



Membership Feedback Responses 2024 - Report and Recommendations

October 2024

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Introduction

Summary

- Members highly value the College's provision of conferences, webinars, events, and its CPD eLearning.
- All College functions are valued, but members particularly value education and training, and our role in promoting standards and quality improvement in services (the work of CCQI and NCCMH).
- Those who held roles in the College would recommend doing so to colleagues and feel supported in undertaking the role.
- Members generally don't understand how decisions are made in the College or who by.
- Most (70%) feel they have little to no influence the College on what is important to them.

Background

The membership feedback opportunity was organised in response to a change in leadership of the College and a variety of comments received formally and informally from members, although it had previously been decided not to include funds for a membership survey in the 2024 budget. In February 2024 a working group was formed to undertake a membership engagement project, for which a feedback mechanism was necessary.

With no budget allocated, the feedback process was managed in house and with limited resources. As such, these results give an insight of how membership feel towards the College but do not offer the rigour of a professionally managed survey.

The feedback results will help develop an action plan and recommendations to improve membership engagement and experience, as well as other targeted pieces of work such as improving the transparency of decision making and clarifying College roles.

Methodology

The 2024 membership feedback process was created to invite members to give feedback on their experience as an RCPsych member, and to understand the barriers to how they engage with the College. Primarily, we wanted to understand how we could improve the way we engage with and support our global membership of over 21,000 members.

It combined questions on membership demographics, understanding members preferred communication styles, their existing involvement with the College, understanding of how decisions are made in the organisation, and a selection of free text responses give open feedback.

The feedback request was circulated online, via all member emails, newsletters, and emails from devolved nation chairs to eligible members (PMPT, specialist associates, international associates,

members and fellows). It was open for six weeks, from 17 June 2024 to 26 July 2024 and included 26 questions, taking approximately six minutes to complete.

Response rate

Out of 21,273 eligible members, 2,231 responded, giving a total response rate of 10.5%.

Broken down between the four UK nations and international membership achieved the following response rate:

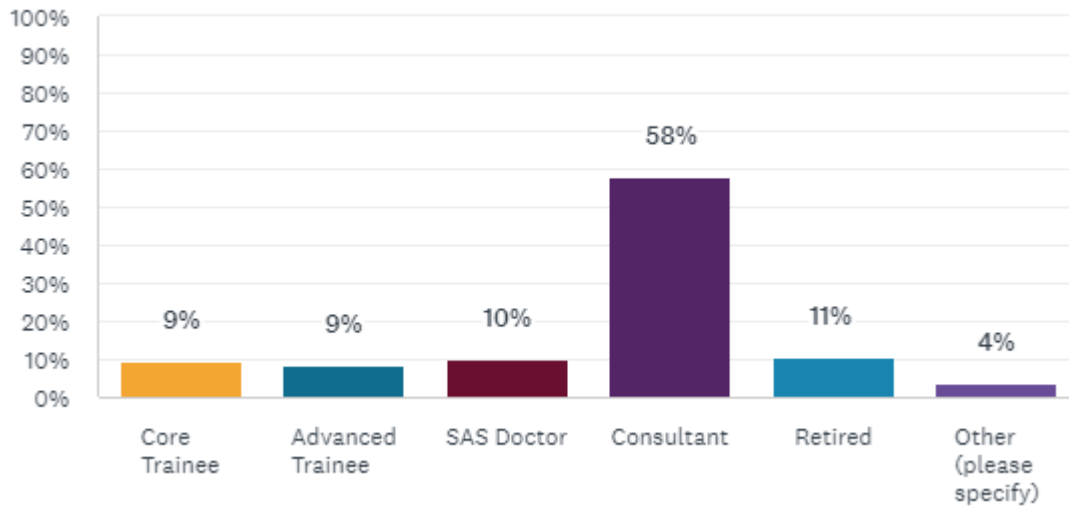
- Northern Ireland – 444 members – 71 responses received - response rate of 16.0%
- Scotland – 1464 members – 183 responses received - response rate of 12.5%
- Wales – 625 members - 76 responses received - response rate of 12.2%
- England – 14,546 members – 1,654 responses received – response rate of 11.4%
- International – 3957 members – 247 responses received - response rate of 6.2%

Results

Demographics

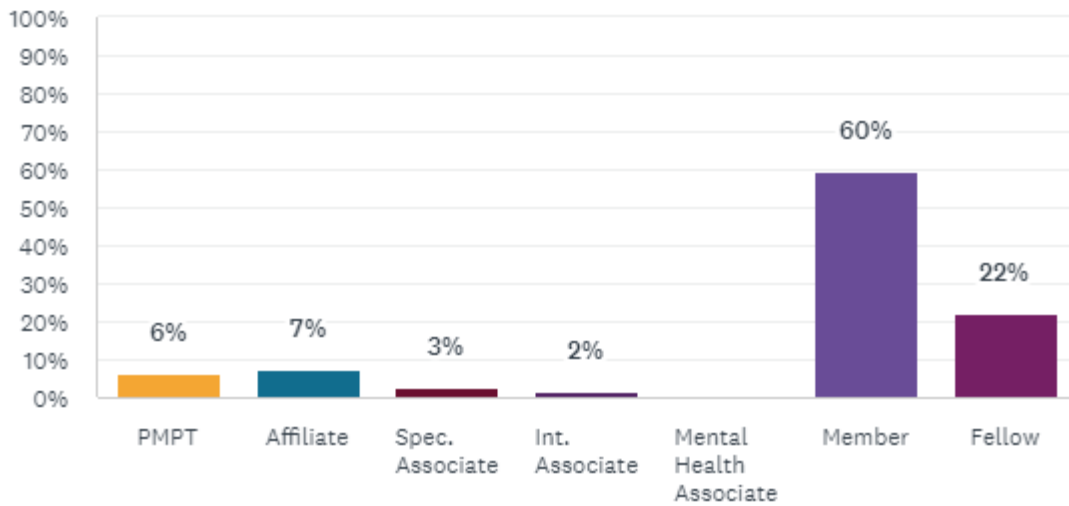
1. What is your career grade?

