

A photograph showing a man in a blue wheelchair being assisted by a staff member in a blue vest and dark trousers onto a boat. The boat has a wooden deck and a glass railing. In the background, there is a stone castle and a red heart-shaped sculpture. The scene is outdoors on a wooden pier next to a body of water.

Inclusive and Accessible Tourism Industry Workshop

Tuesday 29th April
The Ebrington Hotel, Derry~Londonderry



Welcome

Jamie Shields
Event Host



Small steps to a Giant Welcome

Eimear Callaghan
Tourism NI

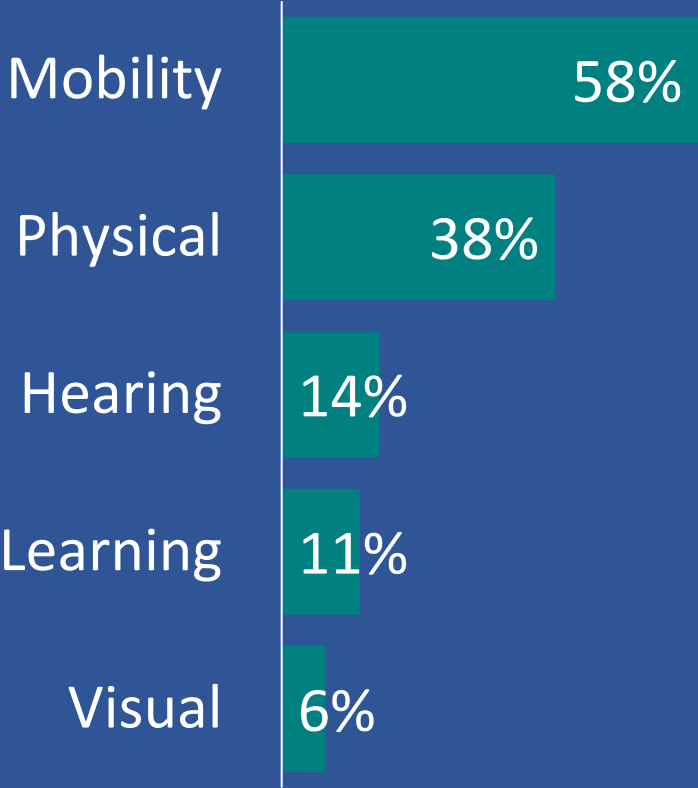


The Need

NI: Around 1 in 5 say they have additional needs with over half specifying mobility issues



What additional needs do you or your travelling companion have?



N = 400, 95 have or travel with someone with additional needs

S12 Would you describe yourself as having a disability / mobility or accessibility needs? S13 Does anyone that you would often go on holiday with have a disability / mobility or accessibility needs?
L6 What type of disability / mobility or accessibility needs do you or your travelling companions [DELETE AS APPLICABLE BASED ON S12/S13] have?

ROI: Around 1 in 10 have or travel with someone with an additional need. Of these, nearly half have or travel with someone with a physical disability

13%

Describe themselves as having disability, mobility or accessibility needs

11%

Say they travel with someone who has a disability, mobility or accessibility needs

What additional needs do you or your travelling companion have?

Physical

46%

Mobility

38%

Visual

20%

Learning

16%

Hearing

13%

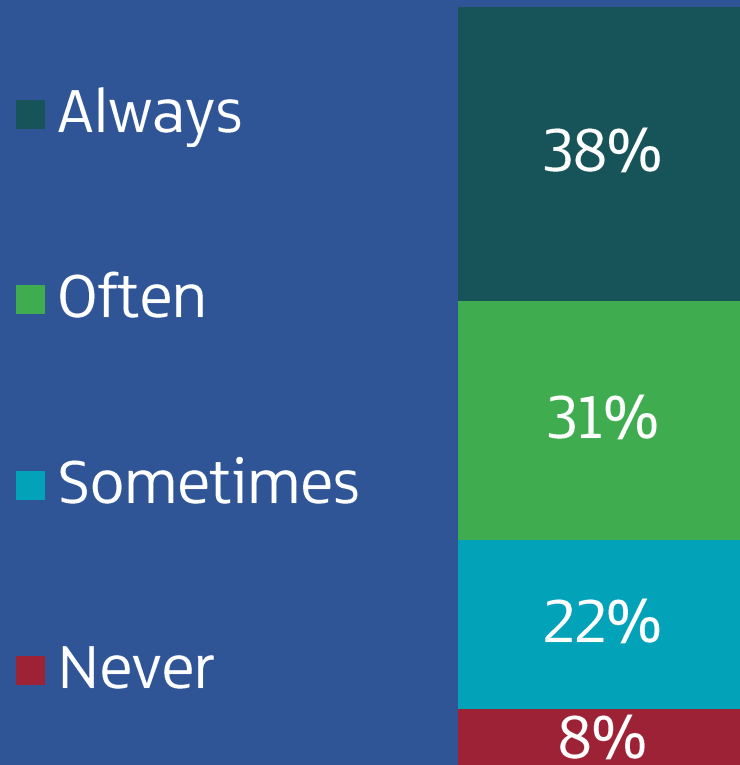
N = 748, 131 have or travel with someone with additional needs

S12 Would you describe yourself as having a disability / mobility or accessibility needs? S13 Does anyone that you would often go on holiday with have a disability / mobility or accessibility needs?

L6 What type of disability / mobility or accessibility needs do you or your travelling companions [DELETE AS APPLICABLE BASED ON S12/S13] have?

Two thirds of people with a disability (or who travel with someone who does) say they look for accessibility information

How often do you look for information detailing accessible features when looking at accommodation (generally)?



30%

Don't find useful
accessibility
information when
researching
accommodation in NI

N = 95

L7 When researching accommodation and/or visitor attractions online, how often do you look for information detailing accessible features?

L8 Overall how would you rate your experience of finding information that is useful to you when researching accommodation and/or visitor attractions in Northern Ireland?



Inclusive & Accessible Tourism Industry Survey

Objectives



- Gauge levels of accessibility within the industry.
- Better understand what support could be provided to help make the tourism offering more accessible to all potential customers.
- Survey designed in collaboration with Disability Action.
 - Input from NITA.
- A total of 451 businesses participated: 258 online 193 via telephone



**TOURISM
NORTHERN
IRELAND**

Technical note


At the beginning of the survey, respondents were provided with the following definitions:



- **Accessibility** is about removing barriers (whether physical, digital, relating to information and content, or attitudinal) to promote positive and equal experiences for all.
- **Disabled people/person** refers to those who may have a disabling experience in society due to barriers to mobility or communication.

Sample: responses by sector

Sector	Responses (% of sample)
Accommodation provider	261 (58%)
Activity/experience provider	95 (21%)
Attraction	50 (11%)
Conference venue	8 (2%)
Golf club	6 (1%)
Festival/events	3 (1%)
Carrier/transport provider	3 (1%)
Food and drink	2 (<1%)
Bar/restaurant/cafe	1 (<1%)
Event organiser	1 (<1%)
Other	21 (5%)
Total	451



Type	Responses (% of sample)
Self-catering	142 (54%)
Hotel	53 (20%)
B&B/GH/GA*	45 (17%)
Caravan/camping/ glamping	10 (4%)
Hostel	6 (2%)
Other	4 (2%)

*Bed and breakfast/guest house/guest accommodation

Q. Which of the following is your main business type? Base: all businesses (n=451).

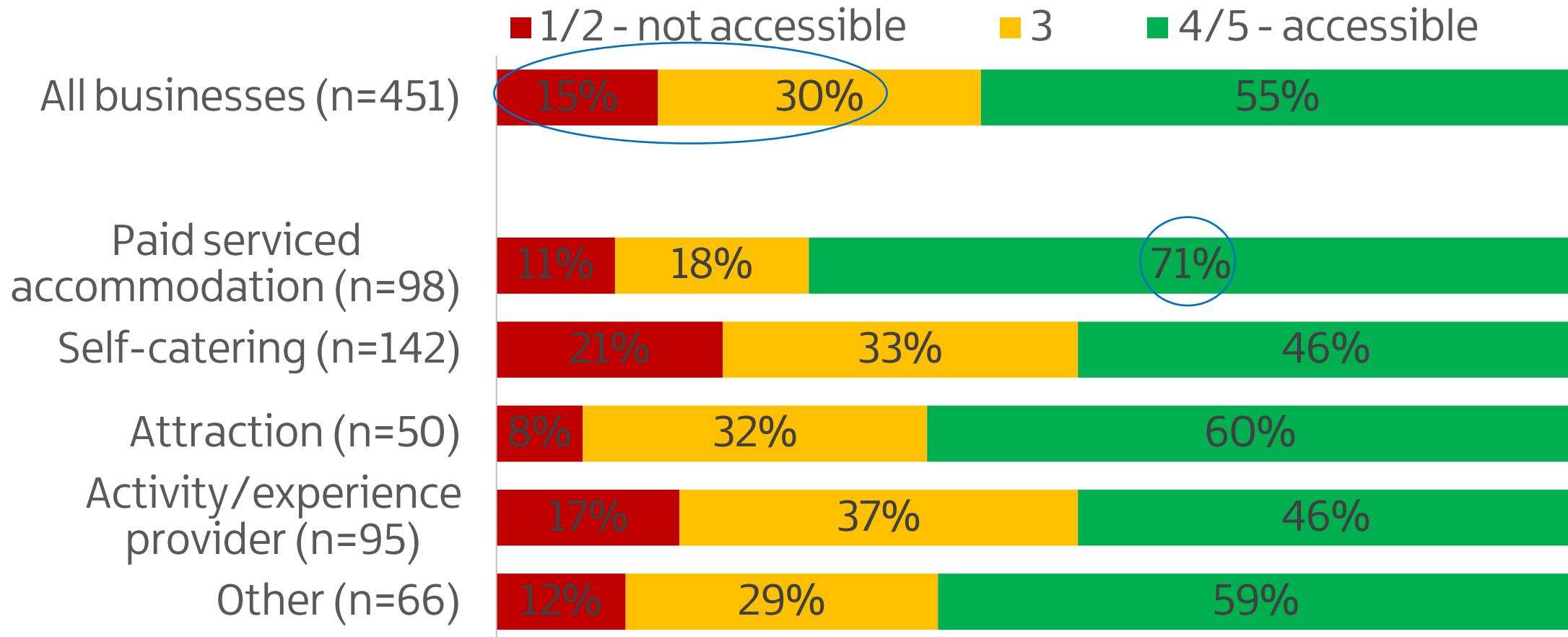
Q. Which of the following best describes your business? Base: all accommodation providers (n=261).

