

# Cosmetic Interventions - Survey of Scottish Population



HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

# **Cosmetic Interventions Survey of Scottish Population**

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# Executive summary

This report presents the key findings from an online survey of Scottish adults. It is based on research about private cosmetic procedures in Scotland and focuses on topics including public awareness and perceptions, procedures the public have undergone, expectations and understanding of procedures, resulting health problems, consideration for future procedures, and seeking advice through resources.

Unless stated otherwise, differences between sub-groups in this summary section and the rest of the report are statistically significant.

The survey was undertaken to gather data which will inform the development of policy by the Scottish Government regarding cosmetic interventions. It provides baseline data on the public perceptions and experiences of the Scottish public related to surgical and non-surgical private cosmetic procedures.

## The sample

The sample consisted of 1,980 Scottish adults aged 18 and over, and has been weighted to be representative of the national population.

## Public awareness and perceptions

Nearly one quarter of Scottish adults report that they have at least a fair amount of confidence in the treatment provided by both the surgical (22%) and non-surgical (23%) cosmetic procedures industries.

Roughly two-in-five Scottish adults believe the cosmetic surgery and cosmetic dentistry industries are 'regulated' (43% and 39% respectively), with the non-surgical cosmetic procedures industry believed to be regulated by a smaller proportion (12%).

Young people aged 18-29 are significantly more likely than older adults aged 50-69 and 70+ to have confidence in the treatment provided by both the surgical and non-surgical cosmetic procedures industries. They are also most likely to believe that the cosmetic surgery and non-surgical procedures industries are regulated.

When considering specific procedures, the Scottish public are most familiar with cosmetic dental treatments (53%) and breast enlargement/reductions (51%).

Two thirds (67%) of Scottish adults do not agree that it is acceptable for the NHS to cover the costs of caring for someone whose private cosmetic procedure has gone wrong. Older adults aged 50+ years are particularly likely to hold this opinion.

## **Private cosmetic procedures among the Scottish public**

Four per cent of the Scottish adult population report that they have had a private cosmetic procedure in their lifetime.

The most commonly reported private cosmetic procedure is a dental treatment, with 2% of Scottish adults having had one. Secondly, 0.6% have had an injectable cosmetic treatment or a laser skin procedure.

Overall, 1% of Scottish adults have had a cosmetic procedure in the past 12 months.

## **Experience of private cosmetic procedures**

Two thirds (66%) of Scottish adults who have had a cosmetic procedure indicate that they feel they had a strong understanding of what the experience would involve in advance of their most recent procedure. Only a very small proportion (1%) indicate that they had little understanding.

More than three quarters (78%) of Scottish adults who have had a cosmetic procedure agree that their most recent procedure achieved what they expected.

More than one quarter (27%) of Scottish adults who have undergone a private cosmetic procedure in their lifetime report that they have had at least one health problem within the first month following. The most common problems experienced are slow healing (11%), bleeding (8%) and infection (7%).

## **Public consideration for future cosmetic procedures**

Sixteen per cent of Scottish adults who have *not* had a cosmetic procedure report that they have thought about doing so, with 7% having considered it very or somewhat seriously.

Women (22%) are significantly more likely than men (9%) to state that they have thought about having a procedure, and young adults aged 18-29 (21%) are significantly more likely than older adults aged 50+ years to have done so (12% for 50-69 years and 5% for 70+ years). Younger adults are also significantly more likely than older adults to report that they have *very* seriously considered having a cosmetic procedure.

Overall, 4% of Scottish adults who have never had a cosmetic procedure report that they are likely to have one in the next three years.

Among Scottish adults who have never had a cosmetic procedure, dental treatments are the most commonly considered procedure, with 8% overall indicating they have thought about having one.

Four per cent of Scottish adults report they are planning to have a cosmetic procedure in the next 12 months. Women (5%) are significantly more likely than men (3%) to say they plan to do so, as are younger adults aged 18-29 (5%) more likely than older adults aged 50-69 (3%) and 70+ (1%).

On par with earlier findings, Scottish adults are most commonly planning to have a cosmetic dental treatment (1.7%) in the next 12 months.

## **Resources and seeking advice**

When Scottish adults are asked which sources they would use if seeking information about cosmetic procedures, they most commonly say they would turn to their GP practice (50%) or search on the internet (49%). A significant proportion also say they would use the NHS Scotland website (40%).

The Scottish public are most likely to report that their first point of contact if something were to go wrong with a cosmetic procedure would be the practitioner who conducted the work (40%). Approximately one-in-five (22%) say they would first contact their GP.

# **Background and method**

## **Policy context and purpose of the survey**

The importance of regulation in the cosmetics industry sector has recently been identified by Sir Bruce Keogh in his 2013 publication of “Review of the Regulation of Cosmetic Interventions” for the UK Department of Health. Within these findings, three key areas requiring change were highlighted:

- High quality care with safe products, skilled practitioners and responsible providers;
- Informed and empowered public to ensure people get accurate advice and that the vulnerable are protected
- Accessible redress and resolution in case things go wrong.

In response to the “Keogh Report”, the Scottish Government have concluded in their “2020 Vision for Health and Social Care” that a government response is needed to drive improvements in the quality of care provided by cosmetic interventions practitioners in Scotland.

In order to collect the evidence required to support the development of policy regarding cosmetic interventions, the Scottish Government Health Analytical Service Division on behalf of the Planning and Quality Team in the Health and

Social Care Directorate General commissioned an online survey to generate baseline data on experiences of cosmetic interventions among the Scottish population.

The main themes of the survey were to be:

- The uptake and current levels of use of a range of cosmetic interventions among the Scottish adult population, including surgical and non-surgical procedures provided outside of the NHS;
- The demographic characteristics of those who choose to undergo cosmetic interventions;
- The consumer experience and any resulting health problems;
- The Scottish public's considerations and intentions for any future cosmetic interventions;
- Whether expectations of procedures have been met.

The results of the survey are intended to provide a basis for informing the development of policy regarding cosmetic interventions. The Scottish Government will share the findings with stakeholders who have a role in assessing these policies.

## Method

Between the 20<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> January 2015, 1,980 Scottish adults aged 18 and over were surveyed online through the YouGov online research panel. The figures in this report have been weighted to be representative by gender, age, region and ethnicity.

## Analysis

The report makes reference to the differences between the sub-groups identified below. Of particular interest were: gender; age; education; ethnicity and region within Scotland.

Where the differences between sub-groups are highlighted in the text or with a red circle in the charts they are statistically significant differences that have been tested at the 95% confidence level.

The questions used in the survey had previously undergone qualitative testing for respondent comprehension by stakeholders of the Scottish Government.

## Sample breakdown

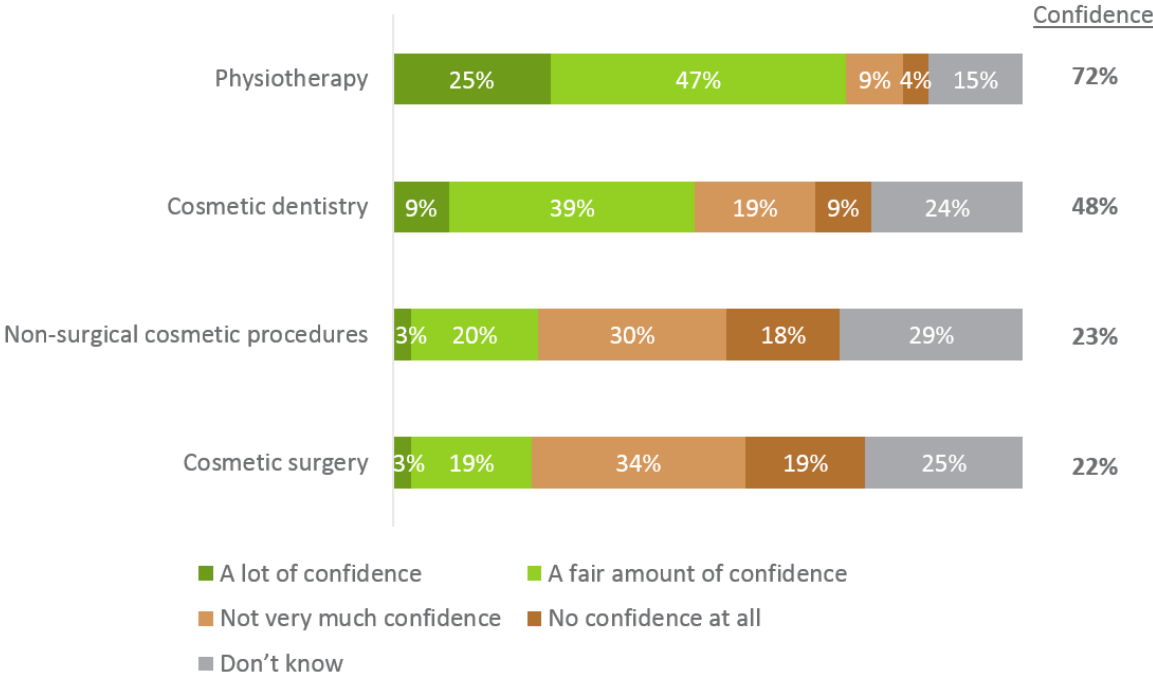
**Table 1: Sample breakdown by demographics**

	Demographics	Unweighted (n)	Weighted (n)
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>941</b>	<b>970</b>
	<b>Women</b>	<b>1039</b>	<b>1010</b>
<b>Age</b>	<b>18-29</b>	<b>339</b>	<b>362</b>
	<b>30-49</b>	<b>731</b>	<b>691</b>
	<b>50-69</b>	<b>774</b>	<b>755</b>
	<b>70+</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>172</b>

	Demographics	Unweighted (n)	Weighted (n)
	<b>White</b>	<b>1853</b>	<b>1901</b>
<b>Ethnicity</b>			
	<b>Minority ethnic</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>79</b>
	<b>No formal qualifications</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>87</b>
	<b>Scottish Ordinary/Lower Certificate or less</b>	<b>274</b>	<b>281</b>
	<b>GCE A level/Higher Certificate or Scottish Higher Certificate</b>	<b>353</b>	<b>363</b>
	<b>Professional qualification/university diploma</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>177</b>
<b>Education</b>			
	<b>University or CNAA first degree (eg BA, B.Sc, B.Ed)</b>	<b>544</b>	<b>528</b>
	<b>University or CNAA higher degree (eg M.Sc, Ph.D)</b>	<b>263</b>	<b>250</b>
	<b>Other technical, professional or higher qualification</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>244</b>
	<b>North East Scotland</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>277</b>
<b>Region</b>			
	<b>Highlands &amp; Islands</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>178</b>



