



Customer Satisfaction Survey 2023



**Wessex NHS
Procurement Limited**

Final Report

By Opinion Research Services

October 2023



Customer Satisfaction Survey 2023

Opinion Research Services

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1. Executive Summary

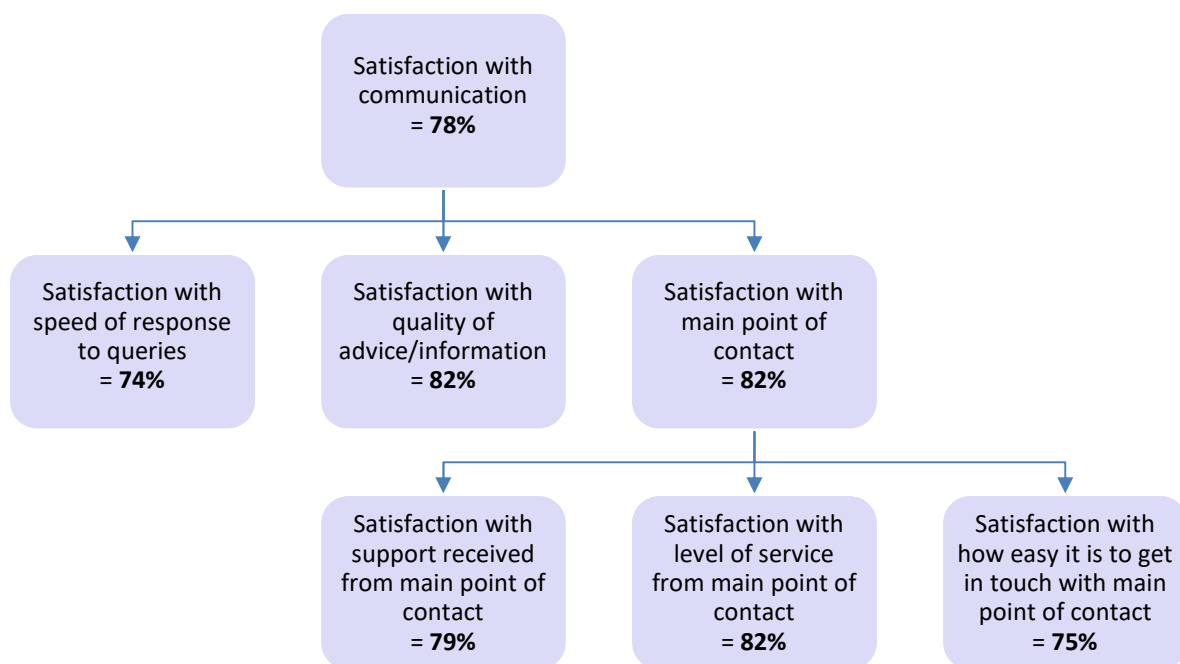
Key Quantitative findings from Customer Satisfaction Survey

1.1 Wessex NHS Procurement Limited (WPL) appointed Opinion Research Services (ORS) to undertake a Customer Satisfaction Survey and follow-up in-depth interviews with the aim of gathering insight from WPL’s customers about their experiences and views on WPL and the service it provides. The following paragraphs highlight some key findings; however, readers are referred to the chapter on Survey Findings for more details.

Communication and Customer Service

- 1.2 The surveys’ findings on attitudes towards WPL’s communication and customer service show high levels of satisfaction among respondents. As Figure 1 shows, nearly eight-in-ten respondents (78%) were satisfied with WPL’s overall communication. Respondents were particularly satisfied with their main point of contact at WPL with over four-fifths (82%) satisfied.
- 1.3 Figure 1 also highlights some room for improvement in the speed of response to queries (74% satisfied) and the ease of getting in touch with customer’s main point of contact (75% satisfied). Though these were higher proportions of satisfaction than in 2022 where 69% were satisfied to both, suggesting steps towards improving these are already underway.
- 1.4 Once customers get in contact with WPL there is a high level of satisfaction in the quality of advice/information and the level of service received from their point of contact (both 82% satisfied).

Figure 1: Satisfaction with WPL’s communication, customer services, and main point of contact



1.5 Respondents’ level of satisfaction with the aspects of communication and customer service varied depending on the respondent’s customer type and the hospital trust they worked for. Those respondents

working for the hospital trust UEL had higher levels of satisfaction across most statements, however it should be noted that these results are only based on nine cases. Those respondents working for the hospital trust HHFT were more likely to be satisfied with the statement concerning how quickly WPL responds to queries. Those respondents in Supply roles were more likely to be satisfied than those in Requisitioner roles.

Opinions of WPL

- 1.6 Respondents were asked the extent they agreed with six statements about WPL. As Figure 2 shows, all statements received agreement from 70% of respondents or higher. *“WPL treats me with respect”* and *“WPL has friendly and approachable staff”* gained the highest level of agreement with nearly nine-in-ten (89% and 87% respectively) agreeing with both statements.
- 1.7 The other four statements were agreed with by between 70% to 73% of respondents. The statement *“WPL understands my needs”* had the lowest level of agreement (70%) and highest level of disagreement (14%). This indicates WPL has some room to improve in making customers feel that they are listened to and that their needs are being taken into account by WPL.

Figure 2: How much do you agree or disagree that... Percentage agreeing with each statement



- 1.8 These are all higher levels of agreement than the 2022 survey where respondents agreeing ranged from just over six-in-ten (61%) to just over eight-in-ten (83%).
- 1.9 Again, respondents’ level of agreement with these statements about WPL varied depending on the respondent’s customer type and the hospital trust they worked for. Those respondents working for the hospital trust UEL had higher levels of agreement across most statements, however it should be noted that these results are only based on nine cases. Those respondents working for the hospital trust HHFT were more likely to agree than those working for UHS, and those respondents working in Supply roles were more likely to agree than those in Requisitioner and Strategic roles.

Change of the last 12 months

- 1.10 A third (33%) of respondents thought the service provided by WPL had improved compared to 12 months ago while 8% of respondents thought the service had worsened. While it is positive that a higher proportion think the service is improving rather than worsening, most respondents (59%) thought the quality of the service has remained about the same over the last year.

Figure 3: Compared to 12 months ago, would you say that the service you now receive from WPL is? Group responses.



- 1.11 This is a higher proportion who think that the service they now receive from WPL has improved compared to 12 months ago than the 2022 survey where a quarter (25%) of respondents had thought the service

had improved (either a lot or a little better) and 16% of respondents had thought the service had worsened (either a little or a lot worse).

- 1.12 Opinions of respondents varied depending on the respondent's customer type and the hospital trust they worked for. Those respondents working for the Hospital Trust UEL were more likely to think that the service they now receive from WPL has improved compared to 12 months ago, however it should be noted that the result for UEL is only based on seven cases. Those respondents with Supply roles were more likely to think that the service they now receive from WPL has improved compared to 12 months ago than those in Requisition or Strategic roles.

Overall satisfaction

- 1.13 The survey found a high level of overall satisfaction in WPL with just over eight-in-ten (81%) satisfied and only 6% were dissatisfied.

Figure 4: Thinking about everything we've talked about today, overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with WPL? Grouped responses



- 1.14 This is higher than the level satisfied in the 2022 survey where under three-quarters (73%) were satisfied with the overall communication from WPL and 13% dissatisfied. (See the chapter on Survey Findings for more information on the breakdown by customer type and the hospital trust)
- 1.15 When respondents were asked why they were satisfied/dissatisfied, nearly two-fifths (37%) gave a comment regarding staff that was positive in nature, but over a tenth (12%) gave a comment about staff that was negative. Over a quarter (27%) gave a comment about communication that was positive in nature, but over a third (35%) gave a comment about communication that was negative. This reflects the importance of communication and the staff they interact with in influencing customer's satisfaction with the service.
- 1.16 At a more detailed level, the most common theme was about how WPL's staff were helpful, knowledgeable, and professional (37%). This was followed by comments expressing that they were generally satisfied with the service (20%), being positive about the easy process of communication/quick response (17%) and then negative comments about how time consuming the process communication was/slow response (also 17%).
- 1.17 When respondents were asked how they feel about WPL, a higher proportion of respondents said they would speak highly of WPL (55%) compared to the proportion that would be critical (6%). However, almost two fifths (39%) of respondents would be neutral about WPL, potentially indicating a level of ambivalence or unfamiliarity towards WPL.
- 1.18 This is a higher proportion who would speak highly of WPL than the 2022 survey where less than half (46%) of respondents would have spoken highly (either with or without being asked). This is also a lower proportion that would be critical than the 2022 survey where just over a tenth (11%) of respondents had said they would have been critical (either with or without being asked).
- 1.19 As with other results, opinions of respondents varied depending on the respondent's customer type and the hospital trust they worked for. Those respondents working for the Hospital Trust UEL had higher levels

of satisfaction, however it should be noted that the result for UEL is only based on nine cases. Those respondents with Supply roles had higher levels of satisfaction than those in Requisition or Strategic roles.

Key Qualitative insights from In-depth interviews

Responsiveness

- 1.20 Just under half of the 20 depth participants had said they are either very, or fairly satisfied with regard to WPL's responsiveness in the survey. Where respondents were 'very' or 'fairly' satisfied, it was related to the speed of response, and to the helpfulness of the responses received; the ability of respondents to check things and ask questions, to feel supported in either finding alternative suppliers for specialist equipment, or to raise codes for new catalogue items. Where respondents were satisfied it was often where they deal with a named individual and appreciate that person going *'above and beyond'*. The new ticketing system was also described by some as having *'sped up responses'*.
- 1.21 The perceived benefits of a good response rate from WPL for customers included saving time, making things easier, and a consequent reduction in delays, which was also said to enable money saving. Respondents said they felt confident that WPL would respond, particularly where they regularly deal with the same named individual. When asked how WPL could build on these successes, the satisfied respondents generally struggled to suggest improvements, or they asked for *'More of the same. More of the collaborative, fast moving response that we've had'*.
- 1.22 Where respondents said that they were 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with WPL's responsiveness, it tended to be because of a variability in responsiveness, with some describing it as *'a bit hit or miss'*, or feeling that there was an element of communication mismatch between clinical staff and procurement staff. Some suggested that this was in part due to not having procurement staff onsite, meaning that a customer's only recourse is to contact a 'generic e-mail', which they found to be less responsive than previous face-to-face contact.
- 1.23 None of the depth interview respondents had said that they were 'very dissatisfied' with WPL's responsiveness, but those who said they were 'fairly dissatisfied' described frustrations arising from struggling to contact the right person with queries, particularly when invoices have not been paid, meaning that the supplier will not fulfil future orders. While it was understood that WPL may not be responsible for making payments to suppliers, they were considered to nonetheless be hindering the process of queries around such matters, or to be responsible for *'parallel processes'* relating to governance documentation, which were thought to be the reason for payment delays.
- 1.24 Specific examples of a less than positive experience of WPL's responsiveness again included delayed payments, and a perceived assumption on WPL's part that Trust staff know and understand what to do when ordering off-catalogue. Many of those that were less than happy with WPL's responsiveness desired to have a dedicated named contact within WPL who has a good knowledge and understanding of their specific hospital, ward or theatre, instead of a generic e-mail address, or they sought more pro-activity from WPL in finding quotes, or alternative items.

Communication

- 1.25 Over a third of the depth participants had scored themselves as very, or fairly satisfied with WPL's communications in the survey. Universally, these customers were satisfied with receiving prompt responses, and many also voiced appreciation for the efforts being made to improve procurement related processes and communications, and for WPL colleagues taking the time to meet via Teams, in addition to e-mailing information in response to a query, which was felt to provide more clarity, as well as the

opportunity to discuss any outstanding issues. Specific examples of the benefits of good communication included; receiving advance notice of changes to the process for ordering item codes, receiving support and information regarding engaging with new suppliers and sourcing quotes, and again, swift and clear responses.

- 1.26 The benefits of good communication were considered to be; saving time and money, being able to allow time to manage upcoming changes in process, and not running short of essential items. When respondents were asked how WPL could build on successful communication, suggestions included targets around response times, a telephone *'hotline'* for urgent queries, a *'Who's who'* directory of WPL contacts, continued *'open communication'* and an FAQ for the new ticketing system, to encourage Trust staff use it.
- 1.27 Just over half of the depth respondents had given either a neutral response (Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied), or a negative response (Fairly or Very dissatisfied) regarding WPL's overall communication in the survey, but most of these were neutral, with only a few saying they were dissatisfied. Where respondents gave neutral responses it was commonly because the communications from WPL were felt to be slightly inconsistent, unpredictable in terms of timeframe, or otherwise *'hit and miss'*.
- 1.28 Other causes of dissatisfaction included WPL *'speaking a different language to clinicians'* or making assumptions about the level of understanding about a situation held by Trust staff. For some, who previously had named contacts but who are now expected to use only the generic e-mail, their dissatisfaction lay in the loss of that named contact. Perceived reasons for less-than-satisfactory communications were mooted by respondents, such as WPL being *'overworked'*, the loss of a WPL team presence on site, the loss of named contacts, and the time taken for Trust staff to learn and master aspects of their own role in terms of ordering and receipting.
- 1.29 The main impacts of a less than positive experience of communication given by respondents were all related to delays to essential or important orders, and the time taken by Trust staff to resolve issues, or stock issues arising due to lack of notification about such delays. A reduction in productivity, clinicians being distracted from their main role, and consequences relating to patient wellbeing were all considered to be the knock-on impacts of such issues.
- 1.30 Participants suggested a number of ways to improve on communications including the provision of phone contacts or allocated named contacts, and WPL staff having a better understanding of the specific needs of different wards and clinical settings.

Understanding Customer needs

- 1.31 In the survey half the depth interview participants had said that they *'Strongly agree'* or *'Tend to agree'* that WPL understands their needs, and the other half either *'Strongly disagreed'* or *'Tended to disagree'* on this point. None of the depth participants had given a neutral response (Neither agree nor disagree). Those who agreed that WPL does understand their needs generally said so simply because they feel that their needs, and their queries are well understood by WPL staff, or emphasised how helpful and understanding WPL staff have been in their responses and interactions.
- 1.32 Participants identified the following benefits of WPL having a good understanding of customer needs; having a say about what type and quality of products should be available to purchase, saving money when items are purchased in bulk, improving the efficiency of deliveries, getting a quick turnaround on urgent orders, visibility of process, and simply that it is *'one less thing to have to think about'*.
- 1.33 Where respondents had said that they disagree about WPL understanding their needs, they gave a variety of reasons for having said so. Some cited the very specific needs of their own departments (e.g. Air

ambulance/ Paediatric intensive care/ IT), or expressed a feeling that a *'one size fits all'* approach is not readily applicable across different trusts and departments. Others described a lack of urgency in relation to sourcing essential equipment or equipment maintenance contracts, and some expressed a desire to receive more support from WPL in price negotiations with suppliers, or with finding quotes in the first place. A few expressed a feeling that there is some inequity between the way WPL interacts with the different trusts, or that their trust takes a *'second place'* in WPL's priorities.

1.34 The suggested resulting impacts of having a poor understanding of customer needs all revolved around time, or around the creation of extra work for Trust staff. Participants were asked for suggestions on what WPL could do to build upon and improve their understanding of customer needs. The suggestions included the following:

- » Pro-activity- e.g. Audit free text requests / ID areas for rapid response needs
- » Visibility
- » Foster increased understanding of customer needs
- » Communication
- » 'Keep up the good work and the direction of travel'.

Service provision

1.35 The Survey asked whether participants felt that WPL's service provision is better, worse, or the same compared to 12 months ago. Of the 20 depth interview participants, half said they thought that service provision had remained consistent, just under a quarter felt it had declined and just over a quarter suggested they had seen an improvement.

1.36 The participants who felt that the service had improved over the last 12 months attributed this to better communication and understanding between themselves and their contacts at WPL, and those who felt there had been a decline in service provision attributed this in part to no longer having a named person as their contact from WPL and to a lack of communication.

1.37 Participants were asked to suggest *'One element of service provision WPL does particularly well, or something they would especially like WPL to retain'*. Suggestions were predominately around the communication pathways, collaboration and speed of response, WPL's commercial expertise and the unclouing of needed items. However, there were still profound issues mentioned within the positive feedback such as the consequences of systemic delays, as well as concern about whether there would be an adequate handover, should a contact within WPL leave their role.

1.38 Participants were asked to suggest *'One element of service provision to improve'*. Suggestions largely echoed themes which had already been raised throughout the depth interviews, namely improving communications, proactivity, providing named contacts, offering clearer guidance and the management of expectations.

1.39 A couple of respondents felt that service provision has declined since the creation of WPL, and one argued for the re-introduction of localised procurement teams. Others felt that when things went wrong they had little recourse and that resolving those issues could be problematic.

Perceptions of WPL

1.40 Of the 20 depth interview participants, most said they either felt neutral or critical of WPL. Participants who said that they would speak positively of WPL did so because they felt that their communication with

and from WPL was good. WPL were described as doing a good job despite being perceived as not working perfectly.

1.41 Participants who said they would speak neutrally about WPL said so because they feel there is room for some improvement in responsiveness and communication or because they felt they did not have much to do with WPL unless something went wrong.

