



**An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt**  
Department of Justice

# End to end review of International Protection Processes

## IPAT Members' survey report

Prepared by the Service Design & Customer Insights Team  
April 2021

## 1. Context

This survey was carried out to gather perspectives relating to the ‘International Protection Process End-to-End Review’ which is being carried out as part of the implementation of the recommendations of the Catherine Day report, specifically Action 3.18 which recommends carrying out an end-to-end review of the International Protection process. As part of this review, an opportunity was given to the International Protection Appeals Tribunal (IPAT) Tribunal Members to express their views about the work they do and the processes and IT infrastructure of the organisation.

## 2. Approach

The survey issued to the IPAT Tribunal Members through a newsletter format from the head of the function and ran from 20 January to 4 February 2021. A copy of the survey is available in Appendix 1 – IPAT Tribunal Members survey extract. The survey was created and delivered on the Department’s ‘Qualtrics’ platform, where results were later analysed.

The survey asked a mix of multiple choice and open text based questions which are summarised in this report. For the text based questions, a classification model was used to identify the topics being discussed. Qualtrics’ inbuilt ‘Sentiment Analysis Tool’ then assigned an overall sentiment score to each topic for each text field. In this way, the topics that are discussed can be easily interpreted.

This analysis of survey responses gives a general overview of the insights collected through the multiple choice questions and corresponding graphs show the results interpreted.

Separately, the text inputs of the IPAT Tribunal Members have been examined and some of the most indicative or noteworthy remarks alongside the sentiment findings have been included.

### 3. General Insights

- 3.1 Below represents a high level analysis and synthesis of survey responses from IPAT Tribunal Members.
- 3.2 The survey was shared by email in a newsletter format. The email was opened by 53 of the 54 recipients.
- 3.3 There were 47 responses from the IPAT Tribunal Members. This is a high completion rate of 87%, and again indicates a very high level of engagement with the overall process.
- 3.4 35 out of the 47 respondents answered the question on job satisfaction. The vast majority of members who responded are satisfied overall with their role as an IPAT Tribunal member. However, 4 are somewhat dissatisfied and 2 are extremely dissatisfied.
- 3.5 42 respondents take between 0-8 cases per month. Only 4 take 9-12 cases and 1 person said that they take 12 or more cases per month.
- 3.6 1 person said that they allow up to an hour preparation, with 6 allowing 1-2 hours preparation, 11 allowing 3-4 hours and 20 between 4 and 5 hours and over.
- 3.7 The overwhelming majority of respondents, 34, felt they had received enough training to effectively perform their role, with only 2 disagreeing with that statement.
- 3.8 Overall, the respondents have indicated that they have received some degree of feedback in relation to the work they do for the Tribunal.
- 3.9 30 of the respondents somewhat agree or strongly agree that their ideas to improve work processes would be taken on board by the organisation.
- 3.10 The majority of members felt that the frequency and quality of the communication from the Tribunal is satisfactory.
- 3.11 Most Tribunal Members responded positively regarding the frequency of meetings taking place to discuss issues and updates.

3.12 The opinions on the effectiveness of the IT equipment are quite mixed with 26 agreeing it is effective or somewhat effective while 12 somewhat disagree, 2 strongly disagree and 4 remain neutral.

## 4. Case Load, Training and Feedback Survey Questions 1-4

Q1 - How many cases do you typically take per month?

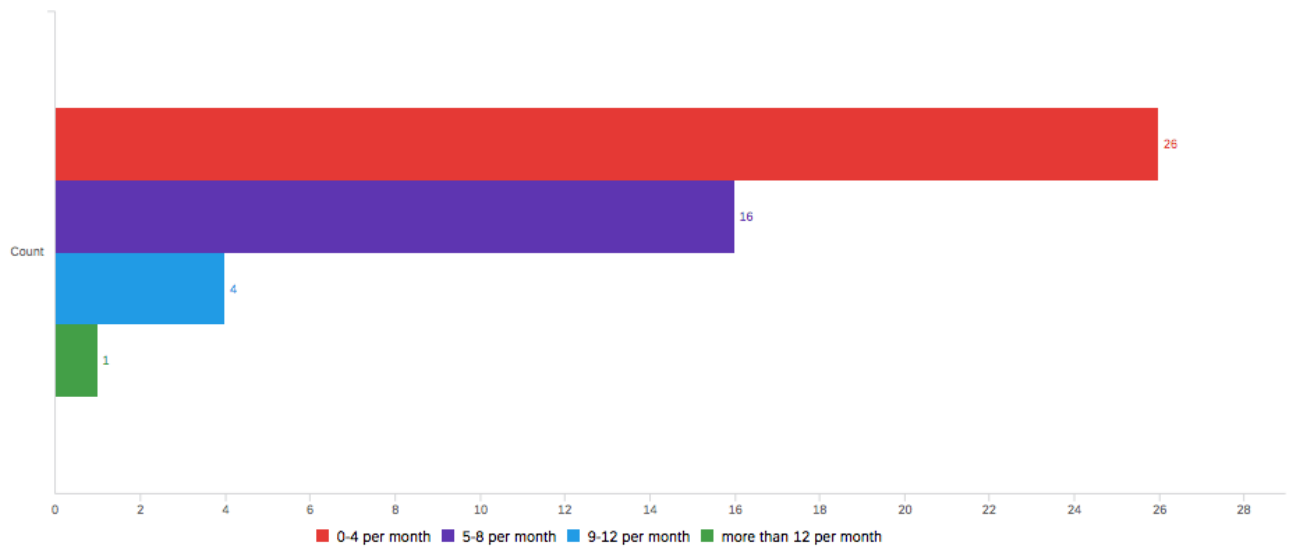


Figure 1 Number of cases taken per month

Q2 - How much time typically do you spend on preparing for a case?

