



ACTIVE BREATHING COURSE

IMPACT REPORT 2023



ACTIVE BREATHING COURSE

6 online classes in a course

helping people recover from the impact of Covid-19 and other respiratory illnesses who have ongoing symptoms of breathlessness, fatigue, anxiety or disordered breathing, in a supportive small group environment.

Course Content

ABC has 4 main teaching blocks each week which are led by expert tutors. Participants are given a pack of resources, course manual and online access to recorded videos to aid practice during and after the course.

- 1. Diaphragmatic Breathing:** Deep breathing exercises engaging the contracting of the diaphragm. This creates space within the rib cage for lungs to fill with air, increasing lung capacity.
- 2. Strength Building By Resistance:** Phonating (creating sound) through a straw is an established technique to strengthen your breathing power and in turn strengthen the lung muscles. Phonating through a straw is easy and accessible.
- 3. Singing For Life:** Engaging in singing exercises helps to reduce shortness of breath by strengthening the muscles used to breathe. It also has a wonderful benefit of releasing endorphins that reduce anxiety and stress.
- 4. Creativity & Recovery:** Engaging in a fun activity helps take the mind off the difficulty of things when recovery is maybe not going as fast as one would like! The activities are all based around breathing and helping to improve lung function but range from creating art to blowing balloons!

Since we began in
April 2021:

510

participants referred
to courses

50

courses run

9

expert tutors trained and
leading sessions

6

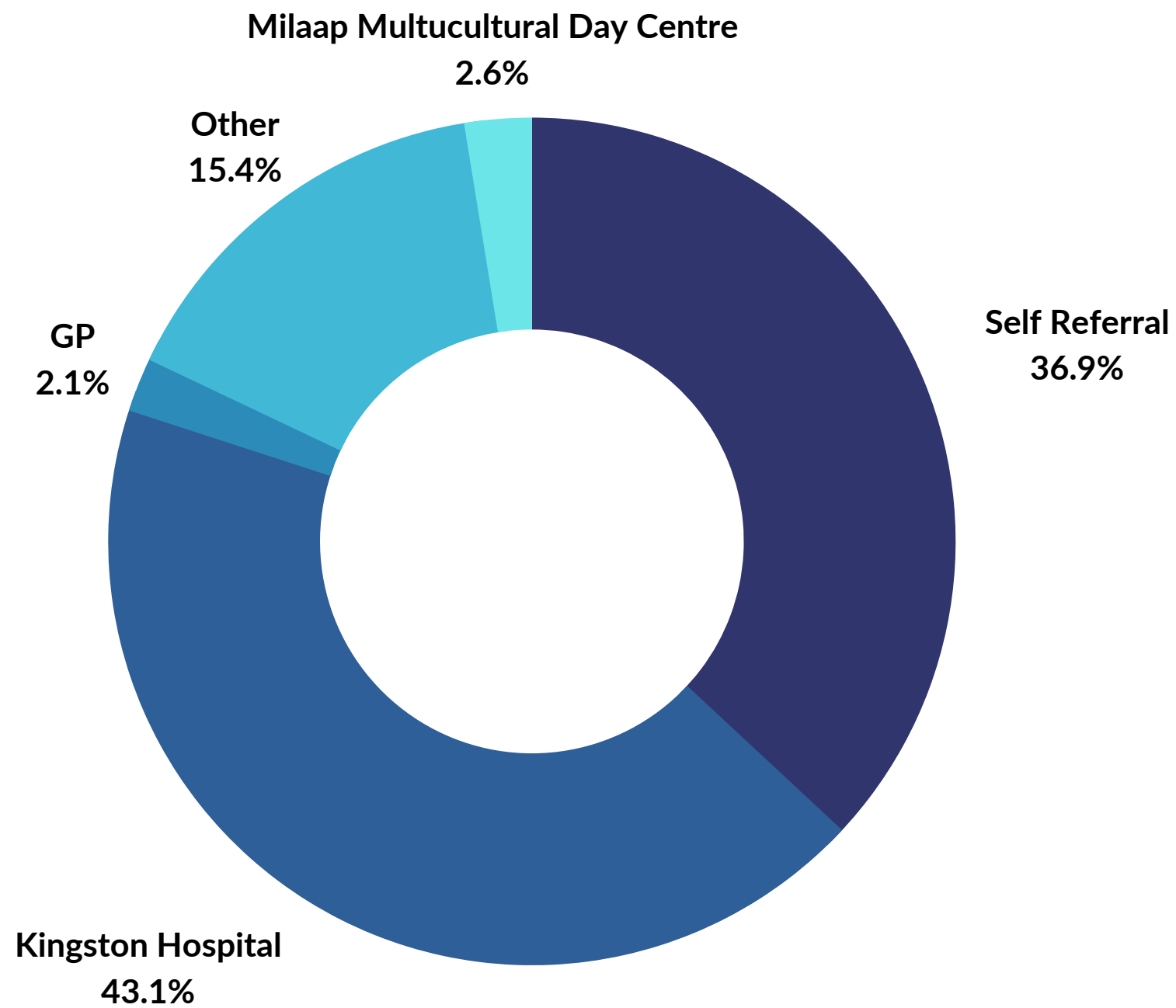
amazing volunteers
helped with
administration

