Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs

WasteDataFlow user survey in England - results.

We invited all local authority WasteDataFlow (WDF) users in England to complete a customer satisfaction survey examining user experience. We'd like to thank all respondents for taking the time to complete the survey and providing us with invaluable feedback.

Defra will be considering the feedback and discussing this is more detail with the contractor to identify actions and priorities for improvements (short and long term). These will be discussed at the WDF User Group meeting (date tbc but likely to be in September)..The survey had 8 main sections:

- User Profile
- Guidance and helpdesk
- System Performance
- Data Entry
- Validation/Helpdesk
- Reporting
- Overall WasteDataFlow opinion
- Future of WasteDataFlow

Respondents were asked not to provide any information that would identify people.

We received 185 anonymous responses from local authorities in England. There may be more than one respondent per local authority and the coverage of responses from all local authorities in England cannot be known.

Where responses are analysed using certain groups (such as 'data admin respondents only' or 'respondents from Waste Disposal Authorities only'), the numbers in these groups are quite small. Care must be taken when interpreting all results as they may not be fully representative of the WDF community but can provide an indication of issues for those particular samples.

The format of this report includes the exact questions from the survey and a summary of results. Most of the survey questions were multiple-choice across a Likert scale – for these questions we've noted the number of respondents and summarised results in bar charts. Some questions include a brief commentary or observations although most of the results are self-explanatory.

Open questions were thematically analysed and responses from the answers have been summarised. The number of responses to open questions includes answers such as 'no comment' or an answer that is not necessarily directly related to the question. Such answers were discounted from the analysis but were considered when gauging the overall tone of responses.

Please note: if you intend to print this document, please using colour printing as the bar charts are colour coded.

Section 1: User profile

More than half of respondents (51%) worked in Waste Collection Authorities, followed by Unitary Authorities (29.7%) and Waste Disposal Authorities (18.9%). The real-life split of Waste Collection Authorities, Unitary Authorities and Waste Disposal Authorities is 65%, 26% and 9% respectively.

The majority of respondents (80.5%) have been an active user of WDF for more than two years, compared to 11.9% of respondents being an active user of WDF for 1-2 years and 7.6% less than one year.

Q1. What type of Local Authority do you work for?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Waste Collection Authority	51.4%	95
Unitary Authority	29.7%	55
Waste Disposal Authority	18.9%	35

answered question	**185**
skipped question	**0**

Q2. What is your user role in relation to WDF?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
WDF data entry & admin	65.4%	121
WDF data entry	25.4%	47
WDF data admin	7.6%	14
Report-only user	1.6%	3

answered question	**185**
skipped question	**0**

Q3. Please select the statements that apply to your council:

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
We use WDF data for waste management performance standards and benchmarking.	69.2%	128
We use WDF for making local data available to general public and other enquiries.	49.2%	91
We use WDF for waste contract management and decisions on services provision.	19.5%	36
None of these	15.7%	29

answered question	**185**
skipped question	**0**

Q4. How long have you been an active user of WDF?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
More than 2 years	80.5%	149
1-2 years	11.9%	22
Less than 1 year	7.6%	14

answered question	**185**
skipped question	**0**

Q5. Please select the reasons/drivers that your authority uses to enter data in WDF:

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
National Indicators (NI)	70.3%	130
Legal requirements	65.9%	122
Data analysis	49.2%	91
Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs)	44.3%	82
Waste from Households (WfH) recycling	43.8%	81
Benchmarking	42.2%	78
Making data public	37.3%	69
Decisions on service	16.2%	30
Biodegradable Municipal Waste (BMW) to landfill	14.6%	27
Contractual requirements	11.9%	22
Other	2.2%	4
Other (please specify)		5

answered question	**185**
skipped question	**0**

Other (please specify): Only 5 respondents specified other reasons/drivers for entering data on WDF, 4 of which conveyed that they enter data because they have to and it serves no other purpose.

