SCOTTISH PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN

People Centred | Improvement Focused

2021/22 Staff Survey
Feedback Report

Survey background and purpose

We are committed to running a staff survey **annually** and this is our eighth annual survey. In 2020/21 we surveyed staff differently about specific work and wellbeing issues related to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Our surveys help us to regularly monitor engagement levels, benchmark against internal and external comparators and work towards continuous improvement of our people management practices.

The annual staff survey provides a regular, formal opportunity for people to **express their views anonymously** on a range of working and HR practices over and above other established methods of feedback that are part of our everyday work such as one to ones, team meetings, performance reviews and through working groups and consultations.

The staff survey sits alongside our commitment to maintaining **our Investors In People (IIP) status**, and the questions asked in the survey have been chosen to mirror those asked through the formal IIP questionnaire process. We also ask some questions on staff engagement related particular areas of our work, culture and environment.

Both our survey and the IIP accreditation process provide us with key information on **engagement and satisfaction** in the office and we use the feedback to drive continuous improvement and form the basis of an **action plan to target areas for improvement**.

This report sets out the findings of the 2021/22 survey along with a benchmark against our last survey and publicly available surveys from other relevant organisations.

Setting the scene – Approach and methodology

- As with previous surveys, an **online questionnaire approach** was used, **using the same questions** we have asked before in order to be able to benchmark responses.
- There were **11 survey themes** consisting of 101 statements on which people are asked to provide their responses.
- Some updates to the survey this year included:
  - 3 new questions under Corporate Social Responsibility to further explore the impact of the work of the Climate Change Community of Practice
  - we kept the questions that we introduced last year on Health and Wellbeing which were reflected in Scottish Government, World Health Organisation and Office for National Statistics surveys
  - we continued to ask the same questions as last year relating to Covid-19 under Internal Relations and Leadership and the section relating to staff experiences of the Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on health, wellbeing, personal circumstances, work relationships and performance
- The majority of statements continued to offer **six different rating options based on a Likert scale** (strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, strongly disagree, not applicable).
- Some questions offered five semantic scale response options (e.g. a scale of excellent to poor, never to always, significantly positive to significantly negative and not applicable options).
- Some questions asked for **simple responses** (yes/no) or a **multiple choice** selection.
- As with previous surveys, staff were able to add free text comments under each theme.

Setting the scene – Survey analysis

Like we've done in previous surveys, the nominal cut off has been applied to any **scores below 70%** positive as areas to consider for improvement. Any **scores below 50%** positive identify high priority issues. As with previous surveys, these nominal cut off points are setting a high standard for improvements.

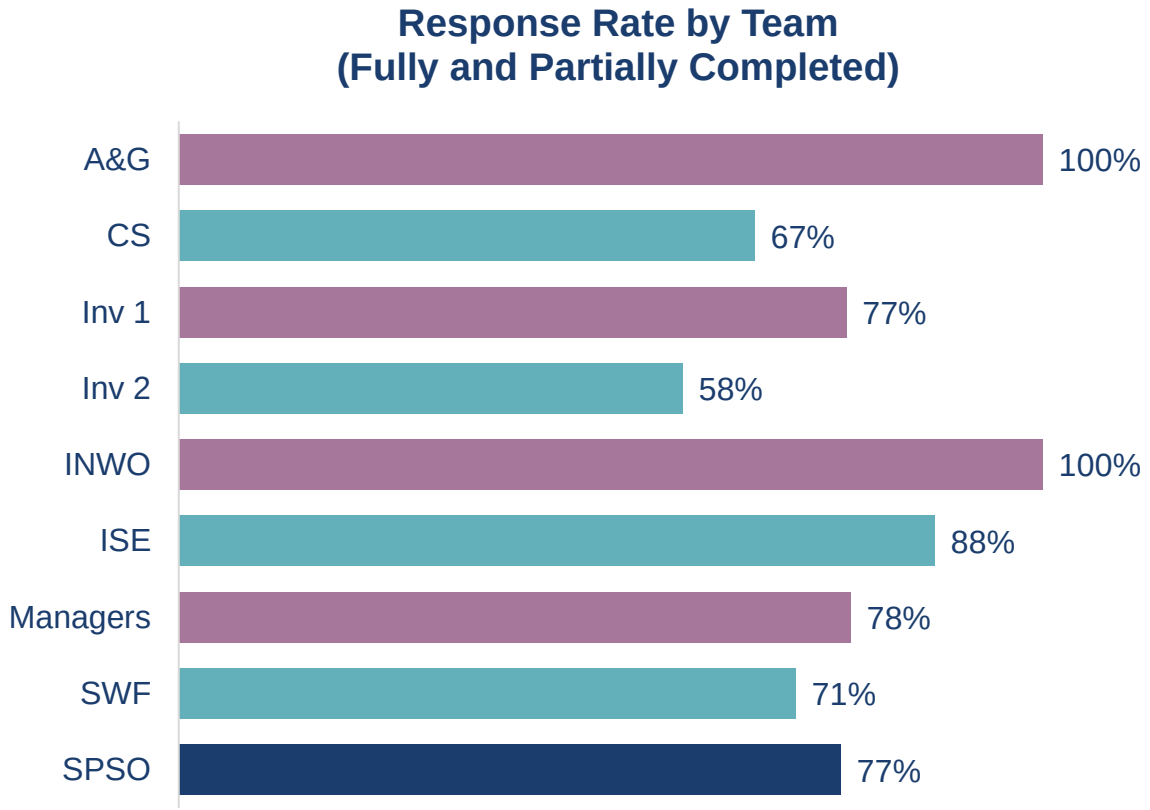
Again, in line with our approach to **additional comments** in previous years, these have been analysed and summarised in order to identify key themes as well as maintain privacy and ensure that comments could not be attributed to specific individuals.

The results have been analysed and **presented against the 2020/21 and 2018/19 results** to identify significant shifts in scores, in particular for those categories falling below the 70% positive benchmark.

Benchmarking data wasn't collected as part of this year's survey reporting. This was due to capacity to enable us to carry out separate staff surveys as part of our trial of hybrid working arrangements.

Setting the scene – Response rates

- 77% of staff responded to the survey. This includes 66% who fully completed and 10% who partially completed the survey.
- This was less than the response rate for 2020/21 (88%) and 2018/19 (84%).



Note: The survey was sent to all SPSO staff (including those on parental leave and long term absence) apart from those involved in survey design, analysis and action planning (Leadership Team, HR Manager)

Headline results – Survey Themes

	2021/22	2020/21	2018/19
Your Job	79%	81%	75%
Internal Relations	80%	82%	72%
External Customers	72%	75%	74%
Management	84%	86%	86%
Leadership	77%	84%	54%
Learning and Development	77%	75%	75%
Equal Opportunities and Diversity	80%	79%	80%
Perceptions of SPSO	77%	79%	70%
Corporate Social Responsibility	69%	69%	76%
Health and Wellbeing	83%	89%	76%

Note: This table shows the average levels of engagement for each survey theme

- Management was the theme that people were most engaged in this year with an average engagement of 84%.
- Health and wellbeing, internal relations and equal opportunities and diversity also maintained an average score over 80% this year.
- On average, we have scored over 70% positive in all but one area (csr) of the survey this year. This was also the theme that had the highest average of neutral responses which represented 22% of responses.
- The themes learning and development and equal opportunities and diversity improved compared to 2020/21.
- 7 themes scored, on average, lower than in 2020/21 (your job, internal relations, external customers, management, leadership, perceptions of spso and health and wellbeing). There was no more than a 7% drop in scores in these themes.
- There continued to be an improvement on the average scores for 2018/19 in all but 3 themes (external customers, management, csr).
- The average percentage of negative responses didn't exceed 10% in any of the survey themes.

