Accent

Household Consumer Perceptions of the energy market

Quarter 1 2021

Research conducted in February 2021

ofgem

citizens advice

Contents

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Changes this quarter

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Customer service

- Overall satisfaction with supplier is significantly lower in Q1 2021 (73%) than it has been in recent quarters (76% in Q3 and Q4 2020), but is at the same level as it was in Q1 2020 (73%). This could be due to seasonal variation over the course of the year and might also have been influenced by the decision not to conduct the face-to-face interview component of the survey this quarter, as the fieldwork took place during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Some other customer service metrics have shown a similar drop in Q1 2021 compared to recent quarters:
  - Satisfaction with customer service overall has declined to 69% (a tracker low) from 73% last quarter.
  - Significantly more consumers are dissatisfied with the telephone or online customer service received this quarter compared to the end of 2020 (note the per cent contacting their supplier is steady, so this change may not be caused by an increase in use of the service):
    - 22% are dissatisfied with telephone service (vs. 19% Q4 2020).
    - 17% are dissatisfied with online service (vs. 14% Q4 2020).
  - Satisfaction with bill accuracy also significantly decreased this quarter, falling to 74% after a tracking high of 77% in Q4 2020.
- While telephone remains the most common contact channel, its use is declining (53% in Q1 2021 vs 58% in Q4 2018). Use of email is gradually increasing, now at 23% (compared to 20% at the start of the tracking).
- This quarter, the proportion considering switching supplier has risen to a tracking high – 23%.

Changes this quarter

Complaints handling:

- While the proportion of consumers lodging a complaint is steady (3% in Q1 2021), satisfaction with the complaints handling process has declined (23% are satisfied, a tracking low, while two thirds (68%) are dissatisfied).

Smart meters:

- Half of consumers surveyed stated they had a smart meter. Over time, satisfaction with the installation process has increased. It is now at 81% (compared to 76% at the start of tracking in Q4 2018).

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 is usually collected using a mixed-mode survey of domestic energy bill-payers in Great Britain (GB), including 2,900 online surveys and 300 face-to-face interviews (the latter being conducted to reach consumers who don’t have access to the internet).
- However in light of the coronavirus outbreak, the face-to-face interviews were not conducted this wave. Face-to-face interviewing for this survey in future waves will only recommence when guidance from the Government Social Research profession changes confirming that it is safe to do so.
- Fieldwork was carried in February via an online survey sourcing respondents from a commercial online market research panel (n= 3,200).
- 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 Great Britain (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 ten 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')	Wave 10 ('Q1 2021')
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	5th – 20th February
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 - 24nd January 2020	1st - 24th April 2020	24th August – 28th September 2020	24th November – 14th December	None

*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 tenth tracking wave (Q1 2021).
- As the survey involved sampling a selection of energy consumers (rather than the whole population), confidence intervals apply to the results. These confidence intervals indicate the degree of confidence we can have that the survey result is real and not due to random chance for a given sample size and a given survey result. For the total sample on which these results are based (n=3,200), 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 10 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 = Prepayment Meter.

Demographics:

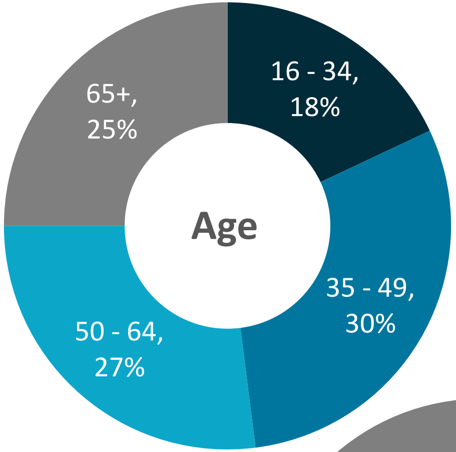
- SEG = Socio-Economic grade.
- ABC1 = Consumers falling into the top three socio-economic bands.
- C2DE = Consumers falling into the bottom three socio-economic bands.
- Online = Survey sample sourced from an online consumer panel.

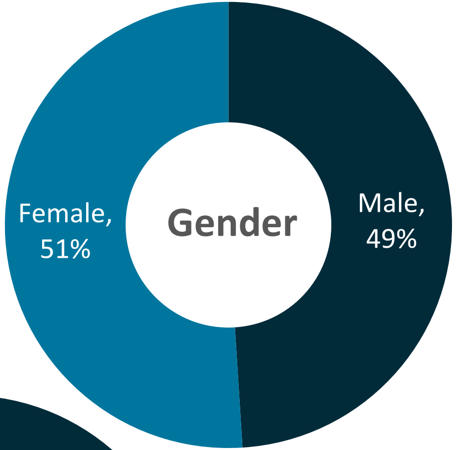
Other:

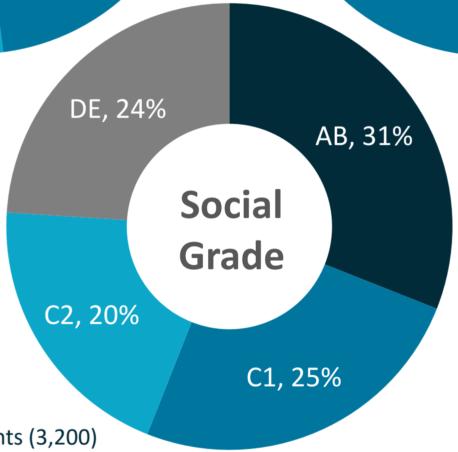
- PCW = Price Comparison Website.
- PPS = Percentage points.

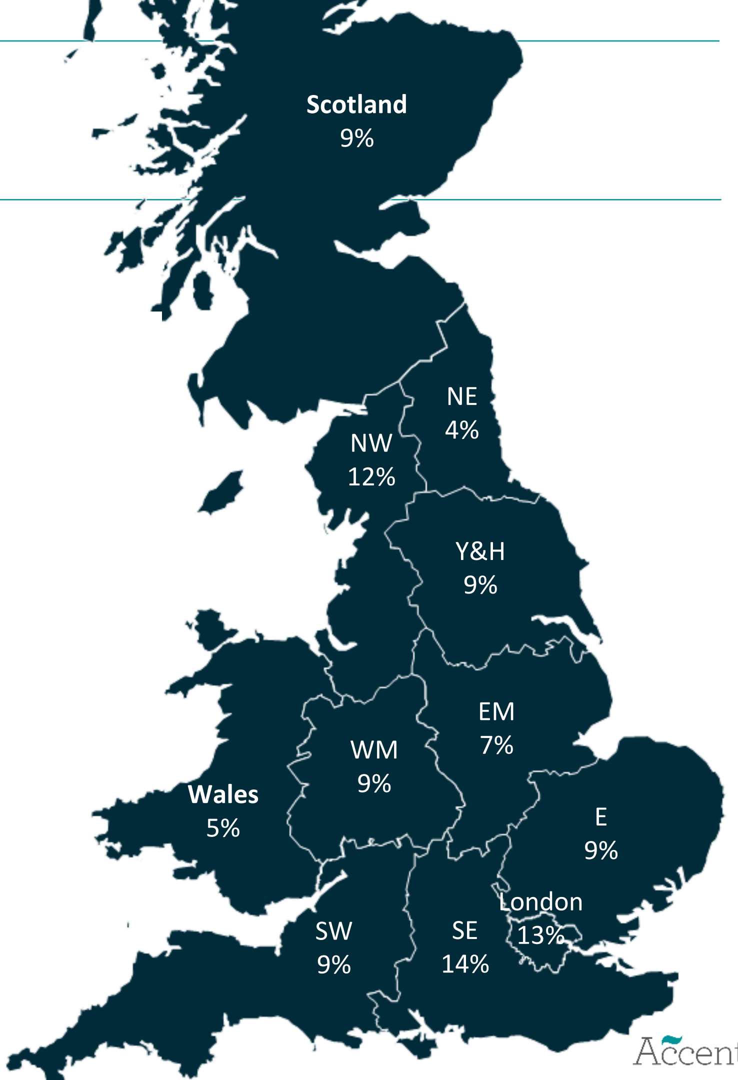
Sample profile

Sample profile







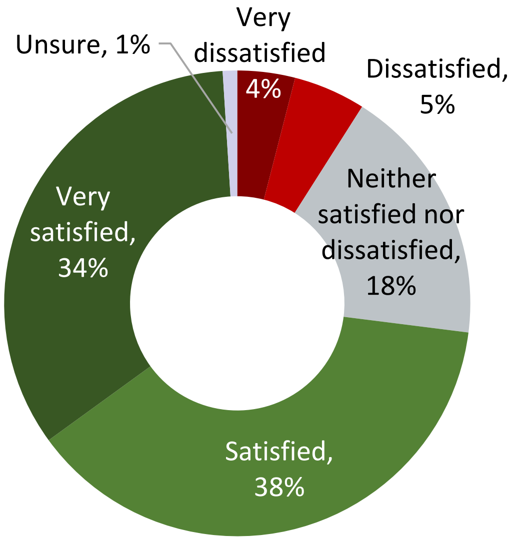


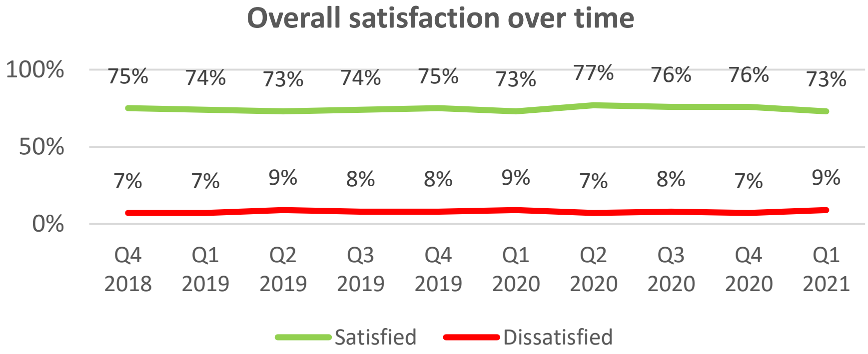
Base: All Participants (3,200)

Satisfaction with supplier

Overall satisfaction with supplier

73% are either satisfied or very satisfied with their supplier. This is significantly lower than the last 3 tracking waves but in line with Q1 2020.





