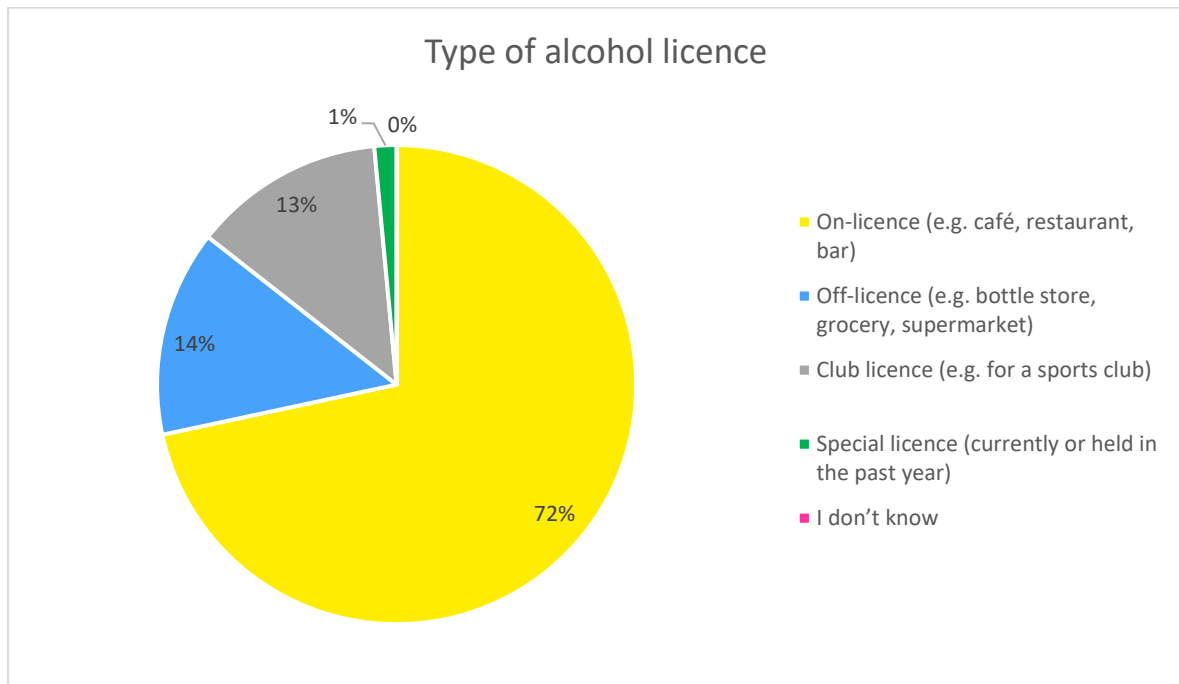


Licensee pre-engagement survey March-April 2024 results

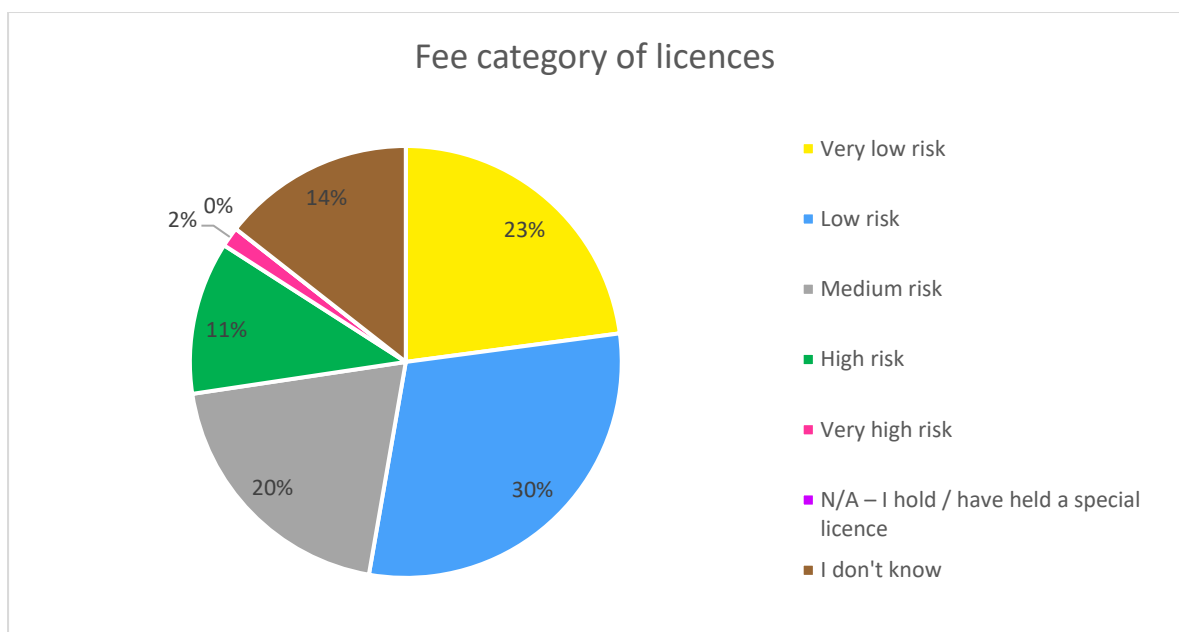
Policy team, Wellington City Council

We had a total of 201 responses to our survey between March and April 2024 to inform the Alcohol Fees Bylaw review. These are the categories of