



Evaluation of the 2023 Approach to the Assessment of Graded National Courses:

Learner experiences

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Notes

This report gives full results of the research into learner experiences of National Qualifications assessment in 2022–23.

Please note that in the charts and text throughout this report, percentages are rounded to the nearest percentage point. Therefore, total figures may not always add to 100.

Key findings from learners, along with those from practitioners, SQA senior appointees and qualifications teams, are available in the shorter [Experiences of and Reflections on 2023 National Qualifications Assessment Report](#).

A further [Summary Report](#) highlights key themes from across SQA's Evaluation of the 2023 Approach to the Assessment of Graded National Courses.

Finally, a [Technical Appendix](#) details our methodology and approach to analysis. In particular, this appendix details how the composite scores were calculated for different learner groups.

Respondent profiles

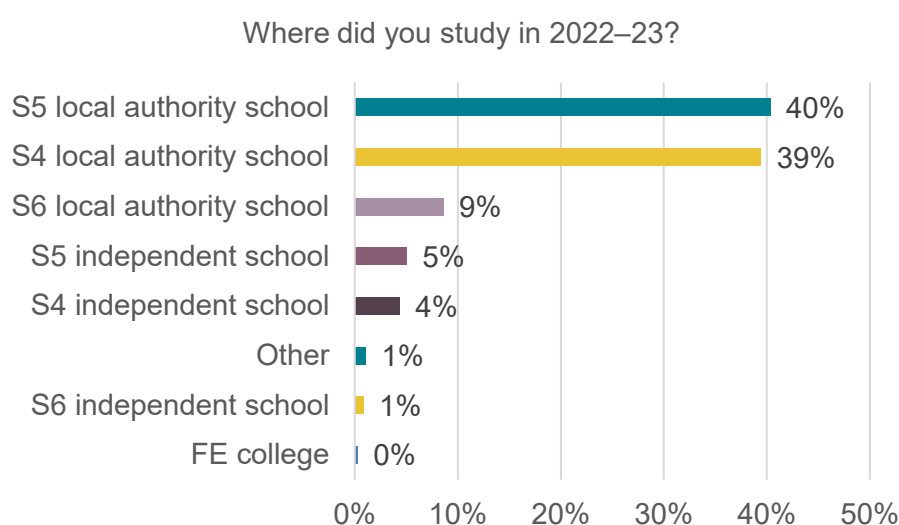
A total of 3,437 learners responded to the Evaluation of the 2023 Approach to the Assessment of Graded National Courses survey.

When asked where they had heard about the survey, a large majority of respondents (95%) said from their school, college or training provider. Smaller numbers cited SQA’s Your National Qualifications booklet (2%), social media (1%), and the SQA pulse survey panel (0%). While 2% said ‘other’, most of these stated that it was emailed to them by a teacher or someone else in school.

Learners were asked about where they studied in 2022–23. As detailed in **Figure 1**, 40% of respondents were S5 learners in a local authority school, 39% were S4 learners in a local authority school, and 9% were S6 learners in a local authority school. 5% of respondents were S5 learners in an independent school, 4% were S4 learners in an independent school, and 1% were S6 learners in an independent school. Fewer than 1% were learners in an FE college.

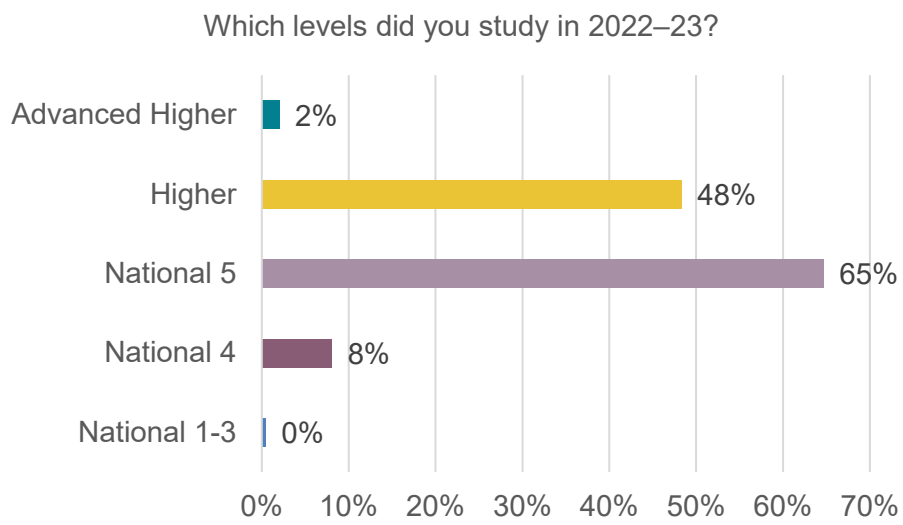
Several of the 1% who chose ‘other’ here named their school and there were also mentions of online learning and home schooling.

Figure 1



Learners were asked which levels they studied in 2022–23. They could choose more than one option. As detailed in **Figure 2**, 65% of respondents had studied National 5 and 48% Higher. Smaller proportions had studied National 4 (8%), Advanced Higher (2%), and National 1–3 (<0.5%).

Figure 2



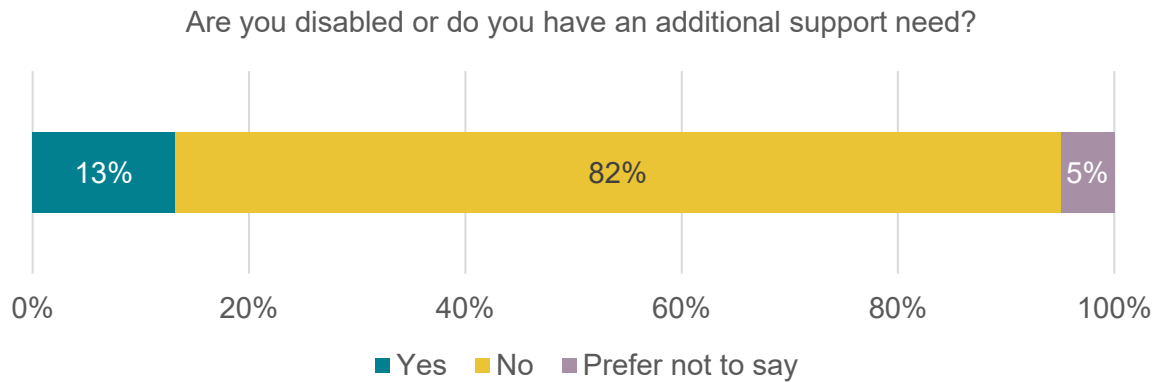
Respondents came from across 31 local authority areas as shown in the table below. The highest proportion of responses came from Edinburgh (11%) and South Lanarkshire (9%).

Table 1

Respondents' local authority area	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Edinburgh	361	11%
South Lanarkshire	289	9%
Aberdeen City	251	7%
Dundee City	242	7%
Aberdeenshire	212	6%
Glasgow	196	6%
North Ayrshire	192	6%
Highland	153	5%
Renfrewshire	144	4%
Dumfries & Galloway	128	4%
North Lanarkshire	128	4%
Angus	108	3%
Fife	100	3%
East Dunbartonshire	97	3%
Inverclyde	89	3%
East Ayrshire	84	2%
West Dunbartonshire	75	2%
East Renfrewshire	65	2%
South Ayrshire	62	2%
East Lothian	60	2%
Stirling	54	2%
West Lothian	52	2%
Midlothian	50	1%
Clackmannanshire	34	1%
Shetland Islands	33	1%
Moray	26	1%
Perth & Kinross	26	1%
Scottish Borders	25	1%
Argyll & Bute	22	1%
Falkirk	9	0%
Eilean Siar	2	0%
Orkney Islands	0	-

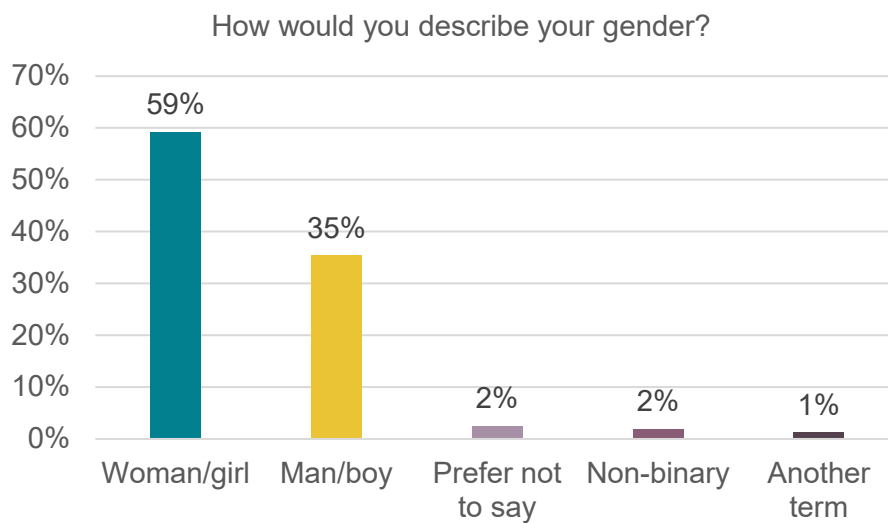
Respondents were asked if they were disabled or had an additional support need (ASN): 13% of respondents said yes and 82% said no; 5% preferred not to say.

Figure 3



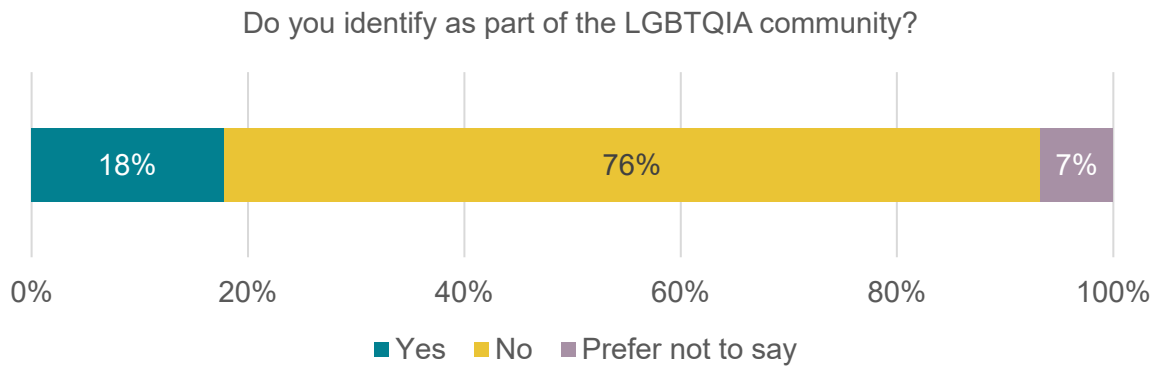
When asked how they would describe their gender, 59% of respondents said woman/girl, 35% said man/boy, 2% said non-binary, and 1% said they used another term. 2% preferred not to say.

Figure 4



Respondents were asked if they identified as part of the LGBTQIA community; 18% said yes, 76% said no, and 7% preferred not to say.

Figure 5



Respondents were asked how they would describe their ethnicity. Responses are detailed in the table below. To protect against risk of disclosure of sensitive personal information, responses are given in percentages only.

- ◆ 86% of respondents were from the aggregated White ethnic group.
- ◆ 7% were from the aggregated Asian ethnic group.
- ◆ 5% were from the aggregated African, aggregated Arab, aggregated Caribbean or Black, and Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups.
- ◆ 1% preferred not to say.

Respondents could also enter their own response, either if they felt their ethnicity was not covered by the given categories or (much more often) to expand upon their answer in a chosen category. In all, 239 respondents entered more information. A considerable range of ethnicities was cited.

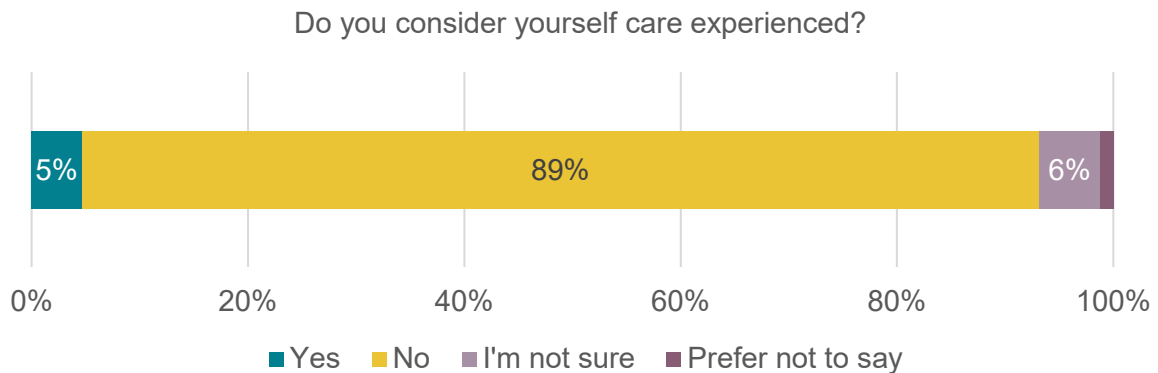
Table 2

How would you describe your ethnicity?	Percentage of respondents
African	
African, African Scottish or African British	2%
Any other African ethnic group	<1%
Arab	
Arab, Arab Scottish or Arab British	<1%
Any other Arab ethnic group	<1%
Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British	
Bangladeshi, Bangladeshi Scottish or Bangladeshi British	<1%
Chinese, Chinese Scottish or Chinese British	1%
Indian, Indian Scottish or Indian British	2%
Pakistani, Pakistani Scottish, Pakistani British	3%
Any other Asian ethnic group	<1%
Caribbean or Black	
Caribbean, Caribbean Scottish or Caribbean British	<1%
Black, Black Scottish or Black British	<1%
Any other Caribbean or Black ethnic group	<1%
Any Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups	
Any Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups	2%
White	
Scottish	77%
Other British	4%
Irish	<1%
Gypsy/Traveller	<1%
Any other White ethnic group	4%
Prefer not to say	
Prefer not to say	<1%

Respondents were asked if they considered themselves care experienced. They were informed that 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, or through being looked after at home with supervision requirements.

While 89% of respondents said that they were not care experienced, 5% said they were, and 6% were not sure; 1% preferred not to say.

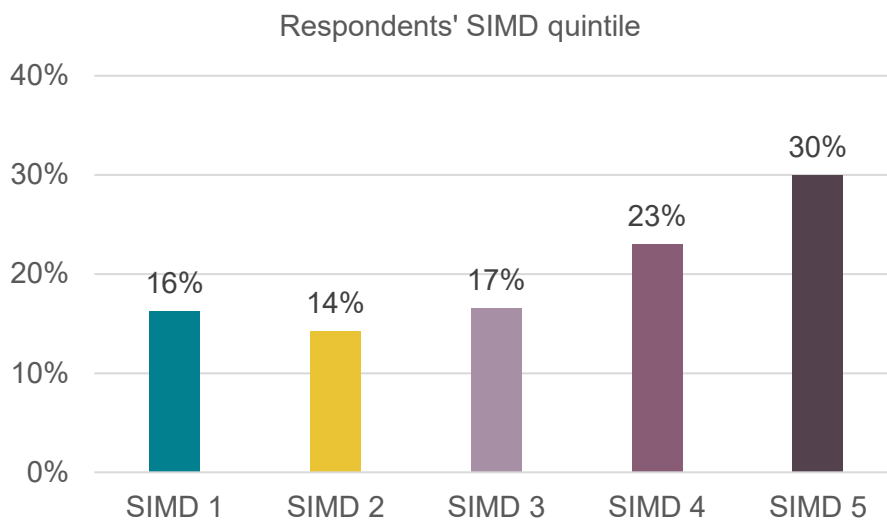
Figure 6



Respondents were informed that SQA would use the [Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation \(SIMD\)](#) to ensure that survey responses came from a representative range of learners from across Scotland. Therefore, they were asked for their postcode so that it could be converted into an SIMD quintile. SIMD quintile 1 represents the 20% most deprived postcodes in Scotland, while SIMD quintile 5 represents the 20% least deprived postcodes.

While 994 respondents (29%) either did not submit a postcode or submitted a postcode that was not recognised by the [Scottish Government's SIMD postcode lookup tool](#), of the remainder, 16% of respondents had postcodes in SIMD quintile 1, 14% in SIMD quintile 2, 17% in SIMD quintile 3, 23% in SIMD quintile 4, and 30% in SIMD quintile 5.

Figure 7

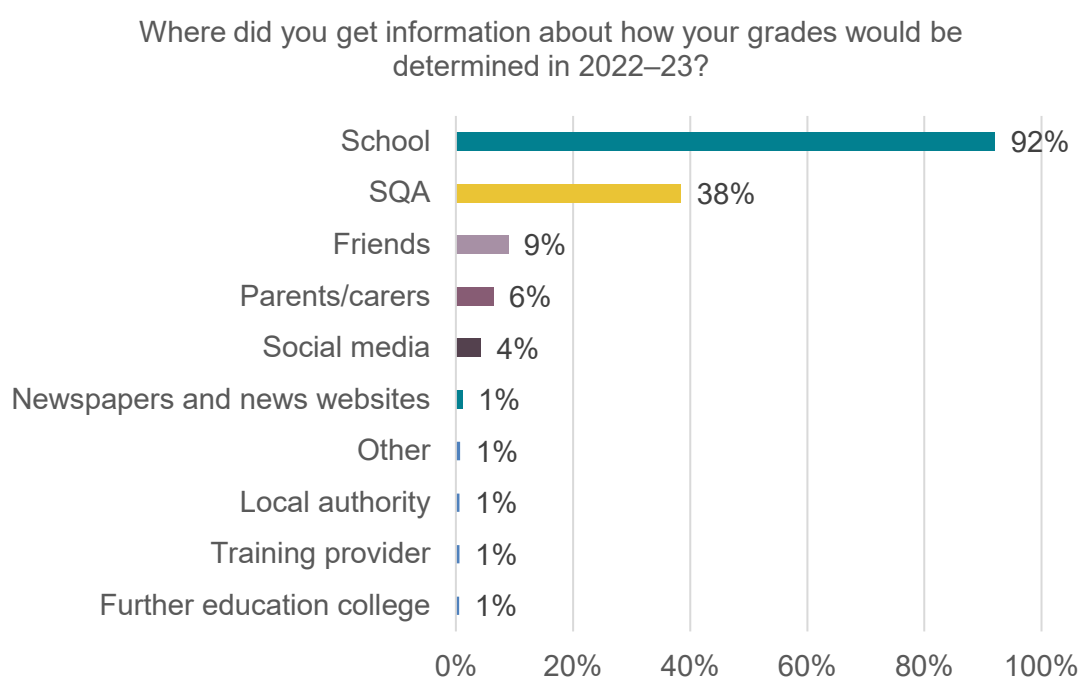


Communication

Learners were asked where they had received information about how their grades would be determined in 2022–23. They could select more than one option. A large majority (92%) had received this information from their school, 38% from SQA, 9% from friends, 6% from their parents or carers, and 4% from social media.