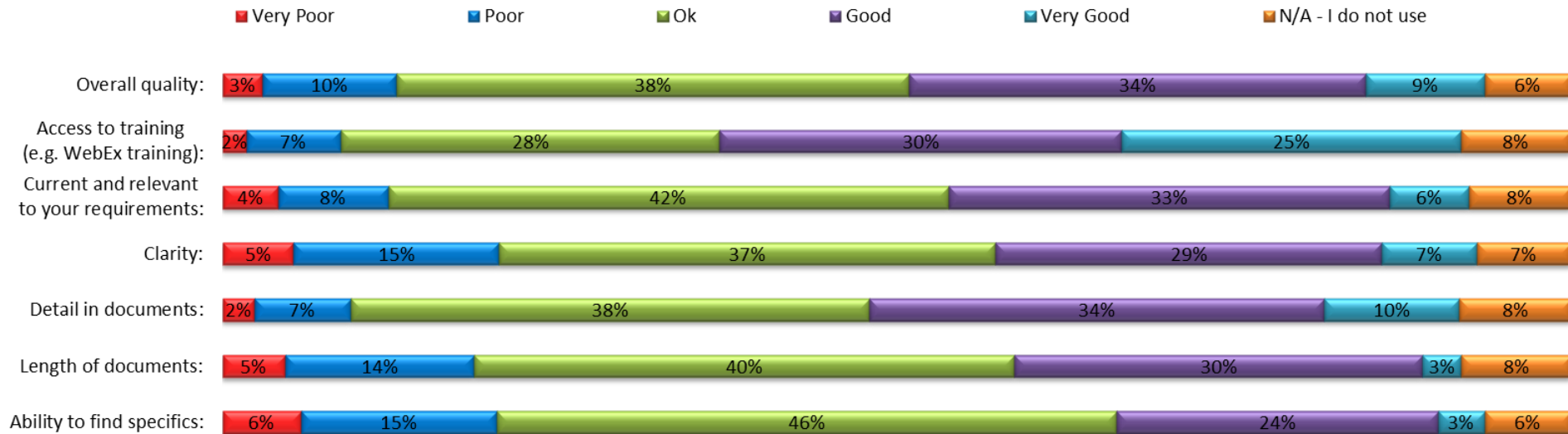Q6. Do you have any further comments about your user profile?

5 respondents entered comments about their user profiles. The comments directly linked to user profiles included having to enter data for more than 1 authority (leading a partnership) and having no control over the quality of data submitted by partners.
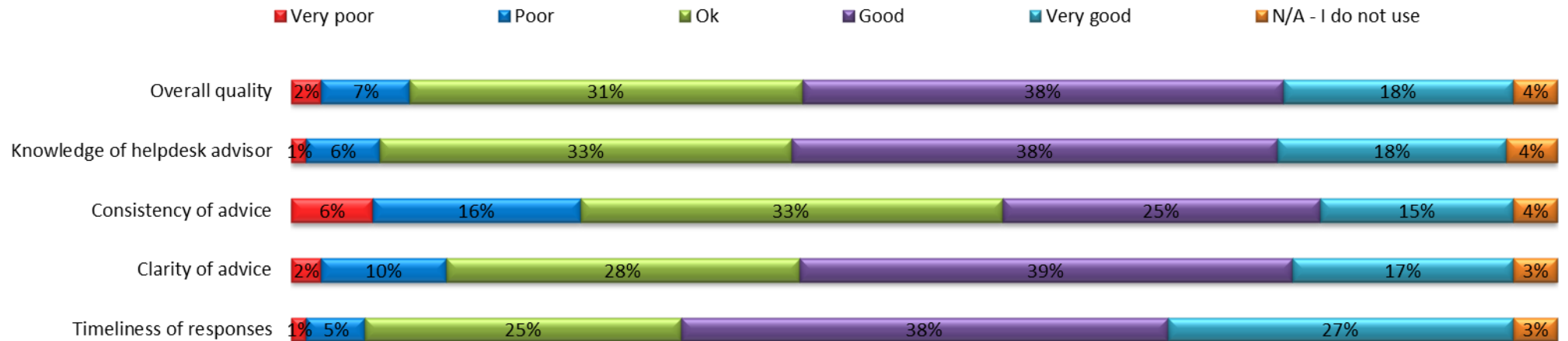
Section 2: Guidance & Helpdesk.

Guidance should be up to date, accessible, easily understood and useful. The helpdesk should be accessible and resolve queries in a timely manner. Guidance provided by the helpdesk should be easily understood.

Respondents from all types of WDF user profile have access to the guidance and helpdesk so responses were analysed as a full sample. Between 169 and 172 of all respondents answered the questions in Section 2 of the User Survey on Guidance & Helpdesk. Respondents that answered 'N/A' were included in the analysis.

Q7. How would you rate the following aspects of the guidance in WDF?

