

Quality of Supply

Attitudes of Business and
Domestic Electricity
Customers

Research Study Conducted for
OFFER



January - March
1999

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INTRODUCTION

Background and Objectives

This report contains the findings of a study undertaken on behalf of the Office for Electricity Regulation (OFFER) by Market & Opinion Research International (MORI) among domestic and business electricity customers in Great Britain. The principal focus of the study was on supply interruptions and attitudes to a range of possible changes to Guaranteed Standards of Service.

The issues covered included:

- customers' expectations of supply reliability and the value placed on a secure supply
awareness of present standards and payment levels and views on improving/extending standards or setting new ones
whether, and if so how, to set standards for the level and duration of supply interruptions
whether companies should make standards payments even during 'extreme' weather or following supply failure for other reasons beyond the company's control
whether payments under the guaranteed standard for supply interruption should be made automatically by the company, without the customer having to claim
importance to customers of undergrounding lines - for reasons of reliability/environmental benefits, and how much they would be prepared to pay
customer views about communications with companies during supply interruptions.

Methodology

A two-stage approach was adopted for this research project.

Stage 1 - Qualitative

Initially, six focus group discussions were held in order to establish, and explore in some depth, the key issues. Four groups were among domestic customers, in both urban and rural areas, while the remaining two were with people responsible for dealing with electricity companies within small businesses (under 100kW consumption).

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- Chester Urban domestic 26th January
 - Daventry 1 Urban domestic 27th January
 - Daventry 2 Rural domestic 27th January
 - Watford Urban business 27th January
 - Macclesfield Rural business 28th January
 - Norwich Rural domestic 28th January

Each group comprised 5-10 individuals, a varying proportion of whom had experienced recent supply interruptions (in the past 2 years). Discussions lasted around 1½ hours.

As it would be extremely difficult and expensive to organise group discussions among people in larger businesses (100kW+) with responsibility for electricity supply, the groups were followed by a series of five depth interviews with these people. The topic guide used was virtually unchanged from that used for the business group discussions. All were conducted between 1st-12th February 1999.

- Industrial gases company 1MW
- Cement manufacturer 1MW
- Chemical company 100 kW
- Electronics manufacturer 100 kW
- Water supply company 1MW

Following analysis of the findings of the discussion groups and depth interviews, quantitative questionnaires were designed for both domestic and business electricity customers, concentrating on the main issues to arise.

Stage 2 - Quantitative

A total of 503 quota-controlled telephone interviews was conducted by MORI's telephone research subsidiary, On-Line Telephone Surveys, with assistance from the interviewers of Continental Research Ltd in the period 3-17 March 1999.

The sample of leads originated from the Yellow Pages Business Database. They were selected as a stratified random sample which provided disproportionate numbers of larger organisations (by numbers of employees) in order to facilitate boosting their numbers in the final sample.

Quotas were set on a basis of maximum demand for electricity. The resulting data were weighted and grossed up by the known national numbers of organisations in each maximum demand band. The profile of the sample was as follows:

Maximum demand	Unweighted (no of interviews)	Weighted and grossed up totals
1 MW+	170	5,000
100kW+	99	50,000
Under 100kW	234	2,095,000

The respondent in each organisation was the person most responsible for managing the electricity supply to the sampled establishment, or in the case of multi-site organisations, the principal site.

In addition, a total of 2,029 quota-controlled face-to-face interviews were conducted by MORI interviewers in 184 systematically selected sampling points throughout Great Britain between 22 February and 23 March 1999. Points were selected to be representative of the demographic profile of the population, in particular its social class profile. At each point, quotas were set for age and working status of head of household. The respondent in each household was the person responsible for paying the electricity bill. The selection of sampling points was skewed slightly to ensure the final sample included at least 500 rural customers.

The resulting data were weighted by age and working status of head of household, by social class and by urban/rural proportions.

Interpretation of the Data

Where percentages in tables do not add to 100%, this may be due to computer rounding or to multiple-response questions, whereby respondents could give more than one answer to a question. In charts and tables an asterisk denotes a value of less than 0.5 per cent, but greater than zero.

Publication of the Data

As with all our studies, these findings are subject to our standard Terms and Conditions of Contract. Any press release or publication of the findings of this survey requires the advance approval of MORI. Such approval is only refused on the grounds of inaccuracy or misinterpretation of the research findings.

KEY FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

- Overall, 95% of domestic customers and 93% of business customers are satisfied with the reliability of their electricity supply. This level of satisfaction is reinforced by the fact that around two-thirds of both groups do not feel that the electricity companies should be investing more to improve the reliability of supply. Virtually all customers, however, feel that it is important to have a continuous uninterrupted electricity supply.
- For both domestic and business customers the most popular change that could be made to service standards (if there were no cost implications) would be to make penalty payments automatic, rather than being paid only if claimed. Three in ten domestic customers rank this as their favourite option (from a list of eight), as do almost half of all businesses (out of five choices).
- When asked generally whether they would be willing to pay any extra on their electricity bill in order to ensure improved standards of service, three in five domestic customers and half of business customers say they would not want to do so. However, this proportion falls to around one in three domestic customers and one in six business customers when presented with individual improvements which could be made and their respective costs.
- The average (mean) amount which domestic consumers would be willing to spend on top of their current bill for **specific** improvements is £8.70 (median amount: £5), with automatic payments again being the most popular amendment. Businesses would be prepared to spend an average of 2.5% (median amount: £2%) extra on top of their current bill, with the most popular improvement to service standards being a three per cent increase in the target for the number of customers' supplies to be restored within three hours.
- Other quality measures which tend to be positively received are reducing the amount of time allowed for a power cut before a payment becomes due from 24 hours to 12 hours, putting more cables underground, and introducing a new standard for answering the telephone. Reactions are mixed towards the idea of introducing a payment should consumers suffer more than a certain number of power cuts in a year.
- Despite a vocal opposition to the concept in the qualitative research, majorities of both business and domestic customers accept that the exemption of electricity companies from penalty payments during severe weather is fair and reasonable.

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- Domestic customers would prefer any savings from efficiency improvements to be returned to them in the form of reduced bills. Business customers, on the other hand, tend to want to see at least some of those savings ploughed back into making further improvements. The most important improvement in this regard would be to reduce the number of power cuts suffered, followed by reducing their length.
 - Very few consumers would be interested in reducing the overall standards of quality of supply in return for lower bills.
 - Over the course of the last year, around three in five domestic customers have suffered flickering lights or similar effects which they believe to have been caused by power fluctuations on the electricity network. On the other hand, just one-quarter of business customers have done so. Business customers are four times as likely as domestic customers to contact their electricity supplier about such fluctuations. In each case, the vast majority were satisfied by the company's response.
 - While around one-third of all consumers have experienced transient power cuts in the last two years, the majority say that they do not find them particularly inconvenient. Businesses suffer more inconvenience from transients than domestic customers.
 - Two in five of all customers have suffered at least one longer power cut in the last two years, and among those who have done so, around 15% have had four or more cuts in that period. While three in five domestic customers say they find these longer power cuts inconvenient, this rises to four in five business customers. Business customers are twice as likely as domestic customers to get in touch with their electricity supplier about such power cuts. Above all else, the key information required is when power will be restored.
 - Overall, therefore, while satisfaction with the quality of supply is high, there are certain improvements which customers would like to see made. Businesses (especially those with a high maximum demand for electricity) tend to be the most interested in seeing improvements made, although they are proportionately no more willing to pay for this than domestic consumers.

Implications

- Nearly all customers say that they are satisfied with their electricity supply, and many spontaneously say that they would not be willing to spend any more for improvements to the quality of supply. There is support, however, for certain specific improvements when the benefits and costs are explained. On this basis domestic customers will pay a median amount of £5-11 extra per year; business customers will pay a median amount of 2-3% per year. However it must be taken into account that one-third of domestic customers and half of business customers do not want to pay anything extra. This is likely to be a main complicating factor in policy making.
- Despite being one of the more expensive options for domestic consumers at £6 per annum, **automatic payments** for not meeting certain standards (as opposed to having to make a claim) would be the most popular improvement for domestic customers. More than half of all businesses would also be prepared to spend an extra 1.5% on top of their current bill to see this introduced. One advantage of such a development is that the electricity companies could be seen to be making a very positive step - transforming a system which is perceived by those few consumers who know about it as being something of a white elephant, into a genuine penalty system from which they might actually benefit.
- For business customers, a **3% increase in the number of customers' suppliers restored within 3 hours** is a little more popular, once the potential cost (0.5% of their bill), is explained. It seems likely it overtakes automatic payments mainly because the cost is one-third of the potential cost of automatic payments.
- **Undergrounding** is also a popular improvement for domestic customers. One in three domestic customers say they would spend an extra £5 a year to see more lines put underground. Business consumers were not asked about this in terms of how much they would be prepared to pay, but they are even more likely than domestic customers to support the idea in general terms. The qualitative research indicated that not only do consumers support this idea in terms of the quality of their electricity supply, but also for environmental benefits such as less visual clutter on the landscape, and reduced danger of health problems from overhead cables. This idea, therefore, appears to be a very simple way of promoting a greener, more environmentally-friendly image, and passing on the costs to consumers in the process.

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- The three potential improvements with most support are therefore automatic payments of penalties, a 3% increase in supply restorations within 3 hours and limited undergrounding of lines. The research indicates these are likely to be the most attractive specific benefits that could be part of a programme of improving quality of supply.
 - The way in which such improvements are communicated will determine how enthusiastically they are received and therefore the level of overall support for quality improvement more generally. In both groups of customers, presentation of the issue as one of “spending efficiency gains” meets less opposition than “paying higher bills”.
 - Business customers are particularly likely to be persuaded by this approach and to choose to share the savings between improvements and lower bills. Domestic customers are more concerned about their own bills, but still more likely to agree to spend efficiency gains rather than to pay higher bills.

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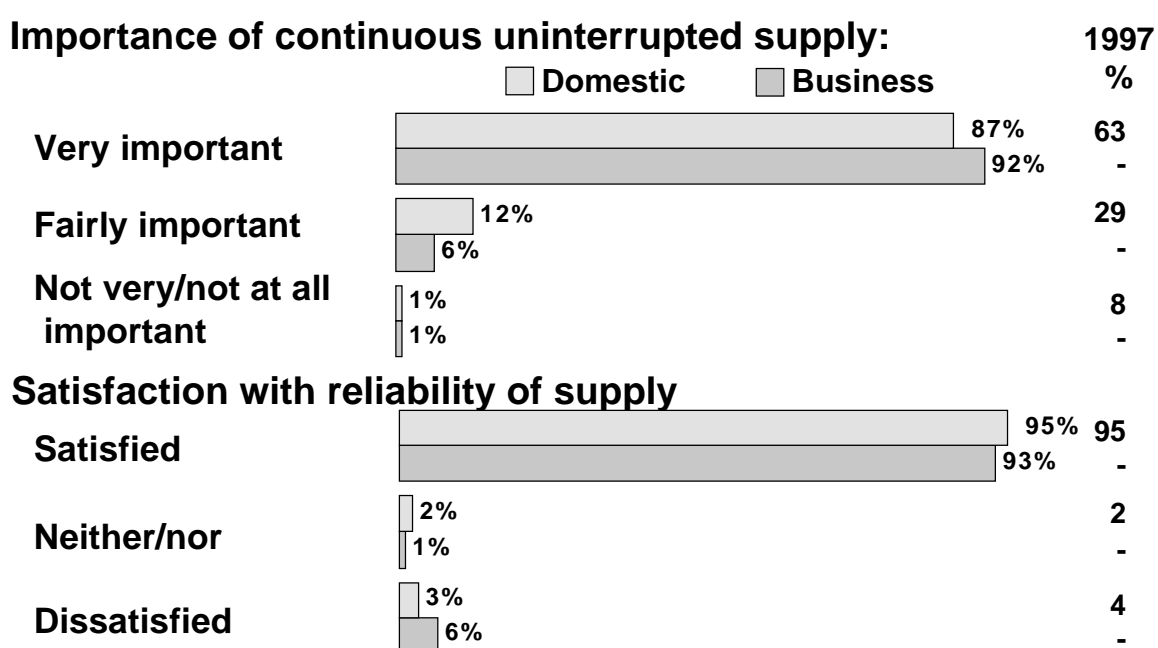
Janette Henderson
Robert Knight
Andy Martin

MAIN FINDINGS

Overall Satisfaction

Virtually all electricity customers regard a continuous uninterrupted supply as important, with the vast majority (around nine in ten of both domestic and business customers) describing it as ‘very important’. The importance for domestic customers has risen somewhat in the two years since the last survey of this kind, when three in five felt uninterrupted supply was ‘very important’.

Views on Reliability of Supply

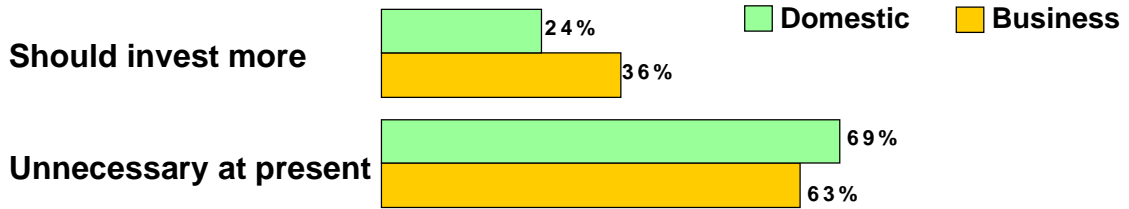


Base: All customers

Given the importance placed on the reliability of supply it is encouraging that all but a few customers say they are satisfied with the reliability of their electricity supply. Just three per cent of domestic customers and six per cent of business customers admit to any dissatisfaction in this respect (rising to 13% among businesses with a maximum demand of 1MW or more). For domestic customers, this overall level of satisfaction has not changed since 1997. Some customers, such as those living in rural areas (eight per cent), and those who have suffered a power cut in the last two years (six per cent) are a little more likely than others to feel dissatisfied with the quality of supply.

Demand for Improvement

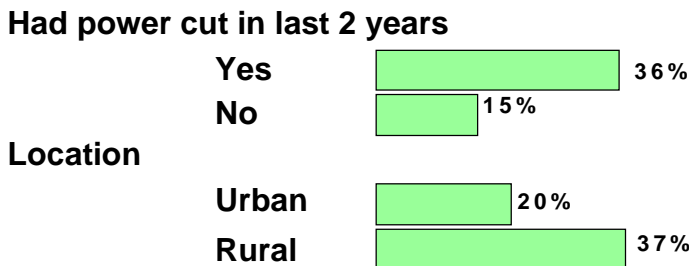
Q Do you think the electricity companies should invest more in the reliability of your electricity supply, or do you feel this is unnecessary at present?



Base: All customers

Most customers consequently feel that the electricity companies do not need to invest more in the reliability of their supply. Seven in ten domestic customers (69%), and 63% of business customers feel that more investment is unnecessary at present. Domestic customers living in rural areas, and those who have suffered at least one power cut in the last two years (often the same people - rural customers are almost twice as likely as urban residents to have suffered any unplanned power cuts recently) are more likely than others to feel that extra investment should be made. Regionally, support for more investment ranges from 39% among ScottishPower customers to 13% in the South West of England.

Domestic - % should invest more



Base: All customers

Among business customers, those who have suffered power cuts are just as likely to feel that the companies should invest more in reliability as to think that current levels of investment are acceptable, as are those with a maximum electricity demand of at least 1MW.

