



**Ashbrook**  
RESEARCH & CONSULTANCY

**REPORT (FINAL DRAFT)**

**KEY AUDIENCE RESEARCH – EMPLOYER AND  
TRAINING PROVIDER CENTRE AUDIENCES**

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**Report (Final Draft)**

**Key Audience Research –  
Employer and Training Provider Centre  
Audiences**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### SQA's Credibility

- Overall, almost four out of five respondents rated SQA's credibility as being **high** and 1 in 12 believed SQA to have **low** credibility, with perceptions of high credibility being high across all audiences, particularly ETP Teaching Professionals, ETP Managers and ETP Learners
- Between November/December 2022 and February/March 2024, there was virtually no change in terms of the percentage of respondents, overall, who believed SQA to have high credibility
- When those stating their belief that SQA had high credibility were asked – on an unprompted basis – why this was the case, their primary response focused around 'SQA having good and well-recognised qualifications', with secondary responses focusing around SQA 'being a well-known and well-established organisation', 'doing a good job' and 'being Scotland's main Awarding Body'
- Overall, respondents provided an average score of 8.45 out of a possible 10 in terms of their satisfaction with SQA's performance, with average scores being high across all four audiences and rising from 8.15 in the last survey
- Well over four out of five respondents, overall, stated their belief that they knew enough about SQA, with this being most likely amongst ETP Teaching Professionals and ETP Managers and representing a notable increase since the last survey

## SQA Qualifications Profile

- Overall, respondents most commonly stated that they knew enough about Highers, SVQs, HNCs/HNDs and National 5s, if they were aware of each of these qualifications, with lowest levels of belief that enough was known about National 1s, National 2s and National 3s (if respondents were aware of these qualifications)
- Between November/December 2022 and February/March 2024, there were notable decreases in terms of the extent to which respondents believed they knew enough about two qualifications of which they were aware, namely National 1s (with this being primarily driven by ETP Teaching Professionals) and PDAs (with this being primarily driven by ETP Teaching Professionals and ETP Managers)
- Although, since the last survey, there was no notable overall change in perceived high credibility of PDAs, there was an increasing extent to which ETP Teaching Professionals believed these qualifications to have high credibility, which was balanced out by a decreasing extent to which ETP Learners believed this to be the case
- Between November/December 2022 and February/March 2024, there was a notable decrease in terms of the extent to which respondents aware of National 1s believed them to have high credibility (with this primarily being driven by ETP Teaching Professionals)
- Since the last survey, there was a notable increase in perceived high credibility of National 4s amongst those aware of them (with this being primarily driven by Employers)
- Overall, approaching one in five respondents stated that their views on the credibility of all SQA qualifications they had heard of – taken together – had changed over the last year, with this most likely to be the case

amongst ETP Learners and notable falls in this regard since the last survey amongst ETP Teaching Professionals and ETP Managers

- Between November/December 2022 and February/March 2024, there was a decrease in the extent to which respondents stated that their overall views on the credibility of all of the qualifications they had heard of taken together had changed and had become more positive (with this being primarily driven by ETP Teaching Professionals and ETP Managers)
- Since the last survey, there was a decrease in the extent to which respondents stated that their overall views on the credibility of all of the qualifications they had heard of taken together had changed and had become less positive (with, again, this being primarily driven by ETP Teaching Professionals and ETP Managers)
- Between November/December 2022 and February/March 2024, there was an increase in the extent to which respondents stated that their overall views on the credibility of all of the qualifications they had heard of taken together had not changed (with, once again, this being primarily driven by ETP Teaching Professionals and ETP Managers)

### **SQA Contact and Communications Profiles**

- Approaching three out of five respondents stated that they had had contact from SQA (in the case of Employers, ETP Teaching Professionals and ETP Managers) or had contacted SQA (in the case of ETP Learners), with this being far more likely to be the case amongst ETP Managers and ETP Teaching Professionals and contacts increasing since the last survey overall and amongst ETP Teaching Professionals and ETP Learners, but decreasing amongst ETP Managers and Employers
- An average score of 8.84 out of a possible 10 was noted in terms of these contacts, with this rising from 8.40 in the last survey

- Amongst those rating their SQA contacts positively, this was primarily due to 'SQA's quick response to queries' and 'the helpfulness of SQA during their contacts', with increasing references since the last survey being made in this regard to 'SQA being easy to contact' and 'SQA providing relevant information during contacts'
- Respondents provided an average score of 8.53 out of a possible 10 in terms of the appropriateness of the 'level of detail of communications from SQA' (with this outcome being high across all four audiences, representing a notable increase on the rating found since the last survey and being primarily driven by ETP Learners, ETP Teaching Professionals and ETP Managers)
- Respondents provided an average score of 8.59 in terms of 'the clarity of communications from SQA' (with, again, this outcome being high across all four audiences, rising notably since the last survey and being primarily driven by ETP Learners, ETP Teaching Professionals and ETP Managers)
- Respondents provided an average score of 8.51 out of possible 10 in terms of 'the timeliness of communications from SQA' (with this outcome, once again, being high across all four audiences, rising notably since the last survey and being primarily driven by ETP Learners, ETP Teaching Professionals and ETP Managers)
- Respondents provided an average score of 8.62 out of a possible 10 in terms of their overall rating of their communications from SQA, with this positive outcome being apparent across all four audiences, particularly amongst Employers, and representing a notable increase since the last survey
- For those providing a high rating of SQA's overall communications, this was primarily due to 'the clarity of SQA communications'

- A significant majority of respondents noted a preference for direct mail as their preferred communication channel, with notable secondary mention being made in this regard (particularly amongst Employers) to social media being their preferred communication channel
- The vast majority of ETP Teaching Professionals and ETP Managers stated that they understand communications issued by SQA, with this also applying to ETP Teaching Professionals and ETP Managers in terms of their belief that information from SQA helps them to carry out their role
- The vast majority of ETP Teaching Professionals and ETP Managers noted their satisfaction with the quantity of emails received from SQA and, again, the vast majority noted their satisfaction with the frequency of newsletters received from SQA
- Half of ETP Learners believed that the quality of publications they receive from SQA is about right

### **SQA Consultation and Engagement Profile**

- When respondents were asked to rate how well SQA consults or engages with them (in the case of Employers, ETP Teaching Professionals and ETP Managers) and consults or engages with themselves or their peers (in the case of ETP Learners), an average score of 7.62 out of a possible 10 was noted, with this positive outcome being apparent across all four audiences but being slightly – but not statistically significantly – lower than that found in the last survey
- For those providing a high rating of SQA in terms of its consultation and engagement, this was primarily due to the ‘good level and quality of consultation and engagement’



## SQA's Values Profile

- Approaching three quarters of respondents agreed that SQA can be trusted, with this being least likely to be the case amongst Employers and being marginally lower than the outcome found in the last survey. In addition, there was a notable fall in this belief being held by Employers since the last survey, due to the fact that they were more likely to be unable to answer this question in the most recent survey
- Over three out five respondents agreed that SQA enables organisations to carry out their roles effectively, with this being least likely to be the case amongst Employers and being virtually identical to this outcome in the last survey. In addition, although there was a notable decrease in the extent to which Employers believed this to be the case, this was primarily due to Employers being less able to answer this question than in the last survey
- Approaching three out of five agreed that SQA is a progressive organisation, with this being most likely amongst ETP Teaching Professionals and being virtually identical to this outcome found in the last survey. In addition, Employers were less likely to believe this to be the case than in the last survey with, again, this being primarily due to them being less able to answer this question than in the last survey

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Project Background**

This report details findings to emerge from research undertaken on behalf of SQA by Ashbrook Research & Consultancy Ltd.

The research focused on the derivation of information from four respondent types:

- Employers (individuals responsible for training, recruitment or HR)
- ETP Learners (individuals engaged in learning through ETPs)
- ETP Teaching Professionals (individuals with teaching responsibilities within ETPs)
- ETP Managers (individuals with ETP managers' roles in ETPs)

### **1.2 Methodological Approaches, Response Levels and Analysis Protocols**

Data was collected during February and March 2024 by means of the administration of structured telephone interviews with Employers and the administration of an online questionnaire with ETP Learners, ETP Teaching Professionals and ETP Managers.

A total of 148 structured telephone interviews were undertaken with Employers, whilst the following number of online responses were achieved:

- 215 ETP Learners
- 143 ETP Teaching Professionals
- 171 ETP Managers

Equal weightings were applied to the respondent types on the following basis:

- Employers
- ETP Learners
- ETP Teaching Professionals
- ETP Managers

### **1.3 The Questionnaire and Reporting Protocols**

Sections 2.0 to 6.0 inclusive detail findings in relation to each of the areas covered in the questionnaire, namely:

- SQA profile
- SQA qualifications profile
- SQA contact and communication profiles
- SQA consultation and engagement profile
- SQA's values profile

Thereafter, Section 7.0 provides a number of key messages for SQA which emerged from the research.

It should be noted that, where appropriate, this report draws comparisons between the most recent survey and that reported upon in February 2023 (the fieldwork for which was undertaken in November/December 2022).

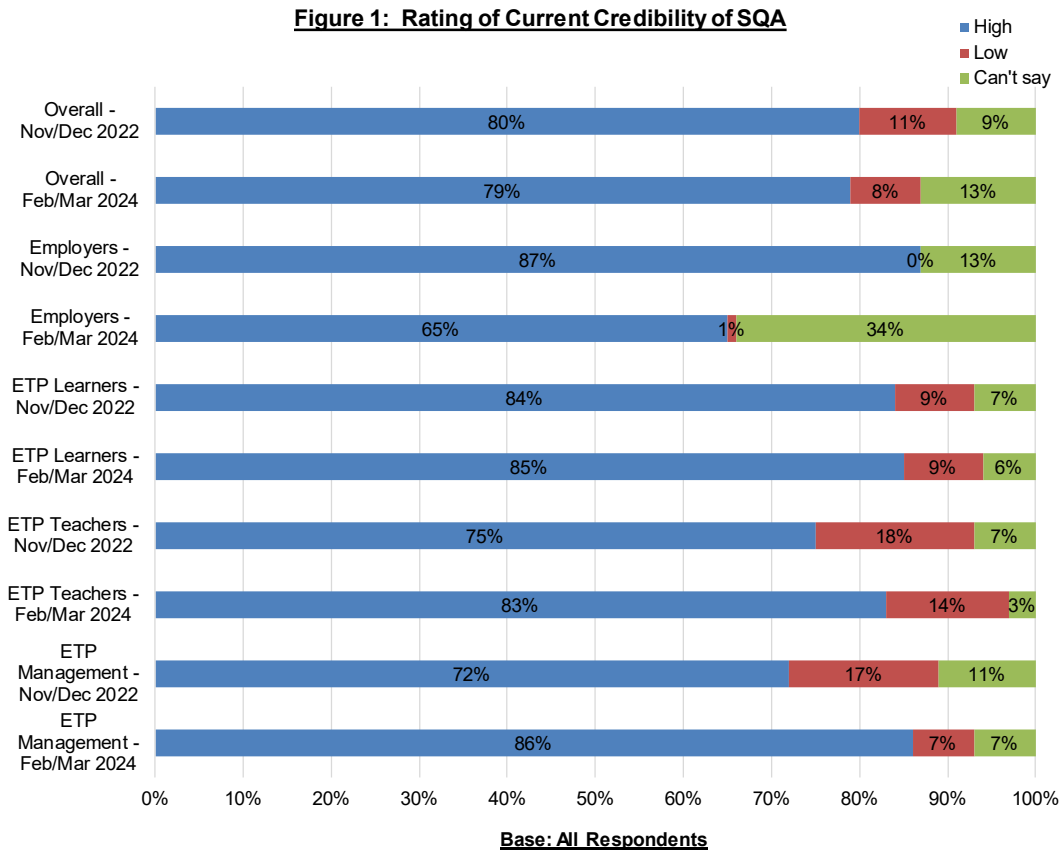
All of the variances noted in this report are statistically significant and it should be stressed that the variances which are cited are the most notable statistically significant variances, and that not all statistically significant variances are cited due to a desire to avoid producing an overly lengthy report.

The statistical tests applied to data to test the significance of variances found in the data samples were determined by the type of data/variable that was being tested and included chi-square tests, t-tests and analysis of variance, with SPSS being used to carry out both survey analysis and statistical testing.

## 2.0 SQA PROFILE

### 2.1 SQA's Credibility

*'How would you rate the current credibility of SQA?'*



From Figure 1, it can be seen that, overall, almost four out of five respondents in 2024 (79%) rated SQA's credibility as being **high**, with this outcome being lowest amongst Employers and consistently higher amongst the remaining three respondent types (65% compared to between 83% and 86% for ETP Teaching Professionals, ETP Learners and ETP Managers).

Figure 1 also indicates that 1 in 12 respondents overall in 2024 (8%) believed SQA to have **low** credibility, with this outcome being lowest amongst Employers (1%) and highest amongst ETP Teaching Professionals (14%).

