



11 September 2025

Tēnā koe

**Official Information Act request**

Thank you for your email requesting information about Hearing Services funding in New Zealand. Your request was originally received on 12 December 2024 by the Ministry of Health and was transferred to the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) on 14 January 2025, in accordance with section 14(b)(i) of the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act).

In 2011, Disability Support Services (DSS) was part of the Ministry of Health. DSS functions then moved to Whaikaha - Ministry of Disabled People in July 2022, and then became a business unit within the Ministry in September 2024. Considering the transfer of DSS functions over this period of time and the timeframes of your request, extensive consultation has been required across agencies. Please accept my sincere apologies for the delay in providing you with a response.

I have considered your request under the Act and my decision on each part of your request set out below.

***1. Can I please get the hearing services spend vs budget numbers since they have been in place.***

Please refer to Table One in Appendix One (Tab 1) for this information.

Your request for Hearing Services expenditure information for the financial year ending 30 June 2012 is refused under section 18(g) of the Act, as this information is not held by the Ministry and I have no grounds to believe that the information is either held by or more closely connected to the functions of another department, Minister of the Crown or organisation.

***2. 2021 - current (2024) MTD (month end or monthly numbers) data for Hearing Services funding e.g. the number of claims, ages, ethnicities, average prices.***

Please refer to Appendix One (Tabs 3 – 5) for this information. Information is provided by financial year, beginning 1 July 2021. We have also included data for the first six months (1 July 2024 – 31 December 2024) of 1 July 2024 – 30 June 2025 financial year.

**3. A breakdown of the number of hearing aid models fit from 2020-current.**

Please refer to Appendix One (Tab 6).

**4. A breakdown of the number of claims per provider, including the number of refunds or credits per provider, for the last 5 years. (If you cannot provide information per provider, please break it down by private vs public).**

Refer to Appendix One (Tab 7).

Please ensure you take the information contained in Tab 8 (Caveat for Credits) into account when interpreting the data in Tab 7.

**5. Enable NZ survey results - about hearing services both for providers and claimants - for the last 5 years.**

Refer to the four attached Survey result documents.

These are surveys that were administered by Enable NZ nationwide and were completed on a voluntary basis, to help inform service improvements and to gauge customer satisfaction.

As you will see, two of the documents relate to hearing aid users and two relate to providers (audiologists and audiometrists).

Enable NZ conducted surveys on a two-yearly basis over the period you requested this information for. Response rates for the 2020 survey may have been low due to the impact of the Covid pandemic.

**6. The percentage of claims that include the customer contribution entered? And for those that are entered, what is the average customer contribution amount?**

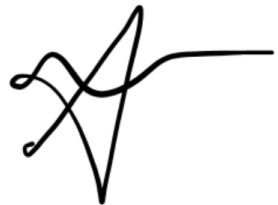
Your request is refused under section 18(g) of the Act, as the information you have requested is not held by the Ministry and I have no grounds to believe that the information is either held by or closely connected to the functions of another department, Minister of the Crown or organisation.

I will be publishing this decision letter, with your personal details deleted, on the Ministry's website in due course.

If you wish to discuss this response with us, please feel free to contact [OIA Requests@msd.govt.nz](mailto:OIA Requests@msd.govt.nz).

If you are not satisfied with my decision on your request, you have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or 0800 802 602.

Ngā mihi nui

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anna Graham'.

Anna Graham  
**General Manager**  
**Ministerial and Executive Services**

# HEARING AID USER SURVEY

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December 2020

Rachel Tatham  
Service Manager - Professional Services

## Introduction

In October 2020 Enable New Zealand (ENZ) sent a customer satisfaction survey to 300 Disability Support Services users who had received Ministry of Health (MOH) hearing aid funding or subsidy.

The purpose of the survey was to gain feedback on the service ENZ provides to gain a better understanding of what's working well, and where we can do better and how useful our services are. Surveys were sent by post as a paper-based questionnaire, with a self-addressed envelope to return the survey to Enable New Zealand for analysis. An online option was also provided for people to respond to the online option but was not utilised by many people. For this survey there was a 24.6% response rate compared to 32% last year.

This report discusses a sample of results through graphs and tables.

The following numbers of people, selected by service type, were invited to participate in the survey:

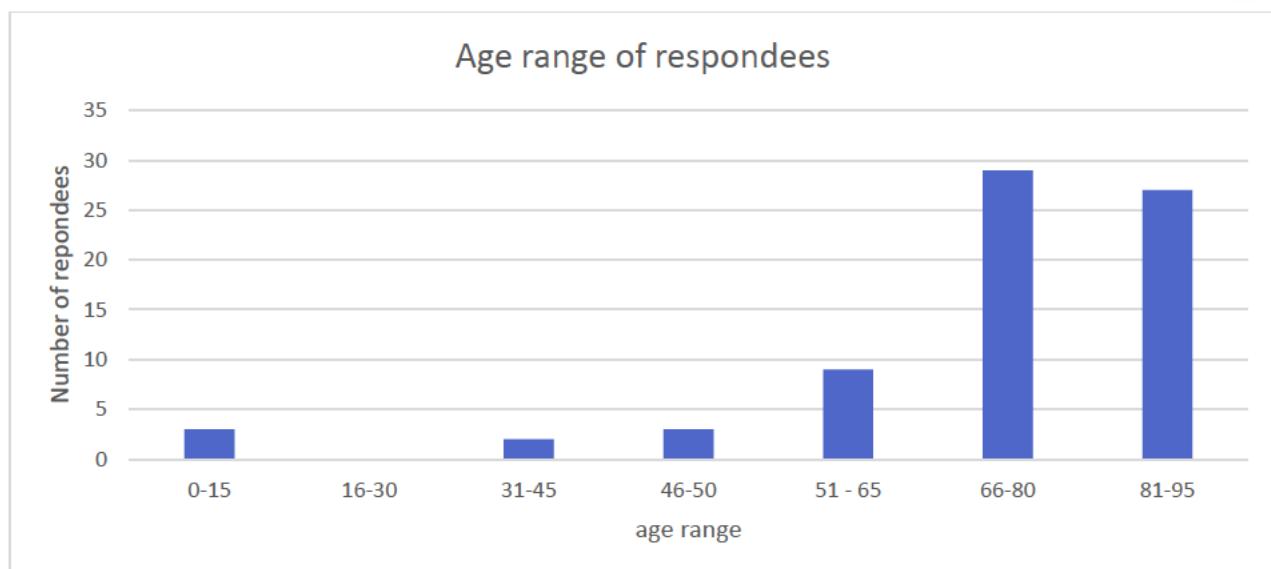
Subsidy	200
Funding	100

Eight responded from the hearing aid full funding subgroup (11%) while Sixty responded that they had received a subsidy (81%). One said they had both funding and the subsidy and two said neither. Three stated they did not know.

