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# Acknowledgements

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**About the Institution of Environmental Sciences (IES):**

The IES is a membership organisation that represents professionals from fields as diverse as air quality, land contamination and education - wherever you find environmental work underpinned by sound science.

A visionary organisation leading debate, dissemination and promotion of environmental science and sustainability, the IES promotes an evidence-based approach to decision and policy making.

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# Executive summary

The Institution of Environmental Sciences (IES) surveys its members annually to identify trends in how different services are valued and to gather members' opinions on potential new future developments.

## Method

In February 2013 an online questionnaire was completed by 261 members, answering questions on the importance of membership services and seeking opinions about publications and staff service.

These results were aggregated and compared against previous years to identify long-term trends.

## Key findings

All of the services were rated as at least 'important' by more than half of the membership. This suggests that the IES is successfully meeting the needs and interest of members through the current provision of services. Members' opinions on individual services were analysed in further detail:

**Post-nominal:** 83 per cent of respondents rated the post-nominal as 'important' or 'very important'.

**Chartership:** These opportunities are highly valued by members, with the Chartered Environmentalist (CEnv) rated by 88 per cent of respondents as 'important' or 'very important', and 76 per cent valuing the Chartered Scientist (CSci) as such. Both the ratings of the CEnv and CSci designations have increased by 6 per cent from last year. We speculate that this is a reflection of greater recognition of charterships by employers and that the designations are becoming increasingly important in the current economic climate where employment opportunities have been in decline.

**Careers support:** These services received their highest ever rating in 2012, with 72 per cent of respondents rating this service as either 'very important' or 'important'. This is likely to be, in part, a reflection of the current economic climate. These services are of high value to members who are recently graduated or seeking work in the environmental science sector.

**Journal:** The environmental SCIENTIST is highly valued by almost all the membership (91 per cent stated it was 'important' or 'very important'). This publication has been consistently rated as 'excellent' or 'good' by approximately four fifths of respondents over the past five years. 51 per cent of respondents stated that the journal has improved since 2011, which reflects the well-received redesign in 2011 and subsequent layout and editorial improvements, changes which sought to make the journal more accessible and engaging for all the membership.

**Newsletter:** 75 per cent of respondents rated it as either 'excellent' or 'good'. The newsletter has been consistently rated as good and important. This reflects the project office efforts to ensure the newsletter is relevant and informative. Despite the improvements the office remains focused in 2013 on continued revision of the newsletter content and layout design.

**Website:** 65 per cent of respondents rated the website as 'excellent' or 'good'. Use of the website has increased consistently over the past five years, with 68 per cent of members now using the website at least once per month or weekly. In early 2012 the IES launched the new website with considerable improvements on the old design. 81 per cent of members who visited the new site rated it as 'excellent' or 'good'.

**Interaction with IES staff:** Excellent customer service is of great importance to the IES. Members have rated interactions with the IES staff as consistently high over the past 5 years. In 2012, 94 per cent of members who had interacted with IES staff rated their experience as either 'excellent' or 'good'. Increased office capacity and further developed expertise of IES staff has ensured improvement of the quality of customer service in recent years.

## Conclusions

This survey demonstrates that services remain highly valued by the membership and are continuing to improve in quality. In 2013 the IES is committed to continue to maintain current standards and develop new services that continue to meet the needs of members.

# Introduction

The Institution of Environmental Sciences (IES) regularly surveys a sample of its membership to find out how the different services provided are valued. By comparing the results to those of previous years the IES is able to assess the uptake of new services and the success of existing ones. The survey also seeks to identify areas for improvement and acts as a feedback tool for our governance committee to monitor staff performance.

## SURVEY METHOD

A questionnaire was prepared through an online survey tool (surveymonkey.com) and opened to members for a period of two weeks in February 2013. In this timeframe, 261 members completed the questionnaire. This report presents the findings of the survey and draws some conclusions for consideration by staff, the Council and the membership. Data from the 2008, 2009 and 2011 surveys are used to add longitudinal data and identify longer-term trends. No survey took place in 2010.

## RESPONSES

261 responses from members represents 20 per cent of the subscribing IES membership. The membership status of those who responded is shown below. This sample is a good representation of the IES membership in February 2013 (when the survey took place). Student and Honorary Members were not surveyed.

▼ **Table 01: The proportion of members at each membership grade as compared to survey respondents.**

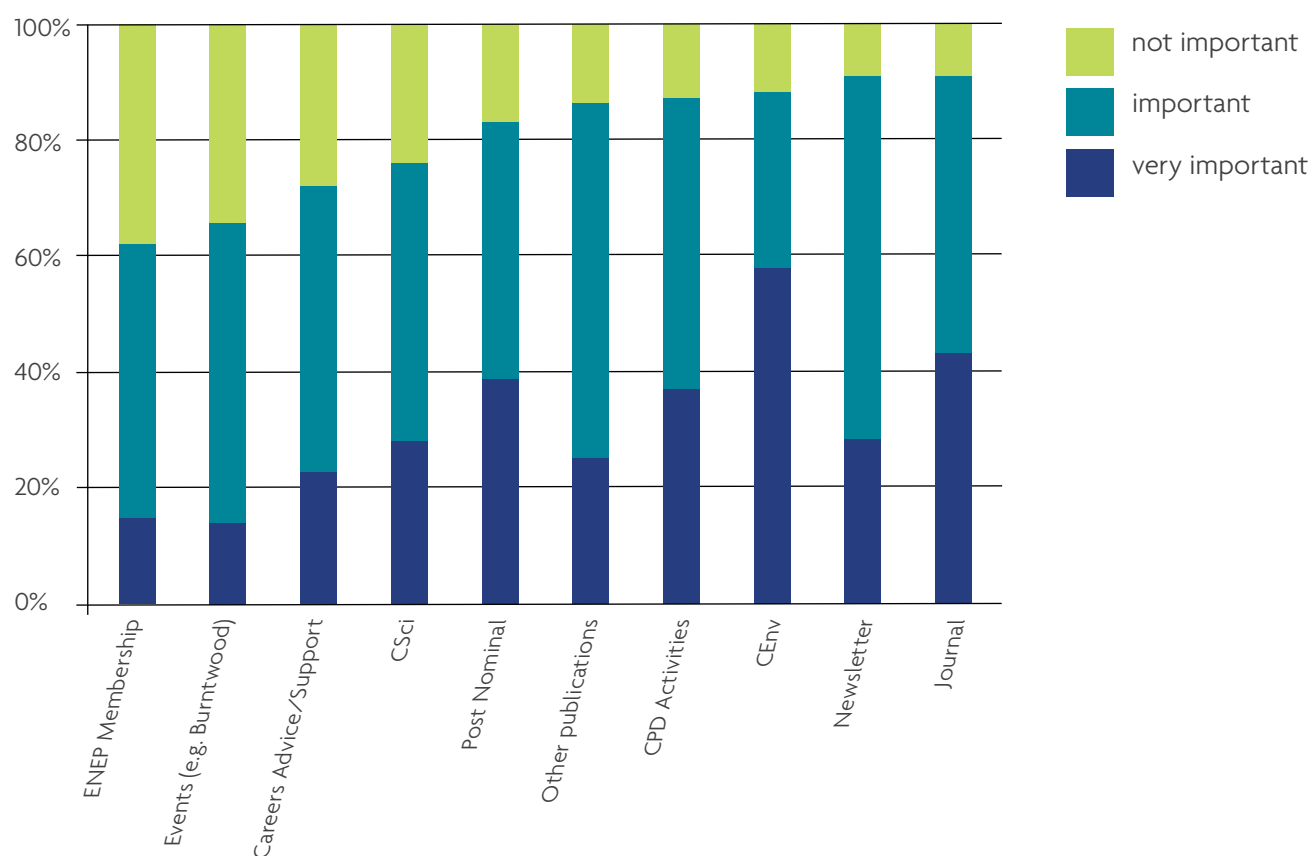
Membership Grade	2012 membership (%)	Survey Respondents			
		2012	2011	2010	2009
Fellows	2	3	3	No survey undertaken	4
Members	72	78	80		77
Associates	19	17	15		16
Afiliates	4	2	2		3

As shown in the table above, the demographic of survey respondents is comparable with the representation of membership grades in previous surveys and broadly reflective of the overall membership picture.