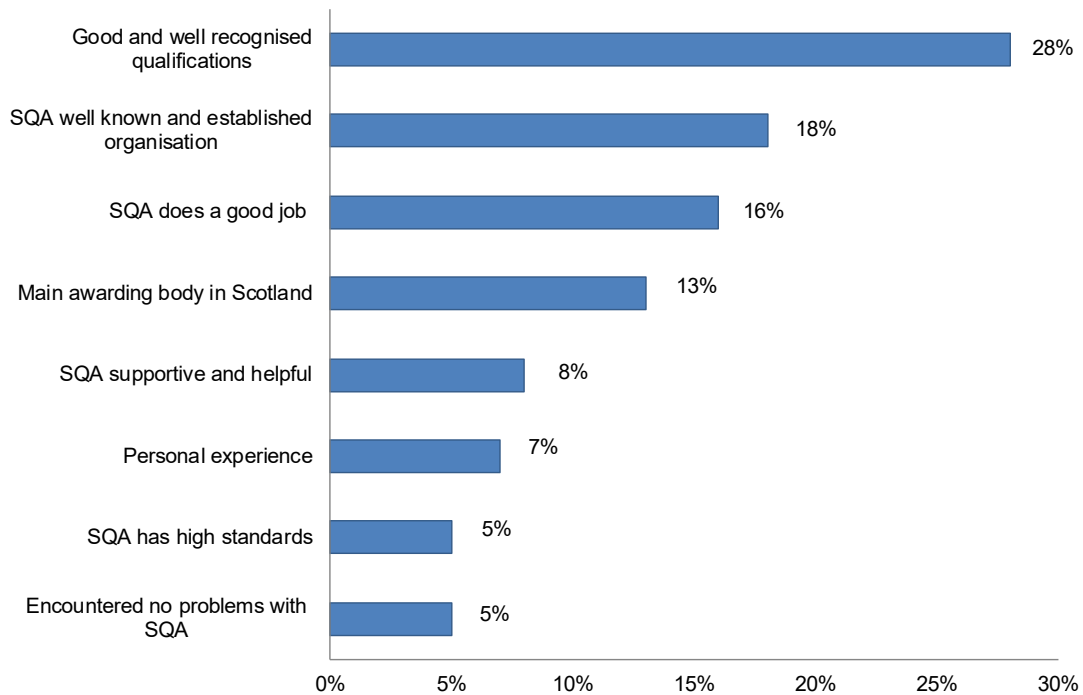
It can also be seen from Figure 1 that, overall, around one in eight respondents in 2024 (13%) provided a '**can't say**' response here, with this outcome being far more prominent amongst Employers (34% compared to between 3% and 7% for those in the remaining three respondent types).

Finally, from Figure 1, it can be seen that, between November/December 2022 and February/March 2024, there was virtually no change in terms of the percentage of respondents, overall, who believed SQA to have **high credibility**. However, during that time, there was a notable decrease in the extent to which Employers believed this to be the case (falling from 87% to 65%), which was due to a significant increase in Employers providing a '**can't say**' response here (rising from 13% to 34%), an increasing extent to which ETP Teaching Professionals believed SQA to have high credibility (rising from 75% to 83%) and an increasing extent to which ETP Managers believed SQA to have high credibility (rising from 72% to 86%).

Further examination of the data also indicated that, since the last survey, there was a decreasing extent to which respondents, overall, believed SQA to have low credibility (falling from 11% to 8%), with this primarily being driven by ETP Managers (falling from 17% to 7%).

*‘Why did you provide a high rating of SQA’s credibility?’*

**Figure 2: Reason for Providing High Rating of SQA Credibility  
(Unprompted)**



**Base: Respondents Believing SQA to Have High Credibility**

From Figure 2, it can be seen that, when those stating their belief that SQA had **high** credibility were asked – on an unprompted basis – why this was the case, their **primary response** focused around ‘SQA having good and well-recognised qualifications’ (28%).

Thereafter, **secondary unprompted mention** was made here of:

- SQA being a well-known and well-established organisation (18%)
- SQA ‘doing a good job’ (16%)
- SQA being Scotland’s main Awarding Body (13%)

Further examination of the data indicated the following differences in terms of a number of the outcomes noted in Figure 2 on the basis of respondent type:

- **SQA having good, well-recognised qualifications:** highest amongst ETP Managers (39%)
- **SQA being a well-known and well-established organisation:** highest amongst ETP Teaching Professionals (24%)
- **SQA doing a good job:** ranging from 16% for both ETP Learners and ETP Managers to 20% for ETP Teaching Professionals
- **SQA being Scotland's main Awarding Body:** highest amongst Employers (18%)

Further examination of the data also indicated that, since the last survey, there was increasing unprompted mention here to 'SQA doing a good job' (rising from 3% to 16%). However, during that time, there was a notable decrease in unprompted reference to 'SQA being a well-known and well-established organisation' (falling from 33% to 18%).

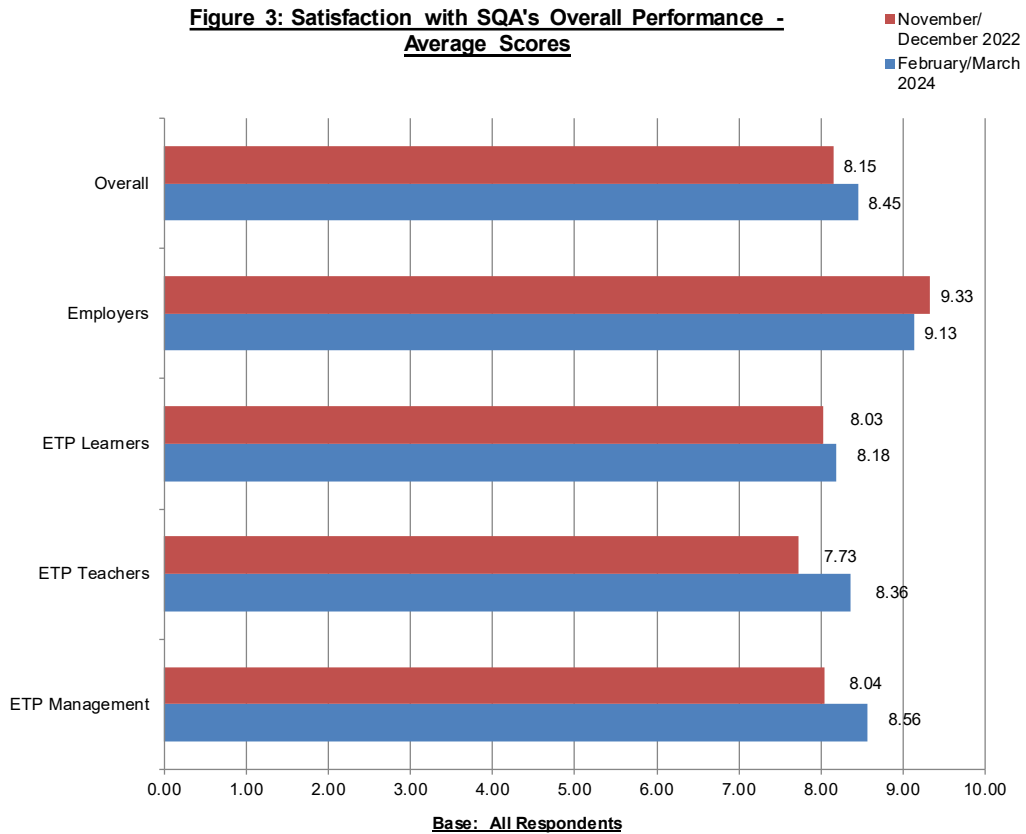
Finally, it should be noted that:

- The subsample of respondents here is insufficient to allow even an indicative breakdown of respondents' ratings of SQA's credibility by respondent type
- There was an insufficient number of respondents believing SQA to have low credibility to note why they believed this to be the case, even on an indicative basis



## 2.2 Satisfaction with SQA's Overall Performance

*'How satisfied would you say you are with the performance of SQA overall, where '1' means 'completely dissatisfied' and '10' means 'completely satisfied'?'*



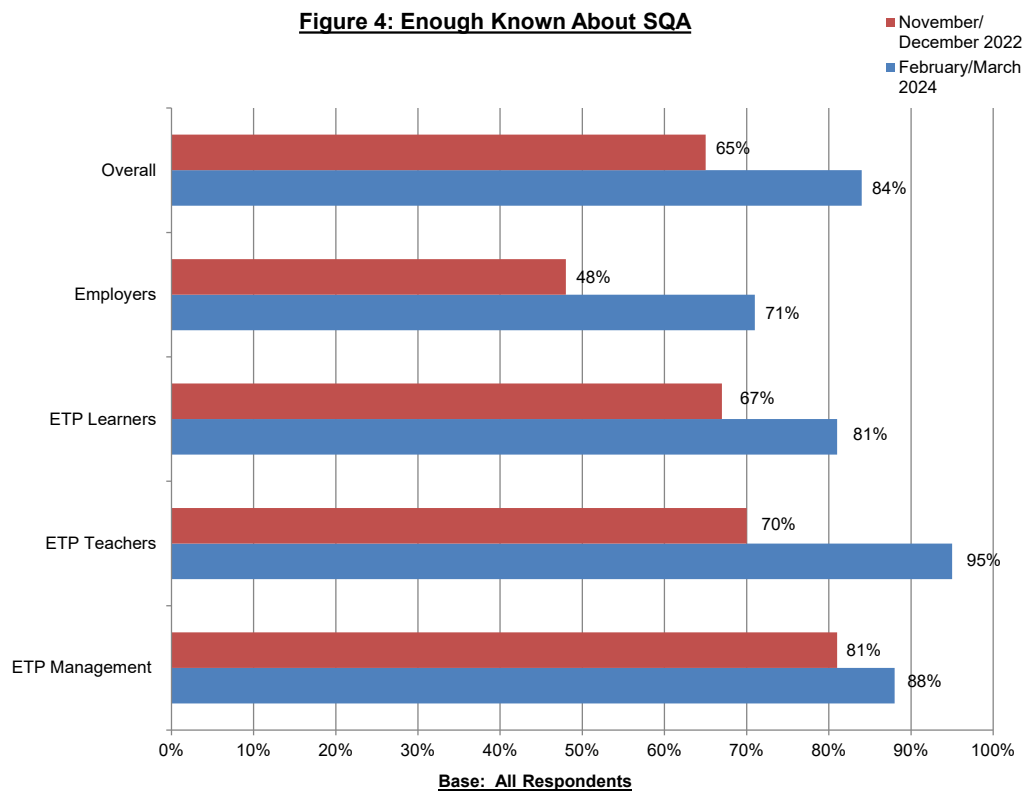
From Figure 3, it can be seen that, overall, respondents in 2024 provided an average score of 8.45 out of a possible 10 in terms of their satisfaction with SQA's overall performance, with **highest levels of satisfaction** being noted by Employers, ie:

- Employers (9.13)
- ETP Managers (8.56)
- ETP Teaching Professionals (8.36)
- ETP Learners (8.18)

Figure 3 also indicates that, overall, there was an increase in levels of satisfaction with SQA’s overall performance between November/ December 2022 and February/March 2024 (rising from 8.15 to 8.45), with this being primarily driven by ETP Teaching Professionals (rising from 7.73 to 8.36) and ETP Managers (rising from 8.04 to 8.56). In this regard, however, it should be noted that, since the last survey, Employers noted a lower level of overall satisfaction with SQA’s performance (falling from 9.33 to 9.13).

### 2.3 SQA Knowledge and Information Profile

*‘Do you believe you know enough about SQA?’*



From Figure 4, it can be seen that, overall, well over four out of five respondents in 2024 (84%) stated their belief that they knew enough about SQA, with this outcome being **highest** amongst ETP Teaching Professionals and lowest amongst Employers, ie:

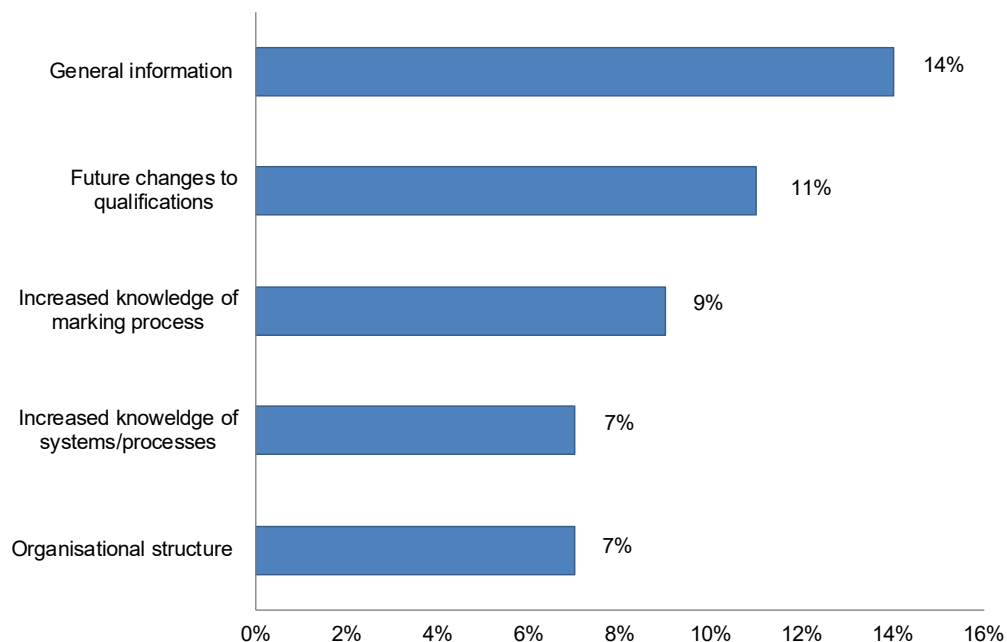
- ETP Teaching Professionals (95%)
- ETP Managers (88%)
- ETP Learners (81%)
- Employers (71%)

Further examination of the data indicated that, since the last survey, there was an increasing belief amongst respondents that they knew enough about SQA:

- Overall (rising from 65% to 84%)
- Employers (rising from 48% to 71%)
- ETP Learners (rising from 67% to 81%)
- ETP Teaching Professionals (rising from 70% to 95%)
- ETP Managers (rising from 81% to 88%)

*‘What would you like to know more about SQA?’*

**Figure 5: Knowledge Desires re SQA (Unprompted) - Indicative**



**Base: Respondents Not Knowing Enough About SQA**

When respondents stating that they didn't know enough about SQA were asked – on an unprompted basis – what they would like to know more about it, Figure 5 indicates that the two **most prominent** unprompted outcomes were desires for:

- General information about SQA (14%)
- Information about future changes to qualifications (11%)

It should be stressed that these outcomes are on an indicative basis due to the small proportion of respondents believing they did not know enough about SQA and that the subsample here is insufficient to allow a meaningful breakdown of outcomes on the basis of respondent type.