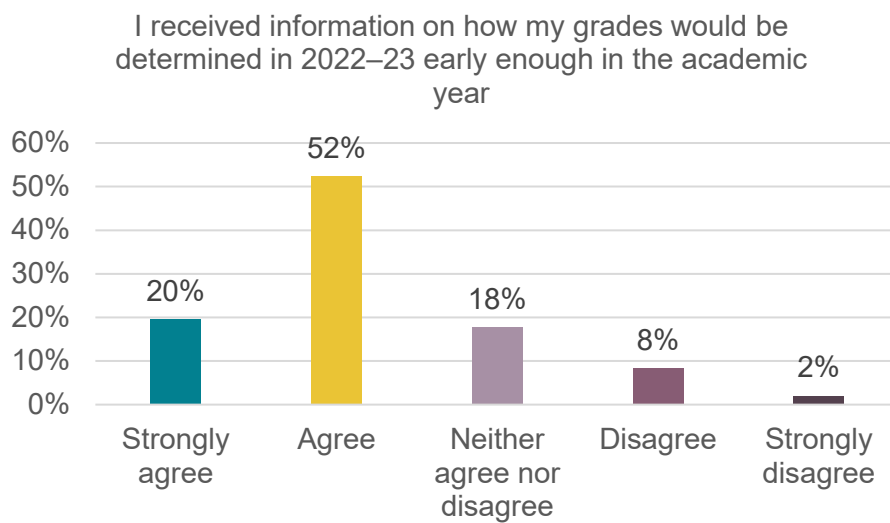
Smaller proportions (around 1% for each) said they received this information from newspapers or news websites, their local authority, their training provider, their further education college, or another way. The 1% who chose 'other' here generally cited siblings or stated that they did not know.

Figure 8



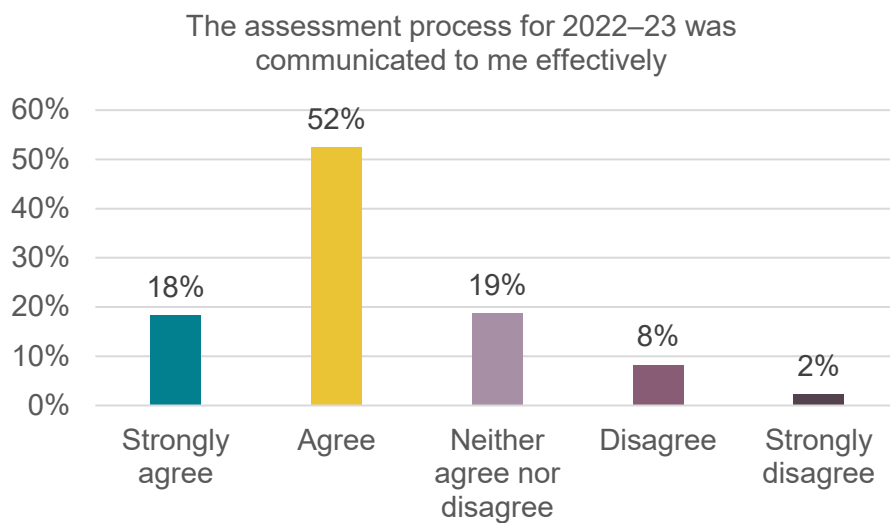
While 72% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they had received information on how their grades would be determined in 2022–23 early enough in the academic year, 10% disagreed or strongly disagreed and 18% neither agreed nor disagreed.

Figure 9



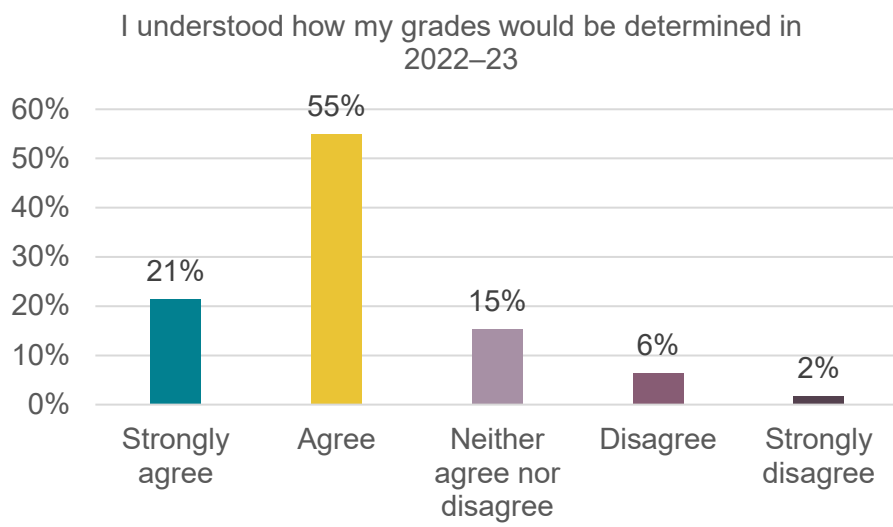
71% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the assessment process for 2022–23 was communicated to them effectively. However, 10% disagreed or strongly disagreed and 19% neither agreed nor disagreed.

Figure 10



More than three-quarters of respondents (76%) strongly agreed or agreed that they understood how their grades would be determined in 2022–23 while only 8% disagreed or strongly disagreed and 15% neither agreed nor disagreed.

Figure 11

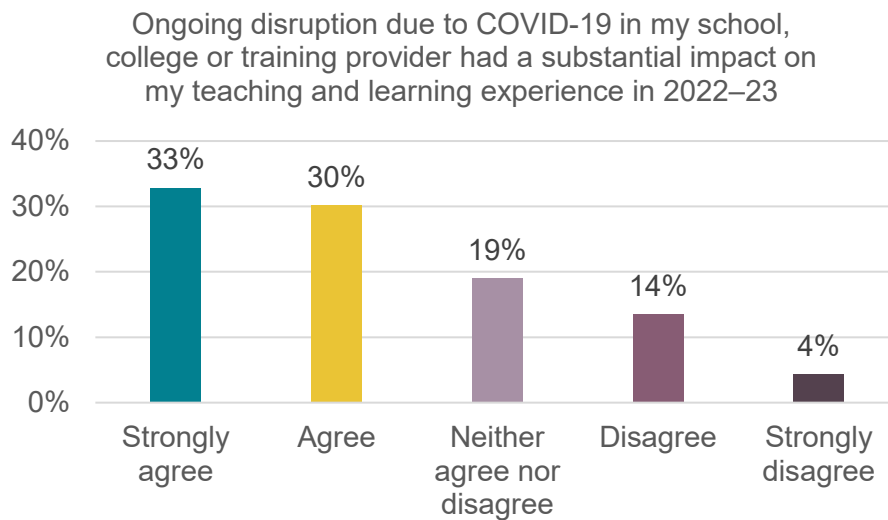


Teaching and learning

Respondents were asked about the continuing effects of COVID-19 on their teaching, learning, and assessment in 2022–23.

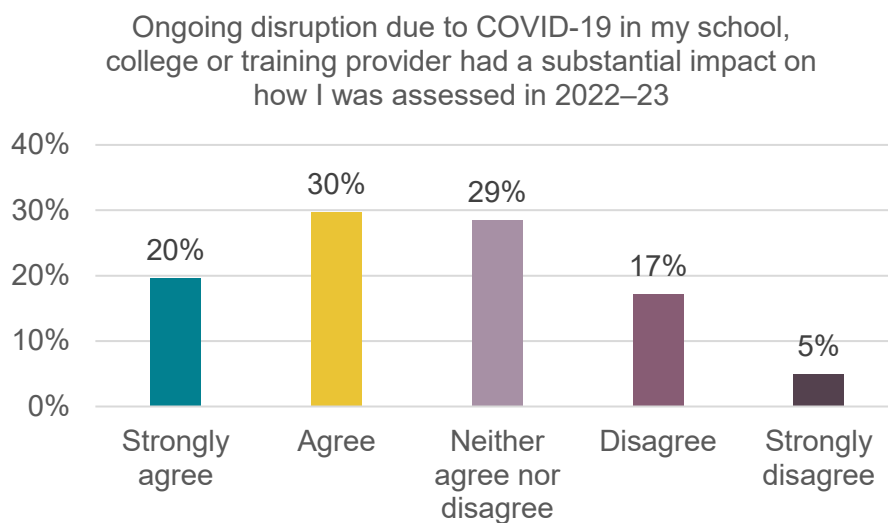
While 63% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that ongoing disruption due to COVID-19 had a substantial impact on their teaching and learning experience in 2022–23, only 18% disagreed or strongly disagreed and 19% neither agreed nor disagreed.

Figure 12



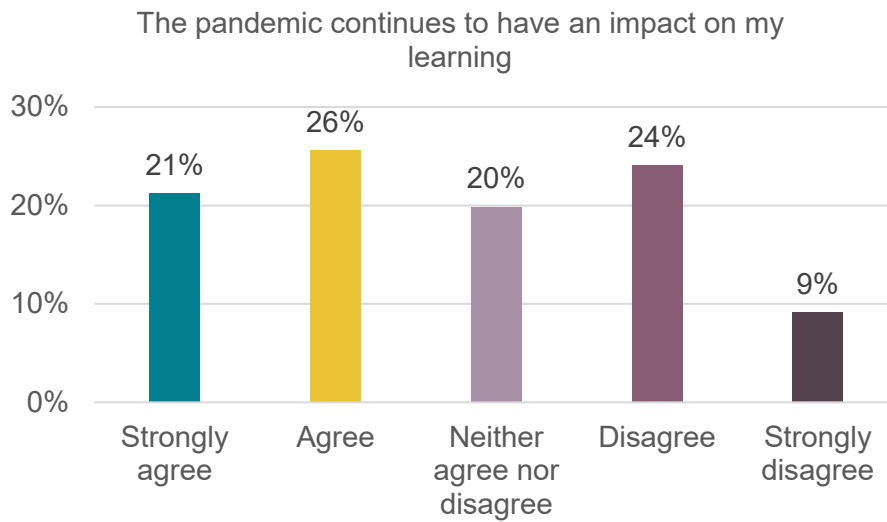
While 20% of respondents strongly agreed that ongoing disruption due to COVID-19 had a substantial impact on how they were assessed in 2022–23, 30% agreed, 29% neither agreed nor disagreed, 17% disagreed, and 5% strongly disagreed.

Figure 13



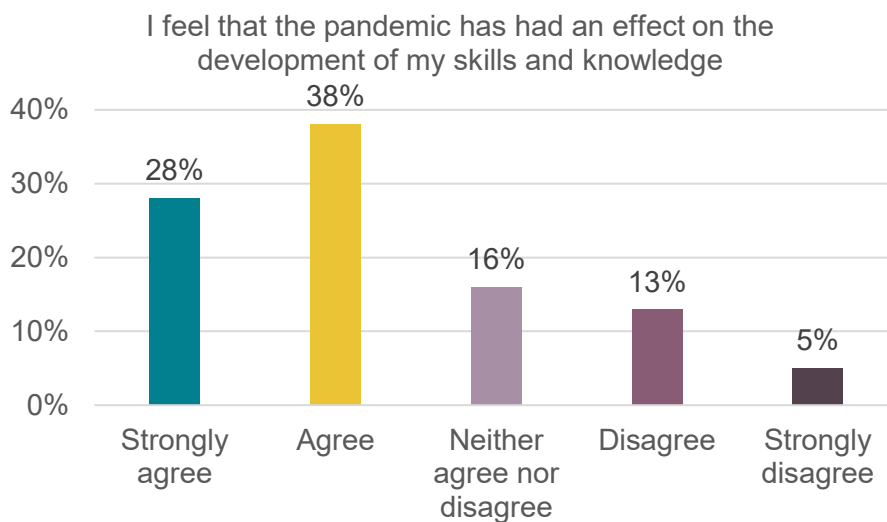
When asked whether they agreed that the pandemic continues to have an impact on their learning, learner views were mixed: 21% of respondents strongly agreed that the pandemic continues to have an impact, 26% agreed, 20% neither agreed nor disagreed, 24% disagreed, and 9% strongly disagreed.

Figure 14



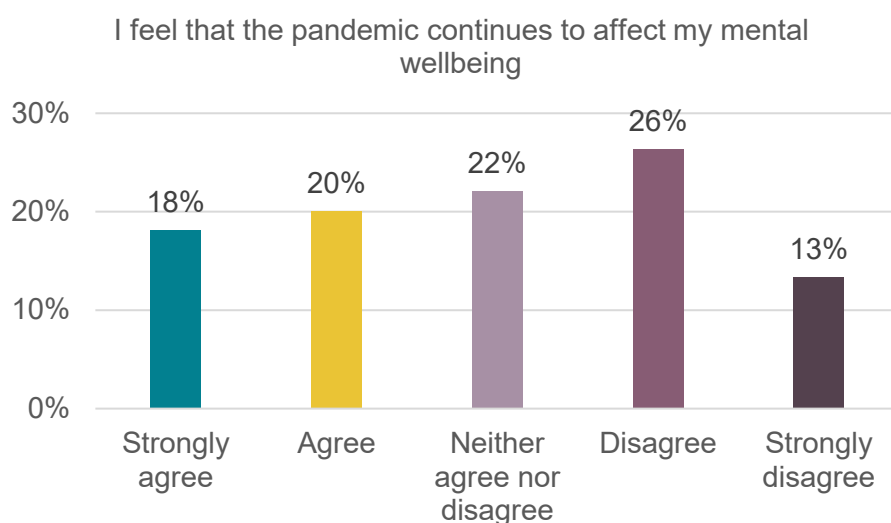
When asked whether they agreed that the pandemic has had an effect on the development of their skills and knowledge, 66% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed, 16% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 18% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Figure 15



While 38% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the pandemic continues to affect their mental wellbeing, 40% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 22% neither agreed nor disagreed.

Figure 16



Learner survey comments

Learners were asked if they had any other comments on what they saw as the continuing effects of COVID-19 on their learning experience. A total of 494 learners submitted comments.

The majority of the learners who responded to this question felt that COVID-19 continues to have an impact on their learning experience. However, it should be noted that there was nonetheless a large number of learners who felt that the pandemic no longer had any impact on their education. That said, the main themes in comments were around removing modifications to course assessments, the impact of missed learning, the social effects of the pandemic, and perceived issues with teaching and learning.

It is worth noting that many of the comments from learners appeared to reference the acute effects of the pandemic in earlier years, not necessarily the continuing effects in 2022–23. Moreover, the main theme — removing modifications to course assessments — referenced the 2023–24 academic year rather than 2022–23.

Removing modifications to course assessments

The most prominent theme that emerged in learner comments was removing modifications to course assessments that had been introduced during the pandemic¹. This meant the re-introduction of coursework for learners who did not have any previous experience of assignments and projects; this was a cause of concern for many learners. Higher and Advanced Higher learners stated that this meant content and topics that had not been covered before due to the modifications to course assessment now had to be covered at speed. This led to what learners saw as a heavier workload than they were used to. Some

¹ SQA announced in March 2023 that coursework and exams for practical subjects that were removed from the assessment of National 5s, Highers and Advanced Highers during the COVID-19 pandemic would return in 2023–24.

learners stated that they felt they had to teach themselves the content that had been re-introduced with little additional support.

As certain areas in subjects have been re-introduced so suddenly after being taken out, it is not fair on those students who have never previously needed this knowledge. With the already limited amount of time to learn the course and now on top of that having to learn a completely new concept at all previous levels, it further limits the amount of time and ability to learn the course effectively ... In my opinion a staggered re-introduction to these topics would have been more effective, especially in Advanced Higher subjects, to ensure that candidates get the full experience from their course.

Missed learning

Somewhat related to the theme above, many learners also reported having gaps in their knowledge and skills due to missed opportunities during the pandemic. These learners, then, appeared to be less concerned with modifications to courses being removed than their introduction in the first place.

During COVID-19 we missed out on a lot of learning and now I feel unconfident in my subjects ... Certain topics in classes were missed out ... for example vectors were not taught at National 5, but now we are expected to do them in the exam at a Higher level.

Social effects

Other comments from learners suggested that the pandemic meant learners missed out on experiences such as field trips, Duke of Edinburgh awards, opportunities to develop skills such as presentation skills, and socialising with their peers.

These missed opportunities were then perceived to have had a knock-on impact on the mental health and wellbeing of learners, especially in terms of social anxiety, a lack of motivation, and concentration issues.

My mental health has been bad because of COVID-19 - having anxiety and bad low mood constantly and [it] was hard to focus and be motivated to do work.

Teaching and learning

Perceived issues with teaching and learning were also a recurring theme among near a fifth of respondents to this question. Many of these comments concerned learners suggesting that they had missed teaching as a result of the pandemic. Related to this, learners reported a shortage of teachers due to the effects of COVID and COVID-related absences. Smaller numbers of learners reported a perceived decline in the quality of teaching over the COVID period and a perceived lack of support from teachers.

The issues highlighted here (including the perceived lack of support during the online learning phase of the pandemic, the lack of exam experience, and the negative effects of lockdowns on learning), as mentioned above, were, on the whole, not specifically about the

2022–23 academic year. Furthermore, although unrelated to the pandemic and its effects, a small number of learners nevertheless also mentioned the effect of teacher industrial action.

The curriculum was rushed, teachers were always off, and we had a lot of self-study with no teaching. The strikes didn't help either.

Learner interviews

When asked specifically if there was any COVID-related disruption to teaching and learning in 2022–23, some interview participants cited the modifications to course assessment that remained in place, rather than direct disruption such as COVID-related absences.

I think they [gave] you a bit more information or kind of guidance.

So, for example, science assignments in some of the projects weren't in.

On the whole, however, learners suggested that teaching and learning had returned to normal and 2022–23 saw little disruption.

It was kind of back to normal.

I think our school's kind of bounced back quite well.

Indeed, a few of the participants, referencing 2023–24 rather than 2022–23, mentioned the removal of modifications to course assessment. Some learners expressed concern that they were now having to undertake assignments, for example, having not completed them before.

I'm being — all of my friends are being — really chucked in at the deep end with these assignments that are now at Advanced Higher level that we've never had to write before.

On a related note, several participants suggested that learners had lost significant amounts of learning during the lockdown period, and some were still trying to make that up. Likewise, participants thought that the pandemic meant that some (other) learners had not developed key skills such as resilience, revision skills, self-management, behavioural regulation, and responsibility for learning.

Quite a few ... aren't learning as well and aren't maybe taking responsibility for their own learning, and perhaps that's due to the pandemic.

Even into this year ... behavioural things in the younger years, particularly, just disrupts the whole school with how, like, socially behind they were.

I'd say they're less engaged to learn than beforehand.

On the other hand, two learners thought that the pandemic had had no continuing effect at all on teaching and learning and one suggested that its effects were positive in terms of enhanced technical skills and self-motivation.

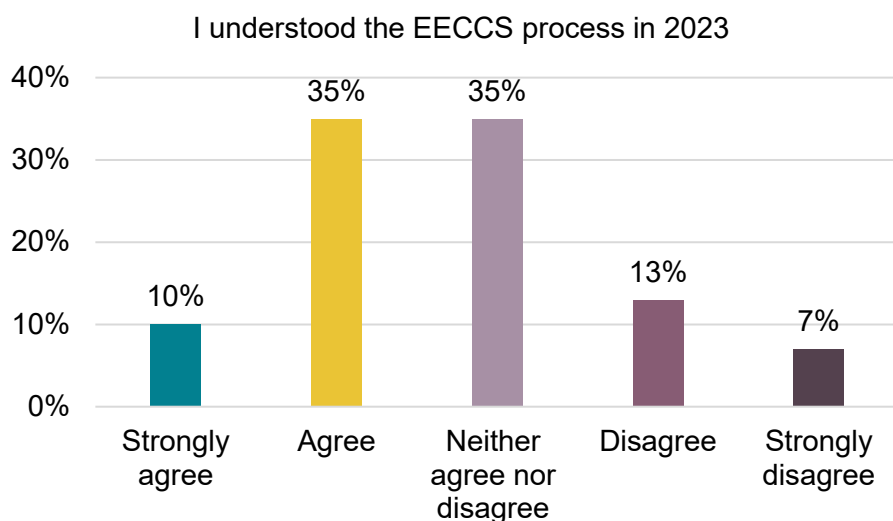
Exam Exceptional Circumstances Consideration Service

Respondents were asked if their school, college or training provider had submitted an exceptional circumstance (EECCS) request for them in 2023. 89% said no, but 11% said yes. This is higher than the 2% of overall National Qualification learners who had an exam exceptional circumstances consideration service (EECCS) request submitted on their behalf in 2023.

