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Phoiblí agus Athchóirithe
Department of Public
Expenditure and Reform

SPS and PO Executive Leadership Programme Evaluation



Evaluation Report
for the
Department of Public Expenditure and Reform

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OÉ Gaillimh



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List of Abbreviations

ASG	Assistant Secretary General
A Sec	Assistant Secretary General
DPER	Department of Public Expenditure and Reform
ELP	Executive Leadership Programme (SPS and PO programme)
PO	Principal Officer
Sec Gen	Secretary General
SG	Secretary General
SPS	Senior Public Service





EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP (TALENT DEVELOPMENT) PROGRAMME

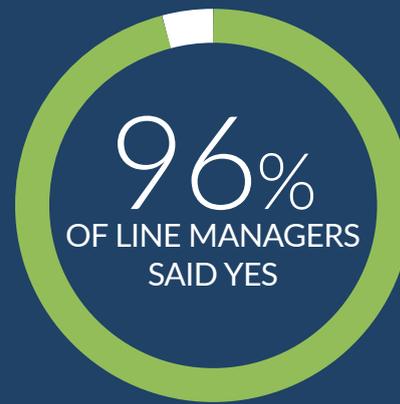
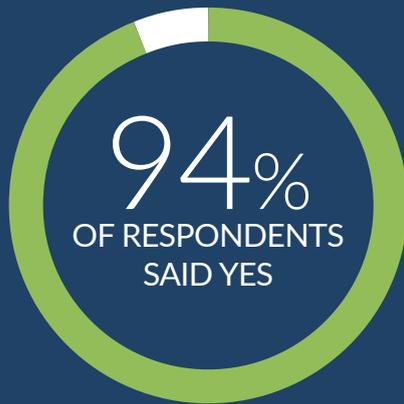
2017-18
TRANCHE 1
20 SPS & 40 PO PARTICIPANTS

2018-19
TRANCHE 2
21 SPS & 40 PO PARTICIPANTS

EVALUATION DATA SOURCES



WOULD YOU RECOMMEND THE ELP TO OTHERS?



TOP 3 BEST THINGS ABOUT ELP



BUILDING AND EXTENDING
NETWORK



DEDICATED TIME AND
SPACE TO REFLECT ON
LEADERSHIP AND IMPACT



PEER-TO-PEER LEARNING

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT – TOP 5

1. Review some of the personality instruments used
2. Review executive coaching process and timing of delivery
3. Provide more supports for networks and alumni post-ELP
4. Enhance link between theory and practice
5. Provide follow-up workshops to sustain and embed learning



IMPACT OF ELP ON PARTICIPANTS' LEADERSHIP CAPABILITY & SKILL – TOP 5



93% indicate ELP helped them empower others on their team



86% indicate ELP enhanced their change leadership skills



78% indicate ELP enhanced their resilience



74% indicate ELP enhanced their ability to work across political system



73% indicate ELP developed their emotional intelligence

TRANSFER OF LEARNING AND CHANGES TO LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT SINCE ELP – TOP 5

1. Enhanced self-reflection, self-awareness and openness to feedback
2. Better team management, motivation and staff development
3. Greater emotional intelligence, communication and understanding of impact on others
4. Greater empowerment and delegation
5. More strategic mind-set



IMPACT OF ELP ON PROMOTION



61% of respondents have applied for promotion since starting the ELP



79% report ELP influenced them to apply for promotion



16% of respondents have been promoted since starting the ELP



86% of those promoted report that ELP helped them transition to new role



63% of those who have not yet applied for promotion plan to do in near future

IMPACT OF ELP ON MOBILITY



36% of respondents have applied or are considering apply for mobility since starting the ELP



78% report ELP has influenced their mobility decision



69% of those on mobility report that ELP helped them transition to new role

Background and Introduction

The Civil Service Renewal Plan sets out a vision for a high performing system with the capability to meet the challenges facing Ireland over the coming years. Action 10 of the Plan states that structured and transparent talent management programmes should be introduced to identify and support future leaders at key career stages.

In accordance with Action 10 of the Civil Service Renewal Plan, the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER) implemented two Executive Leadership Programmes (ELPs) for selected members of senior management at (1) Senior Public Service (SPS) and (2) Principal Officer (PO) levels. To date, there have been two tranches of the Executive Leadership Programmes. The first tranche ran from 2017 to early 2018 with 20 SPS members and 40 POs participants on each of the programmes and the second tranche ran from 2018 to 2019 with 21 SPS members and 40 POs involved.

To assist the Civil Service Management Board (CSMB) on deciding on the future of the programmes, DPER issued a request for quotes in June 2019 for an external evaluation of the impact of the SPS and PO Executive Leadership Programmes on participants and also the wider civil service.

This report sets out the findings of the external evaluation of the ELP programmes conducted by NUI Galway between July and September 2019.

Aims & Objectives of Evaluation Report

The aims of the evaluation of the SPS and PO ELP are:

- To assess the impact of the programmes on leadership capability and confidence, collaboration and broadening of perspectives, and widening of career development horizons including highly specialised/functional leaders
- To examine the programmes' impact as a mechanism for preparing individuals for future Secretary General (SG) and Assistant Secretary General (ASG) roles
- To examine any differences between tranche 1 and tranche 2 participants to explore differences in impact of ELP over time.

The overall objective of this evaluation report is to achieve the aims set out above and to provide the Department of Public and Expenditure and Reform (DPER) with an empirically informed comprehensive evaluation report drawing on multi-stakeholder and multi-level data and insights thereby providing evidence-informed recommendations for further similar leadership development decision-making and policy.

Methodology & Data Sources

A number of training and development evaluation methods exist. The most commonly cited and used is the Kirkpatrick¹ framework and the Philips² Return on Investment (ROI) models. While the Kirkpatrick model was introduced a number of decades ago, it is still the predominant model that exists in practice today. The Philips ROI model builds on the Kirkpatrick typology and adds another level of evaluation aimed at demonstrating a quantitative return on investment figure for specific training and development programme costs.

1 Kirkpatrick, D. (1959), "Techniques for evaluating training programmes", Journal of the American Society of Training Directions, Vol. 13, pp. 3-9 and 21-26; 14, 13-18 and 28-32.

2 Phillips, J. J. (1997) Handbook of Training Evaluation and Measurement Methods. Third Edition . Elsevier Science. USA.

To align with the overall objectives of the evaluation, we collected data about perceptions of the ELP (level 1) and impact at level 2 (learning), level 3 (behaviour change), and level 4 (results) of Kirkpatrick's evaluation model.

We deliberately chose not to conduct a return on investment (ROI) analysis, often termed Level 5 of Kirkpatrick's evaluation model or Phillips ROI. The reason is that the validity of this level of evaluation has been questioned in the last number of years as it attempts to quantify in a numerical manner costs and benefits of executive leadership development training. However, many of the benefits of leadership development are non-quantifiable in nature and, therefore, it is difficult to assign credible numerical ROI statistics to such outcomes.

Data Collection and Response Rates

Our research methodology engaged a multi-stakeholder approach gathering data from ELP participants, ELP line managers, the external training provider and the panel of executive coaches. The data was gathered using online surveys (using Qualtrics software), interviews (a mix of face-to-face and telephone) and focus groups generating both qualitative and quantitative data. The data was gathered during August and September 2019. Tables 1-4 present an overview of the number of data sources, informants and response rates.

Table 1: ELP Participant Numbers and Survey Response Rates

ELP PARTICIPANTS (SURVEY)		TRANCHE 1 (2017-2018)	TRANCHE 2 (2018-2019)	TOTAL
SPS & PO ELP (All)	Number of participants on the ELP programmes	60	61	121
	Number of respondents to evaluation survey	40 (67%)	48 (79%)	88 (73%)
SPS ELP	Number of SPS participants on the ELP programme	20	21	41
	Number of respondents to evaluation survey	14 (70%)	14 (67%)	28 (68%)
PO ELP	Number of PO participants on the ELP programme	40	40	80
	Number of respondents to evaluation survey	26 (65%)	34 (85%)	60 (75%)

Table 2: ELP Line Manager Survey Response Rate

LINE MANAGERS OF ELP PARTICIPANTS (SURVEY)	TOTAL
Number of line managers sent survey link (taking into account those not available due to retirement/moves out of the civil service and some line managers have multiple staff who participated)	83
Number of line manager respondents to survey & Response rate	24 (29%)

Table 3: Focus Group Numbers and Composition

FOCUS GROUPS WITH ELP PARTICIPANTS AND EXECUTIVE COACHES		NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS
1	PO Executive Leadership Programme tranche 2	12
2	PO Executive Leadership Programme tranche 1	6
3	A Sec Executive Leadership Programme tranche 2	5
4	A Sec Executive Leadership Programme tranche 1	3
5	Executive Coaching Panel	5

Table 4: Interviewees and ELP Cohort/Role

INTERVIEWS WITH PARTICIPANTS AND EXTERNAL TRAINING PROVIDER	
1	ASG tranche 2
2	PO tranche 1
3	PO tranche 2
4	ASG tranche 2
5	PO tranche 2
6	PO tranche 1
7	ASG tranche 1
8	ASG tranche 1
9	Facilitator A in Roffey Park Institute (external training provider)
10	Facilitator B in Roffey Park Institute (external training provider)

Data Analysis Approach & Method

The quantitative data (participant and line manager surveys) was analysed using the statistical package R. All numbers are rounded to the nearest unit and in some cases percentages may not add exactly to 100%. The proportion of non-respondents to specific questions are omitted from the analysis, except where the number of respondents is small and impacts interpretation. The qualitative data (open-ended qualitative questions in the participant and line manager surveys, focus groups and interviews) was content-analysed and coded to identify the key emerging themes in relation to the SPS and PO ELP programme.

Respondent Profile and Demographics

Table 5 presents the number and percentage for ELP participant respondents' gender, current grade (at the time of completing the ELP survey), and grade at the time of starting the ELP. There is a similar proportion of male and female participant across the programmes. Overall, there has been an increase in the number of respondents in the SG and A Sec and equivalent roles at the time of completing the surveys (August-September 2019) compared to the grades respondents occupied when starting the ELP. We will discuss these changes in more detail below regarding the impact of ELP on promotion and mobility.

Table 5: ELP Participant Demographic Details

ELP PARTICIPANTS (SURVEY)		TRANCHE 1 SPS & PO (2017-2018)	TRANCHE 2 SPS & PO (2018-2019)	TOTAL
Gender	Male	19 (48%)	21 (44%)	40 (46%)
	Female	19 (48%)	24 (50%)	43 (49%)
	No answer	2 (5%)	3 (6%)	5 (6%)
Current Grade	Secretary General or equivalent	2 (5%)	0	2 (2%)
	Deputy Secretary / Assistant Secretary / Director or equivalent	18 (45%)	17 (35%)	35 (40%)
	Principal Officer or equivalent	18 (45%)	28 (58%)	46 (52%)
	No answer	2 (5%)	3 (6%)	5 (6%)
Grade at start of ELP	Deputy Secretary/ Assistant Secretary / Director or equivalent	13 (33%)	14 (29%)	27 (31%)
	Principal Officer or equivalent	25 (65%)	31 (65%)	56 (64%)
	Not answered	2 (5%)	3 (6%)	5 (6%)

Figure 1 sets out the age distribution of SPS and PO ELP participants on each programme tranche. The majority are aged between 45 and 54.

Figure 2 sets out the organisational tenure of ELP participants on each programme tranche. The majority are in the civil service between 21 and 30 years.

Figure 1: Distribution of age of SPS and PO Executive Leadership Development Programme participants

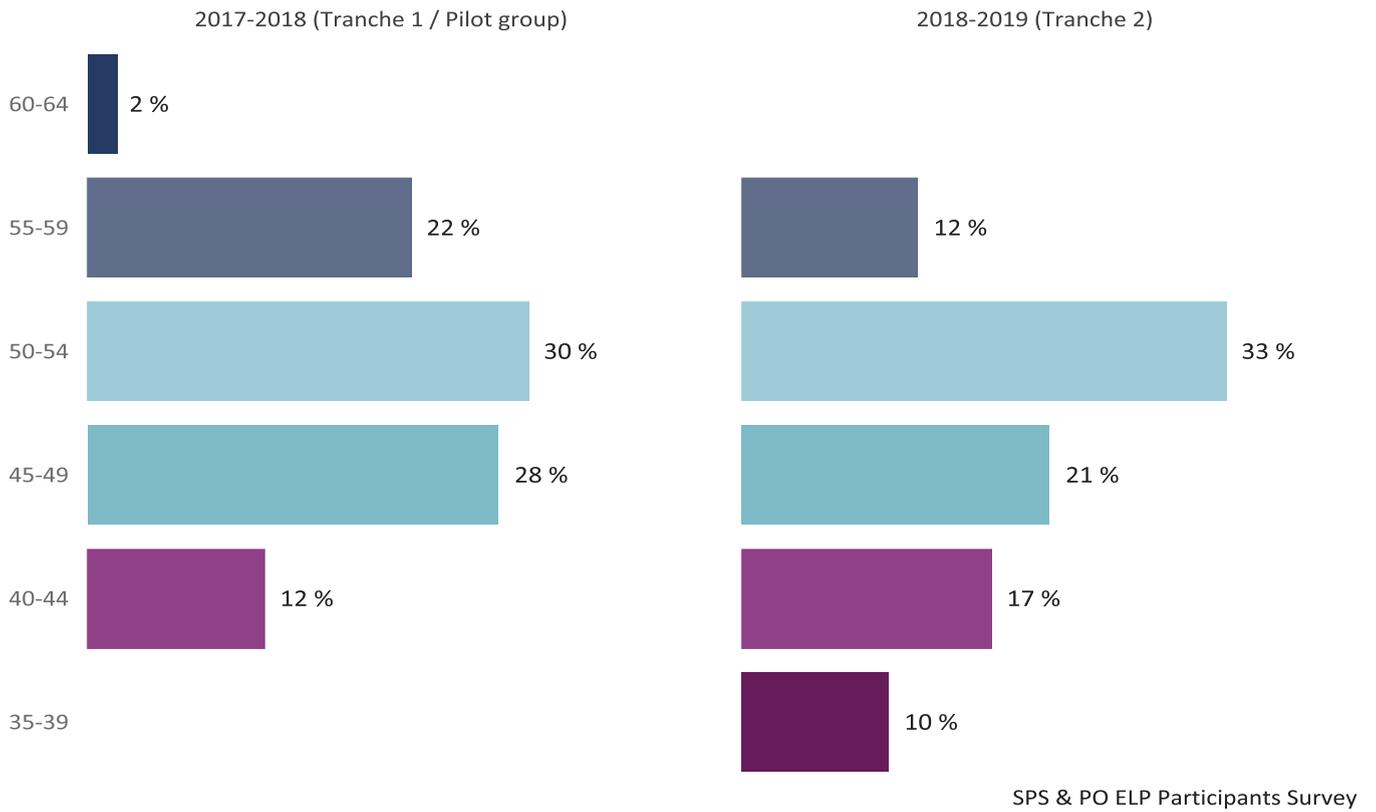
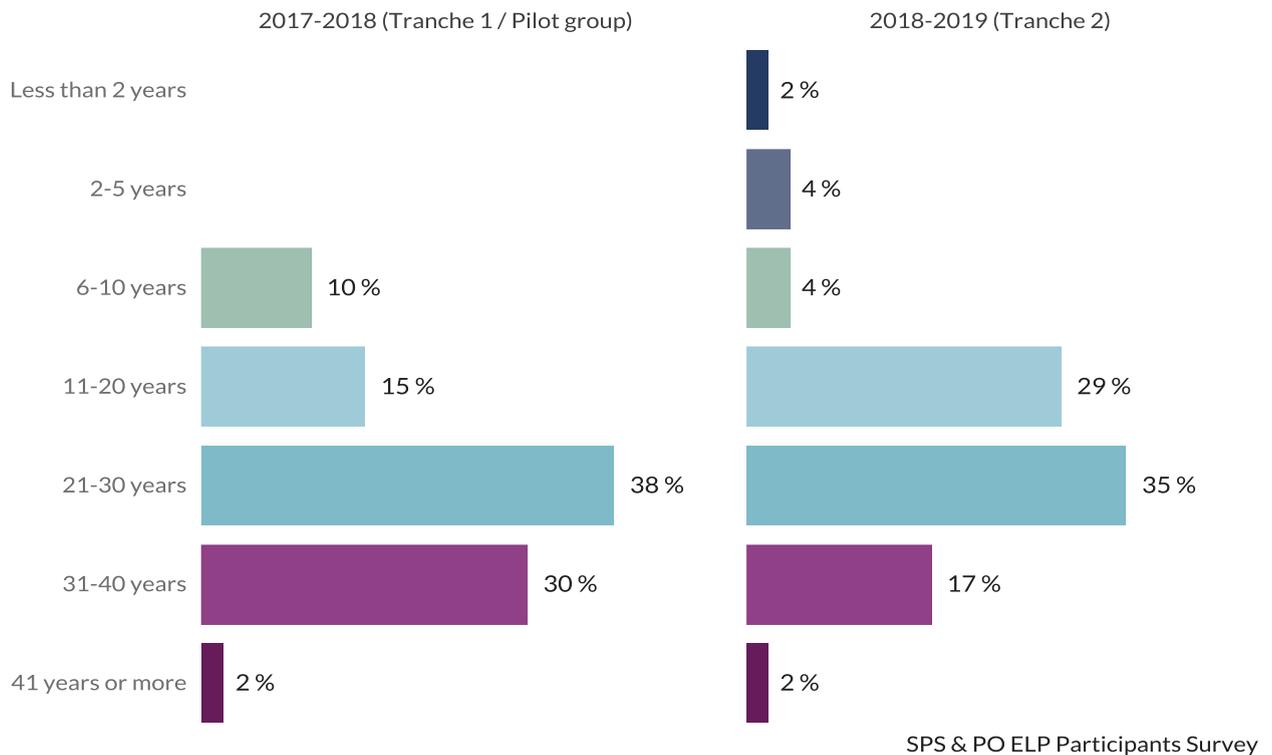


Figure 2: Tenure of SPS and PO Executive Leadership Development Programme participants



Overview of the SPS and PO Executive Leadership Development Programmes

The SPS Executive Leadership Programme is a senior talent development programme for members of the SPS (Deputy Secretary, Second Secretary, Assistant Secretary General and Director grades) designed to assist participants in exploring different aspects and styles of leadership in order to reach the next level of their personal and professional development.

