

DWP Claimant Service and Experience Survey Executive Summary

Data for 2015/16

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About the survey

This report presents findings from the 2015/16 DWP Claimant Service and Experience Survey conducted on behalf of DWP by Kantar Public (formerly TNS BMRB). The findings are based on 15,626 telephone interviews with people who were claiming working-age, disability, carer or pension-related benefits and had been in contact with DWP in the past three months¹. The survey was conducted in quarterly bursts of interviewing with an additional boost conducted among Universal Credit customers in spring 2016. Findings are compared to the previous year's survey conducted in 2014/15².

The survey enables DWP to monitor customers' satisfaction over time with the service offered and feed customer views into operational and policy development. As well as collecting an overall measure of satisfaction, the survey also quantifies DWP's performance across a broad range of measures based on the DWP Customer Charter³. Further details are

provided in the Methodological Note that accompanies the report.

Key findings

Satisfaction with DWP's service delivery

Overall, 84 per cent of customers who had contact with DWP in 2015/16 were satisfied with the service they received, compared to 82 per cent in 2014/15. Levels of satisfaction varied from 76 per cent among Personal Independence Payment customers to 97 per cent of State Pension customers. However it should be borne in mind that customers' satisfaction levels are likely to be impacted by the nature of the benefit they are claiming.

The improvement in overall satisfaction was driven by an increase in the proportion of customers reporting that they were 'very satisfied', which rose from 35 per cent in 2014/15 to 38 per cent in 2015/16. There were notable improvements in satisfaction among Personal Independence Payment customers with satisfaction rising from 68 per cent to 76 per cent as the benefit became more established, with both an increase in customers reporting they were 'very satisfied' (from 25 per cent to 35 per cent) and a decrease in the proportion who were 'very dissatisfied' (from 19 per cent to 12 per cent).

Satisfaction also continued to improve among customers of Employment and Support Allowance (83 per cent in 2015/16 compared to 81 per cent in 2014/15) and Jobseeker's Allowance

¹ The survey focuses on ten benefits: Attendance Allowance; Carer's Allowance; Pension Credit; State Pension; Disability Living Allowance; Personal Independence Payment; Employment and Support Allowance; Income Support; Jobseeker's Allowance; and Universal Credit. The survey focuses on one transaction with DWP. If the customer had more than one transaction there was a process to select one transaction. Details are given in the accompanying Methodological Note.
²

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dwp-claimant-service-and-experience-survey-2014-to-2015>

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/292673/customer-charter-dwp.pdf

(also 83 per cent compared to 81 per cent). Satisfaction levels for other customer groups remained stable.

Ease of getting in touch during transaction (Charter element – Ease of access)

The majority of customers reported that they found it easy to get in touch with DWP ranging from 68 per cent of Personal Independence Payment customers to 93 per cent of State Pension customers. Levels were stable over time for most benefits except Pension Credit where the proportion of customers saying it was easy to get in touch fell from 85 per cent in 2014/15 to 79 per cent in 2015/16 and Universal Credit which fell from 78 per cent to 74 per cent.

Telephone communication was the most common contact channel for all benefit types with the exception of Jobseeker's Allowance and Universal Credit, where face-to-face contact was more likely. Communication via a letter was most likely for the disability benefits (49 per cent for Disability Living Allowance customers and 47 per cent for Personal Independence Payment customers). The use of texts and emails to communicate with DWP remains low and also reflects the more complex transactions that were prioritised for the survey.

Access to the internet among DWP customers was generally high, although lower among Attendance Allowance customers (74 per cent) and Pension Credit customers (59 per cent). The use of gov.uk tended to reflect this variation ranging from nine per cent by Pension Credit customers to 41 per cent by Universal Credit customers. When asked whether they

would consider conducting key tasks relating to their benefit via the internet customers of employment-related benefits tended to be more positive than those claiming disability or pension-related benefits.

Clarity (Charter element - Getting it right)

Both Personal Independence Payment and Disability Living Allowance customers have seen improvements across a number of *getting it right* measures whilst other benefits are largely stable.

