BOARDS & BOARD COMMITTEES

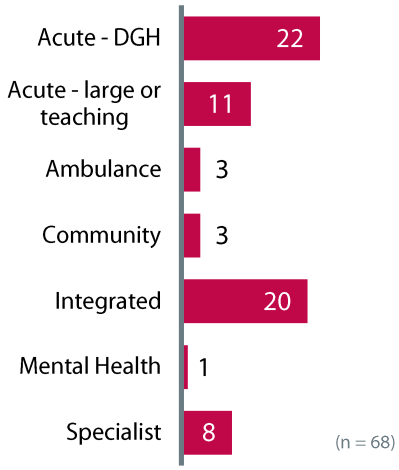
THE SURVEY

In August 2015 we conducted an online survey asking NHS providers for information about board effectiveness and board committees. This briefing summarises the main findings which are being used internally to inform our work.

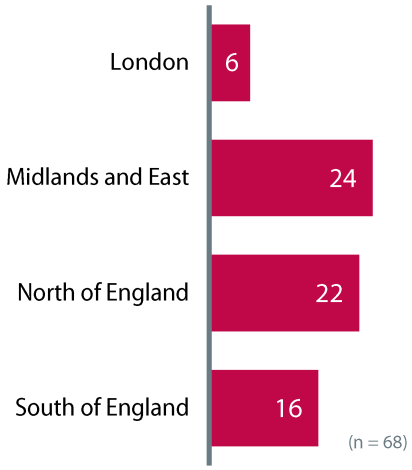
THE SAMPLE

68 providers responded to the survey, representing all trust types and regions. A breakdown of the sample is shown below:

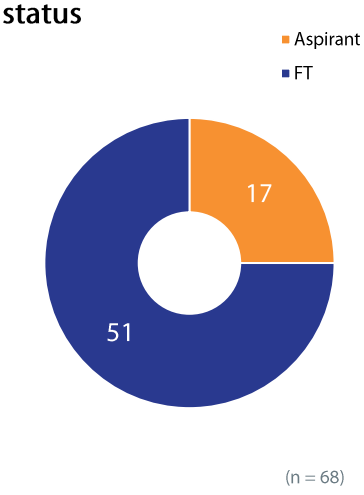
Respondents by trust type



Respondents by region



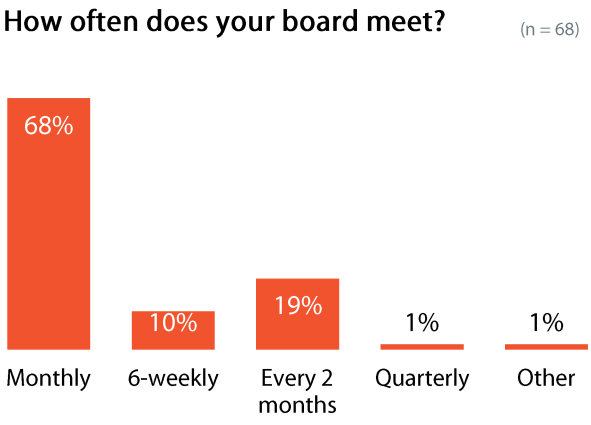
Respondents by FT status



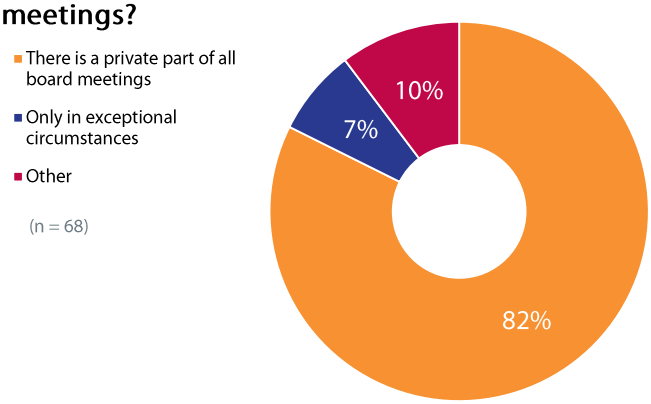
BOARD MEETINGS

- The majority of trusts (68%) hold monthly board meetings and the vast majority of trusts (82%) have a private part of every board meeting.
- Most trusts (61%) hold board development or workshop sessions at least every 8 weeks.

How often does your board meet?