### 3.0 SQA QUALIFICATIONS PROFILE

#### 3.1 Qualification Knowledge and Credibility<sup>1</sup>

*‘Do you think you know enough about the qualifications of which you are aware?’*

**Table 1: Enough Known About Qualifications of Which Respondents Are Aware**

	Overall		Employers		ETP Learners		ETP Teachers		ETP Management	
	Nov/Dec 2022	Feb/Mar 2024	Nov/Dec 2022	Feb/Mar 2024	Nov/Dec 2022	Feb/Mar 2024	Nov/Dec 2022	Feb/Mar 2024	Nov/Dec 2022	Feb/Mar 2024
National 1s	23%	27%	0%	6%	55%	51%	54%	27%	30%	32%
National 2s	29%	30%	0%	6%	55%	56%	51%	28%	30%	39%
National 3s	42%	36%	0%	6%	69%	63%	54%	33%	31%	49%
National 4s	63%	60%	46%	52%	82%	76%	57%	54%	40%	60%
National 5s	73%	74%	75%	83%	80%	80%	67%	64%	55%	65%
Highers	74%	88%	98%	99%	93%	91%	75%	78%	67%	80%
Advanced Highers	74%	68%	77%	78%	77%	76%	61%	44%	53%	58%
HNCs/HNDs	81%	80%	98%	97%	70%	77%	79%	68%	69%	71%
PDAAs	61%	57%	47%	36%	48%	62%	84%	59%	86%	69%
SVQs	84%	88%	92%	86%	74%	87%	95%	87%	93%	94%

<sup>1</sup> The data presented regarding qualification credibility is based on those aware of a qualification who expressed an opinion regarding its credibility (ie excludes can't say responses). It should also be noted that, in the case of National 1s to National 3s, all Employers stated that they didn't know about these qualifications in November/December 2022.

From Table 1, it can be seen that, in 2024, overall, respondents **most commonly** stated that they knew enough about the following qualifications of which they were aware:

- Highers (88%)
- SVQs (88%)
- HNCs/HNDs (80%)
- National 5s (74%)

Table 1 also indicates that the **lowest levels** of belief that enough was known about qualifications of which respondents were aware related to:

- National 1s (27%)
- National 2s (30%)
- National 3s (36%)

Further examination of the data in Table 1 indicated that, in 2024, **highest levels** of belief that enough was known about qualifications of which respondents were aware were noted by the audience types indicated below:

- **National 1s:** ETP Learners (51%)
- **National 2s:** ETP Learners (56%)
- **National 3s:** ETP Learners and ETP Managers (63% and 49% respectively)
- **National 4s:** ETP Learners and ETP Managers (76% and 60% respectively)
- **National 5s:** Employers and ETP Learners (83% and 80% respectively)
- **Highers:** Employers (99%)
- **Advanced Highers:** Employers and ETP Learners (78% and 76% respectively)

- **HNCs/HNDs:** Employers (97%)
- **PDAs:** ETP Managers, ETP Learners and ETP Teaching Professionals (69%, 62% and 59% respectively)
- **SVQs:** ETP Managers (94%)

Table 1 also indicates that, between November/December 2022 and February/March 2024, there was an **increase** in the extent to which those aware of Highers believed them to have high credibility (rising from 74% to 88%).

In contrast, during that time, there was a **decrease** amongst those aware of National 3s in terms of their belief that they know enough about these qualifications (falling from 42% to 36%).

*‘How would you rate the credibility of qualifications of which you are aware?’*

**Table 2: Perceived High Credibility of Qualifications of Which Respondents Are Aware**

	Overall		Employers		ETP Learners		ETP Teachers		ETP Management	
	Nov/Dec 2022	Feb/Mar 2024	Nov/Dec 2022	Feb/Mar 2024	Nov/Dec 2022	Feb/Mar 2024	Nov/Dec 2022	Feb/Mar 2024	Nov/Dec 2022	Feb/Mar 2024
National 1s	61%	60%	N/A	43%	63%	63%	72%	52%	86%	67%
National 2s	53%	61%	N/A	43%	59%	63%	68%	53%	86%	71%
National 3s	43%	64%	N/A	29%	70%	62%	64%	63%	82%	73%
National 4s	50%	79%	73%	87%	71%	67%	76%	75%	86%	88%
National 5s	93%	92%	98%	100%	97%	84%	83%	89%	69%	92%
Highers	97%	96%	100%	100%	97%	91%	92%	95%	90%	95%
Advanced Highers	97%	95%	100%	100%	96%	93%	95%	89%	88%	94%
HNCs/HNDs	94%	97%	100%	100%	98%	95%	79%	93%	81%	98%
PDAs	92%	90%	89%	91%	100%	85%	88%	94%	91%	91%
SVQs	94%	96%	100%	100%	95%	96%	91%	95%	85%	92%



From Table 2, it can be seen that, in February/March 2024, the qualifications of which respondents were aware and were most commonly perceived to have **high credibility** were:

- HNCs/HNDs (97%)
- Highers (96%)
- SVQs (96%)
- Advanced Highers (95%)
- National 5s (92%)
- PDAs (90%)

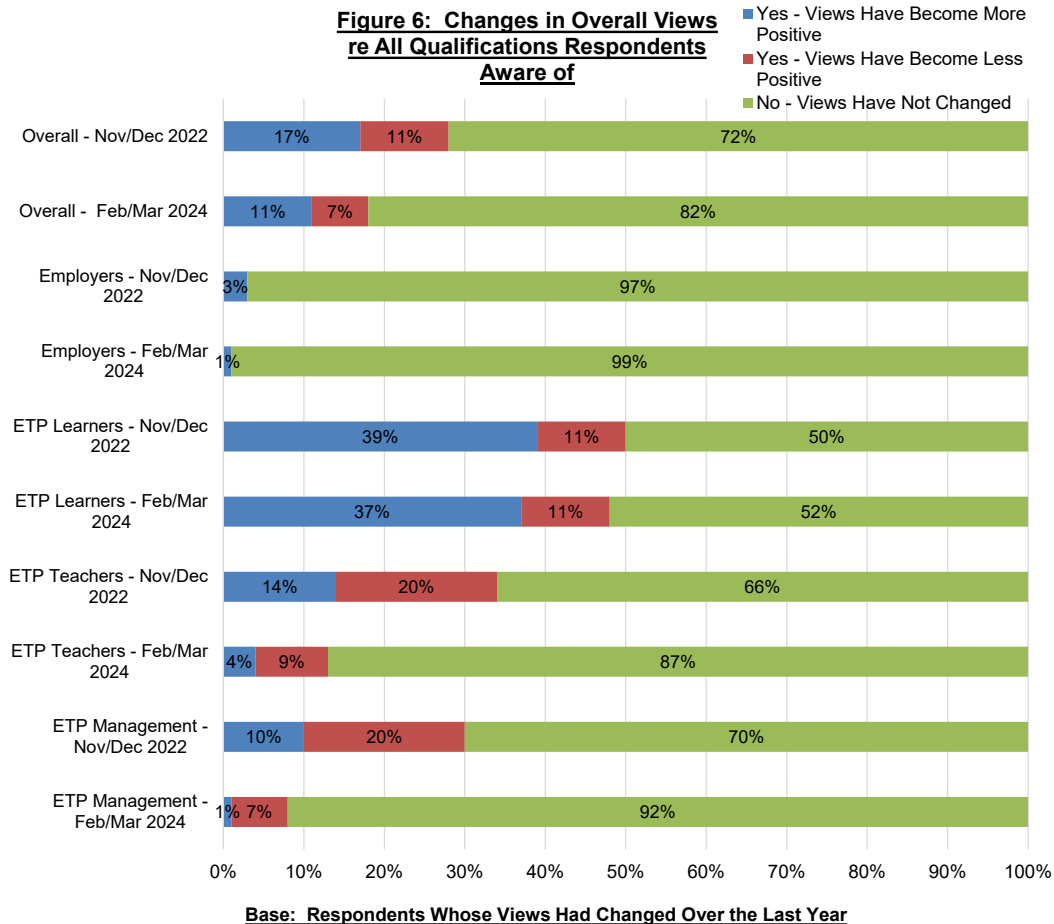
Table 2 also indicates that, between November/December 2022 and February/March 2024, there were notable increases in perceived high credibility of those who were aware of:

- National 2s (rising from 53% to 61%)
- National 3s (rising from 43% to 64%)
- National 4s (rising from 50% to 79%)

It should also be noted from Table 2 that, between November/December 2022 and February/March 2024, there were no notable decreases in terms of perceived high credibility of any of the qualifications of which respondents were aware.

### 3.2 Changes in Views About SQA Qualifications

*‘How have your overall views on the credibility of all of the qualifications you have heard of taken together changed over the last year?’*



From Figure 6, it can be seen that, overall, approaching one in five respondents in February/March 2024 (18%) stated that their views on the credibility of all qualifications they had heard of – taken together – had changed over the last year, with this outcome being most common amongst ETP Learners and least common amongst Employers, ie:

- ETP Learners (48%)
- ETP Teaching Professionals (13%)
- ETP Managers (8%)
- Employers (1%)

Figure 6 also indicates that, overall, around 1 in 10 respondents in February/March 2024 (11%) stated that their views had changed and become **more positive**, with this being most likely to be the case amongst ETP Learners (37%).

Figure 6 also indicates that around 1 in 12 respondents in February/March 2024 (7%) – whose views on qualifications had changed – stated that they had become **less positive**, with this most likely to be the case amongst ETP Learners (11%).

Furthermore, Figure 6 indicates that, overall, over four out of five respondents in February/March 2024 (82%) – whose views on qualifications of which they had heard – stated that their views **hadn't changed**, with this most likely to be the case amongst Employers, ETP Managers and ETP Teaching Professionals (99%, 92% and 87% respectively).

In terms of changes since the last survey, it can be seen from Figure 6 that it was apparent that there was:

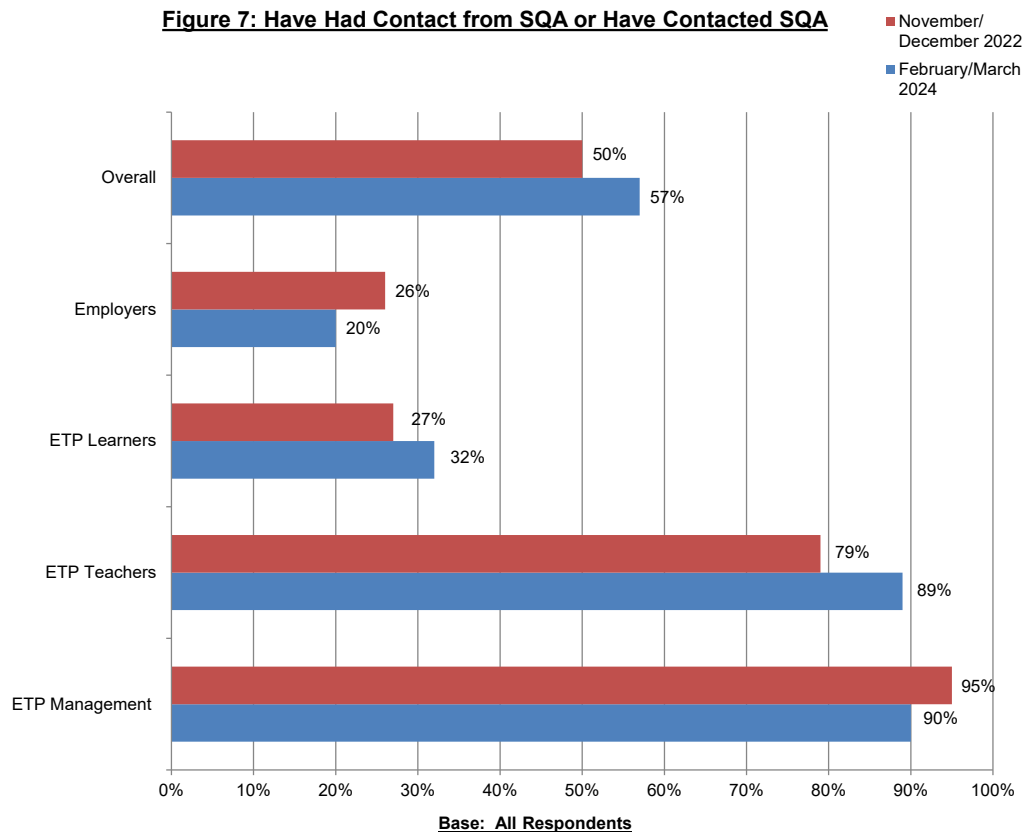
- A **decrease** in the extent to which respondents stated that their views had changed and had become more positive (falling from 17% to 11%), with this being primarily driven by:
  - ETP Teaching Professionals (falling from 14% to 4%)
  - ETP Managers (falling from 10% to 1%)
- A **decrease** in the extent to which respondents stated that their views had changed and become less positive (falling from 11% to 7%), with this being primarily driven by:
  - ETP Teaching Professionals (falling from 20% to 9%)
  - ETP Managers (falling from 20% to 7%)
- An **increase** in the extent to which respondents stated that their views had not changed (rising from 72% to 82%), with this primarily being driven by:
  - ETP Teaching Professionals (rising from 66% to 87%)

- ETP Managers (rising from 70% to 92%)

## 4.0 SQA CONTACT AND COMMUNICATIONS PROFILES

### 4.1 Contact Profile

*‘Have you had contact from SQA or have you contacted SQA?’*



From Figure 7, it can be seen that approaching three out of five respondents in 2024 (57%) stated that they had had contact from SQA (in the case of Employers, ETP Teaching Professionals and ETP Managers) or had contacted SQA (in the case of ETP Learners).