alcohol licences respondents have most recently held and what they had to say about some aspects of the licence application process.

Licence categories - for the most recent licence application

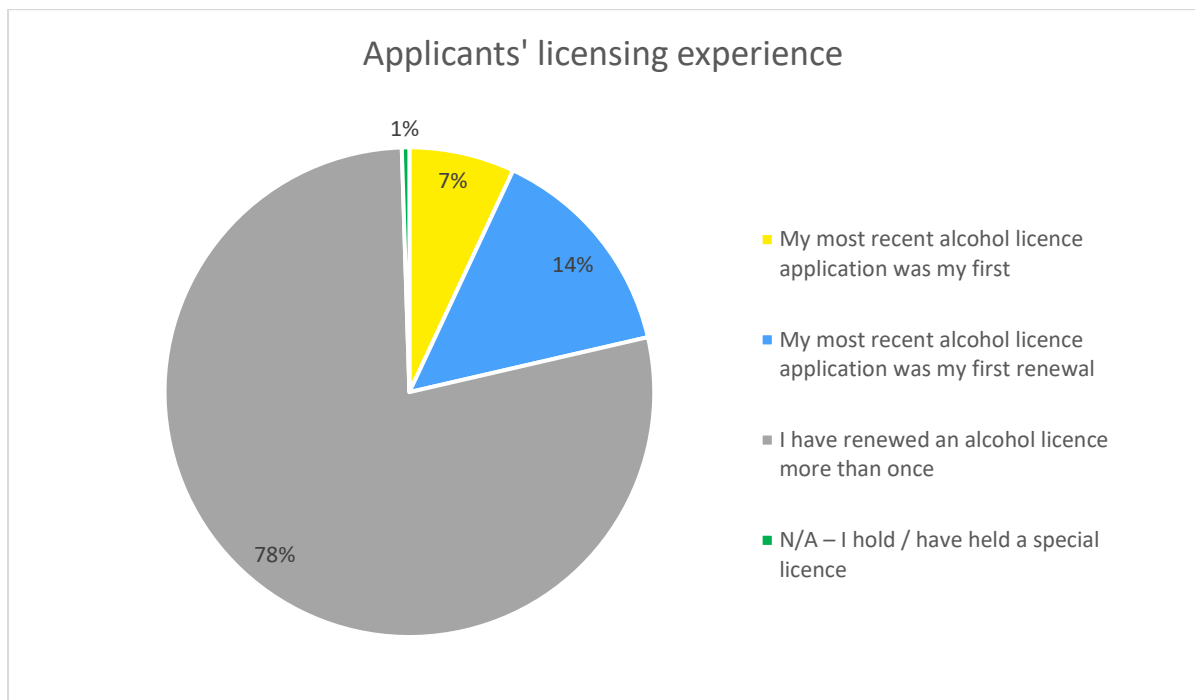


The majority of respondents (72%) had submitted an on-licence application most recently.



