where the views of these groups vary significantly from the view of the overall group, this is highlighted in the report.

Based on the findings of the surveys, recommendations have been made where the evidence suggests changes or improvements to current processes may be beneficial.

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[1] A total of 51 applicant surveys were run, one of which received no responses (Scottish Criminal Cases Review Commission (Member)). A further five appointment rounds (Healthcare Improvement Scotland, Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland, NHS Dumfries & Galloway, NHS Tayside (x2)) were concluded during the period covered by the report, but no applicant survey was run for these rounds due to the length of time that passed between the appointment round and having the process in place to run a survey.

Key Findings

A summary of the key findings from the analysis is provided below. Each of these findings are explored and discussed fully within this report.
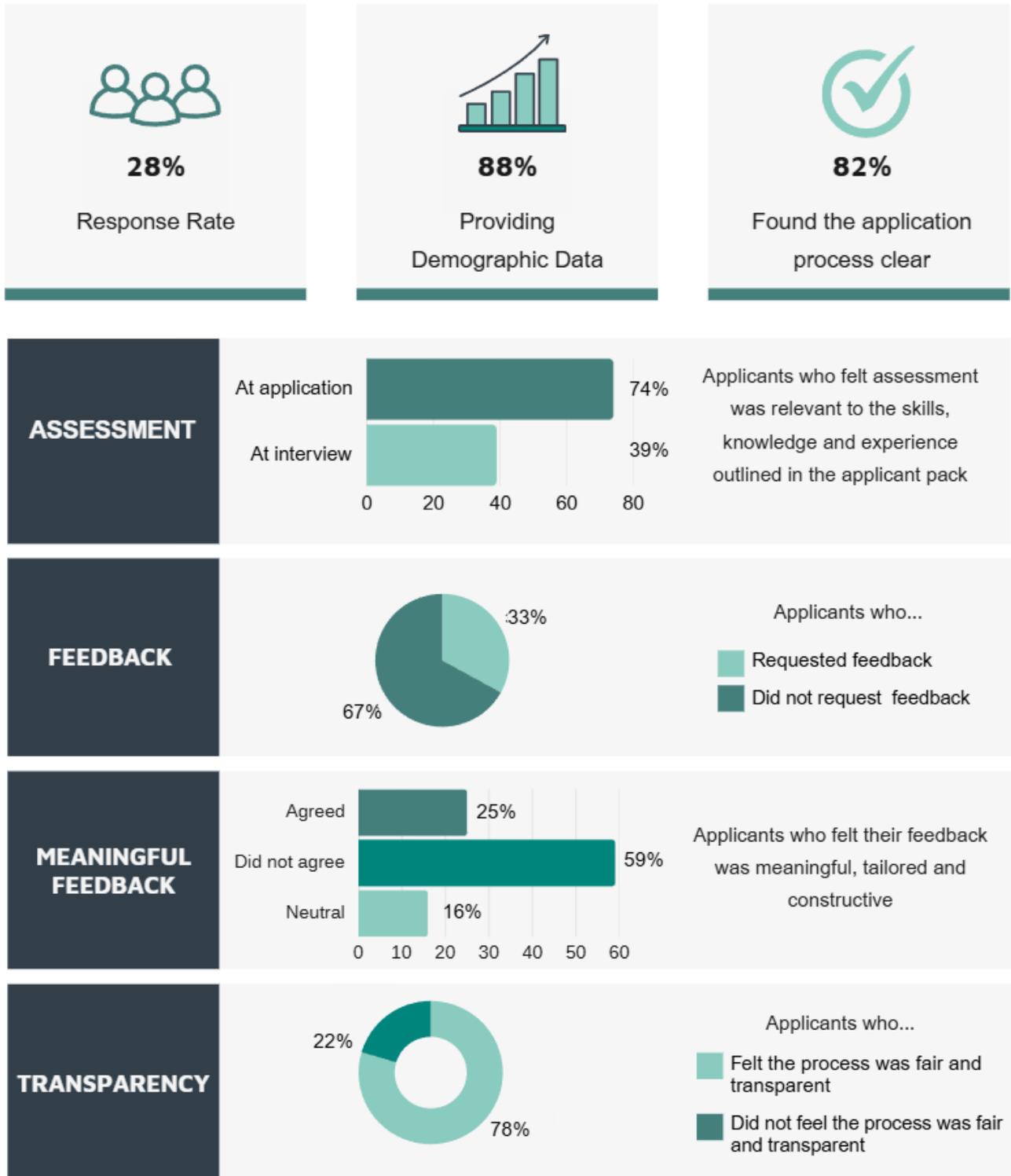

Figure 1 Overview of key findings from the survey analysis.

Respondent Data

In 2024, a total of 1278 applicants across 51 appointment rounds were invited to complete an applicant survey to provide their views on the process. Of those, 362 completed a survey giving an overall response rate of 28%, which is a 1% decrease from 2023. It is worth highlighting that one applicant survey run this year was issued to a significantly higher than typical number of applicants. This survey was for the SportScotland members appointment round and was issued to 125 applicants. Including SportScotland, the average number of applicants per appointment round issued with a survey was 25 over the year. Unfortunately, the SportScotland survey only received a 17% response rate and due to the high numbers of applicants involved, it would be fair to suggest that this low response rate impacted the overall annual response rate. Excluding this one survey, the response rate would have been 30%.

319 applicants provided demographic data (88%, compared to 85% in the previous year). Research suggests that a response rate to surveys of around 30% is generally considered to be good.[2] The number of applications received in each appointment round is detailed in the Public Appointments Annual Report and, for the rounds listed where the applicant survey has been analysed and reported on here, of 1640 applicants, 1278 of those agreed to share their contact details with the ESC (78%, compared to 97% in 2023). It is difficult to assess why we have observed such a decrease this year, and we will want to compare the data again in 2025 to see if this is a one time occurrence or whether it becomes a trend.

The process for running applicant surveys involves the ESC Public Appointments Team (PA Team) requesting participant information from the Scottish Government (SG) Public Appointments Team (PAT). This information is requested once an appointment round has concluded and its respective news release has been made.[3] The timing of these requests and return of information by SG continued to be variable in 2024; due to resourcing pressures in the SG, some applicant surveys were distributed up to three months following the news release announcing the successful candidate(s). The lower the percentage of applicants completing the survey, the lower the statistical validity of the survey findings and the higher the potential for sampling bias to occur. We believe that the length of time between the conclusion of an appointment round and its subsequent applicant survey being run may impact the response rate to some degree. As such, the Ethical Standards Commissioner (ESC) has tried to increase the overall response rate to surveys over the last twelve months. We have done this through working with the Scottish Government to request applicant information from SG within one month following the relevant news release and issuing a survey as quickly as possible thereafter.

To date, progress has been attempted in this area. Although we seek to run applicant surveys on a monthly basis and as close to the announcement of the public appointment as practicable, this has not always been possible. To continue building on this, a general recommendation of this report remains that the Scottish Government continue to consider whether and how they would like to increase the percentage of applicants giving their views about the public appointments process. Where possible, the Ethical Standards Commissioner (ESC) will provide resources to facilitate any suggestions made.

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[2] https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/blog/what-is-a-good-survey-response-rate
[3] https://www.gov.scot/collections/public-appointments-announcements/

As well as analysing all the responses received to applicant surveys, an analysis of demographic groups against the Scottish population published following the Census in 2022, has also been provided for information; the Census figures have been set out below for reference.

Female	Disabled	Minority Ethnic	Under 50	LGBT
51.41%	24.10%	7.13%	49.00%	4.48%

Table 1; Scotland's demographics according to the 2022 census.

A comparison of the responses received, split by demographic group, against the current census data and last years' applicant survey data reveals the following (figure 1). This comparison shows that the percentages of female respondents, respondents under 50 and disabled respondents continue not to reflect the Scottish population to the same extent as the other groups do, while percentage responses within the LGBT group are more than double the census data. For this reason it is important to be mindful that the survey response figures do not represent all applicants for every public appointment round during 2024 and only provide a snapshot view at a point in time.
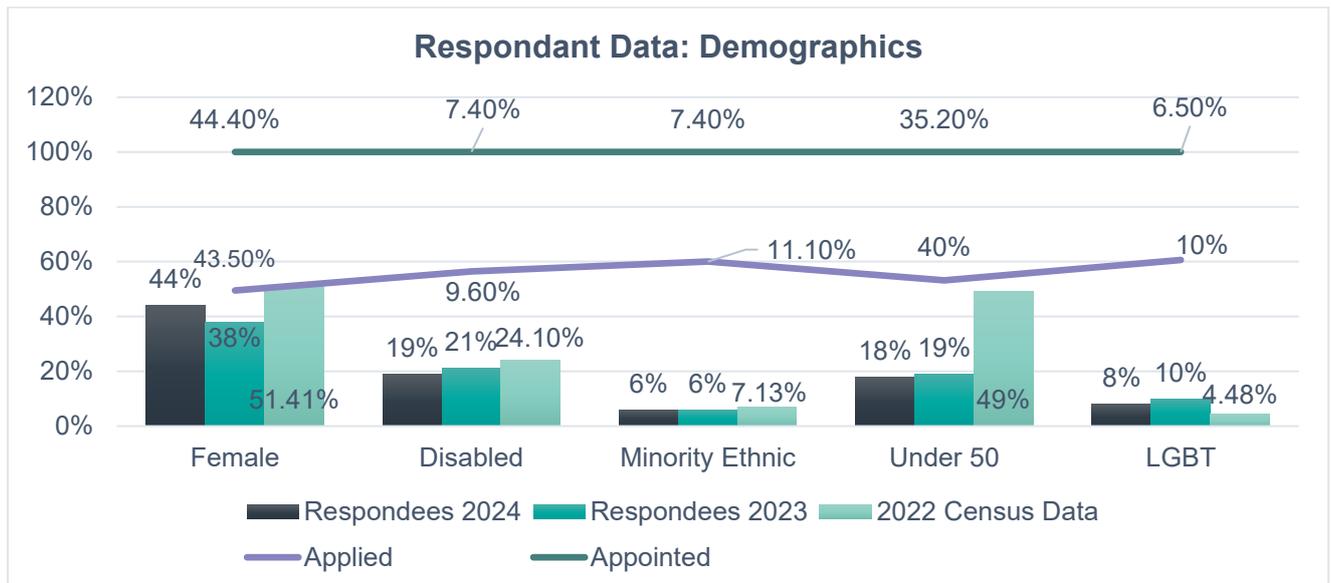

Figure 1 Respondent data: demographic group

A breakdown of the applicant outcomes (that is, those who responded to the surveys and have been offered appointment) for these demographic groups is shown in figure 2. It shows that only BME and LGBT group exceeds the Scottish population by proportion,

although this is not a representative sample of actual board membership and is included for interest only and for comparison purposes in future reports. In terms of how this compares to the results of the 2023 report, there has been a reduction across all demographic groups showing fewer appointments made, but once more this is likely related to the number of applicants responding to the survey and does not reflect the actual statistics of those appointed by demographic group (this information is available in the 2023/2024 Public Appointments Annual Report).
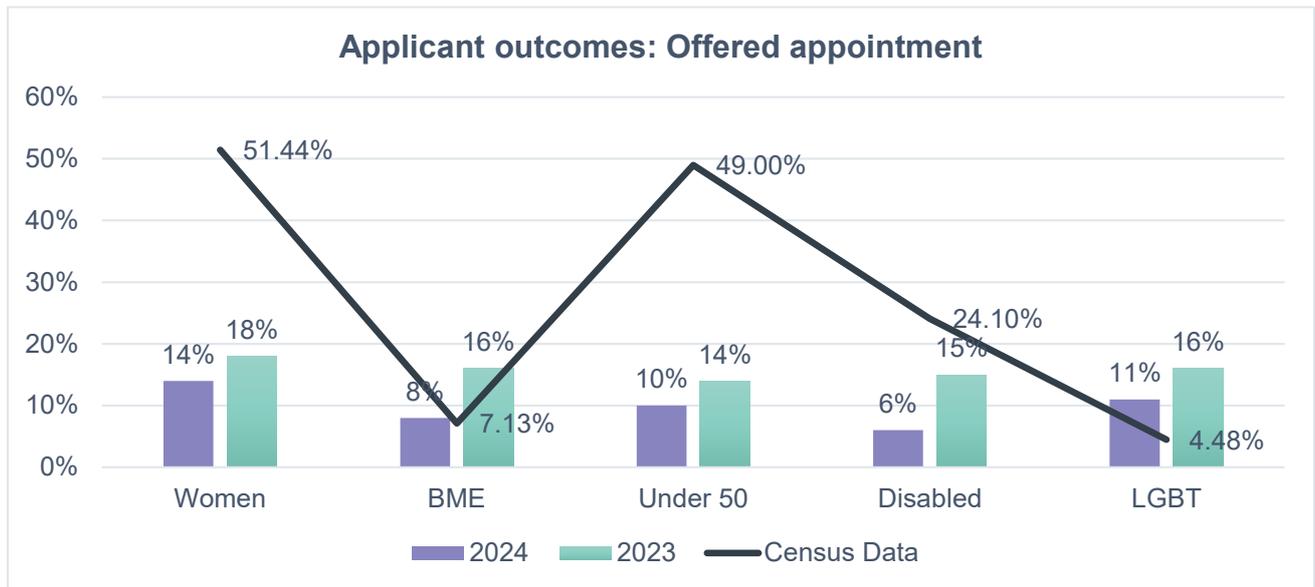
Figure 2 Applicant outcomes: demographic group

Of applicants who provided their views, 45% were applying for the first time, compared to 42% in the previous year. This information will provide insights into how those entering the process for the first time have found the experience.

Figure 3 Previous applicants

55% of applicants had previously applied for a public appointment. Of these, 15% indicated that they experienced something new or innovative during the process (a 5% reduction from

the previous year). Comments on the subject suggest that the process was more streamlined and that more information was available this time. Many comments however noted that the appointments experience was similar to what individuals have experienced before.
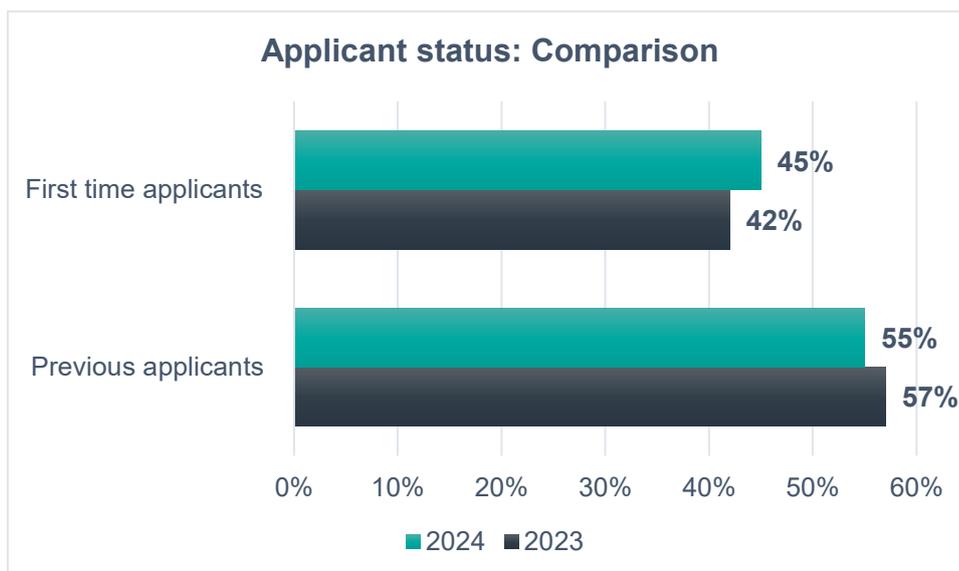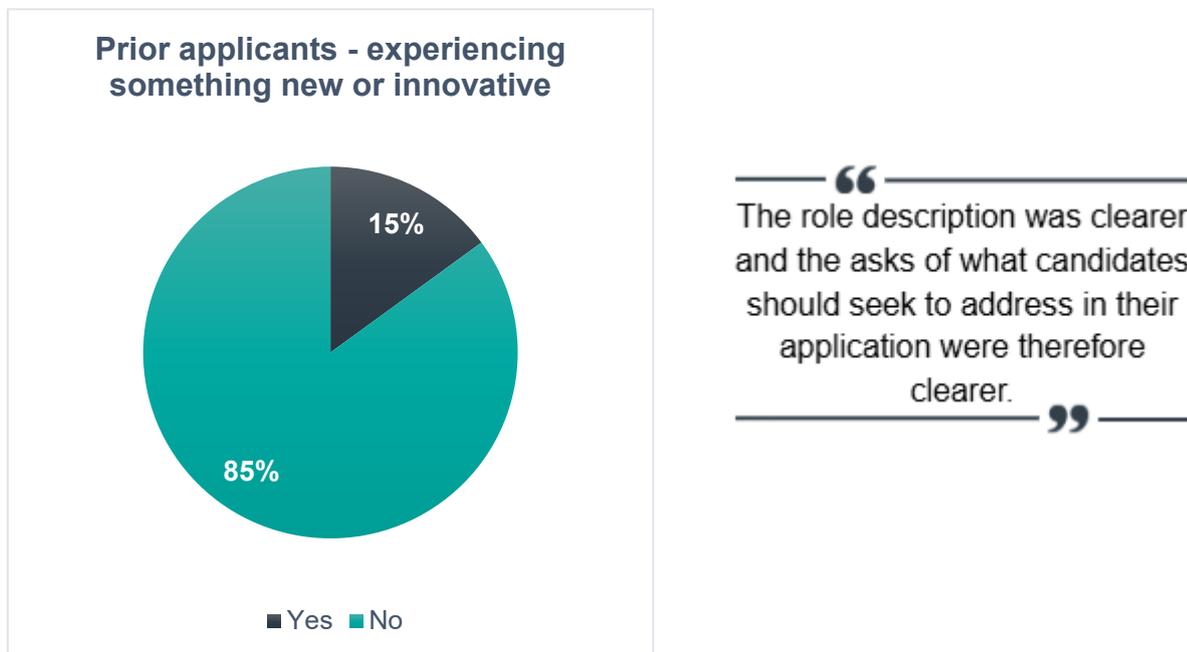

Figure 4 Previous applicants who experienced something new or innovative during the process.

One key element of the 2022 Code of Practice for Ministerial Appointments to Public Bodies in Scotland is its focus on *enabling more creative and ambitious approaches to attracting and appointing the best new board members from the widest possible pool of applicants.* In our 2023 annual applicant survey report, we observed a similar number of previous applicants feeling that they experienced something new or innovative during the process (20%) and as such recommended that the Scottish Government consider how innovation and creativity might be utilised more fully during appoinment rounds. We appreciate that this is a long term ambition and appropriate time will be required for the Scottish Government to consider and implement this recommendation, if they choose to do so. Addiotnally, we will continue to support the Scottish Government with any initiatives they seek to undertake in relation to this.