### **Demographics of customers responding to survey**

#### **Age range**

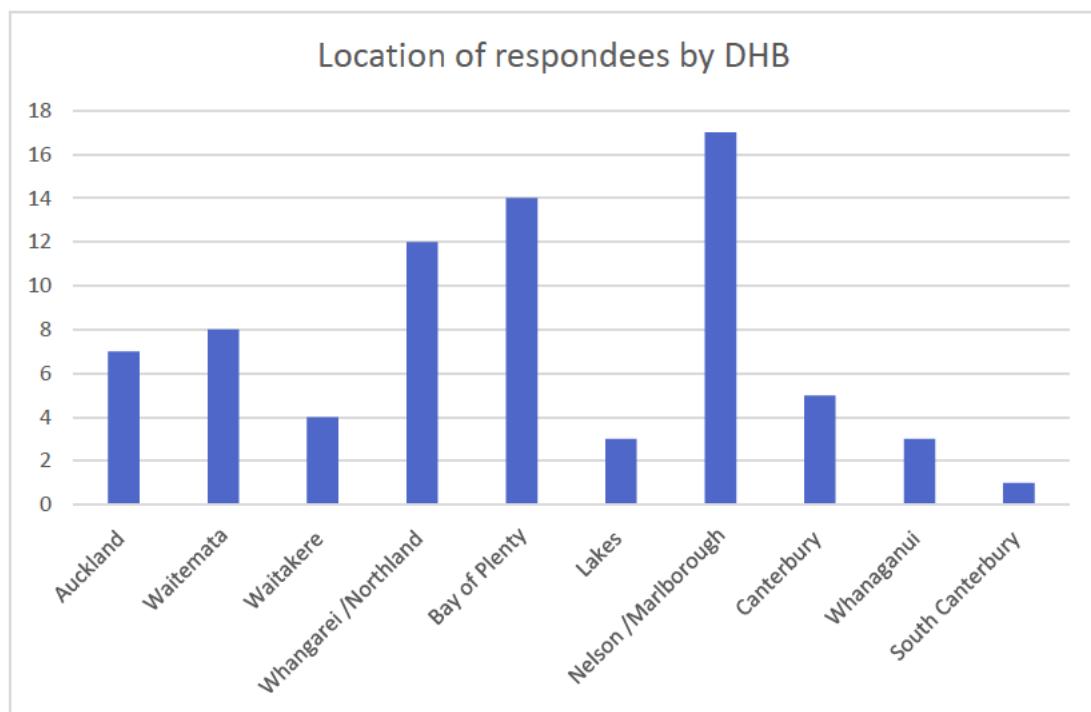
The ages ranged from 11 years to 95 years old. Parents/caregivers were asked to fill out the responses if their family member was unable to complete the survey. Unfortunately, we did not get many returned from the children and young person's group.



*Graph 1: Age range of respondents to the survey*

## Location

All District Health Board (DHB) areas were included however no responses were received from West Coast, Wairarapa, Southern, Taranaki, Tairawhiti, Capital Coast or Waikato.



*Graph 2: DHB location identified by the respondents*

## Ethnicity

This was a free text field so received a range of ethnicity responses. The majority identified as European (53 respondents). 2 people identified as Maori and no one identified as Pacifica. The rest reported varied ethnicity.

### **Questions and responses**

Over the past 2 weeks, on average per day, how many hours did you use your hearing aid(s)? (Please estimate if unsure).

73% (last survey - 68%) stated they were using their hearing aids for 8 hours + a day. 19% were using them 4-8 hours a day. 7% stated they were using their hearing aids 1-4 hours a day, 1% less than 1 hour a day. This is an improvement on the last survey.

When you visited your audiologist/audiometrist, did they provide you with the Ministry of Health information booklet "Guide to getting hearing aids: hearing aid funding/subsidy scheme"?

43% (last survey - 55%) said they had received the booklet, and 32.5% (last survey - 24%) hadn't. 23% weren't sure whether they had or not. One person didn't answer the question.

Did you receive information and advice about all your choices: the range of hearing aids available (including different brands) to meet your needs, hearing aid functions and a range of prices?

74.5% (last survey - 79%) had received information and advice regarding the range of hearing aids and prices. 20% (last survey - 16%) had not received this and 4% (last survey - 5%) weren't sure. One person did not answer the question.

How satisfied were you with the information and advice you received about all your choices: the range of hearing aids available (including different brands) to meet your needs, hearing aid functions and a range of prices?

Of those that answered this question, 81% (last survey - 86%) were very satisfied or satisfied 11% (last survey - 8%) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and 2.5% (last survey - 3%) were dissatisfied. 5.5% (last survey - 3%) stated they had no information or advice given to them.

How satisfied were you with the information (verbal or written instructions) that you received from your audiologist/audiometrist, on how to use and look after your hearing aid(s)?

93% (last survey - 96%) were very satisfied or satisfied. 4% (last survey - 2%) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and 3 % (last survey - 2%) were not satisfied. 2 left no response.

How satisfied are you with the time it took from your hearing aid assessment with the audiologist/audiometrist to your hearing aids and/or accessories being fitted?

94.5% (last survey - 94%) were very satisfied or satisfied, 4% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and 1% were very dissatisfied.

The dissatisfied person added a comment that the hearing aids took 10 months. Most comments about delays appeared to be related to COVID.

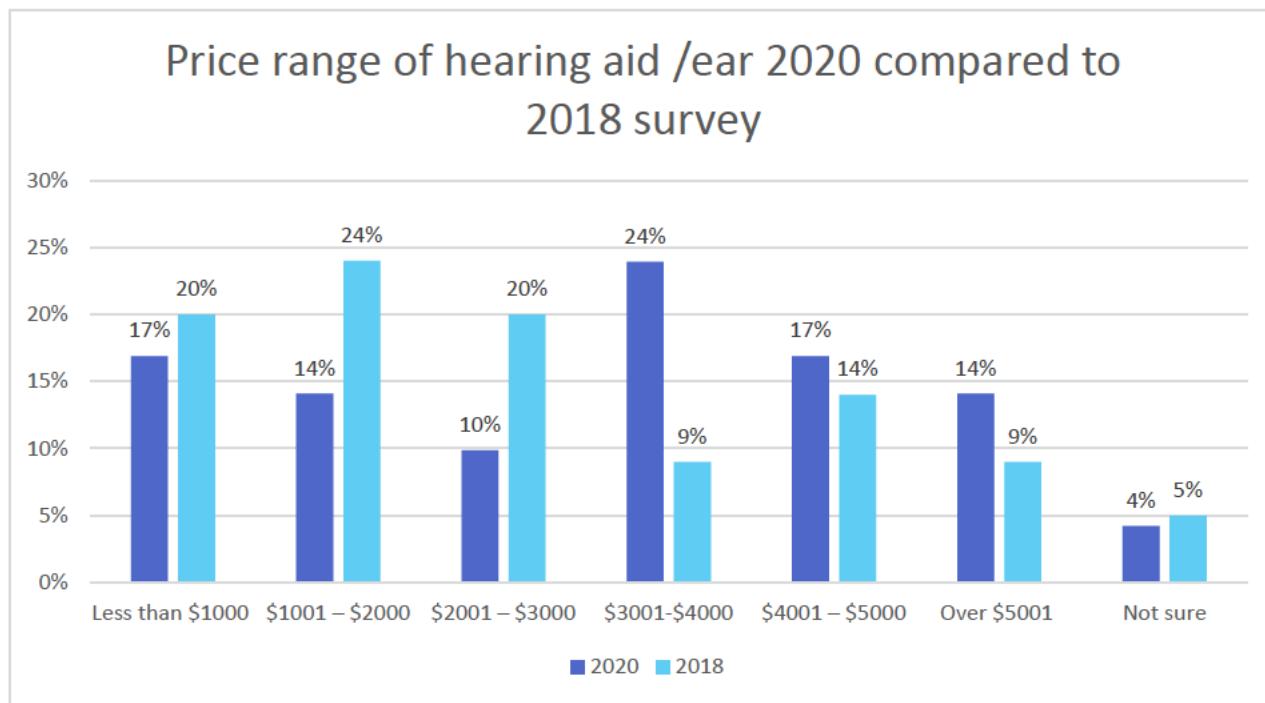
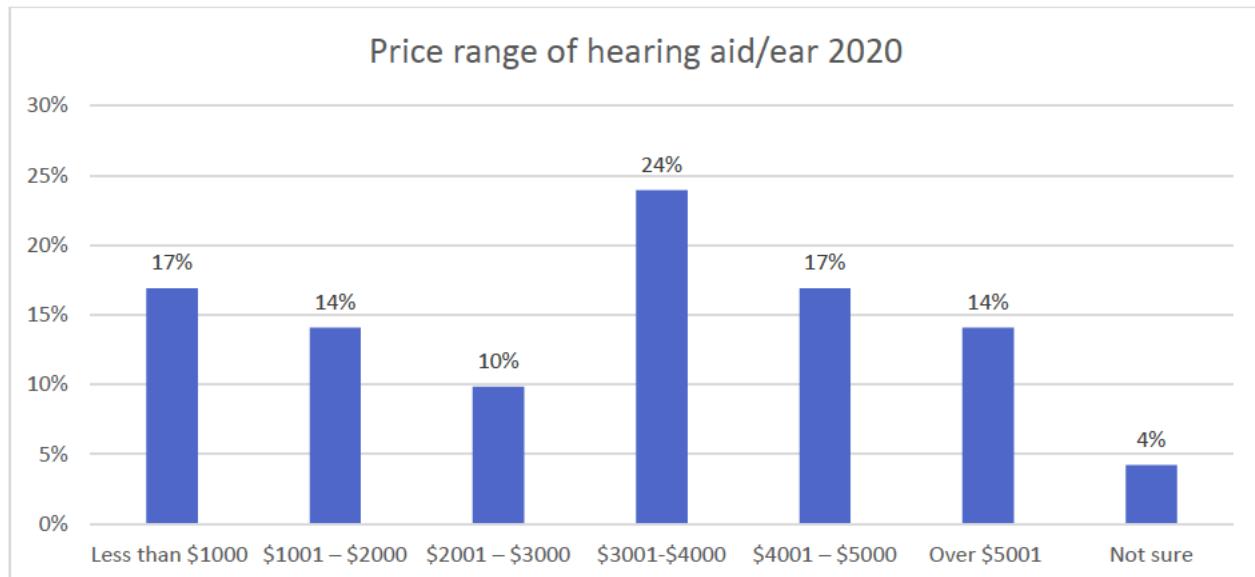
Were you explained the costs you would likely pay and costs the Ministry of Health would likely contribute towards your hearing aid(s)?

