

## **Blue Knot Helpline Client Survey and Demographic Analysis**

### **Survey scope and background**

In July/August Blue Knot distributed a survey seeking feedback from clients who'd called the Blue Knot Helpline since 2020. The helpline service of the Blue Knot Helpline and Redress Support Service takes calls from adults with experiences of complex childhood trauma and those with experiences of institutional child sexual abuse inquiring about the National Redress Scheme.

The survey does not include people applying to the National Redress Scheme or calling the National Counselling and Referral Service. It was developed internally, reviewed and updated following feedback from the Lived and Living Experience Committee (LLEC) and distributed by Electronic Direct Mail (EDM), in our Breaking Free newsletter and on the website ([www.blueknot.org.au](http://www.blueknot.org.au)).

Blue Knot would like to thank everyone who took the time to share their reflections and comments in responding to the survey. The feedback is invaluable as it provides your insights into what we're doing well as well as areas for improvement. We'd also like to thank members of our Lived and Living Experience Committee for their generosity in reviewing the survey before it went out and helped us improve the questions we asked as well as how we asked them.

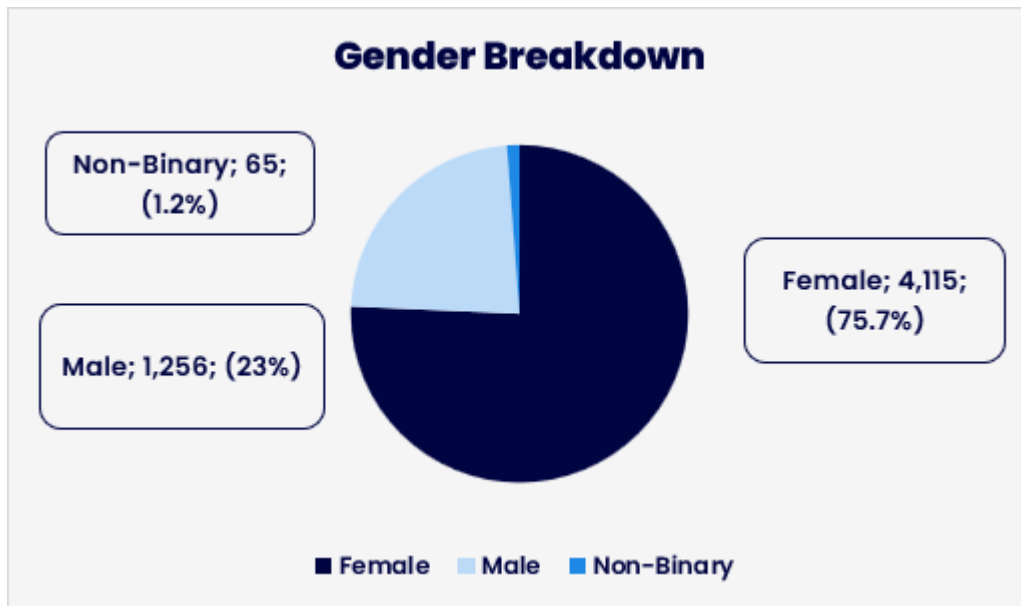
### **Demographic data**

Before we review the survey responses we wanted to share some demographic data which was gathered from callers to the Helpline and not through the survey.

