



LEEDS  
BECKETT  
UNIVERSITY

---

Citation:

Nunn, A and Fidler, Y and Wymer, P and Kelsey, S (2008) Customers Experience of First Contact with Jobcentre Plus: Findings from the Quantitative Survey. Project Report. DWP.

Link to Leeds Beckett Repository record:

<https://eprints.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/id/eprint/877/>

Document Version:

Monograph (Published Version)

---

© Crown Copyright 2008. Published for the Department for Work and Pensions under licence from the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office by Corporate Document Services, Leeds.

Uploaded to this server in accordance with Office of Public Sector Information Click Use licensing.

The aim of the Leeds Beckett Repository is to provide open access to our research, as required by funder policies and permitted by publishers and copyright law.

The Leeds Beckett repository holds a wide range of publications, each of which has been checked for copyright and the relevant embargo period has been applied by the Research Services team.

We operate on a standard take-down policy. If you are the author or publisher of an output and you would like it removed from the repository, please [contact us](#) and we will investigate on a case-by-case basis.

Each thesis in the repository has been cleared where necessary by the author for third party copyright. If you would like a thesis to be removed from the repository or believe there is an issue with copyright, please contact us on [openaccess@leedsbeckett.ac.uk](mailto:openaccess@leedsbeckett.ac.uk) and we will investigate on a case-by-case basis.

**Department for Work and Pensions**

**Research Report No 504**

# **Customers' experiences of first contact with Jobcentre Plus: Findings from the quantitative survey**

**Alex Nunn, Yvette Fidler, Penny Wymer and Sarah Kelsey**

A report of research carried out by Policy Research Institute at Leeds Metropolitan University on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions

© Crown Copyright 2008. Published for the Department for Work and Pensions under licence from the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

Application for reproduction should be made in writing to The Copyright Unit, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, St Clements House, 2-16 Colegate, Norwich NR3 1BQ.

First Published 2008.

ISBN 978 1 84712 389 3

Views expressed in this report are not necessarily those of the Department for Work and Pensions or any other Government Department.

# Contents

Acknowledgements .....	vii
The Authors.....	viii
Abbreviations.....	ix
Summary .....	1
1 Introduction and survey rationale .....	7
2 Approach and methodology .....	9
2.1 Aims.....	9
2.2 Scope .....	9
2.3 Customer group aggregations .....	9
2.4 Customer sampling.....	10
2.5 The survey process.....	12
3 General satisfaction .....	13
3.1 Overall satisfaction.....	13
3.2 Drivers of satisfaction.....	15
3.2.1 <i>Descriptive discussion of factors affecting satisfaction</i> .....	15
3.2.2 <i>Comparative analysis of factors affecting satisfaction</i> .....	21
3.3 Overall satisfaction and individual characteristics.....	21
3.3.1 <i>Descriptive discussion of satisfaction by individual characteristics</i> .....	21
3.3.2 <i>Comparative analysis of factors affecting satisfaction</i> .....	28

4	Different experiences .....	29
4.1	Different ways of initiating contact and making the claim .....	29
4.2	Experiences of 'Rapid Reclaim claimants' .....	31
4.3	Experiences of 'non-telephone claimants' .....	33
4.4	Experiences of 'telephone claimants' .....	33
4.4.1	<i>Choice of telephone method</i> .....	33
4.4.2	<i>Satisfaction with different elements of the call</i> .....	35
5.1	Problems experienced in the New Claims process and intention to complain .....	43
5.2	Complaints process and outcomes .....	45
6	Contact with other Government departments and other parts of the Department for Work and Pensions .....	47
7	Service standards and related issues .....	49
7.1	Relevant Jobcentre Plus service standards .....	49
7.2	Call waiting times .....	49
7.3	Information given at the beginning of the New Claims call .....	51
7.4	The number of calls to complete the New Claim .....	52
8	Main findings and implications .....	53
8.1	Overview and commentary .....	53
8.2	Summary of findings .....	55
8.2.1	<i>General satisfaction</i> .....	55
8.2.2	<i>Satisfaction with the New Claims call</i> .....	55
8.2.3	<i>Different experiences</i> .....	55
8.2.4	<i>Problems and complaints</i> .....	56
8.2.5	<i>Contact with other Government departments and agencies</i> .....	56
Appendix	Survey questionnaire .....	57
References	.....	97

## List of tables

Table 1	Sample profile .....	2
Table 2.1	Profile of respondents.....	11
Table 2.2	Profile of respondents by survey method.....	12

## List of figures

Figure 3.1	Overall satisfaction, by benefit group .....	13
Figure 3.2	Best aspects of the New Claims service by benefit type .....	15
Figure 3.3	Satisfaction with decision time, by benefit group .....	16
Figure 3.4	Overall satisfaction by time taken to receive first payment.....	17
Figure 3.5	Satisfaction with benefit decision, by benefit group .....	18
Figure 3.6	Previous claim experience, by benefit group.....	19
Figure 3.7	Comparison of current and previous claim, by benefit group .....	20
Figure 3.8	Overall satisfaction, by gender .....	22
Figure 3.9	Overall satisfaction, by age group .....	23
Figure 3.10	Overall satisfaction, by limiting illness.....	24
Figure 3.11	Customers with limiting illness wait longer for first benefit payment .....	25
Figure 3.12	Levels of satisfaction by ethnic group.....	26
Figure 3.13	Levels of satisfaction by English as a first language.....	27
Figure 4.1	Aggregated claim route types .....	31
Figure 4.2	Overall satisfaction by claim route.....	32
Figure 4.3	Awareness of call charges .....	34
Figure 4.4	Most mobile callers do not request a call back .....	35
Figure 4.5	Ratings and satisfaction with aspects of the call .....	36
Figure 4.6	Issues not addressed at end of New Claims call(s), by benefit group.....	38
Figure 4.7	Time taken to complete the New Claims call(s), excluding breaks, by benefit group .....	39
Figure 4.8	Ease of handling the call .....	40
Figure 5.1	Incorrect information and felt like complaining, by benefit group.....	44
Figure 5.2	Most did not and do not intend to actually make a complaint....	45
Figure 6.1	Contact with other agencies and providing repeat information ...	48
Figure 7.1	Acceptability of waiting time for call to be answered .....	51
Figure 7.2	The percentage of people who recollected a thorough introduction to the call .....	52



# Acknowledgements

The project team is grateful for the help and assistance provided by staff in Jobcentre Plus Performance Measurement and Analysis Division, particularly Natalie Rhodes, Clare Morley and Alison Cousley and also the joint Jobcentre Plus/Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) project steering group. Gratitude is also due to the 2,087 Jobcentre Plus customers who completed the survey.



# The Authors

**Dr Alex Nunn** – is Principal Research Fellow at the Policy Research Institute at Leeds Metropolitan University. His work focuses on social inclusion, welfare to work and governance. He has undertaken a wide range of applied research projects for a range of Government departments and public bodies. He is the Project Director for the First Contact Research Project, incorporating both the Quantitative Survey and Qualitative Follow-Up.

**Penny Wymer** – is Research Support Manager at the Policy Research Institute and is Project Manager for the First Contact Research Project, incorporating both the Quantitative Survey and Qualitative Follow-Up. She has played a leading role in a vast range of research for Jobcentre Plus and the DWP, including managing previous customer satisfaction surveys.

**Yvette Fidler** – is a specialist statistician at the Policy Research Institute. She has played a leading role in several large scale surveys of Jobcentre Plus customers, including a number of customer satisfaction surveys and customer research underpinning various evaluations of the Jobcentre Plus modernisation.

**Sarah Kelsey** – is Research Fellow at the Policy Research Institute at Leeds Metropolitan University. Her work focuses on welfare to work and governance.

Other colleagues in the Policy Research Institute's Survey Research Centre also contributed to the administration and organisation of the survey, including James Clark, John Jinks, Sue Greene, Judith Harvey and Naoimh Bohan. IFF Research also helped with the completion of survey interviews.

# Abbreviations

AAT	Adviser Achievement Tool
AIP	Adviser Improvement Plan
ASM	Advisory Services Manager
BOC	Better Off Calculation
CETL	Customer Engagement Team Leader
DASO	Diary and Administrative Support Officer
DEA	Disability Employment Adviser
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
FTA	Failed To Attend
IB	Incapacity Benefit
IB Credit/IS Incap	Customers on Incapacity Benefit Credits only, rather than full IB and those on Income Support for reasons of Incapacity
IS	Income Support
JET	Job Entry Target
JOT	Job Outcome Target
JSA	Jobseeker's Allowance
JSAg	Jobseeker's Agreement
LMS	Labour Market System
MI	Management Information
NAO	National Audit Office

ND	New Deal
OAR	Officer Activity Report
PRI	Policy Research Institute
QAF	Quality Assurance Framework
RAG	Red Amber Green
WFI	Work Focused Interview
WTE	Whole Time Equivalent

# Summary

## Context and rationale

Jobcentre Plus has undertaken a series of customer satisfaction surveys in recent years, partly to gauge the impact of significant investment and reform of its services and service delivery model and to determine where improvements to customer services need to be made. In particular, the way in which customers make a new claim for benefit has changed radically over the last few years, with the current model requiring the majority of customers to telephone a Jobcentre Plus' contact centre, rather than attending an office as they used to. Responding to criticisms about the quality and efficiency of the telephone service this model was itself improved during 2007 with the introduction of a revised Standard Operating Model which introduced:

- a freephone number for calls from 'landline' telephones;
- a single call claims process; and
- an improved Interactive Voice Routing system to offer information and to channel calls appropriately.

Changes to the Standard Operating Model formed the rationale for undertaking further survey research to specifically explore customers' experiences of their 'first contact' with Jobcentre Plus. The survey results will also form the baseline for future work to consider the changes in customer satisfaction.

## Methodology

The overall aim of the survey was to establish levels of customer satisfaction with their 'first contact' with Jobcentre Plus. The scope of the research is limited by the concern with 'first contact': the process of contacting Jobcentre Plus and submitting a claim for benefits, however, the process of decision making and further contact with customers was outside the scope of the research. Nevertheless, some of these issues are included in the research as a means of checking the extent to which they impact on overall levels of satisfaction, potentially impacting on apparent levels of satisfaction with 'first contact' earlier in the claims process.

The sample was drawn from a GIS scan of new benefit claimants and was based on the overall profile of new benefit claimants. This approach to sampling replicates that used in the national customer satisfaction survey and the data was weighted to provide results that are representative of all customers.

**Table 1 Sample profile**

	Jobseeker's Allowance	Full Incapacity Benefit	Incapacity Benefit credits/ Income Support Incap	Income Support care	Total
	%	%	%	%	
Men	69	62	58	23	
Women	31	38	42	77	
16-24	46	8	24	38	
25-49	44	52	56	59	
50-64	10	40	20	3	
Long-term illness	12	76	74	18	
White	82	94	92	86	
Mixed	3	<1	2	4	
Asian/Asian British	7	4	3	5	
Black/Black British	6	<1	2	4	
Other	<1	<1	<1	1	
ESOL	8	5	6	6	
<i>Unweighted base</i>	791	453	488	355	2,087

All customers in the contact sample received an advance letter informing them about the survey along with a proforma to complete and return if they wished to opt out of the survey. While the predominant method was a telephone survey, alternatives (including online, paper and translation services) were available for those requiring them. A piloting exercise was undertaken in October 2007 and the main survey was undertaken in November and December 2007 by the Policy Research Institute (PRI) in combination with IFF research.

## Findings

### General satisfaction

Levels of general satisfaction with the New Claims service were high. Nearly 78 per cent of respondents reported being either 'fairly' or 'very' satisfied. Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) customers were most satisfied, closely followed by Income Support (IS) Care customers, who are largely lone parents or customers with other caring

responsibilities. Incapacity Benefit (IB) Credit/IS Incap customers were the least satisfied.

Some of the most important reasons explaining levels of satisfaction lay outside the first contact aspect of the New Claims service and relate to the time taken to process and pay benefit claims as well as the decision regarding eligibility itself.

### **Satisfaction with the New Claims call**

Satisfaction with the New Claims call was exceptionally high, standing at over 90 per cent for all benefit groups. Satisfaction was also high with the different elements of the claim call such as the politeness and efficiency of handling the call on the part of Jobcentre Plus agents. However, a substantial minority of customers report having unanswered questions at the end of this call, especially IB customers. IB and IS customers were also more likely than JSA customers to report that the New Claims call had caused them problems. Addressing these issues might further improve the already high levels of satisfaction with these aspects of the New Claims service.

### **Different experiences**

Three distinct groups of customers still do not go through the standard telephone claim service.

The first of these groups are Rapid Reclaim customers whose previous benefit claim ended less than three months before their new claim and whose circumstances have not changed in the meantime. Ensuring that this group of customers receive a good quality claim service is essential to minimising the disincentives and risks associated with leaving benefits for employment. Comparison of the general levels of satisfaction experienced by this group of customers and the rest shows that they were similarly satisfied overall. Their responses also suggest that they experience quicker payment times than other customers, though they are not necessarily any more satisfied with payment times as a result of this.

The second of these groups do not ever make contact by telephone and the majority undertake a manual claim in a Jobcentre Plus office. The third of these groups, which is much smaller, begin their claim on the telephone but subsequently continue their claim through other means. Taken together these two groups are similarly satisfied to those undertaking their claim on the telephone. However, the findings suggest that they are likely to experience slightly longer waiting times to receive their payments and that they are marginally less satisfied with this aspect than telephone claimants. This may suggest that where there is scope to increase awareness and take-up of the standard process, this would speed up claims and further increase customer satisfaction.

### **Problems and complaints**

Despite generally high levels of satisfaction, relatively large minorities of customers still experience problems with the claim. Just under ten per cent reported being

given contradictory information or advice and 16 per cent felt like complaining at some point. Notwithstanding the fact that the vast majority of those that felt like making a complaint did not actually do so, these findings do indicate that there is scope to increase the quality of service offered, particularly with regard to the accuracy and consistency of information provided. The findings of the survey also suggest that those that do go on to make a complaint remain unsatisfied. This might be held to suggest that the complaints process is deficient but it may also simply indicate that once customers are dissatisfied enough to complain, it is difficult to restore their satisfaction with the process, regardless of the complaints system. This may particularly be the case where dissatisfaction arises from policy or legislation (for instance, over benefits eligibility criteria) rather than the quality of service provided by Jobcentre Plus. The survey findings do not enable any of these explanations to be substantiated.

### **Contact with other Government departments and agencies**

The survey suggests that many new benefit claimants are in contact with other parts of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) or other Government departments. It also suggests that many of these customers are required to provide the same or similar information. However, in general customers did not mind providing this information.

### **Overview and commentary**

The findings of this survey of 2,087 customers recently making a new claim for benefits indicates that the vast majority of customers find their experience of 'first contact' with Jobcentre Plus to be satisfactory. The survey also suggests that there are areas where customer satisfaction might be improved. The most significant of these, however, lay outside this 'first contact' experience and relate in the main to the time taken to process and pay benefit claims. Other important determinants of satisfaction also appear to be largely outside of the control of Jobcentre Plus and relate for instance to the legislative framework around benefit eligibility.

Over recent years Jobcentre Plus has undertaken a major change in the New Claims service it offers, first moving to a telephone claim process and second making significant alterations to this in response to criticism. Though there is no baseline available in the form of previous surveys from which to measure, the survey findings suggest that this programme of investment and reform is paying dividends in relation to customer satisfaction. The 'first contact' services provided by contact centres are well regarded and satisfaction exceeds that with the New Claims service overall. Where respondents had claimed under a previous New Claims system, whether the unimproved telephone system or other manual systems, the majority thought that their most recent experience was superior. The responses of customers who had claimed previously under the new system suggested a welcome degree of consistency in the quality of the service provided.

However, there are still areas where further improvements might be made. Some customers appear not to go through the telephone process because they are not aware of it or receive incorrect advice about how to claim, including from Jobcentre Plus staff. This suggests a need to further increase awareness about appropriate claim routes, within and beyond the organisational boundaries of Jobcentre Plus. Second, some customers begin the process on the telephone but subsequently drop out of the telephone process. This might indicate that the process would benefit from further (and constant) simplification, where possible. Third, while there do appear to be benefits for customers in using the telephone system (for instance in waiting times for payment), the survey findings confirm that for some customers there will always be a need to maintain alternative channels for making 'first contact'. Finally, the relatively large number of people who have at least considered making a complaint suggests that more needs to be done to avoid problems arising.

The results of the survey also suggest that there are some distinct customer groups for whom satisfaction is lower. These include people with limiting health conditions and customers of Asian/Asian British ethnicity. In relation to the former group, the survey data suggests that the complexity of processing claims in relation to the former group may lead to longer processing and payment times, thereby affecting levels of satisfaction. There is no clear explanation in the survey data for why Asian/Asian British customers are less satisfied, except for the possible correlation of these customers with communication problems where their first language is not English. These issues will need to be reflected in the follow-up qualitative research.





# 1 Introduction and survey rationale

The creation of the new Jobcentre Plus agency produced a requirement for a new approach to assessing customer satisfaction across all aspects of the agency's services, leading to the first Jobcentre Plus National Customer Satisfaction Survey undertaken in 2003. This survey was followed by three further National Customer Satisfaction Surveys in 2004, 2005 and 2007.

In addition to the National Customer Satisfaction Survey, Jobcentre Plus wished to specifically examine customer satisfaction with the current New Claims process, in particular in relation to the telephone contact centres.

The way in which customers make a new claim for benefit has changed radically over the last few years, with the current model requiring the majority of customers to telephone one of Jobcentre Plus' contact centres, rather than attending an office as they used to. This system was rolled out nationally in 2004 with one of the aims being to reduce the amount of footfall and the amount of time spent by customers in jobcentres. Additionally, during 2007 a new Standard Operating Model (SOM II) was rolled out across the country, introducing significant changes and potential improvements to the New Claims process, including:

- a freephone number for calls from BT 'landline' telephones;
- the claims process completed in a single call rather than two, as previously;
- an improved Interactive Voice Routing system to offer information and channel calls appropriately.

In the past, prior to the full roll-out of SOM II, Jobcentre Plus contact centres had received criticism from bodies like the National Audit Office (NAO). The NAO identified some drawbacks in terms of the quality and efficiency of the customer services provided by contact centres, particularly with regard to call handling, staff training and retention and performance and quality management (NAO, 2006).

Changes to the SOM and internal perceptions that many of the problems identified by the NAO were at least partially resolved by the reforms, formed part of the rationale for undertaking further survey research to specifically explore customers' experiences of their 'first contact' with Jobcentre Plus. The survey findings are also intended to provide the baseline for ongoing research to consider changes in the level of customer satisfaction in the future. The research includes both a quantitative survey and qualitative fieldwork to explore the survey findings in more detail. The present report summarises findings from the initial quantitative survey.

## 2 Approach and methodology

### 2.1 Aims

The overall aim of the survey was to establish levels of customer satisfaction with their 'first contact' with Jobcentre Plus. Specifically the survey aimed to:

- determine the current level of customer satisfaction with the first contact process. This is intended to act as a baseline for any future surveys;
- understand which aspects of the first contact process customers are most, and least, satisfied with;
- detect possible differences in levels of satisfaction between different benefit groups;
- provide a baseline for further research to consider changes in customer satisfaction in the future.

### 2.2 Scope

The scope of the research is delimited by the concern with 'first contact'. The research, therefore, focused on the process of contacting Jobcentre Plus and submitting a claim for benefits but did not consider, in any great detail, the process of decision making and further contact with customers after this point. Nevertheless, some of these issues are included in the research as a means of checking the extent to which they impact on overall levels of satisfaction, potentially impacting on apparent levels of satisfaction with 'first contact' earlier in the claims process.

### 2.3 Customer group aggregations

The National Customer Satisfaction Survey report has in the past used traditional customer groups as the basis for analysis: claimants of Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA), Incapacity Benefit (IB) and Income Support (IS). However, in previous

research findings we have identified alternative groupings of customers that are more internally coherent, especially with regard to their experience of the New Claims process. These are:

- **JSA** customers: these customers tend to be a reasonably coherent group and receive similar types of service from Jobcentre Plus, the main differentiation arising from length of time on benefits and the severity of barriers to work faced by the individual.
- **Full IB** customers: this group are again reasonably cohesive, facing severe barriers to labour market participation. Where differences arise these are often in relation to a medical or health-related reason for their incapacity which can present different access problems for some customers.
- **IB credit** customers and customers claiming **IS on the grounds of incapacity (IS Incap)**: these two different customer groups often hoped to claim full IB and the more generous level of payments associated with this. However, IB is a contributory and means-tested benefit and some customers do not, therefore, qualify for it, despite having a health condition or illness which prevents them from being available for work. These two groups of customers often have similar frustrations with the New Claims service, especially as a result of dissatisfaction with the benefit decision itself.
- **IS Care** customers: this group of customers also claim IS but often do so not on the grounds of incapacity but on the grounds, predominantly, of caring responsibilities. Many in this group are lone parents.

As such, the findings in this report are presented using these groups as the primary form of disaggregation and comparison.

Customers were allocated to these groups based on their recollection of the benefit they received on completion of the process. For those that had not yet received a decision or were declined benefits, the benefit applied for was used.

Customers were prompted with the benefit recorded on the Jobcentre Plus database and where the customer's recollection was different to this, supplementary questions were asked to confirm that their circumstances concurred with the stated benefit. The information about customers' basis for claiming is also used to further classify the IS customers into the two sub-categories of: IS Incap (that are analysed with the IB Credit customers) and IS on the basis of caring responsibilities.

## 2.4 Customer sampling

The quantitative survey was conducted by telephone with a range of different Jobcentre Plus customers, including those in receipt of:

- JSA;
- IS; and
- IB.

The survey focused primarily on customers who had made a new claim via the contact centres, however, any customers who had made a face-to-face, postal or e-claim were also included. As it was difficult to estimate the proportion of customers who had not made a new claim by telephone because this is not recorded on Jobcentre Plus records, quotas were not set for these groups. Customers who had made a Rapid Reclaim were also included in the sample.

It is important to ensure that the survey respondents had undertaken their claims interview recently to aid recollection and to ensure that the SOM II process was in place. These considerations meant that the sample only included customers who had been claiming for less than four weeks at the time of sampling to ensure that they had recently been through the New Claims process. The timing of the sampling process was crucial in ensuring that, where possible, contextual developments such as the roll-out of 'virtuality' or the reintroduction of job search/broking activities did not result in substantially different experiences for some respondents as opposed to others. For instance, the sampling period was delayed to avoid sampling customers who had a disrupted experience of the service as a result of industrial action in the postal service in autumn 2007. Whilst it is not possible to avoid all contextual 'events' that may have occurred, we are assured that no major disruptions to the service were experienced during the sampling period.

The sample was drawn from a GIS scan of benefit claimants and was based on the overall profile of new benefit claimants. This approach to sampling replicates that used in the National Customer Satisfaction Survey and the data was weighted to provide results that are representative in aggregate for all customers. See Table 2.1.

**Table 2.1 Profile of respondents**

	JSA	Full IB	IB Credit/ IS Incap	IS Care	Total
	%	%	%	%	
Men	69	62	58	23	
Women	31	38	42	77	
16-24	46	8	24	38	
25-49	44	52	56	59	
50-64	10	40	20	3	
Long-term illness	12	76	74	18	
White	82	94	92	86	
Mixed	3	<1	2	4	
Asian/Asian British	7	4	3	5	
Black/Black British	6	<1	2	4	
Other	<1	<1	<1	1	
ESOL	8	5	6	6	
<i>Unweighted base</i>	791	453	488	355	2,087

## 2.5 The survey process

All customers in the contact sample received an advance letter informing them about the survey along with a proforma to complete and return if they wished to opt-out of the survey. In order to maximise accessibility and inclusiveness, the proforma also allowed respondents who were unable to participate in a telephone survey the opportunity to inform us of this and to arrange for the interview to be conducted by another method. A profile of respondents by survey method is offered in Table 2.2.