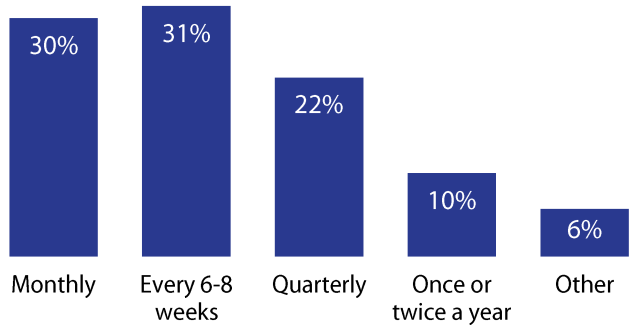


How often do you hold private board meetings?



How often does your board have board development / workshop sessions?

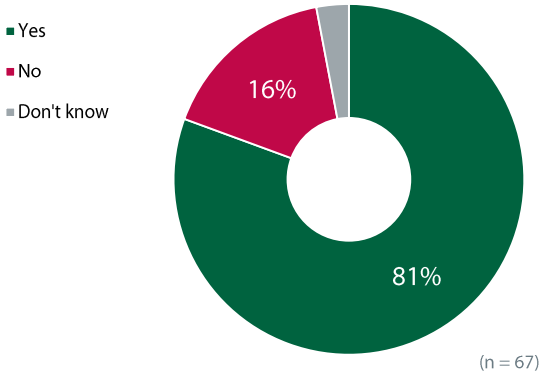
(n = 67)



BOARD EFFECTIVENESS

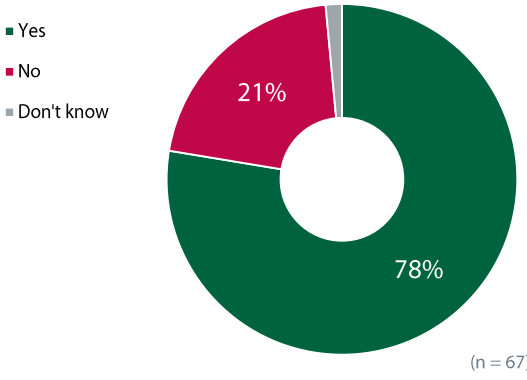
- The majority of respondents felt their board was managing work effectively (81%) and effectively reviewing the business cycle to meet business planning requirements (78%). Positive comments often referenced a proactive work plan, alignment to the business plan and trust strategies, clarity of agreed actions and follow up on progress made.
- 75% of trusts stated that they review their corporate risk register, but just over half (51%) specified that they actively review it.
- 66% felt that the Board Assurance Framework is used appropriately. Many respondents noted that it is discussed quarterly, however a number also reported that understanding and use of the BAF is still being embedded in their board.

Do you feel the board effectively manages its work, setting effective objectives to actions agreed?



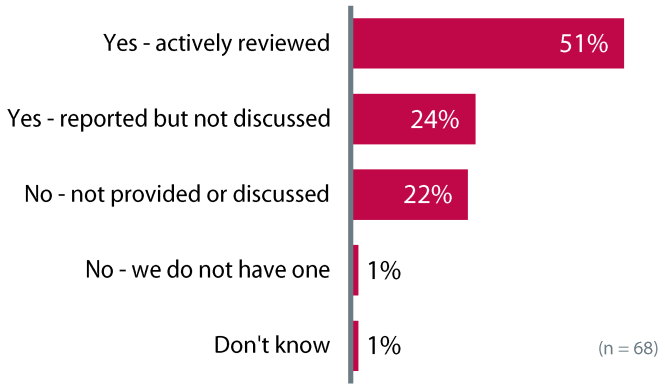
(n = 67)

Does the board adequately review the business cycle to effectively meet business planning requirements?



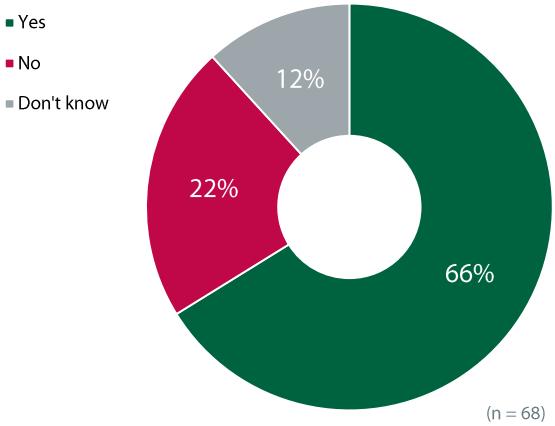
(n = 67)

Does the board review the corporate risk register (not the Board Assurance Framework)?



