ICANN Office of Ombuds: 2025 Baseline Survey Report and Action Plan

September 2025

Introduction

The ICANN Office of the Ombuds (Ombuds Office) ran a survey from May through June 2025 to explore community members' experience with and perception of the Ombuds Office. The survey asked 20 questions related to three of the Ombuds Office's Key Performance Indicators (KPIs): presence and perception, trust, and engagement.

The survey sets a baseline against which the Ombuds Office can measure changes in experience and perception year-to-year.

This report presents the results of the 2025 survey. It includes a summary of findings taken from the survey, actions the Ombuds Office will take to address the main 'pain points' emerging from the survey, and the aggregated responses to each survey question.

Finally, the survey was complemented by follow-up interviews with community members to add context and nuance to the survey findings.

Introduction (Continued)

Part 1: Survey Overview and Background

- Summary Findings: Bright Spots and Pain Points
- Summary Plan of Action to Address Pain Points
- Who Completed the Survey
- Survey Methodology

Part 2: Survey Results and Analysis

- Presence and Perception
- Trust
- Engagement

Part 1

Survey Overview and Background

Part 1 | Survey Overview | Summary Findings

	Positive Rating	Negative Rating
BRIGHT SPOTS		
Engagement and Client Experience	80%	10%
Confidentiality	58%	8%
PAIN POINTS		
Communication and Information	52%	15%
Robust Processes and Effective Handling of Complaints	42%	13%
Perceptions of Independence	41%	19%

Part 1 | Survey Overview | Summary Plan of Action

PAIN POINTS	OMBUDS OFFICE PLAN OF ACTION TO ADDRESS PAIN POINTS
Communication and Information	**Aim:** Enhance Ombuds Office communication with the community so that people have sufficient information about the Office and the services and support it offers. **Actions:** • Blog every 4-6 weeks, communicating the different services and support offered by the Ombuds Office and addressing issues that may be deterring people from contacting Ombuds Office. • Update the Ombuds Office webpage to provide clear information about the Office scope and services. • Offer informational sessions to ICANN staff so that they know when and how to refer people to the Ombuds Office. • Undertake strategic and tailored outreach activities with different groups, such as newcomers to ICANN. • Continue to maintain an office and visible presence at ICANN meetings.

Part 1 | Survey Overview | Summary Plan of Action (Continued)

PAIN POINTS	OMBUDS OFFICE PLAN OF ACTION TO ADDRESS PAIN POINTS
Robust Processes and Effective Handling of Complaints	**Aim**: Make the process the Ombuds Office follows in handling complaints and conflict clear and accessible. **Actions**: • Finalize the Ombuds Office framework and process that sets out the processes and timelines for handling concerns, complaints, and conflicts at all stages. • Share information through blogs and interactions with community members about what they can expect in a complaint or conflict process. • Explore options to provide support and training to community leaders who are sometimes approached to give informal advice about concerns and conflicts.

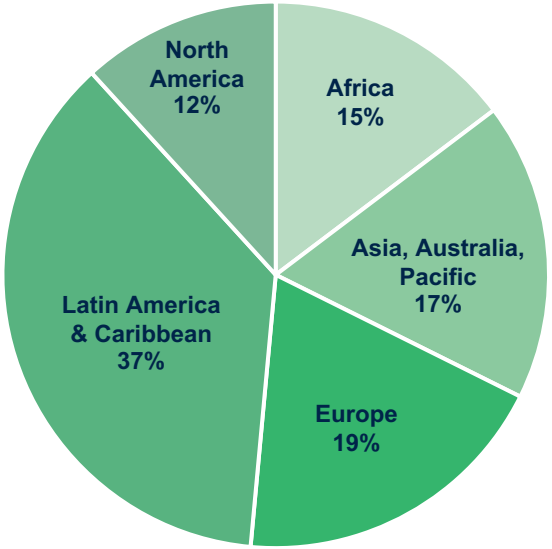
Part 1 | Survey Overview | Summary Plan of Action (Continued)

PAIN POINTS	OMBUDS OFFICE PLAN OF ACTION TO ADDRESS PAIN POINTS
Perceptions of Independence	**Aim**: Demonstrate that the Ombuds Office treats all complainants or visitors equally, irrespective of their role in ICANN, and operates without undue influence from any part of the ICANN ecosystem. **Actions**: • Clarify how the Ombuds Office reports to the Board, emphasizing that the Ombuds does not report on or involve the Board in individual cases. • Define commitments, standards and codes of practice, articulating how the Ombuds Office puts these into action. • Report on Ombuds activities, insights, and improvements (within the boundaries of confidentiality).

