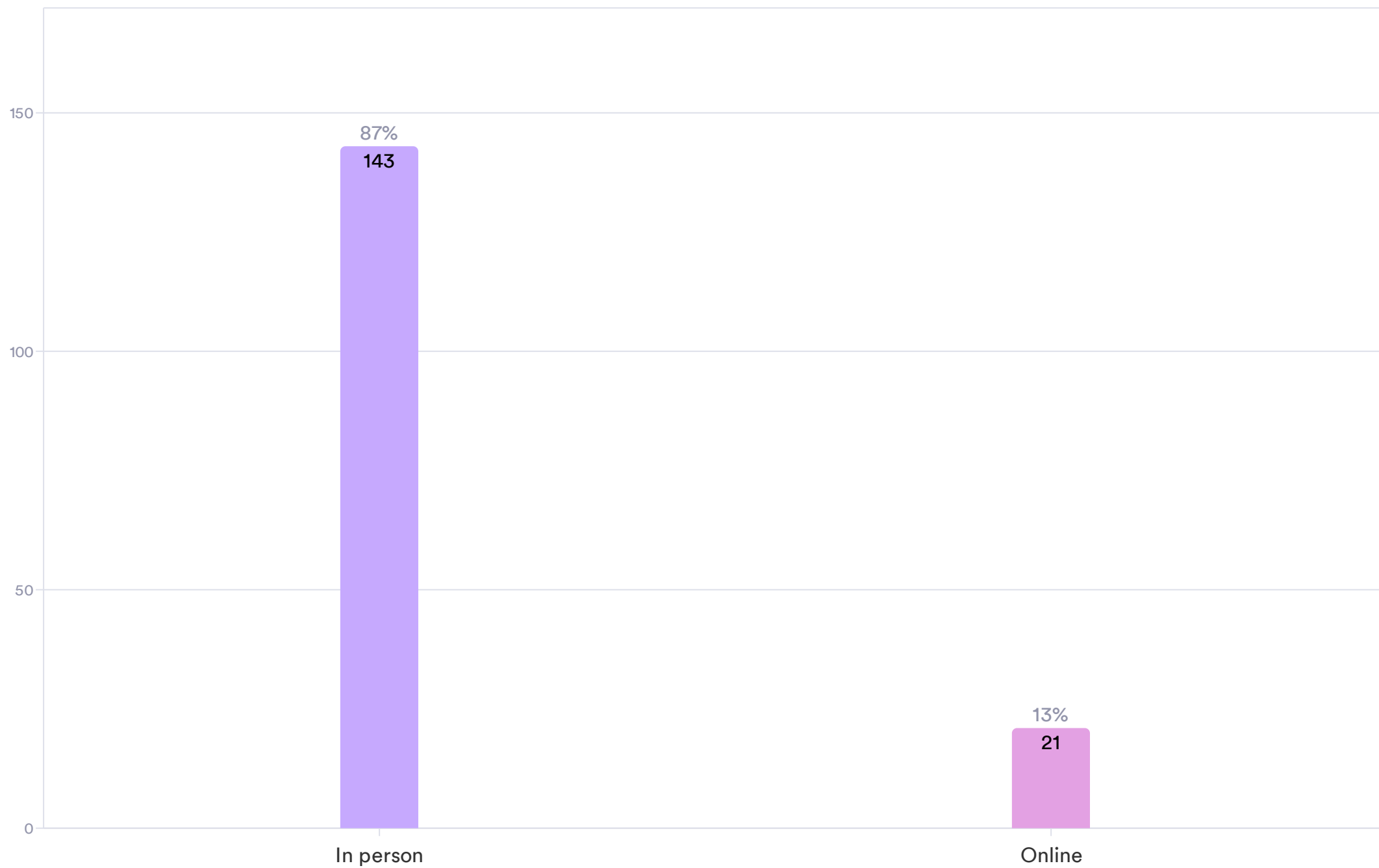


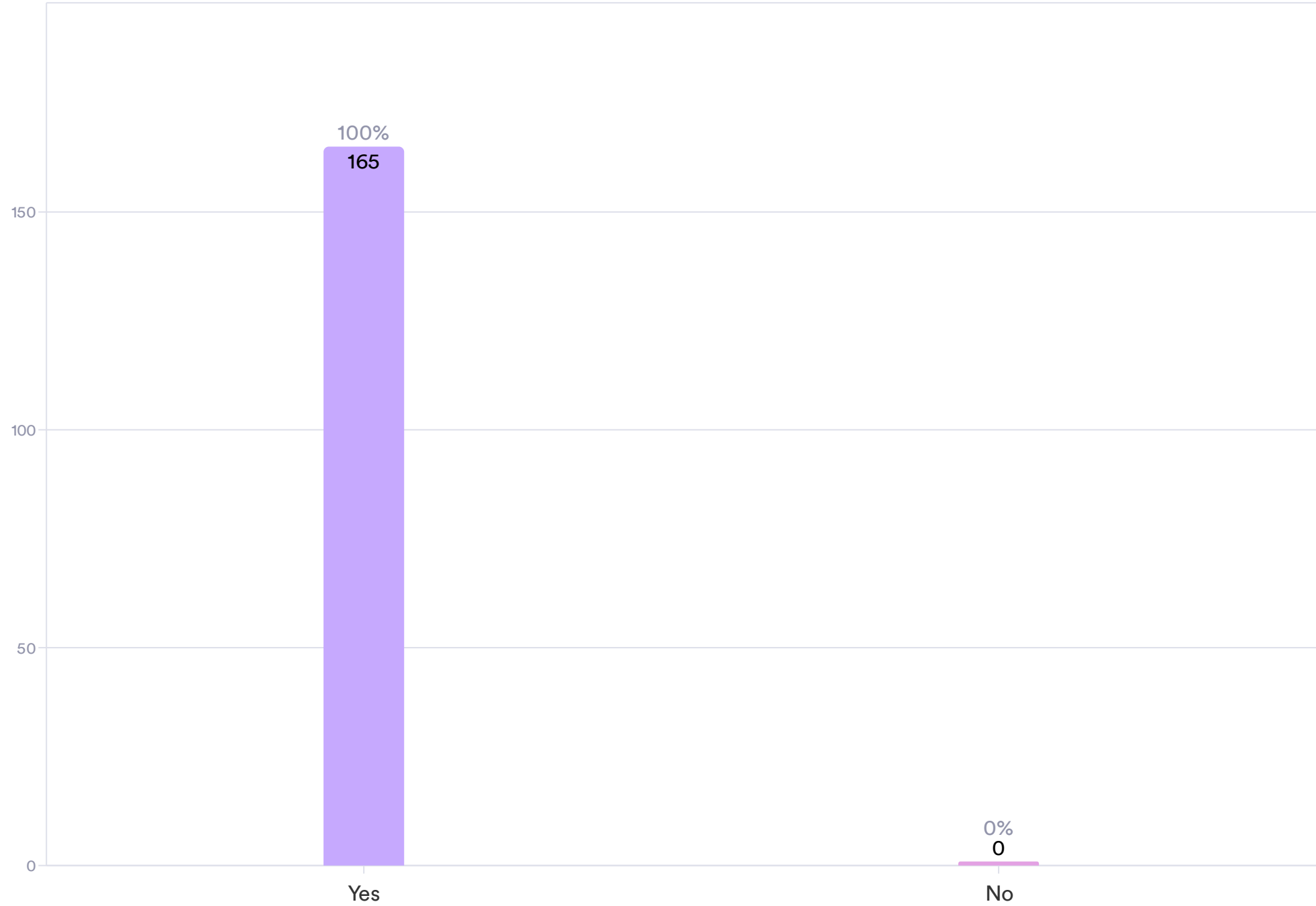


# **National Safeguarding Conference 2023 Evaluation Report**

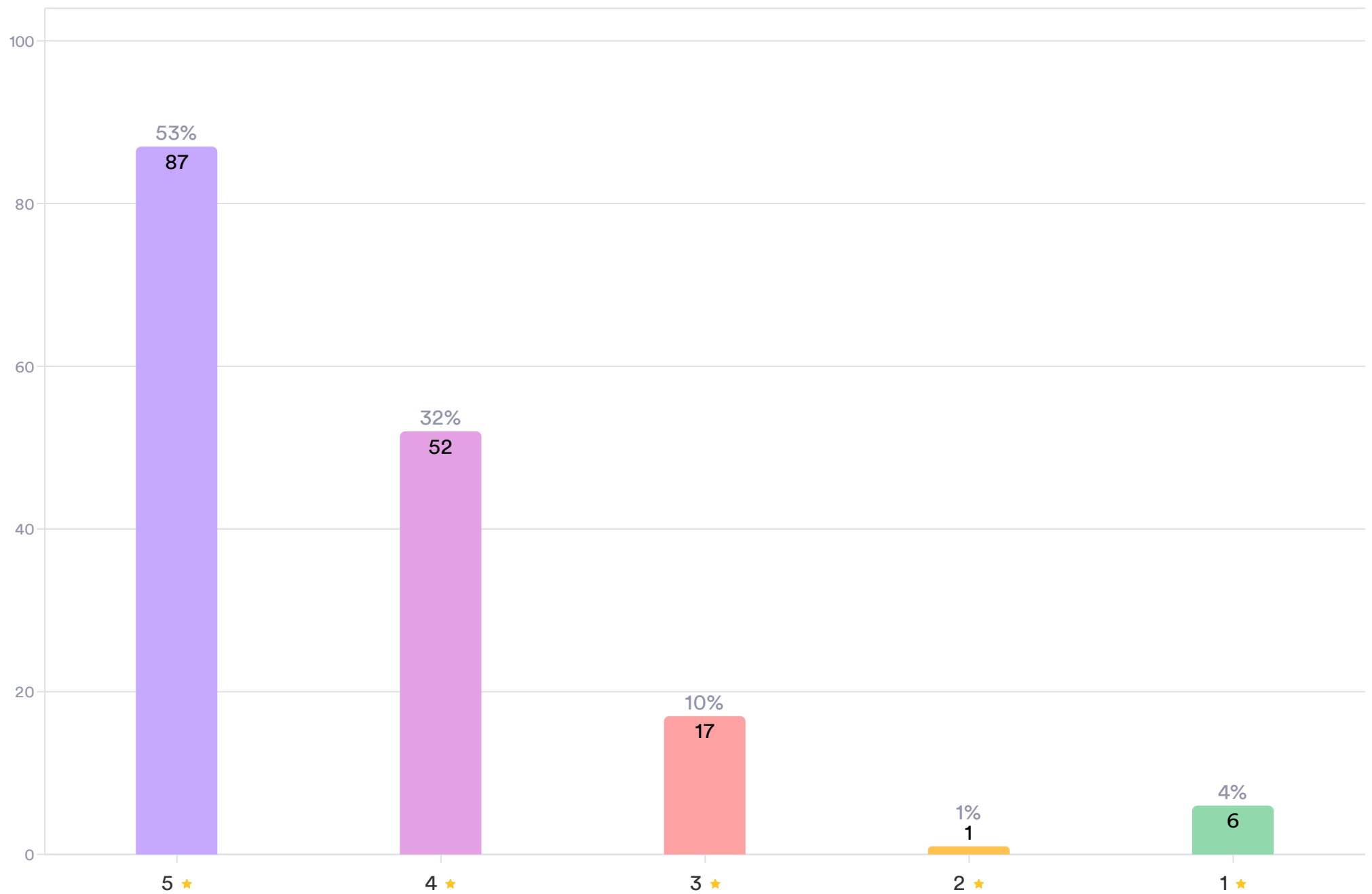
## How did you attend the conference?



Overall, did you enjoy the conference?



Please rate the conference overall.



## What was most enjoyable?

What did you most enjoy about your day?

Enthusiasm  
of delegates

Trauma  
informed  
listening

Fr Barry  
O'Sullivan

Breakout  
sessions

Networking

Scenario -  
Leah's story

Hearing the  
different  
points of view

The  
exchange of  
opinions



Alex  
O'Donnell

An  
enrichment of  
understanding

Learning  
how to  
respond

Mixture  
within the  
groups

Passion with  
which Bishop  
Brian spoke

Quality of  
speakers

Feeling part  
of a  
community

Contents of  
the pack

## What did you most enjoy about your day?

### Some comments 1/2

#### Data

Alex O'Donnell was outstanding, so down to earth and straight to the point. Best speaker you have every had. I learned a lot from his talk. The whole day was very good but that was the best speaker I have heard on Safeguarding with so much good advice.

As a newly qualified PSC, it was really interesting to get all the different views on Leah's story. I also enjoyed meeting new people. This was my first conference and I am sure everything I learned today will help me in my journey as a PSC. It was also lovely that refreshments and lunch was provided for everyone.

Being able to follow up on trauma training I attended through Paisley diocese earlier this year. I feel it's absolutely crucial to have a better understanding of how a survivor of abuse might disclose. I thought all who led the day were clearly specialists in their field and their presentations were comprehensive, considered and thought provoking.

Good positive and professional approach. Managed not to get mixed in fear and anger/hurt around such a difficult issue. Excellent case study.

Good to be present to hear speakers in person and observe audience interaction. I enjoyed meeting people from my own diocese whom I do not meet often. I actually met school acquaintance whom I have not seen since 1961 !

Good to meet so many committed to Safeguarding in the Church The interesting and diversity of the programme. The excellent professionalism of the speakers.

