



Disability Services Data Collection Report 2015-16 to 2020-21

October 2021



About this document

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Contents

Figures.....	iii
Definition of terms used.....	iv
Summary of provider managed complaints	1
Introduction.....	2
Complaint trends	4
Who makes complaints?.....	5
Individual making the complaint	5
Consumer demographics	6
Disabilities identified.....	8
National Standards cited in complaints.....	9
Disability service groups	10
Complaints about accommodation support.....	12
Complaints about community support.....	13
Complaints about community access.....	14
Complaints about respite	14
Complaints about advocacy, information and alternative forms of communication	15
Complaints about employment.....	14
Complaints about other support	15
Complaint issue categories	16
Complaints about staff related issues	17
Complaints about service delivery, management and quality	18
Complaints about communication/relationships	19
Complaints about service access, access priority and compatibility issues	20
Complaints about policy/procedure issues.....	21
Complaints about Carers Charter issues	21
Service funding.....	22
Complaint seriousness	22
Organisational level.....	23
Complaint experience	24
Time to acknowledge and resolve complaints.....	25
Time to resolve complaints and satisfaction	26
Outcomes sought	28
Outcomes achieved.....	29
Why outcomes were not achieved	30
System or organisational changes	31

Appendix 1: Health and Disability Services Complaints Office.....	33
Disability Services Data Collection Program	33
Methodology	33
Notes on interpretation	33
Data limitations	34
Appendix 2: Disability providers prescribed under s48A of the <i>Health and Disability Services (Complaints) Act 1995</i>	35

Figures

Figure 1: Disability service complaint volume	4
Figure 2: Complaint issues raised	4
Figure 3: Individual making the complaint	5
Figure 4: Age of the individual receiving a service.....	6
Figure 5: Characteristics of individuals receiving a service*	7
Figure 6: Disabilities identified.....	8
Figure 7: National Standards cited in complaints.....	9
Figure 8: Disability service groups.....	10
Figure 9: Accommodation services identified in complaints.....	12
Figure 10: Community support services identified in complaints	13
Figure 11: Community access services identified in complaints	14
Figure 12: Complaint categories identified	16
Figure 13: Frequency of issues identified in staff related complaints.....	17
Figure 14: Frequency of issues identified in service delivery complaints	18
Figure 15: Frequency of issues identified in communication/relationships complaints	19
Figure 16: Frequency of issues in access, access priority and compatibility complaints.....	20
Figure 17: Frequency of issues in policy and procedure complaints.....	21
Figure 18: Frequency of issues in Carers Charter complaints	21
Figure 19: Funding service identified in complaints	22
Figure 20: Proportion of complaints that were resolved at different service provider levels	23
Figure 21: Providers' assessment of complaint management (% agreement)	24
Figure 22: Time taken to resolve (days)	25
Figure 23: Person who made the complaint was satisfied with its management.....	26
Figure 24: Person who made the complaint was satisfied with the outcome	27
Figure 25: Common outcomes sought.....	28
Figure 26: Common outcomes achieved.....	29
Figure 27: Reasons why not all desired outcomes were achieved	30
Figure 28: Intention to change and types of change resulting from complaints.....	31

Definition of terms used

Complaint: an expression of dissatisfaction made to an organisation, related to its products, services, staff or the handling of a complaint, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required¹.

Complaint categories: combines complaint issues (defined below) into specific themes.

Complaint issues: the specific issues, or concerns, that an individual has regarding the disability services provided.

Consumer: an actual or potential recipient of disability services from a prescribed provider. May also be known as a client or customer.

Consumer representative: someone who makes a complaint on behalf of the consumer of a disability service, for example a carer, guardian or relative.

Service groups: combines services into types (groups) based on the specific form of disability assistance provided². The main service types are:

- Accommodation support
- Community support
- Community access
- Respite services
- Advocacy, information and alternative forms of communication
- Employment support

Outcome: actions taken by the organisation to resolve the complaint.

¹ Standards Australia. (2014). [Guidelines for complaint management in organizations \(AS/NZS 10002:2014\)](#). Standards Australia, NSW.

² Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2016). [Disability Services National Minimum Data Set: data guide](#), July 2016. Cat. no. DAT 4. Canberra: AIHW.

Summary of provider managed complaints 2015-16 to 2020-21

Complaint trends and demographics

- Complaint volume in 2020-21, both closed and received, was the highest recorded since the introduction of the data collection program in 2015-16.
- The majority of complaints were made on behalf of the consumer, typically by a family member.
- The proportion of complaints received by individuals in the 46-55 and 56-65 age groups increased in 2020-21.
- The most common disabilities identified in each year of the program were intellectual, physical, and autism spectrum disorders.

Service groups

- The three most common categories of service groups have not changed since 2015-16.
- Complaints were primarily about accommodation support, community support, and community access.

Complaint issues

- The three most common categories of complaint issues have not changed since 2015-16. These were:
 - Staff related issues
 - Service delivery, management and quality
 - Communication / relationships

Service funding

- In 2015-16, 10% of services were funded by the NDIA/NDIS. This has increased in each of the past six years and in 2020-21, 94% of services were funded by the NDIS/NDIA.

Complaint outcomes

- The most common outcomes achieved were acknowledgement of a person's views or issues, an explanation, and/or an apology.
- Over the past six years, the most common outcomes achieved have remained consistent with outcomes sought.

System/organisational changes

- Since 2018-19, the proportion of complaints resulting in intended system or organisation changes has decreased.

Introduction

The Health and Disability Services Complaints Office (HaDSCO) is an independent Statutory Authority providing an impartial resolution service for complaints relating to health, disability and mental health services in Western Australia and the Indian Ocean Territories.

The functions of HaDSCO are set out in the governing legislation; the *Health and Disability Services (Complaints) Act 1995*, Part 6 of the *Disability Services Act 1993* and Part 19 of the *Mental Health Act 2014*. HaDSCO's main functions under these Acts are to:

- Deal with complaints by negotiated settlement, conciliation or investigation.
- Review and identify the causes of complaints.
- Provide advice and make recommendations for service improvement.
- Educate the community and service providers about complaint handling.
- Inquire into broader issues of health, disability and mental health care arising from complaints received.
- Work in collaboration with the community and service providers to improve health, disability and mental health services.
- Publish the work of the Office.
- Perform any other function conferred on the Director by the *Health and Disability Services (Complaints) Act 1995* or another written law.

Under Section 48A of the *Disability Services Act 1993* and the *Disability Services Regulations 2004*, each year HaDSCO collects complaints data from prescribed government and non-government disability providers in Western Australia. The data is collected through annual returns under HaDSCO's Disability Services Data Collection Program (DSDCP) and is used to identify systemic issues and trends across the disability sector. The DSDCP commenced in 2015-16.

On 1 December 2020, HaDSCO successfully transitioned the NDIS complaints jurisdiction to the National Disability Insurance Scheme Quality and Safeguards Commission (NDIS Commission) as part of the transition arrangements for quality and safeguarding under the Bilateral Agreement between the Commonwealth and Western Australian Government.

As part of the transition, careful consideration was given to the future arrangements for the DSDCP. It was recognised that the prescribed providers who transition to the quality and safeguarding regulatory framework under the NDIS Commission will have new and separate statutory obligations and it would not be appropriate to impose additional regulatory oversight on providers.

Following consultation with the Department of Communities and the National Disability Services Western Australia, as the peak body for non-government disability service organisations, a recommendation was made to, and supported by, the former Minister for Disability Services, the Hon Stephen Dawson, MLC, that the DSDCP be discontinued beyond 2020-21.

In September 2021, the *Disability Services Amendment Regulations 2021* (Regulations) were published in the Western Australian Government Gazette. These Regulations have amended the *Disability Services Regulations 2004*. The amendments include deletion of Regulation 41, which requires prescribed disability service providers to provide an annual return concerning complaints received to HaDSCO. HaDSCO would like to thank the Department of Communities for assisting with the facilitation of the necessary arrangements to progress the amendments.

As a result, the DSDCP has been discontinued. This is the final Disability Services Data Collection Report to be produced by HaDSCO and covers the trends and themes identified since the program's inception in 2015-16.

Over the past six years, the DSDCP has provided invaluable information on the volume of complaints, consumer demographics, and the issues and outcomes associated with complaints managed by prescribed providers.

HaDSCO would like to take this opportunity to thank the prescribed disability service providers for their participation in the DSDCP; all have been very generous with their time and resources in collating and submitting the annual return of complaints to HaDSCO.

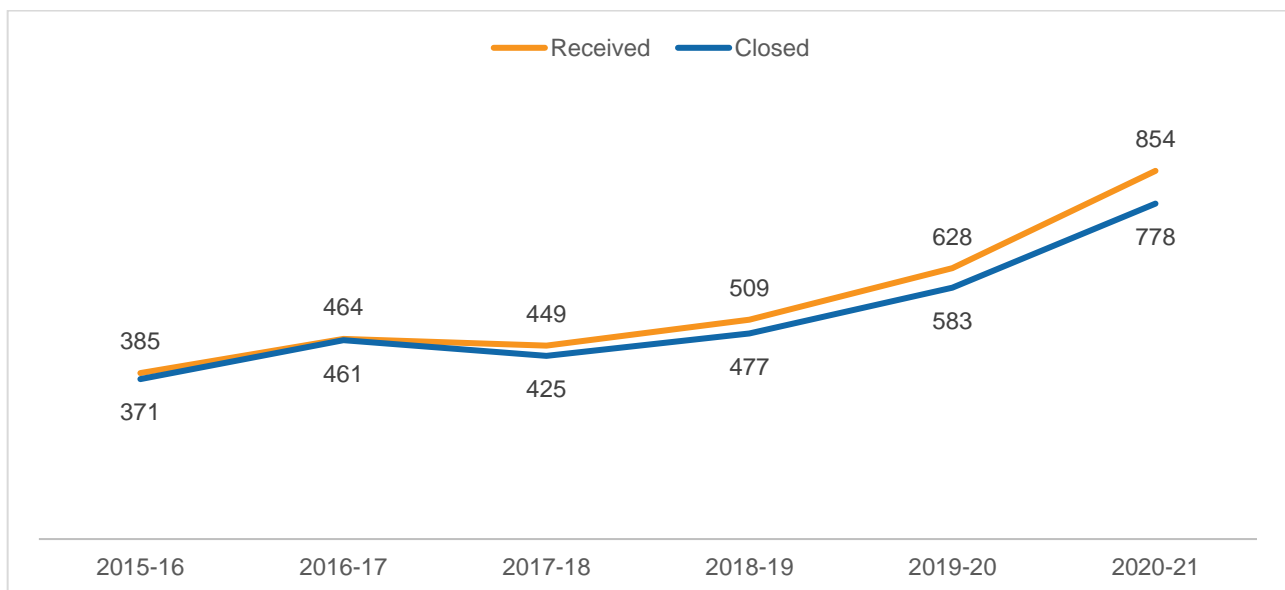
Complaint trends

The number of complaints about disability services received and closed by prescribed disability service providers (disability providers) since the data collection program started six years ago is shown in Figure 1, while the total number of issues identified for the same time period is shown in Figure 2.

Since the start of the program, there has been a 122% increase in the number of complaints received by disability providers, from 385 in 2015-16 to 854 in 2020-21. There was also a 110% increase in the number of complaints closed, from 371 in 2015-16 to 778 in 2020-21.

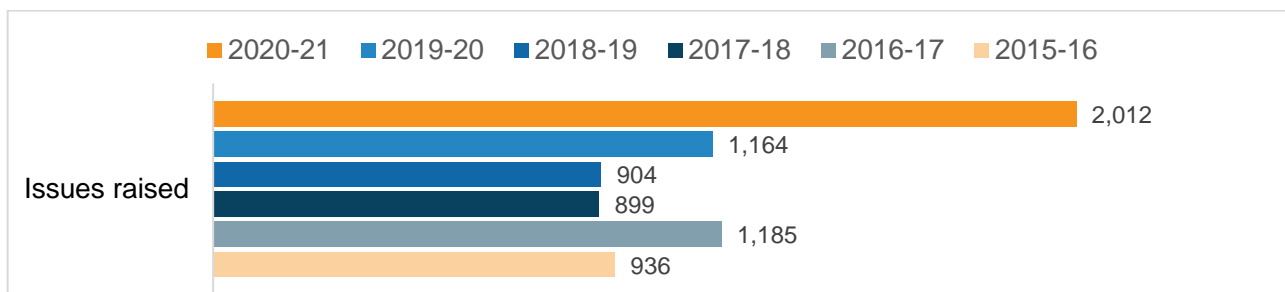
In the past 12 months alone, disability providers have seen complaints received increase by 36% from the 628 in 2019-20.

Figure 1: Disability service complaint volume



In 2020-21, both the total number of issues raised (2,012) and average issues per complaint closed (2.59) were the highest recorded over the previous six years.

Figure 2: Complaint issues raised



Who makes complaints?

Individual making the complaint

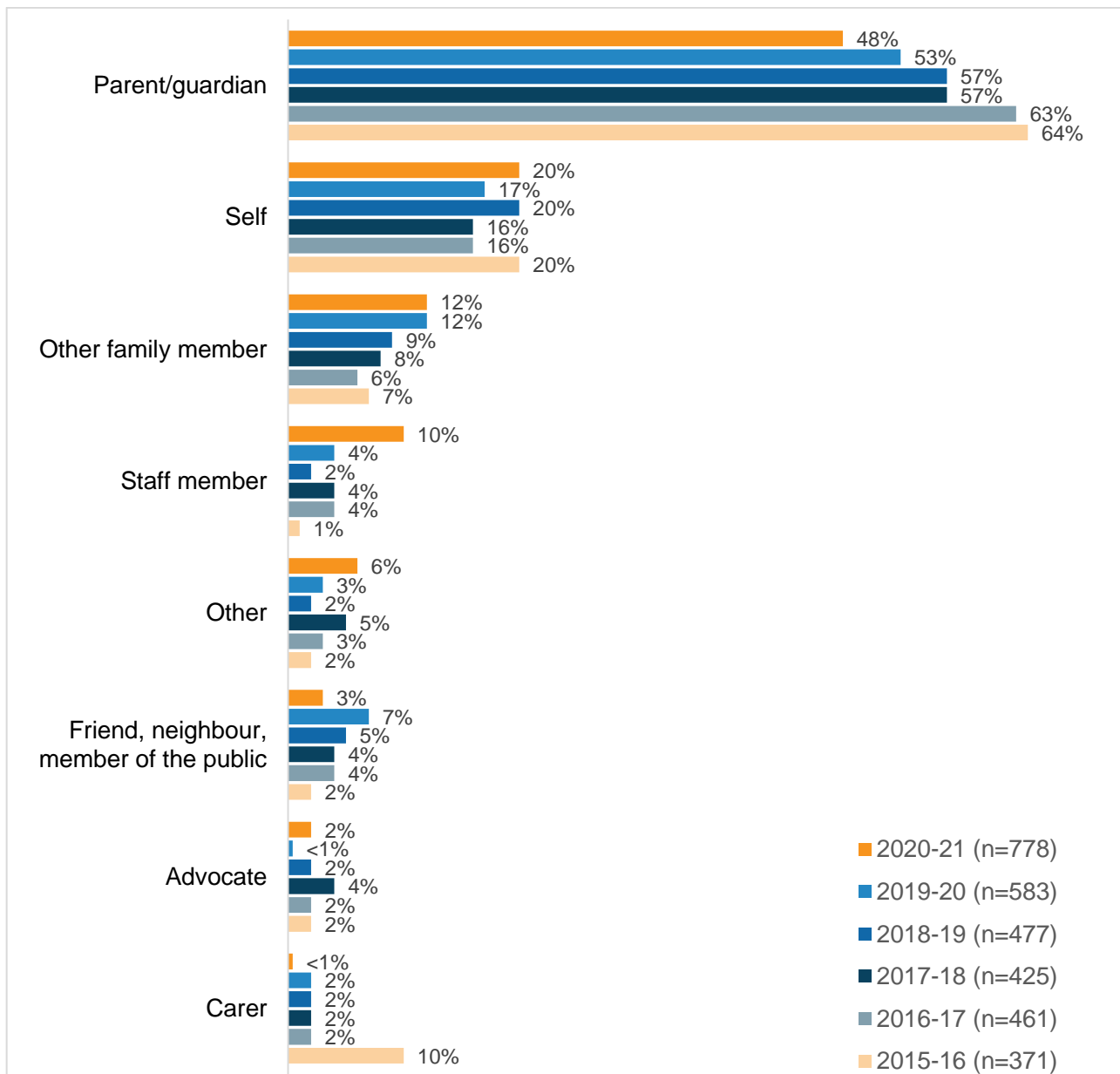
In 2020-21, the majority of complaints (80%) received by disability providers were made by someone acting on behalf of the individual who received the service, typically a parent or guardian, as shown in Figure 3.

