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# Welsh Government Grant Recipients Survey 2018

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# Welsh Government Grant Recipients Survey 2018

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Views expressed in this report are those of the researcher and not necessarily those of the Welsh Government

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# Executive Summary

## Background

This research was commissioned by the Grants Centre of Excellence to help inform changes to the grants process. It also responds to a commitment made to the Public Accounts Committee to run a grant recipients survey in 2018.

## Method

- An online survey was undertaken with Welsh Government grant recipients from 5 - 25 July 2018 to understand current satisfaction with the grants process, views on consistency and duplication across Welsh Government grants, and using on-line interfaces for grant funding from other sources.
- Grant managers within the Welsh Government supplied contact details of recipients of Welsh Government grants. From this, there were 1911 valid email addresses and an 18% response rate was achieved (348 responses) and responses were received from public, third and private sectors.
- Respondents in receipt of Welsh Government grants between April 2016 and April 2018 were categorised as 'current' grant recipients (73%); 'historic' grant recipients for grants before April 2016 (26%). One percent had never received a Welsh Government grant.
- It should be noted that the survey sample is not representative of all current recipients of Welsh Government grants; since the email addresses provided did not contain all grant recipients between 2016-2018.
- This report focuses on the satisfaction of 'current' grant recipients, and their experience with duplication and consistency across Welsh Government grants. It also focusses on the experiences of all respondents who applied or received grants using on-line interfaces from sources other than the Welsh Government.

## Satisfaction with the grants process

- Generally, grant recipients were satisfied with the overall aspects of the Welsh Government grants process with scores ranging from 66% to 80%.
- The highest levels of satisfaction were with the process for making claims and payments (80%), the guidance on applying (77%), the award letter (77%) and dealing with Welsh Government officials (73%).

- Respondents were slightly less satisfied with the grants monitoring process (69%) and the application and decision process (67%).
- Within these broad aspects of the grants process, there were some satisfaction scores greater than 80% for specific parts of each process, including: the award letter clearly setting out required roles and responsibilities and being easy to understand; satisfaction with the way claims are dealt with, knowing who to contact regarding claims and payments and the adequacy of the supporting information required.
- Conversely only 57% agreed that the award letter was issued in a timely manner and only 62% agreed that they knew how to find out what grant funding was available.
- Overall satisfaction with the grants process was analysed by sector. Respondents from the third sector were most satisfied, returning higher than average scores for all aspects of the grants process. The public and private sectors were typically less satisfied. The public sector was notably less satisfied with the award letter (10 percentage points below the cross-sector average) and the application and decision-making process (9 percentage points below the average). The private sector was less satisfied with the claims and payments (14 percentage points below the average) and grants monitoring processes (9 percentage points below the average).
- Respondents were given the opportunity within the survey to provide comments on the grants process. A proportion of the comments were positive, with recipients happy with the service and support provided throughout the process and complimentary of officials that had provided them with guidance. Some were pleased with the transparency of the process and some found it easier than expected. However, some comments were less positive, highlighting some inconsistency in experiences; and some challenges around: timeliness, the claims and payments processes, and recent changes to grant funding.

## **Consistency and duplication across Welsh Government grants**

- Respondents who indicated that they had experience of applying for or receiving more than one Welsh Government grant were asked questions about the **consistency of the grant process** across the Welsh Government.
- These respondents indicated that the highest level of consistency was with the advice they received from Welsh Government officials (73% always or sometimes consistent) and lowest level of consistency was in the monitoring processes (56% always or sometimes consistent).
- Consistency across application forms, the process for submitting applications and making claims received scores of 64%, 60%, and 62%, respectively.
- Respondents who had received more than one Welsh Government Grant in the same financial year were asked about **providing duplicate information**.
- 78% of these respondents reported providing duplicate information for applications, 46% during grant monitoring, 49% when making a claim; 49% had to explain the same issue to different Welsh Government officials.
- Respondents were asked to comment on their experience of consistency and duplication across the processes for Welsh Government grants.
- Some stated that because all grants are different they would typically expect an inconsistent experience depending on: the department awarding the grant, the grant manager's experience, or the size of the grant. Some felt that the differences were appropriate because policy priorities change over time. Some who did not apply for grants regularly also expected grants processes to have changed. Some reported that year-on-year changes to requirements, eligibility criteria or levels of funding within the same grant scheme caused greater frustration than inconsistencies between different grants.
- A number of respondents did not feel that it was onerous to provide duplicate information for different grant applications; typically repeating basic contact details and financial information. However, there seemed to be curiosity as to why this type of grant recipient information was not more widely shared across Welsh Government grant teams.

## **Use of online interfaces for processing grants**

- Respondents were asked about their experiences of applying for grant funding on-line from sources other than the Welsh Government. Only 36% of respondents had experience of this.
- Of these using an on-line interface, 90% had applied for grant funding, 64% had provided monitoring information and 61% had experience of the payments process.
- Many commented on what they liked most or least about applying and administering grants via on-line interfaces.
- In terms of whether respondents were likely to use on-line interfaces if adopted by the Welsh Government, the majority reported that they were highly or quite likely to apply for grant funding (87%), provide monitoring information (89%) or undertake claims and payments (90%) in this way.
- Some respondents provided comments supporting these findings, indicating that they expected the Welsh Government grants process to move in a more digital direction and were broadly in support of such a change.



# 1 Introduction

Grant funding is an essential vehicle to deliver the Welsh Government priorities laid out in the Programme for Government with over 11,000 grant awards offered each year.

As outlined in the [Welsh Government Interim Annual Report on Grants Management](#), Welsh Government is currently reviewing its Grants and Assurance processes as a strand of work for the Improving Efficiency Board. This work stream aims to reduce bureaucracy through implementing improvements such as transitioning to electronic platforms for certain elements of the grants process and increasing standardisation for applications and award letters, amongst other actions.

This research was commissioned by the Grants Centre of Excellence to: help inform the changes that should be made to the grants process through the Improving Efficiency Board work stream; and to respond to a commitment made to the Public Accounts Committee to run a grant recipients survey in 2018.

The overall aim of the research was to provide a current picture of satisfaction with the Welsh Government grants processes and to highlight the areas where improvement is most needed according to public, private and third sector grant holders. It also aimed to understand recipients' attitudes towards streamlining and moving some processes online. The research objectives are included below:

- To measure current grant holder satisfaction with the individual aspects of the grants process (Section 4.2), encompassing:
  - accessing guidance on applying for a grant;
  - submitting an application form;
  - receiving an Award Letter;
  - monitoring;
  - making a financial claim or receiving grant payments;
  - contact with Welsh Government officials over grants.
- To gauge current grant recipients' experiences of duplication and consistency across different Welsh Government grants (Section 5.1)
- To obtain an understanding of respondents' experiences of applying for other grants using online or digital platforms, and ascertaining their appetite for similar platforms for Welsh Government grants (Section 5.2)

## **2 Methods**

An online survey was adopted as the method for the research. The survey was available bilingually in English and Welsh and can be found at [Annex A](#). The survey was designed to be completed quickly and involved routing options for current and historic grant recipients in order to minimise respondent burden. Only one question was mandatory, which identified in which financial year respondents were awarded their most recent Welsh Government grant, to ensure that the respondent was on the correct routing 'path' through the survey. The remainder of questions were non-mandatory providing the option for respondents not to respond if preferred.

The survey sample was derived from information supplied by Welsh Government grants managers who were invited to submit contact details of recent grants recipients. A total of 1911 valid email addresses were provided. The sample contained contacts for the public, private, and third sectors.

The survey was launched on Thursday 5 July 2018, with emails containing a link to the online survey, using Questback survey software, distributed that day. The survey closed Wednesday 25 July 2018. A reminder email was sent to all recipients on Monday 16 and again on Tuesday 24 July 2018 to further encourage responses.

### **2.1 Methodological considerations**

Satisfaction scores in the findings section are calculated as positive scores (combining percentages of those who selected strongly agree and agree to statements) and negative scores (combining percentages of those who selected strongly disagree and disagree).

It should be noted that percentages displayed in the charts have been rounded to whole numbers for simplicity of presentation and could increase or decrease by one percentage point when aggregated into the positive or negative score. Values from .00 to .49 are rounded down and values from .50 to .99 are rounded up. To give maximum accuracy, rounding is performed at the last stage of calculation. If calculations are performed using the rounded figures in the charts, these may differ slightly from the calculations in the report. Therefore, aggregated scores for Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither, Disagree and Strongly Disagree these may not total to exactly 100 percent in the charts.

Finally, given the method by which the sample was derived, the findings are not representative of all recipients of Welsh Government grants, and only represent the views of those that responded to the survey. However, the findings do include responses from across the public, third and private sectors.

### **3 Scope of this report**

Out of the total 1911 recipients who were invited to take part in the research, there were 348 respondents who completed the survey, giving a response rate of 18 percent.

Seventy three percent of respondents were categorised as 'current' grant recipients (in receipt of grants between April 2016 and April 2018) and 26 percent 'historic' grant recipients (in receipt of grants prior to April 2016). One percent stated they had never received a Welsh Government grant.

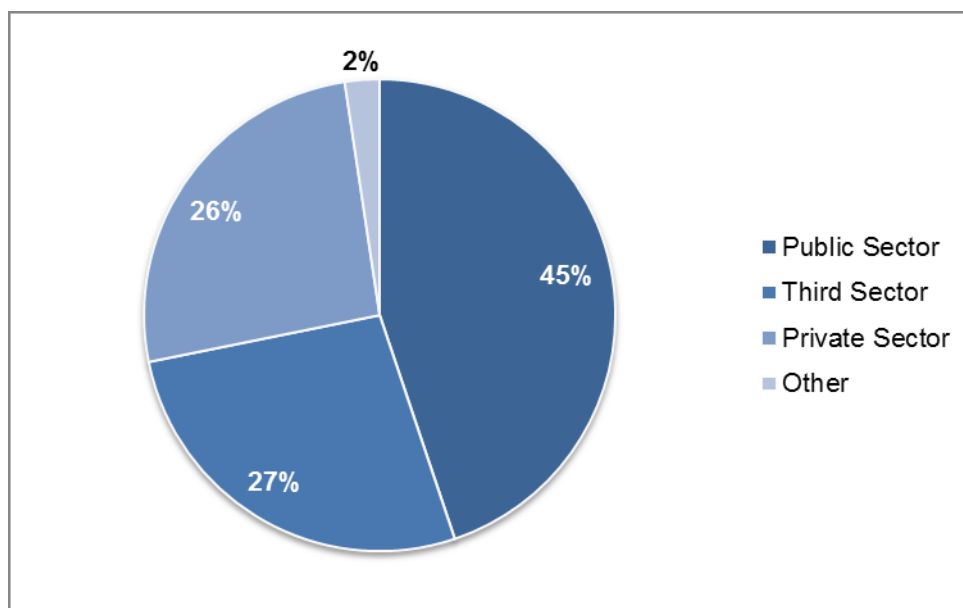
In the main, this report focuses on 'current' grant recipients' views on the grants process and their experience with duplication and consistency across Welsh Government grants. However, the report also focusses on the experiences of both current and historic recipients in relation to using online platforms for applying for grants from sources other than the Welsh Government.

## **4 Survey findings**

### **4.1 Respondent profile**

Figure 1 shows the profile of 'current' grant respondents by the sector in which they work. The largest proportion of respondents came from the public sector (45 percent); there were 27 percent from the third sector and 26 percent were from private sector. A small proportion (two percent) indicated that they worked for an 'other' type of organisation.

Figure 1: Types of organisation ('Current' recipients)



Number of respondents: 253

## 4.2 Satisfaction with grants process

Current grant recipients were asked to indicate which stages of the grants process they had been involved with, in order to identify which follow-on questions would be relevant to them.

Respondents were asked about their satisfaction on a five point scale from 'Strongly Agree' to 'Strongly Disagree' with the following stages of the Welsh Government grants process:

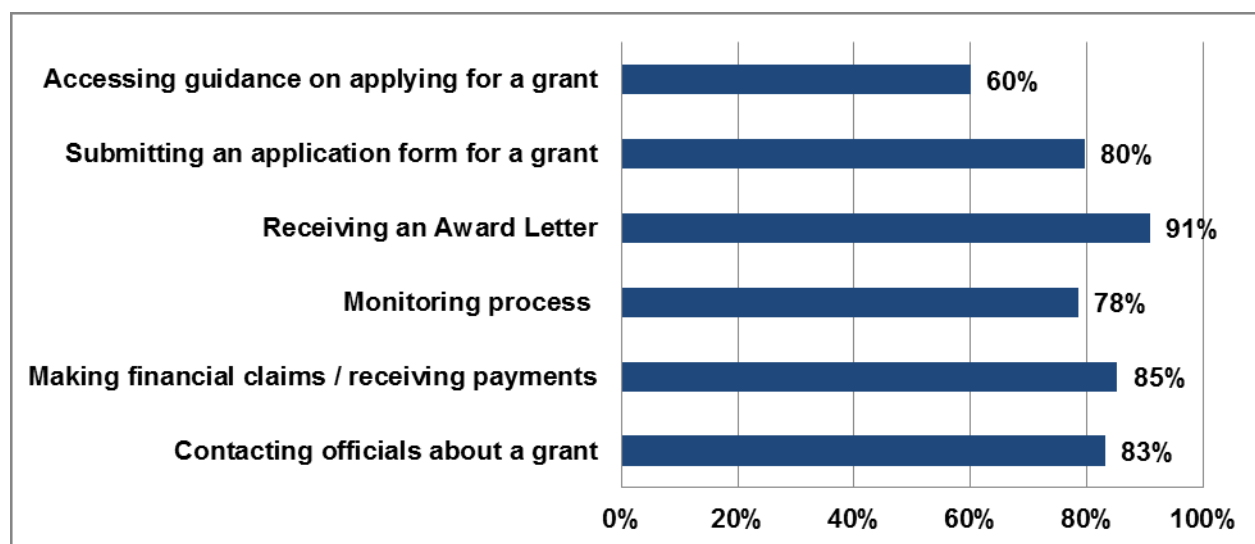
- accessing guidance on making an application;
- the application and decision-making process;
- receipt of the Award Letter (grant terms and conditions);
- grant monitoring processes;
- the claims and payments processes; and
- dealing with Welsh Government grant officials.

Following the satisfaction questions, all respondents were offered the opportunity to provide further feedback through an open-ended comments question.

## Overall satisfaction

As Figure 2 shows, most respondents (91 percent) had received an Award Letter (grant terms and conditions), with the smallest proportion (60 percent) involved in accessing guidance on applying for a grant.