**Table 2.2 Profile of respondents by survey method**

	<b>JSA</b>	<b>Full IB</b>	<b>IB Credit/ IS Incap</b>	<b>IS Care</b>	<b>Totals</b>
Telephone	1,412	152	270	218	2,052
Telephone – interpreted	4	0	2	1	7
Online	4	0	0	1	5
Postal	11	3	6	2	22
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1,413</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>278</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>2,086</b>

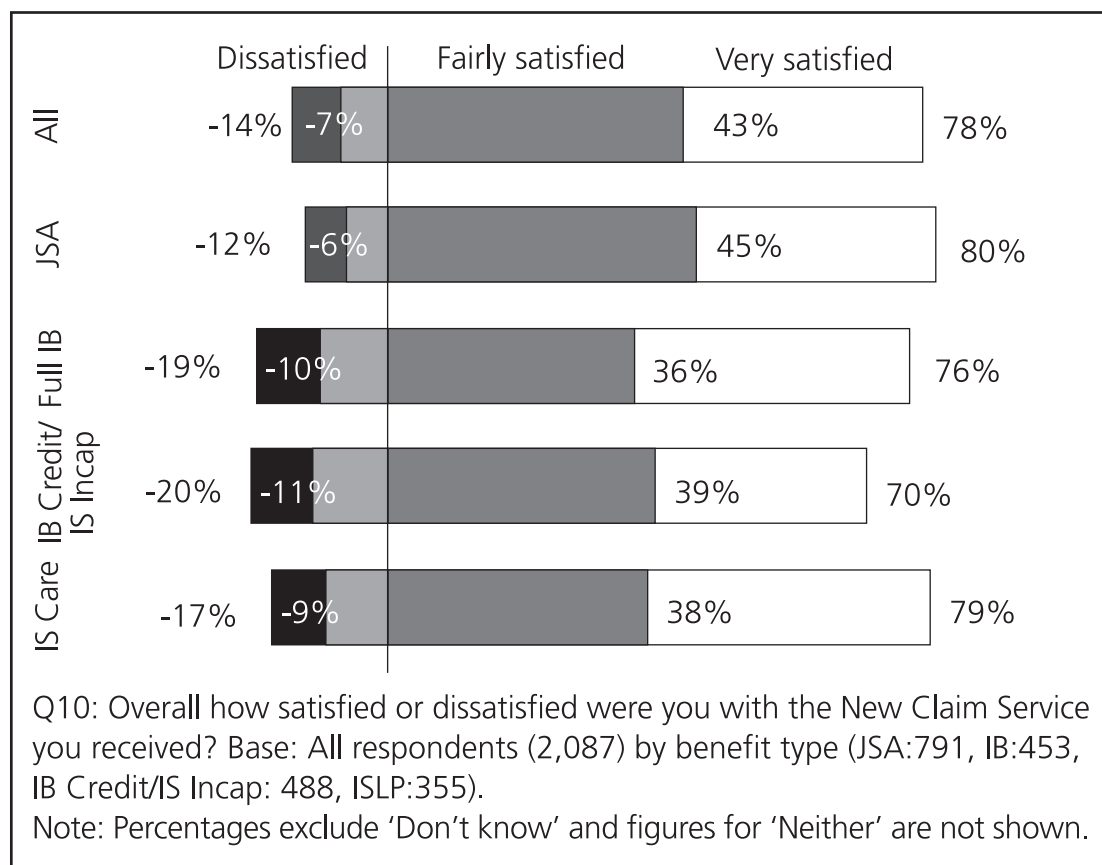
A piloting exercise was undertaken in October 2007 in order to thoroughly test the survey methodology and questionnaire (see the Appendix). The main survey was undertaken in November and December 2007 by the Policy Research Institute in combination with IFF research. The questionnaire was complicated to allow for a number of different claim routes as well as mixed claim routes, where customers began their claim through one method but then continued it by other means. Importantly, Rapid Reclaim customers and others who had not undertaken the full telephone claim, undertook a much shorter questionnaire focused on general satisfaction as well as some of the questions related to aspects of satisfaction outside the first contact experience.

## 3 General satisfaction

### 3.1 Overall satisfaction

Respondents to the survey were asked at the outset how satisfied or dissatisfied they were overall with the New Claims process which they received. The vast majority reported that they were satisfied overall. Nearly 78 per cent of respondents reported being either 'fairly' or 'very' satisfied. Around 14 per cent said that they were (either 'fairly' or 'very') dissatisfied.

**Figure 3.1 Overall satisfaction, by benefit group**





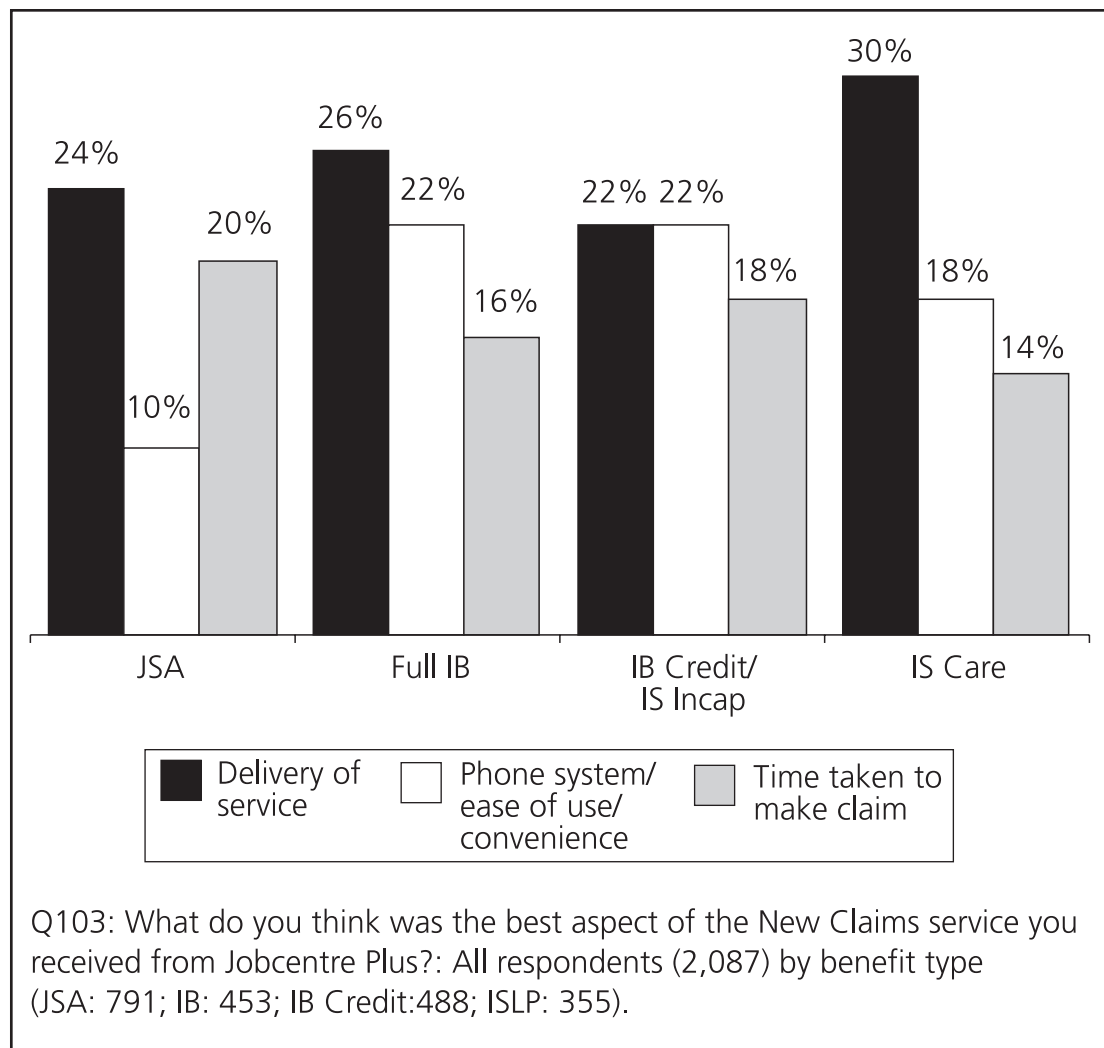
While the two surveys are not directly comparable<sup>1</sup>, the level of satisfaction with 'first contact' suggested by this survey is very similar to that shown in the main *Jobcentre Plus Customer Satisfaction Survey 2007* (Johnson and Fidler, 2008:19), where overall satisfaction was 80 per cent.

Of course, just as shown by the main customer satisfaction survey, Jobcentre Plus customers are not an homogenous group and satisfaction varied to an extent by different customer benefit groups (see Figure 3.1). JSA customers were the most satisfied, with nearly 80 per cent being either fairly or very satisfied. IS Care customers, (excluding those on IS Incap – see Section 2.2 for an explanation of this) who are largely lone parents or customers with other caring responsibilities were similarly satisfied overall at 79 per cent. This compares to a figure of less than 70 per cent for customers on IB Credit or IS Incap, who were the least satisfied.

Respondents were also asked to give their thoughts on what they felt were the best and worst aspects of the New Claims service which they received from Jobcentre Plus. The most frequently cited 'best' aspect (see Figure 3.2) overall related to the speed and efficiency (including favourable comparisons with previous experience) of the New Claims process. The ability to undertake the whole process on the telephone was particularly welcomed, especially for full IB customers. The most frequently cited 'worst' aspect of the process related to timescales, especially for reaching a decision and making payments, particularly for IS Care respondents. It is worth noting, however, that the administrative process of deciding on a claim and making payments are outside the 'first contact' phase of the New Claims process.

---

<sup>1</sup> The samples for each of the surveys were constructed in different ways to reflect different customer profiles and the subject matter for each survey was also very different.

**Figure 3.2 Best aspects of the New Claims service by benefit type**

## 3.2 Drivers of satisfaction

### 3.2.1 Descriptive discussion of factors affecting satisfaction

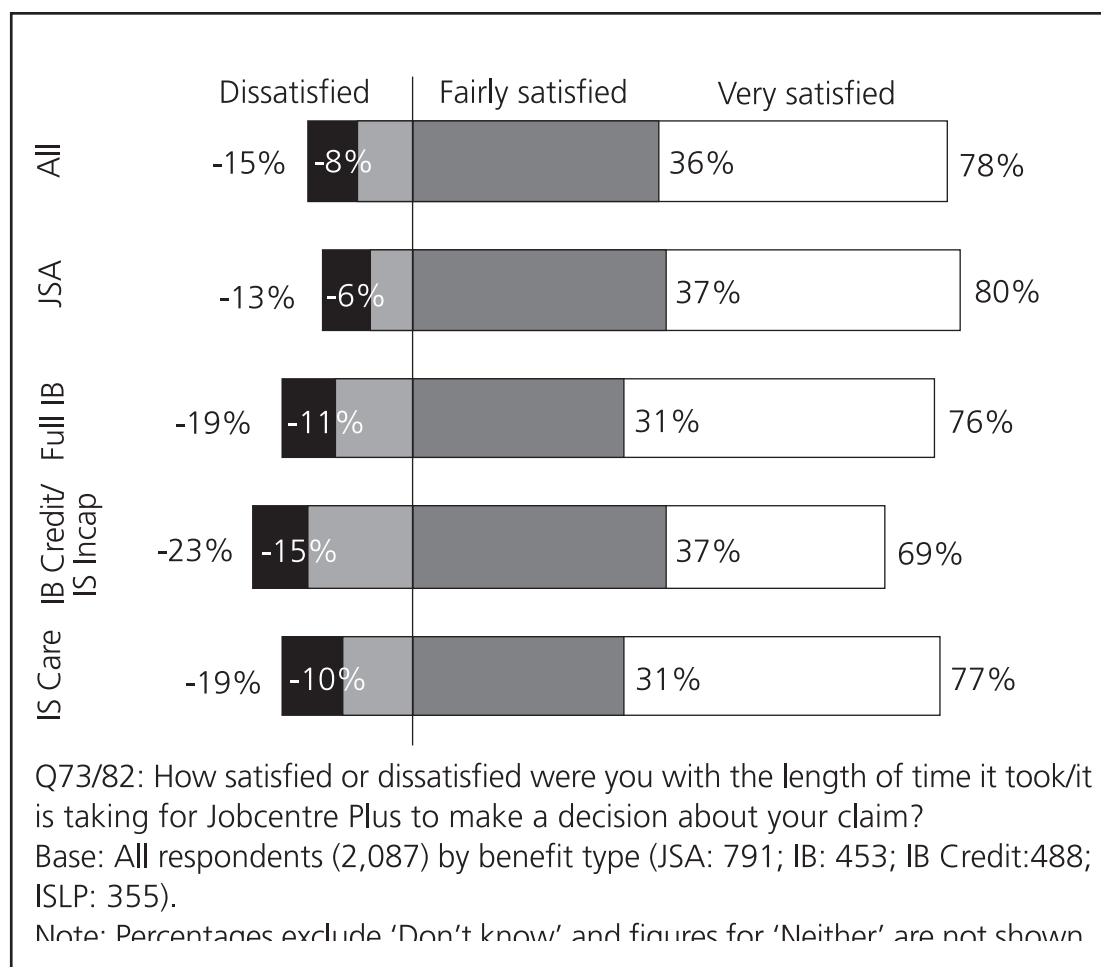
If improvements are to be made to the service customers receive, it is important to understand the causal dynamics underpinning experiences of satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Simply put, it is necessary to isolate what precisely customers are satisfied and dissatisfied about. As such, respondents were asked to give reasons for their levels of satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

Prominent reasons cited by customers themselves for satisfaction included the efficiency and speed of the service and the friendliness and helpfulness of staff. The most frequently cited reasons for dissatisfaction related to the length of time taken to process and pay benefits, the loss of documents and the provision of incorrect or contradictory advice. IS Care respondents were particularly dissatisfied with the timescales involved and IB Credit/IS Incap customers were most dissatisfied with the provision of contradictory information. Interestingly, almost 29 per cent

of dissatisfied JSA customers reported that they were dissatisfied as a result of the bad attitude of staff. A reason which was not felt nearly as strongly by claimants of other benefit types.

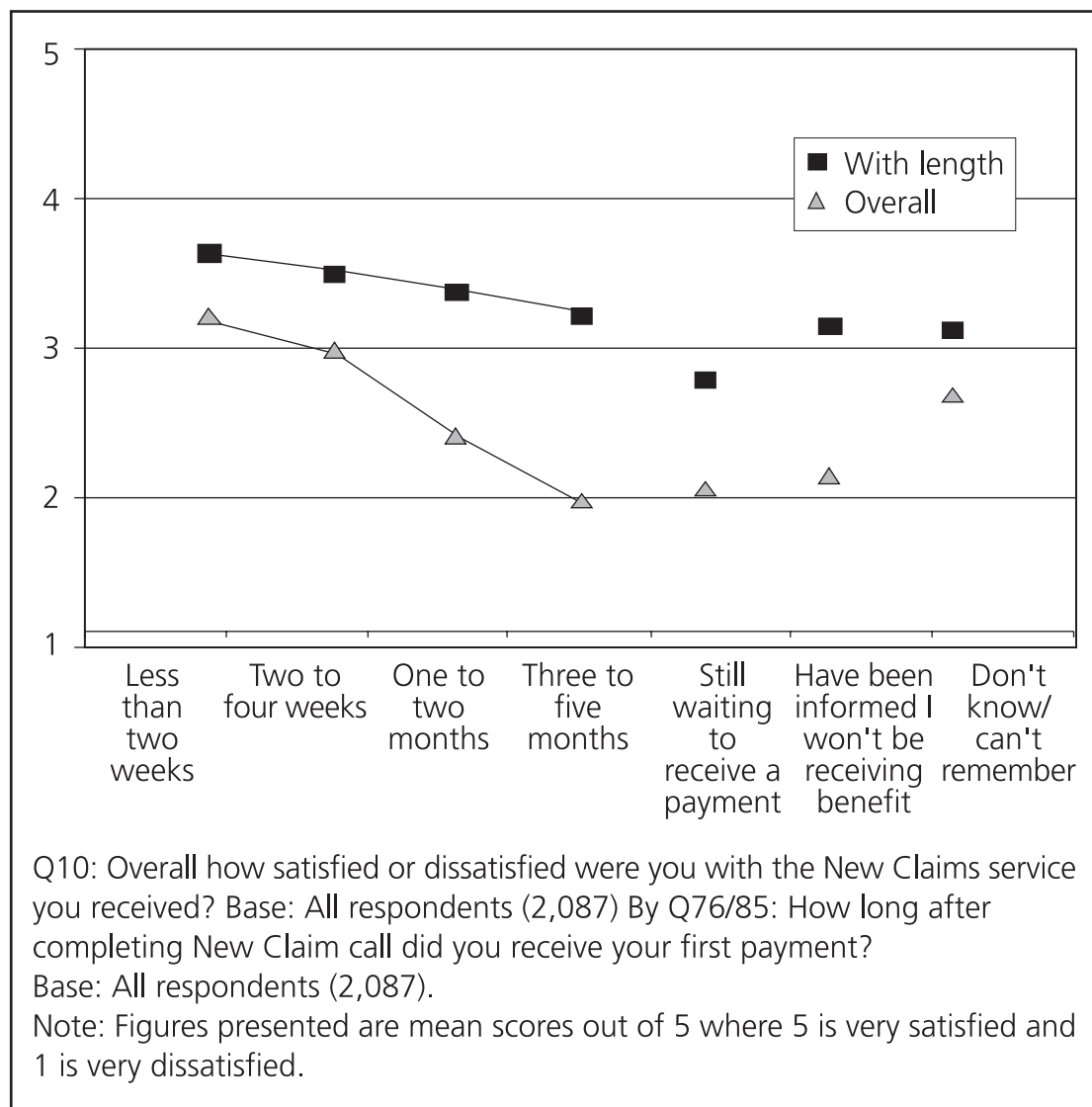
The effect of benefit decisions and processing times on overall satisfaction was anticipated and incorporated into the survey methodology, despite these issues being outside the research focus on 'first contact'. The aim of this was to assess the extent to which dissatisfaction with these aspects of the claim process 'polluted' respondents' satisfaction with the rest of the 'first contact experience'. Respondents were asked whether they were yet receiving any payments. Of those that were receiving benefits, 80 per cent were very or fairly satisfied. However, for claimants who had not yet received any payment this fell dramatically to 56 per cent. The group that were least likely to report that they had started receiving payments were customers on IB Credit/IS Incap. Unsurprisingly, therefore, it was these groups who were also least likely to be satisfied with the time it had taken to make a decision on their claim (Figure 3.3).

**Figure 3.3 Satisfaction with decision time, by benefit group**



The findings also confirmed that the length of time taken to receive payments is a strong predictor of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the claims process overall. Eighty-seven per cent of those who received a payment within two weeks of making their main claim call were fairly or very satisfied. After this the level of satisfaction falls progressively as the length of time taken to receive payments increases, with more than four weeks being an important milestone. More than 80 per cent of those that received payment within four weeks were satisfied overall, whereas this falls dramatically for those that waited longer. Overall, when customers wait for four weeks or more, around 29 per cent become dissatisfied (Figure 3.4).

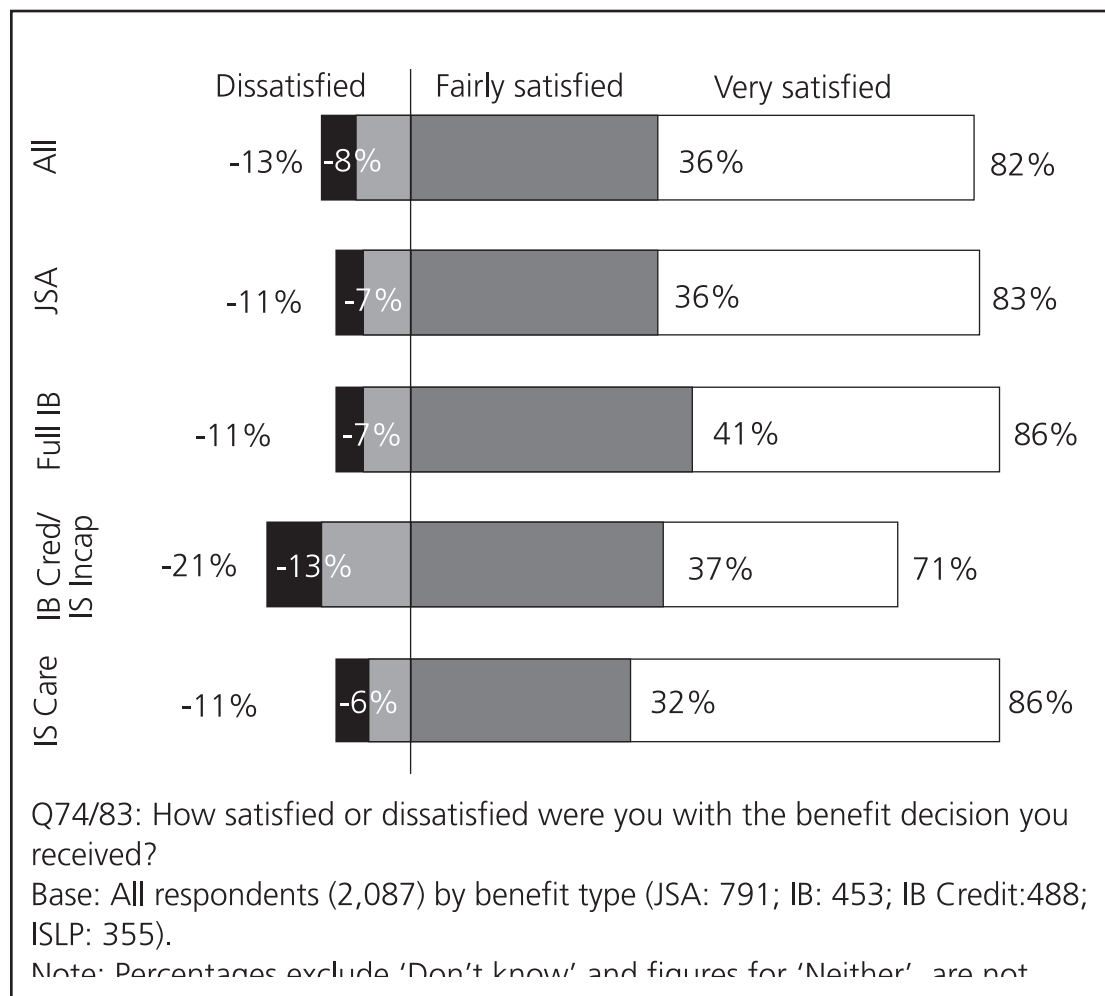
**Figure 3.4 Overall satisfaction by time taken to receive first payment**



Looking at satisfaction with benefit payment time by customer group reveals that JSA customers (at 73 per cent) were most likely to be satisfied with the length of time that it took to receive their first payment. At 55 per cent IB Credit/IS Incap customers were the least likely to be satisfied and almost a third of these customers were dissatisfied with the length of time it took to receive their first payment.

Satisfaction with the actual decision received also varied by customer group. IB Credit/IS Incap customers were the least satisfied with the actual decision on their claim. Only 69 per cent of these customers were satisfied as opposed to 82 per cent or more of the other customer groups. This might be expected given the likelihood that these customers will have wanted the higher levels of benefit payment associated with a successful full IB claim. Unsurprisingly, dissatisfaction that they had not been successful in claiming IB was an important reason for dissatisfaction among IB Credit/IS Incap customers.

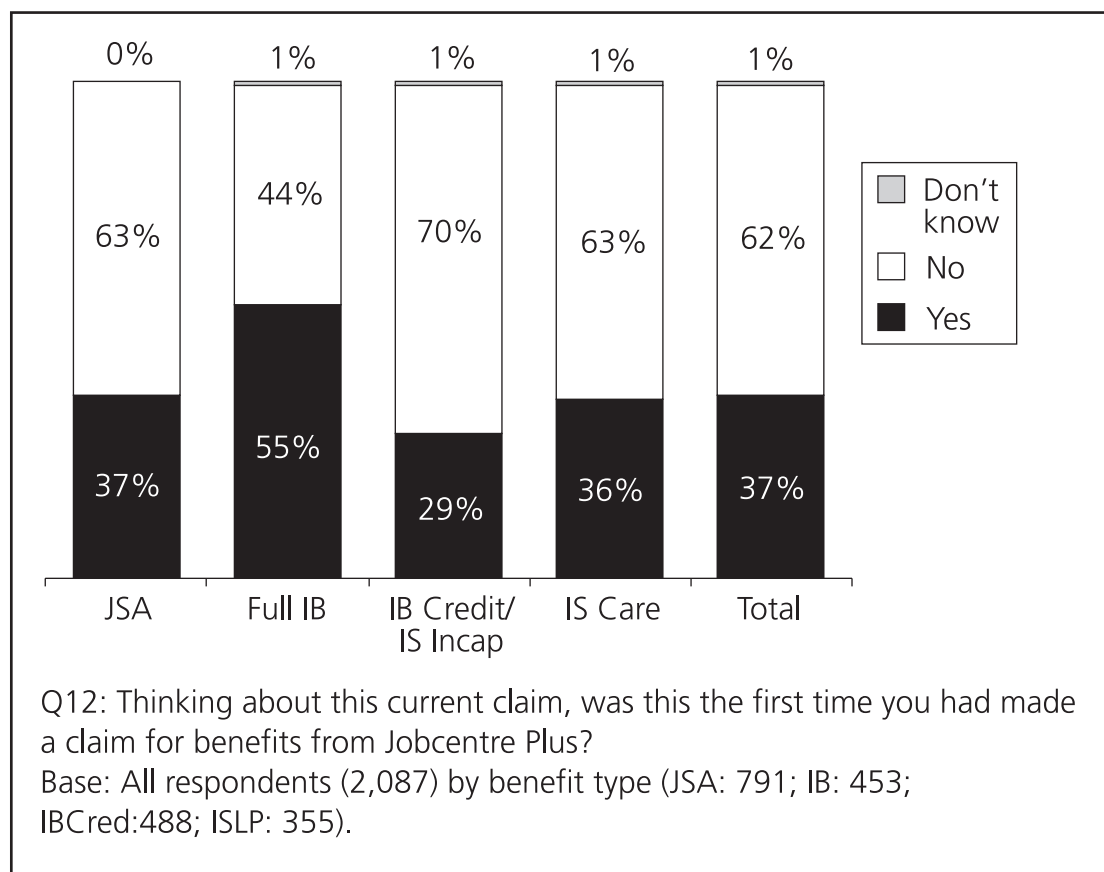
**Figure 3.5 Satisfaction with benefit decision, by benefit group**



Generally, reasons for satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the decision varied. Where respondents were satisfied with their decision this tended to be because they felt that the decision was fair and what they expected or because they felt that their claim was handled efficiently. There were also those that expressed gratitude to receive any payment. The biggest reported reason for dissatisfaction with the decision was the level of benefit payment, across all benefit groups.

We also asked if respondents had claimed benefits previously. Overall, 62 per cent of respondents had, with this ranging between 62 per cent and 70 per cent for JSA, IB Credit/IS Incap customers and IS Care customers. The proportion of full IB customers who had claimed previously was considerably lower at less than 45 per cent, partly reflecting the contributory nature of the benefit.