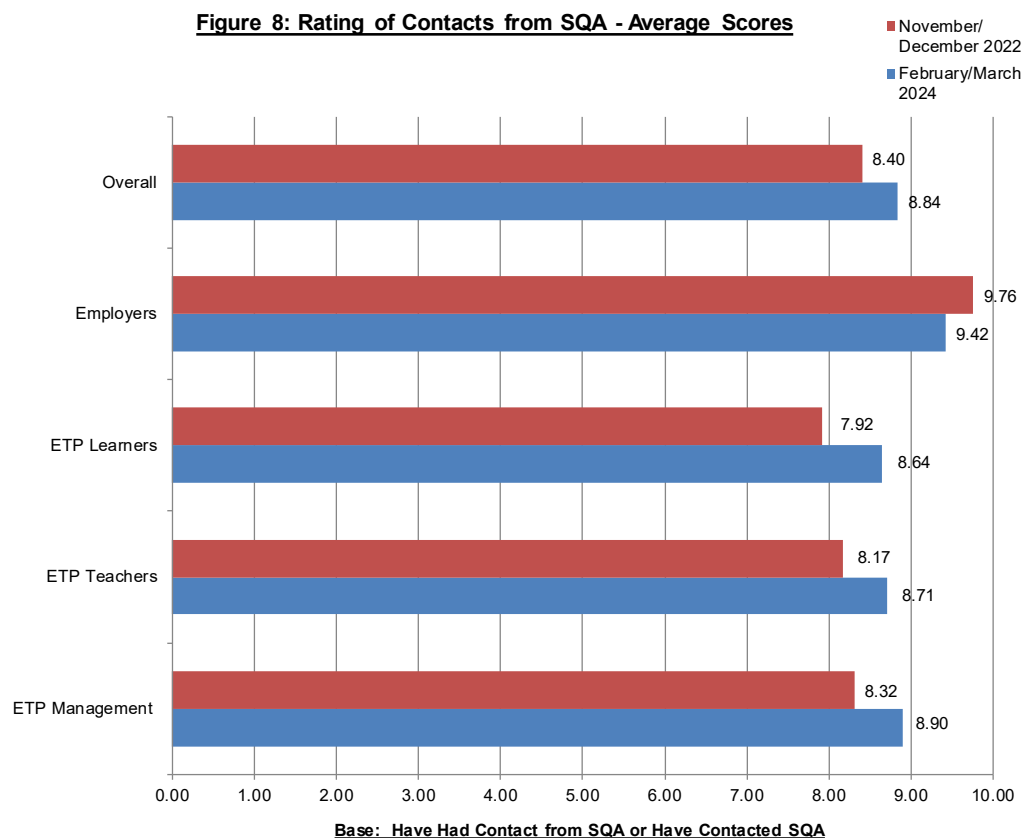
Figure 7 also indicates that SQA contacts were **far greater** amongst ETP Managers and ETP Teaching Professionals, ie:

- ETP Managers (90%)
- ETP Teaching Professionals (89%)
- ETP Learners (32%)
- Employers (20%)

Finally, Figure 7 indicates that, since the last survey:

- There was an increasing reference to contacts overall (rising from 50% to 57%)
- There was increasing reference to contacts amongst ETP Teaching Professionals and ETP Learners (rising from 79% to 89% and 27% to 32% respectively)
- There was decreasing reference to contacts amongst ETP Managers and Employers (falling from 95% to 90% and 26% to 20% respectively)

*‘How would you rate your contact from SQA or contact with SQA, on a scale from 1 to 10, where ‘1’ is ‘very poor’ and ‘10’ is ‘very good’?’*



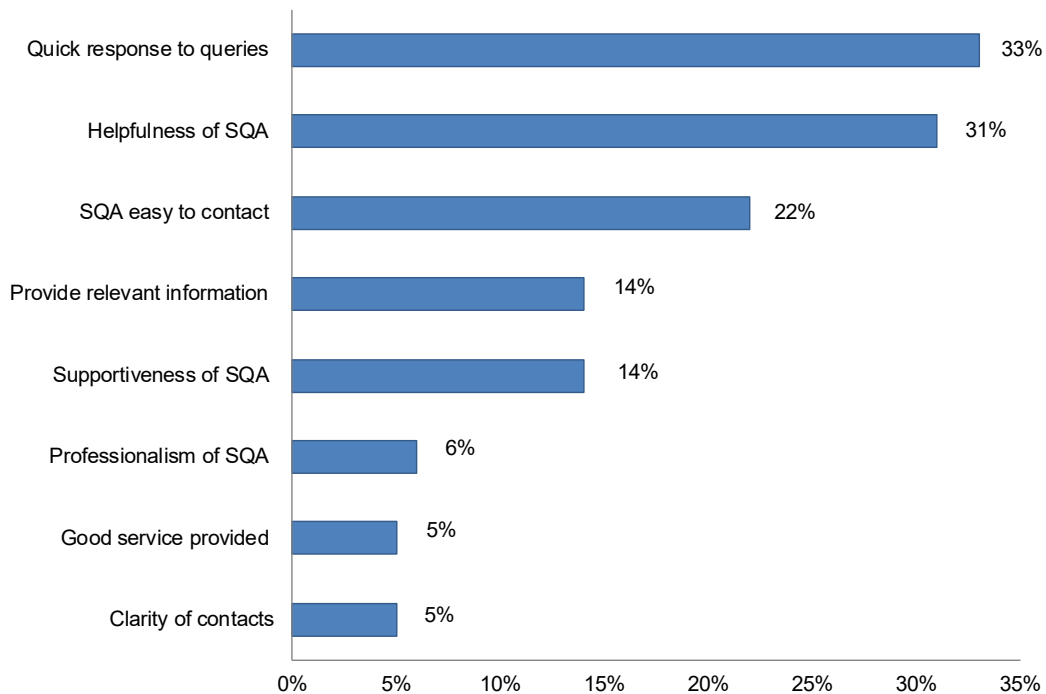
From Figure 8, it can be seen that, when respondents were asked how they rated their contact from SQA (in the case of Employers, ETP Teaching Professionals and ETP Managers) and contact with SQA (in the case the ETP Learners), an average score of 8.84 out of a possible

10 was noted, with this outcome being highest amongst Employers (9.42 compared to between 8.64 and 8.90 for the three remaining respondent types).

Figure 8 also indicates that, since the last survey, there was an overall increase in the mean score here (rising from 8.40 to 8.84), with this increase being apparent across each of the four audiences.

*‘Why did you choose a positive rating for SQA contacts?’*

**Figure 9: Reasons for Choosing Positive Rating of SQA Contacts (Unprompted)**



**Base: Provided Rating of 6 to 10**

Figure 9 indicates that, when those noting a positive rating in terms of SQA contacts (ie provided a rating of between 6 and 10) were asked (on an unprompted basis) why this was the case, their **primary responses** were:

- SQA’s quick response to queries (33%)
- The helpfulness of SQA during their contacts (31%)

Thereafter, **secondary unprompted mention** was made here of:

- SQA being easy to contact (22%)
- SQA providing relevant information during contacts (14%)
- The supportiveness of SQA during contacts (14%)

Further examination of the data indicated that the following respondent types were most likely to make unprompted reference to the responses noted below, namely:

- **SQA's quick response to queries:** ETP Managers and ETP Teaching Professionals (37% and 36% respectively)
- **SQA being helpful during contacts:** ETP Learners (41%)
- **SQA being easy to contact:** ETP Teaching Professionals (34%)
- **SQA providing relevant information during contacts:** ETP Learners (21%)
- **The supportiveness of SQA during contacts:** ETP Managers and ETP Teaching Professionals (17% and 15% respectively)

Further examination of the data indicated that, since the last survey, increasing reference was made to respondents choosing a positive rating of their SQA contacts due to:

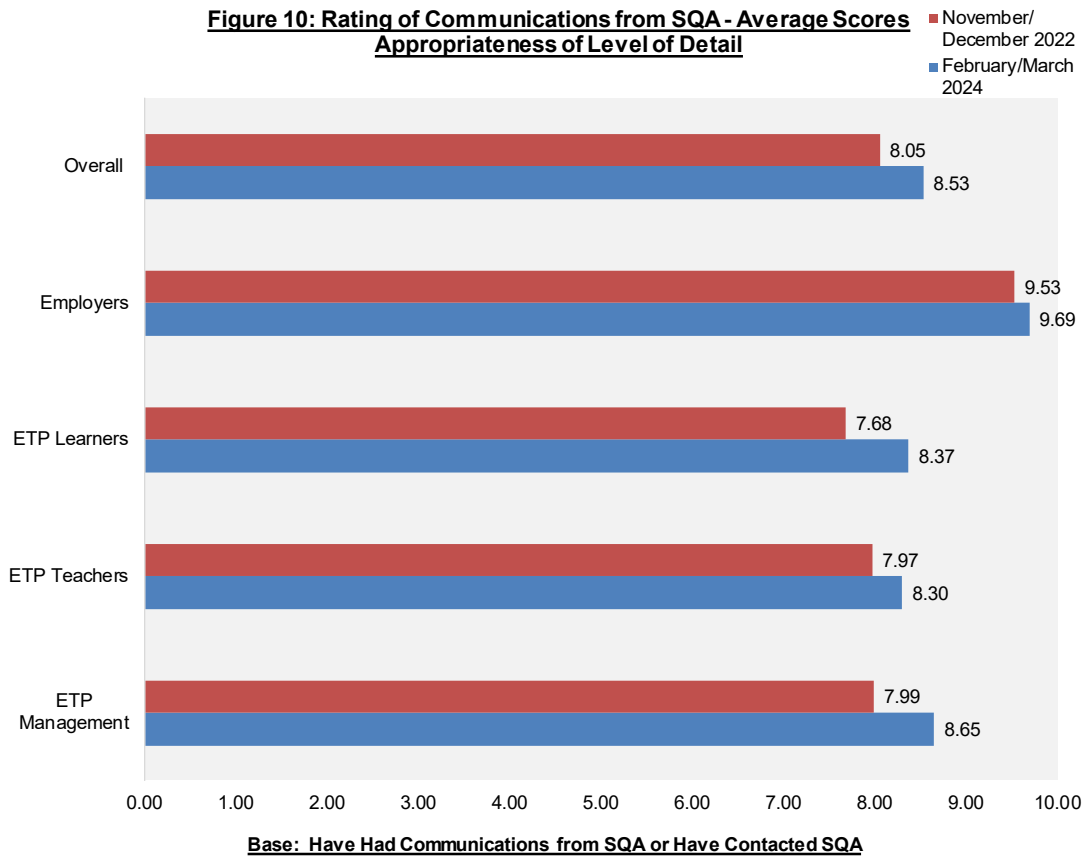
- SQA being easy to contact (rising from 6% to 22%)
- SQA providing relevant information during contacts (rising from 9% to 14%)

However, during that time, there was a decreasing extent to which respondents made reference here to 'SQA's quick response to queries' (falling from 37% to 33%).



## 4.2 Communications Profile

*‘How would you rate the appropriateness of the level of detail of communications from SQA, on a scale from 1 to 10, where ‘1’ is ‘very poor’ and ‘10’ is ‘very good’?’*



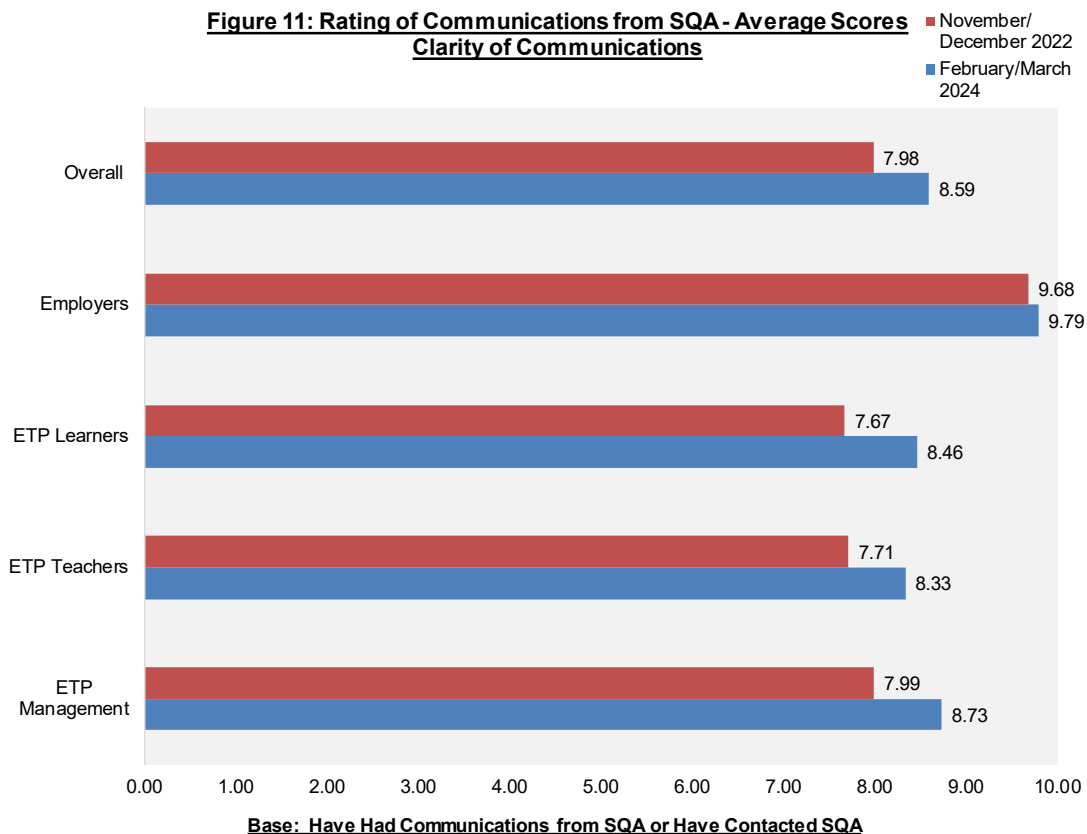
From Figure 10, it can be seen that respondents in February/March 2024 provided an average score of 8.53 out of a possible 10 in terms of the **appropriateness of the level of detail of communications from SQA**, with this outcome being highest amongst Employers:

- Employers (9.69)
- ETP Managers (8.65)
- ETP Learners (8.37)
- ETP Teaching Professionals (8.30)

Figure 10 also indicates that, between November/December 2022 and February/March 2024, there was a notable increase in the rating of the appropriateness of the level of detail of communications from SQA overall (rising from 8.05 to 8.53), with this being primarily driven by three audiences:

- ETP Learners (rising from 7.68 to 8.37)
- ETP Teaching Professionals (rising from 7.97 to 8.30)
- ETP Managers (rising from 7.99 to 8.65)

*‘How would you rate the clarity of communications from SQA, on a scale from 1 to 10, where ‘1’ is ‘very poor’ and ‘10’ is ‘very good’?’*



From Figure 11, it can be seen that respondents in 2024 provided an average score of 8.59 out of a possible 10 in terms of **clarity of communications from SQA**, with this outcome, again, being highest amongst Employers, ie:

- Employers (9.79)
- ETP Managers (8.73)
- ETP Learners (8.46)
- ETP Teaching Professionals (8.33)

Figure 11 also indicates that, since the last survey, the overall rating of the clarity of communications from SQA rose notably (from 7.98 to 8.59), with this being primarily driven by three audiences, namely:

- ETP Learners (rising from 7.67 to 8.46)
- ETP Teaching Professionals (rising from 7.71 to 8.33)
- ETP Managers (rising from 7.99 to 8.73)

*‘How would you rate the timeliness of communications from SQA, on a scale from 1 to 10, where ‘1’ is ‘very poor’ and ‘10’ is ‘very good’?’*

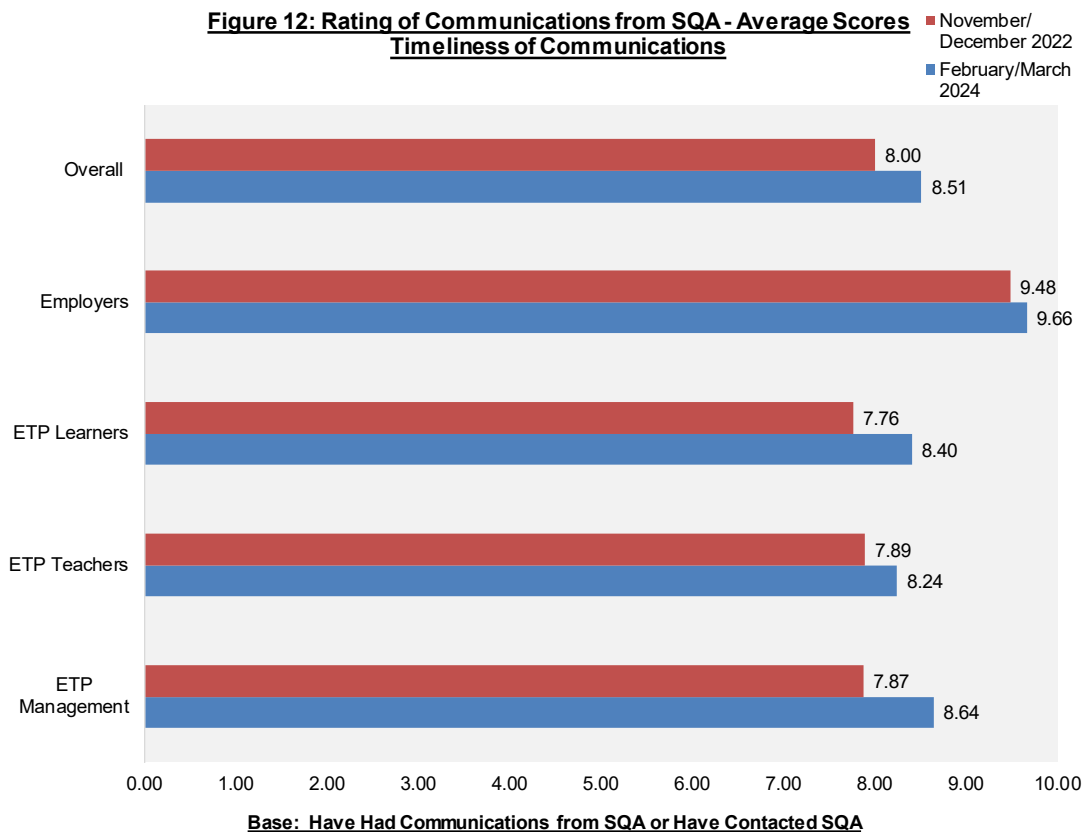


Figure 12 indicates that, in February/March 2024, respondents provided an average score of 8.51 out of a possible 10 in terms of the **timeliness of communications from SQA**, with this outcome, once again, being highest amongst Employers, ie:

- Employers (9.66)
- ETP Managers (8.64)
- ETP Learners (8.40)
- ETP Teaching Professionals (8.24)

It can also be seen from Figure 12 that, between November/December 2022 and February/March 2024, there was a notable increase in the rating of the timeliness of communications from SQA (rising from 8.00 to 8.51) with, again, this increase being primarily driven by three audiences:

- ETP Learners (rising from 7.76 to 8.40)
- ETP Teaching Professionals (rising from 7.89 to 8.24)
- ETP Managers (rising from 7.87 to 8.64)

*‘Overall, how would you rate communications from SQA, on a scale from 1 to 10, where ‘1’ is ‘very poor’ and ‘10’ is ‘very good’?’*

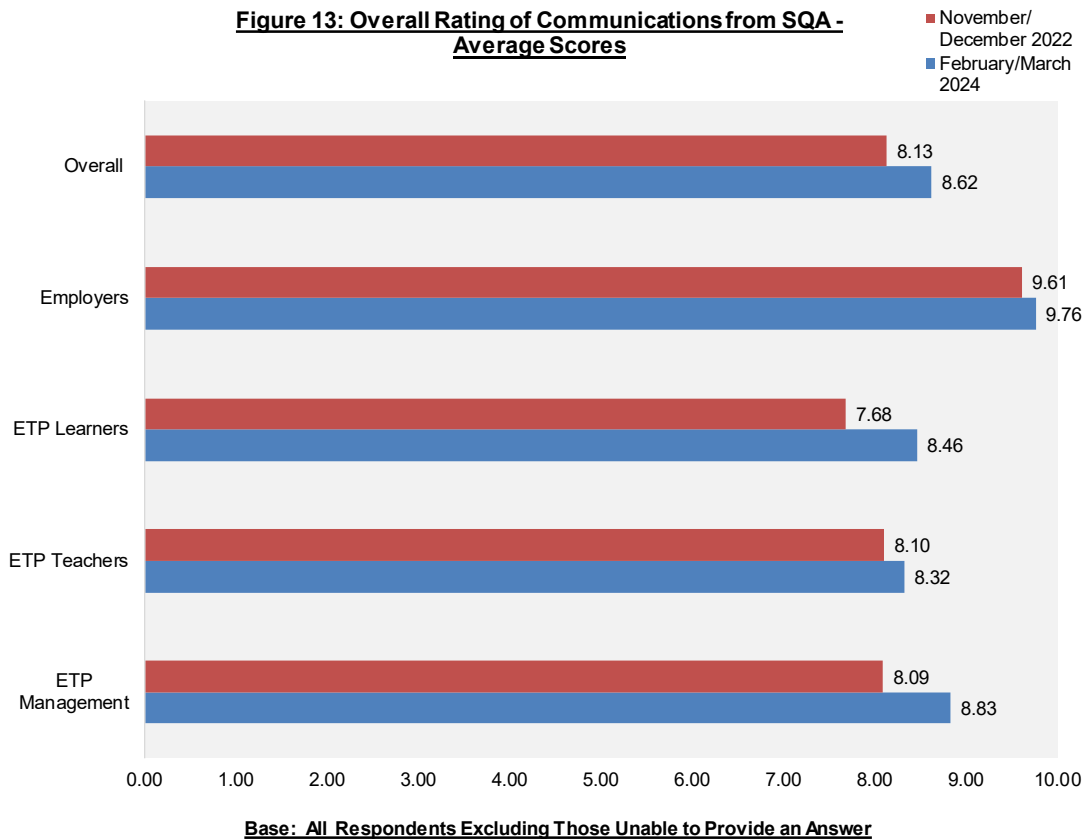


Figure 13 indicates that an average score of 8.62 out of a possible 10 was provided by respondents in terms of their **overall rating of their communications from SQA**, with this outcome being highest amongst Employers, ie:

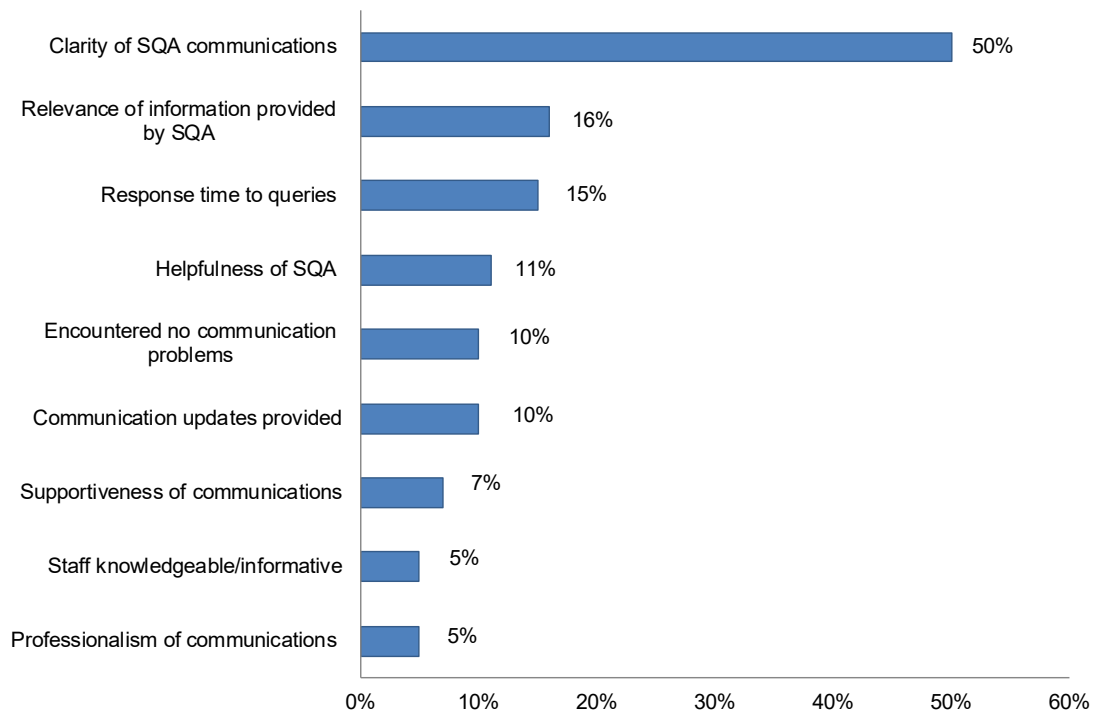
- Employers (9.76)
- ETP Managers (8.83)
- ETP Learners (8.46)
- ETP Teaching Professionals (8.32)

Figure 13 also indicates that, since the last survey, there was a notable increase in the overall rating of communications from SQA (from 8.13 to 8.62), with this increase being primarily driven by three audiences, namely:

- ETP Learners (rising from 7.68 to 8.46)
- ETP Teaching Professionals (rising from 8.10 to 8.32)
- ETP Managers (rising from 8.09 to 8.83)

*‘Why did you choose a high rating number here?’*

**Figure 14: Reasons for Choosing Good Rating of SQA Communications**



**Base: Provided Rating of 6 to 10**

When those providing a high rating number for SQA in terms of its overall rating of its communications (ie provided a rating of 6 to 10) were asked – on an unprompted basis – why this was the case, Figure 14 indicates that their **primary response** related to ‘the clarity of SQA communications’ (50%).

Thereafter, **secondary unprompted mention** was made here of a range of other reasons, including:

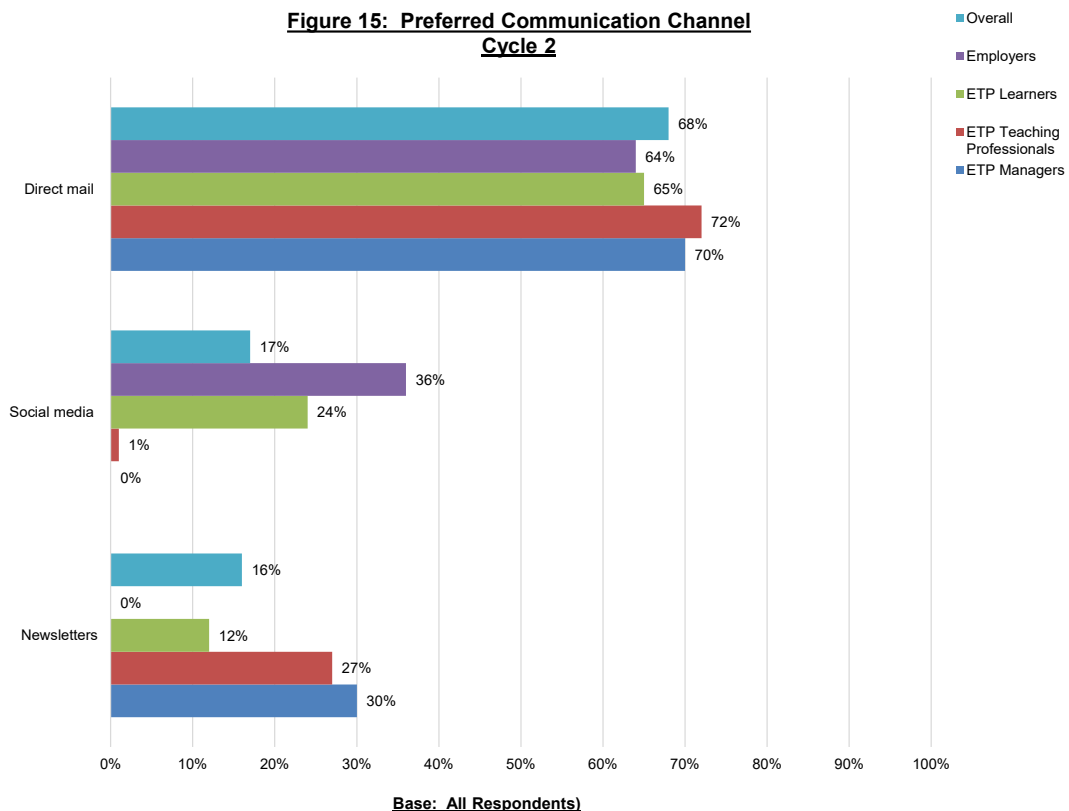
- Relevance of information provided by SQA during communications (16%)

- SQA’s response time to queries (15%)
- The helpfulness of SQA communications (11%)
- Respondents not encountering any problems with SQA in relation to communications (10%)
- Communications updates being provided by SQA (10%)

It should be noted that the subsample of respondents here is insufficient to allow a meaningful breakdown of responses on the basis of respondent type.

