



# DANA

Disability Advocacy  
Network Australia

## **ADVOCACY WORKFORCE SURVEY 2015**

RESULTS

by

Joel Caskie

ACU Master of Social Work

MSocWk (Student)

Where does your organisation provide advocacy? (please tick all that apply) n=62

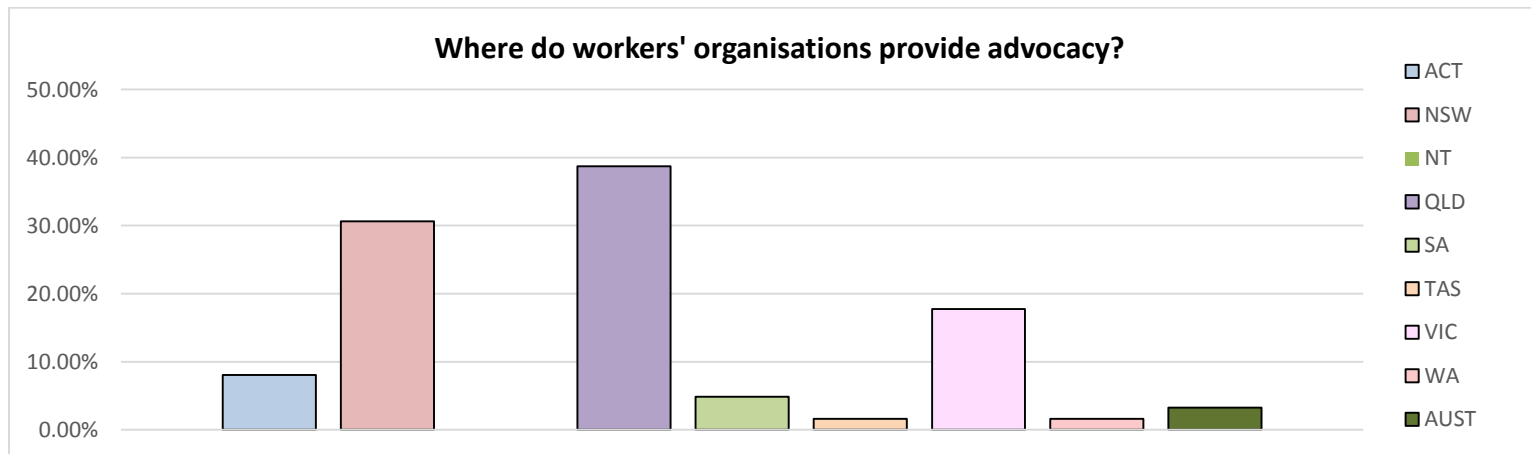


Figure 1.1 Where do workers' organisations provide advocacy? (histogram shown as a percentage)

Which of the following best describes the location where you work? n=62

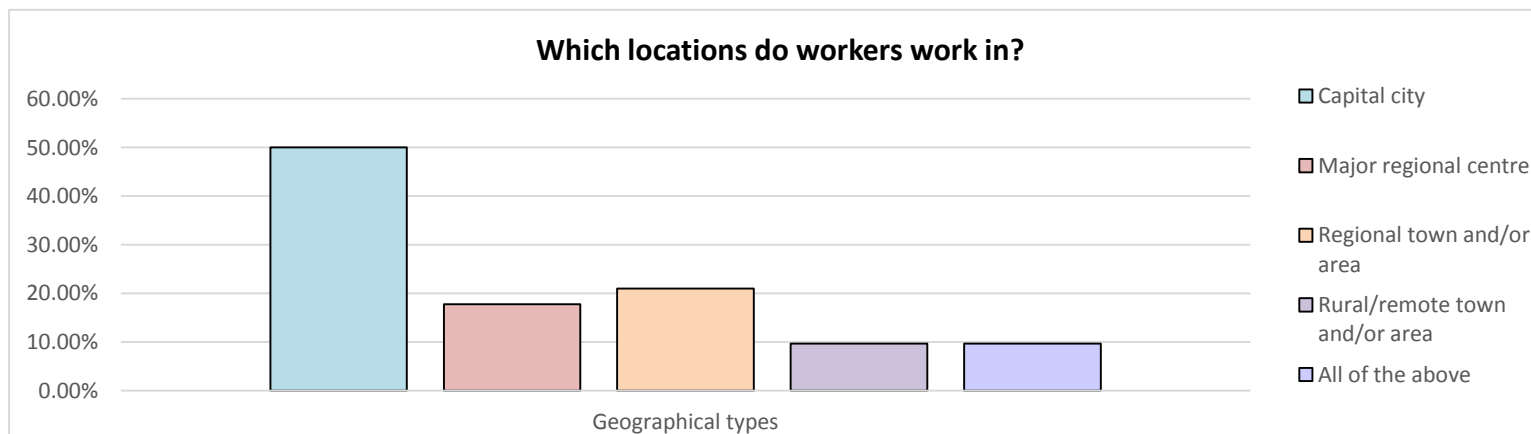


Figure 2.1 Which locations do workers work in? (histogram shown as a percentage)

## Findings

39 per cent of respondents (n=24) reported that they provide advocacy in Queensland.

3 per cent of respondents (n=2) reported that they provided advocacy across all of Australia.

Half of respondents (n=31) reported that they work in a capital city location only.

10 per cent of respondents (n=6) reported that they work in all location types.

How old are you? n=61



Figure 3.1 Employee ages (shown as normal distribution)

What is your gender? n=62

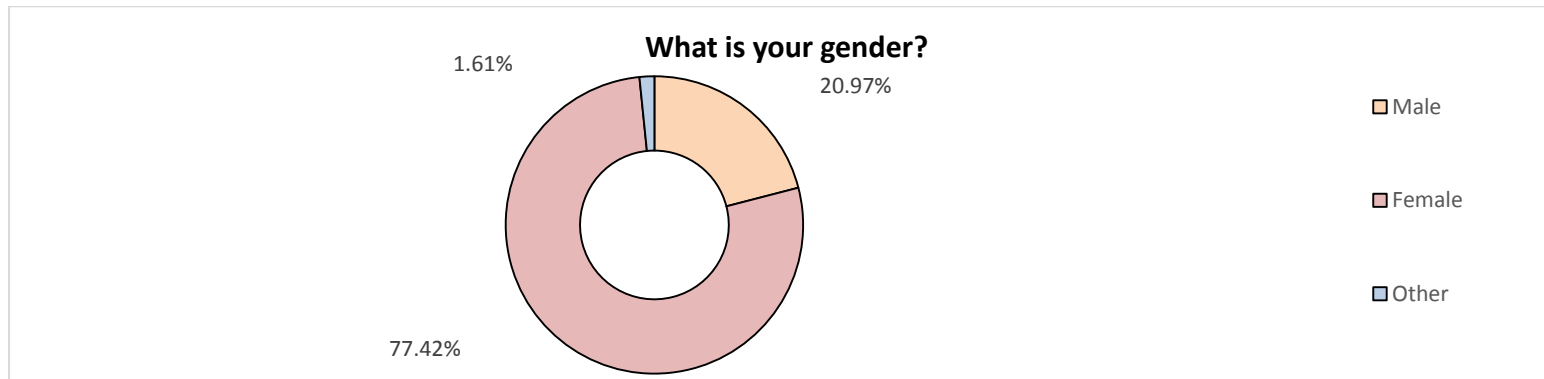


Figure 4.1 What is your gender? (pie chart shown as a percentage)

## Findings

The youngest age among respondents was 21.

The oldest age among respondents was 68.

Over three quarters of respondents (n=48) identify as *female*.

Do you identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander? n=62

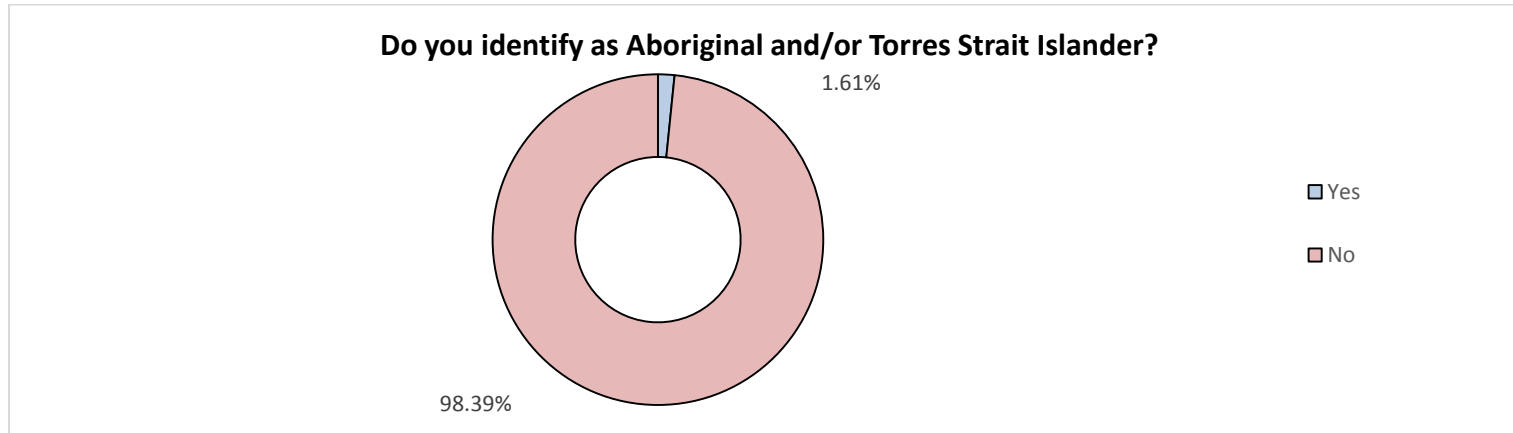


Figure 5.1 Do you identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander? (pie chart shown as a percentage)