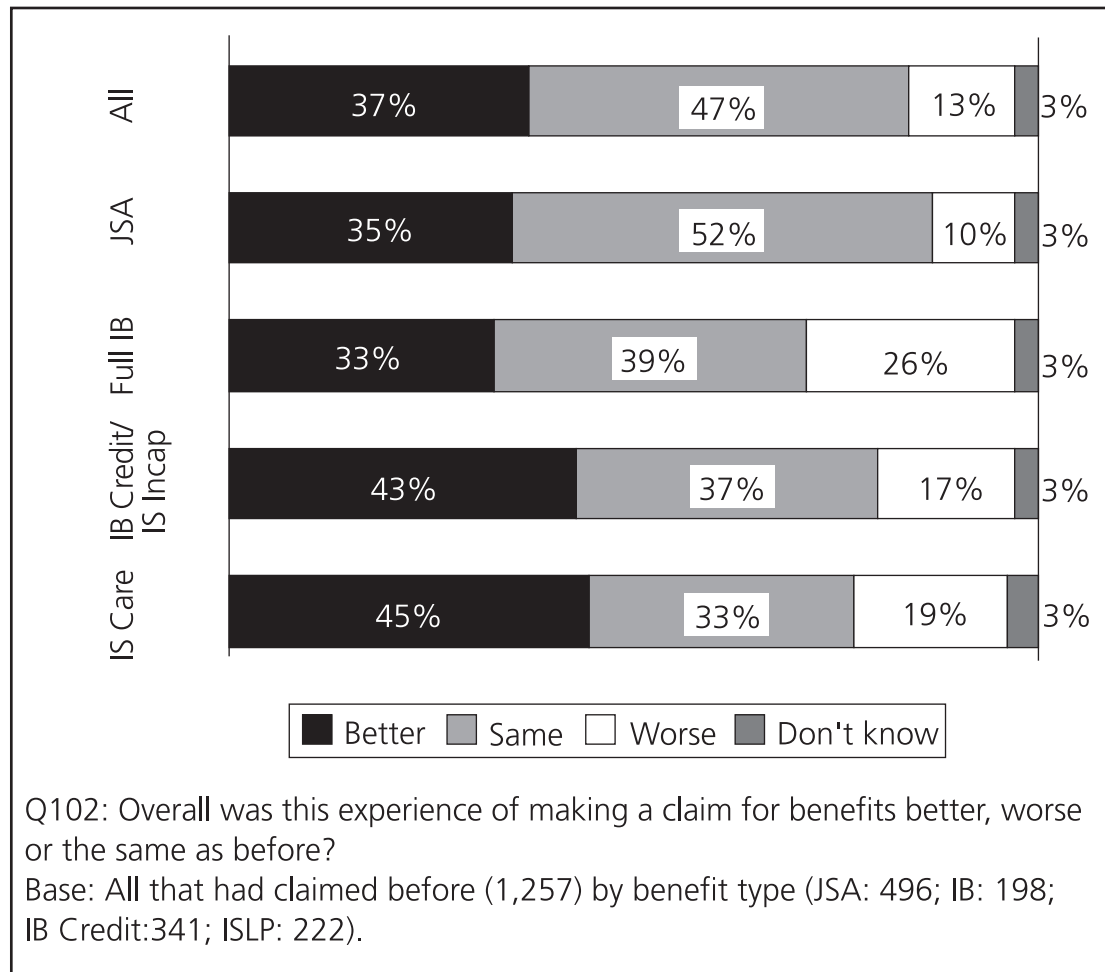
**Figure 3.6 Previous claim experience, by benefit group**



Those who had claimed previously were asked to compare their most recent and previous experience(s) of making a claim for benefits. The largest group (47 per cent) felt the service had remained the same and the next largest group (37 per cent) reported that the service had got better. Only 13 per cent felt that the service had declined in quality between claims. These findings are broadly consistent with the main customer satisfaction survey which showed that the majority of customers thought Jobcentre Plus services had either stayed the same or improved (Johnson and Fidler, 2008).

In relation to first contact, JSA customers were most likely to feel that the service had stayed the same and IB Credit/IS Incap and IS Care customers were the most likely to report that the service had improved.

**Figure 3.7 Comparison of current and previous claim, by benefit group**



While the comparison of present and previous claim experiences indicates positive progress, it could be seen as disappointing that so many customers felt that there had been little or no change in the quality of service, despite considerable investment and reform. However, it is important to understand the responses to these questions in more detail. This is possible through comparison not just on the basis of a previous claim but when that previous claim was made, and specifically whether this was under SOM II, SOM I or a previous face-to-face claim process that operated in the past. Of those that reported their most immediate claim was undertaken in the last year and, therefore, most likely under SOM II, the greatest proportion (at 56 per cent) understandably thought that the process was the same. Rapid Reclaimers, who by definition had to have claimed under the SOM II process, were also much more likely than other groups to report that the experience was the same as previously. Looking at this a different way, of those that thought that

the claims service had stayed the same, 77 per cent were making comparison with a claim that was most likely to have been made under SOM II.

Those that claimed between one and three years ago and therefore, most likely under SOM I, were more likely to suggest that the experience had improved. For this group the largest proportion (at 45 per cent) reported that the experience had improved, though slightly more also thought that the process had got worse. Those that claimed more than three years ago and, therefore, most likely under claims processes prior to the introduction of contact centres were the most likely of all (at 58 per cent) to suggest that the claims process has improved since then.

Taken together, what this analysis appears to show is that the customers who had claimed previously were most likely to compare their most recent experience under SOM II favourably with these previous experiences. Additionally, the responses seem to suggest that the SOM II experience is better than SOM I and better still than previous face-to-face methods. What it also shows is that the apparent bias toward reporting continuity of the quality of service between past and present claim experiences rather than an improvement, suggests that the implementation of SOM II is consistent or improving, with less than 12 per cent reporting that the claim process had got worse during this period. In sum, the findings suggest that the significant investment and organisational change in the first contact process has yielded benefits in customers' experience of service quality.

### **3.2.2 Comparative analysis of factors affecting satisfaction**

It is possible to further explore the relative contribution of a range of factors, which, from the descriptive analysis, appear to have an influence on satisfaction or dissatisfaction levels. A number of factors, which are largely outside the 'first contact experience', explain approximately 29 per cent of the variation in levels of satisfaction including benefit decisions, the decision itself and payment times. More specifically, these include satisfaction with the length of time it takes to make a decision on the benefit claim and to be paid, satisfaction with the decision itself and whether or not the respondent had received a payment at the time of undertaking the survey. Comparing each of these factors suggests that satisfaction with the length of time taken to make a decision is the most important factor within this group, followed by satisfaction with payment time and the decision itself.

## **3.3 Overall satisfaction and individual characteristics**

### **3.3.1 Descriptive discussion of satisfaction by individual characteristics**

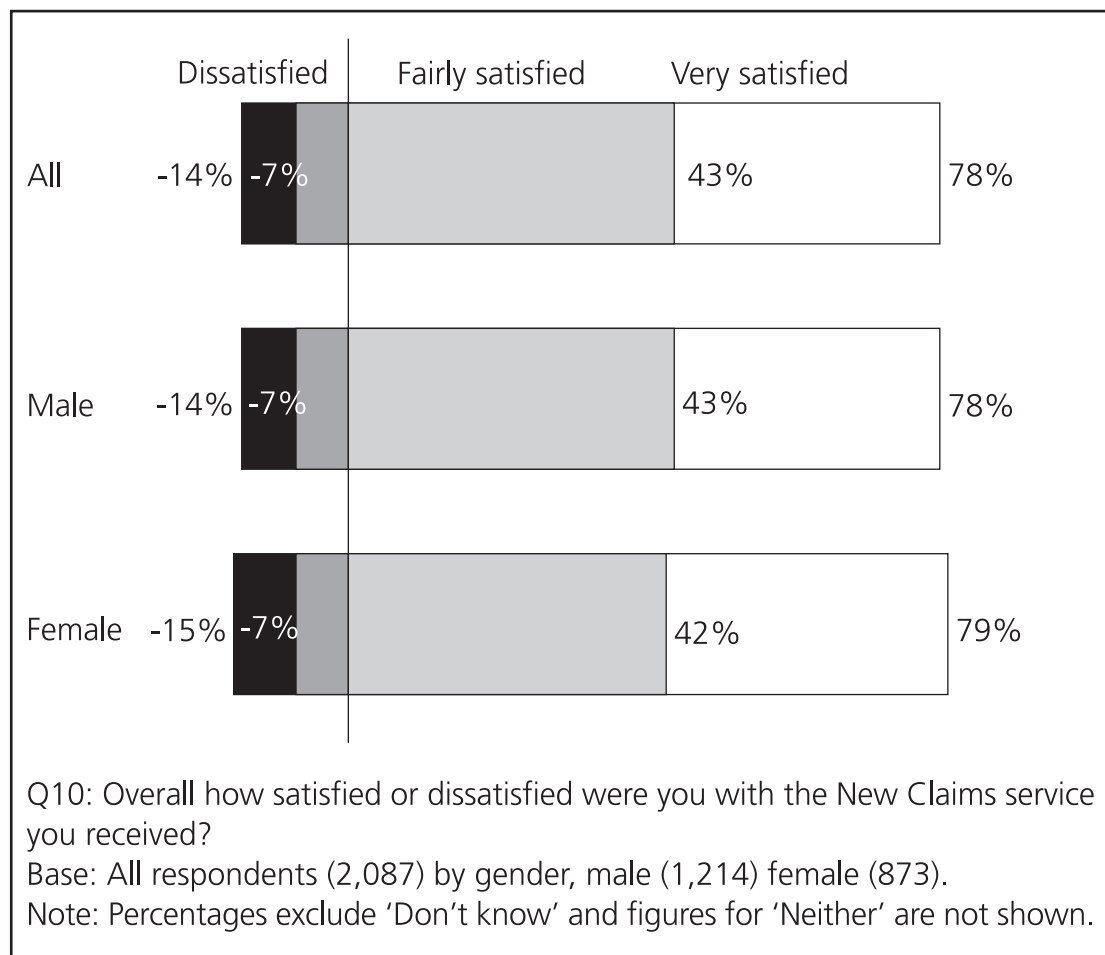
It is possible to compare respondents' satisfaction levels according to their different individual characteristics, such as gender, age, ethnicity and their health status. In addition, respondents included those where someone else – a carer or appointed representative – had spoken on their behalf in order to assist them in making the claim.



At the outset, it is interesting to note that there was there very little difference in the overall satisfaction levels between those that had and hadn't undertaken their claim personally. This continues to suggest that other factors, outside the first contact phase of the claims process, such as decision making and timescales, have a larger influence on levels of overall satisfaction with the New Claims process.

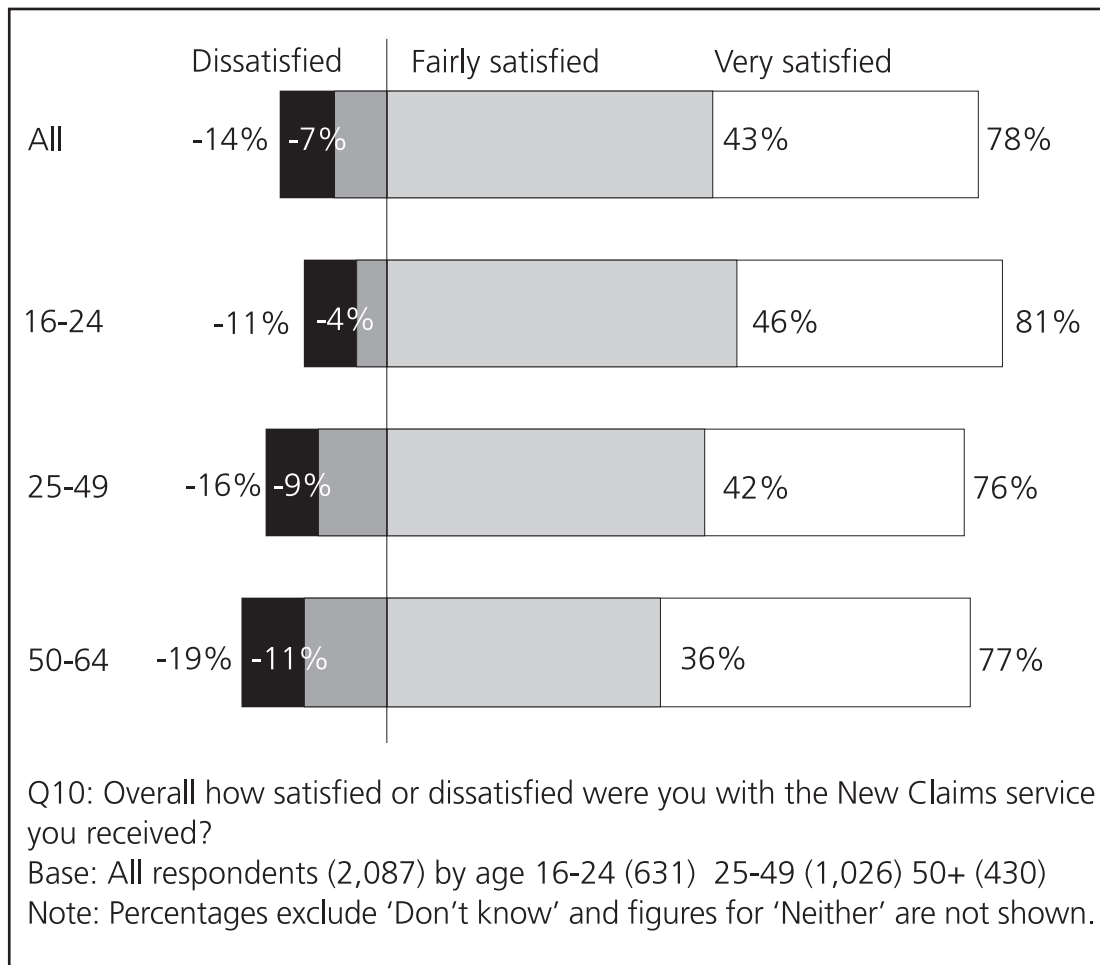
Comparing results by gender (see Figure 3.8) shows that satisfaction between men and women was also closely matched (females 79 per cent, males 78 per cent).

**Figure 3.8 Overall satisfaction, by gender**



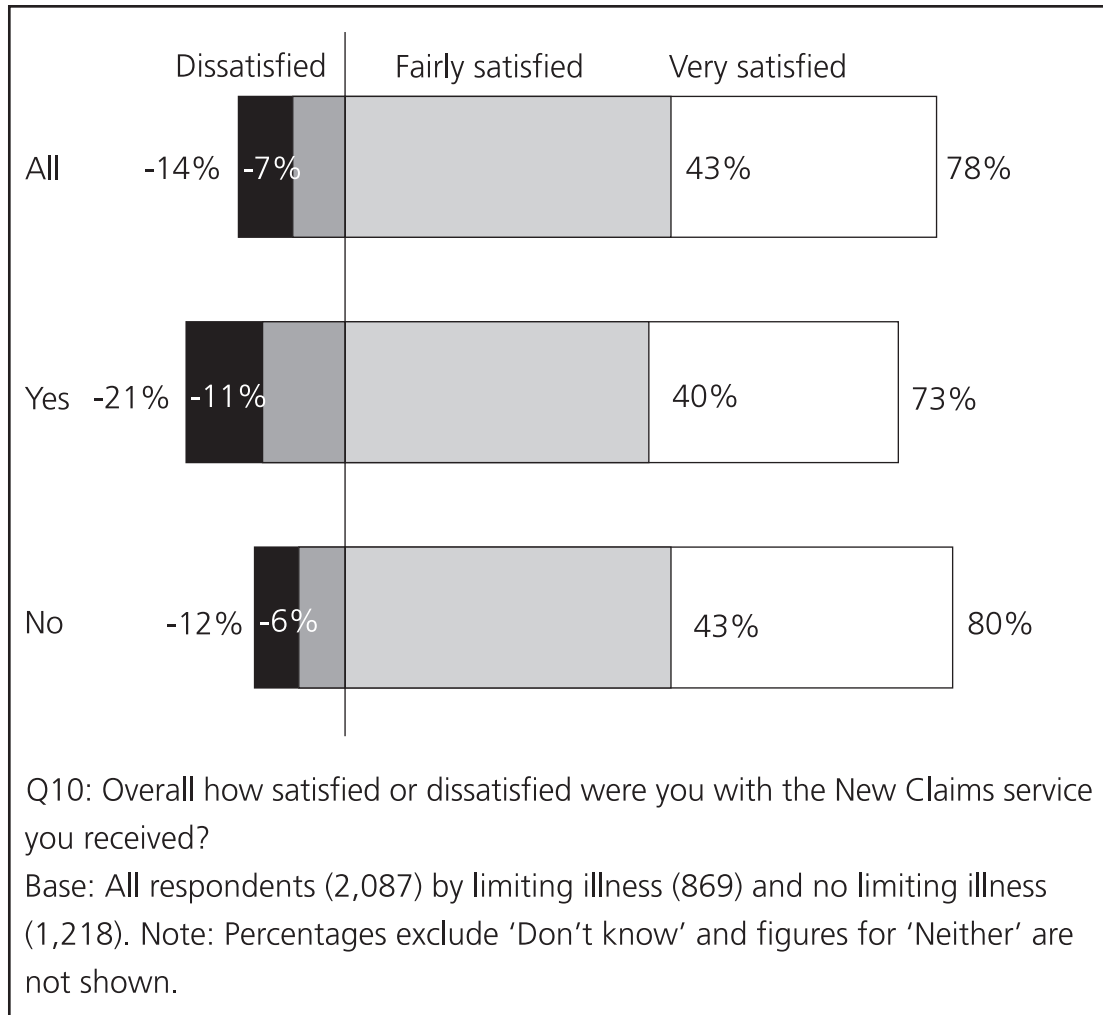
Comparing the responses of different age groups (see Figure 3.9) shows that the age group most likely to be satisfied with the overall New Claims process and the least likely to be dissatisfied were 16-24 year olds. By contrast, the 50-64 age group were more likely than other age groups to be dissatisfied (at just under a fifth) but conversely, this group also had the largest proportion who were very satisfied (two-fifths).

**Figure 3.9 Overall satisfaction, by age group**



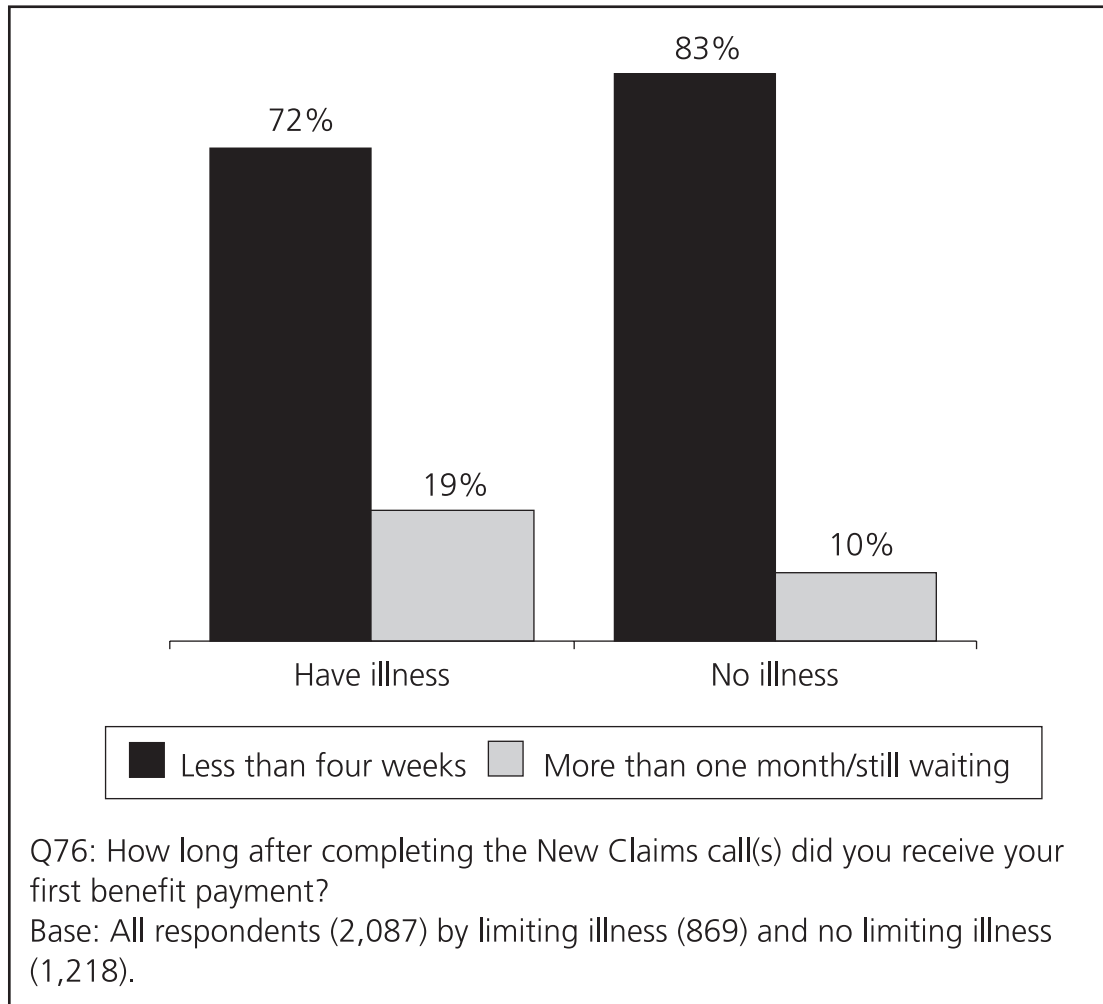
Respondents reporting a limiting illness or health condition were less likely to be satisfied and more likely to be dissatisfied than other groups with the overall claims process (Figure 3.10). Just over a fifth of people with such a health condition were dissatisfied.

**Figure 3.10 Overall satisfaction, by limiting illness**



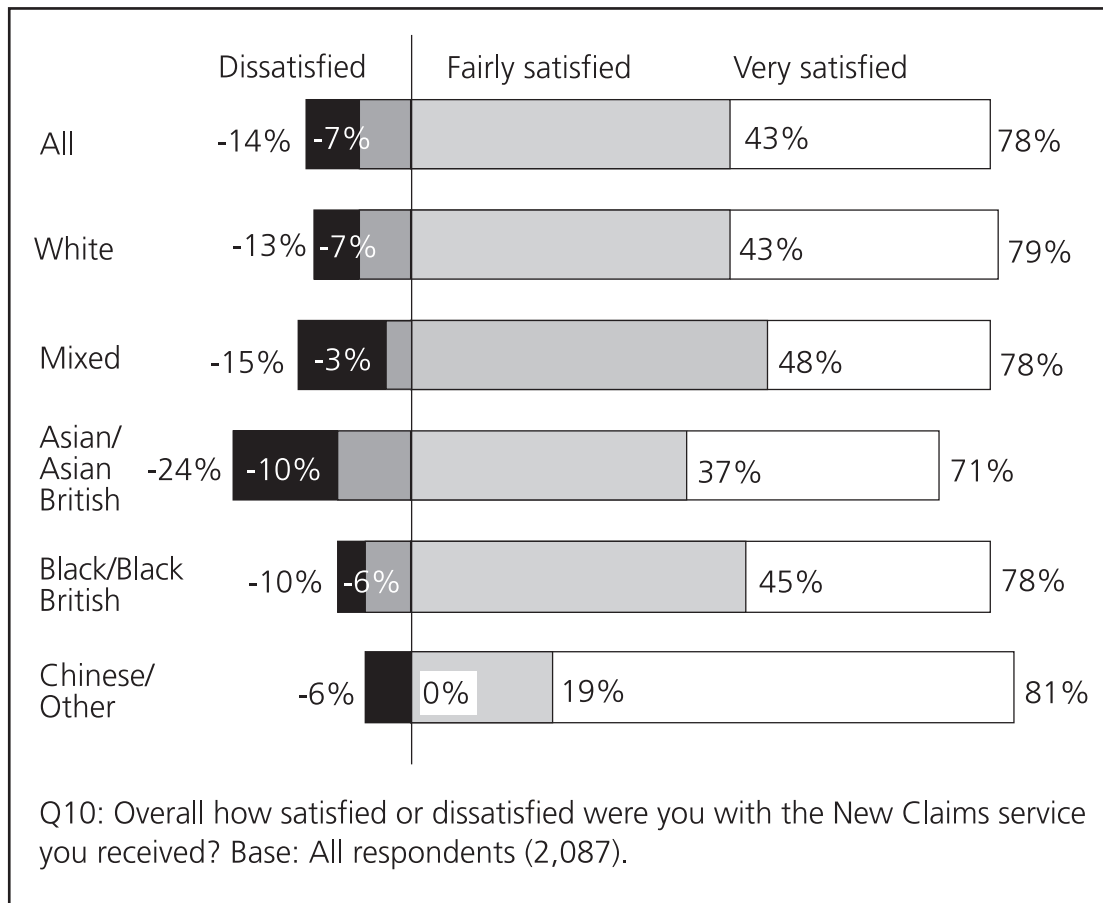
In order to further investigate the reasons why customers with limiting illnesses were less satisfied than other demographic groups, it was important to compare the length of time it took this client group to receive their first benefit payment with the wait times of those people not affected by illness or disability. This revealed longer waiting times for respondents with limiting illnesses and health conditions, perhaps as a result of more complex claims. The percentage of people without a limiting illness who were either still waiting for their first payment or who had to wait between one and five months was only ten per cent. The percentage of claimants with a limiting illness or disability who had to wait between one and five months, or were still waiting, to receive their first benefit payment was nearly three times this figure at 29 per cent. Echoing this trend, 83 per cent of people without a limiting illness or disability had received their first benefit payment within four weeks, as opposed to 72 per cent of people with a limiting illness or disability.

