Research Report

Micro and Small Business Engagement in Energy Markets

Prepared for: Ofgem

Prepared by: BMG Research Ltd

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1 Executive summary

1.1 Background

In September 2015, Ofgem commissioned BMG to undertake a survey of how micro and small businesses[1] across England, Wales and Scotland engage in energy markets. In total, 1500 telephone interviews were completed between 19th October 2015 and 4th December 2015. The survey follows on from a broadly similar survey conducted by BMG in Autumn 2014.

1.2 Key Findings

As in 2014, micro and small businesses reported mixed experiences and perceptions of the energy market.

Key findings for 2015 include:

- Recent switchers and those who have recently shopped around are more likely to take notice of contract renewal letters and contract documents. These documents may be triggers for switching and shopping around or they may be part of the information gathering process.
- Those that have read their contract documents in detail are more likely to be satisfied with their clarity and length. This suggests that among those rating the document negatively in these respects, it is the fact that they have not examined the document in detail, rather than deficiencies in the document itself, that is at the root of dissatisfaction.
- The contract renewal point is a critical time for reviewing supply arrangements. Hence the importance of the contract renewal notification in terms of encouraging businesses to be proactive in pursuing better deals.
- There has been a shift away from extending/rolling-over contracts towards negotiating new contracts with existing suppliers this year. The propensity to negotiate a new contract with an existing supplier is particularly evident among businesses with higher than average energy expenditure.
- There has been an improvement in ratings of suppliers since 2014, but there is still a relatively high level of distrust in suppliers' propensity to treat businesses fairly.
- Businesses are more likely to consider switching easy than to have a negative view of the process. However, a significant minority of businesses are negative about the ease of switching, and opinion is divided with regard to how worthwhile switching is.
- Views on brokers remain overwhelmingly negative across all businesses. However, businesses that use brokers are much more likely to be positive about them.

[1] Defined as having fewer than 50 employees across all GB sites. For brevity these have been referred to throughout this summary as 'businesses'.

1.3 Gas and electricity usage and expenditure

Two fifths of businesses (41%) use both gas and electricity. More than half of businesses with both mains electricity and gas (56%) have the same supplier for both.

One in three businesses (33%) report having a smart meter. This is a slight increase compared with 2014 (30%).

On average, businesses spend approximately £4,000 a year (including VAT) on mains electricity, on average, it accounts for 14% of all operating costs. The average spend on mains gas is lower at just under £3,000 (inc. VAT) and represents 11% of overall costs on average.

1.4 Current contracts and contract change

The majority of businesses (93%) have a fixed term contract for their gas/electricity supply and pay by direct debit (86%). Around two thirds of businesses with a fixed term contract report that the duration of these are for either one (32%) or two (34%) years.

A significant minority of businesses – just over two fifths (43%) - are in their first contract with a supplier. However, more than half of those that have remained with their supplier have negotiated a new contract (53%). The propensity to have done so is greater than in 2014 (45%), when we found that businesses were more likely to have extended or rolled over their existing contract (50% in 2014; now 42%).

Most businesses whose previous contract was extended or rolled-over (90%) were aware of this occurring at the time.

Satisfaction with the renegotiation or extension process is high (73% satisfied). The 10% that say they are dissatisfied with the process highlight price increases, poor communication and renewing without the businesses knowledge as some of the reasons for this.

Nearly half of businesses that were able to recall and who provided a response to the question[2] (48%) recalled receiving a contract renewal letter in the last 12 months; with those that have recently switched supplier more likely to recall doing so (60% of those that had switched in the last year).

Forty-one per cent of those recalling receiving the contract renewal letter reported having read it in detail; 47% had glanced at it or skim read it. Recent ‘switchers’ and those who have recently shopped around for a new contract were more likely to have read the letter in detail.

The majority of all businesses that have read or at least glanced at the contract renewal letter, recall seeing their current energy prices on the letter (80%); with two thirds (67%) recalling information about their energy consumption from the letter.

More than three quarters of businesses (77%) have read their current contract document in detail or at least glanced through it. This includes a quarter of all businesses that have read it in detail (24%).

[2] Excludes respondents that replied ‘don’t know’ from the base

Eighty-two per cent of businesses with fixed term contracts know when it ends; 59% know exactly and 23% know approximately. Three fifths of businesses with fixed term contracts (62%) know when they are able to start renegotiating or giving notice of termination; 16% know exactly and 46% know approximately.

Of the 95% of businesses who recall receiving a bill in the last 12 months, 70% do not recall seeing a contract end date or a date they need to give notice by.

Of those businesses that have noticed contract end dates and shopped around in the last 12 months (17% of all businesses), more than half (54%) said they were prompted to do so by the dates included on the bill. However, this is a lower proportion than in 2014 (64%, when it was based on a similar proportion of all businesses - 16%)

1.5 The switching experience

Most businesses (82%) said they review their energy supply arrangements when their contract comes up for renewal. This is a higher proportion than in 2014 (73%) and suggests that information regarding renewal dates is becoming increasingly important as a trigger for contract review.

Nearly two thirds of all businesses (64%) report they switched gas/electricity supplier in the last 5 years. The proportion of all businesses that have switched supplier in the last 12 months has increased slightly; from 23% in 2014 to 25% in 2015.

As in 2014, just under half of all businesses (47%) have looked into other supplier or tariff options in the last 12 months.

While cost savings remain the main factor in decisions to switch, knowing that a contract was coming to an end and receiving a renewal notice from an existing supplier were also significant triggers (82% and 70% of those that switched in the last 12 months).

Overall views of the switching process amongst businesses that have switched in the last 12 months tend to be broadly positive. Businesses were more likely to agree than disagree that comparing prices is easy (48% strongly agree/agree; 39% strongly disagree/disagree) whilst the majority (61%) thought that switching supplier was easy and a minority (37%) felt that the switching process was too long. However, views are mixed with regard to whether expected savings actually materialise. Just under two fifths agreed that that expected savings do not always materialise but the proportion that disagreed was the same (38% agree; 38% disagree with this statement).

Overall, 16% of all businesses have never considered switching supplier. Among businesses that have not switched in the last 5 years satisfaction with the current supplier is a key reason for not switching (77% of non-switchers). Being tied to an existing contract is also significant as a reason (51%).

1.6 Use of brokers

Brokers are the most frequently cited source of information when businesses choose their electricity/gas contract (64%). Slightly fewer businesses cite their current supplier as a source (59%). Both of these sources are now more frequently cited when compared to 2014 (57% and 46% respectively).

In 2014, the current supplier was most likely to be cited as a primary source of information when choosing a contract. This year businesses are now as likely to cite brokers in this respect (both 28%, compared with 33% and 26% respectively in 2014). In addition, one in ten businesses (10%) has mainly used a price comparison website or telephone service and satisfaction with these (among those that have used them) is high (75% satisfied).

Overall, perceptions of brokers across all businesses tend towards the negative (46% negative; 19% positive), but among users of broker services, perceptions are more positive (29% negative; 44% positive). However, when rating the services of their own broker, more than four fifths of users are satisfied (82%) and only a small minority (7%) are dissatisfied.

Eighty-five per cent of all businesses have been approached by a broker in the last 12 months and 20% report more than 50 contacts. During interviews and attempted interviews many businesses relayed their frustration with the number of cold-calls they receive from brokers. As in 2014, we found that some refusals to participate in the survey were a result of businesses believing the interviewer was actually an energy broker.

Two thirds of businesses that have been approached by brokers and felt able to provide an assessment of broker behaviour[3] believe that they had a professional tone (66%). However, fewer of those able to provide a view recall that brokers identified themselves clearly (as a broker) and provided accurate information about the services they offered (53% for both)[3]. Just 31% of businesses able to recall[3] said brokers had been upfront about the cost of using their services.

Satisfaction with the broker service amongst those that have used one is high, with 82% of users satisfied overall.

1.7 Contact with suppliers

Forty-nine per cent of all businesses have contacted their gas/electricity supplier in the last year. Of those who made contact, the main reason was to seek information (60%), while nearly one in four made a complaint (23%).

Around three fifths of businesses that have contacted suppliers have been satisfied with the time it took them to respond to their query or complaint (57%) and the solution they offered (60%). However, fewer than half (48%) have been satisfied with any follow up service/communication. One in four businesses that have contacted suppliers are dissatisfied with the time it took them to respond to their query or complaint (25%); the solution they offered (23%); and any follow up service/communication (26%). Views on contact with suppliers tend towards being positive, although the proportions of one in four that are dissatisfied represent significant minorities for whom supplier contact could be improved.

1.8 Views on suppliers and the energy market

Two thirds of businesses are satisfied with their current supplier's services overall (67%). Satisfaction levels are highest for the supplier meeting their business needs (72% satisfied) but lower for the information provided on available tariffs and options (51% satisfied) and value for money (53% satisfied). Compared to 2014, satisfaction with suppliers has increased slightly across all aspects measured.

[3] Excludes respondents that replied 'don't know' from the base

Two fifths of businesses (39%) say they tend to distrust or completely distrust energy suppliers to be fair in dealing with business customers. A lower proportion (26%) tend to trust or completely trust them in this regard, while a third (33%) are neutral on this subject.

Just a third of businesses providing a rating in 2015[4] (33%) are satisfied with the competitiveness of prices in the energy market and more than a quarter (27%) are dissatisfied.

[4] Excludes respondents that replied ‘don’t know’ from the base

2 Introduction

2.1 Background and context

In September 2015 the Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (Ofgem), commissioned BMG Research to undertake a survey of how micro and small businesses engage in the energy market.

The 2015 survey follows previous surveys in 2012, 2013 and 2014 which tracked the experiences of non-domestic customers. While the 2014 and 2015 surveys only focus on the experiences of micro and small businesses, the 2012 and 2013 surveys also included medium and large businesses. The 2015 survey findings are compared only to those of 2014 as a result.

The target populations for both the 2014 and 2015 research were all micro and small businesses across England, Wales and Scotland; defined as those with up to 49 employees across all their sites within Great Britain. The survey was undertaken at enterprise rather than establishment level. Thus, where a business operated from more than one site only its head office was contacted.

2.2 Aims and objectives

Ofgem's non-domestic proposals for the Retail Market Review (RMR) were designed to make the market simpler, clearer and fairer for businesses. Changes introduced as a result of the review included making it compulsory for energy suppliers to include contract end dates on bills and allowing micro businesses to provide termination notice at any time. These measures took effect on 31st March 2014.

In 2014, Ofgem also consulted on options to regulate non-domestic Third Party Intermediaries (TPIs)[5] and to improve processes for automatic rollovers and contract renewal.

Micro and small businesses have been considered those most likely to be affected by Ofgem's Retail Market Review and thus, they remain the focus of policy change within the energy market in 2015 and while the survey's overarching aim was to provide Ofgem with a clear picture of micro and small business engagement in the energy market, it also aimed to provide feedback on the RMR changes.

The survey covered a wide range of topics including:

- **Current energy usage**
    - Which types of energy are currently used
    - How much is spent on each energy type
    - Proportion of overall expenditure spent on energy
    - Which suppliers are used
    - How energy is paid for
    - Type of contract in place
    - Any monitoring arrangements

[5] In this survey, TPIs include brokers, telephone and website price comparison services.

- **Information provision**
  - Extent to which businesses understand energy bills and contracts
  - Extent to which businesses are satisfied with energy bills and contracts
  - Sales and marketing activity experienced
- **Market engagement**
  - Frequency of reviewing energy arrangements
  - Experiences of last contract renewal process
  - Experiences of switching suppliers
  - Use of energy brokers/telephone/website price comparison services
- **Perceptions of market players**
  - Perceptions of energy brokers/telephone/website price comparison services
  - Extent to which businesses are satisfied with suppliers
  - Overall perceptions of the energy market

2.3 Research methodology

In total, 1500 interviews were conducted with micro and small businesses across England, Wales and Scotland. The interviews were undertaken by both BMG at its Birmingham-based call centre facility and ICM (as a sub-contractor) at its London-based call centre facility. Computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) was used. Fieldwork was carried out between 19th October 2015 and 4th December 2015.

A full explanation of the sampling and weighting process is presented in the Technical Annex in this report (Appendix 3). A glossary of Standard Industry Classification (SIC) groups is also included (in Appendix 4).

The survey data were weighted by business size (number of employees) and industry sector to Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR) statistics to counteract any disproportionate representation. Businesses with two or more employees were sampled in greater proportion to their actual representation within the population. This was to ensure robust sample bases among businesses with two or more employees, which ensures a higher level of statistical reliability when analysing the data by business size. Furthermore, the sample achieved by industry does not closely reflect the actual business population. This was due to the requirement to speak to businesses that were:

- responsible, either solely or jointly, for arranging mains gas and electricity contracts or paying these bills.
- representing a business that holds a non-domestic (i.e. business) contract for its energy supply managed either by the business itself or an energy broker.

2.4 Report conventions

The report provides a summary of the survey findings amongst businesses with 0 to 49 employees across all sites (zero-employee, micro and small businesses). For brevity these have been referred to throughout as ‘businesses’. Businesses with 50 or more employees across all GB sites have been excluded.

The report presents findings from all respondents (sample base: 1500) and by the following variables:

- **Total number of employees across all sites:** zero-employee (unweighted base: 245); 1-9 employees (micro) (808); 10-49 employees (small) (447).
- **Industry sector:** Primary (307), construction (152), retail/wholesale (318), transport/food/accommodation (212), business services (282) and other services (229).
- **Nation:** England (1223), Wales (114) and Scotland (163).
- **Type of energy that the respondent has responsibility for arranging:** Where the business only uses electricity questions were answered on the basis of their electricity contract. If they also used gas, they were randomly selected to answer questions about their gas contract. The unweighted sample bases were as follows: electricity: 1154; gas: 341.

All findings in this report are weighted by employee size band and industry sector (SIC 2007) (see Technical Annex for full details) but unweighted sample bases are reported in graphs and tables. This is due to the fact that the size of the unweighted sample governs the extent of sampling error. The larger the unweighted sample the smaller the sampling error and the more robust the findings are. Thus, giving the unweighted sample base on which a finding is based provides an indication of how statistically reliable the finding is.

Throughout this report statistically significant differences (at the 95% level of confidence) are noted between sub-samples, while differences that are not statistically significant are noted where it is deemed appropriate (such as there being an obvious reason for the difference but small sample bases do not allow the difference to be statistically significant) and referenced accordingly.

Significance testing is based on the difference between a sub-sample (e.g. all small micro businesses with 1-4 employees) and the sample average minus the sub-sample in question (e.g. businesses across all size bands except those with 1-4 employees).

Unless stated otherwise, all findings reported in bold font in the charts and figures are statistically significantly higher than the overall total. Those reported in italics are statistically significantly lower than the overall total.

A fuller explanation of the way statistical reliability is calculated and the level of standard error attached to the overall sample and to each of the sub-sample groups is included in the Technical Annex.

Graphs and tables are used throughout the report to assist explanation and analysis.

Occasional anomalies appear due to ‘rounding’ differences and these are never more than +/-1%. These anomalies are most common with regard to the sum of two or more whole integer response percentages. Sometimes the sum total is +/-1% of the figure that would be expected based on adding the individual percentages. This is because the aggregate percentage is calculated from the actual number of weighted cases in the data and therefore introduces decimal places into the calculation.

For example: 28% of respondents are very satisfied; 46% of respondents are satisfied but the proportion that are satisfied overall is 75% rather than 74%. This is due to the fact that the aggregated satisfaction figure is based on 43 respondents (28.4%) plus 70 respondents (46.4%) out of a sub-sample total of 151, which totals 74.8% and rounds up to 75%.

Some data is reported on the basis of ‘where provided a response’. This is generally with regard to financial and other numeric data, as well as ratings questions, where there are a relatively high proportion of respondents that have been unable or unwilling to provide an answer (they have replied ‘don’t know’; ‘not applicable’ or they have refused). This is noted where appropriate.

The questions on which the data is based is referenced for each graph and table and a copy of the questionnaire is included in Appendix 5 of this report.

Where appropriate, the 2015 findings are compared with the 2014 survey.

2.5 Overview of 2015 sample profile

When the population of businesses with fewer than 50 employees across all GB sites is adjusted to include only those that arrange their own non-domestic energy contracts, either directly or through a broker, the proportion of businesses without employees decreases – from 45% to 29%. The proportion with 5 or more employees increases, from 55% to 71% - compared with the total business population.

In addition, against the micro and small business population as a whole (i.e. including businesses with a domestic contract or contract managed by a landlord), primary, retail/wholesale and transport, food and accommodation sectors are over-represented in the sample, whilst construction and business services sectors are under-represented. This suggests that businesses in construction and business services sectors are more likely than average to have domestic contracts or landlord managed energy supply contracts.

Ninety-one per cent of micro and small businesses are single site organisations.

Eighty per cent of respondents representing multi-site organisations (including franchises) have responsibility for arranging energy contracts or paying bills for the entire organisation across Great Britain.

3 Gas and Electricity Usage and Expenditure

3.1 Overview and key findings

This chapter provides a summary of current energy usage and expenditure. It covers:

- Types of energy used.
- Average annual expenditure on electricity and gas.
- How energy expenditure breaks down between electricity and gas.
- The proportion of overall costs that is accounted for by energy costs.
- Take up of smart meters.

Key findings:
Two fifths of businesses (41%) use both mains electricity and gas.
Fifty-six per cent of businesses with both mains electricity and gas have the same supplier for both.
On average, businesses spend £4,048 (including VAT)[6] per annum on mains electricity; £2,744 (including VAT) on mains gas.
Across all businesses, electricity expenditure accounts for 80% of all energy expenditure; gas expenditure for 20%.
Across businesses with both mains electricity and gas, electricity expenditure accounts for 63% of all energy expenditure; gas expenditure for 37%.
On average, electricity expenditure accounts for 14% of all costs across sites that respondents have responsibility for arranging the energy contracts for; the equivalent figure for gas expenditure is 11%.
In 2015, energy expenditure as a proportion of all costs across sites has decreased. In 2014, electricity expenditure accounted for 16% of all costs; gas for 13%. This may reflect recent price decreases.
One in three businesses (33%) report having a smart meter; a slightly higher proportion than in 2014 (30%).

[6] All expenditure figures and estimates of contribution to site costs are based on where respondents were able to provide an estimate.

3.2 Energy usage

3.2.1 Types of energy used

Respondents were asked about energy usage within their businesses. Two fifths of all businesses (41%) use both mains electricity and mains gas.

Usage of both mains electricity and gas increases with business size to 39% of those with 1-9 employees and 61% of those with 10-49 employees. It is significantly lower for businesses without employees and those with fewer than 5 employees (both 35%); primary (25%) and retail/wholesale (32%) industries; and amongst businesses in Wales (29%) and Scotland (32%).

More than half of businesses with both a mains electricity and gas supply (56%) have the same supplier for both. There has been no change since 2014 in this respect.

3.3 Energy expenditure

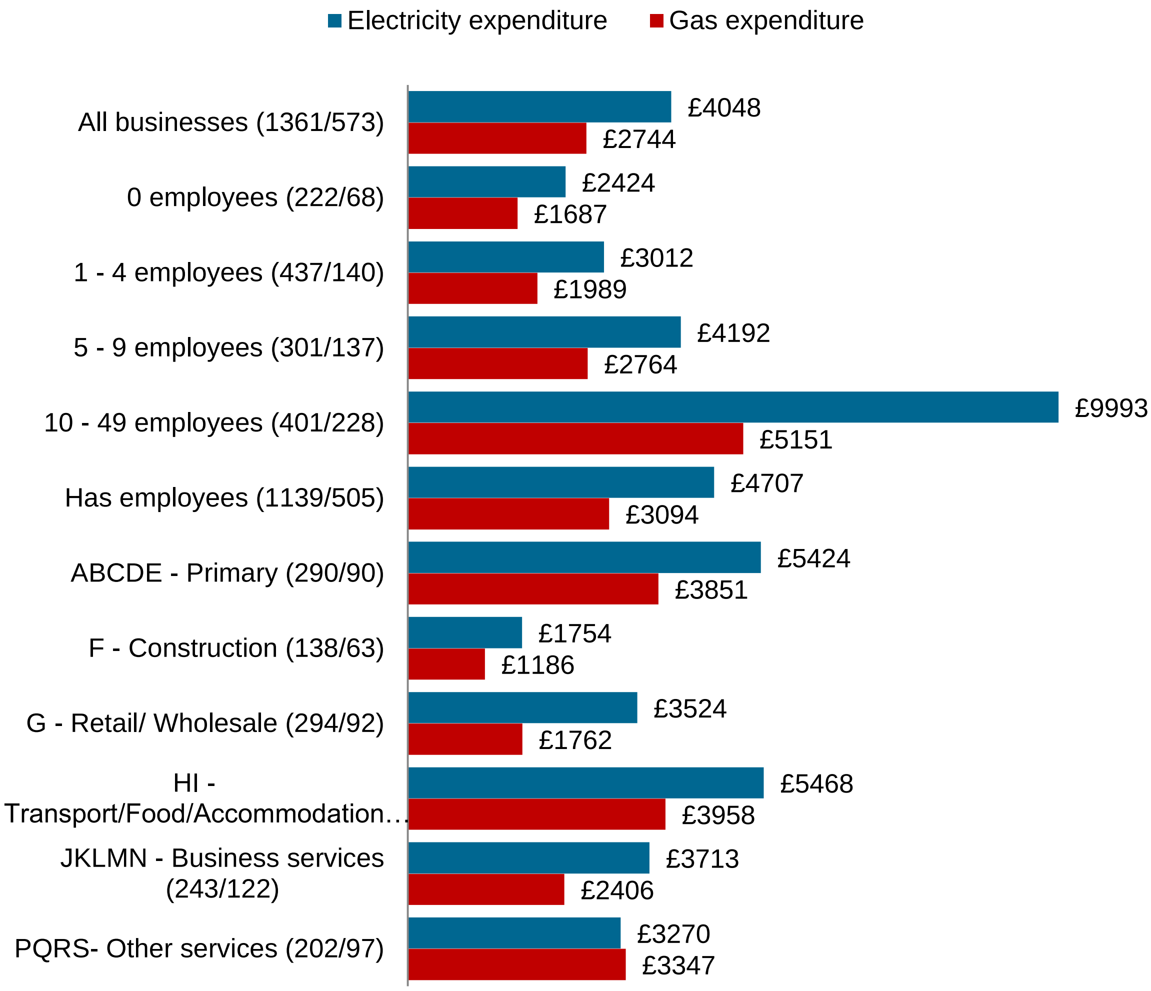
3.3.1 Expenditure

On average, businesses spend approximately £4,000 on electricity per annum (including VAT). This increases to approximately £10,000 for businesses with between 10 and 49 employees.

On average, businesses with mains gas spend approximately £2,700 on gas per annum (including VAT). This increases to approximately £5,100 for businesses with between 10 and 49 employees[7].

[7] Direct comparisons between 2014 and 2015 expenditure data cannot be undertaken as the format for responses was altered this year. In 2014, respondents were initially asked for absolute values and then banded values (e.g. £500-£999) were requested if they were unable to provide an estimate. This year only banded values were requested and these bandings differ from those used in 2014. Thus, the mean values were calculated on a different basis in 2014 and 2015.

Figure 3.1: Average yearly electricity and gas expenditure, by size and sector (all respondents with electricity/gas supplies that provided a response)

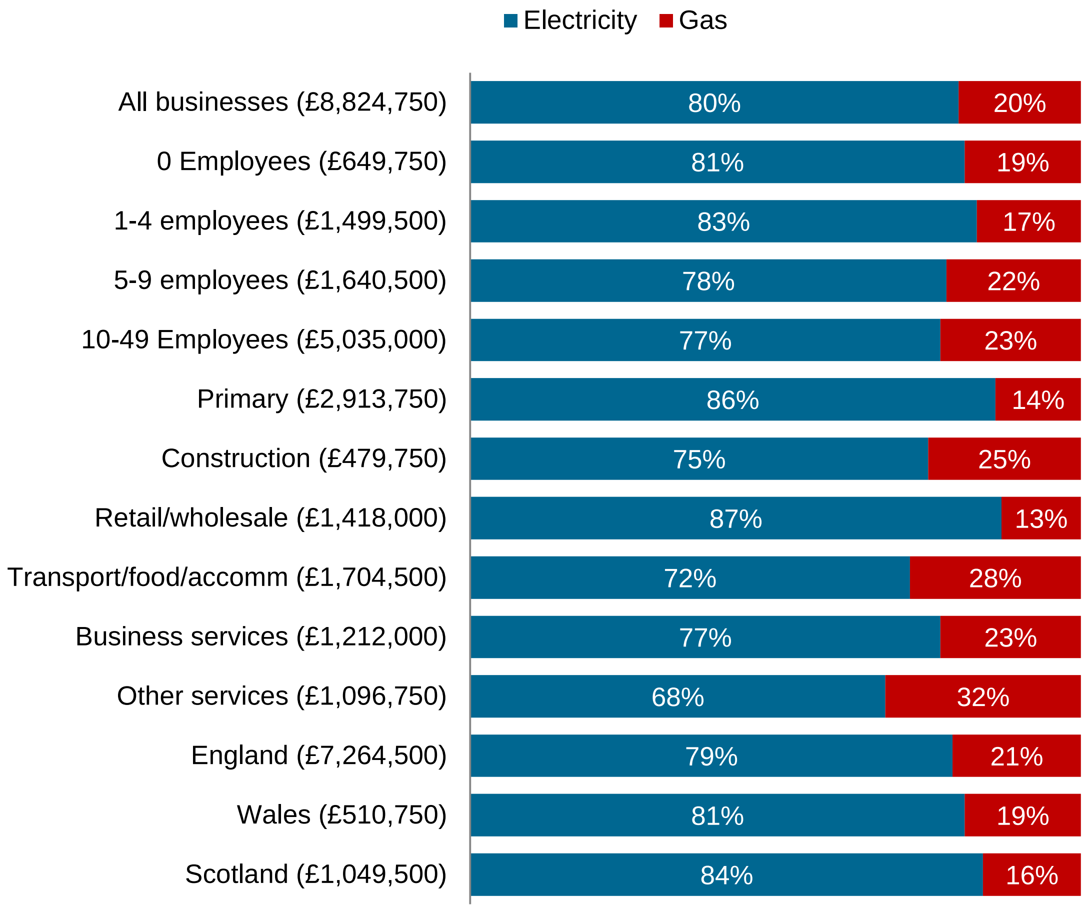


Unweighted sample bases in brackets (respondents specifying electricity/gas expenditure - where provided a response)

B2A. To the best of your knowledge, approximately how much has the organisation as a whole spent on electricity in the last 12 months? B6A. To the best of your knowledge, approximately how much has the organisation as a whole spent on mains gas in the last 12 months?

Across all businesses (by aggregating all energy expenditure across businesses with both fuels and those with just one) the ratio of electricity to gas expenditure is 80%: 20%. The proportion of energy expenditure on electricity increases to 87% in businesses within retail and wholesale and 86% in primary sector businesses and 84% for businesses in Scotland.

Figure 3.2: Ratio of electricity to gas expenditure across all businesses with an electricity and/or gas supply, by business size and sector (where provided a response)
Response based on total expenditure in £ sterling



Unweighted sample bases based on total expenditure (in £ sterling) across all businesses (where provided a response)

B2A. To the best of your knowledge, approximately how much has the organisation as a whole spent on electricity in the last 12 months? B6A. To the best of your knowledge, approximately how much has the organisation as a whole spent on mains gas in the last 12 months?

For businesses that have both electricity and gas, electricity expenditure accounts for just over three fifths (63%) and gas for just under two fifths (37%) of total energy costs.

3.3.2 Proportion of all costs spent on energy

In terms of the proportion of **overall** costs, 65% of those able to provide an estimate reported that electricity accounted for up to 10% of all site costs[8].

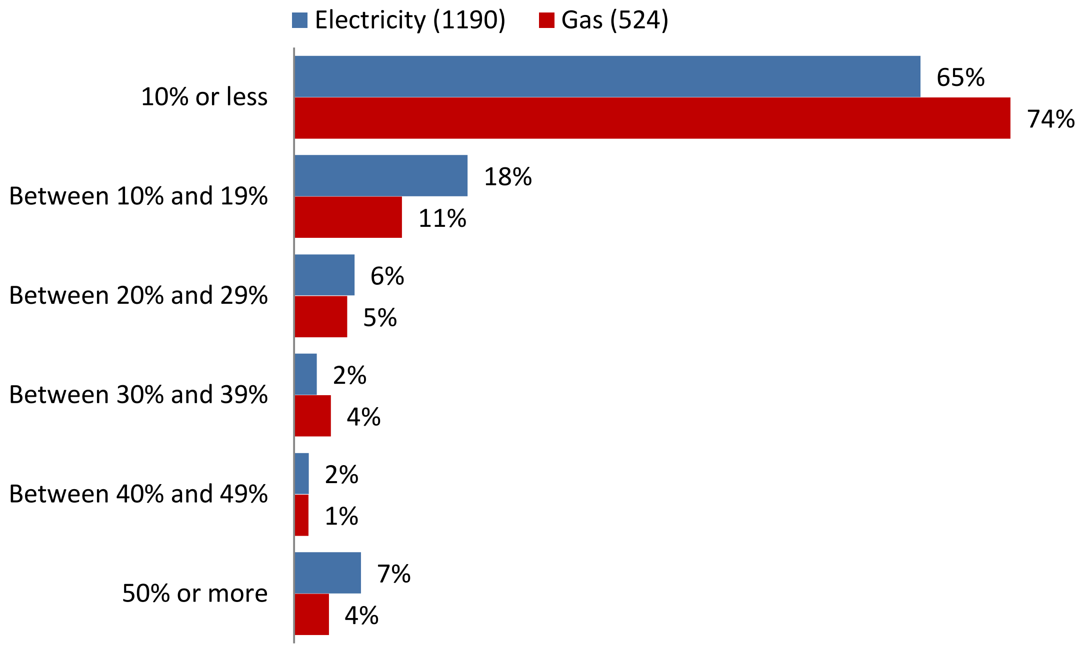
The average proportion of business costs spent on mains electricity is 14%, this proportion is similar across all business sizes and sectors.

For businesses able to provide an estimate, three quarters (75%) said mains gas expenditure accounts for up to 10% of total site costs.

[8] This figure is on the basis of the entire organisation or just the site or sites depending on the respondent's responsibility for arranging energy contracts or paying bills.

The average proportion of total costs for mains gas is 11%. Again, this proportion is similar across all business sizes but is slightly higher in primary and transport, food and accommodation sectors (13% in each).

Figure 3.3: Proportion of total costs spent on electricity and gas (where have electricity/gas supplies and have provided a response)



Unweighted sample bases in brackets (where deal with electricity/gas)

B3. To the best of your knowledge, what percentage of your total organisation's site's costs is spent on electricity? B7. To the best of your knowledge, what percentage of your total organisation's site's costs is spent on gas?

