



**Care
Opinion**

What's your story?

Annual Review

of stories told about NHS Scotland

Services in 2022-2023

**Branching out
and
putting down roots**

**More stories, more staff
listening, more learning
and change**

Table of contents

01 Introduction



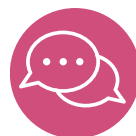
03 CEO Overview



04 Some of our most read stories



06 Keeping the conversation going...



08 Supporting the practice of Realistic Medicine across Scotland



10 Three Health Boards share their 2022/23 Care Opinion Journey



14 Your Care Opinion Scotland team



17 Journey of Growth



18 Activity across NHS Scotland Services and NHS Boards: 2022/23 Infographics



36 Contact us



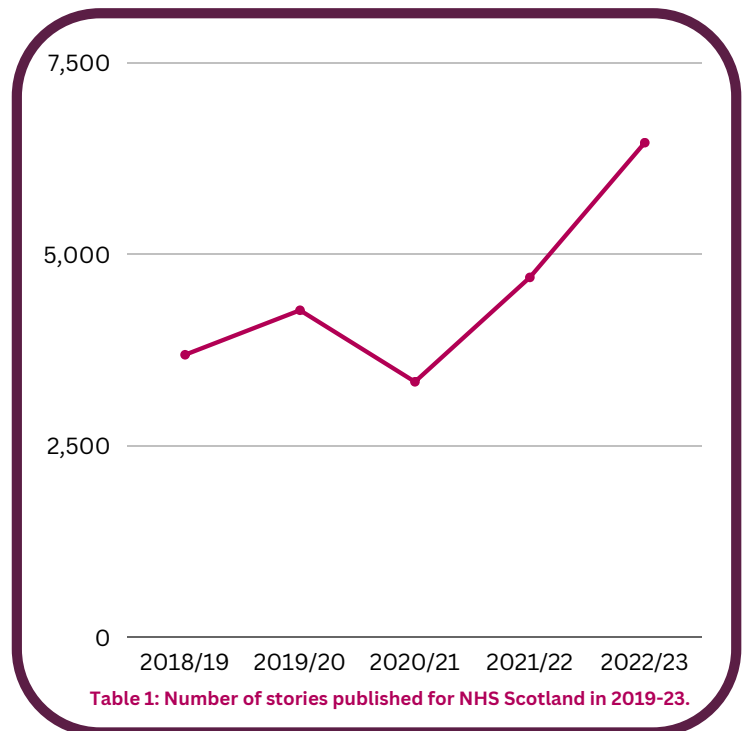
Introduction



Fraser Gilmore, Executive Director and Head of Scotland

The theme for our 2022/23 annual review of “**Branching out and putting down roots**” is an apt one, based on all of the brilliant engagement we have seen across Scotland. Like a growing tree that takes up space, reaches to the sky and with roots permeating the earth, we have seen the use of Care Opinion by the public and staff increase across NHS Boards, and become embedded in practice and culture.

Feedback is a gift and as such, we are grateful to the patients, family members, guardians, carers and other member of the public who shared the **6,455 stories** we received in 2022/23. All of these story authors wanted to thank staff and services when things went well and offer opportunities for learning and change for when things did not go so well. This **37% increase** in stories from 2021/22 really shows the work that staff and services have put in to promoting storytelling on Care Opinion, as well as developing a continued trust in the platform.



We have also seen a growth in the number of **staff listening**, responding and learning from stories shared by the public, which has now risen by **25%** to **over 3,460**. This, along with Health Boards increasing the number and variety of services listed on Care Opinion, has cultivated more opportunities for the public to share feedback and for staff and services to engage.

We are delighted to see that Care Opinion stories are widely read across Scotland, not only by staff and services, but researchers, educators, policy makers, civil servants, the third sector and, importantly the public. All of these people have a place in helping make our healthcare services better for everyone. In 2022/23 we saw an **increase in the numbers of stories read and this rose by around 6% to 955,826.**

At Care Opinion we have also been growing and developing. Throughout the year, we have continued to offer and improve training as part of our online programme and created bespoke sessions for staff and services.

We attended and hosted many events and two conferences, highlighting the great work of Healthcare services across the UK, supported and promoted new research on online feedback and engaged teams with our ever growing menu of guides and materials. We also never stop developing the platform itself, constantly striving to make Care Opinion more safe and easy for the public and staff to use with a consistent aim to create and improve features based on the needs of all users.



In November 2022, we were delighted to hit the milestone of **more than 30,000 stories shared about NHS Scotland services.** To celebrate this milestone National Clinical Director, Jason Leitch shared the following:

“The experience of patients, families and carers is crucial to the staff of the health and care service. Care Opinion has unlocked these experiences and brought them to the light to allow celebration and improvement. It has been the most important person-centred change in the last few years.”

As we travel **through 2023/24**, we are delighted that we have **already surpassed 35,000 stories** on Care Opinion. Each of which is gift from a member of the public and an opportunity to listen, learn and improve.

It’s all about what we learn from each story, so I thought I would end with a quote from a family member and someone who is a nurse themselves, who shared a beautiful story about the passing of their father:

“We go along in life on wards, ER and outpatients, doing our jobs and sometimes we need to stop and think when chaos and stress are all around us, when we feel we achieve nothing and what is the point of it all! That so many families like mine watch you and think ‘I am grateful you are here, I am grateful for the care you give to your patients and families every day’. We matter because you show us how much you care.”

CEO Overview of this year

At Care Opinion we love a good metaphor, especially when it expands our understanding. Healthcare language often seems to suggest the NHS is a vehicle: driving improvement, monitoring dashboards, delivering care packages. But this is a limited and limiting view of what care means to people. Instead, our metaphor for this report is one of organic growth and interdependence, and of slow but steady maturing.



James Munro, CEO

Care Opinion exists to create learning and change in health services, and our approach relies on the idea that the stories people share inform and enrich the everyday thinking of thousands of staff providing hundreds of different services. Sharing stories widely, and easily, is at the heart of our approach.



So it is extremely encouraging that in Scotland, Care Opinion has now been adopted by all the territorial health boards and a growing number of health and social care partnerships too. At the same time, interest in using the platform to support professional education and development is growing, as evidenced by the strong Scottish attendance at our 2023 education conference. And alongside this, connections with Scotland's academic and policy communities are growing too. We hope our policy webinar in October 2023 will nurture this interest.

