



HOW SEA CADETS HELPS YOUNG PEOPLE TODAY:

A summary of the evidence

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2020

**SEA
CADETS**

Contents

1. Executive summary	3
2. Cadet background	6
3. Impact	11
4. Qualitative feedback	19
5. Volunteers experience of Sea Cadets	25
6. Satisfaction and trust	31
7. Virtual Sea Cadets	33
Appendix	35
Endnotes	38

1. Executive summary

1.1 CONTEXT

At Sea Cadets, we aim to give young people the best possible start in life through nautical adventure and fun. We also want to understand the difference we make, both to continue to improve the work we do and to make the case for uniformed youth work to the wider world.

This is the first of what is hoped to be an ongoing series of annual surveys, keeping track of the experience of cadets, parents and carers, and volunteers to understand the impact of Sea Cadets.

This report draws from a mixture of the first of Sea Cadets' in-house annual surveys (with information collected in November and December 2020) alongside key findings from the most recent of a series of wellbeing surveys (completed in Feb-March 2021) called "checking-in" surveys used to keep track of the experiences of cadets and parents throughout the Covid-19 lockdowns.¹

This is built on a foundation of key data from a series of surveys of cadets, parents and carers, and volunteers, designed and analysed by the independent charity sector think tank and consultancy New Philanthropy Capital (NPC). In cases where questions were repeated between the NPC survey and the 2020 annual survey, the results from the NPC questions were used as a baseline to help identify where there has been a change in people's experiences over this time.

1.2 KEY FINDINGS

Results are broadly consistent with the 2017 NPC survey, with cadets, volunteers and parents reporting a positive experience of their time at Sea Cadets. Whilst there is a slight drop in overall levels of satisfaction, the overall reported impact remains broadly similar and overall experience highly positive.

'The best thing about cadets is the opportunities that come out. Starting from the age of only 10, you can go camping, boating, have fun unit nights, have fun cadet unit weekends. I like the amount of opportunity that comes with cadets and the skills and qualifications that can benefit me in the future.'

16-year-old female cadet, Northern Area

'It's a family so I have two now!'

10-year-old male cadet, London Area

This was somewhat surprising given that this data was collected during a period of extreme disruption due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Especially when combined with the findings of the 2021 "checking-in" surveys this suggests a model of youth work that is highly robust, able to adapt to changing circumstances whilst continuing to provide a positive impact for young people.

Cadets come from all walks of life with particularly strong representation from looked-after young people, young carers, and autistic young people. It is also at least representative of young people from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, disabled young people, and LGBTQ+ young people, however it does under represent non-white ethnic minority communities. (For further information on why MSSC chose to use this specific language regarding ethnicity, see Current language used in relation to ethnicity in the methodology section of the appendix on page 37)

Generally, cadets have an equally good experience no matter their background, although LGBTQ+ cadets and disabled cadets showed lower levels of satisfaction, suggesting that these may be groups in need of some additional support.

Feedback from volunteers and, parents and carers, generally reinforced the positive impact reported by cadets, with volunteers having a firmer review of the longer-term impact of the model in areas such as education and employment. More broadly, volunteers felt well supported by the organisation to

deliver effective interventions for cadets, with strong evidence that this has improved since the last time data was collected (2017).

1.3 VALIDATED SCALES

This report uses a mixture of scales developed by prior research with Sea Cadets, new measures developed in-house and some validated scales.

Validated scales are externally recognised methods of recording people's experiences that have previously been tested elsewhere. While appendix 1.4 provides more detail as to how they are calculated, this section briefly outlines the meaning of the score.

Net promoter score: measures overall levels of satisfaction giving a score between -100 and +100. This is used to understand both how positive people feel about their experience of Sea Cadets overall and how likely they are to recommend it to others.

ONS wellbeing questions: these are a set of questions used by the ONS to measure people's mental wellbeing, with each question scored from 0 to 10.

General self-efficacy short scale: this is a set of questions used to measure someone's self-efficacy, essentially their ability to understand their priorities and act on these priorities, It is scored from 1-4 with 4 demonstrating a higher level of self-efficacy.

Charity Commission trust scale: this is a question the Charity Commission used to measure the level of trust by the general population in different organisations or types of individual e.g. charities and doctors. It is scored from 0 to 10.

Experian Mosaic tool: this is a database maintained by Experian which cross-references a range of demographic data to provide information about the economic background and behaviour of people based on their postcode.



2. Cadet background

2.1 SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

	CADETS SURVEY	PARENTS SURVEY	WHOLE SEA CADETS (12/02/21)	GENERAL POPULATION
Less well off ²	36.8%	38%	44.1%	39.17%
Bottom 20% household income	15.9%	15.8%	20.1%	19.87%
Left behind area	22.6%	16.7%	24.1%	27% ³
Free school meals	11.8%	–	–	14.1% ⁴

Cadets are drawn from a range of different socio-economic backgrounds, with a broadly representative presence of cadets from less well-off backgrounds.

Cadets from disadvantaged backgrounds tended to show a higher rate of satisfaction in Sea Cadets than their peers. We see the greatest difference when comparing cadets who received free school meals (NPS 62) with cadets with no marginalised background (NPS 47). More broadly, cadets from disadvantaged backgrounds reported similar levels of impact on the different core measures.

This strongly suggests that Sea Cadets provides a high quality of service to young people from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds, and young people from those backgrounds are likely to find Sea Cadets particularly rewarding/engaging.

‘Being able to be independent. I am comfortable with leaving home for weekends or a week.’

15-year-old, home-schooled female cadet, response to what is best about Sea Cadets

The schools cadets attend are broadly representative of the population as a whole, with a slight underrepresentation of private/fee paying schools, and a higher proportion of home-schooled young people than the general population.

Given that many of the adventurous activities e.g. boating provided by Sea Cadets are generally seen as out of reach of young people from less privileged backgrounds, this strong representation of both cadets who attend state schools, and those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds should be seen as highly positive. Similarly, the positive representation from amongst home-schooled young people should also be seen positively as this is a group often excluded from organised youth activity.

‘Opportunities to do fun activities such as boating which you wouldn't really get to do if you weren't in Sea Cadets.’

14-year-old male cadet who attends a state school and whose household is in the bottom 20% of national income

Table: Place of education

SCHOOL	CADETS SURVEY	GENERAL POPULATION
State school	67.9%	93%
Sixth form college	8.8%	
Further education college	7.9%	
Faith school	4.8%	
Other ⁵	2.2%	
Private school (including fee-paying public schools)	3.4%	6.5%
Home-schooled	2.1%	Approx. 0.9%
Don't know	1.7%	
Don't go to school	1%	

2.2 LOOKED-AFTER CHILDREN AND YOUNG CARERS

	CADETS SURVEY	GENERAL POPULATION
Looked-After Children	6.5% ⁶	0.7% ⁷
Young Carers	6.6%	Approx. 5% ⁸

‘Meeting new cadets which are like a second family and going on courses to learn new skills which I hope will help me in my future.’

16-year-old looked-after male cadet, Northern Area, response to what is best about Sea Cadets

‘I love the boating, also the courses that are available are very cool because they help with confidence, making friends and qualifications leading to a good job.’

13-year-old young carer female, Sutton, response to what is best about Sea Cadets

Looked-after children and young carers are groups which, based on reports from local units, Sea Cadets has previously believed it had a particularly strong representation. The data strongly bears this out, identifying that both communities are significantly overrepresented compared to the general population.

Both groups showed reported impact in line with other Sea Cadets. Looked-after children reported slightly higher levels of satisfaction than their peers, while young carers showed levels of satisfaction in line with their peers.

We also looked at the levels of caring responsibility for young carers, which broadly showed that cadets had a wide variety of caring responsibilities, including a large minority with very high levels of caring responsibility, including 10% reporting they delivered more than 35 hours of care a week.

Given that both these groups are often seen as being hard to both reach and sustain engagement with, due to the significant barriers they face in accessing support, it is really exciting to see this as an area where Sea Cadets has been able to have a sizeable presence.

Further work is planned to look at why Sea Cadets has been able to so effectively engage with these harder to support groups.

2.3 NON-WHITE ETHNIC MINORITIES

	CADETS SURVEY	WHOLE SEA CADETS (12/02/21)	GENERAL POPULATION	ALL VOLUNTEERS (12/02/21)
Non-white ethnic minorities	10.7%	8%	31.3% ⁹	2%

As was already known to be the case from the administrative data, Sea Cadets has a lower level of representation of non-white ethnic minority cadets than the general population.

Interestingly, while representation of volunteers in other marginalised categories was broadly in line with the general population, this is also the group where volunteers underrepresented the general population. This suggests one of the reasons for the lower number of cadets from non-white ethnic minorities may be a lack of adult role models who have a similar experience and background to themselves.

The non-white ethnic minority cadets did however, report the same levels of satisfaction and overall positive impact as their peers. In addition, a deep dive of open field/qualitative responses for this group showed no deviation from their peers.

‘Seeing my friends and being in an environment where I feel wanted and respected’.

11-year-old male non-white ethnic minority cadet, London Area, responding to what is best about Sea Cadets

Brought together, this suggests that the challenge for Sea Cadets is predominately one of effective recruitment. If non-white ethnic minority young people join the Sea Cadets, they have as good an experience as their peers and report as positive an impact with no sign of facing any discrimination or barriers. The challenge is finding ways to engage those communities and give them the opportunity to become cadets.

2.4 DISABILITY¹⁰

	CADETS SURVEY	GENERAL POPULATION OF UNDER 18s	VOLUNTEERS SURVEY
Disability	8.2%	7% ¹¹	12.9%
Autistic spectrum condition	3.2%	Approx. 1% ¹²	1%

Disabled cadets are approximately as common as in the general population, again suggesting an effective model for reaching out to young people who are often excluded from mainstream youth work.

While this level of base engagement is very strong, it should however be noted that disabled cadets reported significantly lower levels of satisfaction (NPS 37) than either cadets as a whole (NPS 49), or cadets with no marginalised characteristics (NPS 47). This suggests that this is a group that is in need of additional support to make the most of what Sea Cadets has to offer.

Cadets were also asked about their specific impairments resulting in one particular group standing out. 3.2% of cadets reported they had autistic spectrum conditions, over three times the national average.¹³

‘The sense of community we build together.’

17-year-old autistic cadet, South West Area, in response to what is best about Sea Cadets

Given this is a community that is often seen as incredibly hard to engage in ongoing youth work this is not only a particularly meaningful finding but an area we hope to expand on in the future.

While the number of autistic volunteers was lower than cadets it was still in line with the general population – which again, given this is a group that is often excluded from wider society, suggests some successes in creating an attractive volunteering environment for autistic adults.

2.5 GENDER

GENDER	CADETS SURVEY	WHOLE SEA CADETS ¹⁴	ALL VOLUNTEERS	VOLUNTEERS
Male	55.2%	63%	60%	61.1%
Female	43%	37%	40%	38%
Agender	0.1%	–	–	–
Gender Fluid	0.5%	–	–	–
Transgender Male	0.7%	–	–	0.1%
Transgender Female	–	–	–	0.1%
Other	0.4%	–	–	0.3%

While predominantly male, Sea Cadets has a large minority of female cadets. Male and female cadets reported similar levels of satisfaction and impact.