Answered: 2,231



2. What is your College membership grade?

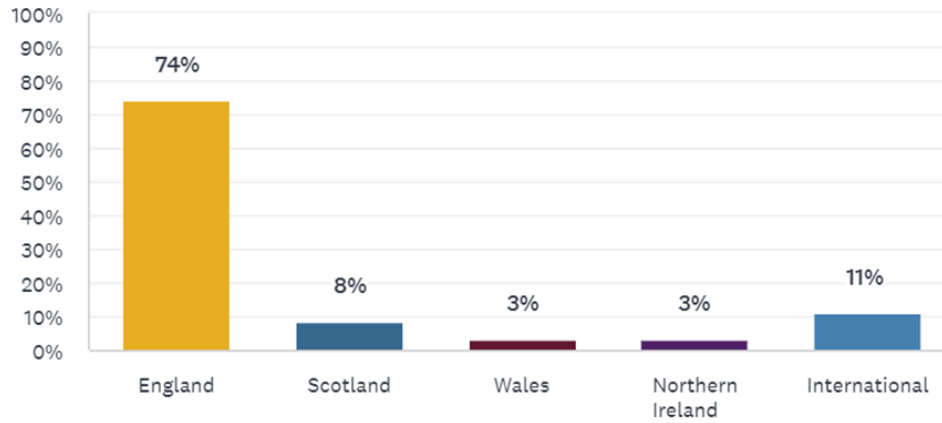
Answered: 2,231



Location of membership

3. Where are you based?

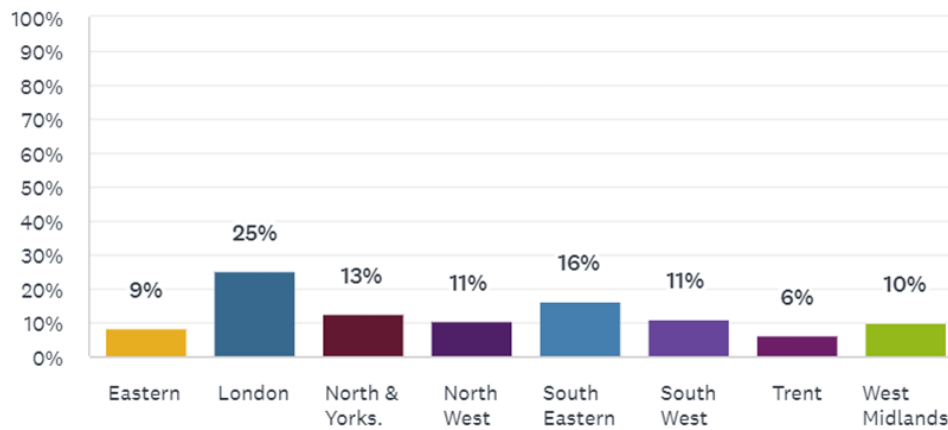
Answered: 2,231



4. Which English Division are you a part of?

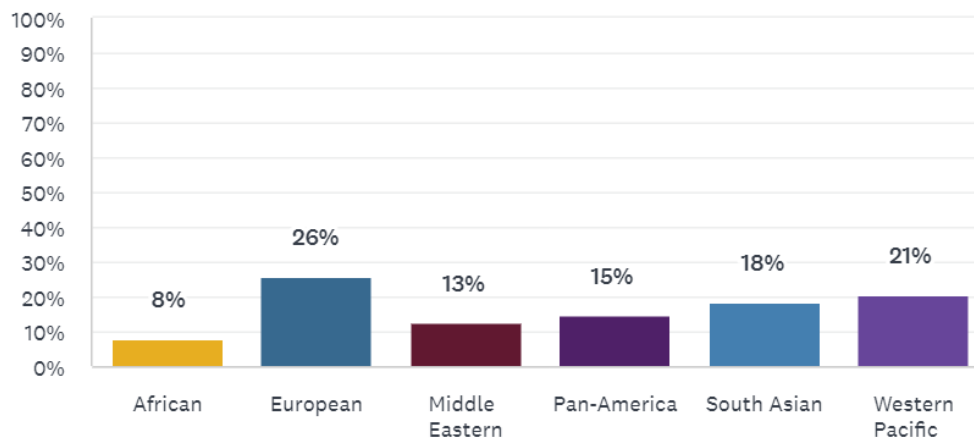
Answered: 1,646

Skipped: 585

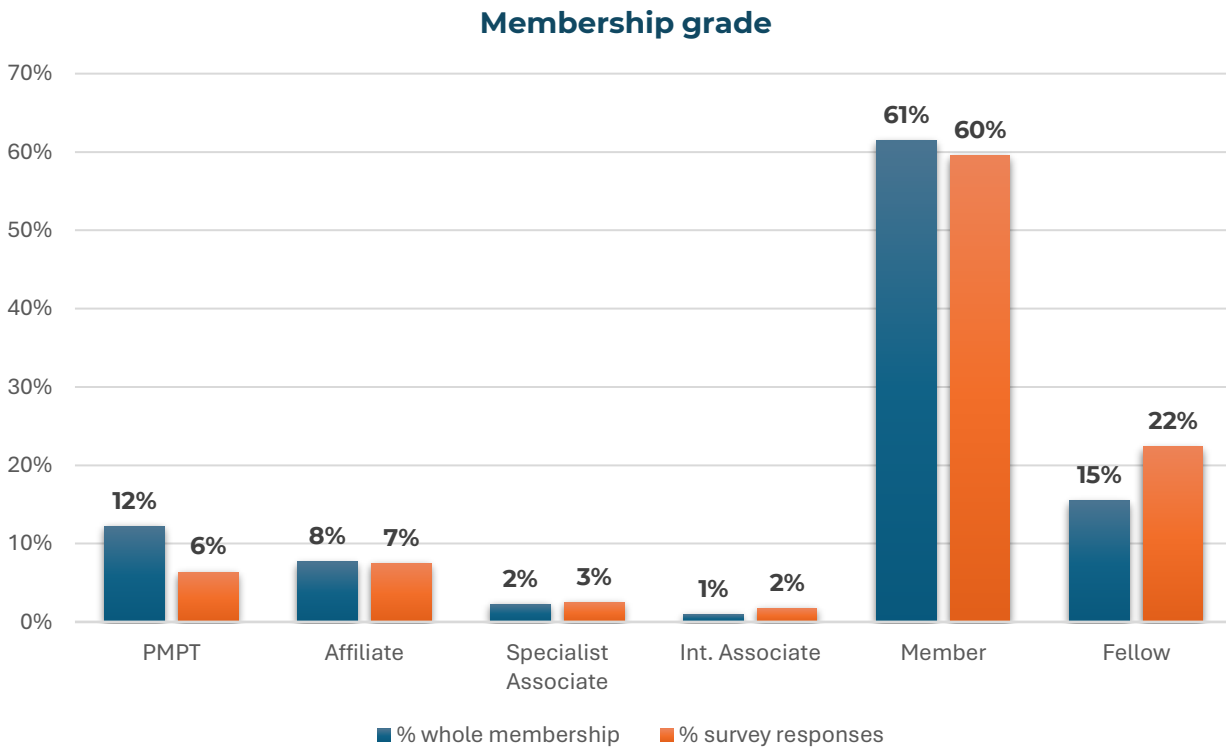
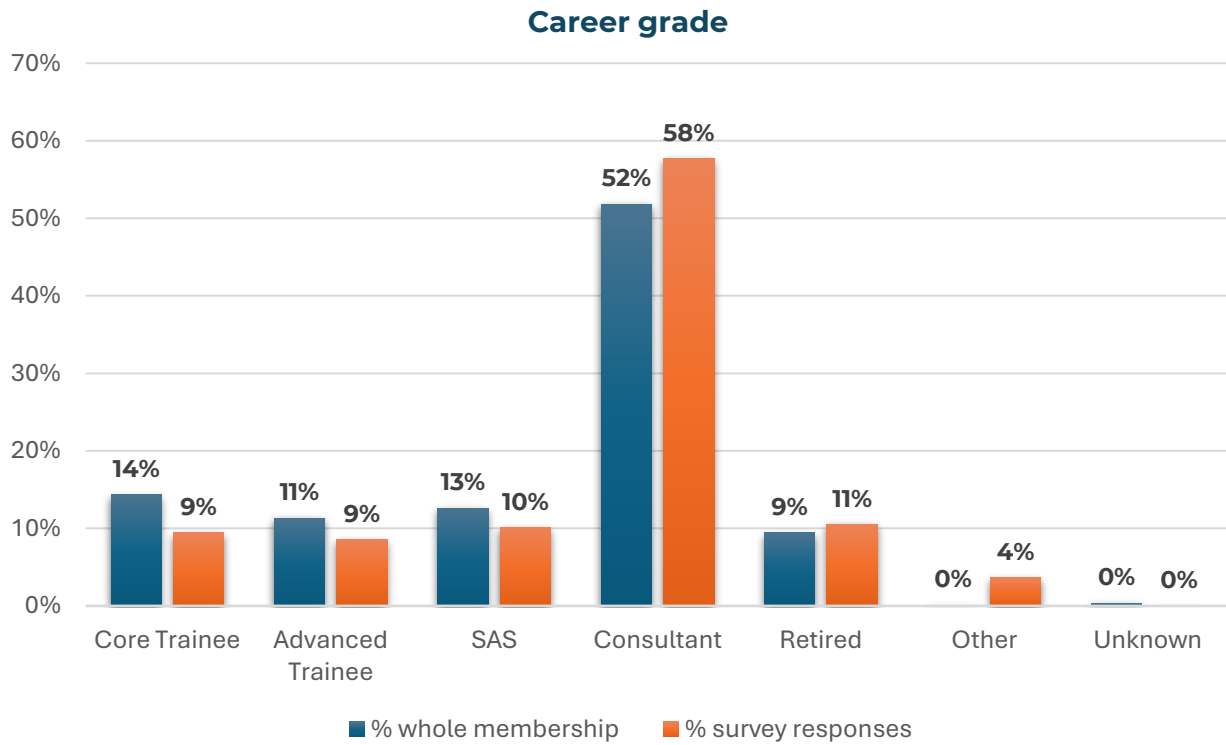