The PO Executive Leadership Programme is a senior talent development programme designed to assist participants in exploring different aspects and styles of leadership in order to reach the next level of their personal and professional development.

Both programmes are facilitated by DPER, and delivered by the Roffey Park Institute, a global provider of leadership development based in the UK. There is also input from Secretaries General (for the SPS programmes) and Assistant Secretaries (for the PO programmes) to provide context relevant information and current input during the modules.

The programmes consist of:

- A one day development centre (DC) designed to produce a “stock take” of current leadership strengths and development areas
- Three two-day modules
- A one-day organisation workshop designed to explore experientially partnership and collaboration across systems
- A review event
- Coaching with external accredited executive coaches focused on application of learning
- Mentoring from recently retired Secretaries General and current Assistant Secretaries General focused on supporting the programme and the participant more widely.

SPS and PO Leadership Development Programme Outline & Content

Content

- Leading transformation at times of ambiguity and complexity
- Working with Ministers and the political system
- Empowering systems and staff
- Emotional intelligence
- Finding the time for leadership
- Resilience in the face of unrelenting pace and pressure
- Collaboration across boundaries

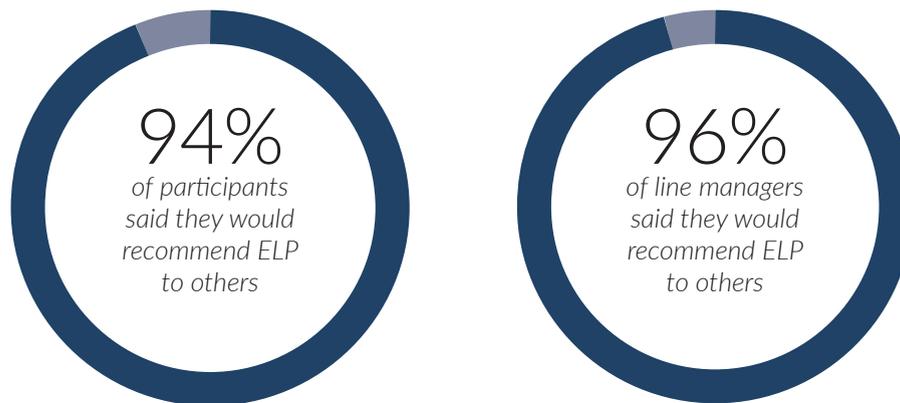
Modules

- Module 1: developing the necessary emotional intelligence and presence to meet the challenges of 21st century Leadership in Government
- Module 2: capability required to be empowered and empowering senior leaders across the civil service
- Module 3: leading across boundaries and creating the conditions for effective cross-Government collaboration

Overall Evaluation of the ELP

ELP participants were asked if they would recommend the ELP programme to others (Figure 3) and 94% of participants indicated that they would recommend the ELP, 1% (one respondent) indicated that they would not recommend the ELP and 5% (four respondents) did not answer the question.

Figure 3: Participants' and their Line Managers' Recommendation of ELP to Others



When asked why they would recommend it, 75 respondents provided responses to the question. The following are the most commonly cited themes regarding why respondents would recommend the ELP in rank order of most frequently cited:

- Building and extending network of peers and colleagues
- Providing the time and space to reflect on current leadership and management behaviour and impact and identify development goals and plans
- Challenges participants to review leadership style and approach and builds enhanced self-awareness
- Enhancement of leadership capability, skills and tools to perform more effectively
- Excellent content that is relevant
- Collaborative learning from others including peer-to-peer learning
- Excellent facilitators and capability of the external training provider
- Challenging
- Fun
- Action learning sets
- 360 feedback
- Mentoring
- Prepares you to step-up to the next level and appreciate the requirements at the next level.

The one participant who would not recommend the programme indicated that while the ELP is prestigious, the course is not as good as other courses and that the facilitators, while excellent and knowledgeable, were constrained by time and “parochial focus” of the course.

Line managers of ELP participants were also asked if they would recommend the programme to their staff and 96% would recommend the ELP while 4% (one respondent) did not answer this question (Figure 3).

When asked why they would recommend the ELP, 20 line managers of ELP participants provided responses to the question. The following are the most commonly cited themes regarding why line managers would recommend the ELP to their staff in rank order of most frequently cited:

- Provides opportunities for peer-to-peer learning and networking
- Enables continuous, improvement, investment in continuing professional development and development of leadership skills
- Enhances self-awareness and provides dedicated time for self-reflection as a leader
- The reputation of the programme, feedback from previous participants and the overall quality of the content
- Allows for dedicated coaching and 360-degree feedback
- Enhances confidence and provides reassurance to leaders.

To further understand the value of the ELP, we asked the participants and their line managers to describe the best thing about the ELP programme. Seventy-three respondents provided an answer to the question and the following are the main themes to emerge presented in rank order of most frequently cited theme:

- Building and extending network of colleagues
- Having dedicated time to reflect on leadership skills, styles, approach and thinking about leadership in a more strategic way
- The value of learning from peers, working with others and the group dynamic
- Coaching
- The quality of the programme and the people (including trainers and participants)
- The opportunity to develop as a leader
- Customised bespoke nature of the programme making it very relevant
- Input from SGs and A Secs
- Mentoring

Twenty line manager respondents provided an answer to the question asking them why they would recommend the ELP to their staff. The following are the main themes to emerge presented in rank order of most frequently cited theme:

- Learning from peers and networking
- Time for leadership self-review, self-reflection and building self-awareness
- Enabling leadership skills development
- Coaching and 360-degree feedback

Thus, the ELP programme is very well received by participants and their line managers. A strong majority would recommend the programme.

Overall Satisfaction with ELP and Key ELP Highlights: Themes from One-to-One Interviews

The following section addresses data that emerged from the one-to-one interviews with participants who completed the ELP and includes insights from the two facilitators from the external training provider regarding the key highlights of the ELP.

Roffey Park and the Facilitators

Overall, there was a high level of satisfaction with the ELP programme across the eight interviews with the ELP participants. The ELP started off with intensity and purpose and “the development centre set the scene for the whole programme” (Interviewee No. 7). The fact that the programme was off-site was very much welcomed, as the participants work in pressurised environments and needed time out from their day-to-day environments in order to fully engage with the programme and take the time necessary for deep personal reflection. “The residential aspect of the programme solidified relationships in the group and the off-site element was really needed” (Interviewee No. 6).

Notwithstanding the fact that everyone agreed with the value of having an off-site residential element, there was a mix of views regarding the location: some would prefer it to be located in Ireland, thus saving on travel time and ultimately costs, while others recommend the value of being in the UK and away from the work environment for immersive learning.

The Roffey Park facilitation team were seen to work very well together. Without exception, the feedback on the trainers was positive; they were seen as being respectful and competent with very good listening skills and were considered more as facilitators rather than trainers. All but one interviewee believed that the trainer’s knowledge of the Irish civil service was excellent; this added value to the programme and a lot of the programme’s success was down to the way the facilitators delivered it. “They understood how we operate, understood how it has changed in recent years and the pressures on people in the public service and the level of scrutiny and all of that they seem to understand and as I said it was directly relevant to the work” (Interviewee No. 1).

Programme Content

In terms of the ELP content, it was agreed that the ELP touched on all the areas for personal development and reinforced the message of “reading your people, engage with them and leverage both your own and their capabilities” (Interviewee No. 5).

While it was accepted that theory is an important foundation for the programme, it was felt that many of the participants had already had exposure to a lot of the theory and would have preferred more of the applied aspect, such as the action learning sets, the learning buddies and group exercises (e.g., the chain, the organisation workshop, the simulations and the group discussion as these were more readily adaptable to the work context).

Secretary General and Assistant Secretary General Guest Speaker Inputs

The guest speakers were excellent in that they allowed the ELP participants to have a window into the work world of senior civil servants and the challenges these managers face. These talks provided a realistic preview into Sec Gen and A Sec roles and it was unanimously agreed that there should be more of these types of sessions. One recently promoted participant stated that: “I reflected on what they said when I was going

through the interview process for promotion” (Interviewee No. 6).

The value of understanding the importance of resilience was a key theme in the one to one interviews and was referred to in terms of the guest lecture inputs from the Sec Gens and A Secs (e.g., developing resilience in times of crisis). This learning resonated with many of the interviewees who believe that resilience is something that is part of a survival kit in the current environment of the modern-day civil service.

Overall Satisfaction with ELP and Key ELP Highlights: Themes from Focus Group Discussions

The following section addresses data that emerged from the focus groups with participants who completed the ELP regarding the key highlights of the ELP.

Off-site sessions and Roffey Park Facilitators

As with the one-to-one interviews, the focus groups endorsed Roffey Park as being one of the big highlights of the ELP, where the facilitators set the tone early on in the process that the programme was going to be a challenge from the start. “It was getting away from work and reflecting. That is the outstanding benefit of the programme. To focus on our leadership and just being able to reflect because in our day-to-day working lives, there is no time for reflection” (Focus Group 5). Additionally, it was commented that the Roffey Park team really understood the Irish civil service which made it much more meaningful for the participants compared to other leadership programmes they had attended. While there was strong agreement that being off-site and away was important, there were a number who felt that two days block release in the middle of Dáil term was not ideal as despite their best intentions “your mind is in two places” (Focus Group 3).

A number of the participants considered Roffey Park as a ‘safe place’, central in supporting changes in their behaviours where there was a lot of focus on empowering the participants to empower others. “Giving us the opportunity and helping us understand and to use your own control was very practical which came through in how I operate and behave day-to-day. Helping me with frustrating situations and helping me stand back and see things and not allow it to happen” (Focus Group 1).

Without exception participants valued the guest talks with Sec Gens who “demystified” this senior role very successfully. Some specific comments about the Sec Gen talks worth noting include:

“The Sec Gens were very honest and very real and very personal and for me it was reinvigorating to hear. All you can do is give it your best... this senior leadership level in Government talked about their experience and how they lurched from one crisis to another and that networks, collegiality and reaching out was key for them to get through it”.

“I actually feel it would be beneficial to have more of those testimonies talking to people who’ve done it recently.”

“It gave me that sense of ‘this is doable”.

Power of the Networks

There was a lot of positive discussion in the focus groups about the network benefit from the ELP. There was a collegiality to the whole programme that was influenced by the group work and supported by the learning buddies which helped cement relationships across and within departments. The groups were seen as generous, sharing and open. Participants agreed that there was an honesty and authenticity in the groups. “The participants were the real stars of the programme in terms of learning... you’re mixing with people who are going through the same challenges” (Focus Group 2) and it was agreed right across the focus groups that this

added to the total experience: “To have that network of support and to be able to tap into another department if there’s an issue and while Roffey Park was a fantastic environment and I took a lot of the learning with me, but it was the connections for me [that was the best]” (Focus Group 1).

The coaches believe that a big part of the success of the programme was down to the group dynamic describing the alumni as a powerful group. “There was an awareness of the huge power of relationships and community in the groups and people’s eyes seemed to be open wide at the experiences they were having within the group, it was like a light going on” (Coaches Focus Group). There was a suggestion across all of the focus groups that this dynamic should be tapped into more. The coaches recommended that some of the alumni would be suitable as internal group coaches.

Increased self-awareness

A theme right across the focus groups was that participants felt more confident in themselves and more self-aware. Much of this was put down to the group work, learning buddies and the coaching. The 360-feedback helped focus the minds of the participants on what they were doing right, the things they were not so good at and this gave them ideas of where they could start to make changes.

One of the coaches remarked that at PO level the practice of reflection is not cultivated, and the POs need to have an opportunity to think in a different way to take their awareness to another level which the ELP assisted them to do. Some powerful statements about self-awareness from across the focus groups include the following:

“I think differently after the programme and I’m certainly more self-aware and certainly, the coaching helped me to be more reflective.”

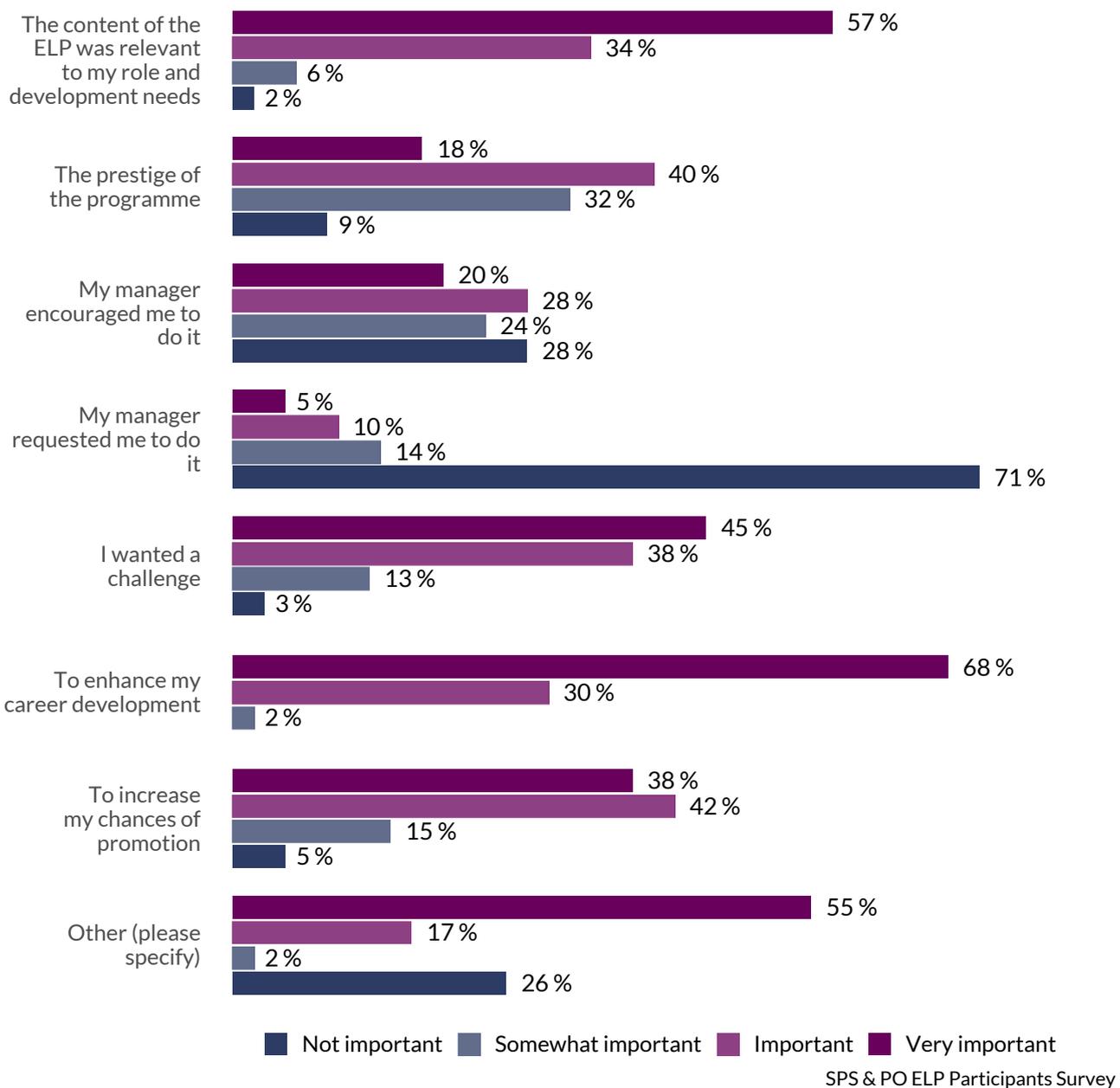
“Much more aware of your position, your staff, your actions, how you speak, the decisions, the way you communicate, all of these were much more deliberate, and I had better engagement in the organisation. Sometimes you can go back to old ways but there is a voice in my head that goes stop or I recognise it after the event, but I do recognise it. But it’s just a constant checking in your head of what you learnt and just to pause.”

“I think reflection and the heightened awareness and mindfulness of reflection... taking time for reflection...the nature of the job is that we need to make the time ourselves and I’m particularly good for making the time for reflection; we have to make the time”.