Figure 2: Involvement in different stages of Welsh Government grants process



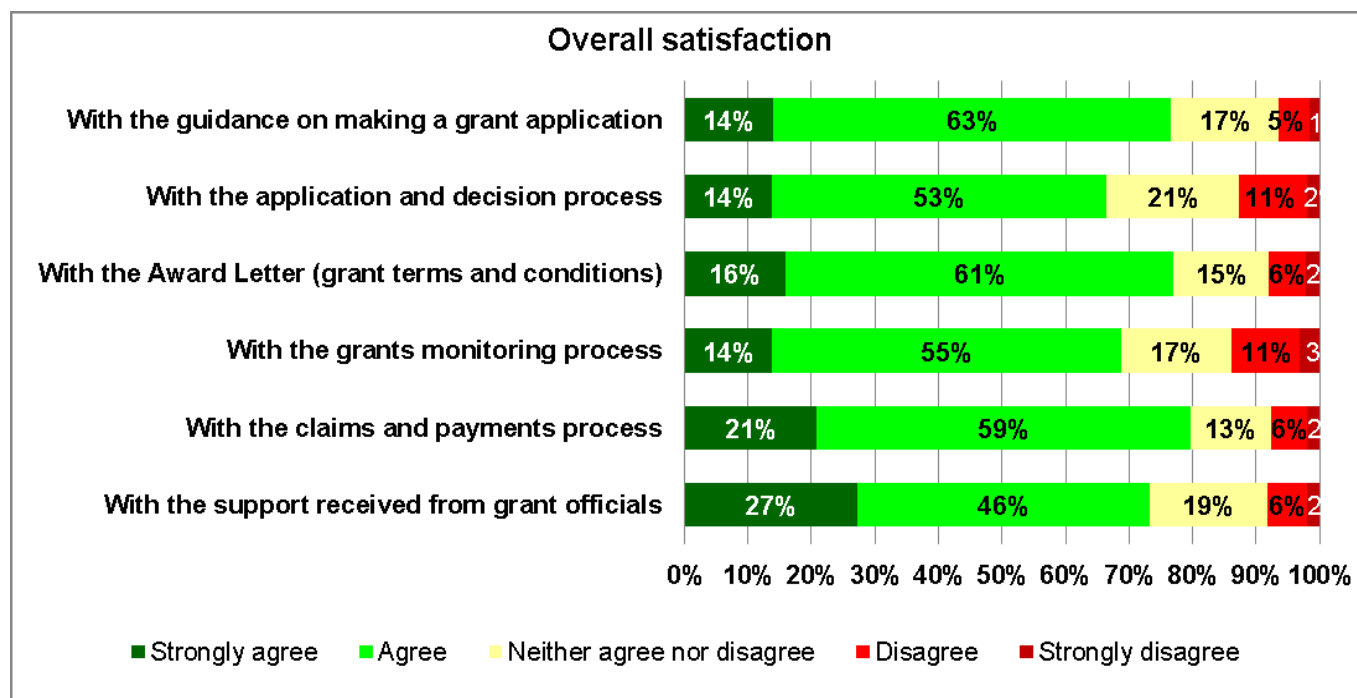
Number of respondents: 250

Figure 3 shows the overall satisfaction scores for each stage of the grants process and respondents' dealings with officials. Overall satisfaction was 66 percent or above for each stage of the process.

The highest levels of satisfaction were with the process for making claims and payments (80 percent), the guidance on applying (77 percent), the Award Letter (77 percent) and dealing with Welsh Government officials (73 percent).

Respondents were slightly less satisfied with the grants monitoring process (69 percent) and the application and decision process (66 percent).

Figure 3: Overall satisfaction with the grants process and support from officials



Number of respondents (top to bottom): 201, 197, 226, 195, 211, 205

#### 4.2.1.1 Overall satisfaction by sector

The overall satisfaction statements were analysed by sector to identify whether there were any notable differences between the public, private and third sectors compared to the cross sector average. The 'Other' category was too small to reliably compare against the other sectors.

When comparing overall satisfaction by sector, the third sector were the most satisfied; returning higher than average satisfaction scores for all aspects of the grants process. The public and private sectors were typically less satisfied.

The public sector were least satisfied with the award letter (10 percentage points less than the cross-sector average), the application and decision-making process (9 percentage points less than the average) and the guidance available on making the grant application (5 percentage points less than the average).

The private sector were least satisfied with claims and payments (14 percentage points below the average), grants monitoring (nine percentage points less than the average). Both private and public sector were only slightly less satisfied (three percentage points) than the cross-sector average regarding support from grant officials.

A detailed description of this analysis can be found at [Annex B](#).

#### **4.2.1.2 Detailed satisfaction with each stage of the grants process**

Satisfaction with the grants process was explored in more detail, with additional questions for each stage of the grants process.

##### **Submitting an application for a Welsh Government grant**

For those who had indicated that they had submitted an application for a Welsh Government grant, they were presented with two banks of satisfaction statements; one around guidance on applying and another around the application and decision process.

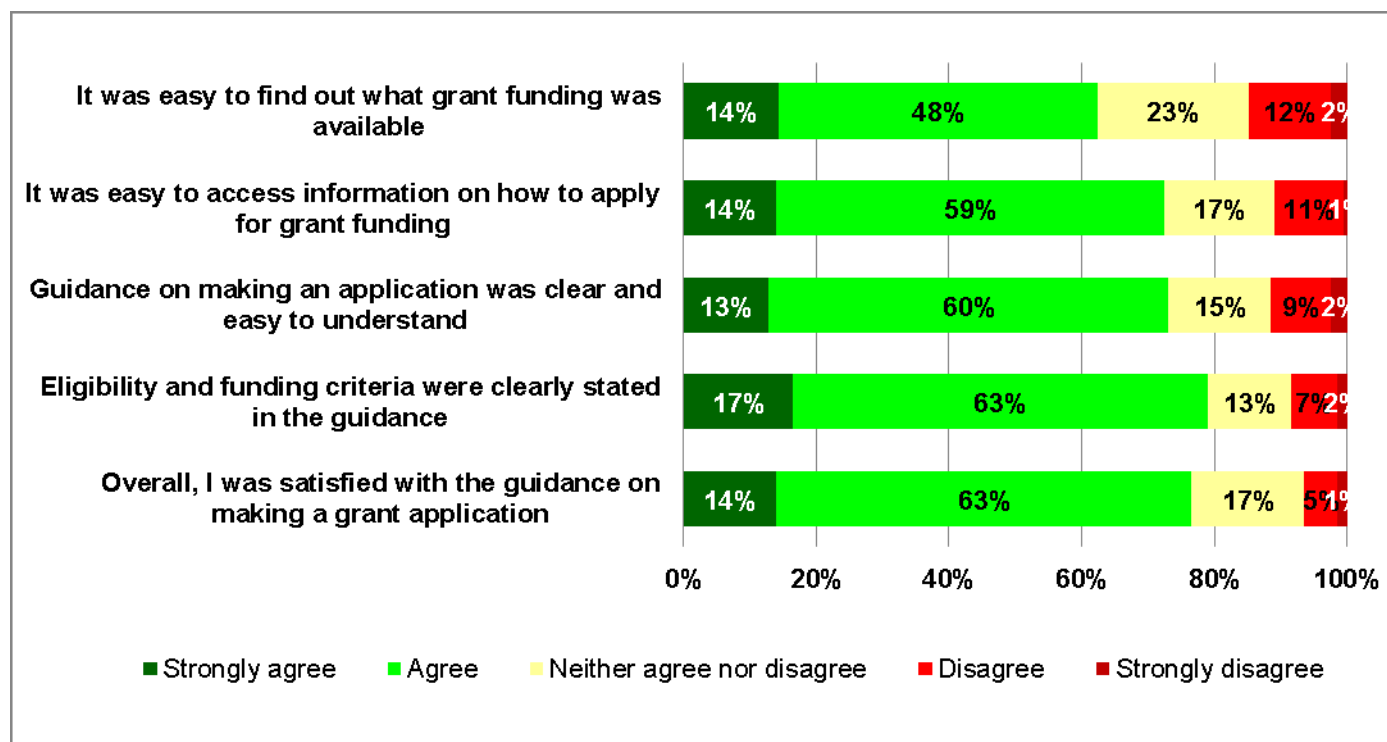
###### **a. Guidance on applying for Welsh Government Grants**

Respondents were asked about the initial guidance on applying for a Welsh Government grant, in terms of how far they agreed or disagreed with five statements around: ease of finding out what grant funding was available, accessibility of information on how to apply for funding, clarity of guidance on making an application; clarity of the eligibility and funding criteria within the guidance; and overall whether respondents were satisfied with the guidance on making a grant application.

As can be seen in Figure 4, satisfaction was relatively high across all statements, with the positive scores ranging from 79 percent to 62 percent. The highest positive score was on the clarity of eligibility and funding criteria in the guidance.

The lowest positive score (62 percent) was in response to the ease of finding out what grant funding was available. This statement also received the highest negative score of 15 percent, but also the largest neutral score (23 percent).

Figure 4: Satisfaction with initial guidance on applying for grants



Number of respondents (top to bottom): 201, 200, 201, 200, 202

## b. Application and decision processes

Respondents who indicated involvement in the application and decision process were asked to state how much they agreed or disagreed with five statements, whether: the application form was easy to complete, an adequate amount of time was given to fill in the application form; the timetable for the grants application and decision process was clearly communicated; the volume of information requested in support of the application was appropriate, and finally whether they were satisfied overall with the application and decision process.

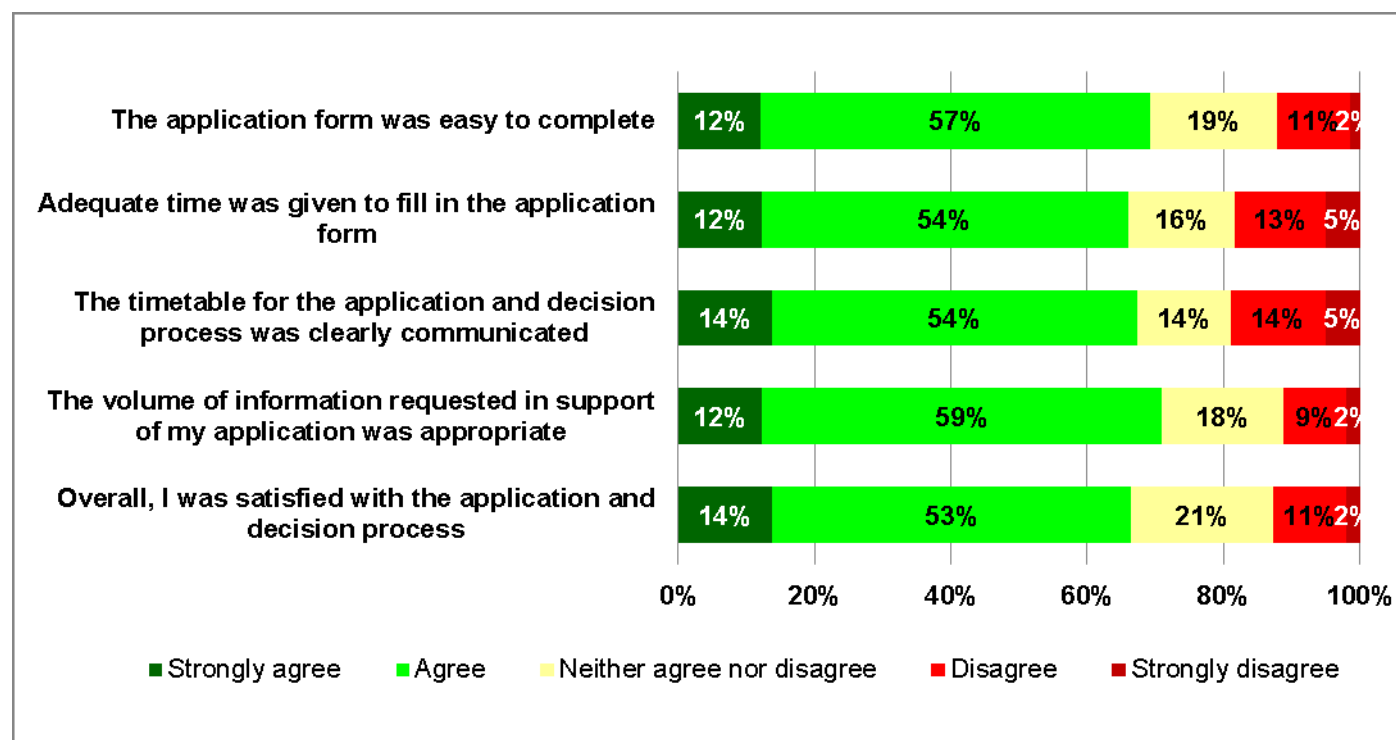
As can be seen in Figure 5, positive scores far outweighed the negative scores. The highest level of satisfaction was recorded for the appropriateness of the volume of information required in support of applications, receiving the highest positive score of 71 percent and the lowest negative score of 11 percent.

The highest levels of dissatisfaction (19 percent negative score) was returned for the statement about clear communication of the timetable for the application and decision process. This statement also returned one of the lowest positive scores of 67 percent.



The lowest positive score of 66 percent, along with a large neutral score from one-fifth (21 percent) of respondents, was returned in response to the overall satisfaction with the application and decision.

Figure 5: Satisfaction with the application and decision process



Number of respondents (top to bottom): 197, 196, 196, 197, 198

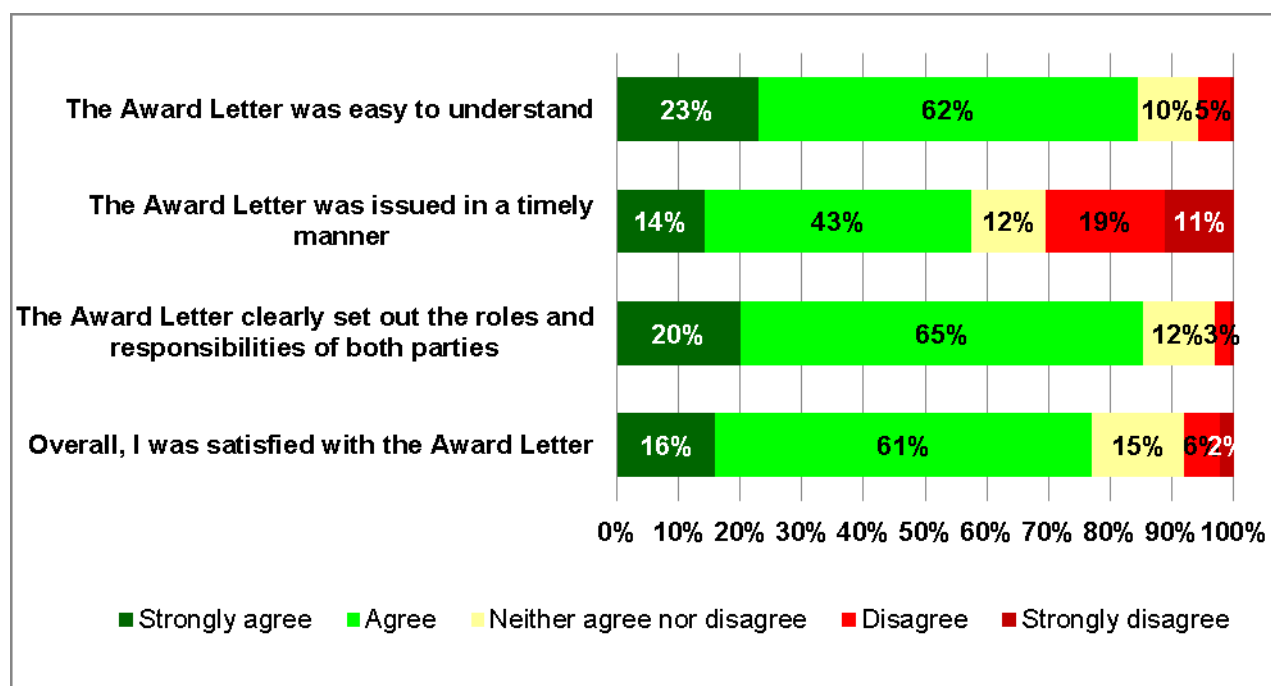
## Funding agreement

Respondents who indicated that they had received an Award Letter (grant terms and conditions) or funding agreement from Welsh Government, were asked to what extent they agreed with four statements relating to the funding agreement, notably whether: the funding agreement was easy to understand; the funding agreement was issued in a timely manner; the funding agreement clearly set out the roles and responsibilities of both parties; and finally overall satisfaction with the Welsh Government funding agreement.