Learners who had responded yes were then asked the extent to which they agreed with a series of statements on the service.

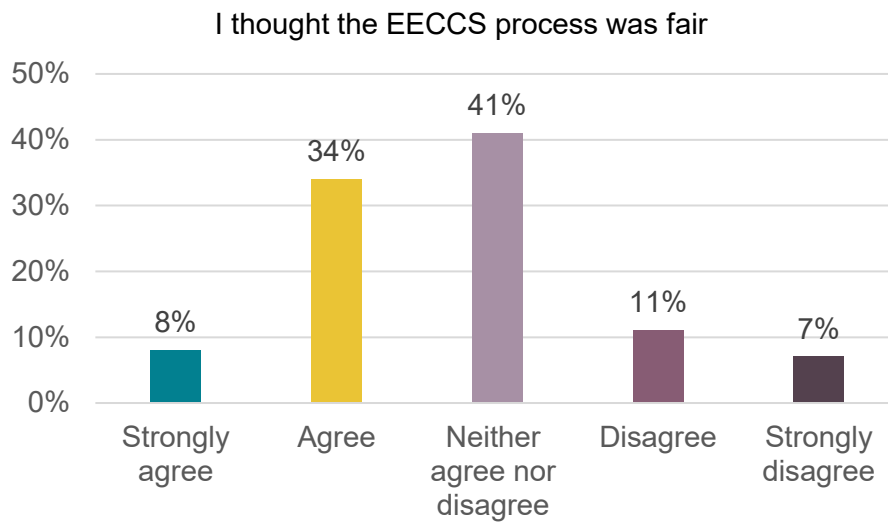
When asked whether they agreed that they understood the EECCS process, 45% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, 35% of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed, and 20% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Figure 17



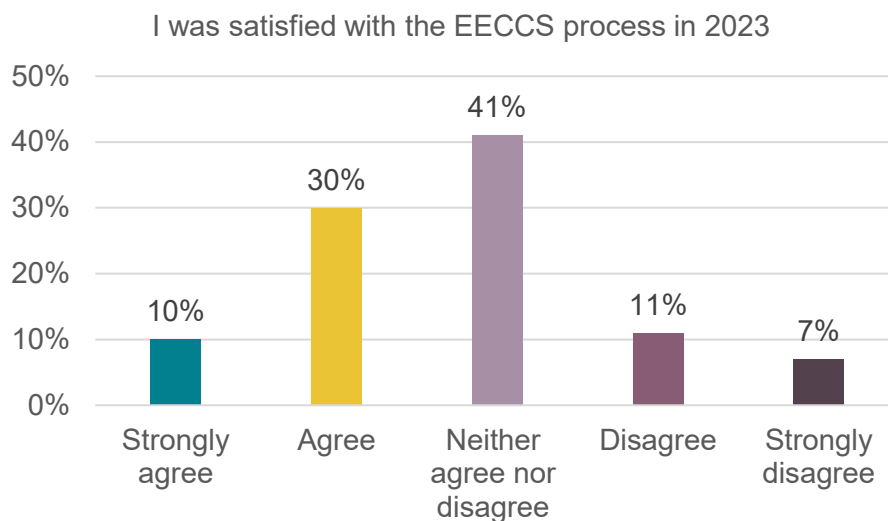
Respondents were also asked whether they agreed that the EECCS process was fair. 42% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed it was fair, 41% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 18% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Figure 18



Respondents were asked whether they agreed that they were satisfied with the EECCS process: 40% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied, 41% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 18% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Figure 19



Learner survey comments

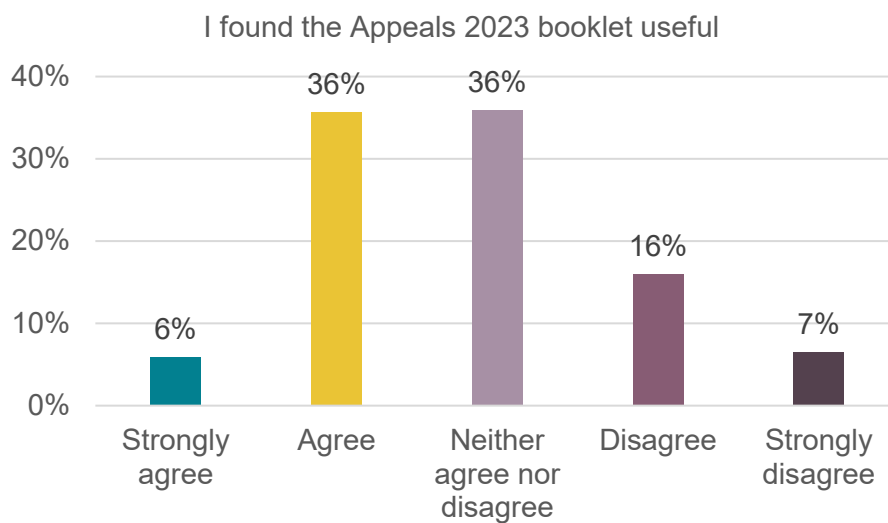
Those learners who had said that they had an EECCS request submitted for them were also asked if they had any other comments on the EECCS process in 2023. Only 11 respondents commented. Two suggested that they did not know what the EECCS process was; most of the others expressed disappointment with the process in some way, with suggestions it was unfair or a waste of time. Two learners suggested that they would have been better off not sitting the exam at all. However, it was not clear that the remaining comments all referred to the EECCS process; for instance, two appeared to be about assessment arrangements and two about appeals.

Appeals

Respondents were asked if they had received the Appeals 2023 booklet; 82% said they had and 18% said they had not.

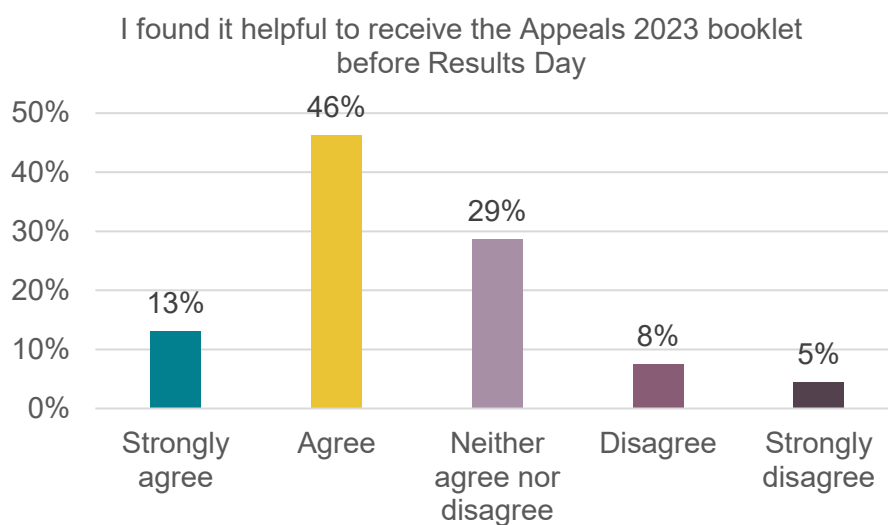
Those who had received the booklet were then asked whether they agreed it was useful: 6% strongly agreed, 36% agreed, 36% neither agreed nor disagreed, 16% disagreed, and 7% strongly disagreed.

Figure 20



Respondents who had received the booklet were also asked whether they agreed that it was helpful to receive the booklet before Results Day: 13% strongly agreed, 46% agreed, 29% neither agreed nor disagreed, 8% disagreed, and 5% strongly disagreed.

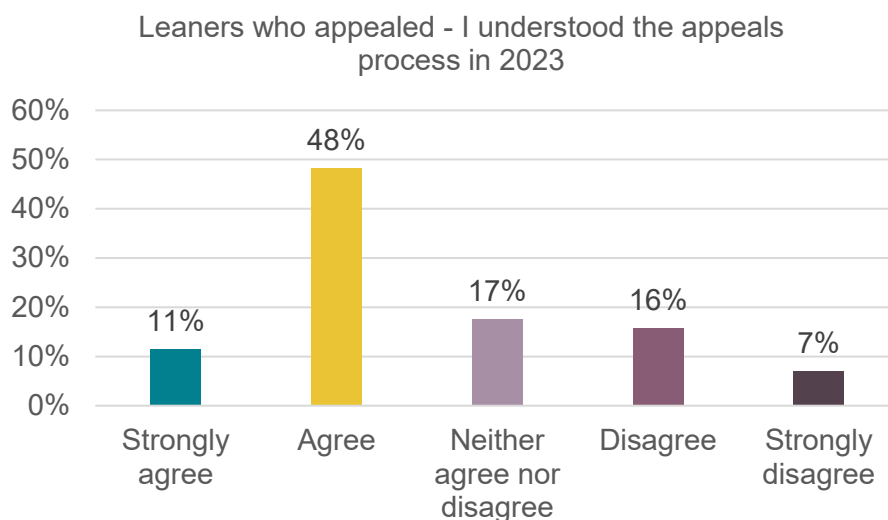
Figure 21



When asked if they or someone acting on their behalf had made any appeals against their grades in 2023, 31% of respondents said yes and 69% said no. It is worth noting that the 31% of survey respondents who reported that they had made an appeal is higher than the 22% of all National Qualifications learners who submitted at least one appeal in 2023.

Those learners who had appealed were then asked about the process – 60% strongly agreed or agreed that they understood the appeals process in 2023 and 23% disagreed or strongly disagreed, while 17% neither agreed nor disagreed.

Figure 22

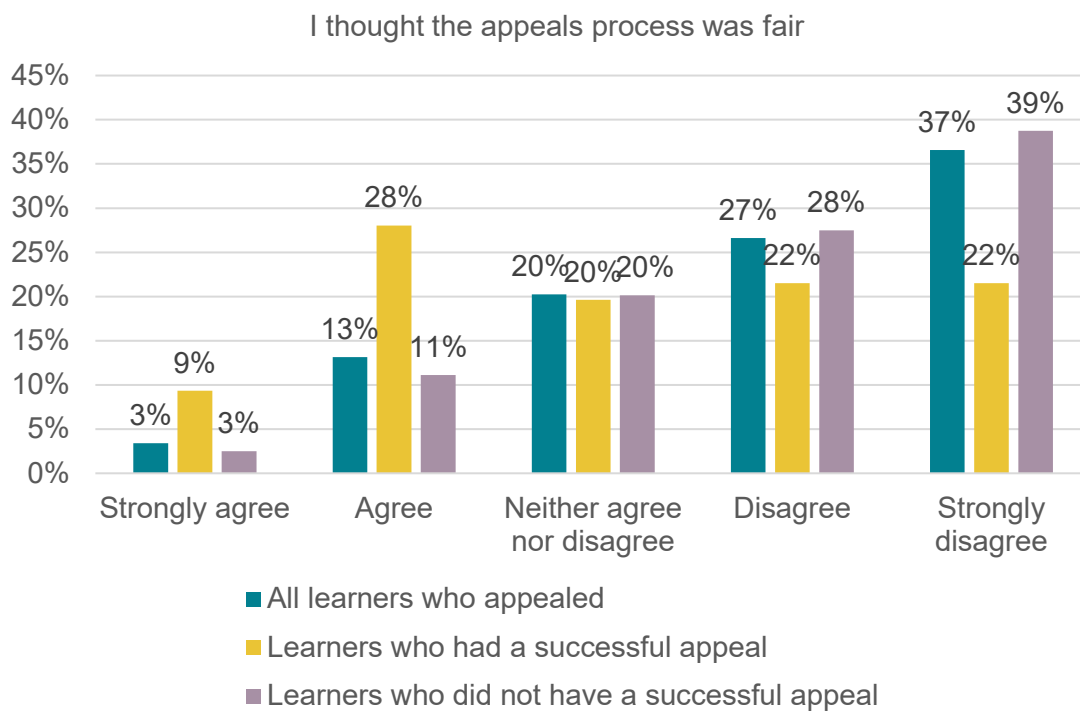


Of those learners who appealed, 17% strongly agreed or agreed that the process was fair, while 63% disagreed or strongly disagreed and 20% neither agreed nor disagreed.

However, those learners who appealed were asked how many appeals they had submitted and how many were successful. Of the 950 respondents who had submitted an appeal, 107 (11%) had at least one successful appeal (although not all respondents had received the results of their appeal by the time they took the survey).

Learners who had at least one successful appeal were more positive about the process: 37% of this group strongly agreed or agreed that the appeals process was fair, 20% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 43% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Of learners who did not have successful appeals or who had not had their appeals results, on the other hand, 14% strongly agreed or agreed that the appeals process was fair, 20% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 66% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Figure 23

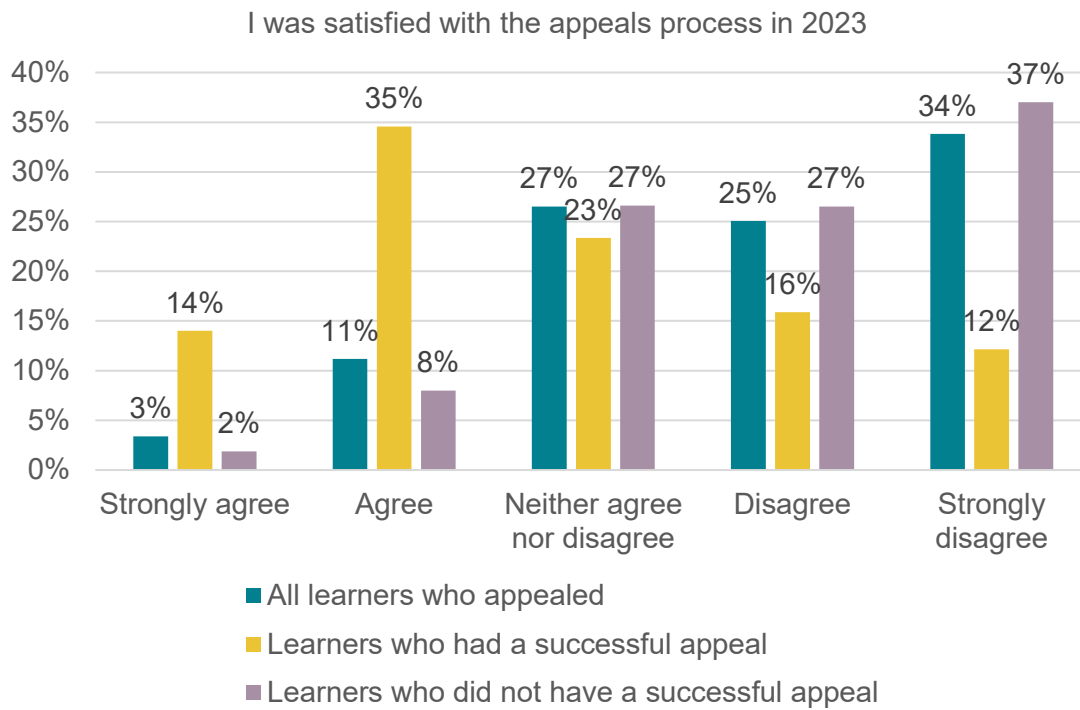


Of those learners who appealed, 15% strongly agreed or agreed that they were satisfied with the appeals process in 2023; 59% disagreed or strongly disagreed; and 27% neither agreed nor disagreed.

Of those learners whose appeal was unsuccessful or who had not yet had the results of their appeal, only 10% strongly agreed or agreed that they were satisfied with the appeals process in 2023; 64% disagreed or strongly disagreed; and 27% neither agreed nor disagreed.

However, in contrast, 49% of learners who had a successful appeal strongly agreed or agreed that they were satisfied with the appeals process in 2023, and 28% disagreed or strongly disagreed; 23% neither agreed nor disagreed.

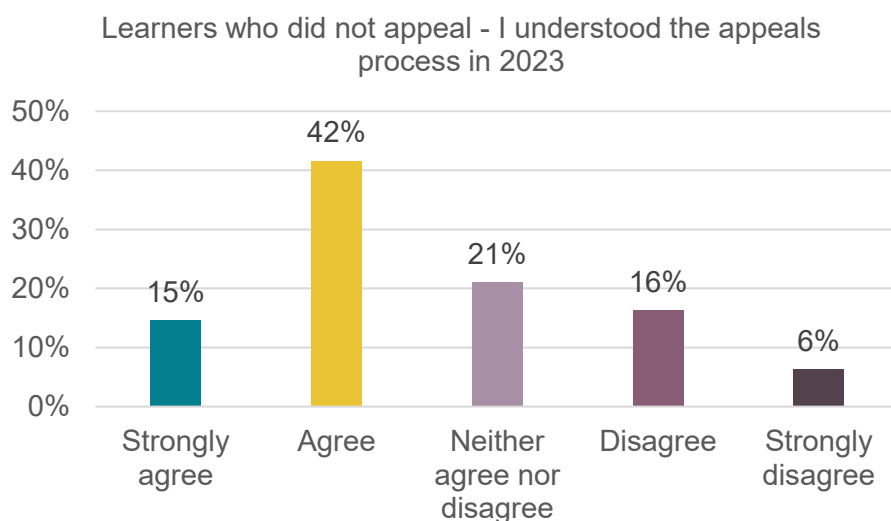
Figure 24



Respondents who had appealed were asked if they had now received the results of their appeal(s). 46% said yes and 54% no.

Respondents who had not appealed were asked if they nevertheless were aware that they could have appealed against their results. 92% said yes and 8% said no. These learners were then asked to what extent they agreed that they understood the appeals process in 2023: 15% strongly agreed; 42% agreed; 21% neither agreed nor disagreed; 16% disagreed; and 6% strongly disagreed.

Figure 25



Learner survey comments

Learners were invited to comment on the 2023 appeals process. The perception of the appeals process in these comments represented a clear dissatisfaction with the process in 2023. However, it is important to note that the qualitative data collected from this section of the survey does not represent the views of all learners who took part, only those who completed this question. Out of 3,437 learners who completed the survey, around a fifth left a comment (18%). Analysis shows that those who commented here were more negative about the appeals process than those who did not comment.

However, there were several themes that emerged consistently in the data collected from those respondents who did answer the question. Those who were unhappy with the appeals process were largely in agreement on the reasons why.

Fairness

It was very common for learners to say that they found the appeals system in 2023 unfair, especially compared to previous years. Learners who expressed this said that they felt their learning was and continued to be impacted by the pandemic, but that this was not taken into account by the 2023 appeals approach. In contrast, learners felt that those who had submitted appeals in 2022 had been compensated for the disruption caused by the pandemic through the perception of a more lenient appeals system.

