

# NICE stakeholder reputation research: Summary

Audience Insight team  
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# Introduction and context

This report presents the findings of a survey conducted in April and May 2017 to measure NICE's reputation among its stakeholders.

NICE has been measuring its reputation among the informed general public on a regular basis since 2014 as part of the Cabinet Office commissioned Reputation Institute's UK Public RepTrak® study. The rolling survey captures the views of people relating to NICE and over 60 other Government departments and Arms-Length Bodies (ALBs).

To complement this work and provide a comprehensive picture of wider stakeholder perceptions, NICE worked with the Reputation Institute to develop an approach using the RepTrak® methodology to capture the views of our varied audiences.

The survey was distributed through a series of email campaigns both directly to individual stakeholders and indirectly through promotion in NICE newsletters and social media channels. 825 responses were received from the survey, with replies from all stakeholder groups. The purpose of the survey was to capture the perceptions of NICE's stakeholders overall so did not set out to achieve a fully representative sample of each audience group.

# Stakeholder perception of NICE

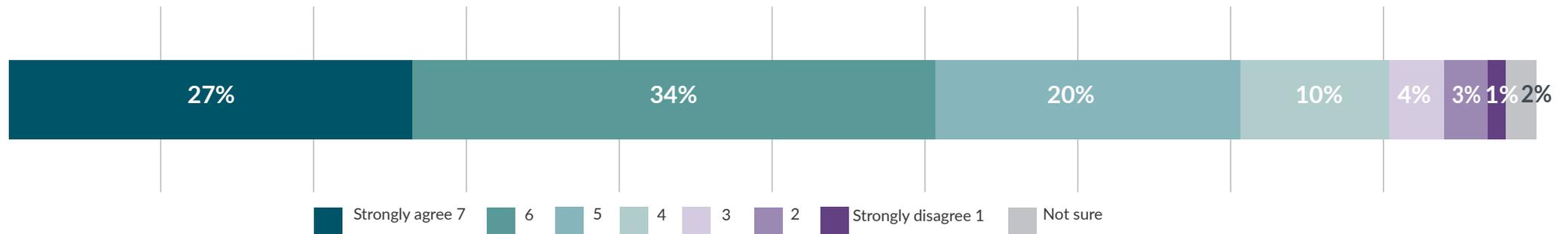
The following section reviews the results of overall perceptions that stakeholders have of NICE.

The figures below suggest that there is a generally strong 'bond' with NICE in terms of trust, overall reputation, general feelings and admiration towards the organisation.

## NICE is an organisation I trust



## NICE has a good overall reputation

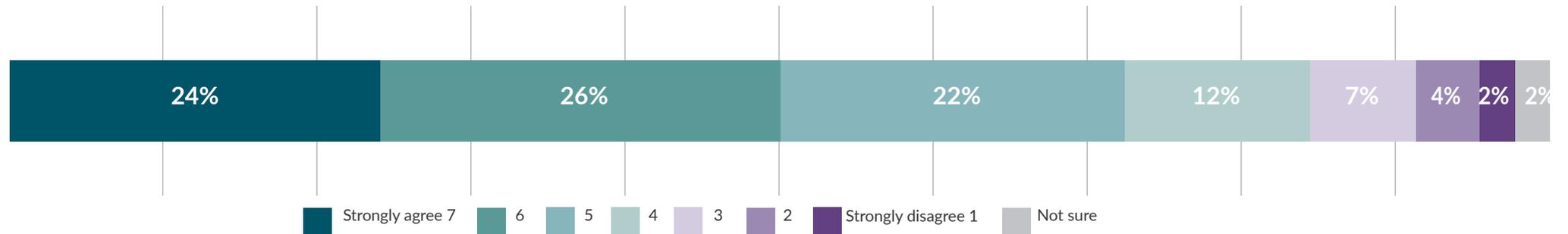


# Feelings towards NICE

NICE is an organisation I have a good feeling about



NICE is an organisation I admire and respect



*“Excellent reputation for quality guidance and development of best practice.”* Nursing and midwifery professional

*“I believe in what NICE do and how they do it.”* Manager

*“I trust the process, objectivity and integrity of the organisation.”* Medical and dental professional

*“Clear information that can be used in the workplace & that you know has been tested & deemed as a trusted measure of good practice.”*  
Social care professional