# The results

## CURRENT MEMBERSHIP SERVICES

Members were asked to rate the importance of current membership services offered by the IES.



▲ **Figure 01: Abbreviations: ENEP - European Network of Environmental Professionals ; CSci - Chartered Scientist; CPD - Continuous Professional Development; CEnv - Chartered Environmentalist.**

## FINDINGS

All membership services were valued as either 'important' or 'very important' by more than half of the respondents. Publications such as the journal and monthly newsletter were considered 'important' or 'very important' by almost all of the respondents (91 per cent respondents valued the journal as 'important' or 'very important'). Marginally fewer members valued the post-nominal and Chartership opportunities so highly; 83 per cent of respondents identified the post-nominal as 'important' or 'very important', 88 per cent for CEnv, and 76 per cent for CSci. However, these three categories were identified as 'very important' by a greater percentage of members than any other category. Notably the CEnv (Chartered Environmentalist) was rated as 'very important' by 58 per cent of respondents.

## CONCLUSIONS

All the services were viewed as important by the majority of respondents which is indicative that the IES is currently successfully providing services of value to its membership. The career support required can vary greatly depending on membership grades. For example, some members may be unemployed and seeking high levels of career support, whereas Affiliate Members often belong to the IES for personal interest rather than professional development. Whilst it is crucial that the IES monitors the provision of services to each membership grade, these results suggest that the IES is successfully providing valued services to all the membership grades.

Publications are a service provided to all members, and they are shown to be of interest across all membership grades. When preparing publications, the IES seeks to ensure that a balance is achieved between the different audiences within its membership. These results demonstrate that the majority of members consider publications to be an important membership benefit; this has been recognised by the project staff and the number, quality, length and frequency of IES publications has now been improved.

Similarly, the website is considered to be of value by the vast majority of respondents. The website was relaunched in early 2012 and the new version has been designed to be informative, user-friendly and accessible for all membership grades.

Chartership opportunities are only available to Full Members and Fellows. For those respondents that did place value on Chartership, these services are of great importance. In response to the high demand and value placed on Chartership opportunities, the IES is committed to continuing to provide regular 'CEnv in a Day' workshops and to promote the opportunity to obtain the CSci designation. The IES launched the CSci in October 2010; obtaining a high value within such a short period demonstrates that this was beneficial. It is possible that fewer members place a high value on the CSci than the CEnv because the CEnv designation is perceived to be more closely aligned with the work of most IES members. Whilst this may be the case for many members, there are common misconceptions surrounding required qualifications for the CSci designation. The project office is therefore committed to creating a new workshop-format service for members to become CSci similar to the manner in which CEnv is offered.

Careers advice received the second lowest rating of importance, after ENEP membership. This is unsurprising as the survey did not include the non-subscribing membership and therefore students' opinions were not represented. In January 2011 the IES launched two schemes ('Back to Work' and 'Into Work' Schemes) to support unemployed members and recent graduates in finding work in the environmental sector. There are currently 37 members in total on these schemes and feedback suggests that they are highly valued by those in a situation where their services are valuable.

The IES considers it important to continue investing in these services, especially in the current economic market and will continue to develop careers support for those seeking work in the environmental sector. Feedback from the mentees currently is very positive.

ENEP membership was ranked as the least important membership service. The IES is a member of this umbrella NGO that represents 22 European environmental organisations. The aim of the organisation is to raise the visibility and influence of environmental professionals on the European level, whilst providing an arena for them to exchange knowledge and shape the European environmental agenda. The organisation has very little access to funds, so the IES has provided graduates through the Leonardo scheme to increase their workforce and has been helping them to develop new membership services. We hope that this will lead to more tangible benefits for IES members, but we will be keeping our membership of the organisation under review.

## COMPARING MEMBERSHIP SERVICES

The IES project office uses a ranking of how services rate against previous years in order to improve the delivery of the services to members<sup>1</sup>.

An overview of the changes of ratings of the past five years enables an understanding of the trends in how the membership values different services.

Four additional services were included in the survey for the first time in 2011: CSci (because this was the first year this service was offered); other publications (e.g. reports); ENEP membership; and Events. There are therefore only two data points for each of these services. In 2012 we included IES Events (e.g. Burntwood) to gauge how important events are for our members. Future surveys will provide the opportunity to identify trends in the perceived importance of these services. The results are displayed in table format.

To calculate the importance of each of the membership services the responses were ranked and assigned numerical values in order to produce an average. These values were multiplied by the number of responses in that category.

The average displayed on the graph is expressed as a percentage of the maximum possible score i.e. the total number of respondents multiplied by the highest numerical ranking value.

## FINDINGS

For all of the services that were identified the relative importance has remained consistent since 2007. Over the past year there has been a slight increase in the value of the CEnv designation, CPD activities and the journal. The rating for the newsletter has been consistently high over the years. The notable exception to this consistency is the relative importance of the careers advice and support service - this has risen 20 per cent over the last two years. It is likely that this is a result of the IES having accredited more universities over that time period and therefore having a greater number of members who came through an accredited course. It is also possible that this is a reflection of current economic pressures and the difficulty of finding work in the environmental sciences.

▼ **Table 02: Relative importance of ies membership offerings between surveys.**

Service	Relative importance (per cent)			
	2012	2011	2009	2008
CEnv	73	72	75	79
Journal	67	64	71	72
CPD activities	62	58	46	57
Post-nominal	61	70	59	63
Newsletter	59	62	61	65
Other Publications	56	51	-	-
CSci	55	61	-	-
Careers advice/support	48	36	31	31
Events	40	-	-	-
ENEP membership	38	34	-	-
Website	-	63	58	61
CPD recording tools	-	50	-	-

<sup>1</sup> To calculate the importance of each of the membership services the responses were ranked and assigned numerical values.

Website was omitted from the survey this year due to an administrative error.



## CONCLUSIONS

The membership consistently places a high value on the services provided by the Institution. Access to the CEnv designation continues to be the service provided with the greatest relative importance.

Careers advice has increased in rating significantly since previous years. We speculate that this may be in response to members encountering increasing difficulties in securing employment in the environmental sector. It is likely that it rates low in comparison with other membership services because it is primarily targeted to a subset of members seeking work, and student members (who were not surveyed). The IES has expanded its career support services in response to the current employment challenges and will continue to offer support to members wherever possible.