It should also be noted that the subsample of respondents providing a poor rating (of between 1 and 5) of SQA’s communications is insufficient to provide even an indicative set of outcomes here.

*‘What is your preferred communications channel?’*

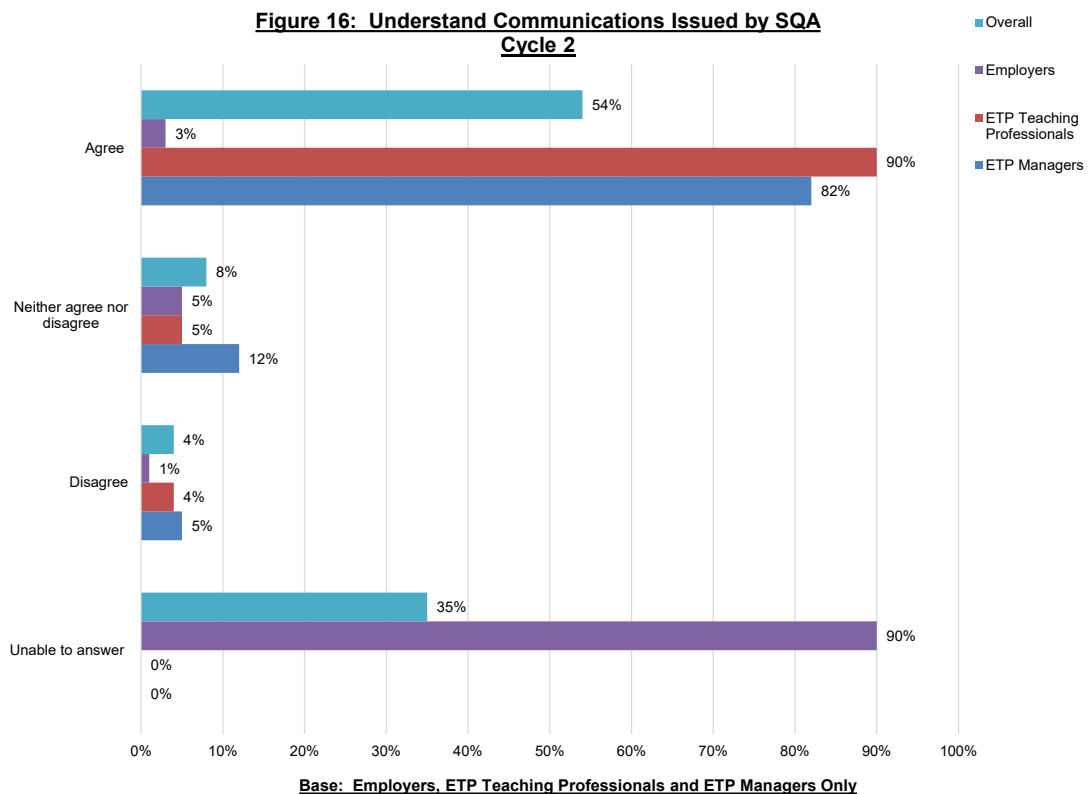


From Figure 15, it can be seen that, across all four audiences, the primary preferred communications channel was ‘direct mail’ (68% overall, ranging from 64% for Employers to 72% for ETP Teaching Professionals).

Thereafter, secondary reference was made here to ‘social media’ (17% overall), with this being most noted by Employers and ETP Learners (36% and 24% respectively).

Finally, Figure 15 indicates that, overall, one in six respondents (16%) expressed a preference for ‘newsletters’, with this being most notable amongst ETP Managers and ETP Teaching Professionals (30% and 27% respectively).

*‘To what extent do you agree that you understand the communications issued by SQA?’<sup>2</sup>*



From Figure 16, it can be seen that, overall, over half of Employers, ETP Teaching Professionals and ETP Managers (54%) stated that they understood the communications issued by SQA, with this outcome being far higher amongst ETP Teaching Professionals and

<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that the data presented in Figures 16 to 19 for Employers is indicative in nature due to the small number of Employers able to provide an answer to these questions.



ETP Managers (90% and 82% respectively compared to 3% for Employers).

Figure 16 also indicates that very few Employers, ETP Teaching Professionals and ETP Managers (4%) disagreed that they understood the communications issued by SQA, with this outcome being similar across the three audiences (ranging from 1% to 5%).

*‘To what extent do you agree that you receive clear information from SQA that helps you carry out your role?’*

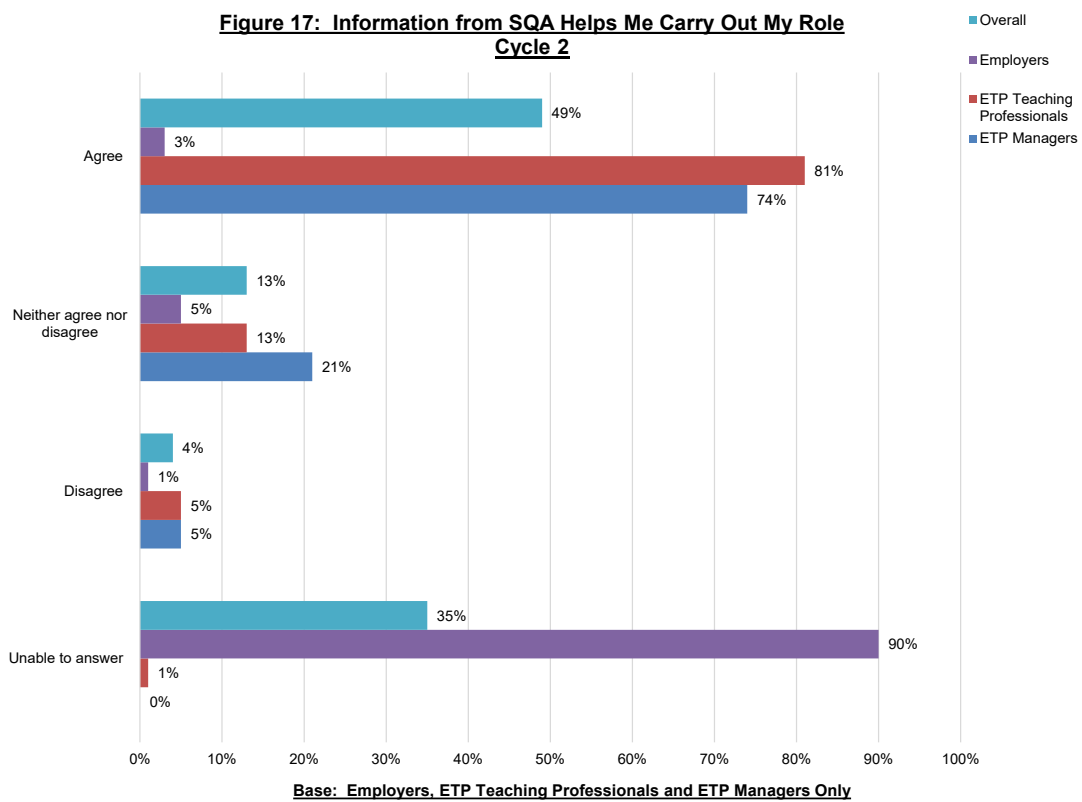


Figure 17 indicates that, overall, half of Employers, ETP Teaching Professionals and ETP Managers (49%) agreed that they receive clear information from SQA that helps them carry out their role, with this being far more likely to be the case amongst ETP Teaching Professionals and ETP Managers (81% and 74% respectively compared to 3% for Employers).

Figure 17 also indicates that, overall, very few respondents (only 4%) disagreed that they receive clear information from SQA that helps them carry out their roles, with this outcome being similar across the three audiences (ranging from 1% to 5%).

*‘Do you think the quantity of emails you receive from SQA is about right?’*

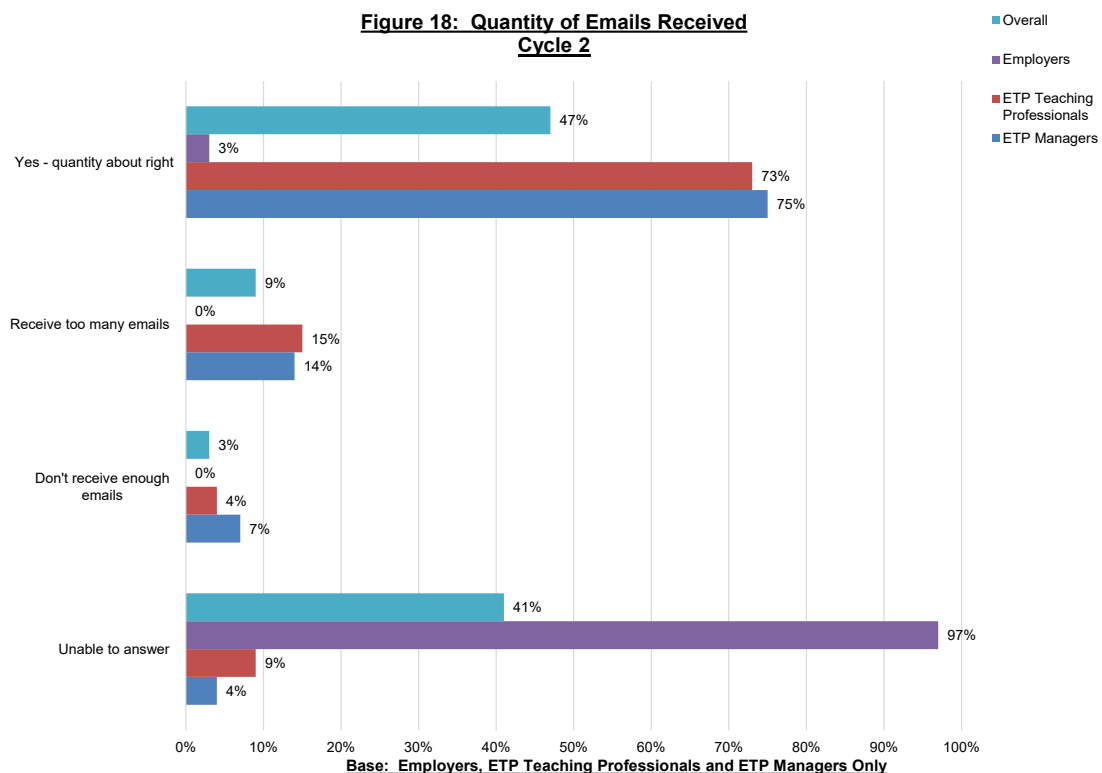
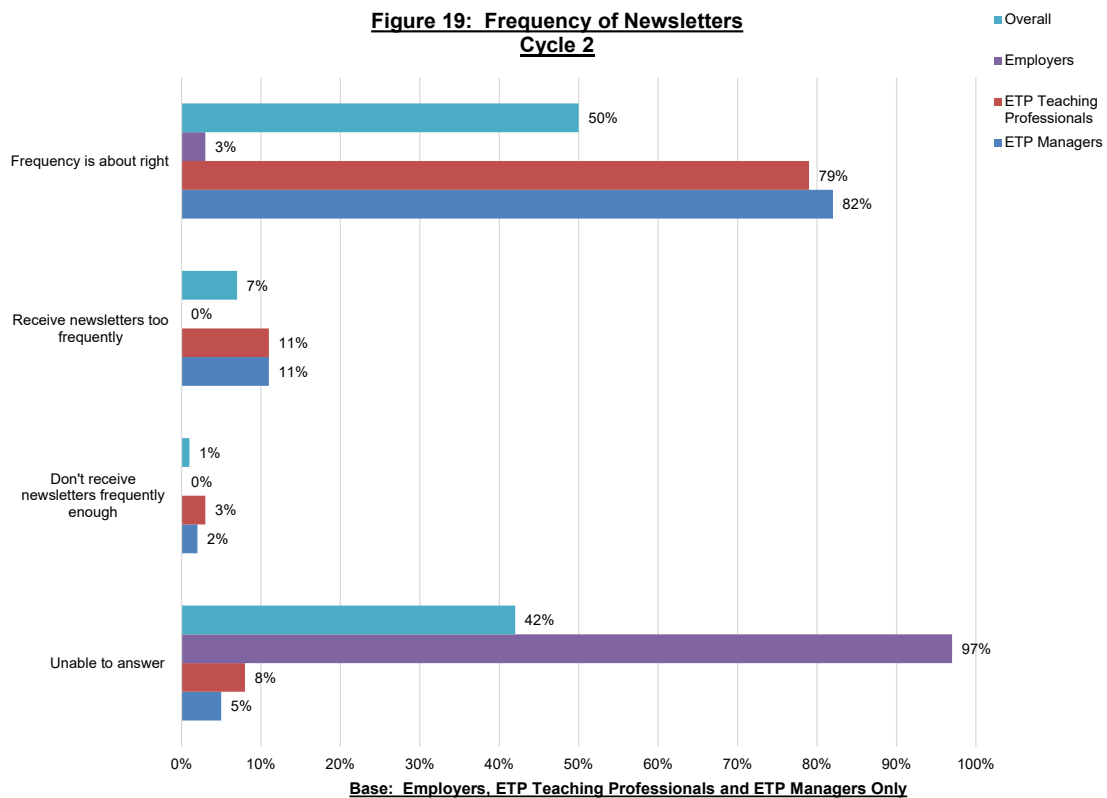


Figure 18 indicates that, overall, approaching half respondents (47%) believed that the quantity of emails they receive from SQA is ‘about right’, with this being far more likely to be the case amongst ETP Managers and ETP Teaching Professionals (75% and 73% respectively compared to 3% for Employers).

