Household Consumer Perceptions of the energy market

Quarter 4 2020

Research conducted in November & December 2020

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Changes this quarter

Changes this quarter

- Satisfaction with accuracy of energy bills has significantly increased from 74% in Quarter 3 2020 to 77%. This is the highest satisfaction recorded since Q4 2018.
- Consumers are more satisfied with their smart meter overall (72%) when compared with the beginning of 2020 (was 67% in Q1 2020). However, the proportion of complaints that were about smart meters significantly increased; up to 29% from 15% in Q3 2020.
- Consumers have had greater problems with online communication with their supplier:
  - Unsuccessful contact via web forms has increased (21% trying to contact via this method were unable to vs 7% - 14% between Q1 2019 and Q3 2020).
  - Live webchat has also become more problematic (25% trying were unable to make contact to vs 20% Q3 2020 and 13% Q2 2020).
- Over time, those contacting supplier by telephone has declined. While it is still the most common contact channel (51%) this is significantly down compared to levels seen in 2019 (which ranged from 59%-62%).

Background and method

Background

- This report presents findings from a tracking survey commissioned jointly by Ofgem and Citizens Advice.
  - The Gas and Electricity Markets Authority (GEMA) is the regulator of Britain's gas and electricity markets, and its principal objective is to protect the interests of both current and future consumers. Ofgem carries out the day to day functions of GEMA.
  - Citizens Advice helps millions of people every year to find a way forward, across all sectors, whatever their problems. This informs its role as the statutory energy consumer advocate, fighting for the best outcomes for current and future consumers.
- The tracker is a representative survey of domestic energy bill-payers and provides Ofgem and Citizens Advice with ongoing measures of consumer engagement in and experiences of the energy market.

Methodology

- Data was collected using a mixed-mode survey of 3,209 domestic energy bill-payers in Great Britain (GB). Fieldwork was carried in November and December 2020 around lockdowns and abiding by the pandemic response Tier system in place at that time. Fieldwork included:
  - An online survey using a commercial online panel (n = 2,983).
  - Face to face interviews (n= 226) to allow for inclusion of the digitally excluded population. These consisted of those without access to the internet, those who had not used the internet in the previous six months and those not confident in using the internet. **In light of the coronavirus outbreak, the face to face interviews were conducted only in Tiers where market research interviewing was permitted and in accordance with the Market Research Society's guidance on social distancing.**
- All participants were responsible (solely or jointly) for the energy bills in their household or for choosing their energy supplier.
- The survey used quotas to achieve a sample representative of the GB bill-payer population. Quotas were set on age, gender, social grade and region. Data were weighted to the known profile of the GB population. Quotas (other than gender) were based on census Household Reference Person (HRP)*, as a proxy for bill-payer.

* https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/datasets/st067

Fieldwork dates

- Fieldwork dates for each of the nine waves of the survey completed are indicated below:

Fieldwork	Wave 1 ('Q4 2018')	Wave 2 ('Q1 2019')	Wave 3 ('Q2 2019')	Wave 4 ('Q3 2019')	Wave 5 ('Q4 2019')	Wave 6 ('Q1 2020')	Wave 7 ('Q2 2020')	Wave 8 ('Q3 2020')	Wave 9 ('Q4 2020')
Online	24th October – 11th November 2018	29th January – 6th February 2019	26th March - 15th April 2019	3rd July - 17th July 2019	1st – 23rd October 2019	6th - 22nd January 2020	1st - 17th April 2020	21st August – 16th September 2020	20th November – 15th December
Face-to-Face*	24th October – 13th November 2018	31st January – 17th February 2019	1st – 16th April 2019	1st July – 23rd July 2019	3rd – 17th October 2019	9th - 24th January 2020	1st - 24th April 2020	24th August – 28th September 2020	24th November – 14th December

*Wave 7 ('Q2 2020') and part of Wave 8 ('Q3 2020') were conducted by telephone

Comparisons between survey waves

- This report presents results for the ninth tracking wave.
- As the survey involved sampling a selection, rather than the whole population, of energy consumers, confidence intervals apply to the results. These confidence intervals indicate, for a given sample size and a given survey result, the degree of confidence we can have that the survey result is real and not due to random chance. For the total sample on which these results are based (n=3,209), there is a confidence interval of +/-2% (i.e. a survey result of 50% could lie between 48% and 52%).
- Confidence intervals also apply when comparing results between waves. Where there are statistically significant differences in findings to previous waves (i.e. we have statistical confidence that a real change has occurred), these are indicated. Where only wave nine results are shown, there are no statistically significant differences in findings from previous waves.
- All measures of statistical significance have been tested at the 95% confidence level.

Abbreviations/terms used in this report

Tariffs / Payment:

- Fixed = Consumer is on a fixed tariff for their electricity and gas.
- SVT = Consumer is on a Standard Variable Tariff for their electricity and gas.
- Mixed tariff = on different types of tariff for gas and electricity.
- Dual Fuel = Consumer uses the same supplier for electricity and gas.
- PPM = Pre-payment Meter.

Demographics:

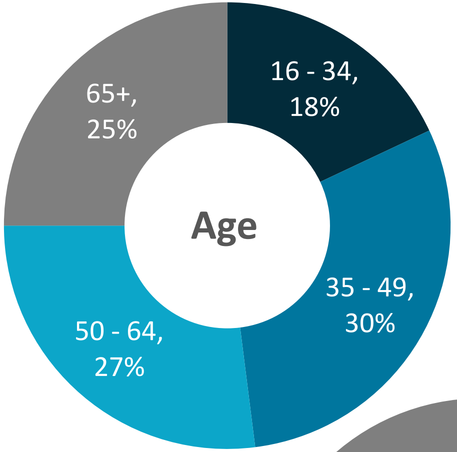
- SEG = Socio-Economic grade.
- ABC1 = Consumers falling into the top three socio-economic bands.
- C2DE = Consumers falling into the bottom three socio-economic bands.
- Online = Survey sample sourced from an online consumer panel.
- Digitally excluded = Sample sourced from face-to-face in-home interviews. All selected on the basis they have no or limited access to the internet.

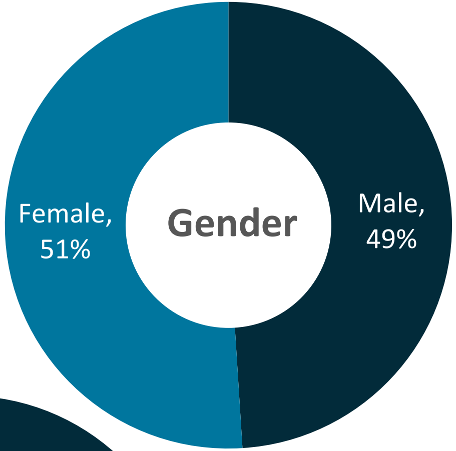
Other:

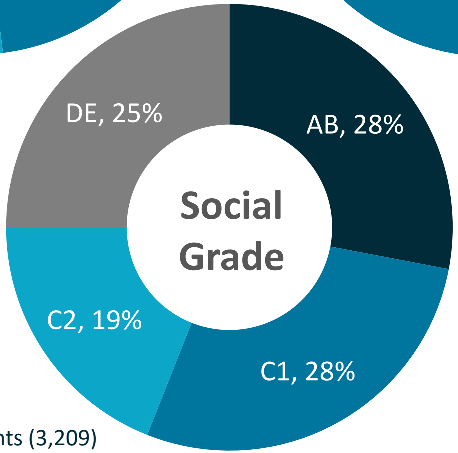
- PCW = Price Comparison Website.
- PPS = Percentage points.

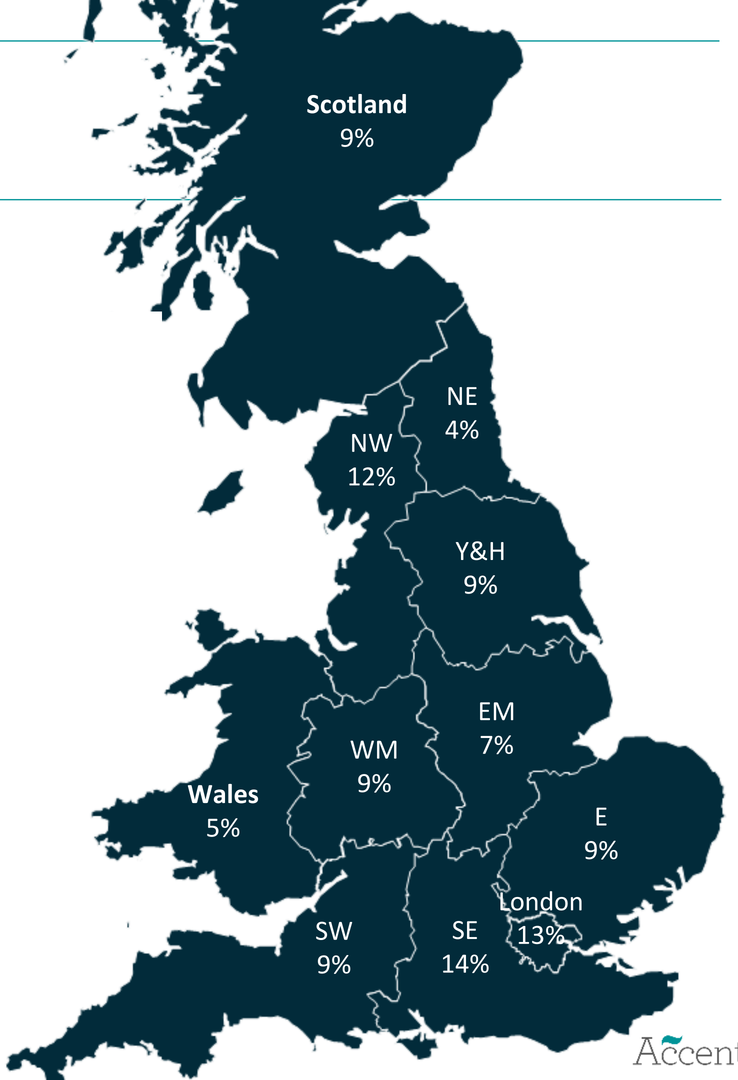
Sample profile

Sample profile







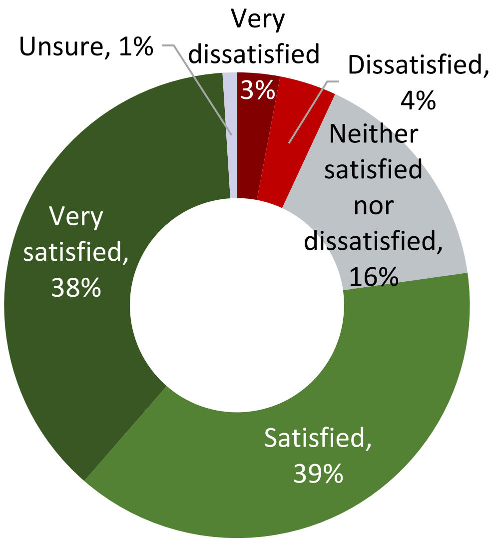


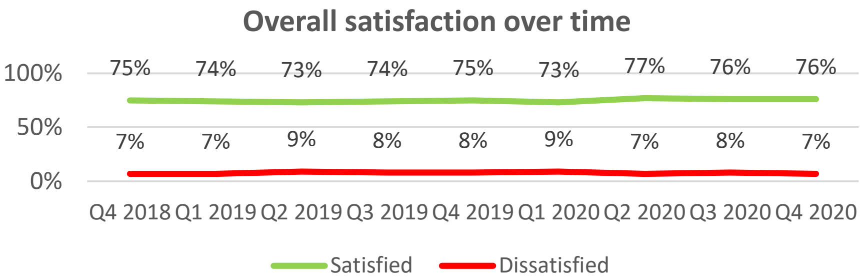
Base: All Participants (3,209)

Satisfaction with supplier

Overall satisfaction with supplier

76% are satisfied with supplier, consistent with the last 3 tracking waves.