- Consistent with previous waves, certain demographic groups show higher levels of dissatisfaction with their supplier:
  - Those aged 16-64 are more likely to be dissatisfied with their supplier compared to those aged 65+ (10% vs. 4%).
  - More consumers in the C2DE social grade are dissatisfied with their supplier (10%) vs. 7% of ABC1.
  - Those paying by standard credit or have a PPM are more likely to be dissatisfied than those using direct debit (11% vs. 8%).

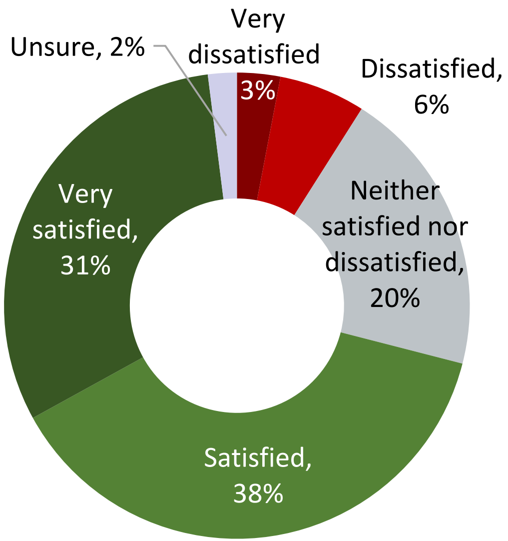
Note when netted together the proportion who are very satisfied or satisfied with their supplier adds to 73%.

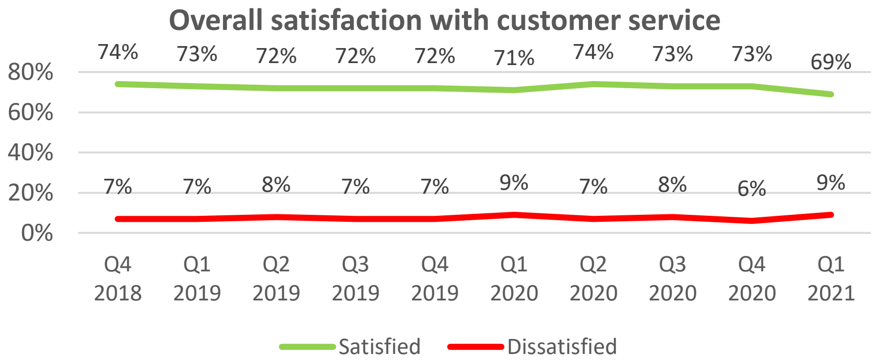
Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with (...) as your supplier of (gas/electricity/gas and electricity)?

Base: All Participants (3,200)

Satisfaction with customer service

69% are satisfied with customer service. This is significantly lower than recent quarters but close to Q1 2020.





- Consistent with previous waves, satisfaction with customer service is higher among:
  - Those using a smart meter (71% vs. 67% of those without)
  - Those aged 65+ (72%) vs those aged 16-64 (68%)
  - Those paying by direct debit (compared to those paying by other methods)

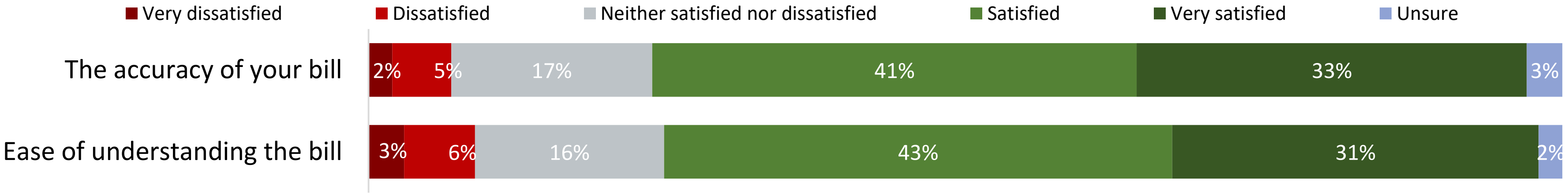
While more consumers with a disability are dissatisfied (13%) compared to those without (8%).

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

Base: All Participants (3,200)

Satisfaction with bill

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



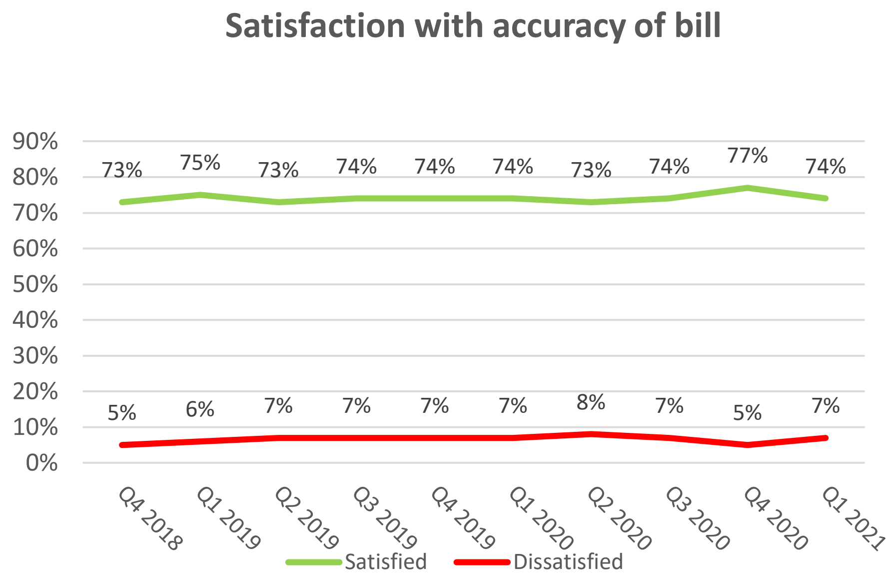
- Over time, satisfaction with bills has been consistently lower among consumers with a disability.
  - In Q1 2021, 68% of those with a disability are satisfied with ease of understanding bills vs. 76% of those without.
  - Similarly, 68% of those with a disability are satisfied with the accuracy of their bill compared to 75% of those without.

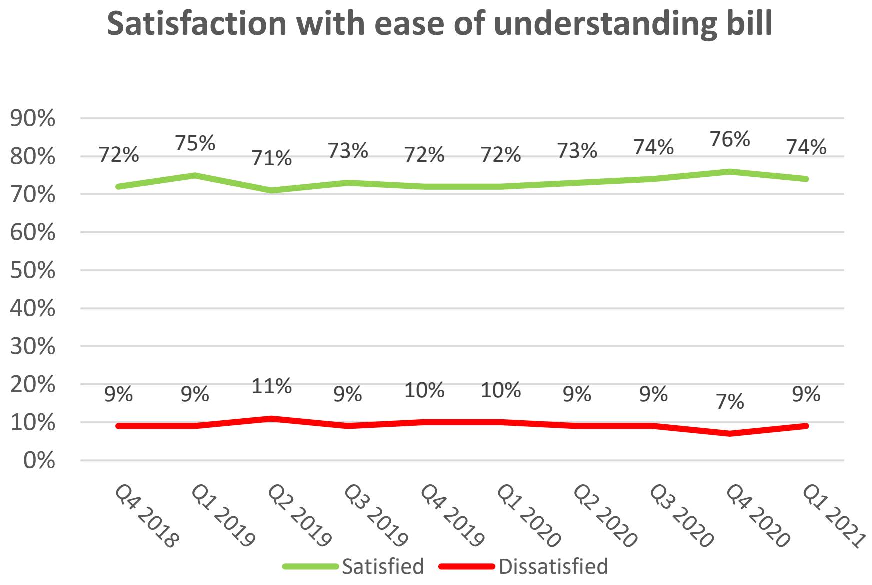
Please can you tell me how dissatisfied or satisfied you are with the following aspects of your energy supplier's bills?