Our UK reach

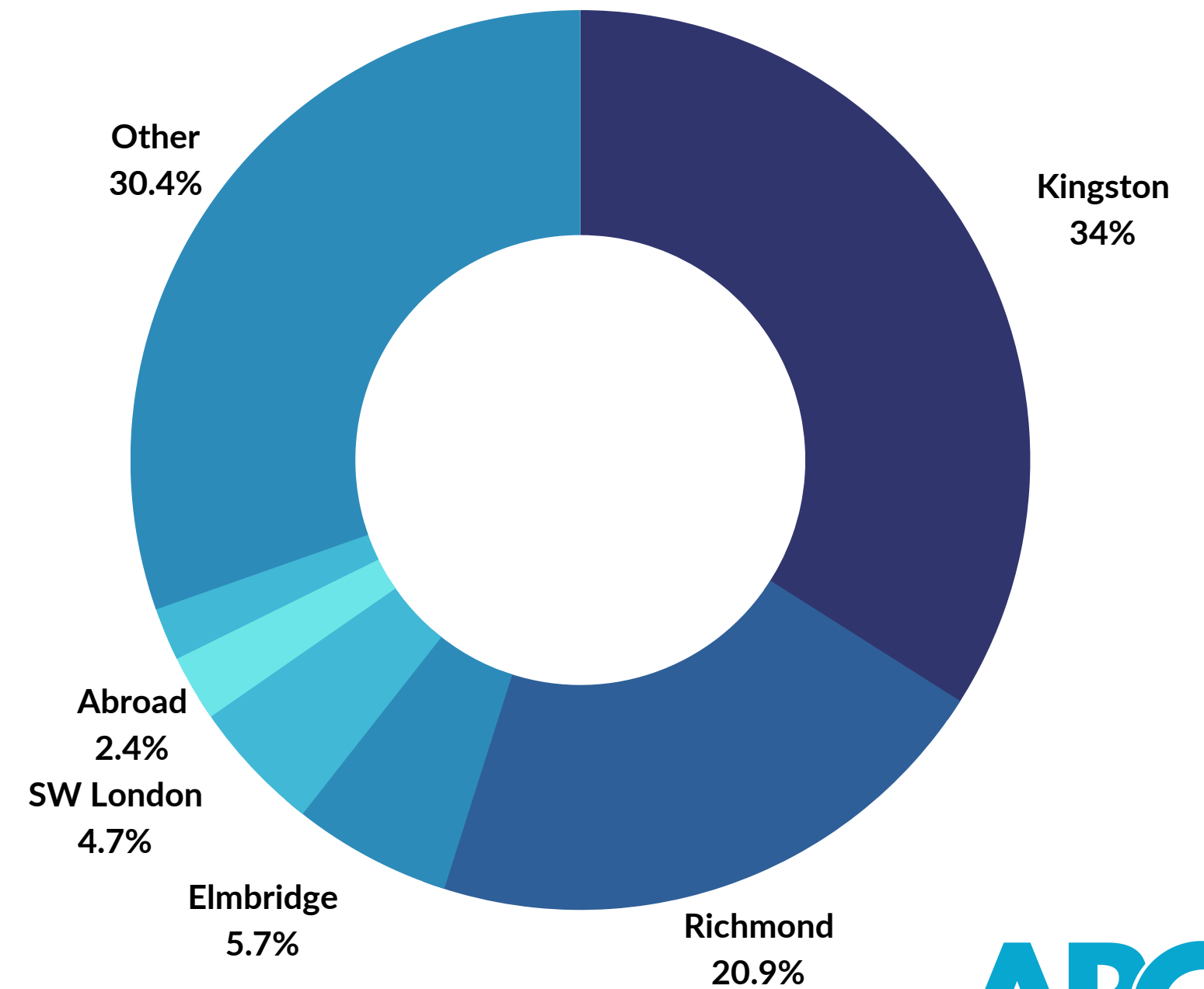
Red dots show where ABC participants have come from...all over the UK!



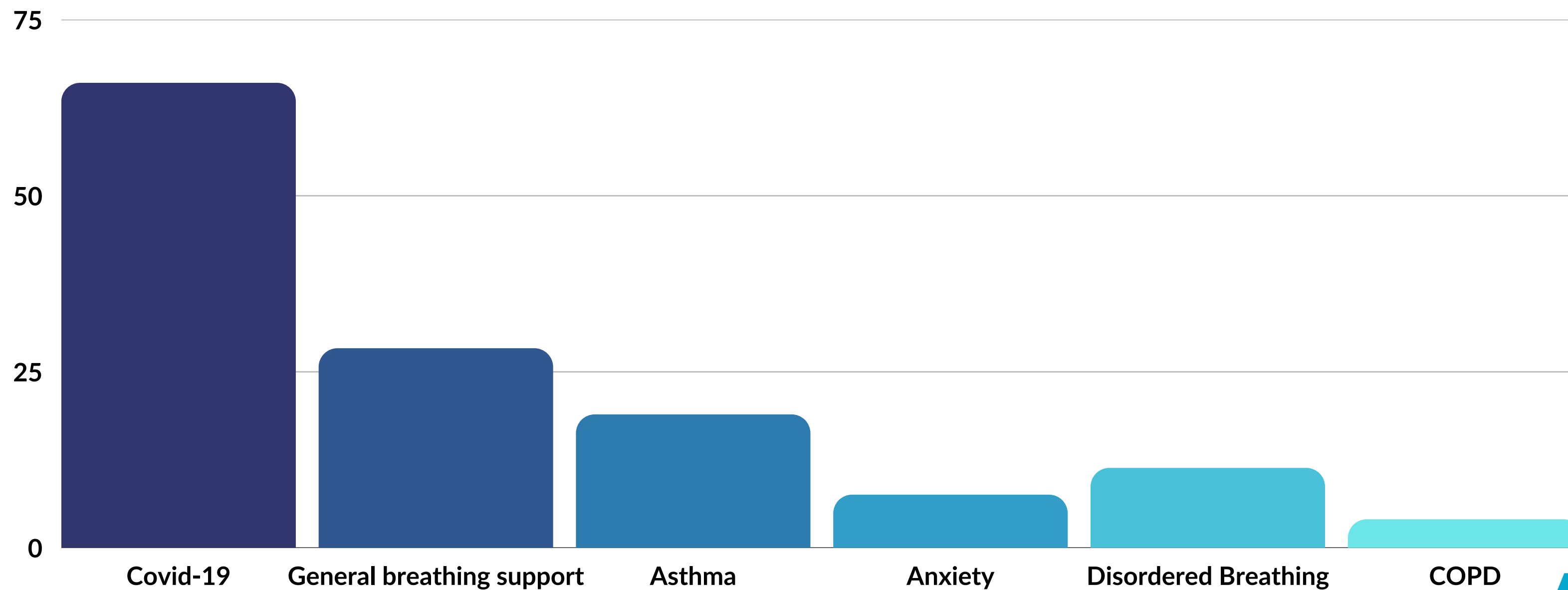
Referral organisations



Referral Boroughs



Reasons for referral in %



(From Evaluation form)