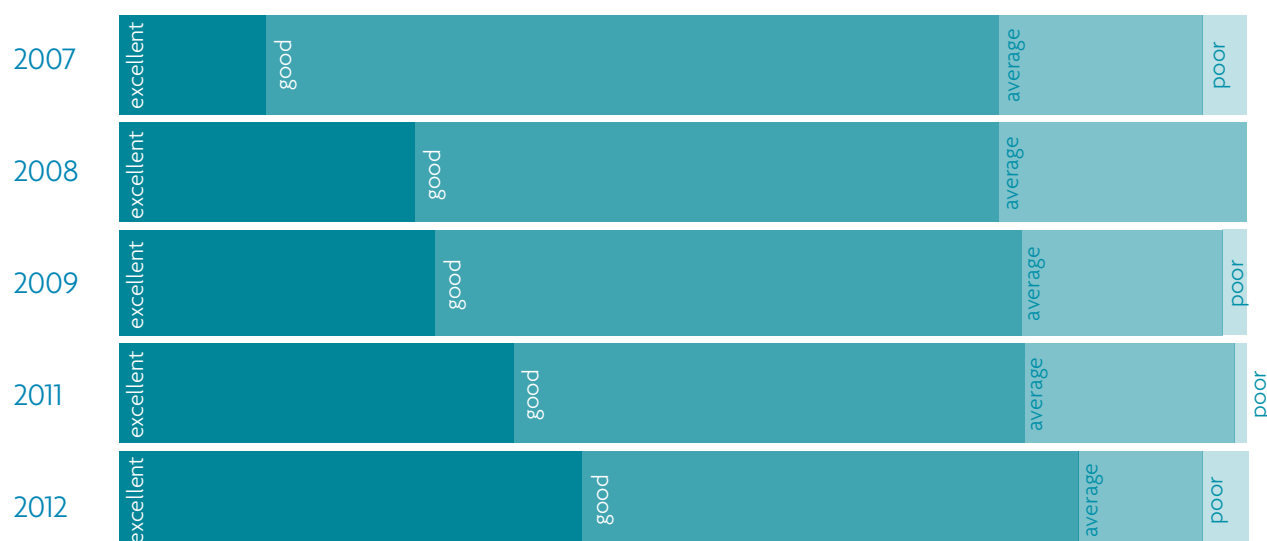
The provision of CPD activities was at its lowest rating in 2009, but in three years has increased in importance. There has been a historic trend of the need to undertake CPD activities becoming more embedded in professional careers; and professional bodies are an appropriate vehicle for delivering training. In 2009 the IES launched its mandatory CPD scheme requiring professional members to complete 30 hours of CPD activities per year. The concept of ongoing learning and training is an integral aspect of Chartership. The higher rating of CPD activities by the membership suggests that the importance of CPD has been successfully communicated as the number of IES-led CPD events throughout the year has increased.

## COMMUNICATION: JOURNAL

Members were asked how they would rate the IES journal, the environmental SCIENTIST. These results were compared with those for the previous years (**Figure 02**).

**Figure 03** shows how IES members rate the journal. The small group of respondents who answered 'n/a' (2%) is likely to represent members who either didn't read the journal or who were not actually members in 2012 and was therefore omitted for clarity.

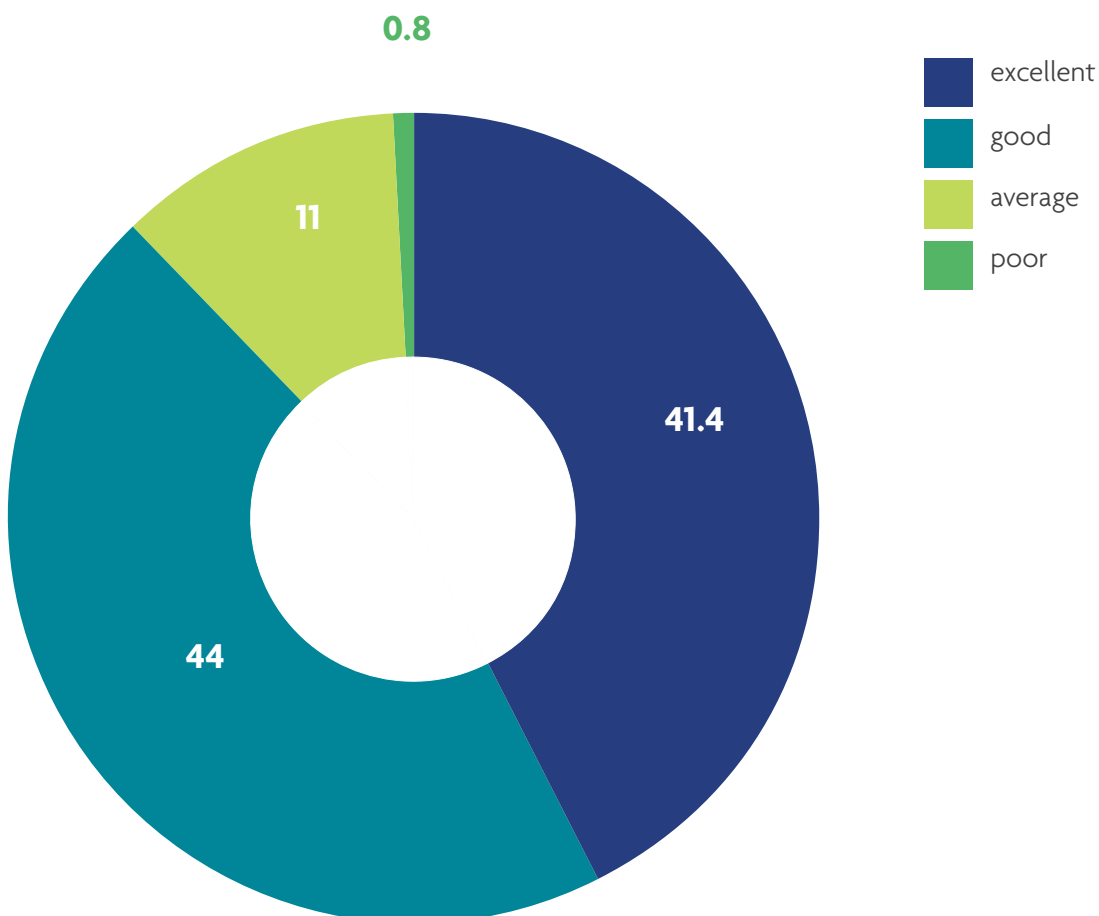
The environmental SCIENTIST underwent significant changes last year. We asked members what they think about the new format and how they rate it in comparison to last year. The response to the new format of environmental SCIENTIST has been very positive with 60% of respondents who read the journal in 2012 rating it as 'Better'. No respondents found the changes to the journal to be 'Worse' but 17% rated the new journal as 'The same', again suggesting that the changes were accepted and the quality of the journal was consistent with the previous year.



▲ **Figure 02: How the IES journal has been rated by members since 2007.**

**FINDINGS**

The percentage of respondents rating the journal as excellent or good has remained consistently high at 88 per cent of the membership. The percentage of respondents rating it as excellent has continually increased over the last five years, rising from 13 per cent in 2007 to 41 per cent in 2012. Additionally in 2012, 60 per cent of members who read the journal think that the new improved format is better.

**2012 ratings for the environmental SCIENTIST**

▲ Figure 03: How respondents rated the IES in-house journal, the environmental SCIENTIST in 2012.