Motivations for Undertaking ELP

ELP participants were asked what were the most important factors in their decision to apply to do the ELP. As set out in Figure 4, the most important factor was to enhance their career development with 98% indicating that this was either very important or important in their decision to apply to do the ELP. The second most important factor was that the content of the ELP was relevant to their roles and development needs with 91% indicating that this was either very important or important in their decision to apply. Other very important or important reasons for applying to the programme including wanting the challenge (83%) and to increase their chances of promotion (80%).

Figure 4: Motivations for Undertaking ELP



Thirty three (33) respondents provided additional comments regarding why they applied to complete the SPS/PO ELP. The following are the most frequently cited themes regarding motivation to complete the ELP presented in rank order of most often cited (presenting additional themes not captured in Figure 4 above):

- To enhance networking opportunities with other colleagues across the civil service
- The opportunity to think differently and see role from other perspectives
- Recommended by others (either the Secretary General or colleagues)
- The opportunity to undertake targeted personal and professional development
- To enhance performance and leadership in current role
- To meet like-minded colleagues and discuss challenges faced at senior management level
- The ability to impact future leadership development programmes where participating on tranche 1 (pilot) iterations
- Desire to broaden perspective to potentially move from specialist function/career.

Feedback on ELP Programme Content, Learning Tools, Facilities and Facilitators

The current evaluation sought feedback from the ELP participants, line managers, coaches and external facilitators about the ELP content, learning tools, facilities and quality of the trainers. This section of the report sets out the key findings for these aspects of the ELP.

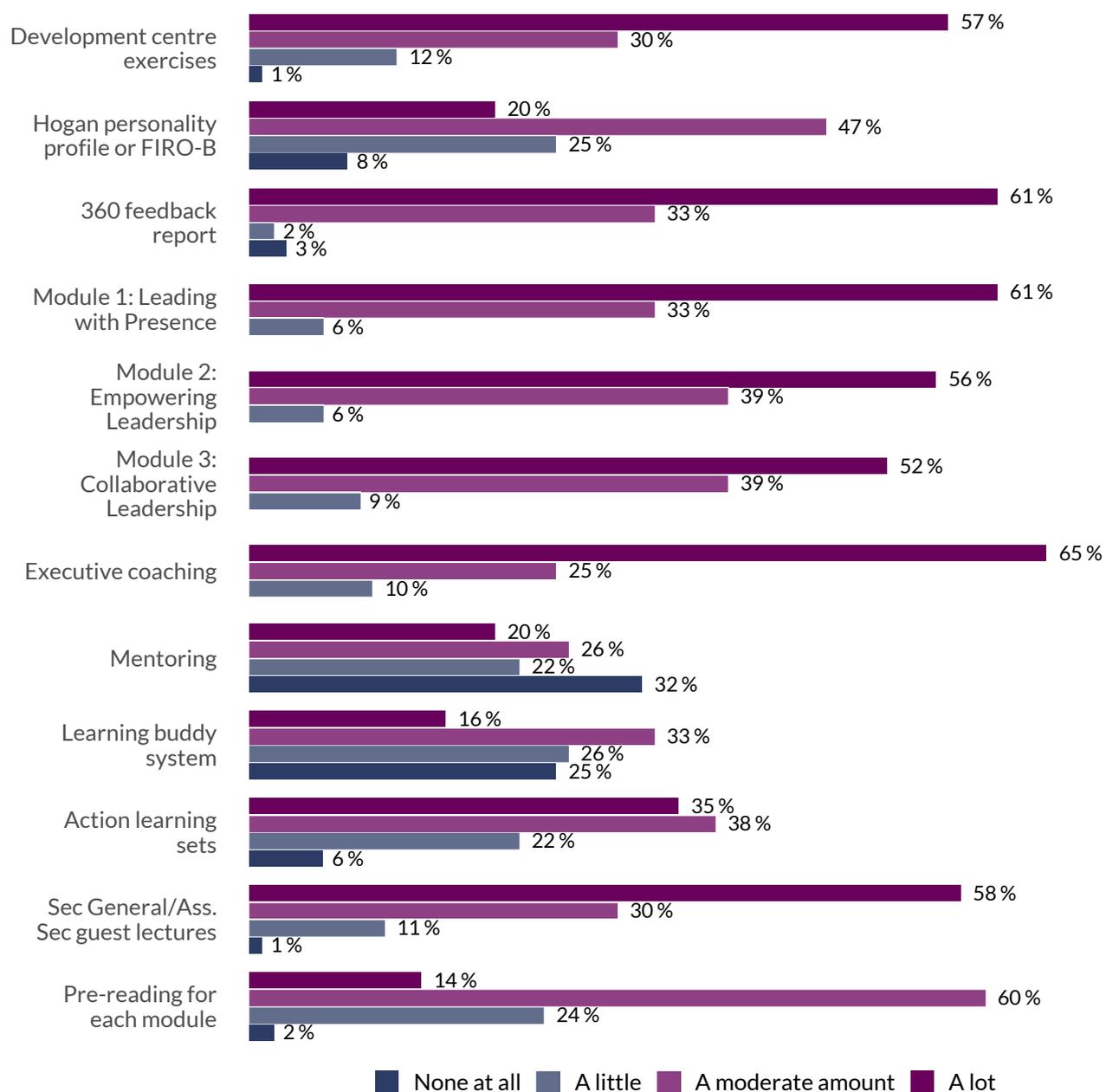
Feedback on ELP Programme Content, Learning Tools, Facilities & Facilitators: ELP Participants

ELP participants were asked to what extent the various ELP tools and content helped their learning and development during the programme. As set out in Figure 5, executive coaching, the modular content, 360 degree feedback, Sec General or A Sec guest lectures and the development centre were reported by the majority of participants to have helped their learning a lot.

Mentoring, the learning buddy system, pre-reading for each module, FIRO-B/Hogan personality profile and the action learning sets were not seen to be as important to participants' learning during the ELP relative to other aspects of the programme as displayed in Figure 5.

The mentoring and learning buddy system were reported to have no impact at all on respondents' learning by 32% (29 respondents) and 25% (22 respondents) respectively. However, the open questions revealed that some respondents have not yet commenced the mentoring.

Figure 5: Impact of ELP Tools and Content on Participants' Learning and Development



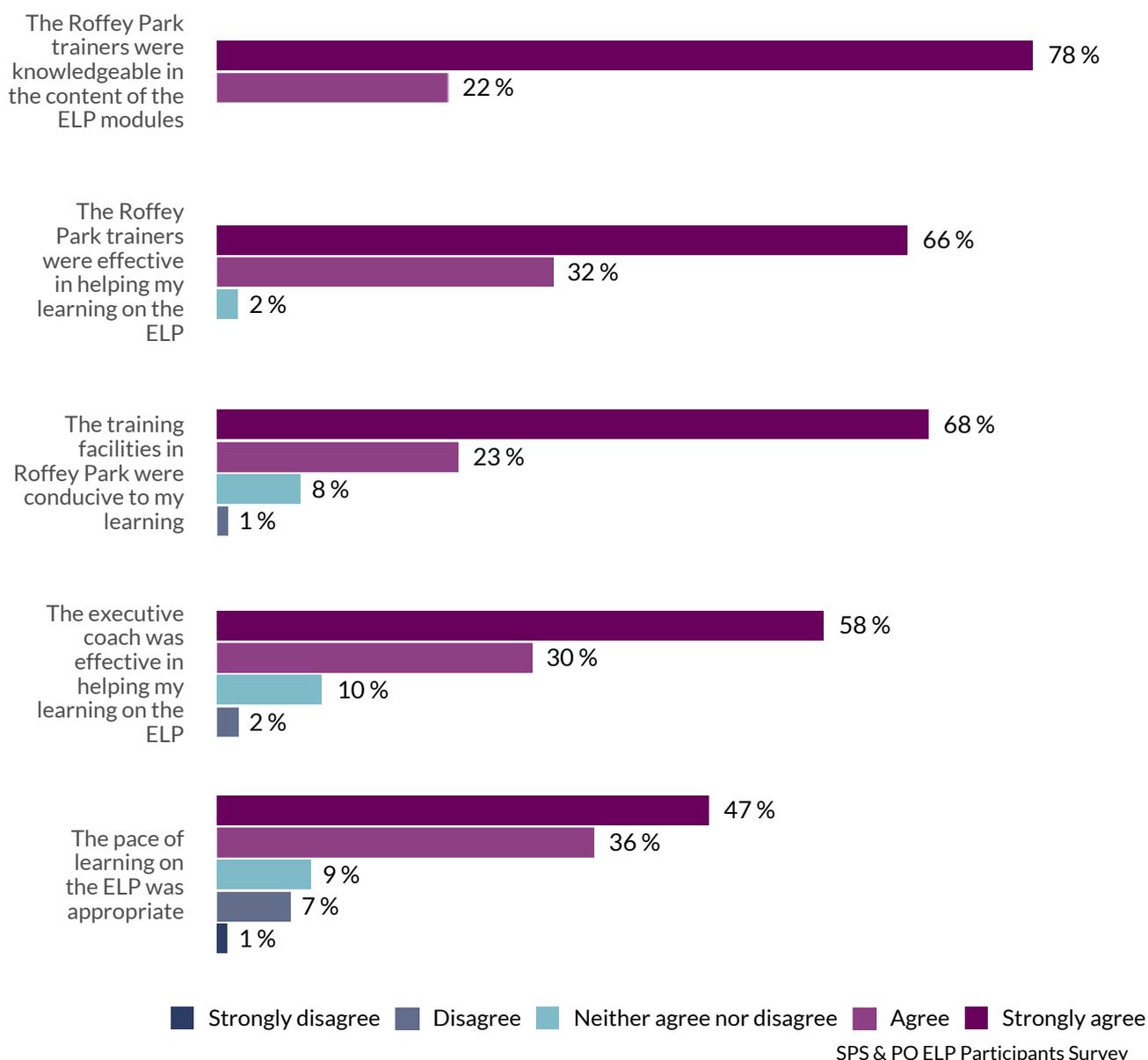
SPS & PO ELP Participants Survey

Participants were asked a number of questions regarding the external training provider for the ELP as well as the executive coaches and pace of learning overall on the ELP (see Figure 6).

The ELP participants were extremely positive about the external provider facilitating the ELP: all ELP participants (100%) either agreed or strongly agreed that the Roffey Park trainers were knowledgeable in the content of the ELP modules; 98% either agreed or strongly agreed that the Roffey Park trainers were effective in helping their learning on the ELP; and 91% either agreed or strongly agreed that the training facilities in Roffey Park were conducive to their learning.

Similar positive views were expressed regarding the executive coaches, with 88% of respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing that the executive coaching process was effective in helping their learning on the ELP. With regard to the pace of learning, 83% either agreed or strongly agreed that it was appropriate. In relation to the latter, the qualitative responses indicate that for the respondents indicating some discontent with the pace, they suggest the timeframe should be shortened which would assist with keeping the momentum. However, only 8% of respondents (7 respondents) had an issue with the pace of learning, and 9% (8 respondents) had a neutral stand regarding the pace of learning.

Figure 6: Satisfaction with External Training Provider, Executive Coaching and Pace of ELP



Participants were invited to provide additional comments regarding the ELP facilitators and facilities for both Dublin and the UK based modules in the survey and 47 responses were submitted. The following are the most commonly cited themes regarding training facilitators and facilities presented in rank order of most frequently cited (presenting additional themes not captured in Figure 6 above):

- The knowledge, effectiveness, interaction and seamless linkage between the Roffey Park facilitators and their knowledge of the civil service context was regarded as very strong
- The learning environment in Roffey Park and the benefit of the off-site residential nature of the delivery was conducive to learning
- There was some discontent with the training facilities in Dublin locations compared to Roffey Park whereby the standard of the facilities and catering was poorer in the Dublin venues
- A small number of respondents indicated possibly condensing the material and having a shorter duration programme
- A small number of respondents would have liked more clarity and information on the action learning sets and how to derive maximum benefit from them.

Coaching Process, Timing & Integration with ELP: Feedback from Focus Groups with ELP Participants & Coaches

There were mixed views on the coaching process and there was agreement across the focus groups that there was somewhat of a disconnect between the programme and the coaching as evidenced by the following sample quotes: “While I found it [the coaching] hugely helpful, I didn’t see alignment with the content of the course” and “[The coaching] felt very disconnected and it didn’t link into the programme itself. It was a total standalone unrelated coaching. There was no conversation about adding or supporting me on the programme. It could have done with an introductory session”.

Some believed that the timing of the coaching is important and that having a gap between the ELP modules and the coaching can be a positive. “In terms of the timing, it suited me to have it [the coaching] later. It’s really about what you want out of it yourself and I really used my coach to meet my needs and it would be more useful to have used the coach after the modules to help embed the learning”. And along the same line, another respondent stated: “I was glad to have the gap between the program and the coaching as it gave me time to reflect. So, I asked my coach to specifically focus on the elements that I needed to work on, and I don’t think I would have reflected as well based on the learnings without the coach”.

While the coaches saw themselves as external objective observers, they felt however that their role was hindered to some extent because they did not know the context of the learning or the instruments being used until well into the programme which they argued was too late. When their respective clients asked for clarity on issues e.g. FIRO-B feedback, some of the coaches felt they were not qualified to address the feedback. “We don’t need to know the content, we do need to know the context of where the material fits in” and they emphasised the importance of this information to help the transfer of learning.

It was agreed by some of the focus group participants and all of the coaches that the coaching should have been introduced earlier in the programme. Starting with a short meeting between the individuals and the coaches would have helped participants focus earlier on taking “ownership of their development” (Coaches Focus Group).

The coaches spoke a number of times about contracting prior to the programme as being critical for success. Moreover, they strongly argued that the nomination process for getting onto the ELP is critical and needs clarification as “there were different reasons for getting on the ELP; some have been told to go on it with different messages that were confusing in terms of was it for personal development or was it actually geared towards promotion?” (Coaches Focus Group). This was also highlighted by SPS Focus Group 3 who argued that “there needs to be a little more honesty with the people going on the course and why”. They believed that there were individuals on the course who should not have been there and that there were ‘polarities’ as a result. “Is this [ELP] about leadership or is it about leadership for the next level... certainly, at A Sec level they are there because they want to embrace the challenge and it definitely needs to be more challenging” (Focus Group 3).

The length of the coaching process was very compressed. As mentioned above, the coaches argued that they need to be involved earlier to meet the candidates before the programme commences and candidates should know that they are allowed to choose not to participate in the coaching if they do not wish to.

While the coaches found it difficult to gauge if there were changes in behaviour as a result of the ELP, they did refer to participants being more open and enjoying a willingness to reflect more in terms of “how could I have done that differently with an emphasis on improving themselves and how they lead”.

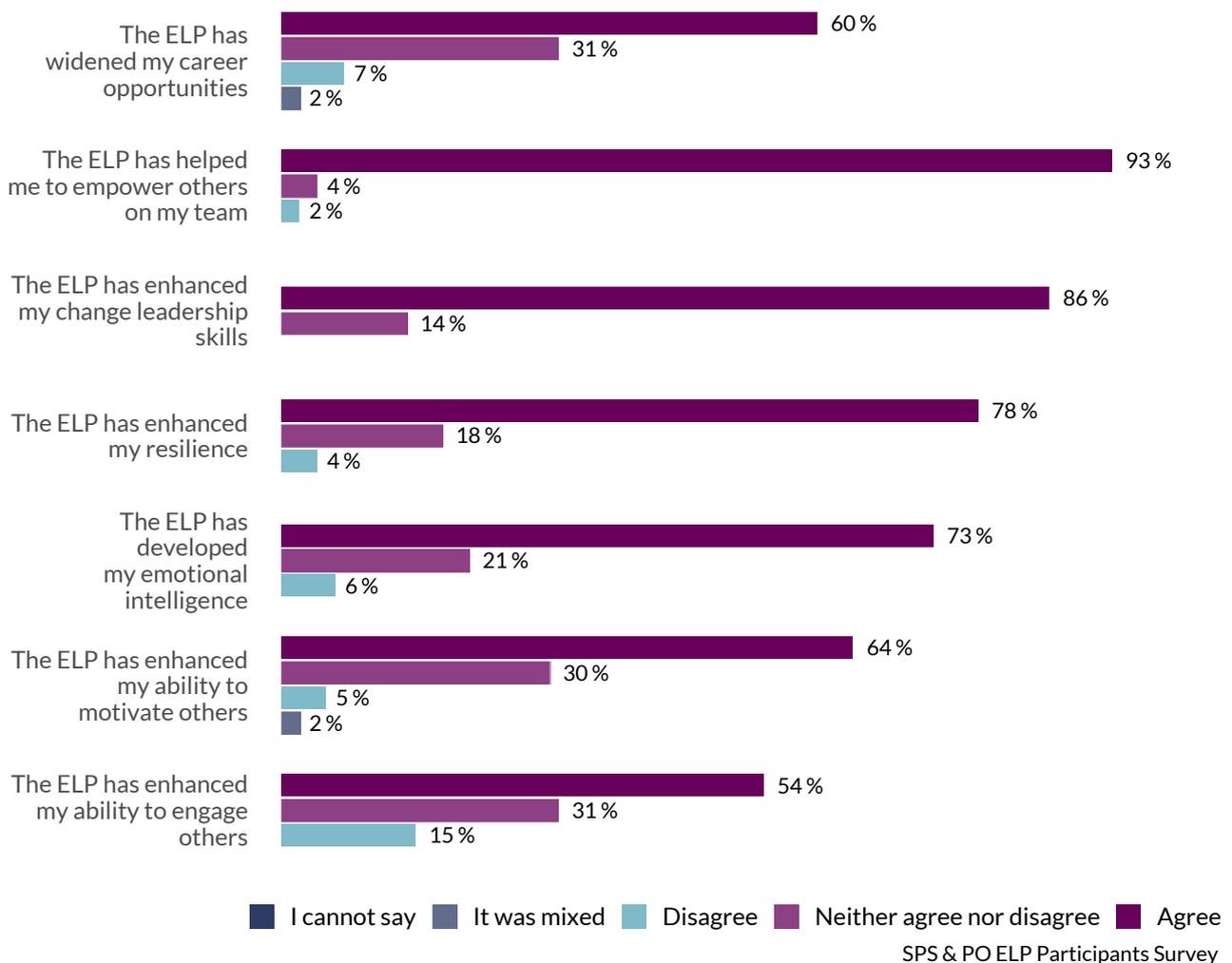
Impact of ELP on Leadership Capability and Skill