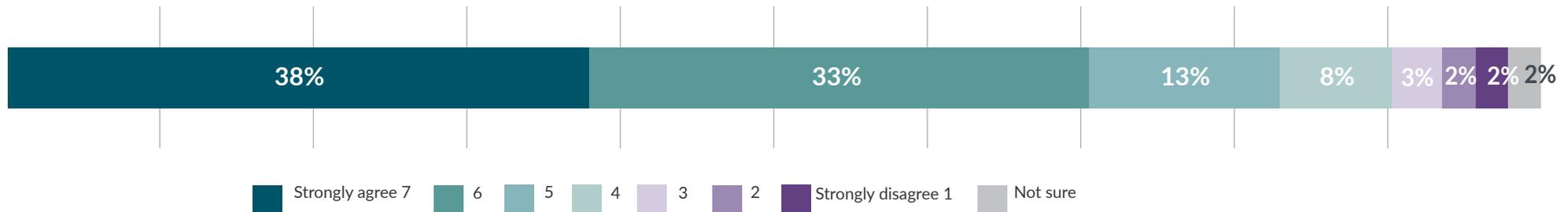
*“An excellent well respected organisation who provide valuable resources.”* Allied health professional

*“Trustworthy, evidence based, easy to understand.”* Patient/service user/carer

How NICE functions as an organisation

# Scientific, rigorous and evidence-based

## NICE is scientific, rigorous and evidence-based



The open comments reflect the overall favourable response:



***"They are clear, concise and well researched; they provide me with evidence based guidance to support my work."*** Nursing and midwifery professional

***"Guidance is developed through a rigorous, evidence-based, and trustworthy process."*** Medical publishing professional

***"Clear evidenced based products and a breadth of high quality guidelines at a time when many public services are under pressure."*** Patient/service user/carer

***"Trustworthy, evidence based, easy to understand."*** Patient/service user/carer

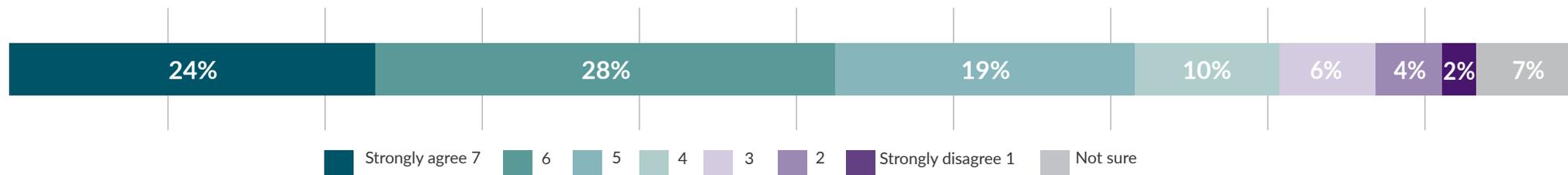
***"Overall excellent organisation providing important service to healthcare professionals. Highly reliable given the thorough process."*** Research and academic professional

# Opportunities to get involved and work collaboratively

NICE provides opportunities for people to become involved in and influence its work



NICE works collaboratively with stakeholders



***“Useful and comprehensive guidance provided which has been formulated in collaboration with practitioners.”*** Manager

***“I also welcome the active engagement of users/patients/carers in working collaboratively with professionals and others to produce guidance which is applicable across a wide range of settings and which encourages good practice.”*** Patient/service user/carers

***“It is an organisation providing evidence based guidance. I am satisfied with the products I use and find NICE staff extremely helpful and willing to engage with stakeholders and to answer queries and questions.”***  
Admin and clerical professional

However, there are some professional groups that felt that NICE could do more to engage with their professions. This seemed to be highlighted particularly from frontline staff and patients:

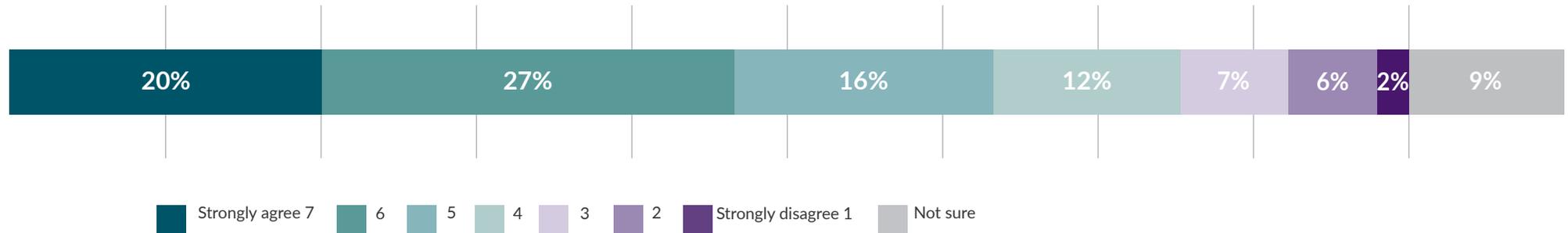


***“..hardly ever hear or feel they are an outward facing organisation.”*** Nursing and midwifery professional

***“Patient involvement still feels like a tick-box exercise at NICE.”***  
Patient advocacy group

# Support to put guidance into practice

## NICE provides support to help put guidance into practice



The open ended comments indicated that some stakeholders felt more could be done to support the implementation of guidance:



***“Excellent products but implementing them in practice is often difficult. Some clinicians choose not to follow guidance or adhere to quality standards.”*** Nursing and midwifery professional

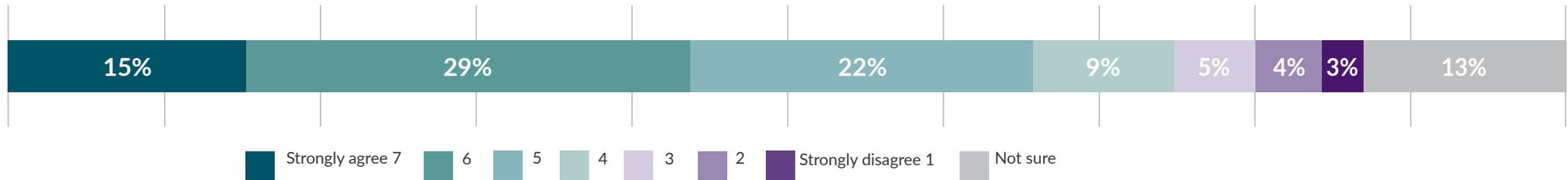
***“Develop more products to help with implementation of guidance and provide support for using the products.”*** Lay representative and voluntary sector organisation

***“My perception of the organisation could be improved by having a more practical element to the guidelines.”*** Nursing and midwifery professional

***“Make their guidelines more realistic and therefore more usable in day to day practice - instead of something that is entirely aspirational.”*** Medical and dental professional

# Responsiveness of medical innovations

## NICE is responsive to medical innovations



Suggestions were made in the free text responses that NICE could do more in this area.



*"In the field of trauma there are many new innovative approaches, working towards an evidence base, but as yet unable to produce this, and because of this lack of evidence NICE seems to ignore these ideas altogether. It is hard to get funding for research into new approaches - money always seems to go to things that 'show promise' - which means there is already evidence. This is a really bad catch-22."* Counsellor/Psychotherapist

*"NICE's methodology for assessing new medicines needs to evolve dramatically in order to keep apace with modern science."*  
Scientific and technical professional

*"I think that the preoccupation with evidence-based trials is to the detriment of rare conditions, and NICE is not responsive to other research that would provide the basis for common sense decisions in primary care."* Patient/service user/carer

# Consideration for a more flexible approach

Some comments suggested a more flexible approach that includes wider sources of evidence, such as qualitative research and less reliance on RCTs.



***“There are little quality RCTs in our field as patient numbers are low or groups are not homogenous. We often see recommendations against using orthoses for this reason. NICE needs to take into account consensus of the field.”*** Allied health professional

***“Consider a wider range of approaches to treatment evaluation, NICE is very RCT focused and protocol driven.”*** Scientific and technical professional

Social care, public health and mental health were given as specific examples where a more flexible approach should be considered, especially when faced with limited evidence.