I feel as though this year was a sad excuse for an appeals process as I was still deeply struggling with the fallout from COVID and having never sat any exams prior to my National 5s. [...] I feel as though a re-mark or an evaluation of the year's work would have been much more comprehensive and kind to the students who have been thrown into the exam system after having practically no learning for years prior.

I feel COVID strongly affected my basic learning throughout the foundation years and has still impacted me to this day. I feel the appeal system

should be more fair in understanding the impact COVID had on a lot of the upcoming exam years.

Additionally, learners felt that the appeals system in 2023 was unfair to those who had performed well throughout the year but had performed poorly on the day of the exam. These learners were frustrated they had no recourse through the appeals process to increase their grade. Some learners felt that those with anxiety disorders or other ASNs were more likely to struggle with performing well on the day of the exam and that the 2023 appeals system put these learners at a greater disadvantage.

I am a fairly anxious person, and it seems that the exam procedure this year has only supported people who can remain calm under pressure. I do not think my grade reflects what I can do. The education system and my school boasts Getting it Right for Every Child. I absolutely don't think this has been the case last year and indeed going forward.

Preferred alternative approaches

Several respondents who expressed that they were unhappy with the 2023 appeals approach offered alternative approaches that they would prefer. This was a free text response, but there were a number of approaches to appeals that respondents continually mentioned in preference to the 2023 process:

- ◆ A full re-mark
- ◆ Taking predicted grades into account
- ◆ Using alternative evidence such as prelims or in-class assessments taken under exam conditions
- ◆ A holistic view of all of these processes together

In particular, a sizeable proportion of those learners who commented here said that they preferred an appeals system that took into account alternative evidence, as happened last year.

Learners felt that the appeals system used in 2022 was fairer to those who had a bad day on the day of exam, and was more considerate and tolerant than the system used in 2023. Additionally, learners suggested that the previous appeals process had made prelims and work carried out throughout the year seem worthwhile, and that outcomes therefore better reflected the learner abilities because of this.

Some learners also felt that changing the system from year to year put them at a disadvantage and they would prefer a consistent approach.

I believe the way appeals were carried out in 2021-2022 was a better and more considerate system.

Communications

A common theme expressed by learners was confusion around information relating to appeals. For example, respondents repeatedly stated that they were unsure whether appeals were being re-marked or recounted in 2023. Learners also said that, at times,

teachers and SQA gave conflicting information relating to whether they were eligible for an appeal and how appeals would be carried out. There was also some uncertainty expressed around whether the learner should make the appeal themselves or whether the centre would carry it out on their behalf. Some learners also referenced being unaware of the deadline to appeal, but this was a less common theme.

There were also comments that suggested the information about appeals came too late, or that the guidance had changed late in the year, meaning that learners felt unprepared.

I think I understood it, but it was not communicated effectively, or at all. Would be much easier if appeals were called something like a 'recount' because I think that's essentially all it is. There were people thinking that appealing would mean taking class tests and prelims into account (which is what I think it was for the 2021, but I'm not totally sure, because again, the communication was awful).

Towards the start of the year, we were told that our prelims and internal assessments were going to have an effect on my appeal, but it turned out this had been changed. Which made me feel like I tried so hard for no reason in those tests.

Related to communications was the perception that the wait to find out the outcome of appeals was too long. At the time of taking the survey, some learners had not yet received their appeal outcome. For instance, one learner explained that they had to apply early for medicine and could not do this as a result of their appeal taking too long.²

I am applying for medicine beginning in 2024 and have an early application date of the 16th of October 2023. However, I was not eligible for a priority appeal meaning I did not know the outcome of my appeal before I submitted my application. I feel this was unfair and could have been avoided by changing the criteria for priority appeals to include early applications.

Less common themes

There were a number of additional ideas that arose in the data, but these were referenced less frequently than the themes detailed above. These are noted below.

- ◆ Exam results are a fair reflection of how hard learners study, and the 2023 appeals process was fair.
- ◆ The information given by SQA made sense and was helpful to understanding the process.
- ◆ The 2023 appeals process damaged learners' futures.
- ◆ Recounting marks makes learners lose confidence in SQA as it is felt that marking should be accurate the first time around.

² Details of the Appeals 2023 timeline, including for priority and standard appeals, is available at <https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/79049.html>

- ◆ The 2023 appeals process made exams more stressful for learners as they had less of a safety net to fall back on, which impacted their mental health.

Learner interviews

All of the learners who took part in interviews said that they had received the Appeals 2023 booklet and found it helpful, to a greater or lesser extent, and that it was useful to have the information before Results Day. However, some participants said that they had only scanned the booklet and would have read it more fully had they needed to appeal.

I think it was good because it was very clear — that potentially takes away some of the worry of getting results.

Only three participants had submitted an appeal in 2023. These learners expressed some disappointment that the process had not included alternative evidence, in contrast to the 2022 approach.

I think I got 77% or 78% in my Higher Physics prelim. But it made no difference whatsoever to the appeals process.

It was just a bit rubbish as well that our prelims actually don't really count for anything anymore.

Everyone was kind of expecting something, especially because of ... the year before.

However, one learner who said that they would like alternative evidence to be included in the appeals approach nevertheless acknowledged issues with that, citing as an example the fact that they were doing their prelims in January, while some friends had completed them in November.

None of the participants had a successful appeal outcome, and consequently a couple suggested that the process had been a waste of time.

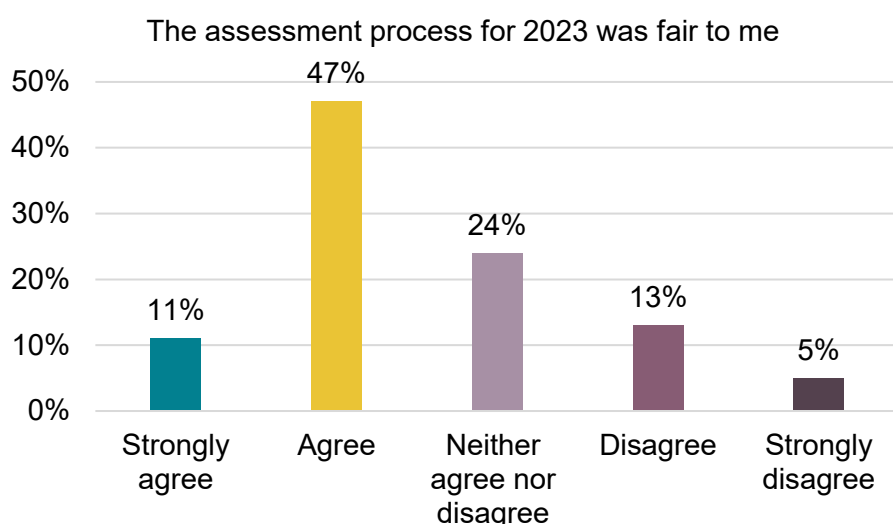
I think one person in my entire school got an appeal back ... I didn't get either of mine and several of my other friends and also in the same situation ... It's definitely the consensus in general in my school that the appeals were kind of a waste of time last year.

All of the participants who appealed, while getting support and advice from their SQA co-ordinator or teachers, said that the decision to submit an appeal was their own.

Overall approach

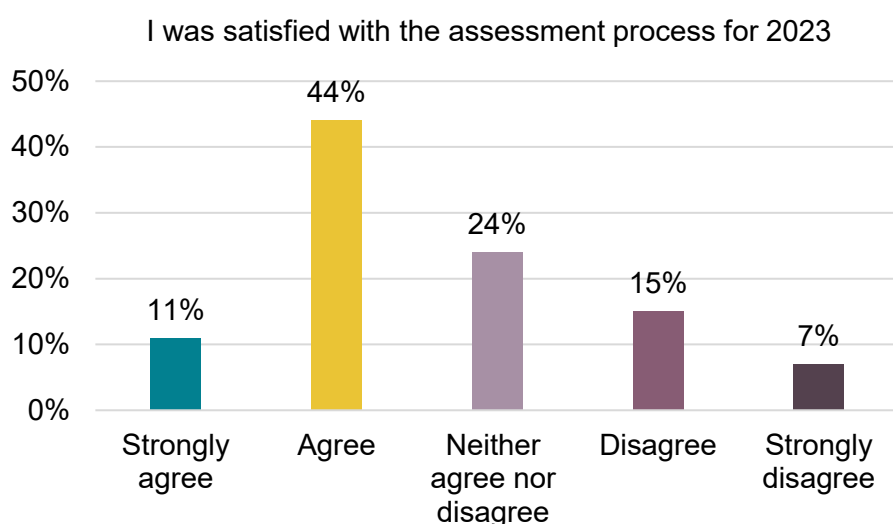
Learners were asked about the overall approach to assessment in 2023: 58% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the assessment process was fair for them, 18% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 24% neither agreed nor disagreed.

Figure 26



When asked whether they agreed that they were satisfied with the assessment process for 2023, 55% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, 22% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 24% neither agreed nor disagreed.

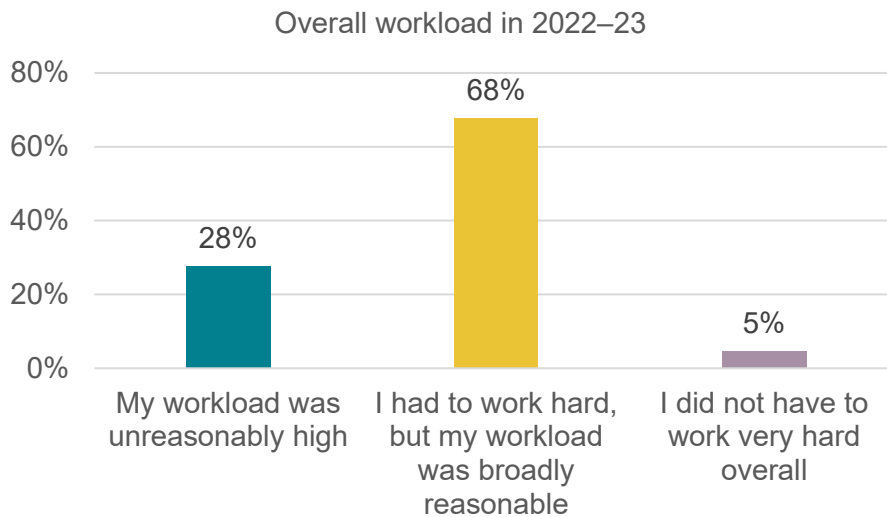
Figure 27



Most learners found their overall workload in 2022–23 reasonable. Learners were asked to think about the National Qualifications courses they were studying in 2022–23 and select a statement that they thought best described their overall workload. While 68% of respondents stated that they had to work hard but found their overall workload broadly reasonable, 28%

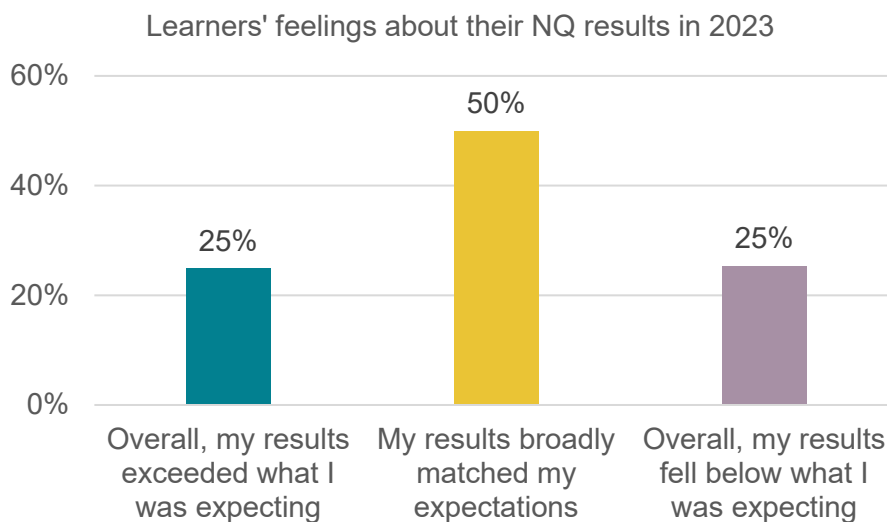
felt that their workload was unreasonably high, and 5% stated that they did not have to work very hard overall.

Figure 28



Learners were also asked to think about their subjects overall and select a statement matching how they felt about their results of their National Qualifications in 2023. While 50% of respondents stated that their results broadly matched their expectations, 25% stated that their results exceeded their expectations, and 25% of respondents stated that their results fell below their expectations.

Figure 29



How learners' feelings about results affected their views on different aspects of the assessment process is explored in more detail in the composite analysis section, below.

Learner interviews

Fairness

The majority of interview participants suggested that the overall 2023 assessment process had been fair. Learners mentioned the consistency of everyone being assessed in the same way, and some contrasted this with their experience during the pandemic.

I really think it was reasonable and fair.

It's just getting back to that normality of everyone being the same every year.

I feel like I got probably the results I deserved at the end of the year, like quite a lot of people felt the same about it.

However, one participant thought that the modifications to course assessment had made the process unfair for those who are better at practical work or coursework as opposed to exams.

One learner was frustrated with the reliance on exams and the perception that work done throughout the year does not count for anything. Another thought that the appeals system was slightly unfair in that it did not include the potential to submit alternative evidence but had nevertheless thought the 2022 appeals process was too generous.

Finally, a disabled learner suggested the assessment system, rather than just the 2023 approach, was unfair. This participant argued that they have to adapt to the assessment system, rather than the system adapting to them and mentioned that accessing appropriate assessment arrangements was very challenging.

Overall assessment process

Learner interview participants were asked to consider the component parts of the National Qualifications process in 2022–23 and think about any that they thought particularly well, or not so well.

In general, the learners thought the process had worked well overall, was well organised, and ran smoothly. Participants mentioned being well informed about the process and supported by SQA co-ordinators and teachers. While there were acknowledgements that exams can be stressful, there was a feeling that they were not unnecessarily so in 2023.

I think we got quite a lot of information quite succinctly, quite nicely laid out quite clearly. So, I don't think I was necessarily worried about the process really. I mean, obviously exams are stressful, but I think it went quite well.

The actual exams are just the most stressful part, but everything else around it is quite ... a good procedure.

Obviously, exam day was a little bit stressful, but since it's a pretty substantial event, it almost has to be because if you're not at least a bit stressed about it, then you're probably not taking it seriously enough in terms of results.

On the topic of stress, a couple of learners suggested that the process was not stressful because they enjoyed exams and preparing for them. A couple more thought that the experience of assessment in 2022–23 compared favourably to that in 2021–22.

I think probably the most stressful year was my S5 exams, which were 21–22 because that was that was ... your first year of doing full exams. But this year, ... you had had the practice of doing it for the first time, and then I was a bit more relaxed this year, I'd say because we'd been into the swing of it for a year.

Only one participant argued that exams in general were too stressful and high stakes.

A small number of the interviewees mentioned modifications to course assessment and stated that they had found these helpful in 2022–23.

Good that they still had like a little bit of extra guidance with the exams.

However, this was contrasted with the situation in 2023–24, where assignments have been re-introduced and a couple of participants felt that this would be challenging without previous experience. One learner thought that 2022–23 involved more work than the previous year, but, equally, that more time had been available in class to complete that work.

While one learner stated that they had liked the appeals process in 2023, a couple more had concerns about it — about its timescales and the lack of alternative evidence in the process. Another participant was frustrated with the perceived uncertainty around the appeals process and asked that a single approach is settled upon.

It is worth noting that, although learners were generally positive, one learner was very unhappy with a range of issues relating to the National Qualifications process in 2022–23. They believed that the curriculum and assessment methods are dated, they had struggled to access appropriate assessment arrangements, and they said that they received their results late.

Finally, all of those learners who took part in interview thought that their workload in 2022–23 was reasonable.

Composite analysis

Composite scores were calculated for each learner by taking the average of key questions relating to assessment processes for 2023. Key questions were all answered on five-point Likert scales from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'. These were converted into numerical responses from 1–5 before analysis.

We focused on five process areas: communications, teaching and learning, exam exceptional circumstances consideration service (EECCS), appeals, and overall process. We chose a composite approach to minimise the number of significance tests we carried out. Carrying out multiple tests has the potential to increase Type I errors. These are errors that suggest a result is indicative of a real effect (ie, population level), when in fact it exists only in the sample by chance.

In the subsequent analysis, we looked for differences across different equalities characteristics: disability/ASN, ethnicity, gender, and LGBTQIA+ identity. Additionally, we looked for the impact of being care experienced, of SIMD quintile, and how learners felt about their results.

A fuller explanation of the composite scores and how they are derived and tested is available in the Technical Appendix.

Communications satisfaction composite analysis

In the communications satisfaction composite, low scores indicate that a respondent did not find SQA's communications in 2022–23 satisfactory, while high scores indicate they did.

Overall, 2,472 learners had a communications satisfaction score calculated. The composite had an overall average of 3.6 (ie, slightly below an 'agree' response). This subsample is made up only of learners who received an appeals booklet in 2023.

Disability/ASN

Of the learners who answered the key communications satisfaction questions, 2,468 also answered the disability/ASN monitoring question. Of those, 118 indicated they preferred not to answer. Consequently, 2,350 learners were included in this analysis. The average communications satisfaction score for this subsample of learners was 3.6.

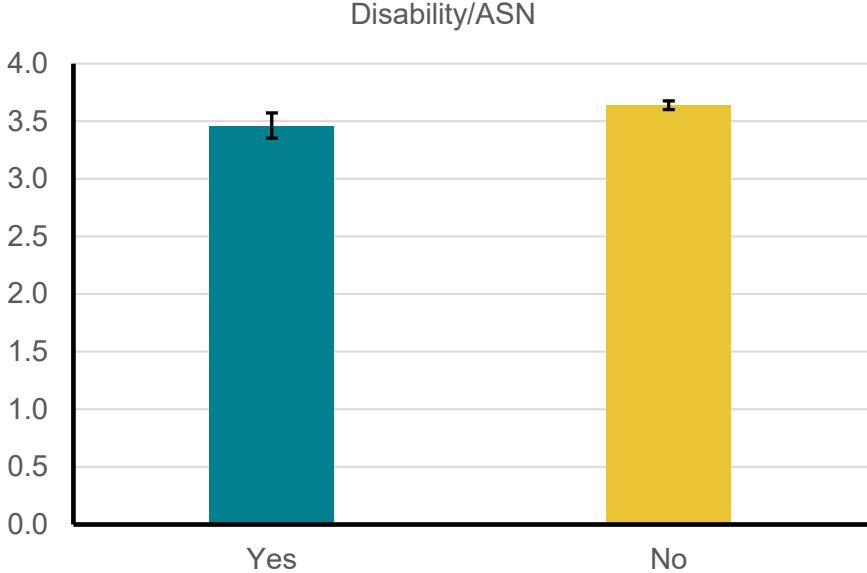
Table 3

Disabled/ASN	Number of respondents	Mean communications satisfaction score
Yes	293	3.5
No	2,057	3.6

Disabled/ASN learners scored lower on our communications satisfaction than non-disabled/ASN learners (averages of 3.5 and 3.6, respectively). While this difference is

extremely small in terms of its size on the scale, it is nevertheless statistically significant, indicating that disabled learners and/or learners with ASN were less satisfied by SQA 2022–23 assessment communications than non-disabled learners ($p < 0.01$).

