



SEA CADETS IMPACT REPORT 2022

How we enhance young people's lives:
A summary of the evidence

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**SEA
CADETS**

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1. Executive summary

1.1 CONTEXT

Sea Cadets works to give young people the best possible head start in life through nautical adventure and fun. We are part of Marine Society & Sea Cadets (MSSC), the leading maritime charity for youth development and lifelong learning.

It's important we understand the difference we make, both to continue to improve our work and to make the case for uniformed youth work to the wider world.

This report is the latest iteration of Sea Cadets' regular impact survey. We did the survey in April 2022, engaging with 2,569 cadets, volunteers, parents and carers. The 16-month gap from the 2020 survey was because of the Covid-19 pandemic,¹ and we intend to return to our normal rhythm of surveying every year.

1.2 KEY FINDINGS

In line with our previous impact surveys, our cadets, volunteers and parents/carers continue to report that Sea Cadets has a wide range of positive impacts on their lives.

While there has been a slight decline in the level of impact reported since 2020, day-to-day satisfaction and trust remains consistent or has slightly risen. In general, 2022's results are consistent with our 2020 survey.

- Despite the slight decline in reported impact, the overall experience of cadets, volunteers and parents/carers appeared to have improved, with a slight increase in overall levels of satisfaction and an either static or slightly improved result on levels of trust in the organisation.
 - All respondents were generally confident Sea Cadets is a safe place for young people and that any concerns they raise will be dealt with appropriately.
 - In comparison with 2020, we saw an increase in cadets' confidence that Sea Cadets helps them to plan for the future.
- Young people from marginalised communities tended to report feeling a similar level of impact from Sea Cadets compared to 2020. However, disabled, LGBTQA+, and Asian Cadets reported lower (although still positive) levels of overall satisfaction in the organisation, suggesting some additional support is needed for these communities.
 - In line with previous years, young people from traditionally marginalised backgrounds (such as lower-income households, looked-after children and young carers) continued to be well represented in Sea Cadets. Their numbers remained similar to 2020, despite the danger of more marginalised groups disproportionately disengaging from youth work due to the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic.
 - Questions around safeguarding and complaints (two newly examined areas) showed generally positive results (especially in the case of safeguarding), but also demonstrated a significant minority who may not be fully engaged. Importantly, it doesn't appear that marginalised groups were likely to be disengaged from either our safeguarding or complaints processes.
 - Compared to 2020, cadets showed more appreciation for wearing a uniform. This may show they were valuing familiar customs, traditions and rituals linked with the Royal Navy that weren't always possible to follow during the Covid lockdowns.
 - Volunteers saw a slight decline in most areas of reported impact and volunteer experience. However, this should be considered within the context of prior trends – volunteers reported a substantial improvement in the quality of experience between

'Meeting new people and having lots of opportunities that I wouldn't have had if I was not there.'

14-year-old female sea cadet from our Southern Area tells us what she likes most about Sea Cadets

the 2018 and 2020 surveys. Indicators that had previously seen high levels of improvement only saw a slight decline and remain substantially above 2018 figures.

Our hypothesis for the slight drop in impact for cadets is that in September 2020, Sea Cadets was one of the few youth organisations that had fully reopened following the first Covid-19 lockdown. Young people were rediscovering adventurous activities after spending time in highly restricted circumstances; by 2022, other services had returned to closer to normal levels. As such it seems reasonable to assume the overall perceived impact of Sea Cadets reduced for many cadets (as they had gone back to having more options).

1.3 VALIDATED SCALES

In this report we use several ways to measure satisfaction, including scales developed during previous Sea Cadets research, new measures we've developed in-house and some validated scales.

Validated scales are externally recognised methods of recording people's experiences that have previously been tested elsewhere. They include:

Net promoter score: this measures overall levels of satisfaction, giving a score between -100 and +100. We use this to understand how people feel about their experience of Sea Cadets overall, and how likely they are to recommend us to others.

Office for National Statistics (ONS) wellbeing questions: these are a set of questions the ONS uses 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 (their ability to understand and act on their priorities). It's scored from 1-4, with 4 showing the highest level of self-efficacy.

Charity Commission trust scale: this is a question the Charity Commission uses to measure the level of trust the general population feel in different organisations or types of individual, for example charities or doctors. It's scored from 0 to 10.

Indices of multiple deprivation: this is a measure of socio-economic deprivation which matches postcodes with a government database tracking a range of demographic and economic features.

You can read more about these validated scales and how they're calculated in Appendix 1.4.





2. Cadet background

2.1 SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

	What cadets told us in the survey	What parents told us in the survey	All cadets (from central database) ² (29/11/22)	General population
Bottom 40% household income³	39%	34%	41%	40% ⁴
Bottom 20% household income	19%	17%	20%	20%
Live in a 'left behind' area⁵	39.5%	–	44%	20% ⁶
Receive free school meals	14%	–	–	22% ⁷

Cadets come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. However, it's particularly positive that cadets from less well-off backgrounds are represented well in our organisation – 40% of cadets come from households in the UK's bottom 40% of income. This is in line with 40% of people in the country as a whole living in these households.

Other major uniformed youth groups tend to have disproportionate numbers of wealthier young people,⁸ according to comparative data. We're pleased to be offering a more accessible programme than many of Sea Cadets' peers.

As shown in the table above, cadets are around twice as likely, compared to the general population, to live in a 'left behind' area of the country.⁶ This means Sea Cadet units are likely to be heavily concentrated in areas with fewer alternative options providing activities/support for young people – making the support we offer even more valuable.

Given the high levels of engagement with young people from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds (e.g. the 44% of cadets in 'left behind'

areas of the country), it's surprising that a relatively low number of cadets reported receiving free school meals (14%). Our hypothesis is that this is largely due to a combination of cadets not being aware they receive free school meals, and cadets who are eligible not claiming (bringing in a packed lunch instead, for example). As the free school meal statistic comes from self-reporting (cadets telling us if they receive them) and the socio-economic status is based on postcode data, we can reasonably assume the postcode data is more likely to be valid and robust, and so a more accurate representation of how many cadets come from disadvantaged backgrounds.

'You get a great feeling that everyone is always equal and no one is ever discriminated [against], or if they are, it would be dealt with as soon as possible.'

13-year-old male cadet from the London Area on what's best about Sea Cadets

Table: Place of education

School	Cadets survey	General population
State school	72.93%	93%
Faith school	5.96%	
Sixth form college	4.49%	
Further education college	2.82%	
Other (please specify)	3.74%	
Home-schooled	2.31%	
Don't know	2.15%	
I don't go to school	0.68%	
Private school (including fee-paying public schools)	4.89%	6.5% ⁹

Qualifications are for a lifetime and you can learn many skills that could have a great impact on your future and what you do with it.'

17-year-old male Welsh sea cadet who attends a state school explains the benefits of Sea Cadets

The schools cadets attend are broadly representative of the population as a whole. Many of the adventurous activities Sea Cadets provides – boating, for example – are generally seen as out-of-reach of young people from less privileged backgrounds. So this strong representation of cadets who go to state schools, and those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, is highly positive. Another positive is the strong representation of home-schooled young people, a group often excluded from organised youth activity.

EXPERIENCE OF CADETS BASED ON SCHOOL TYPE

A common view expressed across MSSC was that Sea Cadets had a particularly strong impact on young people who are home-schooled, and young people who attended state schools. We therefore did a deep dive comparing results between these different groups.

We found the impact of attending Sea Cadets on young people's lives was generally broadly similar no matter where they received their education. The one exception was that state-educated cadets were much more likely to report positive impacts in feeling empowered than their peers.

2.2 LOOKED-AFTER CHILDREN AND YOUNG CARERS

	Cadets survey	General population
Looked-after children	6%	1.1% ¹⁰
Young carers	7%	6% ¹¹

'Like meeting new people and trying new activities. I like sport and being active. Also helps me learn to respect other people's views.'

13-year-old male looked-after cadet from our Southern Area on what's best about Sea Cadets

'I get to see my friends and make new friends and learn more skills and improve my confidence.'

13-year-old Welsh female young carer cadet on the benefits of Sea Cadets

In line with previous years, Sea Cadets units continue to have significant over-representation of looked-after children and young carers compared to the general UK population.

Both groups said Sea Cadets had an impact on their lives, in line with other cadets.

Looked-after children and young carers are often seen as being hard to reach and sustain engagement with, due to the significant barriers they face in accessing support. So it's really exciting to see significant numbers being a part of – and benefiting from – Sea Cadets.

2.3 ETHNICITY

	Cadets survey ¹²	General population ¹³
Total White	87.8%	81.7%
White British	82.1%	74.4%
White other	5.7%	7.3%
Total non-White ethnic minority ¹⁴	10.7%	16.2%
Mixed	4.8%	2.9%
Asian	3.1%	9.3%
Black	2.3%	4%
Latin/South/Central American	0.4%	2.1%
Arab	0.1%	
Other ¹⁵	1.4%	

Sea Cadets draws young people from a wide variety of backgrounds. However, ethnic minorities are generally slightly underrepresented while White British young people are overrepresented. That said, we do have a higher percentage of mixed-race young people than the UK as a whole (our ongoing administrative data also shows this).

The relatively small number of young people in each of the non-White British categories limits the amount of quantitative analysis we can do. However, qualitative responses showed little sign that non-White sea cadets had a different experience of Sea Cadets compared to their White peers.

That said, Asian cadets (the largest non-White category¹⁶) showed a slightly lower level of satisfaction than cadets as a whole (an average of +49, compared to +57¹⁷). While this is still a strong result, it does suggest cadets from an Asian background may be less likely than their peers to remain in Sea Cadets or encourage others to join. This is an issue which requires further investigation beyond the scope of this report.

2.4 DISABILITY¹⁸

	Cadets survey	General population of under-18s	Volunteers survey
Disability	8%	9% ¹⁹	10%
Autistic spectrum condition	4%	2% ²⁰	1%

Sea cadets are approximately as likely to be disabled as the general population of young people. This again suggests we have an effective model for reaching out to young people often excluded from mainstream youth work.

Continuing a trend from 2020, disabled cadets showed lower levels of satisfaction than cadets as a whole, with a net promoter score (out of scale from -100 to +100) of +49, compared to +58 for their peers. However, it should be stressed that this remains a positive result overall.

We asked cadets about their specific impairments, resulting in one group standing out. 4% of cadets reported they had autistic spectrum conditions, four times the national average.²¹ It should be noted that there's an increasing assumption in the wider autistic community that the publicised figure of 1% is

an undercount due to historic issues with diagnosis. So this higher percentage reporting as autistic may indicate that Sea Cadets is a safe environment, where young people feel comfortable disclosing their condition, rather than Sea Cadets attracting more young people from this background.

In either case, it's a highly positive statistic, as autistic young people are often identified as being isolated from youth work.

'Getting to know other people who like the same stuff as me – and having a second family.'

A 15-year-old female autistic cadet tells us what she likes best about Sea Cadets

2.5 GENDER

Gender	Cadets survey	All cadets (from central database) ²²	All volunteers	Volunteer survey
Male	59.31%	64%	60%	59.21%
Female	36.48%	36%	40%	35.46%
Agender	0.1%	-	-	
Gender fluid	0.5%	-	-	0.04%
Transgender male	0.7%	-	-	0.40%
Transgender female	-	-	-	0.08%
Other	0.4%	-	-	-

Male and female cadets showed a broadly comparable level of satisfaction and impact on their lives. This suggests no significant difference in experience between male and female cadets.²³

The survey itself was generally representative of the population of volunteers and cadets as a whole (recorded on the central database), which tells us our sample and therefore the accuracy of the results are more likely to be accurate.

2.6 SEXUALITY^{24 25}

Sexuality	Cadets survey	Volunteer survey
Asexual	0.7%	0.32%
Bisexual	7.6%	2.2%
Heterosexual	86.4%	87.7%
Homosexual	3.3%	3.6%
Other	2%	0.97%

A substantially higher percentage of cadets are non-heterosexual compared to the general population of the UK (3.16% of the general population vs 13.6% of cadets over 12). The difference is less substantial (but still significant) if we compare with the sexual identity of 'Generation Z' (the demographic – born c.1997-2012 – which all surveyed cadets are in), estimated to be around 7% non-heterosexual in the 2021 Census.

These stats suggest substantial engagement in Sea Cadets from LGBTQ+ young people.

In line with our 2020 survey, LGBTQA+ cadets' levels of satisfaction are substantially lower than their peers, with (on a scale of -100 to +100) a satisfaction score of +38 compared to +54 for their peers.

2.7 CHANGING EXPERIENCES

Have you experienced any of the following?

Feeling anxious or lonely	30.2%
Bullying or abuse	19.2%
Getting in trouble at school	13.8%
Getting in trouble with the police	1.3%

Since 2020, there has been a marked decline in cadets reporting feeling anxious or lonely, getting in trouble at school and experiencing bullying or abuse. However,

a significant minority continue to report these issues, suggesting that support targeting cadets with these experiences may be worthwhile.

While only 1.3% of cadets reported getting in trouble with the police, this still equates to a relatively high number, considering the number of sea cadets. This cohort could be targeted for specific support.



3. Impact

Our 2022 impact report generally shows similar trends as previous surveys, with a slight tendency towards satisfaction levels being lower than before.