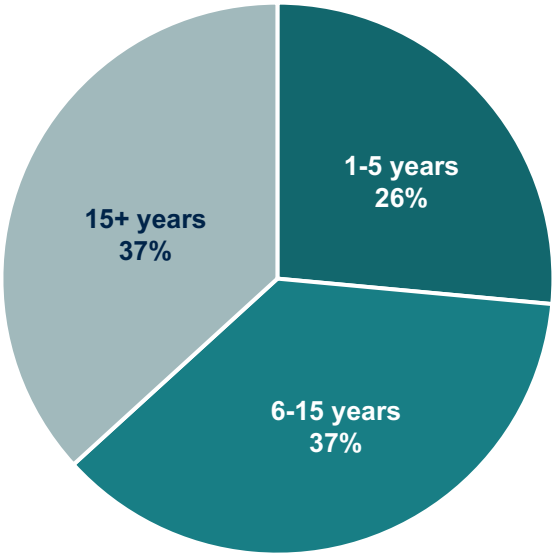
Part 1 | Survey Overview | Who Completed the Survey

81 people responded to the survey; thank you!

Survey Respondents by Region

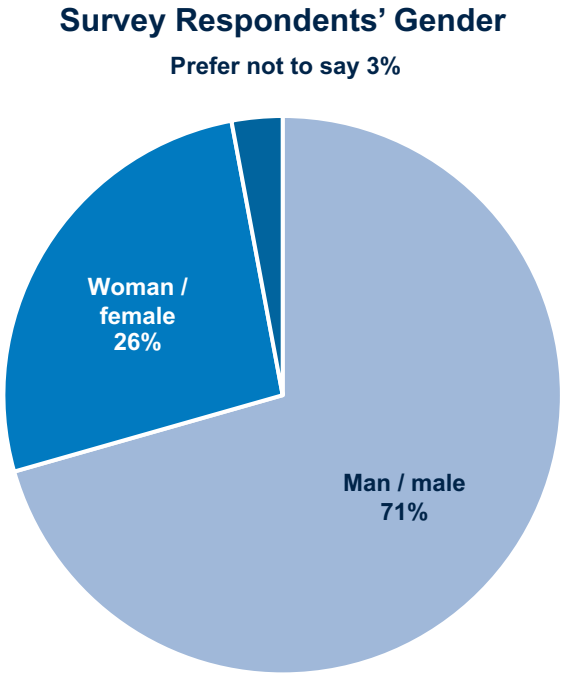


Survey Respondents' Years as Active Members of ICANN

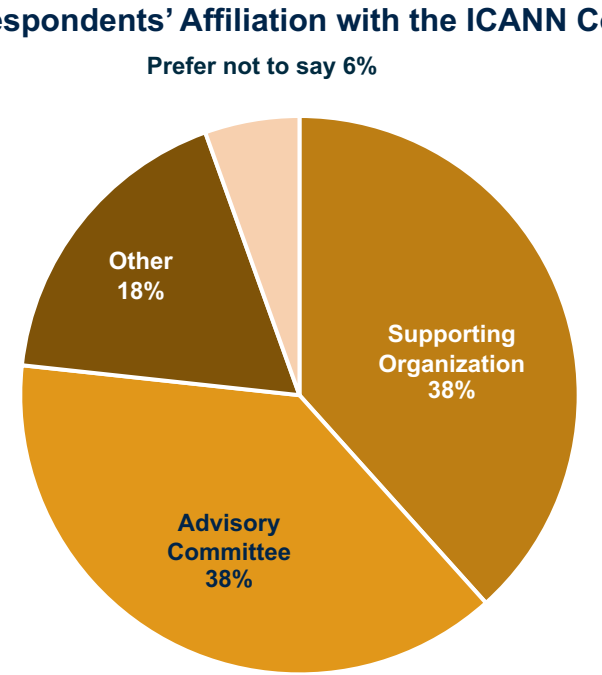


Part 1 | Survey Overview | Who Completed the Survey (Continued)