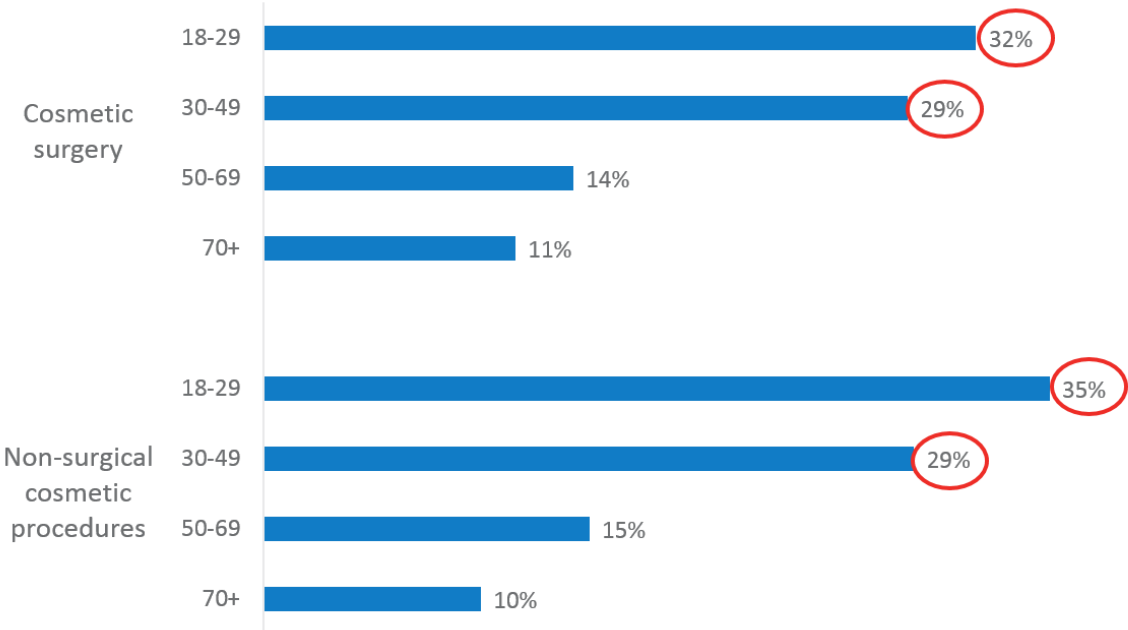
Chart 1: Confidence in treatment provided by private healthcare industries



Question: How much confidence, if any, do you have in the treatment provided by each of the following private sector healthcare industries or practices?  
 Base: all nat rep (1,980)

As illustrated in chart 2, young people aged 18-29 are significantly more likely than older adults aged 50-69 and 70+ to have confidence in the treatment provided by both the surgical and non-surgical cosmetic procedures industries.

Chart 2: Confidence in treatment provided by the surgical and non-surgical cosmetic procedures industries – overall confidence by age



Question: How much confidence, if any, do you have in the treatment provided by each of the following private sector healthcare industries or practices?  
 Base: all nat rep (1,980)

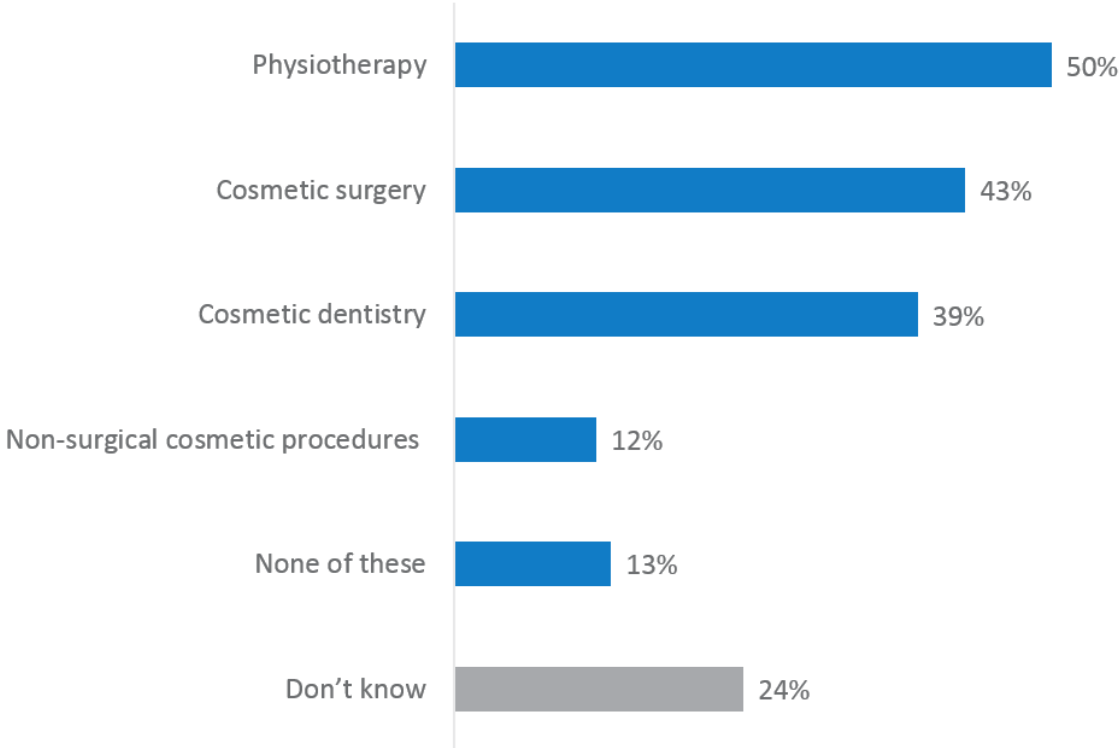
Scottish adults who have had a cosmetic procedure are significantly more likely than those who have not to have confidence in the treatment provided by the cosmetic procedures industries (53% compared with 22% for cosmetic surgery; 47% compared with 23% for non-surgical cosmetic procedures).

Further, adults who have not had a procedure but state they have considered doing so are significantly more likely than those who have not considered having a procedure to have confidence in surgical and non-surgical cosmetic treatments (40% compared with 18% for cosmetic surgery; 35% compared with 20% for non-surgical cosmetic procedures).

**Regulation in private healthcare industries**

When provided with a list of private healthcare industries, the Scottish public are most likely to think that physiotherapy is regulated, with half (50%) stating this belief. Cosmetic surgery and cosmetic dentistry are also believed to be regulated by relatively significant proportions (43% and 39% respectively), but the non-surgical cosmetic procedures industry by a much smaller proportion (12%).

Chart 3: Private healthcare industries believed to be regulated

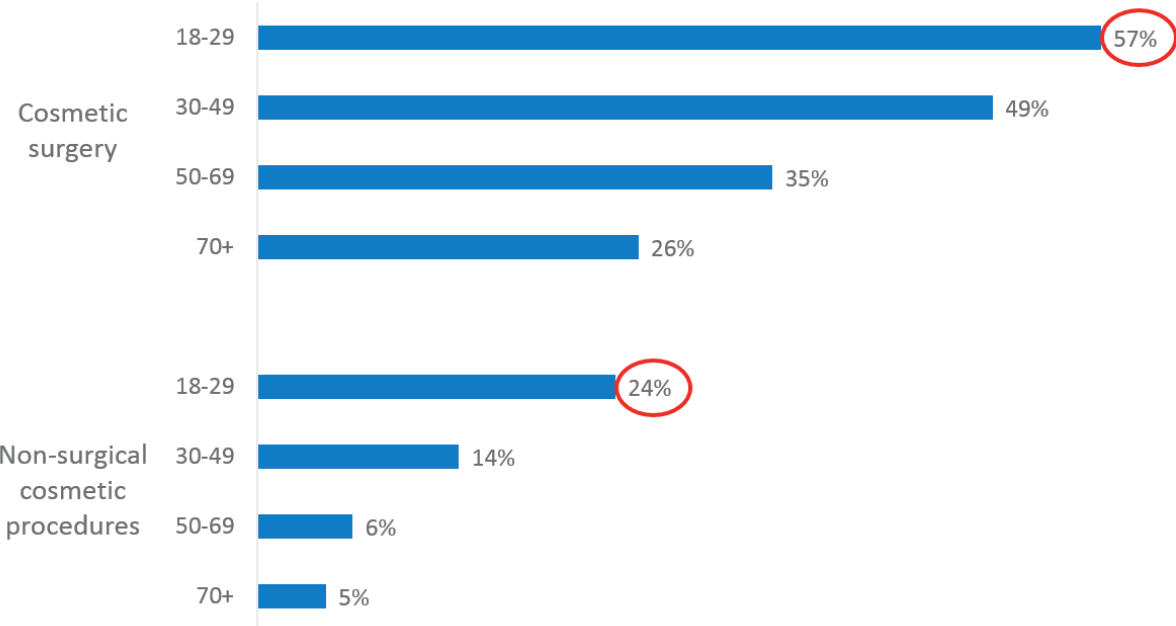


Question: Which of the following private sector healthcare industries or practices, if any, do you think are regulated? Please tick all that apply. By regulation, we are referring to legal rules that govern their behaviour, actions and conduct, and where action may be taken if these rules aren't met?  
Base: all nat rep (1,980)

Consistent with young adults' propensity to have confidence in each industry, they are most likely to believe that the cosmetic surgery and non-surgical procedures industries are regulated.

As shown in chart 4, more than half (57%) of young adults think that cosmetic surgery is regulated, and one quarter (24%) that the non-surgical procedures industry is regulated.

Chart 4: Proportion who believe cosmetic surgery and non-surgical cosmetic procedures are regulated – by age



Question: How much confidence, if any, do you have in the treatment provided by each of the following private sector healthcare industries or practices?  
 Base: all nat rep (1,980)

Scottish adults who have no formal educational qualifications are significantly more likely than those with higher levels of education to believe that none of the industries listed are regulated (19% compared with 13% overall).