As online feedback becomes widespread and accepted across the system we hope that it, in turn, can foster a culture of openness to learning and growth. A speaker at our spring conference noted that Care Opinion changes culture in a way which is “soft, organic and relaxed”. As we continue to put down roots in the Scottish healthcare landscape, and take our place in the wider ecosystem of people working to make care the best it can be, that feels like a sustaining mantra for the year ahead.



Some of our most read stories

When a member of the public shares their story on Care Opinion, we make sure that it is sent to the service(s) that their story is about, so they can learn from the feedback they have received and respond. But this isn't where the readership ends. Other staff, Politicians, Civil servants, Researchers, Educators and, of course the public also read stories too. Below are some of the most popular stories read in 2022/23.

Ward 2 Hairmyres Hospital

"Fantastic care from all staff at Hairmyres Hospital - Medical Admissions Unit, Radiology, Minor Injuries and Ward 2. A very special mention to Charge Nurse Gina on Ward 2 who went above and beyond to ensure my mum was able to access the right care [...]. I cannot thank [...] enough for their person centred care, demonstrating the values of the NHS."


771 views





739 views

"Stobhill GP Out of Hours Centre, excellent service"

"I was seen within 10 minutes of arrival by a very pleasant nurse and then by a very efficient and capable young doctor (possibly called Issy) who took my history and examined my chest, then correctly diagnosed a chest infection secondary to Covid and provided me with a full course of Amoxicillin."

"Perinatal experience"

"This was my second pregnancy and I was cared for by the excellent team of midwives in NHS Grampian, particularly Sophie, who was my named midwife, Hannah, who was the student midwife looking after me, and Ian, the midwife from midwife led Aberdeen maternity unit."



880 views

Keeping the conversation going...

Care Opinion is all about safe and transparent conversations between Authors and Staff / Services. An Author shares their story, whether positive or critical and services can respond showing how they are taking the feedback on board and learning from it.

But it doesn't always end there! Authors sometimes respond back to give further information, or in some cases to thank staff for their responses. These responses from authors really show the impact that a good reply from staff and services can have.

We know that a positive story can have an amazing impact on staff morale, but a response from an author commenting on a great response, can go even further. Here is just a small sample of what some of these authors said:



“Thank you for taking the time to respond, I am delighted that any comment written by the public is being directed to the appropriate department. My thanks to you also as The Lead Nurse, very well run unit.”

“Claire, as an ex NHS nurse, I really was blown away by this nurse led endoscopy unit. So friendly, professional, caring and empathetic.

I do hope you pass on my comments because each and every member of staff deserves praise and recognition for the work they do.”




“Every one of the staff we met were empathetic, caring and reassuring. My mother says the care went above and beyond.

Please do pass on our sincere gratitude to all concerned.”

“Thank you all for your responses. It was really a worrying time for me, however, being able to get the healthcare intervention on time for my husband was just extraordinary.

My husband is continuing to recover and has expressed his gratitude to the NHS services.”






“Of course I wish I had never had my accident in the first place, but every cloud has a silver lining and seeing professional medical teams delivering a first class service with empathy and compassion is in fact a "reward" in itself.”



“The staff nurse was also very lovely; but it is hard and unfair I think of me to single people out as every person there was smiling, kind and engaged with the patient in a very impressive way.

Really impressed and thankful as the experience was scary. Many thanks to you all again.”



“The care continues now on Ward 17. My mum is making good progress and the team are working diligently to get to the bottom of her health concerns. Thank you to everyone of you. I feel safe in the knowledge that my mum is in the best hands.”

“I appreciate you passing my comments on to the radiology staff involved. All wards and departments were all very important links in the chain to my treatment and care and I want to send some positive feedback in these challenging times.”



“It a pleasure to be able to give feedback as a channel for giving personal thanks as well as perhaps providing positive information for other patients and relatives facing the prospect of surgery.”

“Thanks to Kevin for acknowledgement and reply to my story. It was a pleasure for me to have an opportunity to perhaps reassure other patients that their well-being is not limited to physical considerations only by those “at the helm” as it were

I should add that my continuing treatment in dialysis reveals similar examples of kindness and thoughtfulness daily

Many thanks for the opportunity to express my gratitude to those concerned.”



Supporting the practice of Realistic Medicine across Scotland

As a heart doctor working in NHS Forth Valley I was familiar with feedback from patients shared as stories on the Care Opinion platform. Last year, when I became a National Clinical Advisor for Realistic Medicine, I was interested to explore how we can learn from such stories, as part of supporting the practice of Realistic Medicine across Scotland. Since person centred care and shared decision-making are central to the practice of Realistic Medicine it's been fascinating to take a deep dive into Care Opinion to see if, and when, these approaches are taking place. We've been listening to patients and looking at patterns and trends in what they say to understand if they feel they are involved in and informed about their care. I am pleased to say, through Care Opinion, we're hearing more and more from people and families and carers about what really matters to them.



Realistic Medicine is also concerned with reducing harm and waste in health and care services, tackling unwarranted variation, and continuing innovation and quality improvement across health and social care. It's clear that feedback from service users is very valuable in developing services according to these principles of care, and it's heartening to see service providers using feedback to make improvements.

I know when we first started using Care Opinion in my clinical team there was a lot of anxiety about what it might mean for us, as service providers. Despite careful moderation ensuring the focus is on the service rather than the individual, we were worried about “negative” stories and how we'd deal with the concerns which emerged. I do remember feeling disappointed by the story about my service entitled “information vacuum” which described the impact a lack of appropriate information had had on a patient. Though it was a hard read I was able to put myself in the patient's position, better understand their experience of their journey with us and recognise that we could (and should) do better. Reviewing our service, it was clearly designed more around staff than patients.

Following this feedback we took the chance to redesign elements with input from this service user. Soon we were all feeling much better about the service, and I felt better about my work too, as I had not only helped that individual but had improved things for many other future patients. Now more than 30,000 stories have been told across Scotland, for the most part, positive. I've seen that as they became more familiar with the platform, Care Opinion responders become more confident with feedback and using it to support service development, as we did. In this way, Care Opinion has become an additional tool in delivering complete patient care, since patients receive timely responses to their concerns and what emerges is more of a *conversation* which seems to work well for staff and service users alike! There is a well-established link between improved patient experience and positive staff wellbeing and I now see staff feeling more closely connected to their service users through the stories told on Care Opinion. Perhaps it's helping us to re-connect with our purpose as care givers.

