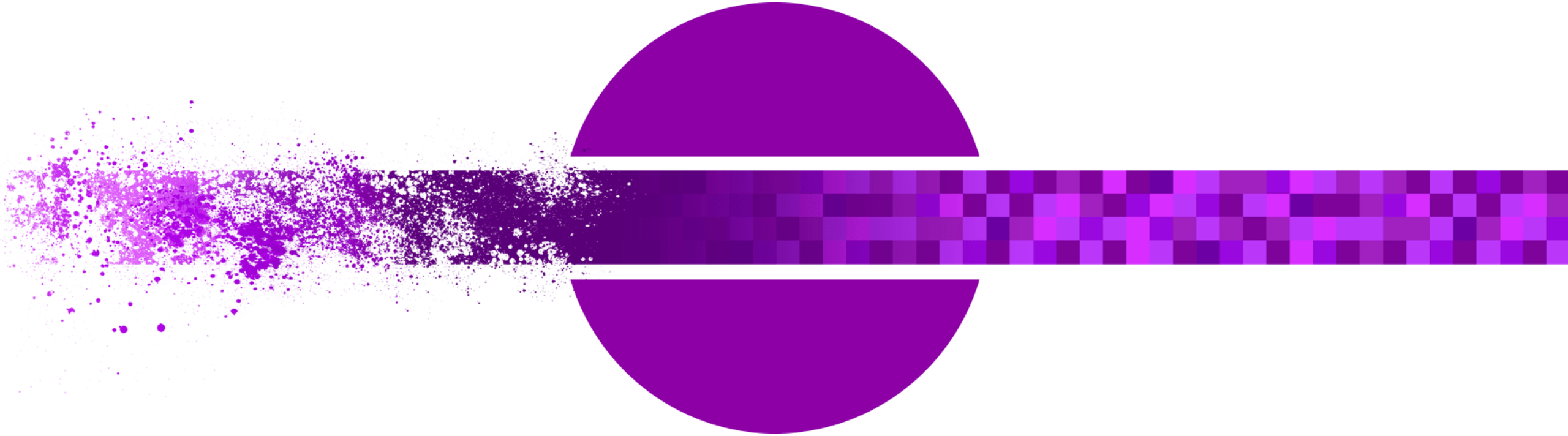


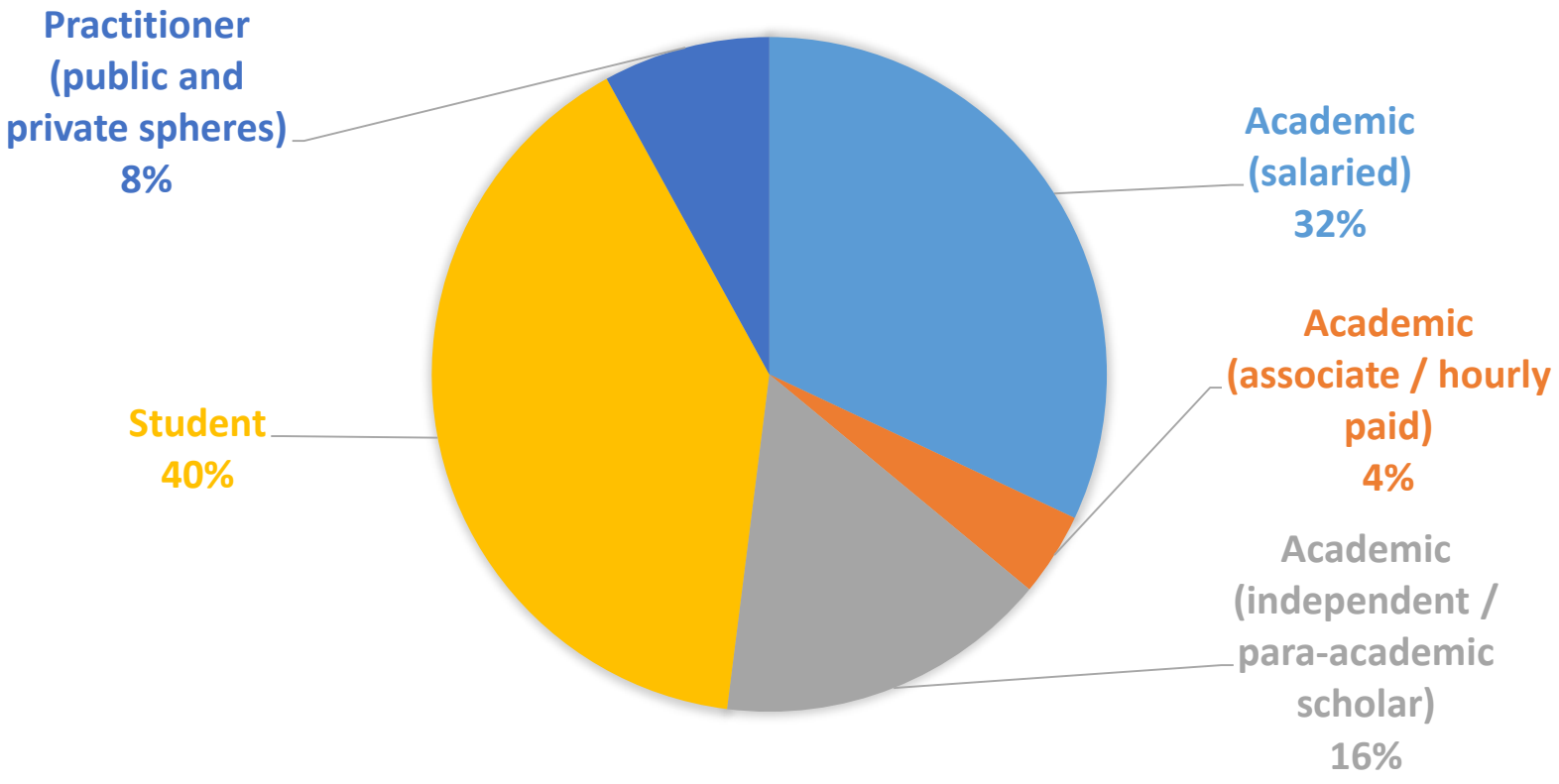
British Society for Phenomenology

Conference 2019: post-conference survey

Overview 21/01/2020 version 1.2

[2019] Attendee / survey responders roles

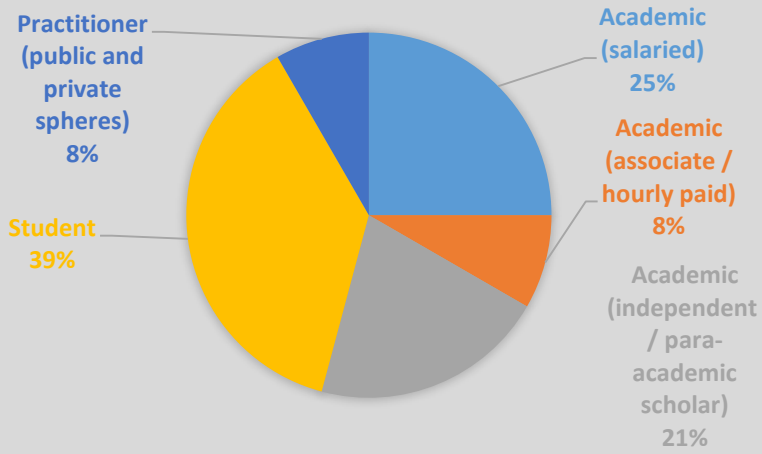
More than one option could be selected



The survey was sent to **34** conference attendees whose email addresses were on record. These did not include keynotes.

Survey Responders	#
Total	**20**
Speakers	17
Delegate only	3

2018



Sent to **38** conference panel speakers and delegates whose email addresses were on record (not including keynotes, keynote respondents, BSP ExCo or conf committee).

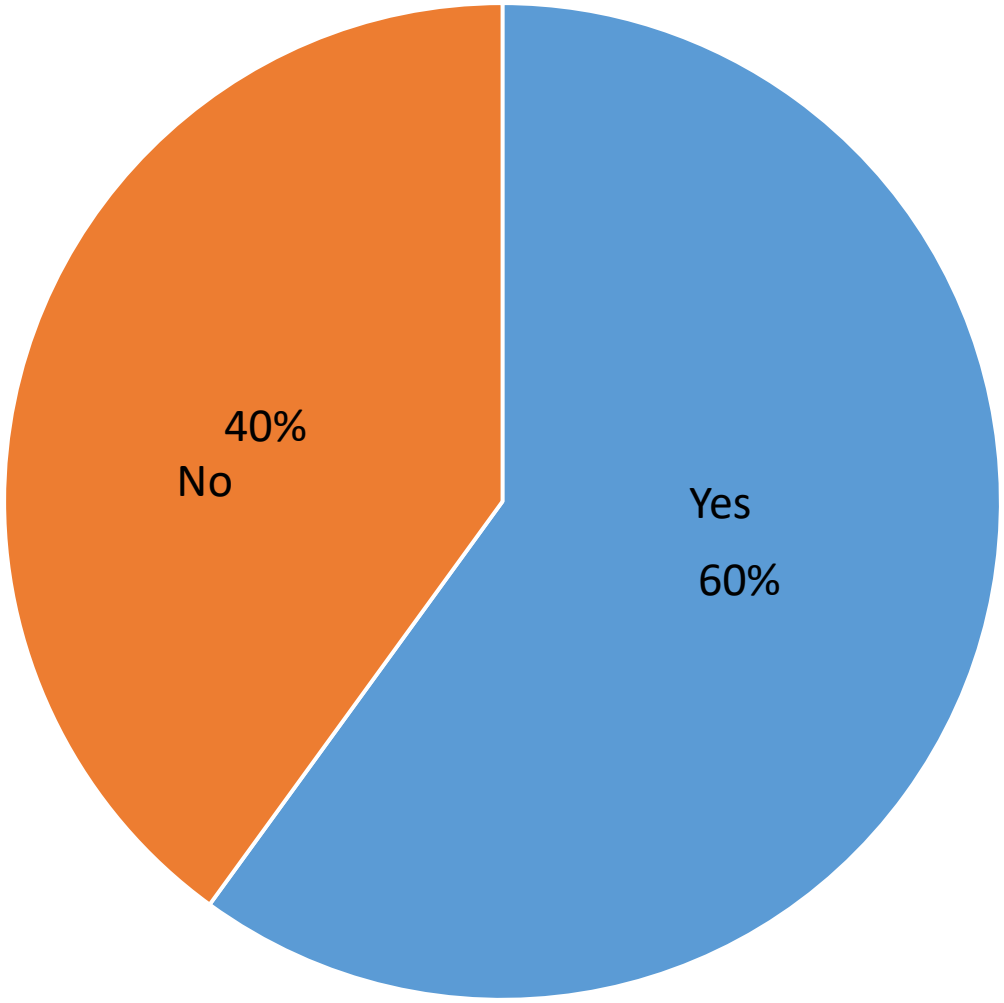
Survey Responders	#
Total	**17**
Speakers	15
Delegate only	2

Comparison / Analysis

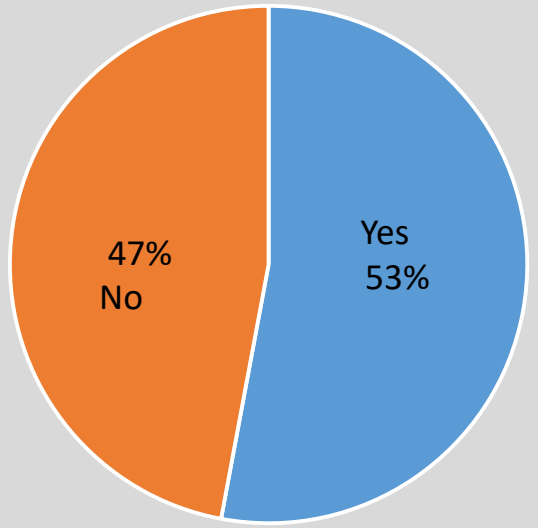
- No significant change
- We continue to struggle to attract practitioners

[2019] Awareness (1)

Was this your first time at the BSP conference?



2018

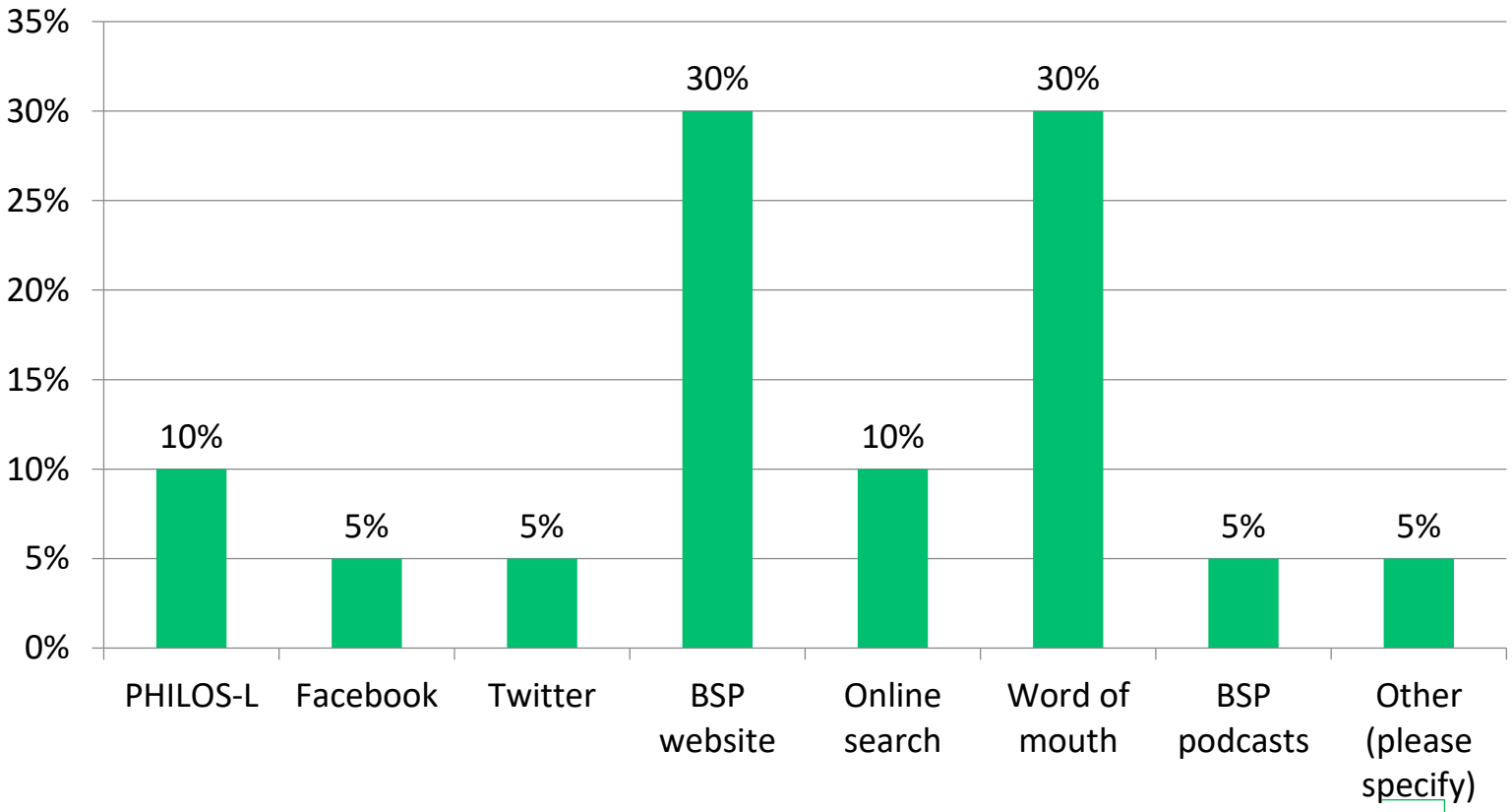


Comparison / Analysis

- Slight increase in new people attending the conference and joining the society

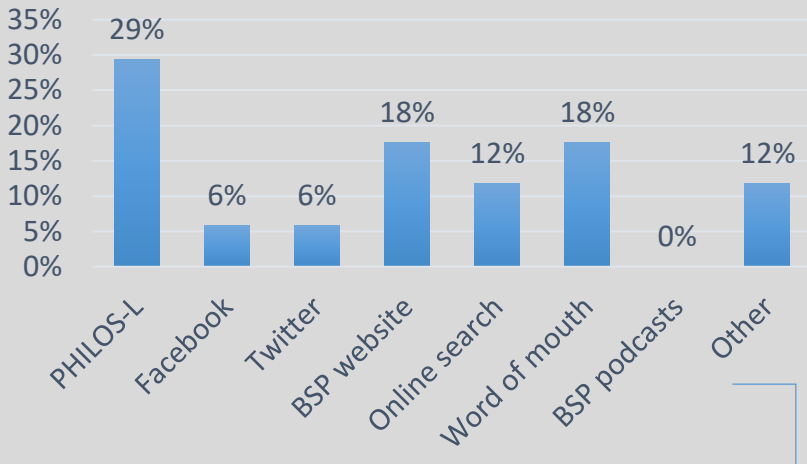
[2019] Awareness (2)

How did you first find out about the conference?