The journal underwent a redesign in August 2011 in an effort to improve to make it more engaging for the readership. Respondents were invited to comment on the journal and in particular its redesign:

“I really like it – the layout, slick without being busy”

“Clear, fresh and makes you want to pick it up and read [it]”

“Nicer design, easy to navigate”

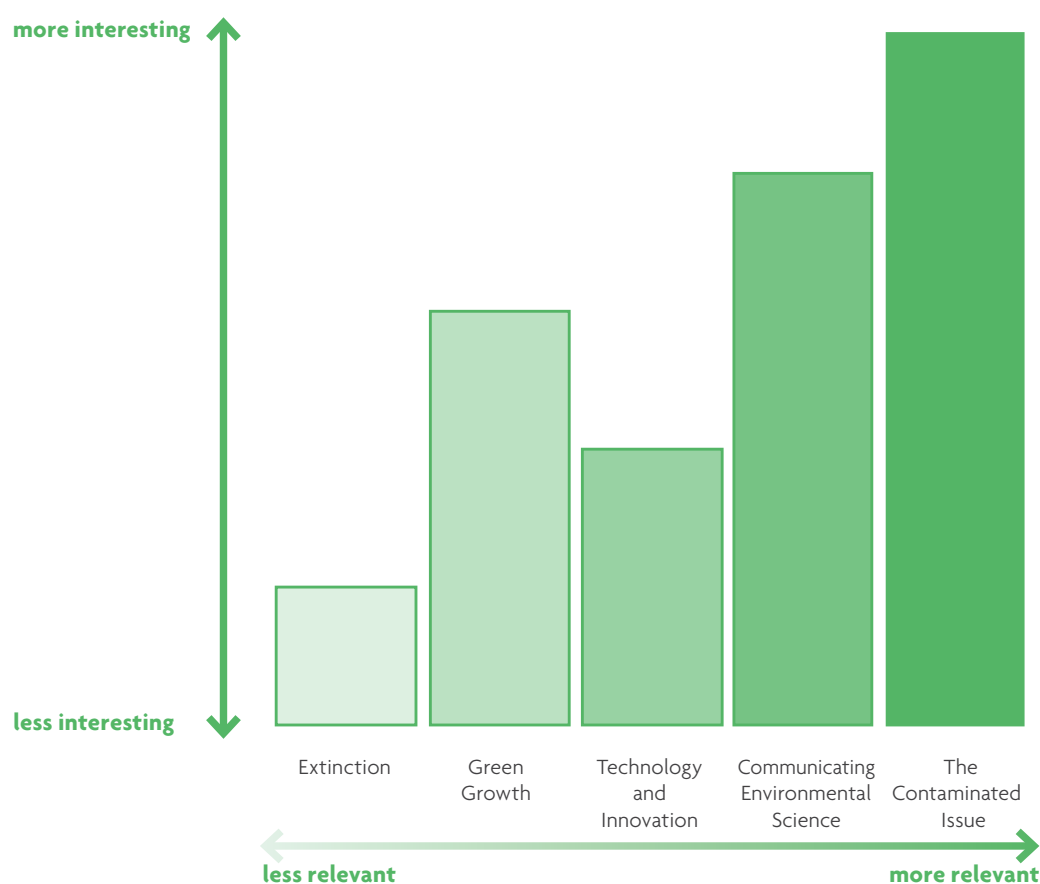
“I found it very user-friendly”

“Very accessible”

“Perhaps could benefit from a more international perspective at times”

“More research papers/articles”

“Full length technical papers should get preference”



▲ **Figure 04: How relevant and interesting the journals are considered by members.**

<sup>2</sup> The members who selected the 'did not read' category were omitted for clarity.

We also asked members to rate each of last years publications of the journal environmental SCIENTIST in terms of relevance and interest.

### FINDINGS

It is heartening to note that the majority of members found all of the journals either 'very interesting' or 'moderately interesting', with the **The Contaminated Issue** journal generating the most interest. Similarly the majority of members found all of the journals relevant with the exception of the **Extinction** journal, which registered as 'not relevant' with a significant proportion of members. Again **The Contaminated Issue** was considered the most professionally relevant to members<sup>2</sup>. The proportion of members who did not read the journal was relatively consistent at around 20 per cent of members, except for the **Extinction** issue journal where approximately 28 per cent of members did not read it.

### CONCLUSIONS

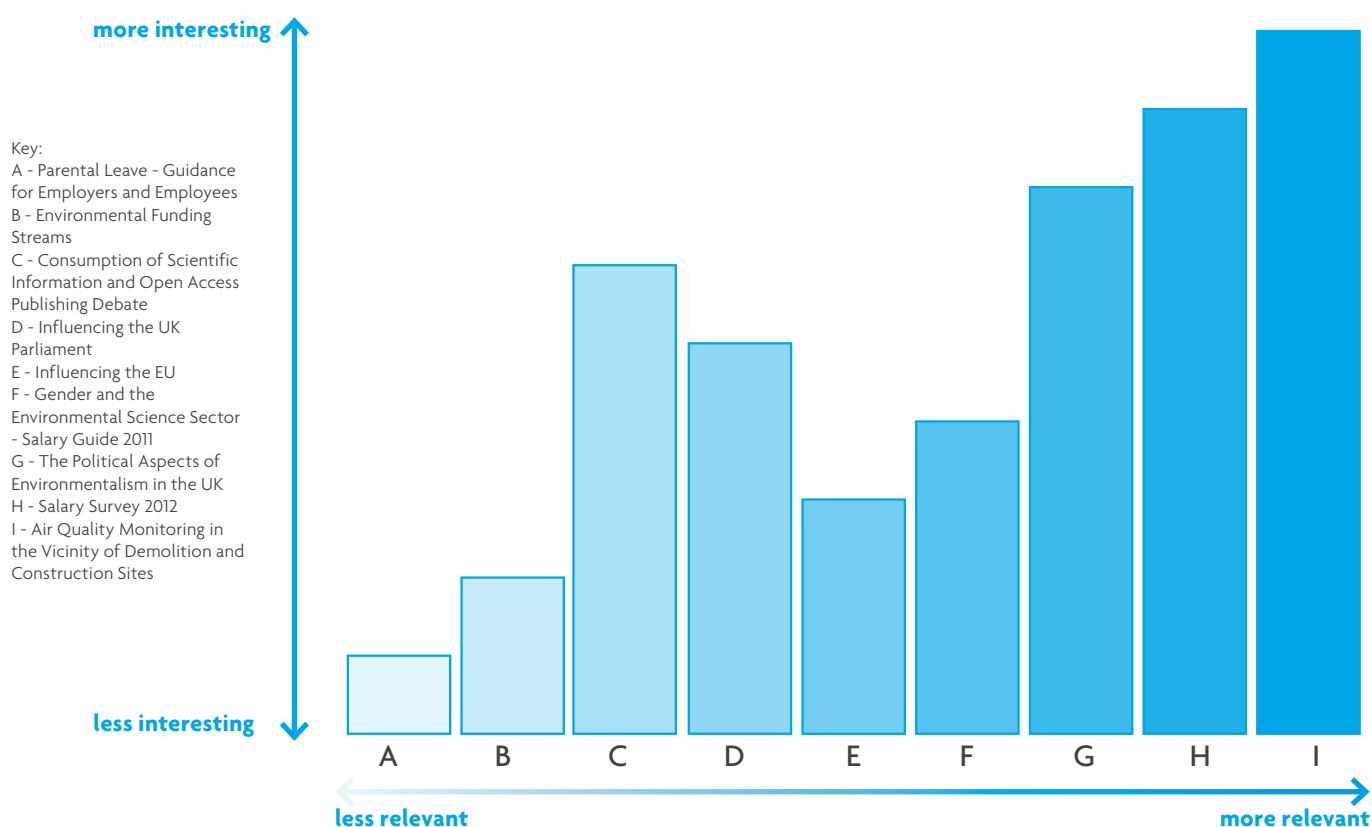
Each edition of the journal is themed around a particular issue within environmental science which is both professionally relevant to our members as well as being interesting. This sector covers a broad spectrum, with the IES membership representing

professionals from numerous and varied fields. The IES seeks to ensure that the journal remains of interest for the whole membership whilst investigating a particular topic in depth in each issue, ranging from more 'technical' topics to contemporary, wider-interest issues such as Science Communication. The comments from members reflect the need to continue balancing the interests of all members whilst retaining the journal's scientific underpinning.

