

INFORMATION
ANALYSIS
DIRECTORATE



The Northern Ireland Pharmacy Technician and Pharmacy Support Staff Survey 2025



NISRA

Northern Ireland
Statistics and Research Agency
Gníomhaireacht Thuaisceart Éireann
um Staitisticí agus Taighde



Department of
Health

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Introduction

The 2018, 2022 and 2024 Pharmacist Workforce Surveys have provided some insight into the pharmacy workforce of Northern Ireland, helping the Department of Health and its stakeholders to inform future planning. Analysis of the survey findings enables future measurements and comparisons of outputs and is used to inform and take forward recommendations made within the [Pharmacy Workforce Review Implementation Plan](#).

The 2023 Pharmacy Technician and Pharmacy Support Staff Survey was the first survey to consider the qualifications, experiences and views of pharmacy technicians and support staff, increasing understanding of the Pharmacy workforce in Northern Ireland. This 2025 Pharmacy Technician and Support Staff survey aims to build on this understanding.

Key Findings

Survey area	Summary of key findings
Gender	74% female, 25% male, 1% prefer not to say
Working pattern	79% full time, 21% part time
5+ years of workplace experience	85% of respondents
Top employer support needed for qualifications	Study time (74%)
Top registration benefit	Recognition of role as registered professional (79%)
Top registration concern	Payment of annual fees (76%)
Highly likely/likely to remain in NI (1, 3 and 5 years' time)	94%, 87% and 76%
Highly likely/likely to remain in current sector (1, 3 and 5 years' time)	85%, 71% and 58%
Top reason to stay in current sector/not change	Enjoy working in their area of pharmacy (66%)
Top reason to consider a change of sector	Considering working outside of pharmacy (71%)
Well-being issue most strongly agreed with	Clear work objectives and a reliable team (both 65%)
Well-being issue most strongly disagreed with	Being able to contribute to decision making that impacts them (38%)
Job satisfaction issue most strongly agreed with	Not being paid enough for their level of responsibility (69%)
Job satisfaction issues most strongly disagreed with	That the role of pharmacy is valued and having good opportunities for advancement (both 54%)

Headline Results

- Most respondents: were **female**, were in the **45-54 age band**, worked **full time**, and had **5+ years of workplace experience**.
- Most Pharmacy Technician respondents chose '**BTEC level 3 national certificate in science (pharmaceutical)**' as their highest level of pharmacy qualification and '**Accuracy checking pharmacy technician accredited programme**' as their highest level of pharmacy experience.
- **Study time** was the most identified employer support that would be needed to gain registration or other pharmacy qualifications.
- **Recognition of their role as a registered professional** was the most identified opportunity from being registered.
- **The payment of annual fees** was the most identified concern in relation to registering as a pharmacy technician.
- Most respondents felt that they would be working (i) in NI and (ii) in their current sector in one-, three- and five-years' time
- Respondents were generally more positive than negative to well-being statements. Of note is that 65% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statements 'I have clear objectives' and 'The people in my team can be relied upon to help when things get difficult in my job.'
- Respondents disagreed most strongly with the well-being statement 'I have the opportunity to contribute my views before decisions are made that affect me', to which 37.9% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed
- The job satisfaction statement to which respondents responded most strongly was 'I am not paid enough money for my level of responsibility', with 69.3% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing and only 10.7% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing.

Methodology

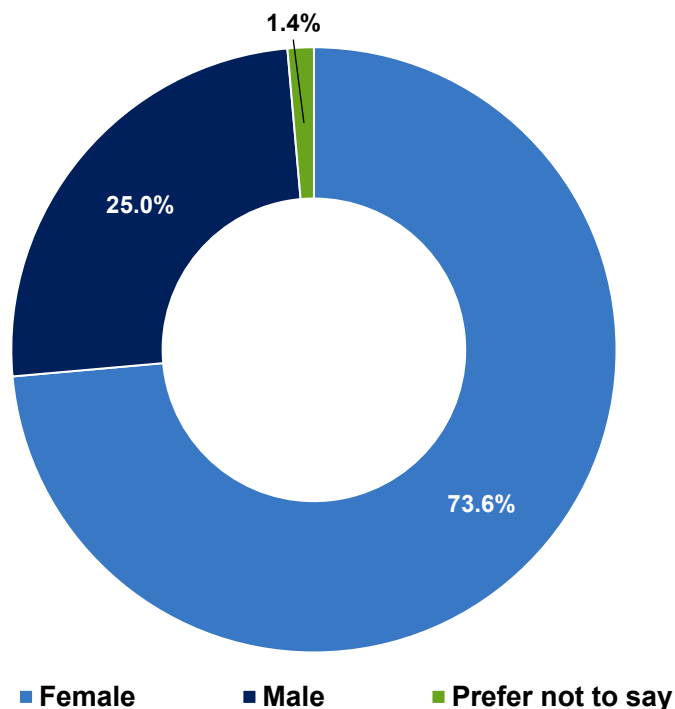
The survey employed an online format using Citizen Space software and ran for 12 weeks, from 15/12/2025 to 23/03/2026; there were 140 survey responses received¹ (compared to 301 responses to the previous survey in 2023). The survey questions can be found in Appendix 1.

Readers should note that individual text comments to 'other' or 'further' information segments of questions are not included in this report due to possible data protection issues and identification of respondents. However, these comments have been categorised where possible and these categories are included in Appendix 2.

Results¹

Gender

Almost three quarters (73.6%, 103) of respondents were female, 25.0% (35) were male and 1.4% (2) preferred not to say. This is very similar to the gender breakdown in the previous survey.



Gender	Number of respondents	Percent*
Female	103	73.6%
Male	35	25.0%
Prefer not to say	2	1.4%
Total	140	100%

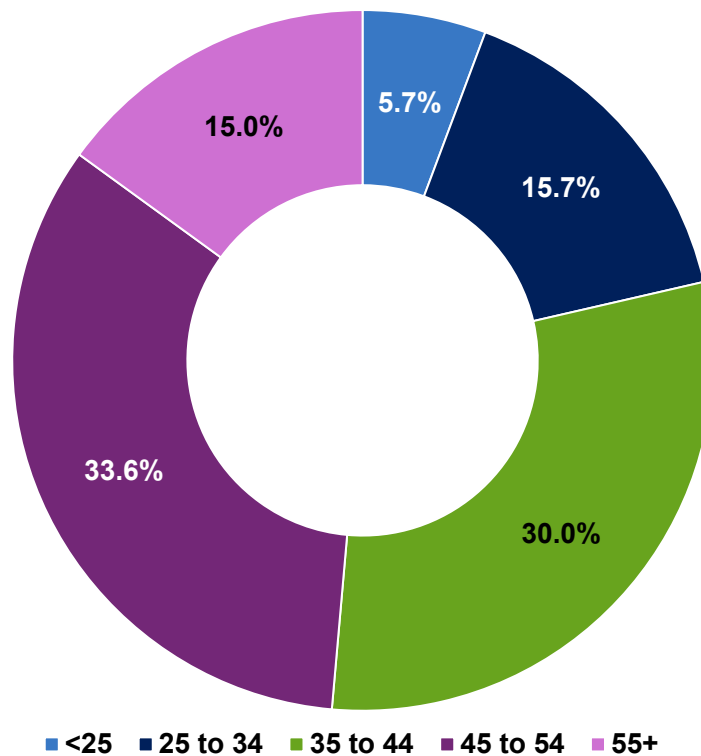
* Percentage of total respondents.

No respondents chose the option 'Prefer to self-describe'

¹ Unless otherwise stated, percentages throughout are calculated using the full 140 respondents.

Age

A third (33.6%, 47) of respondents were in the 45-54 age band. The under 25 age band accounted for the smallest percentage of total respondents (5.7%). This breakdown is similar to that in the previous survey.



Age band	Number of respondents	Percent*
<25	8	5.7%
25 to 34	22	15.7%
35 to 44	42	30.0%
45 to 54	47	33.6%
55+	21	15.0%
Total	140	100%

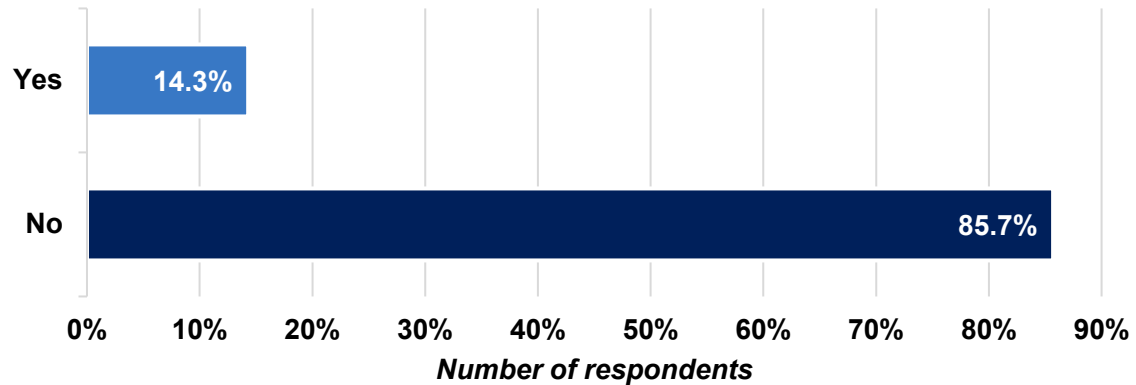
*Percentage of total respondents

Ethnicity

All 140 respondents selected 'White' in response to the question of ethnicity. In the previous survey, 98.0% of the 301 respondents selected 'White'.

Disability

85.7% (120) of respondents did not consider themselves to have a disability (compared to 93.0% of respondents in the previous survey).

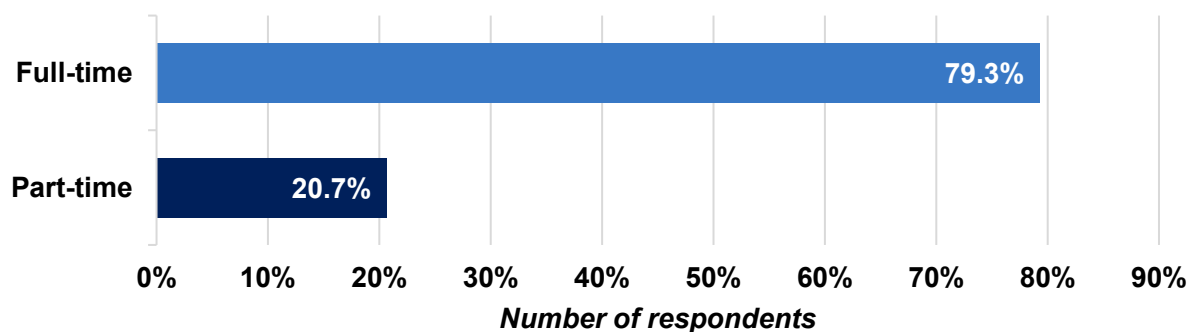


Disability	Number of respondents	Percent*
Yes	20	14.3%
No	120	85.7%
Total	140	100%

*Percentage of total respondents

Working pattern

79.3% (111) of respondents work full-time, with 20.7% (29) working part-time. This compares to 82.7% and 17.3% of respondents in the previous survey.



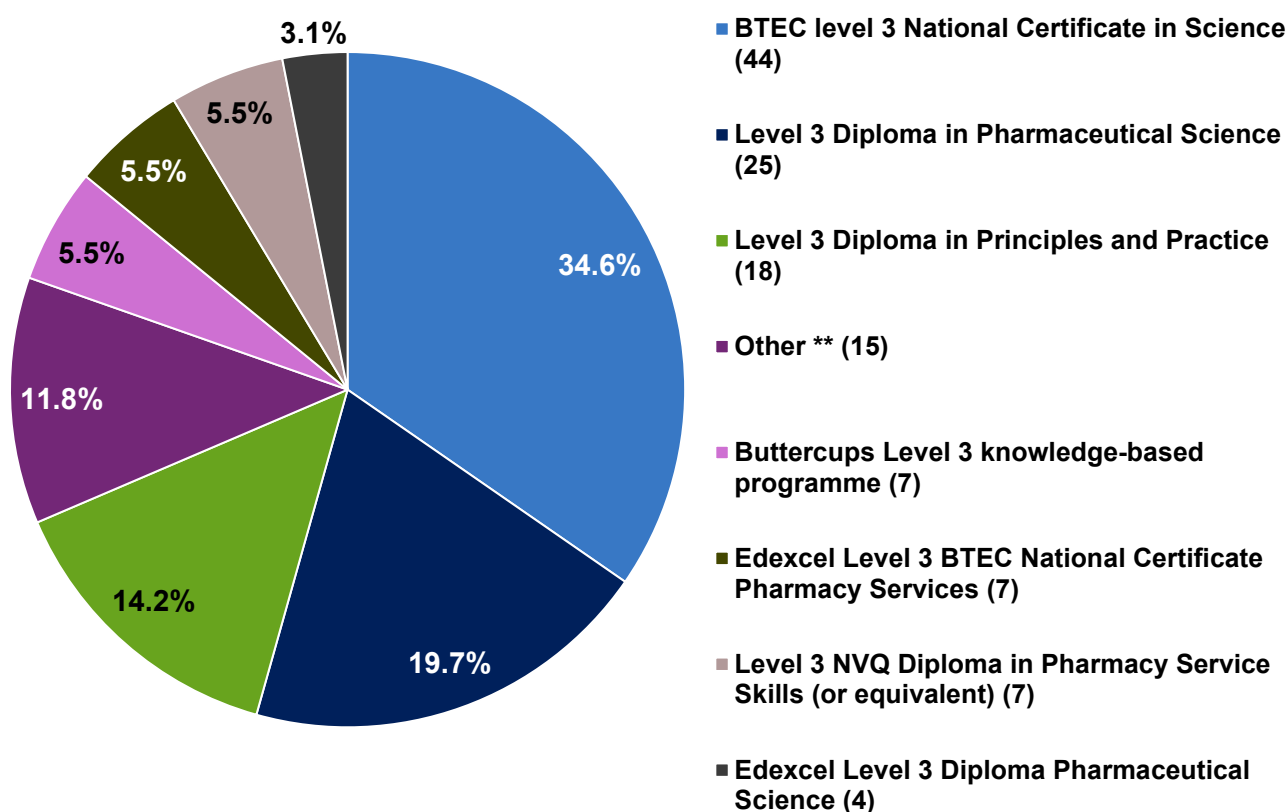
Working pattern	Number of respondents	Percent*
Full-time	111	79.3%
Part-time	29	20.7%
Total	140	100%

*Percentage of total respondents

Highest Level of Pharmacy Qualification

Pharmacy Technician

Of the 127 responses from **Pharmacy Technician** respondents, more than a third (34.6%, 44) had a 'BTEC level 3 national certificate in science (pharmaceutical) Pre 2009' qualification, similar to the previous survey (35.7%).