Last year, the Realistic Medicine team published our Vision for Value Based Health and Care. Using Realistic Medicine principles, we are seeking to provide better value care for people, specifically care which provides outcomes which really matter to them, like my patient who found themselves in an **information vacuum**. Better value health and care is also concerned with providing sustainable, environmentally-responsible care, mindful of the available resources, and is concerned with sustainability of our health and care system as a whole.



We know that up to a fifth of the resource used in our health and care system fails to deliver meaningful outcomes for people. That's bad for patients and hard for those of us working in health and care too. Through the practice of Realistic Medicine, and informed by the stories of our service users, I believe we can develop a Culture of Stewardship around our precious resources while delivering better outcomes for patients, the healthcare system and the environment. This is the essence of Value Based Health and Care I'm excited to continue working with Care Opinion and hearing what our patients think about that!

Article was written and created by Catherine Labinjoh, National Clinical Lead for Realistic Medicine and Kirsty Elliott, VBH&C Policy Officer.



**VALUE BASED
HEALTH & CARE**

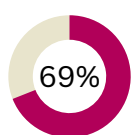
Three Health Boards share their 2022/23 Care Opinion Journey

This year we asked 3 Health Boards to share their Care Opinion journey over 2022/23 with us. We asked about their experience of using the platform over the year, to tell us about their work to promote feedback, how they were using Care Opinion stories for learning and change, and how these stories have impacted on staff culture. With so many wonderful things that boards are doing to utilise Care Opinion across Scotland, we also wanted to hear if there was anything else they wanted to highlight. Here is what they had to share:

NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde

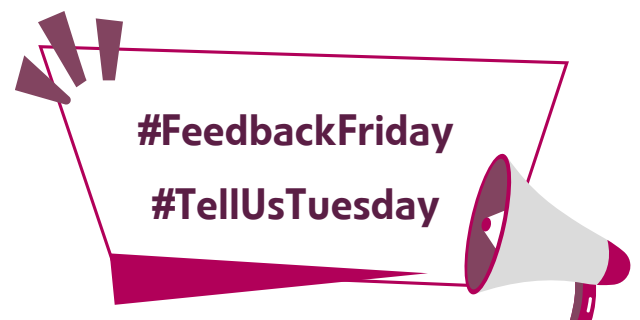


Listening to our patients, their families and carers, and hearing about their experience of care is extremely important to **NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde**. Care Opinion provides us with the opportunity to gather real-time feedback and open a two way dialogue. Person centred care can only be delivered by listening to patients and carers and finding out what matters to them. The feedback we receive helps us capture what matters to our patients and their families, identify themes for improvement, as well as celebrating what works well and providing the opportunity to acknowledge the great care provided by our staff.



During 2022/23, we received 1,542 stories - our highest ever with a 69% increase from the previous year. We ended on a high in March 2023, with a record number of patients and carers sharing their story (232).

We continue to raise awareness of Care Opinion among staff, patients, carers and their families as one of the main mechanisms for people to share their experiences about the care that is received and how we deliver our services. We increasingly used social media to raise the profile of Care Opinion, sharing people's stories during a number of awareness days, such as International Nurses Day, Midwives Day and Carers Week, alongside more regular promotion with our #FeedbackFriday and #TellUsTuesday campaigns.



On a weekly basis we include examples of positive feedback via our Chief Executive's Brief and include regular articles in our staff newsletter. We have also developed a new Care Opinion webpage for staff.

Going forward we plan to develop our approach to demonstrating how we learn from the feedback we received and the improvements flowing from this. This includes empowering and encouraging staff to act on feedback to influence change and practice, record the actions taken as a result of feedback and close the loop on Care Opinion. Thus demonstrating to those sharing their experiences and the wider public how feedback has made a difference.



Nicole McInally
Project Manager,
Patient Experience and Public Involvement Team (PEPI)



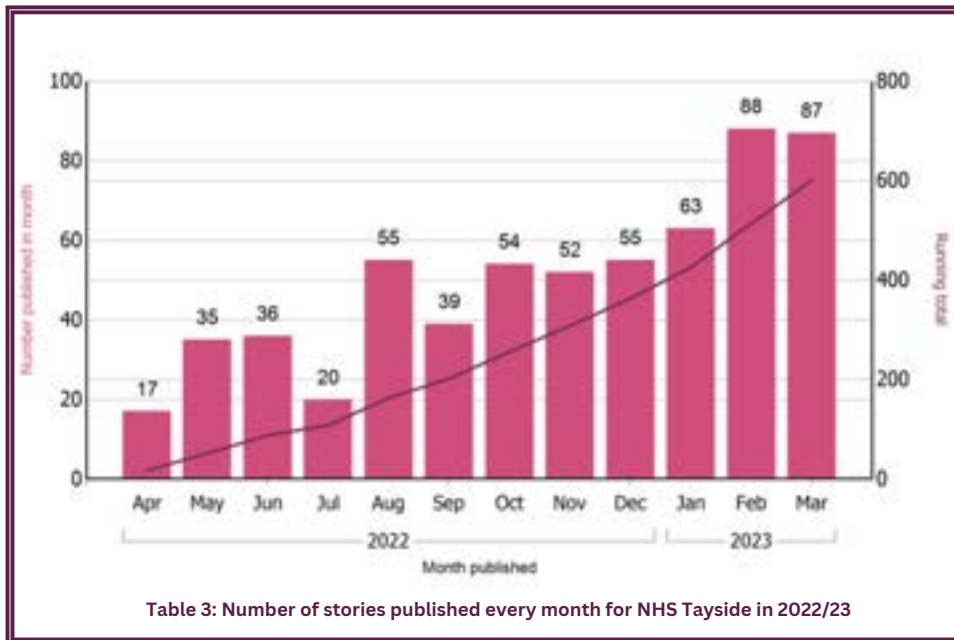
NHS Fife



It has been another busy year for **NHS Fife**, and we continue to face challenges across many of our healthcare systems. Care Opinion has been vital in ensuring we receive valuable feedback from patients and families. It is wonderful that people take the time to share their stories, and we thank them and value their honesty and feedback. Sharing positive feedback with staff lifts morale, knowing the care they provide is appreciated and helps to make a difference. Sharing the patient's story and their gratitude with the team is lovely.