**Figure 3.11 Customers with limiting illness wait longer for first benefit payment**



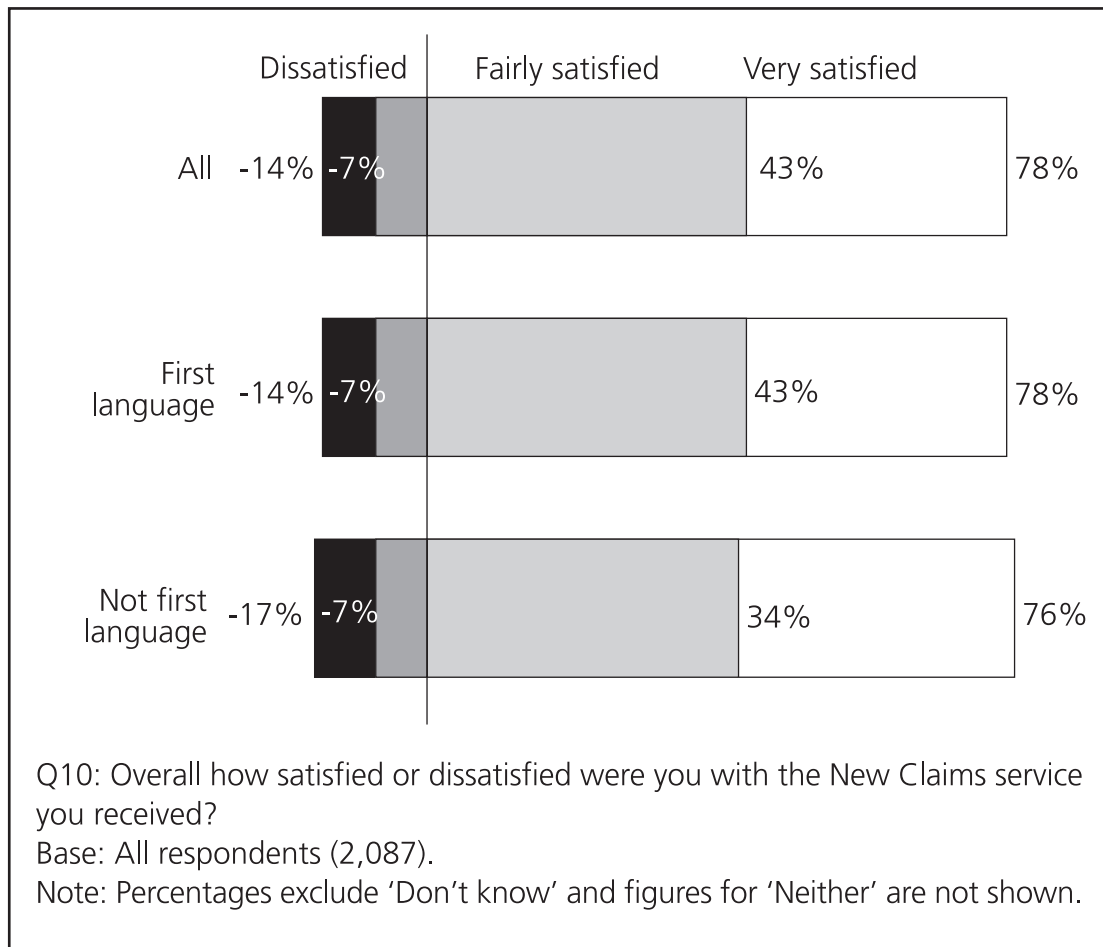
Levels of satisfaction with the New Claims service can also be analysed by ethnic group. Similar percentages of claimants from white, mixed, black or black British and Chinese or other ethnic groups were either 'fairly' or 'very satisfied'. However, respondents from an Asian or British Asian background recorded noticeably lower levels of satisfaction. Similarly, levels of dissatisfaction were also greater amongst those from an Asian or British Asian background, with 24 per cent reporting that they were either 'fairly' or 'very dissatisfied' (see Figure 3.12). Those from a Chinese or other ethnic background have the highest levels of satisfaction and the lowest levels of dissatisfaction, although it should be noted that the sample size for this group is very small.

**Figure 3.12 Levels of satisfaction by ethnic group**



We also asked respondents if English was their first language to see if this affected levels of satisfaction (see Figure 3.13). Perhaps unsurprisingly, levels of satisfaction were marginally lower for those with English as a second language (75 per cent) as opposed to native English speakers (78 per cent). Levels of dissatisfaction for this group were also higher than for those with English as their first language.

**Figure 3.13 Levels of satisfaction by English as a first language**



These findings are potentially useful in explaining the apparent lower levels of satisfaction among Asian and Asian British respondents. This is because the proportion of Asian and Asian British respondents who reported that English was their second language was much higher than for other ethnic minority respondents. This does not mean that there were not other reasons why Asian and Asian British respondents were less satisfied than other respondents, including those from different ethnic minorities, but it does suggest that this is one potentially important dynamic in that explanation.

### **3.3.2 Comparative analysis of factors affecting satisfaction**

In addition to the descriptive analysis above, the individual characteristics of respondents were also subjected to multivariate analysis to identify any particular groups of customers appearing to stand out from the overall analysis. The results of this modeling show that personal characteristics such as gender, ethnicity and age are not strong predictors of customer satisfaction as they explain very little of the variation satisfaction found. The analysis showed that in comparison, two characteristics that showed a much stronger relationship with satisfaction, these are: speaking English as a second language and having a self-reported limiting illness. While the model shows that these two factors do represent significant predictors of satisfaction, taken together they explain only around three per cent of the variation in satisfaction.

## 4 Different experiences

### 4.1 Different ways of initiating contact and making the claim

Despite the Standard Operating Model there is still scope for customers to go through the New Claims process through different ways. Most (63 per cent) of our respondents had initiated a new claim by making a call to a Jobcentre Plus contact centre and undertaking the process over the telephone. A further 14 per cent were designated as Rapid Reclaims. Customers can make a 'Rapid Reclaim' if their new claim is within 12 weeks of receiving the final payment for a previous claim, providing that they are claiming for the same benefit as previously and their personal circumstances have not changed. Rapid Reclaim customers go through a faster claims process and while their claim may begin with a phone call, this should be short and result in the details from the previous claim being used to populate the claim form which is sent to the customer for checking and signing. Again, this is a central part of the SOM II process.

However, there was a relatively large number (13 per cent) of respondents to the survey who indicated that they had not gone through the full telephone or Rapid Reclaim process. These were made up of three sets of customers.

The first set recalled that their first contact began with Jobcentre Plus calling them. For around a third of this group this was a response to an online claim submitted by the customer. A further third of respondents in this group reported that they had filled in a claim form in a local office or that they had been sent a form in the post. This may include customers who were simply given a form in a local office instead of being referred to the contact centre number or customers initiating a call at a time when, for whatever reason, the telephone service was unavailable or for whom an intermediary had requested a claim form be sent to the individual. However, the survey data does not allow us to substantiate any of these possibilities and leaves unanswered the final third of this group of respondents, who reported that they completed the process on the telephone and that this contact was initiated by Jobcentre Plus. One possible explanation for this is that these respondents failed to recollect initiating contact in a local office, through an intermediary or through an online claim.

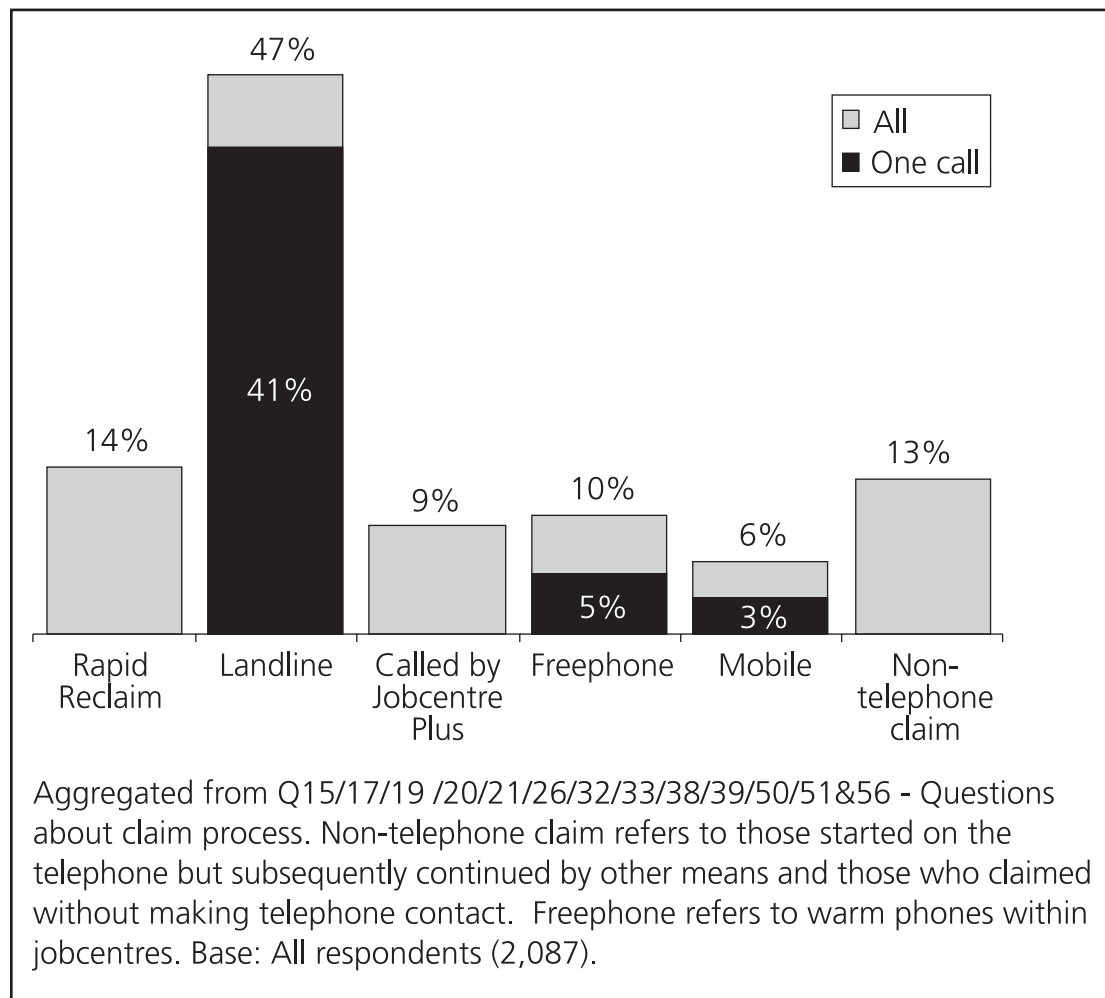


The second set of customers suggested that they had initiated the process by calling Jobcentre Plus but that they had subsequently continued their claim through other means but did not appear to be Rapid Reclaim customers. Though the survey data does not clearly show why these customers dropped out of the telephone process it is likely to be either because they had a complicated claim that was difficult to conduct through the telephone channel or because they had health or communication difficulties which made the telephone a difficult channel for them to use.

The final group had not made any telephone contact at all. Nearly 59 per cent of this group reported that they were not even aware that the majority of claims are made by telephone. Other reasons for making a non-telephone claim included recollections that they had been advised to claim in this way, either by Jobcentre Plus staff or others, that their chosen method (face-to-face and manual claim) was easier than calling by phone. A small number reported that their English was not very good and that this had influenced their claim route.

For customers undertaking the claim through the full telephone process, a number of additional variations are possible. For instance, the process can be completed in a single call or multiple calls. Multiple calls are possible where a customer needs to take a break to collect information or for health/convenience reasons, two or more calls. In addition, customers make the call in different ways, such as from a 'landline' phone, from a mobile or public phone or from a freephone ('warm phone') in a Jobcentre Plus office. In this latter case it is now the expectation that customers will be called back at a different location or in a private booth or room in the Jobcentre Plus office to facilitate privacy and comfort. In the case of mobile phone callers, Jobcentre Plus staff are expected to call customers back if they request it but not to routinely offer this option unprompted. This can make a material difference to customers since while landline calls are free this is not necessarily the case in relation to mobile phone callers.

Among our respondents, the vast majority of telephone contact was made via a call from a landline, though around ten per cent of the sample called from a 'warm phone' and around six per cent from a mobile phone. As might be expected, multi-call experiences were much more common among those respondents who reported that they made first contact via a warm phone in a Jobcentre Plus office or mobile phone, with these groups split evenly between those who completed the process in a single call as opposed to two or more. The main reason why the claim was not completed in a single call was that the customer needed to retrieve additional information or Jobcentre Plus needed to check information, often with the Child Support Agency.

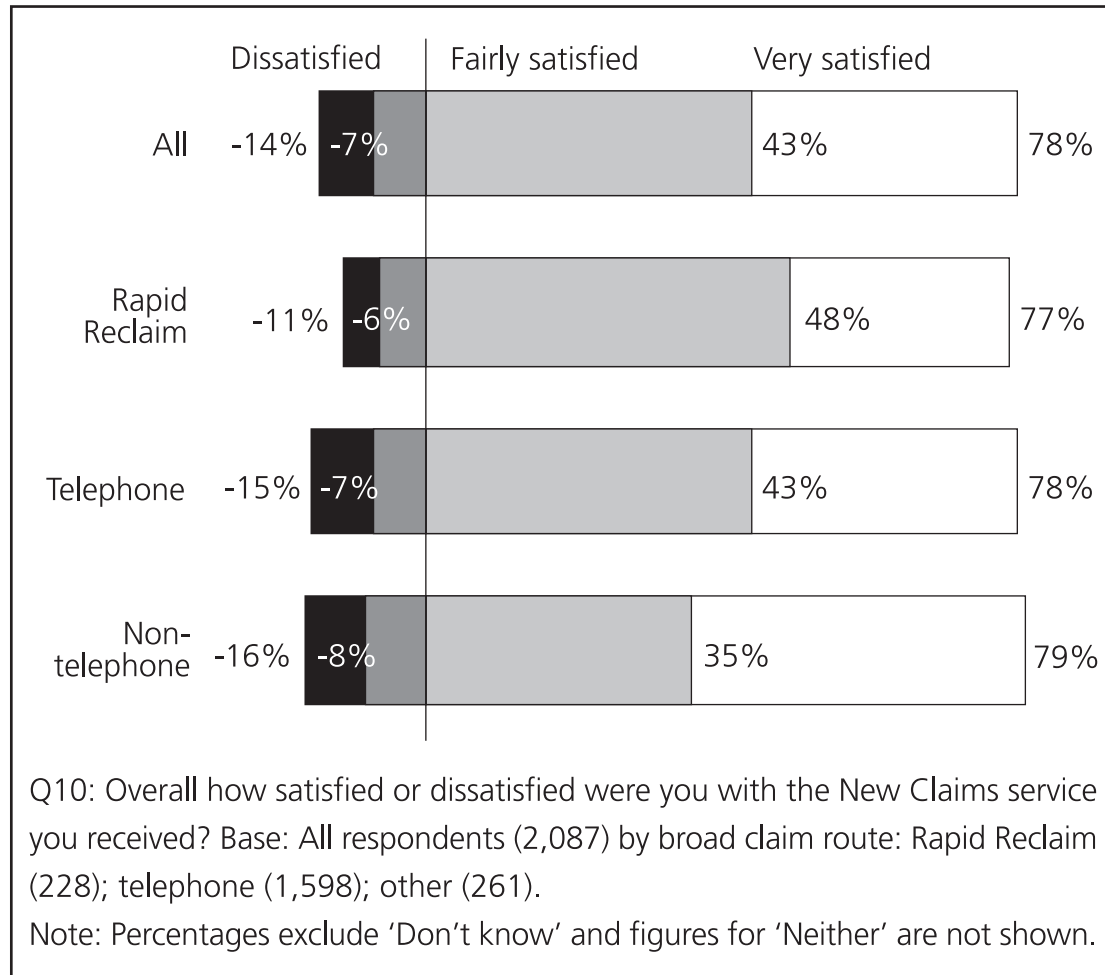
**Figure 4.1 Aggregated claim route types**

Where customers had not completed the process in a single call, the vast majority (70 per cent) had been able to do this in one additional call. However, there were almost a quarter who reported having undertaken three or more calls to complete the process, with half of these having undertaken more than three calls.

## 4.2 Experiences of 'Rapid Reclaim claimants'

Rapid Reclaim customers did not undertake the full survey questionnaire. Instead, they undertook a much shorter version of the survey interview. As such, the amount of comparative analysis that is possible is limited to areas of general satisfaction and a number of additional satisfaction issues related to the payment of benefits, the decision received and the timescales involved.

Comparing the experiences of Rapid Reclaimers and all others in the sample reveals surprisingly that Rapid Reclaimers were similarly satisfied to the wider group. This is surprising since the quicker streamlined service available to Rapid Reclaimers might be expected to increase their satisfaction in comparison to the wider group. Nevertheless, the findings do show that Rapid Reclaimers are marginally less dissatisfied than other groups (see Figure 4.2).

**Figure 4.2 Overall satisfaction by claim route**

Satisfaction levels among Rapid Reclaimers are even more surprising given that the survey responses also suggest that Rapid Reclaim customers were marginally more satisfied with the time taken to make a decision on their claim. The survey findings also suggest that while Rapid Reclaim customers may receive their first benefit payments quicker than other claimants, they were not significantly more satisfied than the rest with the time taken to receive payment.

The survey data does not provide any particular explanation for why Rapid Reclaimers are not more satisfied than other claimants in the way that might be expected. For instance, the age, gender, ethnicity and health profiles of Rapid Reclaimers do not appear to suggest factors which might prevent the quicker claims process experienced by this group from feeding through to a better overall experience. Though the survey data does not substantiate any further conjecture, it may be that the experience of moving off benefits into work and then back onto benefits again in quick succession may affect their general attitude to the claim process. If this were the case it might be argued that the Rapid Reclaim process helps to offset additional dissatisfaction that might otherwise be evident.

### 4.3 Experiences of 'non-telephone claimants'

In addition to Rapid Reclaimers it is possible to identify two further distinct groups of non-telephone claimants. These are a group who reported no telephone contact whatsoever, who accounted for about 11 per cent of our respondents and a considerably smaller second group, accounting for about two per cent, who reported beginning the process on the telephone but subsequently dropping out of the telephone process.

The sample sizes involved mean that these two groups of non-telephone customers (excluding Rapid Reclaimers) have been aggregated for the purposes of comparison with the experiences of those that did undertake the full telephone process. This comparison shows similar levels of satisfaction between those who completed the claims process on the telephone (78 per cent) and those who undertook the claim without undertaking the telephone process (79 per cent).

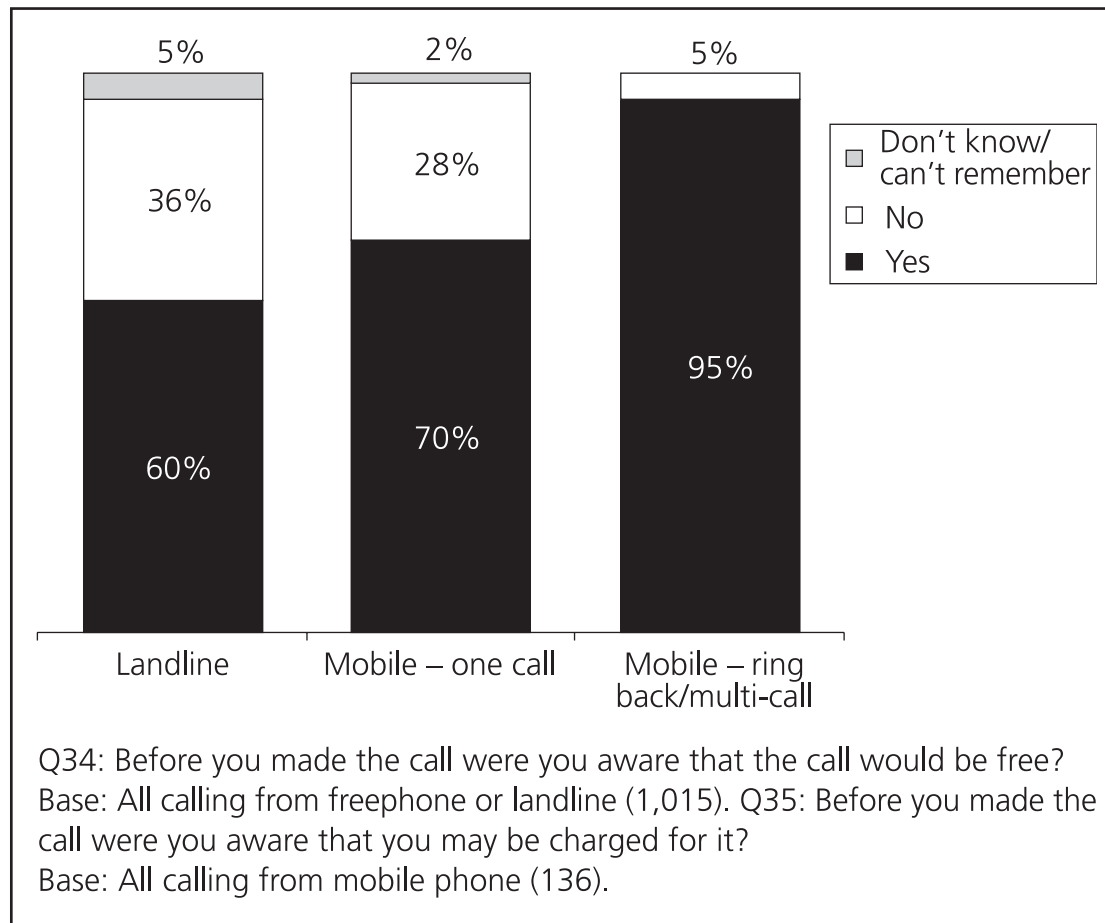
Interestingly, when citing what factors had led to their satisfaction, non-telephoners were less likely to report that the speed and efficiency of the claim had influenced them and more likely to cite the helpfulness and friendliness of staff. This is echoed in the satisfaction of the telephoners and non-telephoners with the length of time it took to decide their claim, with telephoners (78 per cent) being more satisfied than non-telephoners (73 per cent). Following this, the survey data also suggests that non-telephoners had to wait longer to receive their first payment, with substantially less saying that they were paid within a fortnight of making their claim, though the majority did still report being paid within a month. Additionally, while non-telephone claimers were less likely than telephoners to say that they had claimed previously, those that had were considerably less likely to suggest that their present claim was better than previously. Non-telephoners were also marginally less likely to be satisfied with the benefit decision they received. All of this suggests that there are some benefits in satisfaction, including in relation to material factors – how long the claim takes to process – arising from the telephone as opposed to manual claim routes.

### 4.4 Experiences of 'telephone claimants'

#### 4.4.1 Choice of telephone method

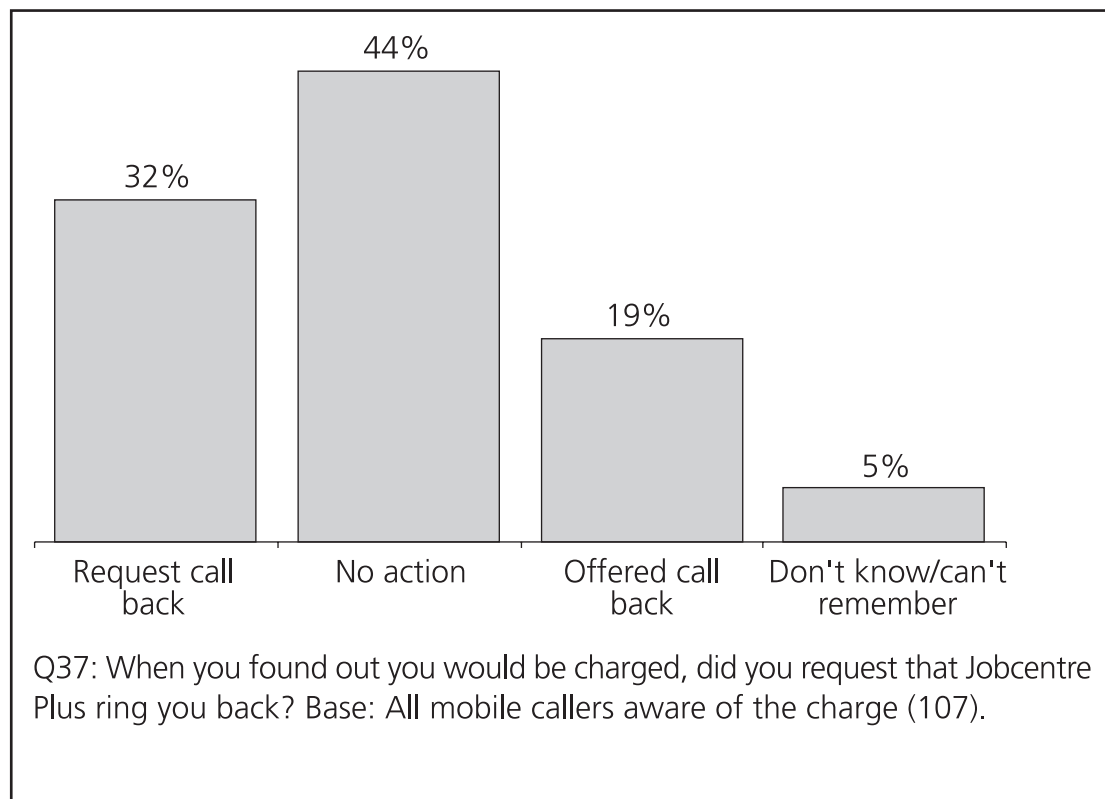
A key change in the service provided to new claimants over recent years is the provision of freephone access for those calling on 'landline' phones. Respondents were, therefore, asked about their awareness of call charges and the impact this had on the choices they made in making contact with Jobcentre Plus.

