

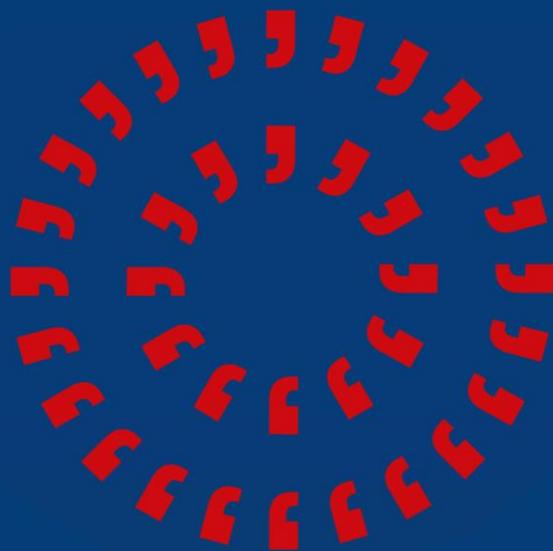


**Survivors**  
against terror



# **Giving Voice to Survivors**

**A survey of the views of survivors of Terrorist attacks**



# Giving Voice to Survivors

## Context

Terrorism has affected our country for generations. Driven by different motivations and using different tactics, it has cost thousands of people their lives.

According to the Global Terrorism Index, 38,422 people were killed in terror attacks globally in 2015 alone.

Terrorism in the UK was at its greatest during the early 1970's. In 1972 353 people were killed in a single year. Terrorism today claims far fewer lives (36 in 2017), but it still has a dramatic impact on the public consciousness and devastates the lives of those injured or bereaved.

2017 saw a surge in attacks in the UK (five in all) which before then had slumped to historic lows since the tube and bus bombing of the 7<sup>th</sup> of July 2005.

Sadly we know that the phenomenon of terrorism isn't about to disappear any time soon. The country remains on alert with the current assessment rated as 'Severe', meaning an attack is highly likely. The threat from ISIS remains real and the security services believe there is also a growing threat from far-right terrorism.

Survivors Against Terror was set up in 2018 by people injured or bereaved by terrorism. Our aims are three-fold:

- 1) To make sure survivors and bereaved families get the support they deserve
- 2) To push for more effective policies to tackle terrorism
- 3) To help the public play their part in defeating terror.

One of the first steps we took as an organisation was to commission a survey of survivors of terror attacks. This is the first nationwide survey of survivors and was conducted in partnership with Kantar, one of the world's leading research and insight companies. The results of the survey will inform how we work and what we focus on in the coming years. These are the results.

## Headlines and Conclusions

First the good news: Survivors of terror attacks rate the support they received highly, with most services being rated by 80% of respondents as good, very good or exceptional. Services such as NHS emergency provision were rated as exceptional by a full 65% of people and very good by a further 15%. The help provided by police and paramedics scored similarly highly. It is clear from this data that while improvements can certainly still be made, the country has good reason to be proud of the work done by our emergency services.

Further good news comes from the progress we are making overall. People's experience of the help they received is improving. Comparing the experiences of those affected in the 1980s to the most recent attacks reveals significantly improved satisfaction levels.

While there is much that is encouraging in the data, the survey also reveals major gaps in service provision that require urgent attention. Chief among these is the lack of adequate mental health provision.

A shocking 76% of survey respondents highlighted mental health services as requiring improvement. Of those who raised mental health, a further 76% of them felt the improvement needed was either a 4 or 5 on a 1 to 5 scale.

The stories underlying this lack of provision were shocking, one respondent commented:

*“Mental health services are diabolical here, I still have not seen a psychologist 14 months after the event.”*

Another talked about the particular lack of support for children and the extreme lengths people have had to go to get support;

*“It took 11 months after the attack and my highlighting the lack of child mental health care on a TV program to get help for my daughter”*

Others talked about mental health services being taken less seriously for those not physically injured:

*“I was on the beach with my friend who was killed. I had to identify her at the mortuary that day. As I wasn't physically hurt, I felt as though I didn't matter. It took nearly a year before I got any help for PTSD.”*

As well as mental health services the two other areas that were felt to be most inadequate were financial support (52%) and legal support (38%). We know

from speaking to survivors that too many people who have been thrust into the worst of situations end up worrying about whether they can afford to stay in their house or negotiating complicated legal processes instead of having the time to grieve or recover. Both areas require significant improvement.

One survivor told us:

“I was off work for ten months due my injuries and came close to losing my job which would have resulted in losing my home.”