The largest change from the previous year was the proportion of complaints made by staff members of the service provider, increasing from 4% in 2019-20, to 10% in 2020-21.

In comparison to prior years, there has been a decreasing trend in the proportion of complaints made by a parent or guardian, from 64% in 2015-16 to 48% in 2020-21.

In 2015-16, 10% of complaints received were made by Carers. By 2020-21, this proportion has reduced to less than 1%.

Figure 3: Individual making the complaint



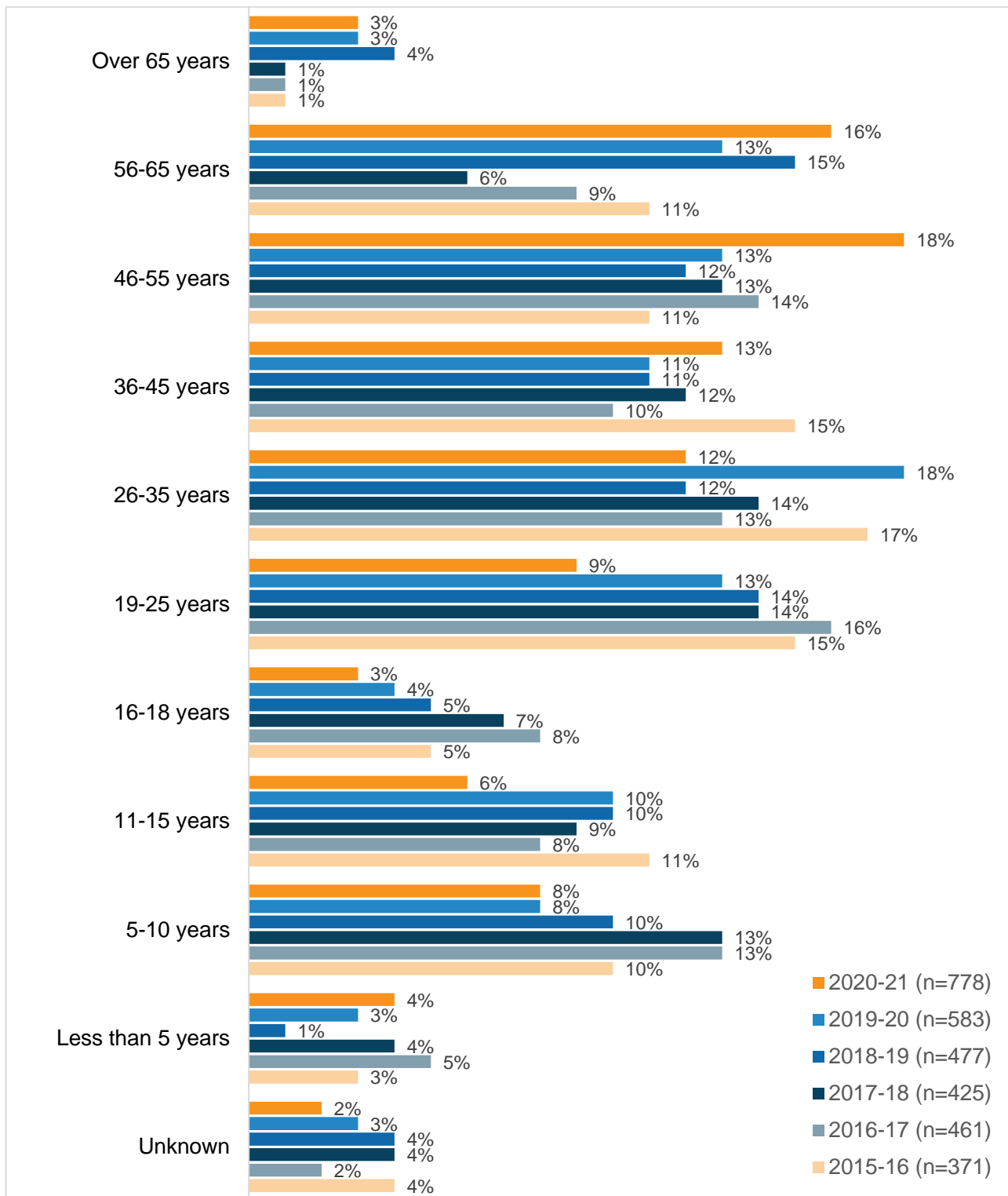
The following individuals are not displayed in Figure 3: 'Anonymous', which accounted for less than 5%. Totals may not sum to 100% as a complaint may be made by multiple individuals.

Consumer demographics

In 2020-21, complaints about disability services concerned individuals from a broad range of age groups, as observed in previous years (see Figure 4).

There was an increase in the proportion of complaints concerning individuals between the ages of 46-55, from 13% in 2019-20 to 18% in 2020-21. The largest single year decrease was in the 26-35 age group (6%).

Figure 4: Age of the individual receiving a service

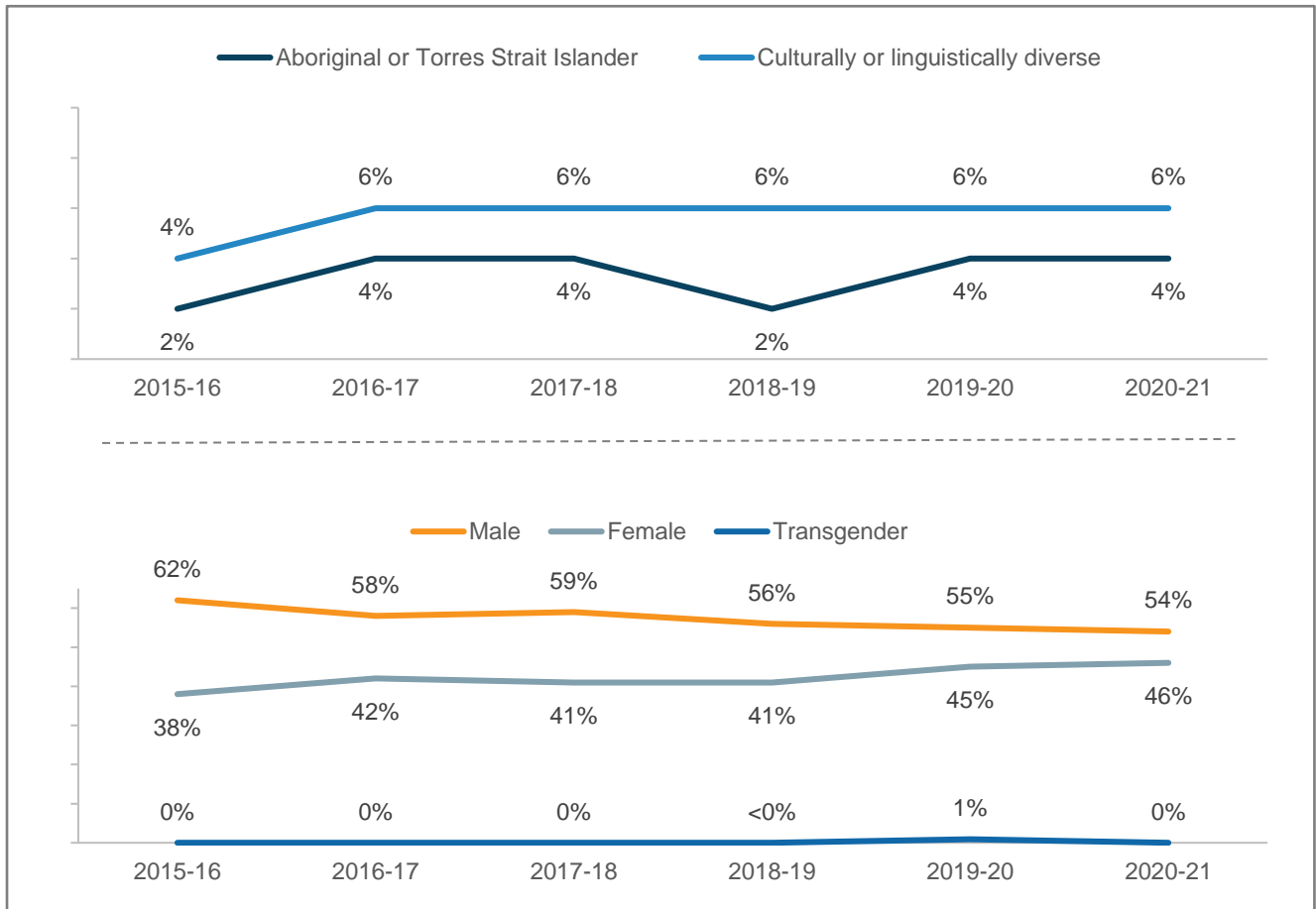


The data in Figure 4 is provided only for complaints where demographic information about the individual receiving a service was recorded. Totals may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

The characteristics of individuals who received a disability service are shown in Figure 5.

In 2020-21, the proportion of individuals who identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander was 4%. This is consistent with previous years, with the exception of 2018-19 (2%). Individuals from culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds have remained consistent since 2016-17 (6%). As seen in prior years, males continue to be identified more frequently as service users than females.

Figure 5: Characteristics of individuals receiving a service*



Sample sizes: identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (2015-16 n=368, 2016-17 n=422, 2017-18 n=364, 2018-19 n=383, 2019-20 n=448, 2020-21 n=574); culturally and linguistically diverse background (2015-16 n=367, 2016-17 n=360, 2017-18 n=366, 2018-19 n=373, 2019-20 n=384, 2020-21 n=506); gender (2015-16 n=368, 2016-17 n=440, 2017-18 n=397, 2018-19 n=450, 2019-20 n=547, 2020-21 n=712).

*Complaints that provided an 'unsure' response or did not contain demographic data have been excluded from the analysis shown in Figure 5

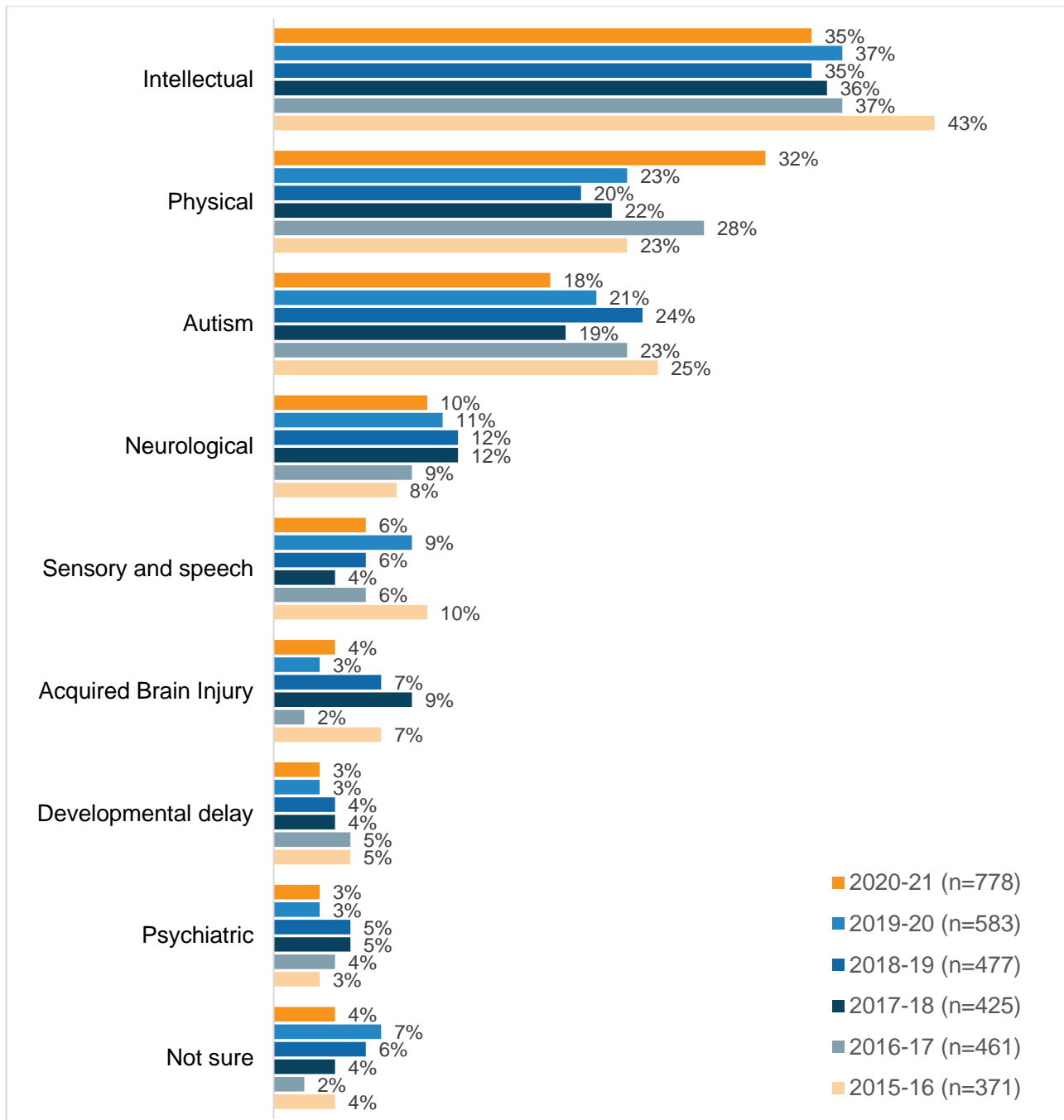
Disabilities identified

In 2020-21, the majority of cases involved individuals who had intellectual disabilities (35%) and/or physical disabilities (32%) (as shown in Figure 6).

Intellectual disabilities were the most common in each of the six years; and with the exception of 2015-16 (43%), the proportion has remained relatively consistent.

Since 2015-16, individuals with a physical disability have generally increased in proportion; from 23% to 32% in 2020-21. Across the same time period, individuals with an Autism spectrum disorder have generally decreased; from 25% in 2015-16, to 18% in 2020-21.

Figure 6: Disabilities identified



The following individuals are not displayed in Figure 6 due to accounting for less than 3%: 'Specific learning/Attention Deficit Disorder' and 'Other disability'.

Figure 6 calculated on a per case basis, totals may not sum to 100% as a consumer may have multiple disabilities.

National Standards cited in complaints

The National Standards for Disability Services (National Standards) aim to promote and drive a nationally consistent approach to improve the quality of services. The National Standards focus on rights and outcomes for people with disability.

The Australian Government revised and tested the National Standards in 2012, before they were endorsed on 18 December 2013 by the Standing Council on Disability Reform ministers from all jurisdictions and adopted in 2014. People with disability, family, friends and carers, service providers, advocacy organisations and quality bodies informed the development of the revised National Standards. There are six National Standards that apply to disability providers: rights; participation and inclusion; individual outcomes; feedback and complaints; service access; and service management.

Service management initially decreased; from being cited in 43% of cases in 2015-16 to 36% in both 2017-18 and 2018-19. Since that time however, an increasing trend has been established with 55% in 2019-20, and 70% in 2020-21 (see Figure 7).

Cases citing the feedback and complaints standard were the second most common in 2015-16 (42%) but have generally decreased since that time and accounted for 16% in 2020-21.