Most respondents have most recently submitted an application for a very low risk or low risk licence (53% of responses) according to its fee category.

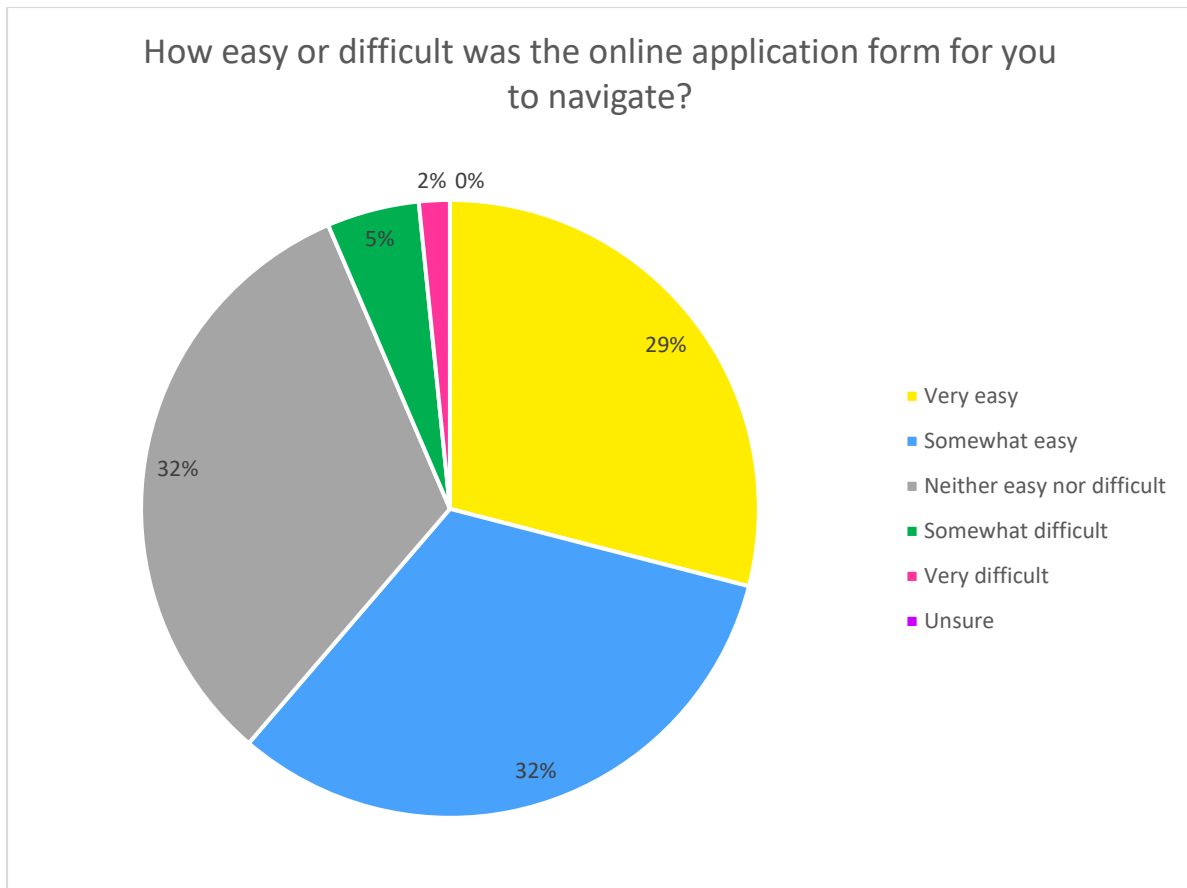
14% of respondents did not know which fee category their most recent licence belonged to.