	2020	2018
Were explained, costs were clear	90%	88.42%
Were explained, but changed significantly	1.5%	2.11%
Not explained	1.5%	6.32%
Not sure if explained	7%	3.16%

3 commented on this:

- I found when I got a look at the account that the battery chargers, something that I consider essential for rechargeable hearing aids. To be \$400. I refused to pay it.

Around how much did you personally end up having to pay for each of your hearing aid(s)?



Graph 3: Reported price range by ear from respondents in 2020 compared to 2018 survey. It appears some of the responses for over \$5000 were for two ears, not one (3 added comments regarding this).

If you have had contact with staff at Enable New Zealand - how satisfied are you with the support and advice provided?

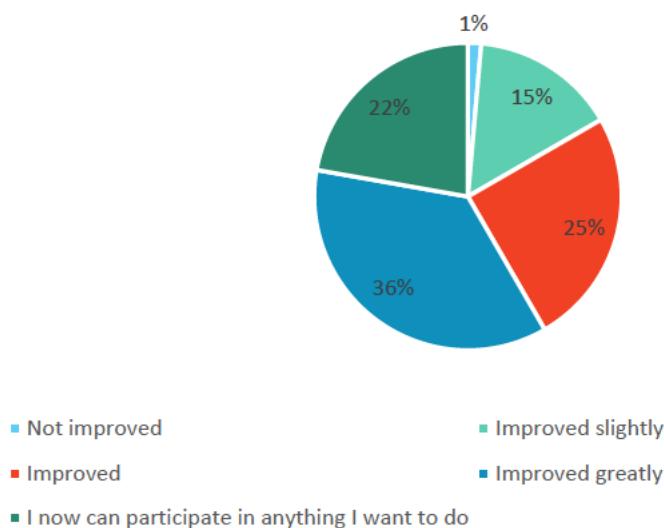
The majority of people had not had any contact with Enable New Zealand nor were aware of our existence. 85% said this question was not applicable.

Of those that responded:

4% were very satisfied and 5.5% satisfied with our service. 5.5% were neutral with no-one dissatisfied.

Following getting my new hearing aids, my participation in everyday activities (i.e. shopping, home activities, and work) has:

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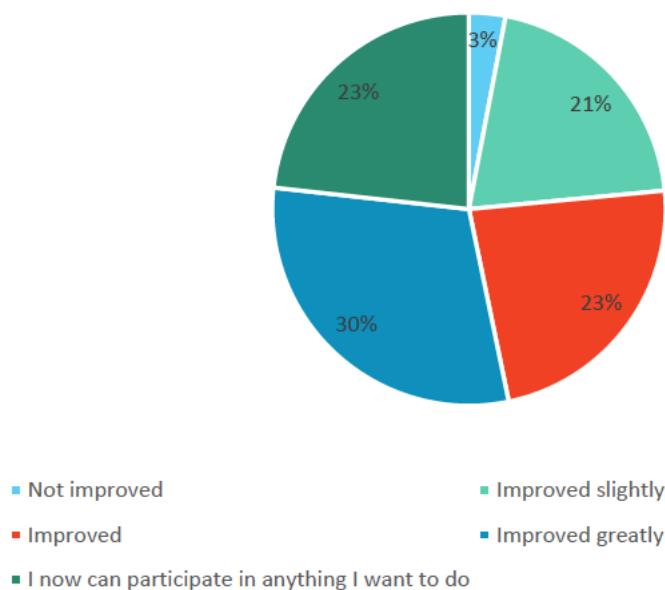


Graph 4: Respondents reported participation in everyday activities following receipt of their hearing aid

22% (last survey - 24%) can participate in everyday activities, with 36% (last survey - 30%) saying their participation has improved greatly. 25% (last survey - 30%) stated their participation has improved, with 15% (last survey - 10 %) stating it had improved slightly. 1% (last survey - 6%) stated it had not improved.

Following getting my new hearing aids my participation in social activities (i.e. conversations, meetings, family gatherings, leisure groups) has:

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*Graph 5: Respondents reported participation in social activities following receipt of their hearing aid*

23% (last survey - 22%) can participate in everyday activities, with 30% (last survey - 28%) saying their participation has improved greatly. 25% (last survey - 28%) stated their participation has improved, with 21% (last survey - 18 %) stating it had improved slightly. 4% (last survey - 1%) stated it had not improved.