Accessibility of business



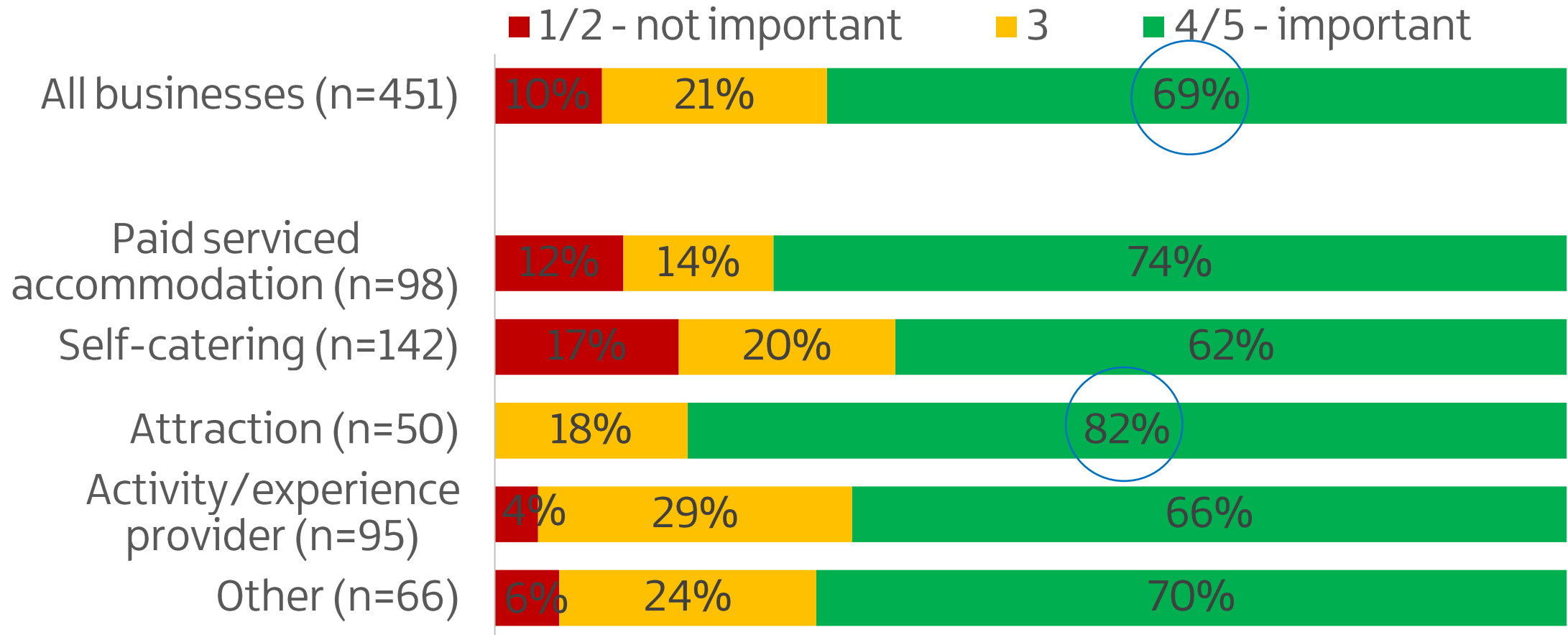
TOURISM
NORTHERN
IRELAND

Rating the accessibility of their business



Q. On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is not accessible at all and 5 is completely accessible, how would you rate the accessibility of your business? Sample sizes denoted on chart. The chart segment without a data label = 2%.

Perceived importance of business being accessible



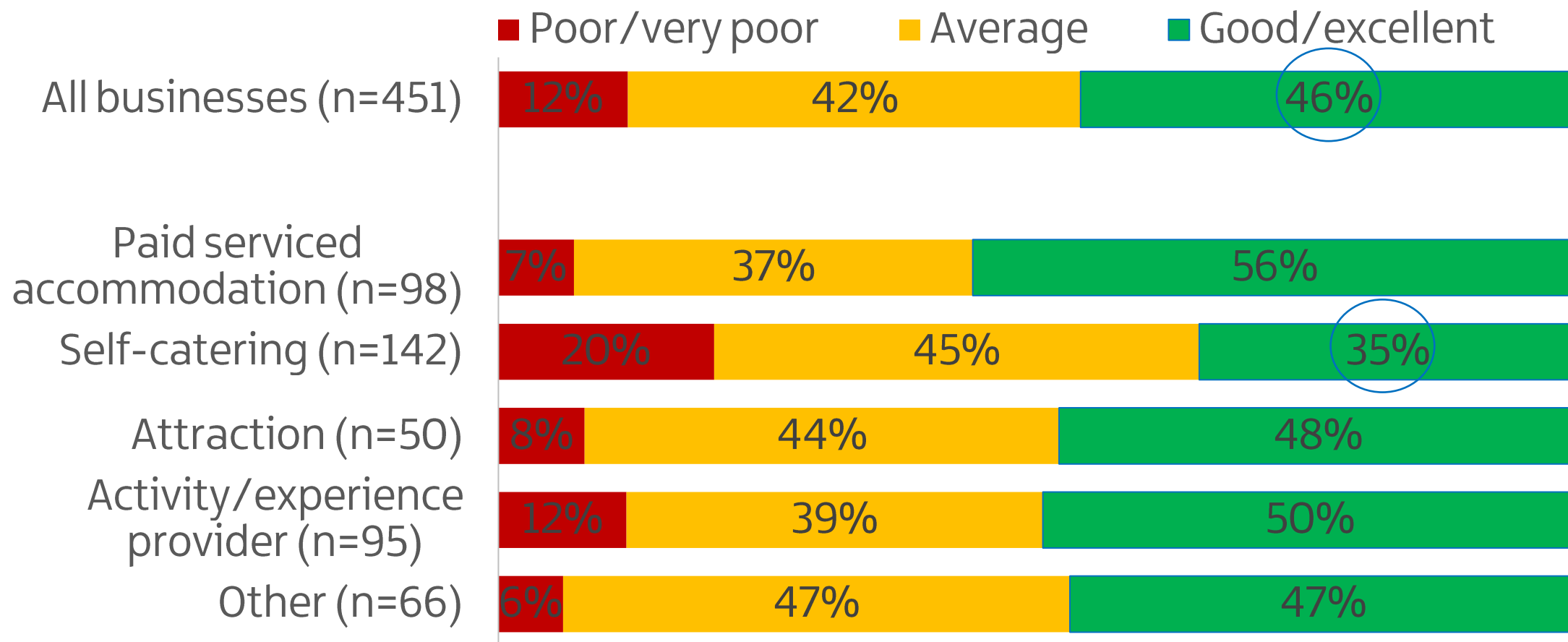
Q. On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is not important at all and 5 is extremely important, how important is it that your business is accessible? Sample sizes denoted on chart.

‘Knowledge & Engagement’



TOURISM
NORTHERN
IRELAND

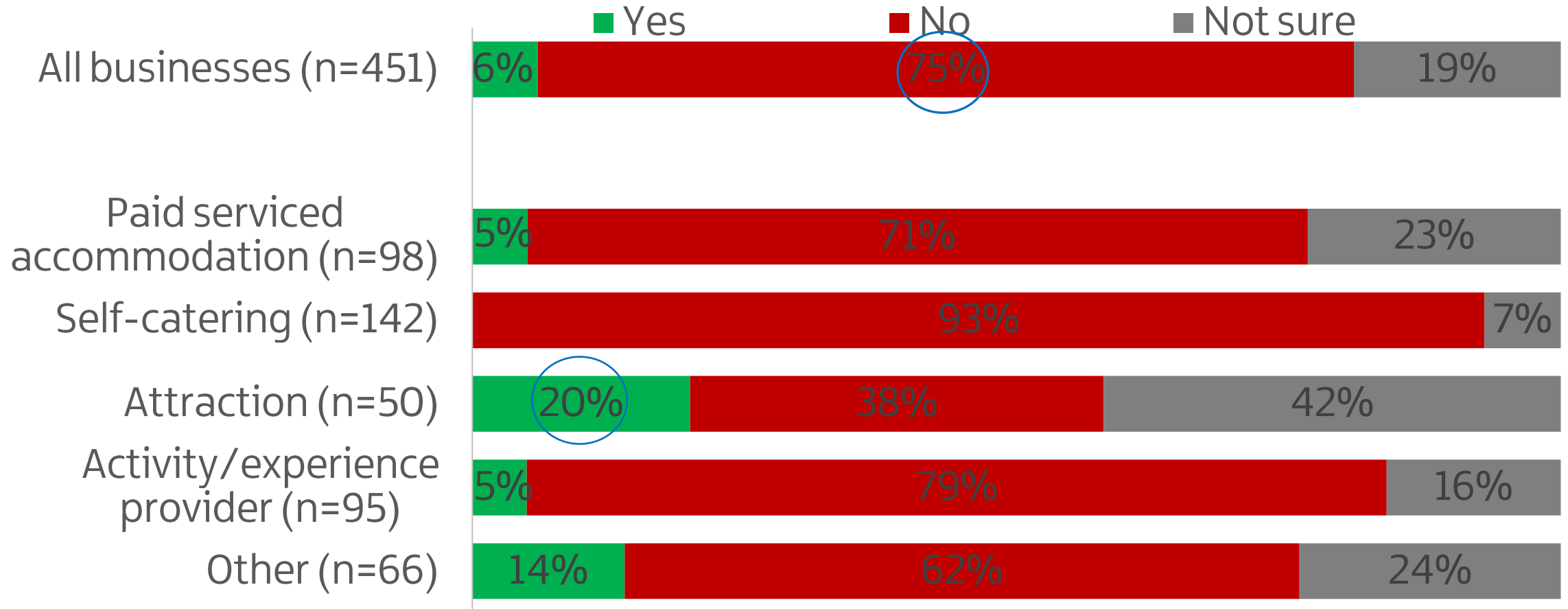
Extent of knowledge of 'Inclusive & Accessible Tourism'



Q. How would you rate your current knowledge of 'Inclusive & Accessible Tourism'? Sample sizes denoted on chart.

Note: any chart segment without a data label $\leq 2\%$.