Around 60 per cent of callers from landlines suggested that they were aware that their call would be free. Callers from mobiles were much more aware that they would be charged for their call. For those who completed the process in a single call awareness was reported among 70 per cent of respondents.

**Figure 4.3 Awareness of call charges**

Unsurprisingly, those who arranged for a ring-back or who experienced a multi-call process were even more aware that the call would be charged (95 per cent). However, it was not clear whether respondents' memory and attribution were accurate on this point in the sense of them being aware prior to the call or becoming aware during their call. For instance, a caller from a mobile may immediately ask to be called back as a result of prior awareness of the call charges, may become aware during the automated message, might be made aware by the call handler that they speak to or may not become aware at all and a broken call may simply result from having to find additional information. These issues were partially explored through a question which asked what respondents did when they became aware that the call would be charged. 32 per cent of callers from mobiles said that they asked the Jobcentre Plus agent to call them back, while 19 per cent suggested that the agent offered to call them back unprompted, though it is worth noting that this figure is based purely on customer recollection so cannot be substantiated. The largest group (44 per cent) did not request a call back.

**Figure 4.4 Most mobile callers do not request a call back**

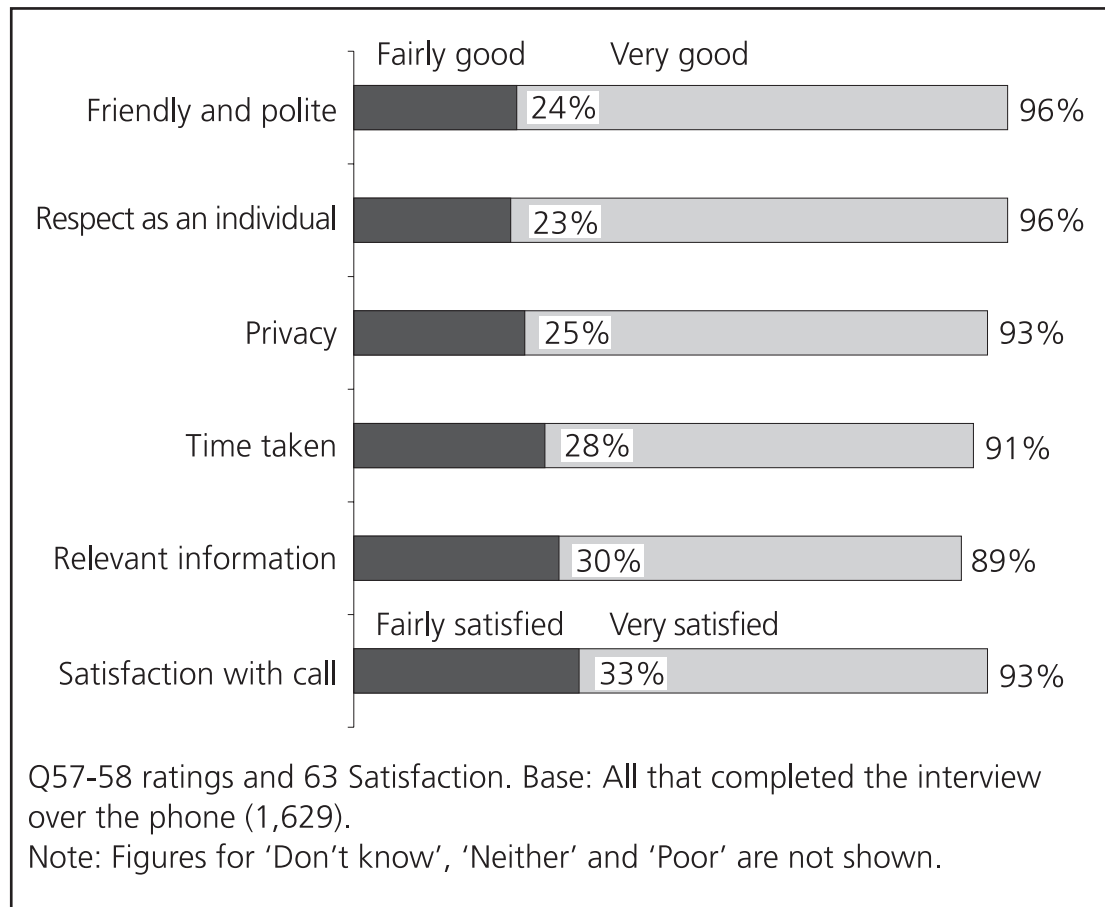


Those respondents who were aware of the freephone/call charges prior to calling were asked to what extent issues of cost had influenced where they made their call from. Surprisingly, for each type of call method, the majority of respondents suggested that the cost of the call had made no difference to their choice of method. Sixty-five per cent of callers from a landline suggested that cost had not influenced their choice, while 73 per cent of callers from mobiles reported that cost had not influenced their choice, though this was unsurprisingly higher (at 78 per cent) for those who had completed the process in a single call from a mobile. Sixteen per cent of landline callers said that cost had totally influenced their choice and a further 11 per cent had been partially influenced by cost. These figures were very much lower and not statistically valid for mobile callers.

#### **4.4.2 Satisfaction with different elements of the call**

##### *Overall*

A range of questions were asked about customers' satisfaction with different aspects of the New Claims call. Respondents were asked to comment on their satisfaction, specifically with their New Claims call(s) as opposed to the New Claims process overall. Ninety-three per cent of all customers were fairly or very satisfied with the New Claims call itself. This varied slightly for different benefit groups but all groups were at 90 per cent or over. The least satisfied were IB Credit/IS Incap customers at 90 per cent and the most satisfied were IS Care customers at more than 94 per cent.

**Figure 4.5 Ratings and satisfaction with aspects of the call**

Considering satisfaction by telephone method, there were again variations in levels of satisfaction but again, all types of telephone contact recorded levels of satisfaction above 90 per cent. Those who were called by Jobcentre Plus reported the highest level of satisfaction with the call itself at more than 98 per cent of respondents. Ninety-three per cent of landline and warm phone callers recorded satisfaction, while 92 per cent of callers from mobiles reported being fairly or very satisfied. Interestingly, there was also less than one percentage point difference in levels of satisfaction between those who had completed the process in one call and those who had a multi-call experience.

### *Conduct of the agent*

Several questions addressed the issue of how respondents felt they had been treated by the telephone New Claims adviser. Overall, more than 96 per cent of respondents felt that the New Claims adviser had been fairly or very good at treating them in a 'friendly and polite' way. This was broadly the same (within a percentage point) for all benefit groups. These results were also tested for differences in the method of telephone contact and between single and multi-call experiences. Variation in the levels of respondents reporting that they had been treated in a friendly and polite way was less than 1.5 percentage points for all

these different types of phone call. The one group who were less satisfied than this was those who had made contact on the telephone but had subsequently continued their claim in some other way.

Respondents were also asked whether they felt that they had been treated with respect as an individual. Again, the vast majority of respondents reported that they felt this aspect had been 'fairly' or 'very' good, with 96 per cent, overall, reporting this. Again these results did not vary substantially between different customer groups, the variation from the average being less than 1.5 percentage points. Similarly, the differences were less than 1.5 percentage points between different telephone methods and between those who had a single and those who had a multi-call experience. Again, though the group that stands out from this are those who had begun the claims process on the telephone but who had subsequently continued the process through other means.

A further question on whether respondents felt that their privacy was respected during their New Claims call(s) was also asked. Responses to this indicated that a generally lower level of satisfaction than the other two aspects of how the agent conducted the claim call, discussed above. Overall, 93 per cent of respondents felt that their privacy had been respected. This varied between different customer groups, methods of telephone contact and between single and multi-call experiences but again with the difference being less than 2.5 percentage points.

An interesting issue here relates to the privacy afforded to customers calling from a Jobcentre Plus warm phone. There has been a concern in the past that a public phone in a Jobcentre Plus office is not an appropriate place for customers to provide detailed personal and financial information. This is despite there being an expectation that dedicated phones will be provided for these customers and that, where necessary, a private room will also be provided. However, over half of our respondents reported that they made their claim from a warm phone and just under half reported that alternative arrangements had been made. However, comparing answers to questions about how customers rated the experience in relation to privacy suggests that they were no less satisfied than landline callers.

### *Efficiency of the call*

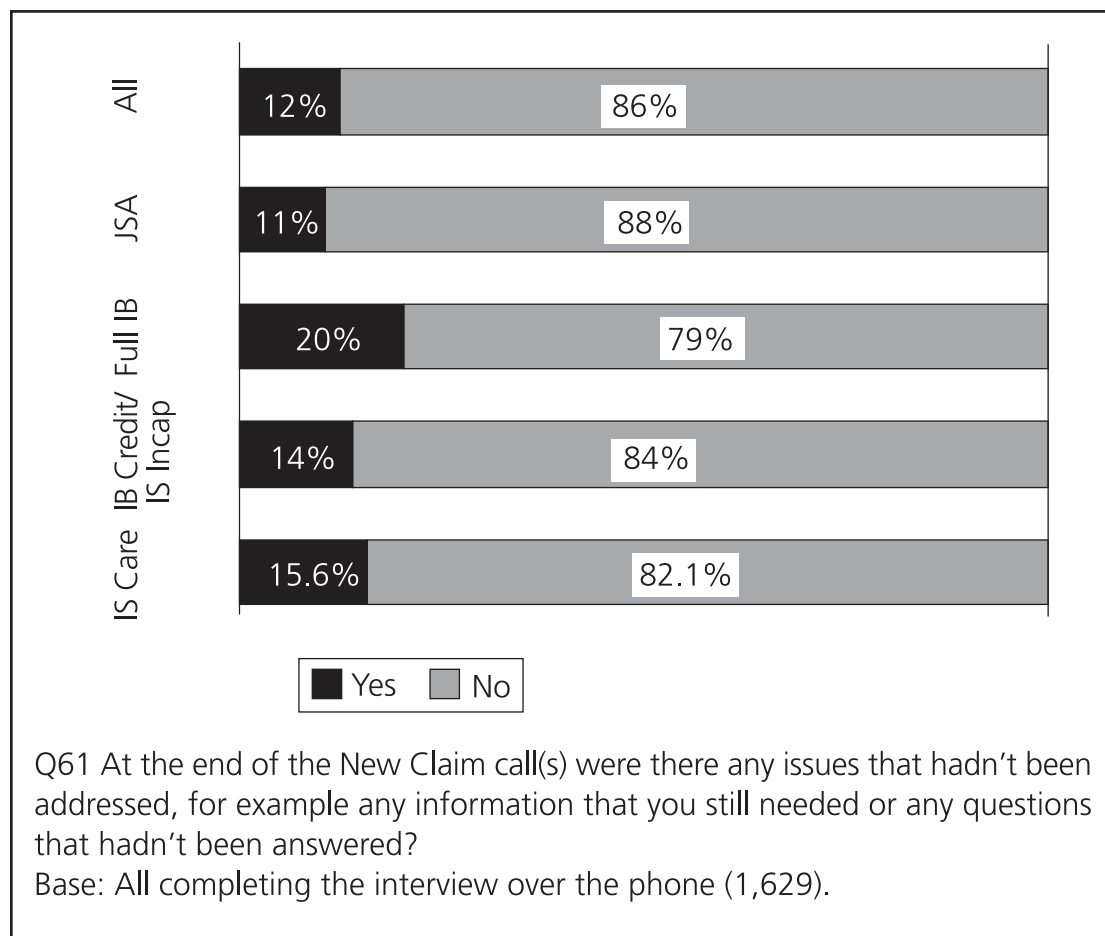
Questions relating to efficiency probed respondents' recollection of the New Claims adviser's ability to provide relevant information, answer questions and get through the call in a timely manner.

Overall, 89 per cent of respondents reported that the New Claims adviser was either fairly or very good at 'providing information relevant to their needs and circumstances'. JSA and IS Care customers (89 per cent) were slightly more likely than IB Credit/IS Incap (85 per cent) customers to think this. Those calling from a Jobcentre Plus warm phone (93 per cent) were more likely than callers from other landlines (87 per cent) or mobiles (89 per cent) to report this.



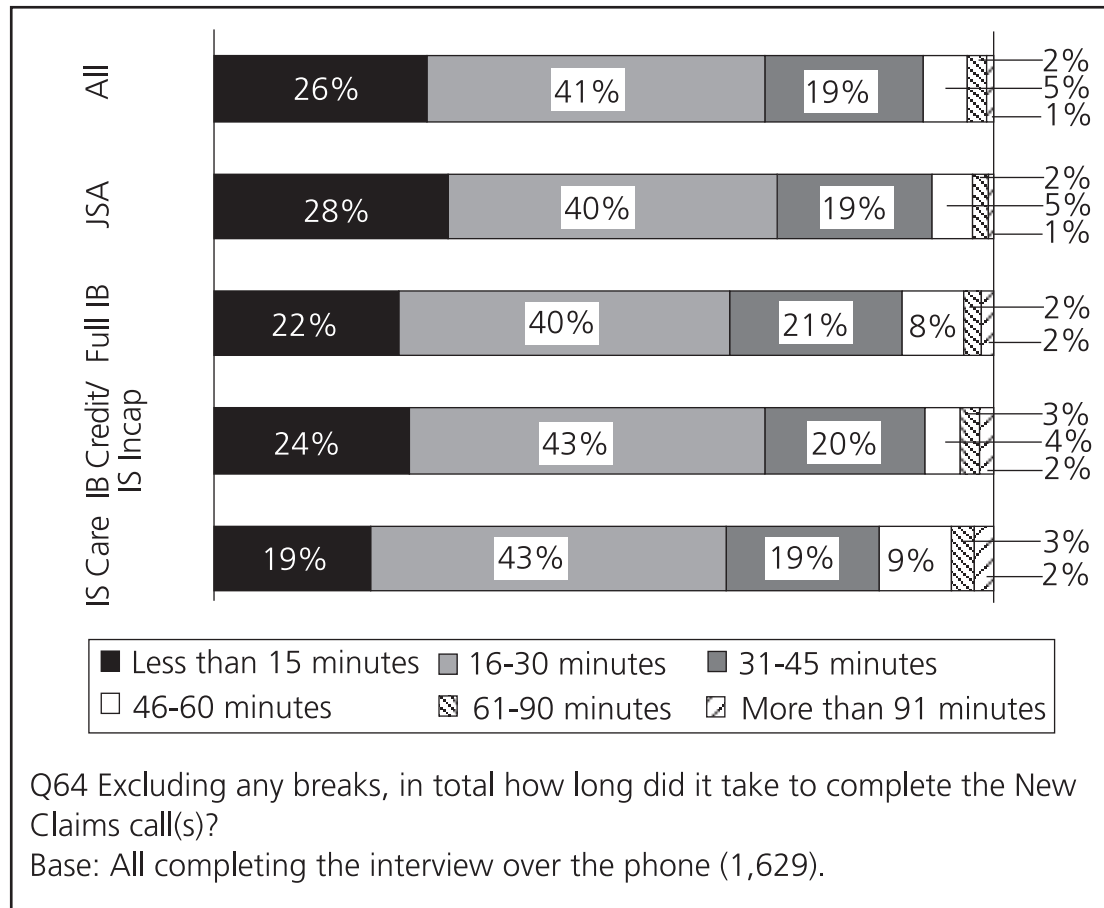
Respondents were also asked to reflect on whether the New Claims adviser had been able to address all their issues and answer all their questions by the end of the call(s). Twelve per cent of all respondents reported that they had outstanding concerns and questions that were not addressed in the New Claims call(s). This increased to a fifth of IB customers but was between 11 and 16 per cent for all other customers. The most widely reported reasons for this was a lack of absolute clarity about which benefit they would be eligible for.

**Figure 4.6 Issues not addressed at end of New Claims call(s), by benefit group**



When asked to reflect on how long the call(s) had taken, the largest group (around 40 per cent) across all benefit types suggested that the call had taken between 16 and 30 minutes. The next largest groups suggested that the call had taken either less than 15 minutes or between 31 and 45 minutes. JSA customers were more likely than other customer groups to report a shorter New Claims interview. Those that had completed the New Claims interview in a single call (27 per cent) were unsurprisingly more likely than multi-call customer (19 per cent) to report a very short (under 15 minutes) duration. Around a third of those that reported that they had been called by Jobcentre Plus or called from a warm phone reported that the call lasted for less than 15 minutes.

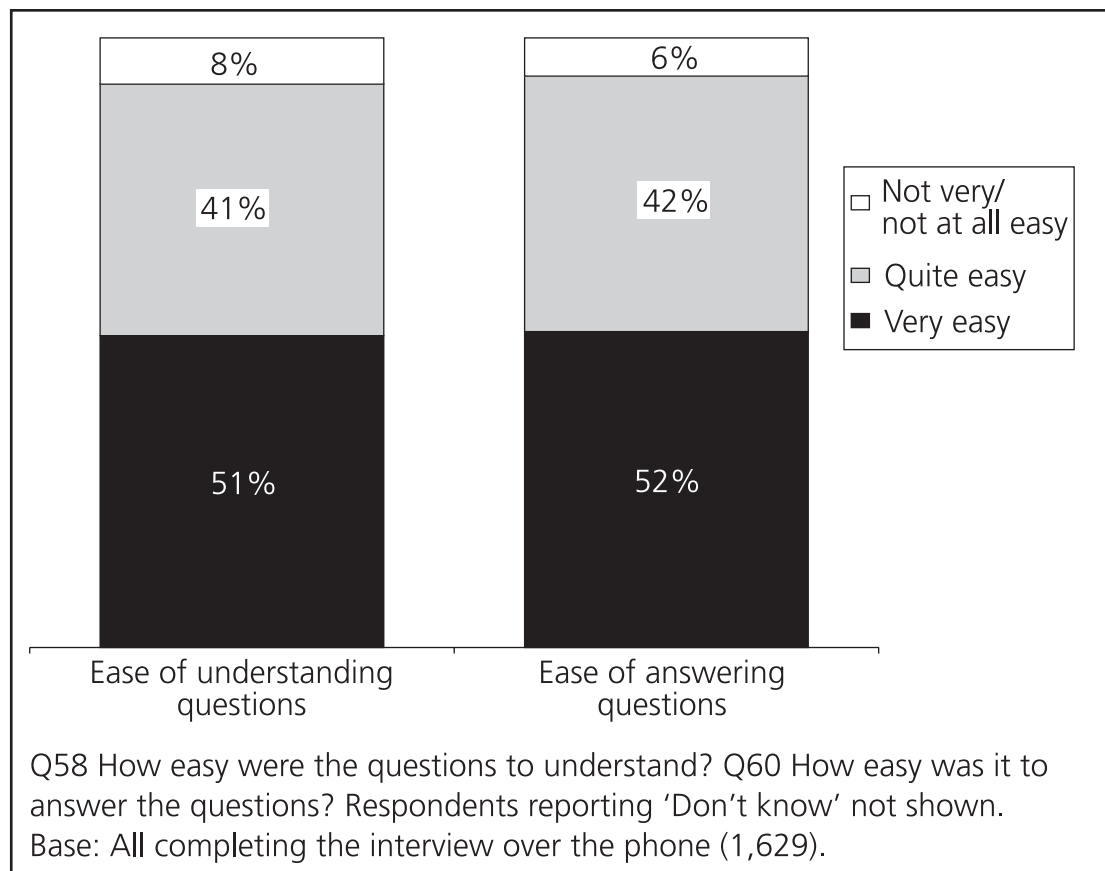
**Figure 4.7 Time taken to complete the New Claims call(s), excluding breaks, by benefit group**



Respondents were also asked to comment on whether they felt that the call was completed in a reasonable length of time. Ninety-one per cent of respondents reported that the agent was either fairly or very good in this respect, with this ranging between 92 per cent of JSA customers and 88 per cent for IB Credit/IS Incap customers. This also ranged from 86 per cent for callers from mobiles and 97 per cent for those called by Jobcentre Plus. Notably, mobile and warm phone callers were more likely than landline callers to report that this aspect is 'fairly' as opposed to very good.

*Ease of understanding, and impact of, the call on the customer*

Respondents were encouraged to reflect on how easy it was to understand and answer questions in the New Claims call(s) and whether the call caused them any particular problems.

**Figure 4.8 Ease of handling the call**

Ninety-two per cent of customers reported that questions were easy to understand and 93 per cent reported that they were easy to answer. IS Care customers (89 per cent) and IB Credit/IS Incap customers (90 per cent) were less likely than JSA (93 per cent) and full IB customers (93 per cent) to suggest that the questions were easy to understand. Full IB customers (at 90 per cent) were less likely than other customer groups to report that the questions were easy to answer. Again, when looking at call route, the group that stands out as finding the questions harder to understand or answer are predictably those who began their claim on the telephone but subsequently used other means.

The vast majority of respondents reported that the call(s) had not caused them any particular problems. However, this varied between customer groups. Twelve per cent of full IB customers felt that the call had caused them problems. Eight per cent and six per cent respectively of IB Credit and IS Care customers reported this, while only three per cent of JSA customers felt that the call had caused them problems. The types of problems reported by respondents varied between mere inconvenience and health-related issues such as stress. The former was particularly reported by JSA customers, while health-related issues were more likely to be reported by IB customers and IB Credit/IS Incap customers.

*Comparative analysis of effect of different elements of the call on satisfaction with the call*

The range of factors considered previously were subjected to multivariate analysis to identify the relative scale of their contribution to overall variation in customer satisfaction with the New Claims call. This analysis showed that the three most significant predictors of satisfaction with the New Claims call were how good the agent was at providing information relevant to the customer's circumstances, how good they were at completing the call(s) in a reasonable length of time and how good they were at respecting the customer's privacy.



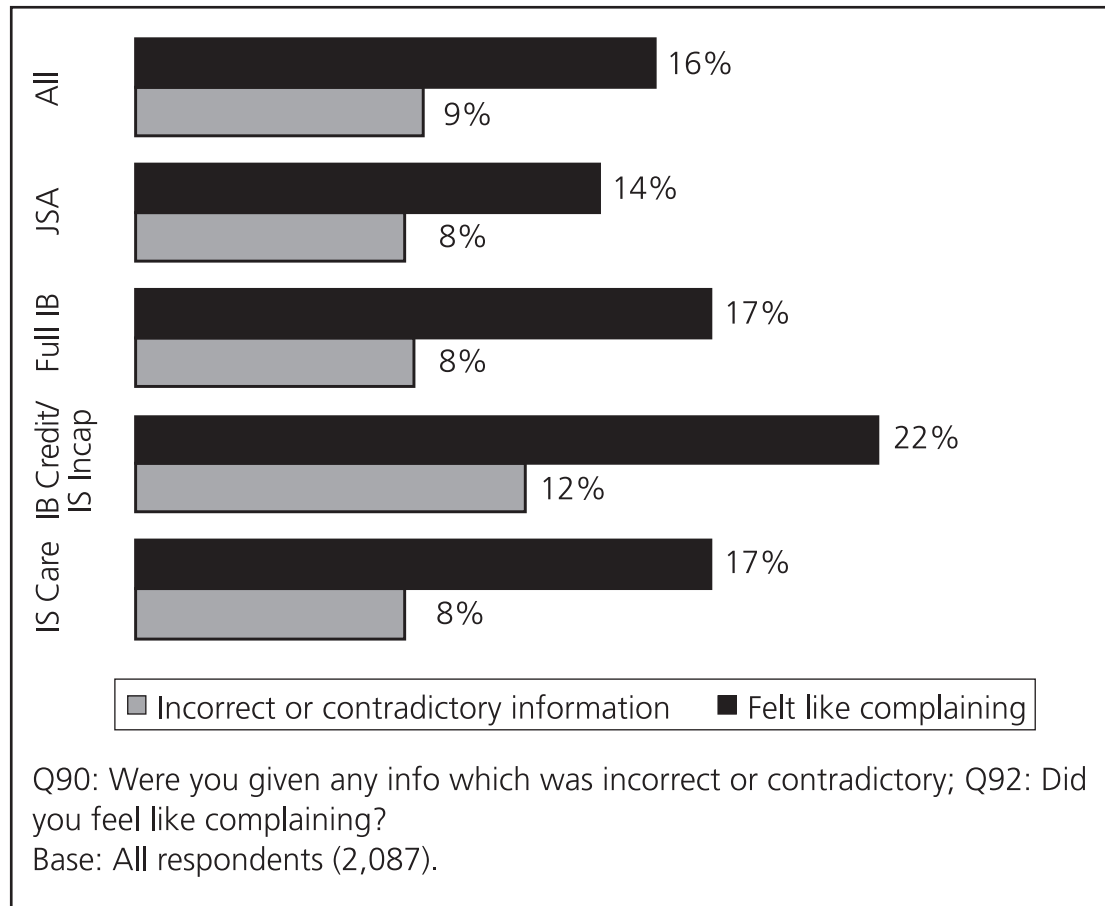
# 5 Problems and complaints

## 5.1 Problems experienced in the New Claims process and intention to complain

In order to better understand the causes of dissatisfaction or problems in the first contact phase of the New Claims process even where customers are satisfied overall, respondents were asked to identify the problems that they experienced and what action they felt like taking and actually took in relation to these.

In order to explore and investigate further aspects of the New Claims process respondents were asked if at any point they were given information by Jobcentre Plus which they found to be incorrect or contradictory. Overall, nine per cent of all respondents reported having been given incorrect or contradictory information at some point in the claims process (see Figure 5.1). This figure was marginally higher for respondents claiming IB Credit/IS Incap. The main types of incorrect information identified by respondents were concerned with which benefit to apply for, when the benefit would be received and the recording of incorrect personal details.

