

# CLIENT SATISFACTION

CLIENT  
SATISFACTION  
SURVEY 2013



 **Victoria  
Legal Aid**  
Lawyers And  
Legal Services



# VLA services – glossary



**Legal advice:** a short session available face to face, or by phone or video conference in some circumstances. The lawyer provides initial advice about the client's legal problem. The clients interviewed for this survey received legal advice services exclusively from lawyers who work for Victoria Legal Aid (VLA salaried lawyers).

**Casework:** includes a range of ongoing services, where the client has completed a legal aid application form and received a grant of aid. The lawyer prepares their legal documents and/or represents them in court. Casework services can be provided by a VLA salaried lawyer or a private lawyer.

**Duty lawyer:** is provided at various courts and tribunals across Victoria to help people who do not have their own lawyer on the day of their hearing. The lawyer may provide information, advise the client about their court appearance and/or represent them in court, but they don't run the client's case. Duty lawyers are mostly VLA salaried lawyers or can be private lawyers who are paid by VLA to undertake duty lawyer work.

**Roundtable Dispute Management (RDM):** is provided at an early stage in family law matters, with the aim of avoiding the need to go to court. It involves helping parents who are going through a separation or divorce to resolve disputes about parenting or child support issues. RDM is also provided during court proceedings to help settle the dispute before a final hearing in appropriate matters. Clients using RDM may be represented by a VLA salaried lawyer or a private lawyer.

**Legal Help:** is a VLA phone service that any member of the public can call for free information about the law and the services VLA provides. This service is available in a range of languages, as well as through a translation service and is provided by Victoria Legal Aid telephone advisers.



## VLA law types – glossary

**Civil:** Our civil law program helps people with legal issues such as debt, discrimination, fines, guardianship, migration, social security, veteran's affairs, tenancy and crime compensation.

**Family:** Our family law program helps people with legal issues such as family breakdown, parenting disputes, child support, child protection and family violence.

In the survey we distinguish between whether a service has been received by family law clients or by civil clients. Legal Help, which is a telephone information and advice service, can cover almost any type of law matter.



# Abbreviations used in this report

**n:** sample size

**SR:** Standard response

**MR:** Multiple response

**N/A-D/N:** Not applicable/didn't know

**RDM:** Roundtable Dispute Management



# Background

Colmar Brunton was commissioned by Victoria Legal Aid (VLA) to conduct research into client satisfaction with VLA in the areas of family and civil law for legal advice, casework and duty lawyer services.

Additionally client satisfaction was assessed for the Roundtable Dispute Management (RDM) and Legal Help services.

The overall objectives of the research were to:

- find out more about clients and their perceptions of VLA services
- help VLA make decisions about the services provided.



# Methodology

In May 2013, Colmar Brunton conducted n=606 x 15 minute Computer Assisted Telephone Interviews (CATI) with a sample of VLA clients. All respondents to the survey had used one or more of the following VLA services:

- **Legal advice:** family law n=86, civil law n=87
- **Casework:** family law n=118, civil law n=60
- **Duty lawyer:** family law n=101, civil law n=85
- **Roundtable Dispute Management:** n=56
- **Legal Help telephone service:** n=100.

Respondents who completed a survey but did not answer a particular question are excluded from the tabulation of results and calculation of statistics for that question. Percentages are generally rounded to whole numbers. Some percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.



# Comparison with previous surveys

When comparing results with previous surveys, please note that the sample population surveyed has varied with each year.

- In 2011, VLA surveyed clients who had received **family, civil and criminal** legal advice, duty lawyer, casework and **Roundtable Dispute Management** services.
- In 2012, VLA limited its survey to clients who had received **criminal** law legal advice, duty lawyer and casework services. The survey also included clients who had used the **Legal Help** telephone information service and had ordered **Community Legal Education** publications.
- In 2013, VLA limited its survey to clients who had received **family and civil** legal advice, duty lawyer, casework and **Roundtable Dispute Management** services. The survey also included clients who had used **Legal Help** telephone information services.

## A note about the services ...



When examining the level of satisfaction with each service it's worth noting the difference between the various services.

Some of the services, such as Legal Help, legal advice and duty lawyer are short services and are limited in the extent of help they can give to the client. It is worth noting that some clients of these services may not have been eligible for further, more intensive service from Victoria Legal Aid, and that may influence their satisfaction with the service they received.

Throughout the survey we ask a number of different questions, relating to the client's experience, including satisfaction with outcome, how helpful they found the service and how confident they felt to sort out future legal issues in order to gain a detailed picture of the client's experience.





# Key Findings

# What we found ...



- The majority of clients were satisfied with legal aid services.
- However, satisfaction varied depending on the type of service received and the area of law.
- Civil law clients were more likely to be satisfied with services compared to family law clients.
- Clients were more likely to be satisfied with more intensive casework services than with less intensive legal advice or duty lawyer services. This is consistent with previous surveys.
- Overall satisfaction had decreased in the areas surveyed compared to the last time they were surveyed in 2011 (2012 for Legal Help). While overall satisfaction had decreased, the performance on some questions had improved since 2011 in some areas.
- The number of clients who were willing to recommend legal aid services remains high, despite overall satisfaction being lower this year.



# Suggestions for improvement ...

When asked how Victoria Legal Aid could improve their service, clients told us:

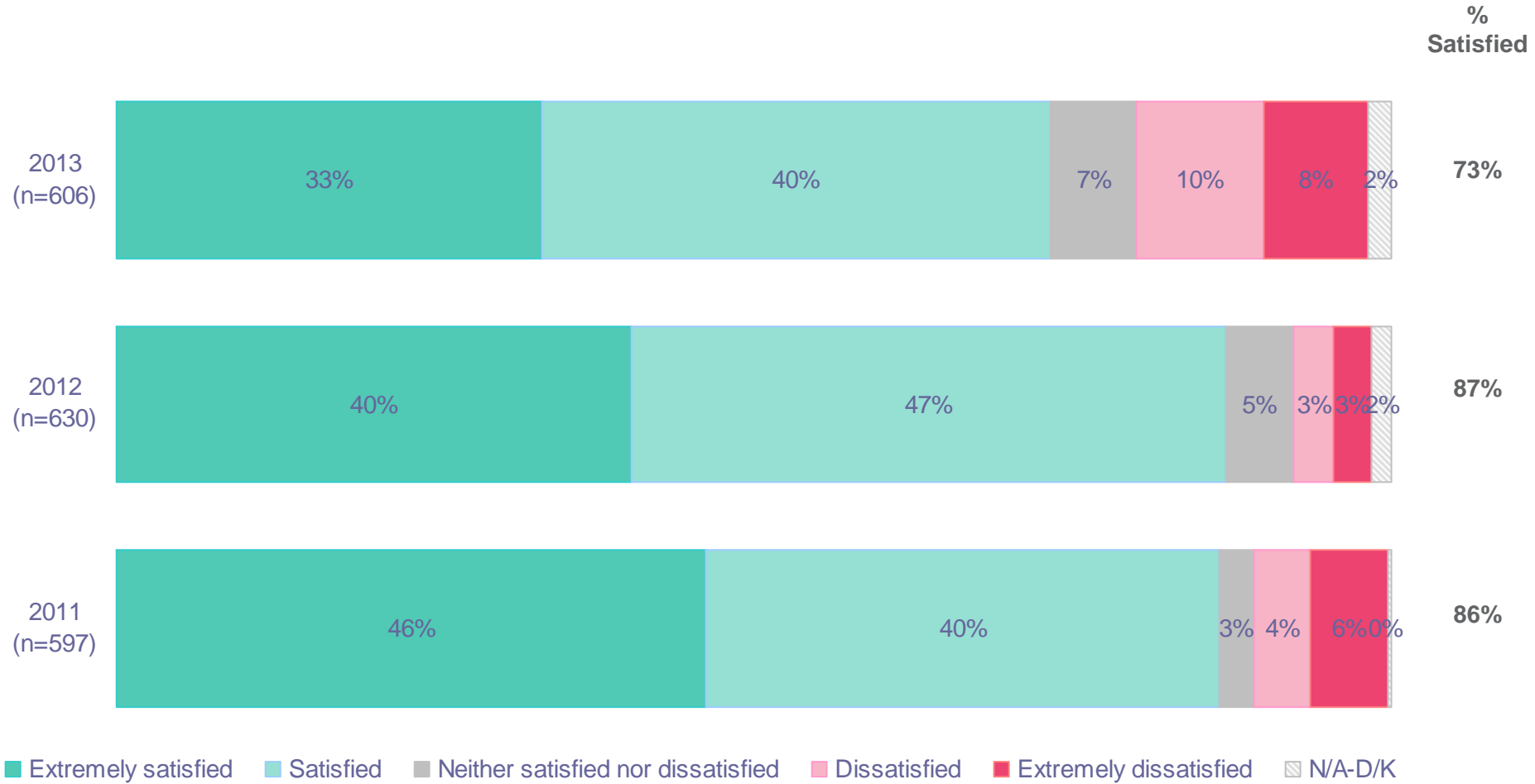
- that we should have more resources (more staff and less waiting)
- that we should take better care of our clients (care about clients / be more helpful / put in more effort when representing me)
- that we should communicate better (return calls quicker / keep in contact / communicate / follow up more).



# Satisfaction with VLA and VLA services

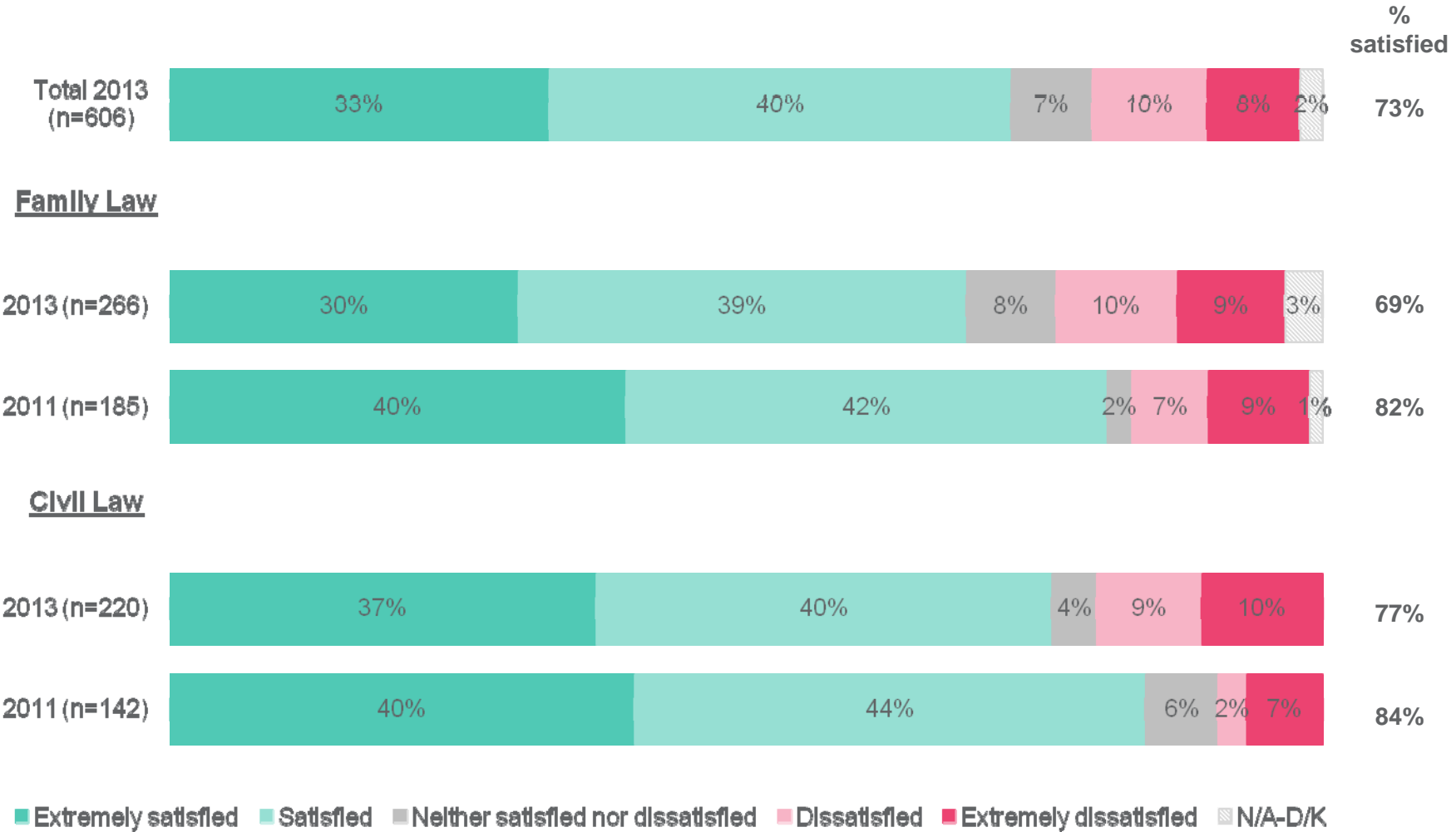


In 2013, 73% of clients were either extremely satisfied or satisfied with Legal Aid. This is a decrease in satisfaction since the previous surveys.



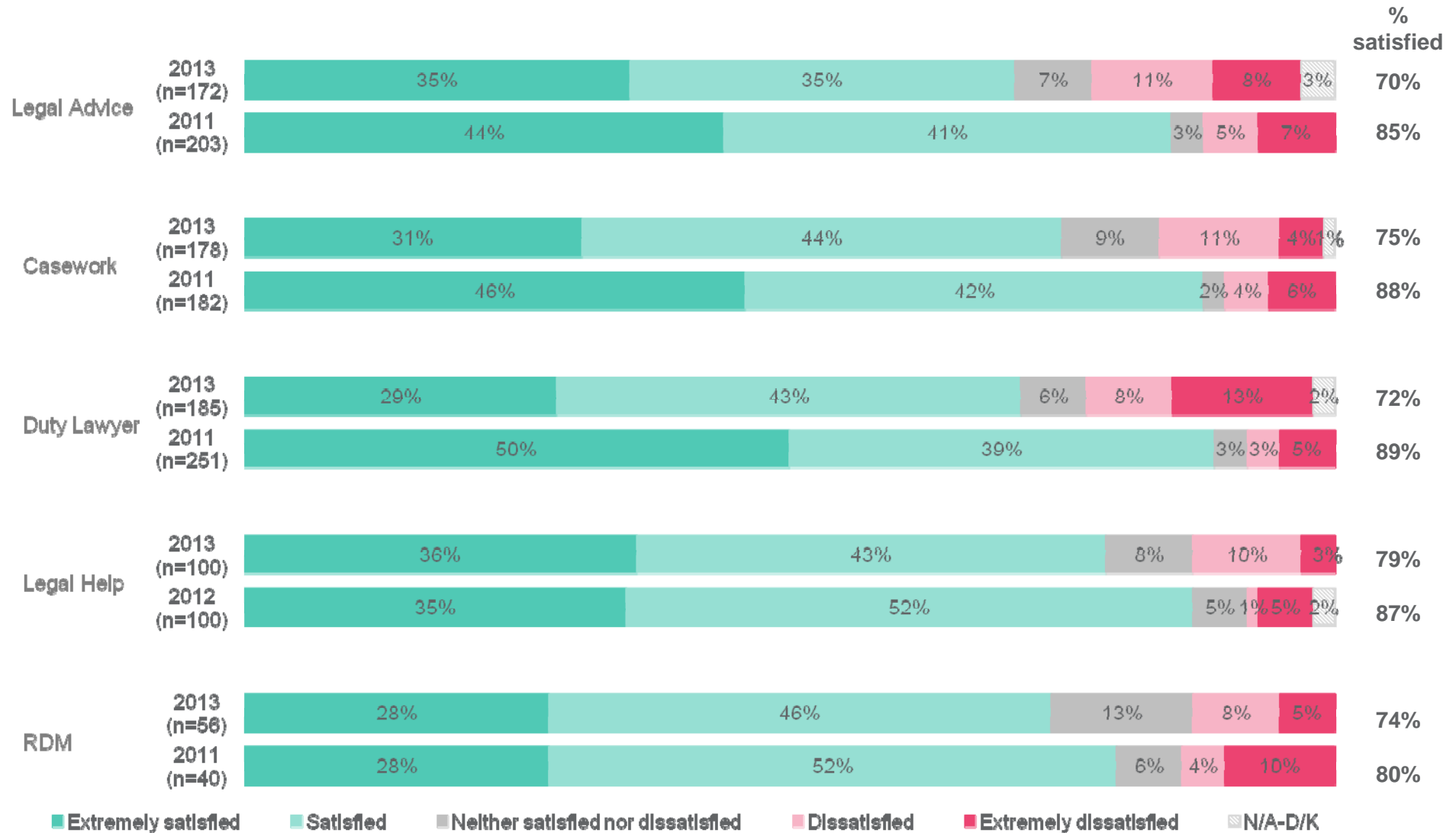


# In 2013, overall satisfaction was 77% for civil law clients and 69% for family law clients.





For all service areas, the proportion of people satisfied ranged from 70–79%, a decrease from 2011 results.