Base: Those who pay for their energy with a regular direct debit or standing order or with cash/cheque/credit card/BACS/App (2,726)

Satisfaction with bill over time

Satisfaction with the accuracy of bills has significantly fallen from a tracking high in Q4 2020 (77%) to 74%, but is similar to Q1 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 (c 2,700 each wave)

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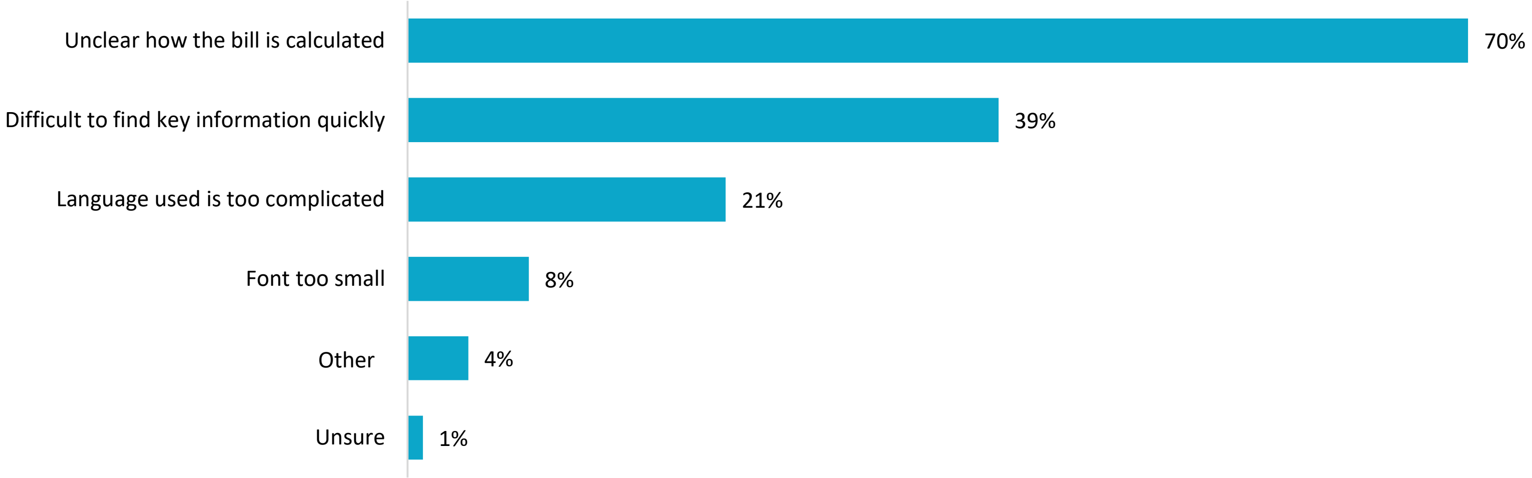
Reasons for dissatisfaction: Ease of understanding the bill

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

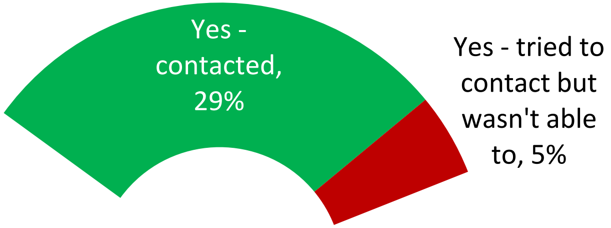


Why are you very dissatisfied/dissatisfied with the ease of understanding your bill from your energy supplier?

Base: Those who are dissatisfied with the ease of understanding their bill from their energy supplier (242)

Recent contact with supplier (last 3 months)

Similar to previous quarters, 29% contacted their supplier in the last three months, while 5% tried to contact but were unable to. Rates of unsuccessful contact have not significantly changed during the COVID-19 pandemic.



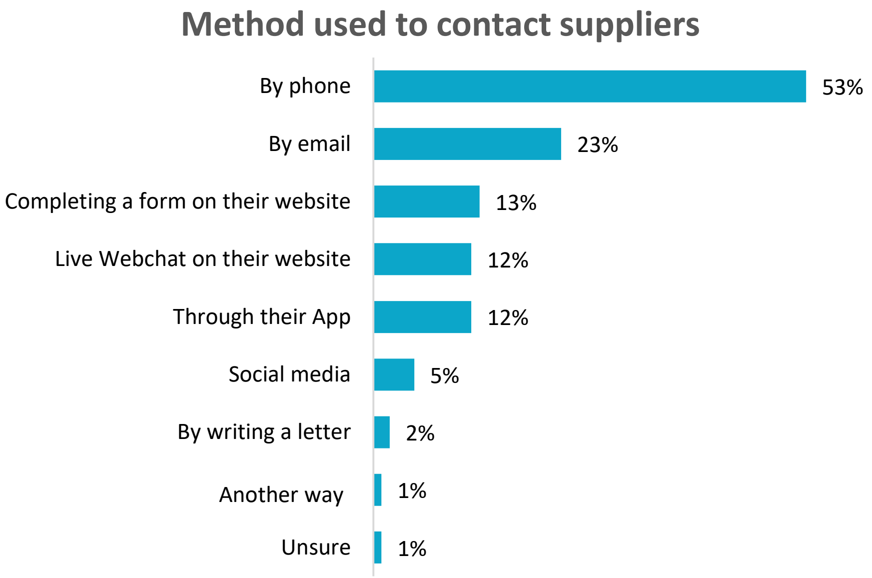
- In Q1 2021, those most likely to contact their supplier are customers who:
  - Are dissatisfied with their supplier (42% contacted)
  - Switched in past 12 months (44% made contact)
  - Are aged 16-34 (38% made contact)
- And those most likely to have tried but failed to contact their supplier are those who:
  - Wanted to contact their supplier in relation to a complaint (24% tried and failed to contact)
  - Are dissatisfied with their supplier (16%)
  - Aged 16-34 (11%)
  - Pay by standard credit (11%)

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

Base: All Participants (3,200)

Recent contact with supplier: contact channel

Telephone is the most commonly used contact channel, but nearly a quarter now use email.

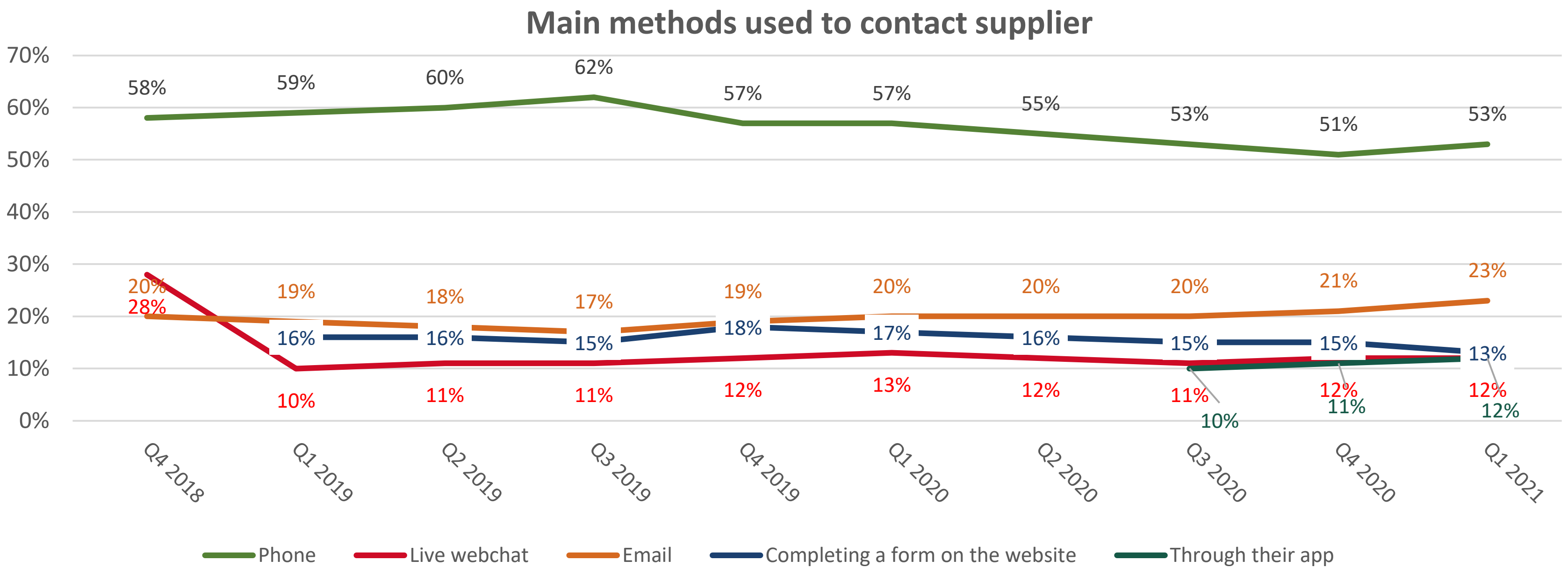


- Regardless of demography, telephone is the most common contact method. However, there is some variation in which channels are used:
  - Younger consumers aged 16-34 are more likely to contact via phone (59%) compared to those aged 50+ (47%).
  - Those aged 65+ are the age group most likely to use a website form (23%) (although they still most commonly contact by phone – 47%).