The environmental SCIENTIST is the flagship publication produced by the IES. It remains popular and highly valued by members, with nearly all members rating that the journal was at least important to them. For this reason, the IES has continued to invest in improving and developing the journal, rankings for clarity, ensuring that it is engaging for all areas of the membership whilst retaining the technical aspect as a scientific publication. The IES has also increased the frequency of publication of the journal to five issues per year. Based upon 60 per cent of members who felt that the journal had improved and the comments above, the editorial improvements appear to have been a very positive development. Given the high value of this service, continued improvement of the journal remains a priority for the IES in 2013.

## COMMUNICATION: REPORTS AND GUIDANCE

Members were asked to rate the Reports and Guidance published on the IES website in 2012. We asked members to rate each publication in terms of professional relevance and also in terms of interest to really establish how effectively the IES is delivering on this communication service and producing publications that are engaging for its members.



▲ Figure 05: How relevant and interesting the reports are considered by members.

## FINDINGS

Of all the Reports and Guidance published in 2012, 'Air Quality Monitoring in the Vicinity of Demolition and Construction Sites' has been rated by members as the most interesting and relevant. The Salary Survey also scored highly with 60 per cent of members rating it as either very moderately relevant and 69 per cent rating it as very moderately interesting. The report that scored as the least interesting and relevant to members was the parental leave report with a significant proportion of members choosing not to read it.

## CONCLUSIONS

IES Reports and Guidance are clearly an important form of communication for our members both in terms of being professionally relevant and interesting. The ratings are very positive in response to most of the publications and in particular ratings revealed popularity both in terms of relevance and interest

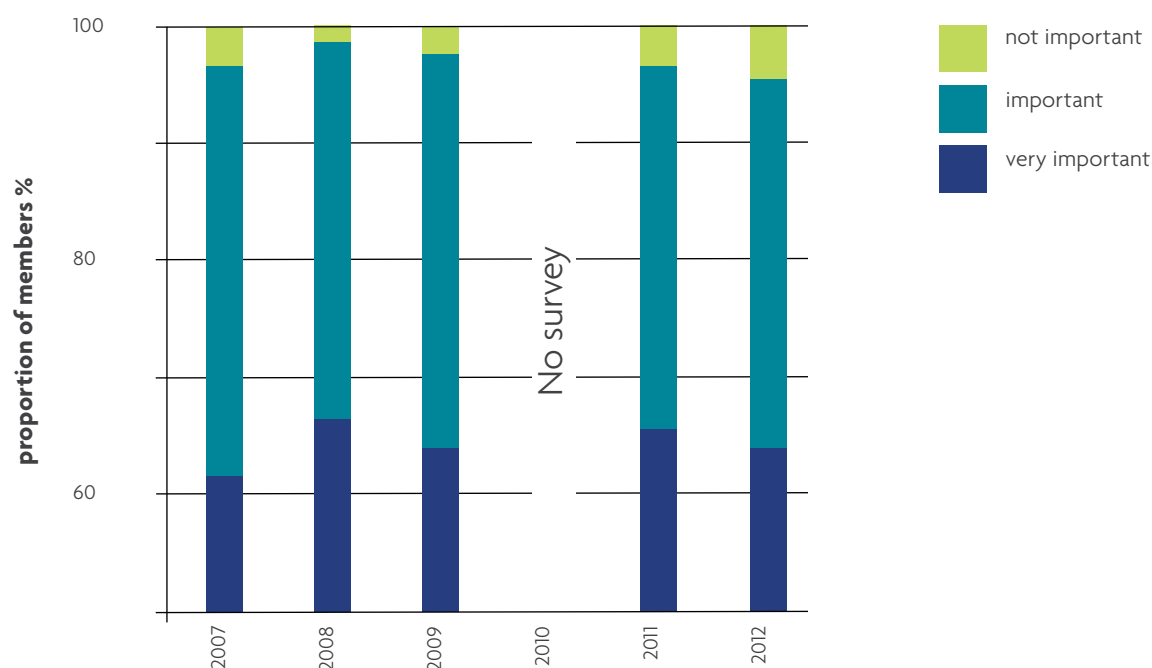
for the more profession-specific reports. The most popular report being the air quality guidance, closely followed by the salary survey.

This result reflects the usefulness of the salary survey to members as it is used as a way to benchmark salaries in the environmental science sector and also the interest in salaries and inflation in a tough economic climate. The publication that stood out as least relevant and least interesting for members was 'Parental Leave – Guidance for Employers and Employees'. This is likely to be because it is only relevant to a specific subset of our members - those who are pregnant or who have recently had children. We published this report as part of our gender and equality series. Given the clear interest in more guidance and professionally-specific reports the Project Office will aim to bring these interests in line with our publication schedule in the future.

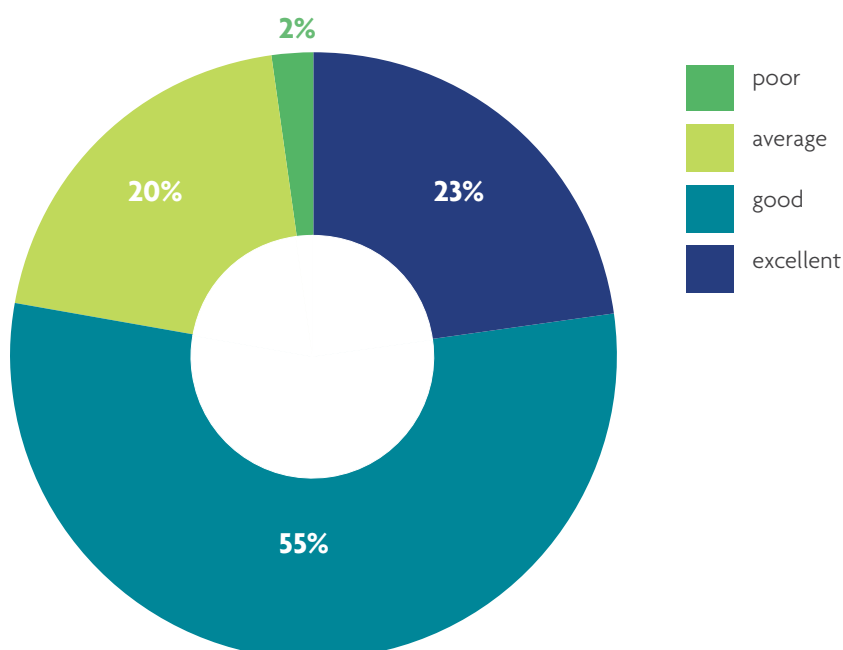
### SERVICES: NEWSLETTER

Members were asked to rate the monthly e-newsletter, EnviroSci News. The newsletter contains news relating to the work of the IES and the environmental sciences sector as a whole, along with events, jobs, articles, book reviews and profiles of IES members.

