



National Qualifications 2023–24

Research: Learner Experiences

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Executive summary

Introduction

Between 2021–23, SQA conducted annual evaluations of the modified assessment approach for Graded National Courses that had been implemented due to the COVID-19 pandemic, to understand its effectiveness and gather insights from stakeholders. Now SQA's research needs have shifted. Consequently, SQA developed a wave-based quantitative research approach to track evolving perceptions of National Qualifications over time, inspired by Ofqual's annual survey but limited to those with recent lived experience. We intend for this research to continue annually unless there are significant changes to the context.

Furthermore, to note, these findings were gathered during a period of intense external scrutiny of the consistency of standards across years.

Method

This research aimed to capture the perceptions of learners who had undertaken National Qualifications (NQ) in 2023–24 about a range of topics related to their NQs. These included:

- ◆ National 4, National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher
- ◆ Assessment, awarding and results
- ◆ Impact of the legacy of the pandemic on learning and teaching

The research also sought to understand how learner respondents with different characteristics (gender, ethnicity, LGBTQIA+ status, SIMD, care experienced status and disability/Additional Support Need status) experienced aspects of their NQ qualifications in 2023–24.

Learners in centres across Scotland were invited to take part in an online survey on these topics in September and October 2024. The survey received 2349 full responses. The data was then analysed by using a mixture of descriptive statistics and statistical significance tests to assess statistically significant differences in the responses between different demographic sub-groups.

A detailed explanation of the methods used can be found in the methodology chapter and the technical appendix.

Results

National 4, National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher

Overall, the majority of learner respondents agreed that National 4s, National 5s, Highers and Advanced Highers were good preparation for further study and developed a broad range of skills for learners. Perceptions of National 4 qualifications were poorer than the other three qualifications in regards to whether the qualifications developed a broad range of skills for

learners, were good preparation for further study, and were trusted qualifications. The proportion of learners who agreed that Higher standards were maintained year on year was also noticeably lower, when compared to their perceptions of other aspects of Higher qualifications.

The statement that generally had the highest proportion of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing was that National 4, National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher qualifications were 'good preparation for further study', at between 67% and 77% for all levels. The proportion who disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement was between 10% and 15% for all the qualifications surveyed.

The proportions of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed that the qualification they had studied in 2023–24 developed 'a broad range of skills for learners' was slightly lower, but still a majority, being within a 9 percentage-point range (between 54% and 62%) for each qualification level. The proportion who expressed disagreement with this statement was between 21% and 15% for each qualification level.

For the statement 'National 4/National 5/Higher/Advanced Higher are good preparation for work', the proportion of learner respondents who agreed or strongly agreed was between 44% and 54% for all qualifications, while the proportion who disagreed or strongly disagreed was in the 20 to 27 percentage-point range.

In response to the statement 'National 4/National 5/Higher/Advanced Higher standards are maintained year on year' the range of agreement among respondents who had undertaken different qualifications was generally lower, at between 51% for National 4 and National 5 and 39% for Higher respondents. The level of disagreement with this statement among respondents for different qualification levels was more varied than the other statements. Seven percent expressed disagreement with this statement for National 4, while 29% disagreed or strongly disagreed for Higher.

There were differences in opinion for the statement 'National 4/National 5/Higher/Advanced Highers are trusted qualifications' among different qualification levels. For learner respondents who studied at Higher in 2023–24, the highest level of agreement came for this statement at 83%. In comparison, 52% of respondents felt the same way for National 4, a 31-percentage point difference. The proportion of respondents who disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement was between 5% and 17% of respondents for all qualification levels.

Assessment, awarding and results

There were high levels of agreement with statements relating to assessment communications. Seventy-five per cent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they understood how their grades would be determined in 2023–24. Sixty-seven per cent expressed agreement that 'the assessment process was communicated to [them] effectively' and 68% felt the same way for the statement 'I received information on how my grades would be determined early enough in the academic year'.

In relation to their NQ workload in 2023–24, a strong majority (69%) opted for the statement ‘I had to work hard, but my workload was broadly reasonable’, while 25% said that their workload was unreasonably high, and 6% felt that they did not have to work very hard overall.

Over half (55%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they were happy with their NQ examination timetable in 2023–24.

Around half of learner respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the assessment process was fair to them (53%) and that they were satisfied with the assessment process (47%).

When asked how they felt about their results in 2024, around half of respondents (51%) felt they ‘broadly matched [their] expectations’ and around a quarter each felt that their results fell below what they were expecting (26%) or exceeded what they were expecting (23%)

Impact of the legacy of COVID-19 on learning

This year’s research showed that the pandemic continued to have an impact on learning. The majority of respondents (62%) agreed or strongly agreed that the pandemic has had an effect on the development of their skills and knowledge, while 51% agreed or strongly agreed that the pandemic continued to have an impact on their learning.

The most common response to the statement ‘I feel the pandemic continues to affect my wellbeing’, was to disagree or strongly disagree — 42% opted for this, compared with 38% who agreed or strongly agreed.

The results of this year’s survey were compared to the previous year and it was found that a slightly higher proportion of respondents in 2023–24 agreed or strongly agreed that the pandemic continued to have an impact on their learning and that it continues to affect their mental wellbeing, compared to 2022–23. The proportion of learners who agreed or strongly agreed that the pandemic has influenced the development of their skills and knowledge dropped by five percentage points between 2022–23 and 2023–24, but these small changes do not necessarily indicate a wider trend in learner attitudes in Scotland and readers should be wary of attempting to generalise these findings.

Differences in perceptions of NQ by demographic sub-group

Respondents with a disability or additional support need (ASN), from Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)¹ areas or who are care-experienced had lower levels of satisfaction with communications about grades and assessment.

There were lower levels of satisfaction with National 4 from respondents from white ethnic groups, compared to minority ethnic groups. However, readers should exercise caution when attempting to generalise this finding to the wider population due to the small number of minority ethnic National 4 respondents. Satisfaction levels with National 5 were also lower for learners with a disability or ASN. There were no statistically significant differences between different sub-groups in satisfaction levels with Higher and Advanced Higher.

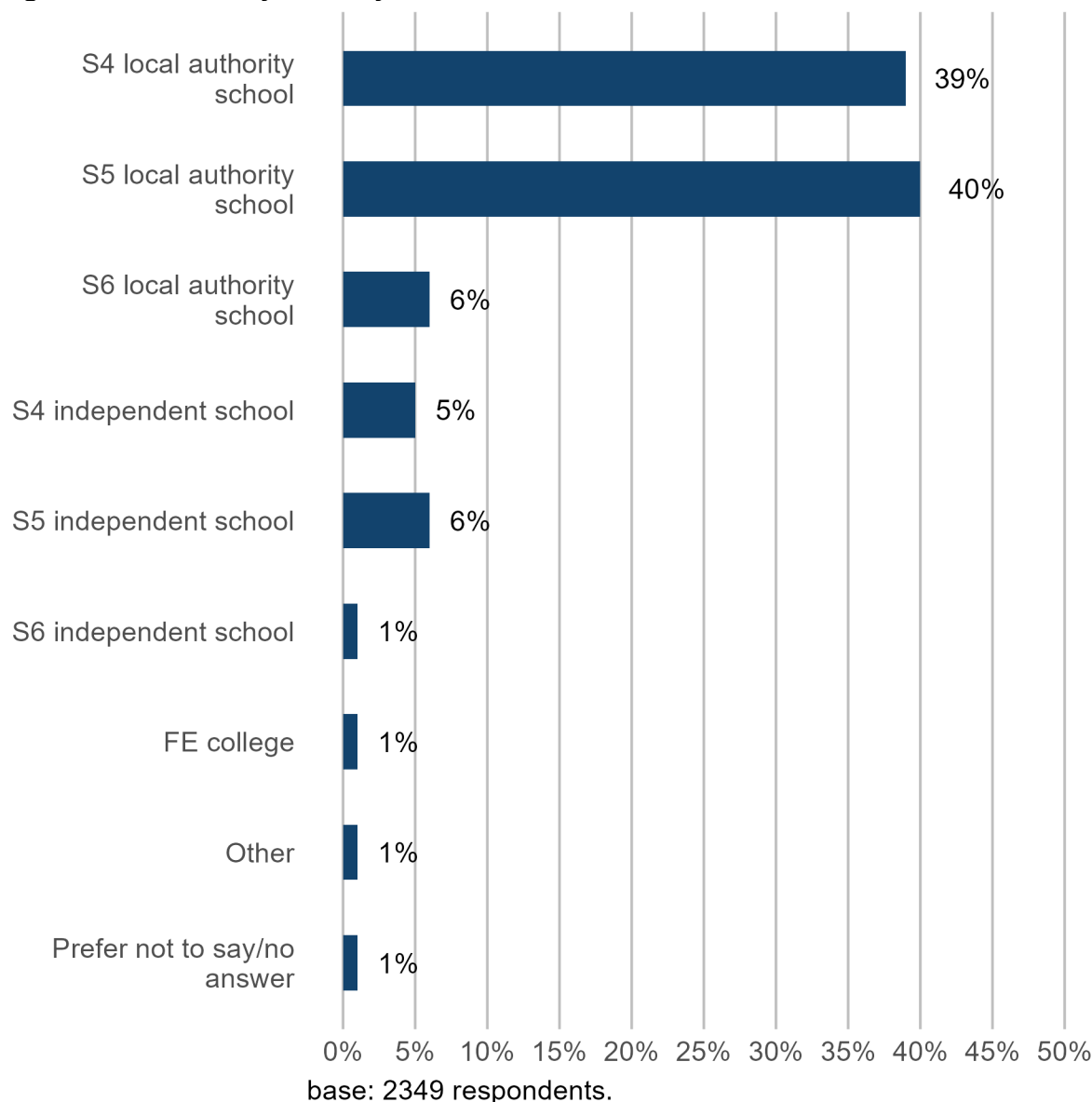
The impact of COVID-19 on learning in 2023–24 was felt to be higher for respondents who identified as women and girls, or were part of the LGBTQIA+ community, or who had a disability or ASN.

Respondents who were part of the LGBTQIA+ community and those with a disability or ASN also showed lower levels of satisfaction with assessment and awarding.

Respondent profiles

Learners respondents were asked to identify where they studied in 2023–24, the level they studied at, and which local authority their centre was based in. A detailed comparison of how the makeup of survey respondents compares to the whole population can be found in the technical appendix.

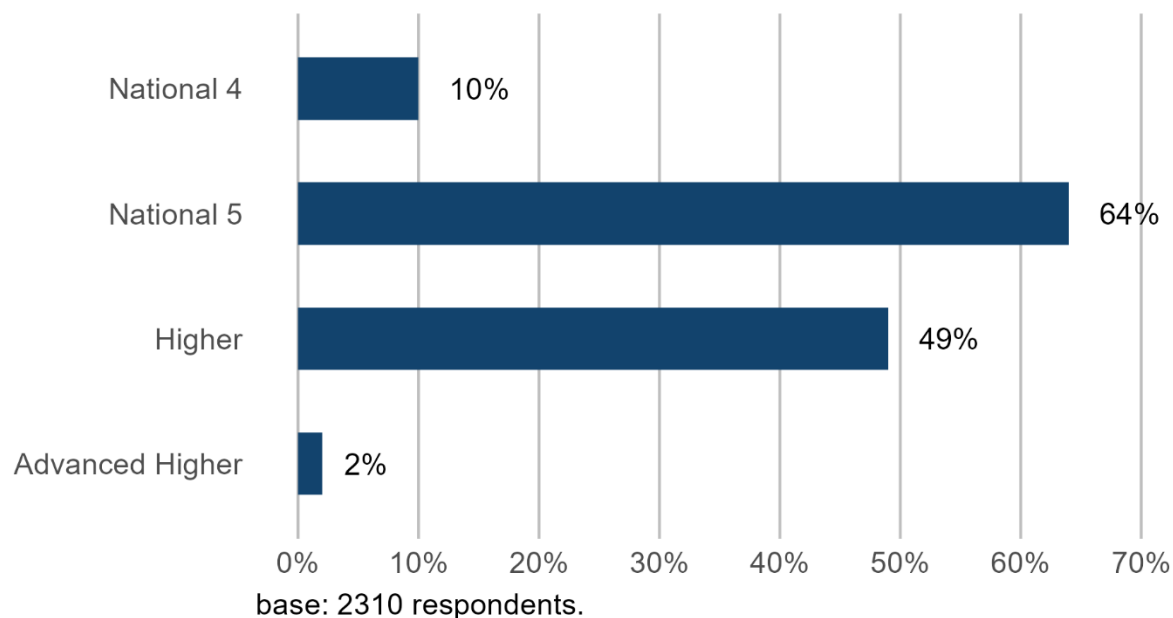
Figure 1: Where did you study in 2023–24?



As shown in Figure 1, respondents were asked where they studied in 2023–24. Similar proportions of learner respondents had studied in S4 and S5 at local authority schools in 2023–24, at 39% and 40% respectively, and 6% who had studied in S6 at local authority schools. Five per cent of respondents studied in S4 in an independent school in 2023–24, 6% studied at S5 in an independent school, and 1% studied at S6 in an independent school. One percent of

respondents studied at a Further Education college in 2023–24, and another 1% studied at an ‘Other’ institution.

Figure 2: Which level(s) did you study in 2023–24?



Respondents were asked to indicate the levels they had studied at in 2023–24. The majority of respondents (64%) had studied at least one National 5 qualification, while just under half (49%) had studied at least one Higher (Figure 2). Ten per cent of learner respondents had studied at least one National 4, and 2% had studied at least one Advanced Higher.

As shown in table 1, respondents came from 31 local authority areas. The highest proportion of respondents (13%) were from City of Edinburgh, followed by South Lanarkshire (12%). There were no respondents from Orkney Islands council area.

Table 1: In which local authority is your school, college or training provider?

Local authority area	Number of respondents (n)	Percentage of respondents (%)
City of Edinburgh Council	301	13
South Lanarkshire Council	275	12
Renfrewshire Council	149	7
Glasgow City Council	145	6
Fife Council	143	6
Highland Council	119	5
Dumfries and Galloway Council	99	4

Local authority area	Number of respondents (n)	Percentage of respondents (%)
Midlothian Council	94	4
Aberdeenshire Council	87	4
East Lothian Council	84	4
East Dunbartonshire Council	79	3
Angus Council	75	3
West Lothian Council	74	3
Scottish Borders Council	60	3
Aberdeen City Council	55	2
Dundee City Council	49	2
North Lanarkshire Council	45	2
North Ayrshire Council	43	2
West Dunbartonshire Council	38	2
Perth and Kinross Council	31	1
East Ayrshire Council	29	1
Inverclyde Council	28	1
Moray Council	22	1
South Ayrshire Council	21	1
Clackmannanshire Council	19	1
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	16	1
Falkirk Council	16	1
East Renfrewshire Council	7	<1
Argyll and Bute Council	[c]	<1
Stirling Council	[c]	<1
Shetland Islands Council	[c]	<1
Not sure/None of these	69	3

The figures in categories with less than five respondents have been suppressed to maintain anonymity. These figures have been replaced with '[c]' in the table.

Respondent demographic characteristics

In the previous year's evaluation of the Approach to Assessment of Graded National Courses, SQA committed to strengthening the scope of the research in terms of seeking to understanding the views of learners with a wider range of protected characteristics:

'In future evaluation research, SQA will look at how best to understand the experiences of learners with a range of protected characteristics, as well as other hard-to-reach learner groups.' (SQA, 2023)

Considering this and to understand how learners with different characteristics experienced the 2023–24 National Qualifications (NQs), this year's iteration of the survey asked respondents the following demographic questions:

Are you disabled or do you have an additional support need?

How would you describe your gender?

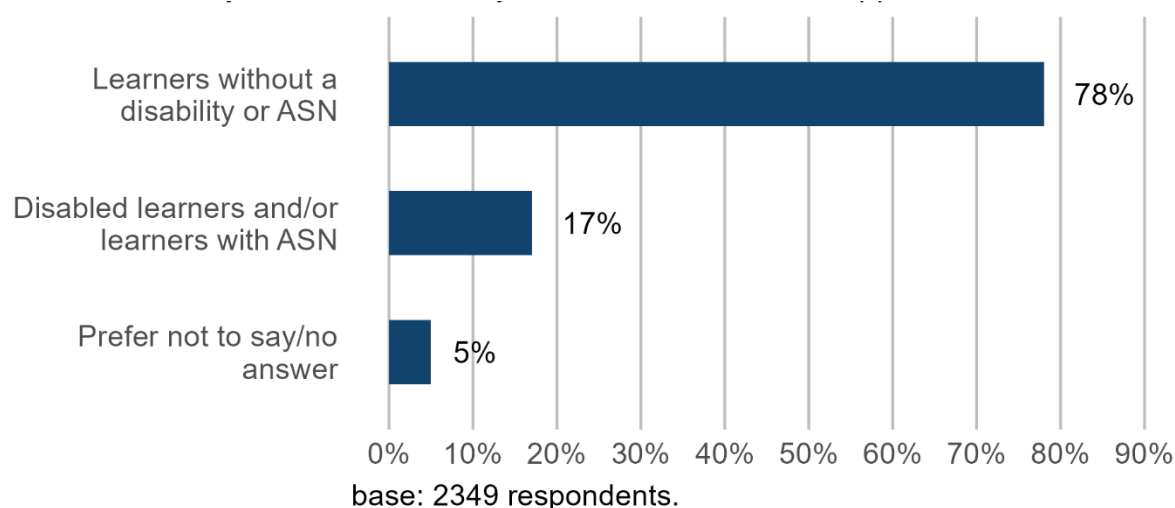
Do you identify as part of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex and Asexual plus (LGBTQIA+) community?

How would you describe your ethnicity?

Do you consider yourself to be care experienced?

What is your postcode?

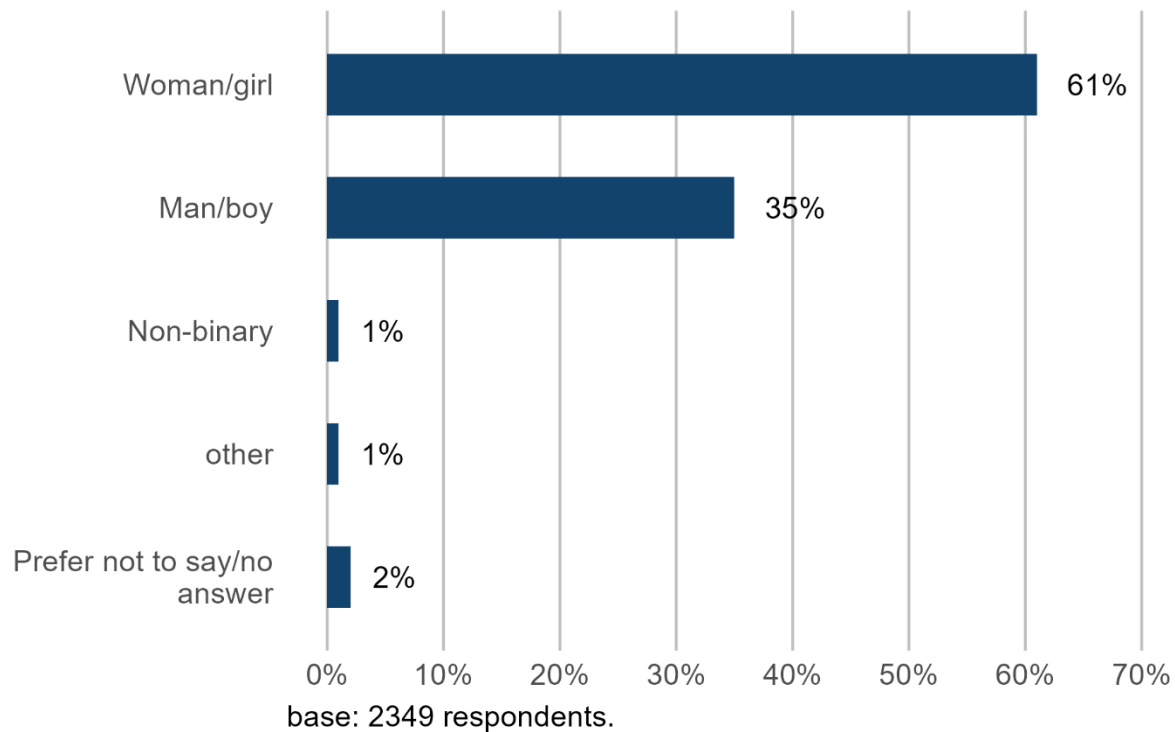
Figure 3: Are you disabled, or do you have an additional support need (ASN)?



As shown in Figure 3, 17% of respondents identified as disabled or had an ASN, while 78% did not. In 2024, the proportion of secondary school learners with an additional support need was 43% ([Scottish Government, 2024](#)). The proportion of respondents in this survey with an additional support need was therefore substantially lower than in the population as a whole. This

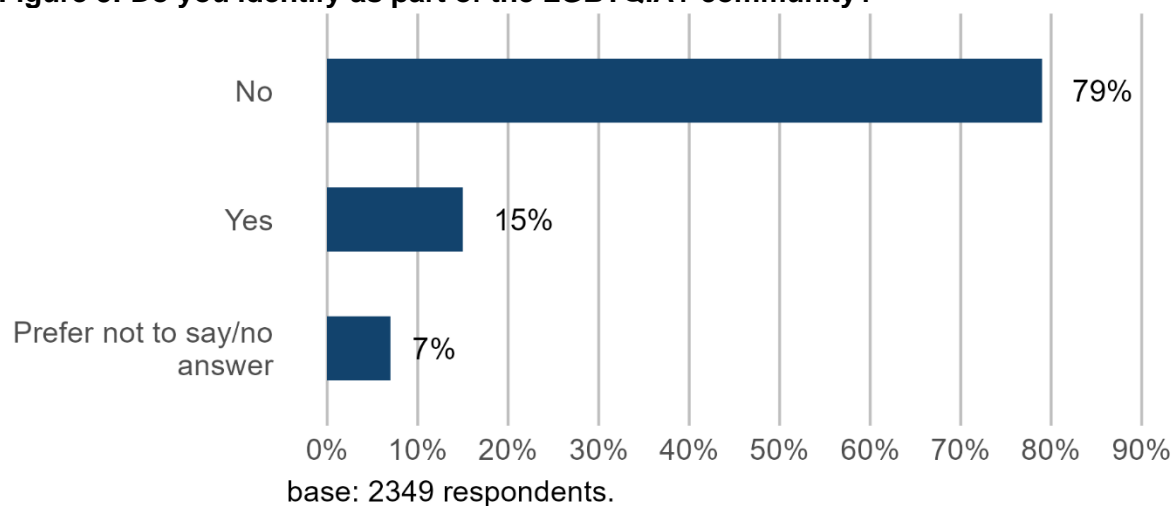
could be a for a number of reasons — for example, learners with ASNs may have declined to take part in this survey at a higher rate than learners without ASNs due to potential accessibility issues such as the survey only being available online and in English. However, it is worth noting that respondents had to self-identify themselves as disabled or with an ASN, and some may not have identified with this description, making the proportion of respondents with ASN appear to be lower than in reality.

Figure 4: How would you describe your gender?



When asked how they would describe their gender, 61% of respondents opted for woman/girl and 35% selected man/boy (Figure 4). One per cent of respondents said they were non-binary, and a further 1% described their gender as 'other'.

Figure 5: Do you identify as part of the LGBTQIA+ community?



As shown in Figure 5, fifteen per cent of learner respondents said that they identified as part of the LGBTQIA+ community, while 79% said they did not.

Respondents were asked to express their ethnicity through a number of prescribed categories. Although the proportions of responses for minority ethnic groups were too small to carry out any meaningful analysis, asking this question was still important to allow SQA to understand the representativeness of the sample in terms of ethnicity and to monitor this for increasing representativeness in the future.

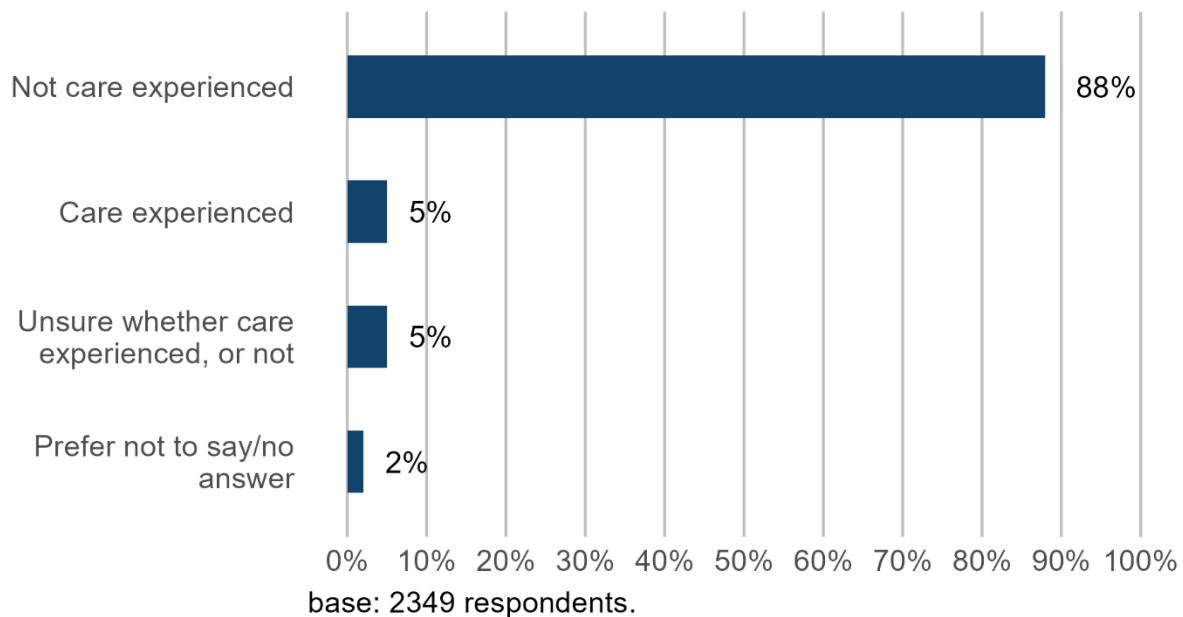
Table 2: How would you describe your ethnicity?