Headline Results – Areas where we scored well

A note on the figures shown in this chart
For ease of reading, results have been rounded to the nearest whole number. As such, in some instances, trend figures presented in this report do not match the rounded figures of the scores that are being compared.

	2021/22	2020/21	Trend	2018/19	Trend
SPSO's success is reliant on all of us achieving our individual objectives	95%	93%	↑ 2%	86%	↑ 9%
I have the technology and equipment I need to be able work remotely	95%	88%	↑ 7%	N/A	N/A
My line manager behaves consistently with integrity	94%	89%	↑ 5%	89%	↑ 5%
I am kept well informed about what the organisation is doing	93%	94%	↓ 1%	60%	↑ 32%
The leadership team have kept me well informed and updated as the position has changed with regards to Covid and lockdown and how this impacts on the SPSO	92%	97%	↓ 4%	NA	NA
The leadership team communicate effectively, keeping me informed about decisions and progress	92%	92%		54%	↑ 39%
I share the SPSO's values	92%	92%		91%	↑ 2%
I am aware of SPSO's climate change objectives	92%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
I feel committed to the SPSO's goals	92%	81%	↑ 11%	79%	↑ 13%
I can express my views and question any decisions that affect my work	91%	91%		76%	↑ 15%
I feel comfortable communicating information to colleagues across the organisation	91%	80%	↑ 11%	88%	↑ 3%
There are a good range of communication methods to keep me informed while working remotely	91%	91%		N/A	N/A

Engagement with the organisation's goals and values, management, leadership communications, internal relations and support to share views and question decisions score within the top 10 areas of satisfaction this year. **A shared sense of responsibility for SPSO's success** was the highest scoring question this year.

Headline Results – Areas where we didn't score as well

A note on the figures shown in this chart

For ease of reading, results have been rounded to the nearest whole number. As such, in some instances, trend figures presented in this report do not match the rounded figures of the scores that are being compared.

	2021/22	2020/21	Trend	2018/19	Trend
At the SPSO we have the people resources we need to complete our work effectively	27%	38%	↓ 11%	19%	↑ 8%
I have dedicated time at work to contribute to SPSO's CSR initiatives	31%	42%	↓ 11%	51%	↓ 20%
Participating in CSR activities allows me to grow and develop professionally	37%	52%	↓ 15%	58%	↓ 22%
Our physical environment is structured to enable us to work well together	49%	47%	↑ 2%	72%	↓ 23%
SPSO has a clear plan for the future to ensure our continued success	51%	77%	↓ 26%	57%	↓ 6%
I feel connected to colleagues across the organisation while working remotely	53%	68%	↓ 15%	N/A	N/A
I feel comfortable with the progress and direction of the organisation at the present time	55%	69%	↓ 15%	48%	↑ 6%
I am comfortable with the amount of work I am expected to do	60%	66%	↓ 7%	54%	↑ 6%
Our roles are structured to enable us to work well together	64%	61%	↑ 3%	53%	↑ 10%
We are encouraged to suggest ways that SPSO could support community causes and/or charities	65%	70%	↓ 5%	89%	↓ 24%

While there were a **high number of neutral responses** in these questions (ranging between 10-42%), some of these questions scored high in negative responses (23-63%), particularly relating to the questions about **feeling connected to colleagues, the strategic direction of the organisation, the amount of work people feel comfortable doing and the people resources at SPSO.**

Headline Results – Most improved

Survey Theme	Question	2021/22	Increase since last year	2020/21
Perceptions of SPSO	At the SPSO we have the physical resources we need to complete our work effectively	79%	↑ 13%	66%
Perceptions of SPSO	I feel committed to the SPSO's goals	92%	↑ 11%	81%
Equal Opportunities & Diversity	Access to opportunities for development and support is fairly managed	75%	↑ 11%	64%
Internal Relations	I feel comfortable communicating information to colleagues across the organisation	91%	↑ 11%	80%
Perceptions of SPSO	We challenge behaviours that are not in line with our values	77%	↑ 10%	67%
Internal Relations	I have the technology and equipment I need to be able work remotely	95%	↑ 7%	88%
External Customers	We act on the feedback we receive from external stakeholders	72%	↑ 6%	66%
Management	My line manager behaves consistently with integrity	94%	↑ 5%	89%
Learning & Development	The feedback I receive helps me to improve my performance	85%	↑ 5%	80%
My job	My targets are ambitious but realistic	67%	↑ 5%	62%

We can see that, compared to last year, people feel more engaged in SPSO's approaches to supporting people with physical and technical resources for working, along with opportunities for people to develop being fairly managed. There are also improvements in the commitment that people feel about reaching SPSO's goals, including having targets that are ambitious and realistic and challenging behaviour that doesn't fit with our values. There is a positive increase in people's perceptions around feedback, both externally as well as personally with managers behaving consistently and with integrity.

A closer look at each theme – Your job

78%

People feel **secure** in their jobs, understand **what is expected** and they recognise how their own performance translates into the **success of the organisation**. Overall they enjoy the level of **autonomy** they have, they are **empowered** to make decisions and take initiative, work is **interesting** and they feel **valued** for what they contribute.

	2021/22	2020/21	2018/19
My work gives me a feeling of personal accomplishment	82%	84%	83%
My work is interesting and makes the best use of my skills and capabilities	75%	85%	88%
I feel empowered to make decisions and act on them	86%	87%	79%
I am encouraged to take initiative in my role	81%	81%	84%
I understand the performance standards and what I am expected to achieve in my job	88%	97%	79%
SPSO's success is reliant on all of us achieving our individual objectives	95%	93%	86%
I feel that my contribution to the success of the SPSO is valued	82%	85%	74%
My targets are ambitious but realistic	*** 67%**	62%	55%
I am able to find information when I need it	70%	66%	57%
I am comfortable with the amount of work I am expected to do	*** 60%**	66%	54%
I am supported in balancing my work and personal life	77%	82%	89%
I feel my job is secure	82%	90%	72%

Two areas scored below 70% - **targets** and **workload**.

This year the results were broadly similar to 2020/21 but there was a 10% drop in the question about work being **interesting** and **making the best use of skills and capabilities**.

↓ 2% on average compared to 2020/21

↑ 4% on average compared to 2018/19

A closer look at each theme – Internal relations

People are well **informed**, feel confident **expressing views and communicating across the organisation, challenging decisions** and **contributing** to how things are done. There is a good **balance and range of communication methods** and positive feedback about the **technology** and **equipment** enabling remote working.

	2021/22	2020/21	2018/19
I am kept well informed about what the organisation is doing	93%	94%	60%
I can express my views and question any decisions that affect my work	91%	91%	76%
I have the opportunity to contribute to how things are done at the SPSO	87%	88%	69%
I feel comfortable communicating information to colleagues across the organisation	91%	80%	88%
I have good working relationships with my colleagues	89%	92%	90%
There is a good balance of verbal, written and email communication used in the SPSO	78%	82%	67%
Our roles are structured to enable us to work well together	***64%**	***61%**	53%
Our physical environment is structured to enable us to work well together	***49%**	***47%**	72%
As an organisation we are communicating well with each other while working remotely	82%	92%	N/A
There are a good range of communication methods to keep me informed while working remotely	91%	91%	N/A
I feel connected to colleagues across the organisation while working remotely	***53%**	***68%**	N/A
My team is good at keeping up with informal connections while working remotely	82%	89%	N/A
I have the technology and equipment I need to be able work remotely	95%	88%	N/A

Three areas scored below 70% (one of these was below 50%) – **connections** with colleagues, the **structure of our roles and the physical environment** to enable team-working with quite a high number of neutral responses to these questions. Feedback was broadly similar to last year but 2 scores dropped more than 10% below last year: communication across the organisation and feeling connected to colleagues while working remotely

↓ 2% on average compared to 2020/21	↑ 8% on average compared to 2018/19

A closer look at each theme – External customers

72%

People feel positively that we **listen** to our customers, that we **act on feedback** and that there are **opportunities to debrief** after a difficult conversation.

