What difference does the Equality Advisory Support Service make for its customers?

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IFF Research

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# Executive Summary

This research was conducted in 2015. The EASS was re-tendered in March 2016 and underwent substantial revisions. The findings from this research apply to the previous service.

## Background

The Government Equalities Office (GEO) has responsibility for managing the Equality Advisory and Support Service (EASS), which was set up on the 1st October 2012. It replaced the previous helpline run by the Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC). The EASS provides information, advice and support on discrimination and human rights issues to individuals across Great Britain. The EASS also refers customers to other organisations for advice making it an important part in the informal resolution process or ‘journey’.

EASS responds to all types of enquiries from basic to complex and involves advisors applying their knowledge of legislation to an individual’s specific circumstances, but not giving legal advice. The EASS supports individuals to resolve their issue using alternative informal dispute resolution. At the time of this research, over 2000 individuals contacted the EASS every month for help and support with discrimination or human rights problems.

Although management information about the customers using the EASS exists, there is limited understanding about the difference that using the EASS has made for people and what its role is in the wider equality advice ‘landscape’. This research was commissioned to address this evidence gap and was conducted in Spring 2015. It comprised a telephone survey (conducted between 9th and 23rd March 2015) with a sample of 750 customers of the EASS who had contacted the service, 15 in-depth interviews with these customers and three interviews with key stakeholder organisations who interacted with the EASS and their customers at the time of the survey.

## Key findings

Although this research attempts to isolate the specific role of the EASS in determining the positive and negative outcomes associated with customers’ issues, it is important to note that the type of outcome itself may not be directly attributable to the interaction with the EASS. For example, a customer may not have achieved the outcome they wanted due to the issue not being considered discriminatory from a legal perspective; or the outcome was achieved through contact with an organisation which EASS signposted the customer to.

**What difference does the EASS make for its customers?**

The main positive differences for customers which were identified by this research and were attributed (at least in part) to the EASS were: not needing to seek paid-for legal advice; increased confidence or knowledge; and feeling that they had improved their access to justice. The EASS was also regarded as making a positive difference when it played a critical role in signposting (where the customer would have been unlikely to contact the organisation who went on to help without the EASS suggesting it).

**A total of 79% respondents[[1]](#footnote-1) reported that the EASS had made some sort of “positive difference”**.

* Nearly a quarter (23%) of respondents reported a **positive outcome** with their issue which they attributed *at least in part* to the EASS.
* Around four in ten (39%) reported that the EASS had **prevented them from needing to seek paid-for legal advice**.
* 65% felt **more confident** dealing with similar issues they might encounter in the future.
* Around seven in ten (73%) felt **more knowledgeable** about their rights in the area of their issue.
* Half (51%) felt the EASS had **helped them access justice** which they otherwise wouldn’t have been able to.
* 15% of respondents had contacted another organisation as a result of EASS signposting, which they would have been unlikely to contact without the EASS suggesting it. In this way, the EASS made a difference to customers even where their enquiry was not within its remit by helping them get their issue resolved by another organisation.

Users with issues relating to disability and to work were particularly likely to feel that the EASS had made a positive difference for them.

Figure 1: The difference the EASS made for survey respondents

Contact with the EASS was reported by some respondents to be part of the ‘healing’ process by which they came to terms with the (sometimes very distressing) equality or discrimination issue they had faced. It helped respondents feel listened to and helped them achieve ‘closure’ by helping them to resolve their issue and made a difference to their **emotional wellbeing and mental health**.

Just over a fifth (21%) of respondents reported that contact with the EASS had made no difference for them or to their issue. In addition, 15% of respondents experienced a positive outcome but they did not attribute this to the contact they had had with the EASS.

**How does the EASS help customers achieve positive outcomes?**

The EASS helped survey respondents achieve positive outcomes by:

* helping them to understand their issue in relation to discrimination;
* helping them to articulate their issue in a way which ensured it was taken seriously (i.e. framing it in legal terms);
* providing clear step-by-step action plans to follow; and
* giving users confidence to take action.

**What is the impact of the EASS within the broader advisory landscape?**

Three key advice providers (stakeholders) were asked about the role of the EASS in the advisory landscape. If the EASS was no longer available, the stakeholders felt that there would be a si**gnificant impact on other advice organisations** in terms of the number of enquiries received. They reported that the EASS could deal with high volumes of calls, which stakeholder organisations reported they didn’t currently have the capacity to take on.

Based on the number of users of the EASS at the time of the research (approx. 2000 customers per month) and the proportion of respondents who reported that they would have approached another organisation or their peers for advice if the EASS was not available (43%), this suggests that around **850+ individuals per month would be aiming to seek advice from other sources if the EASS was no longer available.**

Stakeholders also felt that without the EASS that some customers would ‘fall through the cracks’ and find it harder to get their issue resolved. This was because the **EASS offers specialist advice on a wide variety of equality and discrimination issues.** This a unique feature of EASS because it offers in-depth, bespoke advice to individuals on discrimination and human rights issues, based on the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998, which other advice providers do not. Stakeholders also reported that they would be unlikely to change their remit significantly to fill the gap left by the EASS if it were no longer available.

**How can the EASS make even more of a difference to customers?**

1. **Increase awareness of the EASS among advisory organisations and potential customers (and reduce the journey time)**
* Survey respondents typically arrived at the EASS through signposting or an internet search. This meant that customers could take a long time to find the EASS and go through several organisations before reaching it (there were reports of 20+ organisations contacted and several days of searching for someone who would help). Higher awareness of the EASS among customers would mean a shorter journey to resolution, lessening the amount of time they are in stressful situations.
* Stakeholders felt that improving the knowledge among wider advice organisations of the EASS’s remit could encourage them to make more referrals to the EASS (again meaning that customers would be more likely to end up ‘in the right place’ for their enquiry to be dealt with more quickly).
* Stakeholder organisations felt that the **referral process** could be improved, using call transfers rather than signposting[[2]](#footnote-2). Although, this would shorten the journey for customers looking to get an issue resolved, there would be resource implications for using call transfers which would need to be taken into consideration.
1. **Improve understanding about the role and remit of EASS among customers**
* Approximately one in five (22%) respondents experienced a negative outcome to their issue and **felt the EASS could have done more to help**.
* Although the research did not explore specifically what could be done to improve the service, what was clear from the data was that there was a **mismatch between respondents’ expectations, or hopes, and the remit of the EASS**. For example, respondents contacted the EASS hoping it would “take on” or champion their issue and solve it for them, whereas the remit of the EASS is to only contact an organisation on a client’s behalf, if the client has exhausted all other possible steps to get the issue resolved. Stakeholder organisations felt that the expectation of customers may have been because predecessors to the EASS had more of an advocacy remit.
* The research suggests that there is a need to **better manage customers’ expectations** and ensure that they understand the different roles and responsibilities. There was also feedback from customers and stakeholders that the **website could be clearer in setting out the remit of the EASS** in terms of the types of enquiries it is able to help with and the ways in which it is able to help (including where the customer must take the lead rather than the EASS).
1. **Increase the provision of written documentation of actions for customers**
* Survey respondents and stakeholders suggested that the EASS could make more of a difference for customers by **consistently providing customers with a written record** of what they have discussed with an EASS advisor. While it was recognised that this often does happen through the provision of action plans, some of those who had not received such a plan mentioned how valuable this would have been, regardless of whether they were continuing their journey with the EASS, or being signposted or referred to another organisation.

## Conclusions

The research found that the EASS affects customers in **a range of ways**. In particular, survey respondents with issues relating to **disability** and to **work** tended to report that the EASS had made a positive difference to their issue. However, a proportion of respondents stated that they had experienced a negative outcome relating to their issue and also that they felt that the EASS could have done more to help them to resolve it.

Stakeholders who were interviewed as part of this research reported that without the EASS the general public would find it difficult to access advice, specifically on matters relating to equality and discrimination. This would represent a **gap in the advisory and guidance landscape** which would not be filled by other providers. They also reported that that the service could **potentially have a greater impact** if there was:

* higher awareness of the service among potential customers; and
* a clearer understanding of its remit by its customer base.

The latter finding was further reinforced by evidence from the survey which showed that there was a mismatch between respondents’ expectations of the EASS and its remit. For example, several respondents thought they would receive legal advice.

Any future improvements to the EASS could:

* increase awareness of the EASS among advisory organisations and potential customers (and reduce individual journey time);
* improve understanding about role and remit of EASS among customers; and
* increase the provision of written documentation of actions for customers.

# Introduction

This research was conducted in 2015. The EASS was re-tendered in March 2016 and underwent substantial revisions. The findings from this research apply to the previous service.

## Background

People are experiencing a range of inequality and discrimination issues in society today.[[3]](#footnote-3) The Government is seeking to address this in a number of ways, for example by improving the quality of information and advice available to the public about discrimination and human rights and by increasing access to justice. Government is also focusing on helping people to solve their problems informally, thereby helping to prevent formal dispute resolution where ever possible. The intention is to encourage people to look for alternative methods of resolution, like mediation, so that tribunals, which can be costly, remain a last resort for the most complex cases.

## About the Equality Advisory Support Service (EASS)

The Government Equalities Office (GEO) has responsibility for managing the Equality Advisory and Support Service (EASS). The EASS is a Government funded helpline for those who need information and advice on discrimination and human rights issues. It replaced the previous helpline run by the Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC). It was set up in October 2012 to provide free bespoke advice and guidance to individuals in England, Scotland and Wales. The aim of the EASS is **to promote informal resolution**, assisting individuals to solve their issues and allowing them to get on with their lives. As such, the EASS does not provide legal advice but will signpost an individual to a relevant organisation if this is what the client wants, making the EASS an important part in customers’ resolution journey but often not the only part. Over 2,000 individuals contact the EASS every month for help and support with discrimination or human rights problems.

EASS responds to all types of enquiries from basic to complex and involves advisors applying their knowledge of legislation to an individual’s specific circumstances, but not giving legal advice. The EASS supports individuals to resolve their issue using alternative informal dispute resolution, as opposed to issuing a claim in a county court or an employment tribunal (but it will also provide basic pre-claim support where appropriate). The EASS seeks to help with the most complex discrimination problems for vulnerable clients, providing intensive support for those that need it.

Those who contact the EASS have typically found out about the service through one of the following routes.

* Having been encouraged to contact the EASS by referral partners, such as the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), or the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS).
* From web searches or through the EASS’s digital channels.

The EASS can be contacted through its helpline, via email, web chat or by letter. Once they have contacted the EASS, customers are divided into five journey types which reflect how complex their query is and determine the nature of the service they are provided. Figure 2 shows the definitions for the five journeys and proportion of customers fitting into each that have called the helpline since its inception. As the Figure shows, the majority of customers fall within the Journey 3 and 4 categories (66%).

**Figure 2: EASS customer types (February 2015)**

## About the research

Since the service began, the EASS has collated detailed management information, (including types of discrimination, the protected characteristics and the sector in which the discrimination occurred), but little is known about the journey that each of these individuals undertake following on from the advice they have received. Research was therefore required to address this evidence gap and to look at the impact and outcomes the EASS has had on its customers and the difference it has made to those individuals.

# Research method / approach

## Research objectives

Given the budget pressures across Government, all services must be able to provide evidence of the difference they make to their service users. In a landscape of multiple advice providers, it is also important to ask what the EASS does differently to others. To what extent is it unique? And to what extent does it make a difference that could not be filled by others?

The Government Equalities Office (GEO) commissioned IFF Research in 2015 to identify:

* the difference the EASS currently makes for its customers;
* the impact of the current model of the EASS within the broader advisory landscape; and
* how the EASS can make even more of a difference to customers.

## Approach

The research was conducted between March and June 2015 with EASS customers who had contacted the service 6 to 18 months previously and with key stakeholder organisations. The research consisted of:

* a survey comprising 750 telephone interviews lasting approximately 15 – 20 minutes each;
* 15 in-depth interviews with customers; and
* 3 in depth interviews with key stakeholder organisations.

Sample

The survey sample comprised the following customers.

* + Callers to the EASS helpline only. This was for practical reasons, to ensure that appropriate contact details were available for customers but also because the helpline is the key channel of the EASS.
	+ Those who had contacted the EASS 6-18 months prior to fieldwork in March 2015. This was considered long enough ago for outcomes to have been achieved but recently enough that customers would have good recall of their contact with the EASS and the impact it had had.
	+ Those with a discrimination issue where the advisor had to apply knowledge of the legislation to a specific context, provide an action plan and offer a call back after a period of time (Journey 3 customers) and those with a complex discrimination issue which was suitable for informal resolution (Journey 4 customers). These two journey types are key for understanding common outcomes that the EASS helps achieve for those who contact it for advice.