Our Funders

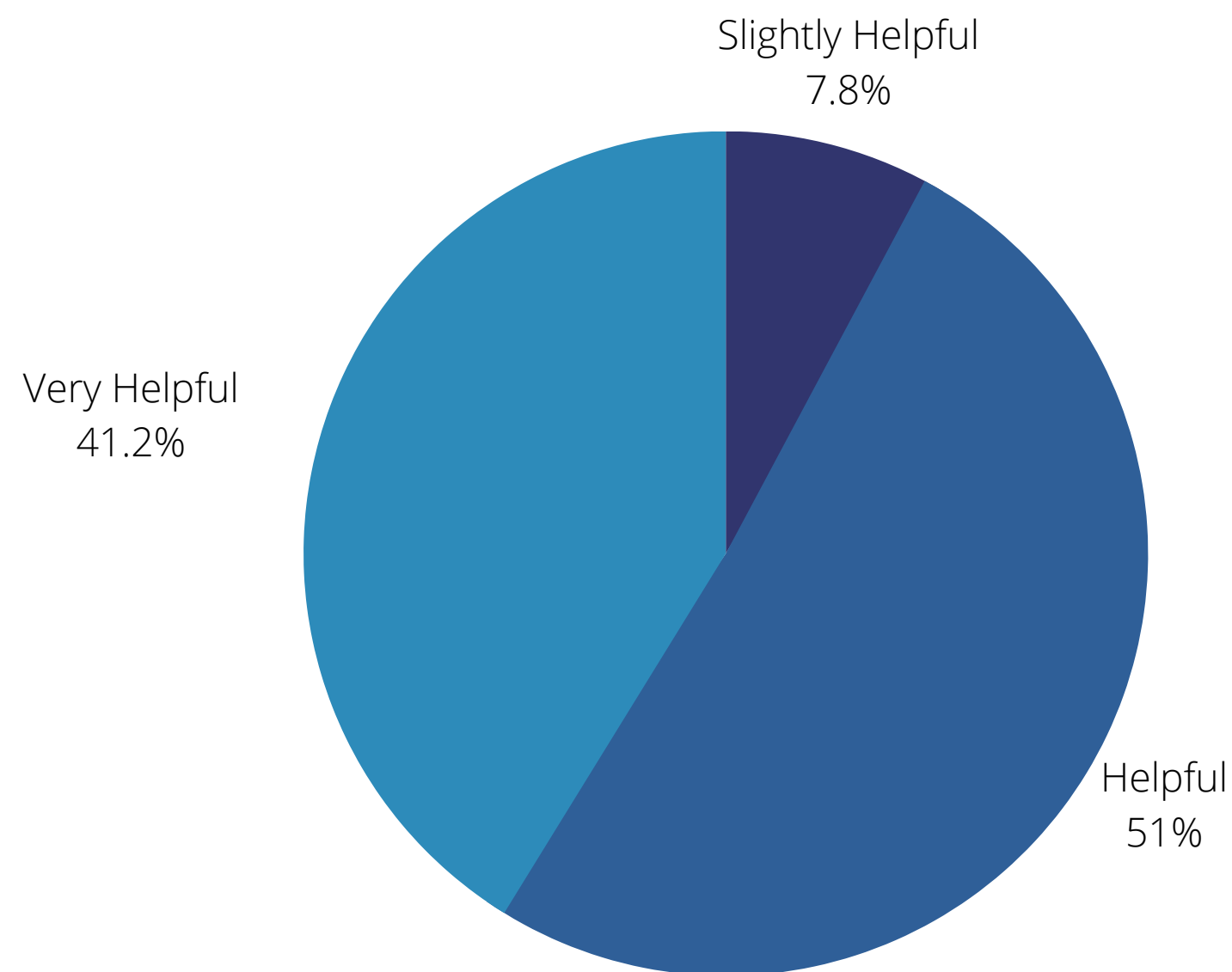
Total funding secured so far = £40,000



Course Feedback

88.6% of course attendees found ABC helpful /very helpful in managing their condition