The survey itself was generally representative of the population of volunteers and cadets as a whole.

2.6 SEXUALITY^{16 17}

SEXUALITY	CADETS SURVEY	UK GENERAL POPULATION 2018 ¹⁸	VOLUNTEERS SURVEY
Asexual	0.7%	–	–
Bisexual	7.6%	0.9%	0.16%
Hetrosexual	86.4%	97%	88.1%
Homosexual	3.3%	1.4%	3.06%
Other	2.1%	0.6%	0.6%

Cadets were disproportionately likely to identify with a non-heterosexual sexuality compared to the general population. This suggests that Sea Cadets is in a good position for reaching out to and initially engaging these groups.

However, the satisfaction of LGBTQ+ cadets (NPS 33) was markedly below that of the general cadet population (NPS 49). This suggests while recruitment of LGBTQ+ young people is something Sea Cadets does well, more work may be needed to make the environment fully engaging and inclusive for LGBTQ+ young people.

LGBTQ+ cadets also showed lower levels of self-efficacy than cadets as a whole, with an overall score of 2.4, compared to 2.9 for cadets overall- the only

marginalised group that showed a significant deviation from the average self-efficacy score. Without a baseline it's hard to know whether they are receiving less support in developing self-efficacy than other groups or merely have a greater need for support in developing it; but in either case it suggests work that builds a young person's self-efficacy is likely highly important for this cohort.

A deep dive of the open field/qualitative questions of LGBTQ+ was done to see if this could determine some of the causes for the low score; however, they had broadly similar patterns to other cadets.

2.7 CHANGING EXPERIENCES

Have you experienced any of the following?

Feeling anxious or lonely	38%
Bullying or abuse	29.2%
Getting in trouble at school	19.9%
Getting in trouble with the police	2%

A large minority of cadets reported feeling anxious or lonely, getting in trouble at school, bullying or abuse, suggesting that support targeting groups with these experiences may be particularly worthwhile.

While a relatively small number of cadets reported getting in trouble with the police, considering the number of Sea Cadets this is still a relatively high number of young people, suggesting a cohort with more complex needs that could be targeted for specific support.



3. Impact

Generally, the impact cadets report is in line with trends from prior surveys, with a slight tendency towards being lower than previously (which given the disruption of Covid-19 is unsurprising).

Cadets tend to report strongest outcomes around building resilience and skills related to communication, but have seen a general decline in outcomes related to future careers or schooling. This change may be due to the very different circumstances of the prior year, where the isolation and stresses of Covid-19 and the resulting lockdown have led to a greater focus on personal resilience and the ability to communicate in difficult circumstances.

While there was general consensus across all stakeholders, volunteers are more likely to report higher impact around outcomes related to making a long-term difference in young people's outcomes, such as the likelihood of them getting a job.

There could be two possible interpretations to this. It could suggest that volunteers, having seen multiple cadets travel through the system, are more likely to understand the long-term difference the cadet model makes (instead of seeing just a brief snapshot of the current status quo like parents or cadets); or alternatively, given they are also deliverers of the service, it could suggest a bias due to being directly involved in service delivery.

Given the other research into the Sea Cadets model – particularly the multi-generational independently delivered research My LegaSea, which looked at the long-term impact of the Sea Cadets model, and suggests there is a long-term impact on people's life opportunities – it seems more likely that volunteers are seeing the holistic picture of the impact on cadets over the longer term.

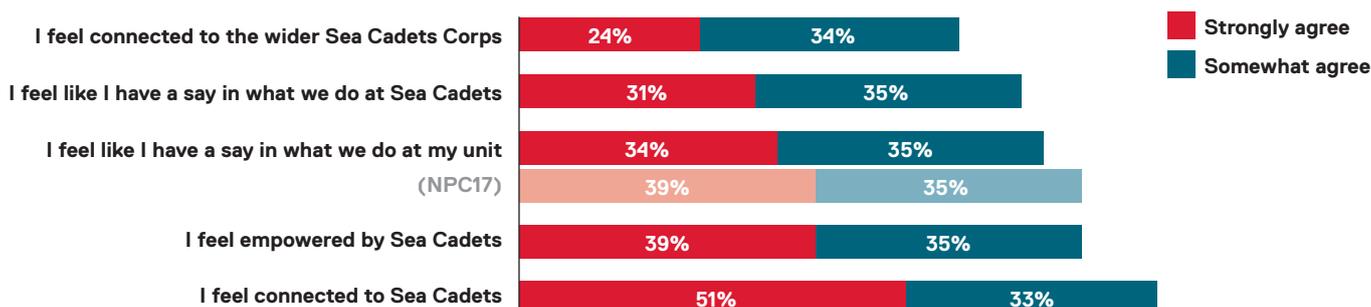
CONSENSUS ACROSS STAKEHOLDERS

MSSC has surveyed cadets, parents and guardians, and volunteers about their experiences during 2020. For many measures there was a significant degree of consensus between these groups. To avoid repetition in cases where there is only a small variance between the different groups (under 10%) this report provides only the figure for cadets (as those with the most direct lived experience) with a note of which groups that aligns with. Results are included in full where there is significant difference between the different stakeholders.

3.1 EMPOWERING CADETS

'I love the social aspect of it, and I feel empowered to do what I want in life, no matter what stops me.'

11-year-old female cadet, Southern Area, answering what is best about Sea Cadets

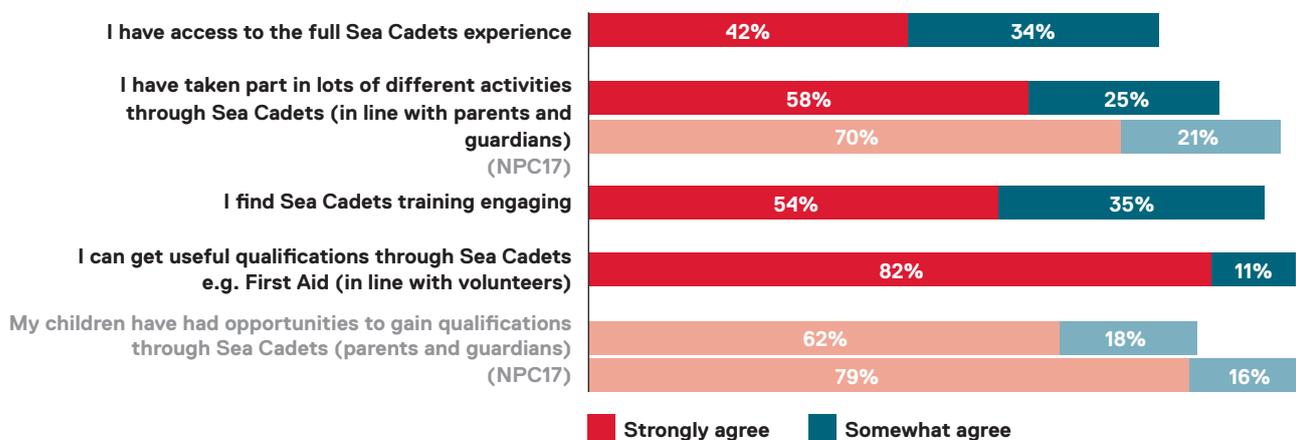


Cadets generally felt highly empowered by and connected to Sea Cadets.

3.2 THE SEA CADETS EXPERIENCE

‘All of the amazing experiences I've had on camps and spending time on unit nights having a great time with my friends’

16-year-old female cadet, Southern Area, answering what is best about Sea Cadets

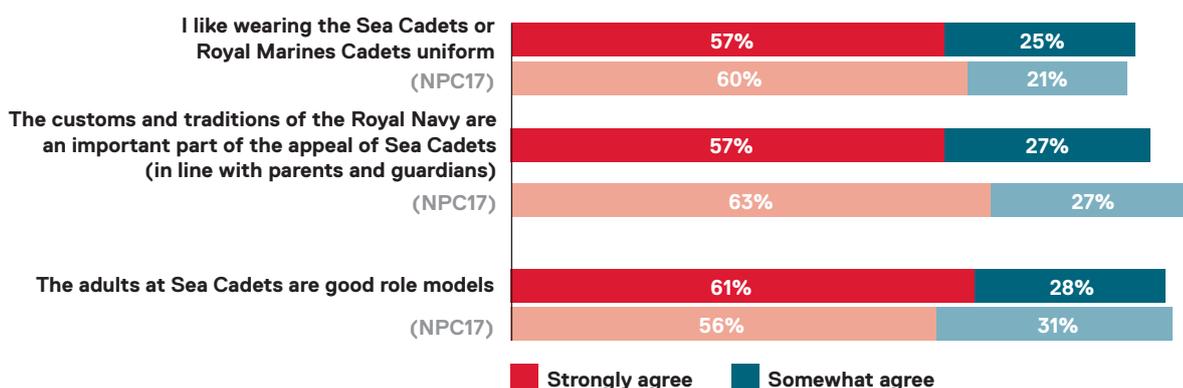


The response to the Sea Cadets Experience was overwhelmingly positive. Interestingly, this includes an overwhelming view among cadets and volunteers (and still a firm view among parents) that useful qualifications are gained – suggesting that not only does the experience seem positive but that it leads to useful skills for later life.

3.3 CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS

‘My favourite thing is boating but I love the history of the Royal Navy, ranks and rates etc.’

16-year-old male cadet, South West Area, answering what is best about Sea Cadets

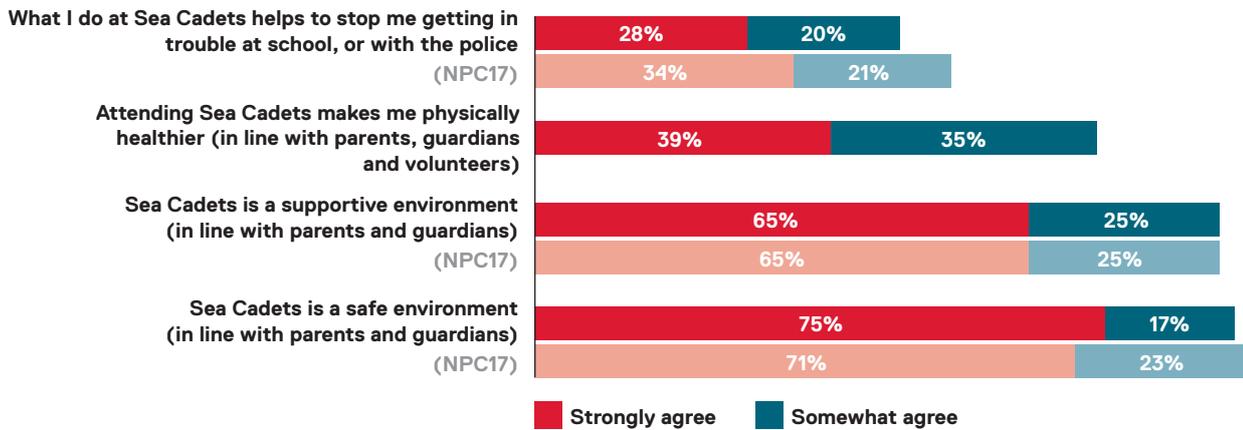


The customs and traditions of the Royal Navy remain an important part of young people’s experiences, and this has remained consistent with the benchmarks set by the NPC survey.