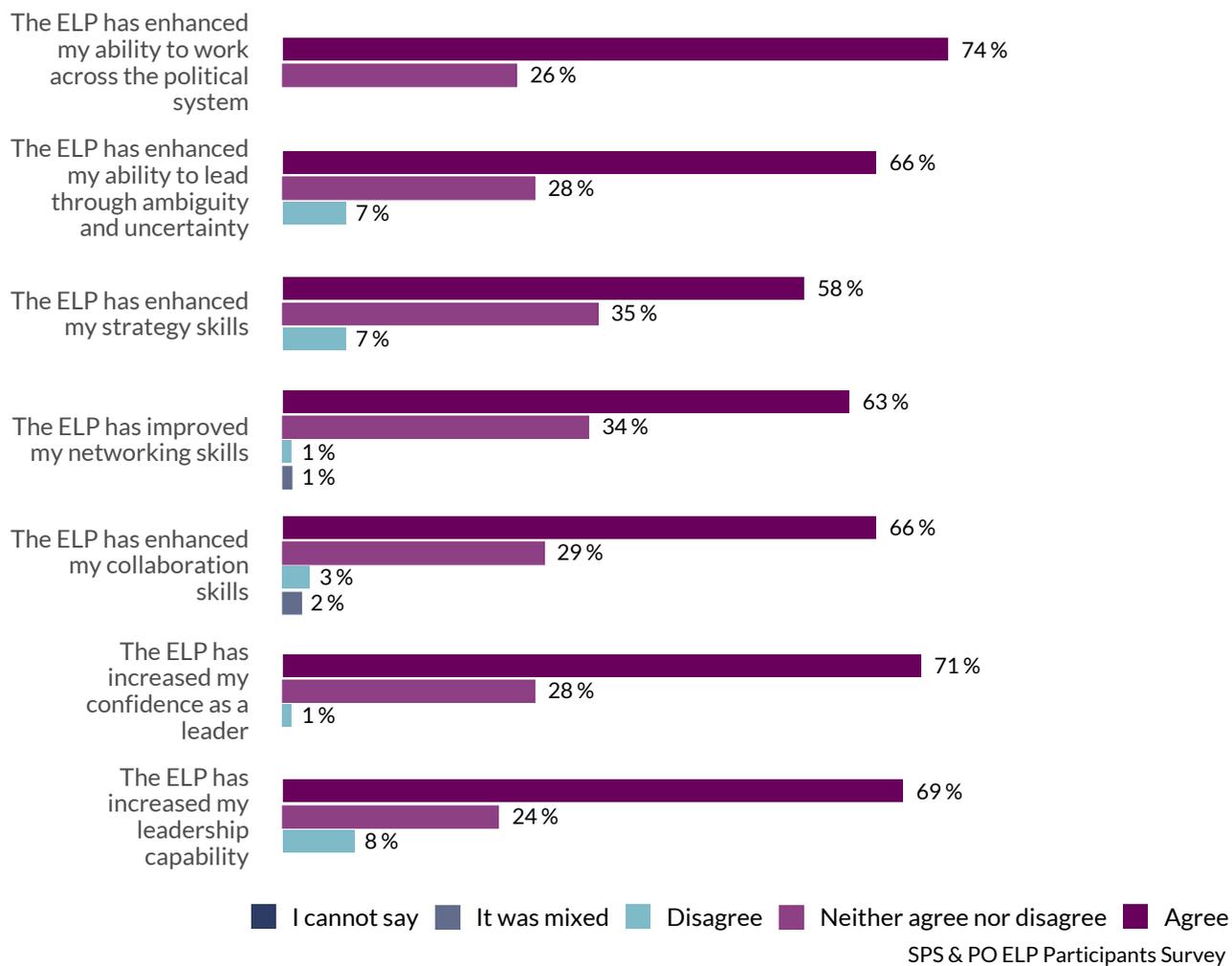
The following section discusses the impact the ELP has on the leadership capability and skills of the participants. This addresses level 3 learning, behavioural changes, in Kirkpatrick's training evaluation model. The impact ELP has on participants' leadership behaviour is examined through several data sources: participants' responses to the survey; line managers' responses to the survey, interviews and focus groups with ELP participants.

Impact of ELP on Leadership Capability and Skill: ELP Participants

As set out in Figure 7, overall, respondents perceived that the ELP had a positive impact on their leadership capabilities. Specifically, 93% of respondents agreed that the ELP helped them to empower others in their team, 86% agreed with the statement that the ELP has enhanced their change leadership skills, 78% of respondents agreed that the ELP has enhanced their resilience; 74% respondents agreed that the ELP has enhanced their ability to work across the political system; 73% believe that the ELP has enhanced their emotional intelligence, and 71% believe the ELP has enhanced their confidence as a leader.

Figure 7: ELP Programme impact on Leadership Capabilities (continued overleaf)





ELP participants were asked which aspects of the ELP were most beneficial for developing their leadership capability and 69 participants provided responses to this question. The responses are presented in three main categories in Table 6 with the key themes presented under each category in rank order by the most frequently cited theme.

Table 6: Most beneficial element of the ELP for developing leadership capability

ELP CONTENT AND MODULES	ELP LEARNING APPROACH AND TOOLS	PEER-TO-PEER AND NETWORK LEARNING
Self-awareness tools and development centre outputs	One-to-one coaching	Cross-departmental work and network building
Learning about up-to-date leadership theory and thinking	Action learning sets	Working with like-minded peers and peer-to-peer learning
Leadership style development and how to empower others	360 feedback	Secretary General and Assistant Secretary General inputs and insights
Enhanced self-confidence	The holistic approach to the programme	
Enhanced resilience	Organisational workshop	
	Challenge from facilitators to think and behave differently	

ELP participants were asked which aspects of the ELP were least beneficial for developing their leadership capability and why and 45 participants provided responses to this question. The responses are presented in Table 7 in three main categories with the key themes presented under each category in rank order by the most frequently cited theme.

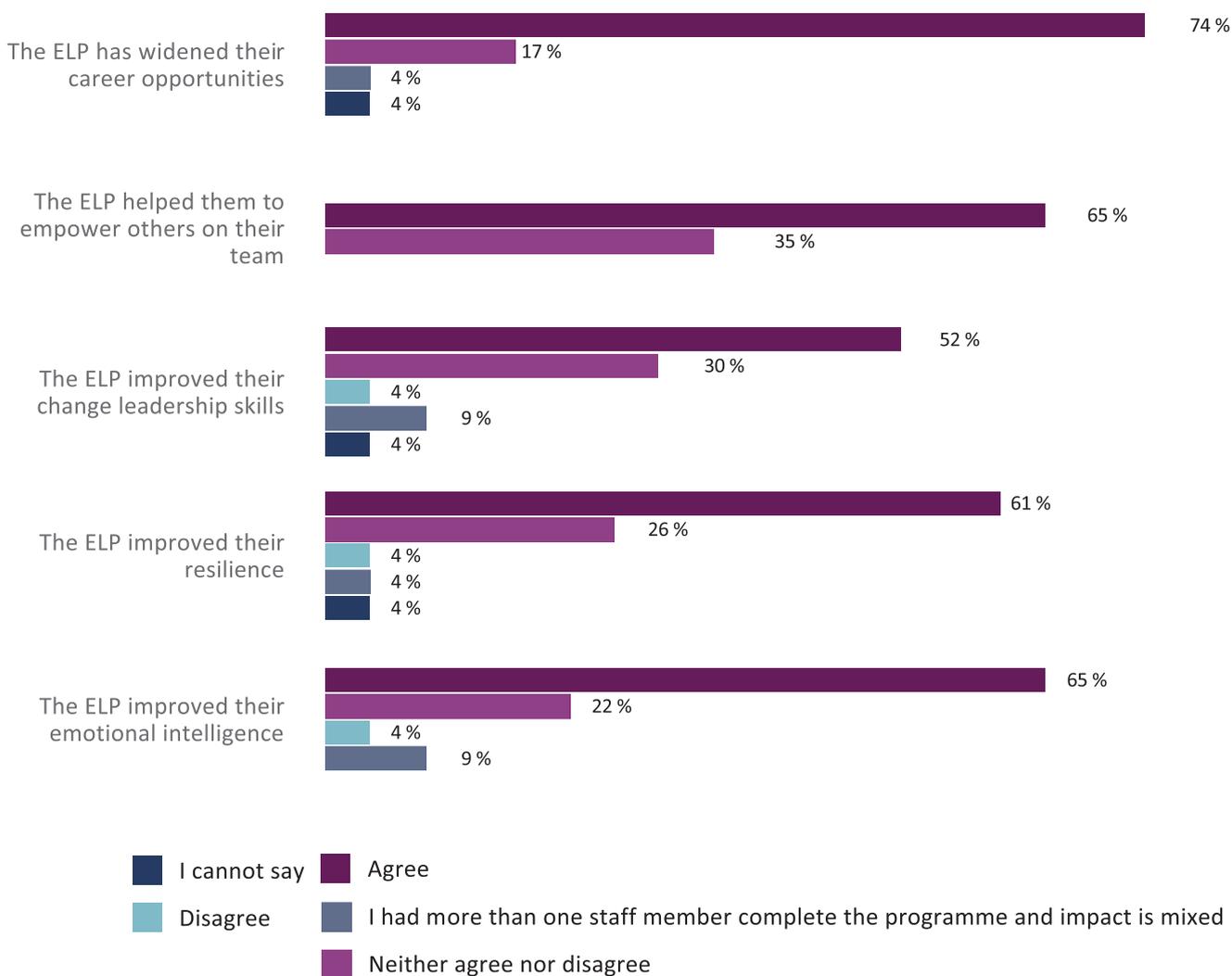
Table 7: Least beneficial element of the ELP for developing leadership capability

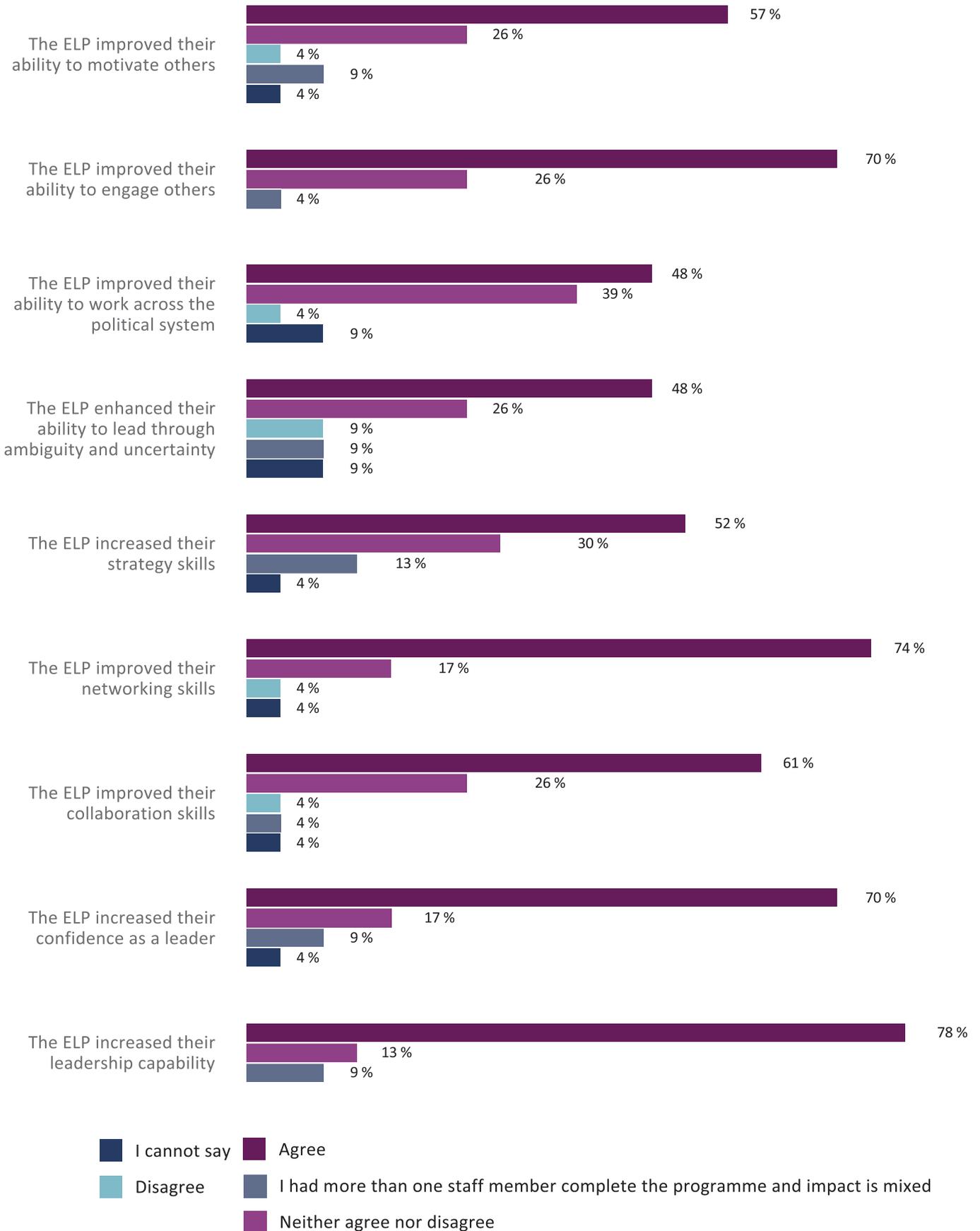
ELP CONTENT AND MODULES	ELP LEARNING APPROACH AND TOOLS
Some of the individual exercises and role plays	FIRO-B instrument
	Action learning sets (needed more focus and structure)
Link between theory and practice and relevance of theory	Some repetition towards end
	Organisational workshop
Extensive experience in some particular areas (e.g. project management and working cross-departmentally) so learning not as high at a personal level	Mentor: lack of fit and understanding of challenges of the role
	Coaching: lack of chemistry and fit between participant and coach

Impact of ELP on Leadership Capability and Skill: Line Manager Perspectives

Line managers were positive about the impact of the ELP on their staff's leadership capability and skills (see Figure 8). They agreed that the ELP helped their staff increase their leadership capability (78%), that the ELP widened their staff's career opportunities (74%), that the ELP improved their staff's networking skills (74%), that the ELP helped their staff to engage better with others (70%), and that the ELP increased their staff's strategy skills (70%). The two areas where the impact of the ELP is perceived to be less strong is on the participants' ability to work across political systems, and the impact ELP has on their ability to lead through ambiguity and uncertainty (48% agreed that the ELP had a positive impact).

Figure 8: Line Managers' Perception of the Impact of the ELP (continued overleaf)





Line Managers Survey

The line managers were asked to provide examples of changes they have seen in their staff member's leadership behaviour which they would ascribe to the SPS or PO ELP. Eighteen line managers provided a response to this question and the following are the main themes presented in rank order of most often cited:

- Enhanced self-reflection, self-awareness and openness to feedback
- Better team management, motivation and staff development among their team
- Greater emotional intelligence, better communications and greater understanding of impact on others
- Better at managing relationships with multiple stakeholders including those outside the Department and senior management
- Enhanced self-confidence
- More focused career progression plans.
- One line manager indicated that while s/he saw some positive changes in behaviour, there was not necessarily a change in outcomes.

Impact of ELP on Leadership Capability and Skill: Themes that Emerged from Interviews and Focus Groups

Many of those interviewed reflected that the key takeaways from the ELP involved personal development in terms of increased self-confidence, increased self-awareness, and improved listening skills. These positive benefits have impacted on their relationships with other people and how they approach people-related challenges. The ELP facilitated a process of change where participants felt more at ease delegating and empowering their teams and the 360-degree feedback was viewed as a base on which to start the process supported by the coaching.

The interviewees who were promoted since completing the ELP believe that while they were always capable of getting promotion, they reflected that the course helped them think more about their career and gave them the confidence to apply for the next level. Interviewee No. 1 felt more confidence in himself as he compared himself to other participants in his group stating that the *"ELP opened my eyes and I have a wider sense of where I am within the wider community of the ELP participants"*.

Others referred to the impact of the ELP on how they communicate with others. *"The feedback was that I need to win the 'heart and mind' of the individual. This was a big turning point for me and understanding the importance of listening and understanding where the other person is coming from"* (Interviewee No. 5) and *"The ELP got me thinking more about ME and my work style and it helped increase my self-awareness and reflecting on my relationships with other people. Previously, I did everything myself and delegated little"* (Interviewee No. 6). *"The course made me really think about impact I have as a leader and standing back"* (Interviewee No. 7).