Ethnicity (aggregated)	Percentage of respondents
African ethnic group	3%
Arab ethnic group	1%
Asian ethnic group	8%
Caribbean or Black ethnic group	1%
White ethnic group	83%
Mixed/multiple ethnic groups	2%
Prefer not to say	2%

Base: all respondents

Table 2 shows that the majority of the respondents described their ethnicity as White, with 83% selecting this ethnic group. The second largest group in terms of ethnicity was Asian at 8%. There were 3% of African respondents and 2% of Mixed/multiple ethnic group respondents. One per cent of respondents were Caribbean/Black and a further 1% of respondents were Arab.

Figure 6: Do you consider yourself to be care experienced?

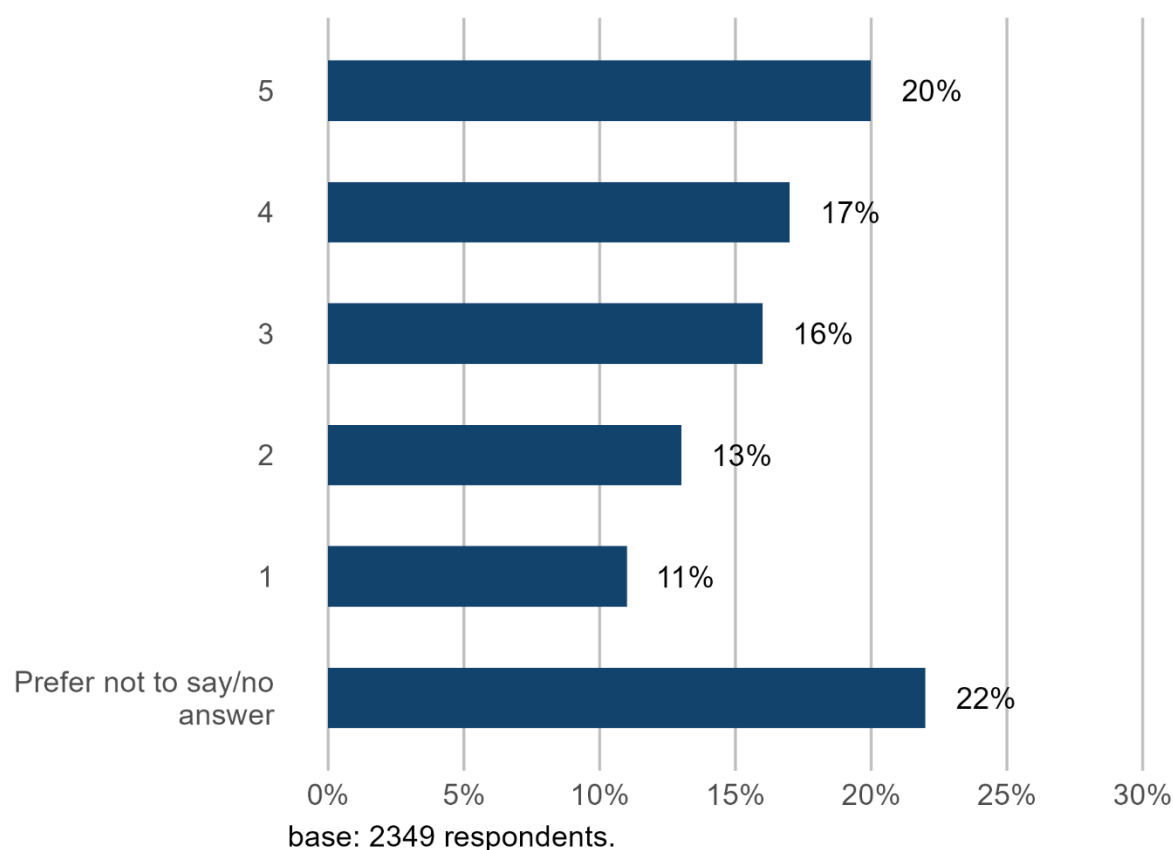


Respondents were given the following definition of 'care experienced':

'The term 'care experienced' refers to any person who is or has ever been in care or looked after for any length of time. This includes anyone who has ever been provided with care in a range of settings, such as foster care, residential care, kinship care (with relatives or friends) or through being looked after at home with supervision requirements.'

Five per cent of respondents said they are care-experienced based on the definition provided, while 88% said they were not (Figure 6). The remainder said they were unsure (5%) or they preferred not to say or did not answer (2%).

Figure 7: Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) quintiles of respondents



Respondents were asked to provide their postcode so that their Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) quintile could be calculated. Twenty per cent of respondents came from the 20% least deprived areas in Scotland, and 11% came from the 20% most deprived areas (Figure 7). Twenty-two per cent of respondents did not answer the question or only gave partial postcodes, meaning that their SIMD area could not be calculated. More information about how the characteristics of respondents compared to the general population can be found in the Technical Appendix.

National Qualifications

Learner respondents were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the same six statements for each National Qualification. Respondents' answers to these six statements for National 4, National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher are discussed in detail in the following section.

National 4

Learner respondents who had studied at least one National 4 (National 4) qualification in 2023–24 were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with six statements relating to National 4s.

Figure 8a: Perceptions of National 4 qualifications

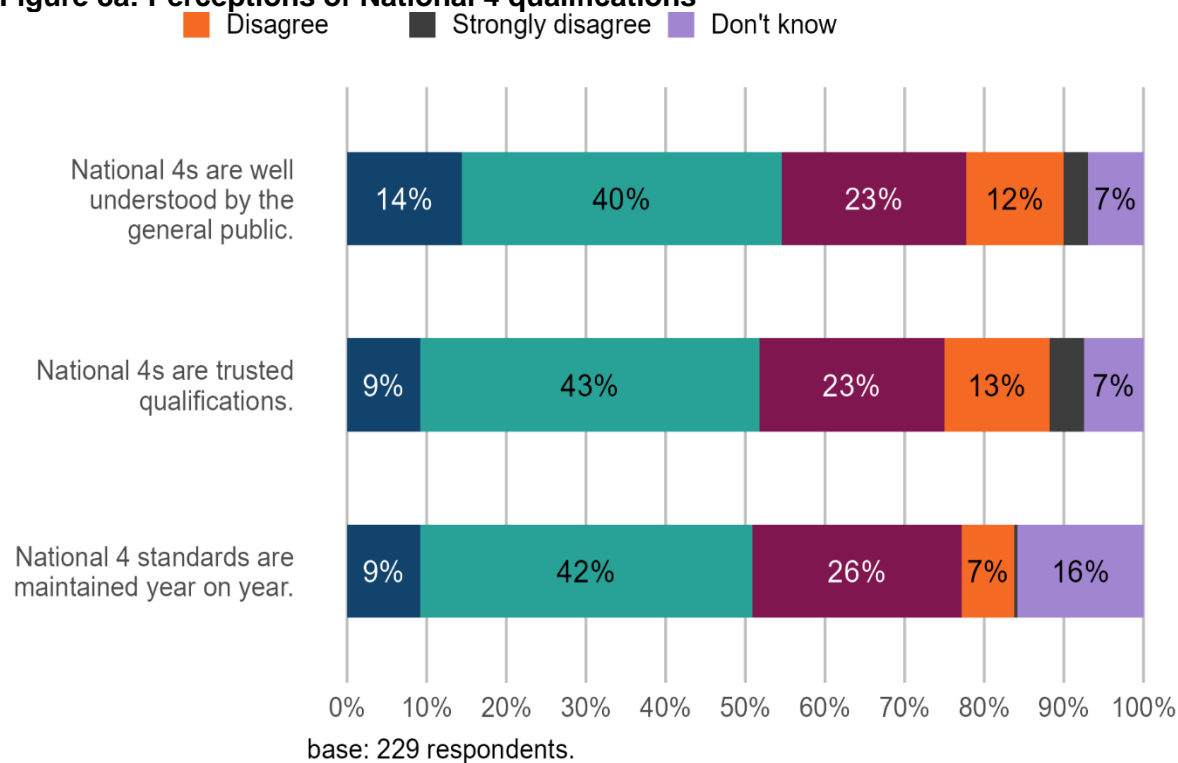
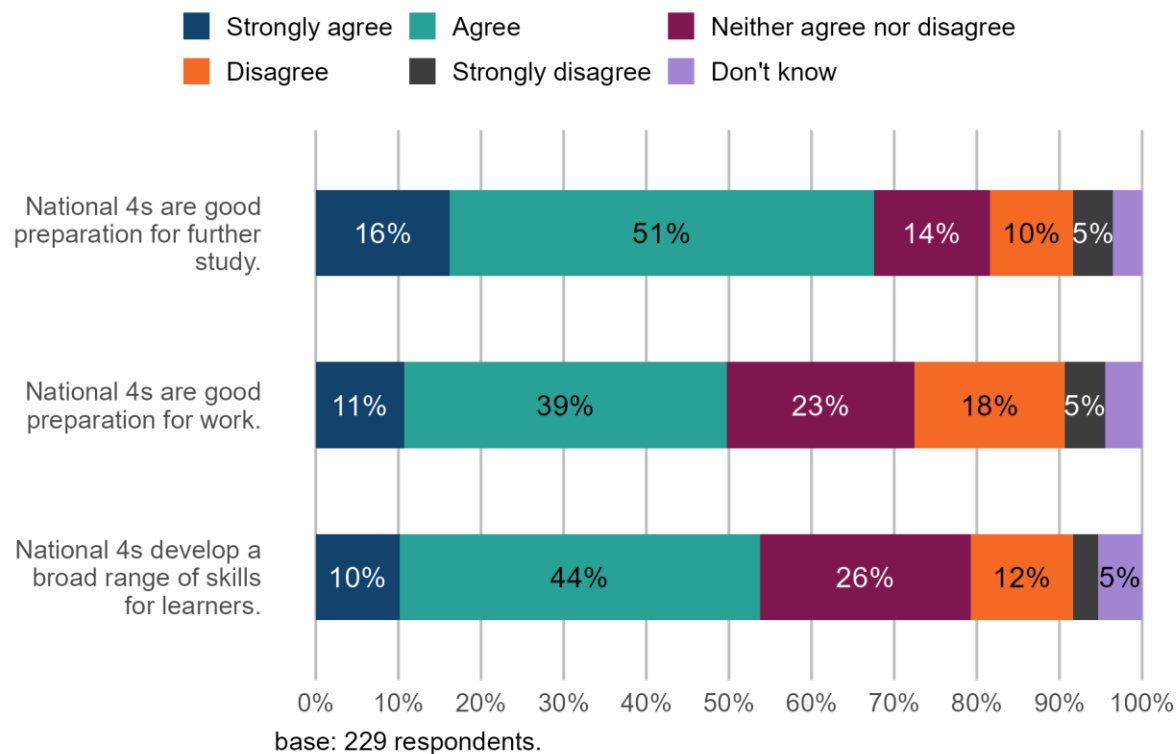


Figure 8b: Perceptions of National 4 qualifications



As shown in Figures 8a and 8b, the majority of learner respondents who had studied at least one National 4 qualification in 2023–24 agreed or strongly agreed with all the statements.

The statement that produced the highest level of agreement was ‘National 4s are good preparation for further study’, with 67% of this respondent group selecting agree or strongly agree, and 15% saying they disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Respondents who had studied National 4 last year agreed or strongly agreed that the qualifications develop a broad range of skills for learners (54%), are well understood by the general public (54%), are trusted qualifications (52%), standards are maintained year on year (51%), and are good preparation for work (50%).

The highest levels of respondents expressing disagreement were for the statement that ‘National 4s are good preparation for work’, with 23% of respondents who studied National 4 last year disagreeing or strongly disagreeing.

National 5

Respondents who had studied at least one National 5 (National 5) qualification in 2023–24 were asked the same statements about National 5 that were asked to those who studied National 4. Figures 9a and 9b show the breakdown in response to each question by percentage.

Figure 9a: Perceptions of National 5 qualifications

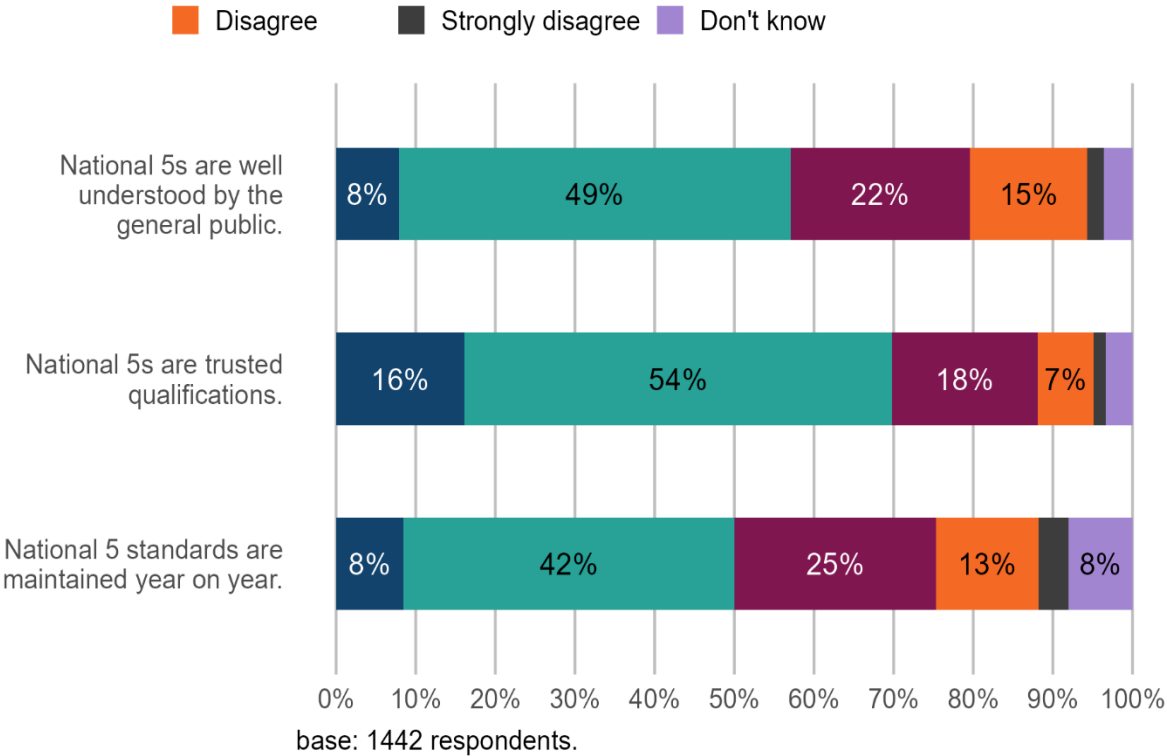
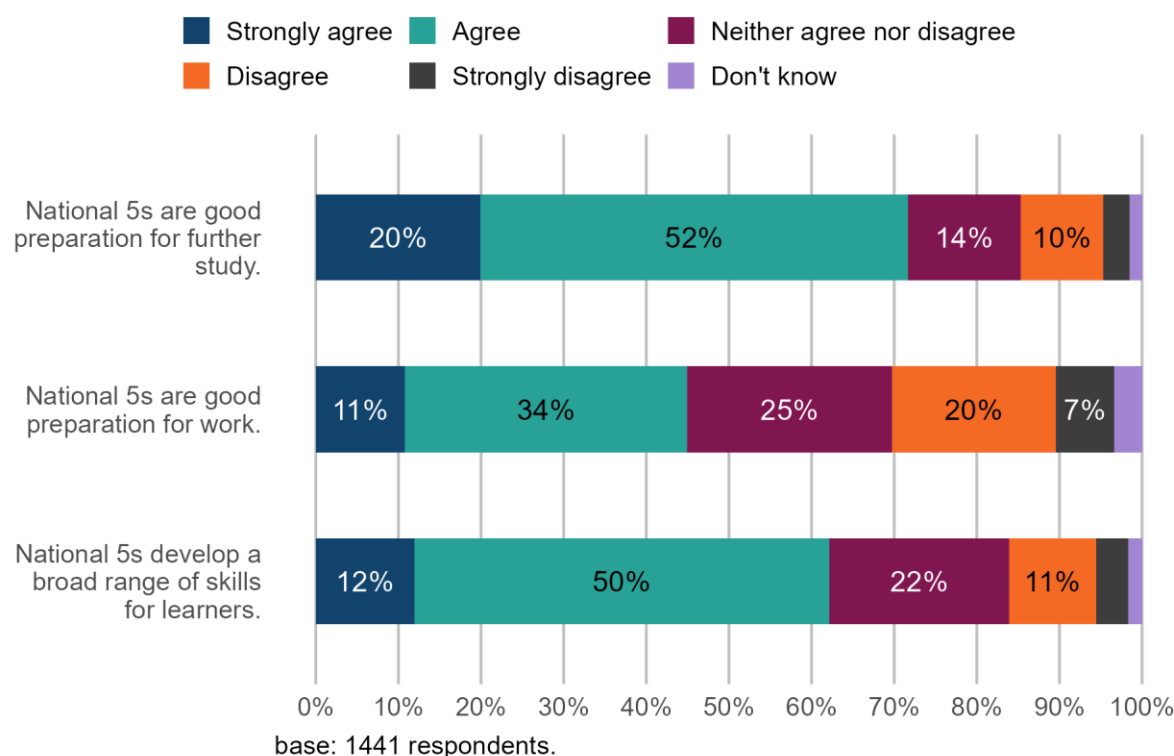


Figure 9b: Perceptions of National 5 qualifications



More than half these respondents agreed or strongly agreed with almost all the statements, with the exception of 'National 5s are good preparation for work', with 45% agreeing or strongly agreeing and 28% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing.

As with the National 4 questions, the statement with the highest level of agreement was 'National 5s are good preparation for further study', with 72% agreeing or strongly agreeing, and 13% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. A similar proportion of respondents who studied National 5 in 2023–24 (70%) also agreed or strongly agreed that 'National 5s are trusted qualifications'.

A majority of learner respondents who studied National 5 in 2023–24 agreed or strongly agreed that National 5s developed a broad range of skills for learners (62%), were well understood by the general public (57%), and that standards were maintained year on year (51%).

Higher

Respondents who had studied a Higher in 2023–24 were asked to say to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the same set of six questions asked to those who studied National 4 and National 5. As shown in Figures 10a and 10b, a majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Highers developed a broad range of skills for learners, were trusted qualifications, and good preparation for further study.

Figure 10a: Perceptions of Higher qualifications

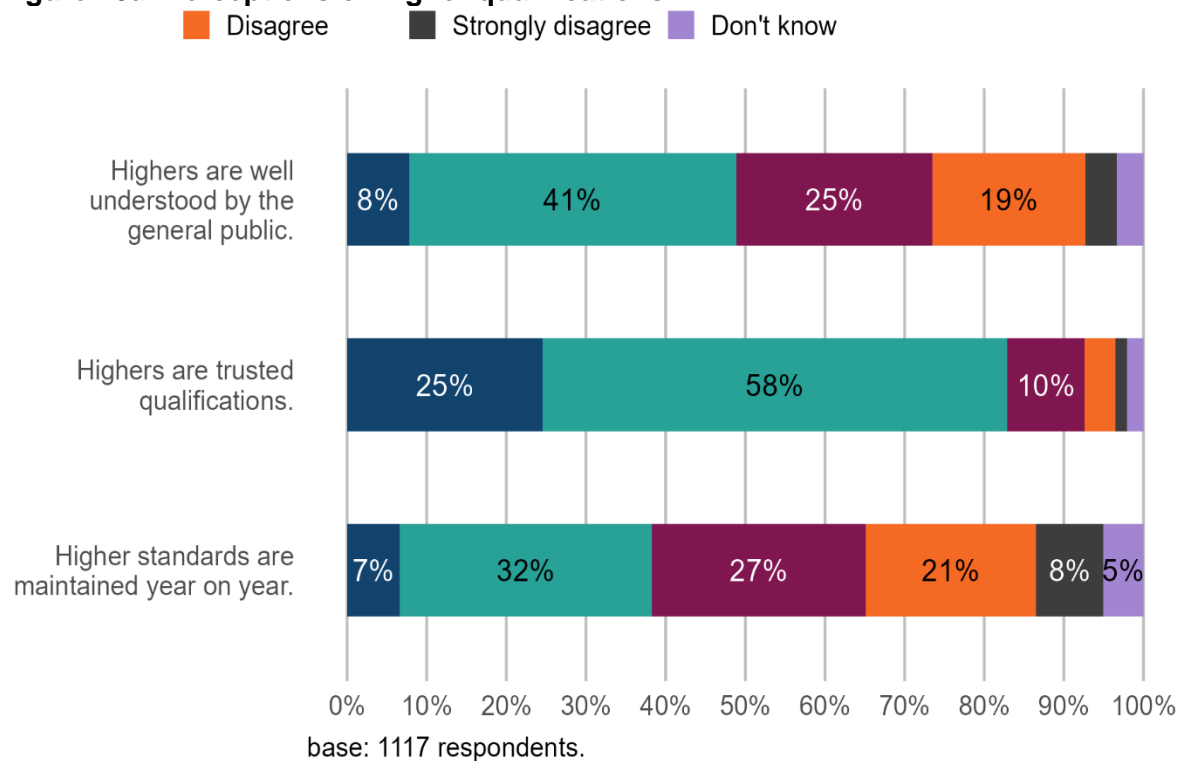
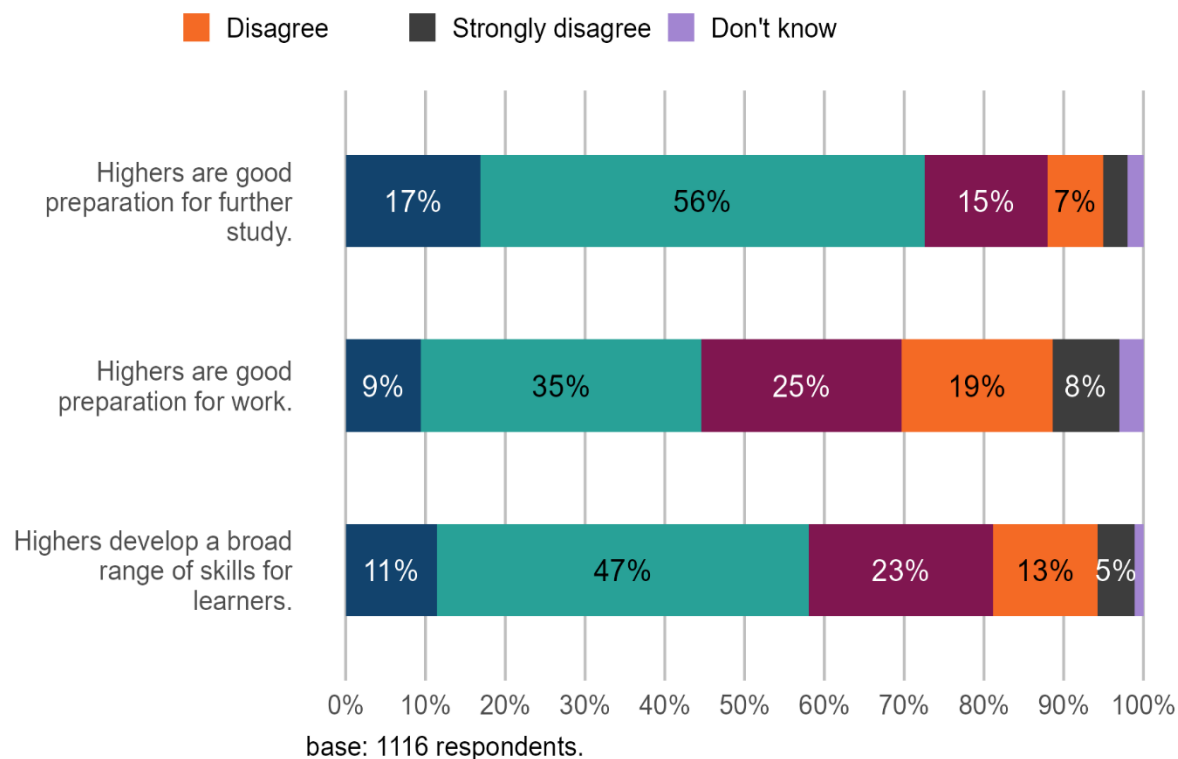


Figure 10b: Perceptions of Higher qualifications



The highest level of agreement was with the statement 'Highers are trusted qualifications', with 83% choosing agree or strongly agree. This was followed by 'Highers are good preparation for further study' with 73% saying that they agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. A slightly smaller but still majority proportion of respondents (58%) agreed or strongly agreed that 'Highers develop a broad range of skills for learners'.

In regards to the statement 'Highers are well understood by the general public', just under half (49%) agreed or strongly agreed and 23% disagreed or strongly disagreed. While 44% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that 'Highers are good preparation for work', 27% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

The highest level of disagreement among learner participants was for the statement 'Higher standards are maintained year on year' with 29% of respondents disagreeing or strongly disagreeing; however, a higher proportion (39%) still agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.