1.42 Those participants who had said they would speak negatively about WPL in the survey felt that WPL are not as helpful as they could be. When asked *“What could WPL do to be spoken more highly of?”* depth participants gave a range of responses which echoed previous comments:

- » Better communication
- » Speed up response times/be more proactive.
- » A more personal approach
- » Take on receipting when necessary
- » Be more helpful.

2. Project Overview

Background

- 2.1 Opinion Research Services (ORS) was commissioned by Wessex NHS Procurement Limited (WPL) to undertake their 2023 customer satisfaction survey with aims including:
- » Measuring satisfaction with the service provided by WPL
 - » Understanding how WPL is perceived by its customers
 - » Understanding how WPL can improve its service delivery
 - » Comparing 2023 survey findings with their 2022 results.

Methodology

- 2.2 The research was conducted in two stages. The first involved a Customer Satisfaction Survey to quantitatively measure the opinions of WPL's customers overall and different subgroups of customers. This was followed up with 20 in-depth interviews to explore topics in greater depth.

The Survey

- 2.3 The Customer Satisfaction Survey was primarily an online survey, with data collected between the 7th of June and 21st of July. 721 email invitations were successfully sent on the 7th of June 2022. This was followed up by four reminder emails that were sent out on the 14th of June, 21st of June, 28th of June, and 21st of July.
- 2.4 To fully maximise the response rate, the survey also used a telephone booster stage running from the 4th to the 21st of July for non-responders to the online survey. A total of 516 contacts were approached by telephone of which 46 were invalid contacts.
- 2.5 153 responses were achieved in the online survey while 154 responses were gained by telephone giving a total number of 307 responses. This yields an approximate overall response rate of 43%. In ORS' experience, this is a very high response rate for this type of survey, which is likely explained by the combination of four email reminders along with the telephone booster stage.
- 2.6 Details of overall response rates broken down by Hospital Trust and Customer Type are shown in the table below.

Table 1: Overall response rate to the survey by Hospital Trust and Customer Type

Characteristic	Respondent Count	Sample Cases	Response Rate %
Hospital Trust			
University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust (UHS)	174	393	44%
Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (HHFT)	124	305	41%
University Hospital Southampton Estates Limited (UEL)	9	23	39%
UHS Customer Type			
UHS Strategic	35	119	29%
UHS Supply	16	52	31%

	UHS Requisitioners	123	222	55%
HHFT Customer Type				
	HHFT Strategic	39	108	36%
	HHFT Supply	26	89	29%
	HHFT Requisitioners	59	108	55%

In-depth interviews

- 2.7 At the end of the customer satisfaction survey, respondents were asked if they would be willing to take part in an in-depth interview for a more detailed discussion of their views on the WPL. 165 respondents said they would be willing to do so, and 20 of those participants were re-contacted to undertake a short depth interview, which referred back to some of their responses in the survey and explored the topic areas of ‘Responsiveness’, ‘Communication’, ‘Understanding Needs’, ‘Service Provision’, and ‘Perceptions of WPL’ in a more conversational manner.
- 2.8 Depth interview participants were recruited to achieve a range of participants across Requisitioning, Strategy and Supply in both HHFT and UHS, with a couple of participants from UEL also included. Within each stakeholder group, participants represented a range of satisfaction ratings with WPL based on their answers to overall satisfaction in the initial survey. Interviews took 20 minutes and were conducted by telephone or via Teams, according to the preference of the participant.

Table 2: Spread of ‘Overall satisfaction with WPL’ amongst the 20 depth participants

HHFT Strategic	UHS Strategic	HHFT Supply	UHS Supply	HHFT Requisitioners	UHS Requisitioners	UEL
Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Very satisfied	Very satisfied	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied
Fairly satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Fairly dissatisfied	Very satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Fairly satisfied
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Fairly satisfied	Fairly dissatisfied	Fairly dissatisfied	

- 2.9 A further table, showing the overall satisfaction of the sample from which depth interviews were recruited is included as Appendix 2.

Structure of the report

- 2.10 This report presents the quantitative findings and a selection of qualitative responses from the survey and the depth interviews. In terms of the qualitative findings, the responses reported here gave a diverse range of stakeholders the opportunity to comment in detail on the WPL’s performance in many areas.
- 2.11 Verbatim quotations are used, in indented italics, for their vividness in capturing recurrent and representative or otherwise important points of view. Sequences of quotations in the text are typically from a range of contributors, not several quotations from a single person. As far as possible, by using quotations, we have tried to let the stakeholders speak for themselves.
- 2.12 In respect to the qualitative findings, the views expressed might or might not be supported by available evidence; that is, they may or may not be accurate as accounts of the facts. ORS cannot arbitrate on the

correctness or otherwise of people's views when reporting them. This should be borne in mind when considering the findings.

Interpretation of the data

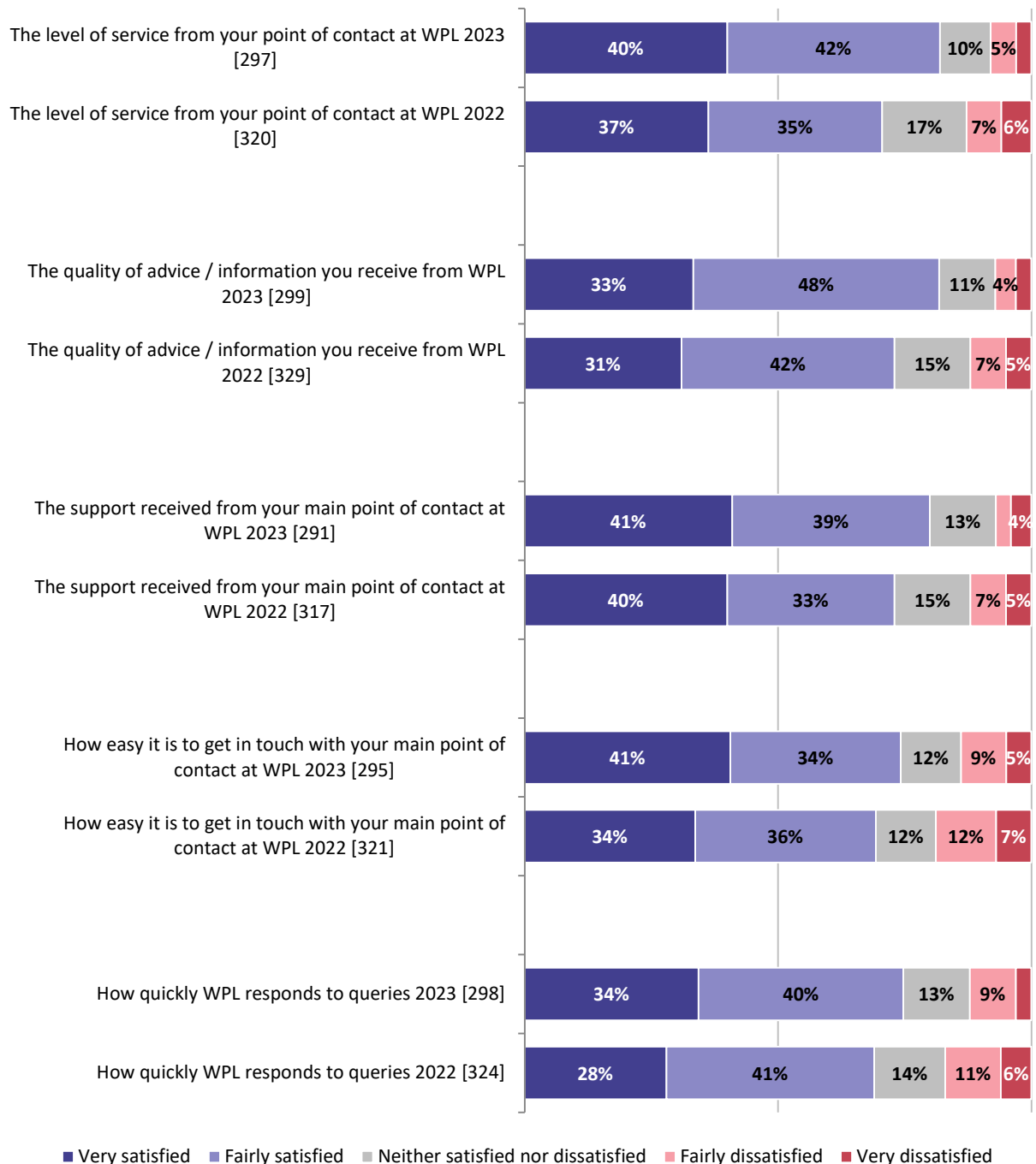
- 2.13 The study was not designed to provide a statistically representative set of results for all customers. As such, the quantitative results presented here have not been weighted and the report refers to 'respondents' rather than 'customers' when discussing quantitative data. Similarly, some subgroup results are based on low number of respondents and should therefore be interpreted with some caution.
- 2.14 Graphics are used extensively in this report to make it as user friendly as possible. The graphics show the proportions (in percentages) of respondents making relevant responses, and, where appropriate, they indicate positive responses in blue, negative responses in red and neutral responses in grey. Bolder shades highlight responses at the 'extremes', for example, very satisfied or very dissatisfied.
- 2.15 It should be noted that, when reporting combined percentages of satisfied and very satisfied, or dissatisfied and very dissatisfied, responses in the text commentary, the figure may sum differently (+/- 1%) to the figures shown on stacked bar charts due to rounding of decimal places.
- 2.16 The number of valid responses recorded for each question (base size) are reported throughout. As not all respondents answered every question, the valid responses vary between questions. Every response to every question has been taken into consideration.
- 2.17 Please note that where percentages do not sum to 100, this may be due to rounding or the exclusion of 'don't know' categories. In some cases, figures of 3% or below have been excluded from graphs for presentational reasons. Quotes are edited using ellipses and square brackets [...] to ensure anonymity.

3. Survey Findings

Communication and Customer Service

3.1 Figure 5 shows the level of satisfaction with five statements concerning different aspects of customer service.

Figure 5: Overall, thinking about your experience of WPL over the last year, to what extent are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the following...? (2023 compared to 2022 survey results)



All respondents (Base numbers in brackets)

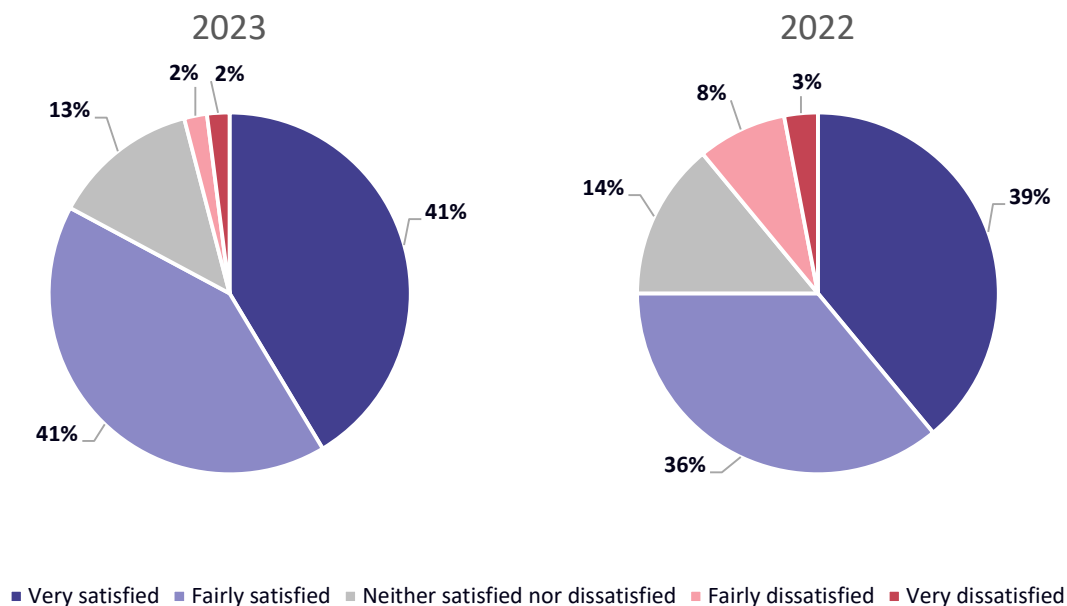
- 3.2 All statements had high levels of satisfaction (ranging from 74% to 82%). The statements with the highest level of satisfaction were concerning the level of service from their point of contact at WPL (82%), and the quality of advice/information received from WPL (also 82%). These are both higher proportions of satisfaction than the 2022 survey where under three-quarters were satisfied (71% and 73% respectively).
- 3.3 Levels of satisfaction were also higher in 2023 for the support received from their main point of contact at WPL, with just under four-fifths (79%) satisfied compared to under three-quarters (73%) in the previous year.
- 3.4 The lowest level of satisfaction concerned how easy it is to get in touch with their main point of contact at WPL and how quickly WPL responds to queries, with 75% and 74% satisfied respectively. Though these were still higher proportions of satisfaction than in 2022 where 69% were satisfied to both.
- 3.5 As well as having the lowest levels of satisfaction, the statements *'How easy it is to get in touch with your main point of contact at WPL'* and *'How quickly WPL responds to queries'* also had the highest level of dissatisfaction, with 14% and 12% dissatisfied respectively. However, it is worth noting that levels of dissatisfaction across all statements were lower in 2023 compared to the previous year.
- 3.6 Table 3 below shows the variation in the level of satisfaction across the five statements by hospital trust and customer type. Respondents from those hospital trusts and customer types noted in blue had higher levels of satisfaction and those noted in red had lower levels of satisfaction.

Table 3: Overall, thinking about your experience of WPL over the last year, to what extent are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the following... Differences in the level of satisfaction (By Hospital Trust and Customer Type)

	Higher Satisfaction	Lower Satisfaction
The quality of advice/information you receive from WPL	UEL (89%)	UHS Supply (71%)
How quickly WPL responds to queries	HHFT (83%) Supply (83%) HHFT Requisitioners (86%) HHFT Supply (84%)	UEL (67%) UHS (69%) UHS Requisitioners (65%)
How easy it is to get in touch with your main point of contact at WPL	Supply (85%)	Requisitioners (70%) UHS Requisitioners (69%)
The level of service from your point of contact at WPL	UEL (89%) Supply (90%) HHFT Supply (92%)	HHFT Requisitioners (71%)
The support received from your main point of contact at WPL	UEL (89%) HHFT Supply (92%)	HHFT Requisitioners (72%)

- 3.7 Those respondents working for the hospital trust UEL had higher levels of satisfaction across most statements (ranging from 78% to 89%), with exception of the statement how quickly WPL responds to queries (67%), however it should be noted that these results are only based on nine cases.
- 3.8 Those respondents working for the hospital trust HHFT were more likely to be satisfied with the statement concerning how quickly WPL responds to queries (83%).
- 3.9 Those respondents in Supply roles were more likely to be satisfied than those in Requisitioner roles to the statement concerning how easy it is to get in touch with their main point of contact at WPL (85% and 70% respectively).
- 3.10 Those respondents in Supply roles within HHFT were also more likely to be satisfied than those in Requisitioner roles (for the same trust) to the statement concerning the level of service from their point of contact at WPL (92% and 71% respectively) and the support received from your main point of contact (92% and 72% respectively).
- 3.11 Those respondents working in UHS Supply roles were less likely to be satisfied with the quality of advice/information received from WPL (71%), however this is only based on 14 cases.
- 3.12 Figure 6 (below) shows the overall level of satisfaction with customers’ main point of contact at WPL. Overall, over four-fifths (82%) of respondents were satisfied with their main point of contact, while less than one-in-twenty (4%) were dissatisfied.
- 3.13 This is a higher level of satisfaction than in the 2022 survey where 76% were satisfied with their main point of contact at WPL overall and a lower level of dissatisfaction than in the 2022 survey where 10% were dissatisfied.

Figure 6: Overall how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your main point of contact at WPL? (2023 compared to 2022 survey results)



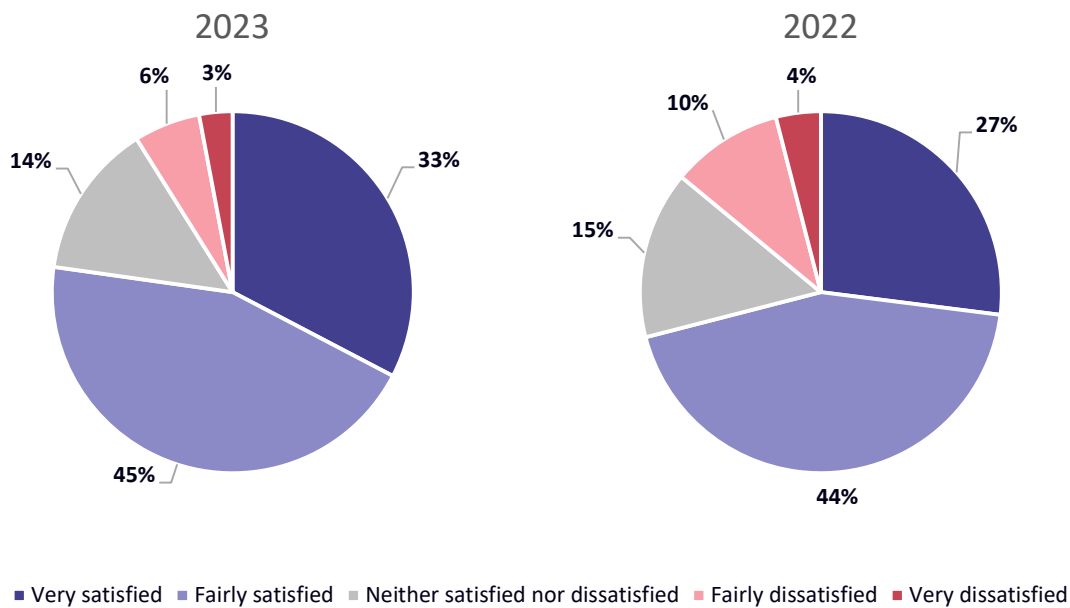
All respondents (Base 2023 = 292), (Base 2022 = 317)

- 3.14 Those respondents working for the hospital trust UEL had the highest level of satisfaction at 100%, however it should be noted this was only based on nine cases. Those respondents working in UHS Strategic and HHFT Supply roles had 94% and 92% satisfaction levels respectively, while those working in

HHFT Requisitioners roles had the lowest level of satisfaction at 71%. Those respondents working for the hospital trust UHS were less likely to be dissatisfied with their main point of contact (2%).