Building resilience and skills related to communication are the strongest benefits of being a sea cadet, according to young people. One hypothesis for this is that the isolation and stresses of Covid-19 have led to a greater focus on personal resilience and the ability to communicate in difficult circumstances. However, compared to 2020, young people said Sea Cadets helped them less with future careers and schooling.

While there was general consensus among cadets, parents/careers and volunteers, volunteers were more

likely to report higher impact around outcomes related to making a long-term difference in young people's lives, such as the likelihood of them getting a job. It's possible that volunteers are seeing the holistic picture of the impact on cadets over the longer term. Other independent research has also proven Sea Cadets' long-term impact on people's life opportunities.

'Sea Cadets has given me opportunities to learn and try new things I didn't think I ever would.'

16-year-old female cadet from our Southern Area on what's best about Sea Cadets

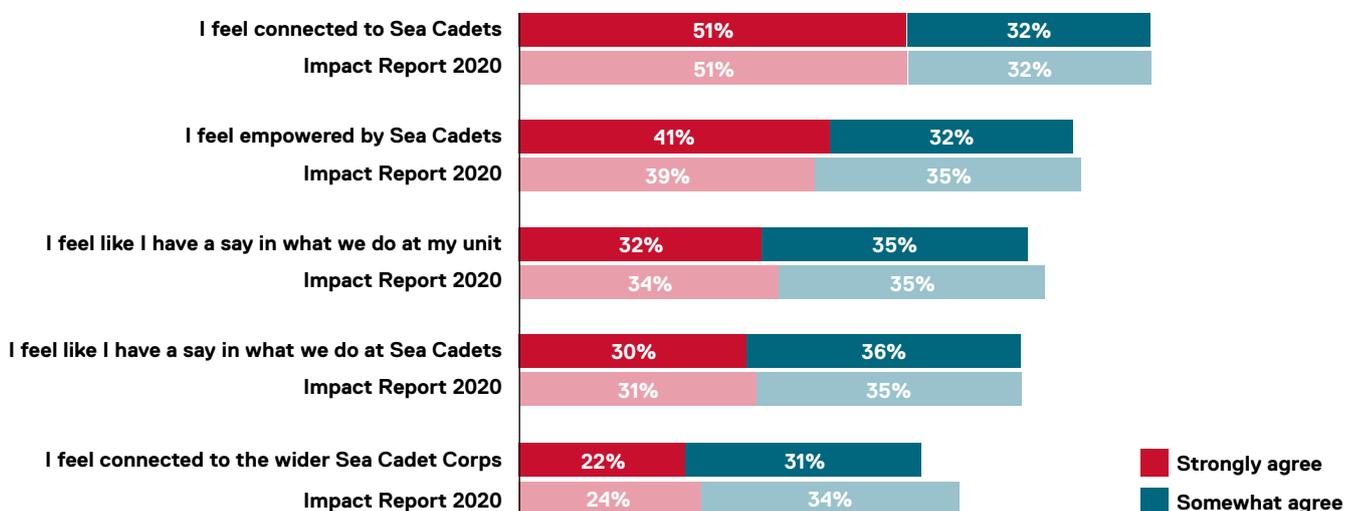
CONSENSUS ACROSS STAKEHOLDERS

As mentioned above, there was significant consensus among cadets, parents/carers and volunteers on most of the questions we asked during the survey. To avoid repetition, in cases where there's only a small variance between the different groups (under 10%) this report gives only the figure for cadets (as they have the most direct lived experience), with a note of which groups it aligns with. We have included results in full where there's significant difference between the three groups.

3.1 EMPOWERING CADETS

'It is a friendly environment that includes everyone. Everyone is very kind and confident. Makes you have more confidence.'

14-year-old Northern Irish female cadet tells us about the benefits of Sea Cadets

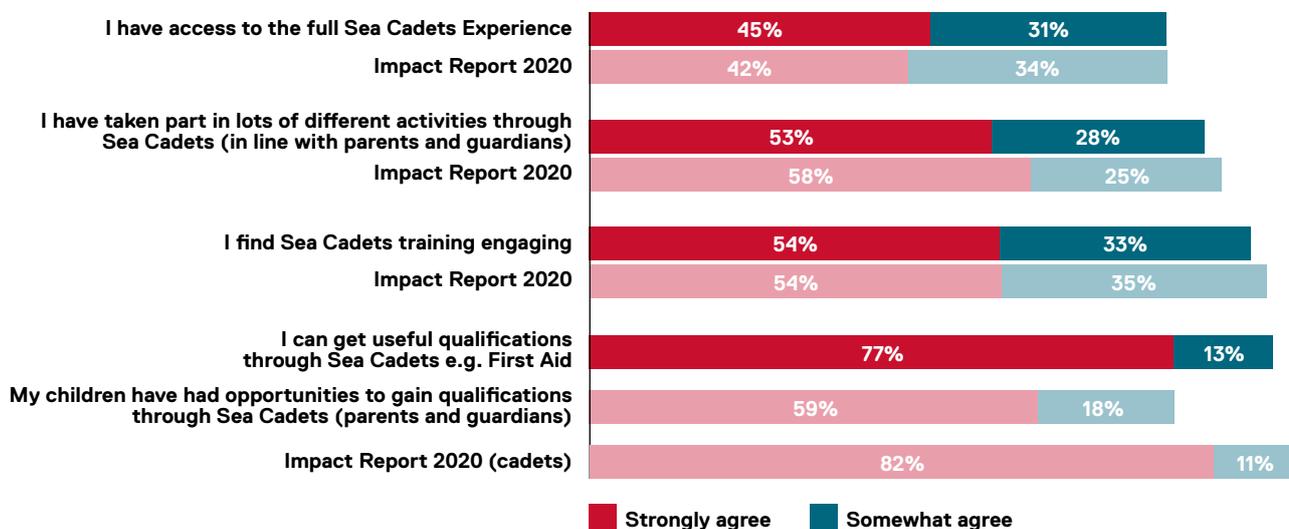


Cadets generally feel highly empowered by and connected to Sea Cadets, but less so than in 2020. Compared to 2020, there was also a decrease in cadets feeling as though they had a say in what they do at their unit.

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 from our Southern Area explains what she likes the most about Sea Cadets



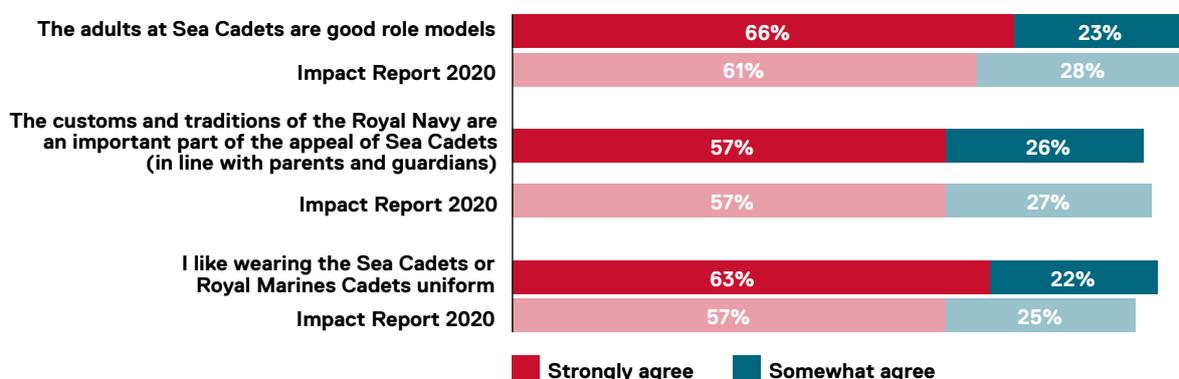
Responses about the experiences cadets have were overwhelmingly positive. Interestingly, this includes an overwhelming view among cadets and volunteers (and still a firm view among parents) that cadets gain useful qualifications, suggesting that Sea Cadets leads to useful skills for later life.

Compared to 2020, there were decreases in those feeling they had taken part in lots of activities and those who feel Sea Cadets provides useful qualifications.

3.3 CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS

‘Turning up every parade night and taking pride in my uniform.’

13-year-old gender queer/non-binary royal marines cadet on what’s best about Sea Cadets



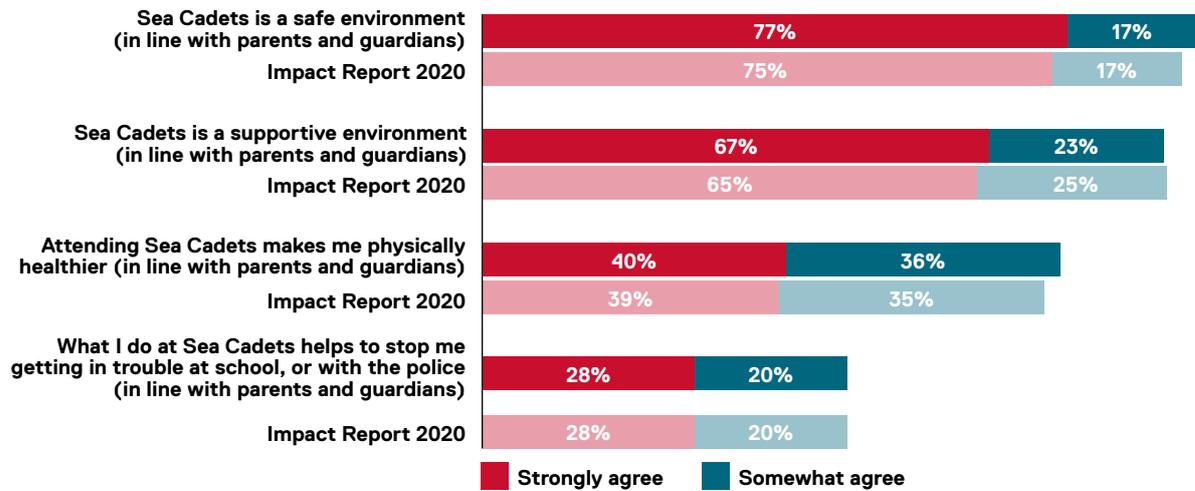
The customs and traditions of the Royal Navy remain an important part of young people’s experiences at Sea Cadets – this has remained consistent through the 2020 and 2022 surveys.

Compared to 2020, there was an increase in sea cadets liking wearing the Sea Cadets/ Royal Marines uniform.

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 from our Northern Area on the benefits of Sea Cadets

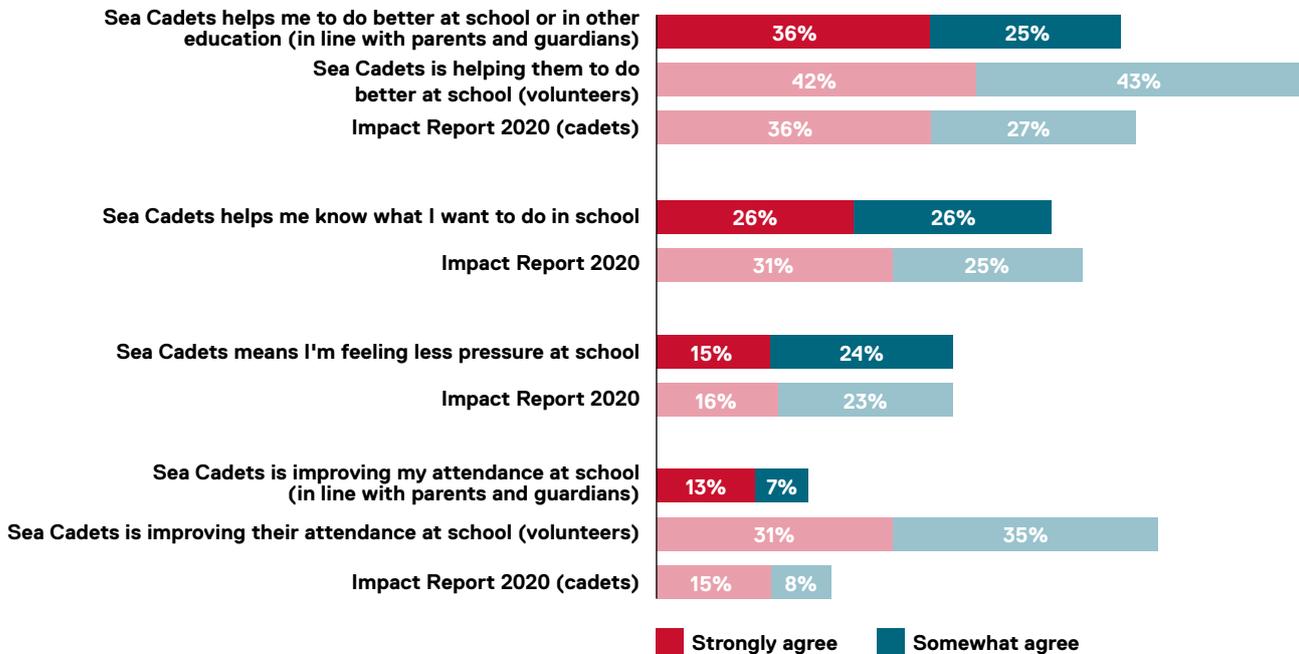


Transitioning back to face-to-face activities after Covid-19 hasn't affected cadets' perceptions around safety. Overall, results were consistent with 2020, and so positive, with no significant increases or decreases.