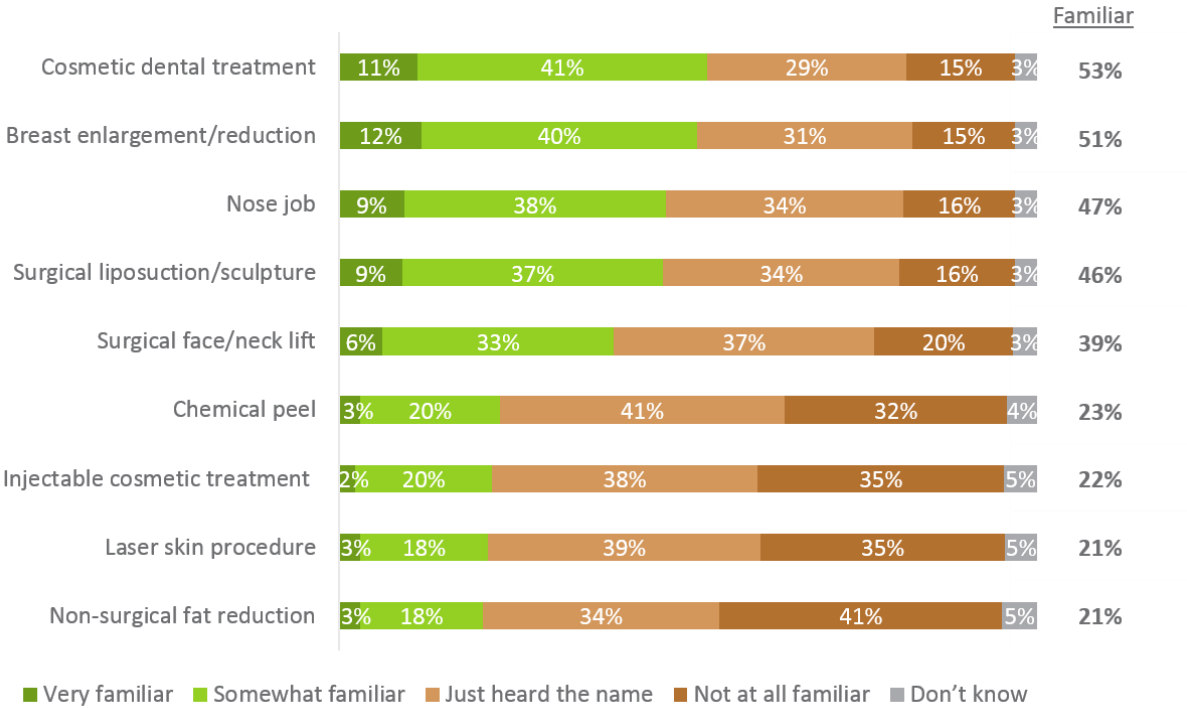
**Familiarity with cosmetic procedures**

When considering specific procedures, more than half of the Scottish public indicate that they are at least somewhat familiar with cosmetic dental treatments (53%) and breast enlargement/reductions (51%).

Significant proportions are also familiar with nose jobs (47%), surgical liposuction/sculpture (46%), and surgical face/neck lifts (39%).

It is relatively less common for Scottish adults to be aware of chemical peels (23%), injectable cosmetic treatments (22%), laser skin procedures (21%) and non-surgical fat reductions (21%).

Chart 5: Levels of familiarity with cosmetic procedures

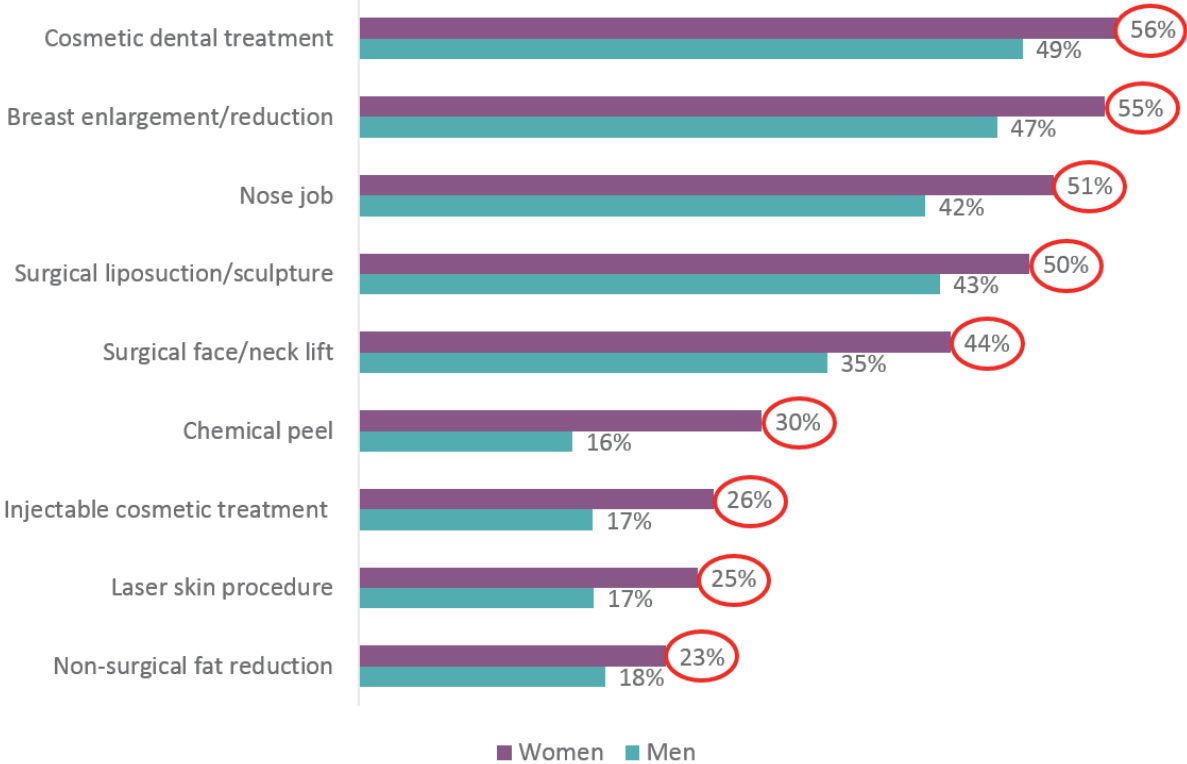


Question: How familiar are you, if at all, with each of the following cosmetic procedures?  
 Base: all nat rep (1,980)

Younger adults are more likely than older adults to report that they are familiar with some cosmetic procedures, but their increased likelihood to have confidence in the industries and believe they are regulated does not necessarily translate into making them more familiar with specific procedures.

As shown in chart 6, women are significantly more likely than men to be familiar with all of the cosmetic procedures listed. This is the case among women with all levels of education.

Chart 6: Levels of familiarity with cosmetic procedures – overall familiarity by gender

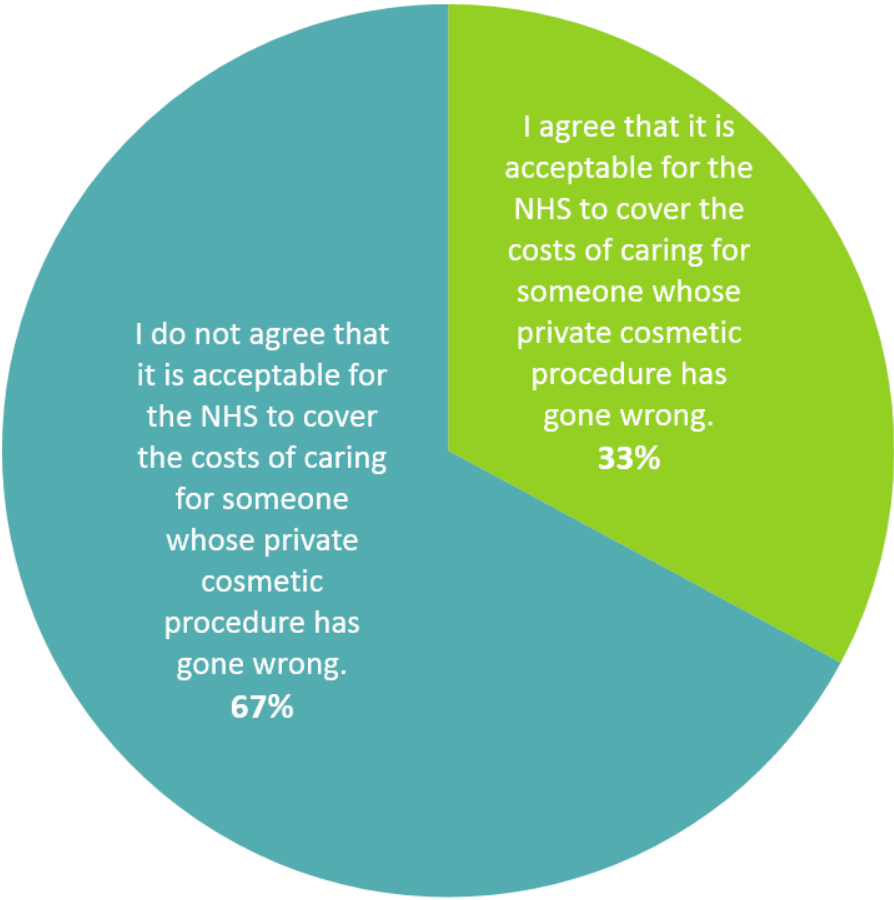


Question: How familiar are you, if at all, with each of the following cosmetic procedures?  
 Base: all nat rep (1,980)

**Opinions regarding cosmetic procedures and NHS support**

When the Scottish public are asked whether or not they agree that it is acceptable for the NHS to cover the costs of caring for someone whose private cosmetic procedure has gone wrong, one third (33%) feel that it is while two thirds (67%) that it is not.