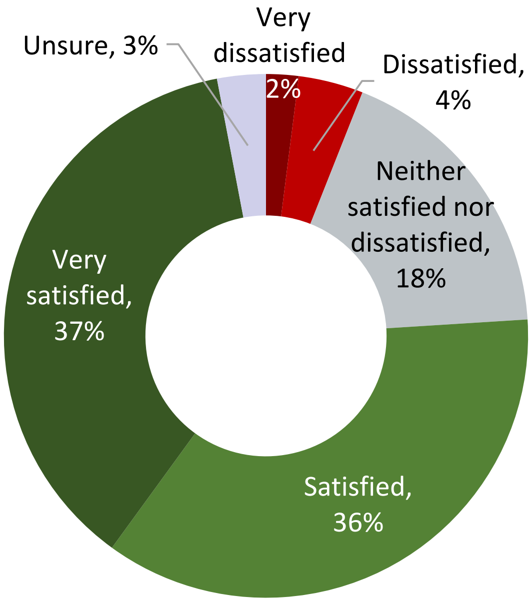
- As with at the previous four quarters, customers using direct debit have higher satisfaction (79% satisfied vs. 69% using standard credit or PPM).

Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with (...) as your supplier of (gas/electricity/gas and electricity)?

Base: All Participants (3,209)

Satisfaction with customer service

73% are satisfied with customer service, in line with previous quarters.



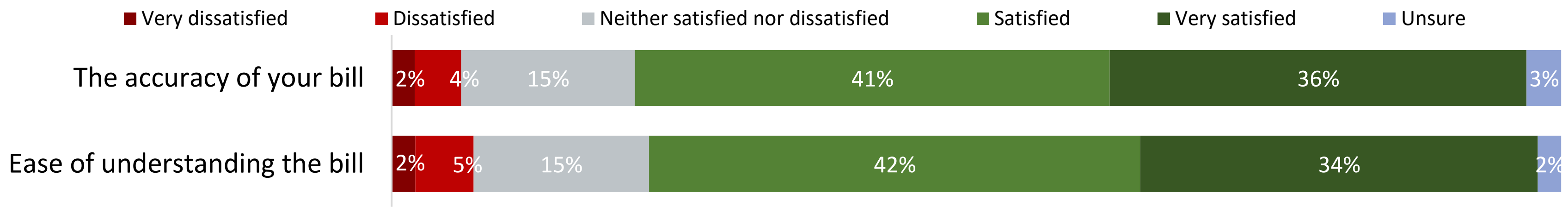
- Satisfaction is higher among:
  - Those using a smart meter (77% vs. 70% of those without).
  - Those aged 65+ (79% vs. 71% of other age groups).
- Of these groups, the following have most consistently shown higher satisfaction.
  - Aged 65+.
  - Since Q1 2019, those paying by direct debit (compared to those paying by other methods).

Overall, how dissatisfied or satisfied are you with the customer service you have received from your energy supplier?

Base: All Participants (3,209)

Satisfaction with bill

Around 3 in 4 are satisfied with the accuracy and ease of understanding bills.



- The '% satisfied' with ease of understanding is lower among:
  - Those paying via PPM (59% vs. 77% of those using direct debit).
  - Social grade C2DE (74% vs 78% ABC1).
  - Those with a disability (71% vs. 78% of those without a disability).
- Each of these groups has had lower satisfaction with billing over all or some of the last 9 quarters:
  - Dissatisfied overall with supplier (all 9 quarters).
  - Have a disability (all but Q1 2019).

Please can you tell me how dissatisfied or satisfied you are with the following aspects of your energy supplier`s bills?

Base: Those who pay for their energy with a regular direct debit or standing order or with cash/cheque/credit card/BACS/App (2,700)

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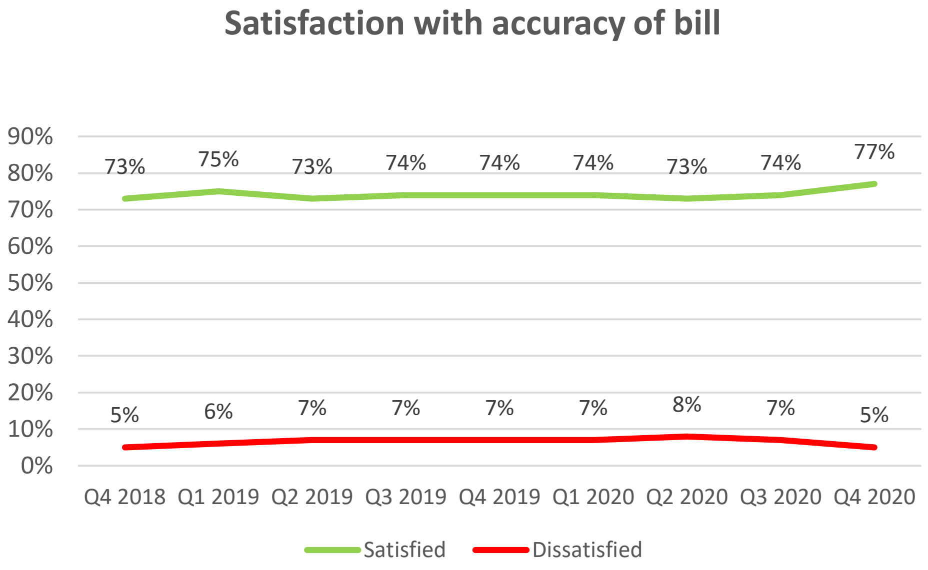
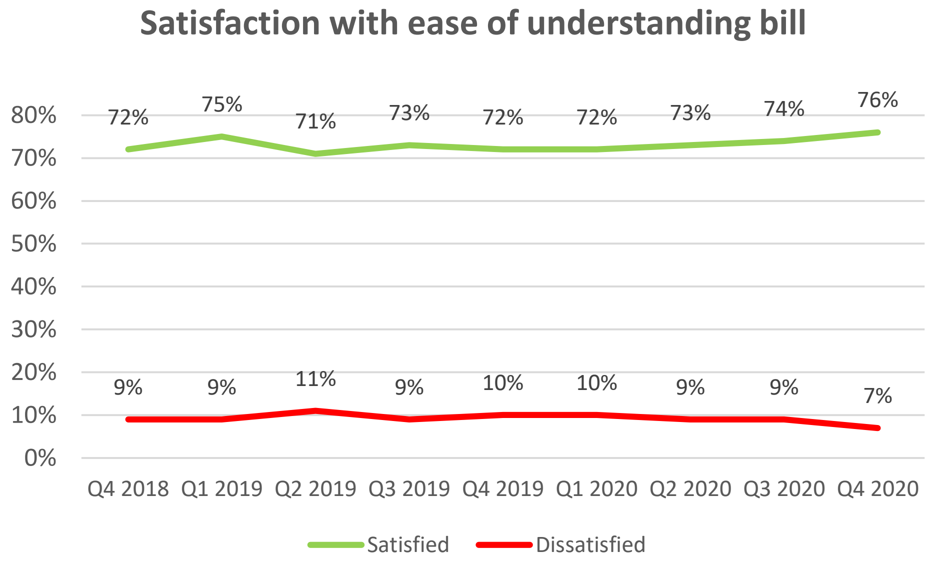
Satisfaction with bill over time

Satisfaction with accuracy of the bill has significantly increased from 74% to 77% since Q3 2020.





Please can you tell me how dissatisfied or satisfied you are with the following aspects of your energy supplier`s bills?

Base: Those who pay for their energy with a regular direct debit or standing order or with cash/cheque/credit card/BACS/App (2,700)

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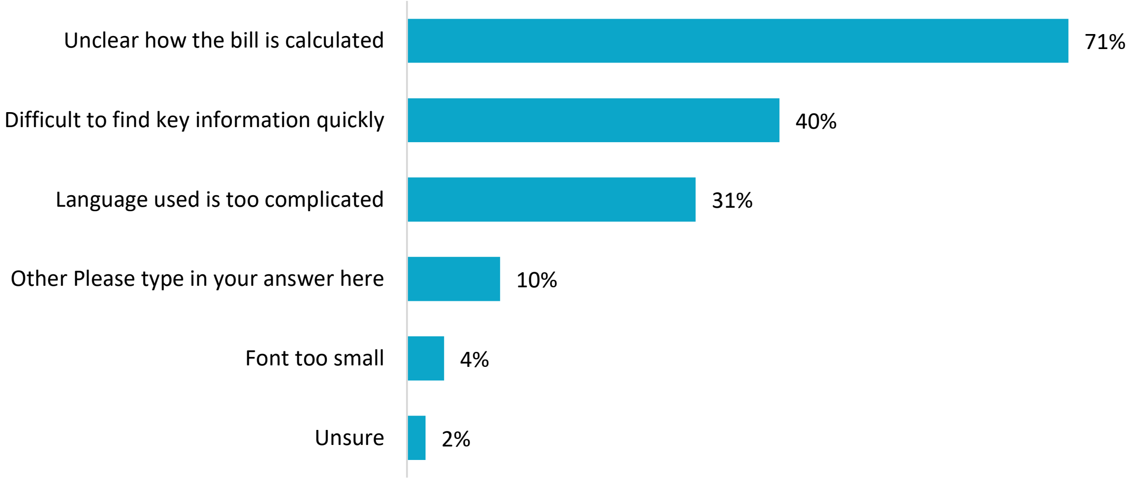
Reasons for dissatisfaction with ease of understanding the bill

As seen in previous quarters, clarity of calculation of bill continues to be the most common problem.