In addition, the sample was limited as only those who agreed, through a telephone opt-in exercise (described below), to be contacted about the research, were able to be included.

## Telephone Survey

The telephone survey was key to understanding the overall impact the EASS had had in helping customers resolve issues and the degree to which this differed across different types of customer, issue and journey. The questionnaire is included in Appendix A.

Following an initial opt-in exercise to gather permission to participate in the research, a pilot was undertaken to test and develop the questionnaire before the mainstage took place. Each stage of the research is covered in more detail below.

### Stage 1 - Opt-in Exercise

In order to gain permission to contact customers and invite them to participate in the research, the EASS conducted an initial telephone opt-in exercise among all Journey 3 and 4 customers who had called the helpline 6-18 months previously.

This telephone exercise was undertaken by Sitel, the organisation responsible for managing the EASS at the time of this research, through their in-house call centre. Over a two-week period in February 2015, Sitel contacted, or made an attempt to contact 8,564 customers. Of these 1,501 agreed to take part in the research (18% of those contacted).

### Stage 2 - Pilot

A pilot exercise was conducted to check questionnaire functionality (i.e. that questions were easy to answer), to ensure key questions were yielding useful data and to check the questionnaire was of appropriate length.

The pilot involved conducting 25 interviews by telephone. The pilot fieldwork ran on 3rd and 4th of March 2015.

The sample was provided by Sitel comprising 152 customers who had previously been in touch with the EASS and who had given their permission to be contacted for further research. Due to the limited amount of sample available, no quotas were set by journey, protected characteristic or issue, or by date they first contacted the EASS, however a diverse range of customers was included. Customers were screened out if they had no recollection of using the service.

The pilot stage found that the questionnaire worked well in terms of flow, respondent comprehension and functionality. However, some revisions were undertaken in order to reduce the questionnaire length to 15 minutes for the mainstage.

### Stage 3 - Mainstage

The mainstage fieldwork consisted of 750 telephone interviews and took place between Monday 9th and Monday 23rd March 2015.

### Response rates

Response rate is one indicator of survey representativeness. The higher the response rate, the less likely it is that bias affects the achieved sample.

A breakdown of fieldwork outcomes is provided in Table 1 below. In total, 1,501 records were provided by Sitel and 1,492 were issued as usable records to the phone unit.

Overall, 750 interviews were completed. This represents a response rate of 50% (53% with unobtainable, not available during fieldwork and out of scope cases removed).

Table 1: Fieldwork outcomes

|  | Number of cases | (%) |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Total Sampled**  | 1,492 |  |
| Completed | 750 | 50% |
| Still live after fieldwork | 533 | 36% |
| Refused / respondent stopped interview | 135 | 9% |
| Out of scope (could not remember contacting the EASS) | 52 | 3% |
| Unobtainable | 18 | 1% |
| Not available during fieldwork | 4 | \*% |

### Customer profile

Table 2 shows the profiles of the total population, starting sample[[4]](#footnote-4) and achieved interviews by journey, protected characteristic and issue type.

Table 2: Profile of achieved interviews against the starting sample and total population

|  | Total population | Starting sample | Achieved interviews (Survey profile) |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Journey | n | % | n | % | n | % |
| 3 | 29,905 | 80% | 975 | 65% | 483 | 64% |
| 4 | 7,417 | 20% | 526 | 35% | 267 | 36% |
| Protected Characteristic\* |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Age | 1,412 | 5% | 58 | 4% | 29 | 4% |
| Disability | 17,333 | 62% | 982 | 65% | 497 | 67% |
| Gender | 2,262 | 8% | 98 | 6% | 43 | 6% |
| Marriage and Civil Partnership  | 59 | \*% | 4 | \*% | 2 | \*% |
| Pregnancy and Maternity  | 1,351 | 5% | 51 | 3% | 15 | 2% |
| Race | 4,331 | 15% | 205 | 14% | 87 | 14% |
| Religion and Belief | 713 | 3% | 26 | 2% | 12 | 2% |
| Sexual Orientation | 432 | 2% | 16 | 1% | 3 | 1% |
| Gender reassignment | 249 | 2% | 11 | 1% | 7 | 1% |
| Issue category |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Associations | 175 | 0% | 5 | \*% | 3 | \*% |
| Education | 3042 | 7% | 136 | 9% | 72 | 10% |
| Premises | 1822 | 4% | 53 | 4% | 31 | 4% |
| Public Sector Equality Duty | 333 | 1% | 1 | \*% | 1 | \*% |
| Services and Public Functions | 13,556 | 33% | 453 | 30% | 245 | 33% |
| Work | 22,056 | 54% | 845 | 57% | 394 | 53% |

\*Column does not sum to 1,501 due to Unknowns

The final survey profile of customers was closely aligned to the overall population in terms of protected characteristic and issue type.

Although the survey profile had a slightly higher proportion of Journey 4 customers than the total population (36% compared to 20%) and fewer Journey 3 customers (64% compared to 80%), the survey profile mirrored that of the starting sample (and therefore aligned with the profile of customers that were available to research). The idea of weighting the data by Journey Type was rejected as this would be likely to negatively affect the protected characteristic and issue category profiles and it was more important for these two aspects to correspond with the overall population counts.

Please note: Although the sample appears to be broadly representative of the Journey 3 and 4 population, which made up the majority (66%) of EASS customers, we do not know how this group of customers differs in terms of experiences, nature of cases or even outcomes from the overall user population. This should be taken into account when interpreting the findings.

## In-depth discussions with customers and stakeholders

### Customers

In total, 15 in-depth interviews were conducted with customers between 12th and 27th June 2015. These interviews were essential for understanding in more detail customer perception on how contact with the EASS benefitted them (or not).

Three key groups of customers were included in the research. Those who:

* had experienced a positive outcome to their issue and felt that this would not have been achieved without contact with the EASS;
* felt that contact with the EASS had helped them avoid having to seek paid-for legal advice; and
* felt that contact with the EASS had not provided them with any benefit.

To ensure widespread feedback from different customer types was captured the sample was also structured by protected characteristic and by type of issue. All customers where further action was still being taken were excluded.

Table 3 outlines the structure used for the qualitative interviews.

Table 3: Qualitative interview structure

|  | **TOTAL** | **Race** | **Disability** | **Other** | **Work** | **Community and education** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Positive outcome which would not have happened without the EASS  | 5 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 2 |
| EASS helped customer avoid having to seek legal advice (and therefore prevented financial loss) | 5 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| The EASS did not lead to a positive outcome, help customers avoid paid-for legal advice, increase knowledge/confidence or enable access to justice[[5]](#footnote-5)  | 5 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| TOTAL | **15** | **6** | **6** | **3** | **7** | **8** |

### Stakeholders

Three in-depth interviews were conducted with key stakeholders from other organisations in the advice and guidance landscape. These discussions aimed to establish their views on the EASS’s role in the advice landscape, the degree to which this role is unique and the benefits it brings to customers.

The topic guides used to help conduct the discussions with customers and stakeholders can be found in Appendices B and C.

## Limitations of the research

### Representativeness of the sample

As noted above, the customers included in the research comprised:

* + callers to the EASS helpline (whether or not they had also contacted the EASS in another way);
	+ those who had contacted the EASS 6-18 months prior to fieldwork (which was conducted in March 2015);
	+ those with a discrimination issue where the advisor had to apply knowledge of the legislation to a specific context, provide an action plan and offer a call back after a period of time (Journey 3 customers) and those with a complex discrimination issue which was suitable for informal resolution (Journey 4 customers); and
	+ those who opted-in to the research and agreed for their contact details to be passed on to IFF (around 18% of all the customers contacted for the opt-in exercise).

It should therefore be noted that the research is not representative of the total customer base as it does not include all users of the helpline but rather those who make up the majority and have had the most interaction with the EASS (Journey 3 and 4 customers) and also only those who opted-in to the research. Other customers’ experience of the EASS could be quite different.

### Measuring the extent to which EASS helps customers

It is also difficult to measure the full extent to which the EASS helps customers achieve positive outcomes as:

* + some respondents were still in the process of trying to resolve their issue at the time the survey was conducted;
	+ the EASS could not have an influence in helping *all* customers achieve positive outcomes as not all customers had issues that were within the EASS’s remit to assist with;
	+ it was not possible within the questionnaire to ask all customers with a positive outcome whether the EASS had played a part in achieving this (as it was not known that the outcome to their issue was positive until it was categorised as such by IFF’s coding team after the survey was complete); and
	+ customers may have different perspectives on the degree to which any positive outcome is attributable to the EASS and as it is difficult to reach a finite / universal definition of “attribution” to prompt with; this is dependent on the customer’s perception / interpretation.

It was not a key objective of the research to investigate or to measure financial implications of the difference the EASS makes for its customers.

### Small sample size for the qualitative and stakeholder research

The qualitative stage of the research was relatively small-scale and so, while the in-depth interviews covered a broad cross-section of customer types and issues, it was not possible to report back qualitative findings broken down by sub-groups of customers. Likewise, the stakeholder interviews focussed on three key stakeholders and so did not pick up the views of organisations who refer customers to the EASS less frequently and who may have lower awareness of the EASS’s remit / a different perception of the EASS.

# What difference does the EASS make for its customers?

## Overview

**The EASS made a positive difference for four out of five (79%) respondents to the survey.**

This 79% included those:

* whose issue had a positive outcome which they felt the EASS played at least some part in;
* who reported that the advice received from the EASS prevented them needing to seek paid-for legal advice;
* who felt more confident, knowledgeable or empowered (able to seek justice which they otherwise wouldn’t have been able to) as a result of their contact with the EASS;
* for whom the EASS played a critical role in signposting (where the customer would not have been likely to contact the organisation who went on to help without the EASS suggesting it).

Respondents may have been in more than one category, having benefited from their contact with the EASS in multiple ways. It was also the case that some respondents experienced a mixture of positive and negative outcomes (for example, some but not all of what they would like to have achieved happened: these respondents are included in the measure of ‘positive difference made’ shown below).

Figure 3: Difference the EASS made to survey respondents



## Positive outcomes the EASS helps customers achieve

**23% of respondents had a positive outcome which they attributed at least in part to the EASS**

Thirteen per cent of respondents believed that the EASS had played a “large part” in helping them achieve a positive outcome and 10% of customers felt it had played “some part”.

It is however difficult to measure the full extent to which the EASS helped respondents achieve positive outcomes (see section 3 for discussion of the limitations of the research).

Respondents who had approached the EASS with work-related issues and those with community and education issues[[6]](#footnote-6) achieved different outcomes. Examples of positive outcomes that respondents achieved having contacted the EASS, by issue type, are outlined in Table 4.

Table 4: Positive outcomes the EASS helped respondents achieve

|  | **Practical outcomes** | **Well-being outcomes** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Work** | Employer made adjustment to workplacePrevented dismissalPromotion or pay prospects improvedEmployer changed policy to prevent discriminationReceived compensationApplication for job treated in line with other candidatesRecruitment processes changed to be more inclusive | Reduced stress / improved well-beingBetter relationship with manager or colleaguesNo longer being harassed or victimisedReceived apology  |
| **Community and Education**  | Adequate provision of service maintained Granted admission / membership to a club or organisation which previously denied it Physically able to access a building or serviceInformation provided in an accessible format Changes in policy of company Received compensationAllocated suitable housingAllocated suitable parking space  | No longer being harassed or victimisedReduced stress / improved wellbeingReceived apology |

## How did the EASS help customers achieve positive outcomes?

The EASS helped respondents achieve positive outcomes by:

* helping them to understand their issue in relation to discrimination;
* helping them to articulate their issue in a way which ensured it was taken seriously (i.e. framing it in legal terms); and
* providing clear step-by-step action plans to follow.

More detail on each of these points is provided below.

### The EASS helps customers understand whether they have an issue relating to discrimination

The EASS helped indicate to survey respondents how their issue might be viewed in terms of existing legislation (i.e. whether they may be being discriminated against). This helped give them a steer on the potential next steps and gave them confidence to continue to pursue their issue.

I felt relieved after the first contact. I thought maybe it was my fault. You start to believe you’re the one being difficult. But once you get an outside opinion and someone tells you that it might be because of this, it makes you realise it’s not you and might be them.

(Disability, Work)

Furthermore, it helped confirm or validate previous advice they may have received and helped resolve contradictory information.