	Very Poor	Poor	Ok	Good	Very Good	N/A - I do not use
Overall quality:	3%	10%	38%	34%	9%	6%
Access to training (e.g. WebEx training):	2%	7%	28%	30%	25%	8%
Current and relevant to your requirements:	4%	8%	42%	33%	6%	8%
Clarity:	5%	15%	37%	29%	7%	7%
Detail in documents:	2%	7%	38%	34%	10%	8%
Length of documents:	5%	14%	40%	30%	3%	8%
Ability to find specifics:	6%	15%	46%	24%	3%	6%

Q8. How would you rate the following aspects of the WDF Helpdesk?

Legend: ■ Very poor ■ Poor ■ Ok ■ Good ■ Very good ■ N/A - I do not use

Aspect	Very poor	Poor	Ok	Good	Very good	N/A - I do not use
Overall quality	2%	7%	31%	38%	18%	4%
Knowledge of helpdesk advisor	1%	6%	33%	38%	18%	4%
Consistency of advice	6%	16%	33%	25%	15%	4%
Clarity of advice	2%	10%	28%	39%	17%	3%
Timeliness of responses	1%	5%	25%	38%	27%	3%

Q9. Are there any changes that would improve WDF guidance and helpdesk?
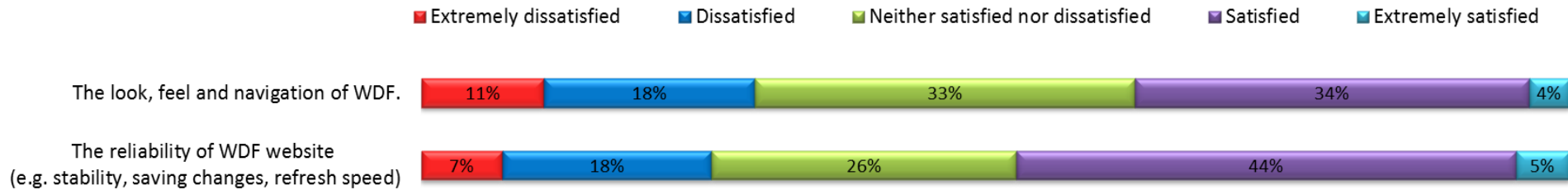
There were 54 responses to this question.

The bulk of responses indicated that advice provided by the helpdesk needs to be more consistent. Specific examples include being given different (sometimes contradictory) advice both from different helpdesk advisors and from one quarter to the next. A number of responses indicated WDF guidance needs to be clearer, more concise and use simpler terminology and plain English - the guidance uses confusing terminology, is long-winded and it is difficult to find specifics. Recommendations included a complete overhaul of the guidance page, searchable online help, live chats (opposed to emails) and clearer/more transparent guidance.

Section 3: System performance.

170 respondents answered this question.

Q10. Please rate your satisfaction for..

	Extremely dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Satisfied	Extremely satisfied

	Extremely dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Satisfied	Extremely satisfied
The look, feel and navigation of WDF.	11%	18%	33%	34%	4%
The reliability of WDF website (e.g. stability, saving changes, refresh speed)	7%	18%	26%	44%	5%

Q11. Do you have any further comments about system performance?

There were 68 responses to this question.

The bulk of respondents had negative comments about system performance. The responses contained 3 main themes in relation to the look, feel and navigation of WDF, indicating the system is 'clunky', slow to refresh after saving and there is an excessive amount of scrolling whilst navigating screens. With regard to the reliability of the WDF website, a number of respondents indicated WDF 'freezes', is slow to save, crashes and is 'out of date' and clunky. A number of comments indicated data does not save and has to be re-entered. Some respondents suggested the implementation of Q100 has impacted on system performance, although acknowledged that performance had generally improved since Q100 was first rolled out. There was a single comment that the WDF website was impressive.

Section 4: Data Entry.