> BSP email newsletter

2018



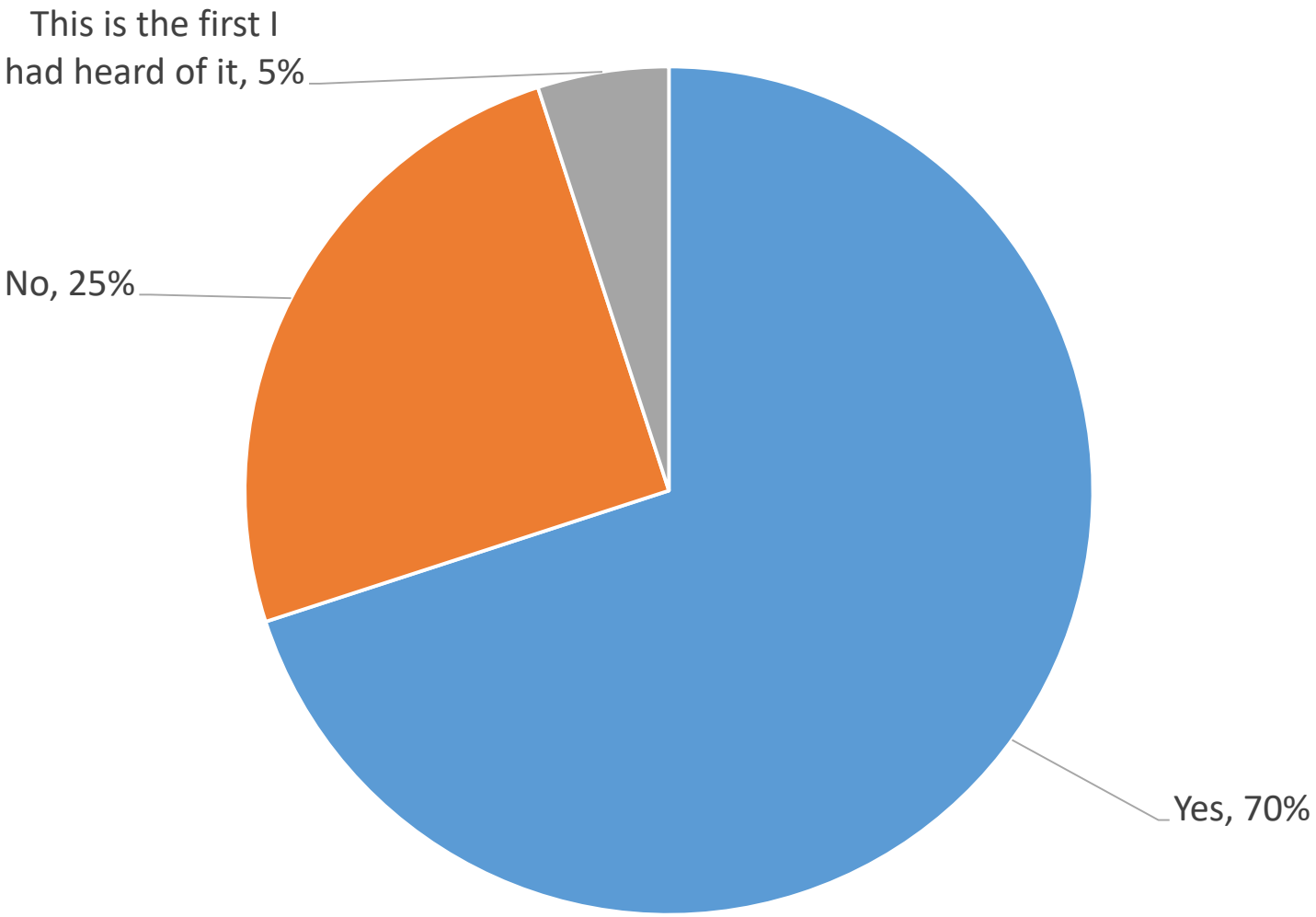
> PhilEvents
> BSP Email newsletter

Comparison / Analysis

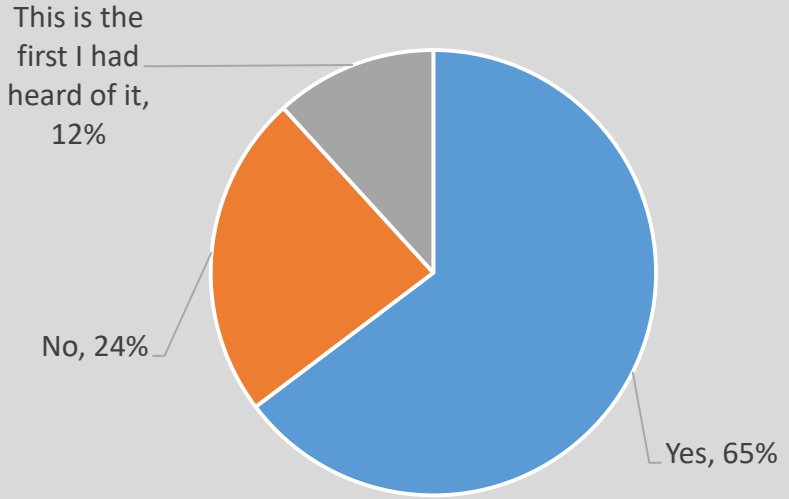
- Online presence has improved and is bringing in more people
- Higher ‘word of mouth’ indicates we are starting to be recommended and our profile is recovering

[2019] Awareness (3): Society

Had you heard of the society before finding out about the conference?



2018

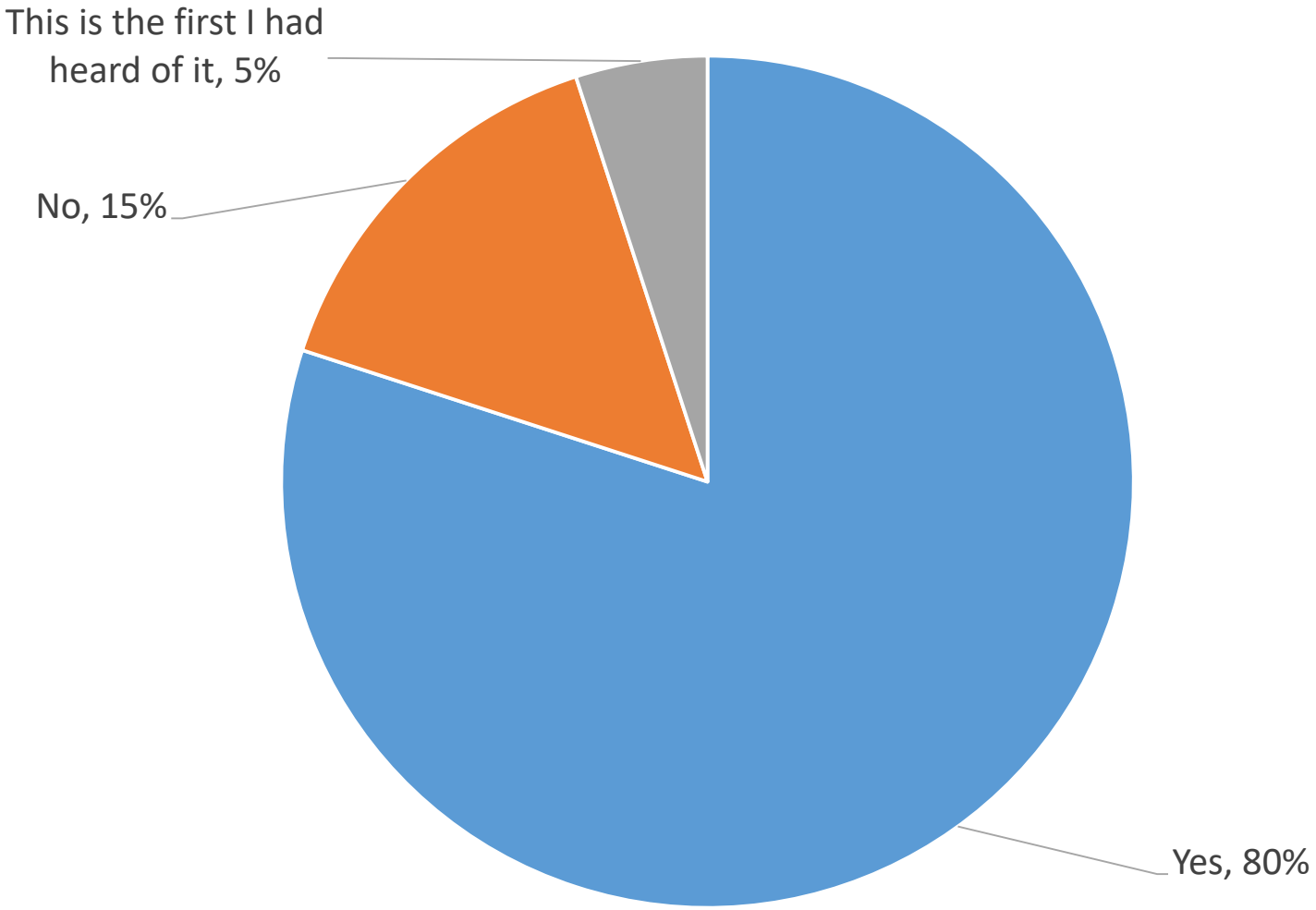


Comparison / Analysis

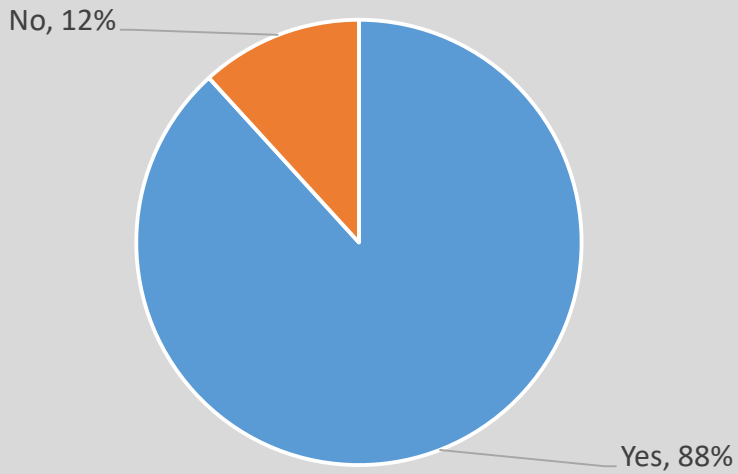
- Slight improvement
- Most attendees have already heard of the society

[2019] Awareness (4): Journal

Had you heard of the journal before finding out about this conference?



2018



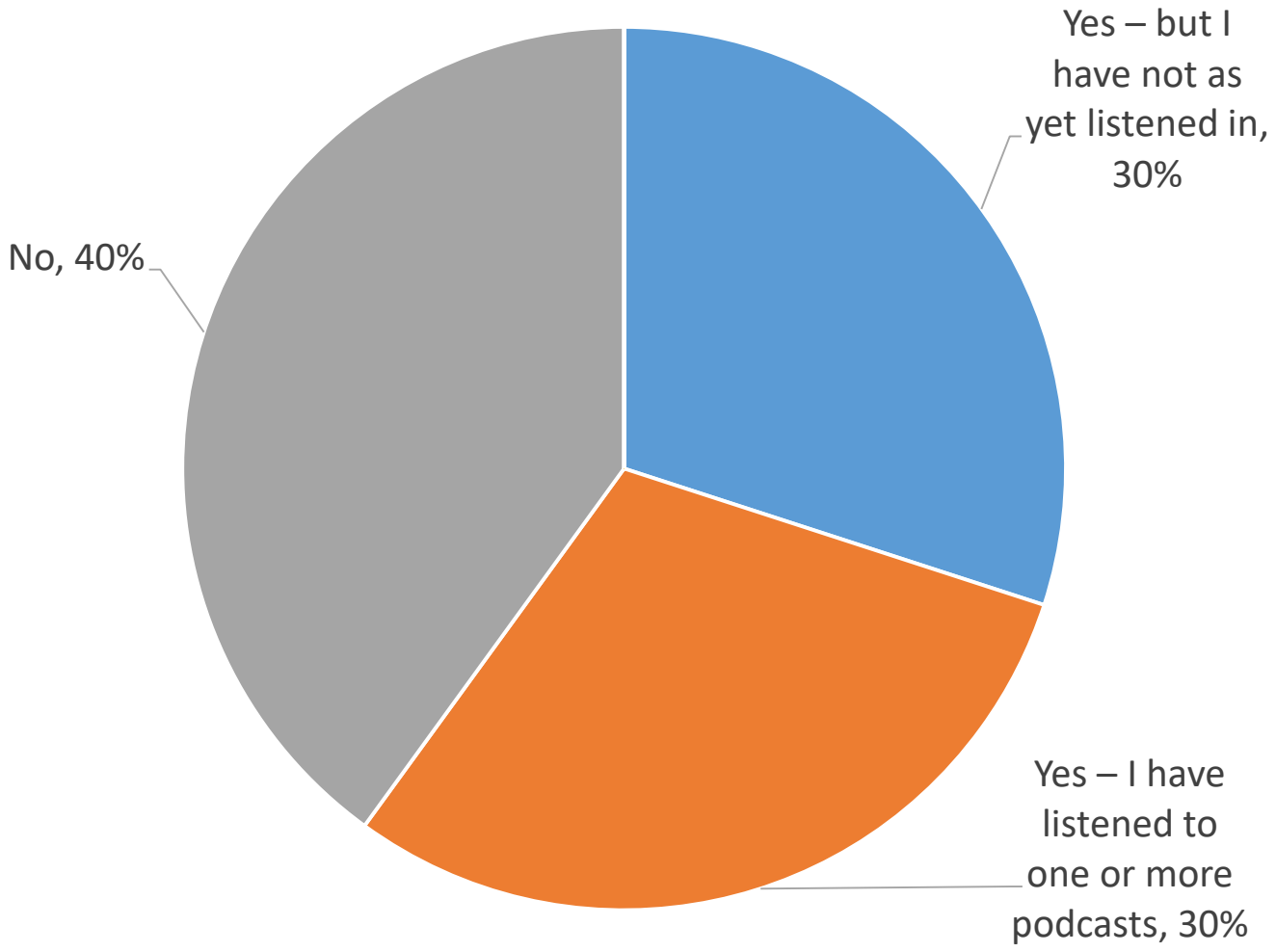
This is the first I had heard of it = 0%

Comparison / Analysis

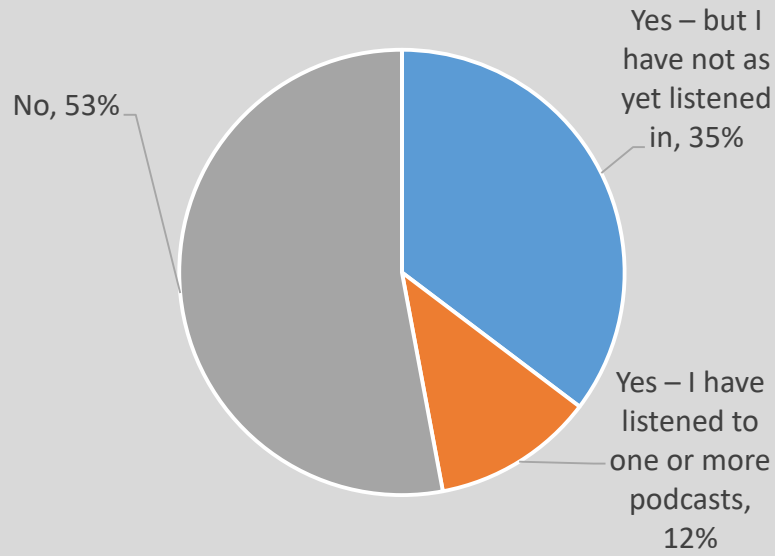
- No significant change
- Most attendees have already heard of the journal; but we are closing the gap between journal and society recognition

[2019] Awareness (4): Podcast

Had you heard of the podcasts before finding out about this conference?



2018

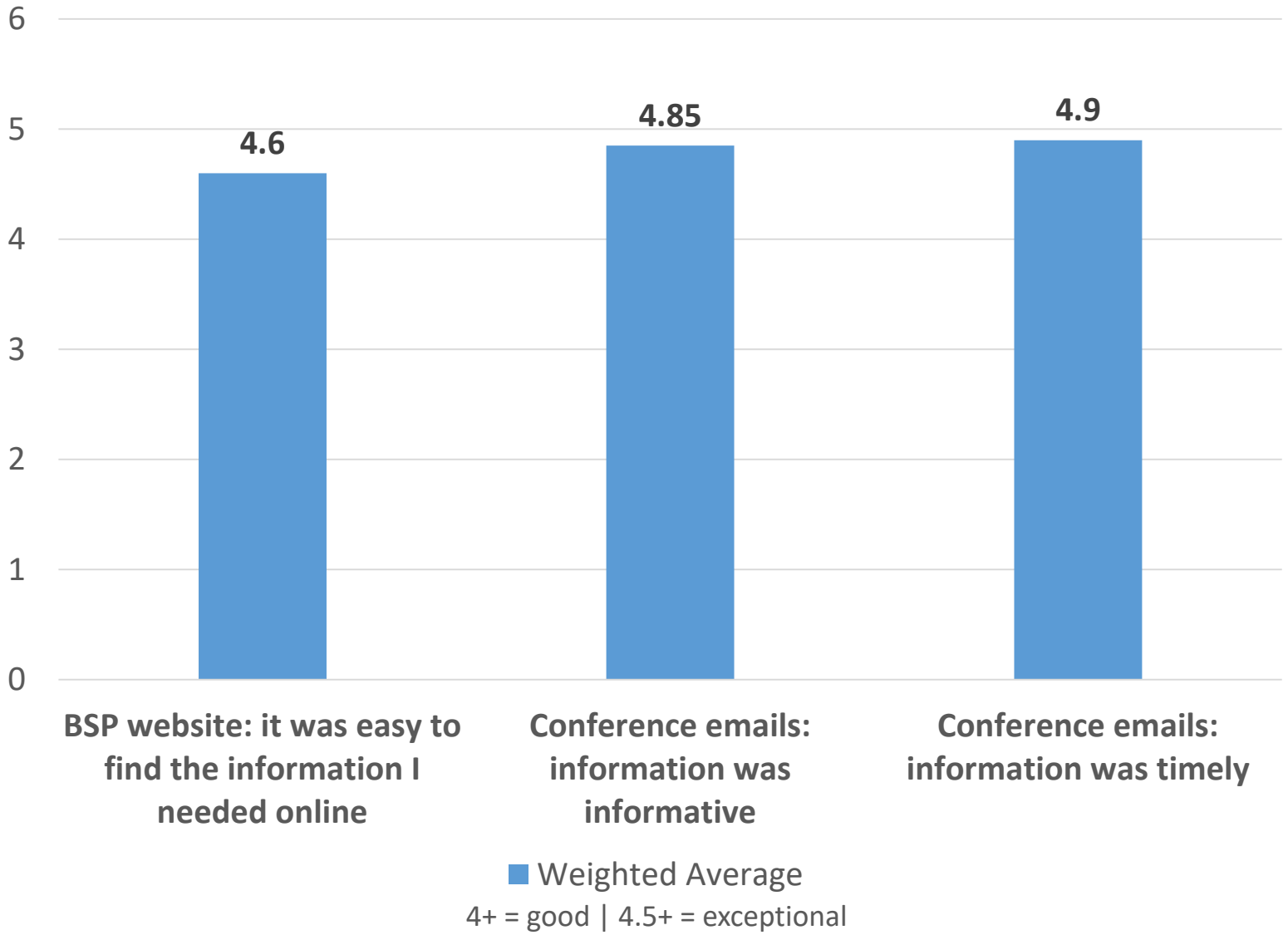


This is the first I had heard of it = 0%

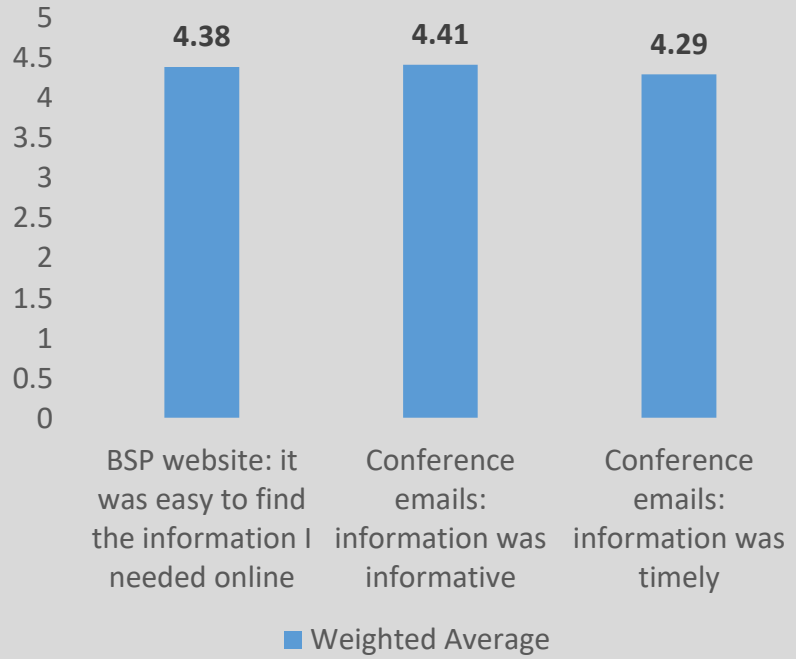
Comparison / Analysis

- The change since last year indicates a growth in the profile of the podcast. Growing the podcast listeners can only help improve the visibility of the society, events and the journal

