



Communication from a Regulatory Perspective

Mr Bill Prasifka
Medical Council CEO



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- The Medical Council is the regulatory body for doctors. It has a statutory role in protecting the public by promoting the highest professional standards amongst doctors practising in the Republic of Ireland.
- Maintains the Register of Medical Practitioners.
- Sets the standards for medical education and training in Ireland. Oversees lifelong learning and skills development throughout doctors' professional careers through its professional competence requirements.
- Where the public may make a complaint against a doctor.
- Governed by Medical Practitioners Act 2007.

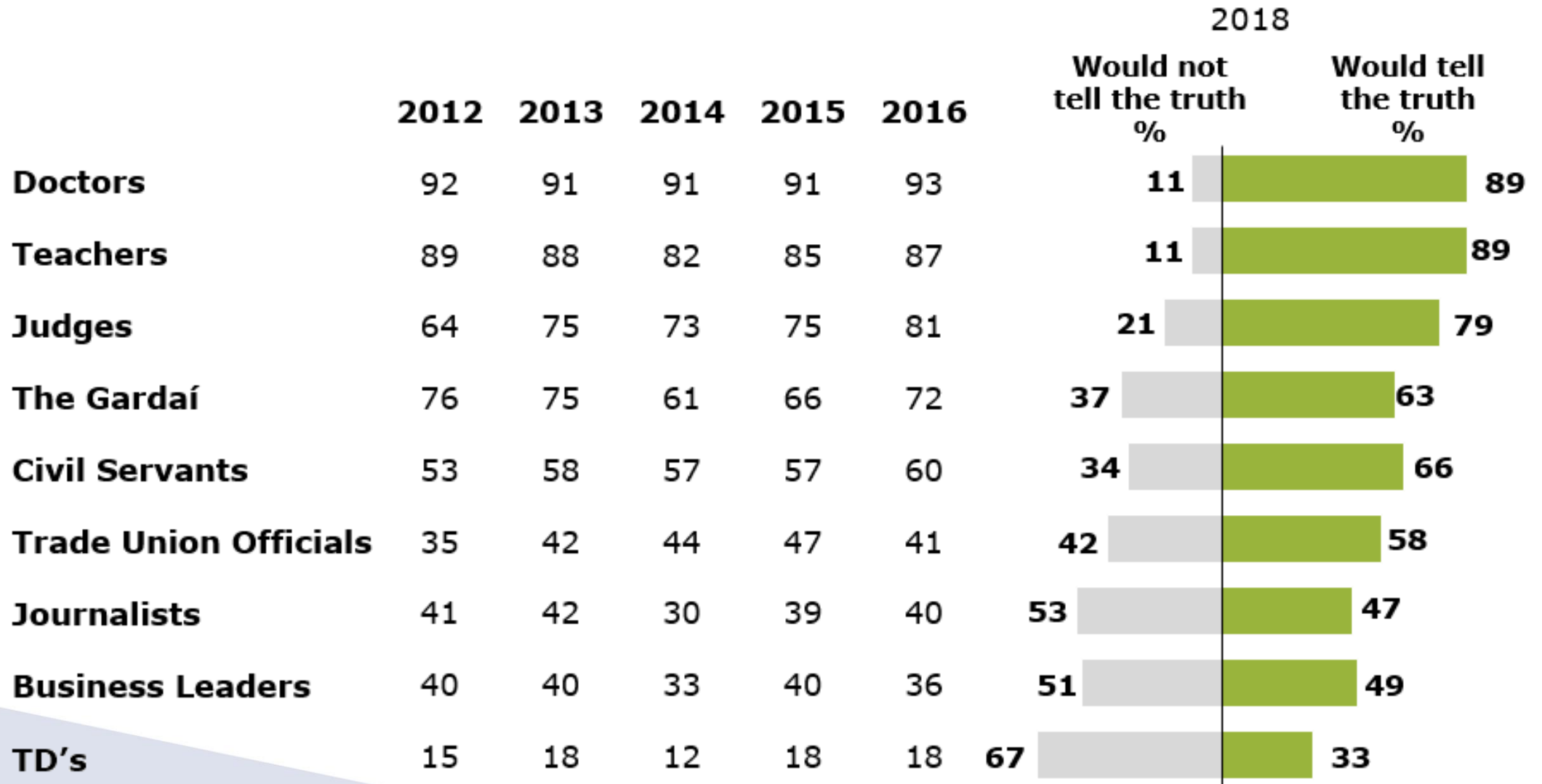


“Good communication... is central to the doctor-patient relationship and essential to the effective functioning of healthcare teams”