Figure 7: National Standards cited in complaints

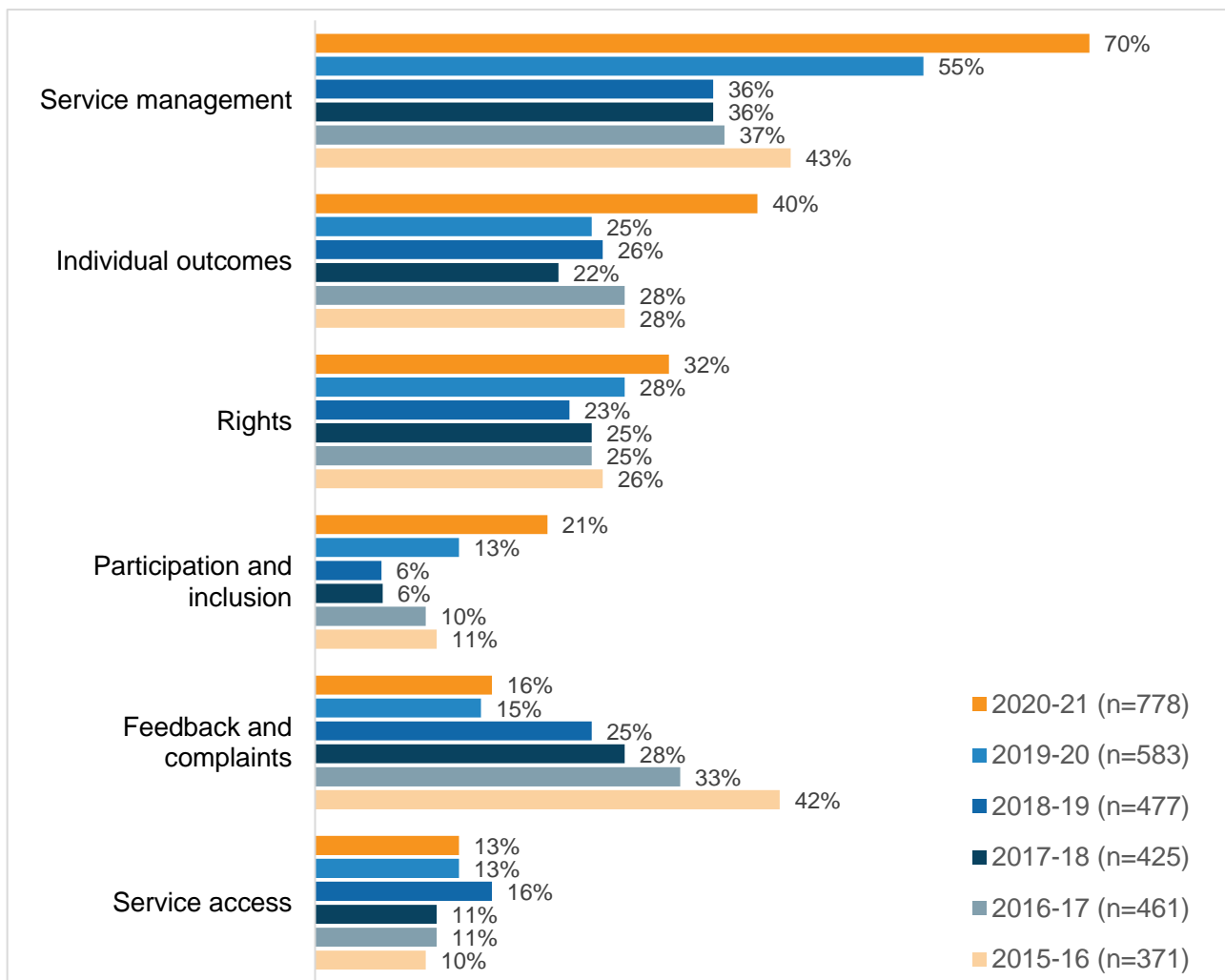


Figure 7 calculated on a per case basis, totals may not sum to 100% as a complaint may cite multiple National Disability Standards.

Disability service groups

The Disability Services National Minimum Data Set (DS NMDS)¹ classifies services according to 'service type'. The 'service type' classification groups services into seven categories (known as 'service groups'):

- Accommodation support
- Community support
- Community access
- Respite
- Employment
- Advocacy
- Other support services

The specific disability service groups identified in complaints closed by prescribed providers are shown in Figure 8.

Figure 8: Disability service groups

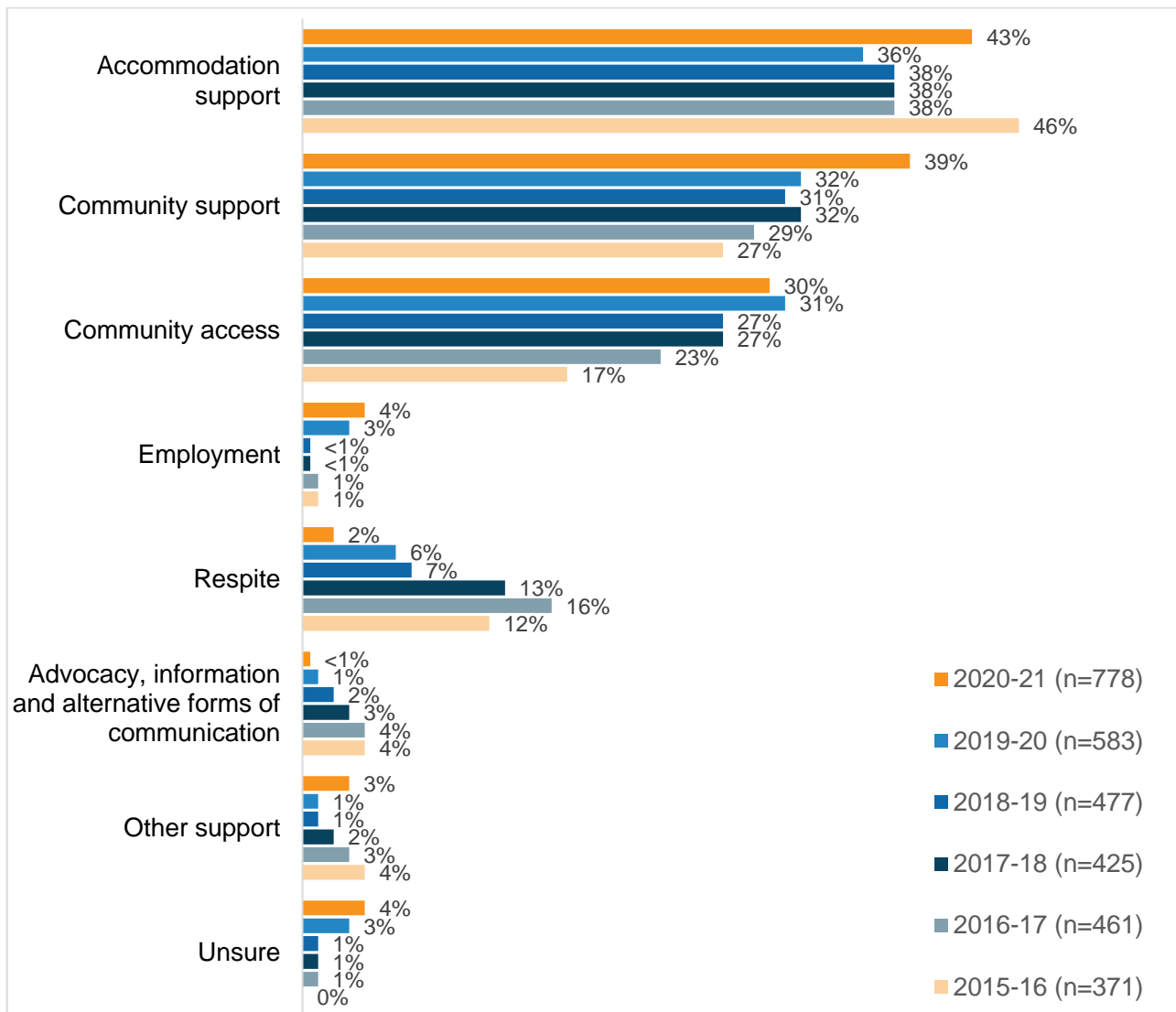


Figure 8 calculated on a per case basis, totals may not sum to 100% as a complaint may identify more than one service group.

¹ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2016). Disability Services National Minimum Data Set: data guide, July 2016. Cat. no. DAT 4. Canberra: AIHW.

Across the disability service groups identified in complaints, the following key findings were identified:

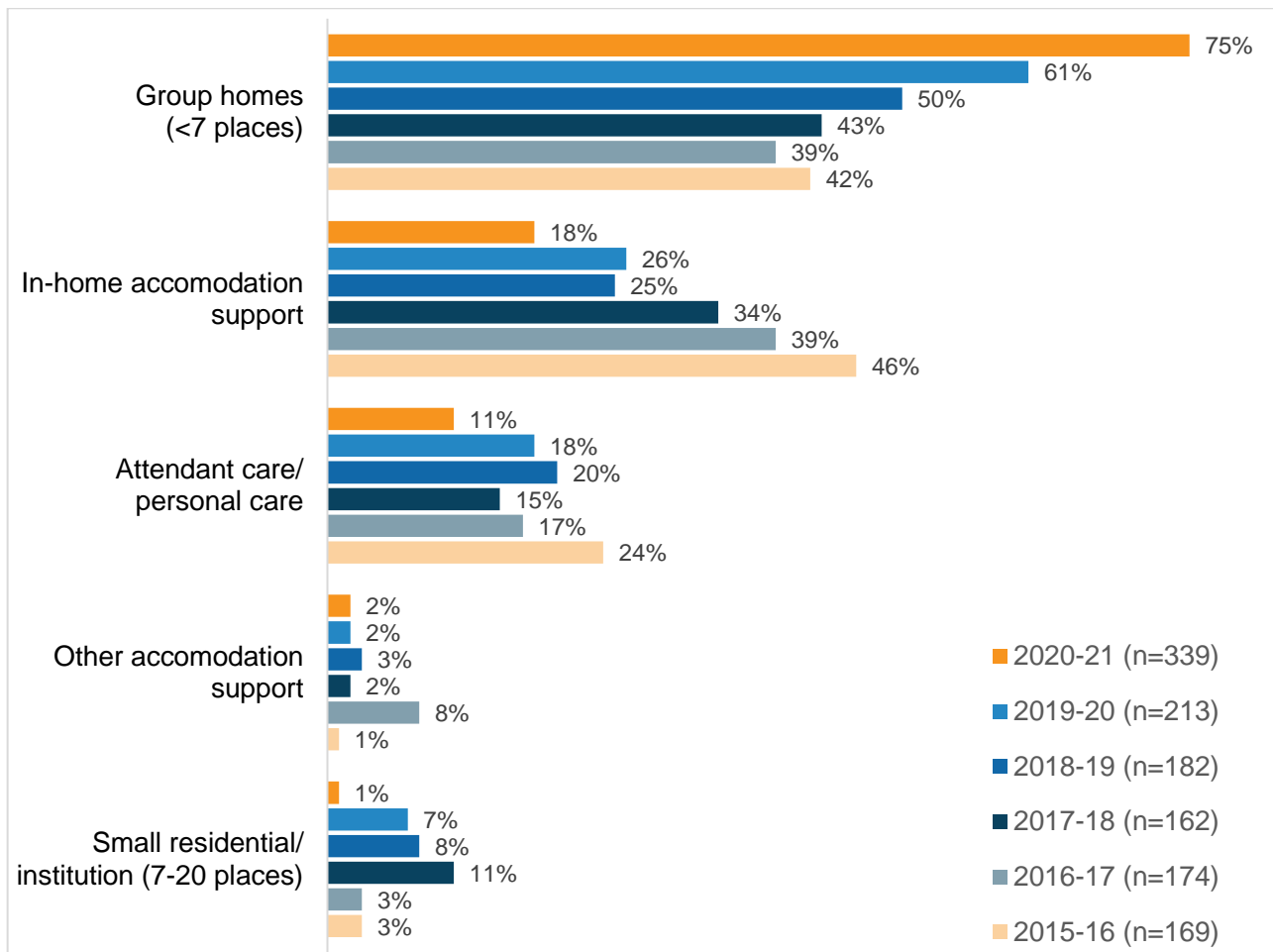
- Accommodation support remains the most commonly identified service group, cited in 43% of complaints in 2020-21.
- The largest single year changes were for the accommodation support and community support service groups, both increasing by 7% from 2019-20.
- The proportion of complaints that cited services within the respite services group has been decreasing since 2016-17, declining from 16% of complaints in 2016-17 to 2% in 2020-21.

Complaints about accommodation support

The accommodation support service group is defined as services that provide accommodation to people with disability and services that provide support needed to enable a person with disability to remain in their existing accommodation or to move to more suitable or appropriate accommodation¹. This was the most frequently cited disability service group in 2020-21.

Figure 9 shows the breakdown of services identified within complaints falling into the accommodation support service group.

Figure 9: Accommodation services identified in complaints



The following individuals are not displayed in Figure 9 due to accounting for less than 3%: ‘Large residential/institution (>20 places)’, ‘Alternative family placement’ and ‘Hostels (generally not 24hr care)’.

Totals may not sum to 100% as a single complaint may identify multiple service types within this service group.

Within complaints about the accommodation support service group:

- In 2020-21, the group homes (<7 places) service type was cited the most for all accommodation support complaints. The proportion of cases that included group homes has increased from 42% in 2015-16 to 75% in 2020-21.
- In-home accommodation support was the second most common service type in 2020-21 (18%). Complaints of this nature have generally been decreasing since 2015-16 when it was the most common at 46%.

¹ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2016). *Disability Services National Minimum Data Set: data guide*, July 2016. Cat. no. DAT 4. Canberra: AIHW.

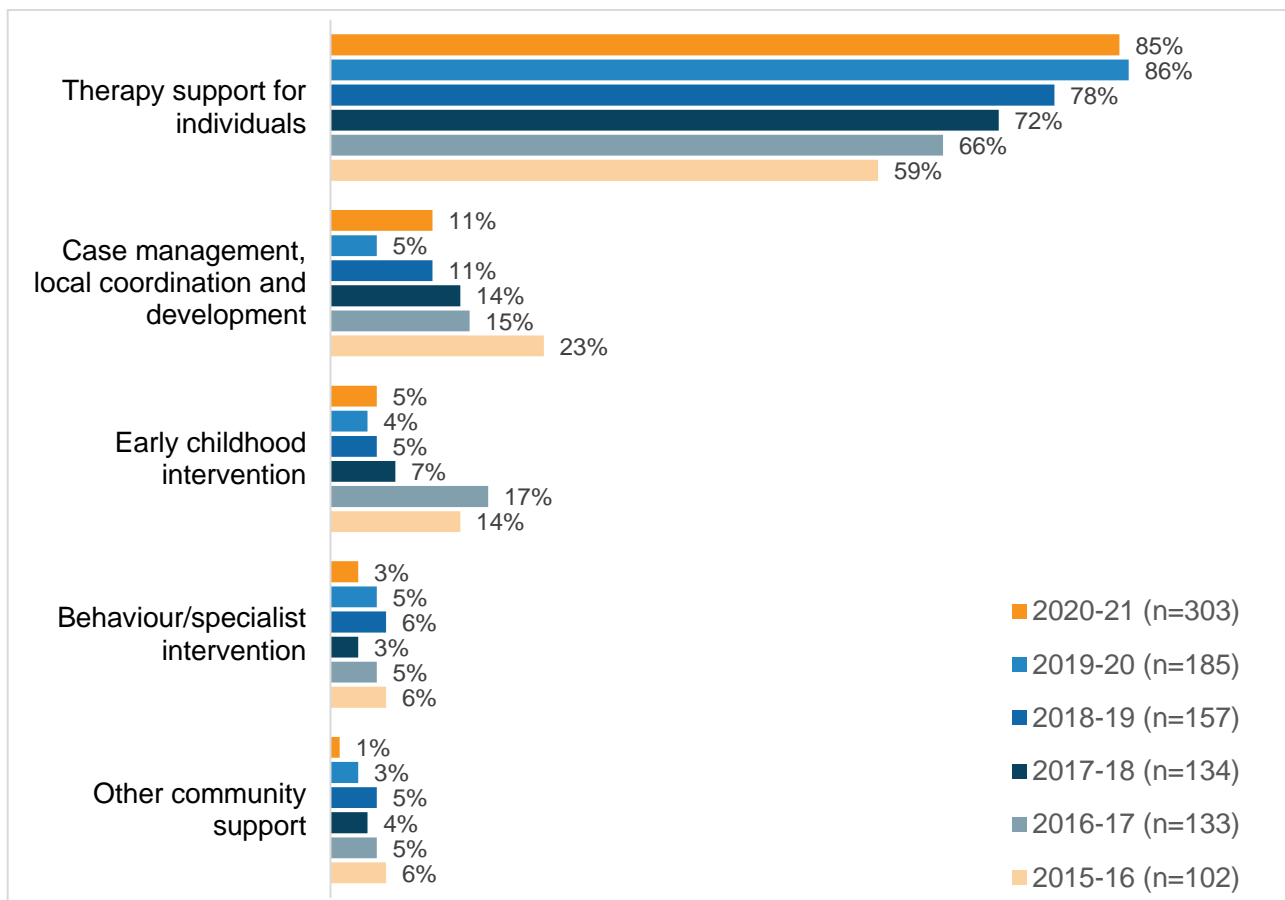
Complaints about community support

The community support service group is defined as services that provide the support needed for a person with disability to live in a non-institutional setting. Support with the basic needs of living such as meal preparation, dressing, transferring etc. are included under accommodation support¹.

This group was the second most frequently cited service group for 2020-21 (see Figure 8).

Figure 10 shows the breakdown of issues identified within the community support service group.

Figure 10: Community support services identified in complaints



The following individuals are not displayed in Figure 10 due to accounting for less than 3%: 'Counselling (individual/family/group)' and 'Regional resource and support teams'.

Totals may not sum to 100% as a single complaint may identify multiple services within this service group.

