



West of Berkshire

**Safeguarding Adults Board**

Reading, West Berkshire & Wokingham

# Mental Capacity Act Survey Results

June 2025

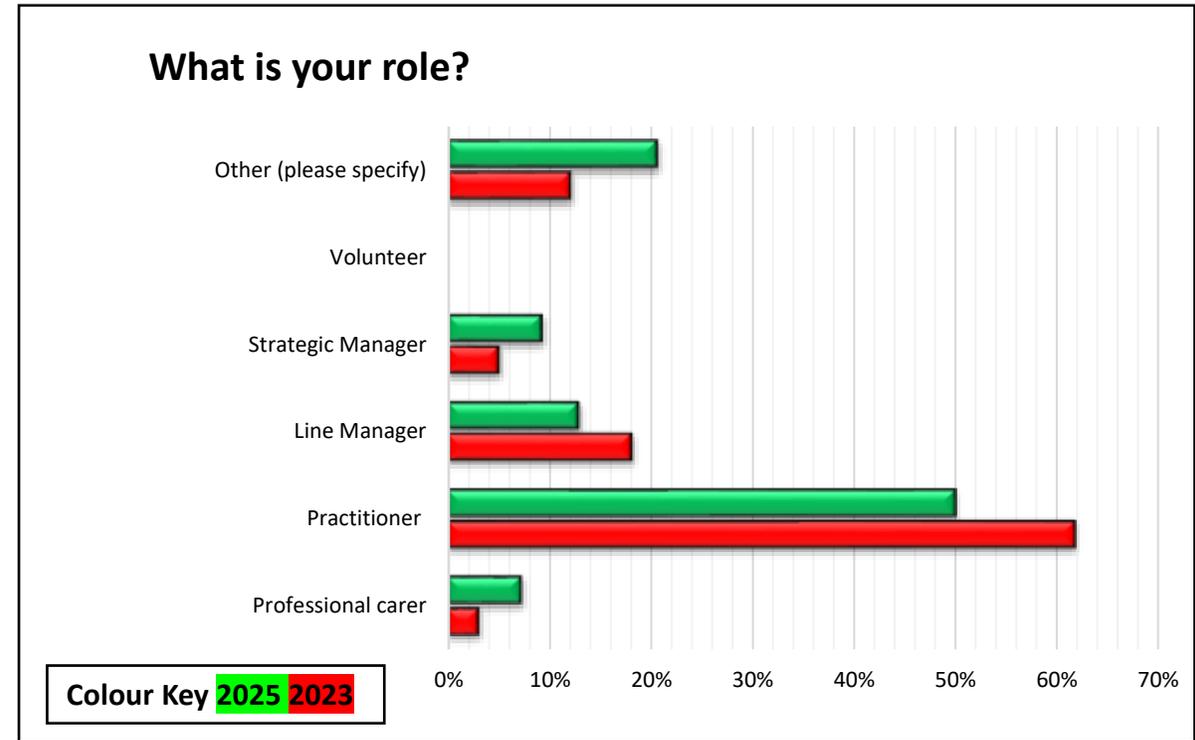
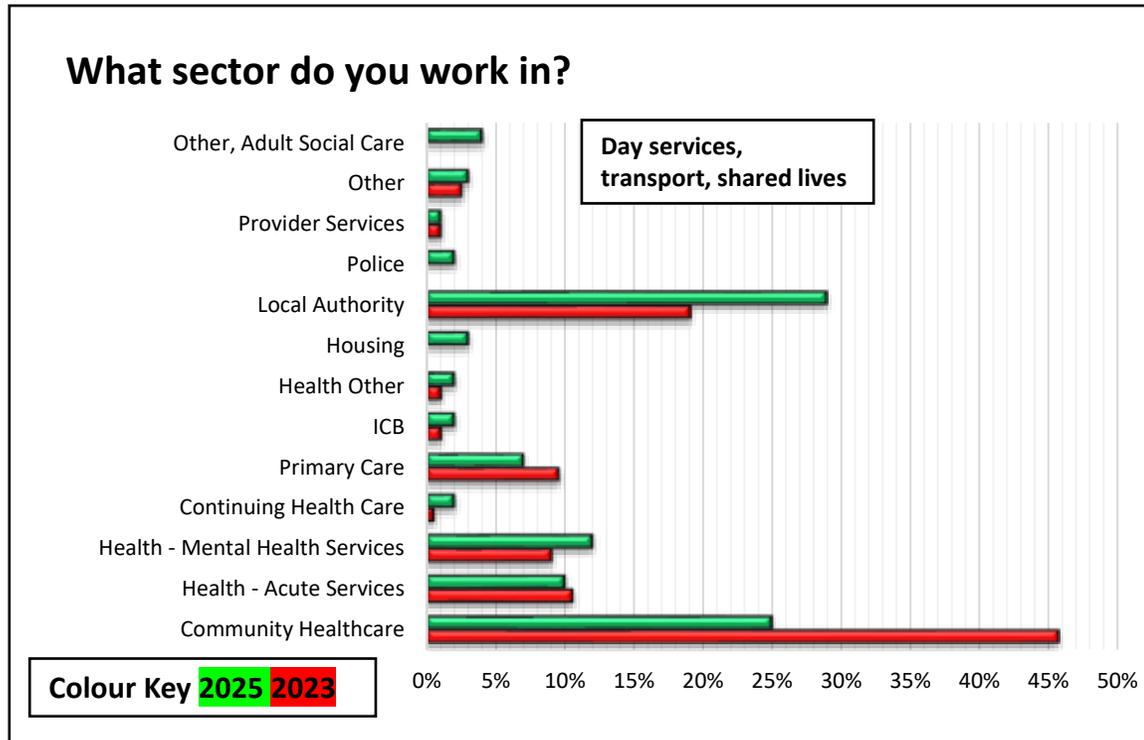
# Why the survey was carried out

- In response to SAB Priority Embed a good understanding of the Mental Capacity Act within the practice of our partners.
- Priority since 23/24
- Learning and Development Subgroup wanted to test the impact the priority has had
- Repeated survey conducted by the SAB in April 2023
- This analysis compares responses between April 2023 and January 2025

# How the Survey was carried out

- Repeated survey undertaken by SAB in April 2023
- Was an online survey hosted by Microsoft forms
- Survey opened on the 6<sup>th</sup> January 2025 and closed on the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2025 (same duration as in 2023)
- Survey was reopened in Feb 2025 to give further opportunity for health responses
- SAB members were asked to promote throughout their organisations
- There were 194 responses, 3% less than the 199 responses to the survey in April 2023