Survey Respondents' Gender



Survey Respondents' Affiliation with the ICANN Community



Part 1 | Survey Overview | Survey Methodology

The Ombuds Office Baseline Survey opened on 14 May 2025 and closed on 16 June 2025. It was distributed to ICANN community members via the Ombuds blog, the Community Digest, and a message to Supporting Organization and Advisory Committee Chairs. In addition, the Ombuds Office contacted a number of individual community members for help with promoting the survey within their groups, targeting specific languages and regions.

Participation was open to all ICANN community members who had the survey link and was entirely voluntary. Only one question in the survey required a response: a question relating to accepting the survey's privacy agreement.

The survey was offered in English, Spanish, and French. Of the 81 total respondents, 63% completed it in English, 28% did so in Spanish, and 9% did so in French.

Most questions use a five-point Likert scale, inviting respondents to indicate their level of agreement with statements ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree, including a neutral middle option (Neither Agree Nor Disagree).

In the results presented here, percentages are calculated based on the number of responses to each individual question, rather than as a proportion of the total survey participants, because not every respondent answered every question.

Part 2

Survey Results and Analysis

Part 2 | Survey Results | Survey Areas

The baseline survey tracks three of the Ombuds Office Key Performance Indicators:

- **Presence and Perception:** People know about the ICANN Ombuds Office and what it does.
- **Trust:** People believe the Ombuds Office can help them and that the ICANN Ombuds has professional ethics and integrity.
- **Engagement:** People use the Ombuds Office; people use the Office for the range of services it provides including conflict prevention and resolution and complaint resolution.

Part 2 | Survey Results | Presence and Perception

The ICANN Ombuds Office offers a **range of support and services** to the ICANN community.

Which of the following would you contact the ICANN Ombuds Office to help with?

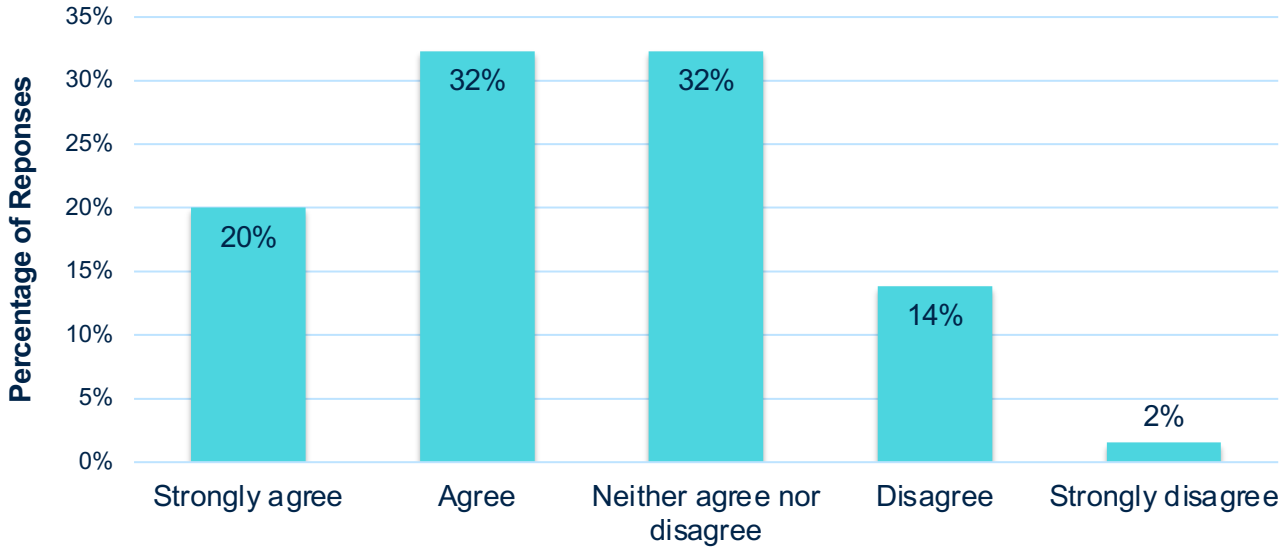
Ombuds Office Support and Services	Respondents who would contact the Office for this support		
	% total respondents	% respondents woman/ female	% respondents man /male
Advice and guidance about a conflict or relationship issue with someone in ICANN	64%	78%	60%
A complaint if I have been treated unfairly	61%	67%	60%
Conciliation, negotiation, mediation, or other informal conflict resolution support	59%	50%	65%
A complaint about bullying	58%	72%	54%
A complaint about sexual harassment	51%	72%	44%
A complaint about identity-based harassment (e.g., harassment based on gender, race/ethnicity, religious beliefs, political opinions, etc.)	52%	61%	50%
Training, learning, or workshops on conflict resolution or anti-harassment	37%	33%	39%
I would not contact the Ombuds Office for help	9%	0%	8%