Some qualification names have been abbreviated in the chart above but are given in full in the table below.

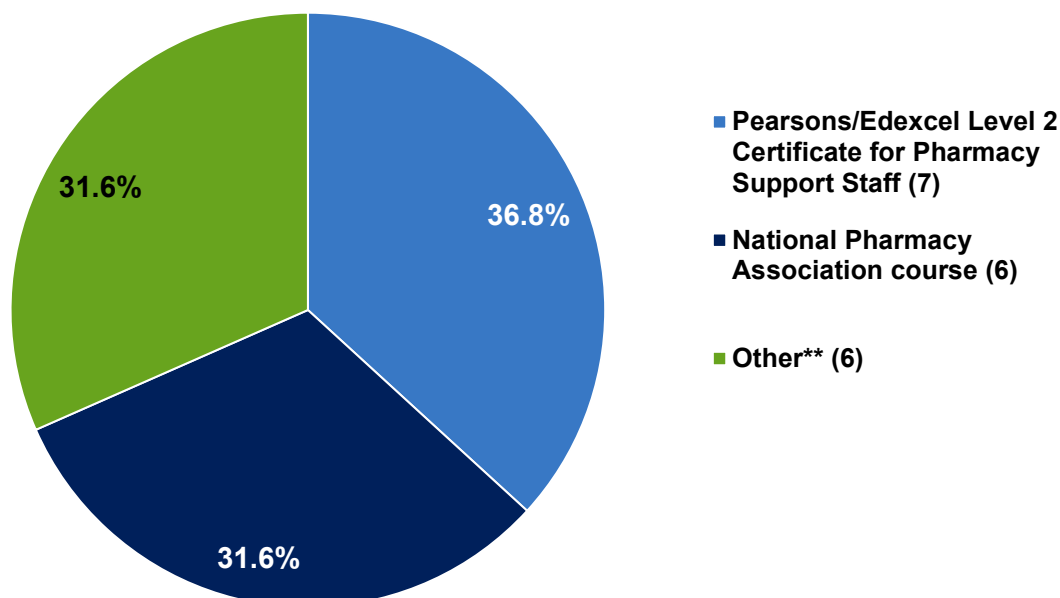
Qualification	Total	Percent*
BTEC Level 3 National Certificate in Science (pharmaceutical) Pre	44	34.6%
Level 3 Diploma in Pharmaceutical Science June 2009- 2020	25	19.7%
Level 3 Diploma in Principles and Practice for Pharmacy Technicians	18	14.2%
Other **	15	11.8%
Level 3 NVQ Diploma in Pharmacy Service Skills (or equivalents)	7	5.5%
Edexcel Level 3 BTEC National Certificate Pharmacy Services	7	5.5%
Buttercups Level 3 knowledge-based programme	7	5.5%
Edexcel Level 3 Diploma Pharmaceutical Science	4	3.1%
Total	127	100%

* Percentages are calculated out of the 127 respondents to this part of the question.

** The 'Other' category in the chart and table includes 'SQA Level 3 National Certificate in Pharmacy Services', 'City and Guilds Level 3 Diploma Pharmaceutical Science', 'City and Guilds Level 3 Certificate in Pharmacy Services Pre 1990', 'NPA Level 3 Underpinning Knowledge Programme', 'Approved Apprenticeship Programme', 'National Pharmacy Association' and a number of free text responses, which have been grouped due to small numbers.

Pharmacy Support Staff

Of the 19 responses from **Pharmacy Support Staff**, over two thirds (68.4%, 13) had a 'Pearsons/Edexcel Level 2 Certificate for Pharmacy Support Staff' or 'National Pharmacy Association course' qualification.



Qualification	Total	Percent*
Pearsons/Edexcel Level 2 Certificate for Pharmacy Support Staff	7	36.8%
National Pharmacy Association course	6	31.6%
Other**	6	31.6%
Total	19	100%

* Percentages are calculated out of the 19 respondents to this part of the question.

** Due to small numbers, the original 'other' category has been combined with the 'Boots UK pharmacy support staff training course', 'Buttercups course' and 'Approved Apprenticeship Programme' options.

Student Trainee Pharmacy Technician

Responses from 12 **Student Trainee Pharmacy Technicians** were in a free text format and more than four fifths (83.3%, 10) referred to a Level 3 and/or Principles and Practice qualification.

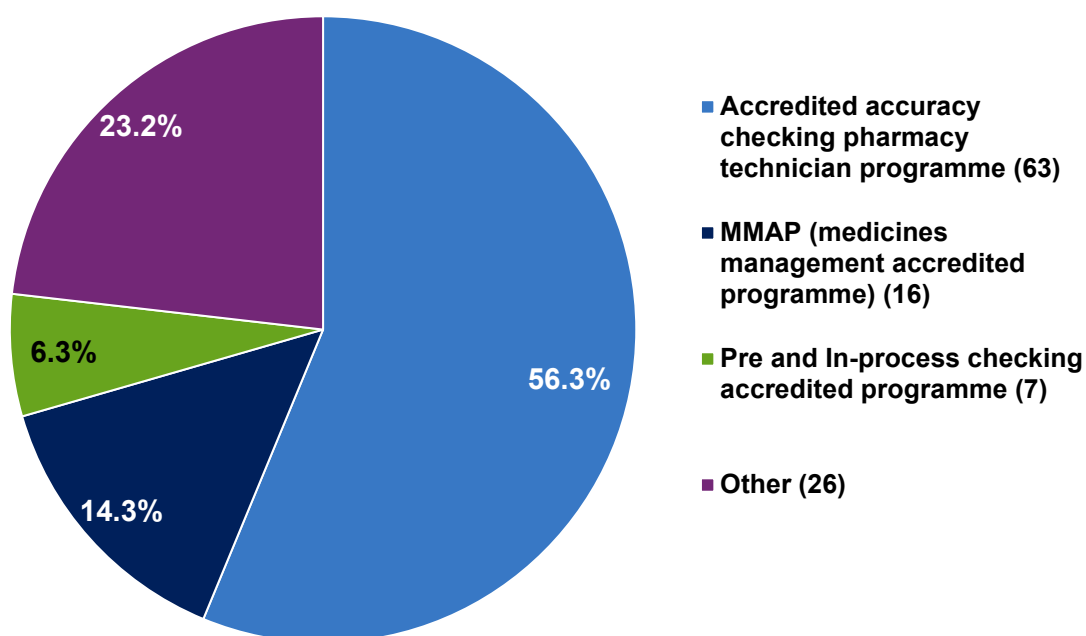
The small number of respondents here make meaningful comparisons with the previous survey difficult, but it can be noted that the Level 3 and/or Principles and Practice qualification was also mentioned by most student trainee Pharmacy Technicians in the previous survey.

Note, some respondents made a selection from more than one of the sets of options, so the number of responses (across the three categories of pharmacy technician, support staff or student) sums to more than the number of survey respondents. All responses have been included in the data. Respondents may have answered based on their current and previous position(s), for example, all pharmacy technicians will in the past have been a student. There was no way to control for this in the current question format, but it may be considered for any future survey.

Year of qualification/expected qualification ranged from 1986 to 2027.

Highest Level of Pharmacy Experience

Of the 112 responses from **Pharmacy Technicians**, as in the previous survey, more than half (56.3%, 63) selected 'Accredited accuracy checking pharmacy technician programme'.



Experience	Total	Percent*
Accuracy checking pharmacy technician accredited programme	63	56.3%
MMAP (medicines management accredited programme)	16	14.3%
Pre and In-process checking accredited programme	7	6.3%
Other**	26	23.2%
Total	112	100%

* Percentages are calculated out of the 112 respondents to this part of the question.

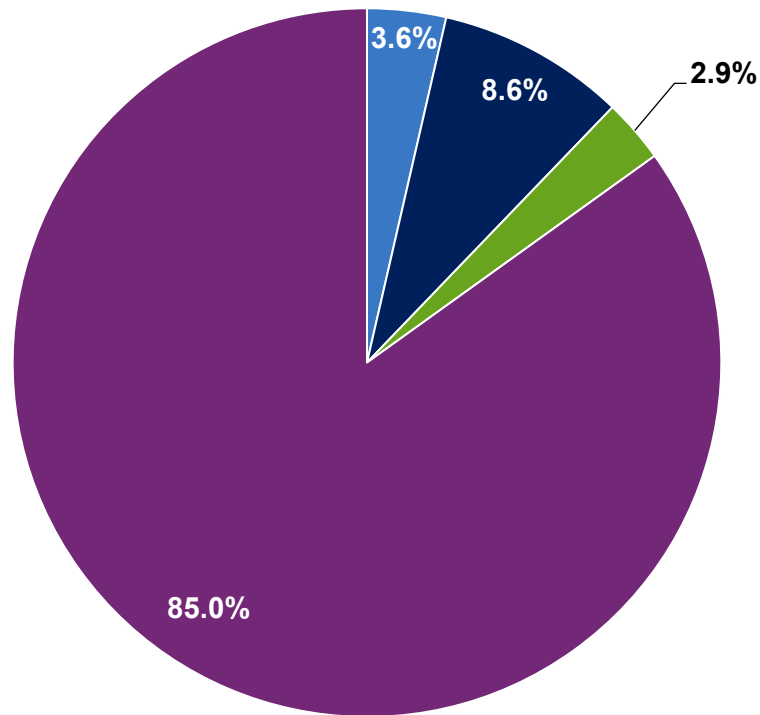
** Of the 26 respondents who answered 'Other', 6 specified that they had no experience or that they were recently qualified.

10 Pharmacy Support Staff and **10 Student Trainee Pharmacy Technicians** answered in a free text format and most responses referred to experience in years and described aspects of their work.

Year of receiving pharmacy course certificate or accreditation ranged from 2001 to 2026. 5 respondents answered that they were currently in the process of doing a course, 6 answered with n/a, 31 answered none and 3 were unknown (unanswered or no year provided). Some respondents answered with multiple years, referring to different certificates or accreditations.

Years of Workplace Experience

As in the previous survey, the pharmacy technician and support staff respondents are an experienced workforce, with 85.0% (119) of respondents reporting 5 or more years of workplace experience. This compares to 84.1% in the previous survey.



■ 0 – 1 year ■ 2 – 3 years ■ 4 – 5 years ■ 5 + years

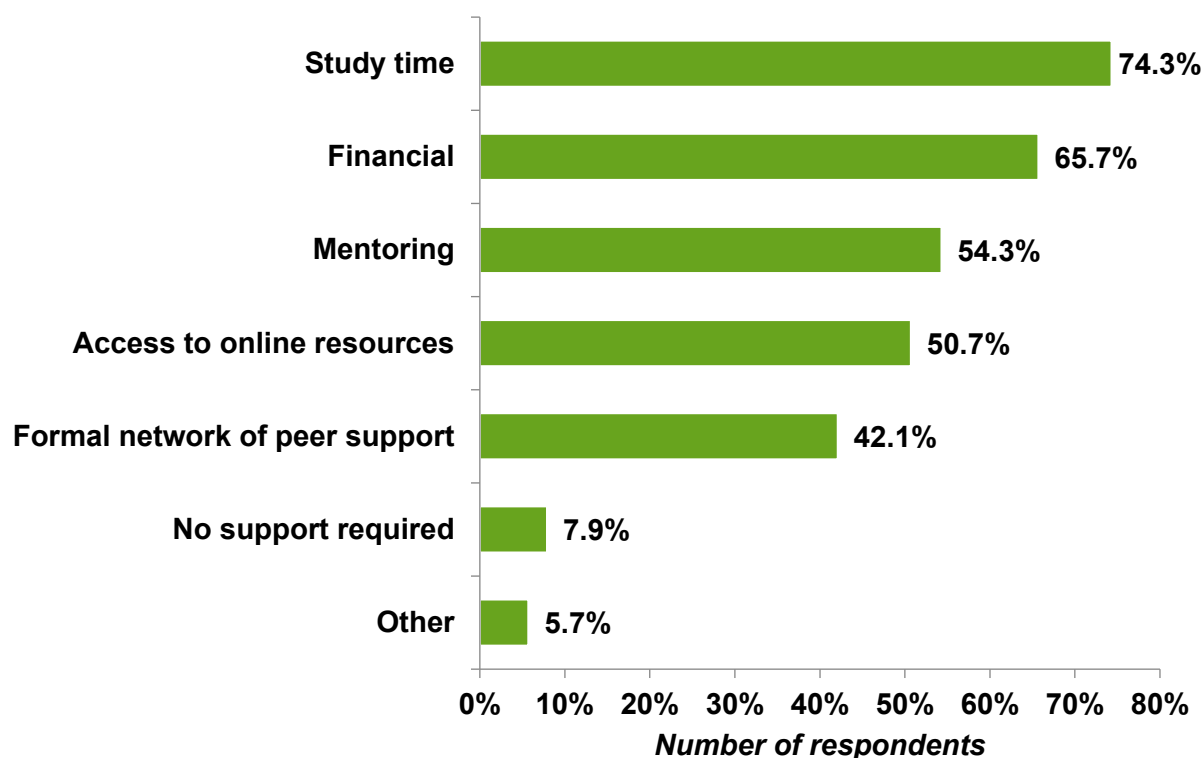
Workplace experience	Total	Percent*
0 – 1 year	5	3.6%
2 – 3 years	12	8.6%
4 – 5 years	4	2.9%
5 + years	119	85.0%
Total	140	100.0%

* Percentage of total respondents

Employer Support²

Multi-response question – respondents could select multiple areas

Study time was the most identified type of employer support needed to gain registration or other pharmacy qualifications, selected by (74.3%, 104) of respondents. This was also the most selected type of support in the last survey (77.7%).



Type of support	Total ²	Percent*
Study time	104	74.3%
Financial	92	65.7%
Mentoring	76	54.3%
Access to online resources	71	50.7%
Formal network of peer support	59	42.1%
No support required	11	7.9%
Other**	8	5.7%

* Percentage of total respondents

** Of the respondents who selected 'other', further details given largely addressed support needed in terms of workplace cover and the prioritization of time and training needed.