Attraction

Applicants were asked about the advert for the roles they applied for and whether anything specific about the advert attracted them to the role. The answer with the biggest response to this was that *it sounded like they were looking for people like me* followed by *it made the role sound attractive / interesting*. Similar to the responses received in 2023, this might be of interest to future panels as they consider their attraction strategies and the type of information that applicants feel is important. Although only 22% of respondents indicated that they applied because the advert made the body sound attractive / interesting, many comments provided in response to the question reflected that the work of the body itself was important and familiar to them, and was an important factor influencing their decision to apply. Indeed, of all comments left in response to this question, 52% reflected that it was the work of the body they applied for specifically that was part of the attraction for them. Although the majority of applicants continue to find out about opportunities via the Scottish Government's Public Appointments Website (discussed in the next section), these comments suggest that existing knowledge of the body itself and its work is also a consideration for many individuals when applying for roles. Panels might therefore wish to consider how outreach from the body itself, both during the appointments process but also during any pre competition period, may increase and generate interest. It is noteworthy that a significantly small number of applicants felt that the advert did not attract them at all, with only 2% indicating this. This suggests that the advert itself does play an important role in the attraction of applicants.
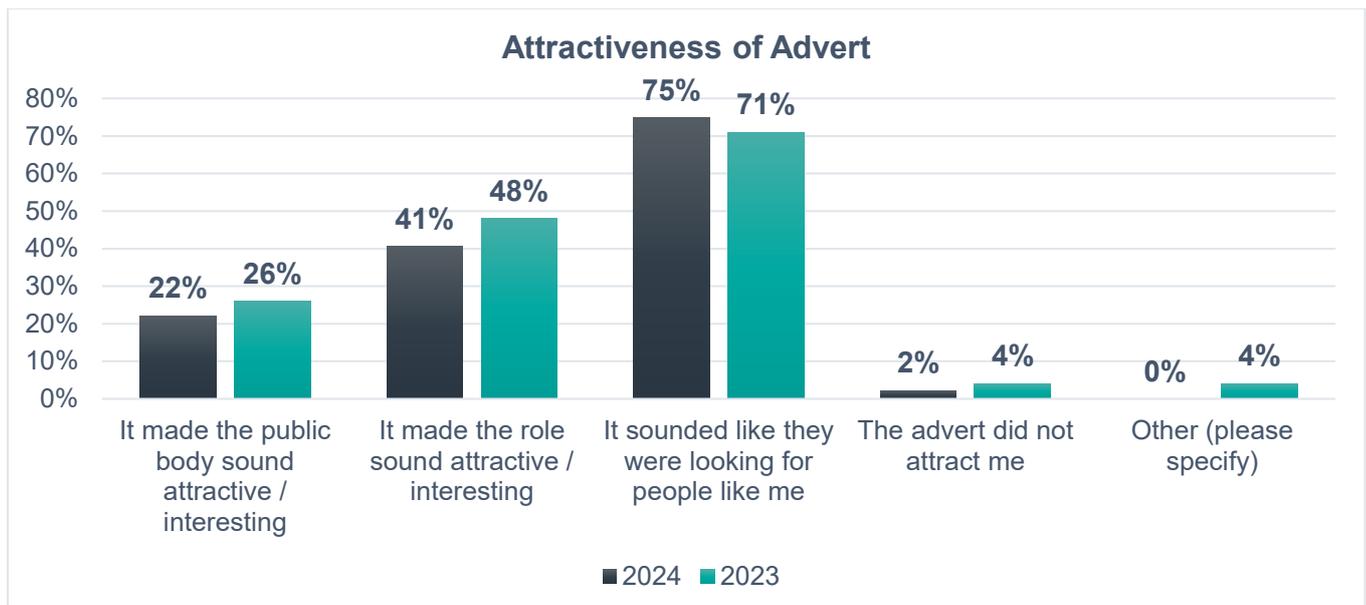

Figure 5 What attracted applicants to the advert.

> This was my first application and first interview - I was asked to analyse a paper that had gone to the board - I took some time over it and provided peer reviewed research to back my conclusions - I'm not sure it was what the panel wanted.
>
> The leading, competency based, questions allowed for little examination of the skills and attributes of non executive directors

Publicising Opportunities

The top methods for finding out about opportunities was through the Scottish Government Public Appointments website (39%). Social media (including X (formerly Twitter), Facebook and LinkedIn) played a significant role too as a combined 24% of applicants found out about an opportunity this way – the same figure as reported in 2023. Personal contacts also played an important role in publicity as 19% of applicants found out about opportunities this way, which is a 2% increase from the previous year and noteworthy considering that the number of applicant responses received during 2024 was fewer than in 2023.

Publicity

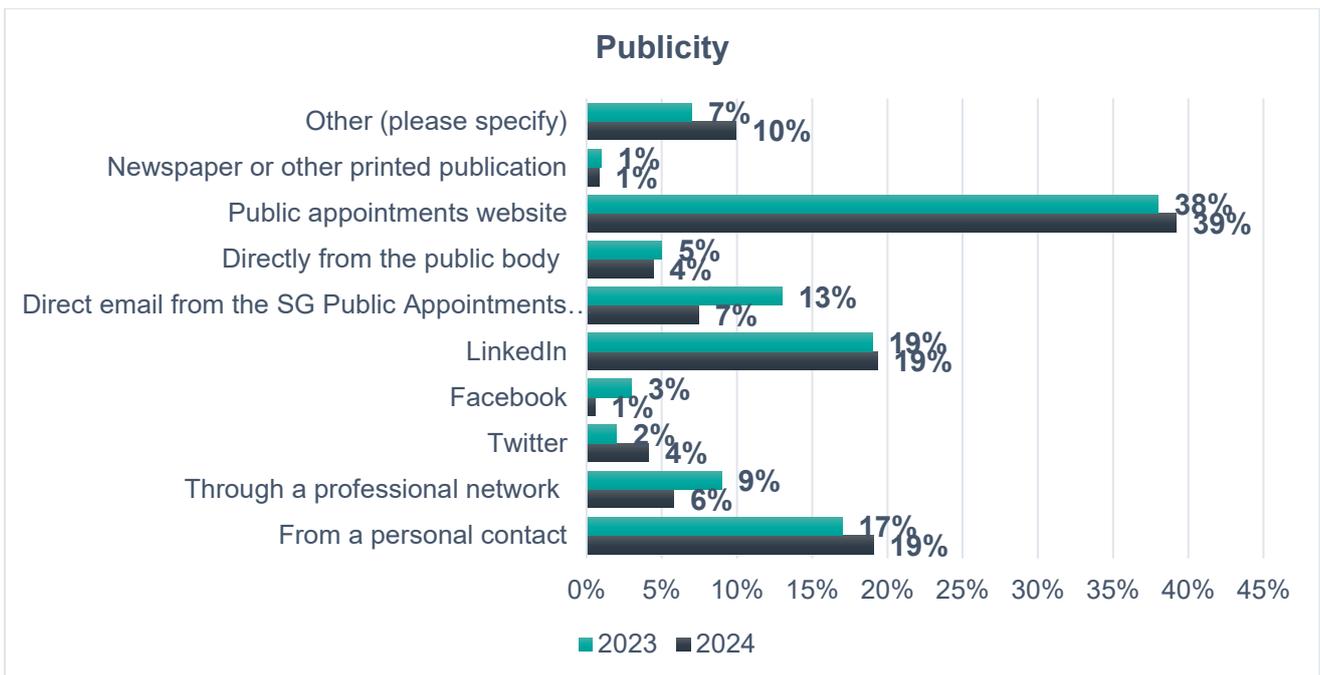| Method	2023	2024
Other (please specify)	7%	10%
Newspaper or other printed publication	1%	1%
Public appointments website	38%	39%
Directly from the public body	5%	4%
Direct email from the SG Public Appointments…	13%	7%
LinkedIn	19%	19%
Facebook	3%	1%
Twitter	2%	4%
Through a professional network	9%	6%
From a personal contact	17%	19%

Figure 6 How applicants found out about public appointment opportunities

The publicity methods used is also of interest when broken down by demographic group, as noted in the table below.

	Female	Disabled	Minority Ethnic	Under 50	LGBT	All

Publicity	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024
Personal Contact	21%	20%	16%	3%	7%	16%	14%	17%	20%	16%	19%
Professional network	4%	11%	2%	13%	15%	12%	7%	6%	0%	6%	6%
Twitter	5%	3%	5%	3%	0%	2%	3%	4%	0%	2%	4%
Facebook	1%	3%	2%	0%	4%	2%	0%	6%	0%	2%	1%
LinkedIn	19%	18%	11%	42%	30%	30%	31%	14%	16%	12%	19%
Email from SG Public Appointments Team	7%	10%	8%	16%	4%	4%	8%	15%	12%	24%	7%
Directly from the body (email or website)	6%	7%	6%	7%	0%	9%	7%	9%	12%	6%	4%
Public Appointments Website	36%	36%	42%	26%	37%	33%	32%	37%	60%	32%	39%
Newspaper or other printed publication	1%	2%	2%	0%	0%	1%	0%	3%	4%	0%	1%
Other	6%	8%	13%	13%	4%	7%	12%	7%	8%	6%	10%

Table 2 Publicity methods split by demographic group.

The prevalence of LinkedIn as an avenue for disabled applicants reduced significantly throughout 2024, though remained high for minority ethnic applicants. Additionally, its importance to Under 50s as an avenue for finding out about public appointments more than doubled. LinkedIn's continued importance to these demographics in sourcing opportunities should be noted as a useful tool for attraction. The method of greatest importance for first time applicants was the public appointments website, with 27% of first time applicants finding opportunities this way. Social media closely followed this, at 26%, though this is a reduction from 34% in 2023.
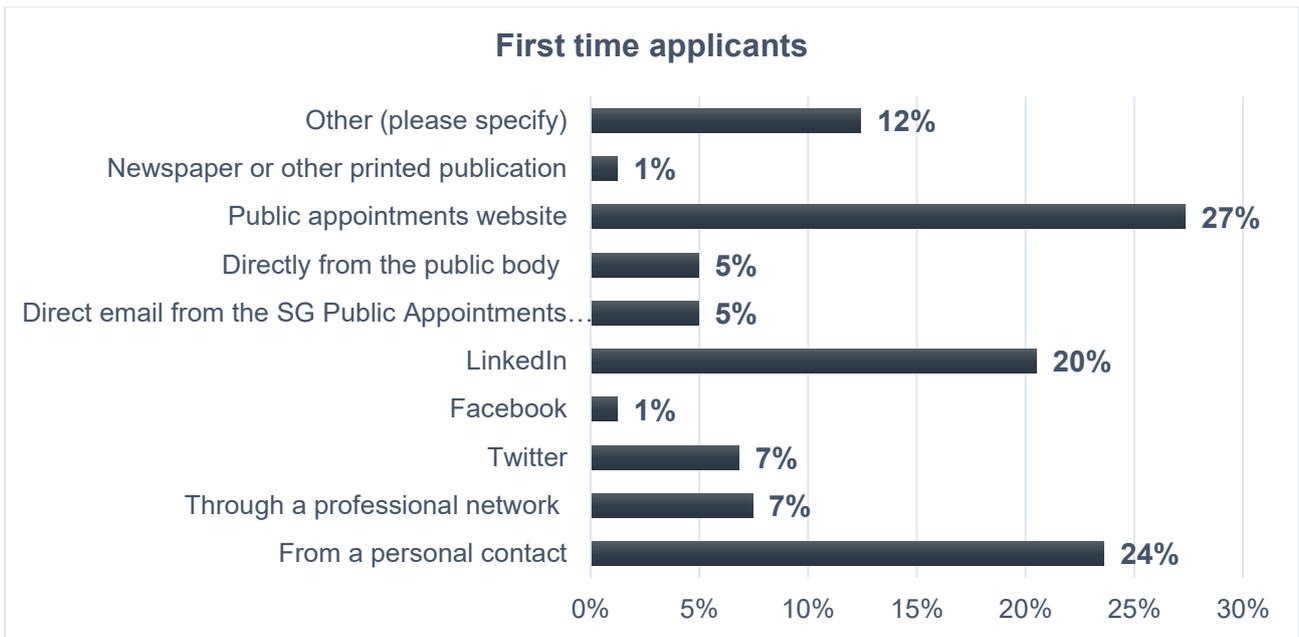
First time applicants

Source	Percentage
Other (please specify)	12%
Newspaper or other printed publication	1%
Public appointments website	27%
Directly from the public body	5%
Direct email from the SG Public Appointments…	5%
LinkedIn	20%
Facebook	1%
Twitter	7%
Through a professional network	7%
From a personal contact	24%

Figure 7 Where first-time applicants found out about public appointment opportunities.

Application Process

The section of the survey covering the application process intends to obtain an understanding of how clear applicants found the process, including clarity in the process of applying and of the requirements of the role. The findings show that 89% strongly agreed or agreed that the application pack contained all the details needed to apply, which is encouraging.

Did the application pack contain all the details you needed to apply (e.g. key deadlines, contact details, the appointments process, etc.)

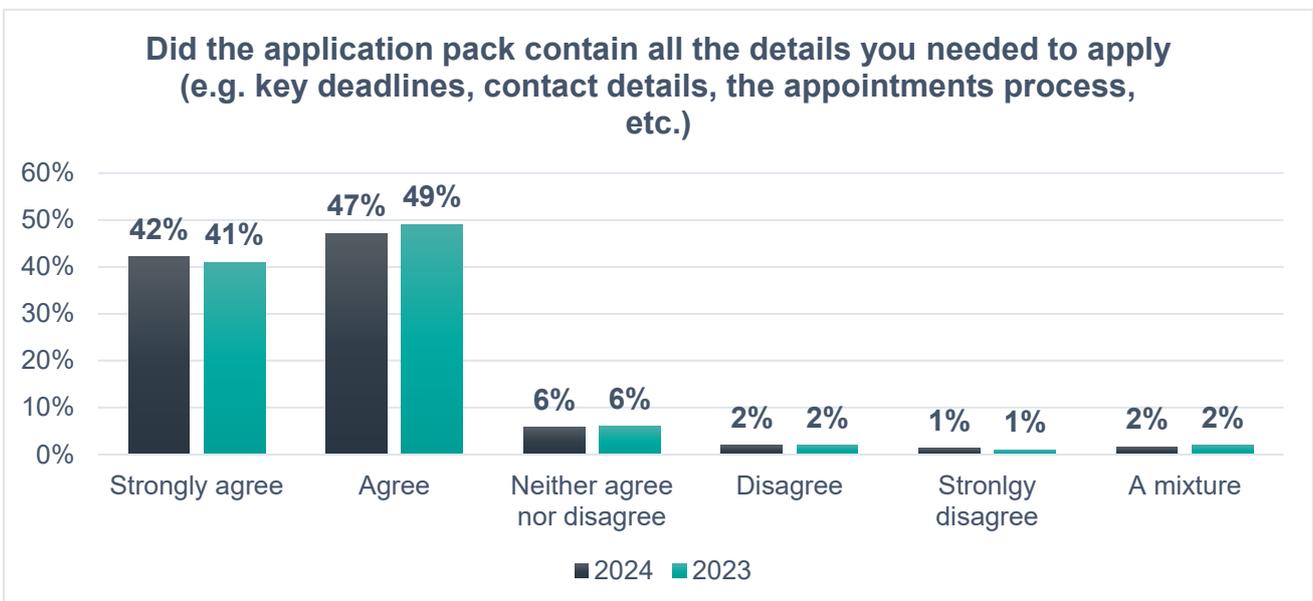| Response	2024	2023
Strongly agree	42%	41%
Agree	47%	49%
Neither agree nor disagree	6%	6%
Disagree	2%	2%
Stronlgy disagree	1%	1%
A mixture	2%	2%

Figure 8 Applicant views on whether the applicant packs contained all the details needed to apply.

A strong majority of applicants also responded positively to the question *Were the requirements of the role clearly outlined?* with 86% of applicants strongly agreeing or agreeing with the statement.
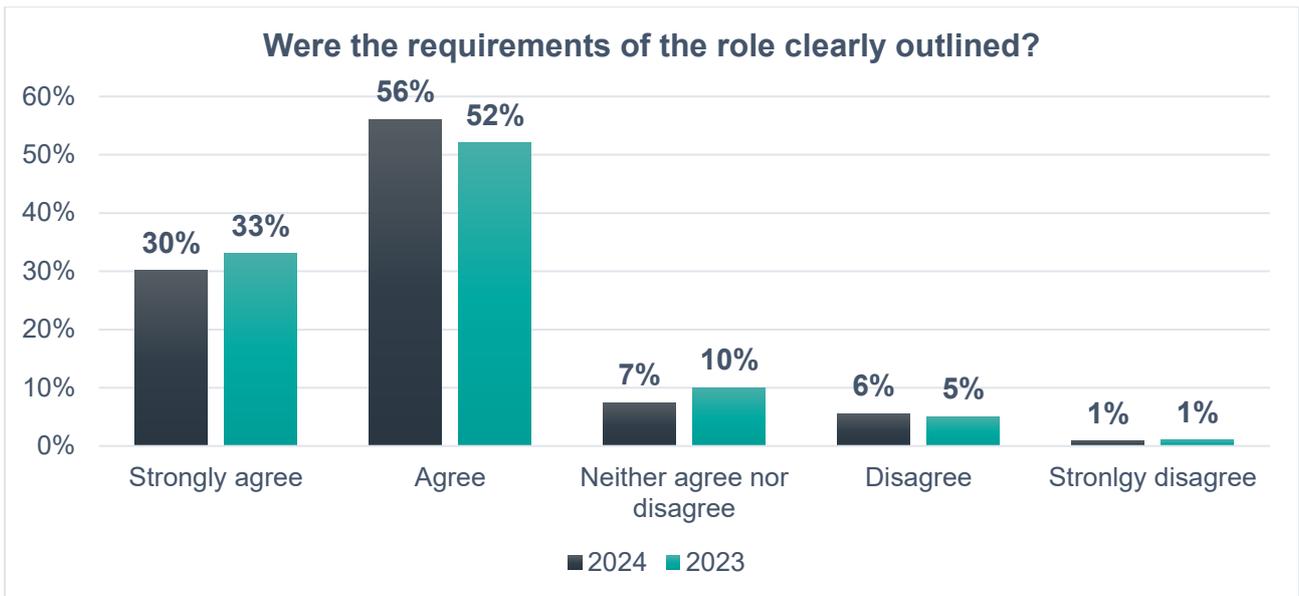
Figure 9 How clearly applicants felt the requirements were outlined.

There is significant difference in 2024 across demographic groups who strongly disagreed or disagreed in their responses to this question. It should be noted that the number of responses from BME and disabled applicants was relatively low overal; however, they are comparable to the responses from 2023. As outlined in Section 1 of this report, 6% of respondees were minority ethnic in both 2024 and 2023, and 19% of respondees were disabled in 2024, and 21% of respondees were disabled in 2023. It is particularly noteworthy then that lack of clarity around the requirements of the role for minority ethnic applicants more than tripled.
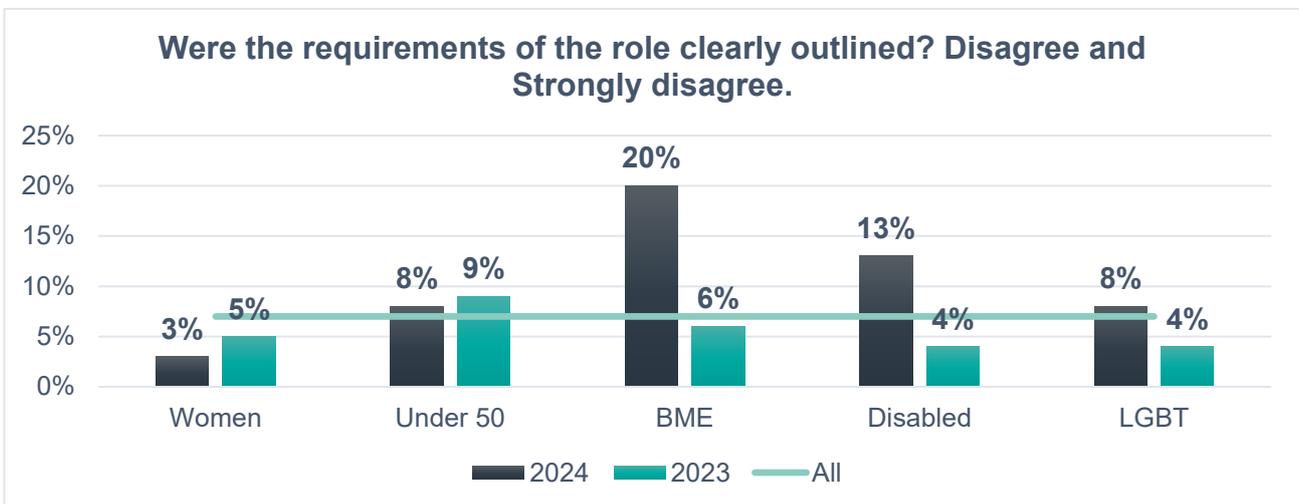
Figure 10 Applicant views on the requirements of the role split by demographic group.