Part 2 | Survey Results | Presence and Perception

I have **sufficient information** about the ICANN Ombuds Office.

While **52% of all respondents** agree that they have sufficient information about the Office, there are important nuances and differences.

61% of respondents in English agreed that they have sufficient information, but only **45% of respondents in Spanish** and **16% of respondents in French** shared that view.

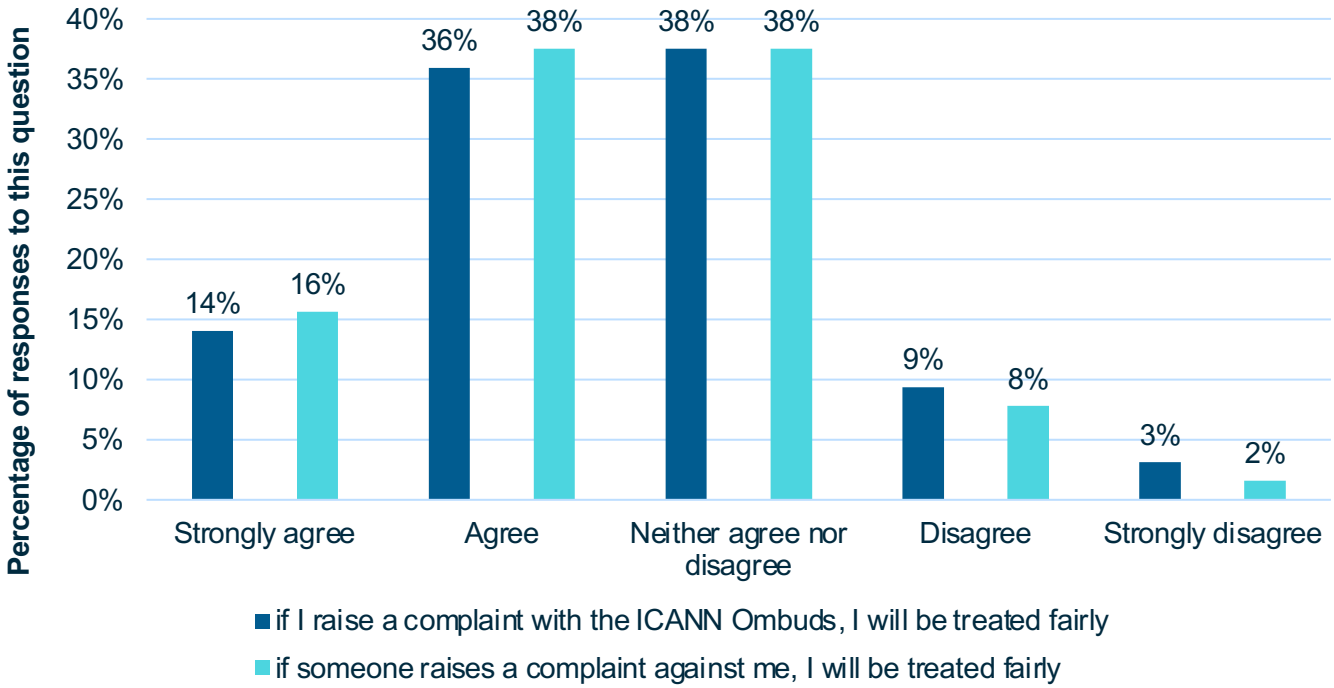


Part 2 | Survey Results | Trust

I am confident that if I raise a complaint with the ICANN Ombuds, **I will be treated fairly**.