5. Which International Division are you a part of?

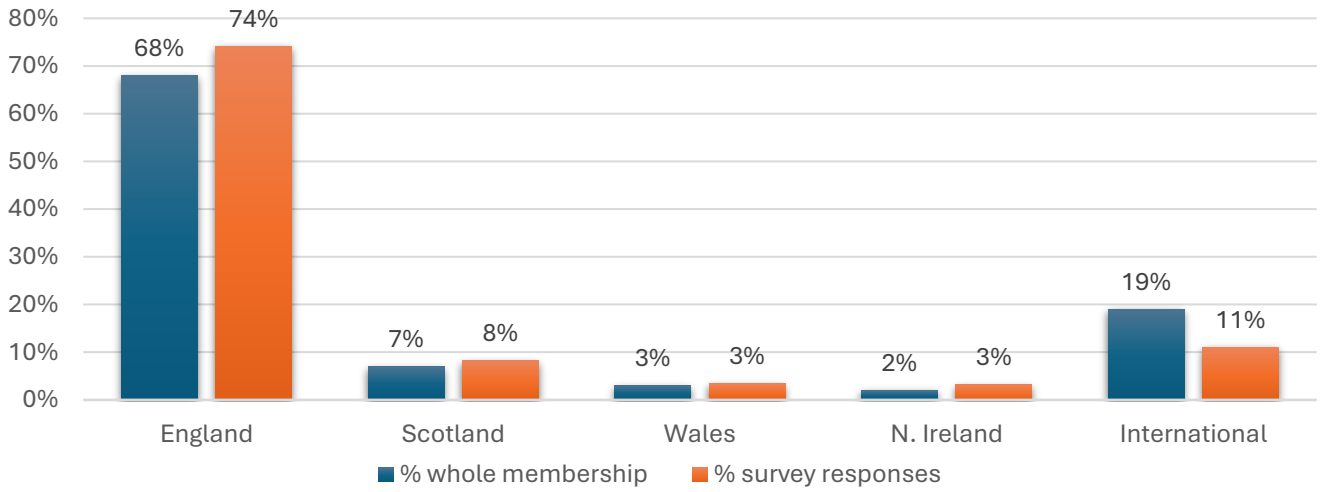
Answered: 246 Skipped: 1,985



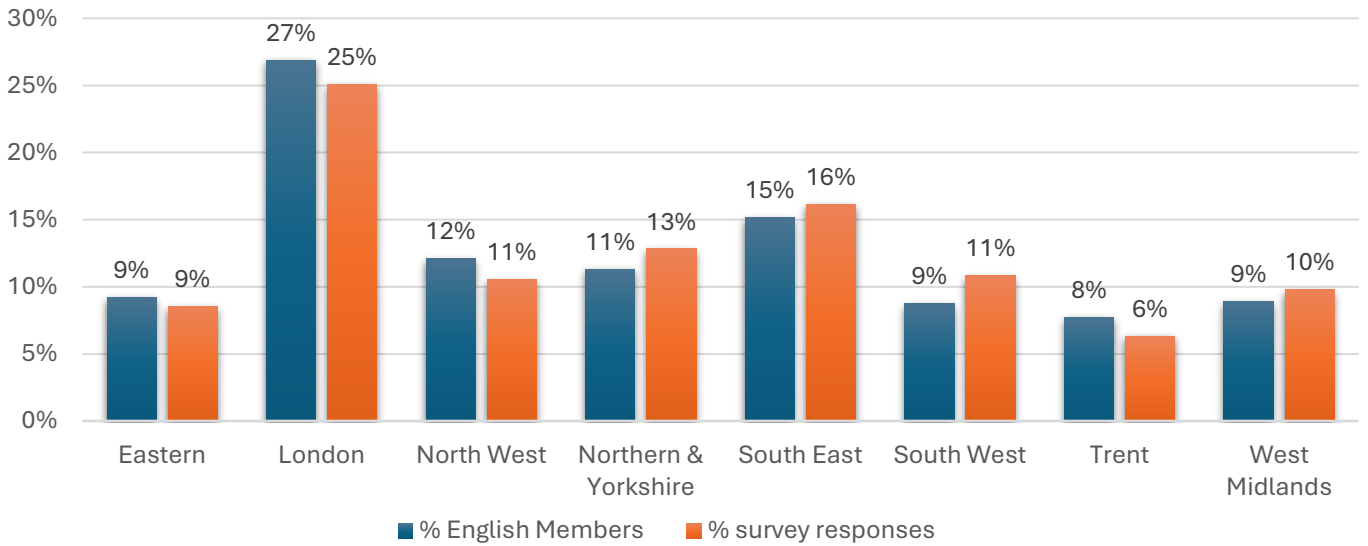
Comparison with wider membership data



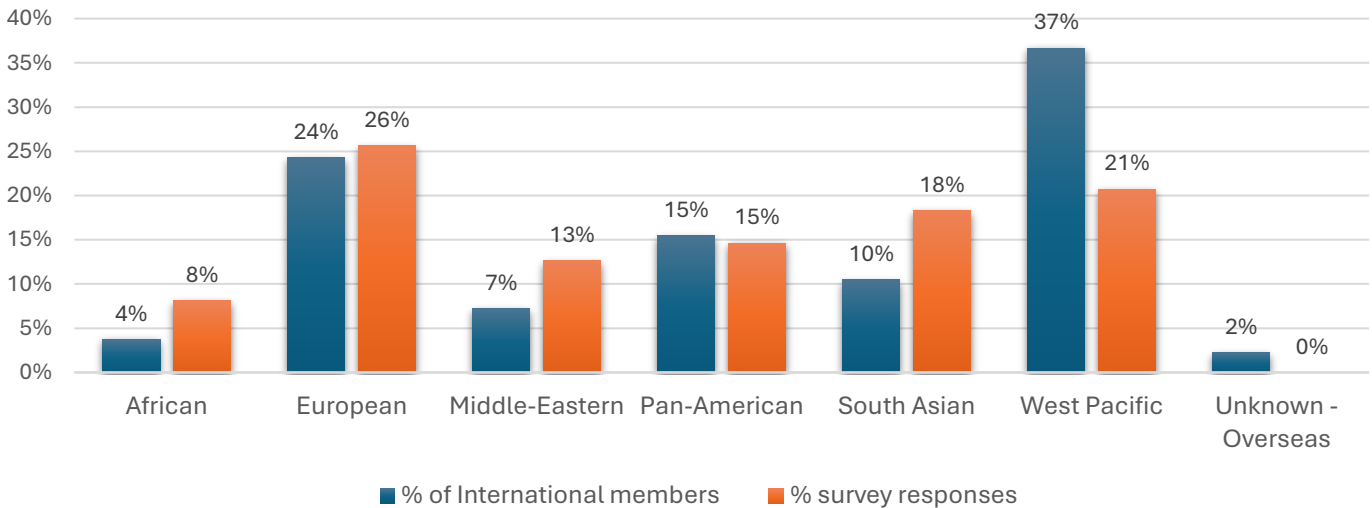
Location - General



Location - English divisions



Location - International divisions



Comparison with wider membership data

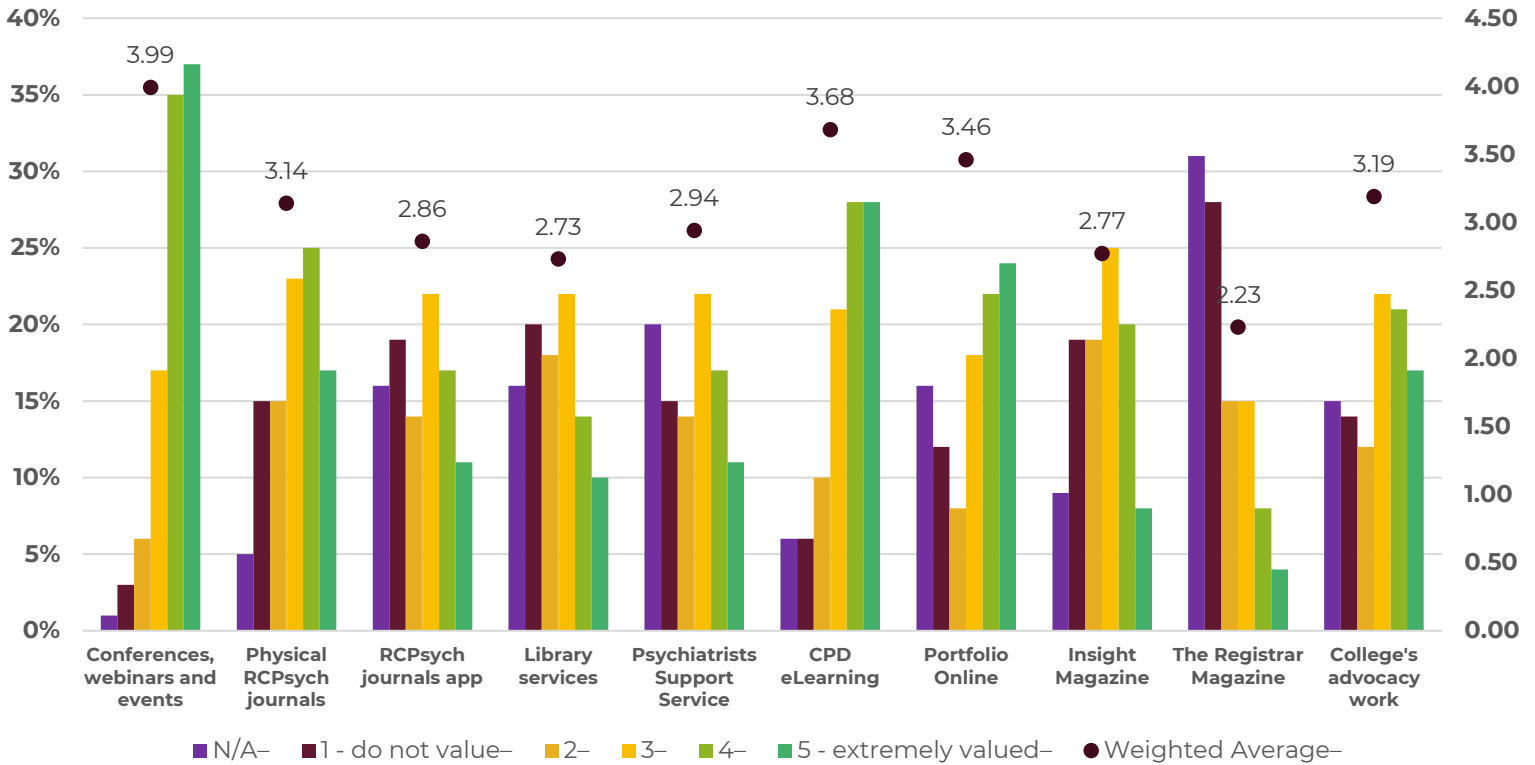
Membership Benefits