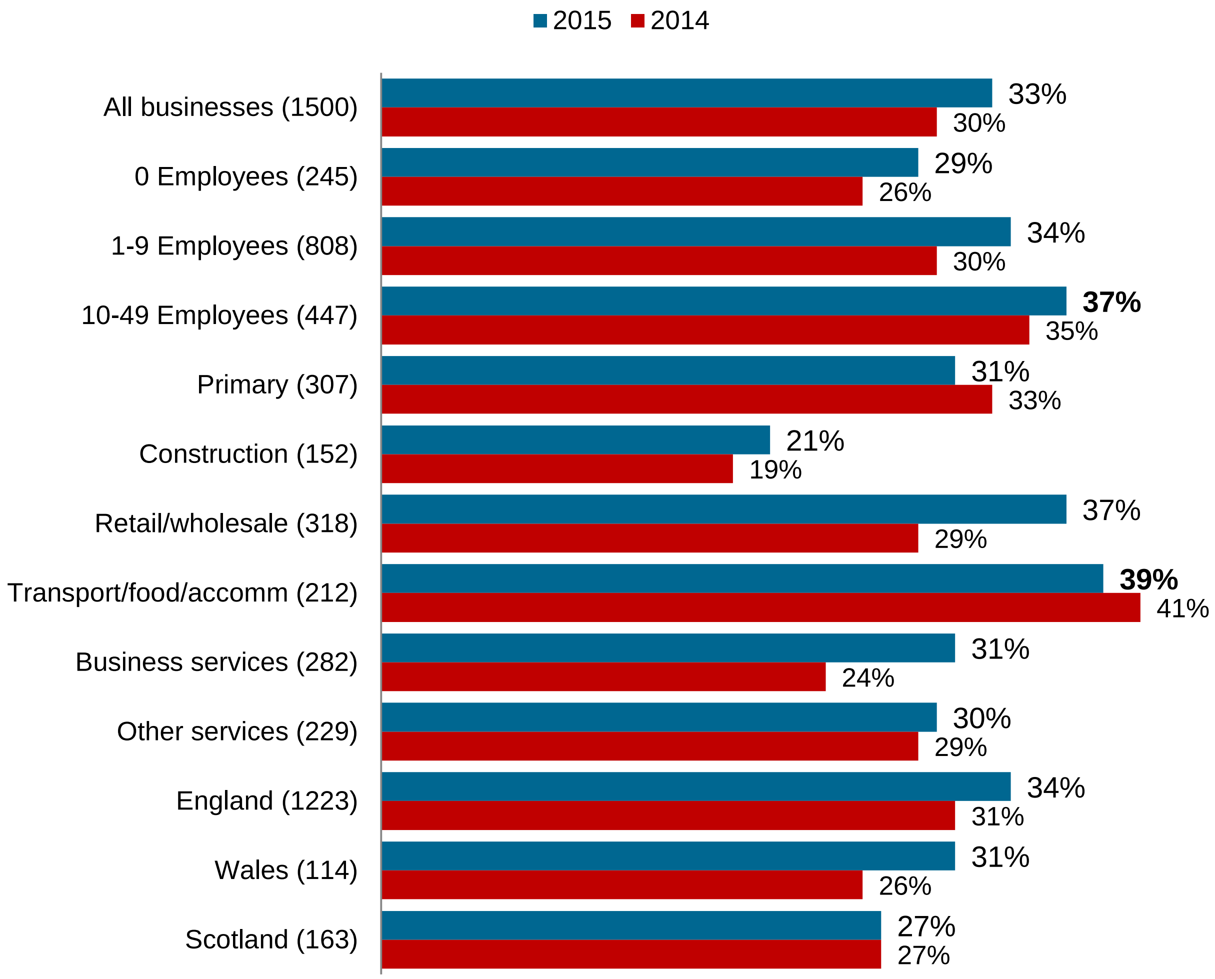
3.4 Smart meters

One in three businesses (33%) report having a smart meter. This is a slight increase compared with 2014 (30%).

By sector, smart metering is reported to be highest within transport, food and accommodation (39%) but there is strong growth within retail and wholesale (from 29% in 2014 to 37% in 2015) and business services (from 24% to 31%).

While smart meter penetration has increased in England and Wales, there has been no change in Scotland.

Figure 3.4: Proportion of businesses that report having a smart meter, by business size and sector (all respondents)



Unweighted sample bases for 2015 in brackets (all respondents)

G1. Does your business have a smart meter?

Bold font signifies a statistically significantly higher figure compared with the average minus the sub-group tested; *italics signifies a statistically significantly lower figure than average minus the sub-group tested*

3.5 Comparisons with the 2014 survey

Figure 3.7 below compares the 2015 survey findings with those of 2014.

There has been little change in these figures between 2014 and 2015.

Figure 3.5: Gas and electricity usage and expenditure: Year on year comparisons

Question:	2014	2015
Which of these forms of energy do they use? – mains gas	40%	41%
Unweighted bases (all respondents):	1502	1500
Electricity expenditure accounts for more than 10% of organisations' costs (where provided a response)	34%	35%
Unweighted bases (where provided a response):	1151	1199
Gas expenditure accounts for more than 10% of organisations' costs (where use gas and provided a response)	29%	25%
Unweighted bases (where use gas and provided a response):	527	524

Bold font signifies a statistically significantly higher figure in 2015 compared to 2014; *italics signifies a statistically significantly lower figure in 2015 compared to 2014*

4 Current Contracts and Contract Renewal

4.1 Overview and key findings

This chapter discusses current non-domestic energy contracts held by businesses and the process of contract negotiation and renewal. It covers the following:

- How businesses pay for energy.
- Whether or not they have fixed term contracts and the length of fixed term contracts.
- How the current contract was arranged.
- Contract renewals and renegotiations, including satisfaction with the process of renewing.
- Satisfaction with particular elements of the contract.
- Awareness of contract end dates.

Key findings:
Amongst the 54% of businesses that stayed with their existing supplier when renewing their contract, the proportion that extended/rolled-over their existing contract were in the minority (42%; 24% of all businesses). This reflects a significant change since 2014 when businesses were more likely to extend/roll-over a contract than to negotiate a new one (50% in 2014). In 2015, more than half of those not changing supplier (53%) have negotiated a new contract (45% in 2014).
Businesses spending more than £5k per annum on electricity are significantly more likely than average to negotiate a new contract with their existing supplier (44% of all businesses spending more than £5k, compared with 30% of all businesses on average), rather than switch (35%, compared with 43%) or extend/roll over their contract with their existing supplier (20%, compared with 24%)[9].
Around three quarters of businesses that have renewed their contract with their supplier were satisfied with the experience of renegotiating, extending or rolling-over their contract (74%), including 33% that were very satisfied. However, satisfaction is continuing on a downward trend, with 77% satisfied with this process in 2014.
Just under half of businesses (48%) recall receiving a contract renewal letter in the last 12 months and the majority of these businesses (88%) have at least glanced at it or skim read it (41% have read it in detail).
More than three quarters of businesses (77%) report having read their contract in detail or at least glanced through it in the last 12 months (24% report reading it in detail). This proportion is higher amongst businesses that have recently shopped around (82%), as well as those that have switched in the last 12 months (83%).
Of those that have read or at least glanced through their contract documents in the last 12 months, most were satisfied with all aspects of their contract measured in this survey. This ranges from 51% who were satisfied with the length/size of the document to 73% who were satisfied with the clarity on the duration of the contract. Those who have read it in detail are more likely to be very satisfied with both its length and clarity.

[9] These statistics are based on all respondents and not just on those respondents answering this question.

Eighty-two per cent of businesses with a fixed term contract know at least approximately when it ends (59% know exactly and 23% approximately). However, businesses with a fixed term contract are less likely to be aware of when they can give notice of termination to their supplier (62%).
Of the 92% of respondents that recall receiving a bill in the last 12 months, 26% recall seeing a contract end date on their bill (24% in 2014), while fewer (20%) recall seeing a date they need to give notice by (as in 2014).
Just under half of all businesses (47%) have looked into other suppliers or tariff options for their energy arrangements in the last 12 months. The propensity to look into other supplier or tariff options increases with energy expenditure.
In total, 17% of all businesses have noticed both details about contract end dates or dates from which they could renegotiate or give notice on their bills <u>and</u> have taken some action to explore their options in the last 12 months. Of this group, 54% were prompted to take some action as a result of noticing the information.

4.2 Payment methods

The majority of businesses said they pay for their energy by direct debit (86%). Businesses with 10-49 employees are more likely to pay this way (89%) in comparison to businesses with 1-4 employees (84%).

One in ten businesses pay only on receipt of the bill (via cash, cheque, credit card or BACS). There is little variation in this respect by business size, but the proportion that pay on receipt of the bill is higher than average within the construction (14%) and business services (13%) sectors.

Paying on receipt of a bill is more prevalent amongst the small proportion of businesses without a fixed term contract (32%, compared with 9% of those that are on a fixed term contract).

Standing order is used by just 3% of all businesses and this does not vary by business size or sector.

4.3 Fixed term contracts

The majority of businesses (93%) have a fixed term contract for their gas/electricity supply. This is a similar proportion to that reported in 2014 (92%). It varies little by business size but is higher than average amongst businesses within the transport, food and accommodation sectors (97%) and lowest within business services sectors (90%).

Nearly all businesses that have used a broker (99%) are on fixed term contracts, while the likelihood of having a fixed term contract is greater amongst users of telephone/website price comparison services (97%). Businesses that have switched suppliers in the last 5 years are more likely than average to have a fixed term contract (97%) with their current supplier. The proportion that say they have a fixed term contract is significantly lower amongst those who have not switched supplier in the last 5 years (87%).

4.4 Length of contracts

Of the businesses with fixed term contracts, around a third (32%) has a contract for a year; a slightly higher proportion report that their contract is for two years (34%). A fifth (20%) have a fixed term contract duration of three years. There is little variation by business size, but shorter fixed term contracts are more prevalent than average amongst businesses in business services sectors (42% have a 12 month contract), while businesses in transport, food and accommodation sectors are more likely than average to have 5 year or longer fixed term contracts (7%, compared to 3% of all businesses).

4.5 Arranging contracts

Just over two fifths of respondents (43%) report their contract to be the first with their current supplier. This is a slightly higher proportion than in 2014 (40%). Construction businesses are significantly less likely than average to report their current contract as their first with that supplier (31%).

More than half of all businesses (54%) already had an existing contract with their current supplier (57% in 2014). Businesses with 1-4 employees are less likely than average to have held an existing contract with their current supplier (50%), as are businesses in other services sectors (49%).

Businesses that have used brokers and/or telephone/website price comparison services are more likely than average to be in their first contract with their current supplier (both 50%).

Of those who have had more than one contract with their current supplier, just over half have negotiated a new contract with their supplier (53%) while fewer than half (42%) have extended or rolled-over their existing contract. Compared with 2014, there has been a significant reversal in the propensity to negotiate new contracts versus extending/rolling-over an existing one. In 2014, 45% of those remaining with their supplier negotiated a new contract, while a higher proportion (50%) extended/rolled-over their existing arrangements.

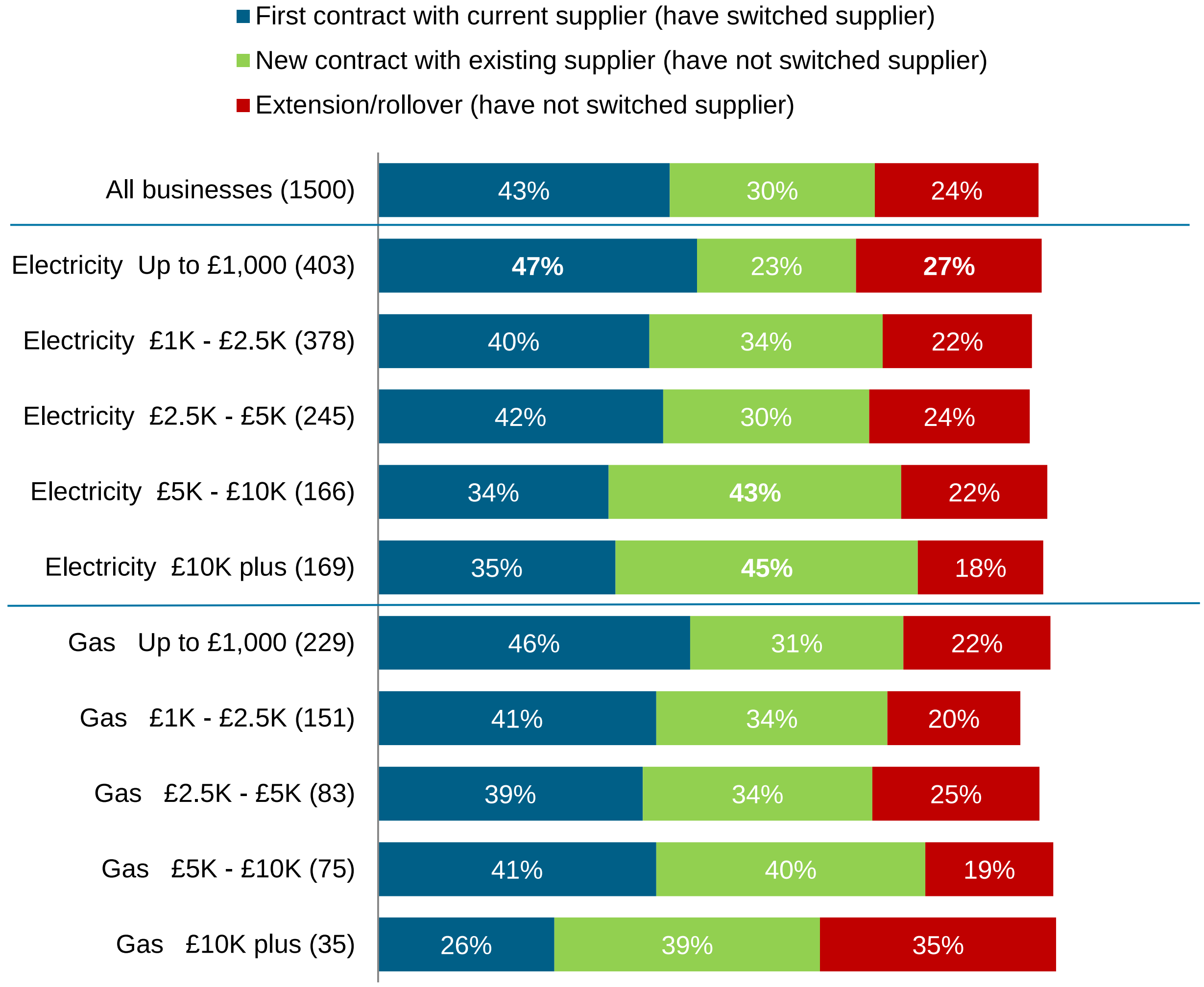
Where a contract has been extended or rolled-over, the majority (90%) report it as being with their knowledge (91% in 2014). Only a minority (7%, as in 2014) report the contract extension or rollover being without their knowledge,

As a proportion of all businesses, just 2% report they were unaware that their contract was being renewed at the time of extension or rollover, unchanged since 2014.

Three in ten of all businesses (30%) had negotiated a new contract with their existing supplier (i.e. they have not switched to a new supplier), slightly higher than in 2014 (27%). The proportion increases to 35% of all businesses with 10-49 employees. By sector, businesses in transport, food and accommodation sectors are more likely to have negotiated a new contract (33% of all).

Examining the extent of contract renegotiation by the level of expenditure on electricity and gas highlights a greater propensity for businesses with larger bills to negotiate new contracts with their existing supplier (see Figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1: Summary of contract renewal, by expenditure (all respondents)



Unweighted sample bases in brackets

C8. Is the gas/electricity contract you have now, the first contract you have had with your supplier? C9. Did you or a broker negotiate this contract as a new contract, or was it an extension or rollover of the previous contract you had with this supplier?

Bold font signifies a statistically significantly higher figure compared with the average minus the sub-group tested; *italics signifies a statistically significantly lower figure than average minus the sub-group tested*

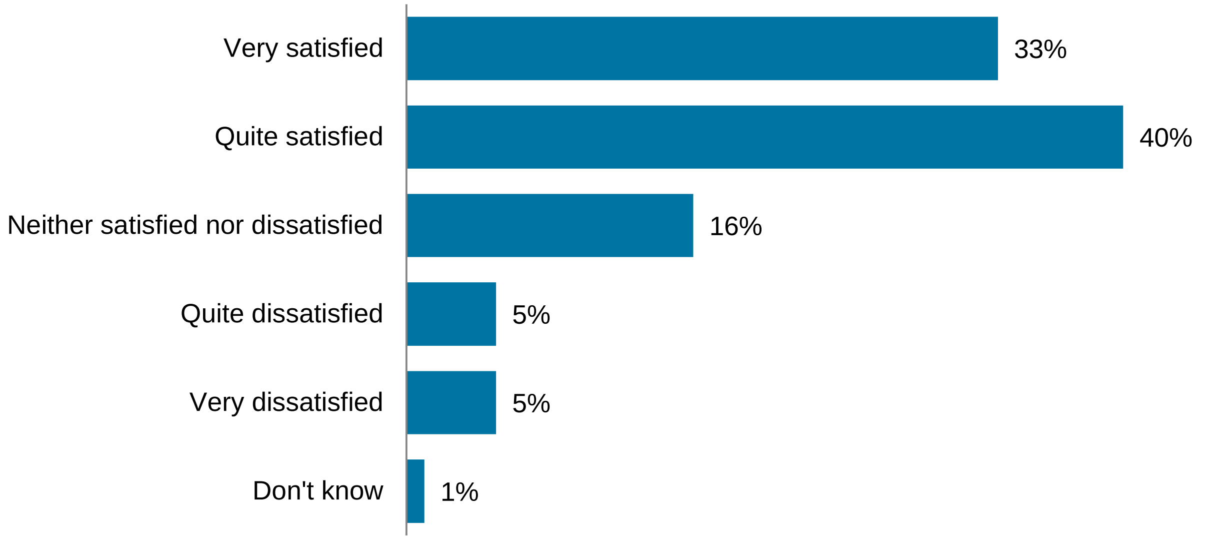
4.6 Satisfaction with last contract change

Respondents who have renegotiated, extended or rolled-over their contract with their existing supplier were asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they were with the renewal or renegotiation process.

Most have been satisfied with this experience (74%, of which 33% say they were very satisfied). This is slightly lower than reported in 2014 (77%, including 36% very satisfied).

Ten per cent were dissatisfied with the process. This compares with 8% in 2014.

Figure 4.2: Extent to which businesses are satisfied with the experience of renegotiating, extending or rolling-over their contract with their gas/electricity supplier (where not the first contract with their current supplier)



Unweighted sample base (where not the first contract with their current supplier): 810

C11. How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the experience of renegotiating/extending or rolling over the contract with your gas/electricity supplier?

Dissatisfaction with the renegotiation or contract extension/rollover process is at higher than average levels amongst businesses that have shopped around (13%, compared to 6% of those that have not); where there is no fixed term contract in place (23%, compared to 9% of those with one in place) and frequent switchers (16% of those that have switched 3 or more times in the last 5 years, compared to 8% of infrequent switchers).

One in six businesses that estimate their electricity expenditure to be more than £10k per annum (16%) have been dissatisfied with the contract renegotiation/extension or rollover process. Given their level of expenditure, a price increase is likely to be a major factor in their dissatisfaction but they are twice as likely to give lack of knowledge of the contract renewal than a price increase as the reason.

The most frequently cited reason for dissatisfaction overall is a price increase (30%; 28% in 2014), while one in seven businesses (14%) said they were dissatisfied with poor communications and a similar proportion (13%) were not happy because the contract was renewed without their knowledge.

The number of dissatisfied respondents is small (just 75 respondents[10]) so these findings should be treated as being **indicative** only.

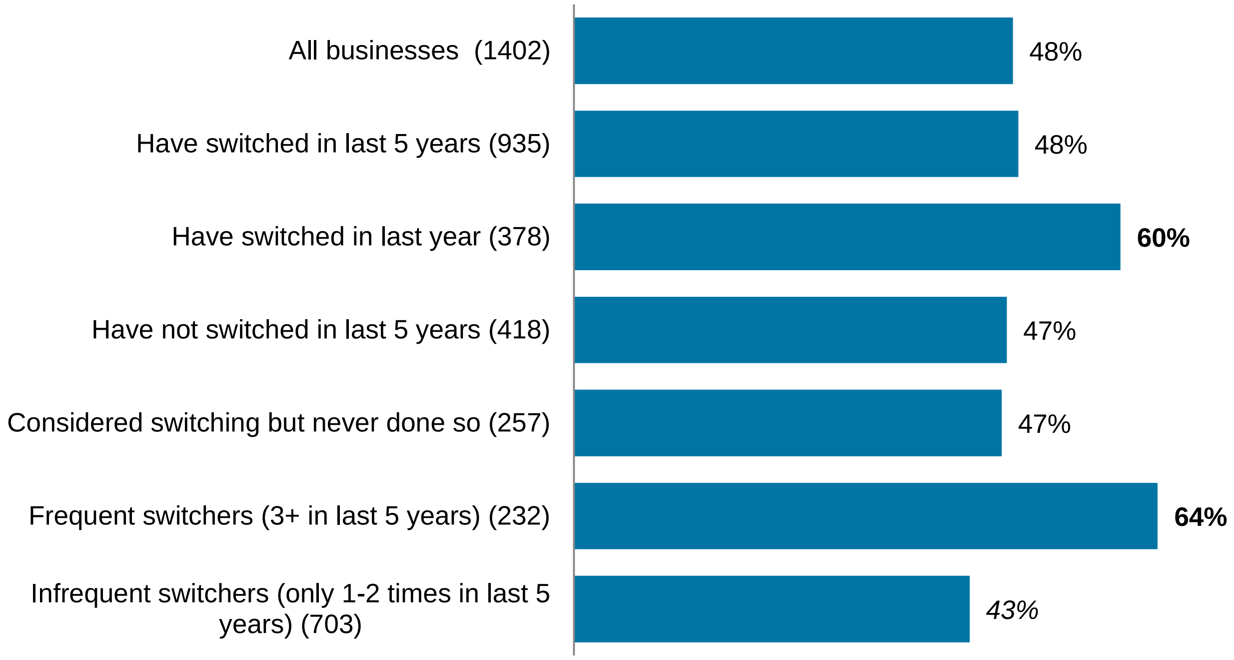
[10] Unweighted base (number of respondents asked this question)

4.7 Contract renewal correspondence

When asked if they had received a contract renewal letter for either gas or electricity in the last 12 months, around half of those able to provide a response[11] said they had (48%). Businesses with 5-9 employees and those in the retail and wholesale sector are more likely than average to recall receiving a contract renewal letter (both 53%). Businesses in Wales are significantly less likely than average to recall such a letter (40%).

Having switched suppliers recently i.e. in the last 12 months, as well as more frequently, are factors in the propensity to recall receiving a contract renewal letter.

Figure 4.3: Whether have received a gas/electricity contract renewal letter in the last 12 months, by switching behaviour (where able to recall)



Unweighted sample bases in brackets (where provided a response)

C12a. Have you received a mains gas/electricity contract renewal letter in the last 12 months?

Bold font signifies a statistically significantly higher figure compared with the average minus the sub-group tested; *italics signifies a statistically significantly lower figure than average minus the sub-group tested*

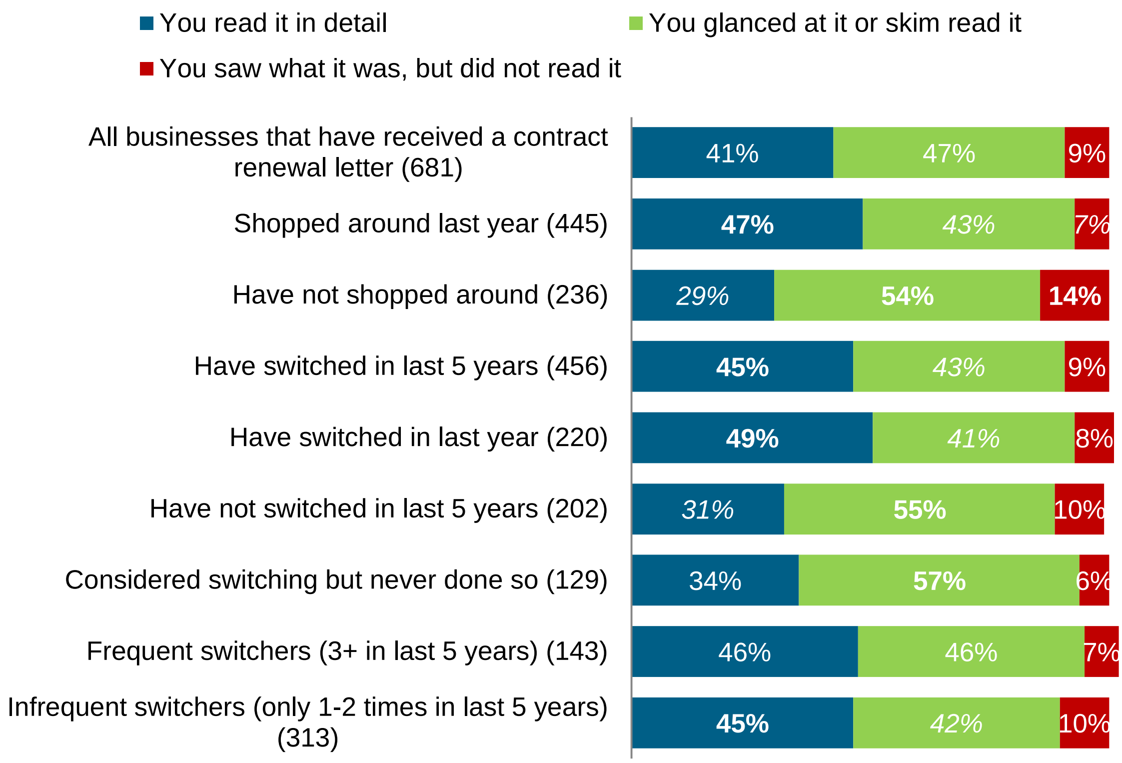
While two fifths of those that recalled receiving the contract renewal letter read it in detail (41%), a higher proportion (47%) reported only having glanced at it or skim read it. The remainder reported not reading it.

Once again, shopping around and switching suppliers are associated with having read the contract renewal letter in detail. Of those who have switched suppliers in the last 5 years, 45% read the letter in detail, compared to only 31% of those who have not switched during that period; this increases to 49% of those who have switched in the last 12

[11] 7% of all respondents were not sure if they had received a contract renewal letter

months. It highlights a potentially heightened interest in contract details and renewal amongst 'switchers'.

Figure 4.4: Detail in which businesses have looked at contract renewal letter, by switching behaviour (where received a contract renewal letter)



Unweighted sample bases in brackets (where received a contract renewal letter)

C12b. In how much detail did you look at the contract renewal letter?

Bold font signifies a statistically significantly higher figure compared with the average minus the sub-group tested; *italics signifies a statistically significantly lower figure than average minus the sub-group tested*

Four fifths of respondents that have read or at least glanced at their renewal letter (80%) recall seeing their current energy prices on the letter. Two thirds (67%) recall seeing information about their energy consumption on the letter.

Although less likely to recall having received a renewal letter in the first place, respondents who have not switched suppliers in the last 5 years and who recall receiving a letter about their contract renewal are significantly more likely than their 'switcher' counterparts to recall seeing information on both prices and consumption on the letter:

Recall seeing information on current energy prices:

- Have switched in the last 5 years, 78%;
- Have not switched in the last 5 years, 86%.

Recall seeing information on energy consumption:

- Have switched in the last 5 years, 64%;

- Have not switched in the last 5 years, 72%.

There are also significant differences between businesses with smart meters and those without in this respect, with those without more likely to recall seeing the information.

Recall seeing information on current energy prices:

- Have a smart meter, 76%;
- Do not have a smart meter, 83%.

Recall seeing information on energy consumption:

- Have a smart meter, 60%;
  Do not have a smart meter, 70%.

Overall, 33% of all businesses recall seeing information on energy prices and consumption in the contract renewal letter. Of these, 80% took some action as a result. For most it was a case of comparing prices across suppliers or getting quotes themselves (64%) and this increases to 79% of businesses that have switched in the last 12 months and 81% of frequent switchers.

4.8 Engaging with contract information

4.8.1 Contract document

More than three quarters of respondents (77%) report that they read or at least glanced through their current contract document.

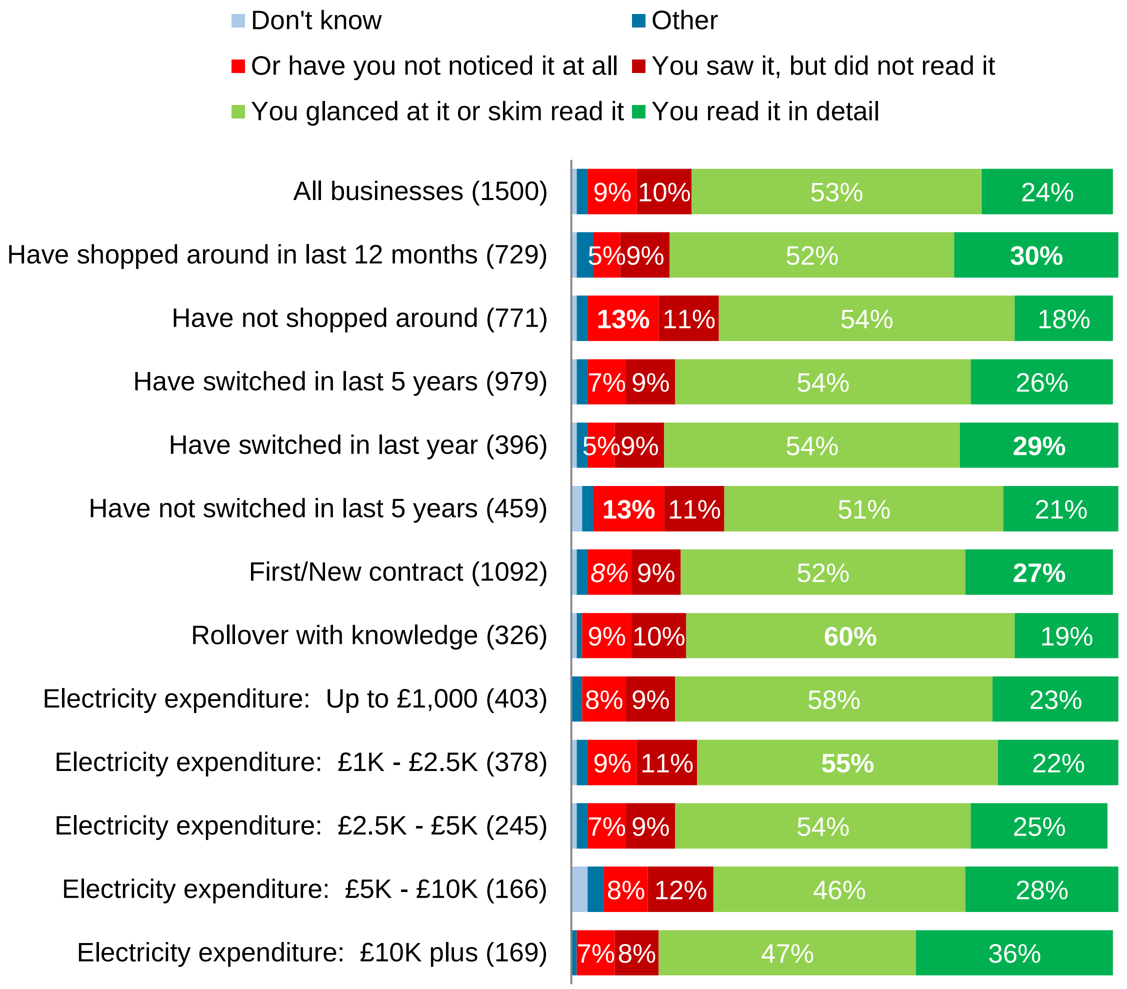
The propensity to have read current contract documents in detail increases with business size; 21% with no employees to 28% with 10 to 49 employees.