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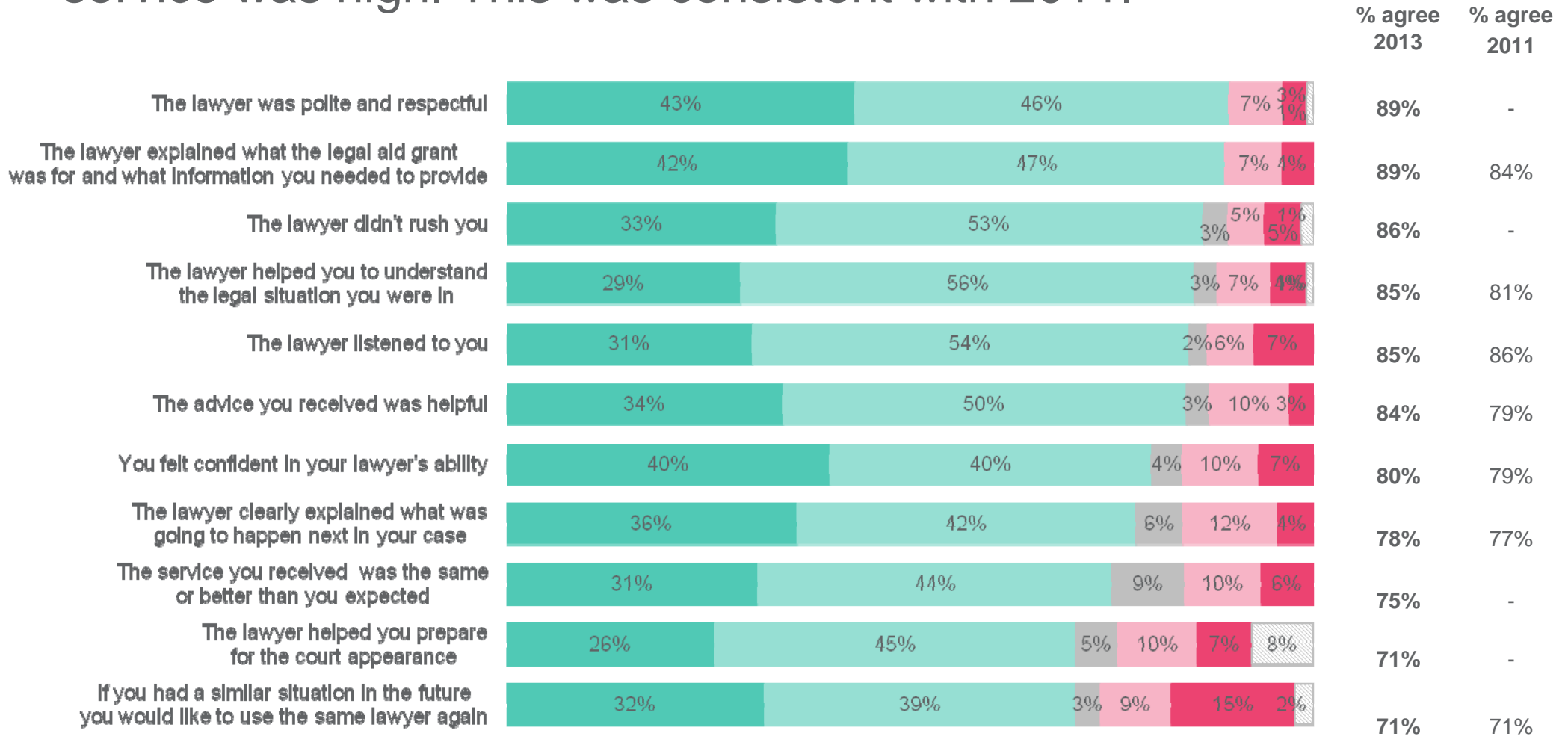
# Breakdown by service areas





# Casework: family law

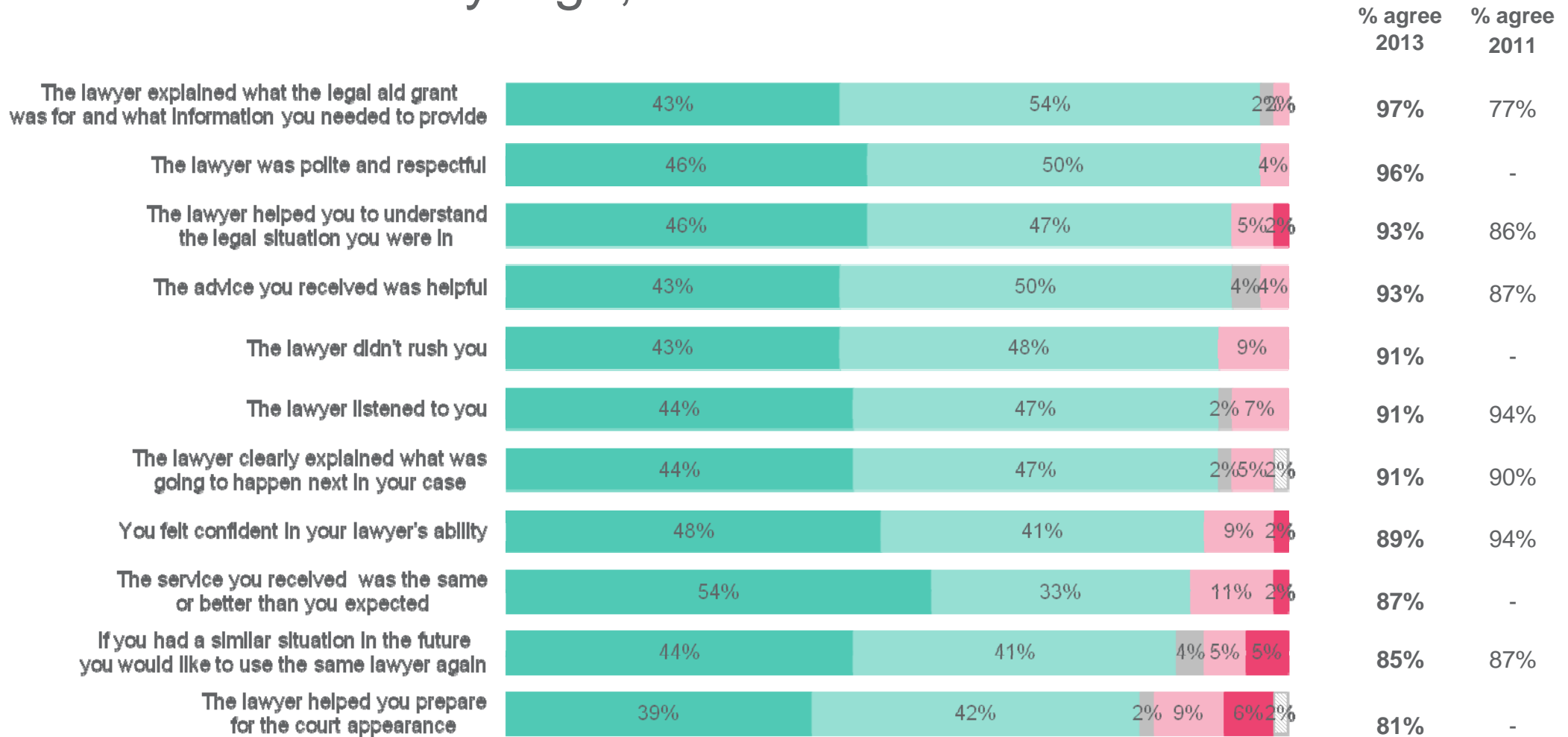
Among family law clients, satisfaction with the casework service was high. This was consistent with 2011.





# Casework: civil law

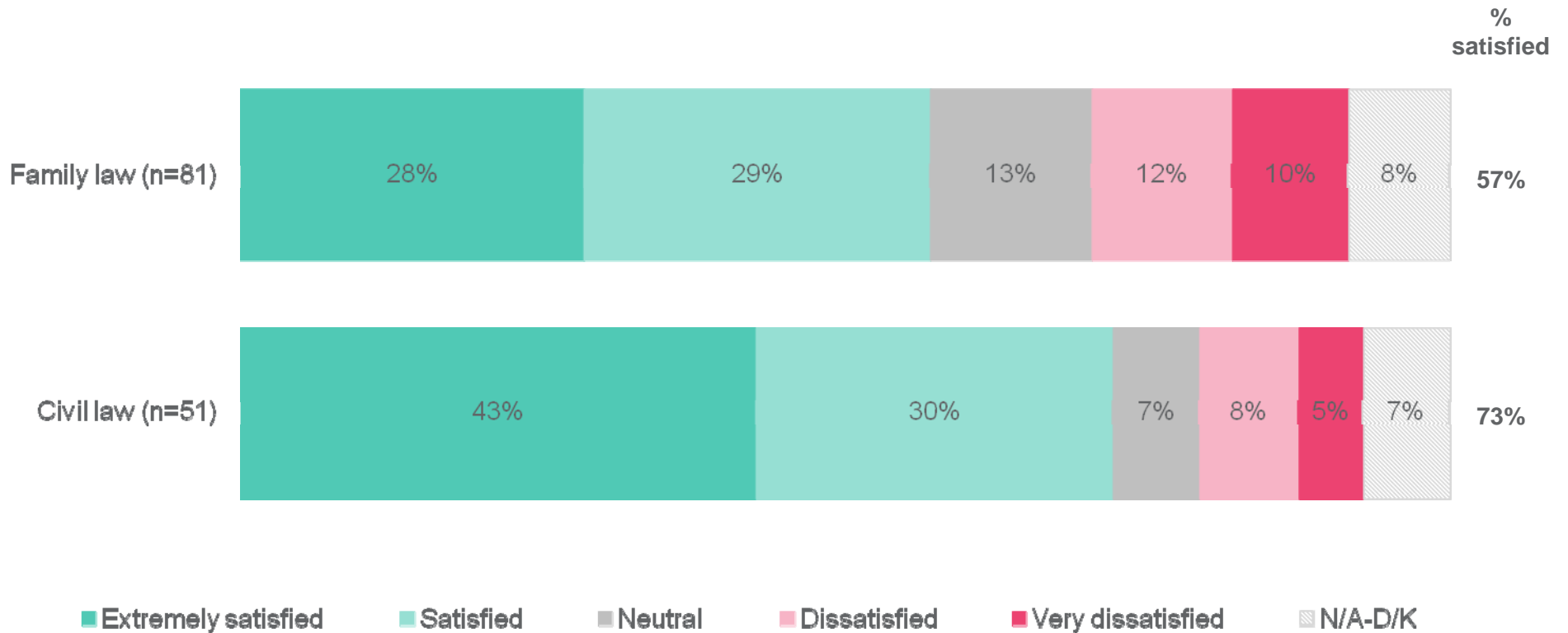
## Among civil law clients, satisfaction with the casework service was very high, consistent with 2011.



■ Strongly Agree  
 ■ Agree  
 ■ Neither agree nor disagree  
 ■ Disagree  
 ■ Strongly Disagree  
 ■ (DNRO) N/A-D/K



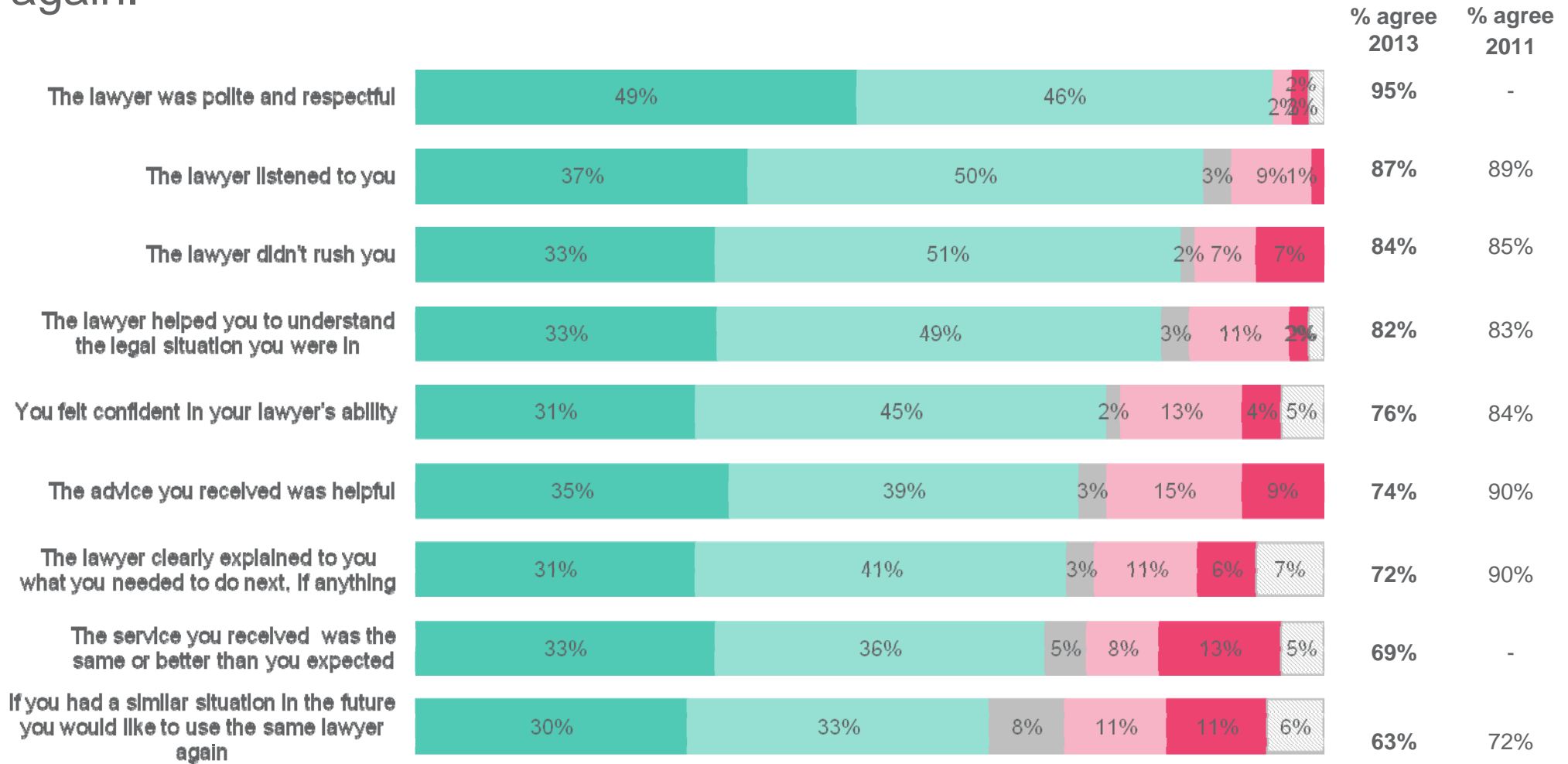
Among casework clients, civil law clients were more likely to be satisfied with the outcome of their case than family law clients.





# Legal advice: family law

Among family law clients, attitudes towards the legal advice service were positive and 63% said they would like to use the same lawyer again.

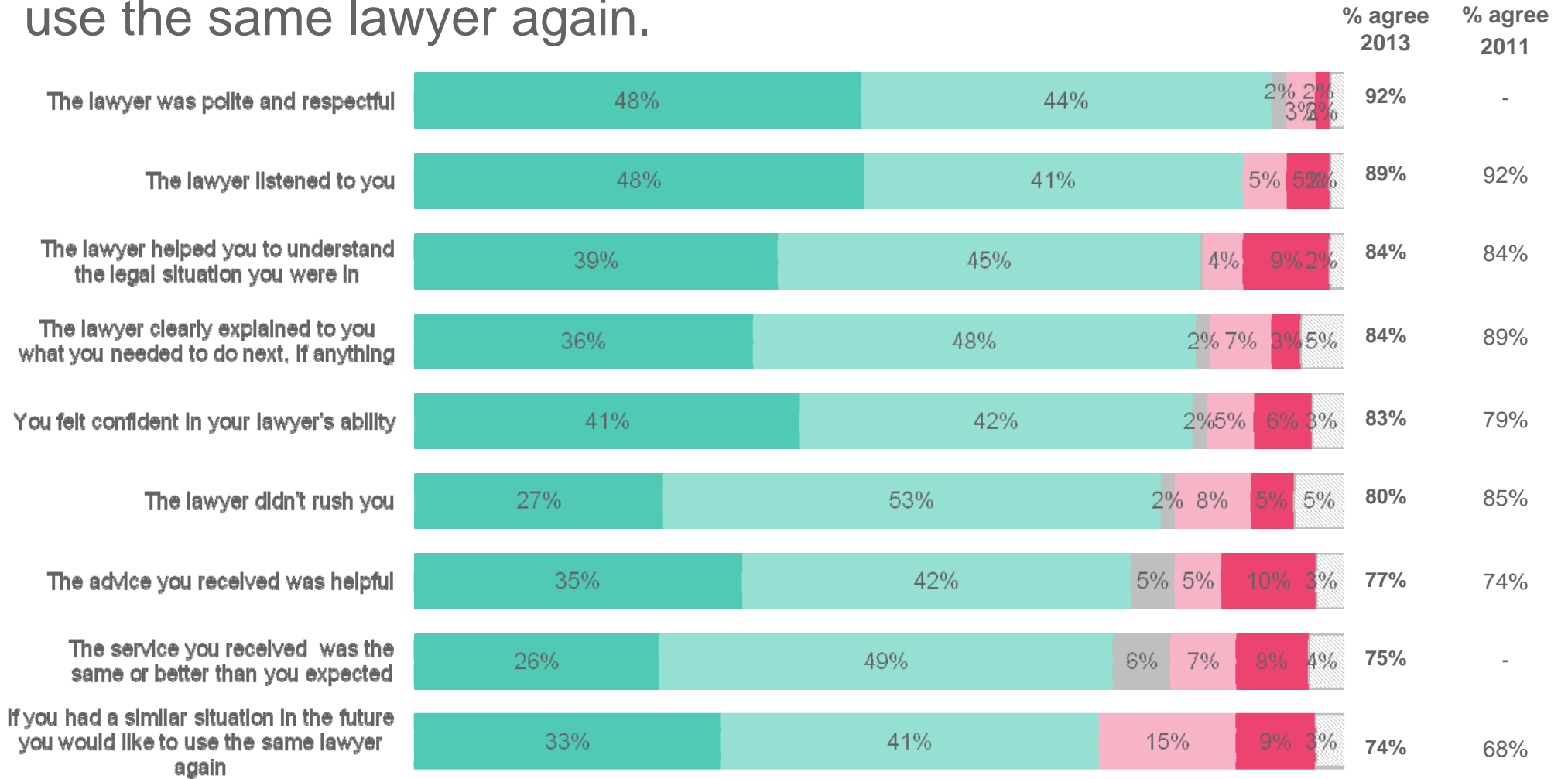


Strongly Agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree N/A-D/K



# Legal advice: civil law

Among civil law clients, attitudes towards the legal advice service were positive with 74% indicating they would like to use the same lawyer again.