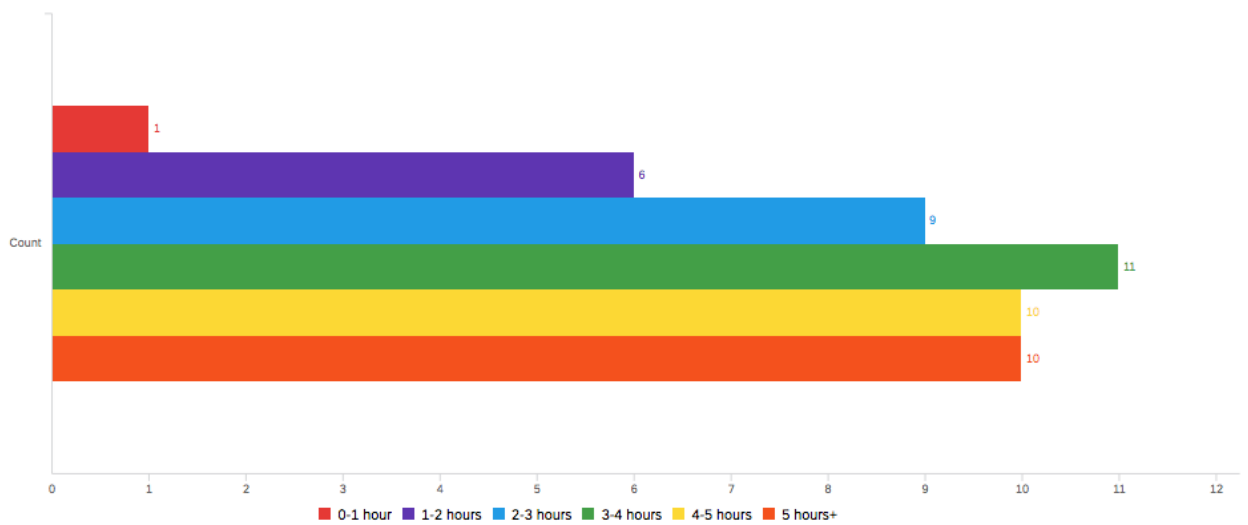


Figure 2 Time spent on preparation

Q3 - I have received enough training to effectively perform my role.

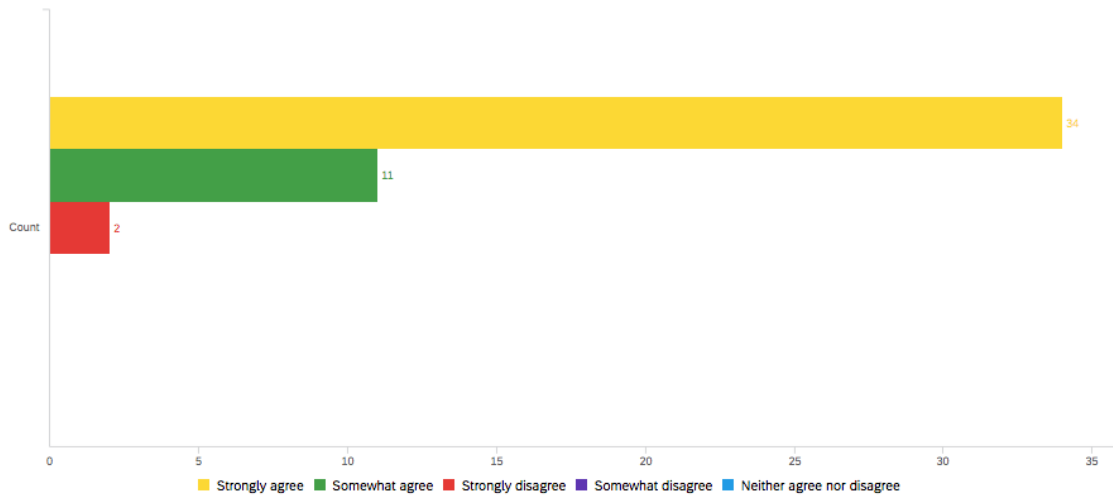


Figure 3 Training

Q4 - Do you receive feedback in relation to the work you do for the Tribunal?