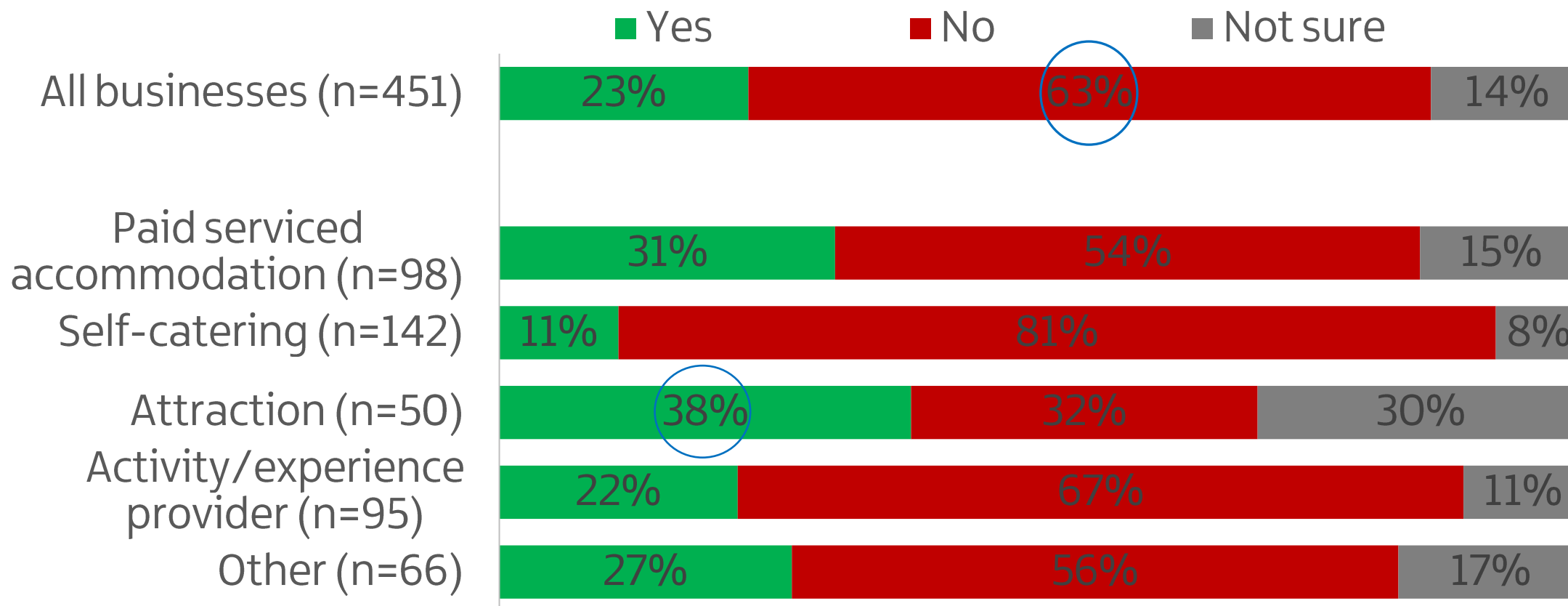
Engaged with an organisation/company to seek advice on accessibility provision



Q. Has your business engaged with an organisation/company to seek advice on accessibility provision?

Base: all businesses – sample sizes denoted on chart.

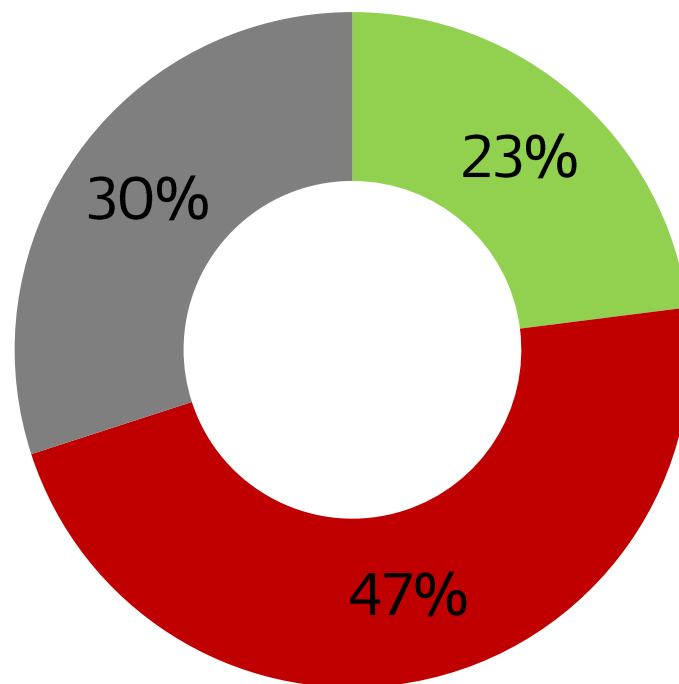
Conducted an accessibility assessment or audit to better understand how to improve the accessibility of business



Q. Have you conducted an accessibility assessment or audit to better understand how to improve the accessibility of your business/organisation? *Base: all businesses – sample sizes denoted on chart.*

Specific action taken on account of accessibility assessment/audit

■ Yes ■ No ■ Not sure



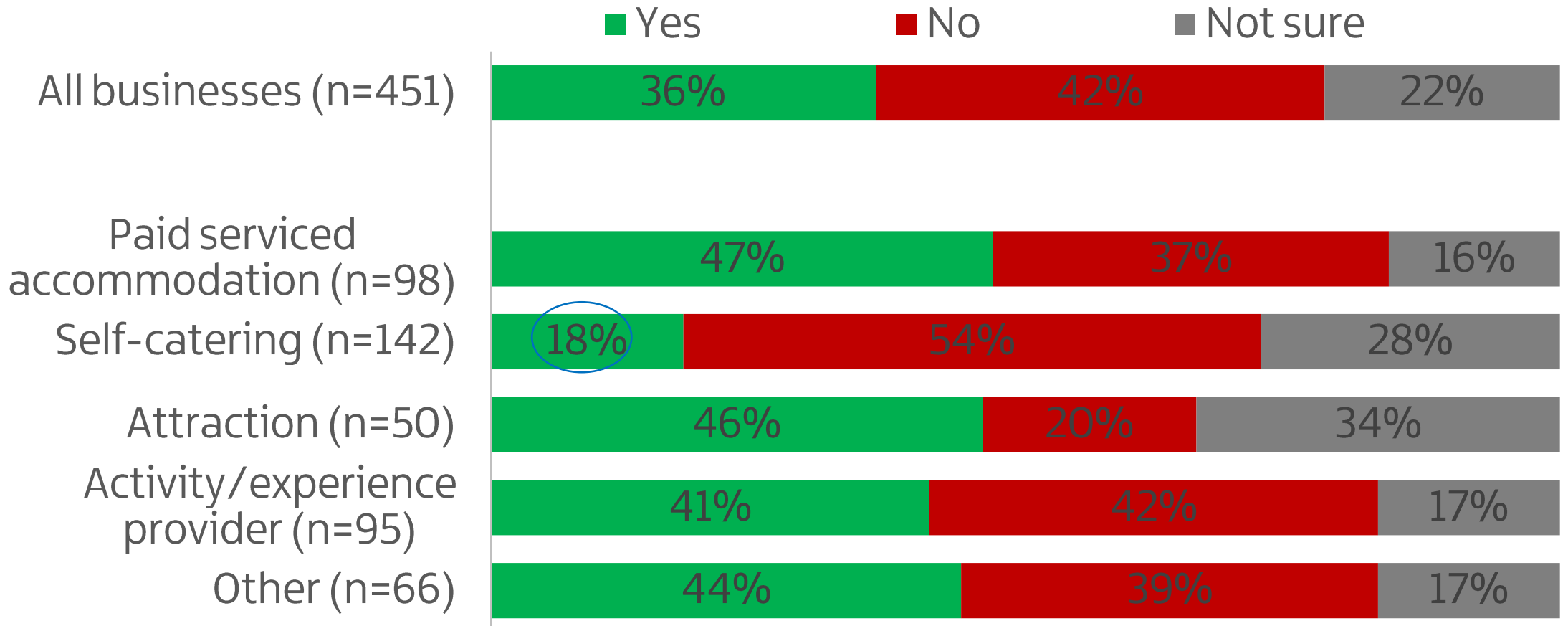
Q. Have you undertaken any specific actions because of this assessment?
Base: all businesses that conducted an accessibility assessment/audit (n=104).