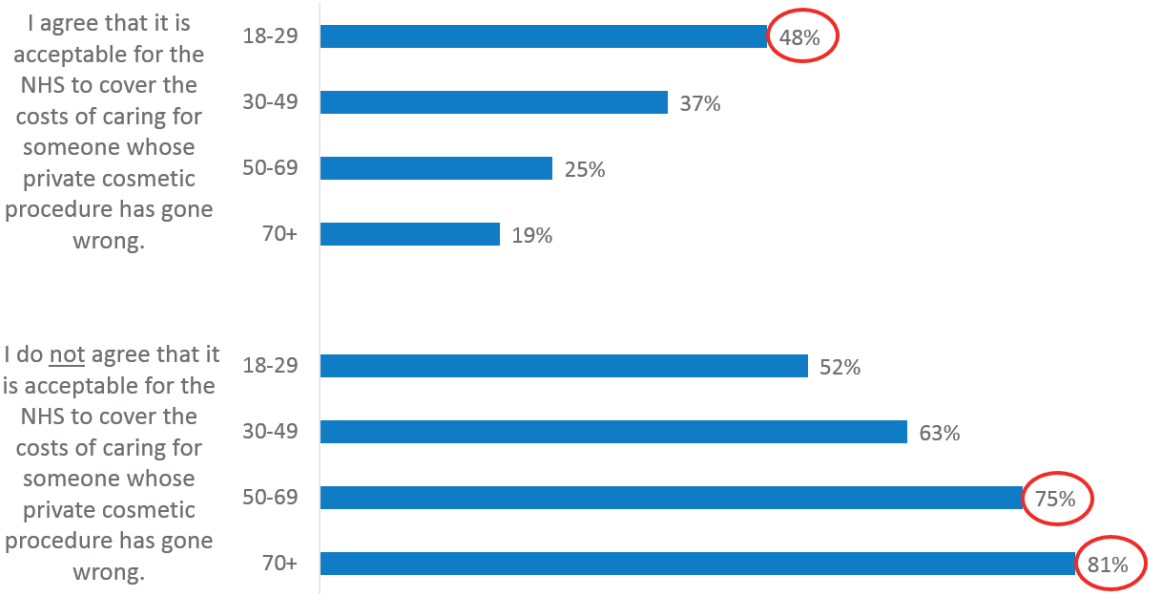
Chart 7: Opinion regarding whether or not it is acceptable for the NHS to cover care related to a private cosmetic procedure



Question: As you may already be aware, there are occasions where something can go wrong as a result of a private cosmetic procedure. In these instances, is it acceptable for the NHS to cover the costs of caring for the person in need and/or correct the issue. Which of the following statements best describes your opinion?  
Base: all nat rep (1,980)

This opinion varies significantly by age: young adults aged 18-29 are significantly more likely than older adults to agree that it is acceptable for the NHS to cover these costs, with nearly half (48%) stating that they agree with the principle. Comparatively, only one quarter (25%) of those aged 50-69 feel it is acceptable for the NHS to do so.

**Chart 8: Opinion regarding whether or not it is acceptable for the NHS to cover care related to a private cosmetic procedure – by age**



Question: As you may already be aware, there are occasions where something can go wrong as a result of a private cosmetic procedure. In these instances, is it acceptable for the NHS to cover the costs of caring for the person in need and/or correct the issue. Which of the following statements best describes your opinion?  
 Base: all nat rep (1,980)

Scottish men and women do not express any differences in opinion from one another when considering the acceptability of the NHS covering healthcare costs related to private cosmetic procedures.

However, when comparing by education, women with a GCE A level/Higher Certificate/Scottish Higher Certificate (34%) are more likely to agree that it is acceptable than those with a Scottish Ordinary/Lower Certificate or less (24%). The same pattern is seen among men (37% compared with 22%).

**Private cosmetic procedures among the Scottish public**

**Incidence of private cosmetic procedures**

Four per cent of the Scottish adult population report that they have had a private cosmetic procedure<sup>1</sup> in their lifetime.

Among those who have had a procedure, by a significant margin the most commonly reported private cosmetic procedures are dental treatments, with more than half (54%) saying they have had one of these.

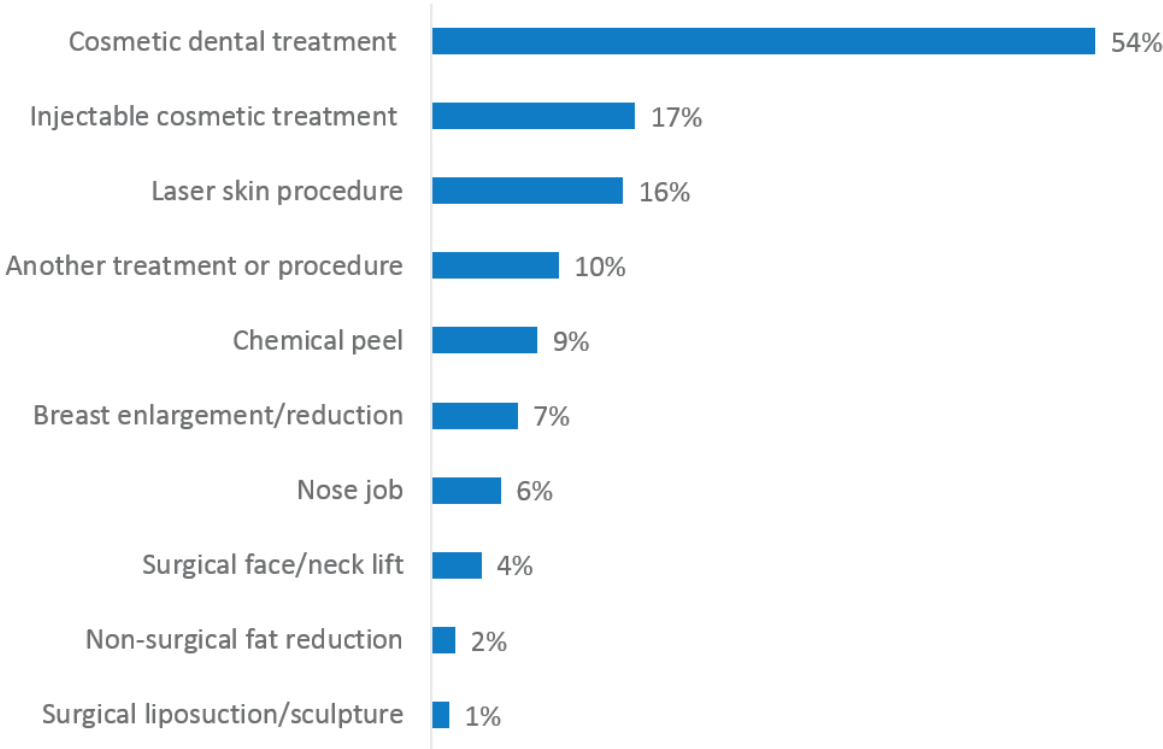
<sup>1</sup> In the survey, a cosmetic procedure was defined for respondents as: "... both cosmetic surgery (e.g. breast implants) and non-surgical cosmetic procedures (e.g. botox® and dermal fillers to fill out wrinkles and plump lips). Cosmetic procedures are usually carried out privately (i.e. paid for by yourself or someone else outside of the NHS) and the following questions will relate only to these procedures paid for privately."

The next most popular procedures are an injectable cosmetic treatment (17% of Scottish adults who have had a private procedure) and a laser skin procedure (16%).

Less common procedures are a chemical peel (9% of adults who have had a cosmetic procedure), a breast enlargement/reduction (7%), nose job (6%), surgical face/neck lift (4%), non-surgical fat reduction (2%) and surgical liposuction/sculpture (1%).

Ten per cent of those who have had a procedure indicate they have had another treatment or procedure not listed, and open-ended mentions for this category include treatments such as laser eye surgery and mole removal.

Chart 9: Private cosmetic procedures Scottish adults have had – among only those who have had a procedure



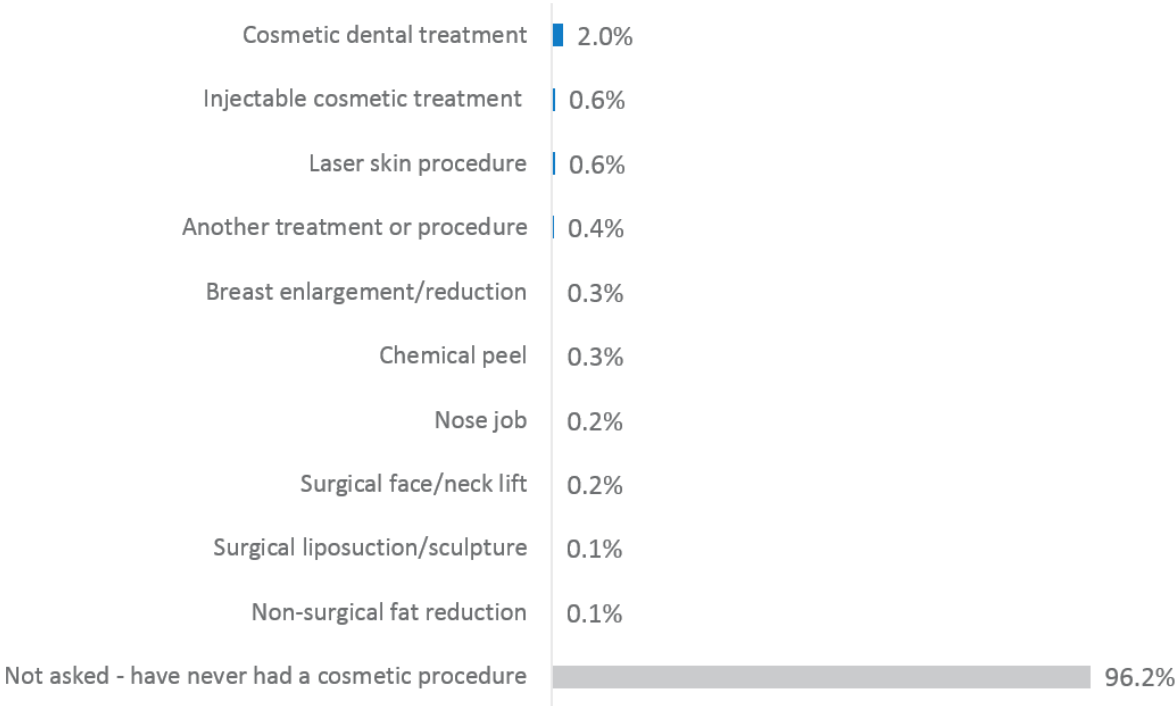
Question: Which of the following cosmetic procedures, if any, have you ever had and paid for privately? Please tick all that apply.