Many others discussed how they now empower and delegate more to their team since completing the ELP. For example, *"I delegate and push downward now, and the lower levels welcome this opportunity and they are getting promoted which makes me feel fabulous."* (Interviewee No. 2) and *"I would have said that I was great at empowering others [before the ELP], but I was very directional in terms of the solutions... now in terms of the directional piece, I have grown, and I have changed that"* (Interviewee No 4). Another remarked that *"taking the time to understand people better has helped me to trust people more and I have pushed out the work rather than wanting to be in the driving seat myself as I had previously inclined"* (Focus Group 2).

Focus Group 5 reflected that POs or heads of function are in those roles because of a very strong track record, competency, capability and commitment. But when the next step up is about *"spinning 100 plates and being*

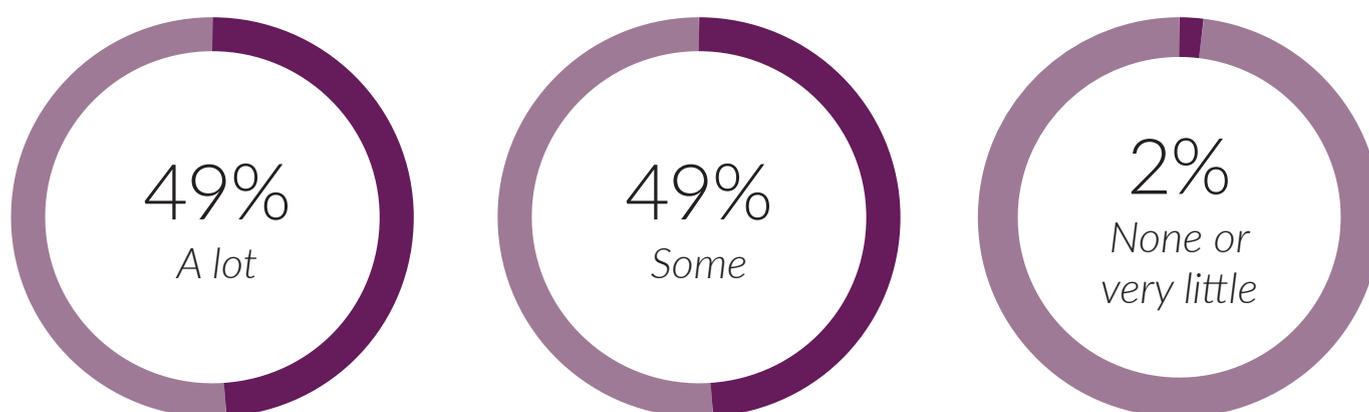
comfortable spinning 100 plates and being less detail oriented” then there is a need to empower and delegate with trust. “Sometimes from a control point of view, do we still stay on the pitch instead of getting off?” Prior to ELP many of the participants had issues with letting go and trusting their people to do a good job. With the support of the coaches, these participants are letting go and it was seen as having a positive effect on work-life balance. The following quote is reflective of the change in mind-set to trust the team more: “Realising yourself that [your team] are not asking you to micromanage them, or to do their job for them. Sometimes we can think that it would be great if we could step in, but what they are actually looking for from us is the horizon scanning piece”.

Transfer of ELP Learning & Impact on Leadership Behaviour and Performance

Transfer of ELP Learning & Impact on Leadership Behaviour and Performance: ELP Participants

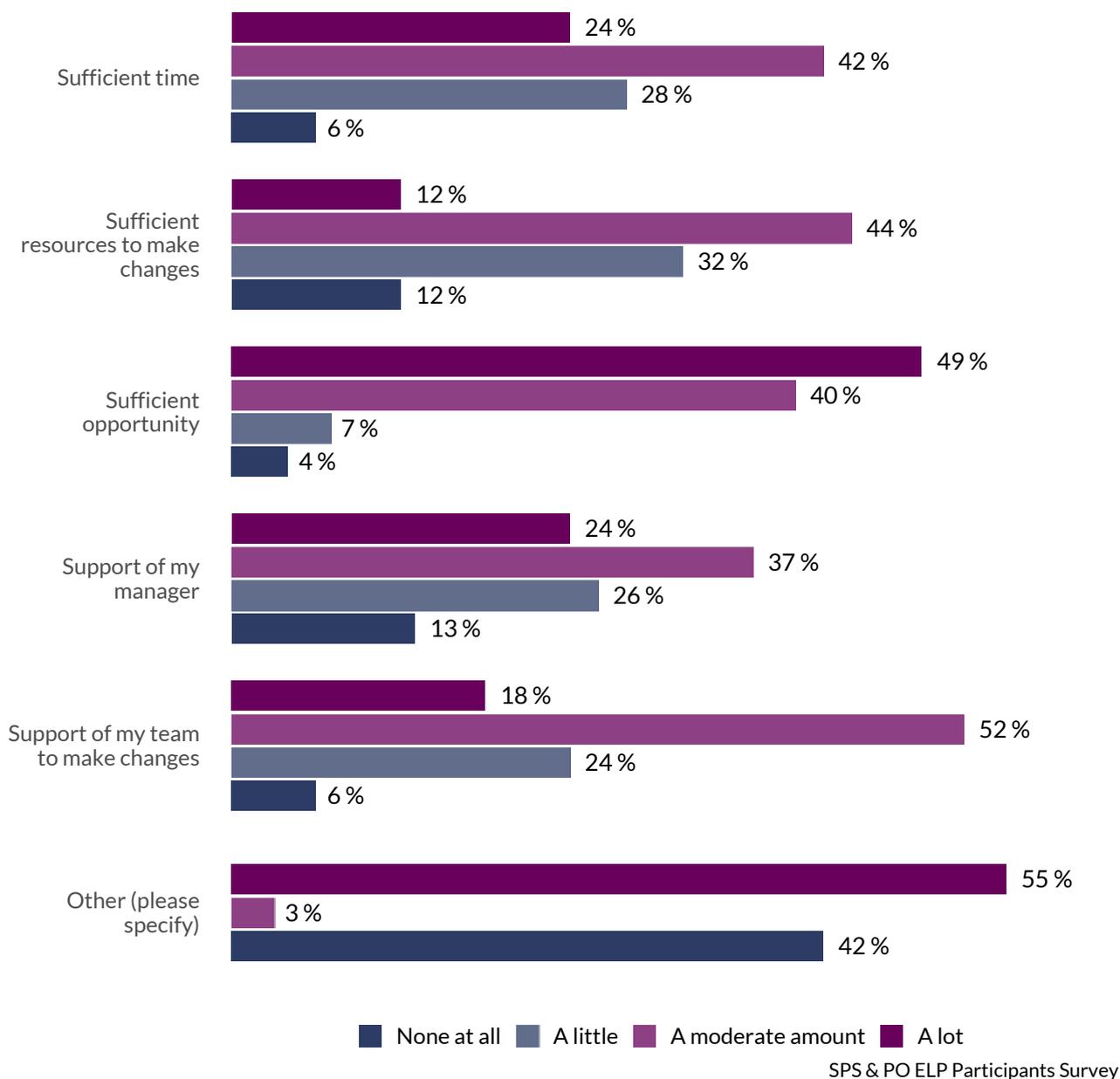
The vast majority of ELP participants judged that they were able to transfer a lot (49%) or some (49%) of their learning on the ELP programme to their work (see Figure 9). Only 2% (2 respondents) perceived that they were not able to transfer their learning from the ELP programme to their work.

Figure 9: Transfer of Learning from ELP to Work



The most important elements which supported the transfer of learning a lot or to some extent were: sufficient opportunity (89%); support from their team to make changes (70%); sufficient time (66%); and support from their manager (61%) (Figure 10).

Figure 10: Elements supporting the Transfer of Learning from the ELP to Work



In addition to the factors listed in Figure 10, the following were the factors that respondents commented on when asked if other factors assisted them to transfer learning from the ELP to their work presented in rank order starting with the most frequently cited theme:

- Change in personal mind set, perception and own approach to work following the programme
- New roles and projects which enabled transfer of learning to take place
- Increased motivation gained from the programme to make change and inspiration from others on the programme

Seventy seven (77) respondents provided an answer to the open-ended question asking them how they transferred learning from the ELP to work and what changes they have made since participating in the ELP. The responses can be classified into three key themes and Table 8 presents the key findings in rank order starting with the most frequently cited theme within each category.

Table 8: ELP Learning Transfer and Changes Made Since Completing ELP

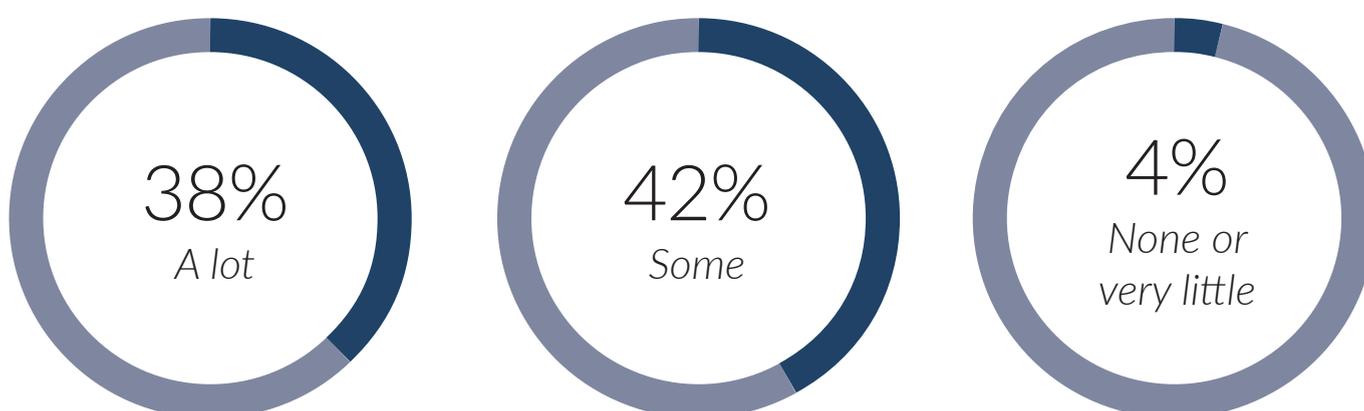
INTRA-PERSONAL AND SELF-MANAGEMENT	INTERPERSONAL, TEAM AND LEADERSHIP STYLE	MANAGEMENT OF WORK AND STRATEGIC APPROACH
Greater self-awareness of strengths, development needs and impact on others	Greater empowerment of others through better and more delegation	More proactive and more strategic in mind set and planning
Increased confidence in personal approach and leadership style	More collaborative team working approach	
Greater understanding of the importance of leading with presence and how to do so	Focusing more on opportunities for collaboration and building and drawing on networks	Better meeting management
Increased resilience	Adjustment in leadership style to be more effective	Better deployment of the team to achieve objectives
Better management of working hours, work-life balance and stress management	Better listening skills	More diverse approach to the management of deliverables
Developed skills areas in need of development	Better relationship management with team and others	
Enhanced understanding of the importance of emotional intelligence	More use of coaching as a leadership style	

There was only one response to the question asking what prevented the participant from transferring the learning indicating a lack of relevance and a lack of time.

Transfer of ELP Learning & Impact on Leadership Behaviour and Performance: Line Manager Perspectives

Line managers were asked to what extent their staff member transferred learning from the SPS or PO ELP to their work. As set out in Figure 11, 42% of line managers consider that their staff were able to transfer some of the learning from the ELP programme to the workplace and 38% stated that their staff were able to transfer a lot. Only 4% (1 respondent) of line managers responding to the survey observed none or very little transfer of learning. Four line managers (16%) did not answer the question.

Figure 11: Line manager perceptions of transfer of learning



Transfer of ELP Learning & Impact on Leadership Behaviour and Performance: Insights from Interviews and Focus Groups

Elements of the programme that emerged from the interviews as key to the transfer of learning included the coaching, reflection, peer support and networking.

Hands-on exercises and role plays

The hands-on exercises at Roffey Park and the role-play were highly praised and seen as being sophisticated and impactful: “You were participating as opposed to listening or talking” (Focus Group 3). Many felt that the group engagement inspired them with great confidence, despite making a number of the participants feel very ‘raw’ as sensitive issues were discussed making participants feel somewhat “laid bare and exposed” but in a constructive way that was helpful (Focus Groups 1 & 2). “We did a complicated exercise about different roles you can play in a meeting. And that was very complex and very intense but the experience stays with you” (Focus Group 3). Role-play exercises that were specifically mentioned in a very positive light were the “Communication Chain”, the “Taxi” and the “Factory.”

It was commented on by Focus Group 3 that once you’re back in the office with all the pressure structures, it was challenging to adopt the learnings. “I have to take responsibility myself as well but it’s the ‘machine’ you go back to in all its dimensions of work and meetings and pressures and hundreds of emails”.

Coaching and reflection supporting changes in behaviour

Overall, there was positive feedback about the coaches and the coaching experiences of the participants to assist with learning transfer. “The coach helped me really focus on changing my behaviour and I found that really worked well and while it is still a work in progress, I have seen improvements, and this is as a direct result from the course” (Interviewee No. 5). Some referred to the coaching process as almost like therapy “it was profound and cathartic... helping me to be more sure-footed about my career” (Interviewee No. 2). One of the key messages that emerged from the data was that the coaching process facilitated powerful reflection and self-awareness. “Through the reflective journal, I have reflected on the commitment I made to myself to get the best out of the programme” (Interviewee No. 4). Participants understood that the coaching was to be an evolving process and they used the 360 feedback as the basis from which to reflect and plan changes in their soft skills and behaviours. “I made a point to work on the 360 and I made it clear to my team and I took the points they made about taking on too much myself” (Interviewee No. 6). The coaching was very much seen as having an applied approach taking the participants to the next level (Interviewee No. 8). At a more senior level, it was felt that for those individuals who are fast tracking up the civil service career ladder, that the coaching in its current form was not challenging enough. To make the coaching more challenging, it was proposed to more clearly align the coaching with the content of the course and what the participants want out of the programme (Focus Group 1).

Peer Support and Networking

A number of key themes were prevalent when participants discussed how the ELP helped them transfer learning including the small group discussions, shared experiences, collaboration with the learning buddies and the collective network. There was a general feeling of trust, being supported and supporting each other in a constructive atmosphere, which allowed for honesty, openness and confidential discussion. The peer-to-

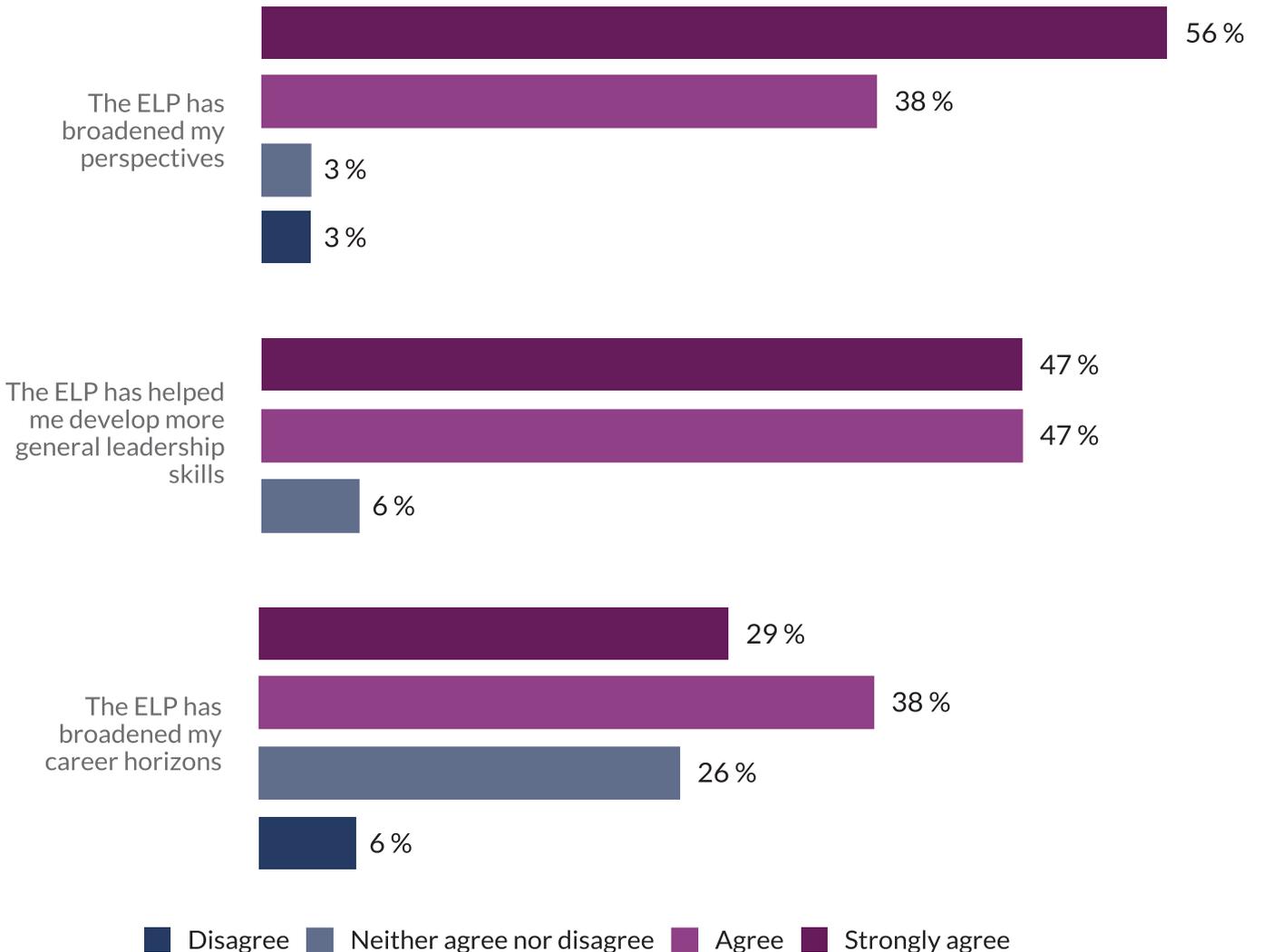
peer elements stand out in terms of the open discussions with colleagues and particularly those from across different departments which added to the richness of the experience and learning. “The group dynamic on the course was a big help in identifying our own failings and supporting positive improvements. The feedback to each other helped me to be more comfortable with making changes, I valued the encouragement and the group’s willingness to be more open” (Interviewee No. 6).