Advanced Higher

Respondents who studied Advanced Higher (Advanced Higher) in 2023–24 were asked to say to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the same series of statements. The number of respondents who said that they had studied Advanced Higher was substantially lower than the other three qualifications surveyed, so the data collected from these questions should be treated with caution and is not as reliable as the data produced from National 4, National 5 and Higher learners.

Figure 11a: Perceptions of Advanced Higher qualifications

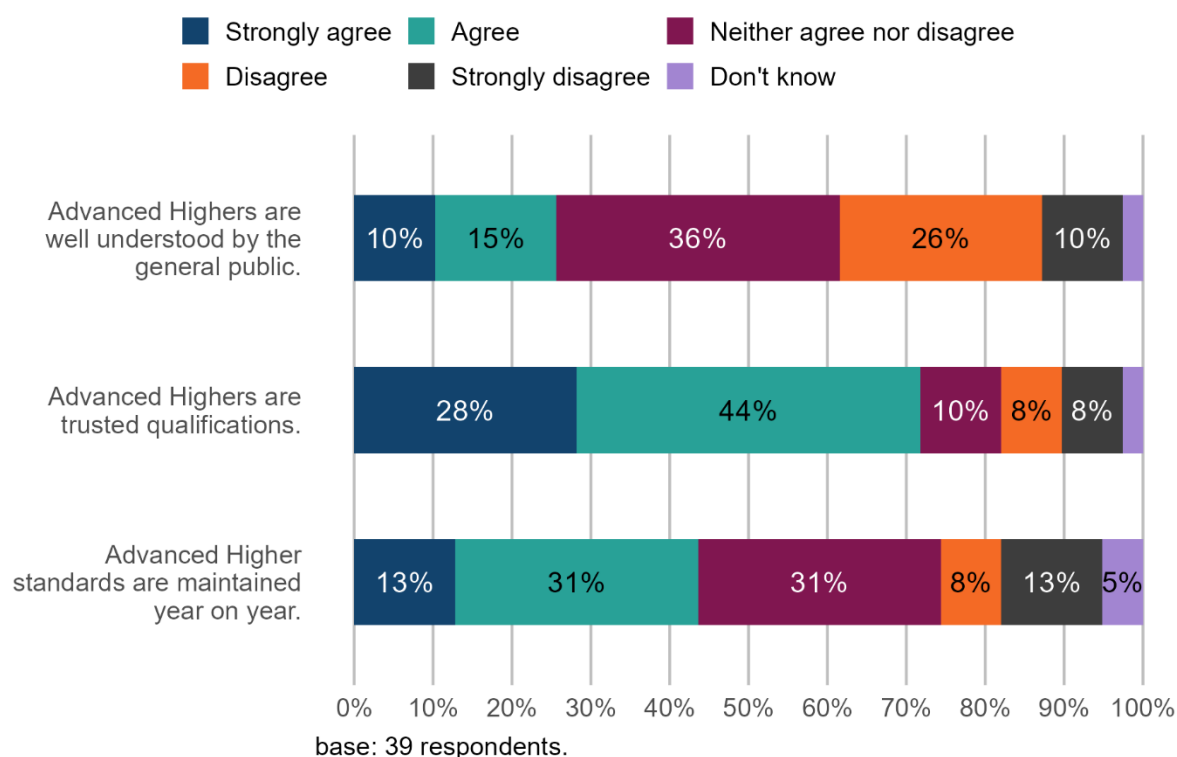
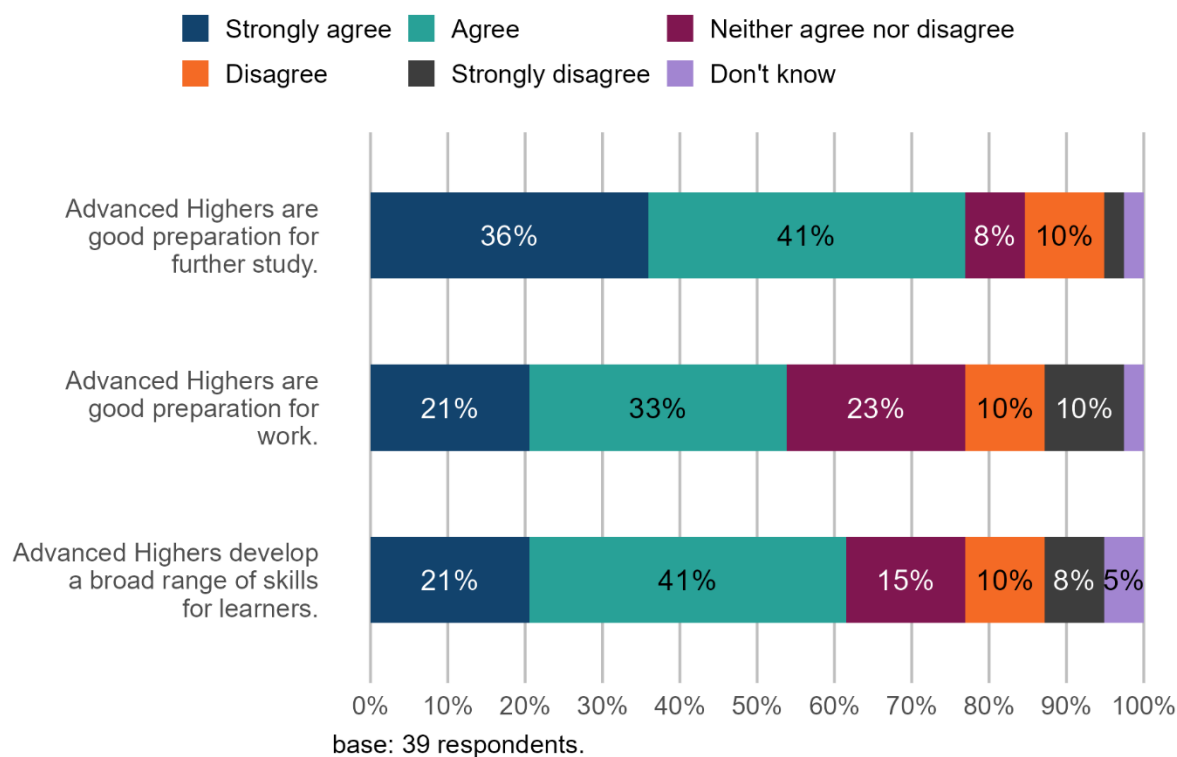


Figure 11b: Perceptions of Advanced Higher qualifications



The majority of respondents for these questions agreed or strongly agreed that Advanced Highers develop a broad range of skills for learners, are trusted qualifications, and are good preparation for further study (Figures 11a and 11b).

The statement that had the highest level of agreement was 'Advanced Highers are good preparation for further study' with 77% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing and 13% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. This was followed by 'Advanced Highers are trusted qualifications' with 72% agreeing or strongly agreeing and 16% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing.

A strong majority (61%) also agreed or strongly agreed that 'Advanced Highers develop a broad range of skills for learners' while 18% disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. Over half (53%) also agreed or strongly agreed that 'Advanced Highers are good preparation for work' and 20% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Forty-four per cent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Advanced Higher standards are maintained year on year, while 21% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

The modal response when asked whether 'Advanced Highers are well understood by the general public' was 'neither agree nor disagree', with 36% of respondents opting for this answer. This was followed by 36% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing, and a minority of respondents (25%) agreed or strongly agreed.

National Qualifications conclusion

The proportion of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed that National 4, National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher qualifications were 'good preparation for further study' was broadly similar at between 67% and 77% for all qualification levels. The highest levels of agreement in any statement among respondents who studied National 4, National 5 and Advanced Higher were for this statement.

The proportions of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed that the qualification they had studied in 2023–24 developed 'a broad range of skills for learners' was largely similar, within a nine percentage-point range, between 54% and 62%, for each qualification level. The qualification with the highest levels of agreement for this statement was for National 5 at 62% and the lowest was for National 4 at 54%.

Similarly, there was not a great deal of variation by qualification level for the statement 'National 4/National 5/Higher/Advanced Higher are good preparation for work' with the proportion of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed being between 44% and 53% for all qualifications. The proportion who disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement was between 27% (National 5 and Higher) and 20% (Advanced Higher).

However, there were differences in opinion for some other statements among different qualification levels. For learner respondents who studied at Higher in 2023–24, the highest level of agreement came for the statement 'Highers are trusted qualifications' at 83%. In comparison,

52% of respondents felt the same way for National 4, a 31-percentage point difference. For National 5, 70% of respondents expressed agreement with this statement and for Advanced Higher the proportion was 72%.

The proportion of respondents who expressed agreement that their qualification was well understood by the general public was noticeably lower for Advanced Higher than for the other three qualification levels. Twenty-five per cent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement for Advanced Higher and 34% disagreed or strongly disagreed, whereas the proportion of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with this statement for National 4, National 5 and Higher was between 49% and 57%. However, the number of respondents who answered the question for Advanced Higher was considerably lower than for the other groups of respondents, so a higher response rate would be needed to determine whether there was a genuine difference in views.

In response to the statement 'National 4/National 5/Higher/Advanced Higher standards are maintained year on year', 51% of respondents for National 4 and National 5 agreed or strongly agreed, while 44% of respondents for Advanced Higher agreed or strongly agreed. The proportion of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with this statement for Higher was lower at 39%.

Assessment, awarding and results in 2023–24

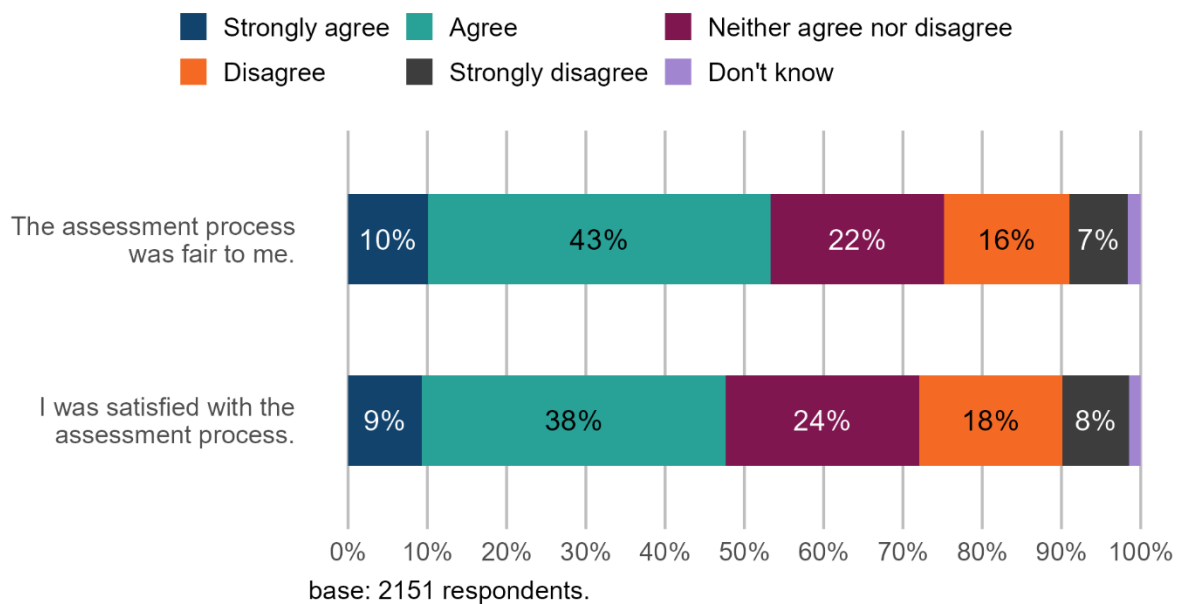
Assessment

Learner respondents were also asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the following two statements related to the assessment process in 2023–24:

The assessment process was fair to me

I was satisfied with the assessment process.

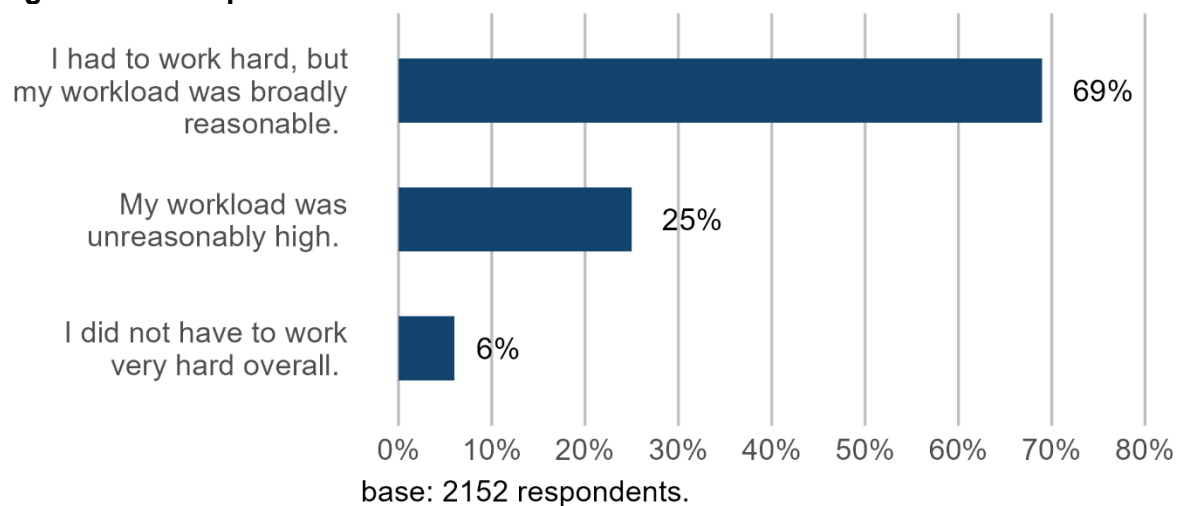
Figure 12: Perceptions of assessment



The majority of learner respondents (53%) agreed or strongly agreed that the assessment process was fair to them, while 23% disagreed or strongly disagreed (Figure 12). A slightly lower proportion of respondents (47%) agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the assessment process, with 26% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with this statement.

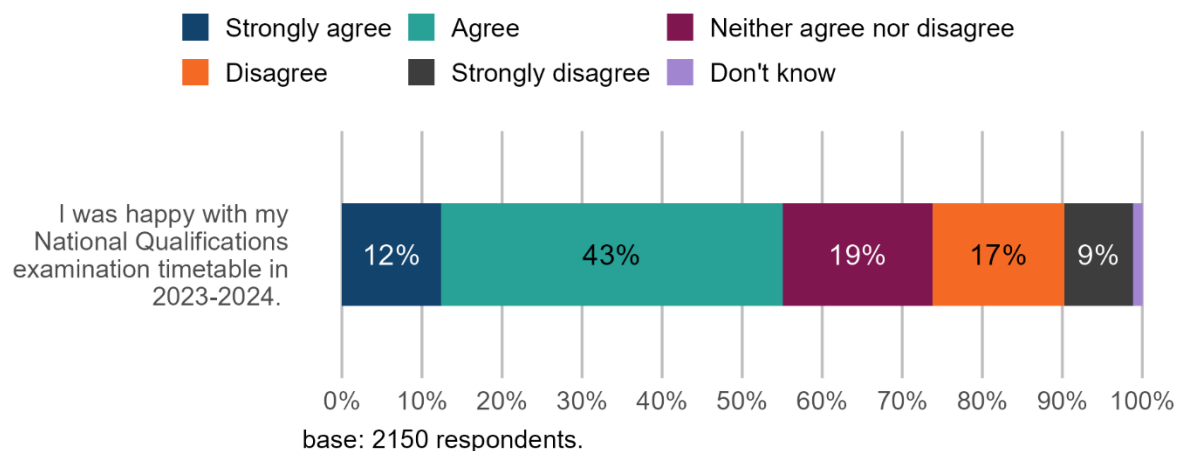
Learner respondents were also asked their views on organisational aspects of NQ in 2024, such as workload and timetabling.

Figure 13: Perceptions of overall workload for National Qualifications 2024



When asked how they felt about their workload for their NQ in 2023–24, a strong majority (69%) opted for the statement ‘I had to work hard, but my workload was broadly reasonable’ (Figure 13). Twenty-five per cent said that their workload was unreasonably high and 6% felt that they did not have to work very hard overall.

Figure 14: Attitudes towards timetabling for National Qualifications 2024

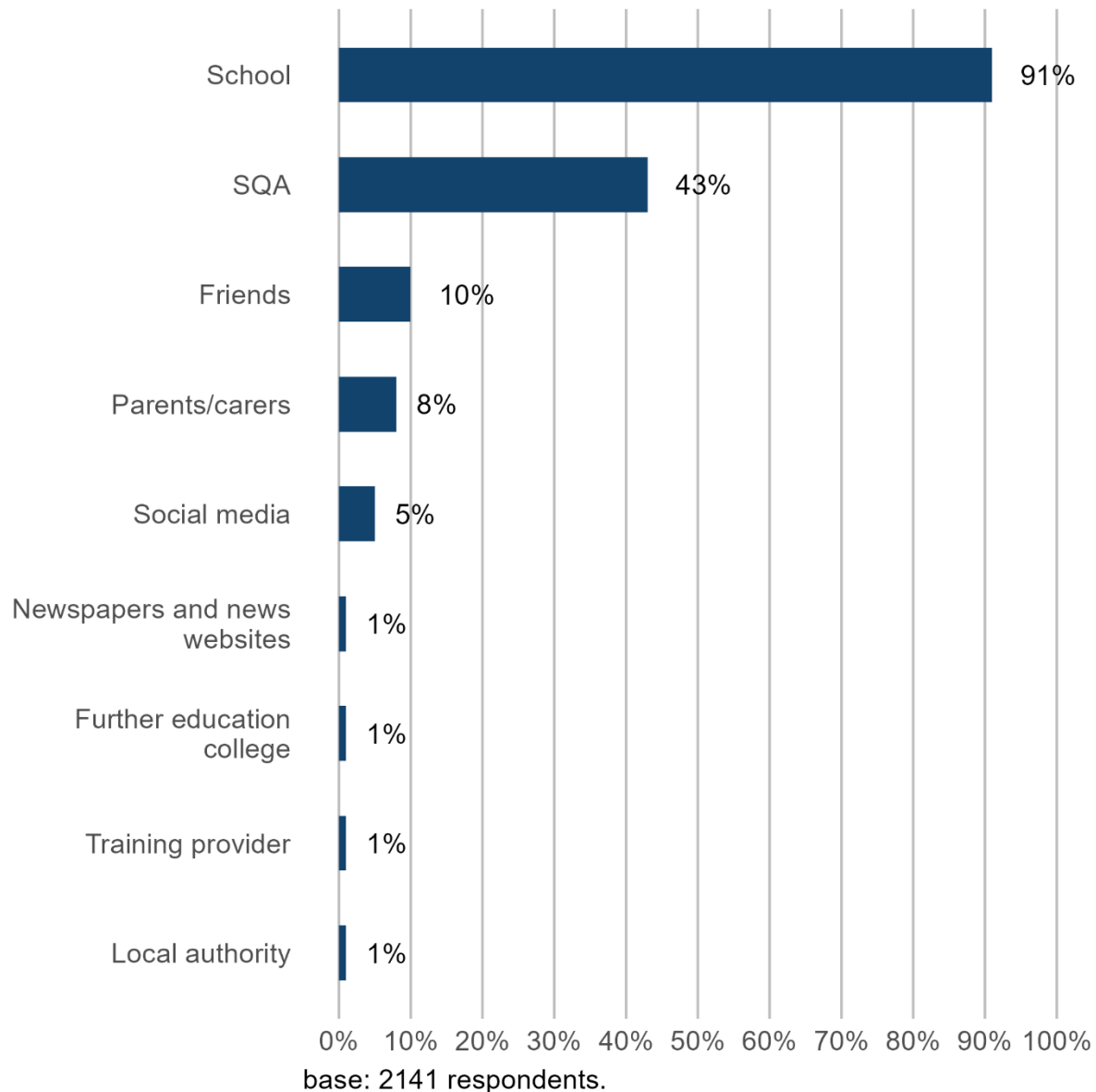


As shown in Figure 14, when asked to what extent they agreed with the statement ‘I was happy with my NQ examination timetable in 2023–24’, 55% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, with 26% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Awarding

Respondents were asked the source of the information they received about how their grades would be determined.

Figure 15: Where did you get information about how your grades would be determined in 2023–24?



The vast majority (91%) of respondents said they received information from their school (Figure 15). This was followed by 43% who stated they received information from SQA. A lower proportion also received information from friends (10%), parents and carers (8%) and from social media (5%). Around 1% of respondents said they received information from other sources including newspapers and news websites, further education colleges, training providers and local authorities.

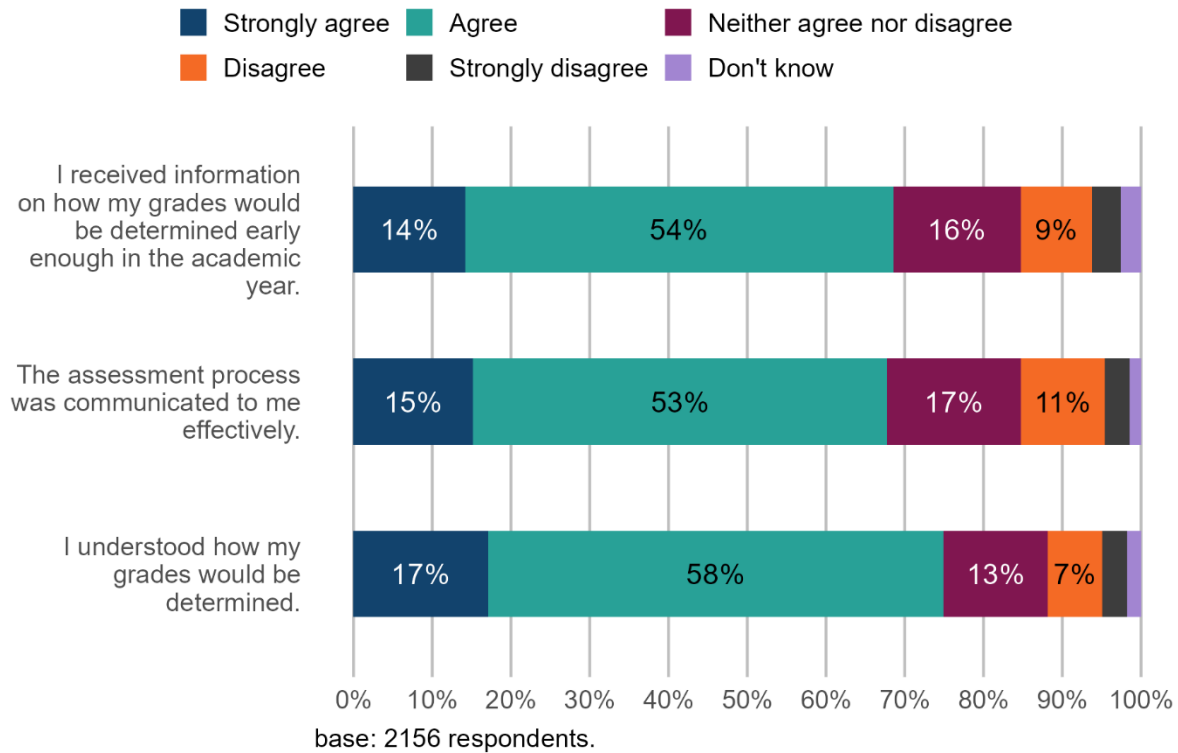
Learner respondents were asked to state to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the following three statements related to communications about assessment in 2023–24:

The assessment process was communicated to me effectively

I understood how my grades would be determined

I received information on how my grades would be determined early enough in the academic year.

Figure 16: Attitudes towards communications about assessment in 2023–24



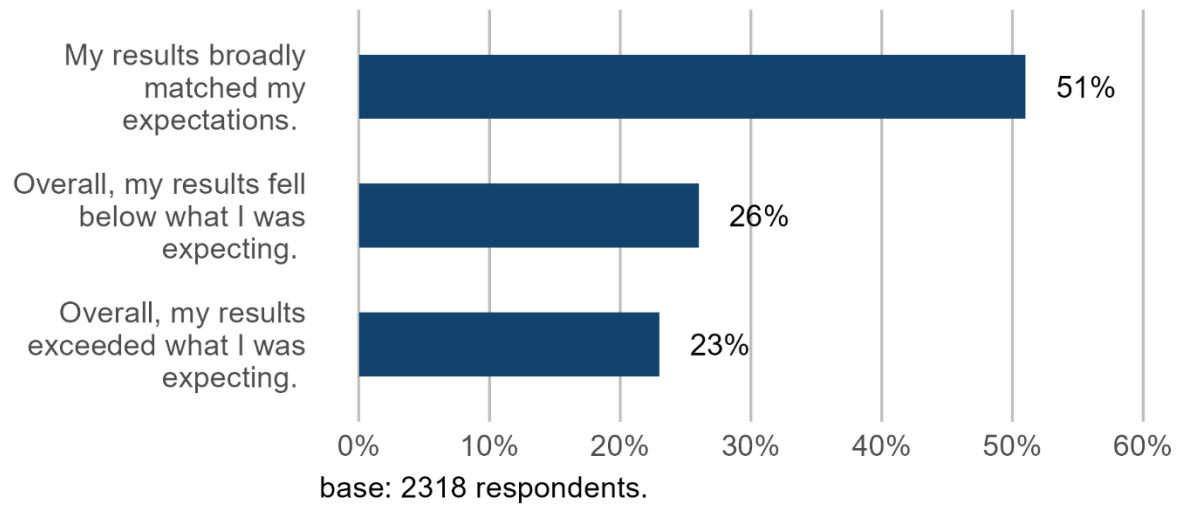
The majority of learner respondents agreed or strongly agreed with all the statements (Figure 16). Respondents displayed the highest levels of agreement with the statement ‘I understood how my grades would be determined’, with 75% opting for agree or strongly agree, and 10% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing.