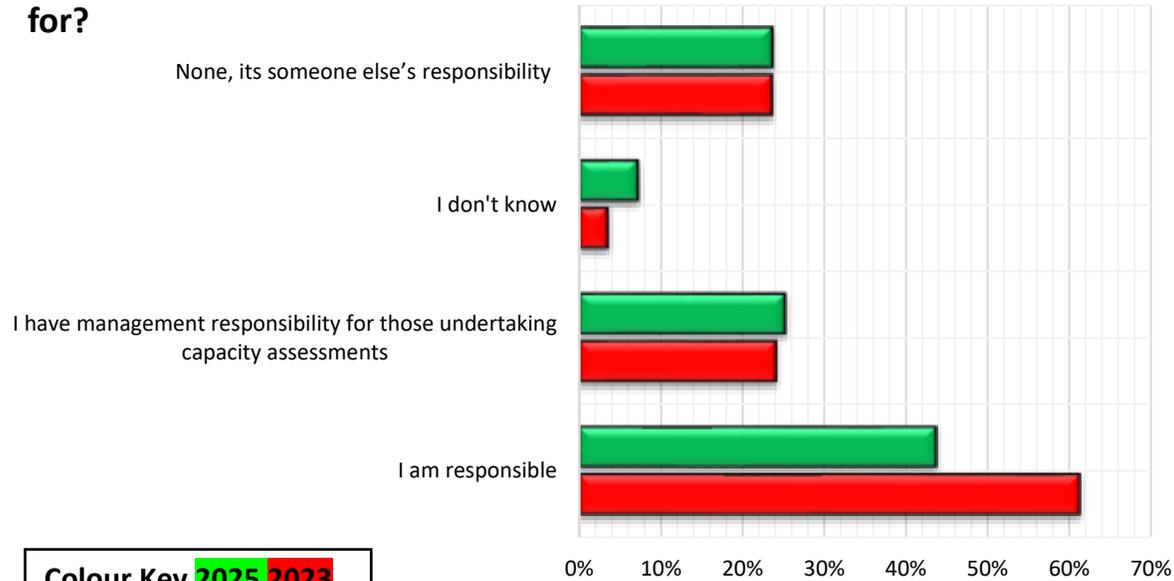
# Who responded to the survey



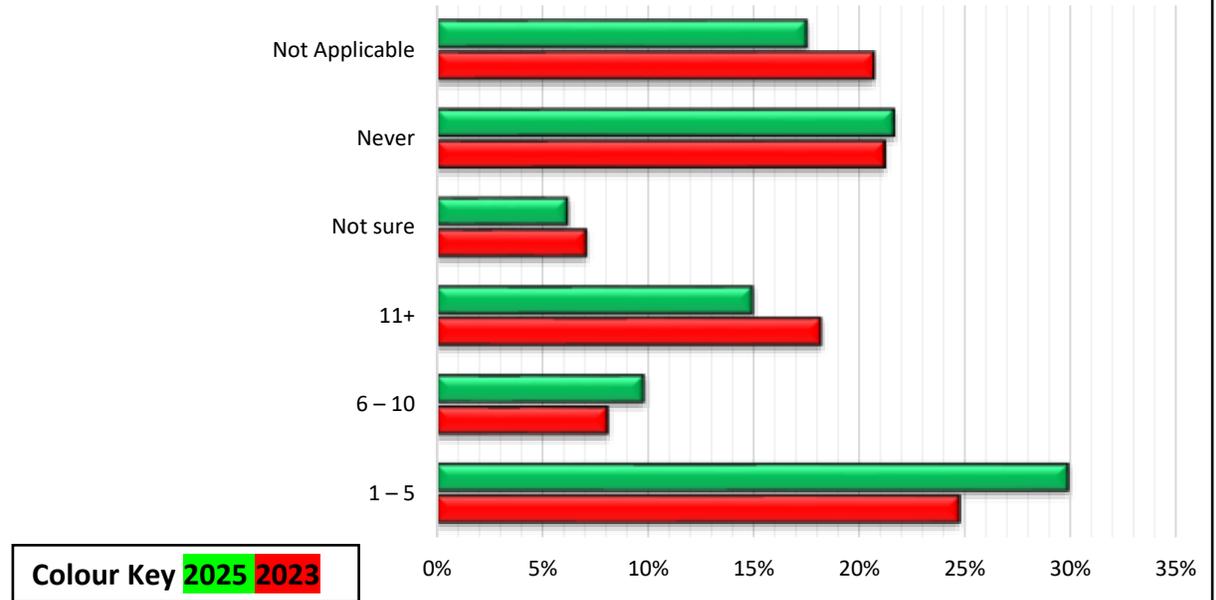
- In 2023 70% of responses came from health roles, mainly in community health. In 2025 this has reduced to 60%. With community health seeing the largest reduction.
- As in 2023 there were no responses from: Ambulance Services, Care Homes, or voluntary care sector, however we have seen responses from Housing and the Police in 2025.
- The largest response rate was from Local Authorities
- As in 2022 the majority of responses were from practitioners which was defined as: social worker, care manager, nurse, Dr, OT that do not have line management responsibility.
- 2025 has seen an increase in responses from strategic manager, professional carer and other (varied roles across the partnership)

# Who responded to the survey

**In your role, what responsibility do you have in relation to assessing capacity for a person in your care/ who you work for?**

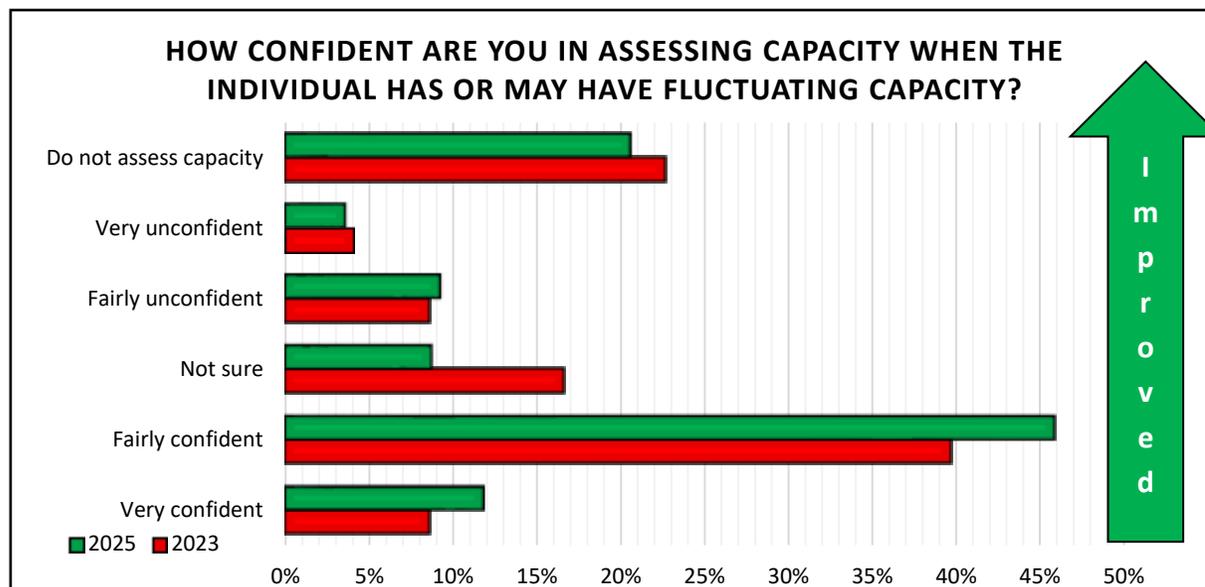
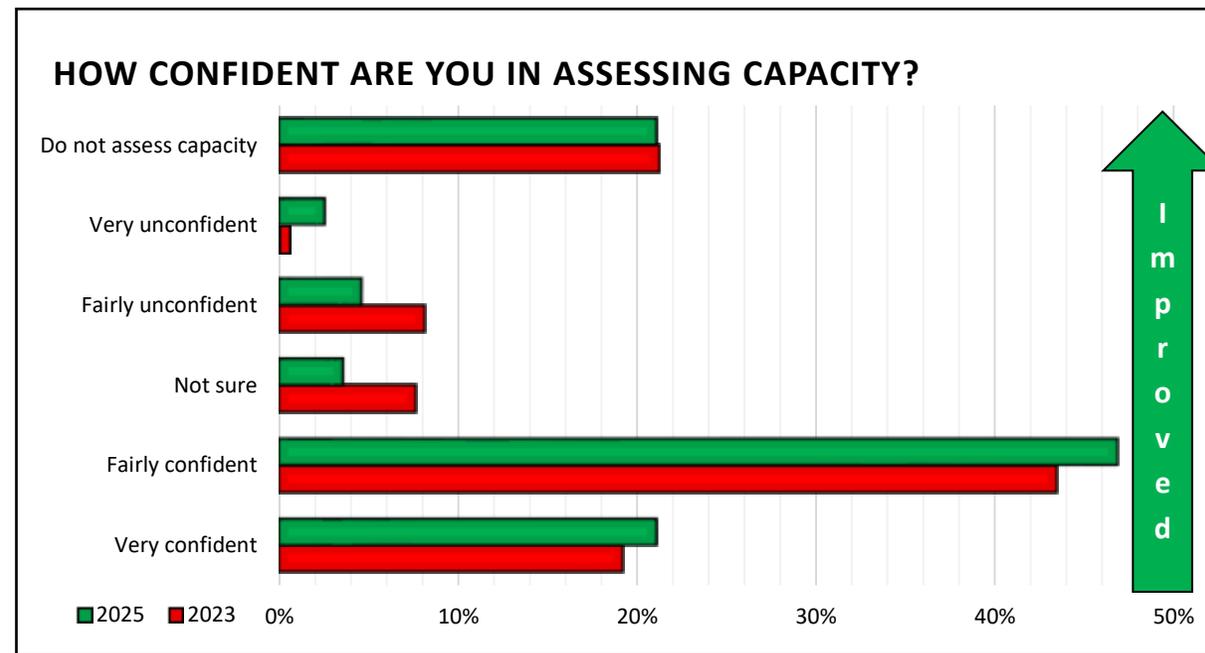
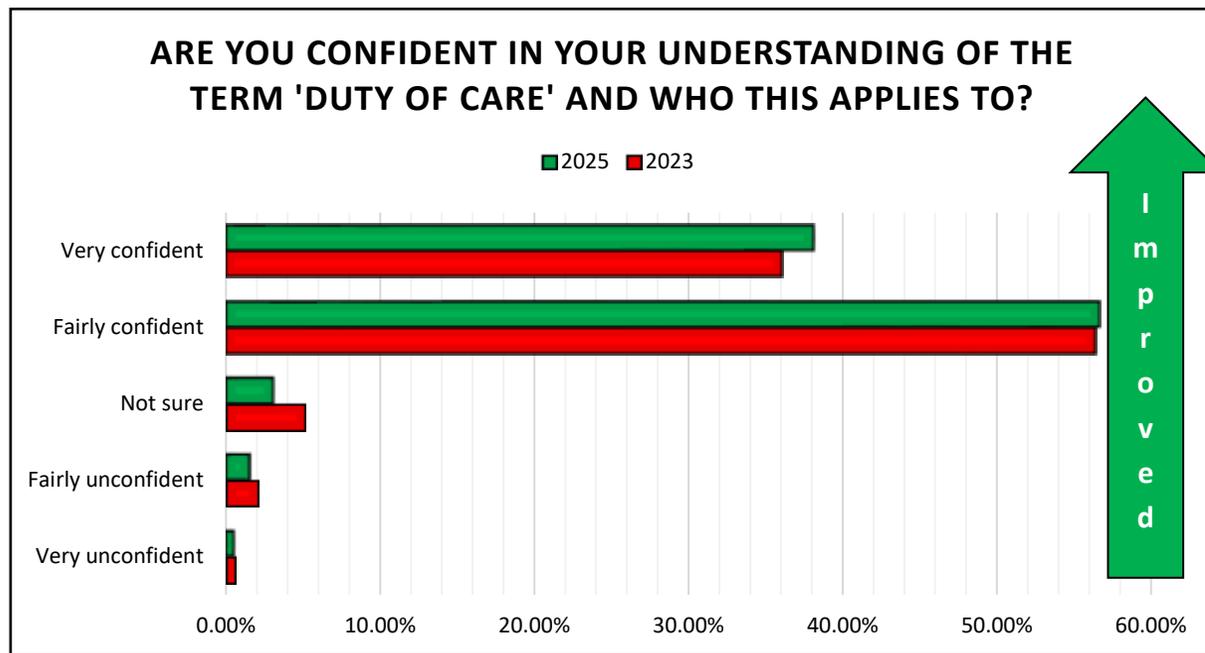