- **Gender**

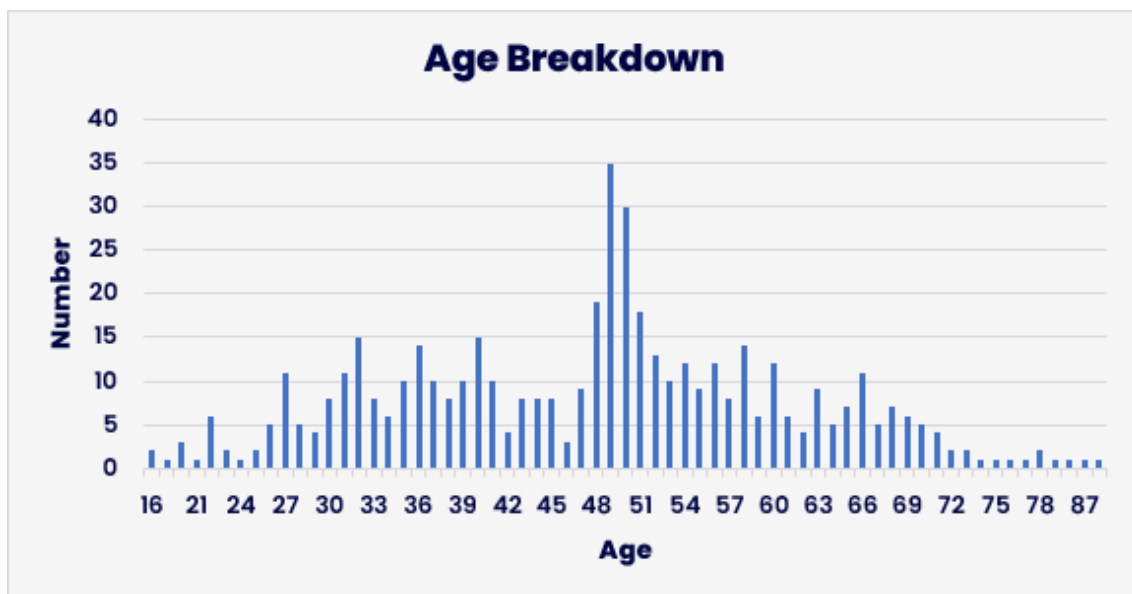
Of the 7,700 unique callers to the Helpline (68% of total) who revealed their gender, 76% identified as female, 23% as male and 1% identified as other genders including non-binary.

N.B. This data may be skewed towards females given the identified increased propensity for females to provide their gender in data collection.



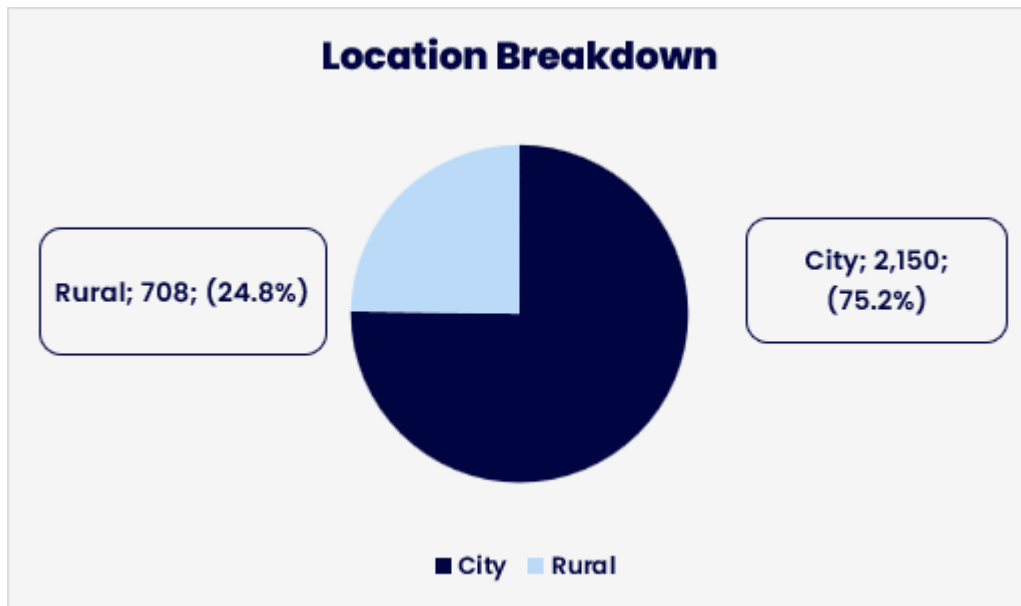
- **Age**

Only a small percentage (<4%) of callers identified their age during a call. **N.B.** The median age of callers in this small sample is 47.7 years although this might not be representative given the sample size.