Great networking opportunities all day with some really stimulating discussions and opinion sharing.

I enjoyed hearing different and new perspectives and about how much progress has been made in Safeguarding practice, since I became a PSC many years ago. It help to develop my thinking and knowledge and refreshed my approach.

I enjoyed hearing different points of view over the topics in question. We heard from professionals. We heard from those who were victims. The mutual enrichment gives an understanding from all sides.

I have enjoyed the conversations, exchanges of opinions within the group, discussing the questions on hand. I have also learned and widened my knowledge with all the answers given by the participants, most especially with the Bishop and Lawyer explaining or giving their opinions about the topic, it was quite interesting.

## What did you most enjoy about your day?

### Some comments 2/2

#### Data

I thought Alex's speech was amazing and I learned so much. It was easy to understand and really helps if I ever have to listen to someone disclosing their trauma. I feel more confident.

Input from Bishop Brian on Synodality and Rev Dr Barry O'Sullivan on Spirituality. Both speakers were worthy of longer time. Both topics provide excellent ideas for next year's conference.

Meeting other people some familiar faces and others, being encouraged by their commitment and enthusiasm to safeguarding in the Catholic Church. The prayer time at the beginning was good, helping me to calm my inner self and to make space for what our "EVERYDAY GOD" wanted me to receive and to try to digest in the following talks and group sharing.

Meeting others with the same goals. Range of subjects covered. Epione presentation was the most informative and interesting. Would like to hear more like this. Also more discussion of how to separate professional persona from safeguarding tasks.

Meeting so many dedicated people and learning from their thoughts and feedback from the small group discussions. The lecturers were interesting and thought provoking and good to refresh the Safeguarding mind. The program moved along well, small groups were good for discussion and sharing.

Opening lecture, opportunity to meet with diocesan staff and other trainers who I do not normally see face to face, chance to listen to people who have been working in this field for many years.