3.5 FORMAL EDUCATION

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

15-year-old questioning and non-binary cadet from our Eastern Area on what's best about Sea Cadets



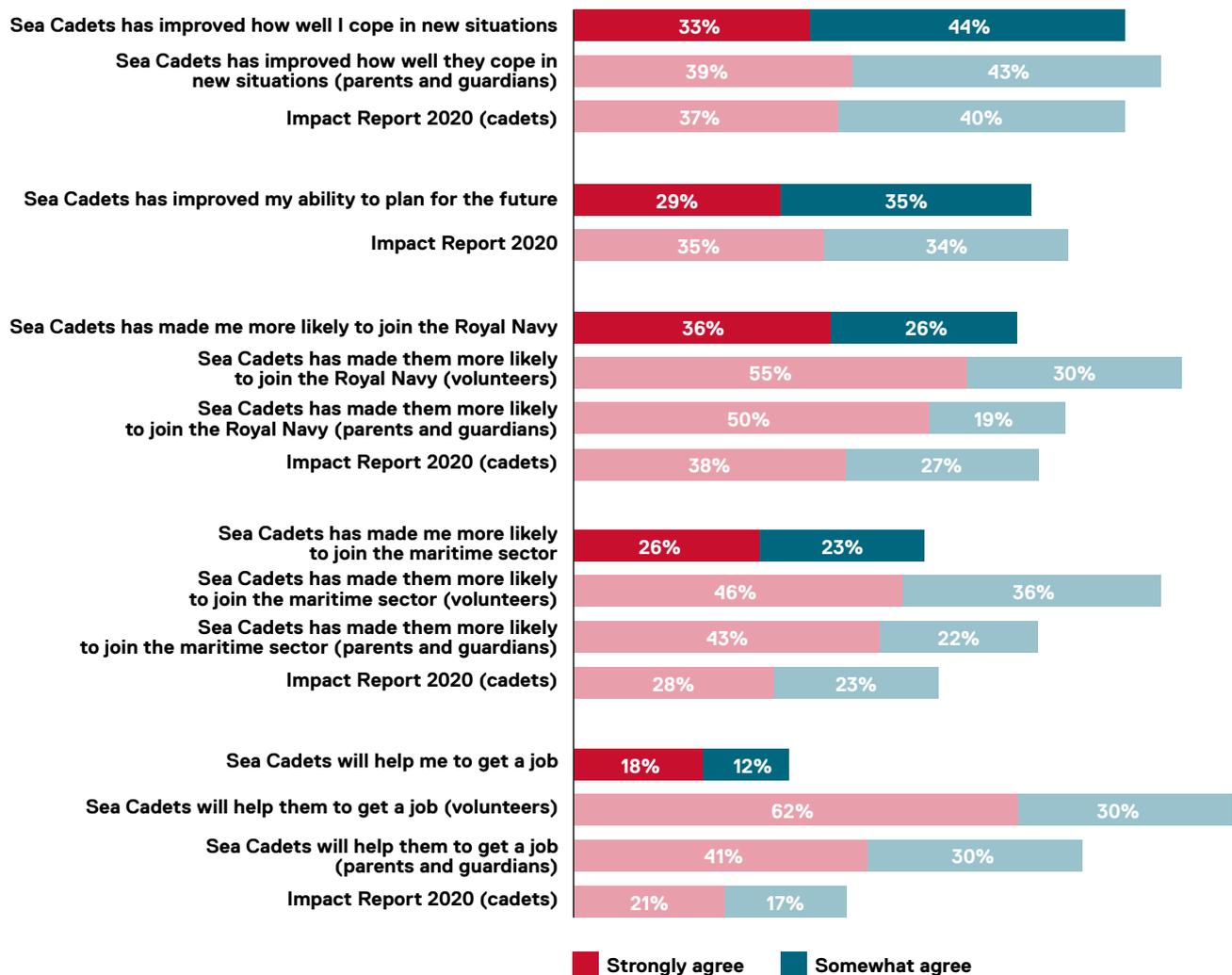
Cadets were much less likely to report an impact from Sea Cadets on their formal education than volunteers or parents/carers. Overall, compared to 2020, there is broad consistency in terms of cadets' perception around Sea Cadets' impact on their formal education.

However, there was a decrease in young people feeling their time in Sea Cadets helped them with knowing what they want to do in school compared to 2020. That said, the majority of cadets still agree that Sea Cadets has helped them with this.

3.6 FUTURE PROSPECTS

‘Offshore courses, opportunities to travel and do things not many teenagers get to do; opportunity to make so many friends from around the country and to hear many people [describe] career paths and experiences in the Royal Navy and other jobs.’

16-year-old female cadet from our Northern Area explains what she likes most about Sea Cadets



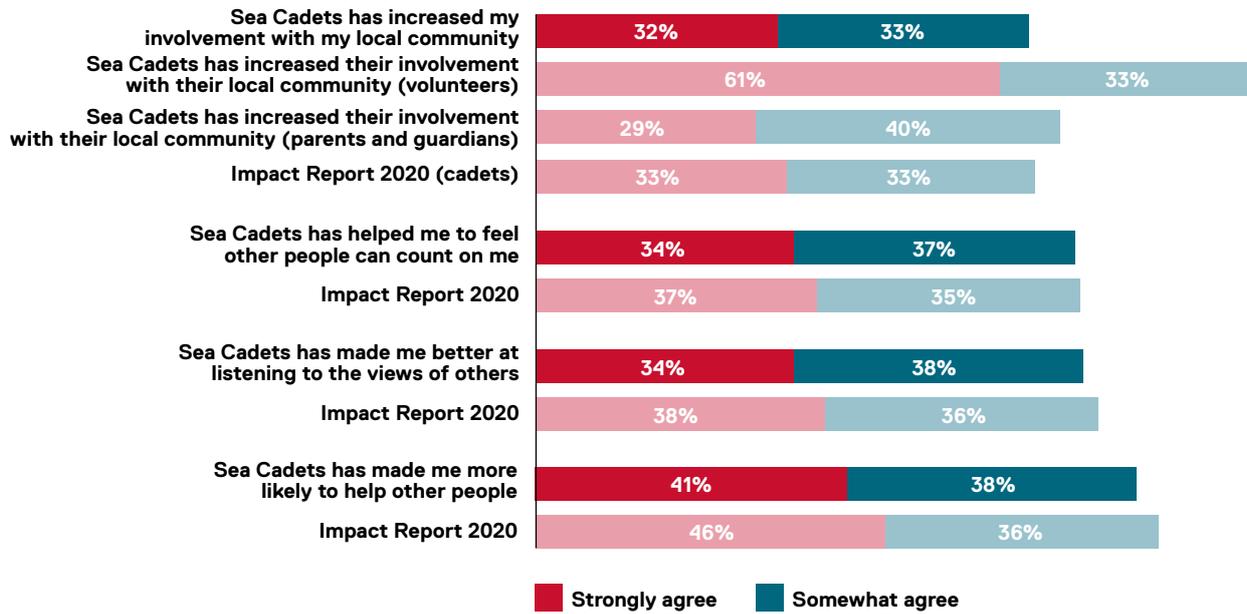
Results remained consistently positive in line with 2020, with parents/carers and volunteers feeling more buoyant about cadets' future prospects than cadets themselves. Interestingly, in terms of helping cadets to get a job, the consistent low agreement among cadets is underpinned by 47% answering 'don't know'.

The high number of cadets who were unsure about the impact Sea Cadets has on their future prospects, especially in comparison to volunteers, may just be a sign of cadets, given their age, not yet knowing what will have an impact. Whereas volunteers in many cases will have seen the longer-term impact on young people and have examples to draw on. Similarly, parents may have the foresight to see that Sea Cadets could increase their child's job prospects.

3.7 SOCIAL ACTION

‘Working together to help the community.’

11-year-old male junior sea cadet from our North East Area on what’s best about Sea Cadets



Results remained consistently positive compared to 2020, with no significant increases or decreases other than the impact of Sea Cadets on helping other people, which has slightly decreased.

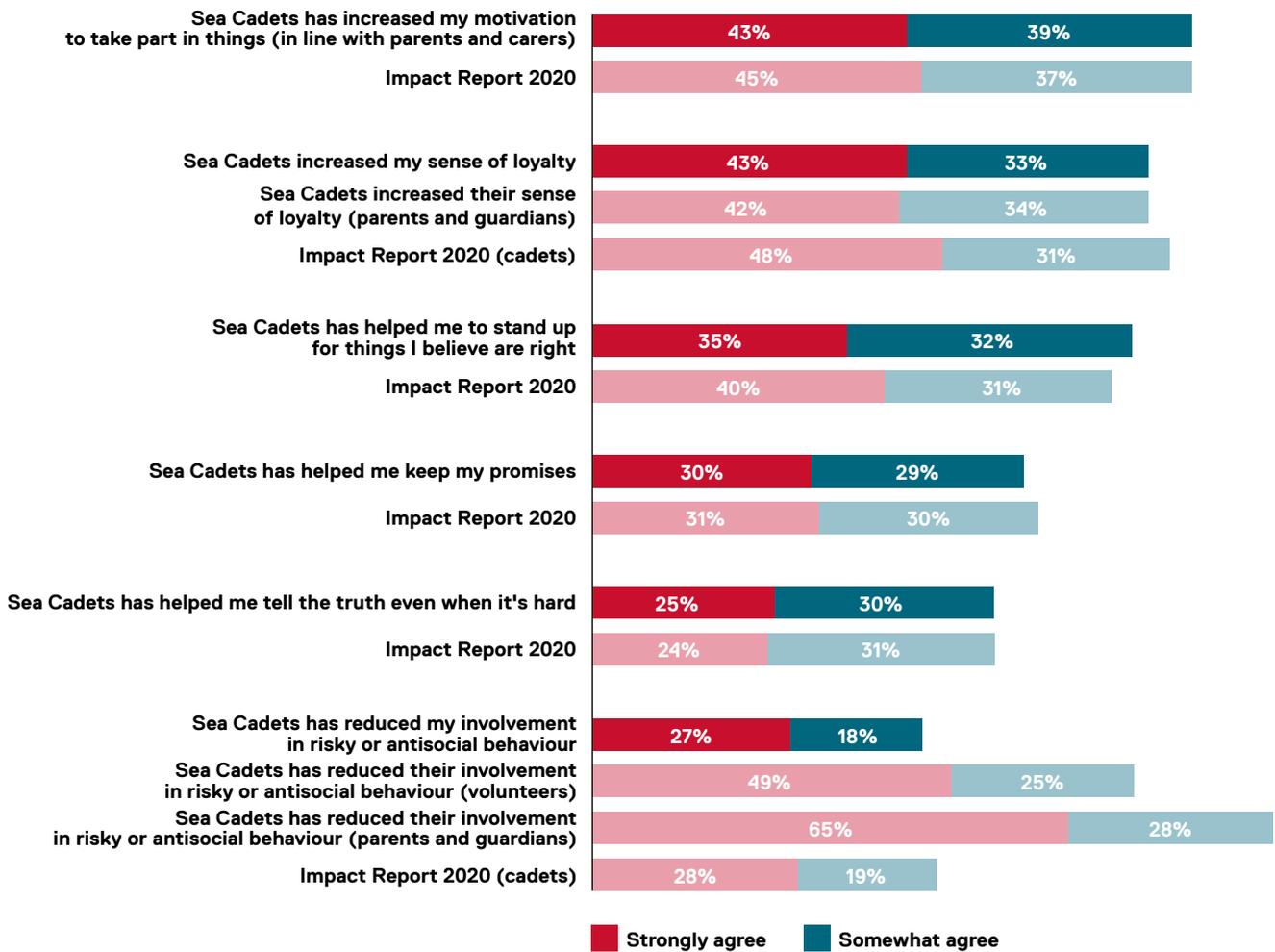
Volunteers generally have a stronger view of Sea Cadets’ impact on improving young people’s engagement in their local communities than cadets and parents/carers.



3.8 VALUES

‘The values that you carry into adult life.’

15-year-old female sea cadet from our North West Area on what’s best about Sea Cadets



Compared to 2020, volunteers, and to a lesser extent parents/carers, have a significantly more positive view that Sea Cadets made young people less at risk of antisocial behaviour than non-cadets.