² Respondents could select more than one option, so percentages do not sum to 100% (and totals do not sum to 140 respondents).

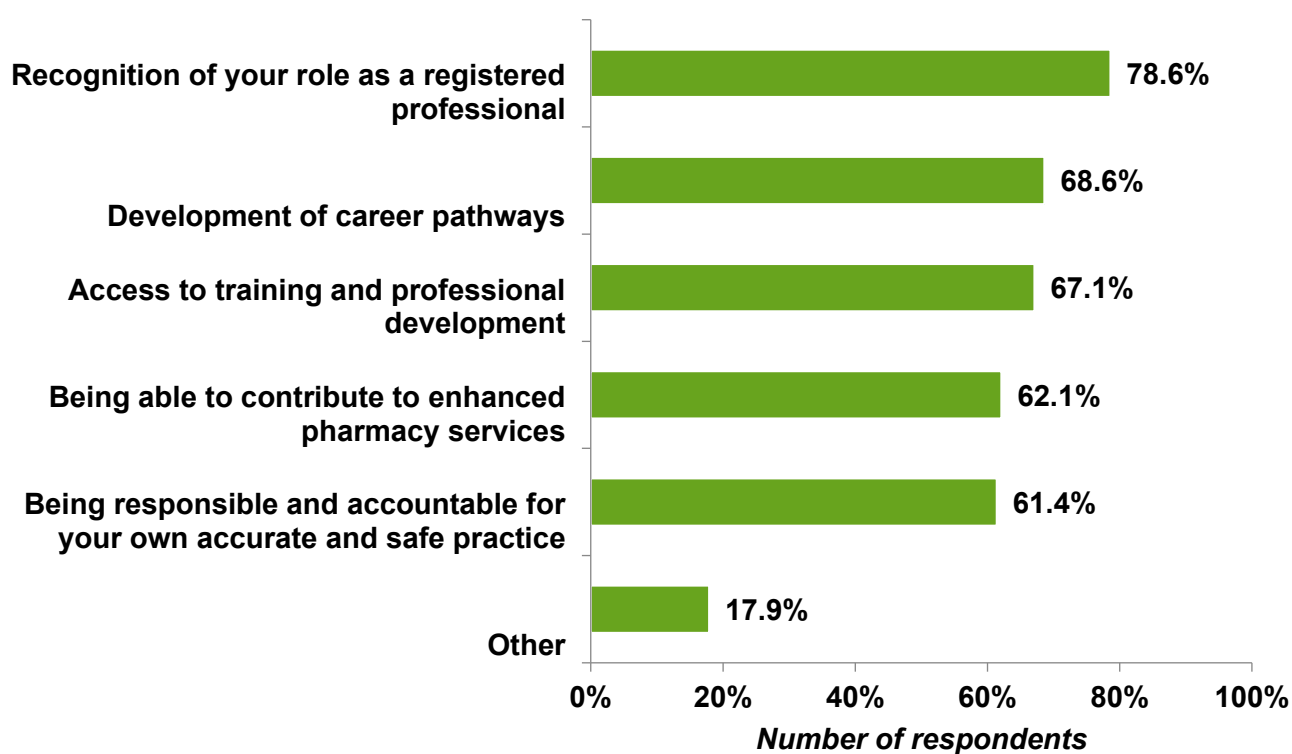
Opportunities from being registered²

Multi-response question – respondents could select multiple areas

Over three quarters (78.6%, 110) of respondents felt that recognition of the role as a registered professional is an opportunity from being registered.

Most respondents agreed that all five opportunities presented would be available to them from being registered; this was also the case in the last survey.

Of the 25 'Other' responses, 17 free text responses were either that there would be no resulting opportunities or were negative about registration, with a few respondents very strongly against registering. Similar views were expressed in the previous survey.



Opportunity from being registered	Total ²	Percent *
Recognition of your role as a registered professional	110	78.6%
Development of career pathways	96	68.6%
Access to training and professional development	94	67.1%
Being able to contribute to enhanced pharmacy services	87	62.1%
Being responsible and accountable for your own accurate and safe practice	86	61.4%
Other	25	17.9%

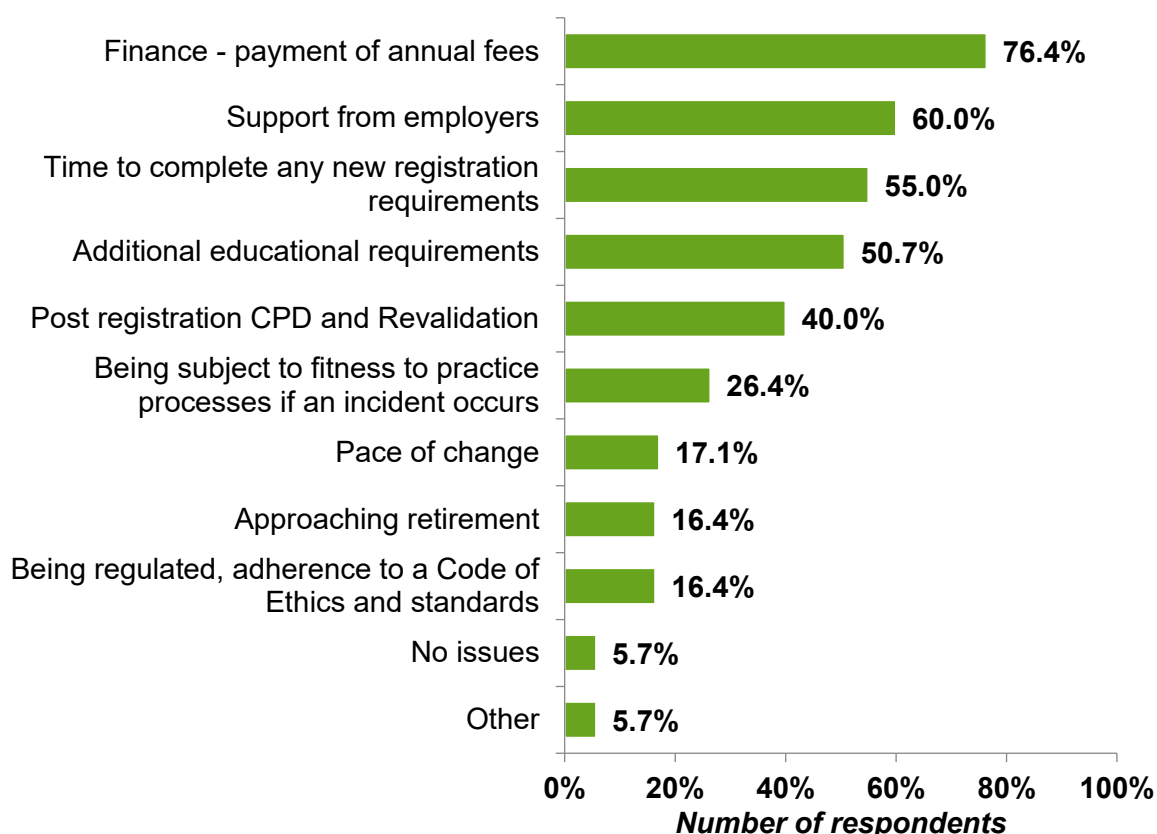
* Percentage of total respondents

² Respondents could select more than one option, so percentages do not sum to 100% (and totals do not sum to 140 respondents).

Issues of concern in relation to registration²

Multi-response question – respondents could select multiple areas

Over three quarters (76.4%, 107) of respondents identified 'Payment of annual fees' as a concern in relation to registration. This was also the issue most identified as a concern by respondents in the previous survey (79.7%)



Issue of concern	Total ²	Percent *
Finance - payment of annual fees	107	76.4%
Support from employers	84	60.0%
Time to complete any new registration requirements	77	55.0%
Additional educational requirements	71	50.7%
Post registration Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and Revalidation	56	40.0%
Being subject to fitness to practice processes if an incident occurs	37	26.4%
Pace of change	24	17.1%
Being regulated, adherence to a Code of Ethics and standards	23	16.4%
Approaching retirement	23	16.4%
No issues	8	5.7%
Other	8	5.7%

* Percentage of total respondents

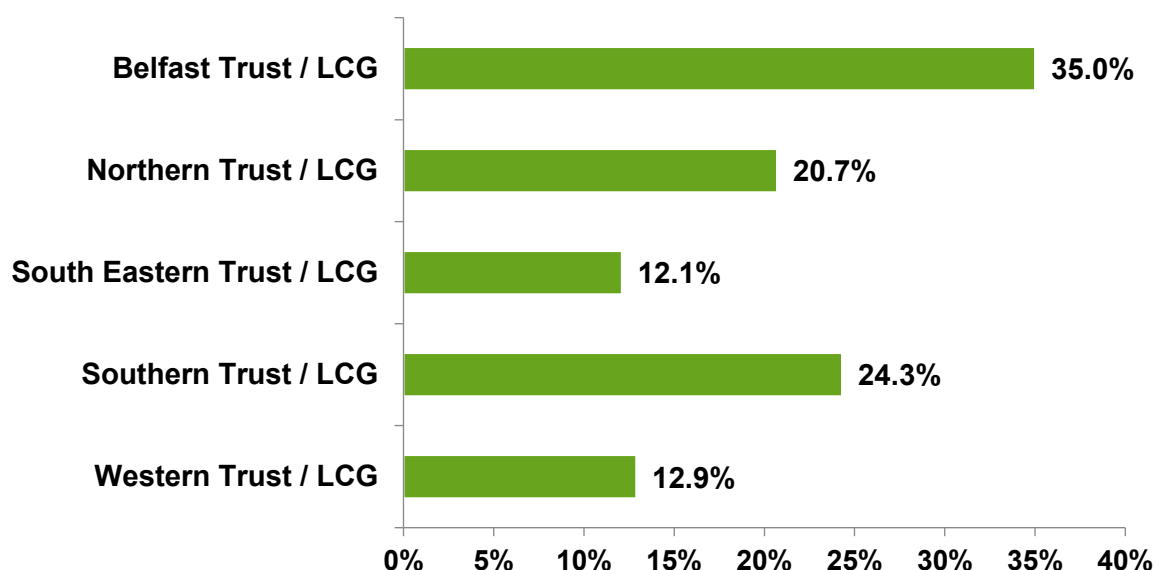
² Respondents could select more than one option, so percentages do not sum to 100% (and totals do not sum to 140 respondents).

Geographical area of practice in NI²

Multi-response question – respondents could select multiple areas

All Trust/LCG areas in NI are represented by survey respondents, with more respondents working in the Belfast Trust/LCG area (35.0%, 49) than any of the others.

There were 3 respondents who worked in 2 Trusts/LCG areas and 1 respondent who worked across all 5 Trusts/LCG areas.



Geographical area of practice (Trust/LCG)	Total ²	Percent*
Belfast	49	35.0%
Northern	29	20.7%
South Eastern	17	12.1%
Southern	34	24.3%
Western	18	12.9%

* Percentage of total respondents

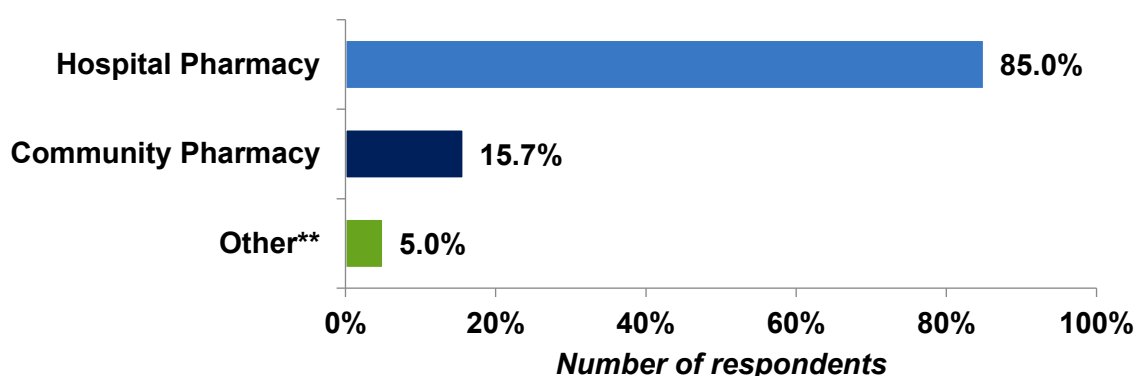
² Respondents could select more than one option, so percentages do not sum to 100% (and totals do not sum to 140 respondents).

Sector of practice²

Multi-response question – respondents could select multiple areas

85.0% (119) of respondents worked in Hospital Pharmacy, 15.7% (22) worked in Community Pharmacy and only a small number of respondents worked in the other pharmacy sectors. This compares to 80.1% and 21.3% respectively in the previous survey.

8 respondents worked in 2 sectors; no respondents worked in more than 2 sectors. Of those respondents who worked in more than one sector, the most common combination was Hospital and Community pharmacy (3 respondents).



Sector	Total ²	Percent*
Hospital Pharmacy	119	85.0%
Community Pharmacy	22	15.7%
Other**	7	5.0%

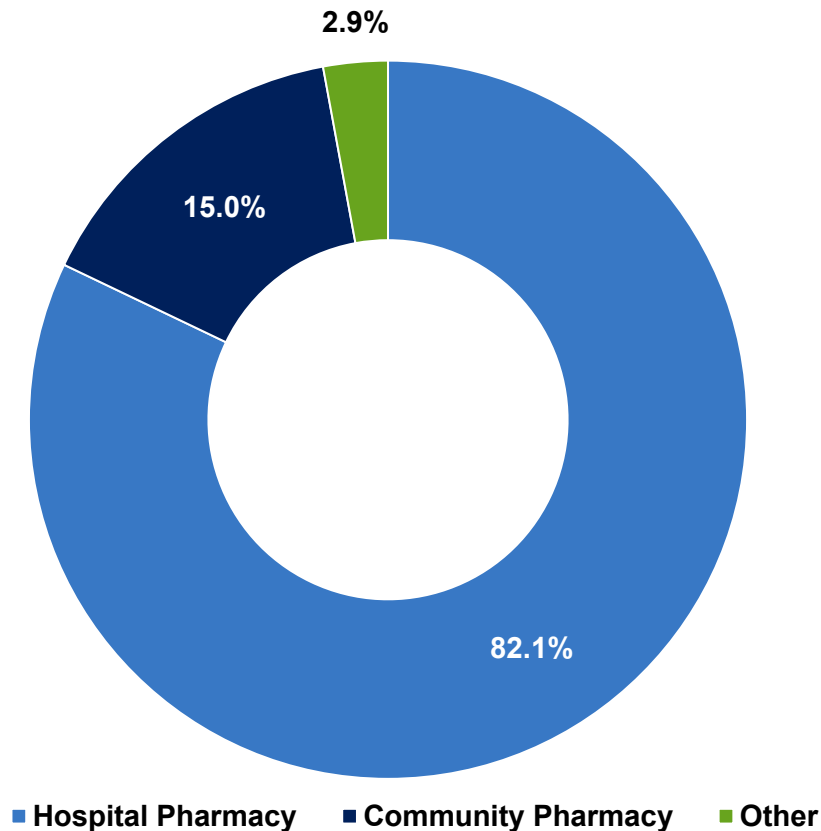
* Percentage of total respondents

** Other category includes Academia and Research. No respondents reported working in Industry or Prison

² Respondents could select more than one option, so percentages do not sum to 100% (and totals do not sum to 140 respondents).