Business - % should invest more

Had power cut in last 2 years



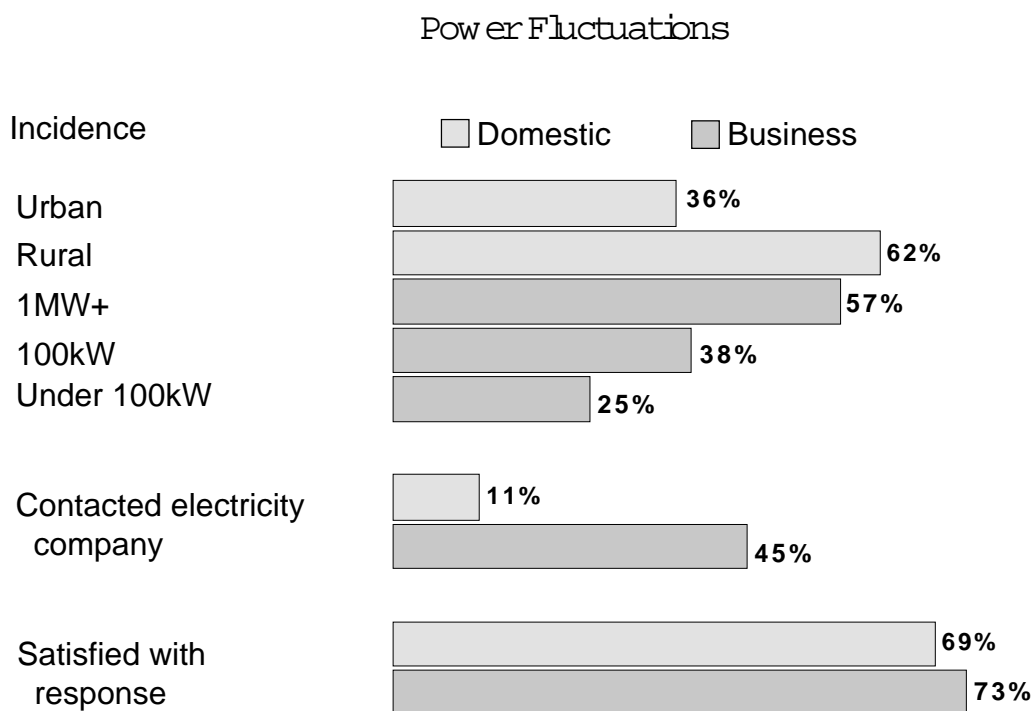
Demand



Base: All customers

Power Fluctuations

Around two in five domestic customers and one-quarter of business customers say they have experienced power fluctuations in the last twelve months. Among domestic customers, this type of problem seems to affect those living in rural areas (62%) rather more than urban dwellers (36%). Those who have experienced unplanned power cuts are also more likely than others to have experienced power fluctuations as well. London residents appear to have the most constant level of supply, with only one-quarter having experienced any flickering lights or similar effects in the last year, in contrast to those supplied by Eastern Electricity, among whom three in five have done so.



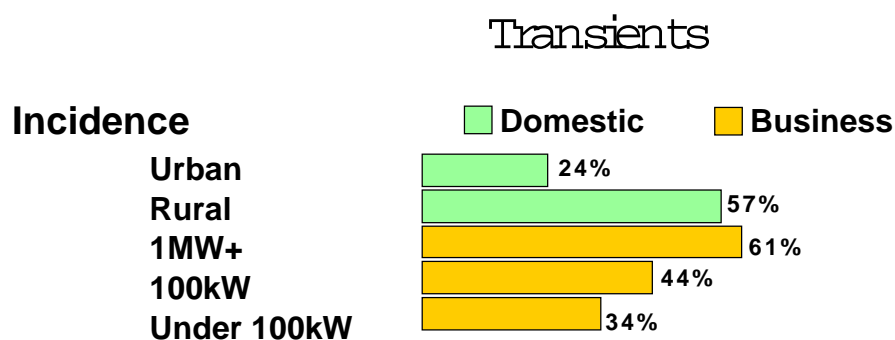
Business customers with the largest maximum demand are decidedly more likely to have noticed such power fluctuations than smaller companies. While almost three in five larger companies have noticed them, just one quarter of those with demand peaking below 100kW have done so.

Business customers are four times as likely as domestic customers to contact their electricity supplier as a result of such a fluctuation (45% and 11% respectively). Once again, businesses with the highest maximum demand are the most likely to contact their supplier, with three-quarters doing so.

Around seven in ten of those who did contact their supplier on the last occasion when this occurred say they were satisfied with the response given by the electricity company.

Transients

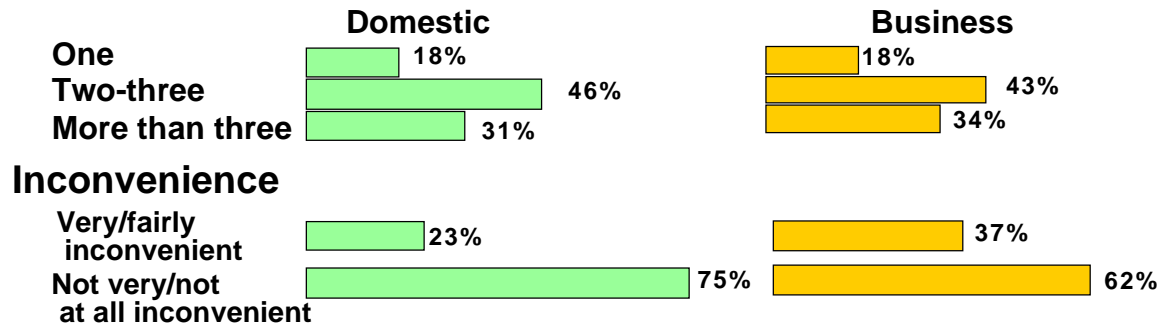
Around one third of all customers have experienced transients (power cuts of one minute or less) in the last two years. Among domestic customers, again it is those living in rural areas who are more likely than urban customers to have suffered such cuts (57% and 24% respectively). Three in five businesses with a maximum demand of over 1MW have experienced transients in the last two years.



Base: All experienced transients in the last 2 years

Among domestic customers who have experienced transients over the preceding 24 months almost half have had between two and three. A sizeable minority - 31% - have experienced more than three such power cuts (42% in rural areas), with one domestic customer in fifty suffering twenty or more transients in the last two years. Three-quarters of domestic customers, however, say they find transients to be either 'not very' or 'not at all' inconvenient. The likelihood of finding such a short power cut inconvenient rises with the size of domestic customers' bills, from 15% among those with bills up to £199 to 31% among those who pay £400 or more each year for their electricity.

Number of transients in the last two years:



Base: All experienced transients in the last 2 years

The average number of transients experienced by business customers is very similar to the figure for domestic customers. Those that have experienced transients are also most likely to have had two to three in the last two years. Once again, some business customers with the largest demand apparently experience (or simply notice ?) more transients than those with lower consumption.

Businesses are more likely than domestic customers to find transients inconvenient, although the majority (62%) still do not feel this way. Maximum demand and the organisation's principal activities have a strong effect on the level of inconvenience, as the table below shows.

Inconvenience of Transients - Businesses

	Total	Maximum demand			Principal activity		
		1MW	100kW+	Under 100kW	Mfing %	Services/retailing %	Education/health /government
Base:	(227) %	(103) %	(44) %	(80) %	(69) %	(97) %	(53) %
Inconvenient	37	77	50	36	40	35	57
Not inconvenient	62	23	50	62	60	65	43

Base: All experiencing transients in last two years

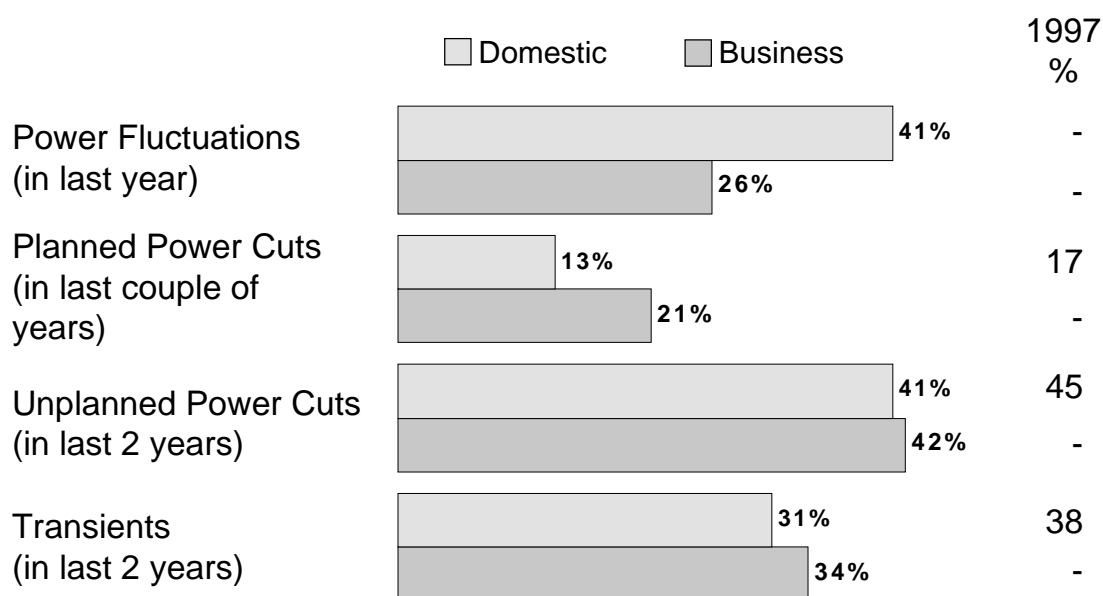
Planned Power Cuts

One in five business customers (21%) have experienced at least one planned power cut in the last couple of years. This figure is slightly higher than for domestic customers - 13%. Rural customers are three times more likely than urban customers to have experienced a planned power cut in the last couple of years (27% and 9% respectively). Half of all customers in the SWALEC area have experienced planned power cuts in this period, in contrast to five per cent in London and four per cent in the ScottishPower region. More than nine in ten of all domestic customers feel that the warning they were given about the power cut was sufficiently accurate.

Businesses in the South are slightly more likely than those elsewhere to have experienced planned power cuts in the last two years. There is little difference, however, in the incidence of planned power cuts among businesses of different maximum demand levels.

While around three in five business customers say that the minimum notice they require for a planned power cut is three days or less, one-third say that they need at least seven days' notice (three in five of those with maximum demand over 1MW).

Incidence of Supply Problems



Base: All respondents

Unplanned Power Cuts

Two in five domestic customers have suffered unplanned power cuts in the last two years. As with the other types of power cut, rural residents are notably more likely to have done so (62% compared to 35% living in urban locations). More than half of domestic customers in some regions have experienced recent unplanned power cuts, compared with figures as low as 12% elsewhere.

Experienced unplanned power cut in last two years

	(Base)	
PES Area		%
Yorkshire	(142)	56
Northern	(153)	55
Southern	(197)	53
Eastern	(136)	52
SEEBOARD	(158)	49
East Midlands	(210)	43
SWALEC	(97)	43
Midlands	(141)	42
ScottishPower	(120)	41
SWEB	(129)	39
Hydro-Electric/Scottish Hydro	(67)	32
MANWEB	(100)	28
NORWEB	(153)	26
London	(150)	12

Base: All domestic customers

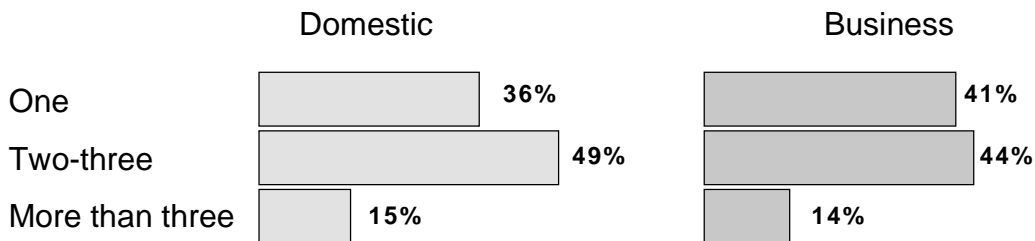
Similarly, two in five businesses have suffered unplanned power cuts in the last two years, with those with a maximum demand of over 1MW marginally more likely than others to have done so.

Around half of all customers who have suffered any unplanned power cuts have experienced two to three, while 14-15% have experienced more. This appears to indicate that while some people have an extremely reliable electricity supply, certain areas (mostly rural) are likely to suffer cuts on a very regular basis.

Unplanned Power Cuts - 1



Number of power cuts in the last two years:



Around three in ten power cuts for domestic customers last up to one hour, as opposed to 37% which last two hours or more. Unplanned power cuts in rural areas tend to last slightly longer than those in urban areas, with half of all such rural power cuts lasting at least two hours.

Three in five domestic customers say that they find unplanned power cuts inconvenient, split evenly between those who find them 'very inconvenient' and 'fairly inconvenient'. Perhaps surprisingly, those aged 55 and over are less likely than younger customers to find them inconvenient. The main causes of inconvenience among domestic customers are the lack of lights (63%), inability to cook (49%) or watch TV (42%).

The vast majority of domestic customers managed to cope with their own resources during their most recent unplanned power cut. Just eight per cent had to go out to buy something, while seven per cent left home temporarily. Those in the professional and managerial classes (AB) were more likely than others to cope with their own resources.

Q Were you able to cope with the resources you had at home, did you have to go and buy anything or did you decide to leave your home temporarily?

	All (506)	Social Class		
		AB (110)	C1/C2 (255)	DE (141)
Base:				
	%	%	%	%
Coped with own resources	85	89	86	78
Went out to buy something	8	5	8	10
Left home temporarily	7	5	5	11

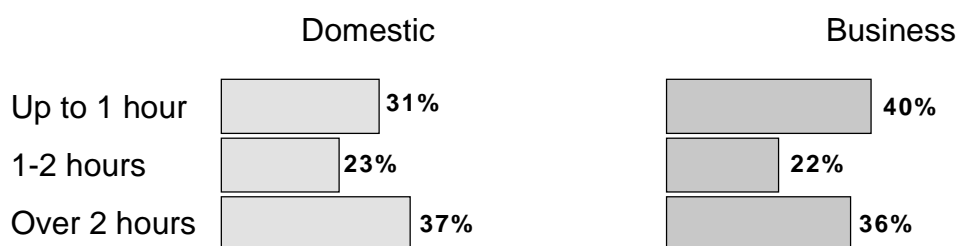
Base: All found power cut inconvenient

Two in five business customers (40%) suffered power cuts of up to an hour; 36% suffered those of two hours or more. Those with the highest maximum demand are twice as likely as those of less than 100kW to have power cuts lasting less than half an hour (36% and 17% respectively).

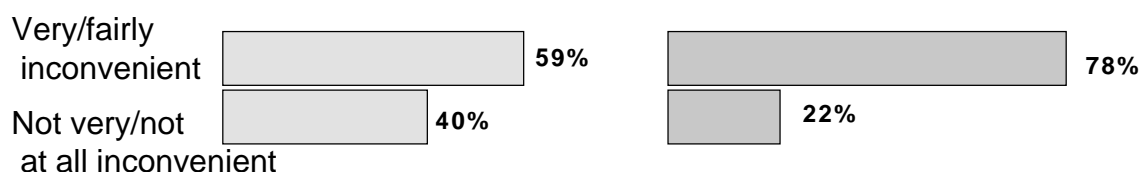
Businesses are more likely than domestic customers to find unplanned power cuts inconvenient - 78% feel this way. Four in five business customers say that such cuts disrupt their equipment or activities (with the single largest disruption being the loss of data on computers - 32%), while two in five say that they cause production and/or money to be lost. One business in twenty says that unplanned power cuts cause damage to its equipment. Businesses with a maximum demand of more than 1MW are three times more likely as others to suffer such damage.

Unplanned Power Cuts – 2

Length of power cuts experienced



Inconvenience



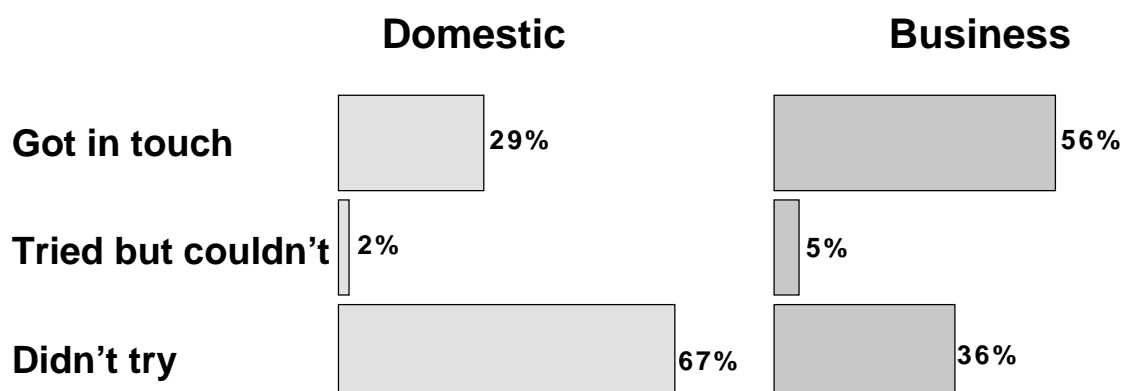
Base: All experienced power cuts

Contacting Electricity Suppliers During Power Cuts

Businesses are twice as likely as domestic customers to try to get in touch with their electricity supplier during a power cut (61% and 32% respectively). The majority are successful, with only 5% and 2% respectively failing to do so. Younger domestic customers (age 16-34: 36%) are more likely than older people (age 55+: 23%) to call their supplier during a power cut. Likelihood to contact suppliers also increases with the size of the electricity bill. Businesses with maximum demand over 100kW are more likely than others to get in contact.