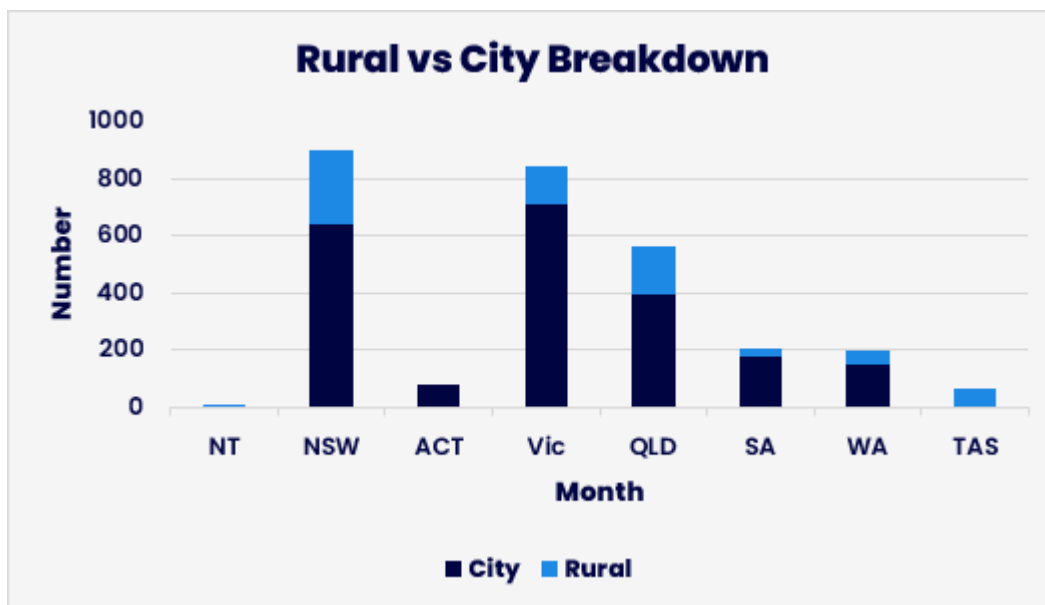


- **Location**

As regards location, only 22.7% of callers identified their location in a way which enabled us to categorise them between urban and rural. In this categorisation, 'rural' includes regional, rural and remote. **N.B.** This may be an underestimation of rural callers as sometimes capital cities are named as a default option by callers and counsellors.



The following shows a breakdown by State and Territory, showing that Blue Knot is a truly national organisation.