Main sector of practice

82.1% (115) of respondents selected Hospital Pharmacy as their main area of practice, with less than one fifth of respondents choosing Community Pharmacy (15.0%) and only 2.9% choosing 'Other'. This is similar to the breakdown seen in the previous survey.



Main Sector	Total	Percent*
Hospital Pharmacy	115	82.1%
Community Pharmacy	21	15.0%
Other	4	2.9%
Total	140	100%

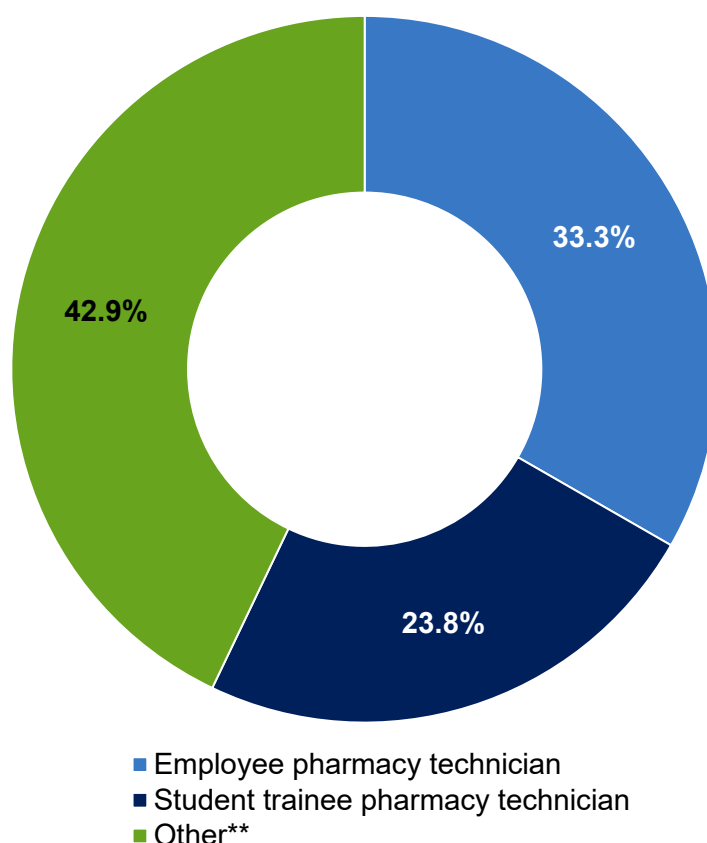
* Percentage of total respondents

Community Pharmacy

Main Role

One third (33.3%, 7) of the community pharmacy respondents chose 'Employee Pharmacy Technician' as their current job title. This was also the most selected job title by community pharmacy respondents in the previous survey (40.7%).

*Note, the 'Other' category consists of a combination of job titles (see footnote ** below).*



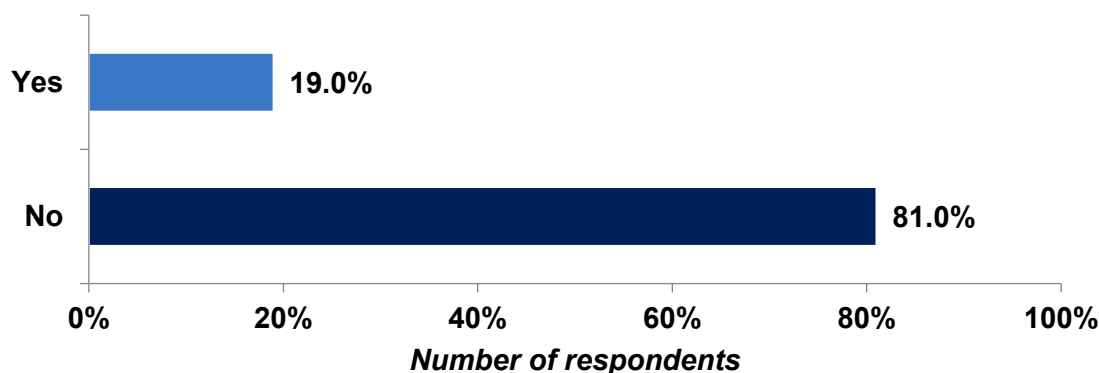
Current job title	Total	Percent*
Employee pharmacy technician	7	33.3%
Student trainee pharmacy technician	5	23.8%
Other**	9	42.9%
Total	21	100%

*Percentages are calculated out of the 21 Community Pharmacy respondents.

** The category of 'Other' in the table and chart is a combination of job titles with a small number of respondents and those who selected 'other' and then specified their job in a free text field. The job titles which were combined due to small numbers include Community Pharmacy Counter assistant, Community Pharmacy Dispensary assistant, and Employee pharmacy technician and Manager. The self-descriptions given include 'Pharmacy technician checker' and 'Accuracy checking pharmacy technician'.

Management in main role

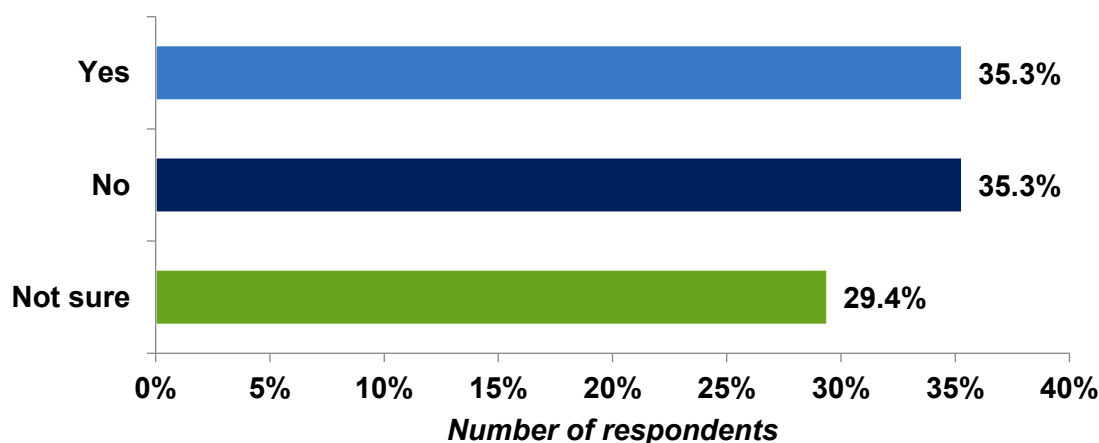
More than four fifths (81.0%, 17) of community pharmacy respondents reported that their main role did not currently involve management. This was the case for 90.7% of the community pharmacy respondents in the previous survey.



Community Pharmacy respondents – main role involves management	Total	Percent*
Yes	4	19.0%
No	17	81.0%
Total	21	100%

* Percentages are calculated out of the 21 Community Pharmacy respondents

Of those whose main role did not currently involve management, the percentage of respondents who did and did not see a future move into management were equal at 35.3% (6).

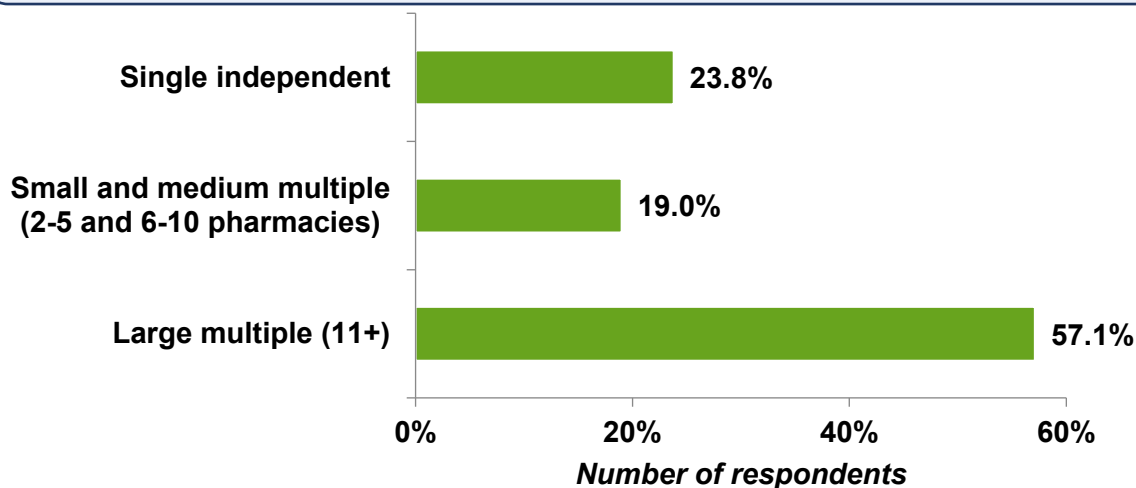


Do you see yourself moving into management in the future?	Total	Percent*
Yes	6	35.3%
No	6	35.3%
Not sure	5	29.4%
Total	17	100%

* Percentages are calculated out of the 17 Community Pharmacy respondents whose main role does not currently involve management.

Type and location of Community Pharmacy

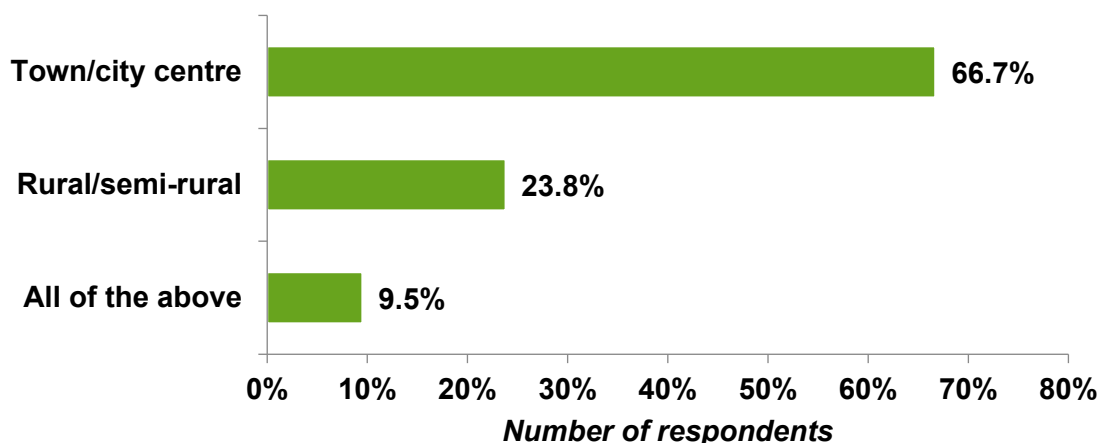
57.1% (12) of community pharmacy respondents were currently working in large multiple types of pharmacy. This compares to 50.0% of respondents in the previous survey.



Type of Community Pharmacy	Total	Percent*
Single independent	5	23.8%
Small and medium multiple (2-5 and 6-10 pharmacies)	4	19.0%
Large multiple (11+)	12	57.1%
Total	21	100%

* Percentages are calculated out of the 21 Community Pharmacy respondents

Two thirds (66.7%, 14) of these pharmacies were in town/city centres, similar to the previous survey (68.5%).



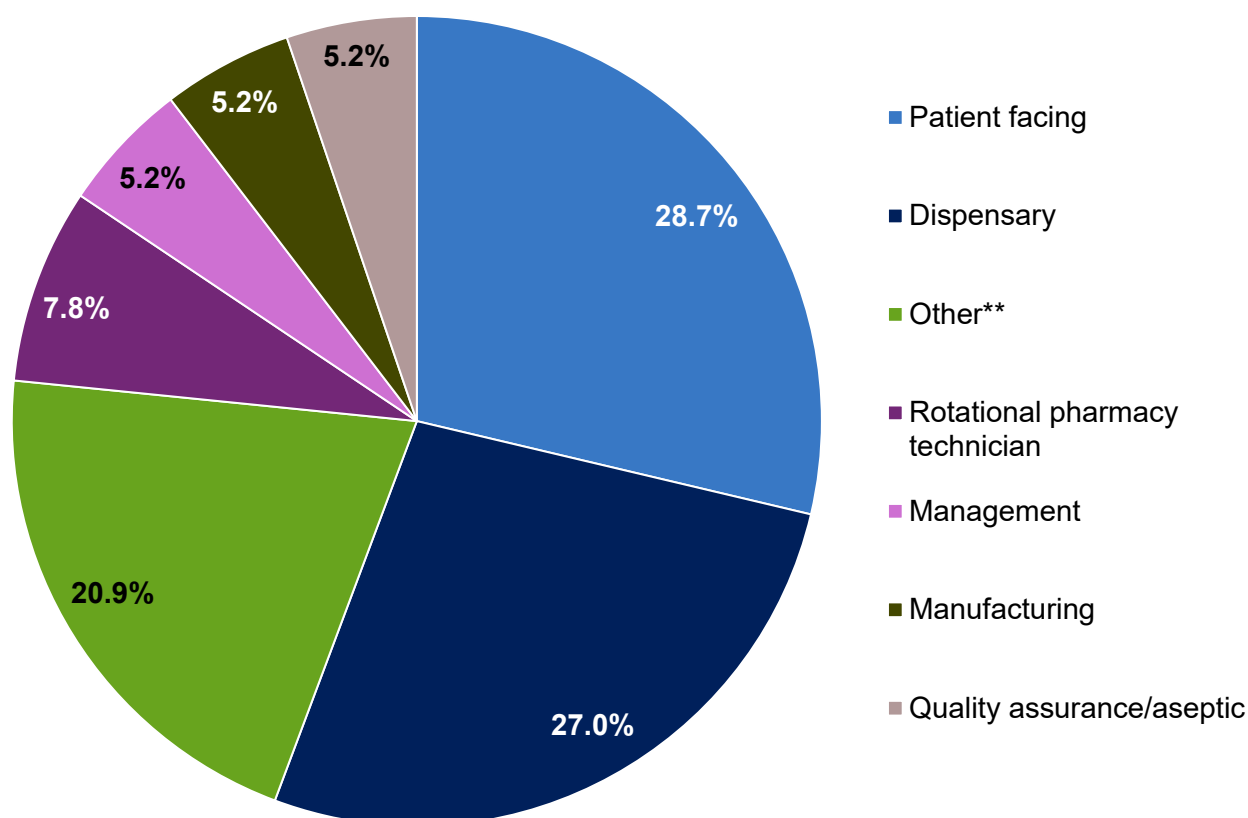
Location of community pharmacy	Total	Percent*
Town/city centre	14	66.7%
Rural/semi-rural	5	23.8%
All of the above	2	9.5%
Total	21	100%

* Percentages are calculated out of the 21 Community Pharmacy respondents

Hospital Pharmacy

Main Role

28.7% (33) of the 115 hospital pharmacy respondents reported having a Patient Facing main role. This was the second most commonly selected main role in the previous survey (27.4% of respondents), with a Dispensary role the most selected main role then (31.2% of respondents).