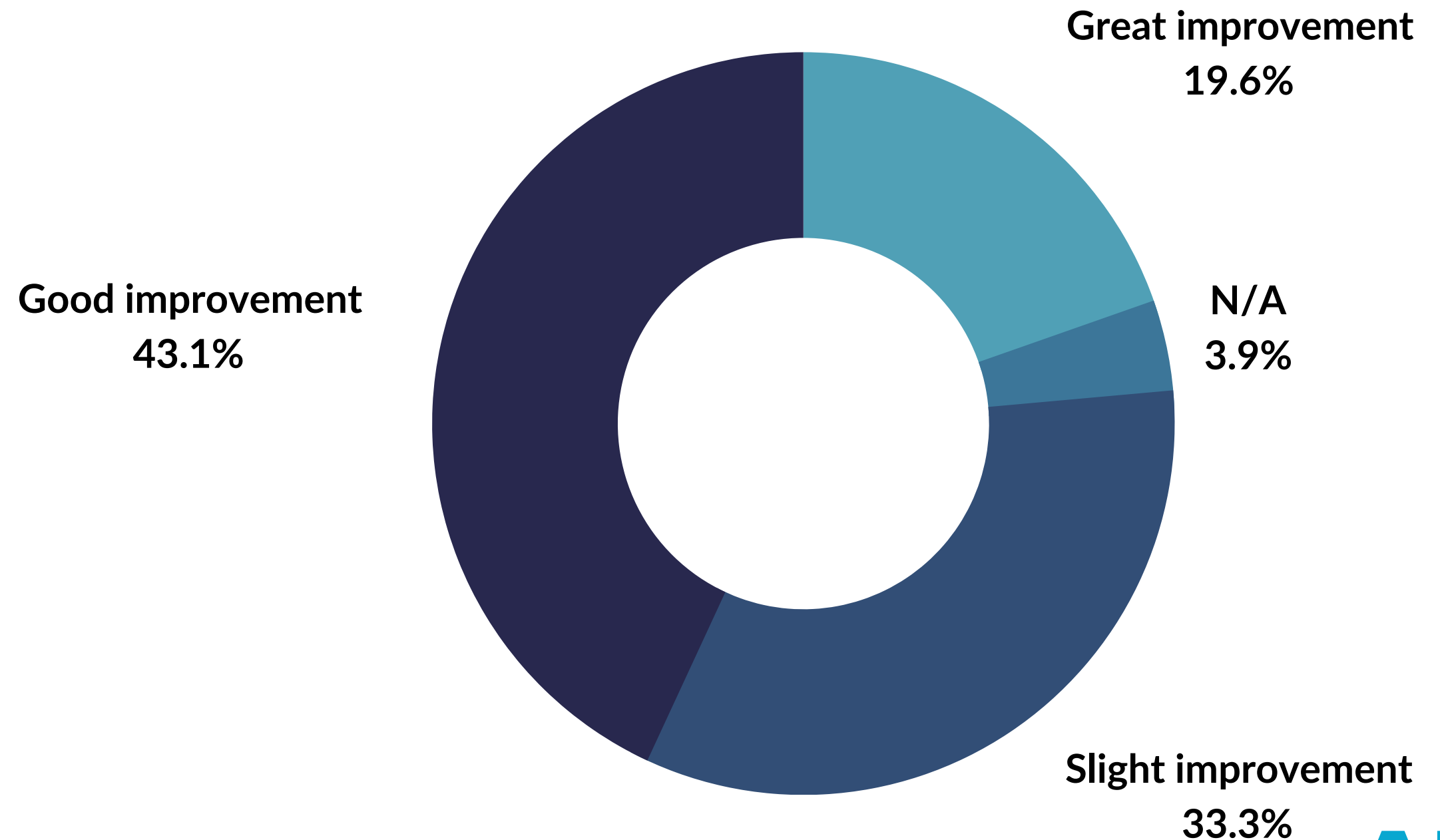
Feedback: Have the exercises from the course helped you in managing your condition?



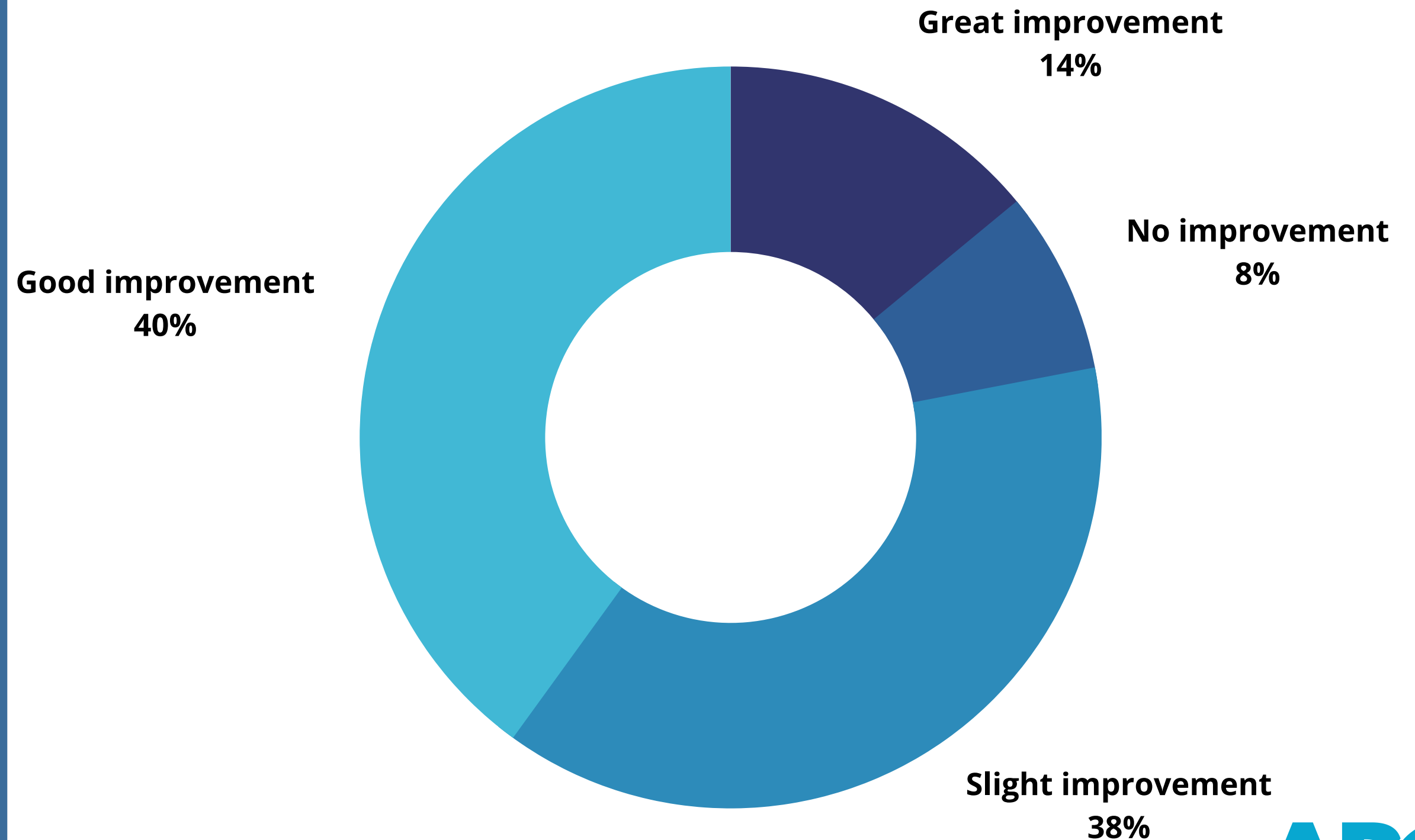
Breathing Capacity

**Thanks to ABC, 60.4% of
course attendees found great or
good improvement to their
overall breathing capacity.**

Feedback: Have you noticed an improvement in your breathing capacity (breathing deeply from your diaphragm) since beginning the course?