What is your most important consideration when selecting a hearing aid? Rank in order of highest (1) to lowest (5):

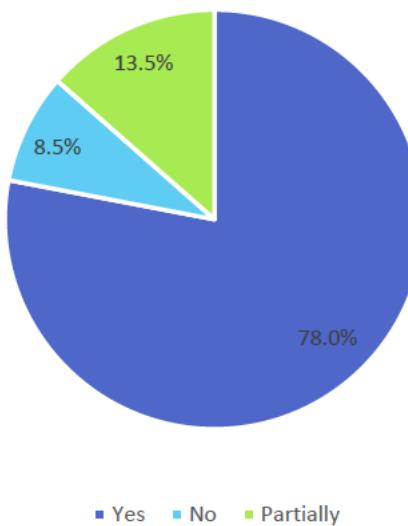
Answer Options	Highest (1)	2	3	4	Lowest (5)
Ability to socialise in noisy situations	11	19	18	6	11
Cost of hearing aids	10	11	12	12	14
Hearing aid usability (easy to use)	14	11	18	13	6
It improves my hearing in everyday activities	46	11	4	2	2
Hearing aid size (i.e. discreetness, cosmetic appearance)	3	9	6	18	23

*Table 1: results of respondents ranks of what was most important to least important when selecting a hearing aid*

Hearing in everyday activities was by far the most important for people. Size and discreetness were least important.

Overall, did receiving your hearing aids meet your expectations and help you overcome any difficulties you were having related to your hearing loss?

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Graph 6: Response percentage to whether hearing aids met the person's expectations

78% (last survey - 77%) said their hearing aids met their expectations and helped overcoming difficulties with hearing, 8.5% (1%) said no and 13.5% (last survey - 22%) said partially met their expectations.

#### Recommended service improvements:

- 1) Reminder to audiologists/audiometrists of their obligations to provide the MOH booklet for subsidies and funding
- 2) Information and advice about choices provided to clients was reasonably high but a number still said they had not received this.
- 3) Survey was not representative of many children or funded requests so this may need to be a focus for the next survey.

# HEARING AID USER SURVEY

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July 2022

Rachel Tatham  
Service Manager - Professional Services

## Introduction

Enable New Zealand (ENZ) issued a customer satisfaction survey to a group of Disability Support Services users who have received Ministry of Health (MOH) full funding for a hearing aid or a hearing aid subsidy.

The purpose of the survey was to gain feedback on the service they had received so that we can gain a better understanding of what works well, what could be done better and how useful our services are. Surveys were sent by post as a paper-based questionnaire, with an enclosed self-addressed envelope to return the survey to Enable New Zealand for analysis. An online option was provided for people to respond however this was not utilised well. There was a 32% return rate in the last survey undertaken in 2018. For this survey there was a 24.6% return rate by the deadline. So, this is a drop.

This report discusses a sample of results through graphs and tables.

The following numbers of people, selected by service type, were invited to participate in the survey:

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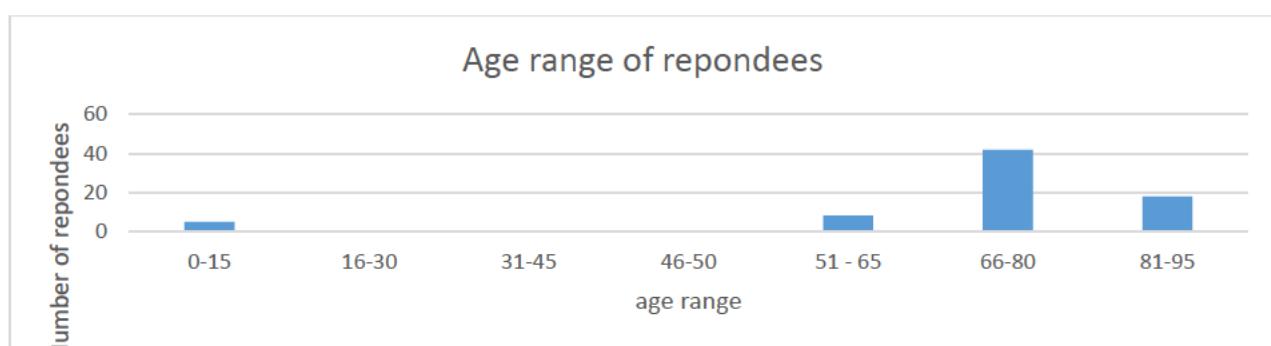
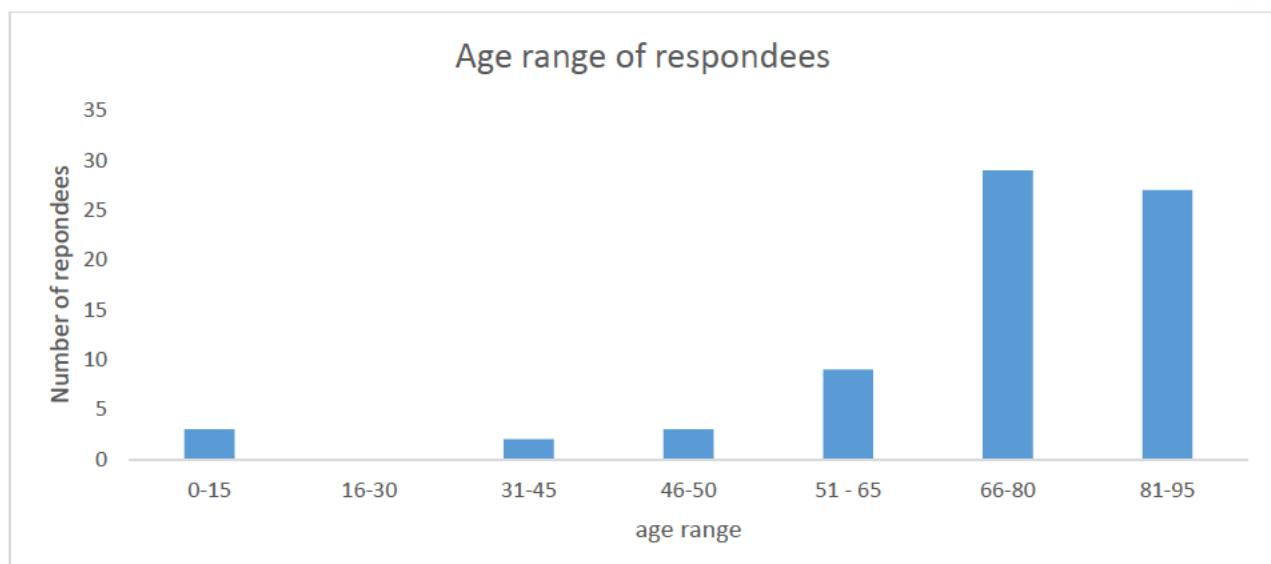
Of the 300 surveys sent, ENZ received 74% (24.6%) responses.

Eight (11%) responded from the hearing aid full funding subgroup. 60 (81%) responded that they had a subsidy. One said they had both funding and the subsidy and two said neither. Three stated they did not know.