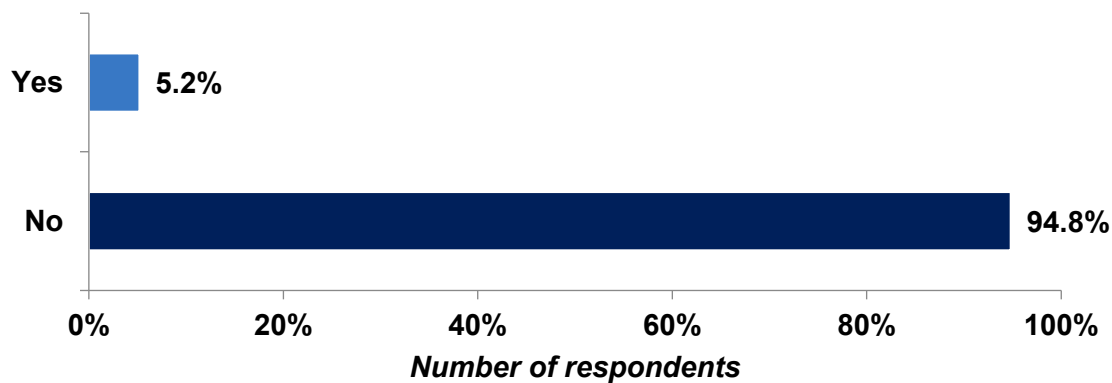
Hospital Pharmacy respondents – main role	Total	Percent*
Patient facing	33	28.7%
Dispensary	31	27.0%
Other**	24	20.9%
Rotational pharmacy technician	9	7.8%
Management	6	5.2%
Manufacturing	6	5.2%
Quality assurance/aseptic	6	5.2%
Total	115	100%

* Percentages are calculated out of the 115 Hospital Pharmacy respondents

** In addition to the actual response choice of 'Other', for which respondents were asked to specify their main role, the category of 'Other' in the chart and table includes 'Education' and 'Administration', which have been combined due to small numbers of respondents.

Management in main role

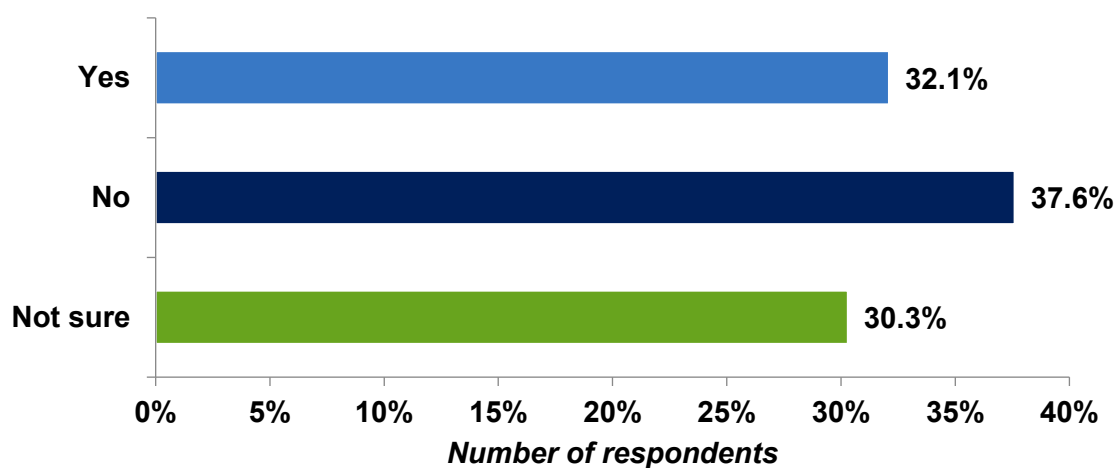
94.8% (109) of hospital pharmacy respondents reported that their main role did not currently involve management. This was the case for 92.0% of hospital pharmacy respondents in the previous survey.



Does your main role involve management	Total	Percent*
Yes	6	5.2%
No	109	94.8%
Total	115	100%

* Percentages are calculated out of the 115 Hospital Pharmacy respondents

Of those whose main role did not currently involve management, 32.1% did see a future move into management, 37.6% did not and 30.3% were unsure.



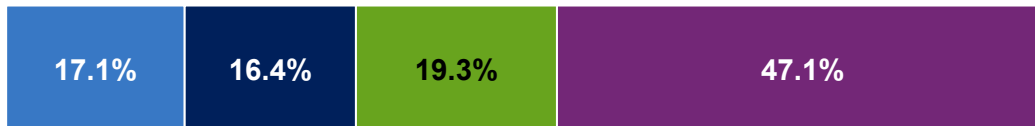
Can you see a future move into management	Total	Percent*
Yes	35	32.1%
No	41	37.6%
Not sure	33	30.3%
Total	109	100%

* Percentages are calculated out of the 109 Hospital Pharmacy respondents to this question

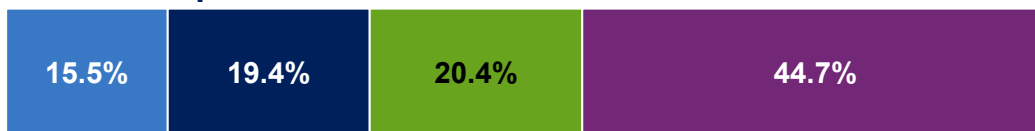
Length of time in current sector

As in the previous survey, most respondents (47.1%, 66) had worked in their current sector for 10+ years. This was the case for both male (51.4%, 18) and female (44.7%, 46) respondents.

All respondents



Female respondents



Male respondents



Length of time	Number and percentage of respondents					
	All	Percent*	Female	Percent**	Male	Percent***
0 – 2 years	24	17.1%	16	15.5%	8	22.9%
3 – 5 years	23	16.4%	20	19.4%	3	8.6%
6 – 10 years	27	19.3%	21	20.4%	6	17.1%
10 +	66	47.1%	46	44.7%	18	51.4%
Total[§]	140	100%	103	100%	35	100%

* Percentage of total respondents

** Percentages are calculated out of the 103 female respondents

*** Percentages are calculated out of the 35 male respondents

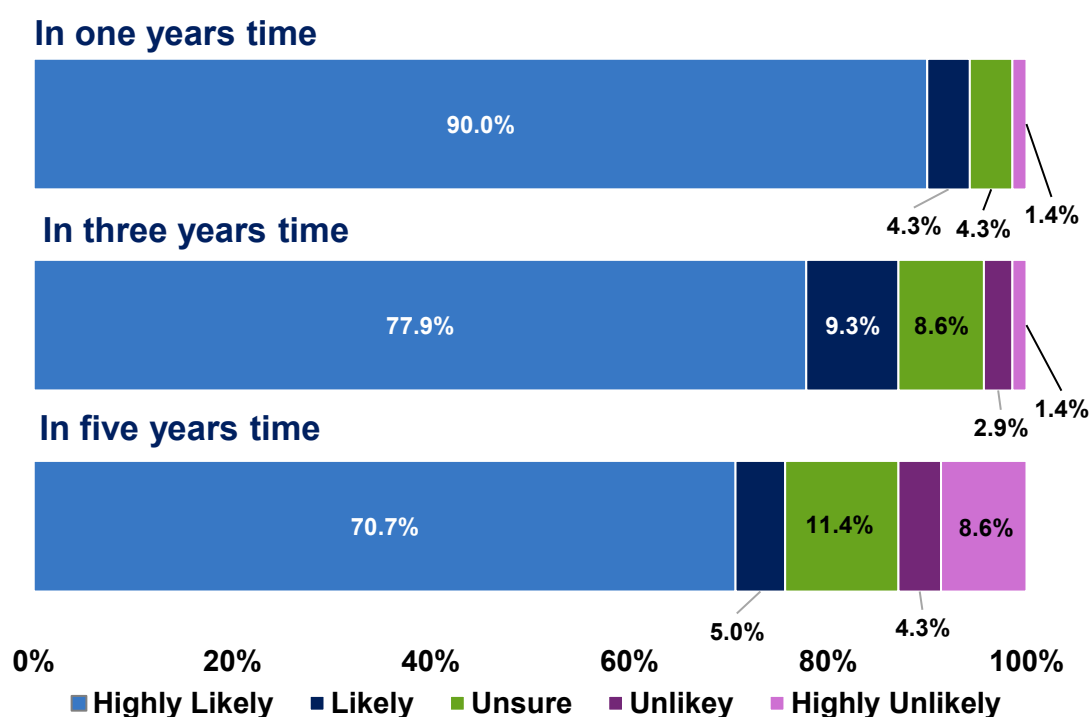
[§] Note that there were 2 respondents who preferred 'not to say' in relation to the gender question, so the male and female figures add to 138 respondents and not the total 140 respondents.

Working in NI in the future

94.3% of respondents indicated that they were likely or highly likely to be working in NI in one year's time. This fell to 87.1%* and 75.7% for three and five years respectively. These figures compare to 96.7%, 92.0% and 86.7% in the previous survey.

Only 1.4% of respondents indicated that they were unlikely or highly unlikely to still be working in NI one year's time. This rose to 4.3% and 12.9% for three and five years respectively. These figures compare to 1.0%, 2.7% and 6.0% in the previous survey.

Likelihood of working in NI:



Option	Likely to work in NI in future:					
	In one year		In three years		In five years	
	Total	Percent**	Total	Percent**	Total	Percent**
Highly likely	126	90.0%	109	77.9%	99	70.7%
Likely	6	4.3%	13	9.3%	7	5.0%
Unsure	6	4.3%	12	8.6%	16	11.4%
Unlikely	0	0.0%	4	2.9%	6	4.3%
Highly unlikely	2	1.4%	2	1.4%	12	8.6%
Total	140	100%	140	100%	140	100%

* Percentages are rounded to 1 decimal place; percentages for combined categories referred to in the text were calculated using the combined number of respondents to these categories, rather than a summation of the rounded percentage figures for each category (as in the table). When correctly calculated this way, the figures for likely and highly likely to work in NI in three years is 87.1%, whereas summing the rounded percentages in the table above would incorrectly sum to 87.2%.

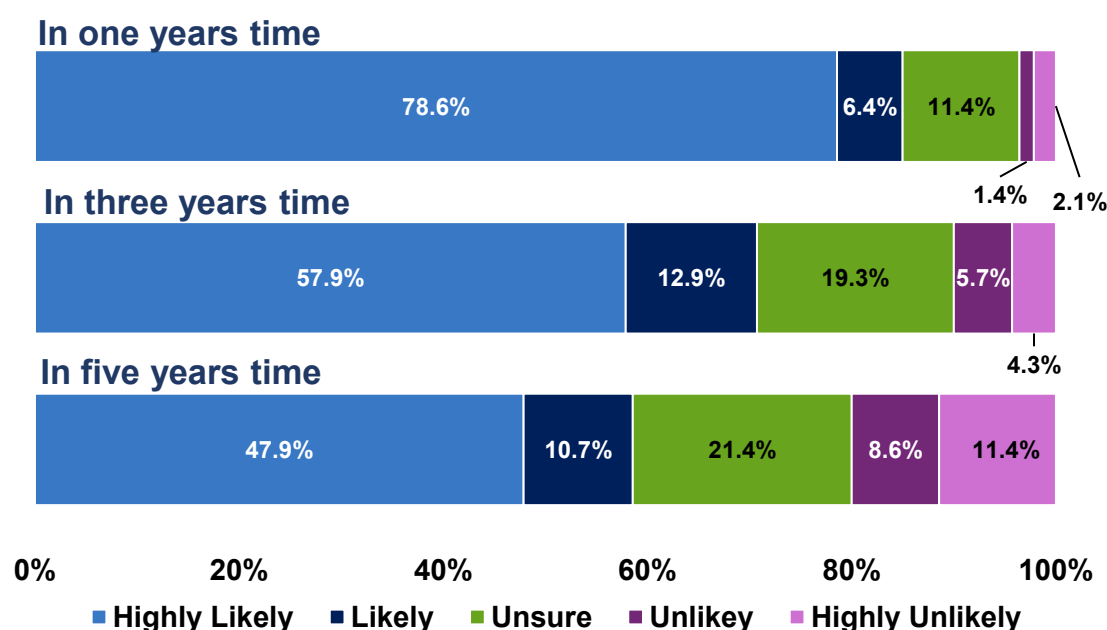
** Percentage of total respondents

Working in current sector in the future

85% of respondents indicated that they were likely or highly likely to be working in their current sector in one years' time. This fell to 70.7%* and 58.6% for three and five years respectively. These figures compare to 89.4%, 75.1% and 60.8% in the previous survey.

Only 3.6%* of respondents indicated that they were unlikely or highly unlikely to still be working in their current sector in one years' time. This rose to 10.0% and 20.0% for three and five years respectively. These figures compare to 3.7%, 8.4% and 14.9% in the previous survey.