Thereafter, almost one in ten respondents overall (9%) stated that they receive too many emails, with this being most likely amongst ETP Teaching Professionals and ETP Managers (15% and 14% respectively).

Finally, Figure 18 indicates that very few respondents (3%) believed that they don’t receive enough emails (with this ranging from 0% for Employers to 4% and 7% respectively for ETP Teaching Professionals and ETP Managers).

*‘Do you think the frequency of newsletters is right?’*



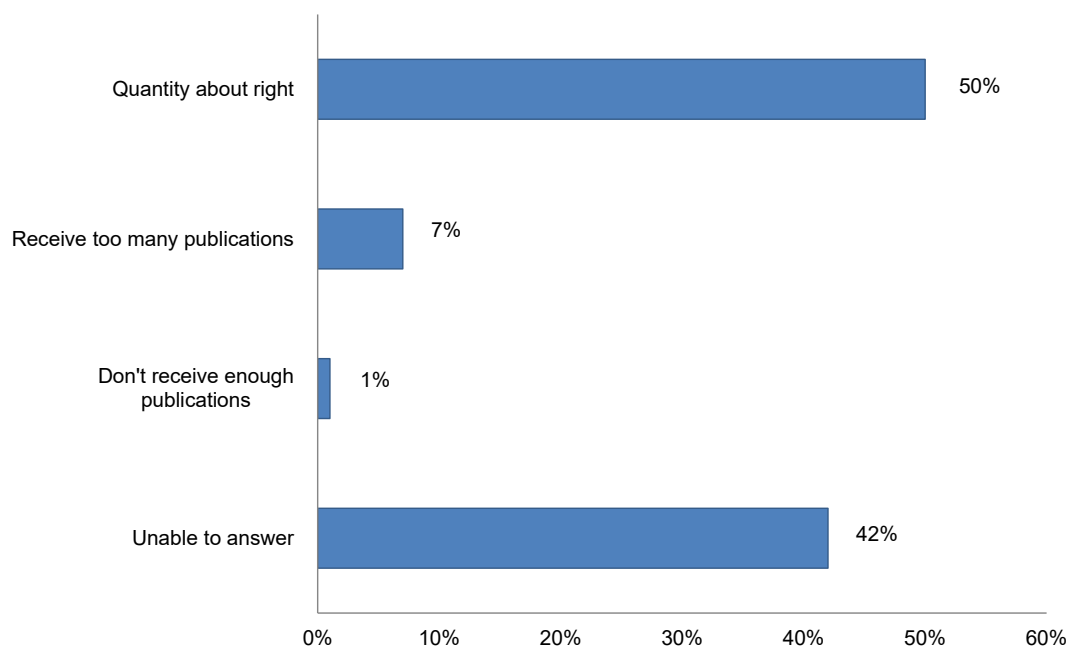
From Figure 19, it can be seen that, overall, half of respondents (50%) believed the frequency of newsletters they receive is 'about right', with this being highest amongst ETP Managers and ETP Teaching Professionals (82% and 79% respectively compared to 3% for Employers).

Figure 19 also indicates that, overall, less than one in twelve respondents (7%) believed they received newsletters from SQA 'too frequently', with this outcome being very similar for both ETP Teaching Professionals and ETP Managers (both 11%).

Finally, Figure 19 indicates that very few respondents (only 1%) believed that they don't receive newsletters frequently enough from SQA, with this outcome being similar across the three audiences (ranging from 0% to 3%).

*'Do you think the quantity of publications you receive from SQA is about right?'*

**Figure 20: Quantity of Publications Received from SQA  
Cycle 2**

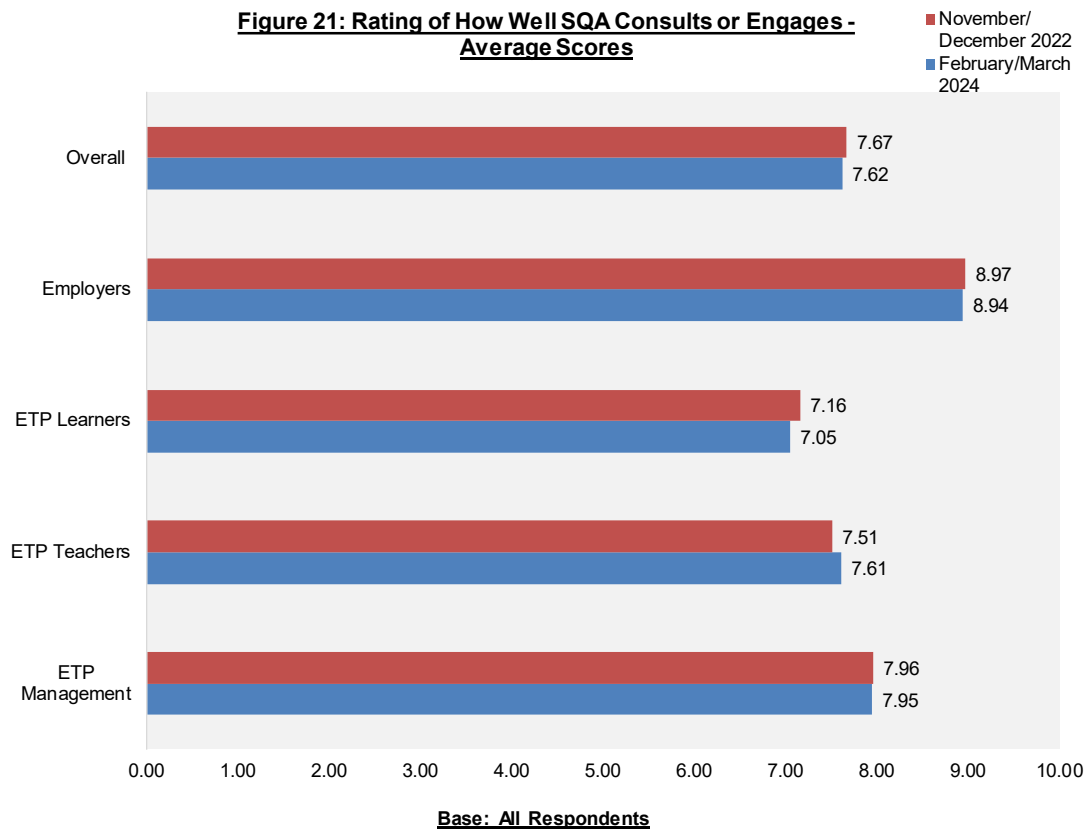


**Base: ETP Learners Only**

From Figure 20, it can be seen that half of Learners (50%) believed the quantity of publications they receive from SQA is 'about right', less than one in twelve (7%) believing they 'receive too many publications from SQA' and very few (only 1%) that they 'don't receive enough publications from SQA'.

## 5.0 SQA CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT PROFILE

*‘How would you rate how well SQA consults or engages with you or you and your peers, on a scale from 1 to 10, where ‘1’ is ‘very poor’ and ‘10’ is ‘very good’?’*



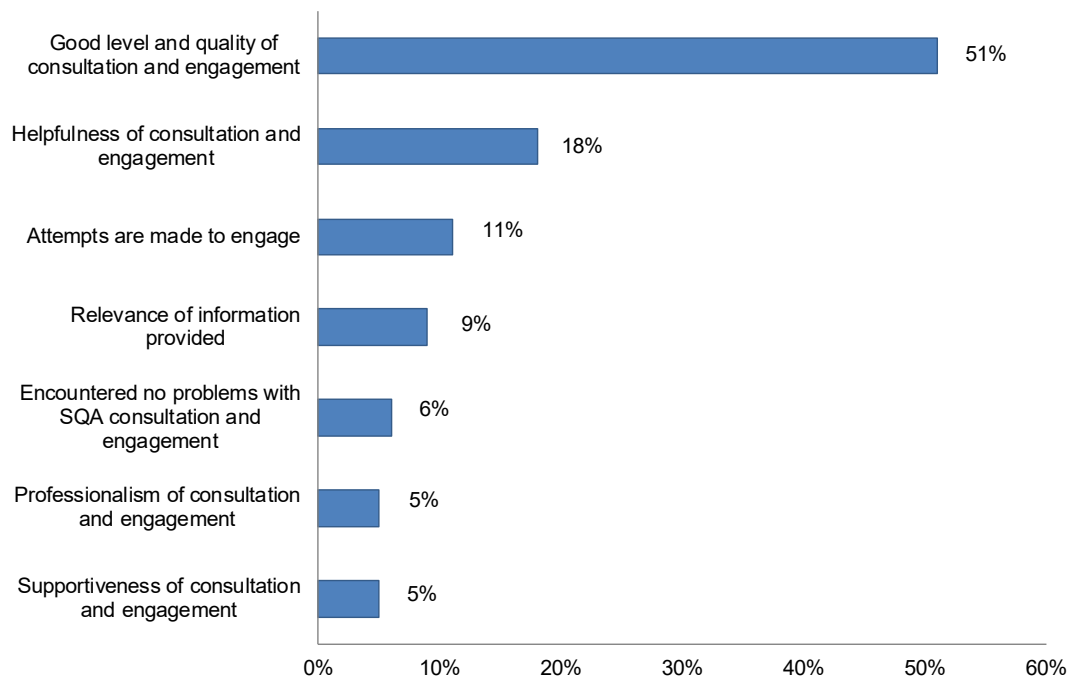
From Figure 21, it can be seen that, when respondents were asked to rate how well SQA consults or engages with them (in the case of Employers, ETP Teaching Professionals and ETP Managers) and consults with themselves or their peers (in the case of ETP Learners), an average score of 7.62 out of a possible 10 was noted, with this average score being highest amongst Employers and lowest amongst ETP Learners:

- Employers (8.94)
- ETP Managers (7.95)
- ETP Teaching Professionals (7.61)
- ETP Learners (7.05)

Figure 21 also indicates that, since the last survey, there was a slight – but not statistically significant – decrease in the overall rating of how well SQA consults or engages (falling from 7.67 to 7.62), with this decrease being primarily driven by ETP Learners (falling from 7.16 to 7.05), although this is not statistically significant. Indeed, during that time, it should be noted that ETP Teaching Professionals provided an improved rating of how well SQA consults or engages with them (rising from 7.51 to 7.61), although, again, this is not statistically significant.

*‘Why did you choose this good rating number?’*

**Figure 22: Reasons for Providing Good Rating re Consultation and Engagement (Unprompted)**



**Base: Provided Rating of 6 to 10**

When those providing a good rating number for SQA in terms of its consultation and engagement (ie provided a score of between 6 and 10) were asked – on an unprompted basis – why this was the case, Figure 22 indicates that their **primary response** was that of SQA demonstrating ‘a good level and quality of consultation and engagement’ (51%).

Thereafter, the **most prominent unprompted mention** was made here of:

- The helpfulness of SQA's consultation and engagement (18%)
- The attempts made by SQA to engage with Centres (11%)
- The relevance of information provided during consultation and engagement (9%)

Further examination of the data indicated that, since the last survey, greater unprompted mention was made here of providing SQA with a good rating in terms of its consultation and engagement due to it demonstrating 'a good level and quality of consultation and engagement' (rising from 36% to 51%). In contrast, during that time, there was decreasing reference here to 'the supportiveness of SQA in its consultation and engagement' (falling from 12% to 5%).

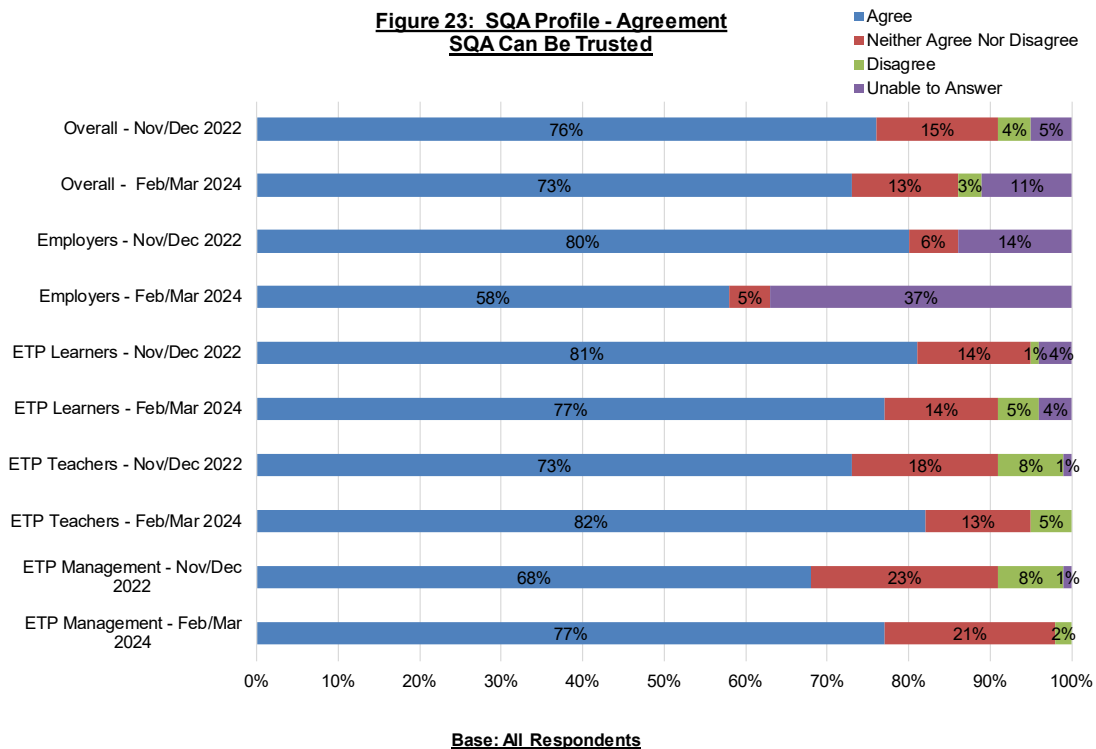
It should be noted that the subsample of respondents here is sufficient to only provide an indicative breakdown of a number of the findings here on the basis of respondent type. However, on this basis, Employers were far more likely to make unprompted reference here to providing a good rating for SQA due to it demonstrating 'a good level and quality of consultation and engagement' (69% compared to between 41% and 43% for the remaining three respondent types).