6. How much do you value the following membership benefits?

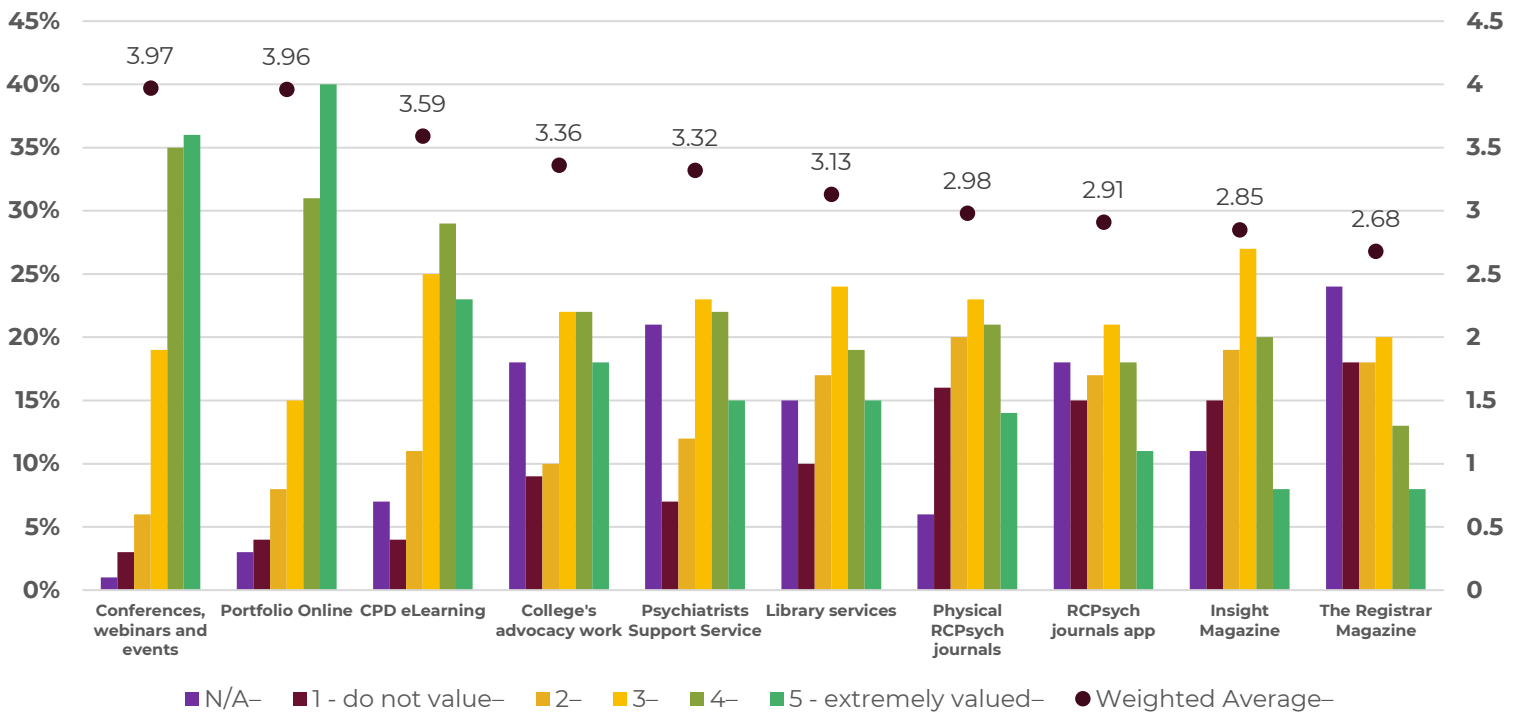
Answered: 2,167

Skipped: 64

All responses



Filtered for Trainee responses (Taken from Q1 – Responses of Core Trainee / Advanced Trainee)

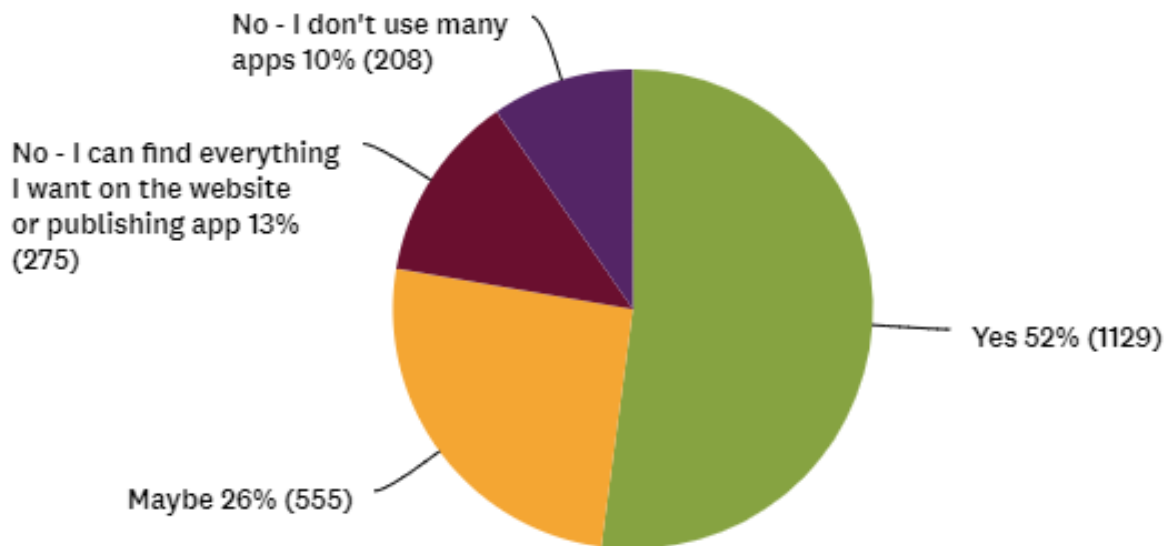


Membership App

7. The College is considering developing a new mobile membership app, that would allow you to access College services from your phone. Would this be something you're interested in?