The majority of respondents have renewed a licence more than once (78%).

Online licence application

In March 2024 we first launched an online licence application. 62 out of 201 total respondents (31%) had used the online application. Of those who used the online application, this is how they found it:

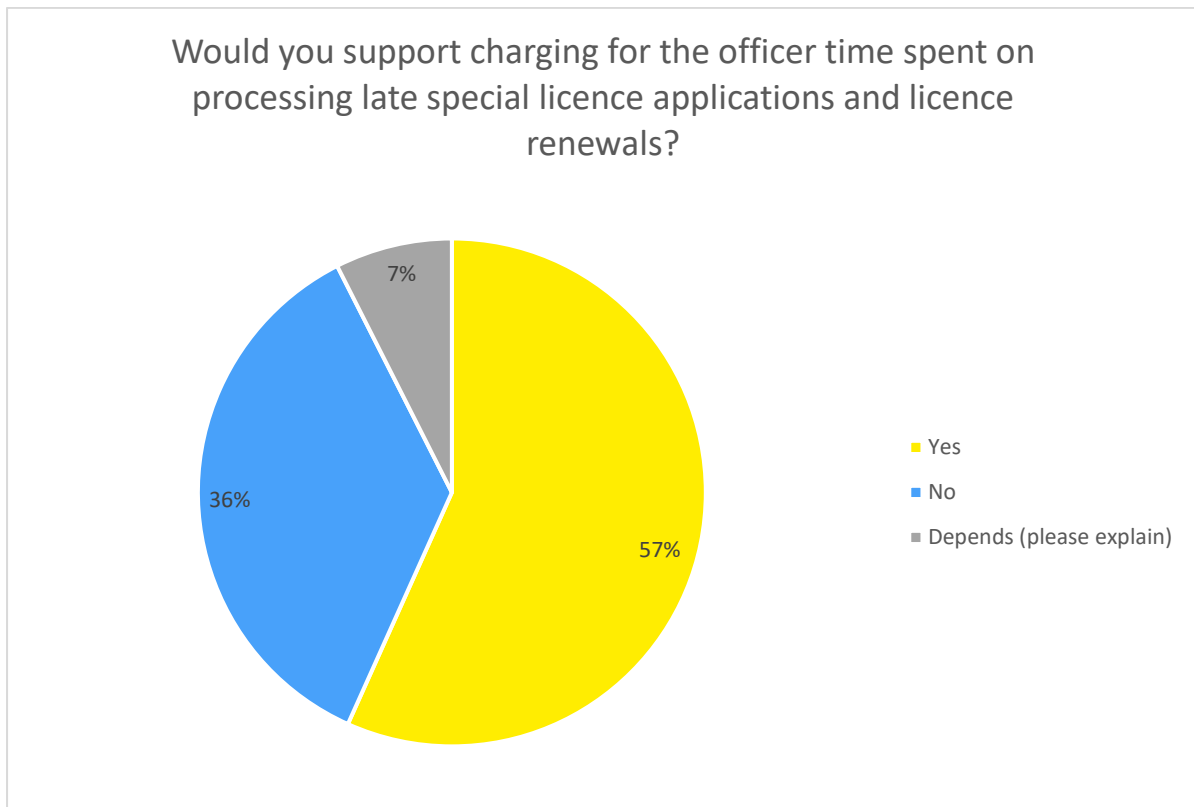


Respondents generally found the online process easy to use (61% answered very easy or somewhat easy).

Of the different licence types (for respondents' most recent licence application):

- **Off-licence holders found it easier** (70% very easy or somewhat easy) than club licence (64%) or on-licence (59%) holders
- **Low risk fee category licence holders found it easier** (75% very easy or somewhat easy) than other fee categories and those who didn't know (between 50% to 64%)
- **New licence applicants found it easier** (80% very easy or somewhat easy) than first-time licence renewals (70%) and multiple licence renewals (57%).