The proportion is significantly higher amongst respondents that report having shopped around for a new contract in the last 12 months: 30%, compared with 18% of those that have not. It is also higher than average amongst those that have actually switched, particularly those that have switched in the last 12 months (29%) and frequent switchers (i.e. those that have switched 3 or more times in the last 5 years) (28%).

More than half of all respondents (53%) have only glanced at or skim read their current contract document. This includes 54% of 'switchers' (i.e. both in the last 5 years and in the last 12 months). The proportion is significantly higher than average amongst respondents that report their contract was knowingly rolled-over (60%).

Businesses with higher expenditure are also more likely to read their contract in detail. Slightly over a third of respondents with an annual electricity expenditure in excess of £10k (36%) say they have done so.

Figure 4.6: Extent to which respondents have looked through their current mains gas/electricity contracts, by switching and renewal (all respondents)



Unweighted sample bases in brackets (all respondents)

Please note: the sample base for 'rollover without knowledge' is too small (20 respondents) to report on this group with any confidence

C6. In how much detail have you looked through your current mains gas/electricity contract?

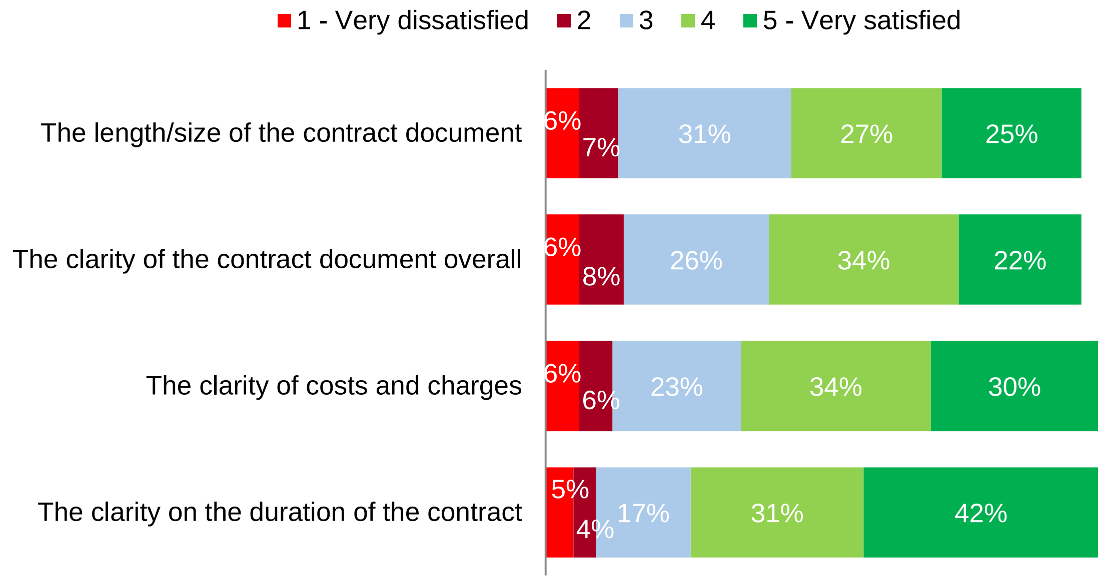
Bold font signifies a statistically significantly higher figure compared with the average minus the sub-group tested; *italics signifies a statistically significantly lower figure than average minus the sub-group tested*

4.8.2 Satisfaction with contract document

Of the three quarters of respondents that have looked at their contract in some way (read in detail, glanced at or skim read), the majority are satisfied with various elements of it.

They are most satisfied with clarity on the duration of the contract (73% are very/quite satisfied). Although nearly two thirds (64%) are satisfied with the document in terms of its clarity of costs and charges, fewer (56%) are satisfied with the clarity of the contract document overall.

Figure 4.7: Extent to which businesses are satisfied with aspects of their contract documents (where read/glanced at contract in the last 12 months)



Unweighted sample base (where read/glanced at contract in the last 12 months): 1156

C7. Thinking about your current <GAS>/<ELECTRICITY> contract document, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the following? Please answer on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is very dissatisfied and 5 is very satisfied

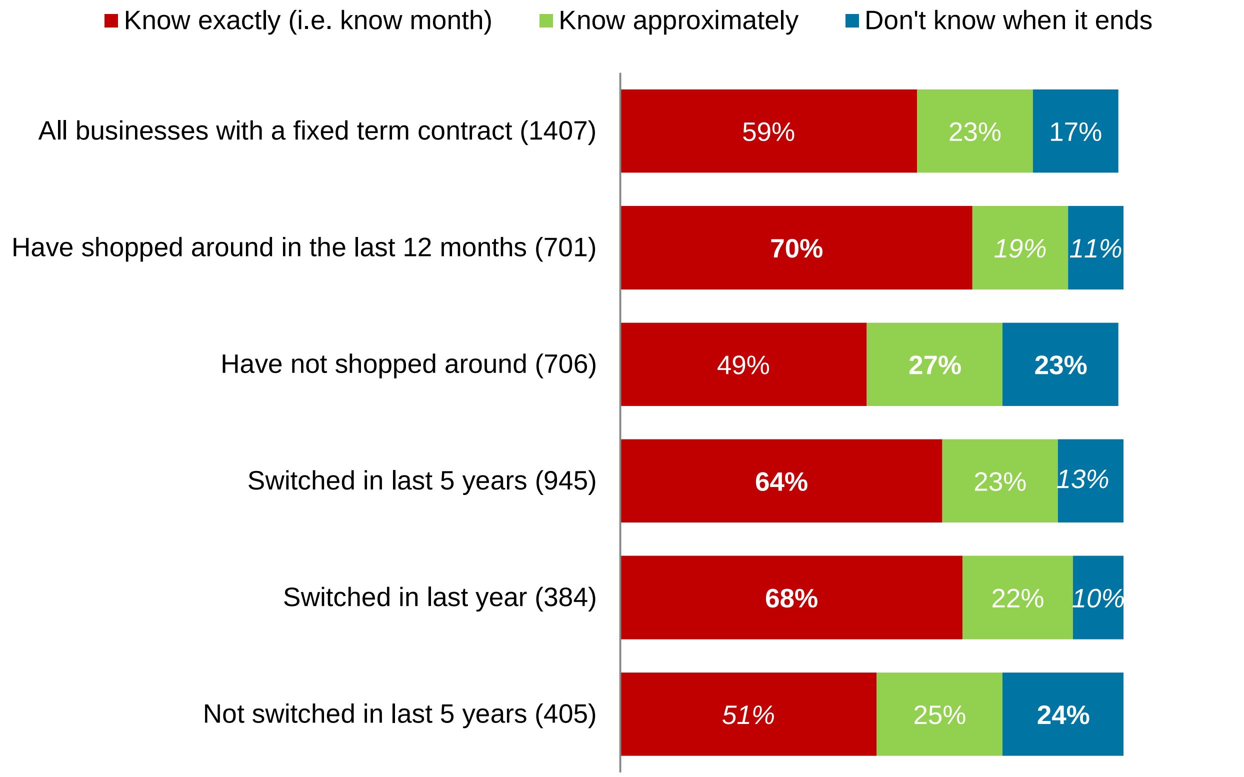
Respondents that have read their contract document in detail are significantly more likely to be very satisfied with all aspects of it than those who have just glanced at or skim read it. More than half that read it in detail (57%) are very satisfied with the clarity on duration, compared with a third (35%) of those who have not read it so thoroughly. Two fifths (41%) are very satisfied with its clarity of costs and charges, compared with 26% of those who have glanced at it or skim read it. A third (35%) are very satisfied with its clarity overall, compared with just 16% of those who have not read it in detail. They are also significantly more likely to be very satisfied with its length or size than those who have only glanced through it (37%, compared with 19%). This suggests satisfaction levels may relate to the time taken to read their contract documentation, rather than problems with the document itself.

4.9 Awareness of contract end date

Almost all business say that they have a fixed term contract (93%). The majority of these businesses know at least approximately when their contract ends. Around three fifths (59%, as in 2014) are aware of this exactly and 23% know approximately (25% in 2014). One in six respondents with a fixed term contract (17%) do not know when their contract ends (16% in 2014).

Businesses that have shopped around or actually switched suppliers in the last 5 years are significantly more likely to know when their mains gas/electricity contract ends.

Figure 4.8: Knowledge of contract end dates, by recent shopping around/switching (where has a fixed term contract)



Unweighted sample bases in brackets (where has a fixed term contract)

C4. Do you know when your gas/electricity contract ends?

Bold font signifies a statistically significantly higher figure compared with the average minus the sub-group tested; *italics signifies a statistically significantly lower figure than average minus the sub-group tested*

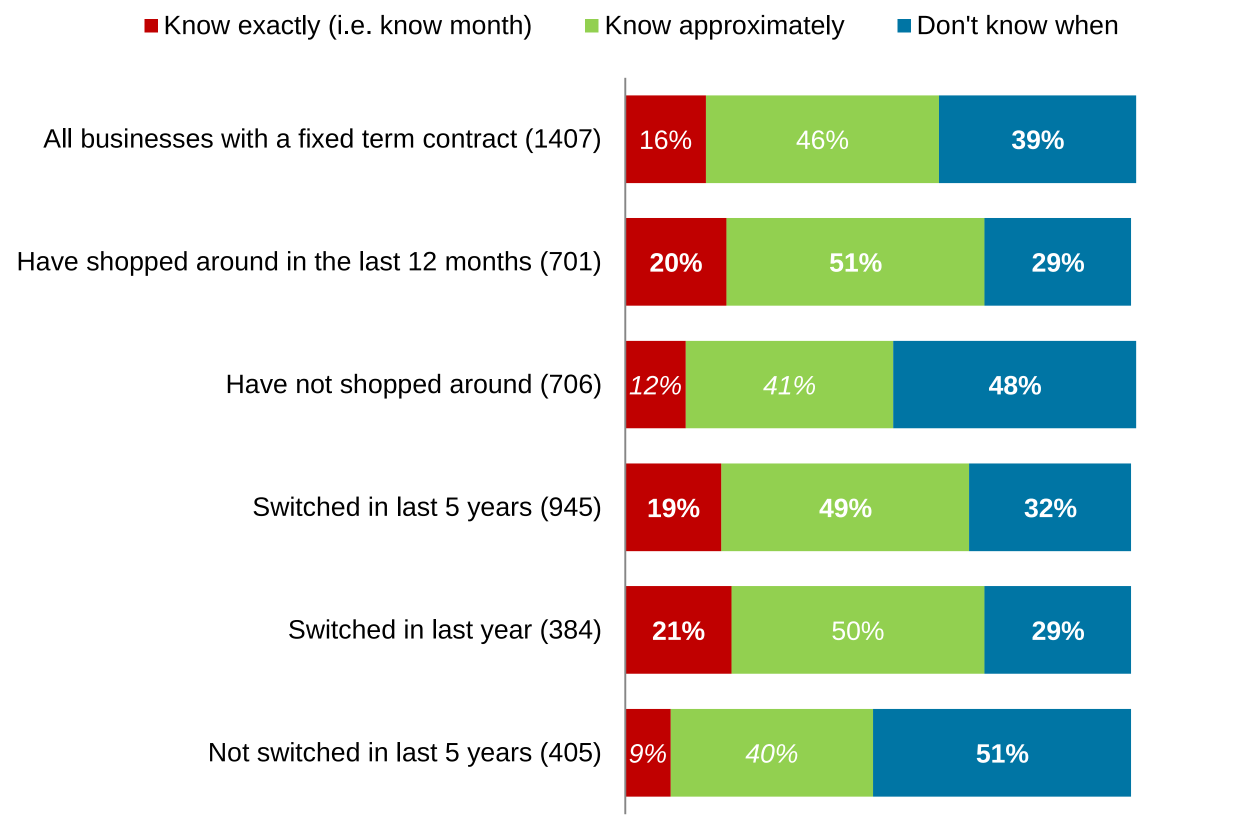
Businesses with higher energy expenditure are also more likely to know their contract end date. The propensity to know exactly when their contract ends increases to 71% of businesses spending £5k or more a year on electricity and 75% of those spending £5k or more a year on gas.

4.10 Awareness of termination notice date

Awareness of when businesses can give termination notice to their supplier is lower: 16% know exactly; 46% know approximately. Thirty-nine per cent of businesses with a fixed term contract do not know when they can give notice of termination to their supplier (compared with 17% that do not know when their contract ends).

Again, those who have recently switched or shopped around are more likely to be aware of their termination notice date, but still around three in ten of those who have recently shopped around or switched are unaware of their termination notice date on their current contract.

Figure 4.9: Knowledge of when to give notice of termination, by recent shopping around/switching (where has a fixed term contract)



Unweighted sample bases in brackets (where has a fixed term contract)

C5. Do you know when you can give notice of termination to your gas/electricity supplier?

Bold font signifies a statistically significantly higher figure compared with the average minus the sub-group tested; *italics signifies a statistically significantly lower figure than average minus the sub-group tested*

4.11 Energy bills

The majority of businesses recall receiving a bill in the previous 12 months leading up to the interview (95%). All businesses were asked if they recalled seeing a contract end date or date they need to give notice by to renegotiate or terminate their contract on their last bill. Seven in ten (70%) did not recall seeing this date (72% in 2014).

Around one in four of all businesses (26%) recalled seeing a contract end date on their bill; while fewer (20%) recall seeing a date they need to give notice by.

There is a positive association between having shopped around and switched in the last 5 years and recalling seeing this information on their most recent bill. Those who have shopped around in the last 12 months are significantly more likely than those that have not to recall seeing both types of information:

Recall seeing the contract end date:

- Have shopped around in the last 12 months, 31%;
- Have not shopped around, 22%.

Recall seeing the date the business needs to give notice by to renegotiate or terminate their contract:

- Have shopped around in the last 12 months, 25%;
- Have not shopped around, 15%.

This is echoed between switchers and non-switchers:

Recall seeing the contract end date:

- Have switched suppliers in the last 5 years, 29%;
- Have not switched in the last 5 years, 22%.

Recall seeing the date the business needs to give notice by to terminate their contract:

- Have switched suppliers in the last 5 years, 24%;
- Have not switched in the last 5 years, 13%.

4.12 Action taken to change supplier or tariff

Just under half of businesses (47%) have looked into other supplier or tariff options (with their existing supplier) or 'shopped around' in the last 12 months. This increases to 53% amongst businesses with 10-49 employees and is significantly lower than average amongst primary sector businesses (42%).

More than a third of all businesses (37%) have looked at both other suppliers and other tariffs with their existing supplier. A further 8% have just looked at other suppliers, while just 2% have looked at other tariffs with their existing supplier.

Figure 4.10: Action taken to look into other supplier or tariff options for gas/electricity in the last 12 months, by expenditure (all respondents)

	Unweighted bases (all respondents)	Any action %	Looked at other suppliers %	Looked at other tariffs %	Looked at other suppliers and tariffs %	Taken no action %
All businesses	*1500*	47	8	2	37	53
Electricity expenditure						
Up to £1,000	*403*	*40*	**7**	2	*31*	**60**
£1,001 to £2,500	*378*	52	10	2	40	*48*
£2.501 to £5,000	*245*	49	9	3	36	51
£5,001k to £10,000	*166*	**60**	8	1	**51**	*40*
£10,001 plus	*169*	**56**	6	1	**49**	*44*
Gas expenditure						
Up to £1,000	*229*	44	11	1	32	56
£1,001 to £2.500	*151*	46	7	3	37	54
£2.501 to £5,000	*83*	44	12	3	29	56
£5,001k to £10,000	*75*	**68**	9	1	58	*32*
£10,001 plus	*35*	51	3	0	48	49

Unweighted sample bases in brackets (all respondents)

C15. In the past year, have you taken any action to look into other supplier or tariff options for gas/electricity?

Bold font signifies a statistically significantly higher figure compared with the average minus the sub-group tested; *italics signifies a statistically significantly lower figure than average minus the sub-group tested*

Of the 17% of all businesses that have noticed contract dates on their bills and taken some action in the last 12 months, more than half (54%) said they were prompted to take action after seeing this information. This proportion is lower than in 2014 (64%).

4.13 Comparisons with 2014

Some key comparisons between the 2014 and 2015 surveys are presented below.

- There has been little change in the propensity to have a fixed term contract and in methods of payment since 2014.
- The proportion of businesses that report starting a contract with a new supplier continues to increase, while the proportion extending or rolling-over an existing contract has decreased significantly.
- Satisfaction with the experience of renegotiating, extending or rolling-over a contract with an existing supplier has declined since 2014.
- A significantly higher proportion of businesses in 2014 have read or glanced through their contract.
- Satisfaction with elements of the contract document, particularly its length and size, has declined since 2014.
- Awareness of contract end dates has not changed in the last 12 months, but fewer businesses now than a year ago are aware of renegotiation dates.

These findings are also highlighted in Figure 4.11.

Figure 4.11: Current contracts and contract renewal: Comparisons between 2014 and 2015 ***(All respondents unless otherwise stated)***

Question:	2014	2015
How does your organisation pay for energy? – direct debit	85%	86%
How does your organisation pay for energy? – on receipt of bill (via cash, cheque, credit card or BACs)	10%	10%
How does your organisation pay for energy? – standing order	4%	3%
Do you have a fixed term contract for your energy supply?	92%	93%
What is the total term of your energy contract? – 12 months (where have a fixed term contract)	31%	32%
Is this current contract the first contract you have had with this supplier? – yes	40%	43%
Is this current contract the first contract you have had with this supplier? – no but a new contract	*27%*	30%
Is this current contract the first contract you have had with this supplier? – no, an extension/rollover	30%	*24%*
Is it an extension/rollover with or without your knowledge? – with knowledge (where an extension/rollover)	91%	90%
Satisfaction with the experience of negotiating, extending or rolling-over their contract? – satisfied (where not first contract)	77%	74%
Satisfaction with the length/size of the contract document? – satisfied (where read/glanced through it)	60%	*51%*

Question:	2014	2015
Satisfaction with the [2013/14: transparency] [2015: clarity] of costs and charges? – satisfied (where read/glanced through it)	65%	*64%*
Satisfaction with the clarity of the duration of the contract [2015: and renewal dates]? – satisfied (where read/glanced through it)	77%	73%
Do you know when your energy contract ends? – know exactly/approximately (where have a fixed term contract)	84%	83%
Do you know when you can give notice of termination? – know exactly/approximately (where have a fixed term contract)	73%	*62%*
Unweighted bases (all respondents):	1502	1500
Unweighted bases (where have a fixed term contract):	1398	1407
Unweighted bases (where an extension/rollover):	449	357
Unweighted bases (where not first contract):	850	810
Unweighted bases (where read/glanced through it):	733	1170

**Bases presented are the number of interviews after weighting ~question wording change*

Font in italics signifies a statistically significantly lower figure compared with the previous year

5 The switching experience

5.1 Overview and key findings

This chapter presents the findings related to questions regarding switching suppliers and/or tariffs. It covers:

- How often micro and small businesses review their supply arrangements.
- Experiences and reasons for switching.
- Barriers to and reasons for not switching.
- Views on the switching process overall.

Key findings:
The majority of businesses on a fixed term contract (82%) review their supply arrangements when their contract comes up for renewal.
Nearly two thirds (64%) have switched supplier in the last 5 years; this is a significantly higher proportion than reported in 2014 (60%). Thirteen per cent have switched at least three times in this period.
Twenty-five per cent of businesses have switched supplier in the last 12 months (compared to 23% in 2014).
A third of businesses have not switched in the last 5 years and nearly half of these (44%; 16% of all businesses) have never considered switching. This is a decrease compared with 2014 (39% and 19% respectively).
One in five businesses that switched in the last 5 years contacted one or two suppliers when they last considered switching (21%), with a slightly higher proportion having contacted three (23%) and fewer having contacted four (16%) or five (15%). Another fifth (21%) contacted more than five suppliers for a quote. This includes contact made with a supplier through a broker.
Cost savings remain by far the most likely reason for switching; 89% have switched in the last 5 years say it was because they were offered a lower price.
Satisfaction with their current supplier is the most frequently cited reason for not switching in the last 12 months (77% of those that have not switched).
Views of those that have switched suppliers in the last 12 months tend towards the positive: • 61% agree that the process of switching supplier is easy; 30% disagree • 48% agree that it is easy to compare prices; 39% disagree • 37% agree that the time between choosing a new tariff and supplier and switching is too long; 46% disagree However, there are mixed views with regard to the financial benefit of switching: • 38% agree that expected savings do not always materialise; 38% disagree.

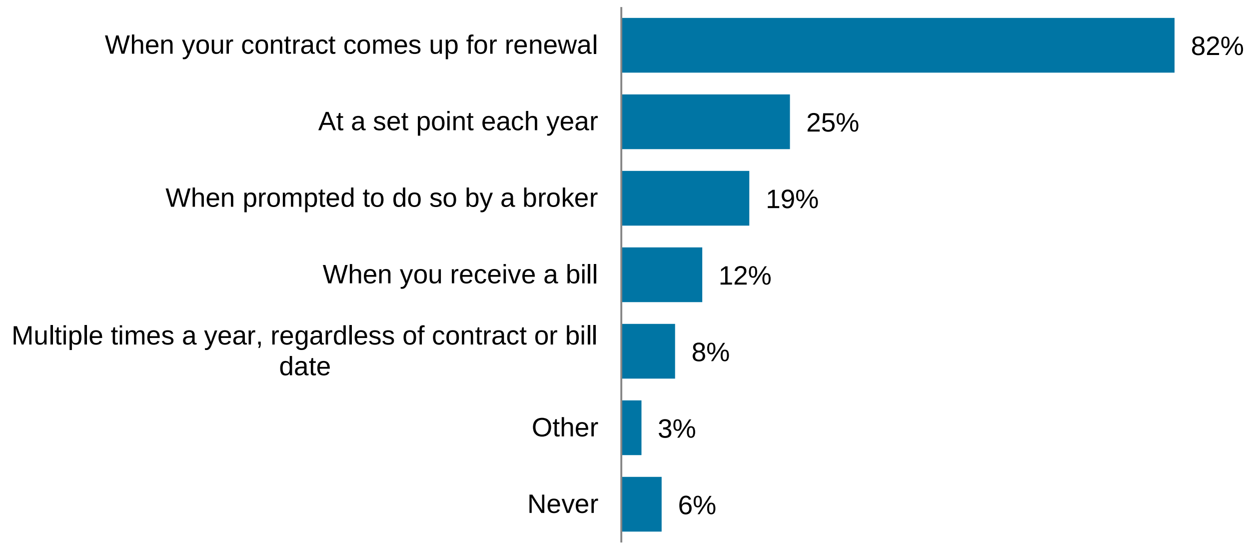
5.2 Reviewing supplier arrangements

The majority of respondents said they review their energy supply arrangements when their contract comes up for renewal (82%; 73% in 2014). Review at the contract renewal point increases to 85% amongst those with a fixed term contract (37% of those without a fixed term contract).

One in four businesses said they review their energy supply arrangements at a set point each year (25%; 16% in 2014), with slightly fewer doing so when prompted to do so by a broker (19%; 10% in 2014). Just one in eight review their arrangements when they receive a bill (12%; 8% in 2014). Less than one in ten do so more frequently throughout the year (8%; 6% in 2014).

One in twenty businesses say they never review their energy supply arrangements (6%; 8% in 2014). This proportion is slightly higher amongst the smallest businesses (7% of those without employees and those with between 1 and 4 employees) than amongst those with between 10 and 49 employees (3%). More than a quarter of businesses without a fixed term contract report never reviewing arrangements (27%) and those that have not recently shopped around and/or have not switched in the last 5 years are more likely than average to say it is not something they do (11% and 15% respectively).

Figure 5.1: Frequency with which businesses review their gas/electricity supply arrangements - prompted (all respondents)



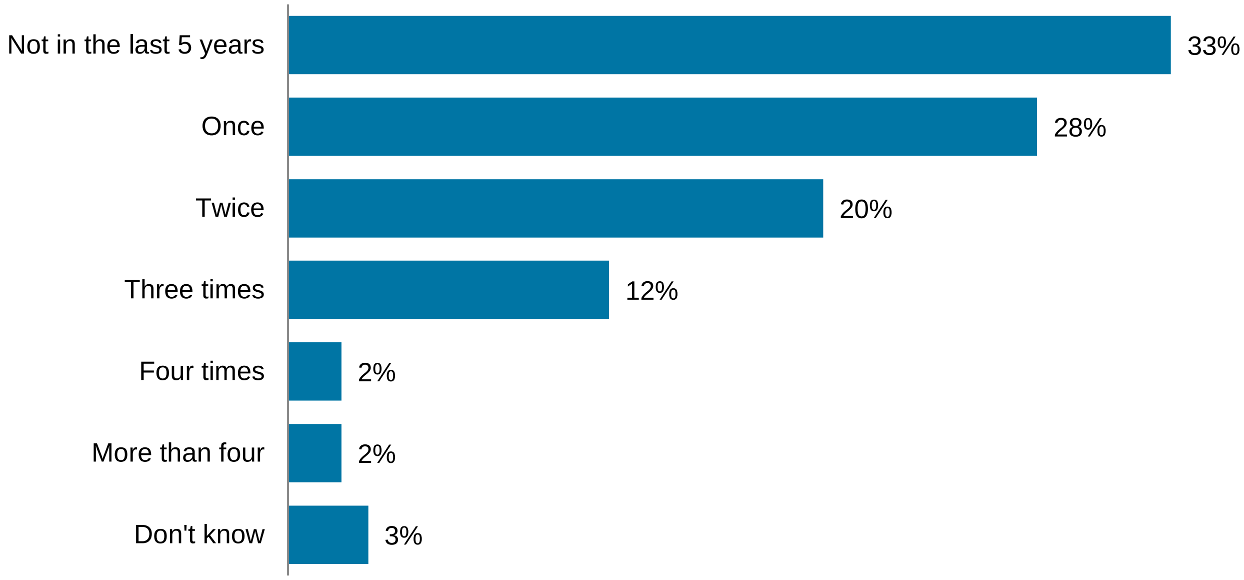
Unweighted sample base (all respondents): 1500

F1. Approximately how often, if at all, do you review your gas/electricity supply arrangements?

5.3 Switching

Nearly two thirds of businesses (64%; 60% in 2014) report that they switched gas/electricity supplier in the last 5 years. Just over a quarter of all businesses (28%; 26% in 2014) has switched once, one in five (20%; 21% in 2014) switched twice and one in six (16%; 13% in 2014) switched 3 or more times over this period.

Figure 5.2: Number of times businesses have switched gas/electricity supplier in the last 5 years (all respondents)



Unweighted sample base (all respondents): 1500

F1. How many times has your organisation switched gas/electricity supplier in the last 5 years?

The propensity to have switched in the last 5 years increases with business size to 70% of businesses with 10-49 employees, while businesses without employees are significantly less likely than average to have done so (60%). Businesses without employees are, however, significantly more likely to have switched in the last 5 years now than in 2014 (46% in 2014).

The table that follows also highlights higher propensity to switch amongst larger electricity spenders but, a significantly higher level of switching than average amongst the lowest bands of gas spenders.

Figure 5.3: Number of times businesses have switched gas/electricity supplier in the last 5 years, by size and annual electricity/gas expenditure (all respondents)

	Unweighted bases (all respondents)	Any switching %	Never %	Once %	Twice %	Three times %	Four times %	More than four %	Don't know %
All businesses	*1500*	64	33	28	20	12	2	2	3
0 employees	*245*	*60*	39	27	*17*	14	2	1	*
1-4 employees	*472*	64	34	29	18	12	1	3	2
5-9 employees	*336*	68	*28*	30	24	*9*	2	2	4
10-49 employees	*447*	**70**	*23*	27	24	14	1	4	**7**
Electricity expenditure									
Up to £1,000	*403*	62	37	**33**	18	*9*	1	2	1
£1,001 to £2,500	*378*	63	35	26	20	14	2	3	2
£2.501 to £5,000	*245*	**71**	27	28	24	15	3	2	2
£5,001 to £10,000	*166*	**75**	22	26	21	**19**	4	4	3
£10,001 plus	*169*	69	28	23	24	15	2	**5**	3
Gas expenditure									
Up to £1,000	*229*	**73**	*26*	33	22	15	2	*1*	1
£1,001 to £2,500	*151*	72	26	28	**27**	11	2	3	2
£2.501 to £5,000	*83~*	59	41	24	20	7	**4**	4	0
£5,001 to £10,000	*75~*	69	28	19	25	14	3	9	3
£10,001 plus	*35~*	71	29	21	24	20	0	**6**	0

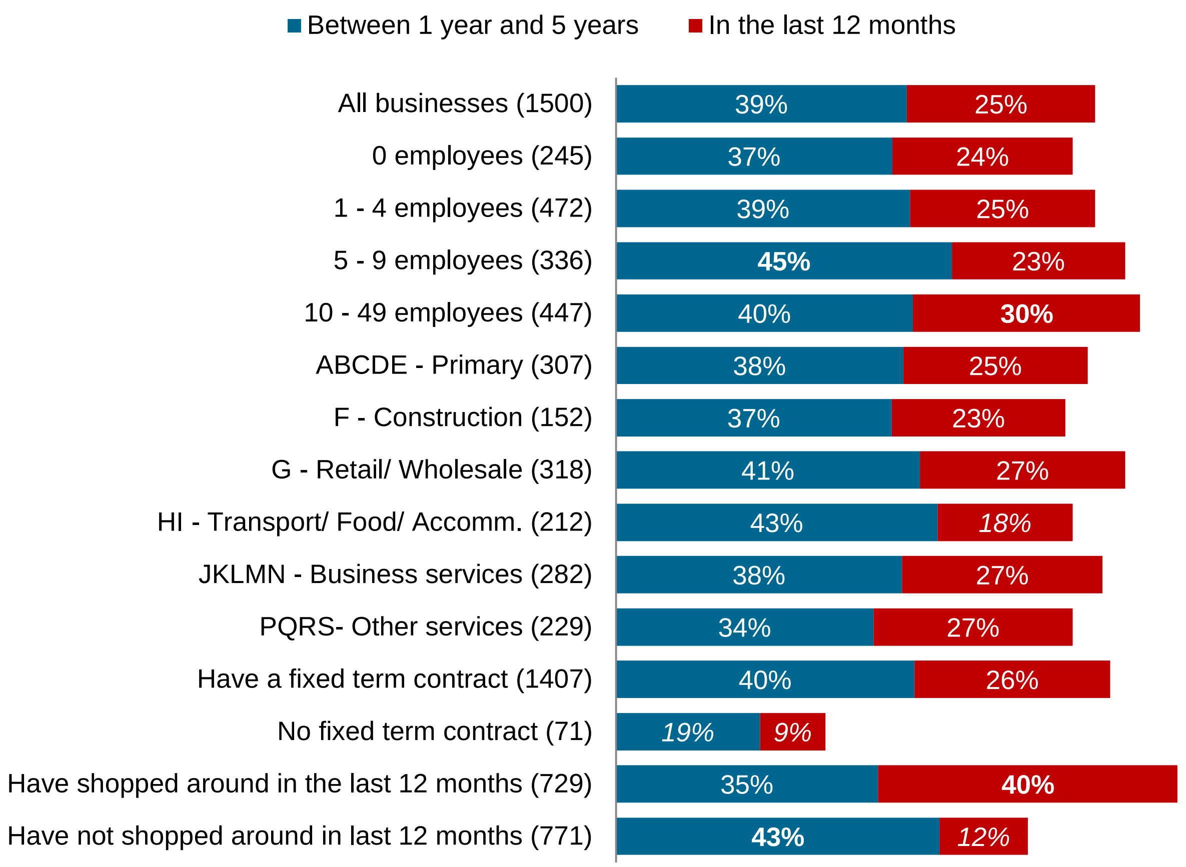
E1. How many times has your organisation switched gas/electricity supplier in the last 5 years? ~caution small sample base

Bold font signifies a statistically significantly higher figure compared with the average minus the sub-group tested; *italics signifies a statistically significantly lower figure than average minus the sub-group tested*

Of those that have switched supplier at all in the last 5 years, 39% have switched in the last 12 months (no change since 2014). This equates to 25% of all businesses.