Speakers were all excellent. Although online - it was good to get the time to breathe in between the talks. I think Bishop Brian spoke with great authority and passion. 'God has gifted us with the power of listening'!

The amazing Bishop McGee. Everything, the venue, the talks, the discussions, the participants. The speed of each talk/item. The knowledge of speakers. Also the tea, coffee and lunch was great.

The inspiring presentations which all focused on the importance of trauma-informed listening and what to do to support all involved. The 'looking after yourself' reminders were helpful too - as well as the reminders that all our clergy (from seminarians to Bishops) need specific training and support. It was great to meet up with so many from different dioceses and to feel so supported by SCSSA and colleagues.

The speakers were very good. I especially enjoyed the presentation by Alex O'Donnell. His talk was both informative and interesting. I've learned a great deal about the effect of trauma on individuals, families, communities and also the impact on those who the individual chooses to disclose their adverse experience to. I was very interested to hear Fr. Barry's talk and so disappointed that he only got to share a brief 10mins of his talk.

## What did you least enjoy about your day?

### What did you least enjoy about your day?

Difficult  
hearing in  
group  
discussions

No online  
participation  
in group  
sessions

Trauma  
informed  
listening-

Experience  
on Zoom

Seating  
arrangements  
for groups

Structure of  
group  
feedback  
sessions

Lack of  
context  
around Leah's  
story

Feedback  
structure



Feedback felt  
rushed

Use of  
auditorium  
for breakout  
groups

No mention  
of risk  
assessments

Some voices  
dominated in  
groups

Lack of time  
given to Fr.  
Barry  
O'Sullivan

Too many  
breakout  
groups

Itinerary  
cramped



## What did you least enjoy about your day?

### Some comments 1/2

#### Data

2nd part of Leah's story. Too much conjecture and lack of info. I felt the questions we were asked to address were poorly framed and thought out. Facilitator clearly driving debate into preferred outcomes which was not at all helpful when exploring issues.

Although I agree that the work done in the last 15 years has radically shifted the landscape of Safeguarding in the institution there continues to be issues around accountability and transparency which needed more emphasis during the presentations. Good policy procedures and training alone won't make the institution safer unless we find a way to inculcate safeguarding as part of our DNA.

Although I thought Leah's story was very powerful and the feedback from the groups was really helpful, I just felt it was a bit too long. Maybe we just had too many groups, so by the time we got to the last group's feedback, I had forgotten what the first group had said.

Although it was good to have the group work on Leah's Story I did feel the second time round it was rather laboured. I would have liked more time given to Dr Barry O'Sullivan with his input.

Difficulty in hearing during group discussions, because not facing each other ( sitting in rows in lecture hall) and noise from other groups. I know it was because of so many people attending. Emphasise that groups should discuss and feedback on question highlighted for them, I felt too many groups all covered question 1 . Gather those giving feedback at front of hall/ in one place to save time and energy of person running all over the place with the microphone. They can go back to seat after speaking if possible. Coming down steps, nothing to lean on. One man in front of me slipped at the edge of step where a gap was.

Epione presentation. Concerned of terminology used.

Hearing the feedback from the group discussions was useful but it was very repetitive. We didn't need to hear from all 14 groups. It took up a lot of valuable time but didn't offer fresh learning. I feel there would have been more value in ensuring adequate time for Fr. Barry's talk and a Q&A. I was in Group 10. Our facilitator was very good but it wasn't till the end of the conference that Julie realised she didn't have the correct pack. Nonetheless, we had an engaging discussion about Leah's story.

In some of the discussions about the case study there was a general assumption that clergy were guilty until proved innocent. The feedback sessions from the 16 groups were too long. There was a lot of repetition.

It was hard that some voices dominated the small groups and some rather ill informed and unwise views were expressed.

Least enjoy is probably the wrong phrase, but if there was one observation it would be that 16 feedback groups was probably a bit too much as there was no real opportunity to develop any discussion from emerging themes.

My group had to meet in the lecture hall and the seating arrangement was not really conducive to sharing ideas. But I realise that would be due to the great number attending the conference and therefore the lack of other breakout space. Not a big issue!

## What did you least enjoy about your day?

### Some comments 2/2

#### Data

Technology failures at start. On 1st group sessions feedback it was 20 mins before we online were connected. Also, not sure about when it was agreed we could use Zoom. Perhaps with better foresight/planning we could have had our own breakout groups? I've done this on other courses etc on Zoom. For those of us with health issues at present Zoom was essential.

The break-out groups were large and our leader spent quite a bit of time responding to what different people said which did not seem as though that was meant to be the purpose of our discussions.

The discussion groups in the auditorium - despite the excellent Facilitator difficult to discuss without face to face contact and also for some difficult to hear.

The discussion groups might be a bit on the large side, but it may become unwieldy to accommodate so many participants in smaller groups. I am not sure if a Saturday is the best day, but perhaps it suits the majority of people. It may have prohibited many priests from taking part because of Vigil Masses (although that does not excuse morning absence).

The feedback was good but it may have been more practical and time saving to have those giving feedback stay at front of Auditorium.

The group sessions were difficult as positioning of groups did not lend itself to conversation with others. Conference room / reception area was not suitable this amount of people.

The scenario and question prompts for the breakout groups were great - but the group was just too big and we really had difficulty hearing one another. There was a sense of rushing through the feedback in the auditorium (because there were so many groups). I would have liked to hear more from Rev Dr Barry O'Sullivan.

The second scenario on Leah's case study was confusing and not as clear as it should be.

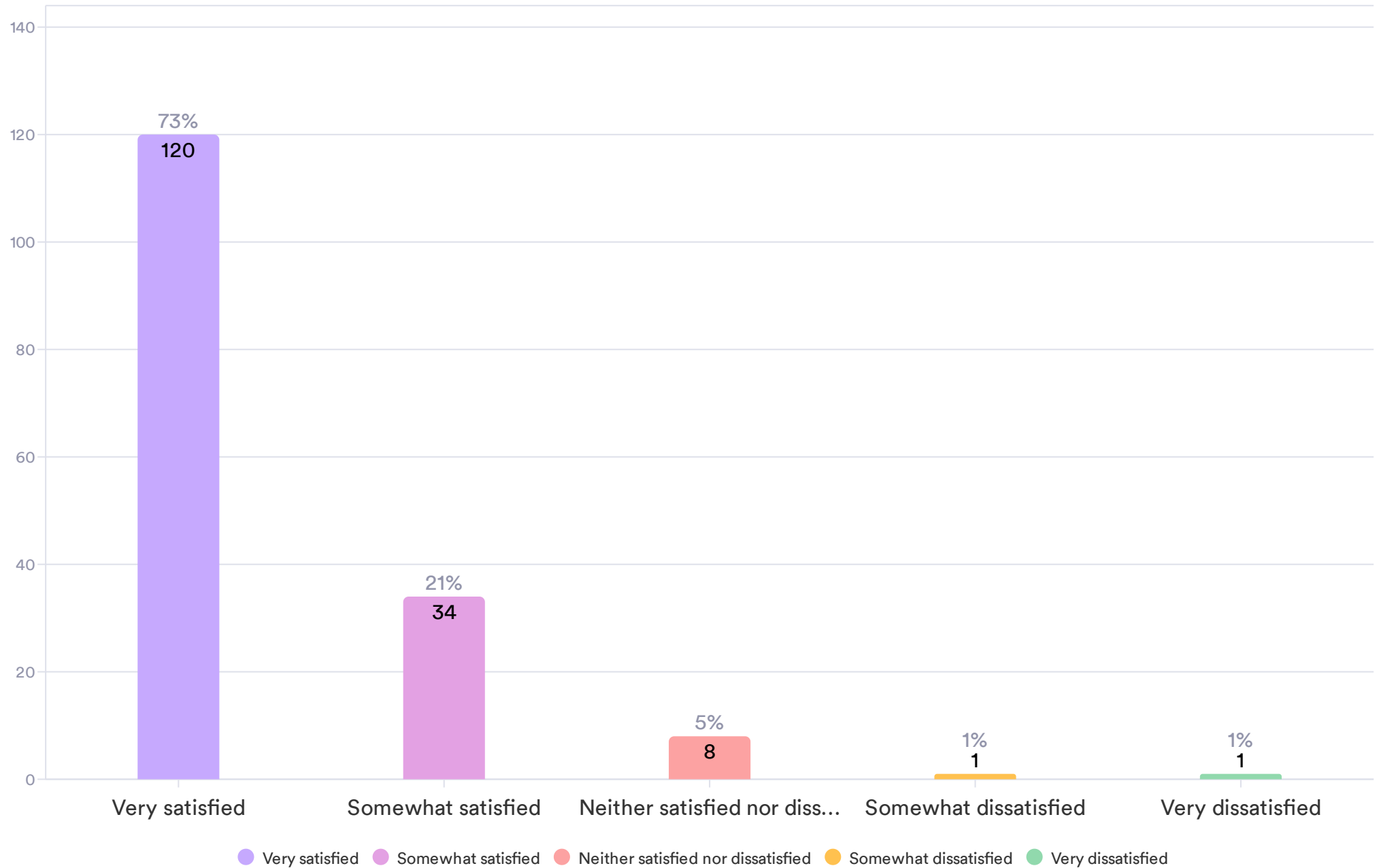
The self congratulatory comments. I know we have come far but we as a church have a long way to go.