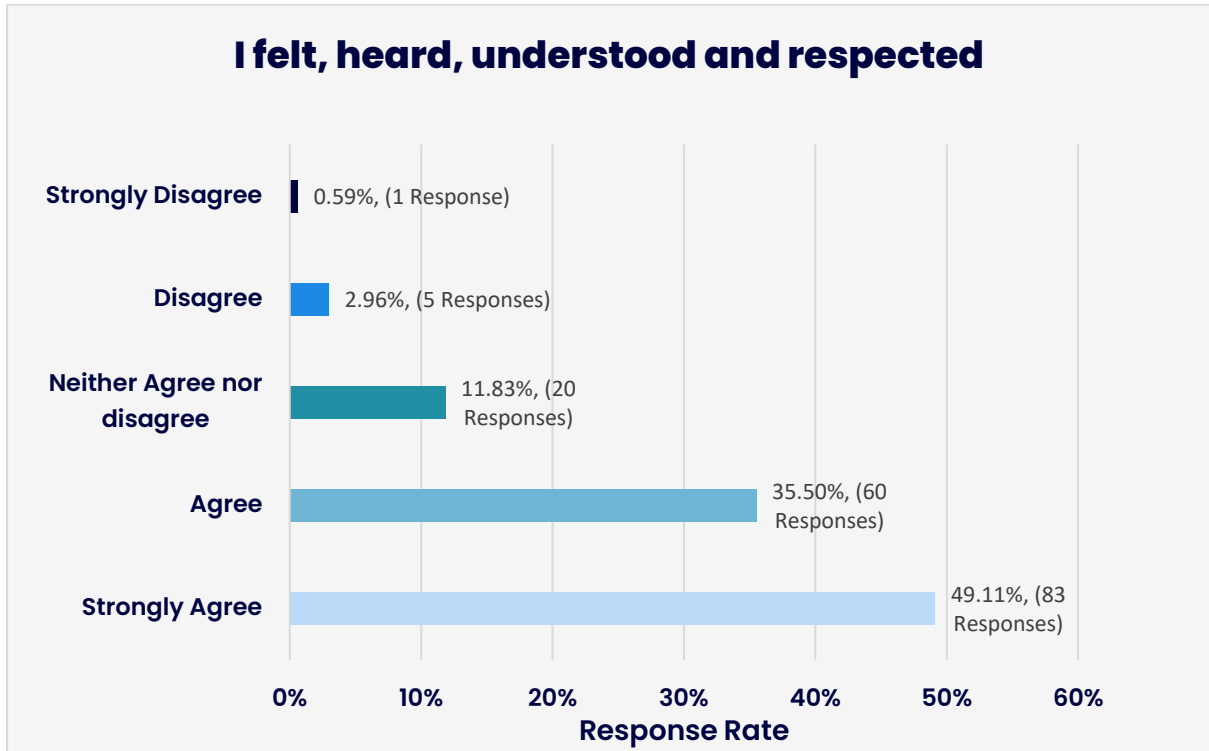
### Survey parameters

Responses were received from 217 people, 50% of whom had called the line more than 6 months previously, 27% between 1 and 6 months previously, 12% between 1 week and 1 month previously and 11% within the prior week. Most people had called the line between 1 and 4 times (71%); 11% called the line between 5 and 10 times and the remainder 19% called over 10 times. Of the 217 people who responded 3% identified as being from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background and 23% were from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds.

## Experience of calling the Helpline

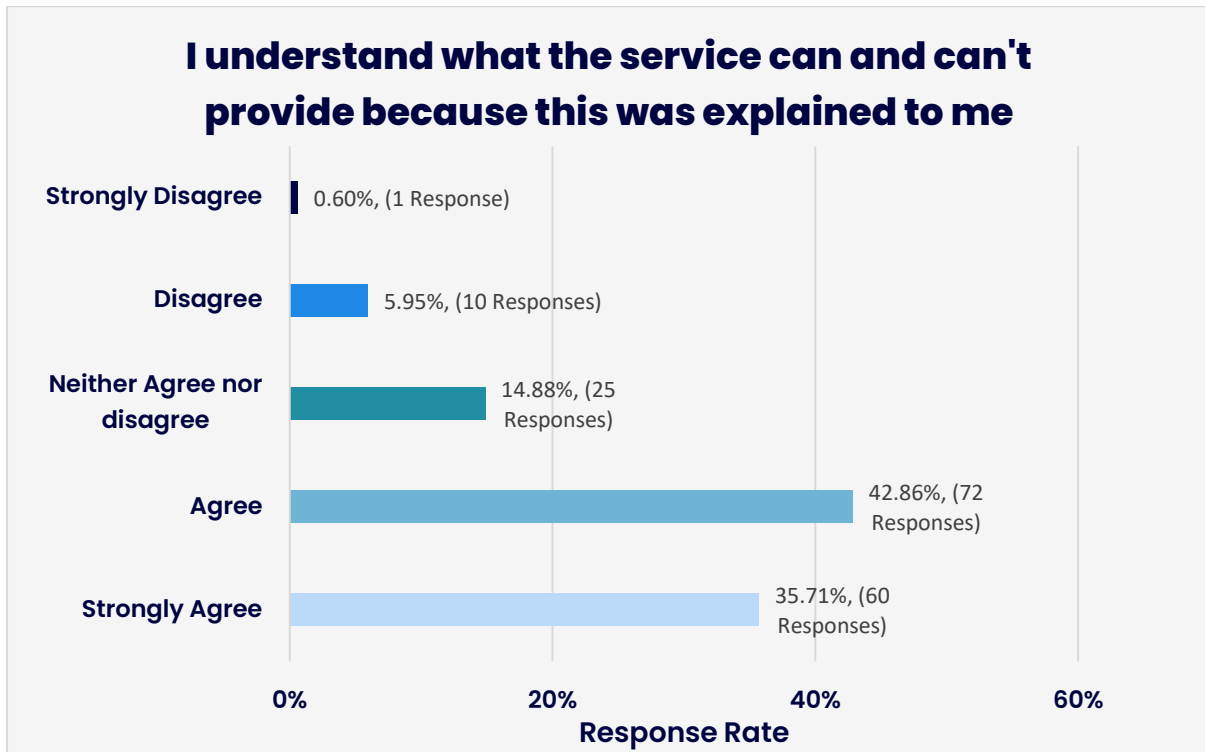
A number of questions explored callers' experiences of calling the Helpline:

- In answer to the question whether the caller felt heard, understood and respected, 85% of callers agreed or strongly agreed, 3.5% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the remainder neither agreeing nor disagreeing.