3.4 HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING

‘Something fun and healthy to do on nights I would normally be on technology’

14-year-old male cadet, Northern Area, answering what is best about Sea Cadets

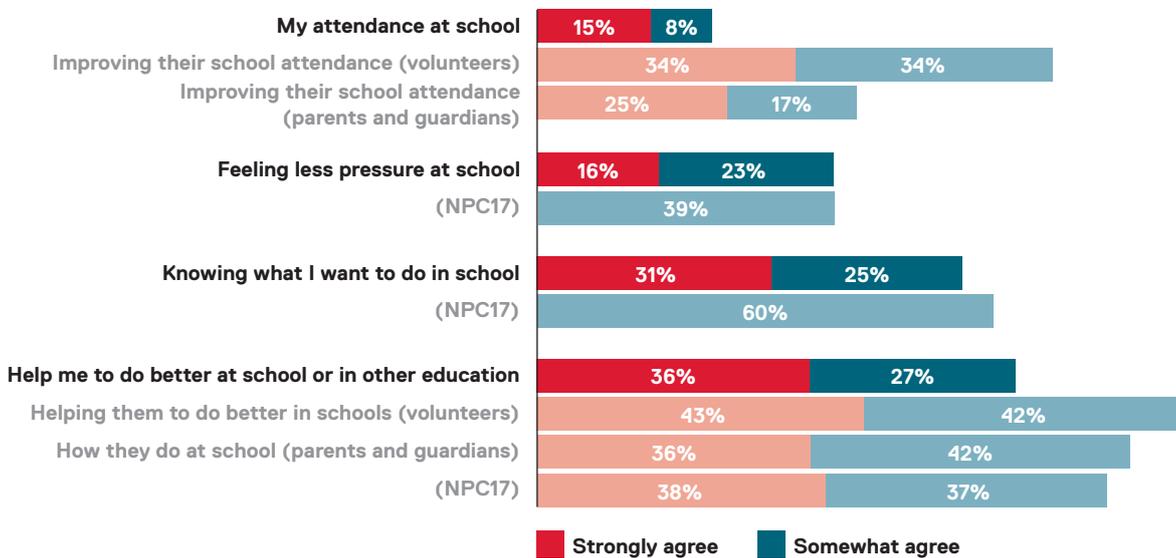


Transitioning to an almost entirely online platform for 2020 brought significant new challenges in creating a safe and supportive environment. Results in this area remain consistently high despite this, which suggests a particularly robust support network for young people and safeguarding functions.

3.5 FORMAL EDUCATION¹⁹

‘You can easily get some good qualifications under your belt and socialise, which is good’

15-year-old questioning, non-binary cadet, Eastern Area, answering what is best about Sea Cadets



Cadets were much less likely to report an impact on their formal education than in other categories.

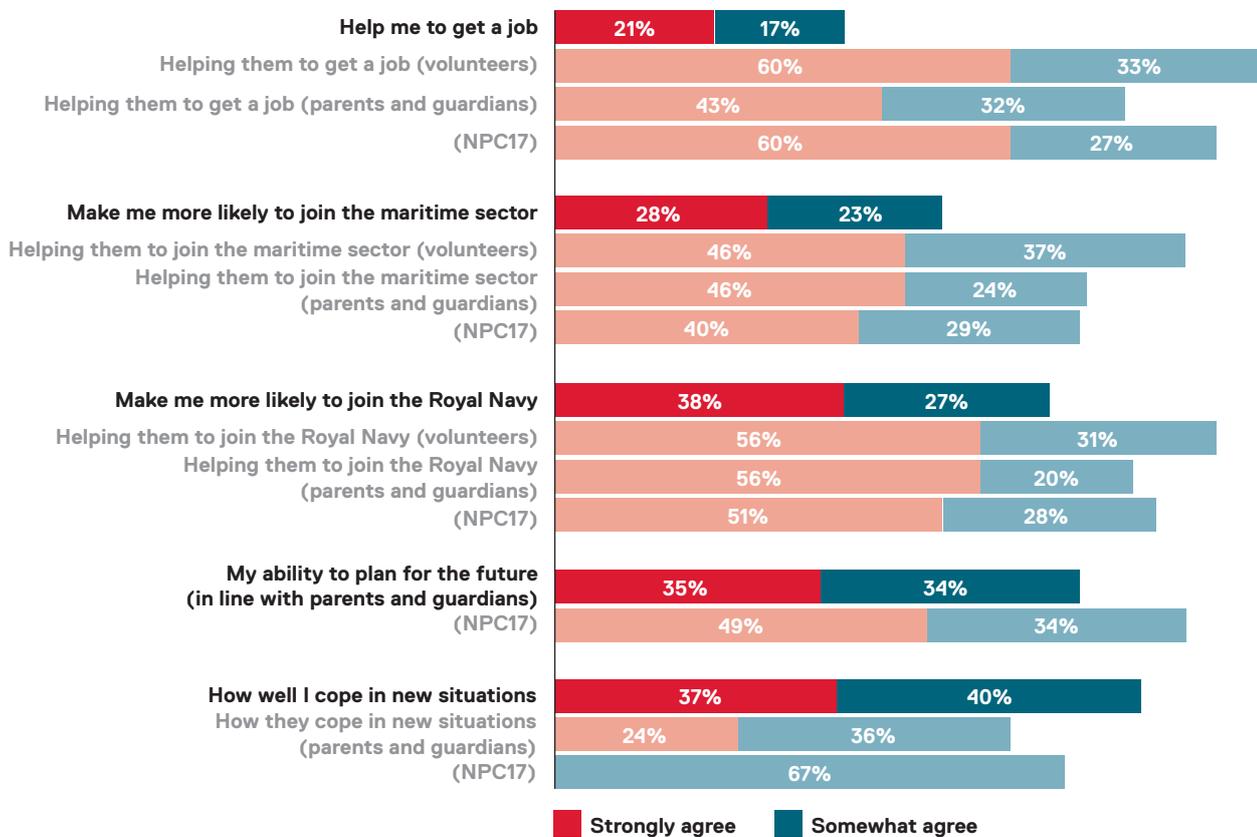
The uptick in cadets reporting that Sea Cadets had helped them feel less pressure at school is interesting and may suggest somewhat of an insulating effect from the additional stresses of the pandemic and lockdown.

Volunteers and, to a lesser extent, parents generally saw a stronger impact than the cadets on young people's formal education.

3.6 FUTURE PROSPECTS

‘The fact that it is engaging and it helps me to get qualifications that will help to get me a job in the navy’

15-year-old male cadet, Southern Area answering what is best about Sea Cadets



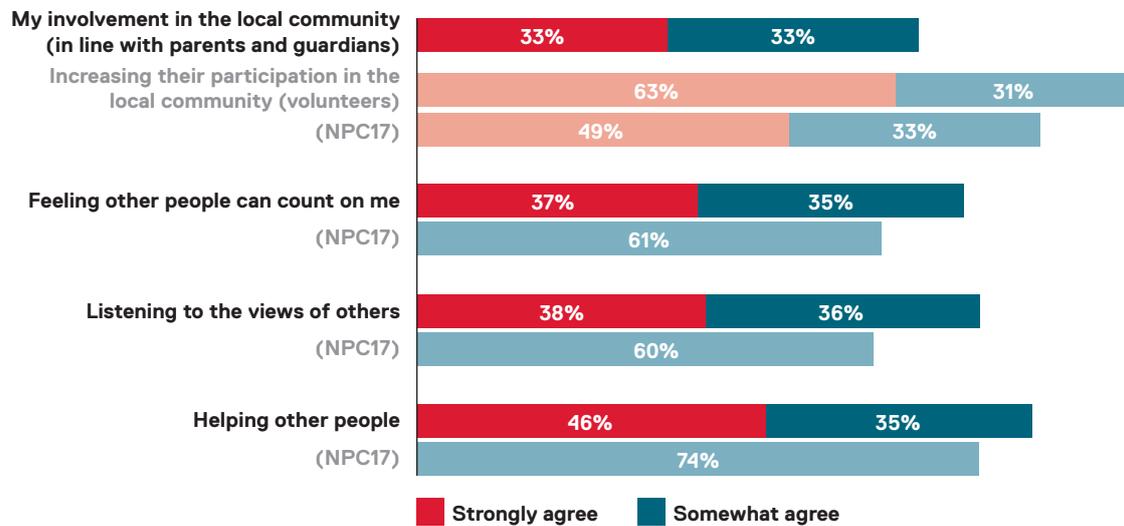
This is the area where there has been both the biggest decline since the last NPC survey and some of the least strong results. Interestingly, the main place where there’s been an increase has been in how cadets cope with new situations, again suggesting transferable skills in terms of responding to the current external circumstances.

This may in part reflect the differing nature of service delivery over the last year (due to Covid-19), with cadets perceiving virtual activities as less inherently linked to developing a career than face-to-face activities. Volunteers and, to a lesser extent, parents and carers generally had a more positive view of the impact on future prospects than cadets.