(n = 68)

Is the Board Assurance Framework appropriately used by the board?



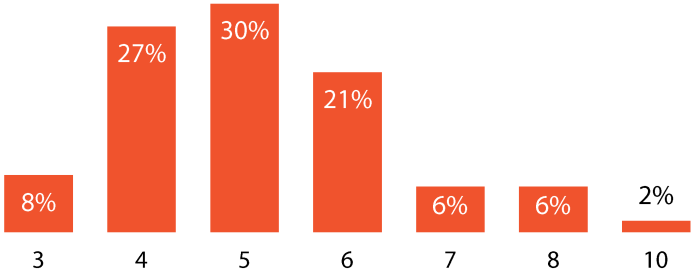
(n = 68)

BOARD COMMITTEES

- The number of board committees' respondents had ranged from three to ten, with the median being five.
- Operational board committee types met most frequently including Finance/Business/Resources, Performance and Clinical Governance/Quality/Safety.
- The board committee type most regularly attended by Company Secretaries was Audit/Risk/Assurance/Governance (94%) and they were least likely to attend Workforce/People/HR (31%).
- The minutes for Appointments/Nominations/Remuneration committees were most often taken by Company Secretaries (69%) but for the other committee types minutes were usually taken by Admin support or another department.
- The board committee type most likely to allow governors to attend and/or participate was Clinical Governance/Quality/Safety (52%) and the least likely was Appointments/Nominations/Remuneration (7%).
- Overall respondents generally felt that the current meeting cycle enables all committee types to work effectively, though with some scope for improvement for Clinical Governance/Quality/Safety, Workforce/People/HR and Performance.

How many board committees does your trust have?

(n = 66)

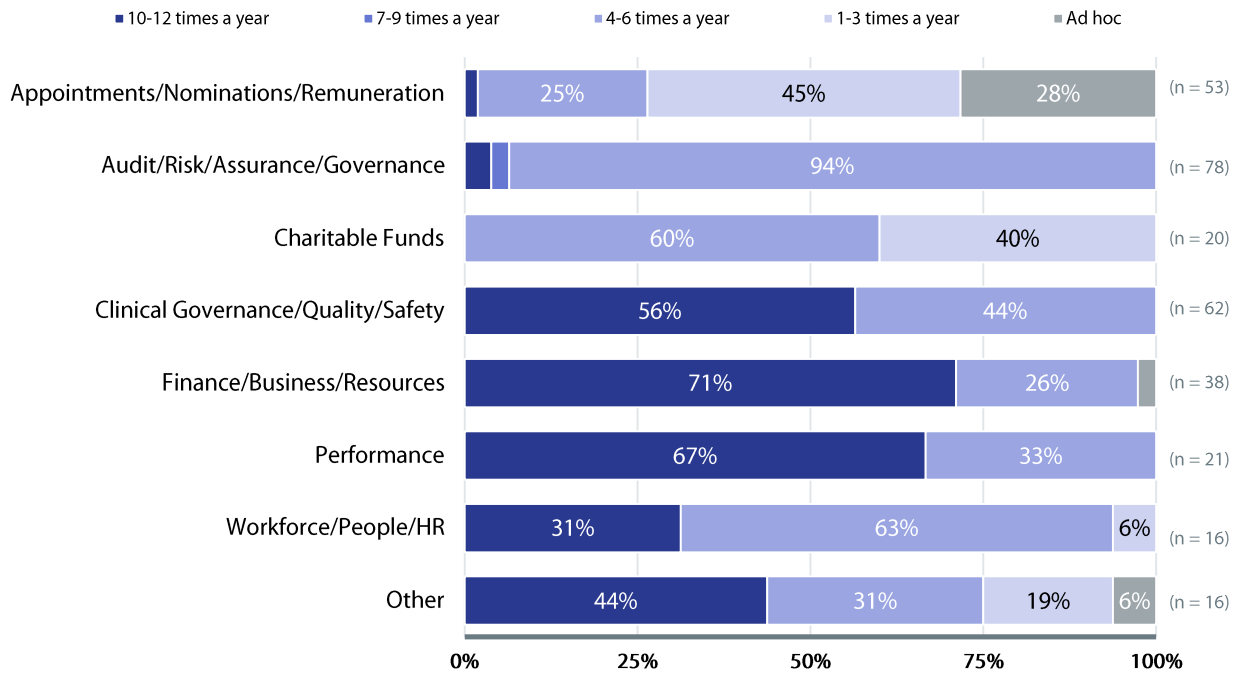


Respondents to the survey provided details for 307 board committees. Each committee was placed into one of eight categories:

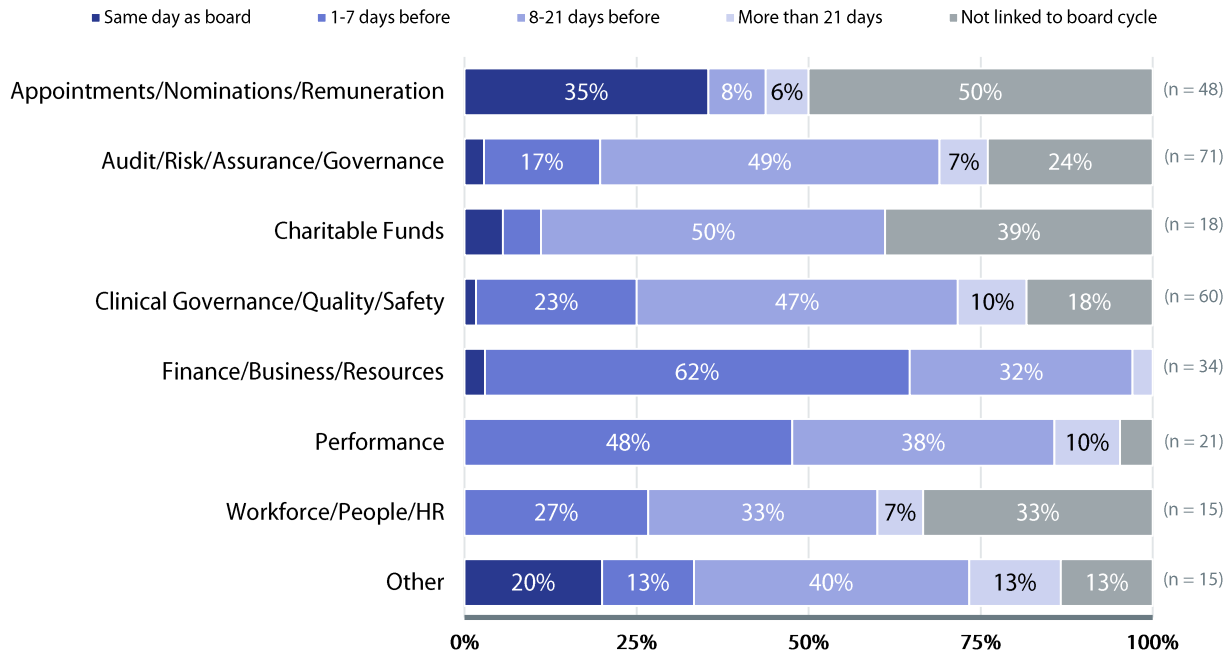
Category	Number
Appointments/Nominations/Remuneration	53
Audit/Risk/Assurance/Governance	78
Charitable Funds	20
Clinical Governance/Quality/Safety	62
Finance/Business/Resources	38
Performance	21
Workforce/People/HR	16
Other	19
Total	307