### Demographics of customers responding to survey

#### **Age range**

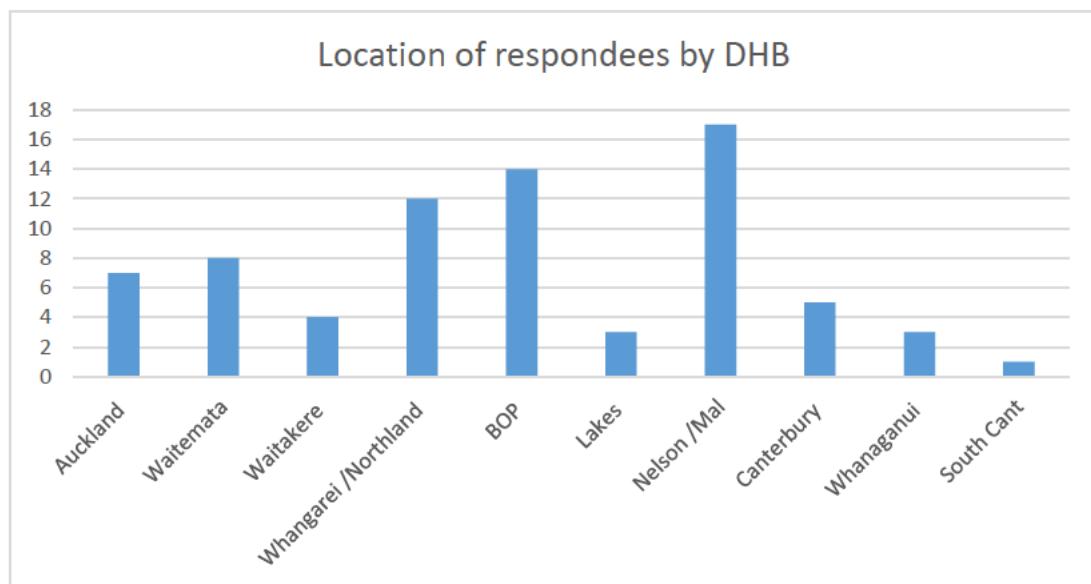
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73% (last survey - 68%) stated they were using their hearing aids for 8 hours + a day. 19% were using them 4-8 hours a day. 7% stated they were using their hearing aids 1-4 hours a day, 1% less than 1 hour a day. This is an improvement on the last survey.

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No respondents said that no information was given on how to look after hearing aids.

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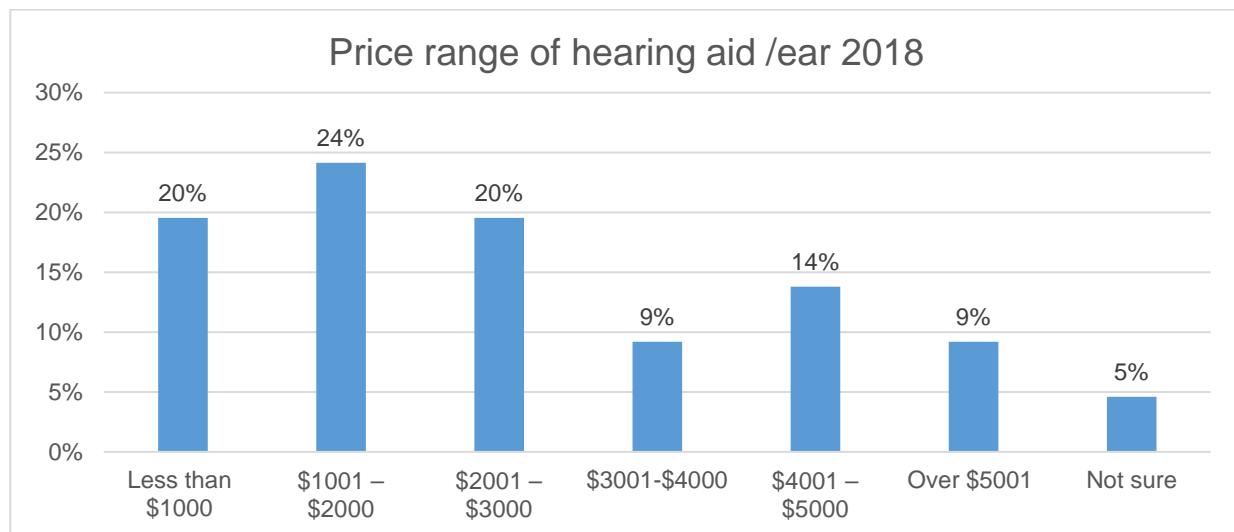
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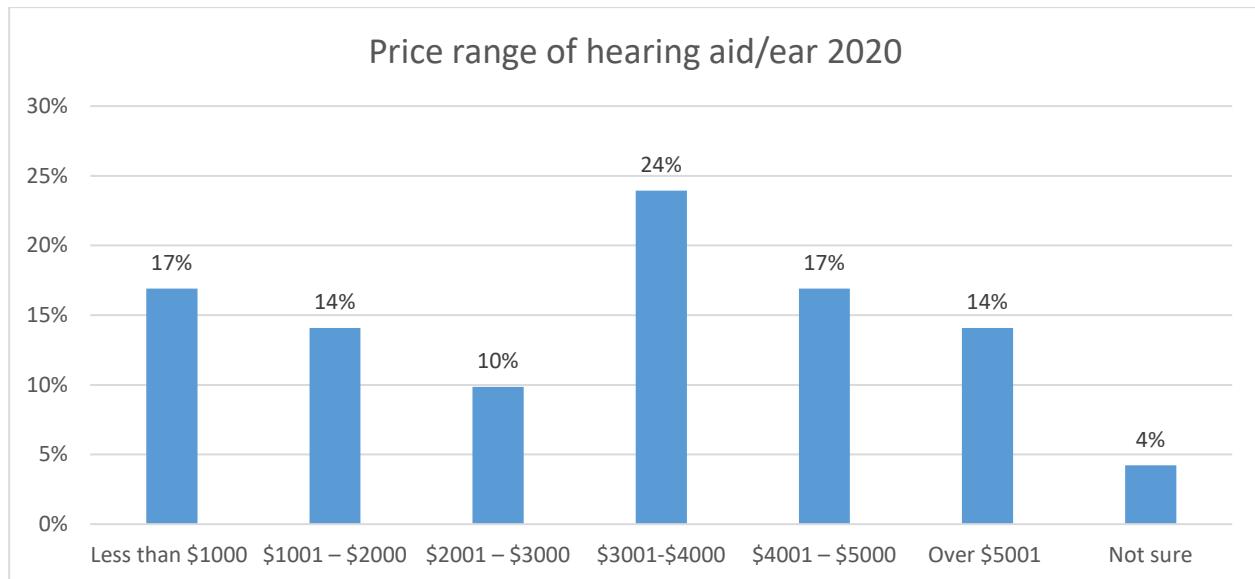
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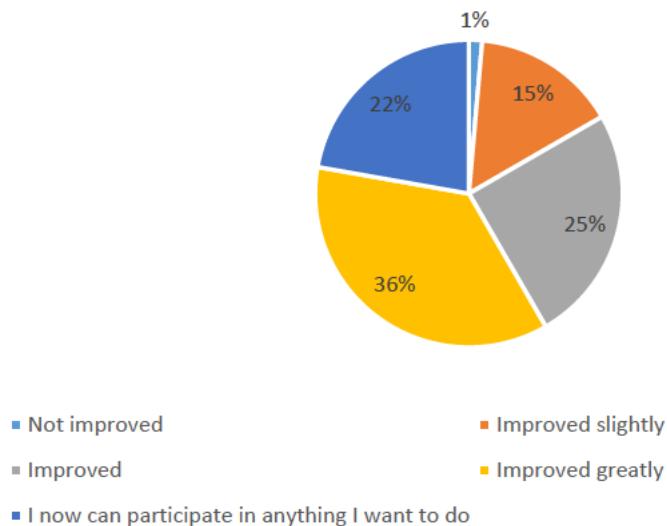
Of those that responded:

4% were very satisfied and 5.5% satisfied with our service. 5.5% were neutral with no-one dissatisfied.

15 people responded with feedback. The majority said they did not know who we were. This is not surprising as the subsidy would be promoted as a MOH subsidy (and most respondents had received a subsidy) and Enable New Zealand is in the background processing requests.