Views on the question *"Was the time and effort taken by you to complete the application form reasonable?"* remain largely positive (72% total agreeing).
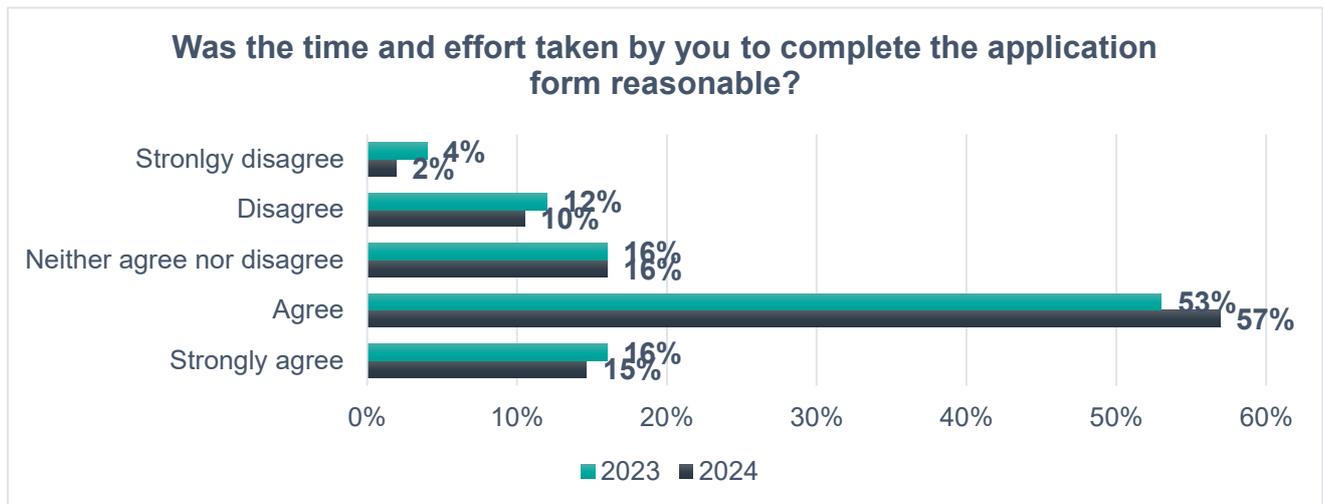
Figure 11 Views on time and effort to complete the application form.

For this question, only minority ethnic applicants showeed greater levels of disagreement to the question than in 2023.

Figure 12 Applicant views on the time and effort to apply split by demographic group.

Once more, and similar to 2023, the vast majority of applicants felt that the amount of information supplied in the applicant information pack was just right (84%).

Figure 13 Whether applicants felt the amount of information supplied in the applicant pack was right.

The same is true when broken down by demographic group, with 75% or more of respondents within each group agreeing that the amount of information supplied was just right, with the exception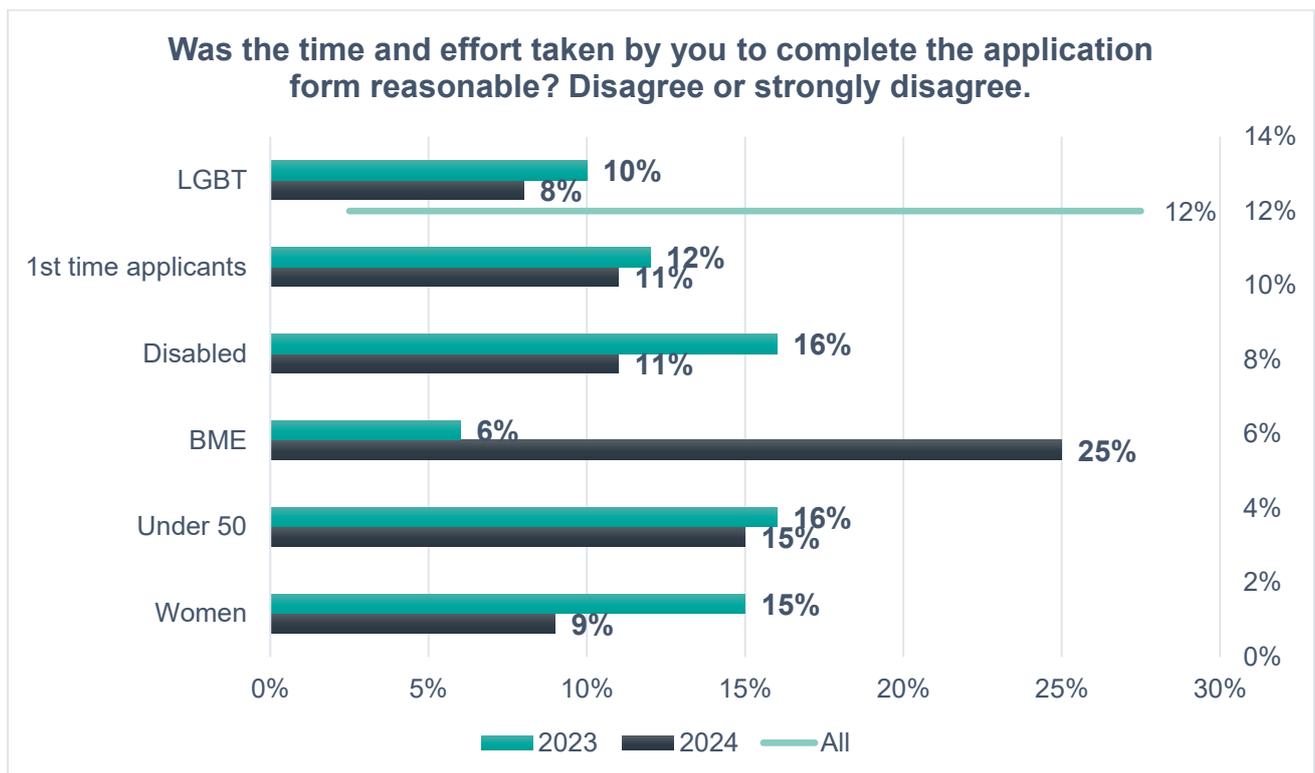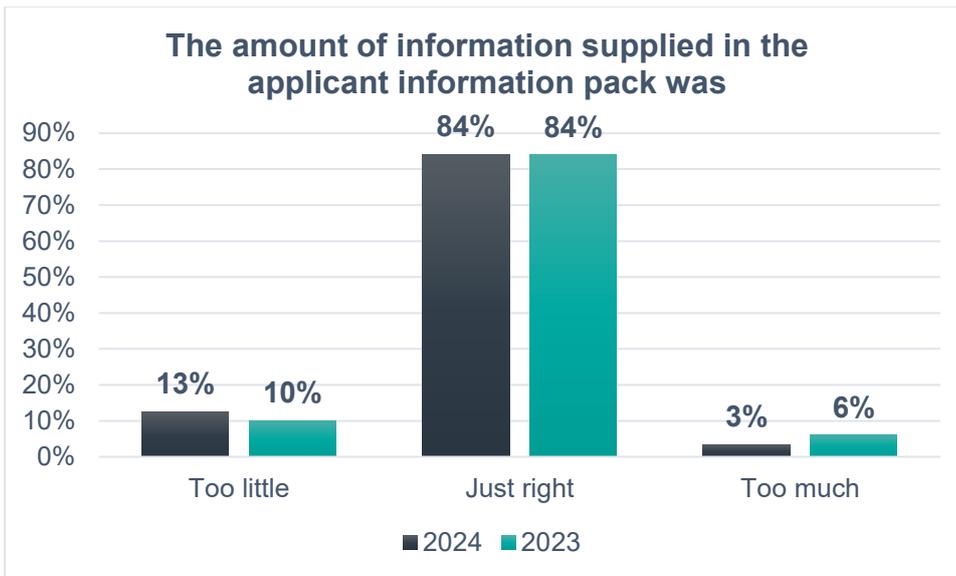 of BME applicants where only 55% felt this was the case. In 2023 we noted that for disabled applicants and applicants under 50, 17% felt that the amount of information was not enough. This was nearly 1 in 5 of all respondents within these groups. These figures increased from 17% to 20% this year. Similarly for minority ethnic applicants, the number who felt that too little information was provided increased significantly from 7% to 35%, or almost 1 in 3 respondents. As should always be the case, thoughtful consideration should be give by panels when designing their applicant packs to ensure they meet the needs of as many prospective applicants as possible.

Information Supplied	Female		Disabled		Minority Ethnic		Under 50		1st time applicants		LGBT	
Year	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023
Too little	8%	13%	20%	17%	35%	7%	20%	17%	14%	12%	12%	12%
Too much	3%	4%	2%	4%	10%	10%	5%	7%	3%	7%	0%	4%

Table 3 Applicant views on the amount of information supplied split by demographic group.

Applicants were also asked whether they were able to discuss any part of the application process with anyone involved in the recruitment process. Responses to this question indicated that the majority of applicants did not wish to speak with anyone regarding their application (43%). In total, 9% of applicants indicated that they either could not find details on how to make contact with someone or tried to make contact but were unsuccessful, which is a very small decrease from the year prior.

Were you able to discuss any part of the application process with anyone involved in the recruitment process?

Response	2023	2024
No -other (please add details below)	19%	20%
I did not wish speak with anyone regarding my application	45%	43%
I tried to make contact but was unsuccessful	6%	5%
I could not find details on how to make contact	5%	4%
Yes	25%	27%

Figure 14 Applicant experience of contacting someone to discuss the application process.

20% of respondents indicated 'No – other' and left a variety of comments reflecting their experience. Many of these comments noted that individuals were not aware that they could contact someone regarding their application, or that they had become aware of the opportunity too late to make contact in time. Other comments reflected on positive experiences having made contact or having gained sufficient information through online sessions regarding the opportunity.

> The pack contained relevant information and I was happy to proceed on that basis.
>
> Not aware of any direct contact offered but an online presentation was offered and I attended. This appeared to be "receive only".
>
> I did not realise this was an option
>
> It was useful being able to speak to the current Board Chair about the appointment.

When split by demographic group and first time applicants, the number of minority ethnic applicants who could not make contact with someone almost triples from 9% in 2023 to 25% in 2024. When considered against some of the comments left under the field 'No – Other' indicating that applicants were not aware that they could discuss the process with someone, it is worth highlighting once more the importance of how applicants packs are designed and that panels shoule be carefully considering the content that goes into them during the planning phase of the appointments process.

Discussing application	Female		Disabled		Minority Ethnic		Under 50		1st time applicants		LGBT	
Year	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023
Could not make contact	10%	10%	12%	15%	25%	9%	8%	15%	10%	14%	12%	14%

Table 4 Applicant experience of contacting someone to discuss the application process split by demographic group.

Finally, applicants were asked how clear they found the process overall. Responses again were largely positive with 82% responding favourably to the question. When broken down by demographic group and first time applicants, responses indicating that applicants strongly disagreed or disagreed were 15% and under. In 2023, this figure was 10% and under.
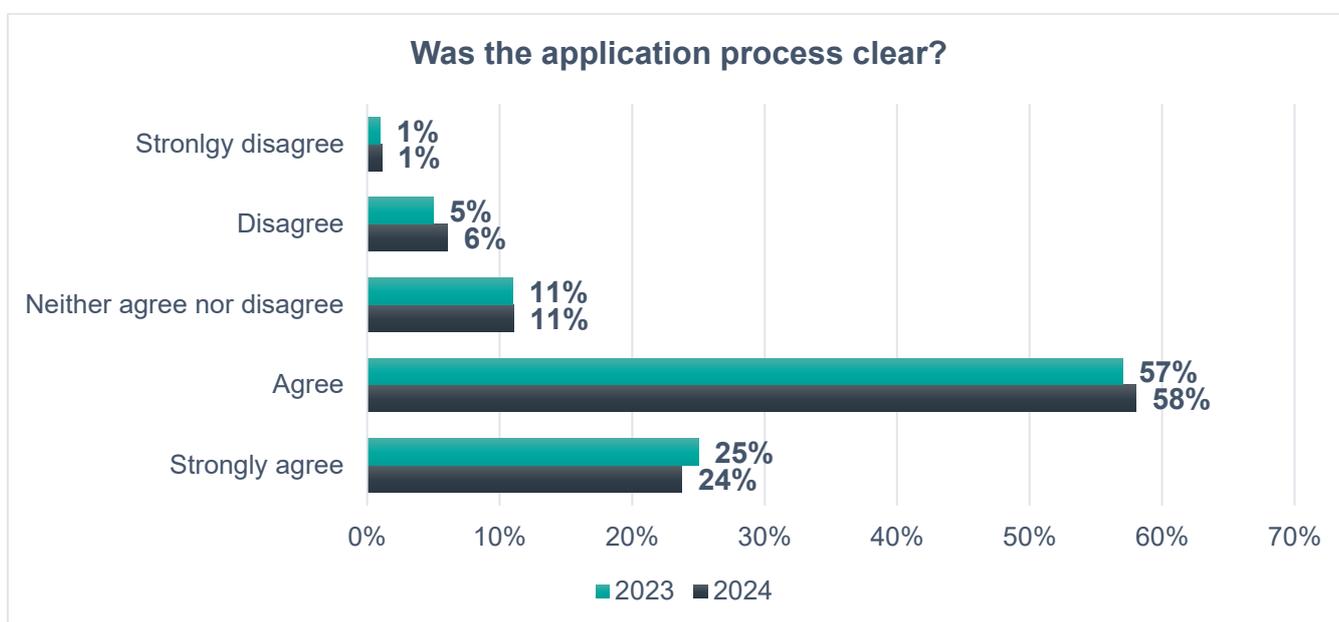

Figure 15 How clear applicants found the application process.

Clarity of application	Female		Disabled		Minority Ethnic		Under 50		1st time applicants		LGBT	
Year	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023
Strongly disagree or disagree	7%	5%	9%	9%	15%	3%	12%	8%	8%	8%	12%	10%

Table 5 How clear applicants found the process split by demographic group.

However, despite 82% of applicants indicating that they found the application process clear, interestingly only 50% of applicants felt that it was a comparatively easy exercise to submit their applications. This question relates to section C3 of the Code of Practice which states that *All materials to be made available to prospective applicants such as publicity or advertisements about posts, details about posts, the assessment criteria to be applied, and the application forms (or equivalent) should be clearly and plainly drafted using simple,*

easy to understand, language. The objective should be to encourage the optimum number of people to apply for positions and for people to find it a comparatively easy exercise to submit applications. 50% of applicants agreed or strongly agreed, which is an increase from 48% in the prior year. 24% of applicants expressed a neutral feeling toward the question and a further 26% strongly disagreed or disagreed with the question (the same as in the prior year). Broken down by demographic group and first time applicants, we observe that minority ethnic and disabled applicants in particular strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement (32% and 31%). An extract of comments is also included below.
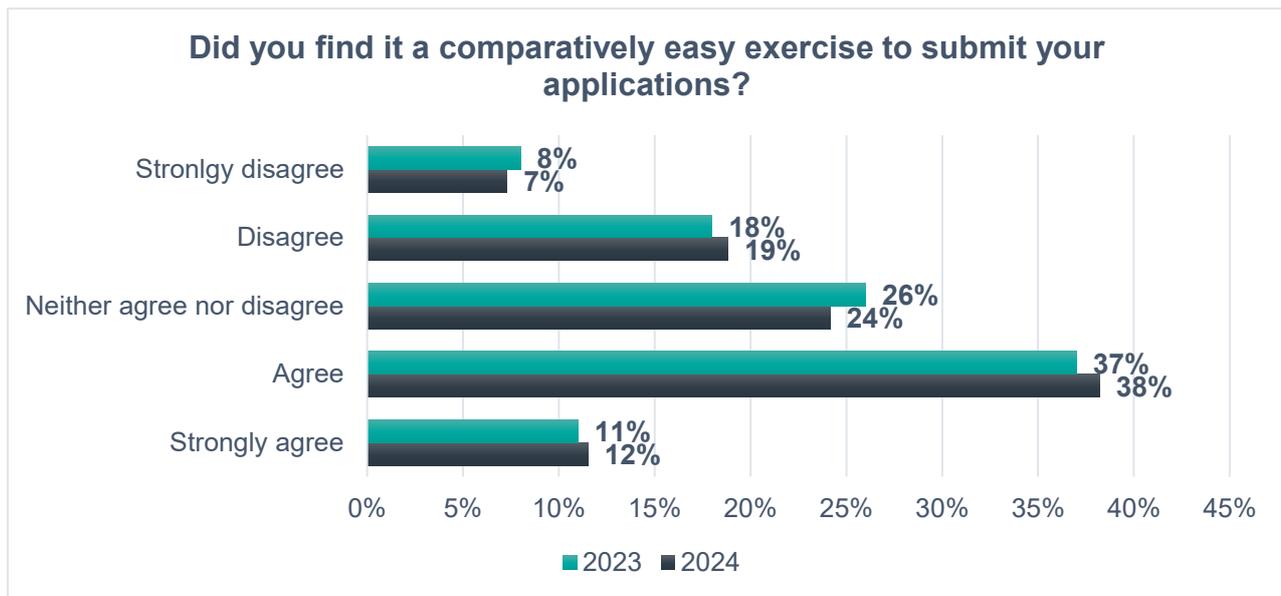

Figure 16 Whether applicants found it was a comparatively easy exercise to submit their application.

Ease of application	Female		Disabled		Minority Ethnic		Under 50		1st time applicants		LGBT	
Year	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023
Strongly disagree or disagree	17%	25%	31%	32%	32%	9%	24%	20%	8%	8%	24%	24%

Table 6 Whether applicants found it was a comparatively easy exercise to submit their application split by demographic group.

The forms are complex, the time taken to complete them is excessive and would, I believe, prevent many people from applying in the first place.

I am used to applying for roles and found the material appropriate however I think the approach probably puts people from more diverse backgrounds at a disadvantage.

Overall, responses to the section on the application process were largely positive and indicate that applicant packs, in general, are clear about what they are asking of applicants. However, the final question asking applicants whether applicants found it a comparitively

easy exercise to submit their applications does not mirror the former positive responses – particularly for minority ethnic and disabled applicants. Comments responding to the question suggest that applicants feel the process is time consuming, that it is designed for people who are familiar with the process and that a general lack of communication throughout the process impacted views on how straightforward the process itself was overall. The Scottish Government introduced a new applicant pack in July 2023; we observed in our 2023 report that in light of the mixed view provided that it would be helpful to compare responses in 2024 to the 2023 appointment rounds, when the new applicant pack has been fully embedded for some time. The results so far indicate generally consistent responses, so it may be that the applicant pack has not impacted perceptions on whether or not it is a comparatively easy exercise to submit applications.