Board committee meetings

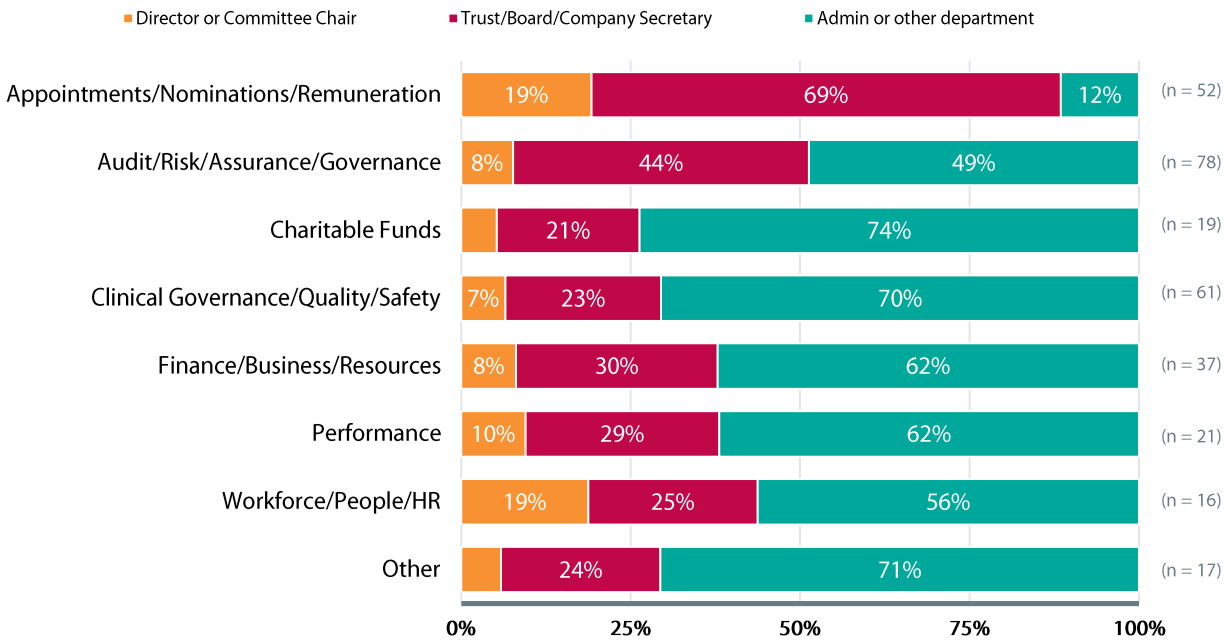
How often does the committee meet?



How long before the board does the committee meet?

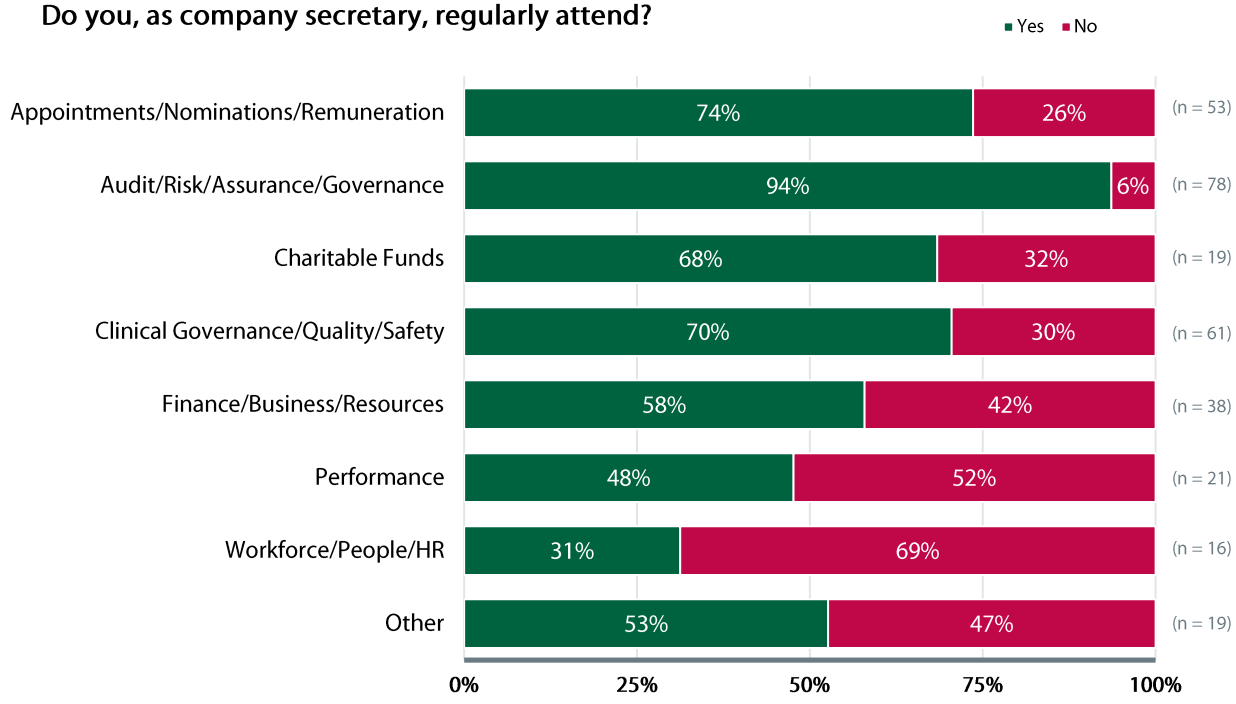


Who is responsible for the minutes?