[2019] Communications (1)



2018

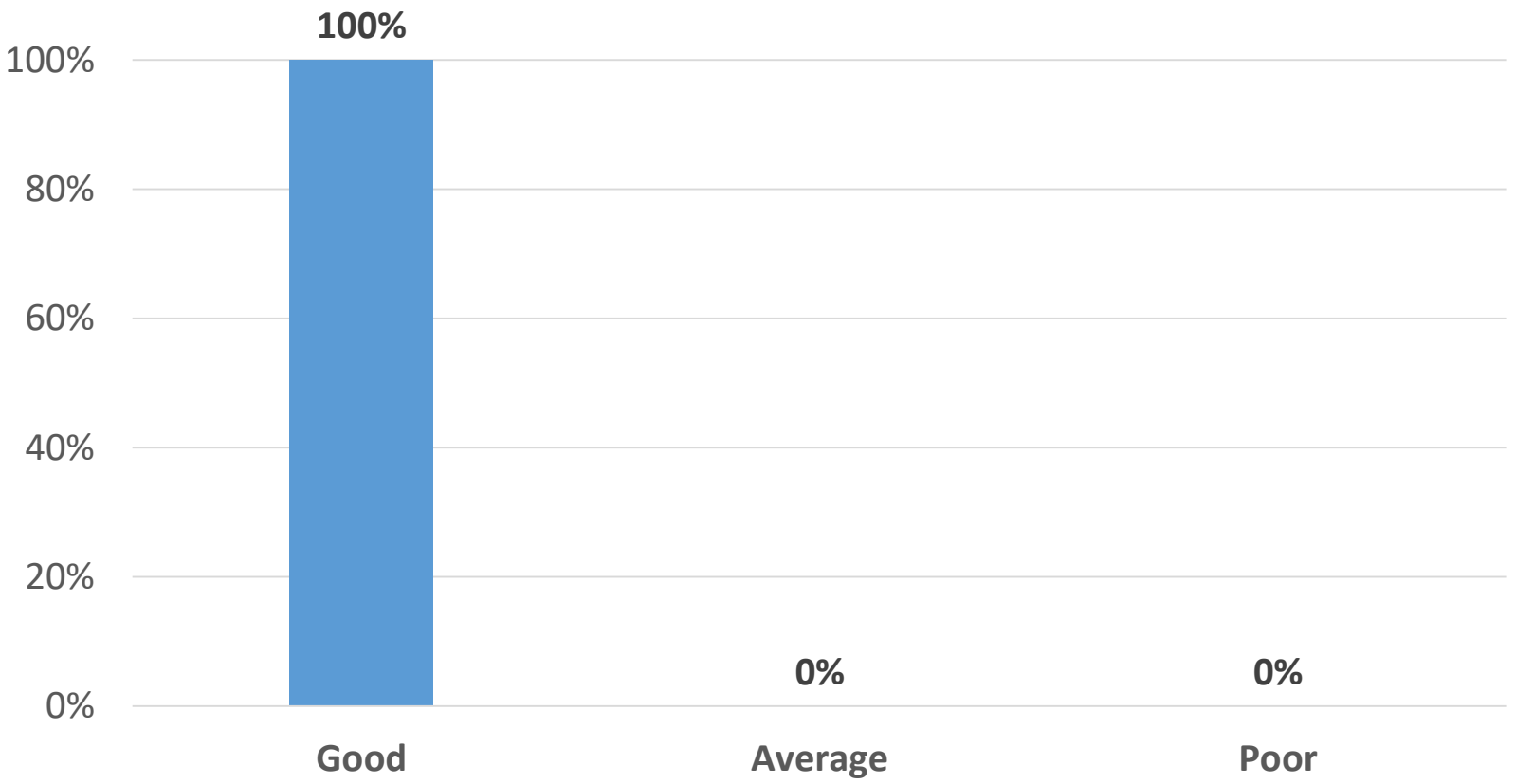


Comparison / Analysis

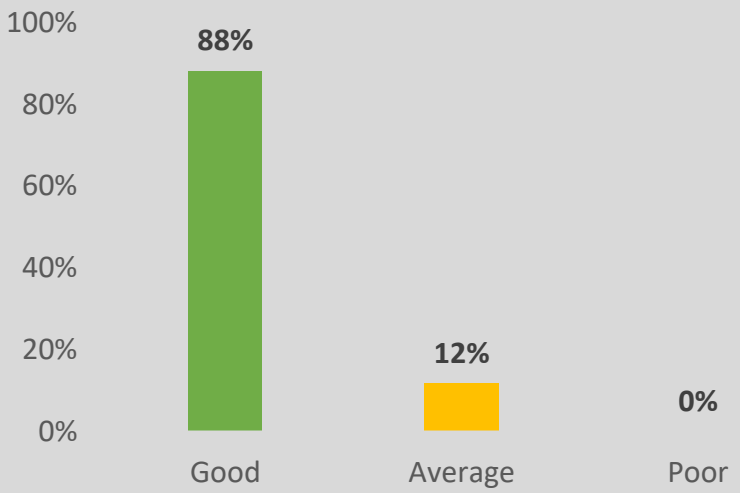
- Scores on comms have moved from good (2018) to exceptional (2019).
- This vindicates the changes and the improvements in the way we organise the conference over the last 18 months

[2019] Communications (2)

Overall, I would rate the conference communications as:



2018

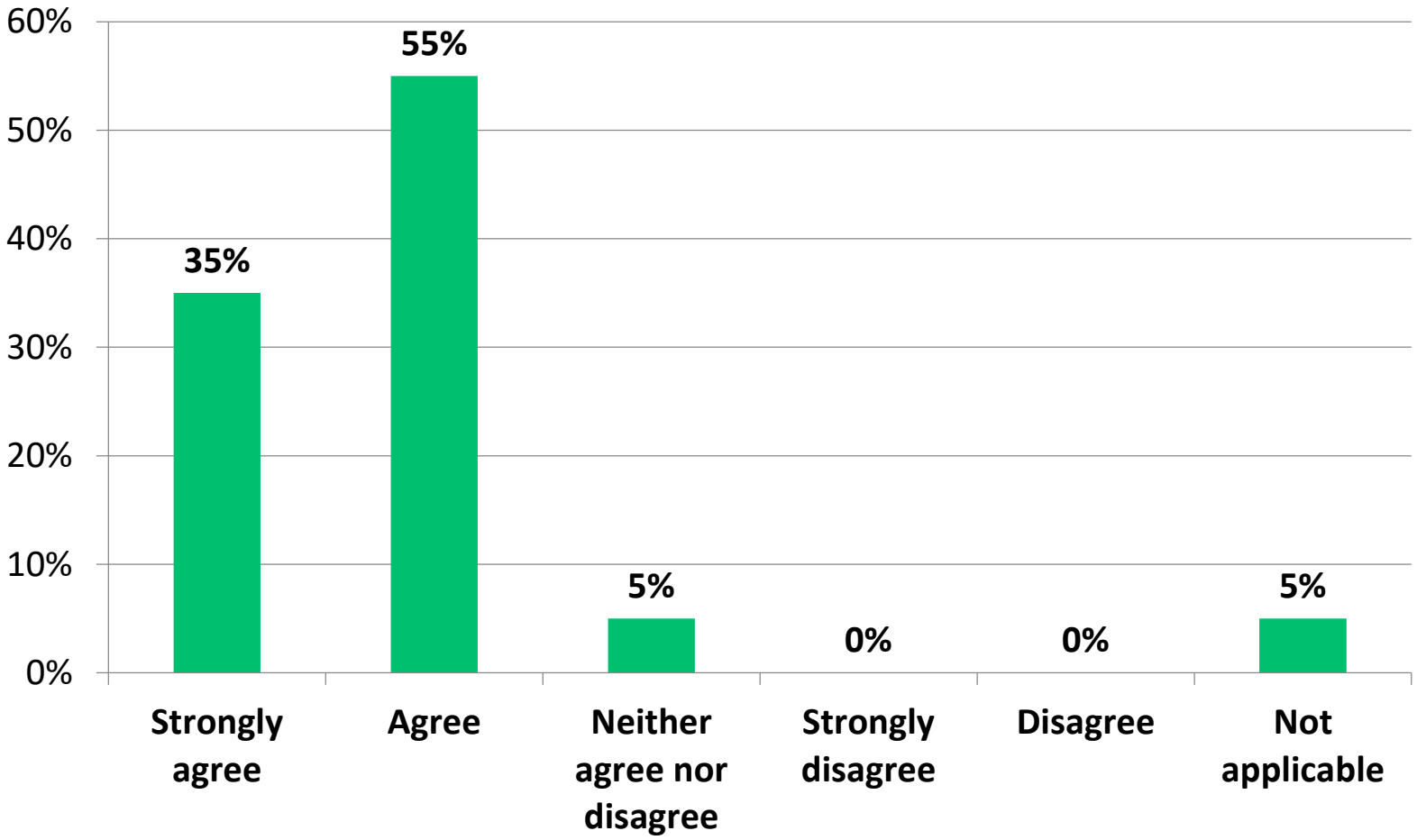


Comparison / Analysis

- As per previous slide, this vindicates the changes and the improvements in the way we organise the changes over the last 18 months

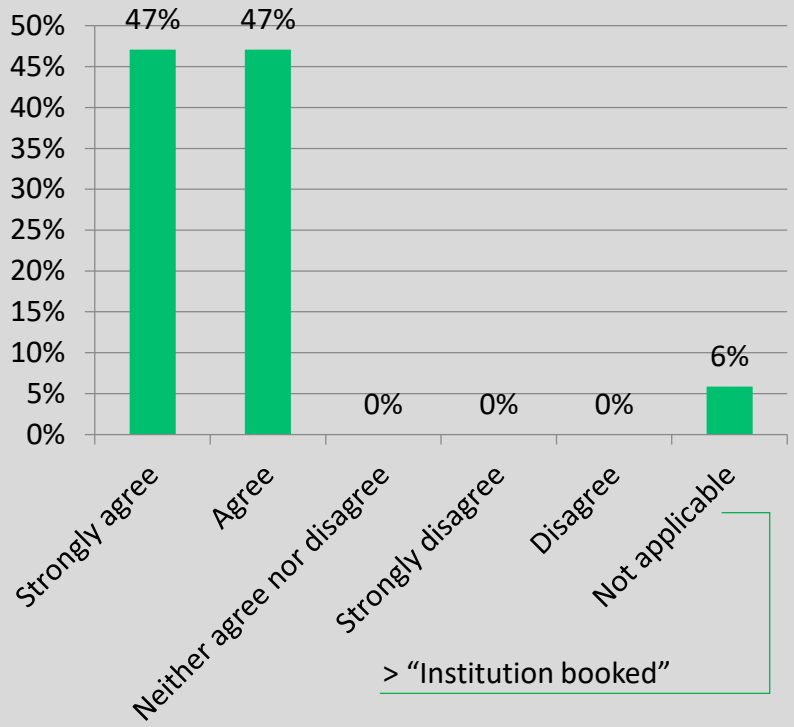
[2019] Registration (1)

The conference registration system was easy to use



> "It would be good if you had membership auto-renew. I didn't realise my membership had automatically lapsed"
> "I had an issue with my confirmation email but it got resolved"

2018



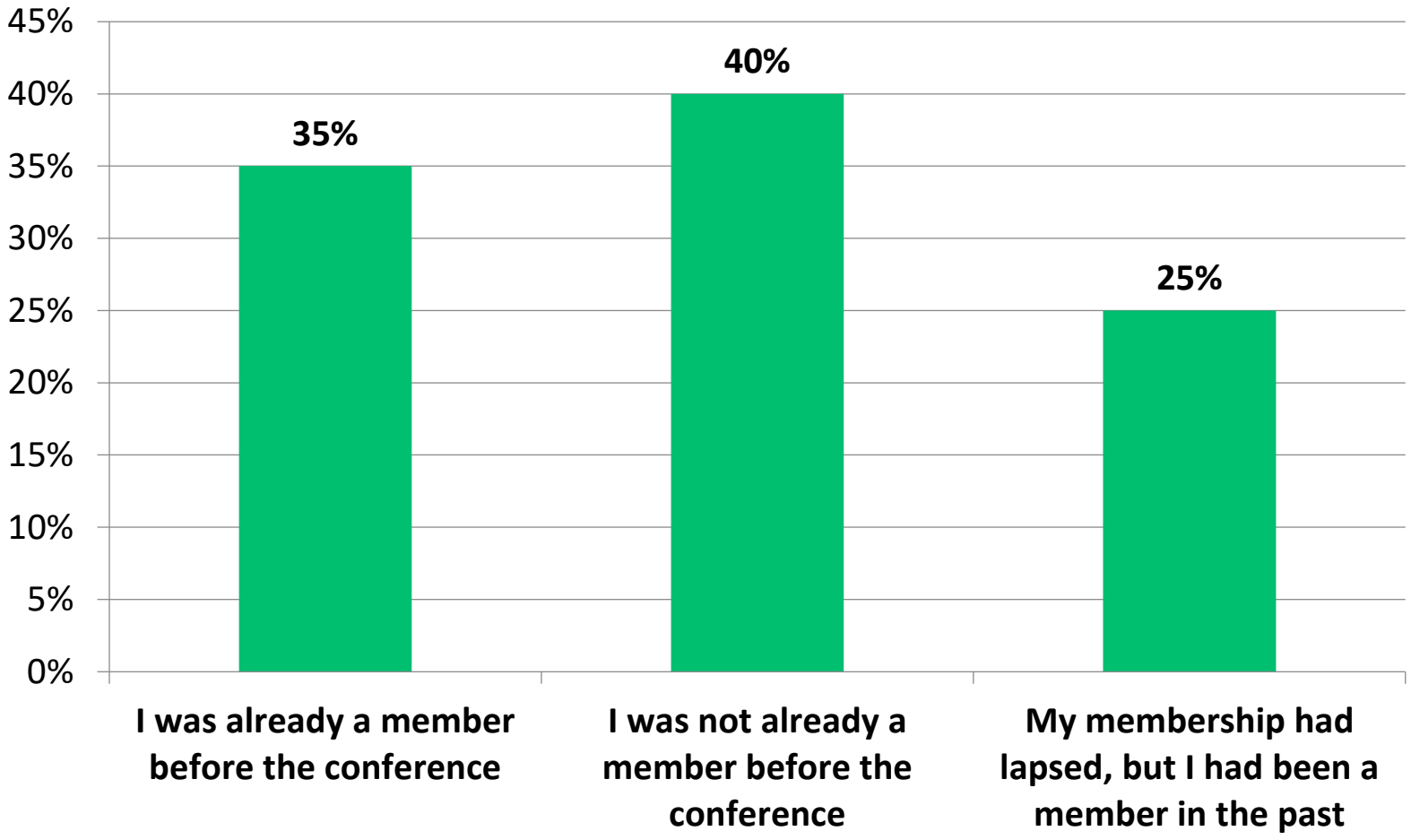
> "Institution booked"

Comparison / Analysis

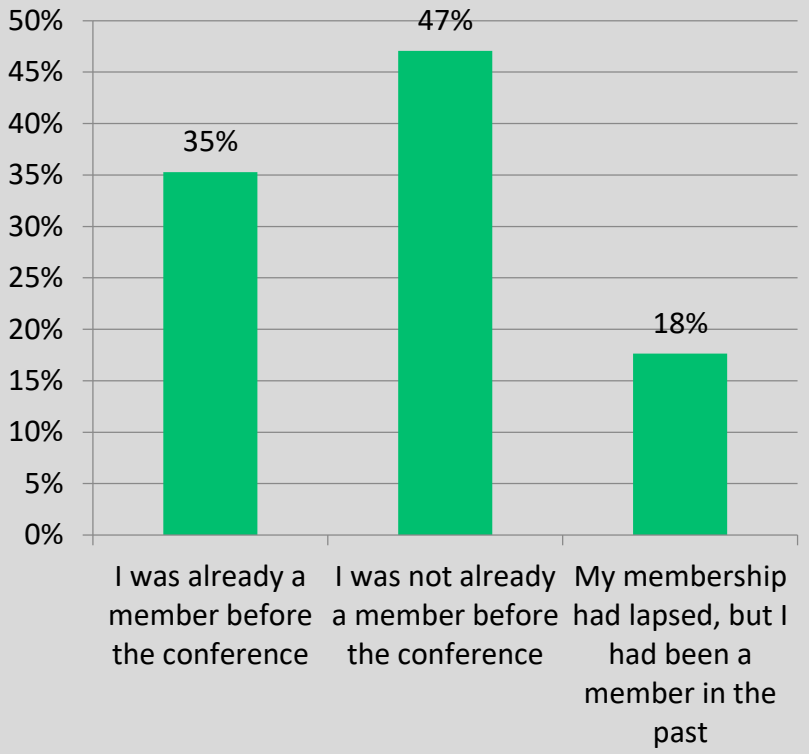
- Registration systems are notoriously difficult for users to negotiate, but given we have zero in the 'disagree' area indicates we are doing very well
- However, still room for improvement here, we should put more focus on this.