There were two more niche areas which as they affect smaller numbers were raised less often, but clearly felt very strongly by those who are affected. Of those who raised child support as an issue a shocking 67% said the support their children received was simply adequate or poor. Similarly, for those caught up in terror attacks abroad there was a strong sense of inadequate support. Of those affected overseas almost half (46%) of respondents said that UK government support was poor - with only 19% saying it was very good or exceptional. Child support and UK Government overseas support both deserve urgent attention.

---

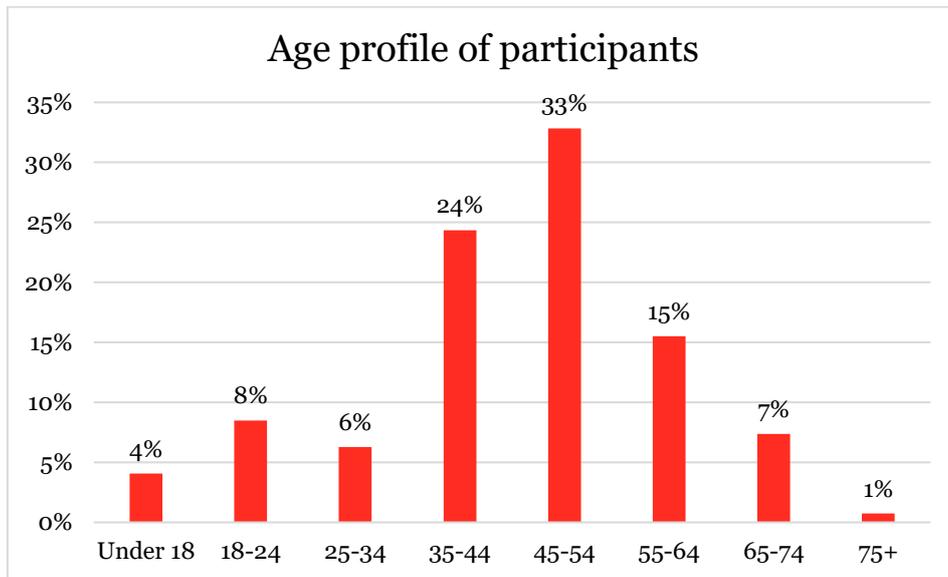
The aim of this survey was to build up a better picture of survivors' experiences beyond our own personal stories. Having identified clear themes and priorities our next step will be to look more deeply into each of the priorities identified and propose policy solutions that might improve the experiences of those affected.

We'd like to thank everyone who took part in the survey and who shared some of their own suffering in the hope of easing the plight of others. We will always remember that behind each of these statistics are people who didn't come home, experiences that cannot be forgotten and trauma that will affect the rest of our lives.

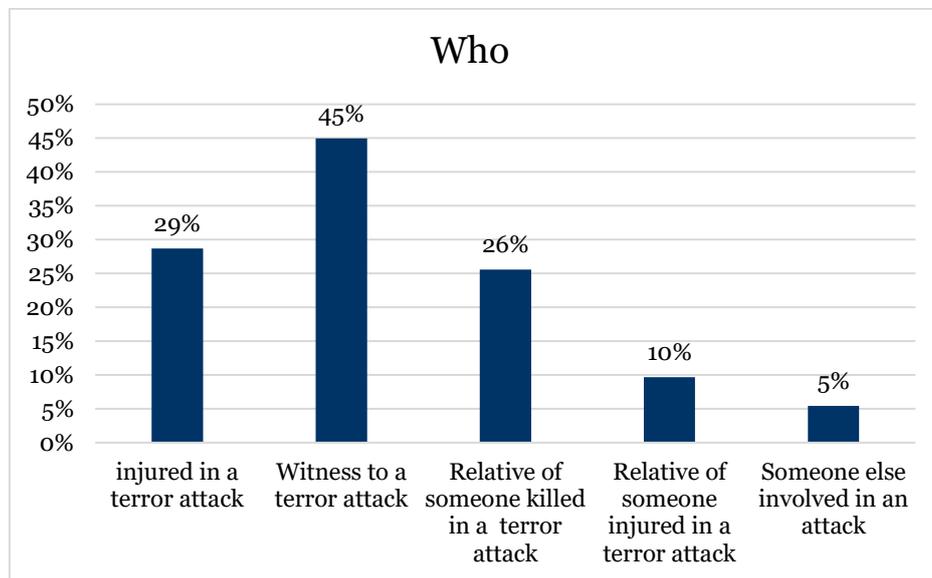
## **The sample**

The survey was conducted over the internet between July and September 2018 and was designed by Survivors Against Terror together with experts from Kantar. 271 people took part in the survey. The sample had a strong

female bias (75%) and a good mix of ages, a majority of whom were between 35 and 54.