The way of looking at Leah's story from different perspectives was interesting, but we lacked context and it was difficult to know how long ago it happened and therefore how relevant it is to nowadays. Also, although the feedback from the groups was interesting, there wasn't really long enough for Br Brendan to reflect on what was said.

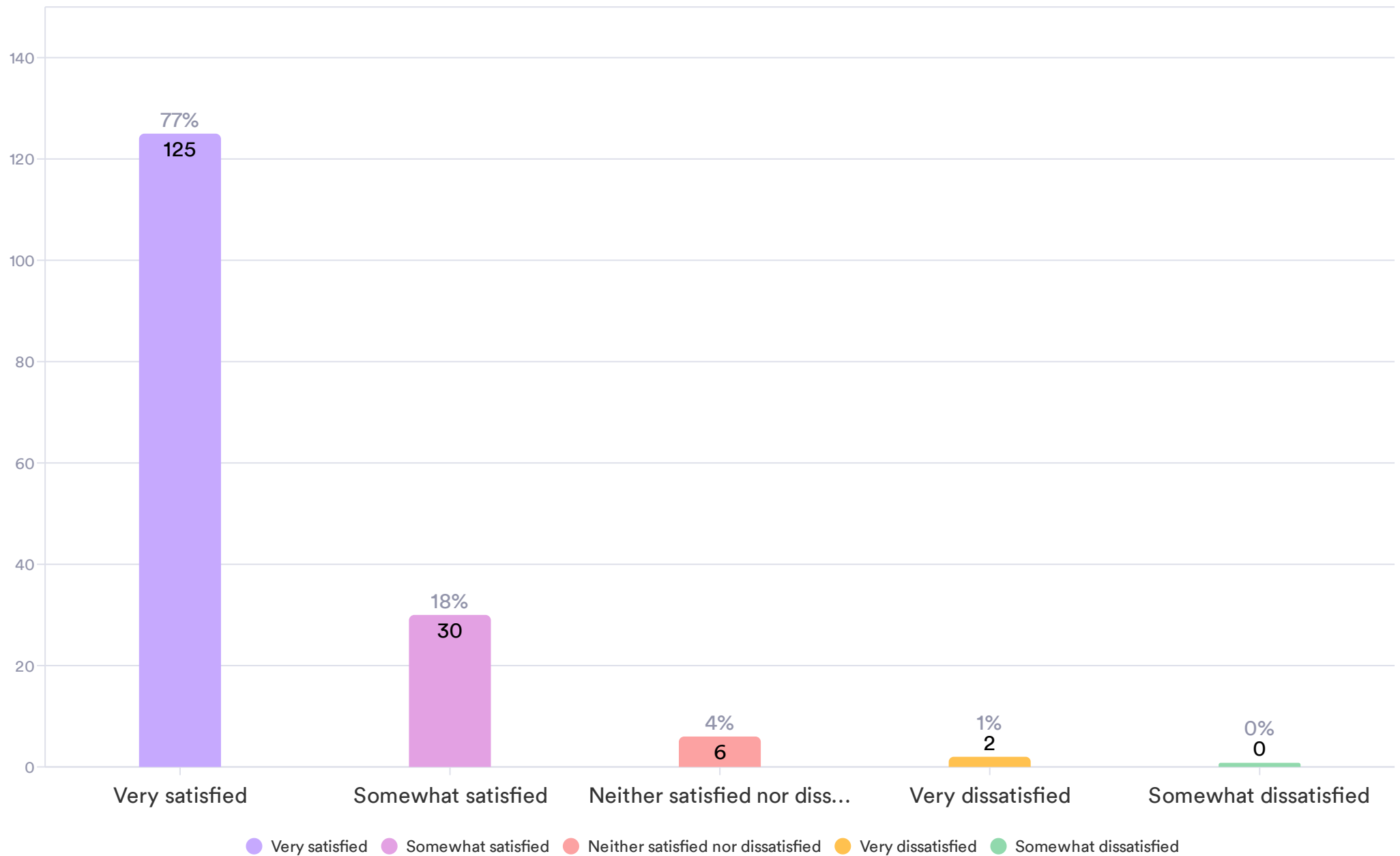
Trauma Informed Listening, while interesting, is really for professionals. Too much on Leah's story.

Trauma informed listening. The intention was good but felt delivery did not always hit the mark. Also some of the content was not accurate/could be harmful i.e. send wrong message. I am trauma informed qualified.