3.7 SOCIAL ACTION

‘Helping the community and helping others. But also doing things it's like my second family’

12-year-old female cadet, Southern Area, answering what is best about Sea Cadets

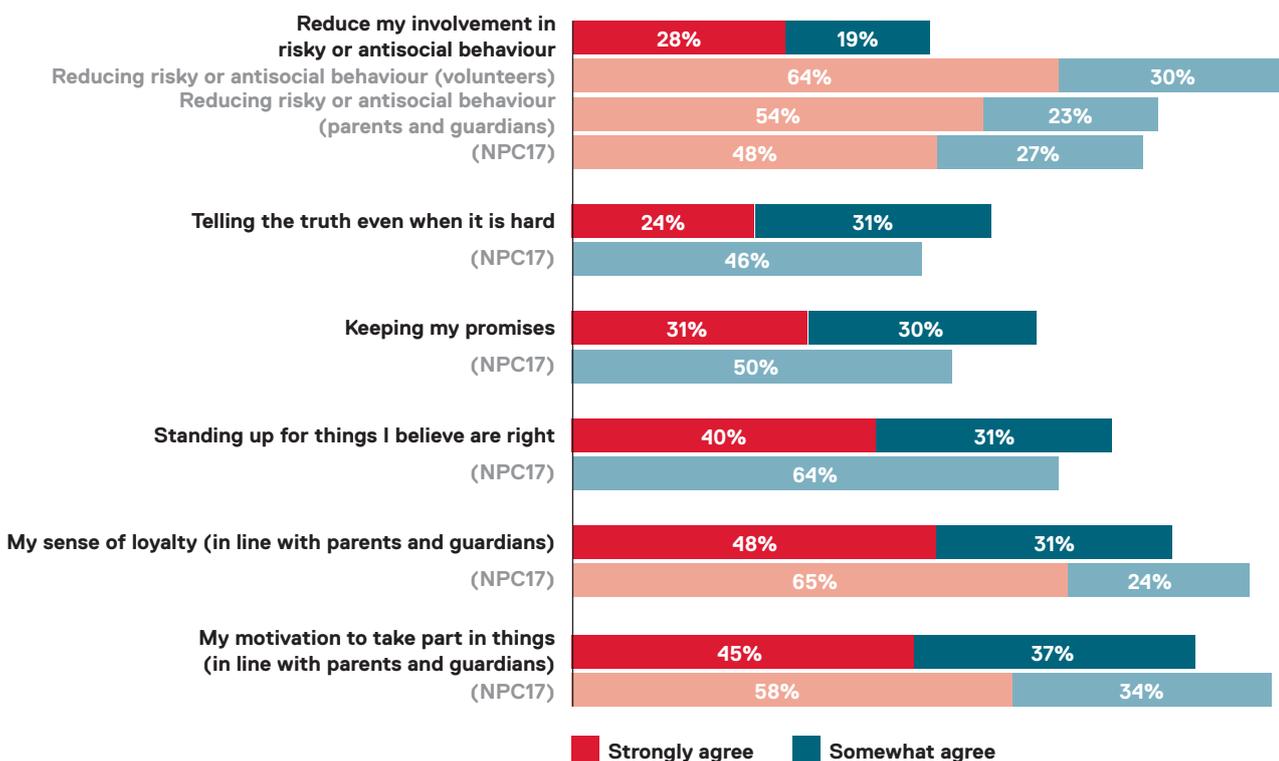


Volunteers generally had a stronger view of the impact of Sea Cadets in improving a young person’s engagement in the local community than cadets or parents and carers.

3.8 VALUES

‘It shows compassion and respect. This can help in later life and help me learn many life skills’

14-year-old male cadet, Eastern Area, answering what is best about Sea Cadets

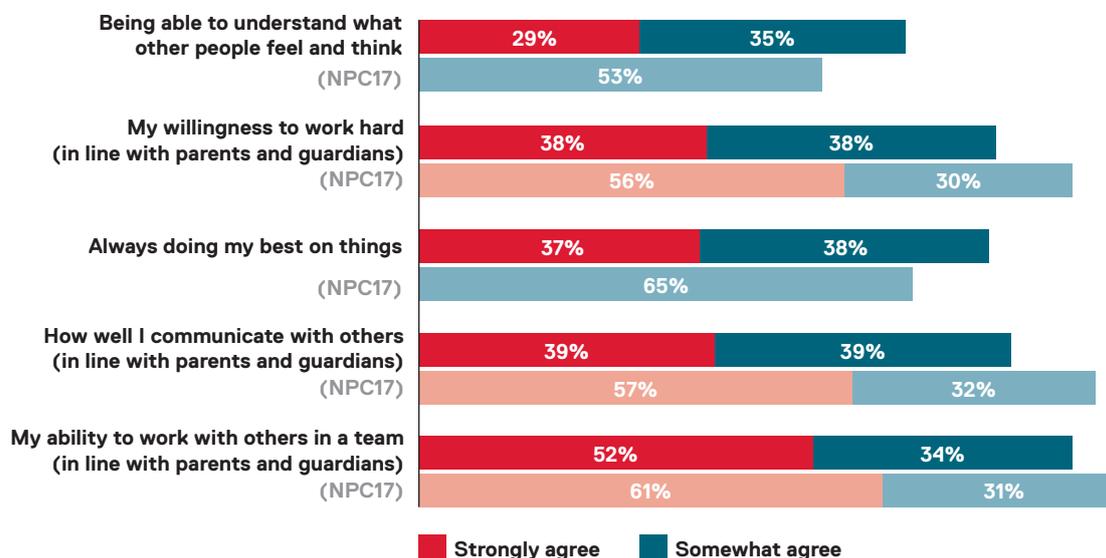


Volunteers and, to a lesser extent, parents and carers have a significantly higher view than cadets that Sea Cadets made young people less at risk of antisocial behaviour.

3.9 PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

‘The best thing about Sea Cadets to me is: that I have somewhere to go every week to gain confidence and discipline. I struggle a lot with confidence and discipline because I’m always anxious and I need the discipline to get work done at school and home.’

15-year-old male cadet, South West Area, answering what is best about Sea Cadets



Outcomes relating to personal development remained in line with the NPC baseline and showed very high levels of consistency between cadets and parents and carers.

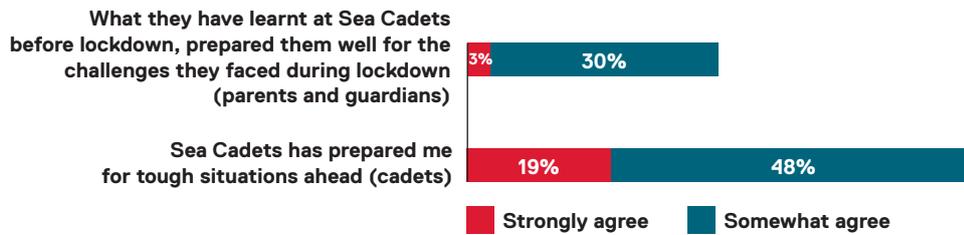
3.10 WELLBEING

	ALL CADETS	LGBTQ+	DISABILITY
Overall how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?	6.99	5.86	6.34
Overall to what extent do you feel that the things you do in your life are worthwhile?	7.13	6.03	6.49
Overall how happy did you feel yesterday?	6.85	5.72	6.25
On a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 is not at all and 10 is completely overall how happy did you feel yesterday?	7.65	— ²⁰	7.56
On a scale where 0 is not at all anxious and 10 is completely anxious, how anxious did you feel yesterday? ²¹	6.56	5.12	5.56

Generally, wellbeing levels were consistent across cadets of different backgrounds. However, LGBTQ+ and disabled cadets showed significantly lower levels of wellbeing than the average. These are both groups who are generally associated with facing higher levels of stress, discrimination and bullying in day-to-day life and as such this is broadly reflective of lower levels of wellbeing across the general population and should not be seen as a sign of a different level of impact at Sea Cadets. It does, however, suggest this is a group where activities that benefit their wellbeing would be particularly impactful.

The 2021 “checking-in” survey also suggested a strong perceived positive impact on young people’s wellbeing across a range of different areas.

Sea Cadets has prepared cadets for tough times



The Covid-19 pandemic has created unprecedented pressure on young people. Cadets themselves seem highly confident that Sea Cadets has contributed to their resilience in the current situation, although parents were less confident in this (51% neither agreed nor disagreed). Even then a large minority of parents saw this as an area where Sea Cadets made a real difference.

3.11 SELF-EFFICACY

Using the annual survey data to examine self-efficacy both for cadets overall, and for cadets from marginalised categories, there appeared to be no substantial variance in self-efficacy between different cadets, with the exception of LGBTQ+ who showed lower levels of self-efficacy than average (2.4 v 2.9).

Drawing from the admittedly smaller sample from the 2021 “checking in survey” (which also asked cadets how long they had been in Sea Cadets) allows us to track the impact of time as a cadet on self-efficacy.

Based on the “checking in” data there appears to be no trend that spending a longer period as a cadet leads to greater self-efficacy. However, two important pieces of context need to be considered:

- The significant disruptions of the last year, which it seems reasonable to assume have caused a negative impact on young people’s self-efficacy.
- The skills identified by cadets, volunteers, and parents and carers, both within the data examined in this report and more widely (e.g. findings from My LegaSea), are generally in line with capacities which when developed, are seen as linked to self-efficacy – e.g. communication skills.

Due to this it seems a reasonable hypothesis that there may be an impact on self-efficacy but this is currently being masked by the realities of Covid-19.



4. Qualitative feedback

This section takes a deep dive into quotes and comments from cadets and parents and carers. It aims to identify core themes in the feedback to feed into wider analysis of MSSC’s work.

Cadets and parents and carers showed similar themes of interest and as such are summarised together.

4.1 CADETS

What is the best thing about Sea Cadets?

THEME	NO. OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES
Courses/education	422	29%
Making friends	338	23%
Being part of a community	187	13%
Adventurous activity/boating	188	13%
Building values/character	74	5%
New experiences	59	4%
Other	65	4%
Fun	39	3%
Working together/teamwork	39	3%
Customs and traditions/drill/Navy	49	3%
Volunteers	19	1%
Total	1479	NA²²

Cadets predominantly focused on the content of courses/education and making new friends.

‘Seeing my friends and being in an environment where I feel wanted and respected.’

11-year-old male cadet, London Area, answering what is best about Sea Cadets

‘Being open to waterborne activities I wouldn't normally be open to.’

16-year-old female cadet, South West Area answering what is best about Sea Cadets

‘All the courses available: shooting, PT [physical training], drill and waterborne activities. And the comradery followed by being part of a community.’

16-year-old male cadet, North West Area, answering what is best about Sea Cadets

Followed by being part of the community, and – effectively as a subset of courses/education – the importance of adventurous activity.

‘Having a go at things like powerboating.’

13-year-old male cadet, South West Area, answering what is best about Sea Cadets

‘Being part of something different, cadets is its own community and being surrounded by people who all want and need something different is where true bonds form. Being able to achieve so much in such a short time and experience things that most people don't get to, moulds you into the person you want to be when you age out at 18.’

16-year-old female cadet, Southern Area, answering what is best about Sea Cadets

Given the large minority of cadets who report having experienced loneliness or anxiety (38%), positive experiences reported by cadets about making friends and being part of a community are particularly interesting as it shows the Sea Cadets is delivering support that would help this group.

Interestingly, despite this being an area that cadets respond to very positively, the customs and traditions are relatively rarely spoken of as the most important thing by cadets. Similarly, volunteers/staff rarely directly mentioned these elements, suggesting these features are more enablers of what respondents see as being the best part of Sea Cadets.

What is the worst thing about Sea Cadets?

THEME	NO. OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES
Other	239	37%
Unit activities	145	23%
COVID-19	108	17%
Timings etc	43	7%
Courses	41	6%
Bullying/arguing/favouritism etc	26	4%
Communication/organisation	24	4%
Unit premises etc	16	2%
Total	642	NA

There was far less consensus around the most negative element of Sea Cadets, with many of the examples showing individual frustrations around a very specific activity or experience.

‘The old uniform (no4).’

15-year-old male cadet, Southern Area, answering what is the worst thing about Sea Cadets

‘The unit being cold.’

13-year-old female cadet, Southern Area, answering what is the worst thing about Sea Cadets

The main themes that could be identified were around unit activities/training being repetitive or less engaging.