Charging for officer time - late special licences and renewals



Most respondents (57%) would support charging for additional time spent by officers processing special licence applications and licence renewals past their deadline (less than 20 days from the event/start date).

Of the different licence types (for respondents' most recent licence application):

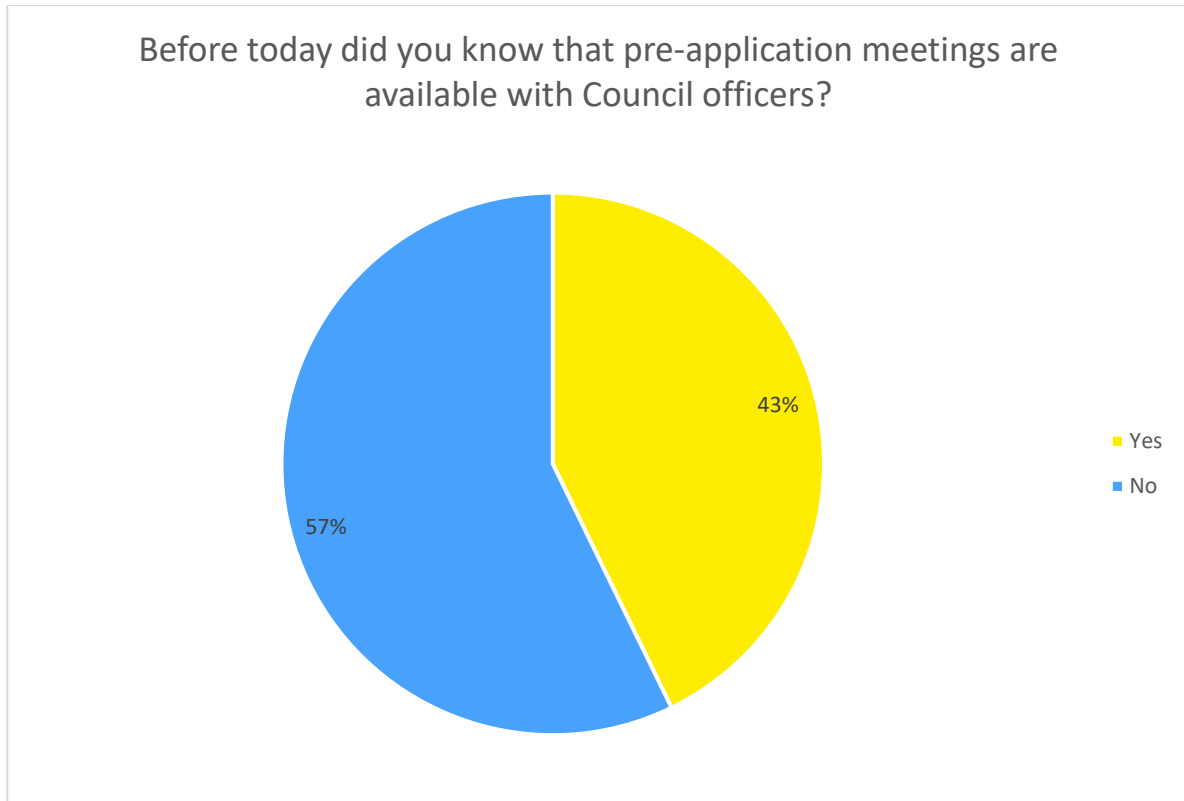
- **Off-licence holders were more supportive** (75% support) than club licence (62%) and on-licence (51%) holders
- **Medium risk fee category licence holders were more supportive** (68% support) than other fee categories and those who didn't know (48% to 58%)
- **New licence applicants were slightly more supportive** (64% support) than multiple licence renewals (57%) and first-time licence renewals (52%).