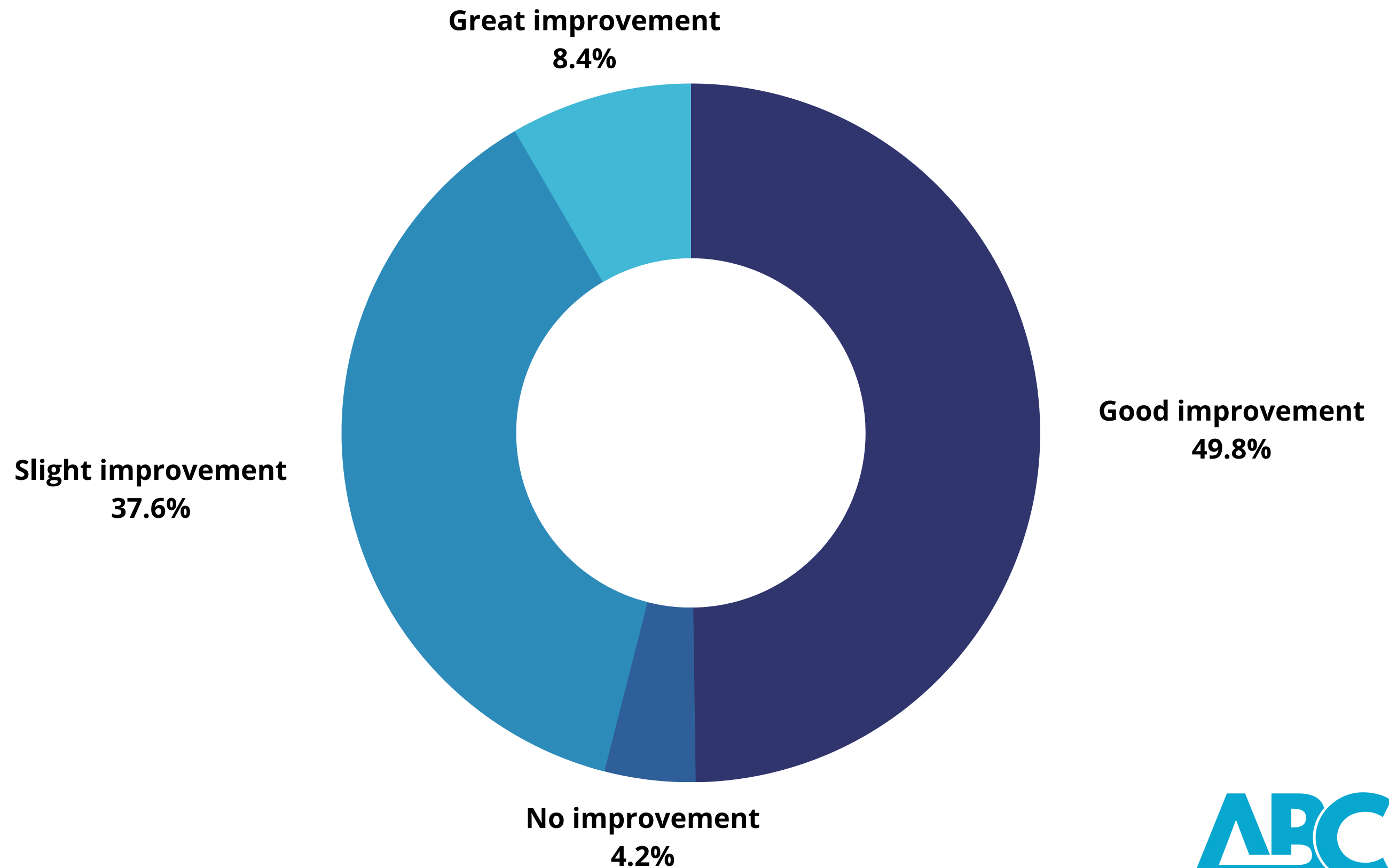
Feedback: Since the beginning of the course, have you noticed an improvement in feeling breathless?



Anxiety Levels

**94.3% of course attendees
struggling with anxiety found
some / good improvement in
managing anxiety attacks thanks
to the course exercises**