‘Depending when and it's not often but sometimes the work we do in the unit or online is quite plain or boring’

15-year-old male cadet, Northern Area, answering what is the worst thing about Sea Cadets

Or the impact of Covid-19.

‘Not being able to go because of corona, but I know that that's not their fault.’

16-year-old female cadet, Southern Area what is the worst thing about Sea Cadets

One of the concerns expressed in the previous analysis by NPC was concerns raised by cadets about bullying, which, while only impacting a minority of cadets, was a common theme of concerns. While still present, it is now a very minor issue raised by cadets, with no unit having any more than two responses reporting bullying or favouritism and most units having no reports of it. Coupled with the high scores in the quantitative work around cadets reporting a supportive and safe environment, this suggests this is an issue that has been successfully tackled.

By far the most common comment to the “worst thing about Sea Cadets” question was “nothing/no issue”, thus reinforcing the overall positive tone of qualitative feedback from cadets.

What, if anything, would improve Sea Cadets in the future?

THEME	NO. OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES
Courses/opportunities	209	44%
Other	143	30%
Virtual	28	6%
Communication/information	25	5%
More volunteers/cadets	22	5%
Unit premises etc	24	5%
Organisation	12	3%
Funding & support	14	3%
Total	703	NA

The overwhelming theme in response to what could improve Sea Cadets in future, was around the offer of a greater diversity and range of courses and opportunities.

‘There could be more courses for junior sea cadets as there aren't loads for juniors. There could also be a national competition for swimming.’

11-year-old female cadet, South West Area, answering what could be improved

‘A lot more offshore courses available, especially overseas, as they are a really good experience especially for the younger cadets.’

17-year-old female cadet, London Area, answering what could be improved

4.2 PARENTS AND CARERS

What is the best thing about Sea Cadets?

THEME	NO. OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES
Courses/activities/opportunities	612	43%
Friends/community	424	30%
Other	264	19%
Life benefits/life skills	207	15%
New skills	130	9%
Belonging	69	5%
Support/safe	62	4%
Volunteers	53	4%
Total	1419	NA

The two themes that heavily dominated positive responses from parents and carers were access to courses/activities/opportunities.

‘Activities outside of the daily routines. Obviously the sailing but additionally the parade makes my son feel part of a team.’

50-year-old father of junior cadet, Southern Area

‘Allows my child to participate in a range of activities and be able to safely learn about risk and keeping himself safe! Has increased his confidence around trying new things and meeting new people.’

35-year-old mother of cadet, London Area

And the importance of friends/the Sea Cadets community, showing broadly similar trends to the feedback from cadets.

‘Both of my children love being at Sea Cadets even though lockdown prevented them from meeting, they have met lots of new friends and lots of new skills have been learnt.’

46-year-old mother of cadet and junior cadet, Southern Area

‘[Unit name]²³ in particular treated my boys like family when their dad died last year and I can't thank them enough’

51-year-old mother of sea cadet and Royal Marines cadet

What is the worst thing about Sea Cadets?

THEME	NO. OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES
Other	290	32%
Covid-19	217	24%
Communication/ Organisation	147	16%
Time Commitment/ Time	101	11%
Courses/ Opportunities	80	9%
Unit Premises etc	53	6%
Virtual	27	3%
Total	915	NA

Worse experiences were much less consistent, with a large number of very specific issues being raised, often linked back to a particular challenge within the unit (the bulk of the “other” category) or the impact of Covid-19.

‘Covid has obviously created an awful situation for all activities and my daughter has struggled to be motivated with the move to online.’

51-year-old father of sea cadet, Southern Area

Poor communication/organisation was also noted by a large minority of respondents. These were predominantly examples of the poor organisation

of communication within units as opposed to communication by MSSC, suggesting there may be a need for some additional support for units to engage with parents and carers more smoothly and effectively.

‘Sometimes they are late posting instructions so I don't have time to grab the items required.’

35-year-old mother of junior cadet, Eastern Area

Given the somewhat sudden transition to virtual service delivery, the fact that only 3% of responses noted virtual/digital offer as the worst thing about Sea Cadets suggests a process that parents and carers rarely found frustrating.

What, if anything, would improve Sea Cadets in the future?

THEME	NO. OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES
Other	225	35%
Courses/opportunities	161	25%
Communication/information	122	19%
Unit premises etc	49	8%
More volunteers/cadets	30	5%
Funding & support	31	5%
Organisation	12	2%
Virtual	15	2%

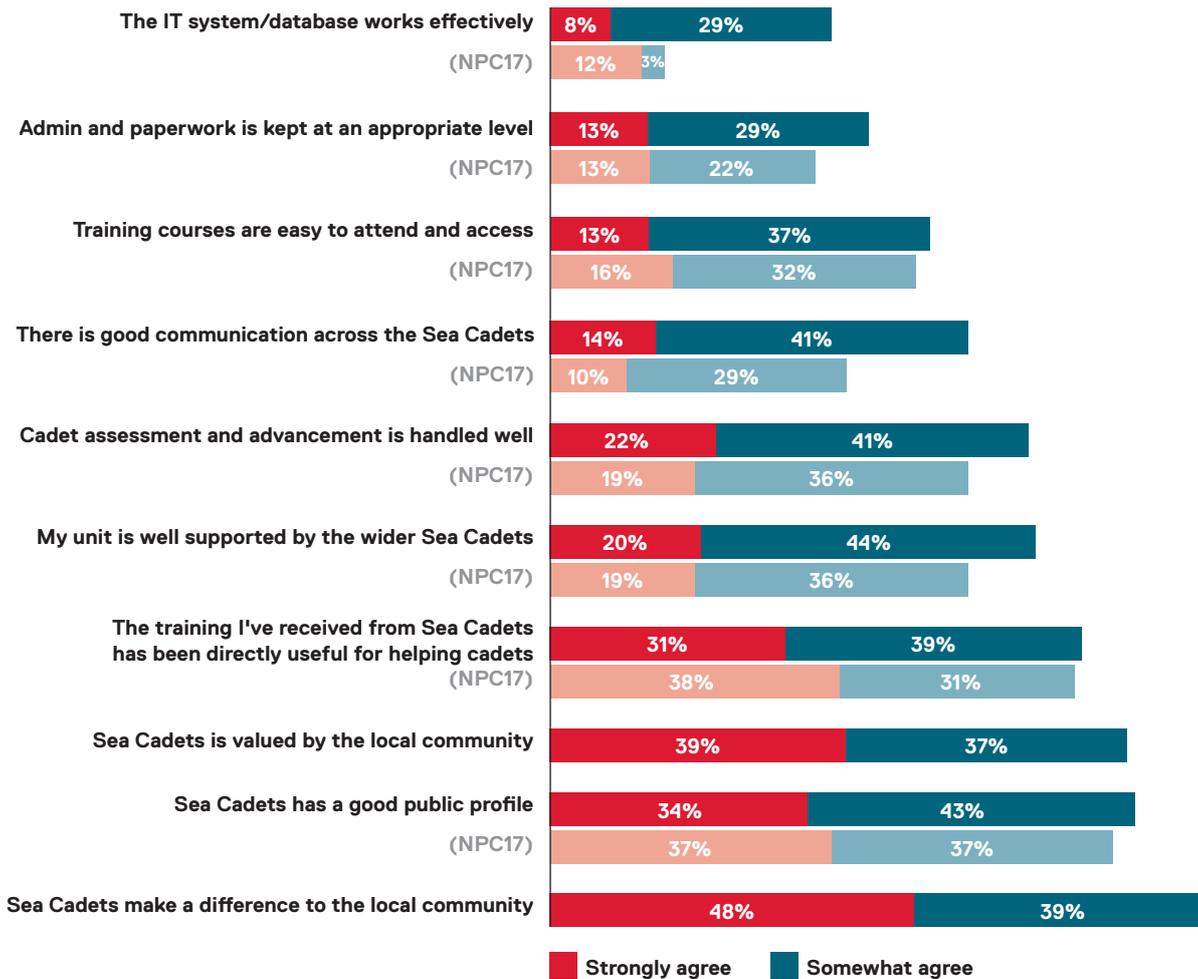
As with what was worst, there are very few firm themes that can be drawn from what could be improved due to the massive dominance of “other” responses which wouldn’t clearly fit into identifiable themes. However, beyond that, the two most common areas raised were around an increase in the number

and quality of courses/opportunities, and improved communication. To a degree this mirrors the areas that have already been identified as a feature that parents and carers clearly value (the quality of courses and opportunities) and an area where a large minority find things frustrating (communication).



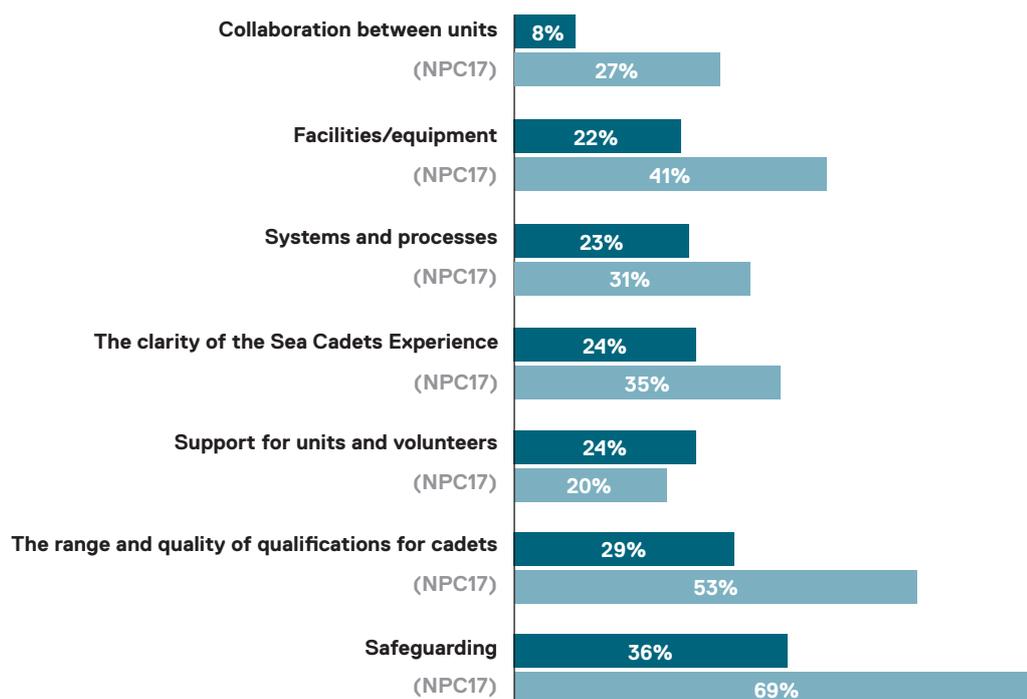
5. Volunteers' experience of Sea Cadets

5.1 VOLUNTEERS' VIEWS OF SEA CADETS



Volunteers' views of the overall experience of Sea Cadets have generally slightly improved across the board from the previous survey. This is broadly in line with improved levels of satisfaction of volunteers in the organisation overall (raising from NPS 9 to NPS 26).