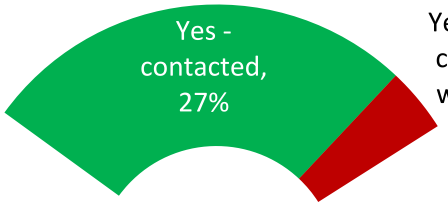


Why are you very dissatisfied/dissatisfied with the ease of understanding your bill from your energy supplier?

Base: Those who are dissatisfied with the ease of understanding their bill from their energy supplier (179)

Recent contact with supplier (last 3 months)

Similar to previous quarters, 27% contacted their supplier in the last three months , while 4% tried to contact but were unable to. Rates of unsuccessful contact have not significantly changed during the COVID-19 pandemic.

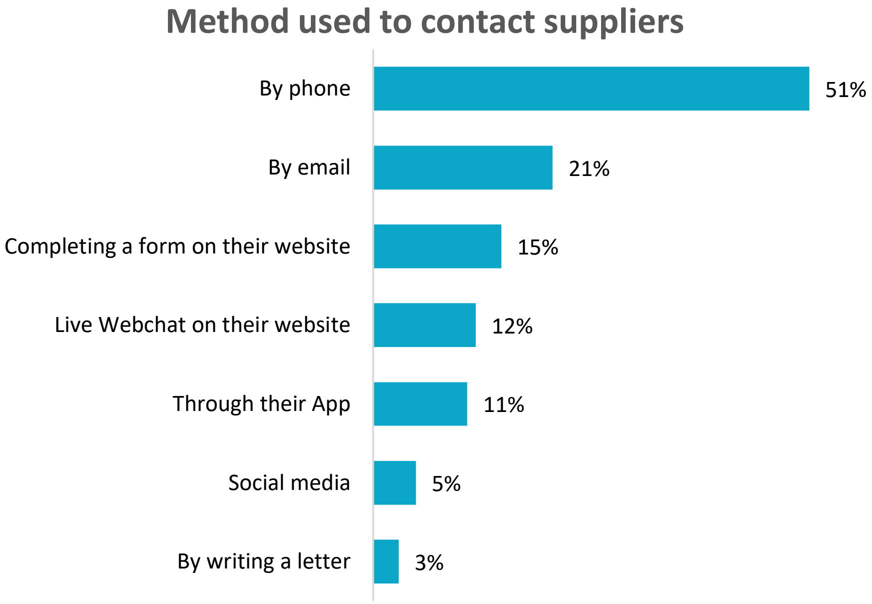


Have you contacted, or tried to contact, your energy supplier within the last 3 months?

Base: All Participants (3,209)

- In Q4 2020, those most likely to contact their supplier are customers who:
  - Are dissatisfied with their supplier (47%).
  - Switched in past 12 months (43%).
  - Are aged 16-34 (36%).
- And those most likely to have tried but failed to contact their supplier are those who:
  - Wanted to contact their supplier in relation to a complaint (25%).
  - Are dissatisfied with their supplier (11%).
  - Aged 16-34 (9%).
  - Pay by standard credit (9%).

Recent contact with supplier: contact channel



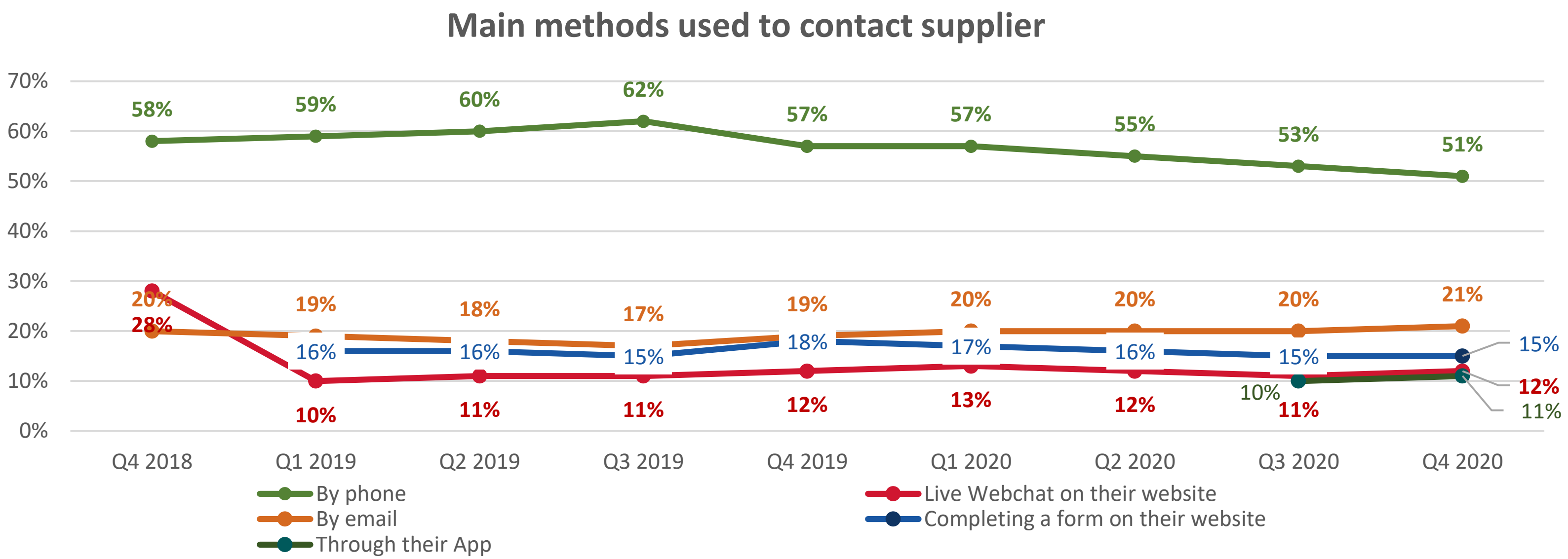
How did you (try to) make contact with your energy supplier on that last occasion? (%)

Base: All who contacted or have tried to make contact in the last 3 months (1,000)

- Regardless of demography, telephone is the most common contact method, however, there is variation in which other channels are used:
  - Younger consumers aged 16-34 are more likely to contact via phone (63%) compared to those aged 35+ (47%).
  - Those aged 65+ are the age group most likely to use a website form (31%) (although they still most commonly contact by phone – 38%).
- While those from higher SEGs are most likely to use email (24% ABC1 vs. 18% C2DE).
- Almost all (94%) of the digitally excluded used the phone.

Contact channels used over time

Over time, use of the telephone to contact suppliers has declined.



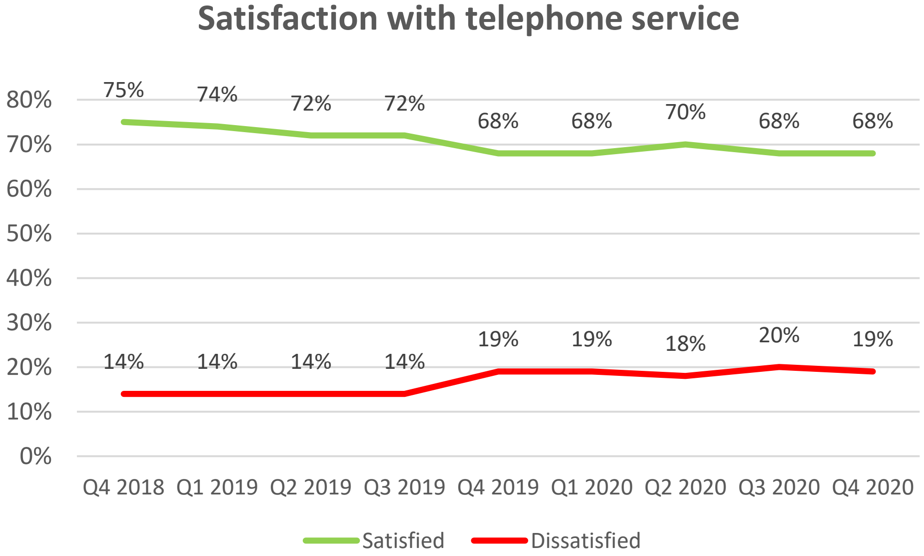
How did you (try to) make contact with your energy supplier on that last occasion? (%)

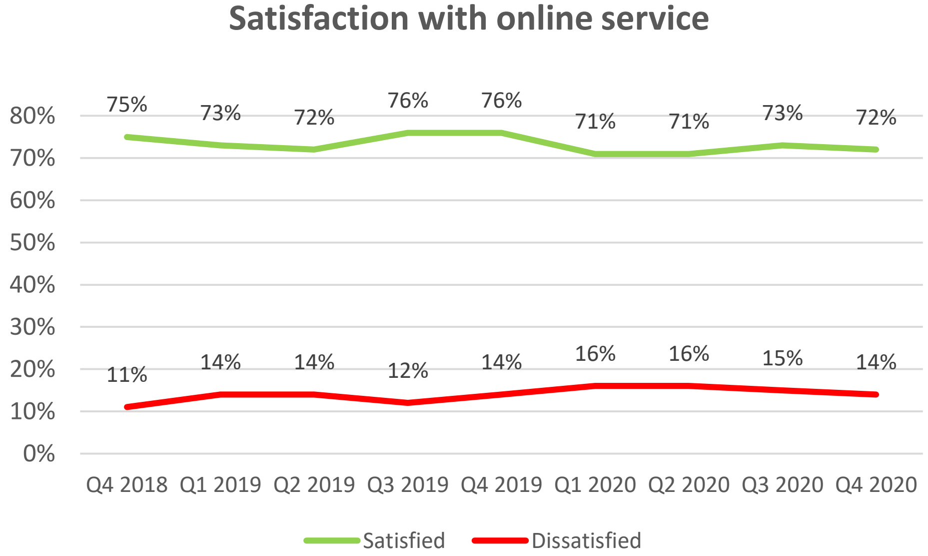
Base: All who contacted or have tried to make contact in the last 3 months (Sample sizes range from 994 to 1130 per quarter)

Mentions over 10% in Q4 2020 shown in chart.

Satisfaction with phone and email service

Satisfaction with telephone service has gradually declined, while satisfaction with online service is steady.