It is also interesting to highlight that across all questions it is clear that the experience for BME applicants was less positive than for those across other demographic groups. It is a stark and, for some questions, significant change in experiences since 2023. A summary of the experience for minority ethnic applicants, compared to 2023 and against all respondees in 2024, is provided in Figure (17) below.
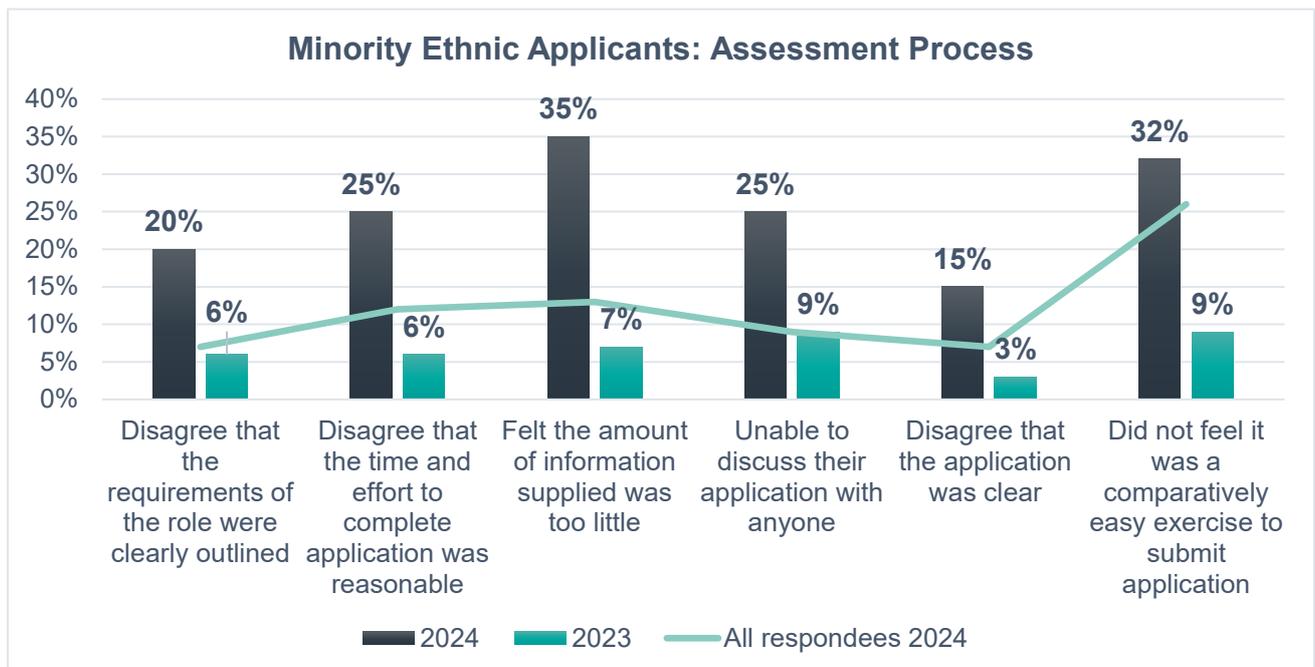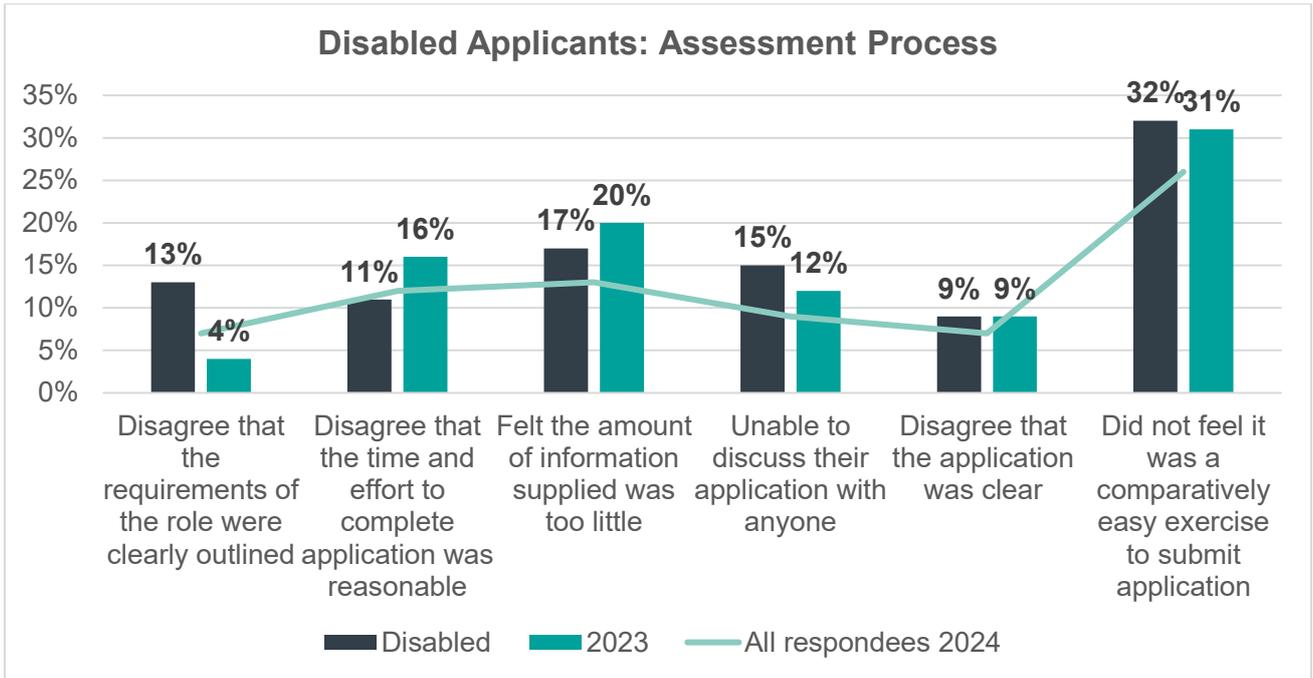

Figure 17 The assessment process for minority ethnic applicants.

In 2023 we observed that the experience of disabled applicants also differed from other demographic groups. This year, these expeirences were similar or slightly improved from 2023, as shown below.

Disabled Applicants: Assessment Process

	Disabled	2023
Disagree that the requirements of the role were clearly outlined	13%	4%
Disagree that the time and effort to complete application was reasonable	11%	16%
Felt the amount of information supplied was too little	17%	20%
Unable to discuss their application with anyone	15%	12%
Disagree that the application was clear	9%	9%
Did not feel it was a comparatively easy exercise to submit application	32%	31%

Legend: ■ Disabled ■ 2023 — All respondees 2024

It will be important to check, by reference to comparative year on year data, whether this is a continuing trend for minority ethnic applicants, or only applicable to the findings in this year. In the meantime, the Scottish Government and panels will want to consider and ensure that the information and material provided or available to applicants during an appointment round is readily accessible, informative, enocuraging, brief and plainly expressed, in line with the 2022 Code's focus on requiring a greater level of respect for applicants.[4]

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[4] https://www.ethicalstandards.org.uk/code-practice-ministerial-appointments-public-bodies-scotland-march-2022-version

Assessment

Responses showed that a majority of applicants (74%) felt that the first stage of assessment, i.e. the application itself, was relevant to the skills, knowledge, experience and other attributes outlined in the applicant pack. Only 8% strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement and a higher proportion of applicants neither agreed nor disagreed with the question. These results are very similar to those in 2023.
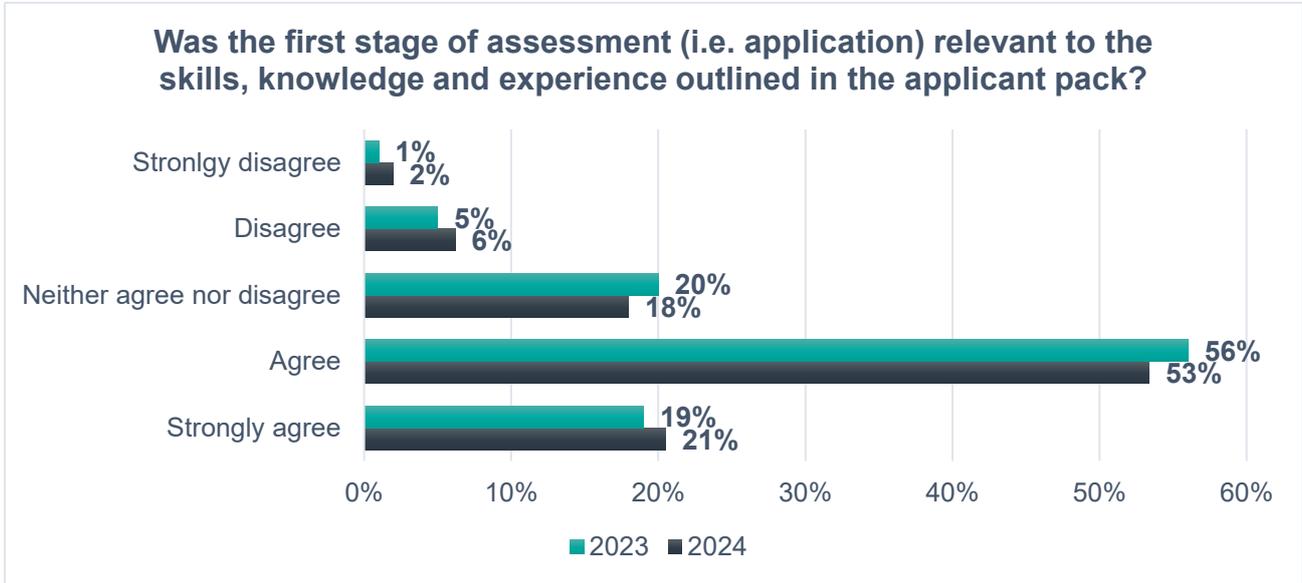
Was the first stage of assessment (i.e. application) relevant to the skills, knowledge and experience outlined in the applicant pack?

Response	2023	2024
Stronlgy disagree	1%	2%
Disagree	5%	6%
Neither agree nor disagree	20%	18%
Agree	56%	53%
Strongly agree	19%	21%

Figure 18 View on whether the first stage of assessment was relevant to the applicant pack.

The follow up question to this, about the second stage of assessment, produced a much more neutral response with 51% of all respondents indicating that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the question, *Was the second stage of assessment (i.e. interview and other assessment methods such as presentation, role play, board paper exercise or similar) relevant to the skills, knowledge and experience outlined in the applicant pack?*

Was the second stage of assessment relevant to the skills, knowledge and experience outlined in the applicant pack?

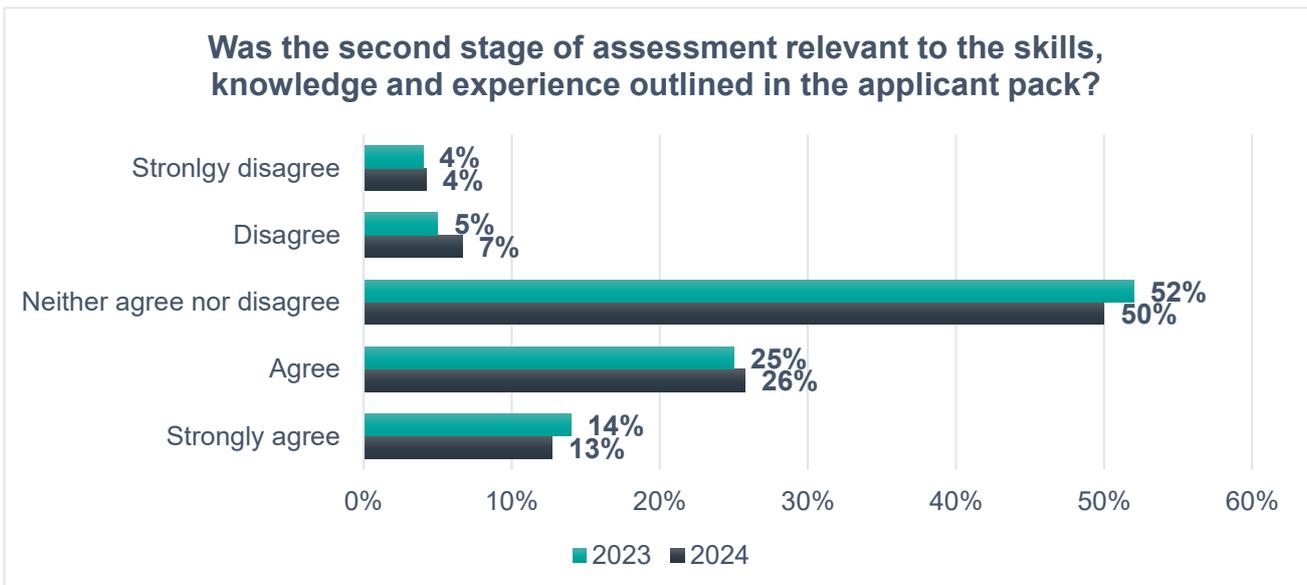| Response	2023	2024
Stronlgy disagree	4%	4%
Disagree	5%	7%
Neither agree nor disagree	52%	50%
Agree	25%	26%
Strongly agree	14%	13%

Figure 19 View on whether the second stage of assessment was relevant to the applicant pack.

In our 2023 report,[5] we noted that this question is asked of every participant in the survey and includes those who did not progress to the second stage to leave comments on the proposed assessment methods in the applicant pack. The considerable number of applicants indicating that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement (50%) suggests that many felt unable to comment on the second stage of assessment. Indeed, a considerable proportion of the comments left indicated this. Only 11% of applicants strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement with the remaining 39% strongly agreeing or agreeing.

> I was not invited to interview, but it appeared to be pretty clear
>
> Not invited. Would have wanted more information or clarification if I had proceeded to this stage.
>
> I was not invited to interview so can't really comment

We made a recommendation in the 2023 annual applicant report[6] to amend the survey to only ask the second stage of assessment question of those applicants who went through this part of the process. This was actioned during 2024, and the full results and effectiveness of this change will be seen in the 2025 annual applicant report – where, for the first time, the change will apply to all surveys.

Feedback

Did you request feedback on your application?

33% Yes
67% No
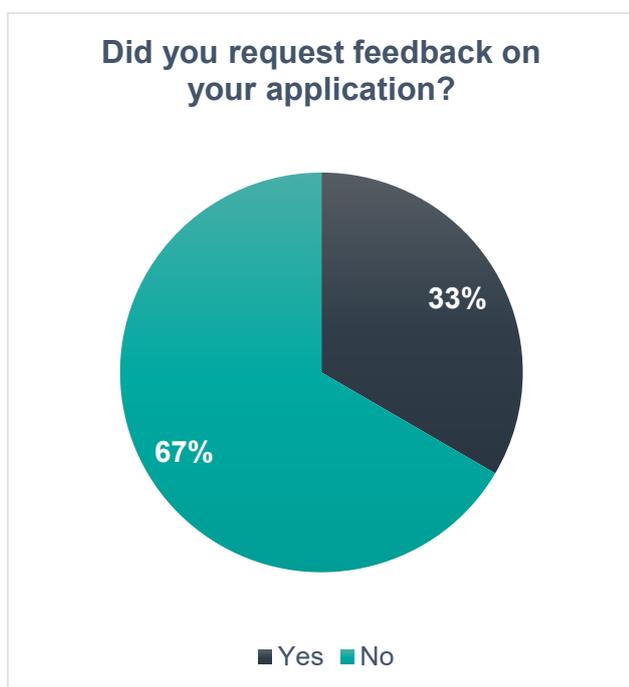
33% of applicants requested feedback, a very small decrease from the 34% requesting the same in 2023. A breakdown of those who requested feedback split by demographic groups and first time applicants is also set out below. Of all the groups, disabled applicants continue to be the most likely to request feedback. The number of LGBT applicants requesting feedback increased during 2024, while the figure for BME applicants decreased. However, other than for disabled applicants, all groups fall within a comparative +/- 10% variation of all responses (33%).

Figure 20 Applicants who requested feedback on their application.

[5] https://www.ethicalstandards.org.uk/public-appointments/research-and-reports/our-research/applicant-research-2023-full-report p23.
[6] https://www.ethicalstandards.org.uk/public-appointments/research-and-reports/our-research/applicant-research-2023-full-report p23.

Applicants Requesting Feedback - Comparative Data

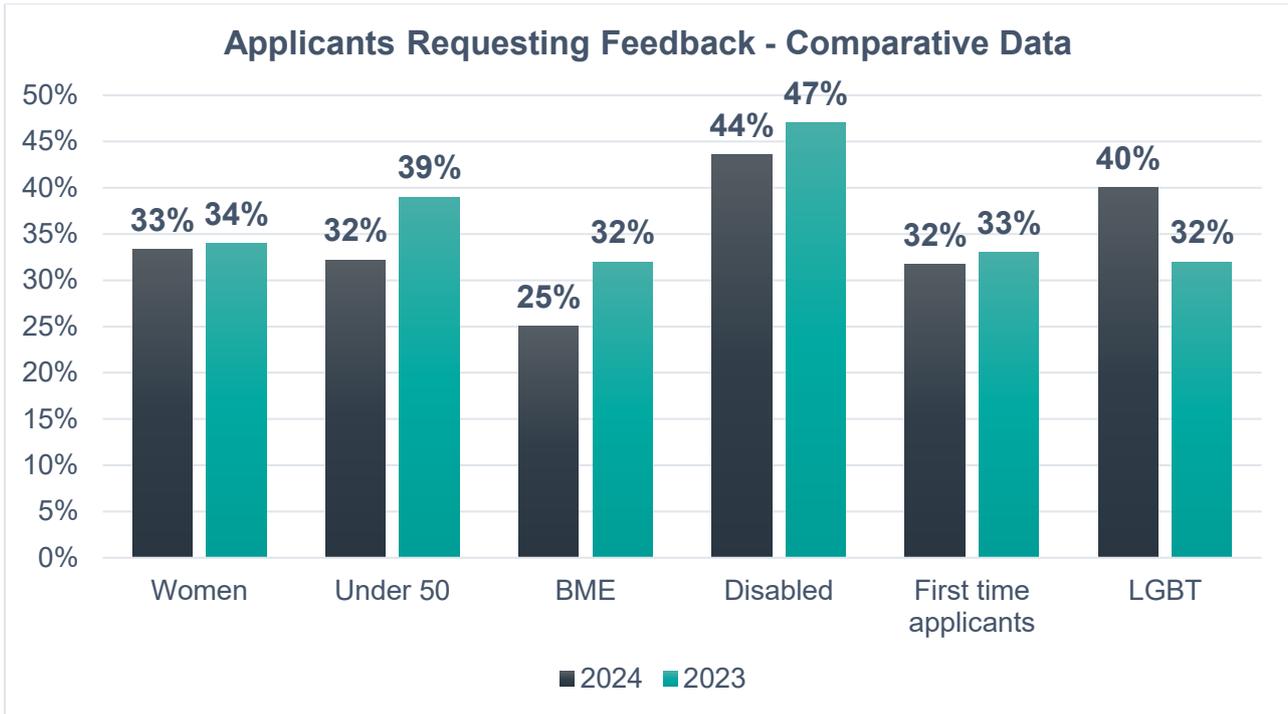| Demographic	2024	2023
Women	33%	34%
Under 50	32%	39%
BME	25%	32%
Disabled	44%	47%
First time applicants	32%	33%
LGBT	40%	32%

Figure 21 Applicants who requested feedback on their application split by demographic group.

The data also shows that those who were invited to interview were more likely to request feedback, but only marginally so (in 2023, 37% applicants invited to interview requested feedback).
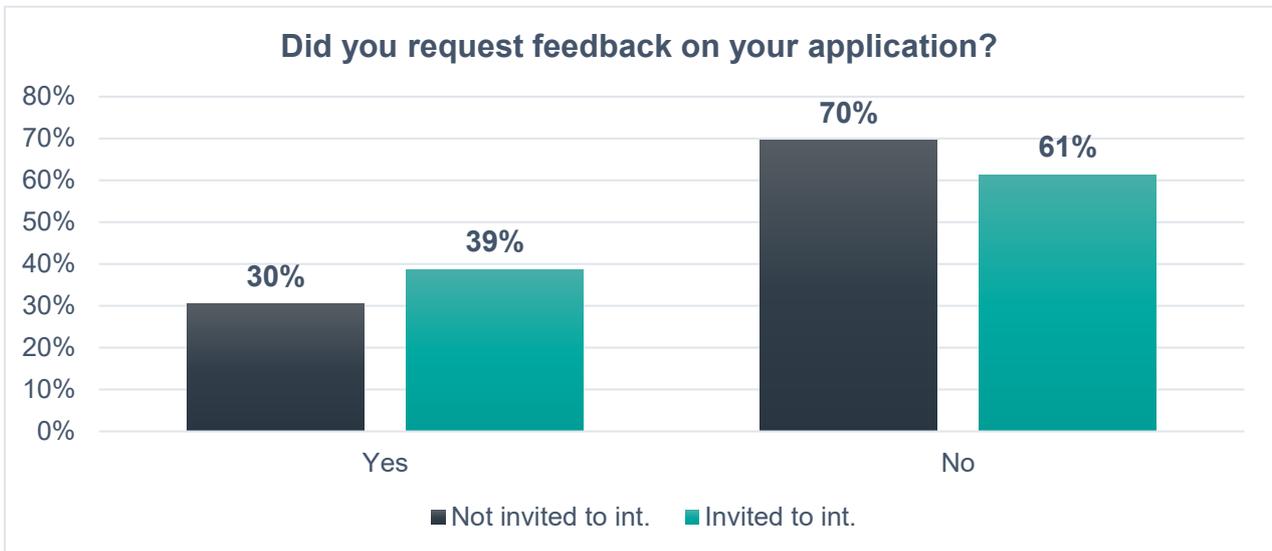
Did you request feedback on your application?

	Not invited to int.	Invited to int.
Yes	30%	39%
No	70%	61%

Figure 22 Applicants requesting feedback according to whether they progressed to the second stage of the process.