Answered: 2,167

Skipped: 64



8. For those who answered, 'Yes' or 'Maybe', these are the features they would want to see.

Answered: 1,673

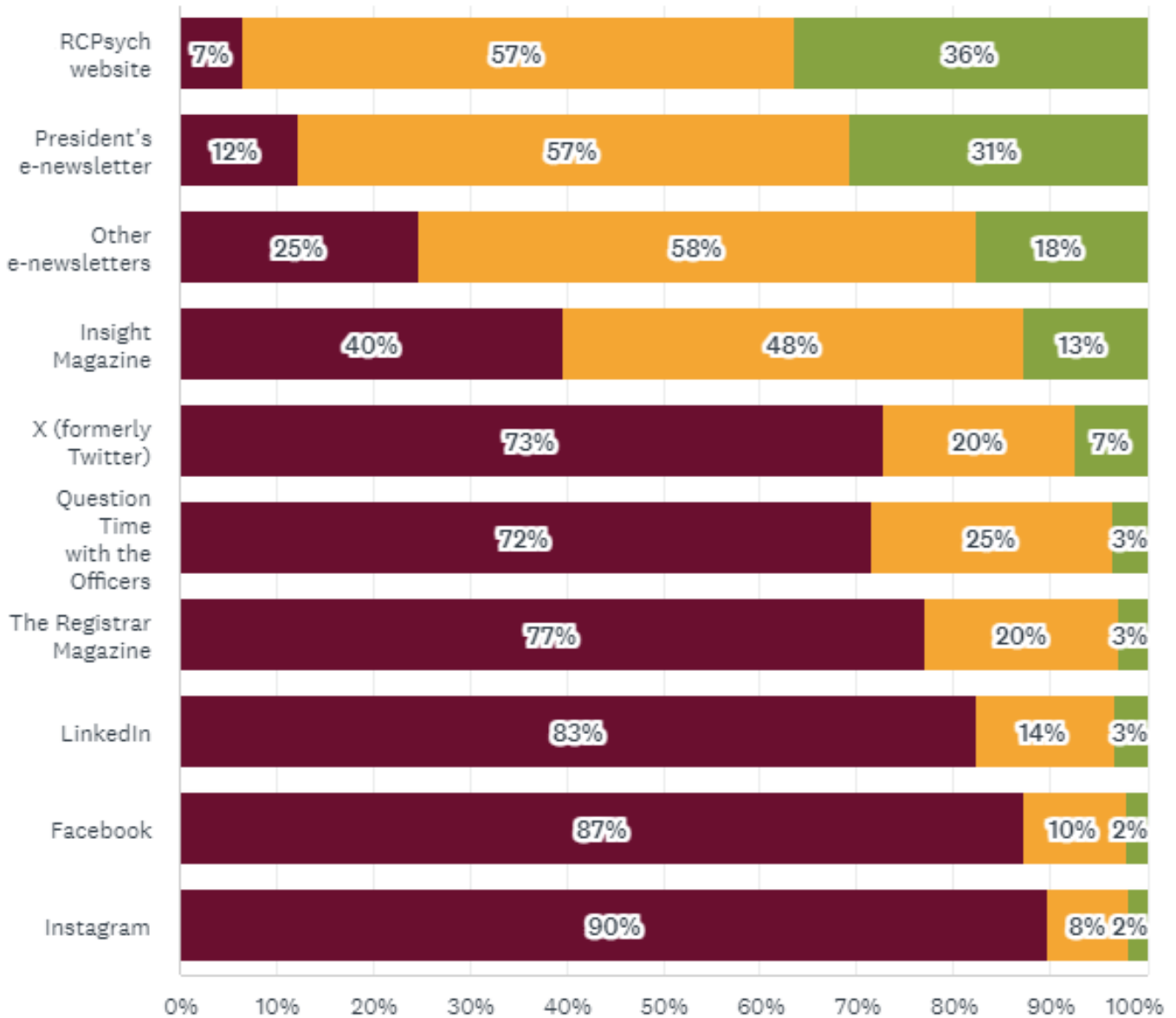
Skipped: 558

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Booking events or courses	87% 1,455
Access to eLearning content	84% 1,400
View or update my CPD	80% 1,343
Access to the College's library digitally	77% 1,296
Access to event resources e.g. agendas or slides	67% 1,128
Keep up to date with College news	62% 1,031
Access to a digital membership card	55% 916
Ability to share leaflets and resources with patients (via QR code)	53% 895
Networking option with other members	46% 762
Membership feedback feature	38% 630
Other (please specify)	Responses 8% 129
Total Respondents: 1,673	

Staying in touch

9. How often do you use the following to stay in touch with what's happening at the College?

Answered: 2,144 Skipped: 87



Key:

Never

Occasionally

Often

10. Which is your preferred method of staying in touch with the College?

Answered: 2,106

Skipped: 125

ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES
▼ RCPsych website		52% 1,095
▼ President's e-newsletter		21% 440
▼ Other e-newsletter		11% 224
▼ Other (please specify)	Responses	6% 121
▼ Insight Magazine		4% 91
▼ X (formerly Twitter)		3% 58
▼ Question Time with the Officers		2% 32
▼ LinkedIn		1% 20
▼ Instagram		1% 11
▼ Facebook		0% 10
▼ The Registrar Magazine		0% 4
TOTAL		2,106

11. Which are your preferred method of communication to feedback your opinion / views to the College?

Answered: 2,136

Skipped: 95

ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES
▼ Website form		65% 1,395
▼ Direct email to staff		38% 807
▼ Direct email to officers		33% 696
▼ Telephone call		13% 267
▼ Question Time with the Officers		6% 137
▼ Other (please specify)	Responses	6% 132
▼ X (formerly Twitter)		4% 76
▼ LinkedIn		1% 26
▼ Instagram		1% 19
▼ Facebook		1% 16
Total Respondents: 2,136		

College Roles

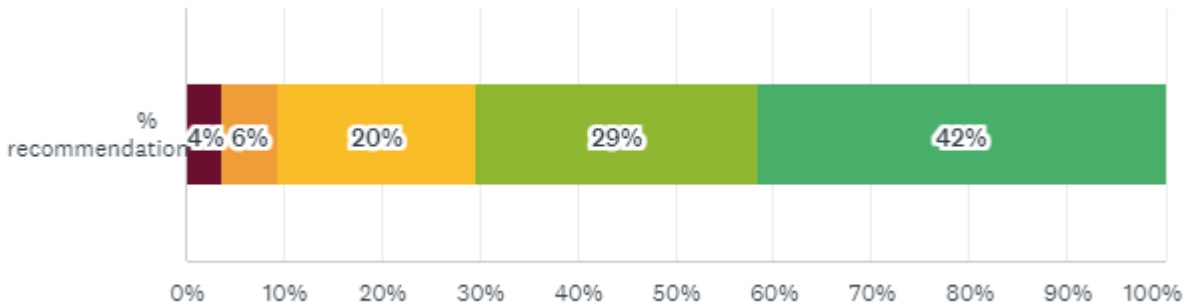
12. Do you currently hold, or have previously held, an elected, appointed or co-opted College role?

Answered: 2,136 Skipped: 95

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	29%	622
No	71%	1,514
TOTAL		2,136

13. Would you recommend applying to a College role to a colleague?

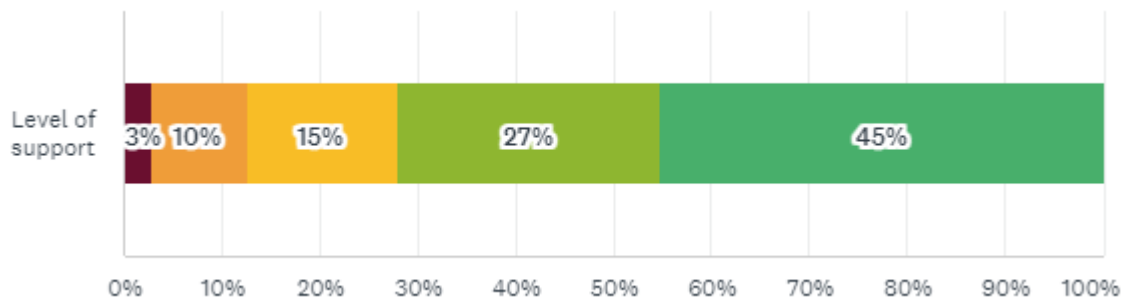
Answered: 621 Skipped: 1,610



	1 - WOULD NOT RECOMMEND	2	3	4	5 - WOULD DEFINITELY RECOMMEND	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
% recommendation	4%	6%	20%	29%	42%	621	3.99
	23	36	125	179	258		

14. How well were / are you supported by the College team in your College role (whether elected, appointed, or co-opted)?