Contacting Electricity Companies During Power Cuts – 1

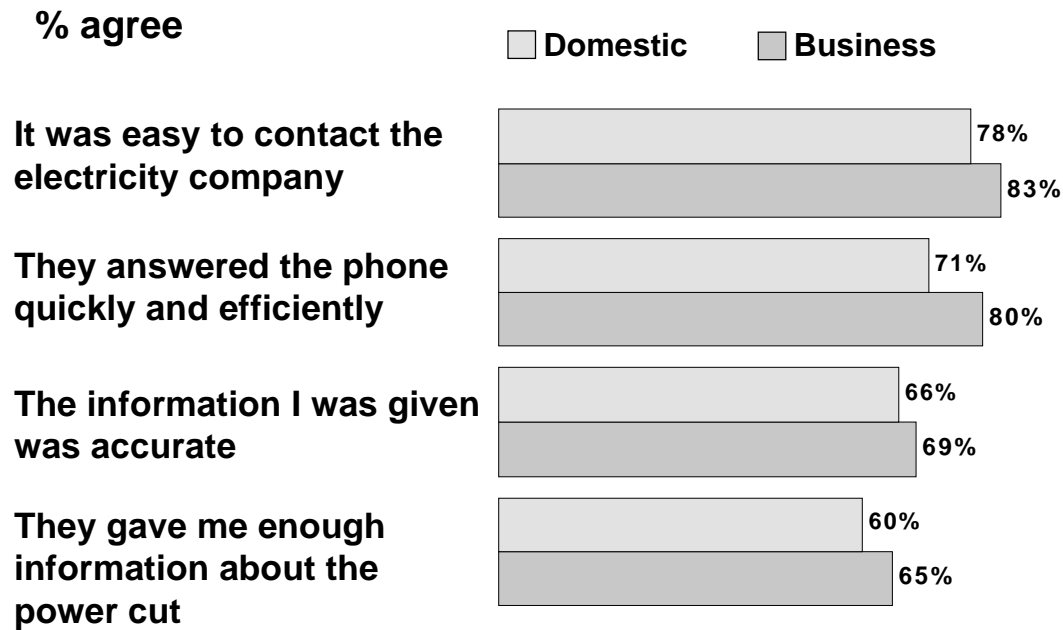
Q On that last occasion, did you get in touch or try to get in touch with your electricity company about it?



Base: All had unplanned power cut

By and large, those who contact their electricity supplier are likely to approve of the service they receive. Business customers tend to be more satisfied than domestic customers. Four in five of all who contacted their supplier say that on the last occasion they found the company easy to contact, while slightly fewer also feel that the company answered the phone quickly and efficiently. Two-thirds of all those who contacted their supplier feel that the information they were given was accurate. A similar proportion agree that they were given sufficient information about the power cut.

Contacting Electricity Companies During Power Cuts – 2



Base: All who got in touch with the electricity company

The proportions imply little dissatisfaction with contact during power cuts. In fact the proportions **disagreeing** with the statements are as follows:

	Domestic %	Business %
It was easy to contact the electricity company	18	15
They answered the phone quickly and efficiently	19	17
The information I was given was accurate	19	25
They gave me enough information about the power cut	29	31

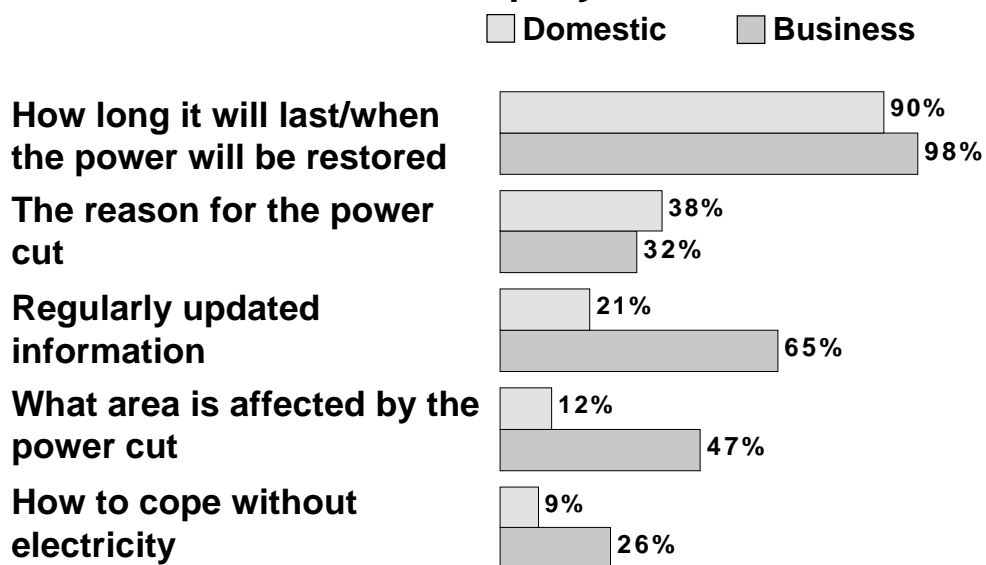
Hence it is, for both groups of customers, the content of the information that is more likely to cause dissatisfaction, though one in four business customers are not happy with the accuracy of the information.

The information that is of overriding concern to all customers when contacting their electricity company during a power cut is how long it will last and when the power will be restored. Almost all businesses (98%) and 90% of domestic customers want to be told this information. Two-thirds of business customers also want regularly updated information (especially those with higher levels of maximum demand), while half want to know what area is affected by the power cut. These may be the elements they had in mind when criticising the “accuracy” of the information. Domestic customers are decidedly less likely to feel the need for this information. Their next most important concern is the cause of the power cut.

One-quarter of all business customers say that they want information from their supplier on how to cope without electricity (compared to nine per cent of domestic customers who feel the same).

Information Provision During Power Cuts

Q During unplanned power cuts, what information do you most need from the company?



Base: All customers

More vs Longer Power Cuts

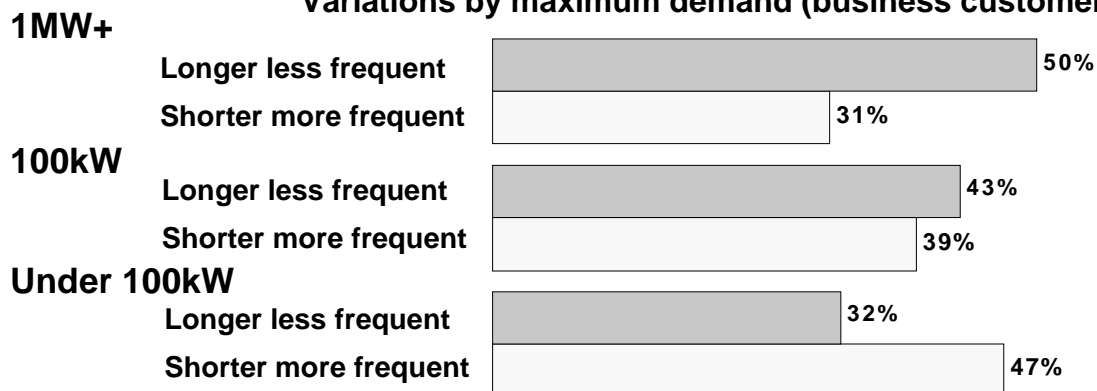
When asked to choose between longer and less frequent power cuts, and shorter but more frequent cuts, domestic customers are twice as likely to opt for the frequent, shorter option, as this would tend to have less significant effects (freezers defrosting etc.). Overall, business customers are also more likely to choose this option, although there is more support for the longer, less frequent cuts than among domestic customers. In fact, there is a significant difference of opinion between those companies with maximum demand exceeding 1MW and others. Half of the larger customers would prefer longer, less frequent power cuts, compared to three in ten who opt for the shorter, more frequent option. This situation is reversed among businesses with a maximum demand under 100kW. Similarly, manufacturing companies are likely to prefer longer, less frequent power cuts, as are those with 1,000 or more employees.

Transients or Longer Power Cuts?

Q If you had to choose, would you prefer?

	Domestic %	Business %
Longer and less frequent power cuts	25	33
Shorter and more frequent power cuts	46	47

Variations by maximum demand (business customers):



Base: All customers suffering transients

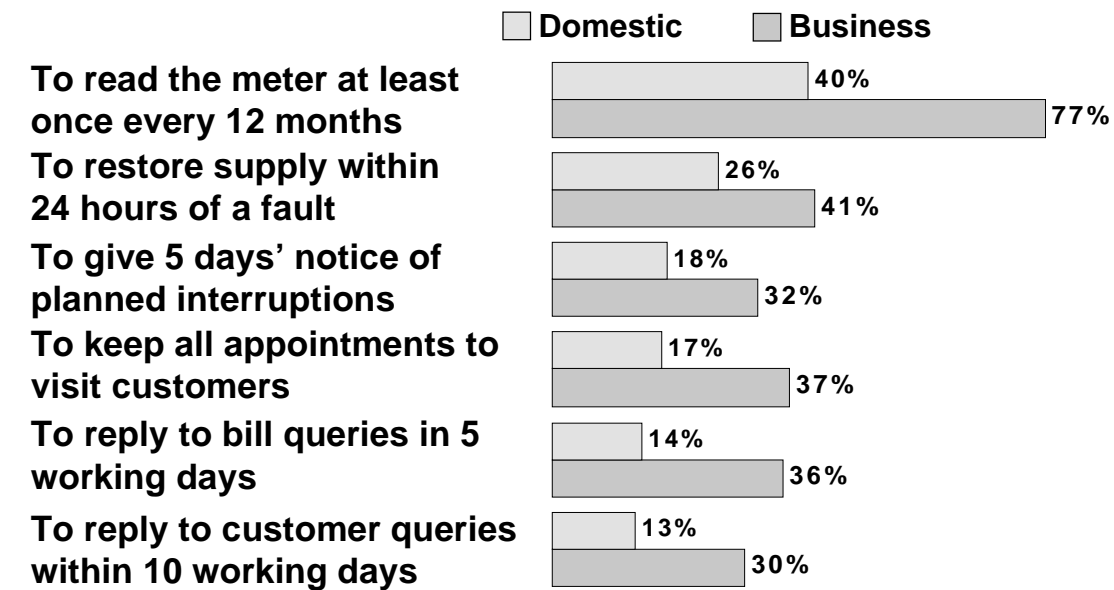
Service Standards

Business customers tend to be more aware than domestic customers of the different standards to which electricity suppliers must comply. Three-quarters, for example, know that electricity companies must read the meter at least once every twelve months, compared to two in five domestic customers. This is far and away the most widely-recognised standard. The next best-known is that companies must restore the electricity supply within 24 hours of a fault, which two in five business customers and one-quarter of domestic customers are aware of.

There are few significant differences in levels of awareness between different types of domestic customer, but those in the ScottishPower region tend to be a little better informed. Businesses with a maximum demand of over 1MW tend to be more likely than others to be aware of most of these standards.

Awareness of Standards

Q Which, if any, have you heard of?



Base: All customers

Only half of business customers claim to know that a system of penalty payments exists for when the electricity companies fail to meet some of these standards. Again, those with the largest demand have a higher level of awareness. This proportion falls to one-third of domestic customers. Older (aged 55+) customers are decidedly more likely than those aged 16-34 to be aware of the penalty payment system, while ABs are also more aware than DEs.

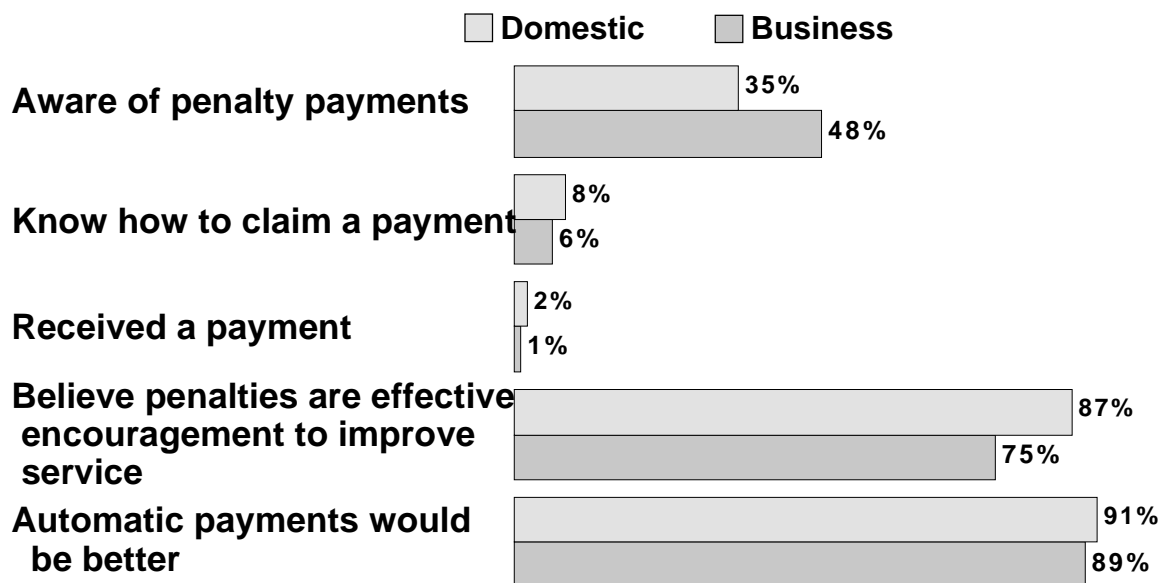
This widespread lack of awareness does not mean, however, that customers believe that the penalty system is not effective. Nine in ten domestic customers and three-quarters of business customers say that they think penalty payments are an effective encouragement to suppliers to improve their service. Businesses which have not had a power cut in the last two years are more likely than others to believe that the penalty payment system is effective.

Awareness that the system exists is no guarantee that people would know how to make a claim. Just eight per cent of domestic customers and six per cent of business customers say that they would know how to claim a penalty payment from their supplier. Rural residents are twice as likely as those living in urban areas to know how to make a claim, while those in the ScottishPower region are the most informed regional group in this respect.

In fact only two per cent of domestic customers have ever received a penalty payment, while only one business customer in 100 has done so. Larger businesses are more likely than average to have received penalty payments - six per cent of all 1MW+ businesses have done so.

Not surprisingly, the vast majority of all customers feel that automatic payments for failing to meet supply standards would be a better system. Around nine in ten customers think that this would be an improvement, with businesses employing over 100 people virtually unanimous in favour.

Penalty Payments – Summary of Issues



Base: All customers

Payment for a set number of power cuts

Around half of business customers feel that it would be fair to introduce a new standard, which would mean that if they were to experience a certain number of power cuts in a year, the suppliers would be forced to make them a compensatory payment, even though some cuts are unavoidable. Around two in five domestic customers feel the same way. Experience of a power cut in the last two years has no impact on customers' attitudes towards such a standard.

New Standard on Number of Power Cuts - 1

	Domestic (2,029) %	Business (503) %
Base: All		
Consider penalty fair on electricity companies		
All	41	48
All had power cut in last 2 years		
Yes	42	47
No	40	48
Maximum demand		
1MW+	-	52
100kW	-	48
Under 100kW	-	48

The average number of cuts which domestic customers (who think such a system would be fair) feel suppliers should be allowed before having to make a payment is 2.3. The median figure however, is only one, implying that the majority of domestic customers feel that electricity companies should be penalised as soon as the supply is interrupted. Rural dwellers tend to be slightly more lenient than urban residents in this regard - London residents being especially harsh.

Almost half of those domestic customers who agree with the introduction of such a system are unable to put a value on the amount they feel the companies should pay out, indicating that it is very difficult for domestic customers to think in terms of the value they place on a guaranteed supply of electricity. Among those who name a figure, the average is £39.30 (median £19), with urban residents again being more likely to take a firm line (average £41.20 median also £19). This overall average figure is not a great deal different to the amount which companies are currently obliged to pay for a power cut of 24 hours.

Business customers, not surprisingly, place a higher value on a continuous supply of electricity. The average number of cuts they are prepared to allow companies is less than two, with the median again being one. More businesses are able to put a price on the cost of power cuts (just 12% are not sure how much the electricity companies should pay out). Among those naming a figure, the average amount specified is £188 (median £62). It is in such circumstances that the cost to certain businesses of power cuts becomes apparent, as the average figure cited by those with a maximum demand over 1MW is £667 (median: £550). The average figure for all manufacturing firms is even higher, at £999. These averages conceal some very large outlying figures.

For many companies, however, as the qualitative research indicated, the idea of a flat rate compensation is not well-regarded. One-quarter of all those businesses which consider the idea of penalty payments to be fair think that the payment should in some way be related to their bill. Many companies suffer to a varying extent, dependent upon when the power cut occurs. Two in five business customers, therefore, say that the payment should reflect the loss or damage that they suffer.

New Standard on Number of Power Cuts - 2

	Domestic (825) %	Business (248) %
Base:		
No. of cuts to be allowed before payment		
Average	2.3	1.96
Median	1	1
Don't know	18%	*
Preferred penalty value:		
Average	£39.30	£187.82
Median	£19	£62
Don't know	48%	12%
Depends on organisation's bill	-	23%
Depends on loss/damage experienced	-	38%

Base: All who consider penalty fair

Payment for a set number of transients

Around half as many customers (17% of domestic customers and 25% of business customers) feel that there should be a similar standard introduced which would force electricity suppliers to make penalty payments after a certain number of transients. Again, experience of one or more transients in the last two years has no significant impact on whether or not customers feel such a penalty system would be fair. However, business customers with a maximum demand in excess of 1MW are twice as likely as those with maximum demand under 100kW to support the introduction of such a scheme.