Trust in Doctors



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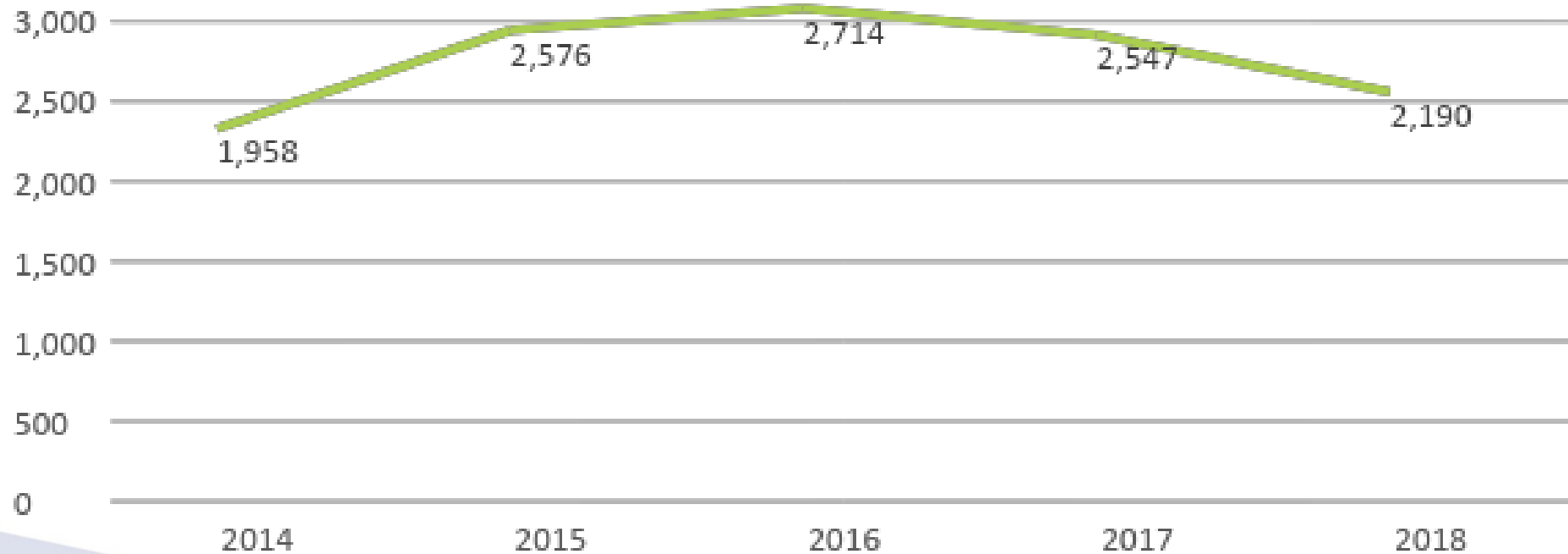