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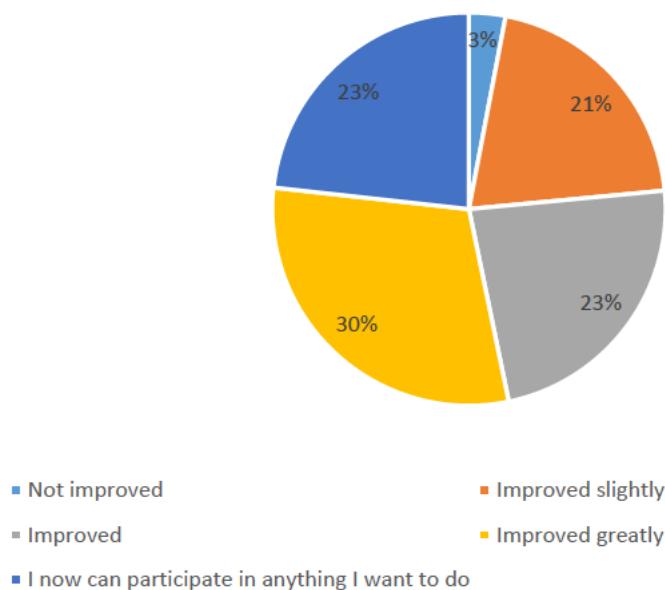


*Graph 5: Respondents reported participation in everyday activities following receipt of their hearing aid*

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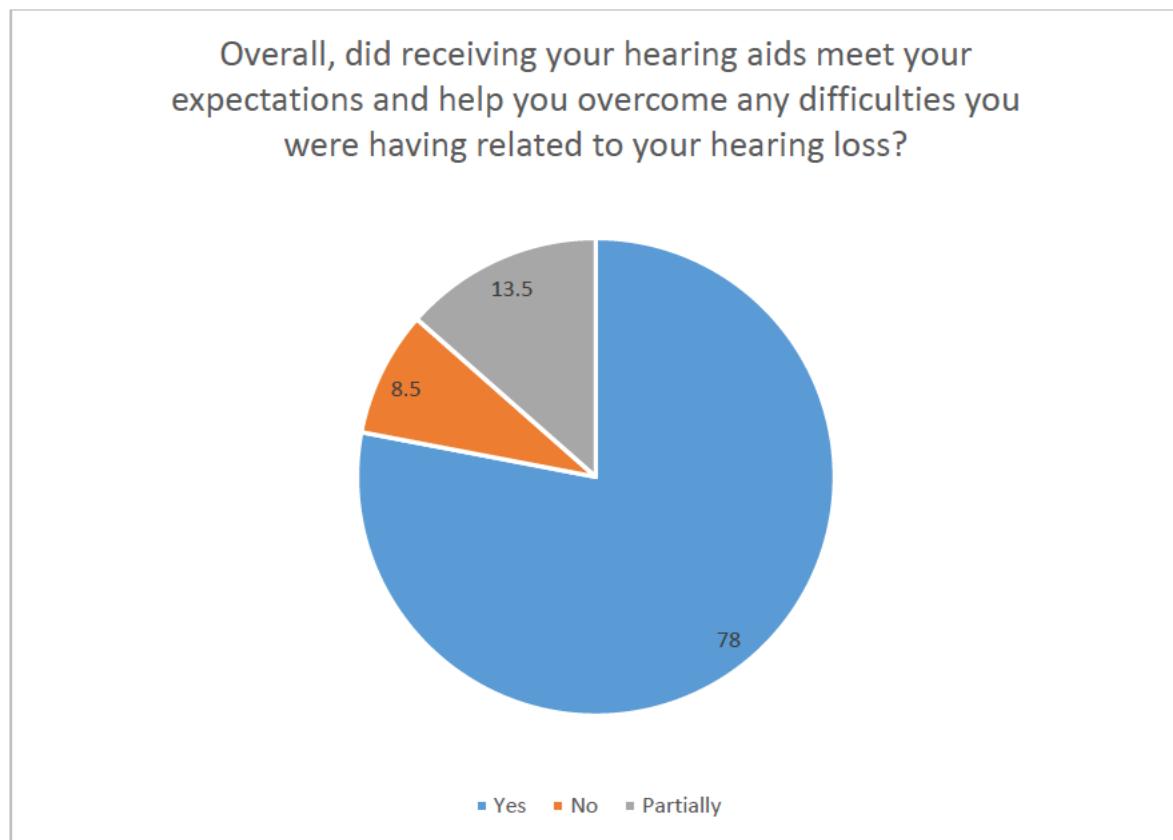
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Overall, did receiving your hearing aids meet your expectations and help you overcome any difficulties you were having related to your hearing loss?



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78% (last survey - 77%) said their hearing aids met their expectations and helped overcoming difficulties with hearing, 8.5% (1%) said no and 13.5% (last survey - 22%) said partially met their expectations.

**Recommended service improvements:**

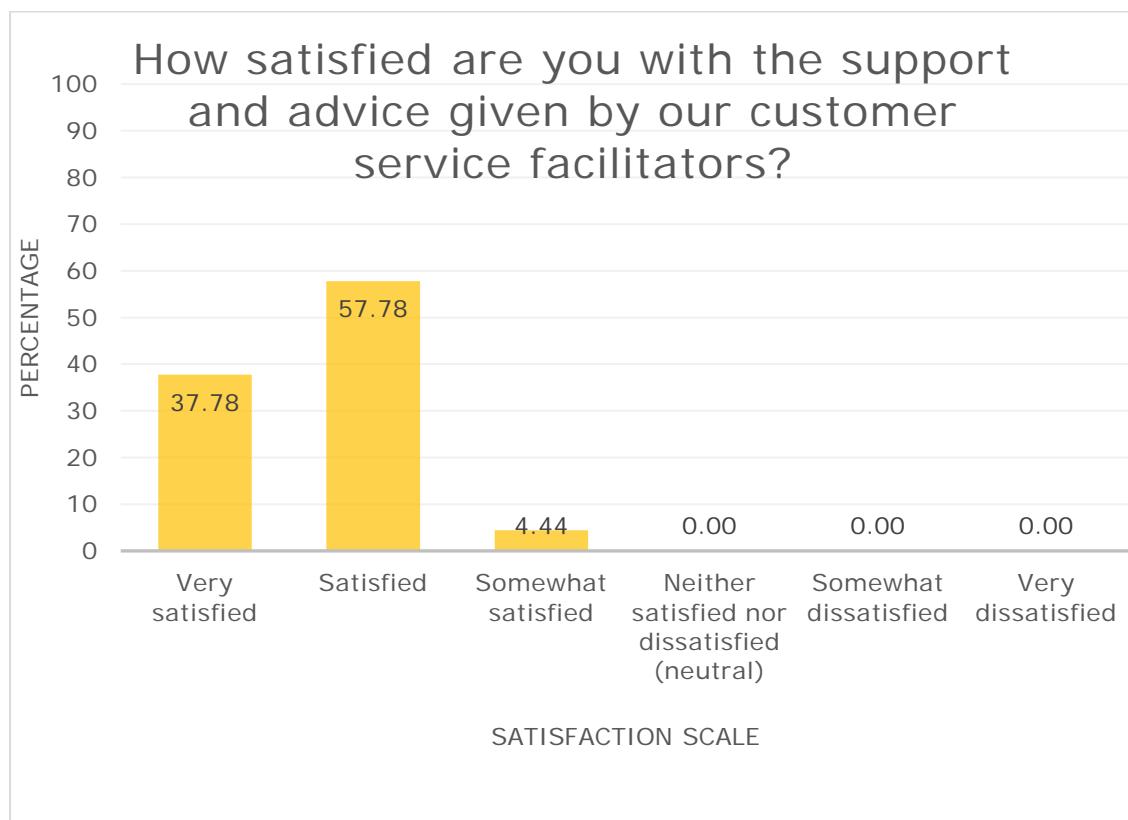
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- 3) Survey was not representative of many children or funded requests so this may need to be a focus next survey.