Disability legislation/ Staff training



TOURISM
NORTHERN
IRELAND

Aware of any disability legislation/compliance relating to sector

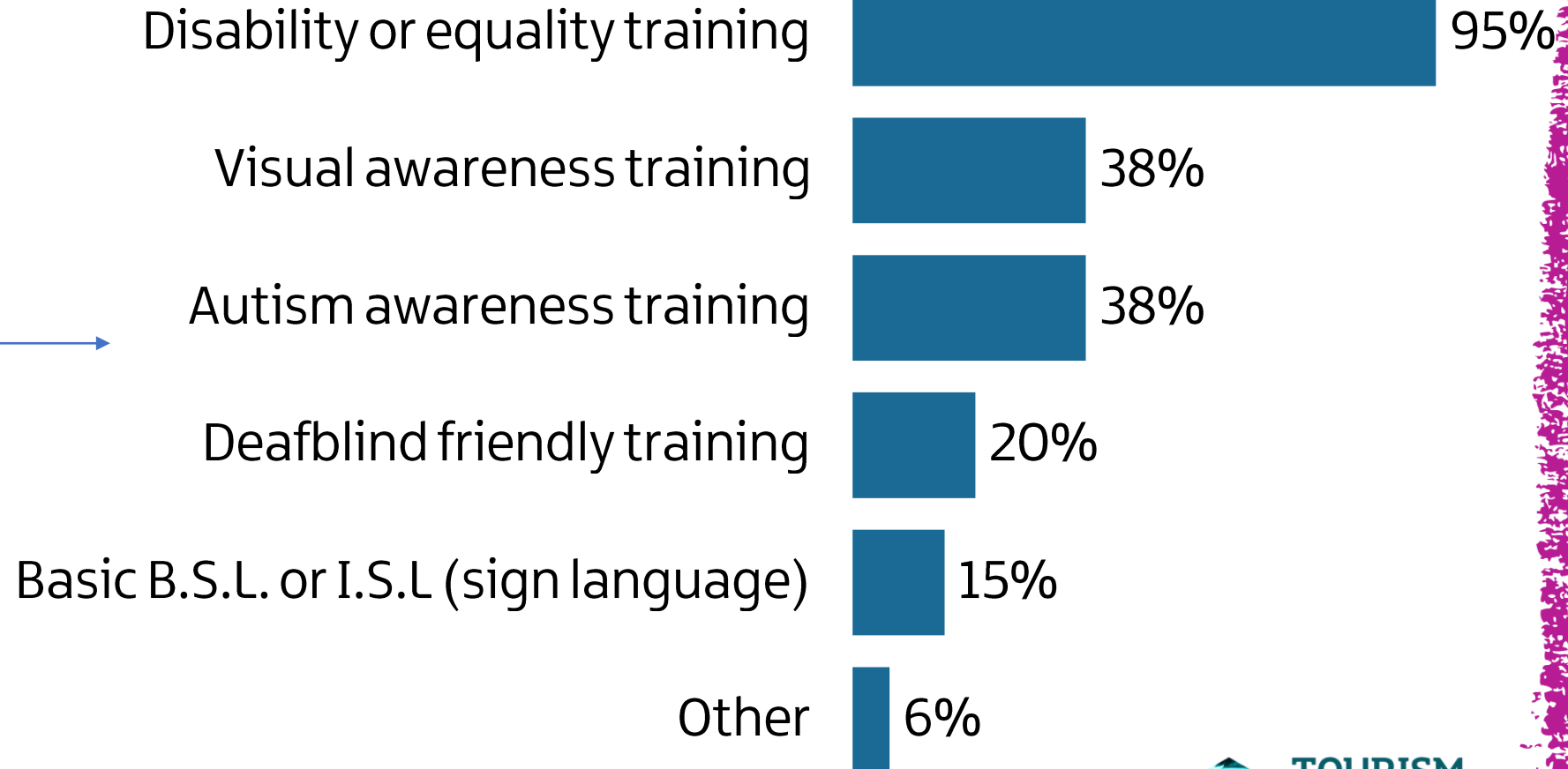
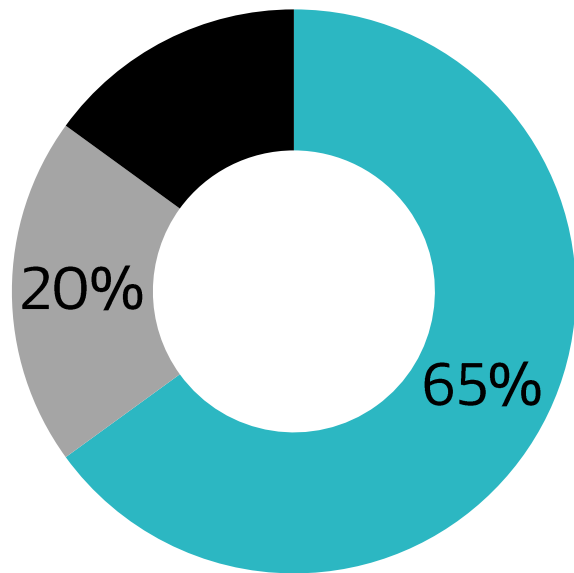


Q. Are you aware of any disability legislation/compliance relating to your sector?

Base: all businesses – sample sizes denoted on chart.

Accessibility training for staff

■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know



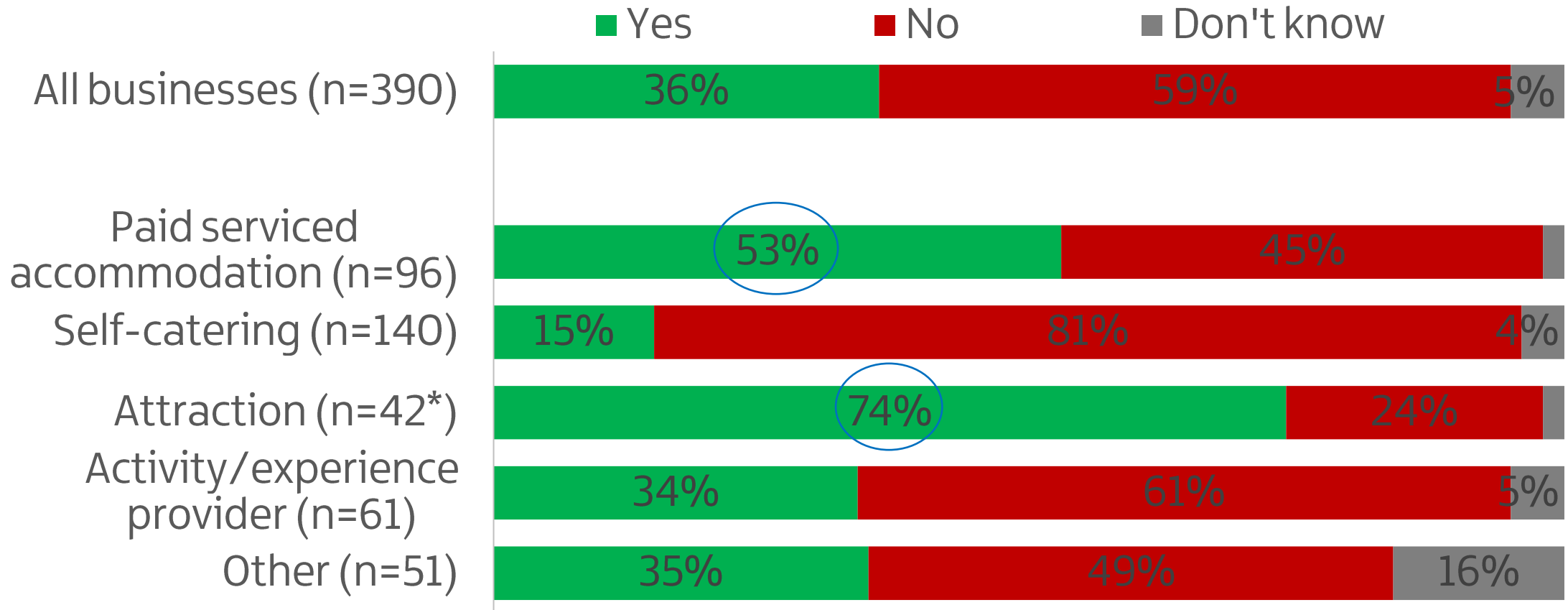
Q. Have your staff undertaken any disability awareness, accessibility or equality training? *Base: all businesses that employ staff (n=210).*
Q. What training have you or any staff members undertaken? *Base: all businesses whose staff had undertaken training (n=136).*