As mentioned, the quality of the material was well targeted and much of the feedback talked about the benefit of the role-play exercises and their applicability in terms of transfer of learning and the role of the learning buddies which fed into the development of informal networks. Participants tapped into these informal networks on an ad hoc basis, with some being more active through organising follow-up events. There is an appetite to develop these informal network events to something more structured, however, it was agreed that to sustain this would possibly require more formal input from the civil service.

Impact on ELP for Highly Specialised/Functional Leaders

One of the objectives of the ELP programme is to broaden perspectives especially for those in highly specialised roles and Figure 12 sets out the findings in this area. Thirty-nine percent (39%) of respondents were in a highly specialised role or function when they started the ELP programme. Of those, 94% either agreed or strongly agreed that ELP has broadened their perspectives, 94% either agreed or strongly agreed that ELP has helped them develop more general leadership skills; and 67% either agreed or strongly agreed that the ELP has broadened their career horizons.

Figure 12: Impact of ELP on Participants in Specialized Roles or Functions



Impact of ELP on Careers & Future Senior Leadership Ambitions

A key objective of the ELP is to help prepare managers for future senior leadership positions. Participants and line managers were asked how the ELP assisted them in their promotion plans and ambitions as well as mobility and this section sets out the findings for these questions.

Impact of ELP on Promotion & Promotion Ambitions: ELP Participants

As set out in Figure 13, of the 85 respondents who answered the question, 14 (16%) ELP respondents indicated that they applied for promotion since doing the ELP and were successfully promoted; 33 (39%) indicated that they applied for promotion but were unsuccessful; 5 (6%) indicated that they have applied for promotion since doing the ELP and that the competition is still ongoing; and 33 (39%) indicated that they did not apply for promotion since the ELP. A small number of respondents (3 respondents) did not answer this question.

Figure 13: Impact of ELP on Promotion



Applied for Promotion and Successful

As set out in Table 9, of the 14 respondents who applied for promotion and were successful, 12 indicated that the ELP either helped them to some extent (36%) or helped them a lot (50%) to attain their promotion. These 12 respondents provided additional insights by answering how the ELP helped them attain their promotion.

The following are the key themes presented in the order of the most frequently cited theme:

- Better awareness of personal strengths and leadership style and relevance to next level up
- Encouragement and confidence to apply for promotion

- Better self-reflection and self-critical analysis of key strengths and leadership capabilities and alignment with level up role requirements.

Table 9: Successfully applied for promotion and ELP assistance in transition to new role

TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU BELIEVE PARTICIPATING IN THE ELP HELPED YOU ATTAIN YOUR PROMOTION?	COUNT (%)	DID COMPLETING THE ELP HELP YOU TRANSITION TO THE NEW ROLE FOLLOWING PROMOTION?	COUNT (%)
A lot	7 (50%)	Yes	12 (100%)
To some extent	5 (36%)	No	0
None	2 (14%)		

Of the 14 respondents (16%) who applied for promotion and were successful, 12 (86%) respondents indicated that the ELP helped them transition to the new role and provided answers to the open-ended question asking how the ELP helped them to transition into their new role. The following are the key themes presented in order of the most frequently cited theme:

- Know how to build new team through empowerment and networking
- More adaptable to respond to new situation and challenges and being more strategic
- Enhanced self-awareness of leadership impact and resilience

Two respondents (14%) indicated that the ELP did not help them attain their promotion and that the ELP did not help them in transitioning into the new role. One respondent indicated that the effective transitioning to the new role was due to organisational factors and not the ELP and the second respondent indicated that the ELP was poorly conceived and rushed.

Applied for Promotion but Not Successful

Of the 33 respondents (39%) who indicated that they applied for promotion but were not successful, 25 (76%) indicated that the ELP influenced them to apply for promotion. Of these 25 respondents, 52% (17 respondents) perceived that the ELP influenced them to some extent, while 24% (8 respondents) judged that it influenced them a lot (see Table 10). Of these 25, 22 provided an answer to the question asking them how participating in the ELP influenced their decision to apply for promotion. The following are the key themes to emerge presented in order of the most frequently cited theme:

- Increased confidence to step up and/or to reapply if unsuccessful in previous competitions
- Better prepared to step up to the next level
- Confirmation of capacity to step up and be more strategic

Table 10: Applied for promotion but not successful

TO WHAT EXTENT DID THE ELP INFLUENCE YOU TO APPLY FOR PROMOTION?	COUNT (%)
A lot	8 (24%)
To some extent	17 (52%)
None	8 (24%)

Of the 33 respondents who indicated that they applied for promotion but were not successful, 8 (24%) indicated that the ELP had no influence in their decision to apply. Of these, 7 provided an answer to the question asking them why the ELP did not influence their decision to apply for promotion. The key theme to emerge was that participants would have applied for promotion regardless of the ELP or had already applied during the early stages of the ELP.

Applied for Promotion and Competition Ongoing

Of the 5 respondents (6%) who indicated that they applied for promotion and the competition is still ongoing, 4 (80%) indicated that the ELP influenced them to apply. The respondents indicated that the ELP influenced them either to some extent (40%, 2 respondents) or a lot (40%, 2 respondents). One respondent (20%) indicated that the ELP did not influence his/her decision to apply (see Table 11).

The four respondents who indicated that the ELP helped them apply to the competition that is still ongoing, answered the question asking them how participating in the ELP influenced their decision to apply for promotion. The following are the key themes to emerge presented in order of the most frequently cited theme:

- Increased confidence to apply
- ELP gave opportunity to think about the challenge of stepping up.

The one person who indicated that the ELP did not influence his/her decision to apply for promotion indicated that he would have applied for promotion regardless of the ELP.

Table 11: Applied for promotion and competition on-going

TO WHAT EXTENT DID THE ELP INFLUENCE YOU TO APPLY FOR PROMOTION?	COUNT (%)
<i>A lot</i>	2 (40%)
<i>To some extent</i>	2 (40%)
<i>None</i>	1 (20%)

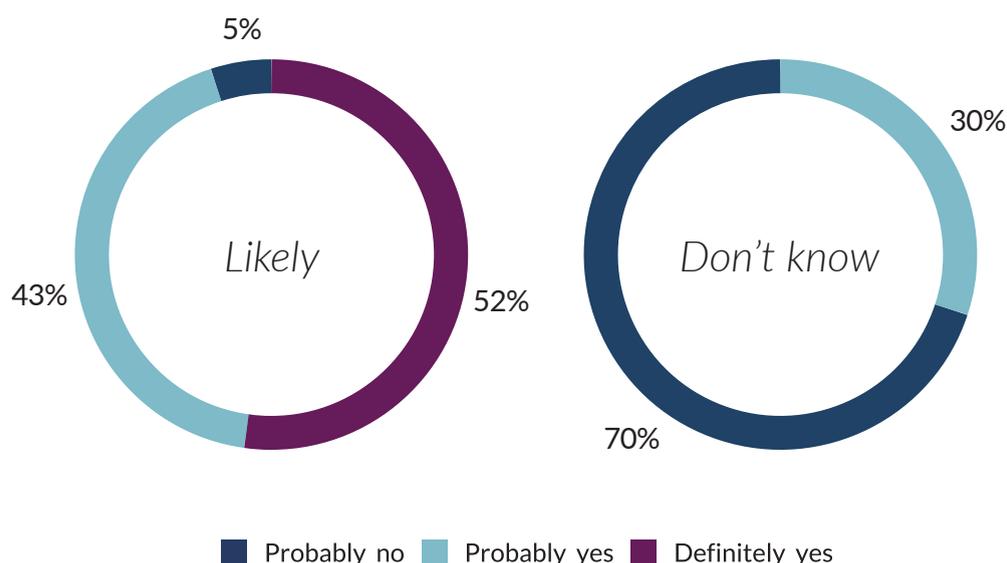
Not Yet Applied for Promotion

As set out in Table 12, of the 33 respondents (39%) who indicated that they have not applied for promotion since completing the ELP, 21 (63%) are likely to apply for promotion in the near future, 10 (30%) do not know yet, one (3%) is already at Sec Gen or equivalent and one (3%) did not answer the question.

Table 12: Promotion plans and ELP impact on promotion plans

HOW LIKELY ARE YOU TO APPLY FOR PROMOTION IN THE NEAR FUTURE	COUNT (%)	HAS COMPLETING THE ELP IMPACTED YOUR PLANS FOR APPLYING FOR PROMOTION	COUNT (%)
<i>Likely</i>	21 (63%)	<i>Definitively yes</i>	11 (52%)
		<i>Probably yes</i>	9 (43%)
		<i>Probably no</i>	1 (5%)
<i>Don't know</i>	10 (30%)	<i>Probably yes</i>	3 (30%)
		<i>Probably no</i>	7 (70%)
<i>Not relevant (already at Sec Gen or equivalent level)</i>	1 (3%)		

Figure 14: Impact of ELP on Applying for Promotion in the Near Future (SPS & PO ELP Participants Survey)



Of those 21 who are likely to apply for promotion, as set out in Figure 14, 20 respondents (95%) indicated that the ELP has had a positive impact on their plans for applying for promotion. They responded that the ELP either definitely (52%, 11 respondents) or probably (43%, 9 respondents) impacted their plans for applying for promotion in the future with one respondent indicating that the ELP has probably not impacted their plans to apply for promotion.

All 33 respondents who have not yet applied for promotion provided an answer to the question asking them how the ELP is influencing their plans to apply for promotion in the future. The following are the key themes to emerge presented in order of the most frequently cited theme:

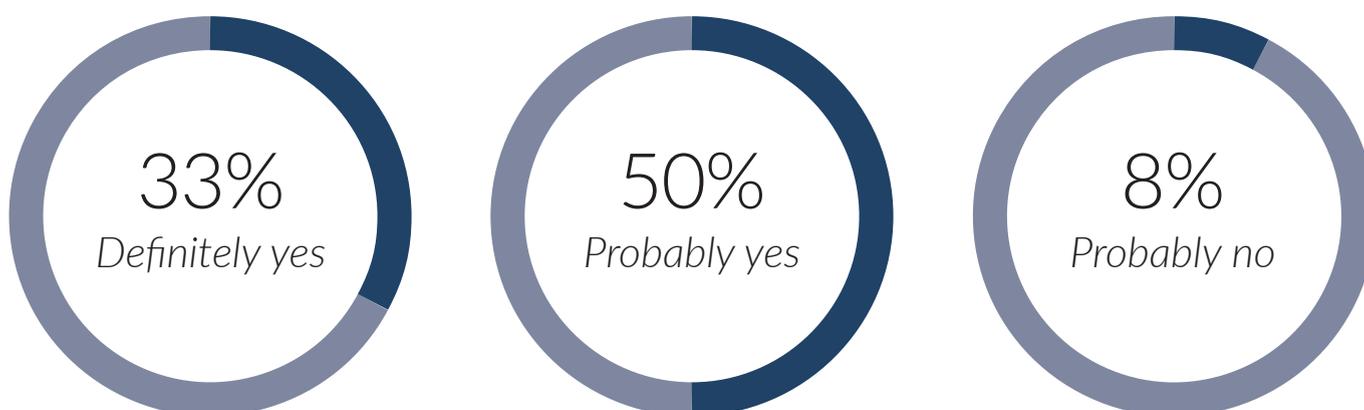
- More informed decision making including analysing the costs and benefits of applying for promotion
- Confidence and belief in the ability to perform at a higher level
- Greater understanding of the role at the next level up and plans on how to develop to achieve same
- Greater focus on the type of role to apply for including other opportunities at a broader level.

Of the 10 respondents who indicated that they have not applied for promotion since completing the ELP and do not know if they will be applying in the near future, 7 (70%) indicated that the ELP has not impacted their plans for applying for promotion in the future (see Figure 14). Of these, 5 provided an answer to the question asking them why the ELP is not influencing their plans to apply for promotion in the future. Respondents indicated that the ELP has not changed their promotion plans and views with one participant indicating that the focus for him/her was on becoming more effective in the current role and so promotion was not a key objective.

Impact of ELP on Promotion & Promotion Ambitions: Line Manager Perspectives

Line managers believe that completing the ELP has definitely (33%, 8 respondents) or probably (50%, 12 respondents) helped their staff member's promotion prospects (see Figure 15). Only 8% (2 respondents) believe that the ELP programme will probably not have a positive impact on their staff's promotion prospects. Two managers did not answer the question.

Figure 15: Impact of ELP on Promotion – Line Manager Perspectives



Impact of ELP on Promotion & Promotion Ambitions: Interviews

Interviewees were asked about the impact of the ELP on their promotion application (if they applied for promotion already) or promotion ambitions. Regardless of whether those interviewed were promoted or not, all interviewees indicated that the ELP has impacted their career plans. For many, the ELP gave them the confidence to seek promotion. One participant reflected on her career plans after completing the programme and while she eventually aspires to move to promotion at the next level, she stated that “the ELP has helped me become more content, satisfied and confident in my own abilities ... I have become more satisfied because I know I am doing a good job and before doing the ELP I felt I was self-limiting.” (Interviewee No. 2).

A number of senior level participants believed that the ELP contributed to their promotions while acknowledging that they had been working towards career advancement for a long time: “For me, I always felt that I was capable of moving up the ladder, but the course helped me structure my thinking” (Interviewee No. 6). Another interviewee stated the following in relation to promotion: “The ELP helped without a shadow of a doubt.” (Interviewee No. 4).

A more recent alumnus believed that while completing the programme may not result in promotion, he is more willing to apply for more senior roles stating: “Yes, I am going for promotion and I am leveraging everything from the ELP to get it. If I don't get the job then ‘nothing ventured, nothing gained ‘and all that.” (Interviewee No. 5).

Impact on Mobility & Broadening Experience

An objective of the ELP is to enhance mobility across the civil service. Participants were asked about past or current mobility applications and prospective mobility plans since starting the ELP and this section sets out their responses to these questions and presented in Figure 16.

Thirteen respondents (15%) indicated that they have applied for mobility and were successful, 4% (3 respondents) indicated that they applied for mobility but were not successful, 17% (14 respondents) indicated that they are considering applying for mobility; and 64% (54 respondents) indicated that they have not applied

for mobility. Four did not answer the question.

Figure 16: Impact of ELP on Mobility



Applied for Mobility and Successful

Of the 13 respondents (15%) who indicated that they have applied for mobility and were successful, five (39%) indicated that the ELP impacted their decision a lot or a great deal, two respondents (15%) indicated that the ELP impacted their decision a little to a moderate amount, and six (46%) indicated that the ELP had no impact on their decision (see Table 13).

Table 13: Successfully applied for mobility & impact of ELP on decision to apply

TO WHAT EXTENT DID THE ELP INFLUENCE YOU TO APPLY FOR MOBILITY?	COUNT (%)
<i>A great deal or a lot</i>	5 (39%)
<i>A moderate or little amount</i>	2 (15%)
<i>None</i>	6 (46%)

Of those 13 respondents who applied successfully for mobility, 12 of them provided responses to the question asking how the ELP impacted their decision to apply for mobility. The following are the key themes to emerge presented in order of the most frequently cited theme:

- Realisation of the need to move and renew skills
- Greater awareness of benefits of broader experience
- Following discussions with mentors and coach.

Nine respondents explained why the ELP helped them transition to the new role. The following are the key

themes to emerge presented in order of the most frequently cited theme:

- Confidence to start with new team and apply learnings from the ELP to the new role
- Networking and knowing more people from ELP
- ELP provided framework for structured management of the transition
- More adaptable and better situational leadership.

Four respondents indicated that the ELP did not help their transition to the new role through mobility due to timing (they had moved at the time of the ELP starting).

Not Applied for Mobility

Of the 54 (64%) of respondents who indicated that they have not applied for mobility, 41 (76%) would apply to the mobility scheme in the future, whereas 13 (24%) would not apply (see Table 14).

Table 14: Future mobility application plans

WOULD YOU APPLY TO THE MOBILITY SCHEME IN THE FUTURE	COUNT (%)
Yes	41 (76%)
No	13 (24%)

A number of respondents (49) provided further input on why they have not applied for mobility and if the ELP impacted that decision. The following are the key themes to emerge presented in order of the most frequently cited theme:

- Recently moved internally within own Department or already has experience working in many different Departments and organisations
- Recently promoted to new role
- Ineligible or difficult to move (on contract or in technical or professional roles where mobility is hard to achieve)
- Enjoy current role or area working in and have projects they wish to see through to completion
- Wrong timing (too soon) or have not been offered mobility.