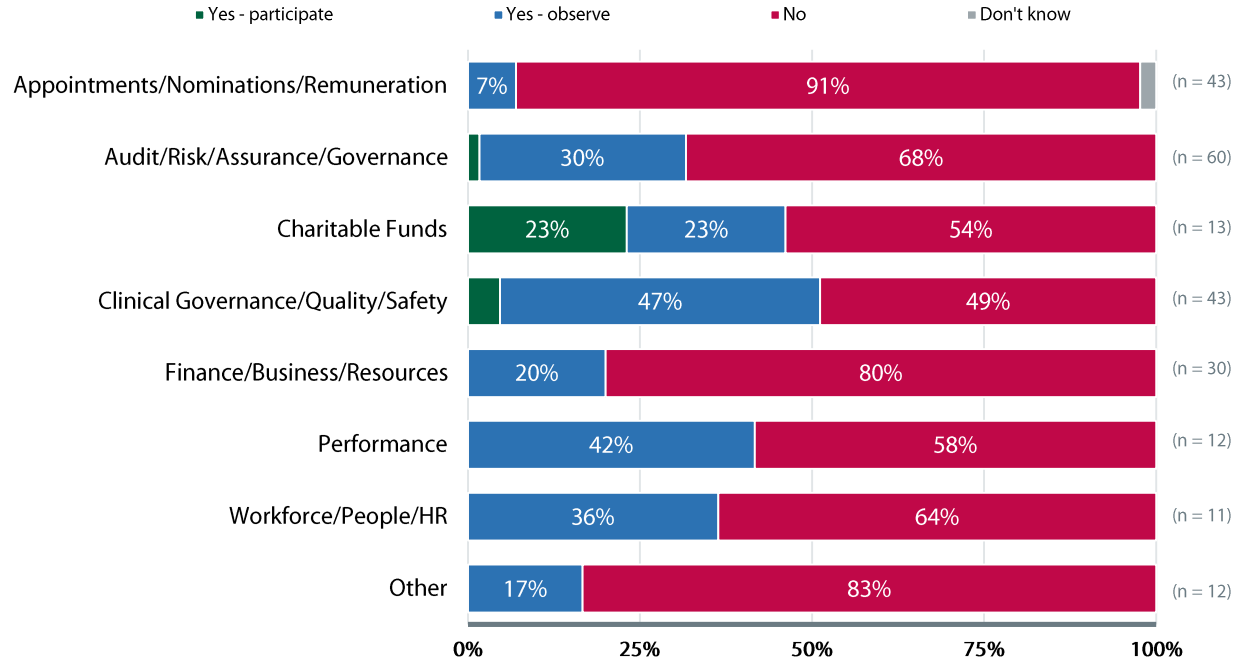


Board committee participation

Do you, as company secretary, regularly attend?