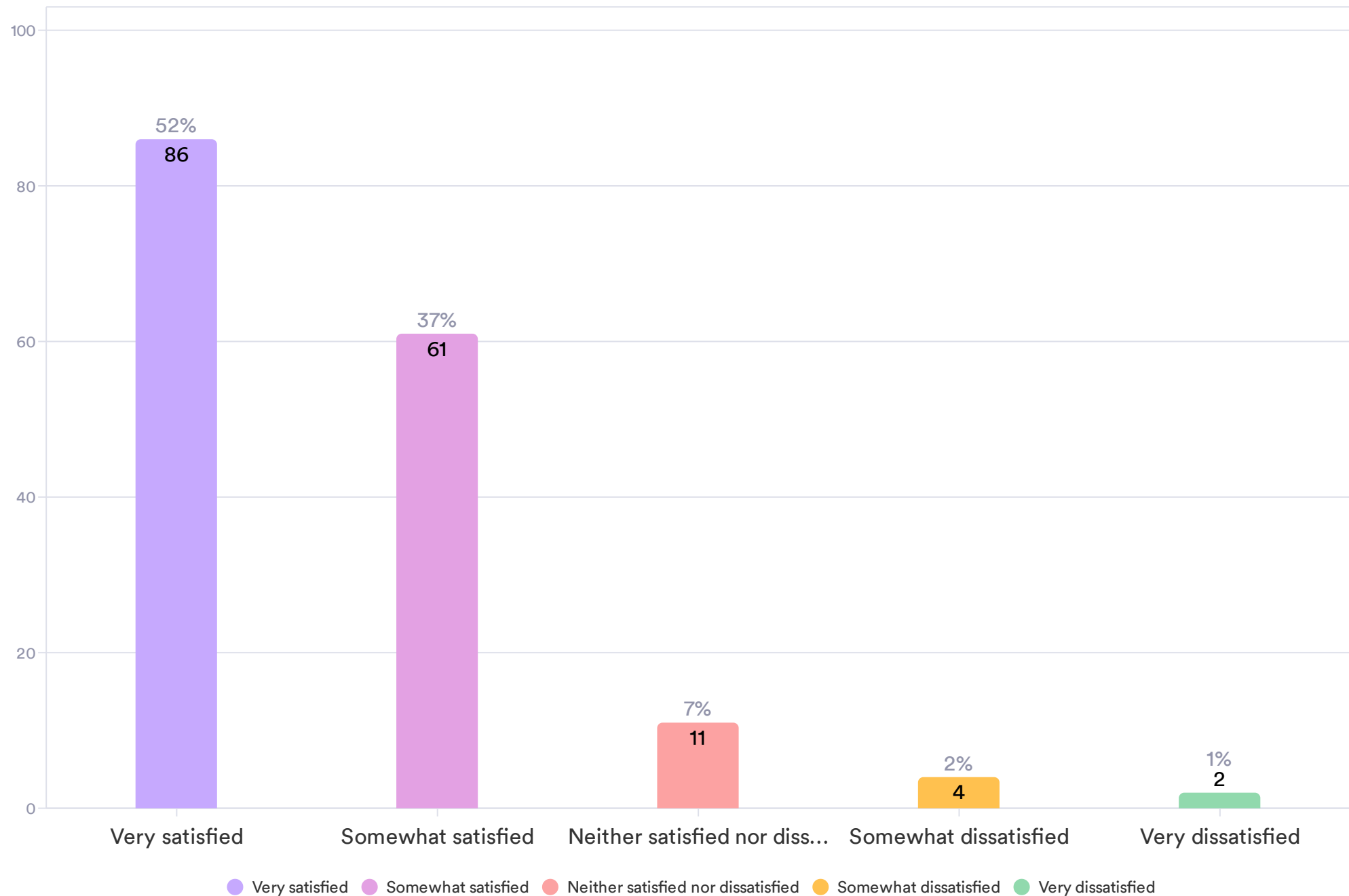
## How satisfied are you that the Conference enhanced your understanding of the importance of trauma-informed listening?



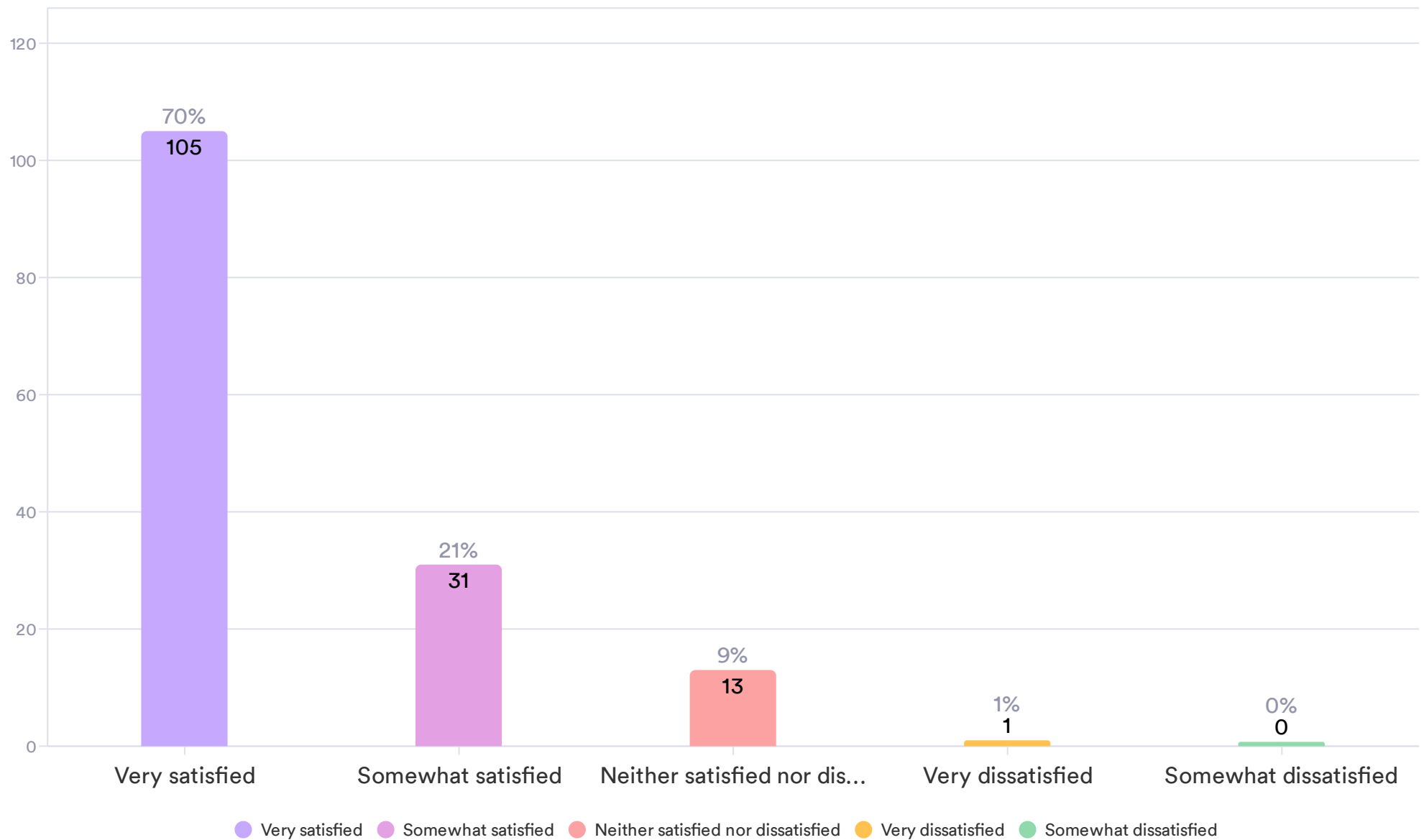
## How satisfied are you that Epione's input enhanced your confidence in listening to people affected by trauma?



How satisfied are you that Leah's Story enhanced your understanding of the importance of the art of encounter in safeguarding?



## How satisfied are you with the contents of the Conference pack?



## Do you have any requests for future training packages or Conference themes?

### Some comments 1/3

#### Data

A place for members of groups who work in parishes to have questions/ concerns etc answered. Perhaps an update for these groups could be arranged.

A suggestion would be to have the scenarios on a disclosure from a young child which would require an immediate response which would be categorised as recent abuse. Are we confident dealing with this? It may not be clergy who is responsible it could be someone who volunteers in the Church.

Accountability and transparency - What needs to change to convince those victims and survivors that their church is really ready to seek their forgiveness The recent work of the Swiss pilot inquiry highlighted how interpretations of processes can continue to be used to minimize the reputational damage to the institution

Although I enjoyed the conference. I work full time and this would only be possible once a year. It would be good if there was more on-line training.

As a Religious, I did feel that we need something more specific to us, however, this would have to be out with the National Safeguarding Conference which is for everyone involved in safeguarding.

Better training for PSCs especially focusing on consistency across the country.

FOR ME --SIMILAR INPUT AS WE RECIEVED AT THIS CONFERENCE , TO FURTHER DEEPEN MY UNDERSTANDING .