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 (1,102)

Contact channels used over time

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

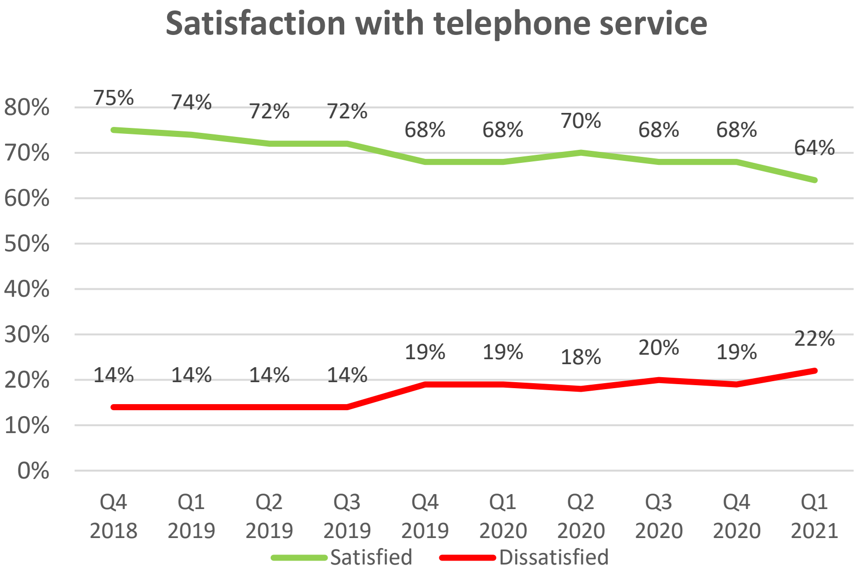


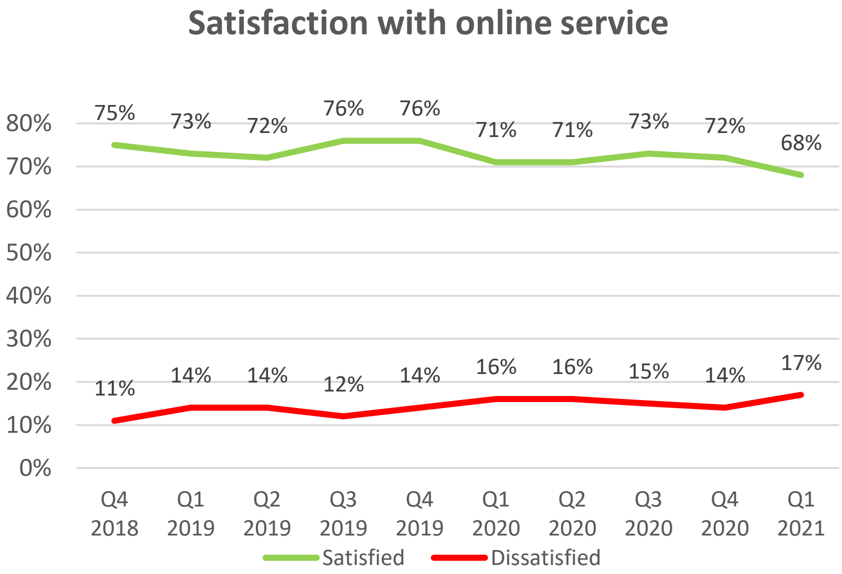
How did you (try to) make contact with your energy supplier on that last occasion? (%)

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 Q1 2021 shown in chart.

Satisfaction with phone and email service

Satisfaction with telephone service has declined over the longer term with a significant drop in Q1 2021. Satisfaction with online service has also significantly declined in Q1 2021.



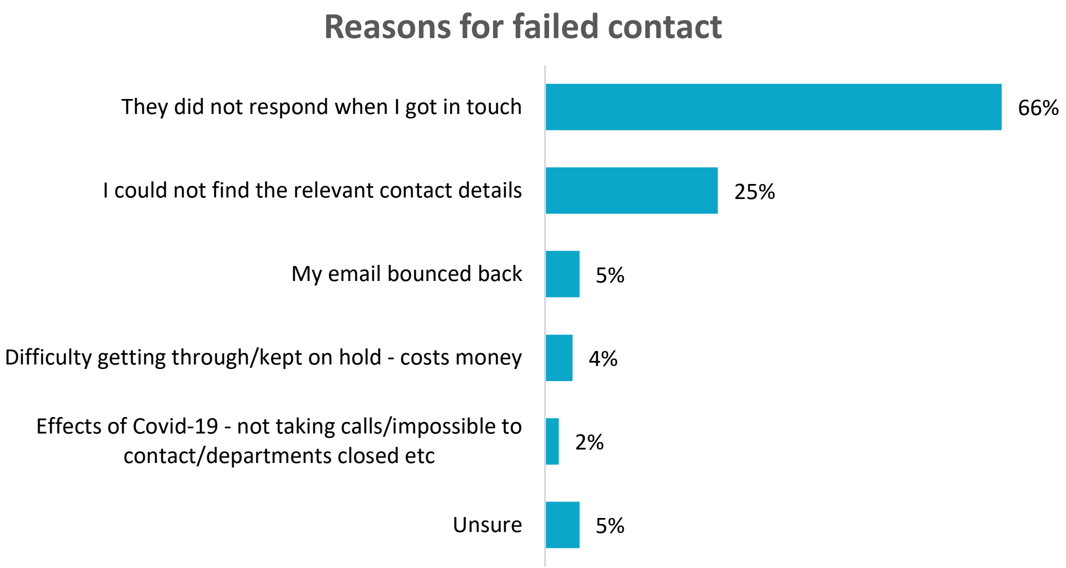


Please can you tell me how dissatisfied or satisfied you were with the service received by phone? (%) Base: All who contacted or tried to contact their supplier by phone in the last 3 months (Base: 538 - 651)

Please can you tell me how dissatisfied or satisfied you were with the service received online? (%) Base: All who contacted or tried to contact their supplier by email/webchat/website form/app in the last 3 months (Base: 411 – 569)

Reasons for failed contact with supplier

Lack of response remains the most common reason for being unable to get a reply from suppliers.

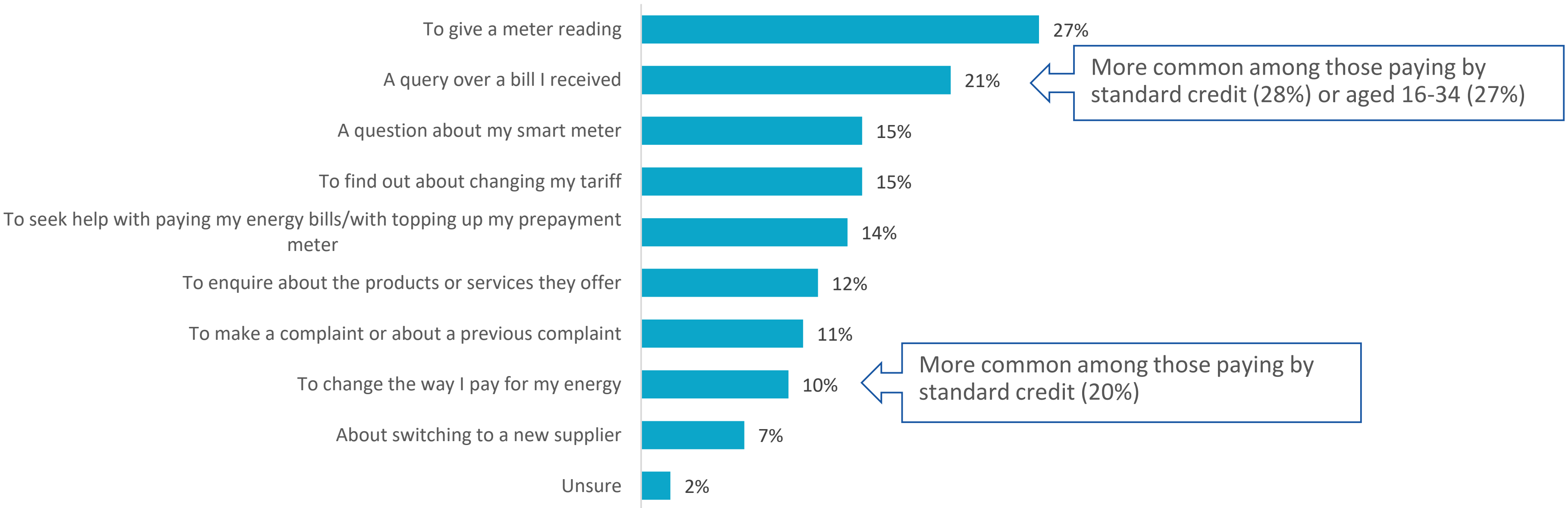


Thinking of the last time you tried to make contact with your energy supplier, why were you not able to? (%)

Base: Those who failed to contact their energy supplier (170)

Reasons for last contacting supplier

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



* 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 (1,102)

Reasons for contacting supplier by payment method

PPM customers tend to contact about help with paying bills or topping up; while those paying by direct debit tend to contact to give meter readings or with billing queries. Those paying by standard credit are the group most likely to lodge a complaint.