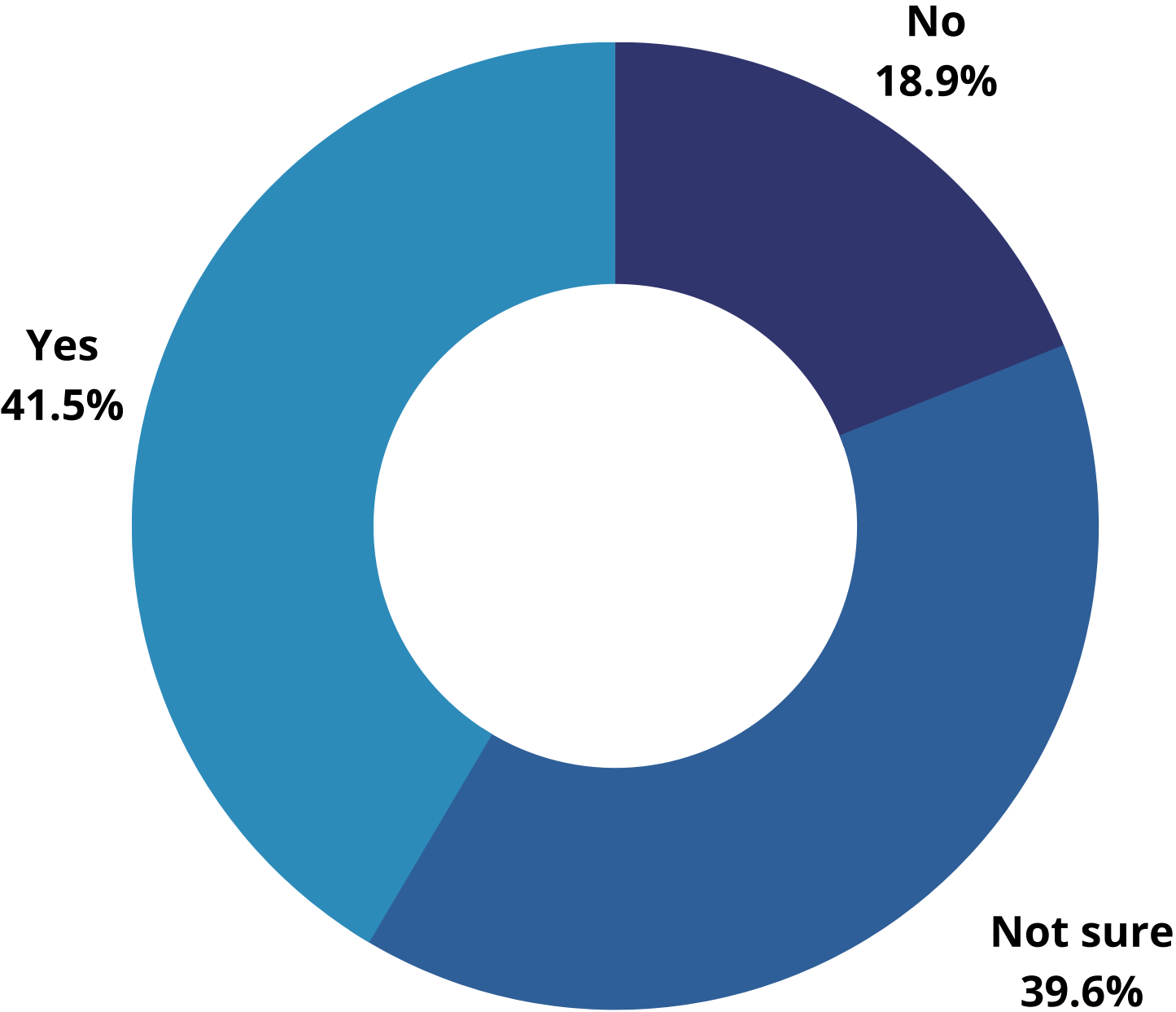
Feedback:
Have you
found that the
course
exercises have
helped
improved your
overall anxiety
levels?