Answered: 621 Skipped: 1,610

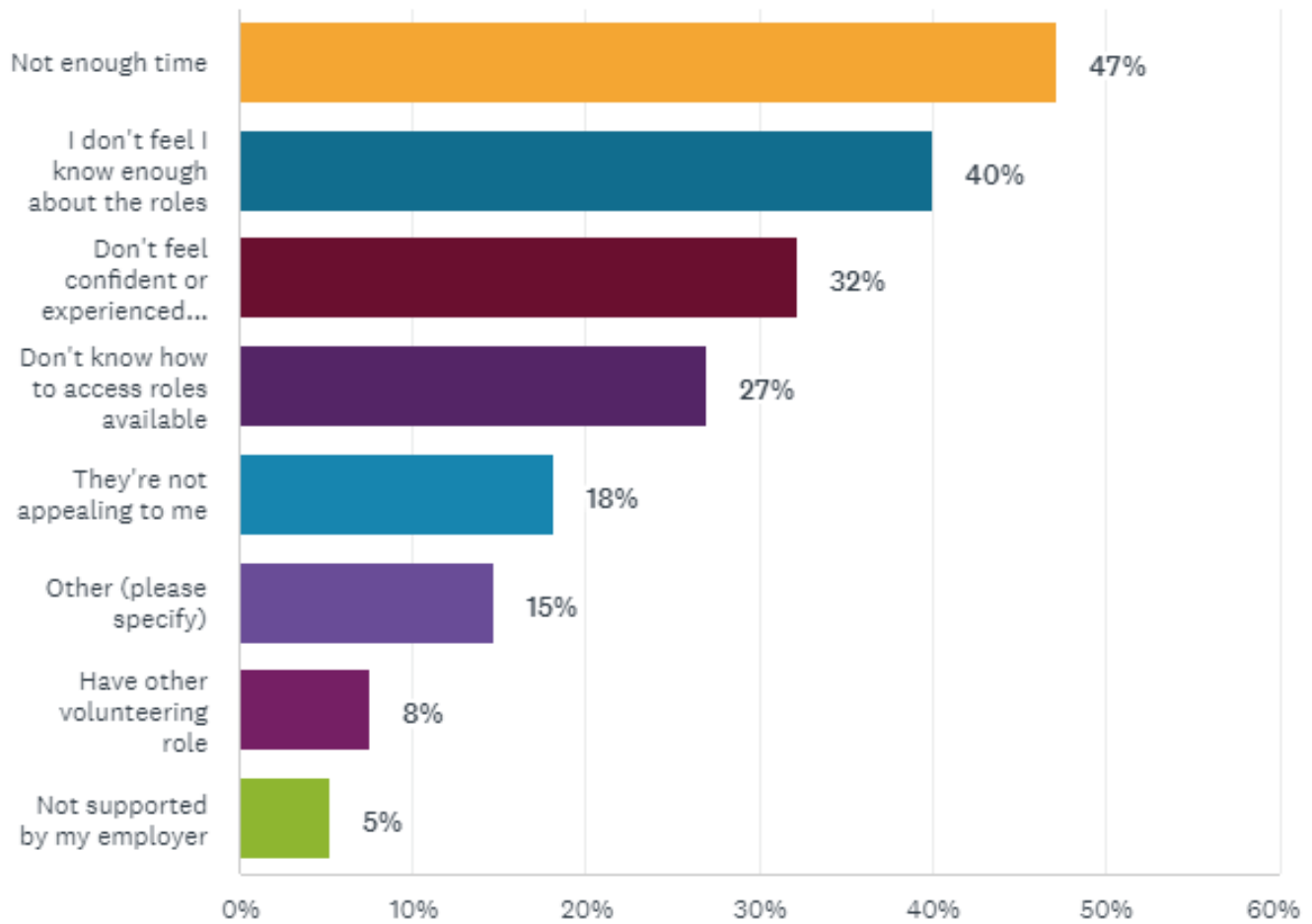


	NOT SUPPORTED AT ALL	NOT PARTICULARLY SUPPORTED	SOMEWHAT SUPPORTED	SUPPORTED	VERY WELL SUPPORTED	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Level of support	3%	10%	15%	27%	45%	609	4.02
	18	59	93	164	275		

15. If you haven't had a role within the College, why? Select all that are applicable.

Answered: 1,516

Skipped: 715



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
▼ Not enough time	47% 715
▼ I don't feel I know enough about the roles	40% 608
▼ Don't feel confident or experienced enough	32% 489
▼ Don't know how to access roles available	27% 409
▼ They're not appealing to me	18% 275
▼ Other (please specify)	Responses 15% 224
▼ Have other volunteering role	8% 114
▼ Not supported by my employer	5% 80
Total Respondents: 1,516	

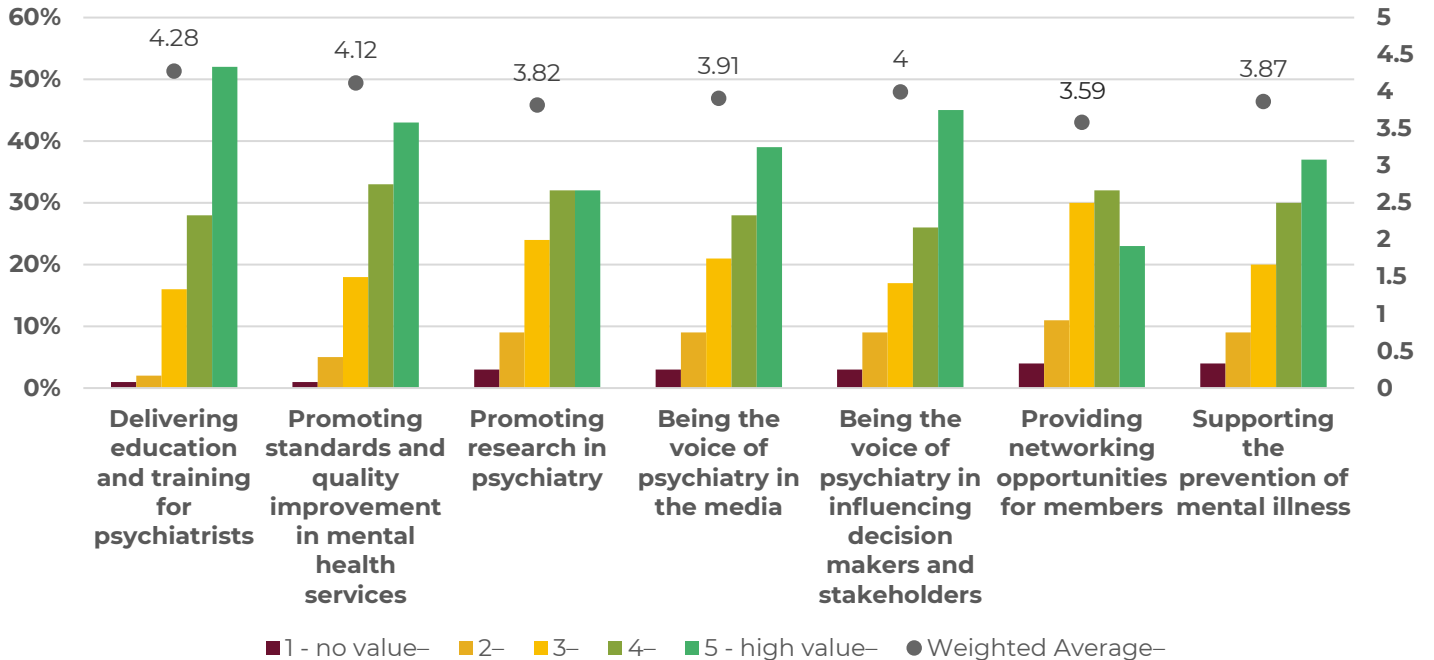
College Functions

16. Please rate the following College functions based on how much you value each area as part of your membership.

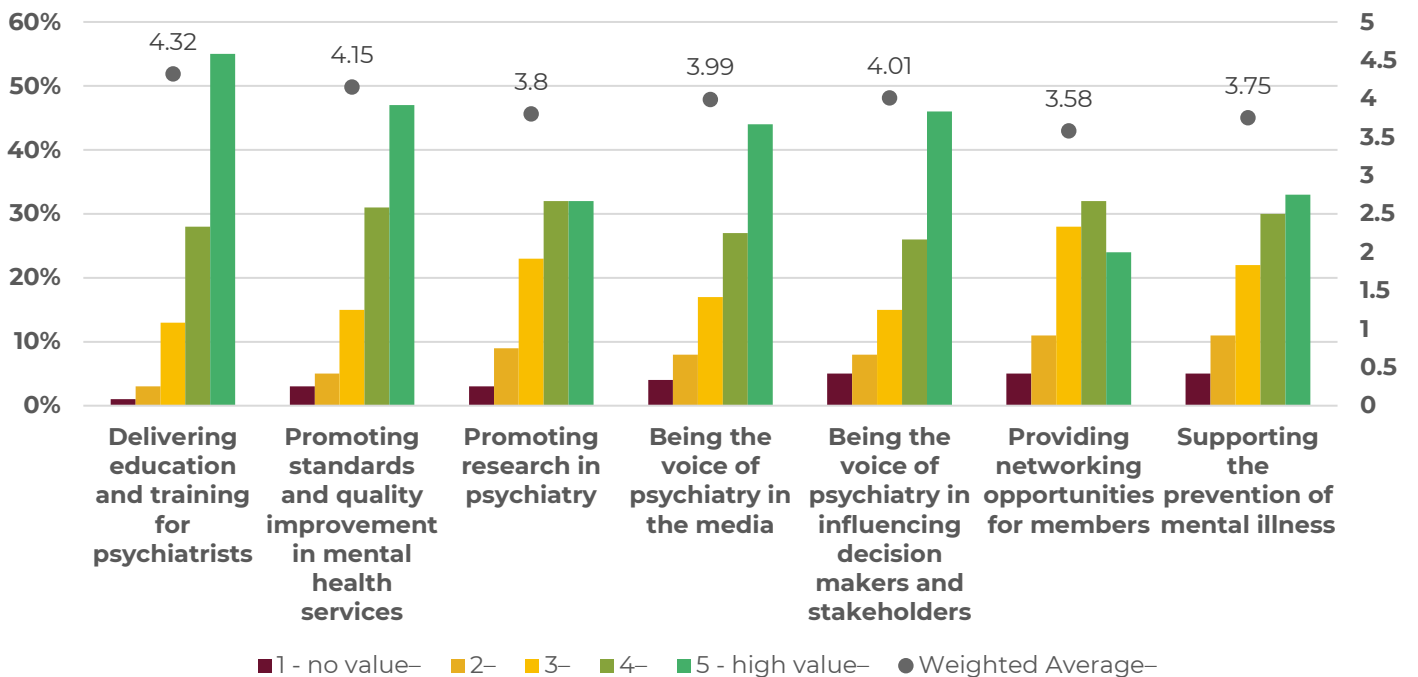
Answered: 2,111

Skipped: 120

All responses



Filtered for Trainee responses (Taken from Q1 – Responses of Core Trainee / Advanced Trainee)



17. Which other College functions are important to you?

Answered: 531 Skipped: 1700

The free text responses were collated and coded according to comment themes. Of the 531 responses, there were 649 different comments coded. More information about the coding and the framework used can be found in Appendix 1 – Free Text Methodology. The top 3 themes were:

1. Delivering conferences and CPD for psychiatrists – (112 comments)

17% of responses highlighted conferences to connect with Colleagues and CPD as a core function of the Colleges work to its members.