Within complaints about community support:

- Therapy support for individuals was the most commonly cited service type in each of the past six years; and has generally increased each year, from 59% in 2015-16, to 85% in 2020-21.
- Case management, local coordination and development was the second most common service type in 2020-21 (11%).
- All other service types accounted for less than 10% of cases in 2020-21.

¹ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2016). *Disability Services National Minimum Data Set: data guide*, July 2016. Cat. no. DAT 4. Canberra: AIHW.

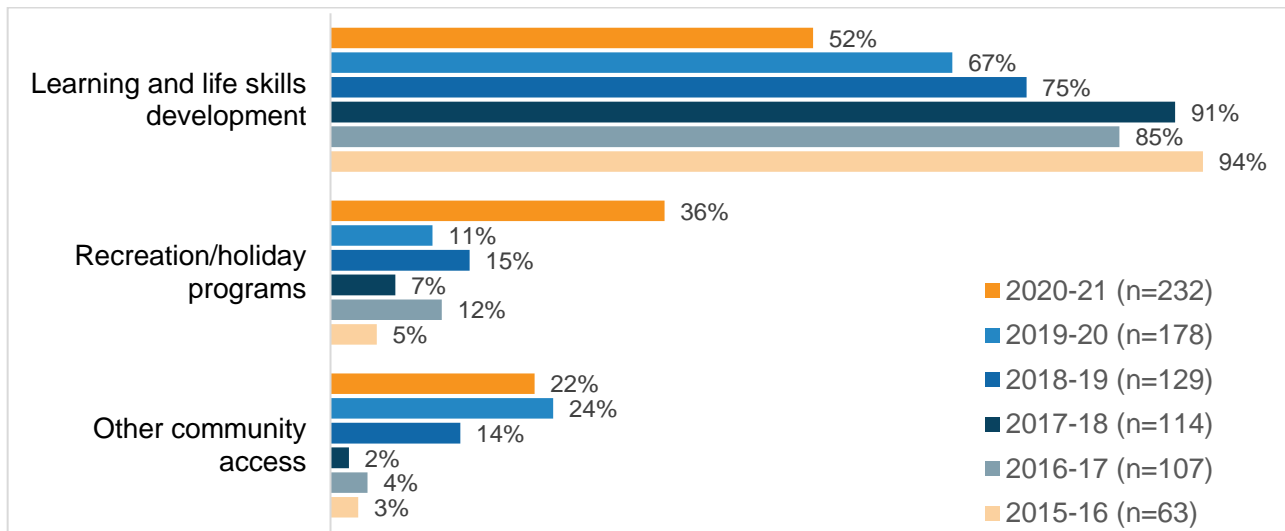
Complaints about community access

The community access service group is defined as including services designed to provide opportunities for people with disability to gain and use their abilities to enjoy their full potential for social independence. People who do not attend school, or who are not employed full-time, are the main users of these services¹.

This group was the third most frequently cited service group for 2020-21 (see Figure 8).

Figure 11 shows the breakdown of services identified within community access.

Figure 11: Community access services identified in complaints



Totals may not sum to 100% as a single complaint may identify multiple issues within this service group.

Within the community access service group:

- Learning and life skills development was the most commonly cited service type in each year, although the proportion of complaints associated with this service type has been declining since 2017-18.
- The percentage of complaints regarding recreation/holiday programs displayed the highest single year change, increasing from 11% in 2019-20 to 36% in 2020-21.
- Other community access cases relate to issues surrounding social, community and civic access/services.

Complaints about employment

The employment service group is defined as including services that provide employment assistance to people with disability in obtaining and/or retaining paid employment in the open labour market¹.

There were 30 complaints regarding employment services in 2020-21; this has increased compared to the previous financial years with 15 complaints in 2019-20, two complaints in both 2017-18 and 2018-19, and four complaints in both 2015-16 and 2016-17.

The majority of these cases concerned supported employment, which accounted for 29 of the 30 complaints in 2020-21, and 12 of the 15 in 2019-20.

¹ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2016). *Disability Services National Minimum Data Set: data guide*, July 2016. Cat. no. DAT 4. Canberra: AIHW.

Complaints about respite

The respite services group is defined as services that provide a short-term and time-limited break for families and other voluntary care givers of people with disability, to assist in supporting and maintaining the primary care giving relationship, while providing a positive experience for the person with disability¹.

The respite service group was cited 19 times in 2020-21. This was a decrease from 34 times in 2019-20 and 35 times in 2018-19.

Across all years, centre based respite/respite homes was the service type most likely to be complained about.

Complaints about advocacy, information and alternative forms of communication

The advocacy, information and alternative forms of communication service group is defined as services designed to enable people with disability to increase the control they have over their lives through the representation of their interests and views in the community¹.

A total of two complaints were closed in 2020-21 that concerned advocacy, information and alternative forms of communication. This was consistent with 2019-20 (two) but a decrease from 2018-19 (12).

Complaints about other support

The other support service group is not specifically defined within the DS NMDS but includes complaints related, but not limited to, research and evaluation, training and development, peak bodies and a variety of other support services.

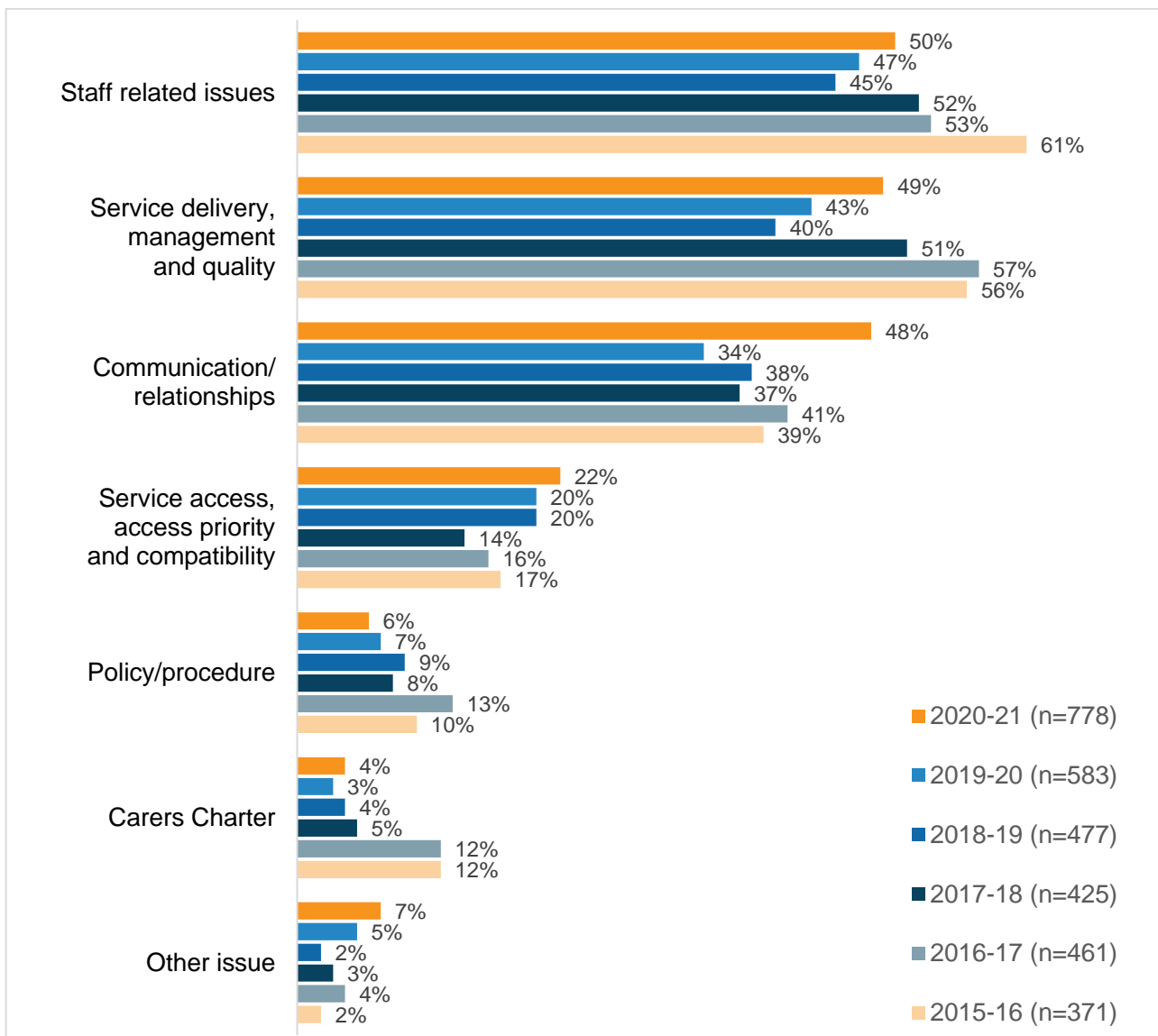
In 2020-21, 25 complaints regarding other support services were registered.

¹ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2016). [Disability Services National Minimum Data Set: data guide](#), July 2016. Cat. no. DAT 4. Canberra: AIHW.

Complaint issue categories

The complaint issue categories combine the specific issues, or concerns, that an individual has regarding the disability services provided into specific themes. A single complaint may have identified issues belonging to more than one issue category, even if the complaint only identified one service group. Figure 12 outlines the complaint categories identified in complaints.

Figure 12: Complaint categories identified



Totals may not sum to 100% as a single complaint may identify multiple complaint issue categories.

Across the complaint issue categories, the following key findings were identified:

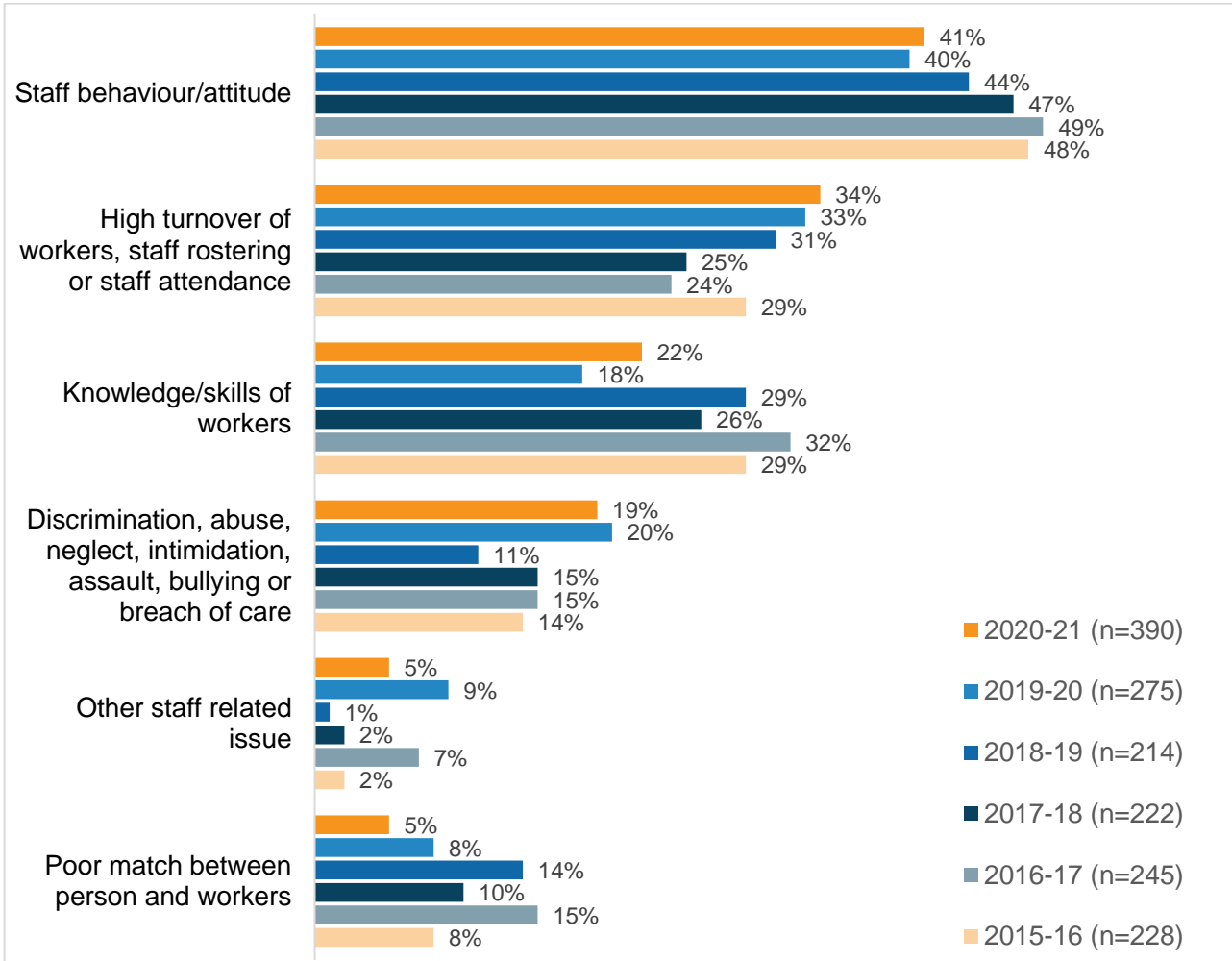
- Staff related issues was the most common complaint in this category for five of the past six years. This issue initially decreased from 2015-16 (61%) through 2018-19 (45%) however has since increased to be present in 50% of cases in this category in 2020-21.
- The proportion of complaints about service delivery, management and quality have increased in each of the past three years.
- The proportion of complaints about communication/relationships displayed the largest single year increase, from 34% in 2019-20 to 48% in 2020-21.

Complaints about staff related issues

This group was the most frequently occurring complaint issue category in 2019-20 (see Figure 12).

Figure 13 shows the breakdown of complaint issues relating to staff.

Figure 13: Frequency of issues identified in staff related complaints



Totals may not sum to 100% as a single complaint may identify multiple issues within this category.

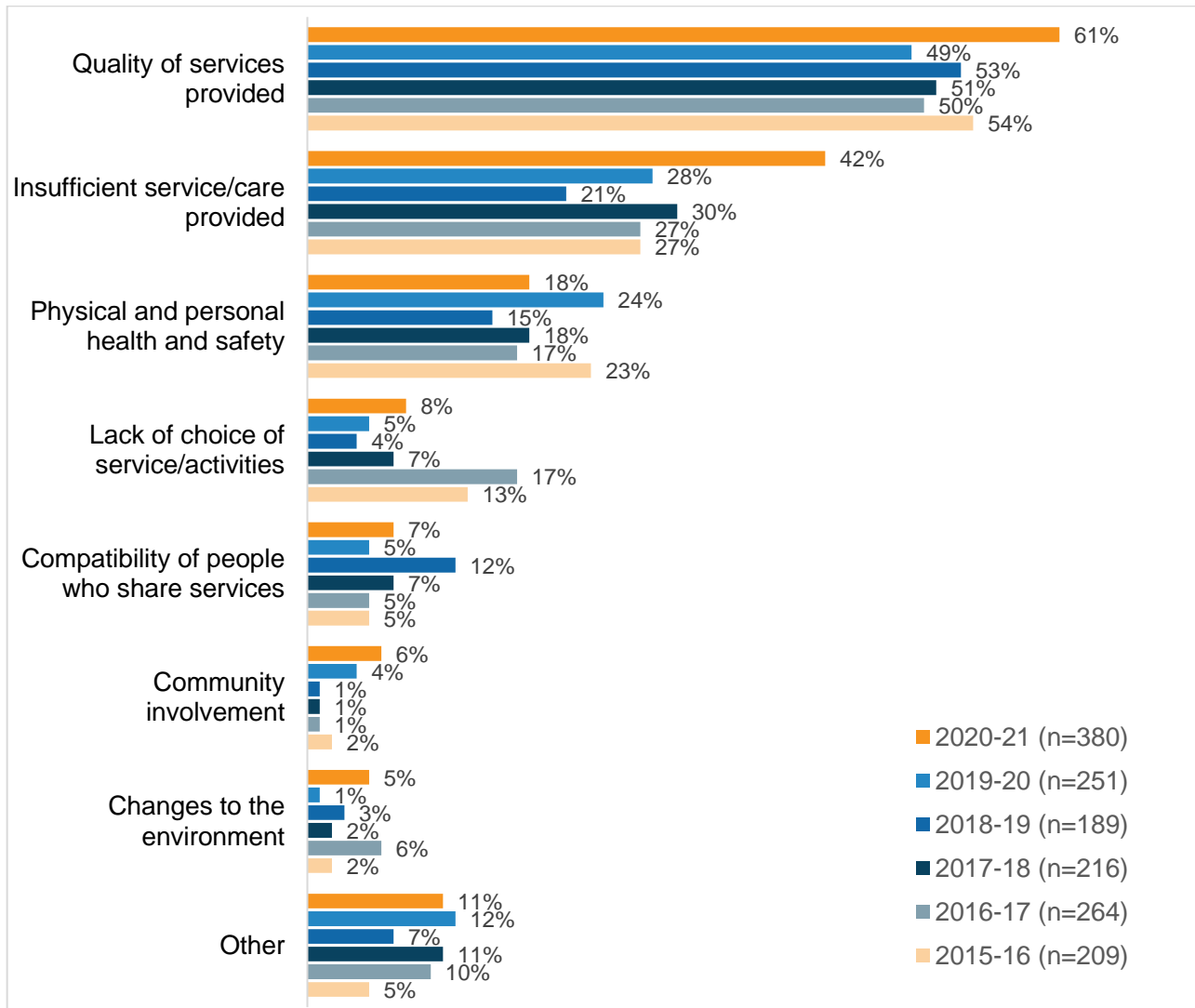
Across the staff related issue category:

- The issue ‘staff behaviour/attitude’ was the most frequently occurring in 2020-21 (41%), this is consistent with previous years.
- ‘High turnover of workers, staff rostering or staff attendance’ issues were the second most common issue in 2020-21; this follows an increasing trend since 2016-17. In 2020-21, ‘high turnover of workers, staff rostering or staff attendance’ issues made up 34% of staff related complaints, compared to 24% in 2016-17.
- The proportion of complaints citing ‘knowledge/skills of workers’ increased from 18% in 2019-20 to 22% in 2020-21.