As can be seen in Figure 6, there are greater differences between the positive scores for the funding agreement questions than the previous questions. The highest positive score of 85 percent was achieved for two statements: the Award Letter was easy to understand; and about the award letter clearly setting out the roles and responsibilities of both parties, this statement correspondingly had the lowest (three percent) negative score.

The lowest positive score of 58 percent was returned for the timeliness in issuing the award letter, which also saw the highest (31 percent) negative score.

Figure 6: Satisfaction with the Award Letter (grant terms and conditions)



Number of respondents (top to bottom): 226, 225, 226, 227

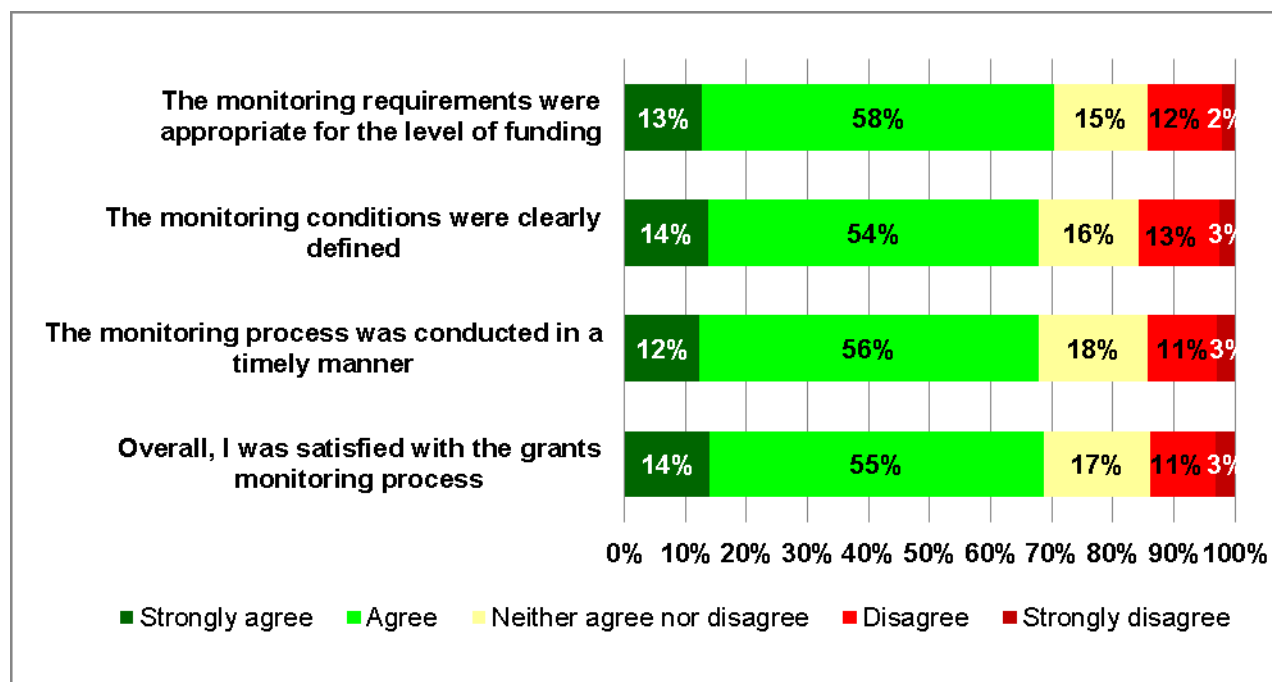
## Grants monitoring process

Respondents who had indicated involvement in the monitoring process were shown four statements to assess how strongly they agreed or disagreed that: the monitoring requirements were appropriate for the level of funding; the monitoring conditions were clearly defined; the monitoring process was conducted in a timely manner; and that overall they were satisfied with the grants monitoring process.

As can be seen in Figure 7, all statements received between 68 and 70 percent positive scores. The highest positive score (70 percent) was returned in response to the monitoring requirements being appropriate for the level of funding.

The lowest positive score (68 percent) was returned for the monitoring process being conducted in a timely manner. The statement 'the monitoring conditions were clearly defined' also received 68 percent positive score, as well as the highest negative score (16 percent).

Figure 7: Satisfaction with the grants monitoring process



Number of respondents (top to bottom): 195, 196, 196, 196

## Claims and payments process

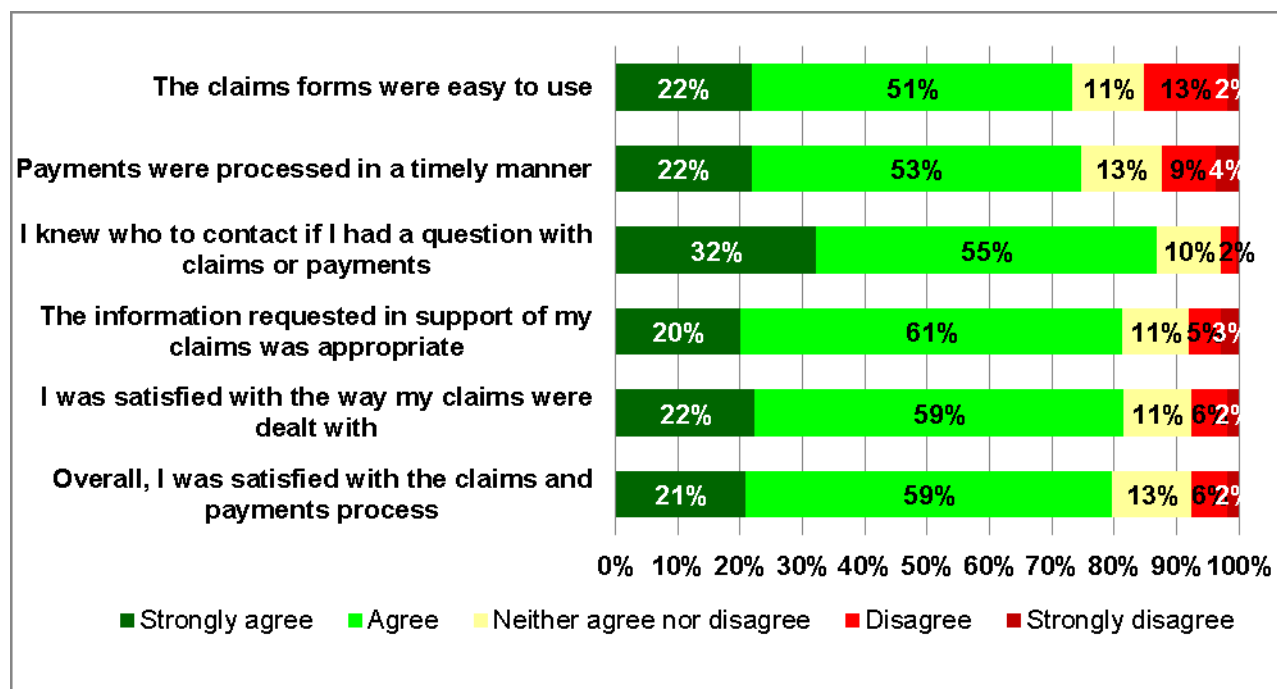
Respondents who had indicated involvement in the claims and payments process were presented with six statements around whether: the claims forms were easy to use; payments were processed in a timely manner; they knew who to contact with questions about claims or payments; the information requested to support claims was appropriate; they were satisfied with the way claims were dealt with; and overall satisfaction with the claims and payments process.

As can be seen in Figure 8, respondents returned high positive scores of over 70 percent for all statements. Of all the satisfaction questions in the survey, this was the area where respondents were, on average, most positive.

Positive scores ranged from 73 percent to 87 percent. The highest positive score was recorded for knowing who to contact with a question or for support related to claims and payments; this statement also had the lowest negative score of 3 percent.

The lowest positive score (73 percent) and highest negative score (15 percent) was returned for the statement around whether claims forms were easy to use.

Figure 8: Satisfaction with the claims and payments process



Number of respondents (top to bottom): 211, 210, 209, 211, 210, 210

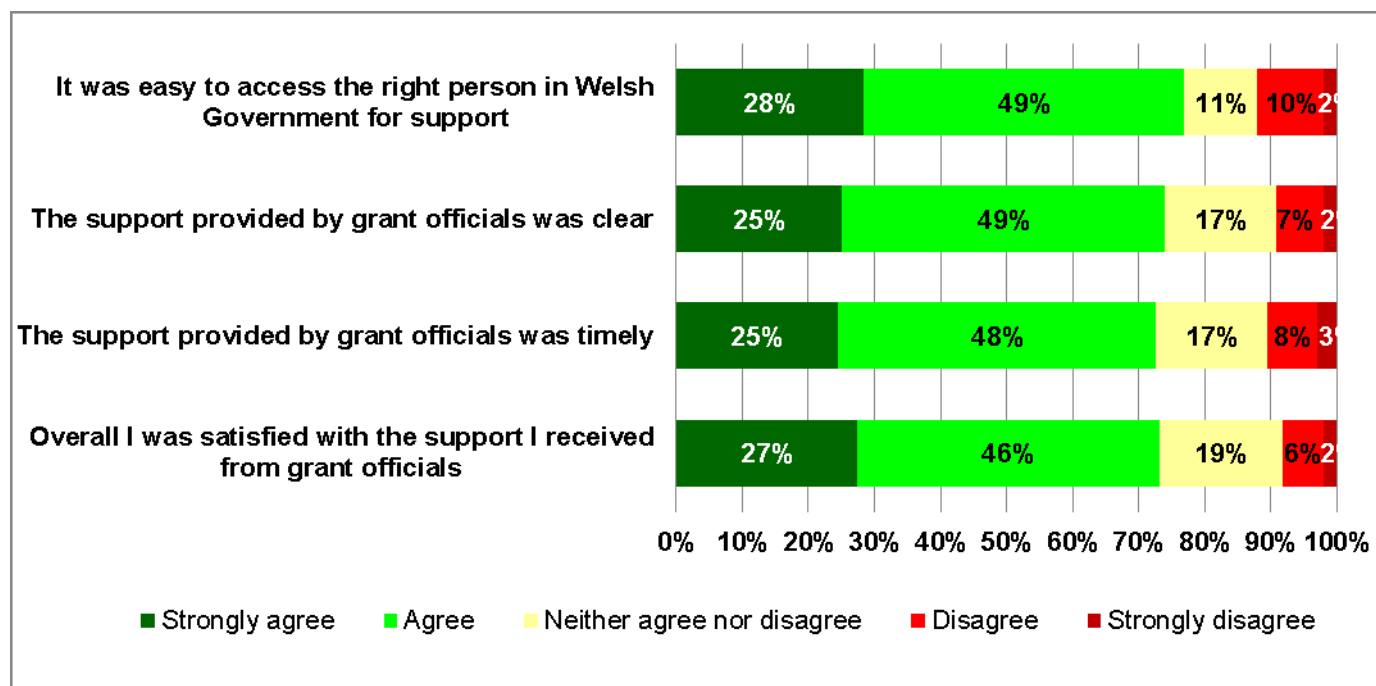
## Satisfaction with support from Welsh Government officials

Respondents who had contact with Welsh Government officials in relation to applying for, or receiving, a grant were shown four statements asking them to what extent they agreed or disagreed that: it was easy to access the right person in Welsh Government to provide support; the support provided by Welsh Government grants officials was clear; the support provided by Welsh Government grants officials was timely; and whether they were satisfied overall with the support received from Welsh Government grants officials.

As can be seen in Figure 9, the majority of respondents were satisfied with support from officials, with positive scores ranging from 73 to 77 percent. The highest positive score (77 percent) was received for the ease of access to the right person in Welsh Government for support, though this also had slightly higher negative score (12 percent) than the other statements. Overall satisfaction with support received from grant officials received the lowest negative score (eight percent).

The lowest positive score (73 percent) and was returned for timely support from grant officials and for overall satisfaction in this area.

Figure 9: Satisfaction with Welsh Government grant officials



Number of respondents (top to bottom): 205, 208, 208, 208

## Comments provided on the Welsh Government grants process

Respondents were given the opportunity to provide comments on the grants process, outlining their general experiences with the process and suggestions for improvement.

Around half of the grant recipients provided comments. A proportion of the comments were positive, with respondents noting that they were happy with the levels of service and support provided to them throughout. Some felt the process was very straightforward. Some were pleased with the transparency of the process and some commented that it was easy or easier than expected. However, there were also less positive comments provided, highlighting some inconsistency in experiences; and some challenges around: timeliness, the claims and payments processes; and recent changes to grant funding. Given that the purpose of the research is to focus on areas for improvement; respondents' less positive comments were explored in detail, as set out below.

## **Support from officials**

Many respondents reported that they had consistently received good support from Welsh Government Grant officials. Respondents said that Welsh Government Officials are supportive, efficient, courteous and very easy to access via telephone or email. Some found that their queries were resolved quickly and stated that the officials were 'solution focussed'. Some specified that this support began prior to submitting an application in the form of timely reminders and support to avoid poor form filling or late submission. Some reported that when they found aspects of the grants process challenging, officials were always willing to assist. A number of respondents said that monitoring meetings were well managed and valued the opportunity to relay the 'story' behind the grant funding, not just providing factual impersonal information on a monitoring sheet. It was felt that collaborative approaches sometimes led to an increased sense of successful project delivery.

Although officials were deemed to be supportive, a number of respondents reported changes in personnel were challenging in terms of loss of corporate memory, requiring recipients to repeat information and re-develop working relationships with new grant managers. Some found that meetings were cancelled and difficult to rearrange as a knock-on effect of staff turnover. Furthermore, some experienced delayed, or an occasional lack of, responses to emails, with no delegation to other staff or alternate contact point. Some also noticed differences in terms of the reliability of advice when experienced officials were replaced by someone with less experience. In addition, some reported that officials involved with monitoring grant funding tend to be different to those involved in awarding, and therefore the consistency of support could fluctuate.