	2021/22	2020/21	2018/19
We listen to our customers rather than just telling them what they need	72%	77%	76%
We act on the feedback we receive from external stakeholders	72%	***66%**	67%
I feel there are effective support mechanisms in place for me to deal with difficult customers	70%	82%	69%
I have the opportunity to debrief following difficult conversations	78%	74%	81%
I feel well supported when I am communicating difficult or sensitive issues	***69%**	78%	76%

One area scored below 70% – **feeling supported when communicating difficult or sensitive issues**

This theme had a consistently high number of people indicating neutral responses or that these questions are **not applicable** to their roles (between 11-15% or respondents).

Some of the scores in this section improved compared to last year but there was one question that dropped lower than 10% and this was about the effectiveness of support mechanisms to deal with difficult conversations.

↓ 3% on average compared to 2020/21	↓ 2% on average compared to 2018/19

A closer look at each theme – Management

84%

This was the **highest scoring theme** of the survey this year.

Managers **communicate** well with their teams, they provide effective support for **health and wellbeing** and they strive to make **improvements**. People have **confidence** in their line managers – they are **consistent** and have **integrity**, the are **motivational**, encourage **teamwork** and **collaboration** and they **recognise** the efforts of the team. Approaches to **setting objectives**, and encouraging **high levels of performance** were also viewed positively.

	2021/22	2020/21	2018/19
I feel motivated by my line manager	83%	85%	88%
My line manager behaves consistently with integrity	94%	89%	89%
My line manager communicates effectively with me	89%	92%	88%
My manager supports me in my health and wellbeing	87%	94%	91%
My line manager encourages teamwork	91%	89%	95%
My line manager encourages collaboration with other teams	78%	78%	86%
My line manager strives to support and deliver better ways of working	87%	92%	93%
I/my team are consistently recognised when we exceed expectations	74%	83%	75%
Performance is managed in my team	***69%**	74%	67%
I set my objectives with my line manager	81%	86%	88%
My performance is reviewed regularly	89%	88%	91%
I am encouraged to achieve high performance	85%	86%	84%

There was one area that scored below 70% - **performance being managed in the team**. 19% of these responses were neutral.

Scores remained broadly similar to 2020/21.

↓ 2% on average compared to 2020/21	↓ 2% on average compared to 2018/19

A closer look at each theme – Leadership

77%

People feel they have been kept **informed** and that LT clearly communicate the **vision, objectives, progress and direction** of the organisation, especially during the pandemic. Overall people feel that LT are **open, responsive and motivational** and provide **consistent and effective** leadership.

	2021/22	2020/21	2018/19
SPSO has a clear plan for the future to ensure our continued success	***51%**	77%	57%
The leadership team communicates the organisation's vision and objectives clearly	85%	88%	55%
I feel comfortable with the progress and direction of the organisation at the present time	***55%**	*69%	48%
The leadership team communicate effectively, keeping me informed about decisions and progress	92%	92%	54%
The leadership team are open and responsive	85%	92%	61%
The leadership team have kept me well informed and updated as the position has changed with regards to Covid and lockdown and how this impacts on the SPSO	92%	97%	NA
The leadership team provide consistent and effective leadership	79%	83%	50%
I trust and respect the leadership team at the SPSO	83%	83%	59%
I feel motivated by our leadership team	***66%**	72%	48%

There were three areas that scored below 70% - a **clear plan** and the **progress and direction** of the organisation. The negative scores for these questions were over 20%. **Feeling motivated** by LT also scored below 70% positive but this, like many of the other questions in this section had a high proportion of neutral feedback. Compared to last year, the scores have dropped slightly and most significantly in the questions about organisation plans, progress and direction.

↓ 7% on average compared to 2020/21 | ↑ 23% difference compared to 2018/19

A closer look at each theme – Learning and Development

77%

This was our **most improved survey theme** this year.

People feel that SPSO is **committed** to and **invests** in developing staff and that there is good **support to apply learning** in their roles. **Regular, constructive feedback that helps improve performance** was also rated positively. The **appropriateness** of L&D activities was rated more positively this year than it had been in previous surveys.

	2021/22	2020/21	2018/19
The learning and development I receive is appropriate and relevant to my job	74%	***69%**	70%
There are sufficient opportunities for me to receive learning and development to improve my skills	***66%**	***62%**	71%
I believe that the SPSO are committed to developing me	74%	72%	70%
SPSO invests in its people	74%	72%	73%
I receive regular, timely feedback on my performance	83%	88%	86%
The feedback I receive helps me to improve my performance	85%	80%	77%
I am supported to apply any learning to my day to day work	81%	80%	79%

There was one area that scored below 70% - **opportunities** to take up learning and development.

Overall, this section scored higher than the previous year.

↑ 2% on average compared to 2020/21	↑ 2% on average compared to 2018/19

A closer look at each theme – Equal Opportunities and Diversity

People generally feel that SPSO is an **inclusive** and **respectful** workplace with **robust policies** to deal with any concerns and that **the workplace is free from bullying and harassment**. People also feel positively that there is **fair access to opportunities for development and support** and **fair and consistent decisions about flexible working** – both of these areas improved on last year's scores.

	2021/22	2020/21	2018/19
I think the SPSO respects individual differences (for example, cultures, working styles, backgrounds, ideas)	85%	89%	84%
I know how to seek support for concerns relating to bullying and harassment	88%	88%	88%
I feel confident that the SPSO would act on any reports of bullying and harassment	81%	84%	79%
Access to opportunities for development and support is fairly managed	75%	***64%**	68%
I believe managers deal with applications for flexible working fairly and consistently	71%	***69%**	76%
My work environment is free from bullying and harassment	81%	78%	86%

There were no areas scoring below 70% in this theme.

4% of respondents do not feel that SPSO is free from bullying and harassment – we ask people to explain this in more detail and comments give some insight into particular examples or general feedback which is reviewed confidentially by HR and incorporated into improvement planning.

We received 6 comments under this section and this was 10% of respondents to the survey. There were no common themes raised but individual feedback has been reviewed by HR and incorporated into improvement planning.

↑ 1% on average compared to 2020/21	No change to average compared to 2018/19

A closer look at each theme – Perceptions of SPSO

People continue to feel a strong sense of **commitment** to SPSO, our goals and our values. Perceptions are that this is an organisation that regularly tries to find ways to **improve** and **embrace change**. There was improvement to the feedback about **holding people to account for their behaviour** and the **physical resources**. There was a high proportion of neutral responses in this section – seven questions scored over 10% neutral.

	2021/22	2020/21	2018/19
I am proud to work for the SPSO	71%	84%	85%
I would tell people that this is a good place to work	79%	83%	68%
I feel a strong sense of belonging and purpose at the SPSO	73%	81%	68%
I feel committed to the SPSO's goals	92%	81%	79%
I share the SPSO's values	92%	92%	91%
My day-to-day behaviour reflects SPSO's values	90%	91%	89%
SPSO's values guide the way we work and make decisions	87%	84%	81%
We challenge behaviours that are not in line with our values	77%	***67%**	64%
At the SPSO we have the physical resources we need to complete our work effectively	79%	***66%**	47%
At the SPSO we have the people resources we need to complete our work effectively	***27%**	***38%**	19%
At the SPSO we regularly look for ways to improve	83%	92%	85%
At SPSO we embrace change to create a sustainable future	77%	91%	66%

One area scored lower than 50% and this was the lowest coring question in the survey - **people resources**.