	Payment method		
	Any using standard credit	Any using PPM	Any using Direct debit
To give a meter reading	29%	15%	28%
A query over a bill I received	28%	19%	21%
To change the way I pay for my energy	20%	14%	8%
To seek help with paying my energy bills/with topping up my prepayment meter	19%	30%	11%
To enquire about the products or services they offer	18%	13%	11%
To find out about changing my tariff	18%	9%	17%
To make a complaint or about a previous complaint	18%	9%	10%
A question about my smart meter	16%	20%	15%
About switching to a new supplier	15%	9%	6%

- Those paying by PPM are the most likely to contact about seeking help with paying bills (30%).
- Those paying by standard credit are more likely to contact their supplier for any reason, and are the group most likely to have made a complaint.
- While those paying by direct debit are more likely to contact about a meter reading.

*Highlighted percentages are statistically significant

Statistically higher than non-highlighted and light green cells

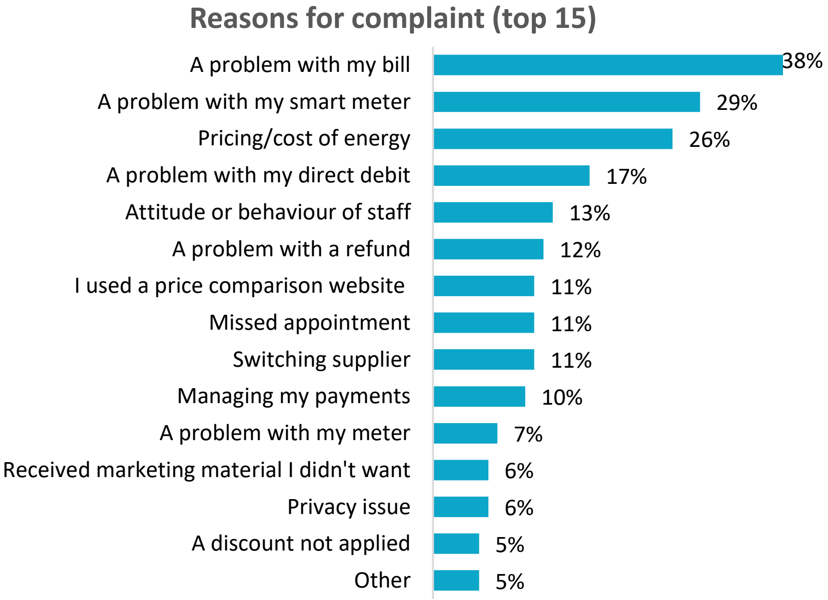
Statistically higher than non-highlighted cells

Complaints

Complaints to suppliers

11% of customers who contacted their supplier in the past 3 months did so in relation to a complaint.

- This equates to 3% of all customers complaining the last time they contacted their supplier (a similar proportion compared to previous waves).
- As in previous waves, the groups more likely to have complained (of all participants) are:
  - Dissatisfied overall with their supplier (20%) vs satisfied (2%) or neutral (4%)
  - Younger customers: 16-34 (7%)
  - Those with a smart meter (5%)
  - Those with a disability (6%).



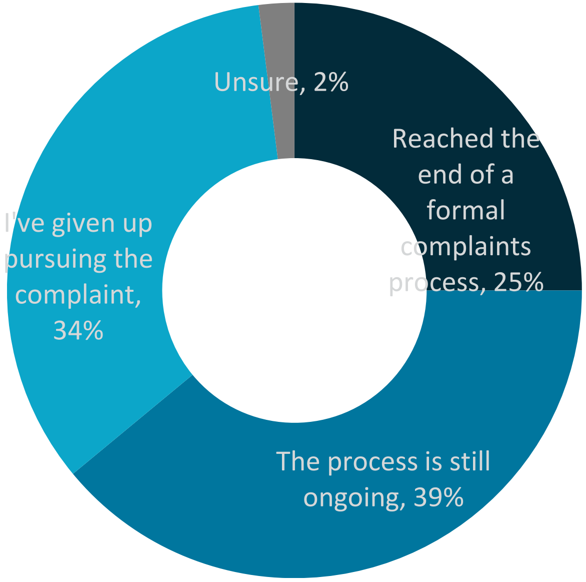
Earlier you said that your last contact with your energy supplier was about a complaint. What was the complaint about?

Base: Those who contacted / tried to contact their energy supplier about a complaint (123)

Stage of complaint and time taken to process

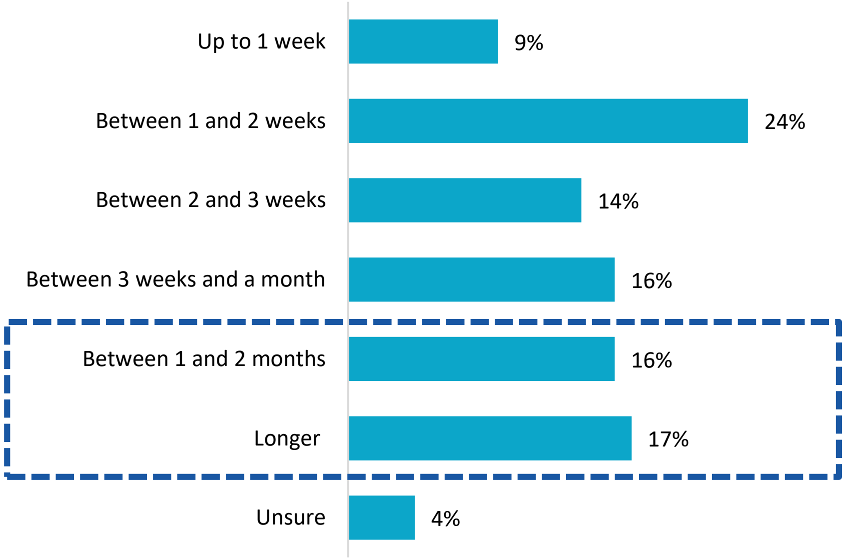
25% of complaints have been formally completed (significantly fewer than Q4 2020 – 31%).

33% of complaints have taken over 1 month to process.



What stage are you at with the complaint process?

Base: Those who contacted their energy supplier to make a complaint (123)



Roughly, how long did the complaint process take from beginning to end?

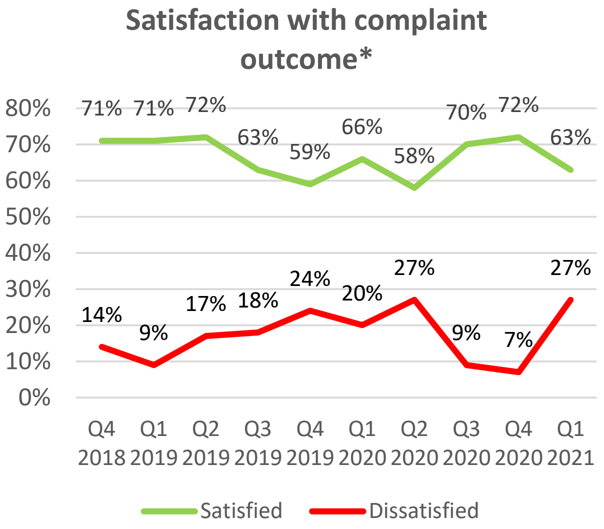
Base: Those who knew the stage of their complaint process (120)

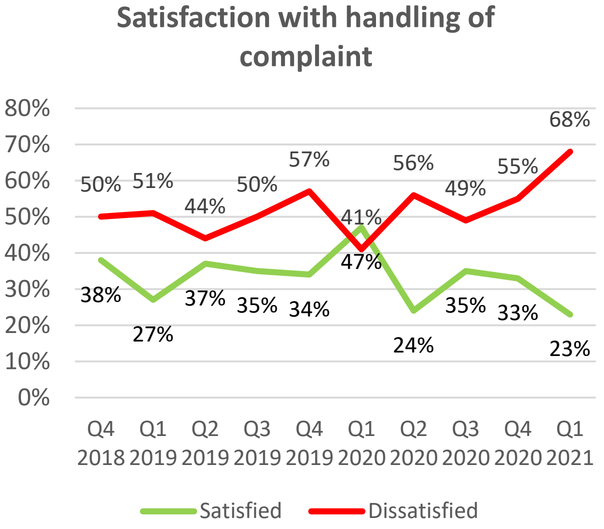
Satisfaction with the complaints process

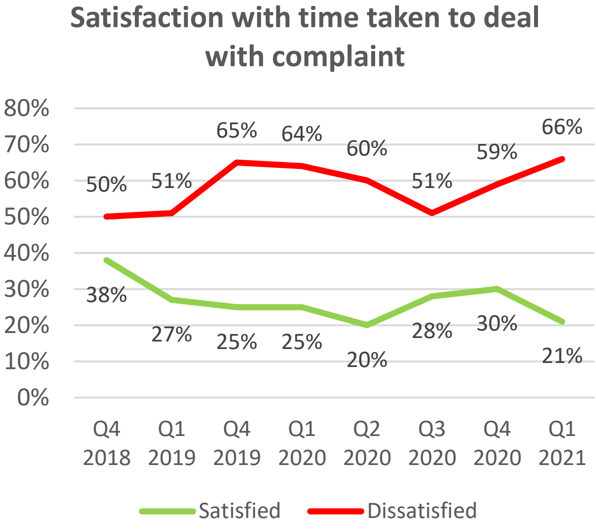
Satisfaction with the outcome of a complaint is lower this quarter.