We continue to appreciate patient feedback as a powerful tool. Through Care Opinion, we hope our patients and families feel they are being listened to and their feedback is being acted upon. We all want to deliver person-centered, quality, safe care, and the vital information we get from Care Opinion allows staff the opportunity to learn, develop and implement change, along with sharing good practices. Staff are really engaged in promoting the use of Care Opinion and responding to feedback, with many reaching out to patients when their experience could have gone better and offering an opportunity to discuss concerns further directly with the service or the Patient Experience Team.

We continue to see an increase in people sharing their stories on Care Opinion, which is fantastic, and this year, our colleagues in Fife Health and Social Care Partnership have joined. We are also actively going out into the ward areas to gather patient stories from patients who may have never had their stories shared or heard publicly. We are already receiving great feedback, and our story numbers are increasing.



Notably, the fact that new services choose to promote Care Opinion from Day 1 demonstrates the shift in our culture, where Care Opinion is now just part of what we do.



Tayside’s most viewed story during 2022/23 contained a British Sign Language video, produced by our Corporate Equalities Translation & Interpretation Team, who have been working to develop ways to help translate stories and responses in order to make Care Opinion more accessible, diverse and equitable for all its users. We’re also ensuring non-clinical services are acknowledged for the important parts they play in patient journeys, with Spiritual Care and Bereavement, Domestic, Portering and Catering services - and more - featuring in our stories.

We’re seeing how the transition out of Covid is starting to take effect, with stories about the transformation of our Vaccination Services, and how much patients appreciate a gradual return to normality, while continuing the enthusiastic appreciation for the work our staff members do.

With Perth & Kinross and Angus Health and Social Care Partnerships having recently taken up Care Opinion subscriptions, NHS Tayside has played an active part in the roll-out and transition of services from the Health Board subscription to theirs, but also in sharing ways of working, meeting regularly and celebrating the interlinked stories we receive which demonstrate the positive and rounded health service we provide to the patients of Tayside.

NHS Tayside appreciates and learns from the critical Care Opinion stories we receive, utilising the valued information for change, learning and development. We also recognise the importance of sharing the good work celebrated in stories, so that this valuable learning can be replicated across our organisation, further embedding the value of Care Opinion and listening to the patient voice.

 **Victoria Sullivan**
NHS Tayside Care Opinion Lead

Your Care Opinion Scotland team



Mhairi Smith, Moderator



Ali Patrick, Senior Moderation Officer



Krisztina Patocs, Business Administration and Support Officer



Lisa Dendy, Engagement and Support Officer



Fraser Gilmore, Executive Director & Head of Scotland



Danielle McEwan, Engagement and Support Officer



At Care Opinion, we work hard towards our mission every day, which is all about creating a safe and supportive space where people can share their honest feedback. We believe that every story has the power to make a real difference, so we make sure that each one finds its way to the right destination, where it can truly have an impact and bring about positive change. We're also committed to fostering transparency by ensuring that everyone has access to information on how services actively listen and adapt based on feedback.

This year, as part of our commitment to continuous improvement, we reached out to all our team members in Scotland to gather their valuable insights. We asked them the following question **“What have you learned from the stories on Care Opinion about NHS Scotland services in 2022/23 as shared by the public and/or staff?”** and here are their responses:

“When reflecting on the stories shared on Care Opinion about NHS Scotland services in 2022/23, I have learned so much on a personal level. These stories have shown me the incredible impact that healthcare professionals can have on people's lives, how genuine care and compassion can make a world of difference. They have taught me about the resilience and strength of individuals facing health challenges and the power of their voices in shaping the quality of care. These stories remind me of the human connection that lies at the heart of healthcare and this inspires me to continue advocating for patient-centred approaches.”

Krisztina Patocs, Business Administration and Support Officer

“From my experiences over the last year, I have learned that there are lots of amazing services provided to patients in very specific situations, as well as those services we are used to seeing on Care Opinion. As promotion and awareness of Care Opinion has spread throughout organisations, I have seen some incredible feedback about new social care and health care initiatives, including maternity, paediatrics, long term condition management and mental health care. It is clear that staff are looking at feedback and exploring ways to improve the journeys of those who need it the most in different departments. I have also noticed an increase in awareness of sharing feedback from relatives, carers and friends of patients and service users, and these stories have allowed more people to be advocated for and have their voices heard. This is wonderful to see.”

Lisa Dendy, Engagement and Support Officer

“Looking back over the past year and reflecting on the many stories that come to us through moderation, I've continued to learn about the amazing work and innovation taking place within services, as well as hearing about the issues facing both healthcare providers and the users of healthcare services in what are very challenging times. There is amazing resilience in both services and the wider public in rising to those challenges. What has really struck me is how far the acknowledgement and empathy goes both ways in healthcare, with patients and service users consistently voicing their support for staff and their understanding of the challenges faced in healthcare today.”

Ali Patrick, Senior Moderation Officer

“This is my first year with Care Opinion. As a moderator I have the privilege of reading a high volume of stories each week. It has been really impressive to discover the wide range of services which are offered across Scotland. In particular how these services are managed so well in particularly rural communities. Scotland has a unique geography which must make things challenging for both healthcare workers and patients alike but they make it work, and work to a high standard. I can only say well done to all the staff involved, under such challenging times they are continuing to deliver a personal and valuable service.”

Mhairi Smith, Moderator

“From all of the stories that I have had the privilege of reading this past year, I've seen some great examples of the creative and innovative ways that staff are engaging with patients and service users. There has been a clear shift, for me as a reader, in the conversations that are happening and it's always lovely to see staff showing pride in both them and their teams, and echoing this through their responses. It's clear to me through reading these stories that staff and services continue to work hard and it's heartwarming to read the interactions between them and authors.

It's also reassuring to witness the thoughtful ways in which staff are encouraging story authors to get involved in changing practice, especially when things haven't quite gone to plan. This reinforces the importance of simply having a chat, we're all human after all!”

Danielle McEwan, Engagement and Support Officer

Journey of Growth



In November 2022, we reached the milestone of 30,000 stories shared by the public about NHS Scotland Services.



In April 2022, the Scottish Government renewed the Care Opinion subscription for all health boards until March 2026.



40% increase in number of stories told from the previous year.



19% increase in number of staff listening during the challenging time of the Covid-19 pandemic.