Promoting accessibility



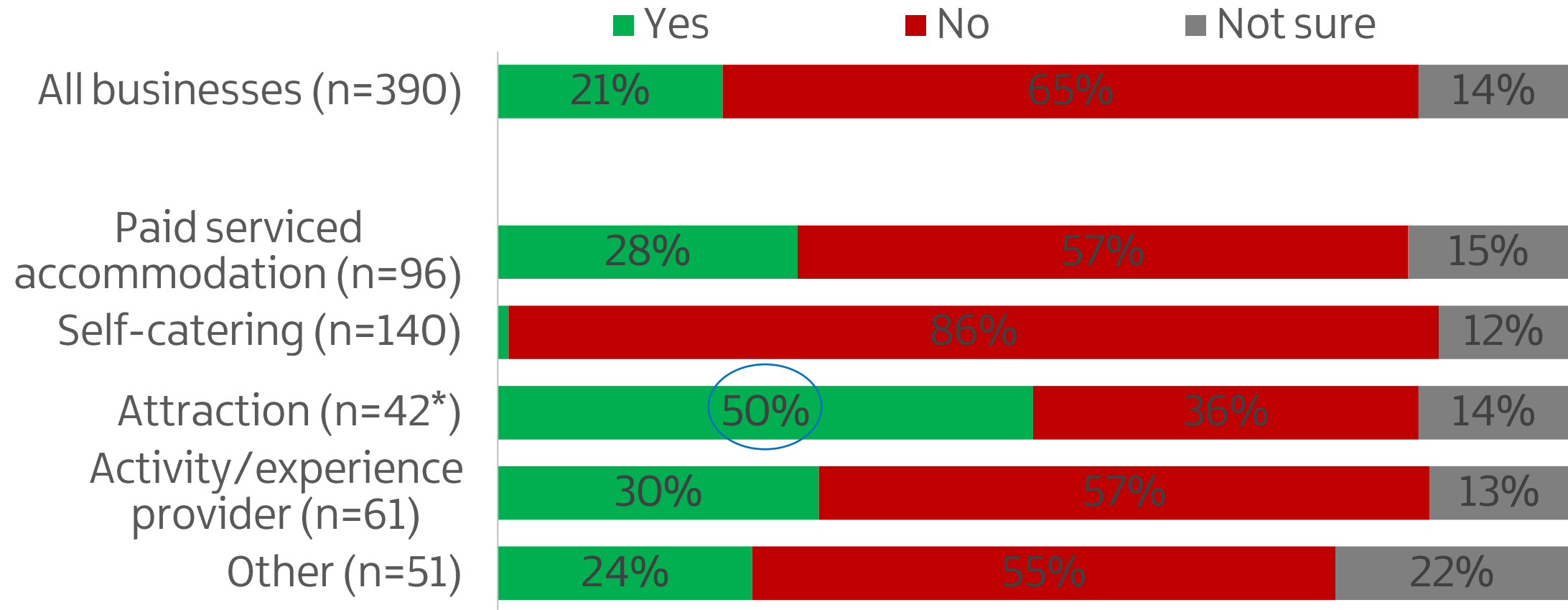
TOURISM
NORTHERN
IRELAND

Promote provision of adaptations for disabled customers



Q. When promoting your business, do you promote the fact that you provide adaptations for disabled customers? Base: all businesses that make accessibility provisions – sample sizes denoted on chart. Note: any chart segment without a data label $\leq 2\%$. *Caution: small sample size.

Have a formal accessibility policy or commitment statement



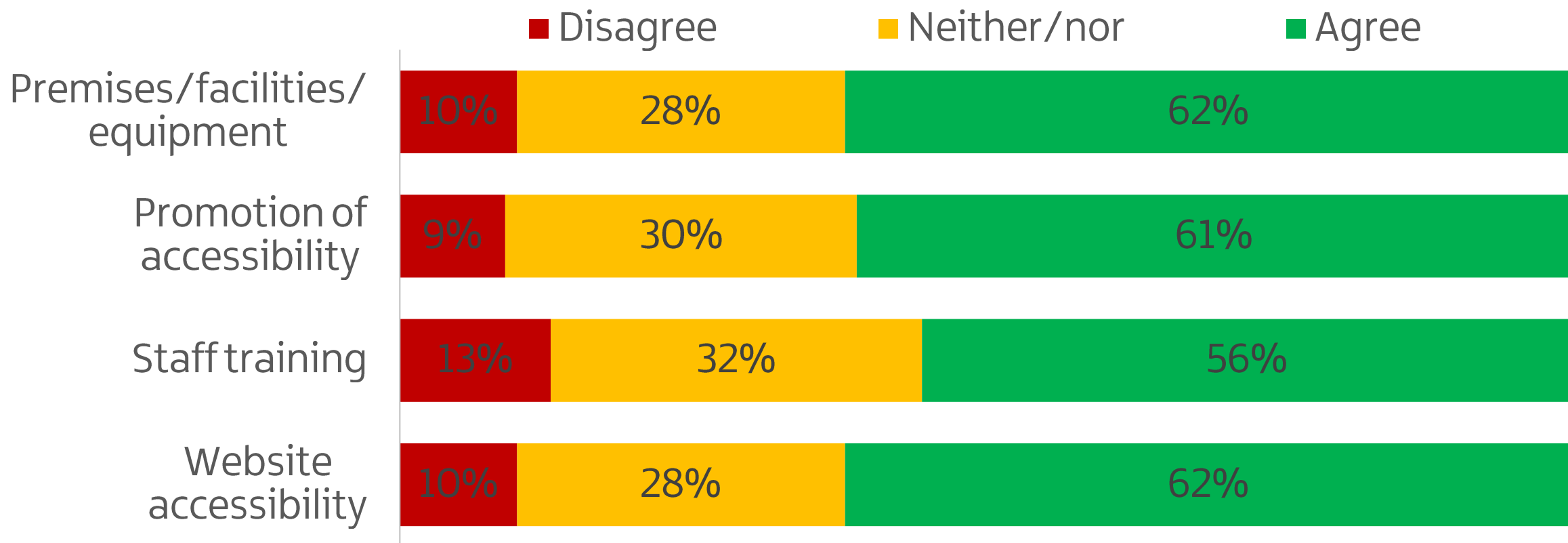
Q. Does your business have a formal accessibility policy or commitment statement? Base: all businesses that make accessibility provisions – sample sizes denoted on chart. Note: any chart segment without a data label =1%. *Caution: small sample size.

Opportunities/ motivation to improve accessibility provision



TOURISM
NORTHERN
IRELAND

Feel there are significant opportunities to improve accessibility with the appropriate support

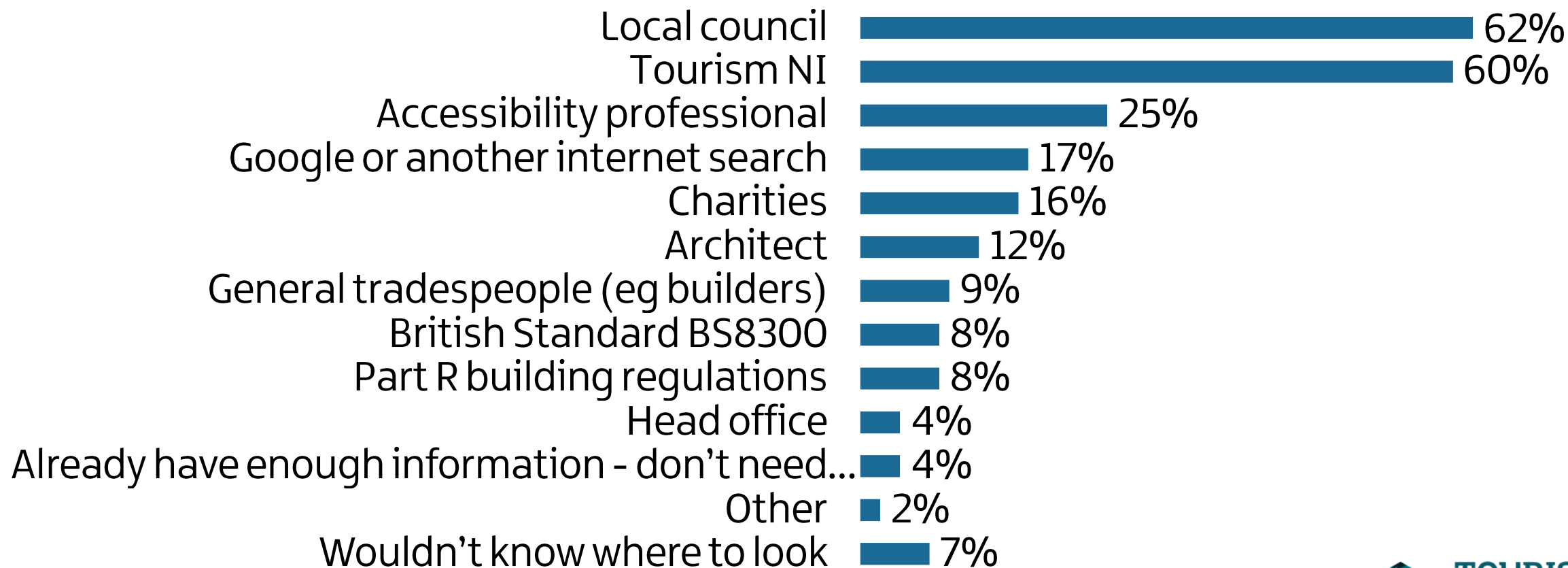


Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: If provided with the appropriate support, there are significant opportunities for my business to improve its accessibility regarding [area]? Base: all businesses (n=451).

Things that would encourage or help improve accessibility of business



Where would go for information about improving accessibility of business



Q. If at any point in the future you did decide to improve the accessibility of your business, where might you look for information on how to go about it? *Base: all businesses (n=451).*

Key Takeaways

Key Takeaways

Low ratings



- Accessibility of businesses.
- Promoting accessible provisions.
- Knowledge of inclusive & accessible tourism.
- Awareness of disability legislation/compliance.

High ratings



- Importance of businesses being accessible.
- Significant opportunities to improve accessibility with support.
- Financial guidance/practical advice would help encourage improvements.



Three-fifths would look to **Tourism NI for information** to improve the accessibility of their business (**62% selected Local Council**)!

What now?



TOURISM
NORTHERN
IRELAND

Tourism NI Approach based on Research

1

Provide Industry with
practical
information &
supports

2

Help Industry take
action

3

Provide guidance on
how to communicate



**TOURISM
NORTHERN
IRELAND**



Inclusive & Accessible Tourism

Toolkit for Businesses

What is accessible Tourism?

Section 1: What is accessibility?

For this section:

Involves removing barriers to provide positive experiences for all. In the case of this toolkit, it's about ensuring that everyone can access tourism.

Is one pillar of a wider Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy.

For implementation of these strategies, we encourage you to use the practical checklists, technical design guidance and other tools. These tools will ensure you move forward on this journey, but engaging with Disabled people in your organisation, in your community and in the wider world, will ensure that your actions are meaningful and informed by lived experience and further subject-specific advice.

Equality and Inclusion (EDI) is a topic being addressed by an increasing number of businesses. In summary, the term 'equality' relates to ensuring everyone can access the same opportunities, 'diversity' means valuing the differences between people and their identifying characteristics and 'inclusion' is a measure of how safe and welcome people feel in their environment. These are important, big-picture concepts that accessibility is embedded into.

Accessibility is a framework for designing spaces, services, cultures, and communication with dignity, ease and independence. Accessibility is about creating opportunities for Disabled people to meaningfully engage in the tourism sector - as tourists and employees - but also has implications for those who travel with children, those who are aging and those who may not speak English as a first language.