[2019] Registration (2)

To attend the conference, you needed to be a member of the BSP. Please tell us…



2018

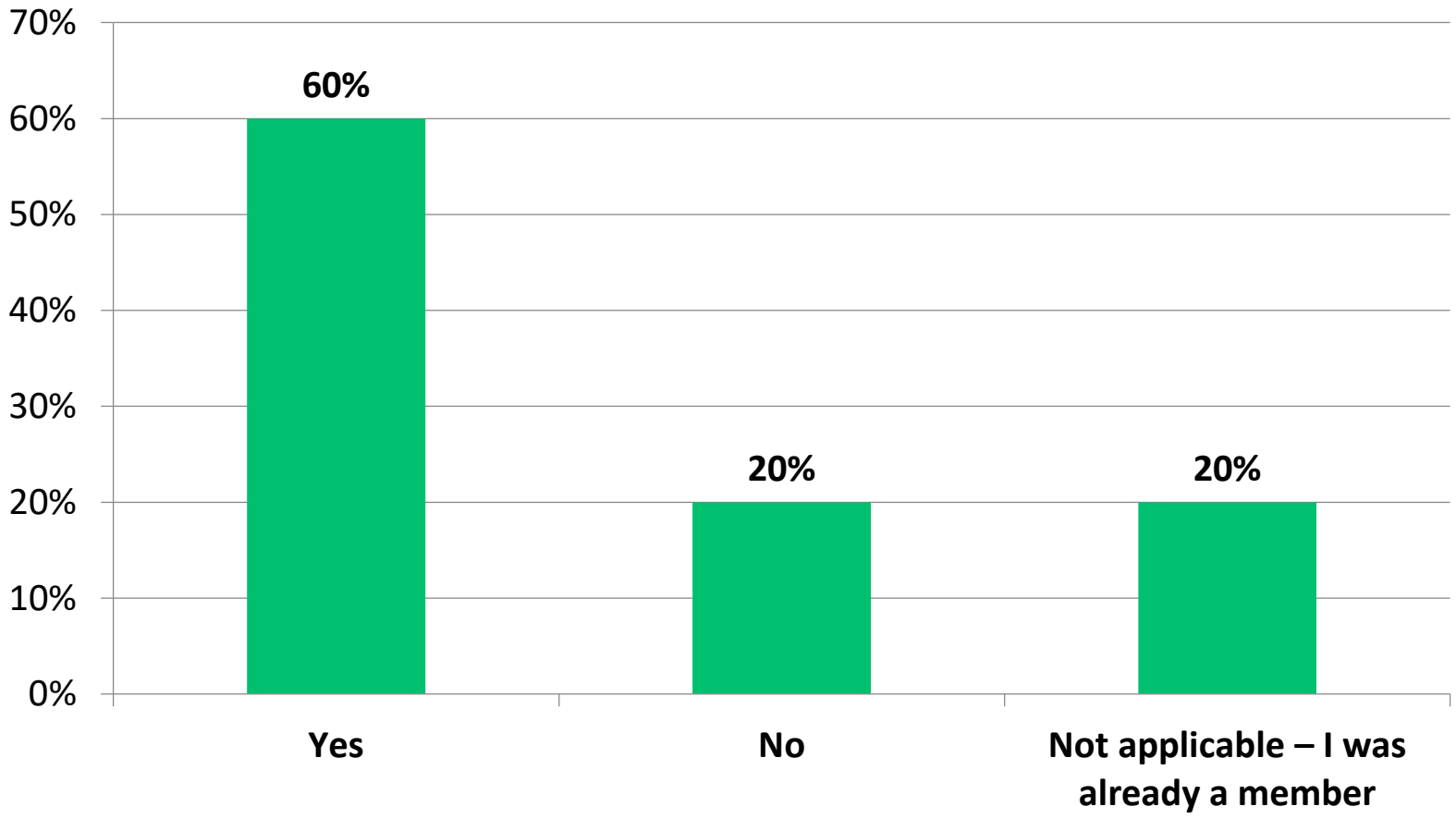


Comparison / Analysis

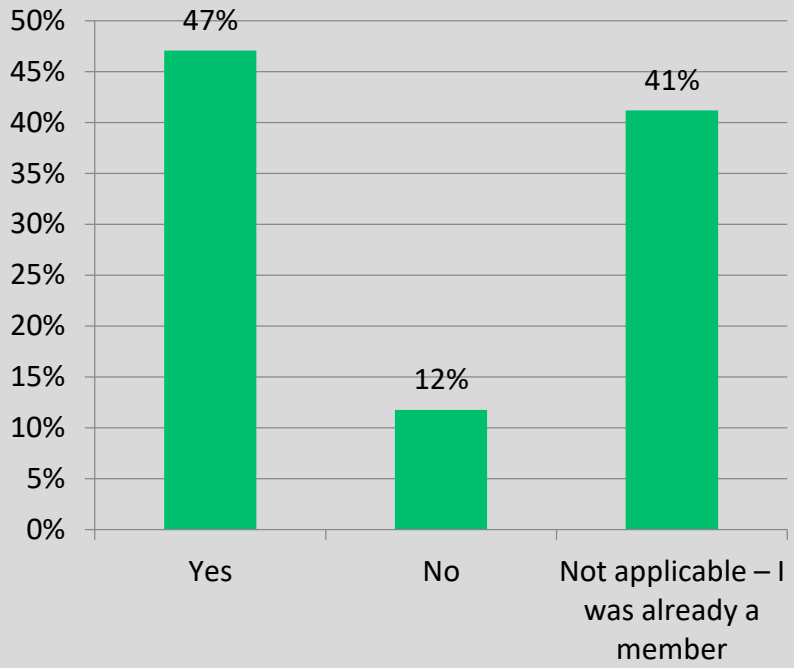
- No substantial change
- However, it shows us that regular delegates are lapsing who likely do want to remain members. This means work needs to be done on member retention.

[2019] Registration (3)

If you weren't a member before registering for the conference, was the site clear as to why this was required?



2018

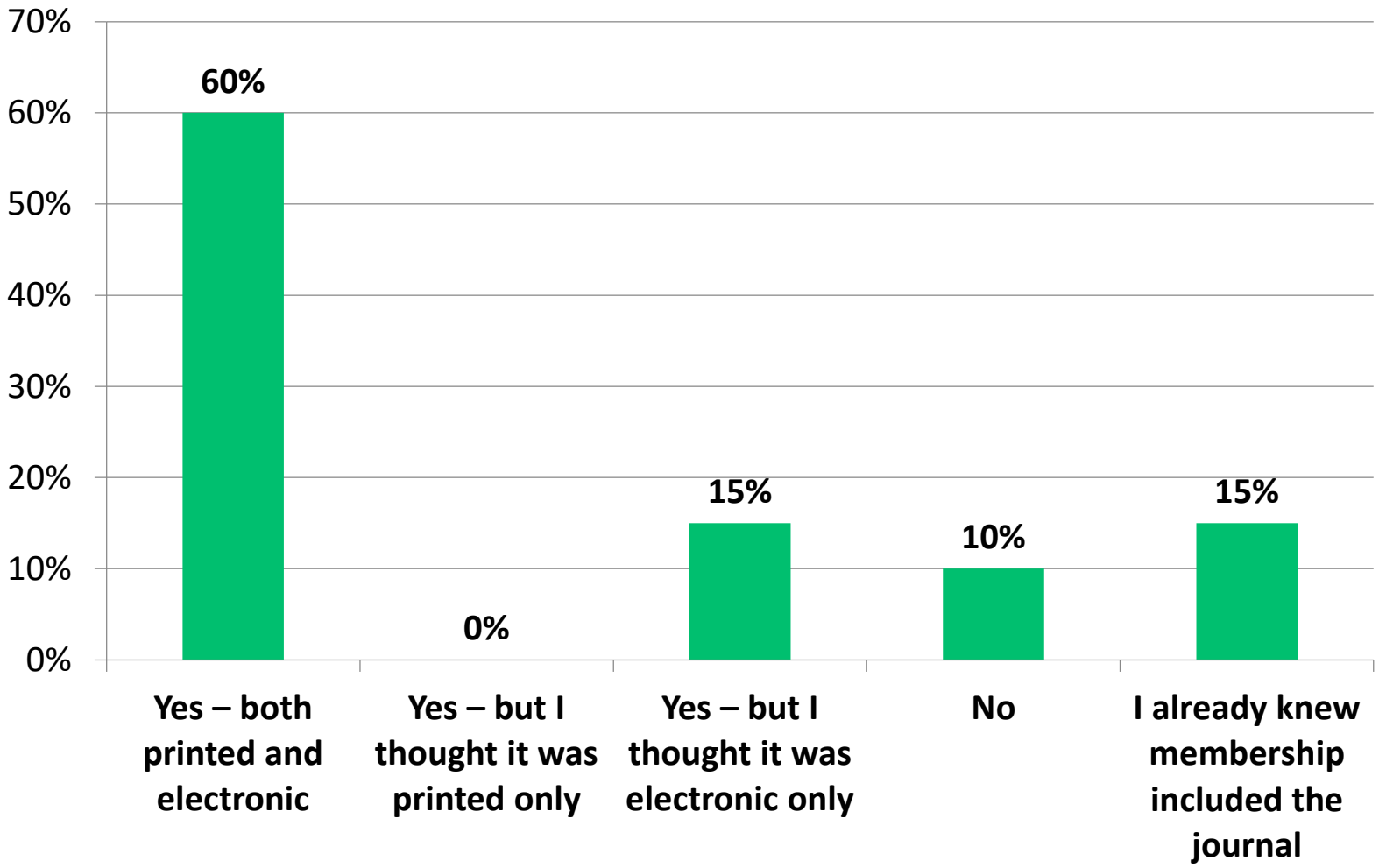


Comparison / Analysis

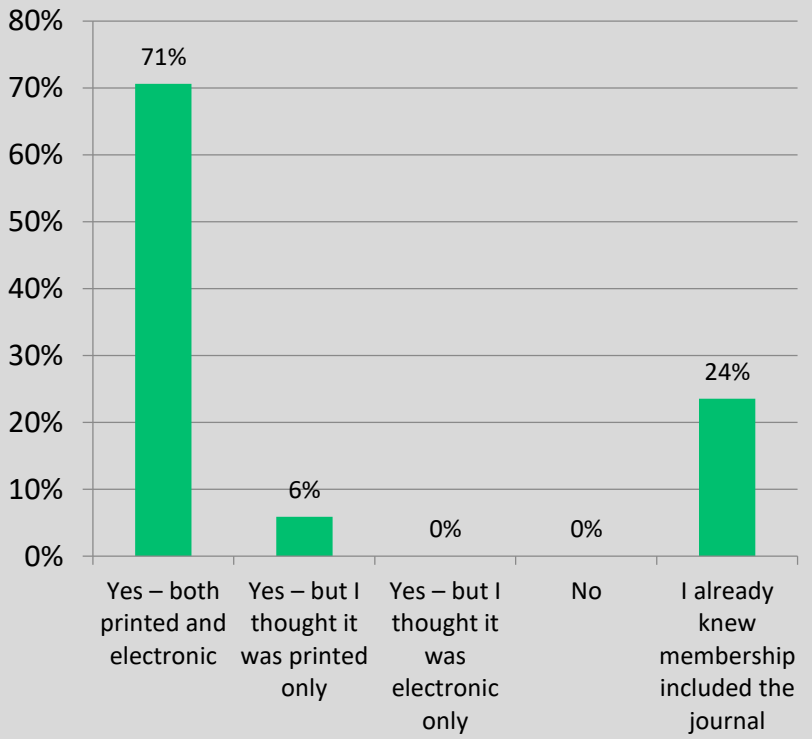
- The way we have communicated this on the registration site has improved, but we need to do more to make it clearer still

[2019] Registration (4)

It was clear to me during the registration process that membership included a year's subscription to the journal (both printed and electronic)



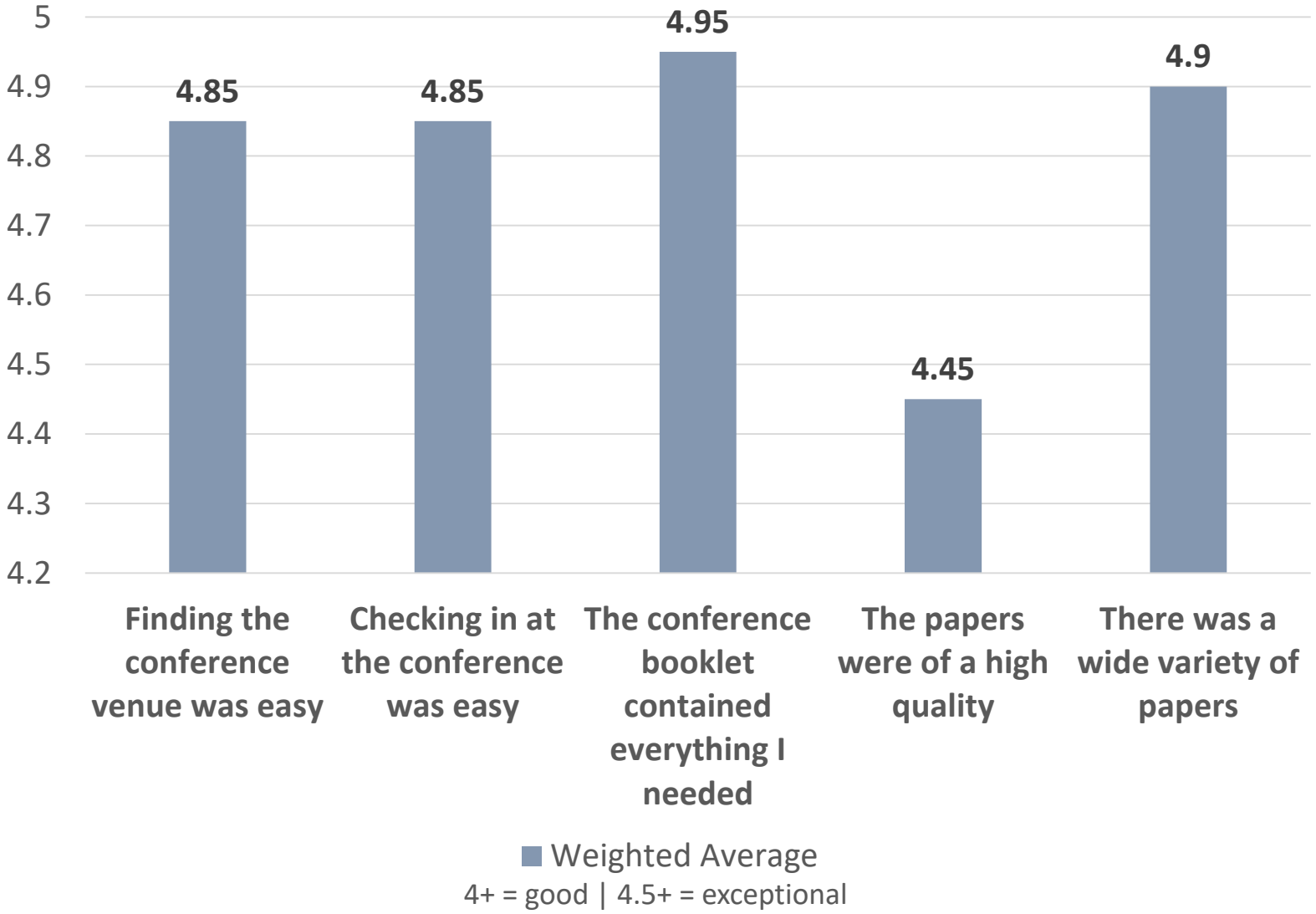
2018



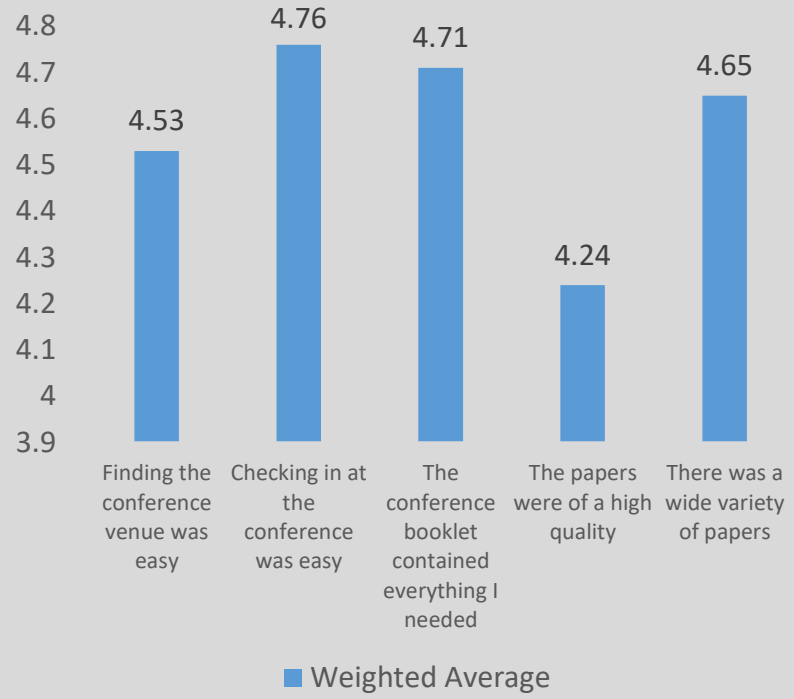
Comparison / Analysis

- No significant change over the two years, the journal remains high profile.
- But as mentioned in previous slides, membership info could better

[2019] Delegate experience (1)