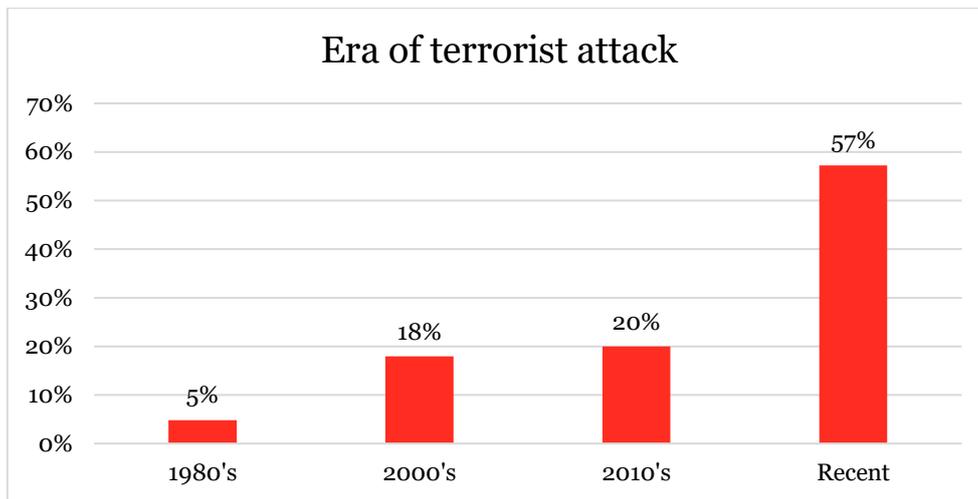


29% of the sample were injured in a terror attack, 26% were the relative of someone killed, 10% the relative of someone injured and 45% witnessed an attack (of course these are not mutually exclusive categories)



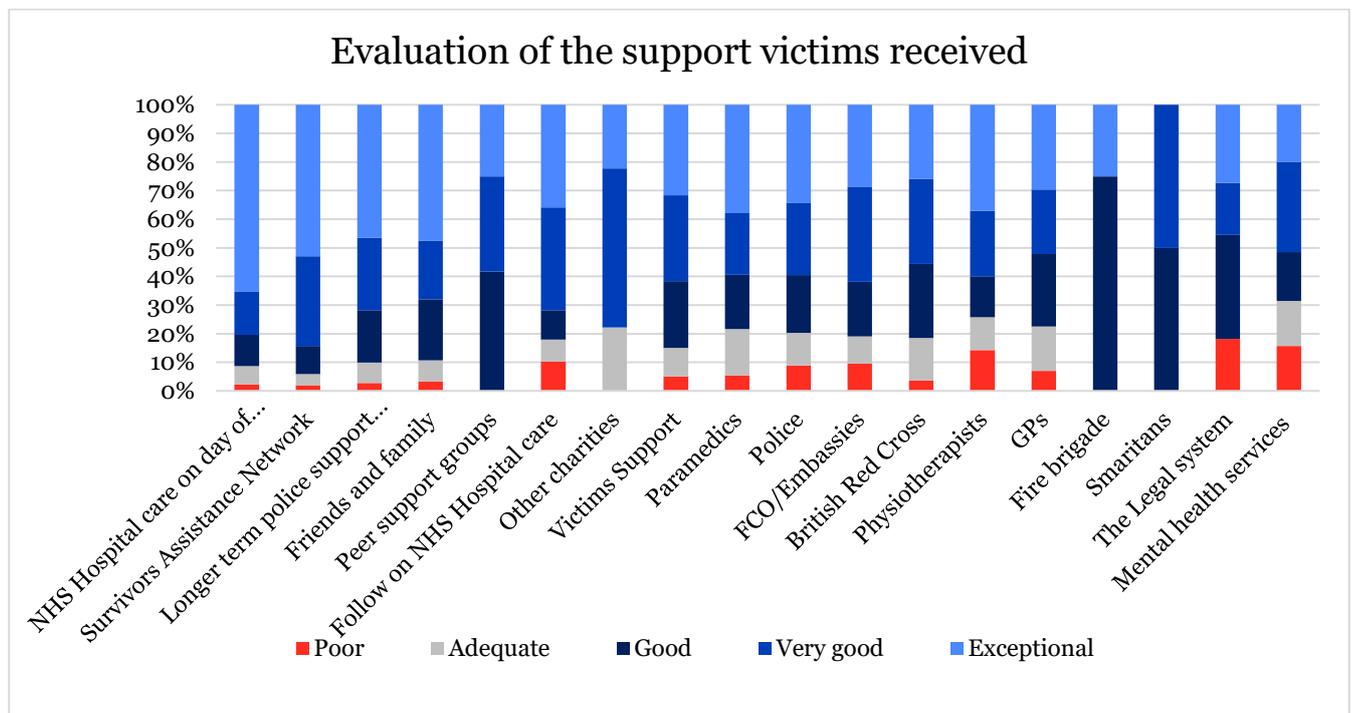
64% of respondents were connected to an attack in the UK, 35% overseas.