Complaints about service delivery, management and quality

This group was the second most commonly occurring complaint issue category in 2019-20 (see Figure 12). Figure 14 shows the breakdown of complaint issues relating to service delivery, management and quality.

Figure 14: Frequency of issues identified in service delivery complaints



The following issues are not displayed in Figure 14 due to accounting for less than 3%: ‘Restrictive practices’ and ‘Encouragement to develop or maintain skills’.

Totals may not sum to 100% as a single complaint may identify multiple issues within this category.

Within the service delivery, management and quality issue category:

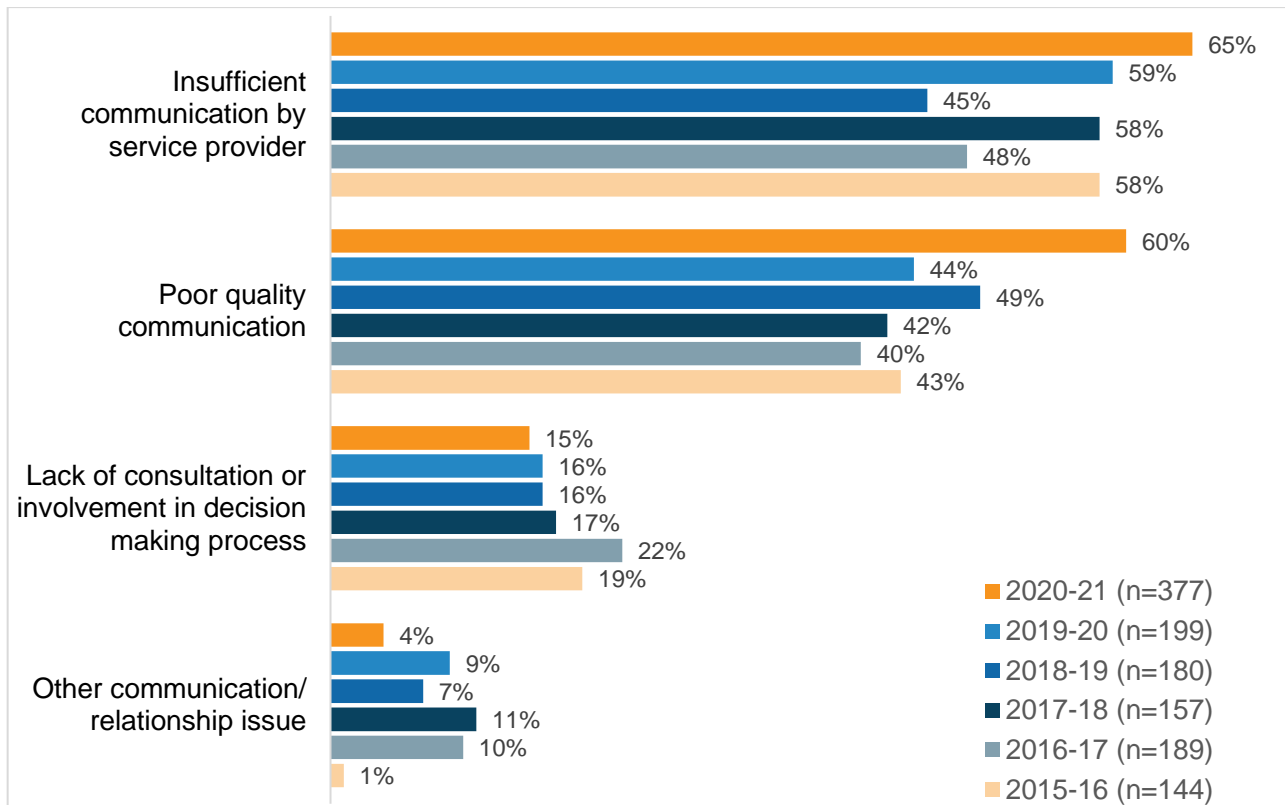
- More than half of the cases included dissatisfaction with the ‘quality of services provided’ in 2020-21 (61%). This has been the most common issue in this category in each of the past six years.
- ‘Insufficient service/care provided’ was the second most common issue. It also represented the largest single year increase, from 28% in 2019-20 to 42% in 2020-21.

Complaints about communication/relationships

This group of complaints was the third most commonly occurring complaint issue category over the last four years (see Figure 12).

Figure 15 shows the breakdown of complaint issues relating to communication and relationships.

Figure 15: Frequency of issues identified in communication/relationships complaints



Totals may not sum to 100% as a single complaint may identify multiple issues within this category.

Across the communication/relationship category of complaints:

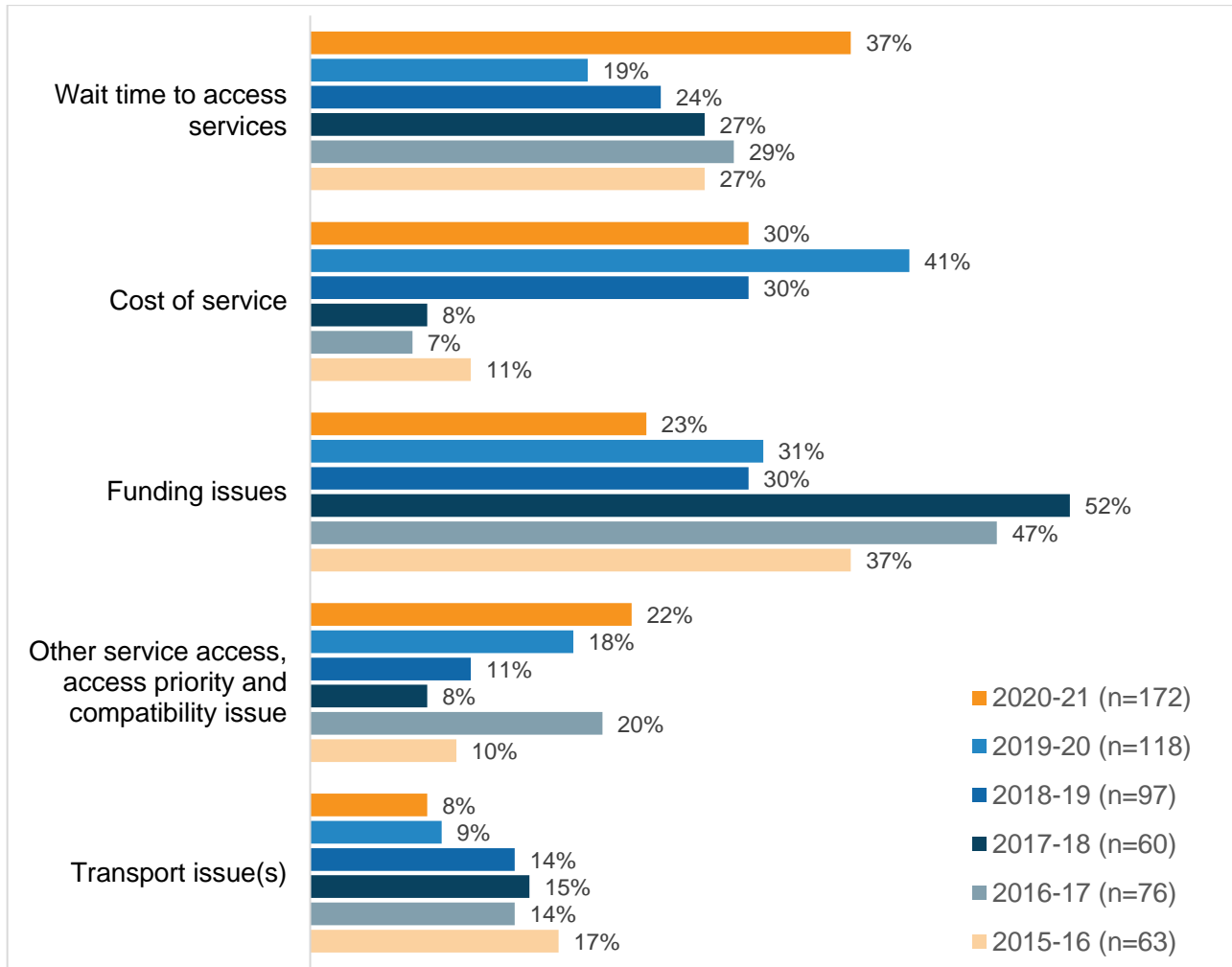
- ‘Insufficient communication by service provider’ and ‘poor quality communication’ were the two most commonly identified issues over the past six years.
- ‘Poor quality communication’ showed the largest single year increase, from 44% in 2019-20 to 60% in 2020-21.

Complaints about service access, access priority and compatibility issues

This group was the fourth most commonly occurring complaint issue category over the last four years (see Figure 12).

Figure 16 shows the breakdown of complaint issues in this category.

Figure 16: Frequency of issues in access, access priority and compatibility complaints



The following issues are not displayed in Figure 16 due to accounting for less than 5%: 'No service available within a reasonable distance', 'Request for service refused as not compatible with level/type of person's disability', 'Request for service refused as not compatible/poor relationship with other people sharing the service' and 'Request for service refused as not assessed as having a disability'.

Totals may not sum to 100% as a single complaint may identify multiple issues within this category.

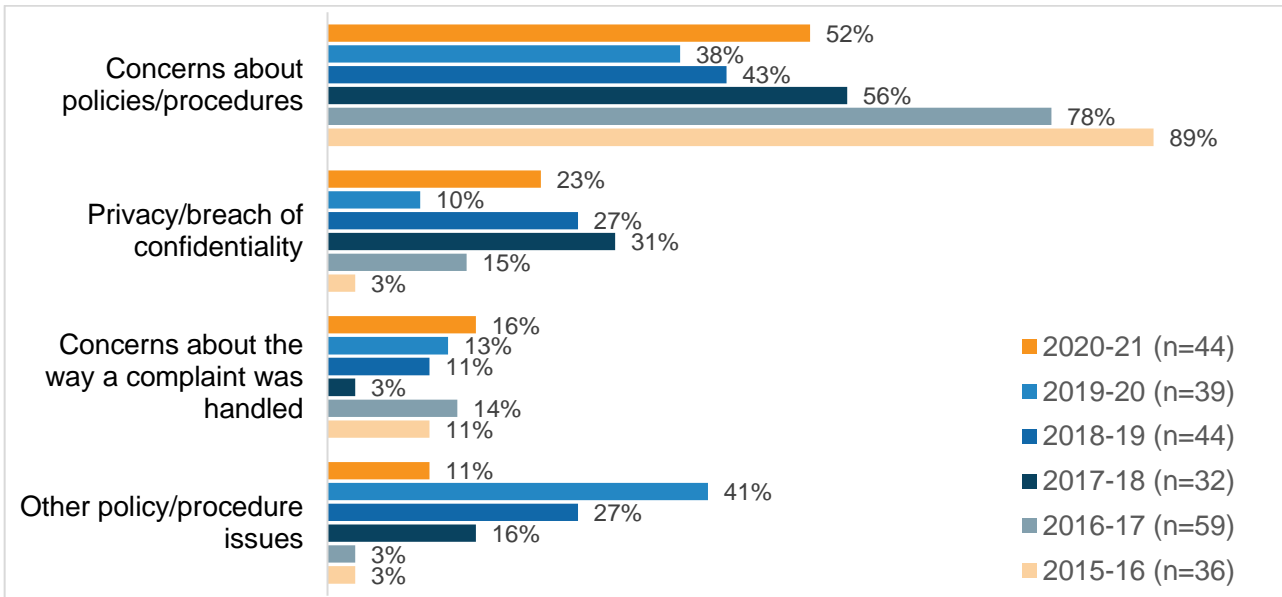
Across the service access, access priority and compatibility complaint category:

- 'Wait time to access services' was the most common issue in 2020-21 at 37%. This was also the largest single year increase from 2019-20, where it accounted for 19% of cases.
- Cases concerning 'cost of service' (30%) were the second most common, despite decreasing 11% from the previous year.
- 'Funding issues' were cited in 23% of cases in this category in 2020-21. This represents a significant decrease from the 52% in 2017-18 when it was the most prevalent issue.

Complaints about policy/procedure issues

Figure 17 shows the breakdown of complaint issues relating to policy/procedure.

Figure 17: Frequency of issues in policy and procedure complaints



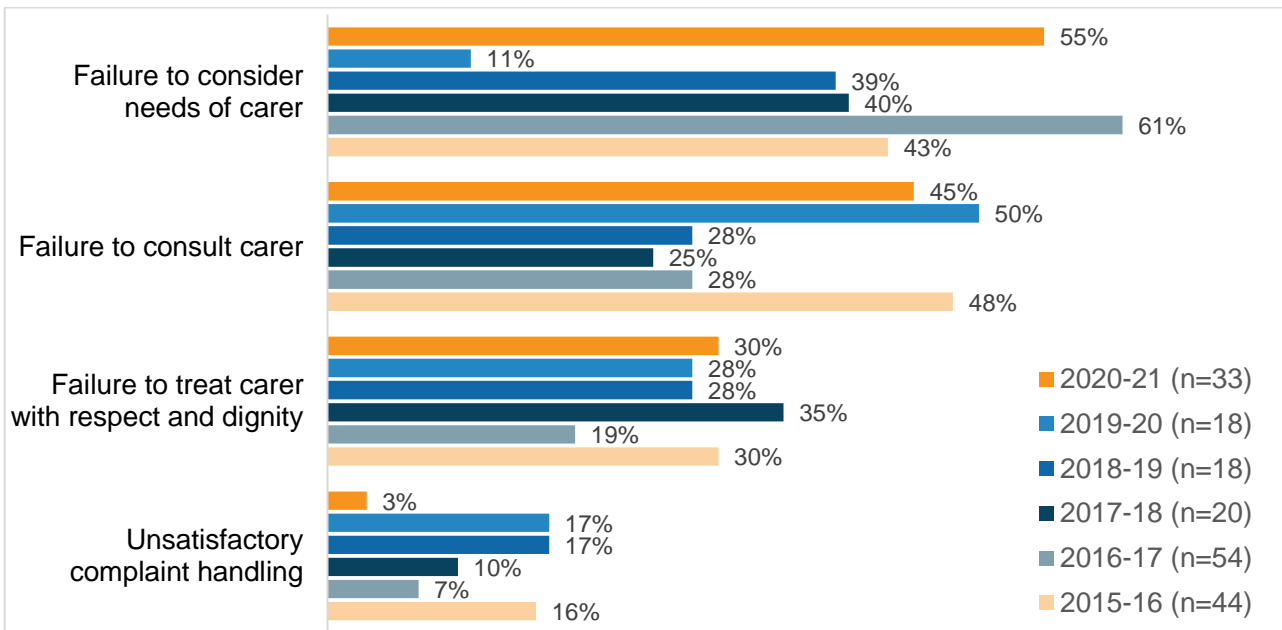
Totals may not sum to 100% as a single complaint may identify multiple issues within this category.

'Concerns about policies/procedure's increased from 38% in 2019-20 to 52% in 2020-21, making it the most frequently cited. Until 2020-21, this issue had been decreasing since 2015-16 where it accounted for 89% of cases within this category.

Complaints about Carers Charter issues

Figure 18 shows the breakdown of Carers Charter complaint issues.