Do you identify as having a disability? n=62

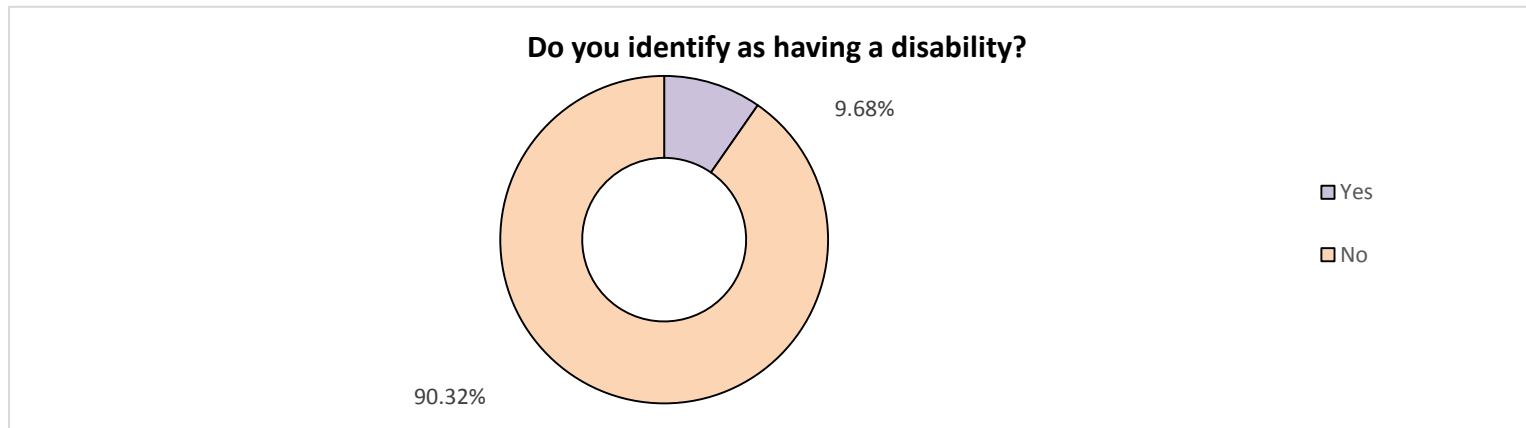


Figure 6.1 Do you identify as having a disability? (pie chart shown as a percentage)

## Findings

Only one respondent identified as *Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander*.

Over 90 per cent of respondents (n=56) reported that they do not identify as having a disability.

Do you speak any other languages? n= 62

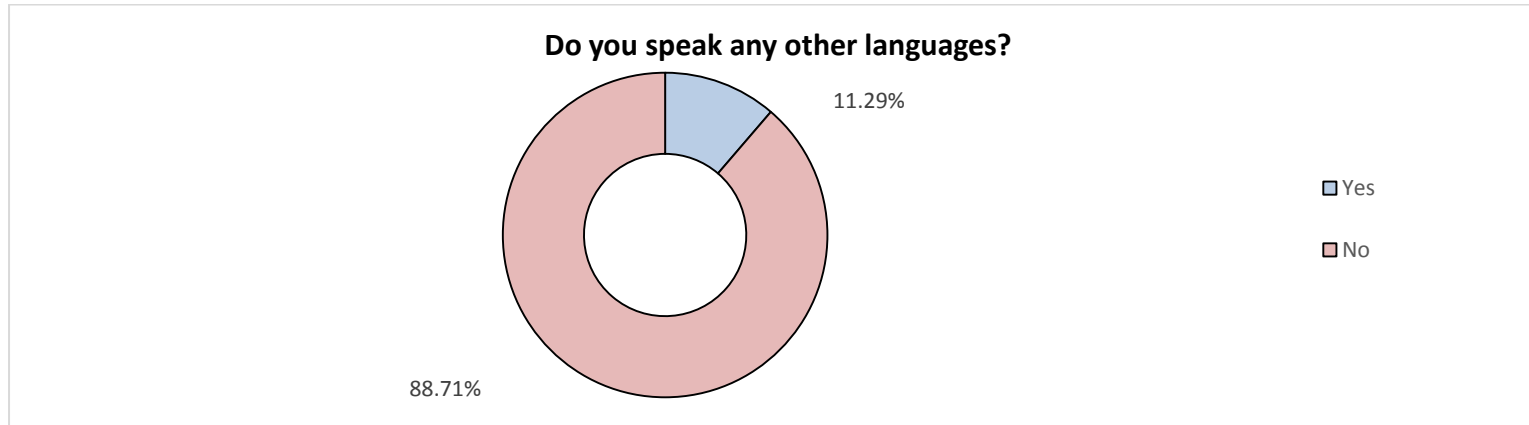


Figure 7.1 Do you speak any other languages? (pie chart shown as a percentage)

What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received? (please tick all that apply) n=61

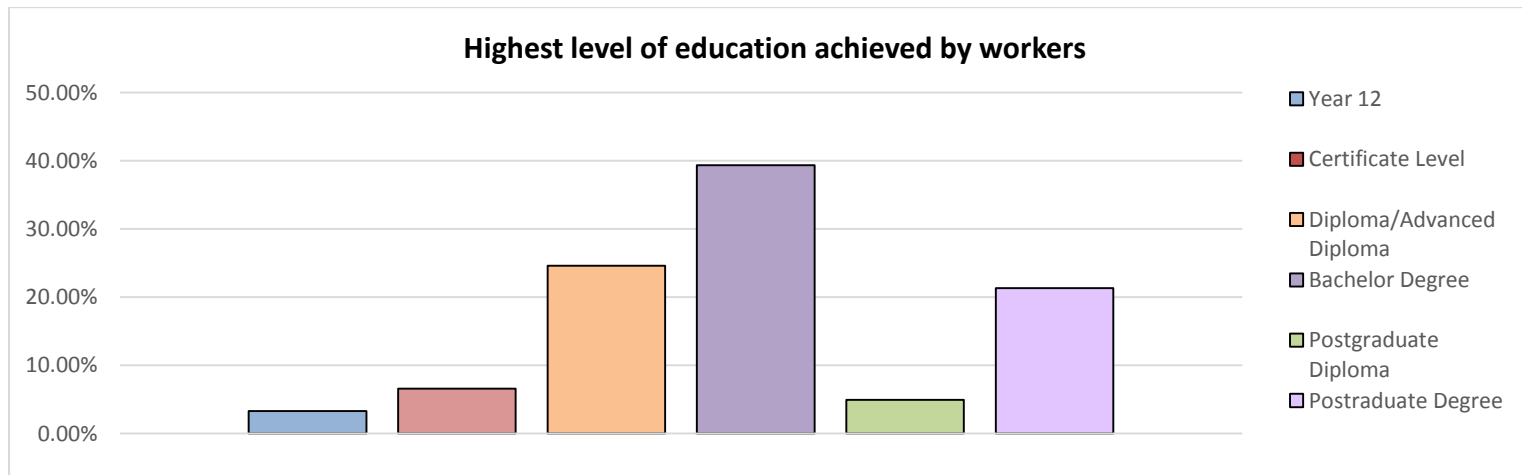


Figure 8.1 Highest level of educated achieved (histogram shown as a percentage)

## Findings

Almost 90 per cent of respondents (n=55) reported that they do not speak any languages other than English.

39 per cent of respondents (n=24) reported that they completed their highest level of education at the Bachelor level.

Over 65 per cent of respondents (n=40) reported having completed a Bachelor Degree or higher.

Over 20 per cent of respondents (n=13) reported having completed a Postgraduate Degree.

3 per cent of respondents (n=2) reported having a Year 12 education as their highest level of education completed.