**How many times have you undertaken a capacity assessment in the last 6 months?**



- In 2023 85% of responses came from those that were responsible for or management responsibility to carry out MCA assessments, this reduced to 69% in 2025.
- In 2023 49% of responses have not carried out an MCA assessment in the last six months, this decreased slightly to 45% in 2025.

# Confidence in practice – duty of care, assessing capacity, fluctuating capacity



A 5-point scale from very confident to very unconfident was used.

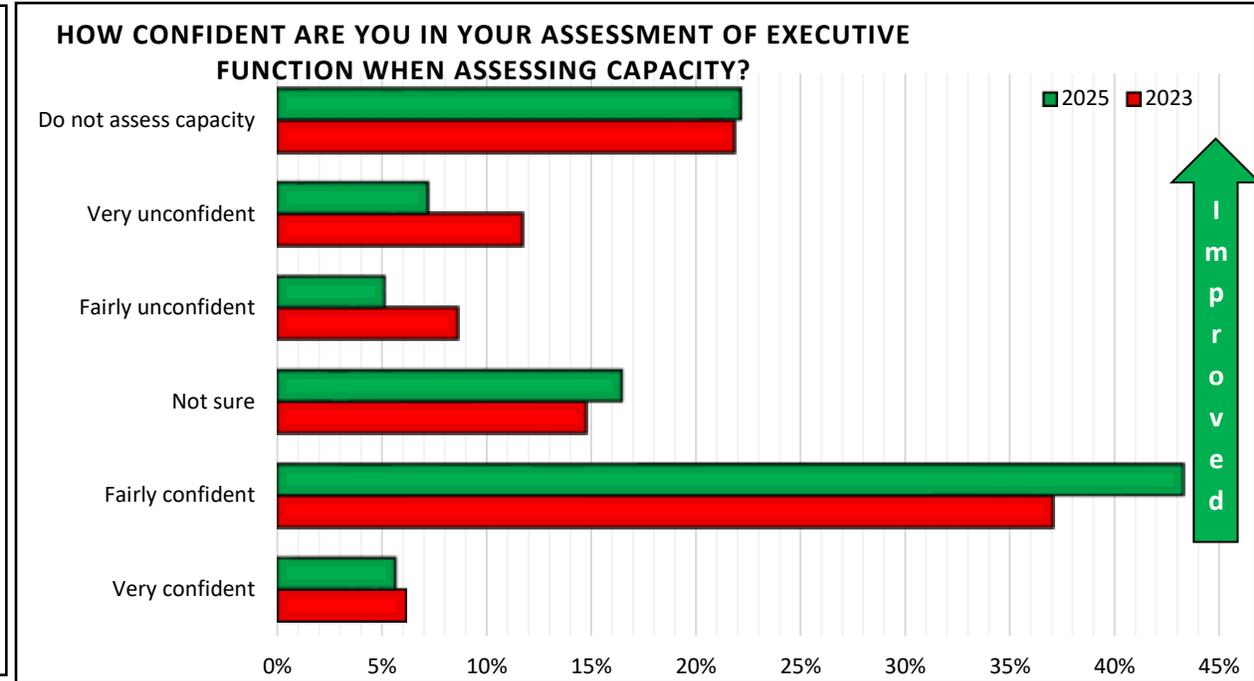
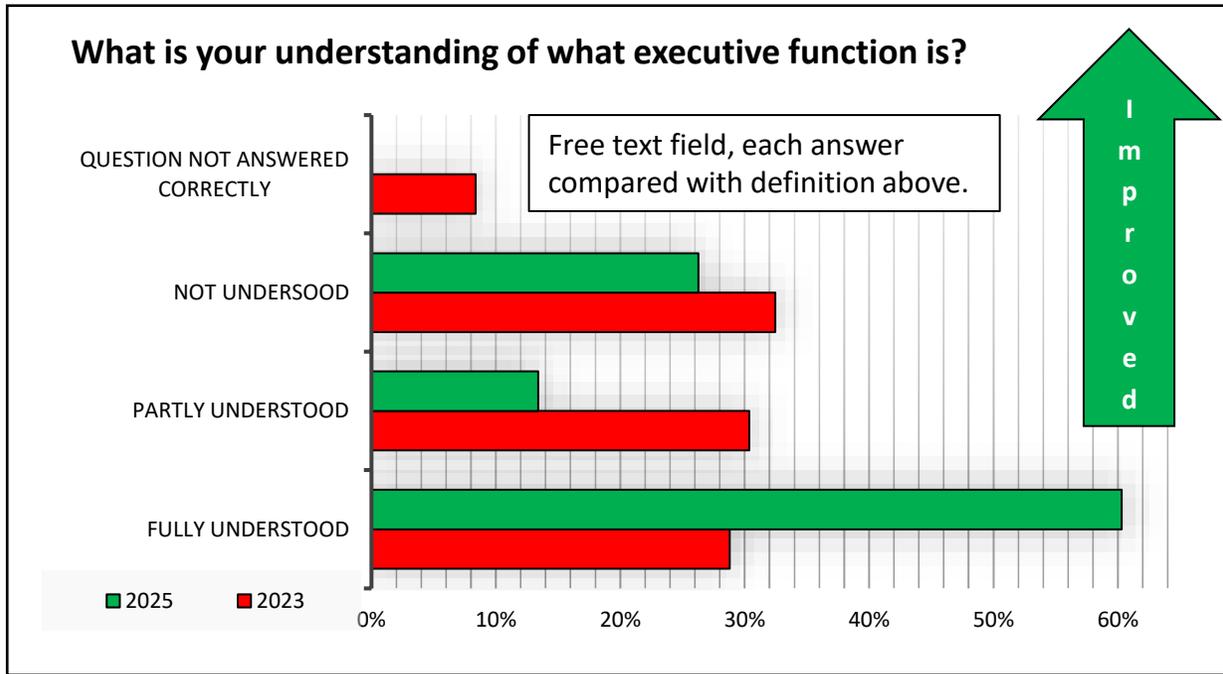
In 2023 92% were confident in their understanding of 'Duty of care' this increased to 95% in 2025.