New Standard on Number of Transients - 1

Base:	Domestic (2,029) %	Business (503) %
Consider penalty for transients fair on electricity companies		
All	17	25
All had transient in last 2 years		
Yes	20	26
No	16	25
Maximum demand		
1MW+	-	52
100kW	-	40
Under 100kW	-	25

Base: All customers

Domestic customers tend to think that suppliers should be allowed an average of 4.2 transients (median 3) before they should have to make penalty payments. Rural residents are prepared to allow an average of five such cuts, compared to 3.9 among urban residents. The mean payment which domestic customers would expect is £43.70, which is, in fact, higher than the average for longer power cuts. The median figure, however, is somewhat lower, at £13 (£9 among rural residents and £16 among urban dwellers). The difference between the two averages would appear to indicate that there is a small number of domestic customers who find transients extremely inconvenient. Many domestic customers are unable to put a price on the inconvenience of transients, as almost half say they do not know what the level should be.

Business customers are harder on suppliers, with those who think such a system is fair being prepared to allow an average of 2.9 transients (median 2) before expecting compensation. The expected payments are also much higher than for domestic customers, averaging at £148 (median £43). With regard to transients, companies with the highest demand appear at first sight to be more forgiving, allowing the suppliers an average of 3.6 transients before they expect a penalty payment. The level of payment they would expect, however, stands at an average of £557 (median: £400).

The time at which the transient hits is evidently even more important than for longer power cuts, as in this case 46% of business customers say that the penalty paid out should depend on the loss or damage they experience, while 14% feel it should simply be linked to their bill. The level of demand has no significant effect on these figures.

New Standard on Number of Transients- 2

	Domestic (825) %	Business (248) %
Base:		
No. of transients to be allowed before payment		
Average	4.20	2.93
Median	3	2
Don't know	22%	5%
Preferred penalty value:		
Average	£43.70	£147.88
Median	£13	£43
Don't know	46%	12%
Depends on organisation's bill	-	14%
Depends on loss/damage experienced	-	46%

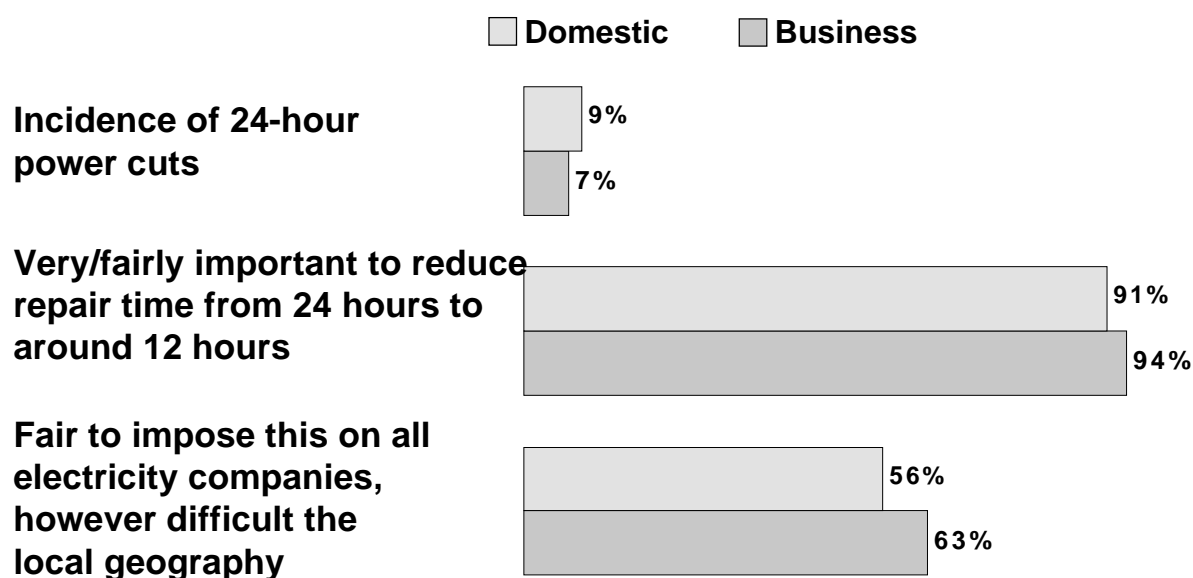
Base: All who consider penalty fair

24 Hour Power Cuts

Overall, nine per cent of domestic customers and seven per cent of business customers say that they have ever experienced a power cut of 24 hours or more - the time period after which electricity suppliers must currently make penalty payments. Domestic rural customers are four times as likely as those living in urban areas to have suffered such a long power cut (22% and 5% respectively).

Nearly all customers (91% of domestic and 94% of business customers) believe that the maximum period for supply restoration should be reduced to 12 hours before a penalty is paid. Most also believe that it would be fair to impose such a standard on all electricity companies, however difficult the local geography. Around three in five businesses (63%), and 56% of domestic customers think this standard should be introduced nationwide. Businesses with more than 500 employees are the most supportive of such a development.

24 Hour Interruptions

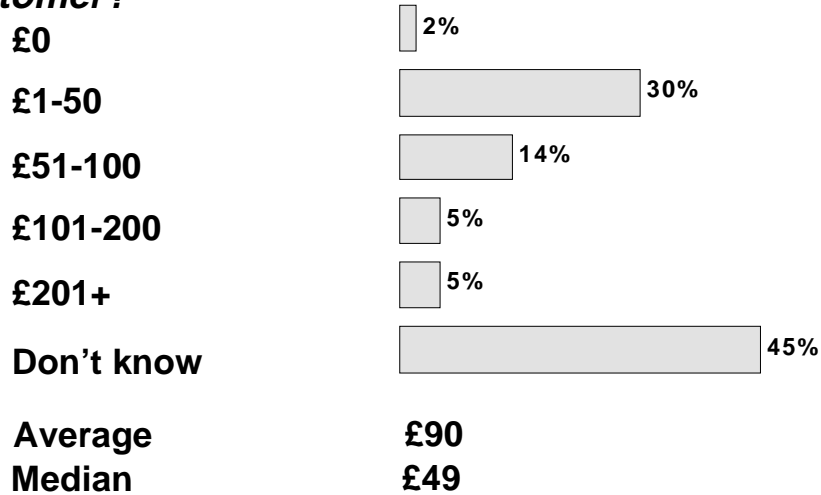


Base: All customers

When considering the current standard, which entails a penalty payment after 24 hours, the median figure which domestic customers would expect to be paid is £49 - almost exactly the current figure. The average amount, however, is £90, indicating that there are some customers who feel that the figure should be significantly higher.

24 Hour Interruptions – Appropriate Domestic Penalty

Q In fact during 1998, 16,000 people suffered a power cut of at least 24 hours. If power is not restored within 24 hours, how much should the company pay each affected customer?



Base: All domestic customers (2,029)

In fact, when told that the current penalty is £50, 56% of domestic customers think that the amount is about right (with the size of the bill having no effect on attitudes). Those who feel it is not enough, however, outnumber those who think it is too much by a factor of four to one (32% vs 8%).

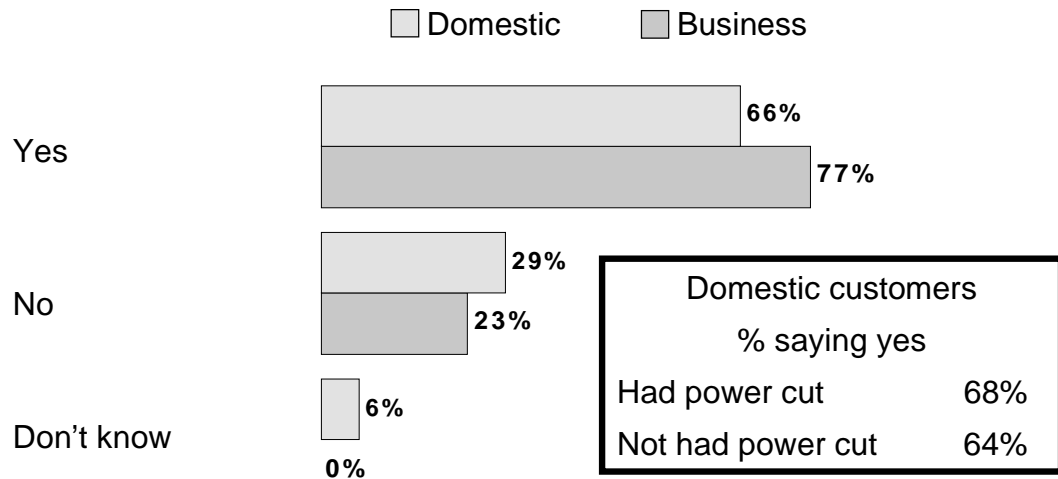
The current amount payable to businesses is £100, which half think is about right. One-third of businesses, on the other hand (and 72% of those with a maximum demand of 1MW or more), think that the amount should be 'a lot more', in contrast to just five per cent who feel the figure is too much.

Severe Weather Exemption

The majority of customers believe that it is fair and reasonable that electricity companies do not have to make payments after 24 hours when they cannot work normally because of 'very bad weather'. Two-thirds of domestic customers and three-quarters of business customers feel this way. Rural customers are more likely to accept that electricity companies experience such difficulties than those living in urban areas. There is no significant difference in the views of those who have suffered power cuts recently.

Severe Weather Exemption

Q *At present electricity companies don't have to make payments after 24 hours when they can't work normally because of "very bad weather". Do you believe this is fair and reasonable?*



Base: All customers

Geographical Variation in Supply Standards

Having seen that most customers believe that the penalty payment system should be introduced without regard for different geographical situations, it is perhaps not surprising that two-thirds of domestic customers think that overall standards of supply should be the same nationwide. One-quarter, on the other hand, believe that it is fair that differences in standards apply. There is little difference between the opinions of those living in rural and urban locations in this regard.

Domestic Customers

Q *Do you think it is fair that customers receive different standards of supply in different parts of the country?*

	All (2,029)	Urban (1,499)	Rural (530)
Base: All			
	%	%	%
Yes	26	25	29
No	65	66	63
Don't know	9	9	7

Business customers, on the other hand, are more likely to feel that it is fair that differences in standards of supply prevail. Just over half (54%) think that this is acceptable.

Business Customers

Q Do you think it is fair that supply standards vary between different companies in different parts of the country because of their own local circumstances?

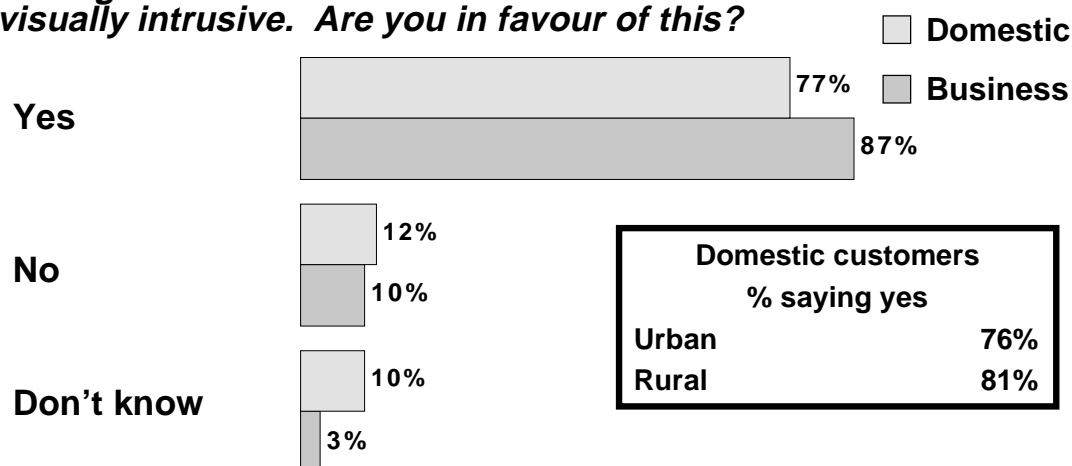
		Had power cut in last 2 years	
	All	Yes	No
Base: All	(503)	(219)	(284)
	%	%	%
Yes	54	56	52
No	41	36	45
Don't know	5	8	3

Undergrounding of Overhead Cables

Many customers feel that electricity companies should be encouraged to put five per cent of their overhead lines underground. Three-quarters of domestic customers are in favour of this, with rural residents and ABs being marginally more likely than others to feel this way. Business customers are even more supportive of such a development, with 87% in favour. Companies employing at least 500 people are the strongest supporters of undergrounding, with 97% in favour.

Undergrounding

Q *Electricity companies may be required to put 5%, that's one in twenty of their overhead lines underground. This is likely to reduce the number of power cuts but may increase the time taken to repair a fault when it occurs. Putting lines underground will also reduce the number of lines that are visually intrusive. Are you in favour of this?*



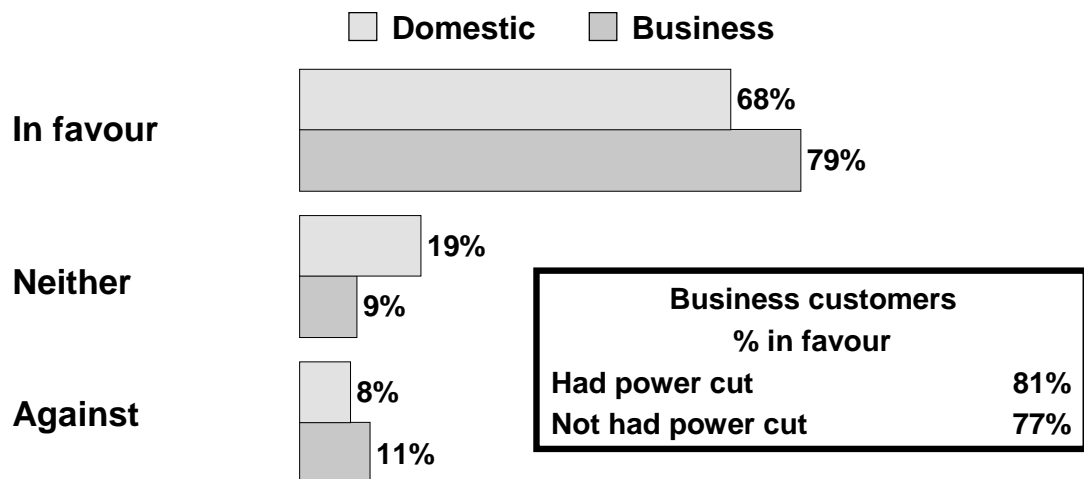
Base: All customers

Restoration targets

Most customers are also in favour of increasing electricity companies' targets for restoring supply following a power cut. At present, companies must restore at least 85% within three hours. Two-thirds of domestic customers and four in five business customers would like to see this target increased by three per cent. Qualitative research indicates that support for such a development would appear to be based largely on the fact that for most people, both domestic and business-based, three per cent seems a relatively insignificant figure, which ought to be achievable

Raising Overall Standards for Supply Restoration

Q At present electricity companies must restore supply to at least 85% of customers within 3 hours of a power cut. For some companies the target is higher. Are you in favour or against raising this proportion by 3%?



Base: All customers

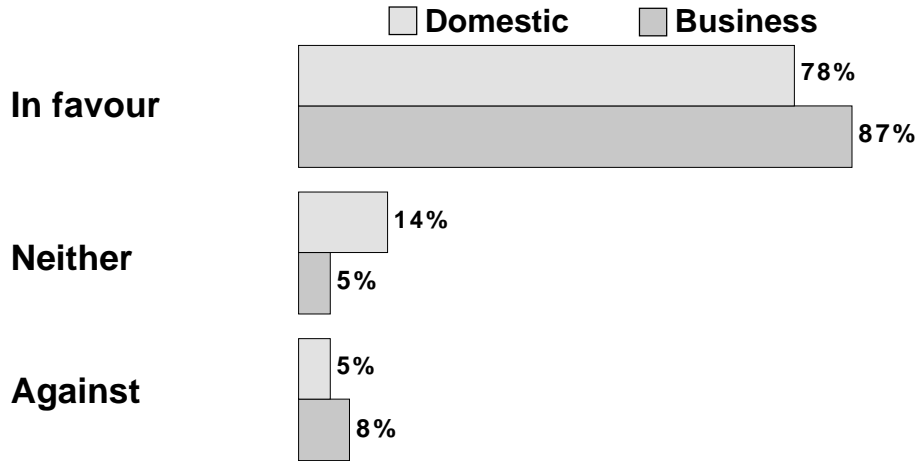
Telephone Enquiries

Customers are very much in favour of a new standard for answering telephone enquiries. When asked whether a standard should be introduced whereby nine out of ten enquiries should be answered within five rings in normal weather, and eight out of ten calls within ten rings in very bad weather, four in five domestic customers feel that this would be a good idea. In fact 45% say they are strongly in favour of such a move. Business customers are even more supportive, with almost nine in ten in favour (55% 'strongly in favour').