"The people involved at the Welsh Government who help and deal with the grants are really good, very switched on, a great team"

-Private sector respondent

"Overall my contact with Welsh Government is very good. I'm always able to speak with someone and they are always able to help with any queries."

-Third sector respondent

"Have dealt with officials in a number of branches and monitoring, claims and payment processes have been straightforward and the staff have been helpful and supportive. Queries are dealt with quickly."

- Third sector respondent

“The process was straightforward even though it was the first time I had experienced a grant application. The support and guidance by the support team was invaluable.”

- Private sector respondent

“There has been several changes in Account Managers since I have been managing the grant, where we have had to build relationships and understanding all over again.”

-Public sector respondent

“A number of meetings have been cancelled and it's been quite difficult to book a date for the end of year review. I'm presuming this is due to a change in policy officer, previously it's been fine.”

-Third sector respondent

## **Timeliness**

Many respondents commented about the timeliness of the grants process as an issue, particularly with applications and issuing award letters.

### **Applications**

Some respondents said that by the time that grant guidance was fully published, the timescales for submitting a good application were too tight. Others noted that grant application deadlines could be better timed. For example, deadlines in the first week of September only allowed the holiday period for completing the application forms. This was particularly difficult for small organisations or those that needed input from other delivery partners.

Some commented that the Welsh Government were slow to process grant applications following prompt submission by applicants, one commenting that they were notified of the outcome five months after the initial submission. It was a source of frustration when the Welsh Government missed its own deadlines particularly around decision making on grants and some suggested that the turnaround should be tighter and communications improved when this was not possible. Occasionally, despite delayed decision making, the timeframe permitted to deliver the projects remained unchanged. Private sector applicants felt frustrated when poor timeliness had negative effects on planned product development, leading to feelings of the grants process being out of line with private sector needs. Some felt that better adherence by Welsh Government to the stated timetable would reduce the difficulties involved in planning for delivery.

“Timing is always the issue, we are given extremely tight turnaround times for application and then further information but decisions coming back take what I consider to be too long and sometimes run into the programme delivery.”

-Public sector respondent

“The communications around grant funding has frequently fallen behind the timescales originally offered.”

-Third sector respondent

“The pace of the process reflects a public sector bureaucratic requirement, not the requirement for speed of a more nimble organisation. The channelling of funding needs to be quicker to narrow the gap in expectation from the two entities. Ultimately, if government is to better support business, then government needs to pick up the pace, be more proactive and more flexible.”

- Private sector respondent

## Award Letters

Many respondents commented on the lack of timeliness with the issuance of Award Letters, which supports the findings in Figure 6. In particular, this was the case for the public sector who reported that untimely Award Letters had knock-on effects in terms of staff retention for ongoing programmes that didn't have funding confirmed with sufficient notice. It was stated that staff contracts can only be renewed with official written notice of programme funding (as opposed to the indicative funding notice likely to have been provided earlier), which was, in some cases, only received days before the end of the previous funding period. Some respondents commented that in some cases they had to continue to run programmes in good faith without written confirmation of funding well into the programme period. Others commented that, where this had not been possible, delayed Award Letters had resulted in a disjointed provision of services, often relied upon by vulnerable groups of people.

This also delayed planning and delivery of priorities until confirmation of the exact amount of funding was received. Some respondents were not aware that a reduction in funding would be made to an ongoing programme until they had received their Award Letter, and noted that there was no rationale given for reductions either.

“Local Authorities need to have grant funding confirmation letters in a timely manner. March or later is not an acceptable confirmation time for that financial year as this affects morale, staff retention and results in disjointed services being provided for children, young people and their families.”

- Public sector respondent



“The timescale in which funding allocations are confirmed are too short to effectively make decisions around how to maximise grant use or to reduce provision in cases of funding reductions.”

-Public sector respondent

“We are still awaiting the formal grant offer letter even though we are now into quarter 2. We are taking in good faith the confirmation in writing that this will be sent to us but has been delayed. The process could be improved in this area.”

- Third sector respondent

### Annual cycles of funding

Many respondents from the public sector felt that increasing funding cycles from one to two or three years could help deliver more strategic projects while reducing the administrative and recruitment costs associated with annual renewals. Some felt that annual cycles led to more frequent changes in grant criteria year-to-year, some noting that grant requirements got more complex over time, or demanding of innovative delivery initiatives even though past initiatives might have been successful and proven to work.

“WG need to consider moving away from annual funding awards to a minimum of two or three years this will ensure better VFM; will stop staff leaving due to job security and will save WG funding be a reduction in administration.”

-Public sector respondent

“having being involved in grants for a number of years in a range of areas they are forever changing which is clearly a problem, no two years have been the same! Timing is always an issue - late issuing of documents, revised criteria and late awards and ANNUAL GRANTS combine to make things even more difficult than they need be.”

-Public sector respondent

### **Claims, payments and monitoring**

Some respondents felt that there could be improvements made to the claims, payments and monitoring processes.

Some commented that claim forms could be repetitive and complicated, requiring a lot of time to complete. Others commented that some of the detail required for claims didn't seem relevant to achieving the outcomes; for example requiring staff names

and job descriptions funded by the grant as opposed to allowing recipients to explain all the work they deliver with the grant. Some commented on the tight turnaround after the end of a quarter to submit actual figures in support of claims. Comments were provided around the difficulty with 'wet' signatures when there are multiple signatories. Some asked for an automated email acknowledgement upon receipt so that grant recipients are aware that claims have officially been received and processed within a given timeframe.

A number of respondents had experienced a long delay between submitting claims and receiving payments, often without notice or explanation as to why the grant might have been withheld, and claimants were only provided with reasons, or payment, after chasing officials.

Some reported that quarterly monitoring reports were too onerous and frequent. A few felt that monitoring forms were not distributed in a timely manner. Some respondents reported that monitoring requirements are often only confirmed after programmes have started, making retrospective data collection difficult. Some were frustrated when similar Welsh Government grant funded projects had different schedules and different approaches to monitoring.

Some noted that changes kept being made to claims and monitoring forms within grants over time, making it more difficult to develop a systematic approach to completing them.

"Monitoring and claims process is very unclear and pedantic...."

-Private sector respondent

"The date for quarterly claim forms ... is unrealistically short. For example this year we had to submit on Monday July 2 even though the quarter only ended on the Saturday and this leaves little time to do the quarterly accounting."

-Third sector respondent

"When claim forms are sent, it would be useful to receive an acknowledgement that the forms have been received and are being processed."

-Third sector respondent

## **Changes to grant funding**

A number of respondents had experienced recent changes to long-standing grant schemes, for example a number of grant streams had been curtailed or merged. Some respondents were positive when they had been consulted and grant streams

had an improved focus on outcomes; though a few commented that changes were made without sufficient consultation with, or communication to, grant recipients. Therefore, some changes were seen as ‘top-down’, leading to confusion and a sense that it was against the ways of working set out in the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act. Furthermore, some felt that policy changes occasionally had too much influence on which grants were issued or cut. A few commented that in spite of initiatives to merge grant streams, additional small grants were sometimes introduced at a later date which were challenging to administer by the deadline. It was felt that although additional monies are welcome, late notification can pose a challenge to achieving the intended outcomes.

“Recent changes to grants are unclear, poorly timed, poorly communicated, involved no consultation with stakeholders, particularly other statutory bodies (except after decisions were made)...”

-Public sector respondent

“There has been a complete breakdown in communication with grants recipients and a failure to truly co-design new grants programmes. What were badged as co-design events were more about telling the third sector how the new grant programme was going to operate... The Welsh Government should be embracing fully the five ways of working set out in the Well-Being of Future Generations Act.”

-Third sector respondent

### **Other comments received about the grants process**

Although many respondents were satisfied with the grants process, some had a more variable experience. Some recipients reported that the overall process was too complicated, particularly for smaller grants where it seemed that the time and effort required was disproportionate to the value of the grant. This was particularly the case for some private sector respondents who were frustrated when they had to pay for external consultants to lead a grant application on their behalf, thus reducing the overall value of the grant awarded. Furthermore, private sector respondents commented that it was difficult to find out what financial support was available from Welsh Government. Some felt that a central point of contact to signpost different industries or sizes of businesses to the various strands of support would be most helpful to ensure a consistent experience.

Multiple grant recipients also commented that they had a variable experience across the different grants, though more detail on duplication and consistency will be explored below in section 5.1.

“The process was complicated and costly and in the long run not worth the time and effort it took to get the amount of money received. The application process is unnecessarily complicated and follows a process that without experience of writing government grant applications was impossible to get right. I had to pay an outside organisation to complete the application on our behalf”

-Private sector respondent

“For the period in question we receive 3 different WG grants. Some are very timely with quick payments and offer letters, whereas others are very slow indeed... Also, 2 of the grants we receive payments up front, as per funding compact, but one grant we receive in arrears. It is a bit of a mixed bag to be honest.”

-Third sector respondent

“Grant process was over complicated for a requested £5000 grant. Monitoring excessive. Payment has now taken 6 months and still not paid”

-Public sector respondent

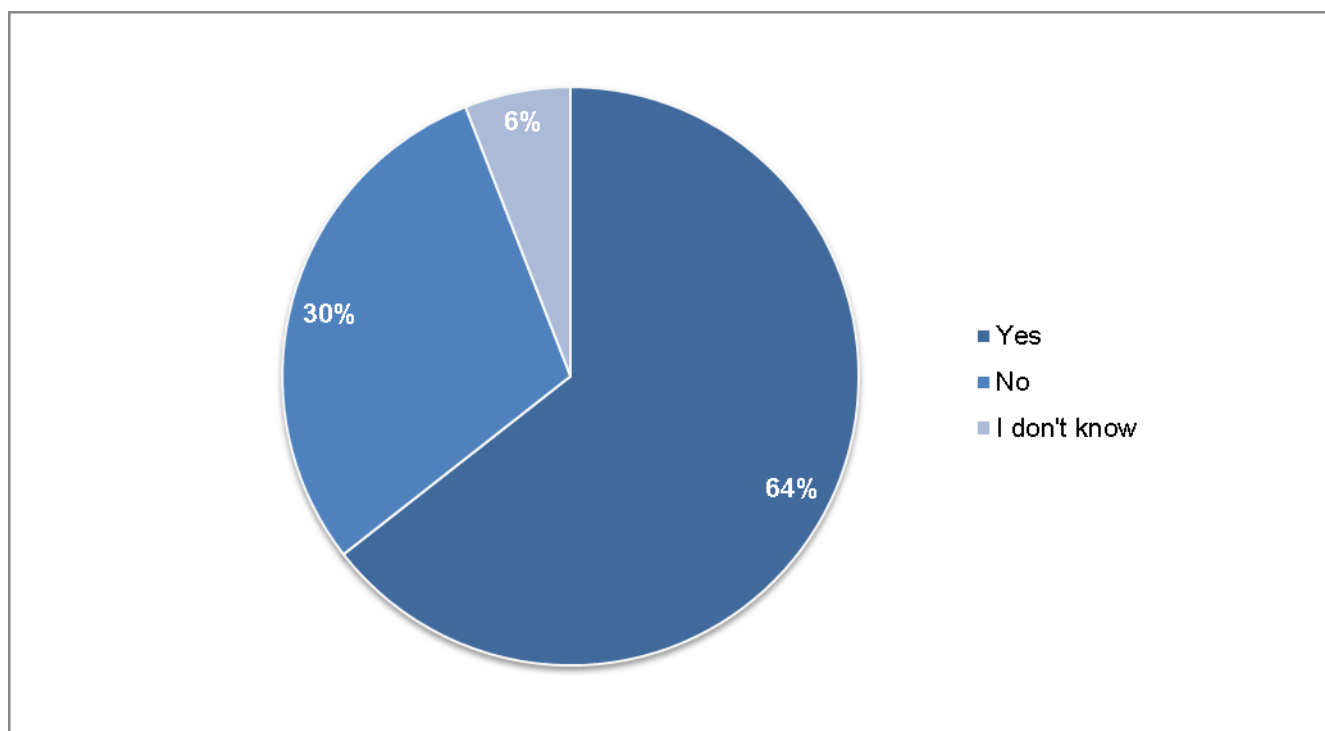
## **5 Additional areas covered by the survey**

The following section of the report presents respondents' feedback on their experiences of consistency and duplication with Welsh Government grants. It also explores their experiences of, and lessons learnt from, using on-line platforms for grants from sources other than the Welsh Government and the likelihood of respondents using on-line interfaces for Welsh Government Grants in the future.

### **5.1 Consistency and duplication within the grants process**

Current grant recipients were asked whether they personally had experience of applying for or receiving more than one Welsh Government Grant. Nearly two thirds (64 percent) had applied for or received more than one Welsh Government grant (Figure 10).

Figure 10: Percentages of respondents that applied for, or have received, more than one Welsh Government grant

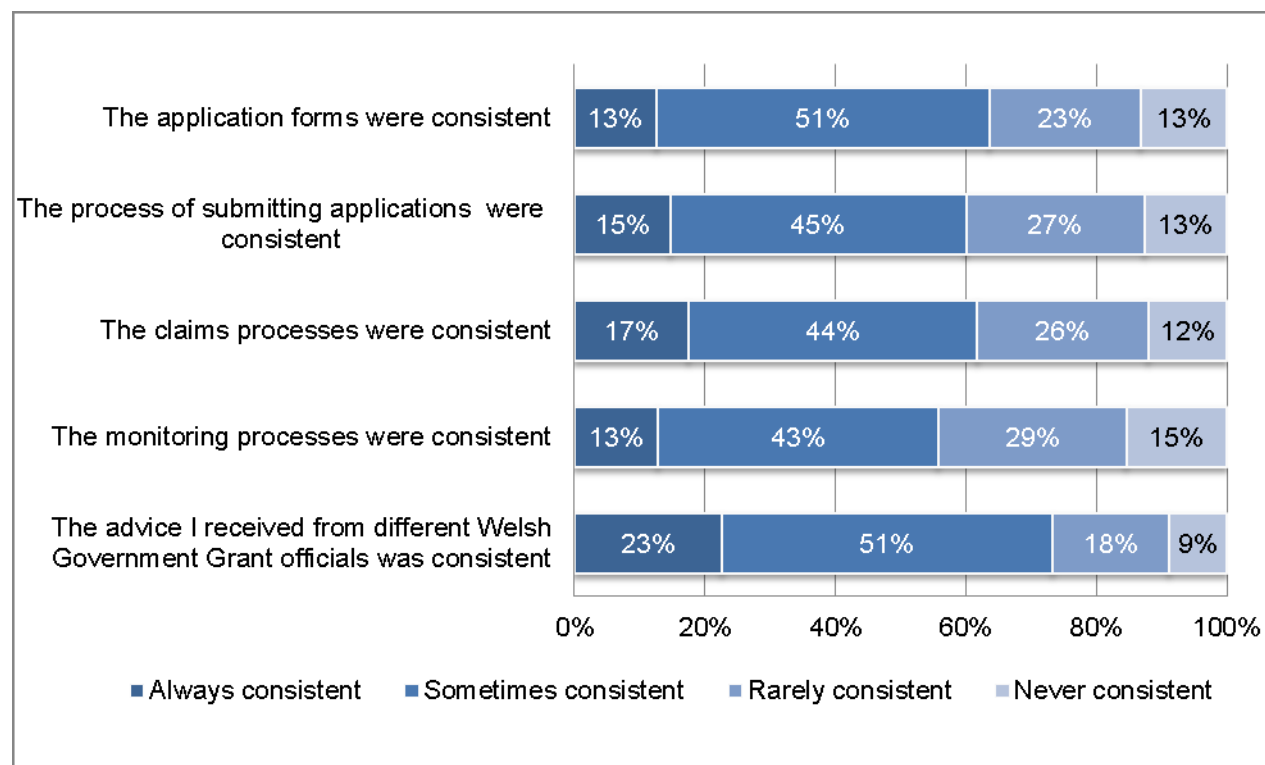


Number of respondents: 253

Respondents that indicated they had applied for or received more than one grant were shown additional questions relating to consistency across different Welsh Government Grants. These respondents were also able to expand on their responses with open ended answers.