A slightly smaller proportion, but still a majority, of respondents expressed agreement with the other two statements. Sixty-seven per cent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that ‘the assessment process was communicated to [them] effectively’ and 68% felt the same way for the statement ‘I received information on how my grades would be determined early enough in the academic year’.

Results

When asked how they felt about their results in 2024, around half of respondents (51%) felt they ‘broadly matched [their] expectations’ and around a quarter each felt that their results fell below what they were expecting (26%) or exceeded what they were expecting (23%) (Figure 17).

Figure 17: How would you say you feel about the results of your National Qualifications in 2024?



Legacy of COVID-19 impact on learning in 2023–24

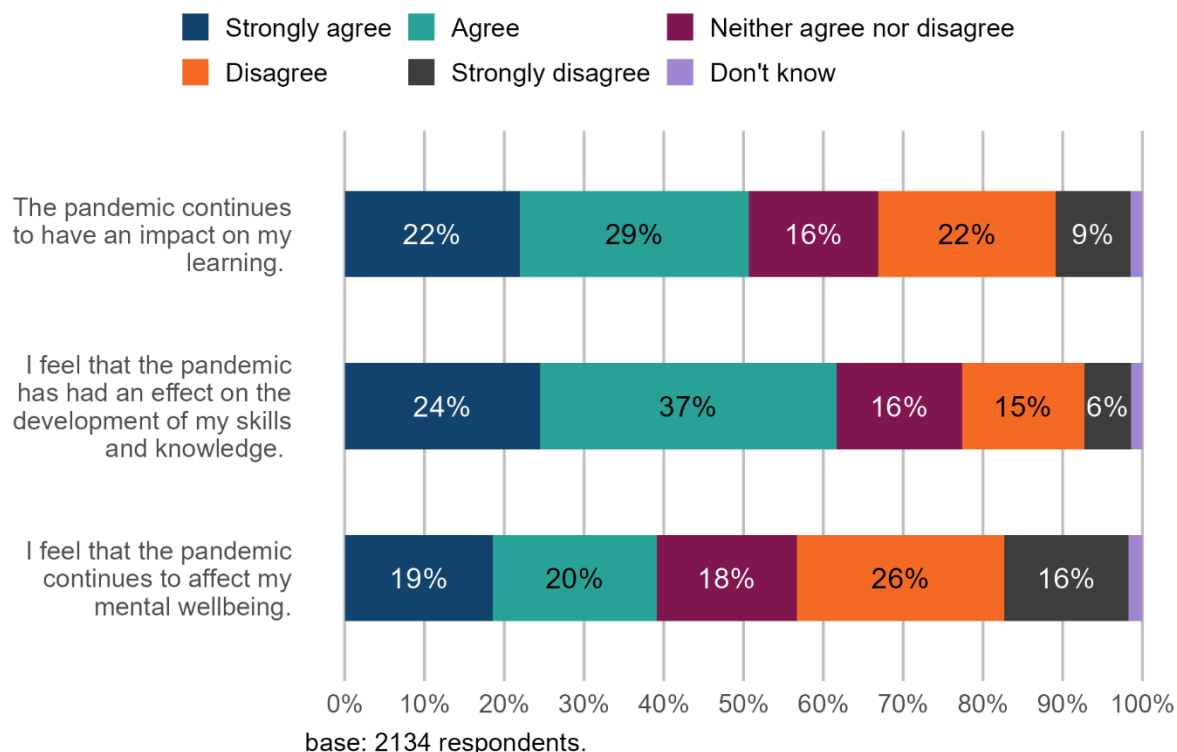
Respondents were asked to what extent they agreed with the following three statements relating to the ongoing impact of the pandemic in 2023–24:

The pandemic continues to have an impact on my learning

I feel that the pandemic has had an effect on the development of my skills and knowledge

I feel that the pandemic continues to affect my mental wellbeing.

Figure 18: Perceptions of the impact of the pandemic on learning in 2023–24



As shown in Figure 18, the majority of respondents (62%) agreed or strongly agreed that the pandemic has had an effect on the development of their skills and knowledge, while 21% disagreed or strongly disagreed. A lower proportion (51%) agreed or strongly agreed that the pandemic continued to have an impact on their learning, while around a third 31% disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. The lowest level of agreement was for the statement 'I feel the pandemic continues to affect my wellbeing', with 38% agreeing or strongly agreeing and 42% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing.

Comparison over time

The responses to these three statements were compared with survey data from 2023–24. In 2022–23, 47% of learner respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement 'The

pandemic continues to have an impact on my learning', but the proportion of respondents who felt the same way had increased to 51% in 2023–24. For the statement 'I feel that the pandemic continues to affect my mental wellbeing', a similar proportion agreed or strongly agreed in 2022–23 (38%) as to in 2023–24 (39%).

However, for the statement 'I feel the pandemic has had an effect on the development of my skills and knowledge', the proportion of learners who agreed or strongly agreed with this statement had decreased slightly since 2022–23, with 66% choosing one of these options in 2022–23 and 61% in 2023–24.

It should be noted that the small changes between percentages is not necessarily indicative of a greater trend in learner attitudes in Scotland as a whole and may be caused by sampling error.

Composite analysis

Composite scoring was developed to gauge how respondents perceived a number of different elements of National Qualifications in 2023–24. A composite score is a single variable or data point that represents a combination of information from multiple related variables or data points. For a detailed explanation of how the composite scoring analysis was developed, please refer to the Methodology chapter and the Technical Appendix.

Communications satisfaction

The communications satisfaction composite examined how learner respondents felt about NQ communications overall in 2023–24 by taking an average of their agreement with the following three statements about communication:

I received information on how my grades would be determined early enough in the academic year

The assessment process was communicated to me effectively

I understood how my grades would be determined.

In designing the communications satisfaction composite, researchers interpreted higher levels of agreement with the three statements as showing higher levels of satisfaction with SQA's communications about NQs in 2023–24. Therefore, low mean scores indicate less satisfaction with SQA's communications in 2023–24, while high scores indicate more satisfaction.

Respondents who answered all three questions had a communications satisfaction score calculated. The composite had an overall average score of 3.7 for all respondents, indicating an above mid-range level of satisfaction with communications. Translated back to the original Likert scale responses, this would place the respondents with an average response of slightly below 'agree' for all respondents.

Communication satisfaction score for this question were compared across six different demographic sub-groups: gender, disability/ASN status, SIMD, ethnicity, care experienced status and LGBTQIA+ status. Statistical analysis revealed no significant difference between satisfaction scores from groups based on gender, LGBTQIA+ status, or ethnicity within our sample ($p > 0.01$) (see Appendix A for more detail).

Disability/ASN status

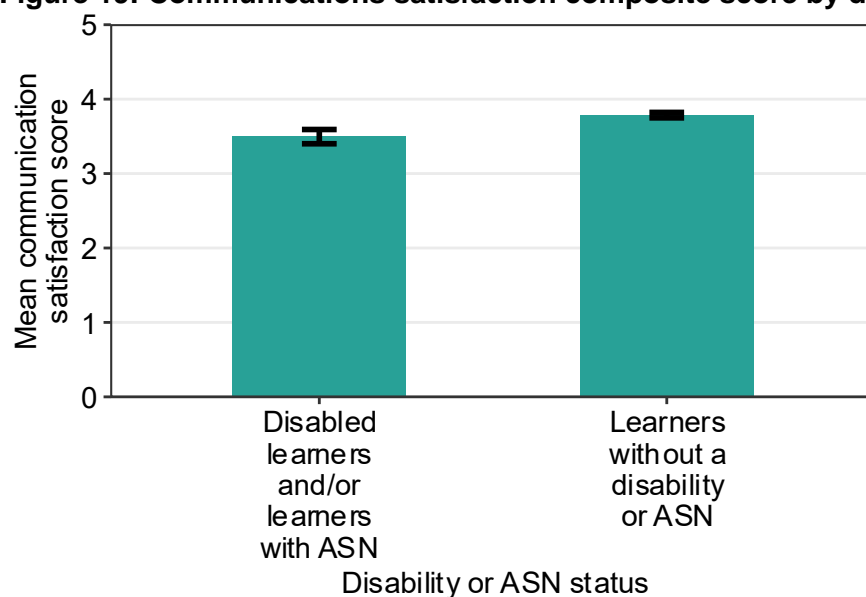
As shown in Table 3 and Figure 19, respondents with a disability/ASN had a mean composite score of 3.5, compared with 3.8 for those without a disability.

Table 3: Communications satisfaction composite score by disability/ASN status

Disability or ASN status	Number of respondents	Mean communication satisfaction score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
Disabled learners and/or learners with ASN	365	3.5	3.4	3.6
Learners without a disability or ASN	1,675	3.8	3.7	3.8

There was a statistically significant difference ($p < 0.01$) in the composite scores of learner respondents who identified as disabled or as having ASN and those who did not within our sample. This could indicate that disabled/ASN learners in the general population were slightly less satisfied than non-disabled learners with communications from SQA about their NQs in 2023–24.

Figure 19: Communications satisfaction composite score by disability/ASN status



SIMD

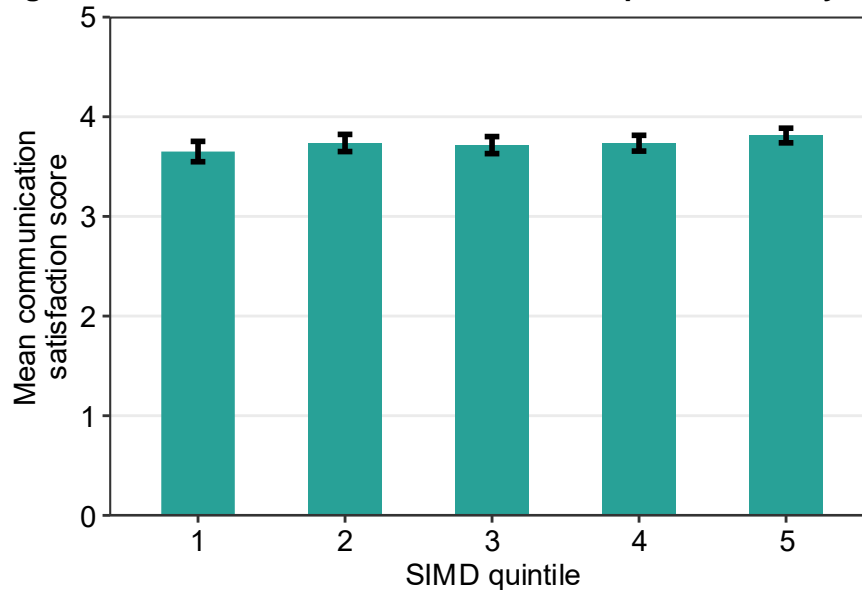
Respondents from SIMD quintiles 1–4 all had a mean satisfaction score of 3.7, while respondents from the 20% least deprived SIMD areas had a mean satisfaction score of 3.8 (table 4 and Figure 20).

Table 4: Communications satisfaction composite score by SIMD quintile

SIMD quintile	Number of respondents	Mean communication satisfaction score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
1	245	3.7	3.5	3.8
2	280	3.7	3.7	3.8
3	340	3.7	3.6	3.8
4	390	3.7	3.7	3.8
5	450	3.8	3.7	3.9

While the difference in these mean scores is relatively small in terms of its size on the scale, it is nevertheless statistically significant ($p < 0.01$). This could suggest that NQ learners in Scotland from the 20% least deprived postcodes were more satisfied with communications from SQA about NQs than those living in the 20% most deprived postcodes.

Figure 20: Communications satisfaction composite score by SIMD quintile



Care-experienced status

Learner respondents who are care-experienced had a mean satisfaction score of 3.6, while learner respondents who are not care-experienced had a mean satisfaction score of 3.7. Respondents who were unsure whether they are care-experienced or not also had a mean satisfaction score of 3.6 (Table 5 and Figure 21).

Table 5: Communications satisfaction composite score by care experience status

Care experience status	Number of respondents	Mean communication satisfaction score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
Care experienced	100	3.6	3.4	3.8
Not care experienced	1,900	3.7	3.7	3.8
Unsure whether care experienced or not	110	3.6	3.4	3.7

Again, the differences in composite mean scores between those who have no care experience and those who do or are unsure is extremely small. However, a statistically significant difference ($p < 0.01$) was observed between these groups within our sample, suggesting that there could be a greater likelihood that care-experienced learners in Scotland also have lower satisfaction with SQA's communications about NQs in 2023–24, than those who are not care-experienced.

Figure 21: Communications satisfaction composite score by care experience status



Qualifications satisfaction

The qualifications satisfaction composite examined how learner respondents felt about the four NQs: National 4, National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher. For each qualification, a satisfaction composite score was created by taking an average of respondents' response to the following six questions:

To what extent do you agree with the following statements: National 4/National 5/Higher/Advanced Higher are well understood by the general public?

To what extent do you agree with the following statements: National 4/National 5/Higher/Advanced Higher are trusted qualifications?

To what extent do you agree with the following statements: National 4/National 5/Higher/Advanced Higher standards are maintained year on year?

To what extent do you agree with the following statements: National 4/National 5/Higher/Advanced Higher are good preparation for further study?

To what extent do you agree with the following statements: National 4/National 5/Higher/Advanced Higher are good preparation for work?

To what extent do you agree with the following statements: National 4/National 5/Higher/Advanced Higher develop a broad range of skills for learners?

National 4

Respondents who answered all six questions on National 4 had a satisfaction score calculated. The resulting composite score has an overall average of 3.5, indicating an above mid-range level of satisfaction with National 4 in 2023–24. Translated back to the original Likert scale response, this would place the respondents with an average response between ‘neither agree nor disagree’ and ‘agree’.

The National 4 satisfaction score was compared across six demographic sub-groups: gender, disability/ASN status, SIMD, ethnicity, care experienced status and LGBTQIA+ status. Statistical analysis revealed no significant differences between satisfaction scores from sub-groups of different genders, disability/ASN status, SIMDs, care experienced status and LGBTQIA+ status within our sample ($p>0.01$) (see Appendix A for more detail).

Ethnicity

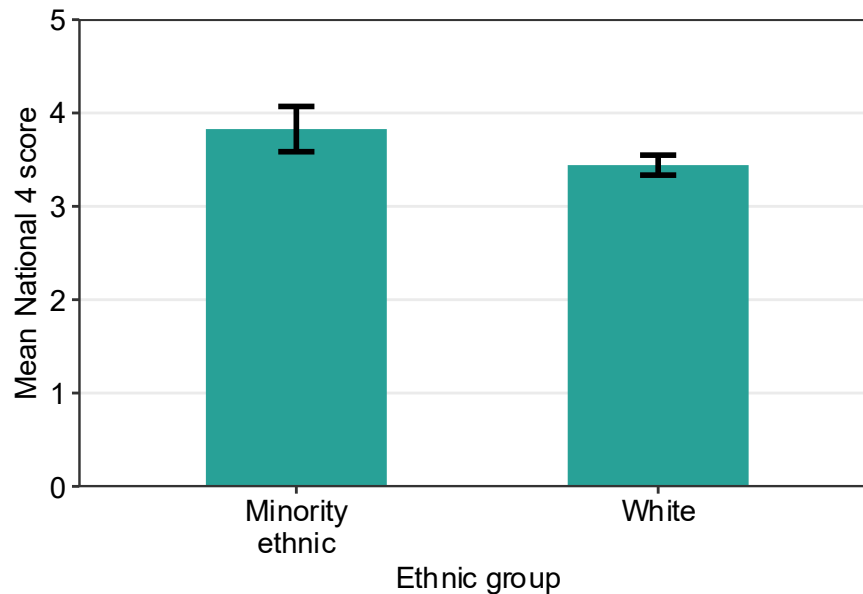
As shown in table 6 and Figure 22, respondents from white ethnic groups had a mean composite score of 3.4 for satisfaction with National 4, while respondents from minority ethnic groups had a mean satisfaction score of 3.8.

Table 6: National 4 satisfaction composite score by ethnic group

Ethnic group	Number of respondents	Mean National 4 score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
Minority ethnic	25	3.8	3.6	4.1
White	190	3.4	3.3	3.5

There was a statistically significant difference ($p<0.01$) in the satisfaction scores between white ethnic groups and minority ethnic groups. This could indicate that white learners in the general population were less satisfied than minority ethnic learners with National 4 qualifications in 2023–24; however, readers should exercise caution with this generalisation due to the small number of minority ethnic National 4 respondents.

Figure 22: National 4 satisfaction composite score by ethnic group



National 5

Respondents who answered all six questions on National 5 had a satisfaction score calculated. The overall mean composite score for National 5 was also 3.5, indicating an above mid-range level of satisfaction with National 5 in 2023–24. Translated back to the original Likert scale response, this would place the respondents with an average response between ‘neither agree nor disagree’ and ‘agree’.

Analysis across the six demographic groups revealed no significant differences between satisfaction scores from sub-groups of different genders, SIMD, ethnicity, care experienced status and LGBTQIA+ status within our sample ($p>0.01$) (see Appendix A for more detail).

Disability/ASN

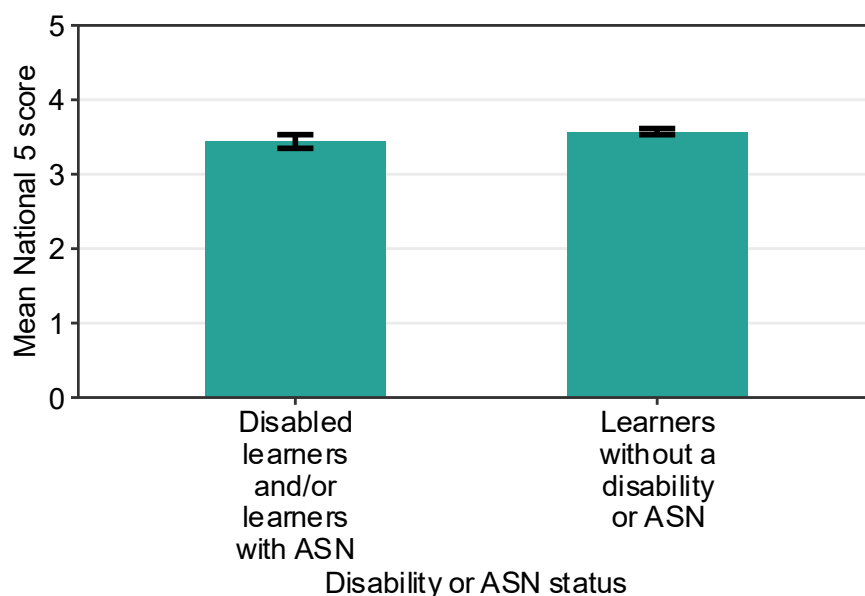
Respondents who identified as disabled or said they had an ASN had a mean National 5 satisfaction score of 3.4 while, while non-disabled respondents had a score of 3.6 (table 7 and Figure 23).

Table 7: National 5 satisfaction composite score by disability/ASN status

Disability or ASN status	Number of respondents	Mean National 5 score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
Disabled learners and/or learners with ASN	255	3.4	3.3	3.5
Learners without a disability or ASN	1,105	3.6	3.5	3.6

There was a statistically significant difference ($p < 0.01$) in the satisfaction scores of learner respondents who identified as disabled or with an ASN, and those who did not within our sample. This could indicate that disabled/ASN learners in the general population were less satisfied than non-disabled learners with communications from SQA about their NQs in 2023–24.

Figure 23: National 5 satisfaction composite score by disability/ASN status



Higher

Respondents who answered all six statements on Higher had a satisfaction score that averaged at 3.5, indicating an above mid-range level of satisfaction with Higher in 2023–24. Translated back to the original Likert scale response, this would place the respondents with an average response between ‘neither agree nor disagree’ and ‘agree’.

Analysis across the six demographic groups revealed no significant differences between satisfaction scores from sub-groups of different genders, disability/ASN status, SIMD, ethnicity, care experienced status and LGBTQIA+ status within our sample ($p>0.01$) (see Appendix A for more detail).

Advanced Higher

Respondents who answered all six statements given on Advanced Higher had a satisfaction score that averaged at 3.5, indicating an above mid-range level of satisfaction with Advanced Higher in 2023–24. Translated back to the original Likert scale response, this would place the respondents with an average response between ‘neither agree nor disagree’ and ‘agree’.

Analysis across the six demographic groups revealed no significant differences between satisfaction scores from sub-groups of different genders, disability/ASN status, SIMD, ethnicity, care experienced status and LGBTQIA+ status ($p>0.01$) within our sample.

Impact of the legacy of COVID-19 on learning

The impact of- the legacy of COVID-19 on learning composite examined how learner respondents felt about the impact of the pandemic on learning overall in 2023–24 by taking an average of their agreement with the following three statements:

The pandemic continues to have an impact on my learning

I feel that the pandemic has had an effect on the development of my skills and knowledge

I feel that the pandemic continues to affect my mental wellbeing.

In contrast to the previous satisfaction scores, researchers interpreted higher levels of agreement with these three statements as indicating higher impact of COVID-19 on learning in 2023–24. Therefore, high mean scores indicate more impact on learning in 2023–24, while low scores indicate less impact.

Respondents who answered all three questions had an impact of COVID-19 on learning score calculated. The composite had an overall average score of 3.3 for all respondents, indicating an above mid-range level of impact of COVID-19 on learning in 2023–24. Translated back to the original Likert scale responses, this would place the respondents with an average response of slightly above ‘neither agree nor disagree’ for all respondents.

The impact of COVID-19 on learning score was compared across six different demographic sub-groups: gender, disability/ASN status, SIMD, ethnicity, care experienced status and LGBTQIA+ status. Statistical analysis revealed no significant difference between impact scores from groups based on SIMD, ethnicity, or care experienced status within our sample ($p>0.01$) (see Appendix A for more detail).

Gender

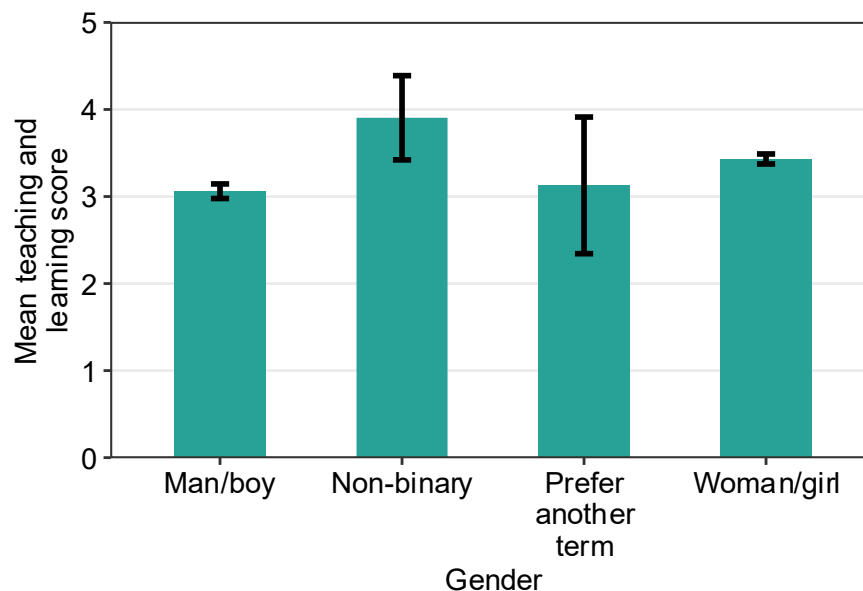
As shown in table 8 and Figure 24, respondents who identified as ‘Man/boy’ had a mean impact score of 3.1, as did respondents who said they preferred another term. Woman/girl respondents had a score of 3.4, while non-binary respondents had a mean score of 3.9.

Table 8: Impact of COVID-19 on learning composite score by gender

Gender	Number of respondents	Mean impact of COVID-19 on learning score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
Man/boy	745	3.1	3	3.1
Non-binary	20	3.9	3.4	4.4
Prefer another term	15	3.1	2.3	3.9
Woman/girl	1,300	3.4	3.4	3.5

There was a statistically significant difference in the mean impact score from respondents who identified as man/boy and respondents who identified as woman/girl within our sample ($p < 0.01$). This could indicate that women and girls felt that the pandemic impacted their learning more in 2023–24 than men and boys across the whole NQ learner population in Scotland.