What was your field of work before you started working in the advocacy sector? (please tick all that apply) n=62

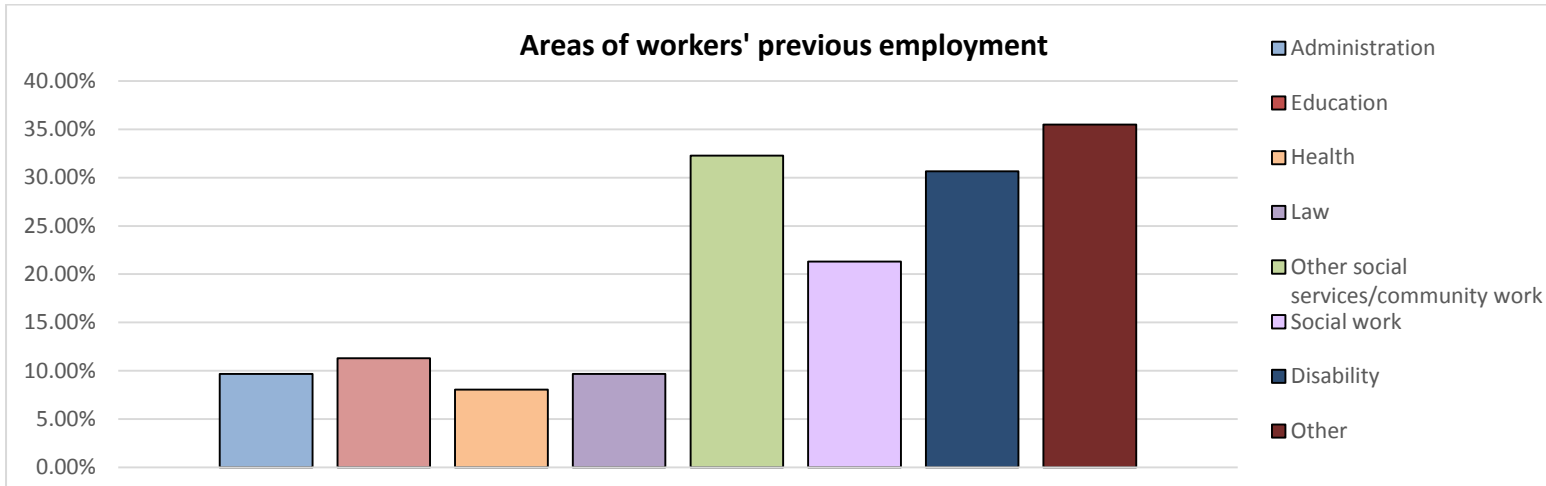


Figure 9.1 Highest level of educated achieved (histogram shown as a percentage)

What is your role in the advocacy sector? n=62

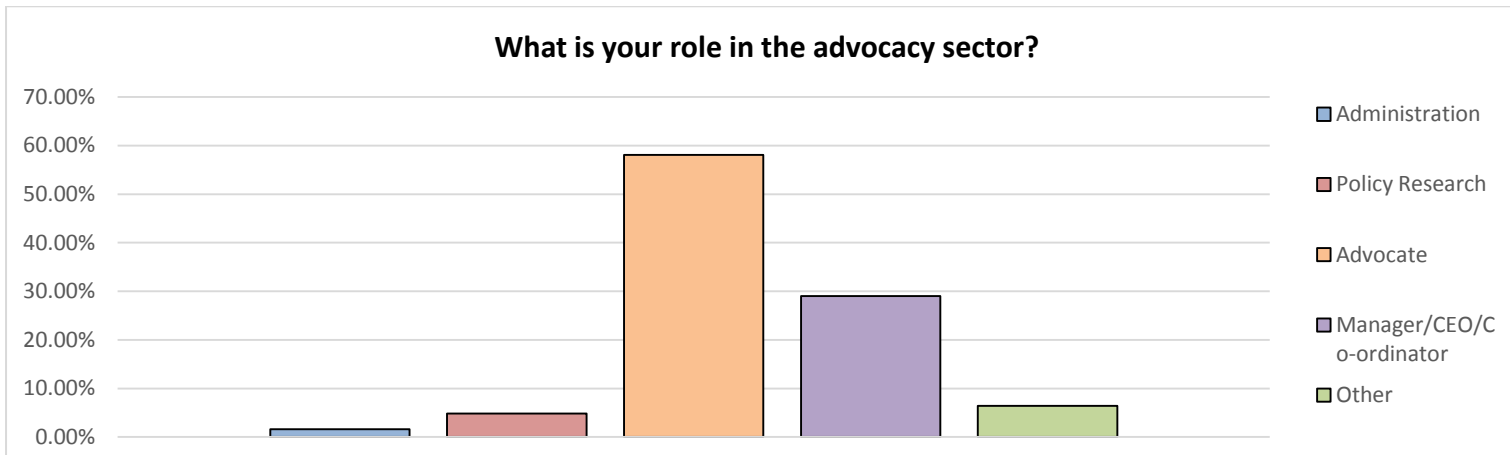


Figure 10.1 Highest level of educated achieved (histogram shown as a percentage)

## Findings

Almost a third of respondents (n=20) reported that they have previously worked in other social services/community services.

Almost a third of respondents (n=19) reported that they have previously worked in the disability sector.

Over a third of respondents (n=22) reported that they have previously worked in sectors other than the answer categories provided.

Almost 60 per cent of respondents (n=36) reported that they work in an advocate position in their organisation.

29 per cent of respondents (n=18) reported that they work in a manager/CEO/co-ordinator position in their organisation.

Only 1 respondent reported that they worked in an administration role in their organisation.

What kind of advocacy do you or your organisation provide? (please tick all that apply) n=62

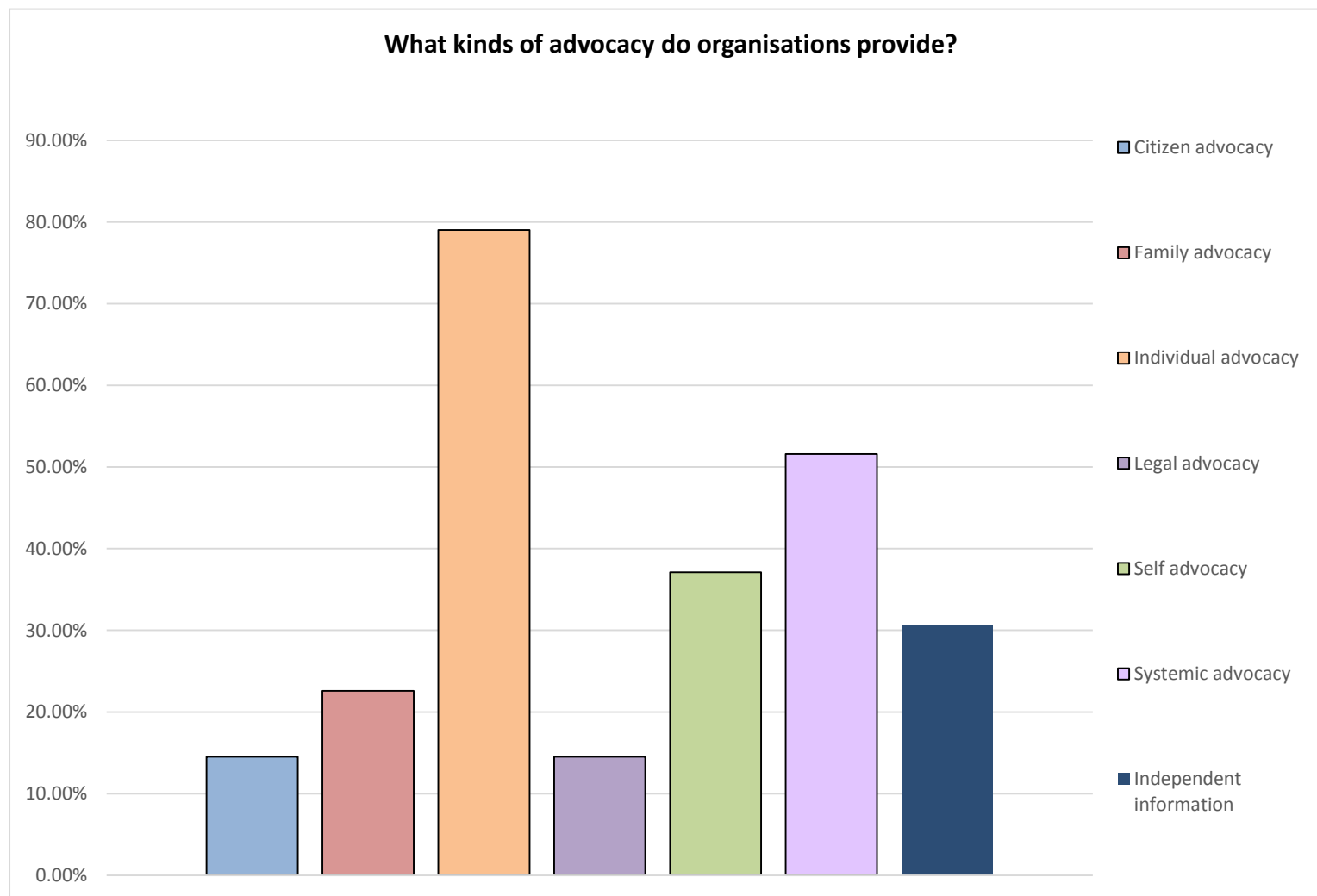


Figure 11.1 What kinds of advocacy do organisations provide? (histogram shown as a percentage)

## Findings

Over three-quarters of respondents (n=49) reported that their organisation provides individual advocacy.

14 per cent of respondents (n=9) reported that their organisation provides citizen advocacy.

14 per cent of respondents (n=9) reported that their organisation provides legal advocacy.

Over half of respondents (n=32) reported that their organisation provides systemic advocacy.

88 per cent of organisations which provided systemic advocacy (n=28) also provided individual advocacy.

45 per cent of all responding organisations (n=28) reported that they provided both individual and systemic advocacy.

Over a third of respondents (n=21) reported that their organisation only provided 1 type of advocacy.