***“NICE applies an overly-simplified and reductive medicalised clinical trials model to seek evidence for social care, this is incompatible with the needs.”*** Allied health professional

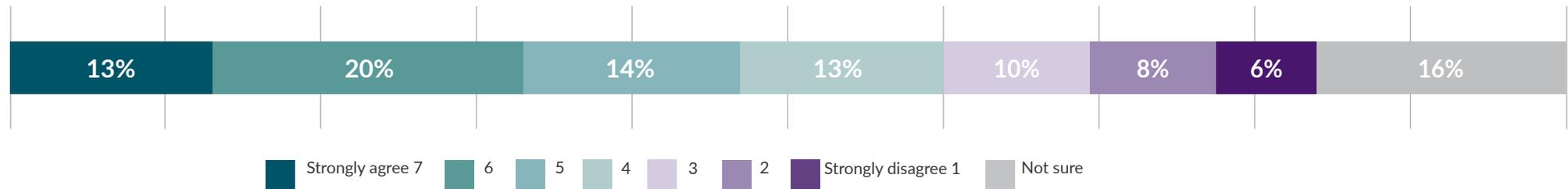
***“NICE provide clear guidelines on managing and responding to mental health issues - however I feel that the focus on the medical model and evidence based interventions sometimes loses sight of the things that are really effective - and that mental health needs a different approach to the medical/scientific approach that can work so well with physical health issues.”*** Manager

***“The ways in which NICE is tied to defensible methodological approaches means that it is sometimes less helpful than it might be for difficult public health problems.”*** Research and academic professional

***“I feel NICE works well in health, where there are clear comparators and costs. Less so in public health and social care where NICE often quotes lack of evidence which disregards good practice and the direction of travel.”*** Voluntary sector, health and wellbeing

# Independence from government and political influence

NICE is fully independent of government and political influence



*"I would like to see NICE be more independent of Government so able to act truly in the best interests of patients and the subject area, and not be forced to limit the scope of their products."* Nursing and midwifery professional

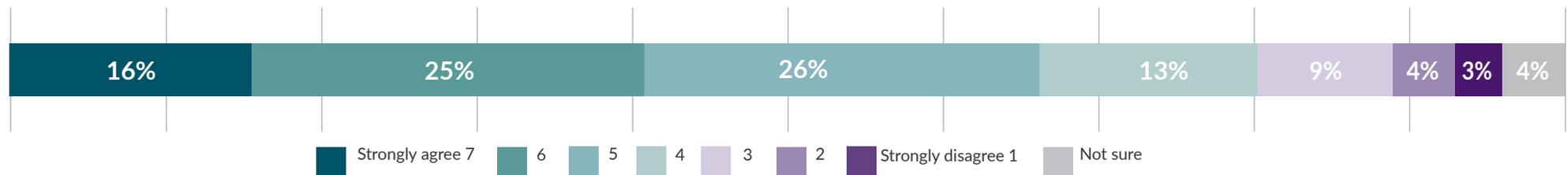
*"Some NICE guidelines seem to be politically motivated and do not reflect the evidence base in an impartial way."* Research and academic professional

# How NICE meets expectations

# Communication from NICE

This section looks at how well NICE meets the expectations of its stakeholders, via its communications methods and channels, and how proactively NICE engages with their profession.

## NICE communicates its products and services effectively to you



It was clear from the suggestions added by respondents, there is still a sense that the communication from NICE could be improved and that NICE could be more proactive.



***“Communication is poor and not user friendly at all. I’m a public policy professional and can barely understand what NICE does for social care.”*** Policy worker for national charity

***“The NICE guidelines get to the final user ‘just by accident.’”*** Medical and dental professional

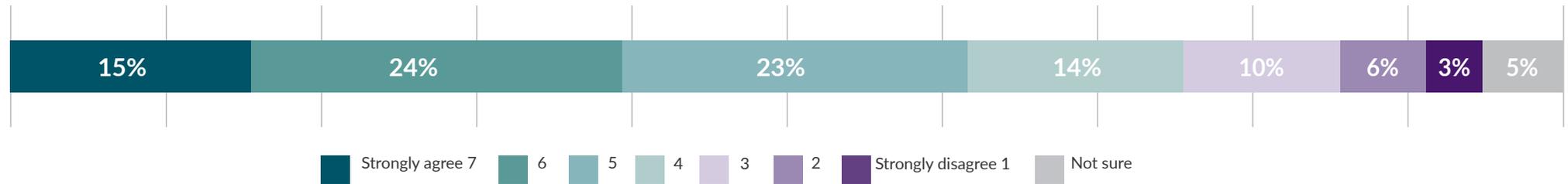
***“When failures occur deal with them and don’t hide behind bland statements that information is on the website - it isn’t always that easy to find things and we are all busy people, expecting your stakeholders to be constantly checking your website is unreasonable.”*** Admin and clerical professional

***“More efficient mechanisms should be in place to inform professional groups about relevant new guidelines, etc. At present, they must either check the website on the off-chance or rely on others (e.g. professional bodies) to inform them.”*** Medical and dental professional

***“I was asked to comment on a NICE guideline in draft form. I was very surprised at onset of recommendations and said so with evidence. There was no further contact and I still do not know if any notice was taken of my input.”*** Research and academic professional

# NICE's website

The NICE website is easy for you to find the information you want



The open comments provide further insight into the issues stakeholders face when navigating the website.