Dissatisfaction with the handling of complaints is significantly higher compared to Q4 2020.

Satisfaction with the time taken to deal with complaints has decreased this quarter and 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 Q1 2021 (104) ; All other waves (96-111)
* **Note small base sizes**: Those whose complaint reached an outcome Q1 2021 (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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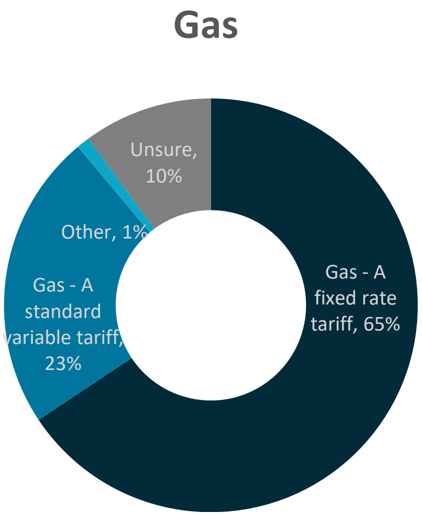
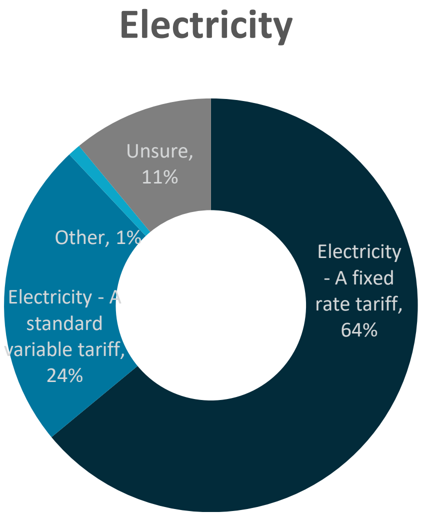
Tariff type

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





- Consistent with previous waves, those who are unsure what tariff type they are on are most likely to:
  - Be PPM customers
  - Have never switched supplier
  - Have a disability
  - Be from lower social grades

% unsure which tariff they're on	Gas	Electricity
Payment method:		
Direct Debit	11%	12%
PPM	21%	23%
Standard Credit	8%	8%
Switching status:		
Yes	6%	6%
No	15%	15%
Disability status:		
Disability	15%	16%
No disability	9%	9%
Socio-economic grade:		
ABC1	7%	7%
C2DE	15%	15%

What kind of gas / electricity tariff are you on?

Base: Gas (2,740), Electricity (3,048)

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Recall of information from suppliers

Notifications of price increases, information about what to do in an emergency and information about the range of tariffs available are the most commonly recalled communications.

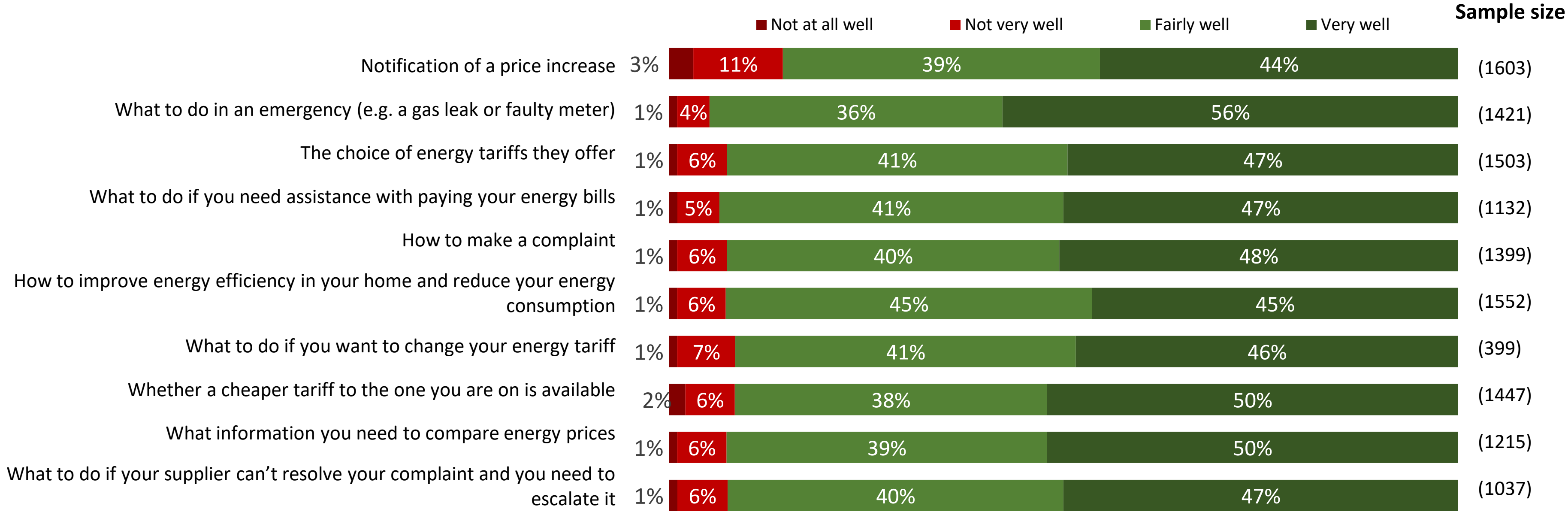
% recalling information from suppliers	Q4 2019	Q1 2020	Q2 2020	Q3 2020	Q4 2020	Q1 2021
Notification of a price increase	49%	45%	56%	50%	49%	52%
What to do in an emergency (e.g. a gas leak or faulty meter)	43%	42%	53%	47%	50%	47%
The choice of energy tariffs they offer	45%	42%	47%	48%	48%	47%
What to do if you need assistance with paying your energy bills	38%	38%	48%	47%	47%	46%
How to make a complaint	42%	42%	49%	44%	44%	44%
How to improve energy efficiency in your home and reduce your energy consumption	Not asked	38%	47%	42%	45%	42%
What to do if you want to change your energy tariff	40%	39%	44%	43%	44%	41%
Whether a cheaper tariff to the one you are on is available	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	38%	38%	34%
What information you need to compare energy prices	32%	31%	36%	35%	35%	33%
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%	32%

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

Base: All 3,200

How well information meets needs

In general, information provided is seen to meet the needs of customers, although around one in seven (14%) feel information about the choice of tariffs could be improved.



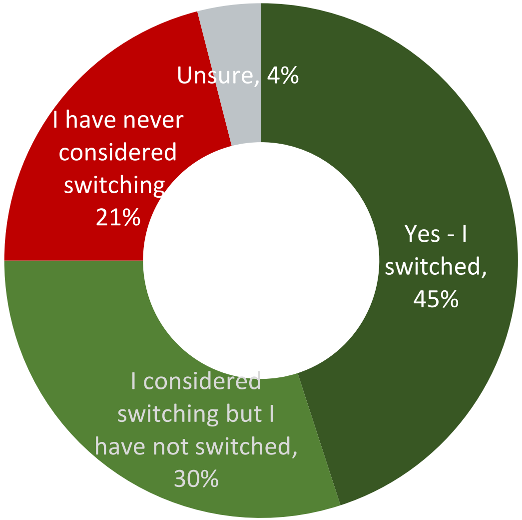
Do you recall if your energy supplier has given you information about any of the following in the last six months? Base: All Participants (3,200), apart from 'Notification of price increase': All on SVT (634)

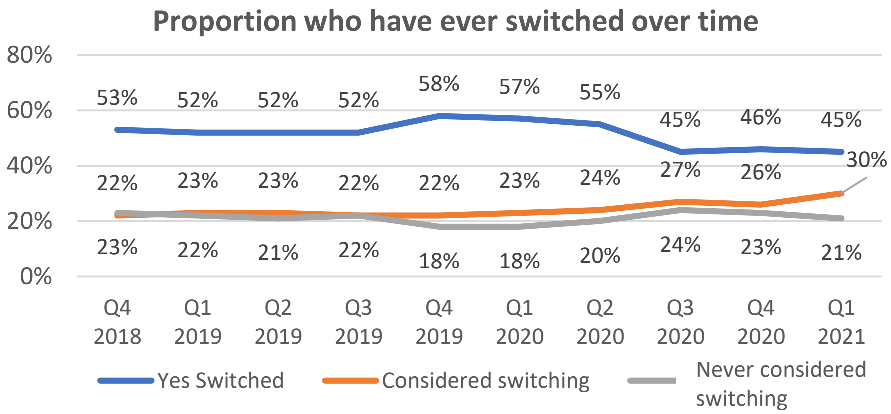
How well did the information you received meet your needs? Bases: those receiving information (individual bases are in brackets)

Switching

Supplier switching - % who have ever switched

After high proportions recalled switching in Q4 2019 and Q1 2020, levels now remains at lower levels – 45% recall ever switching supplier.