We were interested to know if the questions in WDF are structured in a way that representatively captures how you manage your waste, and if the questions provide all the necessary fields and categories to report the data you have.
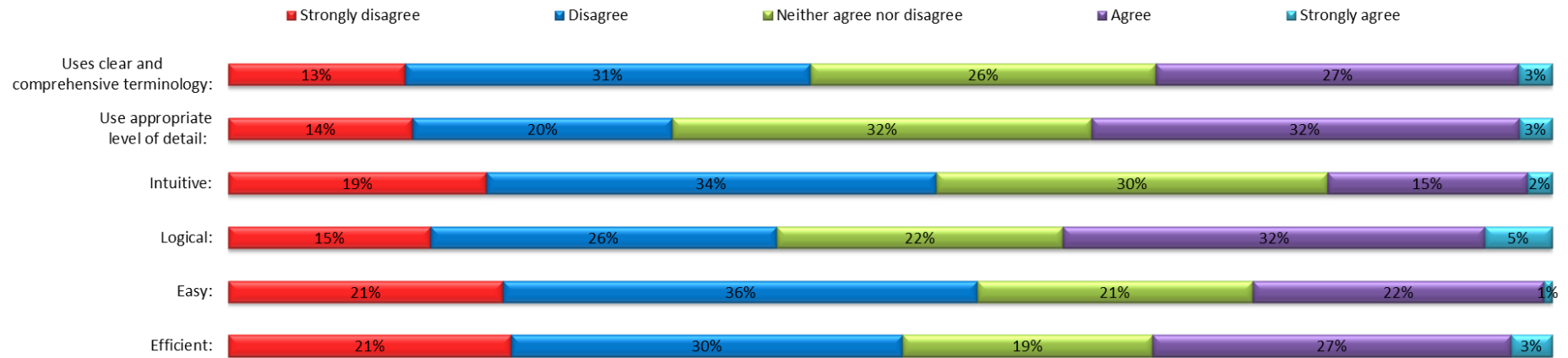
There were 159 responses to question 12 and 13.

Q12. Please complete the following statements: There is provision in WDF to accurately and representatively report all waste collected and sent for….
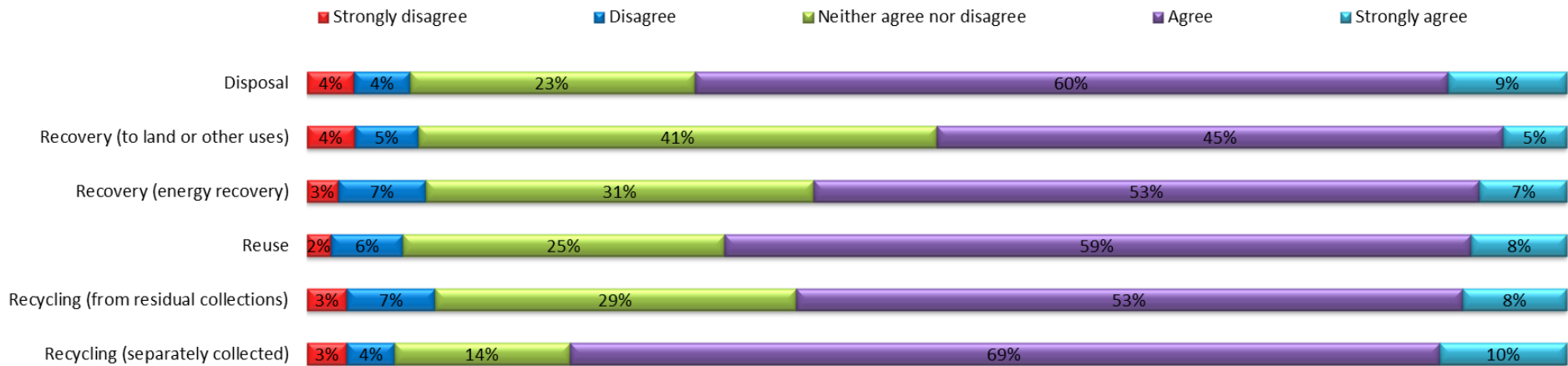
Question 100 (Q100) was designed to replace a number of questions in WasteDataFlow covering the management of waste (treatment, disposal and transfer to reprocessors). It has a different layout from older WDF questions in that the data is presented in a flow diagram "tree" structure with waste movements shown through progressive "branches" and "sub-branches" to the end destinations. Q100 provides a more visual interface to track material flows.

Q13. Please rate the following aspects of Q100 data entry: Q100 data entry is...

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Uses clear and comprehensive terminology:	13%	31%	26%	27%	3%
Use appropriate level of detail:	14%	20%	32%	32%	3%
Intuitive:	19%	34%	30%	15%	2%
Logical:	15%	26%	22%	32%	5%
Easy:	21%	36%	21%	22%	1%
Efficient:	21%	30%	19%	27%	3%

Q14. Are there any changes you would like to see to improve data entry? For example, please include information on functionality of data entry, on screen error flags, range of waste stream types or materials, such as aggregates, facility types or waste treatment processes.