Base: all who have had a private cosmetic procedure (79)

Chart 10 shows the incidence of having undergone procedures among the full national population. While 4% of Scottish adults have undergone a cosmetic procedure in their lifetime, 2% have had a cosmetic dental treatment. Moving down the list, 0.6% of Scottish adults have had an injectable treatment, 0.6% a laser skin procedure, 0.3% a breast enlargement/reduction, 0.3% a chemical peel, 0.2% a nose job, 0.2% a surgical face/neck lift, and 0.1% surgical

liposuction/sculpture or a non-surgical fat reduction. The remaining 96% of the Scottish population have never had a cosmetic procedure.

Chart 10: Private cosmetic procedures Scottish adults have had – among the national population



Base: all nat rep (1,980)

Among Scottish adults who have had a private cosmetic procedure in their lifetime, roughly one third (34%) indicate they have had at least one in the past twelve months. Consistent with findings on procedures that have ever been undertaken, the most commonly reported procedure from the past twelve months is a cosmetic dental treatment (15%).

Otherwise, in the past twelve months 11% have had a laser skin procedure, 3% an injectable cosmetic treatment, 2% a chemical peel and 1% a face/neck lift. Five per cent also report that they have had another procedure not listed.

However, the remaining two-in-three (66%) Scottish adults who have had a private cosmetic procedure report that they have not had any in the past twelve months.

When considering the overall population of Scottish adults, 1% overall have had a cosmetic procedure in the past 12 months.

**Experience of private cosmetic procedures**

**Expectations and understanding**

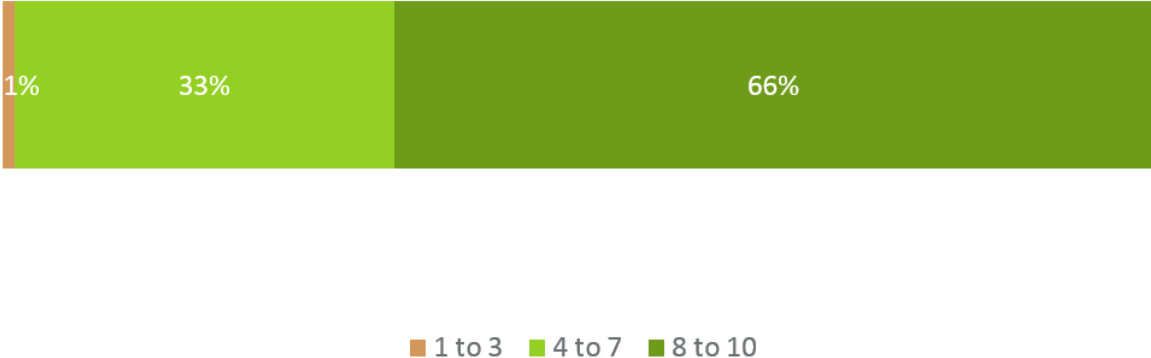
Two thirds (66%) of Scottish adults who have had a cosmetic procedure indicate that they feel they had a strong understanding of what the experience would involve in advance of their most recent procedure.

On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 represents no understanding at all and 10 represents a very strong understanding, roughly one quarter (26%) report that they would rate their understanding of the experience in advance of the procedure as '10', and nearly another quarter (20%) as '9'. Two-thirds rated their understanding at 8 or higher.

A very small proportion of people indicate that they had little understanding of what the experience of the procedure would involve, with only 1% rating it 3 or lower.

The median rating on the scale of level of understanding is '8', therefore implying that overall Scottish adults who have had a private cosmetic procedure feel they had a strong understanding of what the experience would involve.

Chart 11: Rating of the level of understanding Scottish adults had about what the experience of the private cosmetic procedure would involve (scale of 1-10)



Question: In advance of your most recent procedure, how would you describe the level of understanding you had about what the experience of the procedure would involve? Please provide your response on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 represents no understanding at all and 10 represents a very strong understanding.  
Base: all who have had a private cosmetic procedure (79)

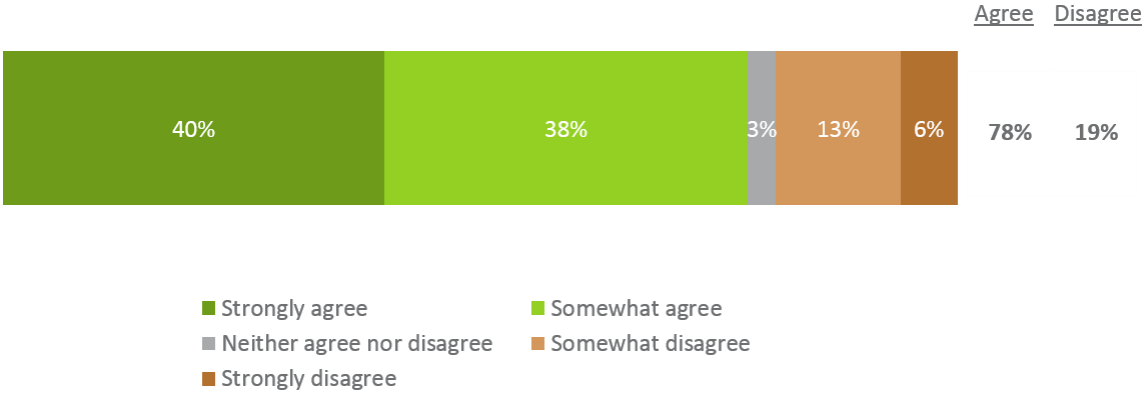
### Satisfaction with results of procedure

Building on the levels of apparent satisfaction reported regarding understanding of private cosmetic procedures, results indicate that Scottish adults who have undergone a private cosmetic procedure are also satisfied with the outcome overall. More than three quarters (78%) agree that their most recent procedure

achieved what they expected, with two-in-five (40%) strongly agreeing and 38% somewhat agreeing.

Meanwhile, 19% disagree that their most recent procedure achieved what they expected and the remaining 3% indicate that they neither agree nor disagree.

Chart 12: Agreement that most recent procedure achieved what was expected



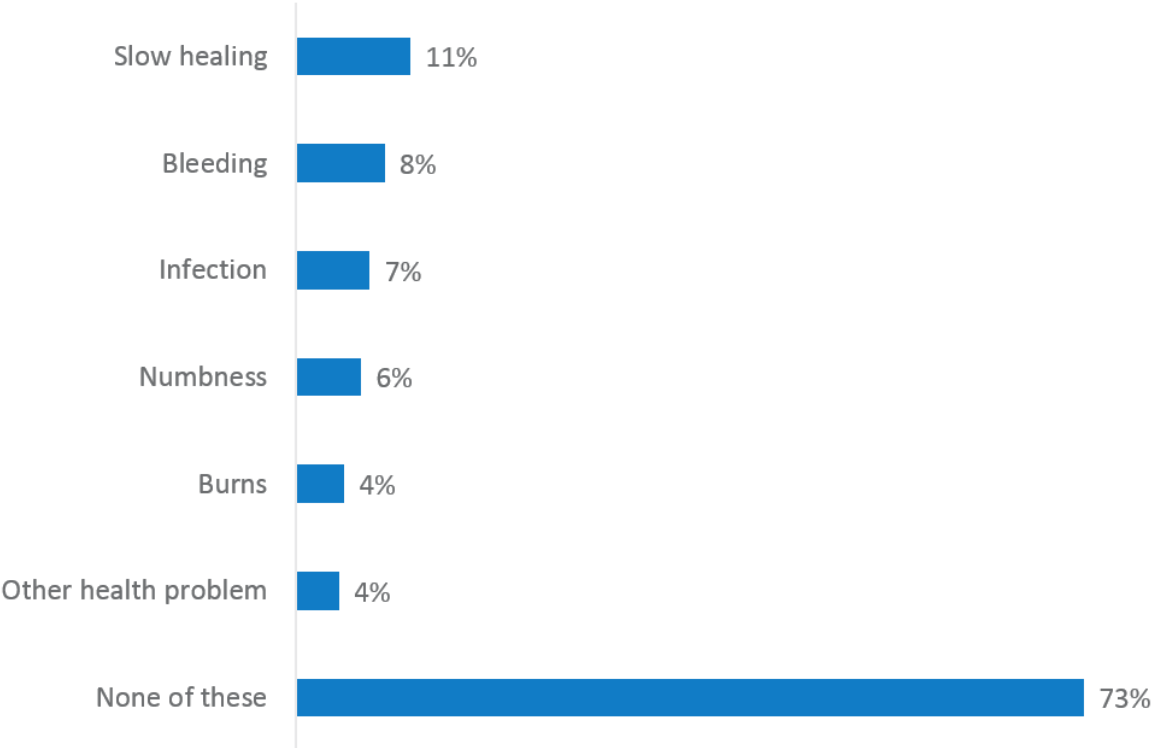
Question: How strongly do you agree or disagree that your most recent procedure achieved what you expected?  
 Base: all who have had a private cosmetic procedure (79)

**Health problems resulting from private cosmetic procedures**

More than one quarter (27%) of Scottish adults who have undergone a private cosmetic procedure report that they have had at least one health problem as a result within the first month following. The most common health problem they report having experienced is slow healing (11%). Less than one in ten also say that within the first month they experienced bleeding (8%), infection (7%), numbness (6%), burns (4%) or another problem (4%).

Nearly three quarters (73%) of Scottish adults who have undergone a cosmetic procedure, however, report that they have never experienced any health problems within the first month following.

Chart 13: Health problems experienced within the first month after a cosmetic procedure



Question: As a result of any of your previous cosmetic procedures, did you ever have any of the following health problems within the first month after the procedure? Please tick all that apply.  
 Base: all who have had a private cosmetic procedure (79)

## Public consideration for future cosmetic procedures

### Consideration and likelihood

Sixteen per cent of Scottish adults who have *not* had a cosmetic procedure report that they have thought about doing so to some extent. Seven per cent overall report that they have seriously considered doing so while 8% say they have considered it less seriously. The remainder (84%) have never thought about having a cosmetic procedure.

Women (22%) are significantly more likely than men (9%) to state this, while young adults aged 18-29 (21%) are significantly more likely than older adults aged 50+ years to do so (12% for 50-69 years and 5% for 70+ years).