Medical Workforce Intelligence Report 2018



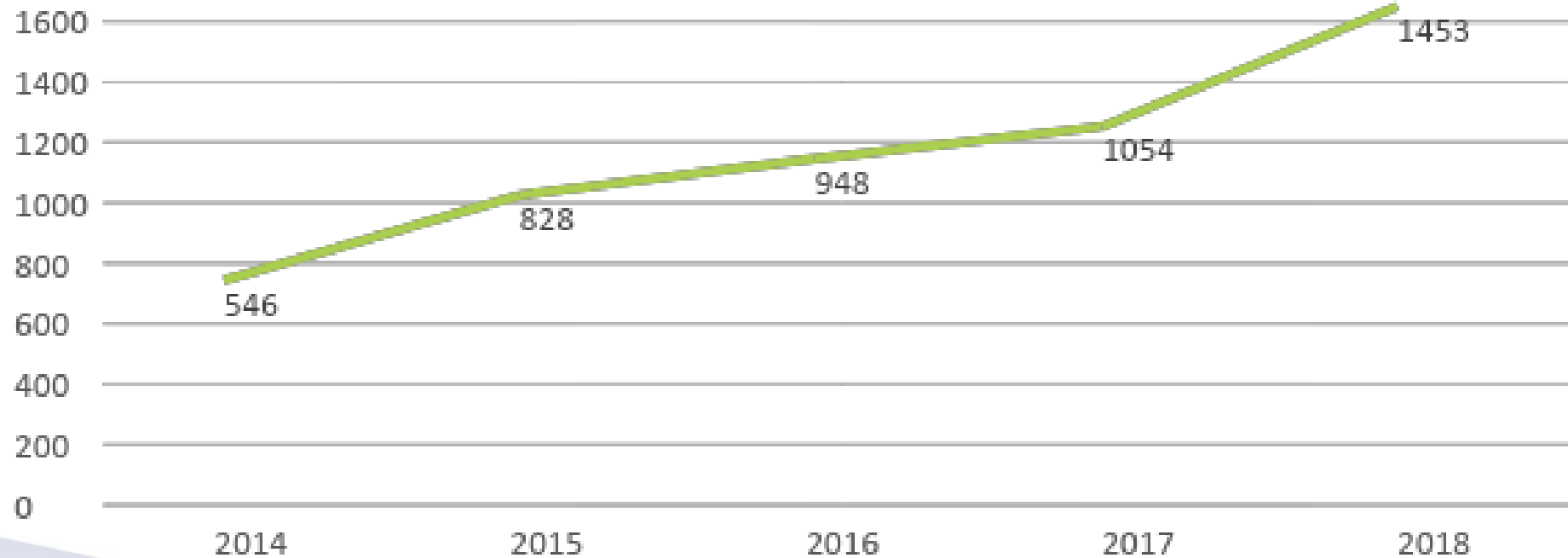
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Applications to Medical Council Register, 2014 - 2018



Medical Workforce Intelligence Report 2018

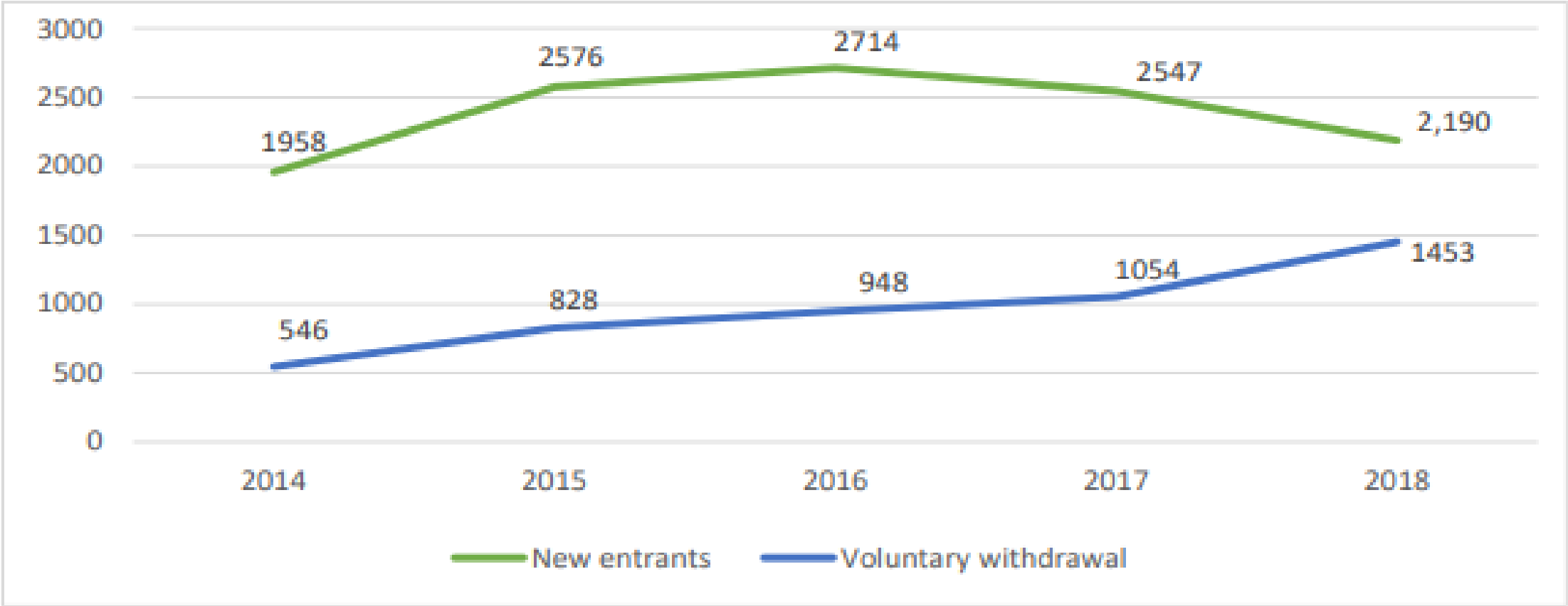
Voluntary Withdrawals from Medical Council Register,
2014 - 2018