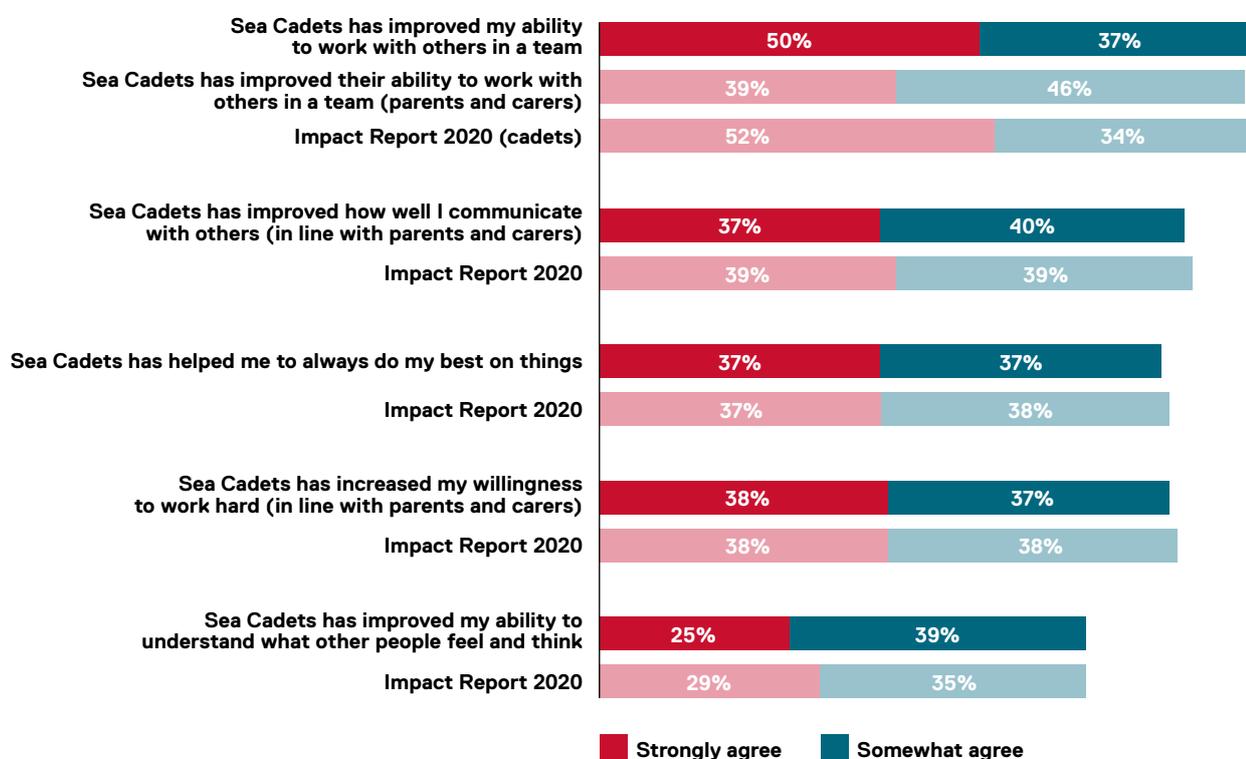
Results remained consistently positive compared to 2020, with no significant increases, but a slight decrease in Sea Cadets making young people more likely to stand up for things they believe are right.



3.9 PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

‘Courses and learning new skills as well as putting these skills into practice as part of a team.’

16-year-old royal marines cadet from our North West Area explains the benefits of Sea Cadets



How Sea Cadets helps with personal development stayed broadly and positively consistent compared to 2022, with no significant increases or decreases.

3.10 WELLBEING

	All cadets	LGBTQA+	Disability
Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays? (10-point scale)	6.79	5.72	5.98
Overall, to what extent do you feel that the things you do in your life are worthwhile? (10-point scale)	6.76	5.84	6.08
Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday? (10-point scale)	6.66	5.69	6.12
How anxious did you feel yesterday? ²⁶ (On a scale where 0 is 'not at all anxious' and 10 is 'completely anxious')	6.81	5.21	5.71

Wellbeing levels were generally consistent across cadets of different backgrounds. However, LGBTQA+ and disabled cadets show 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. As such, our result shouldn't be seen as a sign of a different level of impact at Sea Cadets. It does, however, suggest that these groups would particularly benefit from activities to boost their wellbeing. This result is in line with trends from previous years.

The results also suggest LGBTQA+ cadets are more likely to experience difficulty socialising in comparison to their peers. However, LGBTQA+ cadets reported similar levels of support for Sea Cadets' values, and satisfaction with the wider organisation, suggesting their general experience of Sea Cadets itself is still positive.

Interestingly, we can say with a high degree of confidence that disabled cadets don't feel their access to adventurous or fun activity is curtailed at Sea Cadets, with them having a similar likelihood of seeing adventurous activity as accessible as their non-disabled peers. This is a strong result, displaying some evidence that Sea Cadets is helping to address disabled young people's typically worse mental health by providing fun, adventurous and accessible activities.

Cadets generally reported that Sea Cadets makes a significant impact on their resilience, with 61% agreeing (32% strongly) that Sea Cadets prepares them well for tough times. This is however down from 67% in 2020.

Given the context of the cost-of-living crisis and ongoing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the continued trend of enhancing resilience is a very positive result.

SELF-EFFICACY

For the first time we have been able to track cadets' self-efficacy (ability to understand and act on their priorities) over time. Our hypothesis was the longer a young person was with Sea Cadets, the greater their self-efficacy score would be. This would mean they had greater capacity to manage their own wellbeing and resilience, and achieve the life they want to live. This would back up the qualitative comments about our impact on young people's lives.

However, the results are ambiguous. They show neither a clear sign of improvement nor decline.

Our current working hypothesis is that this suggests there isn't a large increase in self-efficacy from being a cadet in general (as this would likely be visible). Any change that does take place is being masked by other features of the young person's day-to-day life, such as education.

It's possible that individual elements of Sea Cadets' training and support could have a more substantial impact on self-efficacy. Going forward, we plan to look at programme-based potential impacts on self-efficacy, instead of the impact of the Sea Cadets model as a whole.

3.11 LENGTH OF TIME BEFORE IMPACT IS CLEAR

For the first time, we've been able to cross-reference how long a young person has been a cadet and the impact they report, to see how quickly we can identify a positive impact on a young person's life.

In many cases the answer is unclear, due to a lack of available data from different populations to cross-reference how long this positive impact may take to emerge. However, we can say with a high degree of confidence that young people see a clear positive improvement within six months of becoming a Sea Cadet in relation to teamwork, life skills and communication skills. This is very exciting as we previously presumed positive change took longer.



4 Safeguarding and complaints

4.1 SAFEGUARDING

For the first time, our survey asked questions about how safe young people feel and whether they know who to reach out to in different circumstances.

Across the board, cadets, volunteers and parents/ carers strongly feel that Sea Cadets' safeguarding team would appropriately resolve issues, and both cadets and volunteers know who to approach if they need support.

We were slightly concerned that there is a significant minority of cadets who aren't sure who to approach, which largely seems to be down to them having lower levels of trust in Sea Cadets than their peers.

If you/a cadet, or someone you knew at Sea Cadets, was being hurt or abused by someone else at Sea Cadets, would you know who to go to in Sea Cadets for help?

Responses	Cadet	Volunteers
Yes	92%	99.1%
No	5%	0.9%
Prefer not to say	3%	0%

Overwhelmingly, volunteers were confident they would know who to contact if a young person needed help, with 99.1% believing they would know what to do. This is consistent across volunteers of all backgrounds.

Cadets also show a clear belief that they would know who to go to if they were hurt or abused by someone else at Sea Cadets. This, coupled with very high levels of trust in Sea Cadets, suggests MSSC is a place where cadets feel relatively safe and know who to go to if needed.

LGBTQ+ young people, ethnic minority young people, disabled young people, young carers and looked-after young people reported similar results to cadets as a whole.

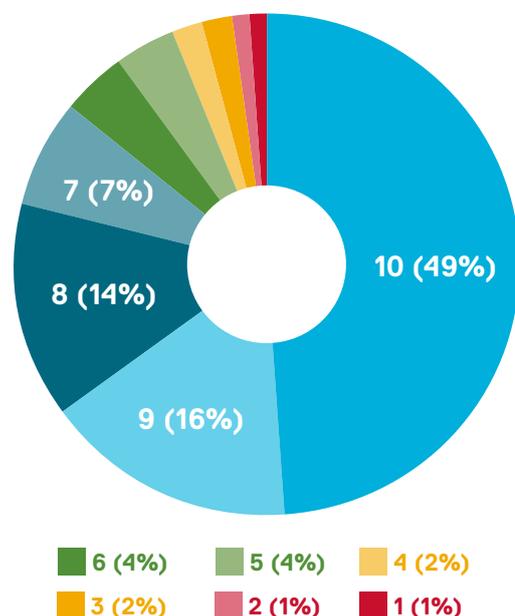
Black cadets showed a significantly lower (but still highly positive) response compared to their peers, with around 88% saying they know who to go to for help. Given the relatively small number of Black respondents, it's unclear whether this is a significant trend.

While the results overall are extremely positive, it's concerning that 5% of cadets don't know where to go for help. An initial hypothesis was these cadets would predominantly be newer cadets who hadn't yet been introduced to the MSSC safeguarding system. However, this doesn't appear to be the case.

In fact, we found the 5% of cadets who didn't know who to go to for help also had lower overall satisfaction in the organisation, with a net promoter score of +19 (compared to +57 for cadets as a whole). They also had lower (but still quite positive) levels of trust in volunteers and the Sea Cadet Corps as a whole than their peers. This may suggest a significant reason for 5% of cadets not knowing where to go for help is that they simply don't trust or have much confidence in the organisation.

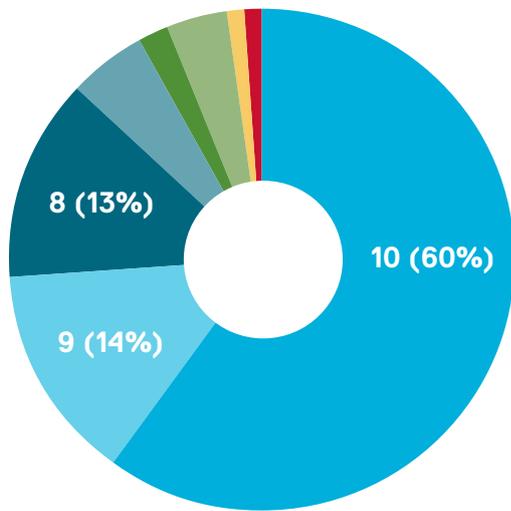
More actively pushing awareness of how to reach out about concerns to independent bodies may be worthwhile, so this 5% group are still able to raise concerns even if they don't feel comfortable doing so with Sea Cadets.

On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is 'would not be dealt with appropriately' and 10 is 'would definitely be dealt with appropriately', how confident are you that if you had to raise an issue with the safeguarding team, the issue would be dealt with appropriately (volunteers)?



Volunteers showed a very high level of confidence in the Sea Cadets safeguarding process, with just under half completely confident that the matter would be handled appropriately, and 79% highly confident (8-10 on the scale).

On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is 'would not be dealt with appropriately' and 10 is 'would definitely be dealt with appropriately', how confident are you that if you had to raise an issue with the safeguarding team, the issue would be dealt with appropriately (parents/carers)?



7 (5%) 6 (2%) 5 (4%) 4 (1%)
3 (0%) 2 (0%) 1 (1%)

Parents/carers showed an even stronger level of confidence in the safeguarding system than volunteers and cadets, with 60% completely confident things would be appropriately resolved and 87% highly confident.



4.2 COMPLAINTS

Overall, respondents' views of Sea Cadets' complaint system are broadly positive (although much less so than safeguarding). Parents/carers reported a much more positive perspective than volunteers.

There was no sign that any marginalised groups have a less positive experience of our complaint system.

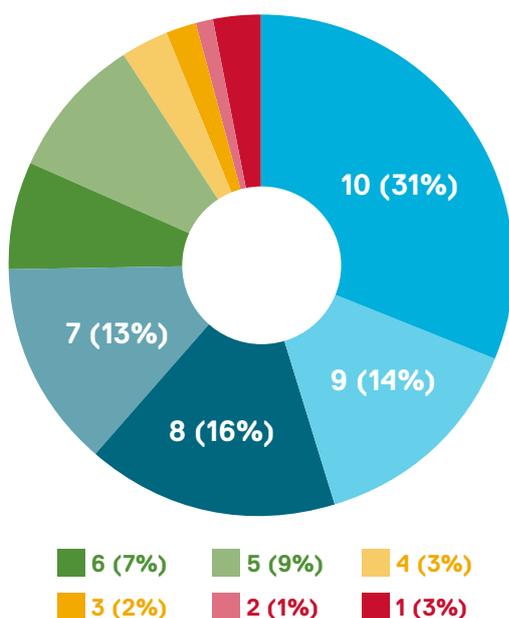
Sea Cadets has a transparent and effective process to handle complaints ²⁷	Volunteers	Parents/carers
Strongly disagree	7%	5%
Somewhat disagree	10%	4%
Totally disagree	17%	9%
Neither agree nor disagree	33%	27%
Somewhat agree	30%	20%
Strongly agree	20%	43%
Totally agree	50%	63%

Volunteers reported a mixed view of the complaint system. While very few strongly disagree with it being a transparent and effective method, a significant minority do. A very large group (33%) also gave an ambiguous result.

Marginalised groups reported a similar level of confidence in the system to their peers.

Parents/carers have a significantly more positive perception of our complaint system than volunteers.

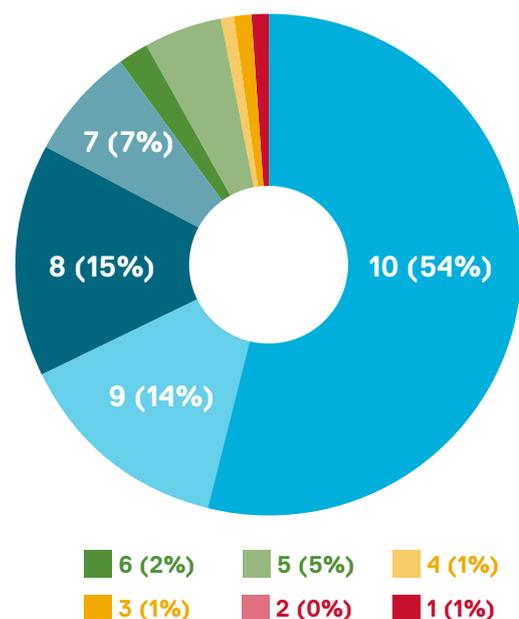
On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is 'would not be dealt with appropriately' and 10 is 'would definitely be dealt with appropriately', how confident are you that if you had to raise an issue with the complaints team the issue would be dealt with appropriately (volunteers)?