As displayed in Figure 11, respondents indicated the highest level of consistency was with the advice they received from Welsh Government officials (73 percent always or sometimes consistent) and lowest level of consistency was with the monitoring processes (56 percent always or sometimes consistent). Consistency of other process (application forms, the process for submitting applications and making claims) received scores of 64 percent, 60 percent, and 62 percent respectively.

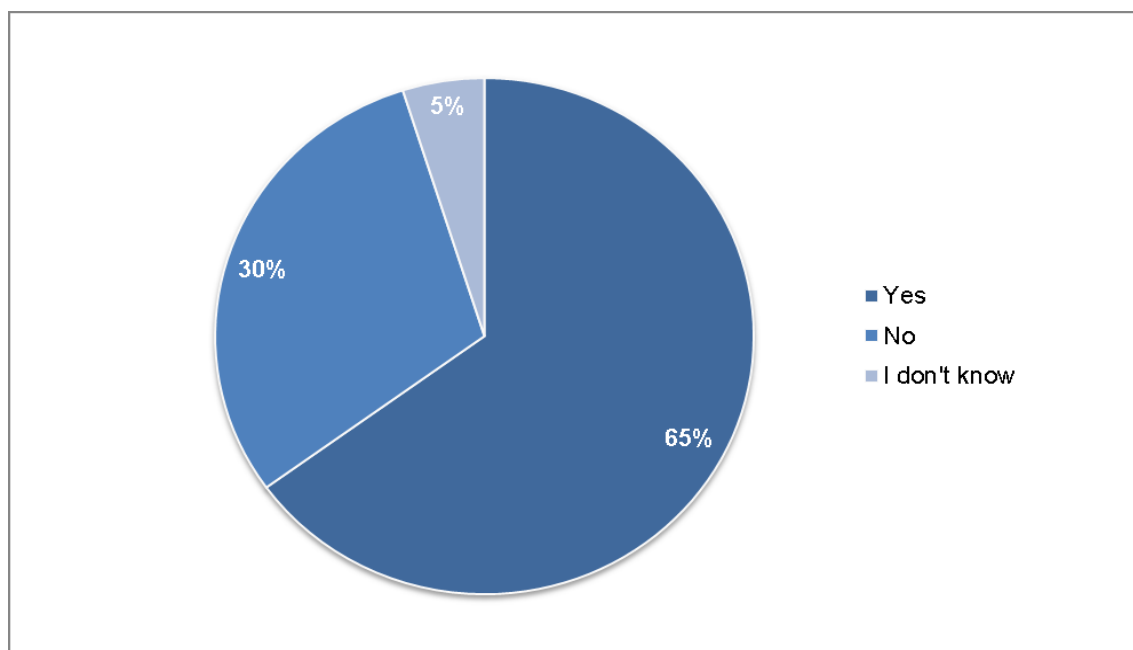
Figure 11: Consistency across Welsh Government Grants:



Number of respondents (top to bottom): 151, 150, 149, 149, 146

These respondents were then asked whether they had personal experience of receiving more than one Welsh Government Grant in the same financial year. Just under two thirds (65 percent) stated that they had (Figure 12).

Figure 12: Percentage of applicants or recipients of more than one Welsh Government grant in the same financial year

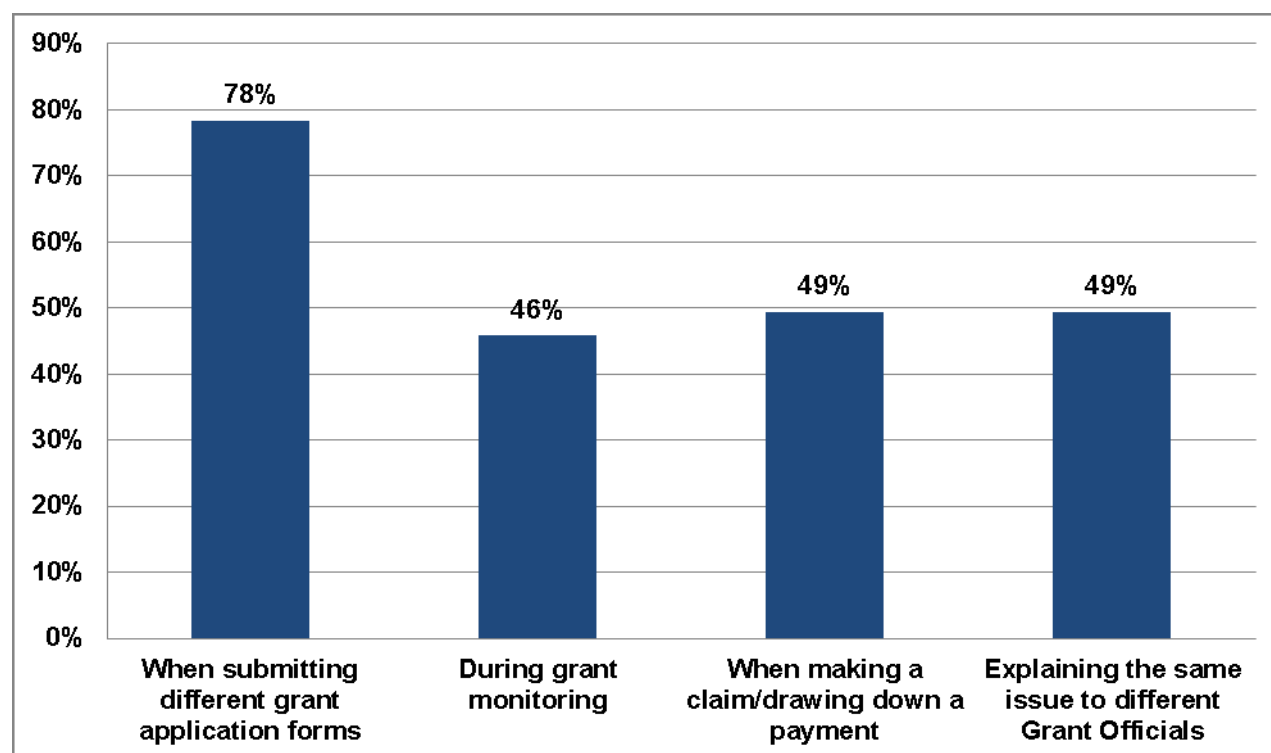


Number of respondents: 163

The respondents who indicated that they had applied for or received more than one grant in the same financial year were then shown additional questions about whether they had to provide duplicate information.

As can be seen in Figure 13, 78 percent of respondents reported having to provide duplicate information at the application form stage; with around half of respondents reporting providing duplicate information during grant monitoring (46 percent), when making a claim or drawing down a payment (49 percent) or explaining the same issue to different Grant Officials (49 percent).

Figure 13: Applicants or recipients of more than one Welsh Government grant in the same financial year providing the same information more than once:



Number of respondents: 83

## Comments on consistency and duplication across Welsh Government grants

Respondents who were in receipt of multiple grants were asked to provide more detail about their experiences with consistency and duplication around the grants that they had received or administered.

### Consistency

Respondents stated that because of the diversity of grants, they typically have different parameters, with variation between the Welsh Government departments awarding the grant, who the grant manager is (and their experience or enthusiasm), and the size of the grant. Some were frustrated when inconsistencies seemed to be counterintuitive, for example more onerous supporting documentation requirements for smaller grants compared to much larger ones. Whilst others commented that the timescales for decision making was inconsistent with some grant award decisions made quickly and others that can take over 6 months.



Some had experienced different processes during the approval stage of related grants. There was a feeling that where there were strong synergies between grants, then these would benefit from more consistent forms, particularly for monitoring. Some reported that these forms had different layouts and different deadlines. Furthermore additional grant pots offered alongside these pre-existing grants had different, although fairly straightforward, processes.

Some reported that, within the same grant scheme, there had been tweaks and changes year-on-year which has been a greater source of frustration than inconsistencies between different grants. For example changing requirements, eligibility criteria or amounts of funding caused difficulties in making longer term plans.

Also, some felt that inconsistencies across Welsh Government grants were less of an issue than against the general landscape of public sector grants via other statutory bodies, especially where the overall aims or outcomes did not seem to be aligned. Some reflected that where grants were awarded via intermediaries that this added to inconsistencies

A number of respondents reported that they did not see inconsistency as an issue. Some responded that because they don't apply for grants on a regular basis, it would always seem daunting and unfamiliar, and that grants awarded years apart would not be expected to remain consistent. Some felt that the differences in policy priorities underpinning grant schemes and the inevitability of changes over time meant that recipients expected a level of different award criteria or monitoring. Respondents who were involved with a wide range of grants did not expect consistency across the board, but did note that having consistency with regards to some aspects e.g. monitoring, could create more time to provide services for the beneficiaries of the grants.

Some felt that Welsh Government officials were a consistent source of support, and typically the advice given over-rode any concerns with inconsistencies around guidance and form-filling. However, where there had been staff turnover, this occasionally lead to inconsistent approaches within grant teams and caused some confusion when information shared with the previous person had not been passed on.

“There appears to be a lack of consistency across all areas. Grant systems constantly changing - on an annual basis make inconsistency the norm.”

-Public sector respondent

“We've never had a problem with consistency”

-Third sector respondent

“Using published or on line information wasn't good when it comes to consistency. However, when speaking to the people at the Welsh Government who administer and monitor the grant process - there was then 100%, no issues at all.”

-Private sector respondent

“Being a local authority we receive many Welsh Government grants and each department/section has different arrangements for monitoring and claiming the grants. Some departments want a huge amount of detail and others don't, there's no relationship between the amount of grant and amount of paperwork/evidence”

-Public sector respondent

“[The grants process is] generally consistent. But I'm not sure if this is important. The grants have different purposes - they cannot be totally consistent.”

-Private sector respondent

## **Providing duplicate information**

A number of respondents did not feel that it was an issue or onerous to provide the same information for different grant applications; typically repeating basic contact details or financial information. Some noted that when larger sections of information had to be provided more than once, they were able to reuse the information and tailor elements to focus on specific requirements of that grant. Different grants had different purposes so the bulk of the application would be specifically tailored to the grant. Others felt that in the scheme of things, other issues such as changing grant criteria and late award letters were a greater problem.

Some felt that duplication had increased since the introduction of more holistic approaches to grant programmes. Another commented that they had thought that the Grants Centre of Excellence would host a central record of up-to-date key documents, accessible to the relevant grant managers, so that grant recipients would not need to supply the same information multiple times. There was an element of curiosity as to why grant recipient information wasn't more widely shared across Welsh Government grant teams.

"The grants are different and need different reporting information so there is little duplication. May be some assumptions higher in the organisation that there is duplication in the information supplied but this is not true as often what looks like similar reporting is on different individuals and for different needs"

- Public sector organisation

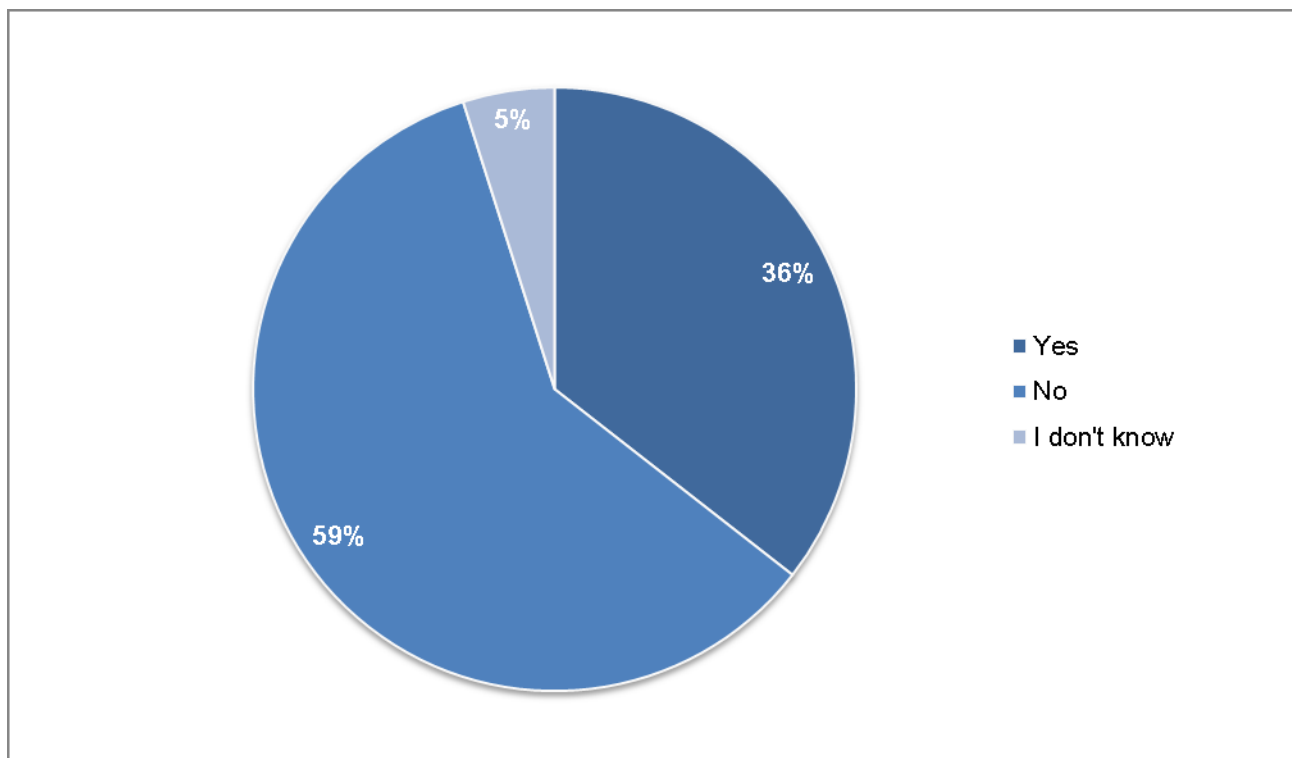
"we would expect a central record of key documents and information to be kept at WG, that would then negate the need for us to submit the same information time and time again. Moreover, the resources it must take at WG to check the same information over and over again must be recognised."