In 2019/20, there was an increase of 10% in the number of stories posted by the public, which was an almost 140% increase from the past 5 years.

2023

6,455 stories told



955,826 stories read



96% response rate

2022

4,696 stories told



904,205 stories read



95% response rate

2021

3,333 stories told



615,039 stories read



96% response rate

2020

4,267 stories told



649,166 stories read



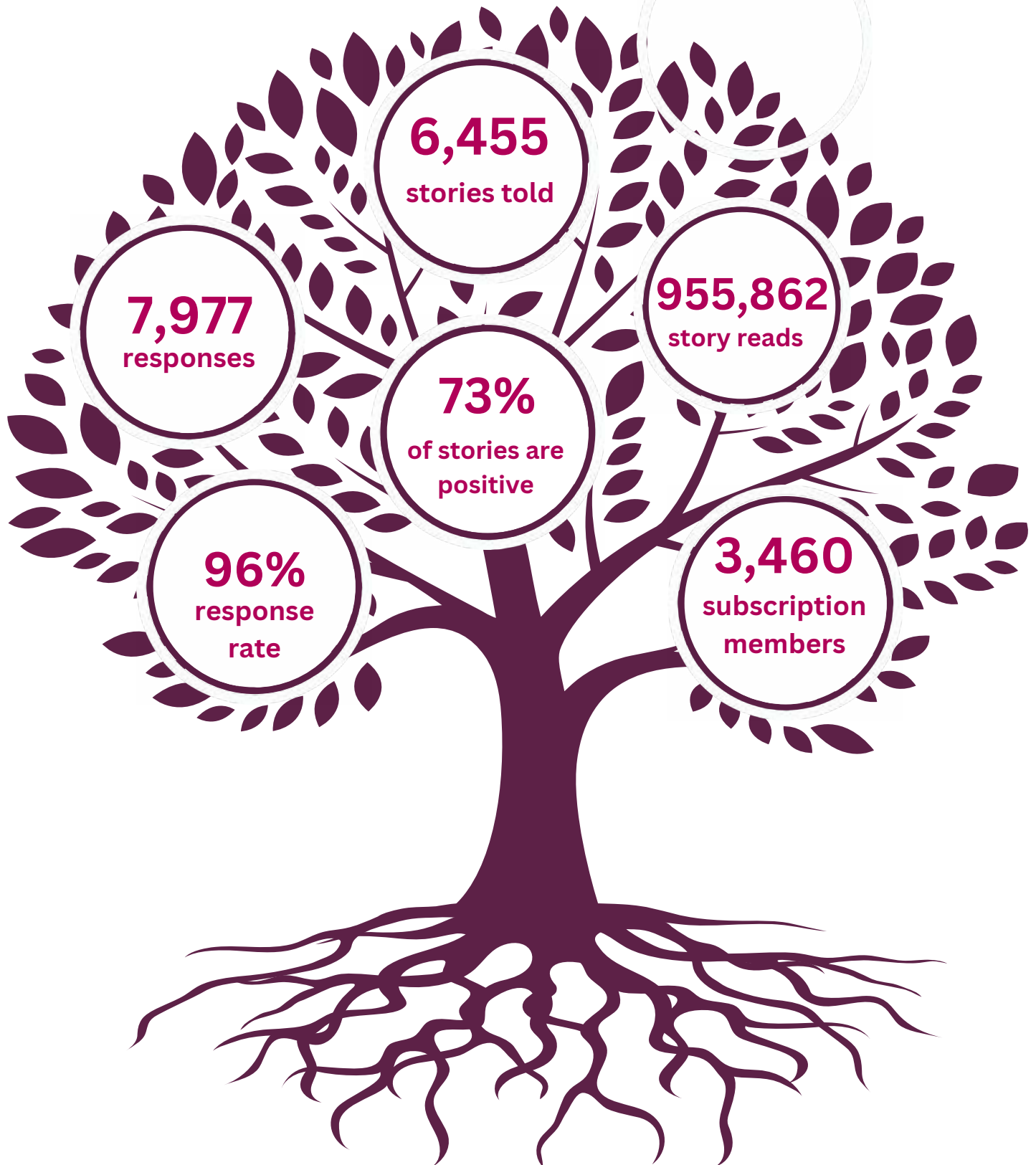
97% response rate

2019

Activity across NHS Scotland services in 22/23



The below infographic outlines activity on Care Opinion about NHS Scotland services during 2022/23.



The following pages have infographics outlining activity on Care Opinion for each Health Board during 2022/23.