### The EASS helps customers articulate their issue in a way which ensures it is taken seriously (i.e. framing it in legal terms)

Respondents to the survey attributed positive outcomes (and getting organisations to listen) to their ability to set out their issue effectively. The EASS talked respondents through the substance of their issue at the outset and advised them how best to express the most relevant aspects.

The EASS provided respondents with simple legal language (e.g. the name of the most relevant legal Act) to help frame their issue and provided grievance and complaint letter templates for customers to use.

They gave me helpful information on the phone about what to say to my Housing Association that would make them take action. They advised me to contact my Housing Association Manager and quote some legal acts to do with Harassment and my right to live free of abuse. To remind them of their Duty of Care.

(Race, Community and education)

The EASS also acted as a filter for complex legal language, which helped respondents understand the context of their issue better and again made them better able to put forward their own case. For example, the EASS helped respondents understand legal documentation (e.g. specific clauses in employment contracts) or interpreted or simplified complex legislation or legal rights.[[7]](#footnote-7) In this respect, the EASS acted as an interpreter, by simplifying convoluted language and issues, as well as an enabler, by empowering respondents to use legal terms themselves.

### The EASS provides clear step-by-step action plans for customers to follow

The EASS provided respondents with a clear action plan and steps they could take to resolve their issue.

They suggested a three step process for me to follow. Firstly, to have a meeting with the manager and if not resolved following this call a meeting with the director of the company. If it was still not resolved to my satisfaction after this, they suggested drafting and sending the company a grievance letter, which they provided the template for.

(Other, Work)

A critical first step was that the EASS helped survey respondents to focus on what they wanted to achieve by taking action on their issue. This made it easier to identify the pathway towards resolution.

In the following example, the EASS advisor helped one customer reach clarity over what their objectives were for raising their complaint in the workplace and what they eventually wanted to achieve. Once this was established, the advisor outlined the steps required to help them reach their end goal.

The advisor asked me “What do you want to achieve here? Do you want to negotiate a pay-out or do you want to go back to a similar role?” There was all of this whirling around in my head. He just encouraged me to take it one step at a time. [The customer eventually decided that] Actually, I don’t want to go back there. I don’t want to work with people who are so unprofessional.

I felt a lot more confident and a lot more clear. In my head it was like a flow diagram: it was like, “Do you want to negotiate a pay-out? Yes? Okay, you go down this path, and if you don’t then you go down this path.” It was a bit of a light bulb moment really. It just clarified everything.

(Other, Work)

The EASS made it clear to survey respondents that they should re-contact them if their issue did not progress to their satisfaction. In addition, the EASS often asked respondents to notify them of the outcome of their issue. This helped respondents feel supported and gave them persistence to take matters forward.

Anita’s example (case study 1) demonstrates how the EASS supports customers in achieving positive outcomes by helping them understand when they are being mistreated and providing action plans and the language and tools to empower them to pursue a resolution.

***Case study 1: Using action plans and tools to support customers in achieving positive outcomes***

Anita[[8]](#footnote-8) had been working for her employer for 5 years when they **changed the terms of her contract**, by scheduling her in for shifts that were difficult to balance with her caring responsibilities. This put her under a lot of pressure, which eventually took its toll and **she became stressed and unwell**.

She had made **several attempts to rectify the situation** **with her employer** but she kept getting ignored. They repeatedly said they would look to change the situation but the circumstances continued and her employer carried on giving her inappropriate shifts. In trying to resolve the issue, after 6 months, she went to her **Union Representative** and a formal meeting was arranged with her employer. Her employer suggested a new shift pattern that was still inappropriate to her needs and they were unable to agree an alternative. Communication therefore broke down. At this point she felt very isolated, alone and that no one was able to help with her issue. After 18 months she decided to go to the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (**ACAS)** who **referred her on to the EASS**.

The EASS **took the time to unpick all of the intricacies of the case** and advised that she was subject to discrimination due to her caring responsibilities. They advised Anita to **go through a step-by-step process** in order to resolve the issue with her employer. This comprised going through the appropriate grievance procedure at her workplace (using **letter templates provided by the EASS**), putting in a request for flexible working, re-contacting ACAS and asking them to arrange a mediator. **The EASS ensured that Anita kept them updated with her issue**, asking them to contact them following each step of the process to track progress.

“I felt clear about what I needed to do. They guide you through the process. The lady I spoke to was really helpful, talked through all the steps and made it easy to understand. She was really supportive and keen to find out what the outcome of the situation would be.”

*In addition to providing the necessary steps towards resolution,* ***the EASS also explained the legal language within Anita’s contract****. They explained that Anita’s employer was in breach of her contract. The EASS simplified complex contract clauses,* ***enabling her to understand her position better and speak with confidence*** *about her legal rights when negotiating with her employer.*

 “Some of the contract, you don’t understand yourself. You don’t really look at in depth. Especially if you don’t have any understanding of clauses. They can have different meanings to what you think. The EASS were useful and knowledgeable and I would recommend them if someone was in doubt.”

*Anita was unable to reach a satisfactory resolution with her employer and so a mediator was sought. Although her employer attempted to make adaptations it was clear that they could no longer accommodate her needs and so a severance package was negotiated. This was a positive outcome for Anita and she believed that this would not have been possible without the guidance she received from the EASS.*

“I think it would have been a lot different [if I hadn’t contacted EASS]. I wouldn’t have understood the law and my rights so I might not have gotten the same outcome. They helped me achieve the best I could possibly achieve at that point from my employers. If not, I probably would have gone back into the job and been really unhappy.”

*(Disability, Work)*

## Preventing the need to seek paid-for legal advice

Almost one in five (18%) survey respondents sought paid-for legal advice. However, **two in five (39%) respondents reported that the EASS prevented them from needing to seek paid-for legal advice.**

The EASS made a difference to these respondents (whether they ended up with a positive outcome or not) by making their efforts to resolve their issue more cost-effective. The EASS prevented the need for paid-for legal advice by:

* empowering respondents to negotiate with organisations to reach out of court settlements or other acceptable informal resolutions; and
* helping respondents to understand the Equality Act 2010 and their issue in relation to it (which helped respondents realise that their issue was not worth pursuing).

Janet’s case (case study 2) illustrates how the EASS supports customers to take on issues themselves without the need for legal advice or representation by guiding them towards and explaining clearly relevant legislation.

***Case study 2: Empowering customers with information on relevant legislation***

*Janet* ***contacted the EASS on behalf of her son*** *who was experiencing issues at university. Her son was epileptic and dyslexic and she felt* ***he was not being appropriately supported which was causing him to fall behind on his course****. Janet also suspected that the fact he was mixed-race was contributing to his issue being ignored. Janet visited the university to talk to his tutors who were initially very unreceptive. She came away feeling very dissatisfied with the outcomes of the meeting and wanted to take the issue further on a legal level.*

*Janet reached the EASS because she was looking for information on her son’s entitlements and how the university should be properly supporting him.* ***She felt that their voices were “not getting heard” and on their own were not making any progress to resolve the issue through his tutors or Student Support****. As such, she searched the internet for advice relating to equality issues and found the EASS.*

*After discussing the issue, the EASS* ***provided Janet with legal information such as specific clauses outlining the university’s responsibilities regarding her son’s welfare. They provided a letter template*** *and recommend that she wrote to the Dean, highlighting why she felt her son was being discriminated against. They also advised her to write to the National Epilepsy Association and they sent her an* ***information pack detailing the legal obligations educational institutions*** *need to undertake to ensure proper support for people with epilepsy.*

“The EASS contact made me feel more confident to address these issues with the university staff. They gave us excellent information and the support they gave was good. They actively encouraged us to phone them back to let them know what happened next.”

***Janet received a speedy response to the letter and the Dean*** *arranged another meeting. Janet took the information pack from the National Epilepsy Association with her and they agreed with her position that her son was not receiving the appropriate level of support. By this stage however, he has missed a substantial amount of his course and had failed a couple of exams. The university suggested that Janet’s son take a year off and go back into the same year. They assured him that in the year he was absent that they would ensure that the required level of support would be in place when he returned.*

“We would have gone down the legal route if we had not had the advice from EASS as to how to go about raising the issues we were concerned about. All I wanted was advice as to how to get my son the right support he needed to fulfil his potential.”

*(Race, Community and education)*

## Empowering customers by increasing confidence and knowledge

**After contacting the EASS, 65% of survey respondents reported that they felt more confident dealing with similar issues they might encounter in the future.** Confidence can be important in achieving a positive outcome as it **gives customers the persistence to carry on pursuing their goals and reach a resolution on their issue.** The EASS helped vindicate respondents’ perspective and show them that they are in a position to challenge the treatment they have faced.

The EASS made me realise I did have a point and I was correct in what I believed my rights to be and what I was expecting wasn’t silly and ridiculous and not asking for the earth.

(Disability, Community and education)

Personally I was quite surprised at the good level of help I received. They took on a motherly role, gave me advice and assured me that I wasn’t doing the wrong thing by pursuing the issue.

(Other, Work)

By contrast, without the EASS’s support, some customers would be likely to ‘give up and go on’ under unsatisfactory circumstances.

**After contacting the EASS, 73% of survey respondents felt more knowledgeable about their rights in the area of their issue and 51% felt the EASS helped them access justice which they otherwise wouldn’t have been able to.**

Even where no positive outcome was achieved, the EASS was often still valued if the respondent felt they had become more knowledgeable as a result of contacting it, for example if they had learnt lessons for the future. This included respondents whose enquiry was out of remit or there were only limited options available in terms of actions to take, but this had been explained clearly and sympathetically.

They couldn’t do anything more than point me where they pointed me. Providing they focus their work on resolving what people want…in other issues, they could take you a long way.

(Race, Community and education)

A positive outcome is that I would know who to go to next time or before I commit to something I would find out more thoroughly or have it in writing that I could get to the place.

(Disability, Community and education)

**Confidence and knowledge can also have a multiplier effect**. In a number of cases survey respondents stated that they would be more likely to recognise discrimination in other situations or understand their rights better in future. This means that **further discrimination encountered by them or by friends or family may be more likely to be acted upon** and dealt effectively with which could potentially save time, stress and money.Contact with the EASS could also be part of the ‘healing’ process by which respondents came to terms with the (sometimes very distressing) equality or discrimination issue they faced. It helped respondents feel listened to and often helped them achieve ‘closure’ by helping them to resolve their issue. Some respondents reported that this **made a difference to their emotional wellbeing and mental health.**

It was helpful to have someone at the end of a telephone who could give advice- they were a bit like the ‘Information Samaritans’. When I was desperate, they were professional and supportive.

(Disability, Work)

After the first call, the big thing was it was a big relief I was happy to share with someone ... someone who cares about it and this was a big point and I didn’t feel so alone and having no idea what to do or what the situation is ... the service is good and I can trust them.

(Race, Work)

Sarah’s experience (case study 3) demonstrates how the EASS supports customers facing distressing situations who are struggling to get their issues acknowledged and dealt with towards reaching quicker resolutions.

***Case study 3: Promoting emotional wellbeing and helping customers to be heard***

*Sarah had been experiencing* ***issues with troublesome neighbours for around 5 years****. Every evening they experienced disturbances which agitated her son who has autism. The noise visibly distressed him and also kept her other small children awake at night. She tried to talk to the families involved and received verbal abuse in return. In addition, teenagers began throwing objects at her house and the neighbours shouted racial abuse at her family and became physically intimidating.* ***She felt as though they were attempting to drive her family out of their home.*** *Sarah called the police on numerous occasions but she felt they didn’t take the issue seriously and no action was taken by them. In addition, she contacted her Housing Association to no effect.*

“I was at the end of my tether because nobody would take the problem seriously and you feel like you are going mad. We felt very scared and very vulnerable. It also spilled over at the school – many of the neighbours are teaching assistants and I felt there was some passive aggression towards my family from the school.”

***Sarah was feeling helpless, frightened and isolated.*** *From an internet search, she found the EASS. The advisor she spoke to was empathetic and supportive and* ***she finally felt that someone was listening to her and wanted to help her find a resolution.*** *The EASS recommended that she re-contact her Housing Association and* ***provided her with appropriate language to use to ensure they took******notice****. Her Housing Association responded quickly and her neighbours were threatened with eviction if the harassment continued. The disturbances and harassment stopped.*

*Sarah had felt let down by other state agencies and felt that the EASS supported her when she was at her most desperate.* ***Without the EASS explaining to her how to communicate with the authorities more effectively, she believed she would have been continued to be ignored.***

“That made a big difference – without that information, I would have continued to be ignored by my Housing Officer. It meant they had to take it on… I had thought that I was going crazy so it was wonderful to have someone to listen to me and agree that I should not have to live like this. I was lucky because the person I spoke to was very warm and the fact that he was so empathetic was very healing. I had felt helpless, very frightened & isolated. Then I felt at last someone was there for me.”