I am confident that if someone raises a complaint against me to the Ombuds, **I will be treated fairly**.

50% of respondents are confident that the Ombuds would treat them fairly if they raised a complaint *and* **54%** are confident if a complaint was raised against them.

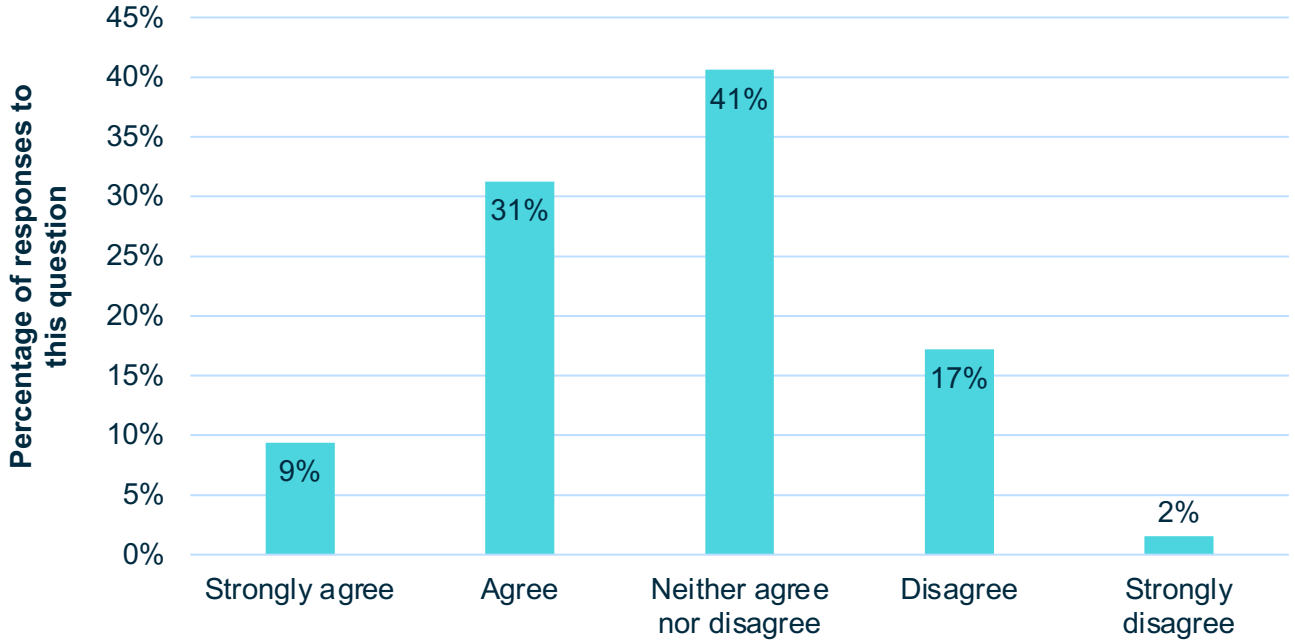


Part 2 | Survey Results | Trust

I am confident that the Ombuds Office operates **independently.**

40% of respondents are confident that the Ombuds Office operates independently.

19% of respondents think the Ombuds Office is not independent.