The attacks covered by the survey span from the 1980's to 2017. Most of the survey participants were more recent attack survivors.



## The Findings

### Level of support



## **High satisfaction with emergency services**

The group as a whole reported strong satisfaction with the emergency services.

60% felt the support they received from paramedics was very good or exceptional, only 5% found it poor. The police scored similarly highly with 59% scoring them as very good or exceptional and only 9% poor. Longer term police support was even more highly supported with 71% rating their support as very good or exceptional.

NHS hospital care came top of the satisfaction stakes with 80% finding their support very good or exceptional (65% of people found their care exceptional). Longer term NHS care was also positively viewed with 72% saying it was very good or exceptional. Though the number dissatisfied also grew from a tiny 2% to more substantial 10% suggesting there are a number of cases where excellent emergency care is not followed up at the same level. GPs were less highly rated than the NHS in general, but still with 53% saying their support was very good to exceptional.

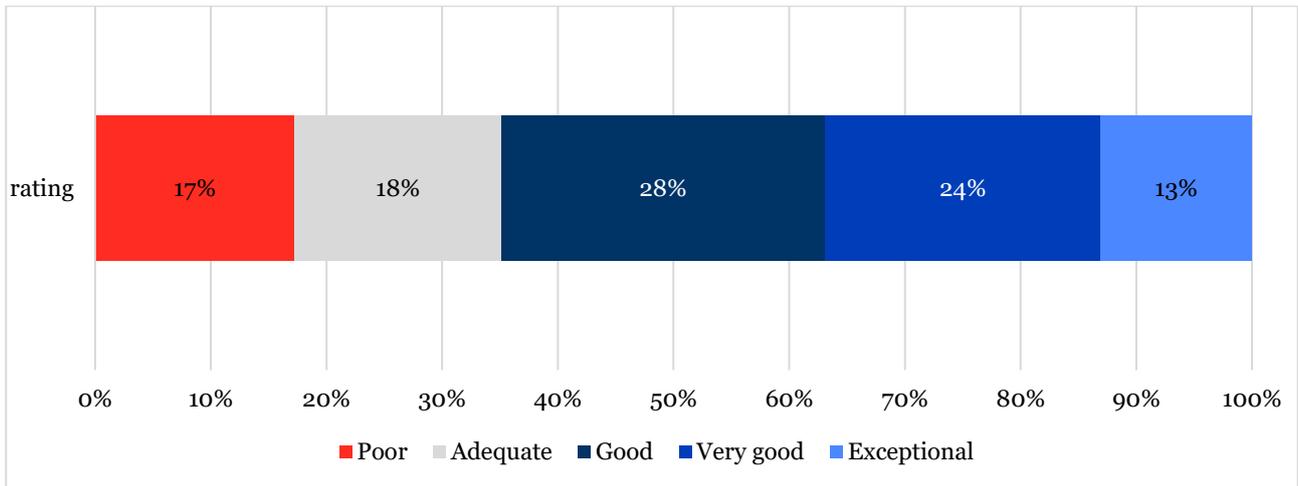
## **NGOs positively viewed, especially specialists.**

We also asked people whether they had come into contact with NGOs and charities helping survivors. Those who had viewed them positively.

The Survivors Assistance Network came out with the most positive rating with an impressive 84% viewing their work as very good or exceptional. Victims Support scored 62% on the same question and the Red Cross 56%, although both Victims Support and the Red Cross had higher levels of dissatisfaction with 15% and 19% respectively seeing their support as poor or adequate.

This suggests high satisfaction with all services and that the specialist services of the Survivors Assistance Network are particularly appreciated.