Figure 18: Frequency of issues in Carers Charter complaints



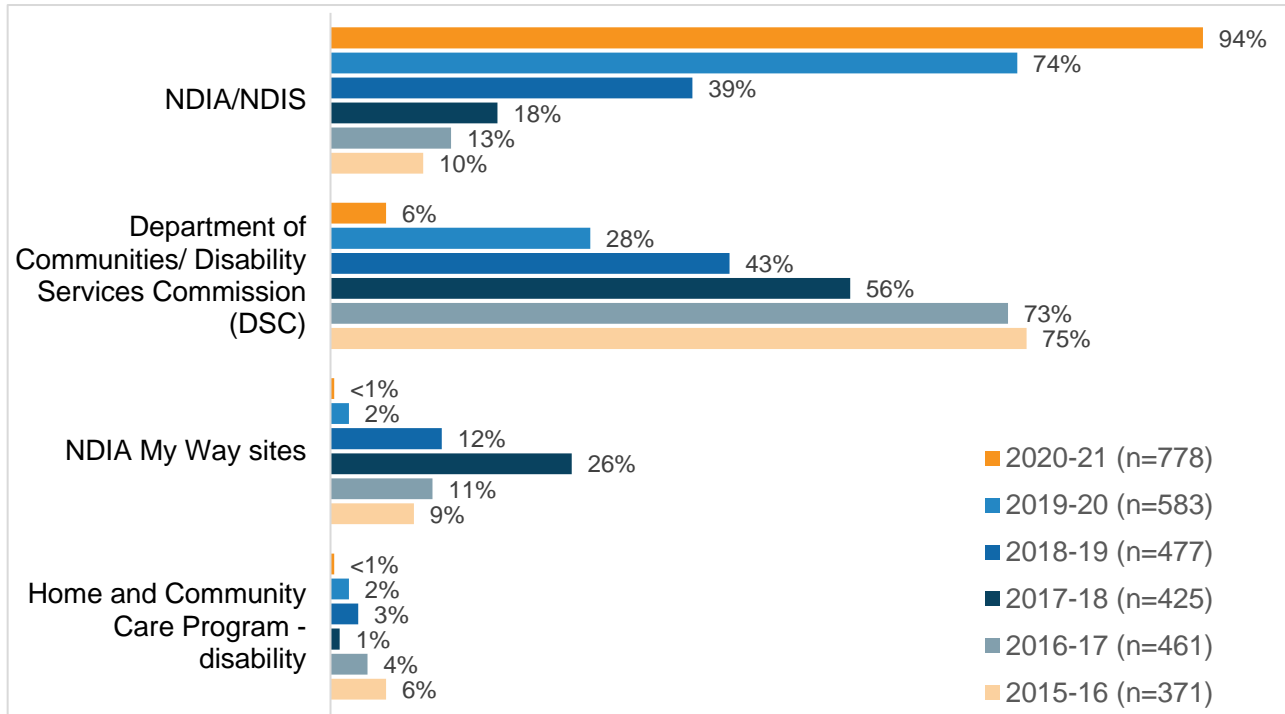
Totals may not sum to 100% as a single complaint may identify multiple issues within this category.

'Failure to consider the needs of a carer' increased as an issue from 11% in 2019-20 to 55% in 2020-21. This has been the most common concern in four of the past six years.

Service funding

Figure 19 shows how services identified in complaints were funded.

Figure 19: Funding service identified in complaints



The following issues are not displayed in Figure 19 due to accounting for less than 5%: 'Home and Community Care Program - non-disability' and 'Other local, state or federal government'.

Percentages may not sum to 100% as more than one funding stream may be available for a service.

In 2020-21, the majority of complaints identified a service funded via NDIA/NDIS (94%), continuing the upward trend since 2015-16 (10%).

Services funded by the Department of Communities or the former Disability Services Commission have demonstrated a declining trend (6% of complaints in 2020-21, from 75% in 2015-16).

Complaint seriousness

Disability providers were asked to rate the seriousness of a complaint considering the following factors:

- Consequences and impact of the issues that were raised
- Likelihood that a similar issue could arise again

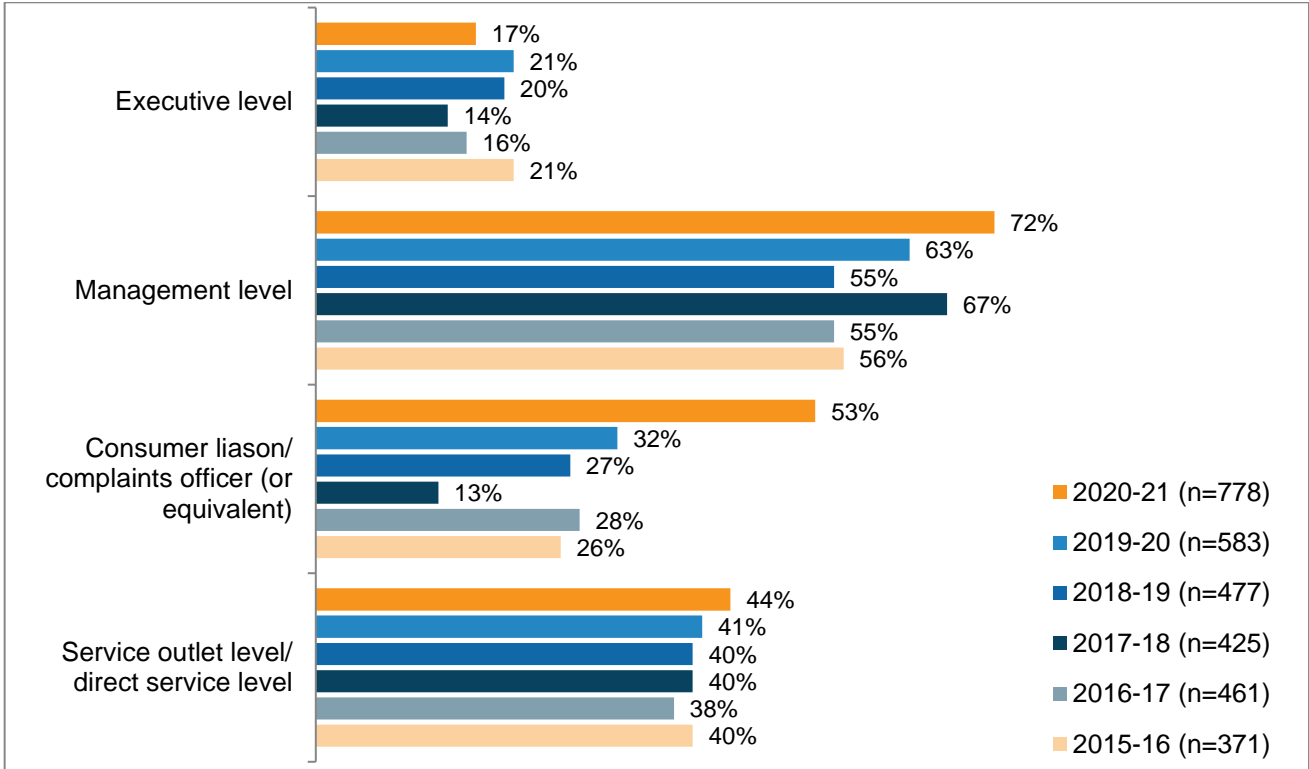
Disability providers then used the reasons behind complaints to categorise them as being of either a serious or less serious nature.

In 2020-21, 37% of complaints were deemed to be of a serious nature. The proportion of complaints deemed to be serious has generally increased since 2015-16, when 25% of complaints were considered serious.

Organisational level

The majority of complaints were handled across five organisation or administrative levels; service outlet/direct service, consumer liaison/complaints officer, management, executive and other. Figure 20 presents the relative proportion of complaint handling performed by these five levels.

Figure 20: Proportion of complaints that were resolved at different service provider levels



The data in Figure 20 is provided only for complaints where the organisational level that was responsible for the complaint resolution was recorded. Totals may not sum to 100% as a complaint can be handled by multiple levels of staff.

Across the organisational level category:

- Across all years, the majority of complaints were resolved at the management level. In 2020-21, 72% of complaints were handled at this level which was the most since 2015-16.
- There was an increase in the number of complaints handled by consumer liaison/complaints officers in 2020-21 (53%). This has been an increasing trend since 2017-18 when 13% were handled at this level.
- From 2015-16 to 2020-21, the proportion of complaints handled at the service outlet level/direct service level have remained relatively stable.

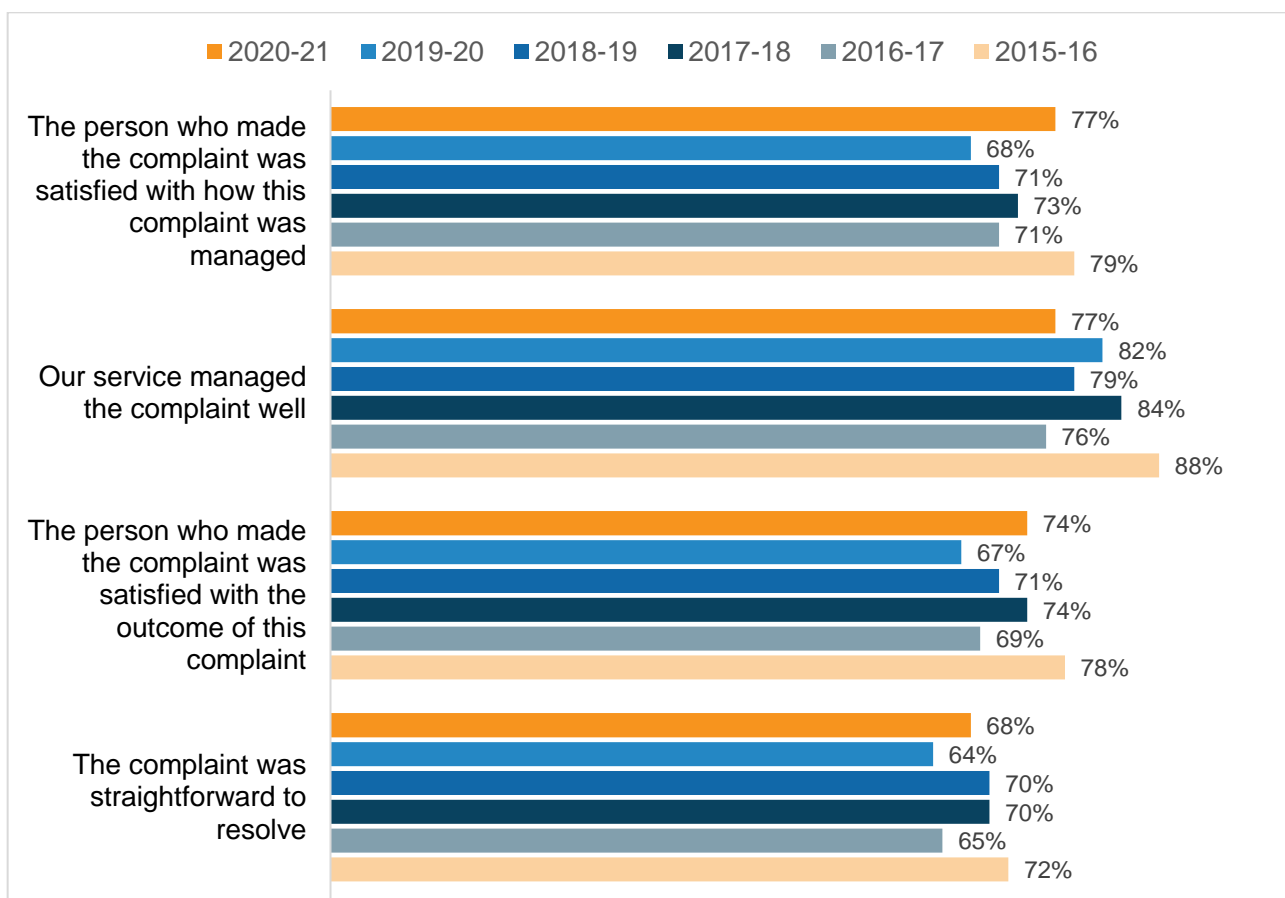
Complaint experience

Disability providers assess their own performance and the satisfaction of the consumer or their representative by addressing the following four statements:

- The complaint was straightforward to resolve
- Our service managed the complaint well
- The person who made the complaint was satisfied with how it was managed
- The person who made the complaint was satisfied with the outcome of the complaint

Agreement is the total of the ‘strongly agree’ and ‘agree’ responses by the providers. Figure 21 illustrates the percentage of agreement with these statements.

Figure 21: Providers’ assessment of complaint management (% agreement)



The data in Figure 21 is provided only for complaints where responses were recorded. Agreement is the total of ‘strongly agree’ and ‘agree’ responses. Base sizes vary between statements, 2015-16 ranges from n=360 to n=368, 2016-17 ranges from n=425 to n=460, 2017-18 from n=403 to n=424; 2018-19 from n=444 to n=472; 2019-20 from n=525 to n=543; and 2020-21 n=621 to n=777.

Compared to 2019-20, in 2020-21 there was an increase in agreement that:

- The person who made the complaint was satisfied with how it was managed
- The person who made the complaint was satisfied with the outcome
- The complaint was straightforward to resolve

The only statement that displayed a decrease in 2020-21 compared to 2019-20 was ‘our service managed the complaint well’.

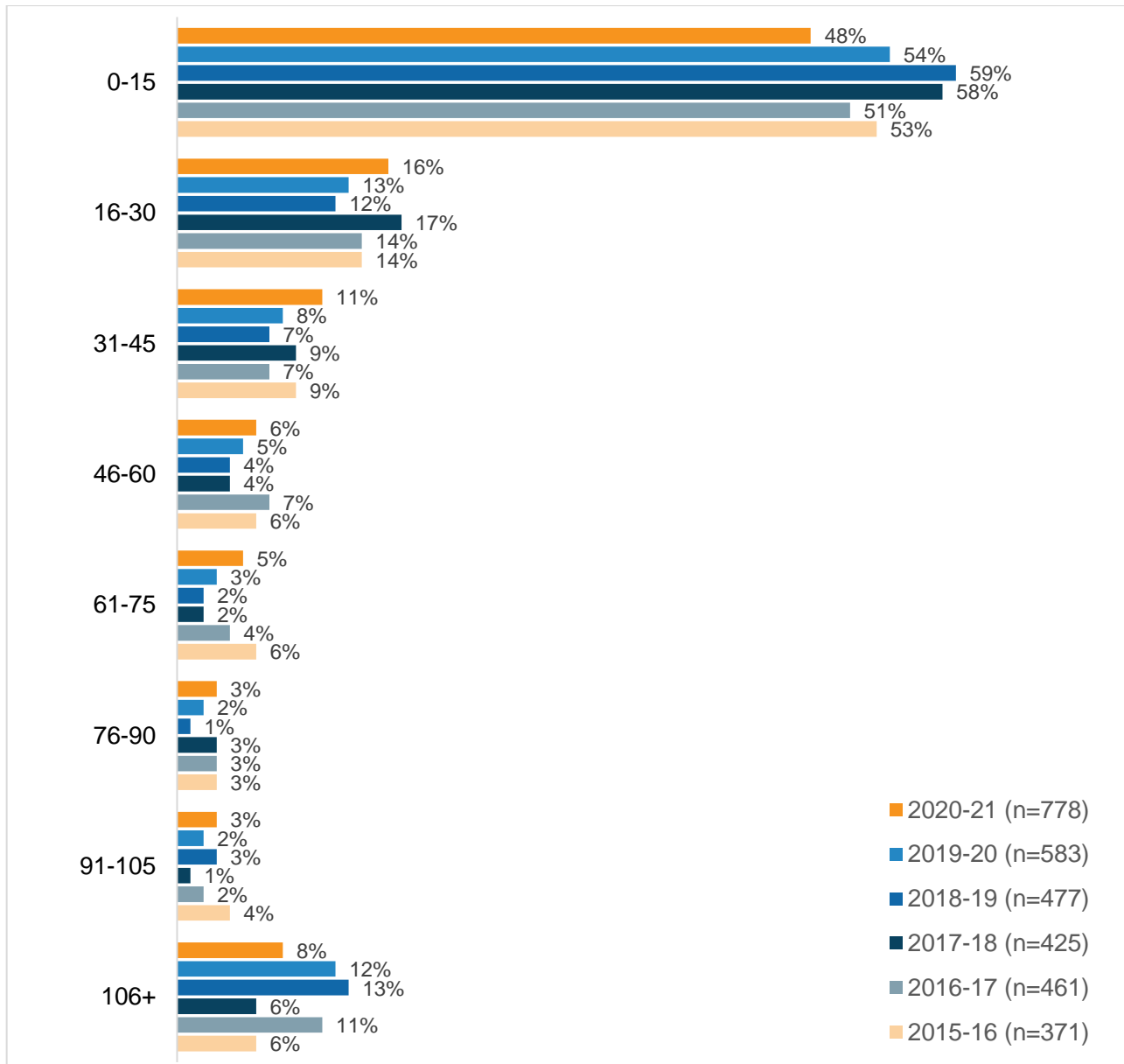
In most instances, the complaint experience in 2015-16 was similar to that in 2020-21.