- 3.15 As shown in Figure 7 (below), nearly eight-in-ten respondents (78%) were satisfied with the overall communication from WPL, including a third (33%) that were very satisfied. Just under one-in-ten (9%) were dissatisfied, with only 3% being very dissatisfied.
- 3.16 This is a higher level of satisfaction than in the 2022 survey where just over seven-in-ten (71%) were satisfied with the overall communication from WPL and a lower level of dissatisfaction than in the 2022 survey where 14% were dissatisfied.

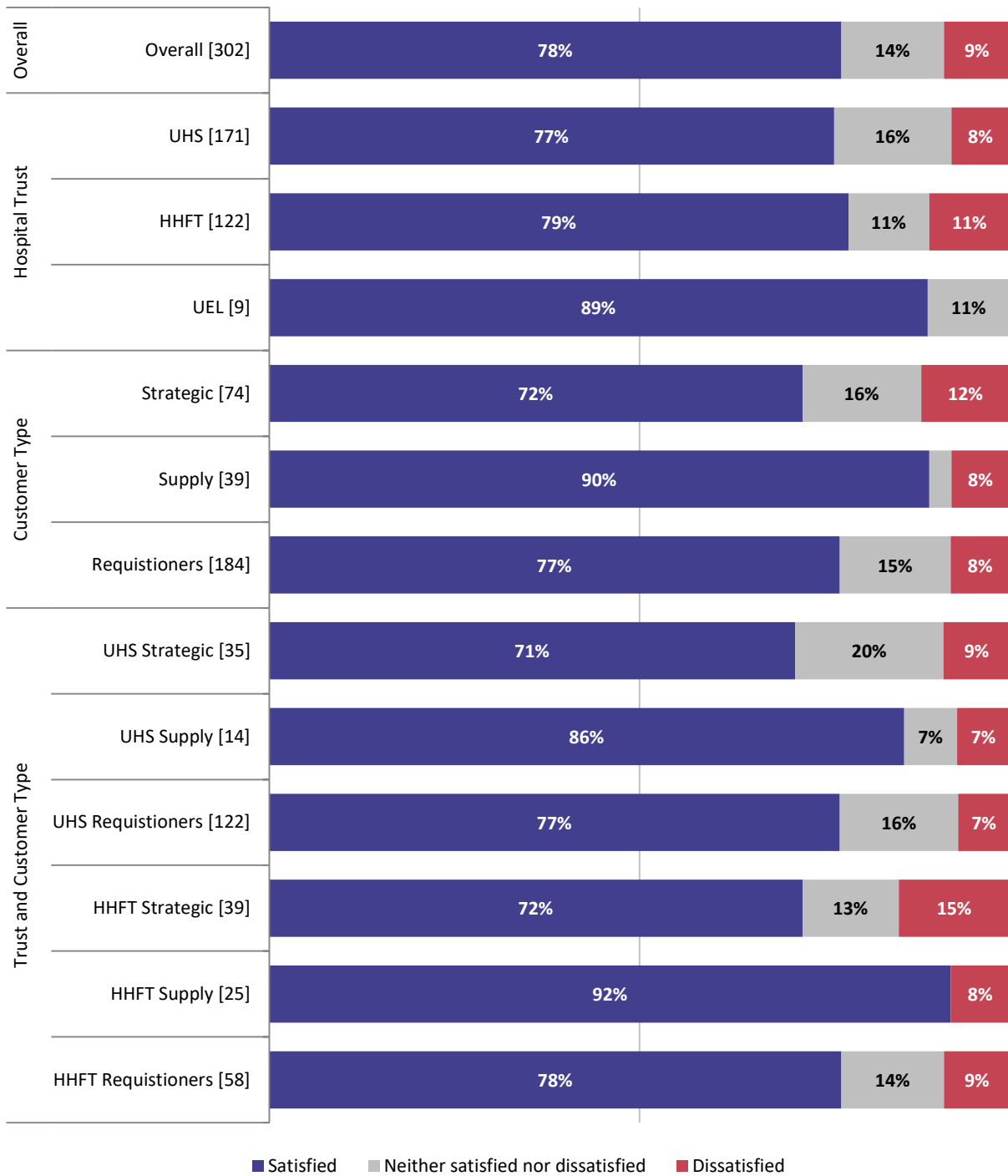
Figure 7: Taking everything into account, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the overall communication from WPL? (2023 compared to 2022 survey results)



All respondents (Base 2023 = 302), (Base 2022 = 328)

- 3.17 Figure 8 (overleaf) shows this result broken down by hospital trust and customer type. Looking at the result by Hospital Trust, those respondents working for the hospital trust UEL had higher levels of satisfaction (89%) compared to those respondents working for both HHFT (79%) and UHS (77%), however it should be noted that the result for UEL is only based on nine cases.
- 3.18 In terms of customer type, those respondents with Supply roles had higher levels of satisfaction (90%) than those in Requisition (77%) or Strategic roles (72%) and those in Supply roles for the HHFT Trust had higher levels of satisfaction (92%) than those in Supply roles for the UHS Trust (86%). However, it should be noted that the result for UHS Supply is only based on 14 cases.
- 3.19 It is also worth noting that those respondents working in HHFT Strategic roles were more likely to have higher levels of dissatisfaction (15%).

Figure 8: Taking everything into account, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the overall communication from WPL? (By Hospital Trust and Customer Type)



All respondents (Base numbers in brackets)

Qualitative insight - Responsiveness & Communication

- 3.20 The 20 in-depth interview participants were asked to comment further on the responses they had given in the survey around WPL's responsiveness and communication.

Responsiveness

- 3.21 In the survey, just under half of the 20 in-depth interview participants said they were either very, or fairly satisfied with WPL's responsiveness. Where respondents were 'very satisfied' or 'fairly satisfied' it was generally because they were happy with the speed of response, and with the helpfulness of the responses received, particularly when trying to source alternative consumable items when those on the catalogue are unavailable, or when seeking information about unavailable items.

Often, it's to help find alternatives, or if they aren't on the catalogue, it's about how we go about getting them. Is the supply issue going to be a temporary thing? Or is it going to be something where we need a long-term solution? Obviously if they don't have it there and then, they can usually find out. They have more of the contacts than we would. (UHS Supply)

- 3.22 Specific examples of good responsiveness included swift responses and resolutions to queries and requests; and the ability of respondents to check things and ask questions, and to feel supported in either finding alternative suppliers for specialist equipment or in raising codes for new catalogue items. The new ticketing system was also mentioned by some as having 'sped up responses'. Where respondents were satisfied, it was often when they dealt with a named individual and appreciated that person going 'above and beyond'.

We're launching a new department and we needed 94 new codes set up and previously that could have taken up to six months to get a response but on this occasion, it was all agreed, set up and approved within 48 hours. (UEL)

She just responds all the time really quickly. One time she was actually on her last day of leave, or had just returned to the office, but straight away she was like 'I'll try and get it sorted for you'. Nothing is ever too much. (HHFT Requisitioners)

Because of timelines – their response times. They have a new system of communication (a ticket system) and that drastically improved things. Now it's very responsive and quick and I can see now each step of the way that something is being done. Whereas before it was just radio silence. (UEL)

- 3.23 The perceived benefits of a good response from WPL for customers include saving time, making things easier or less stressful, and a consequent reduction in delays, which was also said to enable money saving. Respondents said they felt a level of 'trust' and confidence that WPL would respond, particularly when they regularly deal with the same named individual.

It means I keep the flow of thought in my head, so I don't have to pick it up again weeks later and have to remember what the issue was. When I get a response it's still fresh in my head and I don't have to start again. So that's really helpful to me, and it means I can potentially save money for the Trust... (HHFT Strategic)

It means that the ordering is much quicker, it means that we're buying at the right price, the agreed, set price so that when the invoice comes in, it will get cleared during the financial invoice clearing rather than go on hold. (UEL)

- 3.24 When asked how WPL could build on these successes, the satisfied respondents generally struggled to suggest improvements, or they asked for, 'More of the same. More of the collaborative, fast moving

response that we've had' (UEL). However, one respondent suggested improvements to the new ticketing system.

The IT desk they use is clunky and let's say I ask for something to be unmasked and get a response, and it can be only a matter of days, but by the time I see the response, I don't actually know what I was asking for. That's not them but the nature of what they use. Their response doesn't always include the comment you initially put so it can be unclear. It's hard to search for tickets. (UEL)

- 3.25 Where respondents said that they were 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied' with WPL's responsiveness, it tended to be because of a variability in responsiveness, with some describing it as 'a bit hit or miss' or feeling that there is a communication mismatch between clinical staff and procurement staff. Some suggested that this is in part due to not having procurement staff onsite, meaning that a customer's only recourse is to contact a 'generic e-mail', which they found to be less responsive than previous face-to-face contact.

It was easier when you could go down and see the boys... It's the same people so that's not a problem but it's more that you can't have that instantaneous access and they don't have such quick access to me; if there were any products I wanted to look at they came and brought the product when they were on site. (HHFT Strategic)

They are ok. Not amazing or horrendous, there are areas for improvement, but they do a good job most of the time. (HHFT Supply)

They and I talk a different language. I am a nurse and they've come from a spreadsheet. Our methods of communications don't really meet, or match. (HHFT Requisitioners)

We have one generic email; I get either no response or four or five different responses. And you can't follow up with the same person. (HHFT Requisitioners)

- 3.26 These issues were thought to stem from staffing and capacity pressures within WPL, exacerbated in a post-Covid and post-Brexit landscape. Several respondents alluded to manufacturing and importation issues as having an impact on the availability of products, as well as increased demand to source alternatives across a wide range of both consumables and equipment. This was seen as having an impact both for WPL and for the Trusts. Delayed responses were also attributed to changes in working culture, for example an increase in staff working part-time or working from home.

They have undergone a lot of changes. Our procurement team was dedicated for our Trust until a couple of years ago and then it was broadened out regionally, and the pandemic had an impact as well, and lots of people working from home. That distance and the broader geographical responsibility may have had an impact as well... (HHFT Supply)

- 3.27 Where the issue was felt to revolve around 'speaking a different language', it was attributed to the requisitioner not having the necessary skills or capacity to fulfil the administrative tasks associated with receipting items, a task they felt had been bolted onto their role due to a lack of capacity. This, they felt, causes stress for all concerned.

It causes me a lot of stress. And I guess it causes them stress too, because they need my step of the pathway to be completed before they can complete their steps. (HHFT Requisitioners)

- 3.28 Other reported impacts of this variability in WPL's responsiveness included the time spent chasing enquiries, or getting to the point where customers can have a conversation with the right person within WPL, and a lost 'personal touch' for those who now have only a generic contact e-mail.

We used to just phone someone up, now it's all one email address, rather than talking to someone in person. It feels less personal. I'd prefer to speak to someone on the phone and have a discussion, rather than e-mails bouncing backwards and forwards. (HHFT Supply)

Once I can get face-to-face via Teams to say 'here are all the problems' I feel there is then some activity. It feels to me like the job list is too big and you have to get yourselves noticed to get on the top of the job list. (UHS Strategic)

It is frustrating. Which one is the correct answer?? Or if you've had a response from one person, but you want to respond to their response... that's really hard to do if you've only got a generic e-mail address, because you don't know if the same person will pick up your response. (HHFT Requisitioners)

- 3.29 None of the interview participants had said they were 'very dissatisfied' with WPL's responsiveness, but those who said they were 'fairly dissatisfied' described frustrations arising from struggling to contact the right person with queries, particularly when invoices have not been paid, meaning the supplier will not fulfil future orders. Trying to find out why payments are on hold in order to resolve such issues was a particular issue for one respondent, who was annoyed at being a 'Piggy in the middle'. Another explained that their issue is not with their materials managers, (for whom they only had praise), but with the process for escalating issues, (which also regularly relates to the non-payment of invoices), and a lack of clear information or explanation around that process. While it was understood that WPL may not be responsible for making payments to suppliers, they were considered to be hindering the process of queries around such matters, or to be responsible for 'parallel processes' relating to governance documentation, which were thought to be the reason for payment delays.

Quite often I get the companies that we deal with chasing me for invoices not being paid. They're frustrated they can't get through to the right people. Then I'm trying to phone up the SBS phone line, and there are so many different options and invariably I get through to the wrong one and they say, 'try this other number'... It's just a nightmare trying to get through to the right person ... Frustration that the supplier is contacting me because in theory they should be able to contact SBS and then somebody there sort out that process. But I seem to be the piggy in the middle trying to sort it out. (HHFT Strategic)

We should have someone acting for us in the procurement capacity and so when we go out to look for new equipment or getting good deals for us for the supplies we use. We should have a person to interact with on that. (HHFT Supply)

- 3.30 Specific examples of a less than positive experience of WPL's responsiveness again included delayed payments, and a perceived assumption on WPL's part that Trust staff know and understand what to do when ordering off-catalogue. One respondent specifically mentioned a training need around understanding how procurement and finance link up and interact, in part due to the loss of a colleague who had previously handled such matters. Others described the task of finding alternative items as having 'exponentially exploded' due to manufacturing and importation issues, and push-back from WPL when requesting they find a quote for an off-catalogue item. In the latter instance WPL staff had suggested a supplier to approach, but the respondent felt strongly that WPL is better placed to seek new quotes themselves, as the ones with procurement knowledge and experience.

I tried to put an order through that wasn't on SBS because it's not a company they would normally use, it was a one-off subscription payment for some technical requirement. They cancelled the order saying it would take too long to get that company on and it would be better to do it through faster payments. But then there were no instructions of how or what to do. Then I said 'how does that work? The form says you have to have an invoice number and this number', but there were no instructions.

Then there was communication between WPL and the faster payments people. It took two weeks, when it was something that should have been done in one day. I was being chased by the supplier, they couldn't do it without this number being issued. It just clogs everything up. I think it was expected that we know what to do. It's that assumption. (HHFT Strategic)

It's now absolutely huge in terms of having to find alternatives for things that have gone out of stock and kit that is no longer being manufactured because they don't want to get it stamped for the UK and the EU. (UHS Supply)

- 3.31 The impacts of these issues were felt by respondents to be 'massive', resulting in both time and money wasted because clinical staff are being expected to perform procurement tasks and duties.

I've got other things to be getting on with and this is a project I did years ago, and for some reason it's got my name on it because I placed the original order. (HHFT Strategic)

We don't know always know if we've ordered from a preferred provider and it takes a lot of time to research all of that when I feel like it's [WPL's] job to do it, and they're already in the know. And it may be that we're spending an awful lot more than we need to. (HHFT Supply)

I see them as the cog to have those relationships. If they're going to run our procurement, they're the ones that should have the relationships with Supply Chain and the companies for this information to come to them and then come down. (UHS Supply)

- 3.32 Many of the suggestions around how WPL could improve its responsiveness focussed on a desire for a dedicated named contact within WPL with good knowledge and understanding of their specific hospital, ward or theatre, instead of having to use a generic e-mail address. One respondent suggested that a 'one size fits all' approach is not appropriate when providing services to different NHS Trusts; and others wanted to be able to contact WPL staff directly by phone, or at least to receive holding e-mails which contain a realistic estimation of how long a proper response might take.

WPL provide services for two NHS trusts and what is right for Hampshire may not be right and appropriate for us. It's a one size fits all. (UHS Strategic)

Allow you to respond to individuals or have a named person you can go to. (HHFT Requisitioners)

To be able to talk to someone directly by phone. (HHFT Supply)

- 3.33 Other suggestions revolved around a desire for more pro-activity from WPL in finding quotes, or alternative items. One respondent specifically suggested that the remit and pay scale of WPL materials managers should be increased, enabling them to take on some of the administrative functions around procurement that are currently dealt with by clinicians.

They could either give us guidance on what they would expect it to cost, or they need to do the legwork and go and get the quote, and find the best price for things, rather than throwing it back to us to do. (HHFT Supply)

When I talk to my materials management people they say, 'But we would run this for you, if they put that in our job description and gave us that remit', obviously they want a higher job description for it which is fair enough - they're taking on more work - but they would happily run that. (UHS Supply)

Do my receipting for me. (HHFT Requisitioners)

Communication

- 3.34 Over a third of interview participants had scored themselves as very, or fairly satisfied with WPL's communications in the survey. Universally, these customers were satisfied with receiving prompt responses (echoing what was said in the previous section about responsiveness). Respondents also appreciated the efforts being made to improve procurement-related processes and communications, and for WPL colleagues taking the time to meet via Teams, in addition to e-mailing information in response to a query. This was felt to provide more clarity, as well as the opportunity to discuss any outstanding issues.