*(Race, Community and education)*

## Signposting customers to appropriate organisations

Overall, almost half (49%) of survey respondents were signposted to another organisation by the EASS. Of these, 40% (or 20% of all respondents) went on to contact the organisation they were referred to.

**The EASS played a critical role in signposting for 15% of respondents**. In these cases, the respondent would have been unlikely to contact the organisation they did had the EASS not signposted it to them. The EASS customer base experience extremely **diverse issues** and the EASS helps customers **navigate what can be a complex network of organisation**s to approach for advice. In this way, the EASS could make a difference to customers even where their enquiry is not within its remit by helping them get their issue resolved by another organisation.

The value respondents placed on this is shown by the fact that they sometimes reported that the EASS played a critical role in getting their issue resolved even when a lot of the action was taken (or advice provided) by another organisation they were signposted to. The EASS acted as an important link in the chain for these respondents who were grateful to find an organisation who could begin to help them, even if this was through signposting elsewhere. As well as saving time and effort, effective signposting could reduce time and resource pressure on other organisations within the advisory network. Customers are channelled directly towards relevant organisations, lessening the likelihood of them contacting organisations that were unable to help with their issue.

Margaret’s experience (case study 4) shows how the EASS guides customers towards organisations able to assist with their issue that they may not have found otherwise.

***Case study 4: Effective signposting towards relevant organisations***

*Margaret was trying to get custody of her grandchildren who had been taken into care by Social Services and was in need of legal representation. She anticipated that she would be eligible for Legal Aid but during a free consultation session with her granddaughter’s solicitor, she was informed that she would not be.* ***She was doubtful about this and wanted to confirm this information****, check her eligibility and find out which solicitors dealt with custody cases. Margaret found the EASS through an internet search.*

*The EASS advised her to contact Civil Legal Advice. On explaining her issue, the CLA adviser told her they would speak to their solicitors and, if the respondent qualified for support, they would be in contact. Within a week a solicitor contacted Margaret as her representative in the custody application. Margaret had not heard of the CLA previously and so believed contact with the EASS was essential in enabling her to apply for custody. They were instrumental in guiding her through the right channels that ultimately led to her getting legal support.*

“They were really, really helpful on the phone…I did get what I wanted from them. After I’d spoken to them and been given the numbers I felt relieved because I’d got somewhere…because before that I was just going round in circles. I really didn’t know what to do or where to turn.”

*Margaret did not win custody of her grandchildren but although her issue was not resolved in the way that she wanted,* ***she feels that the EASS were as helpful as possible.******Their service also allowed her to obtain the information more quickly than she otherwise would have done:***

“It was the best information that I had. I think if I hadn’t got in touch with them, I wouldn’t have got where I did. It probably would have taken me a lot longer to get the information that I wanted.”

*(Disability, Community and education)*

## Difference by issue type

**The EASS made more of a difference for survey respondents with issues relating to disability and work-related issues than respondents with issues relating to race and community and education.**

Respondents with an **issue related to disability** were particularly likely to report:

* having a positive outcome which they attributed to the EASS;
* the EASS helping them avoid the need to seek paid-for legal advice;
* the EASS making them more confident, knowledgeable and able to access justice they otherwise wouldn’t have been able to;
* the EASS playing a useful role in signposting; and
* having a positive outcome which they did not feel would have happened if the EASS had not been available (a topic which is discussed more fully in chapter 4 of this report).

These differences[[9]](#footnote-9) are outlined in Table 5.

Table 5: The difference the EASS made by issue type: Protected characteristic

|  | **Total** | **Disability** | **Race** | **Other[[10]](#footnote-10)** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Having a positive outcome attributable to the EASS | **23%** | 27% | 13% | 20% |
| Avoiding the need to seek paid-for legal advice | **39%** | 44% | 25% | 37% |
| Made more confident about dealing with similar issues in the future  | **65%** | 72% | 44% | 60% |
| Helped access justice which would have otherwise been unable to  | **51%** | 57% | 35% | 48% |
| Made more knowledgeable about rights in this area | **73%** | 79% | 56% | 67% |
| Played a useful role in signposting | **15%** | 19% | 11% | 14% |
| Having a positive outcome they do not feel would have happened if the EASS had not been available | **18%** | 22% | 12% | 13% |

Respondents with an **issue related to work** were more likely than those with an issue related to community and education to report:

* having a positive outcome which they attributed to the EASS;
* the EASS making them more confident, knowledgeable and able to access justice they otherwise wouldn’t have been able to; and
* the EASS playing a useful role in signposting.

These differences[[11]](#footnote-11) are outlined in Table 6.

Table 6: The difference the EASS made by issue type: work versus community and education issues

|  | **Total** | **Work-related issues** | **Community and education issues** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Having a positive outcome attributable to the EASS | 23% | 26% | 20% |
| Made more confident about dealing with similar issues in the future  | 65% | 71% | 60% |
| Helped access justice which would have otherwise been unable to  | 51% | 55% | 46% |
| Made more knowledgeable about rights in this area | 73% | 80% | 66% |
| Played a useful role in signposting | 15% | 19% | 11% |

**The reasons for the variation in respondents’ experience with the EASS across the different groups were unclear. However, it may be that issues relating to disability and work are less subjective and open to interpretation. The Equality Act 2010 details specific provisions relating to these issues and this provides a clearer focus and statutory responsibilities to guide resolution of these issues.** For example, customers with a disability-related issue may find it easier to prove they are being discriminated against by providing tangible examples of the ways in which employers or services are not adhering to Equality Act provisions. On the other hand, those with a race-related issue may find it more difficult to collate evidence of their discrimination, making it more difficult for the EASS to stipulate what action should be taken to move towards a positive outcome, leaving the customer disappointed.

In addition, positive outcomes may be more easily achieved for workplace issues because **employees have direct access to their employers who are likely to see a business benefit in getting the issue resolved informally**. The EASS can advise on how to resolve an issue with an employer using informal remedies, provided the relationship between employee and employer has not irretrievably broken down. The EASS can guide a client to template letters which can assist them in framing their issue and how they see the issue being resolved. This is non-confrontational with the emphasis and focus being on continuing to work for the employer wherever possible.

Issues relating to community and education typically require a greater level of support and assistance. Customers with these issues may have to deal with complaints departments rather than known individuals.

The in-depth interviews also suggested that **customers can feel more empowered to deal with work issues**: prepared to pursue them and mentally equipped for defending their rights (whilst with community and education issues, particularly where children are involved, customers may feel more vulnerable and in need of greater support, both emotional and practical).

# What is the impact of the model of the EASS within the broader advisory landscape?

**The EASS offers a unique service to the general public and plays an essential role in the advice and guidance network as it specialises in a wide variety of issues relating to discrimination and equality.**

**Almost one in five (18%) survey respondents reported a positive outcome to their issue which they felt would not have happened if the EASS had not been available[[12]](#footnote-12).**

This figure is slightly lower than the proportion of all respondents with a positive outcome who felt that the EASS played some part in it (23%), as some of those respondents (5%) felt that they would have arrived at the same outcome by another route if the EASS had not been available.

Those who felt that the EASS was uniquely well placed to help them included:

* respondents who only contacted the EASS and who did not know where else to turn; and
* respondents who felt the EASS offered a service which other organisations did not (either in terms of its unique remit or added value it brings).

**There would be a significant impact on customers and other advice organisations, in terms of the number of enquiries received, if the EASS was no longer available.**

Over two fifths (43%) of respondents reported that they would have approached another organisation or peers for advice if the EASS was not available. This was higher amongst those respondents with a work-related issue (50%) than amongst those with a community or education one (35%).

As Figure 4 shows, the most commonly cited organisation by these customers was Citizens Advice, followed by Trade Unions and various charities, and then by ACAS.

Figure 4: Organisations and people that respondents would have approached for advice had the EASS not been available

In addition, stakeholders included in the research believed that without the EASS, it was likely that **some customers would ‘fall through the cracks’** **and find it harder to get their issue resolved.**

These stakeholders felt that the EASS could deal with high volumes of calls, which **other advice organisations don’t have the capacity** to take on. This could mean that customers’ issues would take longer to resolve without the EASS and/or that a greater proportion of cases would remain unresolved altogether (where a customer fails to get a timely intervention confirming actions they could take to resolve their issue; this could lead to them giving up pushing to reach a resolution).

Stakeholders believed that the EASS was unique in that it is a non-means tested, universal readily available, free service specialising in a wide variety of issues relating to discrimination and equality and there is no other national service with the same proposition or remit. **Stakeholder organisations reported that they would be unlikely to be able to change their remit significantly to fill the gap left by the EASS if it were no longer available.**

If the EASS was no longer available, this would potentially mean:

* an increase in time and resource pressures on organisations already in the broader advisory landscape (as they would have to spend more time explaining to callers that they cannot help with their issue and would have difficulties knowing where to signpost these customers to instead); and
* fewer people understanding what steps they need to take to resolve their issue. This could lead to customers spending more time and money trying to resolve their issue, having to continue with an unsatisfactory situation (e.g. experiencing discrimination) for longer (with a resulting increase in stress) or being forced to resolve their situation in an unsatisfactory manner (e.g. choosing to leave a job in which they have been discriminated against, with no compensation).

Laura’s case study (case study 5) demonstrates that without contact with the EASS, customers may not achieve the same positive outcomes and may find it difficult to know where to turn to get similar information.

***Case study 5: Example of the gap which would be left in the equality and discrimination
advisory landscape if the EASS was no longer available***

*Laura suffers from hypokalemic paralysis[[13]](#footnote-13). She had signed up for a course with a training provider and during the initial conversations with them, explained she couldn't walk far and would need to use the car park when attending the course. This was initially agreed to but when the course began they wouldn't allow her to.*

“I paid all this money for a course I couldn't access.... I came home one day and she had left a message on the answerphone saying we have other people in these offices who have medical conditions and they need to park in the car park.”

*Laura felt as though she was being discriminated against but wasn’t certain about her entitlements or rights. She felt that the information on government websites was not clear enough to clarify what “reasonable adjustments” should have been made by the training provider to accommodate her needs or guide her on which actions she could take to raise it as an issue with the organisation.*

“There wasn’t any particular guidance on what to do if the place you are going to doesn’t provide these things. It didn’t help me. I wanted some information about what you can do if you feel you are not receiving the help you need.”

*At this stage, Laura was feeling lost and didn’t know how to take her issue further or which organisations to approach for help. She visited the Citizen Advice Bureau’s website and found the EASS’s number on there. The EASS were supportive with her issue and advised that the organisation was acting unreasonably. They advised that she go back the organisation, guided her with the language to use when approaching them and told her to say she had been in touch with the EASS about her treatment. In addition, they gave her a template form to use should she want to escalate the issue. She re-contacted the training provider, explained her position and negotiated a full refund of the course fees and received a letter of apology. The EASS’s confirmation of where her issue stood in relation to the Equality Act 2010 gave her determination to drive forward the issue. Without their advice, she believes she wouldn’t have had the confidence to contact the training provider and believes the end result would have been much less positive.*

“It seemed like they really wanted to help which was nice. The advice was to contact the training provider again and to say that they needed to make adjustments but they hadn’t. I felt good, I realised that wasn’t imagining there was an issue this and I am within my rights – it gave me confidence not let it drop. I probably wouldn’t have contacted them again without EASS’s advice. I would have either tried to get to the course some other way or would have cancelled it but not attempted again to ask them about parking – not tried so hard and given up earlier ... definitely it would have been much less positive – I wouldn’t have been sure if I was right or not and questioned whether I was just making a fuss”

*(Disability, Community and education)*

# How could the EASS make even more of a difference to customers?

## The EASS could make even more of a difference to customers in some circumstances

**Approximately one in five (22%) respondents experienced a negative outcome[[14]](#footnote-14) to their issue and felt the EASS could have done more to help.** Fourteen per cent felt that the EASS could have done a lot more to help and a further seven per cent felt the EASS could have done a little more to help.

Furthermore, the findings suggest that for just over a fifth (21%) of respondents, contact with the EASS made no difference for them or to their issue in that they felt it:

* had not given them a positive outcome with their issue which they attributed *at least in part* to the EASS;
* had not prevented them from needing to seek paid-for legal advice;
* had not made them more confident dealing with similar issues they might encounter in the future;
* had not made them knowledgeable about their rights in the area of their issue; or
* had not helped them access justice which they otherwise wouldn’t have been able to.