# Enable New Zealand Audiology/Audiometrist Survey 2021/22 Summary

Date sent: 24/4/2022

48(20%) Audiologists/Audiometrist responded

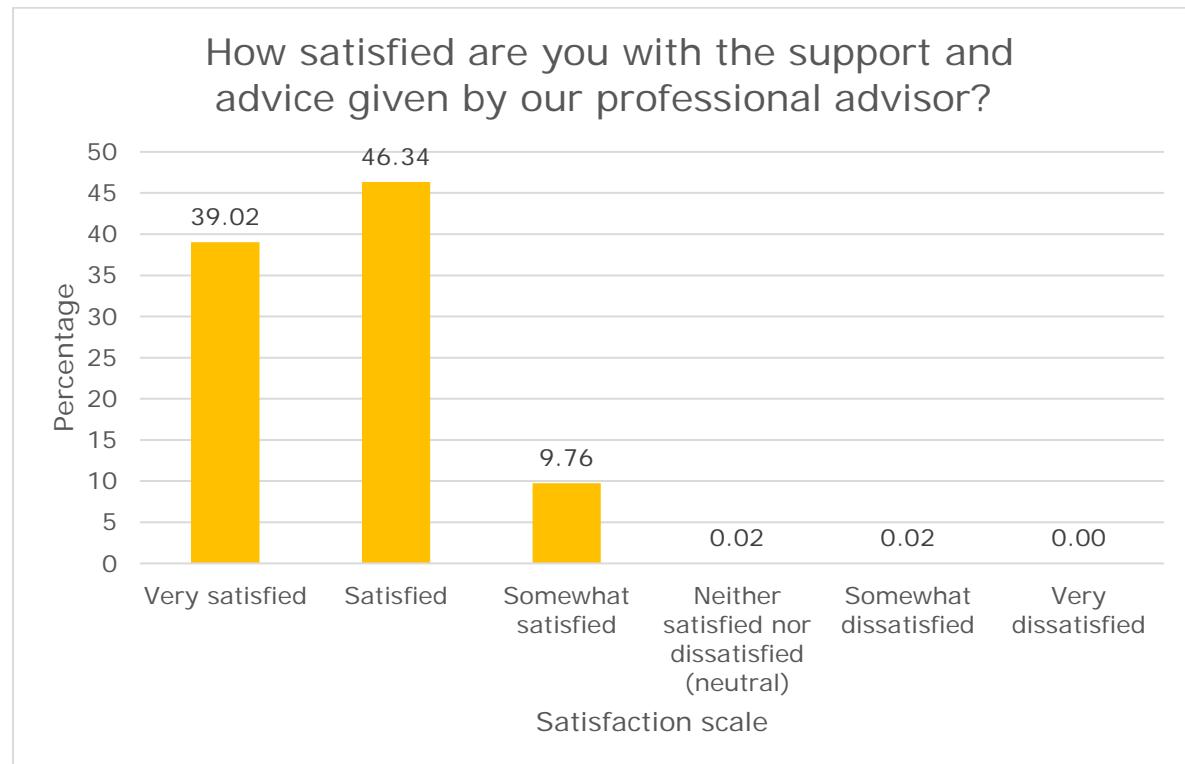
**How satisfied are you with the support and advice given by our customer service facilitators?**



## Service improvements

- Review how to manage consistency decision making with Professional advisor.
- Review process for pricelist updates – discuss with procurement and Comms team.

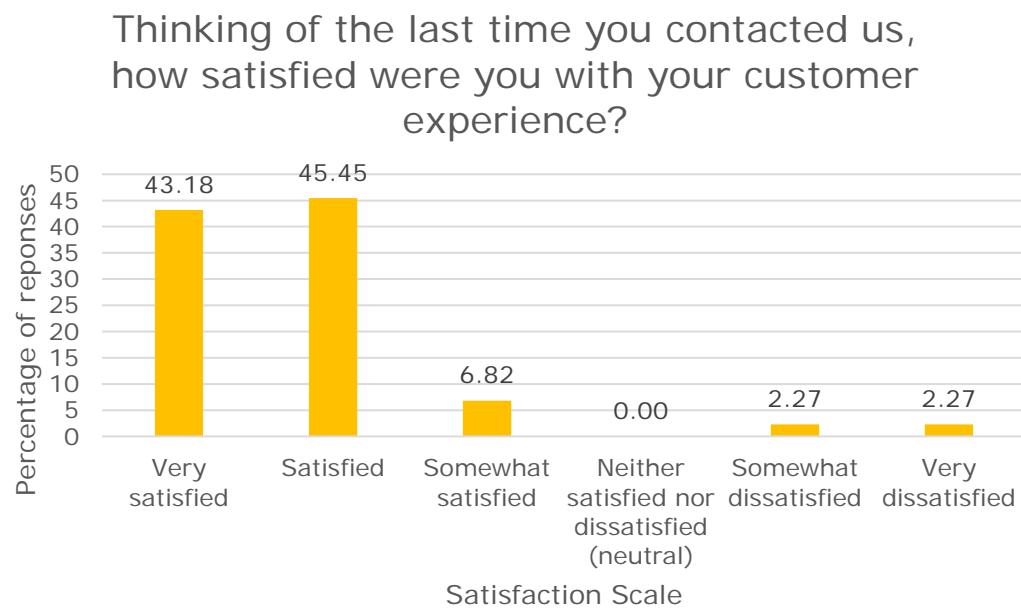
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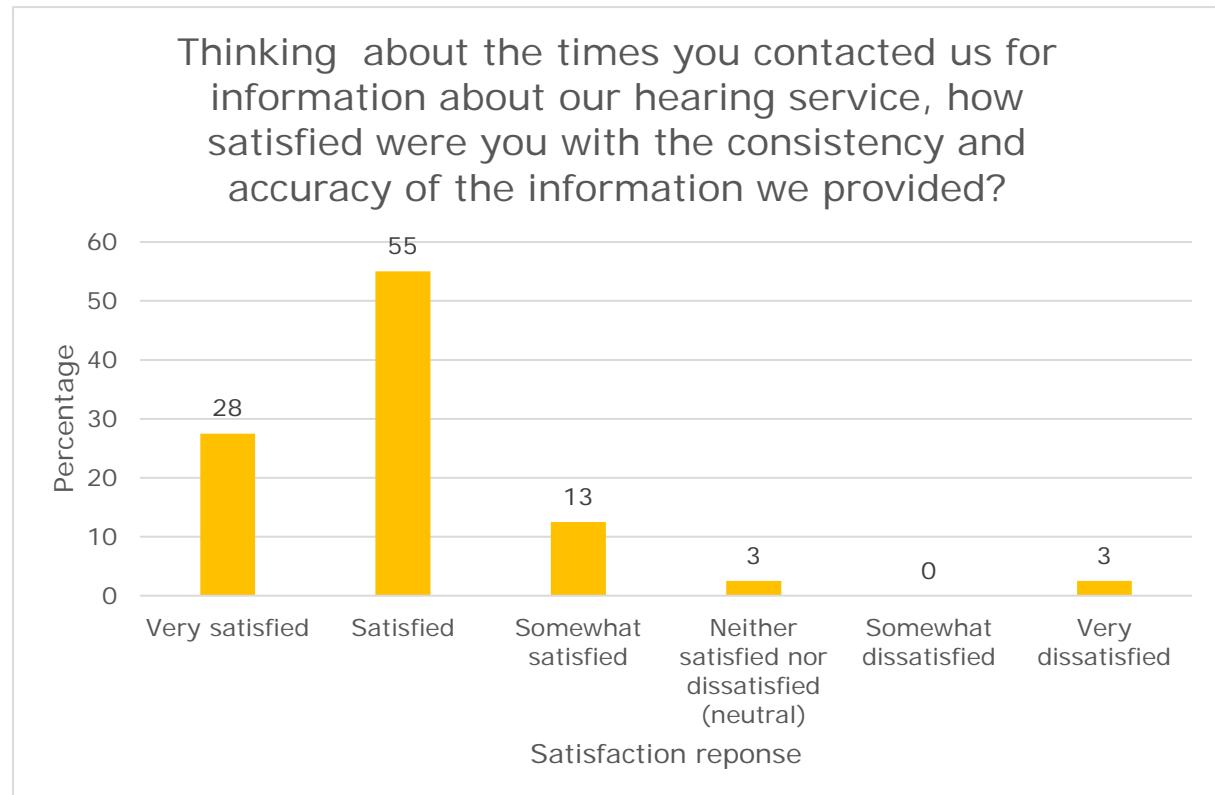
**Service improvements**