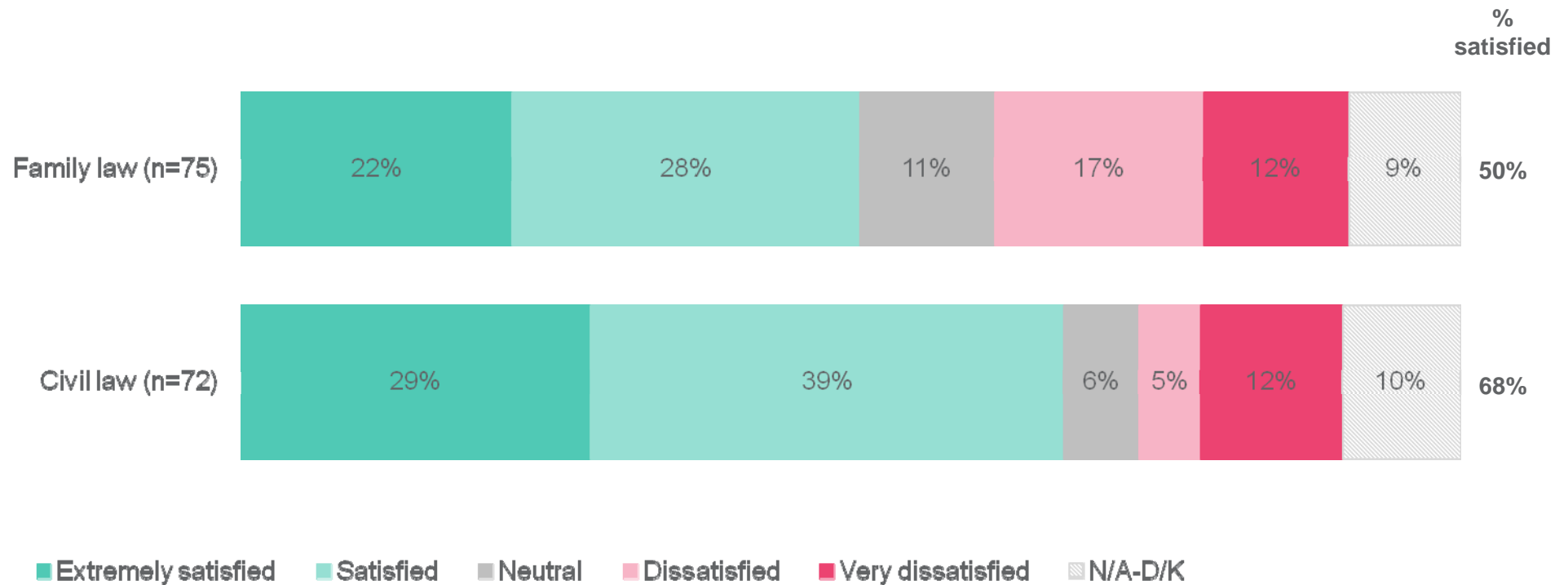


Strongly Agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree (DNRO) N/A-D/K



# Legal advice

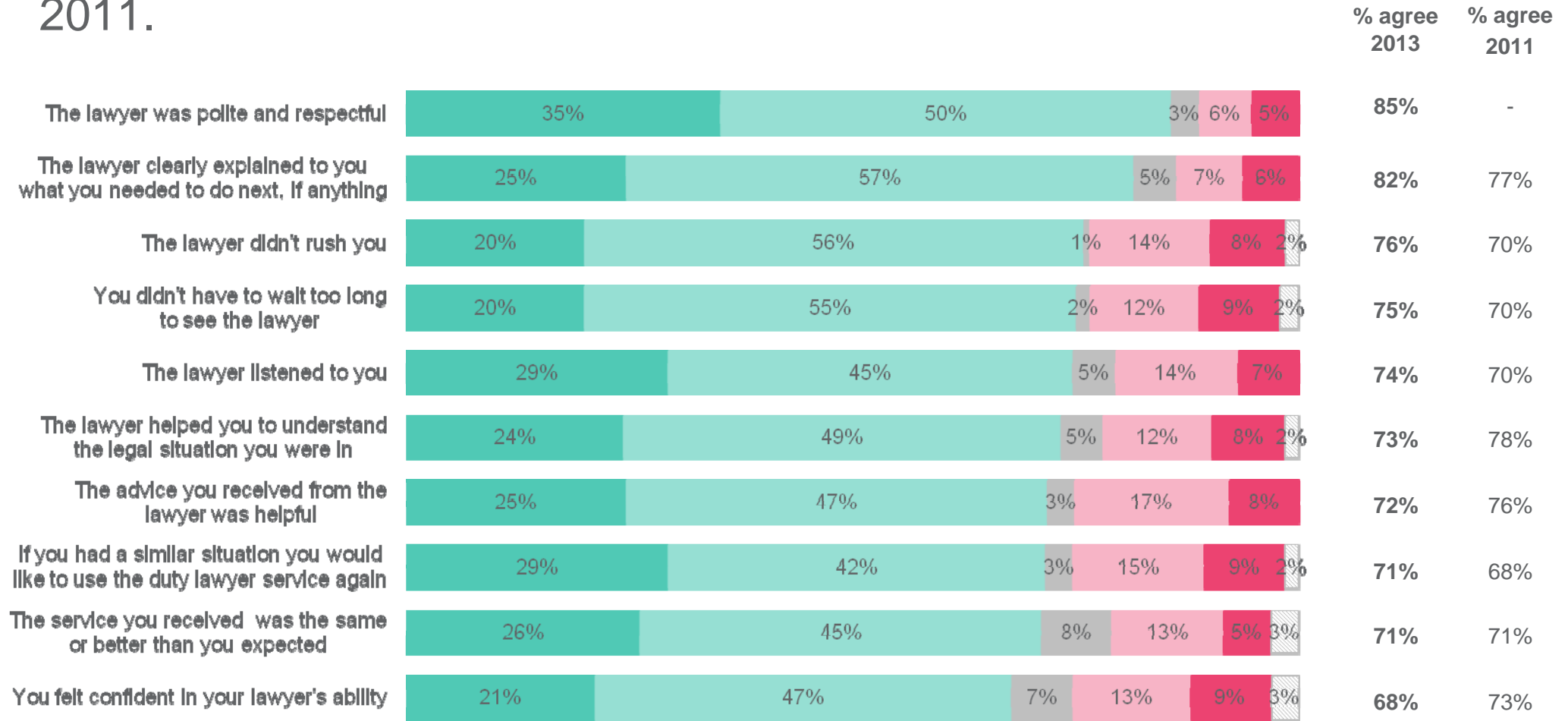
Civil law clients who used the legal advice service reported higher levels of satisfaction with the outcome of their case than family law clients.





# Duty lawyer: family law

Family law clients who accessed the duty lawyer service were most likely to agree that the lawyer was polite and respectful. Fewer clients said they were confident in their lawyer's ability compared to 2011.

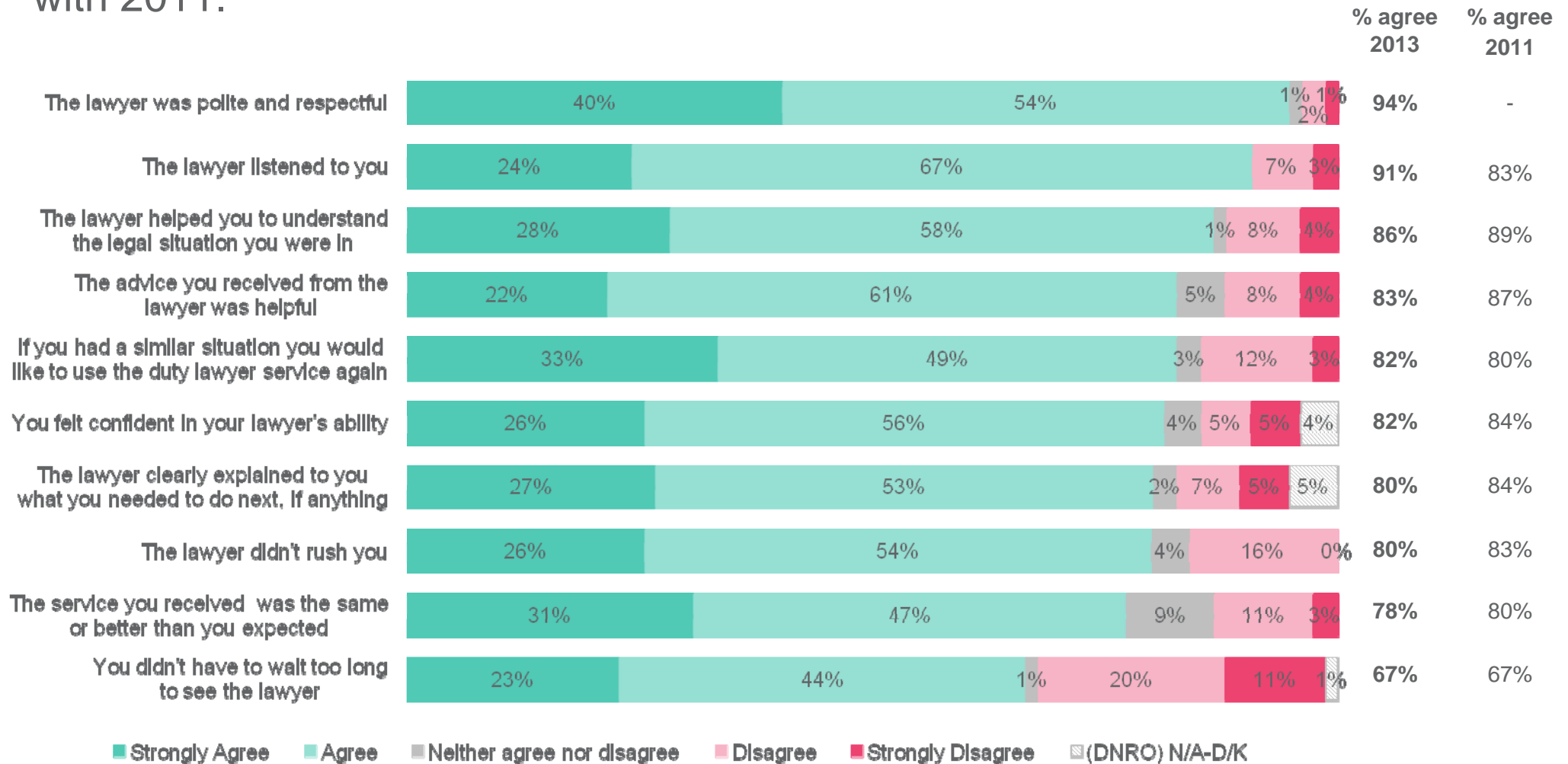


■ Strongly Agree  
 ■ Agree  
 ■ Neither agree nor disagree  
 ■ Disagree  
 ■ Strongly Disagree  
 ■ (DNRO) N/A-D/K



# Duty lawyer: civil law

The majority of civil law clients who used the duty lawyer service found the lawyer to be polite and respectful. Fewer clients agreed that they didn't have to wait too long to see the lawyer, consistent with 2011.

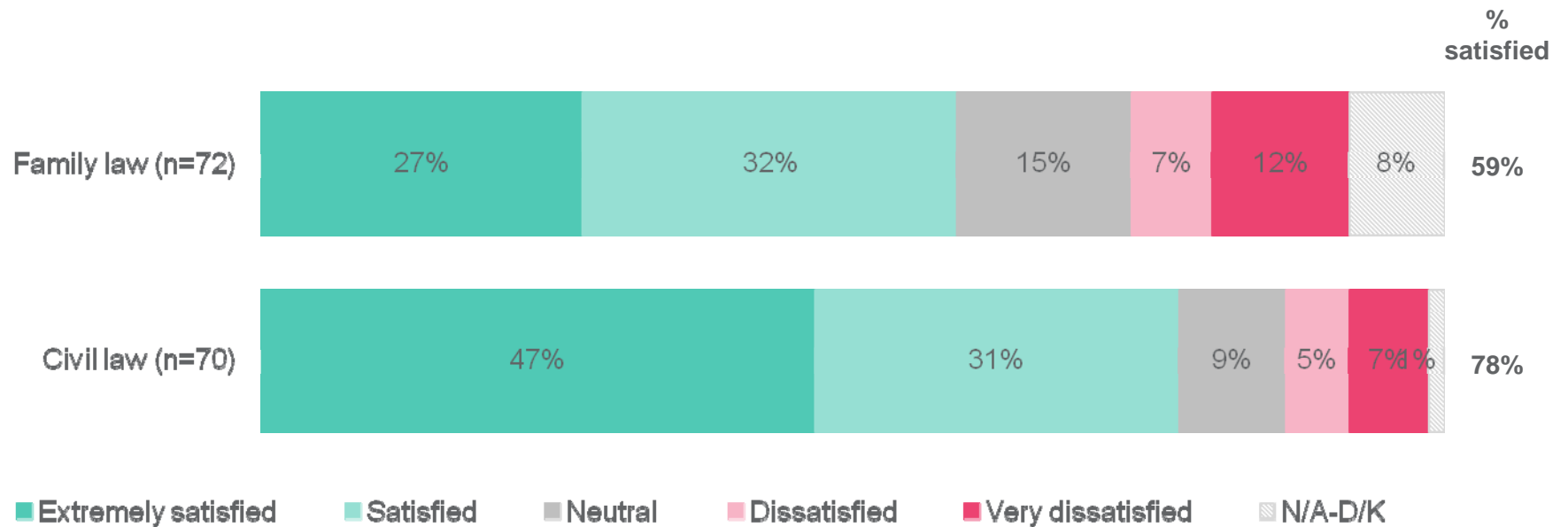






# Duty lawyer

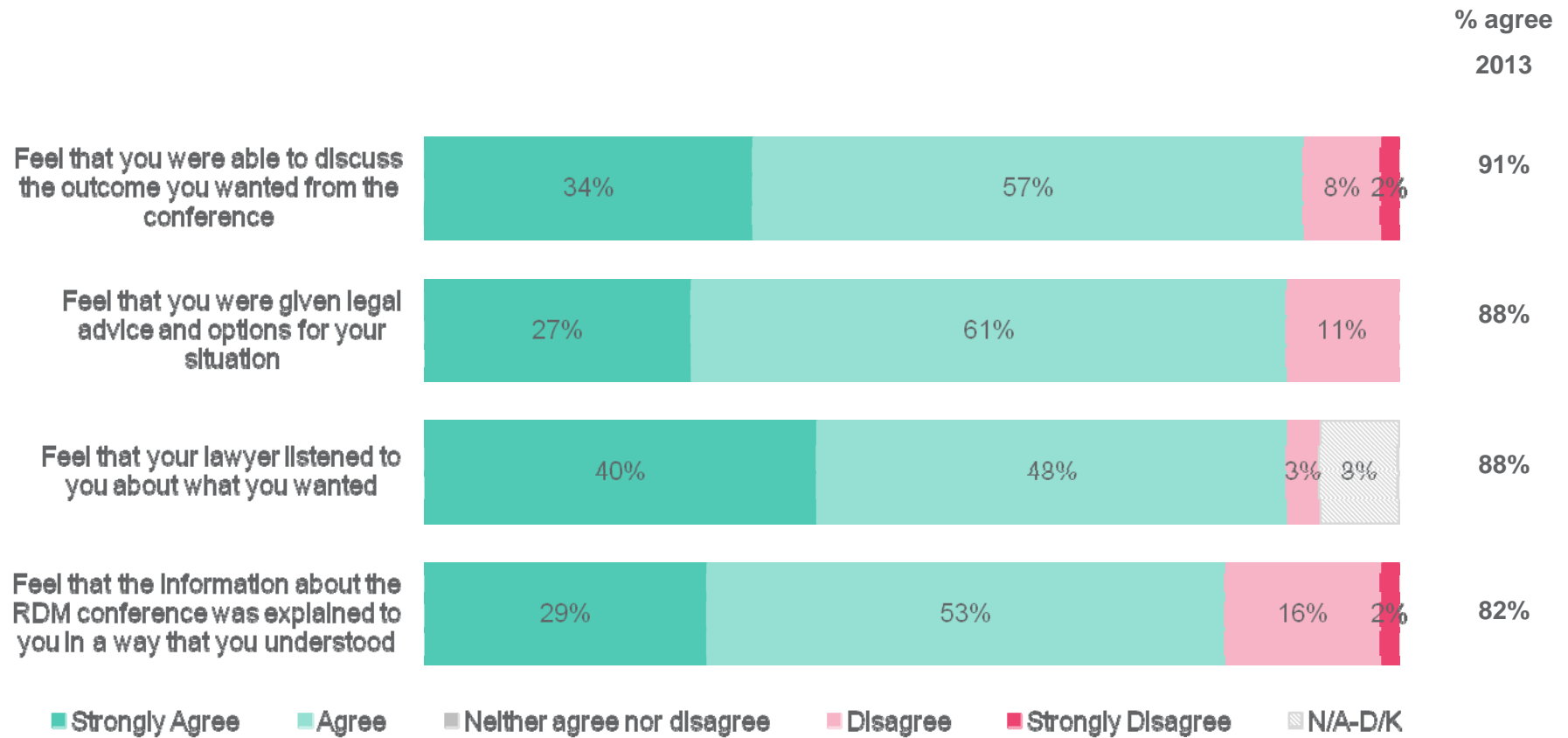
Of those who accessed the duty lawyer service, a higher proportion of civil law clients were satisfied with the outcome of their legal problem compared to family law clients.