In 2023 16% of responders were very, fairly unconfident or unsure in assessing capacity, this reduced to 11% in 2025.

In 2023 29% of responders were very, fairly unconfident or unsure in assessing capacity where there is fluctuating capacity, this reduced to 22% in 2025.

# Executive function

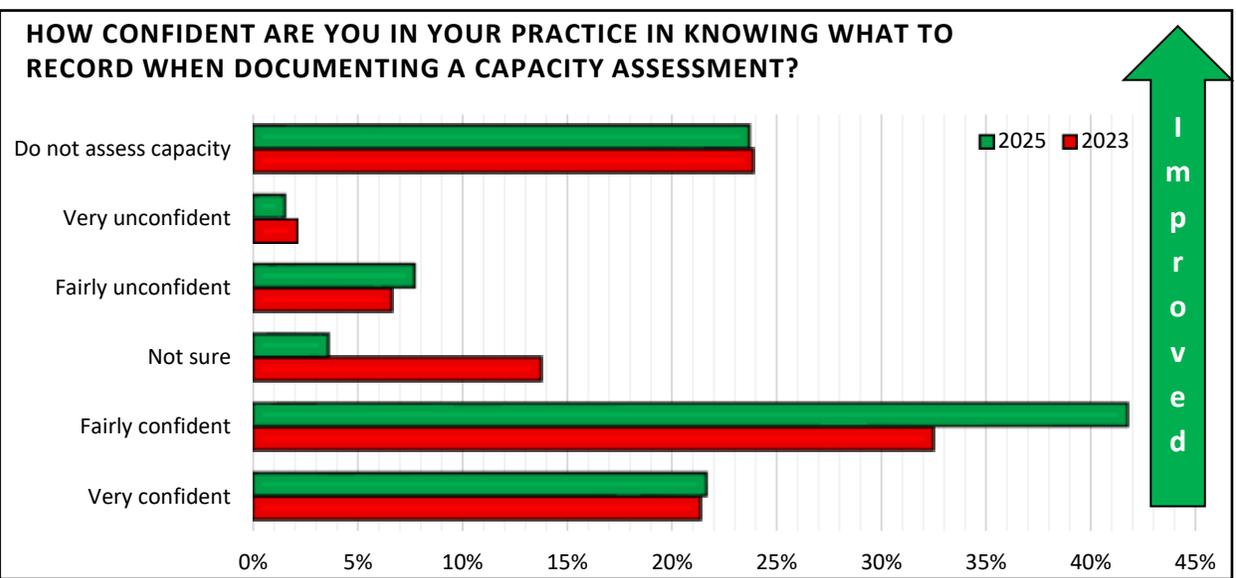
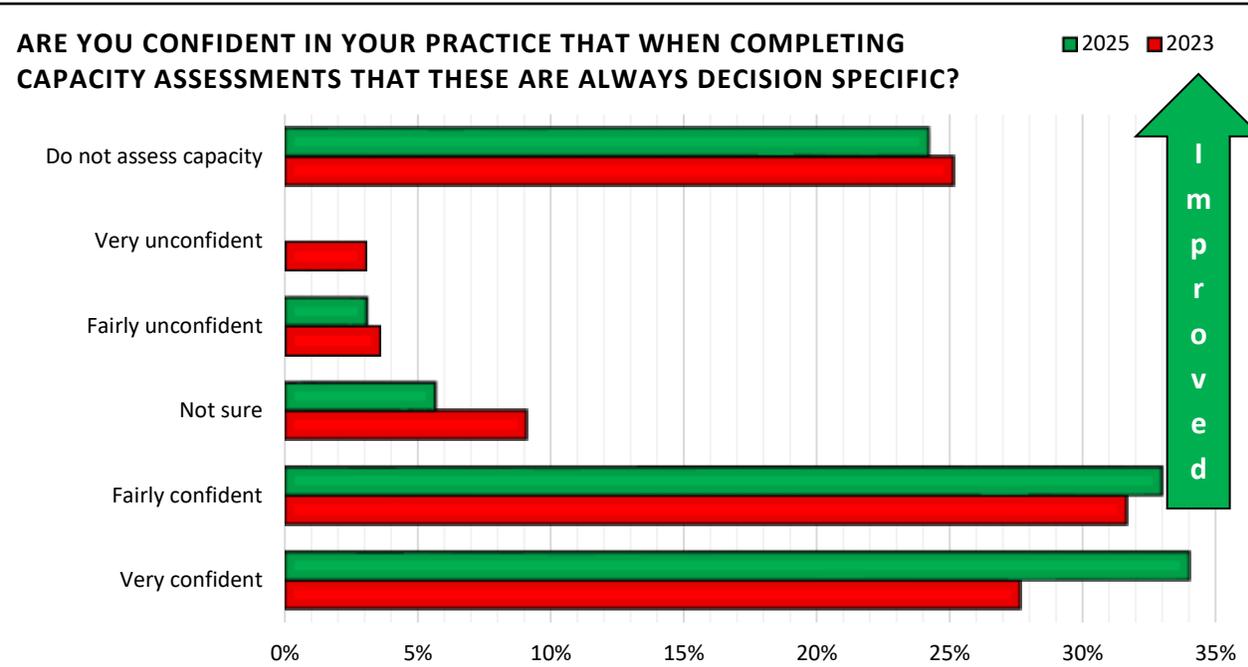
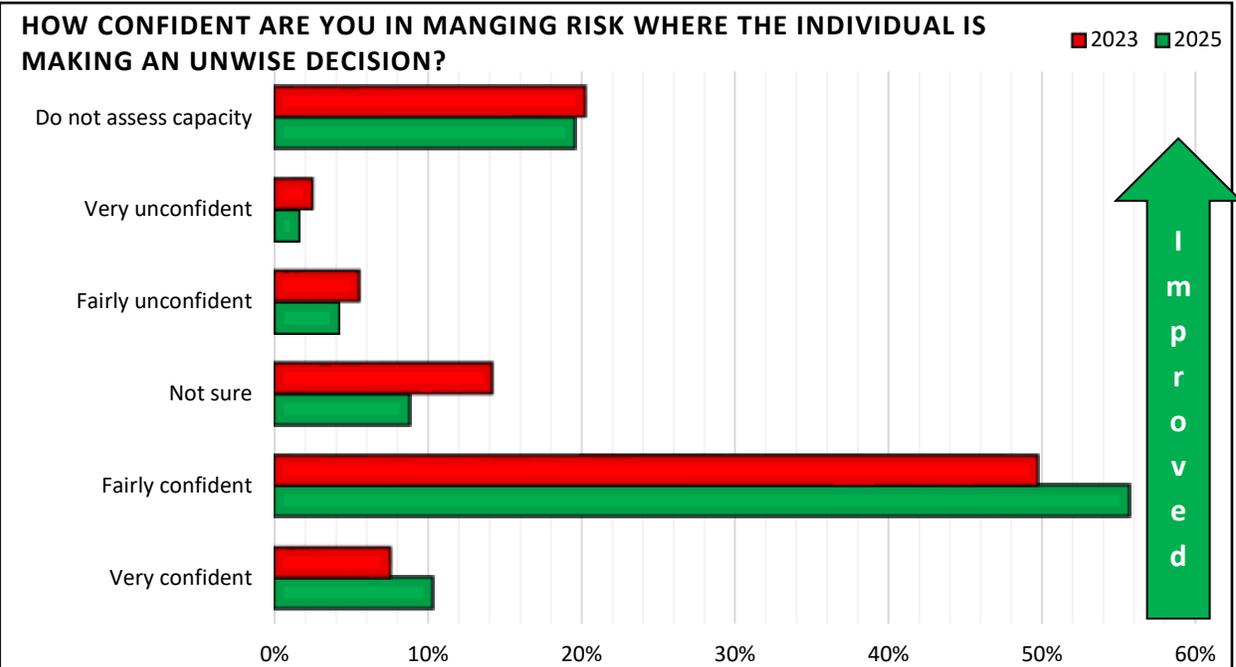
Executive function is an umbrella term used to describe a set of mental skills that are controlled by the frontal lobes of the brain. When executive function is impaired, it can inhibit appropriate decision-making and reduce a person’s problem-solving abilities. Planning and organisation, flexibility in thinking, multi-tasking, social behaviour, emotion control and motivation are all executive functions. - Taken from [executive-functioning-grab-sheet-mca-guidance\\_v10\\_apr2021.pdf \(lancshiresafeguarding.org.uk\)](https://www.lancshiresafeguarding.org.uk/files/2021/04/executive-functioning-grab-sheet-mca-guidance_v10_apr2021.pdf)



Significant increase in the understanding of what executive function is 2023 29% fully understood increasing to 60% in 2025.