It's the promptness. It's the responses. They're always available to answer queries.

(HHFT Requisitioners)

Again, its response times and now we are getting responses and can see action and it feels like they are trying to work with us to improve things whereas before we didn't feel like a team. We've now got the confidence that we can do things the correct way, through procurement, and not have to find workarounds. (UEL)

They are very responsive when they get back to you and will give you the information or do a quick Teams call to get the clarity and to make sense, because an email doesn't always make sense to the person you are sending it to. (HHFT Strategic)

- 3.35 Specific examples of the benefits of good communication included receiving advance notice of changes to the process for ordering item codes, receiving support and information around engaging with new suppliers and sourcing quotes and, again, swift and clear responses.

We've been given notice that the process for ordering codes for some products is changing in December. (UEL)

I have another meeting today to look at more information that they will have collated between two companies they have found for me which is great, because it saves me time. (HHFT Strategic)

Years ago they didn't seem as clear, so I'd raise questions and sometimes they'd send a spreadsheet as a response, to show me something, but without an explanation. These days I normally understand what they mean. Clarity. (HHFT Strategic)

We had an expensive order contract with a CPW (waiver) and I had a same day response saying it had been completed and signed and was now in place. A quick, or immediate response and a good answer to your questions. (HHFT Supply)

- 3.36 Respondents described the benefits of good communication as saving time and money, allowing time to manage upcoming changes in process, and not running short of essential items.

I was able to pass on PO to a supplier so they could put the service contract in place immediately. The equipment concerned was faulty and that enabled the supplier to address the issue quickly. Our work is done on a day-to-day basis and a delay on any one product needs quick resolutions. (HHFT Supply)

We get products we need in a timely manner. Actually, they're very good and not too pushy. They're very good at understanding some products may be cheaper but are not fit for purpose, or for clinical reasons we don't want to go down that line. (UHS Supply)

- 3.37 When asked how WPL could build on successful communication, the satisfied customers made a few suggestions, which included targets around response times, a telephone 'hotline' for urgent queries, a

'Who's who' directory of WPL contacts, continued 'open communication', and an FAQ for the new ticketing system to encourage Trust staff use it.

Targets for response to enquiries, for example within a certain amount of time. And in cases needing urgent assistance, perhaps a contact line to phone through to escalate critical things. (HHFT Supply)

We just need to be open and honest. I think we're getting better but sometimes it can feel like things are being done for a benefit that we are not seeing. Just open communication. (UEL)

3.38 In the survey, just over half of the interview participants had given either a neutral response (neither satisfied nor dissatisfied), or a negative response (fairly or very dissatisfied) around WPL's overall communication. Most of these were neutral however, with only a few saying they were dissatisfied.

3.39 Where respondents gave neutral responses, it was commonly because the communications from WPL were felt to be slightly inconsistent, unpredictable in terms of timeframe, or otherwise 'hit and miss'. Some also talked about positives around communication within their responses, praising WPL for the new ticketing system, and for sourcing samples of items requiring clinical consideration. These positives were tempered, however, by caution over speaking too soon about improvements arising from the ticketing system, or by a desire for WPL to be more pro-active (in offering samples when alternatives are required, for example).

I think the communication with them is very good, I feel they absolutely do understand what is needed and normally give a quick solution. It's just the frustration of not knowing how long you have to wait for that. (UHS Strategic)

Because you can't communicate with the same person all the time. (HHFT Requisitioners)

It is hit and miss [but] this new IT thing has come in and I get a within 24-hour response and I can go back in and see the request I have made and the response from the team and then go back to them straight away and ask them what's going on. It's a better channel because you are going back to one person [in a live feed]. It seems to be ok; I hope it keeps going. It's a work in progress and has only just started but I feel happy about it. (UHS Requisitioners)

The orders are my main bugbear because as far as I am concerned the order has gone through and they don't come back and say that the supplier has not got that or that you may have to look for another. Or that it's going to be delayed by whatever time. (UHS Requisitioners)

... The one good thing they have done for us, which I didn't realise they do, is they have the ability to ask companies for samples. So rather than us having to order a whole box, they have been able to offer samples so I have been able to get two or three of each thing to have a play with... Being able to automatically go 'Right this is out of stock, do you need us to get you some alternative samples?' rather than us having to ask for it would be an improvement. I feel like it would be nice if they could say 'We've noticed you use a huge amount of this', because they can see the numbers of kit we order; 'Would it be helpful if we got you samples for each of the three or four alternatives so your clinical specialist can look at it?'. (UHS Supply)

3.40 Other reasons given for being dissatisfied again included comments about WPL 'speaking a different language to clinicians' or making assumptions about levels of understanding among Trust staff. For some, who previously had named contacts but who are now expected to use only the generic e-mail, their dissatisfaction was rooted in the loss of that named contact.

Again, different language – they were asking me things full of acronyms I don't understand. I accept some fault myself I haven't invested the time to do this, but I use my time clinically rather than doing what I perceive to be an admin process. When I say, 'I'm a nurse, I don't know how to do this' – and

they just say, 'do it'. It seems de-personalised; I don't know if it's an AI generated response or something. I just get endless e-mails. (HHFT Requisitioners)

We used to have a named person that we would contact, and now it's just general enquiries e-mail, which we don't get much joy from. (HHFT Supply)

- 3.41 Several respondents specifically mentioned fielding communications about finance from suppliers, and dealing with unpaid invoices, areas which they felt were not their department, and for which they hold no responsibility.

I've been getting lots of e-mails about finance; when a bill hasn't been paid, or I'm chasing to find where an order is, then they're sending emails about what I need to do with the financial side which isn't my job. Then it turns out that the invoice hadn't been signed off, or the payment hadn't been signed off. (HHFT Supply)

- 3.42 Further perceived reasons for less-than-satisfactory communications were raised by respondents. These included WPL staff being 'overworked', the loss of a WPL team presence on-site, and the time taken for Trust staff to learn and master aspects of their own role in terms of ordering and receipting.

We will set meetings up on Teams but the reason we email is because they are not here. I don't necessarily think that is a major negative, but if for example we had a procurement lead embedded in our facilities that sat and worked with us and we met with regularly then that would be better... (UHS Strategic)

... I think it's probably just that they're overworked. (UHS Requisitioners)

Switching from named contact; the people at the other end know what needs to be done, but they're directing it to the wrong people. They know what the issue is, but they're not directing it to the right people. (HHFT Supply)

I am learning and I am doing better now, but I'm frustrated about the process because it has taken up a lot of my time in the past year. (HHFT Requisitioners)

- 3.43 The main reported impacts of a less than positive communication experience all related to delays to essential or important orders and the time needed from Trust staff to resolve issues, or stock issues arising due to lack of notification about such delays. A reduction in productivity, clinicians being distracted from their main roles, and impacts relating to patient wellbeing were also thought to be knock-on impacts of such issues.

It takes me away from my clinical role. (HHFT Requisitioners)

It delayed equipment being delivered which then had an impact on patient safety and wellbeing. (HHFT Supply)

Time and reducing of productivity are the big things. (UHS Strategic)

It does slow a process down. With delays in communication, especially if it's something we're having difficulty locating and we need some assistance, that delay in getting back to us can have an impact on our supplies for the operational team. There are occasions where we look in our store and we're starting to get below our minimum supply level, and we've sent an enquiry off about why it's out of stock or what alternatives there are, and there's a delay in someone coming back so we know we're not going to get this resolved this week and it's probably going to be next week or maybe even the week after. By that time, we could actually be out of stock. (UHS Requisitioners)

They are big orders for the wards and nobody thinks to say 'There is going to be a delay on this'. With any problems or issues on anything, it would be good to know sooner rather than later. (UHS Requisitioners)

- 3.44 Participants suggested a number of ways to improve communications, again including provision of phone contacts or allocated named contacts, and WPL staff having a better understanding of the specific needs of different wards and clinical settings, and of what can and cannot be dealt with by ward staff.

They need to have more of an understanding of what we do on the ward and how far we can go before it then becomes a financial issue, when it is a different department that deals with it. (HHFT Supply)

I think just the phone line, knowing the options to choose. I think some training would probably be helpful both ends. A, for the people on the other end and b, on our end about how it all links together and what we need to do. (HHFT Strategic)

It might be good to have a contact to be able to telephone and maybe they should share a roster or have a duty manager so if we need something quick we can have someone to telephone. (UHS Strategic)

A named person or the ability to respond to an individual rather than the general email. Putting your query into the generic, that's fine, but when you get a response sometimes you want to respond directly to that person. (HHFT Requisitioners)

- 3.45 One respondent said that WPL needs to 'Assume I'm an idiot', suggesting a need for more clarity of process, as well as the use of clearer language and fewer acronyms. Another described a need for a 'more centralised administration system' and felt that if an immediate response is unlikely to be forthcoming, then being given a suggested timescale for receiving a full response would be useful.

Assume that I'm an idiot. I don't understand the acronyms they use, and if you want someone to do something particular, you need to put it in a language that they can understand. (HHFT Requisitioners)

It really is just having awareness of when you're going to have communication. Perhaps a more centralised admin point of contact who can manage that process for them, because we probably are communicating directly with the people that then need to be doing the work, and you do feel like you're ... slowing them down by asking the questions. So, a more centralised administration system... (UHS Strategic)

Opinions of WPL

3.46 Figure 9 shows the extent to which respondents agreed or disagreed with six statements about WPL and the service it provides.

Figure 9: How much do you agree or disagree that... (2023 compared to 2022 survey results)



All respondents (Base numbers in brackets)

- 3.47 All statements had high levels of agreement (ranging from 70% to 89%). The statements with the highest level of agreement were ‘WPL treats me with respect’ (89%), and ‘WPL has friendly and approachable staff’ (87%). These are both higher proportions of agreement than the 2022 survey where just over eight-in-ten agreed (83% and 81% respectively).
- 3.48 The remaining statements had similar levels of agreement ranging from one-in-seven (70%) to a just under a quarter (73%) of respondents...
- » ‘WPL provides an effective and efficient service’ (73%) (69% in 2022)
 - » ‘WPL is open and transparent’ (72%) (64% in 2022)
 - » ‘WPL cares about their customers’ (71%) (66% in 2022)
 - » ‘WPL understands my needs’ (70%) (61% in 2022).
- 3.49 These are all higher levels of agreement than the 2022 survey where respondents agreeing ranged from just over six-in-ten (61%) to just under seven-in-ten (69%).
- 3.50 As well as having the lowest level of agreement, the statement ‘WPL understands my needs’ also had the highest level of disagreement (14%). However, it is worth noting that the level of disagreement was lower in 2023 compared to the previous year (17%).
- 3.51 Differences in the level of agreement by hospital trust and customer type across the six statements are highlighted in Table 4. Respondents from those hospital trusts and customer types noted in blue had higher levels of agreement and those noted in red had lower levels of agreement.

Table 4: How much do you agree or disagree that... Differences in the level of agreement (By Hospital Trust and Customer Type)

	Higher Agreement	Lower Agreement
WPL provides an effective and efficient service	Supply (83%) HHFT Supply (85%)	Strategic (63%)
WPL understands my needs	UEL (78%) HHFT Supply (85%)	HHFT Strategic (63%)
WPL is open and transparent	Supply (86%) HHFT Supply (95%)	UEL (67%) Requisitioners (68%)
WPL cares about their customers	UEL (89%) Supply (82%) HHFT Supply (88%)	UHS (66%) UHS Requisitioners (64%)
WPL has friendly and approachable staff	UEL (100%) Supply (97%) HHFT Supply (100%)	Requisitioners (83%)
WPL treats me with respect	UEL (100%) HHFT Supply (96%)	UHS (86%) UHS Requisitioners (85%)

- 3.52 Those respondents working for the hospital trust UEL had higher levels of agreement across most statements (ranging from 78% to 100%), with exception of the statement that WPL is open and transparent (67%), however it should be noted that these results are only based on nine cases.
- 3.53 Those respondents working for the hospital trust HHFT were more likely to agree (ranging from 72% to 93%) than those working for UHS (ranging from 66% to 86%) across all these statements and those respondents working in Supply roles (ranging from 79% to 97%) were more likely to agree than those in Requisitioner (ranging from 68% to 87%) and Strategic (ranging from 63% to 92%) roles.

Qualitative insight - Understanding customer needs

- 3.54 In the survey, half of the interview participants said that they ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘tended to agree’ that WPL understands their needs, and the other half either ‘strongly disagreed’ or ‘tended to disagree’ on this point. No participants gave a neutral response (neither agree nor disagree).
- 3.55 Those who agreed said so simply because they feel that their needs, and their queries, are well understood by WPL staff.

I have worked with a few of them for years so they know me and they understand that infection control is really important and it affects a lot of things, even down to the toilet roll. Other people might think it is minor but they do understand that we actually do hold an important role in that sort of thing. (HHFT Strategic)

They tend to answer quite promptly and they know what I mean. So they ‘get it’, and understand what my query is saying... (HHFT Strategic)

Because they listen to what we’ve got to say. We obviously explain the importance of particular things, and they trust our opinion. (UHS Supply)

- 3.56 Some also emphasised how helpful and understanding WPL staff have been in their responses and interactions.

I feel once I get through they are very helpful, very constructive. The advice is generally good in terms of what the next steps are. I think when systems are changing and can generally be a bit confusing, I say, ‘Hold on, I’m a bit lost in this process here’ and they normally get me back on track. (UHS Strategic)

In the interactions I have had they seem helpful and understanding, and when I’ve escalated things to the more senior members in the team they do seem understanding and helpful, so I do get a little confidence from that. (HHFT Supply)

When I do contact them about things, like what suppliers are for certain things, then I can send that IT ticket in and ask which suppliers we are using and they can come back and give me a couple of options. (UHS Requisitioners)

- 3.57 Specific examples of WPL understanding participants’ needs well included receiving a thorough breakdown of a contract which involved an element of ‘free items’, support with changing purchase orders, a swift turnaround in orders for services providing home visits, and support finding suppliers for uncommonly purchased items.

There was a tender that was being carried out by a commissioner about enteral feeds, and I didn’t know much about them. We had a contract with a supplier that meant we got something for free when we purchased the other bit, but as part of the tender we needed to know what volume of free

things we got. So I asked for that report, and they sent me one which I just forwarded on to the commissioner. (HHFT Strategic)

The lady I deal with goes that extra mile. We were trying to sort something a while ago, couldn't get what we needed then and the purchase order was in fact incorrect and needed changing. Then she went and did that for me, she will just change the purchase order. (HHFT Requisitioners)

We are running home visits. Everything we need we can plan, and we obviously do, but sometimes we need things turned around really quickly. They'll understand that and we get the purchase order as soon as possible. (HHFT Requisitioners)

The other week I had to get [some uncommon items] and I just thought 'Where would I order them from?' I didn't even know what they were called properly, so I put in an IT ticket and someone came back to me with two suppliers straight away. So it seems to be working like that. (UHS Requisitioners)

- 3.58 Participants identified the following benefits of WPL having a good understanding of customer needs: having a say about what type and quality of products should be available to purchase; saving money when certain items are purchased in bulk; improving the efficiency of deliveries; and quick turnarounds on urgent orders.

I know they are not just going to bring something in and other colleagues who aren't with WPL or are with their own procurement company haven't had that and have had things changed without them knowing. For instance, detergent wipes; I know two trusts who have had those both changed despite them not liking them, because they are cheaper. (HHFT Strategic)

It varies on the issue. Discussions on pricing, that has particularly saved money, or liaising with companies to try to free up a locked account to improve our efficiency of deliveries, that's where it is critical. (HHFT Supply)

... There are a lot of products where, at the end of the year, you get a rebate back if you use a certain amount and you have reached the target. I always ask about that because quite often that will offset what they think is you spending too much money. It brings the products down to the same price as the cheaper products. (HHFT Strategic)

It just ensured we do get a quick turnaround. Some of these companies, they've got a time of four weeks and sometimes we need things sooner than that. (HHFT Requisitioners)

- 3.59 Other perceived benefits of understanding the customer's needs well were increased efficiency, visibility of process, getting the information needed to report to commissioners, and simply having 'one less thing to have to think about'.

I guess it's efficiency. If they're aware of our requirements and processes then the procurement stages go a bit more smoothly. (UHS Strategic)

We're able to have better visibility about what we are doing, both from our point of view and a procurement aspect. (UJEL)

- 3.60 One participant, who had said in the survey that they 'tended to disagree' that WPL understands their needs, had changed their mind about this when interviewed following a positive experience of support around a mass unmasking of items. This, it was said, had enabled time efficiencies and had given the staff concerned increased confidence in WPL's understanding of their needs.

It's getting better. We order lots of items through EDC and we are trying to move over to Supply X and to do that the items need to be unmasked and they have struggled to understand just how... We need to order it, so it doesn't need to be questioned. We are taking on new areas and requesting mass

unmasking and it is getting done so I would upgrade my response because of it... It enables us to order things quicker and do things quicker and to take on projects and it is able to go to our timescale because they appreciated, they needed to unmask everything. (UEL)

- 3.61 Where respondents had disagreed that WPL understands their needs, they gave a variety of reasons for having said so. Some cited the very specific needs of their own departments (e.g., air ambulance/ paediatric intensive care/ IT) or expressed a feeling that a 'one size fits all' approach is not readily applicable across different trusts and departments. One participant described the process of getting items as unmasked as being especially 'clunky', and attributed this in part to the fact that they fall under 'general medicine', when their needs are in fact quite specialised.