Please can you tell me how dissatisfied or satisfied you were with the service received by phone? (%)

Base: All who contacted or tried to contact their supplier by phone in the last 3 months (Base: 538 - 651)

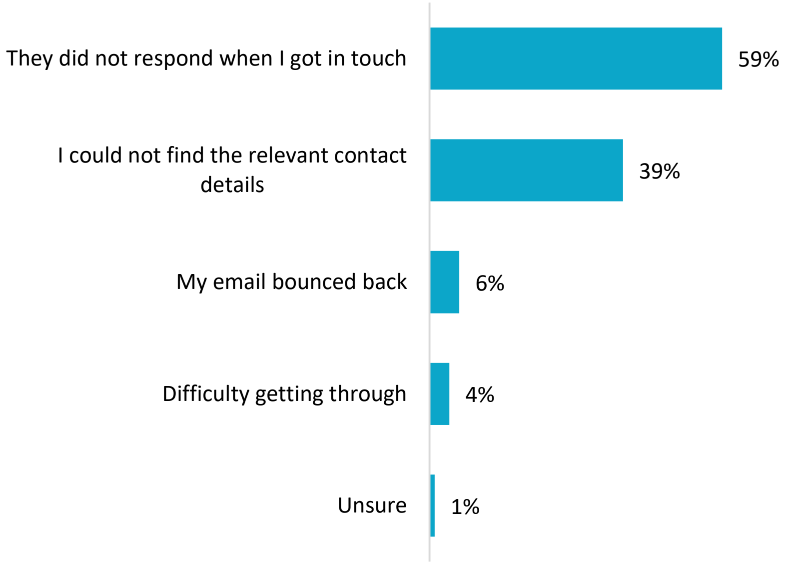
Please can you tell me how dissatisfied or satisfied you were with the service received? (%)

Base: All who contacted or tried to contact their supplier by email/webchat/website form/app in the last 3 months (Base: 411 – 505)

Reasons for failed contact with supplier

Unsuccessful contact via web forms has increased (21% tried but were unable to vs 7% - 14% between Q1 2019 and Q3 2020.

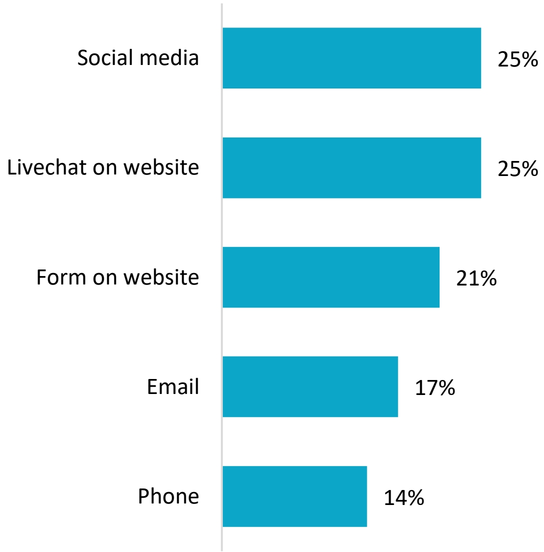
Reasons for failed contact



Thinking of the last time you tried to make contact with your energy supplier, why were you not able to? (%)

Base: Those who failed to contact their energy supplier (133)

% trying to contact but failing by channel



Have you contacted, or tried to contact, your energy supplier within the last 3 months?

Base: All who contacted or have tried to make contact (Phone 511, Webchat 120, email 211, social media 50, website form 156)

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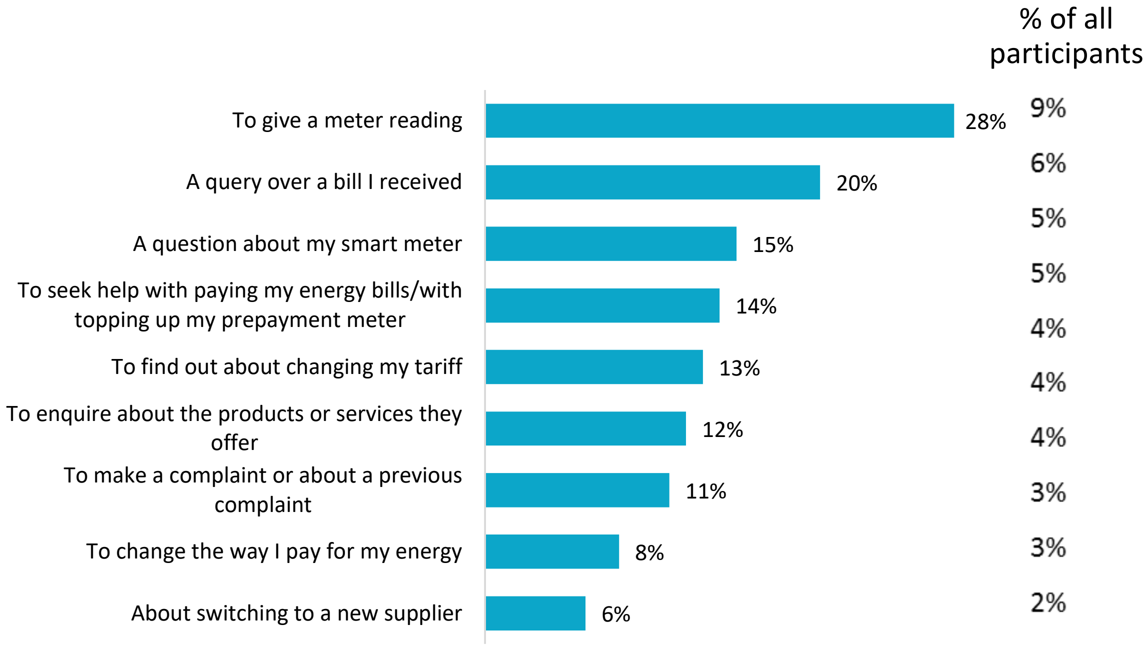
Reasons for last contacting supplier

Giving meter readings and billing enquiries remain the most common reasons for contact.



Differences by subgroup:

- 42% without a Smart Meter gave a meter reading.
- 44% of those aged 65+ got in contact about a meter reading.
- 38% who switched tariff in last 12 months contacted to find out about changing tariff.
- 25% with a Smart Meter asked a question about it.
- 18% of those using standard credit got in contact to change payment methods.
- 15% of those with a disability contacted about a complaint and 19% for help paying energy bills or topping up a PPM.

* Contact relating to smart meters will include all forms of contact (e.g. installations, ongoing use, changing smart meter etc)

Thinking of the last time you (made/tried to make) contact with your energy supplier, what was it about? (%)

Base: Those who contacted / tried to contact their energy supplier (1,000)

Reasons for contacting supplier by payment method

Reasons for contacting supplier	Payment method		
	Any using standard credit	Any using PPM	Any using Direct debit
A query over a bill I received	27%	17%	19%
A question about my smart meter	12%	17%	15%
To change the way I pay for my energy	18%	6%	7%
About switching to a new supplier	11%	5%	6%
To enquire about the products or services they offer	15%	12%	12%
To find out about changing my tariff	13%	8%	14%
To give a meter reading	25%	12%	31%
To make a complaint or about a previous complaint	12%	12%	10%
To seek help with paying my energy bills/with topping up	23%	32%	9%

*Highlighted percentages are statistically significant

- Those paying by PPM the most likely to contact about seeking help with paying bills (32% - similar to Q3 2020 – 30%).
- Those paying by standard credit are more likely to contact about:
  - Changing payment method.
  - To give a meter reading.
  - A complaint.
  - To seek help with paying bills.
- While those paying by direct debit more likely to contact about a meter reading.

Statistically higher than non-highlighted and light green cells

Statistically higher than non-highlighted cells

Complaints

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Complaints to suppliers

11% of recent contacts with suppliers were relating to a complaint

- **This equates to 3% of all consumers complaining the last time they contacted their supplier (similar to previous waves)**
- As in previous waves, the groups more likely to have complained (of all participants) are:
  - Dissatisfied overall with their supplier (18%) vs satisfied (2%) or neutral (5%).
  - Younger consumers: 16-34 (5%).
  - Those with a smart meter (5%) vs those without (2%).
  - Those with a disability (5%) vs those without (3%).
- The proportion of complaints that were about smart meter problems has significantly increased; up to 29% from 15% in Q3 2020.

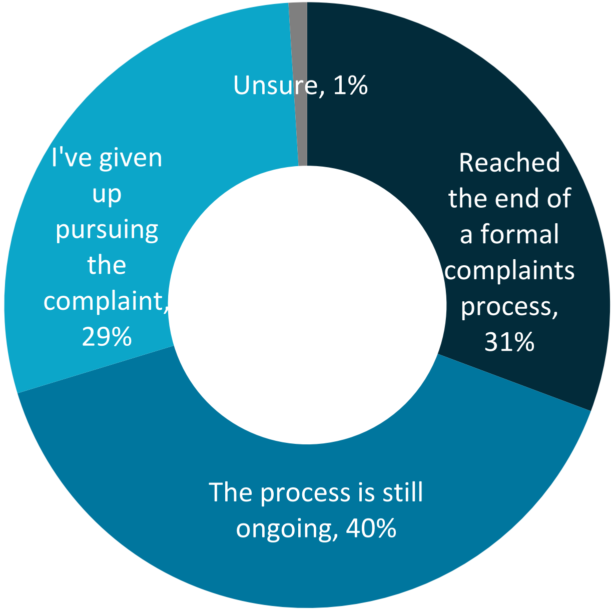
Reasons for complaint (top 15)

Earlier you said that your last contact with your energy supplier was about a complaint. What was the complaint about?