Applicants who requested feedback were also asked whether they found this feedback to be constructive, tailored and meaningful. This is a requirement under section I4 of the Code of Practice which states that *Constructive, tailored and meaningful feedback will be provided to all unsuccessful applicants who make a reasonable request for it.* Responses to this question are more concerning, with 59% of applicants strongly disagreeing or disagreeing with the statement. In 2023, 22% of applicants neither agreed nor disagreed

while this year this dropped to 16% of applicants. 25% strongly agreed or agreed in response to this question, which is an increase from 18% in 2023. It is certainly encouraging that, although the data for those disagreeing with the question remained largely the same, there was movement from those feeling neutral toward the question to those agreeing with it.
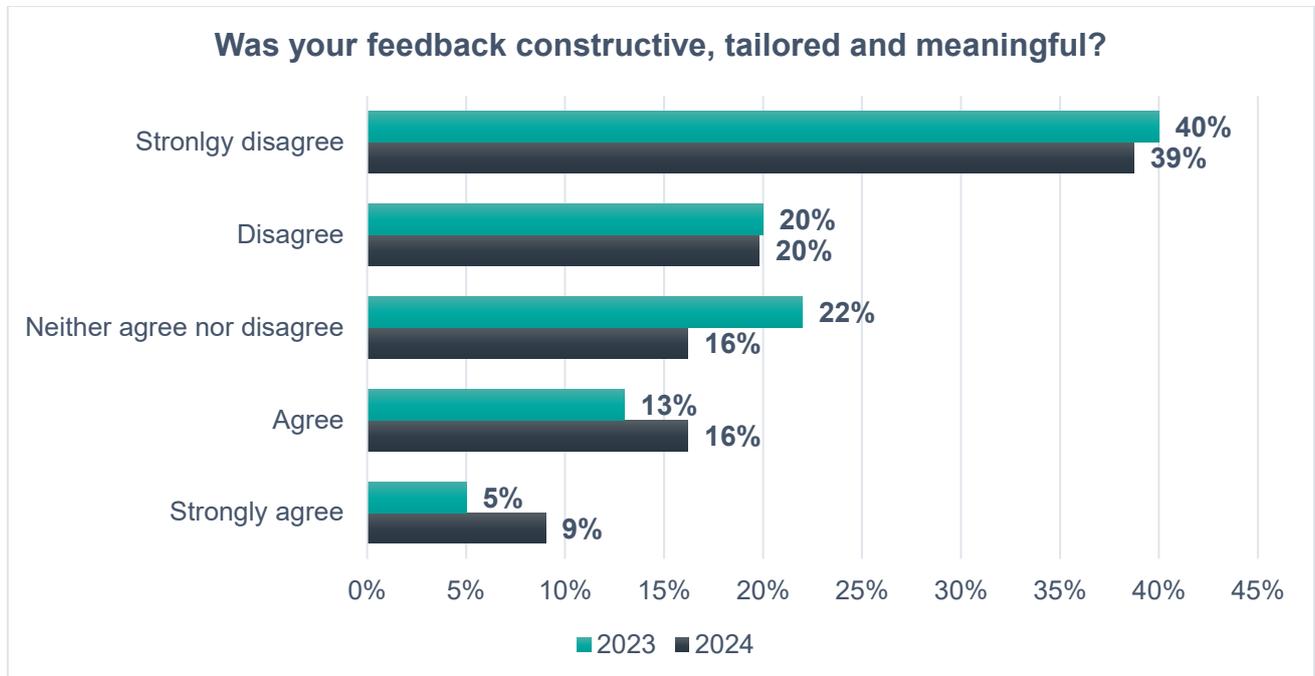
Was your feedback constructive, tailored and meaningful?

Figure 23 Applicant views on quality of feedback received.

Was your feedback constructive, tailored and meaningful?
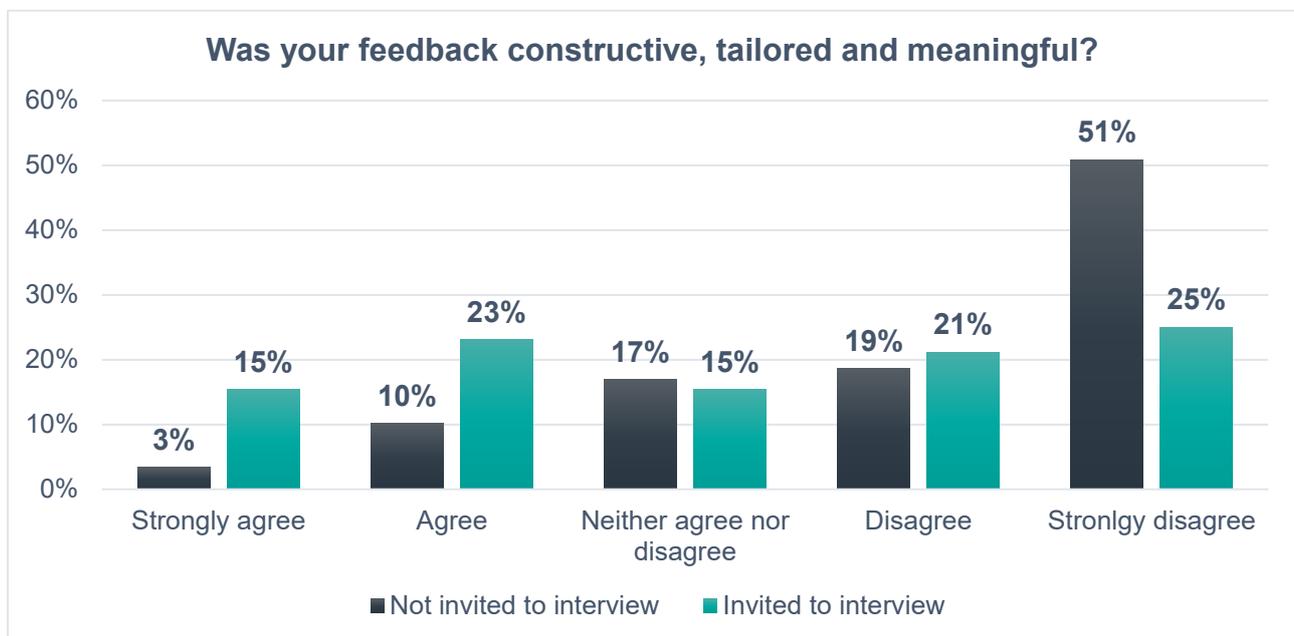

Figure 24 Applicant views on quality of feedback received.

There is also a clear difference in the feedback experience for applicants who were invited to interview and those who were not. Figure 24 shows that, generally, applicants who were invited to interview find the feedback of higher value than those who were not invited to

interview. Indeed, for those invited to interview 38% strongly agreed or agreed, compared to 46% who strongly disagreed or disagreed (34% and 34% in 2023).

Comments received for this question, similar to 2023, continue to suggest that a high proportion of applicants who requested feedback did not receive it. Other comments relate to the disappointing quality of feedback received, although there were several instances where applicants did note that when they did receive feedback it was helpful, particularly when provided by the body chair themselves. Of the 80 comments received in relation to this question, 51% commented that no feedback was received (of those, 41% explicitly stated that feedback was requested but not received). Of those who indicated that they did receive feedback (49% of the 80 comments), 18% felt they had a positive experience while 77% stated that they did not feel the feedback provided was constructive, tailored or meaningful.
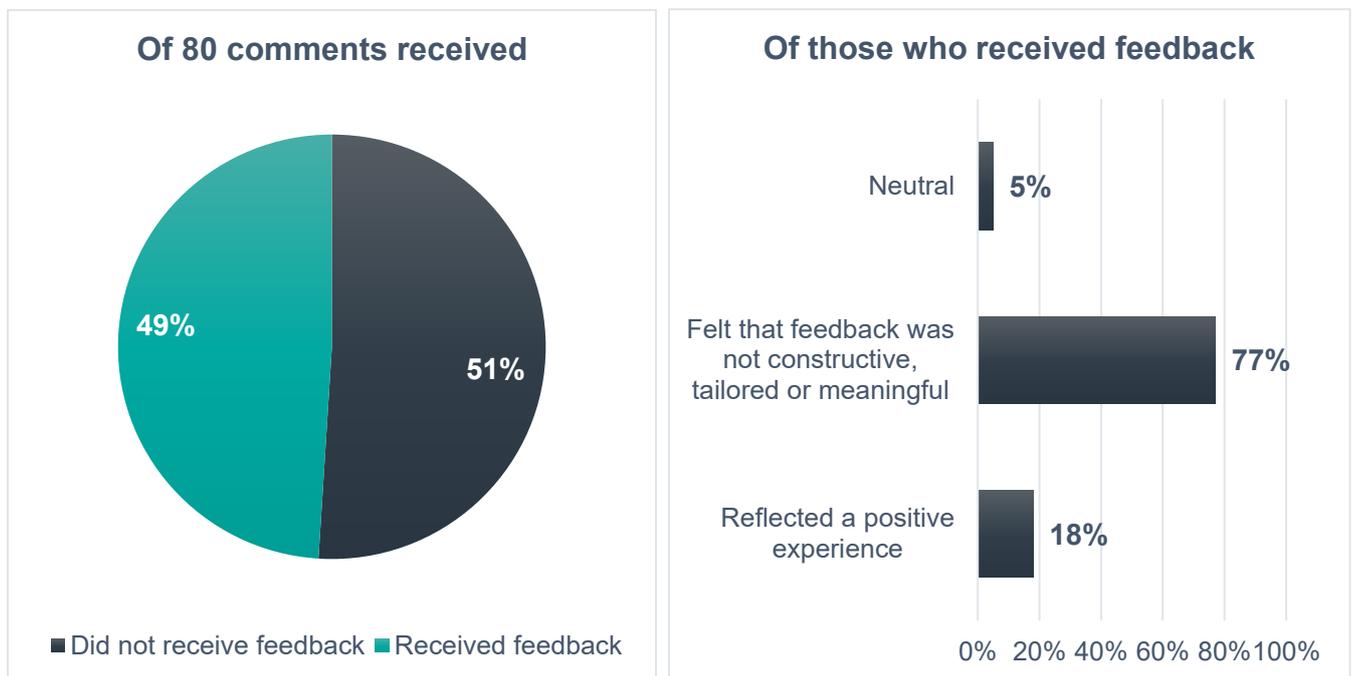

Figure 25 Comments received on the principle of respect.
Figure 26 Type of comments received on the principle of respect.

Based on these results and the comments from applicants, a recommendation from the 2023 report was for the Scottish Government to consider requests for feedback, to ensure these are provided in a timely manner once requested and to ensure, in alignment with the Code, that it is constructive, tailored and meaningful. This recommendation remains given that the results from this year's survey are broadly the same as last year.

> Feedback not provided despite two requests.
>
> Feedback was offered, I said yes please (twice), but no feedback was received.
>
> The feedback was informative and balanced in terms of my performance and the area were I did not provide evidence appropriate to the question asked.
>
> I remain unclear as to what I could have done differently and I am aware of individuals in similar roles who appear more unsuited to their positions (I appreciate I may be biased towards myself). I would like to carry out work at this level and think I am very suited but I am no clearer about what I need to do to obtain an interview / improve my application.

Additionally, we noted in 2023 that the applicant survey does not ask applicants whether or not they received the feedback they have requested. A second recommendation was made for the ESC to amend the applicant survey to ask this question. This change was made during 2024 and only a small number of applicant surveys were affected by the change; the full impact of this question being added will therefore be reported on in the 2025 annual applicant survey report, which will ask the question of all applicants who requested feedback across all surveys.

Recommendation

Scottish Government to consider the Principle of Respect and how this relates to experience of feedback for all applicants.

Respect for Applicants

The 2022 Code of Practice introduced the principle of Respect, stating that applicants and ultimately the people appointed to boards are integral to the good governance of Scotland's public bodies. Applicants will be accorded the respect that they are due for their interest and their efforts and appointees for their contribution to public life. Respondents were asked during the survey to provide any comments in relation to how they experienced the principle of Respect during the appointments process. In total, 219 comments were left in response to this question, compared to the 315 comments left in 2023 (though it is worth bearing in mind that there were less responses received to the surveys overall this year). In 2023, 255 comments left related to the question itself and were able to be analysed. This year, 179 were able to be analysed. The category 'offered no comment' relates to applicants who either indicated that they had no strong view on the question, or who left comments directly related to their own experience but who did not mention the principle of respect or how they felt they had experienced this during the process.
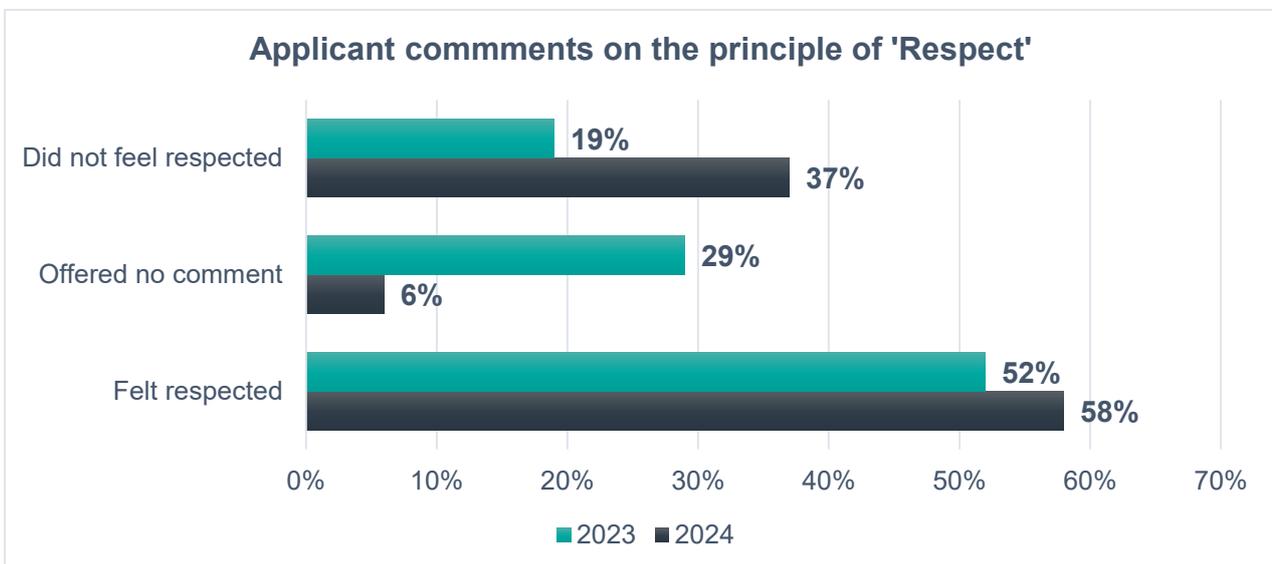

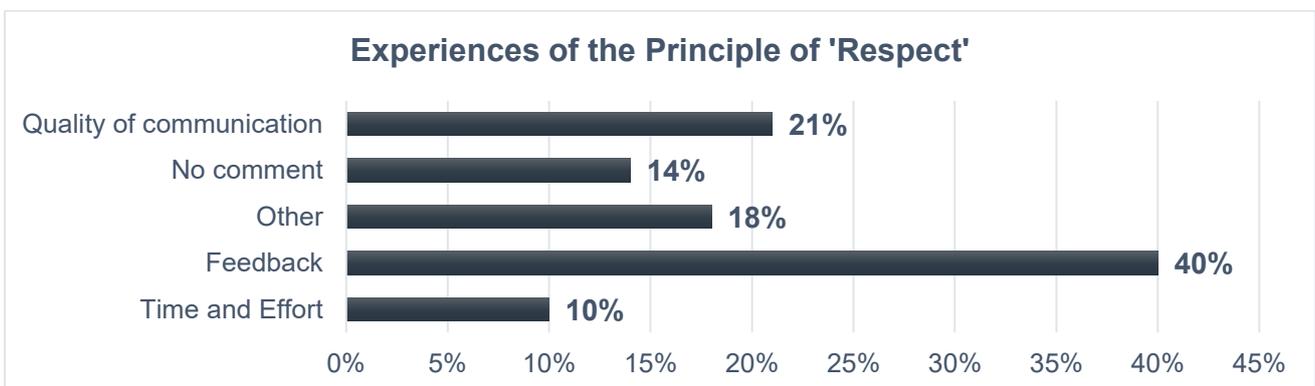*Figure 27 Applicant comments on the principle of respect.*

Figure 28 Applicant views on the principle of respect.

Of the 77 negative or neutral comments received, 40% commented on the quality or lack of feedback having impacted their experience. 21% commented on the quality of communication, or indeed complete lack of it, that they experienced during the process not

being to the standard they had expected. 'Other' in this figure pertains to comments received specifically related to an applicant experience (and that may be identifying if shared). The majority of comments left by those who had a positive expereince simply stated that they felt respected, with some indicating that panels were friendly and communication was good throughout the process.

These comments are helpful for learning about parts of the process which are important to applicants, and which should be given due attention by those involved in the process. Extracts from these responses are included included in Appendix 3.

Fairness and Transparency

Overall, did you feel that the application process was fair and transparent?

■ Yes ■ No ■ Partially
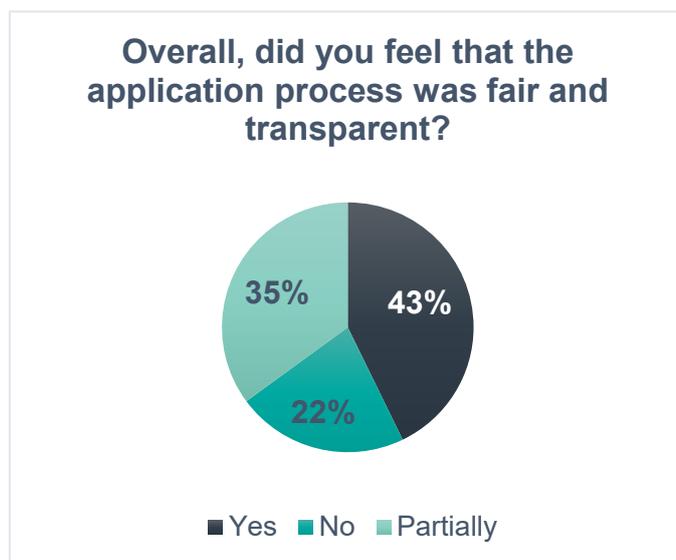
Overall, 78% of applicants felt that the process was fully or partially fair and transparent, a very small reduction from 80% the year prior. Although this report only seeks to compare the results from this year to last, it is notable (as it was in the 2023 report) that, historically, this number continues falling.[7] We will be interested therefore in how this figure looks during 2025.

Figure 29 Applicant views on the transparency of the appointments process.

Those who did not feel that the application process was fair and transparent, or who felt it was only partially so, noted lack of feedback and feeling that they had the exact skills, knowledge, experience and values outlined in the applicant pack but were not appointed. 'Other' in figure 30 (below) received a notable proportion of responses, and comments provided varied across surveys. Some respondents felt 'all of the above' was more appropriate, while others cited specific parts of the process that caused them to question its transparency. Extracted comments are included here and in Appendix 3.