Likelihood of working in current sector:



Option	Likely to work in current sector in future:					
	In one year		In three years		In five years	
	Total	Percent**	Total	Percent**	Total	Percent**
Highly likely	110	78.6%	81	57.9%	67	47.9%
Likely	9	6.4%	18	12.9%	15	10.7%
Unsure	16	11.4%	27	19.3%	30	21.4%
Unlikely	2	1.4%	8	5.7%	12	8.6%
Highly unlikely	3	2.1%	6	4.3%	16	11.4%
Total	140	100%	140	100%	140	100%

* Percentages in the table are rounded to 1 decimal place; percentages for combined categories referred to in the text were calculated using the combined number of respondents to these categories, rather than just a summation of the rounded percentage figures for each category (as in the table). When correctly calculated this way, the figures for likely and highly likely to work in their current sector in three years is 70.7%, whereas summing the rounded percentages in the table above would incorrectly sum to 70.8%. The same is the case for the percentage for unlikely and highly unlikely to work in their current sector in one year, which summed using the rounded figures in the table above is 3.5%, but is 3.6% when correctly calculated using the number of respondents.

** Percentage of total respondents

Reasons to stay in current sector/not change²

Multi-response question – respondents could select multiple areas

'Enjoy working in this area of pharmacy' (65.5%, 78) was the most popular reason for wanting to stay in their current sector/not consider a change (of those respondents who had indicated they were highly likely or likely to continue working in their current sector).



Reason to stay in current sector/not change	Total	Percent*
Enjoy working in this area of pharmacy	78	65.5%
Job security	64	53.8%
Limited opportunity to work elsewhere	42	35.3%
Opportunities for professional development	32	26.9%
Approaching retirement	29	24.4%
Team working	29	24.4%
Use full range of my skills	23	19.3%
Defined career pathway	22	18.5%
Multi-professional environment	19	16.0%
Financial incentives	13	10.9%
Professional autonomy	10	8.4%
Other	3	2.5%

* Percentage of those respondents who had indicated they were highly likely or likely to continue working in their current sector

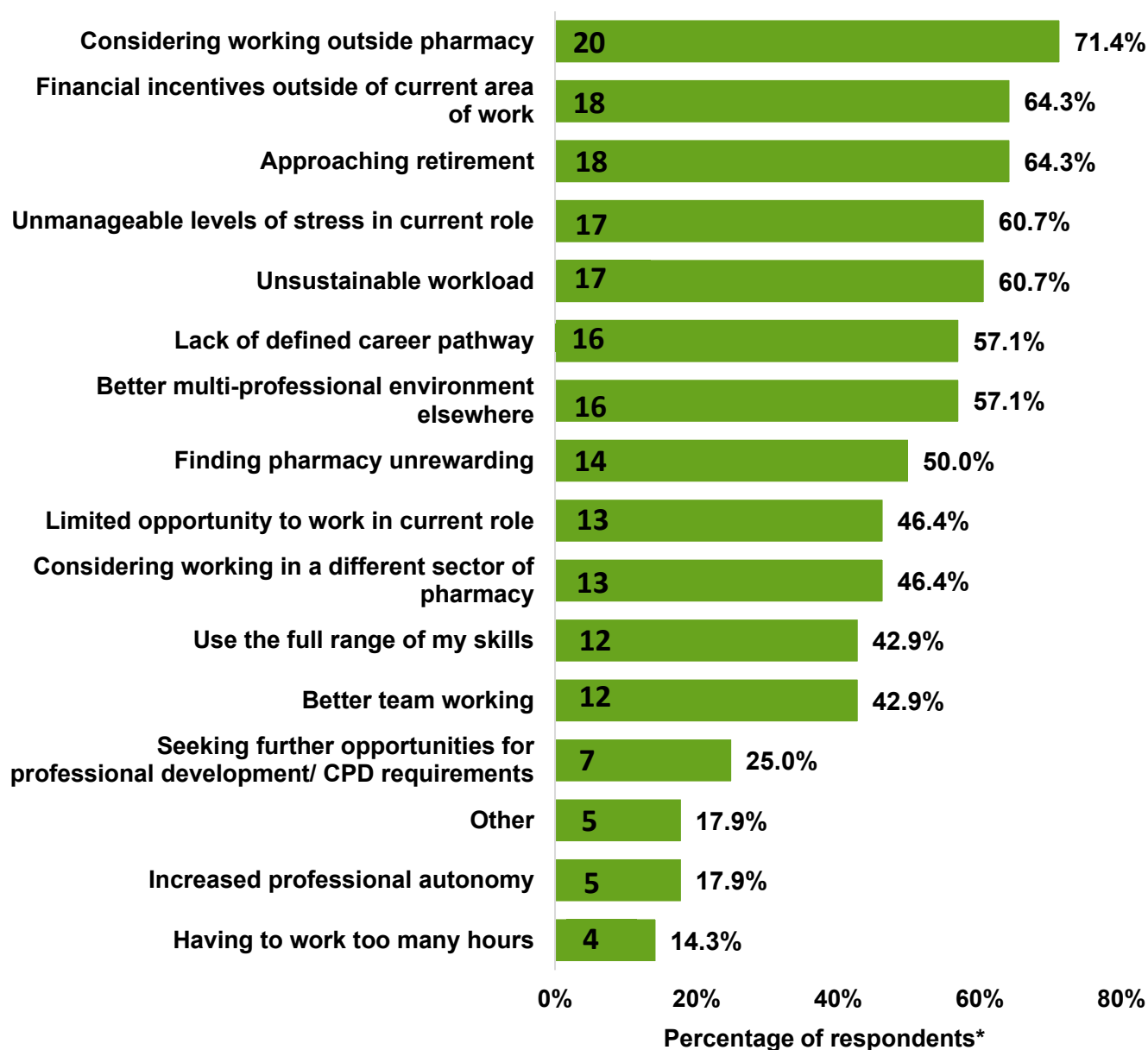
² Respondents could select more than one option, so percentages do not sum to 100% (and totals do not sum to 140 respondents).

Reasons to consider a change in sector²

Multi-response question – respondents could select multiple areas

‘Considering working outside of pharmacy’ (71.4%, 20) was the most popular reason for considering a change in sector (of those respondents who had indicated that they were highly unlikely or unlikely to continue working in their current sector).

Note, the number in the left side of each bar in the chart is the number of respondents who selected each reason. The table in Appendix 3 also presents the raw data for this chart.



* Percentage of those respondents who had indicated that they were highly unlikely or unlikely to continue working in their current sector

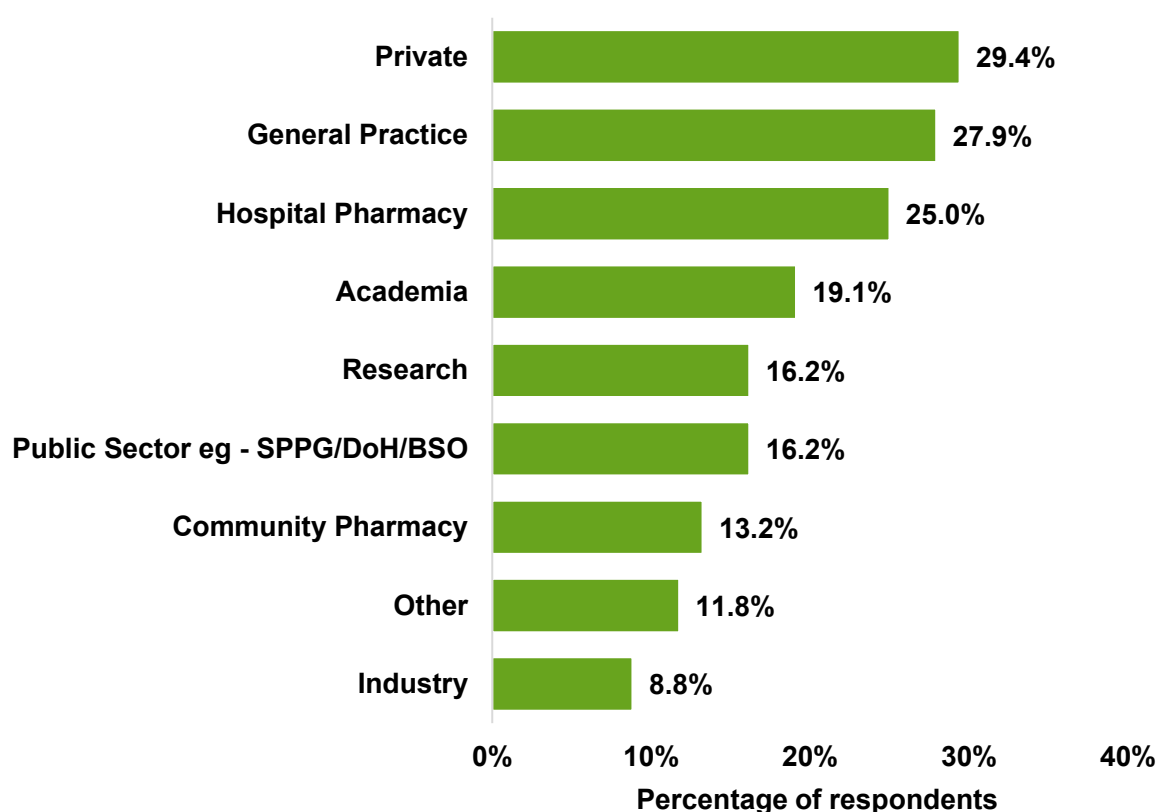
² Respondents could select more than one option, so percentages do not sum to 100% (and totals do not sum to 140 respondents)

Considering working in a different area of pharmacy²

Multi-response question – respondents could select multiple areas

Private pharmacy (29.4%, 20) was the most selected 'different area' of pharmacy respondents indicated they would consider working in.

Note, although 13 respondents indicated that they were considering working in a different area of pharmacy, a total of 68 respondents selected a different area of pharmacy that they were considering working in. All response are included here.



Different area considered	Total	Percent*
Private	20	29.4%
General Practice	19	27.9%
Hospital Pharmacy	17	25.0%
Academia	13	19.1%
Public Sector eg - SPPG/DoH/BSO	11	16.2%
Research	11	16.2%
Community Pharmacy	9	13.2%
Other	8	11.8%
Industry	6	8.8%

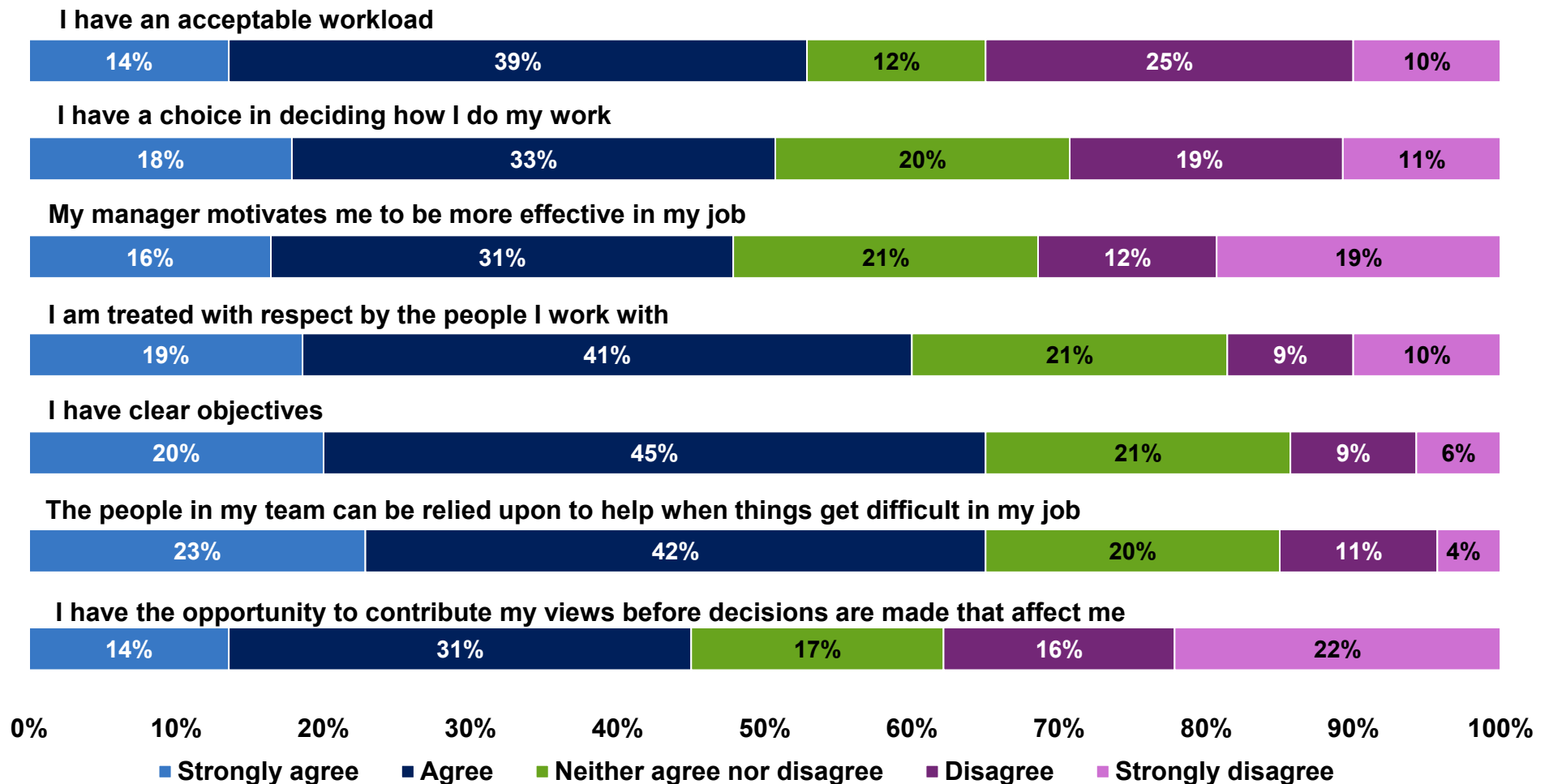
* Percentage of the 68 respondents who selected a different area of pharmacy

² Respondents could select more than one option, so percentages do not sum to 100% (and totals do not sum to 140 respondents)

Well-being Participant responses to the well-being statements are shown in the chart below and in Appendix 4.

65% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statements 'I have clear objectives' and 'The people in my team can be relied upon to help when things get difficult in my job'. Respondents in the previous survey also expressed strong agreement with these statements.

37.9% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement 'I have the opportunity to contribute my views before decisions are made that affect me'. One third of respondents in the previous study also expressed strong disagreement with this statement.



Job satisfaction

Participant responses to the job satisfaction statements are shown in the chart overleaf and in Appendix 5.