Medical Workforce Intelligence Report 2018



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Communication complaints as seen in the 2018 Annual Report



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- Complaints received by the Medical Council about doctors are broken down into 44 different categories, however **19% of all complaints** fell into the category of **communications** in 2018.
- Issues of poor communication are not acceptable - either to the patient or the Medical Council.
- The Medical Council is dedicated to improving the patient experience by supporting doctors to deliver the highest standards of care. It is clear that we need to put a particular focus on communications at this current time.
- We are developing a number of new initiatives to support doctors by providing additional guidance to further enhance good communication skills with patients and their families.



What is a Communications Complaint?



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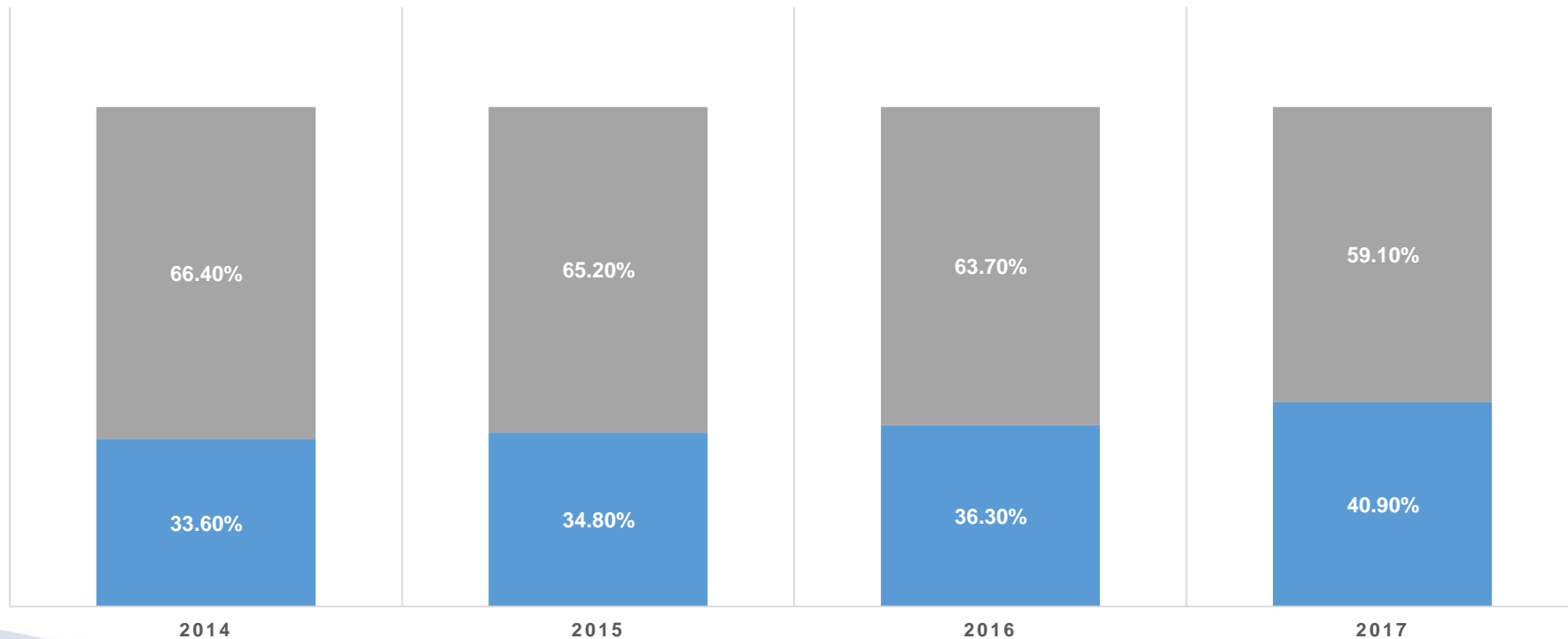
- a misunderstanding
- a miscommunication
- not explaining a diagnosis or treatment plan in an understandable or clear manner
- a disagreement
- a personality clash