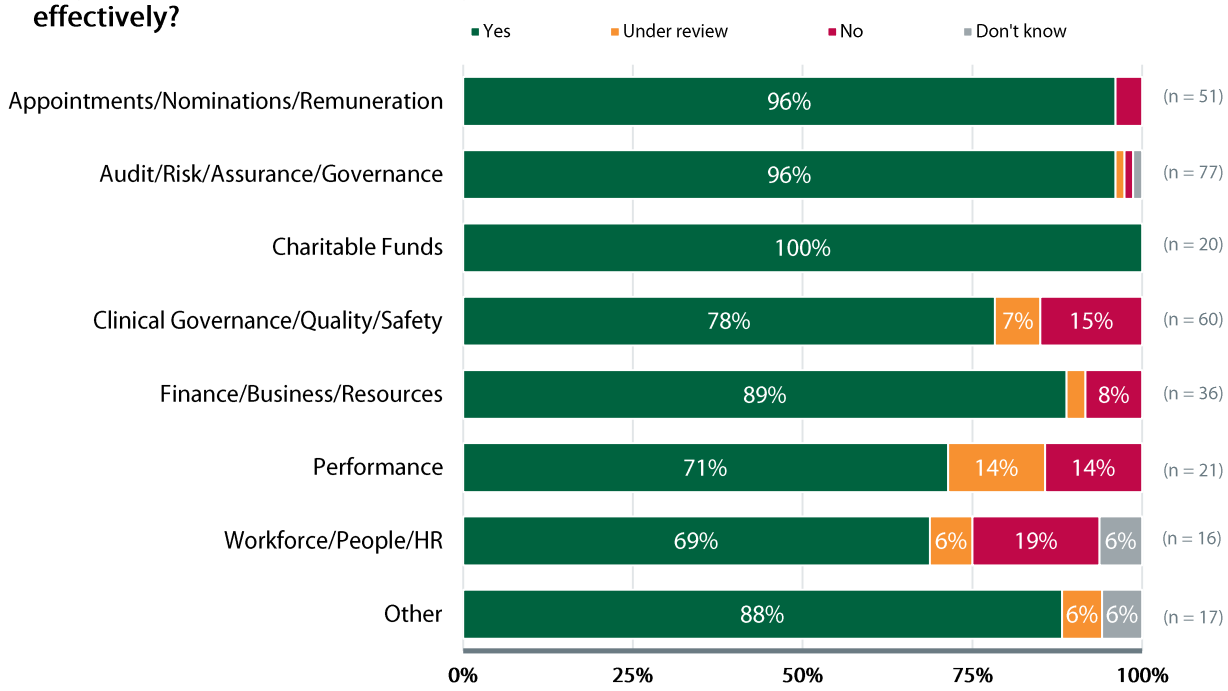


Are governors allowed to attend/participate?

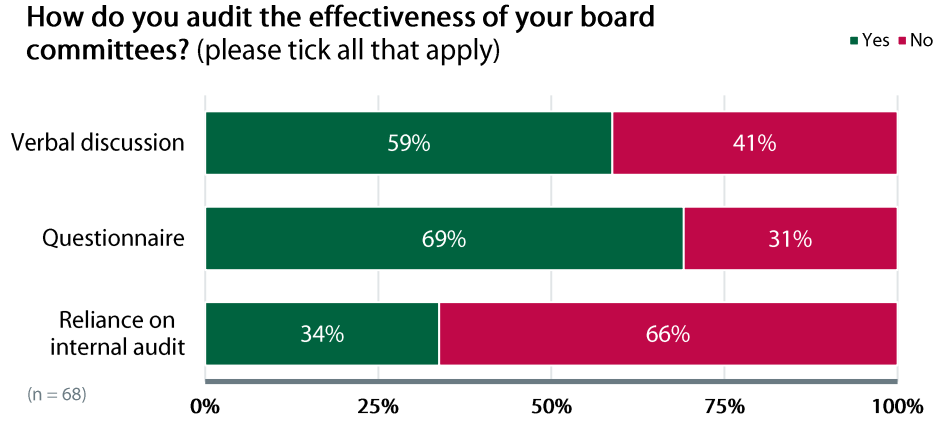


Board committee effectiveness

Do you feel the current meeting cycle enables the committee to work effectively?



How do you audit the effectiveness of your board committees? (please tick all that apply)



Summary table showing board characteristics for majority of respondents:

Category	Frequency	Time before board meeting	Minutes taken by CoSec	Company Secretary attends	Governors attend?	Effective meeting cycle
Appointments/Nominations/Remuneration	45% 1-3 times/year	50% not linked	69%	74% Yes	91% No	96% Yes
Audit/Risk/Assurance/ Governance	94% 4-6 times/year	49% 8-21 days	44%	94% Yes	68% No	96% Yes
Charitable Funds	60% 4-6 times/year	50% 8-21 days	21%	68% Yes	54% No	100% Yes
Clinical Governance/ Quality/Safety	56% 10-12 times/year	47% 8-21 days	23%	70% Yes	49% No	78% Yes
Finance/Business/ Resources	71% 10-12 times/year	62% 1-7 days	30%	58% Yes	80% No	89% Yes
Performance	67% 10-12 times/year	48% 1-7 days	29%	48% Yes	58% No	71% Yes
Workforce/People/HR	63% 4-6 times/year	33% 8-21 days	25%	31% Yes	64% No	69% Yes
Other	47% 10-12 times/year	38% 8-21 days	22%	55% Yes	85% No	83% Yes

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