Further information on spirituality in safeguarding and the work of Dr Barry O'Sullivan.

Helping to make the recruitment process more effective and efficient. I have recently been through it again for an activity in a different diocese and it is really quite a long process which is a shame given that I am fully approved in my own diocese.

I think smaller gatherings which can go into more detailed debate especially for those in specific roles and functions would be helpful.

I was intrigued and puzzled by the conference title. I would have liked to hear more about how the title came about. Is it the agency's intention that those involved in Safeguarding, at all levels, become experts in the art of encounter? What local and national training and events are planned to achieve this? Last year there was mention of a new training programme being launched but I've heard nothing more about it. The role of PSC can be quite isolated. It would be useful to have diocesan events whether that's for training, to provide progress updates or to meet new DSAs and trainers.

## Do you have any requests for future training packages or Conference themes?

### Some comments 2/3

Data
I would appreciate something on SPIRITUAL abuse.
I would have like to have heard more from Fr. Barry O'Sullivan on the Theology of Safeguarding.
I would like to hear more about Spirituality in Safeguarding (Rev Dr Barry O'Sullivan) I would like to hear more about some of the research which is being undertaken and hear about some of work being undertaken by working groups.
I would like to hear more about trauma and safeguarding.
I would like to hear more from Fr Barry regarding the theology in safeguarding.
I would welcome the opportunity to attend the full Epione 1 day course. This should be provided to all voluntary safeguarders.
I'd like to see the progression of the trauma informed agenda
In my experience, priests get little or no Pastoral support, including the challenge to be the best they can be, having chosen Priesthood. This is nothing new, but I have feeling we may have crossed the Rubicon on this one. Abuse is not confined to priests, however, but that is where our focus was for this Conference (2023).
In the group sessions I felt there was a real lack of understanding about grooming and how it works.
In view of Lady Rae's comments at the end of the day, it might be useful to have training in dealing with allegations - both the legal and pastoral areas to be considered.
It might be an idea to tie the conference in with the ISC, so that it either feeds in to their agenda/themes, or follows on from it in terms of any learning gained. Although I have answered Spring below in the timings section, it might also be an idea to tie it in with the end of the audit/self-evaluation framework (when confirmed) so that any emerging themes can be presented on.
It would be good to enhance our skills around Trauma informed listening
More on trauma informed practice please.



## Do you have any requests for future training packages or Conference themes?

### Some comments 3/3

Data
Perhaps a bit more could be done at parish level, from time to time, to ensure that the Safeguarding system is readily accessible to those who may have concerns which may need shared .
PSC training must be a priority
Risk assessment. More on theology of safeguarding
Something on understanding the mindset of abusers and how to be agents of change for them.
Support and training for those dealing with non recent abuse and also how to support people who have false allegations made against them.
The impact of safeguarding on the individual volunteer / PSC / Priest etc.
The bar has been set very high and it may be challenging to match in the future, but I shall happily attend whatever the theme(s), confident that it will have been planned with great deliberation and selection of appropriate presenters. The option of remote attendance is crucial, despite the obvious drawbacks, so that many more can avail themselves of the valuable core of the day without the restrictions of distance already mentioned.
The issue of Reconciliation disclosures came up on our group and in some others I think. It would be good to explore how as a church we deal with this. Also, following on from Epione's input, it would be good to explore how we support each other through and after we have been part of a disclosure.
The Theology and Spirituality of Safeguarding. Providing on line training packs for update.

## Is there anything of significance you would like to pass on to the SCSSA?

### Some comments 1/2

#### Data

Just to say thankyou for your dedication and hard work that you do for the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults. Be assured of our support in prayer ( from myself and my community ) IF WE HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ,NEED HELP OR INFORMATION -- WE KNOW WERE TO GO-- THANKS TO THE GUIDLINES PROVIDED BY YOUR GOOD SELVES THE PROCCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED ETC. THANKYOU AND GOD BLESS EACH ONE ABUNDENTLY .

A big thank you for all that has been achieved in a short period of time and for the professionalism that can often be missing in Church events.

A big thanks for the work you do- it's not an easy gig and as was highlighted in this conference seeking to get folks to engage in an environment of "a necessary evil " is challenging. Please continue working with this challenge; we need the shift away from the above to being a church community that doesn't seek to minimize or obfuscate or see protecting institutional reputation as a default

As a PSC, I think that handling a disclosure is a very difficult task that requires a lot of skill and sensitivity. I have never had to handle a disclosure and I am worried that this lack of experience would lead to me making mistakes. I think that PSCs should be recruited from people who have relative experience from their careers e.g. social workers, human resource experts etc

As parishes amalgamate it is of paramount importance that the safeguarding processes are kept effective and up to date. Clarity and cohesion must always operate.

Co-ordinator training could be refreshed a bit more often on a smaller, local level - say nine or ten parishes at a time.

Conference venue was great, I appreciate there were some difficulties in group work due to amount if people in one area, however overall venue was easy to access by transport and everything ran to time and extremely well. Thankyou

Difficult to provide appropriate input to such a wide range of participants; perhaps have two conferences i.e. one for parishes and volunteers and a separate one for people in positions of responsibility.

Encouraging to witness as Br Brendan said the Synodal Church in action, - the importance of the representation of the Bishops at this and futureConferences

Get Alex O'Donnell back, the best speaker you have had since the conferences began in my opinion. Clear, concise, professional and so down to earth.

I am not sure whether this is of significance but I think the opportunity to meet with people involved in Safeguarding in a variety of roles and to hear about the work that is being undertaken to ensure the safety of people who are vulnerable: children, people with disabilities, the elderly in the context of the Catholic Church is really important.

## Is there anything of significance you would like to pass on to the SCSSA?

### Some comments 2/2

#### Data

I would like to commend all those who strive to develop Safeguarding in the Catholic Church in Scotland. So much goes on behind the scenes and the commitment of all involved is to be applauded.

Keep going! You will meet resistance I'm sure but you are doing excellent work.

Might be an idea to provide an avenue for delegates to use if they have something to bring up for discussion but don't want to do so in the wider forum ?

Need for training and support in preparation of young men for priesthood. Perhaps life experience of a few years before entering a seminary

Thank you for what the SCSSA has achieved in a relatively short time, helping to develop an academic, professional entity with which I am proud to be associated.

Thank you for your work. All aspects were well planned and well facilitated.

Thank you for your work to help make our Churches and society safer for the vulnerable.

The apparent inability to adopt a standard risk assessment model nationally is a serious risk. The need for a professional support/supervision mechanism for DSA's is evident.

The conference was informative and interesting so, more of the same please.