Accessibility is all about removing barriers (whether physical, digital, relating to information and content, or attitudinal) to promote positive experiences for all. It is the 'actionable' part of ensuring that EDI is on the agenda for Disabled people in particular but can benefit to customers and colleagues who might identify differently.

Contributors and Supporters:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• AccessAble• Access and Inclusion UK• AccessibleUK• Association of Event Organisers• Bacta• BALPPA• Barclays• BIAZA• British Institute of Innkeeping• Business Disability Forum• Caravan and Motorhome Club	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Centre for Accessible Environments• Dementia Adventure• English Heritage• Euan’s Guide• Events Industry Alliance• Historic Houses• Historic Royal Palaces• Inclusive Hotels Network• Institute of Tourist Guiding• Visit England Assessment Services• Leonard Cheshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meetings Industry Association• Merlin Entertainments• Mencap• Motionspot• Muscular Dystrophy UK• National Autistic Society• Premier Cottages• RNIB• Sense• Social Enterprise, Sargent Group Consulting• Stay in a Pub• The Professional Association of Self-Caterers UK• UK Hospitality
--	--	---

Inclusive & Accessible Tourism

- Aimed at SME's self-catering and serviced accommodation, visitor attractions, food & drink businesses, event venues and event organisers
- Guidance on the theory and practice of inclusive operations for external customers and internal colleagues
- 'Quick win' practical hints and tips
- Longer term aspirational goals relating to physical and digital design and business operations
- Flexible structure allowing the reader to dip in and out as each section focuses on different topics along with 'Top Tip' summaries
- Downloadable business-specific actionable checklists
- Inspirational Case Studies

Inspiring Industry Case Studies

Examples of best practice include 7 Attractions and 6 Accommodation providers addressing needs around:

- Physical & Mobility Disabilities
- Sensory Disabilities
- Blind and low vision customers
- Customer with Assistance Dogs
- Neurodiversity and Non-Visible Disabilities
- Customers with Dementia
- Hidden, multiple and complex disabilities

NI Case Studies

- **Mae Murray Foundation** – Inclusive Beaches
- **Marble Arch Caves** – Virtual Reality
- **Crumlin Road Gaol** – Sign Language pre-record of audible information
- **Game of Thrones Studio Tour** – speech to text option for audio information
- **Belfast Zoo** – Sensory Packs
- **Armagh Observatory & Planetarium** – Sensory Maps
- **Glendun Self-Catering** – consultation with disability groups regarding design of their cottage
- **Old Inn, Crawfordsburn** – Staff Training
- **The Ebrington Hotel** – Interior Design
- **Giants Causeway, National Trust** – Changing Places Toilet
- **Grand Central Hotel** – Alerts for D/deaf Guests
- **Titanic Hotel** – Virtual Visit to explore facilities prior to booking



Additional Support

MyTourismNI' E-learning modules

Toolkit content will be transformed into online learning modules for industry to access at a time and pace suited to their schedule and needs



Login

A banner for MyTourismNI featuring a coastal scene with a large rock formation and people. The text 'MyTourismNI - it's time to learn' is prominently displayed. Below it, a smaller text reads 'Unleash your tourism business's potential with Tourism NI's new e-learning platform for Northern Ireland's thriving industry.' At the bottom, there is a search bar with the text 'What do you want to learn today?' and a blue button with the text 'Search Q'.



Tour Guiding for the Deaf

- OCN NI Level 2 Award in Tour Guiding
- Partnership with Foyle Deaf Association, Derry City & Strabane District Council and North West Regional College
- May – June 2025

Top 3 Actions

1. Review Toolkit
2. Log onto **MyTourismNI** and start modules
3. Just get started!

Remember – **Small steps to a GIANT welcome**

Best Practice Video 1: Lavery's Bar



TOURISM
NORTHERN
IRELAND



Thank You

Industry Panel Discussion

Kyleigh Lough – Mae Murray Foundation

Lisa Heaney – Millennium Forum

Emma Cunningham – National Trust

Fionnuala McEldowney – The Ebrington Hotel

Best Practice Video 2: Titanic Belfast



TOURISM
NORTHERN
IRELAND

Guide Dogs NI Demonstration

Mark Quinn
Torie Tennant

Embrace the Inclusive Spirit

Tuesday 18 February 2025

Guide Dogs NI



Guide Dogs

We are Guide Dogs and we're here to help people with sight loss live the life they choose.

Our expert staff, volunteers and dogs help people with sight loss live actively, live independently and live well.

We work with:

- Children, young people and adults with a vision impairment
- Friends and family

We provide:

- Canine assisted and non-canine assisted services, information and advice



Sighted Guiding - Creating a more accessible society for people with vision impairment

Top Tips for Sighted Guiding

- Introduce Yourself
- Ask if the person needs any assistance
- Offer your arm
- Maintain open and effective communication

Q&A

With Torie and Vivvy

Sighted Guide Training

- Sighted guiding training for:
 - - professionals
 - - the general public
 - - friends and family
- 1 hour / 2 hour / 3 Hour sessions
- Face to face or online



Get in touch!

partners@guidedogs.org.uk



Mark Thompson
Tourism NI

UK and Ireland Accessibility Information Project



TOURISM
NORTHERN
IRELAND

The need and opportunity

- Up to **25%** of UK the population are disabled, inclusive of older audiences.
- But only **7%** of disabled (**under 2% of pop**) are wheelchair users.
- Understanding non-visible disabilities can also be an issue.
- Measures, information and assurance can inspire an untapped audience.



The need and opportunity

- The economic opportunity is illustrated by Wheel the World research: The global expenditure generated by those with a disability or those travelling within a group where a member has an impairment is an estimated **£77 billion** per annum.
- This is in a landscape where it is believed that **1 in 10** disabled people don't travel or are afraid to travel.



UK and Ireland Accessibility Information Steering Group

- Representation from all UK and Ireland National Tourism Organisations: **Visit England, Visit Scotland, Visit Wales, Tourism NI and Failte Ireland.**
- Procured expert advisory body as partner and to deliver independent research: Access and Inclusion UK.
- Aim to bring consistency of information across these islands.

3-Step Process

Information is key, and how this is surfaced and made discoverable. It is step 1 of a 3-step process.

1. Online Information

A check list of key priority “deal breaker” information. Primarily provided online.

2. Toolkit

The NI Accessibility Bible for guidance and information

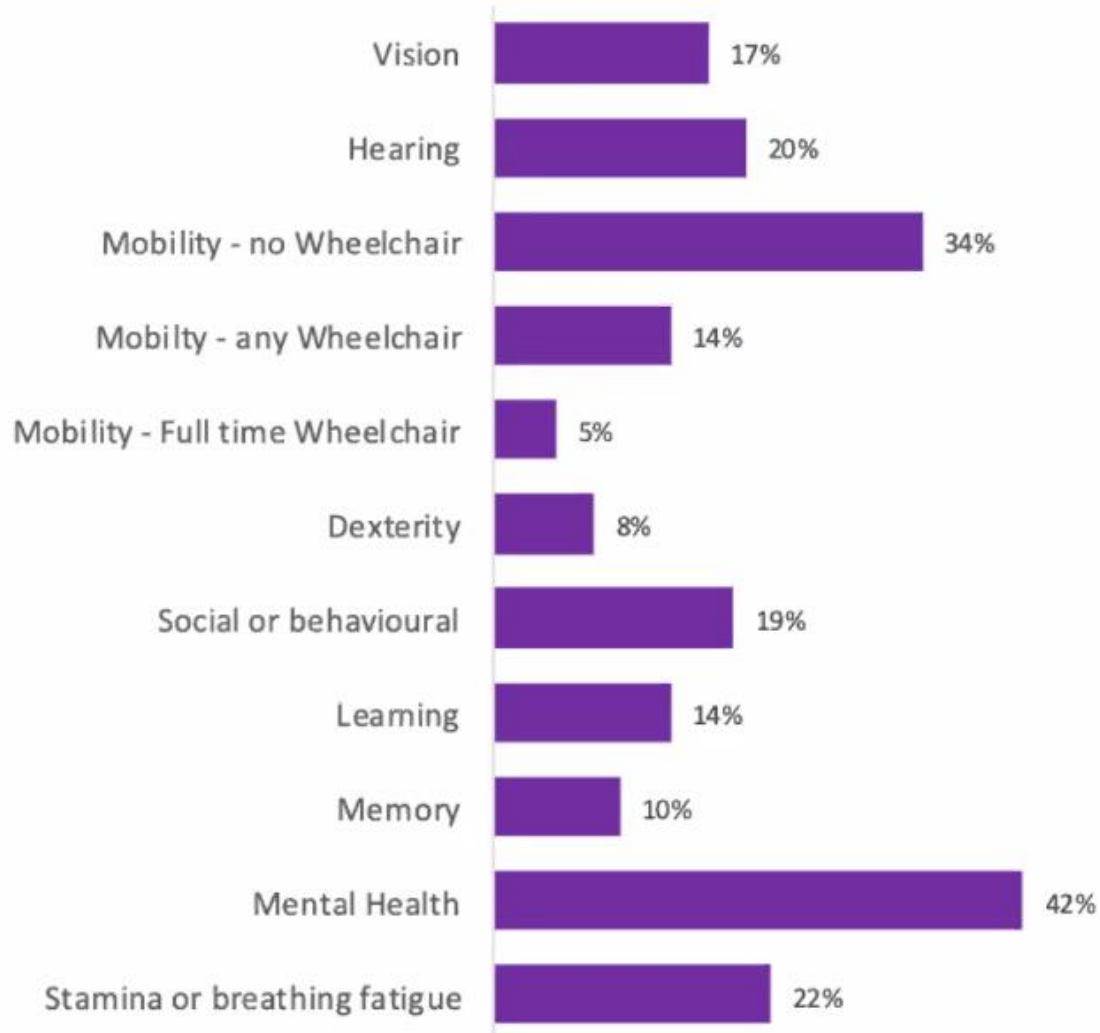
3. Accessibility Audit

Independent, adjudicated third party, detailed expert guidance.