7% of respondents said it would depend on some conditions. These included:

- If lateness was caused by **exceptional circumstances** such as ill health or family bereavement (six comments)
- If lateness was due to **Council officers' responsiveness** e.g. giving enough notice time, being late in replying, sending invoices on time (three comments)
- If lateness was **outside of the control of the applicant** e.g. event waiting on sponsorship (two comments)
- To waive the late fee for either a **first-time** applicant or **first time** being late (two comments)

- The **type of event** for special licences e.g. a school fundraiser, major event or charitable event (two comments)
- Applicants with **multiple council licences** e.g. alcohol licences, food licences, outdoor furniture, pavement signs (one comment)

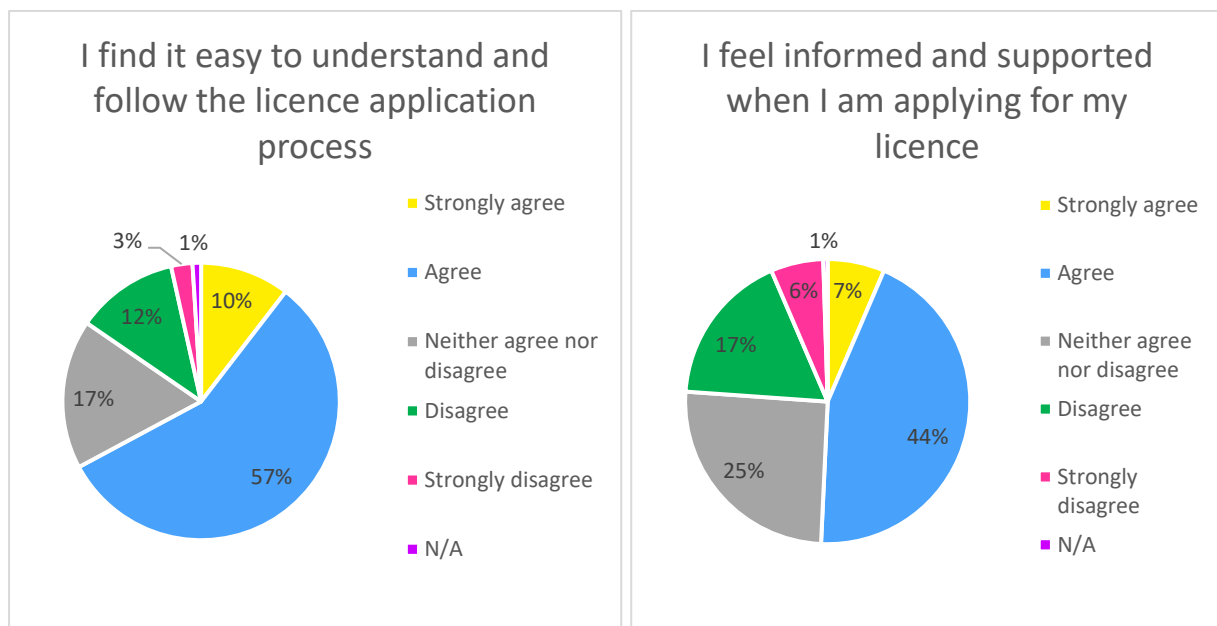
Awareness of pre-application meetings with Council officers



More respondents were unaware that pre-application meetings are available (57% answered no) than aware (43% answered yes).

- **First-time applicants were most aware** (57% answered yes).