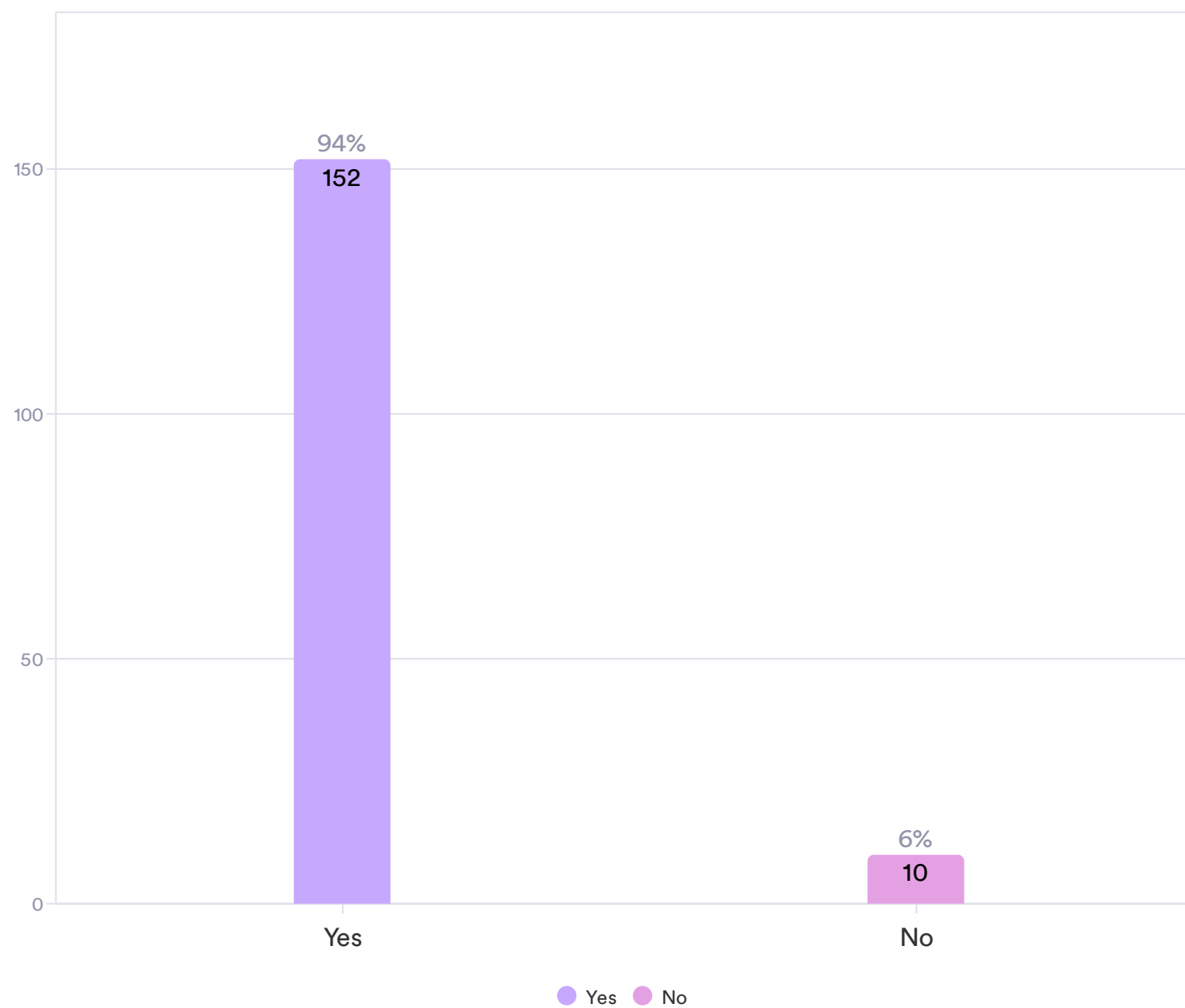
The role of PSC seems like a lot to ask of volunteers.

There is an inconsistent practice of information sharing between the criminal justice/statutory authorities and Dioceses across Scotland, particularly, with regard to the right of worship in Church by offenders released back to the local communities, which require urgent attention.

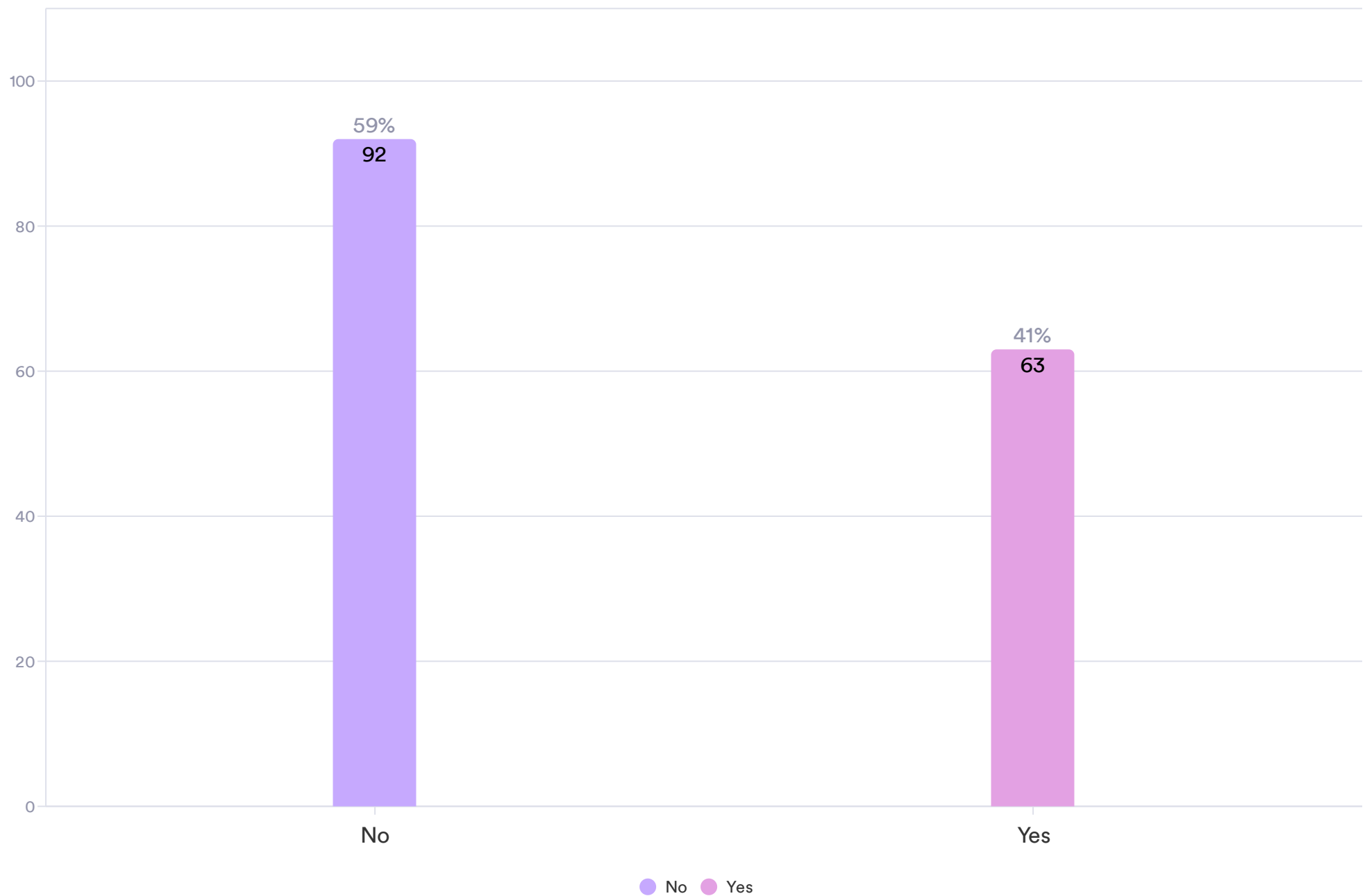
There may well be good reasons for it, but I think the lack of Parish Priest attendance was quite stark.

When the caution at the end of the conference was made about language that was used and not apologising at that stage to the victim I think it should have been made very clear about when and how it is appropriate to apologise to victims and acknowledge that it is important. That one comment might be very important but could have been done in such a way as to not make people terrified of saying the wrong things and of empathising with the victims. Victims I think sense when someone is scared and shut down and say nothing.