Among these adults who have ever thought about having a cosmetic procedure, almost half (46%) say they have considered it seriously, with 36% having considered it somewhat seriously and 10% very seriously.

Young adults are significantly more likely than older adults to report having considered a cosmetic procedure *very* seriously (4% for 18-29 years and 1% for 50-69 years).

Chart 14: Levels of seriousness in considering having a cosmetic procedure

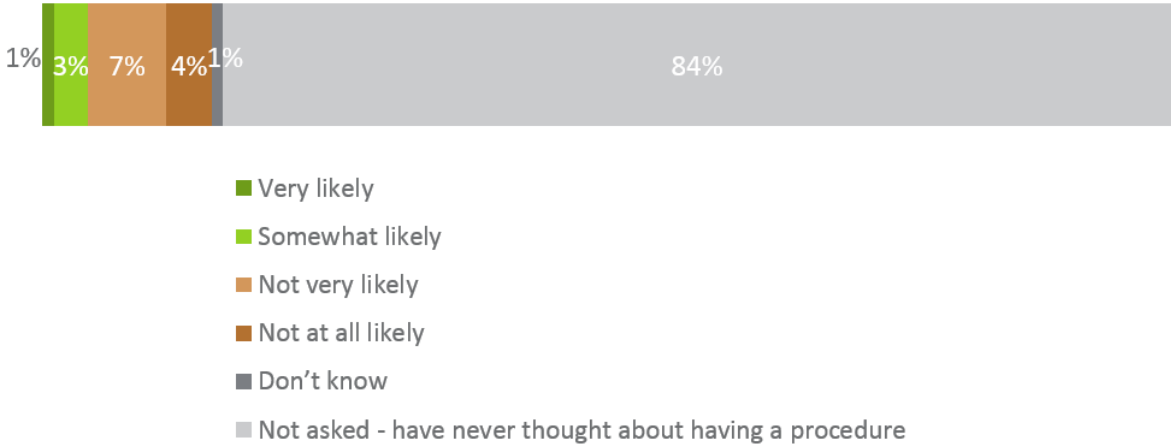


Question: How seriously, if at all, did you consider having a cosmetic procedure?  
Base: all nat rep who have not had a cosmetic procedure (1,901)

Among Scottish adults who have thought about having a cosmetic procedure but have not yet done so, roughly one quarter (23%) say they are very or somewhat likely to have one in the next three years. Otherwise, nearly three quarters (70%) are unlikely to have a cosmetic procedure in this time frame and 6% do not know.

As shown in chart 15, among the total population of Scottish adults who have not undergone a cosmetic procedure, 4% report that they are likely to have one in the next three years and 11% that they are not likely to do so. The remainder (84%) have never thought about having a cosmetic procedure.

Chart 15: Likelihood of having a cosmetic procedure in the next three years



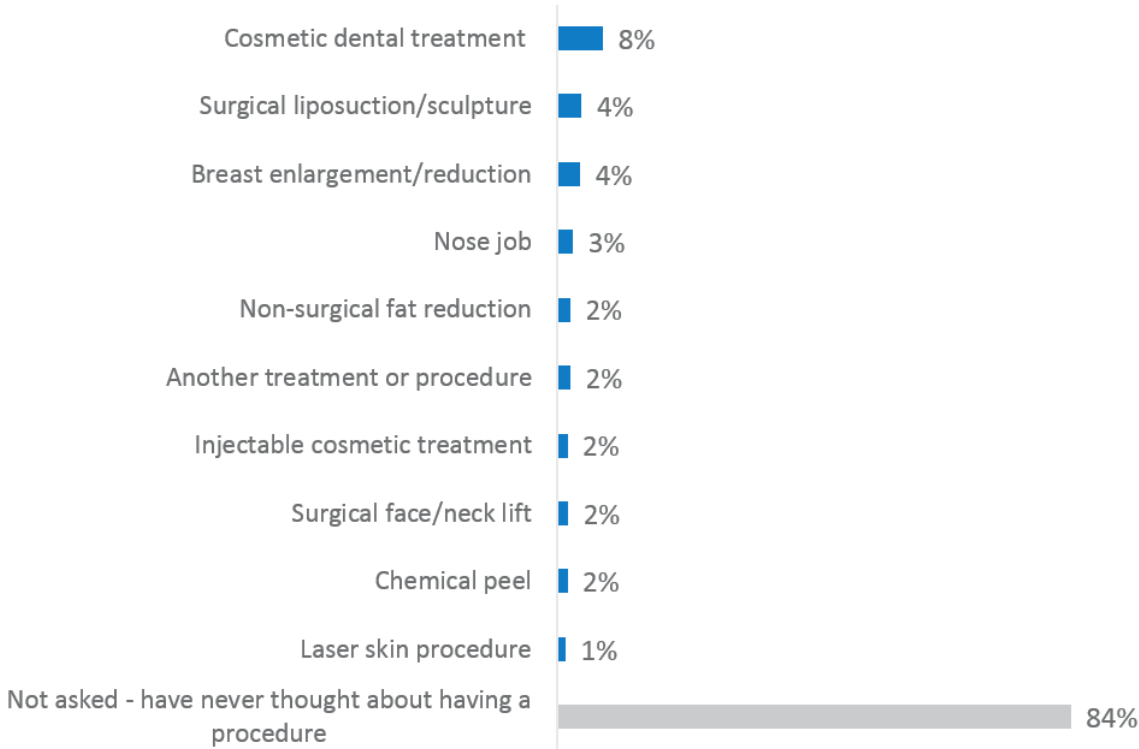
Question: And how likely would you say you are, if at all, to have a cosmetic procedure in the next three years?  
 Base: all nat rep who have not had a cosmetic procedure (1,901)

**Cosmetic procedures the Scottish public have considered**

Among Scottish adults who have thought about having a cosmetic procedure but have not yet done so, the most commonly considered procedure is a cosmetic dental treatment, with almost half (48%) of this group have considered having one. This translates into 8% among the full population of Scottish adults who have never had a cosmetic procedure. This is consistent with reports of the procedures that Scottish adults have already undergone in their lifetime; by a significant margin cosmetic dental treatments are the most common.

Four per cent of adults who have not had a cosmetic procedure report that they have considered having surgical liposuction/sculpture or a breast enlargement/reduction. Slightly less commonly, they report having considered a nose job (3%), non-surgical fat reduction (2%), injectable treatment (2%), surgical face/neck lift (2%), chemical peel (2%) or laser skin procedure (1%).

Chart 16: Cosmetic procedures Scottish adults have considered



Question: Which of the following cosmetic procedures, if any, have you ever thought about having? Please tick all that apply.

Base: all nat rep who have not had a cosmetic procedure (1,901)

Women are significantly more likely than men to report that they have considered having a wide variety of procedures, including an injectable treatment (3.1% compared with 0.2%), a surgical face/neck lift (3.0% compared with 0.6%) and a breast enlargement/reduction (7.3% compared with 0.2%).

Further, young adults aged 18-29 are significantly more likely than older adults aged 50-69 to say they've considered having a breast enlargement/reduction (8.1% compared with 1.6%), while older adults are more likely to have considered a face/neck lift (2.9% compared with 0.3%).

**Intentions for cosmetic procedures in the next 12 months**

Amongst the full nationally representative sample of Scottish adults, 4% report that they are planning to have a cosmetic procedure in the next 12 months.

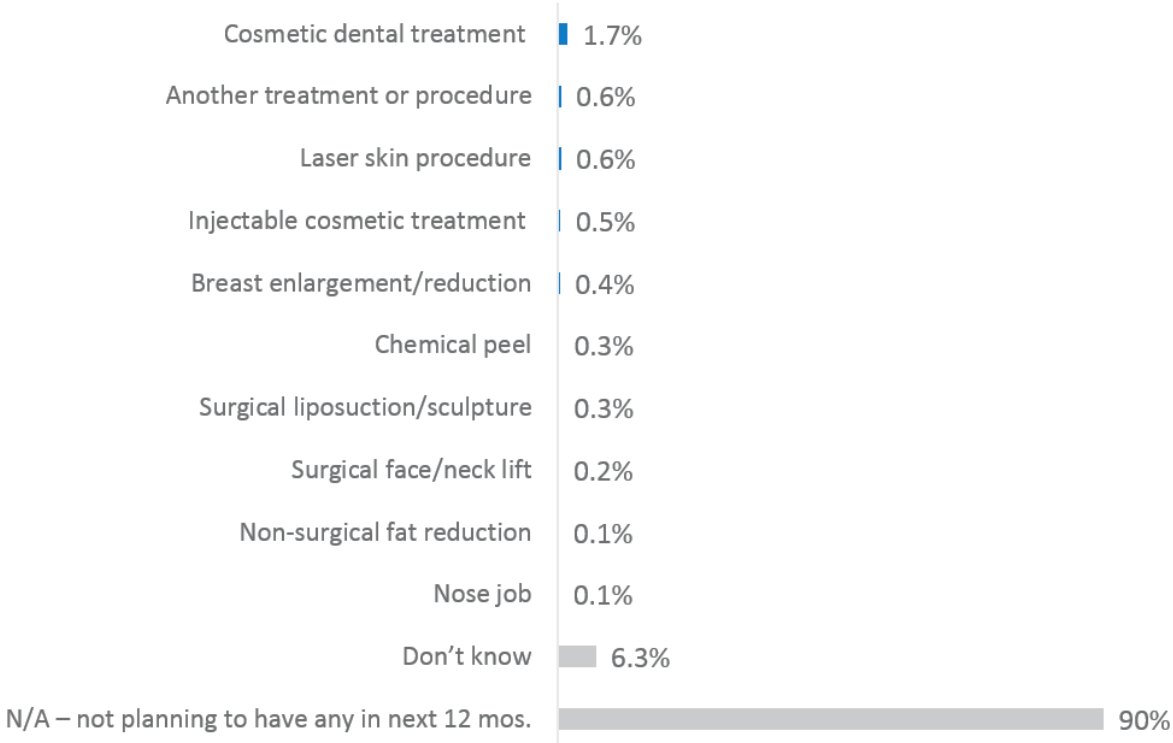
Women (5%) are significantly more likely than men (3%) to say they plan to have a procedure in the next 12 months, as are younger adults aged 18-29 (5%) more likely than older adults aged 50-69 (3%).