Level of agreement with statements about the licence application process

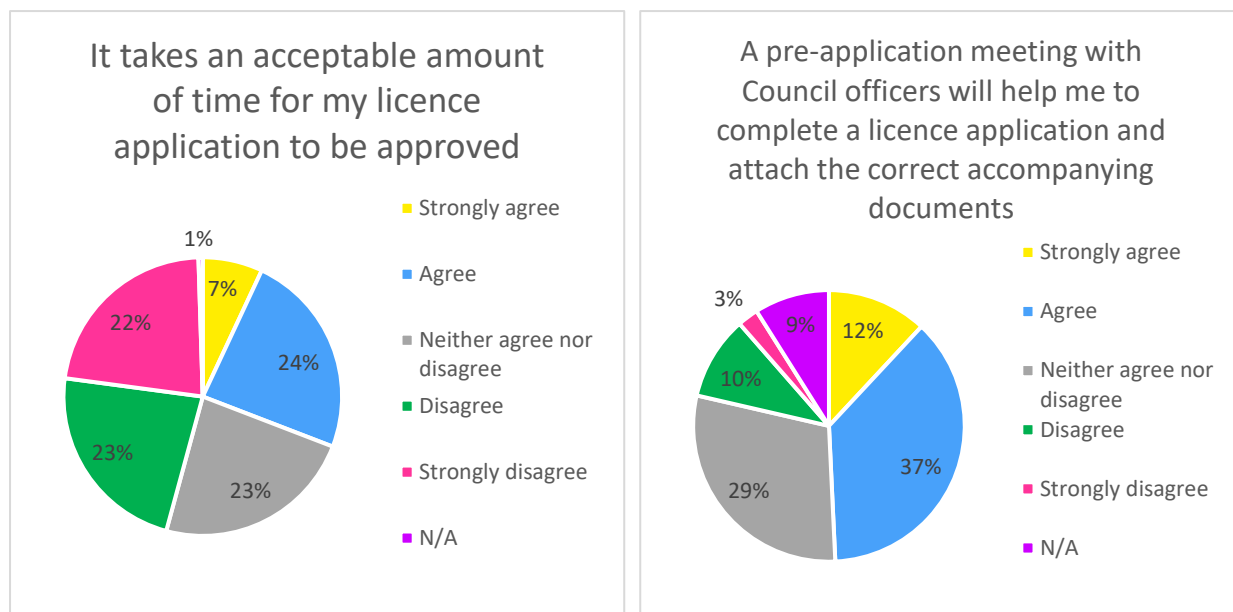


Respondents generally agreed that they found the licence application process easy to understand and follow (67% agree or strongly agree).

- **Medium risk licence-holders agreed the most (83% agree or strongly agree) out of all licence categories**
- **Respondents whose most recent licence application was their first disagreed the most (43% disagree or strongly disagree).**

Respondents somewhat agreed that they feel informed and supported when applying for their licence (51% agree or strongly agree).

- **Club licence-holders (73% agree or strongly agree) and very low risk licence-holders (61% agree or strongly agree) agreed the most**
- **High and very high risk licence-holders disagreed the most (42% disagree and strongly disagree).**



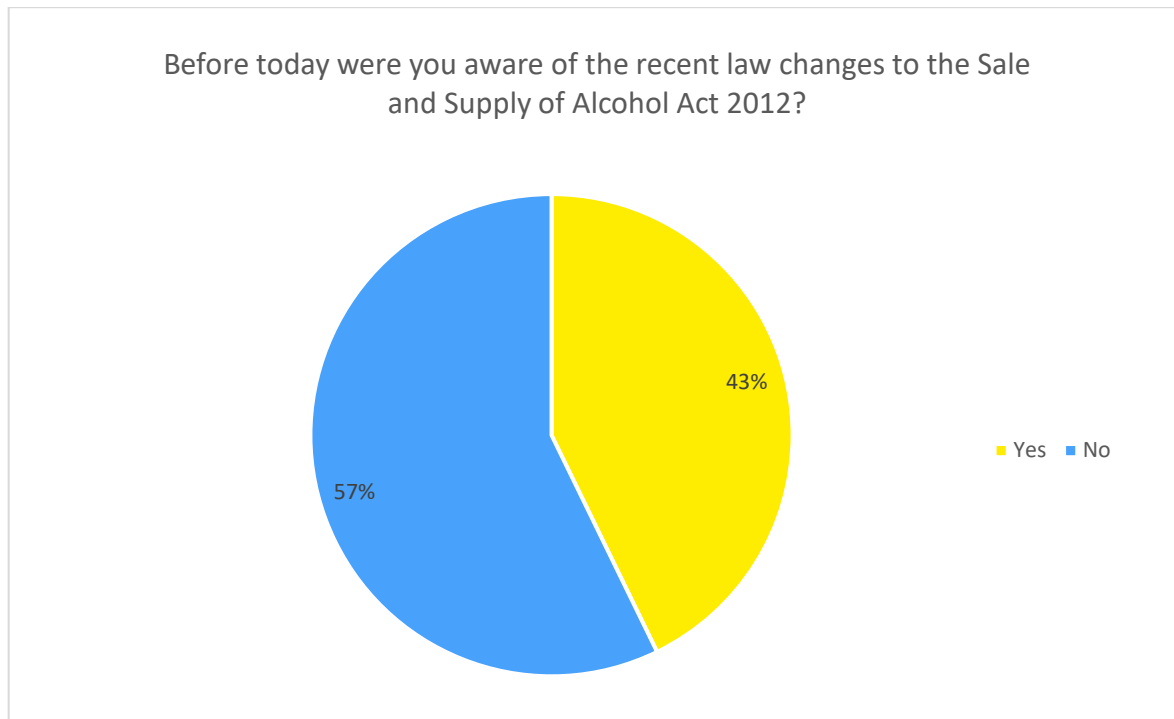
Respondents somewhat disagreed that their licence application takes an acceptable amount of time for approval (45% disagree or strongly disagree).