## **Mixed view of support overall**

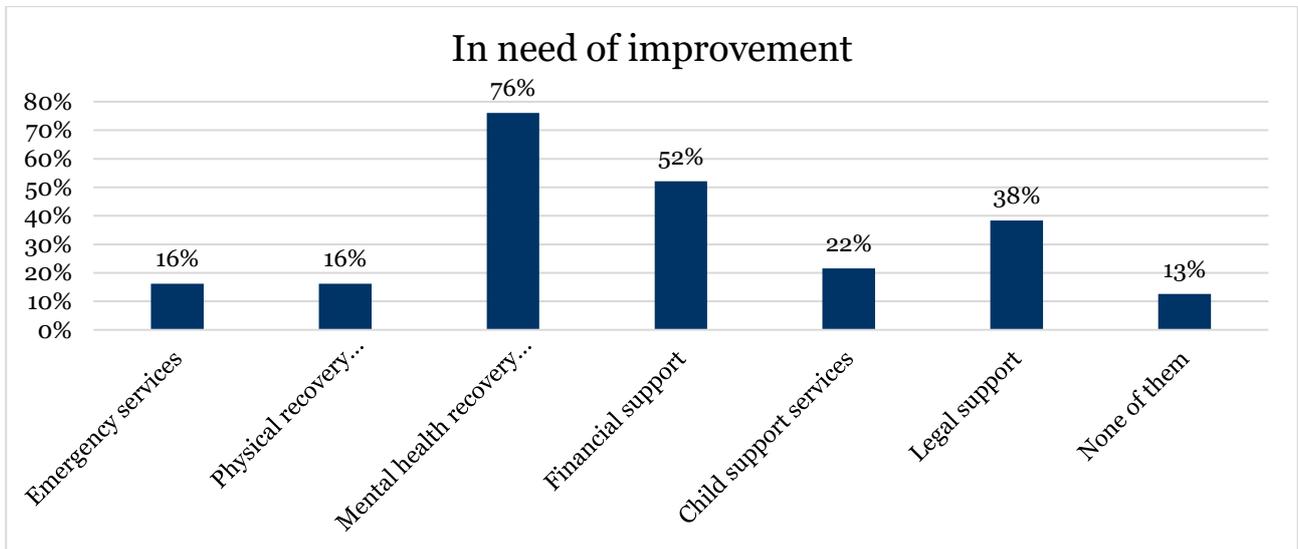


As the data above shows, the cohort of respondents are broadly positive and often very positive. Nevertheless, when asked to rate the overall level of support they received they are more nuanced with only 13% saying the support has been exceptional, 24% very good, 28% good, 18% adequate and 17% poor. This is a much more mixed picture and suggests there are key areas dragging down what are otherwise strong levels of satisfaction.

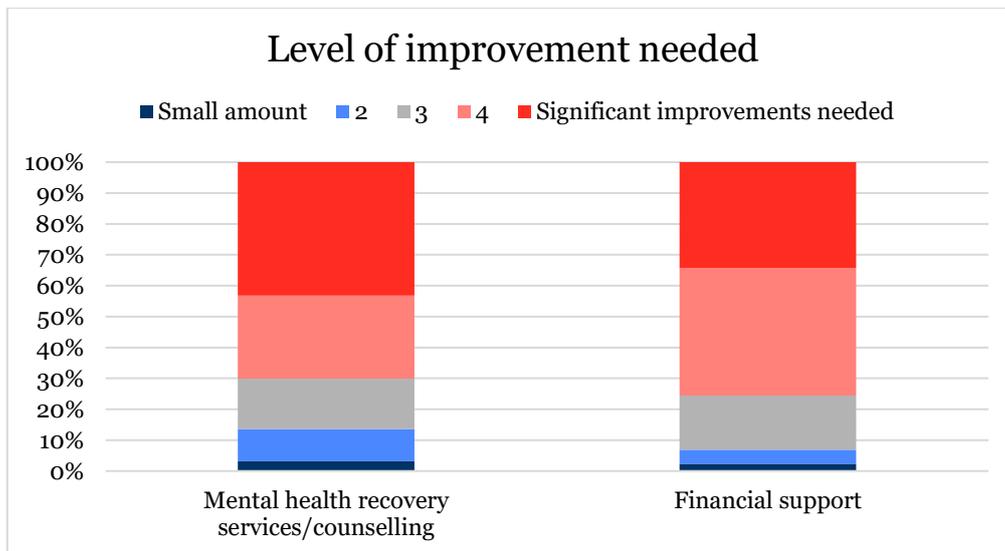
### What needs improving

When asked what needs improving three areas stand out.