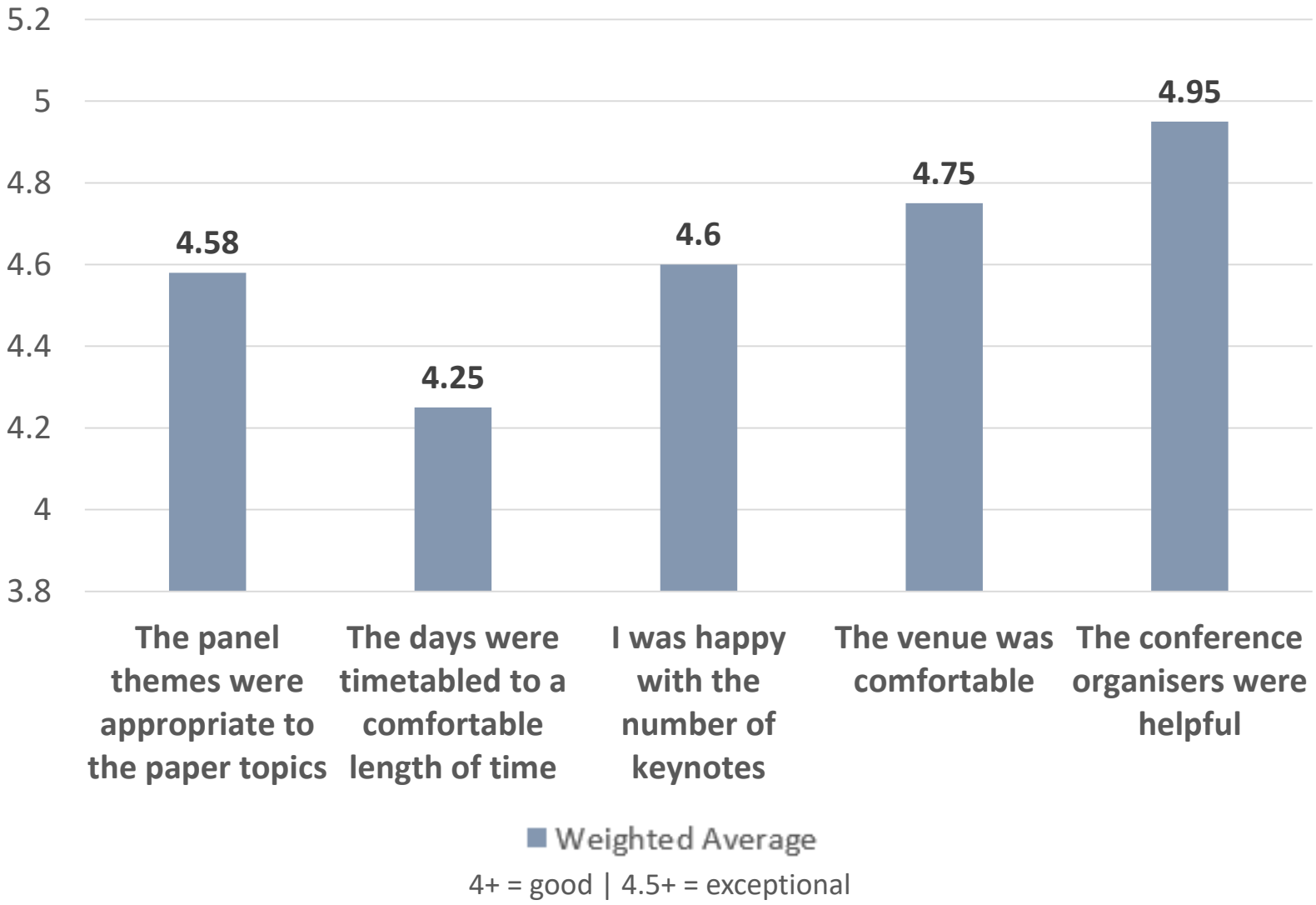
2018



Comparison / Analysis

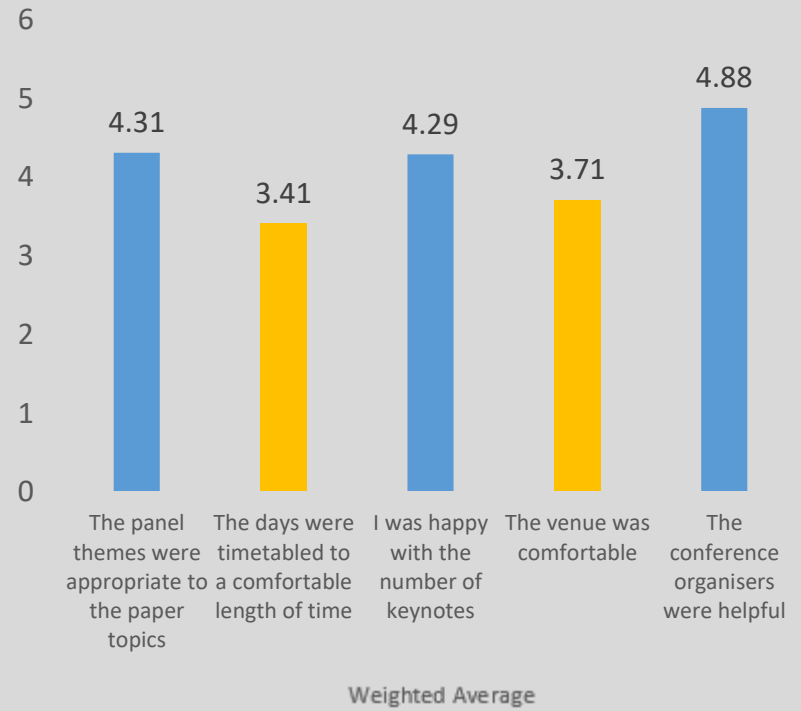
- Key indicators of delegate experience remain good and exceptional, but have increased overall
- Investment in conference booklets appears to vindicated, driving an exceptional experience.

[2019] Delegate experience (2)



4+ = good | 4.5+ = exceptional

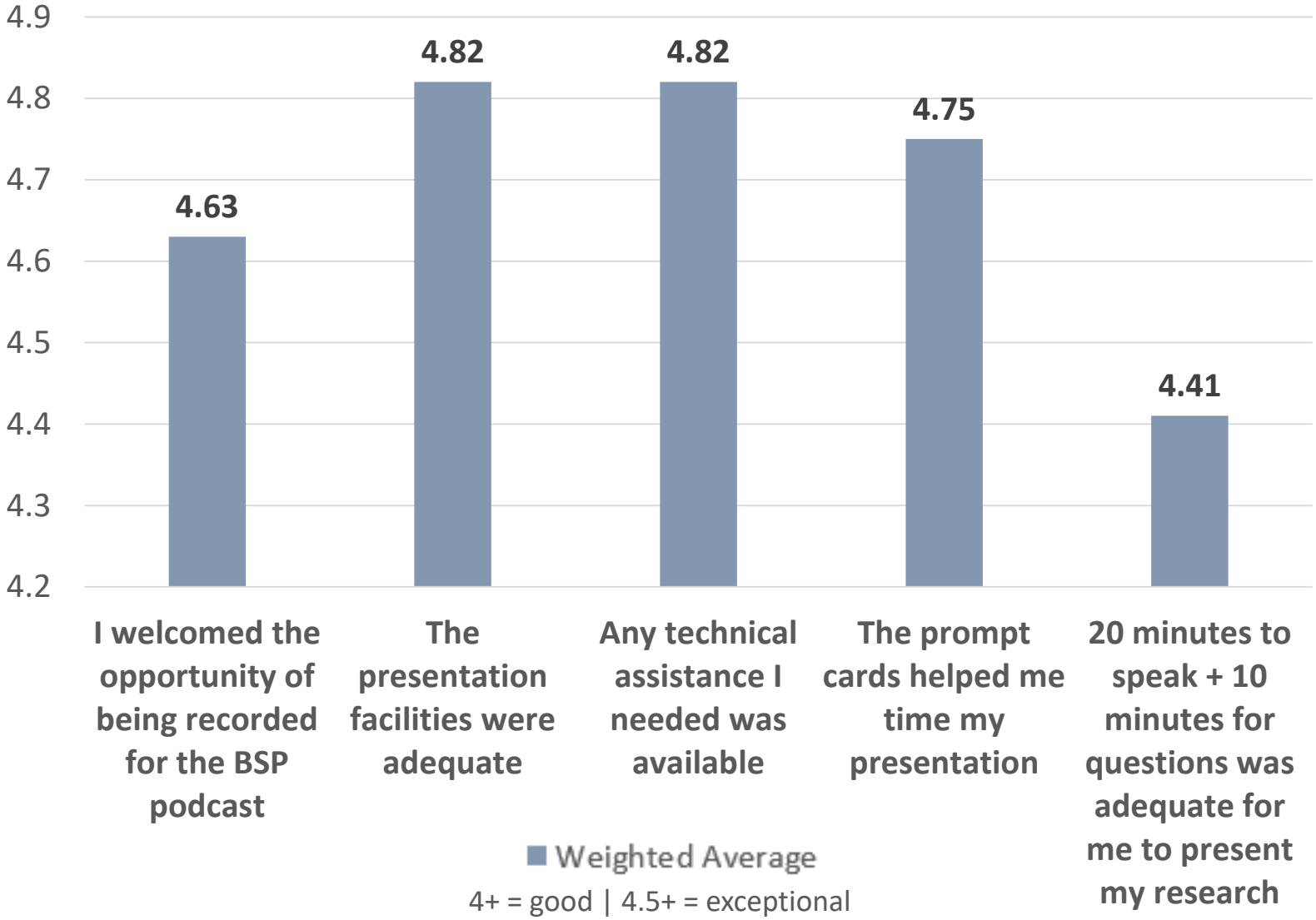
2018



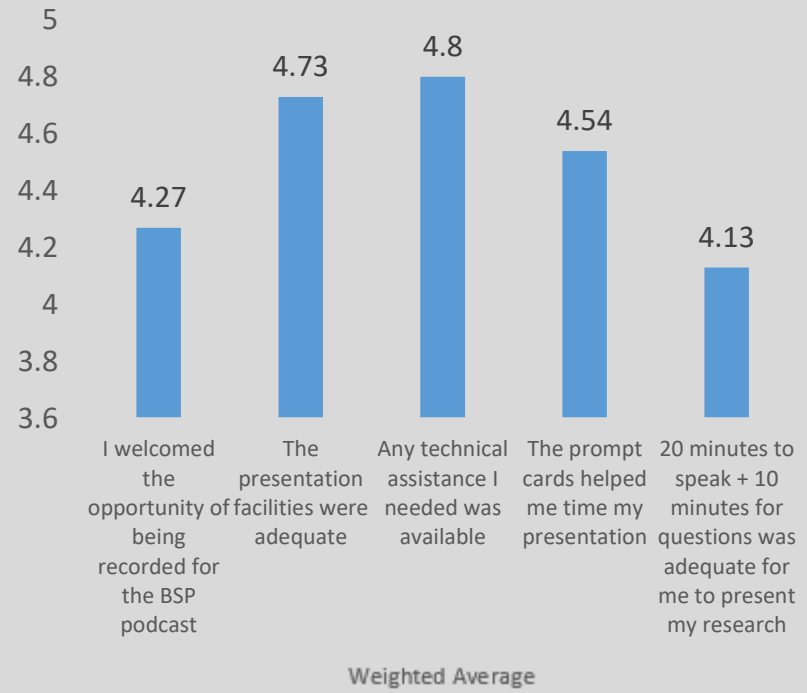
Comparison / Analysis

- Clear improvement over last year with respect to timetabling, although is relatively low compared to other scores
- Venue much better – focus must continue on this

[2019] Speaker experience



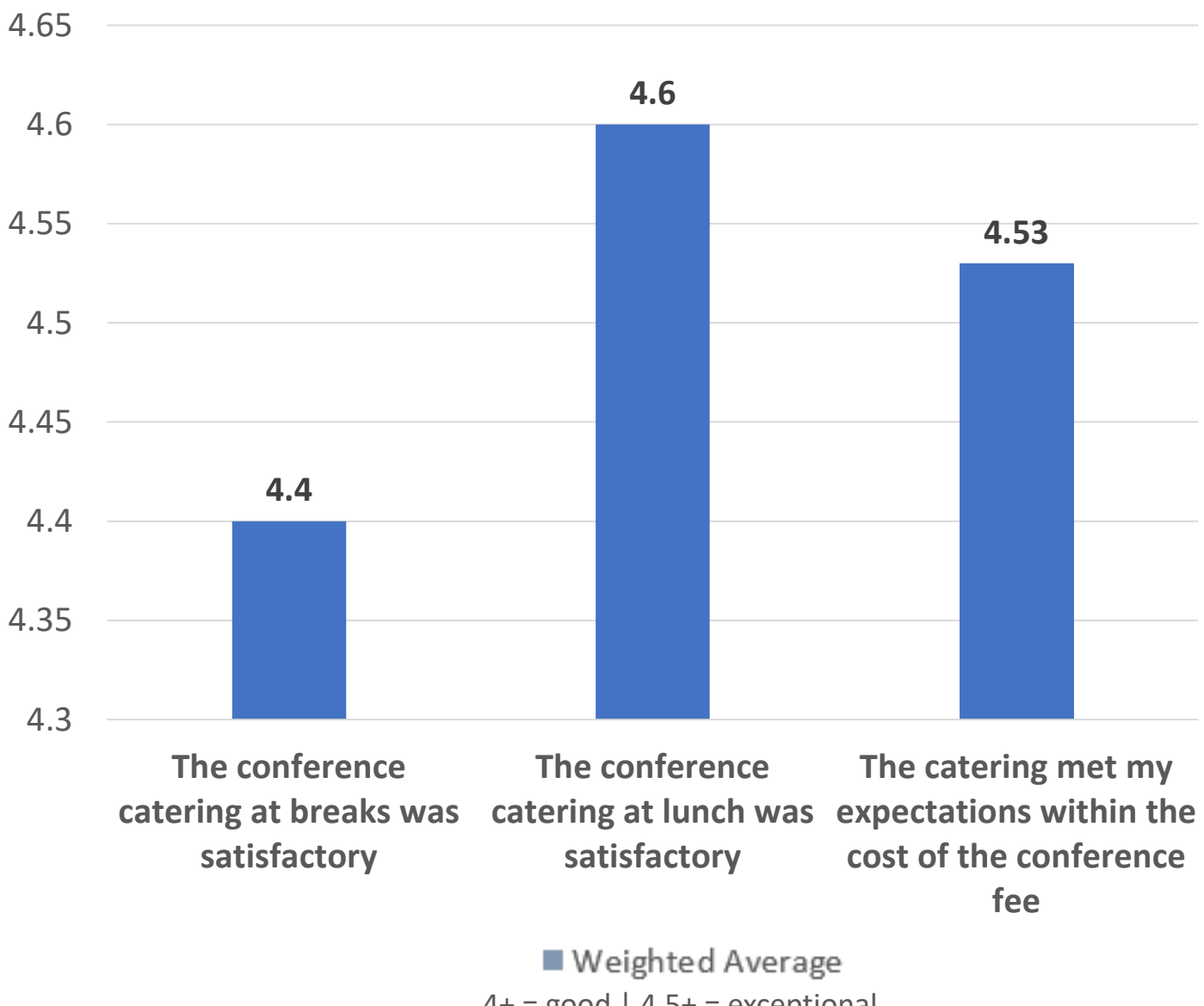
2018



Comparison / Analysis

- Speaker satisfaction has increased overall.
- Lowest score is on panel times, see later in pack

[2019] Catering



4+ = good | 4.5+ = exceptional

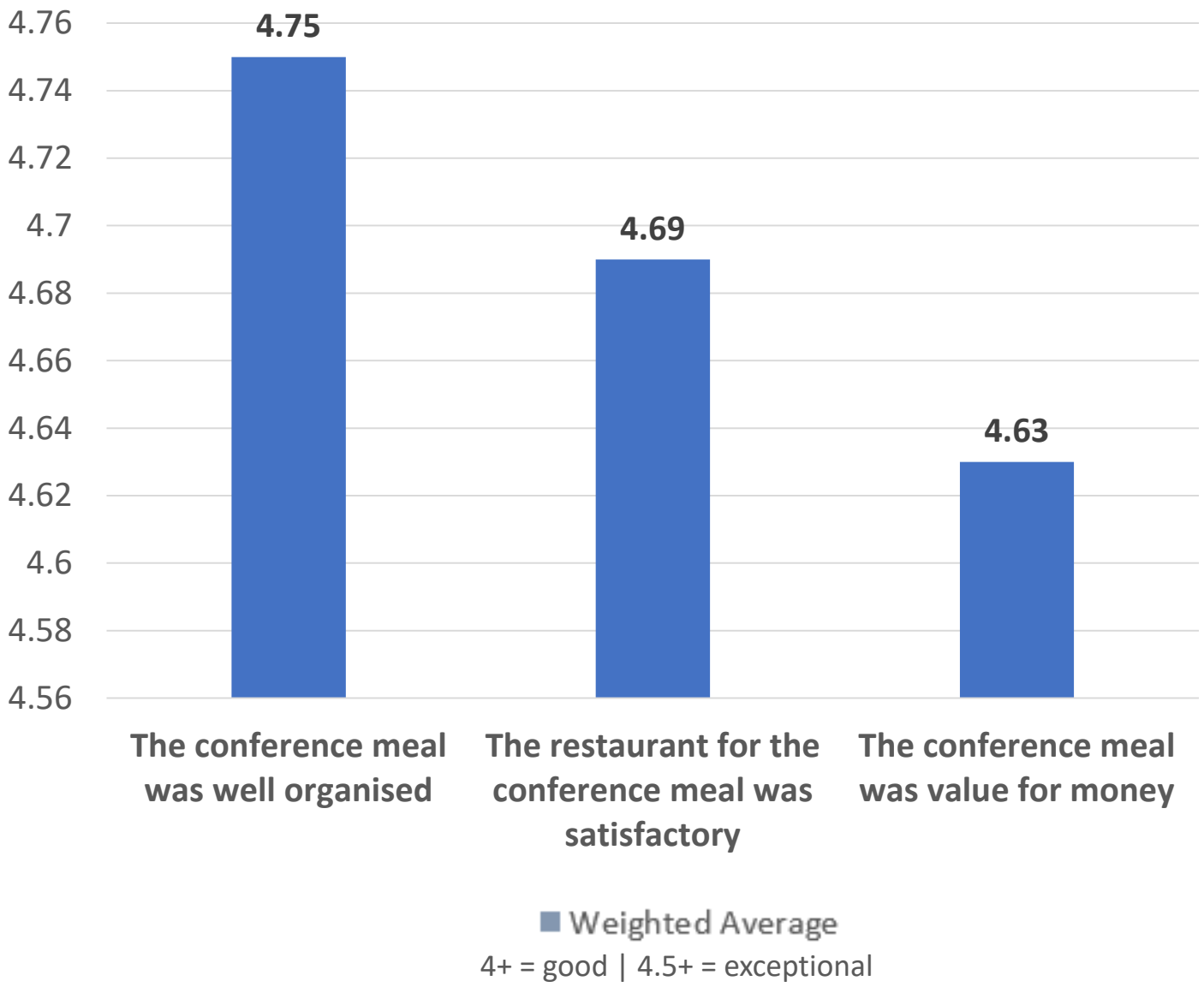
2018



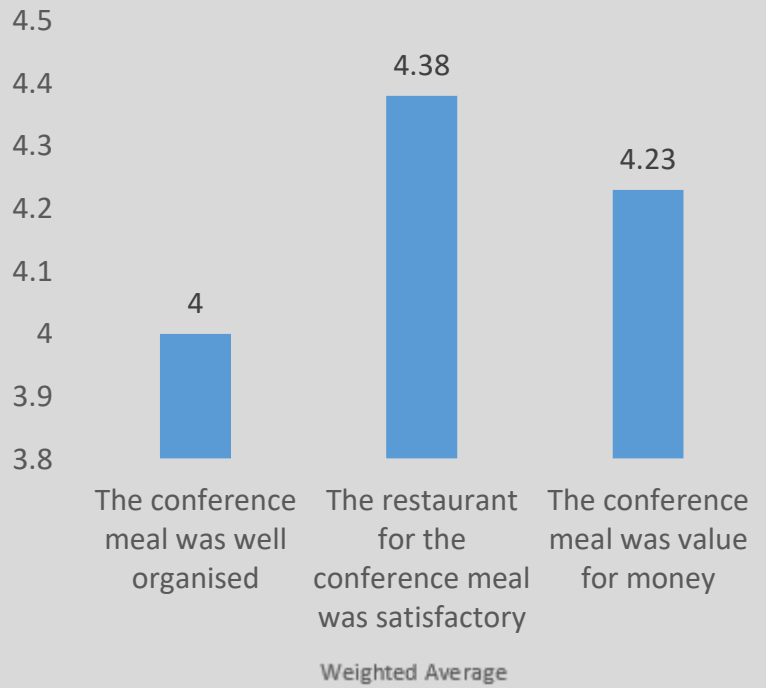
Comparison / Analysis

- Significant improvement on last time
- Note that the conference fee has increased on last year but delegate perception of value has improved (2017: £80; 2018: £90 e.b., £100 late; 2019: £100 e.b., £120 late).