- **High and very high risk licence-holders disagreed the most** (69% disagree or strongly disagree).
- **Licensees who did not know their fee category agreed the most** that the approval time was acceptable (45% agree or strongly agree)

Respondents somewhat agreed that having a pre-application meeting will help them to complete a licence application and attach the correct documents (49% agree or strongly agree).

- **Licensees who did not know their fee category** (69% agree or strongly agree), **first-time applicants** (64%) and **medium risk fee category licensees** (63%) **agreed the most**
- **Off-licence holders disagreed the most** (21% disagree or strongly disagree).

Awareness of recent law changes



More respondents were unaware of the recent law changes to the Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act 2012 (57%) than aware (43%).

- **Club licence-holders were least aware** (73% answered no)
- **First-time applicants were most aware** (57% answered yes).

Other comments

57 respondents made additional comments at the end of the survey. Of these, the most common themes are as follows, and quotes from some of these comments:

- **Licence fees or fee increases are high** (13 comments – across all fee categories)
- **Fee category (risk rating) or licensing process is not fit-for-purpose** for their specific licence type (13 comments – across all fee categories except medium risk)

"I would love for the fees to be based around size as well as risk. We are such a small space and would love the fees to reflect this so we don't have to pay as much as a larger venue."

- **Application takes a long time to process** (11 comments – across mostly low risk fee categories)

"Wellington Council are generally helpful and efficient with responses etc. Processing times with the DLC often take too long."

- **Service received from the Council has been inconsistent** or less responsive than desired (11 comments – across all fee categories)

"The online link to apply and pay only works 50% of the time... puts additional stress on businesses."

- **Renewal processes are inefficient** because all information has to be re-entered from the original application (seven comments – across very low and low risk fee categories)

"It would be great if supporting documents could be held and reused to make the whole process much more simple and quick."

- **The business or hospitality sector is struggling** (seven comments – across all fee categories except medium risk)

"The burden of license fees on smaller capacity premises is often crippling at a time when hospitality has seen a reduction in takings of between 11.4% and 40% over the last two years."

Some further suggestions were made to improve the licensing process:

- **Simplify the process** for some licence types e.g. lower risk or for special licences holding a function under the club licence (five comments)
- **Recognise good, compliant and long-standing operators** without convictions, complaints and incidents e.g. by reviewing their risk rating and therefore reducing fees (four comments)
- **Improve communication of processes** e.g. with reminders or notifications before due dates or guidance for special licence application requirements (three comments)
- **Fix IT issues** e.g. payment systems timing out (two comments)
- **Assign a dedicated officer to an applicant** for better guidance and relationships (two comments)
- **Provide a phone number** to call instead of general email address (one comment)
- **Align licensing renewal dates** for businesses with multiple sites/licences (one comment).