said they found it takes more time and is more challenging to build rapport with clients remotely. For legal representatives with clients in custody, pre-hearing communication was reliant on the client being provided with either a phone or being brought to a booth and for the connection to the legal representative to be made. **Legal representatives also commented that informal out of court conversations with the other side do not occur naturally with remote hearings and the potential to resolve issues ahead of the hearing is therefore reduced.**

During hearings

Experiences during remote hearings including technical experiences and support, introductions and explanations of ground rules, communication, working with interpreters, and wellbeing. Key findings:

- **One in five remote hearing public users experienced issues with technology**. Those that attended by video were more likely to experience technical issues than those that attended by audio (30% compared with 15%). **The main issues for all groups were inconsistent audio quality and people being disconnected. These issues made some hearings take longer and made it more difficult for court users to contribute and follow what was happening.** Despite these issues, there were few court adjournments due to technology issues reported across all groups. Judicial respondents were more likely to report that they experienced technical issues in over half of their hearings (26%) compared to legal representatives (10%) and HMCTS staff (11%). Connection dropping out or freezing was the most frequently reported major problem (44% of judicial respondents, 35% of HMCTS staff and 16% of legal representatives.

- **Only a handful of public users reported having difficulties accessing the platform used for their remote hearing**. However, where difficulties with access were encountered these were often quickly resolved through support and guidance provided by court staff and legal representatives.

- **Around half of judicial survey respondents (48%) and a quarter of legal representatives (25%) had needed technical support in some of their remote hearings**, with the majority needing support in less than a quarter of hearings. The majority of those receiving support from HMCTS staff were satisfied with it.

- **Public users and observers had better experiences when they understood what to expect from the judge's introduction**. Formal introductions, with ground rules and housekeeping for the hearing, helped users feel reassured and more able to contribute at the right time.

- **Of public users represented by a legal representative, those attending in-person hearings were more likely than those attending remotely to report that it was easy to communicate with their legal representative in the hearing** (57% compared with 46%). **Vulnerable individuals who accessed their hearings remotely were particularly less likely to have found it easy to communicate with their lawyer** (41% disagreed that was easy compared with 29% of those not classed as vulnerable). Two thirds of legal representatives felt that they were able to communicate effectively with their clients. Having access to a second device and pre-arranging communication methods was important to facilitate private communication with parties during hearings.

- Seven in ten judicial respondents (70%), two-thirds of HMCTS staff (64%) and half of the legal representatives (47%) who had participated in remote hearings involving interpreters said there were difficulties due to the hearing being remote. **The most common problems were the interpreter or signer not being visible to their client, not being audible or using the phone. Hearings with an interpreter were reported to take longer which needs to be reflected in the scheduling.** It is important to provide the opportunity in a remote hearing for the interpreter to familiarise themselves with the person they are interpreting for and to understand the context of the hearing.

- **Legal representatives and support professionals commented that there was often a lack of communication about delays and cancellations of remote hearings.** A third of legal representatives (36%) reported being dissatisfied and commented that lack of information about delays can be a major factor contributing towards a stressful experience for their clients.

- **Around three in five (58%) judicial respondents felt that remote hearings impacted on their health and wellbeing**. Increased fatigue was the most commonly reported issue followed by increased stress, increased workload and fewer breaks. Just over half of legal representatives (54%) felt that remote hearings impacted on their health and wellbeing. Reduction in travel and waiting times was significant for many but some said that they found remote hearings more tiring, missed the interaction in court and found work/home boundaries more challenging. HMCTS staff were least likely to report that remote hearings impacted on their health and wellbeing (43%). They were most likely to cite increased workload and stress, closely followed by fewer breaks and fatigue as the main challenges.

Views and attitudes

Views and attitudes including public satisfaction, channel and platform preferences, procedural justice, replicating the court environment, attitudes and behaviours during remote hearings and views about the future use of remote hearings. Key findings:

- **Public users that attended remotely were more likely to be satisfied with the overall experience of their hearing than in-person users;** 63% of remote hearing users were satisfied with their overall experience compared with 56% of in-person users. Those who joined via video were particularly likely to be satisfied with their overall experience (67%) compared to those who joined via audio (60%). Drivers for satisfaction were strong judge moderation, comfort and security of joining from home, less travel time and costs, time off work and childcare needed. Legal representatives had stronger preferences for remote hearings (35%) compared to judges (13%) and HMCTS staff (15%).

- **For remote hearings, all professionals preferred fully remote hearings and CVP was the most popular platform** (57% for judiciary and HMCTS staff and 41% for legal representatives) followed by Teams (25% for judiciary, 37% for legal representatives and 26% for HMCTS staff). Sign language interpreters generally had a strong preference for Zoom because of the functionality and control that it offers for pinning, spotlighting and highlighting which is important to ensure a clear view of those signing.

- Public users typically felt able to understand what was happening during their hearing (79%), understand the outcome of their hearing (81%), express their views in their hearing (59%) and felt that their views were considered (59%). **Those attending a remote hearing**