How long have you been working in the advocacy sector? n=62

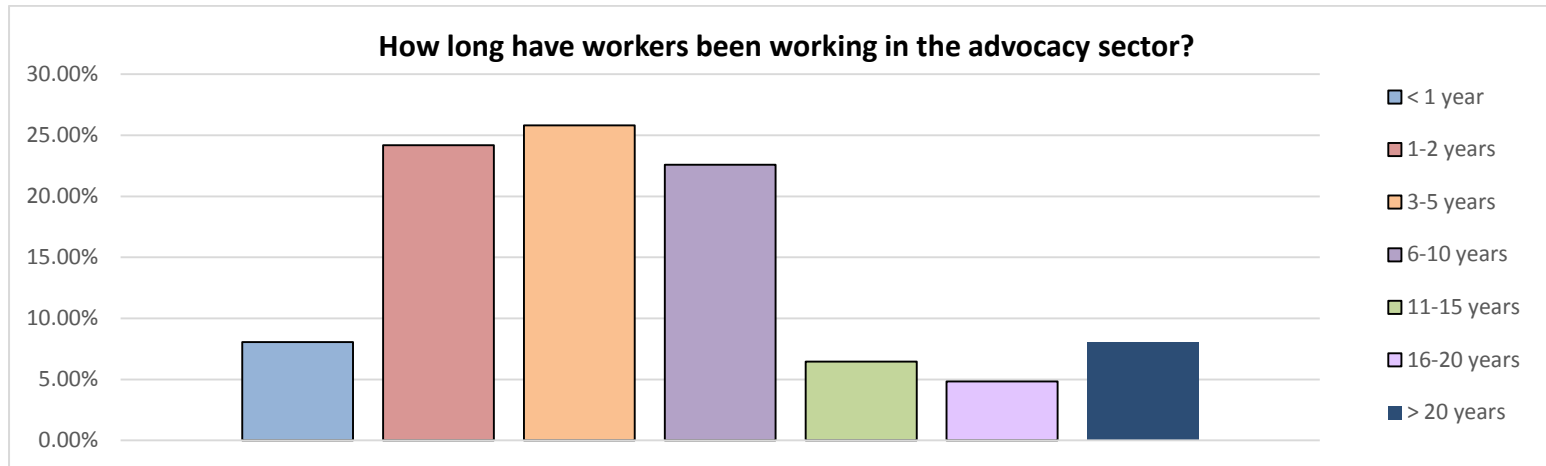


Figure 12.1 How long have workers been working in the advocacy sector? (histogram shown as a percentage)

How long have you been working for your current organisation? n=62

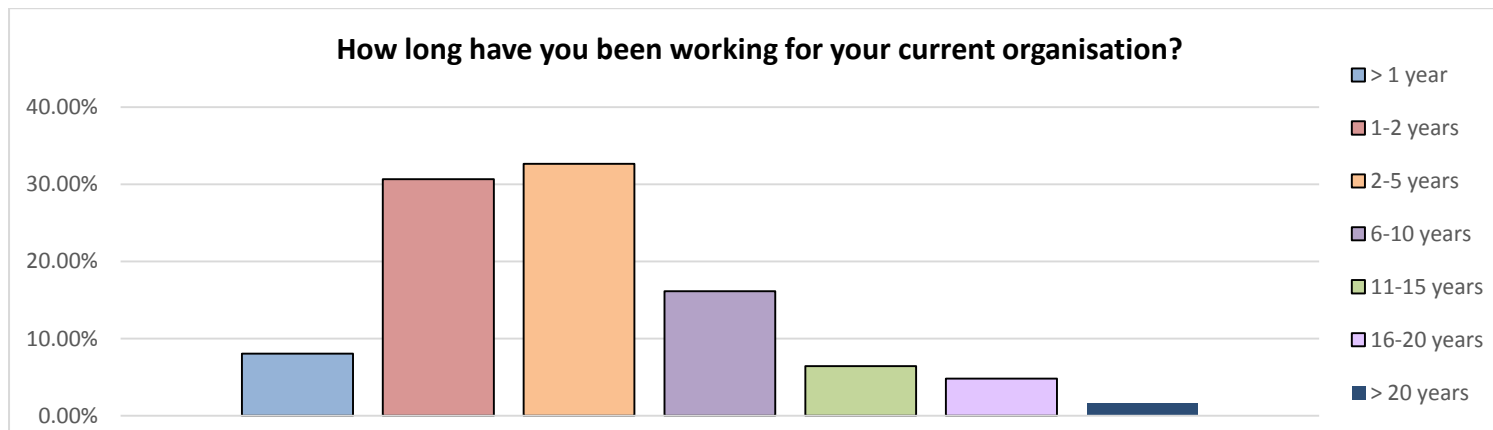


Figure 13.1 How long have you been working for your current organisation? (histogram shown as a percentage)

## Findings

Half of respondents (n=31) reported that they have been working in the advocacy sector for 1-5 years.

13 per cent of respondents (n=8) reported that they have been working in the advocacy sector for over 16 years.

A third of respondents (n=20) reported that they have been working in their current organisation for 3-5 years.

Almost a third of respondents (n=19) reported that they have been working in their current organisation for 1-2 years.

63 per cent of respondents (n=39) reported that they have been working in their current organisation for 1-5 years.

13 per cent of respondents (n=8) reported that they have been working in their current organisation for over 10 years.



How satisfied are you with the resources available to help you perform your task effectively? n=62



Figure 14.1 How satisfied are you with the resources available to help you perform your task effectively? (histogram shown as a percentage)

What resources (including technology) would help you to perform your work more effectively? n=62

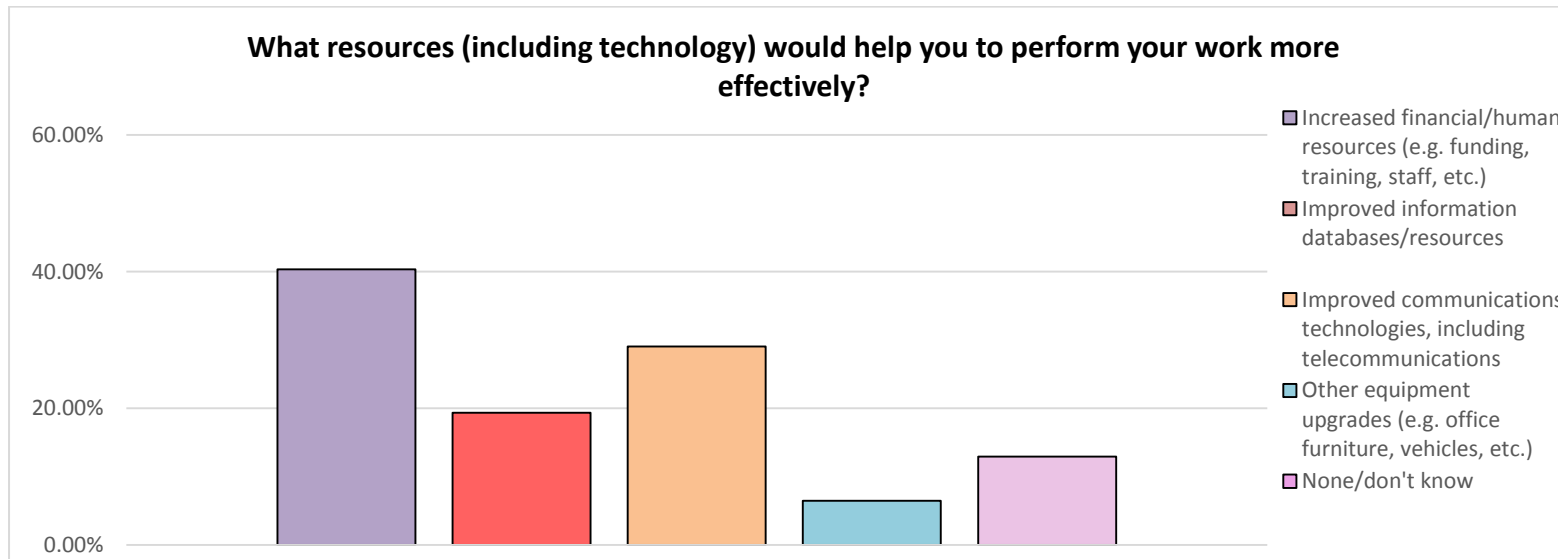


Figure 15.1 What resources (including technology) would help you to perform your work more effectively? (histogram shown as a percentage)



## Findings

Over 80 per cent of respondents (n=52) reported that they felt *satisfied* or *extremely satisfied* with the resources available to help them perform their tasks effectively.

Over 40 per cent of respondents (n=25) cited *increased financial/human resources* as being able to help them perform their work more effectively.

*Improved information databases resources* were cited by almost 20 per cent of respondents (n= 12) as being able to help them perform their work more effectively.

*Improved communications technologies/telecommunications* attracted almost 30 per cent of participants' (n=12) responses.