# RDM: lawyer (prior)

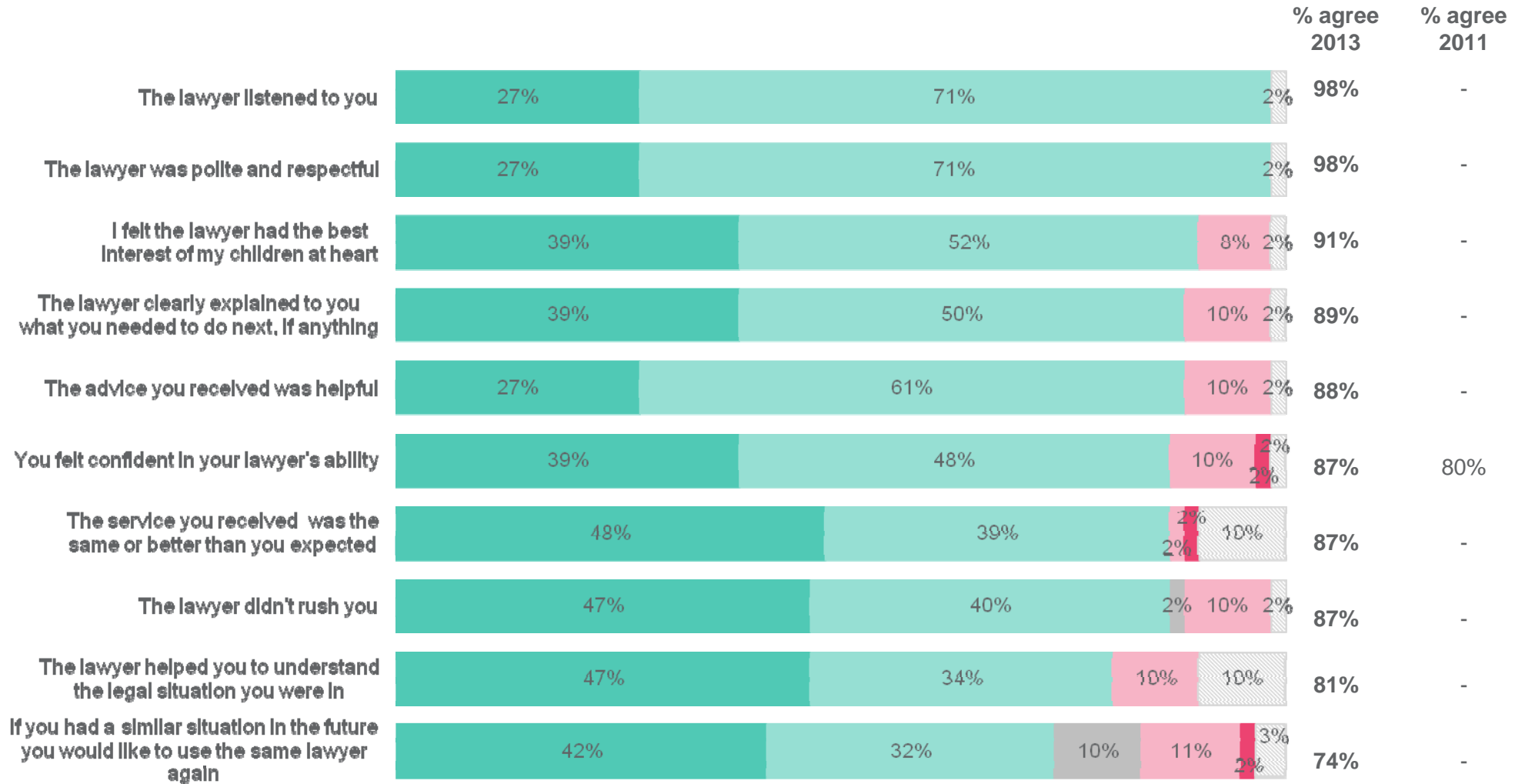
Most clients were satisfied with the service provided by the lawyer prior to the RDM conference.





# RDM: lawyer (during and after)

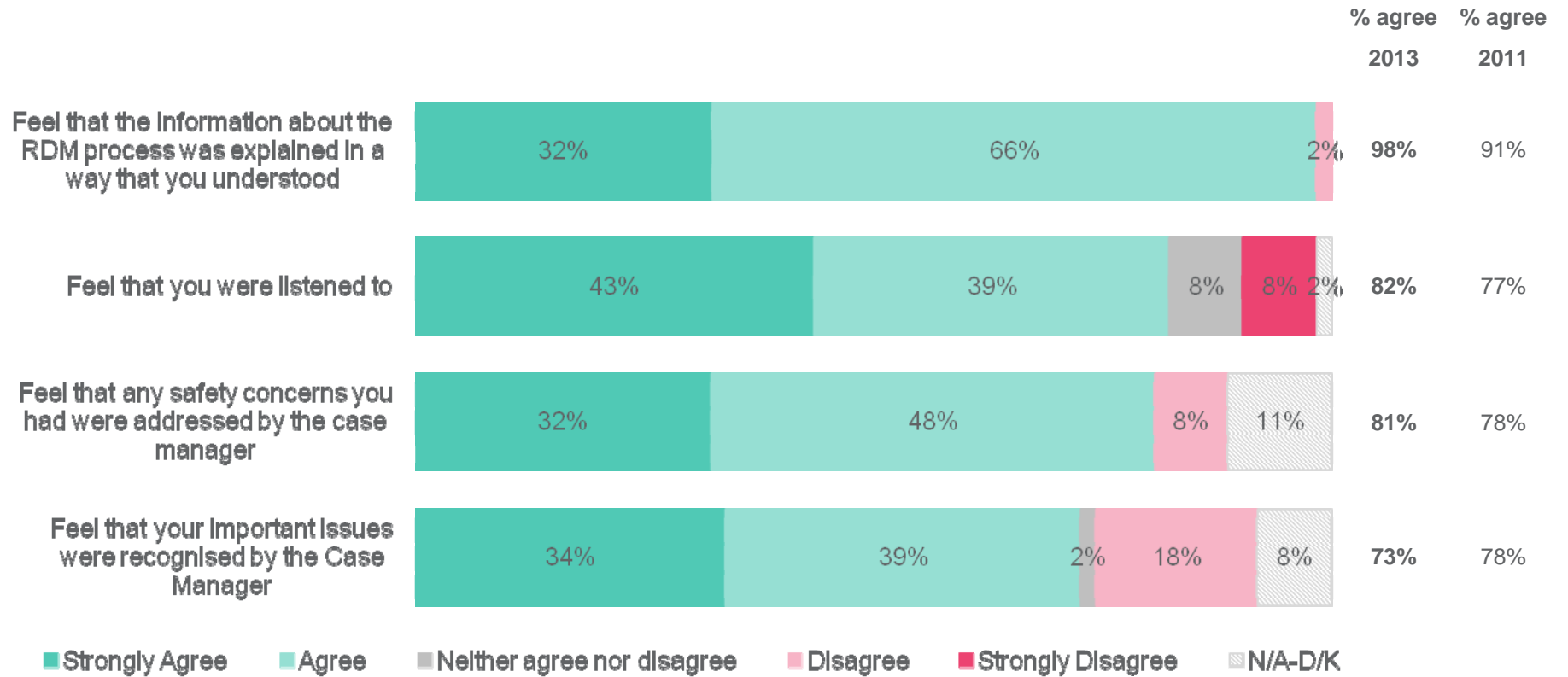
Among RDM clients, 98% agreed that the lawyer listened to them and that the lawyer was polite and respectful.





# RDM: case manager (prior)

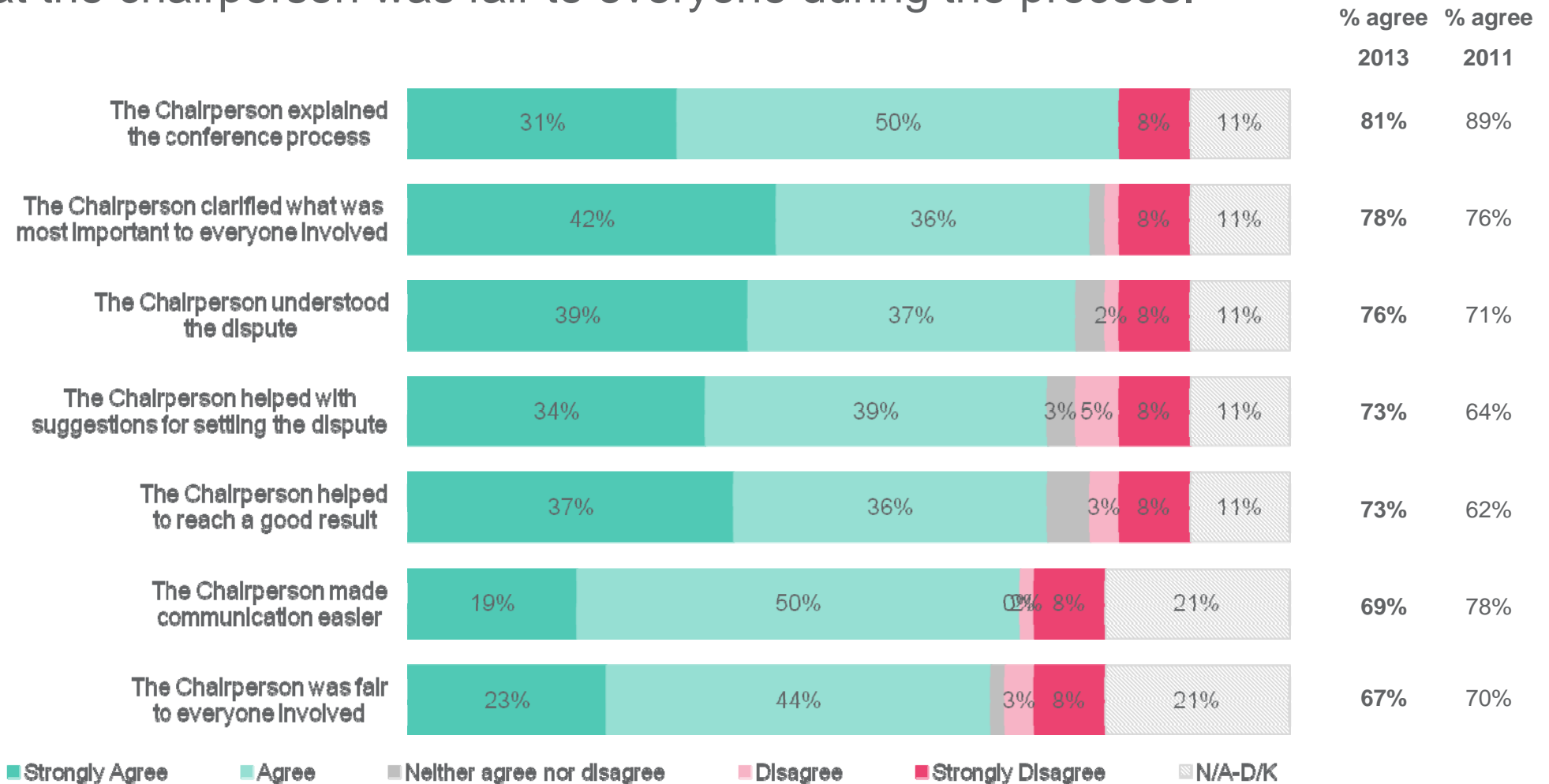
Almost all RDM clients agreed that the case manager explained the RDM process in a way they could understand, an increase on 2011. A higher proportion of clients reported that they felt they were listened to, compared to 2011.





# RDM: conference chairperson

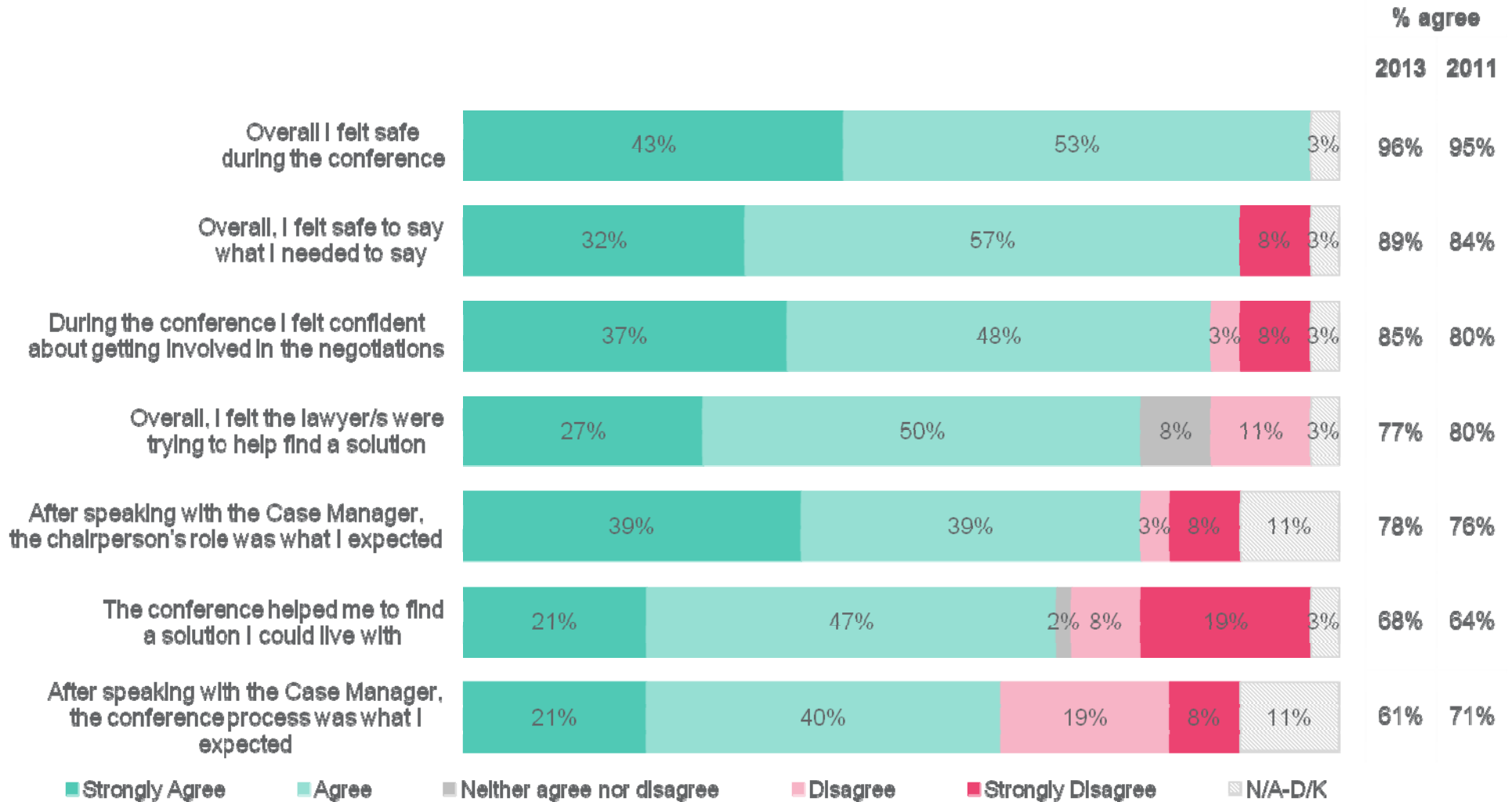
Compared to 2011, RDM clients were more likely to agree that the chairperson helped them reach a good result. Fewer clients agreed that the chairperson was fair to everyone during the process.





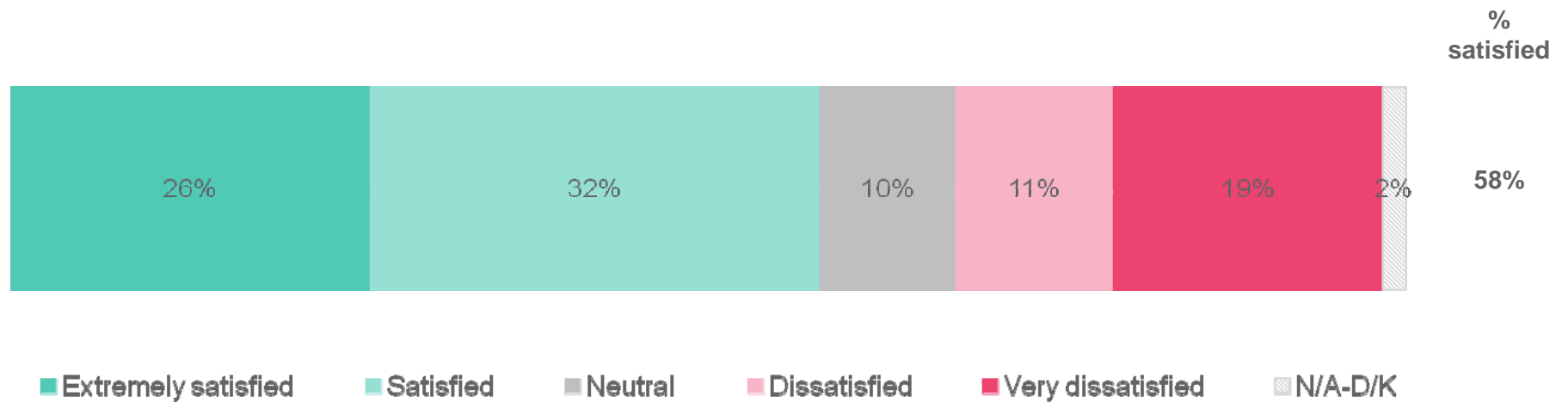
# RDM: conference experience

Most RDM clients felt safe during the conference process, and more agreed that they felt confident about getting involved in negotiations compared with RDM clients in 2011. However, fewer clients said that the conference process was what they expected.