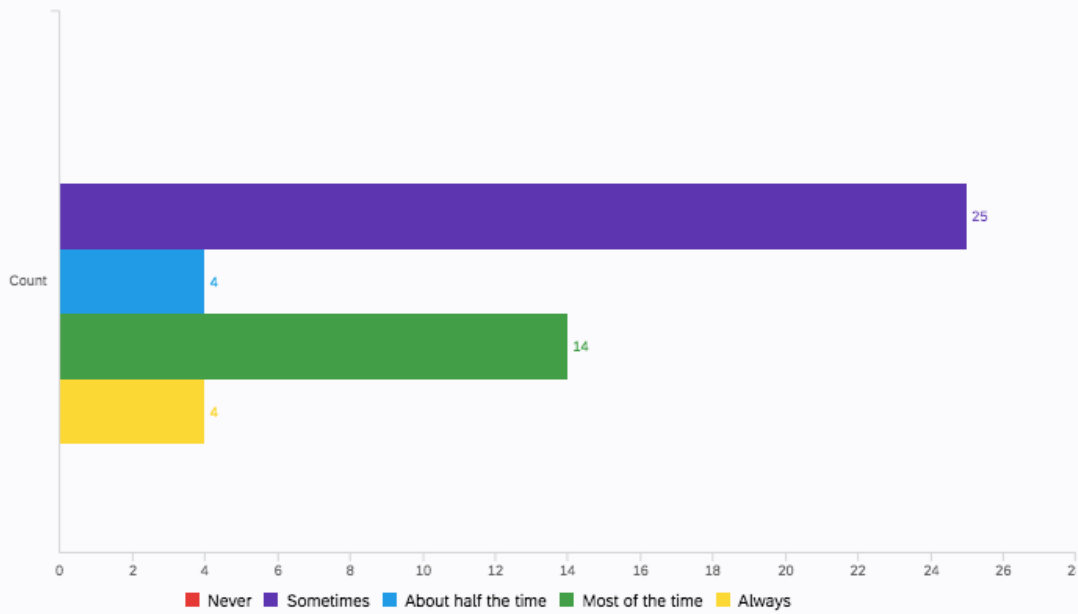


Figure 4 Feedback received

## 5. Communication, IT and Innovation Survey Questions 5-9

Q5 - If I have an idea to improve our work processes, the Tribunal will take it...

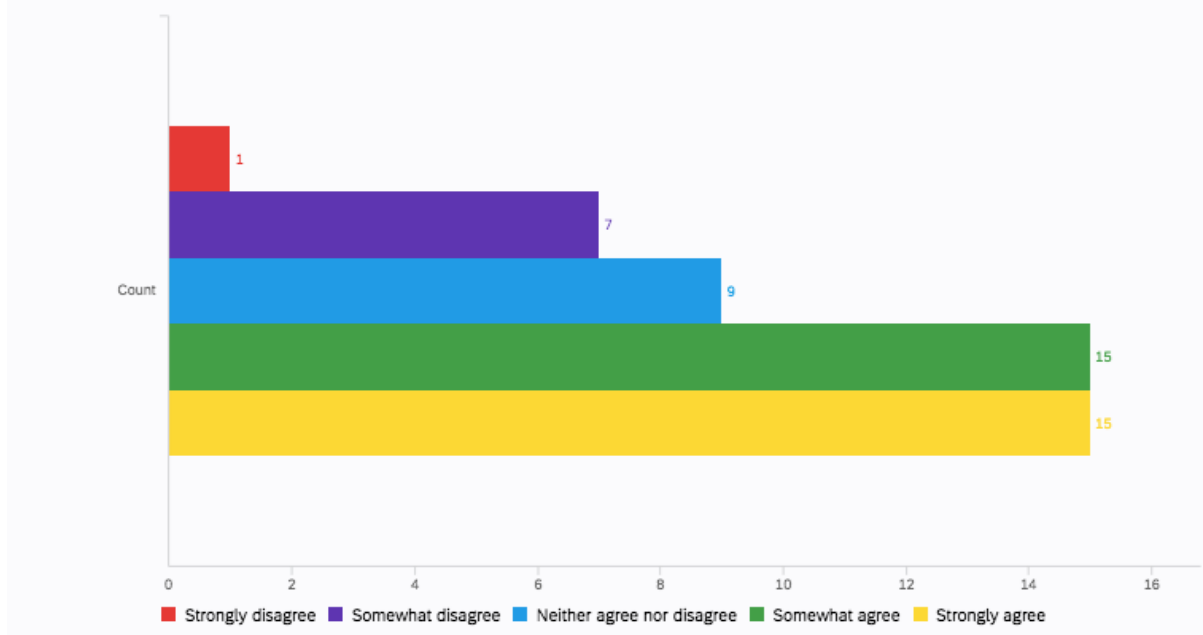


Figure 5 Ideas to improve work processes

Q6 - Meetings are held between members of the Tribunal and management of IPAT to...

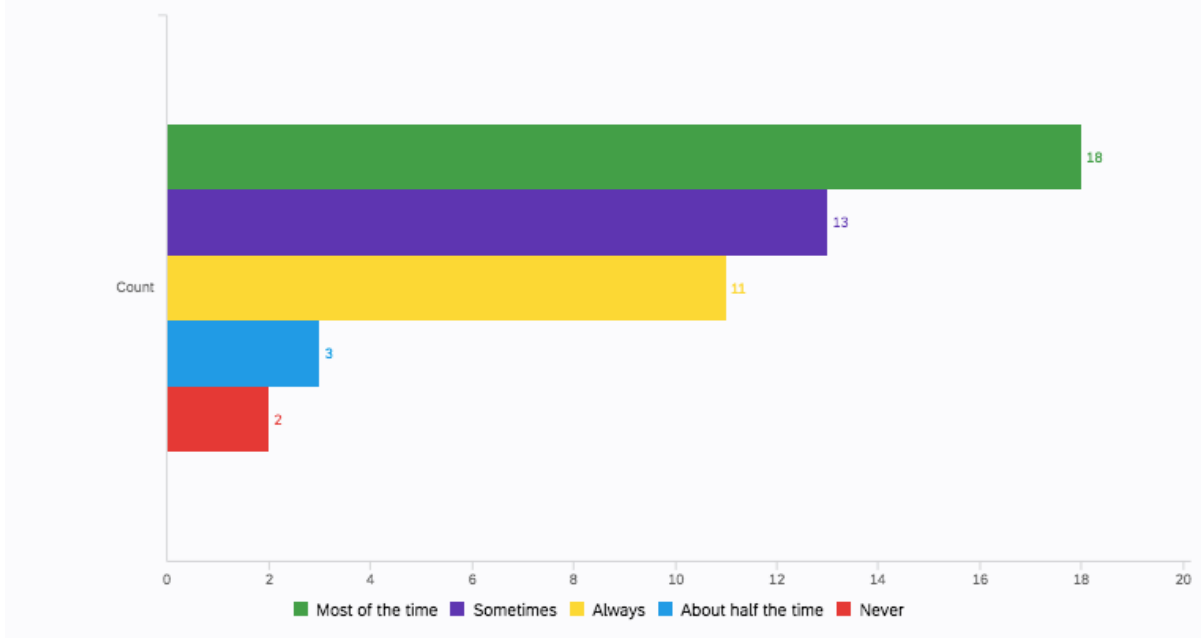


Figure 6 Charts on Innovation

Q7 - How satisfied are you with the frequency of communication from the Tribunal...