Fewer customers in these groups have ever switched:

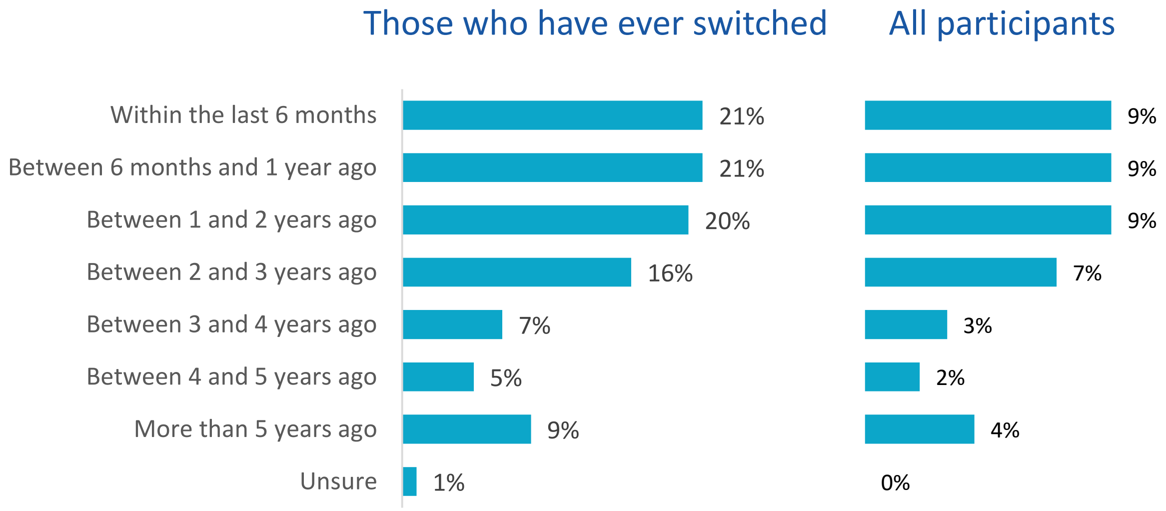
- Pay by standard credit (25%) or PPM (21%)
- On an SVT (34%) or a mixed tariff (31%)
- Aged 16-34 (24%)
- From the C2DE (38%) social grade
- Those with a smart meter (37%).

Have you ever switched or considered switching energy supplier?

Base: All Participants (3,200)

When last switched supplier

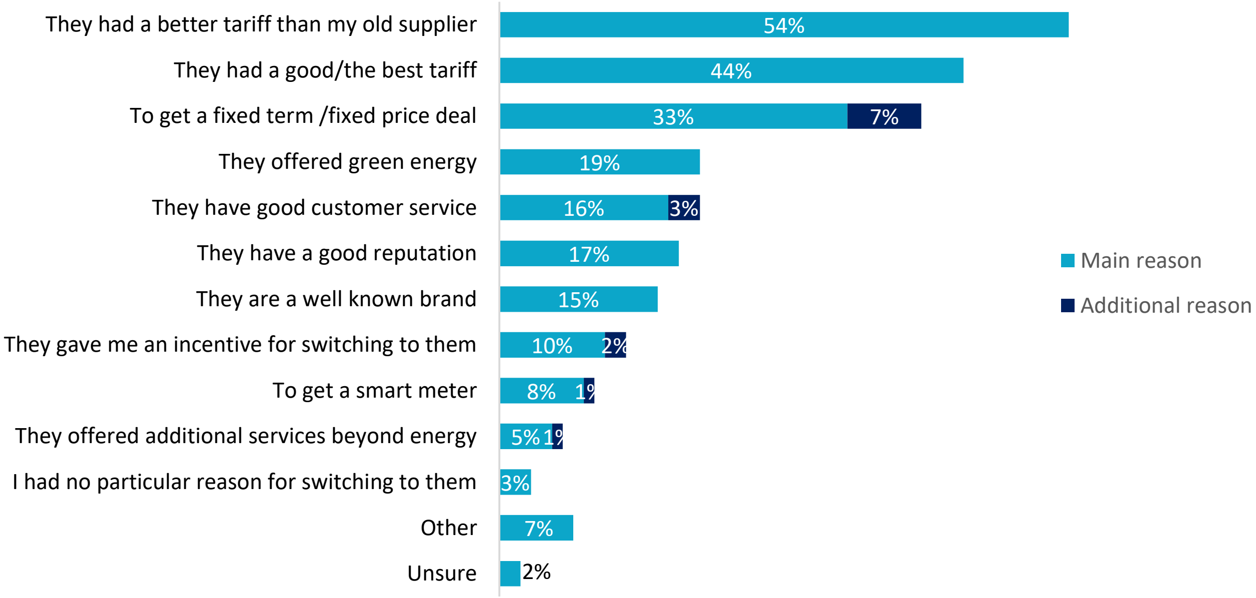
40% of those who have *ever* switched supplier did so in the last year.
This equates to 18% of all consumers switching in the last year (unchanged compared to previous waves).



When was the last time you switched energy supplier? (%)
Base: Those who have ever switched (1,405); All Participants (3,200)

Reasons for choosing supplier

The key reasons for selecting a supplier are cost related. Even when prompted with non-cost reasons, service, reputation, incentives and green tariffs are secondary considerations (42% 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 (1,405)

Were there any other reasons for selecting them apart from the tariff?
Base: Those who have ever switched (1,405)

Reasons for choosing supplier over time

The top reasons for choosing a supplier remain price related. Offering green energy and reputation are secondary drivers.

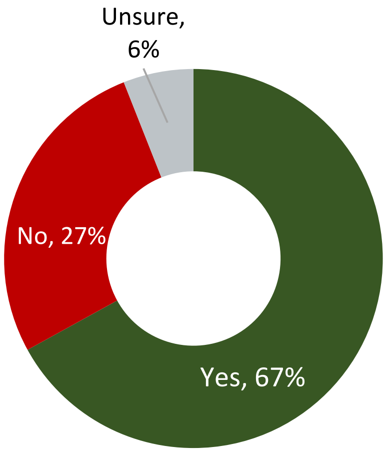
	Q1 2019	Q2 2019	Q3 2019	Q4 2019	Q1 2020	Q2 2020	Q3 2020	Q4 2020	Q1 2021
They had a better tariff than my old supplier	52%	54%	57%	54%	54%	55%	55%	53%	54%
They had a good/the best tariff	50%	46%	47%	49%	47%	48%	46%	44%	44%
To get a fixed term /fixed price deal	33%	30%	30%	31%	31%	29%	32%	32%	40%
They offered green energy	9%	13%	14%	16%	16%	19%	18%	19%	19%
They have good customer service	16%	17%	14%	17%	16%	18%	14%	16%	19%
They have a good reputation	16%	17%	16%	19%	17%	19%	17%	18%	17%
They are a well known brand	15%	12%	14%	15%	14%	15%	13%	15%	15%
They gave me an incentive for switching to them	13%	14%	14%	13%	13%	13%	10%	11%	15%
To get a smart meter	7%	7%	6%	5%	8%	6%	7%	8%	12%
They offered additional services beyond energy	3%	4%	4%	4%	4%	5%	4%	4%	9%
I had no particular reason for switching to them	2%	2%	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	3%

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 (1,405)

Use of price comparison websites (PCWs)

67% who switched used a price comparison website (consistent with previous waves).