[2019] Conference Meal (1)



2018

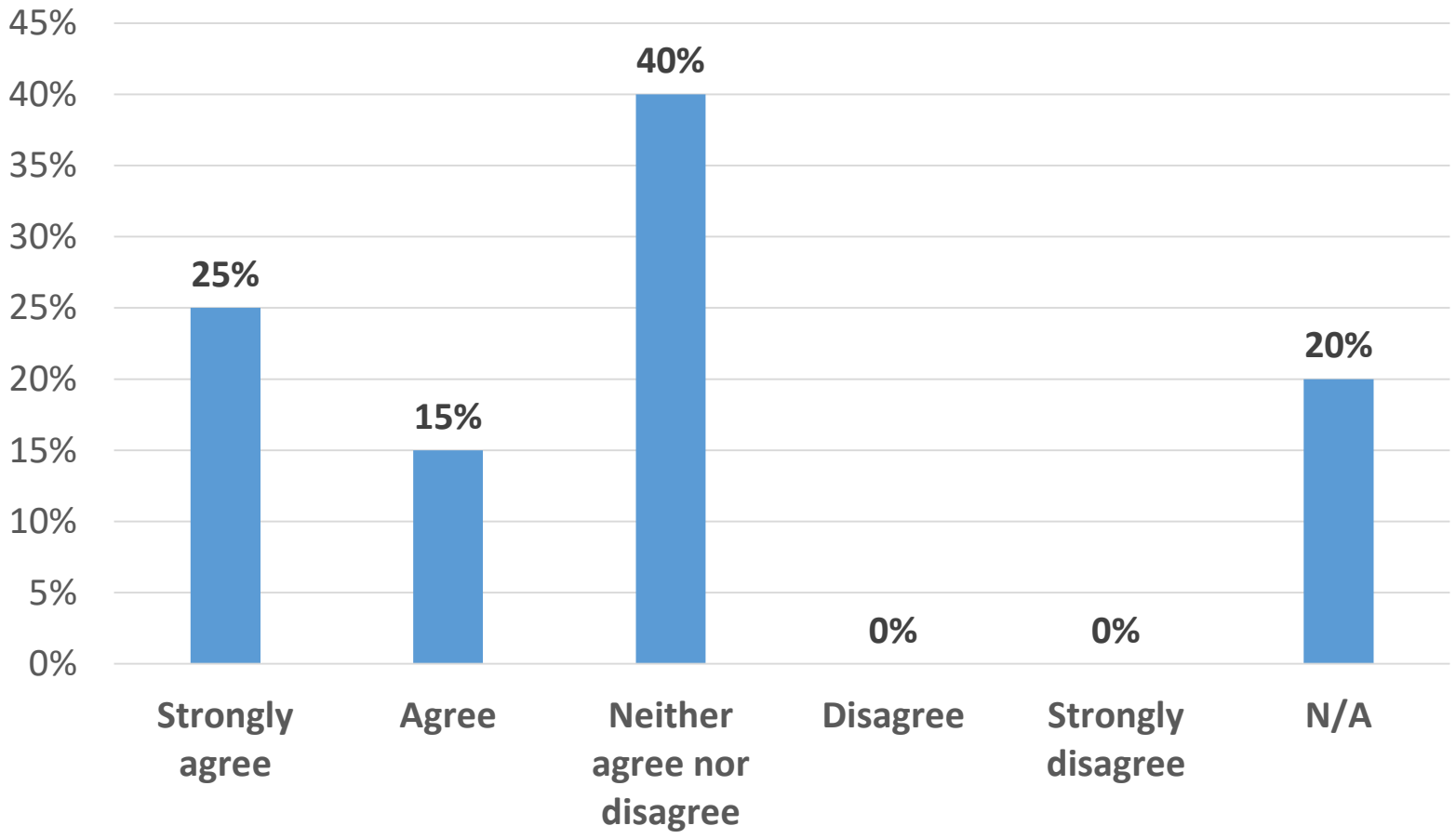


Comparison / Analysis

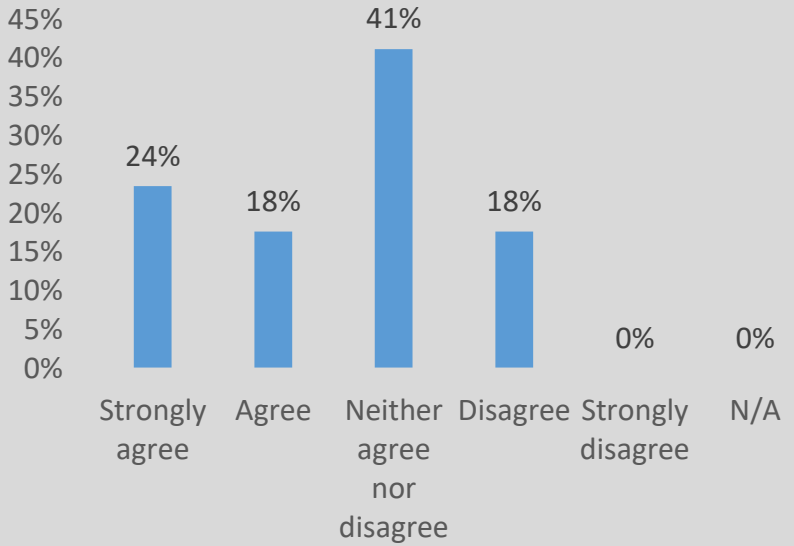
- Moved from good to exceptional
- The differences: earlier announcement, more formal channel for taking fee; advanced choice of dishes
- Maintaining a focus on improving conference meal

[2019] Conference Meal (2): payment

I would have preferred to opt in and pay for the conference meal during registration



2018

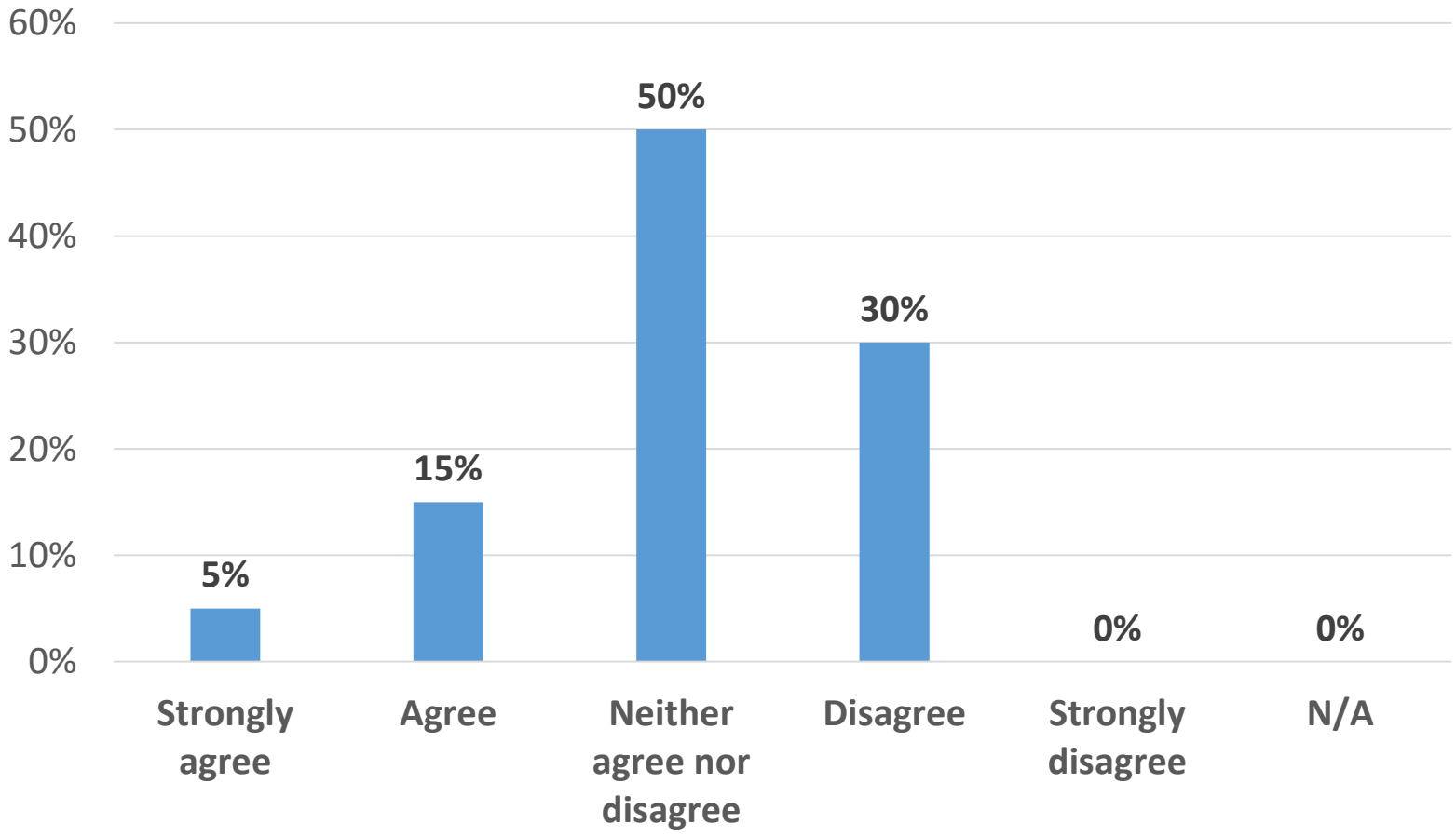


Comparison / Analysis

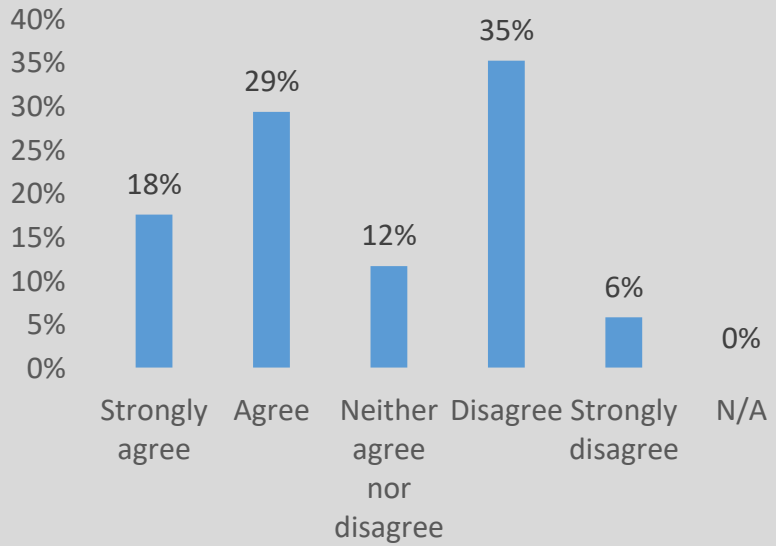
- While there is no strong voice for rolling the conference meal payment into registration system, there is no voice at all against this.

[2019] Evening activities

I would have preferred more group activities in the evenings



2018

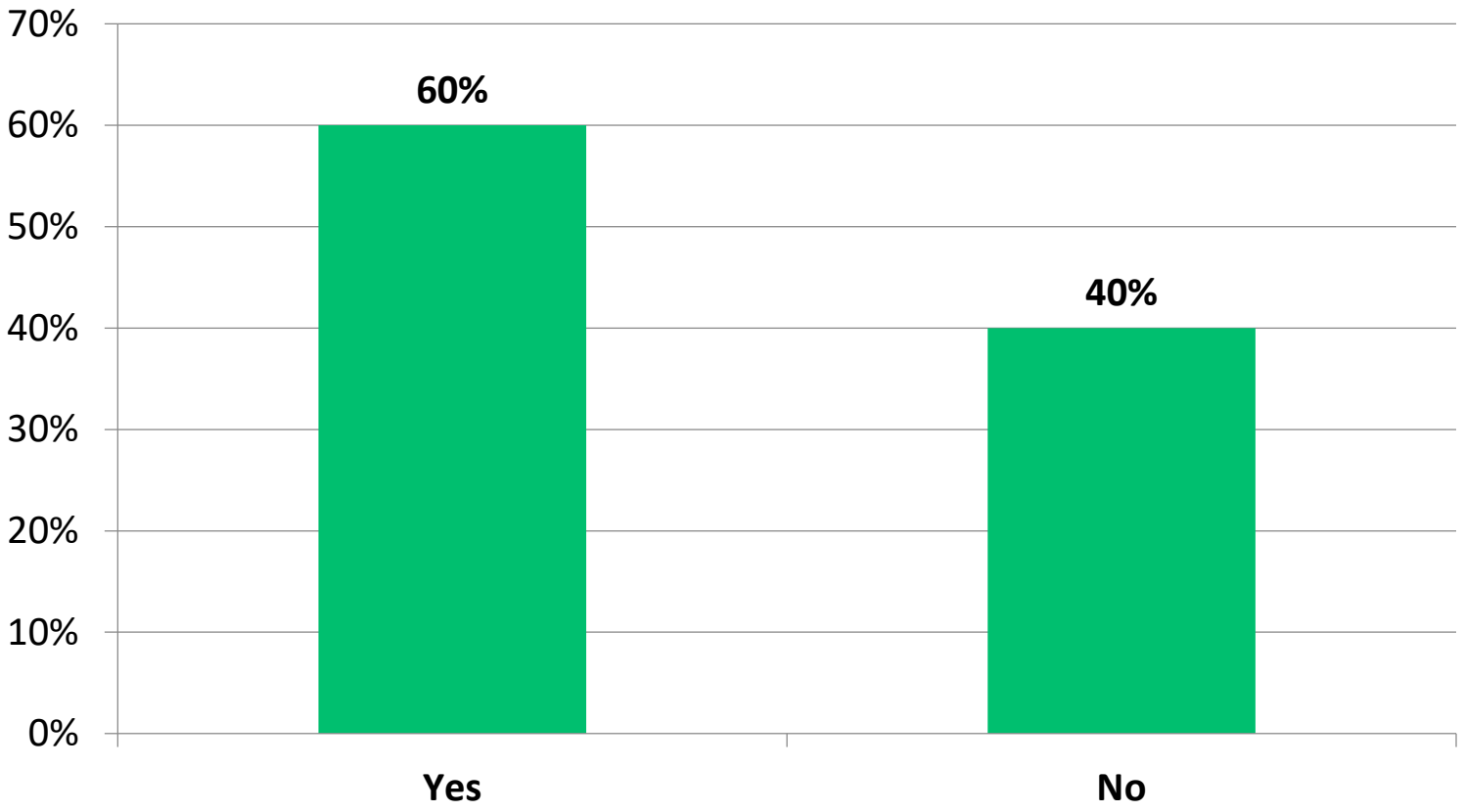


Comparison / Analysis

- Some change from 2018 to 2019, and a strong move toward neutrality indicates happiness with status quo.
- We added welcome drinks (but poorly attended). Thus 2019 approach should be maintained

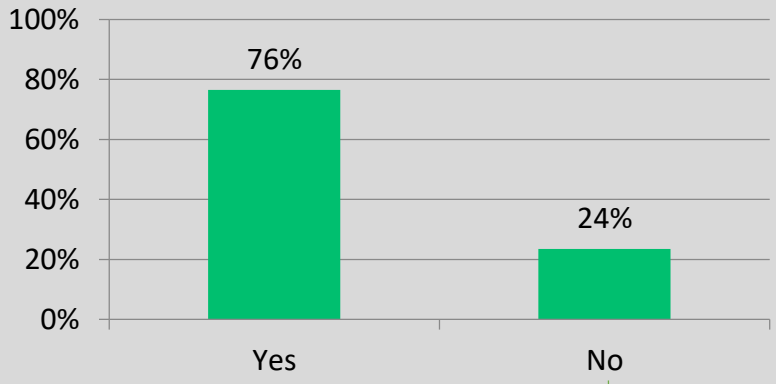
[2019] Retention

Did you attend the conference on all three days?



