

Exploring parents’ views on audiology services for children with temporary hearing loss

Insights from the ‘Deaf Children Today 2025’ Survey

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Introduction

Most research on childhood deafness focuses on permanent hearing loss. Less is known about the experiences of families supporting a child with temporary hearing loss. In 2025, the National Deaf Children's Society's annual 'Deaf Children Today' survey asked parents and carers of children with any level of temporary hearing loss about their views on their audiology services.

Methodology

Every year, the National Deaf Children's Society runs a survey called 'Deaf Children Today.' The survey aims to collect the views, experiences, reflections and beliefs of parents of children aged 0 to 25 with any level of deafness or hearing loss.

The most recent 'Deaf Children Today' survey ran for 3 weeks in January 2025. It included open- and closed-ended questions about a range of topics, including parents' experiences of audiology services. Responses to closed-ended questions were analysed through descriptive statistical analysis. Open-ended questions were analysed through reflexive thematic analysis. The survey was promoted via email, social media, newsletters and word of mouth, both directly (through the National Deaf Children's Society) and indirectly (through other stakeholders).

This year, a total of 911 parents completed the survey. Of those, 831 said their child had been seen by an audiologist in the past year. These respondents were presented with follow-up questions about their experiences of audiology services. Through customer segmentation, responses were split into distinct sub-groups based on the child's level or type of hearing loss in the analysis process. We were particularly interested in the responses of parents of children with mild, unilateral, and temporary hearing loss, as previous surveys have shown that these groups often have different experiences of audiology services compared with parents of children with moderate, severe and profound permanent hearing loss.

- Sub-group A: Parents of a child with mild hearing loss only (27 respondents)
- Sub-group B: Parents of a child with unilateral hearing loss only (84 respondents)
- Sub-group C: Parents of a child with temporary hearing loss only (56 respondents)

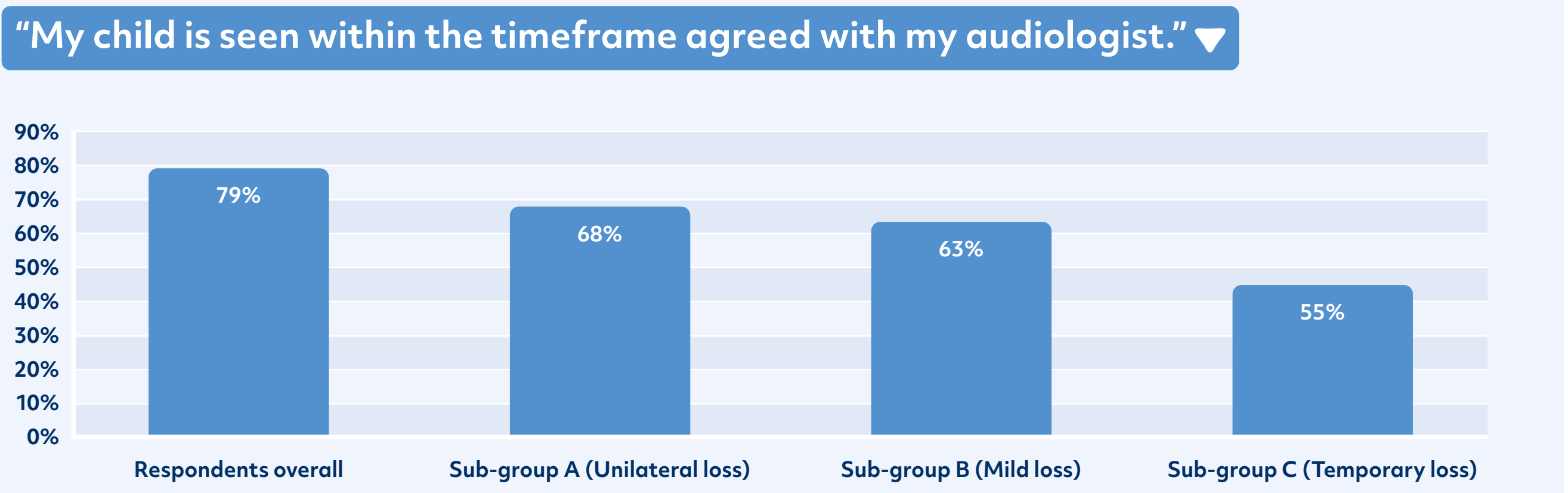
The parents in sub-group C gave markedly different responses to 4 out of 5 of the closed-ended questions about their child's audiologist compared with all other sub-groups. These responses are presented on this poster.

Timeframes

Of the 831 respondents who said their child had been seen by an audiologist in the past year, 654 (79%) said they felt their child was seen within the timeframe agreed with their audiologist. Amongst the sub-groups, the percentages of parents who agreed with this statement were as follows.