A massive 76% of respondents highlight mental health services as requiring improvement, 52% highlight financial support and 38% highlight legal support. This compares to only 16% who suggested emergency services or physical health services. This suggests these three areas are having a major negative impact on the experience of survivors overall.



When you look at each of these areas in more detail the findings are stark. Of those who felt mental health services needed improving, 76% of them felt the improvement needed was either 4 or 5 on a 1-5 scale. Similarly, 90% of people who felt financial support/compensation needed improving ranked the level of change need as 4 or 5 on a 1-5 scale. 91% felt the same on legal services. What this shows is not just that there is a strong view that these services need improving, but that the improvement needed is dramatic.



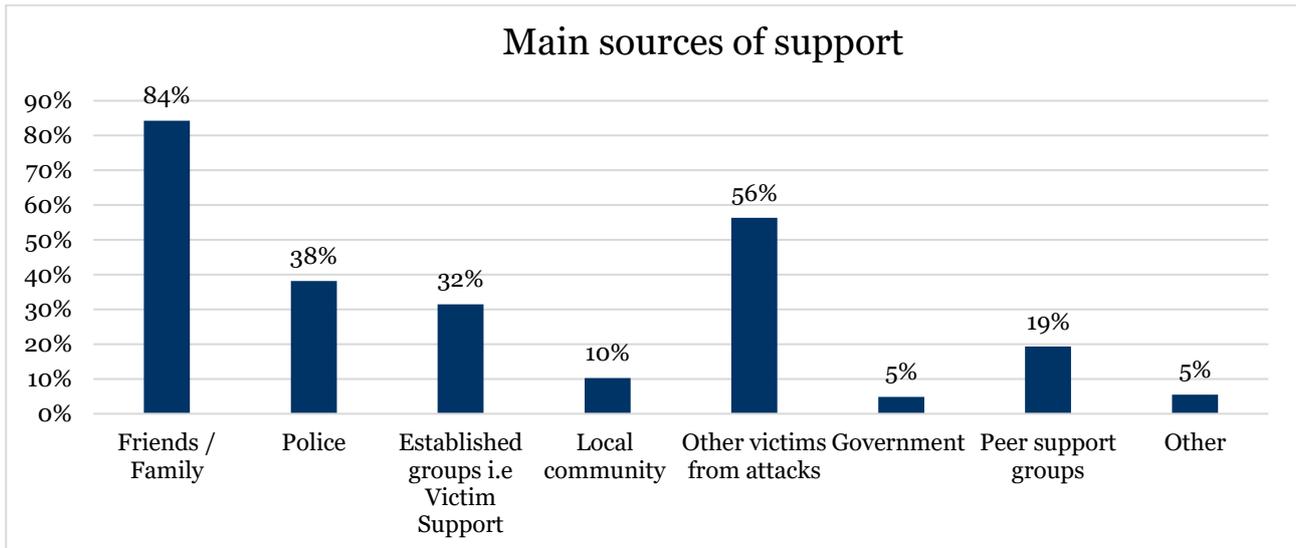
On compensation it was both the process and the amounts that were seen as falling short. 60% of people felt the process was either poor or adequate and 64% felt the amounts involved were poor or adequate. When terror takes a loved one, the last thing survivors want to be worrying about is paying their bills but the system at present often increases these worries both by moving slowly and by compensation levels that fail to fill the gaps needed.

On each of these areas, mental health services, financial compensation and legal support there is need for significant improvement and it's likely that changes in these areas would have a disproportionate impact on the lives and experiences of survivors.

Survivors Against Terror will look into each of these in more detail in due course and publish more substantial recommendations.

## The role of friends and other survivors

One of the interesting findings from the survey is the role of friends/family and other survivors. Perhaps unsurprisingly 84% of people said friends and family were one of their main sources of support in the period following the attack.