Nipped out for some sessions as the days were rather long
Due to professional commitments
Other academic duties
I was ill

2018

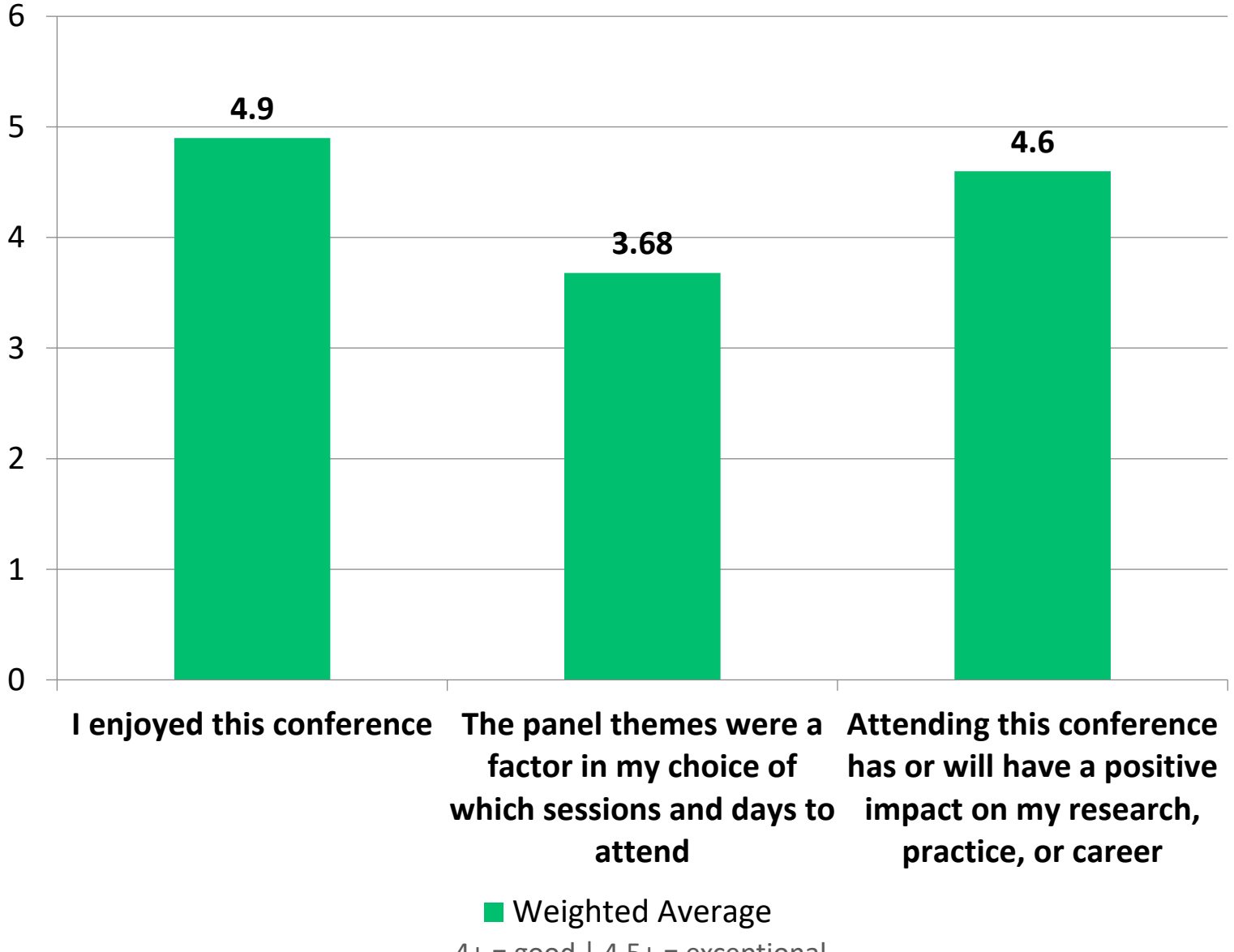


Other engagements
I had to go back to my home country
I had to travel back to my home country

Comparison / Analysis

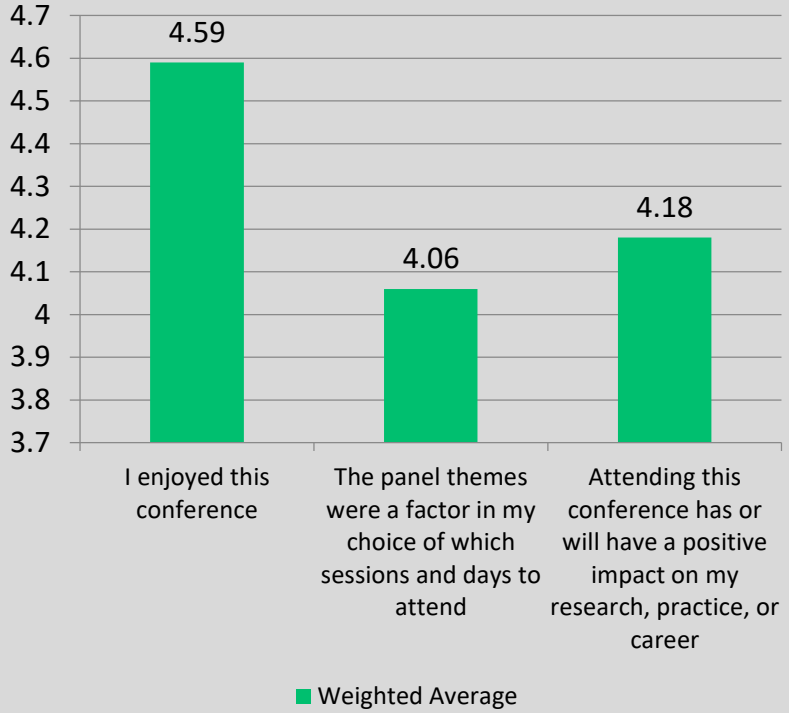
- Retention over three days is down.
- Most stated reasons remain extrinsic
- Feedback on day length inconclusive here, but see later slides for more discussion.

[2019] Conference overall (1)



4+ = good | 4.5+ = exceptional

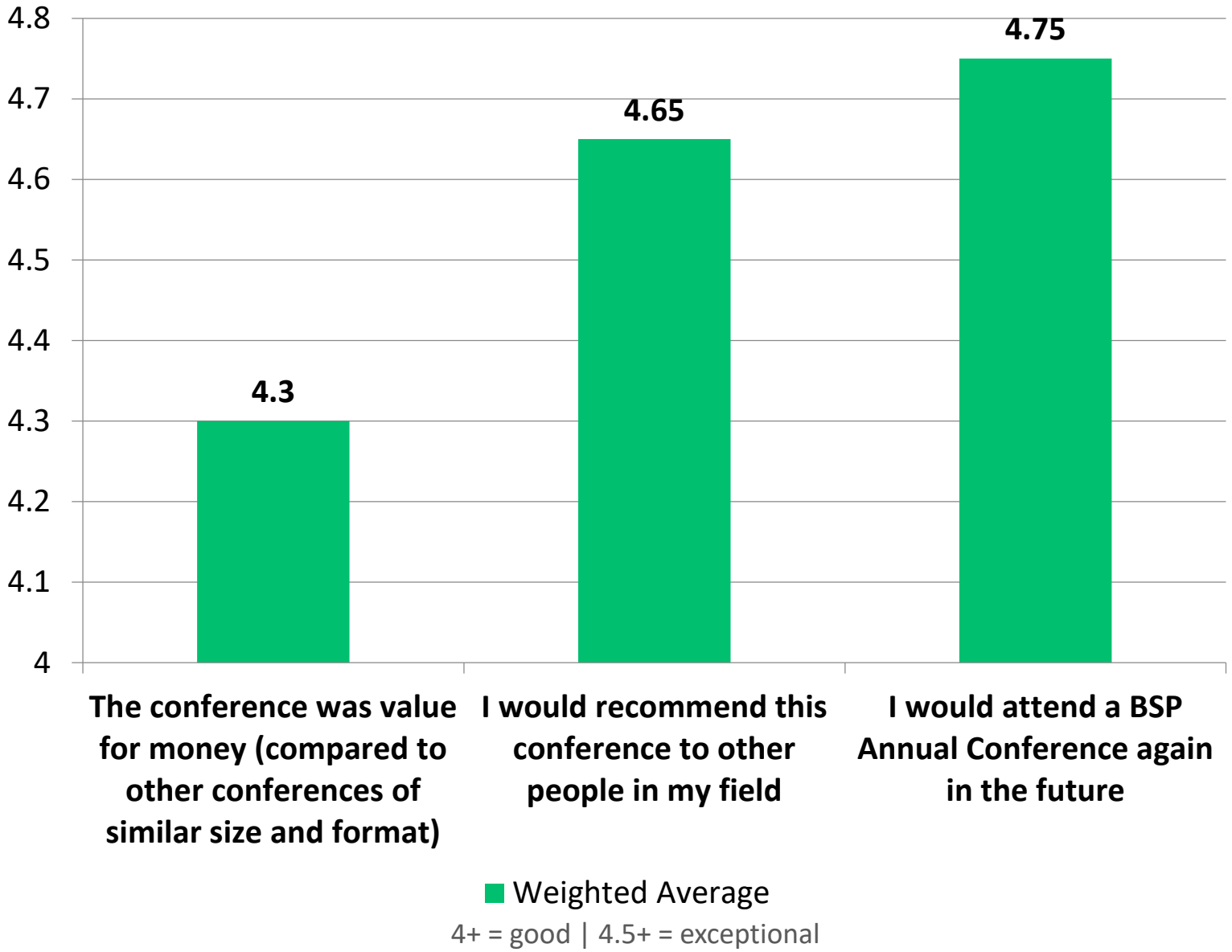
2018



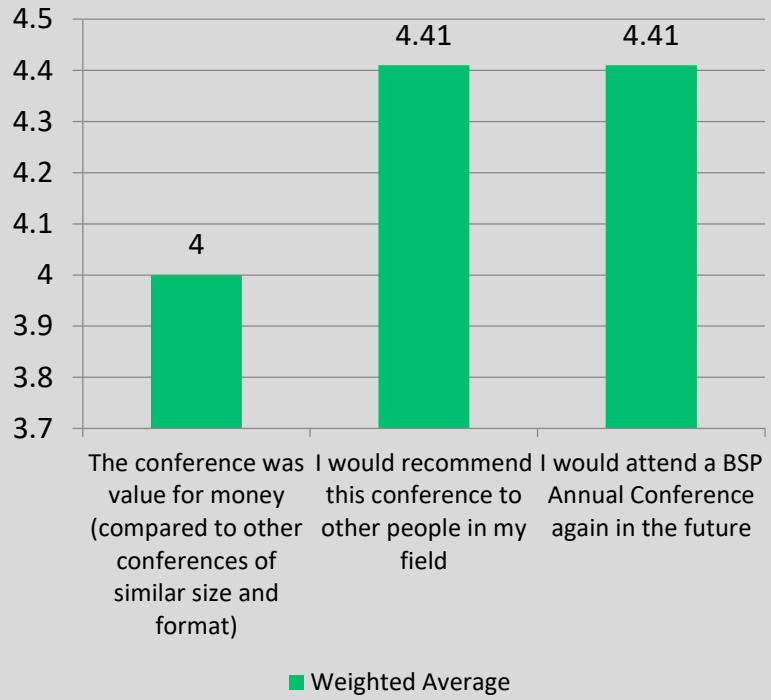
Comparison / Analysis

- Enjoyment and impact up, now both in exceptional
- Panel themes do not really seem to be a factor in people choosing which sessions they will attend, we must suspect it will be for the actual paper titles.

[2019] Conference overall (2)



2018



Comparison / Analysis

- Value up (despite price increase)
- Recommend and desire to attend again moved from ‘good’ to ‘exceptional’

[2019] Conference overall (3)

Do you feel that there any subjects missing or under-represented at the conference?

- “Maybe more presentations on feminist phenomenology”
- “There is no connection to phenomenology being done in the analytic tradition (e.g. Kriegel, Zahavi). The BSP, being based in Britain but within a continental tradition, has a great opportunity to be a bridge between these two traditions. And while continental philosophy has a lot of links to fields such as psychopathology, analytic philosophy has a lot of links to fields such as neuroscience”
- “Art - books. films, etc”
- *“No” x 8*

2018

- “The interface between phenomenology and analytic philosophy”
- “Literature, cinema, art”
- “The arts”
- “Phenomenology of perception; Phenomenology of emotion”
- “More French phenomenology”
- “French phenomenology eg Merleau-Ponty, Lévinas, Sartre”
- “Indigenous phenomenologies in the English world
- Phenomenology and hermeneutics, or phenomenological hermeneutics”
- *“No” x 2*

Comparison / Analysis

- CfP wording was most inclusive ever, and this has born fruit overall.
- There were less “analytic” papers, but: we do still welcome these, and inviting more analytic keynotes may help remedy the contrary perception.

[2019] Conference overall (4)

What was the low point of the conference?

- “Days were rather long, very early starts”
- “Personal, sometimes a bit tired due to long days. Day three morning was too early compared with day two. Late evenings”
- “I just found the programme too long so was unable to focus at the end of the day”
- “Not really a low point, but it would be great to have more time for discussion”

- There was some feedback on presentation skills in English (the language of the conference)
- “I struggled to ‘keep up’ with the presentations but eventually allowed myself to just let them happen and relish the experience”
- Some of the sessions were rough, but still valuable.

- “No particular low point” x 4
- “(maybe include crisps at lunch)”

2018

- The heat!
- The conditions in the lecture hall, the venue needed working air-conditioning fit for the current environmental apocalypse
- It was a very hot few days- the air con was inadequate and really needed addressing but this was a facilities issue.
- Facilities, especially lack of Air-con

- The long days and short breaks. Audiences need to be seen as audiences
- Long days

- It's a shame to mention it, but I think many philosophers might regret to miss the beautiful talks on the third day, some of them were my favourites. We shouldn't have seen the least number of attendants (even) on the last day.

- No particular low point.

Comparison / Analysis

- Long days continues be a an issue, although satisfaction was better over all. The context of these should be seen in respect to future…
- Other points do not warrant action
- No low points has increased 1>4

[2019] Conference overall (5)

What was the high point of the conference?

- The keynote speakers
- “Linda Finlay's talk was exceptional”; “I liked Linda's keynote”; “Linda Finlay’s paper”; “Linda Finlay's keynote”
- “Keith Crome's final keynote”; “Keith's keynote”
- “Dylan Trigg's keynote paper on the subject of birth”
- “I enjoyed the keynote”

- “The first session on Heidegger, although several other papers were interesting and engaging, such as Valeria Bizzarri's paper on music”
- “The papers were excellent”
- “The valuable feedback I got during my Q&A”
- “Topics”
- “Empirical phenomenology”
- “The conference itself was a 3-day-high-point!”; “The conference in itself”; “The overall feel of the conference”; “The general atmosphere”
- “Meeting other interdisciplinary scholars. Such an inclusive vibe!”
- “I am used to attending IT vendor conferences, this is the first ‘academic paper presentation’ conference I have ever attended. I found it very strange at first, unusual, even not ‘right’. Eventually I feel the experience was much richer, authentic and I intend to try to use that experience to improve presentations and meetings at work in future.”

2018

- “Keynote - Niall Keane” x 3
- “Keynote - Luna Dolezal” x 2
- “Keynote speakers with respondents” x 1

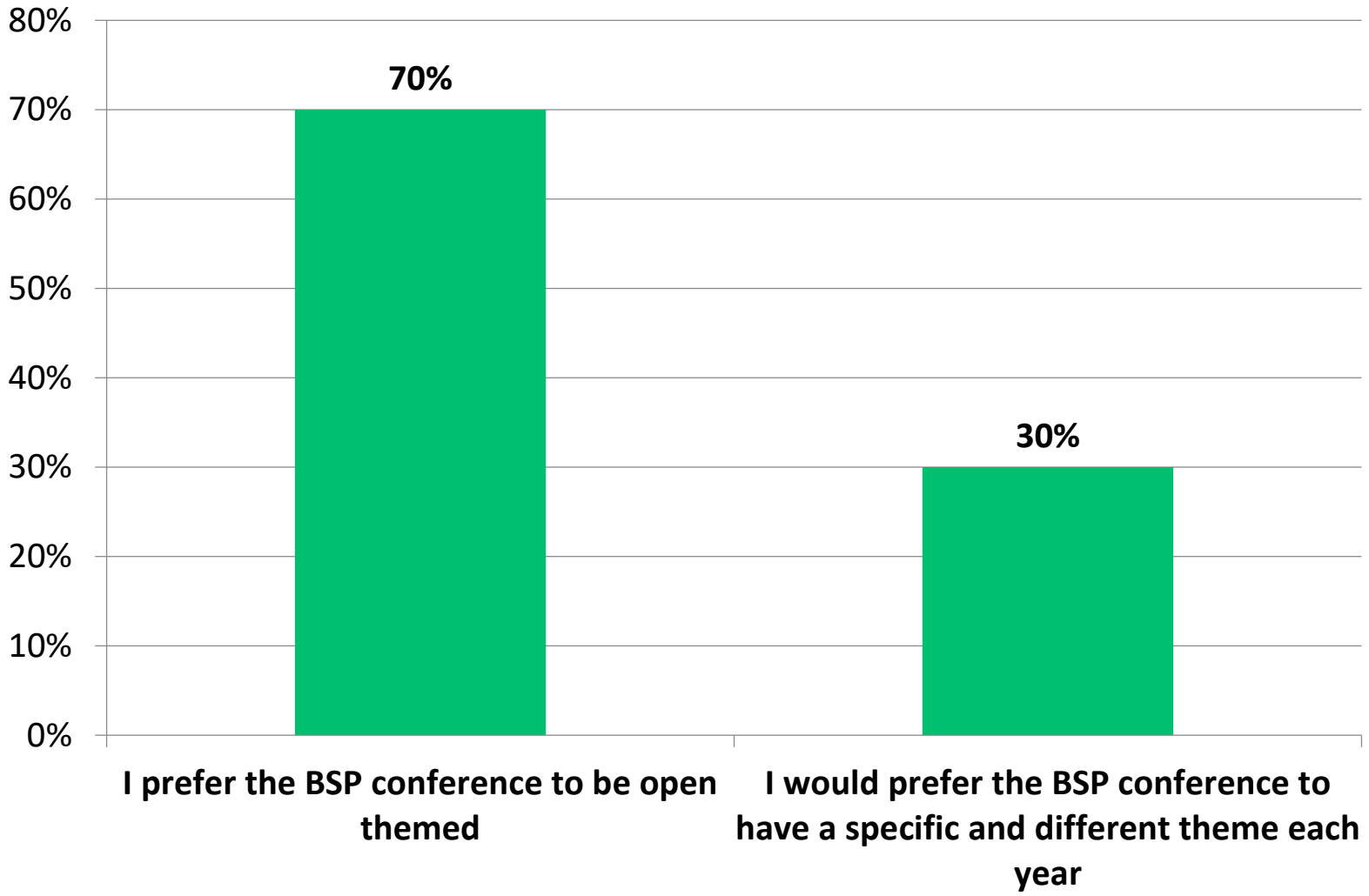
- “The diversity of papers”
- “Most sessions had something exciting to offer”
- “There were too many standout papers to mention- an intense, inclusive and intriguing conference! Amazing job!”
- “Speaking is a highlight as the reception and feedback is always passionate, critical and supportive. You really do learn a lot about your own research”
- “Everyone was very friendly and offered constructive and stimulating discussions”
- “The people” x 2