5.2 IMPROVEMENTS IN THE PAST YEAR



Volunteers reported significantly fewer improvements in MSSC in the last year than previously. However, it should be recognised that many of these activities are not particularly relevant given the realities of the pandemic, for example most units will not have accessed facilities and equipment for much of the year and there has been less need to engage with safeguarding.

Has anything else important improved in the last year?

THEME	NO. OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES
Nothing	176	36%
Digital	151	31%
Other	58	12%
Communication/collaboration & support	54	11%
Covid-19	39	8%
Recognition	8	2%
Organisational change	8	2%
Total	494	NA

Beyond the example priorities, the most common area noted by volunteers to have improved was digital (unsurprisingly given the introduction of virtual Sea Cadets activity), which ties in closely with the responses that noted how well Covid-19 was handled over the year.

‘Ability to work in different ways, e.g. virtual training.’

22-year-old female uniformed instructor, Southern Area

‘District Officers have become more involved in providing online training because of Covid-19 restrictions, very welcome support.’

67-year-old male civilian instructor, South West Area

Has anything else important become worse in the last year?

THEME	NO. OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES
Covid/ loss of face-to-face interaction	277	38%
Communication	38	5%
Training	31	4%
Courses	31	4%
Recognition	13	2%
Other	184	25%
Nothing/Don't Know	129	18%
Bureaucracy	20	3%
Total	723	NA

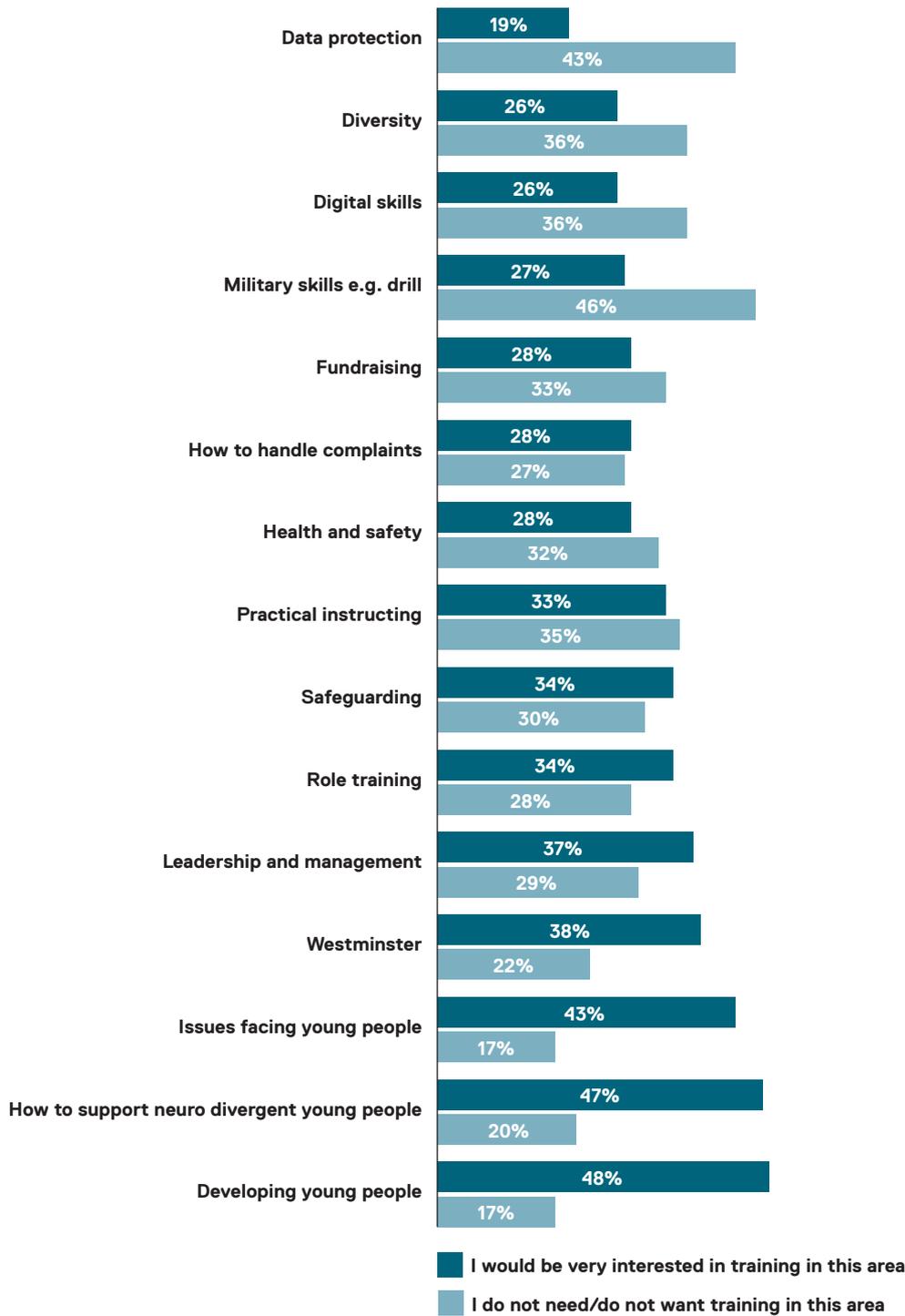
Beyond an expected significant frustration regarding Covid-19, there were no general recognisable themes for the areas that have become worse in the last year.

'Obviously, the lack of activity due to Covid but that cannot be helped.'

36-year-old male civilian instructor, Eastern Area



5.3 TRAINING PRIORITIES FOR VOLUNTEERS



The areas where volunteers are least interested in further training are in relation to data, digital skills, and diversity.

The topics they are most interested in tend to be more directly related to youth development issues facing young people, developing young people, and how to support neuro divergent young people. The point around neuro diversity is particularly interesting given the high rate of autism reported among cadets, suggesting there may be an unusually high level of need for this type of support (to reflect the high level of young people with this impairment within the organisation) compared to other similar youth groups.

5.4 LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

How else, if at all, would you improve Sea Cadets in the future?

THEME	NO. OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES
Courses/training/opportunities	119	14%
Admin/bureaucracy	101	12%
Funding & support	79	9%
Communication/information	44	5%
Virtual/digital	45	5%
Organisation	17	2%
More volunteers/cadets	7	1%
Unit premises etc	7	1%

The most common themes where volunteers would like to see more work in the future were around more training opportunities (for both cadets and volunteers).

‘Courses to have a young person with poor home life able to progress in life with a better group interaction.’

57-year-old male Unit Management Team, Southern Area

‘Fewer career staff, far better training for cadets progressing to staff. Ample courses available to re-validate qualifications for staff. Also, a mandatory period of teaching/assessment for any cadets taking the officer route to become staff, not just the do's and don'ts of the Corps but life skills. I appreciate that this is difficult but often they cannot control the cadets as many of their friends are still of cadet age.’

57-year-old male uniformed instructor, South West Area

‘Get more staff training. This is the basic fundamental part of training cadets and without it the cadets don't learn. Get rid of the barrier between ex-serving military and volunteers and allow the carry-over of qualifications. Allow them to fill and teach roles that they did as an occupation and can do better than

any civilian staff member. This will then allow the cadets to be better taught and actually gain the full cadet experience.’

20-year-old male uniformed instructor, Northern Area

Volunteers would also like to improve administration/ bureaucracy. The low number of responses around virtual/digital suggests this is an area where broadly speaking the current rapid change is seen as sufficient and not something volunteers are prioritising as something that would need to be developed further.

‘For the Sea Cadets admin site to be improved. To help instructors who have just joined to be able to teach any rate.’

31-year-old female uniformed instructor, Northern area

‘Less bureaucracy more support for volunteers. Less hoops to keep jumping through. Improve courses booking and more courses. Understanding of family and work needs outside of Sea Cadets. More presents from area and national staff at unit level. Clearer route for cadets to progress through LH and CPO with courses being cancelled.’

50-year-old male Unit Management Team, South West Area



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6. Satisfaction and trust

6.1 TRUST

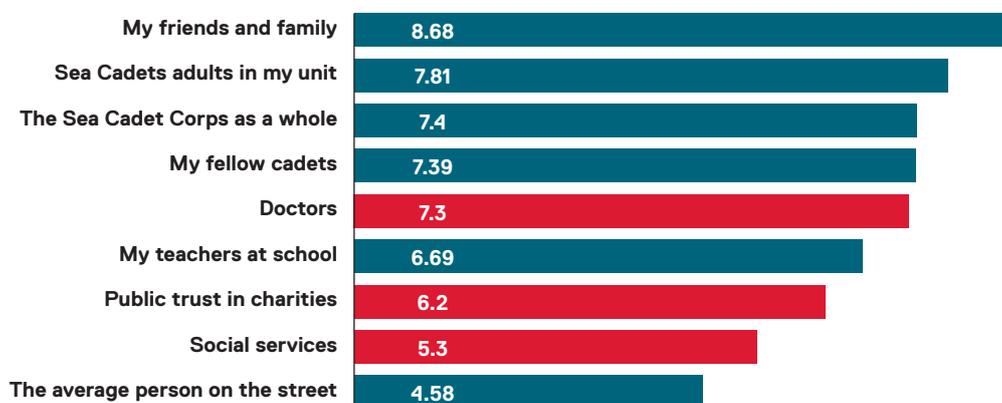
‘Feeling like I have a second family at cadets that I can trust.’

16-year-old female cadet, Eastern Area, responding to what is the best thing about Sea Cadets

Trust is a really important enabler of the work of the Sea Cadets. Cadets and parents need to trust the organisation to be able to commit their time and to share where they need help, while trust in volunteers creates an effective working environment to support young people.

Higher levels of trust also means it’s more likely stakeholders will be honest about their experiences, increasing the validity of the results of things like this impact report.

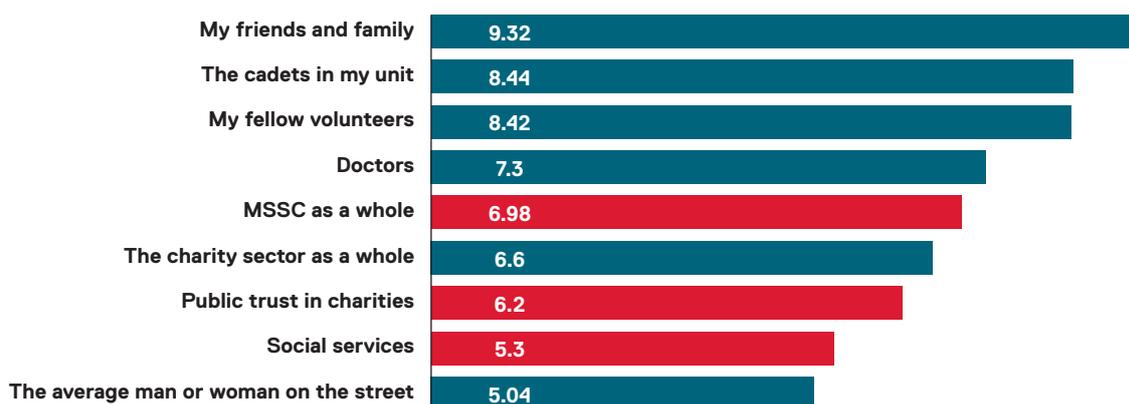
Cadets’ trust



Parents’ trust



Volunteers’ trust



Red bars show benchmarks from external datasets.²⁵

Across cadets, volunteers, and parents, very high levels of trust were shown in Sea Cadets whether looking at MSSC as a whole, volunteers/fellow volunteers or cadets themselves. In all cases this was greater than the level of trust recorded for the general population when asked about the man in the street or social services. This is a particularly important finding when considering how to support marginalised groups who often find social services harder to engage with around difficult topics.