Considering Applying for Mobility

Of the 14 (17%) of respondents who indicated that they are considering applying for mobility, ten respondents (71%) indicated that the ELP influenced their mobility consideration a lot or to great deal, whereas four (28%) indicated that it influenced their decision a little or a moderate amount (see Table 15).

Table 15: Considering applying for mobility & impact of ELP on decision to apply

TO WHAT EXTENT WILL THE ELP INFLUENCE YOUR DECISION TO APPLY FOR MOBILITY?	COUNT (%)
A great deal or a lot	10 (71%)
A moderate or little amount	4 (29%)
None	0 (0%)

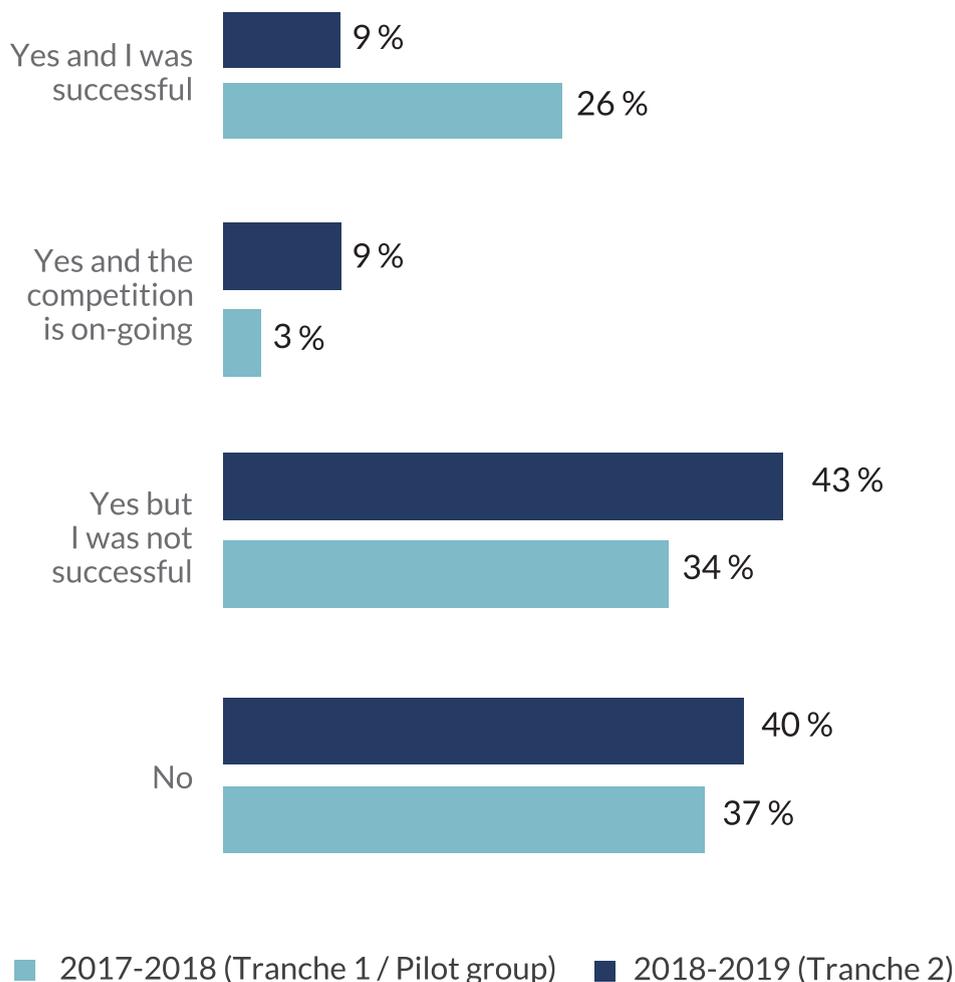
Twelve respondents who are considering applying for mobility provided responses to the question asking how the ELP is impacting their mobility decision. The following are the key themes to emerge presented in order of the most frequently cited theme:

- ELP broadens thinking and horizons and helps to see value in breath of experience which mobility can bring
- ELP has given confidence to apply for mobility

Differences between Tranche 1 and Tranche 2: Promotion and Mobility

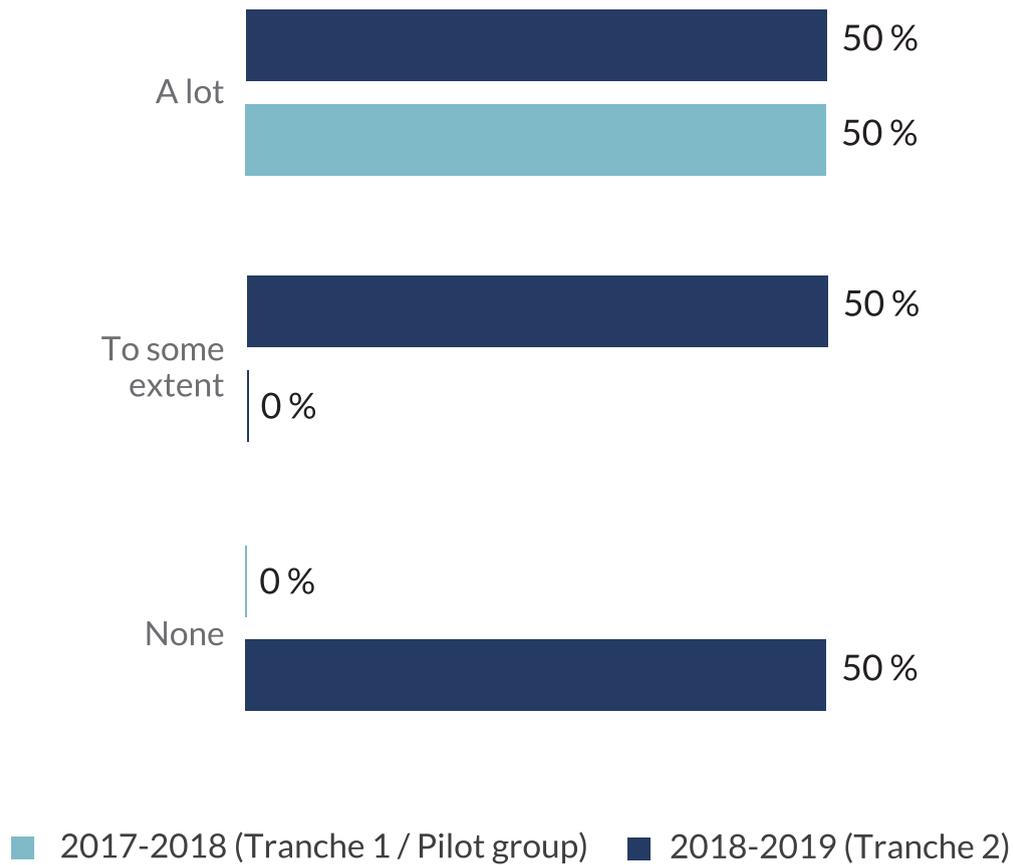
Figure 17 reports the difference in promotion success between tranche 1 and tranche 2 ELP participants. There were 85 respondents who provided information regarding their promotion since doing the ELP and three did not provide a response: 38 in tranche 1 and 47 in tranche 2. Comparing their promotion success, 10 (26%) of tranche 1 respondents were successful in their promotion application compared to four (9%) for tranche 2. More respondents who participated in tranche 2 stated that the competition is still ongoing (four (9%) for tranche 2 compared to one (3%) for tranche 1). Regarding those who applied for promotion but were not successful, 13 (34%) of tranche 1 respondents reported that they were not successful compared to 20 (43%) of tranche 2 respondents. Finally, 14 (37%) of respondents from tranche 1 did not apply for promotion compared to 19 (40%) for tranche 2 respondents.

Figure 17: Comparison of promotion success between tranche 1 and tranche 2



Regarding the impact of ELP on promotion success, of the ten tranche 1 respondents who were promoted, five (50%) report that the ELP had a lot of impact on their promotion success and five (50%) report that the ELP had some impact on their promotion success (see Figure 18). The same trend is reported for tranche 2 respondents: two (50%) tranche 2 participants report that the ELP had a lot of impact on their promotion success and two (50%) tranche 2 participants report that the ELP had some impact on their promotion success.

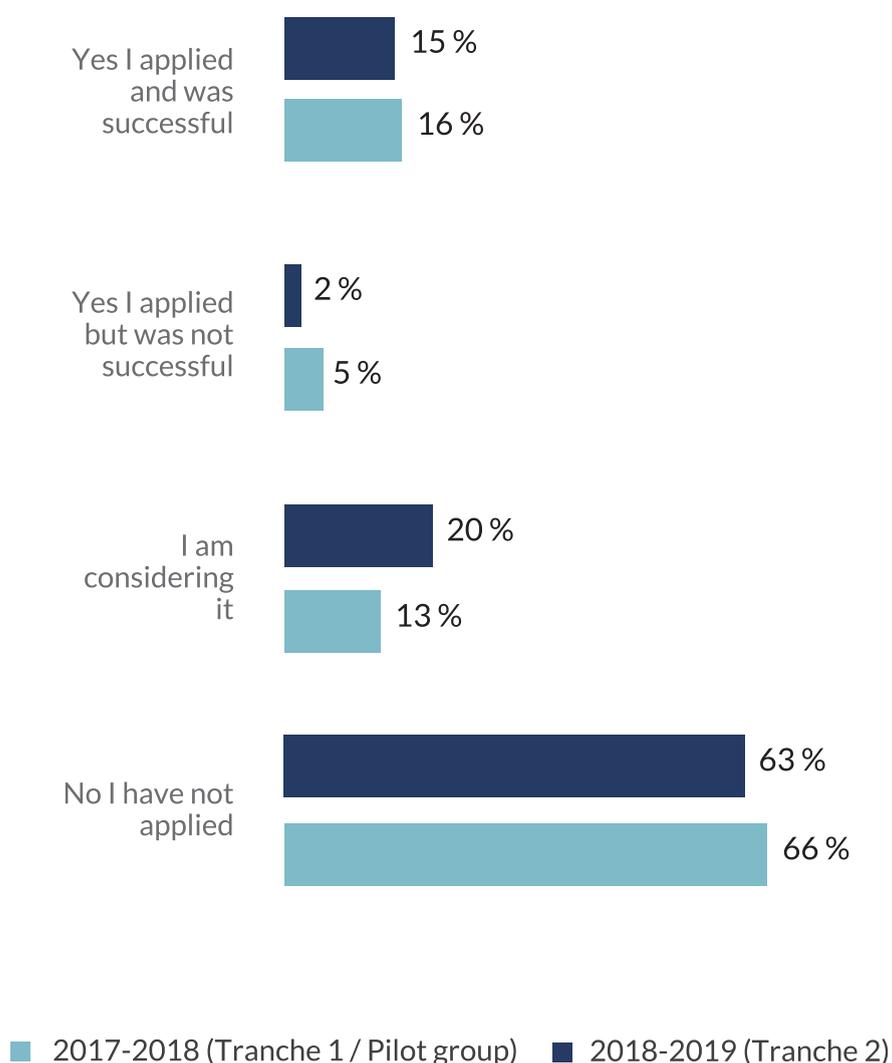
Figure 18: Comparison of ELP impact on promotion success between tranche 1 and tranche 2



SPS & PO ELP Participants Survey

Figure 19 presents the mobility application decisions and outcomes of tranche 1 and tranche 2 respondents. Sixteen percent (6 respondents) of tranche 1 and 15% (7 respondents) for tranche 2 respondents successfully applied for mobility while 5% (2 respondents) of tranche 1 and 2% (1 respondent) of tranche 2 respondents were not successful with their mobility application. A slightly higher proportion of tranche 2 participants, 20%, (9 respondents) indicated that they are considering applying for mobility compared to tranche 1 which is 13% (5 respondents). Finally, 66% (25 respondents) of tranche 1 respondents did not apply for mobility compared to 63% (29 respondents) of tranche 2 respondents.

Figure 19: Comparison of mobility success between tranche 1 vs tranche 2

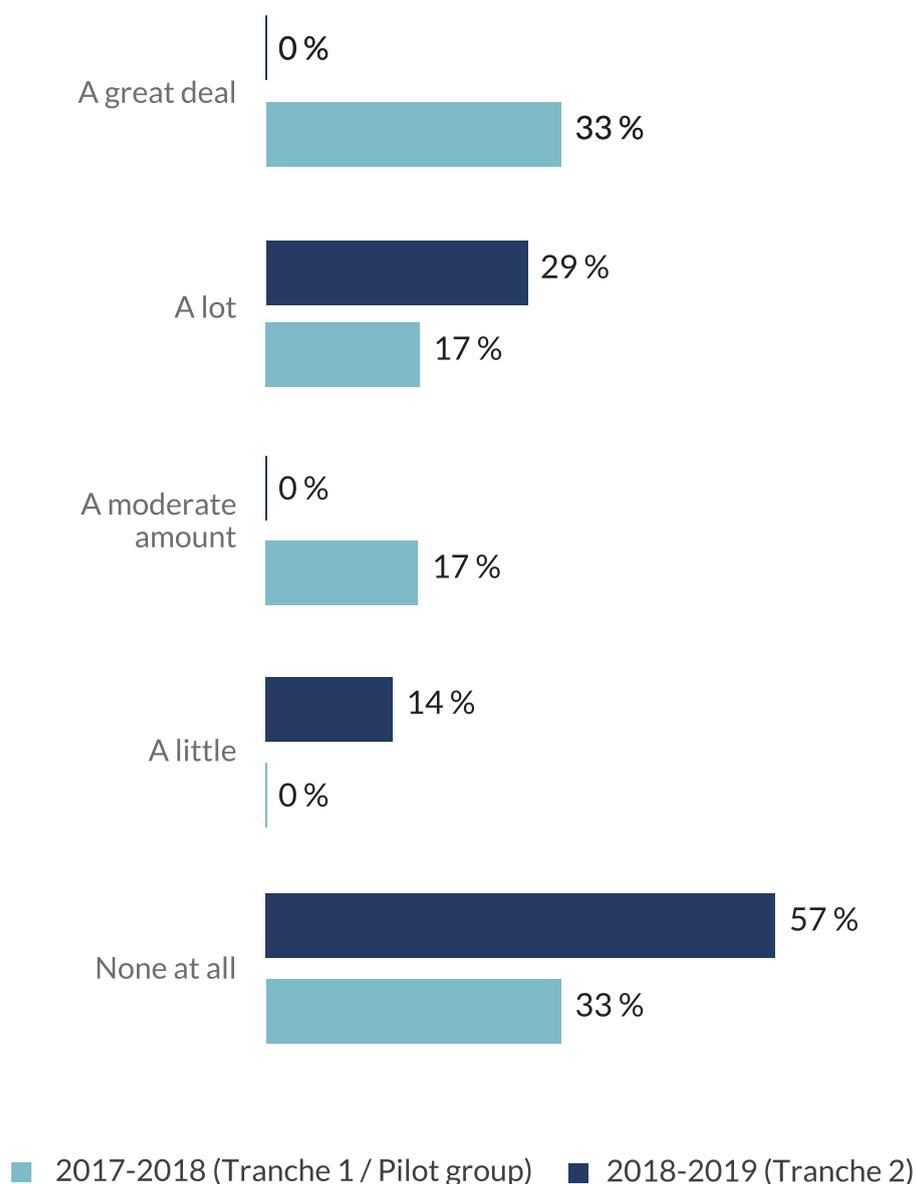


SPS & PO ELP Participants Survey

Finally, we looked at differences between tranche 1 and tranche 2 respondents' perceptions about the impact of the ELP on their successful mobility application (see Figure 20). There were 13 respondents in total: Six in tranche 1 and seven in tranche 2.

Four respondents (67%) from tranche 1 and three (43%) respondents from tranche 2 reported that the ELP had some influence (ranging from a little to a great deal) on their decision to apply for mobility. Two (33%) respondents from tranche 1 and four (57%) respondents from tranche 2 reported that the ELP had no impact on their decision to apply for mobility.