UK and Ireland Accessibility Information Steering Group

Research Insights

Representation of a full range of impairments



71% of travel groups have only one person with impairments
22% have two people with impairments
7% have three or more people with impairments

Each person with impairment(s) has, on average,

2.1 conditions

Although in the analysis there is focus on impairment types, they are not **exclusive**.

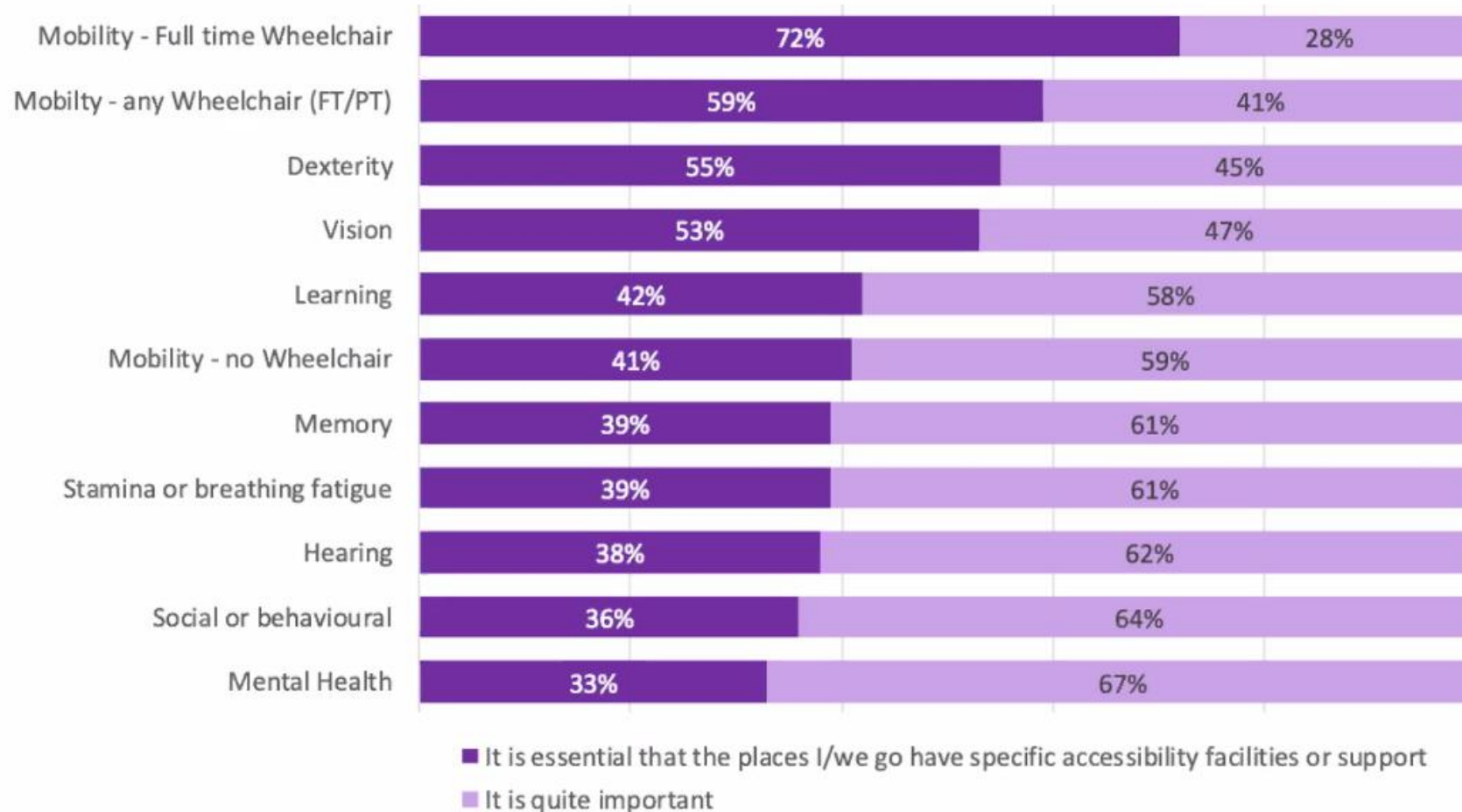
Travel groups and individuals within them are typically looking to meet the **accessibility needs of multiple impairments**, each with specific requirements, that combine together to form their full list of accessibility features requirements.

UK and Ireland Accessibility Information Steering Group

Research Insights

Impairments can lead to accessibility features being either essential or important

e.g. Full-time wheelchair use has the most profound impact on accessibility features/support requirements, with nearly three-quarters of full-time wheelchair users saying it is 'essential'. At the other end of the spectrum those with mental health impairments are the least likely to say facilities/support is essential

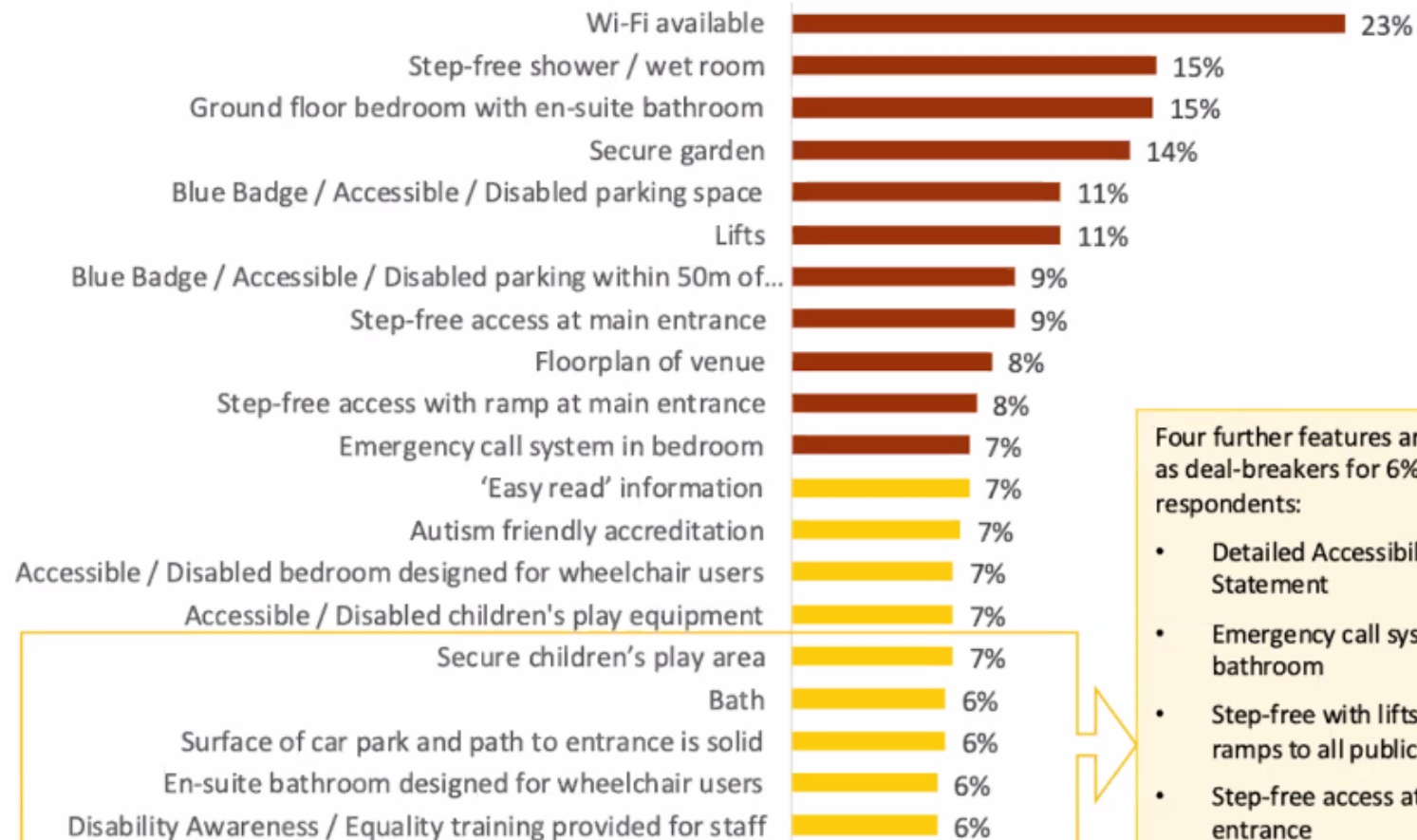


UK and Ireland Accessibility Information Steering Group

Research Insights

The top 20 “deal-breakers” for self-catering accommodation

% identifying features as “deal-breakers” for **self-catering accommodation**
Top 20 features