Three-quarters of all customers would prefer, when telephoning electricity companies, to not necessarily get through straightaway, but, once connected, to be able to speak immediately to someone who can deal with their call. Around one in five, on the other hand, would prefer to be able to get through straightaway to a switchboard or answering service, and then be put on hold. The only significant difference between all customer groups in this respect is among businesses with at least 500 employees, where support for the first option is even stronger.

Standard for Telephone Enquiries

Q Thinking about telephone enquiries, it is proposed that 9 out of 10 enquiries to electricity companies should be answered within 5 rings in normal weather and 8 out of 10 within 10 rings in very bad weather. Are you in favour or against this requirement on the electricity companies?



Base: All customers

Preference of Telephone Response

Q When you telephone your electricity company, would you prefer to:

	Domestic (2,029) %	Business (503) %
Base: All		
Be able to get through straightway to the switchboard or answering service, and then to be put on hold	15	19
Not get through straightaway, but once you are connected be able to speak immediately to someone who can deal with your call	79	76
Both	3	*
Neither	3	4

Priority Changes - Domestic customers

When presented with a list of eight changes to the standards, the favourite option would be to introduce automatic payments rather than having to make claims. Three in ten domestic customers rank it as their first choice. This is followed by reducing the time period before payments are made to twelve hours, and increasing the proportion of supplies restored within the three hour period. The table below shows the standards in order of popularity, with the right hand column showing the total points amassed for each standard (ranked first = one point, ranked eighth = eight points).

Priority Changes

		% Ranking it first	Total ranks
1	Automatic payments	30	5,881
2	Payments after 12 hours instead of 24 hours	20	6,940
3	Increase proportion of customers' supplies restored within three hours	18	7,412
4	One in twenty lines underground	12	9,057
5	Payments after set number of power cuts	5	9,193
6	New telephone answering standard	7	10,199
7	Remove severe weather exemption	5	10,392
8	Payments after set number of transients	1	11,852

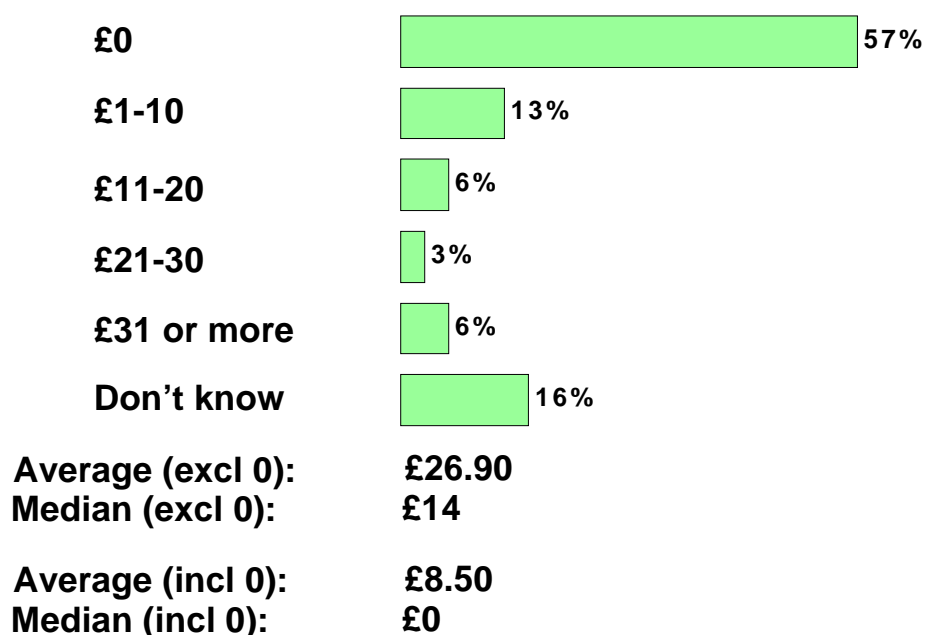
Base: All domestic customers (2,029)

Although when considered in isolation, many customers have been shown to be in favour of such improvements as new telephone answering standards and payments after a set number of power cuts, as the table shows, these are actually fairly low priorities overall.

Different types of domestic customers all appear to have very similar priorities. The only significant difference between any groups appears to be that rural residents would place greater emphasis than others on undergrounding.

When asked generally how much they would be willing to pay to see improved standards of electricity supply, more than half of domestic customers (57%) say that they do not want to spend anything at all. As the qualitative research found, there is a widespread feeling that improved standards should be paid for from suppliers' profits, rather than raising prices further. Overall, (including those who say zero) domestic customers say that they would be willing to pay an average of £8.50 per year more to see improved electricity supply (median figure is zero.)

Willingness to Pay Extra for Reliability Improvements Domestic Customers – £ Extra Per Year



Base: All domestic customers (2,029)

When faced with the suggestion of paying for specific improvements, domestic customers appear to become a little more ready to spend some money. The likely costs attached to each improvement were calculated by OFFER and shown to the respondents. The proportion who say that they would not be willing to spend any more to see these improvements made falls to one-third (highest among those aged 55+). Among those willing to pay for certain improvements, it is automatic payments, again, which prove to be the most popular idea, with 36% saying that they would be willing to spend an extra £6 per year on their electricity bill for this standard to be introduced. Customers aged 16-34 are the most keen on this idea - with 40% willing to spend the extra money.

Perhaps the most surprising result in this respect (given that there is no individual compensation involved) is that three in ten domestic customers would also be willing to spend another £5 per year to see more electricity lines put underground. Rural residents (37%) and ABs (41%) are the most willing to pay for this.

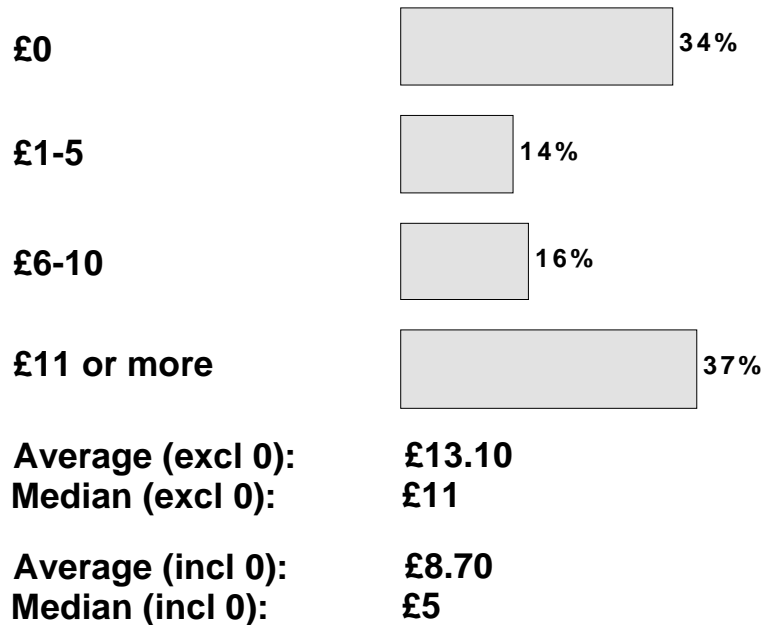
Priority Changes in Light of Costs

	Cost	% Prepared to pay
1 Automatic payments	£6	36
2 One in twenty lines underground	£5	31
3 New telephone answering standard	£1	29
4 3% increase in number of customers' supplies restored within 3 hours	£1	28
5 Payments after 12 hours instead of 24 hours	£10	26
6 Payments after more than 4 power cuts per year	£6	21
7 Payment whatever the weather after 12 hours	£2	17
8 Payment whatever the weather after 24 hours	£1	15
None of these		34

Base: All domestic customers (2,029)

These individual results imply that, while a sizeable minority would not be prepared to spend any more on their electricity bill to gain improved standards, the average amount that all domestic customers would be prepared to spend is £8.70 per annum - only a little more than above - though the median amount rises from 0 to £5, reflecting fewer replies of zero. Nearly two in five domestic customers say that they would spend £11 or more per year to facilitate improvements to the quality of their electricity supply.

Implied Additional Costs Acceptable to Customers – Domestic Customers



Base: All domestic customers (2,029)

Priority Changes - Business customers

Business customers were presented with five possible improvements and asked to rank them in order of preference. Once again, automatic payments are the most popular option, ranked as the most important standard by almost half of business customers.

Priority Changes

		% Ranking it first	Total ranks*
1	Automatic payments	46	4,155,806
2	Increase proportion of customers' supplies restored within three hours	27	5,408,612
3	Payments after 12 hours instead of 24 hours	14	5,890,167
4	Payments after set number of power cuts	6	7,236,737
5	Payments after set number of transients	5	8,671,566

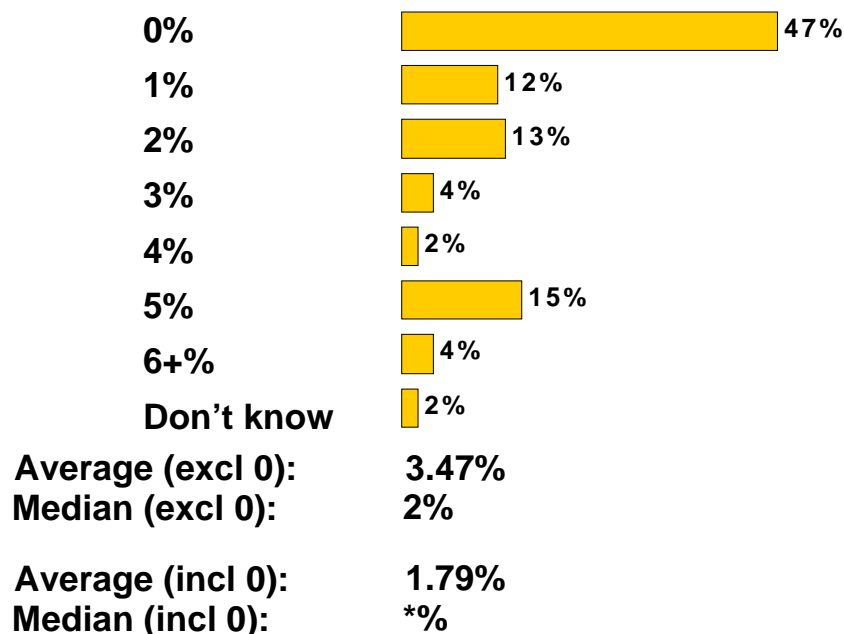
Base: All business customers (503)

* Figures grossed up to all business customers

Although it was shown above that there is a lot of support for payments after a certain number of power cuts, the table shows that few business customers regard it as particularly important in comparison with other options.

Business customers were asked what proportion of their annual bill they would be prepared to pay to see improvements made to the standard of supply. Just under half (47%) would not be prepared to pay anything. Around one-quarter, on the other hand, would spend one or two per cent extra to see service improvements. The overall average is an additional 1.8% on top of a company's annual bill (median amount just over zero.)

Willingness to Pay Extra for Reliability Improvements Business Customers – % Extra Per Year



Base: All business customers (503)

When presented with the likely costs of particular improvements, however, business customers tend to become more willing to consider spending money for better quality supply. While 47% said originally that they would not want to spend any more, just 18% would not be willing to consider any of the four options presented to them. For the first time, automatic payments are no longer the most popular improvement. Three in five business customers would be willing to spend an additional 0.5% on their current bill to see a 3% increase in the number of customers' supplies reconnected within three hours (the popularity perhaps linked to the lower required expenditure for this option). More than half, however, would also be willing to spend an extra 1.5% for the introduction of automatic payments.

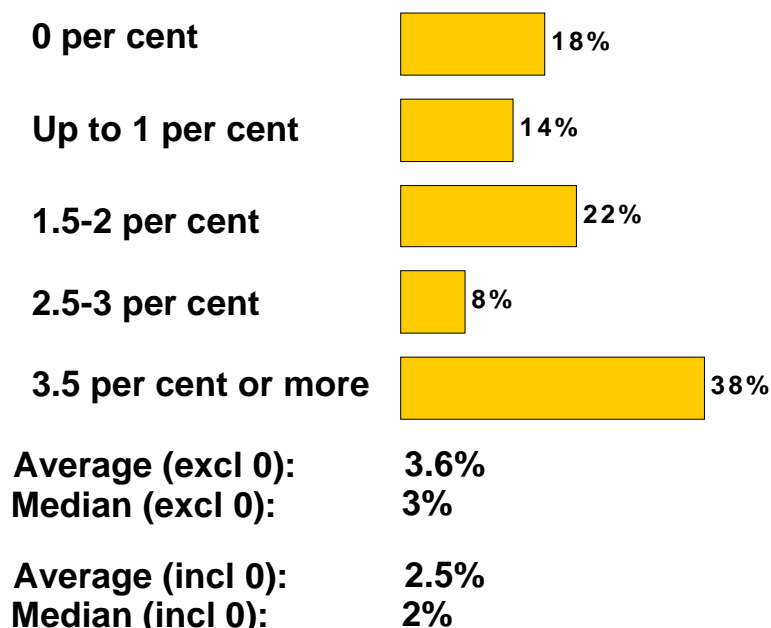
Priority Changes in Light of Costs

		% Cost	% Prepared to pay
1	3% increase in number of customers' supplies restored within 3 hours	0.5	61
2	Automatic payments	1.5	55
3	Payments after 12 hours instead of 24 hours	2.5	36
4	Payments after more than 4 power cuts per year	1.5	34
	None of these		18

Base: All business customers (503)

Over three in ten business customers, therefore, say that they would be willing to spend at least 3.5% more on top of their existing electricity bill to see the introduction of particular new service standards. The average amount overall is 2.5% (median: 2%) - slightly higher than when faced with the prospect of paying for more generalised improvements. For business customers, therefore, when introducing increased costs for service improvements, it is evidently important to stress just how the money is being used.

Implied Additional Costs Acceptable to Customers - Business Customers



Base: All business customers (503)

Efficiency Savings

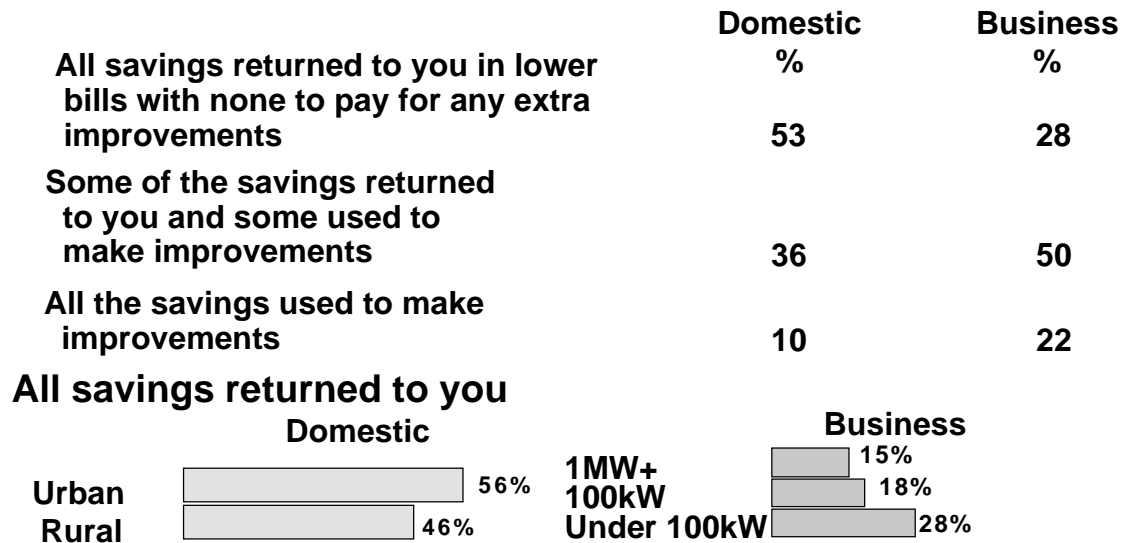
When faced with the idea of electricity companies making use of savings from improved efficiency, the majority of domestic customers (53%) would prefer to see the money returned to them in the form of lower bills. Just over one-third would choose to see some of the savings returned to them and some used to make improvements to the network, while only one in ten would opt to have the savings used to make more improvements. Urban residents are the most likely group to want all the money returned to them.

Business customers tend to be more willing to share the savings. Half would opt for sharing the savings between themselves and the companies, while one in five would be prepared to see all the savings used to make further improvements. Businesses with lower maximum demands tend to be most like domestic customers, while just 15% of those with a maximum demand over 1MW would opt to see all the savings returned to them in the form of lower bills.