There were 2 questions that scored over 10% more than last year – **commitment to SPSO's goals** and **physical resources**. There were 3 questions that scored more than 10% lower than the previous year – **feeling proud to work for SPSO**, **people resources** and **embracing change to create a sustainable future**.

↓ 2% on average compared to 2020/21 | ↑ 7% on average compared to 2018/19

A closer look at each theme – Corporate Social Responsibility

This was the **lowest scoring theme** of the survey.

Overall, scores suggest that people feel that SPSO's CSR activities are **important** and that as an organisation, we are **contributing responsibly** in particular to **causes, campaigns and projects that support environmental protection, sustainability** and that **minimise our impact on climate change**.

	2021/22	2020/21	2018/19
Working for an organisation with similar ethical views to my own is important to me	87%	94%	92%
I have dedicated time at work to contribute to SPSO's CSR initiatives	***31%**	***42%**	51%
Participating in CSR activities allows me to grow and develop professionally	***37%**	***52%**	58%
SPSO contributes to campaigns and projects that promote the wellbeing of society	***69%**	***69%**	77%
At SPSO we implement initiatives that minimise our impact on the environment	88%	89%	87%
We are encouraged to suggest ways that SPSO could support community causes and/or charities	***65%**	70%	89%
I am aware of SPSO's climate change objectives	92%	N/A	N/A
We are encouraged to suggest ways that SPSO could support environmental causes and/or climate change initiatives	79%	N/A	N/A
SPSO contributes to campaigns and projects that promote environmental protection and sustainability	73%	N/A	N/A

Four areas scored below 70% (two of these were below 50%) – **dedicated time to contribute to CSR activities**, **personal growth through CSR**, SPSO's contribution to **promoting wellbeing of society**, **encouragement to support community causes and charities**. These questions also all scored over 25% neutral and overall this section had the highest average of neutral responses (22% on average).

No change to average compared to 2020/21	↓ 7% on average compared to 2018/19

A closer look at each theme – Health and Wellbeing

People feel that health and wellbeing is part of our **culture**, it is **promoted** well in the organisation and there is a good **awareness** of the initiatives available. The feedback shows that SPSO is a workplace where **we are committed to wellbeing,** we **support each other** to **achieve positive health and wellbeing**.

	2021/22	2020/21	2018/19
Health and wellbeing is effectively promoted	87%	91%	69%
Health and wellbeing is part of our culture	83%	86%	63%
The SPSO is committed to supporting my health and wellbeing	77%	77%	69%
People help and support each other at SPSO	90%	98%	94%
I am supported in my health and wellbeing	79%	84%	NA
I am aware of the health and wellbeing initiatives available to me	83%	95%	85%

There were no questions that scored below 70%.

Compared to last year, engagement in this section dropped overall but there was only one question where there was a more than 10% drop in engagement – **awareness of the health and wellbeing initiatives** available.

↓ 6% on average compared to 2020/21	↑ 7% on average compared to 2018/19

A closer look at each theme – Most useful initiatives for wellbeing

81% flexi-time policy (including relaxed lockdown)

54% flexible working arrangements

33% resilience at work training

31% mental health awareness week events

19% Employee assistance programme

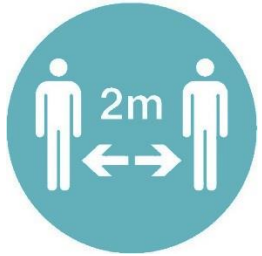
19% coffee mccoffee sessions

15% information, resources, emails

10% lockdown HR and wellbeing FAQs

A closer look at each theme – Health and Wellbeing (supplementary questions)

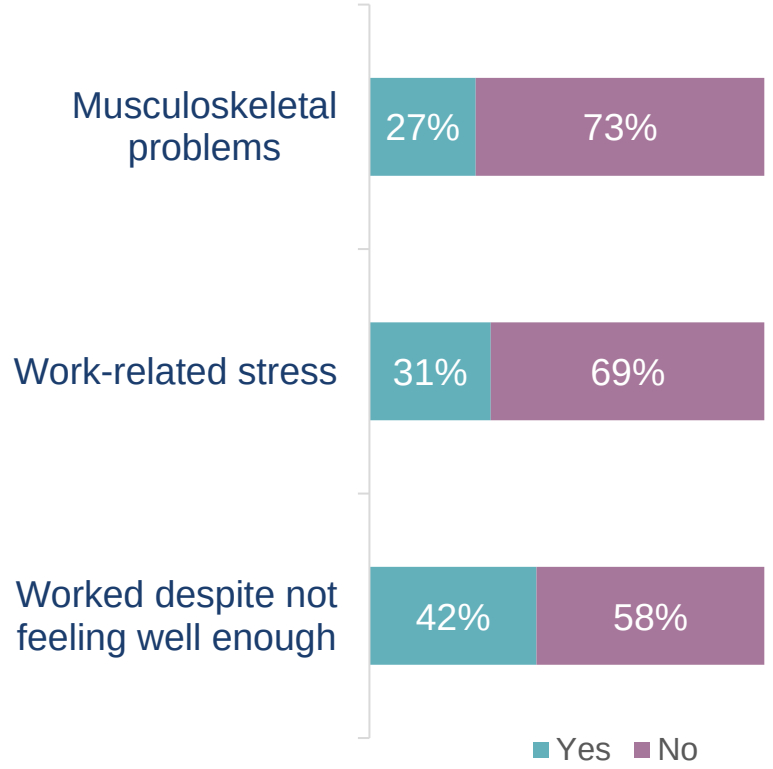
- **81%** responded **positively** about their current mental health
- **13%** of people rated their mental health as **fair**
- **6%** rated their mental health as currently **poor**



- **65%** said they **never** or **hardly ever** feel lonely
- **35%** said they **occasionally** or **some of the time** feel lonely

- **75%** responded **positively** about their current physical health
- **23%** of people rated their physical health as **fair**
- **2%** rated their current physical health as **poor**

In the last 12 months, people have reported experiencing...



A closer look at each theme – Covid-19 impacts

SPSO staff have reported being unable to work because...

- **29%** for a reason not related to Covid-19
- **23%** were ill with symptoms of Covid-19
- **10%** had caring responsibilities due to Covid-19
- **6%** had to quarantine/self-isolate for Covid-19
- **44%** answered not applicable

The impact that Covid-19 has had on people has been far-reaching:

Physical health

23% Positive
33% Negative

Mental health

8% Positive
63% Negative

Caring

8% Positive
31% Negative

Household finances

33% Positive
10% Negative

Work

35% Positive
37% Negative

Productivity

44% Positive
31% Negative

Manager relationship

25% Positive
10% Negative

Colleague relationships

17% Positive
38% Negative

Compared to last year, the feedback remains broadly similar in terms of positive responses. There has been over a 10% drop in the number of negative responses and under physical health and caring responsibilities, the number of ‘no impact’ responses increased as a direct result while the 16% drop in negative responses about productivity was because more people rated this positively this year.

Headline Results – Insight from comments

94 comments were made in the survey, 56 fewer than 2020/21 when we also had a higher response rate. Comments were broad and covered a range of topics with the following themes most commented on:

48% workload, resources, capacity

22% teamworking, collaboration

20% management style, approach, support

19% wellbeing and work-life balance

17% performance, standards, targets

14% learning and development

13% communications (technology, style)

Insight from comments

I currently do not have a comfortable level of work… My work has become less interesting in recent months and I have less scope to use my skills and capabilities as I am spending most of my time managing the overwhelming level of … cases

I think the allocation system needs to be adjusted to take account of complexity…to ensure the allocations are balanced and avoid overwhelming people with high numbers of complex cases.