Volunteers' confidence in how well our complaint system would support them is broadly positive, with about 61% (8-10 on the scale) showing a high degree of confidence things would be resolved well. However, there is a significant minority (9%) who were less confident that things would be resolved.

This 9% group didn't appear to have any common feature beyond a general lower level of satisfaction in Sea Cadets as a whole.

On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is 'would not be dealt with appropriately' and 10 is 'would definitely be dealt with appropriately', how confident are you that if you had to raise an issue with the complaints team the issue would be dealt with appropriately (parents/carers)?



Parents/carers' views of our complaint system were overwhelmingly positive, with 83% (8-10 on the scale) extremely confident their issue would be resolved well.



5. Qualitative feedback

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

Cadets, parents and carers' feedback had similar themes, so we have summarised it all together.

5.1 CADETS

What is the best thing about Sea Cadets?²⁸

Best thing about Sea Cadets	% of total
Friends/community	29%
Activities/courses available	24%
Skills/life skills/life experience/learning	20%
Sea/boating/Navy interest	20%
Fun	6%

Cadets predominantly focused on courses/ education, making new friends and the experiences, opportunities and learning that Sea Cadets provides. Sea Cadets being fun was also raised, but less so, indicating enjoyment on top of the educational and life experiences Sea Cadets offers.

Cadets tell us the best things about Sea Cadets:

'Being around friends and creating a new family.'

14-year-old female royal marines cadet, Eastern Area

'Getting to go away and learn life skills and meet new people.'

15-year-old male sea cadet, North West Area

'The opportunities presented by courses. I have experienced a plethora of new activities from the courses I have done and I feel this is the greatest thing offered by Sea Cadets. For example,

a course like the offshore voyages is a niche experience that wouldn't be readily available to a large quota of the young people that attend Sea Cadets, and yet it teaches skills that are so vital and useful.'

16-year-old male sea cadet, South West Area

'Learning about the sea, getting out on the sea and being part of a team.'

11-year-old male sea cadet, South West Area

'Boating and water activity experiences, making new friends outside of school, learning new skills and qualifications.'

13-year-old female sea cadet, South West Area

As previously mentioned, a significant minority of cadets report having experienced loneliness or anxiety (30.2%). So cadets reporting making friends and being part of a community is positive, and shows Sea Cadets is continuing to deliver support to help this group.

The best thing about Sea Cadets (cadets word cloud)

learning drill
 friends new things
 boating sailing
 new skills qualifications
 people everything
 activities
 opportunities
 water new friends

What is the worst thing about Sea Cadets?²⁹

Worst thing about Sea Cadets?	Number	% of total
Activities/length of time/availability	39	25%
Staff/unit	19	12%
Sea/boating/maritime interest	17	11%
Uniform	15	10%
Late nights	15	10%
Trouble making friends/want more friends	14	9%
Unorganised	11	7%
Weather	7	4%
Covid	4	3%
Travel	5	3%
Cultural differences/lack of diversity	5	3%
Not being on enough days	4	3%
Being new – lack of info	3	2%
Portal	2	1%
Bullying	1	1%
Concentration	2	1%

There was far less consensus around the most negative element of Sea Cadets. Many of the answers reflect individual frustrations around a very specific activity or experience, hence the greater number of categories here.

Covid-19 and its profound effect on every facet of life may have distracted cadets from mentioning more minor concerns in 2020, and made them more inclined to mention them in 2022. For example, uniforms and staff/units were minor issues in 2020, but have increased significantly in 2022 as areas of frustration.

Despite the fact that making friends and being with friends were cited as some of the best things about Sea Cadets, a significant minority find this a challenging aspect. In spite of earlier, positive views that Sea Cadets is a friendly and community-centred experience, around 9% of cadets don't share this sentiment.

Below are some of the frustrations cadets reported:

'No flexibility in uniform rules to allow for teens to express our individuality e.g. piercings, hair styles etc.'

16-year-old female sea cadet, Eastern Area

'Repetition of activities and learning.'

13-year-old male sea cadet, Northern Area

'I find learning difficult and all we did at the unit was learn about the sections. There was no actual physical activities other than drill which became boring doing the same thing each week.'

13-year-old male sea cadet, South West Area

One of the concerns cadets expressed (17%) in 2020 was Covid-19. In 2022, Covid makes up just 4% of responses, a significant improvement and a sign that units (and Sea Cadets as a whole) were mostly back to normal.

The effect Covid has had for slightly older cadets, in terms of gaining qualifications and going away, but this has been dealt with quite well.'

17-year-old female royal marines cadet from our Southern Area on the worst thing about Sea Cadets

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

Improvements you would make	% of total
Different activities/more activities	29%
Unit/staff	18%
More sea/Navy	15%
More courses available	8%
More opportunities to socialise	8%
Help for those who are new	5%
Mental health facilities	3%
Diversity and inclusion	3%
Travel	2%
Portal	2%
Uniform	2%
Branding	2%
Covid	2%
Cadets having a say	1%

The overwhelming theme in response to what could improve Sea Cadets in the future is around offering a greater diversity and range of activities, along with unit and staff (volunteer) improvement. A recurring frustration is around the availability of certain activities, either due to age barriers (not being 12 yet) or certain activities not being available in some districts.

‘I love Sea Cadets but would love more adventures or outdoor activities like Go Ape, camping, sailing. I think there should be more stuff for the juniors to join in with. And junior cadets should be allowed to do the engineering courses please.’

11-year-old male sea cadet, North West Area

‘More outdoor activities, camping, day trips, more river time.’

11-year-old male sea cadet, North West Area

Cadets raised a number of issues around diversity and inclusion as well as scope for more new courses.

‘I would like to see less ambiguity on the dress regulations in the case of afro hair. As someone with afro hair, I feel this is a rather overlooked topic as options are either expensive and time-consuming or require regular cutting of

the hair which some may find unsettling (especially for females). I would also like to see more advanced courses being run, I do understand that instructors and venues are in very short supply; however, personally I find this was the main reason I stayed at cadets – courses. I do understand that there is probably a lot of effort being put into trying to get these courses to run again, but we have cadets who are unable to attend boards due to lack of intermediate courses, never mind advanced ones. For the final note, thank you to Sea Cadets as a whole for this amazing opportunity.’

16-year-old male sea cadet, North West Area

5.2 PARENTS AND CARERS

What is the best thing about Sea Cadets?

Theme	% of total
Friends/community	16%
Life skills	16%
Experience/opportunity	11%
Activities/courses	10%
Navy interest/sea-based activity	9%
Teamwork/belonging	8%
New skills	7%
Staff	5%
Learning/education	5%
Everything	3%
Diversity/inclusion	3%
Being focused and happy	2%
Fun	2%
Interest outside of home/ healthy	2%
Qualifications	1%
Safety	1%

The two themes that heavily dominated the positive responses from parents/carers were the friends their children made, community spirit/engagement and life skills gained. Life skills is parents/carers seeing improved confidence and communication skills in their children, with this sometimes being transferable to life or work.

Parents/carers tell us the best things about Sea Cadets:

‘The sense of family, respect and routine with amazing opportunities to learn new skills and attend courses that people may never have an opportunity to attend. My son was a junior for a short time and a cadet for almost four months, he loves cadets for this reason. He is gaining confidence in himself and his own abilities and is keen to explore new skills and challenge himself. He will volunteer for courses and has a desire to move through the ranks.’

Father of a cadet, Northern Area

‘Fun activities which build great teamwork and leadership skills. Empowering the cadets to believe in themselves and accept each other’s differences.’

Mother of a junior sea cadet, South West Area

‘Everything, so much opportunities for all, with fabulous people running it. My son is proud to be a sea cadet.’

Mother of sea cadet, London Area

‘Experiences, and as my child is home educated, having a uniformed experience is a life lesson.’

Mother of sea cadet

What is the worst thing about Sea Cadets?

Theme	% of total
Communication/information	20%
Unit facilities/culture/capabilities	20%
Lack of variety of events and courses/ repetition (drill)	14%
Late nights	10%
Travel/location	8%
Not on enough days	4%
Lack of diversity/inclusion	4%
Weather	3%
Uniform	3%
Too many days	2%
Funding	2%
Portal	2%
Cost	2%
Waiting list	1%
Motivating child to go	1%
Too many events	1%
Not enough water activity	1%
Dislikes everything	1%
Questionnaire	1%
Covid	1%
Red tape	1%

The more negative feelings expressed relate to communications and information received. This includes late notice or poor information around what their children were doing at cadets. It also includes negative feelings towards units, whether that be facilities, culture or capabilities, or a lack of volunteers.

‘Communication to parents currently relies on the cadet passing on information to a large extent and in our case, our child has ADHD and dyslexia which results in key information being missed, forgotten or omitted.’

Mother of a junior sea cadet, Eastern Area

A lack of variety/availability of courses and activities was raised the third most, particularly around repeated activities such as drill.

‘Long periods/whole evenings of standing during parade/drills – we have had to work hard to keep our son attending when this happens. (His dyspraxia may make this more challenging for him than other cadets of his age.)’

Mother of a junior sea cadet, North West Area

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

Theme	% of total
Communication/information	21%
More choice and availability of courses/events/activities	17%
Unit facilities/culture/capabilities	15%
Late nights and unsuitable timings	8%
More water-based activities and sessions/Royal Navy involvement	5%
Better advertisement	5%
Funding	4%
Inclusion and diversity	4%
Central admin support	4%
Travel	3%
Cost	3%
Uniform	3%
Portal	3%
Better rewards for courses	2%
More family involvement	1%
Covid	1%
Waiting lists	1%
More outdoor activity	1%

In terms of improvement, there seems to be a broad alignment in percentage share of answers with what parents think the worst things are about Sea Cadets – suggested improvements include solving problems with units and communication, and a better variety and availability of courses and activities.

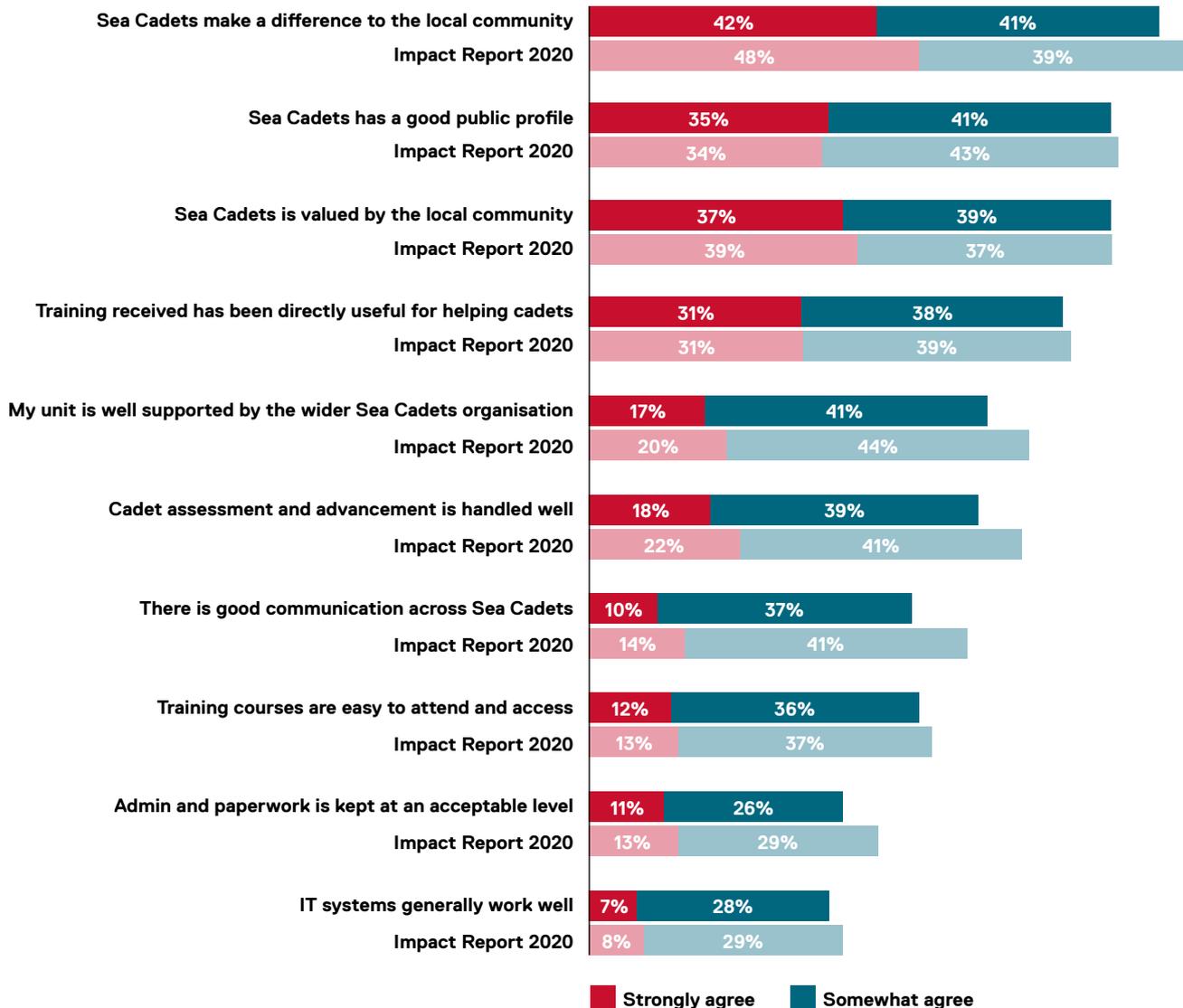
The best thing about Sea Cadets (parents word cloud)