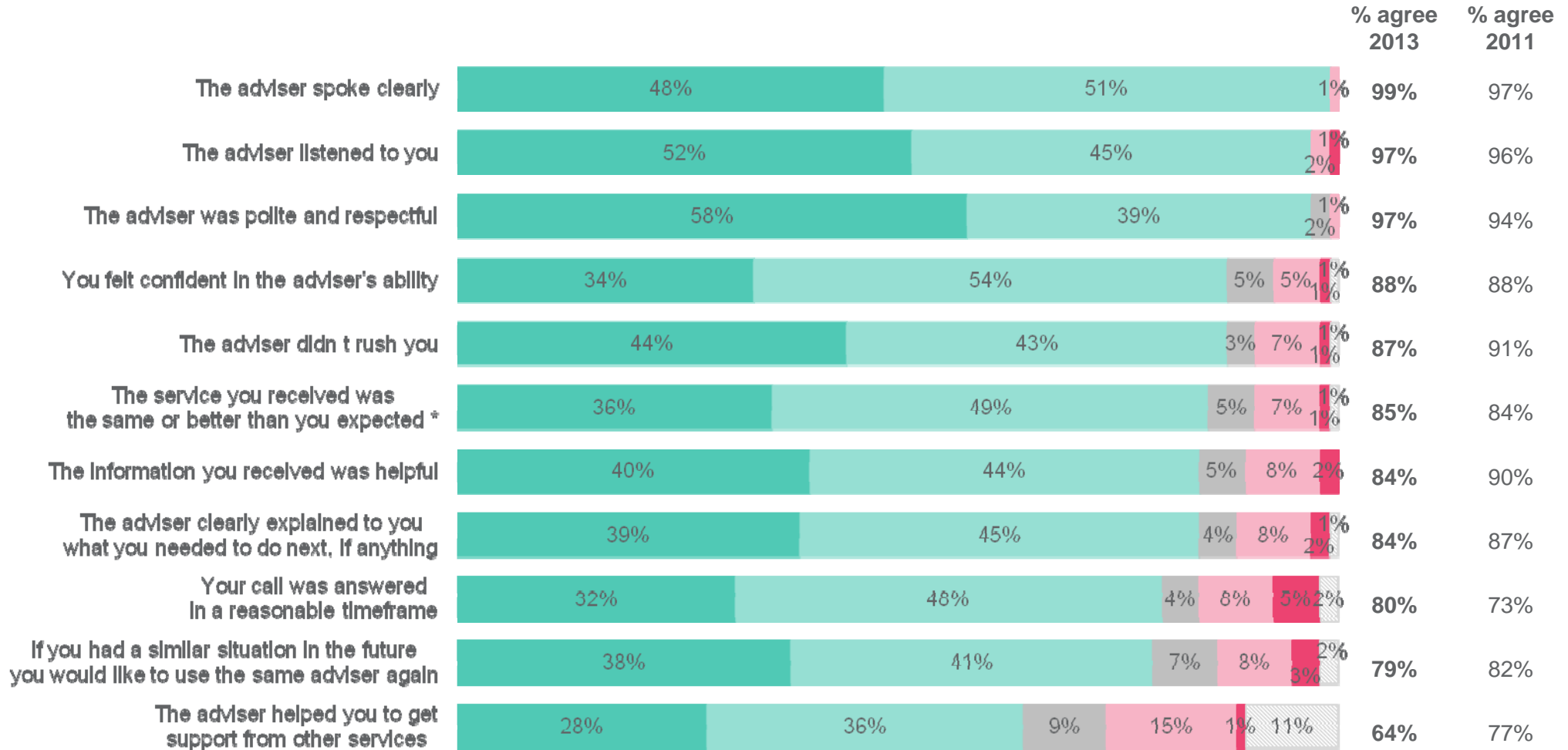
Over half of RDM clients were satisfied with the outcome of their conference.





# Legal Help

## Nearly all users of the Legal Help service reported the advisor spoke clearly, listened and was polite.





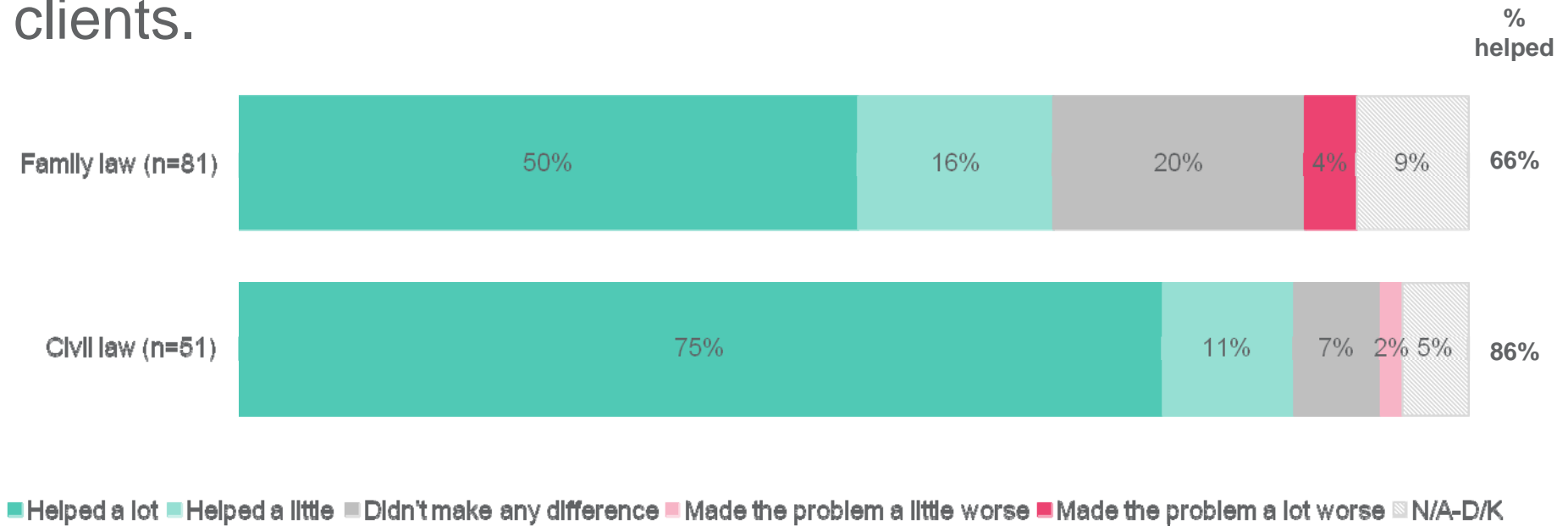


# Extent of help



# Casework

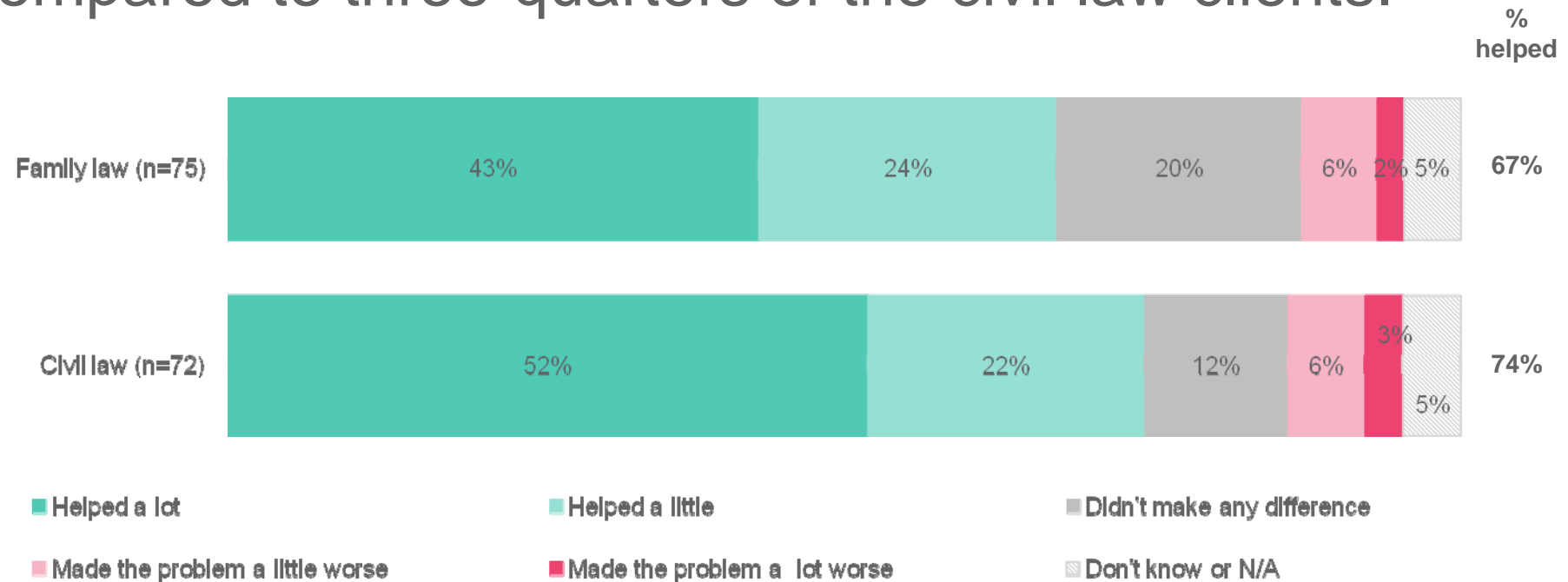
A significantly higher proportion of civil law clients using the casework service said that the service helped them to sort out their legal problem compared to family law clients.





## Legal advice

Two-thirds of family law clients said the legal advice service helped them with their legal problem compared to three-quarters of the civil law clients.





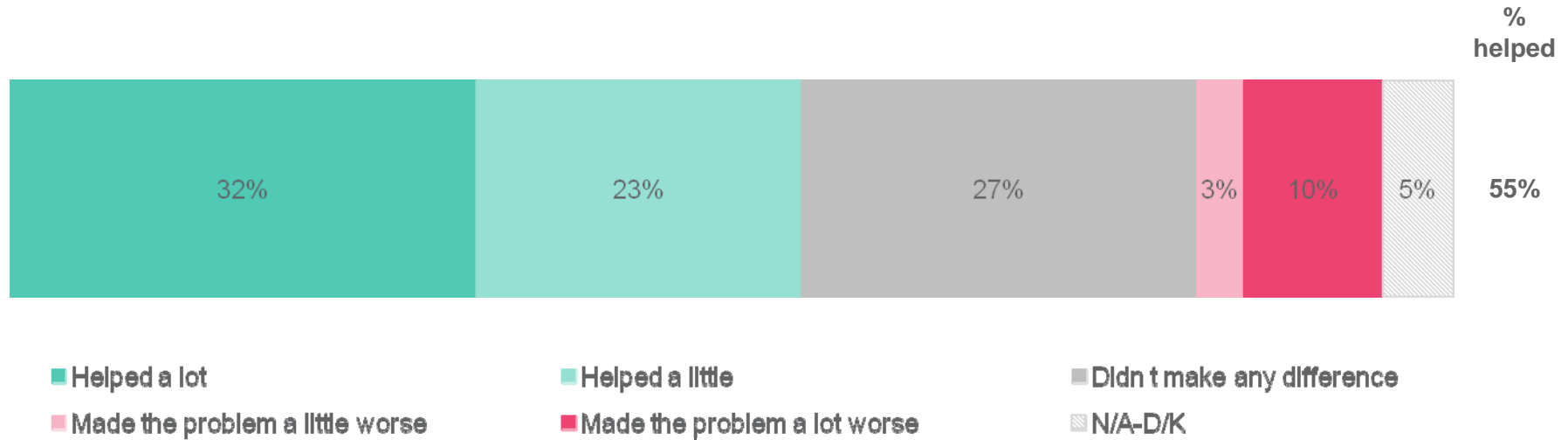
# Duty lawyer

A significantly higher proportion of civil law clients using the duty lawyer service said that the service helped them sort out their legal problem compared to family law clients.





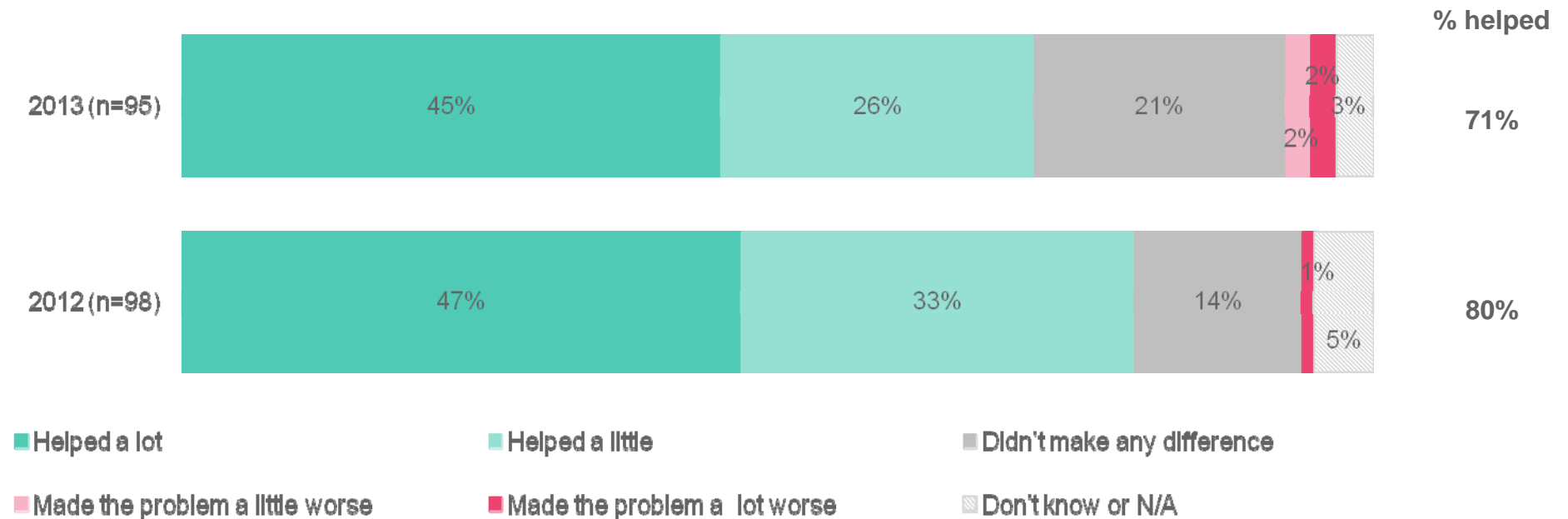
Just over half of RDM clients agreed that the conference helped them to sort out their legal problem.





# Legal Help

Most users of the Legal Help service agreed that the service helped to sort out their legal problem. This is a decrease on 2012.



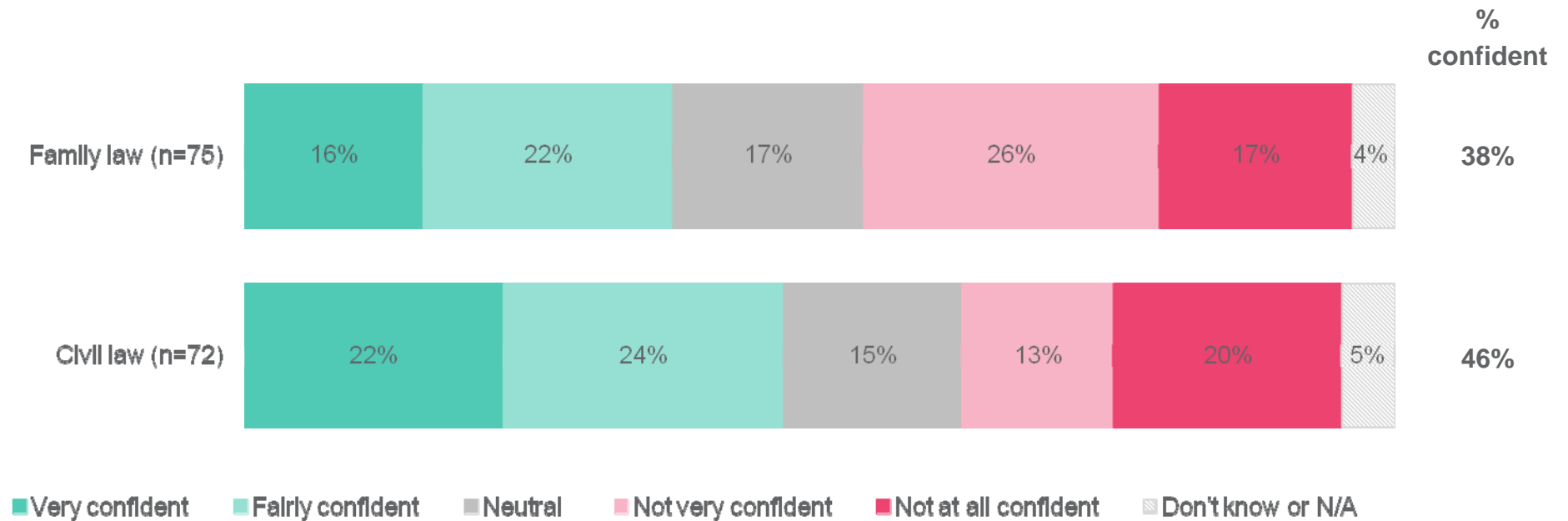


# Self efficacy



# Legal advice

Among legal advice clients, civil law clients are more confident than family law clients that if a similar problem arose again they would be able to sort it out without assistance from the legal advice service.

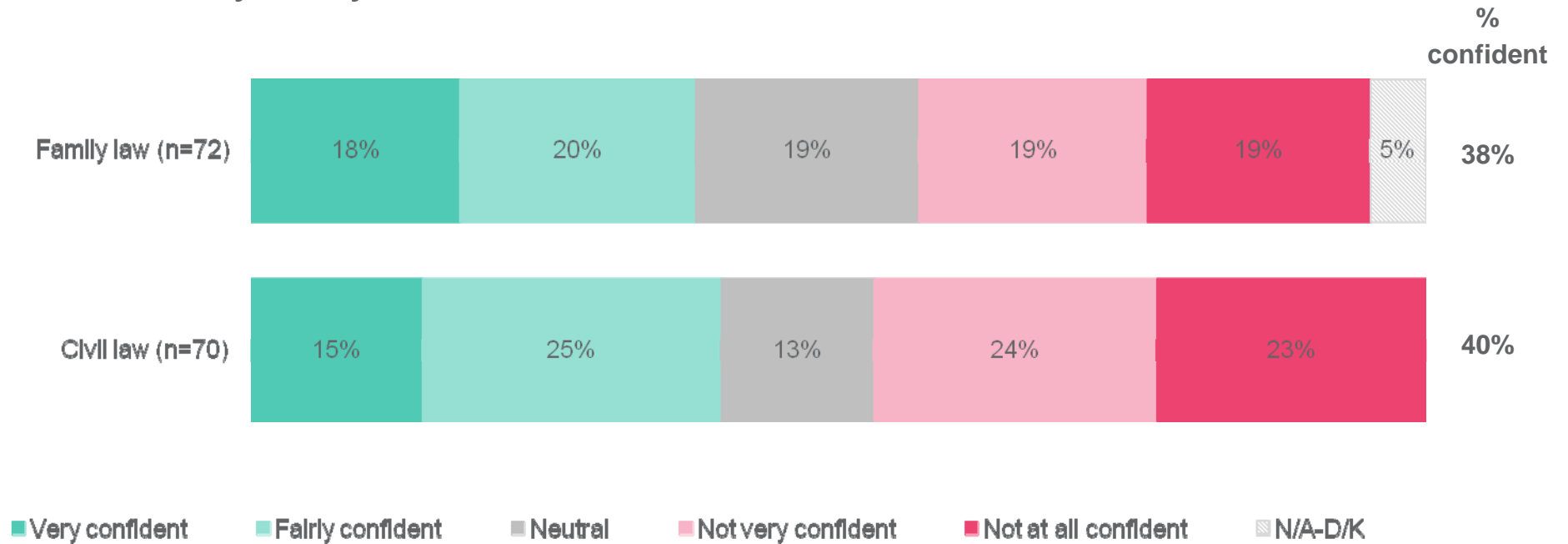






# Duty lawyer

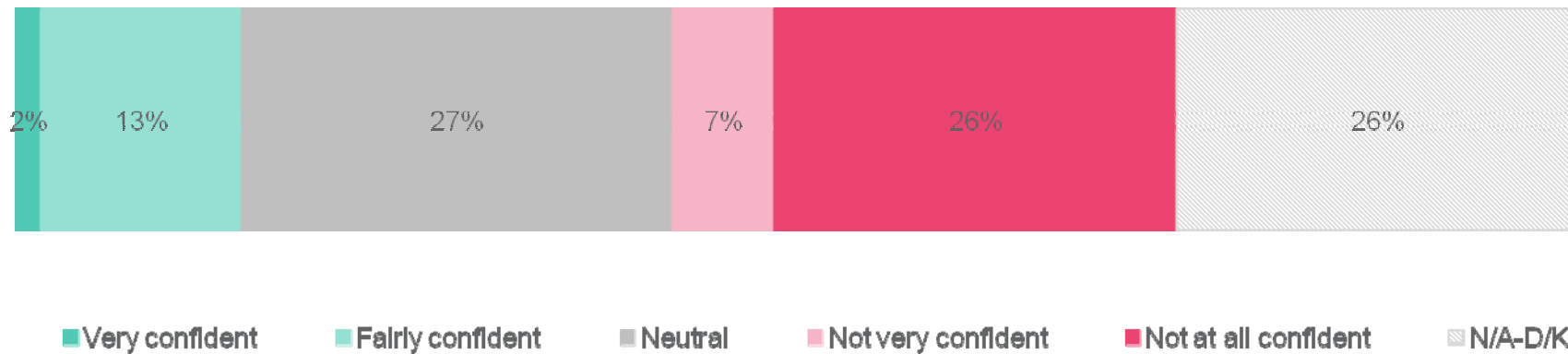
Among duty lawyer clients, four in 10 of both family law and civil law clients said they would be confident that if a similar problem arose again they would be able to sort it out without assistance from the duty lawyer service.