When given a nominal £10 to distribute among different options, overall, domestic customers would put around one-third (£3.50) towards lower bills with improvements to the reliability of supply being made at the same rate as present. Slightly less (£3.30) would be spent reducing the number of power cuts. Rural dwellers and older customers would prefer to see a larger proportion of the savings put towards this option. £2.50 would go on reducing the length of power cuts, while around £1.40 would be spent on reducing the number of transients.

Attitudes to Efficiency Savings

Q Which of the following would you like to see?



Base: All customers

Distribution of Efficiency Savings - Domestic Customers

Average figures

	Total	Age 16-34	Age 35-54	Age 55+	Urban	Rural
Base:	(936)	(375)	(297)	(264)	(695)	(241)
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Lower prices	3.46	3.55	3.54	3.20	3.57	3.14
Reduced number of power cuts	3.28	3.02	3.20	3.79	3.14	3.7
Reduced length of power cuts	2.46	2.51	2.52	2.29	2.47	2.42
Reduced number of transients	1.41	1.44	1.43	1.33	1.45	1.31

Base: All willing to use savings for improvements

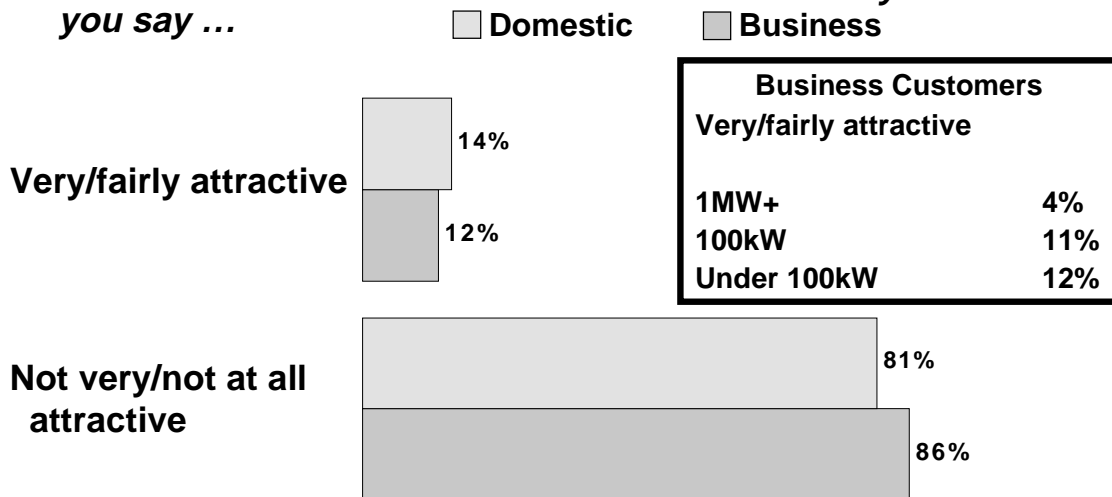
Business customers, given £100 to spread around, would spend most (£30) on reducing the number of power cuts. Slightly less (£27.60) would go towards lower bills, while £23.60 would be spent on reducing the length of power cuts. Again, transients would attract the smallest amount - £18.80.

Worsenment

Very few customers want to see electricity suppliers spending any less on maintaining the network so that bills could be reduced. Just 14% of domestic customers and 12% of business customers feel that this would be an attractive option (with the proportion falling to four per cent among those businesses with a maximum demand of over 1MW). Younger domestic customers (17%) and DEs (16%) are the most likely groups to find this idea attractive.

Attraction of "Worsenment" Option

Q *Alternatively electricity companies could spend less on maintaining the network in order to reduce bills. This could mean more power cuts or longer power cuts for some customers. How attractive would this idea be to you? Would you say ...*



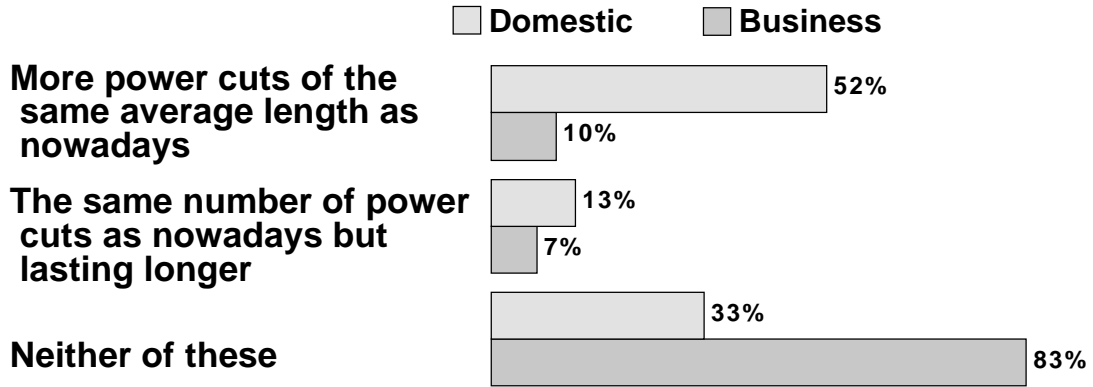
Base: All customers

Even among those who say that they would be prepared to see less investment in the maintenance of the network, one-third of domestic customers and over four in five business customers say that they would be prepared to accept neither more power cuts nor longer power cuts.

Around half of those domestic customers who see less investment as an attractive option would be prepared to accept more power cuts of the same average length as nowadays, with younger customers (61%) and rural residents (69%) most likely to accept such a worsening of standards. The average number of additional power cuts that domestic customers would be prepared to accept each year stands at just under three. (The number of business customers in the survey willing to accept either more or longer power cuts, and the numbers of domestic customers who would accept longer power cuts are so small as to prevent any attempt to draw useful conclusions from these results.)

Acceptance of W orsened Service

Q Which of the following would you be prepared to accept in order to obtain a price reduction?



Proportion still interested in "worsement"	
Domestic	9%
Business	2%

Base: All see "worsement" as attractive

Statistical Reliability

The sample tolerances that apply to the percentage results in this report are given in the table below. This table shows the possible variation that might be anticipated because a sample, rather than the entire population, was interviewed. As indicated, sampling tolerances vary with the size of the sample and the size of the percentage results.

For example, on a question where 50% of the people in a weighted sample of 2,029 respond with a particular answer, the chances are 95 in 100 that this result would not vary more than two percentage points, plus or minus, from a complete coverage of the entire population using the same procedures.

Approximate sampling tolerances applicable to percentages at or near these levels

Size of sample on which survey result is based	10% or 90% ±	30% or 70% ±	50% ±
2,029	1	2	2
503	3	4	4

Tolerances are also involved in the comparison of results from different parts of the sample. A difference, in other words, must be of at least a certain size to be considered statistically significant. The following table is a guide to the sampling tolerances applicable to comparisons.

Differences required for significance at or near these percentage levels*

Size of the samples compared	10% or 90% ±	30% or 70% ±	50% ±
2,029 vs 503 (Business vs domestic customers)	3	4	5

Topline Results - Domestic Customers

All figures are percentages based on weighted and edited data. 2,029 quota-controlled interviews were conducted between 22 Feb and 23 March 1999, in 184 systematically-selected sampling points throughout Great Britain.

An asterisk (*) denotes a figure of less than 0.5% but greater than zero.

Where percentages do not sum to 100, this may be due to computer rounding, multiple responses or the exclusion of 'don't knows'.

	%			%
Telephone in home:		Point type:		
Yes	84	Urban		78
No	5	Rural		22
Refused/Ex-directory	11			

Sex		%
	Male	40
	Female	59
Age of respondent:		%
	16-24	7
	25-34	28
	35-44	16
	45-54	16
	55-64	11
	65+	22
Age of Head of Household is:		%
	16-34	30
	35-54	35
	55+	34
Respondent is:		%
	CIE	60
	Not CIE	37
Occupation of C.I.E.		
Position/Rank/Grade		
Industry/type of firm		
Quals/degrees/apprenticeships		
Number of staff responsible for		
REMEMBER TO PROBE FULLY FOR PENSION CODE BELOW		%
	AB	18
	C1	24
	C2	28
	D	14
	E	16

Working Status of Head of Household

Working (active)	%
Working full time (30hrs+)	49
Working part time (8-29 hrs/wk)	6
Self employed	1
Waiting to start a job	*
Unemployed (registered)	3
Unemployed (not registered but looking for work)	1
Working student	*
Working on a Government training scheme	0
Other	1
Not Working (inactive)	%
Long term sick/permanently ill	3
Retired	26
Housewife	5
At home and not seeking work	2
Non working student	2
Disabled	1
Other	*

Interviewer Declaration: I confirm that I have conducted this interview face-to-face with the above named person at the above named address and that I asked all the relevant questions and recorded the answers in full conformance with the survey specifications and within the MRS Code of Conduct.

Interviewer No:
 Interviewer Name:
 Signature:
 Date of Interview:.....

**THIS FORM IS THE PROPERTY OF MARKET & OPINION RESEARCH INTERNATIONAL (MORI) LTD
 95 SOUTHWARK STREET, LONDON SE1 0HX**

Household is:	%
Pensioner(s) only (ie no children or other adults)	22
Adults and contains no children under 16	36
Adults with child/ren under 16 - two parent household	32
Adult with child/children under 16 - one parent household	7

No. in household (incl. respondent)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
16	37	18	18	7	1	1	*	%

Children (under 5)

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
64	17	5	1	0	*	0	0	0	%

Children (5 - under 16)

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
61	14	11	3	1	*	*	0	0	%

No. of adults in full-time employment in household (include. respondents)

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
39	33	21	2	1	*	*	0	0	%

SHOWCARD M (R) Using this card, approximately how much would you estimate your household's bill was for electricity over the last 12 months? Please include both winter and summer bills. Just read out the letter next to the category which is your best estimate.

		%
A)	Less than £100	1
B)	£100-199	12
C)	£200-299	28
D)	£300-399	24
E)	£400-499	10
F)	£500-599	7
G)	£600-699	3
H)	£700-799	2
I)	£800 or more	1
	No idea	10

SHOW INCOME CARD Which of the categories on this card represents your annual household income before tax? Just read out the letter of the category which applies.

		%
A	Under £2,500	2
B	£2,500 - £4,499	7
C	£4,500 - £6,499	7
D	£6,500 - £7,499	3
E	£7,500 - £9,499	4
F	£9,500 - £11,499	4
G	£11,500 - £13,499	4
H	£13,500 - £15,499	5
I	£15,500 - £17,499	4
J	£17,500 - £21,499	6
K	£21,500 - £24,999	5
L	£25,000 - £29,999	5
M	£30,000 - £39,999	6
N	£40,000 or over	6
	Refused	19
	Don't know	13

Telephone service (fixed line, ie excluding mobile phones) supplied by:

	%
BT	77
Other telecoms supplier	17
No telephone	4

Good morning/afternoon/evening. I'm from MORI, the Market Research company. We're conducting a survey about your local services, may I ask you some questions?

QA. Do you or any member of your immediate family work in the electricity, gas or market research industries?

Yes	1	CLOSE
No	2	ASK QB

QB. Are you the person most responsible, or are you jointly responsible with someone else, for paying the electricity bill in your household?

Person most responsible	1	ASK
Jointly responsible	2	Q1
Not responsible	3	IF SOMEONE NOT IN HOUSEHOLD IS RESPONSIBLE
		CLOSE
Don't know	4	CLOSE

ASK ALL

Q1. Irrespective of whether they now supply your electricity, what is the name of your local regional electricity company? (INTERVIEWER: CHECK THIS MAKES SENSE FOR YOUR AREA)

	%
Eastern Electricity	6
East Midlands Electricity/EMEB	11
Hydro-Electric/Scottish Hydro	3
London Electricity/LEB	8
MANWEB	5
Midland Electricity/MEB	7
Northern Electric/NEEB	6
NORWEB/United Utilities	7
ScottishPower/SSEB	6
SEEBOARD/South Eastern Electricity	8
Southern Electric/SEB	10
South Wales Electricity/SWALEC	5
South Western Electricity/SWEB	6
Yorkshire Electricity/YE	7
Don't know	6

Q2. Can you tell me the name of the company that supplies your electricity?

	%
British Gas	3
Scottish Gas	*
Eastern Electricity (& Natural Gas)	1
Eastern Electricity	5
East Midlands Electricity	9
Economy Power	0
Enron Direct	*
Imperial Power	*
Independent Energy	0
London Electricity	8
Manweb	5
MEB	7
Northern Electric & Gas	6
Norweb	7
Scottish Hydro-Electric	3
ScottishPower	7
SEEBOARD	8
Southern Electric	10
SWALEC	4
South Western Electricity	6
WRE Limited	0
Yorkshire Electricity	7
Other	1
Don't know	3

ASK ALL

Q3. What is your household's main fuel for heating your home? MULTICODE OK.

	%
Coal/solid fuel	4
Electricity -night storage heating	7
Electricity - other	5
Gas - mains	83
- bottled (propane)	1
Oil	3
Other	1
Don't know	*

SUPPLY OF ELECTRICITY

Q4.a In the last year, have you experienced flickering lights or similar effects caused by power fluctuations on the electricity network ?

	%
Yes	41
No	58
Don't know/can't remember	1

ASK IF YES AT Q4.a

Q4.b **Did you contact your electricity company about this ?**

Base: All had power fluctuations (838)

	%
Yes	11
No	89
Don't know/can't remember	*

ASK IF YES AT Q4.b

Q4.c **And were you satisfied or dissatisfied with the response you received from the electricity company?**

Base: All who contacted elec co (92)

	%
Satisfied	69
Dissatisfied	31
No reply received yet	0
Don't know/can't remember	0

ASK ALL

Q5. **Have you been warned in advance by ... (electricity company) that you were going to have a power cut in the last couple of years?**

	%
Yes	13
No	85
Don't know	2

ASK ALL WHO HAD PLANNED POWER CUT: OTHERS GO TO Q7.a

Q6. **Were the details that you were given in the warning sufficiently accurate ?**

Base: All who had planned power cut (261)

	%
Yes	92
No	6
Don't know/can't remember	2

ASK ALL

Q7.a **Have you had a power cut lasting more than just a few minutes, that you were not warned about in the last two years?**

	%
Yes	41
No	56
Don't know	3

Q7.b **How many of these power cuts would you say you have had in the last two years? PROBE FOR BEST ESTIMATE**

Base: All had unplanned power cut (838)

	%
1	36
2-3	49
4-5	9
6-10	5
More than 10	1
Don't know	1

Q8. **On the last occasion when this happened, how long did the power cut last?**

Base: All had unplanned power cut (838)

	%
Less than half an hour	14
Half an hour to one hour	17
Over one hour to two hours	23
Over 2 hours - 6 hours	30
Over 6 hours - 12 hours	5
Over 12 hours but less than 24 hours	1
24 hours or more	1
Don't know/can't remember	8

Q9. **SHOWCARD A How inconvenient was that power cut for you and your household ?**

Base: All had unplanned power cut (838)

	%
Very inconvenient	31
Fairly inconvenient	28
Not very inconvenient	28
Not at all inconvenient	11
Don't know	1

IF VERY/FAIRLY INCONVENIENT:

Q10a. **In what way was it inconvenient? PROBE FULLY AND CODE BELOW. MULTICODE POSSIBLE**

Base: All very/fairly inconvenient (495)

	%
Couldn't cook	49
No lights	63
Freezer/fridge went off	31
No heating	30
Could not watch TV	42
Other	30

Q10b. **Were you able to cope with this with the resources you had at home, did you have to go out and buy anything or did you decide to leave your home temporarily ? MULTICODE OK FOR ANSWERS 2 & 3**

Base: All very/fairly inconvenient (495)

	%
Coped with own resources	85
Went out to buy something	8
Left home temporarily	7

ASK ALL WHO HAD UNPLANNED POWER CUT

Q11. **On that last occasion, did you get in touch or try to get in touch with . . . (electricity company) about it ?**

Base: All had unplanned power cut (838)

	%
Got in touch	29
Tried but couldn't	2
Didn't try	67
Don't know	1

IF GOT IN TOUCH WITH ELECTRICITY COMPANY:

Q12. **SHOWCARD B Using the words on this card could you tell me whether you agree or disagree with the following statements. SINGLE CODE ONLY FOR EACH. READ OUT. ALTERNATE ORDER. TICK START**

Base: All got in touch (246)

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know/no opinion
	%	%	%	%	%	%
It was easy to contact the electricity company	39	39	3	10	8	1
The information I was given was accurate	33	33	11	10	9	4
They gave me enough information about the power cut	27	34	8	17	12	3
They answered the phone quickly and efficiently	35	36	8	10	8	2

ASK ALL

Q13. **In the last two years, have you, as far as you know, experienced any very short power cuts lasting less than 1 minute, perhaps those that affect electric clocks and timers?**

	%
Yes	31
No	66
Don't know	3

Q14. **How many of these power cuts would you say you have had in the last two years? PROBE FOR BEST ESTIMATE.**

Base: All who had very short power cuts (635)

	%
1	18
2-3	46
4-5	17
6-10	8
11-20	4
More than 20	2
Don't know	6

Q15. **SHOWCARD C On the last occasion this happened, how inconvenient was that very short power cut for you and your household ?**

Base: All who had very short power cuts (635)

	%
Very inconvenient	8
Fairly inconvenient	15
Not very inconvenient	41
Not at all inconvenient	34
Don't know	1

ASK IF VERY/FAIRLY INCONVENIENT

Q16. **In what way was it inconvenient ? PROBE FULLY AND CODE BELOW**

Base: All very/fairly inconvenient (149)

	%
Had to reset clocks/timers	82
Alarm clock didn't go off	21
Couldn't use computer/lost data	6
Other	22

ASK ALL WHO HAD VERY SHORT POWER CUTS

Q17. **If you had to choose, would you prefer ...? READ OUT**

Base: All who had very short power cuts (635)

	%
Longer and less frequent power cuts	25
or	
Shorter and more frequent power cuts	46
Don't know	29

ASK ALL

Q18. SHOWCARD D During **unplanned** power cuts, what information do you most need from the company? PROBE FULLY. MULTICODE OK.