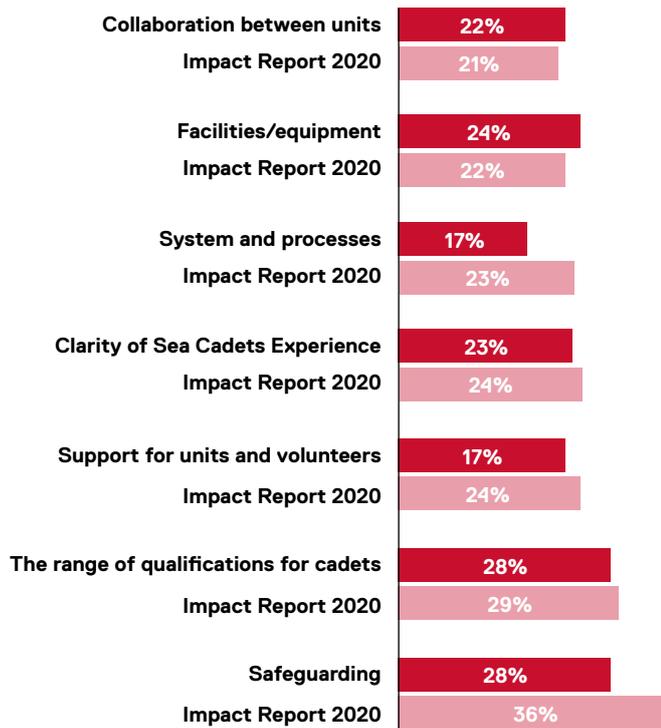
6. Volunteers' experience of Sea Cadets

6.1 VOLUNTEERS' VIEWS OF SEA CADETS



Volunteers' views on the overall experience of Sea Cadets have slightly worsened across the board from the previous survey. This is broadly in line with results from cadets. Despite this, these results are largely positive, with most statements receiving over 50% support.

6.2 IMPROVEMENTS IN THE PAST YEAR



Volunteers generally reported less improvement in their experience of MSSC in 2022 compared to in 2020. They rated collaboration between units and facilities/equipment broadly the same as previously.

Has anything else important improved in the last year?³⁰

Theme	Number of responses	% of total
Nothing	47	51%
Post-Covid improvements/face-to-face return/online integration	18	19%
Unit improvements/greater engagement	11	12%
Online training	6	6%
Digital	4	4%
Collaboration between units	3	3%
Course and qualification improvements	3	3%
Safeguarding	1	1%

Similar to 2020, volunteers' second most mentioned improvement was the handling of Covid-19 restrictions and transition to the post-Covid period in 2022. They indicated they were satisfied with online adaptations (video calls, more online training and better flexibility for volunteers), and face-to-face returns happening more frequently.

'Coming out of Covid is gradually improving things. Online courses save us travelling distances for new CFAVs [Cadet Force Adult Volunteers]. A mix of online and face-to-face make for variety but cadets work better with face-to-face so they can speak to fellow cadets.'

Male uniformed instructor, Northern Area

‘Blended learning has enabled cadets and volunteers that can travel readily to access courses they wouldn't have been able to access.’

Female uniformed instructor, Northern Area

Has anything else important become worse in the last year?³¹

Theme	% of total
Nothing	36%
Lack of support from MSSC/district/national training centre	9%
Communication	8%
Lack of volunteers	8%
Qualifications, courses and training for staff (lack of)	8%
Unit – getting uniforms etc.	8%
Access to courses and advancement for cadets	7%
Admin	6%
Digital	5%
Stores	2%
Covid	2%
Being valued	1%

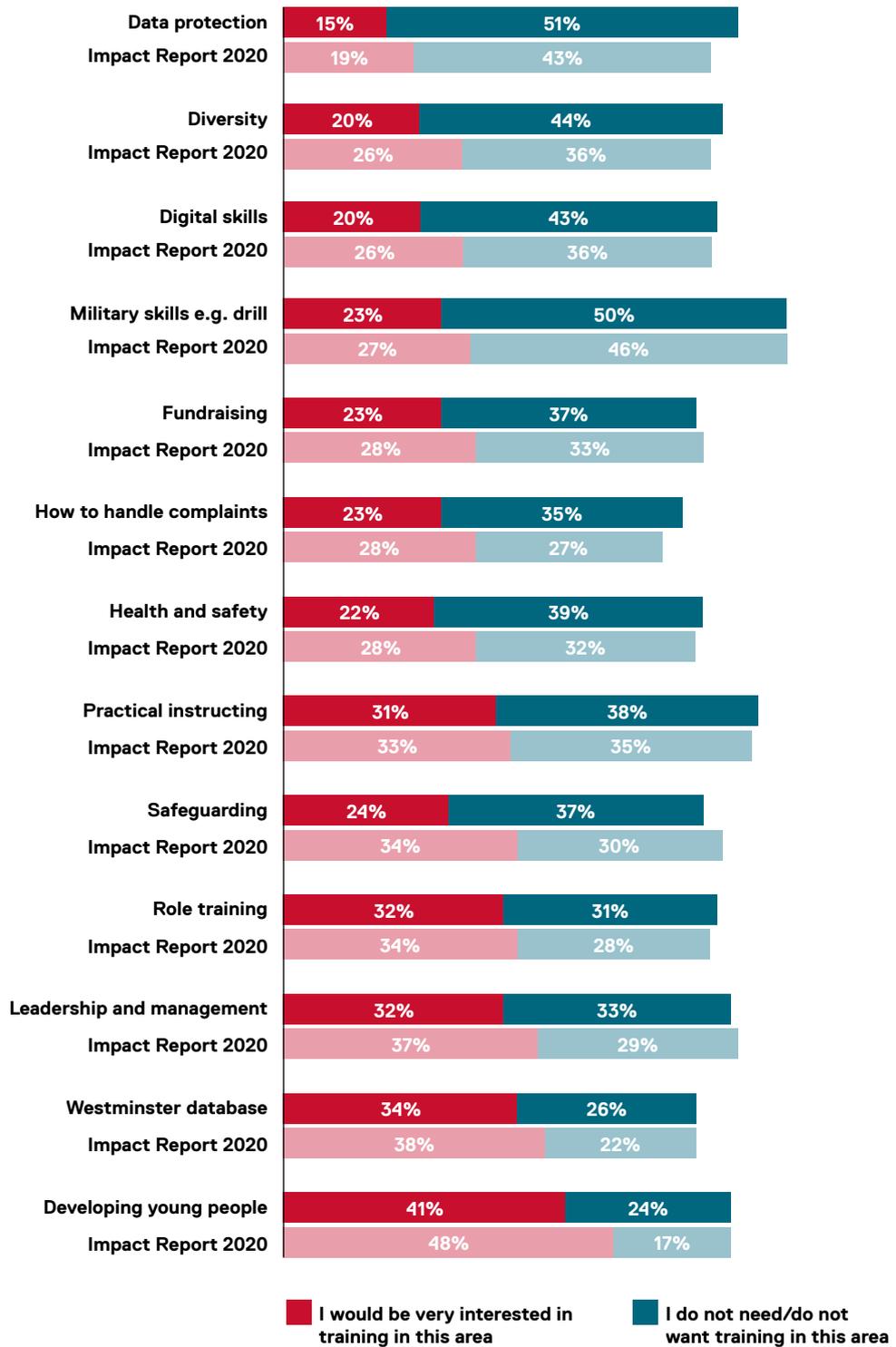
There is a considerable decrease in mentions of Covid compared to previous years. However, underlying the theme of a lack of volunteers is a frustration toward the post-Covid flexibility given to volunteers (leading to a reduction in volunteer days attended, or new volunteers wanting this flexibility), resulting in less reliable volunteers.

‘Being able to offer courses online and the flexibility Covid has given us, also has a negative effect. Staff do not need to turn up two nights a week due to commitments, family time etc. This means we need a lot more staff (double) in order to ensure safe parading. Be that in the unit, in the field or on water.’

Female uniformed instructor, Eastern Area



6.3 TRAINING PRIORITIES FOR VOLUNTEERS



In every category a lower percentage of volunteers said they were very interested in training compared to 2020. This suggests more volunteers are feeling comfortable and assured in multiple areas, year on year.

Volunteers are least interested in training on diversity, military skills and data protection. In 2020 volunteers were least interested in training on data, digital skills and diversity.

As in 2020, developing young people in a wide range of areas continues to be an area volunteers are keen for training in. Westminster database training places second highest, despite a reduction from 38% to 34% since 2020.

6.4 LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Finally, how else, if at all, would you improve Sea Cadets in the future? Please use this space to tell us about anything you think would make Sea Cadets a better place.

Theme	% of responses
Training/courses/activities	17%
Nothing	15%
Financial or other support	13%
More Royal Navy alignment	11%
Volunteer appreciation/ more volunteers	10%
Reduce bureaucracy/admin	9%
Communication/information	6%
Digital	5%
Unit	5%
MSSC/National Support Centre	4%
Travel	3%
Equality, diversity and inclusion improvements	2%
Too left-wing/political	1%

The most common area where volunteers would like to see more work in the future has remained the same as 2020: more training opportunities (for both cadets and volunteers). Additionally, with some concerned about general support for units, financial support to improve unit facilities and capabilities rated highly.

‘A more accessible range of cadet and adult training and events, for those in remote areas like Northern Ireland.’

Civilian instructor, Northern Area

‘Keep the links to the Navy strong and keep our cadets' activities fun but challenging.’

Unit management trustee, London Area

‘Re-design the digital footprint i.e. Portal, Westminster, link to defence learning in such a way that people can easily navigate and find what they are looking for. And make the digital platform a driver and support system for cadet and volunteer training and all related material, tracking, approvals, etc. Basically re-design the digital landscape to make it simple and usable as per the needs of the volunteers and cadets.’

Uniformed instructor, Southern Area

‘Reduce the burden of administration on volunteers and staff. This will improve recruitment and retention and this, in turn, will improve the cadets’ experience.’

A unit management team member, South West Area

‘Need to invest more in the key unit roles. Paid HQ staff are fine but you need to raise the game at unit and direct cadet-facing level if you are going to make a real difference.’

Unit management team member, Southern Area



7. Satisfaction and trust

7.1 TRUST

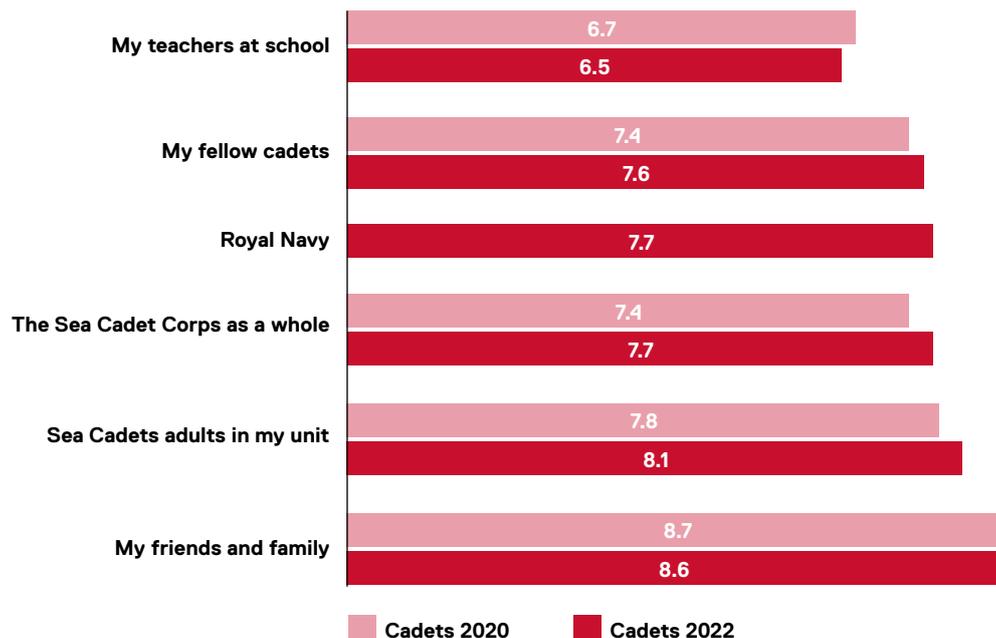
‘The whole unit, I think the adults are amazing, very well trusted and the cadets are fun to communicate with.’