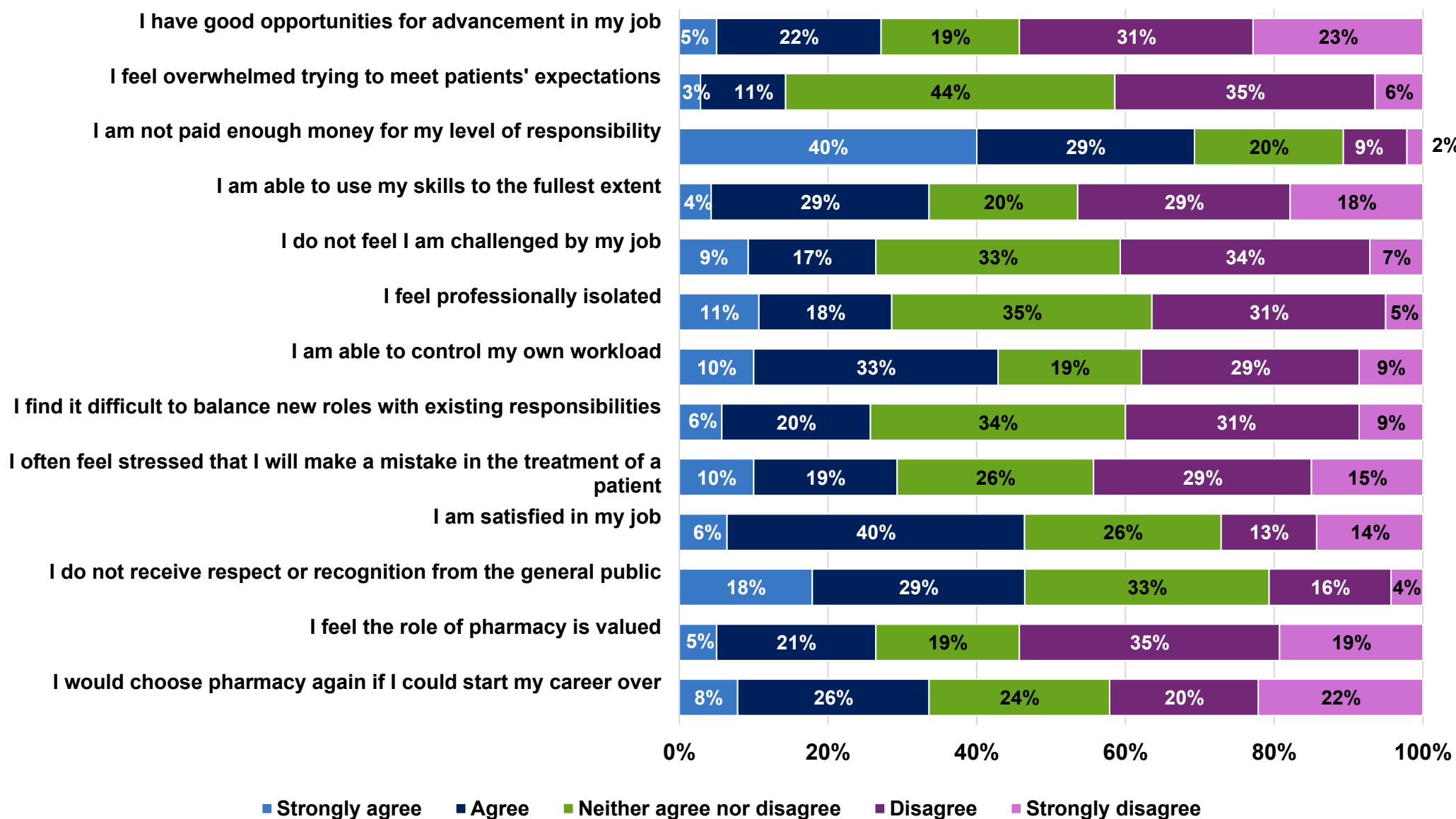
69.3% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement 'I am not paid enough money for my level of responsibility', Respondents in the previous survey also expressed strong agreement with this, with 78.4% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing.

10.7% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement, compared to 6.6% of respondents in the previous survey.

54.3% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statements 'I feel the role of pharmacy is valued' and 'I have good opportunities for advancement in my job'. 'I feel the role of pharmacy is valued' was also the statement with which respondents in the previous survey expressed strongest disagreement, (55.5% disagreed or strongly disagreed).

Job satisfaction continued

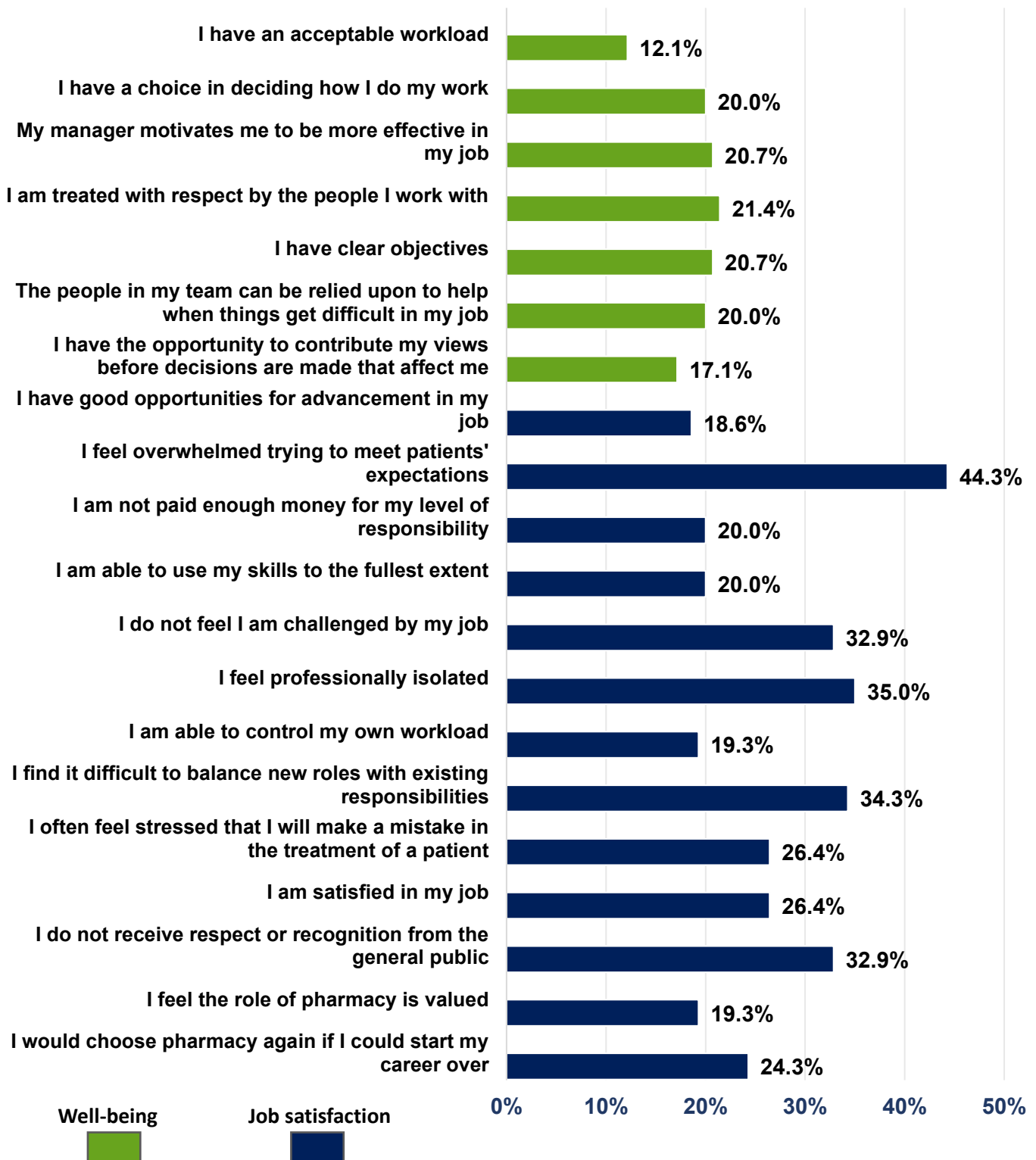
Participant responses to the job satisfaction statements are shown in the chart below and in Appendix 5.



Job satisfaction continued

Respondents generally felt less strongly about the job satisfaction than the well-being statements, with higher percentages answering neutrally ('Neither agree nor disagree') to the job satisfaction well-being statements.

Respondents answering neither agree nor disagree



Conclusions

Overall, the survey findings illustrate a committed and experienced workforce with significant potential to support the future development of pharmacy services in Northern Ireland. To maximise this potential, consideration should be given to strengthening career development pathways, enhancing support for professional practice and development, implementing initiatives to support workforce retention, and increasing recognition of the contribution of pharmacy technicians and pharmacy support staff to patient care and service delivery. Addressing these areas will support professional development, improve workforce sustainability and help ensure the workforce is equipped to meet future service needs.

Appendix 1 Survey questions

General Information

1 What is your gender? Please select only one option.
(Required)

- Female
- Male
- Prefer not to say
- Prefer to self-describe (please complete text box below)
Self-description of gender

2 What is your age? Please select only one option.
(Required)

- <25
- 25 to 34
- 35 to 44
- 45 to 54
- 55 to 64
- 65+

3 What is your ethnicity? Please select only one option.
(Required)

- White
- Irish Traveller
- White and Black Caribbean
- White and Black African
- White and Asian
- Any other mixed/multiple ethnic background
- Indian
- Pakistani
- Bangladeshi
- Chinese
- Any other Asian background
- African
- Caribbean
- Any other Black/African/Caribbean background
- Arab
- Any other ethnic group (Please complete text box below)
Other ethnic group

4 Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

Under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (legislation.gov.uk)
(Required)

Please select only one item

- Yes
- No

Type of Employment

5 Do you work Full-time or Part-time? Please select only one option.
(Required)

- Full-time
- Part-time

Level of qualification

6 What is the highest level of pharmacy qualification that you currently have? Please answer the relevant questions for ONLY ONE of the options (A, B or C), depending on whether you are a pharmacy technician, pharmacy support staff or Student trainee pharmacy technician.

(A) Pharmacy technician qualification
Please select only one item

- Level 3 Diploma in Principles and Practice for pharmacy technicians
- Level 3 Diploma in pharmaceutical science June 2009- 2020
- Level 3 NVQ diploma in pharmacy service skills (see various equivalents)
- BTEC level 3 national certificate in science (pharmaceutical) Pre 2009
- City and Guilds Level 3 Diploma Pharmaceutical Science
- City and Guilds Level 3 Certificate in Pharmacy Services Pre 1990
- Edexcel Level 3 BTEC National Certificate Pharmacy Services
- SQA level 3 National Certificate Pharmacy Services
- Edexcel Level 3 Diploma Pharmaceutical Science
- Buttercups Level 3 knowledge-based programme
- NPA Level 3 Underpinning knowledge programme
- Approved apprenticeship programme
- National Pharmacy Association (NPA) (add any further details in the text box below)
- Other (please answer in text box below)

(A) Pharmacy technician - if you selected 'National Pharmacy Association', please add any further details here

(A) Pharmacy technician - if you selected 'Other' qualification - please add any further details here

(B) Pharmacy support staff - dispensary/Counter Assistant courses
Please select only one item

- Pearsons/Edexcel Level 2 Certificate for Pharmacy Support Staff (add any further details in the text box below)
- Boots UK pharmacy support staff training course (add any further details in the text box below)
- Buttercups course (add any further details in the text box below)
- National Pharmacy Association (NPA) course (add any further details in the text box below)
- Approved apprenticeship programme
- Other (please answer in text box below)

(B) Pharmacy support staff - please add any further details if required

(B) Pharmacy support staff - if you selected 'other', please specify here

(C) Student trainee pharmacy technician - please detail course name and location

7 In what year did you or will you achieve this pharmacy qualification? Please give details in the box below.

Year of qualification (Required)

Level of experience

8 What is the highest level of pharmacy experience that you currently have? Please answer the relevant questions for ONLY ONE of the options (A, B or C), depending on whether you are a pharmacy technician, pharmacy support staff or Student trainee pharmacy technician.

A) Pharmacy technician experience (please select only one item)

- MMAP (medicines management accredited programme)
- Pre and In-process checking accredited programme
- Accuracy checking pharmacy technician accredited programme
- Other (please specify in text box below)

Pharmacy technician - please specify 'other' level of training

(B) Pharmacy support staff experience - please detail your experience in your area of work

(C) Student trainee pharmacy technician - please detail experience and location

9 In what year did you receive this pharmacy course certificate or accreditation? Please give details in the box below.

Year of experience - if you have no certificate or accreditation, please type 'None' (Required)

Workplace experience

10 How many years workplace experience in total do you have? Please select only one option. (Required)

- None
- 0 – 1 year
- 2 – 3 years
- 4 – 5 years
- 5 + years

Registering as a pharmacy technician

11 What support do you feel you will need from your employer to gain registration or other pharmacy qualifications? Please select all that apply.

(Required)

- Financial
- Study time
- Mentoring
- Formal network of peer support
- Access to online resources
- Other – please specify below
- No support required

Other support needed

Opportunities from being registered

12 What opportunities do you think will be available to you by being registered? Please select all that apply. (Required)

- Access to training and professional development
- Recognition of your role as a registered professional
- Being able to contribute to enhanced pharmacy services
- Being responsible and accountable for your own accurate and safe practice
- Development of career pathways
- Other - please specify below

Specify 'other'

Issues of concern

13 Registering as a Pharmacy Technician - what issues are you concerned about? Please select all that apply. (Required)

- Additional educational requirements
- Pace of change
- Time to complete any new registration requirements
- Being regulated, adherence to a Code of Ethics and standards
- Being subject to fitness to practice processes if an incident occurs
- Post registration Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and Revalidation
- Finance - payment of annual fees
- Approaching retirement
- Support from employers
- No issues
- Other - please specify below

Geographical area

14 Which geographical area of Northern Ireland do you work in? Please select all that apply. (Required)

- Belfast Trust area
- Northern Trust area
- South-eastern Trust area
- Southern Trust area
- Western Trust area

Sector(s) in which you work?