Businesses with 10-49 employees are significantly more likely than average to have switched suppliers (31% in the last year; 45% in the last 5 years).

Figure 5.4: Proportion of businesses that have switched gas/electricity supplier in the last 12 months, by size, sector, type of contract and whether shopped around (all respondents)



Unweighted sample bases in brackets (all respondents)

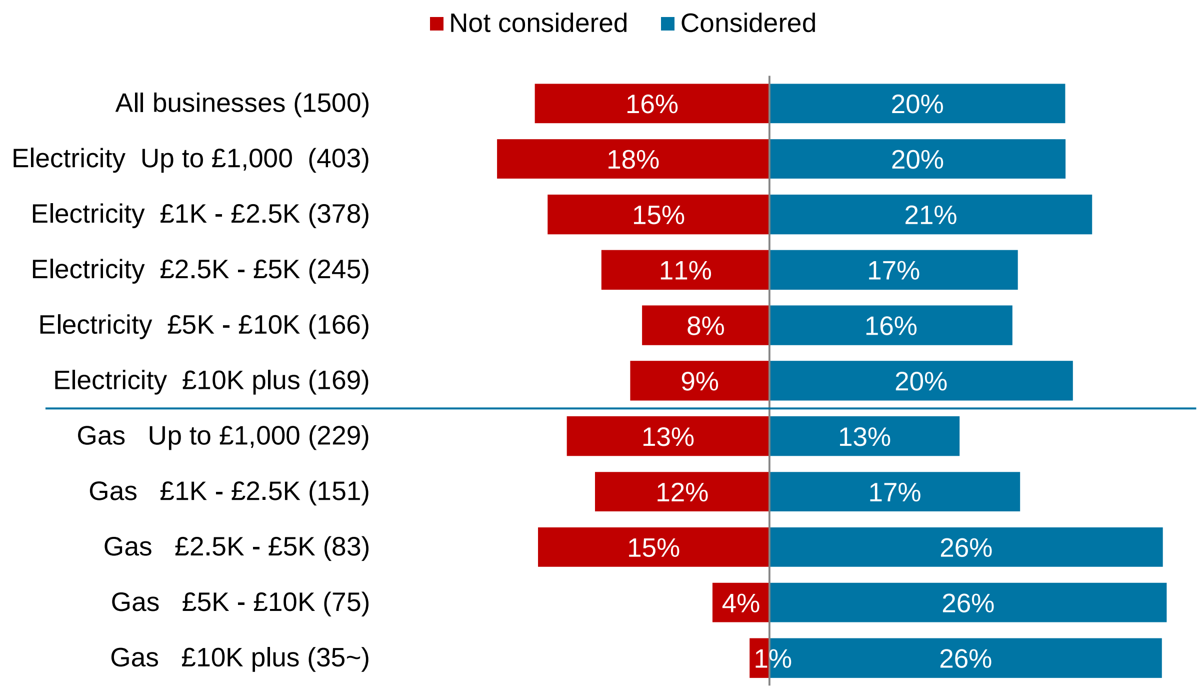
E2. Have you switched gas/electricity supplier in the last 12 months?

Bold font signifies a statistically significantly higher figure compared with the average minus the sub-group tested; *italics signifies a statistically significantly lower figure than average minus the sub-group tested*

Of those who have not switched in the last 5 years, just over half (55%) have considered doing so. Overall, 16% of all businesses have never considered switching supplier (19% in 2014).

The higher the expenditure on either electricity or gas, the greater the probability that businesses have switched or considered switching. As a proportion of those that have not switched in the last 5 years, 48% of businesses with electricity expenditure of less than £1k per annum have never considered switching supplier, compared with just 29% of businesses with expenditure of £10k or more. The respective figures based on gas expenditure are 50% (expenditure of less than £1k per annum) and 5% (businesses with expenditure of £10k or more). The latter figure is based on a very small sample (26 respondents).

Figure 5.5: Proportion of businesses that have considered/never considered switching gas/electricity supplier in the last 12 months, by expenditure (all respondents)
– the remainder (not shown) have switched supplier in the last 5 years



Unweighted sample bases in brackets (all respondents) ~caution: low sample base

E3. Have you ever considered switching gas/electricity supplier?

5.3.1 Number of quotes

On average, businesses that have switched in the last 12 months contacted four suppliers, either directly or through brokers. The figure was three in 2014, although this figure is based on those who had switched in the last 5 years or who had considered doing so.

Businesses using brokers reported a higher number of quotes obtained than those that did not use brokers at all (5, compared with 2.5).

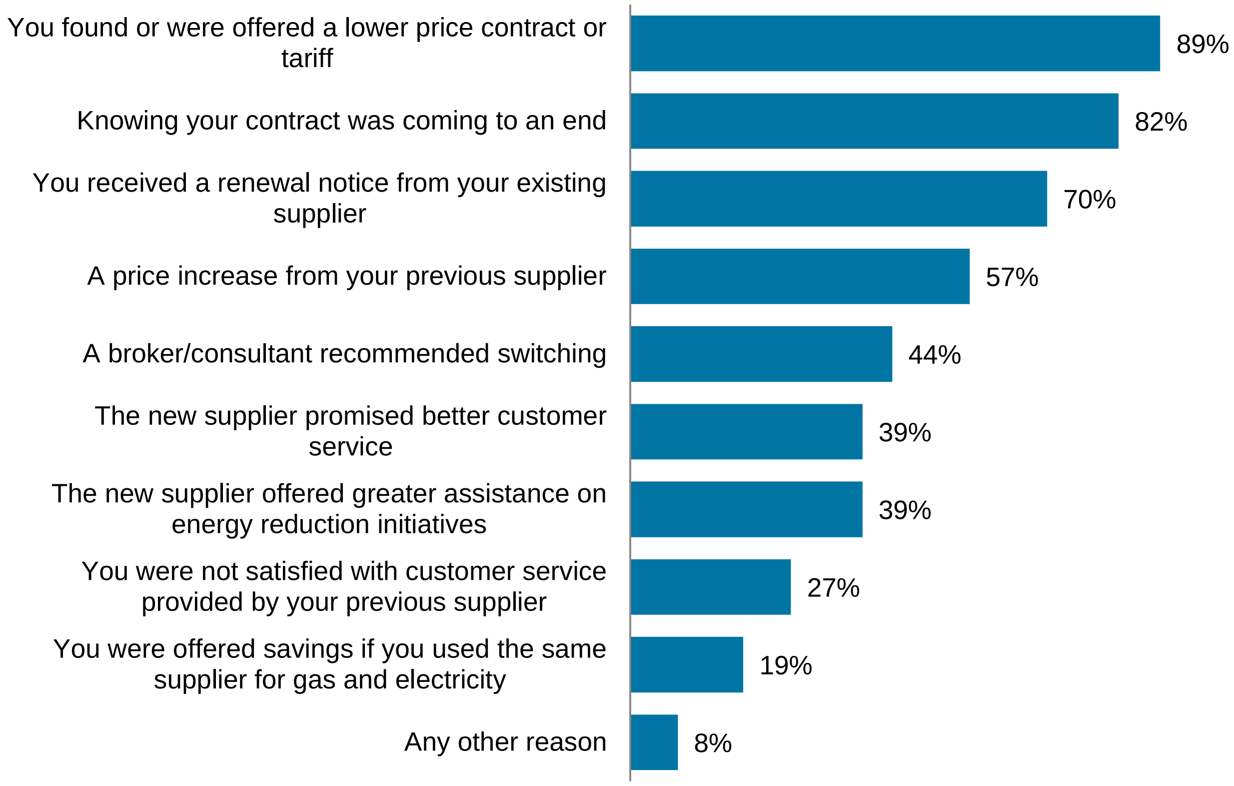
Overall, around three quarters of respondents who have switched in the last 12 months were able to provide an estimate of the number of quotes obtained. Of those able to recall how many quotes were obtained, 11% reported having obtained just one quote, while a further 10% have obtained two. More than a fifth (23%) have obtained three quotes, while fewer have obtained four (16%) and a similar proportion have obtained five (15%). A fifth (21%) obtained more than 5 quotes.

5.4 Reasons for switching

Respondents that have switched suppliers in the last 12 months were asked what factors had prompted them to do so. More than four fifths cited finding or being offered a lower price contract or tariff (89%) or knowing their contract was coming to an end (82%). There is obviously a considerable degree of overlap between these two reasons. Slightly fewer cited that they had received a renewal notice from their existing supplier (70%).

Another reason cited by the majority is that there was a price increase from their previous supplier (57% of those that switched in the last 12 months).

Figure 5.6: Factors in the decision to switch gas/electricity supplier on the last occasion – prompted, multiple response (where switched in the last 12 months)



Unweighted sample base (where switched in the last 12 months): 396

E5. Were any of the following factors in your decision to switch gas/electricity supplier on the last occasion you switched?

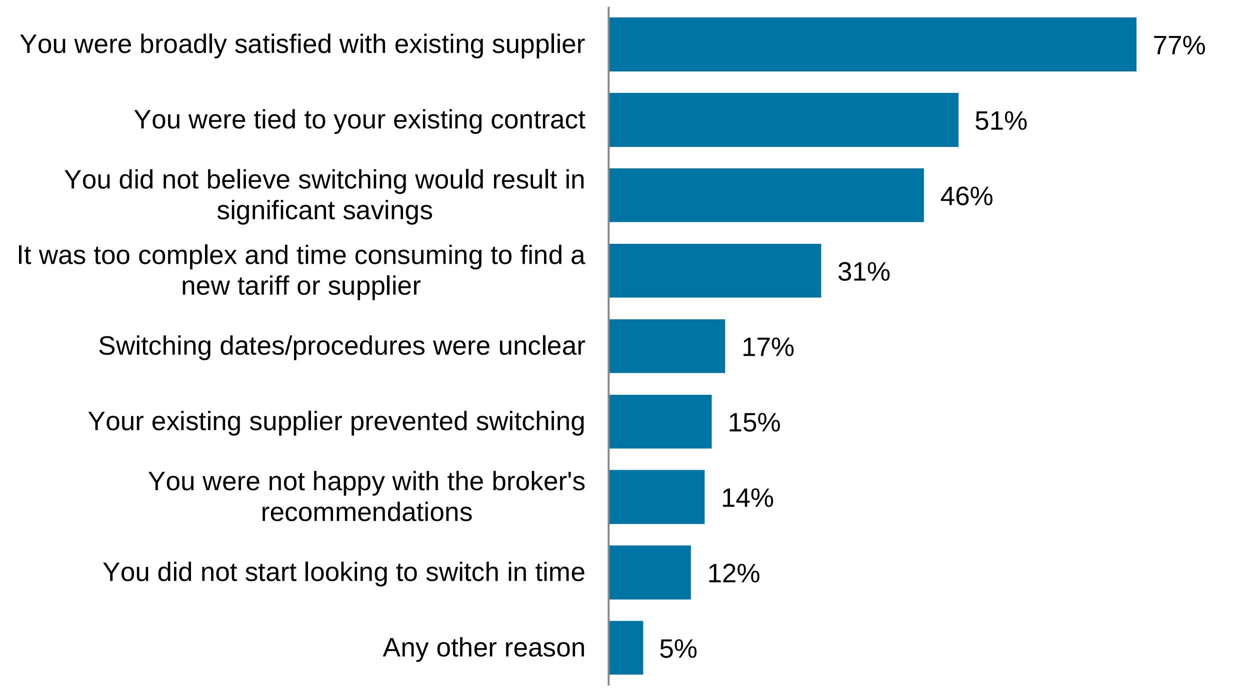
5.5 Reasons for not switching

Respondents that had switched or considered switching suppliers in the last 5 years but did not switch in the last 12 months were asked why they have not done so.

Their reasons for not switching are summarised in Figure 5.7. The top two reasons were general satisfaction with their current supplier (77%) and being tied into an existing contract (51%).

Nearly half of respondents, however, said they were sceptical of the savings that can be made through switching (46% cite this), while a third of respondents cited the fact that finding a new tariff or supplier is too complex and time consuming (31%).

Figure 5.7: Reasons for not switching suppliers in the last 12 months - prompted, multiple response (where have not switched in the last 12 months)



Unweighted sample base (where have switched or considered switching in the last 5 years but have not done so in the last 12 months): 868

E6. You say you have not switched suppliers in the last 12 months. Why have you not switched?

5.6 Views on the switching process

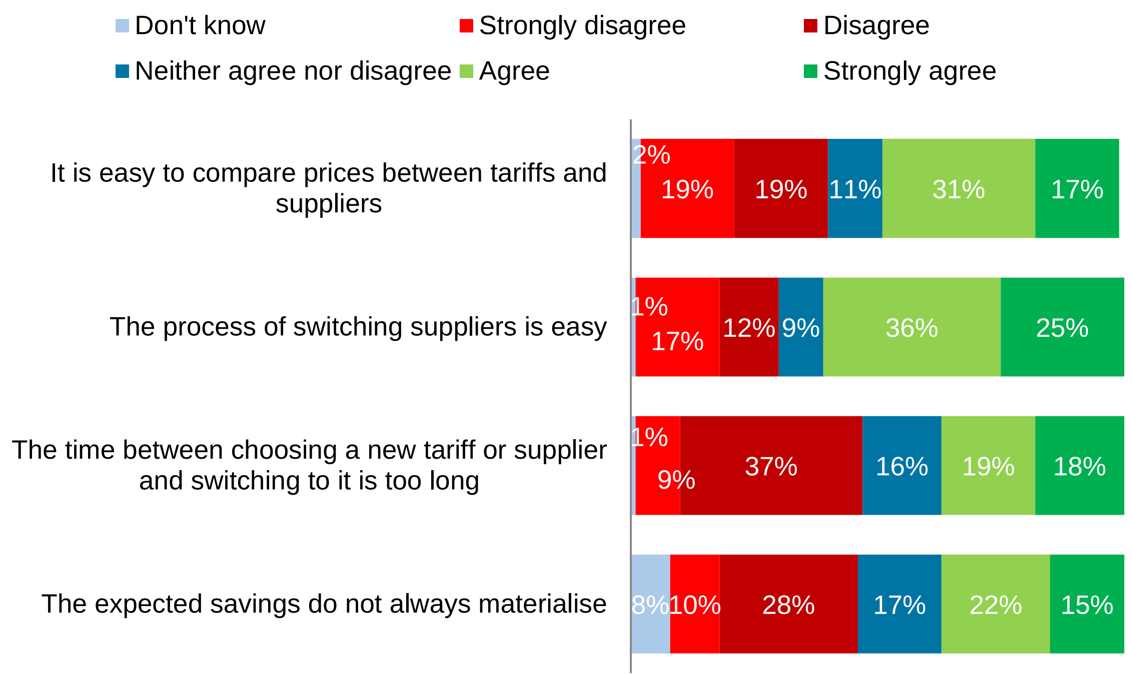
Those businesses that had switched in the last 12 months[12] (25% of all respondents) were asked their views on various aspects of it.

As in 2014, higher proportions of respondents agree than disagree that it is easy to compare prices (48% strongly agree/agree; 39% strongly disagree/disagree) and that the process of switching supplier is easy (61% strongly agree/agree; 30% strongly disagree/disagree). Although this year's views are based on more recent switching experiences, views are similar to those reported in 2014.

Similar proportions agree or disagree with the statement that expected savings do not always materialise (38% strongly agree/agree; 38% strongly disagree/disagree), while respondents are more likely to disagree that the time between choosing a new tariff or supplier and switching to it is too long (37% strongly agree/agree; 46% strongly disagree/disagree).

[12] In 2014, this question was asked of those who had switched suppliers in the last 5 years.

Figure 5.8: Extent to which respondents agree or disagree with aspects of the switching process (where have switched in the last 12 months)



Unweighted sample base (where have switched in the last 12 months): 396

E7. In terms of the switching process, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following aspects of it?

There are few differences in views of the switching process across business size and sectors, as well as by other variables such as type of contract and expenditure. However, respondents that used a broker to switch are significantly more likely than average to agree that the process of switching is easy (66%).

Respondents that have not shopped around in the last 12 months are significantly more likely to agree that expected savings do not always materialise (47%) than those who have shopped around (35%). Frequent switchers (having done so at least 3 times in the last 5 years) are significantly more likely than average to disagree that this is the case (46%).

5.7 Comparisons with 2014

Figure 5.9 presents figures for the 2014 and 2015 surveys on questions where it is possible to compare the data.

It shows that there has been a significant increase in reported switching.

Figure 5.9: The switching experience: Comparisons between 2014 and 2015

Question:	2014	2015
How many times has your organisation switched energy supplier in the last 5 years? – at least once	60%	**64%**
How many times has your organisation switched energy supplier in the last 5 years? – once only	26%	28%
How many times has your organisation switched energy supplier in the last 5 years? – twice	21%	20%
Have you switched energy supplier in the last 12 months? – yes	23%	25%[13]
Unweighted bases (all respondents):	1502	1500

Bold font signifies a statistically significantly higher figure compared with the previous year

[13] Of those that have switched supplier at all in the last 5 years, 39% have switched in the last 12 months. This equates to 25% of all businesses. The 2014 figure in this table is also based on all businesses.

6 Use of brokers and other information sources

6.1 Overview and key findings

This chapter summarises use of brokers, as well as other sources of information when businesses think about changing their contracts or tariffs. It covers:

- The sources that businesses consult.
- Satisfaction with price comparison websites or telephone services.
- Approaches from and use of brokers.
- Views on the conduct of brokers.

Key findings:
Sixty-four per cent of businesses cite brokers as a source of information when choosing their energy contracts (28% say brokers are the main source). Use of brokers as a main source increases to 35% of businesses with 10-49 employees.
Fifty-nine per cent of all businesses say their current supplier is a source of information when choosing energy contracts. This is a significant increase compared with 2014 (46%). Twenty-eight per cent cite them as the main source, which is lower than in 2014 (33%).
One in ten businesses (10%) have mainly used a price comparison website or telephone service when choosing their current energy contract; 75% were satisfied with the service provided (including 28% that say they were very satisfied).
Eighty-five per cent of businesses have been approached by brokers in the last 12 months. Around two fifths of all businesses (40%) report receiving up to 10 approaches by brokers in the last 12 months. One in five businesses (19%) have received more than 50 approaches from brokers, which is a higher proportion than in 2014 (15%).
Of those businesses that have been approached by brokers in the last 12 months. Of those able to provide a view[14]: • 66% reported that brokers' had a professional tone; 34% disagreed • 53% reported that the brokers clearly identified themselves as an energy broker; 47% disagreed • 53% reported that the broker provided accurate information about the services they offered; 47% disagreed • 31% reported that brokers were upfront about the cost of their service; 69% disagreed :
Just 8% of businesses that have used a broker said they were charged for the broker's services. More than two in three (69%) of these businesses were aware of the charge before using the broker's services.
Most of the businesses that have used brokers (82%) were satisfied with the service provided. This includes 47% that were very satisfied.

[14] Excludes respondents that replied 'don't know' from the base

Key findings:

However, the perception of energy brokers more generally among micro and small businesses tends to be more negative. Forty-six per cent of all businesses describe their overall view of energy brokers as negative, while 19% describe their view as positive.

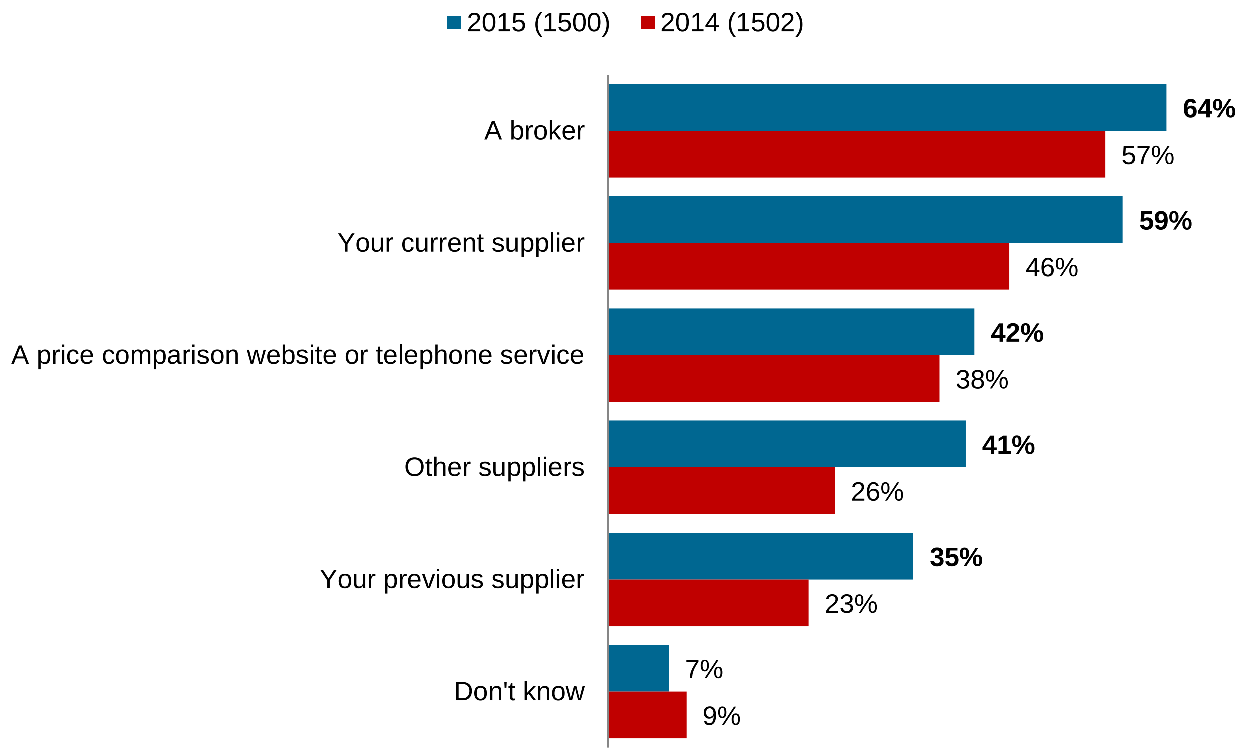
6.2 Use of brokers and other information sources

Respondents were asked about the sources they consulted or approached when choosing their current contract or tariff.

Nearly two thirds of respondents reported consulting or being approached by brokers (64%). Slightly fewer cited their current supplier as a source (59%). Around two fifths of respondents report price comparison websites or telephone services (42%) or other suppliers (41%) as sources, while a third (35%) said they speak to their previous supplier.

Compared to 2014, current suppliers have become more significant (46% in 2014) as a general source, although brokers are also more frequently cited (57% in 2014). However, there is evidence to suggest that businesses are consulting a wider range of sources in comparison to the previous survey.

Figure 6.1: Sources consulted when choosing current gas/electricity contract or tariff: All sources – prompted, multiple response (all respondents)



Unweighted sample bases in brackets (all respondents)

D1. When choosing your current <GAS>/<ELECTRICITY> contract or tariff did you consult or were you approached by, any of the following?

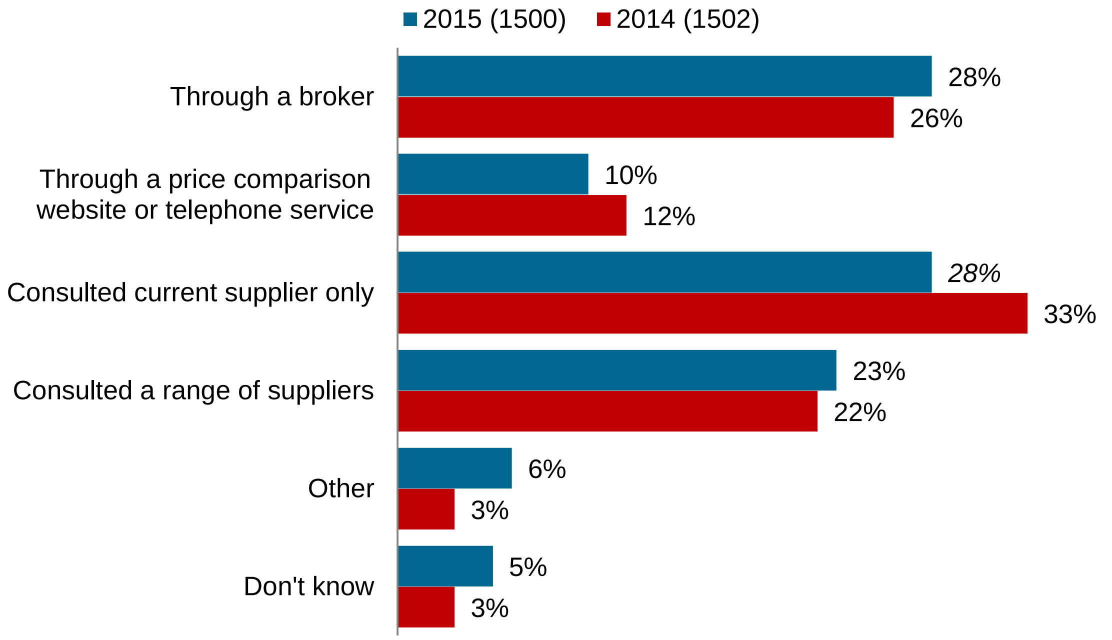
Bold font signifies a statistically significantly higher figure compared with the previous year; *italics signifies a statistically significantly lower figure compared with the previous year*

Businesses reported that the *main* source of information for choosing their contract or tariff was likely to be their current supplier or a broker, with just over a quarter saying this (28% for each). However, current suppliers have become less significant as a main source (33% in 2014).

While price comparison websites or telephone services are consulted by more than two in five businesses, they are only cited as a main source when choosing an energy contract by one in ten (10%; 12% in 2014).

Although consulting other suppliers is more significant now than in 2014, the proportion citing them as the main source has not changed (23% of all businesses; 22% in 2014).

Figure 6.2: Ways in which businesses mainly chose their current gas/electricity contract or tariff – prompted, multiple response (all respondents)



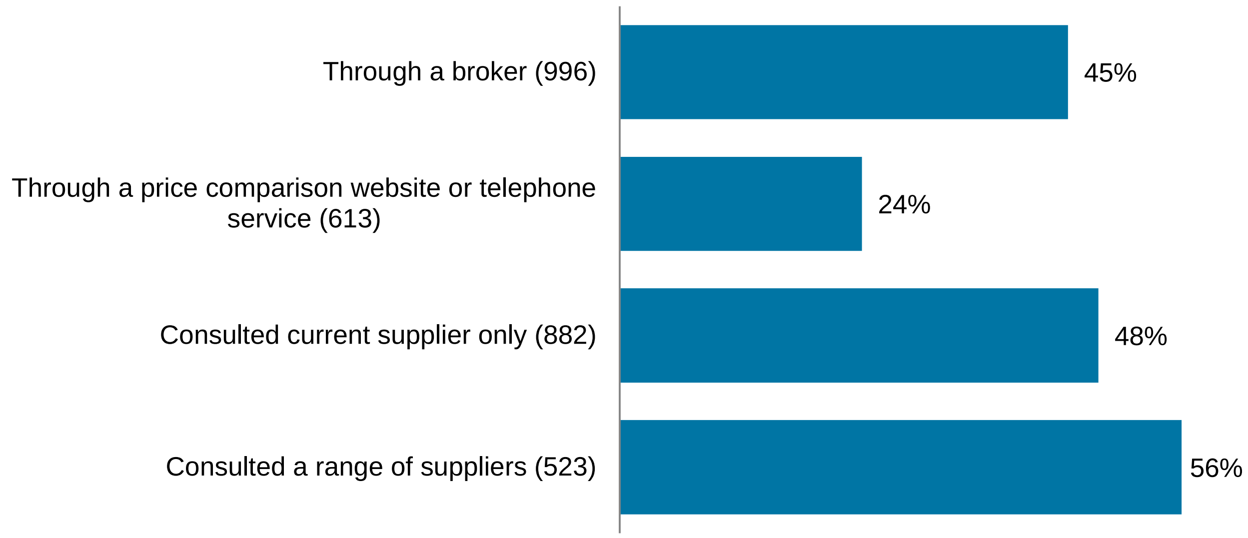
Unweighted sample bases in brackets (all respondents)

D2. And how did you mainly choose your current gas/electricity contract or tariff?

Bold font signifies a statistically significantly higher figure compared with the previous year; *italics signifies a statistically significantly lower figure compared with the previous year*

Just over two fifths of all respondents that consulted or were approached by brokers ultimately used one to arrange their current gas/electricity contract or tariff (45% of those that have consulted a broker at all). There is a lower level of reliance on price comparison websites or telephone services as a main source amongst those that have used these services, with only 24% of those having consulted them having used them as a main source.

Figure 6.3: Main source consulted when choosing current gas/electricity contract or tariff, based on all businesses that consulted each source at all (where consulted each source)



Unweighted sample bases in brackets (where consulted each at all)

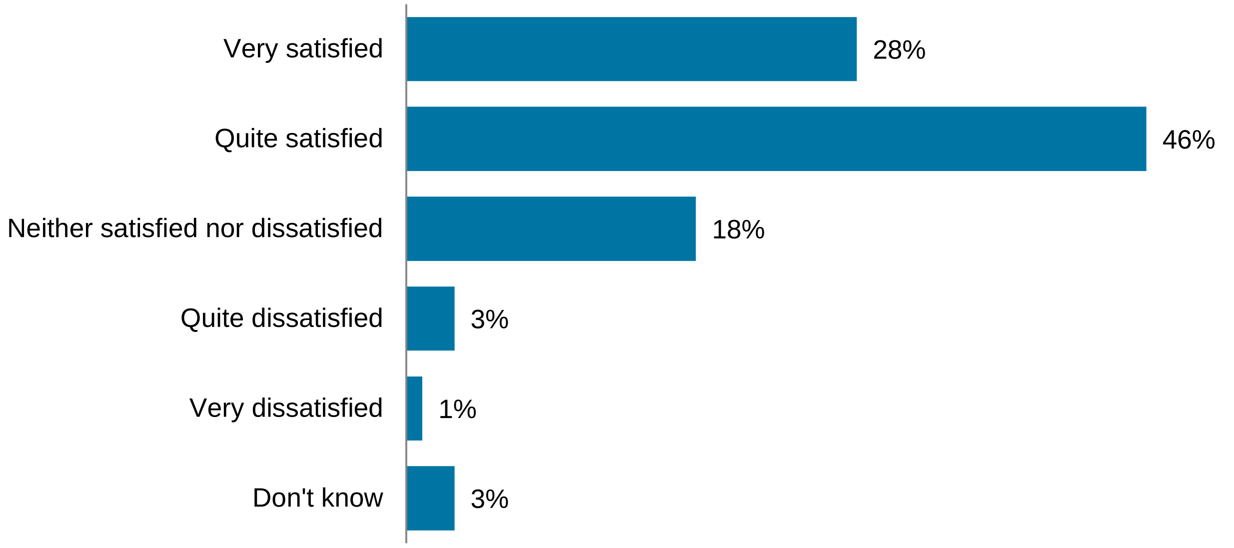
D2. And how did you mainly choose your current gas/electricity contract for tariff?