-Third sector respondent

## **5.2 Grant funding from other sources using on-line interfaces**

All survey respondents were presented with questions about their experiences of using on-line interfaces in applying for, or receiving, grants elsewhere. Only 36 percent of respondents reported that they had experience of applying for grants using on-line interfaces from sources other than the Welsh Government (Figure 14).

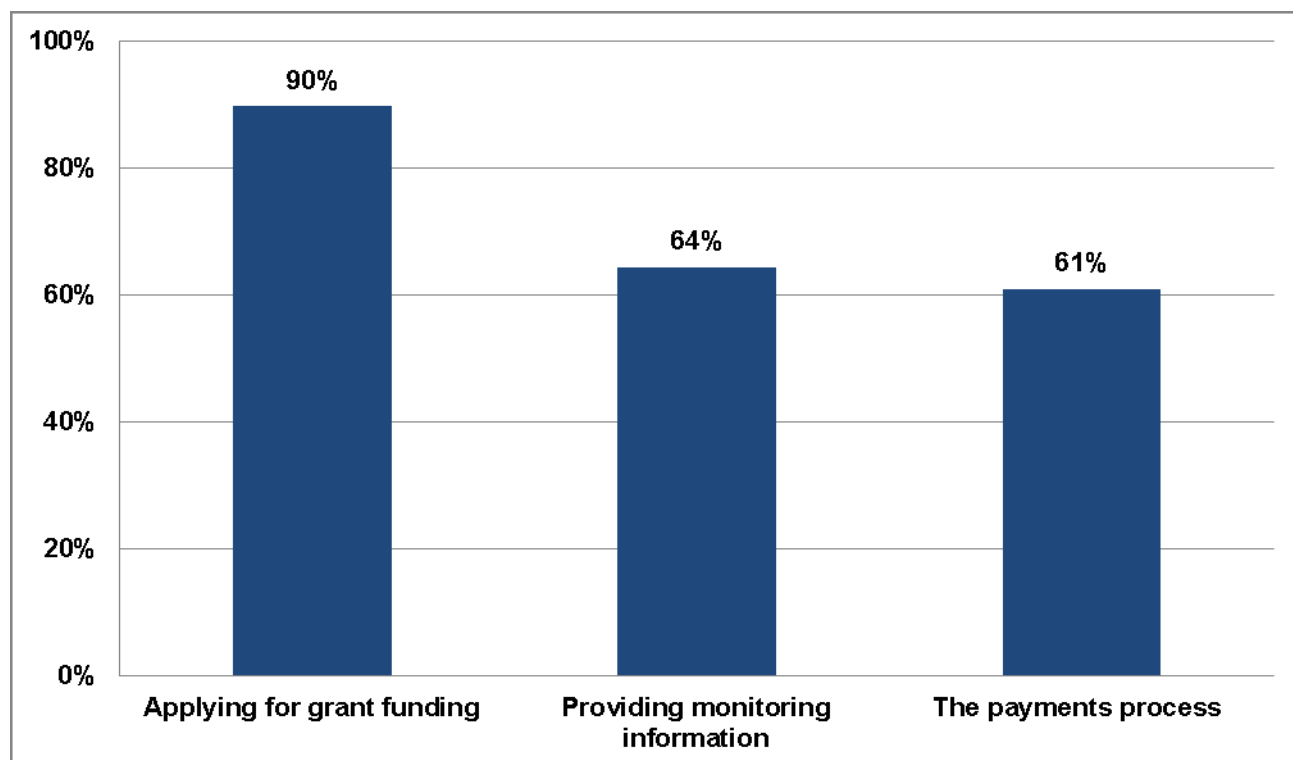
Figure 14: Experience of applying for grant funding digitally from other sources



Number of respondents: 346

Of these respondents, 90 percent had applied for grant funding, 64 percent had provided monitoring information and 61 percent had experience of the payments process using an on-line interface. Two percent selected 'Other' but did not specify which other elements of the grants process they had undertaken on-line.

Figure 15: Stages of the grants process experienced on-line or digitally elsewhere



Number of respondents: 118

### Comments on experience of applying and receiving grants online

Respondents were asked to expand on what they **liked most** about applying for or receiving grant funding on-line or digitally. The majority said that they most liked the ease of use. Some elaborated that the structure of the on-line form made it easier, quicker and more straightforward to complete an application compared with paper- or word-processor based applications. Some felt that it tended to be simpler because relevant FAQ or guidance could be accessed at appropriate points in the system and word-limits were set. Some platforms had the ability to undertake automatic error detection (for example with financial miscalculations) or flagged up missing information prior to submission.

Others noted that being able to save, log out and return to, or amend, an application was a benefit. Some felt that it could better facilitate sharing one live version with others working remotely to contribute to the application, compared to the risks involved with managing multiple drafts of document-based applications. Some found online platforms saved time if previously uploaded core documents could be attached to multiple applications, and that being able to use one log in to look at their

record of historic submissions was also helpful. This was especially useful if the information could be re-used or re-purposed for future applications.

Some respondents appreciated a visible indicator of the completion progress of their application throughout the process, confirming that certain sections had been completed. The immediate confirmation of submission on the screen, coupled with an automated email acknowledgement, was also reassuring. Others appreciated being able to see the awarding body's progress in processing the application once submitted via the on-line portal, checking for status updates or feedback via the one platform.

Some respondents saw the benefit for grants managers also, enabling them to collate and compare like-for-like applications, and liked the assurance of the level playing field with set word limits for all applicants. They also reported appreciating the ability to see the answers to any questions raised by other applicants which could likely reduce the burden on grants managers being asked the same question multiple times.

“Ease of access and ability to follow easy structured approach”

- Private sector respondent

“Clear, simple forms. The ability to save and return to a form”

- Private sector respondent

“Feels less time consuming and you can go back and refine and share drafts easily.”

- Third sector respondent

“The required data is well-structured, the entries can be validated during the process and system provides transparency to the progress throughout. There is a clear communication channel between the applicant and the case worker.”

- Private sector respondent

In contrast the things that respondents **liked least** about applying for or receiving grant funding on-line or digitally was the sense that it seemed more remote and impersonal. Some felt that personal contact was discouraged, that it could be difficult to find a named contact or telephone number for queries during the process.

The practicalities were also frustrating for applicants. For example, some systems felt clunky and time-consuming. Text and figures could be difficult to format. The absence of a spell-checker meant that applicants spent more time initially composing

entries in a word-processor before cutting and pasting into the system. Uploading relevant documents could be problematic, and often field sizes were inadequate compared to the volume of information requested or word limits provided. Being unable to see the application and its overall requirements at the beginning, or to review it in its entirety at the end, was unhelpful. Some also found online forms to be too restrictive, not allowing enough freedom for multi-organisational bids or unique applications, adopting a one size fits all approach, irrespective of the amount of funding applied for.

The inability to work off-line sometimes caused issues, restricting collaboration with others unless using the same user-name and password to log in. Connectivity issues, systems timing out, or crashed servers led to unsaved or lost work hosted on digital platforms. There were some concerns around the security of online portals, particularly when highly confidential or commercially sensitive information forming part of a grant application might be compromised by hackers. Some applicants found that limited support was available when IT issues were encountered.

Some found it frustrating when hard copies of documents, or 'wet signatures' were also required alongside the digital applications.

"Downsides can be; lack of space to fully answer questions, inability to add attachments, errors in finance tables, tables not corresponding with your funding breakdown. The other main downside is the lack of personal contact and distance from the funder. If there are any queries currently you can amend the form, once submitted that can be a problem."

-Third sector respondent

"Difficult to format text, difficult to word count, spell check, etc. Info had to be cut and paste from a word doc then input into the online system. Application info difficult to share with others e.g. board, etc. - again has to be cut and pasted - can't send a link around without sharing passwords, etc."

- Third sector respondent

"The portal was difficult to navigate, the criteria were often left to your own imagination, no examples were available and very hard to get to speak to someone to sort out issues. Also security was and still is a big worry, online is not a very safe place and grant applications and payments are highly confidential, would try to avoid portal based solutions."

- Private sector respondent

"When the on-line system malfunctions - there is a need for downloading reports so that this is not catastrophic. The system will be too time consuming

with the level of bureaucracy with regards to quotes for minor consumable items.”

- Private sector respondent

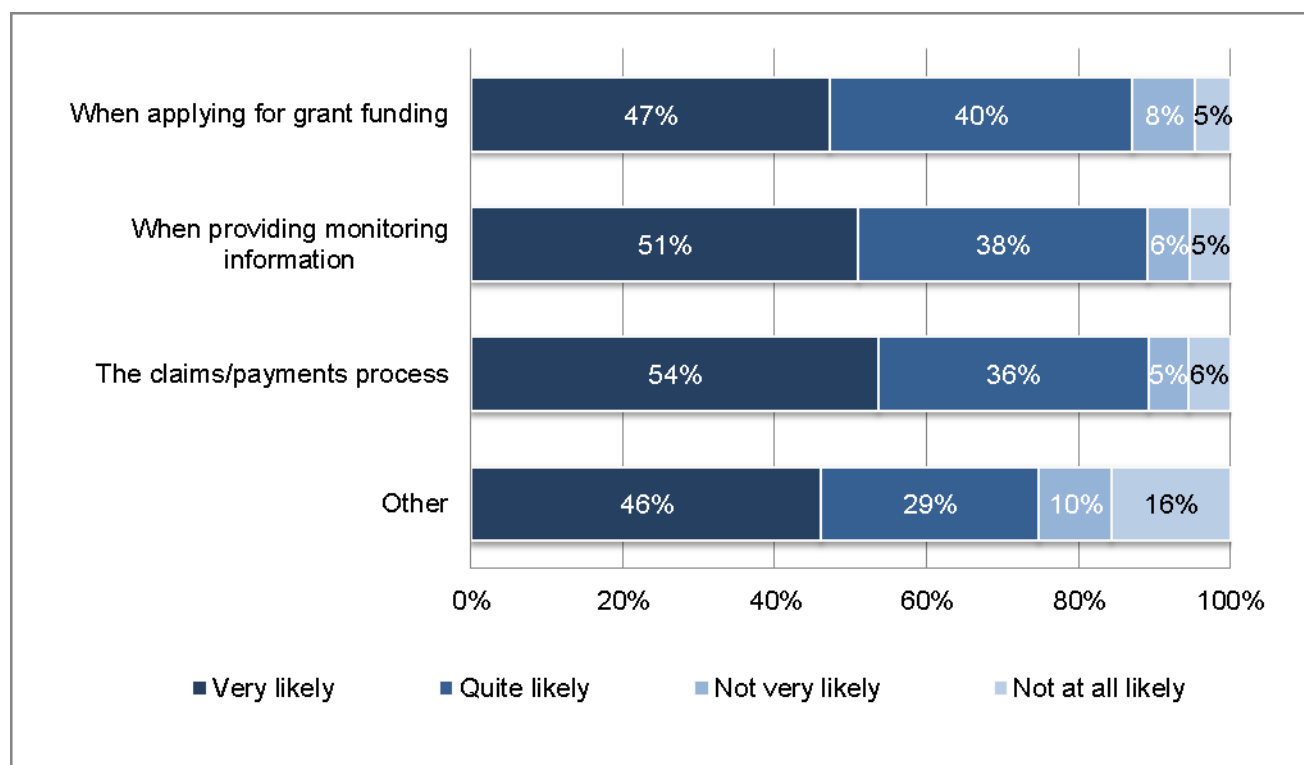
“When digital system still requires additional paper/physical validations - papers signed with wet ink etc. Identification and all actions should be enabled through digital interface.”

- Private sector respondent

### Likelihood of using on-line interfaces for Welsh Government Grants

Respondents were asked if they would be likely to use online interfaces for Welsh Government grants. The majority of respondents reported that they were highly or quite likely to apply for grant funding (87 percent) provide monitoring information (89 percent) or undertake claims and payments (90 percent) using an on-line interface if adopted by the Welsh Government (Figure 16).

Figure 16: Likelihood of using on-line interfaces for Welsh Government grants



Number of respondents (top to bottom): 341, 341, 343, 115



## Comments on likelihood of using on-line interfaces for Welsh Government Grants

In terms of **suggestions for Welsh Government around the development of its own on-line platforms**, respondents noted that they would engage with whichever part of the process was developed in this way. Many noted that there was an expectation for platforms to be digitised nowadays, although there would still be a need to communicate with grant managers throughout the process, particularly about project progress. Many respondents said that it would be good to test new processes out with users during the development phase.

However, a small number of respondents felt that moving these processes exclusively online might alienate some applicants, for example micro-organisations delivering projects that did not require the use of computers, and that some flexibility in the approach might be useful.

“This is the direction of travel for grants and so our organisation is familiar with this process.”

-Third Sector respondent

“I have used online interfaces for WG grants in the past. They work well and save time if they are well designed (i.e. with the involvement of all kinds of users) and communication with WG officials is good.”

-Public sector organisation

“I think in this day and age the internet is the place most of us do business and I see no difference in the grant process being part of that system, it should make for a more streamlined process and should allow for a more timely transaction and decision.”

-Private sector respondent

There were suggestions that the process should:

- not result in less communication with grant managers, ensuring there is a named contact for each stage of the process
- minimise inefficiencies and any delays, be reliable, and be time efficient for both applicants and grant-giving organisation

- ensure eligibility criteria is clear, with clear guidance, best practice examples, FAQs and responses to additional questions raised, including the date of the question and date of response to aid proper completion of the forms
- ensure compatibility with accessibility software for people with disabilities
- offer auto-save and a reliable save and return option, so that applications or claims can be broken down into manageable chunks
- offer the ability to work offline to facilitate input from others, and upload information, minimising work loss if IT problems occur
- ensure design is easy to use and logical, providing clear word limits and sufficient space for the amount of words required
- provide the ability to scan forward and see the whole process
- guarantee high levels of security and allow collaboration with others without sharing user name and passwords, ensuring compatibility with firewalls for example at local authorities
- incorporate the flexibility to add or upload other supporting information including web-links or social media feeds for evidence
- provide clear notification of progress – including a progress bar or Red-Amber-Green rating, not allowing submission unless all fields are populated
- ensure the applicant has the authority to make such applications on behalf of their organisation – possibly through disclaimer statements or incorporating senior manager approval function
- ability to easily PDF or print versions of applications, monitoring reports or claims for record keeping, audit, or to share with senior colleagues either before or after submitting
- provide real-time estimates for decision deadlines by the grant giving organisation
- allow applicants to browse their previous applications

ENDS

# **Annex A: Welsh Government Grant Recipients Survey 2018**

## **Welsh Government Grant Survey**

This survey asks grant recipients some questions around: satisfaction with different parts of the grant process; suggestions for improvement; as well as experiences of and appetite for on-line interfaces.