This group were more likely to be Journey 3 (24%) customers in comparison to Journey 4 (16%). They were also over twice as likely to have had a race related issue (39%) than they were a disability related one (15%) and issues were more likely to be about community and education (27%) than work (17%). Specifically, just over a third (34%) were experiencing issues related to government or local government and 28% about a service provided by a private company or establishment.

Demographically, they were older (25% aged 44+ compared to 18% 18-44 year olds) and more likely to be male (28% male, 16% female) and belonging to a BAME ethnic group (28% BAME, 19% white).

In addition, 15% of respondents experienced a positive outcome but did not attribute this to the contact they had with EASS.

## Customer expectations and the remit of the EASS

This feeling that the EASS could have done more to help appeared to often be the **result of customer expectations, or hopes not matching the remit of the EASS.**

Figure 5 shows what respondents hoped the EASS would do to help them resolve their issue and compares this to the action actually taken[[15]](#footnote-15).

**Figure 5: Respondents’ expectations of the EASS versus actions of the EASS**



Many respondents did not have clear expectations of the service, as shown by the variety of actions they hoped the EASS would take to help resolve their issue.

Respondents reported contacting the EASS hoping it would take on their issue and solve it for them (for example by contacting the organisation they were having issues with). Whereas the remit of the EASS is to only contact an organisation on a client’s behalf if the client has exhausted all other possible steps to get the issue resolved.

Significant minorities of respondents were hoping that the EASS would take action on their behalf: either by contacting the organisation they were having issues with (40%) or by taking legal action on their behalf (34%). However, the majority of these customers did not have their expectations met – for example, only 6% of respondents reported that the EASS did contact the organisation they were having issues with on their behalf. The expectation of the EASS taking legal action on behalf of customers demonstrates that there was some confusion over the service’s remit[[16]](#footnote-16).

Stakeholder organisations felt that this misalignment of expectations with the EASS’s remit was likely to be partly because predecessors to the EASS had more of an advocacy / case work remit. This feeling was echoed by some respondents:

*That was my perception, probably from what I experienced from the old set-up, the old regime under the old name when they were under the Commission for Racial Equality[[17]](#footnote-17). There was a natural thought that [the EASS] would be within the same remit.*

(Race, Non-Work)

Some survey respondents felt that the **website could be clearer in setting out the remit of the EASS** in terms of the types of enquiries it was able to help with and, particularly, the ways in which it was able to help (including where the customer must take the lead rather than the EASS). This indicates that the respondents did not get a sense of this from the website, which does not mean that this information is not there but rather that it is not sufficiently prominent. Arguably, to really raise awareness among customers, this information needs to be hard to avoid rather than just easy to find for those specifically looking for it.

**When the EASS did explain its remit clearly from the outset, respondents felt more prepared as to what to expect and what to do next.** Even when the remit was not quite as respondents hoped, this did not necessarily result in disappointment, provided that the EASS could provide some help with the resolution of the issue, whether this was by providing further information, an action plan, or signposting or referring to other organisations.

## Low awareness of the EASS among the general public and effect this can have

**Low awareness of the EASS also limits how much of a difference it can make to the general public.** The in-depth interviews with previous customers suggested that they typically arrived at the EASS through signposting or an internet search, and typically had limited awareness of the EASS, or none at all, prior to getting in touch with the organisation:

*I didn’t really know [what to look for]. I just know Citizens Advice give you advice on things like that because I went to them years ago about a contract and they had been quite helpful then so I thought – it was the only place I knew. I just looked for Citizens Advice [on the internet] and thought I would try that [EASS] number.*

(Disability, Non-Work)

Stakeholders also reported that few of those they signposted to the EASS seemed to be aware of the organisation in advance.

This low awareness of the EASS among potential customers means they can take a long time to find the EASS and can go through several organisations before reaching it (there were reports of 20+ organisations contacted, and several days of searching for someone who would help). As a result, some customers’ issues could remain unresolved for longer than they should, which could lead to an increase in stress levels, or could sometimes mean that customers ended up exceeding the time limits to bring a legal complaint forward. This has potential cost implications for society.

**Survey respondents and stakeholders believed that higher awareness of the EASS among potential customers would mean a shorter journey to resolution, lessening the amount of time they are in stressful situations.**

*I think I was just reaching out to as many avenues as possible. I hoped that I would be lucky but had no real expectations. Talking to EASS may not have made a lot of difference to where I am now but the ride may have been more bumpy [without them]. They probably confirmed a couple of things and therefore shortened the time I might have spent running around like a headless chicken.*

*They [the EASS] need to make people more aware of them as an organisation. Unless you know they are out there, people won’t find them. They need more promotion – more leaflets and advertising space on the radio etc.*

(Disability, Work)

In addition, stakeholders felt that improving the knowledge of the EASS’s remit among wider advice organisations could encourage them to signpost or to refer customers to the EASS more often (again meaning that customers would be more likely to end up ‘in the right place’ for their enquiry to be dealt with more quickly).

**Stakeholders felt that the referral process could work better, using call transfers rather than signposting[[18]](#footnote-18).** Again, this would shorten the journey for customers looking to get their issue resolved: reducing the length of time they are in stressful situations. However, there are resource implications for using call transfers which need to be taken into consideration.

An alternative, potentially less costly approach, was mentioned by one stakeholder; their organisation now **sends customers e-mails containing contact details for the EASS, including a link to their website,** and have found this to be effective at increasing their referral rates:

*Where we can signpost people on, we have a service that we can do on our system that we e-mail them a link to the relevant website so that they’ve got a record of the contact details. [Previously] we’d give them [customers] the telephone number [only] and they might jot it down on a piece of paper somewhere and they’d lose it.*

*The number of referrals [from stakeholder organisation to EASS] improved when we introduced this e-mail service… they increased significantly.*

(Stakeholder)

This approach (or something similar) may be appropriate for the EASS to consider in future when signposting customers to other organisations.

## Providing written confirmation of possible next steps

**Providing step-by-step action plans was a key way in which the EASS made a difference for respondents but the provision of these plans could be even more widespread**. Some of those who did not receive a plan mentioned that they **would have liked a written record of what they had discussed with an advisor**: regardless of whether they were continuing their journey with the EASS, or being signposted or referred to another organisation. Such written records would be particularly valued by customers who have difficulties with their memory as the sequence of actions to take, and the detail surrounding these, can be quite complex.

*[An improvement would be] only to make it clearer what can be done if you don’t get the outcome you would like. What do you do next if you have tried everything. I think they did say something about filling in this form if you wanted to report it but I can’t remember who that was reporting to or if that was for legal purposes.*

(Disability, Non-Work)

*I personally would’ve liked if they had sent me an e-mail of steps I could have followed, just so I had a reference. I have dyslexia so I forget everything quite badly and to have a reference that I could go back to. It probably would have helped a lot more rather than having to write everything down and try to remember it all.*

(Pregnancy and Maternity, Work)

# Conclusions

The research found that the EASS is a valuable service which makes a positive difference to customers in multiple ways. Evidence suggests that a gap would be left in the advisory and guidance landscape if the EASS was no longer available whereby the public would find it difficult to get advice specifically relating to equality and discrimination issues.

The EASS plays a particularly important role for customers in:

* confirming whether they have an issue relating to discrimination;
* helping them to articulate their issue in a way which ensures it is taken seriously (i.e. ‘framing’ it with reference to the appropriate laws);
* providing step by step actions to take, which could include signposting to stakeholder organisations; and
* giving customers’ confidence to take action.

Customers with issues relating to disability and to work are particularly likely to feel that the EASS has made a difference for them.

Nevertheless, a substantial proportion of respondents felt that they had a negative outcome to their issue and the EASS could have done more to help. The service could potentially have had a greater impact if there was higher awareness of the service and a clearer understanding of its remit (which could be facilitated by reviewing the design of EASS’s website and through partnership work with stakeholders). This would mean customers would be more likely to turn to the EASS as a first port of call (where relevant), thereby shortening their overall journey to resolve their issue. This quicker resolution would reduce the amount of time customers have to manage stressful situations. Raising awareness of the remit of the EASS would also mean that there would be fewer cases of customers dissatisfied with the service provided by the EASS due to expectations being misaligned with what the service can do.

# Appendix A – customer questionnaire

EASS Customer Outcomes

Screener

ASK PERSON WHO ANSWERS PHONE

**S1 Good morning / afternoon / evening. My name is and I'm calling from IFF Research. Please can I speak to ?**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Respondent answers phone | 1 | CONTINUE |
| Transferred to respondent | 2 |
| Hard appointment | 3 | MAKE APPOINTMENT |
| Soft Appointment | 4 |
| Refusal | 5 | CLOSE |
| Not available in deadline | 6 |
| Engaged | 7 |
| Fax Line | 8 |
| No reply / Answer phone | 9 |
| Business Number | 10 |
| Dead line | 11 |

ASK ALL

S2 Good morning / afternoon, my name is NAME, calling from IFF Research, to ask you about your experience of using the Equality Advisory and Support Service (the EASS), which you contacted in [MONTH AND YEAR OF FIRST CONTACT] and how helpful you found it. You kindly agreed when you were called last month by the service that we could contact you to ask about taking part in this survey which should take around 10 minutes. Would you be happy to continue now?

 ADD IF NECESSARY: The research will allow the Government Equalities Office, which is responsible for the EASS, to make sure they are providing a service which makes a real difference to people.

 IF FEEL LONG TIME AGO: We would still really like to speak to you even though your contact with the EASS was some time ago. This is because we are interested in what has happened since your contact with the EASS and what difference it made to resolving your issue over the longer term.

 IF FEEL ALREADY TAKEN PART: The EASS itself conducts a customer satisfaction survey which you may have taken part in, but this is something different – we are interested in what has happened since your contact with the EASS and what difference it made to resolving your issue over the longer term.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Continue | 1 | CONTINUE |
| Hard appointment | 2 | MAKE APPOINTMENT |
| Soft appointment | 3 |
| Refusal | 4 | THANK AND CLOSE |
| Not available in deadline | 5 |

S3 This call may be recorded for quality and training purposes only.

| REASSURANCES TO USE IF NECESSARYThe interview will take around 10 – 15 minutes to complete.The EASS has a website and helpline which advises and assists individuals on issues relating to equality and human rights.IFF Research is an independent market research company. Please note that all data will be reported in aggregate form and your answers will not be reported to our client in any way that would allow you to be identified.If respondent wishes to confirm validity of survey or get more information about aims and objectives, they can call: MRS: Market Research Society on 0500396999 IFF: XXXXX |
| --- |

1. Establishing reason for contact

Ask all

* 1. Our records show that you contacted the EASS in [MONTH AND YEAR OF FIRST CONTACT]. Is this correct?

*PROMPT TO PRECODES*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Yes | 1 | CONTINUE |
| Can’t remember date / feel the date was different but can remember contacting the service | 2 | CONTINUE |
| Can remember contacting EASS but different date  | 3 | A1a |
| Can’t remember contacting the service at all |  4 | THANK AND CLOSE |

Ask IF A1=3

* + 1. In which month and year did you contact EASS?

| WRITE IN MONTHWRITE IN YEAR |
| --- |
| Don't know | 1 |  |
| Refused | 2 |  |

ASK ALL

* 1. Could you provide a brief summary of the issue you contacted the EASS about in [MONTH AND YEAR OF FIRST CONTACT]?

| WRITE IN |
| --- |
| Don't know | 1 |  |
| Refused | 2 |  |

Ask all

* 1. And to summarise, was it an issue you were having..?

read out. multicode

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| At work | 1 |  |
| At school, college or university | 2 |  |
| With a service provided by government or local government  | 3 |  |
| Accessing premises, including parking issues | 4 |  |
| Gaining membership of a club or association | 5 |  |
| Something else (specify) | 6 |  |
| DO NOT READ OUT: None of the above | 7 |  |
| DO NOT READ OUT: Don’t know  | 8 |  |

ask all

* 1. And which characteristics did your equality issue relate to?

PROMPT IF NECESSARY. multicode possible

| Age | 1 |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Gender  | 2 |  |
| Race | 3 |  |
| Disability | 4 |  |
| Marital status | 5 |  |
| Pregnancy or maternity rights  | 6 |  |
| Sexual orientation | 7 |  |
| Transgender rights  | 8 |  |
| None of these | 9 |  |
| Don’t know | 10 |  |
| Refused | 11 |  |

1. Route in to EASS
	1. THERE IS NO B1
	2. THERE IS NO B2
2. EASS involvement in resolving issue

ask all

* 1. What were you hoping the EASS would do to help you resolve your issue? Were you hoping they would…?