15-year-old male royal marines cadet from our Northern Area on the best thing about Sea Cadets

Trust is very important for Sea Cadets. Cadets and parents need to trust the organisation to be able to commit their time and to share where they need help. Trust in volunteers also creates an effective working environment to support young people.

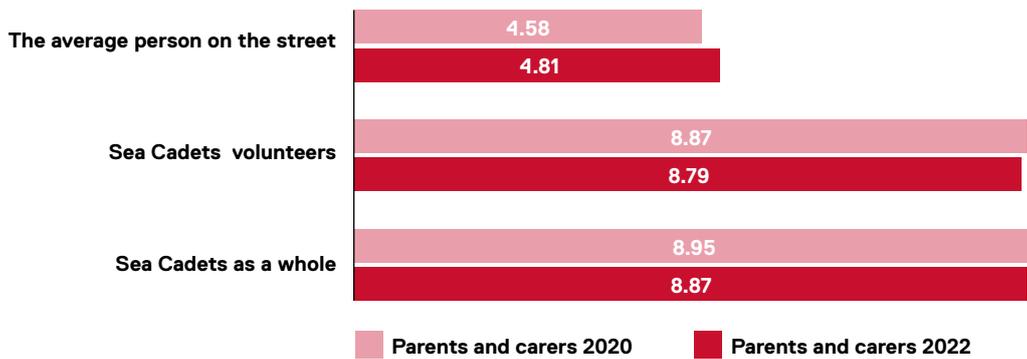
Higher levels of trust mean it’s more likely that stakeholders will be honest about their experiences too, increasing the validity of the results of this impact report and other projects.

Cadets' trust (10-point scale)



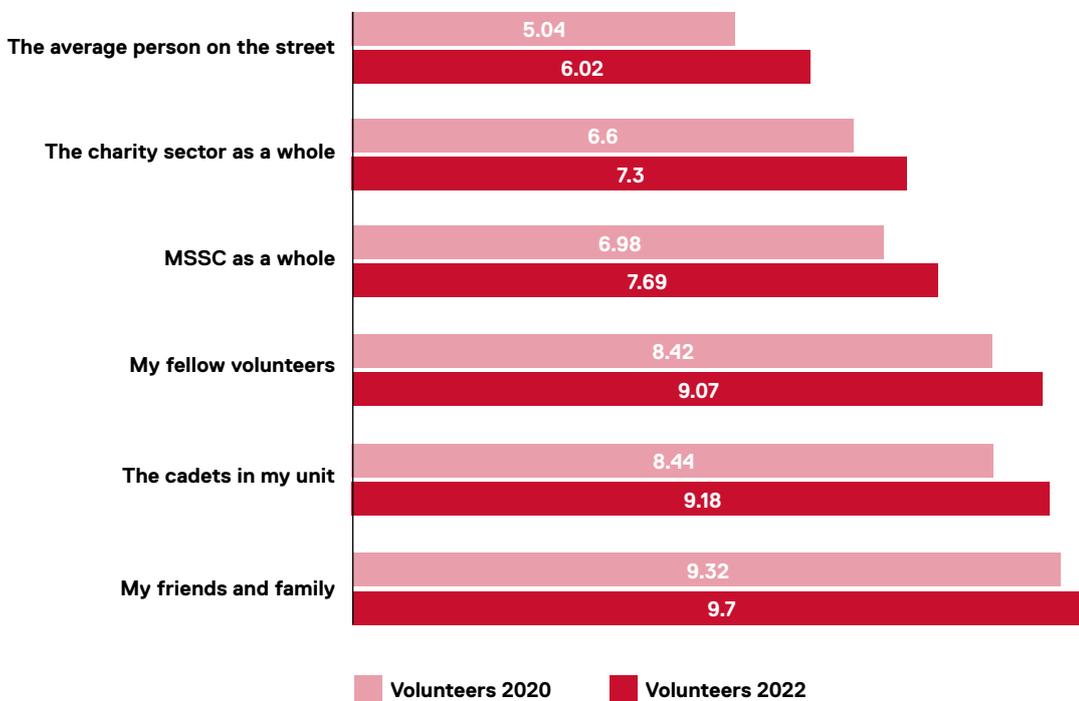
Cadets’ level of trust in the organisation remains broadly static compared to in 2020, with a slight (but below statistical relevance) increase overall. This is within the context of historically very high results, and should be seen as a positive finding/overall trend. It’s particularly interesting given the trend throughout this report of young people reporting slightly lower levels of impact. This suggests that while the difference Sea Cadets has made to young people may have declined, they continue to have a very high degree of trust in the organisation as a whole.

Parents' and carers' trust (10-point scale)



Parents' and carers' level of trust in Sea Cadets remains very high, and in line with previous years. This strongly suggests that parents and carers are likely to trust Sea Cadets with their children and follow the advice the organisation gives.

Volunteers' trust (10-point scale)



Across the board, volunteers' level of trust in Sea Cadets has slightly increased. However, volunteers also had a higher level of trust in people in general. This suggests volunteers are generally trusting of Sea Cadets and therefore likely to meaningfully engage with and believe information we share with them. However, this increase in trust isn't due to anything Sea Cadets has done, but more general changes in how the volunteer population perceive the wider world. This could be down to a change in the mix of volunteers, or changing experiences over the last few years.

7.2 OVERALL SATISFACTION

‘It’s fun, you get to hang out with cool people and learn new skills.’

13-year-old male cadet from our Eastern Area on what’s best 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’s 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 discuss this experience.
- ‘Passives’, who had a broadly okay experience.
- ‘Promoters’, who had a highly positive experience and are likely to tell others.

Based on this it then produces a score between -100 and +100. The chart below shows the percentage of cadets, volunteers and parents/carers who fell into each category in 2022 (figures in brackets denote the percentage point change on 2020) and the overall net promoter score for each group.

	Detractors	Passives	Promoters	NPS
Cadets	10% (down by 3 percentage points)	22% (up 4ppt)	67% (up 5ppt)	+57 (up 8)
Volunteers	22% (up by 1ppt)	33% (static)	45% (down 2ppt)	+23 (down 3)
Parents and carers	6% (static)	16% (down 3ppt)	78% (up 3ppt)	+72 (up 3)

In 2022, cadets showed a significant improvement in overall satisfaction (from an already high baseline). While their score hasn’t quite recovered to its pre-pandemic peak of +62, it is still a positive sign, and suggests young people are generally having a good experience at Sea Cadets.

Overall volunteer satisfaction figures have technically dropped and scores for parents/carers have slightly increased. However, differences are so slight that they’re well within the margin of error of analysis, so should be treated as static results.

It’s also important to put these results in context. Volunteers’ satisfaction levels have risen greatly since the 2017 survey (+9 in 2017, +26 in 2020, +23 in 2022). This shows the substantial gains in volunteers’ satisfaction since 2017 have largely been sustained despite the additional stresses of the last few years.

In the case of parents/carers, this broadly static result is still incredibly high for a net promoter score, showing an overwhelmingly positive experience of Sea Cadets.

7.3 IMPLICATIONS OF SATISFACTION DIFFERENCES BY POPULATION

Interestingly, if we look at specific communities some show a marked difference in satisfaction to others.

Junior sea cadets are much more likely to report a positive experience, with a net promoter score of +73. This is largely caused by a very low number of detractors (only 5% of juniors, so less than half that of older cadets) coupled with a very high rate of promoters (78%). While this suggests junior cadets are having a highly positive experience, a small note of caution is that this may be due to their younger age (they may be more generally excited about everything).

LGBTQA+ and disabled and neurodivergent sea cadets are much more likely to report a negative experience. LGBTQA+ cadets reported a net promoter score of +38, compared to +54 for those who identify as straight.³² Disabled and neurodivergent cadets had a score of +49, compared to an average of +58 for their peers.

The same tendency is seen for volunteers, but with more significant differences between groups. Disabled volunteers reported an NPS of +9 and LGBTQA+ volunteers reported a score of +4 (compared to average of +23).

In the case of both cadets and volunteers, this is in line with trends from 2020, which showed these cohorts reporting lower levels of satisfaction. In both cases we engaged in a deep dive of qualitative responses to see if there was any sign of systemic homophobia or ableism, but we didn't identify any trends. Given the high levels of trust cadets reported, it would seem likely that if they were experiencing these issues, they would mention it in the survey (they trust the organisation enough to be honest). This therefore suggests the issue is more likely caused by an overall less welcoming environment and/or potential micro-aggressions towards LGBTQA+ and disabled/neurodivergent young people, instead of explicit discrimination.

Asian cadets show slightly lower levels of satisfaction with Sea Cadets as a whole than White cadets, with an average of +49 compared to +57.³⁵ As with LGBTQA+ and disabled/neurodivergent groups, we examined the qualitative data to see if there was any sign of explicit racism and found no evidence of this. This suggests another case of non-inclusive culture/micro-aggressions instead of explicit discrimination.



8. Sea Cadets Portal

Our Sea Cadets Portal empowers cadets and gives them more information, enabling them to engage more closely with the amazing opportunities we offer.

Our survey found links between increased satisfaction with the Sea Cadets Portal and increased satisfaction with the overall cadet experience. It also found that disadvantaged cadets are more likely to recommend and use the Portal than their socio-economically advantaged peers.

8.1 PORTAL SATISFACTION

Looking at levels of satisfaction with the Sea Cadets Portal, we see a trend towards slight overall dissatisfaction, with 33% of users reporting they were promoters and 37% detractors, with an overall NPS of -3.5. This is, however, a significant improvement from the initial Portal roll-out, which showed an NPS of -14 in 2020. We are confident in these results with a high degree of statistical significance. Satisfaction in the Portal has substantially grown, although it still remains relatively low compared to satisfaction with Sea Cadets as a whole (+57).

A more broadly positive experience of the Portal had a strong correlation with being likely to be a promoter of cadets in general. Detractors of the Portal were much

less likely to recommend Sea Cadets, with a mean score of 7.9, compared to promoters' 9.45. We can be very confident of this difference statistically. It doesn't appear promoters of Sea Cadets are inherently more likely to have a positive experience of the Portal itself.

8.2 SOCIO-ECONOMIC DISADVANTAGE AND PORTAL USAGE

We wanted to test if people from economically disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to be dissatisfied with the Portal. This is based on the hypothesis that having less access to up-to-date technology, for example good wi-fi, could affect ease of use.

Interestingly, while Portal usage was broadly similar between young people from different economic backgrounds, those from disadvantaged backgrounds (living in the bottom 20% of neighbourhoods, ranked by the government's Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)) show a slightly higher (but statistically significant) level of satisfaction in the Portal as a platform.

This is an unexpected result – our hypothesis is that it may have been driven by the Portal's ability to open up additional opportunities, which may be rarer for young people from less well-off backgrounds.

How often do you use the Portal?	Bottom 20 percentile IMD	Top 80 percentile IMD	Grand total
Never	3%	1%	2%
I've used it once or twice	18%	24%	23%
Occasionally	40%	42%	42%
Regularly	26%	24%	24%
Very regularly	14%	9%	10%

'I can express my interest in courses. I can see my progress. There is information on what is happening in the world of Sea Cadets. I like the Forum. I can see when my friends have booked on similar courses.'

15-year-old female cadet from our South West Area on the benefits of the Sea Cadets Portal

8.3 TRAINING AND PORTAL USAGE

Sea Cadets who had a positive view of the Portal (were promoters of it) were much more likely to find training as a whole enjoyable than those who were detractors.

Appendix 1: Methodology

This report draws primarily from three surveys conducted in April 2022. We distributed surveys to all cadets as well as the cadets' primary contact (for parents/carers) and volunteers.

We distributed surveys by email with regular reminders. People could choose to complete it in their own time, although in some cases we also know people completed it as part of regulated activity.

A 1.1 SURVEY DESIGN

We based the design on previous iterations of our impact survey, with edits made based on feedback from the previous (2020) survey.

A 1.2 STATISTICAL SIGNIFICANCE

When statistical significance is referred to, this relates to a test we conducted on the differences between the 2020 and 2022 Impact Reports. A statistically significant difference means we have a 99% or higher confidence that the difference recorded between the two surveys is true and not due to randomness.

A 1.3 DISTRIBUTION METHOD AND RESPONSE RATES

We distributed all three surveys by email and sent regular reminders to respondents. 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 compared with our organisation-wide administrative data) means this isn't a substantial concern.

Confidence intervals

	Responses ³⁴	Population	Confidence interval ³⁵ (2020 results)
Cadets	2,559	13,579	95/1.73 (95/2.47)
Volunteers	2,762	8,511	95/1.53 (95/1.82)
Parents and carers	2,927	19,010 ³⁶	95/1.67 (95/2.07)

All three surveys showed a positive confidence interval which, coupled with the broadly representative nature of the sample demographics, means MSSC can have confidence in the validity of the results. This is especially the case for many of the impact findings where feedback from cadets, volunteers and parents/carers is broadly consistent. This shows not only a commonality in their views as to the impact of the specific outcome, but it's a way to check/validate the data against the perceptions of the other groups.

There were significant improvements in the response rate and resulting confidence interval for cadets in comparison to 2020. Volunteers and parents/carers saw slight but still significant improvements.

A 1.4 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:

Cadets: On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is not at all likely and 10 extremely likely, how likely is it that you would recommend Sea Cadets to a friend?