Please note that this survey asks for feedback on Welsh Government grants only. It is not relevant for those who have received European grants, for example, from the Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO).

The survey should take no longer than 5-10 minutes to complete. If you have any queries or difficulties while completing this survey, please contact Cerys Ponting by phone 03000 257342 or email [WelshGovernmentResearch@gov.wales](mailto:WelshGovernmentResearch@gov.wales)

The survey is completely anonymous; you will not be identifiable from the information you provide - for more information about this, please download the Research Privacy Notice: [Download Privacy notice - Grant Survey 2018.pdf](#)

- 1. What type of organisation do you work for?**
  - a. Public Sector organisation
  - b. Private Sector organisation
  - c. Third Sector/ Not-for-profit organisation
  - d. Educational Institution
  - e. Other (please specify)
  
- 2. How many people does your organisation employ?**
  - a. 0-9
  - b. 10-50
  - c. 51-250
  - d. 251-499
  - e. 500 or more
  - f. I don't know

**3. In which financial year were you awarded your most recent Welsh Government grant?\*** (\*= mandatory; please select only one)

**Please note that the term ‘Welsh Government grant’ refers to grants that are provided by the Welsh Government and does not include European grants, for example from the Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO)**

- a. April 2017/2018 [go to ‘Overall Satisfaction’]
- b. April 2016/2017 [go to ‘Overall Satisfaction’]
- c. Before April 2016 [go to ‘Short Satisfaction’]
- d. I have never been awarded a Welsh Government grant [go to ‘Final Comments’ and route out of survey]

If answer is (a/b), route to main satisfaction section. If answer is (c) before April 2016 then show short satisfaction section and open ended comment box. If answer is (d), route out of the survey

**4. Is your organisation in receipt of more than one Welsh Government Grant?**

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. I don’t know

**Overall satisfaction**

We would like to ask about your satisfaction with the below stages involved when applying for, and receiving, Welsh Government grant(s). An opportunity to give a detailed response will come at the end of the section if you would like to tell us more.

**5. For your latest Welsh Government grant(s) have you been involved in any of the following processes? (tick as many as apply)**

- a. Accessing guidance on applying for a Welsh Government grant; [if yes, see 6]
- b. Submitting an application form for a Welsh Government grant; [if yes, see 7]
- c. Receiving an Award Letter (grant terms and conditions) or a funding agreement for a Welsh Government grant; [if yes, see 8]
- d. The monitoring process for a Welsh Government grant; [if yes, see 9]
- e. Making a financial claim or receiving a payment of a Welsh Government grant. [if yes, see 10]
- f. Making contact with Welsh Government grant officials in relation to applying for, or receiving, a grant [if yes, see 11]

**6. Thinking about the initial guidance on applying for a Welsh Government grant; how far do you agree or disagree with the following statements?**

**Answer options:** Strongly Disagree – Disagree – Neither Agree nor Disagree – Agree – Strongly Agree

- a. It was easy to find out what grant funding was available;
- b. It was easy to access information on how to apply for grant funding;
- c. The guidance on making an application was clear and easy to understand;
- d. The eligibility and funding criterion were clearly stated in the guidance;
- e. Overall, I was satisfied with the guidance on making a grant application.

**7. Thinking about the application and decision-making process for Welsh Government Grants; how far do you agree or disagree with the following statements?**

**Answer options:** Strongly Disagree – Disagree – Neither Agree nor Disagree – Agree – Strongly Agree

- a. The application form was easy to complete;
- b. An adequate amount of time was given to fill in the application form;
- c. The timetable for the grants application and decision process was clearly communicated;
- d. The volume of information requested in support of my application was appropriate;
- e. Overall, I was satisfied with the application and decision process.

**8. Thinking about the Award Letter (grant terms and conditions) or funding agreement from Welsh Government, how far do you agree or disagree with the following statements?**

**Answer options:** Strongly Disagree – Disagree – Neither Agree nor Disagree – Agree – Strongly Agree

- a. The Award Letter (grant terms and conditions) was easy to understand;
- b. The Award Letter (grant terms and conditions) was issued in a timely manner;
- c. The Award Letter (grant terms and conditions) clearly set out the roles and responsibilities of both parties;
- d. Overall, I was satisfied with the Award Letter (grant terms and conditions).

**9. Thinking about the Welsh Government grants monitoring process, how far do you agree or disagree with the following statements?**

**Answer options:** Strongly Disagree – Disagree – Neither Agree nor Disagree – Agree – Strongly Agree

- a. The monitoring requirements were appropriate for the level of funding;
- b. The monitoring conditions were clearly defined;
- c. The monitoring process was conducted in a timely manner;
- d. Overall, I was satisfied with the grants monitoring process.

**10. Thinking about the Welsh Government claims and payments process, how far do you agree or disagree with the following statements?**

**Answer options:** Strongly Disagree – Disagree – Neither Agree nor Disagree – Agree – Strongly Agree

- a. The claims forms were easy to use;
- b. Payments were processed in a timely manner;
- c. I knew who to contact if I had a question or needed support with claims or payments;
- d. The information requested in support of my claims was appropriate
- e. I was satisfied with the way my claims were dealt with;
- f. Overall, I was satisfied with the claims and payments process.

**11. Thinking about your dealings with Welsh Government grant officials, how far do you agree or disagree with the following statements?**

**Answer options:** Strongly Disagree – Disagree – Neither Agree nor Disagree – Agree – Strongly Agree

- a. It was easy to access the right person in Welsh Government to provide support;
- b. The support provided by Welsh Government grant officials was clear;
- c. The support provided by Welsh Government grant officials was timely;
- d. Overall I was satisfied with the support I received from Welsh Government grant officials.

**12. If you would like to provide any comments about your experience when applying for, or receiving, your Welsh Government grant(s), please write them here:**

OPEN ENDED BOX

**Short Satisfaction**

[Short satisfaction section for those that said they received their most recent grant before April 2016]

**13. Thinking about your experience of Welsh Government grants, how far do you agree or disagree with the following statements?**

**Answer options:** Strongly Disagree – Disagree – Neither Agree nor Disagree – Agree – Strongly Agree

- a. I was satisfied with the guidance on making a grant application
- b. I was satisfied with the application and decision process
- c. I was satisfied with the Welsh Government Award Letter (terms and conditions) or funding agreement
- d. I was satisfied with the grants monitoring process
- e. I was satisfied with the claims and payments process
- f. I was satisfied with the support I received from Welsh Government grant officials

**14. If you would like to provide any comments about your experience when applying for, or receiving, your Welsh Government grant(s), please write them here**

OPEN ENDED BOX

**15. [For those who have never received a Welsh Government grant] If you would like to provide any comments about Welsh Government grants, please write them here:**

OPEN ENDED BOX

**Improving Welsh Government grants processes** [Ask all current recipients]

Welsh Government wants to improve the experience for those who apply for, or are in receipt of, its grants. It is considering:

- introducing more consistency across its grants;
- bringing some grant processes (e.g. applications, monitoring and claims) online.

**16. Have you (as an individual, on behalf of your organisation) applied for, or have received, more than one Welsh Government grant?**

- a. Yes [see 17]
- b. No [go to Grant funding from other sources]
- c. I don't know [go to Grant funding from other sources]

**17. Thinking about the consistency in applying for, or receiving, more than one Welsh Government Grant, how far would you say that:**

**Answer options:** Always consistent, sometimes consistent, rarely consistent, never consistent, not applicable

- a. The application forms were consistent across different grants
- b. The process of submitting applications were consistent across different grants
- c. The claims processes were consistent across different grants
- d. The monitoring processes were consistent across different grants
- e. The advice I received from different Welsh Government Grant officials was consistent

**18. Please tell us more about your experiences regarding consistency here.**

OPEN ENDED BOX

**19. Have you (as an individual, on behalf of your organisation) applied for, or have received, more than one Welsh Government grant in the same financial year?**

- a. Yes [see 20]
- b. No [go to Grant funding from other sources]
- c. I don't know [go to Grant funding from other sources]



**20. When you applied for, or received, more than one Welsh Government grant in the same financial year, please tell us if you had to provide the same information more than once:** (only visible to those who answered yes to 19, please tick as many as apply)

- a. When submitting different grant application forms
- b. During grant monitoring
- c. When making a claim/drawing down a payment
- d. Explaining the same issue to different Welsh Government Grant Officials
- e. Other

**21. Please tell us more about your experiences with having to provide duplicate information here.**

OPEN ENDED BOX

**Grant funding from other sources using on-line interfaces** [Ask all current recipients]

We would like to learn about your experiences in applying for, or receiving, grants elsewhere, particularly about experiences of using on-line interfaces, digital forms and/or web-based portals. **Please note:** online forms **does not** include emailing MS Word documents/Excel sheets.

**22. Have you had experience of applying for grant funding, and/or providing the necessary grant information on-line or digitally from any sources other than the Welsh Government?**

- a. Yes [go to 23]
- b. No [take to final comments box]
- c. I don't know [take to final comments box]

**23. Please tell us which elements you have experienced on-line or digitally elsewhere:**

- a. Applying for grant funding
- b. Providing monitoring information
- c. The payments process
- d. Other

**24. What did you like most about applying for, or receiving, grant funding on-line or digitally?**

OPEN ENDED BOX

**25. What did you like least about applying for, or receiving, grant funding on-line or digitally?**

OPEN ENDED BOX

Ask all current recipients

**26. Looking to the future, if you could engage with the Welsh Government using on-line interfaces for grant purposes, how likely would you be to do so in the following areas?**

Answer options: Not at all likely – not very likely – quite likely – very likely

- a. When applying for grant funding
- b. When providing monitoring information
- c. The claims/payments process
- d. Other

**27. Please tell us more about why you selected the answers above:**

OPEN ENDED BOX

**Final Comments**

**28. Please write any final comments you may have about Welsh Government grants here:**

OPEN ENDED BOX

Respondents then get a message saying

**‘Please press the send button to submit your response to the survey’.**

Upon doing so, they will proceed to the final page with the following message:

**Thank you for taking part in this survey, your response has now been submitted.**

**The Welsh Government is planning further improvements to its grants. Please email [Ymholiadau.Grant.Queries@gov.wales](mailto:Ymholiadau.Grant.Queries@gov.wales) if you wish to be involved in future conversations to help inform these improvements. Your email address will only be used to contact you about follow-up conversations related to this survey.**

Your response to the survey is completely anonymous and you will not be identified through the information you have provided. If you have any queries about the survey, please contact Cerys Ponting by phone on 03000 257342 or email [WelshGovernmentResearch@gov.wales](mailto:WelshGovernmentResearch@gov.wales)

## Annex B: Overall satisfaction by sector – detailed analysis

The overall satisfaction statements were analysed to identify whether there were any notable differences between the public, private and third sectors compared to the cross sector average. The 'Other' category was too small to compare reliably.

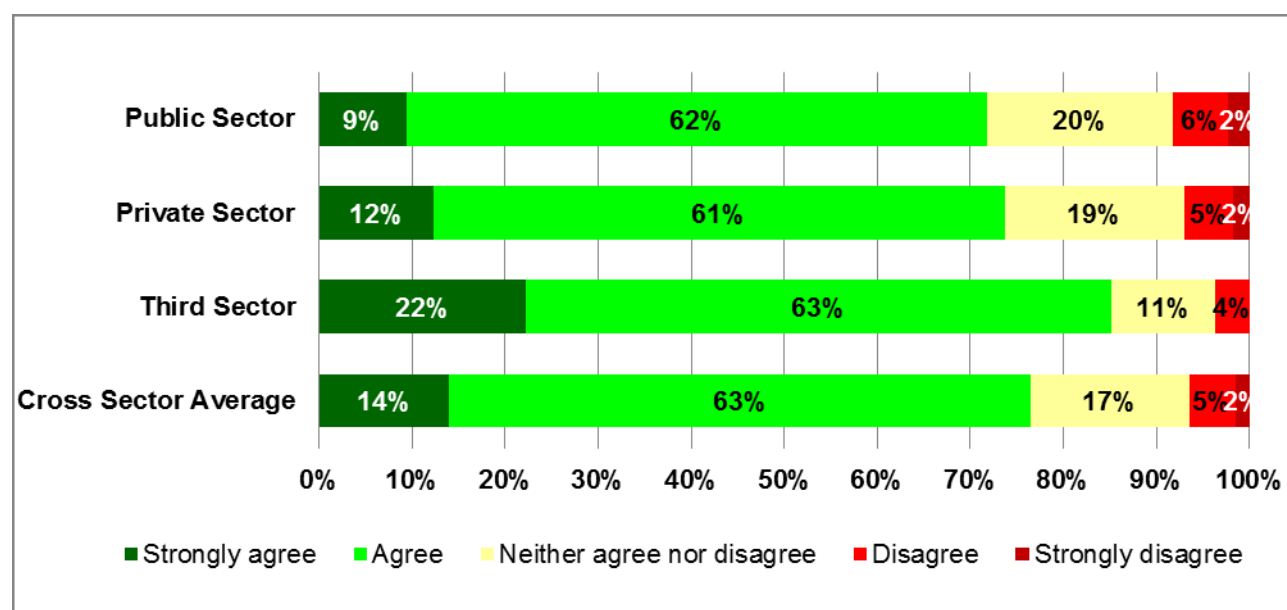
Statistical significance testing was carried out and differences between sectors were found to be significant at the  $p=0.05$  level in three cases. In the other three cases, results were not significant at the  $p=0.05$  level, and are marked with an asterisk (\*).

When comparing overall satisfaction scores across sectors, the Third Sector were the most satisfied compared to the average across all stages of the grants process; returning higher than average satisfaction scores for all aspects of the grants process. The public and private sectors were typically less satisfied.

### Guidance on making an application – overall satisfaction by sector

Regarding overall satisfaction with the guidance on making an application (Figure B-1), the third sector was most positive at 85 percent (9 percentage points above the cross-sector average score of 77 percent). There was little variation between public and private sectors, with positive scores of 72 and 74 percent respectively, and almost a fifth returning neutral scores indicating that those respondents did not feel they could make a judgement either way about the guidance<sup>1\*</sup>.