Confidence in assessment of executive function has increased from 43% in 2023 to 49%. However very confident has seen a slight drop in performance.

# Confidence in practice – managing risk, decision specific MCA’s, documentation

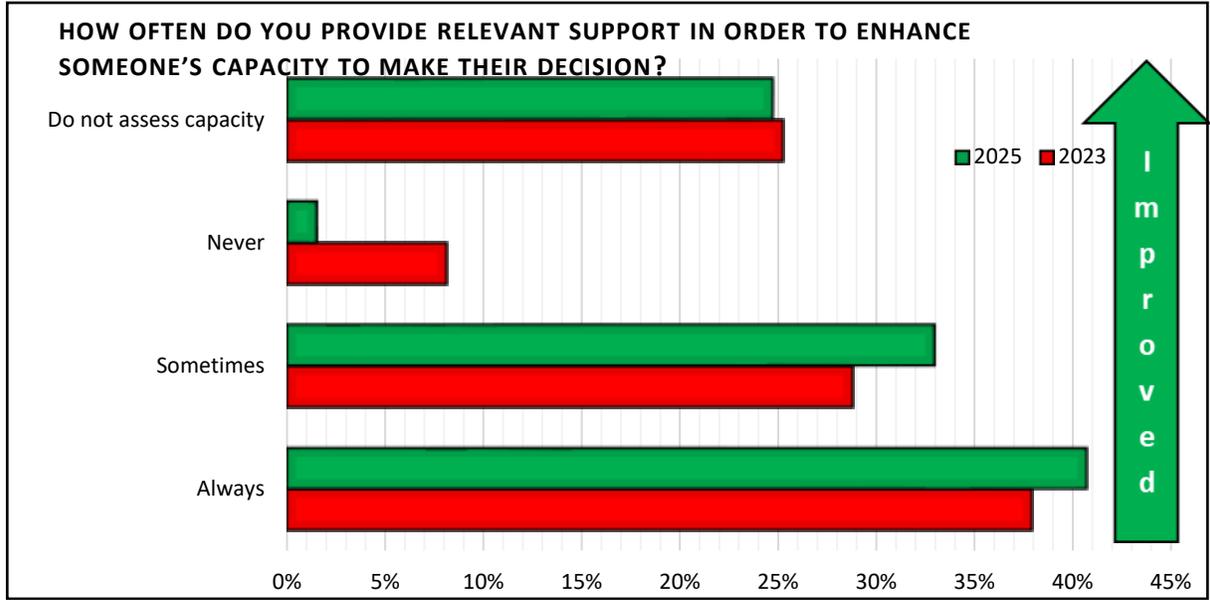


In 2023 58% of responders were very confident or confident in managing risk when an unwise decision was being made, this increased to 66% in 2025.

In 2023 60% of responders were very confident or confident in their practice that MCAs were always decision specific, this increased to 67% in 2025.

In 2023 53% of responders were very confident or confident in their practice in documenting MCA’s, this increased to 63% in 2025.

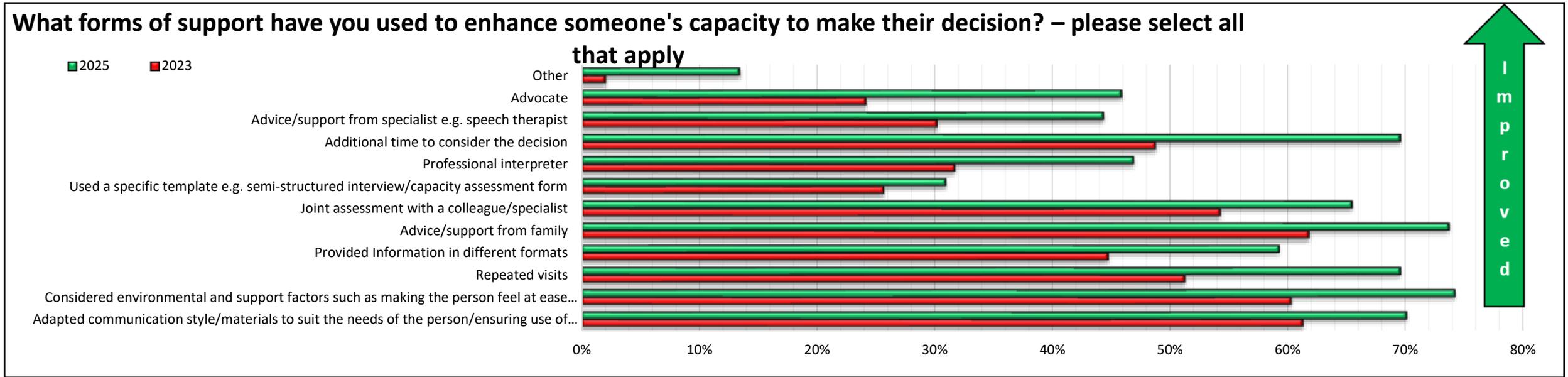
# Supported Decision Making



In 2023 only 38% of respondent always provided relevant support to enhance someone's capacity to make their decision, this increase slightly to 41% in 2025.

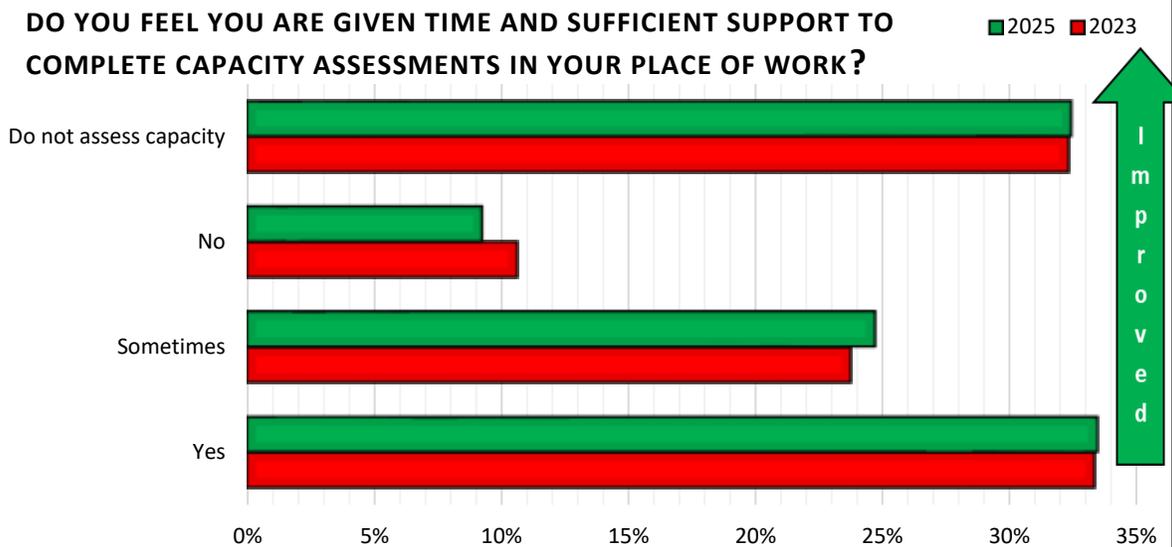
In 2023 8% of responded stated they never provide support this decreased to 2% in 2025. It should be noted that answers may have considered when they consider an individual to have capacity which will skew the outturn and 25% of respondents do not assess capacity.

Below details what form of support they have used. When comparing 2023 with 2025, there has been an increase in responses for all methods with significant increase in the following: Advocate, Specialist Advice, Time.