Base: Those who contacted / tried to contact their energy supplier about a complaint (99)

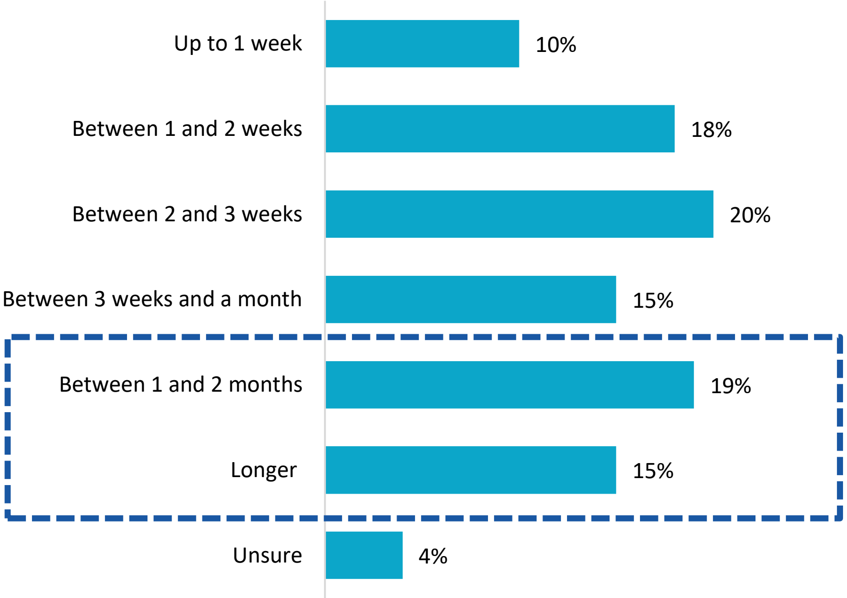
Stage of complaint and time taken to process

31% of complaints have been completed (similar to previous waves)



What stage are you at with the complaint process?
Base: Those who contacted their energy supplier to make a complaint (99)

34% of complaints have been live for over 1 month



Roughly, how long did the complaint process take from beginning to end?
Base: Those who knew the stage of their complaint process (98)

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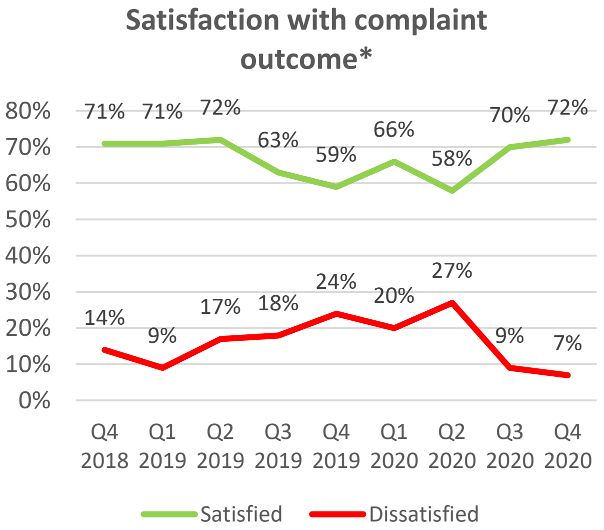
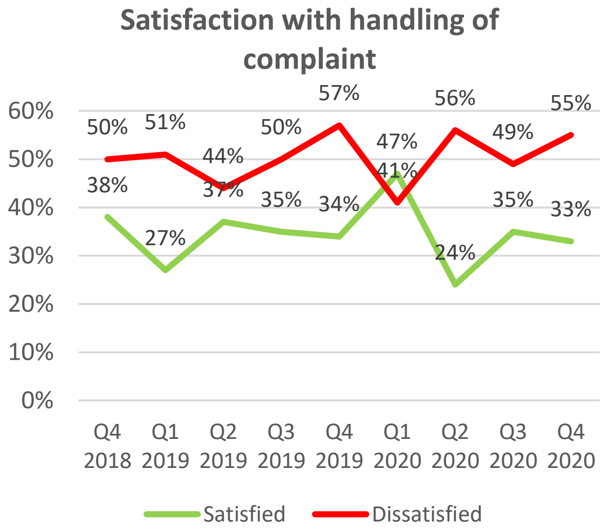
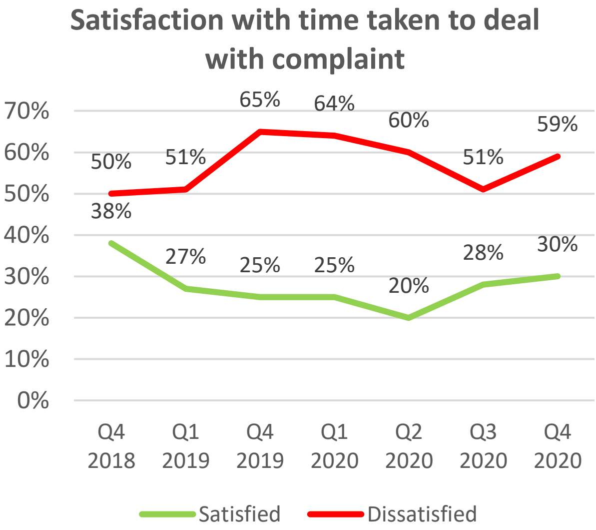
Satisfaction with the complaints process







Satisfaction with the outcome of a complaint is broadly consistent compared to last quarter and has improved from levels seen in mid 2019.

Satisfaction with the handling of complaints has been broadly stable this quarter – but more remain dissatisfied than satisfied.

Satisfaction with the time taken to deal with complaints have increased this quarter (although more remain dissatisfied than satisfied).

Please can you tell me how satisfied or dissatisfied you are with the following aspects of your complaint.
Base: Those who contacted their energy supplier to make a complaint Q4 2020 (104) ; All other waves (96-111)
* Note small base sizes: Those whose complaint reached an outcome Q4 2020 (36); All other waves (33-46)

*N.B. Neutral and 'Don't know' responses are not shown

Tariffs and information provision

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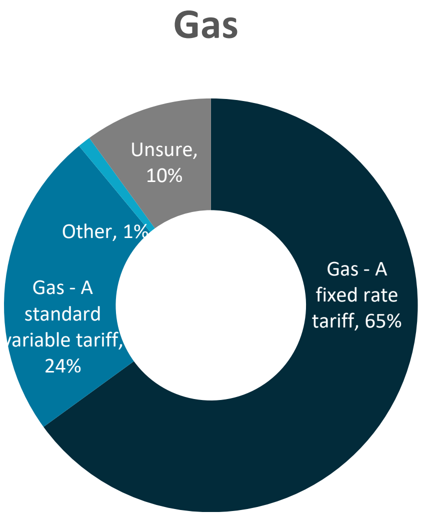
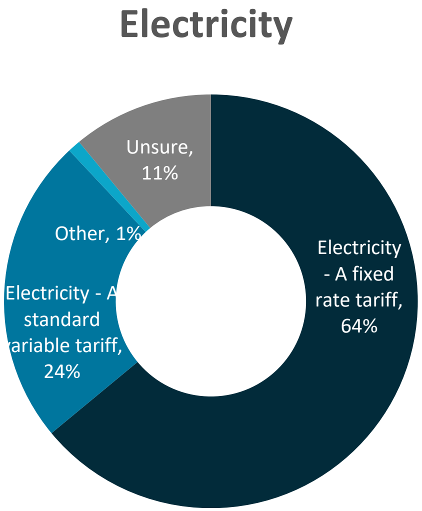
Tariff type

88% of gas and electricity customers know what tariff type they are on.





What kind of gas / electricity tariff are you on?

Base: Gas (2,780), Electricity (3,095)

- Those who are unsure are most likely to be:
  - PPM customers
  - Have never switched supplier
  - Have a disability
  - From lower social grades
  - These patterns are consistent with previous survey waves.

% unsure which tariff they're on	Gas	Electricity
Payment method:		
Direct Debit	7%	7%
PPM	24%	25%
Standard Credit	11%	12%
Switching status:		
Yes	6%	6%
No	15%	15%
Disability status:		
Disability	16%	16%
No disability	8%	8%
Socio-economic grade:		
ABC1	6%	7%
C2DE	15%	16%

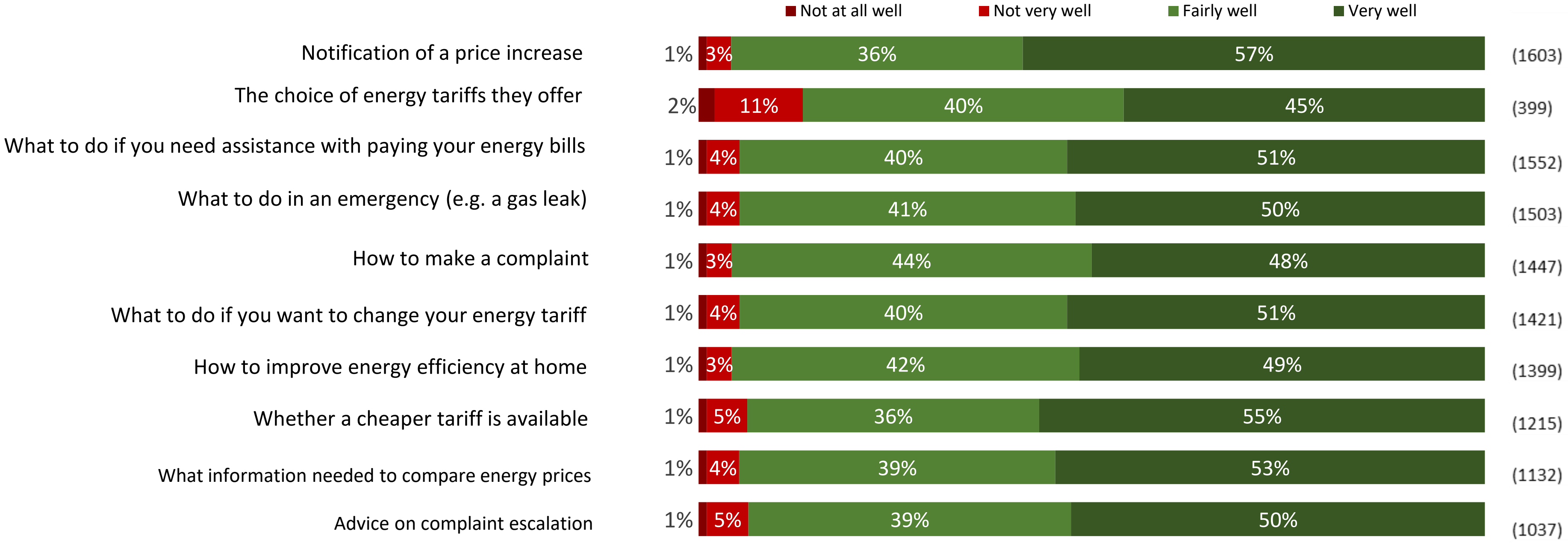
Recall of information from suppliers

% recalling information from suppliers	Q4 2019	Q1 2020	Q2 2020	Q3 2020	Q4 2020
What to do in an emergency (e.g. a gas leak or faulty meter)	43%	42%	53%	47%	50%
Notification of a price increase	49%	45%	56%	50%	49%
The choice of energy tariffs they offer	45%	42%	47%	48%	48%
What to do if you need assistance with paying your energy bills	38%	38%	48%	47%	47%
How to improve energy efficiency in your home and reduce your energy consumption	Not asked	38%	47%	42%	45%
What to do if you want to change your energy tariff	40%	39%	44%	43%	44%
How to make a complaint	42%	42%	49%	44%	44%
Whether a cheaper tariff to the one you are on is available	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	38%	38%
What information you need to compare energy prices	32%	31%	36%	35%	35%
What to do if your supplier can't resolve your complaint and you need to escalate it	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	32%	33%

Do you recall if your energy supplier has given you information about any of the following in the last six months?

How well information meets needs

In general, information provided is seen to meet the needs of customers; although around one in eight (13%) feel information about the choice of tariffs could be improved.