There were 87 responses to this question.

The main theme in the comments was the desire for onscreen error messages or guidance to check data during entry e.g. to instantly identify imbalances or to explain terminology. Respondents felt that Q100 had been poorly implemented and would benefit from simpler data entry processes with comments that it was complicated and unwieldy. A number of improvements were suggested including; plain English terminology, easier selection of facilities, use of alphabetical ordering, pages being quicker to update and less duplication of data entry for materials and final destinations.

Respondents also felt data entry could be improved by less scrolling to find their place, having a split screen for reporting end destinations/tonnages (Q100) and having running totals onscreen. Other comments included a desire for better 'bulk upload' functionality, quicker updating pages and being able to edit/insert a branch without deleting the tree (Q100).

Q15. We are interested to know about how much time it takes you to complete WDF each quarter (not including data collection before using WDF):

Answer Options	Response Average (hours)	Response Total (hours)	Response Count
Approximately how many hours, each quarter, does your authority spend entering data to level 30 in WDF?	13.07	1,895	145
Approximately how many hours, each quarter, does your authority spend responding to the validation process to get to level 35?	3.82	562	147

answered question	147
skipped question	38

Q16. Overall, do you think the amount of time you spend on data entry and validation is reasonable for the tasks?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	53.2%	82
No	44.2%	68
N/A	2.6%	4

answered question	154
skipped question	31

Q17. Do you have any further comments about WDF data entry?
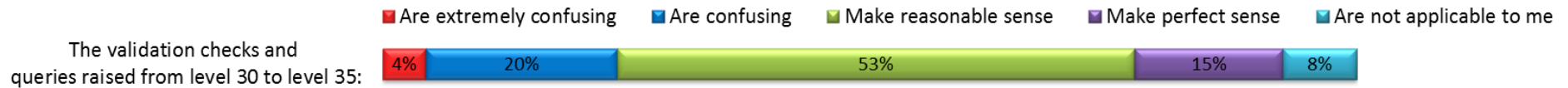
There were 60 responses to this question.

The main theme respondents conveyed was that data entry is excessively time consuming. This was due to a number of reasons including the level of detail required (and the time it takes to collate the data), the introduction of Q100, nonsensical/illogical validation challenges and the time it takes to find errors. There were references to some data requirements being out of the respondents' control, such as two-tier authority relations and sourcing accurate data from third parties such as MRFs. The comments clearly conveyed a desire for data entry processes to be improved and become more efficient or reasonable.
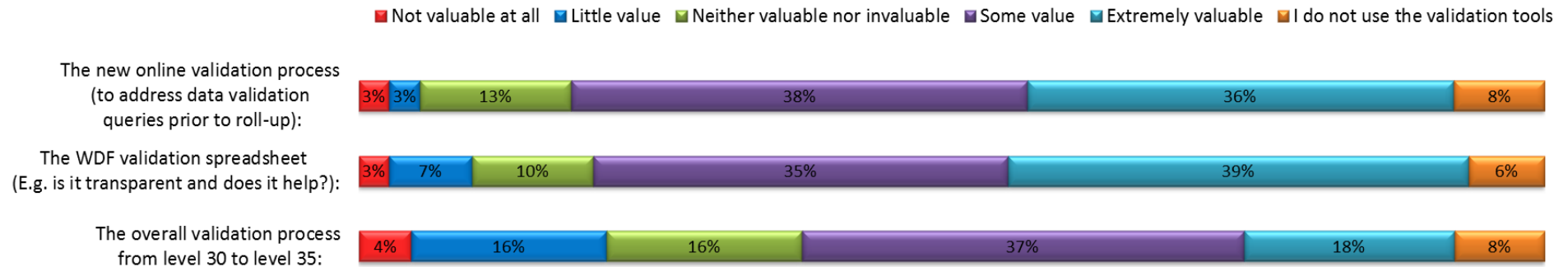
Section 5: Validation/helpdesk.

The process of validation from level 30 to level 35 is meant to help local authorities ensure data has been entered in WDF as accurately as possible.