Figure 30



Ethnicity

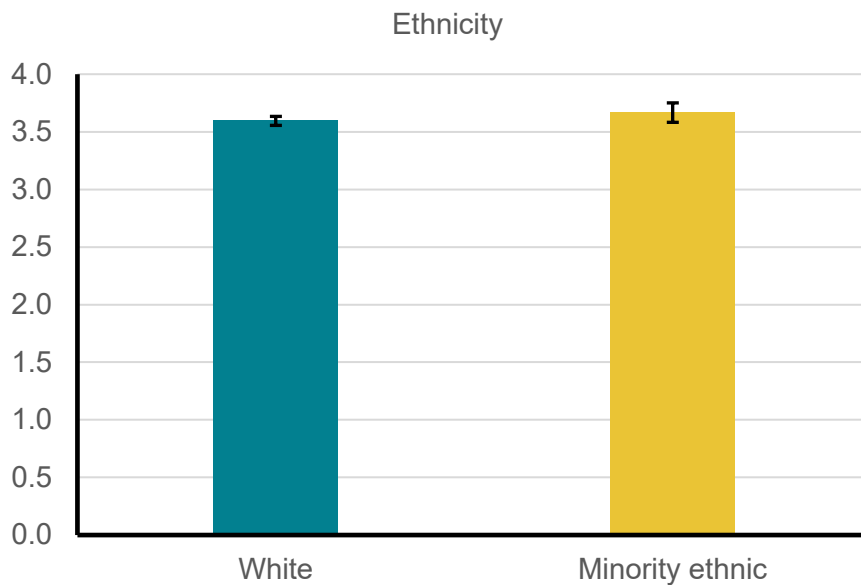
Of the learners who answered the key communications satisfaction questions, 2,449 also answered the ethnicity monitoring question. Of those, 26 indicated they preferred not to answer. Consequently, 2,423 learners were included in this analysis. The average communications satisfaction score for this subsample of learners was 3.6.

Table 4

Ethnicity	Number of respondents	Mean communications satisfaction score
White	2,003	3.6
Minority ethnic	420	3.7

White learners scored lower than minority ethnic learners on our communications satisfaction composite (averages of 3.6 and 3.7 respectively). This difference was potentially statistically significant based on the extent of overlap in confidence intervals, so we followed up with statistical testing. This confirmed a lack of significant difference between the two groups, indicating that there was no meaningful difference between white and minority ethnic groups in terms of communication satisfaction score ($p > 0.01$).

Figure 31



Gender

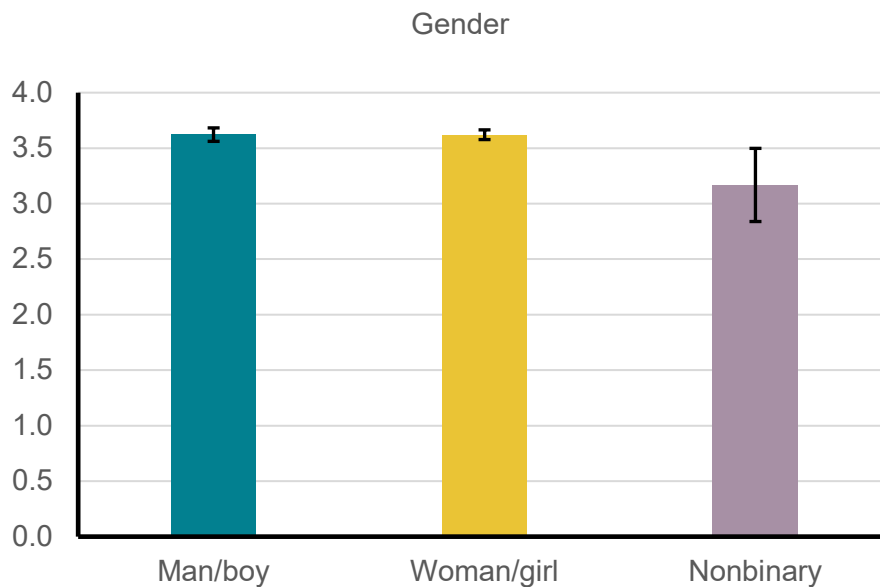
Of the learners who answered the key communications satisfaction questions, 2,450 also answered the gender monitoring question. Of those, 59 indicated they preferred not to answer. Consequently, 2,391 learners were included in this analysis. The average communications satisfaction score for this subsample of learners was 3.6.

Table 5

Gender	Number of respondents	Mean communications satisfaction score
Man/boy	843	3.6
Woman/girl	1,502	3.6
Non-binary	46	3.2

There was no significant difference between men/boys and women/girls in terms of scores on the communications satisfaction score, with both scoring 3.6 on average. Learners who identified as non-binary in our survey did have a significantly lower score than the other genders combined with an average of 3.2, indicating that non-binary respondents were less satisfied by SQA communications than men/boys and women/girls ($p < 0.01$). There were, however, only 46 non-binary individuals who supplied answers to key questions for this analysis, 96% of whom also identified as members of the LGBTQIA+ community. As such it may be that this result should be considered alongside the LGBTQIA+ results below.

Figure 32



LGBTQIA+ identity

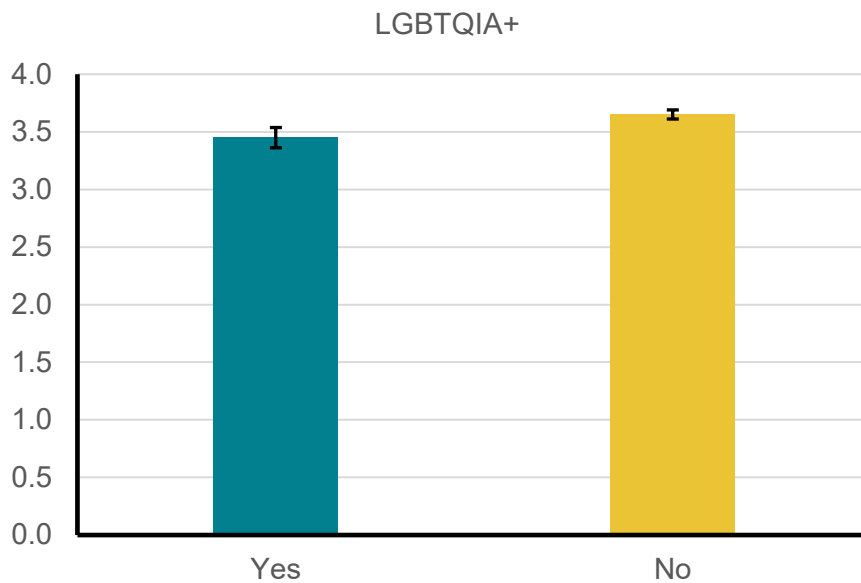
Of the learners who answered the key communications satisfaction questions, 2,465 also answered the LGBTQIA+ monitoring question. Of those, 165 indicated they preferred not to answer. Consequently, 2,300 learners were included in this analysis. The average communications satisfaction score for this subsample of learners was 3.6.

Table 6

LGBTQIA+	Number of respondents	Mean communications satisfaction score
Yes	443	3.4
No	1,857	3.7

Learners who identified as part of the LGBTQIA+ community scored lower on average than learners who did not on the communications satisfaction score (3.4 and 3.7 respectively). This difference was statistically significant, indicating that LGBTQIA+ learners were less satisfied with SQA communications relating to 2022–23 assessment than learners who were not part of the LGBTQIA+ community ($p < 0.01$).

Figure 33



Care experience

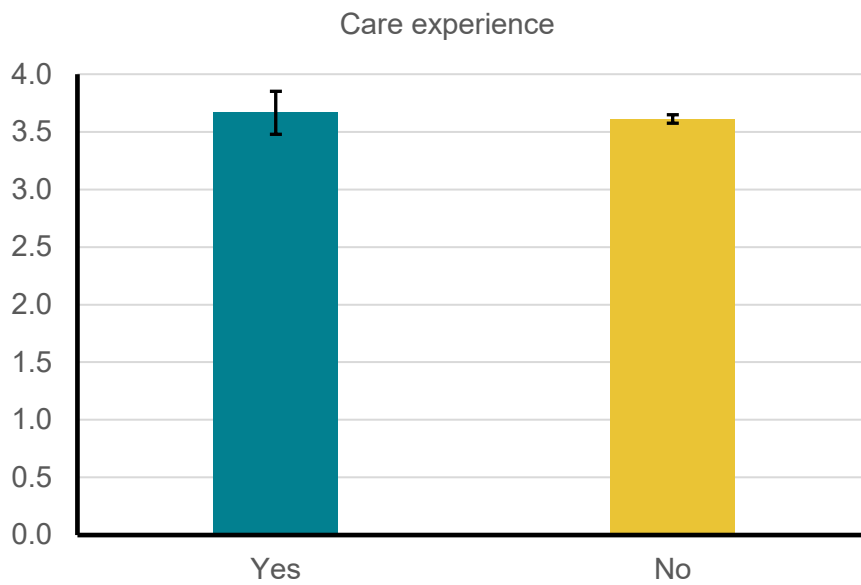
Of the learners who answered the key communications satisfaction questions, 2,497 also answered the care experience monitoring question. Of those, 136 indicated they either preferred not to answer or were unsure how to respond. Consequently, 2,331 learners were included in this analysis. The average communications satisfaction score for this subsample of learners was 3.6.

Table 7

Care experienced	Number of respondents	Mean communications satisfaction score
Yes	97	3.7
No	2,234	3.6

While there was slight difference between average communications satisfaction scores for learners who were care experienced and learners who were not, this difference is not statistically significant, meaning that care experienced learners do not differ meaningfully from non-care experienced learners in their view of SQA communications relating to 2022–23 assessment.

Figure 34



SIMD

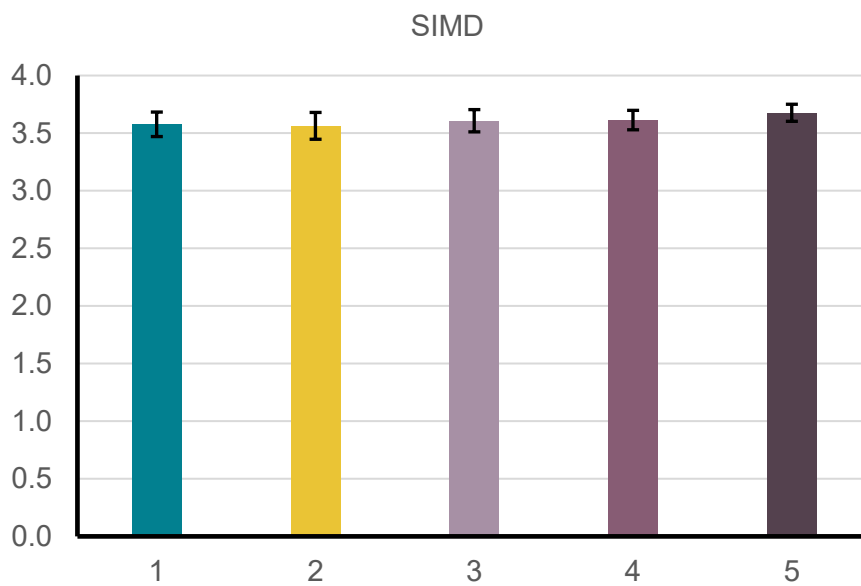
Of the learners who answered the key communications satisfaction questions, 1,805 also provided SIMD information. The average communications satisfaction score for this subsample of learners was 3.6.

Table 8

SIMD quintile	Number of respondents	Mean communications satisfaction score
1	261	3.6
2	249	3.6
3	295	3.6
4	434	3.6
5	566	3.7

While the average scores for each quintile differ slightly from each other, these differences are not statistically significant, indicating that there was no meaningful difference between any SIMD quintile and learner satisfaction with SQA communications relating to 2022–23 assessment.

Figure 35



Feelings about results

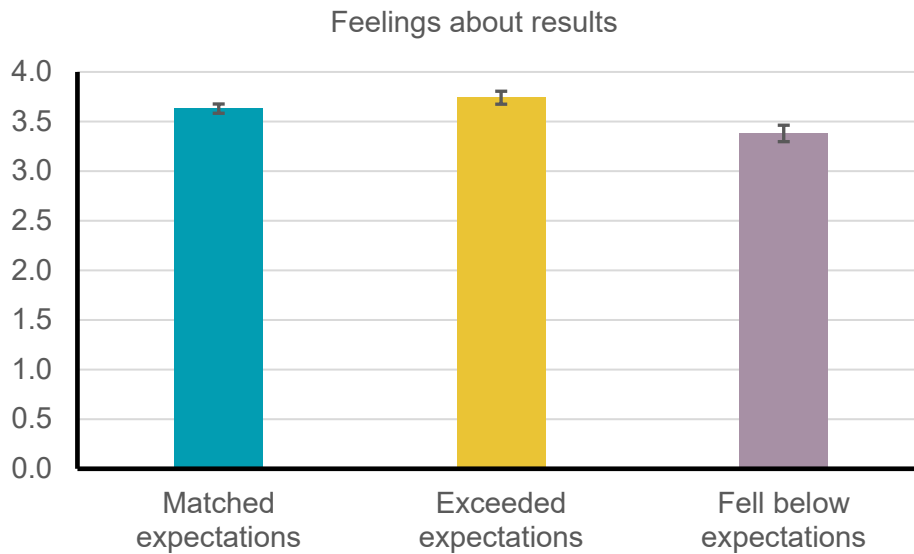
Of the learners who answered the key communications satisfaction questions, 2,370 also answered the question on how they felt about their results. The average communications satisfaction score for this subsample of learners was 3.6.

Table 9

Results	Number of respondents	Mean communications satisfaction score
Matched expectations	1,189	3.6
Exceeded expectations	596	3.7
Fell below expectations	585	3.4

Communications satisfaction scores were significantly lower on average for learners whose results were lower than they expected (3.4) than for those whose results matched (3.6) or exceeded (3.7) expectations ($p < 0.01$). Additionally, learners whose results exceeded expectations scored significantly higher than learners whose results matched their expectations ($p < 0.01$). This suggests that satisfaction with SQA's communications relating to 2022–23 assessment increases as learners do better relative to their expectations.

Figure 36



Teaching and learning disruption composite analysis

In the teaching and learning disruption composite, low scores indicate that a respondent did not feel the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted their teaching and learning experiences in 2022–23, while high scores indicate they did.

Overall, 3,141 learners had a teaching and learning disruption score calculated. The composite had an overall average of 3.4 (ie, slightly above a 'neither agree nor disagree' response).

Disability/ASN

Of the learners who answered the key teaching and learning disruption questions, 3,134 also answered the disability/ASN monitoring question. Of those, 154 indicated they preferred not to answer. Consequently, 2,980 learners were included in this analysis. The average teaching and learning disruption score for this subsample of learners was 3.4.

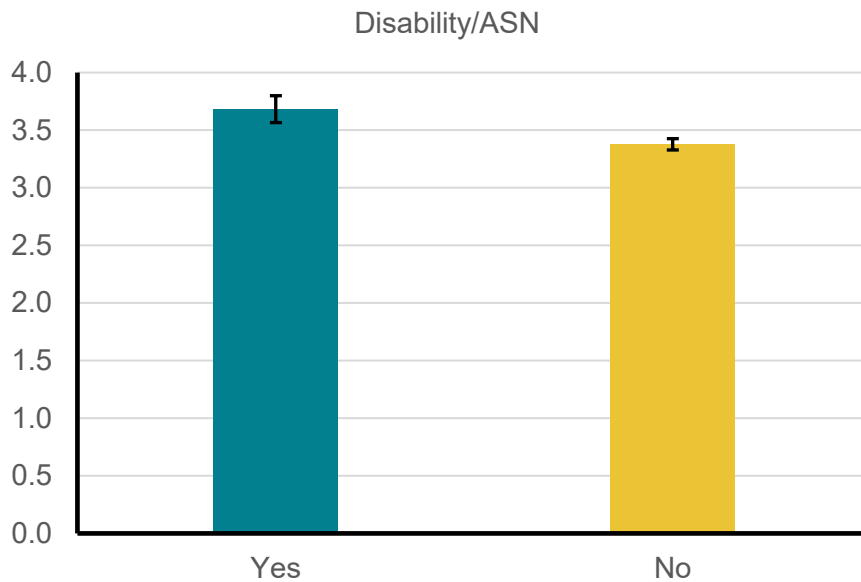
Table 10

Disabled/ASN	Number of respondents	Mean teaching and learning disruption score
Yes	419	3.7
No	2,561	3.4

Disabled learners and/or learners with ASN scored significantly higher on the teaching and learning disruption score than learners who were not disabled and/or did not have an ASN

(averages of 3.7 and 3.4, respectively; $p < 0.01$). This indicates that disabled learners and/or learners with ASN reported experiencing more disruption to their teaching and learning in 2022–23 than learners who were not disabled and/or did not have an ASN.

Figure 37



Ethnicity

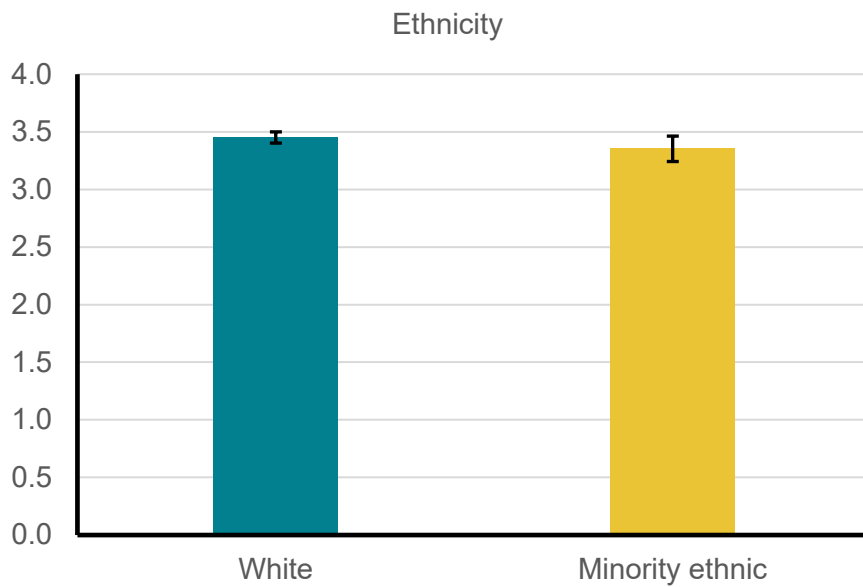
Of the learners who answered the key teaching and learning disruption questions, 3,112 also answered the ethnicity monitoring question. Of those, 30 indicated they preferred not to answer. Consequently, 3,082 learners were included in this analysis. The average teaching and learning disruption score for this subsample of learners was 3.4.

Table 11

Ethnicity	Number of respondents	Mean teaching and learning disruption score
White	2,543	3.5
Minority ethnic	539	3.4

White learners scored higher than minority ethnic learners on our teaching and learning disruption score (averages of 3.5 and 3.4, respectively). This difference was potentially statistically significant based on the extent of overlap in confidence intervals, so we followed up with statistical testing. This confirmed a lack of significant difference between the two groups, indicating that there was no meaningful difference between white and minority ethnic groups in terms of teaching and learning disruption score ($p > 0.01$).