When you're working in IT, you need to speak to somebody. Most of my projects are IT related, so there are a lot of elements of IT in that. IT equipment, services, service contracts, finding a new system or negotiating a new contract with a new system. (HHFT Strategic)

You have to understand what we do is specialised and it's not just a piece of kit that sits on a shelf, it's a piece of kit that potentially saves a child's life... Having a little bit of understanding is helpful in terms of what they're supplying, and I don't know how we give them that because obviously these procurement people aren't clinical so they don't have that knowledge. Maybe it is that my expectations are too high, but I just feel like I do a lot of their work. (UHS Supply)

One thing we find is that the group we're set up with under UHS... I think we're set up under general medicine and obviously ... we're not general medicine. What we found is recently one of the products we've been purchasing for a couple of years suddenly disappeared. We've been trying to locate a replacement. When we do, we then have to email ECAT to get this unmasked so that we can then order it. They have to go to WPL to get permission to unmask it. The whole process is so clunky, it takes so long. It delays it. (UHS Requisitioners)

- 3.62 Others described a lack of urgency in relation to sourcing essential equipment or equipment maintenance contracts, and some wanted more support from WPL in price negotiations with suppliers, or with finding quotes in the first place.

When we need to order equipment, or when we're waiting for equipment, there's no urgency; it is just paper shuffling for them. They aren't on the ward seeing the impacts of not having that equipment. (HHFT Supply)

I negotiate quite a lot directly with suppliers, but I don't walk away confidently thinking 'Well have I got the best?' and I don't necessarily feel that's questioned by the procurement team. Ideally, we'd be benchmarking against other areas, but that's very difficult. My feeling is the profit could be coming from the procurement team a bit more on that. (UHS Strategic)

They don't get quotes for you anymore the same way they used to. We used to have buyers when they were still on site that we would just contact (I would just walk down there) and say, 'This is what I need, here's a picture from Amazon, can you find me a quote that you'll be happy to approve?' and they would do that. Now they say, 'Try this company'. But that's what I need; if I had time to do that I would. My job is not procurement! (HHFT Requisitioners)

- 3.63 Specific examples of WPL showing a lack of understanding of customer needs were given by some participants, who described tasks where they required more support and understanding (such as receipting), and instances of issues around sourcing basic items such as furniture, or with having to repeatedly explain why particular products are needed.

Receipting. I now get a colleague to do it for me when I get an order, but that takes their time as well. If I read the 55 pages of handbook I might learn, but I'm afraid I'm not inclined to try. (HHFT Requisitioners)

Sometimes we've tried to order stuff and they've come back and said, 'Actually you can't order that, this is an alternative'. In particular medical gloves. Because of the type of work our team do... the quality of the gloves needs to be top notch ... We have found that if you get somebody new in WPL, they will actually flag that and throw that order back to us and say, 'This is what the Trust use and these are cheaper' and we have to say 'No, these are the ones we definitely have to have'. (UHS Requisitioners)

- 3.64 One participant felt that there is some inequity between the way WPL interacts with the different Trusts, and that their Trust takes 'second place'.

... It would be more, well we have done this with [other Trust] and this is what they wanted, so how come you are different? And the WPL stuff is based at [the other Trust] so it does feel sometimes that things get done quicker and sooner there. Then we get the second bite of the cherry if you like. (UHS Strategic)

- 3.65 The suggested resulting impacts of WPL having a poor understanding of customer needs all revolved around time, or around the creation of extra work for Trust staff.

We then have to spend additional time unpicking it or trying to resolve the problem or having awkward conversations. So, productivity and time. (UHS Strategic)

The huge amount of time it takes because I'm not an expert in doing that, so it takes me longer than it would take them ... And it takes me away from the job that I am supposed to be doing, which is managing a team. (HHFT Requisitioners)

We feel a bit alone with any issues that pop up. We are left scratching head and trying to work out how to get around such things. We are trying to run a lab, that's our skillset, and trying to do that bit without not knowing the ins and outs of how procurement might work. We don't have anyone we can go to and talk to and ask what's going on and can they help us. (HHFT Supply)

- 3.66 Some described the impacts of such issues upon patient wellbeing.

We were short of patient chairs which means some patients didn't have a chair for them to sit in. which has a huge impact on the patients. It's not good to keep patients in bed for long periods of time. It took several months to resolve, the chairs were on order and we were speaking to the company that was providing them, but there was a blockage. (HHFT Supply)

- 3.67 Participants were asked for suggestions on what WPL could do to build upon and improve their understanding of customer needs. The suggestions included the following:

Pro-activity (for example via an audit free text requests / identifying areas with rapid response needs)

One of the things I hear on the ground from the Materials Management Team is that, for example, one of the options is that you can request for something to be added to catalogue, and they know this but use a free text order every single time because they are used to that work-around and because they don't understand why they should change it. Their response was 'I don't know why I should do it because they can see what we do a free text for and look it up and see what we order regularly and just do it themselves.' They could do an audit of the free text requests... I don't know why they don't just add those things to the catalogue. (UEL)

ID-ing areas where they need to galvanise into a more rapid response. For example understanding how microbiology/pathology work. It is quite a unique area and understanding how we work and the impact of procurement issues on how we deliver our service is something that could be worked on. (HHFT Supply)

Visibility (i.e. an organisational chart or directory, training about what WPL do, guidance about decision making processes and a WPL presence at meetings)

... I think sometimes it is about visibility... Because they sit off site and we only see the materials management people... (UHS Supply)

As far as I'm aware, there's no document anywhere that says, 'if you have trouble with this, this is who you would contact'. I think training needs and a bit of communication about what they [WPL] do, who sits within their business, what their job role is, who to contact if you have issues above and beyond. (UHS Supply)

It might be useful to have an organisational chart of WPL – who is there and what the sections looks like, how it is broken down, who runs it and who are the people you should actually be speaking to. Names and faces and key people to come to meetings with us occasionally. (HHFT Supply)

Availability and accessibility. 25 years ago if we were sat down to have a procurement discussion about replacing a bit of kit, there probably would've been one of the procurement team in the room at the beginning of the process... Just slightly more availability at the early stages would be beneficial. In preparing to replace a piece of equipment recently, it felt very unclear to me where the decision-making process about whether the piece of equipment would be purchased via capital, via a managed equipment service or via a leasing service. I felt like questions kept coming back to me about it... The procurement and the finance leads should be telling us what the finance routes are going to be. That sometimes felt a little bit unclear. Just sharing guidance information about that decision making process. (UHS Strategic)

Foster increased understanding of customer needs

Have a better understanding of who they are dealing with and the needs of a ward. Understand that actually we have nothing to do with finance, and that if we're ordering things, unnecessary delays have an impact. (HHFT Supply)

... I always used to order things through the process that is in place no problem, and if there was something ad hoc then I would go to them and they would come back to me, either with a quote, or with the solution that's already in place. They don't even seem to know what we can order through which of our own catalogues... they don't seem to have that overview on what comes from where anymore. (HHFT Requisitioners)

Improving direct communication

There is an awful lot of pressure ... in terms of finances, to try and cut costs, but we don't want that to be at the cost of reducing quality. Looking at products, obviously if we can we will trial products and say we have sized it up against our normal product and actually it's just as good, not as good or better. We're willing to look at all the options... You sometimes need them to come in and go through it with you, because you can read as much as you want. Again, they'll do all that communication with the reps and get them in. (UHS Supply)

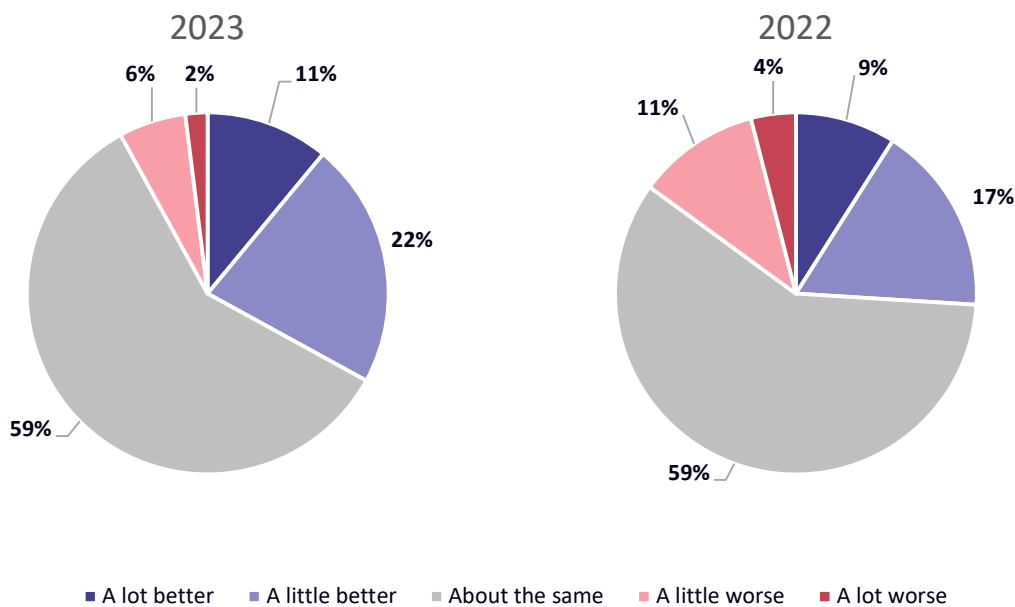
'Keep up the good work and the direction of travel'

The direction we're travelling at the moment, if it continues that way, it will be a lot better. (UEL)

Change over the last 12 months

- 3.68 When asked if the service they now receive from WPL has improved or not compared to 12 months ago, a third (33%) of respondents thought the service has improved (either a lot or a little better) while 8% of respondents thought the service has worsened (either a little or a lot worse). While it is positive that a higher proportion think the service is improving rather than worsening, most respondents think the service provided by WPL has remained about the same over the last year. (see Figure 10)
- 3.69 This is a higher proportion who think that the service they now receive from WPL has improved compared to 12 months ago than the 2022 survey where a quarter (25%) of respondents had thought the service had improved (either a lot or a little better) and a lower proportion who think the service has worsened than the 2022 survey where 16% of respondents had thought the service had worsened (either a little or a lot worse).

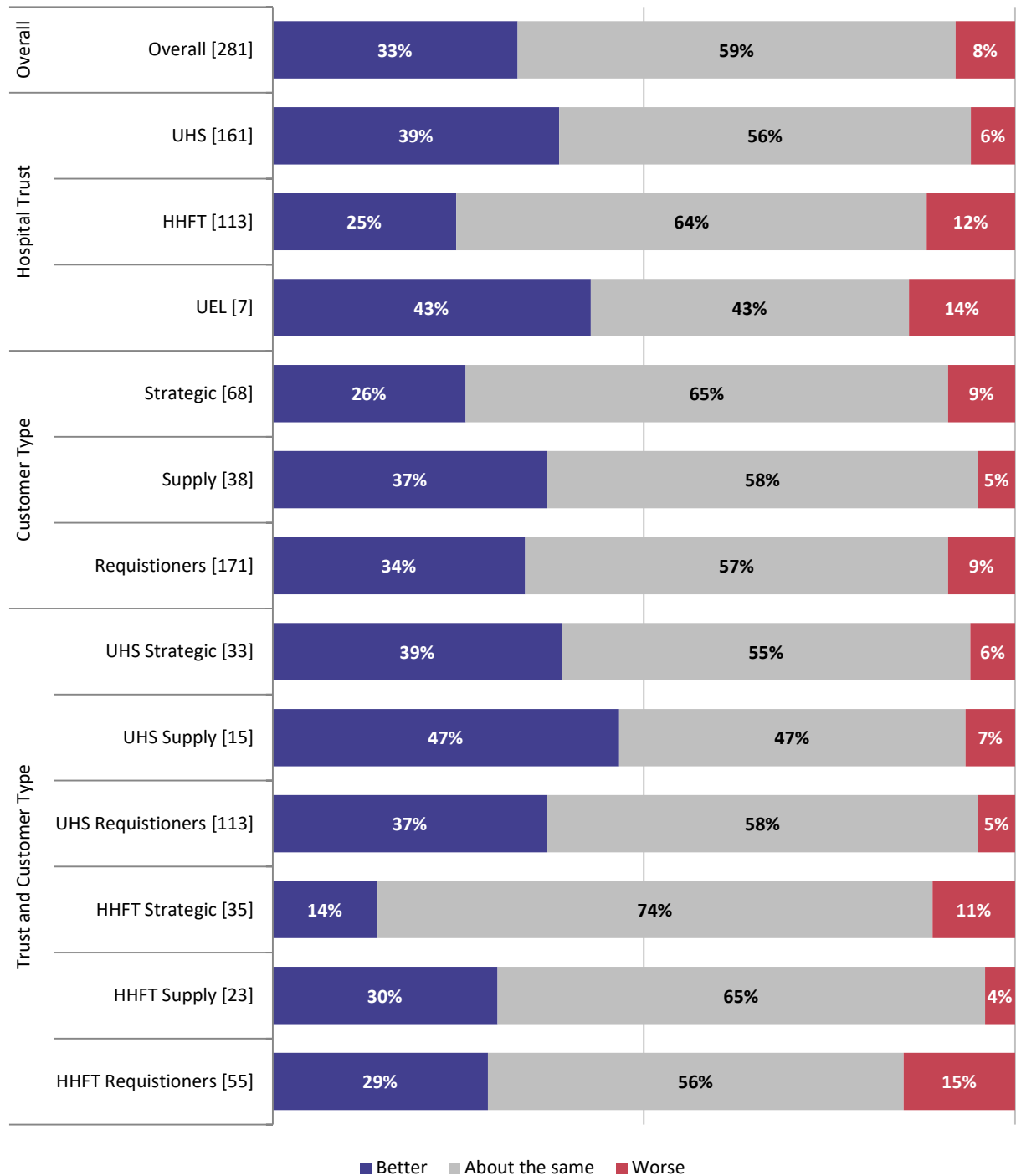
Figure 10: Compared to 12 months ago, would you say that the service you now receive from WPL is? (2023 compared to 2022 survey results)



All respondents (Base 2023 = 281), (Base 2022 = 314)

- 3.70 Figure 11 (overleaf) shows this result broken down by hospital trust and customer type. Looking at the result by Hospital Trust, those respondents working for the hospital trust UEL were more likely to think that the service they now receive from WPL has improved compared to 12 months ago (43%) compared to UHS respondents (39%) and HHFT respondents (25%), however it should be noted that the result for UEL is only based on seven cases.
- 3.71 In terms of customer type, those respondents working in Supply roles were more likely to think that the service they now receive from WPL has improved compared to 12 months ago (37%) than those in Requisition (34%) or Strategic roles (26%), and those working in Supply roles for the UHS Trust were more likely to think this (47%) than those in Supply roles for the HHFT Trust (30%). However, it should be noted that the result for UHS Supply is only based on 15 cases.
- 3.72 It is also worth noting that those working in HHFT Requisitioners roles were more likely to think that the service they now receive has worsened compared to 12 months ago (15%).

Figure 11: Compared to 12 months ago, would you say that the service you now receive from WPL is? (By Hospital Trust and Customer Type)



All respondents (Base numbers in brackets)

Qualitative insight - Service provision

3.73 The survey asked whether participants felt that WPL’s service provision is better, worse, or the same compared to 12 months ago. Of the 20 interview participants, half said they thought that service provision had remained consistent, just under a quarter felt it had declined, and just over a quarter had seen an improvement.

- 3.74 The participants who felt the service had improved over the last 12 months attributed this to better communication and understanding between themselves and their contacts at WPL.

Responsiveness and understanding our needs has got better. (UEL)

I just think we've probably seen more of them, and that's because probably as I say we're finding more issues with manufacturing and stuff. I think we're just seeing and hearing more from them really. (UHS Supply)

- 3.75 Participants who felt that the current service provision is much the same as a year ago commented that:

It hasn't really changed that much. The people I've spoken to are very knowledgeable and really helpful and you go away thinking 'I know what I'm doing now'...but if there's an issue that's where I'm struggling. (HHFT Strategic)

It is consistent. It's just easier and easier for me because of the understanding they're gaining as time goes on... They do go above and beyond. (HHFT Requisitioners)

They are a continuous service. Nothing specifically changes. (UHS Requisitioners)

- 3.76 Participants who felt there had been a decline in service provision attributed this in part to no longer having a named contact within WPL and to a lack of communication and proactivity as a whole.

3.77 We had a named person before and could contact them directly who understood our needs and how we worked. They didn't ask us anything about receipting or financing because they knew that wasn't our job, so they just had a slightly better idea of who we were. (HHFT Supply)

They don't do as much for us anymore. Recently... I had to find [items] for myself, and it ended up being quicker for me to find it than for the procurement team to find it. But my job's not procurement so surely they should be quicker at it than I am! (HHFT Requisitioners)

- 3.78 Participants were asked to suggest 'One element of service provision WPL does particularly well, or something they would especially like WPL to retain'. Suggestions were predominately around communication pathways, collaboration and speed of response. Other positives were the WPL's commercial expertise and unclinking of needed items.