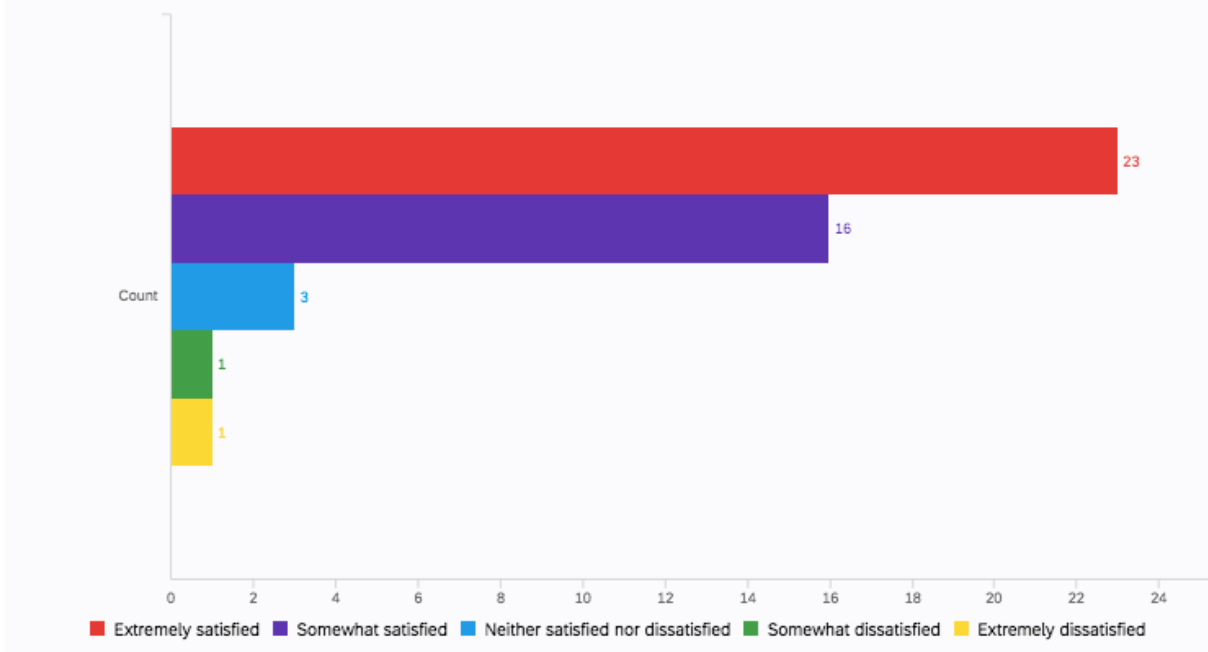


Figure 7 Charts on Communications

Q8 - How satisfied are you with the quality of communication from the Tribunal?

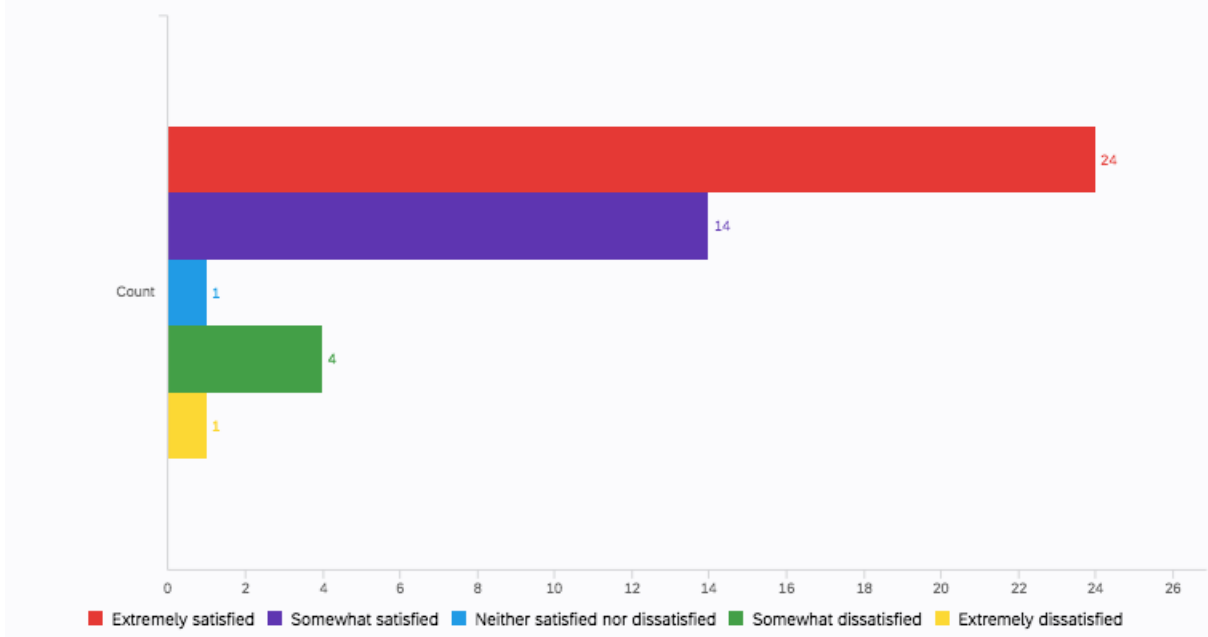


Figure 8 Quality of Communication

Q9-The IT applications supporting my work in the International Protection Process are effective.