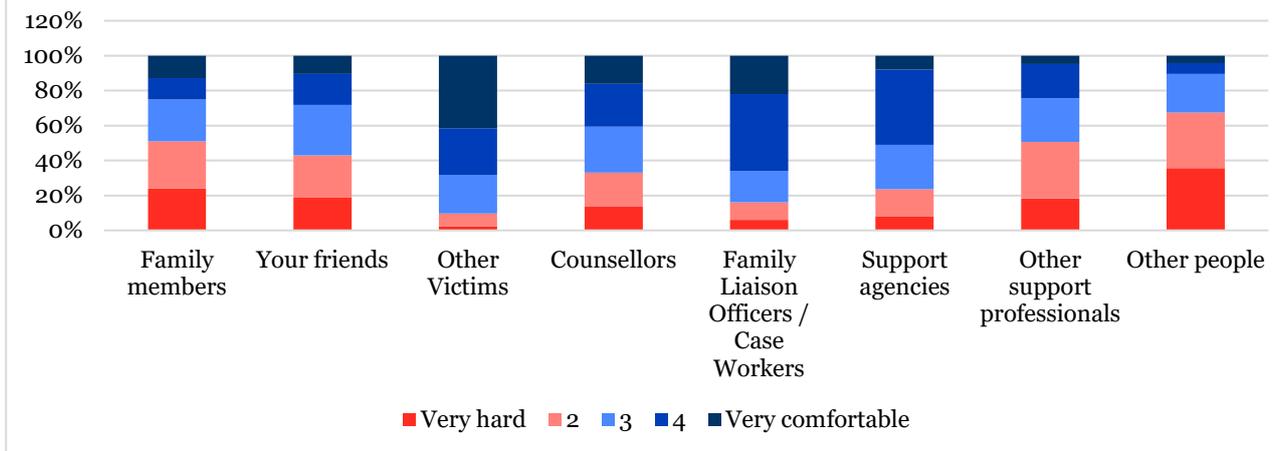


Despite that 61% of friends and family got no support and only 4% got all the support they needed. Given the importance of friends and family following attacks like these service providers should look at what else they can do to support those the survivors and what support they might need to do that job more effectively.

Less obviously 56% said other survivors were one of their main sources of support - that is higher than any other groups other than friends and family.

The importance of support from other survivors is further underlined when asked about how easy survivors find it to talk to people about their experiences. Here 68% of respondents chose 4 or 5 on a 5 point scale when asked how easy it is to talk to other survivors about their experiences (where 5 was very comfortable) . This compared to just 25% for family members, 28% for friends and is even higher than counsellors 41% and Police Family Liaison Officers (66%).

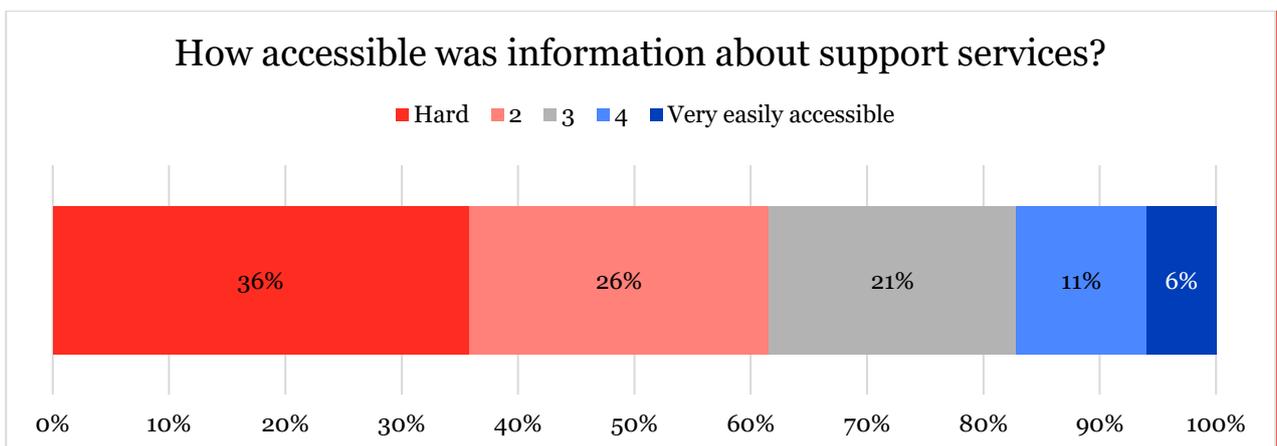
## How easy has it been to talk to these different groups of people?



This suggests the role of survivors in providing support to other survivors should be explored more by government and groups providing such services.

## Lack of information

A clear finding from the survey is that survivors struggled to get the information they needed on what services existed and on what to expect. Only 6% found it very easy to get information, compared with 36% who found it very hard. Police, other survivors and doctors were the main sources of information.