- Sub-group A (unilateral): 68 (81%)
- Sub-group B (mild): 17 (63%)
- Sub-group C (temporary): 31 (55%)

This would suggest that **parents of children with temporary hearing loss are least likely to be seen within the timeframe agreed with their audiologist.**



Parents who felt their child had not been seen within the timeframe agreed with their audiologist were directed to a follow-up question asking how they felt the long waiting times for appointments impacted their child. This was an open-ended question. Of the 22 parents of children with a temporary hearing loss who responded that their child had not been seen within the timeframe agreed by their audiologist, 8 parents (36%) **felt this had negatively impacted their child's speech and language development.**

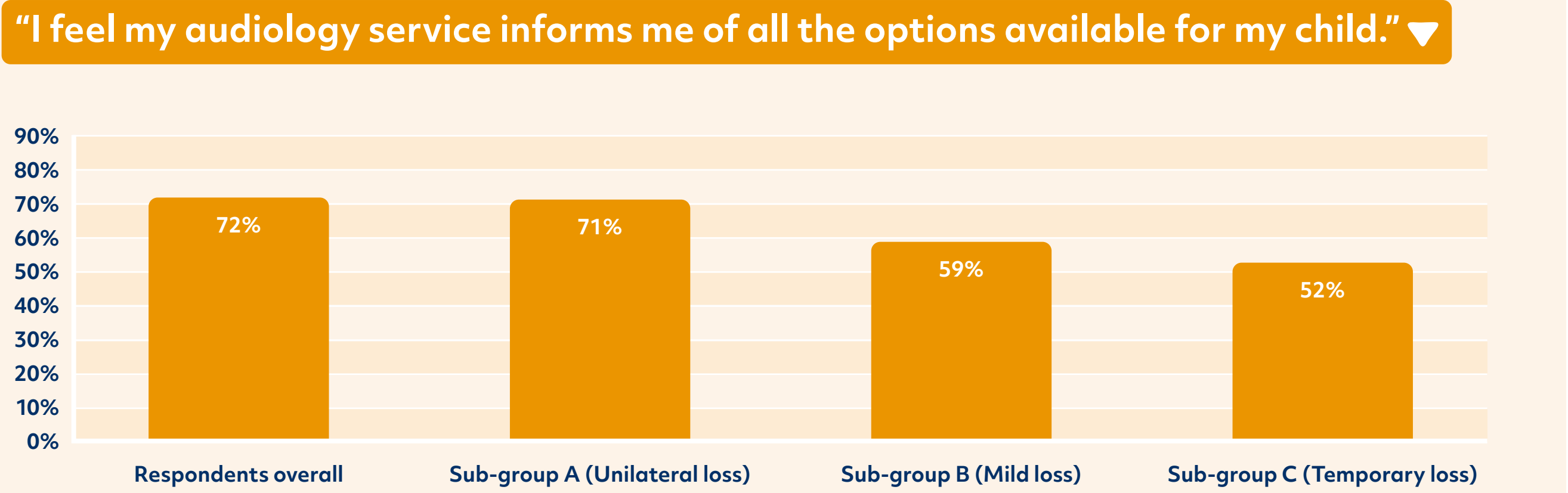


Informed choice

Of the 831 respondents who said their child had been seen by an audiologist in the past year, 598 (72%) said their audiology service informs them of all options available to their child. Amongst the sub-groups, the percentages of parents who agreed with this statement were as follows.

- Sub-group A (unilateral): 60 (71%)
- Sub-group B (mild): 16 (59%)
- Sub-group C (temporary): 39 (52%)

Again, it appears that, of all the sub-groups, parents of children with temporary hearing loss are least satisfied with their audiology service. They are **least likely to feel their service gives them information on all the options available to their child.**



Over to you!

Take a minute to reflect on this audience's experiences.

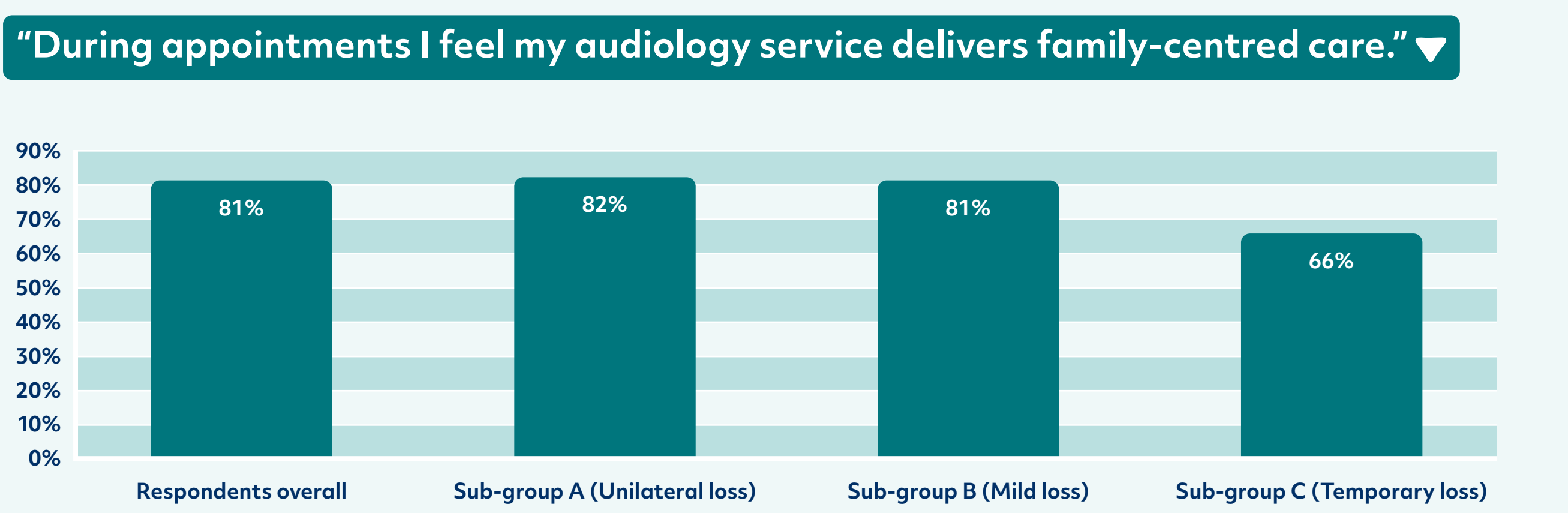
- Why do you think parents of children with temporary hearing loss feel this way?
- What may have contributed to this?
- What could you do to improve audiology services for children with temporary hearing loss?