Do you recall if your energy supplier has given you information about any of the following in the last six months? Base: All Participants (3,209), apart from 'Notification of price increase': All on SVT (815)

How well did the information you received meet your needs? Bases: those receiving information (individual bases are in brackets)

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Switching

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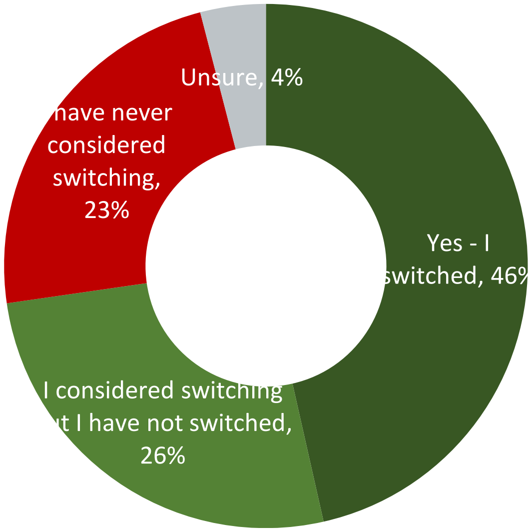
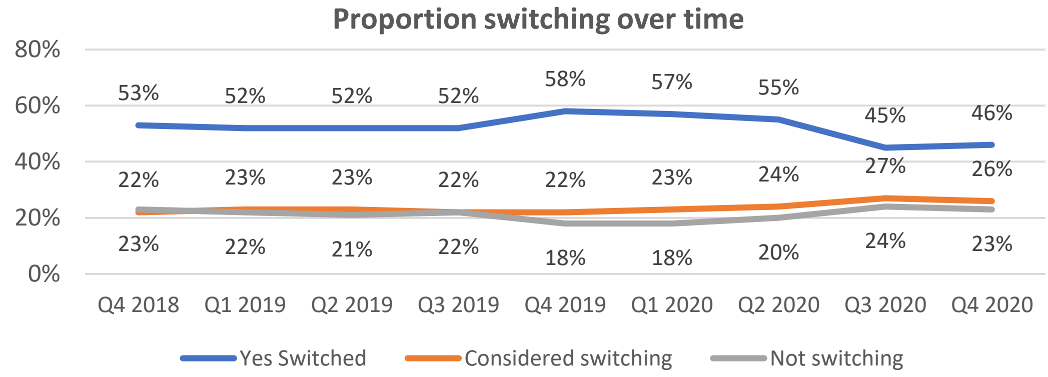
How many consumers have ever switched supplier?

After high switching rates in Q4 2019 and Q1 2020 switching remains at lower levels – 46% recall ever switched supplier



Have you ever switched or considered switching energy supplier?
Base: All Participants (3,209)



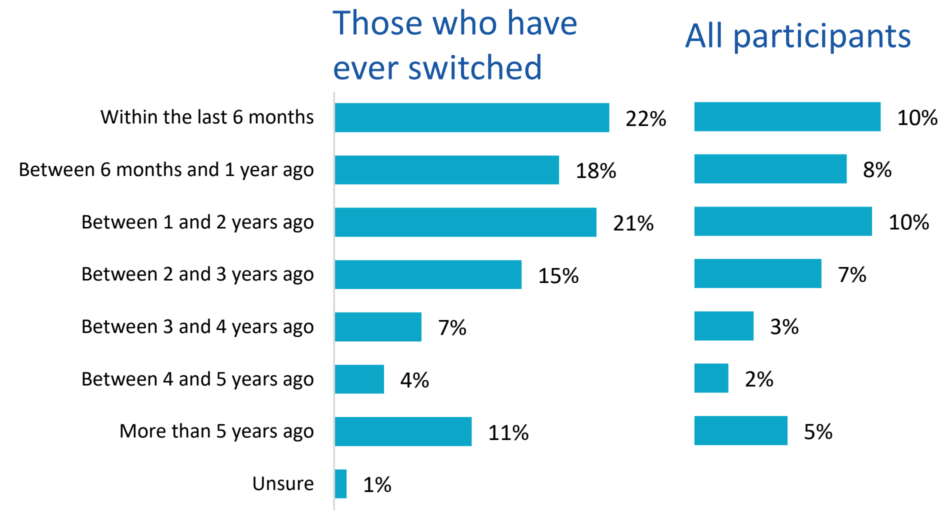
The proportion switching is lowest among those:

- Paying by standard credit (24%) or PPM (24%).
- On an SVT (33%) or a mixed tariff (30%).
- Aged 16-34 (27%).
- From C2DE (38%) social grade.
- Those with a smart meter (39%).
- The digitally excluded (38%).

When was the last time consumers switched supplier?

40% of those who have *ever* switched supplier did so in the last year.

This equates to 18% of all consumers switching in the last year (unchanged).



When was the last time you switched energy supplier? (%)

Base: Those who have ever switched (1,485); all Participants (3,209)

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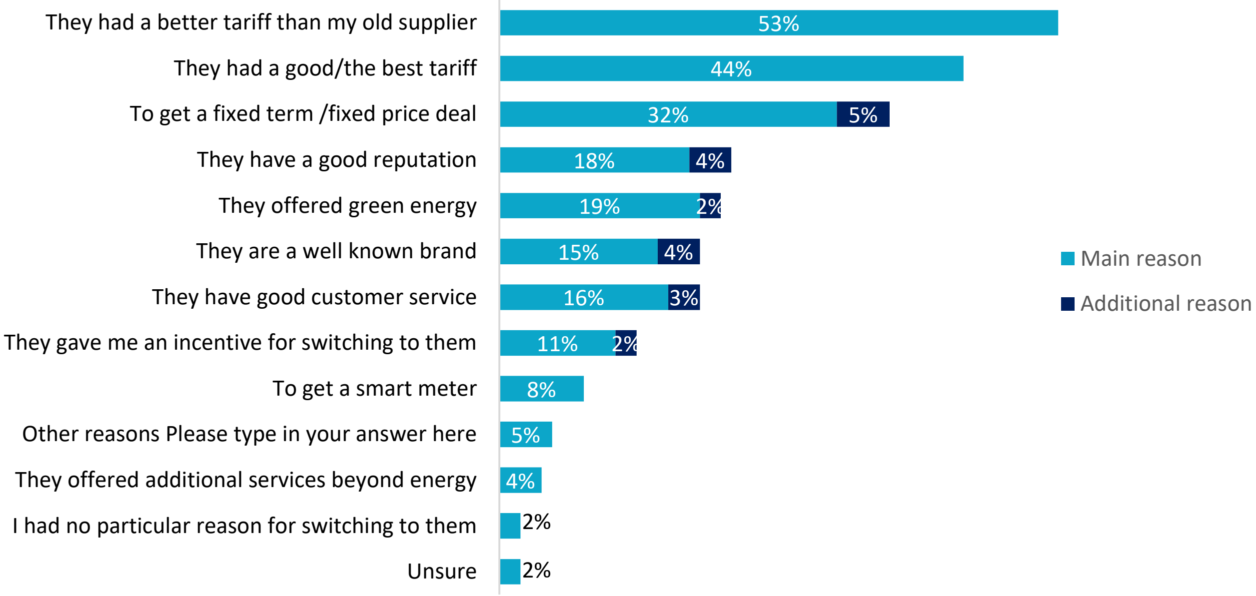
Reasons for choosing supplier

The key reasons for selecting a supplier are cost related. Even when prompting with non-cost reasons, service, reputation, incentives and green tariffs are secondary considerations (60% gave no additional reason).



Once you had made the decision to switch to another energy supplier, what were the main reasons you chose the company you went with?

Base: Those who have ever switched (1,485)

Were there any other reasons for selecting them apart from the tariff?

Base: Those who have ever switched (1,485)

Reasons for choosing supplier over time

Top reasons for choosing supplier remain having a better tariff and to get a fixed price or deal. Offering Green energy and reputation are secondary drivers

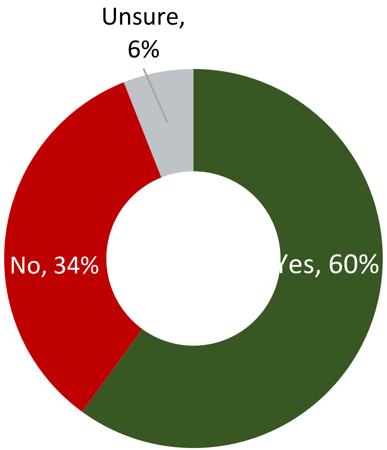
	Q1 2019	Q2 2019	Q3 2019	Q4 2019	Q1 2020	Q2 2020	Q3 2020	Q4 2020
They had a better tariff than my old supplier	52%	54%	57%	54%	54%	55%	55%	53%
They had a good/the best tariff	50%	46%	47%	49%	47%	48%	46%	44%
To get a fixed term /fixed price deal	33%	30%	30%	31%	31%	29%	32%	32%
They offered green energy	9%	13%	14%	16%	16%	19%	18%	19%
They have a good reputation	16%	17%	16%	19%	17%	19%	17%	18%
They have good customer service	16%	17%	14%	17%	16%	18%	14%	16%
They are a well known brand	15%	12%	14%	15%	14%	15%	13%	15%
They gave me an incentive for switching to them	13%	14%	14%	13%	13%	13%	10%	11%
To get a smart meter	7%	7%	6%	5%	8%	6%	7%	8%
They offered additional services beyond energy	3%	4%	4%	4%	4%	5%	4%	4%
I had no particular reason for switching to them	2%	2%	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%

Once you had made the decision to switch to another energy supplier, what were the main reasons you chose the company you went with?

Base: Those who have ever switched (1,485)

Use of price comparison websites (PCWs)

60% who switched used a Price Comparison Website.