It should also be noted that the subsample of respondents here who provided a poor rating for SQA's consultation and engagement (of between 1 and 5) is insufficient to even allow an indicative breakdown here on the basis of respondent type.



## 6.0 SQA'S VALUES PROFILE

*'How strongly would you agree or disagree that SQA can be trusted?'*



From Figure 23, it can be seen that approaching three quarters of respondents in February/March 2024 (73%) **agreed** that 'SQA can be trusted', with this outcome being highest amongst ETP Teaching Professionals and lowest amongst Employers, ie:

- ETP Teaching Professionals (82%)
- ETP Managers (77%)
- ETP Learners (77%)
- Employers (58%)

Figure 23 also indicates that, between November/December 2022 and February/March 2024, there was a marginal – but not statistically significant – decrease in the extent to which, overall, respondents believed SQA can be trusted (falling from 76% to 73%), with this decrease being primarily driven by Employers (falling from 80% to

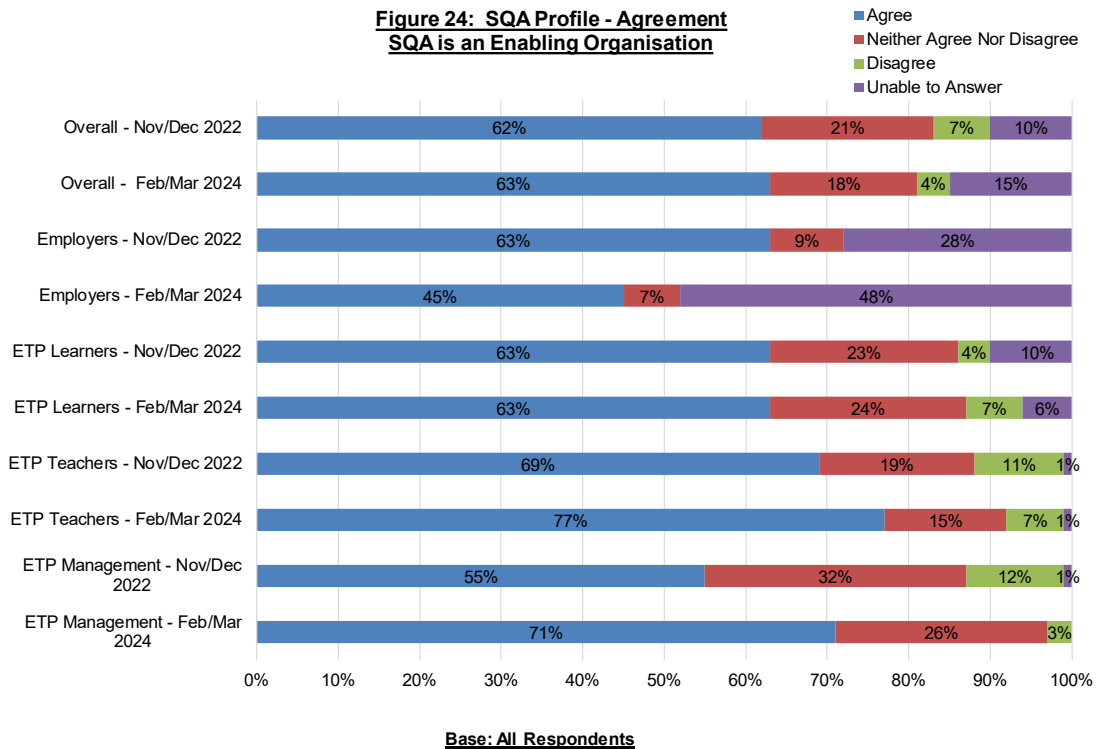
58%) and primarily a result of this audience being increasingly likely to be unable to answer this question (rising from 14% to 37%).

Figure 23 also indicates that very few respondents in February/March 2024 (only 3%) disagreed that SQA can be trusted, with this outcome being low across all four audiences, being almost identical to that found in November/December 2022 (4%) and this difference not being statistically significant.

Further examination of the data also indicated that, between November/December 2022 and February/March 2024:

- There was an increasing extent to which ETP Managers believed SQA can be trusted (rising from 68% to 77%), with this also being the case amongst ETP Teaching Professionals (rising from 73% to 82%)
- There was a decreasing extent to which ETP Teaching Professionals neither agreed nor disagreed that SQA can be trusted (falling from 18% to 13%)
- There was an increasing extent to which ETP Learners disagreed that SQA can be trusted (rising from 1% to 5%) and a decreasing extent to which this was believed to be the case amongst ETP Managers (falling from 8% to 2%)

*‘How strongly would you agree or disagree that SQA enables organisations to carry out their roles more effectively?’*



From Figure 24, it can be seen that, overall, over three out of five respondents in February/March 2024 (63%) **agreed** that ‘SQA enables organisations to carry out their roles more effectively’, with this figure being highest amongst ETP Teaching Professionals and lowest amongst Employers, ie:

- ETP Teaching Professionals (77%)
- ETP Managers (71%)
- ETP Learners (63%)
- Employers (45%)

Figure 24 also indicates that, between November/December 2022 and February/March 2024, there was virtually no difference in terms of the extent to which SQA was believed to be an enabling organisation (rising by only 1% from 62% to 63%, which is not statistically significant). However, during that time:

- There was a notable decrease in the extent to which Employers believed that SQA is an enabling organisation (falling from 63% to 45%) which was almost exclusively a result of Employers being increasingly unable to answer this question (rising from 28% to 48%)
- There was an increasing extent to which ETP Teaching Professionals believed that SQA is an enabling organisation (rising from 69% to 77%)
- There was an increasing extent to which ETP Managers believed SQA to be an enabling organisation (rising from 55% to 71%), with this being primarily a result of decreasing disagreement that this is the case (falling from 12% to 3%) and, thereafter, the increasing provision of 'neither agree nor disagree' responses here (falling from 32% to 26%)

Figure 24 also indicates that, since the last survey, there was a fall in the extent to which respondents disagreed that SQA is an enabling organisation (from 7% to 4%), with this fall being primarily driven by ETP Managers (from 12% to 3%).

*‘How strongly would you agree or disagree that SQA is a progressive organisation?’*

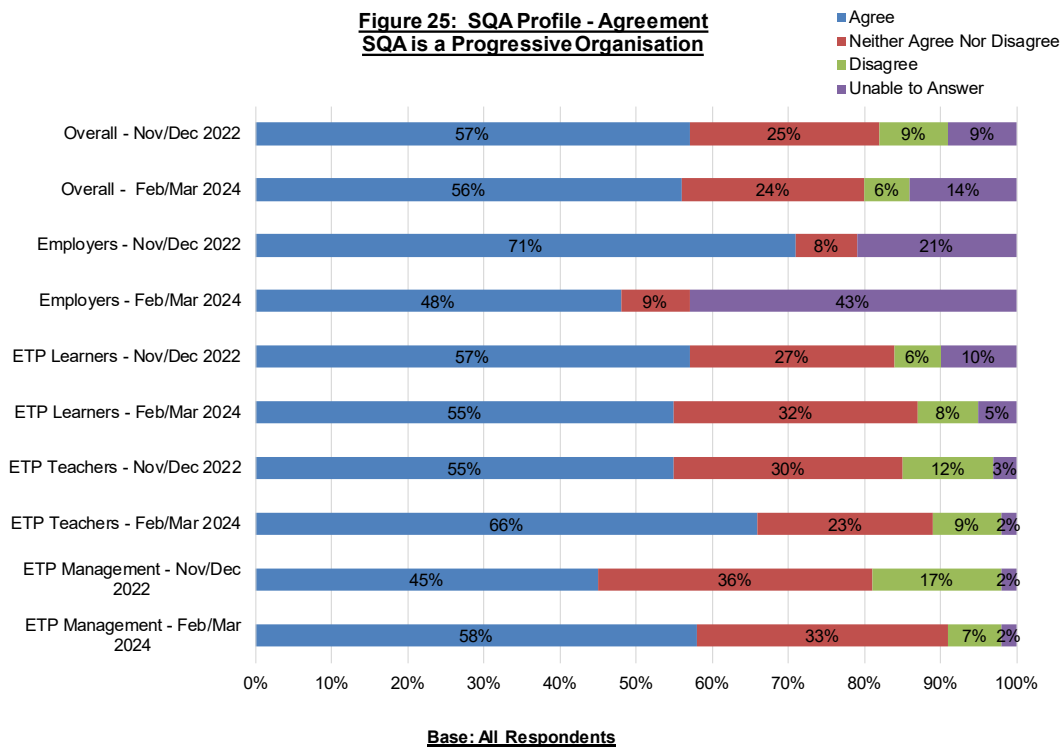


Figure 25 indicates that, overall, approaching three out of five respondents in February/March 2024 (56%) **agreed** that ‘SQA is a progressive organisation’, with this most likely to be the case amongst ETP Teaching Professionals and least likely to be the case amongst Employers, ie:

- ETP Teaching Professionals (66%)
- ETP Managers (58%)
- ETP Learners (55%)
- Employers (48%)

In this regard, it should be noted that Employers were far more likely than the other three audiences to be unable to answer this question (43% compared to between 2% and 5% for the other three audiences).

Figure 25 also indicates that, since the last survey, although – overall – there was virtually no difference in terms of the extent to which SQA is

believed to be a progressive organisation (falling by only 1% from 57% to 56%, which is not statistically significant) there was a decreasing extent to which this was believed to be the case amongst Employers (falling from 71% to 48%), primarily driven by the increasing extent to which Employers felt unable to express an opinion in this regard (rising from 21% to 43%).

Finally, Figure 25 also indicates that, between November/December 2022 and February/March 2024:

- There was an increasing extent to which, overall, respondents felt unable to comment as to whether or not SQA is a progressive organisation (rising from 9% to 14%)
- There was an increasing extent to which ETP Learners neither agreed nor disagreed that this was the case (rising from 27% to 32%) and a decreasing extent to which they felt unable to answer this question (falling from 10% to 5%)
- There was a decreasing extent to which ETP Teaching Professionals provided a 'neither agree nor disagree' response here (falling from 30% to 23%)
- There was a decreasing extent to which ETP Managers disagreed that SQA is a progressive organisation (falling from 17% to 7%)

## 7.0 KEY MESSAGES

### 7.1 SQA's Credibility

SQA continues to have high credibility amongst its ETP Key Audiences, particularly ETP Managers, ETP Learners and ETP Teaching Professionals and, although a small proportion of respondents believe SQA to have low credibility, this is at its greatest amongst ETP Teaching Professionals, amongst whom one in seven believe this to be the case.

SQA's high credibility is due to a number of factors and particularly SQA having good and well-recognised qualifications.

Satisfaction with SQA's overall performance is high across its ETP Key Audiences.

There is an extent to which a number of those in SQA's ETP Key Audiences believe they would like to know more about SQA, particularly in terms of general information about SQA and information about future changes to qualifications.

### 7.2 SQA Qualifications Profile

There continues to be a common belief amongst SQA's ETP Key Audiences that they know enough about qualifications of which they are aware. However, there is a degree of variability amongst these audiences and a degree of variation through time in terms of whether this is the case to a greater or lesser extent than previously.

SQA qualifications continue to be perceived as having high levels of credibility, although, for National 1s to National 3s, their perceived credibility is lower than in the previous survey.

There is a limited extent to which the views of SQA's ETP Key Audiences about the credibility of all SQA qualifications of which they are aware have changed over the last year, with this being most likely to be the case amongst ETP Learners and there being a notable decrease in the extent to which this is the case amongst ETP Teaching Professionals and ETP Managers.

Over the last year there has been a decreasing extent to which ETP Key Audiences views in this regard have changed, with a fall during that time in terms of views changing and becoming more positive and views becoming more negative.

### 7.3 SQA Contact and Communication Profiles

Contacts from and with SQA were highest amongst ETP Managers and ETP Teaching Professionals and far more limited amongst ETP Learners and, in particular, Employers.

Across all of the ETP Key Audiences, there were high ratings provided of their contact from/with SQA, particularly amongst Employers, with these positive ratings being driven by a range of factors and, in particular, SQA's quick response to queries and the helpfulness of SQA during contacts.

In addition, the ETP Key Audiences overwhelmingly believe SQA contacts to be appropriate (in terms of their level of content), timely and clear.

The ETP Key Audiences overwhelmingly rated SQA highly in terms of communications from SQA – again, particularly Employers – with this high rating being again driven by a number of factors, of which, by far, the most prominent is the clarity of SQA's communications.



The ETP Key Audiences noted that direct mail and, thereafter, social media were their preferred communication channels.

There was a lot of positivity about the extent to which communications issued by SQA are understood by ETP Teaching Professionals and ETP Managers, the extent to which they help ETP Teaching Professionals and ETP Managers to carry out their roles, together with the positivity expressed by ETP Teaching Professionals and ETP Managers regarding the quantity of emails they receive and the frequency of newsletters they receive.

There was a belief amongst half of ETP Learners that they receive about the right quantity of publications from SQA.

#### **7.4 SQA Consultation and Engagement Profile**

The ETP Key Audiences provided a high average score in terms of SQA's consultation and engagement (particularly Employers), with this, again, being driven by a number of factors and, in particular, the level and quality of SQA's consultation and engagement.

#### **7.5 SQA Values Profile**

The ETP Key Audiences are positive about SQA in terms of it being a progressive organisation, its enabling abilities and its trustworthiness, particularly the last of these three values.

However, since the last survey, there was a slight – but not statistically significant – decrease in the extent to which the ETP Key Audiences believed SQA can be trusted.