	%
How long it will last/when the power will be restored	90
The reason for the power cut	38
What area is affected by the power cut	12
How to cope without electricity	9
Regularly updated information	21
Nothing/do not need any information	2
Other	1
Don't know	2

Q19. SHOWCARD E How important do you think it is to have a continuous uninterrupted electricity supply ?

	%
Very important	87
Fairly important	12
Not very important	1
Not at all important	*
Don't know	*

Q20. SHOWCARD F And how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the reliability of your electricity supply?

	%
Very satisfied	64
Fairly satisfied	31
Neither/nor	2
Fairly dissatisfied	2
Very dissatisfied	*
Don't know	*

Q21. Do you think the electricity companies should invest more in improving the reliability of your electricity supply, or do you feel this is unnecessary at present?

	%
Should invest more	24
Unnecessary at present	69
Don't know	7

STANDARDS OF SERVICE

ASK ALL

Q22. SHOWCARD G . . . (electricity company) **has to meet various service standards set by OFFER, the electricity regulator. Which, if any, have you heard of? Just read out the letter(s) that apply.**
MULTICODE OK.

	%
A) To restore electricity supply within 24 hours of a fault	26
B) To give at least 5 days notice when they need to interrupt the supply for maintenance	18
C) To reply to customers' queries about problems within 10 working days	13
D) To read the meter at least once every 12 months	40
E) To reply to queries on bills within 5 working days	14
F) To keep all appointments to visit customers	17
None of these	37
Don't know	4

Q23. **In some of these cases, the electricity company has to give the customer a payment if it doesn't meet the standard. Were you aware of this:**

	%
Yes	35
No	64
Don't know	1

ASK ALL AWARE

Q24. **Have you ever received one of these payments from your electricity company?**

Base: All aware of payments (713)

	%
Yes	6
No	93
Don't know	1

ASK ALL

Q25. **Electricity companies are required to pay fixed penalties to customers when they do not meet certain service standards. Do you think this is an effective way of encouraging companies to improve their service ?**

	%
Yes	87
No	9
Don't know	4

Q26. **Do you know how to claim a penalty payment?**

	%
Yes	8
No	92
Don't know	1

Q27. **In your view, should customers have to claim a payment, or would automatic payments be better?**

	%
Should have to claim	7
Automatic payments better	91
Don't know	3

Q28. **Electricity companies could be asked to make payments to customers after a set number of power cuts. As some cuts may be unavoidable, do you think this penalty would be fair on electricity companies?**

	%
Yes	41
No	47
Don't know	13

ASK ALL WHO SAY IT IS FAIR TO PENALISE COMPANIES FOR A NUMBER OF POWER CUTS

Q29. **How many power cuts should a company be allowed in a one year period before it makes a payment? WRITE IN NUMBER**

Base: All saying it is fair (831)

Average(inc 0)	2.3
Don't know	18%

Q30. **If there were more cuts than this in a year, how much should the company pay each affected customer? WRITE IN AMOUNT IN £. ROUNDED TO THE NEAREST £. USE LEADING ZEROES - 0000 FOR £0.**

Base: All saying it is fair (831)

Average (£ inc 0)	39.30
Don't know	48%

ASK ALL

Q31. **Companies could also be asked to pay customers if they have a set number of very short (under 1 minute) power cuts. Given that some cuts may be unavoidable, do you think this payment would be fair on electricity companies?**

	%
Yes	17
No	74
Don't know	9

ASK ALL WHO THINK PAYMENTS FOR SHORT POWER CUTS ARE FAIR

Q32. **How many very short power cuts should an electricity company be allowed in a one year period before it has to make a payment? WRITE IN NUMBER**

Base: All saying it would be fair (353)

Average(inc 0)	4.2
Don't know	22%

Q33. **If there were more very short power cuts than this in a year, how much should the companies pay each affected customer? WRITE IN AMOUNT IN £. USE LEADING ZEROES - 0000 FOR £0.**

Base: All saying it would be fair (353)

Average (£ inc 0)	43.70
Don't know	47%

ASK ALL

Q34. **At present, electricity companies have to try to restore supply after a power failure within 24 hours. Have you ever experienced a power cut of this duration?**

	%
Yes	9
No	90
Don't know	1

Q35. **In fact, during 1998, 16,000 people suffered a power cut of at least 24 hours. If power is not restored within 24 hours how much should the company pay each affected customer? WRITE IN AMOUNT IN £. USE LEADING ZEROES - 0000 FOR £0.**

Average (£ inc 0)	90
Don't know	45%

Q36. **SHOWCARD H The current payment to customers for failing to restore supply within 24 hours is a fixed amount of £50. Which of these best describes the payment?**

	%
It is far too much	2
It is a little too much	6
It is about right	56
It should be a little more	15
It should be a lot more	17
Don't know	4

Q37. SHOWCARD I Considering the current duration of power cuts, how important is it to you to reduce the repair time from 24 hours to around 12 hours?

	%
Very important	62
Fairly important	29
Not very important	5
Not at all important	1
Don't know	3

Q38. There is, in fact, a proposal to reduce the required period to restore supply to 12 hours. Would it be fair, in your view, to impose this on all the electricity companies, however difficult the local geography and conditions might be?

	%
Yes	56
No	35
Don't know	9

Q39. At present electricity companies don't have to make payments after 24 hours when they can't work normally because of "very bad weather". Do you believe this is fair and reasonable?

	%
Yes	66
No	29
Don't know	6

ASK ALL

Q40. Electricity companies may be required to put one in twenty of their overhead lines underground. This is likely to reduce the number of power cuts but may increase the time taken to repair a fault when it occurs. Putting lines underground will also reduce the number of lines that are visually intrusive. Are you in favour of this?

	%
Yes	77
No	12
Don't know	10

Q41a. Thinking about telephone enquiries, it is proposed that 9 out of 10 should be answered within 5 rings in normal weather and 8 out of 10 within 10 rings in very bad weather. Are you in favour of or against this requirement on the electricity companies? Is that strongly or just a little?

	%
Strongly in favour	45
A little in favour	34
Neither	14
A little against	4
Strongly against	1
Don't know	3

Q41b. When you telephone your electricity company, would you prefer to. READ OUT

	%
A. Be able to get through straightaway to the switchboard or answering service, and then be put on hold	15
or	
B. Not get through straightaway, but once you are connected be able to speak immediately to someone who can deal with your call	79
DO NOT READ OUT	Both 3
	Neither 3

Q42. At present electricity companies must restore supplies to at least 85% of customers within 3 hours of a power cut. For some companies the target is higher. Are you in favour or against raising this proportion by 3%. Is that strongly or just a little?

	%
Strongly in favour	32
A little in favour	36
Neither	19
A little against	6
Strongly against	1
Don't know	6

Q43. Do you think it is fair that customers receive different standards of supply in different parts of the country ?

	%
Yes	26
No	65
Don't know	9

Q44. The possible changes to the Standards are designed to reduce the number and length of power cuts. Although you personally may not have had many power cuts, there are people in some areas who have and OFFER is keen to improve the reliability of supply across all customers. To achieve higher standards OFFER may let the electricity companies raise prices a little - provided customers agree to the improvements.

How much extra per year would you be prepared to pay on your electricity bill to allow extra improvements to reliability to be made?

PROBE FOR A FIGURE (REMIND RESPONDENT IT IS PER YEAR) PLEASE TRY TO AVOID DK. IF ZERO WRITE IN 0000. USE LEADING ZEROES.

Average (£ excl zero)	26.90
% saying zero	57
Don't know:	16

INTERVIEWER: PLEASE HAND QUESTIONNAIRE TO RESPONDENT TO COMPLETE Q45 AND 46.

Q45. Listed below are some of the main changes that could be made to the Standards. Could you please put them in rank order, where No 1 is the one you would most like to see and No 8 is the one you would least like to see:

		Rank 1-8	
A.	To make payments to customers after 12 hours of power failure instead of 24 hours	% ranking it first	20%
		Total rankings	6940
B.	To make payments whatever the weather conditions	% ranking it first	5%
		Total rankings	10392
C.	To make automatic payments, with no need for customers to claim them	% ranking it first	30%
		Total rankings	5881
D.	To increase the number of customers whose supply must be restored within 3 hours of a power failure	% ranking it first	18%
		Total rankings	7412
E.	To make payments where there are more than a set number of power cuts	% ranking it first	5%
		Total rankings	9193
F.	To place some overhead lines underground.....	% ranking it first	12%
		Total rankings	9057
G.	To answer 9 out of 10 telephone enquiries within 5 rings during normal weather conditions and 8 out of 10 within 10 rings during "very bad weather" conditions	% ranking it first	7%
		Total rankings	10199
H.	To make payments where there are more than a set number of very short power cuts.....	% ranking it first	1%
		Total rankings	11852

Q46. This shows the effect that these changes could have on your annual electricity bill. Please indicate which if any you would like to see, bearing in mind the additional cost to you.

	Cost to you each year	%
A. Payments to customers after 12 hours of power failure instead of 24 hours	£10	26
B. Payment whatever the weather conditions		
- After 12 hours (only available if you chose 1 above)	£2	17
- After 24 hours.....	£1	15
C. Automatic payments, with no need for customers to claim them.....	£6	36
D. 3% increase in the number of customers whose supply must be restored within 3 hours of a power failure.....	£1	28
E. Payments made where there are more than 4 power cuts a year.....	£6	21
F. One in twenty overhead lines placed underground	£5	31
G. 9 out of 10 telephone enquiries answered within 5 rings during normal weather conditions and 8 out of 10 within 10 rings during “very bad weather” conditions	£1	29
None of these		34

THANK YOU. NOW PLEASE HAND THIS QUESTIONNAIRE BACK TO THE MORI INTERVIEWER.

Q47. **It is possible that various efficiency savings may be made over the next year. These could be used to lower bills or to make improvements to the network.**

SHOWCARD J **Which of the following would you like to see?**

	%
All the savings returned to you, in lower bills with none to pay for any extra improvements	53
Some of the savings returned to you and some used to make improvements	36
All the savings used to make improvements	10

ASK ALL WHO CHOOSE TO MAKE IMPROVEMENTS/SHARE SAVINGS

Q48. SHOWCARD K **How would you like to see each £10 of this saving distributed across these four options: WRITE IN AMOUNT IN POUNDS/PENCE IN EACH BOX. ENSURE IT ADDS TO £10**

Base: All who agree to use any savings for improvements (936)

Averages (incl 0)

A.	Reducing the number of power cuts	£3.28
B.	Reducing the length of power cuts	£2.46
C.	Reducing the number of very short (under 1 minute) power cuts	£1.41
D.	Put towards lower prices and continue any improvements to the reliability of supply at the same rate as at present	£3.46

(Please ensure these figures add to £10)

ASK ALL

Q49. SHOWCARD L **Alternatively, companies could spend less on maintaining the network. This could mean more power cuts or longer power cuts for some people but lower prices. How attractive would this idea be to you ?**

	%
Very attractive	3
Fairly attractive	11
Not very attractive	38
Not at all attractive	43
Don't know	5

ASK ALL VERY/FAIRLY ATTRACTIVE AT Q49

Q50. **Which of the following would you be prepared to accept in order to obtain a price reduction?**
READ OUT

Base: All see idea as attractive (282)

	%
More power cuts of the same average length as nowadays	52
or	
The same number of power cuts as nowadays but lasting longer	13
Neither of these	33

ASK ALL CHOOSING MORE POWER CUTS

Q51. **How many more power cuts per year would you be prepared to accept? WRITE IN NUMBER**

Base: All prepared to accept more cuts (146)

Average:	2.5
Don't know:	17%

ASK ALL CHOOSING LONGER POWER CUTS

Q52. **How much longer would you be prepared to accept that an average length of power cut could be?**
WRITE IN NO OF HOURS TO NEAREST HOUR.

Base: All prepared to accept longer cuts (38)

Average:	5.5 hours
Don't know:	44%

ASK ALL

Q53. **What other comments, if any, would you like to make about the issue of improving the reliability of your electricity supply ? PROBE FULLY. WRITE IN.**

TO FOLLOW IN COMPUTER TABLES

NOW THANK RESPONDENT AND GO TO DEMOGRAPHICS

Topline Results - Business Customers

These results are weighted and edited figures based on 503 telephone interviews with the person responsible for managing the electricity supply in a range of organisations.

Fieldwork dates were 3-17 March 1999

All sub-sample bases are shown unweighted

An asterisk (*) denotes a figure of less than 0.5% but greater than zero.

Where percentages do not sum to 100, this may be due to computer rounding, multiple responses or the exclusion of 'don't knows'.

Good morning/afternoon/evening. Could I speak to the person who is most responsible for managing the electricity supply to your organisation?

WHEN CONNECTED:

Good morning/afternoon/evening. I'm calling from MORI, the market research company. Would you be able to help us by answering some questions about the electricity supply to your organisation?

FILTER QUESTIONS TO CHECK ELIGIBILITY

QA. **First of all, can I just check, is your organisation itself part of the electricity, gas or market research industries?**

Yes	1	CLOSE	
No	2	CONTINUE	()

QB. **Does your organisation operate on one site or more than one site?**

One site	1	GO TO QD	
More than one	2	GO TO QC	()

QC. **And how many sites are you personally responsible for ?**

	()		
One site	1		
More than one	2		()

IF MORE THAN ONE SITE: For the following questions, I'd like you to think specifically about your principal site: (INTERVIEWER: IF THEY ARE IN DOUBT IT IS THE ONE LIKELY TO BE MOST SERIOUSLY AFFECTED BY POWER CUTS)

QD. **Can you tell me, very approximately, the maximum electricity demand of your organisation?**

1 Megawatt or more	1	GO TO	
100 Kilowatt - less than 1 MW	2	Q1 IF FITS	
Under 100 KW	3	QUOTA	
Don't know	4	ASK QE	()

QE **Could you tell me the approximate cost of your annual electricity bill ?**

£250,000 or more (1MW)	1	GO TO	
£25,000 - £249,999 (100KW+)	2	Q1 IF FITS	
Under £25,000 (Under 100 KW)	3	QUOTA	
Don't know	4	ASK QF	()

QF. To the best of your knowledge, since when have you been able to purchase electricity from suppliers other than your local electricity company? Has it been since 1990 or 1994 or more recent than that?

Since 1990 (1 MW)	1	GO TO Q1 IF FITS QUOTA	
Since 1994 (100 KW+)	2		
More recently (under 100 KW)	3		
Still cannot buy from alternative supplier (under 100 KW)	4		
Don't know	5	PROBE FOR RESPONDENT WHO IS MORE FAMILIAR WITH ELECTRICITY SUPPLY	()

I need to fax you two sheets to help you complete the questions, could I have the number of your nearest fax machine please?

.....

ASK ALL

Q5. Irrespective of whether they now supply your electricity, what is the name of your local regional electricity company?

	%
Eastern Electricity	10
East Midlands Electricity/EMEB	12
Hydro-Electric/Scottish Hydro	2
London Electricity/LEB	7
MANWEB	3
Midland Electricity/MEB	10
Northern Electric/NEEB	5
NORWEB/United Utilities	9
ScottishPower/SSEB	4
SEEBOARD/South Eastern Electricity	9
Southern Electric/SEB	14
South Wales Electricity/SWALEC	1
South Western Electricity/SWEB	5
Yorkshire Electricity/YE	9
Don't know	*

SUPPLY OF ELECTRICITY

Q6.a In the last year, have you experienced power fluctuations on the electricity network ?

	%
Yes	26
No	73
Don't know/can't remember	1

ASK IF YES AT Q2.a

Q2.b Did you contact your electricity company about this ?