As can be seen from this figure the newsletter remains either important or very important to over 90% of the membership. However, this proportion has fallen slightly over the past year.



▲ Figure 06: How important members consider the e-newsletter.



▲ Figure 07: How the newsletter was rated by IES members in 2012.

## FINDINGS

The newsletter ratings have remained relatively consistent with the proportion of members rating it as either important or very important remaining over 90%. Despite this overwhelming majority, the proportion of members who find the newsletter unimportant has increased over the last two years.

In the 2012 survey we also asked members if they would like to be profiled in the newsletter and we received a positive response from 80 members who completed the survey.

## CONCLUSIONS

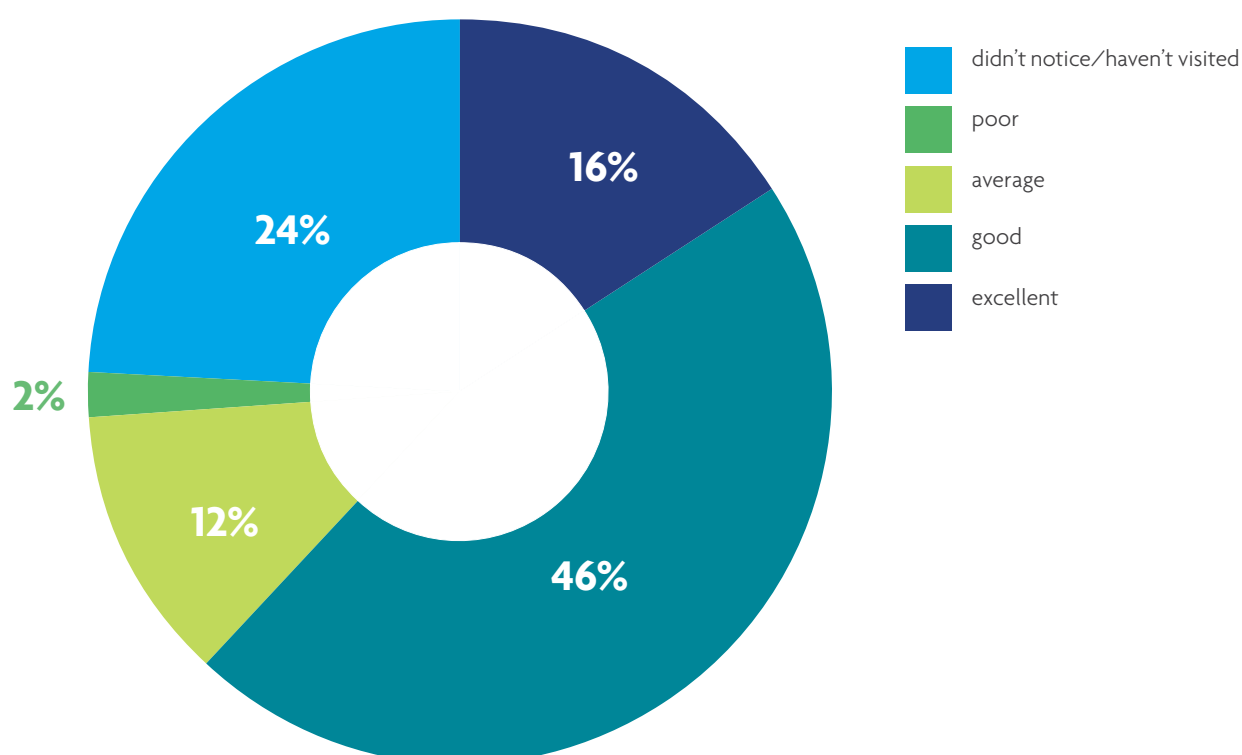
Similar to the journal, the newsletter is highly valued across the membership grades. The IES is in the process of a review of the newsletter, seeking to identify the areas of most interest and value to members. Whilst this process is on-going, the slight increase in the proportion of members who consider it 'not important' suggests that the 2012 redesign was perhaps not successful in its aims. The IES has committed to further modifications in 2013 with improved content and layout.

## SERVICES: WEBSITE

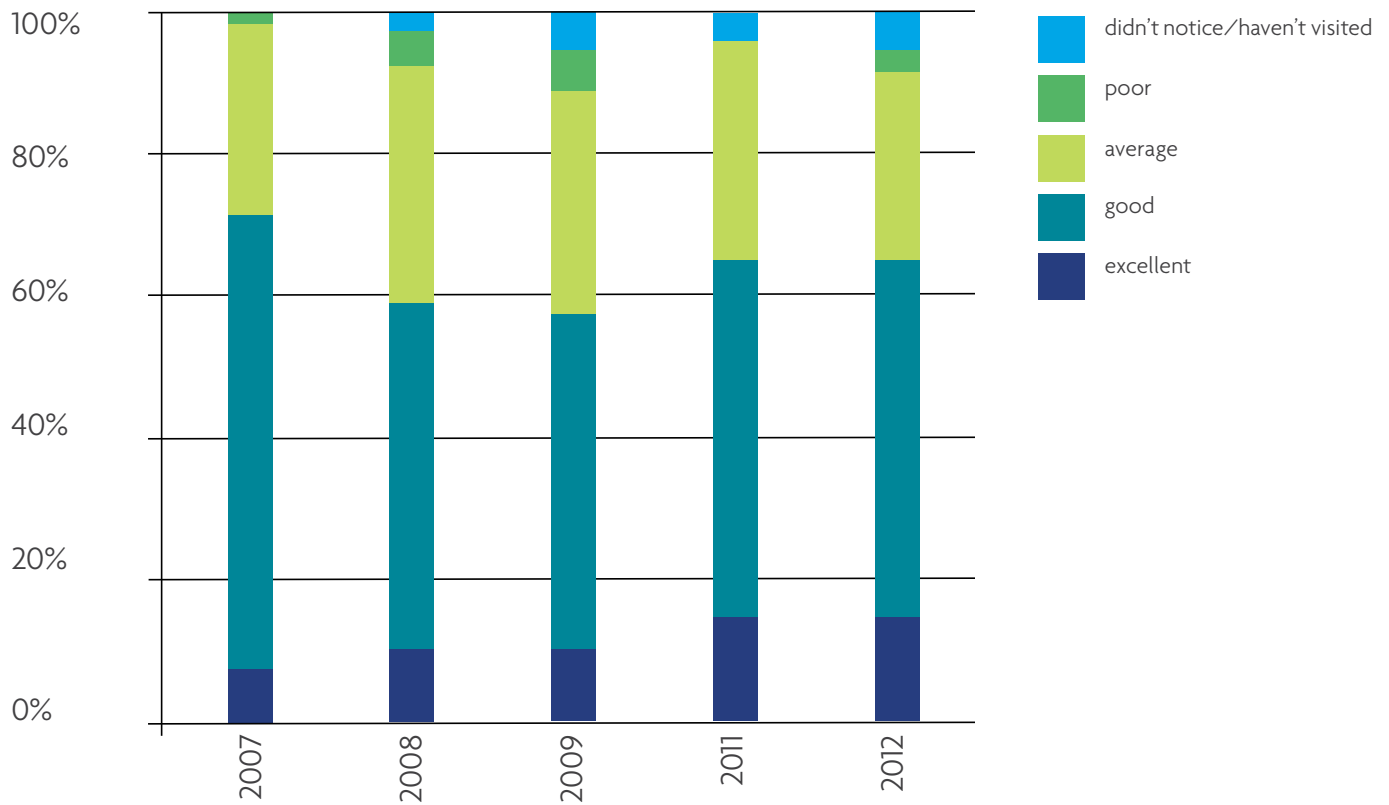
Members were asked to rate the quality of the IES website, [www.ies-uk.org.uk](http://www.ies-uk.org.uk), which had undergone a redesign in 2012.