What is your employment status in the advocacy sector? n=62

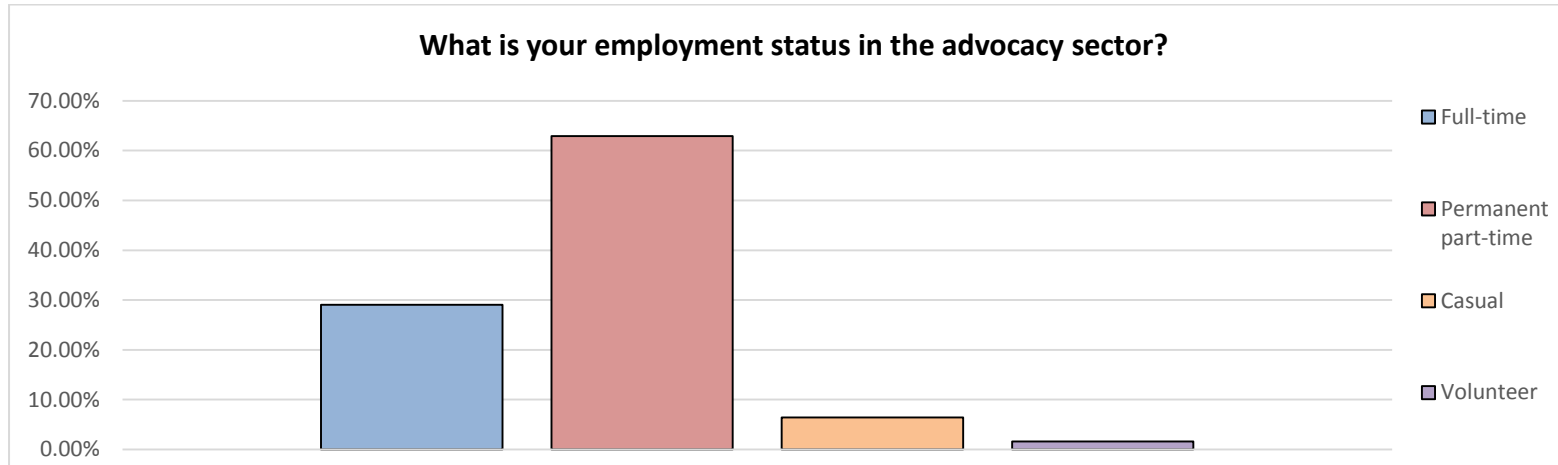


Figure 16.1 What is your employment status in the advocacy sector? (histogram shown as a percentage)

In a typical week, about how many hours are you paid for? n=62

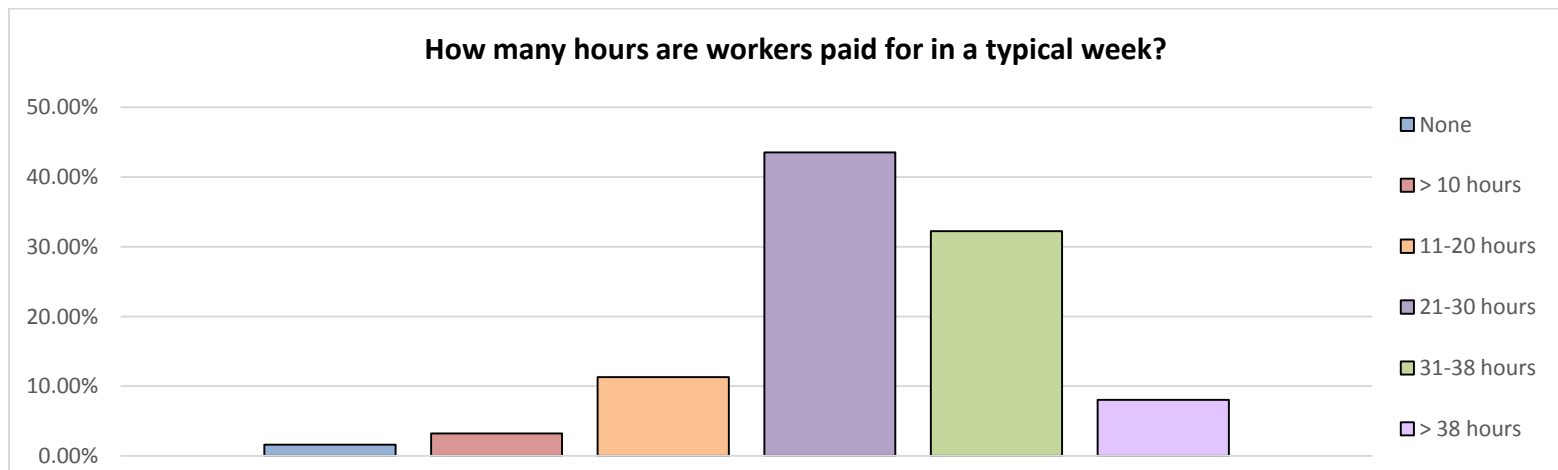


Figure 17.1 How many hours are workers paid for in a typical week? (histogram shown as a percentage)

## Findings

63 per cent of respondents (n=39) reported that they were employed in the advocacy sector on a permanent part-time basis.

92 per cent of respondents (n=57) reported that they were employed on a permanent basis.

44 per cent of respondents (n=27) reported that they were paid for 21-30 hours in a typical week.

40 per cent of respondents (n=25) reported that they were paid for 31 hours or more in a typical week.

These figures are consistent with figures provided in the previous question regarding employment status of participants.

How many unpaid hours, if any, do you work in a week? n=30

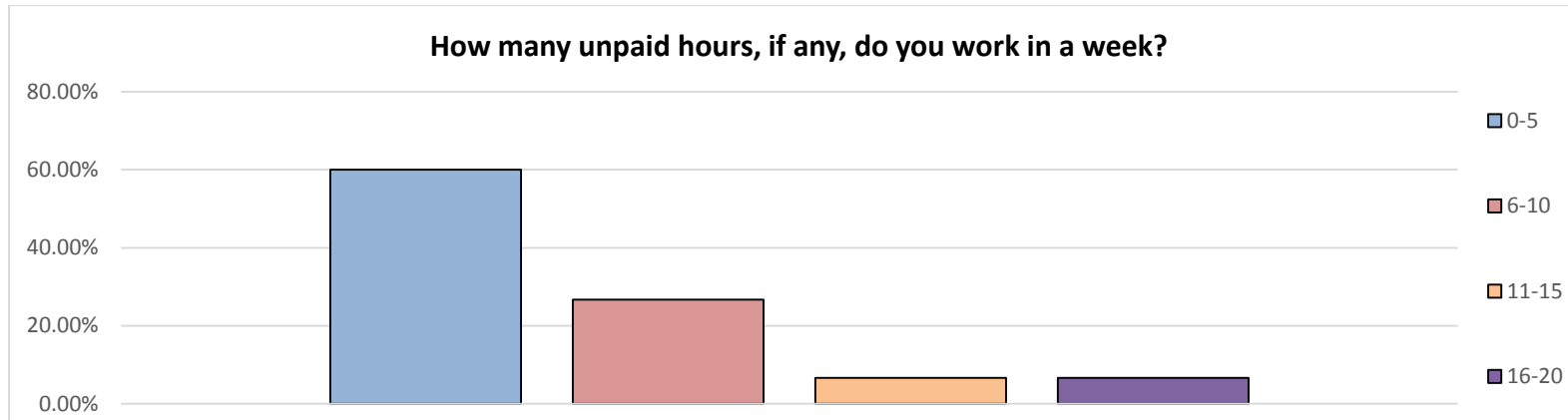


Figure 18.1 How many unpaid hours, if any, do you work in a week? (histogram shown as a percentage)

Would you like to work more paid hours than you currently do? n=62

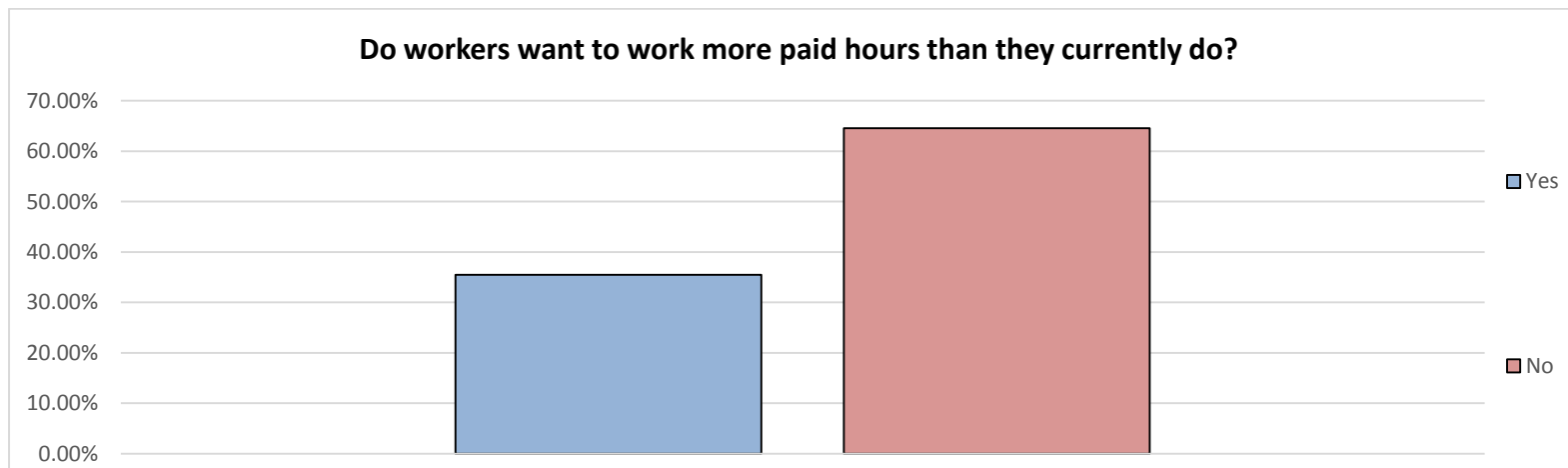


Figure 19.1 Do workers want to work more paid hours than they currently do? (histogram shown as a percentage)

## Findings

60 per cent of workers who reported that they work some unpaid hours (n=18) work 0-5 unpaid hours a week.

