



Evaluation of service user experience of the Best Health Programme. The HSE self-management education and support programme for people living with obesity.

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Background

The Best Health Programme is a structured, evidence-based clinical and behavioural intervention delivered by the chronic disease hub dietitians in the community for people living with obesity. Evaluation of early phase implementation was completed between Q1 2021 and Q1 2024, with results demonstrating high levels of engagement (62% programme completion) alongside meaningful clinical and quality of life improvements, including a 24% increase in the WHO mental wellbeing index, a 12% reduction in triglycerides, and a mean weight reduction of 5.4%. The programme achieved accreditation with the Quality Institute for Self-Management Education and Training (www.qismet.org.uk) in 2024. Ongoing service user evaluation is central to quality assurance and continuous improvement, ensuring that the programme remains responsive to patient needs and the evolving evidence base in obesity care.

Aim

This evaluation aimed to analyse participant-reported experiences of the Best Health Programme following completion of the six core sessions, focusing on perceived gains in knowledge and skills for obesity self-management, confidence to engage in health-related behaviour change, and early self-reported behaviour changes undertaken as a result of participation.

Methods

A bespoke service user evaluation (SUE) questionnaire was designed incorporating open and closed ended items and 5 point Likert scale statements. The questionnaire was administered through SmartSurvey, a secure platform for service level data collection. Participants are provided with a link and QR code to the questionnaire or a hardcopy is provided to those who attend in person programmes. SUE questionnaires are administered after the six core weekly sessions and again at session 14. This analysis reports on responses collected at the end of the 6 core sessions completed in 2025. Descriptive analysis was conducted using Microsoft Excel, and thematic analysis of open ended responses was undertaken manually and with assistance of MS Copilot.

Knowledge, skills and confidence

Likert-scale items assessed participants' **perceived gains in knowledge and self-management skills** (e.g., the science of obesity as a chronic disease, goal setting, personal planning) alongside **confidence to implement behaviour change**, reflecting improvements in both **capability and self-efficacy**.

Behaviour change

Assesses participants' **self-reported initiation of health behaviour change**, reflecting movement from **intention to action**, and capturing participants' own perception of health behaviour change and the types of behavioural strategies adopted.

Programme experience and satisfaction

Assesses participants' **perceived satisfaction and helpfulness** with key components of programme delivery (onboarding information, dietetic input, session content, and educational materials), reflecting overall **acceptability and perceived value of the intervention**.

Figure 1. Core components of the Service User Evaluation questionnaire completed by participants of The Best Health Programme