*READ OUT. MULTICODE. PROBE: ANYTHING ELSE?*

*DS: FOR C1 AND C2 ROTATE ORDER, BUT KEEP IN SAME ORDER BETWEEN QUESTIONS*

* 1. When you contacted EASS, what did they do to help you with your issue?

*READ OUT. MULTICODE*

|  | **C1** | **C2** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Tell you whether treatment you were experiencing was against the law | 1 | 1 |
| Give you an ‘action plan’ i.e. suggest actions which you could take and a timeframe for these actions  | 2 | 2 |
| Provide information relating to the issue | 3 | 3 |
| Tell you about another organisation or someone else who could help | 4 | 4 |
| Contact the organisation you were having issues with on your behalf | 5 | 5 |
| Take legal action on my behalf | 6 | 6 |
| Something else (specify) | 7 | 7 |
| None of these | 8 | 8 |
| Don’t know | 9 | 9 |

ask if signposted elsewhere (C2=4)

* 1. Who were you told could help?

do not read out. multicode possible

| ACAS | 1 |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Citizens Advice | 2 |  |
| Community Legal Advice | 3 |  |
| Disability Rights UK | 4 |  |
| Equality and Human Rights Commission | 5 |  |
| Job Centre (including advisor at the Job Centre) | 6 |  |
| Law Centres Network | 7 |  |
| Legal representative  | 8 |  |
| Local Council  | 9 |  |
| MIND | 10 |  |
| Royal Association for Deaf People | 11 |  |
| Trade Union | 12 |  |
| Voice Ability | 13 |  |
| Other (specify) | 14 |  |
| Don’t know | 15 |  |

DP: C4-7 WILL BE ON A LOOP FOR EACH MENTIONED AT C3

ask if signposted elsewhere (C2=4), show for each contacted at c3

* 1. Had you heard of [ORGANISATION SIGNPOSTED TO] before the EASS suggested they could help?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Yes | 1 |  |
| No | 2 |  |
| Don’t know | 3 |  |

ask if signposted elsewhere (C2=4), show for each contacted at c3

* 1. Did you contact [ORGANISATION SIGNPOSTED TO] about this issue?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Yes | 1 |  |
| No | 2 |  |
| Had already contacted them | 3 |  |
| Don’t know | 4 |  |

IF YES AT C4 AND AT C5

* 1. How likely would you have been to contact this organisation to help you with your issue anyway, even if it had not been suggested by the EASS?

*READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.*

| Very likely | 1 |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Quite likely | 2 |  |
| Not very likely | 3 |  |
| Not at all likely | 4 |  |
| Don’t know | 5 |  |

* 1. THERE IS NO C7

ask all

* 1. <IF SIGNPOSTED ELSEWHERE AND CONTACTED ORGANISATION (C2=4 AND C5=1): Other than organisations already discussed,> did you contact any other organisations or visit their websites to help resolve your issue?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Yes | 1 |  |
| No | 2 |  |
| Don’t know | 3 |  |

ask if CONTACTEd OTHER ORGANISATIONS or visited website (C8=1)

* 1. Which organisations were these?

do not read out. multicode possible

| ACAS | 1 |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Citizens Advice | 2 |  |
| Community Legal Advice | 3 |  |
| Disability Rights UK | 4 |  |
| Equality and Human Rights Commission | 5 |  |
| Job Centre (including advisor at the Job Centre) | 6 |  |
| Law Centres Network | 7 |  |
| Legal representative  | 8 |  |
| Local Council  | 9 |  |
| MIND | 10 |  |
| Royal Association for Deaf People | 11 |  |
| Trade Union | 12 |  |
| Voice Ability | 13 |  |
| Other (specify) | 14 |  |
| Don’t know | 15 |  |

ask all

* 1. Have you spoken to family, friends, colleagues or other peers for advice on how to resolve your issue? PROBE: Who?

DO NOT READ OUT. MULTICODE

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Friends | 1 |  |
| Family | 2 |  |
| Colleagues | 3 |  |
| Other peers (please specify) | 4 |  |
| No, none of these | 5 |  |
| Don’t know / Refused | 6 |  |

1. Establishing outcomes of contact with EASS
	1. THERE IS NO D1
	2. THERE IS NO D2

* 1. THERE IS NO D3

ASK ALL

* 1. What have been the outcomes so far regarding the issue you contacted EASS? PROBE: Anything else? PROBE: Please tell me about both positive and negative outcomes.

Prompt if necessary. Multicode

INTERVIEWER NOTE: WE ARE INTERESTED IN WHAT HAS HAPPENED AS A RESULT OF THEM TAKING ACTION ABOUT THEIR ISSUE.

PLEASE NOTE: There are 2 “Nothing / there have been no outcomes” codes 1) nothing changed but there is no further action I could take 2) nothing has changed so far but I am taking further action

if issue work related (a3=1)

| Positive |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Prevented dismissal | 1 |  |
| Promotion or pay prospects improved  | 2 |  |
| No longer being harassed / victimised | 3 |  |
| Better relationship with manager / colleagues | 4 |  |
| Reduced stress / improved wellbeing | 5 |  |
| Application for job treated in line with other candidates | 6 |  |
| Recruitment processes changed to be more inclusive | 7 |  |
| Employer made adjustment in the workplace | 8 |  |
| Employer changed policy to prevent discrimination | 9 |  |
| Negative |  |  |
| Dismissed from job | 10 |  |
| Felt had to leave job | 11 |  |
| Worse relationship with manager / colleagues | 12 |  |
| Increased stress / reduced well being | 13 |  |
| Nothing changed but no further action I could take (SINGLECODE) | 14 |  |
| **Both** |  |  |
| Nothing has changed so far but I am taking further action (SINGLECODE) | 15 |  |
| Other (specify) | 16 |  |
| Can’t remember / don’t know  | 17 |  |

if issue not work related (a3 not 1 – nb no-one should ever see both answer grids even if a3=1 multicode)

| Positive |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Physically able to access building or service  | 1 |  |
| Provided information in an accessible format | 2 |  |
| Granted admission or membership to school, organisation or club of choice | 3 |  |
| Adequate provision of service ensured (SPECIFY) | 4 |  |
| Prevented closure of a service, including removal of parking spaces | 5 |  |
| Allocated suitable housing | 6 |  |
| Allocated suitable parking space | 7 |  |
| Landlord made adjustment within a property | 8 |  |
| No longer being harassed / victimised | 9 |  |
| Reduced stress / improved wellbeing | 10 |  |
| Compensation granted  | 11 |  |
| Negative |  |  |
| Refused admission or membership to school, organisation or club of choice | 12 |  |
| Service closed down, including parking spaces removed | 13 |  |
| Application for suitable housing rejected | 14 |  |
| Had to relocate (housing)  | 15 |  |
| Application for suitable parking space rejected | 16 |  |
| Request for compensation denied | 17 |  |
| Increased stress / reduced wellbeing | 18 |  |
| Nothing changed but no further action I could take (SINGLECODE) | 19 |  |
| Both |  |  |
| Nothing has changed so far but I am taking further action (SINGLECODE) | 20 |  |
| Other (specify) | 21 |  |
| Can’t remember / Don’t know | 22 |  |

ASK IF CODED ANY POSITIVE OUTCOMES AT D4 (WORK RELATED=1-9 / NON WORK RELATED=1-11)

* + 1. I’m interested in to what extent you feel the service you received from EASS led to [FOR SINGULAR POSITIVE OUTCOME: this outcome / FOR MULTIPLE POSITIVE OUTCOMES: these outcomes]. [FOR MULTIPLE POSITIVE OUTCOMES: For each outcome I read out below] could you tell me whether the service you received from EASS played a large part, some part, or no part at all in this specific outcome.

*DP: ONLY SHOW THOSE CODED AT D4*

if issue work related (a3=1)

| Positive | Large part | Some part | No part at all | Don’t know |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Prevented dismissal | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Promotion or pay prospects improved  | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| No longer being harassed / victimised | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Better relationship with manager / colleagues | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| Reduced stress / improved wellbeing | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| Application for job treated in line with other candidates | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 |
| Recruitment processes changed to be more inclusive | 7 | 7 | 7 | 7 |
| Employer made adjustment in the workplace | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 |
| Employer changed policy to prevent discrimination | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 |

if issue not work related (a3 not 1 – nb no-one should ever see both answer grids even if a3=1 multicode)

| Positive | Large part | Some part | No part at all | Don’t know |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Physically able to access building or service  | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Provided information in an accessible format | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Granted admission or membership to school, organisation or club of choice | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Adequate provision of service ensured (SPECIFY) | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| Prevented closure of a service, including removal of parking spaces | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| Allocated suitable housing | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 |
| Allocated suitable parking space | 7 | 7 | 7 | 7 |
| Landlord made adjustment within a property | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 |
| No longer being harassed / victimised | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 |
| Reduced stress / improved wellbeing | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 |
| Compensation granted for an unfair charge | 11 | 11 | 11 | 11 |

ASK IF CODED ANY NEGATIVE OUTCOME AT D4 (WORK RELATED=10-14 OR NON WORK RELATED 12-19)

* + 1. I’m interested in whether you feel EASS could have done more to help avoid [NEGATIVE OUTCOMES AT D4]. Could you tell me whether you think EASS could have done a lot more to help you avoid this / these outcome(s), a little more, or whether there’s nothing else they could have done?

*PROMPT TO PRECODES*

| A lot more to help | 1 |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| A little more to help | 2 |  |
| There was nothing more they could have done to help | 3 |  |
| Don’t know | 4 |  |

* 1. THERE IS NO D5

ASK ALL

* 1. What outcomes, if any, do you / did you want to happen that have not happened?
	PROBE: Anything else?

Prompt if necessary. Multicode

*DP: SHOW ONLY THOSE CODES NOT CODED AT D4 UNLESS ONLY “OTHER” OR “CAN’T REMEMBER” NOT CODED AT D4*

if issue work related (a3=1)

| Prevented dismissal | 1 |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Promotion or pay prospects improved  | 2 |  |
| No longer being harassed / victimised | 3 |  |
| Better relationship with manager / colleagues | 4 |  |
| Reduced stress / improved wellbeing | 5 |  |
| Application for job treated in line with other candidates | 6 |  |
| Recruitment processes changed to be more inclusive | 7 |  |
| Employer made adjustment in the workplace | 8 |  |
| Employer changed policy to prevent discrimination | 9 |  |
| Other (specify) | 10 |  |
| Can’t remember / don’t know  | 11 |  |

if issue not work related (A3 not 1)

| Physically able to access building or service  | 1 |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Provided information in an accessible format | 2 |  |
| Granted admission or membership to school, organisation or club of choice | 3 |  |
| Adequate provision of service ensured (SPECIFY) | 4 |  |
| Prevented closure of a service, including removal of parking spaces | 5 |  |
| Allocated suitable housing | 6 |  |
| Allocated suitable parking space | 7 |  |
| Landlord made adjustment within a property | 8 |  |
| No longer being harassed / victimised | 9 |  |
| Reduced stress / improved wellbeing | 10 |  |
| Compensation granted for an unfair charge | 11 |  |
| Other (specify) | 12 |  |
| Can’t remember / Don’t know | 13 |  |

ASK ALL

* + 1. Are you planning on taking any further action on the issue you contacted EASS about in the future?

*PROMPT TO PRECODES*

| Yes – definitely  | 1 |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Yes – possibly  | 2 |  |
| No – my issue has reached a satisfactory conclusion  | 3 |  |
| No – my issue has not reach a satisfactory conclusion but there is no further action I am able to take | 4 |  |
| Don’t know | 5 |  |

* 1. THERE IS NO D7

ask if OTHERs iNVOLVED (ANY C5=1 OR C8=1 OR C10=1-4)

* 1. Thinking of all the organisations and people who have helped you with your issue to date, which has had the greatest impact on this / these outcomes?