Bold font signifies a statistically significantly higher figure compared with the average minus the sub-group tested; *italics signifies a statistically significantly lower figure than average minus the sub-group tested*

6.2.1 Satisfaction with price comparison website or telephone service

As mentioned above, one in ten of all respondents (10%) have mainly used a price comparison website or telephone service to choose their current gas/electricity contract or tariff. Three quarters of these businesses have been satisfied with their experience of this service (75%). Just 4% were dissatisfied (9% in 2014).

Figure 6.4: Extent to which businesses are satisfied overall with the service provided by the price comparison website or telephone service (where mainly used a price comparison website or telephone service)



Unweighted sample base (where mainly used a price comparison website or telephone service): 139

D2b. How satisfied or dissatisfied were you overall with the service provided by the price comparison website or telephone service when changing to your current gas/electricity contract or tariff?

The sample size of price comparison website or telephone service users is small, limiting detailed breakdown of satisfaction levels by business demographics and behaviour. It is apparent, however, that those who have not shopped around in the last 12 months are significantly more likely than those that have shopped around to be satisfied with the service (89% very/quite satisfied, compared with 64%). The proportion is also significantly lower than average (61%) amongst businesses that have switched in the last 12 months.

This suggests that price comparison website or telephone services are rated more positively by those that have used them longer ago. However, there is a higher level of neutrality than average amongst those that have shopped around in the last 12 months (25%, compared with an average of 18%) and those that have switched in the last 12 months (30%) rather than dissatisfaction. These figures are based on small samples so differences are indicative rather than conclusive.

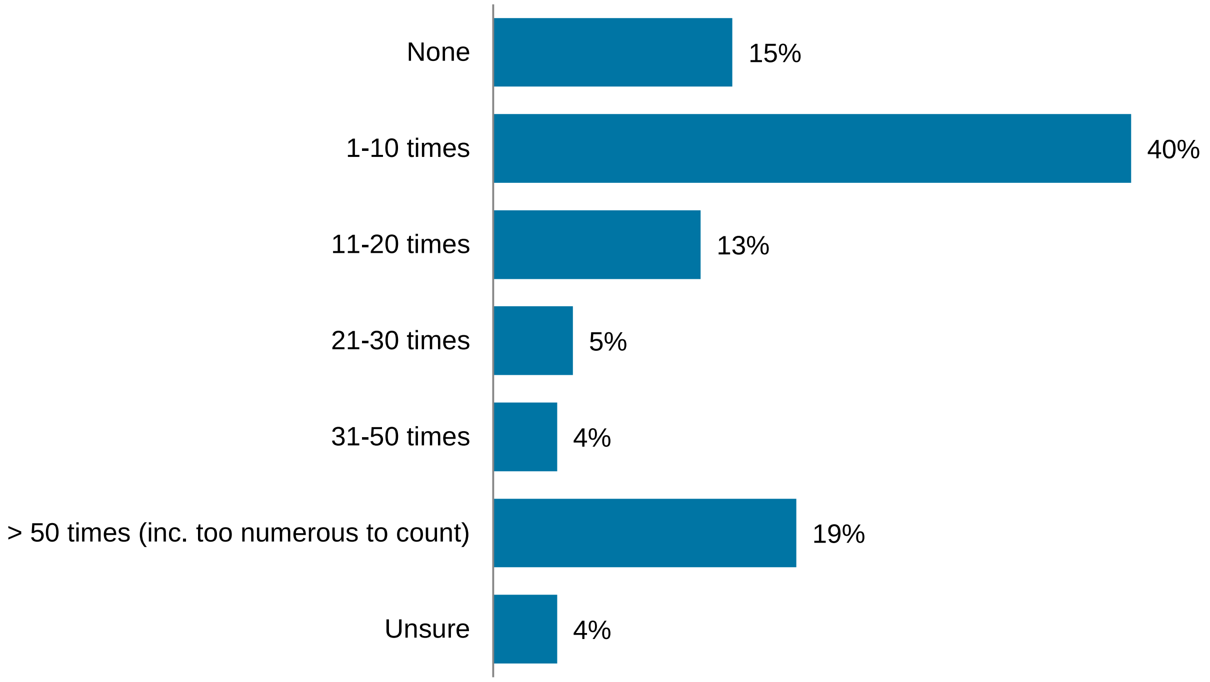
6.3 Approaches from brokers

6.3.1 Number of times approached

Eighty-five percent of all respondents report having been approached by a broker during the last 12 months. Two fifths (40%) say this has happened between one and ten times.

More than a fifth (22%; 23% in 2014) estimate having been approached more than 10 times up to 50 times, while around a fifth (19%) estimate more than 50 approaches and too many to count.

Figure 6.5: Number of times businesses have been approached by a broker in the last 12 months (all respondents)



Unweighted sample base (all respondents): 1500

D3. Approximately how many times, if at all, have you been approached by a broker in the last 12 months?

The propensity to report more than 50 approaches varies little by business size, although is slightly lower than average amongst businesses without employees (16%).

However, it does vary to a greater extent by sector, with those in transport, food and accommodation, retail and wholesale particularly likely to report a large number of calls (29% and 27% respectively). The proportion is also significantly higher within businesses with single site (20%) compared to multi-site (11%) businesses. There is little variation by switching behaviour, suggesting that there is no correlation between having received calls from brokers and switching suppliers.

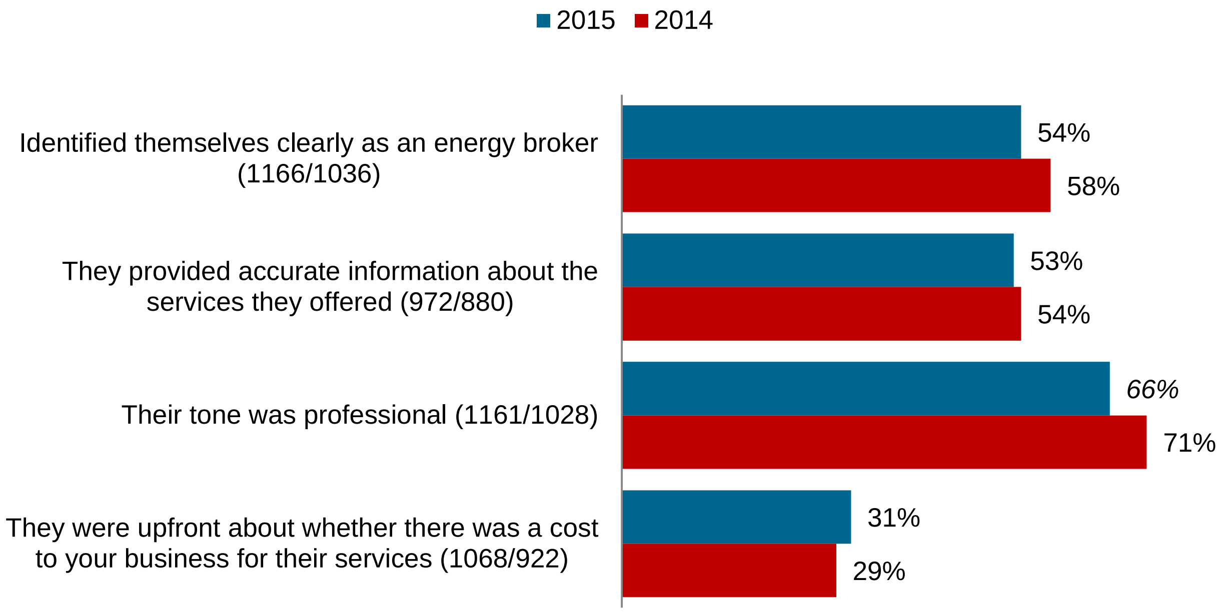
6.3.2 Satisfaction with broker approaches

Businesses' views of broker conduct is mixed. Of those able to provide a response, two thirds reported brokers' tones as professional (62%). However, fewer reported that brokers identified themselves clearly (54%), while they were equally as likely to report that brokers provided accurate information about the services they offered.

Only around a third (31%) reported that brokers were upfront about whether there was a cost to the business for their services.

Compared with 2014, respondents are slightly less positive with regard to brokers identifying themselves clearly (54% in 2015; 58% in 2014) and with regard to the professionalism of their tone (66% in 2015; 71% in 2014).

Figure 6.6: Proportion of respondents agreeing with statements about the conduct of brokers in approaches to businesses (where approached by a broker and provided a response)



Unweighted sample bases in brackets (where approached by a broker and provided a response – 2015/2014)

D4. Thinking about the last time you were approached by a broker, would you say they…?

A more positive view of brokers' conduct is held by those who have used brokers to arrange their current contract compared with those who have consulted or been approached by a broker but ultimately used another source (or who have not used brokers at all).

However, even amongst those that have used a broker, a high proportion of respondents reported that brokers were not upfront about the cost of their services (see Figure 6.7).

Figure 6.7: Perceived conduct of brokers in approaches to businesses, by use of brokers (where approached by a broker and provided a response)

		All businesses that have been approached %	Broker usage: Main source %	Broker usage: Consulted but not main source %	Broker usage: Not used %
Identified themselves clearly as an energy broker	Yes	53	**62**	50	*49*
	No	47	*38*	50	51
Unweighted bases (where approached by brokers and provided a response)		1166	386	517	263
They provided accurate information about the services they offered	Yes	53	**63**	48	48
	No	47	*37*	52	52
Unweighted bases (where approached by brokers and provided a response)		972	325	444	203
Their tone was professional	Yes	66	**74**	63	61
	No	34	*26*	37	39
Unweighted bases (where approached by brokers and provided a response)		1161	388	503	270
They were upfront about whether there was a cost to your business for their services	Yes	31	**43**	25	24
	No	69	*57*	75	76
Unweighted bases (where approached by brokers and provided a response)		1068	354	474	240

D4. Thinking about the last time you were approached by a broker, would you say they…?

Bold font signifies a statistically significantly higher figure compared with the average minus the sub-group tested; *italics signifies a statistically significantly lower figure than average minus the sub-group tested*

6.4 Brokers' charges

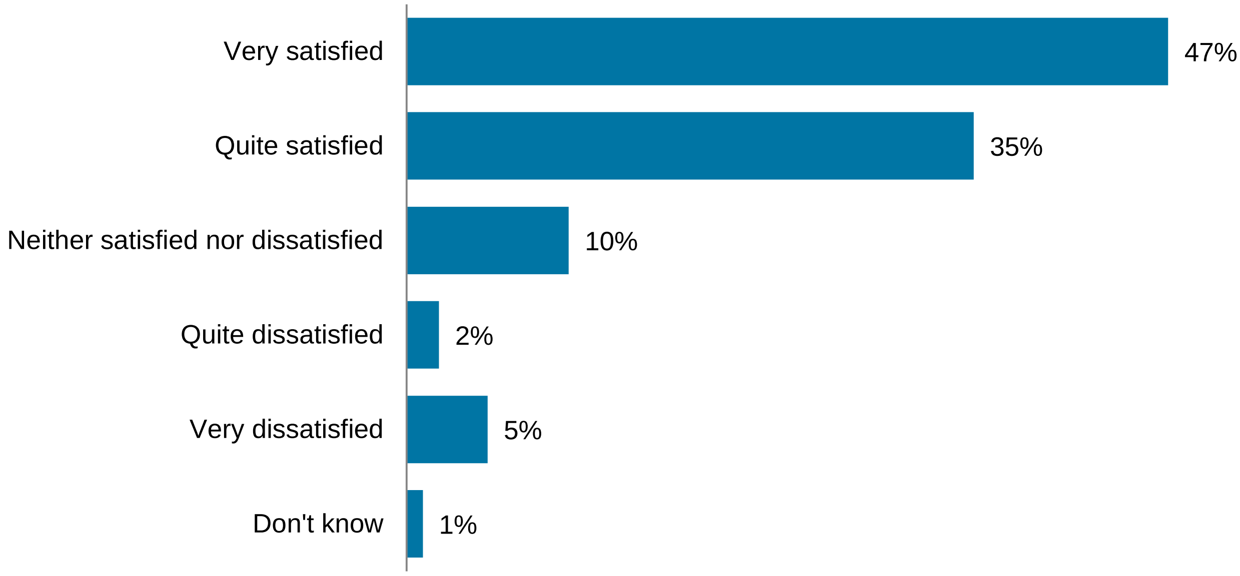
Eight per cent of respondents that had used a broker reported they were charged for their services. This is higher than in 2014 (5%). However, it remains the case that very few respondents are aware that brokers charge for their services and this continues to highlight a lack of clarity with regard to the cost of broker services.

Around two thirds of respondents (69%) that recall being charged were aware of this charge before using the broker's services.

6.4.1 Overall satisfaction with broker services

There has been little change in satisfaction levels with regard to broker services. The majority of those that have used brokers were satisfied with the service provided (82%), which includes 47% that were very satisfied. Just 7% were dissatisfied, which includes 5% that were very dissatisfied.

Figure 6.8: Extent to which respondents are satisfied with the service provided by their broker (where used a broker)



Unweighted sample base (where used a broker): 445

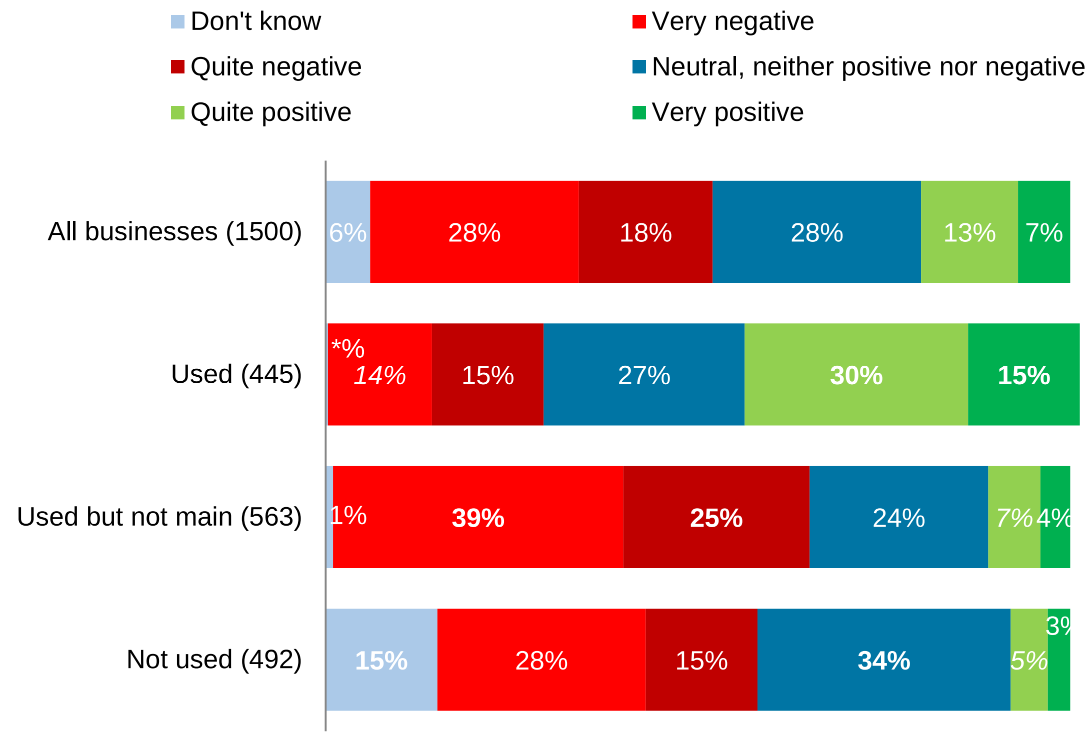
D10. How satisfied were you overall with the service provided by the broker when changing to your current gas/electricity contract or tariff?

All businesses were asked about their general views of brokers. When the views of businesses that have not used brokers is factored in, a higher proportion have negative perception of energy brokers than have a positive perception: 19% are very/quite positive; 46% are very/quite negative.

The reverse is true of businesses that have used brokers to arrange their current contract or tariff: 44% are very/quite positive; 29% are very/quite negative.

As one would expect, a higher proportion of respondents that have not used brokers than average are neutral in their views (34%) or do not feel confident in giving a rating (15% do not know).

Figure 6.9: Overall views of energy brokers, by broker usage (all respondents)



Unweighted sample base in brackets (all respondents)

D11. How would you describe your overall view of energy brokers?

6.5 Comparisons with 2014

Figure 6.10 presents comparisons between the 2014 and 2015 surveys.

Figure 6.10: Use of brokers and other information sources: Comparisons between 2014 and 2015

Question:	2014	2015
When choosing your current gas/electricity contract or tariff did you consult or were you approached by a broker?	57%	**64%**
And how did you mainly choose your current gas/electricity contract or tariff? – through a broker	26%	28%
And how did you mainly choose your current gas/electricity contract or tariff? – current supplier	33%	*28%*
And how did you mainly choose your current gas/electricity contract or tariff? – range of suppliers	22%	23%
And how did you mainly choose your current gas/electricity contract or tariff? – through a price comparison website or telephone service	12%	10%

Question:	2014	2015
How would you describe your overall view of energy brokers? – positive	20%	19%
How would you describe your overall view of energy brokers? – negative	44%	46%
Unweighted bases (all respondents):	1502	1500
Thinking about the last time you were approached by a broker, would you say they...? - identified themselves clearly as an energy broker (yes)	58%	54%
Thinking about the last time you were approached by a broker, would you say they...? - They provided accurate information about the services they offered (yes)	54%	53%
Thinking about the last time you were approached by a broker, would you say they...? - Their tone was professional (yes)	71%	*66%*
Thinking about the last time you were approached by a broker, would you say they...? - They were upfront about whether there was a cost to your business for their services (yes)	29%	31%
Maximum unweighted bases (where approached by a broker and provided a response):	1036	1166
How satisfied were you overall with the service provided by the broker when changing to your current gas/electricity contract or tariff? – very/quite satisfied	81	82
Unweighted bases (where used a broker):	420	445

Bold font signifies a statistically significantly higher figure compared with the previous year; *italics signifies a statistically significantly lower figure compared with the previous year*

7 Contact with suppliers

7.1 Overview and key findings

This chapter focuses on businesses' contact with suppliers. It covers:

- Recent contact with suppliers.
- Reasons for contact.
- Satisfaction with contact.
- Experience of back-billing.

Key findings:
Forty-nine per cent of all businesses have contacted their supplier in the last year.
The main reason for contact is a query or to obtain information (60%), with just 23% contacting suppliers with a complaint.
Of those that have had contact with their energy supplier: • 60% were satisfied with the solution offered (33% very satisfied, while 23% were dissatisfied) • 57% were satisfied with the time it took them to respond to their query or complaint (31% very satisfied while 25% were dissatisfied) • 48% were satisfied with any follow up service/communication (28% very satisfied while 26% were dissatisfied). Satisfaction is at similar levels to that reported in 2014, although there has been a slight increase in satisfaction with the solution the supplier offered and the time it took suppliers to respond to their query or complaint.

7.2 Contacting suppliers

Forty-nine per cent of all businesses have contacted their supplier in the last year. This is slightly higher than in 2014 (45%).

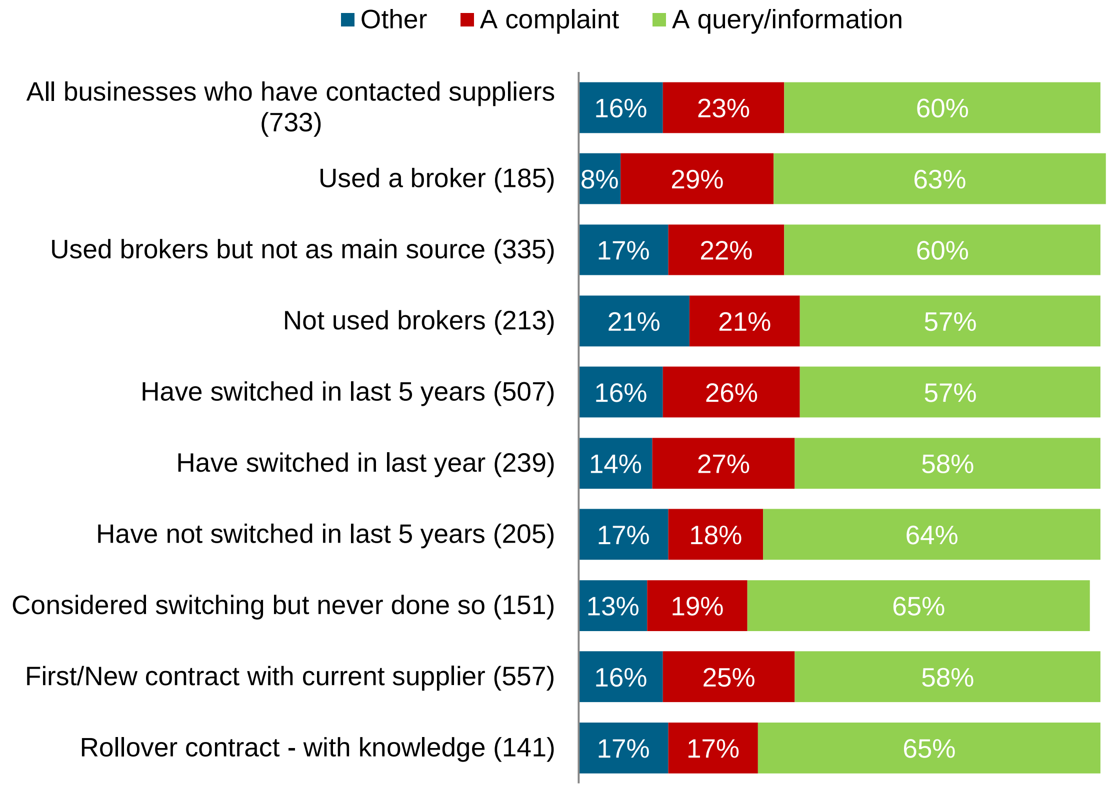
Businesses that are significantly more likely than average to have contacted their supplier in the last year included those that have shopped around for a new supplier or tariff in the last 12 months (65%) and those that have switched in the last year (64%). Businesses at the top end of electricity expenditure are significantly more likely to have contacted their supplier than those spending least (62% of those spending £10k or more, compared with 44% of those spending up to £1k per annum). The proportion is also significantly higher amongst those that do not currently have a smart meter than those that do (52%, compared with 47%).

7.2.1 Reasons for contact

As in 2014, the main reason for contacting suppliers in the last year is regarding a query or information (60%; 65% in 2014). Nearly a quarter of respondents contacted their supplier to make a complaint (23%).

Businesses that have used brokers to set up their current contract or tariff are significantly more likely than average to be contact their supplier with a complaint (29%, compared with 21% of those that have not).

Figure 7.1: Main reason for contacting suppliers, by use of brokers and switching behaviour (where contacted supplier)



Unweighted sample base in brackets (where contacted a supplier)

F5. Thinking about the last time you contacted your supplier, what was the main reason for contacting them?

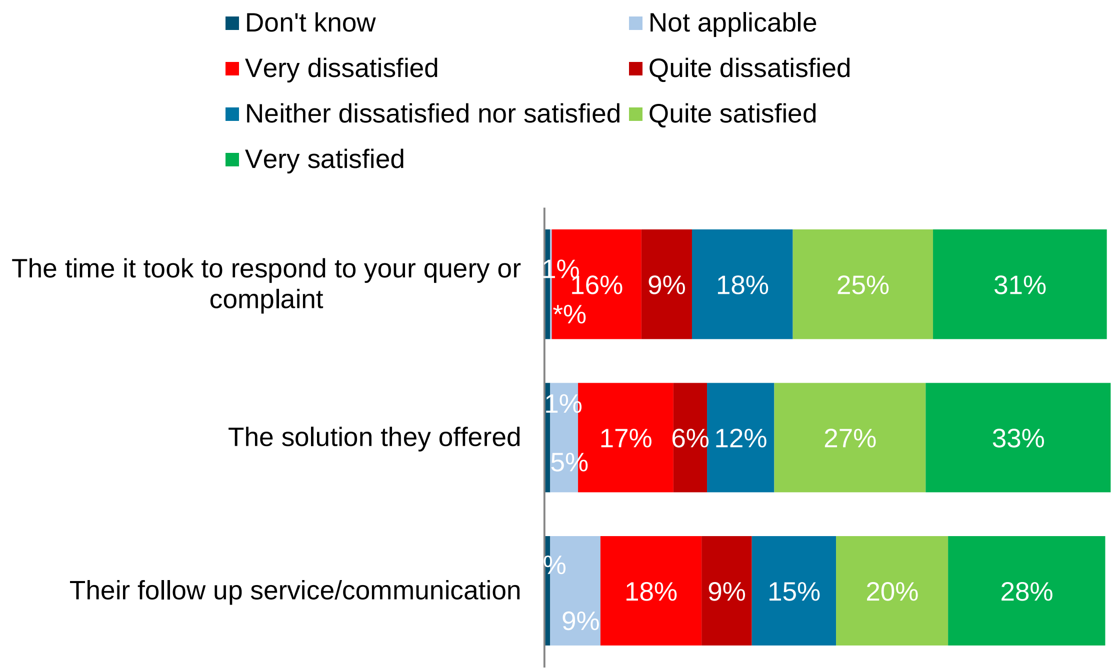
Bold font signifies a statistically significantly higher figure compared with the average; *italics signifies a statistically significantly lower figure compared with the average*

7.2.2 Satisfaction with contact

Those that had made contact with their supplier were asked how satisfied they were with aspects of it. There has been little change since 2014. Around three fifths were satisfied with the time it took suppliers to respond to their query or complaint (57% very satisfied/satisfied) and the solution they offered (60%). Just under half were satisfied with any follow up service/communication (48%).

Around one in four respondents were dissatisfied with the time it took them to respond to their query or complaint (25%), the solution offered (23%) and their follow up service/communication (26%).

Figure 7.2: Extent to which respondents are satisfied with the last contact with their gas/electricity supplier (where contacted supplier)



Unweighted sample base (where contacted supplier): 733

F7. Thinking about the last time you contacted your gas/electricity supplier, how would you rate your level of satisfaction with the following…?

While there is little difference in satisfaction by individual fuel type, businesses with both electricity and gas supplies (rather than just electricity) are more likely to be dissatisfied with each aspect than businesses with electricity only. Furthermore, businesses that have used brokers are more likely to be dissatisfied with each aspect that those who have not. This is summarised in Figure 7.3.

Figure 7.3: Extent to which respondents are satisfied with their last contact with their gas/electricity supplier, by fuel usage and use of brokers (where contacted supplier)

		All businesses that have contacted supplier	Fuel - usage		Broker - usage	
			Use both	Use electricity only	Used	Not used
		%	%	%	%	%
The time it took to respond to your query or complaint	Satisfied (very/quite)	57	54	58	*44*	**60**
	Neutral	18	17	18	21	18
	Dissatisfied (very/quite)	25	**28**	*22*	**35**	*21*
	Average score	3.48	3.35	3.57	3.09	3.58
The solution they offered	Satisfied (very/quite)	60	58	61	*50*	**63**
	Neutral	12	12	12	13	15
	Dissatisfied (very/quite)	23	25	21	**34**	*18*
	Average score	3.57	3.49	3.62	3.21	3.69
Their follow up service/ communication	Satisfied (very/quite)	48	48	48	*34*	**48**
	Neutral	15	13	16	16	16
	Dissatisfied (very/quite)	26	28	25	**39**	*23*
	Average score	3.35	3.28	3.40	2.84	3.49
Unweighted bases (where contacted supplier)		*733**	*324*	*408*	*185*	*213*

F7. Thinking about the last time you contacted your <GAS>/<ELECTRICITY> supplier, how would you rate your level of satisfaction with the following on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is very dissatisfied and 5 is very satisfied...

**difference between total base and sum of sub-sample bases is due to respondents not included in sub-samples due to don't know/refused/other responses in the defining questions (A9 and A10)*

Average score is calculated on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is very dissatisfied and 5 is very satisfied.

Bold font signifies a statistically significantly higher figure compared with others in the sub-group tested; *italics signifies a statistically significantly lower figure than others in the sub-group tested*

The level of dissatisfaction with aspects of supplier contact increases with the level of annual expenditure. This is evident in relation to both electricity and gas expenditure.

Figure 7.4: Extent to which respondents are satisfied with their last contact with their gas/electricity supplier, by energy expenditure (where contacted supplier) ELECTRICITY ONLY

		Electricity expenditure per annum				
		Up to £1,000	£1k-£2.5k	£2.5k-£5k	£5k-£10k	£10k plus
		%	%	%	%	%
The time it took to respond to your query or complaint	Satisfied (very/quite)	**64**	60	*48*	52	*44*
	Neutral	14	15	21	16	22
	Dissatisfied (very/quite)	21	24	29	30	**33**
	Average score	3.66	3.60	3.27	3.31	*3.14*
The solution they offered	Satisfied (very/quite)	66	61	53	54	*50*
	Neutral	8	12	15	10	15
	Dissatisfied (very/quite)	19	22	28	**33**	26
	Average score	**3.76**	3.62	3.35	3.29	3.37
Their follow up service/communication	Satisfied (very/quite)	**58**	46	43	41	*38*
	Neutral	12	17	16	11	12
	Dissatisfied (very/quite)	21	24	33	35	**38**
	Average score	**3.60**	3.41	3.13	3.05	*2.97*
Unweighted bases (where contacted supplier)		*181*	*183*	*124*	*85*	*94*

F7. Thinking about the last time you contacted your <GAS>/<ELECTRICITY> supplier, how would you rate your level of satisfaction with the following on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is very dissatisfied and 5 is very satisfied...

Average score is calculated on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is very dissatisfied and 5 is very satisfied.

Bold font signifies a statistically significantly higher figure compared with others in the sub-group tested; *italics signifies a statistically significantly lower figure than others in the sub-group tested*

Figure 7.5 continued: Extent to which respondents are satisfied with their last contact with their gas/electricity supplier, by energy expenditure (where contacted supplier) GAS <u>ONLY</u>

		Mains gas expenditure per annum				
		Up to £1,000 %	**£1k-£2.5k** %	**£2.5k-£5k** %	**£5k-£10k** %	**£10k plus** %
The time it took to respond to your query or complaint	Satisfied (very/quite)	**66**	49	51	43	32
	Neutral	12	25	12	18	12
	Dissatisfied (very/quite)	22	26	**37**	**39**	52
	Average score	3.67	3.29	3.23	*2.93*	2.90
The solution they offered	Satisfied (very/quite)	64	60	52	*39*	58
	Neutral	7	**19**	10	20	0
	Dissatisfied (very/quite)	23	17	**37**	34	38
	Average score	3.67	3.59	3.22	*3.10*	3.30
Their follow up service/communication	Satisfied (very/quite)	57	40	49	*30*	59
	Neutral	*7*	22	16	10	8
	Dissatisfied (very/quite)	22	29	29	**44**	26
	Average score	3.61	3.08	3.33	*2.67*	3.33
Unweighted bases (where contacted supplier)		*101*	*75*	*44**	*39**	*16**

*F7. Thinking about the last time you contacted your <GAS>/<ELECTRICITY> supplier, how would you rate your level of satisfaction with the following on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is very dissatisfied and 5 is very satisfied... *caution small sample base*

Average score is calculated on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is very dissatisfied and 5 is very satisfied.

Bold font signifies a statistically significantly higher figure compared with others in the sub-group tested; *italics signifies a statistically significantly lower figure than others in the sub-group tested*

8 Views on suppliers and the energy market

8.1 Overview and key findings

This chapter examines views on suppliers and the energy market. It covers:

- Satisfaction with aspects of energy suppliers' services.
- Overall satisfaction with the service provided by energy suppliers.
- Propensity to recommend suppliers.
- Views on the energy market in general.
- Perception of fairness of energy suppliers in their dealings with business customers.