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[7] See 2019 Applicant Research: https://www.ethicalstandards.org.uk/publication/applicant-research-2019 and 2023 Applicant Research: https://www.ethicalstandards.org.uk/public-appointments/research-and-reports/our-research/applicant-research-2023-full-report
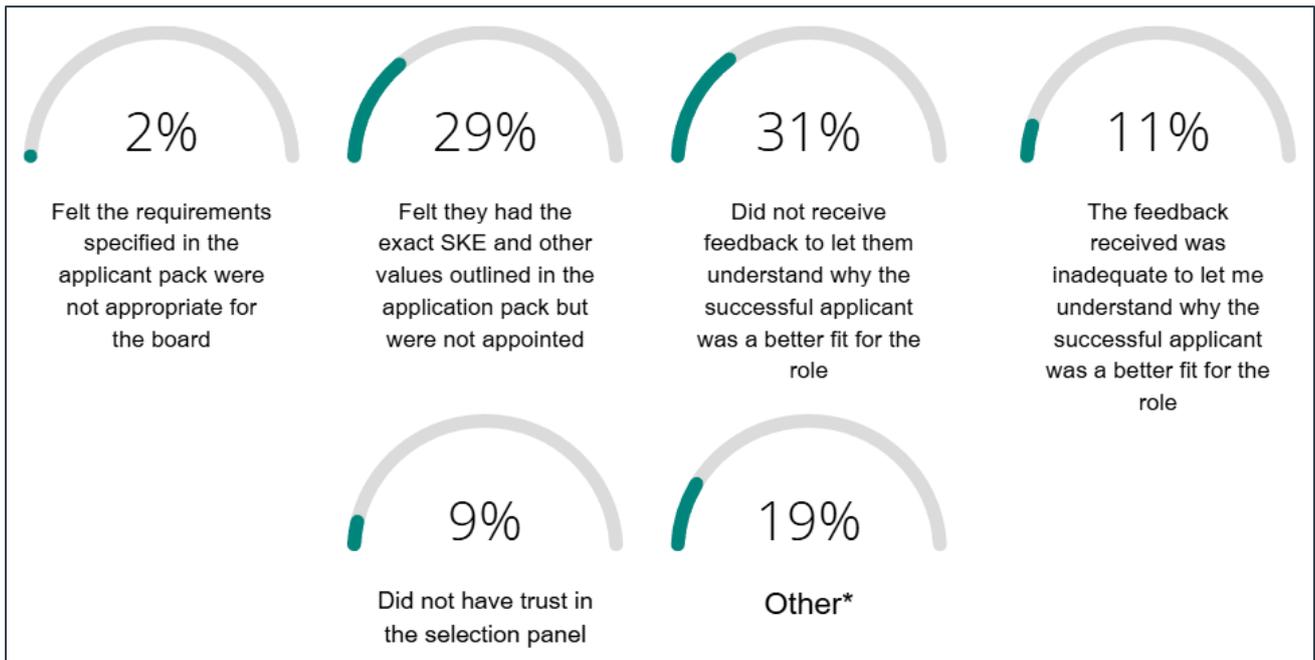
Figure 30 Applicant reasons for partially agreeing or disagreeing about transparency of process

When broken down by demographic group the figures are broadly the same with the exception of responses from minority ethnic applicants, for which only 53% fully or partially agreed. This is a significant decrease from the results in 2023 (where 87% fully or partially agreed).
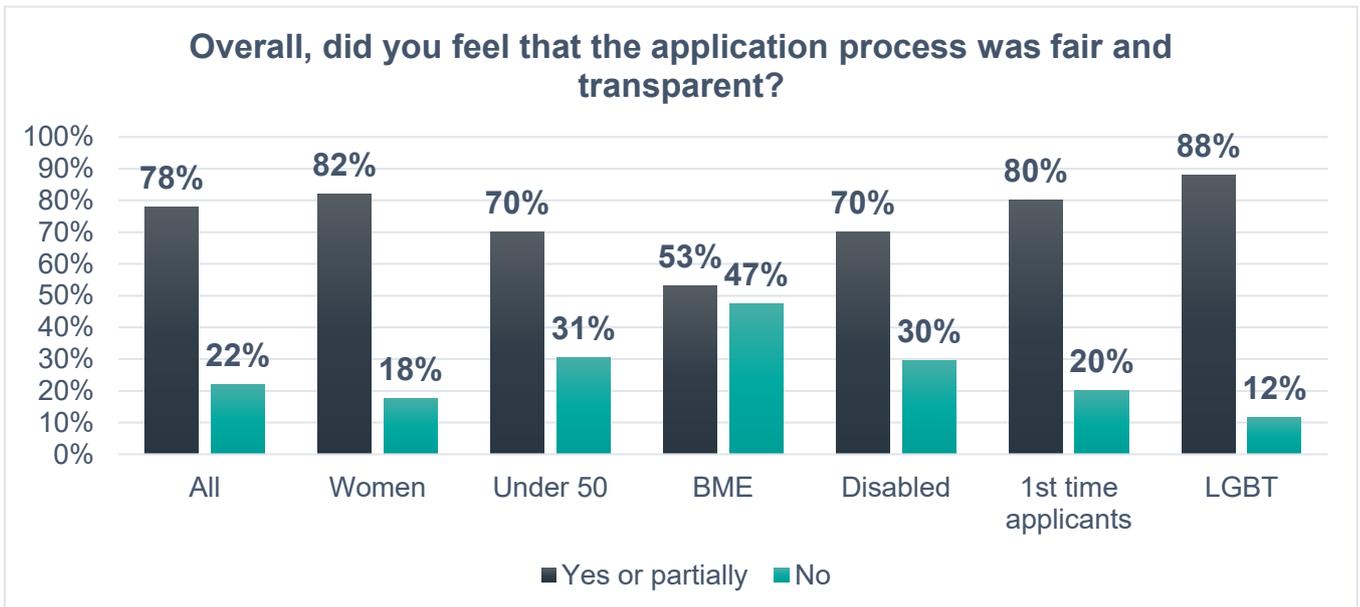
Figure 31 Applicant views on the transparency of the appointments process split by demographic group.

In addition to minority ethnic applicants, responses to the question from those under 50 and disabled applicants also reduced this year, and we will want to observe whether this trend continues next year.

Overall, did you feel that the application process was fair and transparent?
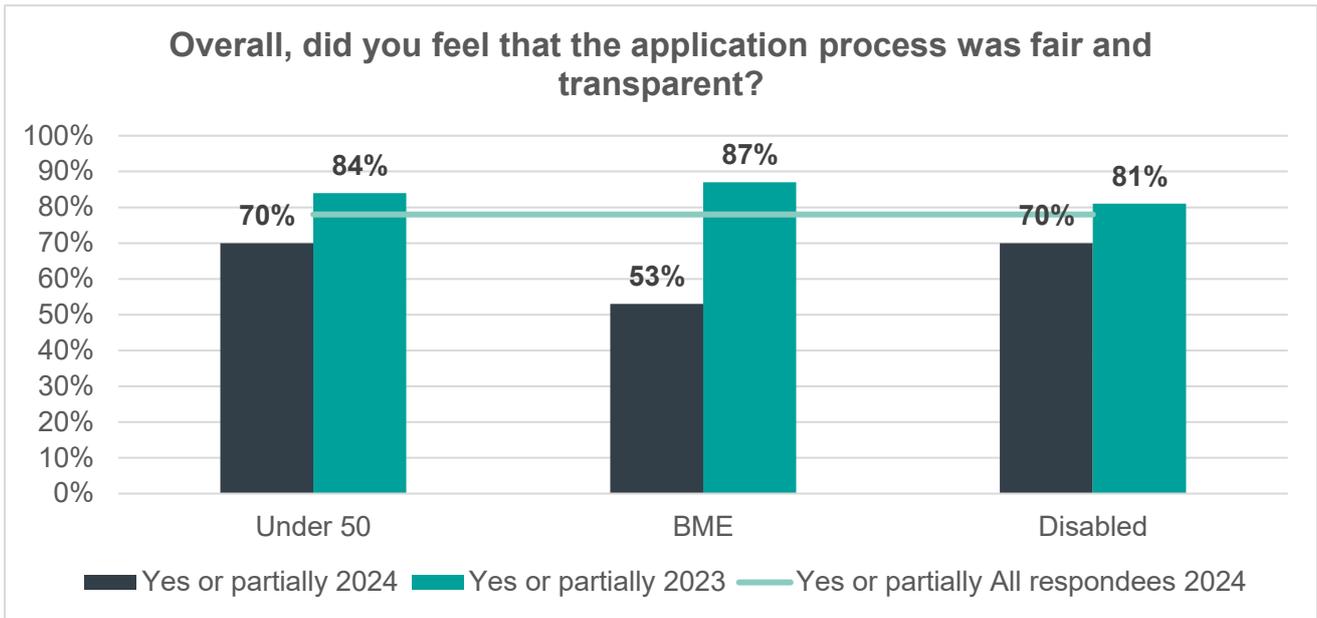
Figure 32 Applicant views on the transparency of the appointments process split by under 50s, BME and disabled applicants.

> More information on the reasons for rejection would nave been appreciated by me.
>
> What would improve the process is for more attention to be given to unsuccessful applicants to ensure they better understand why they were unsuccessful and by doing this, this support and encourage them to apply again and improve future applications.
>
> The application was transparent but I have no idea why I didn't get to the interview stage.
>
> I had the skills, knowledge, experience and more specifically, lived experience such as role requirements expressed and set out. Very suprised was not invited to interview as I believed I met all of the requirements and exceeded same with a degree of comfort.

Regulation

Applicants were asked whether they were aware that the appointments process was regulated by the Ethical Standards Commissioner and whether they believe that this regulation makes the process fairer and more transparent. 69% of respondents were aware of ESC regulation, and in total 80% felt that this regulation makes the process fully or partially fairer and more transparent than if it were not regulated, the same figure as in 2023.

Were you aware that the process was regulated by the Ethical Standards Commissioner?

31%

69%

■ Yes ■ No

Do you believe this regulation makes the process fairer and more transparent than if it was not regulated?

26%

20%

54%

■ Yes ■ No ■ Partially
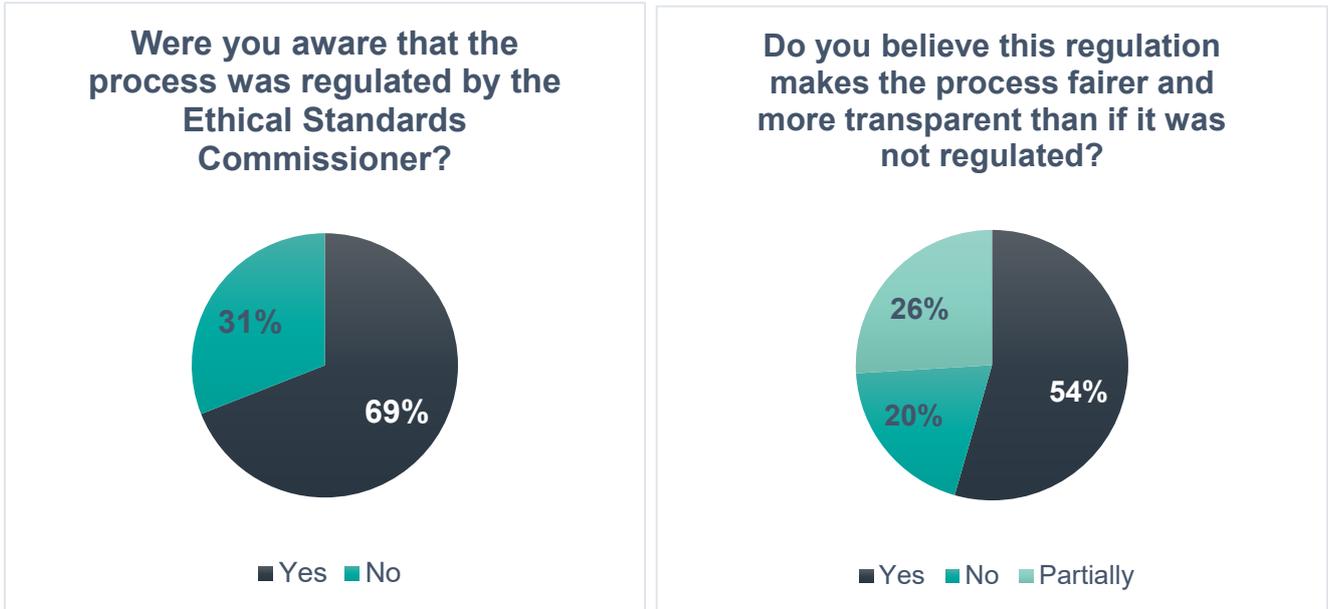
Figure 33 Applicant awareness of ESC regulation.
Figure 34 Applicant views on impact of ESC regulation.

Respondents were invited to comment on what more the ESC could be doing by way of regulation to improve the appointments process. A selection of comments is noted below with more in Appendix 2. Once more the issue of feedback arises with applicants noting that a lack of feedback results in feeling that the process is not as fair and transparent as it could be. Furthermore, some suggestions related to work already being undertaken by the ESC, such as having a representative sit on panels or having appropriate sight of applicant packs and adverts and working more closely with the Scottish Government Public Appointments Team. These comments indicate a lack of understanding about the role of the ESC and the work that we do. When broken down by demographic group, the results are broadly aligned with all responses with some notable exceptions.   In particular, only 51% of applicants under 50 were aware of the ESC's regulation (down from 58% in 2023), while only 55% of minority ethnic applicants were aware (down from 61% in 2023).
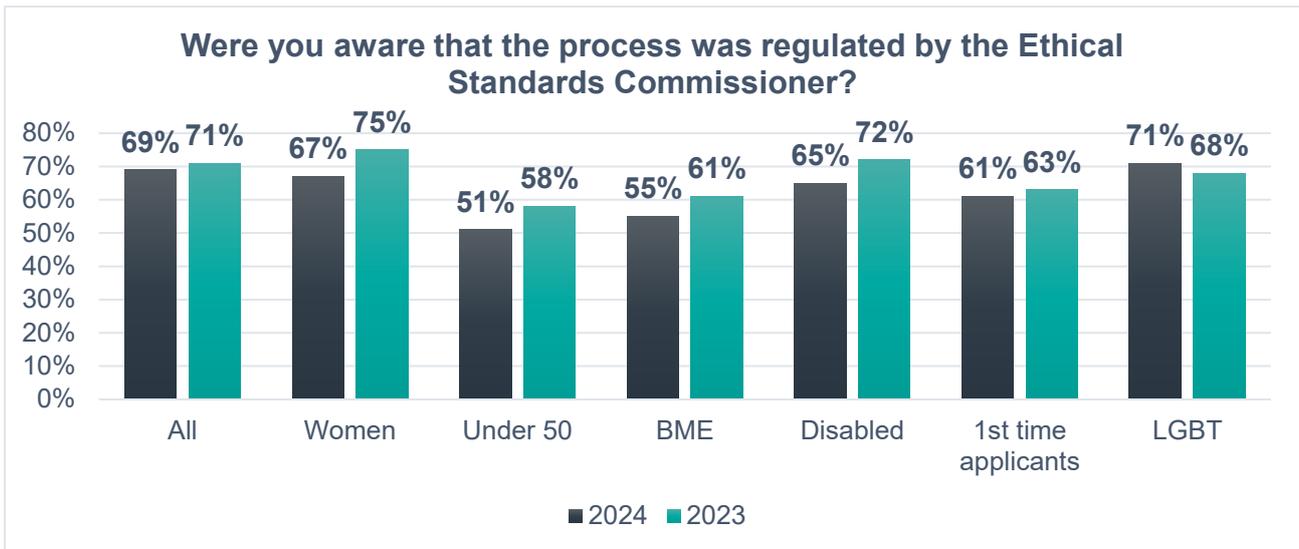
Figure 35 Applicant awareness of ESC regulation split by demographic group in 2024.

Despite the lower figures indicating awareness of ESC regulation, when broken down by demographic group, those who fully or partially believe that reglation makes the process fairer and more transparent than if it was not regulated are consistently high and trend higher than all responses, which is encouraging. However, this is with the exception of minority ethnic applicants for which only 60% felt that ESC regulation makes the process fairer and more transparent, compared to the overall 80%. For all other demographic groups or first time applicants, at least 75% or above agreed or partially agreed.
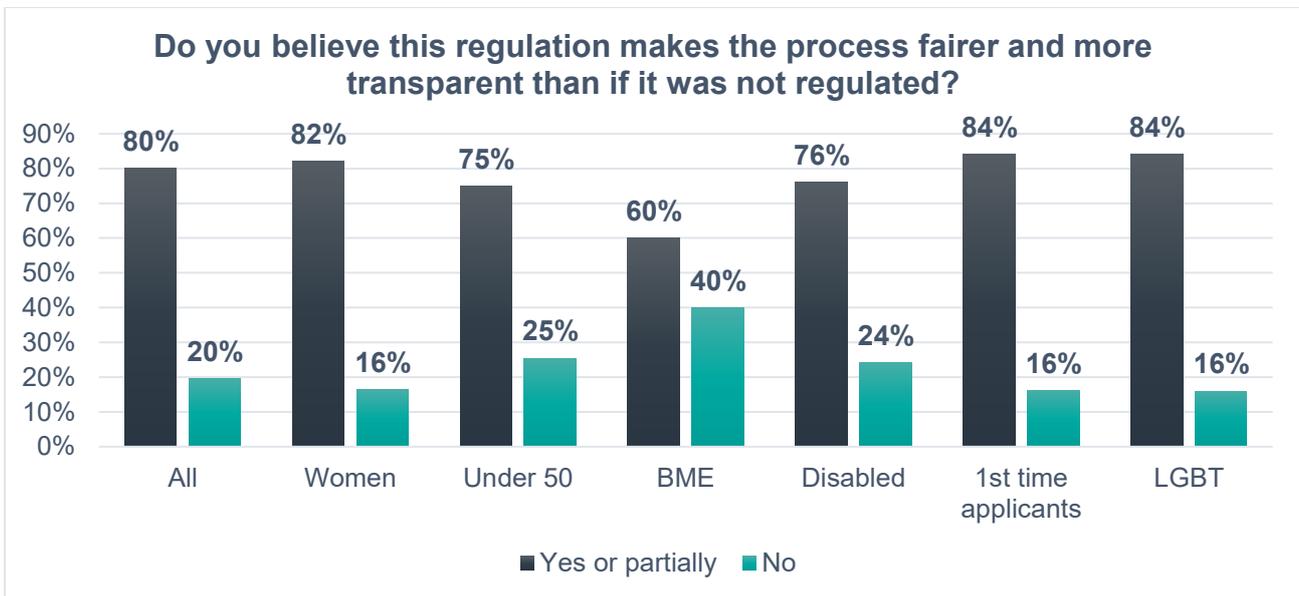
Figure 36 Applicant views on impact of ESC regulation split by demographic group.

The ESC continues to be committed to helping the public and our stakeholders more readily understand what we do, how and why we do it and how well we do it during the period 2024 – 2028.[8] As such, it will be useful to compare results on this section of the survey year on

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[8] https://www.ethicalstandards.org.uk/publication/communications-strategy

year, to assess whether there is any change in understanding of the ESC's regulation and to observe whether the trend for minority ethnic applicants in particular continues.

Conclusion

It is positive progress to have another year's worth of data from public appointment rounds run under the 2022 Code of Practice. It has been particularly helpful to compare the 2024 results to those in 2023, and to begin identifying possible trends in the data. Over time, this will allow us to identify aspects of the process that appear to be particularly helpful to, or present barriers for, applicants within currently under-reflected groups. The findings of this year in particular show a particularly different experience for minority ethnic applicants when compared to other demographic groups, and the experience of disabled applicants is comparable or slightly better than last year. With more data we can better assess how far these findings become trends that require addressing.

As in previous years, respondent comments are invaluable in helping us and the Scottish Government to understand and learn from viewpoints on all the various aspects of the process. It is clear from the comments received that, although there are areas for improvement, applicants appreciate the opportunity to feedback on the process and that the ESC undertaking the applicant surveys continues to be an important and effective element of the appointments process – both for applicants having the opportunity to share their views, and for continuous learning and improvement as we work alongside the Scottish Government.

"

I enjoyed my interaction with the Scottish Government staff involved in the process - they were very friendly the total opposite of "faceless" - I valued this.