442

stories
told



547

responses



96.8%

response
rate



69%

of stories are
positive



226

Subscription
members



65,900

story
reads



218

stories
told



210

responses



80.7%

response
rate



76%

of stories are
positive



189

Subscription
members

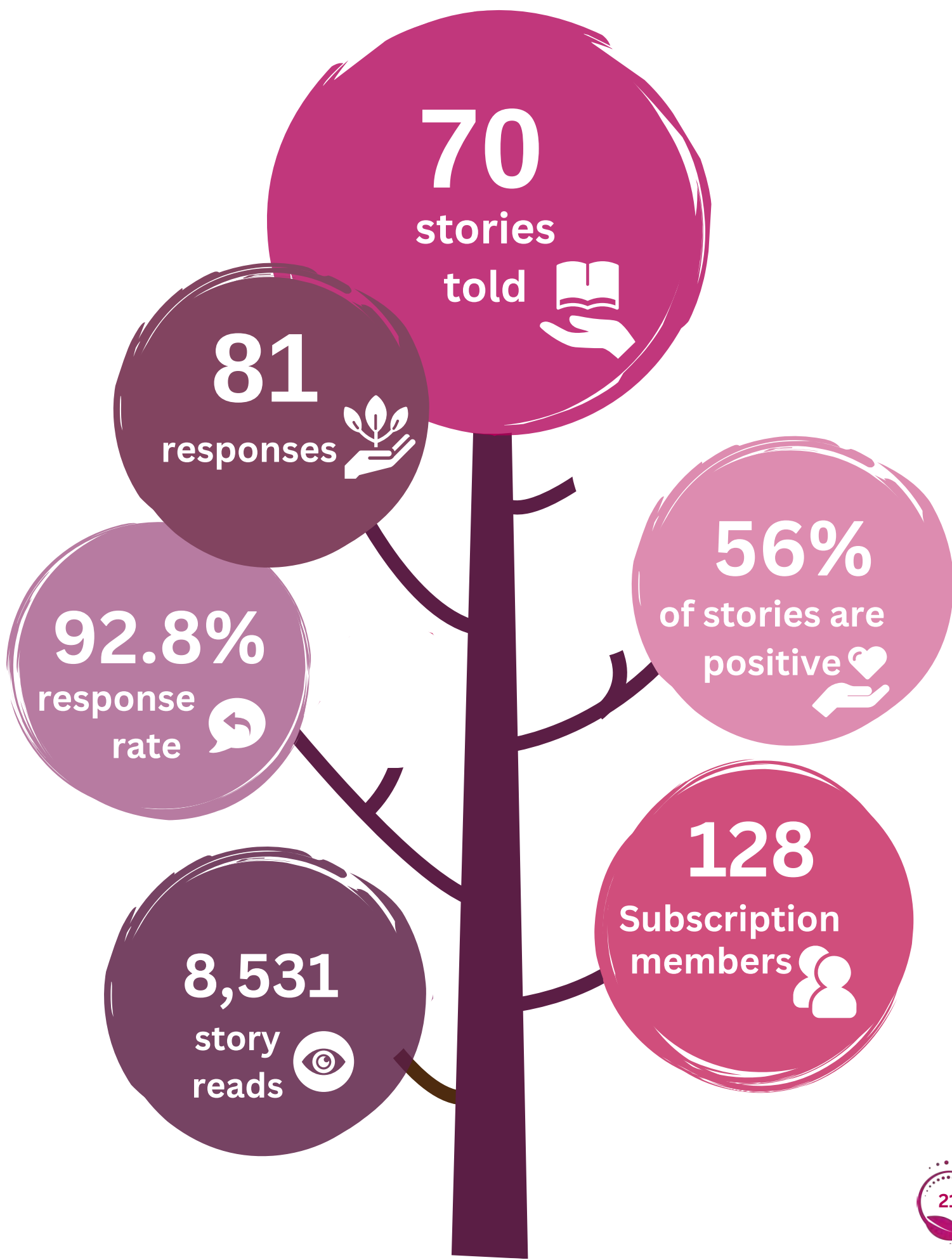


27,770

story
reads



NHS Dumfries and Galloway



857

stories
told



1,176

responses



98.2%

response
rate



81%

of stories are
positive



399

Subscription
members



91,871

story
reads



742

stories
told



872

responses



94.5%

response
rate



77%

of stories are
positive



199

Subscription
members

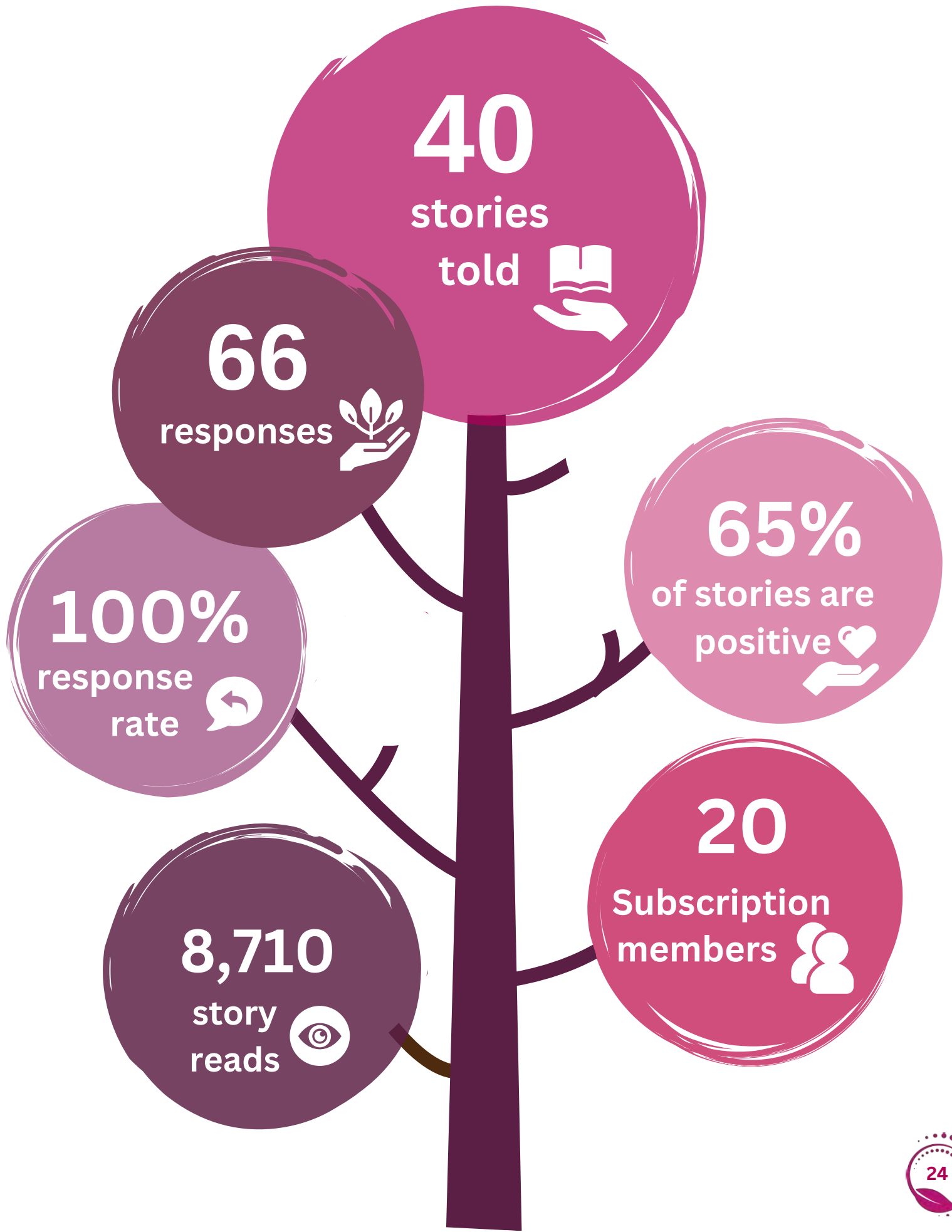


88,109

story
reads



Golden Jubilee National Hospital



NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde

1,542

stories
told



1,956