Time to acknowledge and resolve complaints

Across all years, the majority of complaints were acknowledged within 15 days. The average time taken to acknowledge a complaint was three days in 2015-16 and decreased to one day in 2020-21.

Figure 22 illustrates the time taken to resolve complaints.

Figure 22: Time taken to resolve (days)



Totals may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

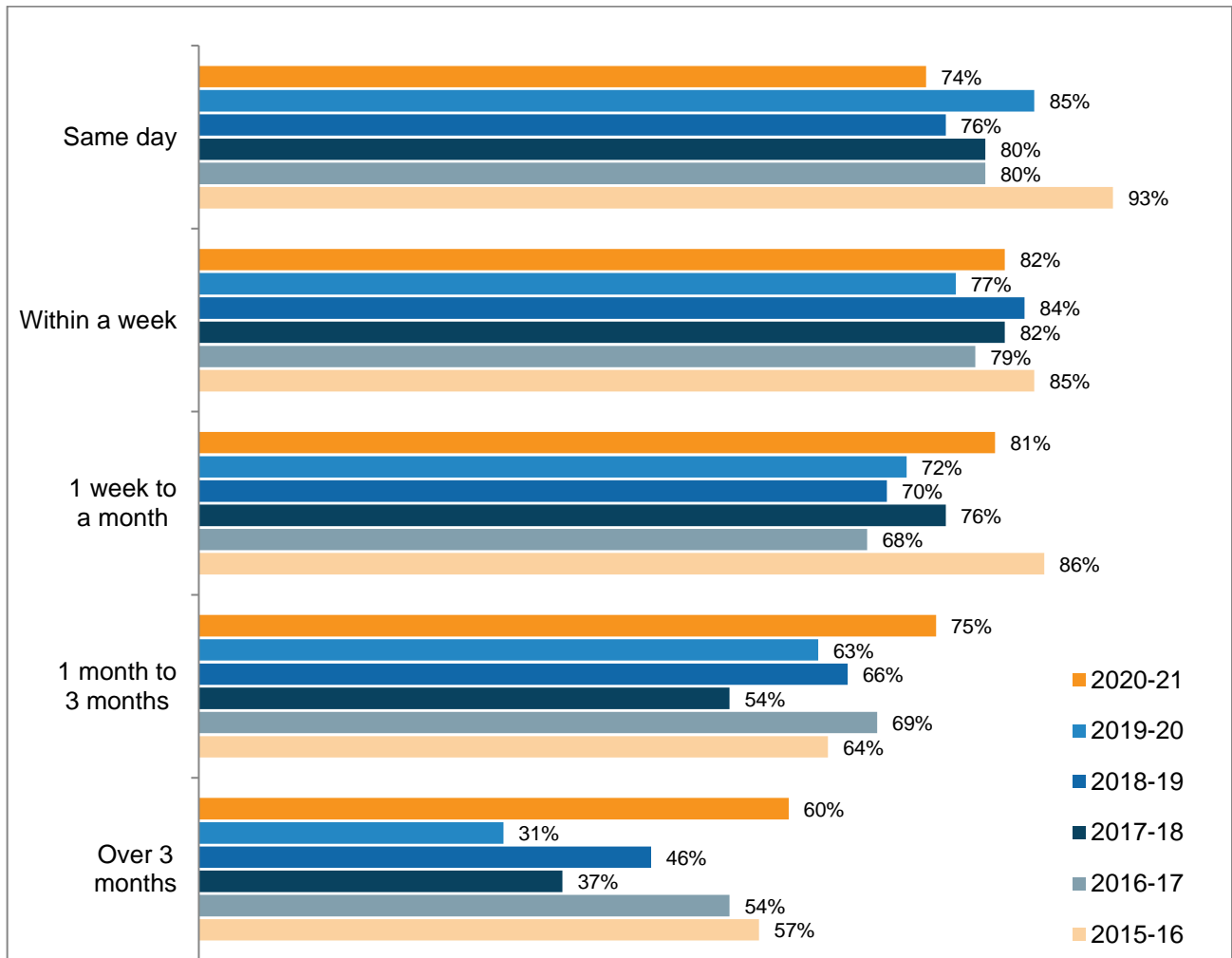
Analysis of the data indicates that:

- For the first time in the previous six years, less than half of complaints were resolved within 15 days (48%) in 2020-21.
- The average time taken to resolve a complaint was 34 days in 2015-16, 40 days in 2016-17, 30 days in 2017-18, 38 days in 2018-19, 38 days in 2019-20 and 35 days in 2020-21.

Time to resolve complaints and satisfaction

Figure 23 shows the relationship between the time taken to resolve complaints and consumer/consumer representative satisfaction with the management of the complaint.

Figure 23: Person who made the complaint was satisfied with its management*



*For data in Figure 23, outliers (>500 days) were removed from the calculation of the average time to resolve complaints. 2015-16 base sizes range from n=30 to n=105; 2016-17 base sizes range from n=54 to n=126; 2017-18 base sizes range from n=25 to n=146; 2018-19 base sizes range from n=53 to n=141; 2019-20 base sizes range from n=68 to n=145; 2020-21 base sizes range from n=58 to n=207. *Satisfied is determined by summing 'satisfied' and 'very satisfied' responses.*

The satisfaction with complaint management improved for all categories in 2020-21, with the exception of those resolved on the same day. Satisfaction was highest for complaints resolved within a week (82%).

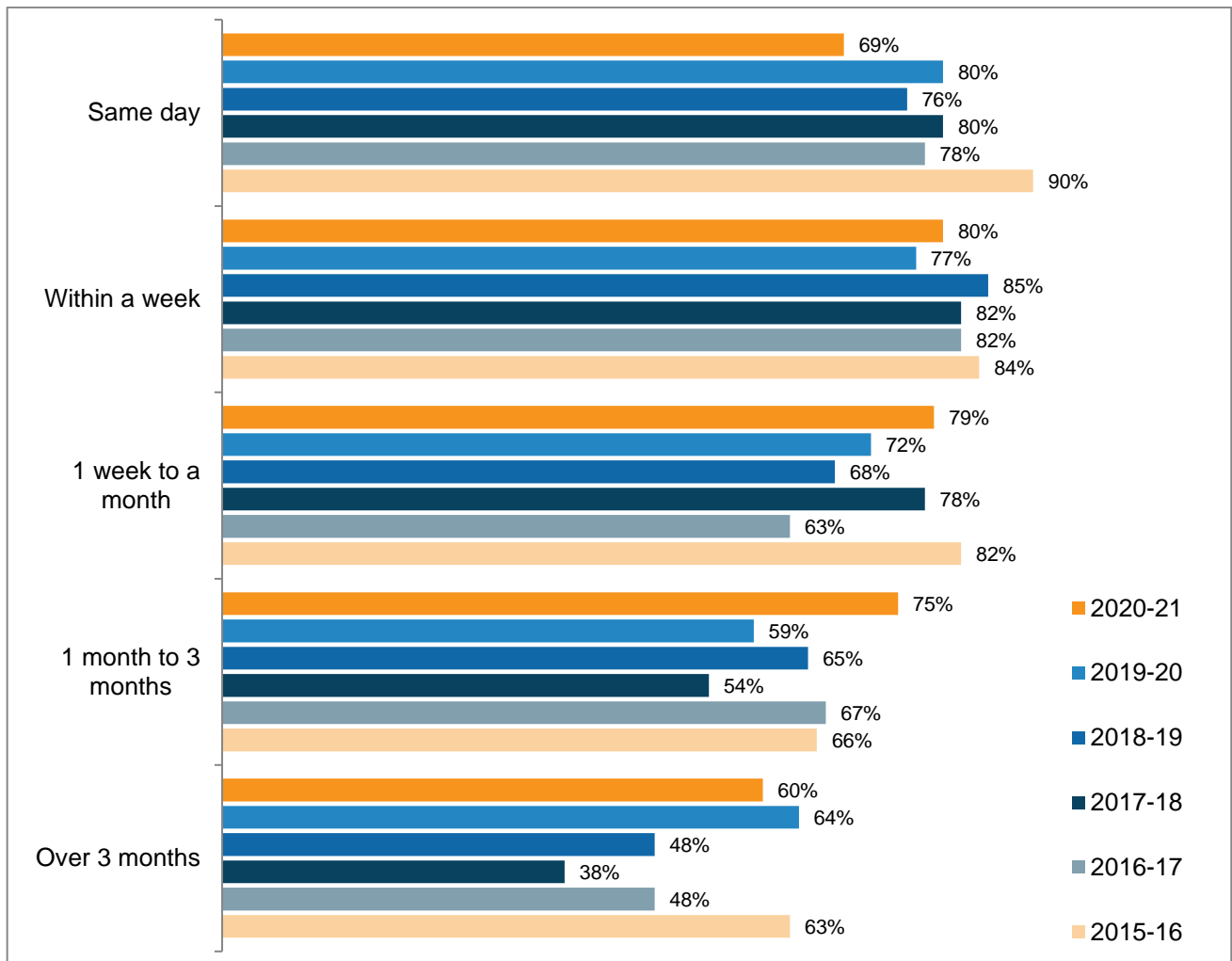
In 2020-21, despite satisfaction being at its lowest for complaints that take over three months to resolve (60%); this is actually an increase from 2019-20, when only 31% of consumers or their representatives were satisfied.

Figure 24 shows the relationship between the time taken to resolve complaints and consumer/consumer representative satisfaction with the outcome of the complaint.

Satisfaction with the outcome of a complaint was similar to the satisfaction with the management of the complaint in 2020-21. Satisfaction was highest for complaints resolved within a week at 80%, and lowest for complaints that took longer than three months to resolve (60%).

The largest decrease in outcome satisfaction from 2019-20 to 2021-21 was for complaints resolved on the same day, decreasing from 80% to 69%. In 2015-16, complaints resolved within this time frame had a 90% outcome satisfaction rate.

Figure 24: Person who made the complaint was satisfied with the outcome*



For data in Figure 24, outliers (>500 days) were removed from the calculation of the average time to resolve complaints. 2015-16 base sizes range from n=30 to n=104; 2016-17 base sizes range from n=55 to n=127; 2017-18 base sizes range from n=25 to n=146; 2018-19 base sizes range from n=51 to n=143; 2019-20 base sizes range from n=68 to n=145; 2020-21 base sizes range from n=58 to n=207. *Satisfied is determined by summing 'satisfied' and 'very satisfied' responses.

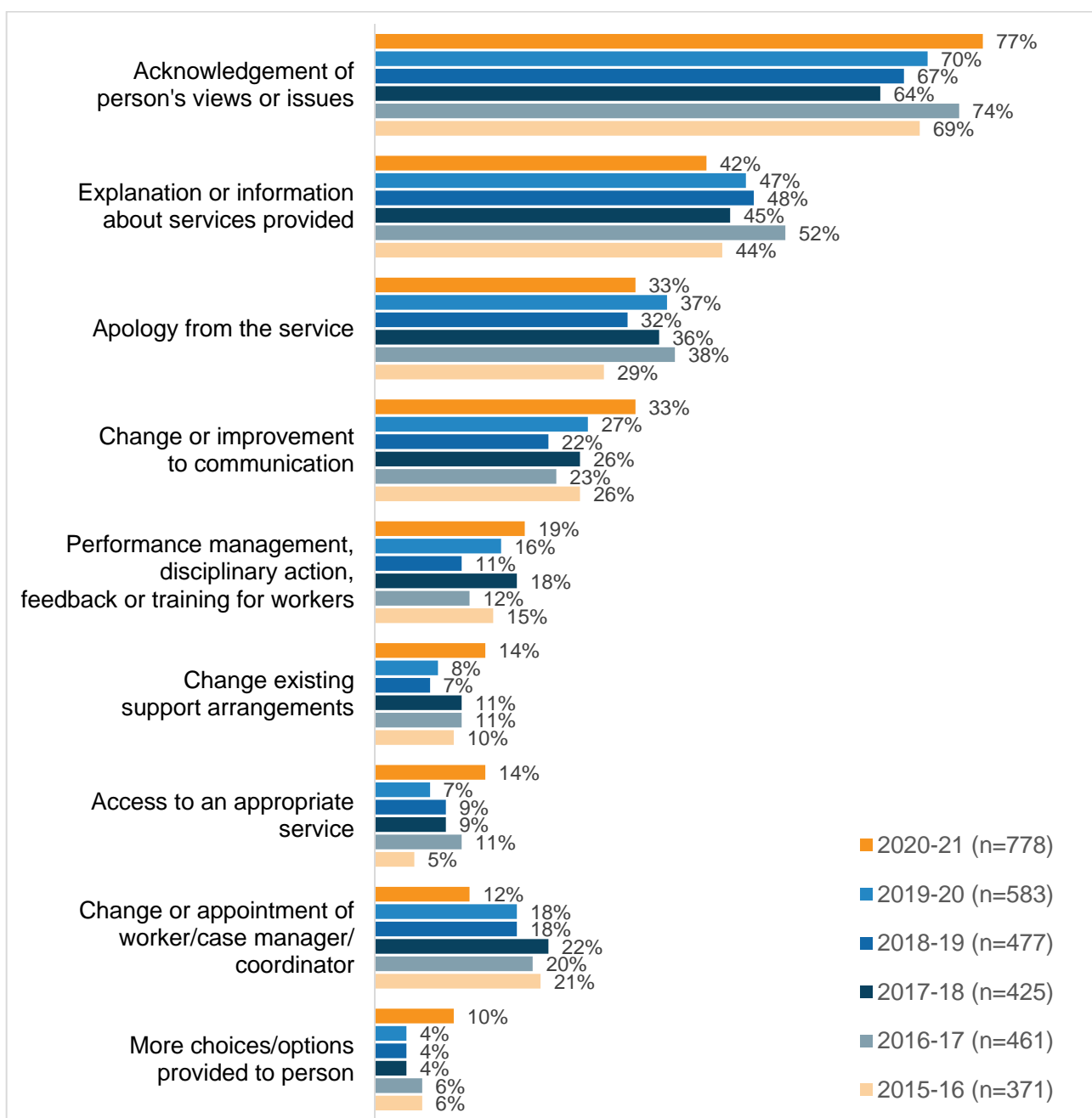
Outcomes sought

Consumers and their representatives identified a range of desired outcomes in the complaints made to disability providers, including multiple outcomes for some complaints. In 2020-21, 2,268 desired outcomes were identified in the 778 complaints resolved by disability providers. This equates to 2.9 outcomes per complaint in 2020-21, an increase from the 2.6 outcomes per complaint in 2015-16.

The most common outcomes have remained consistent between years (see Figure 25):

- Acknowledgement of a person's views or issues (77% of complaints in 2020-21)
- An explanation or information about services provided (42% of complaints in 2020-21)
- An apology from the service (33% of complaints in 2020-21)

Figure 25: Common outcomes sought



Totals may not sum to 100% as a single complaint may identify multiple desired outcomes.