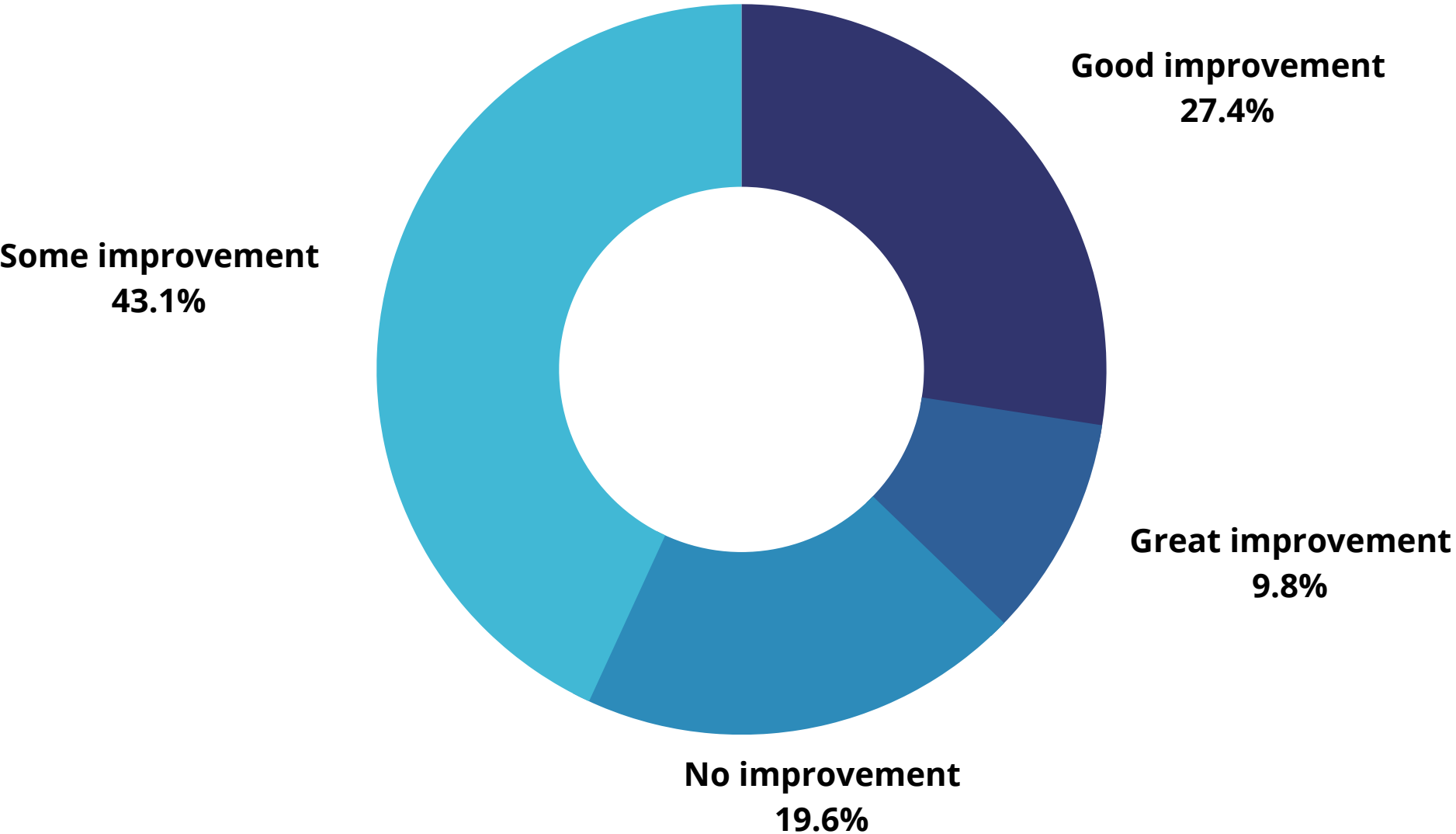
Energy & Mood Levels

**77.3% of course attendees saw
some improvement / good / great
improvement in their energy.
levels since starting ABC**

Feedback: When you did the sessions, did you notice any improvement in your energy levels?

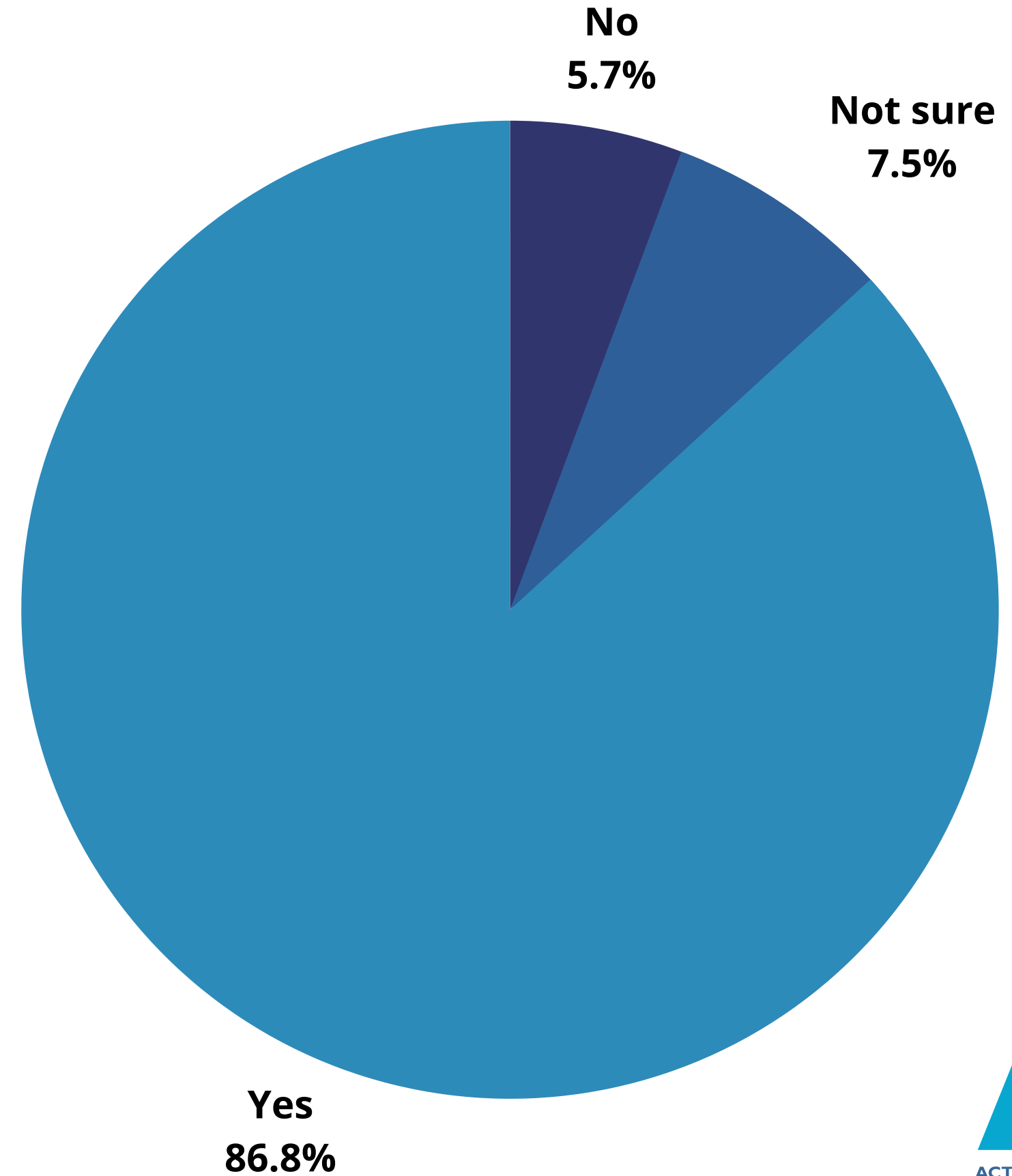


Feedback: Have you noticed any improvement in your overall energy levels since beginning the course?