A small proportion of RDM clients felt confident that if a similar problem arose again, they would be able to sort it out without assistance from the RDM service.

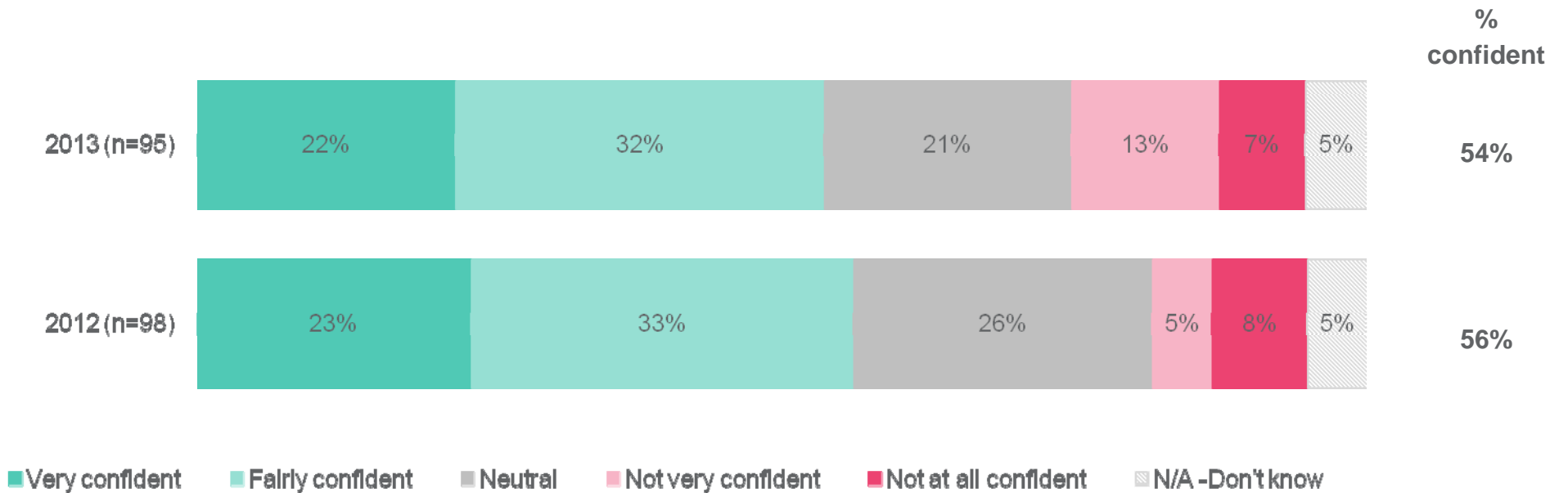
% confident





# Legal Help

Slightly more than half of all Legal Help clients were confident that they would be able to sort out a similar problem again without calling the Legal Help service.

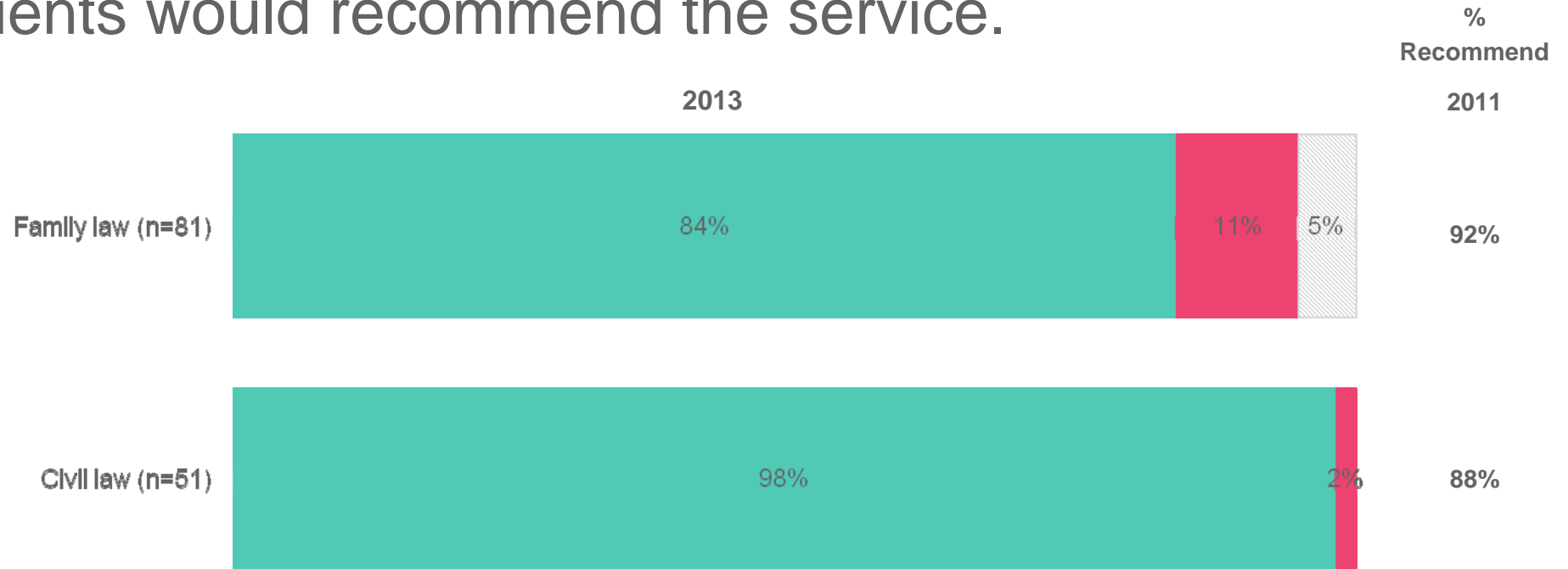




Likelihood to  
recommend



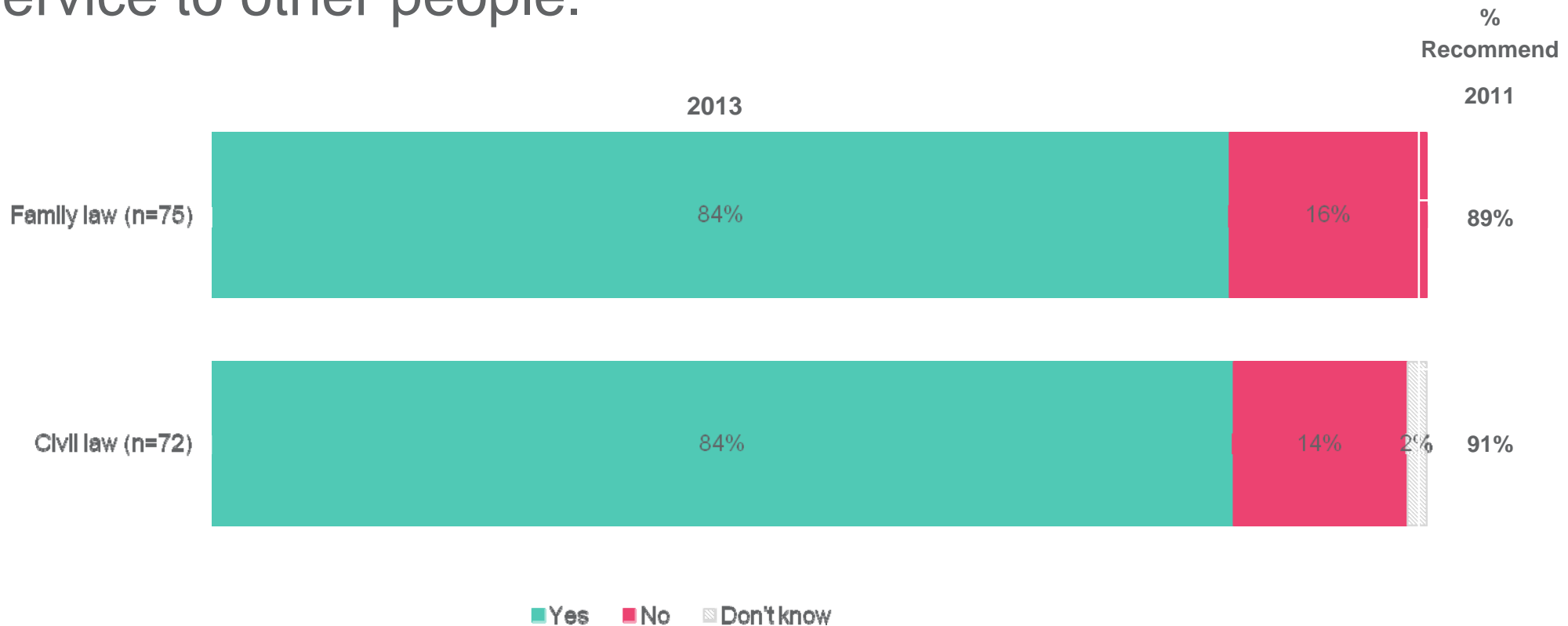
Almost all civil law clients would recommend the VLA casework service while 84% of family law clients would recommend the service.





## Legal advice

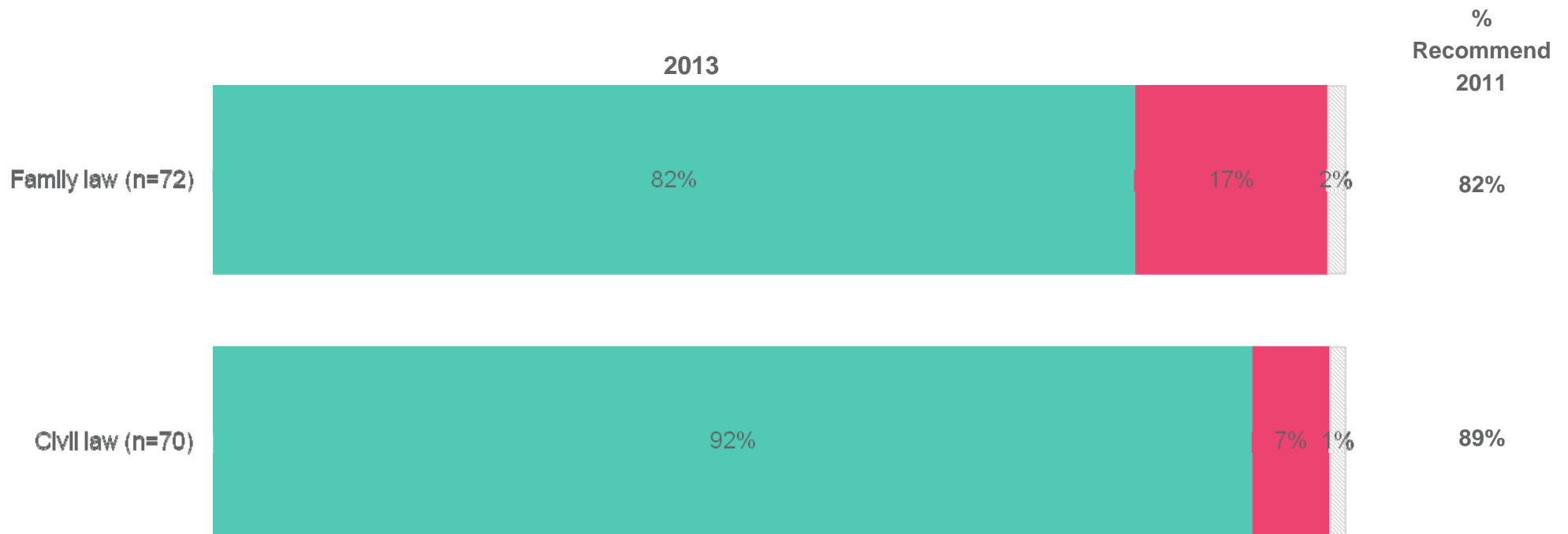
A high proportion of both family law clients and civil law clients would recommend the legal advice service to other people.





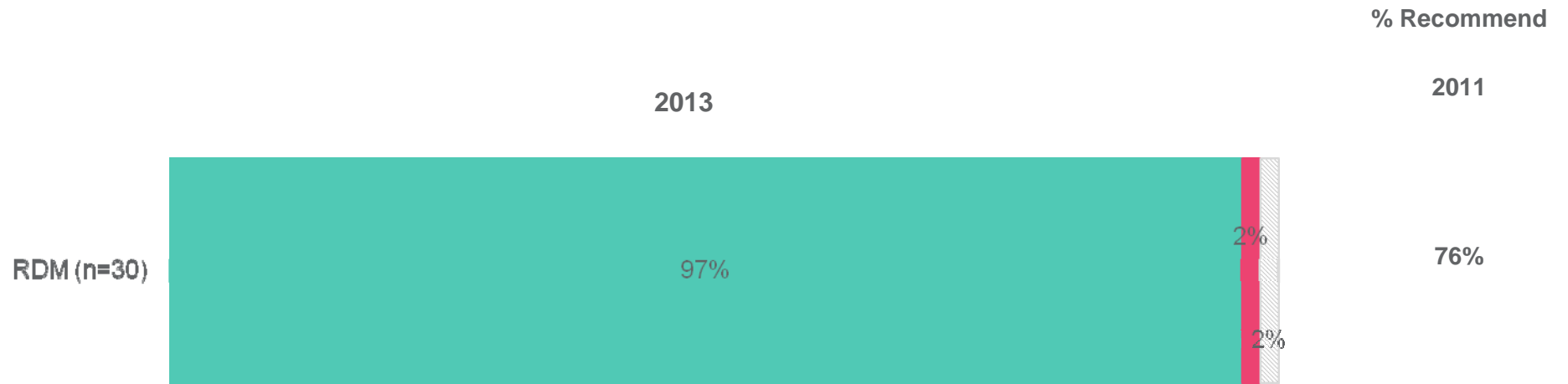
## Duty lawyer

Most clients accessing the duty lawyer service would recommend the service to others. Civil law clients would be more likely to do so.





## Almost all RDM clients said they would recommend the RDM service to others.

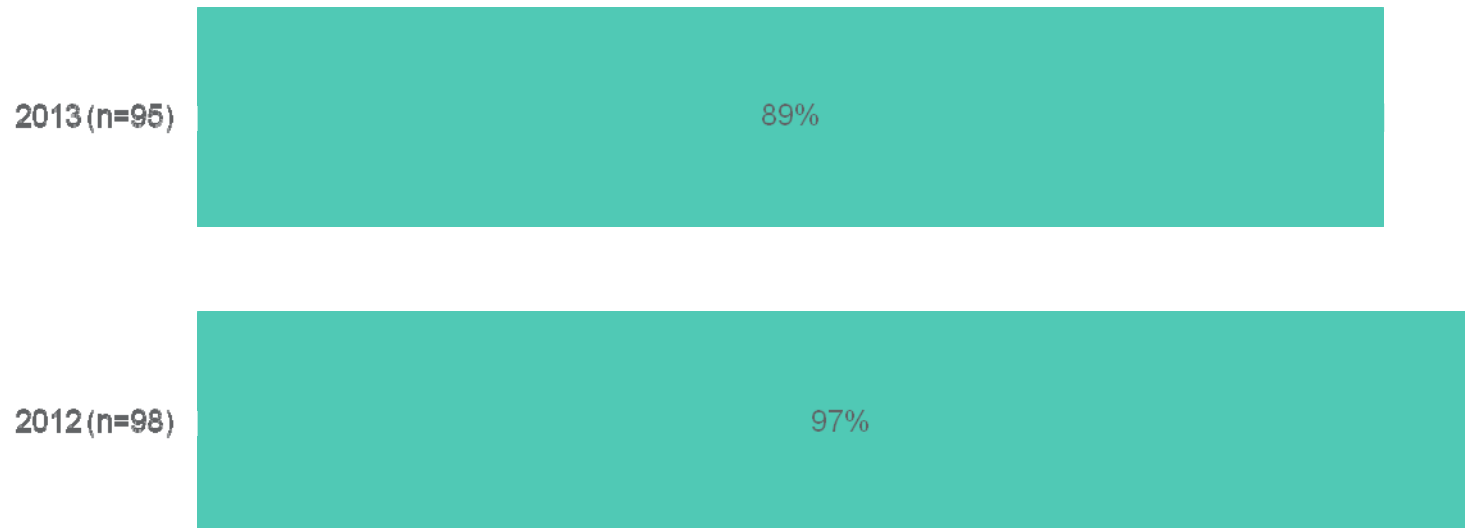






## Legal Help

While a high number (89%) of Legal Help users would recommend the service, there is a decrease in the proportion who would recommend the service in 2013 compared to 2012.