When the 4% are broken out by the specific procedures they are planning to have in the next 12 months, the proportions become very small. Most commonly,

Scottish adults are planning to have a cosmetic dental treatment (1.7%). Others are planning to have a laser skin procedure (0.6%), an injectable treatment (0.5%), a breast enlargement/reduction (0.4%), or another treatment not listed (0.6%). Very small proportions are planning to have a chemical peel (0.3%), surgical liposuction/sculpture (0.3%), a surgical face/neck lift (0.2%), a nose job (0.1%), or a non-surgical fat reduction (0.1%).

Again, these findings are on par with the procedures reported to have been undertaken by those Scottish adults who have already had a cosmetic procedure in their lifetime; dental treatments are the most common cosmetic procedure, followed by injectable treatments and laser skin procedures.

Chart 17: Cosmetic procedures Scottish adults are planning to have in the next 12 months



Question: Which of the following procedures, if any, are you planning to have in the next 12 months? Please tick all that apply.  
 Base: all nat rep (1,980)

Women are significantly more likely than men to be planning to have a dental treatment (2.3% compared with 1.0%) and a breast enlargement/reduction (0.8% compared with 0.0%).

Significant differences do not present themselves between younger and older adults in terms of specific procedures being considered in the next 12 months.

## Resources and seeking advice

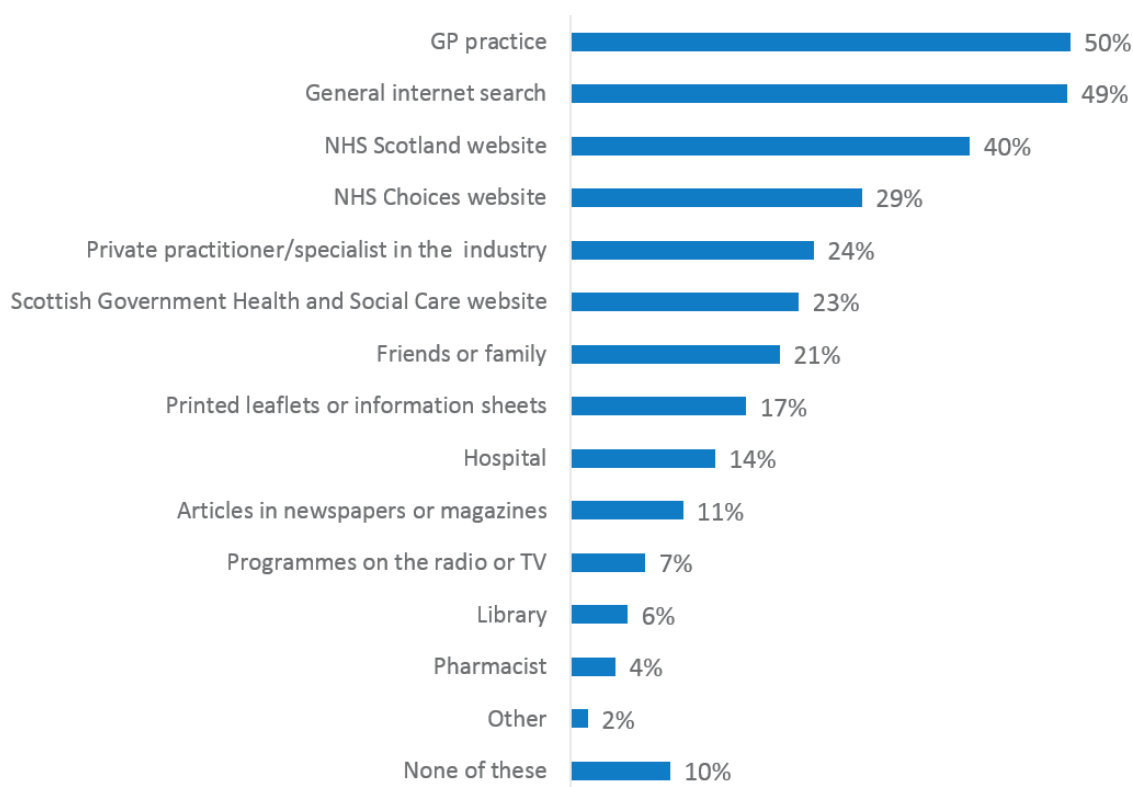
### Sources to use for information about cosmetic procedures

When Scottish adults are asked on an open-ended basis which sources they would use if seeking information about cosmetic procedures, they most commonly suggest that they would speak to their GP or do an internet search. Some also mention specific websites, such as the NHS or Bupa websites.

When provided with a list of sources a consistent picture is seen, with roughly half saying they would turn to their GP practice (50%) or search on the internet (49%). A significant proportion also say they would use the NHS Scotland website (40%).

Closer to one quarter report that they would use the NHS Choices (29%) or Scottish Government Health and Social Care (23%) websites, contact a private practitioner/specialist in the cosmetic procedures industry (24%), or speak to friends and family (21%).

Chart 18: Information sources the Scottish public would use



Question: Which of the following sources, if any, would you use if seeking information about surgical or non-surgical cosmetic procedures? Please tick all that apply.

Base: all nat rep (1,980)

Women are significantly more likely than men to say they would use many of the sources listed. Among others, more women report that they would do a general internet search (52% compared with 46%), as well as use the NHS Scotland

website (43% compared with 37%) and the NHS Choices website (31% compared with 26%). Further, they are more likely to seek information through a private practitioner or specialist in the industry (29% compared with 19%). Men, conversely, are significantly more likely to say they would not use any of these sources (13% compared with 8%).

Women with a higher education level are significantly more likely to report that they would take a variety of actions, including an internet search (56% of those with a GCE A level/Higher Certificate/Scottish Higher Certificate compared with 37% of those with a Scottish Ordinary/Lower Certificate or less), using the NHS Scotland (45% compared with 33%) or NHS Choices (33% compared with 25%) websites, and speaking to a private practitioner/specialist (31% compared with 21%).

Young adults aged 18-29 are also significantly more likely than older adults aged 50-69 to use information sources if seeking information about cosmetic procedures, including the NHS Scotland (46% compared with 38%) or NHS Choices (38% compared with 26%) websites, and a private practitioner/specialist (35% compared with 18%). Older adults are more likely to say they would not make use of any of these sources (12% compared with 6%).

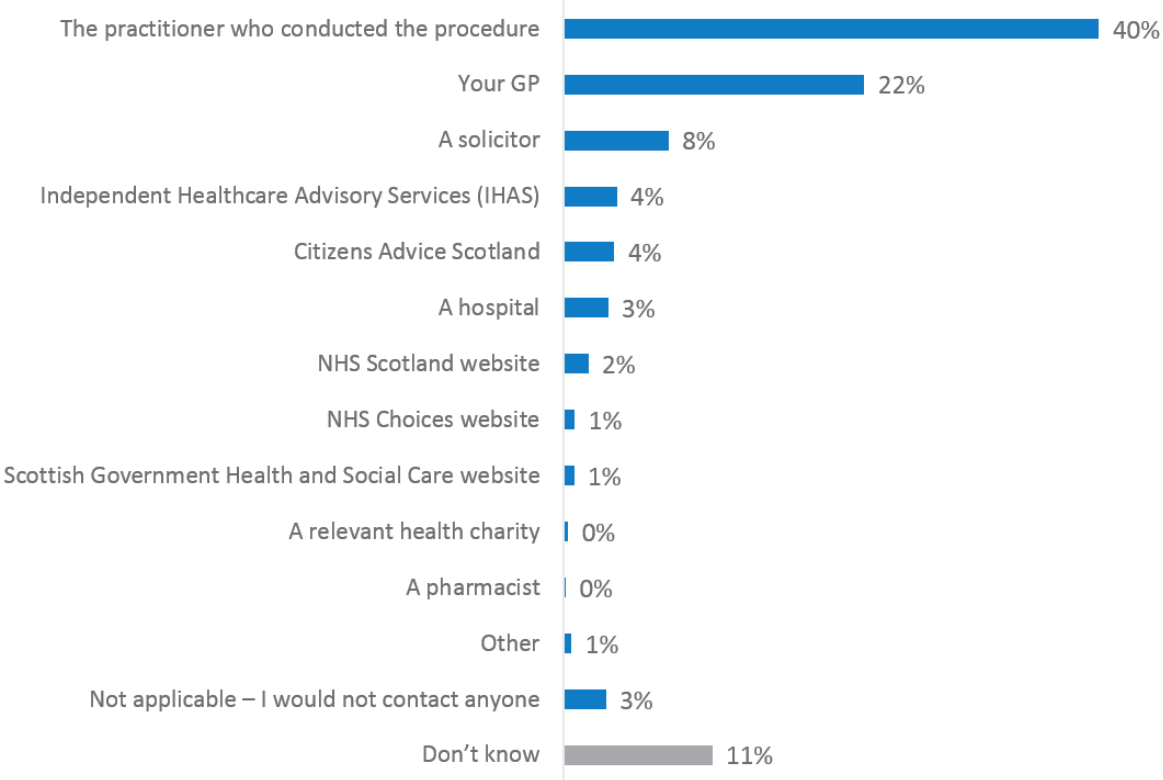
### **Points of contact for raising a concern or complaint**

Most commonly, Scottish adults report that their first point of contact if something were to go wrong with a cosmetic procedure would be the practitioner who conducted the work, with two-in-five (40%) indicating this.

Approximately one-in-five (22%) say their first point of contact would be their GP.

Less frequently used routes would be a solicitor (8%), the Independent Healthcare Advisory Services (4%), Citizens Advice Scotland (4%), a hospital (3%), or the NHS Scotland (2%), NHS Choices (1%) or Scottish Government Health and Social Care (1%) websites.

**Chart 19: First point of contact the Scottish public would use for assistance or making a complaint if something went wrong with a cosmetic procedure**



Question: Please imagine that you have recently had a cosmetic procedure and something went wrong. Who, if anyone, would you be most likely to contact first for information, assistance or to make a complaint? Please select just one option.  
 Base: all nat rep (1,980)

Women are significantly more likely than men to say they would contact the practitioner first (44% compared with 35%).

Conversely, young adults aged 18-29 are significantly more likely than older adults to report that they would turn to a hospital first (7% compared with 3% for 30-49 years and 2% for 50-69/70+ years). This is also the case among adults belonging to minority ethnic groups, with 7% stating this compared with 3% of white adults.