Figure 24: COVID-19 impact on learning composite score by gender



LGBTQIA+ status

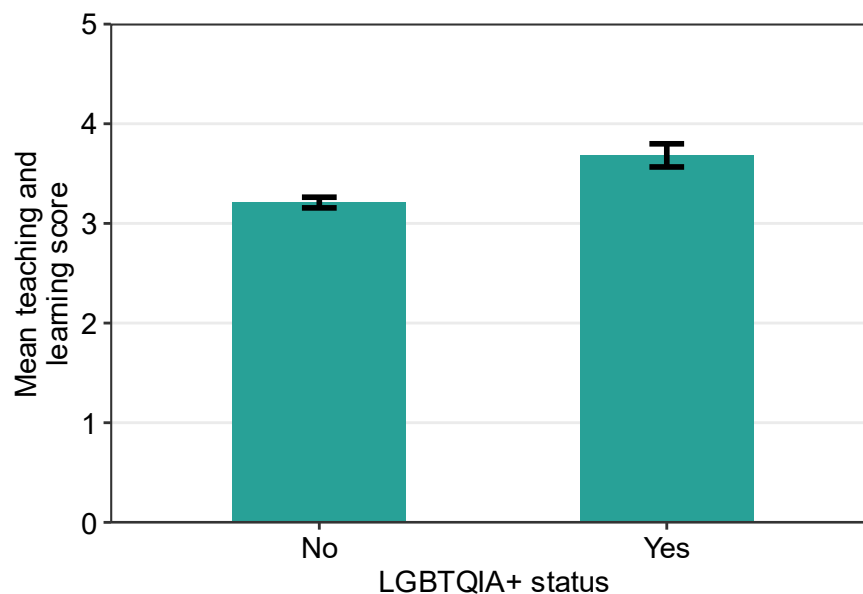
Respondents who identified as part of the LGBTQIA+ community had a mean impact score of 3.7, while respondents who did not identify as LGBTQIA+ had a mean score of 3.2, indicating that LGBTQIA+ respondents felt COVID-19 had a higher impact on their learning than non-LGBTQIA+ respondents. (table 9 and Figure 25).

Table 9: COVID-19 impact on learning score by LGBTQIA+ status

LGBTQIA+ status	Number of respondents	COVID-19 impact on learning score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
No	1,675	3.2	3.2	3.3
Yes	315	3.7	3.6	3.8

There was a statistically significant difference in the mean impact score from LGBTQIA+ respondents and those who did not identify as LGBTQIA+ within our sample ($p < 0.01$). This could suggest that LGBTQIA+ NQ learners in Scotland as a whole felt that the pandemic had a higher impact on their learning in 2023–24 than those who did not identify as LGBTQIA+.

Figure 25: Teaching and learning satisfaction composite score by LGBTQIA+ status



Disability/ASN status

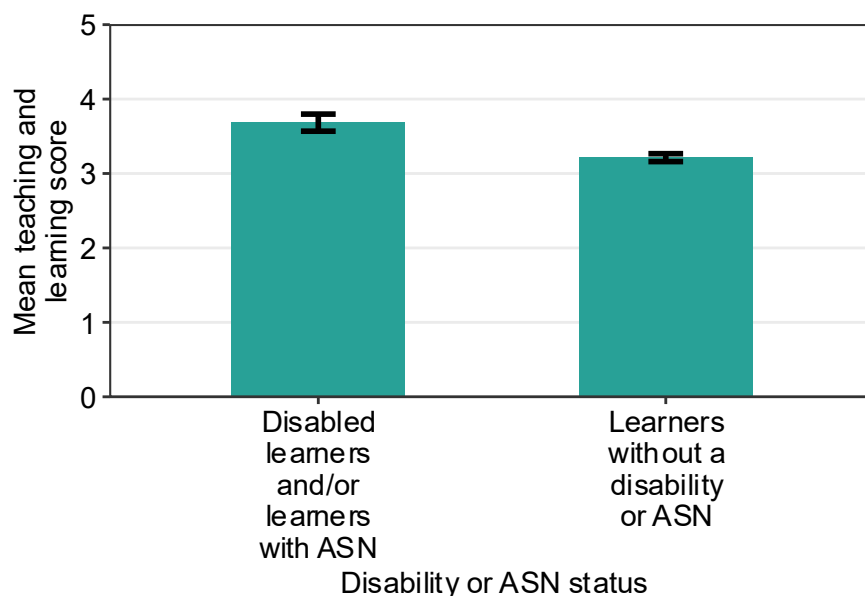
Respondents with a disability or ASN had a mean impact score of 3.7, while respondents without a disability or ASN had a mean impact score of 3.2 (table 10 and Figure 26).

Table 10: COVID-19 impact on learning composite score by disability/ASN status

Disability or ASN status	Number of respondents	COVID-19 impact on learning score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
Disabled learners and/or learners with ASN	360	3.7	3.6	3.8
Learners without a disability or ASN	1,665	3.2	3.2	3.3

There was a statistically significant difference in the mean impact scores of these two groups within our sample ($p < 0.01$). Therefore, in Scotland as a whole, NQ learners with a disability or ASN could feel that the pandemic has had more of an impact on their learning in 2023–24 than those without a disability or ASN.

Figure 26: COVID-19 impact on learning score by disability/ASN status



Assessment and awarding satisfaction

The assessment and awarding satisfaction composite examined how learner respondents felt about this aspect of their National Qualifications in 2023–24 by taking an average of their agreement with the following two statements:

The assessment process was fair to me

I was satisfied with the assessment process.

Respondents who responded to both statements had an assessment and awarding satisfaction score calculated. The composite had an overall average score of 3.3 for all respondents, indicating a below mid-range level of satisfaction with assessment and awarding. Translated back to the original Likert scale responses, this would place the respondents with an average response of slightly above 'neither agree nor disagree' for all respondents.

The assessment and awarding satisfaction score was compared across six different demographic sub-groups: gender, disability/ASN status, SIMD, ethnicity, care experienced status and LGBTQIA+ status. Statistical analysis found no significant differences between satisfaction scores from groups based on gender, SIMD, ethnicity, and care experienced status within our sample ($p > 0.01$) (see Appendix A for more detail).

LGBTQIA+

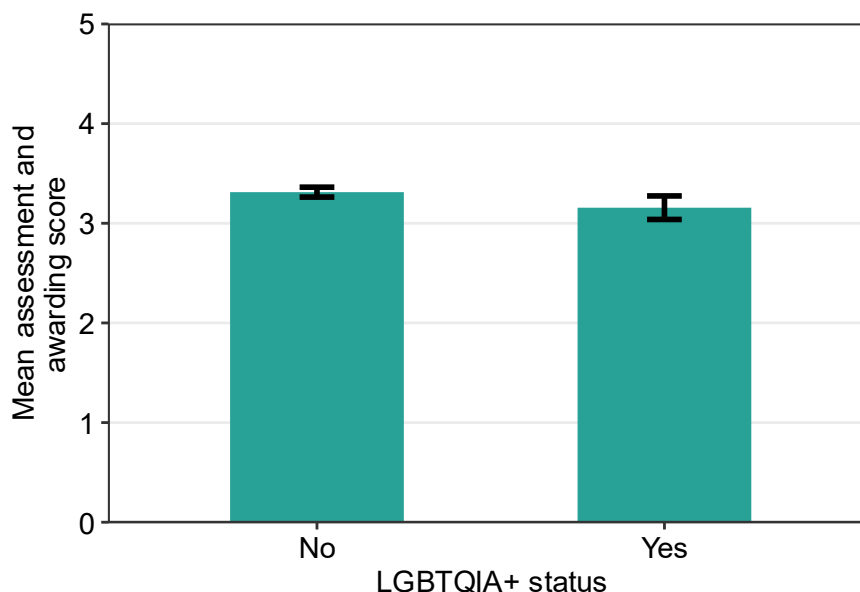
Respondents who said they were part of the LGBTQIA+ community had a mean satisfaction score of 3.2, while respondents who did not identify as LGBTQIA+ had a mean satisfaction score of 3.3 (table 11 and Figure 27).

Table 11: Assessment and awarding satisfaction composite score by LGBTQIA+

LGBTQIA+ status	Number of respondents	Mean assessment and awarding score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
No	1,670	3.3	3.3	3.4
Yes	320	3.2	3	3.3

While the difference in mean scores between these two sub-groups is relatively small, it was nevertheless statistically significant within our sample ($P < 0.01$). This could suggest that in Scotland as a whole, LGBTQIA+ learners have lower levels of satisfaction with their assessment and awarding compared to learners who are not LGBTQIA+.

Figure 27: Assessment and awarding satisfaction composite score by LGBTQIA+ status



Disability/ASN status

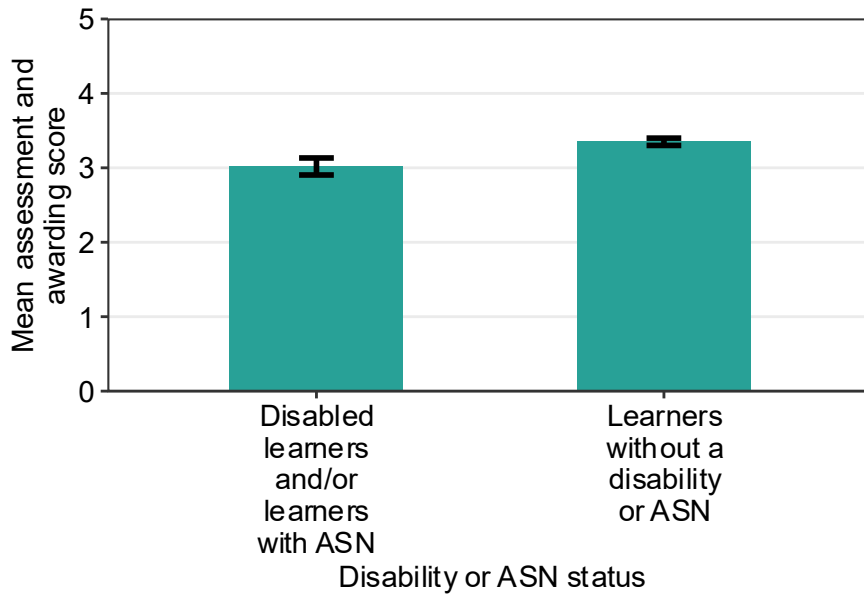
Respondents who said they were disabled or had an ASN had a mean satisfaction score of 3, while non-disabled respondents had a mean score of 3.4 (table 12 and Figure 28). This indicated that disabled/ASN respondents had lower levels of satisfaction with learning and teaching than respondents who did not have a disability or ASN.

Table 12: Assessment and awarding satisfaction composite score by disability/ASN status

Disability or ASN status	Number of respondents	Mean assessment and awarding score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
Disabled learners and/or learners with ASN	360	3	2.9	3.1
Learners without a disability or ASN	1,665	3.4	3.3	3.4

There was a statistically significant difference in the mean satisfaction score between these two sub-groups within our sample ($p < 0.01$). This could indicate a similar difference in the population as a whole where learners with a disability or ASN may have lower levels of satisfaction with assessment and awarding in 2023–24 compared to non-disabled learners.

Figure 28: Assessment and awarding satisfaction composite score by disability/ASN status



Appendix A – Composite satisfaction analysis

Communications satisfaction composite

Communications satisfaction composite score by care experience status

Figure 29: Communications satisfaction composite score by care experience status

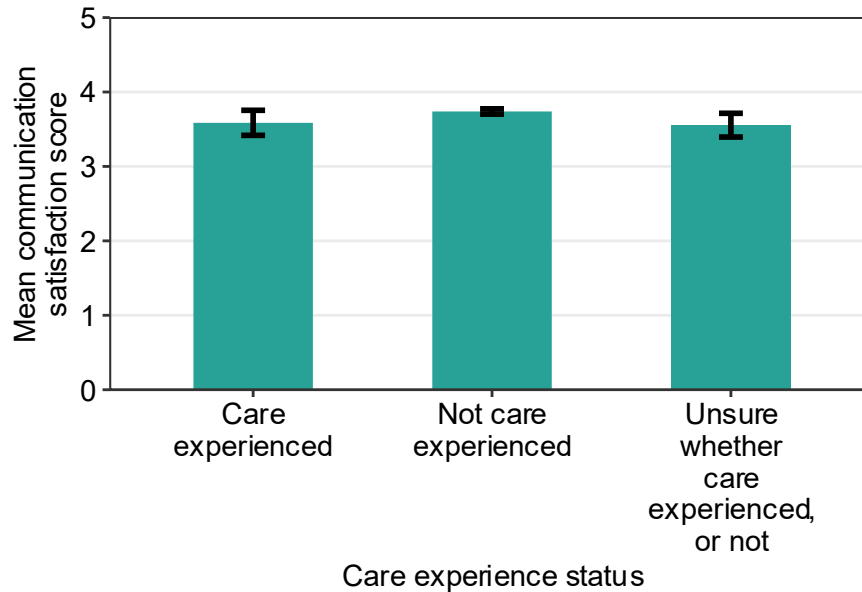


Table 13: Communications satisfaction composite score by care experience status

Care experience status	Number of respondents	Mean communication satisfaction score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
Care experienced	100	3.6	3.4	3.8
Not care experienced	1,900	3.7	3.7	3.8
Unsure whether care experienced, or not	110	3.6	3.4	3.7

Kruskal-Wallis test p-value = 0.0035

There was evidence to suggest that at least one of the care-experience status groupings has a different median score.

Communications satisfaction composite score by disability/ASN status

Figure 30: Communications satisfaction composite score by disability/ASN status

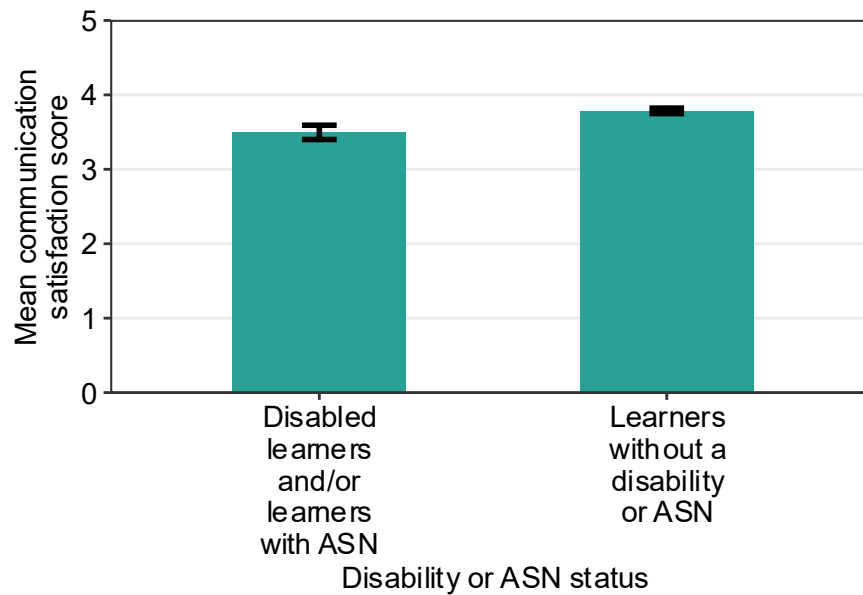


Table 14: Communications satisfaction composite score by disability/ASN status

Disability or ASN status	Number of respondents	Mean communication satisfaction score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
Disabled learners and/or learners with ASN	365	3.5	3.4	3.6
Learners without a disability or ASN	1,675	3.8	3.7	3.8

Kruskal-Wallis test p-value = 0

There was evidence to suggest that at least one of the disability or ASN status groupings has a different median score.

Communications satisfaction composite score by ethnic group

Figure 31: Communications satisfaction composite score by ethnic group

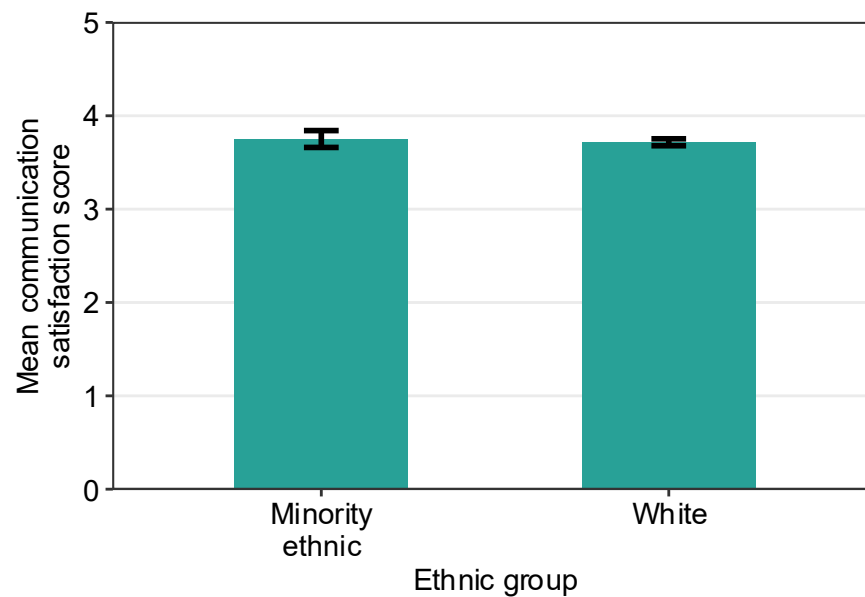


Table 15: Communications satisfaction composite score by ethnic group

Ethnic group	Number of respondents	Mean communication satisfaction score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
Minority ethnic	305	3.8	3.7	3.8
White	1,800	3.7	3.7	3.8

Kruskal-Wallis test p-value = 0.0571

There was no evidence to suggest that any of the ethnic group groupings have a different median score.

Communications satisfaction composite score by gender

Figure 32: Communications satisfaction composite score by gender

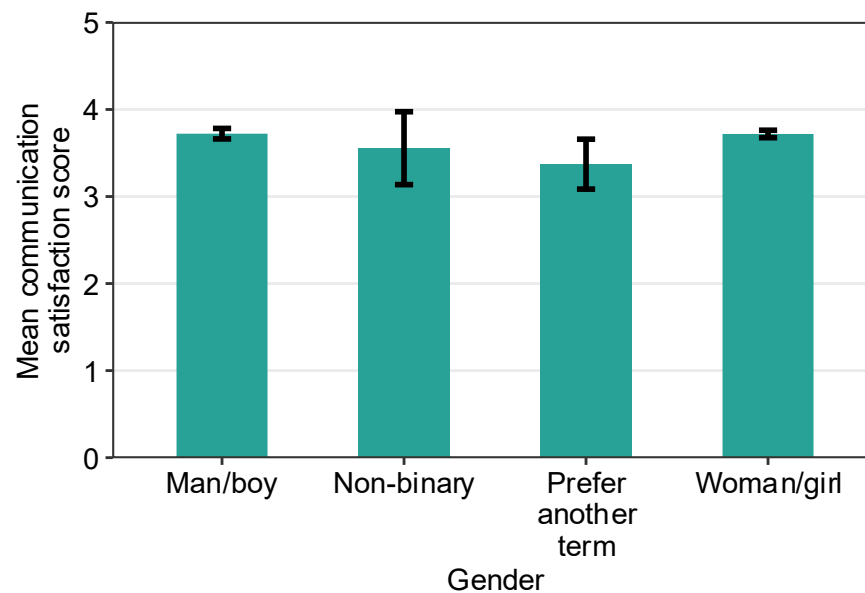


Table 16: Communications satisfaction composite score by gender

Gender	Number of respondents	Mean communication satisfaction score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
Man/boy	750	3.7	3.7	3.8
Non-binary	20	3.6	3.1	4
Prefer another term	15	3.4	3.1	3.7
Woman /girl	1,310	3.7	3.7	3.8

Kruskal-Wallis test p-value = 0.1249

There was no evidence to suggest that any of the gender groupings have a different median score.

Communications satisfaction composite score by LGBTQIA+ status

Figure 33: Communications satisfaction composite score by LGBTQIA+ status

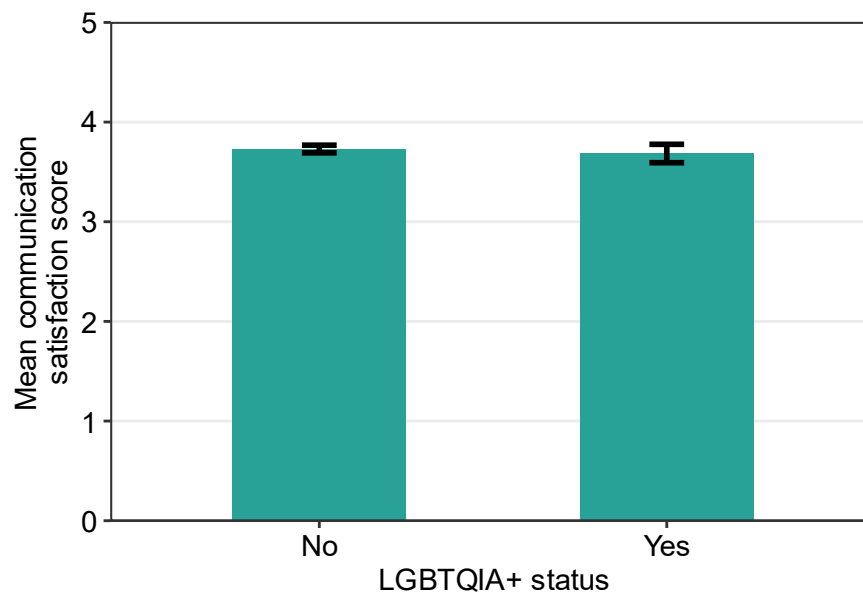


Table 17: Communications satisfaction composite score by LGBTQIA+ status

LGBTQIA+ status	Number of respondents	Mean communication satisfaction score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
No	1,680	3.7	3.7	3.8
Yes	320	3.7	3.6	3.8

Kruskal-Wallis test p-value = 0.119

There was no evidence to suggest that any of the LGBTQIA+ status groupings have a different median score.

Communications satisfaction composite score by SIMD quintile

Figure 34: Communications satisfaction composite score by SIMD quintile

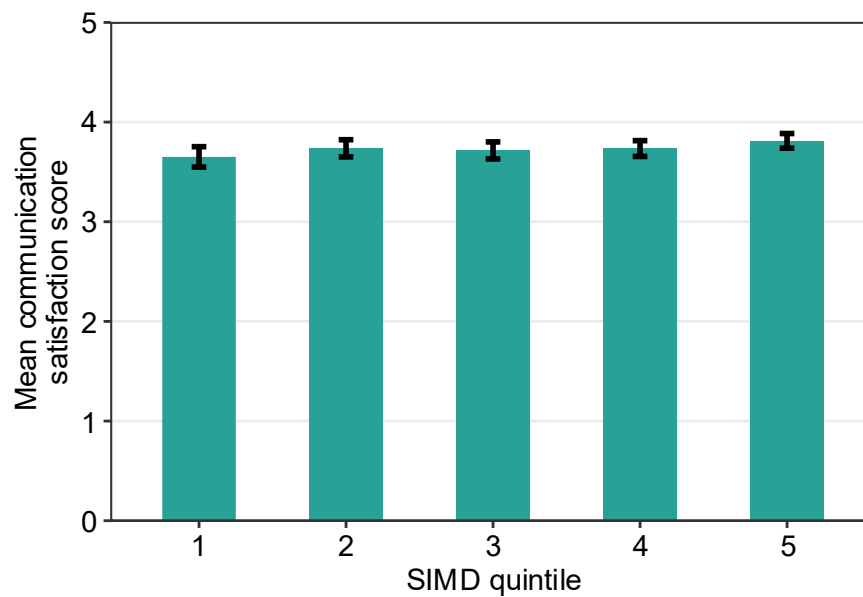


Table 18: Communications satisfaction composite score by SIMD quintile

SIMD quintile	Number of respondents	Mean communication satisfaction score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
1	245	3.7	3.5	3.8
2	280	3.7	3.7	3.8
3	340	3.7	3.6	3.8
4	390	3.7	3.7	3.8
5	450	3.8	3.7	3.9

Kruskal-Wallis test p-value = 0.0055

There was no evidence to suggest that at least one of the SIMD quintile groupings has a different median score.

National 4 satisfaction composite

National 4 satisfaction composite score by care experience status

Figure 35: National 4 satisfaction composite score by care experience status

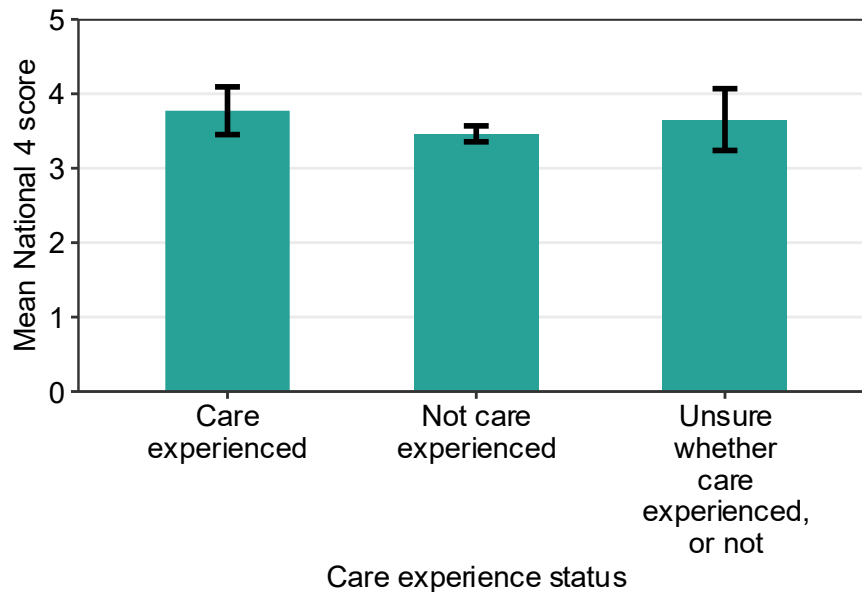


Table 19: National 4 satisfaction composite score by care experience status

Care experience status	Number of respondents	Mean National 4 score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
Care experienced	15	3.8	3.5	4.1
Not care experienced	185	3.5	3.4	3.6
Unsure whether care experienced, or not	20	3.7	3.2	4.1

Kruskal-Wallis test p-value = 0.2411

There was no evidence to suggest that any of the care-experience status groupings have a different median score.