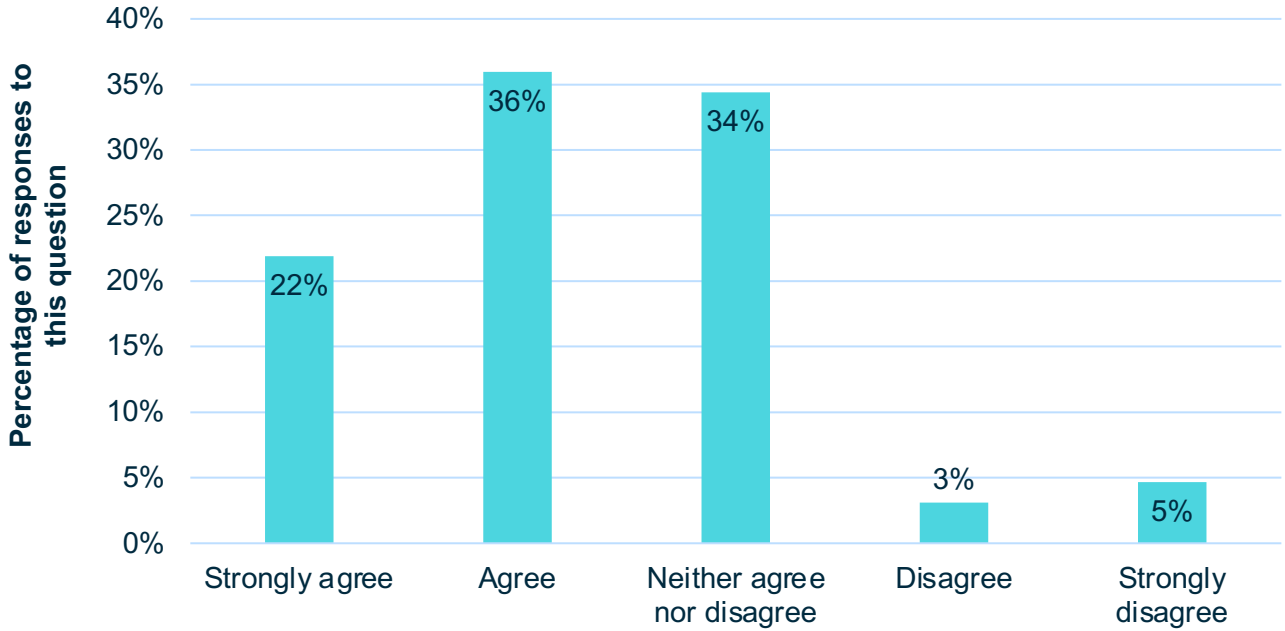


Part 2 | Survey Results | Trust

I am confident that the Ombuds Office provides **confidentiality** to community members who contact the office.

58% of respondents have confidence that the Ombuds Office provides confidentiality.

8% of respondents do not share that confidence.