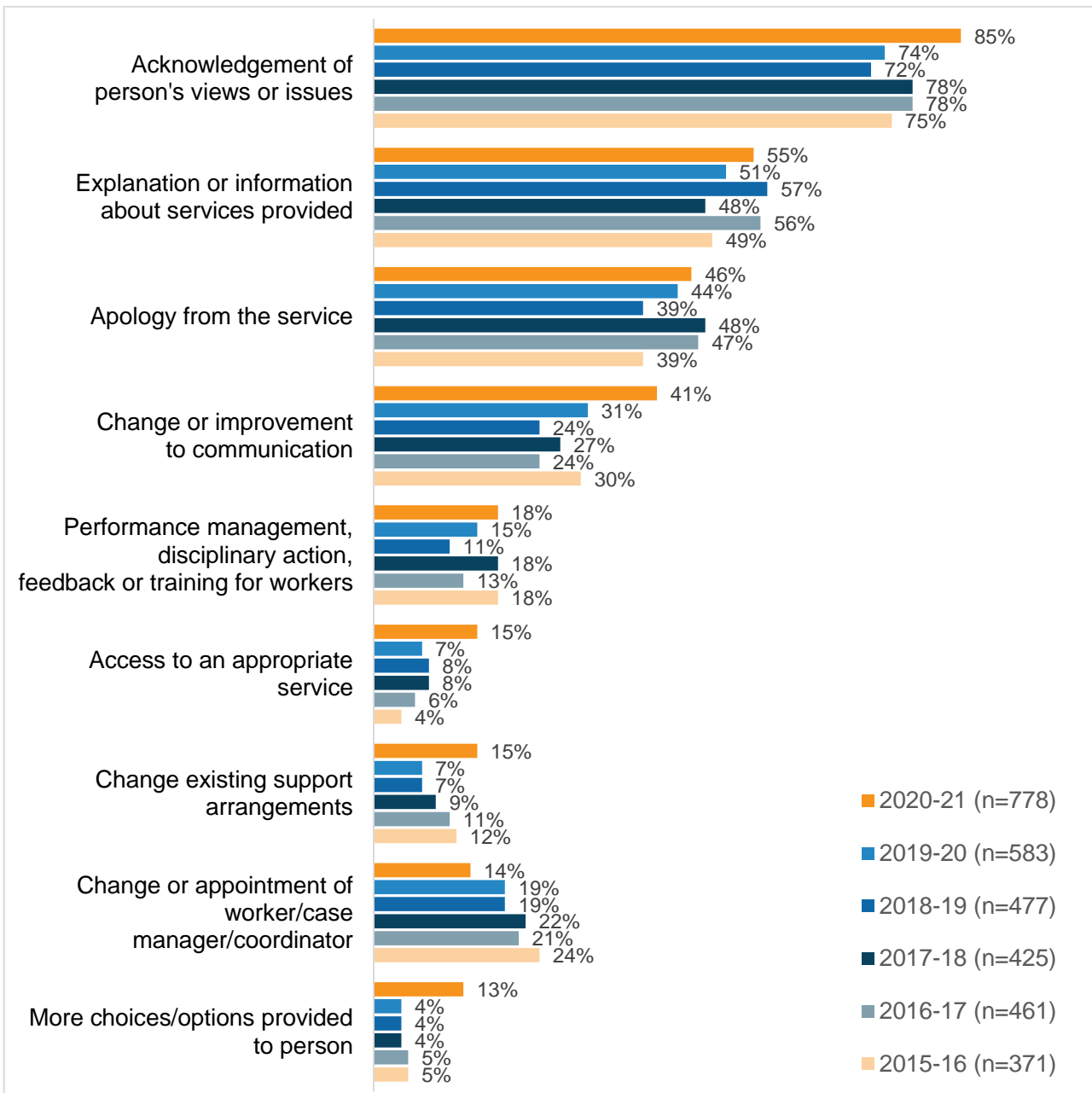
Outcomes achieved

A range of outcomes were achieved from the complaints managed by disability providers, including multiple outcomes for some complaints. In 2020-21, 2,745 outcomes were achieved from the 778 complaints resolved, 3.5 outcomes per complaint, which was an increase from 2.6 in 2015-16. Over the past six years, the most common outcomes achieved have remained consistent with outcomes sought.

The most common outcomes have remained consistent between years (see Figure 26):

- Acknowledgement of a person's views or issues (85% in 2020-21)
- An explanation or information about services provided (55% in 2020-21)
- An apology from the service (46% in 2020-21)

Figure 26: Common outcomes achieved



Totals may not sum to 100% as a single complaint may result in multiple outcomes being achieved.

Why outcomes were not achieved

The main reasons why outcomes were not achieved are shown in Figure 27. The common reasons for complaint outcomes not being achieved included:

- Difference of opinion between parties (25% in 2020-21)
- Issues not being within provider’s control to address (22% in 2020-21)
- Part of the complaint being unrelated to services provided by agency (10% in 2020-21)

In 2020-21, 47% of complaint outcomes consisted of ‘Other reason’. Common themes outlined by the ‘Other’ category were that the complaint was not yet finalised or there was not enough information to resolve the complaint.

Figure 27: Reasons why not all desired outcomes were achieved

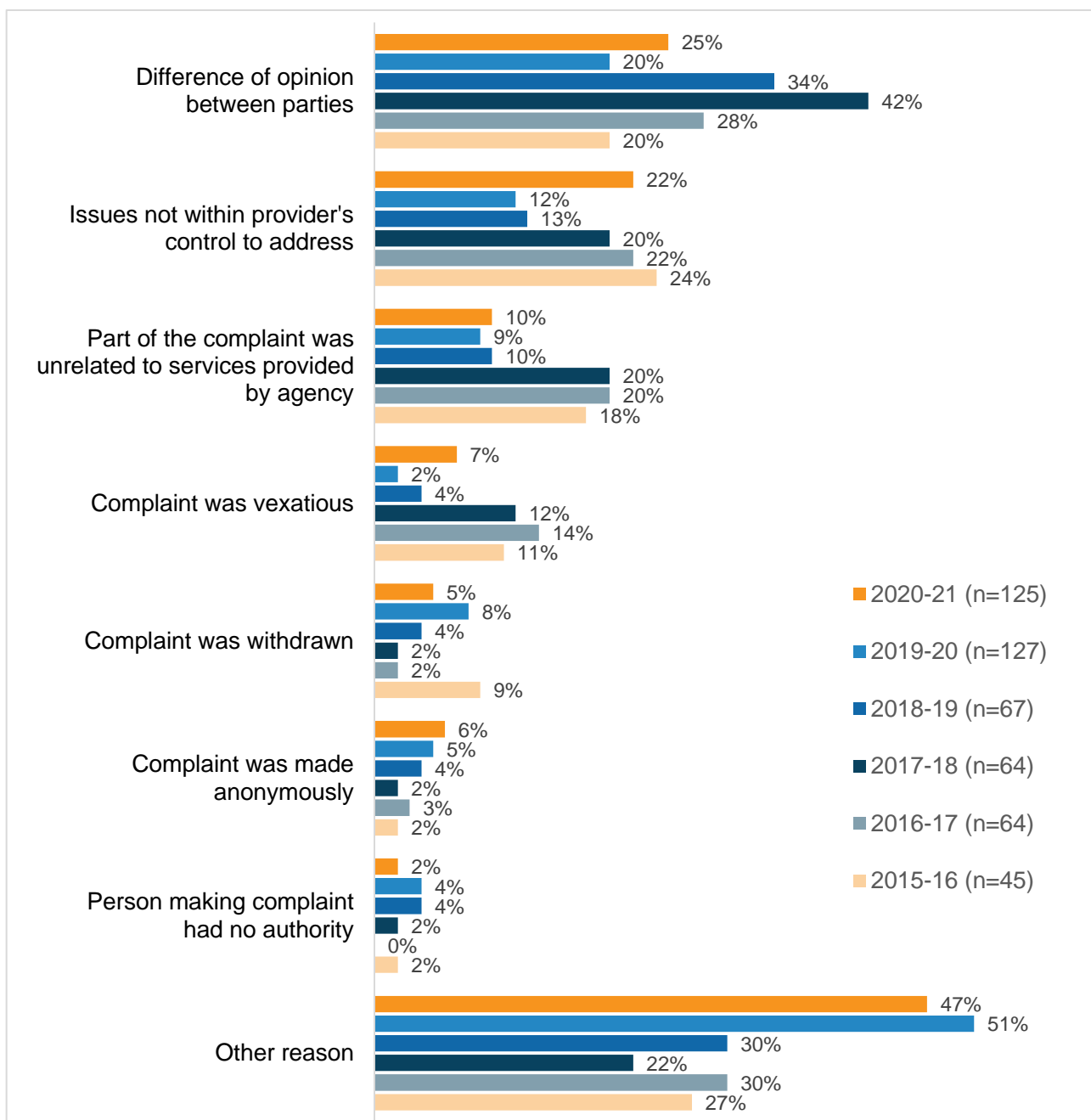


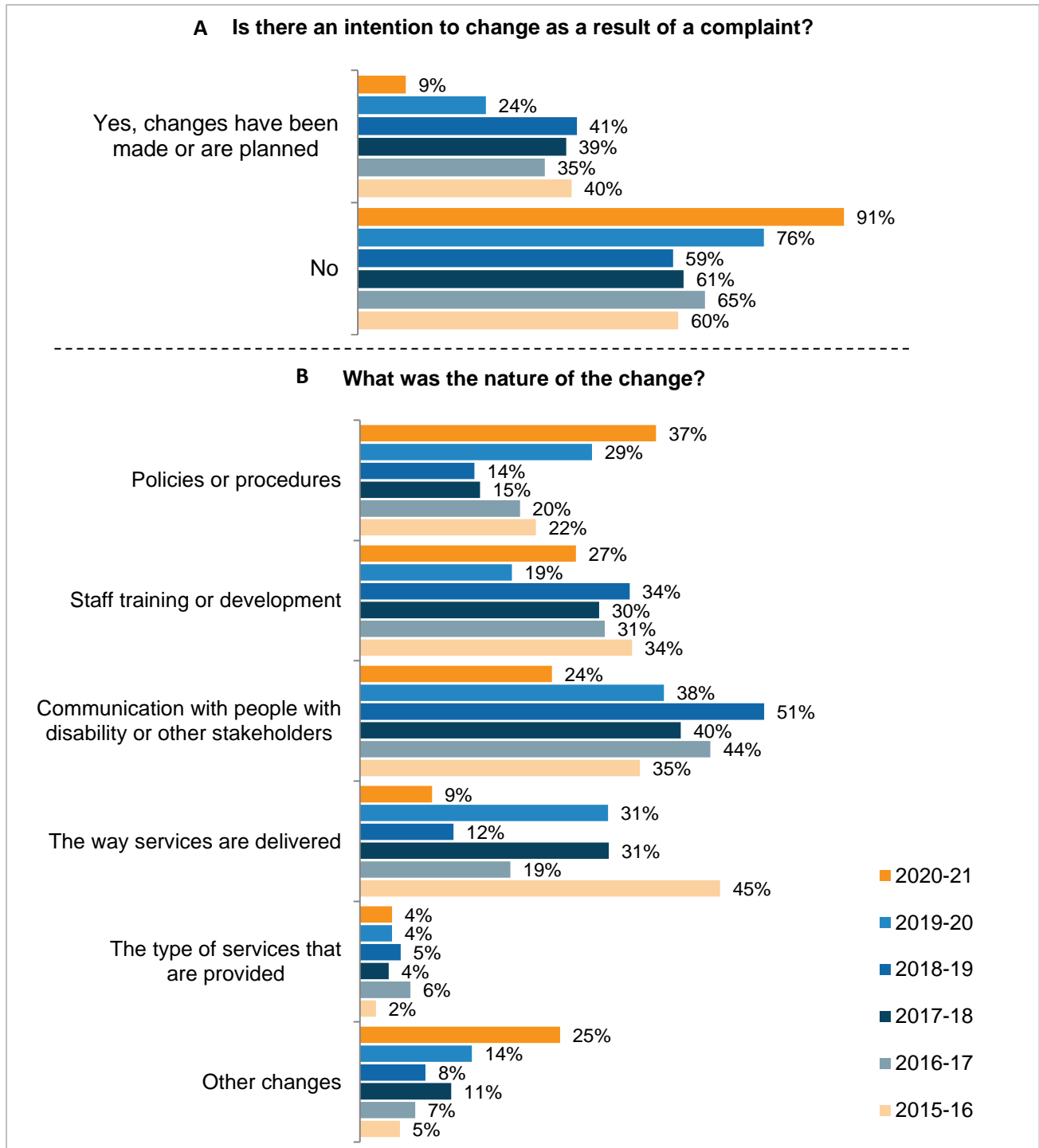
Figure 27 is provided only for complaints where the desired outcome was not achieved. Percentages may not sum to 100% as more than one reason may be provided for a complaint.

System or organisational changes

Across the past three years, a decreasing proportion of complaints closed prompted system or organisational changes to improve complaint resolution or prevent complaints. In 2020-21, only 9% of resolutions led to such changes, compared to 41% in 2018-19.

The system or organisational changes implemented, or intended to be implemented, by prescribed providers are shown in Figure 28.

Figure 28: Intention to change and types of change resulting from complaints



Base sizes vary between questions:

Figure 28A: 2015-16 n=346, 2016-17 n=461, 2017-18 n=423, 2018-19 n=477, 2019-20 n=583 and 2020-21 n=778.

Figure 28B: 2015-16 n=137, 2016-17 n=160, 2017-18 n=167, 2018-19 n=196, 2019-20 n=139 and 2020-21 n=67.

Across the changes implemented by providers:

- Updates to policies or procedures were the most common organisational changes stemming from resolutions achieved in 2020-21 (37%). This is an increase from 14% in 2018-19 and 29% in 2019-20.
- Communication with people with disability or other stakeholders has decreased over the past three years; from 51% in 2018-19, to 38% in 2019-20, and 24% in 2020-21.

Appendix 1: Health and Disability Services Complaints Office

Disability Services Data Collection Program

Under Section 48A of the *Disability Services Act 1993* and the *Disability Services Regulations 2004*, each year the Health and Disability Services Complaints Office (HaDSCO) collects complaints data from prescribed government and non-government disability providers in Western Australia. The data is collected through annual returns under HaDSCO's Disability Services Data Collection Program (DSDCP) and is used to identify systemic issues and trends across the disability sector.

De-identified data is collected from prescribed disability providers. A list of the prescribed disability providers can be found in Appendix 2. The information collected includes:

- Number of complaints
- Consumer demographics
- Complaint issues
- Complaint outcomes
- System or organisational changes made as a result of complaints
- Timeliness of complaint resolution

Methodology

Complaints data was collected via the HaDSCO Online Complaints and Compliments Reporting System (hosted by ORIMA Research Pty Ltd). At the conclusion of each financial year, HaDSCO is provided with access to de-identified complaints data in a database format. The data does not include personal details (such as names, addresses, phone numbers and email addresses) entered by providers into the portal or case notes related to complaints. HaDSCO is not provided with compliments data.

Complaints data was reviewed for accuracy and completeness by ORIMA Research Pty Ltd prior to HaDSCO undertaking analysis of the data presented in this report.

Notes on interpretation

Unless otherwise stated, all the data presented in this report is for complaints closed by disability providers during the specified financial years (2015-16, 2016-17, 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20).

Data is presented on the service groups identified in complaints, and the specific issues identified in complaints. A single complaint may relate to more than one service group and/or identify more than one issue.

One complaint may have multiple objectives, issues, and/or outcomes; a complaint may also be made by more than one person or concern an individual with multiple disabilities. As a result, the charts included in the report may not sum to 100%.

The charts presented in this report present proportions based on the number of complaints closed in each financial year (e.g. "issue x was identified in 40% of complaints").

Data limitations

There are certain limitations to the data collected through the DSDCP that impact on the analysis that can be completed.

Data collected through the program is case level data. A complaint may involve multiple services, complaint issues and outcomes; as a result, comparisons between specific variables of interest, whether demographic or complaint characteristics, can rarely be completed using mutually exclusive subsets of data. This makes identifying relationships or correlations between variables difficult.

This report focuses on identifying trends more broadly across all the complaints managed by prescribed providers, instead of identifying correlations between specific aspects of complaints (e.g. whether the person making the complaint influences the type of issues raised in a complaint).

Appendix 2: Disability providers prescribed under s48A of the *Health and Disability Services (Complaints) Act 1995*

Disability Service Provider	Legal Name
Ability Centre	The Cerebral Palsy Association of Western Australia Ltd
Activ	Activ Foundation Incorporated
*Adventist Residential Care Nollamara	Seventh-day Adventist Aged Care (Western Australia)
Autism Association of Western Australia	Autism Association of Western Australia Inc
Avivo (previously Perth Home Care Services)	Avivo
Baptistcare	Baptistcare Incorporated
Community Living Association	Community Living Association Inc.
Disability Services Commission	Disability Services Commission
Empowering People in Communities (EPIC)	Empowering People in Communities (EPIC) Inc.
Enable Western Australia	Enable Southwest Inc.
Identitywa	Identitywa
*Lady Lawley Cottage	Australian Red Cross Society (t/as Lady Lawley Cottage)
Lifestyle Solutions	Lifestyle Solutions (Aust) Ltd (Western Operations)
Mosaic Community Care	Mosaic Community Care Inc.
My Place	My Place Foundation Inc.
*Nulsen	Nulsen Haven Association (Inc.)
Rocky Bay	Rocky Bay Incorporated
Senses Australia	Senses Australia
Therapy Focus	Therapy Focus Incorporated
Uniting WA (previously UnitingCare West)	Uniting WA

**As of March 2019, Adventist ceased providing disability services, focusing only on aged care. At this time, Nulsen acquired the disability services Adventist were providing. Baptistcare ceased providing disability services in 2019. Lady Lawley Cottage ceased providing disability service during the 2020-21 reporting year.*



Health and Disability Services
Complaints Office (HaDSCO)

Health and Disability Service Complaints Office (HaDSCO)

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