Please continue to reach out to unsuccessful candidates and ask for process feedback as this is the best way to critical analyse how the process works in practice and provides opportunities for learning and adjusting SOP's to improve

Thank you for enabling me to provide feedback on the process

Having ESC staff present/participating provided a level of confidence and independence to the overall process

"

Appendix 1 – Appointment rounds 1 January 2024 – 31 December 2024

Body	Position
Boundaries Scotland	Commissioner
Boundaries Scotland	Deputy Chair
Cairngorms National Park Authority	Member
Caledonian Maritime Assets Limited	Non-Executive Directors
Community Justice Scotland	Members
Crown Estate Scotland	Members
Forth Valley College	Chair
Healthcare Improvement Scotland	Member
Highlands and Islands Enterprise	Members
Historic Environment Scotland	Members
Independent Living Fund	Members
Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland	Convenor
National Galleries of Scotland	Members
National Museums Scotland	Trustees
NatureScot	Member
NHS Ayrshire & Arran	Member
NHS Dumfries & Galloway	Member
NHS Dumfries & Galloway	Chair
NHS Education for Scotland	Member
NHS Education for Scotland	Member
NHS Fife	Member
NHS Grampian	Members
NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde	Members
NHS Highland	Members
NHS Lanarkshire	Members
NHS Tayside	Chair
NHS Tayside	Chair

NHS Tayside	Members
Poverty and Inequality Commission	Chair
Poverty and Inequality Commission	Members
Risk Management Authority	Members
Scottish Agricultural Wages Board	Chair
Scottish Ambulance Service	Member
Scottish Children's Reporter Administration	Chair
Scottish Children's Reporter Administration	Members
Scottish Commission on Social Security	Chair
Scottish Commission on Social Security	Member
Scottish Criminal Cases Review Commission	Legal Member
Scottish Criminal Cases Review Commission	Chair
Scottish Enterprise	Chair
Scottish Enterprise	Chair
Scottish Food Commission	Chair
Scottish Funding Council	Members
Scottish Futures Trust	Chair
Scottish Housing Regulator	Member
Scottish Land Commission	Members - Land Commissioners
Scottish Land Commission	Tenant Farmer
Scottish Law Commission	Commissioner
Scottish Legal Aid Board	Chair
Scottish Legal Aid Board	Legal member
Scottish Police Authority	Members
Scottish Qualifications Authority	Members
Scottish Social Services Council	Members
Scottish Water	Members
sportscotland	Chair
sportscotland	Members
VisitScotland	Chair

West Lothian College	Chair

Appendix 2 – Applicant Survey Questions

1. **Have you applied for a regulated appointment to a public body before this application?**

Yes - in the last 12 months	Yes – longer the 12 months ago	No

2. **Did you experience anything new or innovative during the process compared to your previous experience? Please provide any additional comments.**

Yes	No

3. **What statement best describes the outcome of your application?**

I submitted an application but was not invited to interview
I was invited to interview but was not appointed
I was offered the appointment
Other (please specify):

4. **How did you first find out about this particular public appointment opportunity? ***

From a personal contact	Through a professional network (please specify in the box below)
Twitter	Facebook
LinkedIn	Direct email from the Scottish Government Public Appointments Team
Directly from the Public Body (a direct email or from the website)	Public Appointments Website (www.appointed-for-scotland.org)
Newspaper or other printed publication	Other (please specify below)

5. **What about the advert attracted you? ***

It made the public body sound interesting
It made the role sound interesting
It sounded like they were looking for people like me
That advert was not attraction

6. **Did the application pack contain all the details you needed to apply (e.g. key deadlines, contact details, the appointments process, etc.) Please provide additional comments.**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	A mixture

7. **Were the requirements of the role (skills, knowledge, experience and other relevant attributes) clearly outlined in the applicant pack?**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

8. **Was the time and effort taken by you to complete the application form reasonable?**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

9. **The amount of information supplied in the applicant information pack was:**

Too little	Just right	Too much

10. **Were you able to discuss any part of the application process with anyone involved in the recruitment process?**

Yes
I could not find details on how to make contact
I tried to make contact but was unsuccessful
I did not wish to speak with anyone regarding my application
No – other (please add details below)

11. **Was the application process clear?**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

12. **Please provide any comments on the previous six questions**

13. **Was the first stage of assessment (i.e. application) relevant to the skills, knowledge and experience outlined in the applicant pack? Please provide any additional comments.**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

14. **Was the second stage of assessment (i.e. interview and other assessment methods such as presentation, role play, board paper exercise or similar) relevant to the skills, knowledge and experience outlined in the applicant pack?**

If you were not invited to interview, please feel free to leave your thoughts on the proposed assessment in the applicant pack. Please provide any additional comments.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

15. **The Code of Practice states that, in relation to materials provided to applicants and the assessment process for appointments, *The objective should be to encourage the optimum number of people to apply for positions and for people to find it a comparatively easy exercise to submit applications.* * Do you feel this reflects your experience?**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

16. **Did you request feedback on your application?**

Yes	No

17. **Do you feel that the feedback you received was constructive, tailored and meaningful?**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

18. **Since 2022 the Code of Practice for Ministerial Appointments to Public Bodies in Scotland includes the principle of Respect to applicants. Please provide any comments in relation to how you experienced the principle of Respect during the appointments process.**

19. **Please describe one (or more) positive aspect of the process for you.**

20. **Overall, did you feel the process was fair and transparent? Please provide any additional comments**

Yes	No	Partially

21. What makes you believe that the process was not fair and transparent? *

I believe that the requirements specified in the applicant pack were not appropriate for the board
I felt that I had the skills, knowledge, experience and other relevant attributes as outlined in the applicant pack but was not appointed
I did not receive feedback to help me understand why I was not the best fit for the role
The feedback that I received was inadequate to help me understand why I was not the best fit for the role
I did not have trust in the selection panel
Other (please specify)

22. **Were you aware that the process was regulated by the Ethical Standards Commissioner?**

Yes	No

23. **Do you believe this regulation makes the process fairer and more transparent than if it was not regulated?**

Yes	No	Partially

24. **What more should the ESC be doing by way of regulation to improve the appointments process?**

25. **Please provide any other comments you may have on regulation. We would be particularly keen to receive more detail if you consider that the regulation does NOT make the process fairer and more transparent.**

26. **If you are happy to be included in further qualitative research following completion of this survey, please enter your email address below.**

27. **Thank you for taking the time to provide this feedback on the appointments process. If you have any final comments, please leave these in the box below.**

Appendix 3 – Additional Applicant Comments

Did you experience anything new or innovative during the process compared to your previous experience?

The leading, competency based, questions allowed for little examination of the skills and attributes of non executive directors

It was fully electronic

This was my first application and first interview - I was asked to analyse a paper that had gone to the board- I took some time over it and provided peer reviewed research to back my conclusions - I'm not sure it was what the panel wanted

In my recent interview for the NHS public board position, I have noticed a few things that were different from my past experiences. One of the differences I faced was how much they focused on the NHS's core values, like patient care and community health. Instead of just asking about my skills and experience, they were really interested in how my personal values align with theirs, especially around diversity and inclusion. It felt like they were looking for someone who truly shares their mission, not just someone with the right qualifications on paper.

Another new aspect was that they gave me situational scenarios to respond to, which I hadn't really encountered in other interviews before. They asked me how I would handle specific challenges that the NHS is facing right now. It was a lot more hands-on and made me think on my feet, which I found both challenging and refreshing. It showed me that they're really focused on finding leaders who can think strategically and adapt to real-world pressures.

Overall, the whole process felt more holistic.it was about understanding who I am and how I could contribute to their goals. It was a really engaging experience and left me even more excited about the possibility of joining their team.

The use of competency based questions was much more apparent this time.

The role description was clearer and the asks of what candidates should seek to address in their application were therefore clearer.

Rather than being new or innovative, the process seemed simpler and less time-consuming than previously.

I made a small number of applications to public bodies of interest to me at roughly the same time.

The young persons interview as part of the appointment process was new to me. I found this an innovative inclusion which ensured applicants are able to relate to and work alongside and in the best interests of the young people [body] is there to support. I was hugely impressed by the young person who led the session.

It was good that a young person was involved in the recruitment.

The application form was less focussed on competencies sought than I have seen in previous applications

No and in fact the opposite - As a senior global executive who was interested in the position and have experience on both sides of the recruitment process, I found the process lacking in guidance and engagement

It was extremely perfunctory

The application was much simpler and not as prescriptive

Letter from the chair to unsuccessful candidates was a nice touch

There was no difference in the initial stages and as I did not progress to interview I cannot comment on that stage

It is a longer and broader process with much more information provided to the applicant

The organisation to which I was applying named a contact for further information, which was useful

In both cases (the previous application was for a NED role in [body]), given my qualifications and extensive business experience I was surprised not be invited to interview.

The review of a board paper was new for me and a welcome addition as it related to the role being applied for rather than generic competency based questions which rarely address how the candidate would act in the role.

Nothing new but the same old ways of promoting equal opportunity even though we are not standing on equal footing

The process is biased towards people already serving in or known to the public sector recruiting organisation. The process is very archaic in what you have to produce and how this is assessed -- nothing much has changed here in many years.

Extensive information sought through questions and through detailed responses

What about the advert attracted you?

I was aware of just how poorly things had been handled in the past and felt they needed the skills I hold to bring the board back on track for public benefit.

I felt that I had relevant experience and justice is an area I'm very interested in

I believed I meet the criteria from an empirical knowledge base and previous roles I had in my career

The advert reflected accurately the governance nature of the role which was of interest to me.

I have always been very keen about the prospect of being a Trustee [for this body]. I am passionate, and extremely well-informed about the arts and culture; I have past and valuable, senior SG policy experience of cultural policy; I know the sector very well indeed; and I've been a senior charity trustee for the part 14 years. Also, since I may be retiring in the coming months, I'd have relished making myself useful in this way, with more time to devote to the role.

Please see answer to question 3. I found out from a personal contact NOT from an advert.

I am very familiar with the [the body] and I am an enthusiastic visitor

I knew about the public body already and looking at the candidate profile I felt that I fitted it very well. In many respects this was my ideal "job"

I was excited for the opportunity to be involved with each of the two bodies I applied for. These were each directly linked to my career and offered a unique opportunity to be part of the bigger picture and to grow professionally without leaving a career I am dedicated to.

I have a very good knowledge of how organisations work and have had a career in health related industries. I am also a big picture thinker and believed I could offer new perspective and dynamism and commitment to the role.

My years of experience in the US health care system have allowed me to see the impact an effective or ineffective health care system can have on the patients, community, economy and society of a community. I wanted to use my experiences to help enhance the difference that [body] has on the community it serves with

the resources provided.

I also had relevant experience over a number of years on a variety of [body] governance committees.

I was attracted to the role because I have had and continue to have major health issues, and so have vast experience of being a patient - a "customer" - of the [body]. Also my background, as an analyst, senior executive and advisor to leading media companies worldwide, might be of value.

The roles being recruited for aligned to my own professional experience and I thought that it looked like a good fit.

The invitation to apply video from The board Chair resonated

I found the process inefficient and not helpful. The timeline advertised was not adhered to, which for a board appointment is not acceptable without any updates in advance of the candidate notification commitment date. I had to follow up 1 week beyond the date publish for candidates to be notified never received an apology or a reason for the delay. I have served at director level for major international companies and never experienced this type of organisation. Overall this was at best poorly managed.

I felt it was a valuable way of utilising the learning I have on a daily basis in my role, the information our communities share with us and using it to make the systemic change that is needed.

I was attracted to the role because of my knowledge of the issues facing the organisation and its importance to the Scottish Economy

I have worked in Scottish business and industry for over 40 years and I thought I had a lot to offer the role.

I read the job specification, it matched my own experience and I believe the work of this Commission to be very important

I was already well-informed about the body.

What statement best describes the outcome of your application?

Submitted application but no response

I received no feedback from interview which was disappointing. It was many weeks before I received a rejection by email, nothing wrong in that but it's a nice courtesy after interview to let people know whether they are successful or not.

I was told in a feedback session that I was appointable but I was beaten by the panel's preferred candidate.

Having been appointed to another post days after this interview I declined the offer of Chair.

Given my huge background and deep experience in all the key criteria I was extremely surprised not to be offered an interview.

Really really disappointed to not be called to interview - that's twice now and I'd taken previous feedback into account.

I should add that it took a long time for me to hear the result of my application since the email had gone into a spam folder, having been sent to an email address I no longer use, and not the email address from which I applied..

I was not given additional time, and the chair refused me to refer to my notes during the interview

Submitted application, but withdrew before closing date

I submitted the application and was invited for interview but could not make that date/time due to an unavoidable family commitment (taking me away from the area). I asked if I could be interviewed via Teams

but that was not possible. I was therefore asked to withdraw my application.

After the information meeting I thought the appointment was too onerous.

I was interviewed and told I had passed but not appointed.

I have not received any information regarding my interview.

I was not invited to interview but was suggested to apply to the expert of experience panel, and I was successful

I submitted an application but never heard back at all.

I never received communication as to whether I was successful or not

Received no response

I thought I'd completed the application and submitted it, but I appear to have submitted it incomplete.

As far as I know, no appointment was made, as the Minister in charge was changed due to a cabinet reshuffle towards the end of the process. It was disappointing that the previous Minister had chosen a number of candidates for interview they must have thought were suitable, but the new Minister must have decided against them. No explanation has been provided about what happened to the process to appoint a new Chair.

I received a generic reply which was accepted by myself

I met the exacting requirements and pre requisites in entirety so the decision to not proceed was unjust and didn't meet the equality statement!!

I was dismayed to read the criteria and approach. Given my currency and experience in technology in addition to UK and international advisory work in policing it was clear from the process I would not be selected for interview. I would dearly love to bring my work and advisory experience to help in Scotland and despite exceptional references on my capability and contribution from past Chief Constables and officers I am baffled that I would not at least be selected for interview.

I attended the brief and did the initial application stage but did not do the next stage

I have no idea

Again as I said zero feedback.

How did you first find out about this particular public appointment opportunity?

I was a member of the [board] and became aware of the process by dint of that

The Work For Scotland job portal

Web

A contact who is on a public body said she felt I was the sort of person who should be appointed to a HB - she did say at the time because I was the sort of person they should appoint probably meant I wouldn't be appointed! she was right.

various - mainly through local [area] contacts and also SG

Aberdeen Chamber of Commerce

Someone in my network seen the advert (on LinkedIn I think??) and shared it with me.

Via the Experts by Experience panel

It may have appeared on the Indeed jobs website. I trawl the jobs websites so I can't be sure which one.

Government website

As a current independent member of [board], I was aware that the vacancy had arisen.

Work for Scotland website

I can't remember specifically. I think it was via an online website similar to myjobscotland.

Senior contacts and colleagues in the financial and social sectors encouraged me to submit my interest

I read about the failure to appoint so looked out for it

Direct mail from the Civil Service team sponsoring the establishment of this body

There was an advertisement for the role on the Scottish Land & Estates Website.

Indeed

Did the application pack contain all the details you needed to apply (e.g. key deadlines, contact details, the appointments process, etc.)

Yes. But I knew that I would be unavailable on the date indicated for interview and asked about this by email, and nobody bothered to reply.

It was vague on substance of the role and what was expected. It was the fact that it was for [the body] that attracted me at the outset.

The two part application process was, frankly, quite confusing - and I'm very used to completing government forms. I found this pretty stressful, as I was very keen to get it right; I also found the description of the various sections of the application form left me wondering exactly what was wanted. This feeling was underlined later when I received feedback. I had written a carefully succinct description of what I could offer in each section, but on turning the online page to find a request for an embellished CV, I considered much of that material had already been covered in my first scripts. However, I was not sufficiently sure of what I should change or omit, in order to please the panel, so I did my best in the CV section and left the first part alone.

The application pack was confusing and the process was complicated. It could have been far more clear and straight forward in my opinion, with clearer questions.

It was quite full but I don't think it had enough information about the organisation and some of the timelines were unclear

Although the practicalities for applying was in the pack, there was a lack of information which might be relevant for deciding the accessibility and time commitments required of the post. For example there was a lack of information about how often meetings are in [body HQ not in central belt] or elsewhere which is significant for applicants (and their employers) not in the central belt. Assuming the majority are in [body HQ not in central belt], there was no information on how to travel to meetings by public transport to estimate time commitments and consider accessibility which can be relevant to deciding whether to apply in the first place. A follow up request to the email address in the information pack received no response.

The questions in the application conflicted with the information requested as part of the application process. The questions changed part way though the application window

It read as if there were no barriers to people with highly relevant private sector experience but at same time was geared to public sector and water industry regulation.

The application pack was very clear and sufficiently detailed.

The emphasis appeared more on finding an ethnic minority candidate. It should be about finding the best and right candidates for the role but inclusive of all cultures, race etc. It did however have key dates and contact information included.

Clear process and helpful info/ Q&A virtual session

I cannot recall. If you had sent this survey to me nearer the time, I might have been able to answer your questions with a degree of knowledge regarding the applications process but this has come too late for me to recall as I have applied for numerous other positions since then.

I do recall thinking that it was full of the usual 'woke' nonsense that unfortunately pervades society these days.

Many of the questions did not seem to be relevant. I had to telephone the [body] to make sure that I had applied properly and had not missed anything out.

I feel that there must have been something missing from the details in the pack. The reason that I say this is because I believe that I had very strong skills in all of the areas that were listed, but I still did not get the opportunity to interview for the role. Also, there was no indication of what area I fell down in.

The pack was comprehensive and professional

Was complex and could have put people off applying

The information provided was extensive, but clear and as accurate as is possible when setting up a new public body innovative in its function. Practical details were clear and proved to be reasonably accurate (the timeline slipped)

The milestones and timelines had been indicated but not followed and there was little engagement as an applicant

Structure rather unclear

Were you able to discuss any part of the application process with anyone involved in the recruitment process?

The lack of response made it difficult to decide whether to submit an application, but I did nonetheless. In retrospect, it was probably a mistake.

When I was getting a bit embroiled in the process, I'd have been delighted to speak with someone. I recall I tried the 0330 number, which was all I could find, but I received a recorded message saying that number wasn't manned (I'm pretty sure that's correct) and no alternative was offered.

But they were not helpful

This opportunity was very helpful.

As suggested in the pack I made contact with the named NHS Board rep to arrange a call to discuss an application in advance of submitting an application. I received a response with an appointment for a date after the closing date and then subsequent shortlisting process. The email seemed to hint that it was presumptuous and that I may not be shortlisted

Communication was via email

I spoke with someone who was not going to be involved in the interviews

I would have had I been invited to interview

I spoke to the chair prior to my application submission

I received a rejection email and asked for feedback

I do not recall what was on offer but I felt sure that I could have reached out to the Chair, CEO or existing board members

I spoke to a past Board member and a Director, both of whom strongly encouraged me to apply.

There was a lack of information which might be relevant for deciding the accessibility and time commitments required of the post. I emailed the address in the information pack for more information on some practical aspects to aid decision making on whether to apply or not, but received no response. This was disappointing.

As I am repeating, lots of work on my part and zero feedback on the part of Sport Scotland, completely unacceptable and disrespectful.

Having served on the board previously and knowing the organisation very well I didn't feel the need to speak with anyone.

The pack contained relevant information and I was happy to proceed on that basis.

I emailed the relevant contact provided in the pack. I did not receive a response.

I did speak to a contact who is familiar with the Board but not involved in the process, so I could get an independent perspective.

This wasn't asked for

I had previously spoken

I did not realise this was an option

Didn't realise this was an option

I didn't want to appear to be canvassing

The timeline was against other priorities in my business and working life at this time so for me the timeline was too short

[Survey question at the end of this series] Please provide any comments on the previous questions

I got the impression at the interview that the panel was looking for something not in the pack - but here again I would think that as I was not appointed.

It would be helpful to express more clearly what skills, knowledge and background is being sought to avoid time-wasting.

If you invite queries by email, responses should be given

While the questions were superficially clear, it feels like you need to know the key phrases and how to express certain things in order to have a realistic chance of being appointed.

The advert gave me the impression that I need not be an academic to apply for the role. However, it does appear if I read the detail of the successful applicants correctly, that those eventually selected are indeed either supremely qualified or academics. I had thought that [board] may have been looking to appoint someone who had operational experience of heritage skills, but I believe the appointees are strategic leaders. I wish them and [the body] well nevertheless.

As a tax payer and supporter of both organisations and government the process remains opaque and curious and very different to anything that I experience in the private sector

Overall the experience was a very positive one despite not getting the role. One thing that did stick out for me though. At interview I was asked about my own personal experience of disability. I gave an answer about that my experience of this came from being an employer. I got the impression that the panel were slightly surprised by my answer and they asked a few times about my own personal experience. I could be wrong but I felt this went against me. But the application pack made clear that your experience of disability could come from a variety of routes not just lived experience.

As the position was recommended to me by the current chair, I was able to ask a number of questions about the role and the application process.

As mentioned, the 2 Part form was unexpected and caught me out! I believe I may have started by completing the second section first, and there seemed to be no way to marry it all up, so I started again. I also focused on what I had to offer, concentrating on what they'd get if they selected me - e.g. the information they didn't already have to hand. The feedback suggested I should instead have read the [body's] Annual reports and demonstrated in my application that I had done so. There were some added, specific types of experience that they would have liked from candidates, but it was stressed that this wasn't essential. I'm now wondering if in fact it was?

The two stage approach was over complicated.

The questions in the application were very specific, took a lot of effort to answer, and they did not allow the applicant to fully describe their expertise and interest in the role. It seemed to be that this would take place in the presentation and interview if one was selected for this. I was not and hence feel that I missed out on an exciting opportunity.

A very long process

I am not sure how many people applied, if there was a ranking and did not receive any feedback, just a standard letter

The Chair of the Board got in touch to help clarify the application and interview process after I had expressed interest. I understand this happened with all candidates, not just me! It was useful to understand the format of answers that would align with expectations.

I think that it is a model of good practice

Process was clearly set out with good links to key documents etc. Process also included recruitment timetable which was very helpful.

I found the application process really difficult

There was some uncertainty as to whether my application was complete. I received an email saying that it was not complete, even though previous messages had said that it was complete.

After reading the required skills and attributes required of the individual that the Board would like to appoint I felt that my Knowledge, background and previous experience made me and ideal candidate for the role. It also mentioned that they were looking to create a diverse Board with members from outwith the NHS environment which I also have. I was surprised that I was not contacted or invited for an interview.

There was a long wait between applications and interview

It feels disproportionate to require detailed personal statements from candidates when the bar for shortlisting is clearly very high - candidates put in a huge amount of thought, spending 3-5 hours on submission, and receive a short rejection in response.