Long waiting times and a large unallocated pool with no clear plan to tackle this leaves me uncomfortable with the progress/direction of travel of the organisation.

If / when fully staffed I think we probably do have the people resources we need. High levels of absence and reduced productivity for some staff has had an impact on our ability to reduce waiting times. I am hopeful this will improve in the coming year.

Workload, resources, capacity

It is…more challenging to feel our work has any real impact when we are investigating events that occurred approx 3 years ago.

Although everyone works hard to stay connected and we have a supportive team, remote working means we miss out on a lot in the way of incidental chat/support from colleagues.

Teamworking, collaboration

I have been very uncomfortable making and receiving difficult calls from home without the support of colleagues. While I know there are people I can call to debrief, in the moment that is often far less appealing than if you are present with colleagues.

I think communication has definitely improved as we have adjusted to working from home long-term but I do still feel quite disconnected from some areas of the organisation.

In terms of relationships with people I work with, in some ways I think it has been very positive to work with my team in a different way and I think I have got to know people in different ways. I've made connections I didn't have previously. However, my interaction with others across the organisations has been far more limited, so it's a mixed picture.

Insight from comments

Line manager supportive of my health and wellbeing but their ability to take practical action to relieve personal stress/anxiety has been limited due to high case numbers.

The Leadership team have responded to the need to communicate effectively, and the engagement with staff is much better during and post covid than it was pre-covid. However I am concerned that a major risk for the business, and for staff overall, being the ever increasing 'backlog' is not given enough prominence in terms of the impact it has on morale, productivity, sense of job satisfaction

Management style, approach, support

I have had a good few managers over my career and I have to say that my current manager is probably the best I have had…is a real asset to the business and makes working in the team I am in a real pleasure.

I feel supported and valued by my Manager [they] trusts me to make decisions and be proactive in my role and is always available should I need help or guidance. Good performance is always recognised and appreciated which in turn motivates me to continue doing the very best I can in my role.

Wellbeing, work-life balance

In lockdown, and more generally, I often find that I have too little time to meet the various demands of my role. The result is working for too long without a break, working too many hours and developing back and hip issues from poor quality office chairs, coupled with excessive immobility.

When you have a short term illness that ordinarily you would not come into the office with, it is very easy to try and 'push through it' when at home. It's easier to think getting at least one thing done is better than nothing - when in actuality we should just take the time we need to get better, without feeling guilty.

The increased…workload…has had an negative impact on my wellbeing particularly the uncertainty of resourcing to deal with the uptake in demand for our service, and the lack of opportunity or appetite for driving improvement...

I feel less stressed and more productive working from home and would prefer to continue working from home primarily going forward.

Insight from comments

Performance, standards, targets

While my performance is reviewed the quality of my work is not. The lack of QA has been a significant barrier in ensuring the quality of work produced by my team. This has been a risk since we have had new members of the team join, numerous changes to the guidance, and an huge increase in demand for the service which has resulted in a higher volume of work going out in a shorter time scale.

Targets are largely imposed from above, they do little to improve productivity, other than increasing pressure on individual staff members. There is little evidence of analysis of processes or change based on performance across the teams.

Communications style, technology

There are too many communication methods and little clarity, consistency or logic to which is used for what communications

Communication can seem haphazard, and it is often difficult to relate the LT information to the day to day tasks for staff.

I value the regular updates and think LT have engaged with us well during the pandemic, but it doesn't feel as if there is a clear plan at the moment.

Learning and Development

While I do believe there is appetite and encouragement from management to get involved in training opportunities, these often feel unmanageable from a time perspective, and the time involved in undertaking training is not reflected in targets or allocations.

Our training is good/relevant but CRs don't have sufficient time for more comprehensive L&D because of our caseloads.

I am not always clear what learning and development opportunities I can ask for and how closely they need to link to my current role. It would be helpful to know what training/opportunities others in the organisation have requested, so that I can also express interest if it's something I hadn't thought of.

Conclusions

Engagement in the survey decreased by 11% on average compared to the last survey. It is possible that there was a 'survey fatigue' in the organisation last year with the launch of several projects involving surveys to evaluate future direction. 77% is generally a good response rate and we are thankful to those that contribute their views. We hope to improve this response rate next year and encourage as many people as possible to participate.

We saw an improvement in 30% of questions but there was a drop in positive responses in 60% of questions compared to last year. Overall, this drop was due to a slight increase (less than 10%) in the number of negative and neutral responses to other questions this year, compared to last year.

We saw fewer questions scoring between 50-70% this year compared to last year (13% of questions this year compared to 17% last year) and there was a 1% increase in the number of questions scoring below 50% (bringing the overall number of questions scoring below 50% to 4%).

Feedback shows that people are particularly engaged in **management style and approaches**, **internal communications** and **homeworking infrastructure**. These results are particularly encouraging given the ongoing challenges of working during the pandemic last year.

The areas where people are particularly dissatisfied are around **work volumes** and the challenges of this are not just limited to individual **job satisfaction** and **wellbeing** but also the impact it has on people's ability to take up **opportunities for csr and l&d**. Another theme that flows through the survey is around the **challenges of home working**, particularly the impact that this has on our **work relationships** both in terms of **socialisation** and **feeling connected to and identifying as part of the wider organisation** (i.e. outwith the team setting).

Areas for improvement

The following questions and themes scored below 70% and are the focus for improvement planning:

Survey Theme	Question	2021/22
Perceptions of SPSO	At the SPSO we have the people resources we need to complete our work effectively	27%
Corporate social responsibility	I have dedicated time at work to contribute to SPSO's CSR initiatives	31%
Corporate social responsibility	Participating in CSR activities allows me to grow and develop professionally	37%
Internal relations	Our physical environment is structured to enable us to work well together	49%
Leadership	SPSO has a clear plan for the future to ensure our continued success	51%
Internal relations	I feel connected to colleagues across the organisation while working remotely	53%
Leadership	I feel comfortable with the progress and direction of the organisation at the present time	55%
My job	I am comfortable with the amount of work I am expected to do	60%
Internal relations	Our roles are structured to enable us to work well together	64%
Corporate social responsibility	We are encouraged to suggest ways that SPSO could support community causes and/or charities	65%
Leadership	I feel motivated by our leadership team	66%
Learning and development	There are sufficient opportunities for me to receive learning and development to improve my skills	66%
My job	My targets are ambitious but realistic	67%
External customers	I feel well supported when I am communicating difficult or sensitive issues	69%
Management	Performance is managed in my team	69%
Corporate social responsibility	SPSO contributes to campaigns and projects that promote the wellbeing of society	69%

Improvement planning and next steps

We combine feedback from the staff survey with feedback and recommendations from the IIP reviews which feed into our HR action plan and business planning processes.

Taking account of the feedback shared in this year's survey, we will focus our improvement planning on the following areas:

- promoting staff survey earlier in the year ahead of the launch to encourage interest and improve response rates;
- addressing the challenges of **work volumes** (which impact on morale, health and wellbeing, ability to participate in CSR, L&D activities);
- maintaining **performance standards,** particularly as we work in and out of the office environment;
- clarity in direction and the approach to **dealing with the backlog of casework;**
- improving on and maximising the **people resources** available to us;
- how we continue to overcome the **challenges of home working** like **keeping people connected, building relationships** across the office and overcoming **physical barriers** of not working together in the same place at the same time;
- providing **more support for communicating** difficult and sensitive issues;
- continuing to **identify individual skills development needs** through the performance development planning process while also linking to wider team training needs and ensuring **workloads allow people to take-up of L&D activities**;
- raising awareness, engagement with and investing more time in our **contributions to CSR initiatives to support professional development**.