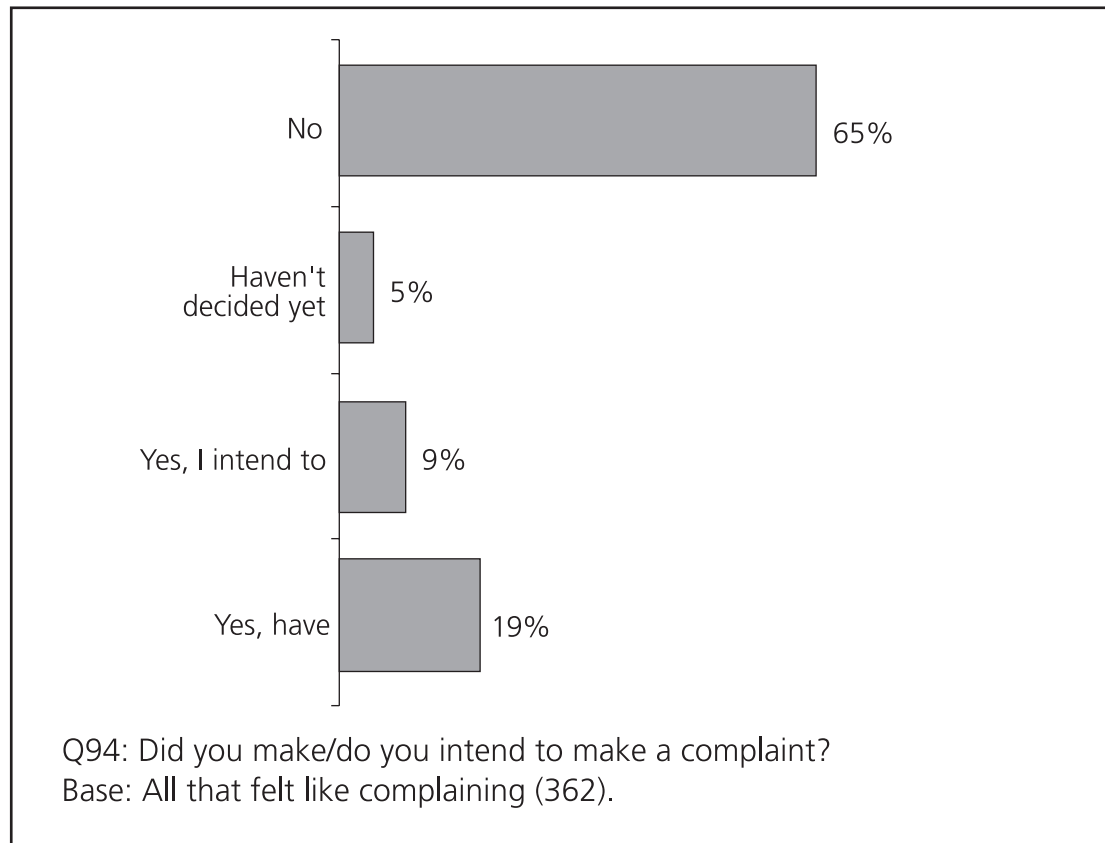
**Figure 5.1 Incorrect information and felt like complaining, by benefit group**



Respondents were also asked if they ever felt like complaining about the New Claims service they received from Jobcentre Plus. As Figure 5.1 shows, 16 per cent of respondents reported that they had felt like complaining at some point. This is similar to the findings of the main customer satisfaction survey which showed that 14 per cent of customers had felt like complaining at some point (Johnson and Fidler, 2008:45-6). In a follow-up question respondents were also asked why they felt like complaining; 21 per cent held Jobcentre Plus staff attitudes responsible whilst 20 per cent were unhappy about the length of time taken from making a claim to receiving the first payment and 16 per cent were unhappy because of late or incorrect benefit payments. Again, this follows a similar pattern to the findings of the general customer satisfaction survey where similar motivations for feeling like complaining were identified.

Following this, those that reported having felt like complaining, were asked whether they then went onto make a complaint or if they now intended to do so. Only a few among this group (19 per cent) actually went ahead with their complaint, 65 per cent decided not to (see Figure 5.2). This also mirrors the findings from the general customer satisfaction survey.

**Figure 5.2 Most did not and do not intend to actually make a complaint**



A number of reasons were identified by respondents who chose not to complain, the most significant was apathy (21 per cent). This was followed by the reasoning that there was no point in complaining because the office could not, or would not, be able to do anything about the complaint. Another reason for not complaining was that the complaint was not viewed as serious enough to pursue.

## 5.2 Complaints process and outcomes

Statistically, the number of complaints is too small to sustain comparative analysis. However, it is possible to analyse the methods of complaint most commonly used by respondents as well as looking at levels of satisfaction with how complaints were handled and satisfaction levels with regards to the outcome of complaints.

The most commonly used methods of making a complaint were in person and by telephone/textphone. Of the few claimants on IB Credit or IS for the reasons of incapacity who did make a complaint, most did so via telephone or textphone, rather than in person.

Respondents were asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they were with the way their complaint was handled. Almost half of this group were very dissatisfied, suggesting either that the complaints process is inadequate or that once customers



are dissatisfied enough to complain it is difficult to restore their satisfaction with the process. The main cited reasons for dissatisfaction were because the assistance given was considered to be unhelpful or because the complaint was not resolved for respondents.

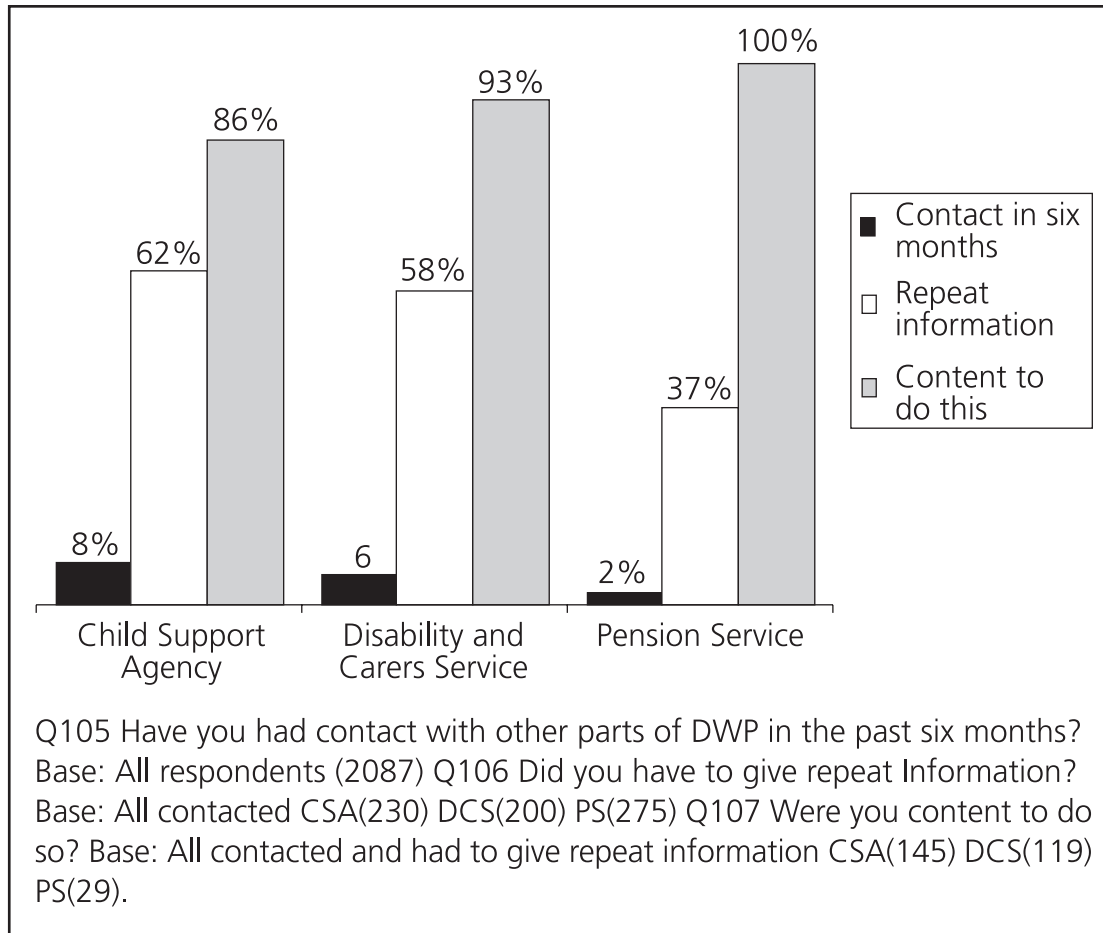
The outcomes of complaints mirrored similar results to those above. Almost half of the respondents who complained were 'very dissatisfied' with the outcome and result of their complaint. The main reason recognised for this dissatisfaction is because there was seen to be no outcome. The majority of respondents did not take the matter further after their initial complaint.

## 6 Contact with other Government departments and other parts of the Department for Work and Pensions

The survey data suggests that 14 per cent of all respondents have had contact with other Government departments. The Child Support Agency; of those it was necessary for 62 per cent to provide the same information to Jobcentre Plus. Six per cent of all respondents have had contact with the Disability and Carers Service; of those it was necessary for 58 per cent to provide the same information to Jobcentre Plus. Two per cent of all respondents have had contact with The Pension Service; of those it was necessary for 36 per cent to provide the same information to Jobcentre Plus.

As a follow-up question respondents were asked whether they were content in providing this information to Jobcentre Plus. The majority of respondents who had been in contact with any of the services named above were content with this information to Jobcentre Plus, of the small number who were not (not enough to derive any valid statistics from) – this was mainly in relation to having to repeat the same information again.

**Figure 6.1 Contact with other agencies and providing repeat information**



# 7 Service standards and related issues

## 7.1 Relevant Jobcentre Plus service standards

In order to regulate and ensure the standard of the service received by Jobcentre Plus customers, the organisation has a range of 'service standards'. These state that:

*'When you contact us by phone or textphone..., we aim to answer your call within 30 seconds. Our staff will give you their name and the name of the office or section you have called.*

*We will ring you back if you ask us to or if we cannot answer your question right away. If we cannot help you we will try to direct you to the right place to get help.'*

(Jobcentre Plus, 2007:6)

The survey asked respondents to reflect on these and closely related issues. Clearly, this does not produce evidence to prove conclusively whether these service standards are being met or not and Jobcentre Plus maintains detailed statistics on the maintenance of these service standards. However, what answers to these questions do show is how customers perceive the service that they receive in specific areas and whether this reflects the levels of service demonstrated in the service standard data.

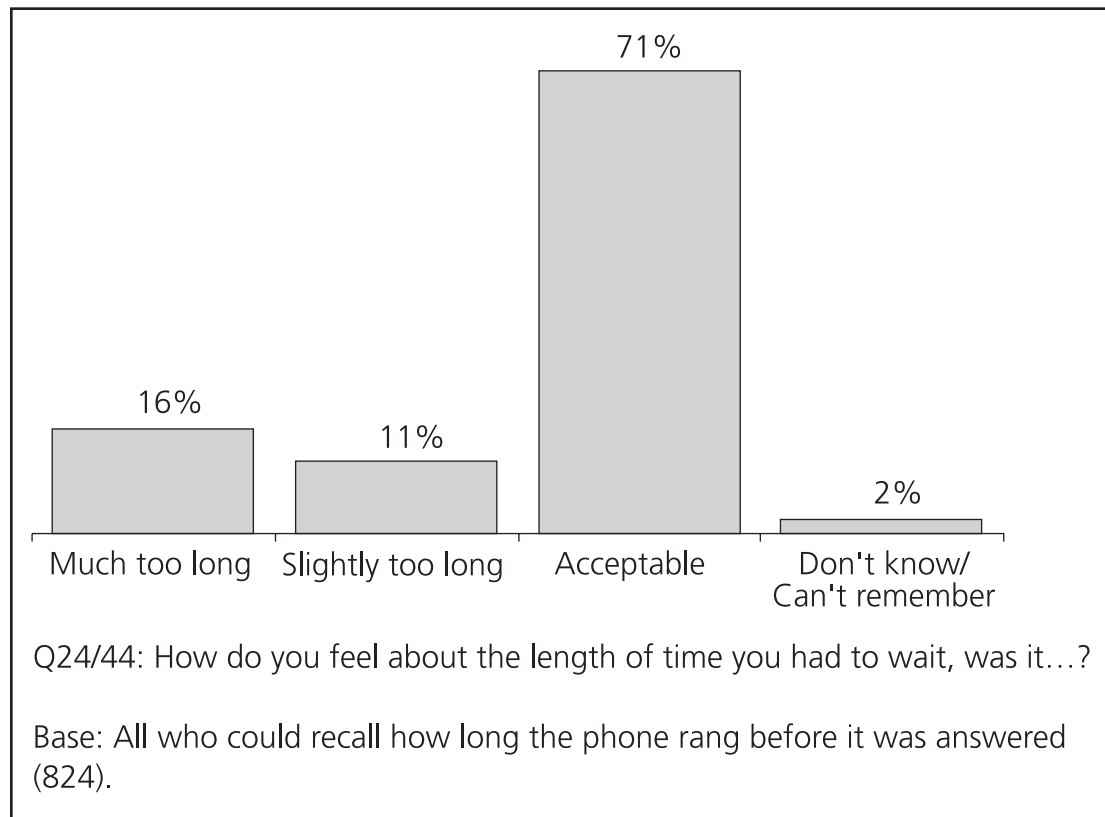
## 7.2 Call waiting times

Overall, respondents were broadly evenly split between those who thought that the phone had rung for more than 30 seconds and those who thought it had rung for 30 seconds or less. There was though some variation in the responses to the question based on respondents' mode of calling Jobcentre Plus. Customers ringing from outside the organisation should immediately hear an automated response introducing the organisational aims of Jobcentre Plus and confirming

that the number called is for New Claims. The automated message then informs customers that the call is free other than for callers from mobiles who may be charged by their network operator. The response also offers a number of options, including one to continue with a new claim and alternatives to access appropriate numbers for other services. Callers from warm phones in Jobcentre Plus offices do not go through the automated response. As such, the survey asked respondents to confirm whether or not they had been through the automated response and to say whether they had waited for more than 30 seconds for the telephone to be answered after going through the automated response. It is, therefore, possible to compare respondents' answers based on whether they called from warm phones or from outside the organisation.

This comparison shows substantial numbers of respondents to the survey reported that they called from outside the organisation but did not go through the automated response, though this may simply be an inaccurate recollection. Of those who did recollect the automated response, respondents were broadly equally split between those who thought the phone had been answered within 30 seconds and those who thought it had taken longer than this, with a third group (about a quarter) reporting that they couldn't remember. IB Credit/IS Incap customers were the most negative among the different customer groups with higher proportions of these customers reporting that it had taken longer for the call to be answered. This was also true among customers calling from a warm phone in a Jobcentre Plus office.

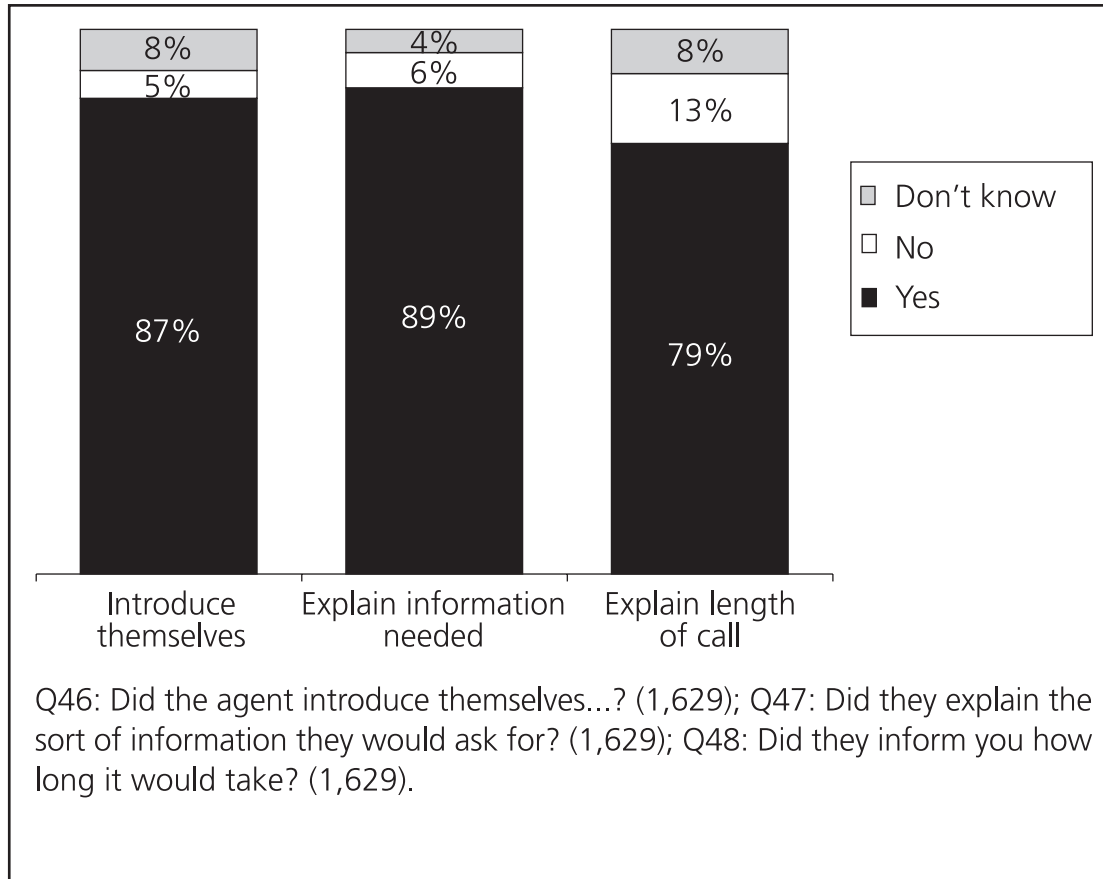
When asked to comment on how they felt about the length of time they had had to wait for their call to be answered, those calling from within the organisation from a warm phone (at 63 per cent) were less likely than those calling from outside Jobcentre Plus (at 73 per cent) to think this was an acceptable amount of time to wait. Those that had made their call from a mobile phone were not significantly more dissatisfied with the length of time to wait than those who had made the call from a landline.

**Figure 7.1 Acceptability of waiting time for call to be answered**

### 7.3 Information given at the beginning of the New Claims call

Respondents were asked if at the beginning of the process the New Claims agent had introduced themselves to them. The vast majority replied positively (87 per cent) with only five per cent saying that this introduction had not taken place. In 89 per cent of calls, it was explained by the New Claims agent at the beginning of the call what sort of information they would be asking for to complete the claim. Seventy-nine per cent of respondents were also informed how long the call would take. Thirteen per cent were not informed of this.

**Figure 7.2 The percentage of people who recollected a thorough introduction to the call**



#### 7.4 The number of calls to complete the New Claim

Once the New Claims call had begun, the majority of claimants (85 per cent) were able to answer all the questions in one call. For 13 per cent of respondents a call back was arranged. For those claims where a call back was arranged, 82 per cent of respondents said that this call was received at the time that had been arranged and for 85 per cent of these respondents this call took place within 36 hours from the break from the earlier New Claims call. Of the 12 per cent that were not called back at the arranged time, around half said that they were not called back at all (though this was a very small number of respondents).

# 8 Main findings and implications

## 8.1 Overview and commentary

The findings of this survey of 2,087 customers recently making a new claim for benefits indicates that the vast majority of customers find their experience of 'first contact' with Jobcentre Plus to be satisfactory. The survey also suggests that there are areas where customer satisfaction might be improved. The most significant of these, however, lay outside this 'first contact' experience and relates, in the main, to the time taken to process and pay benefit claims.

Other important factors which determine levels of satisfaction are not service delivery issues but are related to the legislative framework governing eligibility for particular benefits. This would seem to be one part of the explanation for why customers receiving IB Credit/IS Incap (who will have made a claim for the more generous full IB but may not have made sufficient National Insurance contributions to qualify for it) are significantly less satisfied than other customer groups. Since these dynamics are outside the service delivery remit of Jobcentre Plus it is important to isolate them out of any explanation for satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

Over recent years Jobcentre Plus has undertaken a major change in the New Claims service it offers, moving to a telephone claim process. This has, in the past, attracted some criticism, in relation to the quality and efficiency of services offered by Jobcentre Plus contact centres. In response to this, improvements have been made to the nature of the service provided and attention has been given to the staffing, organisation and management of contact centres. The survey findings suggest that this programme of investment and reform is paying dividends in relation to customer satisfaction. Though there is no baseline available in the form of previous surveys from which to measure, the findings from this survey suggest that satisfaction with the services provided by contact centres is well regarded and exceeds that with the New Claims service overall. Where respondents had claimed under a previous New Claims system, whether the unimproved telephone system



or other manual systems, they thought that their most recent experience was superior. The responses of customers who had claimed previously under the new system suggested a welcome degree of consistency in the quality of the service provided.

However, there remain issues that might be addressed in order to improve the first contact experience further. There remain a large minority of customers who engage in the New Claims process outside the standard telephone claims process. Comparing their responses with those experiencing the standard service suggests that they may be disadvantaged by this, experiencing longer waiting times for payment and less likely to report an improvement in the service where they can compare with a previous claim. Some of these customers also begin their claim on the telephone but subsequently drop out of the telephone process. This may indicate that for some customers the telephone process is too complicated or unsuitable.

In sum, this suggests three important conclusions in terms of maintaining and improving service delivery: First, raising awareness of the telephone process may increase its take-up among those customers whose sole reason for not doing so was a lack of awareness or misinformation from Jobcentre Plus staff or other sources of advice. However, despite the apparent scope for improvements in satisfaction from expanding take-up of the telephone service, it may also be the case that some customers with complex claims or communication difficulties find this channel difficult. As such, further simplification may help to reduce the number of people making repeat demands on resources as they divert between contact centres and local offices. Finally, even if such improvements were made, it may always be the case that some customers will find the telephone channel difficult. Therefore, it is likely that the organisation will always need to maintain alternative mechanisms of making first contact for the small numbers of customers who require them.

A further area of potential improvements relates to the relatively large proportion of customers who have considered making a complaint at some point in their claim and suggest that they have not been able to resolve queries or who are given contradictory or incorrect information. Again, these are not just issues of customer service but of effective and efficient use of resources. Customers who are dissatisfied enough to consider complaining, or who are uncertain about the information supplied to them, are often more costly to provide services to. This is because they make repeat demands on the service or trigger actual complaints and the requirement to investigate the problems they experience.

The results of the survey also suggest that there are some distinct customer groups for whom satisfaction is lower. These include people with limiting health conditions and customers of Asian/Asian British ethnicity. In relation to the former group, the survey data suggests that the complexity of processing claims in relation to the former group may lead to longer processing and payment times, thereby affecting levels of satisfaction. There is no clear explanation in the survey data for why

Asian/Asian British customers are less satisfied, except for the possible correlation of these customers with communication problems where their first language is not English.

## 8.2 Summary of findings

### 8.2.1 General satisfaction

Levels of general satisfaction with the New Claims service were high. Nearly 78 per cent of respondents reported being either 'fairly' or 'very' satisfied. JSA customers were most satisfied, closely followed by IS Care customers, who are largely lone parents or customers with other caring responsibilities. IB Credit/IS Incap customers were the least satisfied.

Some of the most important reasons explaining levels of satisfaction lay outside the first contact aspect of the New Claims service and relate to the time taken to process and pay benefit claims as well as the decision regarding eligibility itself.

### 8.2.2 Satisfaction with the New Claims call

Satisfaction with the New Claims call was exceptionally high, standing at over 90 per cent for all benefit groups. Satisfaction was also high with the different elements of the claim call such as the politeness and efficiency of handling the call on the part of Jobcentre Plus agents. However, a substantial minority of customers report having unanswered questions at the end of this call, especially IB customers. IB and IS customers were also more likely than JSA customers to report that the New Claims call had caused them problems. Addressing these issues might further improve the already high levels of satisfaction with these aspects of the New Claims service.

### 8.2.3 Different experiences

Three distinct groups of customers still do not go through the standard telephone claim service.

The first of these groups are Rapid Reclaim customers whose previous benefit claim ended less than three months before their new claim and whose circumstances have not changed in the meantime. Ensuring that this group of customers receive a good quality claim service is essential to minimising the disincentives and risks associated with leaving benefits for employment. Comparison of the general levels of satisfaction experienced by this group of customers and the rest shows that they were similarly satisfied overall. Their responses also suggest that they experience quicker payment times than other customers, though they are not necessarily any more satisfied with payment times as a result of this, perhaps as a result of their enhanced expectations about receiving a faster claim process.

The second of these groups do not ever make contact by telephone and the majority undertake a manual claim in a Jobcentre Plus office. The third of these groups, which is much smaller, begin their claim on the telephone but subsequently continue their claim through other means. Taken together these two groups are similarly satisfied to those undertaking their claim on the telephone. However, the findings suggest that they are likely to experience slightly longer waiting times to receive their payments and that they are marginally less satisfied with this aspect than telephone claimants. This may suggest that where there is scope to increase awareness and take-up of the full telephone process, potentially speeding up claims and further increasing customer satisfaction.