40 per cent of workers who reported that they work some unpaid hours (n=12) work over five (5) unpaid hours a week.

Over a third of respondents (n=22) reported that they *would* like to work more paid hours than they currently receive.

How satisfied are you with your salary package? n=60



Figure 20.1 How satisfied are you with your salary package? (histogram shown as a percentage)

What is the most satisfying aspect of your work? n=62

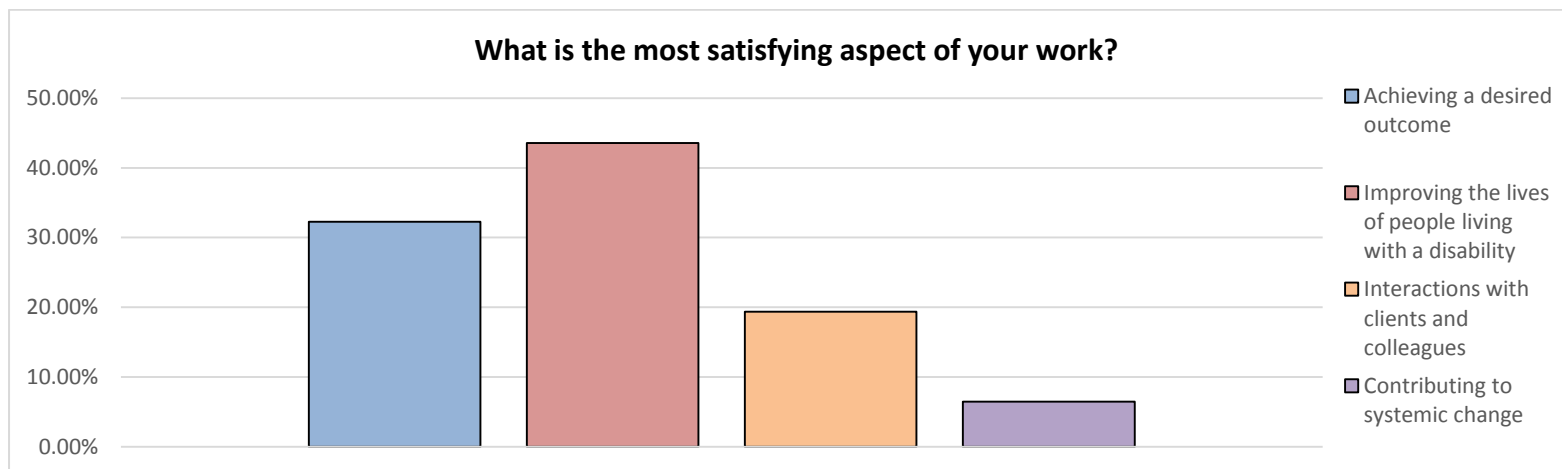


Figure 21.1 What is the most satisfying aspect of your work? (histogram shown as a percentage)

## Findings

80 per cent of respondents (n=40) reported that they are *satisfied* with their current salary package.

Almost 45 per cent of respondents (n=27) reported that *improving the lives of people living with a disability* was one of their most satisfying aspects of their work.

A third of respondents (n=20) reported that *achieving a desired outcome* was one of their most satisfying aspects of their work.

6 per cent of respondents (n=4) reported that *contributing to systemic change* was one of their most satisfying aspects of their work.

In a typical week how often do you feel stressed at work? (Select from the box below) n=62

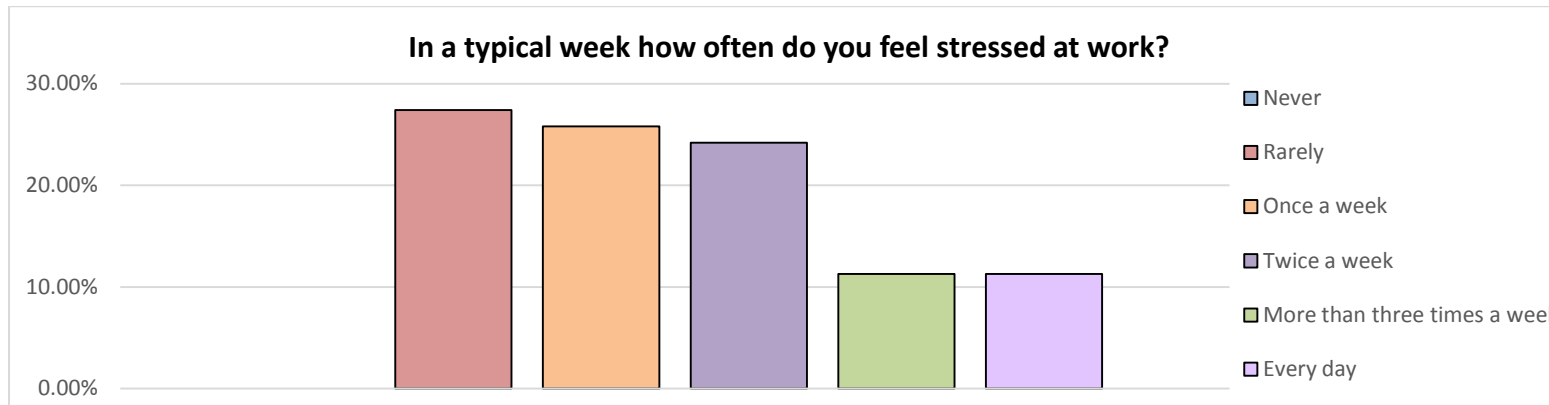


Figure 22.1 In a typical week how often do you feel stressed at work? (histogram shown as a percentage)

In a typical week how often do you feel stressed at work? (Select from the box below) (reasons explained in comments) n=51

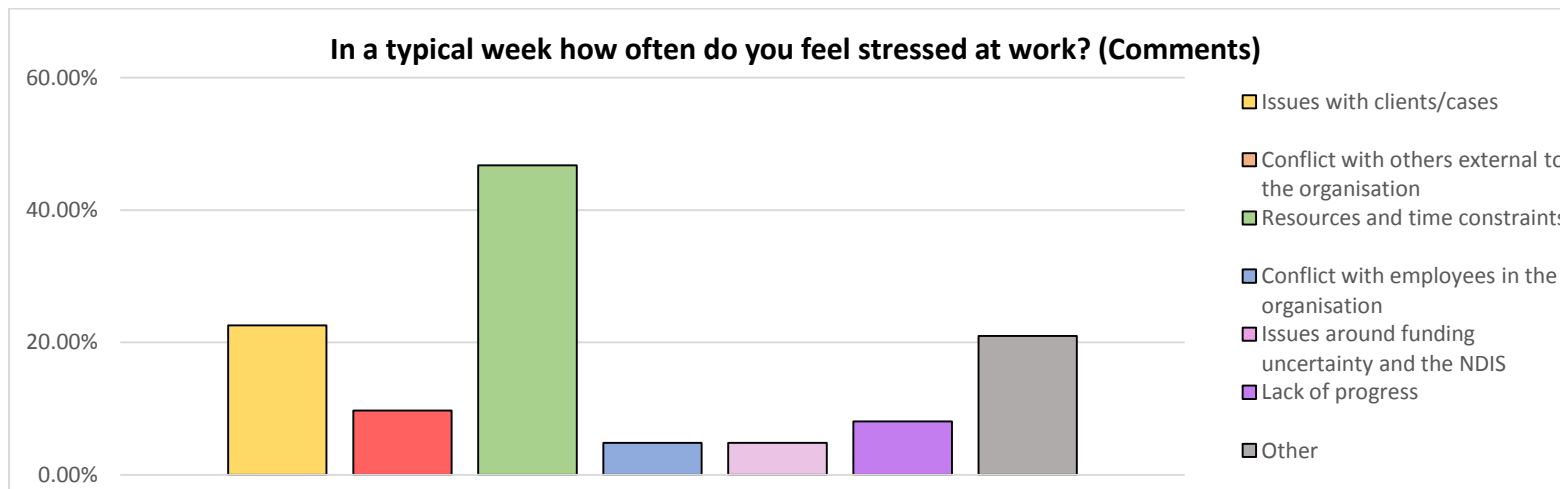


Figure 22.2 In a typical week how often do you feel stressed at work? (Reasons explained in comments) (histogram shown as a percentage)

## Findings

Half of respondents (n=31) reported that they experience stress at work *once a week* or *twice a week*.

Over a quarter of respondents (n=17) reported that they *rarely* experience stress at work in a typical week.

11 per cent of respondents (n=7) reported that they experience stress at work every day.

No respondents indicated that they never experience stress at work.

Over 45 per cent of respondents (n=29) included statements regarding *resource and time constraints* as a contributing factor to their stress at work.

Almost 10 per cent of respondents (n=6) cited *conflict with other professionals external to the organisation* as a contributing factor to their stress at work.