responses



99.3%

response
rate



70%

of stories are
positive



352

Subscription
members



243,844

story
reads



512

stories
told



615

responses



97%

response
rate



70%

of stories are
positive



238

Subscription
members



173,247

story
reads



90
stories
told



68
responses



50%
response
rate



63%
of stories are
positive



11,831
story
reads



68
Subscription
members



1,035
stories
told



1,349
responses



99.3%
response
rate



71%
of stories are
positive



155,265
story
reads



307
Subscription
members



300

stories
told



447

responses



99.3%

response
rate



68%

of stories are
positive



210

Subscription
members



40,237

story
reads



177

stories
told



414

responses



100%

response
rate



59%

of stories are
positive



217

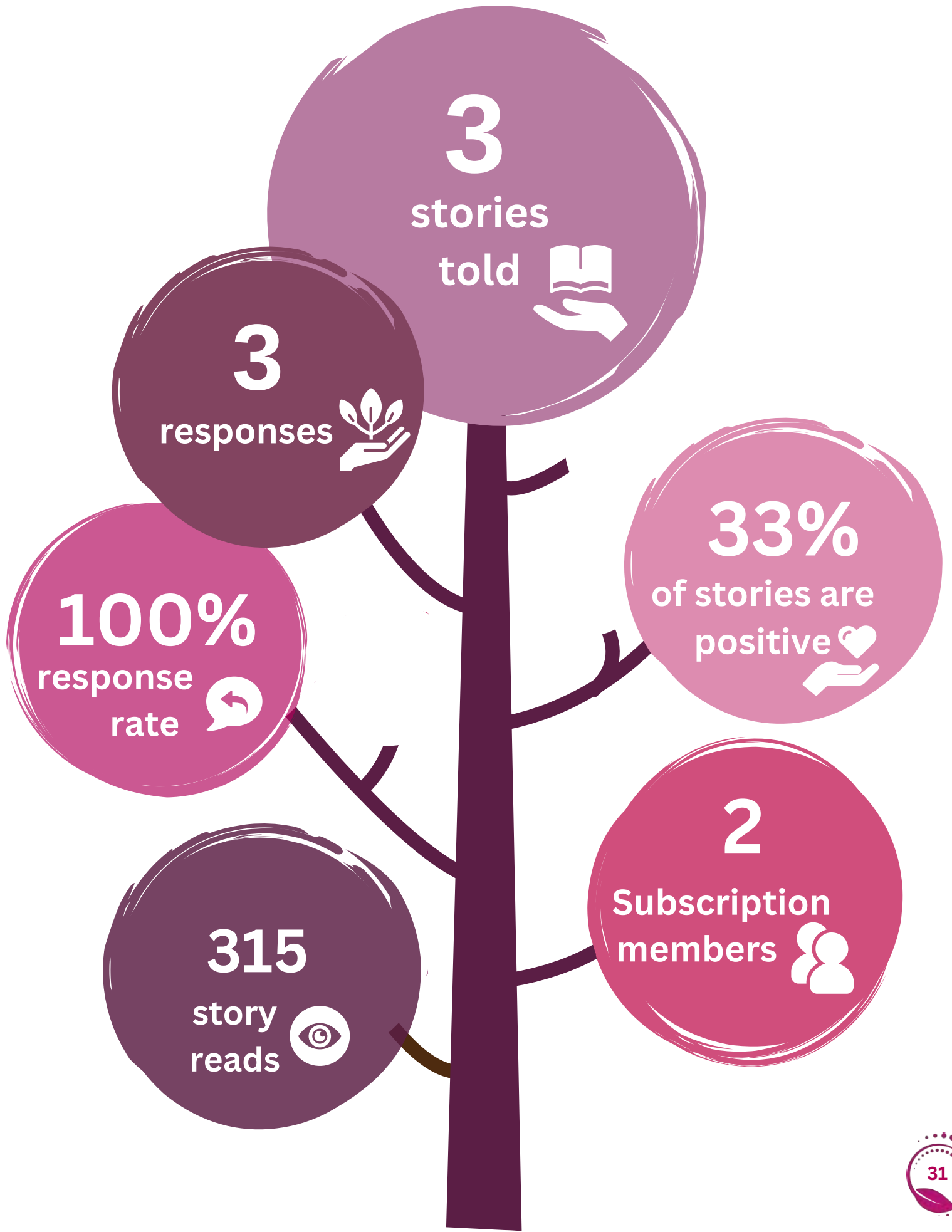