*"I have found the website harder to navigate as the number of guidelines etc has increased."* Medical and dental professional

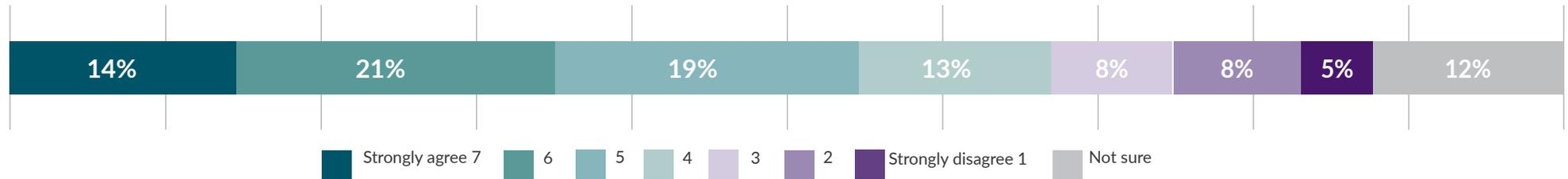
*"I have never found the website easy to use. It is better now than it was but still quite hard to navigate."* Public health professional

*"The website can be difficult to navigate and information seems to move/get reorganised without warning."* Research and academic professional

*"Find website difficult to negotiate, when searching for a topic it doesn't take you directly to summary or the actual guidelines."* Allied health professional

# Proactive engagement with professionals

## NICE proactively engages with your profession



***"I have had many positive personal interactions with NICE and have used many products to progress initiatives and pathways."*** Public health professional

***"I have been very happy with my engagement with NICE as a medical device company."*** Employee for medical device manufacturer

***"NICE can come across as faceless - it would be good to see NICE staff at more events, speaking on TV or writing for both professional and lay journals."*** Research and academic professional

***"As far as I am aware, I only hear about NICE through the media and that is usually when something controversial is being debated. Perhaps you could do something more proactive to promote the good work you do and the way you collaborate with other organisations therefore improving the public's perception of what comes across as a faceless bureaucratic organisation."*** Manager

# Concluding comments

# Emerging themes from the research and next steps

There were a number of themes that emerged from the research, largely identified through the open questions in the survey which allowed respondents to share their views in more detail and explain their responses. The results have been presented to the NICE Board and teams across NICE will be considering the themes in more detail to agree the actions that will be taken to tackle the issues raised.

## **Implementation and impact**

The research indicated the value placed in NICE guidance and recognition of how important it is to strive for the highest quality in care delivery. However, some feel that NICE could do more to support the implementation of its guidance and, in particular, more account could be taken of the challenges of implementing some of the recommendations in the 'real world', which is also partly about how guidance is formulated.

## **Approach and methodology**

It is clear that NICE's scientific approach to developing its guidance is one of the main drivers of its strong reputation and it is important to retain that rigour. However, there is a sense among some respondents, that NICE could be more responsive to new medical innovations and adopt a more flexible approach in its consideration of evidence in some of the newer areas of NICE's remit.

## **Understanding NICE's role and remit**

The role and remit of NICE is not fully understood by all audiences. Building this knowledge is the first step to developing further engagement. Furthermore there are widespread misconceptions about the independence of NICE, with a considerable proportion of respondents feeling that NICE is not independent of government and political influences.

## **Communication and engagement**

The theme of communication and engagement highlighted a number of areas where NICE could improve, including feedback about engaging more with front line staff and being more visible to charities, third sector organisations and patients.

The website was identified an important communication tool, as well as being the main route that stakeholders used to directly access NICE's products. Regardless of how engaged stakeholders were, it was the main way that people found out about what NICE offers. For the more engaged it is used more proactively to seek out information and access our guidance and for the least engaged, it's more as a means of finding out more generally about NICE.

Despite the importance of the website, the results indicate that currently stakeholders, on the whole, do not find the website easy to navigate.