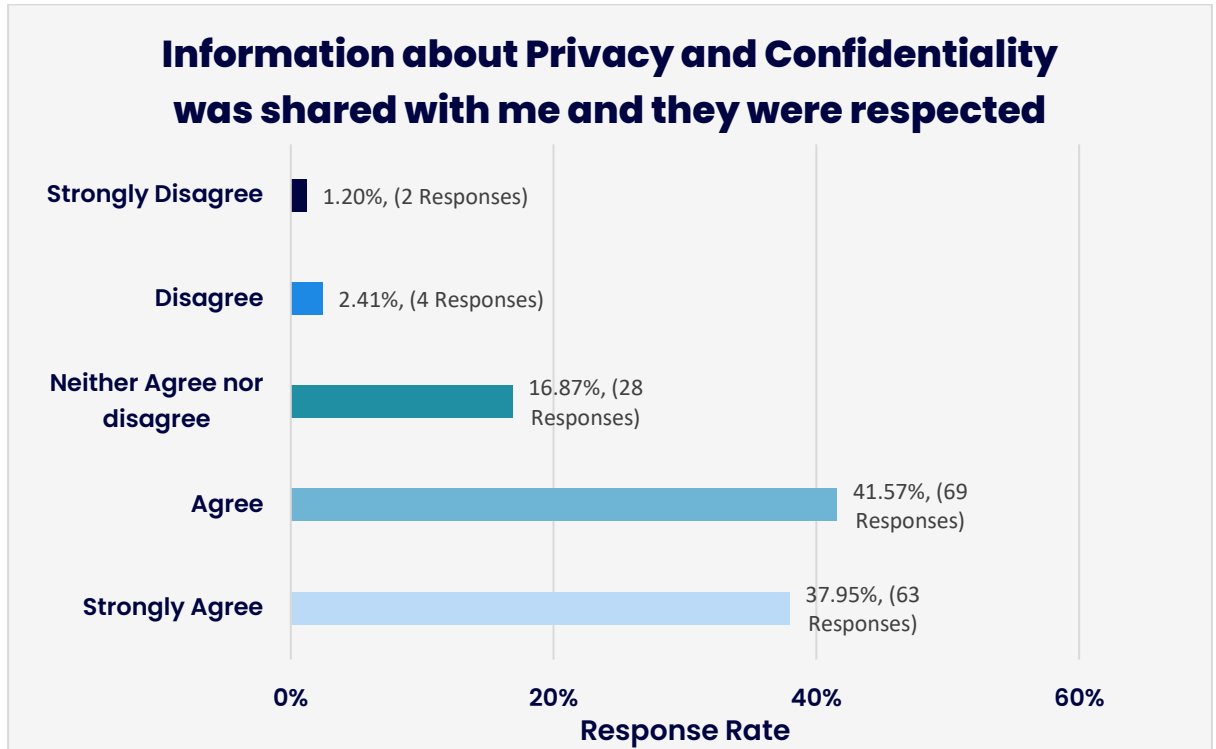
*"Blue Knot has been THE MOST amazing service to assist me with my CPTSD. I feel so cared about and supported and understood the few times I've needed to call this number. This service is just life changing for people like me struggling with CPTSD and I would be so lost if it ever closed." – anonymous feedback*

- In answer to the question about whether callers understood what the service can and cannot provide, 78.5% of callers agreed or strongly agreed that they understood this, 6.5% disagreed or strongly disagreed and the remainder neither agreed or disagreed.