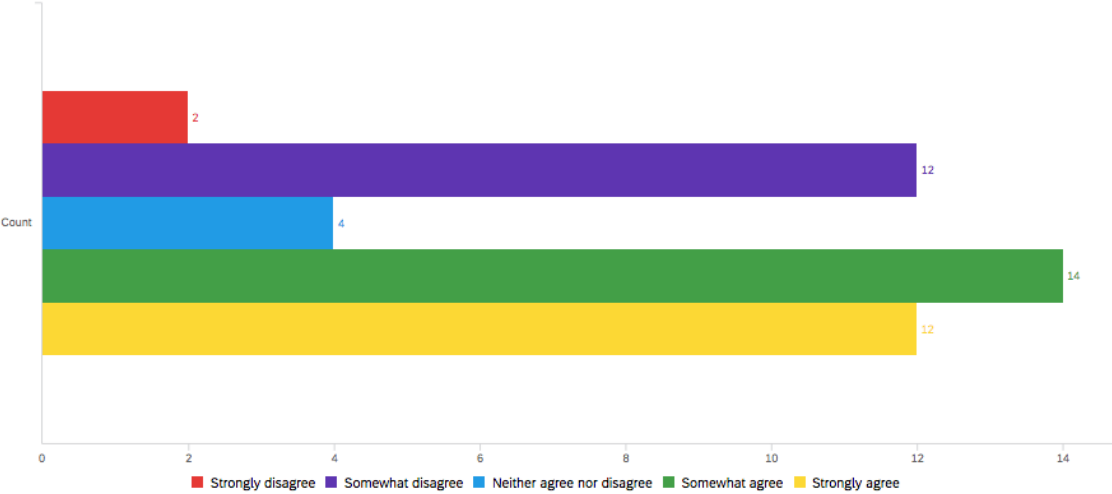


Figure 9 Effectiveness of IT Applications



## 6. Satisfaction Survey Question

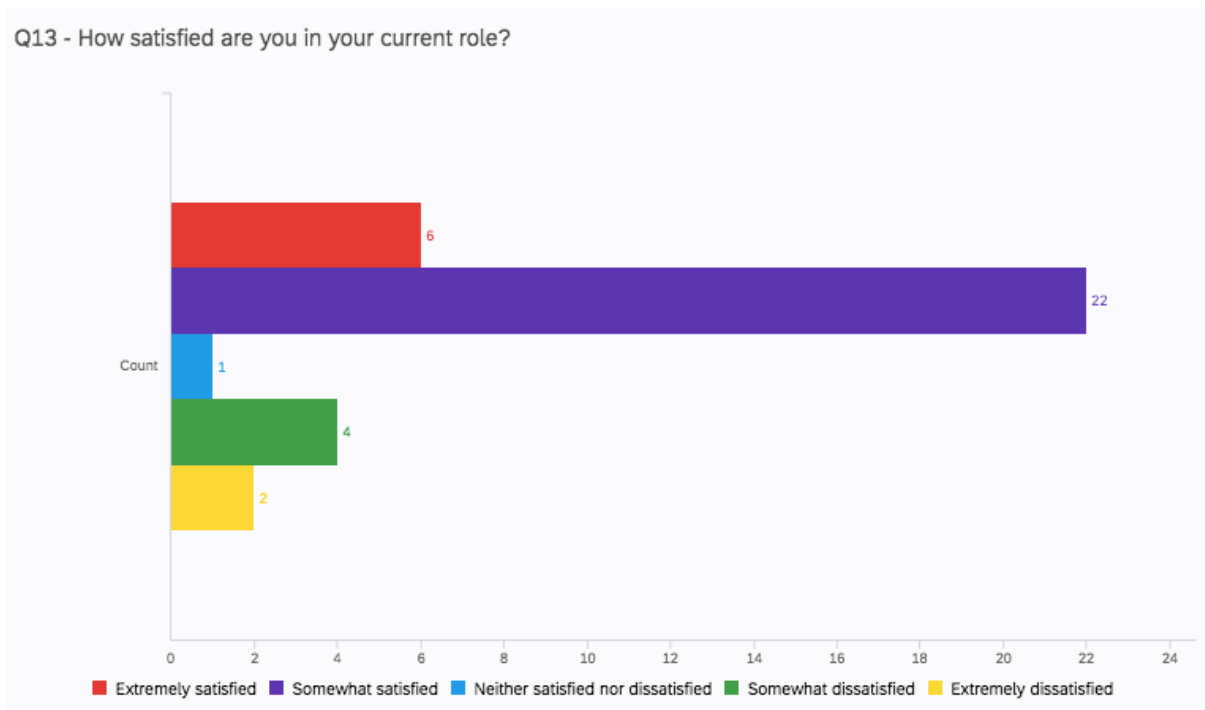


Figure 10 Question on satisfaction

## 7. Key insights from the open text questions

7.1 35 of the 47 participants chose to respond to the text questions 10-14 (Q10 What is working well in your role; Q11 What is not working well in your role; Q12 What motivated you to apply to be on the Tribunal Members panel; Q14 Have you any other comments).

7.2 22 of the respondents are somewhat satisfied and 6 were extremely satisfied with their role as a Tribunal Member. The prevailing sentiments that motivated people to apply to the Tribunal are an interest in this area of law and a sense of doing meaningful work. Many pointed out their desire to be on the decision making side of the process, having had experience in representing applicants previously. This can be seen in *Figure* and *Figure* .

7.3 *Figure* shows the sentiment analysis of the question on “What is working well in your role?”, the following topics scored highly:

- Efficiency, Colleagues and Collaboration,
- Staffing (cooperation with Tribunal staff),
- Training, and
- Leaders and Managers.