Prevalence of bullying, 2014-17



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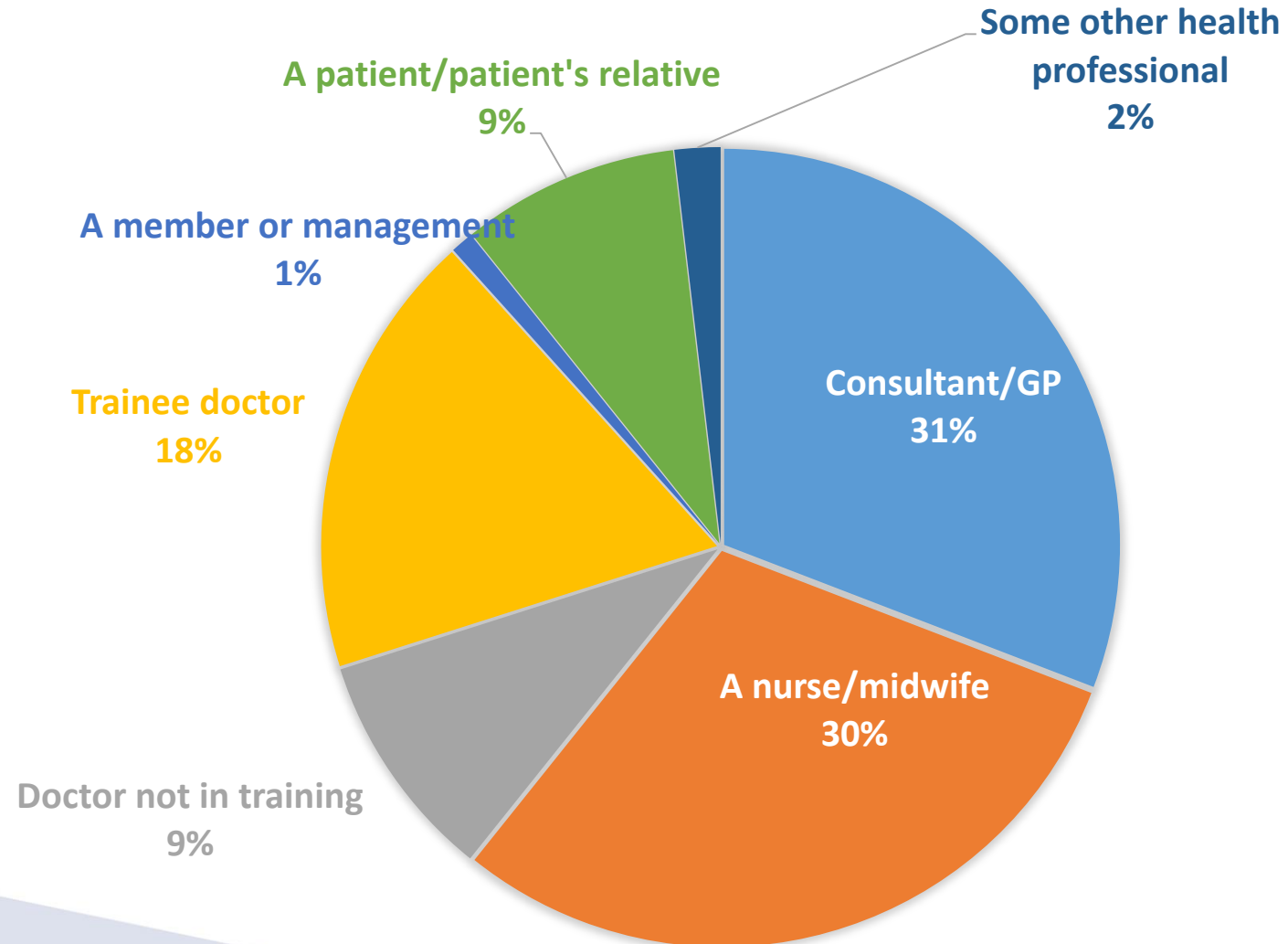
■ Bullied ■ Not bullied