National 4 satisfaction composite score by disability/ASN status

Figure 36: National 4 satisfaction composite score by disability/ASN status

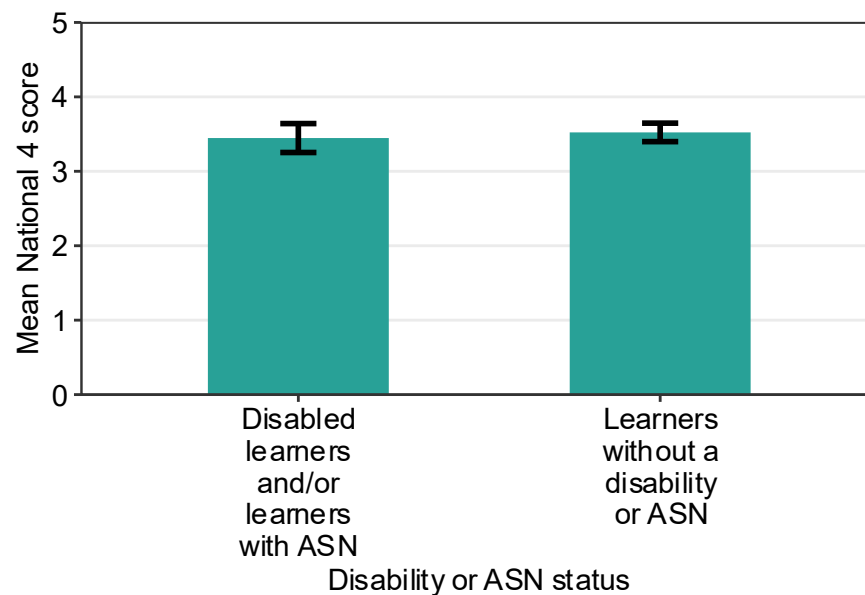


Table 20: National 4 satisfaction composite score by disability/ASN status

Disability or ASN status	Number of respondents	Mean National 4 score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
Disabled learners and/or learners with ASN	60	3.4	3.3	3.6
Learners without a disability or ASN	145	3.5	3.4	3.6

Kruskal-Wallis test p-value = 0.6968

There was no evidence to suggest that any of the disability or ASN status groupings have a different median score.

National 4 satisfaction composite score by ethnic group

Figure 37: National 4 satisfaction composite score by ethnic group

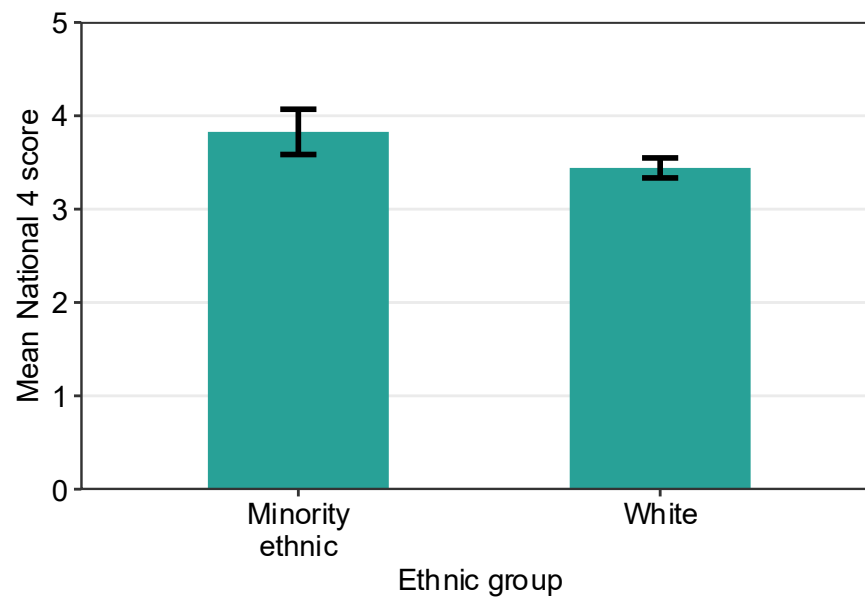


Table 21: National 4 satisfaction composite score by ethnic group

Ethnic group	Number of respondents	Mean National 4 score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
Minority ethnic	25	3.8	3.6	4.1
White	190	3.4	3.3	3.5

Kruskal-Wallis test p-value = 0.0122

There was no evidence to suggest that any of the ethnic group groupings have a different median score.

National 4 satisfaction composite score by gender

Figure 38: National 4 satisfaction composite score by gender

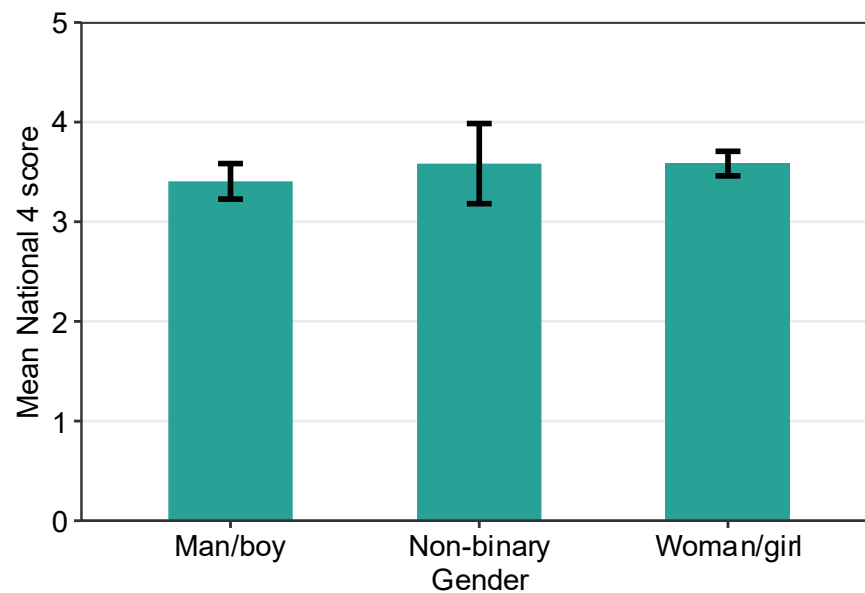


Table 22: National 4 satisfaction composite score by gender

Gender	Number of respondents	Mean National 4 score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
Man/boy	85	3.4	3.2	3.6
Non-binary	5	3.6	3.2	4
Woman/girl	125	3.6	3.5	3.7

Kruskal-Wallis test p-value = 0.2331

There was no evidence to suggest that any of the gender groupings have a different median score.

National 4 satisfaction composite score by LGBTQIA+

Figure 39: National 4 satisfaction composite score by LGBTQIA+

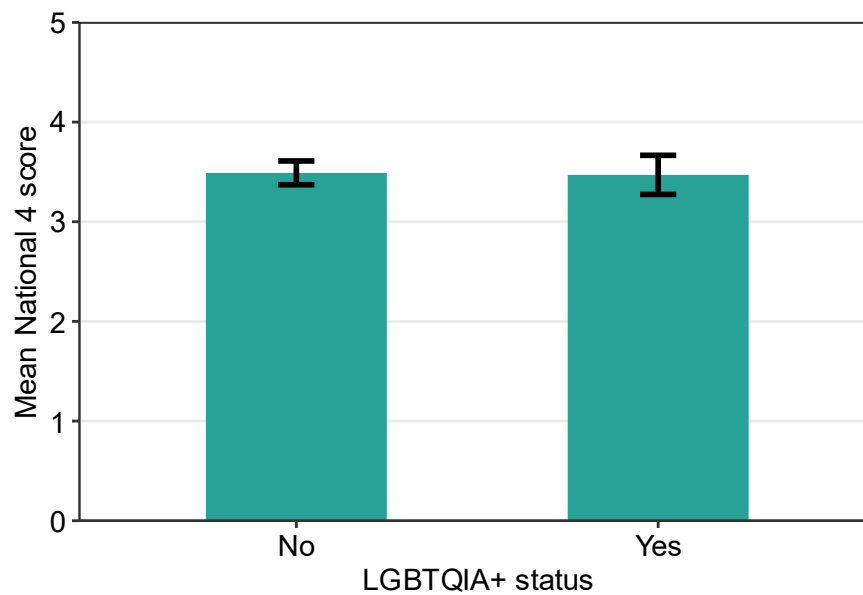


Table 23: National 4 satisfaction composite score by LGBTQIA+ status

LGBTQIA+ status	Number of respondents	Mean National 4 score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
No	165	3.5	3.4	3.6
Yes	40	3.5	3.3	3.7

Kruskal-Wallis test p-value = 0.3916

There was no evidence to suggest that any of the LGBTQIA+ status groupings have a different median score.

National 4 satisfaction composite score by SIMD quintile

Figure 40: National 4 satisfaction composite score by SIMD quintile

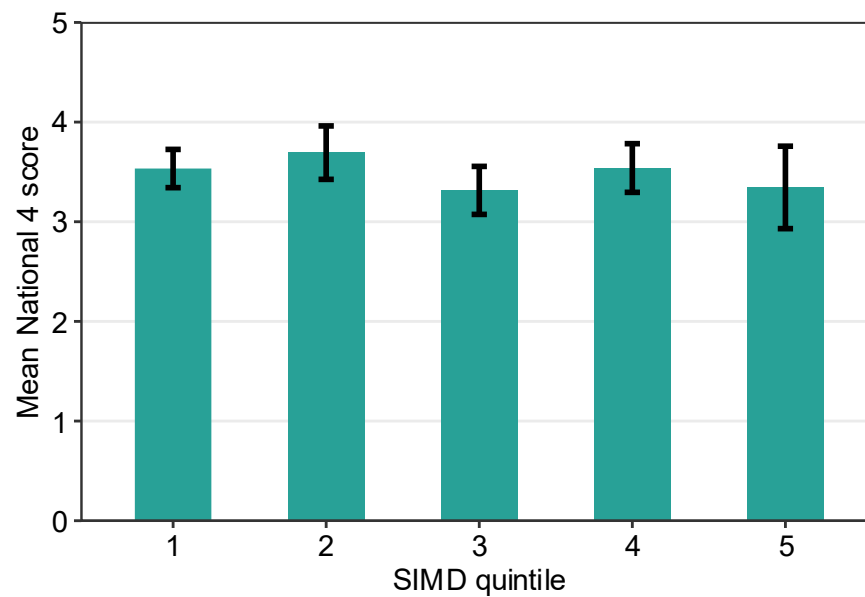


Table 24: National 4 satisfaction composite score by SIMD quintile

SIMD quintile	Number of respondents	Mean National 4 score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
1	50	3.5	3.3	3.7
2	25	3.7	3.4	4
3	40	3.3	3.1	3.6
4	30	3.5	3.3	3.8
5	15	3.3	2.9	3.8

Kruskal-Wallis test p-value = 0.2756

There was no evidence to suggest that any of the SIMD quintile groupings have a different median score.

National 5 satisfaction composite

National 5 satisfaction composite by care experience status

Figure 41: National 5 satisfaction composite score by care experience status

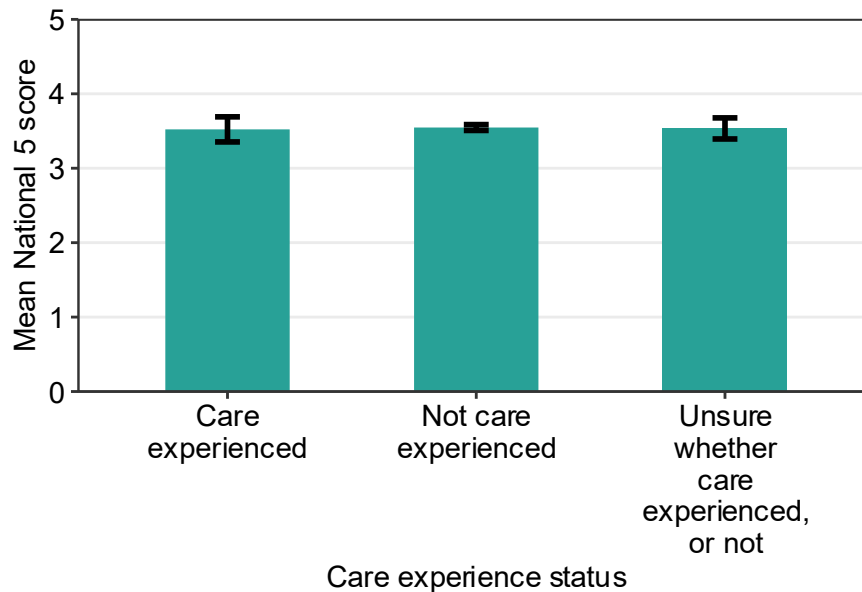


Table 25: National 5 satisfaction composite score by care experience status

Care experience status	Number of respondents	Mean National 5 score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
Care experienced	80	3.5	3.4	3.7
Not care experienced	1,240	3.5	3.5	3.6
Unsure whether care experienced, or not	95	3.5	3.4	3.7

Kruskal-Wallis test p-value = 0.0535

There was no evidence to suggest that any of the care-experience status groupings have a different median score.

National 5 satisfaction composite score by disability/ASN status

Figure 42: National 5 satisfaction composite score by disability/ASN status

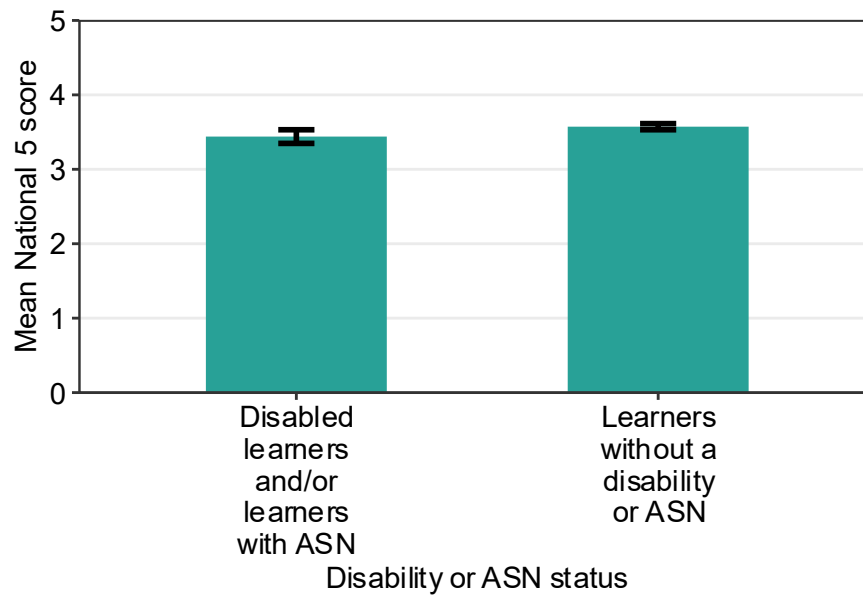


Table 26: National 5 satisfaction composite score by disability/ASN status

Disability or ASN status	Number of respondents	Mean National 5 score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
Disabled learners and/or learners with ASN	255	3.4	3.3	3.5
Learners without a disability or ASN	1,105	3.6	3.5	3.6

Kruskal-Wallis test p-value = 0.0046

There was evidence to suggest that at least one of the disability or ASN status groupings has a different median score.

National 5 satisfaction composite score by ethnic group

Figure 43: National 5 satisfaction composite score by ethnic group

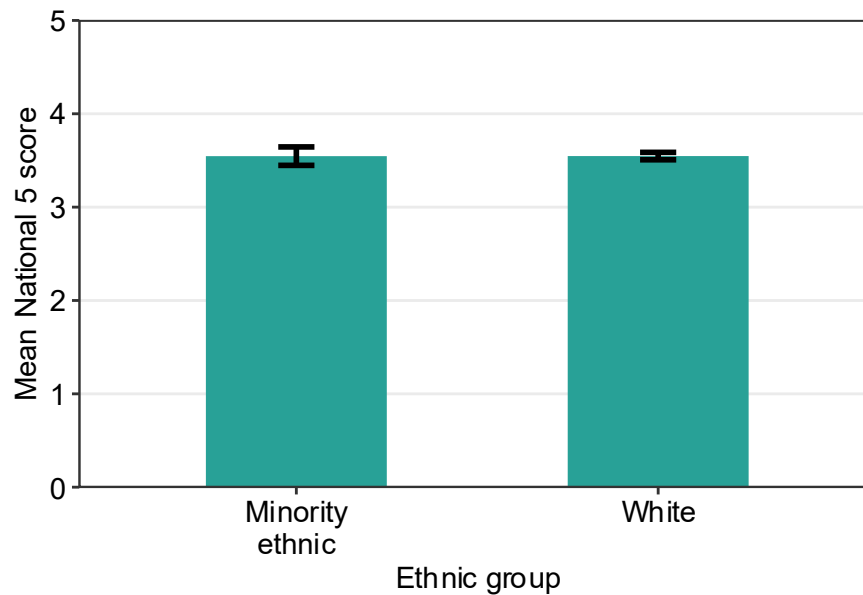


Table 27: National 5 satisfaction composite score by ethnic group

Ethnic group	Number of respondents	Mean National 5 score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
Minority ethnic	195	3.5	3.4	3.6
White	1,215	3.5	3.5	3.6

Kruskal-Wallis test p-value = 7e-04

There was evidence to suggest that at least one of the ethnic group groupings has a different median score.

National 5 satisfaction composite score by gender

Figure 44: National 5 satisfaction composite score by gender

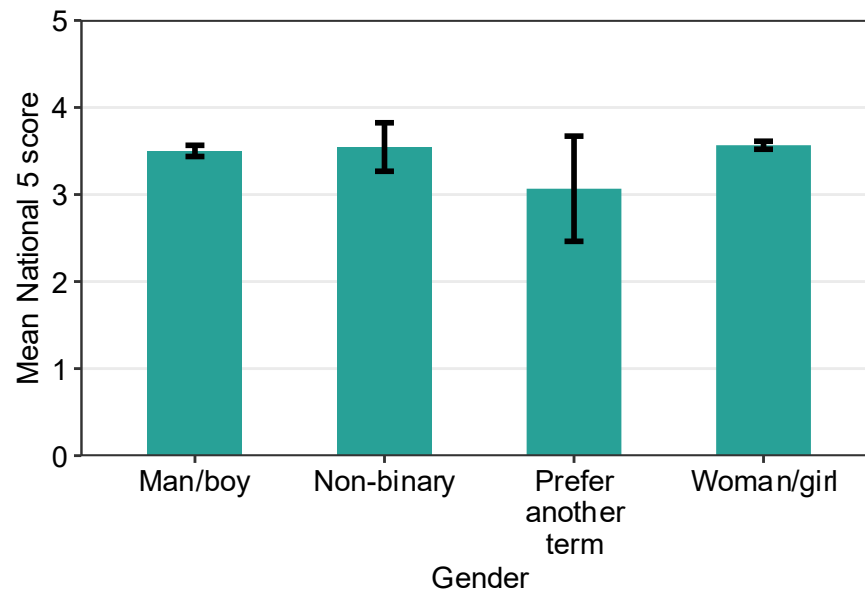


Table 28: National 5 satisfaction composite score by gender

Gender	Number of respondents	Mean National 5 score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
Man/boy	510	3.5	3.4	3.6
Non-binary	10	3.5	3.3	3.8
Prefer another term	10	3.1	2.5	3.7
Woman/girl	875	3.6	3.5	3.6

Kruskal-Wallis test p-value = 0.1533

There was no evidence to suggest that any of the gender groupings have a different median score.

National 5 satisfaction composite score by LGBTQIA+ status

Figure 45: National 5 satisfaction composite score by LGBTQIA+ status

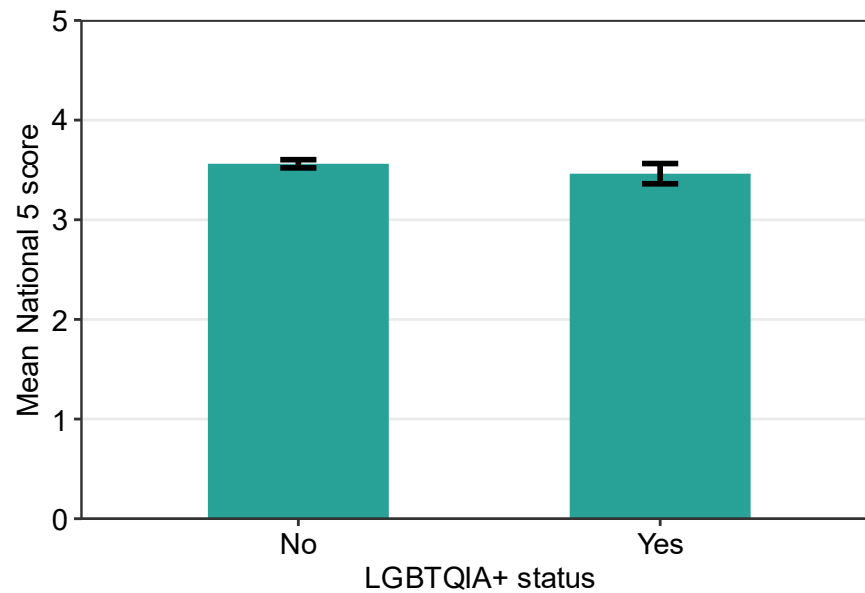


Table 29: National 5 satisfaction composite score by LGTBQIA+ status

LGBTQIA+ status	Number of respondents	Mean National 5 score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
No	1,120	3.6	3.5	3.6
Yes	220	3.5	3.4	3.6

Kruskal-Wallis test p-value = 0.032

There was no evidence to suggest that any of the LGBTQIA+ status groupings have a different median score.

National 5 satisfaction composite score by SIMD quintile

Figure 46: National 5 satisfaction composite score by SIMD quintile

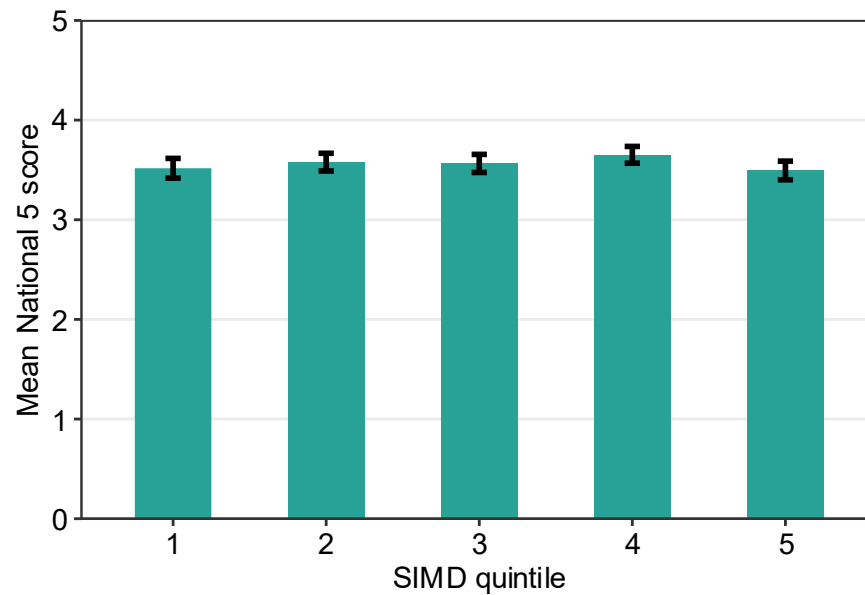


Table 30: National 5 satisfaction composite score by SIMD quintile

SIMD quintile	Number of respondents	Mean National 5 score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
1	175	3.5	3.4	3.6
2	205	3.6	3.5	3.7
3	230	3.6	3.5	3.7
4	240	3.7	3.6	3.7
5	235	3.5	3.4	3.6

Kruskal-Wallis test p-value = 0.038

There was no evidence to suggest that any of the SIMD quintile groupings have a different median score.

Higher satisfaction composite

Higher satisfaction composite score by care experience status

Figure 47: Higher satisfaction composite score by care experience status

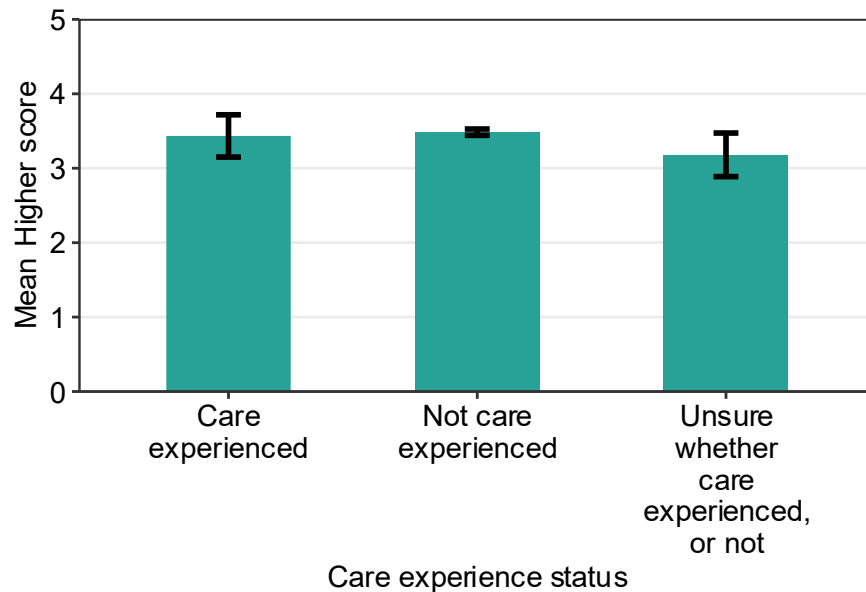


Table 31: Higher satisfaction composite score by care experience status

Care experience status	Number of respondents	Mean Higher score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
Care experienced	35	3.4	3.1	3.7
Not care experienced	1,035	3.5	3.4	3.5
Unsure whether care experienced, or not	40	3.2	2.9	3.5

Kruskal-Wallis test p-value = 0.2998

There was no evidence to suggest that any of the care-experience status groupings have a different median score.