Subscription
members



40,721

story
reads





Scottish Ambulance Service

207

stories
told



516

responses



100%

response
rate



71%

of stories are
positive



63

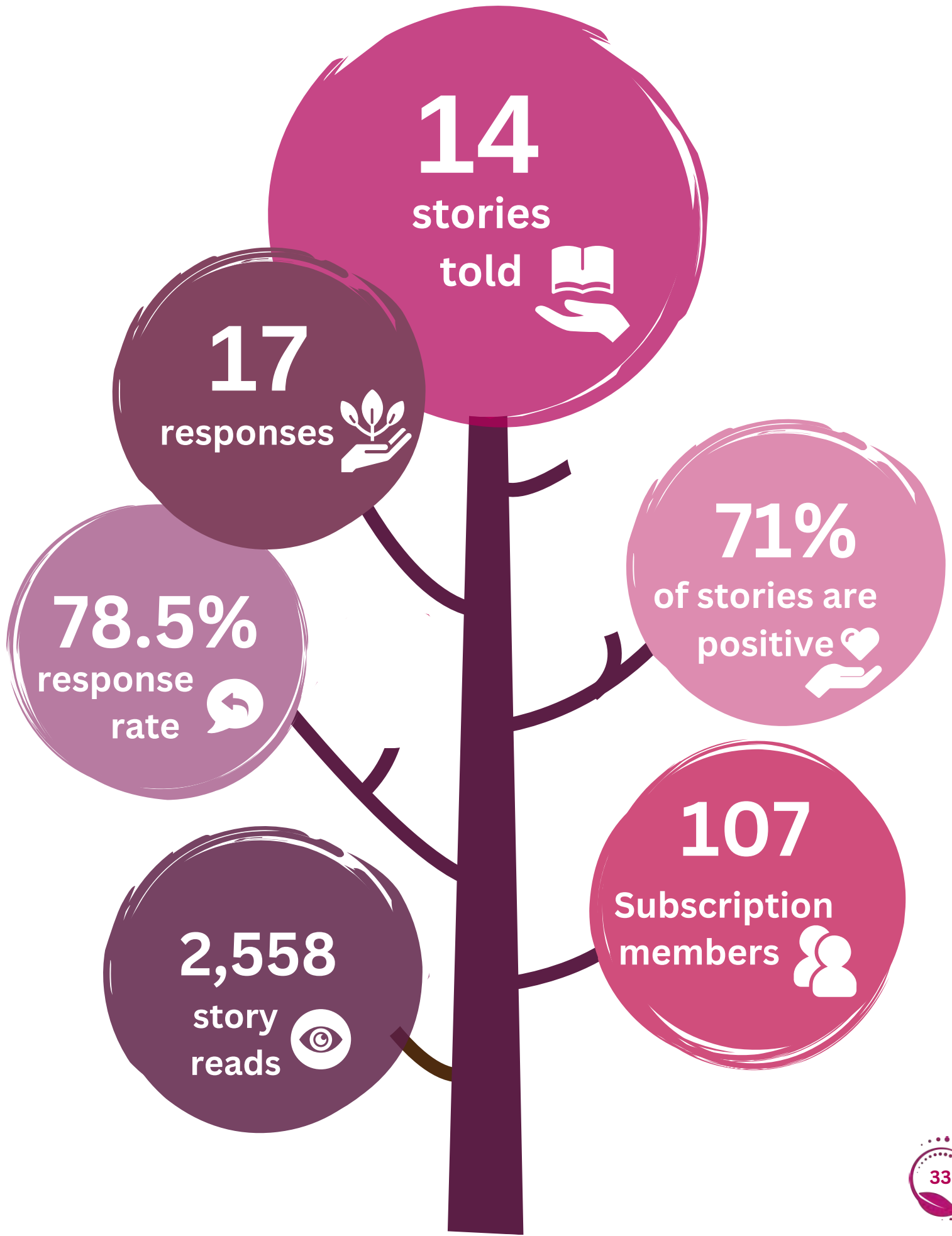
Subscription
members



48,776

story
reads





607

stories
told



727

responses



95.2%

response
rate



81%

of stories are
positive



561

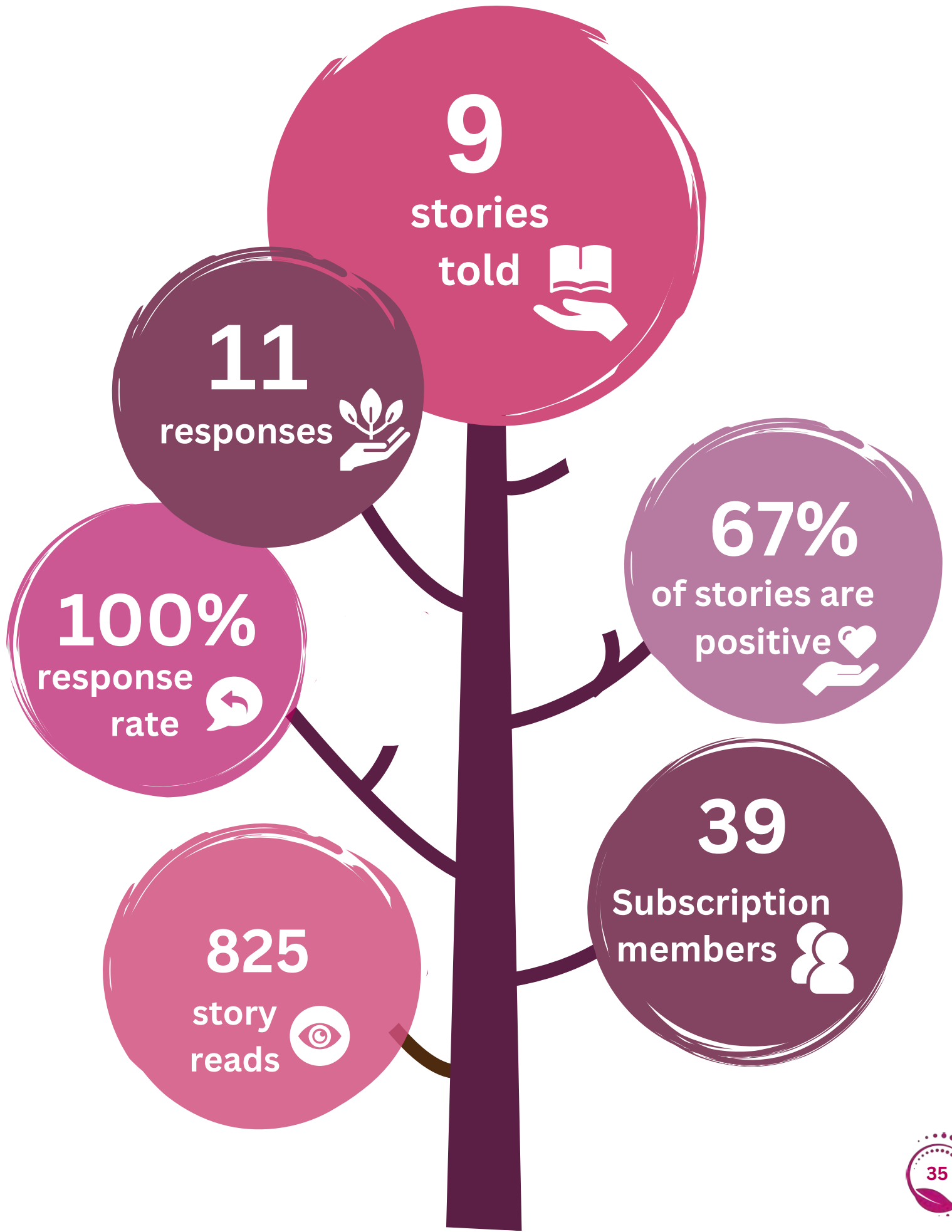
Subscription
members



57,666

story
reads







Care Opinion

Contact us

If you would like to get in touch with the Care Opinion team, you can:



info@careopinion.org.uk



www.careopinion.org.uk



Care Opinion Scotland: Unit 6 Alpha Centre, Stirling University
Innovation Park, Stirling, FK9 4NF



Care Opinion Scotland: 01786 583 661



[@CareOpinionScot](https://twitter.com/CareOpinionScot)