Technical Guidance

Please bear in mind when reading this report:

- **Rounding |** Results are presented as whole numbers for ease of reading, with rounding performed at the last stage of calculation for maximum accuracy. Therefore, in some instances, the differences presented in this report will not match the rounded figures of the scores being compared. For example, where a figure of 69.64% has been returned in the raw data, in this report it will appear as 70% and this will be identified as an area for improvement.
- **Theme scores |** Scores for each individual theme are arrived at by calculating the average percentage of positive responses to the theme's constituent questions.
- **Comparison to historical results |** This year we created 23 questions which were not comparable to previous survey results. For tables that include data for historical survey results, 'N/A' indicates that a comparable question was not included in the survey.
- **Percentages |** Unless otherwise stated, question score percentages shown in this report relate to the proportion of employees providing a positive response.
- **Anonymity |** We have maintained anonymity of the feedback by removing any references to individuals and teams due to the small numbers in some teams which could identify individuals.

SCOTTISH PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN

People Centred | Improvement Focused

2021/22 Staff Survey

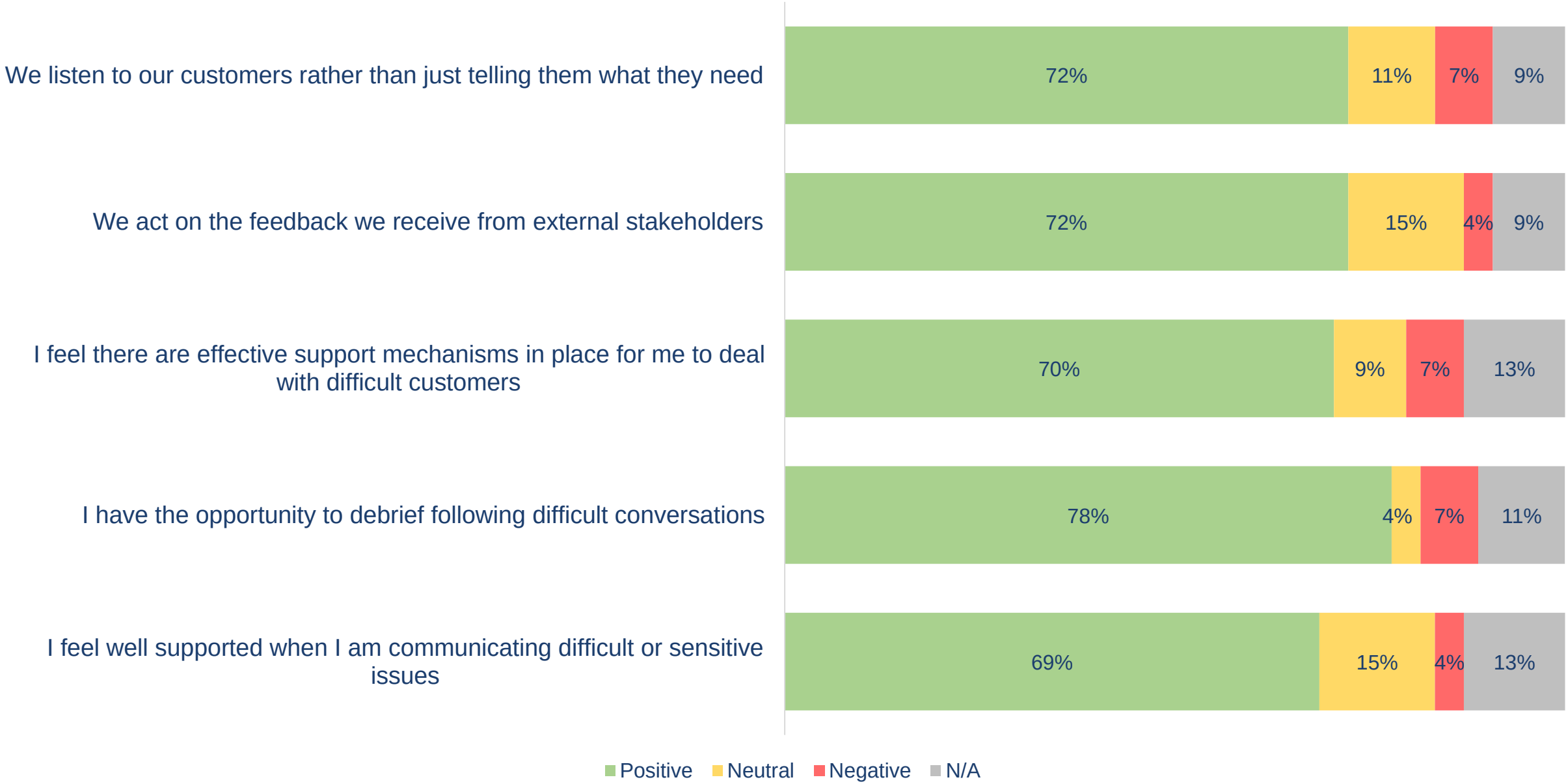
Detailed Results

My job

My work gives me a feeling of personal accomplishment
82%
11%
7%
My work is interesting and makes the best use of my skills and capabilities
75%
18%
7%
I feel empowered to make decisions and act on them
86%
9%
5%
I am encouraged to take initiative in my role
81%
16%
4%
I understand the performance standards and what I am expected to achieve in my job
88%
7%
5%
SPSO's success is reliant on all of us achieving our individual objectives
95%
5%
I feel that my contribution to the success of the SPSO is valued
82%
11%
7%
My targets are ambitious but realistic
67%
21%
9%
4%
I am able to find information when I need it
70%
11%
19%
I am comfortable with the amount of work I am expected to do
60%
18%
23%
I am supported in balancing my work and personal life
77%
14%
9%
I feel my job is secure
82%
7%
9%
2%
Positive
Neutral
Negative
N/A