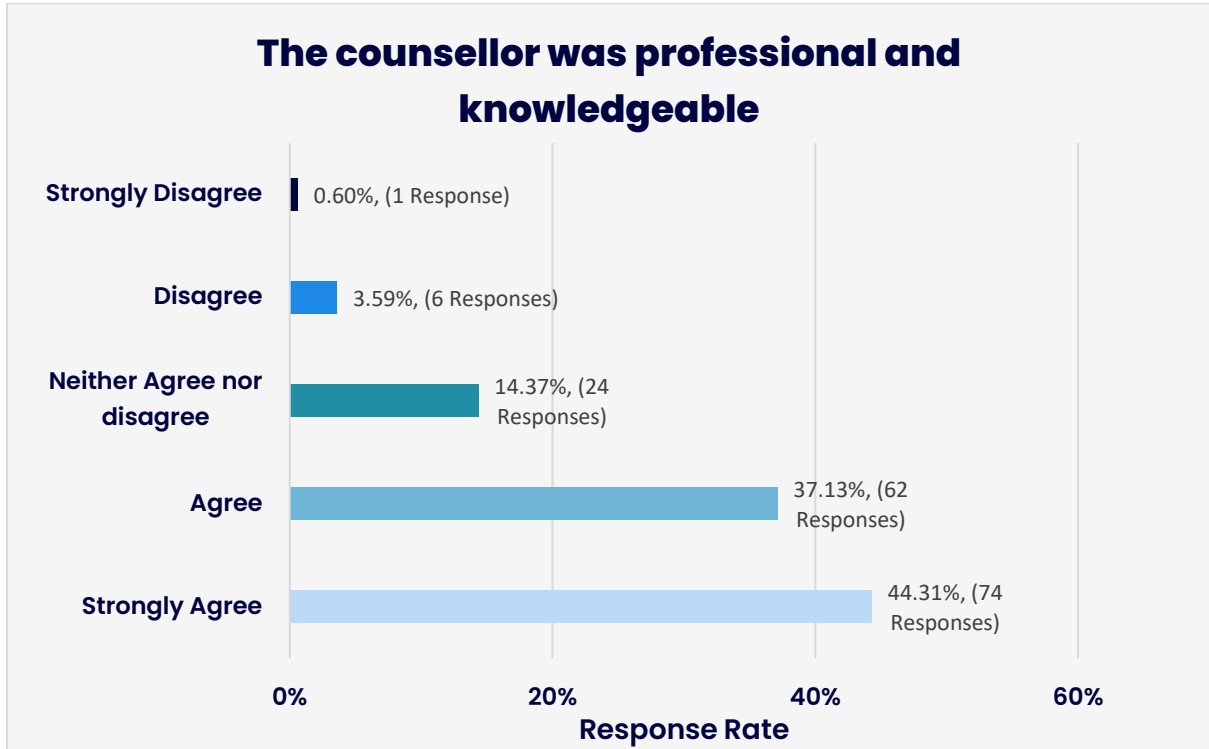
*“Just having more funding for after hours availability. I called other lines such as Lifeline during this period and they were really terrible and unhelpful. I found myself counselling them on how to speak to people who were suicidal and distressed. The blue knot helpline is the only truly trauma informed service I have used. Absolutely amazing. I recommend it to everyone with complex trauma that needs that kind of support. Thank you so much for what you do.”- anonymous feedback.*

- In answer to the question as to whether information about privacy and confidentiality were shared with the caller and whether they were respected 80% agreed or strongly agreed, 4% disagreed or strongly disagreed and the rest neither agreed or disagreed.



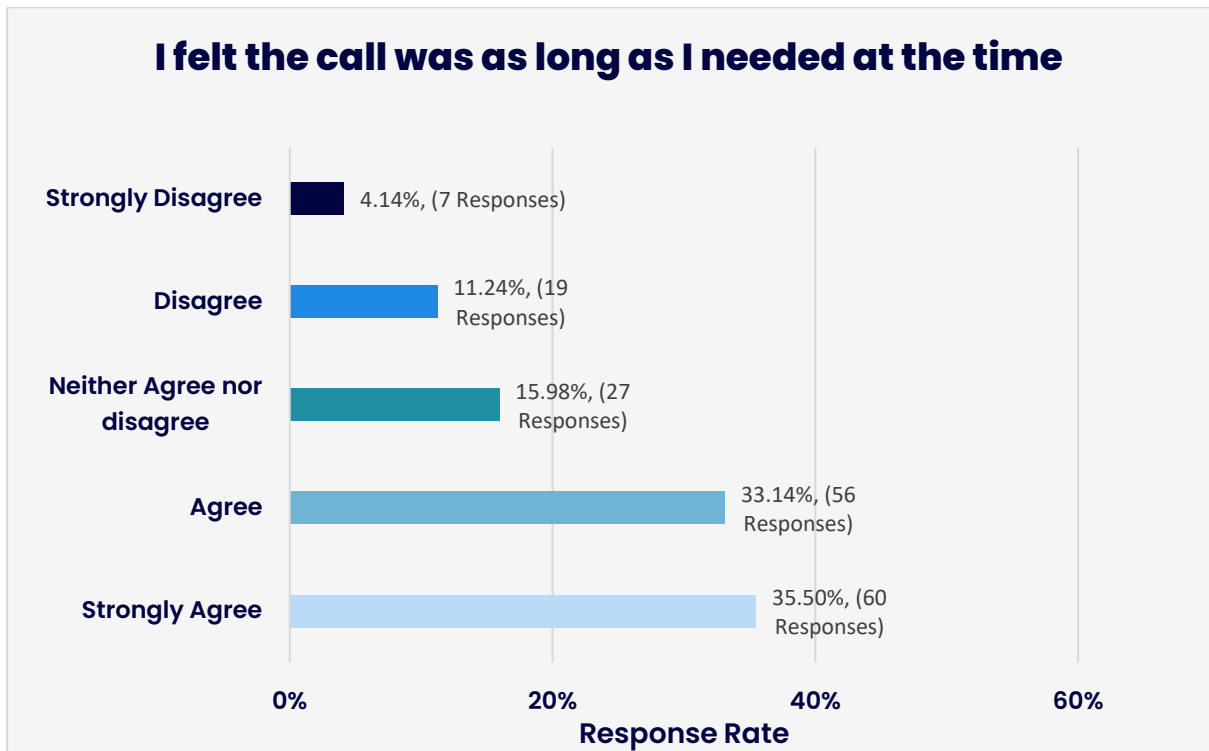
*"It's a great service, definitely trauma informed and would like to see it expanded and perhaps able to book in interim services (like individual counselling for maybe 5-8 sessions while a more local service is sourced and then a warm transfer from Blueknott to the other service provider. There's a lot of gaps in the systems and feels like starting over all the time with each new service." – anonymous feedback*