7.4 Many people pointed out the excellent training and support provided by the Chair and Deputy Chairpersons and praised their commitment.

7.5 It is however noteworthy here that a negative sentiment towards ‘Transparency and Openness’ appeared regarding overall case allocation. Considering this feedback in light of the Tribunal member’s Focus Group feedback, it is apparent that there is a significant level of frustration and dissatisfaction with how cases are allocated and with the openness of the methodology used for their allocation.

7.6 The Tribunal Members note the negative impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on their work.

7.7 *Figure* shows the sentiment analysis for the question on “What is not working well in your role?” the most common topics in the responses were:

- Processes (mainly the scheduling of cases and the absence of a strong case management system),
- IT & Systems (the main issue being the inefficiency of the AV hearings),
- Channels and Tools and the overall efficiency in achieving the objectives.
- The issue of insufficient remuneration featured in many responses under this section and it comes strongly in the “Other comments” section.

7.8 As mentioned above, the remuneration for Tribunal Members came up strongly in the “Other comments” section with majority of respondents pointing out that only their interest in the field keeps them committed to the job.

7.9 Another strong sentiment features in regard to Mission and Values with respondents believing that IPAT should be independent from the Department of Justice. This was reiterated during the focus groups. This sentiment from the Tribunal is worth exploring further, as the IPAT *is* statutorily independent from the Department of Justice as established by Section 61 of the International Protection Act 2015. If there is a view or understanding from Tribunal Members that this is not the case, then this is worth investigating further. (This is outside the scope of the team carrying out this piece of work.)

7.10 The overall summary of the “Other Comments” can be seen in *Figure .* Issues around pay and remuneration came up as a strong negative sentiment in this section – members are very dissatisfied and unhappy with the current fee structure, often indicating that it is barely worth their time financially when all of the related tasks are taken into account. This issue is coded in the bubble labelled “recognition” in *Figure .*

## 7.1.1 Text analysis and extracts from the open text questions

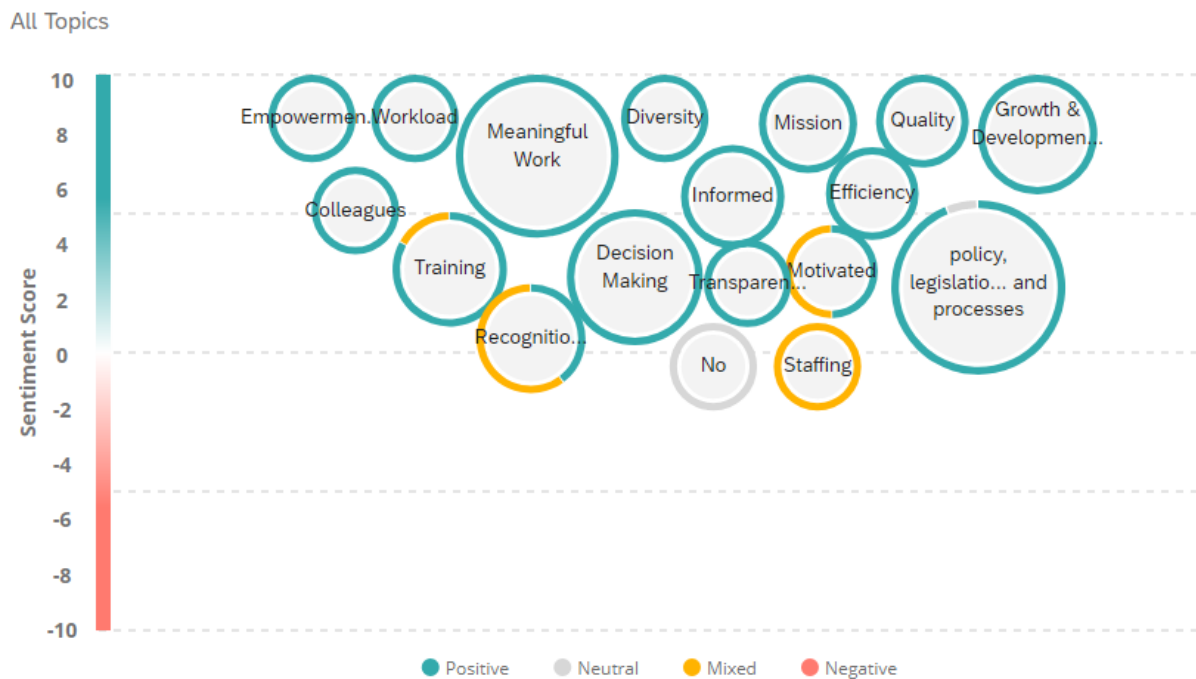


Figure 11 Sentiment analysis on “What motivated you to apply for the role?”

Sample extracts of comments for the above:

An inherent belief in the importance of human rights and our duty to protect and support those persons most in need of that help.

I find the area of law interesting and enjoy the human rights element of the work.

I find this to be a very interesting and challenging area of law, in which one encounters a wide range of different people with different backgrounds and cultures.

A love of the work, a commitment to the process, a sense of public service, a wish to put my skills to a good use.



Figure 12 Sentiment analysis of "What is working well in your role?"

Sample extracts of comments for the above:

The training and support from the leadership is excellent. In addition the Tribunal staff are very helpful, efficient and knowledgeable.

I believe the staff and members are motivated to do right by Appellants within the system as it exists. The senior management team are wonderful and accessible.

There is also a positive collegiate relationship among Tribunal Members. IPAT is a very pleasant place to work.

My admin team are excellent (EO and CO) as are the reception staff.