Key findings:
Overall, 67% of businesses are satisfied with the service provided by their energy supplier. This includes 32% that are very satisfied. Around one in eight (12%) are dissatisfied overall. Satisfaction with the service provided overall has remained at a similar level to that reported in 2014; although businesses are slightly more likely to be very satisfied in 2015 (66% were satisfied, including 28% that were very satisfied in 2014). Of all businesses: • 72% are satisfied with the degree to which their energy supplier meets their needs (36% very satisfied) while 9% are dissatisfied • 53% are satisfied with their energy supplier with regard to value for money (22% very satisfied) while 15% are dissatisfied • 51% are satisfied with the information that their energy supplier provides on available tariffs and options (23% very satisfied) while 20% are dissatisfied. There has been a slight increase in satisfaction with these aspects since 2014.
Around a fifth (19%) of businesses would be very likely to recommend their supplier. However, those that indicate that it is unlikely are in the majority (53% rating the likelihood at 6 or below out of a 10 point scale where 10 is most likely and 0 is least likely). There has been a slight improvement in the Net Promoter Score (NPS[15]), from -39% in 2014 to -34% in 2015, which is largely the result of fewer businesses in 2015 rating the likelihood of recommending their supplier to others at 6 or below (57% in 2014).
Businesses' views of the energy market overall are mixed. Businesses that felt able to provide a view[16] were most positive about the ease of switching (46% satisfied) and comparing prices (38% satisfied). They were least positive with regard to the sales approaches of energy suppliers (18% satisfied) and brokers (20% satisfied).
Dissatisfaction is higher with regard to sales approaches of suppliers and brokers. More than half of businesses that felt able to provide a view[14] (57%) expressed dissatisfaction with sales approaches of brokers. Nearly half said they are dissatisfied with sales approaches from suppliers (47%).
Two in five of all businesses (39%) say they tend to distrust or completely distrust energy suppliers in

[15] A Net Promoter Score (NPS) is calculated by subtracting 'detractors' (0-6) from 'promoters' (9-10). The NPS highlights the extent to which one group either 'detractors' or 'promoters' outnumbers the other.

[16] Excludes respondents that replied 'don't know' from the base

Key findings:

terms of their ability to be fair in their dealings with business customers. This compares with a lower proportion (26%) that tend to trust or completely trust energy suppliers.

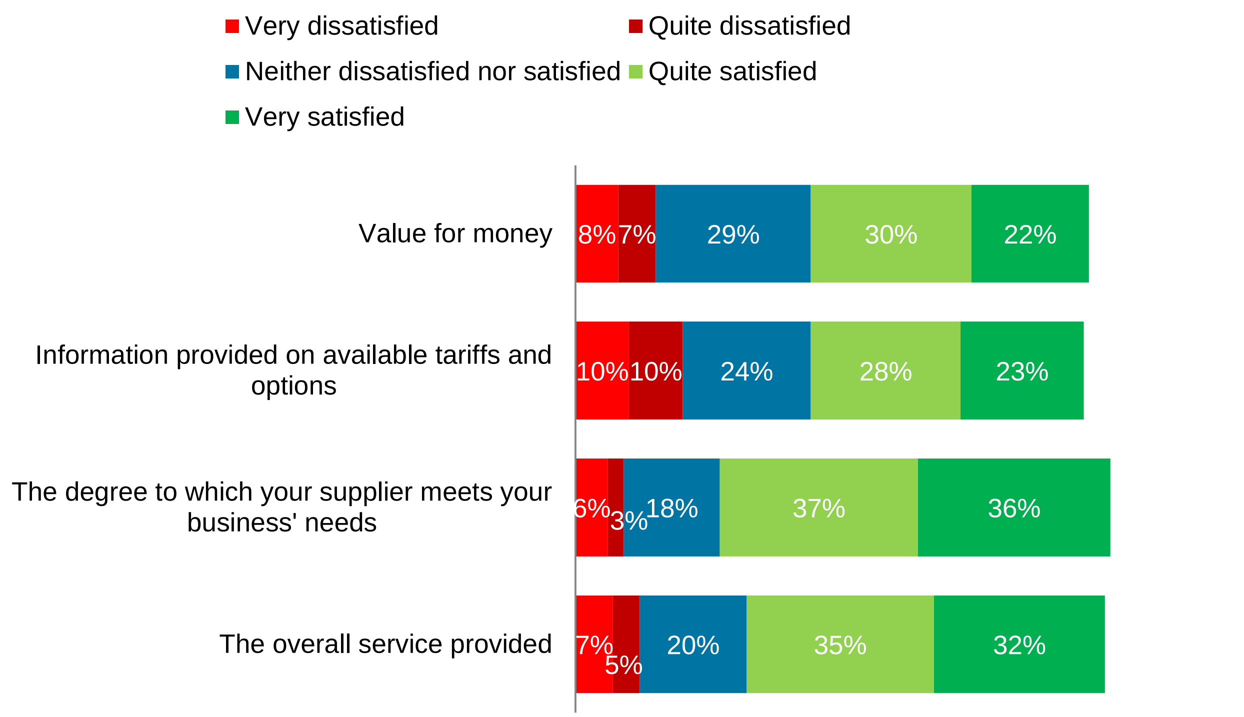
8.2 Views on current energy suppliers

Respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with three aspects of their current supplier's services as well as their satisfaction with the service provided overall. There have been slight improvements in satisfaction with suppliers since 2014.

They are most likely to be satisfied with the degree to which their supplier meets their business needs (72% satisfied; 36% very satisfied) and least likely to be satisfied with information provided on available tariffs and options (51%; 23% very satisfied) and value for money (53%; 22% very satisfied).

Overall, two thirds of respondents (67%) are satisfied with their current supplier overall, including 32% that are very satisfied.

Figure 8.1: Extent to which respondents are satisfied with their gas/electricity supplier (all respondents) ***% don't know/not applicable – included in the data but not shown***



Unweighted sample base (all respondents): 1500

H1. Thinking about your current gas/electricity supplier, how would you rate your level of satisfaction with the following..?

Satisfaction levels are lower than average amongst respondents that have used brokers to arrange their current contract; as well as those who have reported that their last contract was rolled-over without their knowledge (although this is based on a small number of respondents). The most satisfied are those who have knowingly rolled-over their contract with their supplier. This suggests that general satisfaction is a key reason for not switching.

Figure 8.2: Extent to which respondents are satisfied with aspects of their current supplier, by contract rollover and broker usage (all respondents)

			Contract rollover			Broker usage	
		All businesses %	First/new contract %	Rollover – with knowledge %	Rollover – without knowledge %	Used %	Not used %
Value for money	Satisfied (very/quite)	53	54	56	10	49	51
	Neutral	29	27	30	38	30	29
	Dissatisfied (very/quite)	15	15	*11*	46	16	**18**
	Average score	3.54	3.54	3.67	2.39	3.47	3.49
Information provided on available tariffs and options	Satisfied (very/quite)	51	50	**59**	17	*43*	52
	Neutral	24	25	22	36	26	22
	Dissatisfied (very/quite)	20	20	*16*	48	22	22
	Average score	3.46	3.44	3.68	2.28	3.27	3.45
The degree to which your supplier meets your business' needs	Satisfied (very/quite)	72	73	**77**	28	*68*	72
	Neutral	18	16	19	52	20	18
	Dissatisfied (very/quite)	9	**10**	*3*	20	10	9
	Average score	3.95	3.91	**4.15**	2.98	3.83	3.96
The overall service provided	Satisfied (very/quite)	67	66	**75**	24	*59*	67
	Neutral	20	19	19	49	**25**	22
	Dissatisfied (very/quite)	12	**13**	6	26	**14**	11
	Average score	3.81	3.77	**4.05**	2.76	3.63	3.82
Unweighted bases (all respondents)		*1500*	*1092*	*326*	*20**	*445*	*492*

*H1. Thinking about your current gas/electricity supplier, how would you rate your level of satisfaction with the following..?   *caution small sample base*

Average score is calculated on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is very dissatisfied and 5 is very satisfied.

Bold font signifies a statistically significantly higher figure compared with the average minus the sub-group tested; *italics signifies a statistically significantly lower figure than average minus the sub-group tested*

Satisfaction levels tend to decrease as expenditure on energy increases. This is best illustrated by electricity expenditure, where sample bases are higher and the pattern is more evident.

Figure 8.3: Extent to which respondents are satisfied with aspects of their current supplier, by electricity expenditure (all respondents)

		Electricity expenditure per annum				
		Up to £1,000	£1k-£2.5k	£2.5k-£5k	£5k-£10k	£10k plus
		%	%	%	%	%
Value for money	Satisfied (very/quite)	**59**	54	50	51	*39*
	Neutral	27	*24*	32	25	**37**
	Dissatisfied (very/quite)	*10*	18	14	**23**	**22**
	Average score	*3.73*	3.50	3.51	3.36	**3.16**
Information provided on available tariffs and options	Satisfied (very/quite)	53	48	57	50	*42*
	Neutral	25	24	21	25	26
	Dissatisfied (very/quite)	*16*	23	20	22	24
	Average score	**3.57**	3.36	3.55	3.37	*3.22*
The degree to which your supplier meets your business' needs	Satisfied (very/quite)	**79**	71	72	*65*	*64*
	Neutral	16	17	17	16	19
	Dissatisfied (very/quite)	*4*	11	10	**17**	**15**
	Average score	**4.13**	3.94	3.91	*3.62*	*3.61*
The overall service provided	Satisfied (very/quite)	**73**	66	65	64	*57*
	Neutral	19	21	22	15	23
	Dissatisfied (very/quite)	*8*	12	12	**20**	**17**
	Average score	**3.98**	3.81	3.77	*3.55*	*3.53*
Unweighted bases (all respondents)		*403*	*378*	*245*	*166*	*169*

H1. Thinking about your current gas/electricity supplier, how would you rate your level of satisfaction with the following..?

Average score is calculated on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is very dissatisfied and 5 is very satisfied.

Bold font signifies a statistically significantly higher figure compared with the average minus the sub-group tested; *italics signifies a statistically significantly lower figure than average minus the sub-group tested*

8.2.1 Likelihood of recommending their current energy supplier

Respondents were asked to indicate their likelihood of recommending their gas/electricity supplier to someone else or another business on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 was least likely to and 10 was most likely to. Their scores are classified as follows:

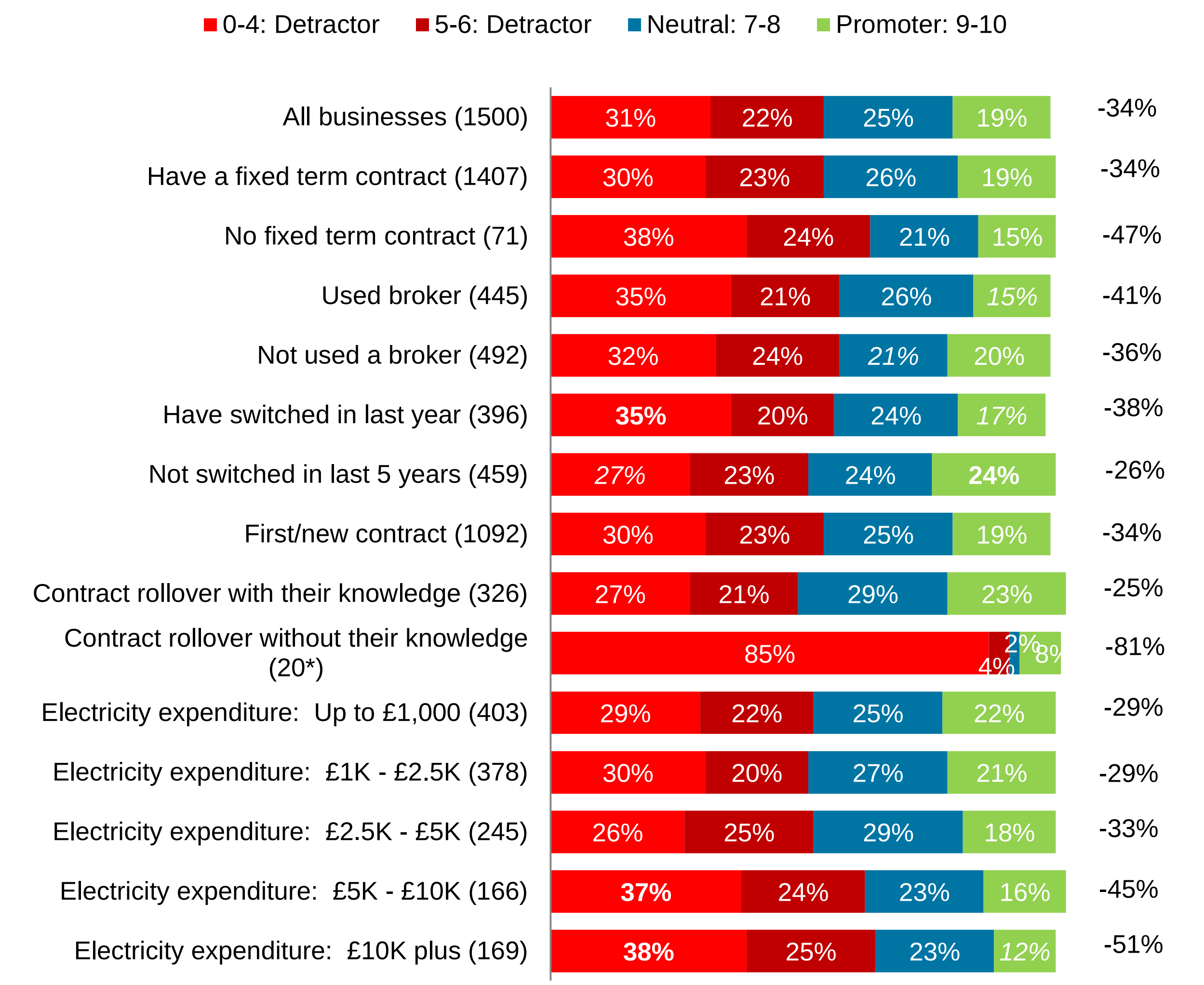
- Promoter (9, 10): 19%
- Neutral (7, 8): 25%
- Detractors (0-6): 53%

There is little change compared with 2014 scores, although fewer respondents selected a score between 0 and 6 this year than in 2014 (53%, compared with 57% in 2014).

A Net Promoter Score (NPS) is calculated by subtracting ‘detractors’ (0-6) from ‘promoters’ (9-10). The NPS highlights the extent to which one group either ‘detractors’ or ‘promoters’ outnumbers the other. The resulting score of -34% signifies that ‘detractors’ outnumber ‘promoters’ and that there is a low level of advocacy in the market. However, it is a slight improvement compared with the 2014 NPS of -39%.

There are few differences by business size or sector. However, reviewing the NPS by type of contract, switching behaviour, contract renewal and expenditure, shows that there is a lower NPS amongst those without fixed term contracts (-47%; 62% are detractors); and those that have used brokers to arrange their current contract (-41%; 56% are detractors). We also see a decrease in NPS as expenditure increases to -45% amongst those spending between £5k and £10k per annum on electricity (61% are detractors) and -51% amongst those spending £10k or more per annum on electricity (63% are detractors).

Figure 8.4: Likelihood of recommending their current gas/electricity supplier to someone else or another business (all respondents) ***NPS at end of bars***



Unweighted sample bases in brackets (all respondents)

*H2. How likely is it that you would recommend your current gas/electricity supplier to someone else or another business? *caution: low sample base*

NPS = Net Promoter Score, which is the proportion that are 'detractors' subtracted from the proportion that are 'promoters'

Bold font signifies a statistically significantly higher figure compared with the average minus the sub-group tested; *italics signifies a statistically significantly lower figure than average minus the sub-group tested*

8.3 Views on the energy market in general

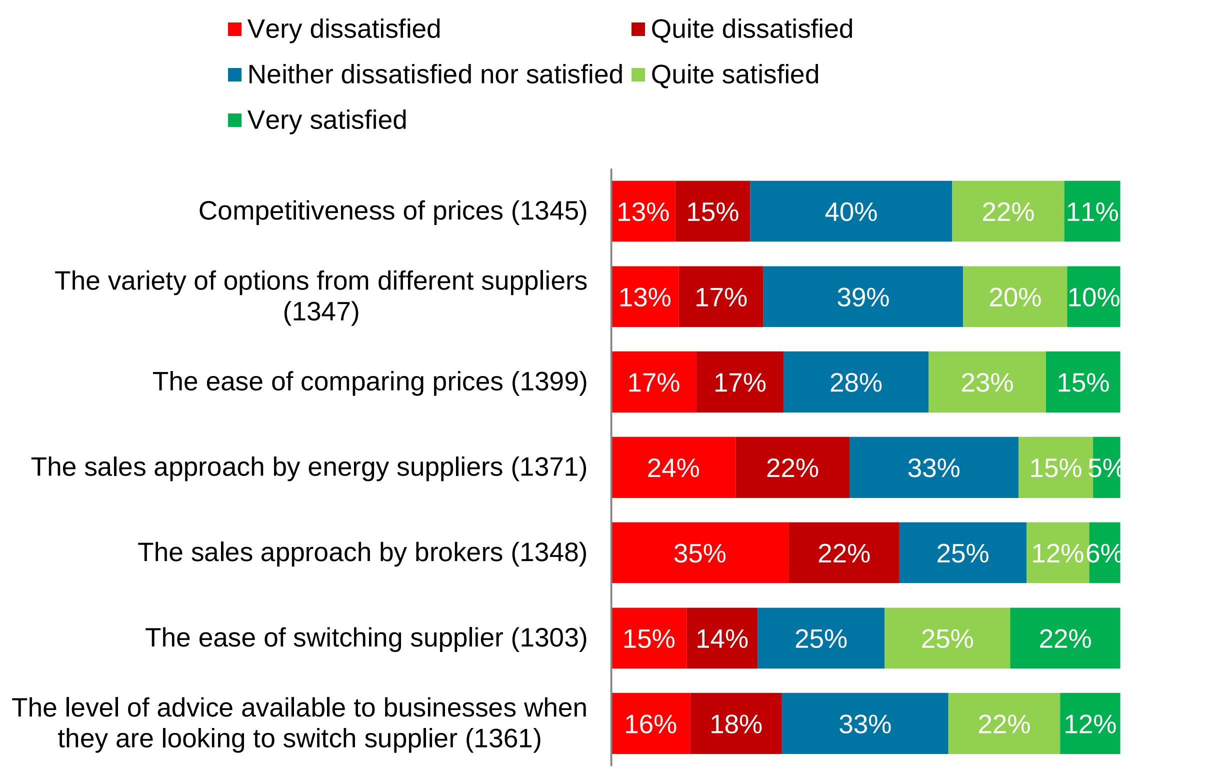
Respondents were asked for their views on the energy market in general.

Amongst those providing a rating, satisfaction levels range from 18% (very/quite satisfied) for the sales approaches of brokers and 20% for the sales approaches of energy suppliers to 47% for the ease of switching suppliers.

A significant minority of respondents (between 25% and 40%) are neutral in their views on these aspects of the energy market.

Levels of dissatisfaction range from 28% (very/quite dissatisfied) for competiveness of prices; 29% for the ease of switching supplier and 30% for the variety of options from different suppliers to 57% for the sales approach by brokers.

Figure 8.5: Extent to which respondents are satisfied with aspects of the energy market in general (all respondents, where provided a response)

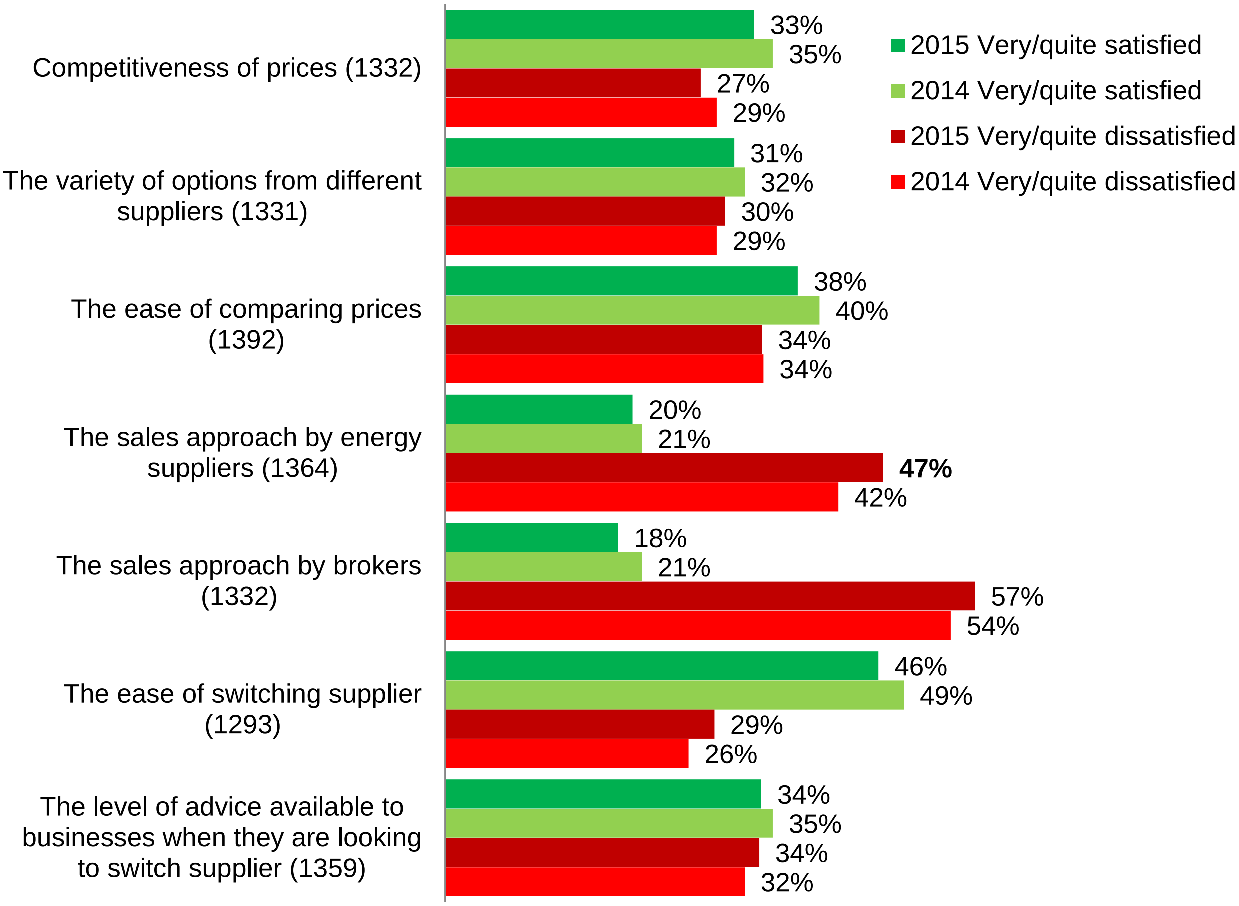


Unweighted sample bases in brackets (where provided a response)

H3. Thinking now about the energy market in general, how would you rate your level of satisfaction with the following..?

Compared with 2014, the only significant change is with regard to the level of dissatisfaction with the sales approach of energy suppliers, which has increased from 42% to 47%.

Figure 8.6: Proportion of respondents that are satisfied or dissatisfied with aspects of the energy market in general; a year on year comparison (all respondents, where provided a response)



Unweighted sample bases for 2015 in brackets (where provided a response)

H3. Thinking now about the energy market in general, how would you rate your level of satisfaction with the following..?

Bold font signifies a statistically significantly higher figure compared with 2014

Examining perceptions of aspects of the energy market by switching behaviour gives a more mixed picture in terms of satisfaction. In the case of those that have not switched in the last 5 years, the proportion that do not feel able to provide a rating is higher than average. In terms of rating ‘competitiveness of prices’ for example, 14% said ‘don’t know’ and a further 4% ‘not applicable’, compared with 6% and 1% respectively of those that have switched in the last 5 years. The same is true of ‘the variety of options from different suppliers’, ‘the ease of switching supplier’ and, to a slightly lesser extent, ‘the level of advice available to businesses when they are looking to switch supplier’. Those that have rated the aspect are those that may have taken steps to review what is on offer.

Respondents that have considered switching but never done so are less likely than average to be satisfied with aspects of the energy market. They are significantly less likely than average to be satisfied with regard to the ‘competitiveness of prices’, the ‘ease of comparing prices’ and ‘the level of advice available to businesses’.

Figure 8.7: Extent to which respondents are satisfied with aspects of the energy market, by business size and switching in the last 5 years (all respondents, where provided a response)

		All businesses %	Switching behaviour				
			In the last 5 years %	In the last 12 months %	Not in the last 5 years %	Considered but never done so %	Frequent %
Competitiveness of prices	Satisfied (very/quite)	33	32	32	34	30	35
	Neutral	40	40	40	40	38	35
	Dissatisfied (very/quite)	27	28	28	26	33	30
	Average score	3.04	3.02	3.03	3.09	*2.91*	3.00
The variety of options from different suppliers	Satisfied (very/quite)	31	31	31	31	29	34
	Neutral	39	38	39	42	42	31
	Dissatisfied (very/quite)	30	32	30	28	29	35
	Average score	2.98	2.96	2.97	2.98	2.95	2.97
The ease of comparing prices	Satisfied (very/quite)	38	38	41	37	33	40
	Neutral	28	27	22	32	33	22
	Dissatisfied (very/quite)	34	35	37	31	34	38
	Average score	3.00	3.00	3.03	3.04	2.94	3.01
The sales approach by energy suppliers	Satisfied (very/quite)	20	20	21	20	17	20
	Neutral	33	33	33	33	40	36
	Dissatisfied (very/quite)	47	48	46	46	44	43
	Average score	2.54	2.53	2.55	2.54	2.54	2.56
The sales approach by brokers	Satisfied (very/quite)	18	19	24	16	15	18
	Neutral	25	25	27	23	25	28
	Dissatisfied (very/quite)	57	55	49	61	60	54
	Average score	2.33	**2.38**	**2.53**	*2.19*	2.20	2.36
The ease of switching supplier	Satisfied (very/quite)	46	47	52	43	43	54
	Neutral	25	25	23	25	29	21

		All businesses %	Switching behaviour: In the last 5 years %	In the last 12 months %	Not in the last 5 years %	Considered but never done so %	Frequent %
	Dissatisfied (very/quite)	29	28	26	31	29	26
	Average score	3.24	3.29	**3.38**	3.13	3.17	**3.43**
The level of advice available to businesses when they are looking to switch supplier	Satisfied (very/quite)	34	35	33	31	27	30
	Neutral	33	32	33	34	32	36
	Dissatisfied (very/quite)	34	33	34	35	41	34
	Average score	2.97	2.97	2.94	2.94	*2.76*	2.93
Maximum unweighted bases (all respondents where provided a response)		*1500*	*979*	*396*	*459*	*285*	*242*

H3. Thinking now about the energy market in general, how would you rate your level of satisfaction with the following..?

Average score is calculated on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is very dissatisfied and 5 is very satisfied.

Bold font signifies a statistically significantly higher figure compared with the average minus the sub-group tested; *italics signifies a statistically significantly lower figure than average minus the sub-group tested*

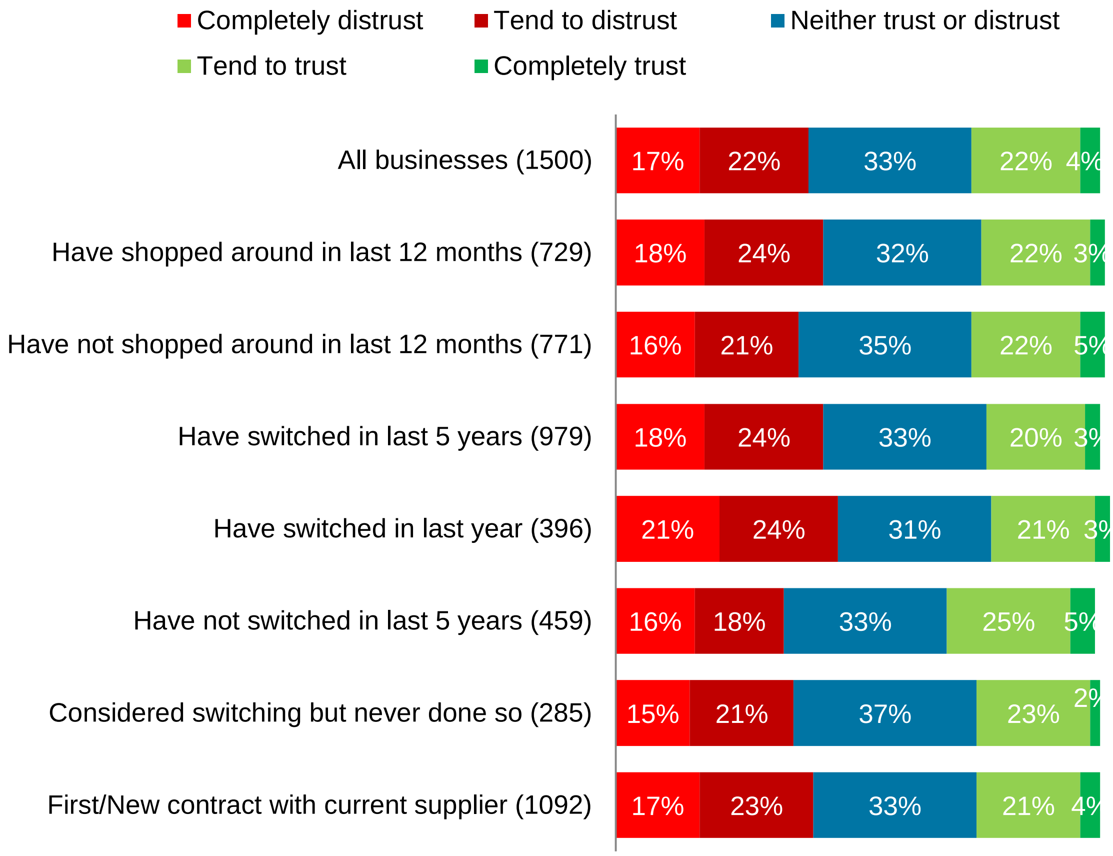
8.3.1 Extent to which businesses trust energy suppliers to be fair

There has been little improvement in the extent to which energy suppliers' are trusted to be fair in their dealings with business customers since 2014. Two in five businesses (39%) say they tend to distrust or completely distrust suppliers in this regard, while around one in four (26%) tend to trust or completely trust them and the remainder (33%) are neutral in their views.

Respondents in businesses with a fixed term contract are significantly less likely than those without one to distrust their supplier (38%, compared with 63%) and more likely to trust their supplier (26%, compared with 16%) or to be neutral (34%, compared with 22%).

There are higher levels of distrust amongst switchers, while those who have not switched in the last 5 years have higher levels of trust with regard to energy suppliers, perhaps reflecting the reasons for staying with their current supplier for so long.

Figure 8.8: Extent to which respondents trust or distrust energy suppliers to be fair in the way they deal with business customers, by switching behaviour (all respondents)



Unweighted sample bases in brackets (all respondents)

H4. To what extent do you trust or distrust energy suppliers to be fair in the way they deal with business customers?

8.4 Comparisons with 2014

Figure 8.9 presents figures for the 2014 and 2015 surveys.

Levels of satisfaction with all elements of supplier service, including overall satisfaction, have increased slightly since 2014.

A higher level Net Promoter Score reflects the slight increase in satisfaction, although it is predominantly caused by a reduction in the proportion of respondents that are classified as 'detractors' (rating their likelihood of recommendation at 6 or below on a 10-point scale where 10 is most likely and 0 is least likely).