# Barriers in completing MCA's

**DO YOU FEEL YOU ARE GIVEN TIME AND SUFFICIENT SUPPORT TO COMPLETE CAPACITY ASSESSMENTS IN YOUR PLACE OF WORK?**

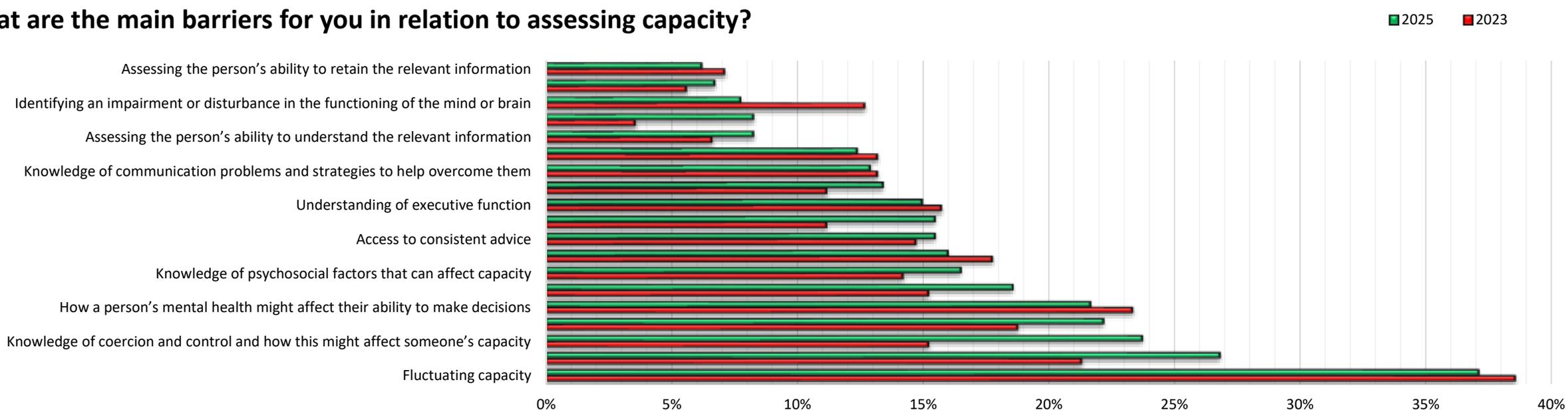


In 2023 33% of respondents felt that they have enough time and support to complete MCA's this increased to 34% in 2025 with 34% not having enough time (sometimes or no).

The 3 main barriers in relation to completing MCA's are (respondents were able to select more than 1):

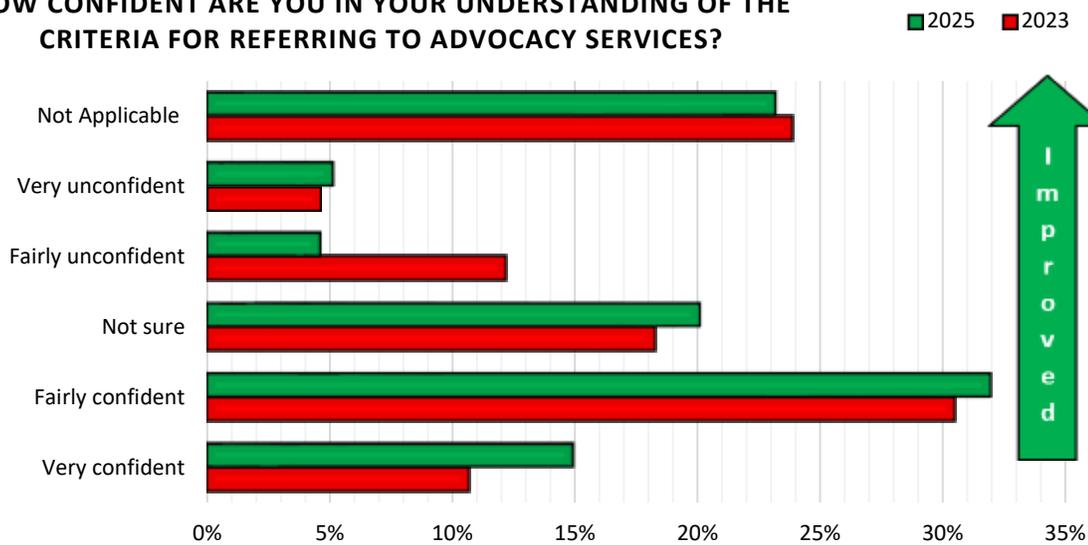
2023	2025
Fluctuating capacity – 39%	Fluctuating capacity – 37%
How a person's mental health might affect their ability to make decisions -23%	Knowledge of the legislative framework including recent case law – 27%
Knowledge of the legislative framework including recent case law – 21%	Knowledge of coercion and control and how this might affect someone's capacity – 24%

**What are the main barriers for you in relation to assessing capacity?**



# Advocacy

## HOW CONFIDENT ARE YOU IN YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE CRITERIA FOR REFERRING TO ADVOCACY SERVICES?

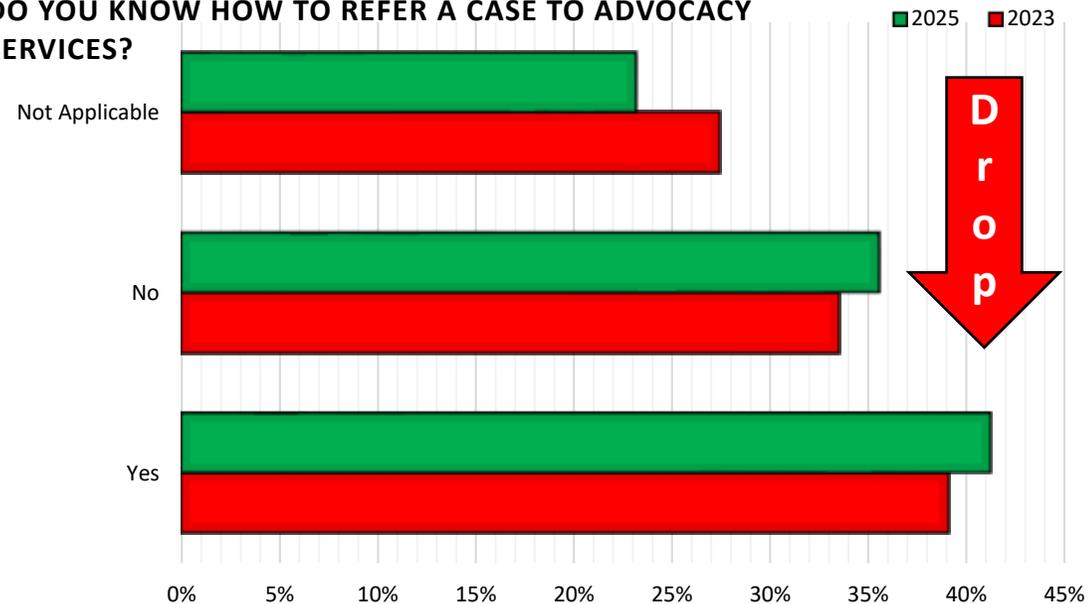


In 2023 a total 35% of responders were either unconfident or not sure in the criteria for responding to advocacy services, this reduced to 30% in 2025.

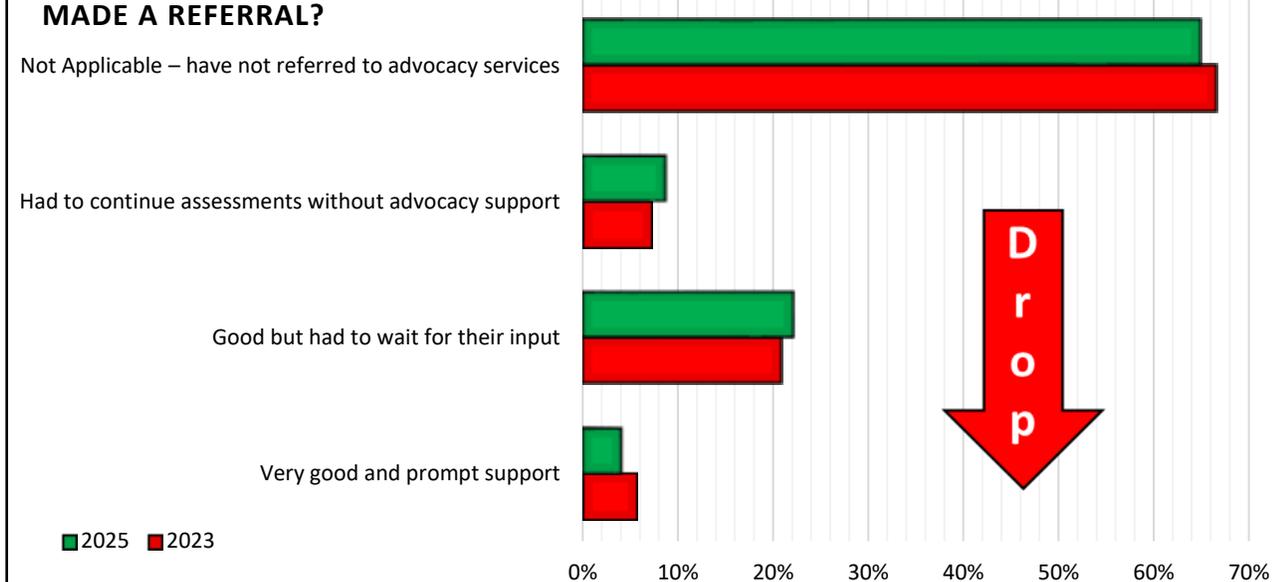
In 2023 34% of respondents do not know how to refer to advocacy services this increased slightly to 36% in 2025.