SHOw only those options coded at c5=1, OR C9 OR C10

*DP: PLEASE BRING ACROSS TEXT FROM “OTHER” RESPONSES AT C3 (ONLY IF CONTACTED C5=1), C9 AND C10*

| ACAS | 1 |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Citizens Advice | 2 |  |
| Community Legal Advice | 3 |  |
| Disability Rights UK | 4 |  |
| EASS | 5 |  |
| Equality and Human Rights Commission | 6 |  |
| Job Centre (including advisor at the Job Centre) | 7 |  |
| Law Centres Network | 8 |  |
| Legal representative  | 9 |  |
| Local Council  | 10 |  |
| MIND | 11 |  |
| Royal Association for Deaf People | 12 |  |
| Trade Union | 13 |  |
| Voice Ability | 14 |  |
| Friends  | 15 |  |
| Family | 16 |  |
| Colleagues | 17 |  |
| All helped equally | 18 |  |
| Other (specify) | 19 |  |
| OTHER RESPONSE FROM C6 (IF CONTACTED, C5=1) | 20 |  |
| OTHER RESPONSE FROM C9 | 21 |  |
| OTHER RESPONSE FROM C10 | 22 |  |
| Don’t know |  |  |

ask ALL

* 1. Have you at any point since the issue arose, sought paid for legal advice for your issue to help you resolve it?

*PROMPT TO PRECODES*

| Yes | 1 |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| No – but intending to | 2 |  |
| No – not intending to | 3 |  |
| Don’t know / refused | 4 |  |

ASK HAVE NOT SOUGHT LEGAL ADVICE (d9=2-3)

* 1. Did the advice you received from EASS help you avoid having to seek paid for legal advice?

| Yes  | 1 |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| No  | 2 |  |
| Don’t know | 3 |  |

ASK ALL

* 1. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the EASS did the following...?

*PROBE:* Is that tend to or strongly?

|  | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | DK |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| \_1 Made you more confident about dealing with similar issues you might encounter in future | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| \_2 Helped you access justice which you otherwise wouldn’t have been able to  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| \_3 Made you more knowledgeable about your rights in this area | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

ask all

* 1. Thinking back to when this issue first arose, if the EASS had not been available, what would you have done instead to resolve your issue?

DO NOT READ OUT. MULTICODE

| Approach another organisation for similar advice | 1 |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Sought legal advice | 2 |  |
| Complained directly to the organisation in question | 3 |  |
| Approached friends, family, colleagues or other peers for advice | 4 |  |
| Other (specify) | 5 |  |
| Nothing  | 6 |  |
| Don’t know | 7 |  |

if WOULD HAVE approached another organisation OR PERSON (d12=1 OR 4)

* 1. Which organisations or people would you have approached for similar advice?

do not read out. mulTIcode possible

| ACAS | 1 |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Citizens Advice | 2 |  |
| Community Legal Advice | 3 |  |
| Disability Rights UK | 4 |  |
| Equality and Human Rights Commission | 5 |  |
| Job Centre (including advisor at the Job Centre) | 6 |  |
| Law Centres Network | 7 |  |
| Legal representative  | 8 |  |
| Local Council  | 9 |  |
| MIND | 10 |  |
| Royal Association for Deaf People | 11 |  |
| Trade Union | 12 |  |
| Voice Ability | 13 |  |
| Friends  | 14 |  |
| Family | 15 |  |
| Colleagues | 16 |  |
| Other (specify) | 17 |  |
| Don’t know | 18 |  |

ASK ALL

* 1. Overall, if the EASS had not been available, do you think the outcome or outcomes of your issue so far would have been any different?

| Yes – outcome would have been different | 1 |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| No – outcome wouldn’t have been different | 2 |  |
| Don’t know | 3 |  |

If yes at d14

* 1. Why do you say that?

| WRITE IN |
| --- |
| Don't know | 1 |  |
| Refused | 2 |  |

* 1. THERE IS NO D16
1. Demographics

Ask all

* 1. **I now have a few questions to ask about you. This is just so we can see whether different groups of people have similar experiences or not.**

**Firstly, what is your age?**

prompt if necessary.

| 18-24 years old | 1 |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 25-34 years old | 2 |  |
| 35-44 years old | 3 |  |
| 45-54 years old | 4 |  |
| 55-64 years old | 5 |  |
| 65+ years old | 6 |  |
| Prefer not to say | 7 |  |

* 1. **THERE IS NO E2**
	2. **THERE IS NO E3**
	3. **THERE IS NO E4**

ask all

* 1. Are you…?

| Male | 1 |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Female | 2 |  |
| Prefer not to say | 3 |  |

* 1. **THERE IS NO E6**

ask all

* 1. **What is your sexual orientation?**

| Heterosexual/straight | 1 |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Bisexual | 2 |  |
| Gay | 3 |  |
| Prefer not to say | 4 |  |

ask all

* 1. **Do you consider yourself to have a disability as defined by The Equality Act 2010?**

ADD IF NECESSARY:**A disability is a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and adverse impact on your ability to undertake day to day activities**

| Yes | 1 |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| No | 2 |  |
| Prefer not to say | 3 |  |

* 1. **THERE IS NO E9**

* 1. THERE IS NO E10

ask all

* 1. **Which of the following best describes your ethnic group?**

PROMPT IF NECESSARY

| White | 1 |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Black | 2 |  |
| Asian | 3 |  |
| Mixed | 4 |  |
| Other | 5 |  |
| Prefer not to say | 6 |  |

* 1. THERE IS NO E17

ask all

* 1. **Finally, would you be willing for us to call you back if we need to clarify any of the information you’ve given today?**

| Yes | 1 |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| No | 2 |  |

IF CONSENT TO recontact (E13=1)

* 1. And could I just check, is [NUMBER] the best number to call you on?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Yes | 1 |  |
| No - write in number | 2 |  |

| THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING. THE SURVEY IS NOW COMPLETE.  |
| --- |

| Finally, I would just like to confirm that this survey has been carried out under IFF instructions and within the rules of the MRS Code of Conduct. Thank you very much for your help today. |
| --- |

| Name:Record details of respondent who completed interview |  |
| --- | --- |

# Appendix B - EASS customer outcomes discussion guide

Introduction

* **Introduce self**
* **Introduce IFF Research and work we are conducting for the Government Equalities Office**
	+ Thank you for agreeing to take part in this valuable piece of research looking at customer experience of using the Equality Advisory Support Service.
	+ Thank you for taking part in the telephone survey – we have taken on board your answers to this but would like more detail in a few areas.
	+ The interview will take up to 60 minutes.
* **Confidentiality**
	+ All the information we collect will be kept in the strictest confidence and used for research purposes only.
	+ We will not pass any of your details on to any other companies. It will not be possible to identify any individual or individual company in the results that we report to the Government Equalities Office and the answers you give will not be traced back to you.
* **Recording**
	+ Permission to record.

The issue and initial expectations

***This section is designed to “warm up” respondents, to understand the background to their issue and the key objectives they were hoping to achieve by taking action to resolve it.***

* As I understand it, your issue was [INTERVIEWER TO PROVIDE BRIEF SUMMARY OF ISSUE]. Is that correct?

 IF NECESSARY:

* + Could you tell me a little more about it?
	+ When did it start?
	+ IF NECESSARY: Which (type of) organisation did it involve?
* And what were you hoping would happen by seeking advice or guidance on the issue?
	+ How did you think this would be achieved?
	+ What did / do you expect your own role to be in resolving this issue?

*INTERVIEWER: Aim to establish the degree to which they felt they would play an active role vs. wanting someone to take on their case / resolve it for them.*

Customer journey

***To plot the steps customers have taken to resolve their issue and key milestones throughout the resolution process***

***To establish what action was taken and by whom and what outcomes were achieved by this action***

***To gauge customer perceptions on value of contact with the EASS and action taken by the EASS to help resolve their issue***

I’m interested in finding out how you ended up contacting the EASS so tracking the journey you went on when you first started experiencing issues to the point where you approached the service.

INTERVIEWER TO DRAW A TIMELINE ON PAPER TO PLOT THE WHOLE JOURNEY IN TERMS OF CONTACTS AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE ISSUE – WHETHER EACH CONTACT WAS A TRIGGER FOR THINGS GETTING BETTER / WORSE OR NOT

* What made you decide to take action on your issue?
* Roughly how long was it between when the issue began and when you decided to take action?
* When you decided you wanted advice on your issue– what was the first step you took?
* How clear were you at the start on where you needed to go for advice or guidance? Where did you get your information from? What did you think of the information that was available?
* Who did you turn to for advice first? Next?

FOR EACH

* Why?
* What they actually did
* How helpful was this activity
* Outcome of contact
	+ Impact on the issue
	+ What happened next

ADDITIONAL PROBES FOR THE EASS

* Prior to contacting to the EASS, what were your impressions of the EASS?
* How were you expecting they would be able to help you with your issue?
* What happened during your initial contact with the EASS? What was discussed? Talk me through how the conversation went.
* What did the EASS do for you during this initial contact?
* How did you feel after this initial contact?
	+ How helpful was it?
* How much did you know about what would happen next?
	+ PROBE: What were the expected “next steps”? Where did you get this idea from?
* Following this initial contact, what did you think would happen with your issue?
	+ How closely did this match your expectations and what you thought you needed to solve your issue?
* How clear were you in terms of the next steps ***you*** (personally) needed to take regarding your issue?
* And what did happen next?

**REPEAT THESE TYPES OF QUESTIONS AS NEEDED, TO PLOT JOURNEY TO WHERE CUSTOMER / ISSUE ENDED UP – INCLUDING ANY ORGANISATIONS CONTACTED AFTER THE EASS IF RELEVANT**

CLARIFY CONTACT CHANNELS USED AT EACH POINT: TELEPHONE, LETTER, EMAIL, FACE-TO-FACE?

CLARIFY WHO INITIATED CONTACT AT EACH STAGE (THE CUSTOMER VS. THE EASS) AND WHETHER THIS IS WHAT THEY EXPECTED

Perceptions of final outcome and degree of EASS impact

***To understand the difference contacting the EASS has made to outcomes for its customers (compared to not contacting the EASS)***

***To establish the EASS’s value and USP as part of the advice and guidance landscape and the perceived impact it has for customers (or potential lack of).***

***To gauge whether non-existence of the EASS would leave a gap in the advice and guidance landscape and how this would impact those seeking advice on equality issues***

Please describe to me what has happened with your issue from the point where it first began up until this point. Think in terms of specific outcomes that have happened since you took action to try and resolve this issue – both positive and negative.

* How has your issue ended up?
* How do you feel about where you ended up with your issue?
	+ IF NECESSARY, PROBE FOR TO WHAT EXTENT MET (OR EXCEEDED) EXPECTATIONS
* How would you sum up the EASS’s role in resolving your issue?
	+ USE SURVEY RESPONSES AS PROMPTS WHERE RELEVANT
	+ PROBE COMPARED IMPACT OF OTHER ORGANISATIONS
* What difference has contact with the EASS made to you?

**IF EASS LED TO POSITIVE OUTCOME:**

* What benefits were there for you in contacting the EASS? What did contact with the EASS achieve for you personally?
* Describe to me how contact with the EASS helped you achieve [PROBE FOR EACH POSITIVE OUTCOME].
	+ Which aspects of the EASS’s contribution / advice were particularly helpful? Less helpful?
	+ REFER BACK TO TIMELINE: Which one element had the most impact?

Imagine that the EASS didn’t exist.

* In what ways do you think circumstances relating to your issue would have been different to how they are now?
* How would you have approached attempting to resolve the issue differently?
* Why do you feel that you may not have achieved the same positive outcomes without the EASS?
* How satisfied were you that the EASS did everything they could to help you resolve your issue?
	+ What more could they have done?

**IF PREVENTED FINANCIAL LOSS:**

You mentioned in your survey response that the advice you received from the EASS helped you avoid having to seek paid for legal advice.

* Why do you think this? In what ways did the nature or type of advice the EASS gave to you prevent you from needing to seek legal advice?
	+ Which aspects of the EASS’s contribution / advice were particularly helpful? Less helpful?
	+ REFER BACK TO TIMELINE: Which one element had the most impact?

Imagine that the EASS didn’t exist.

* In what ways, do you think circumstances relating to your issue would have been different to how they are now?
	+ Would it have been more difficult to resolve your issue (or more straightforward)? Would it have taken longer (or quicker)?
	+ Would you have got to the point where you are now?
* How would you have approached attempting to resolve the issue differently?
	+ Would you have known where else to go to access the type of guidance / advice they gave?
	+ Do you feel that the guidance you were given is accessible anywhere else in the public domain?
		- IF NOT COVERED: Would you know how to access it?
	+ What would have been the impact of having to seek legal advice for your issue?
* How satisfied were you that the EASS did everything they could to help you resolve your issue?
	+ What more could they have done?

**IF ‘NO EASS IMPACT’:**

You mentioned in your survey response that you felt the EASS could have done more to help you with your issue.

* In what ways do you believe the EASS could have done more to help you?
* What further help would you have liked that you did not receive from the EASS?
* Were there any ways in which contact with the EASS did help you? Did they do anything that you felt was beneficial?