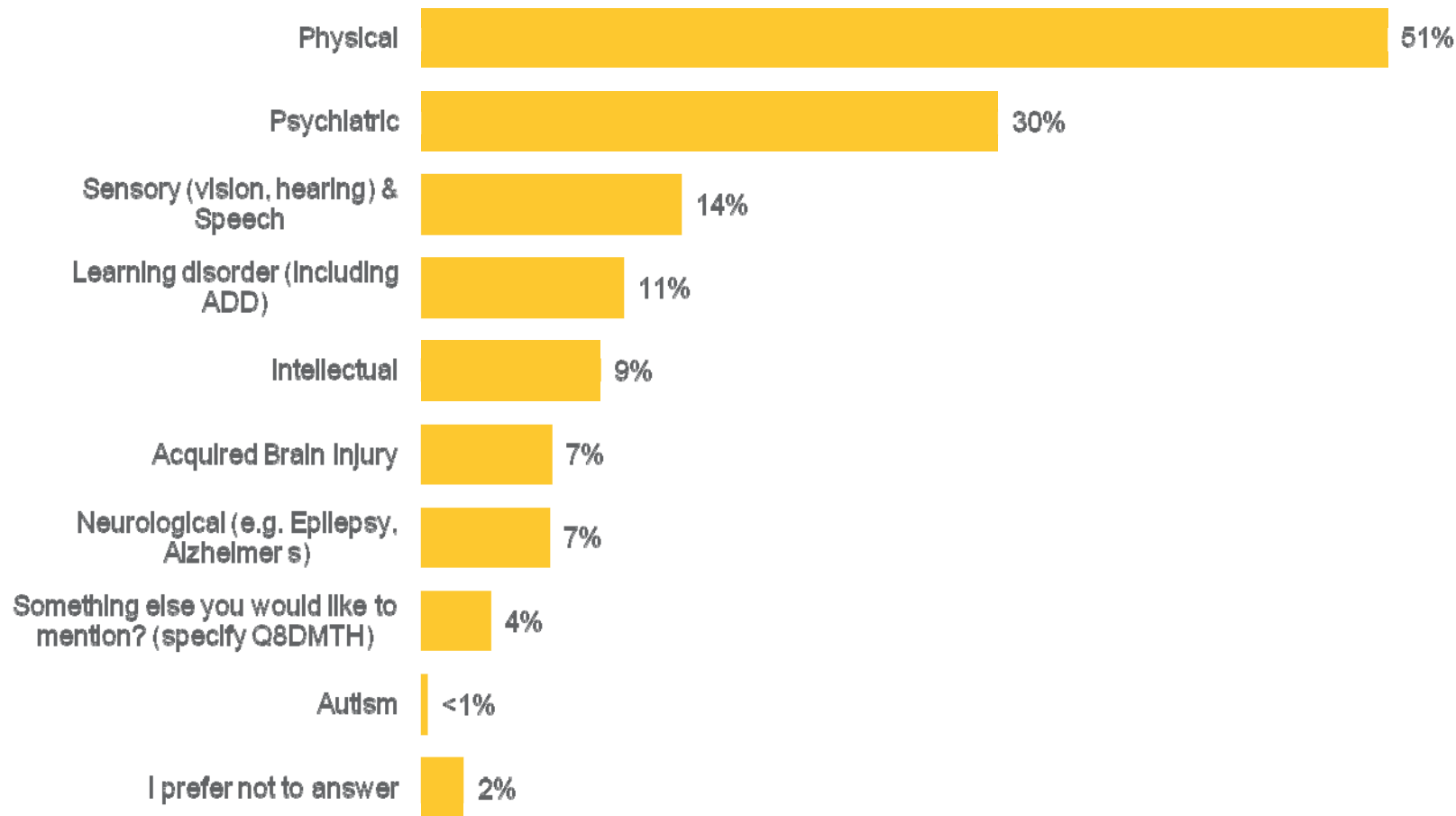


# Specific client groups



## Clients with a disability

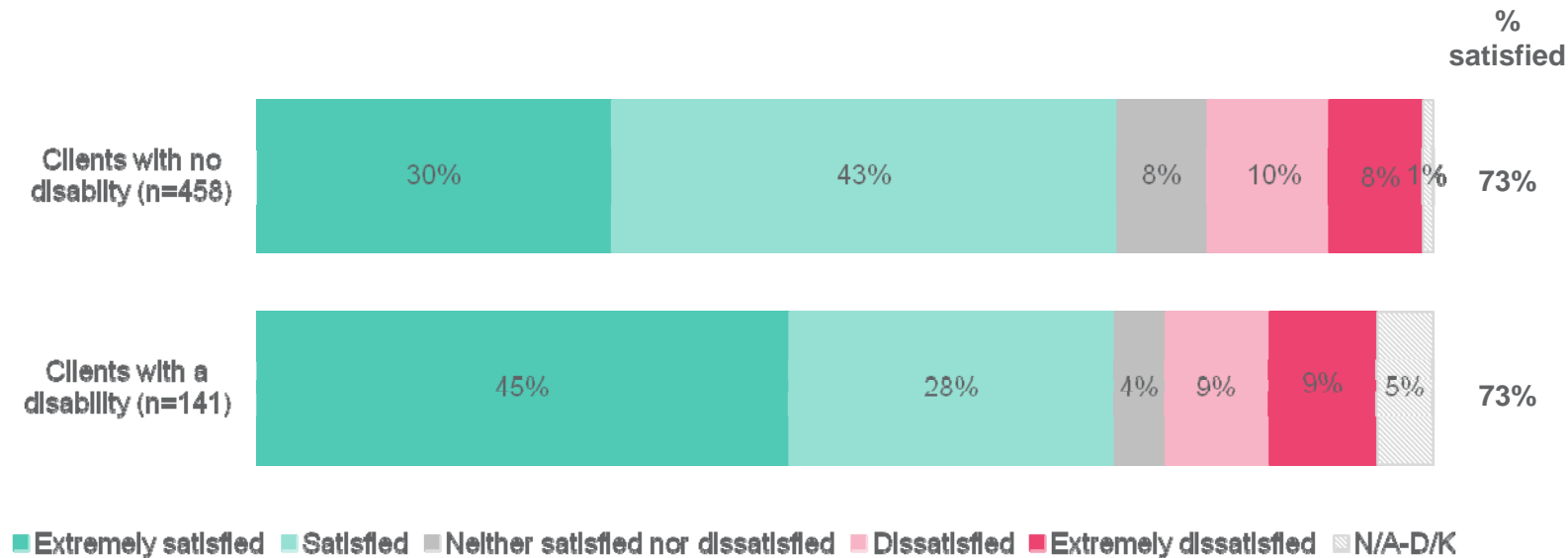
Almost a quarter of clients (23%) indicated they had some form of disability, with some reporting more than one type of disability. The proportion of clients who reported having a disability was similar to 2012 (25%).





## Clients with a disability

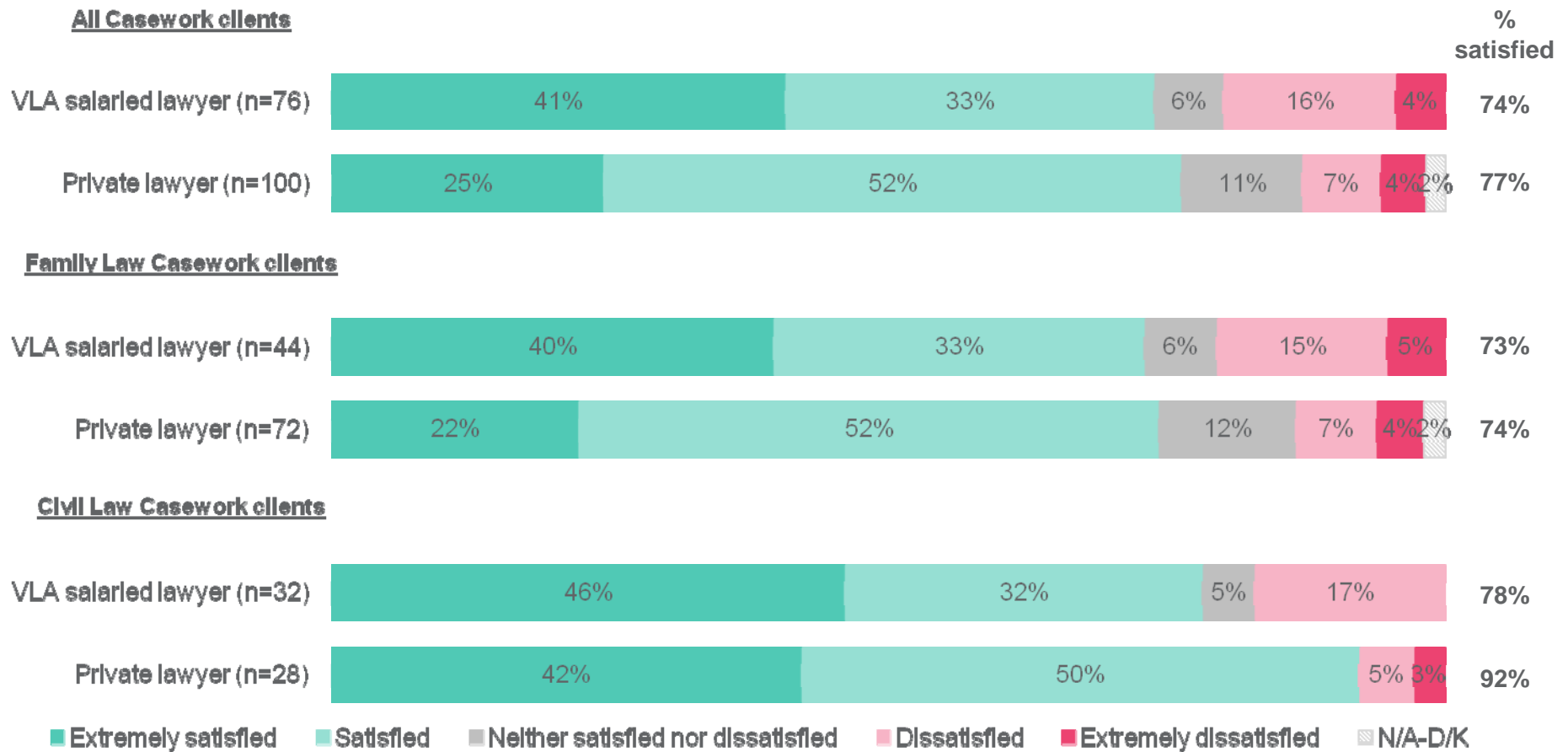
Clients with a disability indicated that they were more likely to be extremely satisfied compared to those without a disability.





# VLA lawyer and private lawyer

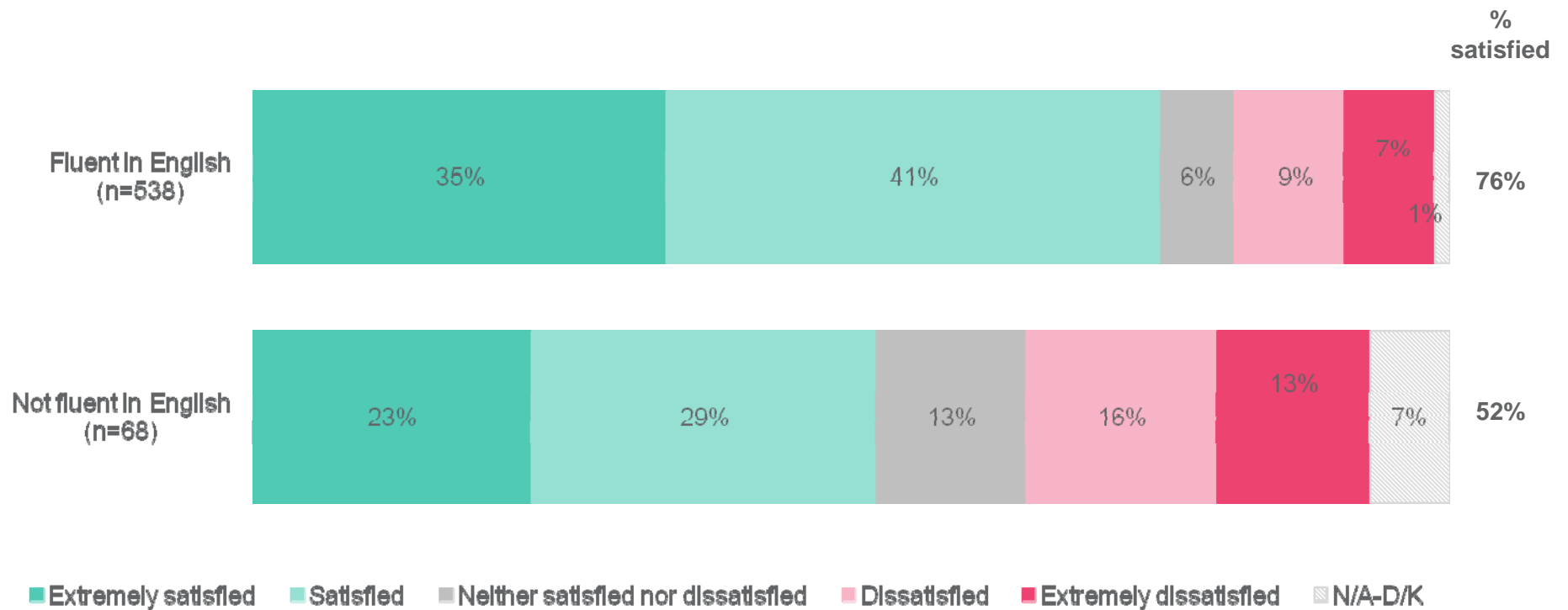
Overall, satisfaction with legal aid did not significantly differ between those using a VLA salaried lawyer and those using a private lawyer.





# English fluency

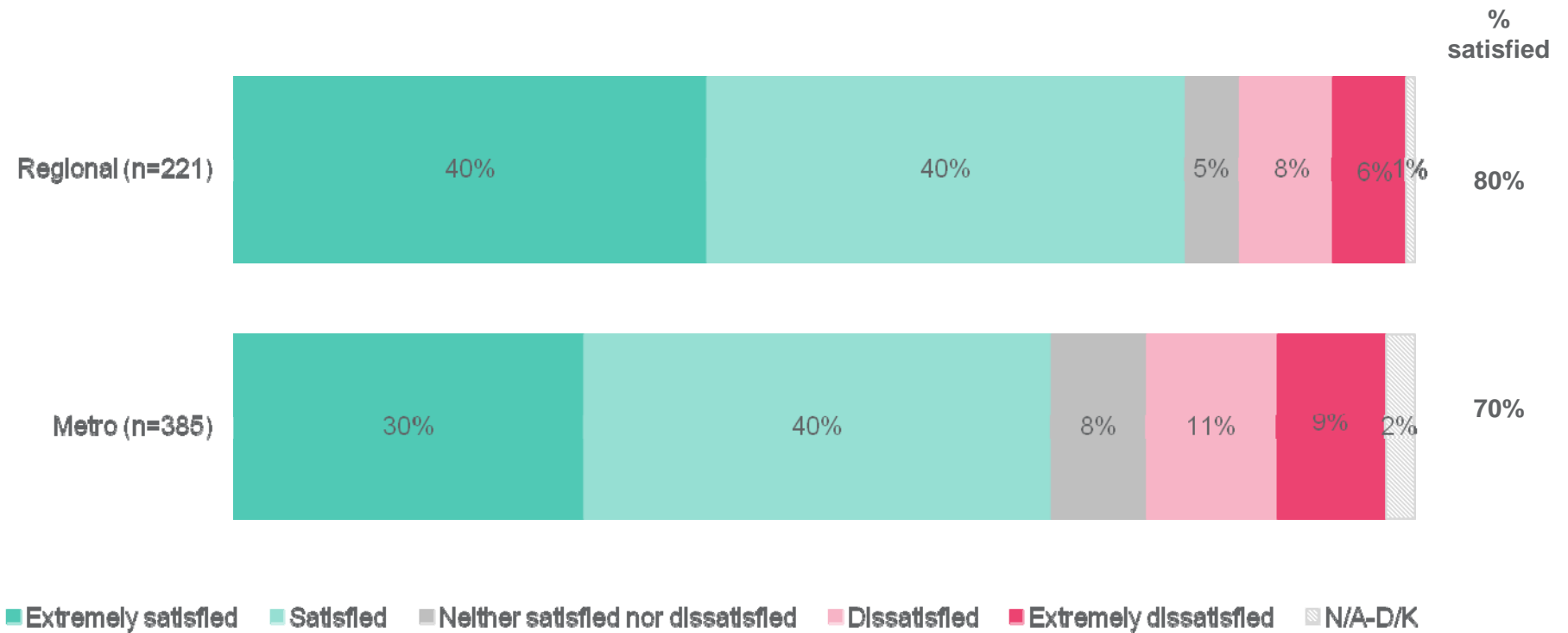
Clients not fluent in English were less likely to be satisfied than those fluent in English.