Comparison / Analysis

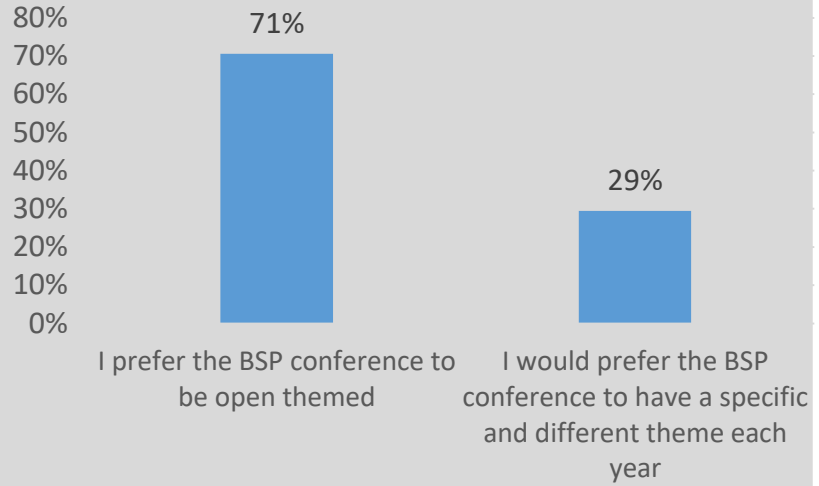
- Keynotes are still the high point of conference, indicating both the quality of the speakers and that we can attract them to speak. Increasing number can only be good

[2019] Future format (1)

The BSP Conference – as in more recent years – had an open theme… what do you prefer?



2018

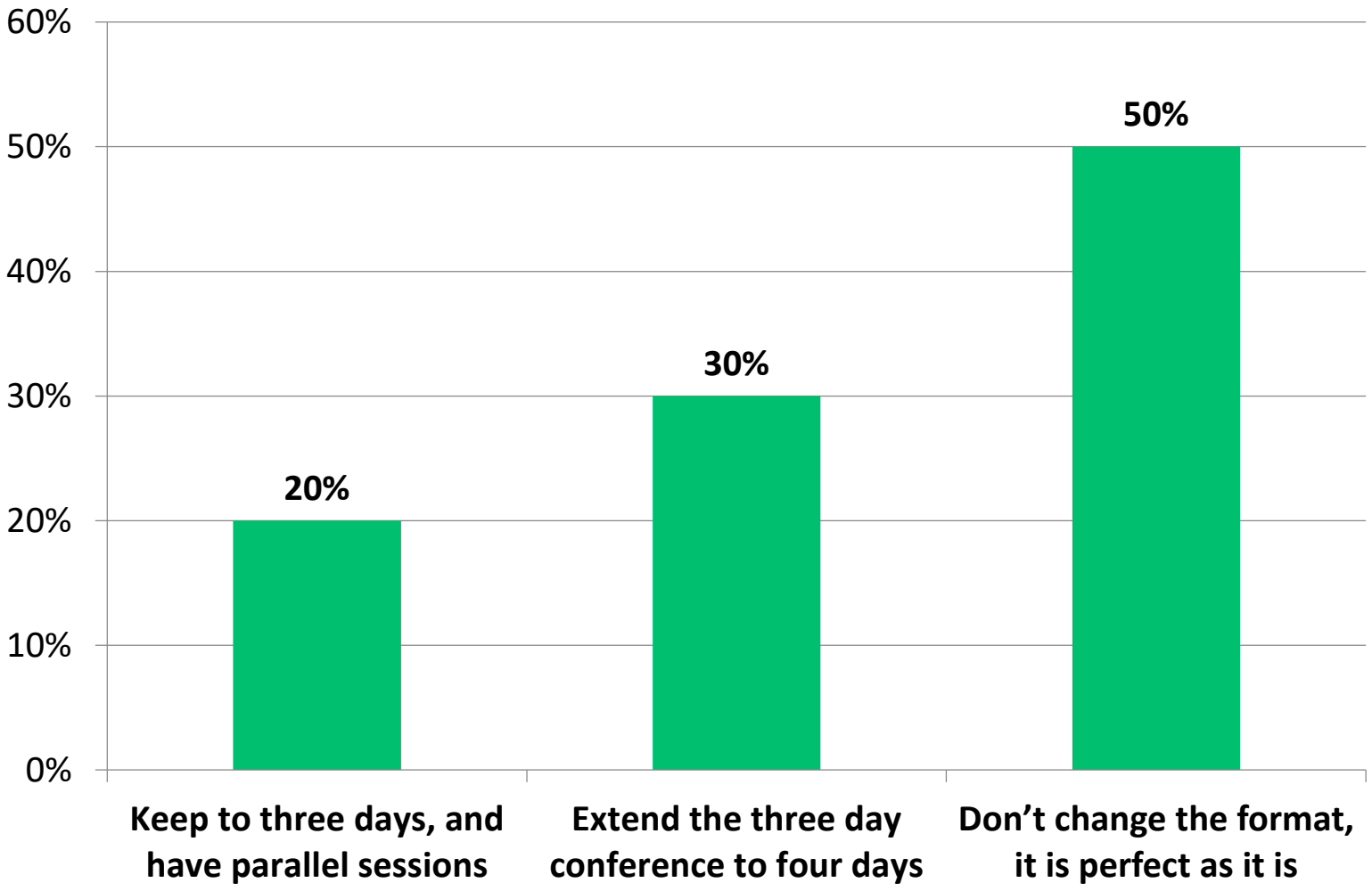


Comparison / Analysis

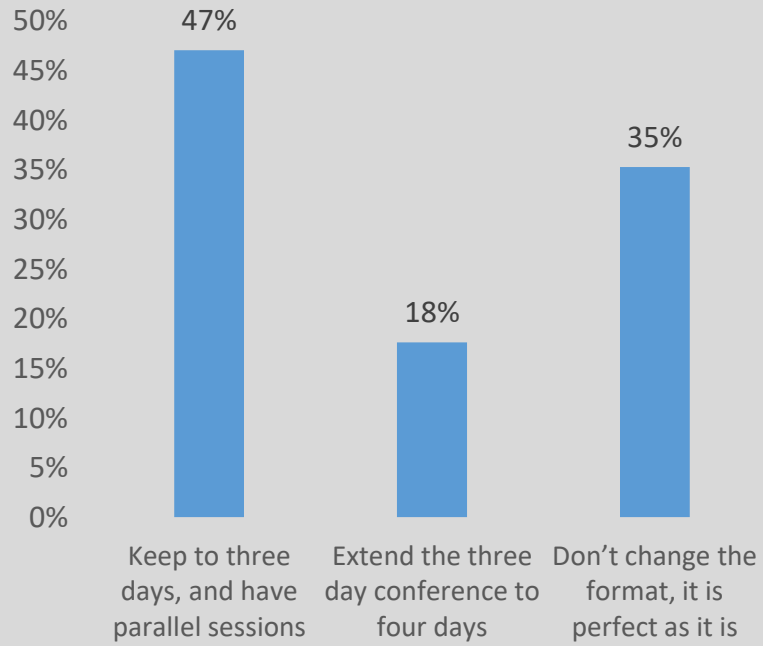
- There remains a strong preference for an open theme

[2019] Future format (2)

We are looking for ways to expand the capacity of the conference to allow more people to speak. What would you prefer?



2018

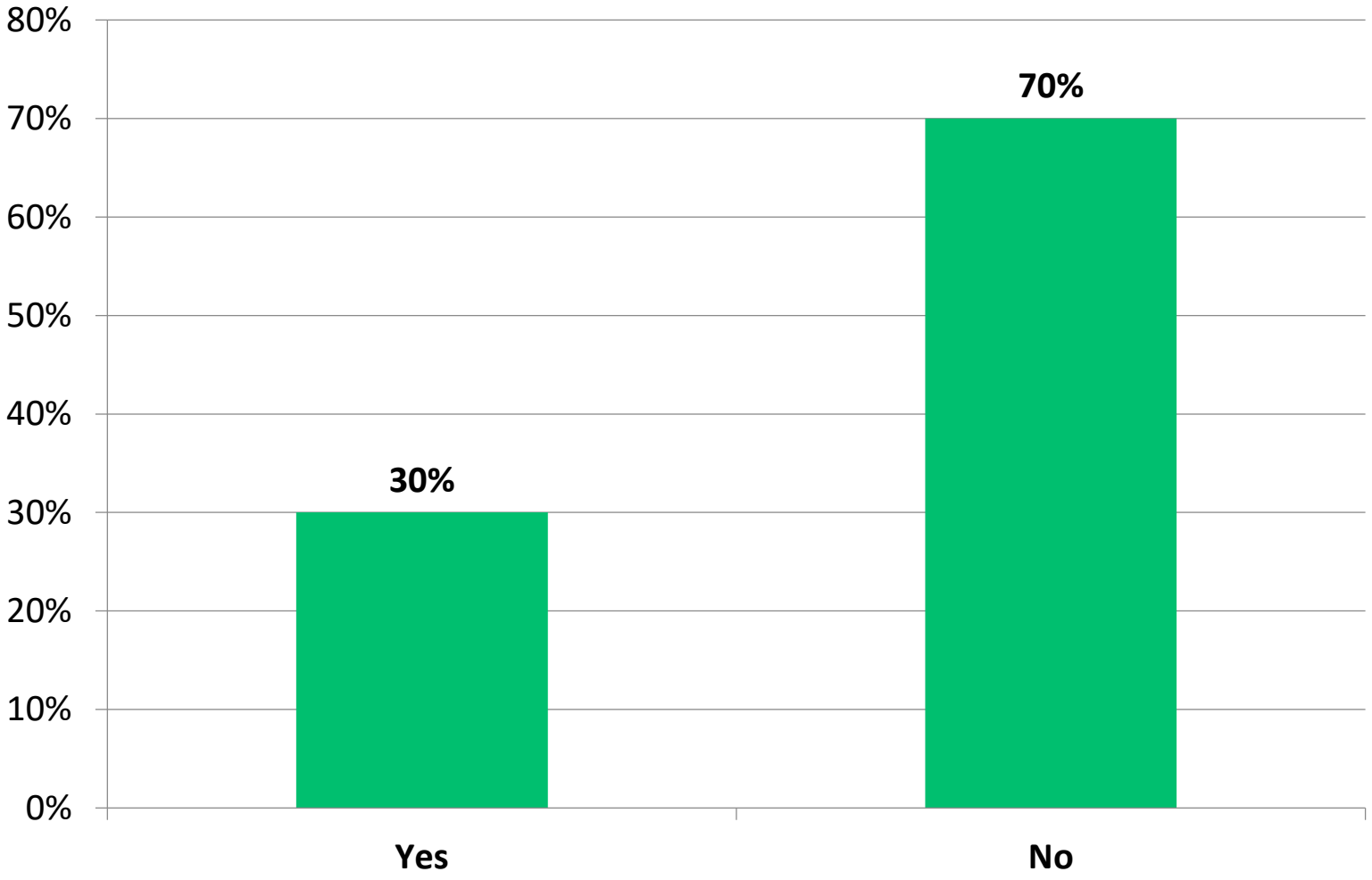


Comparison / Analysis

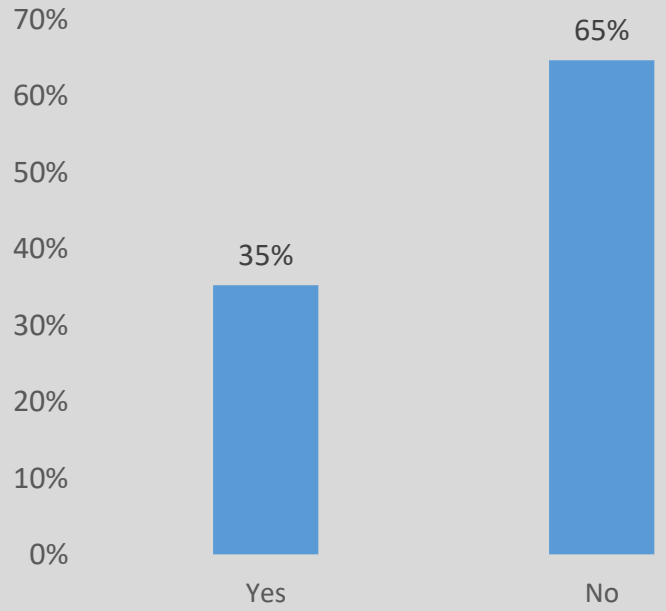
- Strong preference for status quo, and this has increased from last year (however, see next slide and analysis)

[2019] Future format (3)

Was the current format a factor in your decision to attend?



2018



Comparison / Analysis

- This slide puts the previous slide into context. While current format is well liked this is not a driver for attendance.

[2018] After the conference (5)

Anything else you want to tell us?

- The conference was excellent and well organised! I loved attending
- Very well organised conference. Nothing to add by way of things to change or further facilities

- The question about parallel sessions is interesting. You would need to get the balance right. Two, three at the most. This would also help with the less than optimal long days
- Long days
- To note on the format change: I would run parallel sessions, but keep these to a minimum (maybe one split) as the precious quality of inclusiveness for the conference is so valuable. I only selected the parallel sessions to get more people there and speaking, and 4 days is a very big time commitment
- If parallel sessions run it could be an opportunity to have more open format discussions / round tables / informal meetings which I find very useful.

- The conference artwork and branding could be enhanced. More media (photo's, video interviews, social media) but also more theming around the years conference.
- It would have been useful to have more of an idea of what was expected from the talks. I attended independently so had no supervisor to guide me in such matters.
- This might be too much to ask, and some attendants might have other plans to use their submissions, but I hope we could have access to the full papers presented at the conference (as long as the speakers give consents)

[2019] After the conference (5)

Anything else you want to tell us?

- I would really like to be able to stay in contact with the attendees. is there a "group" we can use to maintain contact, to reflect on experiences ?
- Just more time for discussion. 15 min papers?
- Facilities were great at both the venue and restaurant. Also, the way everyone was kept to time meant nothing felt rushed, and you could rely on the timetable if you went off for a panel and wanted to come back later.
- I think I'd prefer 25+15-minute-slots over the 20+10.
- Crisps
- Everything is very good
- the catering this year was amazing! the plenaries were diverse in subject and I really enjoyed it!
- The gender neutral toilets were good. The vegetarian food options at lunch were excellent.
- First off, thank you so much for organising this great conference. I must say that at the end, my attendance to the conference was very costly. Accommodation in Manchester was pricey and even if I managed to get to London for relatively cheap, the return train ticket London-Manchester was almost a hundred quid! If you could offer a cheaper possibility of joining the BSP on electronic format only that might make it easier. Also, the conference dinner was a great venue, but the price was way off my budget and I felt like it was an opportunity I shouldn't miss. I understand that it is very difficult to make the conference fee itself cheaper when you have to hire the venue yourselves (it is really infuriating universities in Manchester don't just give you a free venue!), and I thank you all very much for all of the wonderful work you've put into making this conference possible. Ps. This survey was way too long!

Observations and Recommendations 1

- Attracting new attendees and society members via the conference remains good (40%), although retention of current membership needs improvement.
- Keynotes are still the high point of conference, indicating both the quality of the speakers and that we can attract them to speak. Increasing the number of keynotes can only be good for the conference.
- We continue to struggle to attract practitioners (steady at 8%). Recommend AC2020 Comms plan has some specifics to address this. Also, ensuring we have a practitioner as keynote should be maintained.
- There were less “analytic” papers in 2019 than usual, and this was noted in comments. However, CfP wording was most inclusive ever, and this has born fruit overall. Inviting more analytic keynotes may help remedy the contrary perception.
- Visibility of the society, the journal and the annual conference remains high. There has also been a growth in the profile of the podcast which can only help improve overall visibility.
- Overall conference value: both ‘enjoyment’ (4.9) and ‘impact’ (4.6) are up on last year, now both in exceptional; similarly ‘recommend to others’ (4.65) and ‘desire to attend again’ (4.75).
- While conference fee has increased year on year, delegate perception of overall conference value has improved (2017: £80; 2018: £90 e.b., £100 late; 2019: £100 e.b., £120 late).

Observations and Recommendations 2

- Scores on communications have moved from good (2018) to exceptional (2019) vindicating the changes and the improvements in the way we organise the conference over the last 18 months.
- On instructions about membership during registration: some improvement in comms needed here.
- Registration systems are notoriously difficult for users to negotiate, and our results are good, but still room for improvement, and we should put more focus on this in 2020.
- While there is no strong voice for rolling the conference meal payment into registration system, there is no voice at all against this. Doing this would also lessen the load at the helpdesk & for organisers during the conference.
- Investment in conference booklets appears to vindicated, driving an exceptional experience.
- Clear improvement over last year with respect to timetabling and venue. Although length of days remains a relatively low score (4.25 out of 5); and is mentioned in comments. Venue score much better – we need to retain the focus.
- Entertainment (drinks evenings and conference meal): happiness with status quo. We added welcome drinks this year (but poorly attended). 2019 approach should be maintained and monitored.
- There remains a strong preference for an open theme; and while current linear format is well liked, this is not a driver for attendance.