You mentioned in your survey response that you didn’t feel the EASS made you more knowledgeable about your rights or more confident in dealing with similar issues in the future.

* + Why was this?
	+ Were you expecting them to / hoping they would?
	+ In what ways could they have achieved this?
* *INTERVIEWER NOTE: Consider participant responses throughout the “Customer Journey” section*
* Thinking about the help you received ?

Imagine that the EASS didn’t exist.

* In what ways, do you think circumstances relating to your issue would have been different to how they are now?
* How would you have approached attempting to resolve the issue differently? Who would you contact and why? How would this help resolve you issue compared to the EASS?
* To what extent do you see the value in the EASS?
	+ Who for?
	+ What kind of issues do you think they would be effective in helping people resolve?

*INTERVIEWER: Even if the EASS had little / no impact on their issue do they see in value in it for others?*

* What would you say to other people in a similar situation about approaching the EASS? Why?
* Would you ever use the EASS again? For what type of issue?

*INTERVIEWER: By end of section, need to establish whether or not outcomes / resolution would have been achieved regardless. Probe around difference the EASS made to the journey / process.*

* + *More straightforward?*
	+ *Resolved quicker?*

Final comments and wrap up

* What, if any, improvements could have been made to your experience with the EASS?
* Thinking about everything we have discussed, is there anything else you would like to add?

COLLECT INCENTIVE DETAILS - THANK AND CLOSE

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| As a thank you for your time, we are offering £20 as a personal cheque, PayPal transfer or donation to a charity of your choice. I’ll just need to confirm some details:Personal cheque Charity donationPayPal Name of charity                              \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*(if applicable)*Name on cheque & postal address  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_For personal cheque   *(if applicable)                                     \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**PayPal email address   \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**Incentives will be processed at the end of the project – late June.* |   |

| Finally I would just like to confirm that this survey has been carried out under IFF instructions and within the rules of the MRS Code of Conduct. Thank you very much for your help today. |
| --- |

|  |
| --- |
| I declare that this survey has been carried out under IFF instructions and within the rules of the MRS Code of Conduct. |
| Interviewer signature:  | Date:  |
| Finish time: | Interview Length  | Mins |

# Appendix C - EASS stakeholder discussion guide

Introduction

* **Introduce self**
* **Introduce IFF Research and work we are conducting for the Government Equalities Office**
	+ Thank you for agreeing to take part in this valuable piece of research looking at customer experience of using the Equality Advisory Support Service. We are talking to a number of stakeholders about their relationship with the EASS and their views on its value as a service.
	+ The interview will take up to 60 minutes.
* **Confidentiality**
	+ All the information we collect will be kept in the strictest confidence and used for research purposes only.
	+ We will not pass any of your details on to any other companies. It will not be possible to identify any individual or individual company in the results that we report to the Government Equalities Office and the answers you give will not be traced back to you.
* **Recording**
	+ Permission to record.

General introduction of organisation and role within the organisation

***To establish the nature, background and remit of the organisation and respondent’s role within it***

* Could you give me a quick overview of the nature of your organisation?
	+ Key objectives
	+ Services offered
* How long have you worked here? And how has the organisation developed / changed in the time you have been here?
* And what is the direction of travel? What does the next few years look like for your organisation?
* What is your day to day role? IF NECESSARY: Level of seniority?

Nature of advice / guidance given to customers

***To understand the organisation’s interaction with customers and the types of issues customers typically approach them with***

***To establish the degree to which organisation is proactively involved in helping customers resolve their issues***

* How does your organisation market itself to the public / customers on a general level? How do they typically find out about you?
* Could you talk me through your customer base?
	+ Target audience?
* As an organisation, what is your relationship like with your customers?
	+ Typically how often do your customers contact you?
	+ What type of contact is this, e.g. telephone, email, face-to-face?
	+ Is communication ad hoc, or will customers be allocated a case worker?
	+ Are there any particular groups of customers that you tend to provide advice to more often than others?
* Thinking in general terms, what are the main areas of advice that customers approach you for?
	+ What kind of conversations are you typically having with customers at the moment?
	+ How frequently do customers present dual issues e.g. discrimination and welfare?
* What is the nature of the advice you give to customers on a day to day basis?
	+ What actions can you take to resolve customers’ issues?
* To what extent do you take action to resolve an issue vs. empowering the customer to take action for themselves?
* To what extent are customers’ expectations of what you can do for them realistic?

Advice and guidance landscape

***To establish a general overview of the advice and guidance landscape, how accessible it is to the public and to identify where there maybe gaps***

* What are your general thoughts about the advice and guidance landscape for the public regarding equality and discrimination issues?
	+ How well informed are the public about where to go for advice?
	+ How well serviced are the public? Are there any gaps? Which organisations should be filling these gaps?
	+ Are there any particular pressures you face as an organisation offering advice to the public?
	+ What do you think the advice and guidance landscape will look like in the next few years?

Perceptions of / relationship with the EASS

***To establish the organisation’s views on the reason for the EASS’s existence, interaction between the organisation and the EASS and the effectiveness of the referral process***

* When I talk about the EASS, what are the first things that spring to mind for you? How would you describe the EASS as an organisation?
* Why does the EASS exist? What do you think its main objectives are?
* What is its value as an organisation, compared to other advice and guidance providers? What position does it hold in the wider ‘advice landscape’.
* How well known is the EASS amongst customers your organisation typically deals with?
* Describe your organisation’s relationship with the EASS.
	+ What does a typical interaction between your organisation and the EASS look like?
	+ Overall, how do you feel about this relationship?
* Talk me through the nature of signposting between yourselves and the EASS
	+ Under what circumstances do you signpost to the EASS?
		- What do they offer that you do not?
		- Why do you signpost to the EASS rather than to other organisations?
			* What does it offer that others do not?
			* What does it do better than others?
	+ Under what circumstances would they signpost to you?
	+ Do you feel this referral process works effectively…
		- For yourselves as an organisation?
		- For customers?
	+ Have you noticed any changes in the referral process between your organisation and the EASS?
		- What changes have been made?
		- What have been the implications for your organisation?
		- Do you feel this has improved the process?
	+ Is there anything about this process of two-way referral that could be improved or done differently?
		- From your perspective?
		- From a customer perspective?
* Do you ever receive feedback from your customers about their experience with the EASS?
	+ Under what circumstances?
	+ What are their feelings towards them?

Perceptions of the EASS’s impact

***To understand the EASS’s value and USP as part of the advice and guidance landscape and the perceived impact it has for customers.***

***To gauge whether non-existence of the EASS would leave a gap in the advice and guidance landscape and how this would impact other organisations in the network***

* What do think the EASS offers the public that is not available elsewhere? i.e. What is the EASS’s unique selling proposition?
* If the EASS ceased to exist as a service tomorrow, what do you think would happen?
	+ What would the impact be, if any, on you as an organisation?
	+ Would you anticipate increased demand for your services?
		- IF YES: What would be the resourcing implication? How would you manage the increased demand?
	+ And what do you think would be the impact on people with equality issues?
	+ Do you think the nature of the issues that customers approach you with would change at all?
		- To what extent would you be equipped to deal with this?
		- Would you anticipate needing to alter your organisation’s remit at all?
* What would you suggest to those customers you currently signpost to the EASS?
	+ PROBE FOR WHETHER WOULD SIGNPOST ELSEWHERE (IF SO, WHERE?) OR DO SOMETHING DIFFERENT THEMSELVES
* Do you think that without the EASS any organisations other than yourselves would be affected?
* Do you think there is a better way of offering help for discrimination issues? If so what would this look like?

Final comments and wrap up

* Thinking about everything we have discussed, is there anything else you would like to add?

THANK AND CLOSE

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The views expressed in this report are the authors’ and do not necessarily reflect those of the Government Equalities Office or the Department for Education.

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This document is available for download at [www.gov.uk/government/publications](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications)

1. Respondents may have identified more than one category, having benefited from their contact with the EASS in multiple ways. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Call transfers involve the EASS transferring the customer to the appropriate organisation during the call. With signposting, customers are told by the EASS which organisation to approach and it is left to the customer to contact them following the call. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. There are many reports available in the public domain to evidence this. For examples of recent research, please see research by the Equalities and Human Right Commission (EHRC): <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/publications/our-research/research-reports>. Additional evidence includes report from the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) on the experiences of race and sexual orientation or religion discrimination claimants at employment tribunals: <http://www.acas.org.uk/media/pdf/0/d/Race-discrimination-claims-unrepresented-claimants-and-employers-views-on-Acas-conciliation-in-emplo.pdf> and <http://www.acas.org.uk/media/pdf/r/l/The-experiences-of-sexual-orientation-and-religion-or-belief-discrimination-employment-tribunal-clai.pdf>. Time to change research on mental health discrimination: <http://www.time-to-change.org.uk/sites/default/files/Stigma%20Shout.pdf>. Department for Business Innovation and Skills and EHRC’s report on pregnancy and maternity discrimination in the workplace: <https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/448162/BIS-15-447-pregnancy-and-maternity-related-discrimination-and-disadvantage.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The ‘starting sample’ consisted of those who, in the opt-in exercise conducted by Sitel, agreed to have their contact details passed on to IFF Research. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Excluded among this group were those who said they experienced ‘positive outcomes only’, ‘nothing changed and no further action can be taken’ and those who felt that there was nothing else the EASS could have done to help (or were unsure whether this was the case). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. This included respondents who had issues relating to associations (for example membership of societies), education, premises (e.g. access to buildings), public sector equality duty (the duty on **public authorities** to consider or think about how their policies or decisions affect people who are **protected** under the Equality Act 2010) and services and public functions (e.g. the provision of health, social care and council-led services). This group also includes customers that raised an issue with a commercial organisation. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. As a note, although survey respondents reported receiving help in these ways (and valued this help), it is not within the core remit of the EASS to interpret legal documents or to simplify legal advice provided by a solicitor (if a solicitor’s advice has been sought, the EASS would advise returning to the solicitor to seek any clarification needed). However, the EASS can apply the Equality Act 2010 to a client’s specific issue to enable understanding of their rights. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Names in all case studies have been changed to protect confidentiality. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. There is a significant difference between those with and without a disability-related issue in each case. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. The “Other” category includes customer with issues relating to pregnancy and maternity, religion, sex, sexual orientation and marriage and civil partnership. Due to small base sizes (each lower than 50 customers), separate analysis could not be undertaken on these groups. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. There is a significant difference between those with a work-related issue and those with a community or education issue in each case. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Although 18% of respondents may seem low, it is important to note that the aim of the research was not to measure satisfaction with the EASS but the extent to which customers perceived the service as **helping them to resolve their issues.** There are difficulties inherent in trying to research this. For example, there are complexities involved when measuring the positive / negative outcomes of issues and the degree to which the EASS had an influence on these outcomes. This is because:

The EASS could not have an influence in helping all customers achieve positive outcomes as not all customers had issues that were within the EASS’s remit to assist with.

Furthermore, having received guidance from the EASS, customers may not be able to, or chose not to take further action on their issue. Customers could perceive their inability to take further action or the lack of resolution to their issue as a “negative outcome”, even though the EASS may have provided an appropriate level of service within their remit.

In addition, at the time of research some customers were still in the process of trying to resolve their issue. Those customers for whom issues were ongoing were potentially unable to identify the any outcomes to their issue and impact the EASS had had to date. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Hypokalemic periodic paralysis is a disorder that causes occasional episodes of muscle weakness and sometimes a lower than normal level of potassium in the blood. Symptoms include attacks of muscle weakness or loss of muscle movement (paralysis) that come and go. There is normal muscle strength between attacks. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. This includes customers who experienced both positive and negative outcomes to their issue, if they feel that the EASS could have done more to help in terms of avoiding the negative outcome(s). Those who experienced multiple negative outcomes are only counted once here (and were asked to give an indication of whether the EASS could have done more to help with these outcomes at an overall level, rather than for each mentioned). [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. It should be noted that these questions were asked on a prompted basis to allow for a like-for-like comparison between expectations and action taken, but it does mean that the proportions shown here are likely to be higher than they would be on an unprompted basis. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. As do the few cases where customers incorrectly believed that the EASS actually took legal action on their behalf. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. The Commission for Racial Equality (CRE), along with the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) and the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) were replaced by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) in 2007, which was in turn replaced by the EASS in 2012. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Call transfers involve the EASS transferring the customer to the appropriate organisation during the call. With signposting, customers are told by the EASS which organisation to approach and it is left to the customer to contact them following the call. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)