There were 158 responses to questions 18 and 19,

Q18. We are interested to know if the validation checks (from level 30 to level 35) are understood. Please complete the following statement:- The validation checks and queries raised from level 30 to level 35:

Legend: ■ Are extremely confusing ■ Are confusing ■ Make reasonable sense ■ Make perfect sense ■ Are not applicable to me

The validation checks and queries raised from level 30 to level 35:	4%	20%	53%	15%	8%

Q19. Please rate the value of the following aspects of validation:

Legend: ■ Not valuable at all ■ Little value ■ Neither valuable nor invaluable ■ Some value ■ Extremely valuable ■ I do not use the validation tools

	Not valuable at all	Little value	Neither valuable nor invaluable	Some value	Extremely valuable	I do not use the validation tools
The new online validation process (to address data validation queries prior to roll-up):	3%	3%	13%	38%	36%	8%
The WDF validation spreadsheet (E.g. is it transparent and does it help?):	3%	7%	10%	35%	39%	6%
The overall validation process from level 30 to level 35:	4%	16%	16%	37%	18%	8%

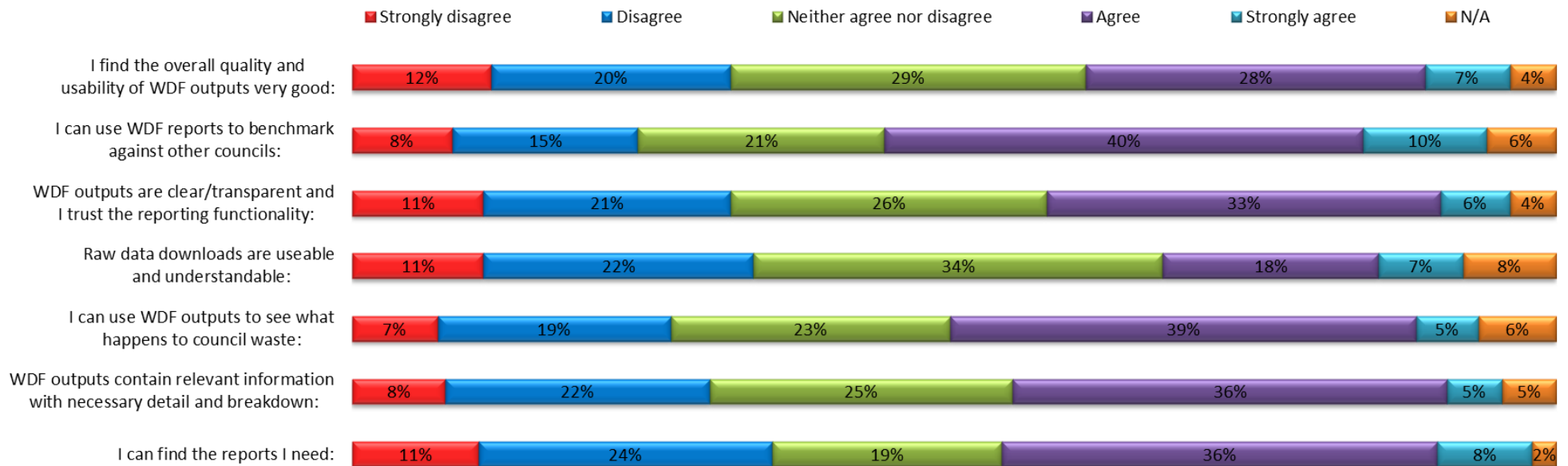Q20. Do you have any further comments about WDF data validation and helpdesk?

There were 42 responses to this question.

The main theme respondents conveyed was that validation challenges can be trivial (small imbalances, seasonal fluctuations and quarter on quarter changes), unclear or unspecific and sometimes inconsistent. The responses also suggested the validation process needs more transparency - respondents found the validation spreadsheet unnecessarily confusing with complicated formulae that make it difficult to identify errors in data and then trace where exactly it relates. Some responses recommended a quicker turnaround for validation challenges and better scrutiny of submissions before challenging, especially where covered by comments already provided. A number of answers were (or were balanced with) positive and welcoming comments about the validation process, helpdesk, and online validation tool.

Section 6: Reporting (the outputs from WDF).

WDF reporting functionality is meant to help local authorities enhance their waste management data reporting. This is for strategic planning purposes, performance benchmarking against other local authorities and for the general public to access local waste management information.