The proportion using PCWs is lowest among:

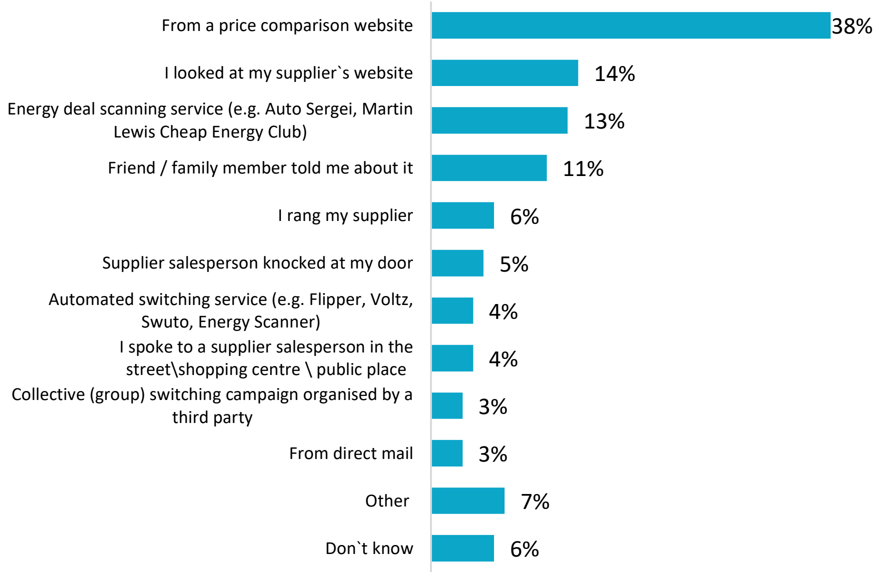
- The digitally excluded (11%).
- Those paying by PPM (36%).
- Those aged 65+ (49%).
- From C2DE social grades (52%).
- Those who have a disability (51%).

Did you use a price comparison website to help you switch energy supplier?

Base: Those who have ever switched supplier (1,485)

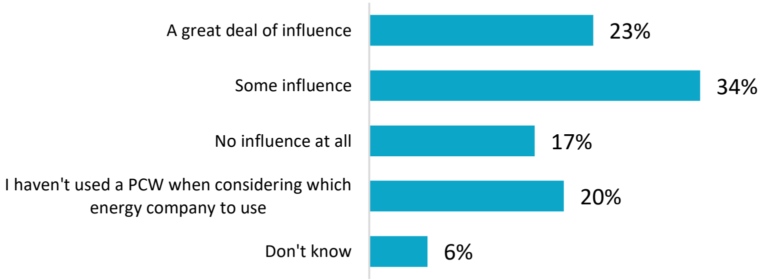
Source of energy deal information

Just under two fifths found out about their energy deal via a price comparison website.



How did you find out about the energy deal you switched to?
Base: : Those who switched their energy supplier (1,485)

- 15% had heard of the Ofgem accreditation for price comparison websites, and 12% had heard of the Ofgem Confidence Code.
- Over a half of those aware of the Ofgem PCW accreditation said this has some influence on the comparison website they would use.

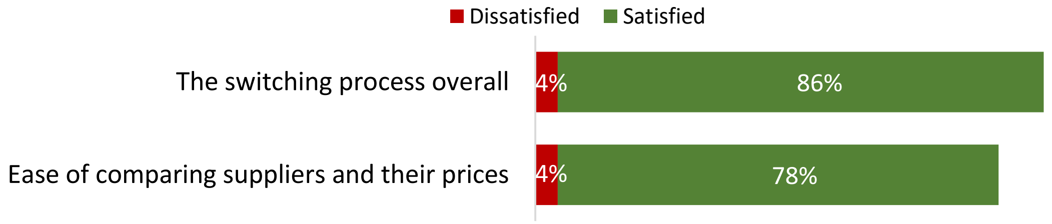


To what extent does Ofgem accreditation influence which price comparison website you would use?
Base: All aware Ofgem accreditation for price comparison websites (701)

Before today, had you ever heard of the Ofgem Confidence Code or Ofgem accreditation for price comparison websites?
Base: All Participants (3,209)

Satisfaction with the switching experience

There is high satisfaction with the switching process, but satisfaction with the ease of comparing suppliers is down compared to Q2 2020 (78% vs 83%)



- Those paying by direct debit tend to be more satisfied (80% with ease of comparing suppliers and 88% the process overall).
- Whereas those with a disability tend to be less satisfied (72% with ease of comparing suppliers and 83% the process overall).

Satisfaction with switching remains higher among those who used a Price Comparison Website

	Satisfied with ease of comparing suppliers and prices	Satisfied with the switching process overall
Did not use PCW	67%	83%
Used PCW only to compare suppliers	87%	90%

Please can you tell me how dissatisfied or satisfied you were with the following aspects of your switch to another supplier?

Base: Those who switched their energy supplier (1,485), Did not use PCW (522), Used PCW to complete switch (869)

N.B. Neutral and 'Don't know' responses are not shown

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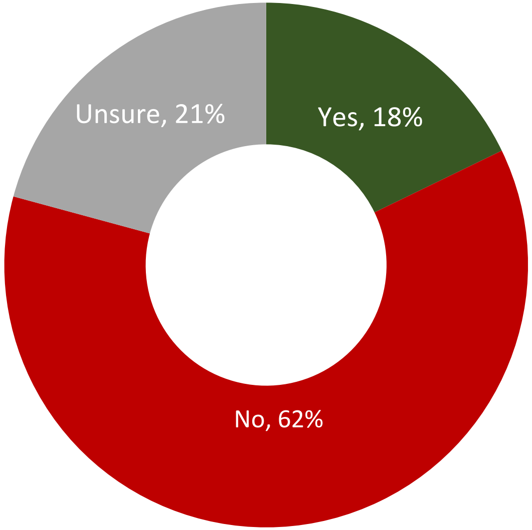
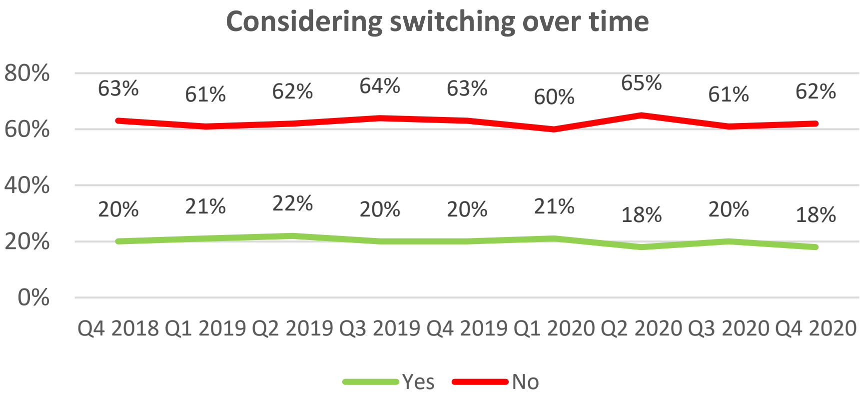
How many consumers are considering switching

18% are thinking of switching supplier.





- The proportion considering switching is highest among:
  - Dissatisfied customers (55%).
  - Those on a mixed tariff (41%).
  - Those aged 16 to 34 (24%).
  - From ABC1 social grades (20%).

Are you currently considering changing your energy supplier?
Base: All Participants (3,209)

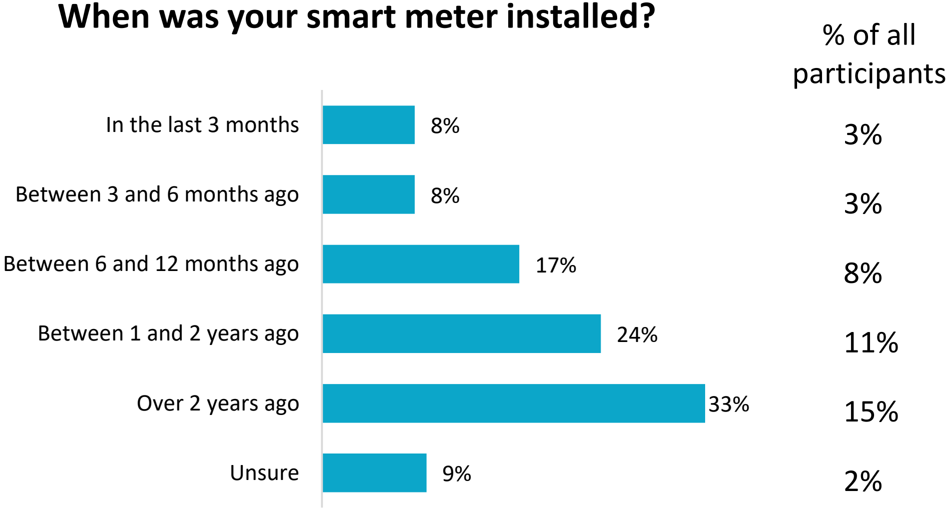
Smart meters

Smart meter use

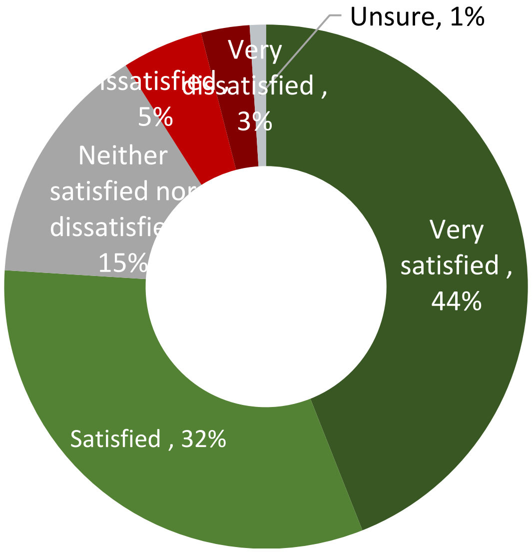
47% have a Smart Meter (based on their description of their energy meters).

Three quarters are satisfied with the installation process.

When was your smart meter installed?