Internal Relations

External customers



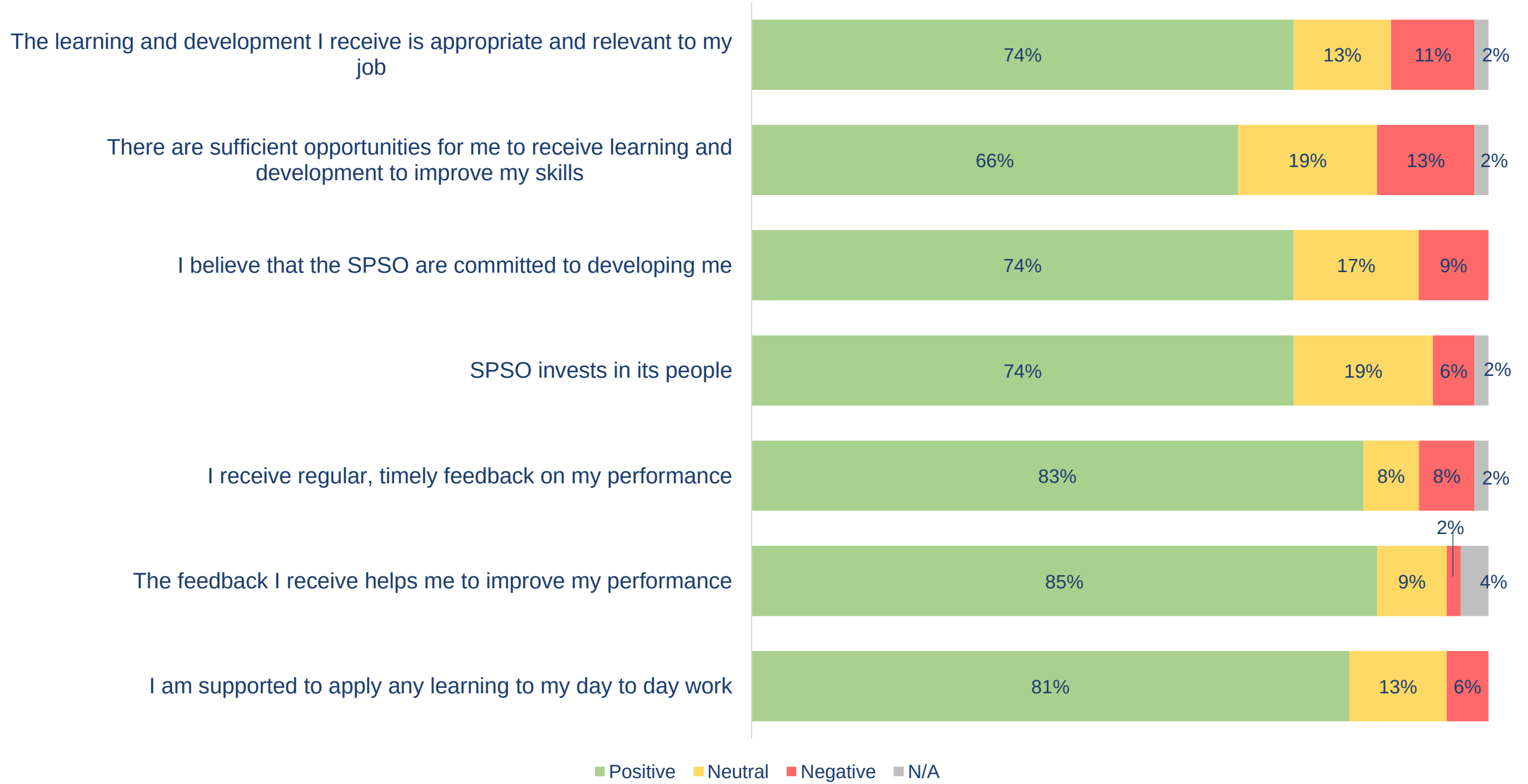
Management

I feel motivated by my line manager
83%
9%
7%
My line manager behaves consistently with integrity
94%
2%
4%
My line manager communicates effectively with me
89%
6%
6%
My line manager supports me in my health and wellbeing
87%
6%
6%
2%
My line manager encourages teamwork
91%
7%
2%
My line manager encourages collaboration with other teams
78%
19%
4%
My line manager strives to support and deliver better ways of working
87%
9%
4%
I/my team are consistently recognised when we exceed expectations
74%
19%
7%
Performance is managed in my team
69%
19%
11%
2%
I set my objectives with my line manager
81%
13%
2%
4%
My performance is reviewed regularly
89%
7%
2%
2%
I am encouraged to achieve high performance
85%
11%
4%
Positive
Neutral
Negative
N/A

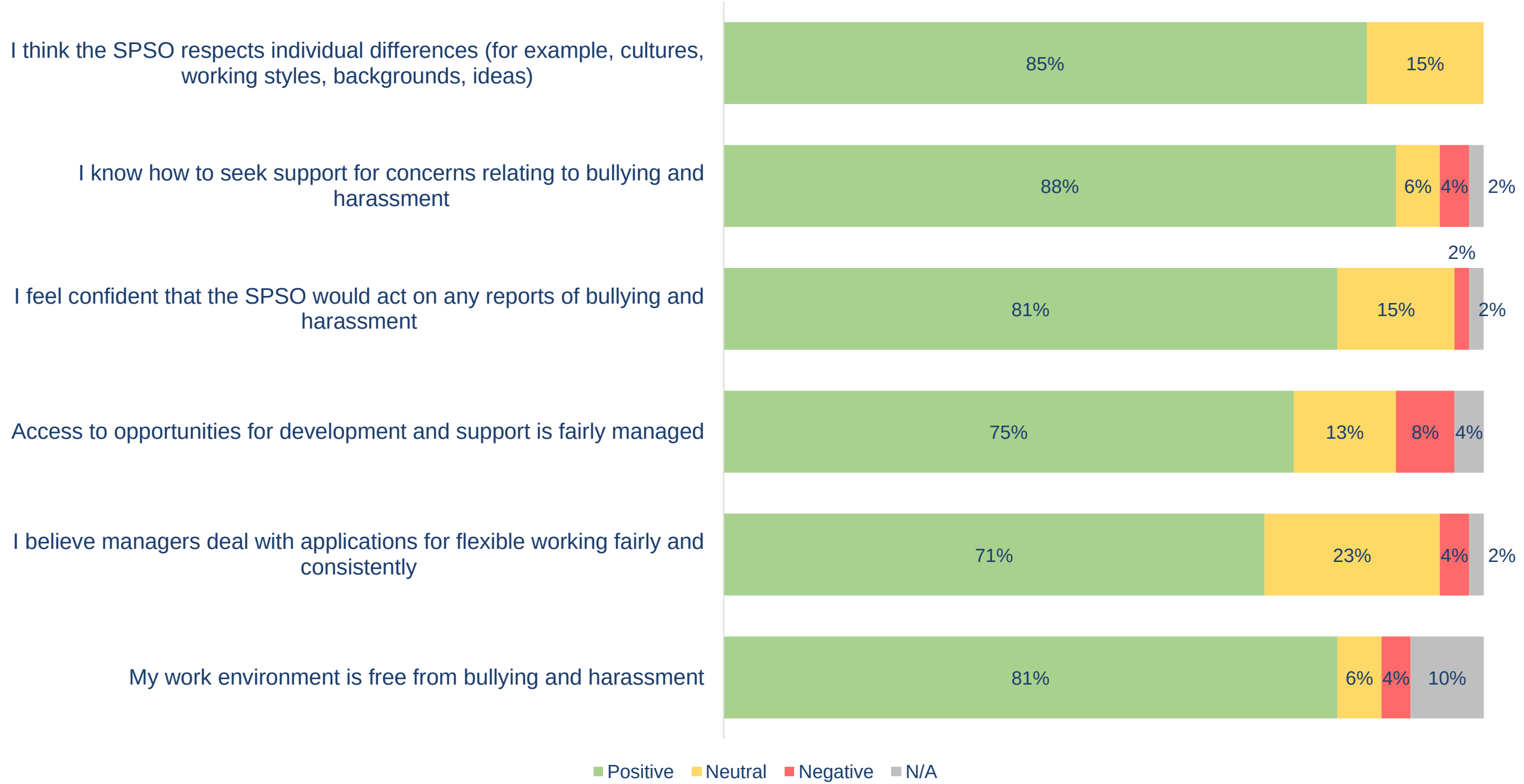
Leadership

SPSO has a clear plan for the future to ensure our continued success
51%
26%
23%
The leadership team communicates the organisation's vision and objectives clearly
85%
8%
8%
I feel comfortable with the progress and direction of the organisation at the present time
55%
17%
28%
The leadership team communicate effectively, keeping me informed about decisions and progress
92%
2%
6%
The leadership team are open and responsive
85%
11%
4%
The leadership team have kept me well informed and updated as the position has changed with regards to Covid and lockdown and how this impacts on the SPSO
92%
6%
2%
The leadership team provide consistent and effective leadership
79%
17%
4%
I trust and respect the leadership team at the SPSO
83%
15%
2%
I feel motivated by our leadership team
66%
28%
6%
Positive
Neutral
Negative
N/A