Family-centred care

Out of the 831 respondents, 675 (81%) said they felt their audiology service delivers family-centred care. We defined family-centred care as 'considering the child's needs, engaging with the child during appointments, or making parents feel listened to.' Amongst the sub-groups, the percentages of parents who agreed with this statement were as follows.

- Sub-group A (unilateral): 69 (82%)
- Sub-group B (mild): 22 (81%)
- Sub-group C (temporary): 37 (66%)

This would suggest that **parents of children with temporary hearing loss are least likely to view their audiological care as family-centred.**

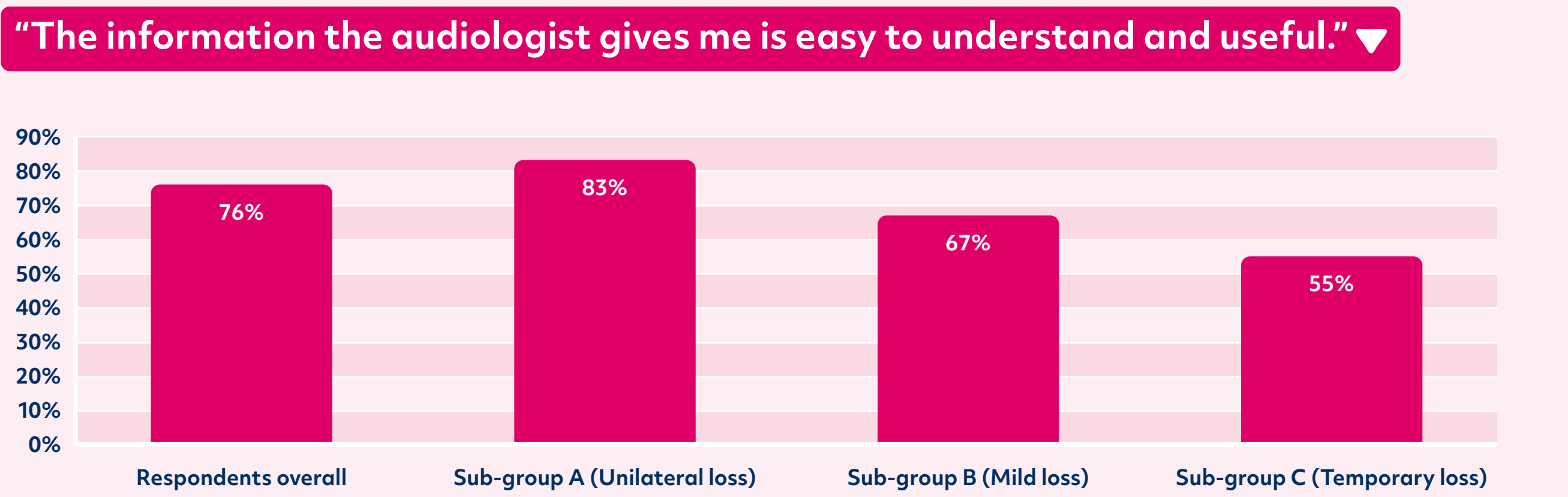


Useful information that's easy to understand

Of the 831 respondents who said their child had been seen by an audiologist in the past year, 635 (76%) said the audiologist provided them with information that was easy to understand and useful. Amongst the sub-groups, the percentages of parents who agreed with this statement were as follows.

- Sub-group A (unilateral): 70 (83%)
- Sub-group B (mild): 18 (67%)
- Sub-group C (temporary): 31 (55%)

This would suggest that **parents of children with temporary hearing loss consider their audiologist's information to be least valuable to them.**



* The 5th question concerned audiologists' deaf awareness. Here, responses from parents to a child with mild deafness diverged most sharply from the rest, followed by responses from parents to children with a temporary hearing loss.