15 In which sector(s) do you work? Please select all that apply. (Required)

- Community Pharmacy
- Hospital Pharmacy
- Academia
- Research
- Industry
- Prison
- Other (please add details below)

Sector of work - 'Other'

Main area of work

16 Which sector do you consider to be your main area of work? For respondents who work in 2 sectors, please answer the following questions based on one area only. Please select only one option.
(Required)

- Community Pharmacy
- Hospital Pharmacy
- Other (please specify in the following question)

Other main area of work

17 Please specify the 'other' sector which you consider to be your main area of work. Please select only one option.
(Required)

- Academia
- Industry
- Research
- Prison
- Other (please add details below)

Sector of work - 'Other'

Community Pharmacy (i)

Community Pharmacy (this section is to be completed by pharmacy technician and support staff working in community pharmacy)

18 Which of these options best describe your current job title? Please select only one option.
(Required)

- Employee pharmacy technician
- Employee pharmacy technician and Manager
- Locum pharmacy technician
- Student trainee pharmacy technician
- Community Pharmacy Dispensary assistant
- Community Pharmacy Counter assistant
- Assistant Technical Officer (Band 2/3)/Health Care Assistant
- Other title (please specify below)

Other job title

19 Does your main role currently involve management? Please select only one option.
(Required)

- Yes
- No

Community Pharmacy (ii)

20 Do you see yourself moving into management in the future? Please select only one option.
(Required)

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Community Pharmacy (iii)

21 What type of community pharmacy do you currently work in? Please select all that apply.
(Required)

- Single independent
- Small multiple (2 – 5 pharmacies)
- Medium multiple (6 – 10)
- Large multiple (11+)

22 Where is the community pharmacy in which you work located? Please select only one option.
(Required)

- Rural/semi-rural
- Town/city centre
- All of the above

Hospital, Manufacturing, Industrial Pharmacy (i)

Hospital Pharmacy (this section is to be completed by pharmacy technician and support staff working in either hospital, manufacturing or industrial pharmacy)

23 What is your main role? Please select only one option.
(Required)

- Administration
- Patient facing
- Dispensary
- Management
- Quality assurance/aseptic
- Rotational pharmacy technician
- Education (e.g. training/mentoring/tutoring)
- Industry
- Manufacturing
- Other (please specify below)

Hospital, Manufacturing, Industrial Pharmacy (ii)

24 Do you see your future career moving into management? Please select only one option.
(Required)

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

The Future (i)

This section is to be completed by all pharmacy technicians and support staff.

25 Length of time in current sector? Please select only one option.

(Required)

- 0 – 2 years
- 3 – 5 years
- 6 – 10 years
- 10 +

26 Thinking about the future, how likely is it that you will be working in Northern Ireland in each of the following timeframes? Please select only one item for each timeframe

(Required) Highly likely Likely Unsure Unlikely Highly unlikely

- ☐ In one year
- ☐ In three years
- ☐ In five years

27 Thinking about the future, how likely is it that you will be working in your current sector in each of the following timeframes? Please select only one item for each timeframe

(Required) Highly likely Likely Unsure Unlikely Highly unlikely

- ☐ In one year
- ☐ In three years
- ☐ In five years

The Future (ii)

28 If you answered highly likely/likely for any of the options in the previous question, for what reason(s) would you wish to stay in your current sector of work / not consider a change? Please select all that apply.

(Required)

- Approaching retirement
- Opportunities for professional development
- Defined career pathway
- Professional autonomy
- Enjoy working in this area of pharmacy
- Team working
- Financial incentives
- Use full range of my skills
- Limited opportunity to work elsewhere
- Multi-professional environment
- Job security
- Did not answer highly likely or likely
- Other (please specify below)

29 If you answered highly unlikely/unlikely, for what reason(s) are you considering a change from your current sector? Please select all that apply.

(Required)

- Approaching retirement
- Considering working in a different sector of pharmacy (please see question 30)
- Considering working outside pharmacy
- Finding pharmacy unrewarding
- Seeking further opportunities for professional development/ CPD requirements
- Increased professional autonomy
- Better team working
- Financial incentives outside of current area of work
- Use the full range of my skills
- Limited opportunity to work in current role
- Better multi-professional environment elsewhere
- Having to work too many hours
- Lack of defined career pathway
- Unsustainable workload
- Unmanageable levels of stress in current role
- Did not answer highly unlikely/unlikely
- Other (please specify in text box below)

Other reason for considering a change

The Future (iii)

30 If you are considering a different area of pharmacy, what area of pharmacy are you considering? Please select all that apply.

(Required)

- Academia
- Community Pharmacy
- Hospital Pharmacy
- Public Sector eg - SPPG/DoH/BSO
- General Practice
- Industry
- Research
- Private
- Not applicable - not considering a different area of pharmacy
- Other - please specify below

Other

Well-being

31 Please select a response to each of the following statements in relation to your well-being.

(Required)

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

- I have an acceptable workload
- I have a choice in deciding how I do my work
- My manager motivates me to be more effective in my job
- I am treated with respect by the people I work with
- I have clear objectives
- The people in my team can be relied upon to help when things get difficult in my job
- I have the opportunity to contribute my views before decisions are made that affect me

Job Satisfaction

32 Please select a response to each of the following statements in relation to your job satisfaction.

(Required)

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

- ☐ I have good opportunities for advancement in my job
- ☐ I feel overwhelmed trying to meet patients' expectations
- ☐ I am not paid enough money for my level of responsibility
- ☐ I am able to use my skills to the fullest extent
- ☐ I do not feel I am challenged by my job
- ☐ I feel professionally isolated
- ☐ I am able to control my own workload
- ☐ I find it difficult to balance new roles with existing responsibilities
- ☐ I often feel stressed that I will make a mistake in the treatment of a patient
- ☐ I am satisfied in my job
- ☐ I do not receive respect or recognition from the general public
- ☐ I feel the role of pharmacy is valued
- ☐ I would choose pharmacy again if I could start my career over

Appendix 2 Categorisation of 'Other' text responses

Respondents who selected the 'Other' option to certain questions in the survey were prompted to specify their response in an open text box. These text answers have been put into categories, which are summarised in the following tables. Note, more respondents provided a free text answer to each question than selected the 'Other' option; all text responses have been included in the analysis below. This could not be prevented in the survey structure but may be considered in future surveys. Note, as a text response could be placed in more than 1 category, it would be inaccurate to sum the number of respondents in each table.

Pharmacy technician: What is the highest level of pharmacy experience that you currently have?

'Other' experience category	Number of respondents
No Additional Qualification / N/A	10
MMAP	6
ACPT / Accuracy Checking	4
Leadership / Management	4
Assessor / Education Qualification	3
Pharmacy Technician Qualification	3
Lapsed Accreditation	2
MMAP in process	2
Other	2
Specialist Qualification	2
ACPT + MMAP	1
PIPC	1

Pharmacy support staff: What is the highest level of pharmacy experience that you currently have?

'Other' experience category	Number of respondents
Years of Pharmacy Experience	6
Current Employment and Training	2
Hospital and Community Pharmacy Experience	1
Other	1

Student trainee pharmacy technician: What is the highest level of pharmacy experience that you currently have?

'Other' experience category	Number of respondents
Years of pharmacy experience	4
Other	2
Pharmacy work practice	2
Education/Training in process	1
No Pharmacy Experience	1

What support do you feel you will need from your employer to gain registration or other pharmacy qualifications?

'Other' support category	Number of respondents
Protected Study Time / Time to Complete Training	5
Supervisor/Workplace Support	5
Registration / Regulatory Concerns	4
Training and Qualification Opportunities	4
Training Quality and Course Improvement	2
No Additional Support Required	1

What opportunities do you think will be available to you by being registered?

'Other' opportunities category	Number of respondents
No Opportunities or Change Expected	15
Opposition to Registration/Costs	8
Pay, Banding and Reward	6
Professional Development and Career Opportunities	2
Need More Information or Organisational Support	1
Total	32

Registering as a Pharmacy Technician - what issues are you concerned about?

'Other' issues of concern category	Number of respondents
Cost / Financial Concerns	5
Relevance / Resistance to Registration	5
Role, Responsibility and Accountability	4
Support for Registration, Training and CPD	3
Communication / Information Gaps	2

In which sector(s) do you work?

'Other' sector category	Number of respondents
Pharmacy Administration / Medicines Management	2
Community Pharmacy Experience	1
Healthcare Service Delivery	1
Procurement / Supply Chain	1
Technical services	1

Please specify the 'other' sector which you consider to be your main area of work.

'Other' main sector category	Number of respondents
Community Hospital Services	1
Ward-Based Healthcare Services	1
Pharmacy Administration / Medicines Management	1

Which of these options best describe your current job title?

'Other current job title category	Number of respondents
Pharmacy technician checker	1
Accredited Checking Technician	1
Accuracy checking pharmacy technician	1

Hospital Pharmacy: What is your main role?

'Other' main role category	Number of respondents
Procurement / Medicines Procurement	11
Dispensary / Distribution / Supply	5
Clinical Services / Ward Based	3
Management / Leadership	3
Specialist / Governance	3
Mixed Role / Rotational	2
Clinical trials	2
Healthcare services delivery	2

If you answered highly likely/likely for any of the options in the previous question, for what reason(s) would you wish to stay in your current sector of work / not consider a change?

'Other' reason category	Number of respondents
Employment Stability & Retention	2
Location & Personal Circumstances	2
Career Development & Progression	1

If you answered highly unlikely/unlikely, for what reason(s) are you considering a change from your current sector? Please select all that apply. - Other reason for considering a change

'Other' reason category	Number of respondents
Career Change / Further Education	2
Other	2
Workplace Culture & Management Issues	2
Learning & Development Opportunities	1
Pay & Career Progression	1
Leaving NHS / Sector Change	1

If you are considering a different area of pharmacy, what area of pharmacy are you considering?

'Other' area of pharmacy category	Number of respondents
Alternative Pharmacy Career	3
Direct Patient Care	2
Other	2
Outside Pharmacy	1

Reasons to Consider a Change in Sector

Reason	Number of Respondents	% of Total Respondents
Considering working outside pharmacy	20	71.4%
Approaching retirement	18	64.3%
Financial incentives outside of current area of work	18	64.3%
Unsustainable workload	17	60.7%
Unmanageable levels of stress in current role	17	60.7%
Better multi-professional environment elsewhere	16	57.1%
Lack of defined career pathway	16	57.1%
Finding pharmacy unrewarding	14	50.0%
Considering working in a different sector of pharmacy	13	46.4%
Limited opportunity to work in current role	13	46.4%
Better team working	12	42.9%
Use the full range of my skills	12	42.9%
Seeking further opportunities for professional development/ CPD requirements	7	25.0%
Increased professional autonomy	5	17.9%
Other	5	17.9%
Having to work too many hours	4	14.3%

The number of respondents who chose each option are shown in the table. Note that the 119 respondents were able to choose more than one reason for considering a change in sector.

Well-being Participant responses to the well-being statements are shown in the table below.

Well-being question	Strongly agree		Agree		Neither agree nor disagree		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Agree and Strongly agree*		Disagree and Strongly disagree*	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
I have an acceptable workload	19	13.6%	55	39.3%	17	12.1%	35	25.0%	14	10.0%	74	52.9%	49	35.0%
I have a choice in deciding how I do my work	25	17.9%	46	32.9%	28	20.0%	26	18.6%	15	10.7%	71	50.7%	41	29.3%
My manager motivates me to be more effective in my job	23	16.4%	44	31.4%	29	20.7%	17	12.1%	27	19.3%	67	47.9%	44	31.4%
I am treated with respect by the people I work with	26	18.6%	58	41.4%	30	21.4%	12	8.6%	14	10.0%	84	60.0%	26	18.6%
I have clear objectives	28	20.0%	63	45.0%	29	20.7%	12	8.6%	8	5.7%	91	65.0%	20	14.3%
The people in my team can be relied upon to help when things get difficult in my job	32	22.9%	59	42.1%	28	20.0%	15	10.7%	6	4.3%	91	65.0%	21	15.0%
I have the opportunity to contribute my views before decisions are made that affect me	19	13.6%	44	31.4%	24	17.1%	22	15.7%	31	22.1%	63	45.0%	53	37.9%

* Percentages in the Well-being and Job satisfaction tables are rounded to 1 decimal place and have been calculated using the number of respondents to each option/s and the total number of respondents to the survey. The percentages for agree and strongly agree combined, and disagree and strongly disagree combined, have been calculated using the raw data and not just the summation of the rounded percentages for each of the relevant categories.

Job Satisfaction

Participant responses to the job satisfaction statements are shown in the table below.

Job satisfaction question	Strongly agree		Agree		Neither agree nor disagree		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Agree and strongly agree		Disagree and Strongly disagree	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
I have good opportunities for advancement in my job	7	5.0%	31	22.1%	26	18.6%	44	31.4%	32	22.9%	38	27.1%	76	54.3%
I feel overwhelmed trying to meet patients' expectations	4	2.9%	16	11.4%	62	44.3%	49	35.0%	9	6.4%	20	14.3%	58	41.4%
I am not paid enough money for my level of responsibility	56	40.0%	41	29.3%	28	20.0%	12	8.6%	3	2.1%	97	69.3%	15	10.7%
I am able to use my skills to the fullest extent	6	4.3%	41	29.3%	28	20.0%	40	28.6%	25	17.9%	47	33.6%	65	46.4%
I do not feel that I am challenged by my job	13	9.3%	24	17.1%	46	32.9%	47	33.6%	10	7.1%	37	26.4%	57	40.7%
I feel professionally isolated	15	10.7%	25	17.9%	49	35.0%	44	31.4%	7	5.0%	40	28.6%	51	36.4%
I am able to control my own workload	14	10.0%	46	32.9%	27	19.3%	41	29.3%	12	8.6%	60	42.9%	53	37.9%
I find it difficult to balance new roles with existing responsibilities	8	5.7%	28	20.0%	48	34.3%	44	31.4%	12	8.6%	36	25.7%	56	40.0%
I often feel stressed that I will make a mistake in the treatment of a patient	14	10.0%	27	19.3%	37	26.4%	41	29.3%	21	15.0%	41	29.3%	62	44.3%
I am satisfied in my job	9	6.4%	56	40.0%	37	26.4%	18	12.9%	20	14.3%	65	46.4%	38	27.1%
I do not receive respect or recognition from the general public	25	17.9%	40	28.6%	46	32.9%	23	16.4%	6	4.3%	65	46.4%	29	20.7%
I feel the role of pharmacy is valued	7	5.0%	30	21.4%	27	19.3%	49	35.0%	27	19.3%	37	26.4%	76	54.3%
I would choose pharmacy again if I could start my career over	11	7.9%	36	25.7%	34	24.3%	28	20.0%	31	22.1%	47	33.6%	59	42.1%