Among Personal Independence Payment customers, the proportion saying that their payment calculations were explained clearly increased from 68 per cent in 2014/15 to 80 per cent in 2015/16 with a corresponding rise among Disability Living Allowance customers from 83 per cent to 89 per cent. Personal Independence Payment customers saw a particular fall in the proportion reporting that their payment calculations 'had not been explained at all' (from 17 per cent to seven per cent).

Among customers who had received a decision about their benefit as part of their transaction, there was a decline in the proportion of pension-related benefit customers who felt it had been explained 'very' or 'fairly' clearly, with falls for both Attendance Allowance (from 93 per cent in 2014/15 to 87 per cent in 2015/16) and Pension Credit (from 95 per cent to 91 per cent). Levels for other customer groups remained stable.

Of those customers contacting DWP by telephone or face-to-face, the proportion saying that they had been

given correct information was largely stable compared to 2014/15. The exception was a decline in the proportion of Universal Credit customers saying that they had been given correct information over the telephone, which fell from 85 per cent in 2014/15 to 76 per cent in 2015/16.

Communication on next steps (Charter element – Keeping you informed)

Where a transaction involved multiple steps, Pension Credit customers were less likely than last year to report being told what will happen next (81 per cent in 2014/15 compared to 67 per cent in 2015/16), less likely to have been given clear timings if DWP staff needed to take action (73 per cent compared to 62 per cent) and less likely to have been kept up to date with their transaction (73 per cent compared to 62 per cent).

Similarly State Pension customers reported lower levels of being given clear timings (75 per cent in 2015/16 compared to 85 per cent in 2014/15) and lower levels of being kept up to date with the progress of their transaction (66 per cent compared to 71 per cent).

Improvements for this charter element included the proportion of Attendance Allowance customers reporting they were told what would happen (77 per cent in 2015/16 compared to 69 per cent in 2014/15) and Disability Living Allowance customers were more likely to have been given clear timings (76 per cent compared to 68 per cent).

Right treatment

The majority of customers who spoke to DWP over the telephone were satisfied that staff were polite, knowledgeable and helpful, and understood their particular circumstances. The only changes since last year were among Disability Living Allowance customers who were more likely to report that staff were helpful (91 per cent in 2015/16 compared to 83 per cent in 2014/15) and Universal Credit customers who reported staff were less likely to report that staff were helpful (79 per cent compared to 86 per cent).

The face-to-face treatment of Jobseeker's Allowance customers at Jobcentre Plus locations has improved since last year. These customers were more likely to report staff were knowledgeable (85 per cent in 2015/16 compared to 83 per cent in 2014/15), polite (92 per cent compared to 90 per cent) and understood their particular circumstances (85 per cent compared to 83 per cent). Understanding of particular circumstances of Income Support customers also improved from 91 per cent to 95 per cent. All other face-to-face treatment measures were stable for customers of benefits which required them to make contact at Jobcentre Plus locations.

A low proportion of customers reported encountering problems or difficulties when dealing with DWP. Personal Independence Payment customers were less likely to have encountered issues in 2015/16 (17 per cent) than in 2014/15 (26 per cent) with similar falls for Disability Living Allowance customers (from 12 per cent to five per cent) and State Pension customers

(from five per cent to two per cent). However, more problems were experienced by Universal Credit customers (18 per cent in 2015/16 from four per cent in 2014/15 and Jobseeker's Allowance customers (15 per cent compared to 12 per cent).

Jobcentre Plus perspectives

Where applicable, the assessment for the support offered in finding a job by Jobcentre Plus staff varied, ranging

from 71 per cent satisfied among Income Support customers to 56 per cent among Employment and Support Allowance customers. Similarly the assessment of Jobcentre Plus facilities for searching for jobs ranged from 81 per cent satisfied among Income Support customers to 71 per cent among Employment and Support Allowance customers.

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The full report of these research findings is published by the Department for Work and Pensions (ISBN 978 1 911003 67 0. Research Report 955. January 2017).

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