There have been slight decreases in levels of satisfaction with regard to sales approaches from both brokers and energy suppliers.

Figure 8.9: Views on suppliers and the energy market: Comparisons between 2014 and 2015

Question:	2014	2015
Satisfaction with the degree to which your supplier meets your business needs? - satisfied	69%	72%
Satisfaction with the information provided on available tariffs and options from your supplier? - satisfied	49%	51%
Satisfaction with value for money from your supplier? - satisfied	50%	53%
Satisfaction with service provided by supplier overall? - satisfied	66%	67%
How likely is it that you would recommend your current supplier to someone else or another business? - Promoter (9,10 out of 10)	18%	19%
How likely is it that you would recommend your current supplier to someone else or another business? - Neutral (7, 8 out of 10)	25%	25%
How likely is it that you would recommend your current supplier to someone else or another business? - Detractor (0-6 out of 10)	57%	*53%*
Net Promoter Score (NPS)[17]	-39%	**-34%**
Satisfaction with the sales approaches of brokers? – satisfied~	21%	18%
Satisfaction with the sales approaches of energy suppliers? – satisfied~	21%	20%
Satisfaction with the variety of options from different suppliers? – satisfied~	32%	31%
Unweighted bases (all respondents):	1502	1500

~ based on where provided a rating (excludes 'don't knows')

Font in bold signifies a statistically significantly improved figure compared with the previous year
Font in italics signifies a statistically significantly lower figure compared with the previous year

[17] NPS calculated by subtracting 'detractors' from 'promoters'.

Appendix 1: Sample Profile

Business size

The weighted sample profile reflects the population data adjusted to take account of those who arrange their own non-domestic energy contracts. Of the *non-adjusted* business population as a whole (i.e. up to 49 employees), 45% have no employees other than the owner/manager/partners. Within the *adjusted* business population, businesses without employees account for just 29% of all those with up to 49 employees. This reflects the extent to which these smallest businesses are more likely to be home-based and have domestic energy contracts and are thus excluded from the survey.

As a consequence of a high proportion of businesses without employees falling out of scope of the survey, the proportion of businesses in the larger size bands increases compared to the whole population.

- no employees: non-adjusted, 45%; adjusted, 29%
- 1-4 employees: non-adjusted, 35%; adjusted, 39%
- 5-9 employees: non-adjusted, 11%; adjusted, 17%
- 10-49 employees: non-adjusted, 9%; adjusted, 15%

The size profile of each of the industry groups examined in the survey is summarised in Figure A1.1 below.

Figure A1.1: Size of the workforce across all sites, by sector (all respondents)

	Primary (ABCDE)		Construction (F)		Retail/ wholesale (G)		Transport/ Food/ Accom (HI)		Business services (JKLMN)		Other services (PQRS)	
	Population – adjusted %	Sample %	Population – adjusted %	Sample %	Population – adjusted %	Sample %	Population – adjusted %	Sample %	Population – adjusted %	Sample %	Population – adjusted %	Sample %
None (no employees)	50	42	47	28	37	31	24	18	55	30	32	16
1-4 employees (Small micro)	30	33	39	32	39	41	44	43	31	42	40	39
5-9 employees (Larger micro)	10	12	9	23	14	18	17	21	8	14	14	21
10-49 Employees (Small)	10	13	6	17	10	11	14	18	6	14	14	24
Population/unweighted bases (all respondents)	*268k*	*307*	*257k*	*152*	*351k*	*318*	*193k*	*212*	*793k*	*282*	*226k*	*229*

S4 How many paid employees does your business currently employ across all sites, excluding owners and partners?

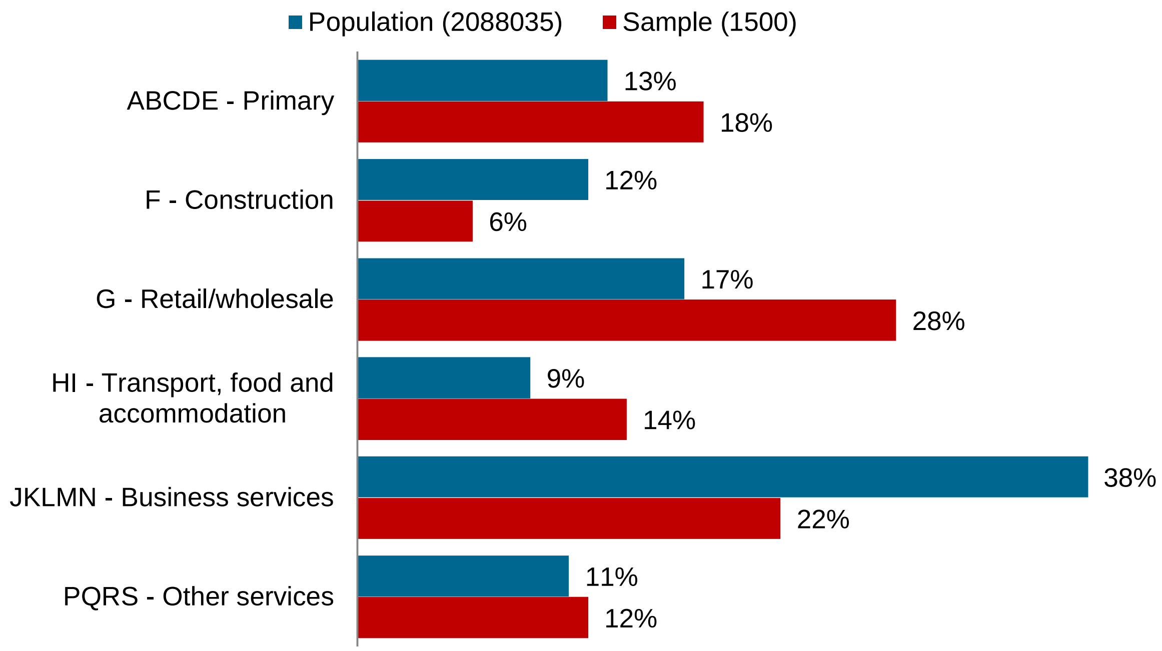
Industry sector

The sector profile of the sample (and population of businesses with up to 49 employees with self-managed, non-domestic contracts) is summarised in Figure A1.2 below.

Retail/wholesale businesses account for just over 1 in 4 businesses (28%) with those in business services accounting for just over 1 in 5 (22%). Against the population as a whole (i.e. including businesses with a domestic contract or contract managed by a landlord), primary, retail/wholesale and transport, food and accommodation sectors are over-represented in the sample and construction and business services sectors are under-represented.

This suggests that businesses in construction and business services sectors are more likely than average to have domestic contracts or landlord managed energy supply contracts.

Figure A1.2: Industry sector profile – actual population compared with population adjusted for those having non-domestic contracts (all respondents)



Population/unweighted sample base in brackets (Source for population: ONS[18] IDBR[19] 2014)

QA2. What is the main business activity that you undertake?

[18] Office for National Statistics

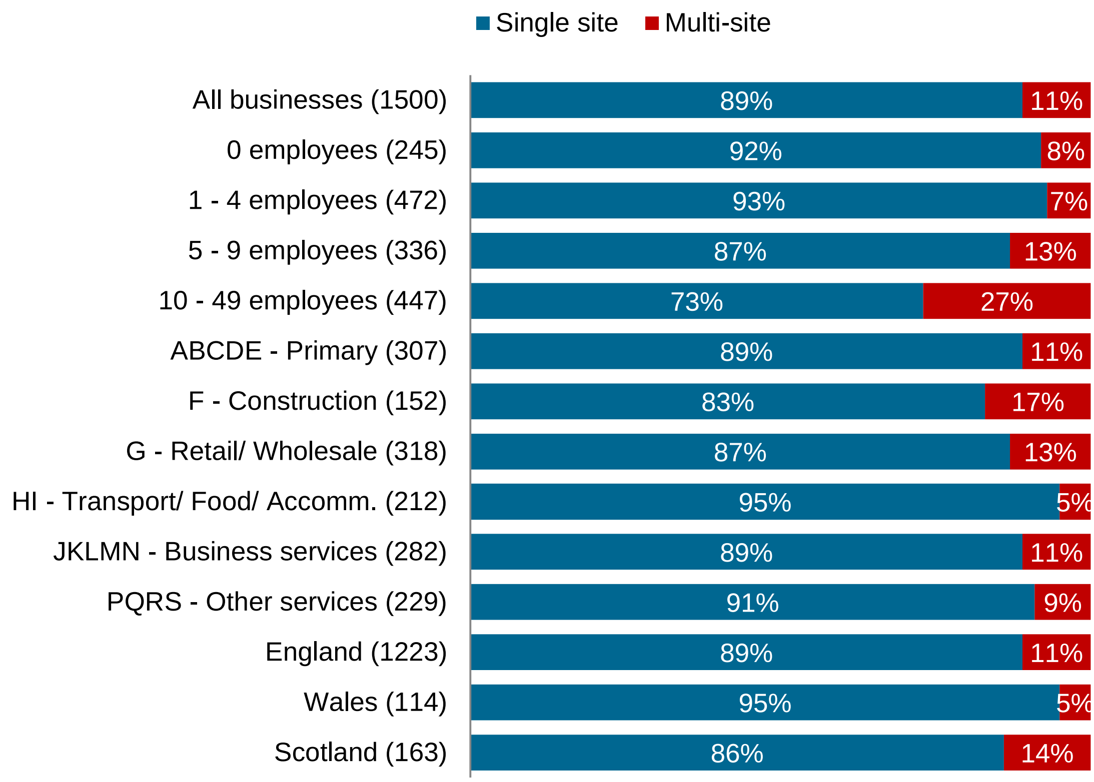
[19] Inter-departmental Business Register

Site characteristics

Just 1% of businesses are franchises and there is little variation by business size and sector.

Eighty nine per cent of businesses are single site organisations and this proportion is significantly lower amongst businesses with 10 to 49 employees (73%).

Figure A1.3: Number of sites, by business size and sector (all respondents)



Unweighted sample bases in brackets (all respondents)

QA5. How many sites in Great Britain does your business operate from, including the site where you are now?

Bold font signifies a statistically significantly higher figure compared with the average minus the sub-group tested; *italics signifies a statistically significantly lower figure than average minus the sub-group tested*

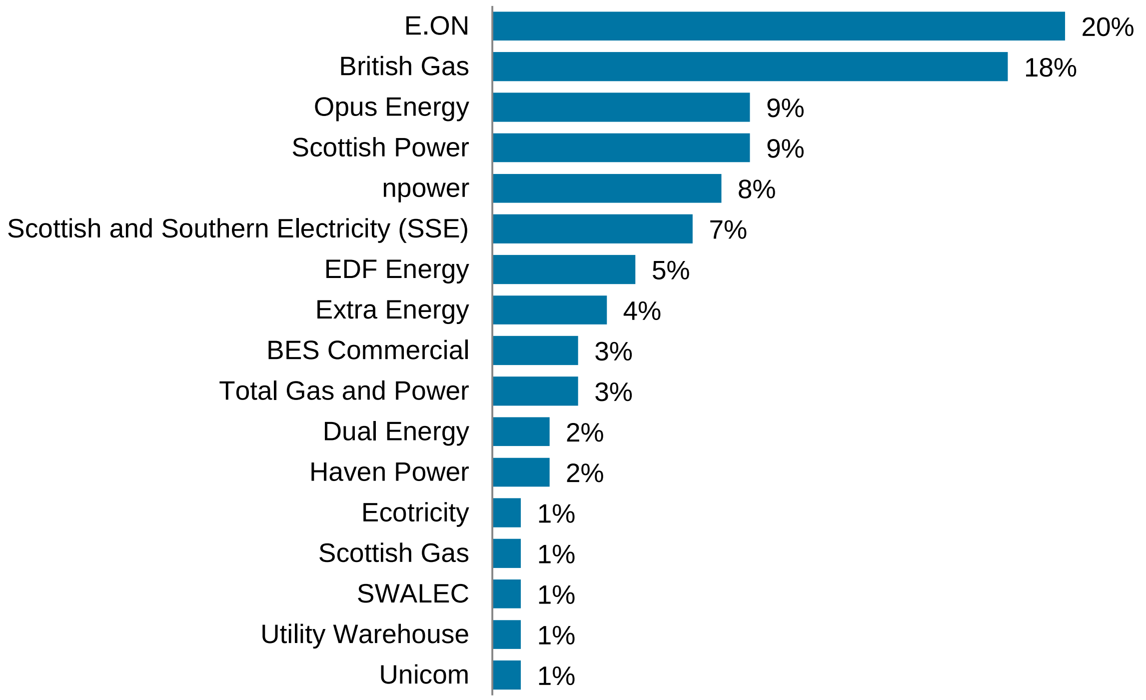
The majority of multi-site organisations that are not franchises are classed as head offices (83%, or 9% of all businesses).

Eighty two per cent of respondents representing multi-site organisations (including franchises) have responsibility for arranging energy contracts or paying bills for the entire organisation across Great Britain. Of the remainder, most have responsibility for energy contracts or paying bills at just the site at which they are based (16%), while a small proportion (2%) are responsible for more than one branch but not all parts of the organisation.

Appendix 2: Suppliers

E-On is reported to be the most frequently used supplier for electricity, with British Gas the most frequently cited supplier for gas.

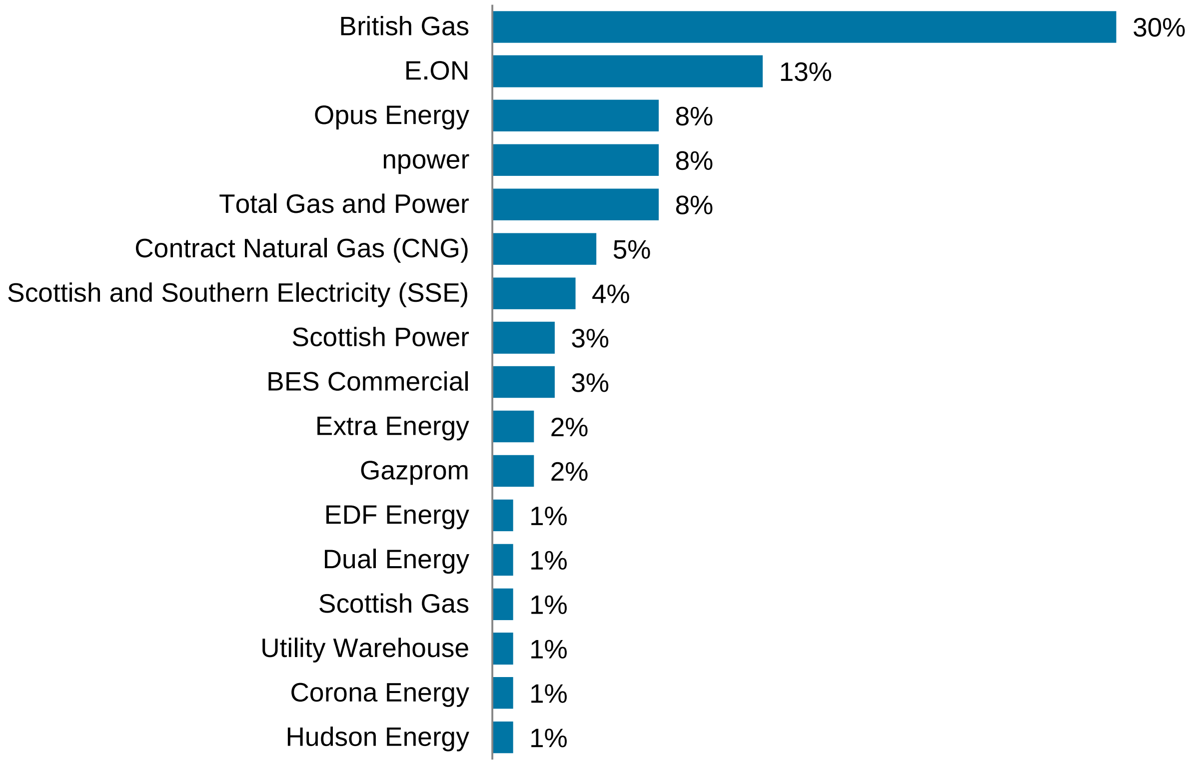
Figure A2.1: Electricity suppliers used (where respondents use electricity)



Unweighted sample base (where use electricity): 1492

B1. What is the name of your organisation's site's current electricity supplier?

Figure A2.2: Gas suppliers used (where respondents use gas)



Unweighted sample base (where use gas): 654

B5. What is the name of your organisation's site's current gas supplier?

More than half of those with both a mains electricity and gas supply (56%) have the same supplier for both. This is no difference in this respect by business size, but the proportion is lower than average in the construction sector (42%), as well as across Scotland (47%).

Appendix 3: Technical Annex

Population, interviews and weighting of data

The target population for the 2015 research (as in 2014) was all micro and small businesses across England, Wales and Scotland; defined as those with up to 49 employees across all their sites within Great Britain[20]. The survey was undertaken at enterprise rather than establishment level. This means that where a business operated from more than one site, only its head office (not its branches) was contacted. Businesses with no employees, other than the owner/manager or any partners were also included in the target population.

The sample specification was based on attaining a minimum number of interviews by business size (number of employees) based on bandings: 0, 1-4, 5-9, 10-49 and by industry, by Standard Industry Classification (SIC) groups: Primary (ABCDE[21]) Construction (F), Retail and Wholesale (G), Transport, food and accommodation (HI), Business services (JKLMN) and Other services (PQRS). A glossary of SIC groups is provided in Section 12 of this report.

The survey sought the views of non-domestic customers only. Therefore, any businesses supplied with gas or electricity on a domestic contract (because their business premises are also their home) were excluded. Since there was no way of identifying businesses with domestic energy contracts before speaking to them, screening questions were included at the beginning of the interview. Thus, the interviewers were able to establish that the respondent was:

- Responsible, either solely or jointly, for arranging mains gas and electricity contracts or paying these bills;
- Representing a business that holds a non-domestic (i.e. business) contract for its energy supply which is managed by itself or an energy broker on behalf of the business.

Sample completed

In total, 1500 interviews were undertaken with micro and small businesses across England, Wales and Scotland.

The interviews were undertaken by both BMG at its Birmingham-based call centre facility and ICM at its London-based call centre facility. CATI (computer-assisted telephone interviewing) was used. Fieldwork was conducted between 19th October 2015 and 4th December 2015.

Average interview length was 18.5 minutes. Completed interviews were achieved at an average rate of 0.54 per interviewer hour.

[20] Great Britain excludes Northern Ireland

[21] Alphabetical classifications relate to broad SIC 2007 sector classification groups

Quotas were set by size band and broad sector groups in order to ensure that robust analysis could be undertaken by size and sector. However, the requirement for the survey to only include businesses with non-domestic energy contracts that manage these contracts themselves or through an energy broker hindered progress in terms of achieving the required number of interviews within smaller size bands and some sectors. For example, it proved to be challenge to meet the quota for interviews amongst zero employee businesses, as these were more likely than average to be home-based with domestic contracts.

The proportion of businesses with domestic contracts or subject to a landlord or building management service arranging and managing energy contracts on their behalf was unknown at the outset of the fieldwork. The screening questions allowed some quantification, while calls were also terminated during the initial stages of the introduction for these reasons and the CATI system enabled these call outcomes to be logged and quantified

Although the screening questions and call outcomes were useful indicators, they were too reliant on getting through to businesses and speaking to the right person to be a comprehensive and reliable indicator of the proportion of businesses that were out of scope.

A further indicator of the extent of domestic and landlord/building management contracts across private sector businesses with up to 49 employees was obtained by adding an appropriate question to a business omnibus[22]. This provided a larger sample on which to base the statistics and these statistics were used to adjust the population to account for these out of scope businesses. Figure A3.1 below presents the proportion of businesses by size and sector that have non-domestic energy contracts, based on the responses to the question included in the business omnibus.

It is apparent that the extent businesses have domestic contracts or landlords making decisions on energy contracts for them vary considerably by business size within sector. For instance, while 68% of construction businesses with 10 to 49 employees have non-domestic energy contracts, only 14% of businesses in this industry sector with no employees have non-domestic energy contracts. Thus, more than four in five construction businesses without employees fall out of scope of the survey. The same is true of businesses without employees in business services sectors, while fewer than two in five businesses without employees in the retail and wholesale industry would fall out of scope.

[22] The Small Business Survey (SBS) 2014, commissioned by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS); undertaken by BMG Research between July and October 2014. SBS 2014 is a large scale general business survey undertaken with SMEs (0-249 employees). The report is published on the BIS website at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/small-business-survey-2014-businesses-with-employees However, the question that was added is not reported on as it was included only for the purposes for use in this Ofgem commissioned survey and was only asked of businesses with up to 49 employees.

Figure A3.1: Proportion of businesses with non-domestic energy contracts, by size and sector

	Micros			Small
	0 employees %	1-4 employees %	5-9 employees %	10-49 employees %
Primary (ABCDE)	53	70	82	83
Construction (F)	14	19	59	68
Retail and Wholesale (G)	62	78	92	86
Transport, Food and Accommodation (HI)	48	66	80	85
Business services (JKLMN)	14	36	50	61
Other services (PQRS)	24	47	71	81

Source: The BIS Small Business Survey (SBS) 2014

Weighting

Survey data have been weighted to counteract any disproportionate representation within the sample.

Businesses with two or more employees were sampled in a greater proportion to their actual representation within the population. This was a deliberate step to overcome the small sample sizes amongst businesses with two or more - and particularly five or more - employees that would otherwise result if sampling was in proportion to the population. Businesses with no employees account for 45% of the business population with up to 49 employees, while those with fewer than five employees account for a further 35% of the population. Oversampling in larger size bands provides more robust data for analysis by business size.

Furthermore, the requirement to speak to businesses that have non-domestic energy contracts and that manage these contracts themselves (rather than having them managed for them through a landlord) meant the sample achieved by industry (grouped SIC) did not closely reflect the actual business population.

To correct this, IDBR statistics were used as a starting point for the population data and adjusted by the statistics from the business omnibus in Figure 3.1 so that the weighting factors were based on the population estimated to have non-domestic energy contracts managed by themselves or by an energy broker.

Figure A3.2 shows a summary of the number of interviews completed by each of the quota variables; how this translates into the number of weighted cases; and how it compares with the population is provided.

Figure A3.2: Population, interviews and weighting of data

	Population (n)	Population %	Population – adjusted for non-dom usage (n)	Population – adjusted %	No. of interviews	No. of cases (weighted)
Size (employees)						
0	944,755	45	270,873	29	245	432
1-4	737,790	35	370,564	39	472	591
5-9	223,785	11	159,974	17	336	255
10-49	181,705	9	138,650	15	447	221
Sector						
Primary (ABCDE)	267,190	13	170,447	18	307	272
Construction (F)	257,255	12	59,337	6	152	95
Retail and Wholesale (G)	351,045	17	263,316	28	318	420
Transport, Food and Accommodation (HI)	193,000	9	128,539	14	212	205
Business services (JKLMN)	793,015	38	210,261	22	282	336
Other services (PQRS)	226,155	11	108,161	12	229	173
Total for GB	**2,088,035**	**100**	**940,062**	**100**	**1,500**	

Database

The sample frame used was the Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR), which is defined by ONS as:

"A list of UK businesses maintained by National Statistics (NS) and combines the former Central Statistical Office (CSO) VAT based business register and the former Employment Department (ED) employment statistics system. It complies with European Union regulation 2186/93 on harmonisation of business registers for statistical purposes."

The main strengths of the IDBR are highlighted in its 2001 Review, with the three most relevant to this study being:

- that it is updated frequently [weekly] from administrative sources
- the existence of systems that regularly update the structures of large businesses

- its excellent coverage, which is due to the use of two comprehensive administrative sources [HM Customs and Excise and Inland Revenue]
- that extensive work is undertaken to reduce the level of duplication arising from the use of multiple administrative sources.

In order to minimise errors arising from discrepancies between the sampling frame and the target population and sub-populations (such as under-coverage, over-coverage and misclassification), the sample frame received from IDBR was subject to stringent checks from BMG Research, which brought to light a number of duplications.

The sample frame was subsequently re-counted and these counts were then used to form the basis of the sample structure, rather than the original counts which included duplications.

Sample response outcomes

Call outcomes were monitored and reported throughout the fieldwork period. The last call outcome report is presented in Figure A3.3.

The refusal rate was 29% overall. The most frequently cited reasons for refusing to take part was ‘nuisance’ and ‘lack of time’ or a belief that the survey was not genuine. Through interviewer feedback these reasons were largely attributed to the large number of ‘cold calls’ businesses report receiving from energy brokers and energy companies.

A further one in eight calls ended before beginning the survey because the business reported having a domestic energy contract or a landlord or building management company that arranges and manages their energy contract for them.

Figure A3.3: Survey call outcomes ***denotes less than 0.5**

	TOTAL (n)	TOTAL (% of sample frame contacted)
Sampling frame contacted	**17542**	**100%**
Total completes	**1500**	**9%**
Sampling frame available	**7434**	**42%**
- Appointment	96	1%
- Call back	7332	42%
- Part completed (further attempt to complete made)	6	*%
Unusable Sampling frame (no longer trading/not known/unobtainable)	**1085**	6%

	TOTAL (n)	TOTAL (% of sample frame contacted)
Refusals	**5165**	**29%**
- Refusal (nuisance)	2864	16%
- Refusal (lack of time)	2301	13%
Filtered out	**2358**	**13%**
- Landlord deals with contract	1056	6%
- No business contract/only domestic	1276	7%
- Business too large (including quota fails)	26	*%

Statistical confidence

The overall sample is sufficiently large to allow reporting on findings with a high degree of statistical reliability. Unless stated otherwise, all findings reported in bold font in the charts and figures are statistically significantly higher against the overall total. Figures reported in italics are statistically significantly lower than the overall total. It should be noted that the comparison is between the sub-group and the total minus that sub-group. For example, where comparisons are made between 1-4 employees and others this means a comparison between businesses with 1-4 employees and businesses without employees, larger micros (5-9 employees) and small businesses.

Appendix 4: Standard Industrial Classification 2007 (SIC 2007)

SECTION	DIVISION	DESCRIPTION
A	01	Crop and animal production, hunting and related service activities
A	02	Forestry and logging
A	03	Fishing and aquaculture
B	05	Mining of coal and lignite
B	06	Extraction of crude petroleum and natural gas
B	07	Mining of metal ores
B	08	Other mining and quarrying
B	09	Mining support service activities
C	10	Manufacture of food products
C	11	Manufacture of beverages
C	12	Manufacture of tobacco products
C	13	Manufacture of textiles
C	14	Manufacture of wearing apparel
C	15	Manufacture of leather and related products
C	16	Manufacture of wood and of products of wood and cork, except furniture; manufacture of articles of straw and plaiting materials
C	17	Manufacture of paper and paper products
C	18	Printing and reproduction of recorded media
C	19	Manufacture of coke and refined petroleum products
C	20	Manufacture of chemicals and chemical products
C	21	Manufacture of basic pharmaceutical products and pharmaceutical preparations
C	22	Manufacture of rubber and plastic products
C	23	Manufacture of other non-metallic mineral products
C	24	Manufacture of basic metals
C	25	Manufacture of fabricated metal products, except machinery and equipment
C	26	Manufacture of computer, electronic and optical products
C	27	Manufacture of electrical equipment
C	28	Manufacture of machinery and equipment n.e.c.
C	29	Manufacture of motor vehicles, trailers and semi-trailers
C	30	Manufacture of other transport equipment
C	31	Manufacture of furniture
C	32	Other manufacturing
C	33	Repair and installation of machinery and equipment
E	36	Water collection, treatment and supply
E	37	Sewerage
E	38	Waste collection, treatment and disposal activities; materials recovery
E	39	Remediation activities and other waste management services.
F	41	Construction of buildings
F	42	Civil engineering

SECTION	DIVISION	DESCRIPTION
F	43	Specialised construction activities
G	45	Wholesale and retail trade and repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles
G	46	Wholesale trade, except of motor vehicles and motorcycles
G	47	Retail trade, except of motor vehicles and motorcycles
H	49	Land transport and transport via pipelines
H	50	Water transport
H	51	Air transport
H	52	Warehousing and support activities for transportation
I	55	Accommodation
I	56	Food and beverage service activities
J	58	Publishing activities
J	59	Motion picture, video and television programme production, sound recording and music publishing activities
J	60	Programming and broadcasting activities
J	61	Telecommunications
J	62	Computer programming, consultancy and related activities
J	63	Information service activities
K	64	Financial service activities, except insurance and pension funding
K	65	Insurance, reinsurance and pension funding, except compulsory social security
K	66	Activities auxiliary to financial services and insurance activities
L	68	Real estate activities
M	69	Legal and accounting activities
M	70	Activities of head offices; management consultancy activities
M	71	Architectural and engineering activities; technical testing and analysis
M	72	Scientific research and development
M	73	Advertising and market research
M	74	Other professional, scientific and technical activities
M	75	Veterinary activities
N	77	Rental and leasing activities
N	78	Employment activities
N	79	Travel agency, tour operator and other reservation service and related activities
N	80	Security and investigation activities
N	81	Services to buildings and landscape activities
N	82	Office administrative, office support and other business support activities
O	84	Public administration and defence; compulsory social security
P	85	Education
Q	86	Human health activities
Q	87	Residential care activities
Q	88	Social work activities without accommodation
R	90	Creative, arts and entertainment activities
R	91	Libraries, archives, museums and other cultural activities

SECTION	DIVISION	DESCRIPTION
R	92	Gambling and betting activities
R	93	Sports activities and amusement and recreation activities
S	94	Activities of membership organisations
S	95	Repair of computers and personal and household goods
S	96	Other personal service activities

Appendix 5: Questionnaire employed

Small Business Engagement in Energy Markets 2015

ASK TO SPEAK TO PERSON AT THAT SITE RESPONSIBLE FOR DEALING WITH ENERGY CONTRACTS/BILLS

ASK ALL

Good morning/afternoon. My name is XXX and I am calling from BMG Research, an independent research organisation. We are conducting a survey to determine businesses' experiences of choosing energy suppliers and the service they receive with regard to their gas and electricity supply.

The survey is being conducted on behalf of the gas and electricity industry regulator, Ofgem. It is an annual survey which aims to provide Ofgem with a clear view of businesses' current energy usage, levels of satisfaction with energy suppliers and brokers and experience of contract renewal and switching.

The survey takes the form of a telephone interview lasting approximately 20 minutes. Would you be able to help us?