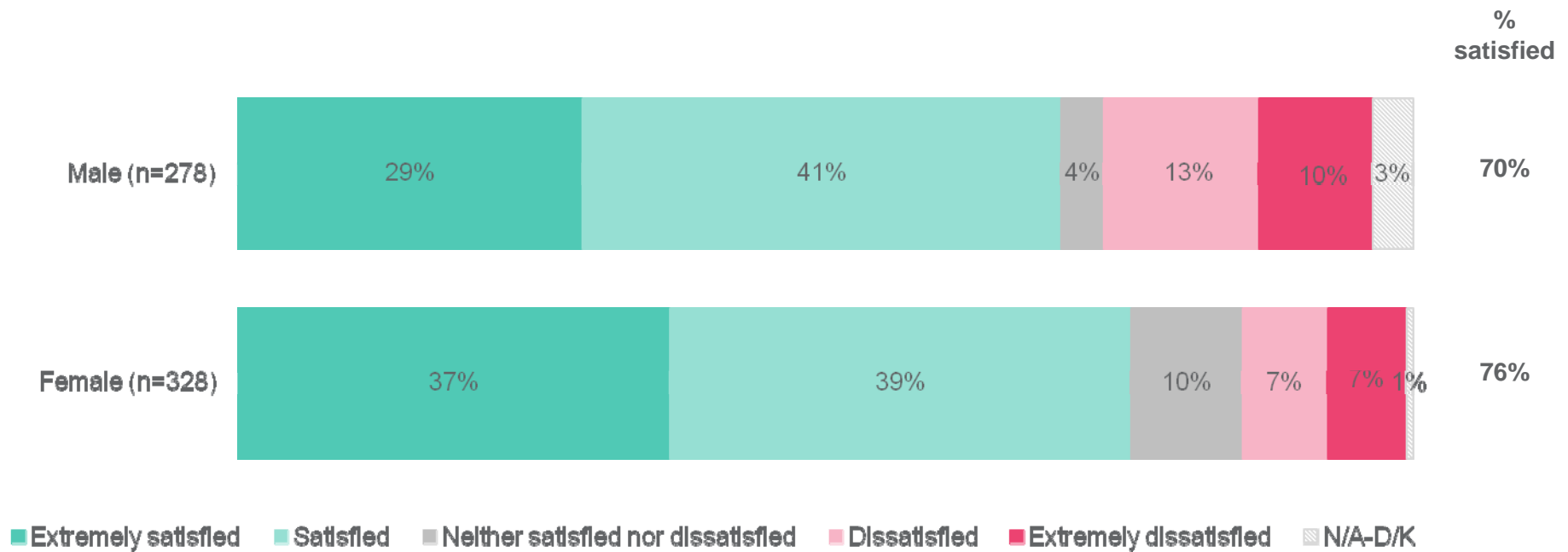
# Location

Clients from regional areas were more likely to be satisfied with VLA.





Females were more likely to be satisfied than males.



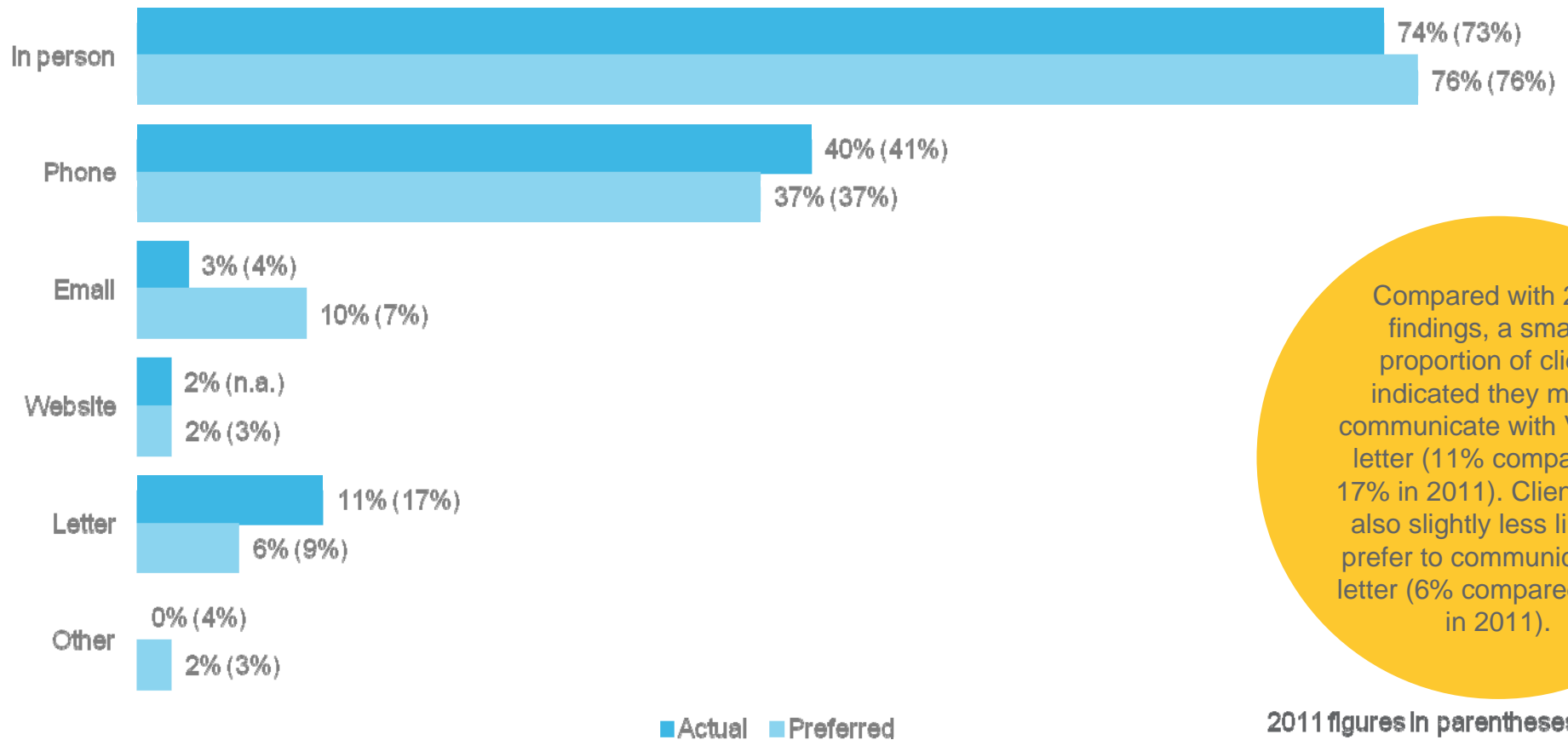




# Communications



# The most common and most preferred form of communication with VLA is in person.



Compared with 2011 findings, a smaller proportion of clients indicated they mostly communicate with VLA via letter (11% compared to 17% in 2011). Clients were also slightly less likely to prefer to communicate via letter (6% compared to 9% in 2011).

2011 figures in parentheses



# Referrals



## VLA continues to refer clients to a range of other services.

Private lawyer / Law Institute	A court	VLA website	Another government agency	Community Legal Centre	Another service within Victoria Legal Aid	Social services	Ombudsman	Doctor	Any other
17%	17%	14%	12%	11%	9%	8%	5%	4%	5%

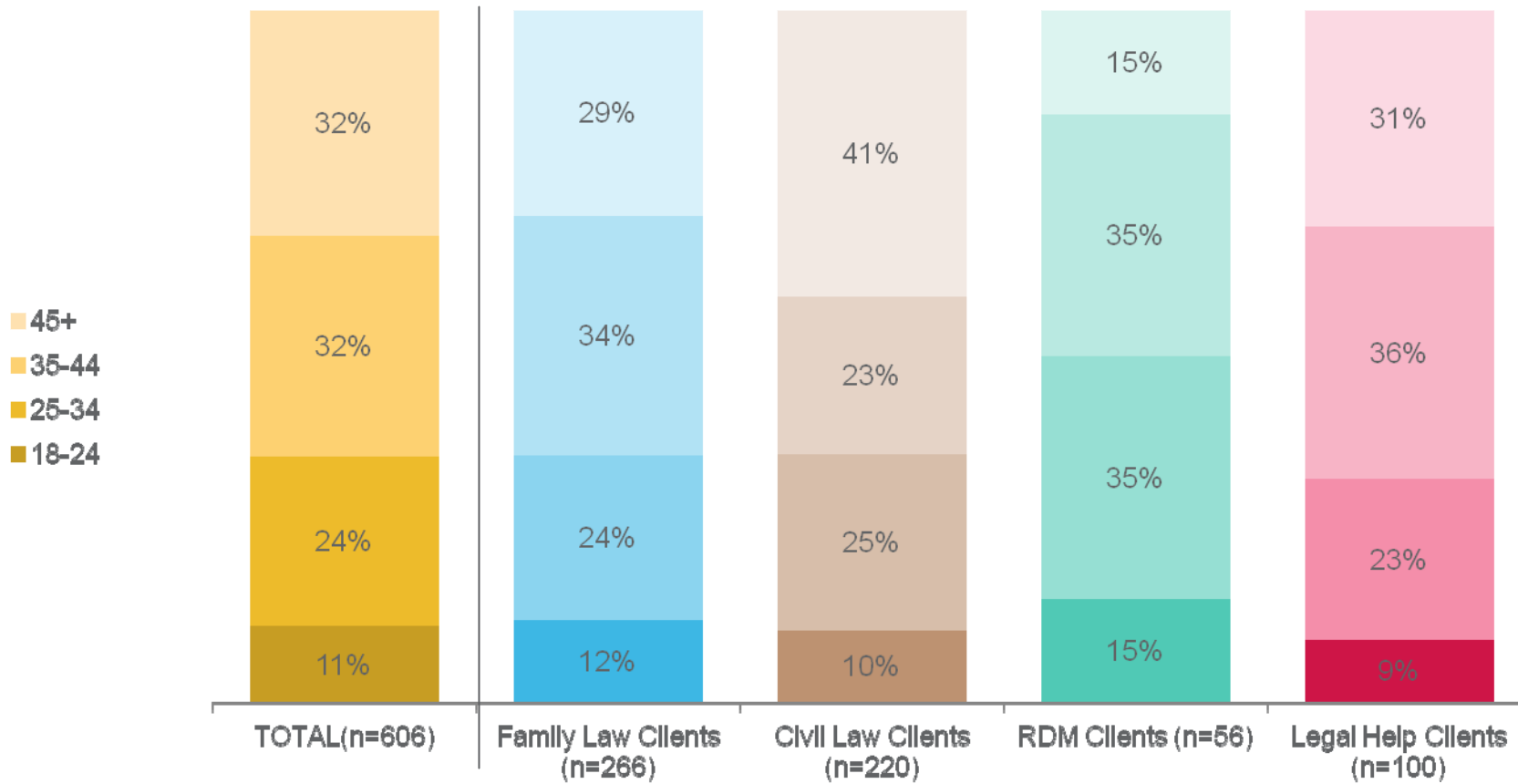
Three-quarters (77%) of those who had been referred to another service indicated that they had followed up the referral. Among clients who had followed up the referral, 69% said that the agencies they were referred to were useful to them. Clients were more likely to find the referral useful if the lawyer or VLA staff member rang and made the appointment for them – known as a ‘warm referral’. 81% of clients who received a warm referral found the referral useful.



# Sample information



# Age

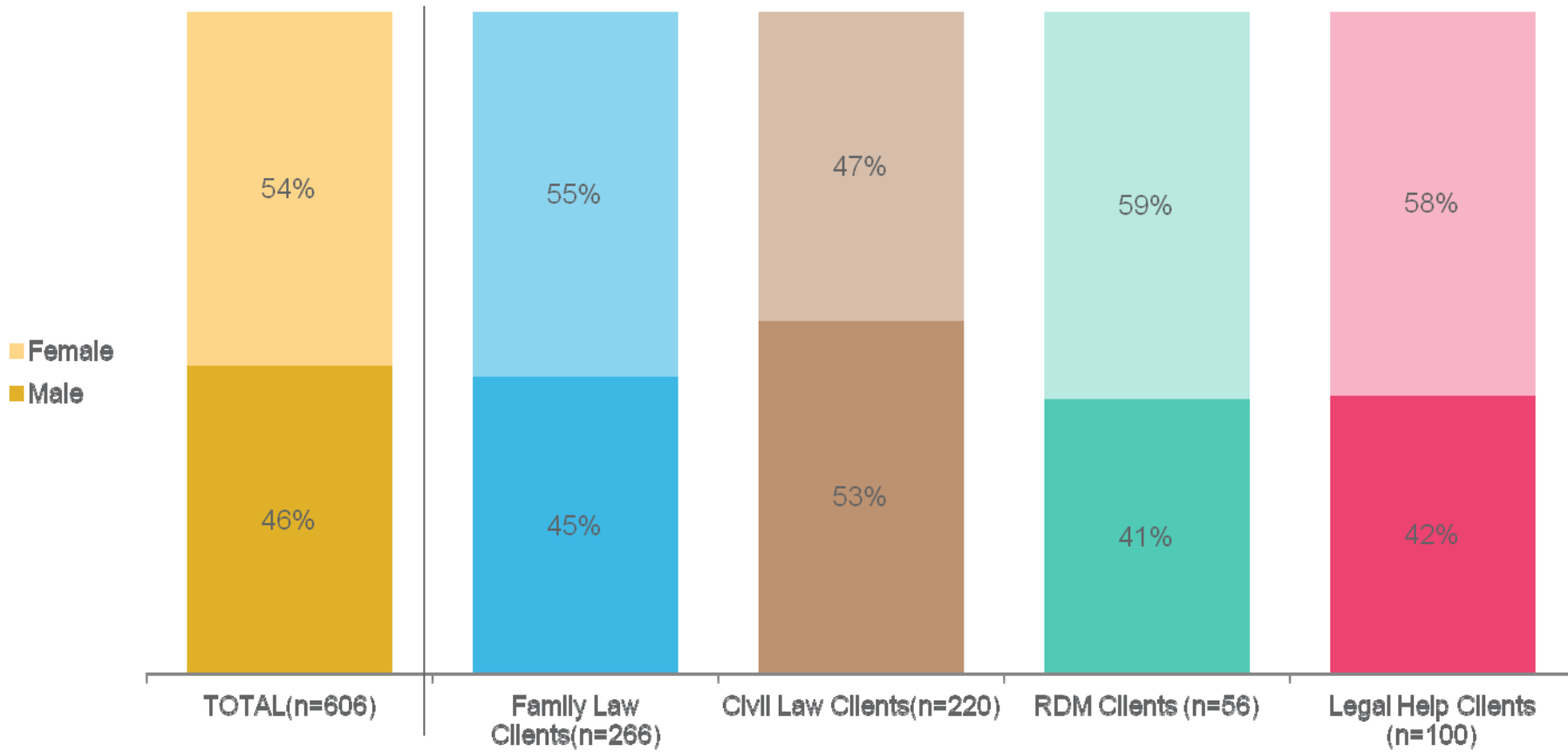


Note: Demographic information represents unweighted data.

D2. What was your age on your last birthday? (SR).  
Base: All respondents (n=606)



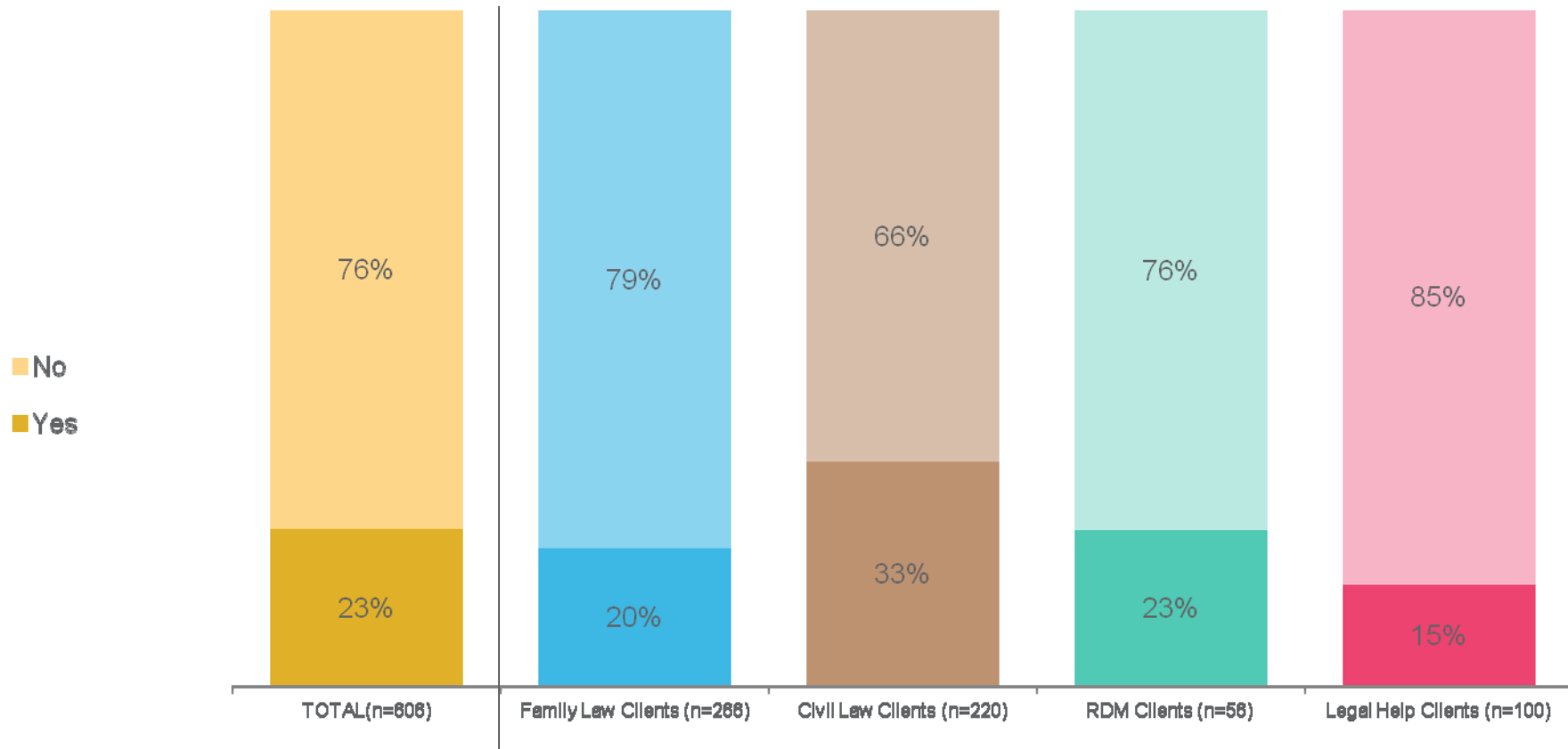
# Gender



Note: Demographic information represents unweighted data.



# Disability







# More information



For more information about this report, or for a copy of the full report with detailed findings and analysis, please contact Victoria Legal Aid at [research@vla.vic.gov.au](mailto:research@vla.vic.gov.au)