#### **8.2.4 Problems and complaints**

Despite generally high levels of satisfaction, relatively large minorities of customers still experience problems with the claim. Just under ten per cent reported being given contradictory information or advice and 16 per cent at some point felt like complaining. Notwithstanding the fact that the vast majority of those that felt like making a complaint did not actually do so, these findings do indicate that there is scope to increase the quality of service offered, particularly with regard to the accuracy and consistency of information provided. The findings of the survey also suggest that those that do go on to make a complaint remain unsatisfied. This might be held to suggest that the complaints process is deficient but it may also simply indicate that once customers are dissatisfied enough to complain it is difficult to restore their satisfaction with the process, regardless of the complaints system. This may particularly be the case where dissatisfaction arises from policy or legislation (for instance over benefits eligibility criteria) rather than the quality of service provided by Jobcentre Plus. The survey findings do not enable any of these explanations to be substantiated.

#### **8.2.5 Contact with other Government departments and agencies**

The survey suggests that many new benefit claimants are in contact with other parts of the DWP or other Government departments. It also suggests that many of these customers are required to provide the same, or similar, information. However, in general, customers did not mind providing this information.

# Appendix

## Survey questionnaire

Region	■	■		
Org	■			
ID Number				
Benefit	■			



## Jobcentre Plus First Contact Satisfaction Survey (2007)

Hello, my name is ..... and I'm calling from the Policy Research Institute at Leeds Metropolitan University / IFF Research. We have been asked by Jobcentre Plus to conduct a survey to find out how satisfied people are with the service they received when they made a New Claim for benefits. You should have received a letter telling you what the survey is about and asking if you would be willing to participate, do you recall seeing it?

(If no, briefly outline the purpose and content of the survey)

Would you be willing to take part? It should take about 10 to 15 minutes to complete. Everything you say will be treated in the strictest confidence and no one can identify you from the results.

### A) Can I check that you are.... (READ OUT CONTACT NAME)?

1. Yes *(Go to Section 1 - Q1)*
2. No

### B) If no but the person you are speaking to usually deals with Jobcentre Plus on behalf of the respondent and made the New Claim for them and is willing to take part in an interview ask, can you tell me your relationship to (CONTACT NAME) and confirm that you are authorised to respond on their behalf?

*CODE ALL THAT APPLY*

1. Spouse / Partner
2. Mother / Father / Guardian
3. Son / Daughter
4. Other relative
5. Friend
6. Professional Carer
7. Other *(Please Specify)* .....
8. **NOT AUTHORISED – Terminate Interview**

## Section 1: Respondent Circumstances

### 1. According to Jobcentre Plus records you made a New Claim for benefits around the (insert date from contact sheet /screen) is that correct?

*CODE ONE ONLY*

- |   |                 |
|---|-----------------|
| 1. Yes  | <i>Go to Q3</i> |
| 2. No   | <i>Go to Q2</i> |
| 3. Don't know / Can't remember  | <i>Go to Q2</i> |
| <b>4. Never made a claim for benefits - If respondent states that they have never made a claim for benefits prompt with 'by benefits we mean things like JSA or IB etc...' If the respondent still maintains they have never claimed any, then code this option and terminate the interview</b> |                 |

### 1. When did you make your most recent claim to Jobcentre Plus for benefits?

*CODE ONE ONLY*

- |                                    |                            |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Within the last month           | <i>Go to Q3</i>            |
| 2. Between 1 and 3 months ago      | <i>Go to Q3</i>            |
| 3. Between 4 and 6 months ago      | <i>Go to Q3</i>            |
| 4. Between 7 months and a year ago | <i>Terminate Interview</i> |
| 5. More than a year ago            | <i>Terminate Interview</i> |
| 6. Never made a claim              | <i>Terminate Interview</i> |
| 7. Don't know / Can't remember     | <i>Terminate Interview</i> |

### 2. Have or did you start receiving benefit payments for this claim?

*CODE ONE ONLY*

- |                                |                 |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Yes                         | <i>Go to Q4</i> |
| 2. No                          | <i>Go to Q6</i> |
| 3. Don't know / Can't remember | <i>Go to Q6</i> |

### 3. According to Jobcentre Plus records the benefit you're receiving is (read out benefit type from screen / contact sheet), is that correct?

*CODE ONE OPTION ONLY*

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Yes, Jobseekers Allowance            | <i>Go to Q8a</i>  |
| 2. Yes, Incapacity Benefit (live)       | <i>Go to Q8a</i>  |
| 3. Yes, Incapacity Benefit Credits Only | <i>Go to Q8a</i>  |
| 4. Yes, Income Support                  | <i>Go to Q8a</i>  |
| 5. No                                   | <i>Go to Q5</i>   |
| 6. Don't know / Can't remember          | <i>These respondents to be classified by the benefit type stated on screen/sheet then go to Q8a</i> |

#### 4. Which benefit is it that you are receiving?

*READ OUT AND CODE ONE ONLY - If more than one of the benefits listed is being received then code the MAIN benefit ONLY.*

- |                                      |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Jobseekers Allowance              | <i>Go to Q8a</i>   |
| 2. Incapacity Benefit (live)         | <i>Go to Q8a</i>   |
| 3. Incapacity Benefit – Credits Only | <i>Go to Q8a</i>   |
| 4. Income Support                    | <i>Go to Q8a</i>   |
| 5. Other (please specify)<br>.....   | <i>(Terminate Interview if not receiving either JSA, IB or IS as a main benefit)</i> |
| 6. Don't know / Can't remember       | <i>Classify by the benefit type stated on screen/sheet then go to Q8a</i>            |

#### 5. Do you know why you haven't received any benefit payments yet, is it that you...?

*READ OUT OPTIONS & CODE ONE ONLY*

- |   |                            |
|---|----------------------------|
| 1. Are still waiting for it to be processed                                       | <b><i>Read out 7.1</i></b> |
| 2. Are only receiving credits ie having your national insurance contribution paid | <b><i>Read out 7.2</i></b> |
| 3. Were informed that you weren't eligible to receive any                         | <b><i>Read out 7.3</i></b> |
| 4. Signed off before receiving anything   | <b><i>Read out 7.3</i></b> |
| 5. Other (please specify)<br>.....  | <b><i>Read out 7.3</i></b> |
| 6. Don't know / Can't remember  | <b><i>Read out 7.3</i></b> |

#### 6. According to Jobcentre Plus records the benefit that you are.....

**7.1 due to receive is (read out benefit type from screen / contact sheet), is that correct?**

**7.2 receiving credits for is (read out benefit type from screen / contact sheet), is that correct?**

**7.3 had made a claim for was (read out benefit type from screen / contact sheet), is that correct?**

*CODE ONE OPTION ONLY*

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Yes, Jobseekers Allowance            | <i>Go to Q8a</i>  |
| 2. Yes, Incapacity Benefit (live)       | <i>Go to Q8a</i>  |
| 3. Yes, Incapacity Benefit Credits Only | <i>Go to Q8a</i>  |
| 4. Yes, Income Support                  | <i>Go to Q8a</i>  |
| 5. No                                   | <i>Go to Q8</i>   |
| 6. Don't know / Can't remember          | <i>Classify by the benefit type stated on screen/sheet then go to Q8a</i> |

**7. Which benefit is it that you are.....****(if asked 7.1 at Q 7 ask) 8.1 due to receive?****(if asked 7.2 at Q 7 ask) 8.2 receiving credits for?****(if asked 7.3 at Q 7 ask) 8.3 had made a claim for?***READ OUT AND CODE ONE ONLY - If more than one of the benefits listed is being received then code the MAIN benefit ONLY.*

- |                                      |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Jobseekers Allowance              | <i>Go to Q8a</i>   |
| 2. Incapacity Benefit (live)         | <i>Go to Q8a</i>   |
| 3. Incapacity Benefit – Credits Only | <i>Go to Q8a</i>   |
| 4. Income Support                    | <i>Go to Q8a</i>   |
| 5. Other (please specify)            | <i>(Terminate Interview if not receiving either JSA, IB or IS as a main benefit)</i> |
| .....                                |  |
| 6. Don't know / Can't remember       | <i>Classify by the benefit type stated on screen/sheet then go to Q8a</i>            |

**8a Which, if any, other benefits.....****If receiving benefits ask 8a.1 are you receiving or are due to receive?****If not yet receiving benefits ask 8a.2 are you receiving or are due to receive?****If not eligible / no longer receiving benefits ask 8a.3 did you make a claim for?***PROMPT IF NECESSARY & CODE ALL THAT APPLY*

1. Jobseekers Allowance (JSA)
2. Income Support (IS)
3. Incapacity Benefit (IB)
4. Severe Disablement Allowance
5. Maternity Allowance
6. Bereavement Benefits
7. Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit
8. Carer's Allowance
9. Tax Credits
10. Training Allowance
11. Disability Living Allowance (DLA)
12. Housing Benefit
13. Council Tax Benefit
14. Other (please specify)
- .....
15. Don't know / Can't remember
16. Prefer Not To Say
17. None



**8. Which of the following best describes your current circumstances, are you.....?**

*READ OUT AND CODE ALL THAT APPLY*

*IF RECEIVING, DUE TO RECEIVE OR CLAIMED JSA ASK OPTION 1 FIRST*

*IF RECEIVING, DUE TO RECEIVE OR CLAIMED IB (LIVE), IB (CREDITS) OR IS ASK OPTIONS 2, 3 & 4 FIRST*

1. Registered unemployed, signing on and claiming Jobseekers Allowance
2. Claiming benefits because of health reasons or disability
3. Claiming benefits because you are a lone parent caring for your children
4. Claiming benefits because you are a carer
5. In work – not claiming benefits
6. In work (16 hrs or less) – claiming benefits / credits
7. In work (more than 16 hrs) – claiming benefits / credits
8. Not in work & not claiming benefits
9. On a Jobcentre Plus scheme
10. Other (please specify)

.....

**9. During this survey I will be asking you in detail about your experiences of the Jobcentre Plus New Claim process. Before we talk about that, can you please tell me overall how satisfied or dissatisfied you were with the New Claim service you received, were you...?**

*READ OUT AND CODE ONE OPTION ONLY*

- |                                       |                  |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Very satisfied                     | <i>Go to Q11</i> |
| 2. Fairly satisfied                   | <i>Go to Q11</i> |
| 3. Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied | <i>Go to Q12</i> |
| 4. Fairly dissatisfied                | <i>Go to Q11</i> |
| 5. Very dissatisfied                  | <i>Go to Q11</i> |
| 6. Don't know                         | <i>Go to Q12</i> |

**10. Why is that?**

.....

.....

.....

## Section 2: Previous Claims

**11. Thinking about this current claim, was this the first time you had made a claim for benefits from Jobcentre Plus?**

*CODE ONE ONLY*

- |                                |                  |
|--------------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Yes                         | <i>Go to Q17</i> |
| 2. No                          | <i>Go to Q13</i> |
| 3. Don't know / Can't remember | <i>Go to Q13</i> |

**12. At the time you made this current claim, how long had it been since you had last received a benefit payment from Jobcentre Plus?**

*CODE ONE ONLY*

- |  |                               |
|--|-------------------------------|
| 1. Within 12 weeks of making this current claim<br>(ie between June & Sept 07)                   | <i>Go to Q14</i>              |
| 2. Between 3 and 6 months before making this current claim<br>(ie between Feb & May 07)          | <i>Go to Q14</i>              |
| 3. Between 7 months and a year before making this current claim<br>(ie between Jan 07 & Sept 06) | <i>Ask Q14 then go to Q17</i> |
| 4. Between 1 and 3 years before making this current claim  | <i>Ask Q14 then go to Q17</i> |
| 5. Between 3 and 5 years before making this current claim  | <i>Ask Q14 then go to Q17</i> |
| 6. More than 5 years before making this current claim  | <i>Ask Q14 then go to Q17</i> |
| 7. Made a claim but didn't receive a payment   | <i>Go to Q17</i>              |
| 8. Don't know / Can't remember   | <i>Ask Q14</i>                |

**13. Which benefit(s) were you receiving at that time?***PROMPT IF NECESSARY & CODE ALL THAT APPLY*

1. Jobseekers Allowance (JSA)
2. Income Support (IS)
3. Incapacity Benefit (IB)
4. Severe Disablement Allowance
5. Maternity Allowance
6. Bereavement Benefits
7. Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit
8. Carer's Allowance
9. Tax Credits
10. Training Allowance
11. Disability Living Allowance (DLA)
12. Housing Benefit
13. Council Tax Benefit
14. Other (please specify)

- .....
15. Don't know / Can't remember
  16. Prefer Not To Say

***If last claim for benefit was more than 7 months ago go to Q17*****14. When you made this current claim was it a rapid reclaim - you can only make a rapid reclaim if you are making a claim within 12 weeks of receiving your last benefit payment AND if you are applying for the same benefit as you received before AND if your circumstances have not changed in that time, was this your situation?***CODE ONE ONLY*

- |                                |                  |
|--------------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Yes                         | <i>Go to Q16</i> |
| 2. No                          | <i>Go to Q17</i> |
| 3. Don't know / Can't remember | <i>Go to Q17</i> |

**15. How did you make this rapid reclaim for benefits, did you....?***PROMPT & CODE ONE ONLY*

- |  |                                     |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Ring Jobcentre Plus and they sent you a claim form to complete by hand  | <i>Ask Q16a to c then go to Q81</i> |
| 2. Ring Jobcentre Plus and complete the full claim call by telephone (ie you did not complete a manual claim form) | <i>Go to Q17</i>                    |
| 3. Go into a Jobcentre Plus office and they gave you a claim form to complete by hand                              | <i>Ask Q16a to c then go to Q78</i> |
| 4. Other (please specify)<br>.....   | <i>Ask Q16a to c then go to Q78</i> |
| 5. Don't know / Can't remember   | <i>Ask Q16a to c then go to Q78</i> |

**16a When you were making this claim for benefits did anybody else speak to or contact Jobcentre Plus on your behalf to assist you with the claim?***CODE ONE ONLY*

- |                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| 1. Yes                         | <i>Go to Q16b</i>                        |
| 2. No                          | <i>Follow routing instruction at Q16</i> |
| 3. Don't know / Can't remember | <i>Follow routing instruction at Q16</i> |

**16b Who was this?***CODE ALL THAT APPLY*

1. A friend / family member
2. A Jobcentre Plus appointed translator
3. An appointed representative eg a carer
4. An advocacy service (ie legally appointed representative)
5. An adviser from a Welfare Rights Organisation eg Citizens Advice / Connexions
6. My employer
7. My GP / health advisor
8. Other (please specify)  
.....
9. Don't know / Can't remember

**16c Why did somebody else help you make the claim?**

.....

.....

.....*Follow routing instruction at Q16*

### Section 3: Claims Process

I'm now going to ask you some questions about the actual process of making your New Claim. First of all can you tell me.....

#### 16. How did you actually make this claim for benefits, was it.....?

*READ OUT AND CODE ONE ONLY*

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. By telephone  | <i>Ask Q17 a to c and Q18 then go to Q21</i> |
| 2. By filling in a claim form in person at an office             | <i>Ask Q17 a to c and Q18 then go to Q20</i> |
| 3. By filling in a claim form that you received through the post | <i>Ask Q17 a to c and Q18 then go to Q20</i> |
| 4. Online via the Jobcentre Plus website                         | <i>Ask Q17 a to c and Q18 then go to Q19</i> |
| 5. Other (please specify)  | <i>Ask Q17 a to c and Q18 then go to Q20</i> |
| .....  |  |
| .....  |  |
| 6. Don't know / Can't remember                                   | <i>Ask Q17 a to c and Q18 then go to Q20</i> |

#### 17a When you were making this claim for benefits did anybody else speak to or contact Jobcentre Plus on your behalf to assist you with the claim?

*CODE ONE ONLY*

- |                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| 1. Yes                         | <i>Go to Q17b</i>                                       |
| 2. No                          | <i>Go to Q18 then follow routing instruction at Q17</i> |
| 3. Don't know / Can't remember | <i>Go to Q18 then follow routing instruction at Q17</i> |

#### 17b Who was this?

*CODE ALL THAT APPLY*

1. A friend / family member
2. A Jobcentre Plus appointed translator
3. An appointed representative eg a carer
4. An advocacy service (ie a legally appointed representative)
5. An adviser from a Welfare Rights / Aid Organisation eg Citizens Advice / Connexions
6. My employer
7. My GP / health advisor
8. Other (please specify)
- .....
9. Don't know / Can't remember

#### 17c Why did somebody else help you make the claim?

.....

.....

.....*Ask Q18 then follow routing instruction at Q17*

**17. How did you know / find out how to make your New Claim by (insert method from Q17)?**

*CODE ALL THAT APPLY*

1. I have previously made a claim from Jobcentre Plus using this method
2. I found out when I was last claiming
3. Went in to a Jobcentre Plus office to enquire
4. I rang my local Jobcentre Plus office to enquire
5. I rang the wrong Jobcentre Plus number and was given the correct number to ring
6. From the Jobcentre Plus Website
7. From a Jobcentre Plus leaflet
8. From another Government Department / Agency website eg DWP / HMRC
9. From another website (non government / JC+)
10. Friend / family member told me
11. Friend / family member found out for me
12. Asked / informed by another Government Department / Agency eg HMRC
13. Asked / informed by Welfare Rights Organisation eg Citizens Advice
14. Asked / informed by my employer
15. Asked / informed by my GP / health advisor
16. Looked the number up in phone book / directory enquiries
17. Other (please specify)  
.....
18. Don't know / Can't remember

**18. After you had submitted your online application, did a Jobcentre Plus Agent contact you by telephone to conduct the New Claim call?**

*CODE ONE ONLY*

- |                                |                  |
|--------------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Yes                         | <i>Go to Q46</i> |
| 2. No                          | <i>Go to Q20</i> |
| 3. Don't know / Can't remember | <i>Go to Q20</i> |

**19. At any point in the process of you making this New Claim did you either ring Jobcentre Plus or did Jobcentre Plus ring you to conduct your telephone claim?**

*CODE ONE ONLY*

- |                                |                  |
|--------------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Yes, I rang Jobcentre Plus  | <i>Go to Q22</i> |
| 2. Yes, Jobcentre Plus rang me | <i>Go to Q46</i> |
| 3. No                          | <i>Go to Q78</i> |
| 4. Don't know / Can't remember | <i>Go to Q78</i> |

## Section 4: Telephone Contact

**20. So when you made this New Claim over the telephone, did you make the initial call to the Jobcentre Plus contact centre, or did they ring you?**

*CODE ONE ONLY*

- |                                |                  |
|--------------------------------|------------------|
| 1. I rang Jobcentre Plus       | <i>Go to Q22</i> |
| 2. Jobcentre Plus rang me      | <i>Go to Q46</i> |
| 3. Don't know / Can't remember | <i>Go to Q22</i> |

**21. Did you make the call using one of the free phones they have in Jobcentre Plus offices?**

*CODE ONE ONLY*

- |                                |                   |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Yes                         | <i>Go to Q22a</i> |
| 2. No                          | <i>Go to Q33</i>  |
| 3. Don't know / Can't remember | <i>Go to Q46</i>  |

**22a Did you use the Welsh Language number when making your call to Jobcentre Plus?**

*CODE ONE OPTION ONLY*

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know / Can't remember

## If Rang from a Jobcentre Plus Office:

**22. Why did you choose to make the initial call from the Jobcentre Plus free phones?**

*CODE ALL THAT APPLY*

1. It's free
2. I went in to ask about how to apply for benefits and they told me to use the phone
3. I went in / was in a Jobcentre Plus office for something else / another reason
4. I don't have a phone at home
5. I don't have a mobile phone
6. A friend / family member told me that's how I should do it
7. A Welfare Rights organisation eg Citizens Advice told me that's how I should do it
8. My employer told me that's how I should do it
9. My GP / health advisor told me that's how I should do it
10. Other (please specify)  
.....
11. Don't know / Can't remember

**23. When you rang the contact centre from the free phone, did the phone ring for more than 30 seconds before a member of staff answered?**

*CODE ONE OPTION ONLY*

- |                                |                  |
|--------------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Yes                         | <i>Go to Q25</i> |
| 2. No                          | <i>Go to Q25</i> |
| 3. Don't know / Can't remember | <i>Go to Q26</i> |

**24. How do you feel about the length of time you had to wait, was it.....?**

*READ OUT AND CODE ONE ONLY*

1. Much too long to wait to have your call answered
2. Slightly too long to wait
3. An acceptable amount of time to wait
4. Not long enough
5. Don't know / Can't remember

**25. Once you had got through to the contact centre, did a Jobcentre Plus Agent arrange to call you back on another phone?**

*CODE ONE ONLY*

- |   |                  |
|---|------------------|
| 1. Yes  | <i>Go to Q27</i> |
| 2. No, I completed the whole claim call from the free phone                     | <i>Go to Q46</i> |
| 3. No, I started the claim call using the free phone but didn't complete it all | <i>Go to Q46</i> |
| 4. No, I went through a face to face interview instead                          | <i>Go to Q81</i> |
| 5. No, I completed a manual claim form instead                                  | <i>Go to Q81</i> |
| 6. Don't know / Can't remember  | <i>Go to Q46</i> |

**26. Where did they arrange to call you back?**

*CODE ONE ONLY*

1. Jobcentre Plus office
2. My home phone (landline)
3. My mobile phone
4. A friend / family members home phone (landline)
5. A friend / family members mobile phone
6. A public telephone
7. At a Welfare Rights Organisation eg Citizens Advice
8. Other (Please Specify)

- .....
9. Don't know / Can't remember



**27. Did they call you back when they said they would?***CODE ONE ONLY*

- |                                |                  |
|--------------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Yes                         | <i>Go to Q30</i> |
| 2. No                          | <i>Go to Q29</i> |
| 3. Don't know / Can't remember | <i>Go to Q29</i> |

**28. Did they call you back at all?***CODE ONE ONLY*

- |                                |                  |
|--------------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Yes                         | <i>Go to Q30</i> |
| 2. No                          | <i>Go to Q32</i> |
| 3. Don't know / Can't remember | <i>Go to Q32</i> |

**29. And was the call back made within 36 hours of your initial call?***CODE ONE ONLY*

- |                                |
|--------------------------------|
| 1. Yes                         |
| 2. No                          |
| 3. Don't know / Can't remember |

**30. When they called you back did you begin answering the New Claim questions?***CODE ONE ONLY*

- |                                |                  |
|--------------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Yes                         | <i>Go to Q46</i> |
| 2. No                          | <i>Go to Q32</i> |
| 3. Don't know / Can't remember | <i>Go to Q32</i> |

**31. How did you proceed with your claim?***CODE ONE ONLY*

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. I called them again / continued and completed the New Claim call               | <i>Go to Q46</i>                           |
| 2. Jobcentre Plus rang me at a later time and I completed the New Claim call      | <i>Go to Q46</i>                           |
| 3. I went into a Jobcentre Plus office and was given a claim form to complete     | <i>Go to Q81</i>                           |
| 4. I went into a Jobcentre Plus office and had a face to face New Claim interview | <i>Go to Q81</i>                           |
| 5. I was sent a clerical claim form to complete by hand                           | <i>Go to Q81</i>                           |
| 6. Other (Please Specify)   | <i>If other involved phone go to Q46</i>   |
| .....   | <i>If no phone call involved go to Q81</i> |
| .....   |  |
| 7. Don't know / Can't remember  | <i>Go to Q81</i>                           |

## If Did Not Ring from a Jobcentre Plus Office:

### 32. Where did you make the call from?

*CODE ONE ONLY*

- |  |                               |
|--|-------------------------------|
| 1. My home phone (landline)                            | <i>Ask 33a then go to Q34</i> |
| 2. My mobile phone                                     | <i>Ask 33a then go to Q35</i> |
| 3. A friend / family members home phone (landline)     | <i>Ask 33a then go to Q34</i> |
| 4. A friend / family members mobile phone              | <i>Ask 33a then go to Q35</i> |
| 5. A public telephone                                  | <i>Ask 33a then go to Q34</i> |
| 6. At a Welfare Rights Organisation eg Citizens Advice | <i>Ask 33a then go to Q41</i> |
| 7. Other (Please Specify)                              | <i>Ask 33a then go to Q41</i> |
| .....  |                               |
| 8. Don't know / Can't remember                         | <i>Ask 33a then go to Q41</i> |

### 33a Did you use the Welsh Language number when making your call to Jobcentre Plus?

*CODE ONE OPTION ONLY*

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know / Can't remember

### 33. Before you made the call, were you aware that the call would be free?

*CODE ONE ONLY*

- |                                |                  |
|--------------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Yes                         | <i>Go to Q40</i> |
| 2. No                          | <i>Go to Q41</i> |
| 3. Don't know / Can't remember | <i>Go to Q41</i> |

### 34. Before you made the call, were you aware that you may be charged for it?

*CODE ONE ONLY*

- |                                |                  |
|--------------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Yes                         | <i>Go to Q36</i> |
| 2. No                          | <i>Go to Q41</i> |
| 3. Don't know / Can't remember | <i>Go to Q41</i> |

**35. How did you find out that you may be charged for the call?***CODE ALL THAT APPLY*

1. From the Jobcentre Plus automated answer service
2. The Jobcentre Plus agent I spoke to told me
3. Another Jobcentre Plus staff member told me
4. A Jobcentre Plus leaflet
5. The Jobcentre Plus website
6. A friend / family member told me
7. Other (please specify)  
.....
8. Don't know / Can't remember

**36. When you found out, did you request that the Jobcentre Plus Agent ring you back?***CODE ONE ONLY*

- |   |                  |
|---|------------------|
| 1. Yes  | <i>Go to Q38</i> |
| 2. No, I did not request to be rung back                | <i>Go to Q40</i> |
| 3. No, the Jobcentre Plus Agent offered to ring me back | <i>Go to Q38</i> |
| 4. Don't know / Can't remember                          | <i>Go to Q40</i> |

**37. Did they.....?***PROMPT & CODE ONE ONLY*

- |  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| 1. Ring you back immediately to continue with the New Claim call     | <i>Go to Q40</i> |
| 2. Ring you back at a later time to continue with the New Claim call | <i>Go to Q40</i> |
| 3. Ring you back but you missed the call / were unavailable          | <i>Go to Q39</i> |
| 4. Refuse to ring you back   | <i>Go to Q39</i> |
| 5. Other (Please Specify)<br>.....                                   | <i>Go to Q39</i> |
| 6. Don't know / Can't remember                                       | <i>Go to Q39</i> |

**38. How did you proceed with your claim?***CODE ONE ONLY*

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. I called them again / continued and completed the New Claim call               | <i>Go to Q40</i>                           |
| 2. Jobcentre Plus rang me at a later time and I completed the New Claim call      | <i>Go to Q40</i>                           |
| 3. I went into a Jobcentre Plus office and was given a claim form to complete     | <i>Go to Q81</i>                           |
| 4. I went into a Jobcentre Plus office and had a face to face New Claim interview | <i>Go to Q81</i>                           |
| 5. I was sent a clerical claim form to complete by hand                           | <i>Go to Q81</i>                           |
| 6. Other (Please Specify)   | <i>If other involved phone go to Q40</i>   |
| .....   |  |
| .....   | <i>If no phone call involved go to Q81</i> |
| 7. Don't know / Can't remember  | <i>Go to Q81</i>                           |

**39. To what extent did the cost of the call influence where you made your initial call from, did it.....?***READ OUT & CODE ONE ONLY*

1. Totally influence where you made the call from
2. Partially influence where you made the call from
3. Have no influence on where you made the call from
4. Don't know / Can't remember

**40. When you first rang Jobcentre Plus to make your New Claim did you get through to an automated answering service that asked you to select an option and then state your postcode?***CODE ONE OPTION ONLY*

- |                                |                  |
|--------------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Yes                         | <i>Go to Q43</i> |
| 2. No                          | <i>Go to Q42</i> |
| 3. Don't know / Can't remember | <i>Go to Q42</i> |

**41. When you rang Jobcentre Plus to make your New Claim for benefit, did the phone ring for more than 30 seconds before a member of staff answered?***CODE ONE OPTION ONLY*

- |                                |                  |
|--------------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Yes                         | <i>Go to Q44</i> |
| 2. No                          | <i>Go to Q44</i> |
| 3. Don't know / Can't remember | <i>Go to Q46</i> |

**42. After you had been through the automated options, did the phone ring for more than 30 seconds before a member of staff answered?**

*CODE ONE OPTION ONLY*

- |                                |                  |
|--------------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Yes                         | <i>Go to Q44</i> |
| 2. No                          | <i>Go to Q44</i> |
| 3. Don't know / Can't remember | <i>Go to Q46</i> |

**43. How do you feel about the length of time you had to wait, was it.....?**

*READ OUT AND CODE ONE ONLY*

1. Much too long to wait to have your call answered
2. Slightly too long to wait
3. An acceptable amount of time to wait
4. Not long enough
5. Don't know / Can't remember

**44. Moved to Q22a & 33a**

## Section 5: The New Claim Call

I'd now like to ask you some questions about what happened during the actual New Claim call.