IF NECESSARY: **This is not a sales call and no one will try to sell anything to you as a result of this call.**

REASSURANCES TO USE AS NEEDED

- **Any information you provide will be treated in strictest confidence, and answers you give will not be attributed to you or your organisation in the data**
- **We work strictly within the Market Research Society Code of Conduct**
- **The contact at BMG Research is Emma Parry on 0121 333 6006. Emma is a member of the Market Research Society**
- **Your details have been provided from Dun & Bradstreet's commercial database**
- **If you would like to confirm that this research is genuine you can call Adam Knight at Ofgem on 020 7901 7446**
- **The previous report is published on Ofgem's website called 'micro and small business engagement in the energy market'. We can send you an email link to the final report next year if you wish**

KEY OUTCOME CODES

Continue	1
Refused	2
Not relevant – do not have business energy contract	3
Not relevant – business does not arrange energy bills (e.g. have a landlord)	4
Not relevant – other (SPECIFY)	5
Unobtainable number/business closed	6
Not a business	7
Appointment	8
Call back (e.g. answer phone, engaged, respondent not available)	9
Other	10

ASK ALL

S1. **Firstly, are you the person within your business who is solely or jointly responsible for arranging mains gas and electricity contracts or paying these bills?** CODE ONE ONLY

Yes, solely responsible	1	CONTINUE
Yes, jointly responsible	2	CONTINUE
No – somebody else responsible	3	ASK TO SPEAK TO SOMEONE WHO IS, TAKE NAME AND NUMBER (IF DIFFERENT)
Not applicable – nobody in business arranged energy contracts/pays bills	4	THANK AND CLOSE **(Thank you but we need to speak to businesses that arrange their own gas or electricity contracts)**
Not applicable – do not use either main gas or mains electricity	5	

NO S2

ASK ALL

S3. **Which of the following descriptions applies to the energy supply contract(s) at your site?** READ OUT. CODE ONE ONLY

<table>
<tr><td>It is a domestic (residential) tariff or contract</td><td>1</td><td>THANK AND CLOSE (Thank you but the survey is concerned with business contracts only)</td></tr>
<tr><td>It is a business contract arranged by yourselves or an energy broker</td><td>2</td><td>CONTINUE</td></tr>
<tr><td>It is arranged by a landlord or building management company or included in the rent agreement</td><td>3</td><td>THANK AND CLOSE (Thank you but we need to speak to businesses that arrange their own energy contracts)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Don’t know</td><td>4</td><td rowspan="2">THANK AND CLOSE (Thank you, but we need to know whether you have a business or residential contract for the interview to continue)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Refused</td><td>5</td></tr>
</table>

ASK ALL

S4 **How many paid employees does your business currently employ across all sites, excluding owners and partners?**

- INCLUDE FULL AND PART TIME
- INCLUDE TEMPORARIES/CASUALS, BUT NOT AGENCY STAFF
- EXCLUDE SELF-EMPLOYED
- EXCLUDE OWNERS/PARTNERS, BUT OTHER DIRECTORS COUNT AS EMPLOYEES
- IF THE BUSINESS IS A FRANCHISE, ONLY INCLUDE EMPLOYEES PAID BY THE FRANCHISE

IF DON’T KNOW, ENCOURAGE BEST ESTIMATE

ENTER NUMBER (RANGE=0-99,999)____________________

QUOTA BANDS:

<table>
<tr><td>None (no employees)</td><td>1</td><td rowspan="4">CONTINUE</td></tr>
<tr><td>1-4 employees (Very small micro)</td><td>2</td></tr>
<tr><td>5-9 employees (Larger micro)</td><td>3</td></tr>
<tr><td>10-49 Employees (Small)</td><td>4</td></tr>
<tr><td>50+ Employees (Medium/large)</td><td>5</td><td rowspan="2">THANK AND CLOSE (Thank you but we are only interviewing businesses with fewer than 50 employees)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Refused</td><td>6</td></tr>
</table>

ASK ALL WITH EMPLOYEES (S4/1+)

S5. **Approximately what proportion of the workforce across all sites is employed on a full time basis?** PROMPT FOR AN APPROXIMATION AND WRITE IN PERCENTAGE (%)

Full time	
Don't know	x

SECTION A: ABOUT THE BUSINESS

ASK ALL

A1. **Before we start to talk about energy suppliers, we would like to ask a few questions about your business in order to help classify your answers. We have** [DESCRIPTION OF BUSINESS ACTIVITY FROM SAMPLE] **as a broad description of your company's activity. Does this sound about right to you?**

Yes	1
No	2

ASK IF NO AT A1 (A1/2)

A2. **What is the main business activity that you undertake**? PROBE AS NECESSARY

- **What is the main product or service?**
- **What exactly is made or done?**

WRITE IN. (CODE TO 2 DIGIT SIC 2007)

ASK ALL

A3 **Can I just confirm with you that the postcode of your present location is** [READ OUT POSTCODE FROM DATABASE]**?** SINGLE-CODE

Yes	1	
No	2	RECORD CORRECT POSTCODE

ASK ALL

A4 **Is your business a franchise?**

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

ASK ALL

A5 **How many sites in Great Britain does your business operate from, including the site where you are now?** ADD IF A FRANCHISE (A4/1) **Please only include the sites that you or the franchisee manage directly.** CODE ONE ONLY.

One	1
More than one (SPECIFY NUMBER)	2
Don't know	3

ASK IF MORE THAN ONE SITE AT A5 BUT NOT A FRANCHISE (A5/2, BUT NOT A4/1)

A6. **Is this site your head office in Great Britain or a branch?** SINGLE CODE ONLY

Head office	1
Branch	2
Other (SPECIFY)	3

ASK IF MORE THAN ONE BRANCH (A5/2)

A7. **Do you have responsibility for arranging energy contracts or paying bills for your entire organisation across Great Britain, or just the site where you are now?** SINGLE CODE ONLY

Entire organisation	1
More than one branch, but not entire organisation	2
Just the single branch	3
Other (SPECIFY)	4
Don't know	5

ASK IF HAVE RESPONSIBILITY FOR MORE THAN ONE BRANCH, BUT NOT ENTIRE ORGANISATION (A7/2)

A8. **How many branches across Great Britain do you have responsibility for?** WRITE IN NUMBER

Don't know	97

ASK ALL

A9. **Which of these forms of energy do you use?** READ OUT. MULTICODE OK

Mains electricity	1	
Mains gas	2	
(DO NOT READ OUT) Neither	96	THANK AND CLOSE

ASK ALL WITH BOTH GAS AND ELECTRICITY (A9/1 AND A9/2)

A10. **And for which do you have responsibility, e.g. arranging contracts or paying bills?** READ OUT. MULTICODE OK

Mains electricity	1
Mains gas	2

SECTION B: GAS AND ELECTRICITY EXPENDITURE

ASK IF DEAL WITH MAINS ELECTRICITY (A10/1)

B1. **What is the name of your** (IF A7/1-2) **organisation's** (IF A7/3) **site's current electricity supplier?** DO NOT READ OUT. CODE ONE ONLY.

Axis Telecom	1
BES Commercial	2
Better Energy	3
British Gas	4
Corona Energy	5
Daligas	6
DONG Energy	7
Dual Energy	8
E.ON	9
Ecotricity	10
EDF Energy	11
Extra Energy	12
Gazprom	13
GDF Suez	14
Good Energy	15
Haven Power	16
Hudson Energy	17
LoCO2 Energy	18
Manweb	19
Norweb	20
npower	21
Nwy Prydain	22
Opus Energy	23
Scottish and Southern Electricity (SSE)	24
Scottish Gas	25
Scottish Power	26
SEEBoard Energy	27
SWALEC	28
Total Gas and Power	29
Utility Warehouse	30
Other (SPECIFY)	31
Don't know	32
Refused	33

ASK IF DEAL WITH MAINS ELECTRICITY (A10/1)

B2a (IF RESPONSIBLE FOR WHOLE ORGANISATION - A7/1) **To the best of your knowledge, approximately how much has the organisation as a whole spent on electricity in the last 12 months? This should include VAT**

(IF RESPONSIBLE FOR PART OF THE ORGANISATION – A7/2) **To the best of your knowledge, approximately how much has the organisation spent on electricity in the last 12 months for the branches you have responsibility for? This should include VAT**

(IF RESPONSIBLE FOR JUST ONE BRANCH – A7/3) **To the best of your knowledge, approximately how much have you spent on electricity in the last 12 months for the site you have responsibility for? This should include VAT**

READ OUT AND CODE ONE ONLY

Less than £500	1
Between £500 and £1,000	2
Between £1,001 and £2,500	3
Between £2,501 and £5,000	4
Between £5,001 and £10,000	5
Between £10,001 and £15,000	6
Between £15,001 and £25,000	7
Between £25,001 and £50,000	8
More than £50,000	9
Don't know	10
Refused	11

ASK IF DEAL WITH MAINS ELECTRICITY (A10/1)

B3. **To the best of your knowledge, what percentage of your total** (IF A7/1-2) **organisation's** (IF A7/3) **site's costs is spent on electricity?** PROMPT FOR AN APPROXIMATION USING RANGES PROVIDED

Less than 10%	1
Between 10% and 19%	2
Between 20% and 29%	3
Between 30% and 39%	4
Between 40% and 49%	5
50% or more	6
Don't know	7
Refused	8

ASK ALL THAT DEAL WITH MAINS GAS AND MAINS ELECTRICITY (A10/1 AND 2). OTHERS GO TO NEXT SECTION

B4. **Is your mains gas supplier the same as your electricity supplier?**

Yes	1
No	2
Unsure	3

ASK IF DEALS WITH MAINS GAS ONLY (A10/2 BUT A10/NOT 1) OR IF HAVE MAINS GAS SUPPLIER DIFFERENT FROM MAINS ELECTRICITY SUPPLIER (A10/2 BUT NOT B4/1)

B5 **What is the name of your** (IF A7/1-2) **organisation's** (IF A7/3) **site's current gas supplier?** DO NOT READ OUT. CODE ONE ONLY.

Axis Telecom	1
BES Commercial	2
Better Energy	3
British Gas	4
Corona Energy	5
Daligas	6
DONG Energy	7
Dual Energy	8
E.ON	9
Ecotricity	10
EDF Energy	11
Extra Energy	12
Gazprom	13
GDF Suez	14
Good Energy	15
Haven Power	16
Hudson Energy	17
LoCO2 Energy	18
Manweb	19
Norweb	20
npower	21
Nwy Prydain	22
Opus Energy	23
Scottish and Southern Electricity (SSE)	24
Scottish Gas	25
Scottish Power	26
SEEBoard Energy	27
SWALEC	28
Total Gas and Power	29
Utility Warehouse	30
Other (SPECIFY)	31
Don't know	32
Refused	33

ASK ALL THAT DEAL WITH MAINS GAS (A10/2)

B6 (IF RESPONSIBLE FOR WHOLE ORGANISATION - A7/1) **To the best of your knowledge, approximately how much has the organisation as a whole spent on mains gas in the last 12 months? This should include VAT**

(IF RESPONSIBLE FOR PART OF THE ORGANISATION – A7/2) **To the best of your knowledge, approximately how much has the organisation spent on mains gas in the last 12 months for the branches you have responsibility for? This should include VAT**

(IF RESPONSIBLE FOR JUST ONE BRANCH – A7/3) **To the best of your knowledge, approximately how much have you spent on mains gas in the last 12 months for the site you have responsibility for? This should include VAT**

READ OUT AND CODE ONE ONLY

Less than £500	1
Between £500 and £1,000	2
Between £1,001 and £2,500	3
Between £2,501 and £5,000	4
Between £5,001 and £10,000	5
Between £10,001 and £15,000	6
Between £15,001 and £25,000	7
More than £25,000	8
Don't know	9
Refused	10

ASK ALL THAT DEAL WITH MAINS GAS (A10/2)

B7. **To the best of your knowledge, what percentage of your total** (IF A7/1-2) **organisation's** (IF A7/3) **site's costs is spent on gas?** PROMPT FOR AN APPROXIMATION USING RANGES PROVIDED

Less than 10%	1
Between 10% and 19%	2
Between 20% and 29%	3
Between 30% and 39%	4
Between 40% and 49%	5
50% or more	6
Don't know	7
Refused	8

SECTION C: CHOOSING CONTRACTS/TARIFFS

SECTION TO BE ASKED ABOUT ELECTRICITY OR GAS

- IF ONLY RESPONSIBLE FOR ARRANGING ELECTRICITY (A9/1 BUT NOT A9/2), ASK ABOUT ELECTRICITY
- IF ONLY RESPONSIBLE FOR ARRANGING GAS (A9/2 BUT NOT A9/1), ASK ABOUT GAS
- IF RESPONSIBLE FOR ARRANGING BOTH GAS AND ELECTRICITY (A9/1 AND A9/2) HALF OF THESE RESPONDENTS TO BE ASKED ABOUT ELECTRICITY, HALF ABOUT GAS

TEXT IF ARRANGE BOTH GAS AND ELECTRICITY
Thank you. For the remainder of the survey I will only be asking about your <GAS>/<ELECTRICITY> **contract**

ASK ALL
C1. **How does your organisation pay for** <GAS>/<ELECTRICITY**>?** PROBE AND CODE ONE ONLY

Direct debit	1
Standing order	2
Pay only on receipt of bill with cash/check/credit card/BACS	3
Prepayment meter	4
Other (SPECIFY)	5
Don't know	6
Refused	7

ASK ALL
C2. **Do you have a fixed term contract for your** <GAS>/<ELECTRICITY> **supply? By that I mean, a contract that is for a set period of time and defines when you can change to another supplier?** CODE ONE ONLY

Yes	1
No	2
Unsure	3

ASK IF HAVE A FIXED TERM CONTRACT (C2/1)

C3. **What is the total term of your** <GAS>/<ELECTRICITY**> contract? By that I mean the total length of your contract from beginning to end, not just the time remaining**
CODE ONE ONLY

12 months	1
18 months	2
2 years	3
3 years	4
4 years	5
5 or more years	6
Other (SPECIFY)	7
Unsure	8

ASK IF HAVE A FIXED TERM CONTRACT (C2/1)

C4. **Do you know when your <**GAS>/<ELECTRICITY**> contract ends?** PROBE WHETHER KNOW EXACTLY (I.E. THE MONTH) OR APPROXIMATELY. CODE ONE ONLY

Yes – exactly (i.e. know month)	1
Yes – knows approximately	2
Don't know when it ends	3

ASK IF HAVE A FIXED TERM CONTRACT (C2/1)

C5. **Do you know by when you have to give notice of termination to your <**GAS>/<ELECTRICITY**> supplier?** PROBE WHETHER KNOW EXACTLY OR APPROXIMATELY. CODE ONE ONLY

Yes – exactly (know the exact date)	1
Yes – knows approximately (i.e. know the month)	2
Don't know when it can be terminated	3

ASK ALL

C6 **In how much detail have you looked through your current <**GAS>/<ELECTRICITY> **contract?** READ OUT. SINGLE CODE ONLY

You read it in detail	1
You glanced at it or skim read it	2
You saw it, but did not read it	3
Or have you not noticed it at all	4
Other (SPECIFY)	95
Don't know	97

ASK IF READ/GLANCED AT CONTRACT (C6a/1-2)

C7. **Thinking about your current** <GAS>/<ELECTRICITY> **contract document, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the following? Please answer on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is very dissatisfied and 5 is very satisfied** RANDOMISE ORDER OF READING. CODE ONE PER STATEMENT ONLY

	Very dis-satisfied				Very satisfied	Don't know
(a) The length/size of the contract document	1	2	3	4	5	6
(b) The clarity of the contract document overall	1	2	3	4	5	6
(c) The clarity of costs and charges	1	2	3	4	5	6
(d) The clarity on the duration of the contract, and renewal dates	1	2	3	4	5	6

ASK ALL

C8. **Is the** <GAS>/<ELECTRICITY> **contract you have now, the first contract you have had with** [GAS OR ELECTRICITY SUPPLIER AT B1/B5]? CODE ONE ONLY

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

ASK IF NOT THE FIRST OR DON'T KNOW (C8/2, 3)

C9. **Did you or a broker negotiate this contract as a new contract, or was it an extension or rollover of the previous contract you had with this supplier?** CODE ONE ONLY

New contract	1
Extension/rollover	2
Don't know	3

ASK IF HAD EXTENSION/ROLLOVER (C9/2)

C10. **Were you made aware that this contract was being extended or rolled over?** CODE ONE ONLY

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

ASK IF NOT THE FIRST (C8/2)

C11. **How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the experience of** [TEXT SUB: IF C9/1: **renegotiating;** IF C9/2: **extending or rolling over] the contract with your <**GAS>/<ELECTRICITY**> supplier? Were you...** READ OUT. CODE ONE ONLY

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

ASK IF DISSATISFIED (C11/4-5)

C12. **Why were you dissatisfied?** DO NOT READ OUT. PROBE FULLY AND CODE ALLTHAT APPLY. ASK: **Any other reason?**

The contract was renewed without our knowledge	1
There was a price increase	2
Unreasonable/unfavourable credit or payment terms	3
Contract document was too complex/difficult to understand	4
Correspondence about the renewal was too complex/difficult to understand	5
The renewal process involved too much work	6
The renewal process took too long	7
The notice period required was too long	8
The time given to renew was too short	9
Other (SPECIFY)	10
Don't know	11

ASK ALL

C12a. **Have you received a <**GAS>/<ELECTRICITY**> contract renewal letter in the last 12 months?**

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

ASK IF RECEIVED CONTRACT RENEWAL LETTER (C12a/1)

C12b. **In how much detail did you look at the contract renewal letter?** READ OUT. SINGLE CODE ONLY

You read it in detail	1
You glanced at it or skim read it	2
You saw what it was, but did not read it	3
Other (SPECIFY)	4
Don't know	5

ASK IF READ CONTRACT RENEWAL LETTER OR GLANCED AT IT (C12b/1-2)

C12c. **In the contract renewal letter did you recall seeing information on either of the following?** READ OUT. SINGLE CODE ONLY FOR EACH

	Yes	No	Don't remember
(i) Your current energy prices?	1	2	3
(ii) Your energy consumption?	1	2	3

ASK IF SAW ENERGY PRICES OR CONSUMPTION (C12ci/1 or C12cii/1)

C12d. **Did you use your** [PRICES/CONSUMPTION/PRICES AND CONSUMPTION] **information to do any of the following?** READ OUT. MULTICODE 1-3

Compare prices across suppliers, or get quotes yourself?	1
Ask a broker to compare prices or get quotes?	2
Take other action based on you seeing the prices and/or consumption (SPECIFY)	3
None of these	4
Don't know	5

ASK ALL

C13. **Have you received a <**GAS>/<ELECTRICITY**> bill in the last 12 months?**

Yes	1
No	2

ASK ALL

C14 **The last time you received a <**GAS>/<ELECTRICITY**> bill, do you recall seeing the following ...** READ OUT. MULTICODE 1-2

Your contract end date?	1
The date you need to give notice by to renegotiate or terminate your contract?	2
Neither of these	3

ASK ALL

C15. **In the past year, have you taken any action to look into other supplier or tariff options for <**GAS>/<ELECTRICITY**>?** IF YES, PROBE WHETHER LOOKED AT OTHER SUPPLIERS, OR LOOKED AT EXISTING SUPPLIER
CODE ONE ONLY

Yes – looked at other suppliers only	1
Yes – looked at other tariffs with my existing supplier only	2
Yes – looked at other suppliers AND looked at tariffs with my existing supplier	3
No – taken no action	4

ASK IF TOOK ACTION AND NOTICED OPTIONS ON BILLS (C15/1-3 AND C14/1-2)

C16. **Were you prompted to look into other supplier or tariff options because you noticed your contract end date, or the date you needed to give notice by, on your bill?**
CODE ONE ONLY

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

SECTION D: USE OF BROKERS

ASK ALL

D1. **When choosing your current** <GAS>/<ELECTRICITY> **contract or tariff did you consult or were you approached by, any of the following?** ADD IF ROLLOVER/EXTENSION C9/2**: By current contract I mean the original contract you set up.** CODE ALL THAT APPLY

A broker	1
A price comparison website or telephone service	2
Your current supplier	3
Your previous supplier	4
Other suppliers	5
Don't know	6

ASK ALL

D2. **And how did you mainly choose your current** <GAS>/<ELECTRICITY> **contract or tariff?** READ OUT IF NECESSARY. CODE ONE ONLY

Through a broker	1
Through a price comparison website or telephone service	2
You consulted your current supplier only	3
You consulted a range of suppliers	4
Other (SPECIFY)	5
Don't know	6

ASK IF MAINLY USED A PRICE COMPARISON WEBSITE OR TELEPHONE SERVICE (D2/2)

D2B. **How satisfied or dissatisfied were you overall with the service provided by the price comparison website or telephone service when changing to your current gas/electricity contract or tariff? Were you...** READ OUT. CODE ONE ONLY

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

ASK ALL

D3. **Approximately how many times, if at all, have you been approached by a broker in the last 12 months?** PROMPT AS NECESSARY

None/not approached in last 12 months	1
1 - 5 times	2
6 - 10 times	3
11 – 20 times	4
21 – 30 times	5
31 – 50 times	6
More than 50 times/too many times to count	7
Don't know	8

WHERE APPROACHED BY BROKER (D3/2-7)

D4. **Thinking about the last time you were approached by a broker, would you say they...?** READ OUT AND CODE ONE ONLY FOR EACH

	Yes	No	Unsure
Identified themselves clearly as an energy broker	1	2	3
They provided accurate information about the services they offered	1	2	3
Their tone was professional	1	2	3
They were upfront about whether there was a cost to your business for their services	1	2	3

ASK IF USED BROKER (D2/1)

D5. **Did the broker charge you for their services?** CODE ONE ONLY

Yes	1
No	2
Can't recall	3

ASK IF CHARGED FOR SERVICE (D5/1)

D6. **Were you aware of this charge before using the broker's services?** CODE ONE ONLY

Yes	1
No	2
Can't recall	3

NO D7-D9

ASK IF USED A BROKER (D2/1)

D10. **How satisfied were you overall with the service provided by the broker when changing to your current** <GAS>/<ELECTRICITY> **contract or tariff?** CODE ONE ONLY

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

ASK ALL

D11. **How would you describe your overall view of energy brokers on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is very negative and 5 is very positive?** CODE ONE ONLY

Very negative	1
Quite negative	2
Neutral, neither positive nor negative	3
Quite positive	4
Very positive	5
Don't know	6

SECTION E: SWITCHING EXPERIENCE

ASK ALL

E1. **How many times has your organisation switched** <GAS>/<ELECTRICITY> **supplier in the last 5 years?** PROMPT AS NECESSARY. CODE ONE ONLY

Not in the last 5 years	1
Once	2
Twice	3
Three times	4
Four times	5
More than four	6
Don't know	7

ASK IF SWITCHED AT ALL IN LAST 5 YEARS (E1/2-6)

E2. **Have you switched** <GAS>/<ELECTRICITY> **supplier in the last 12 months?**

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

ASK ALL THAT HAVE NEVER SWITCHED (E1/1 OR 7)

E3. **Have you ever considered switching** <GAS>/<ELECTRICITY> **supplier?**

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

ASK IF SWITCHED AT ALL IN LAST 12 MONTHS (E2/1)

E4. **Thinking about the last time you switched** <GAS>/<ELECTRICITY> **supplier, how many suppliers did you or your broker contact for quotes?** WRITE IN NUMBER

____

Don't know 97

ASK IF SWITCHED AT ALL IN LAST 12 MONTHS (E2/1)

E5. **Were any of the following factors in your decision to switch** <GAS>/<ELECTRICITY> **supplier on the last occasion?** READ OUT AND CODE ALL THAT APPLY. RANDOMISE ORDER OF READING

A price increase from your previous supplier	1
You found or were offered a lower price contract or tariff	2
You were not satisfied with customer service provided by your previous supplier	3
The new supplier promised better customer service	4
The new supplier offered greater assistance on energy reduction initiatives	5
You received a renewal notice from your existing supplier	6
Knowing your contract was coming to an end	7
A broker/consultant recommended switching	8
ASK IF USE BOTH GAS AND ELECTRICITY (A9/1 AND A9/2): **You were offered savings if you used the same supplier for gas and electricity**	9
Any other reason (SPECIFY)	10
Don't know	11

ASK IF SWITCHED OR CONSIDERED SWITCHING IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS, BUT NOT IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS (E2/2-3 OR E3/1

E6. **You say you have not switched suppliers in the last 12 months. Which of these, if any, are reasons why you have not switched?** READ OUT. CODE ALL THAT APPLY. RANDOMISE ORDER OF READING

You were broadly satisfied with existing supplier	1
You did not believe switching would result in significant savings	2
You were tied to your existing contract	3
You did not start looking to switch in time	4
It was too complex and time consuming to find a new tariff or supplier	5
Your existing supplier prevented switching	6
You were not happy with the broker's recommendations	7
Switching dates/procedures were unclear	8
Any other reason (SPECIFY)	9
Don't know	10

ASK IF SWITCHED AT ALL IN LAST 12 MONTHS (E2/1)

E7. **In terms of the switching process, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following aspects of it?** RANDOMISE ORDER OF READING. CODE ONE PER STATEMENT. FOR EACH PROBE: **Would you say that you (dis) agree strongly, or just (dis) agree?**

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know
It is easy to compare prices between tariffs and suppliers	1	2	3	4	5	6
The process of switching suppliers is easy	1	2	3	4	5	6
The time between choosing a new tariff or supplier and switching to it is too long	1	2	3	4	5	6
The expected savings do not always materialise	1	2	3	4	5	6

SECTION F: SUPPLIER CONTACT

ASK ALL

F1. **Approximately how often, if at all, do you review your** <GAS>/<ELECTRICITY> **supply arrangements?** READ OUT. CODE ALL THAT APPLY

When you receive a bill	1
When your contract comes up for renewal	2
At a set point each year	3
Multiple times a year, regardless of contract or bill date	4
When prompted to do so by a broker	5
Other (SPECIFY)	6
Never	7

NO F2-F3

ASK ALL

F4. **Have you contacted your** <GAS>/<ELECTRICITY> **supplier in the last year?** CODE ONE ONLY

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

ASK IF CONTACTED SUPPLIER (F4/1)

F5. **Thinking about the last time you contacted your supplier, what was the main reason for contacting them?** READ OUT 1-3 AND CODE ONE ONLY

A complaint	1
A query/information	2
Other (SPECIFY)	3
Can't remember	4

NO F6

ASK IF CONTACTED SUPPLIER (F4/1)

F7. **Thinking about the last time you contacted your** <GAS>/<ELECTRICITY> **supplier, how would you rate your level of satisfaction with the following on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is very dissatisfied and 5 is very satisfied...** RANDOMISE ORDER OF READING. CODE ONE ONLY FOR EACH

	Very dissatisfied	Quite dissatisfied	Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	Quite satisfied	Very satisfied	Don't know	Not applicable
The time it took to respond to your query or complaint	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The solution they offered	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Their follow up service/communication	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

SECTION G: SMART METERS

ASK ALL

G1. **A smart meter is a unit that is installed by a professional engineer from your gas or electricity company that is able to communicate with energy suppliers to send and receive information about the amount of energy being used. Does your business have one of these?** CODE ONE ONLY

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

SECTION H: OVERALL EXPERIENCE OF THE MARKET AND SUPPLIERS

ASK ALL

H1. **Thinking about your current** <GAS>/<ELECTRICITY> **supplier, how would you rate your level of satisfaction with the following on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is very dissatisfied and 5 is very satisfied...** RANDOMISE ORDER OF READING. CODE ONE ONLY FOR EACH

	Very dissatisfied	Quite dissatisfied	Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	Quite satisfied	Very satisfied	Don't know	Not applicable
Value for money	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Information provided on available tariffs and options	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The degree to which your supplier meets your business' needs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The overall service provided	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

ASK ALL

H2. **How likely is it that you would recommend your current** <GAS>/<ELECTRICITY> **supplier to someone else or another business? Please indicate how likely on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is not at all likely and 10 is extremely likely.** CODE ONE ONLY

(0) Not at all likely	0
	1
	2
	3
	4
	5
	6
	7
	8
	9
(10) Extremely likely	10
Don't know	11
Refused	12

ASK ALL

H3. **Thinking now about the energy market in general, how would you rate your level of satisfaction with the following on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is very dissatisfied and 5 is very satisfied...** RANDOMISE ORDER OF READING. CODE ONE ONLY FOR EACH

	Very dissatisfied	Quite dissatisfied	Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	Quite satisfied	Very satisfied	Don't know	Not applicable
Competitiveness of prices	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The variety of options from different suppliers	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The ease of comparing prices	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The sales approach by energy suppliers	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The sales approach by brokers	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The ease of switching supplier	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The level of advice available to businesses when they are looking to switch supplier	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

ASK ALL

H4. **To what extent do you trust or distrust energy suppliers to be fair in the way they deal with business customers?** PROBE FOR COMPLETELY (DIS)TRUST OR TEND TO (DIS) TRUST. SINGLE CODE ONLY

Completely trust	1
Tend to trust	2
Neither trust or distrust	3
Tend to distrust	4
Completely distrust	5
Don't know	6

SECTION I: CLOSE

ASK ALL

I1A. **Finally, just a couple more questions for classification purposes. Can you please tell me the approximate turnover of your business in the past 12 months?** RECORD EXACT FIGURE BELOW, IF NOT SURE, ASK FOR AN APPROXIMATE FIGURE. ALLOWED RANGE £0-£99,999,999

£									

Don't know X
Refused Y

TO COMPLETE IF FIGURE GIVEN AT QI1A. INTERVIEWERS TO RE-ENTER TURNOVER INTO RANGE. DO NOT ASK. SINGLE CODE ONLY

£0-£9	1
£10-£99	2
£100-£999	3
£1,000-£9,999	4
£10,000-£99,999	5
£100,000-£999,999	6
£1,000,000-£9,999,999	7
£10,000,000-£99,999,999	8

ASK IF DK/REF AT I1A

I1B. **Which of these ranges does your turnover fall into?** READ OUT UNTIL ANSWER GIVEN. SINGLE CODE ONLY

Less than £73,000	1
£73,000 - £99,999	2
£100,000 - £199,999	3
£200,000 - £299,999	4
£300,000 - £499,999	5
£500,000 – £749,000	6
£750,000 - £999,999	7
£1m - £1.99m	8
£2m - £4.99m	9
£5m or more	10
Don't know	97
Refused	98

ASK ALL

I2 **That's the end of the survey, thank you very much for your time. Ofgem may wish to undertake follow-up interviews with businesses to explore some of these issues in more depth. Would you be willing to take part in further research commissioned by Ofgem at a later date?** CODE ONE ONLY

Yes	1
No	2

ASK ALL

I3 **Would you be interested in receiving a copy of the survey findings by email? The report is likely to be published early in 2016.** IF YES: **Could I take your email address please?**

Yes (RECORD EMAIL ADDRESS)	1
No	2

CLOSE

This survey has been commissioned by Ofgem. On behalf of them and BMG, thank you very much for your time. If you have any questions about the research you can call Emma Parry on 0121 333 6006.

Appendix 6: Statement of Terms

Compliance with International Standards

BMG complies with the International Standard for Quality Management Systems requirements (ISO 9001:2008) and the International Standard for Market, opinion and social research service requirements (ISO 20252:2012) and The International Standard for Information Security Management ISO 27001:2005.

Interpretation and publication of results

The interpretation of the results as reported in this document pertain to the research problem and are supported by the empirical findings of this research project and, where applicable, by other data. These interpretations and recommendations are based on empirical findings and are distinguishable from personal views and opinions.

BMG will not publish any part of these results without the written and informed consent of the client.

Ethical practice

BMG promotes ethical practice in research: We conduct our work responsibly and in light of the legal and moral codes of society.

We have a responsibility to maintain high scientific standards in the methods employed in the collection and dissemination of data, in the impartial assessment and dissemination of findings and in the maintenance of standards commensurate with professional integrity.

We recognise we have a duty of care to all those undertaking and participating in research and strive to protect subjects from undue harm arising as a consequence of their participation in research. This requires that subjects' participation should be as fully informed as possible and no group should be disadvantaged by routinely being excluded from consideration. All adequate steps shall be taken by both agency and client to ensure that the identity of each respondent participating in the research is protected.

With more than 25 years' experience, BMG Research has established a strong reputation for delivering high quality research and consultancy.

BMG serves both the public and the private sector, providing market and customer insight which is vital in the development of plans, the support of campaigns and the evaluation of performance.

Innovation and development is very much at the heart of our business, and considerable attention is paid to the utilisation of the most up to date technologies and information systems to ensure that market and customer intelligence is widely shared.