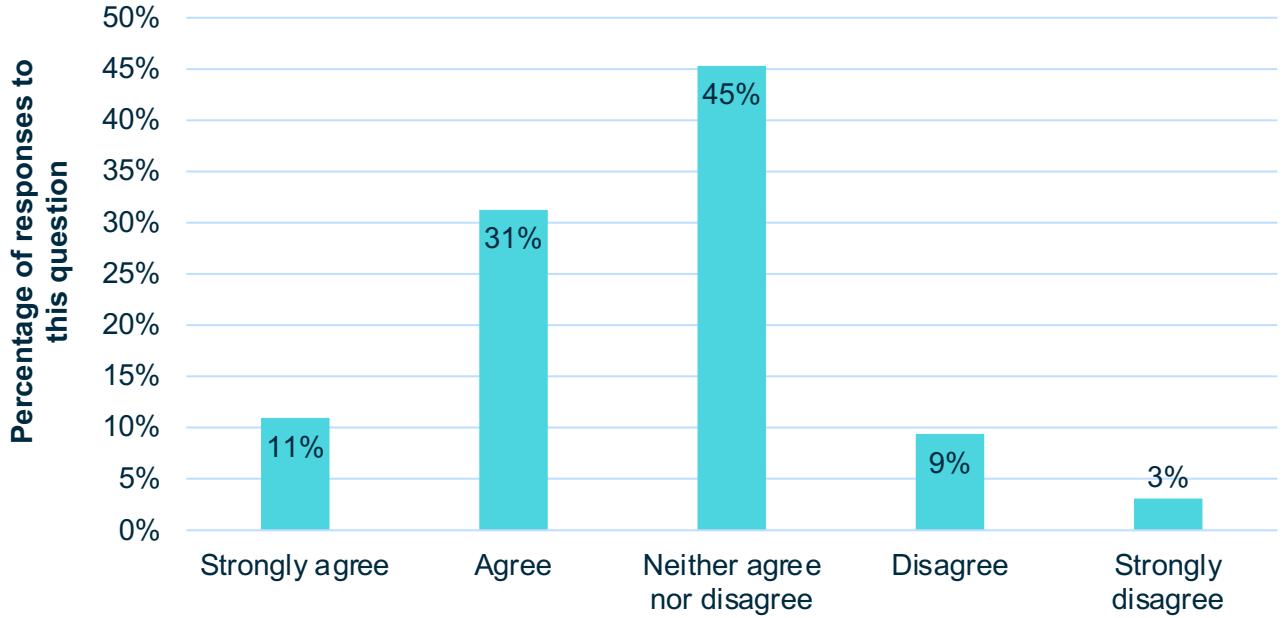


Part 2 | Survey Results | Trust

I am confident that the Ombuds Office has **robust processes** in place to handle complaints and disputes.

42% of respondents are confident that the Ombuds Office has robust processes in place to handle complaints and disputes.

12% of respondents disagree.



Part 2 | Survey Results | Trust

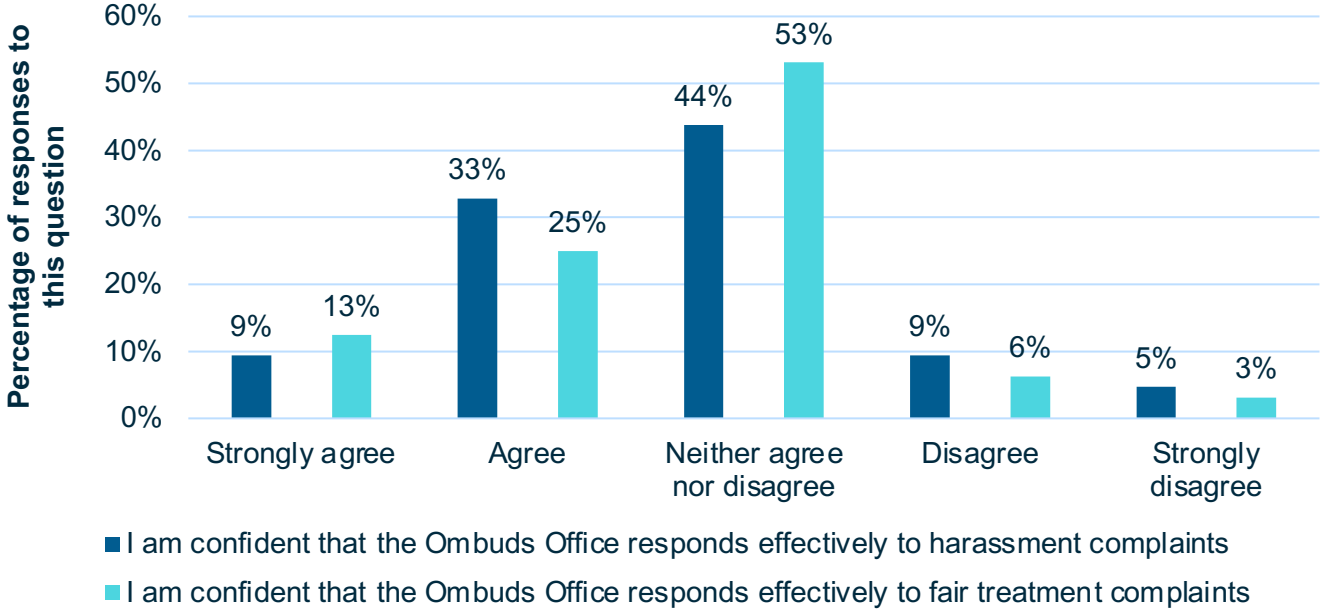
The Ombuds Office handles complaints about both fair treatment and harassment.