Collaborative, pro-active and fast paced working

Collaborative, fast paced working ... What's been good recently is that although we're working on some priorities of our own, which don't necessarily always align with WPL's priorities, they have been open and made us feel like we're a priority, whereas previously we haven't always felt that way. (UEL)

Once you get in contact with them, they do work hard to rectify the problem. There are times when we perhaps order something and there has been a difference in price, and they are very quick to get back to us and say, 'There is a difference in price, are you happy for us to proceed with this?'. (UHS Requisitioners)

In-person and telephone contact with friendly, knowledgeable staff

I like the fact they say 'Let's do a Teams call' or even just a phone call. At the end of the day, emails can sometimes be misconstrued either way round or you may not have necessarily understood what someone is asking for, so sometimes it is good just to have that quick phone call. (HHFT Strategic)

I think the individuals, I feel they're trying to be helpful. They're friendly and have a pleasant manner. The communication is good when you can get hold of them. (HHFT Strategic)

They do have commercial expertise that we are able to tap into. (HHFT Strategic)

Ordering system and unclocking items

The ordering system works well when it works. It is a very straightforward process, for our regular orders and equipment. Things tend to go through quickly and efficiently. (HHFT Supply)

I can ask for things to be unclocked. (HHFT Requisitioners)

- 3.79 However, profound issues were mentioned within that positive feedback, such as the consequences of systemic delays, as well as concern about whether there would be adequate handover should a contact within WPL leave their role.

When it works, it works. Most of the time you place the order, it goes through fine, it gets receipted fine, it gets received. It's just when it goes wrong. It's horrible being constantly chased by suppliers, and they're sending you these threatening letters that they've referred it to the legal team and you're thinking 'Oh my god is this my fault?', then the letter goes to the chief information officer. I can't do anything about it because the system won't let me do anything, I can't fix it or move things around or whatever, even if I knew what the answer was. I can only see what I can see on the system. It's about having that conduit that knows what's gone on. (HHFT Strategic)

The response time is good, but if the people I deal with were leaving, it would be good to ensure there's a proper handover to whoever takes on their roles. (HHFT Strategic)

- 3.80 Participants were also asked to suggest 'One element of service provision to improve'. Suggestions largely echoed themes that had already been raised throughout the depth interviews, namely improving communications, proactivity, providing named contacts, offering clearer guidance, and managing expectations on timeframes.

Offer better solutions for finding alternatives for things that have gone out of stock, like being more helpful in trying to offer solutions so it doesn't come down to the clinical staff. (UEL supply)

... You think you've raised a purchase order and you think it's going through, then the supplier lets the buyer know and the buyer doesn't let us know. It's frustrating. (HHFT Requisitioners)

I guess just maintaining and ensuring we know when products are going out in a timely manner, because what we don't want is to today hear about a product that's suddenly going to go and it's something that's vital to our service and we don't have anything to replace it with. (UHS Supply)

Bring that named contact person back – dedicated teams to deal with a wards' needs, teams to deal with surgery or medicine, or even a team for just one hospital or one type of dept. (HHFT Supply)

If there was a generic email saying they would take two days to get back to you with the option to flag it as 'urgent', that would really help us and probably help them because I am sure they must get pestered. (HHFT Strategic)

Managing expectations on a time frame. From an ideal point of view, they would have more resource and we would be able to have quicker responses to issues. Having some sort of admin centred responses about when the next step was going to happen, so you can then get on and focus on other things as and when. (HHFT Strategic)

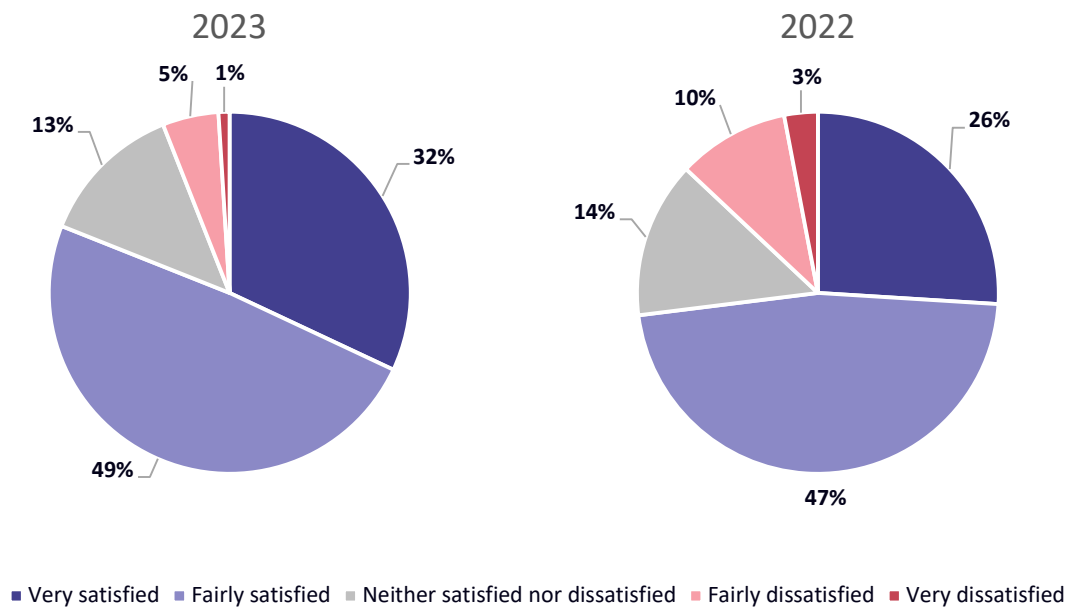
- 3.81 A couple of respondents felt that service provision has declined since the creation of WPL, and one argued for the re-introduction of localised procurement teams.

For me, it worked better before WPL, so the answer to that question is – stop using WPL and go back to having a local procurement team. With the caveat that I understand the need for financial efficiency, and we have to try and make it work, but my honest answer to that question is that it doesn't deliver me any benefit as an operational manager. None at all. (HHFT Strategic)

Overall satisfaction

- 3.82 Respondents were asked, at an overall level, how satisfied they were with WPL. Figure 12 shows a high level of satisfaction with just over eight-in-ten (81%) respondents satisfied with WPL. Only 6% were dissatisfied (including 1% who were very dissatisfied) and 13% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.
- 3.83 This is a higher level of satisfaction than in the 2022 survey where under three-quarters (73%) were satisfied with WPL overall and a lower level of dissatisfaction than in the 2022 survey where 13% were dissatisfied.

Figure 12: Thinking about everything we've talked about today, overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with WPL? (2023 compared to 2022 survey results)



All respondents (Base 2023 = 303), (Base 2022 = 332)

- 3.84 Figure 13 (overleaf) shows this result broken down by hospital trust and customer type. Looking at the result by Hospital Trust, those respondents working for the hospital trust UEL had higher levels of satisfaction (89%) compared to those respondents working for the hospital trust UHS (82%) and HHFT (80%), however it should be noted that the result for UEL is only based on nine cases.
- 3.85 In terms of customer type, those respondents working in Supply roles had higher levels of satisfaction (83%) than those in Requisition (81%) or Strategic roles (79%) and those respondents working in Supply roles for the HHFT Trust had higher levels of satisfaction (88%) than those in Supply roles for the UHS Trust (75%). However, it should be noted that the result for UHS Supply is only based on 16 cases.
- 3.86 Those respondents working in UHS Strategic roles had the highest levels of satisfaction with nearly nine-in-ten (89%) satisfied, whereas those in HHFT Strategic roles were more likely to have higher levels of dissatisfaction (11%).

Figure 13: Thinking about everything we've talked about today, overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with WPL? (By Hospital Trust and Customer Type)

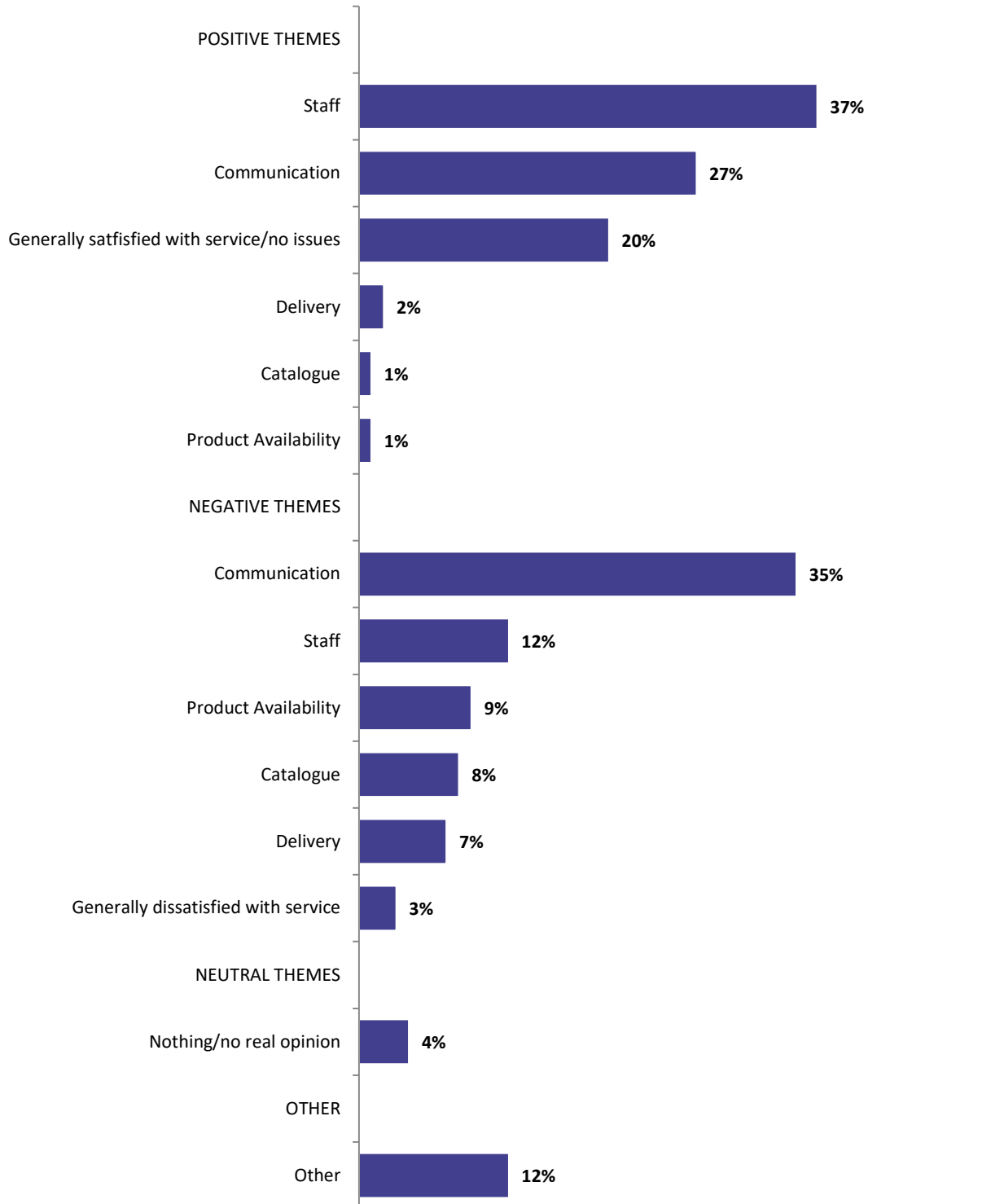


All respondents (Base numbers in brackets)

3.87 Respondents were asked a follow-up open question to better understand why they were satisfied or dissatisfied. Figure 14 (overleaf) shows the responses grouped into general themes split by whether the comment given was positive, negative or neutral in nature. As shown, most comments concerned topics relating to staff and communication. Nearly two-fifths (37%) gave a comment regarding staff that was positive in nature, but over a tenth (12%) gave a comment about staff that was negative. Over a quarter (27%) gave a comment about communication that was positive in nature, but over a third (35%) gave a comment about communication that was negative.

3.88 One-fifth of comments (20%) expressed that they were generally satisfied with the service / had encountered no issues.

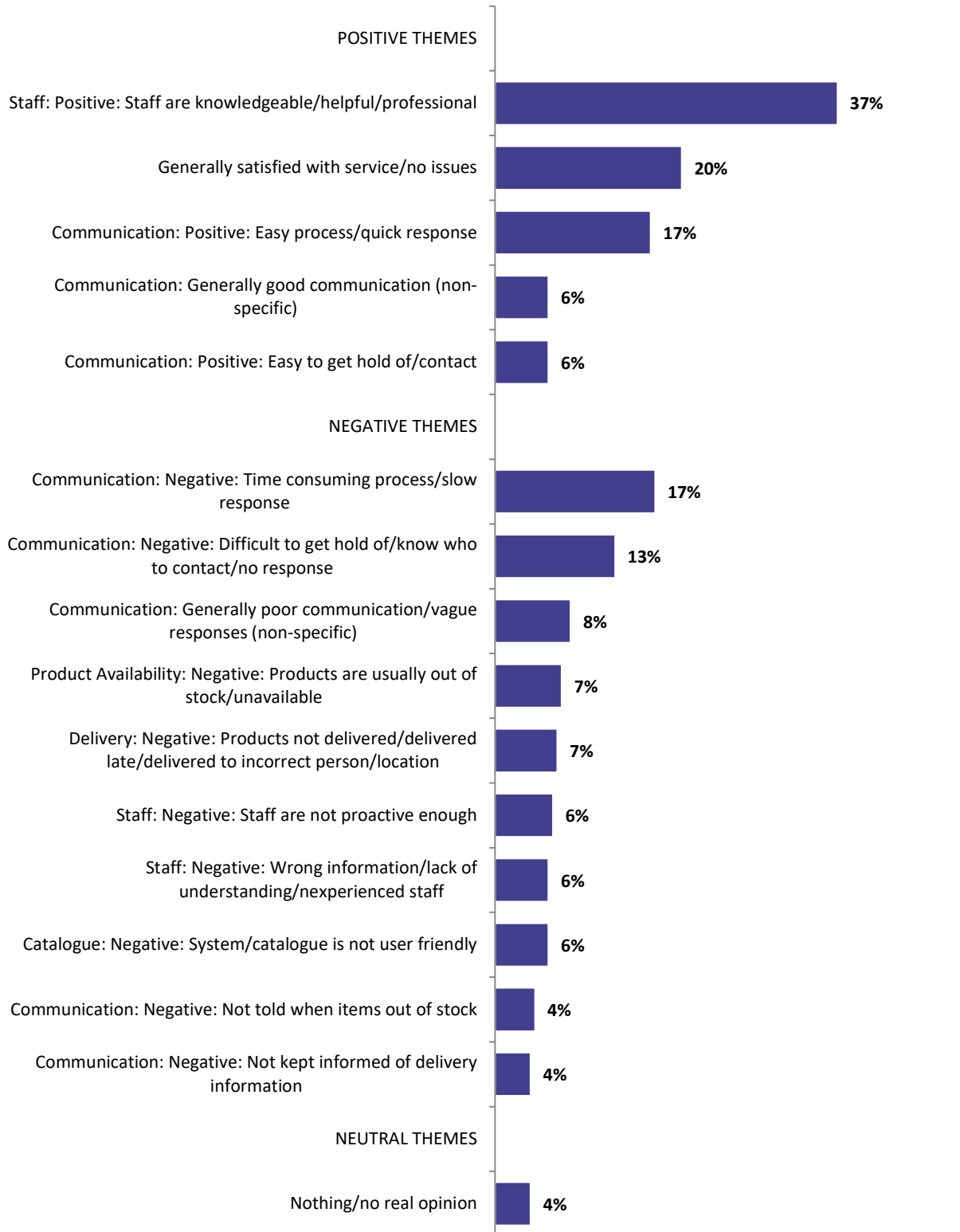
Figure 14: Why do you say that? General themes (more than one theme could have been given and therefore percentages do not round to 100%)



All respondents (Number of respondents – 210, number of themes – 375)

3.89 Figure 15 shows a more detailed coding of the comments (only themes containing at least 4% of the comments are shown).

Figure 15: Why do you say that? Detailed themes (more than one theme could have been given and therefore percentages do not round to 100%)



All respondents (Number of respondents – 210, number of detailed themes – 412). Only themes with mentioned by at least 4% of respondents are shown

- 3.90 The most common (positive) theme here is how the staff were helpful, knowledgeable, and professional (37%).

“Always very prompt in replying back to emails/enquiries and if that person is unable to answer your query, they will forward it onto a person who can.”

“It has been a difficult year and demands and product shortages have been very prevalent. WPL made great efforts to help find alternative products...”

- 3.91 This was followed by comments expressing that they were generally satisfied with the service (20%) and being positive about the easy process of communication/quick response (17%).

“I find WPL provide a strong level of service and demonstrate good communication when dealing with issues that arise. They process orders in a relatively timely manner on most requests that I have submitted as well, so overall I think they have been performing well in the last 12 months.”

- 3.92 And some negative comments about how time consuming the communication process was/slow response (17%).

“It doesn't make things easy the way we order and receive, purchasing is very confusing and difficult, there are too many things involved that take time. We don't have time to chase orders...”

“...I have had to chase a lot of information about procurement processes. My concern is with the time it takes to run through the governance process, and the number of signatures that are required to approve orders, and how actively WPL follow that up...”