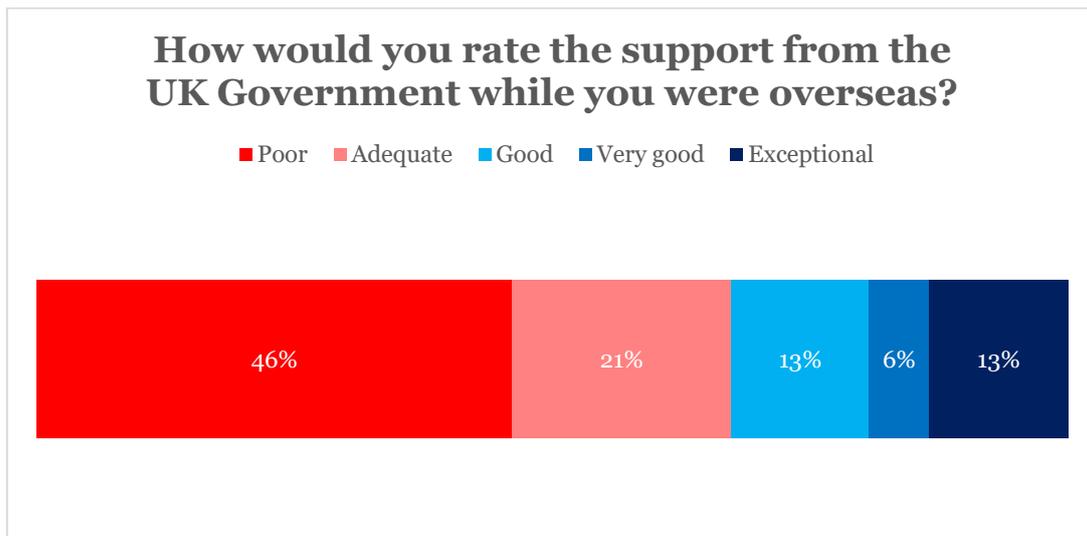


## Foreign attacks

The experience of those caught up in attacks overseas is substantially different from those who survived UK attacks.

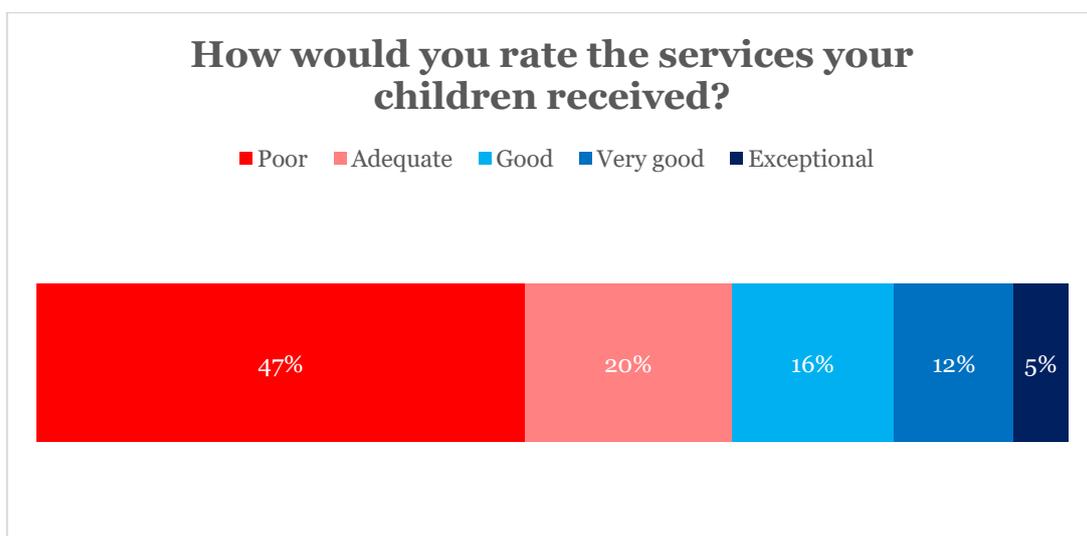
For those involved in foreign attacks 49% said their support was poor or merely adequate, including 67% of people who said that the support they received from agencies overseas was poor or adequate.

Support from the UK government for those caught up in foreign attacks was even less satisfactory than support in general with 46% of respondents saying UK government support was poor - only 19% saying it was very good or exceptional. These are shocking figures and suggests a serious overhaul of consular assistance is required.



## Child support

Child support services affected less people (as most of the respondents didn't have children who were involved), but for those who had children they were scathing about the lack of support. 67% said the support their children received was either poor or adequate and only 5% rated it as exceptional.



## How to combat terror

We also asked respondents to rate what we should do to tackle terrorism. The two responses that were felt to be most important (both of which were chosen by majorities of the sample) were more support for the police and security services (54%) and combatting hate speech online and offline (51%). These priorities reflect the importance of responding both to the immediate threat through policing but also tackling terrorism at its source by tackling the hatred that drives it.