This is an improvement on 2011 opinions when only 57.9 per cent of members rated the website as either excellent or good as compared to 62 per cent in 2012.

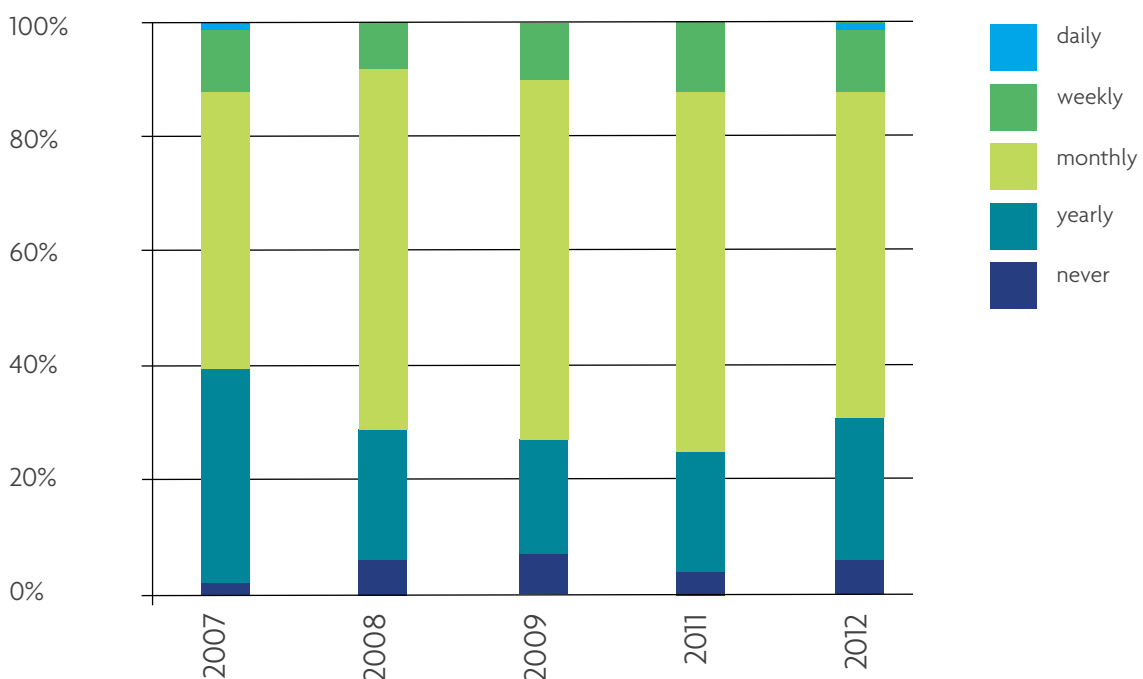
Members were asked how frequently they visit the website. The regularity with which members visit the website has increased although the proportion of members who visit the website has decreased slightly since the previous survey.



▲ Figure 08: How IES members rated the website in 2012.



▲ Figure 09: How members have rated the website since 2007.



▲ Figure 10: Annual comparison of how often members have visted the website.



## FINDINGS

The website has remained consistently highly rated by members over the last two years with 65 per cent of respondents rating it as 'excellent' or 'good'. A greater percentage of members rated it as 'excellent' in both 2011 and 2012 than in previous years.

Website use has increased since 2007, with 69 per cent of members now visiting it at least once a month. Six per cent of members report to not to have visited the website in the last twelve months.

## CONCLUSION

The website was rated as an important service by the majority of respondents. More members are now using the website regularly and it is predominantly perceived as being a good quality service.

The IES launched the re-designed website in April 2012. The new website was designed to be more engaging and interactive, enabling members to control and access their own information and submit their CPD records online. The aim of developing a new website has been to enable members and non-members to more easily find the relevant information and engage more effectively with the work of the IES. The new website will be continually developed and we are currently investigating the loading speed of the website. We are also working to launch the members' login which will enable more opportunity to discuss website content. We think this will facilitate more interactivity of web services, increase usefulness and provide members with better quality online services.

Some respondents provided general comments on the website:

"The new web site is a massive improvement"

"I do find it much easier to use and navigate now, and the content is good too (while I like to have paper journals to read I am quite pleased to be able to download so many previous years copies of the journal to use more flexibly on my Kindle!)"

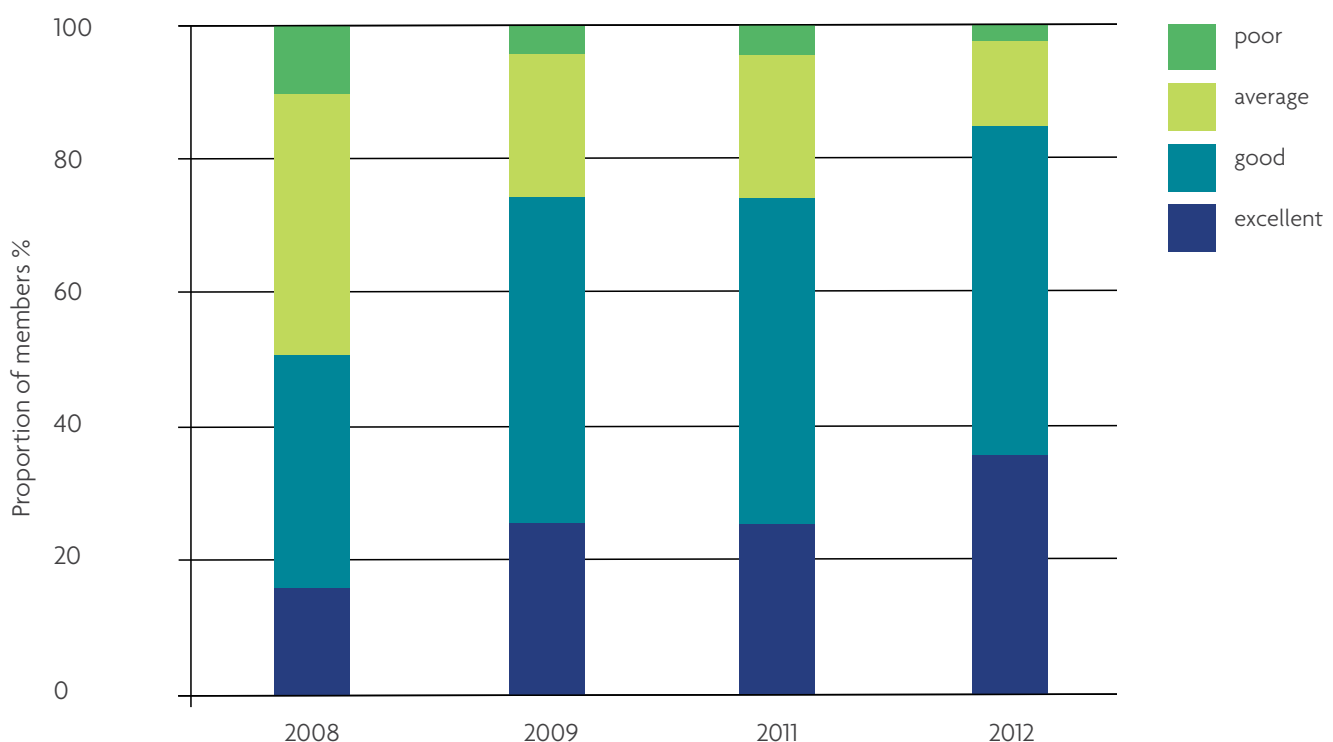
"Brilliant website and again very user friendly"