The training received on an ongoing basis is extremely good. It allows me to keep abreast of the most up to date developments in International Protection along with ensuring that we review existing methodologies for file preparation, conducting hearings and writing decisions.

Communication within the Tribunal is excellent.

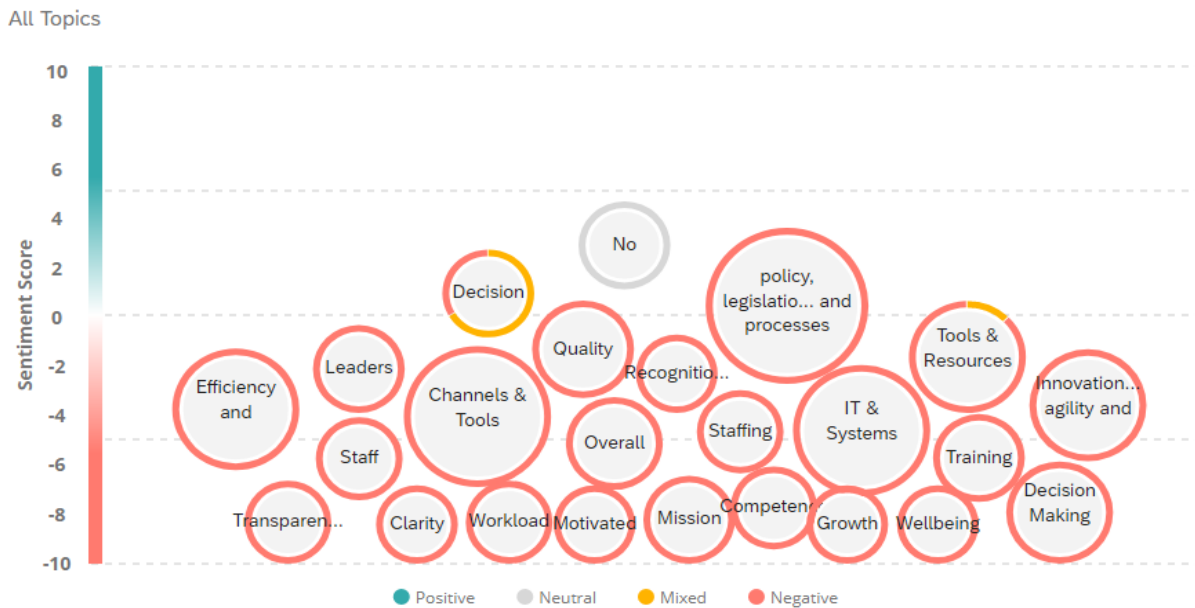


Figure 13 Sentiment analysis of “What is not working well in your role?”

Sample extracts of comments for the above (Please note some comments have been edited for clarity and to ensure anonymity):

Scheduling. I have not received a scheduled case in months. The roll out of AV hearings has effectively taken 1 year.

I am anxious about conducting audio Visual hearings especially from home to begin with without available back up support

The absence of a common documentation system to ensure that everyone is working off the same well-ordered booklets

The use of an in-office cubby hole is ineffective for the part time Tribunal staff

The fees currently payable to Tribunal members do not reflect the amount of work undertaken on average per file.

One wonders whether IPAT gets the attention/funding it requires from the Department of Justice.

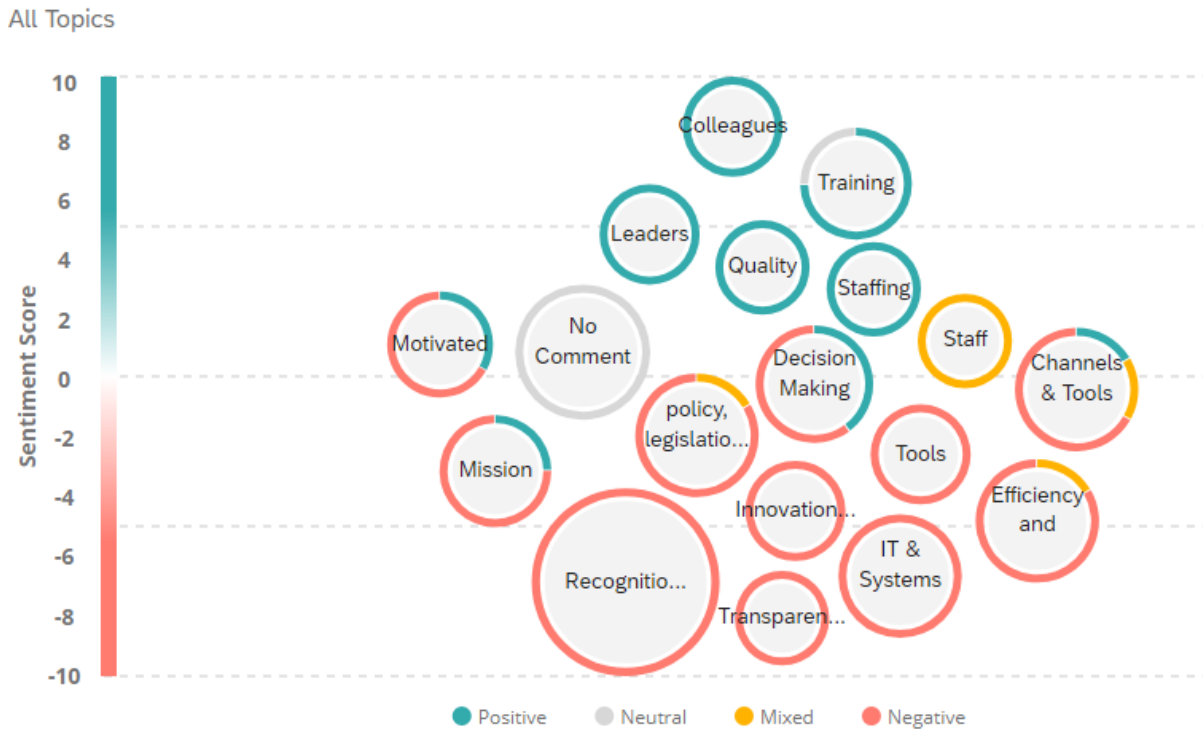


Figure 14 Sentiment analysis of “Other comments”

NOTE: Comments relating to fees and payments are coded as “recognition” in the above diagram.