**45. At the beginning of the process, did the New Claims Agent introduce themselves to you?**

*CODE ONE OPTION ONLY*

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know / Can't remember

**46. At the beginning of the process, did they explain what sort of information they would be asking you for during the call?**

*CODE ONE OPTION ONLY*

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know / Can't remember

**47. At the beginning of the process, did they inform you how long the New Claim call may take to complete?**

*CODE ONE OPTION ONLY*

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know / Can't remember

**48. Once the New Claim call had begun, were you able to complete the full process and answer all the questions in one call, or did the Agent have to arrange to ring you back? (caution: for those respondents who have already been called back eg those who rang from the Jobcentre Plus phones, make sure that they are aware that this is the second call we are referring to)**

*CODE ONE OPTION ONLY*

- |                                 |                  |
|---------------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Yes, completed in one call   | <b>Go to Q57</b> |
| 2. No, a call back was arranged | <b>Go to Q50</b> |
| 3. Don't know / Can't remember  | <b>Go to Q57</b> |

**49. Why wasn't the New Claim process completed in one call?***PROBE & CODE ALL THAT APPLY*

1. I needed to find some additional information
2. Jobcentre Plus needed to check some information eg with CSA
3. I needed a break for health reasons
4. I needed a break for family reasons e.g childcare
5. Agent was finishing a shift
6. Other (Please Specify)  
.....
7. Don't know / Can't remember

**50. In total, how many calls did you have with Jobcentre Plus during the New Claims process for you to answer the claims questions?***CODE ONE ONLY*

1. Two
2. Three
3. Four
4. Five or more
6. Don't know / Can't remember

**51. Following the break(s), did Jobcentre Plus ring you back when they said they would?***CODE ONE ONLY*

- |   |                  |
|---|------------------|
| 1. Yes  | <i>Go to Q54</i> |
| 2. No   | <i>Go to Q53</i> |
| 3. Can't say as had mixed experience (if more than two calls) | <i>Go to Q54</i> |
| 4. Don't know / Can't remember                                | <i>Go to Q53</i> |

**52. Did they call you back at all?***CODE ONE ONLY*

- |                                |                  |
|--------------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Yes                         | <i>Go to Q54</i> |
| 2. No                          | <i>Go to Q56</i> |
| 3. Don't know / Can't remember | <i>Go to Q56</i> |

**53. Did they ring you back within 36 hours after the break(s) from the earlier New Claim call(s)?**

*CODE ONE ONLY*

1. Yes
2. No
3. Can't say as had mixed experience (if more than two calls)
4. Don't know / Can't remember

**54. During the call back(s), did you get to the end of the claim questions?**

*CODE ONE ONLY*

- |                                |                  |
|--------------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Yes                         | <i>Go to Q57</i> |
| 2. No                          | <i>Go to Q56</i> |
| 3. Don't know / Can't remember | <i>Go to Q57</i> |

**55. How did you proceed with your claim?**

*CODE ONE ONLY*

1. I called them again / continued and completed the New Claim call
2. Jobcentre Plus rang me at a later time and I completed the New Claim call
3. I went into a Jobcentre Plus office and was given a claim form to complete
4. I went into a Jobcentre Plus office and had a face to face New Claim interview
5. I was sent a clerical claim form to complete by hand
6. Other (Please Specify)  
.....
7. Don't know / Can't remember



**56. I'd now like you to rate some aspects of the service you received during the New Claim call(s). After each one I read out I'd like you to say if you thought it was Very Good, Fairly Good, neither Good nor Poor, Fairly Poor or Very Poor.**

*If Respondent had more than one New Claim call say: As you had more than one call can you please answer about the main or longest call in this process*

**First of all can you tell me.....?**

*CODE ONE OPTION PER ROW*

		Very Good	Fairly Good	Neither Good nor Poor	Fairly Poor	Very Poor	N/A	D/K
<b>A</b>	How good or poor the Agent was at treating you in a friendly and polite way	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>B</b>	How good or poor the Agent was at treating you with respect as an individual	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>C</b>	How good or poor the Agent was at respecting your privacy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>D</b>	How good or poor the Agent was at providing information relevant to your needs & circumstances	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>E</b>	How good or poor the Agent was at completing your business in a reasonable length of time	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**57. During the New Claim call(s), overall how easy were the questions to understand, would you say you they were .....**

*READ OUT AND CODE ONE OPTION ONLY*

- |                                  |                  |
|----------------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Very easy to understand       | <b>Go to Q60</b> |
| 2. Quite easy to understand      | <b>Go to Q60</b> |
| 3. Not very easy to understand   | <b>Go to Q59</b> |
| 4. Not at all easy to understand | <b>Go to Q59</b> |
| 5. Don't know                    | <b>Go to Q60</b> |

**58. What was it about some of the questions that you did not understand?**

*PROMPT IF NECESSARY & CODE ALL THAT APPLY*

- The wording used
- The Agent's accent
- Not relevant
- Poor quality line
- Too much background noise at the contact centre
- Too much background noise where I was calling from
- Other (please specify)  
.....
- Don't Know / Can't remember

**59. During the New Claim call(s), overall how easy was it to answer the questions, was it.....?**

*READ OUT AND CODE ONE OPTION ONLY*

1. Very easy
2. Quite easy
3. Not very easy
4. Not at all easy
5. Don't know

**60. At the end of the New Claim call(s) were there any issues that hadn't been addressed, for example any information that you still needed or any questions that hadn't been answered?**

*CODE ONE OPTION ONLY*

- |                                |                  |
|--------------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Yes                         | <b>Go to Q62</b> |
| 2. No                          | <b>Go to Q63</b> |
| 3. Don't know / Can't remember | <b>Go to Q63</b> |

**61. If yes ask, what issues had not been addressed?**

.....

.....

.....

**62. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the standard of service you received during the New Claim call(s), were you?**

*READ OUT AND CODE ONE OPTION ONLY*

1. Very satisfied
2. Fairly satisfied
3. Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
4. Fairly dissatisfied
5. Very dissatisfied
6. Don't know

**63. Excluding any breaks, in total how long did it take to complete the New Claim call(s)?**

*PROMPT & CODE ONE OPTION ONLY*

1. Less than 15 minutes
2. 16 to 30 minutes
3. 31 to 45 minutes
4. 46 to 60 minutes
5. 61 to 90 minutes
6. More than 91 minutes
7. Don't know / Can't remember

**64. Did the call(s) cause you any particular problems?**

*CODE ONE OPTION ONLY*

- |                                |                  |
|--------------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Yes                         | <b>Go to Q66</b> |
| 2. No                          | <b>Go to Q67</b> |
| 3. Don't know / Can't remember | <b>Go to Q67</b> |

**65. If yes ask, what problems did it/they cause?**

.....

.....

.....

**66. During the call(s), did the Agent inform you which benefit(s) you may be eligible to receive?**

*CODE ONE OPTION ONLY*

- |                                |                   |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Yes                         | <b>Go to Q67a</b> |
| 2. No                          | <b>Go to Q69</b>  |
| 3. Don't know / Can't remember | <b>Go to Q69</b>  |

**67a Which benefit(s) were you told you may be eligible to receive?**

*PROMPT IF NECESSARY & CODE ALL THAT APPLY*

1. Jobseekers Allowance (JSA)
2. Income Support (IS)
3. Incapacity Benefit (IB)
4. Severe Disablement Allowance
5. Maternity Allowance
6. Bereavement Benefits
7. Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit
8. Carer's Allowance
9. Tax Credits
10. Training Allowance
11. Disability Living Allowance (DLA)
12. Housing Benefit
13. Council Tax Benefit
14. Other (please specify)

- .....
15. Don't know / Can't remember
  16. Prefer Not To Say
  17. None

**67. Was this / were these the benefit(s) you were expecting to receive?**

*CODE ONE OPTION ONLY*

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know / Can't remember

**68. At the end of the call(s) did the Agent inform you of what would happen next with your claim?**

*CODE ONE OPTION ONLY*

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know / Can't remember

**69. At the end of the call(s) did the Agent arrange for you to attend a Work Focused Interview at your local Jobcentre Plus office?**

*CODE ONE OPTION ONLY*

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know / Can't remember
4. Not Applicable – I was told I didn't need to attend a WFI

**70. Following the New Claim call(s), did you receive (or were you shown) a statement detailing the information you gave during the call that you had to sign?**

*CODE ONE OPTION ONLY*

- |                                |                  |
|--------------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Yes                         | <b>Go to Q72</b> |
| 2. No                          | <b>Go to Q73</b> |
| 3. Don't know / Can't remember | <b>Go to Q73</b> |

**71. Overall how accurate would you say the information in your statement was, was it....?**

*READ OUT AND CODE ONE OPTION ONLY*

1. Very accurate
2. Fairly accurate
3. Not very accurate
4. Not at all accurate
5. Don't know

**72. How satisfied or dissatisfied were / are you with the length of time it took / it is taking Jobcentre Plus to make a decision about your claim, were / are you?**

*READ OUT AND CODE ONE OPTION ONLY*

1. Very satisfied
2. Fairly satisfied
3. Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
4. Fairly dissatisfied
5. Very dissatisfied
6. Don't know

**73. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the benefit decision you received, are you?**

*READ OUT AND CODE ONE OPTION ONLY*

- 1. Very satisfied **Go to Q75**
- 2. Fairly satisfied **Go to Q75**
- 3. Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied **Go to Q76**
- 4. Fairly dissatisfied **Go to Q75**
- 5. Very dissatisfied **Go to Q75**
- 6. Don't know **Go to Q76**
- 7. N/A no decision received yet **Go to Q76**

**74. Why is that?**

.....

.....

.....

**75. How long after completing the New Claim call(s) did you receive your first benefit payment?**

*CODE ONE ONLY*

- 1. Less than two weeks **Go to Q77**
- 2. Two to four weeks **Go to Q77**
- 3. One to two months **Go to Q77**
- 4. Three to five months **Go to Q77**
- 5. Still waiting to receive a payment **Go to Q77**
- 6. Have been informed I won't be receiving benefit **Go to Q90**
- 7. Don't know / Can't remember **Go to Q77**

**76. How satisfied or dissatisfied were / are you with the length of time it took / it is taking for you to receive your first payment, were / are you?**

*READ OUT AND CODE ONE OPTION ONLY*

- 1. Very satisfied
- 2. Fairly satisfied
- 3. Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- 4. Fairly dissatisfied
- 5. Very dissatisfied
- 6. Don't know

**Now go to Q90**

## Section 6: Non Telephone Contact

**77. Are you aware that the majority of new benefit claims are now made by telephone to a Jobcentre Plus contact centre?**

*CODE ONE OPTION ONLY*

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know / Can't remember

**78. You said that you made your New Claim by (insert method from Q16 or 17). Why did you choose to make your claim in this way?**

.....

.....

.....

**79. Is there a specific reason why you made your claim this way rather than by telephone?**

.....

.....

.....

**80. How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the standard of service you received from Jobcentre Plus during the New Claims process, were you?**

*READ OUT AND CODE ONE OPTION ONLY*

1. Very satisfied
2. Fairly satisfied
3. Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
4. Fairly dissatisfied
5. Very dissatisfied
6. Don't know
7. Not applicable – did not receive any service

**81. How satisfied or dissatisfied were / are you with the length of time it took / it is taking Jobcentre Plus to make a decision about your claim, were / are you?**

*READ OUT AND CODE ONE OPTION ONLY*

1. Very satisfied
2. Fairly satisfied
3. Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
4. Fairly dissatisfied
5. Very dissatisfied
6. Don't know

**82. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the benefit decision you received, are you?**

*READ OUT AND CODE ONE OPTION ONLY*

- |                                       |                  |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Very satisfied                     | <b>Go to Q84</b> |
| 2. Fairly satisfied                   | <b>Go to Q84</b> |
| 3. Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied | <b>Go to Q85</b> |
| 4. Fairly dissatisfied                | <b>Go to Q84</b> |
| 5. Very dissatisfied                  | <b>Go to Q84</b> |
| 6. Don't know                         | <b>Go to Q85</b> |
| 7. N/A no decision received yet       | <b>Go to Q85</b> |

**83. Why is that?**

.....

.....

.....

**84. How long after completing your New Claim application did you receive your first benefit payment?**

*CODE ONE ONLY*

- |  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| 1. Less than two weeks                             | <b>Go to Q86</b> |
| 2. Two to four weeks                               | <b>Go to Q86</b> |
| 3. One to two months                               | <b>Go to Q86</b> |
| 4. Three to five months                            | <b>Go to Q86</b> |
| 5. Still waiting to receive a payment              | <b>Go to Q86</b> |
| 6. Have been informed I won't be receiving benefit | <b>Go to Q90</b> |
| 7. Don't know / Can't remember                     | <b>Go to Q86</b> |



**85. How satisfied or dissatisfied were / are you with the length of time it took / it is taking for you to receive your first payment, were / are you?**

*READ OUT AND CODE ONE OPTION ONLY*

1. Very satisfied
2. Fairly satisfied
3. Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
4. Fairly dissatisfied
5. Very dissatisfied
6. Don't know

## Section 7: Generic & Complaints

86. Removed after pilot

87. Removed after pilot

88. Removed after pilot

**89. During the New Claim process were you given any information by Jobcentre Plus that you found to be incorrect or contradictory?**

*CODE ONE OPTION ONLY*

- |                                |                  |
|--------------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Yes                         | <b>Go to Q91</b> |
| 2. No                          | <b>Go to Q92</b> |
| 3. Don't know / Can't remember | <b>Go to Q92</b> |

**90. What was the incorrect information concerning?**

*PROMPT IF NECESSARY & CODE ALL THAT APPLY*

1. How to apply for benefits
2. Which benefit to apply for
3. Other benefits available
4. How much benefit I would receive
5. When I would receive my benefit
6. Job vacancies / job finding
7. Training
8. Jobcentre Plus programmes
9. My personal details
10. Appointments
11. Other (*Please Specify*).....
12. Don't know / Can't remember

**91. During the New Claim process did you ever feel like complaining about the New Claim service you received from Jobcentre Plus?**

*CODE ONE OPTION ONLY*

- |                                |                   |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Yes                         | <b>Go to Q93</b>  |
| 2. No                          | <b>Go to Q102</b> |
| 3. Don't know / Can't remember | <b>Go to Q102</b> |

**92. What did you feel like complaining about?***PROMPT IF NECESSARY & CODE ALL THAT APPLY*

1. Discrimination from staff (eg age, sex, ethnic group, disability etc.)
2. Discrimination from employers (eg age, sex, ethnic group, disability etc.)
3. Staff's lack of knowledge
4. Staff attitudes
5. Benefit application procedures
6. Benefit signing-on procedures
7. Benefit payment procedures
8. Late / incorrect benefit payments
9. Waiting times / queues in Jobcentre Plus offices
10. Job vacancies / job finding
11. Jobcentre Plus programmes
12. New Deal
13. Standards of service in general
14. Office layout is not disability friendly
15. The length of time it took from making my claim to receiving my first payment
16. The benefit decision
17. Other (*Please Specify*).....
18. Don't know / Can't remember

**93. Did you make / do you intend to make a complaint?***CODE ONE OPTION ONLY*

- |  |                   |
|--|-------------------|
| 1. Yes, I have made a complaint            | <b>Go to Q96</b>  |
| 2. Yes, I intend to make a complaint       | <b>Go to Q102</b> |
| 3. I haven't decided whether to or not yet | <b>Go to Q102</b> |
| 4. No                                      | <b>Go to Q95</b>  |
| 5. Don't know / Can't remember             | <b>Go to Q102</b> |

**94. Why did you decide not to complain?***CODE ALL THAT APPLY*

1. Could not be bothered
2. Too busy, didn't have the time
3. No point because the office CAN'T do anything about the problem
4. No point because the office WON'T do anything about the problem
5. Process would take too long
6. Queues too long
7. Worried about repercussions
8. No form available
9. Didn't know the procedure
10. Not serious enough to complain
11. Feel shouldn't complain
12. No privacy to complain
13. Not staff's fault – it's 'the system'
14. Other (*Please Specify*).....

***GO TO Q102*****95. How did you complain?***PROMPT IF NECESSARY AND CODE ALL THAT APPLY*

1. In person
2. By completing a complaint form
3. By letter
4. By telephone/textphone
5. By fax
6. By email
7. Other (*Please Specify*).....
8. Don't know / Can't remember

**96. How satisfied or dissatisfied are / were you with the PROCESS or WAY IN WHICH your complaint was handled, were you.....?***READ OUT AND CODE ONE OPTION ONLY*

- |                                       |                  |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Very satisfied                     | <b>Go to Q99</b> |
| 2. Fairly satisfied                   | <b>Go to Q99</b> |
| 3. Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied | <b>Go to Q99</b> |
| 4. Fairly dissatisfied                | <b>Go to Q98</b> |
| 5. Very dissatisfied                  | <b>Go to Q98</b> |
| 6. Don't know                         | <b>Go to Q99</b> |

**97. Why are / were you dissatisfied with the PROCESS or WAY IN WHICH your complaint was handled?**

.....

.....

.....

**98. How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the OUTCOME or RESULT of your complaint, were you.....?**

*READ OUT AND CODE ONE OPTION ONLY*

- |                                       |                   |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Very satisfied                     | <b>Go to Q101</b> |
| 2. Fairly satisfied                   | <b>Go to Q101</b> |
| 3. Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied | <b>Go to Q101</b> |
| 4. Fairly dissatisfied                | <b>Go to Q100</b> |
| 5. Very dissatisfied                  | <b>Go to Q100</b> |
| 6. Don't know                         | <b>Go to Q101</b> |
| 7. Not applicable – no outcome yet    | <b>Go to Q101</b> |

**99. Why were you dissatisfied with the OUTCOME or RESULT of your complaint?**

.....

.....

.....

**100. Following your complaint, have you taken the matter any further?**

*IF YES, PROMPT IF NECESSARY AND CODE ALL THAT APPLY*

1. Yes, contacted the office manager
2. Yes, contacted Jobcentre Plus Chief Executive
3. Yes, contacted my MP
4. Yes, contacted the Ombudsman via my MP
5. No further action
6. Other (*Please Specify*).....

- 101. If No at Q12 ie has claimed benefits previously ask, Overall was this experience of making a New Claim for benefits better, worse or the same as before?**

*CODE ONE OPTION ONLY*

1. Better
2. The same
3. Worse
4. Don't know

- 102. What do you think was the best aspect of the New Claim service you received from Jobcentre Plus?**

.....

.....

.....

<sub>1</sub> Don't know

<sub>2</sub> Nothing

- 103. What do you think was the worst aspect of the New Claim service you received from Jobcentre Plus?**

.....

.....

.....

<sub>1</sub> Don't know

<sub>2</sub> Nothing

- 104. Finally, I'd like to ask you about your contact with other parts of the Department for Work and Pensions. In the last six months have you been in contact with.....?**

*READ OUT & CODE ONE OPTION PER ROW*

		YES	NO	Don't Know
<b>A</b>	The Child Support Agency	1	2	3
<b>B</b>	The Disability and Carers Service	1	2	3
<b>C</b>	The Pensions Service	1	2	3

***If no contact with any of A to C in the last 6 months, go to Q109***

**105. Was it necessary to give the same information to Jobcentre Plus that you gave to (insert name of services from Q105)?**

*CODE ONE OPTION ONLY*

- |                                |                   |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Yes                         | <b>Go to Q107</b> |
| 2. No                          | <b>Go to Q109</b> |
| 3. Don't know / Can't remember | <b>Go to Q109</b> |

**106. Were you content to do this?**

*CODE ONE OPTION ONLY*

- |                                |                   |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Yes                         | <b>Go to Q109</b> |
| 2. No                          | <b>Go to Q108</b> |
| 3. Don't know / Can't remember | <b>Go to Q109</b> |

**107. Why not?**

.....

.....

.....

## Section 10: Demographics

***THIS IS THE FINAL SECTION AND I'D JUST LIKE TO ASK YOU A FEW DETAILS ABOUT YOURSELF / (RESPONDENT'S NAME) FOR CLASSIFICATION PURPOSES***

### **108. Record Gender**

***ASK IF NECESSARY - CODE ONE OPTION ONLY***

1. Male
2. Female
3. I do not wish to say

### **109. Would you mind telling me how old you are?**

***PROMPT WITH FOLLOWING OPTIONS IF NECESSARY AND CODE ONE ONLY***

- |          |                         |
|----------|-------------------------|
| 1. 16-18 | 5. 50-59                |
| 2. 19-24 | 6. 60-64                |
| 3. 25-34 | 7. 65+                  |
| 4. 35-49 | 8. I do not wish to say |

### **110. Do you have any long term illness, health condition or disability which limits your daily activities or the work you can do?**

***CODE ONE OPTION ONLY***

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't Know
4. I do not wish to say



**111. To which of these ethnic groups do you consider you belong?***PROMPT WITH SECTIONS A to E AND THEN CODE ONE OPTION ONLY IN THAT SECTION***A) White**

1. British
2. Irish
3. Any other White background *(Please Specify)*.....

**B) Mixed**

1. White and Black Caribbean
2. White and Black African
3. White and Asian
4. Any other Mixed background *(Please Specify)*.....

**C) Asian or British Asian**

1. Indian
2. Pakistani
3. Bangladeshi
4. Any other Asian background *(Please Specify)*.....

**D) Black or Black British**

1. Caribbean
2. African
3. Any other Black background *(Please Specify)*.....

**E) Chinese or other ethnic group**

1. Chinese
2. Any other *(Please Specify)*.....

**F) Refused**

1. I do not wish to say

**112. Is English your first language?***CODE ONE OPTION ONLY*

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't Know
4. I do not wish to say

**113. Would you be willing to be contacted again to take part in further studies of this type?**

*CODE ONE OPTION ONLY*

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

***Thank respondent and terminate interview***

Interviewer: ..... Date: .....

Respondent's Name: .....

Unique Client ID Number:			/				/				/			
--------------------------	--	--	---	--	--	--	---	--	--	--	---	--	--	--



# References

Jobcentre Plus (2007), *Our Service Standards*, Jobcentre Plus: [www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk/JCP/Stellent/groups/jcp/documents/websitecontent/dev/\\_011795.pdf](http://www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk/JCP/Stellent/groups/jcp/documents/websitecontent/dev/_011795.pdf)

Johnson, S. and Fidler, Y. (2008), *Jobcentre Plus Customer Satisfaction Survey 2007*, Department for Work and Pensions Research Report 480, Leeds: Corporate Document Services.

National Audit Office (2006), *Department for Work and Pensions: Delivering effective services through contact centres*, London: The Stationary Office.