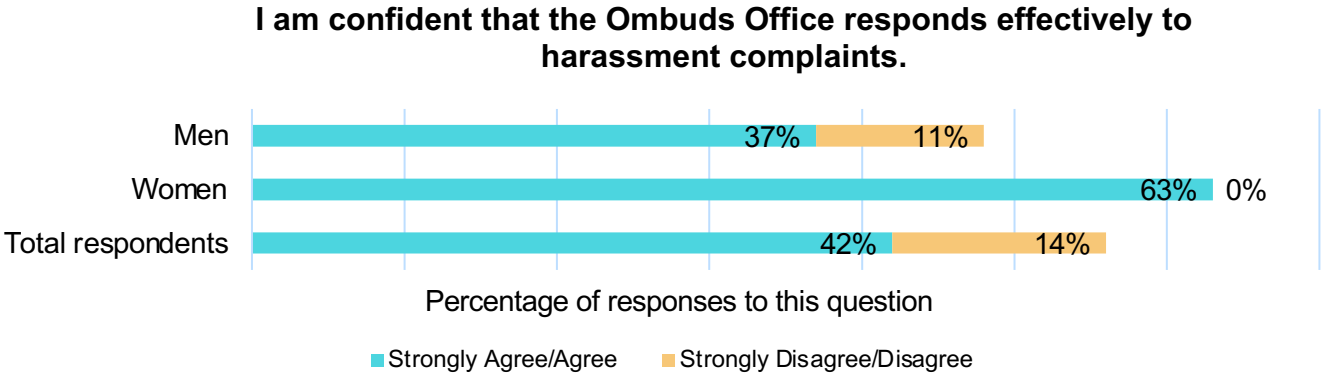
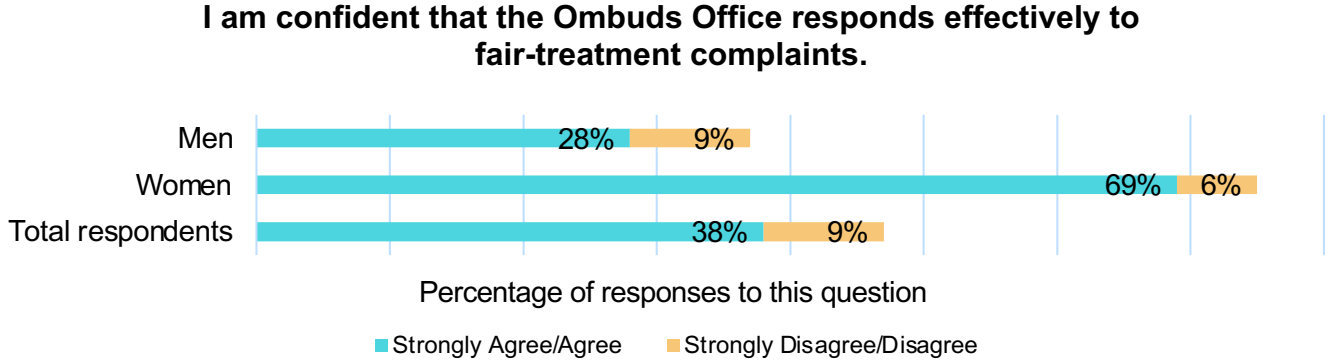
I am confident that the Ombuds Office responds effectively to **harassment complaints**.

I am confident that the Ombuds Office responds effectively to **fair-treatment complaints.**

42% of respondents trust the Ombuds Office to respond effectively to harassment complaints versus **38%** to fair treatment complaints.

But **14% of respondents** think harassment complaints are not handled well, compared with **9%** for fair treatment complaints.



Part 2 | Survey Results | Trust

Female respondents have greater confidence in the Ombuds Office to **provide an effective response** to harassment and fair-treatment complaints.