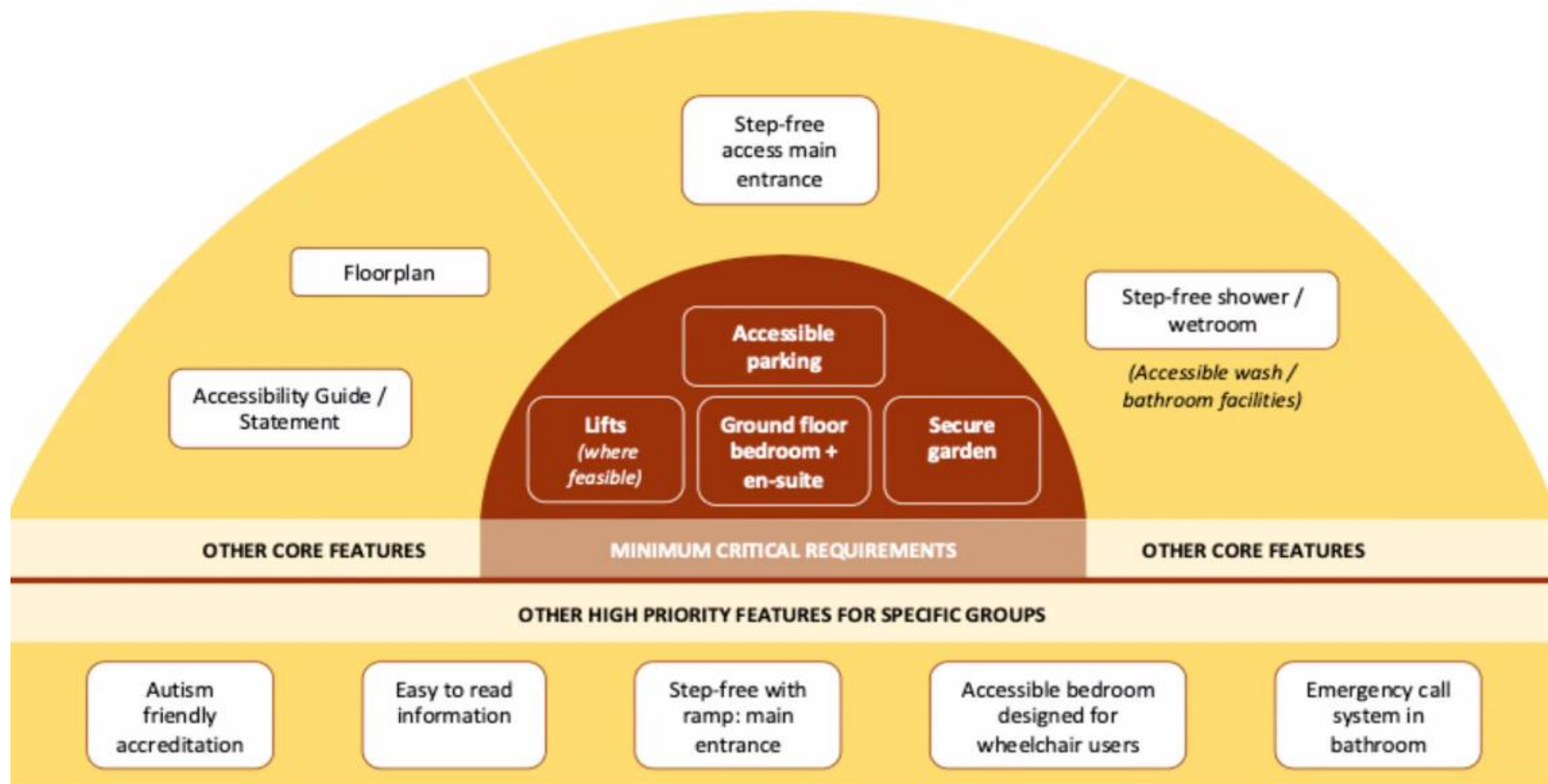
Four further features are identified as deal-breakers for 6% of respondents:

- Detailed Accessibility Guide / Statement
- Emergency call system in bathroom
- Step-free with lifts and / or ramps to all public areas
- Step-free access at alternative entrance

UK and Ireland Accessibility Information Steering Group

Research Insights

Summary: priority features for **self-catering accommodation businesses**



UK and Ireland Accessibility Information Steering Group

The result is question sets, of approx. 30 questions across each of **7 categories:**

- Serviced Accommodation
- Self-Catering Accommodation
- Camping, Glamping, Caravan Parks
- Attractions and Experiences
- Food and Drink
- Events and Festivals

UK and Ireland Accessibility Information Steering Group

Outputs

- Just a checklist, with clear information and guidance.
- As trade and industry need education and assistance.

Question and guidance	Do you have this feature?	Feature name and description
<p>Are designated accessible parking bays / areas available within 50 metres of the main entrance or an alternative step-free entrance if applicable?</p> <p>These bays may or may not require a Blue Badge to be displayed (consider international visitors arriving by car who may have a different badge).</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<p>Designated accessible parking</p> <p>Designated accessible parking bays are available within 50 metres of the main entrance or an alternative step-free entrance if applicable.</p>

UK and Ireland Accessibility Information Steering Group

Incorporation into Discovernorthernireland.com

Please note

that the website will only display features for your venue that you select 'yes' for, for example if you do not have facilities for assistance dogs, then no reference to this will be published.

Top tips for completing the questionnaire

- Be honest - if you have any doubt about a feature, do not tick the box.
- Read the guidance - follow the guidance available for each question.
- Review regularly - to ensure the information remains accurate, update the information as soon as you make a change and review the answers at least annually.

Please note:

The following are not included in this questionnaire as they are statutory responsibilities, which should be provided as standard:

- assistance dogs welcome;
- information on the 14 major allergens in any food provided, along with food labeling requirements.

For essential

guidance to help you improve your welcome for customers with accessibility requirements, check out [VisitEngland's Accessible and Inclusive Tourism Toolkit for Businesses](#), which includes practical tips and action checklists specific to your business type and technical built environment guidance for when new-build, refurbishment, conversion, and adaptation projects are possible.

Access to Key Areas

2025ACC39

Do you have a wheelchair-accessible kitchen for independent use?

A wheelchair-accessible kitchen should have as a minimum:

- step-free access
- a minimum door width of 750mm (800mm (Scotland and Ireland)
- Height adjustable / lowered worktops and sink
- Cupboards within easy reach for wheelchair users

Kitchen appliances which can be easily accessed by wheelchair users.

☐ Yes

2025ACC01

Is your venue all on one level?

This should be step-free, with no raised thresholds.

☐ Yes

2025ACC02

Is a lift available between floors and changes in level, as an alternative to stairs?

A lift may be a standard passenger lift, wheelchair stairlift or a platform lift designed for disabled people.

An evacuation chair should also be available in case of emergency.

☐ Yes

Parking General

2025ACC37

Is there a step-free route with a firm surface from the parking to the main entrance or an alternative step-free entrance?

The route from the parking to the entrance should be step-free providing level access suitable for a wheelchair user. The route may include access by ramp or lift. The route should have a firm and reasonably smooth surface to accommodate wheelchair users and others with accessibility requirements i.e. no cobbles, bare earth, sand or unbonded gravel.

☐ Yes

Back

Next

Clear form

Back

Next

Clear form

3-Step Process

Information is key, and how this is surfaced and made discoverable. It is step 1 of a 3-step process.

1. Online Information

A check list of key priority “deal breaker” information. Primarily provided online.

2. Toolkit

The NI Accessibility Bible for guidance and information

3. Accessibility Audit

Independent, adjudicated third party, detailed expert guidance.

Best Practice Video 3: Ramada Hotel



TOURISM
NORTHERN
IRELAND



Thank You



TOURISM
NORTHERN
IRELAND

Sign Source Workshop

Anthony Sinclair, PGCE BSL
Founder and Director of Sign Source

Becoming Deaf-Aware: Why It's Good for Business and Society

Deaf Awareness, barriers and solutions

Anthony Sinclair

Sign Source

My unique background!

- **My background and experiences as a Deaf individual**
- **My work and advocacy for Deaf awareness**
- **My journey in hospitality and workplace inclusion**



<https://youtu.be/3KAsJ0-GGQQ?si=NZu9EbAIYkq3MuzA>



Access to Services - Public Attitudes

- **“Over two thirds (67%) of Deaf people and people with Hearing Loss have experienced negative attitudes or behaviours in the last year” (RNID)**
- **“A third (33%) of people with Hearing Loss, and just under two thirds of Deaf people (61%) and British Sign Language (BSL) users (63%) have experienced people talking to someone who is with them, rather than directly to them in the last year.” (RNID)**

Barriers

- **75% of Deaf people find hospitality venues inaccessible**
- **80% of Deaf people rely on text-based communication at work**

History of Sign Language & Its Suppression

- **1880 Milan Conference banned sign language in education**
- **Oralism forced Deaf individuals to rely on speech and lipreading**
- **Stigma and lack of awareness reduced Sign Language popularity**
 - **The fight for recognition and inclusion continues today**

Who Should Fix the Problem?

- **Deaf people are always expected to adapt**
 - **Hearing people learn sign language?**
- **Communication is a two-way street, not just a Deaf person's burden**

<https://youtube.com/shorts/u21oFYMit-Y?si=5a5fFM4BgGRCEk2h>

Hospitality

- **65% of Deaf hospitality workers experience workplace anxiety**
 - **50% report feeling isolated due to lack of communication**
- **30% have left jobs due to poor accessibility and discrimination**

BSL/ISL Act: What It Means for Workplaces

- **Recognises British and Irish Sign Language as an official language**
 - **Encourages better access and inclusion in workplaces**
- **Employers should provide BSL and ISL interpreters and accessible communication**

The Dream World as a Deaf Person

- **A world where sign language is normalised**
- **Equal job opportunities without communication barriers**
 - **Full accessibility in workplaces and hospitality**
- **Respect and understanding from hearing individuals**

<https://youtu.be/Kjep4G2OWzc?si=p2ANOYE4xoTqmg27>



Thank you _____

Anthony Sinclair

anthony@thisissignsource.com

www.thisissignsource.com

Facebook/Instagram: Sign Source learning



Closing Comments and Next Steps

Eimear Callaghan
Tourism NI

Top 3 Actions

1. Review Toolkit
2. Log onto **MyTourismNI** and start modules
3. Just get started!

Remember – **Small steps to a GIANT welcome**

A photograph showing a man in a blue wheelchair being assisted by a staff member in a blue vest onto a boat. The boat has a wooden deck and a glass railing. In the background, there is a stone castle and a red heart sculpture. The scene is outdoors on a wooden pier next to a body of water.

Inclusive and Accessible Tourism Industry Workshop

Tuesday 29th April
The Ebrington Hotel, Derry~Londonderry