Figure 38



Gender

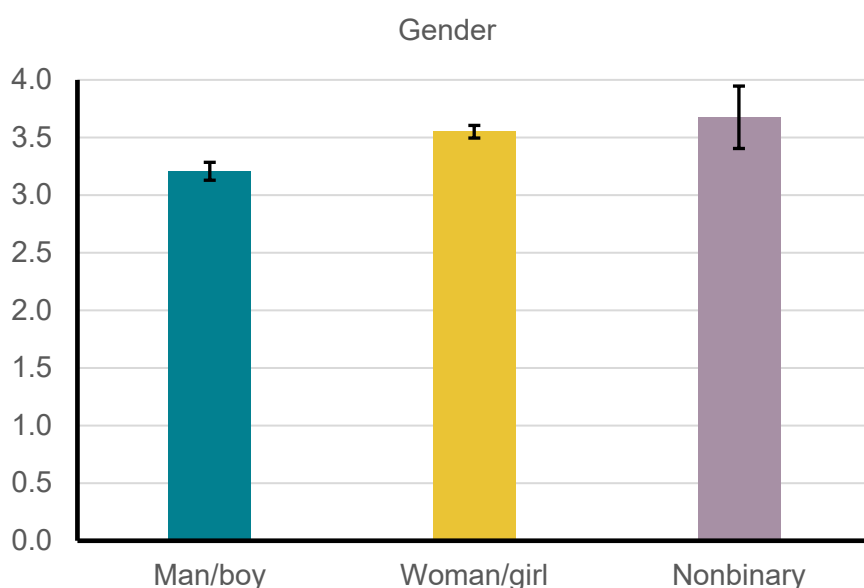
Of the learners who answered the key teaching and learning disruption questions, 3,101 also answered the gender monitoring question. Of those, 74 indicated they preferred not to answer. Consequently, 3,027 learners were included in this analysis. The average teaching and learning disruption score for this subsample of learners was 3.4.

Table 12

Gender	Number of respondents	Mean teaching and learning disruption score
Man/boy	1,118	3.2
Woman/girl	1,848	3.6
Non-binary	61	3.7

Learners who described themselves as men/boys had a lower score on the teaching and learning disruption score than either women/girls or non-binary learners (means of 3.2, 3.6 and 3.7, respectively). These differences were statistically significant ($p < 0.01$), while the difference between women/girls and non-binary learners was not. This suggests that men/boys reported experiencing less disruption to their teaching and learning as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic than others.

Figure 39



LGBTQIA+

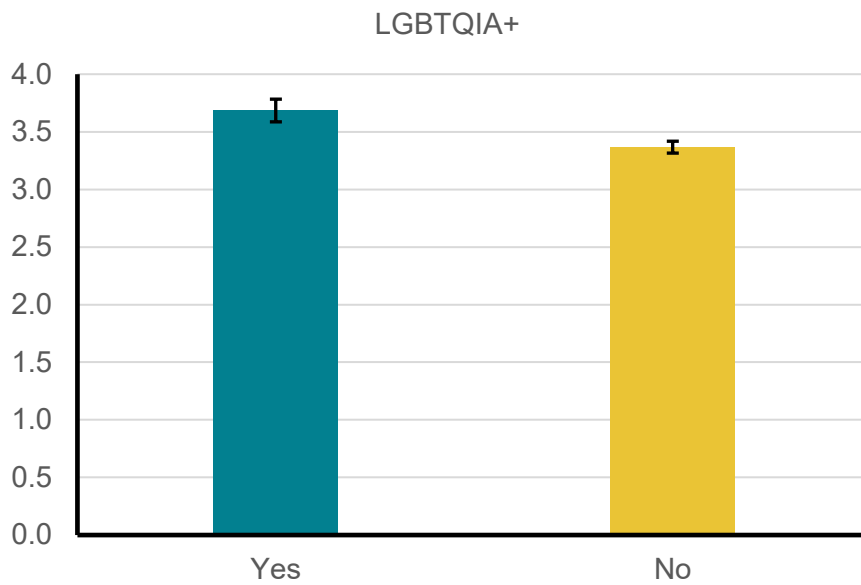
Of the learners who answered the key teaching and learning disruption questions, 3,130 also answered the LGBTQIA+ monitoring question. Of those, 208 indicated they preferred not to answer. Consequently, 2,922 learners were included in this analysis. The average teaching and learning disruption score for this subsample of learners was 3.4.

Table 13

LGBTQIA+	Number of respondents	Mean teaching and learning disruption score
Yes	568	3.7
No	2,354	3.4

Learners who considered themselves to be part of the LGBTQI+ community scored higher on the teaching and learning disruption score than learners who did not (3.7 and 3.4, respectively). This difference was statistically significant ($p < 0.01$), indicating that LGBTQIA+ learners reported more disruption to their teaching and learning as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic than learners who were not part of the LGBTQIA+ community.

Figure 40



Care experience

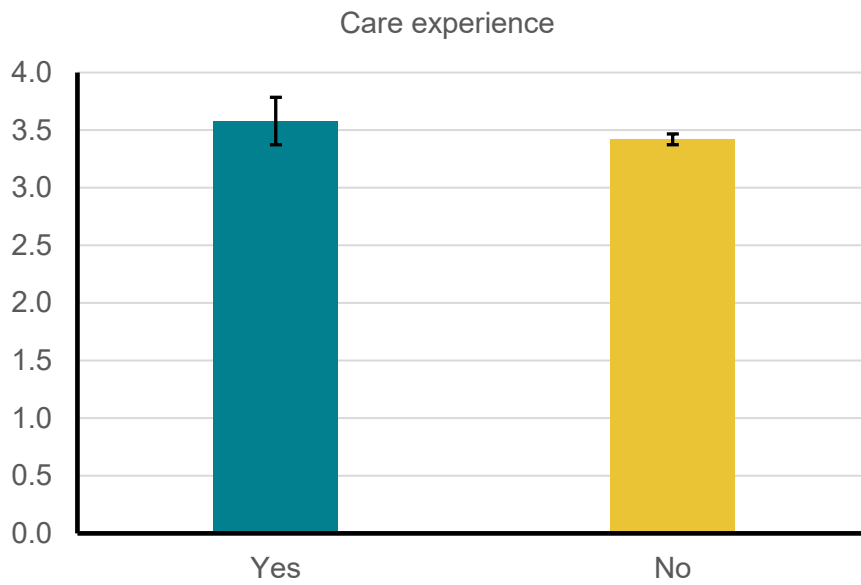
Of the learners who answered the key teaching and learning disruption questions, 3,129 also answered the care experience monitoring question. Of those, 204 indicated they either preferred not to answer or were unsure how to respond. Consequently, 2,925 learners were included in this analysis. The average teaching and learning disruption score for this subsample of learners was 3.4.

Table 14

Care experienced	Number of respondents	Mean teaching and learning disruption score
Yes	143	3.6
No	2,782	3.4

While there was a slight difference between average teaching and learning disruption scores for learners who were care experienced and learners who were not (3.6 and 3.4, respectively), this difference was not statistically significant, meaning that care experienced learners do not differ meaningfully from non-care experienced learners in their experience of disruption to their teaching and learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Figure 41



SIMD

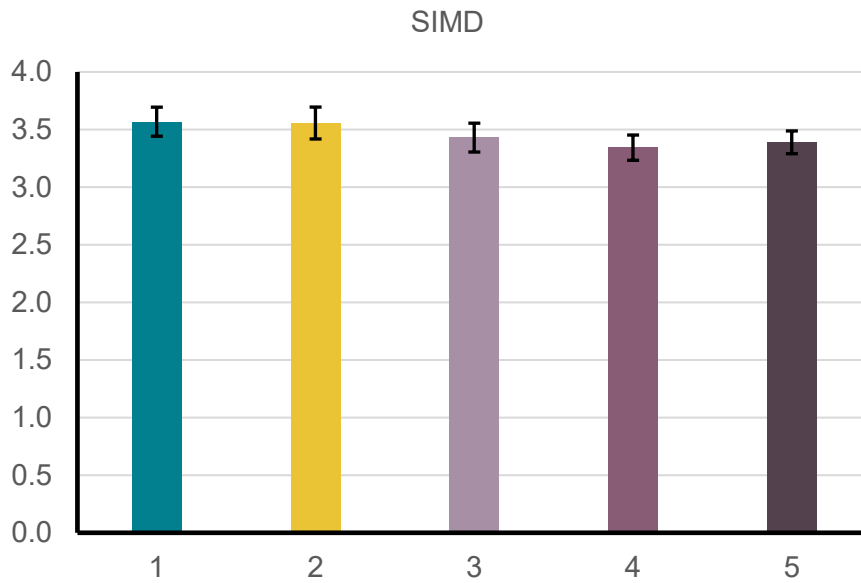
Of the learners who answered the key teaching and learning disruption questions, 2,273 also provided SIMD information. The average teaching and learning disruption score for this subsample of learners was 3.4.

Table 15

SIMD quintile	Number of respondents	Mean teaching and learning disruption score
1	362	3.6
2	317	3.6
3	374	3.4
4	533	3.3
5	687	3.4

The patterning of confidence intervals in Figure 41 suggest that teaching and learning disruption scores may be higher for learners from more deprived areas. Follow-up testing revealed that this difference was only significant for the first compared to the fourth quintiles (3.6 and 3.3 respectively, $p < 0.01$), indicating that learners from these two SIMD quintiles differ meaningfully from each other. Specifically, learners from most deprived areas reported more disruption to their teaching and learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic than learners in SIMD quintile 4.

Figure 42



Feelings about results

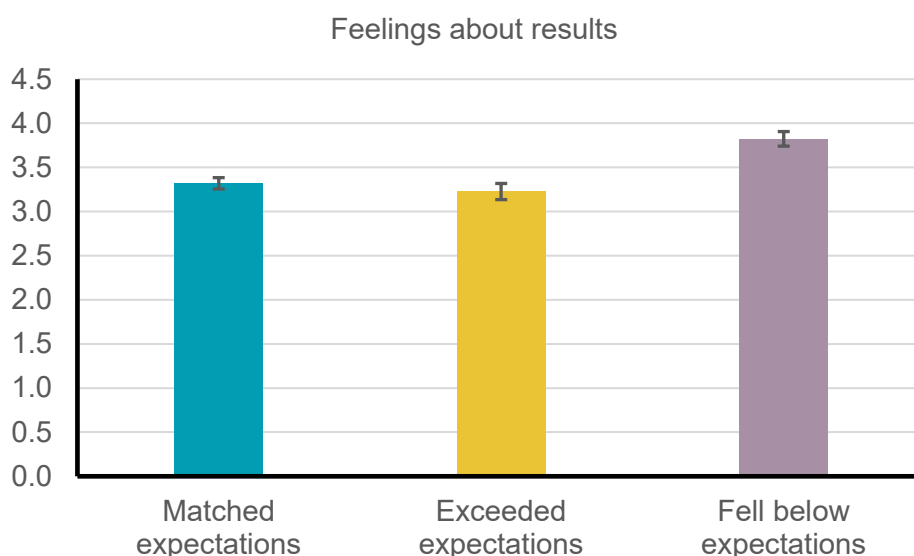
Of the learners who answered the key teaching and learning disruption questions, 2,869 also answered the question on how they felt about their results. The average teaching and learning disruption score for this subsample of learners was 3.4.

Table 16

Results	Number of respondents	Mean teaching and learning disruption score
Matched expectations	1,434	3.3
Exceeded expectations	711	3.2
Fell below expectations	724	3.8

Teaching and learning disruption scores were significantly higher on average for learners whose results were lower than they expected (3.8), than for those whose results matched (3.3) or exceeded (3.2) expectations ($p < 0.01$). However, there was no significant difference between learners whose results matched or exceeded their expectations ($p > 0.01$). This suggests that learners who did worse than they expected also reported experiencing more disruption to teaching and learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic than other learners.

Figure 43



EECCS satisfaction composite analysis

In the EECCS satisfaction composite, low scores indicate that a respondent did not find the 2023 EECCS process satisfactory, while high scores indicate they did.

Overall, 322 learners had an EECCS satisfaction score calculated. This composite had an overall average of 3.2 (ie, slightly above a 'neither agree nor disagree' response). This subsample included only learners who had an EECCS submitted for them in 2023.
Disability/ASN

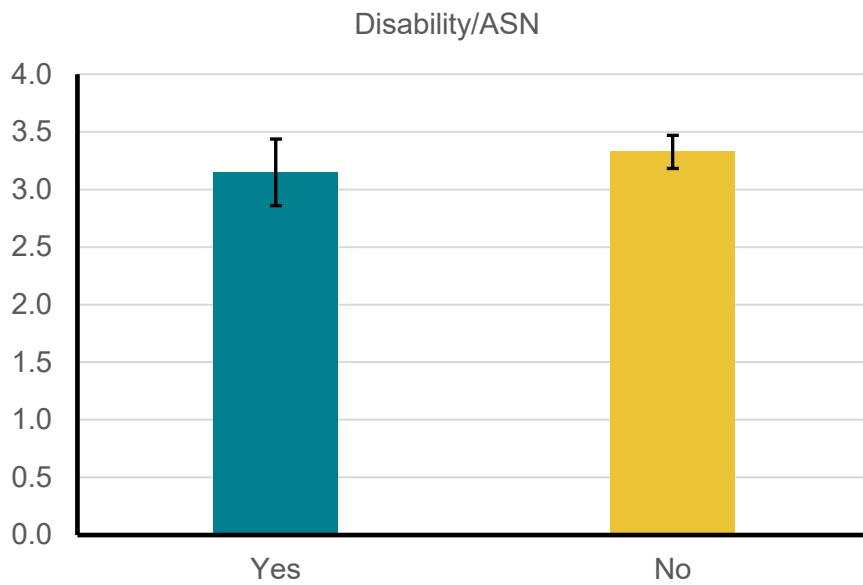
Of the learners who answered the key EECCS satisfaction questions, 321 also answered the disability/ASN monitoring question. Of those, 25 indicated they preferred not to answer. Consequently, 296 learners were included in this analysis. The average EECCS satisfaction score for this subsample of learners was 3.2.

Table 17

Disabled/ASN	Number of respondents	Mean EECCS satisfaction score
Yes	81	3.1
No	215	3.3

There was no significant difference between disabled learners and/or learners with ASN and learners without a disability and/or ASN in terms of their satisfaction with 2023's EECCS process (3.1 and 3.3, respectively).

Figure 44



Ethnicity

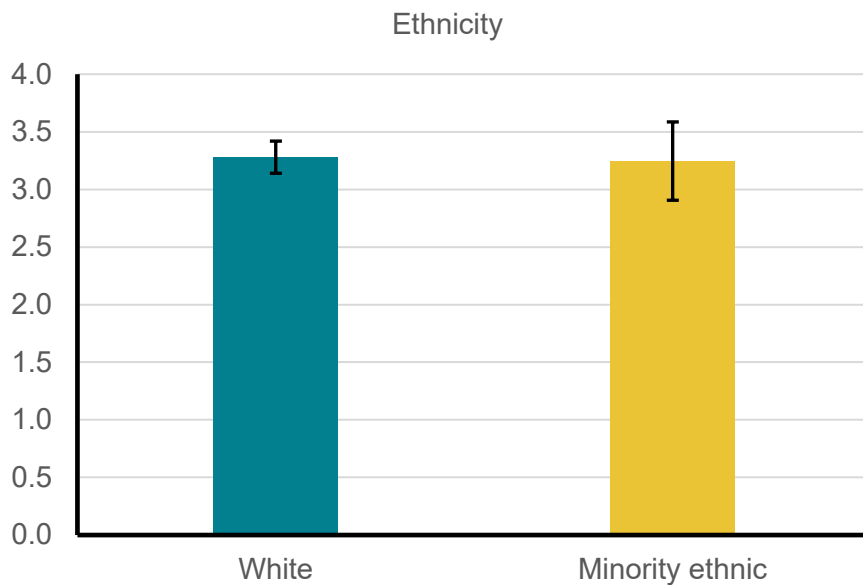
Of the learners who answered the key EECCS satisfaction questions, 316 also answered the ethnicity monitoring question, with no learner indicating they preferred not to answer. The average EECCS satisfaction score for this subsample of learners was 3.2.

Table 18

Ethnicity	Number of respondents	Mean EECCS satisfaction score
White	255	3.3
Minority ethnic	61	3.2

There was no significant difference between white and minority ethnic learners in terms of their satisfaction with 2023's EECCS process (3.3 and 3.2, respectively).

Figure 45



Gender

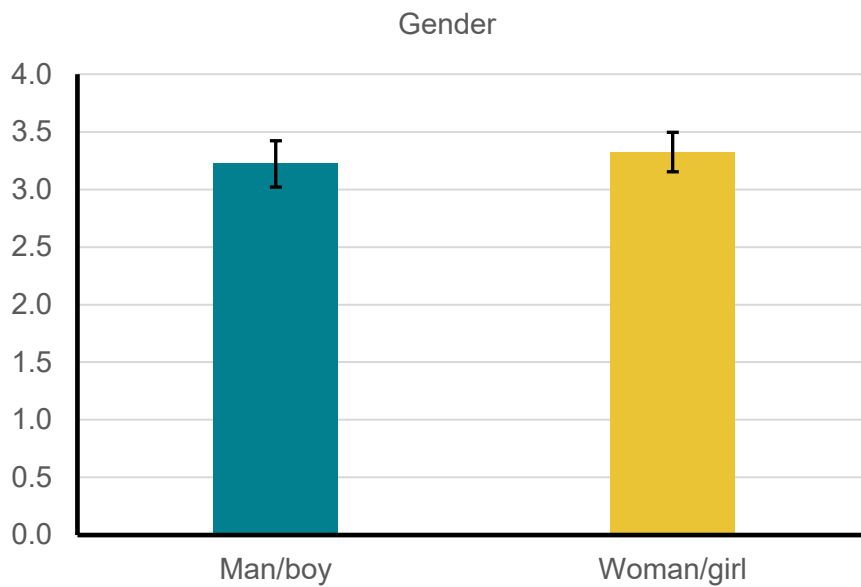
Of the learners who answered the key EECCS satisfaction questions, 315 also answered the gender monitoring question. Of those, 11 indicated they preferred not to answer. The number of learners identifying as non-binary was too small to analyse so non-binary learners were removed. Consequently, 301 learners were included in this analysis. The average EECCS satisfaction score for this subsample of learners was 3.3.

Table 19

Gender	Number of respondents	Mean EECCS satisfaction score
Man/boy	116	3.2
Woman/girl	185	3.3

There was no significant difference between men/boys and women/girls in terms of EECCS satisfaction scores, indicating that there is no meaningful difference between them in terms of learner experiences of the 2023 EECCS process (3.2 and 3.3, respectively).

Figure 46



LGBTQIA+

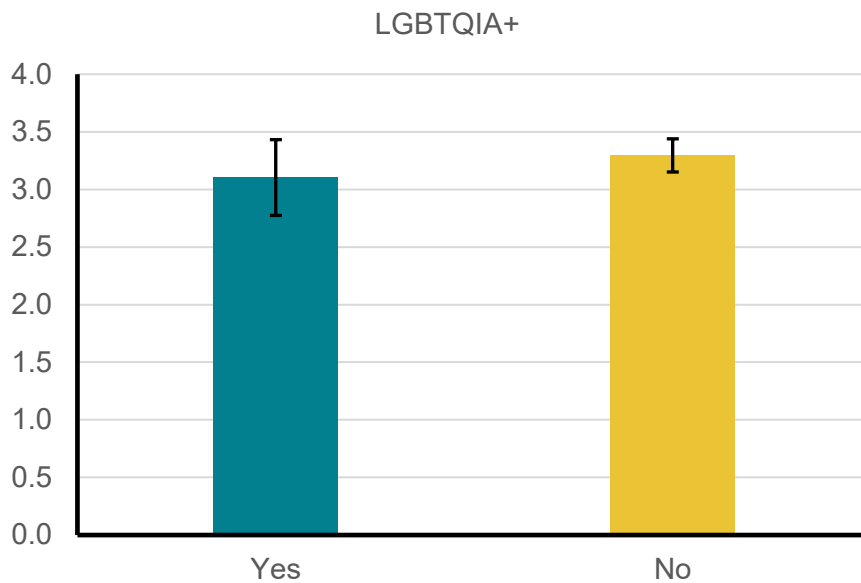
Of the learners who answered the key EECCS satisfaction questions, 321 also answered the LGBTQIA+ monitoring question. Of those, 22 indicated they preferred not to answer. Consequently, 299 learners were included in this analysis. The average EECCS satisfaction score for this subsample of learners was 3.3.