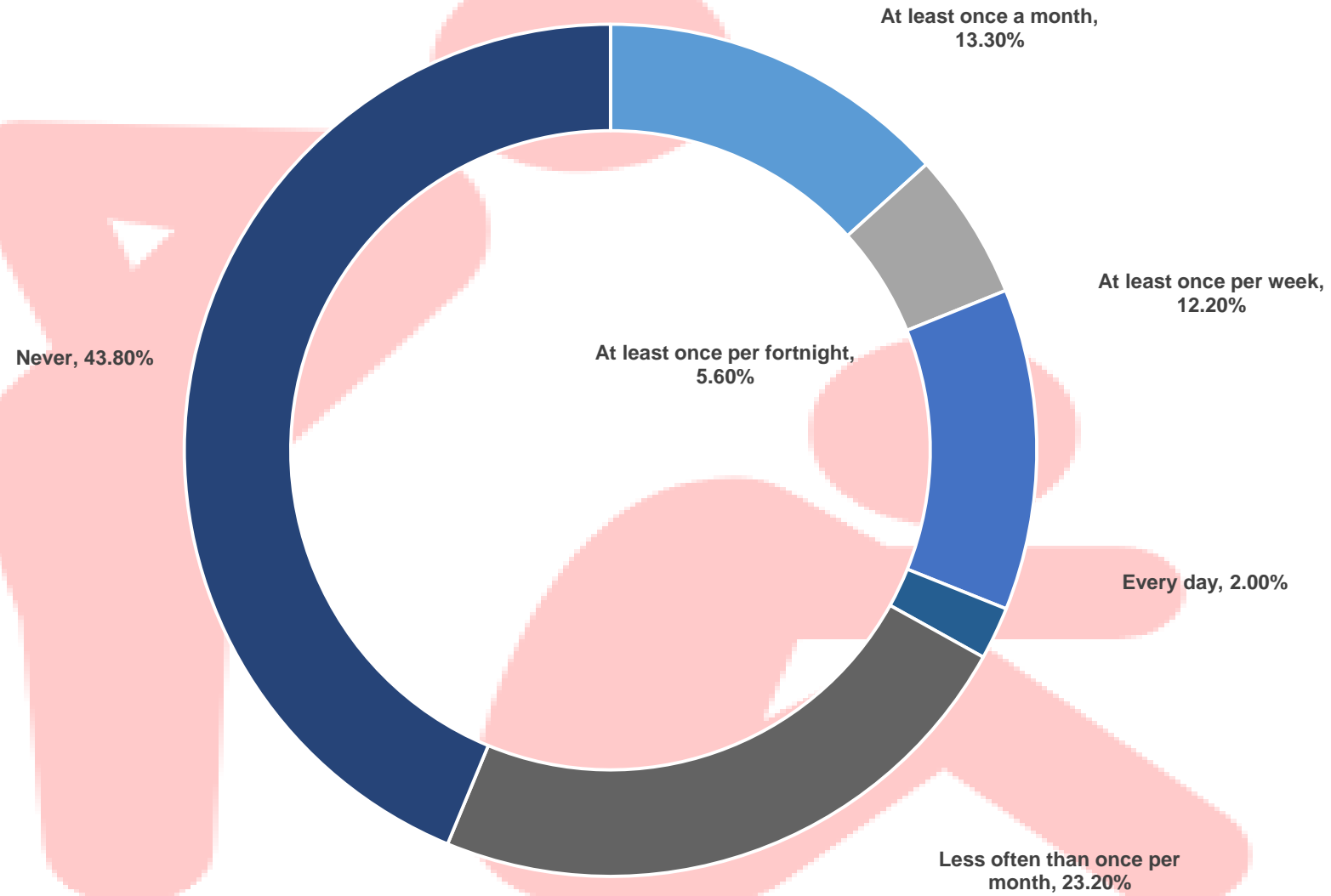


Interprofessional communication and bullying



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HSE National Healthcare Communication Programme



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- National programme to support healthcare staff to learn, develop and maintain their communication skills with patients, their families and with colleagues
- Underpinned by the Core Values of Care, Compassion, Trust and Learning and builds on these values with a focus on person-centred and Clinical Communication Skills
- The overall aim of this programme is to improve the experience of patients and their relatives by supporting staff to take a sensitive and person-centred approach in all conversations with patients and their families.

Maintenance of Professional Competence perspective



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- The PGTBs that operate the Professional Competence Schemes must demonstrate that the CPD they offer to RMPs incorporates the Medical Council's Domains of Good Professional Practice. There are a number of domains which focus on communication:
- **Relating to Patients**
Good medical practice is based on a relationship of trust between doctors and society and involves a partnership between patient and doctor that is based on mutual respect, confidentiality, honesty, responsibility and accountability.
- **Communication and Interpersonal Skills**
Medical practitioners must demonstrate effective interpersonal communication skills. This enables the exchange of information, and allows for effective collaboration with patients, their families and also with clinical and non-clinical colleagues and the broader public.
- **Collaboration and Teamwork**
Medical practitioners must co-operate with colleagues and work effectively with healthcare professionals from other disciplines and teams. He/she should ensure that there are clear lines of communication and systems of accountability in place among team members to protect patients.

○

The Way Forward



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- The Medical Council intends to introduce mandatory CPD in communication in the Maintenance of Professional Competence Framework model.
- Many facets are required to implement this change which will require discussion with stakeholders.

Communication complaints & current efforts