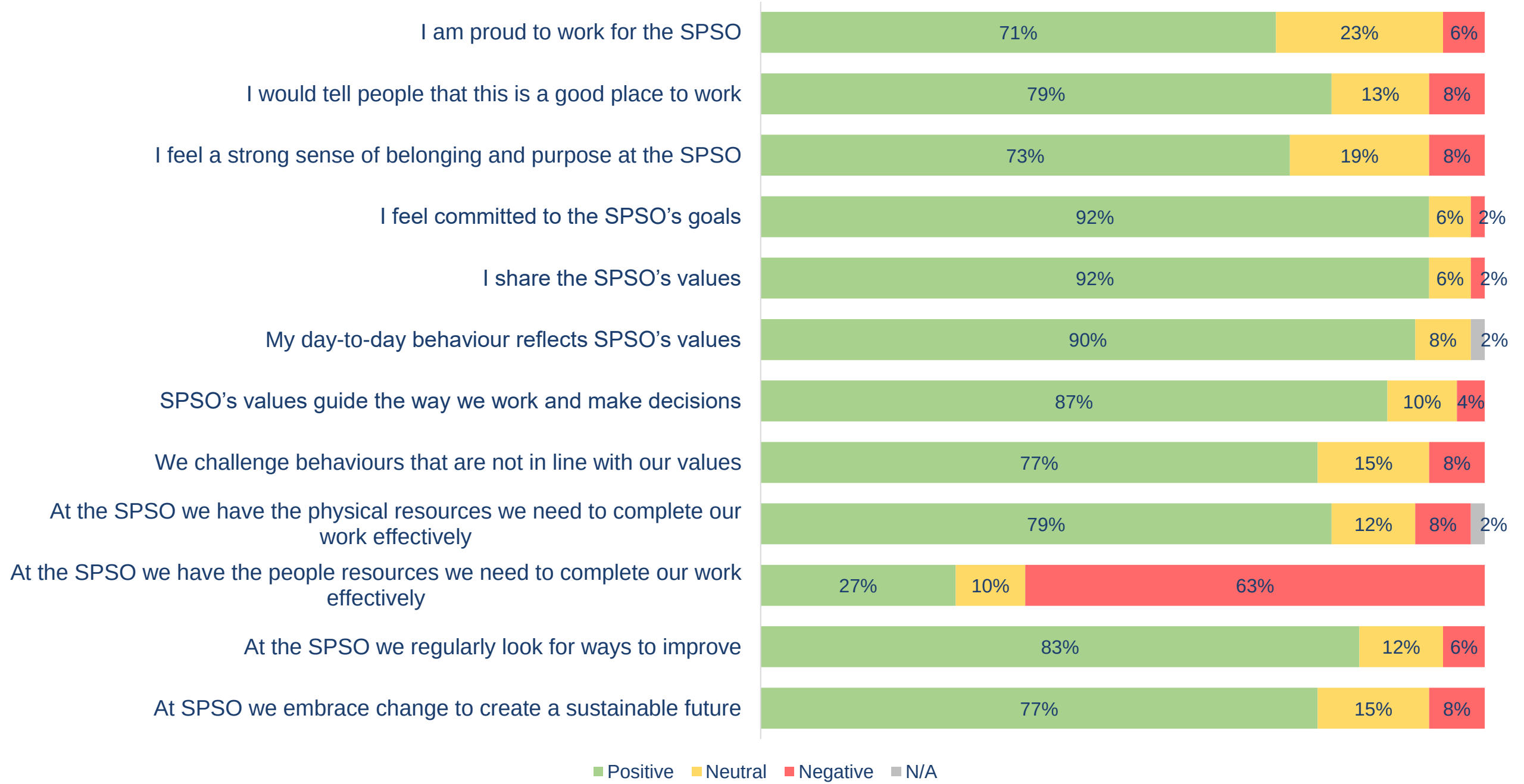
Learning and development



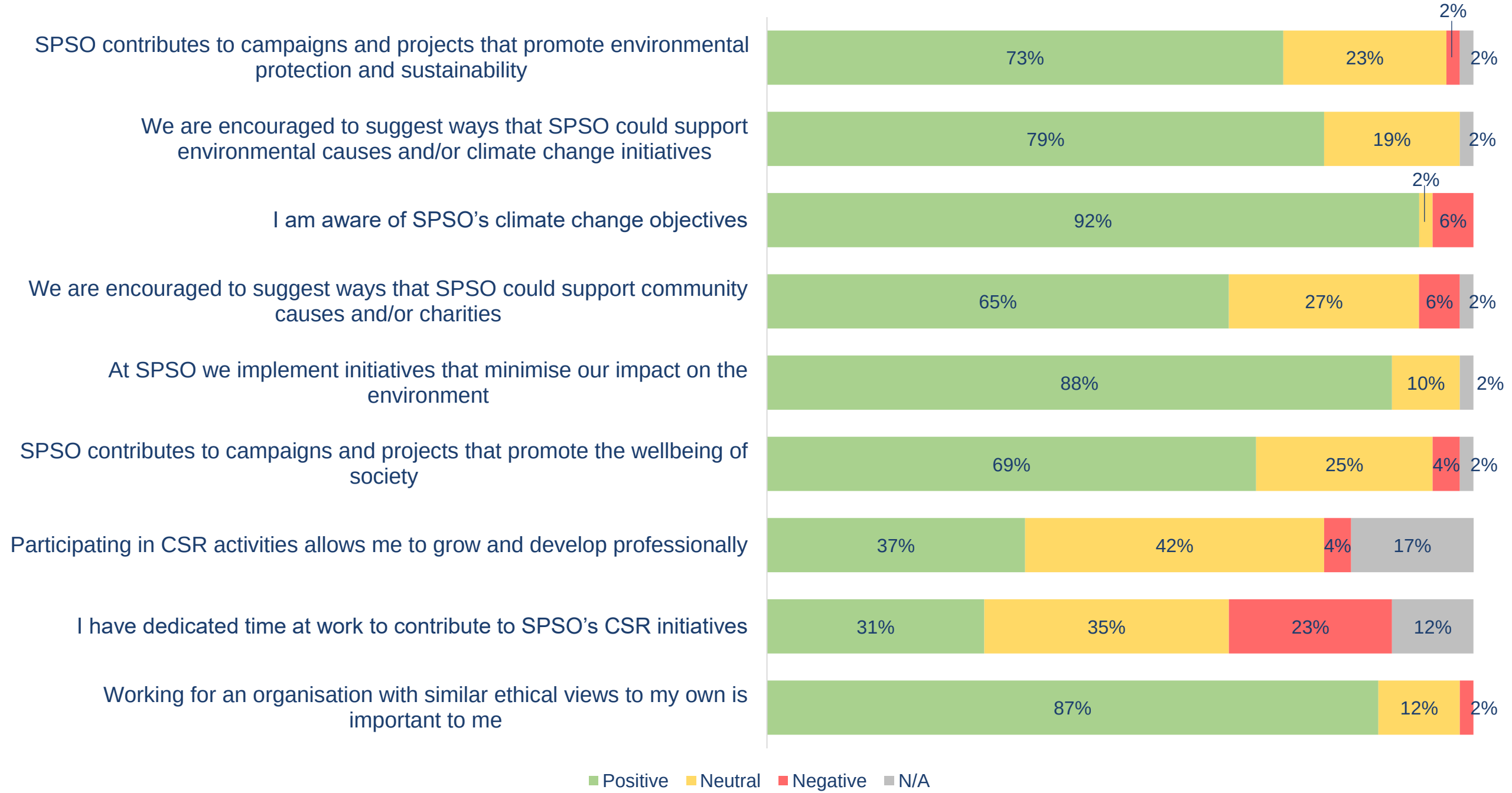
Equal opportunities and diversity



Perceptions of SPSO



Corporate social responsibility



Health and wellbeing

SCOTTISH
PUBLIC
SERVICES
OMBUDSMAN
People Centred | Improvement Focused