Higher satisfaction composite score by disability/ASN status

Figure 48: Higher satisfaction composite score by disability/ASN status

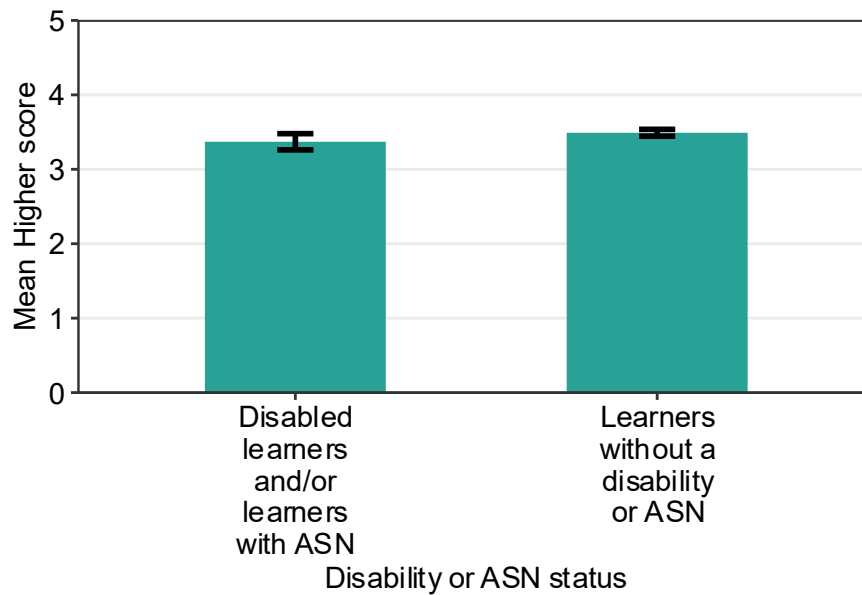


Table 32: Higher satisfaction composite score by disability/ASN status

Disability or ASN status	Number of respondents	Mean Higher score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
Disabled learners and/or learners with ASN	175	3.4	3.3	3.5
Learners without a disability or ASN	900	3.5	3.4	3.5

Kruskal-Wallis test p-value = 0.1764

There was no evidence to suggest that any of the disability or ASN status groupings have a different median score.

Higher satisfaction composite score by ethnic group

Figure 49: Higher satisfaction composite score by ethnic group

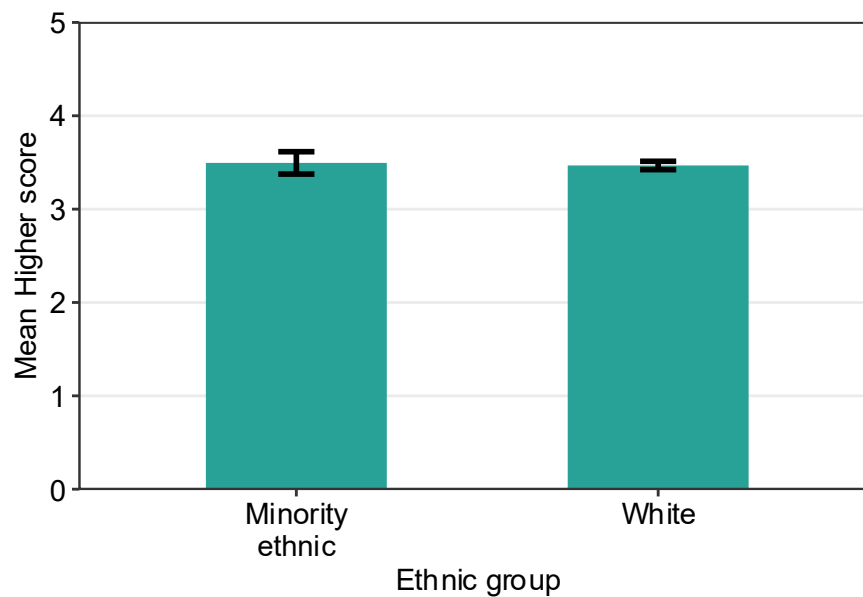


Table 33: Higher satisfaction composite score by ethnic group

Ethnic group	Number of respondents	Mean Higher score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
Minority ethnic	160	3.5	3.4	3.6
White	940	3.5	3.4	3.5

Kruskal-Wallis test p-value = 0.6509

There was no evidence to suggest that any of the ethnic group groupings have a different median score.

Higher satisfaction composite score by gender

Figure 50: Higher satisfaction composite score by gender

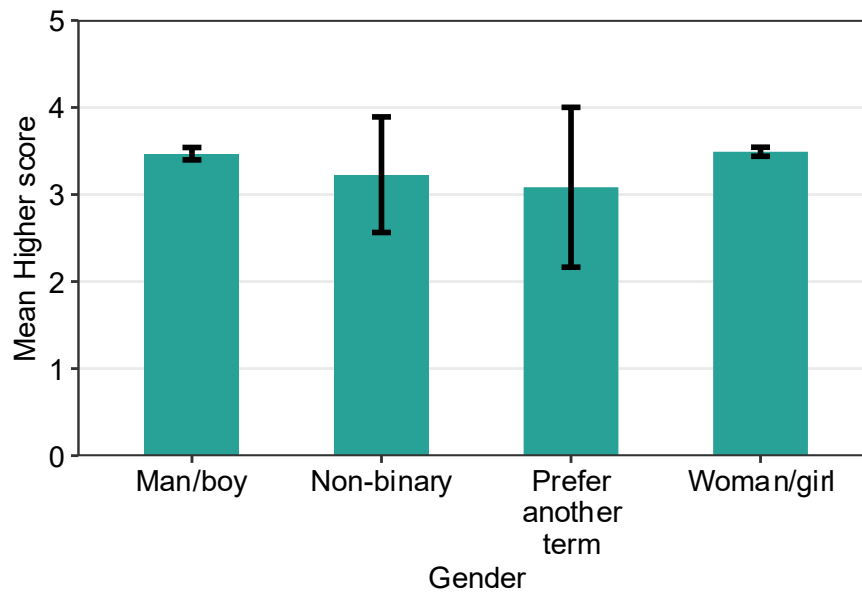


Table 34: Higher satisfaction composite score by gender

Gender	Number of respondents	Mean Higher score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
Man/boy	365	3.5	3.4	3.5
Non-binary	10	3.2	2.6	3.9
Prefer another term	5	3.1	2.2	4
Woman/girl	715	3.5	3.4	3.5

Kruskal-Wallis test p-value = 0.1238

There was no evidence to suggest that any of the gender groupings have a different median score.

Higher satisfaction composite score by LGBTQIA+ status

Figure 51: Higher satisfaction composite score by LGBTQIA+ status

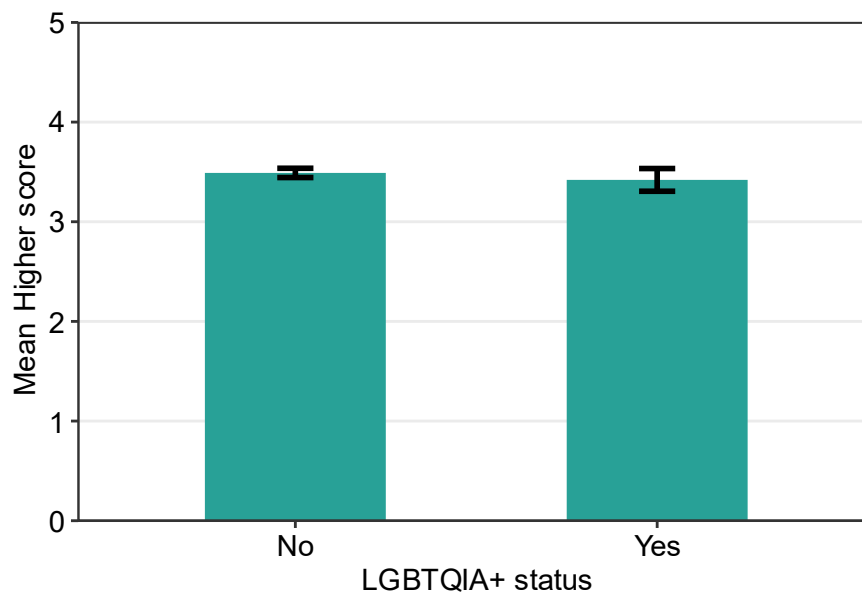


Table 35: Higher satisfaction composite score by LGBTQIA+ status

LGBTQIA+ status	Number of respondents	Mean Higher score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
No	875	3.5	3.4	3.5
Yes	175	3.4	3.3	3.5

Kruskal-Wallis test p-value = 0.5732

There was no evidence to suggest that any of the LGBTQIA+ status groupings have a different median score.

Higher satisfaction composite score by SIMD quintile

Figure 52: Higher satisfaction composite score by SIMD quintile

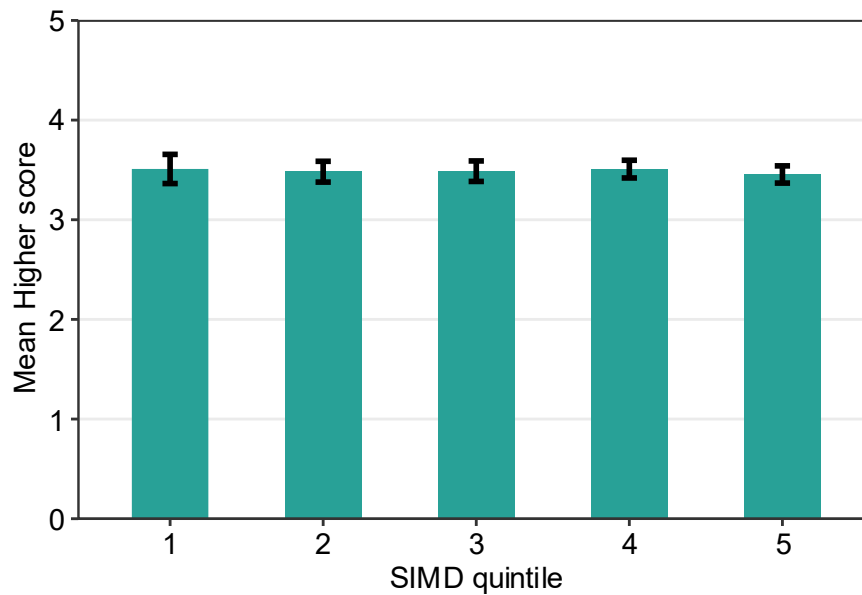


Table 36: Higher satisfaction composite score by SIMD quintile

SIMD quintile	Number of respondents	Mean Higher score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
1	110	3.5	3.4	3.7
2	135	3.5	3.4	3.6
3	175	3.5	3.4	3.6
4	220	3.5	3.4	3.6
5	280	3.5	3.4	3.5

Kruskal-Wallis test p-value = 0.6949

There was no evidence to suggest that any of the SIMD quintile groupings have a different median score.

Advanced Higher satisfaction composite

Advanced Higher satisfaction composite score by care experienced status

Figure 53: Advanced Higher satisfaction composite score by care experience status

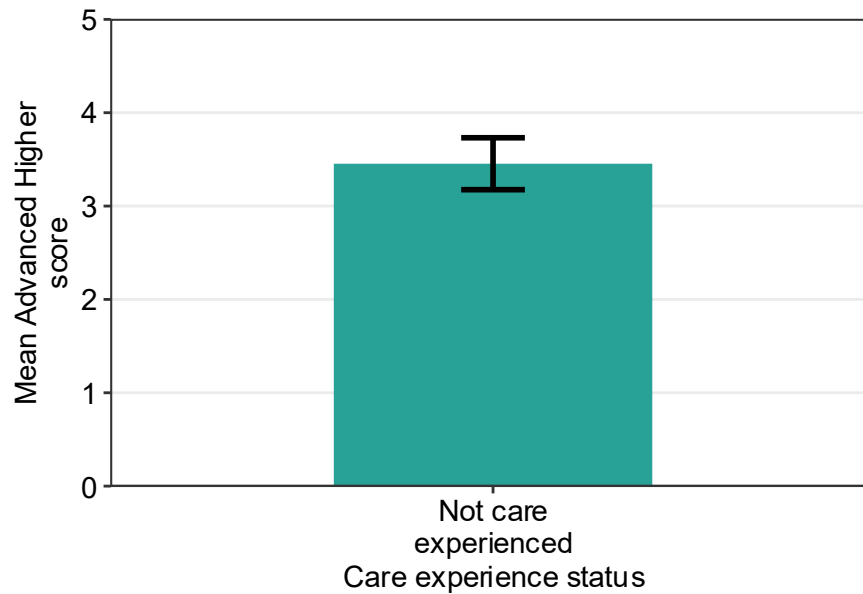


Table 37: Advanced Higher satisfaction composite score by care experience status

Care experience status	Number of respondents	Mean Advanced Higher score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
Care experienced	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]
Not care experienced	35	3.5	3.2	3.7
Unsure whether care experienced, or not	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]

There was an insufficient number of groups to perform a Kruskal-Wallis test.

Advanced Higher satisfaction composite score by disability/ASN status

Figure 54: Advanced Higher satisfaction composite score by disability/ASN status

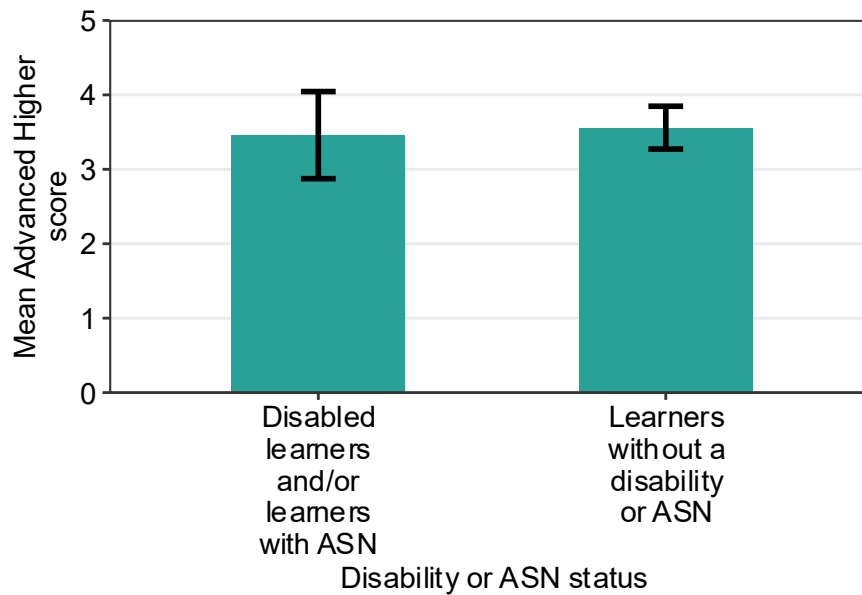


Table 38: Advanced Higher satisfaction composite score by disability/ASN status

Disability or ASN status	Number of respondents	Mean Advanced Higher score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
Disabled learners and/or learners with ASN	10	3.5	2.9	4
Learners without a disability or ASN	30	3.6	3.3	3.8

Kruskal-Wallis test p-value = 0.6047

There was no evidence to suggest that any of the disability or ASN status groupings have a different median score.

Advanced Higher composite score by ethnic group

Figure 55: Advanced Higher satisfaction composite score by ethnic group

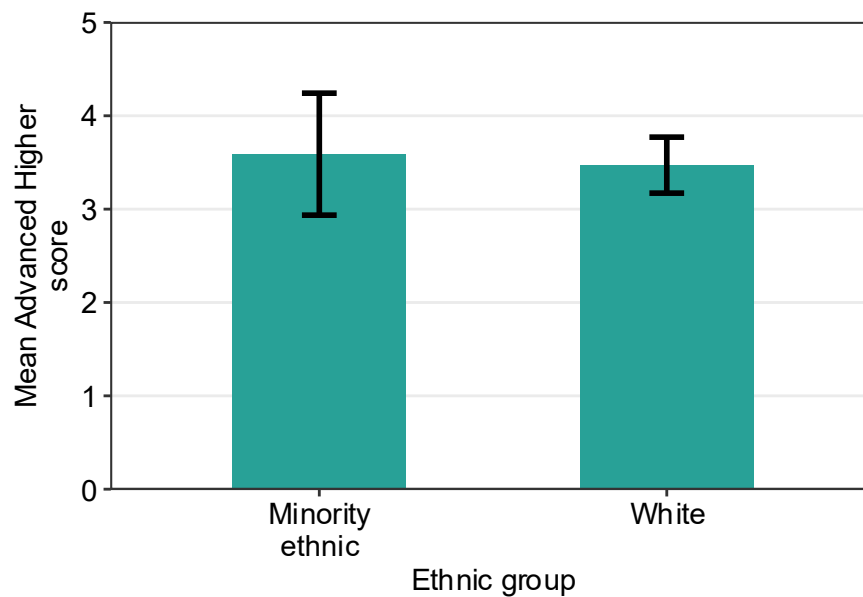


Table 39: Advanced Higher satisfaction composite score by ethnic group

Ethnic group	Number of respondents	Mean Advanced Higher score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
Minority ethnic	10	3.6	2.9	4.2
White	30	3.5	3.2	3.8

Kruskal-Wallis test p-value = 0.3836

There was no evidence to suggest that any of the ethnic group groupings have a different median score.

Advanced Higher satisfaction composite score by gender

Figure 56: Advanced Higher satisfaction composite score by gender

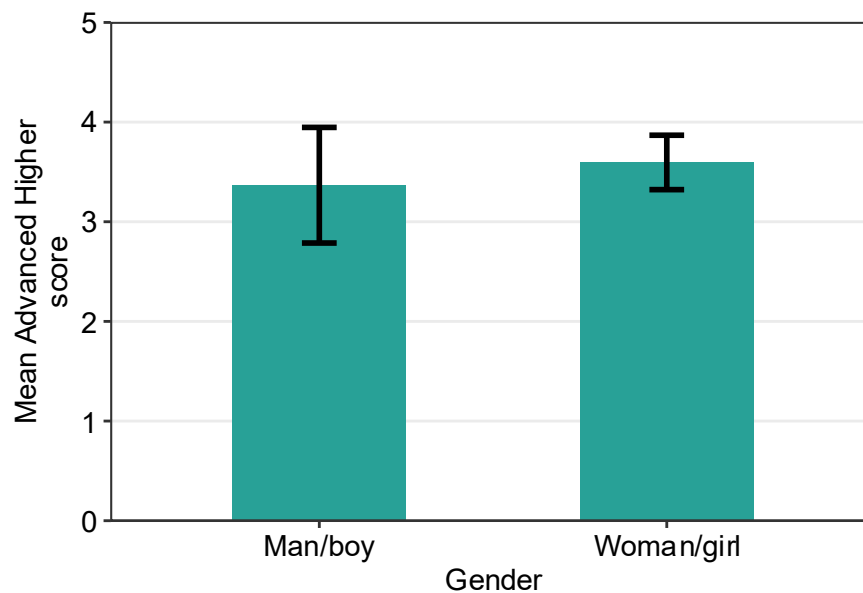


Table 40: Advanced Higher satisfaction composite score by gender

Gender	Number of respondents	Mean Advanced Higher score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
Man/boy	15	3.4	2.8	3.9
Non-binary	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]
Prefer another term	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]
Woman/girl	20	3.6	3.3	3.9

Kruskal-Wallis test p-value = 0.7075

There was no evidence to suggest that any of the gender groupings have a different median score.

Advanced Higher satisfaction composite score by LGBTQIA+ status

Figure 57: Advanced Higher satisfaction composite score by LGBTQIA+ status

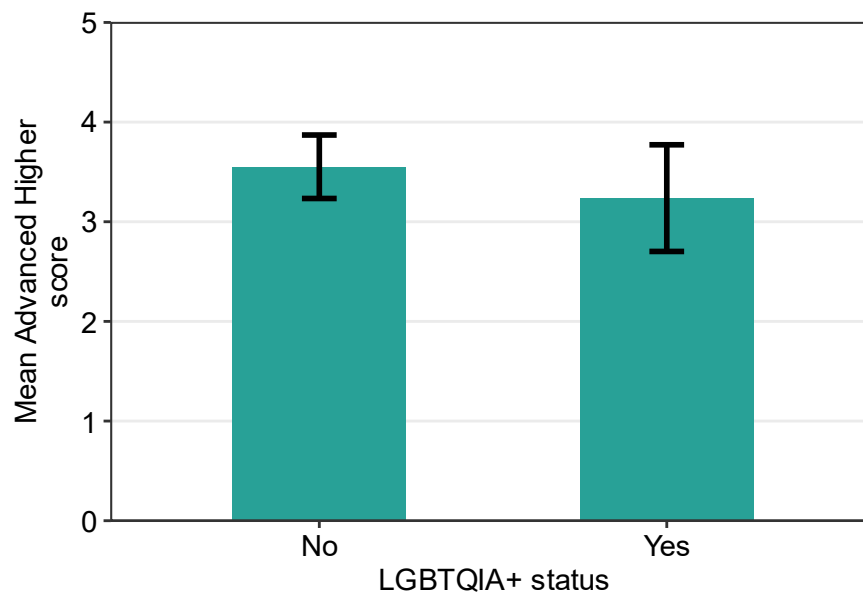


Table 41: Advanced Higher satisfaction composite score by LGBTQIA+ status

LGBTQIA + status	Number of respondents	Mean Advanced Higher score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
No	30	3.6	3.2	3.9
Yes	10	3.2	2.7	3.8

Kruskal-Wallis test p-value = 0.6758

There was no evidence to suggest that any of the LGBTQIA+ status groupings have a different median score.

Advanced Higher satisfaction composite score by SIMD quintile

Figure 58: Advanced Higher satisfaction composite score by SIMD quintile

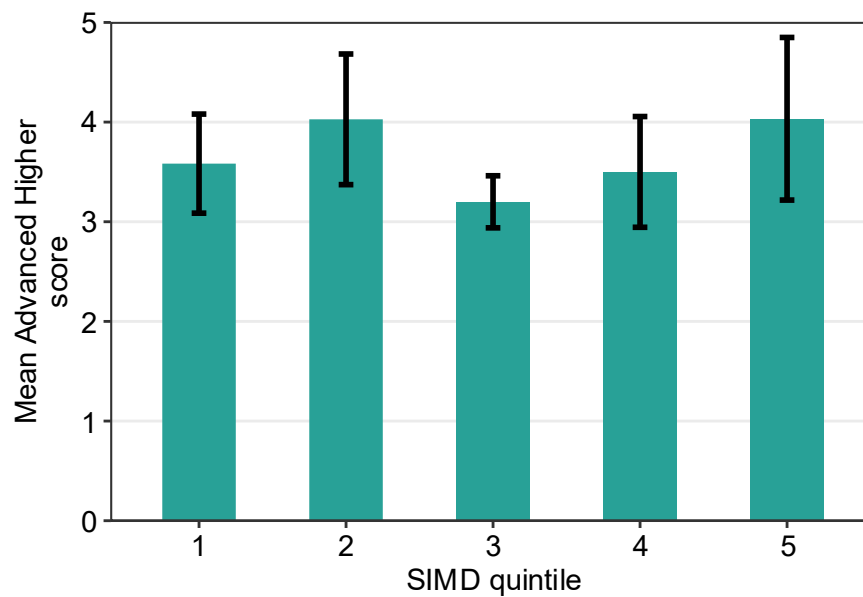


Table 42: Advanced Higher satisfaction composite score by SIMD quintile

SIMD quintile	Number of respondents	Mean Advanced Higher score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
1	5	3.6	3.1	4.1
2	5	4	3.4	4.7
3	5	3.2	2.9	3.5
4	10	3.5	2.9	4.1
5	5	4	3.2	4.8

Kruskal-Wallis test p-value = 0.0875

There was no evidence to suggest that any of the SIMD quintile groupings have a different median score.