- Will provide MOH with the feedback around policy and processes

**Thinking of the last time you contacted us, how satisfied were you with your customer experience?**



**Thinking about the times you contacted us for information about our hearing service, how satisfied were you with the consistency and accuracy of the information we provided?**

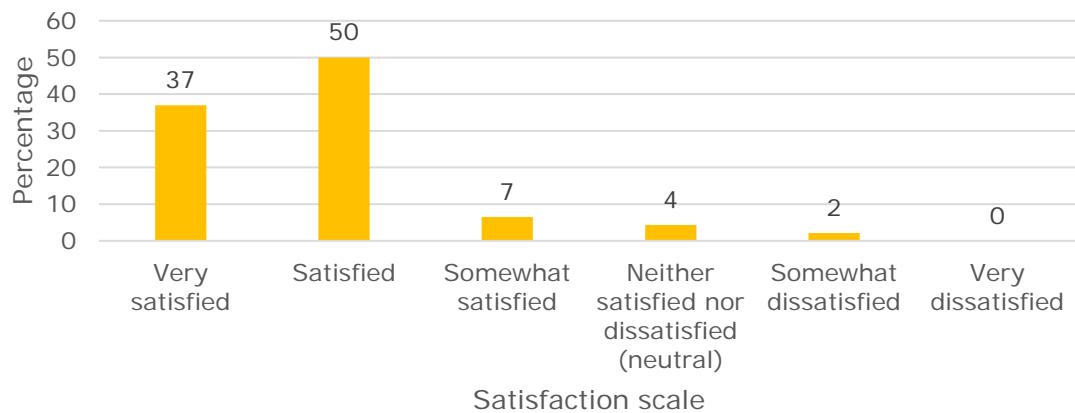


### **Service improvements**

- Access to team – consider best way to access team for our customers
- Forward feedback around records and conflicts of interest to MOH

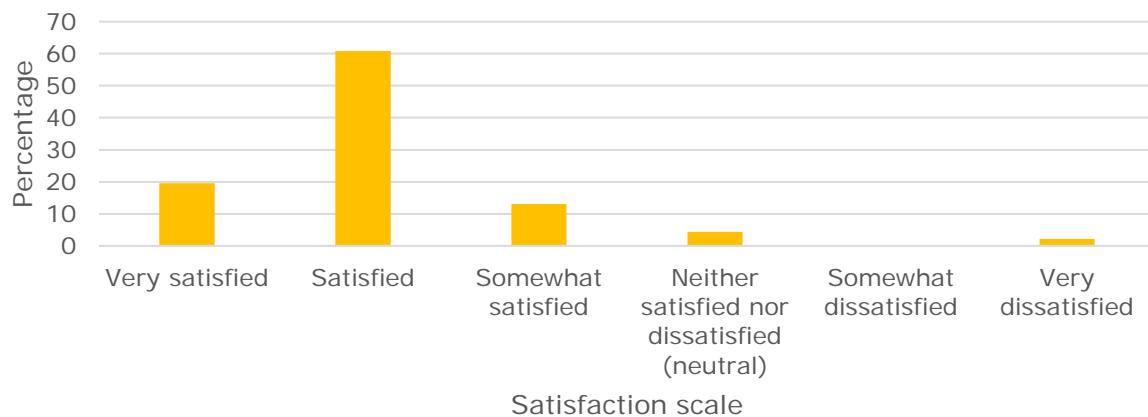
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**Overall, how satisfied are you with the hearing services we provide on behalf of the Ministry of Health?**

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### Demographics of EMS assessors responding to survey - 2020

- Response rate

Overall rate of response from approved Audiologists/Audiometrists and on behalf of persons was 11% (50 responses).

The survey was sent to 459 audiologists, audiometrists and On behalf of administration. 62% of those that responded were audiologists. 34% were on behalf of people.

### Work area

31% were from the DHB, and the rest working in private practice. The client groups that represented their case load were as follows

Age 0-16 22%

Age 16-65 8%

Age 65 + 50%

All of the age groups – 20%

### ***How satisfied are you with the support and advice given by our customer service facilitators?***

41.5 were very satisfied. 46% were satisfied and 6.5 somewhat satisfied. 2% were neutral, 2 % somewhat dissatisfied and 2 very dissatisfied. NB 2% = 1 person.

#### Service improvement:

review issues with eligibility of students going to education and see if there is ways this can be improved (proof expectations)

### ***How satisfied are you with the support and advice given by the Professional Advisor- Hearing at Enable New Zealand?***

33.5% were very satisfied. 49% were satisfied and 11% somewhat satisfied. 4.5% were neutral, 2 % somewhat dissatisfied and none very dissatisfied. NB 2% = 1 person.

#### Service improvement:

improve awareness off professional advisor role

### ***Thinking of the last time you have contacted us, how satisfied were you with the customer experience.***

52% were very satisfied. 37.5% were satisfied and 2% somewhat satisfied. 2% were neutral, 2 % somewhat dissatisfied and 4% very dissatisfied. NB 2% = 1 person.

***Thinking about the times you contacted us for information about our hearing service, how satisfied were you with the consistency and accuracy of the information we provided?***

52% were very satisfied. 36% were satisfied and 7% somewhat satisfied. No one were neutral, and 5% somewhat dissatisfied (2 people).

1

Service improvement:

unable to make recommendations as not enough feedback to why the 2 people were dissatisfied

***With applications we aim to respond within 10 working days (excluding applications that go to the Professional Advisor-Hearing). How satisfied are you with the timeliness of our response?***

42% were very satisfied, 35% satisfied, 17% somewhat satisfied and 2% neutral. 2% were somewhat dissatisfied (1 person) and 2% (1 person) were very dissatisfied. Feedback was received from 9 people

***Overall, how satisfied are you with the hearing services we provide on behalf of the Ministry of Health?***

37% were very satisfied, 39% satisfied, 8% somewhat satisfied and 8% neutral. 6% were somewhat dissatisfied (3 people) and 2% (1 person) were very dissatisfied. Feedback was received from 10 people and some repeated different themes