Of the two meters described below, which is the most similar to the one in your home? / When did you have your smart meter installed? (%)
Base: All Participants (3,209) / All with smart meter (1493)



How dissatisfied or satisfied were you with the process you went through to have a smart meter installed? Base: All with smart meter installed in last 6 months (235)

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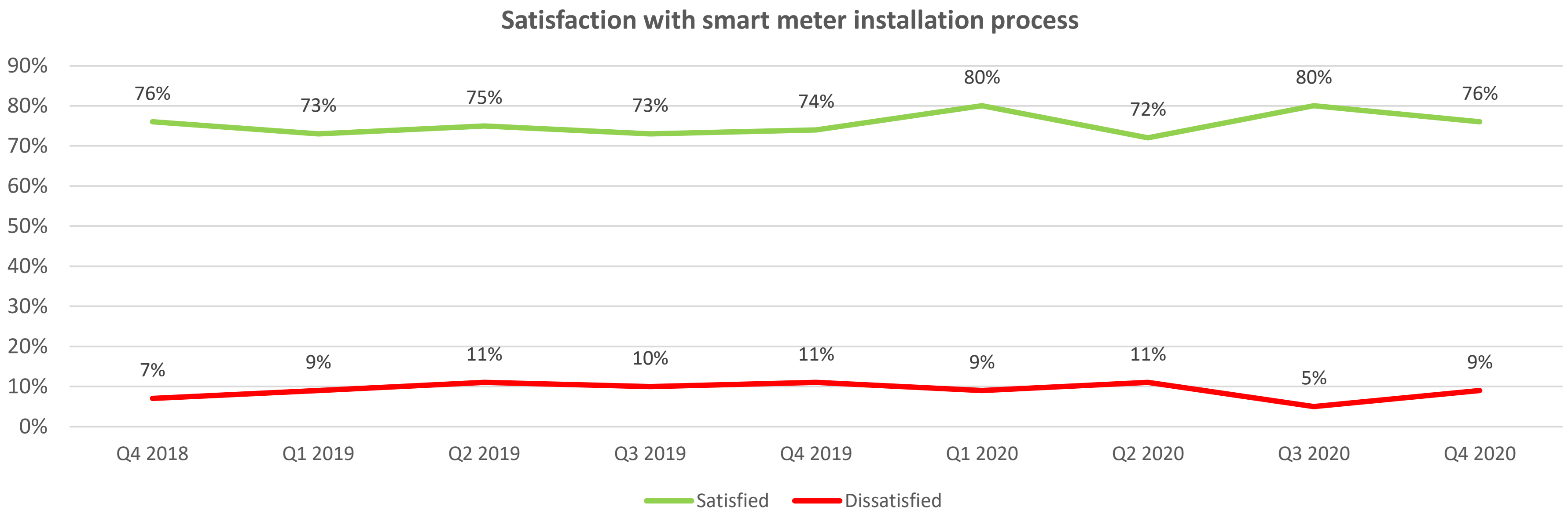
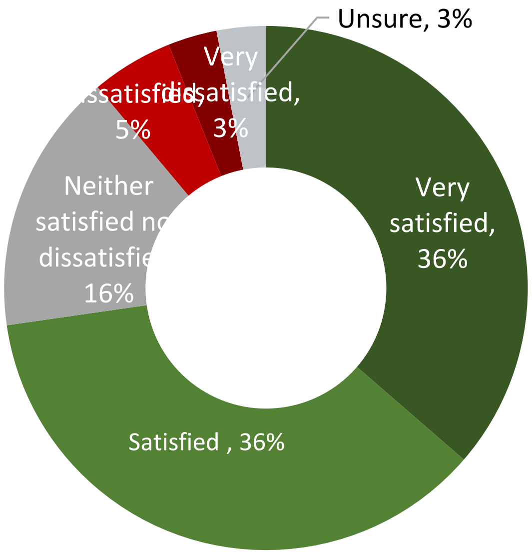
Satisfaction with smart meter installation over time



Satisfaction with smart meter overall

72% are satisfied with their smart meter. This is the highest level recorded to date and has significantly improved compared to the start on 2020 (was 67% in Q1 2020).



Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your smart meter? Base: All with a smart meter (1,493)

- Satisfaction is higher among:
  - The digitally excluded (92%).
  - Customers who are satisfied with their supplier (82%).
  - Those aged 16 to 34 (79%).
  - Those without a disability (74%).

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Supplier debt management processes

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Problems paying bills

Around a third of PPM customers (32%) report being temporarily disconnected in the past 6 months.

One in ten (10%) customers with a credit meter have fallen into arrears on their bills.

Disconnection from PPM

- 32% of those on a pre-payment meter (PPM) say they have run out of credit resulting in their energy supply being disconnected in the past 6 months (although we don't explore *why this occurred*).
  - Temporarily disconnection was more common mong those aged 16-34 (40%) or aged 35-49 (35%) compared to those aged 50+ (21%).

Thinking about the past 6 months, has your household run out of credit on your pre-payment meter so that you have been temporarily disconnected from your energy supply?. has your household fallen behind on an energy bill so that you owed money to your energy supplier? Base: All PPM (221) All Direct Debit (2,405)

Falling into arrears

- 10% of those with a credit meter say they have fallen behind on an energy bill so that they owed money to their energy supplier in the past 6 months.
  - This was more common among those who are dissatisfied with their supplier (30%), paying by standard credit (28%), those who'd make a complaint (34%), aged 16-34 (23%) or those with a disability (16%).

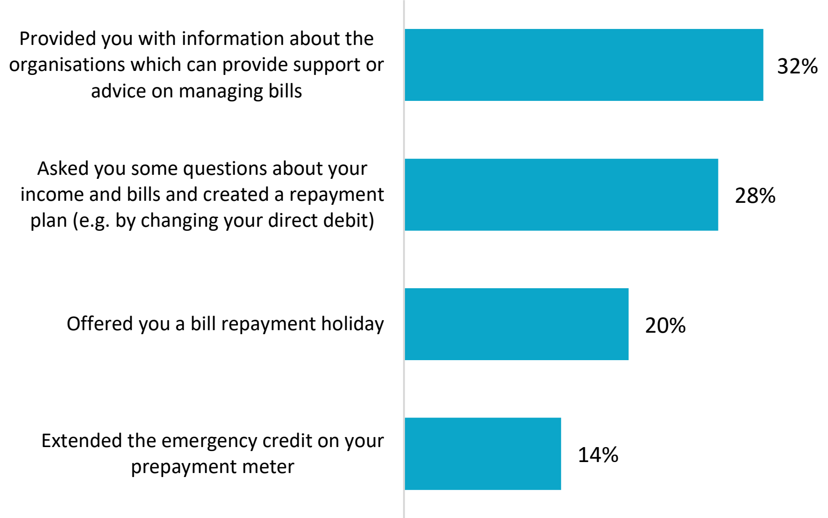
Have you been in contact with your energy supplier to ask for help with paying your bills?
Base: All households running out of credit on PPM or running behind on energy payments (432)

Supplier support for customers who have fallen behind on bills

We asked consumers who had run out of credit on their PPM or fallen behind on bills if they had contact with their energy supply to ask for help:

- 58% of consumers had contact, including 44% who contacted their supplier themselves and 14% were contacted by their supplier.
- These are similar proportions compared to Q3 2020.

What support is offered by suppliers to assist with paying energy bills? (%)



Have you been in contact with your energy supplier to ask for help with paying your bills? Base: All households running out of credit on PPM or running behind on energy payments (432)

When you had contact with your energy supplier about your bills, did they do any of the following? Base: All households contacting energy suppliers about running out of credit on PPM or running behind on energy payments (251)

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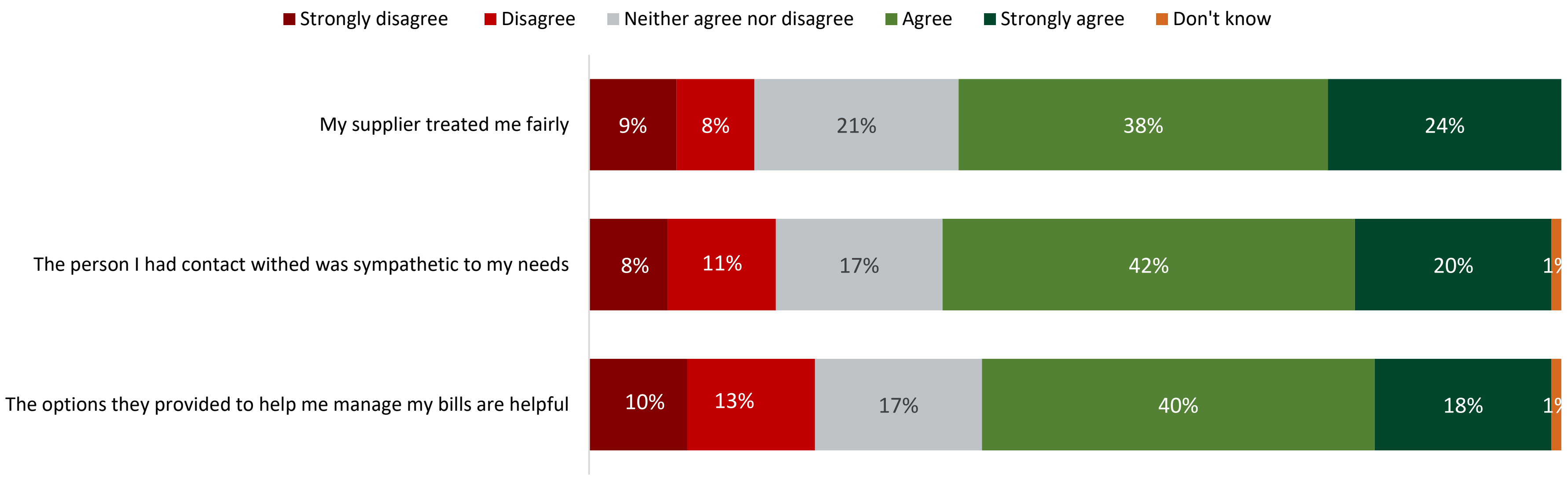
Supplier support when having issues paying bills

A majority of those receiving support felt the contact was sympathetic, fair and helpful.



To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the contact you`ve had with your energy supplier about paying your bills: Base: All households contacting energy suppliers about running out of credit on PPM or running behind on energy payments (251)

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Annexes

Measuring smart meter use

- Use of smart meters is measured by asking participants to indicate which of the following best described the energy meters they have in their home.
- The question is asked separately of gas and electricity. The order of the meter descriptions was randomised across the survey sample.
- Those selecting the description for Meter A (the titles remained static) for either gas or electricity are deemed to have a smart meter.

Meter A	Meter B
Monitors energy use	Monitors energy use
Automatically sends readings of how much energy has been used in your home to your supplier	You or someone else in your household personally send readings of how much energy has been used in your home to your supplier OR someone from your supplier visits your home to take meter readings
Shows how much energy has been used in pounds and pence on a display or an app or online account	Does not show how much energy has been used in pounds and pence on a display or an app or online account
Has been installed in the last 5 years	Has been installed more than 5 years ago
SHOW IF HAVE A PRE-PAYMENT METER Allow those who pre-pay for energy to top up via their mobile or online	SHOW IF HAVE A PRE-PAYMENT METER Those who pre-pay for energy must top up at a pay point, post office or other shop

Sample profile: unweighted vs weighted

Demographic characteristic		Unweighted	Weighted
Gender	Male	47%	49%
	Female	53%	51%
Age	16-34	18%	18%
	35-49	28%	30%
	50-64	25%	27%
	65+	29%	25%
Social grade	AB	26%	28%
	C1	27%	28%
	C2	20%	19%
	DE	27%	25%

Demographic characteristic		Unweighted	Weighted
Region	North East	4%	4%
	North West	11%	12%
	Yorkshire and The Humber	9%	9%
	East Midlands	8%	7%
	West Midlands	9%	9%
	East of England	9%	9%
	London	12%	13%
	South East	13%	14%
	South West	9%	9%
	Wales	6%	5%
	Scotland	10%	9%

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