- 3.93 While 13% of respondents commented that it was difficult to get hold of/know who to contact at WPL or that they received no response.

“I have multiple points of contact with WPL, some work very well and provide excellent service, some appear too busy to respond promptly and carry out requests. As individuals, they work professionally but time pressures impact on customer experience.”

“...we don't have a main contact from WPL. We have a general email address. We can't phone a person. We have to email their email address and it's not the most satisfactory way of doing things. Sometimes you just want to pick up the phone and speak to someone.”

3.94 Some other comments that were raised include...

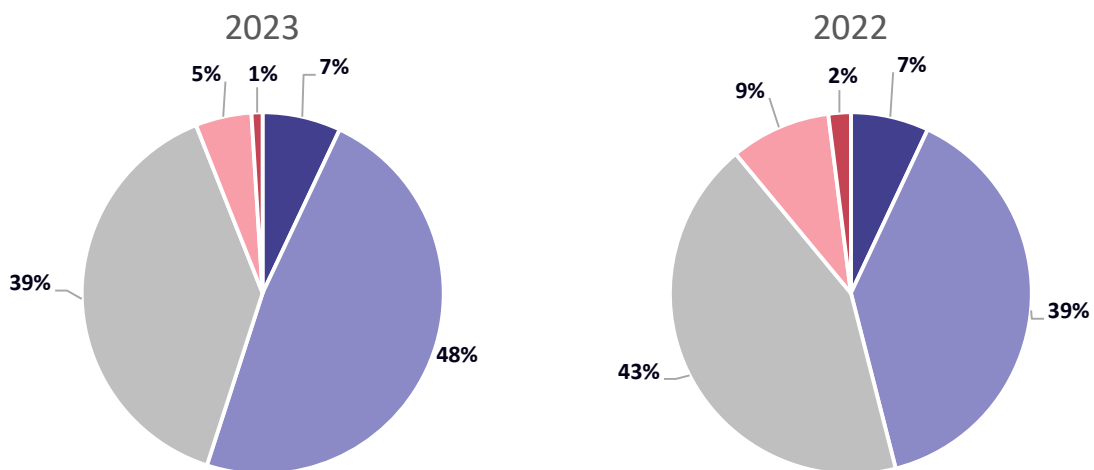
"...prices need to be regularly updated in the catalogue too to prevent customers having to raise extra PO's at the end of the year to account for discrepancies. This is very time consuming."

"...there are some products that are delayed when we have ordered them."

"I think there are difficulties when the clinical expertise is not known. It's trying to explain what is required for the area. The person in procurement is not clinical. They don't always understand what the specific requirements are. Overall, I am fairly happy with it all. And I think they try very hard to get what you want."

- 3.95 These are the same themes that were raised during the 2022 survey with similar proportions having given these responses, however the percentage saying that staff were helpful, knowledgeable, and professional was quite a bit higher in 2023 (37%) compared to that in the 2022 survey (25%).
- 3.96 Analysing this by subgroup, those respondents working in Strategic and UHS Strategic roles were more likely than other subgroups to give a comment saying that staff were helpful, knowledgeable, and professional (50% and 63% respectively).
- 3.97 Those respondents working in Strategic roles were also more likely than other sub-groups to note that staff were leaving/they were understaffed (9%) or that they were generally dissatisfied with the service (9%).
- 3.98 Those respondents working in HHFT Requisitioners roles were more likely than other sub-groups to say they were not told when items were out of stock (13%).
- 3.99 Figure 16 (overleaf) shows how respondents describe how they feel about WPL. A higher proportion of respondents would speak highly of WPL (55%) compared to the proportion that would be critical (6%). However, almost two fifths (39%) of respondents would be neutral about WPL, potentially indicating a level of ambivalence or unfamiliarity towards WPL.
- 3.100 This is a higher proportion who would speak highly of WPL than the 2022 survey where less than half (46%) of respondents would have spoken highly (either with or without being asked) and a lower proportion that would be critical than the 2022 survey where just over a tenth (11%) of respondents had said they would have been critical (either with or without being asked).

Figure 16: Which of these five statements best describes how you feel about WPL? (2023 compared to 2022 survey results)



- I would speak highly of WPL without being asked
- I would speak highly of WPL if someone asked my opinion
- I would be neutral about WPL if someone asked my opinion
- I would be critical of WPL if someone asked my opinion
- I would be critical of WPL without being asked

All respondents (Base 2023 = 304), (Base 2022 = 332)

- 3.101 Figure 17 (overleaf) shows this result broken down by hospital trust and customer type. Looking at the result by Hospital Trust, those respondents working for the hospital trust UEL were more likely to speak highly of WPL (67%) compared to those respondents working for HHFT (57%) and UHS (53%). However, those respondents working for the hospital trust UEL were also more likely to be critical of WPL (11%), though it should be noted that the result for UEL is only based on nine cases.
- 3.102 In terms of customer type, those respondents working in Supply roles were more likely to speak highly of WPL (64%) than those in Strategic (56%) or Requisition (52%) roles and those respondents working in Supply roles for the HHFT Trust were more likely to speak highly of WPL (73%) than those working in Supply roles for the UHS Trust (50%). However, it should be noted that the result for UHS Supply is only based on 16 cases.

Figure 17: Which of these five statements best describes how you feel about WPL? (By Hospital Trust and Customer Type)



All respondents (Base numbers in brackets)

Qualitative insight - Perceptions of WPL

- 3.103 Of the 20 interview participants, most had said in the survey that they either felt neutral about or critical of WPL.
- 3.104 Participants who said they would speak positively of WPL did so because they felt their communication with the organisation was good. WPL was described as doing a good job within the constraints of its operating processes and systems.

They do their best with a slightly broken system, and they have a difficult job. I never get the impression they haven't answered me because they can't be bothered. (HHFT Strategic)

I've always got answers and information from them, when I've asked for it, and in a timely fashion. (UHS Strategic)

It feels like they're working with us, not just demanding things of us even though they're an external company. They're not just Trust related, it's obviously a network thing. (UHS Supply)

- 3.105 Participants who said they would speak neutrally about WPL felt there is room for some improvement in responsiveness and communication, or said that they did not have much to do with WPL unless something went wrong.

People are not unpleasant or rude or unhelpful but you can't get to speak to them; there are no communications by phone and they don't really help anymore. They're quick to say if you don't receipt things quickly enough on the system, but they don't procure them anymore. (HHFT Requisitioners)

- 3.106 Those participants who had said they would speak negatively about WPL in the survey made little further comment about this in their interviews. However, one participant said they had seen no operational benefit from the establishment of WPL, and the feeling that WPL is not as helpful as it could be was mentioned by other respondents.

The fact that it's remote and based at another Trust; that we have to try and do everything through e-mail, and it has not delivered us any operational benefit. (UHS Strategic)

- 3.107 When asked "What could WPL do to be spoken more highly of?" depth participants gave a range of responses that echoed previous comments.

Better communication and helpfulness

That personal touch really, that you're being contacted to say, 'This is being dealt with' or they've passed it on to someone to deal with... Even when we've passed it on to someone in finance and they've contacted SBS themselves to say, 'can you do this or that?', it goes really quiet, and nothing happens, and it's supposed to have been dealt with and it doesn't. Before you know it, you're being hounded by the supplier again. It's the time it takes to sort it out. (HHFT Strategic)

Just improve their communication in all areas... if there's a difference in costing on an order, they're quick to pick that up and convey that to us and get an answer from us that we're happy to proceed so that they can push ahead with that order. I think they should be able to do that in all areas. (UHS Requisitioners)

Speed up response times/be more proactive

It's about being reactive. A lot of what procurement do is long-term tendering products, but alongside that also you have the constant change of products and fast paced moving changes and it's those that people normally get frustrated about, because we understand the longer tenders and we understand the contracts, but we still need to focus on day-to-day things. (UEL)

I think just help with the troubleshooting, for me that's the biggest thing... Just being a bit more proactive, rather than the reactivity I have to chase to get samples... I think my frustration has been 'We'll look into this and come back to you', but then a few weeks down the line I've not had an answer... (UHS Supply)

A more personal approach

Why don't they open an office at our Trust for procurement and share some space and time here?
(UHS Strategic)

Be more engaged with us; have a better understanding of how we work, how the structure of our Trust works. And explaining to us more about who they are, and where they sit within the organisation.
(HHFT Supply)

3.108 Participants were also asked “What one thing could WPL do to enhance its reputation among staff at your trust – if anything?” and many of the responses again echoed previous comments around communication and responsiveness. The desire for increased visibility of the service and its staff was also voiced once more.

Communication and responsiveness

Proactivity and communication I think would be the biggest things for me. (UHS Supply)

I'd like to see maybe a Teams session where they introduce themselves and say, 'These are the things we're having problems with; these are the issues we're having'... It's almost like an appraisal or service provision to make sure people are happy and there's an opportunity to raise issues. I know it's a massive organisation and it's not that easy to do it on that level. (HHFT Strategic)

Spend time with us and do some networking, so everyone is comfortable with each other and build relationship and trust. So, they could pick up the phone to us and we could pick up the phone to them and then you know who you are speaking to and not just someone you have seen on Teams.
(HHFT Strategic)

Increase knowledge and visibility of the service.

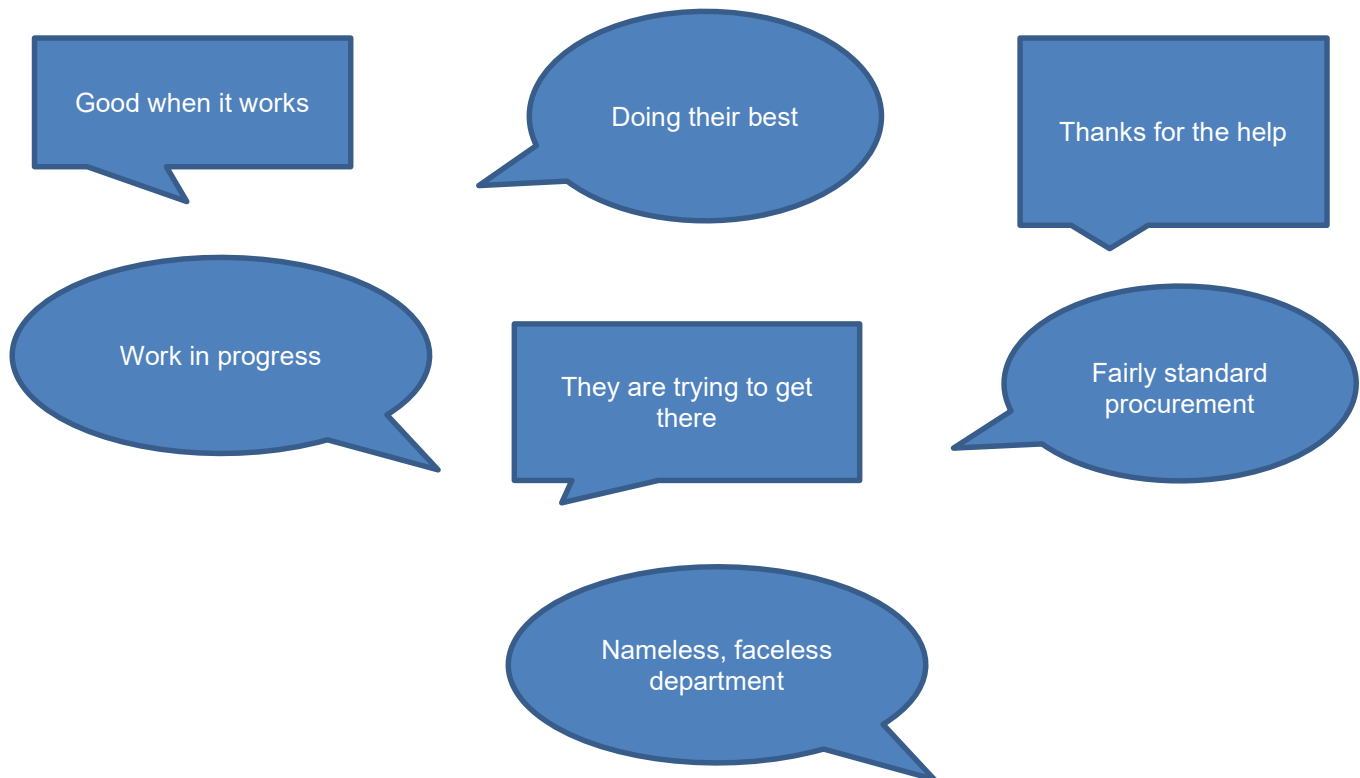
I guess more broadly I would say they're fairly hidden as a service. I think if I walked out into my team and asked them what they thought of WPL, lots of them would ask, 'What on earth is WPL?'. Or just again I think if you searched for procurement stuff on Staff Net. I don't think their policies and procedures are that visible. (HHFT Strategic)

I think engagement. Just let us know what we can expect from them and what they can expect from us. It might be that we're directing our questions to the wrong people. (HHFT Supply)

3.109 Participants were asked to describe WPL ‘in three words’. Some gave three separate words; others chose a three-word phrase. The individual words are shown in the word cloud below:



3.110 Other phrases given were as follows:



3.111 One participant found it difficult to give three words because they felt that WPL were helpful on one level, but not on another.

It's really difficult, because at the level I work with them it's 'amazing', 'brilliant', and 'invaluable'. But there are two real levels to WPL. The bit I have down here is phenomenal, the bit above that is a bit of an unknown, frustrating, no flow of information. (UHS Supply)

3.112 When asked if there were any further overall thoughts or comments about WPL they might like to add, some felt that changes within WPL had been positive, but several others reiterated the need for more guidance and help from the organisation.

Changes have been positive

The changes in the last three months have been felt out on the floor and that's making a real benefit to the way we can provide operationally to the theatres. (UEL)

When it was launched whenever that was a few years ago, I was a bit dubious of it but it seems to be working well. They provide a good service. (UHS Supply)

More guidance and help is needed from WPL.

Don't assume I know what I'm doing. You've got the supplier, SBS, finance. Where does it all fit? A bit more structure and a bit more workflow to know what to do, to navigate this complicated world. I'm not a finance person, I'm not a procurement person and I'm not an invoicing person. They're almost experts in their own field, and they need to guide me with what to do. (HHFT Strategic)

Everyone is keen to work together but we need to know how to. (HHFT Supply)

I am not criticising individual people at all – but I would like more support with receipting, or for someone else to do it. (HHFT Requisitioners)

I don't even know where they are any more. I don't even know where they are based, it feels disconnected. (HHFT Requisitioners)

There is a need around troubleshooting.

The knowledge our contacts in WPL have around our kit and our equipment is unbelievably invaluable and they are a phenomenal resource. Really regular lifesavers. It would be very interesting for WPL to look at how they can utilise them on the shop floor, but I think that would be in terms of changing their job role and probably expanding the job role for them to do a bit more of this troubleshooting. (UHS Supply)

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Appendix 1: Questionnaire

SCREENING QUESTIONS

(Ask all) S1: Firstly, have you dealt with your Procurement or Supply Chain function (WPL) in the last 12 months?

- Yes - **Continue**
- No - **TERMINATE INTERVIEW**

MAIN BODY QUESTIONS

Communication

(Ask all) Q1: Overall, thinking about your experience with WPL over the last year, to what extent are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the following...?

- The quality of advice / information you receive from WPL
- How quickly WPL responds to queries
- How easy it is to get in touch with your main point of contact at WPL
- The level of service from your point of contact at WPL
- The support received from your main point of contact at WPL

Very satisfied	1
Fairly satisfied	2
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	3
Fairly dissatisfied	4
Very dissatisfied	5
<i>Not applicable</i>	96

(Ask all) Q2: Overall how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your main point of contact at WPL?

Very satisfied	1
Fairly satisfied	2
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	3
Fairly dissatisfied	4
Very dissatisfied	5
<i>Don't know</i>	97

(Ask all) Q3: Taking everything into account, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the overall communication from WPL?

Very satisfied	1
Fairly satisfied	2
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	3
Fairly dissatisfied	4
Very dissatisfied	5
<i>Don't know</i>	97

General

(Ask all) Q4: How much do you agree or disagree that...

- WPL provides an effective and efficient service
- WPL understands my needs
- WPL is open and transparent
- WPL cares about their customers
- WPL has friendly and approachable staff
- WPL treats me with respect

Strongly agree	1
Tend to agree	2
Neither agree nor disagree	3
Tend to disagree	4
Strongly disagree	5
<i>Don't know</i>	97

(Ask all) Q5: Compared to 12 months ago, would you say that the service you now receive from WPL is?

A lot better	1
A little better	2
About the same	3
A little worse	4
A lot worse	5
<i>Not applicable</i>	96
<i>Don't know</i>	97

(Ask all) Q6: Thinking about everything we've talked about today, overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with WPL?

Very satisfied	1
Fairly satisfied	2
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	3
Fairly dissatisfied	4
Very dissatisfied	5

(Ask if Q6=1-5) Q7: Why do you say that?

[Freetext response]

(Ask all) Q8: Which of these five statements best describes how you feel about WPL?