# CONCLUSIONS

This survey of the Scottish public reveals that a minority of adults believe that the surgical and non-surgical cosmetic procedures industries are regulated. While nearly half believe that cosmetic surgery is a regulated practice, a significantly smaller proportion believe this to be the case with non-surgical cosmetic procedures.

Public confidence in the treatment provided by the surgical and non-surgical cosmetic procedures industries is not widespread at slightly less than one quarter of the adult population.

Scottish adults would be most likely to turn to their GP practice or search on the internet if they were seeking information about cosmetic procedures. A relatively significant proportion, however, also say they would use the NHS Scotland website.

A majority of the Scottish public disagree that it is acceptable for the NHS to cover the costs of caring for someone whose private cosmetic procedure has gone wrong. On this topic, Scottish adults are most likely to believe that if something were to go wrong with a cosmetic procedure their first point of contact would be the practitioner who conducted the work, followed by a smaller proportion who say they would first contact their GP.

Four per cent of the Scottish adult population have had a private cosmetic procedure in their lifetime, and they most frequently report having had a dental treatment.

Cosmetic dental treatments are emphasised throughout the findings, as in addition to being the most commonly undertaken procedure, they are the one most widely familiar to the general public and the one most commonly considered for the future.

Four per cent of the Scottish public say they are planning to have a cosmetic procedure in the next 12 months, and 16% of those who have *never* had a procedure report that they have thought about doing so. In both cases, this is particularly likely to be reported by women and younger adults.

# Annex A: demographic analysis of a boosted sample of people who have had a private cosmetic procedure

## Introduction

In addition to the nationally representative sample of 1,980 Scottish adults, a boost of 92 people who have had a private cosmetic procedure was carried out to allow for more detailed demographic analysis of this group. In total, 171 Scottish adults who have had a private cosmetic procedure were interviewed.

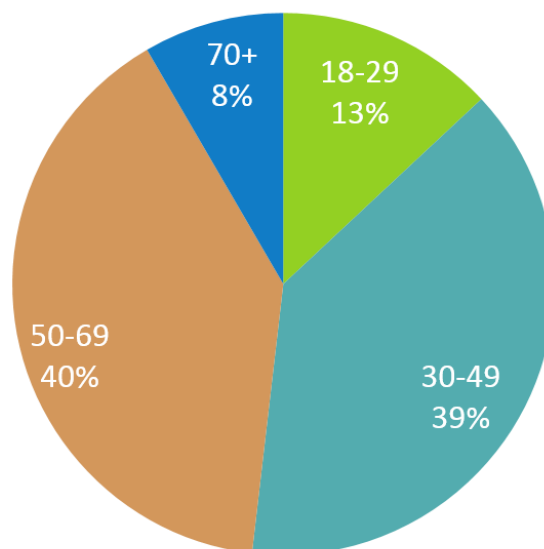
While the main report reflects only the responses of the 79 people within the nationally representative sample who have had a private cosmetic procedure, demographic analysis incorporating the boosted sample is reported in this annex.

## Demographic profile of Scottish adults who have had a private cosmetic procedure

The Scottish adults who report having had a cosmetic procedure in their lifetime are predominately female, with 71% being women and 29% men.

As chart 20 illustrates, two in five adults who have had a procedure fall within each of the 30-49 (39%) and 50-69 (40%) age groups, and smaller proportions are 18-29 (13%) or 70+ years old (8%).

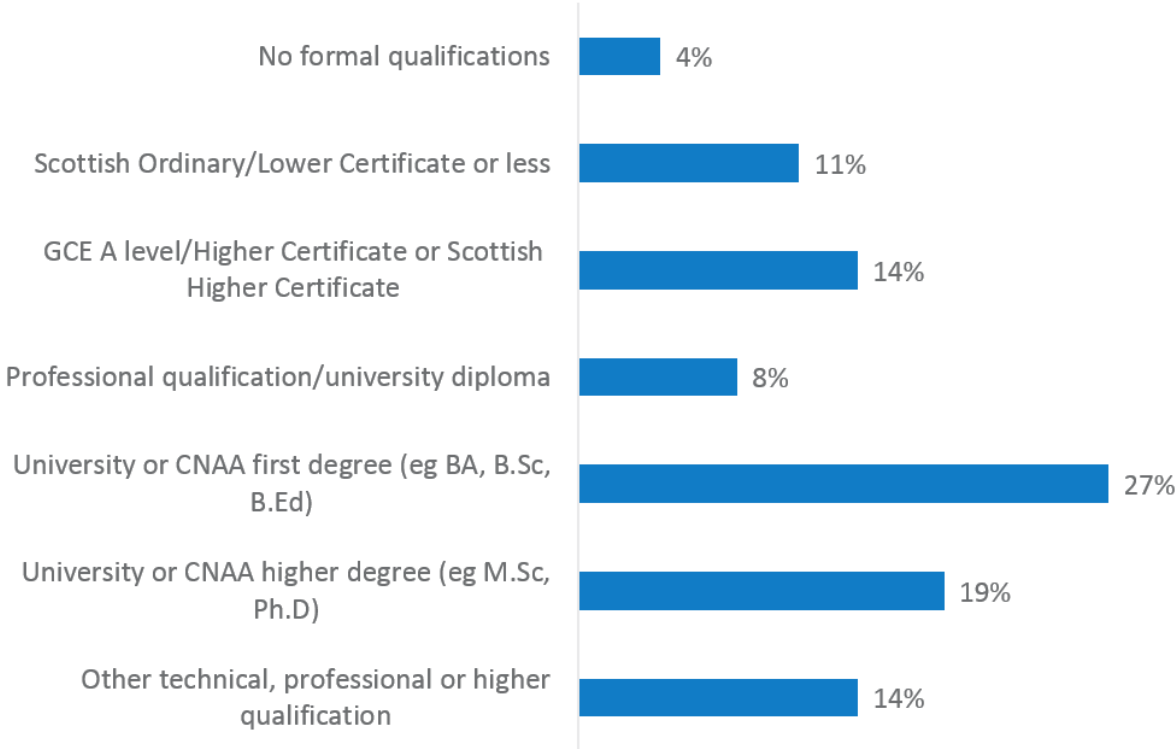
Chart 20: Demographic split by age of those who have had a cosmetic procedure



Base: all who have had a private cosmetic procedure (171)

One quarter (27%) of those who have had a cosmetic procedure are made up of people with a university or CNAA first degree. Secondly, 19% have a university or CNAA higher degree. Smaller proportions are represented by those who have another technical, professional or higher qualification (14%), a GCE A level/Higher Certificate/Scottish Higher Certificate (14%), a Scottish Ordinary/Lower Certificate or less (11%), or a professional qualification/diploma (8%). Four per cent have no formal qualifications.

Chart 21: Demographic split by education of those who have had a cosmetic procedure

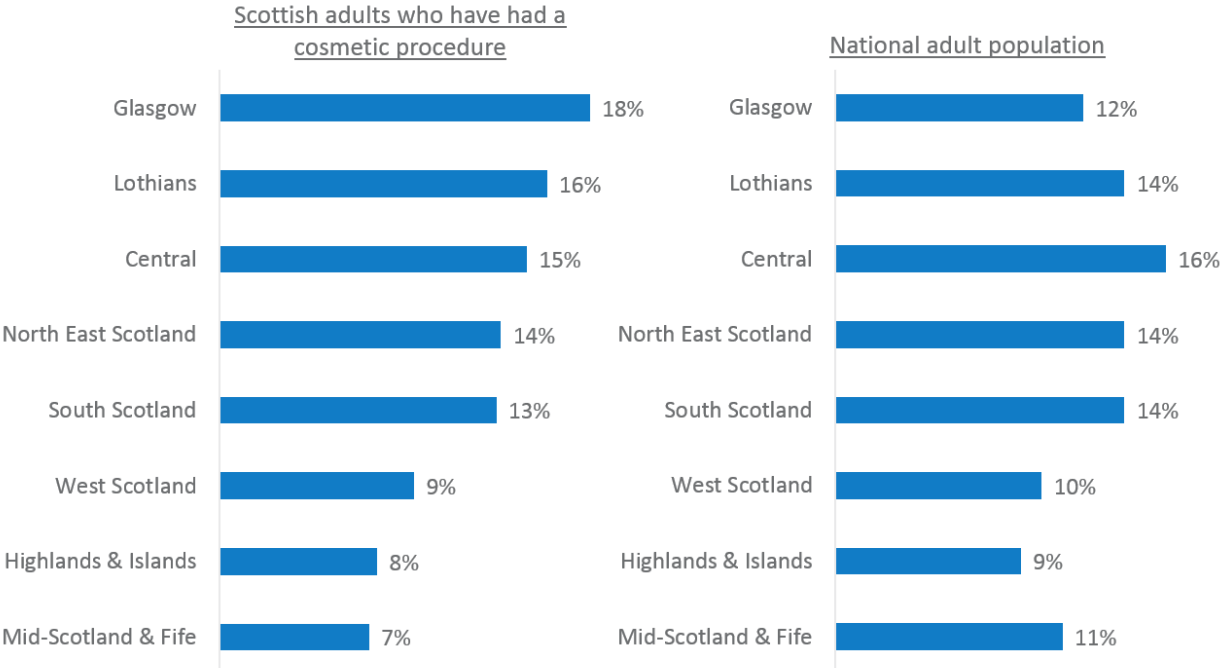


Base: all who have had a private cosmetic procedure (171)

The ethnic breakdown of those who have had a cosmetic procedure matches the nationally representative proportions of white and minority ethnic groups in the Scottish adult population, with 96% belonging to a white ethnic group and 4% representing minority ethnic groups.

When examining the division of those who have had a cosmetic procedure by region within Scotland, the demographic split closely matches the nationally representative figures. Those who live in Glasgow, however, represent a larger proportion of those who have had a cosmetic procedure than Glasgow residents do in the national population (18% compared with 12% in the national adult population).

Chart 22: Demographic split by region of those who have had a cosmetic procedure compared with the national adult population



Base: all who have had a private cosmetic procedure (171)

### **How to access background or source data**

The data collected for this social research publication:

are available via Health Analytical Services Department in the Scottish Government.



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