Sample extracts of comments for the above:

I also agree with the recommendations of the Day Report, in respect of the Tribunal and feel they are entirely sensible.

The work is barely worth doing financially if assessed on an hourly rate. The researching and study of country of origin information can take days to properly assimilate..... I think most of us feel that the amount of work that we have to do and the standard we have to achieve is under estimated and unappreciated by the Department of Justice.

The fee also fails to reflect the significant emotional challenge inherent in the role.

It would be good to have hearings outside of Dublin.

If the administrative and IT frictions are reduced and eliminated, and remote hearing put in place, I see no reason why most appeals cannot be turned around within six months.

Please schedule hearings Monday to Friday. Please start AV hearings without delay. Please digitise files.

## 8. Conclusion and next steps

- 8.1 This survey report will be shared with all of the IPAT members, IPAT Management and with the Programme Board of the Catherine Day Implementation Working Group.
- 8.2 This survey formed part of an overall piece of work to look at user perspectives and experiences. Similar surveys were carried out with staff of the IPO and IPAT, and with IPO Legal Panel members. These surveys were augmented by workshops and focus groups with each group. Overall there are 8 individual reports analysing each of these pieces of work.
- 8.3 These 8 reports have been looked at as a whole, and the insights within them used to develop one overall set of recommendations for improvements. In many cases, recommendations are based directly on or lead from ideas that people shared throughout the work. These recommendations will be based on what people shared about their experiences and their roles within the International Protection process, and so for the most part focus on what will improve the experience of working in the International Protection process.
- 8.4 These recommendations have then been cross-referenced with the overall recommendations arising from the overall body of work reviewing the end to end process review of the International Protection Process. Ultimately, this will result in one overall set of recommendations, supported by multiple strands of analysis and research. These recommendations will then be submitted to the Programme Board for consideration, approval and decisions on how to implement.



## Appendix 1 – IPAT Tribunal Members survey extract

This survey has been exported from Qualtrics, formatting as below is not reflective of the formatting in the survey issued to IPAT members. The version that issued to IPAT was tested and reviewed for usability on a range of devices.

# IPAT Tribunal Member survey

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Start of Block: Default Question Block

### Introduction

This survey is being carried out to gather perspectives relating to the International Protection Process end-to-end review. This action arose from the recommendations of the Advisory Group on the Provision of Support including Accommodation to Persons in the International Protection Process (often referred to as the "Catherine Day Report"). The review team are eager to get your input, and this survey is one of the key ways in which they are doing this. The survey should take between 5 and 10 minutes to complete. You will only be able to submit one response. All responses are completely anonymous - we cannot link responses back to any individual. The information provided is stored on a Department of Justice licensed piece of software. The information will be used to shape what areas we need to look at in most detail, and to bring the review team's attention to things that may not be on the radar which need to be considered. Should you have any queries, or wish to discuss any matter with the review team, please contact the team by email at [BusinessChange@justice.ie](mailto:BusinessChange@justice.ie)

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Q1 How many cases do you typically take per month?

▼0-4 per month (1) ... more than 12 per month (4)

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Q2 How much time typically do you spend on preparing for a case?

▼0-1 hour (1) ... 5 hours+ (6)

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Q3 I have received enough training to effectively perform my role.

- Strongly disagree (1)
  - Somewhat disagree (2)
  - Neither agree nor disagree (3)
  - Somewhat agree (4)
  - Strongly agree (5)
- 

Q4 Do you receive feedback in relation to the work you do for the Tribunal?

- Never (1)
  - Sometimes (2)
  - About half the time (3)
  - Most of the time (4)
  - Always (5)
-

Q5 If I have an idea to improve our work processes, the Tribunal will take it on board.

- Strongly disagree (1)
  - Somewhat disagree (2)
  - Neither agree nor disagree (3)
  - Somewhat agree (4)
  - Strongly agree (5)
- 

Q6 Meetings are held between members of the Tribunal and management of IPAT to discuss issues and updates.

- Never (1)
- Sometimes (2)
- About half the time (3)
- Most of the time (4)
- Always (5)

Q7 How satisfied are you with the frequency of communication from the Tribunal?

- Extremely satisfied (1)
  - Somewhat satisfied (2)
  - Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (3)
  - Somewhat dissatisfied (4)
  - Extremely dissatisfied (5)
-

Q8 How satisfied are you with the quality of communication from the Tribunal?

- Extremely satisfied (1)
  - Somewhat satisfied (2)
  - Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (3)
  - Somewhat dissatisfied (4)
  - Extremely dissatisfied (5)
- 

Q9 The IT applications supporting my work in the International Protection Process are effective.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

Q10 What is working well in your role? (What is positive in your role, what works well and what helps you get your work done efficiently etc.)

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Q11 What is not working well in your role? (What slows down your work and does not job efficiently etc.)

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Q12 What motivated you to apply to be on the Tribunal members panel?

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Page Break



Q13 How satisfied are you in your current role?

- Extremely satisfied (1)
  - Somewhat satisfied (2)
  - Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (3)
  - Somewhat dissatisfied (4)
  - Extremely dissatisfied (5)
- 

Q14 Have you any other comments?

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End of Block: Default Question Block

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