Does your organisation provide any support in dealing with stress at work? n=61

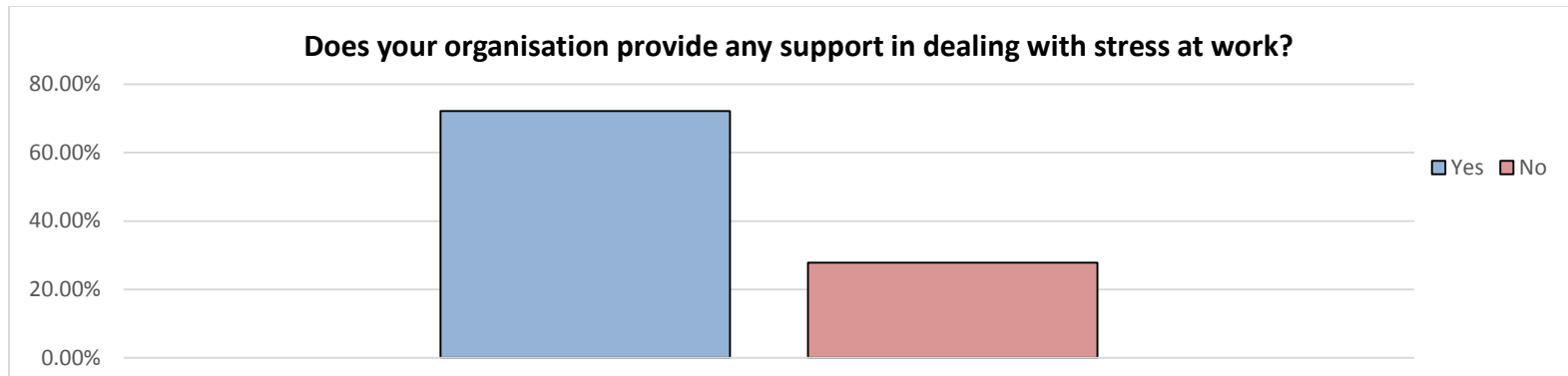


Figure 23.1 Does your organisation provide any support in dealing with stress at work? (histogram shown as a percentage)

What kind of support does your organisation provide with dealing with stress at work?

*“There is always the offer to call my line manager who is 2000k's away to debrief about difficult situations. While helpful, this doesn't always afford the level of support that I seek.”*

*“General line management and some workload support for head office staff. Regional areas aren't able to receive that support as much as there is only one staff member in each office.”*

*“Regular professional supervision”*

*“Some debriefing with other staff, but no formal assistance or counselling is available to staff”*

## Findings

Almost three quarters of respondents (n=44) reported that their organisation provides support in dealing with stress at work.

## Key Points

Support available across organisations is varied, and includes:

- counselling
- debriefing
- Employee Assistance Program
- peer supports

Smaller and/or regional organisations are not able to access some of these services readily.

Have you attended any training during the past 12 months that has helped you to build your skills and knowledge? n=62

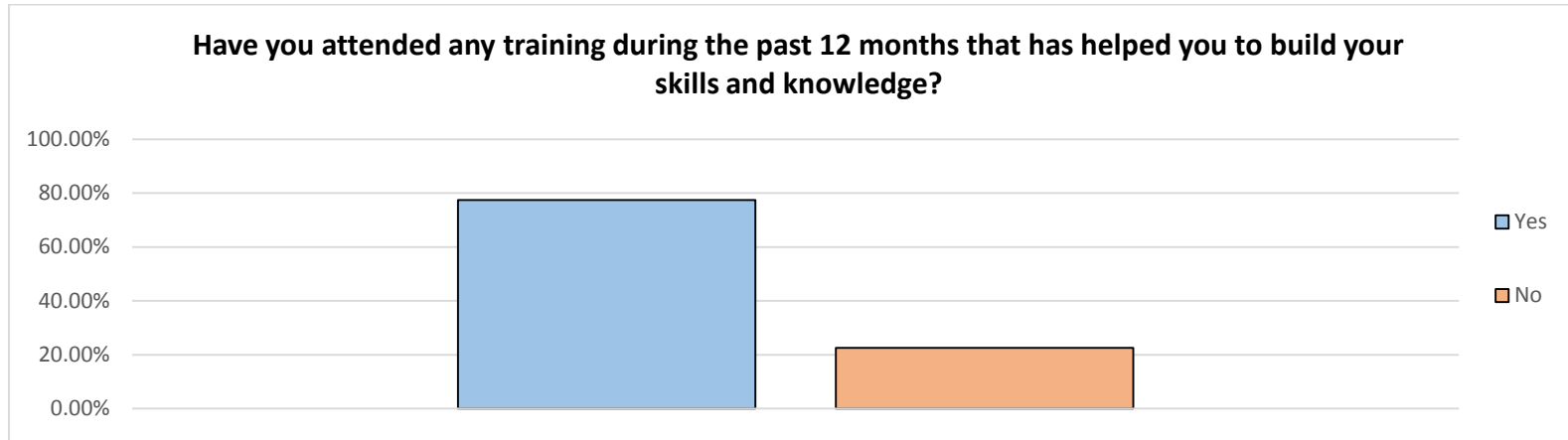


Figure 24.1 Have you attended any training during the past 12 months that has helped you to build your skills and knowledge? (histogram shown as a percentage)

What other training and professional development would you find useful if it was available? n=38

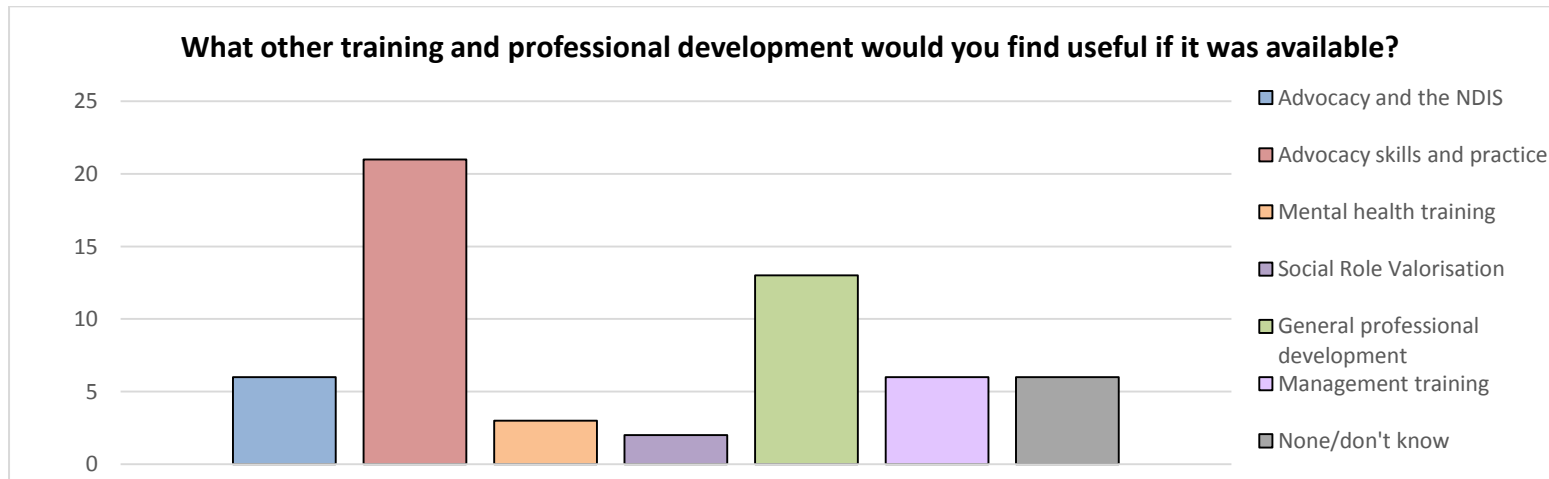


Figure 25.1 What other training and professional development would you find useful if it was available? (histogram shown as a percentage)



## Key Points

*“No funding for training opportunities. University is my only upskilling opportunity in my own time / money.”*

*“Opportunities for training are constrained by funding....most opportunities are cost free workshops or forums”*

Training that has helped build employee skills and knowledge included:

- negotiation and mediation
- report and submission writing
- social role valorisation training
- DARU training
- NDIS workshops

21 mentions by respondents identified *advocacy skills and practice* as training and professional development that they would find useful if it was available.

- this included a need for systemic advocacy training

*General professional development* had the next highest amount of mentions (n=13).