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Safe Start

Are you a doctor who
is new to medical
practice in Ireland?



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- The Medical Council's Guide to Conduct & Ethics for Medical Practitioners (8th edition, amended 2019) gives detailed guidance for doctors on the subject of communications.
- The Medical Council has published a new resource for doctors who are new to the practise of medicine, entitled Safe Start. The guide includes essential information on consent, prescribing, End of Life care, record keeping, and general conduct and communication skills.

Bullying is unacceptable



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- The Medical Council has a zero tolerance approach to bullying at all career levels among registered medical practitioners
- If the situation cannot be resolved at a local level a complaint could be brought to the Medical Council as a last resort
- The Council is monitoring the situation in relation to bullying as part of their regular clinical site inspection visits
- The Council is working with our stakeholders to examine programmes currently in place to deal with bullying

Communication must include advocacy

- The Medical Council also stands behind and supports doctors who advocate for reform and those that speak out on behalf of vulnerable patients
- A doctors first duty is always to their patient first



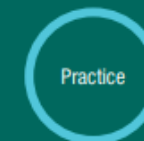
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Guide to Professional Conduct and Ethics
for Registered Medical Practitioners
(Amended)

8th Edition 2019



Advocacy

- Our guidance is contained in our Guide to Professional Conduct and Ethics for Registered Medical Professionals, 8th Edition
- 4.5 Advocacy. You should act as an advocate for your patients in two ways. You should speak on behalf of individual patients, to help make sure they receive appropriate healthcare. In addition, you should support all patients by promoting the fair distribution of limited resources and fair access to care.
- 63.1.1 As a doctor in a management role, you have a responsibility to advocate for appropriate healthcare resources and facilities if insufficient resources are affecting or may affect patient safety and quality of care.



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Thank You