In the case of parents and cadets, levels of trust were also above the benchmark set by the level of trust in doctors who are generally a public-facing role with some of the highest levels of trust. This again shows the confidence they have in Sea Cadets.

6.2 OVERALL SATISFACTION

‘Lots of fun!’

10-year-old male cadet, South West Area, answering what is the best thing about Sea Cadets

Net promoter score (NPS) is the core measure we use as an indicator of satisfaction. This score quantifies how likely someone is to become an active champion of an activity or product. It is also seen as a strong way of defining overall satisfaction. It splits users into three categories:

- Detractors, who are likely to have had a negative experience and discussed this experience
- Passives, who had a broadly okay experience
- Promoters, who had a high positive experience and are likely to tell others.

Based on this it then produces a score between -100 and +100.

	DETRACTOR	PASSIVES	PROMOTERS	NPS
Cadets	13%	26%	62%	49
Cadets – NPC 2017	10%	17%	72%	62
Parents	6%	19%	75%	69
Parents – NPC 2017	7%	10%	83%	76
Volunteers	21%	33%	47%	26
Volunteer – NPC 2017	30%	31%	39%	9

Although the net promoter score is lower for cadets and parents compared to the previous annual survey, both 49 and 69 are positive scores. It is likely that the impact of Covid-19 has influenced this.

The NPS score for volunteers has improved by 17 points. Especially given prior scores were close to neutral/negative, this is very encouraging, suggesting substantial improvements in the experience of volunteers since the NPC survey.

7. Virtual Sea Cadets

2020 required a significant move to the provision of remote service delivery, so a deep dive is needed to understand the effectiveness of Sea Cadets' virtual offering.

It should be noted that before 2020, Sea Cadets did not generally provide an e-learning or substantial online offer. However, through the rapid creation of Virtual Sea Cadets, a series of modules to replicate the learning experience of in-person unit activities was deployed to support young people during the pandemic.

7.1 VIRTUAL SEA CADETS REACH

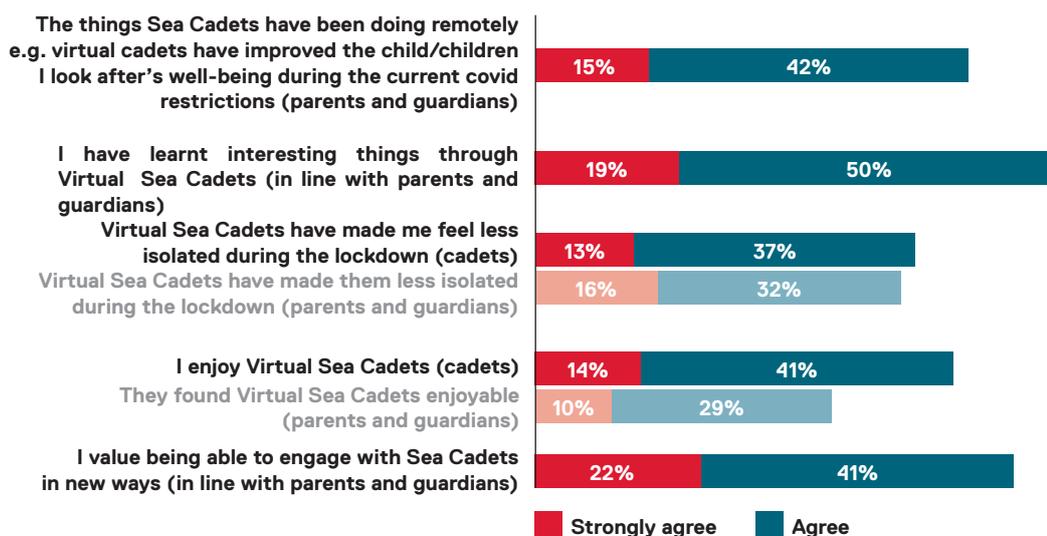
There was no significant variance in reach, and no indication that marginalised groups were any less able to access Virtual Sea Cadets than the cadet population.

HOW OFTEN, IF AT ALL, HAVE YOU ACCESSED VIRTUAL SEA CADETS?	
I don't know what Virtual Cadets is	2%
No	17%
Yes – a few times	39%
Yes – regularly	42%

81% of cadets had engaged with Virtual Sea Cadets at least once, with just over half of those engaging regularly. Overall, this demonstrates the programme has had a wide reach.

7.2 VIRTUAL SEA CADETS IMPACT

The following is drawn from the 2021 “checking-in” survey, which looked in more detail at the experiences of Sea Cadets who engaged with Virtual Sea Cadets. It is also in line with trends identified throughout 2020 by three previous “checking-in” surveys.



Both parents and cadets reported a positive impact of the Virtual Sea Cadets programme, with parents trending towards being slightly more optimistic about the impact in relation to young people being less isolated and how enjoyable young people found Virtual Sea Cadets.

However, the most interesting data around the impact of Virtual Sea Cadets, came from looking at what other activities young people had engaged with.

Have you/the child you care for done any other type of replacement e-learning during the lockdown?	CADETS	PARENTS & CARERS ²⁶
Yes - just e-learning through school/formal education	47%	33%
Yes – a mixture of e-learning through school/formal education and extracurricular/other e-learning	29%	37%
Yes – just extracurricular/other e-learning	7%	7%
No	17%	23%

The question identified that a large minority of young people had received no other e-learning support during the lockdown. Given the 2021 “checking-in” survey took place almost a year into a period when young people would have very rarely been able to go into school, the scale of these figures is surprising and suggests that for a large minority of cadets, Sea Cadets provided the only form of e-learning during this time.

When looking at the background of the young people who had received no other forms of learning, they were broadly representative of the cadet population as a whole, and looking at previous “checking-in” surveys, with the exception of the earliest iterations (where the number who had received no e-learning was substantially higher), these figures remain consistent. They also remain consistent when excluding the children of key workers.²⁷

This suggests the significance of outcomes identified above such as reducing a sense of isolation, or learning interesting things, is massively heightened for these groups as the only source of similar types of learning during the lockdowns.

7.3 VIRTUAL SEA CADETS SATISFACTION

Virtual Sea Cadets compared to other e-learning ²⁸	CADETS	PARENTS & CARERS ²⁶
Virtual Sea Cadets is better than other e-learning I/they have tried	30%	35%
Virtual Sea Cadets is no better or worse than other e-learning	63%	61%
Virtual Sea Cadets is worse than other e-learning	7%	4%

A large minority of both cadets and parents (approximately 1/3 in both cases) rated Virtual Sea Cadets as better than other e-learning, and only a small minority reported it was worse than other e-learning. Given both the rapid launch of Virtual Sea Cadets and the variety of e-learning introduced, this suggests a highly successful programme that created a high quality of experience in comparison to its peers.

The headline net promoter score was, however, slightly negative.

NPS SCORE VIRTUAL SEA CADETS	
Promoters	30%
Passive	34%
Detractors	36%
Net promoter score	-6.00

Prior iterations of the “checking-in” survey did show the net promoter score oscillating over time - starting lower, rising up into low positives, and then returning to a low negative score. This suggests a not particularly highly positive or highly negative experience, somewhat in sharp contrast to the very high satisfaction scores recorded for Sea Cadets overall.

Given the wider picture of both the positive outcome supported by cadets and parents, and the higher rating of Virtual Sea Cadets in comparison to other e-learning services, it seems most likely this is simply a sign that young people do prefer and miss the in-person elements of Sea Cadets. This indicates that whilst it provides a good e-learning course in comparison to its peers, some key elements of the programme are still missing compared to being able to operate in person.

Appendix: Methodology

This report draws from two primary data sources:

- The first set of in-house annual surveys conducted by MSSC which took place from 14 November to 14 December 2020. These were designed to understand the overall experience of Sea Cadets from the perspective of three different key internal stakeholders: cadets themselves, parents and carers, and volunteers.
- The most recent, and at this stage expected to be final (pending any further national lockdowns), “checking-in” survey, which ran from 12 February to 3 March 2021 and took a more focused look at cadets’ wellbeing within the context of the national lockdowns triggered in response to Covid-19 and how they have found Virtual Sea Cadets.

SURVEY DESIGN

The new annual survey was based on a survey first developed by New Philanthropy Capital (NPC) to maintain consistency in data collection. This was then combined with questions chosen based on the MSSC’s current strategic priorities, as well as areas where anecdotally it was believed we had a particularly strong impact but wanted to test, e.g. engagement with looked-after young people.

The “checking-in” survey was largely a repeat of earlier iterations of the “checking-in” survey, which was itself designed based on the principle of creating short accessible surveys to identify both cadet wellbeing and our impact on this wellbeing during the lockdown.

DISTRIBUTION METHOD AND RESPONSE RATES

Both surveys were distributed by email, with regular reminders sent to respondents over the period. As the sample was self-selecting rather than random, it does need to be recognised there is some bias in that more engaged stakeholders were more likely to respond. Having said that, the broadly representative nature of the sample demographics (when comparable with organisation wide administrative data) means this is not a substantial concern.

	RESPONSES ²⁹	PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION	CONFIDENCE INTERVAL ³⁰
Annual survey 2020 cadets	1403	10.5% ³¹	95/2.47
Annual survey 2020 volunteers	2173	25% ³²	95/1.82
Annual survey 2020 parents and carers	2060	7.7% approx ³³	95/2.07
“checking-in” survey 2021 cadets	531	48% ³⁴	95/3.07
“checking-in” survey 2021 parents and carers	1020	3.8% approx ³⁵	95/3.01

All four surveys showed a good confidence interval, which coupled with the broadly representative nature of the sample demographics means MSSC are confident about the validity of the results. This is especially the case for many of the impact findings, where there is broad consistency in the feedback from cadets, volunteers, and parents - showing not only a commonality in their views as to the impact of the specific outcome, but a way to check/validate the data against the perceptions of these other groups.

This is the first in-house annual survey MSSC has launched. It is expected it will routinely be collected in the spring or early summer each year although in this case it was delivered in the winter due to disruption caused by Covid-19. This will provide a rich and ongoing dataset around the impact of the charity.

QUALITY OF SAMPLE

Where possible, the sample was compared with data available for Sea Cadets as a whole (predominantly through the use of Westminster, a central database that records some basic information about Sea Cadets).