Base: All experienced fluctuations (194)

	%
Yes	45
No	53
Don't know/can't remember	2

ASK IF YES AT Q2.b

Q3 And were you satisfied or dissatisfied with the response you received from the electricity company?

Base: All yes (121)

	%
Satisfied	73
Dissatisfied	27
No reply received yet	0
Don't know/can't remember	*

ASK ALL

Q4. Have you been warned in advance by your electricity company that you were going to have a power cut in the last couple of years?

	%
Yes	21
No	76
Don't know	3

ASK ALL WHO HAD PLANNED POWER CUT: OTHERS GO TO Q6

Q5. How many days' notice would be the least that you would find acceptable before a planned power cut?

Base: All had planned power cut (109)

	%
One	10
Two	21
Three	27
Four	2
Five	8
Six	0
Seven	19
More than seven	13
Don't know	*
None required	*

ASK ALL

Q6. **Have you had a power cut lasting more than just a few minutes, that you were not warned about in the last two years?**

	%
Yes	42
No	57
Don't know	1

Q7. **How many of these power cuts would you say you have had in the last two years? PROBE FOR BEST ESTIMATE**

Base: All had unplanned power cut (219)

	%
1	41
2-3	44
4-5	7
6-10	3
More than 10	4
Don't know	1

Q8. **On the last occasion when this happened, how long did the power cut last?**

Base: All had unplanned power cut (219)

	%
Less than half an hour	18
Half an hour to one hour	22
Over one hour to two hours	22
Over 2 hours - 6 hours	34
Over 6 hours - 12 hours	1
Over 12 hours but less than 24 hours	1
24 hours or more	*
Don't know/can't remember	2

Q9. **How inconvenient was that power cut for your organisation? Would you say ... READ OUT**

Base: All had unplanned power cut (219)

	%
Very inconvenient	63
Fairly inconvenient	15
Not very inconvenient	15
Not at all inconvenient	7
Don't know	0

IF VERY/FAIRLY INCONVENIENT:

Q10. **In what way was it inconvenient? PROBE FULLY. WRITE IN.**

Base: All inconvenient (183)

Summary of answers given:	%
Disruptions to equipment/activity	80
(Explicitly) lost money/production	38
Damage to equipment	8

ASK ALL WHO HAD UNPLANNED POWER CUT: OTHERS GO TO Q13

Q11. **On that last occasion, did you get in touch or try to get in touch with your electricity company about it?**

Base: All had unplanned power cut (219)

	%
Got in touch	56
Tried but couldn't	5
Didn't try	36
Don't know	3

IF GOT IN TOUCH WITH ELECTRICITY COMPANY:

Q12. **Could you tell me whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. Is that strongly or just tend to ...? SINGLE CODE ONLY . READ OUT**

Base: All got in touch (147)

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know/no opinion
	%	%	%	%	%	%
It was easy to contact the electricity company	63	21	2	9	6	0
The information I was given was accurate	44	25	6	9	16	*
They gave me enough information about the power cut	39	26	4	11	20	*
They answered the phone quickly and efficiently	57	23	2	11	6	2

ASK ALL

Q13. **In the last two years, have you, as far as you know, experienced any very short power cuts lasting less than 1 minute, perhaps those that affect electric clocks and timers?**

	%
Yes	34
No	64
Don't know	1

Q14. **How many of these power cuts would you say you have had in the last two years? PROBE FOR BEST ESTIMATE.**

Base: All had very short power cuts (227)

	%
1	18
2-3	43
4-5	15
6-10	9
11-20	5
More than 20	5
Don't know	4

Q15. **On the last occasion this happened, how inconvenient was that very short power cut for your organisation? Would you say READ OUT**

Base: All had very short power cuts (227)

	%
Very inconvenient	19
Fairly inconvenient	18
Not very inconvenient	40
Not at all inconvenient	22
Don't know	1

IF VERY/FAIRLY INCONVENIENT:

Q16. **In what way was it inconvenient? PROBE FULLY. WRITE IN.**

Base: All very/fairly inconvenient (130)

Summary of answers given:	%
Disruptions to equipment/activity	90
Damage to equipment	7
(Explicitly) lost money/production	*

ASK ALL WHO HAD VERY SHORT POWER CUTS : OTHERS GO TO Q18

Q17. **If you had to choose, would you prefer: READ OUT.**

Base: All had very short power cuts (227)

	%
Longer and less frequent power cuts	33
or	
Shorter and more frequent power cuts	47
Don't know	20

ASK ALL

Q18. **During unplanned power cuts, what information do you most need from the company? Do you need to know.... READ OUT. PROBE FULLY. MULTICODE OK.**

	%
How long it will last/when the power will be restored	98
The reason for the power cut	32
What area is affected by the power cut	47
How to cope without electricity	26
Regularly updated information	65
Nothing/do not need any information	1
Compensation/rebate information	1
Reassurance of supply	1
Inform us of who the points of contact are	*
Other	*
Don't know	1

Q19. **How important do you think it is to have a continuous uninterrupted electricity supply? _Would you say ... READ OUT**

	%
Very important	92
Fairly important	6
Not very important	1
Not at all important	*
Don't know	0

ASK ALL

Q20. **And are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the reliability of your electricity supply? Would you say very or fairly ...?**

	%
Very satisfied	62
Fairly satisfied	31
Neither/nor	1
Fairly dissatisfied	4
Very dissatisfied	2
Don't know	*

Q21. **Do you think the electricity companies should invest more in improving the reliability of your electricity supply, or do you feel this is unnecessary at present?**

	%
Should invest more	36
Unnecessary at present	63
Don't know	*

()

STANDARDS OF SERVICE

ASK ALL

Q22. **Your electricity company has to meet various service standards set by OFFER the electricity regulator. For each I read out could you tell me if you have heard of it? MULTICODE OK.**

	Yes
	%
A) To restore electricity supply within 24 hours of a fault	41
B) To give at least 5 days notice when they need to interrupt the supply for maintenance	32
C) To reply to customers' queries about problems within 10 working days	30
D) To read the meter at least once every 12 months	77
E) To reply to queries on bills within 5 working days	36
F) To keep all appointments to visit customers	37

Q23. **In some of these cases, the electricity company has to give the customer a payment if it doesn't meet the standard. Were you aware of this:**

	%
Yes	48
No	52
Don't know	0

Q24. **Have you ever received one of these payments from your electricity company?**

Base: All aware of payments (260)

	%
Yes	2
No	97
Don't know	1

ASK ALL

Q25. **Penalty payments to customers exist to encourage electricity companies to improve their service standards. Do you think that the principal of penalty payments is an effective way of achieving this?**

	%
Yes	75
No	17
Don't know	8

Q26. **Do you know how to claim a penalty payment?**

	%
Yes	6
No	94
Don't know	*

Q27. **In your view, should customers have to claim a payment, or would automatic payments be better?**

	%
Should have to claim	10
Automatic payments better	89
Don't know	1

Q28. **Electricity companies could be asked to make fixed penalty payments to customers after a set number of power cuts. As some cuts may be unavoidable, do you think this penalty would be fair on electricity companies?**

	%
Yes	48
No	50
Don't know	3

Q29. **How many power cuts should an organisation experience in a one year period before the electricity company has to make a fixed penalty payment ? WRITE IN NUMBER**

Base: All who think it is fair (248)

Average(incl 0):	1.96
Don't know:	*

Q30. **If there were more cuts than this, how much should the company pay each affected customer? IF NOT SURE, PROBE: Can you give me an estimate ? WRITE IN AMOUNT IN £. ROUNDED TO THE NEAREST £**

Base: All who think it is fair (248)

	%
Average (£ incl 0)	187.82
Depends on organisation's bill	23
Depends on loss/damage experienced	38
Don't know	12

ASK ALL

Q31. **Companies could also be asked to pay customers a fixed penalty payment if they have a set number of very short (under 1 minute) power cuts. Given that some cuts may be unavoidable, do you think this payment would be fair on electricity companies?**

	%
Yes	25
No	74
Don't know	1

Q32. **How many very short power cuts should an organisation experience in a one year period before the electricity company has to make a fixed penalty payment? WRITE IN NUMBER**

Base: All who think it is fair (186)

Average(incl 0):	2.93
Don't know:	5%

Q33. **If there were more very short power cuts than this, how much should the companies pay each affected customer? IF NOT SURE, PROBE: Can you give me an estimate ? WRITE IN AMOUNT IN £**

Base: All who think it is fair (186)

	%
Average (£ incl 0):	147.88
Depends on organisation's bill	14
Depends on loss/damage experienced	46
Don't know	12

ASK ALL

Q34. **At present, electricity companies have to try to restore supply after a power failure within 24 hours. Have you ever experienced a power cut of this duration?**

	%
Yes	7
No	93
Don't know	0

Q36. **The current payment to customers for failing to restore supply within 24 hours is a fixed amount of £100. Would you say this penalty is too much, about right or should it be more? IF TOO MUCH: Is that just a little too much or far too much? IF SHOULD BE MORE : Is that just a little more or a lot more?**

	%
It is far too much	3
It is a little too much	2
It is about right	52
It should be a little more	9
It should be a lot more	32
Don't know	3

Q37. **Considering the current duration of power cuts, how important is it to you to reduce the repair time from 24 hours to around 12 hours? Would you say it was . . . ? READ OUT**

	%
Very important	74
Fairly important	20
Not very important	4
Not at all important	2
Don't know	*

Q38. **There is, in fact, a proposal to reduce the required period to restore supply to 12 hours. Would it be fair, in your view, to impose this on all the electricity companies, however difficult the local geography and conditions might be?**

	%
Yes	63
No	35
Don't know	2

Q39. **At present electricity companies don't have to make penalty payments after 24 hours when they can't work normally because of "very bad weather". Do you believe this is fair and reasonable?**

	%
Yes	77
No	23
Don't know	*

ASK ALL

Q40. Electricity companies may be required to put 5% (one in twenty) of their overhead lines underground. This is likely to reduce the number of power cuts but may increase the time taken to repair a fault when it occurs. Putting lines underground will also reduce the number of lines that are visually intrusive. Are you in favour of this?

	%
Yes	87
No	10
Don't know	3

Q41a. Thinking about telephone enquiries, it is proposed that 9 out of 10 enquiries to electricity companies should be answered within 5 rings in normal weather and 8 out of 10 within 10 rings in very bad weather. Are you in favour of or against this requirement on the electricity companies? Is that strongly or just a little?

	%
Strongly in favour	55
A little in favour	32
Neither	5
A little against	4
Strongly against	4
Don't know	1

Q41b. When you telephone your electricity company, would you prefer to. READ OUT

A.	Be able to get through straightaway to the switchboard or answering service, and then be put on hold	19
	or	
B.	Not get through straightaway, but once you are connected be able to speak immediately to someone who can deal with your call	76
DO NOT READ OUT	Both	*
	Neither	4

Q42. At present electricity companies must restore supplies to at least 85% of customers within 3 hours of a power cut. For some companies the target is higher. Are you in favour or against raising this proportion by 3%. Is that strongly or just a little?

	%
Strongly in favour	40
A little in favour	39
Neither	9
A little against	9
Strongly against	2
Don't know	2

Q43. Do you think it is fair that supply standards vary between different companies in different parts of the country because of their own local circumstances?

	%
Yes	54
No	41
Don't know	5

Q44. The possible changes to the Standards are designed to reduce the number and length of power cuts. Although you personally may not have had many power cuts, there are people in some areas who have and OFFER is keen to improve the reliability of supply across all customers. To achieve higher standards OFFER may let them raise prices a little - provided customers agree to the improvements.

How much extra each year, expressed as a percentage, would you be prepared to pay on your electricity bill to allow extra improvements to reliability to be made?
 PROBE FOR A FIGURE (REMIND RESPONDENT IT IS PER YEAR) PLEASE TRY TO AVOID DK. IF ZERO WRITE IN 000

Average (% excl zero):	3.47
Zero:	47
Don't know	2

ON FAXED SHEET

Q45. Turning now to the first sheet we faxed to you : listed here are some of the main changes that could be made to the Guaranteed Standards. Could you please put them in rank order, where No 1 is the one you would most like to see and No 5 is the one you would least like to see:

		Rank 1-5	
A.	To make payments to customers after 12 hours of power failure instead of 24 hours	% ranking it first:	14
		Total rankings:	5,890,167
B.	To make automatic payments, with no need for customers to claim them.....	% ranking it first:	46
		Total rankings:	4,155,806
C.	To increase the number of customers whose supply must be restored within 3 hours of a power failure	% ranking it first:	27
		Total rankings:	5,408,612
D.	To make payments where there are more than a set number of power cuts	% ranking it first:	6
		Total rankings:	7,236,737
E.	To make payments where there are more than a set number of very short power cuts	% ranking it first:	5
		Total rankings:	8,671,566

INTERVIEWER PLEASE NOTE (IF ASKED): THE PENALTY PAYMENT WOULD BE SIMILAR IN EACH CASE

Now could you please read me the ranks you have written in for each starting with A ...

ON FAXED SHEET

Q46. **This shows the effect that these changes could have on your organisation's annual electricity bill. Please indicate which you would like to see, bearing in mind the additional cost to your organisation.**

	Approximate Cost per year	%
A. Payments to customers after 12 hours of power failure instead of 24 hours	2.5% of the electricity bill	61
B. Automatic payments, with no need for customers to claim them.....	1.5% of the electricity bill	55
C. 3% increase in the number of customers whose supply must be restored within 3 hours of a power failure	0.5% of the electricity bill	36
D. Payments made where there are more than 4 power cuts a year	1.5% of the electricity bill	34
None of these		18

Now please read out to me which of the numbered boxes you have ticked

THANK RESPONDENT AND RESUME INTERVIEW

Q47. **It is possible that various efficiency savings may be made over the next year. These could be used to lower bills or make improvements.**

Which of the following would you like to see? READ OUT

	%
All the savings returned to you, in lower bills with none to pay for any extra improvements.....	28
Some of the savings returned to you and some used to make improvements	50
OR	
All the savings used to make improvements	22

Q48. **How would you like to see each £100 of this saving distributed across these four options: READ OUT. WRITE IN AMOUNT IN POUNDS IN EACH BOX. ENSURE IT ADDS TO £100**

Base: All who wish some savings to be used for improvements (393)

	Averages (incl 0)
A. Reducing the number of power cuts	£30.01
B. Reducing the length of power cuts	£23.59
C. Reducing the number of very short (under 1 minute) power cuts	£18.81
D. Put towards lower prices and continue any improvements to the reliability of supply at the same rate as at present	£27.59
(Please ensure these figures add to £100)	£100.00

ASK ALL

Q49. **Alternatively electricity companies could spend less on maintaining the network in order to reduce bills. This could mean more power cuts or longer power cuts for some customers. How attractive would this idea be to you? Would you say ... READ OUT**

	%
Very attractive	4
Fairly attractive	8
Not very attractive	20
Not at all attractive	67
Don't know	1

Q50. Which of the following would you be prepared to accept in order to obtain a price reduction?
READ OUT

Base: All who find idea attractive (47)

	%
More power cuts of the same average length as nowadays	10
or	
The same number of power cuts as nowadays but lasting longer	7
Neither of these	83.

Q51. How many more power cuts per year would you be prepared to accept? WRITE IN NUMBER

Base: All prepared to accept more cuts (5)

Average:	0.97
Don't know	33

Q52. How much longer would you be prepared to accept that an average length of power cut could be?

Base: All prepared to accept large cuts (5)

Average:	0.11
Don't know	0

ASK ALL

NOW JUST A COUPLE OF QUESTIONS TO HELP US CLASSIFY THE FINDINGS

Q53a. How would you describe the principal activity of your organisation? READ OUT IF NECESSARY Is it? MULTICODE OK

IF MORE THAN ONE SITE AT QB ASK:

Q53b. How would you describe the principal activity of your site? READ OUT IF NECESSARY Is it? MULTICODE OK

	Q53a	Q53b
	%	%
Manufacturing/processing	17	16
Financial/banking	4	6
Services/retailing	48	42
Transport/distribution	8	4
Construction/mining	3	1
Education	5	4
Healthcare/NHS	4	6
Agriculture/farming	3	2
Local government	3	5
Publishing/printing	1	1
IT/software	1	*
Charity	1	0
Office based	*	9
Head office	0	9
Other	*	3

Q54. **What is your exact job title?**

RESULTS TO FOLLOW IN TABLES

Q55. **How many employees do you have in your organisation in Great Britain?**

RESULTS TO FOLLOW IN TABLES

IF MORE THAN ONE SITE AT QB ASK:

Q56. **How many employees do you have on your site?**

RESULTS TO FOLLOW IN TABLES

THANK AND CLOSE

Q58. CODE FROM LEAD: **No of employees**

		%
A	1-20	60
B	21-500	35
C	501+	5