What would be your preference for accessing training and professional development? n=59

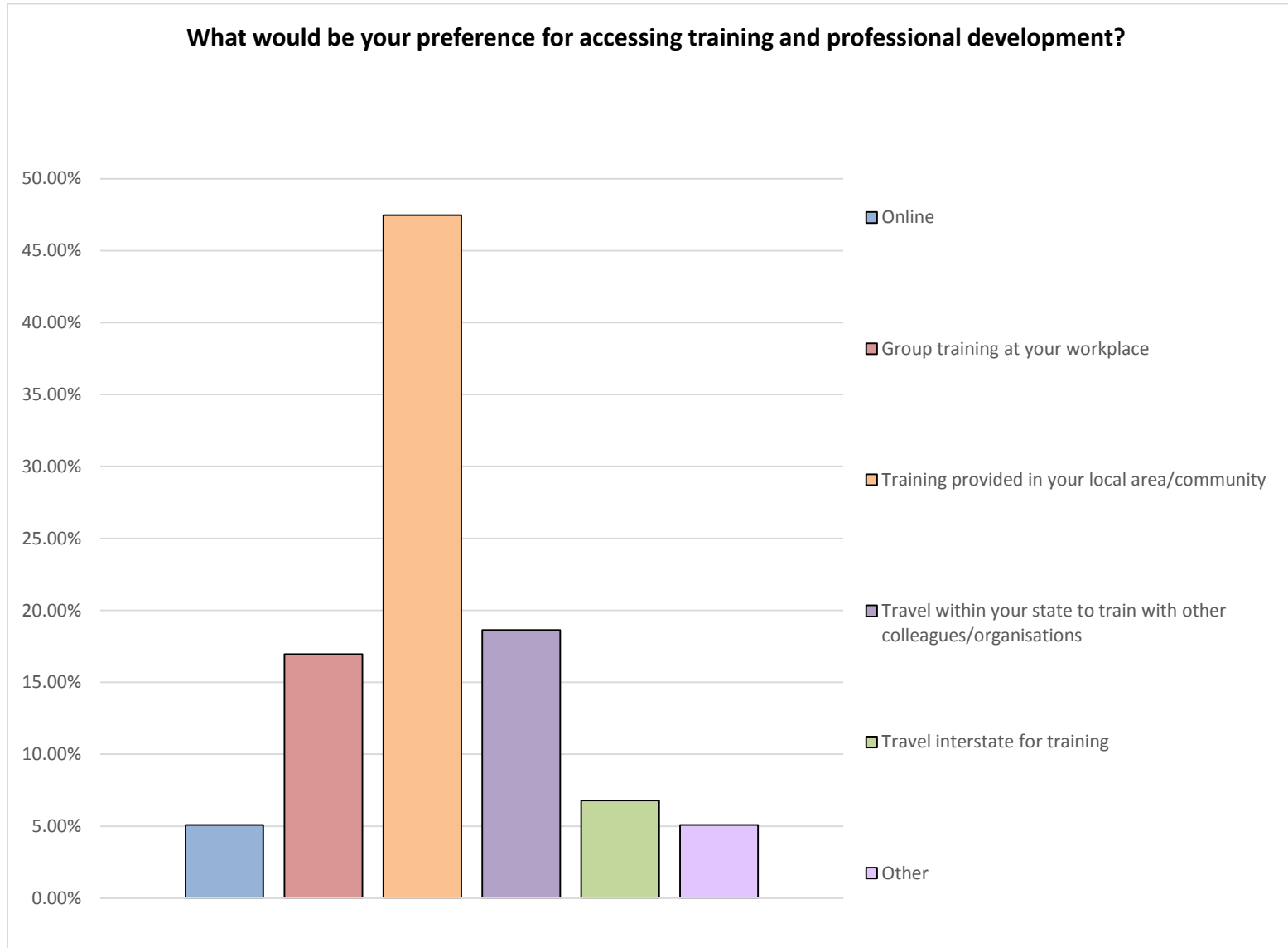


Figure 26.1 What would be your preference for accessing training and professional development? (histogram shown as a percentage)

## Findings

Almost half of the respondents (n=28) reported that they would prefer training to be provided in the local area/community.

## Comments

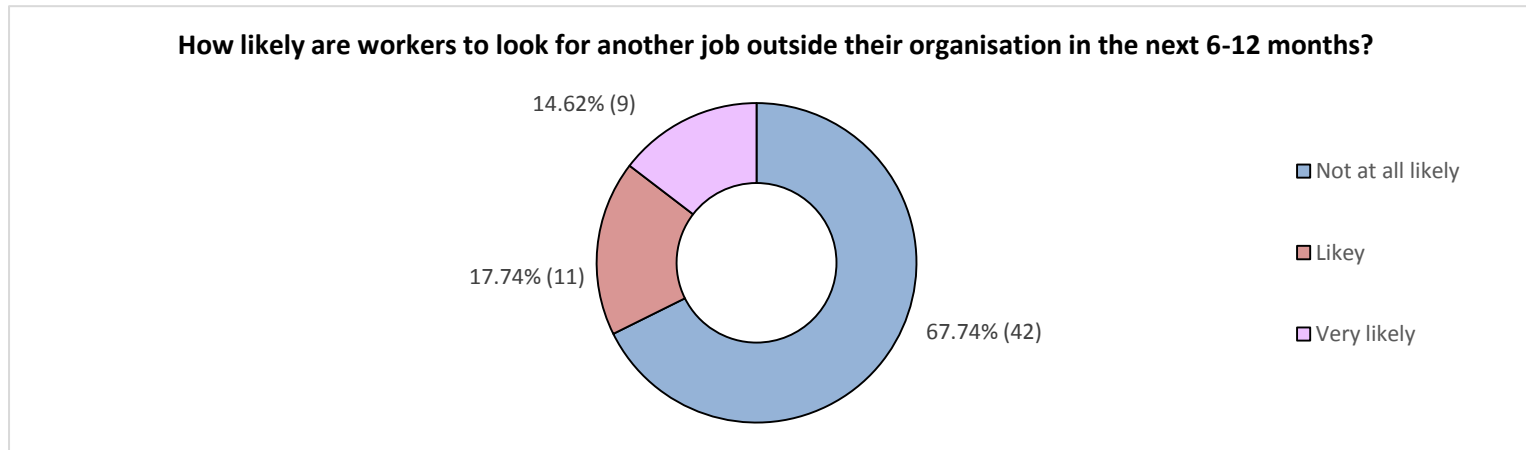
*“Open to all training, but would appreciate the opportunity to learn and network with other advocates, as we are quite isolated, being in a rural/regional area.”*

*“It would be helpful to be able to access preferred training events locally to allow all staff to attend jointly....this reinforces training and development”*

*“Costs prevent out of town training”*

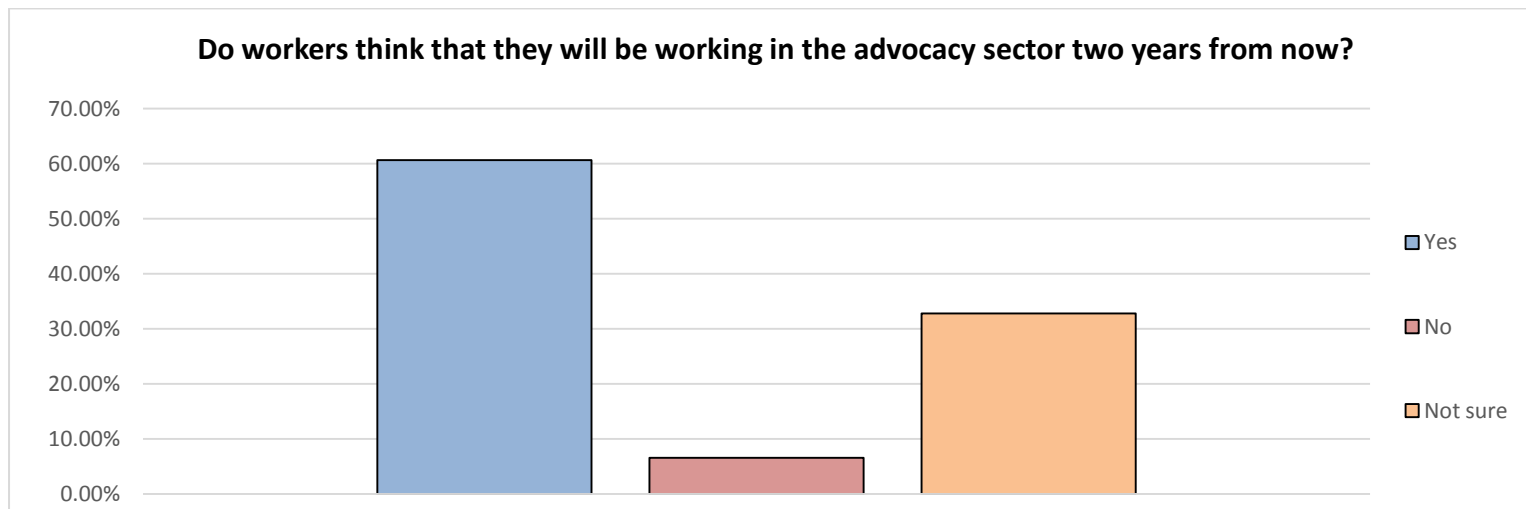


How likely are you to look for another job outside the organisation in the next 6-12 months? n=62



**Figure 27.1** How likely are workers to look for another job outside their organisation in the next 6-12 months? (pie chart shown as a percentage)

Do you think you will be working in the advocacy sector 2 years from now? n=57



**Figure 28.1** Do workers think that they will be working in the advocacy sector two years from now? (histogram shown as a percentage)

## Findings

About a third of respondents (n=20) reported that they are *likely* or *very likely* to look for another job outside their current organisation in the next 6-12 months.

*"I love my job but with the future of advocacy in doubt I may be forced to look for alternative employment for stability."*

*"No guarantee of funding after 6 months, I want job security."*

Less than two-thirds of workers (n=37) are confident that they will be working in the advocacy sector two years from now.

*"I certainly hope so"*

*"Currently there is uncertainty in our job security which is concerning on a personal level"*

*"Fantastic sector full of dedicated people. Hope to continue working in this area"*