Volunteers: On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is not at all likely and 10 extremely likely, how likely is it that you would recommend volunteering at Sea Cadets to a friend or colleague?

It splits users into three categories:

- ‘Detractors’, who are likely to have had a negative experience and discuss this experience (score of 0-6)
- ‘Passives’, who had a broadly okay experience but won’t 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 give an overall net promoter score between -100 and +100.

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

This model gives a confident read of overall levels of satisfaction. Also, the higher the score, the more likely people are to recommend their experience to others, helping to drive recruitment/growth.

ONS wellbeing questions

These are a set of questions on a 10-point scale developed by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), each of which measures a different element of wellbeing (satisfaction or happiness, for example):

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?

While the survey asked these questions, we couldn’t find any general trends around the impact of Sea Cadets on wellbeing. This is in part as we saw the ebbs and flows expected as a young person ages (for example, young girls in particular often see a decline in wellbeing in their teens). This made it impractical to identify what causes changes. As such we haven’t reported on this part of the assessment discussions in detail in this report.

General self-efficacy short scale

This scale uses five questions graded on a four-point scale (not at all true; hardly true; moderately true; extremely true), with a numeric score based on what you select, for example 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.

While we asked cadets about self-efficacy, we couldn’t find any overall pattern in relation to their results so we haven’t reported on this in detail in this report.

Charity Commission trust scale

The question below 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?

Indices of multiple deprivation

Indices of multiple deprivation is a tool the UK government developed to assess relative socio-economic disadvantage between different areas in the UK. It uses postcodes to tie people to an overall score between one and 10, based on which percentile of socio-economic deprivation their neighbourhood is ranked in compared to the rest of the UK.

A 1.5 REDUCING ANALYTICAL BIAS

We developed this report in-house. As such, we recognise that there is some inherent potential bias as our researchers are themselves employees of MSSC.

Andrew Weston (Head of Policy and Insight) oversaw the analysis. He has a background in independent charity evaluation and therefore experience of how to both engage analysis and present data in a way that minimises bias.

The researchers/authors work in our Policy and Insight Team, which isn't directly involved in delivering any frontline services, reducing any personal investment in positive results.

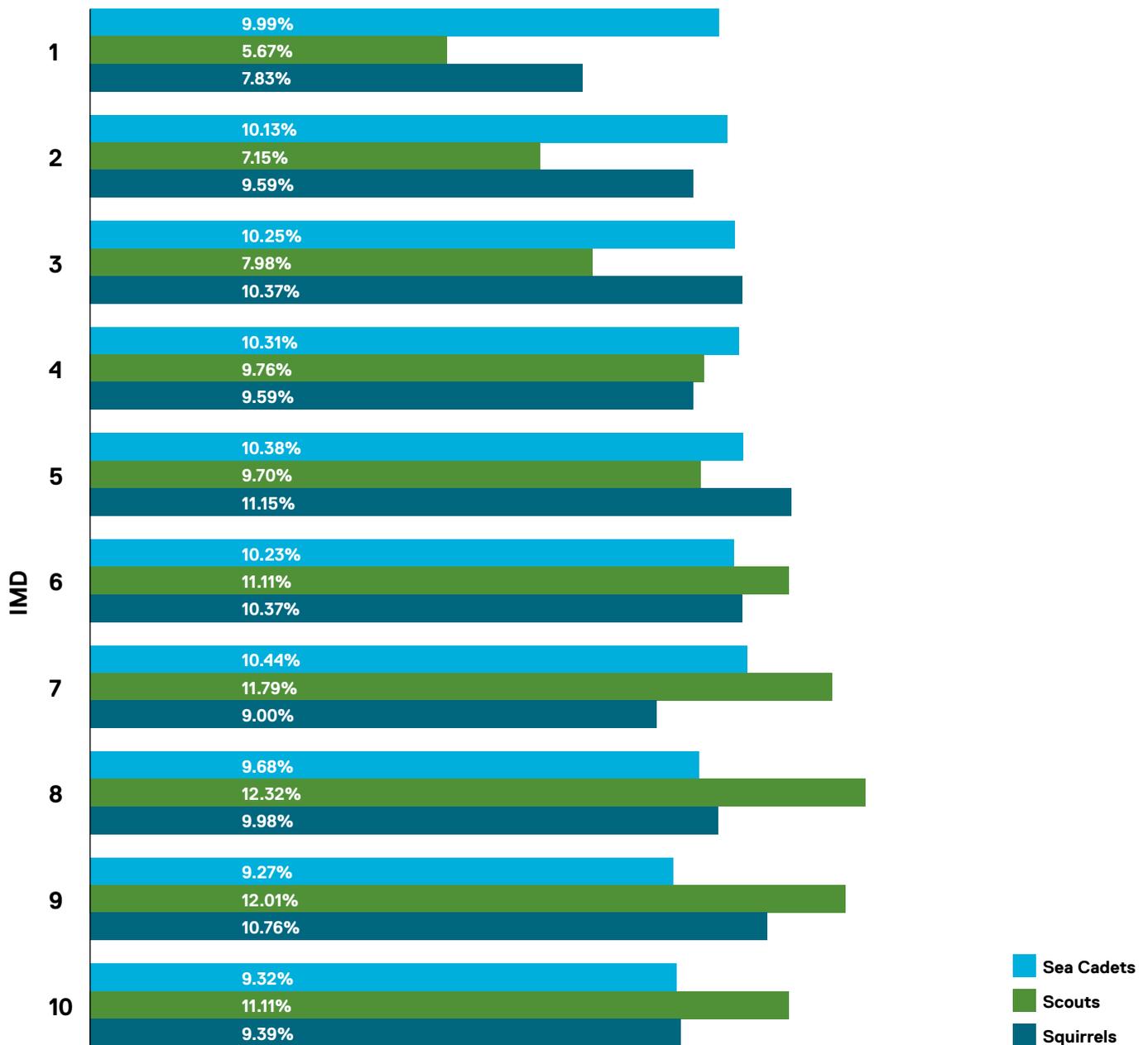
The National Support Centre's Senior Management Team gave broad autonomy in setting the wording and structure of the survey, reducing any potential for bias.

Where possible we have based questions either on wording provided by prior independent analysis, for example NPC's (New Philanthropy Capital) prior consultancy work, or pre-existing validated scales, reducing any potential bias in wording.

Appendix 2: Scouts, Squirrels and Sea Cadets comparison

Sea Cadets and Scouts comparison³⁷

% living in each Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) category area (1=most disadvantaged)



This chart looks at how well Sea Cadets and Scouts reach economically disadvantaged young people, compared with Squirrels – a targeted programme by Scouts to provide outreach to younger children in economically disadvantaged communities.

Indices of multiple deprivation (IMD) is a measure the UK government uses to identify levels of relative economic disadvantage. An individual IMD score is based on someone's decile of relative economic deprivation compared to the general population; for example, a score of 1 would mean you live in the most deprived 10% (decile) of areas.³⁸ The chart on the previous page groups young people into 10 groups based on their IMD scores, with group 1 being the most disadvantaged.

Sea Cadets shows a significantly higher engagement from underrepresented groups than Scouts – we have nearly double the number of children from group 1 in Sea Cadets than there are in Scouts.

However, the most interesting finding is when we compare Sea Cadets and Squirrels. Sea Cadets is open-access youth work while Squirrels initially (and for the period the data was collected) explicitly targeted harder-to-reach communities. In principle, therefore, we would expect this to be an unfair comparison and for Squirrels to significantly outperform Sea Cadets.

However, looking at the most disadvantaged groups (1-4), there was a strong trend of Sea Cadets outperforming Squirrels. This was most marked among the most disadvantaged young people (group 1). Overall, Sea Cadets narrowly outperformed Squirrels when looking at reach towards economically disadvantaged groups. 40.68% of cadets are in the bottom four groups of the IMD (so face some level of economic disadvantage), compared to 37.38% of Squirrels.

This tells us Sea Cadets performs well in comparison to other open-access uniformed youth work organisation (for example, in comparison to Scouts in general). But, while remaining open-access, we do at least as well as targeted youth work – and in this case marginally better than Squirrels – in successfully engaging young people from economically disadvantaged backgrounds.



Endnotes

1. The disruption of the Covid-19 pandemic delayed the collection of data until most units were back to face-to-face delivery.
2. A download of the demographic results covering all the sea cadets registered in MSSC's central 'Westminster' database.
3. We surveyed 2,569 people, but this figure only includes 2,334 due to some postcodes being unidentifiable. For this and the 'Bottom 20% household income' section we use the Indices of Multiple Deprivation, which is a reliable government indicator of socio-economic status.
4. The general population benchmark is slightly different to the Impact Report 2020 due to using government rather than Experian Mosaic data. Overall, the cadet and parent results remain comparable to 2020 despite the shift in data used.
5. A term coined by the Local Trust community funder to describe areas suffering from deprivation and lacking social infrastructure. The term was then adopted by the UK government's 'Levelling Up' initiative to support 'left behind' areas. Previous Sea Cadets Impact Reports have the Local Trust's 2019 report for comparison data; this report uses more up-to-date but comparable information from the UK government's list of areas in need of priority levelling up support.
6. Drawn from government data from the Levelling Up Fund round two, which gave three levels of priority category areas (highest to lowest, 1-3) which are currently 'left behind'. Excludes Northern Ireland.
7. 2021/22 figures, based on England, from the Department for Education. Free school meal eligibility has continued to go up year on year due to loosening of the criteria.
8. See Appendix 2, Scouts, Squirrels and Sea Cadets for an in-depth example of this.
9. Independent school headcount 21-22 – Create your own tables, Table Tool – explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk
10. 2020, UK figure, defined as children under 18 years old not living with their parents – estimated percentage of children aged under 18 by family type, UK, 2005 to 2020 – Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk) (82,000 looked-after children).
11. Family Resources Survey: financial year 2020 to 2021 – (www.gov.uk).
12. In normal circumstances we would also compare with figures taken from sea cadets and volunteers as a whole via the central database (as opposed to just those who responded to the survey). This wasn't possible in 2022 due to a change in how we report on ethnicity occurring after the data was collected. However, it will be possible in future years. Based on benchmarking where the comparable statistics are available, we know the survey respondents were broadly representative of the ethnicities of cadets as a whole.
13. Drawing from the 2022 UK Census.
14. In line with best practice in relation to equity, diversity and inclusion, MSSC is largely moving away from using aggregated statistics in relation to ethnicity (for example, BAME or BIPOC). This is why we have included more detailed breakdowns than we previously reported.
15. Of the 60 other responses, we manually recoded 25 to one of the main categories, as they clearly fit the definition. For example, we would have recoded someone writing 'Black African and Caribbean' in an open field as Black.
16. There was insufficient data from other ethnic groups to give a confident quantitative assessment of differing experiences.
17. White cadets were broadly in line with the average at +58.49.
18. These figures also broadly aligned with figures reported by parents, further increasing our confidence about the validity of the data.
19. Family Resources Survey: financial year 2020 to 2021 – (www.gov.uk).
20. SEN_2019_Text.docx.pdf (publishing.service.gov.uk) – this gives the percentage of autistic children in school.
21. Unfortunately, the number of respondents was too small to do detailed analysis on satisfaction or perceived impact.
22. Male and female are the only two options available to be recorded in Westminster (the administrative database the records cadet demographic information)
23. The total number of responses for young people who didn't identify as male or female is too small for quantitative analysis. However, examination of the qualitative questions suggests their experiences are broadly in line with the cadet population as a whole.
24. We only asked cadets aged 12+ this question.
25. Responses of 'don't know' have been excluded from the count.
26. As anxiety runs on a different scale to the other questions (with a high score as a negative result, i.e. 10 is most anxious), for ease of reading we have mirrored/reversed the scale to more easily compare with the other wellbeing questions, i.e. an average of one (the most positive result) would be displayed as 10 (in line with the most positive results of the other wellbeing questions) while an average of 10 would be displayed as one (the least positive of the other wellbeing questions).
27. Volunteers and parents were able to select multiple categories in this question, leading to results that total more than 100%.
28. Sample: 15% of total responses for this question (255) – picked at random.
29. Sample: 15% of total responses for this question (156) – picked at random.
30. Sample: 15% of total responses (553) for this question (83) – picked at random.
31. Sample: 15% of total responses 731 for this question (110) – picked at random.
32. Disparity between this and the overall results is due to only cadets aged 12+ being asked the sexuality questions, alongside some who decided not to answer. All juniors were excluded from the sample.
33. White cadets were broadly in line with the average at +58.49.
34. Most questions could be skipped. As such, the precise number of responses per question varies slightly. However, if a respondent completed the first non-demographic question, they were likely to complete the survey. This is therefore used as the line for what counts as a response.
35. With a target of confidence level of 95 and confidence interval of no more than five (95% of the time can be confident the result is accurate to within five points).
36. This is an estimate based on the average number of parents per child in the UK (1.4).
37. IMD data for Sea Cadets taken from a full download of all sea cadets in Scotland, England and Wales on 16 December 2021. Data from Scouts is taken from <https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:6872242974475087872/> (2021).
38. Both groups largely use the UK as a whole although the figures for Sea Cadets exclude Northern Ireland, due to a different methodology used by Northern Ireland to calculate its IMD. As this impacts approximately 2.8% of the UK's population it's not expected to meaningfully distort results.