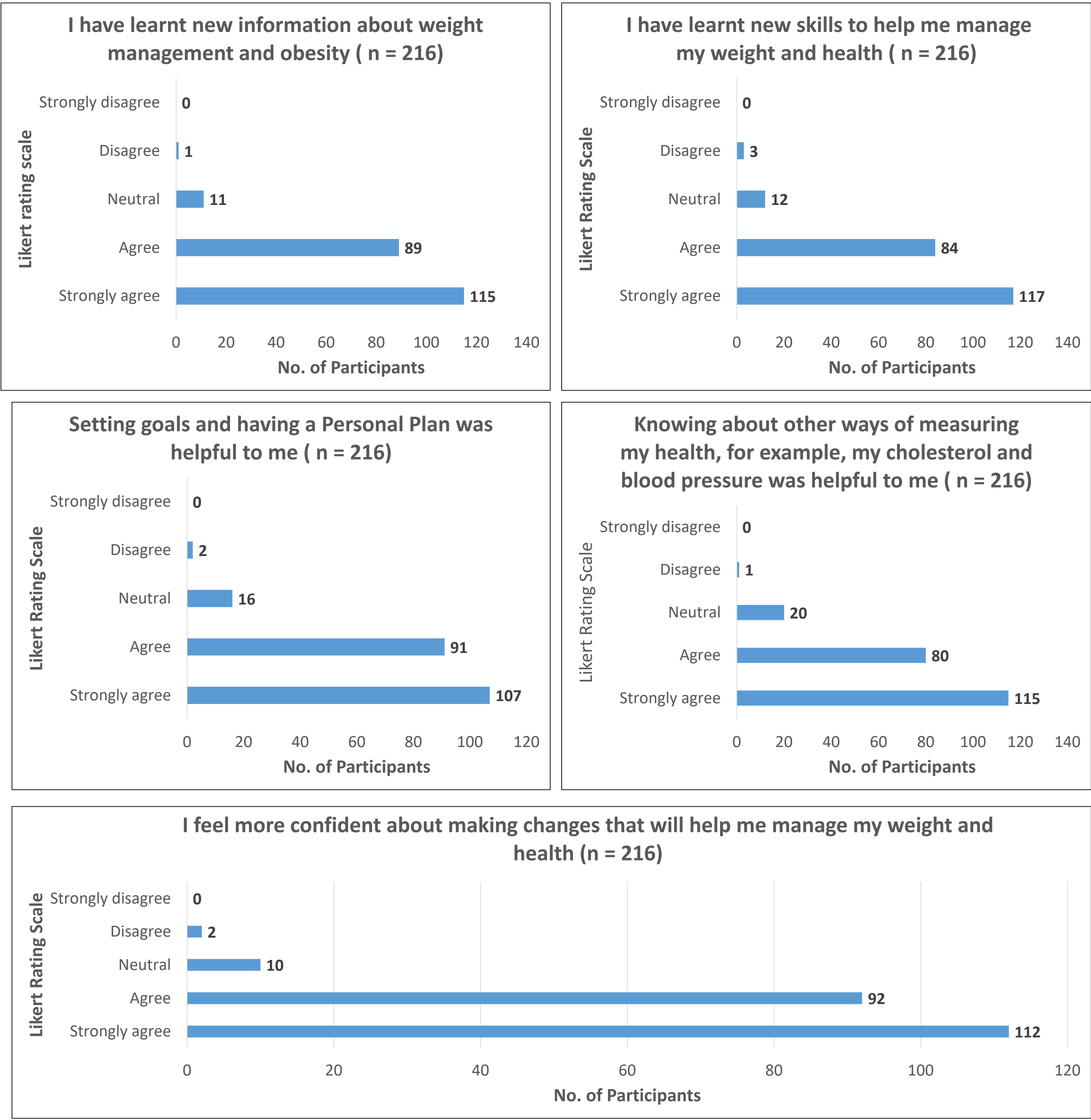
Results

Service User Evaluation (SUE) Questionnaire completion after 6 core sessions in 2025