I would speak highly of WPL without being asked	1
I would speak highly of WPL if someone asked my opinion	2
I would be neutral about WPL if someone asked my opinion	3
I would be critical of WPL if someone asked my opinion	4
I would be critical of WPL without being asked	5

Appendix 2: Overall Satisfaction ratings across Survey recontact sample (165 in total)

	HHFT Strategic	UHS Strategic	HHFT Supply	UHS Supply	HHFT Requisitioners	UHS Requisitioners	UEL	Total
V sat	10	9	8	3	7	21	0	58
F sat	8	11	4	4	13	23	6	69
Neither sat nor diss	4	2	1	2	2	9	1	21
F diss	4	1	1	0	3	4	0	13
V diss	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	3
Refused	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
								0
Total	26	23	15	9	27	58	7	165

Appendix 3 : Depth interviews Topic Guide

Wessex NHS Procurement: Customer Satisfaction Survey

Follow-up Depth Interviews - Topic Guide

Introduction

Good morning/afternoon/evening. Can I speak to [name]?

My name is and I'm calling from Opinion Research Services on behalf of Wessex NHS Procurement Limited (WPL), which provides procurement and supply chain services at your trust. You recently took part in an online survey or an interview with a colleague of mine about WPL and kindly agreed to take part in a follow-on interview to explore the feedback you raised in that survey in more depth.

Is now still a good time for you?

If not, rearrange. If yes...

As you know, WPL has commissioned Opinion Research Services (or ORS) – an independent social research company - to undertake its Customer Satisfaction Survey.

The interview should take around 20 minutes and will focus on...

- WPL's responsiveness and communication;
- The extent to which WPL understands your needs;
- WPL's service provision; and
- Your perceptions of WPL.

The interview will be recorded so that it can be properly written up, but the recording will not be shared with anyone else. Everything you say will be treated in complete confidence, all data will be anonymous and while we may use what you say in our report, we will not use any information that potentially identifies you. ORS will destroy any information which identifies you as an individual (including the recording) three months after the completion of the project, but the rest of your responses will be kept for research purposes. ORS strictly adheres to the principles of the Data Protection Act, as well as the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). If you would like more information on our privacy policy, please visit ors.org.uk/privacy.

INITIAL QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PARTICIPANT

To begin, could you tell me a bit more about how you interact with the Procurement or Supply Chain team at your trust?

RESPONSIVENESS

Interviewer: check the participant's answer to Q1AB and ask...

In the survey, when asked how well WPL responds to queries, you said [answer].

[If participant was positive]

1. Why did you say that?
 - a. Can you give an example/examples of when WPL has responded well to your queries?
 - b. What benefits does this have?
 - c. How could WPL build on this success?

[If participant was neutral]

2. Why did you say that?
 - a. What do you think are the main reasons for this?

- b. What impact does it have?
- c. What could WPL do to be more responsive to queries?

[If participant was negative]

- 3. Why did you say that?
 - a. Can you give an example/examples of when WPL did not respond well to your queries?
 - b. What do you think are the main reasons for this?
 - c. What impact does it have?
 - d. What could WPL do to be more responsive to queries?

COMMUNICATION

Interviewer: check the participant's answer to Q3 and ask...

In the survey, when asked how satisfied or dissatisfied you were with the overall communication from WPL, you said [answer].

[If participant was positive]

- 4. Why did you say that?

[Probes: provision of advice/information; ease of contact/communication generally; communication with/from main point of contact; being kept informed of delivery/order information; proactivity]

 - a. Can you give an example/examples of when WPL has communicated well with you?
 - b. What benefits does this have?
 - c. How could WPL build on this success?

[If participant was neutral]

- 5. Why did you say that?

[Probes: as above]

 - a. What do you think are the main reasons for this?
 - b. What impact does it have?
 - c. What could WPL do to communicate better with you?

[If participant was negative]

- 6. Why did you say that?

[Probes: as above]

 - a. Can you give an example/examples of when WPL did not respond well to your queries?
 - b. What do you think are the main reasons for this?
 - c. What impact does it have?
 - d. What could WPL do to communicate better with you?

UNDERSTANDING NEEDS

Interviewer: check the participant's answer to Q4B and ask...

In the survey, when asked how well WPL understands your needs, you said [answer].

[If participant was positive]

- 7. Why did you say that?

- a. Can you give an example/examples of when WPL has understood your needs well?
- b. What benefits does this have?
- c. How could WPL build on this success?

[If participant was neutral]

8. Why did you say that?
 - a. What do you think are the main reasons for this?
 - b. What impact does it have?
 - c. What could WPL do to better understand your needs?

[If participant was negative]

9. Why did you say that?
 - a. Can you give an example/examples of when WPL did not understand your needs well?
 - b. What do you think are the main reasons for this?
 - c. What impact does it have?
 - d. What could WPL do to better understand your needs?

SERVICE PROVISION

Interviewer: check the participant's answer to Q5 and ask...

When asked whether, compared to 12 months ago, the service you now receive from WPL is better, worse or about the same, you said it was [answer]

10. What were your reasons for that?
 - a. What one thing could WPL do to improve its service/improve its service further?
 - b. What one thing does it do particularly well/would you want it to retain?

YOUR PERCEPTIONS OF WPL

Interviewer: check the participant's answer to Q8 and ask...

In the survey, when asked what phrase would best describe the way you would speak of WPL to other people, you said [answer].

11. What were your reasons for that?
 - a. [If participant was neutral/negative] What could WPL do to be spoken more highly of?

OVERALL

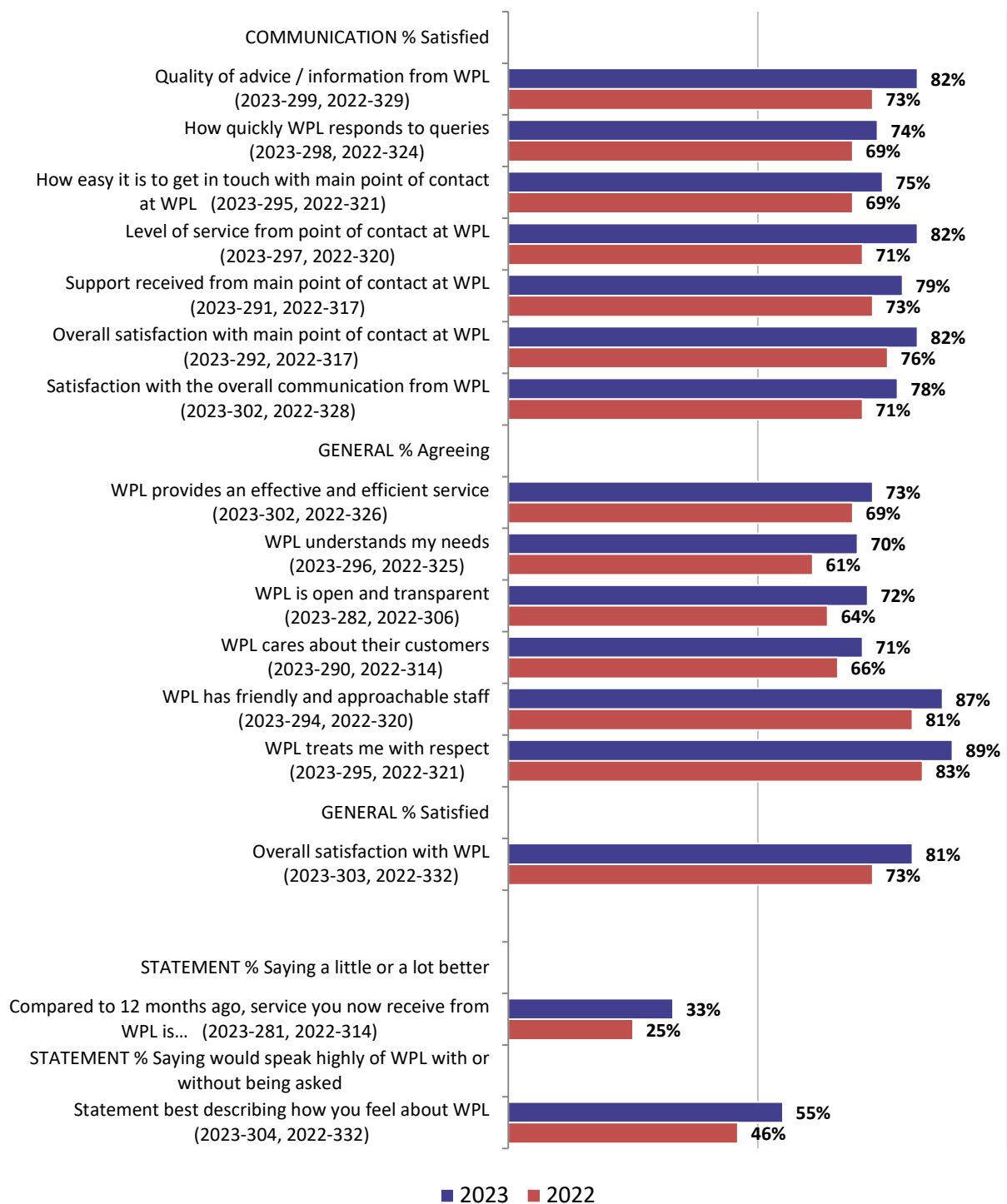
12. Taking into account everything we've talked about today, what one thing could WPL do to enhance its reputation among staff at your trust – if anything?
13. And could you summarise how you would describe WPL in 3 words?
14. Do you have any other overall thoughts or comments about WPL you would like to add?

THANK AND CLOSE

Appendix 4 : Comparing 2023 survey findings with 2022 results

Level of positive responses to each of the survey questions compared with 2022 results can be seen in Figure 18 below and Table 5 overleaf. Levels of satisfaction includes those respondents stating 'very' or 'fairly' satisfied, levels of agreement include those stating 'strongly agree' or 'tend to agree', positive statements about service include 'a lot better' and 'a little better' and positive statements about WPL include speaking highly of WPL with or without being asked.

Figure 18: Comparing 2023 survey findings with 2022 results, positive responses



All respondents (Base numbers in brackets)

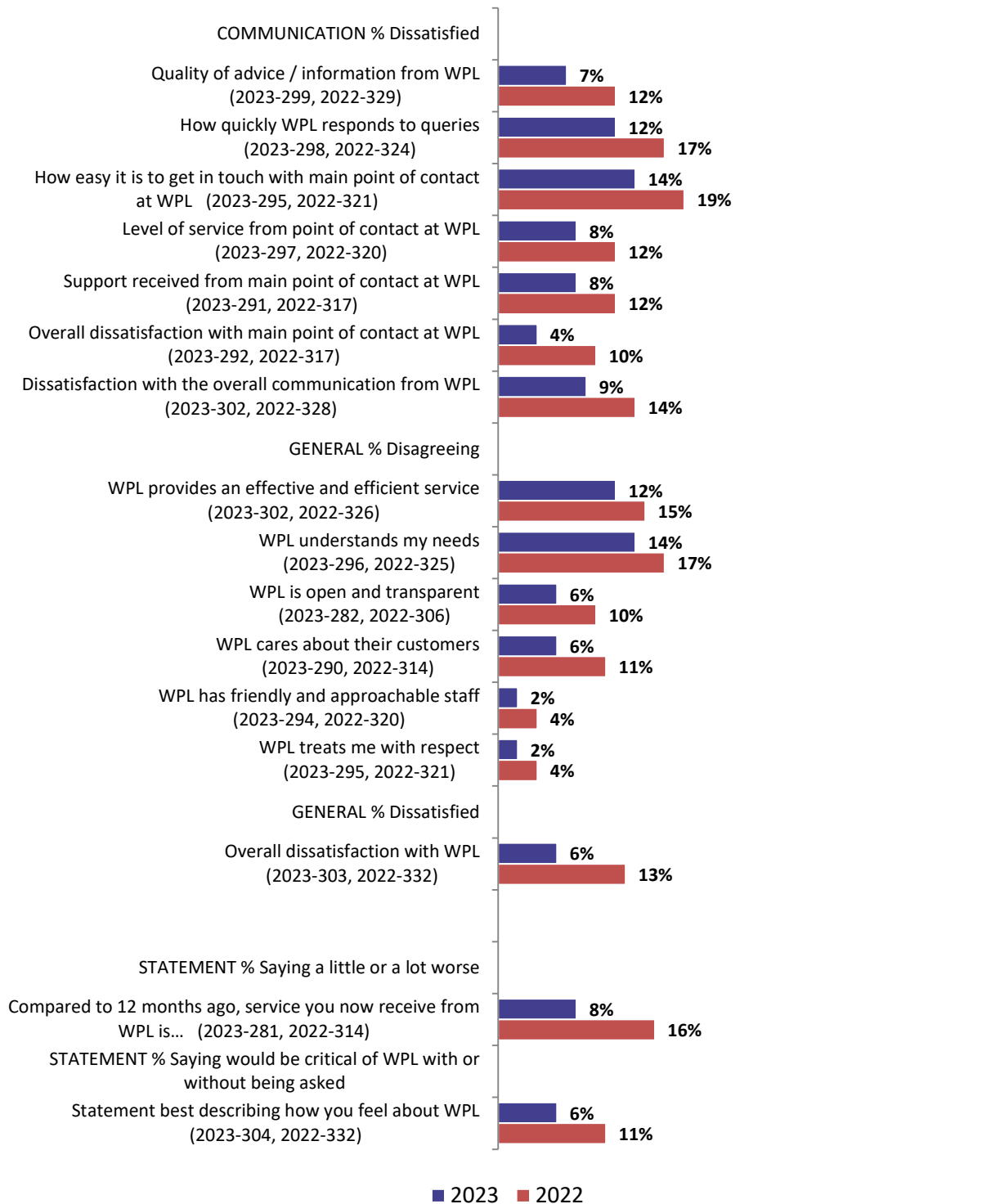
Table 5: Comparing 2023 survey findings with 2022 results, positive responses

	2023	2022
COMMUNICATION % Satisfied		
Quality of advice / information from WPL (2023-299, 2022-329)	82%	73%
How quickly WPL responds to queries (2023-298, 2022-324)	74%	69%
How easy it is to get in touch with main point of contact at WPL (2023-295, 2022-321)	75%	69%
Level of service from point of contact at WPL (2023-297, 2022-320)	82%	71%
Support received from main point of contact at WPL (2023-291, 2022-317)	79%	73%
Overall satisfaction with main point of contact at WPL (2023-292, 2022-317)	82%	76%
Satisfaction with the overall communication from WPL (2023-302, 2022-328)	78%	71%
GENERAL % Agreeing		
WPL provides an effective and efficient service (2023-302, 2022-326)	73%	69%
WPL understands my needs (2023-296, 2022-325)	70%	61%
WPL is open and transparent (2023-282, 2022-306)	72%	64%
WPL cares about their customers (2023-290, 2022-314)	71%	66%
WPL has friendly and approachable staff (2023-294, 2022-320)	87%	81%
WPL treats me with respect (2023-295, 2022-321)	89%	83%
GENERAL % Satisfied		
Overall satisfaction with WPL (2023-303, 2022-332)	81%	73%
STATEMENT % Saying a little or a lot better		
Compared to 12 months ago, service you now receive from WPL is... (2023-281, 2022-314)	33%	25%
STATEMENT % Saying would speak highly of WPL with or without being asked		
Statement best describing how you feel about WPL (2023-304, 2022-332)	55%	46%

All respondents (Base numbers in brackets)

Level of negative responses to each of the survey questions compared with 2022 results can be seen in Figure 19 below and Table 6 overleaf. Levels of dissatisfaction includes those respondents stating ‘fairly’ or ‘very’ dissatisfied, levels of disagreement include those stating ‘tend to disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’, negative statements about service include ‘a little worse’ and ‘a lot worse’ and negative statements about WPL include being critical of WPL with or without being asked.

Figure 19: Comparing 2023 survey findings with 2022 results, negative responses



All respondents (Base numbers in brackets)

Table 6: Comparing 2023 survey findings with 2022 results, negative responses

	2023	2022
COMMUNICATION % Dissatisfied		
Quality of advice / information from WPL (2023-299, 2022-329)	7%	12%
How quickly WPL responds to queries (2023-298, 2022-324)	12%	17%
How easy it is to get in touch with main point of contact at WPL (2023-295, 2022-321)	14%	19%
Level of service from point of contact at WPL (2023-297, 2022-320)	8%	12%
Support received from main point of contact at WPL (2023-291, 2022-317)	8%	12%
Overall dissatisfaction with main point of contact at WPL (2023-292, 2022-317)	4%	10%
Dissatisfaction with the overall communication from WPL (2023-302, 2022-328)	9%	14%
GENERAL % Disagreeing		
WPL provides an effective and efficient service (2023-302, 2022-326)	12%	15%
WPL understands my needs (2023-296, 2022-325)	14%	17%
WPL is open and transparent (2023-282, 2022-306)	6%	10%
WPL cares about their customers (2023-290, 2022-314)	6%	11%
WPL has friendly and approachable staff (2023-294, 2022-320)	2%	4%
WPL treats me with respect (2023-295, 2022-321)	2%	4%
GENERAL % Dissatisfied		
Overall dissatisfaction with WPL (2023-303, 2022-332)	6%	13%
STATEMENT % Saying a little or a lot worse		
Compared to 12 months ago, service you now receive from WPL is... (2023-281, 2022-314)	8%	16%
STATEMENT % Saying would be critical of WPL with or without being asked		
Statement best describing how you feel about WPL (2023-304, 2022-332)	6%	11%

All respondents (Base numbers in brackets)