### INTERACTIONS WITH IES STAFF

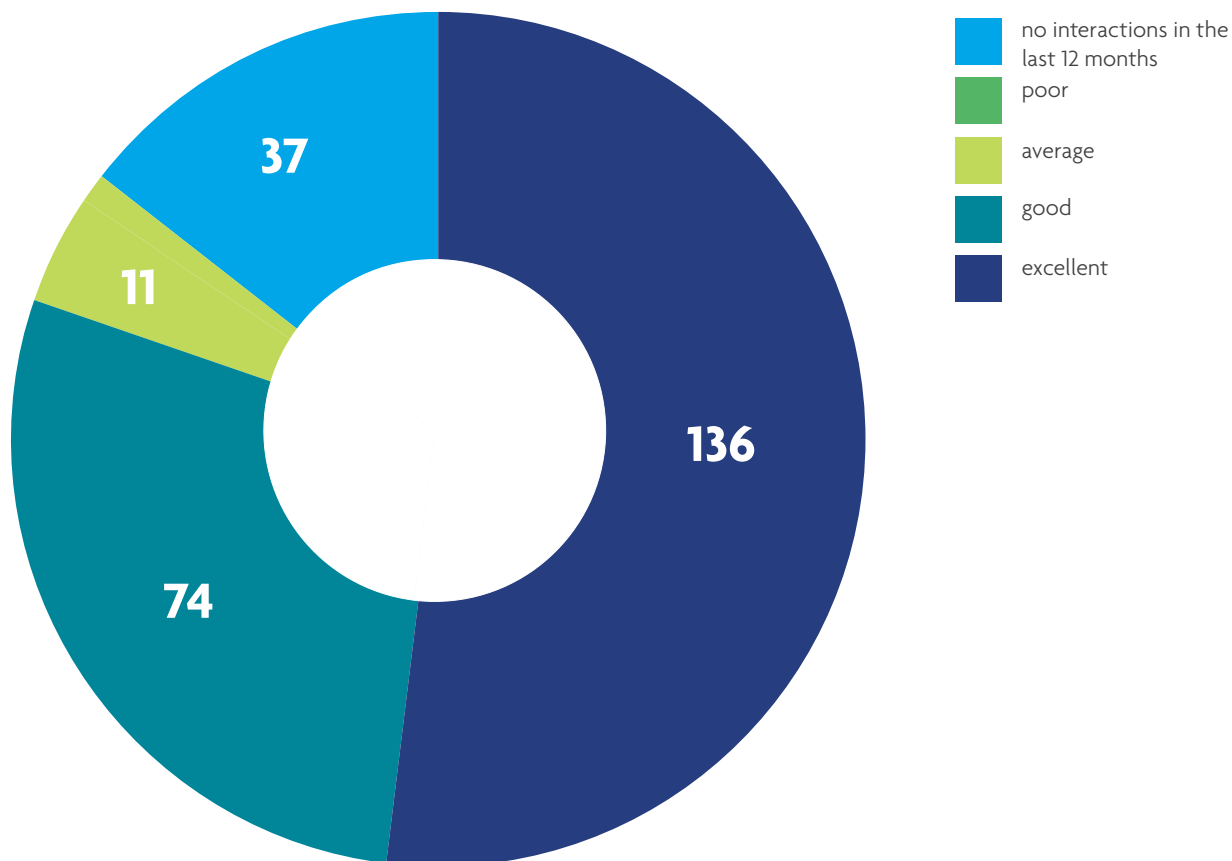
Members were asked to rate the quality of their interactions with the IES Office.

As can be seen from the graph, the rating of interactions with staff at the IES office continues to improve significantly year on year.

Respondents were also surveyed on the ability of the IES staff to answer their enquiry last time they interacted. Members who had not interacted with the office were omitted from this graph for clarity (**Figure 11**).



▲ **Figure 11: How members rated their interactions with IES Project Office staff.**



▲ **Figure 12: How members rated their interactions with the IES Project Office.**

### FINDINGS

The quality of members' interactions with IES staff has remained consistently high. A large majority (84 per cent) of respondents who interacted with IES staff in 2012 rated their interaction as either 'excellent' or 'good'. We believe that this reflects the effective running of the IES office and the professional and helpful approach of IES office staff.

When considering the ability of IES staff to answer members' enquiries, the results are also very positive. In 2012 93 per cent of respondents who had interacted with the IES office stated it was good or excellent which is consistent with the result that was found in 2011.

### CONCLUSION

Over the years the IES has consistently offered good levels of customer service. The increase in 'excellent' rated interactions and responses to enquiries reflects the continuing improvement in customer service experienced by members. This can be attributed to an increase in capacity in the IES office which has improved response times to enquiries, and to the increased knowledge the staff hold which enables them to successfully engage with member enquiries.

# Comments & conclusions

Responses to the membership survey 2012 indicate strong satisfaction from the majority of IES members for key membership services.

One concluding comment upon reflection of responses from members in relation to services is that the newsletter isn't important for as many members as it could be and ways to make this more engaging for members to be addressed.

The question of regional representation has been raised again by members this year as it was in 2011. There is evidently demand for regional events and for the IES to report more on regional issues. The IES is keen to address this demand and encourages members to get in touch and discuss ideas with a member of the project team.

Comments about the environmental SCIENTIST have been predominantly positive in 2012 and the new format has been well received. The least popular journal in 2012 was 'Extinction' – it is possible that this is because of the proportion of members who are actively involved in conservation within the IES membership and thus members' professional interests.

The survey requested members' ideas for future publications. Suggestions for journal topics made by members appear to feature a global dimension as increasingly of concern for members, highlighting the importance of the interconnectedness of the environmental sciences.

Members continue to be interested in pursuing CPD-based events through the IES. The project office is keen to take suggestions from the membership as to the types of event that will be professionally useful for them to attend and will continue to actively encourage feedback from the membership.

Similarly, the IES will strive to arrange and run more events outside of London as demand from the membership demonstrates where the potential events could be held and the topics that could be covered.

The Project Office will continue to work towards delivering high-quality membership services both in terms of interest and professional relevance and actively encourage members to be in touch with feedback, comments and suggestions.

If you have any comments or suggestions please contact the Project Office [[enquiries@ies-uk.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@ies-uk.org.uk)].

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