In 2023 34% of responders have referred to advocacy services this increased slightly to 35% in 2025. In 2023 responders had to wait 28% for input or continued without advocacy support, this increased to 31% in 2025.

## DO YOU KNOW HOW TO REFER A CASE TO ADVOCACY SERVICES?

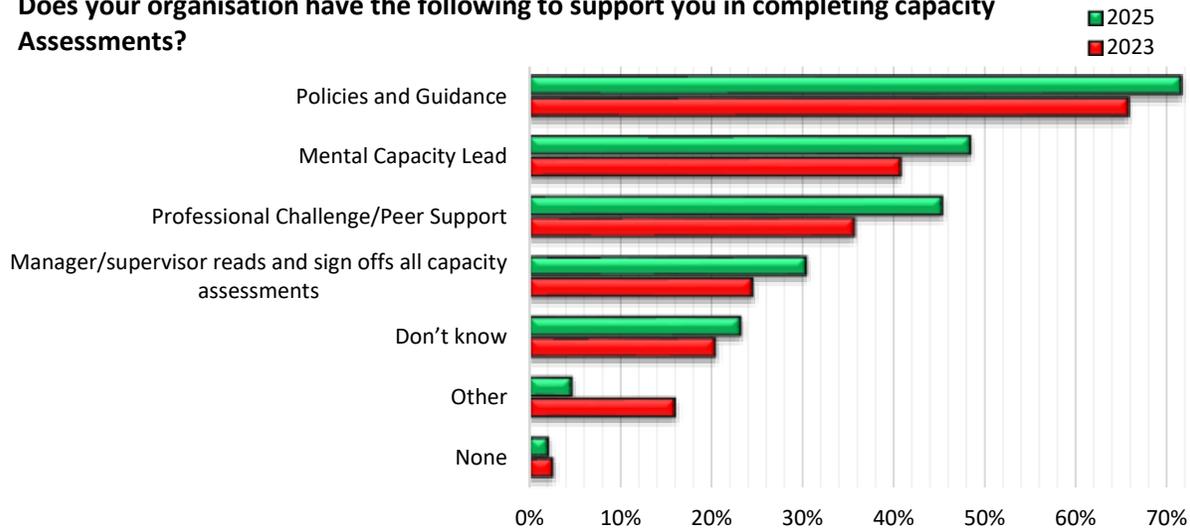


## HOW ACCESSIBLE/TIMELY IS ADVOCACY SUPPORT WHEN YOU HAVE MADE A REFERRAL?



# Training and Additional Support

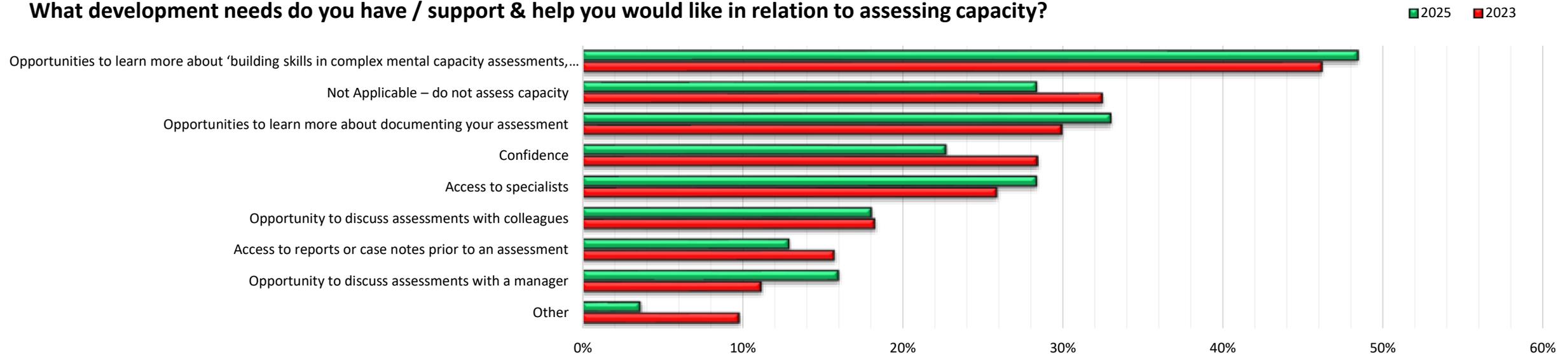
## Does your organisation have the following to support you in completing capacity Assessments?



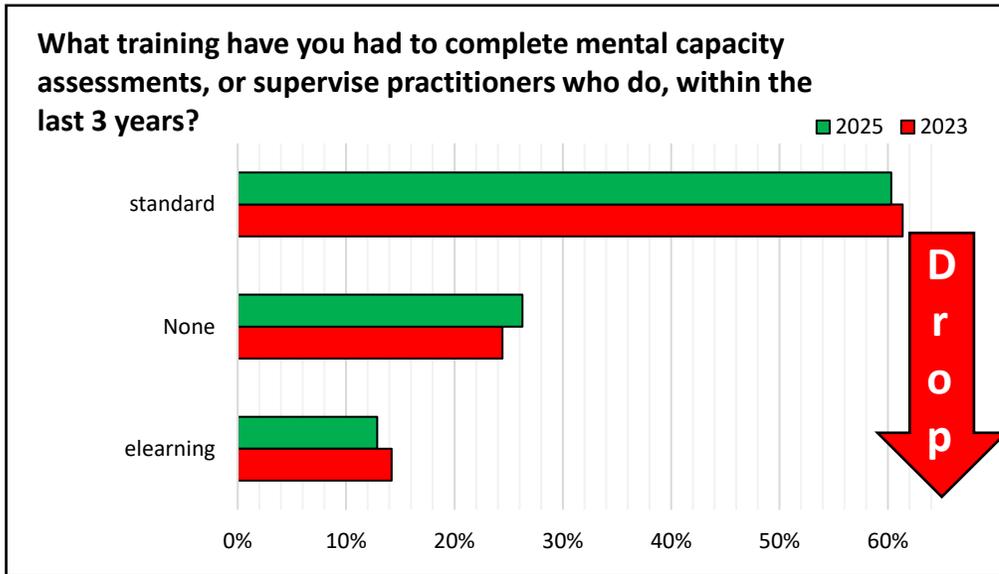
## The 3 main help and support asks (respondents were able to select more than 1):

2023	2025
Opportunities to learn more about 'building skills in complex mental capacity assessments, such as considering executive capacity/complex communication/self-neglect' – 46%	Opportunities to learn more about 'building skills in complex mental capacity assessments, such as considering executive capacity/complex communication/self-neglect' – 48%
Opportunities to learn more about documenting your assessment – 30%	Opportunities to learn more about documenting your assessment – 33%
Confidence – 28%	Access to specialists – 28%

## What development needs do you have / support & help you would like in relation to assessing capacity?



# Training and Additional Support Continued



A free text box was supplied for this answer, which were summarised into 3 categories:

Standard – have had mandatory training/updates, and face to face training

eLearning – online training only

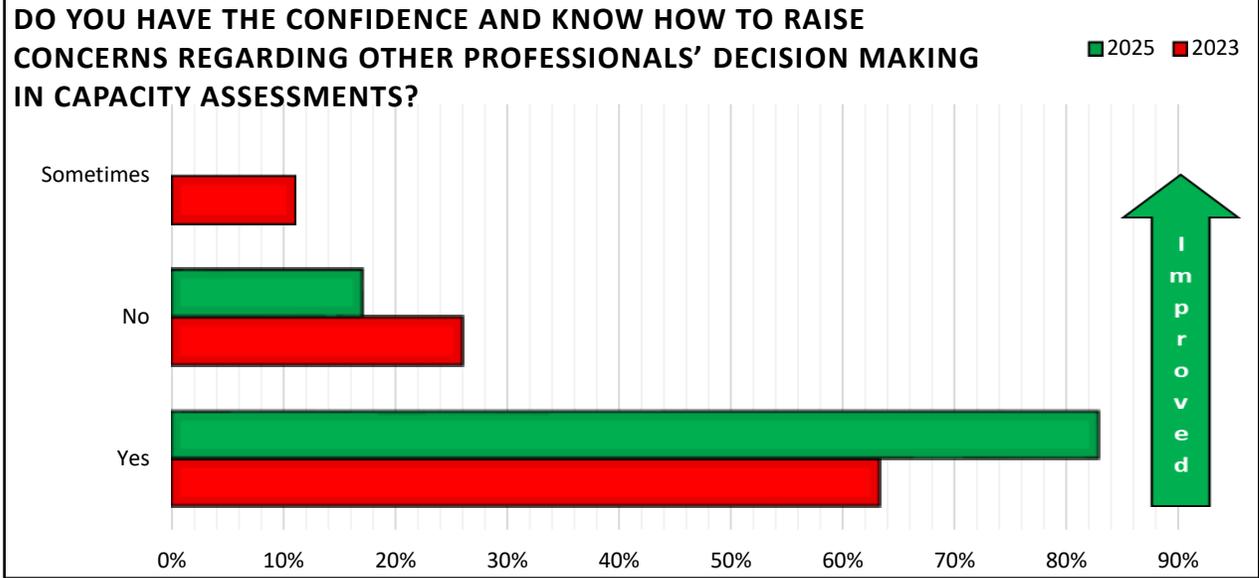
None – have had no training at all

Comparing performance across 2023 and 2025, there has been an increase in no training and decrease in eLearning and standard learning, which means overall the training accessed by the respondents has reduced.

## Learning opportunities provided by the Board since 2023

- Executive Function : understanding fluctuating mental capacity and how best to care with these issues, 81 attendees, [supporting video](#), webinar part of safeguarding adults week 2023.
- MCA Executive Functioning and Alcohol Use Webinar, June 2024, 128 attendees, [recording on website](#).
- Mental Capacity Act - the Inherent Jurisdiction and undue influence, 56 attendees, [recording on website](#), part of safeguarding adults week 2024.
- SAB have a training calendar specific to MCA and have reviewed and updated the MCA webpage, which to date has had 1,619 views which equates (12% of all views) on the website and is the most visited professional page on the website.
- BOB ICB MCA Steering Group, a programme of MCA learning events has been devised by BOB ICB and open to all this is included on the SAB MCA training calendar

# Professional Challenge



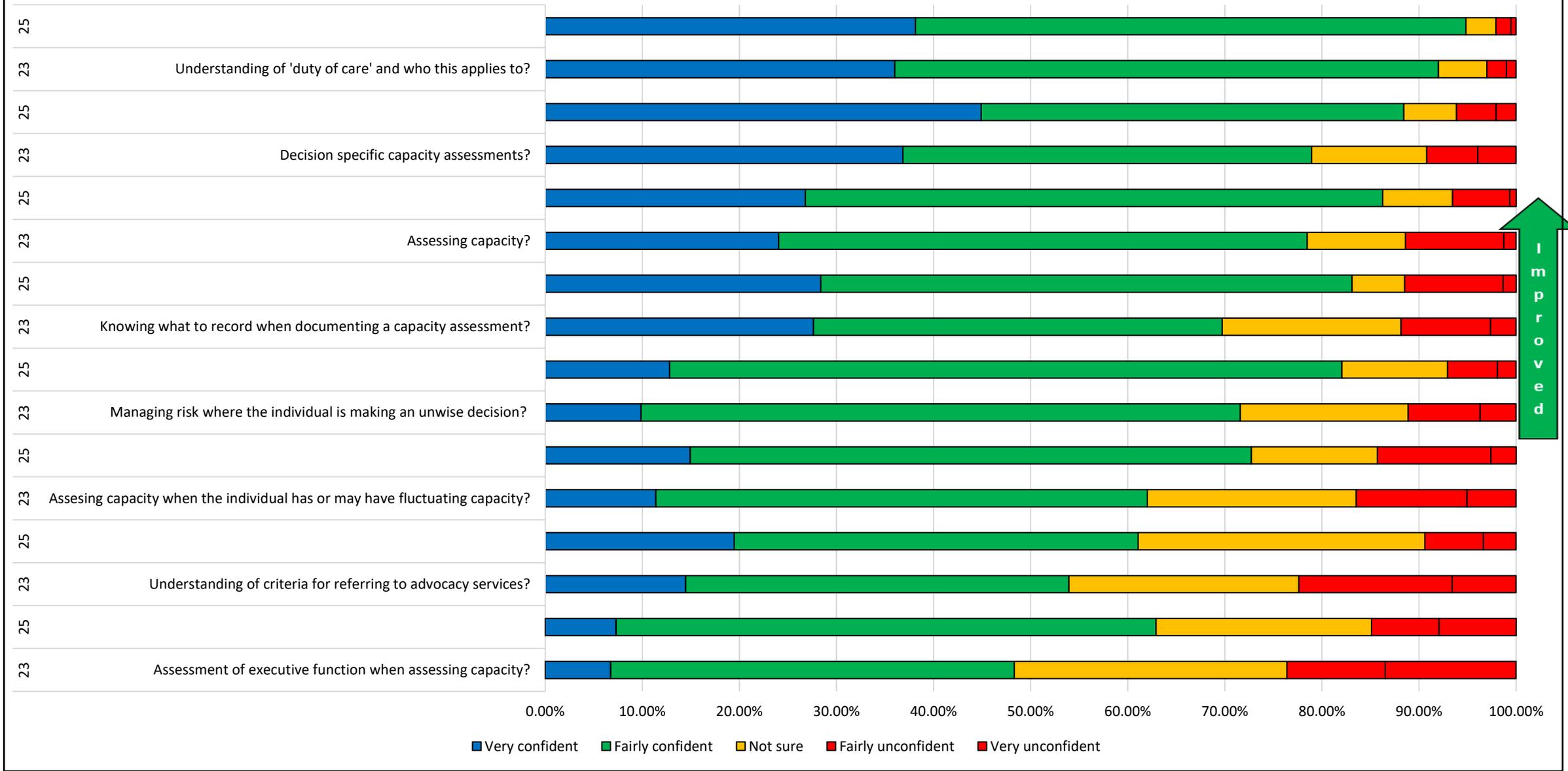
In 2025 83% of respondents stated that they would feel confident to challenge other professionals this is an increase from 63% in 2023.

However, whilst is less than 2023, 17% of respondents stated they do not have the confidence to challenge.

- Those who answered no asked for:
- clearer knowledge on process
  - I would discuss concerns with my line manager - just not sure if that would be the best thing to do or not ...
  - Sometimes I do. Sometimes I feel this is not my place and pass my concerns on to my line manager
  - pathway to do so
  - No idea how to do it
  - More training on complex cases from specialists.
  - Not sure, it's a difficult area to start questioning another professional's decisions.
  - Do not know how/when to challenge colleagues
  - Confidence in the process myself to be able to challenge others.
  - Not sure who are the relevant professionals to contact.



### Comparing Confidence in Practice



Improved

## **Reflections from the Learning and Development Subgroup**

- There has been a general increase in confidence levels across all areas, except for advocacy.
- The Mental Capacity Act (MCA) remains a key training priority for all partner organisations.
- While training provides a foundation, peer support is essential for applying the MCA in complex, real-world scenarios. In response, partners have introduced drop-in sessions to support practitioners.
- Workforce capacity continues to influence the effective application of the MCA.
- Partners are encouraged to identify and share recurring challenges or themes related to MCA implementation with the Learning and Development Subgroup for further consideration.
- Insights from this survey will inform the upcoming Advocacy Audit, scheduled for presentation at the Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) in September 2025.
- The MCA should continue to serve as a 'golden thread' throughout all partnership initiatives.