Table 20

LGBTQIA+	Number of respondents	Mean EECCS satisfaction score
Yes	55	3.1
No	244	3.3

EECCS satisfaction scores did not differ significantly between learners who indicated they considered themselves to be part of the LGBTQIA+ community and those who did not (3.1 and 3.3, respectively). This suggests that there was no meaningful difference in satisfaction between these two groups in terms of their satisfaction with the EECCS process in 2023.

Figure 47



Care experience

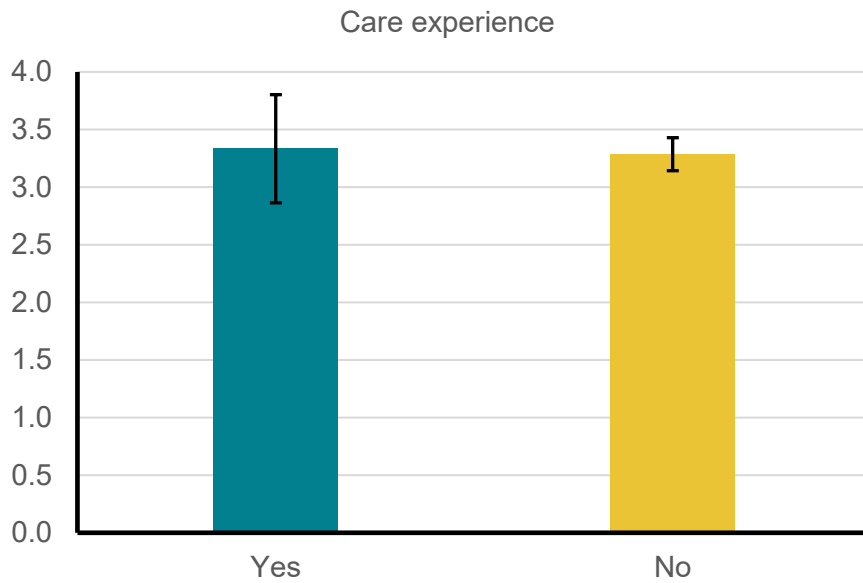
Of the learners who answered the key EECCS satisfaction questions, 321 also answered the care experience monitoring question. Of those, 44 indicated they either preferred not to answer or were unsure how to respond. Consequently, 277 learners were included in this analysis. The average EECCS satisfaction score for this subsample of learners was 3.3.

Table 21

Care experienced	Number of respondents	Mean EECCS satisfaction score
Yes	31	3.3
No	246	3.3

While there was slight difference between average EECCS satisfaction scores for learners who were care experienced and learners who were not, this difference is not statistically significant, meaning that care experienced learners did not differ meaningfully from non-care experienced learners in their view of the EECCS process in 2023.

Figure 48



SIMD

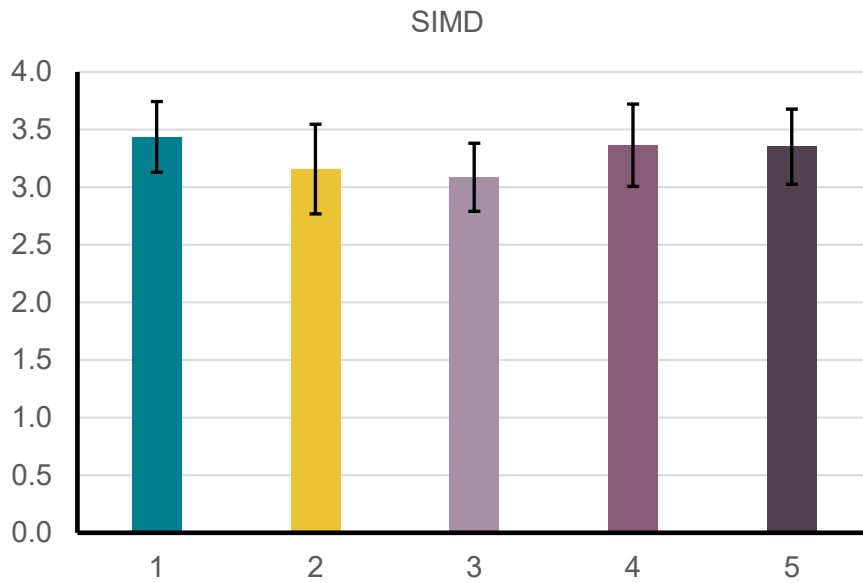
Of the learners who answered the key EECCS satisfaction questions, 226 also provided SIMD information. The average EECCS satisfaction score for this subsample of learners was 3.3.

Table 22

SIMD quintile	Number of respondents	Mean EECCS satisfaction score
1	52	3.4
2	34	3.2
3	39	3.1
4	44	3.4
5	57	3.4

While the average scores for each SIMD quintile differ slightly from each other, there is no statistical difference between EECCS satisfaction scores and any SIMD quintile. This indicates that learner satisfaction with 2023's EECCS process was not impacted by learners' SIMD quintile.

Figure 49



Feelings about results

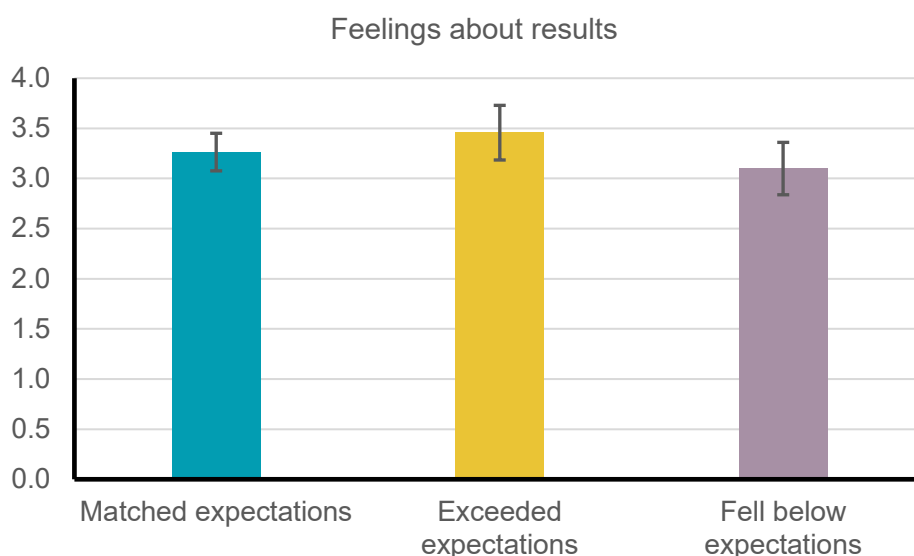
Of the learners who answered the key EECCS satisfaction questions, 302 also answered the question on how they felt about their results. The average EECCS satisfaction score for this subsample of learners was 3.3.

Table 23

Results	Number of respondents	Mean EECCS satisfaction score
Matched expectations	148	3.3
Exceeded expectations	70	3.5
Fell below expectations	84	3.1

Compared to learners with scores that matched expectations, average scores were lower for learners whose results fell below expectations and higher for learners whose results exceeded expectations. This difference was not statistically significant ($p > 0.01$) indicating that learner satisfaction with 2023's EECCS process did not differ according to how they felt about their results.

Figure 50



Appeals satisfaction composite analysis

In the appeals satisfaction composite, low scores indicate that a respondent did not find 2023's appeals process satisfactory, while high scores indicate they did.

Overall, 910 learners had an appeals satisfaction score calculated. The composite had an overall average of 2.6 (ie, slightly below a 'neither agree nor disagree' response), which is the lowest score of any of the satisfaction measures. This subsample included only learners who had made an appeal in 2023. Disability/ASN

Of the learners who answered the key appeals satisfaction questions, 908 also answered the disability/ASN monitoring question. Of those, 41 indicated they preferred not to answer. Consequently, 867 learners were included in this analysis. The average appeals satisfaction score for this subsample of learners was 2.6.

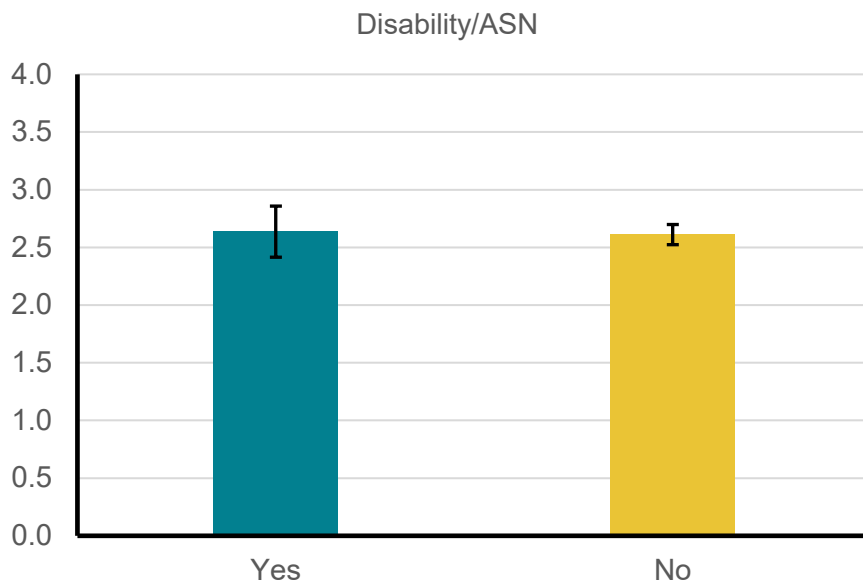
Table 24

Disabled/ASN	Number of respondents	Mean appeals satisfaction score
Yes	132	2.6
No	735	2.6

There was no difference between the appeals satisfaction scores for disabled learners and/or learners with ASN compared to learners who do not have a disability and/or ASN,

indicating that disability/ASN status had no impact on satisfaction with 2023's appeals process.

Figure 51



Ethnicity

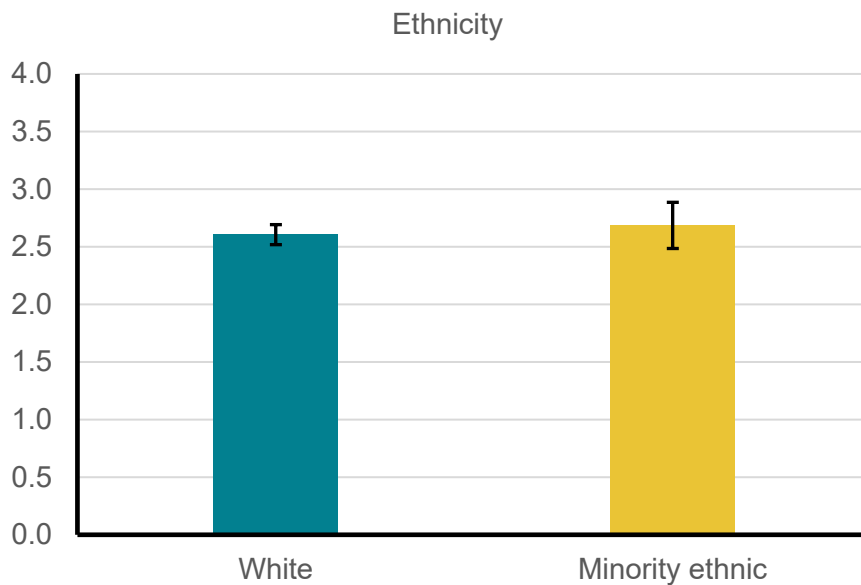
Of the learners who answered the key appeals satisfaction questions, 896 also answered the ethnicity monitoring question (excluding a very small number indicating they preferred not to answer). The average appeals satisfaction score for this subsample of learners was 2.6.

Table 25

Ethnicity	Number of respondents	Mean appeals satisfaction score
White	752	2.6
Minority ethnic	144	2.7

There was a very slight difference in average appeals satisfaction score between white and minority ethnic learners (2.6 and 2.7, respectively), but this difference is not statistically significant. This indicates that there was no meaningful difference between white and minority ethnic groups in terms of the appeals satisfaction score.

Figure 52



Gender

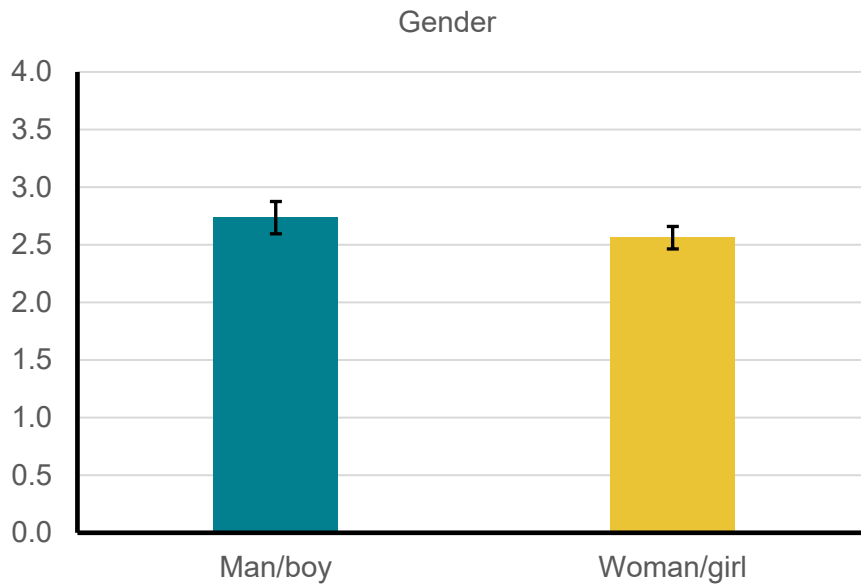
Of the learners who answered the key appeals satisfaction questions, 899 also answered the gender monitoring question. Of those, 26 learners who either indicated they preferred not to answer or were among a small number who identified as non-binary were dropped from analysis. Consequently, 873 learners were included. The average appeals satisfaction score for this subsample of learners was 2.6.

Table 26

Gender	Number of respondents	Mean appeals satisfaction score
Man/boy	336	2.7
Woman/girl	537	2.6

Men/boys and women/girls differed significantly on their average appeals satisfaction score (2.7 and 2.6, respectively; $p < 0.01$), suggesting that women/girls were less satisfied than men/boys with their experience of the 2023 appeals process.

Figure 53



LGBTQIA+

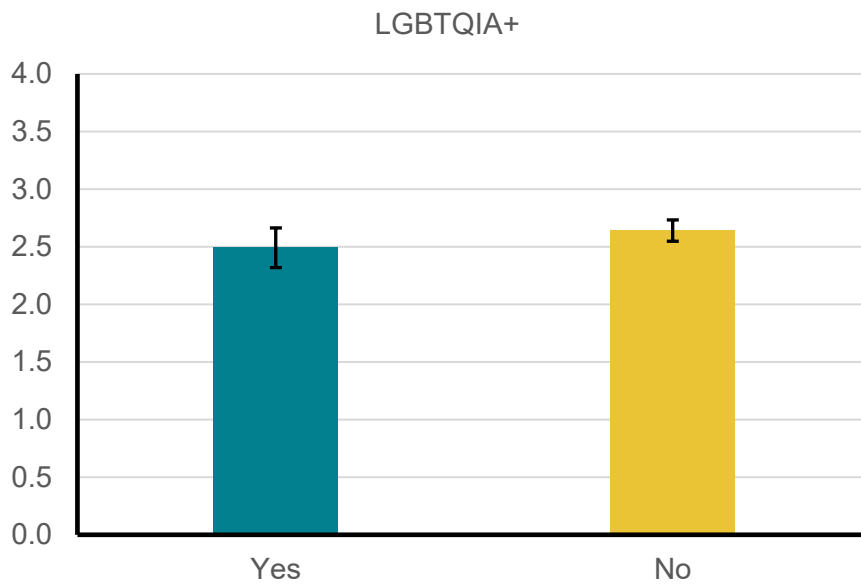
Of the learners who answered the key appeals satisfaction questions, 908 also answered the LGBTQIA+ monitoring question. Of those, 49 indicated they preferred not to answer. Consequently, 859 learners were included in this analysis. The average appeals satisfaction score for this subsample of learners was 2.6.

Table 27

LGBTQIA+	Number of respondents	Mean appeals satisfaction score
Yes	152	2.5
No	707	2.6

Although there was a difference in average score between learners who considered themselves part of the LGBTQIA+ community and those who did not (2.5 and 2.6, respectively), that difference was not statistically significant. This indicates that there was no meaningful difference in satisfaction with the 2023 appeals process between LGBTQIA+ identified learners and those who did not consider themselves part of the LGBTQIA+ community.

Figure 54



Care experience

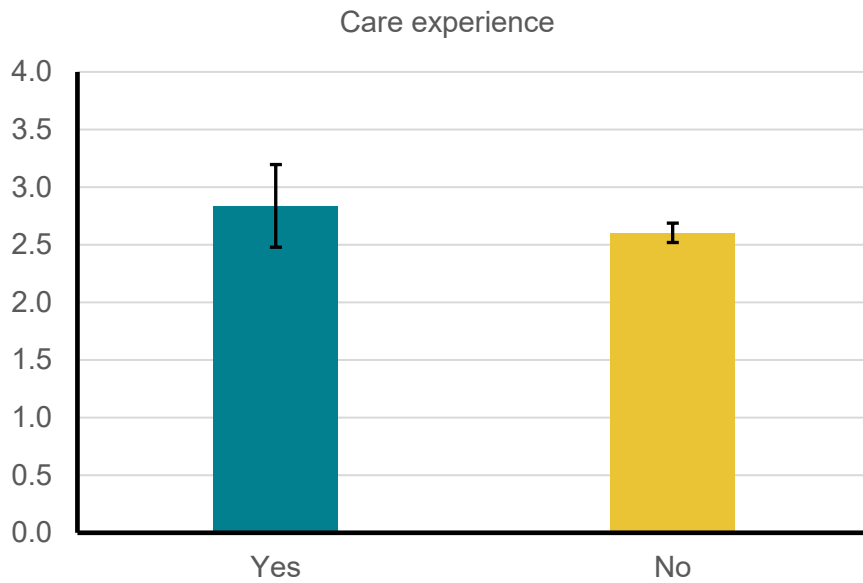
Of the learners who answered the key appeals satisfaction questions, 907 also answered the care experience monitoring question. Of those, 53 indicated they either preferred not to answer or were unsure how to respond. Consequently, 854 learners were included in this analysis. The average appeals satisfaction score for this subsample of learners was 2.6.

Table 28

Care experienced	Number of respondents	Mean appeals satisfaction score
Yes	41	2.8
No	813	2.6

While average appeals satisfaction scores differed between care experienced and non-care experienced learners (2.8 and 2.6, respectively) the difference was not statistically significant. This suggests that there was no impact of care experience on satisfaction with the 2023 appeals process.