“I find CPD modules very useful.”

“Faculty conferences are extremely important to me - they are a chance to come together with colleagues and get important updates on the latest research for those of us who aren't usually in research circles / networks.”

2. Delivering education and training for psychiatrists – (99 comments)

15% of responses mentioned that delivering education and training for psychiatrists as a key function, with the MRCPsych, training curricula, and maintaining standards in psychiatry recurring comments.

“Education & up-dating primarily.”

“The in-house conferences are good and so are those meetings with other colleges & disciplines.”

3. Promoting professional standards for psychiatrists and supporting and advocating for them throughout their careers – (92 comments)

14% of responses talked about the support received throughout members careers and the importance of professional standards and the center focus of the College as a membership organisation.

“Advocacy for and representation of members first and foremost.”

“Guidance on career development: for pursuing other interests like medical education, research, leadership opportunities and endorsements/accreditations for additional skills like sub-specialties (e.g. Dual diagnosis in CAMHS) or psychotherapies.”

4. Other comments and themes

Many comments also drew on the importance of Faculties and Special Interest Groups (SIGs) as core functions important to them, alongside the desire of the College being their professional home.

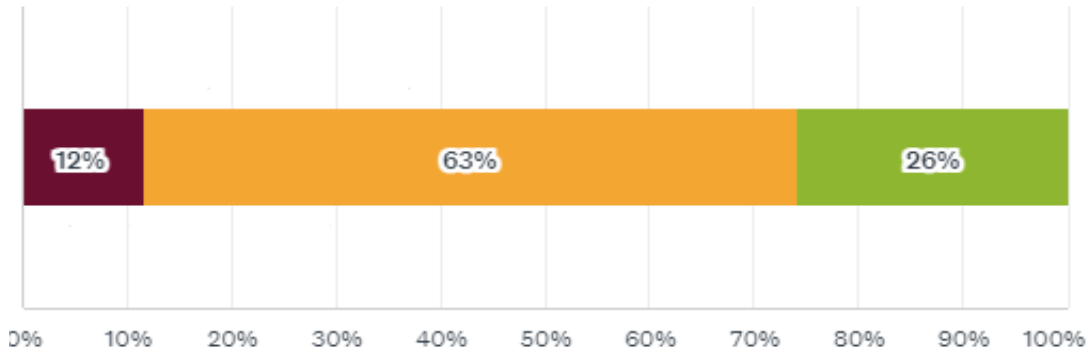
“Synergising with colleagues on work matters. Having a physical home to go to as a psychiatrist.”

“Communication with like minded professional colleagues. Debate about sometimes contentious issues and being 'critical friends' to each other. A source of support and a sounding board for difficult decisions and potential misinformation”

Decision making

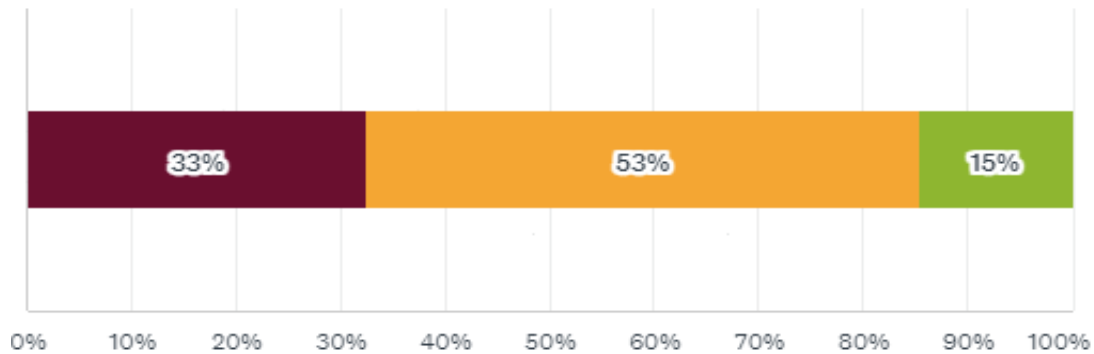
18. Do you feel informed about the work the College does?

Answered: 2,106 Skipped: 125



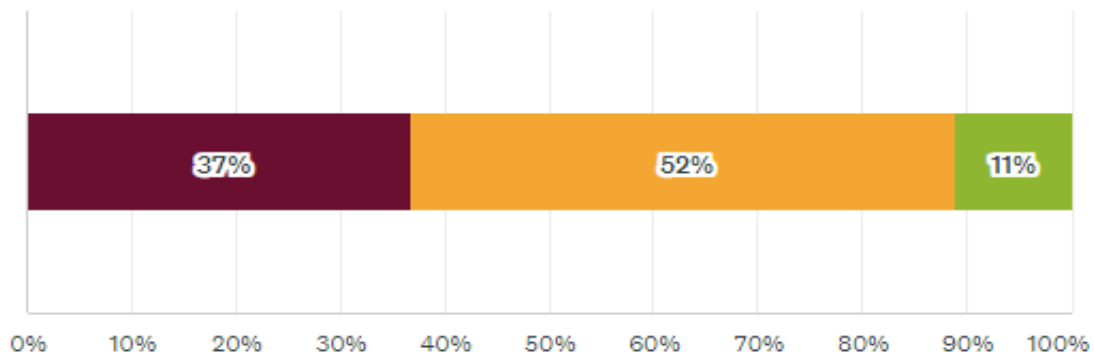
19. Do you understand the way that the College is governed?

Answered: 2,106 Skipped: 125

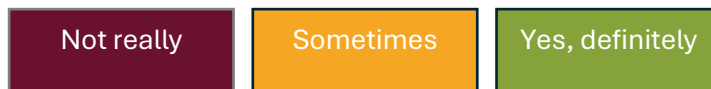


20. Do you understand how decisions are made at the College?

Answered: 2,106 Skipped: 125

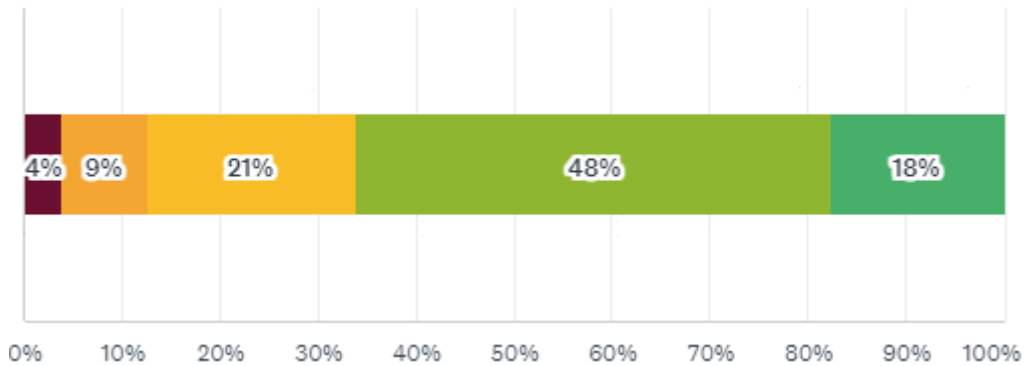


Key:



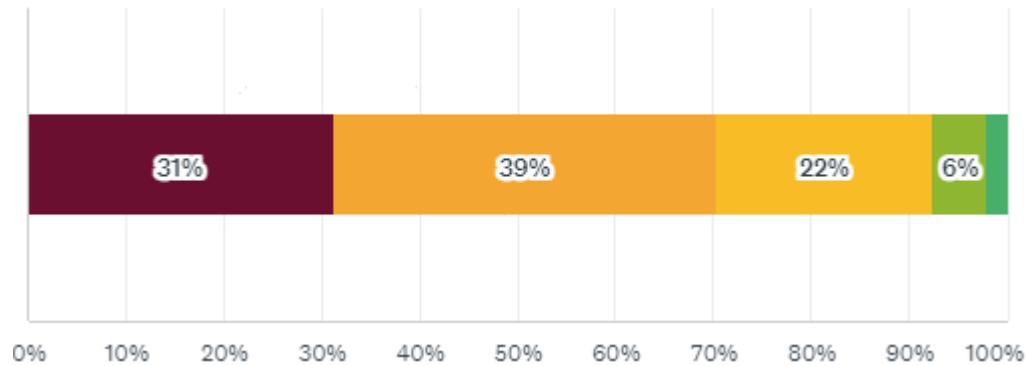
21. Do you agree with the following statement, 'The College represents and advocates for the profession and its members'?