One feels that the post is predestined.

I applied for a role on an online form, but was rejected without interview or contact. I do not know why I was rejected so cannot comment on whether the process was robust. I believe I am suitable for this type of role but I have a personal bias and may not be aware of all the facts.

discussion with chair was of value

I got a straight rejection, and reached out for feedback and was ignored!!!

To tackle under presentation , criteria needs to reflect on potential rather experience. There has been an historically under representation from minority groups due to the opportunities denied systematically. some individuals are recycled in multiple position to reflect fair representation

Was the first stage of assessment (i.e. application) relevant to the skills, knowledge and experience outlined in the applicant pack?

Difficult to be certain. I felt that I was a good fit for the role, which was the reason I applied. However, I was disappointed not to be invited for an interview, and did not receive any feedback.

I'm not sure as I thought my knowledge and experience did meet what was required but didn't get an interview. I assume others had more relevant knowledge etc. that does conflict with my thoughts as to how much 'non executive' experience is valued vs experience relevant to the public body. It doesn't lead to a fresh or different approach in my opinion.

There was not in my view sufficient emphasis on the governance role.

No.

I can't comment on this as the first stage of assessment methodology is not disclosed to candidates as far as I can see.

It wasn't entirely clear whether the answer required was purely based on competencies, on outcomes or through a narrative of the activities undertaken.

skill were more executive than board level e.g. IT and 'lived experience'

I didn't get past the first stage so I don't know

I did query one thing with the chair. On reading the pack it seemed to suggest that you needed experience of Northern Ireland and Scotland but she clarified that this was not the case. This could have been clearer.

I'd say it was clear - but, as mentioned, having sought and received feedback, now I'm not so sure.

Please see my comments from the last section

I am unsure because no details were passed on to me

As mentioned previously I felt that I had the required knowledge and skills for this role

See previous comments also. I felt that the two varied a lot and the questions were somewhat confusing. I would have preferred simple, to the point, questions with a guidance statement beneath each one. If specific examples are required a clear, simple request re this would have been helpful, e.g. please include an example of when you showed leadership at a strategic level - please include a lot of detail.

The appointment was related to leadership in supporting change. My whole career has been focussed on being successful in this arena and I have a strong history in health and the public sector. I didn't understand why I hadn't at least been shortlisted

I found it hard to share my experience based on the questions asked.

Yes - but this misses the point. The advert stressed that [the body] were looking for a diverse board, including younger members. The questions were framed in such a way as to give a clear advantage to more experienced, older, candidates. I don't mind this, but I would appreciate consistency of message and a clear idea from the outset of who the role is aimed at - no young person could have met the criteria.

Again a real opportunity to put unrestricted experience and examples would be so much better instead of very limited skills randomly selected.

A ned on the board who I spoke to about the role believed I had great experience but because I don't have Scottish government experience they believed that was the reason I was excluded in the first review. The government sift had a different view to the board members.

It was a clear and simple form to complete. I liked the fact that word count was quite limited as this made the process efficient and forced me to be concise.

See my previous comment - it is too clumsy and outdated

I think the first stage was relevant however I'm not sure the way that applications are assessed is known so you can ensure that you are filling in the assessment with to enable your strengths and experience to be valued correctly.

Decided not to proceed

Can be challenging when specific areas of expertise are required and your skill base has been developed in a broad role with accountability for all of these aspects. Perhaps I need to hone my writing skills but it felt almost contrived writing about these in silos

It is impossible to know if the process was relevant to the skills because there was no feedback on the application review process.

Clear alignment with criteria and skills, knowledge and experience being tested.

Was the second stage of assessment (i.e. interview and other assessment methods such as presentation, role play, board paper exercise or similar) relevant to the skills, knowledge and experience outlined in the applicant pack? If you were not invited to interview, please feel free to comment your thoughts on the proposed assessment in the applicant pack.

I fulfilled the required criteria but was not asked to interview and I would really like to understand how I can better my application for future attempts. I believe I have a considerable amount to offer [the body] and am committed to trying again.

I was not invited to interview but the process sounded reasonable and appropriate

Again the lack of opportunity to inform the interview panel of the relevant experience and knowledge one has was a disadvantage in fully outlining suitability for the role

The assessment methods were very closely aligned with what I imagine the role requires.

Was not invited to an interview

I was interviewed

The board paper review didn't feel too relevant and slightly contrived. The question was too open ended. Might have been better to ask for an opening statement about a particular issue

No details of second stage assessment were given at application stage

It wasn't too clear what to expect from the panel it would have been of value to know if questions required preparation.

I don't have an answer to this and I would rather leave it blank. I don't like being forced to answer things so I default to strongly disagree when forced to answer.

I was not invited to interview so can't really comment

The process did not allow me to provide my considerable expertise in education and assessment.

I was not invited to second stage and received no feedback on the application. The appointments are not a surprise and reflect a sector led approach to selection, rather than the broader principles and skills associated with good governance and strategic decision making. This leads to the conclusion that those shortlisting take a traditional and outdated approach to the assessment of applications and look for those who 'speak their language' in the way in which the questions/ evidence is assessed.

I've stated earlier in the feedback that the application was relative tricky to respond to and I found it very time consuming. I didn't request feedback but some offer of feedback as standard to an unsuccessful application would be useful feedback and encourage candidates to apply for other appointments. I'm not sure I will apply for other public appointments, as I am concerned about the time required to fill in applications, only to be unsuccessful with no feedback offered, without me promoting it. I don't really want to hear platitudes e.g.'the pool was strong and you were close' etc.

There was a bit of confusion among the panel as to the criteria they were supposed to be asking me about so many of my questions were more relevant to the post I hadn't applied for (although was still qualified). I think this might have affected the outcome.

I was not invited and often our Surname put us in advantage position and first to be eliminated in the selection process

Not invited. Just an observation but likert scale surveys should be about a statement not a yes or no question. This whole survey requires amendment.

The Code of Practice states that, in relation to materials provided to applicants and the assessment process for appointments, The objective should be to encourage the optimum number of people to apply for positions and for people to find it a comparatively easy exercise to submit applications. Do you feel this reflects your experience?

I got the impression that the effort required for successful application was quite large.

I found that there was a clear intention in the position as advertised that they were looking for applications for a diverse group of people. Not sure how well that this intention was followed up. It would be interesting to check if the candidates called for interview reflected this intention.

I felt my cv / experience fitted the role but as I was not invited to interview perhaps it wasn't that clear - especially as I was previously interviewed for a board position which I felt was less well matched to my experience

The application was laborious and about the organisation not the applicant's skills and experience

Process will only ever be fair if completely transparent.

There was no indication on the optimum number of individuals that were encouraged to apply, nor was there any indication of the number candidates that would be shortlisted for interview.

It took a long time to complete because the questions were so specific and didn't relate to any previous applications I'd made.

It was a very tight prospectus, so don't see how that could attract a wide application base.

I am used to applying for roles and found the material appropriate however I think the approach probably puts people from more diverse backgrounds at a disadvantage.

I agree that the Code of Practice is appropriate but do feel the opportunity to provide detailed information - with a 300 word restricted response- is limiting and impacts on the applicants submission.

not an easy process or form to complete

I sent an application and a CV and received a rejection. The process was perfectly easy to do, but I cannot assess the process when I have no idea why I was rejected

The registration process and the form don't feel easy to navigate.

Not with the process questions changing. When I first opened the application it asked for a 600 word summary of my CV. I worked on this offline. On going back in that question had disappeared. Replaced by an upload your CV

The application forms are too long and take too long to complete. 300-400 words per section only finds out who can answer the question asked in a way that reflects Scottish Government policy. It does not find the best candidate for the role. It finds people who can give the answer that is sought by the question setter not the gravitas or credibility of the candidate.

I don't have an answer to this and I would rather leave it blank. I don't like being forced to answer things so I default to strongly disagree when forced to answer.

Despite being a highly experienced international lawyer and executive, whose skills and experience have been proven as beneficial in a public sector Non-executive Director role, the "preferences" expressed by Scottish public sector recruiters, and the misandry-driven Scottish Government legislation around public sector boards, make the selection of experienced male applicants unlikely and lead to the impression that such applicants are encouraged to apply so as to give the impression of fairness in the selection process.

Yes, I would say that is correct, but there is no point in encouraging applications if the end result is the same as always.

As above. It takes a long time to complete the application form to the desired number of words and then to custom tailor a cv. Time spent was in excess of 8 hours. This effort is needed for every application submitted and is discouraging

Do you feel that the feedback you received was constructive, tailored and meaningful?

I welcomed the opportunity to receive feedback. The person giving feedback did so constructively. It was meaningful in that I was told I was appointable but the differentiation between me and successful candidate was not made entirely clear. However in fairness it was a feedback session and not an appeal against the decision. See my comments re the remote nature of the interview which I think were acknowledged. One member of the panel in particular misconstrued some of my comments which I was unaware of at the time.

Extremely opaque. Left me with the belief the process was 'fixed'. I felt they simply did not want any challenge to their current approach.

I never received any feedback despite asking twice

I was a bit confused by it, as mentioned already. I was told I only sounded adequately keen. Also, that I could have mentioned certain slightly obscure specifics. Of course I could have done so, but what of all the extra

content I provided (that seemed relevant to me).

I received no feedback on my application; I received an Email thanking me for my application and stating that on this occasion I had not been selected for an interview.

It was good to have some feedback but I didn't feel that it sufficiently answered why I wasn't selected for interview. It demonstrated that they were not looking for someone like me at all, despite emphasis on the opposite, which was very disappointing. A lot of the feedback advised that they were looking for information, e.g. only examples/evidence, but the application hadn't specifically said they only wanted examples, which I felt was unfair. They mentioned looking for evidence, but by the nature of work it's not possible to provide actual evidence in an application form, only statements of work you've done, etc. Despite stating you don't have to have been a board member previously, it was also suggested that I become a board member of another organisation, which was confusing and contradictory.

No the comments did not reflect the board experience and skills detailed in the application.

Yeah the feedback was useful in being clear on what answer I hadn't done as well in at the interview.

I remain unclear as to what I could have done differently and I am aware of individuals in similar roles who appear more unsuited to their positions (I appreciate I may be biased towards myself). I would like to carry out work at this level and think I am very suited but I am no clearer about what I need to do to obtain an interview / improve my application.

I received absolutely no feedback. I was offered feedback when I heard I had been unsuccessful, which I asked for and received a follow up email that feedback would be given in due course and several months later I have not heard from anyone. An otherwise fine process slightly let down by unprofessional communication.

I did get feedback which was helpful but it did not provide any detail behind the feedback - for example I was given one suggestion to improve my application which was more examples but no further detail regarding what these examples should focus on.

Took a long time to receive feedback compared to other roles applied for. Feedback was a little generic and did not go into detail.

Feedback was disappointing. I had to chase it twice, received it 3 months after my interview, and found it very mechanistic.

Yeah the feedback was useful in being clear on what answer I hadn't done as well in at the interview.

I felt that the initial feedback was very much a 'standard' response with limited specific information on interview performance. As such I have sought further direct feedback from Chair of the interview panel. As yet (some 5 months since interview) this has not been progressed despite continued communication on my part to arrange a suitable meeting.

Since 2022 the Code of Practice for Ministerial Appointments to Public Bodies in Scotland includes the principle of Respect to applicants. Please provide any comments in relation to how you experienced the principle of Respect during the appointments process.

Everyone involved was respectful, helpful and appropriately challenging

Not applicable. I was rejected without comment thus no opportunity for respect or disrespect.

I felt respected

I was told last the time that I would be contacted should a role become available or about other roles, to date I have had no contact.

It would be respectful to let applicants who are unsuccessful get automatic feedback on why

Unfortunately due to the lack of feedback, I do not feel particularly respected so I do not feel that principles of respect have been followed during the process.

Sadly lacking in totality.

The principles were upheld fully

The Interview Panel were very respectful and as well as conducting a thorough assessment of my knowledge, skills and experience their approach meant that this was enjoyable.

Cannot recall seeing any mention of the option for 'feedback' in the process (?)

I did not experience the principle of respect, sadly.

I actually felt quite disrespected at the end of the interview process. I was asked a challenging question about the Nolan Principles, and I felt that this was just asked to catch me out.

The time taken to provide helpful and meaningful feedback. The approach by the interview panel.

Wasn't invited for interview

Please describe one (or more) positive aspect of the process for you.

I can't think of one.

I was put at ease by the panel during the interview.

Completing the application form wasn't too onerous

It came across as appealing and interesting

Clear process with easy to follow instructions.

My application was strong enough to be selected for interview.

The information pack and website gave a good insight to the work

Online information session ahead of application was very helpful

Friendly and professional interview.

None really as I do not believe my application was properly assessed

I was persuaded to apply after the online presentation & Q&A by the public body. They seemed very open to new people and new ideas.

Being told I was appointable was a comfort. The process let me know that I can make a positive contribution as a non executive member of a college and of he boards.

Documentation was well set out - eg criteria being assessed included indicator examples and process re how this would be assessed. The interview process was a positive experience and well chaired.

Good communication

Overall, did you feel that the application process was fair and transparent?

More information on the reasons for rejection would have been appreciated by me.

As noted above left in the dark after interview. Was told the ministerial appointment process takes time which I was aware of but didn't hear back as to whether I was being put forward or not as would normally be the case.

thought it was fair and transparent but not very engaging.

Not entirely clear how I didn't meet one of the criteria

Difficult to tell without feedback

I gained no information to enable me to judge this.

It would be very helpful to know how many applicants there were & how many went forward to interview. I have had individual feedback in the past when unsuccessful and have found this to be fairly generic and unhelpful. That is the reason I didn't ask on this occasion

Difficult to tell in the absence of feedback. I am not convinced that the marking criteria are applied in a sufficiently flexible and objective manner.

I just got the feeling that at interview I was never going to be appointed

The inflexibility on interview date was unhelpful. The lack of response about options was underwhelming.

It feels like they already know who they do/don't want, though there's nothing to confirm or deny that feeling.

The application was transparent but I have no idea why I didn't get to the interview stage.

What makes you believe that the process is not fair and transparent?

No feedback given

I was very disappointed not to have an interview and as in my earlier reply, it left me believing that there was other selection criteria that I was unaware of.

I think the pre-scrutiny trawl has the potential to produce false negatives as I have experienced in a previous application.

I don't feel I had the opportunity to outline my experience and skills instead the questions demanded evidence of operational abilities

The application pack should include minimum entry criteria for the role like an accounting qualification or a number of years in specialist roles in the [area].

I state this only because I was not able to attend on that precise date and time.

The role implies broad skills and experience would be considered but in reality in depth experience of specialists was required. The process should be more open on the skills required to be successful

I do believe the process is fair I was giving an opinion on the difficulty when you meet all of the criteria but further examples would have been beneficial. With word limits giving multiple examples can be difficult when you are covering multiple criteria required.

The correspondence post interview was confusing to me. It somehow left me with doubts rather than a straight 'you were unsuccessful'.

There were limited opportunities to indicate why I would be suitable. What I wrote is limited.

What more should the ESC be doing by way of regulation to improve the appointments process?

Don't know enough about it to make comment

Instruct organisations to promptly respond to enquiries.

Have fair approach and feedback

I can't comment on this as I've no current knowledge of how the ESC regulates appointments. For example is there any random sampling of aggregated data on appointments, any peer review of the regulatory process, and who regulates or sense checks the ESC itself?

Mandatory feedback and public scrutiny, not just appointed scrutineers and staff.

Ensuring the board is a mix of all genders.

Publish DEI figures for each role recruitment and a work plan to increase diversity.

Ensure that all requirements are clear and concise.

The ESC might request some usability testing to be conducted on the online forms. I think that could be incredibly helpful in this case. Also, reviewing the explanatory material to see if he/she/they believe it clarifies what exactly is wanted in each section, in a clear and transparent way.

I felt the pack was very clear on expectations but I would not have known about it without a personal connection. This is not about regulation really but about raising awareness of opportunities.

Provide feedback to applicants

I've been happy with the process and feel the ESC can't improve anything at this time in the way of the appointments process.

If not currently carried out I suggest that a review of the shortlisting process i.e who completes this, what criteria is being used and clear reasons why candidates are not selected for interview or appointment. In addition what is the feedback process for unsuccessful candidates and is their comments or return feedback used for future improvements to the process.

I don't have enough knowledge of the ESC to answer this question.

Please provide any other comments you may have on regulation. We would be particularly keen to receive more detail if you consider that the regulation does NOT make the process fairer and more transparent.

When looking at the successful applicants it is interesting that there are several appointees who have been of several different health boards - simply moving from one to another!

No additional comments, Regulation of the process is important.

I was very impressed that I was given feedback and that there was detail in the feedback on my application. I felt very encouraged by that and this has prompted me to pursue further roles using a similar process.

Overall this was a disappointing process with a negative outcome from an applicant with substantial experience, skills, and knowledge to be shared.

I instinctively assume that any public sector process like this will be well regulated and ethical. The fact that I have been invited to complete this question confirms my assumption is correct. Thank you.

What does the process add for the unsuccessful applicants? The regulation should make unsuccessful candidates feel the process was worthwhile by explaining the outcome. If no information is actively provided applicant like myself wonder what has regulation added to the candidate experience

It only makes it fairly if it explores why someone was appointed, and why other were rejected.

How is it regulated(?) Regulation is a wonderful concept but how is it actually put into practise in this scenario?

Fully accept that this is an important process but I think it would be regrettable if people think they have to give up their political interests to have a better chance of becoming a board member

These roles are not "jobs" in the sense of regular employment in a career. As such for applicants to be drawn from a more diverse pool, the process should possibly include earlier processes, see earlier comments

With an appointment like this, I would have liked to be informed who had been appointed.

Communication is the foundation of all good recruitment and relationships, sadly it was lacking.

Wasted enough time already

Have the interview questions checked for compliance with the Ethical Standards.

Transparency could be increased by providing feedback verbally and in writing. If an applicant has taken time and made the effort to apply and participate in the application process the panel Chair should respectfully provide the feedback in person/ on the phone as well as in writing

Thank you for taking the time to provide this feedback on the appointments process. If you have any final comments, please leave these in the box below.

It was nice to be offered an opportunity to comment

Please make it as clear and easy as possible to apply for public appointments. It certainly is desirable for as many folk as possible to consider helping in this way.

After my interview I thought it would have made sense to inform me that I was the preferred candidate to give me an opportunity to say if I had changed my mind or had any points of clarification following the interview. As it was I think names were put forward to SG with no final check in with me post interview that I was happy for my name to go forward.

I would appreciate some feedback on my application. Not sure whether I requested this at the time of applying, however would be helpful to understand why I did not proceed further in the process.

Enjoyed my interaction with the Scottish Government staff involved in the process - they were very friendly the total opposite of "faceless" - I valued this

I consider myself to be a highly educated and competent individual who very much wants to give back to society in a meaningful way. I really don't know what I am doing wrong to repeatedly miss the interview stage.

For future please consider making application questions much more clear on what you are looking for, e.g. if you only want examples then say so. Please understand that an applicant cannot provide actual evidence in an application form. Please consider disabilities more seriously and make allowances for same.

Not sure how much of this feedback is fed into any further processes or whether this is just a paper exercise

I have much to offer in terms of public service, but I'm sad to say that I've been put off applying for any further appointments.

It would have been helpful to have the full address for the interview venue. I was provided with the name of a building only and despite checking the address prior to interview found it difficult to locate the precise location. It has no meaningful external signage which would have been useful.

I would be happy to give further feedback in the future if I pursue a further appointment.

I will always be happy to assist our public services in anyway I can. My background is in advising organisations (private and public) on strategy and change, in fifty countries.

Would be good to get the feedback at some point.

Please continue to reach out to unsuccessful candidates and ask for process feedback as this is the best way to critical analyse how the process works in practice and provides opportunities for learning and adjusting SOP's to improve

Development requires feedback

I do not think this process is designed in a way that will ensure that a wide, and representative, sample of Scotland and its skills will be represented on these appointments. Experience is great but I think there is too much of some kinds in the final appointments, to the detriment of some perspectives.

Thank you for the opportunity for provide feedback on this appointments process. I have found the interview part of this process disappointing, and upsetting and left feeling frustrated as there was so much more I wanted to say and discuss but I was over so quickly. I have appreciated being about to tell you my experience. Thank you.

This was and is a role I really think I could do well, and I have the PERFECT background and experience for this position. Not even getting an interview for this job has shattered my view of the fairness of public appointments.