Figure 20: Comparison of ELP impact on mobility success between tranche 1 vs tranche 2



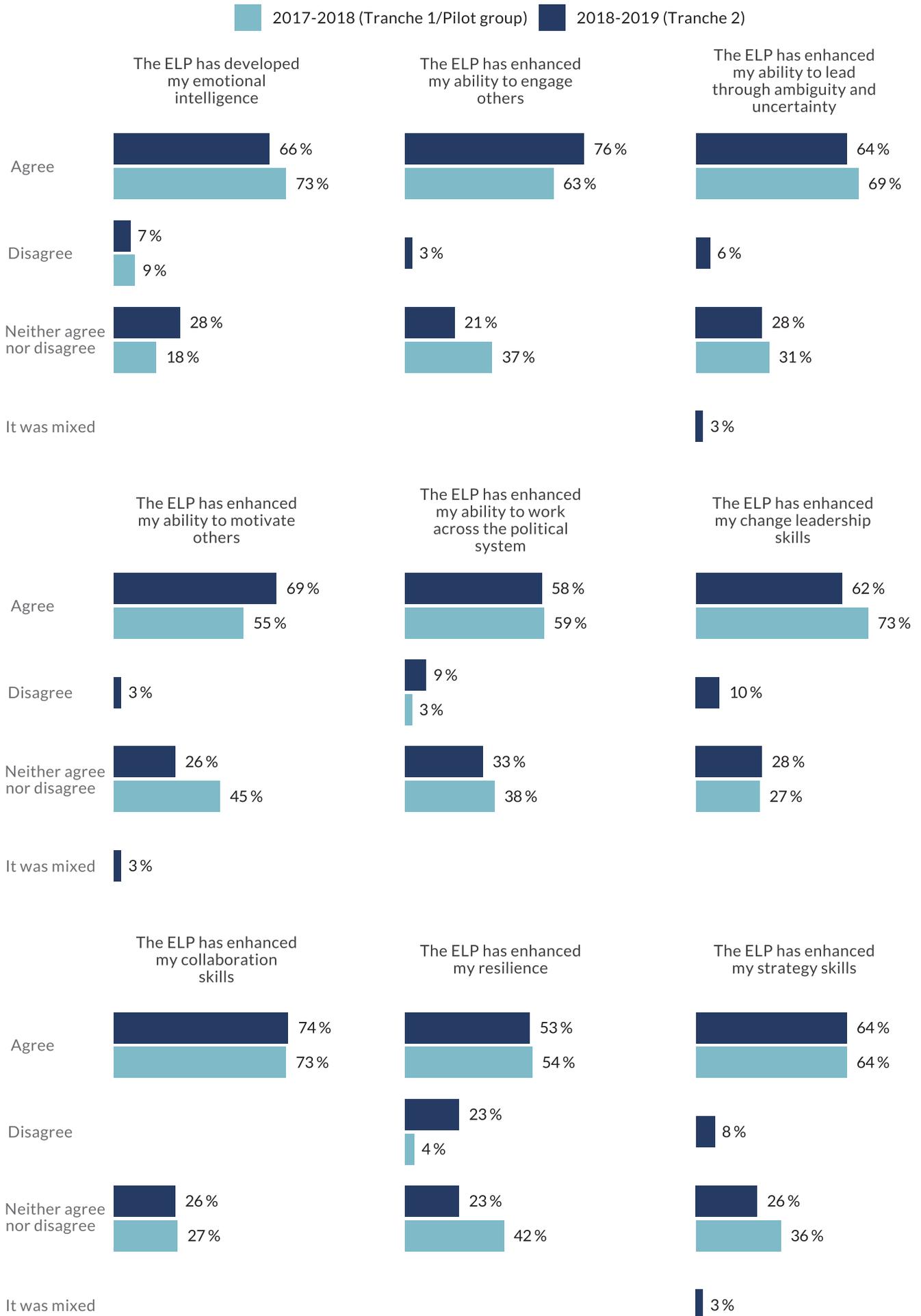
SPS & PO ELP Participants Survey

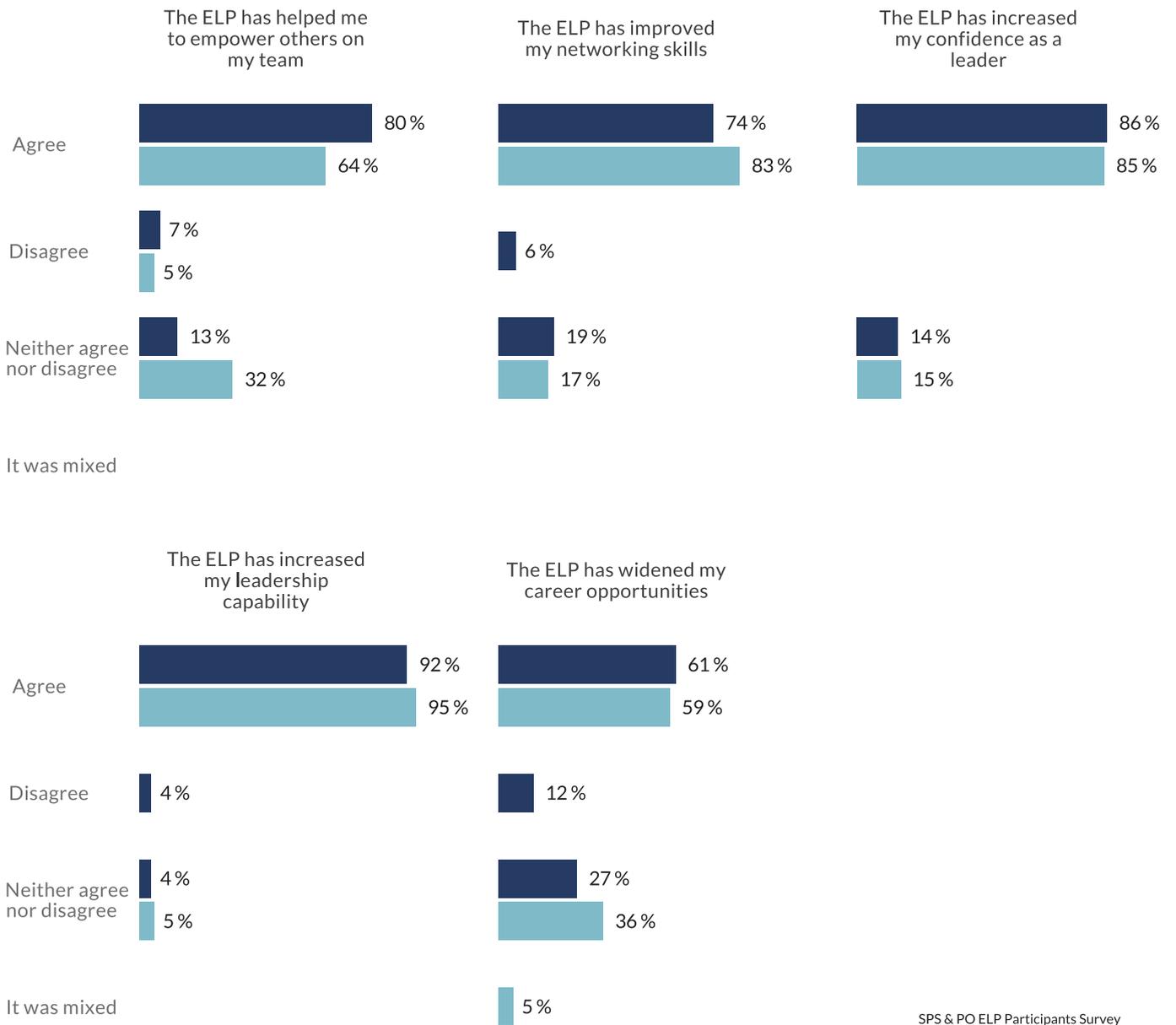
Respondents from tranche 1 and tranche 2 of the ELP programme generally report similar effects regarding the impact the ELP has had on their leadership capability and skill (see Figure 21).

Honing in on the differences between the two tranches, more respondents from tranche 2 agreed that the ELP has: (i) enhanced their ability to engage others (76% for tranche 2 compared to 63% for tranche 1); (ii) enhanced their ability to motivate others (69% compared to 55%), and (iii) helped them to empower others (80% compared to 64%).

On the other hand, more participants from tranche 1 than tranche 2 agreed that the ELP has helped them develop their emotional intelligence (73% compared to 66%), that the ELP has enhanced their change leadership skills (73% compared to 62%), and that the ELP has improved their networking skills (83% compared to 74%).

Figure 21: Comparison of ELP impact on Perception of Leadership Capabilities between tranche 1 vs tranche 2 (continued overleaf)





SPS & PO ELP Participants Survey

Organisational and Business Benefits of ELP

Participants were asked what they believed were the key business benefits for the civil service of investing in the ELP and 75 ELP respondents provided an answer. The following are the key themes to emerge presented in order of the most frequently cited theme in relation to business benefits of the ELP:

- Developing effective leadership capacity and capability and more effective impactful leaders in their current leadership roles
- Networking, learning from colleagues and broadening perspectives
- Developing the leaders of the future and quality of future leadership talent
- Better quality work performance and organisational and citizen outcomes through more efficient and effective leadership to address the various 21st century challenges of managing the civil service
- Enables leaders who can work more collaboratively
- Increasing the pool of talent and pipeline applying for senior roles through promotion and/or mobility and succession planning
- Enables leaders who can work more collaboratively to address complex problems
- Enables more strategic thinking and better cross-Government collaboration
- Should lead to a more integrated civil service

Proposed ELP Changes and Improvements

Proposed Changes and Improvements: ELP Participants

Participants were asked what changes they would recommend for improving the ELP and 78 of the 88 respondents provided an answer to the question. Many different suggestions are made and there are no overriding consistent themes that emerge as reported by a large number of participants. Seven themes were mentioned by at least three participants:

- More real-world, practice and grounded content with less emphasis on theory and more on the application to the reality of the work context
- More off-site and overnight residential components to ensure time and space to immerse in the learning and not be pulled into work
- Ensure attendance at all elements of the programme and for full days. Mandatory participation once selected should be the norm and should be followed up where it does not happen
- Greater clarity regarding coaching and mentoring and the role of the coach and mentor
- Support networks after the course is completed
- Greater support from DPER and opportunity for mobility following the ELP
- Make the ELP more challenging in terms of the content and challenging mind-sets.

The following are other recommendations mentioned by one or two participants:

- More coaching during the full programme and earlier in the programme
- Ensure energy is maintained throughout each module
- More appreciation for the tension between reality of crises and complex content and theory
- Too narrowly focused on the civil service – needs more outward looking civil service
- Mentoring should sync better with the course
- More Secretary General and Assistant Secretary General input
- Change FIRO-B instrument or review the debriefing process for its use if continued
- Condense/compress the course mentioned by two participants, however, two others specifically recommend extending the time
- Pace too fast for some modules
- More support with action learning sets
- More workshops like the development centre
- Better management of those contributing during the programme and ensure all are given opportunity to contribute
- Too much pair-work
- Review the relevance of the organisational workshop
- Plan dates well in advance, ensure good administration and management of the programme by DPER.

Proposed Changes and Improvements: Focus Groups and Interviews

Overall, there was positive feedback about the ELP in both the focus groups and interview sessions. A number of recommendations emerged from the focus groups as follows:

- There should have been more structured follow-up after the ELP programmes. It was suggested that a half day of engagement off-site once or twice a year would build on the initial learnings and keep the network going in a more formalised way. This could include a number of senior level guest speakers from within the civil service.
- For those who are not yet ready to take the next step up and who just want to become better and more effective leaders in their current role, half-day refresher courses were suggested that would focus on specific identified topics relevant to their current role.
- Contracting is essential to an effective coaching relationship between ELP participants and the executive coaches as it formally sets out the relationship between the two parties, setting out goals and boundaries for the relationship. The coaches asked that this should be considered for the future and that there is a need for greater understanding of the context of the learning environment and the occupational and personality profiling instruments used.
- Continue with the coaching as an integral part of the programme. Also, the amount of coaching sessions should be more flexible to cater to the individual needs of each participant.

- Consider the process for participants being accepted onto the ELP and alignment with the objectives of the ELP. There was a sense that there is some confusion as to whether the ELP is for development in current role, preparing for promotion or mobility to other roles or both.
- Collaboration is highly recommended as a leadership strategy throughout the ELP. It was suggested that DPER should build on the ELP alumni and consider them for internal group coaching which would assist with building collaboration.
- Review the use of the Hogan profile and FIRO-B instruments.
- The coaches recommended that they should be involved earlier in the process and could inform the design and timing of the coaching element so that the coaching better complements the timing of other elements of the ELP.
- The value of being able to determine some of the content and focus of subsequent modules was welcomed but some felt that subsequent delivery could have been tailored even more to the needs that were identified by the ELP participants.

A number of recommendations emerged from the interviews as follows:

- The assessment centre at the start was very worthwhile in setting a base-line for reflection and change and a 'post-assessment centre' at the end of the programme was proposed to establish if any significant changes have taken place and these key learnings could be shared across the groups.
- There is better clarity needed regarding the objective of the ELP: is it to equip participants to be better leaders in their current roles or equipping them for the next level up or both. There are different opinions at present and so more consistent messaging is needed.
- Hearing the experience of the senior leaders and high performing colleagues through the Sec Gen and A Sec guest lectures was really useful and beneficial to the participants and there should be more of these realistic previews of senior roles.
- There was evidence of a strong informal network having been developed across the groups which were supported informally through events organised by the participants themselves. There was a call to look at formalising this post-ELP support. DPER should explore how to support networks after the programme is completed.
- The residential aspect of the programme solidified collaboration and networking relationships in the group and the off-site element was really needed and it should be continued with whether in Ireland or in Roffey Park.
- Some elements of the programme need to be more challenging.

Proposed Changes and Improvements: Line Managers

The line managers of ELP participants were asked what changes they would recommend to the ELP programme and the following are the key themes to emerge presented in the order of most cited:

- Follow-up inputs post-ELP to assist with embedding the learning and focusing on application
- Improve the input of the line manager in the process. Some line managers proposed 3-way coaching between the coach, participant and line manager should be the norm or potentially required for all participants.

- Invest in the alumni network post-ELP
- Involve the organisation in ELP assignments
- Increase the number of places on the PO programme
- Greater clarity of purpose – is it vertical development or development within role?

Proposed Changes and Improvements: ELP Provider

The two external ELP facilitators were interviewed and recommendations for change were sought from them in terms of potential changes to the ELP. The following are the key themes to emerge:

- As the programme unfolded and as the participants emerged from the programme, there was a sense of focus on improving their impact. The civil service need to ensure it leverages on that focus on impact and the ‘power of the collective’ of ELP participants should be tapped and capitalised on to make change at the civil service level.
- It was useful having the internal civil service speakers but other speakers beyond the civil service would be good to consider from the public sector more generally or the private sector and covering leadership issues that are relevant across all sectors.
- An innovative element could be introducing an “organisational raid” to the programme. This is where ELP participants would spend a half day in another organisation observing and watching best practice with people outside of their own organisation and sector and see how things are done differently elsewhere. ELP participants could ask “what is good practice here and what can I learn from a non-civil service context that I can bring back?”
- A big challenge is that ELP participants are working across the civil service and they need to collaborate and partner better and more with others to be effective in their roles which is demanding. The civil service needs to be more inventive and creative in making that collaboration work.
- Support action learning sets outside of the formal modules which would add costs but should be beneficial. Might be useful to have a facilitator outside of the formal modules to ensure learning sets are set up for success. An option would be to develop DPER staff to be action learning set facilitators to enable transfer of capability in-house to DPER but it doing so would depend on DPER capacity.

Conclusions and Key Recommendations

The SPS and PO ELP is very well regarded by programme participants and their line managers as an effective leadership and talent development initiative for the civil service. Feedback from ELP participants and their line managers, captured in the empirical data gathered in this evaluation project, is predominantly very positive about the ELP programme design, content and delivery.

ELP participants report that the ELP has positively impacted their leadership capability, enhanced their confidence as leaders, improved their networks, provided them with dedicated time and space for critical self-reflection and analysis of the leadership styles and impact. The positive impact of the ELP is reinforced by the line managers' evaluations. The majority of ELP participants indicate that they have transferred the learning from the ELP to their work.

ELP participants report that the ELP has positively impacted their promotion and mobility plans and for those who have been promoted or moved through mobility, the majority report that the ELP has helped them transition in a new role.

For those in specialist roles or functions, the majority of ELP participants reported that the programme helped them broaden their perspectives, develop more general leadership skills and broaden their career horizons.

A slightly larger number of ELP participants from tranche 1 for both the SPS and PO programme have been promoted since completing the ELP compared with tranche 2. However, it should be kept in mind that they also had more time and hence more opportunities for promotion. More participants from tranche 2 are considering mobility and fewer participants stated that they did not apply for mobility.

We set out the following key recommendations taking into account the multi-stakeholder data we gathered and the quantitative and qualitative data analysis we undertook in this evaluation project:



Retain the off-site residential element of the programme to enable deep immersive learning, coaching, modular approach, development centre, and input from Secretaries General and Assistant Secretaries General. Consider including more off-site residential components if possible.



Review the mentoring, learning buddy system, pre-reading for each module, the Hogan and FIRO-B personality instruments as these elements of the programme were evaluated less favourably. Also review the content of the three modules to ensure all content is challenging.



Review the coaching process, timing with the other ELP elements delivery, and contracting between coach and participant to ensure clear understanding of expectations.



An important area for future development is sustaining the momentum post-ELP. This is especially the case in relation to the opportunities the civil service can leverage from the networking and focus on collaboration that the ELP has fostered. Ensuring that there are supports and opportunities to continue these networks for cross-Departmental collaboration is a potentially powerful outcome from the ELP that should be sustained over time.



Enhance the link and connection between class-based theory and practice or application of theory to the workplace.



Review the objectives of the ELP and clarify if the objectives are for development within current role or preparation for future leadership roles or both. Ensure messaging about the objectives of the ELP are clear and consistent for all stakeholders.



Consider follow-up workshops after the ELP is complete to sustain the learning and networking and to encourage embedding transfer.



The civil service should explore how to leverage the power of the network and collective goodwill that exists post-ELP to address civil service wide leadership challenges which would also assist with developing a more collaborative mind-set.



Examine the feasibility of additions to the ELP including an 'organisational raid' where leaders shadow each other in their organisations.