It appears the sample was broadly representative of Sea Cadets as a whole, including in some categories such as age which were recorded in the survey data but did not produce any relevant findings for the impact analysis.

Therefore, we are confident the findings do reflect the experience of all sea cadets. It should be recognised, however, that there was a moderate flaw in the sample: socio-economic background slightly overrepresented cadets from better off backgrounds.

Considering the relatively high number of responses, and that this population does not show particularly anomalous results, this is not considered a material concern for the overall quality of the sample.

VALIDATED SCALES

Net promoter score

The core measure we use as an indicator of satisfaction is the net promoter score (NPS). This score quantifies how likely someone is to become an active champion of an activity or product, which is also seen as a strong way of defining overall satisfaction. Users were asked a single question:

'on a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 is not at all likely and 10 is extremely likely, how likely is it that you would recommend Sea Cadets/volunteering at Sea Cadets to a friend/friend or colleague (cadets and parents and carers/volunteers)?' It splits users into three categories:

- Detractors who are likely to have had a negative experience and discussed this experience (score of 0-6).
- Passives who had a broadly okay experience but will not share their experience with others (score of 7-8).
- Promoters who had a highly positive experience and are likely to tell others (score of 9-10).

The percentage of each group is calculated based on the total number of responses, then the percentage of detractors is subtracted from the percentage of promoters to provide an overall net promoter score between -100 and +100.

E.g. if 70% of a group reported they were promoters, 10% passive, and 20% detractors the final NPS score would be: $70-20=+50$

This model not only gives a confident read of the overall levels of satisfaction, but also the higher the score the more likely people are to recommend their experience to others, helping to drive recruitment/growth.

ONS wellbeing questions

A set of questions on a 10-point scale were developed by the Office of National Statistics, each of which measures a different element of wellbeing (e.g. satisfaction, happiness or anxiety):

For each of these questions I'd like you to give an answer on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is "not at all" and 10 is "completely".

How satisfied are you with your life nowadays?

To what extent do you feel that the things you do in your life are worthwhile?

How happy did you feel yesterday?

&

On a scale where 0 is "not at all anxious" and 10 is "completely anxious", overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday?

General self-efficacy short scale

This scale uses five questions graded on a 4-point scale (not at all true, hardly true, moderately true, extremely true), with a numeric score based on what you select e.g. not at all true=1 extremely true=4.

If someone opposes me I can find means and ways to get what I want
I am confident that I can deal effectively with unexpected events
It is easy for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my goals
Thanks to my resourcefulness I know how to handle unforeseen situations
I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my coping abilities

The overall score is then calculated as an average of the results in each category.

Charity Commission trust scale

This question was developed for the Charity Commission's regular Trust in Charities report:

On a scale of 0-10 where 10 means you trust them completely and 0 means you don't trust them at all, how much trust and confidence do you have in the following?

Experian's Mosaic

Mosaic is a tool developed by Experian which cross-references a range of demographic data to identify the behaviour, lifestyle, and economic status of a population based on postcodes, and compares this to a national baseline.

QUALITATIVE CODING

This report took an iterative approach to coding, beginning by initially running through all open field comments and noting trends before repeating this process, seeing what fitted into these trends and continuing until a firm set of trends in each question set remained.

A threshold of at least 1% of responses (excluding nothing/don't know for questions about what could be improved) was set for a set of similar topics to be considered a theme, with anything that did not fit as a theme being coded into the 'other' category.

CURRENT LANGUAGE USED IN RELATION TO ETHNICITY

This report was written whilst MSSC was in a period of transition in the language we use regarding ethnicity. It aims to recognise the different experiences of young people who have generally been placed in the category of Black Asian and minority ethnic (BAME). Young people from these backgrounds have often been underrepresented in uniformed youth work, and are significantly more likely to face systemic discrimination in mainstream education than their white peers.

It felt most accurate to exclude white ethnic minorities from this group, as we recognise both the pre-existing literature and reported lived experiences for many white minority groups is significantly different. For example, whilst people who identify ethnically as Polish are relatively likely to have experienced discrimination in the UK, this is less likely for someone who identifies as Spanish or Italian. Therefore, this created a concern that by combining white minorities into the measure, we may unfairly inflate the apparent support we give to disadvantaged groups. This also reflects the established norms of language used by youth funders within the UK.

It is acknowledged that any attempt at categorising different ethnic groups together to reflect similar experiences can be controversial and difficult, especially in terms of the language to use. As such, MSSC is currently undergoing a formal consultation to identify the best language to use in the long-term. However, even at this early stage, it is clear BAME is generally a term that people are not comfortable with, and therefore it has not been used. The language used in this report (non-white ethnic minority) should be seen as a descriptive placeholder until MSSC has an accepted longer-term piece of terminology.

The way young people were categorised into non-white ethnic minority was based on self-submitted data. Each cadet, volunteer, or parent/guardian was asked a multiple-choice question containing the following options:

CATEGORY	DEFINED AS PART OF NON-WHITE ETHNIC MINORITY
Arab	Yes
Asian Bangladeshi	Yes
Asian Indian	Yes
Asian Other	Yes
Asian Pakistani	Yes
Black African	Yes
Black Caribbean	Yes

CATEGORY	DEFINED AS PART OF NON-WHITE ETHNIC MINORITY
Chinese	Yes
Latin/South/Central American	Yes
Mixed	Yes
White British	No
White Irish	No
White Other	No
Other (please specify)	Varied/sorted by researcher

These options are based on the categories used in MSSC's Westminster IT system, which is itself based on categories used in the census. This is to remain consistent with both our prior evaluations, and the key performance indicators (KPI) reported to the MoD.

With any form of question around how people identify, there is always a tension between a clearly codified system and a sufficiently flexible system to recognise the variety of ways that people identify. In this case, the existence of the Other box provided a way for people to submit a response that did not align with the categories drawn from Westminster. These responses were reviewed in their own right, and then sorted into the two different main categories of white and non-white ethnic minority.

It is recognised that there is potential for researcher bias in this categorisation (as which response belonged to which category was based on the discretion of the researcher). However, this had a limited potential impact on the overall findings as it covers a very small percentage of overall responses. For example, this represented 2.2% of responses to the cadet survey, with 60% of these coded into non-white ethnic minority, 35% white, and 5% coded as a blank response/not applicable.

REDUCING ANALYTICAL BIAS

This is a report developed in-house and as such it is recognised that there is some inherent potential bias as the researchers are themselves employees of MSSC.

Analysis has been headed by Andrew Weston (Head of Policy and Insight), who has a background in independent charity evaluation and therefore had experience of how to both engage analysis and present data in a way that minimises bias.

The researchers/authors are made up of the Policy and Insight team, which is not directly involved in the delivery of any frontline services, reducing any personal investment in positive results.

The senior management team provided broad autonomy in setting the wording and structure of the survey, reducing any potential for bias.

Where possible, questions are either based on wording provided by prior independent analysis, e.g. NPC's work, or pre-existing validated scales, reducing any potential bias in wording.

Endnotes

1. For a full methodology see Appendix – Methodology.
2. Less well off, and bottom 20% of household income are identified using Experian's Mosaic tool which aggregates demographic data to provide information about people's backgrounds based on postcode and provides benchmarks comparing this to the general population.
3. Based on ONS local authority populations as of 2019.
4. Based on figures for England only, Department for education figures 2019.
5. 30 other responses were recoded to different categories as the clarifying information given by the cadet placed it into one of the other subcategories e.g. 'Church of England school' was recoded to a faith school.
6. This question was also asked to parents and received identical results (6.5%), increasing our confidence as to the validity of the result.
7. Based on counts of looked after children by relevant government authorities in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, compared to the number of children in the UK in 2019.
8. Based on estimated numbers of young carers by Young Minds, compared to the number of children in the UK in 2019.
9. Based on figures for England only, Department for education figures 2019.
10. These figures also broadly aligned with figures reported by parents further increasing our confidence as to the validity of the data.
11. Based on the Family Resource Survey 2015-2016
12. Based on estimates by the British Medical Association of the percentage of autistic children.
13. Unfortunately, the number of respondents was too small to do detailed analysis on satisfaction or perceived impact.
14. Male and Female are the only two options available to be recorded in Westminster.
15. The size of the sample for transgender a gender and gender fluid cadets was too small to be able to do detailed analysis of their satisfaction of impact levels however they have been included in the assessment of the LGBT+ population as a whole.
16. This question was only asked to older cadets (age 12+).
17. Responses of 'Don't Know' have been excluded from the count.
18. 18s and over <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/sexuality/bulletins/sexualidentityuk/2018>
19. NPC17)* denotes that the question was a Agree/Disagree tick box in 2017 rather than a 5 point scale.
20. No-one that identifies as LGBTQ+ answered the happiness question.
21. As anxiety runs on a different scale to the other questions (with a high score as a negative result e.g. 10 is most anxious) for ease of reading the scale has been mirrored/reversed to more easily compare with the other wellbeing questions e.g. an average of one (the most positive result) would be.
22. As each individual response could contain multiple themes figures may not sum to 100.
23. Unit name and area has been anonymized to help protect the identity of respondent.
24. Excludes 412 responses of don't know, or nothing.
25. Public Trust in Charities from Charity Commission 'Trust in Charities 2020' - https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/897204/Public_Trust_in_Charities_2020_overview_of_findings.pdf
26. It should be noted the disparity between cadets and parents and carers may be explained by the "checking-in" survey for parents and guardians being available to all parents while the cadet survey was only available to older cadets (aged 12+).
27. This was not possible for the 2021 checking in iteration as this was not a field that was recorded but was included in some previous iterations which was used to check whether this substantially influenced the data.
28. Taken from the checking in 2021 survey this question was only asked to cadets, parents and guardians, who reported they/the child they care for had both done Virtual Sea Cadets and engaged in other e-learning activities.
29. Most questions could be skipped as such the precise number responses per question varies slightly however if a respondent completed the first non-demographic question e.g. not the location of the local unit they were likely to complete survey this is therefore used as the line for what counts as a response.
30. With a target of confidence level of 95 and confidence interval of no more than 5 (95% of the time can be confident the result is accurate to within 5 points).
31. Based on population of cadets in December 2020 13,330.
32. Based on population of volunteers in December 2020 8,748.
33. Surveys are distributed through next-of-kin email addresses, however we do not have a full account of all parents and guardians of the cadets and as such a fully accurate population cannot be provided for the purpose of the confidence interval the calculation used was double the number of cadets (December 2020) have been used which is likely to be an over account giving us confidence we are not over representing the accuracy of the confidence interval.
34. "checking-in" surveys were only sent to older cadets so have a lower population (1106).
35. Surveys are distributed through next-of-kin email addresses, however we do not have a full account of all parents and guardians of the cadets and as such a fully accurate population cannot be provided for the purpose of the confidence interval calculation double the number of cadets at the time (Feb 2021) have been used which is likely to be a slight over account giving us confidence we are not over representing the accuracy of the confidence interval.