Q21. Please rate the following aspects of downloadable WDF reports:

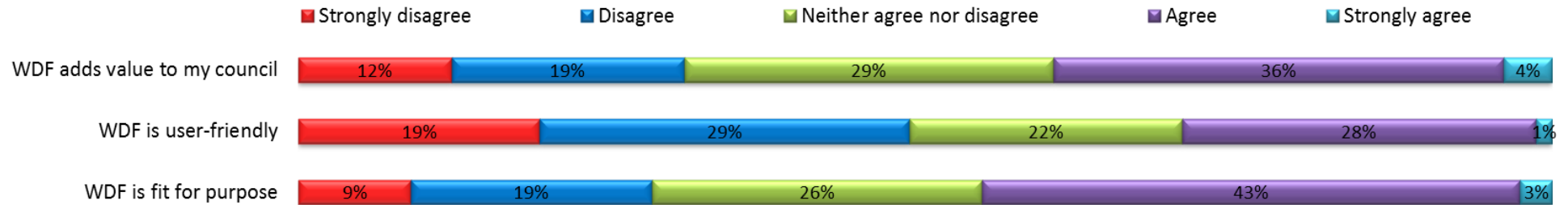|	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	N/A
I find the overall quality and usability of WDF outputs very good:	12%	20%	29%	28%	7%	4%
I can use WDF reports to benchmark against other councils:	8%	15%	21%	40%	10%	6%
WDF outputs are clear/transparent and I trust the reporting functionality:	11%	21%	26%	33%	6%	4%
Raw data downloads are useable and understandable:	11%	22%	34%	18%	7%	8%
I can use WDF outputs to see what happens to council waste:	7%	19%	23%	39%	5%	6%
WDF outputs contain relevant information with necessary detail and breakdown:	8%	22%	25%	36%	5%	5%
I can find the reports I need:	11%	24%	19%	36%	8%	2%

Q22. Are there any reports you would like to see added or improved to meet your needs?

There were 43 responses to this question.

The majority of respondents that answered this question indicated they have difficulties using the existing reporting functionality, and since the introduction of question 100 a number of reports do not work. Respondents find the reporting tools cumbersome, have low confidence in the data, find the reports confusing, unclear and difficult to use and have struggled to use/understand the Q100 raw data download. A number of respondents expressed a desire for simple/transparent performance benchmarking reports/tools and reports that are easier to understand or manipulate.

Section 7: Overall WasteDataFlow opinion.

Q23. Please complete the following statements:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
WDF adds value to my council	12%	19%	29%	36%	4%
WDF is user-friendly	19%	29%	22%	28%	1%
WDF is fit for purpose	9%	19%	26%	43%	3%

Q24. Do you have any further comments about your overall opinion of Wastedataflow?

There were 42 responses to this question.

Overall, the responses to this question indicated that WDF needs to be more user-friendly. A number of respondents made positive comments acknowledging WDF as a good resource, comments also suggested the system could be better and is hampered by excessive requirements and usability issues. Some respondents indicated WDF is not fit for purpose and they only use it because they have to.

Section 8: Future of WasteDataFlow.

WasteDataFlow has been in active use for over 10 years. English waste policy and the waste industry have undergone changes during this time and both are likely to evolve in future.

Q25. Do you have any further comments about WDF? E.g. what developments to WDF would you like to see?

There were 54 responses to this question.

The main theme in the comments was a desire for WDF to be more user-friendly with better reporting functionality. Respondents believed WDF should be quicker to use and have clearer drivers for reporting. A number of comments suggested WDF is out of date; the entire system should be reviewed or even closed down and replaced. Respondents also indicated they would like to see combined WDA/WCA reporting, better auto-upload functionality, less trivial validation and potentially be rolled out to waste industry for data reporting.

Q26. Please provide any suggestions for alternative or improved ways of reporting/sourcing local authority collected waste data in future:

There were 39 responses to this question.

Similar to question 25, a significant theme was a desire for WDF to be generally more user friendly – specific examples included improving efficiency of data entry/validation (particularly Q100) and using clearer terminology. Some respondents suggested WDF would benefit from tools to make local authority data input more consistent and uniform, such as using issuing local authorities with a spreadsheet template to record waste data and having functionality to automatically upload to WDF.

Other suggestions included requiring contractors (particularly MRFs) to provide data, legislation required contractors to provide local authorities with data, reducing focus on imbalances when validating data, and having Waste from Households (WfH) performance figures available for benchmarking at local authority level. Respondents acknowledged WDF is a good concept but felt it had been poorly executed.