- In answer to the question of whether the counsellor was professional and knowledgeable 82% agreed or strongly agreed, 4.5% disagreed or strongly disagreed and the rest neither agreed or disagreed.



*“Blue Knot changed my life. The counsellor was so kind and created a safe space straightaway. Because of that and the way they approached my story I was able to move forward in a way I never had before. Thank you so much.” – anonymous feedback*

- In answer to consideration as to the length of the call and whether it was long enough, 69% agreed or strongly agreed that the call was long enough, 15% disagreed or strongly disagreed that it was long enough and the rest neither agreed or disagreed.



The maximum duration of the call on the Blue Knot Helpline varies depending on resourcing and demand and the balance between them. Given resourcing on the Helpline under current funding is stretched, the service seeks to respond to as many callers as possible when they call. Many comments refer to the wait times to get through for this reason.

*“Just more funding for more counsellors – it’s heart-wrenching to wait and wait and then hang up feeling even worse for trying and not able to speak with someone. When I get through everyone is always incredibly helpful. I stopped calling much – maybe every 6 months or so now – so that other people won’t have to wait.” – anonymous feedback*



## **Blue Knot Referral Database**

Blue Knot maintains a database of Health Professional and Agencies assessed around their ability to work with adults with the lived and living experience of childhood trauma. Given the data this is an area for substantial review but also one reflecting mental health systems issues, the limited capacity of mental health professionals to accept new clients and the lack of professionals with the requisite skills to work with adult survivors.

In response to the question: if you asked for a referral to a health professional or service did you receive it? 35% indicated that they did; 31% indicated that there was no one suitable in their area; 34% were not sure.

*“Was not able to provide an experienced clinical psychologist that I wanted.” – anonymous feedback*

In response to a further question for callers who had received details of health professionals or services, as to whether those services or health professionals could support the caller, 22.5% indicated that they could; 28% indicated that they were either unsuitable or did not have availability; 49.5% indicated that they were not sure.

*“Therapists who are on your data base need to specify their experience of the client work, not just modalities they have trained in, or their area of interest. Especially as looking for professionals who have experience of with Ritual and organised child abuse and exploitation.” – anonymous feedback*

The final question was a more general one about different experiences of calling the Helpline.

- 7% of callers experienced technical difficulties
- 12.5% experienced delays receiving a callback i.e. > 2 days

*“Many times when I've been struggling needing to speak with a helpline counsellor there's been no answer, tried multiple times on the same day with no answer. I've tried the call back option numerous times but I personally have not found the call back option 48 hrs later suitable (for me).” – anonymous feedback*

- 43% experienced long wait times.

*"It was clearly stated that I could ask for a call back and I was highly triggered and alone. I decided to wait for over half an hour. It was worth it. I felt truly heard and validated in my pain and in my capability. The human connection with someone who clearly had some deep understanding of complex trauma was very helpful to me. I cried deeply and was able to separate the past from my options in the present."* – anonymous feedback

*"Most recent call no one was available. I think it suggested I call lifeline or 000 and there was an option for leaving a message for call back. Can't remember detail. Definitely not how it used to be. I would mark the experience below as great - except that the service no longer provides what it did. I assume this is due to an increase in need of the service, and not enough persons available to provide. That is not the fault of blue knot."* – anonymous feedback

One final thanks to everyone who has shared their insights. We will continue to do what we can to improve the service we provide every day to callers in need.