COVID-19 impact on learning composite

COVID-19 impact on learning composite score by care experience status

Figure 59: COVID-19 impact on learning composite score by care experience status

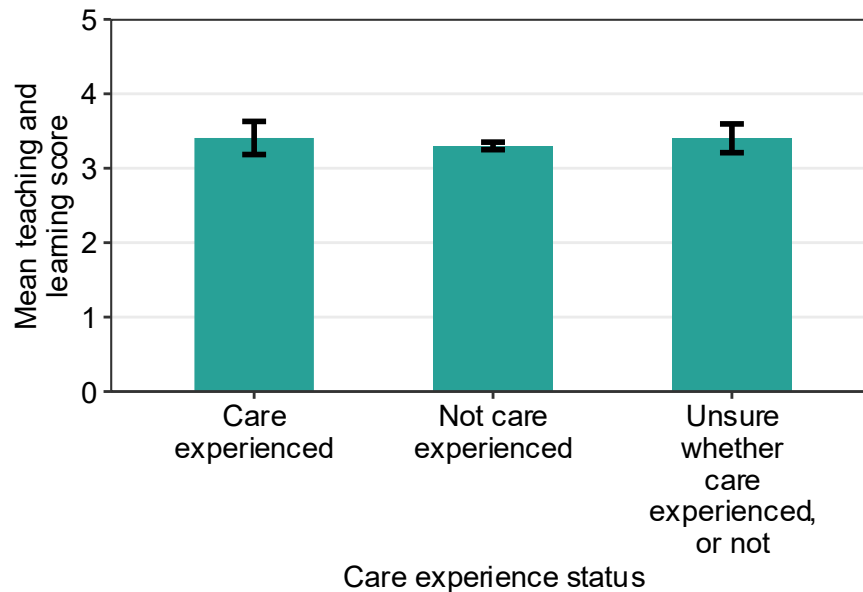


Table 43: COVID-19 impact on learning composite score by care experience status

Care experience status	Number of respondents	Mean COVID-19 impact on learning score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
Care experienced	100	3.4	3.2	3.6
Not care experienced	1,885	3.3	3.2	3.4
Unsure whether care experienced, or not	110	3.4	3.2	3.6

Kruskal-Wallis test p-value = 0.6529

There was no evidence to suggest that any of the care-experience status groupings have a different median score.

COVID-19 impact on learning composite score by disabled/ASN status

Figure 60: COVID-19 impact on learning composite score by disabled/ASN status

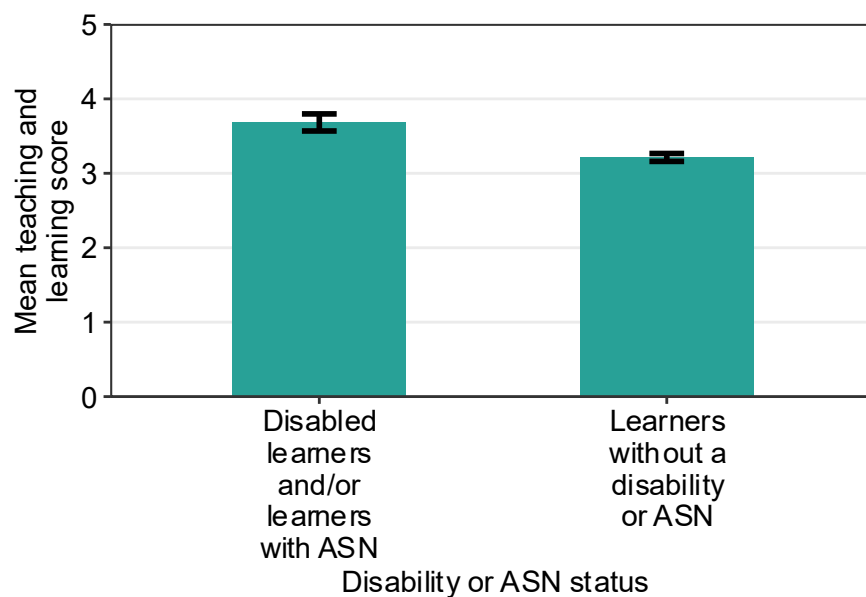


Table 44: COVID-19 impact on learning composite score by disabled/ASN status

Disability or ASN status	Number of respondents	Mean COVID-19 impact on learning score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
Disabled learners and/or learners with ASN	360	3.7	3.6	3.8
Learners without a disability or ASN	1,665	3.2	3.2	3.3

Kruskal-Wallis test p-value = 0

There was no evidence to suggest that at least one of the disability or ASN status groupings has a different median score.

COVID-19 impact on learning composite score by ethnic group status

Figure 61: COVID-19 impact on learning composite score by ethnic group status

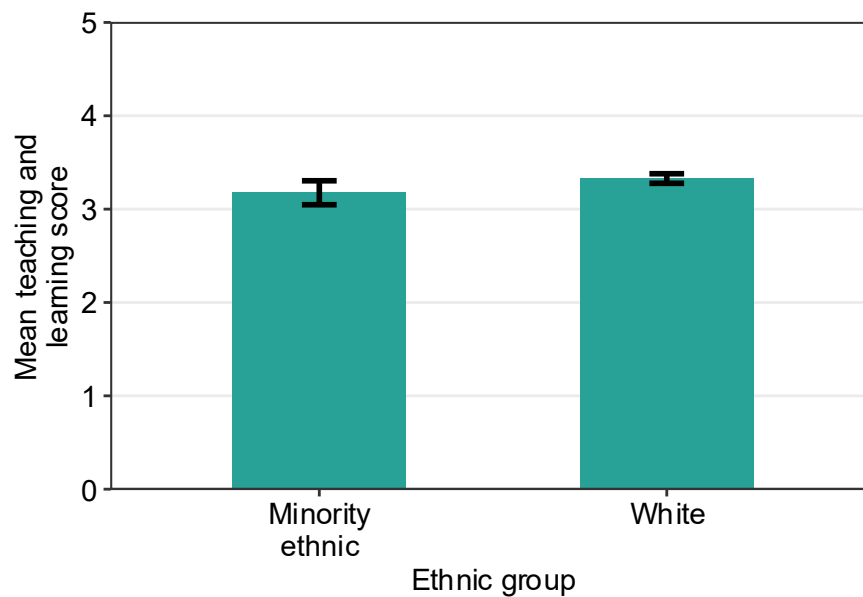


Table 45: COVID-19 impact on learning composite score by ethnic group status

Ethnic group	Number of respondents	Mean COVID-19 impact on learning score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
Minority ethnic	300	3.2	3	3.3
White	1,780	3.3	3.3	3.4

Kruskal-Wallis test p-value = 0.0396

There was no evidence to suggest that any of the ethnic group groupings have a different median score.

COVID-19 impact on learning composite score by gender

Figure 62: COVID-19 impact on learning composite score by gender

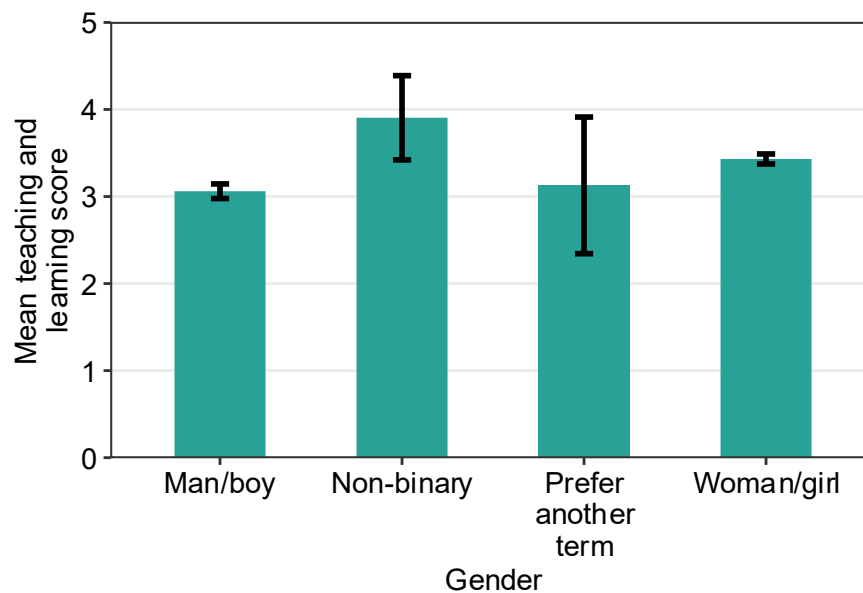


Table 46: COVID-19 impact on learning composite score by gender

Gender	Number of respondents	Mean COVID-19 impact on learning score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
Man/boy	745	3.1	3	3.1
Non-binary	20	3.9	3.4	4.4
Prefer another term	15	3.1	2.3	3.9
Woman/girl	1,300	3.4	3.4	3.5

Kruskal-Wallis test p-value = 0

There was evidence to suggest that at least one of the gender groupings has a different median score.

COVID-19 impact on learning composite score by LGBTQIA+ status

Figure 63: COVID-19 impact on learning composite score by LGBTQIA+ status

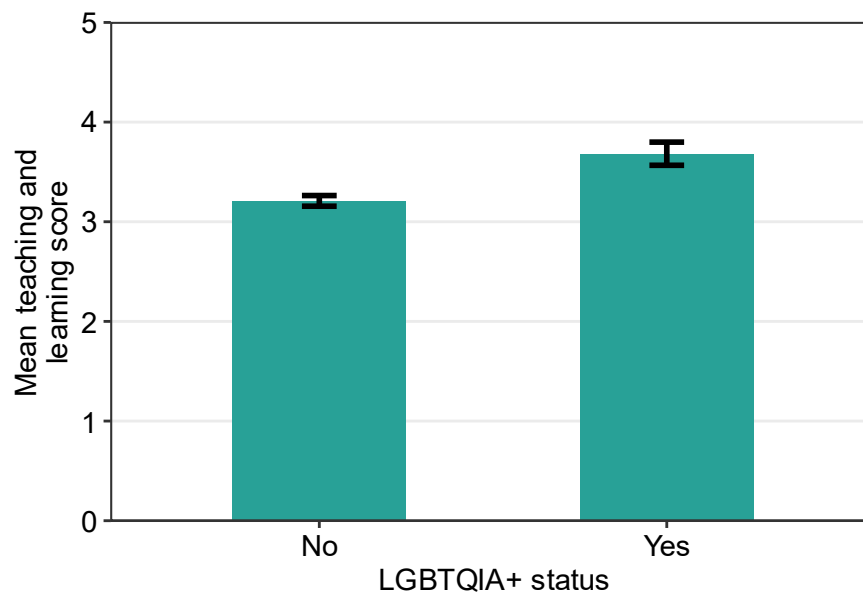


Table 47: COVID-19 impact on learning composite score by LGBTQIA+ status

LGBTQIA+ status	Number of respondents	Mean COVID-19 impact on learning score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
No	1,675	3.2	3.2	3.3
Yes	315	3.7	3.6	3.8

Kruskal-Wallis test p-value = 0

There was evidence to suggest that at least one of the LGBTQIA+ status groupings has a different median score.

COVID-19 impact on learning composite score by SIMD quintile

Figure 64: COVID-19 impact on learning composite score by SIMD quintile

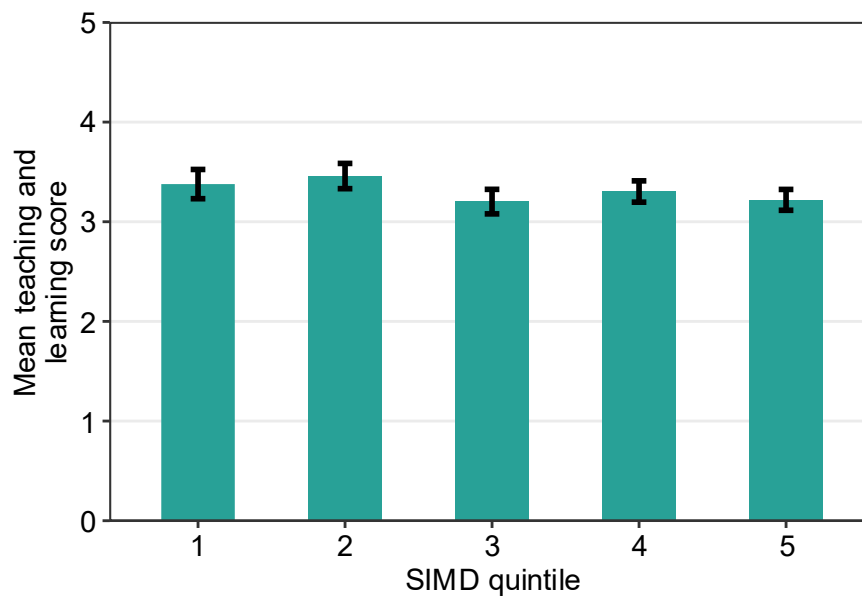


Table 48: COVID-19 impact on learning composite score by SIMD quintile

SIMD quintile	Number of respondents	Mean COVID-19 impact on learning score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
1	245	3.4	3.2	3.5
2	275	3.5	3.3	3.6
3	335	3.2	3.1	3.3
4	390	3.3	3.2	3.4
5	445	3.2	3.1	3.3

Kruskal-Wallis test p-value = 0.0335

There was no evidence to suggest that any of the SIMD quintile groupings have a different median score.

Assessment and awarding satisfaction composite

Assessment and awarding satisfaction composite score by care experience status

Figure 65: Assessment and awarding satisfaction composite score by care experience status

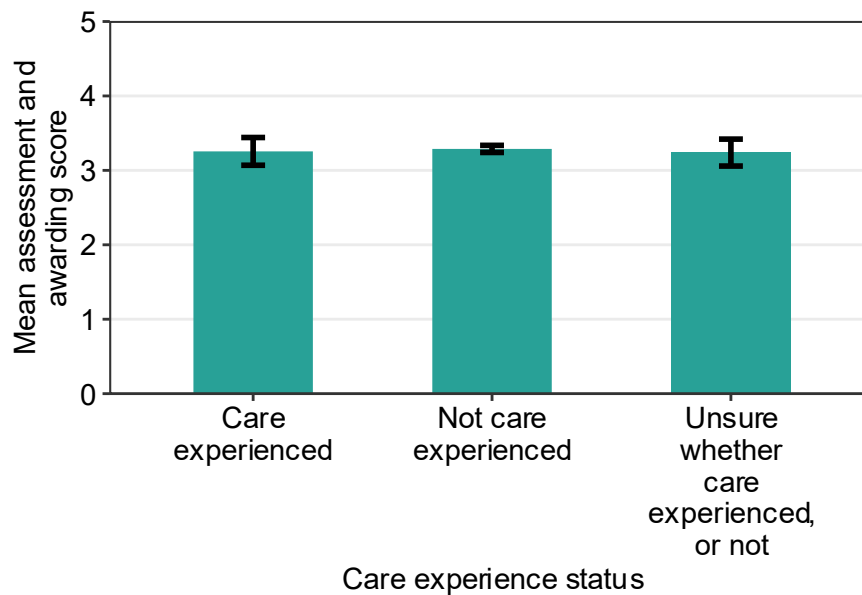


Table 49: Assessment and awarding satisfaction composite score by care experience status

Care experience status	Number of respondents	Mean assessment and awarding score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
Care experienced	100	3.3	3.1	3.4
Not care experienced	1,885	3.3	3.2	3.3
Unsure whether care experienced, or not	110	3.2	3.1	3.4

Kruskal-Wallis test p-value = 0.0627

There was no evidence to suggest that any of the care-experience status groupings have a different median score.

Assessment and awarding satisfaction composite score by disability/ASN status

Figure 66: Assessment and awarding satisfaction composite score by disability/ASN status

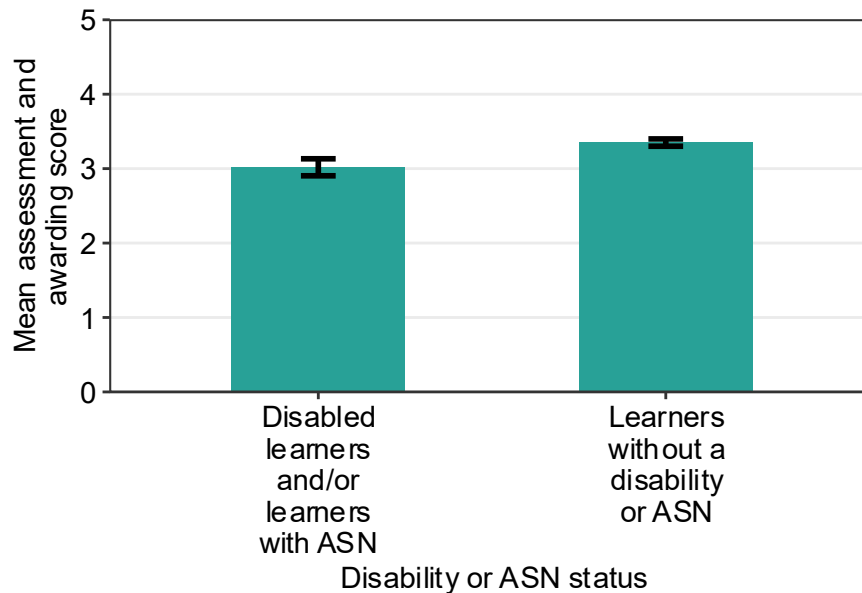


Table 50: Assessment and awarding satisfaction composite score by disability/ASN status

Disability or ASN status	Number of respondents	Mean assessment and awarding score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
Disabled learners and/or learners with ASN	360	3	2.9	3.1
Learners without a disability or ASN	1,665	3.4	3.3	3.4

Kruskal-Wallis test p-value = 0

There was evidence to suggest that at least one of the disability or ASN status groupings has a different median score.

Assessment and awarding satisfaction composite score by ethnic group

Figure 67: Assessment and awarding satisfaction composite score by ethnic group

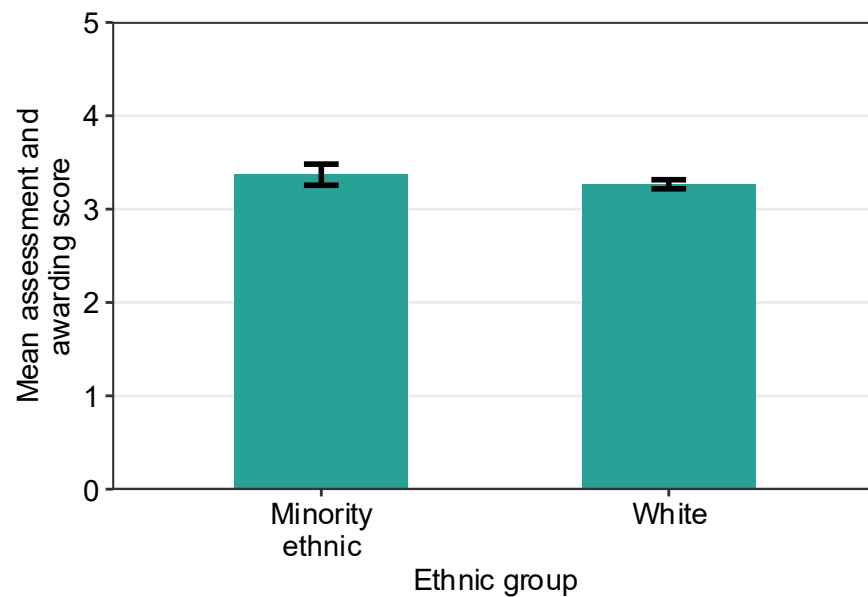


Table 51: Assessment and awarding satisfaction composite score by ethnic group

Ethnic group	Number of respondents	Mean assessment and awarding score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
Minority ethnic	300	3.4	3.3	3.5
White	1,790	3.3	3.2	3.3

Kruskal-Wallis test p-value = 0.1208

There was no evidence to suggest that any of the ethnic group groupings have a different median score.

Assessment and awarding satisfaction composite score by gender

Figure 68: Assessment and awarding satisfaction composite score by gender

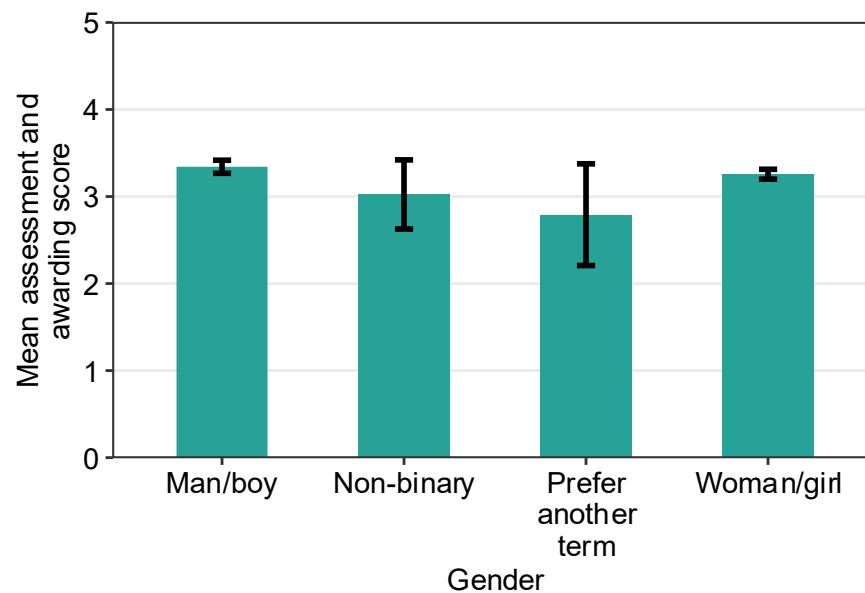


Table 52: Assessment and awarding satisfaction composite score by gender

Gender	Number of respondents	Mean assessment and awarding score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
Man/boy	745	3.3	3.3	3.4
Non-binary	20	3	2.6	3.4
Prefer another term	10	2.8	2.2	3.4
Woman/girl	1,305	3.3	3.2	3.3

Kruskal-Wallis test p-value = 0.0212

There was no evidence to suggest that any of the gender groupings have a different median score.

Assessment and awarding composite score by LGBTQIA+ status

Figure 69: Assessment and awarding satisfaction composite score by LGBTQIA+ status

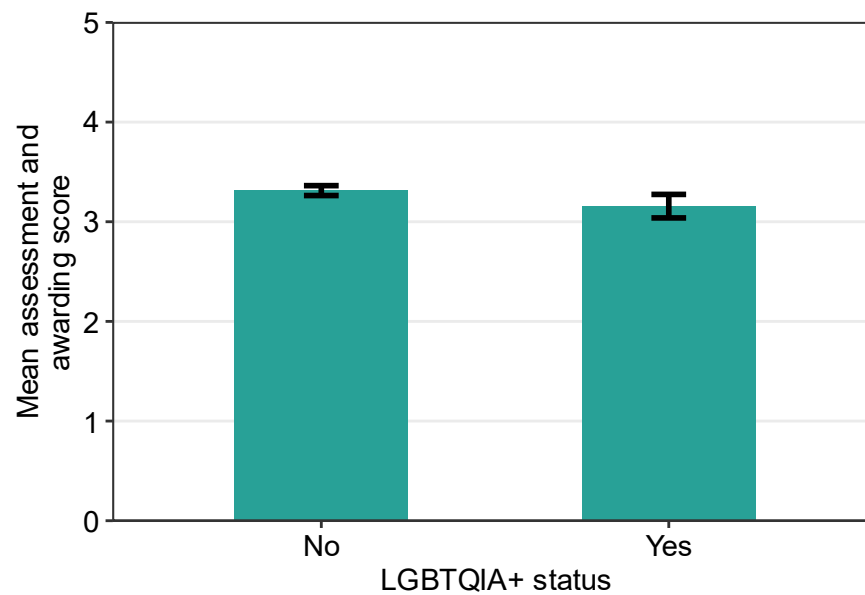


Table 54: Assessment and awarding satisfaction composite score by LGBTQIA+ status

LGBTQIA + status	Number of respondents	Mean assessment and awarding score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
No	1,670	3.3	3.3	3.4
Yes	320	3.2	3	3.3

Kruskal-Wallis test p-value = 0.0043

There was evidence to suggest that at least one of the LGBTQIA+ status groupings has a different median score.

Assessment and awarding satisfaction composite score by SIMD quintile

Figure 70: Assessment and awarding satisfaction composite score by SIMD quintile

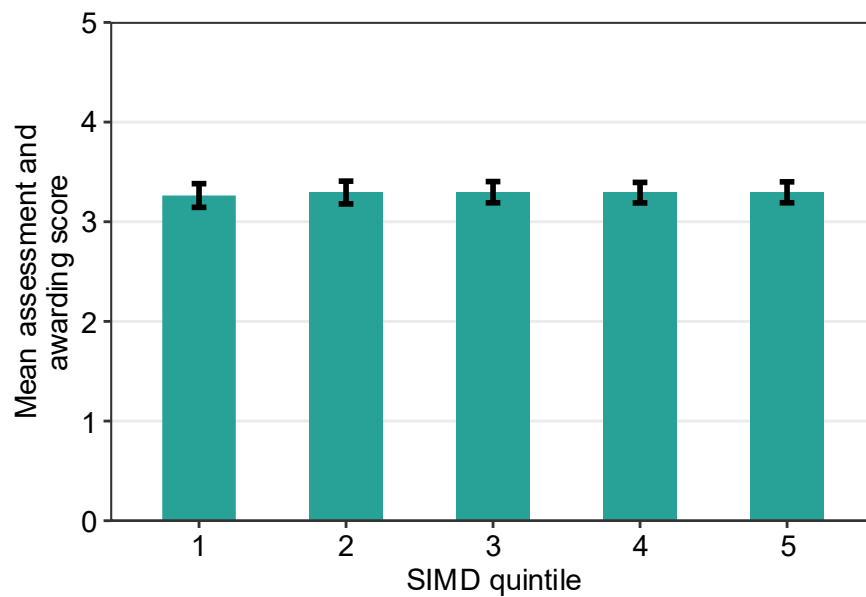


Table 55: Assessment and awarding satisfaction composite score by SIMD quintile

SIMD quintile	Number of respondents	Mean assessment and awarding score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
1	245	3.3	3.1	3.4
2	280	3.3	3.2	3.4
3	335	3.3	3.2	3.4
4	385	3.3	3.2	3.4
5	445	3.3	3.2	3.4

Kruskal-Wallis test p-value = 0.8793

There was no evidence to suggest that any of the SIMD quintile groupings have a different median score.