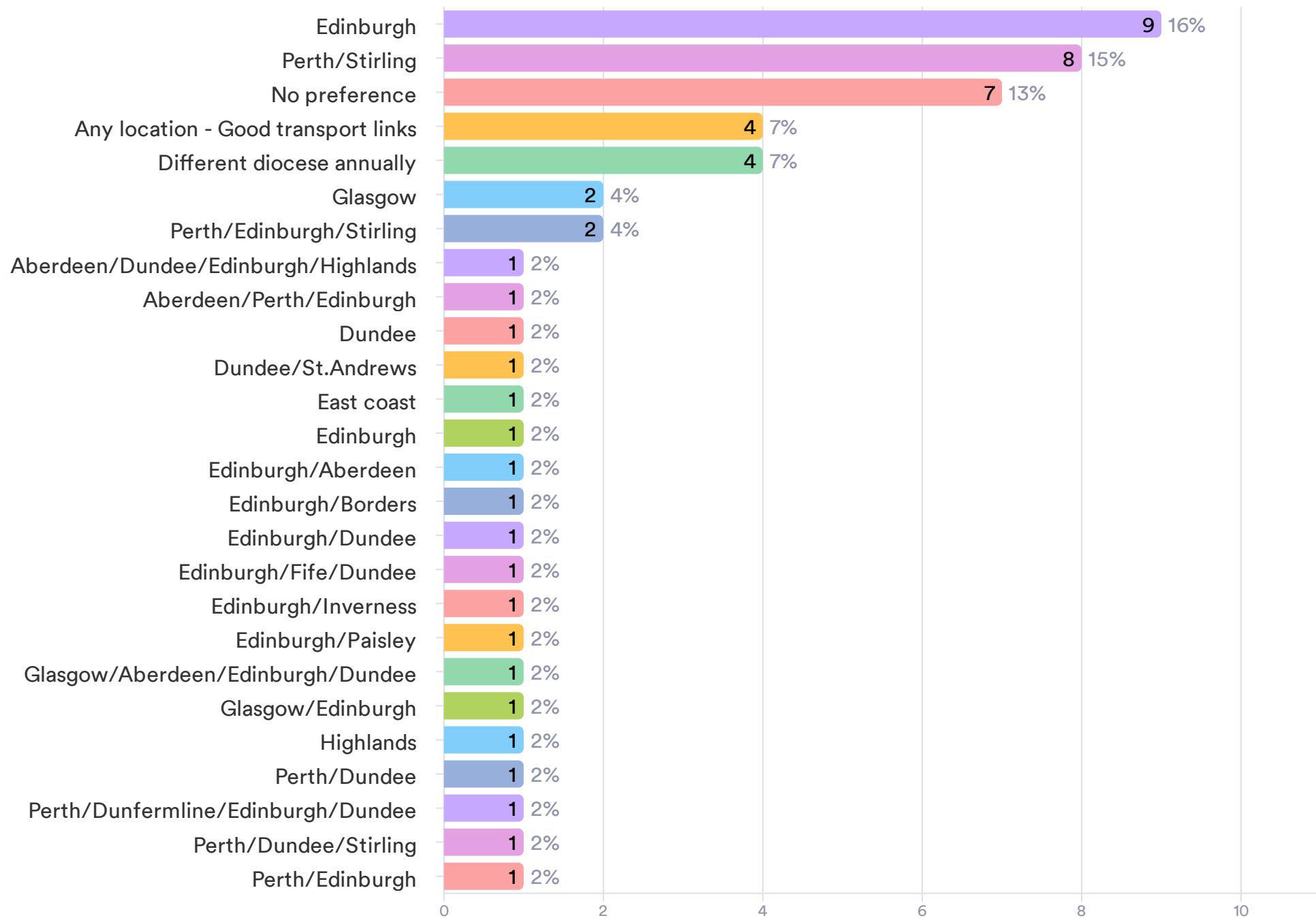
## Are you satisfied with the annual conference being held on the weekend?



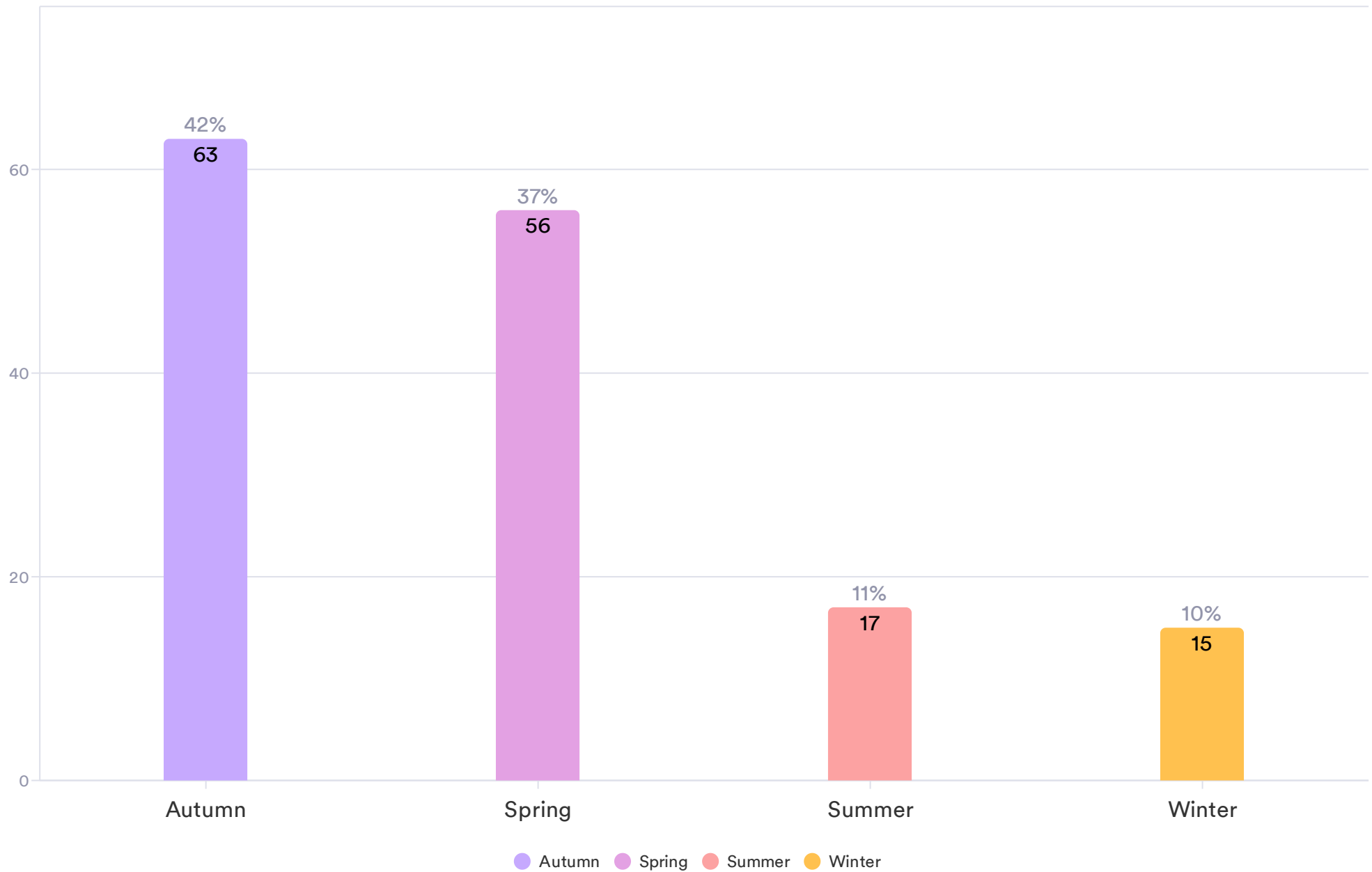
## Would you prefer the Conference to alternate locations around the country?



If you have answered "yes" above, please provide some preferred locations.



## Do you feel the Conference would be better held in:



**Thank You!**