Figure 55



SIMD

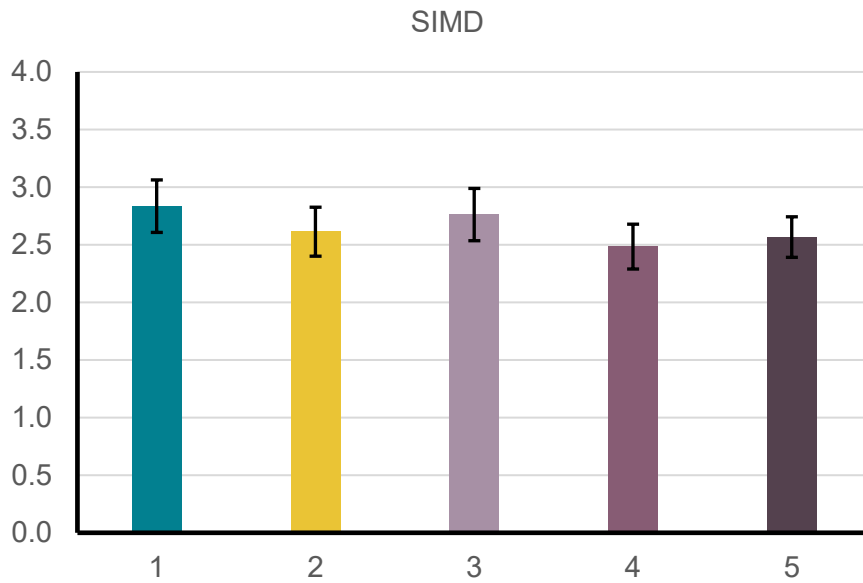
Of the learners who answered the key appeals satisfaction questions, 659 also provided SIMD information. The average appeals satisfaction score for this subsample of learners was 2.6.

Table 29

SIMD quintile	Number of respondents	Mean appeals satisfaction score
1	111	2.8
2	106	2.6
3	98	2.8
4	144	2.5
5	200	2.6

While most of the SIMD quintiles do not differ from each other significantly on average appeals process score, there is a significant difference specifically between SIMD quintile 1 and SIMD quintile 4, whereby learners in the first (most deprived) quintile report higher levels of satisfaction with the 2023 appeals process than learners in the fourth (2.8 and 2.5, respectively; $p < 0.01$).

Figure 56



Feelings about results

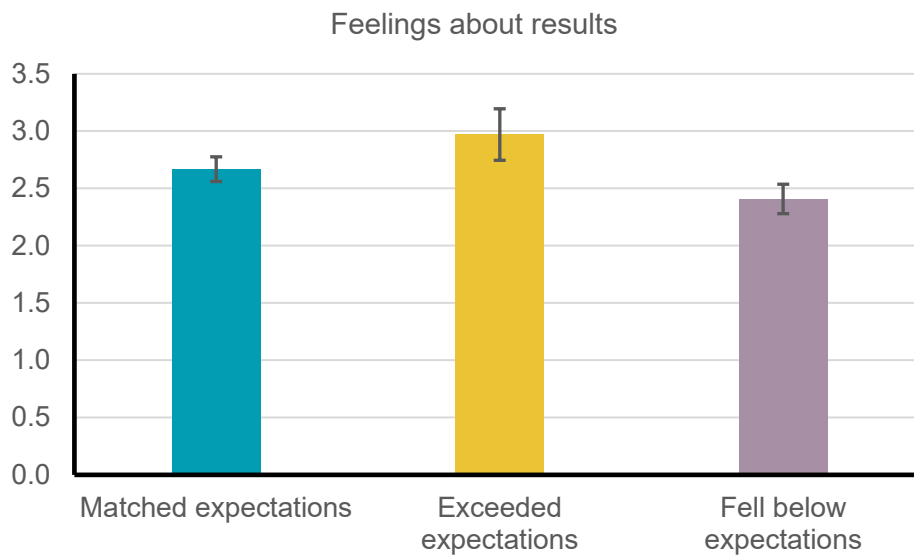
Of the learners who answered the key appeals satisfaction questions, 879 also answered the question on how they felt about their results. The average appeals satisfaction score for this subsample of learners was 2.6.

Table 30

Results	Number of respondents	Mean appeals satisfaction score
Matched expectations	406	2.7
Exceeded expectations	124	3.0
Fell below expectations	349	2.4

Appeals satisfaction scores were significantly lower on average for learners whose results were lower than they expected (2.4), than for those whose results matched (2.7) or exceeded (3.0) expectations ($p < 0.01$). Additionally, learners whose results exceeded expectations scored significantly higher than learners whose results matched expectations ($p < 0.01$). This suggests that satisfaction with the 2023 appeals process decreases as learners did worse relative to their expectations.

Figure 57



Overall process composite analysis

In the overall satisfaction composite, low scores indicate that a respondent did not find 2023's overall process satisfactory, while high scores indicate they did.

Overall, 2,887 learners had an overall satisfaction score calculated. The composite had an overall average of 3.4 (ie slightly above a 'neither agree nor disagree' response).

Disability/ASN

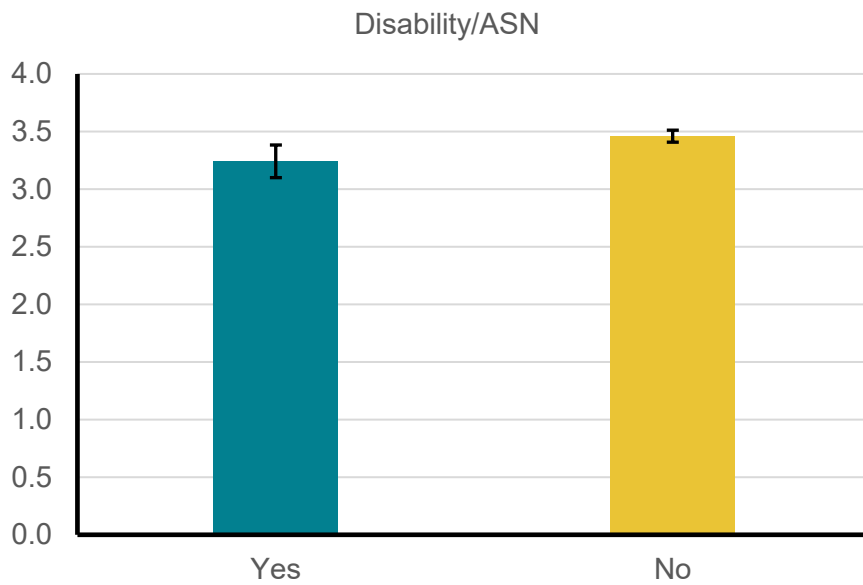
Of the learners who answered the key overall satisfaction questions, 2,881 also answered the disability/ASN monitoring question. Of those, 147 indicated they preferred not to answer. Consequently, 2,734 learners were included in this analysis. The average overall process satisfaction score for this subsample of learners was 3.4.

Table 31

Disabled/ASN	Number of respondents	Mean overall satisfaction score
Yes	379	3.2
No	2,355	3.5

Disabled learners and/or learners with ASN had lower overall process satisfaction scores on average than learners who do not have a disability and/or ASN (averages of 3.2 and 3.5, respectively). This difference is statistically significant ($p < 0.01$), indicating that disabled learners and/or learners with ASN were less satisfied with the overall assessment process in 2023 than learners who do not have a disability and/or ASN.

Figure 58



Ethnicity

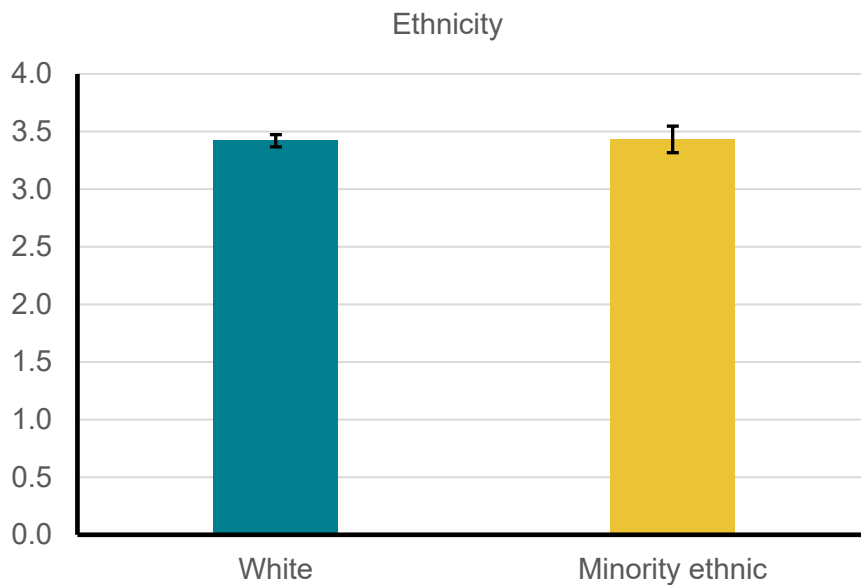
Of the learners who answered the key overall satisfaction questions, 2,861 also answered the ethnicity monitoring question. Of those, 28 indicated they preferred not to answer. Consequently, 28,33 learners were included in this analysis. The average overall satisfaction score for this subsample of learners was 3.4.

Table 32

Ethnicity	Number of respondents	Mean overall satisfaction score
White	2,335	3.4
Minority ethnic	498	3.4

There was no difference between white and minority ethnic learners in terms of their average overall process satisfaction scores (both 3.4), indicating that both groups were equally satisfied with the overall assessment process in 2023.

Figure 59



Gender

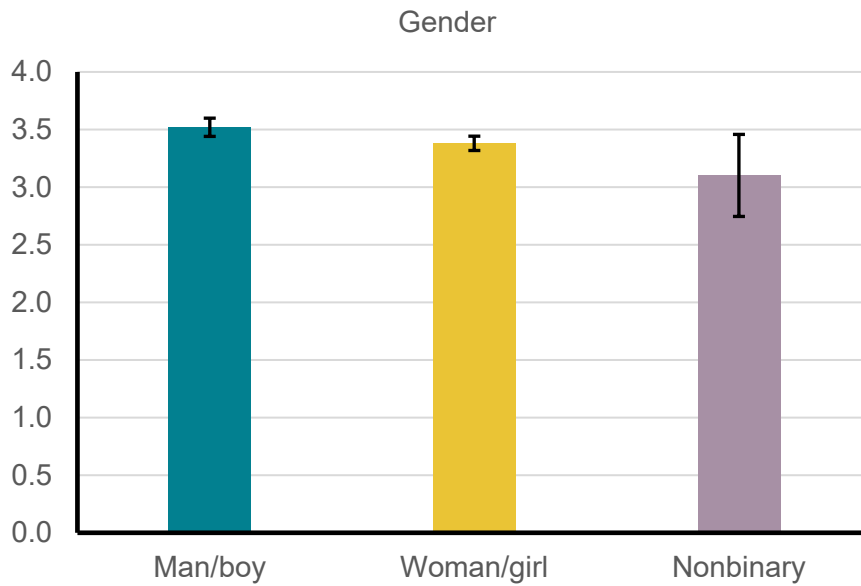
Of the learners who answered the key overall satisfaction questions, 2,851 also answered the gender monitoring question. Of those, 67 indicated they preferred not to answer. Consequently, 2,784 learners were included in this analysis. The average overall satisfaction score for this subsample of learners was 3.4.

Table 29

Gender	Number of respondents	Mean overall satisfaction score
Man/boy	1,022	3.5
Woman/girl	1,703	3.4
Non-binary	59	3.1

Women/girls and non-binary learners do not differ significantly from each other on overall process satisfaction score (3.4 and 3.1, respectively), but both differ significantly from men/boys who have significantly higher scores on average (3.5, $p < 0.01$). This suggests that men/boys are more satisfied with the 2023 assessments process than others.

Figure 60



LGBTQIA+

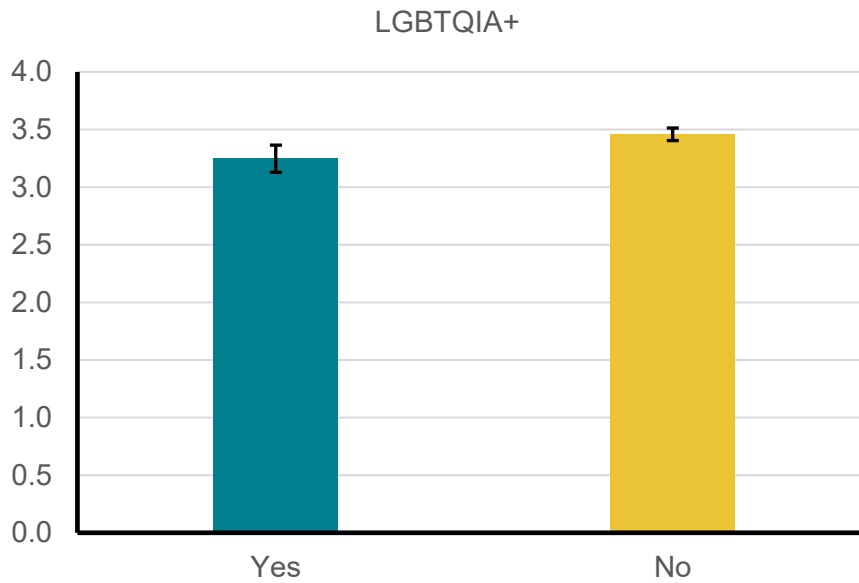
Of the learners who answered the key overall satisfaction questions, 2,878 also answered the LGBTQIA+ monitoring question. Of those, 186 indicated they preferred not to answer. Consequently, 2,692 learners were included in this analysis. The average overall satisfaction score for this subsample of learners was 3.4.

Table 33

LGBTQIA+	Number of respondents	Mean overall satisfaction score
Yes	527	3.2
No	2,165	3.5

Learners who indicated they considered themselves members of the LGBTQIA+ community had lower overall process satisfaction scores on average than learners who indicated they did not (3.2 and 3.5, respectively). This difference was statistically significant ($p < 0.01$), indicating that LGBTQIA+ learners were less satisfied with the overall 2023 assessment process than learners who were not part of the LGBTQIA+ community.

Figure 61



Care experience

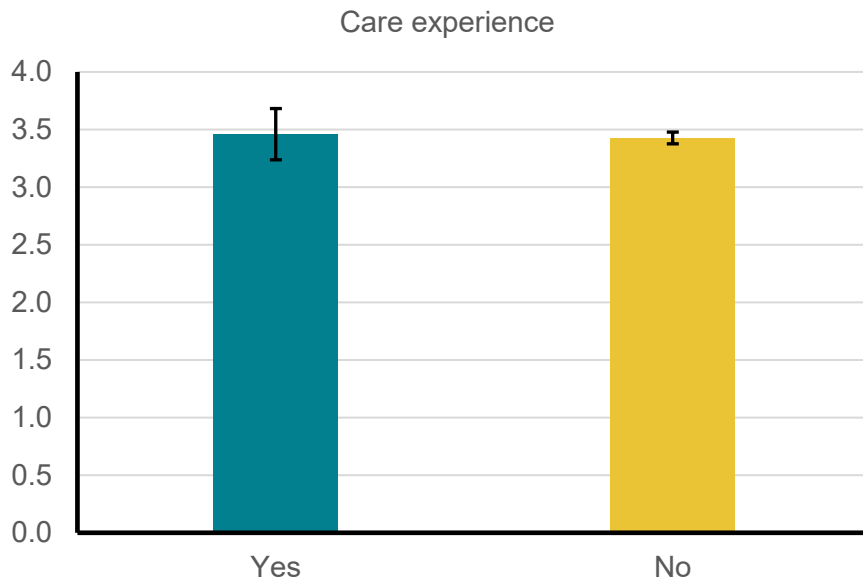
Of the learners who answered the key overall satisfaction questions, 2,878 also answered the care experience monitoring question. Of those, 189 indicated they either preferred not to answer or were unsure how to respond. Consequently, 2,689 learners were included in this analysis. The average overall satisfaction score for this subsample of learners was 3.4.

Table 31

Care experienced	Number of respondents	Mean overall satisfaction score
Yes	124	3.5
No	2,565	3.4

The slight difference in average overall process satisfaction scores between care experienced and non-care experienced learners (3.5 and 3.4, respectively) was not statistically significant, suggesting that care experience did not impact on overall satisfaction with 2023's assessment process.

Figure 62



SIMD

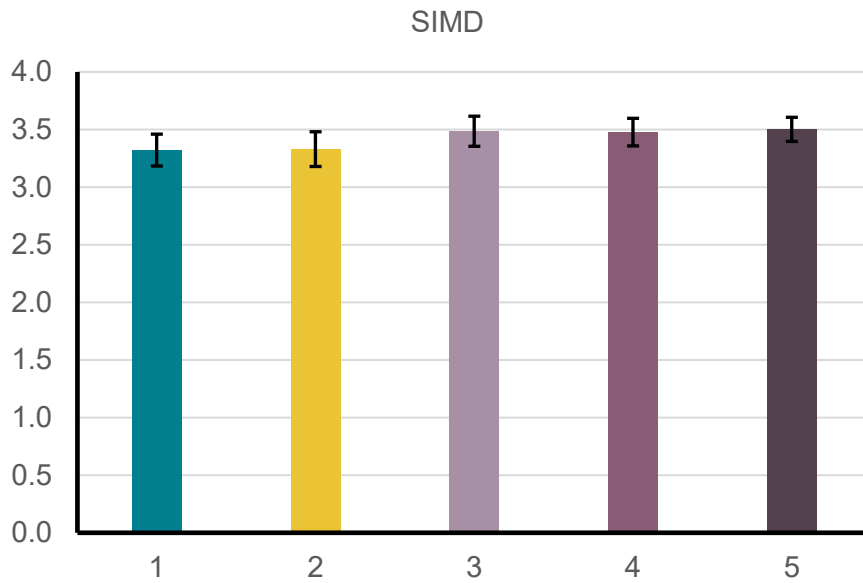
Of the learners who answered the key overall satisfaction questions, 2,092 also provided SIMD information. The average overall satisfaction score for this subsample of learners was 3.4.

Table 34

SIMD quintile	Number of respondents	Mean overall satisfaction score
1	342	3.3
2	294	3.3
3	339	3.5
4	489	3.5
5	628	3.5

While SIMD quintiles 1 and 2 have lower overall process satisfaction scores than the other three quintiles, these differences are not statistically significant. This suggests that deprivation, as measured by SIMD, did not have an impact on learner experience of 2023's assessment process overall.

Figure 63



Feelings about results

Of the learners who answered the key overall satisfaction questions, 2,871 also answered the question on how they felt about their results. The average overall satisfaction score for this subsample of learners was 3.4.

Table 35

Results	Number of respondents	Mean overall satisfaction score
Matched expectations	1,436	3.6
Exceeded expectations	712	3.8
Fell below expectations	723	2.7

Overall satisfaction scores were significantly lower on average for learners whose results were lower than expected (2.7) than for those whose results matched (3.6) or exceeded (3.8) their expectations ($p < 0.01$). Additionally, learners whose results exceeded their expectations scored higher than those whose results matched their expectations ($p < 0.01$). Consistent with the other results, this suggests that as learners do better relative to their expectations their overall satisfaction with the 2023 assessment process increases.

Figure 64