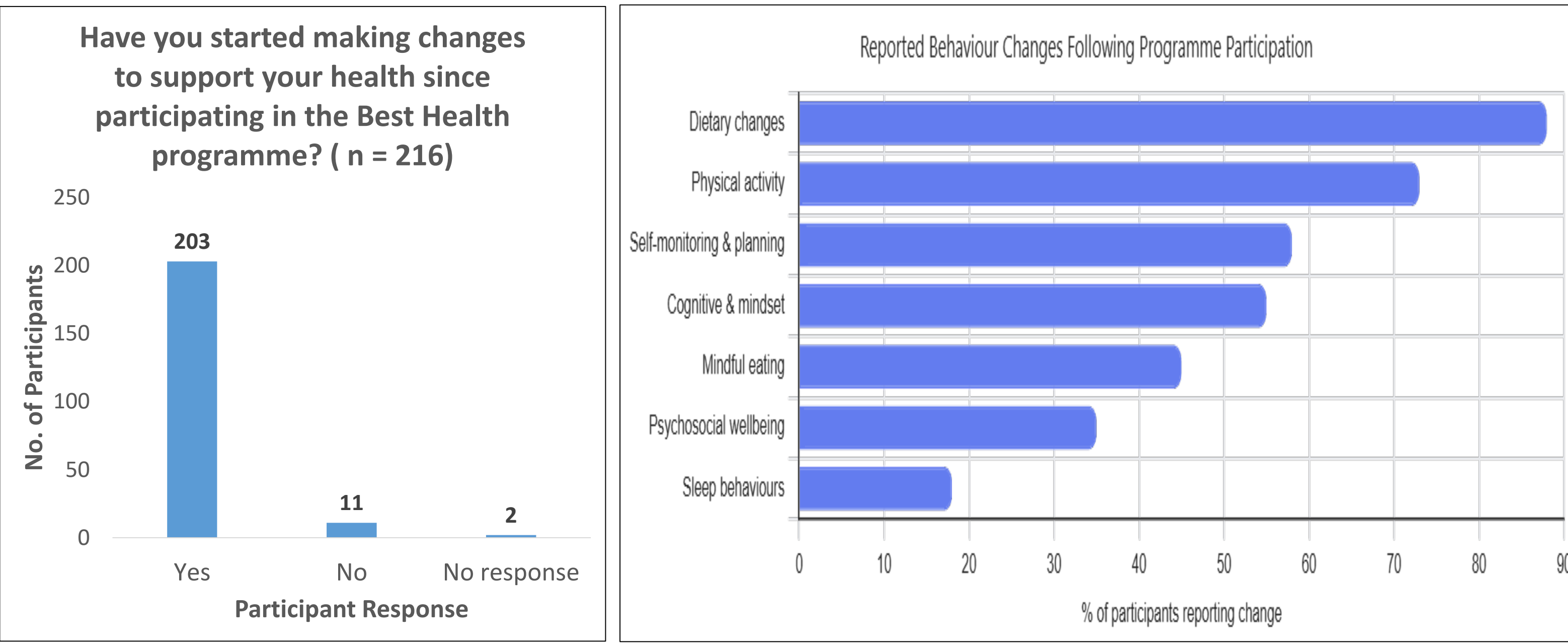


35 Best Health Programmes delivered
14 HSE Chronic Disease Hubs
216 Participants completed SUE questionnaires

Knowledge, Skills and Confidence

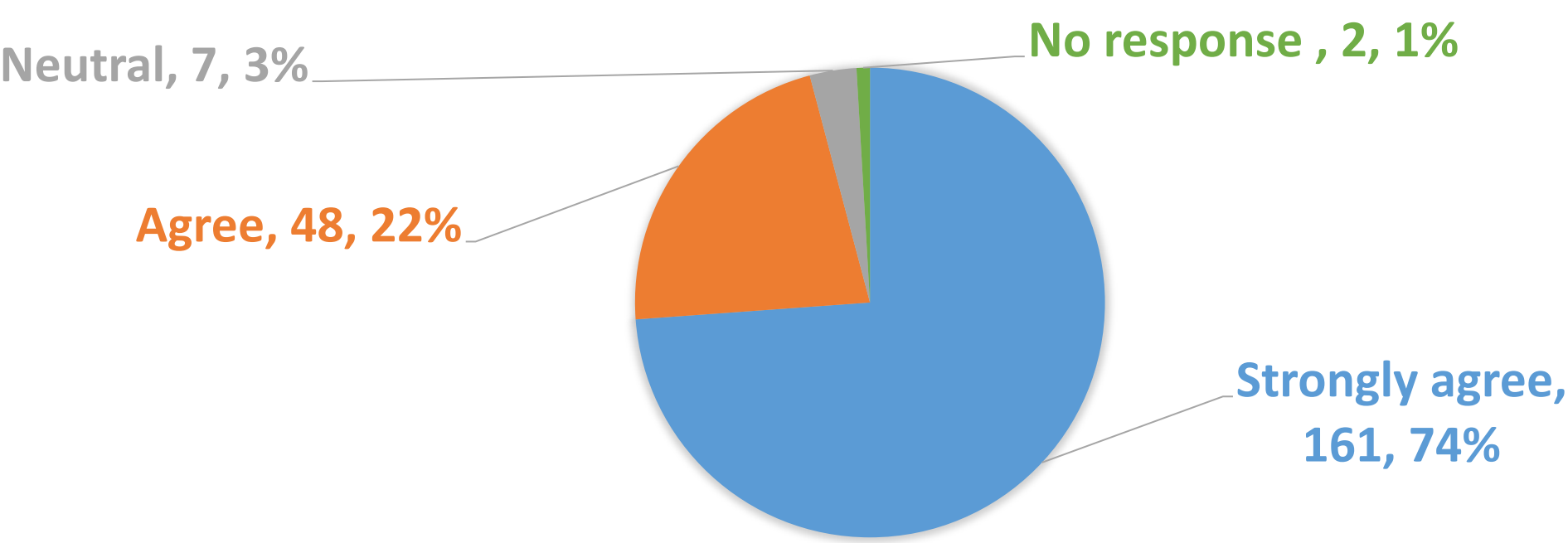


Behaviour change



Participant experience and satisfaction with the programme

I WOULD RECOMMEND THIS COURSE TO OTHERS WHO NEED SUPPORT TO MANAGE THEIR WEIGHT AND HEALTH



What participants reported as most helpful about the programme.

"Enjoyed sharing experience with group. Knowing everyone struggles and group was supportive as where tutors."

"The content is focused on a healthy lifestyle rather than the scales. The delivery of the programme allows you time to concentrate on making small changes rather than stressing about weekly weigh ins & not losing any weight. I feel like this programme will work for me."

"Having a dietitian that's easy to talk with has really helped."

"Having a chance to ask questions with experts; getting a better understanding of guidelines"

"Hearing from the other members. I'm not very talkative, I don't like public talking in groups I don't know. But this group were great to share their question and thoughts. Very nice people. I also found the exercise links great, exercises we can do at home in our own kitchen."

"This is not a diet but a plan... the supportive approach and small changes have created a real shift in how I think about my health."

Conclusion
Participants reported significant gains in knowledge, skills, and confidence to engage in sustainable behaviour change. Qualitative feedback further highlights the value of the programme's holistic multi-component approach, integrating a health gains focus, nutrition and physical activity education, behaviour change strategies, and supportive peer group engagement. The strong emphasis on empowerment and self-efficacy aligns with the model of care for chronic disease management and person-centred care. Ongoing role out of the programmes continues nationally in the chronic disease hubs in 2026.

For information on obesity including the Best Health Programme, visit the HSE webpage or use the QR code: <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/obesity/>