Figure B-1: Overall satisfaction with guidance on making an application



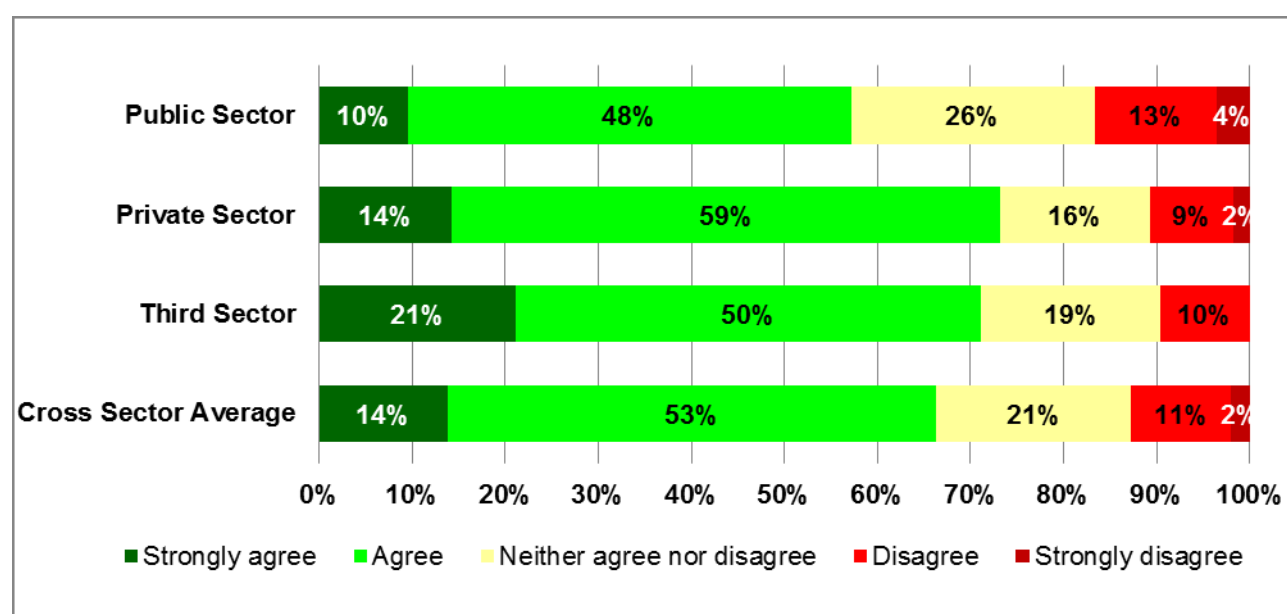
Number of respondents (top to bottom): 57, 85, 54, 201

<sup>1\*</sup> No significant difference was found between sectors at  $p=0.05$  level for this satisfaction statement

## Application and decision process – overall satisfaction by sector

With regards to overall satisfaction with the application and decision process (Figure B-2) the private sector was most positive at 73 percent (7 percentage points above the cross sector average). The public sector returned the lowest positive score of 57 percent (9 percentage points below the cross sector average) and highest negative score (17 percent compared to the cross sector average of 13 percent). Twenty six percent of public sector respondents also returned neutral scores, indicating that those respondents did not feel they could make a judgement either way<sup>2\*</sup>.

Figure B-2: Overall satisfaction with the application and decision-making process



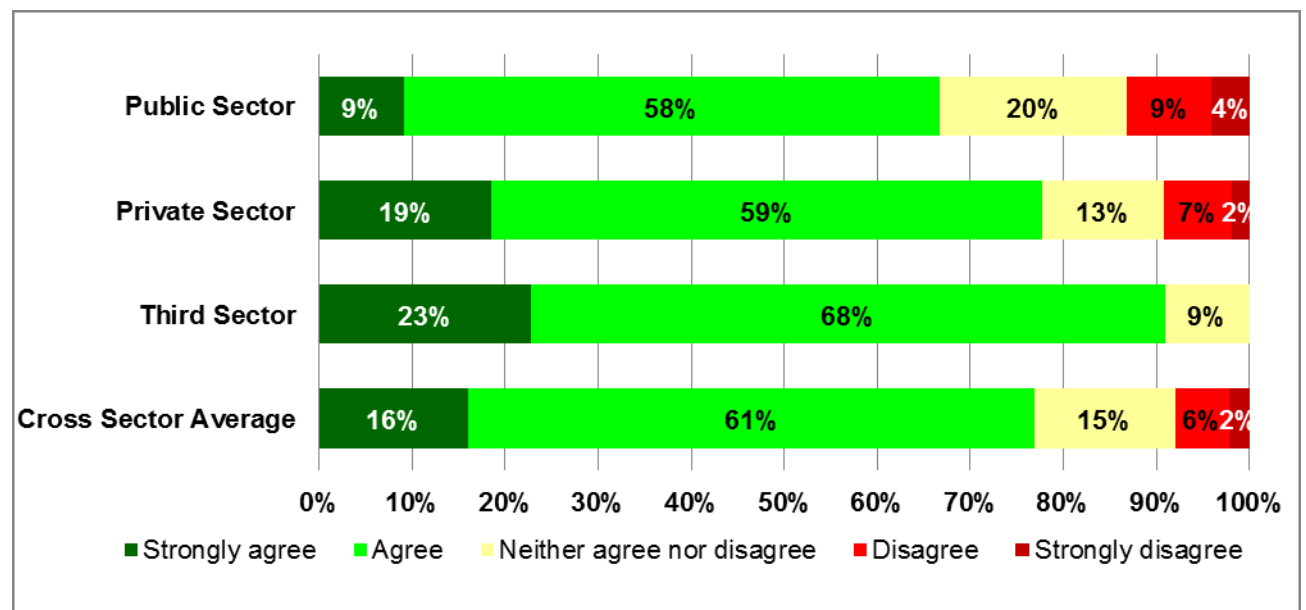
Number of respondents (top to bottom): 56, 84, 52, 197

<sup>2\*</sup> No significant difference was found between sectors at p=0.05 level for this satisfaction statement

## Award Letter (terms and conditions) – overall satisfaction by sector

Regarding the Welsh Government award letter (Figure B-3) the third sector was most satisfied at 91 percent (14 percentage points above the cross sector average); the public sector was least satisfied, at 67 percent (10 percentage points lower than the cross sector average). The private sector was slightly more dissatisfied compared to the cross sector average (5 percentage point difference), with the highest neutral score at 20 percent (compared to 15 percent cross sector average).

Figure B-3 Overall, I was satisfied with the Welsh Government award letter

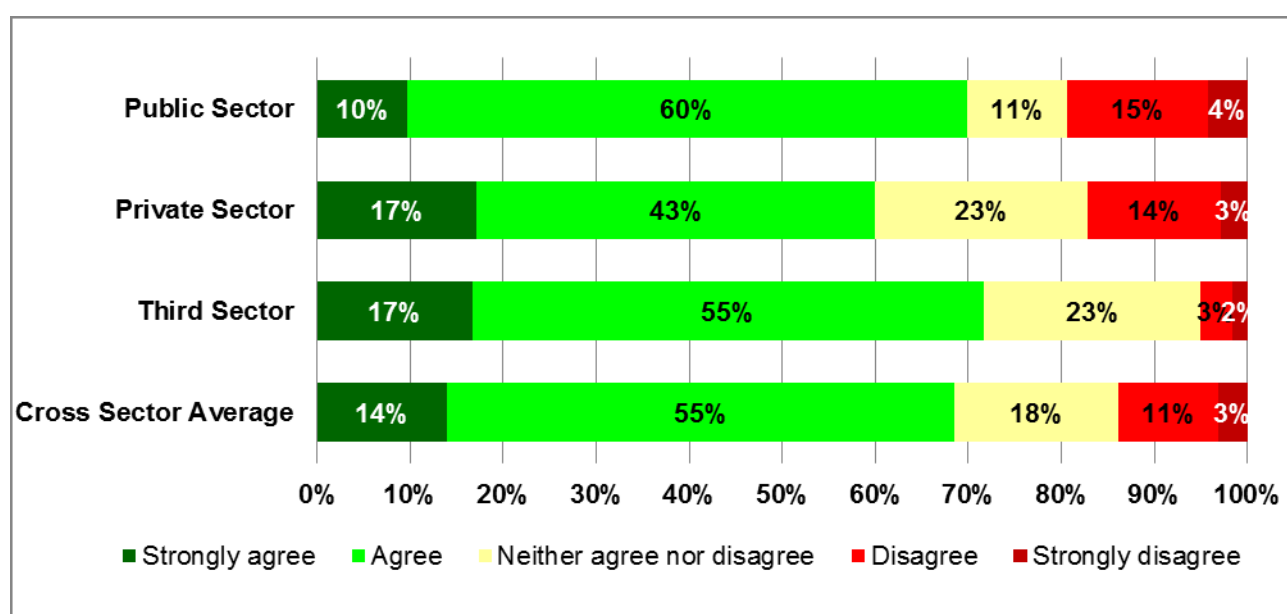


Number of respondents (top to bottom): 54, 99, 66, 226

## Monitoring Process – overall satisfaction by sector

With regard to satisfaction with the grants monitoring process (Figure B-4), third sector respondents were most satisfied, returning the highest positive score (72 percent) and the lowest negative score (5 percent). The private sector was least satisfied, returning the lowest positive score at 60 percent, compared to the cross sector average of 69 percent. However almost a quarter (23 percent) of private and third sector respondents gave a neutral response, indicating that those respondents did not feel they could make a judgement either way.

Figure B-4: Overall satisfaction with the grants monitoring process

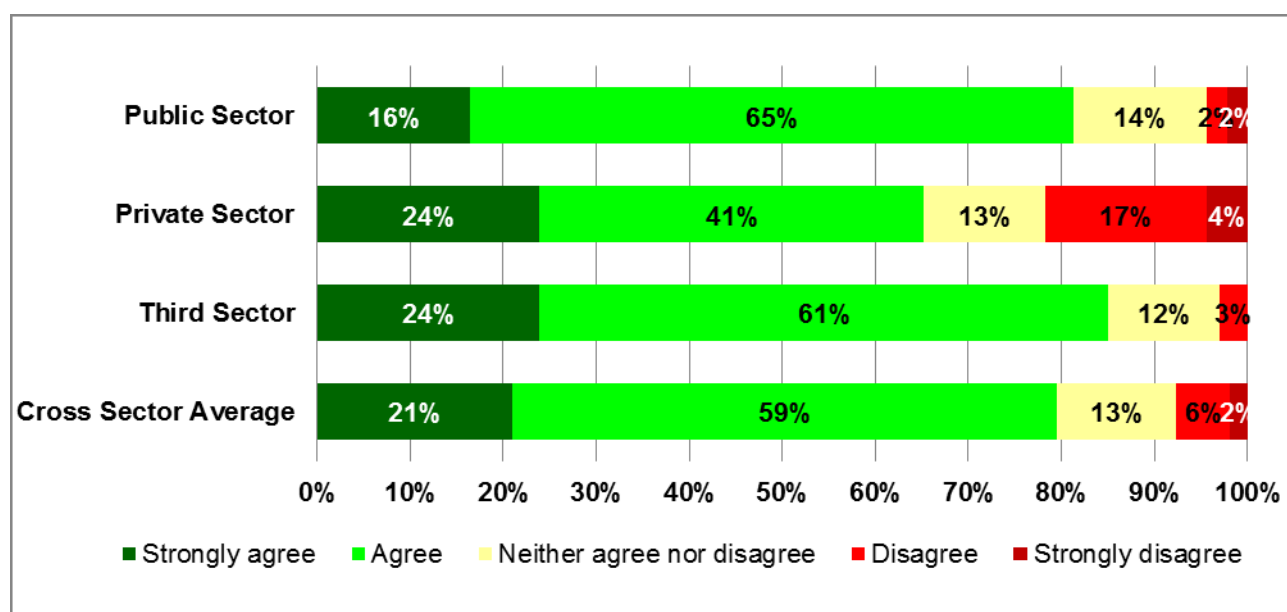


Number of respondents (top to bottom): 35, 93, 60, 195

## Claims and payments – overall satisfaction by sector

In response to the question on satisfaction with the claims and payments process (Figure B-5), the third sector was most positive at 85 percent, 5 percentage points higher than the cross-sector average of 80 percent. The private sector were least satisfied at 65 percent positive, while the public sector closely resembled the cross sector average.

Figure B-5: Overall satisfaction with the claims and payments process



Number of respondents (top to bottom): 46, 91, 67, 211

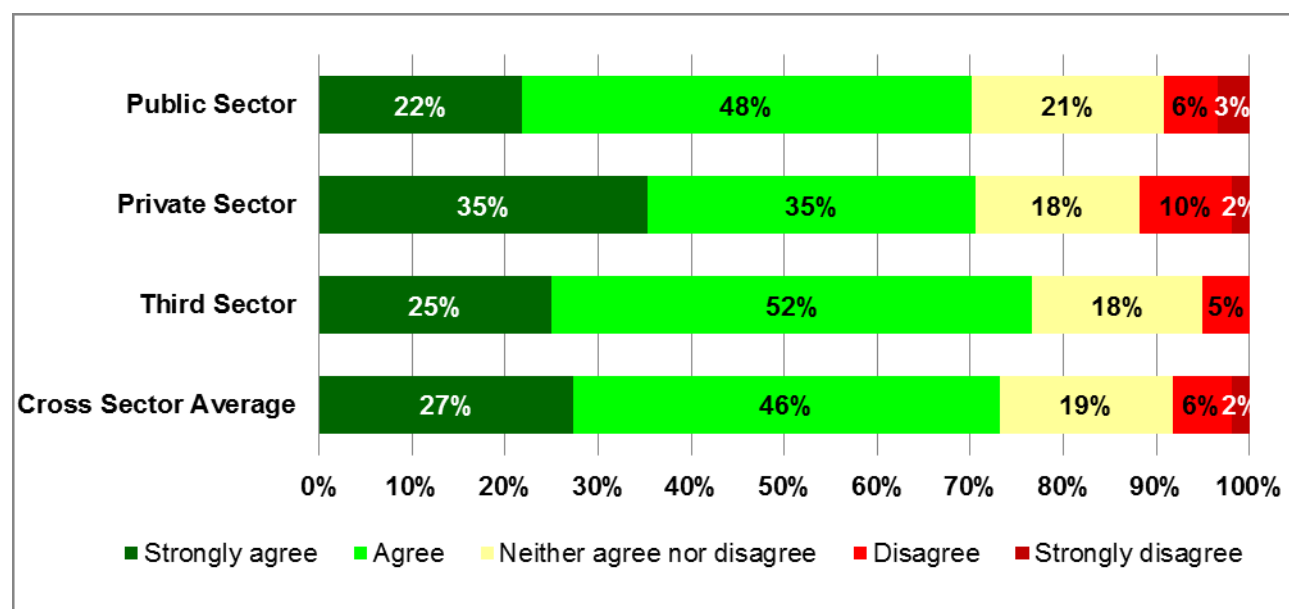


## Support from Welsh Government officials – overall satisfaction by sector

In response to the question on satisfaction with the support from Welsh Government grants officials (Figure B-6), there was little variation across all sectors, with around a fifth (between 18 – 21 percent) of all respondents returning neutral responses<sup>3\*</sup>.

All respondents returned satisfaction scores of over 70 percent. Third sector respondents were most satisfied, returning the highest positive score of 77 percent and lowest negative score of 5 percent. Public sector respondents were less satisfied than the cross sector average (by 3 percentage points) at 70 percent, while private sector respondents reported the highest negative score (12 percent).

Figure B-6: Overall satisfaction with support from Welsh Government grants officials



Number of respondents (top to bottom): 51, 87, 60, 205

<sup>3\*</sup> No significant difference was found between sectors at p=0.05 level for this satisfaction statement