Answered: 2,106 Skipped: 125



22. Do you feel you are able to influence the College's decisions on topics that are important to you?

Answered: 2,106 Skipped: 125



Improving membership engagement and support

23. In what way could the College improve the way it engages with and supports its members?

Answered: 853

Skipped: 1,378

Of the 853 responses to the open question, there were 953 comments coded across 8 main themes. More detail around the coding framework and methodology can be found in Appendix 1 – Free Text Methodology. The top 4 commented areas were:

1. **Feedback Mechanisms (209 comments)**

22% of all comments highlighted a need for more ways to feedback into the work the College does, whether that is through more frequent surveys of the membership (109 comments), input into the different levels of decision making (64 comments), or to have a clearer understanding of who can represent members views to decision making bodies such as Committees or the Council of the College (36 comments).

“Regular requests for feedback, perhaps about specific issues. Making sure that questions asked always have a free text box to explain / extend answers given. Increased use of online webinars allowing learning / discussion of important issues”

“More online surveys and seek more diverse opinions from quieter members”

“College could actually reach out to its members on important decision-making processes, or even at the stage of gathering information. Delphi panels could be utilised for some of these. It is best to kept relevant to the topic/population discussed as per the decision rather than using the same experts for everything.”

“Engage directly with members before taking positions on controversial topics. Elected representatives often represent their own views rather than reflecting a consensus of members' views. Where there is no consensus college officers should refrain from comment.”

2. **Recognition and Support (138 comments)**

15% of comments outlined the desire for the College to understand and further support members with the challenges they face (31 comments) and the wider implications of decisions made by governments and health bodies (28 comments), either through working directly with employers (38 comments) or decision makers.

“Outreach to trusts and talks with members in their place of work”

“Be more supportive when members get in touch about service delivery where they work. Advocate more strongly about compositions of a proper mental health team. Hold the health authorities to account on what a proper service should be like.”

“Genuinely engaging with political issues which directly affect the mental health of members, patients and families - eg: standing up against genocide, structural violence, austerity, the climate crisis.”

3. Communication (127 comments)

The third largest collection of comments were around improving or adjusting the way we communicate to members with 14% of comments in this area. Some areas mentioned included the potential improvements should a membership app be developed (38 comments), the wider communication with stakeholders and the media (16 comments), and individual communication to members over emails (73 comments).

“Having an active app may be useful”

“It should be a lot stronger voice in the public arena, challenging the situation and reason for mass exodus of psychiatrists, burnout and general disempowerment of the profession.”

“Its just important to improve the level of communication with member. Making the member more aware of the function of the college and how decisions are made.”

“I think the current President's e-mail updates are very useful. I think the effects of psychiatric practice & looking after mentally ill patients on psychiatrists are being given more consideration and that is good; it's a stressful occupation.”

“I get lots of emails. so many that I have started ignoring. maybe a clear pathway on website?”

4. Personalisation – tailoring experiences for members (115 comments)

Other comments focused on the need for personalisation and the disparities members face with working across their devolved nations (13 comments) or divisions (21 comments), and the desire for the College to continue to develop its work internationally (38 comments). Members also highlighted the feeling that the College is still somewhat London-centric (43 comments).

“The College feels very London centric and for those who do not live near London it can feel excluding. There could be more meetings and library facilities for members in other parts of the UK.”

“More engagement with members outside of the 'London bubble', aware Lade is working hard to encourage this, but maybe devolved nations meetings with her face to face once a year to engage trainees and consultants and make their voices heard. Also rotating conferences in all 4 nations capital cities (not just majority London!)”

“I think there should be more communication, including to the international members. I have trained in the UK and moved back to my home country, where public mental health is still years behind the UK. I would love if there were more options that look at the cultural differences of practising in less developed countries, and it would be even more helpful if members working abroad could have reduced rates for events, seminars, etc (the pay rate where I am is incredibly lower due to our currency).”

“Promote and facilitate inclusion and participation of membership in devolved councils and regional networks”

“Roadshow around the English Divisions and the devolved nations.”

Initial Recommendations

1. Improve communication around College governance and decision making (such as sharing a video explaining our governance video and developing a scheme of delegation).
2. Create more engagement initiatives for Fellows of the College.
3. Introduce new staff roles to further improve membership engagement, including a Head of Engagement and additional administrative support for special interest groups (SIGs).
4. Streamline the governance around College committees and their reporting structures.
5. Improve communication around roles at the College and how members can apply and contribute to the work of the College.
6. Continue to utilise Officers Question Time to allow members to voice questions to the Officers.
7. Improve the induction process for members in College roles, giving them a broader understanding of the College and how their role fits within the organisation.
8. Encourage members to utilise the spaces available to them in our offices across the UK.
9. Improve ways for members to communicate with the College and to voice their concerns.
10. Ensure members know who their accountable representatives are on Council and what they do, and that elected members understand their roles in full.
11. Reviewing our social media strategy.

Next Steps

Following approval of the report and recommendations at Council and the Board of Trustees, an action plan will be created to develop the recommendations and outline the next steps.

The results of the survey, and the recommendations will also be shared with the membership online and in an article in Insight Magazine for the Winter 2024 edition. The action plan will be shared in early 2025.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Free Text Methodology

All free text comments were extracted from the database of responses and disconnected from socio-demographic data, to help maintain the anonymity of people who had commented. Each comment was checked for any identifying information; only one edit was considered necessary to anonymise quotes or comments provided.

Data for question 17, 'Which other College functions are important to you?', were coded based on the 7 core functions of the College, and a sample of 100 comments for additional areas of work valued by members. 14 codes were created, the full framework is as follows:

Q17 - Code Framework		Total
1	Delivering education and training for psychiatrists	99
2	Promoting standards and quality improvement in mental health services	30
3	Promoting research in psychiatry	18
4	Being the voice of psychiatry in the media	19
5	Being the voice of psychiatry in influencing decision makers and stakeholders like politicians and the health providers	40
6	Providing networking opportunities for members	49
7	Supporting the prevention of mental illness	18
8	Net-zero and sustainability	6
9	Promoting professional standards for psychiatrists and supporting and advocating for them throughout their careers	92
10	Supporting employers to deliver exceptional mental health services	18
11	Delivering conferences and CPD for psychiatrists	112
12	Working to support psychiatrists internationally	27
13	Support for members around creation of PA roles.	10
14	Other	111

Data for questions 23 and 26 was coded using a framework based on a MemberWise article, ['Unravelling Poor Membership Experiences in Organisations and Associations'](#)¹ looking at some of the common causes of disengagement and what organisations can do to avoid poor experiences. These were mapped to a sample of 100 comments, and then adjusted to fit the variety of responses given.

¹ (MemberWise, 2023)

This coding framework was used to review Q23 'In what way could the College improve the way it engages with and supports its members?' and Q26 'Do you have any other comments or suggestions?'

The full coding framework with response summaries are as follows:

Q23 - Code Framework		Total
1	Communication	127
1a	Membership app	38
1b	Engaging with the media	16
1c	Email communication	73
2	Opportunities to connect	92
2a	In-person events	28
2b	Online events	19
2c	Support for retired members	21
2d	More events outside of London	24
3	Technology and platforms	37
3a	Website	13
3b	Trainee Portfolio	13
3c	CPD submissions and learning platforms	11
4	Personalisation – tailoring experiences	115
4a	London-centric decision making	43
4b	International work	38
4c	National disparities (Devolved Nations)	13
4d	Regional disparities (English Divisions)	21
5	Recognition and Support	138
5a	Working directly with employers	38
5b	Understanding the challenges in the workplace	31
5c	Working with government and other decision makers	28
5d	SAS / Affiliate support	41
6	Feedback Mechanisms	209
6a	More surveys	109
6b	Input into College decision making	64
6c	Better representation within Committees and Council	36
7	Finances	63
7a	Understanding where membership fees go	19
7b	Fees and Costs	44
8	Miscellaneous	172

Q26 - Code Framework		Total
		437
1	Communication	21
1a	Membership app	17
1b	Engaging with the media	4
2	Opportunities to connect	28
2a	In-person events	6
2b	Online events	9
2c	Support for retired members	7
2d	More events outside of London	6
3	Technology and platforms	9
3a	Website	4
3b	Trainee Portfolio	3
3c	CPD submissions and learning platforms	2
4	Personalisation – tailoring experiences	29
4a	London-centric decision making	5
4b	International work	23
4c	National disparities (Devolved Nations)	1
4d	Regional disparities (English Divisions)	0
5	Recognition and Support	21
5a	Working directly with employers	7
5b	Understanding the challenges in the workplace	5
5c	Working with government and other decision makers	4
5d	SAS / Affiliate support	5
6	Feedback Mechanisms	41
6a	More surveys	23
6b	Input into College decision making	14
6c	Better representation within Committees and Council	4
7	Finances	41
7a	Understanding where membership fees go	7
7b	Fees and Costs	34
8	Miscellaneous	82
9	Answered "No" or "N/A"	165