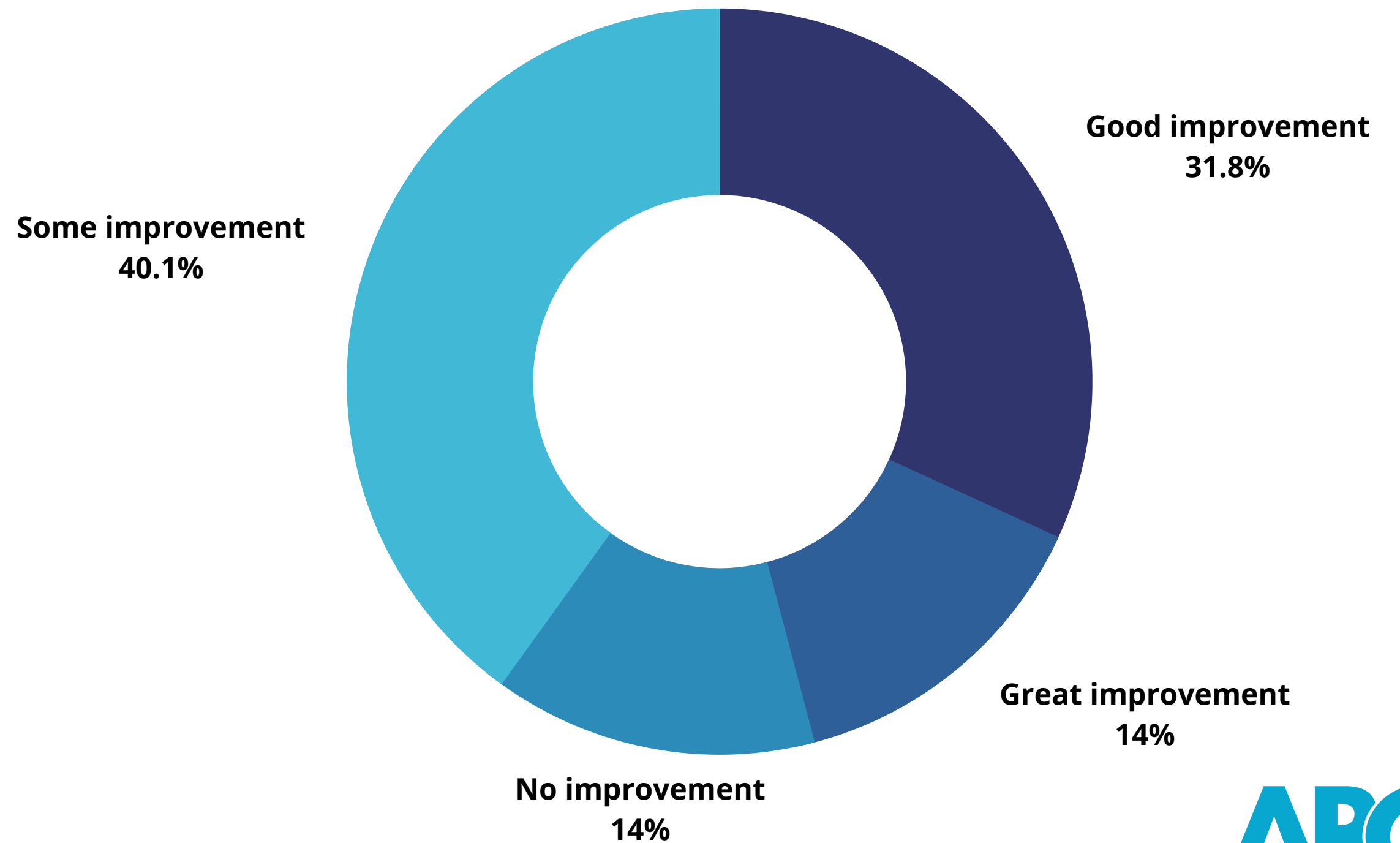


**86.8% of course attendees
found that their mood lifted
whilst participating in the
ABC sessions**

**Feedback: When
you participate
in the sessions,
did you find that
they lifted your
mood?**



Feedback:
Have you
noticed any
improvement
in your overall
mood since
beginning the
course?



Case Study 1

Charlotte, age 35-44, referred himself after being fatigued from Long Covid. She found:

- The exercises very helpful in managing his condition
- Good improvement in his breathing capacity
- Good improvement from breathlessness
- Good improvement in managing his anxiety and energy levels
- She now continues to use the techniques taught weekly, finding them *"All were useful and beneficial, but the fun activities at the end were great"*

She said:

"It was nice to be in a group with others going through similar experiences. It was something to put in the diary to look forward to. I've found the activities helped and Addassa was fab."

Case Study 3

Mike, a 45-54 year old was referred by Kingston Hospital after experiencing Long Covid. He found:

The variety of activities 'was perfect' when asked what he particularly enjoyed. He commented particularly on the exercises, saying he *"saw benefit from blowing bubbles into water for added resistance, blowing paint across a page, great fun and with a genuine health benefit"*.

He also said:

"The number of participants seemed about right, Ruth (ABC tutor) was fabulous at facilitating and guiding us through each of the modules. It was structured and relaxed, but most of all it was fun. What seemed like pointless actions ended up being fun and with benefits to health. Goes to show, you get out what you put in."

Case Study 2

Merel, 35-44 years old, referred herself as she was suffering from breathlessness following Covid Nineteen. She found:

- The resources included in the course very helpful
- She felt confident to use the exercises after the course finished
- Good improvement from breathlessness
- She found the exercises helpful in managing her condition

She said:

"I thought the course set up was really well done. The combination of breathing exercises with creative/art 'therapy' was lovely. It made it less like a chore and much more playful. Exactly what I needed!"

Supporting Research

Links for supporting research:

- British Lung Foundation run a Breathe Easy course - similar concept but run in-person (pre-Covid) and has more of a singing weighting to the course: <https://www.blf.org.uk/support-for-you/singing-for-lung-health>
- A volume edited by Felicity Baker and Sylka Uhlig entitled "Voicework in Music Therapy" (Jessica Kingsley, 2011) supports with research, as well as more recent research on the use of music and singing in recovery of breathing functions after illness or injury (see, e.g., Goldenberg, R. B. (2018). Singing Lessons for Respiratory Health: A Literature Review. Journal of Voice, 32(1), 85-94)
- <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/28461167/>.
- <http://www.bris.ac.uk/news/2018/january/singing-breathing.html>
- More recently: English National Opera lessons for long Covid sufferers, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-55819360>



ABC

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VOH.ORG.UK/ABC