Use of PCWs is lower among:

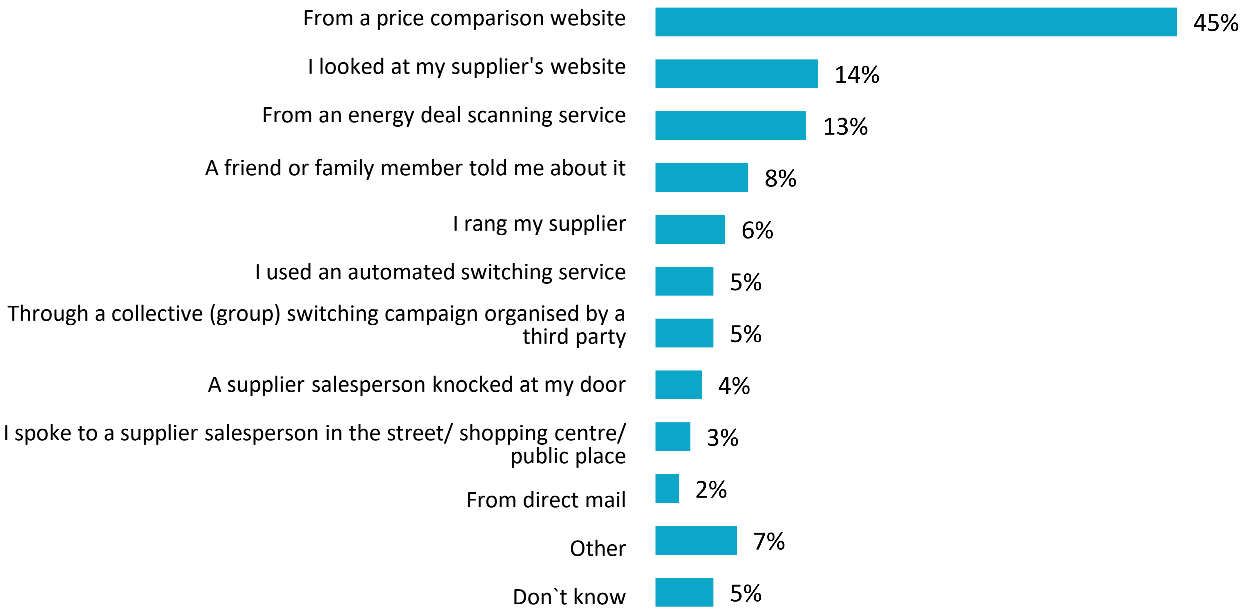
- Those paying by PPM (50%)
- From the C2DE social grades (60%)
- Those aged 65+ (61%)
- Those who have a disability (62%).

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

Base: Those who have ever switched supplier (1,405)

Source of energy deal information

PCWs remain the most commonly used source of information about energy deals.



How did you find out about the energy deal you switched to? Base: : Those who switched their energy supplier (1,405)

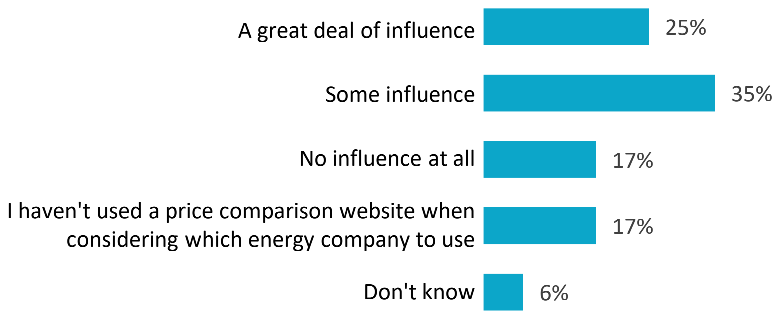
Accent

The Ofgem Confidence Code

Most of those who have heard of the Ofgem Confidence Code or PCW accreditation said that it influenced their choice of price comparison website.

- 17% had heard of the Ofgem accreditation for price comparison websites, and 13% had heard of the Ofgem Confidence Code.

- Over a half of those aware of the Ofgem Code of Confidence or the PCW accreditation said this has had at least some influence on the comparison website they would use.



Before today, had you ever heard of the Ofgem Confidence Code or Ofgem accreditation for price comparison websites? Base: All Participants (3,200)

To what extent does Ofgem accreditation influence which price comparison website you would use? Base: All aware Ofgem accreditation for price comparison websites (813)

Satisfaction with the switching experience

There is high satisfaction with the switching process and the ease of comparing suppliers and their prices (consistent with previous quarters).

- Those paying by direct debit tend to be more satisfied (81% with ease of comparing suppliers and 87% with the process overall).
- Whereas those with a disability tend to be less satisfied (72% with ease of comparing suppliers and 81% with the process overall).

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 (1,405), Did not use PCW (371), Used PCW to complete switch (952)

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

Satisfaction with the switching experience

Satisfaction with switching remains higher among those who used a price comparison website compared to those who did not.

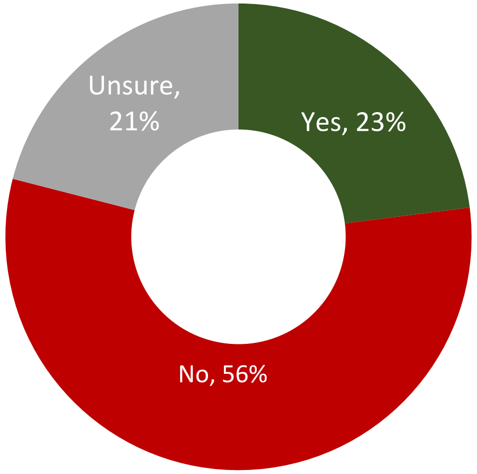
	Satisfied with **ease of comparing suppliers and prices**	Satisfied with **the switching process overall**
Did not use PCW	65%	80%
Used PCW only to compare suppliers	85%	88%

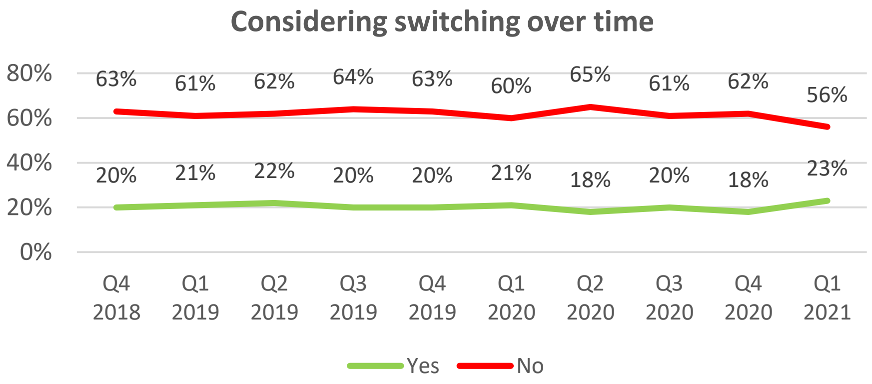
Please can you tell me how dissatisfied or satisfied you were with the following aspects of your switch to another supplier?

Base: Those who switched their energy supplier (1,405), Did not use PCW (371), Used PCW to complete switch (952)

How many consumers are considering switching

23% are thinking of switching supplier, significantly more compared to most of 2020.





- The proportion considering switching is highest among:
  - Dissatisfied customers (58%)
  - Consumers from ABC1 social grades (26%)
  - Those aged 16 to 64 (26%).

Are you currently considering changing your energy supplier?
Base: All Participants (3,200)

Smart meters

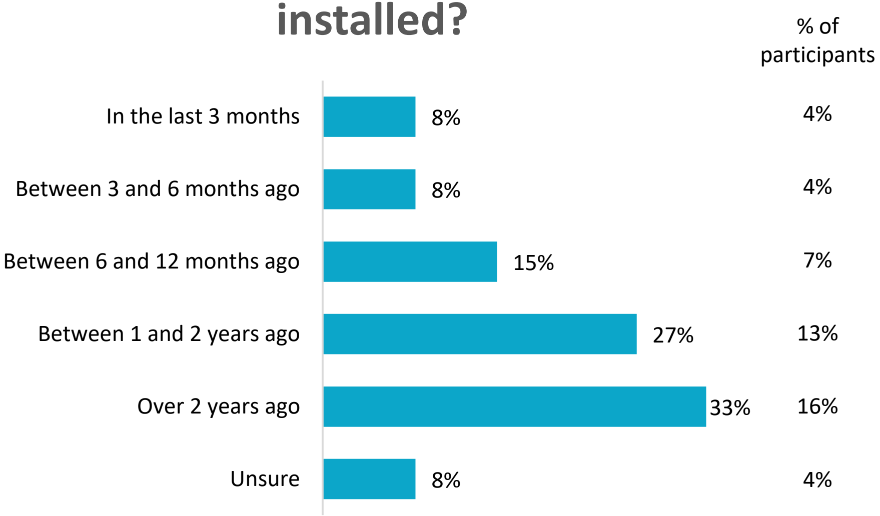
Accent

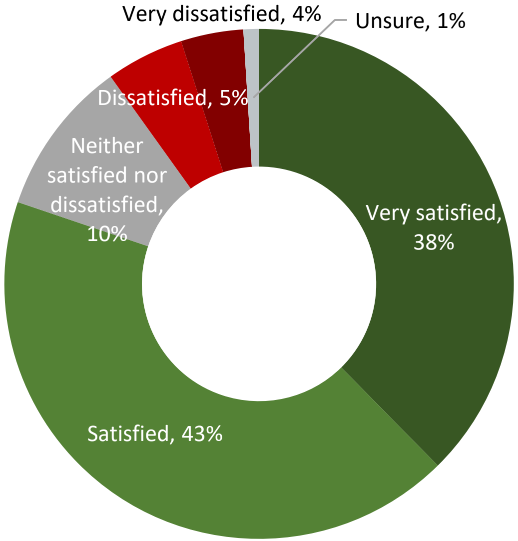
Smart meter use

50% now say they have a smart meter, with the majority installed prior to the start of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Four fifths of those who had their smart meter installed in the last six months are satisfied with the installation process.

When was your smart meter installed?



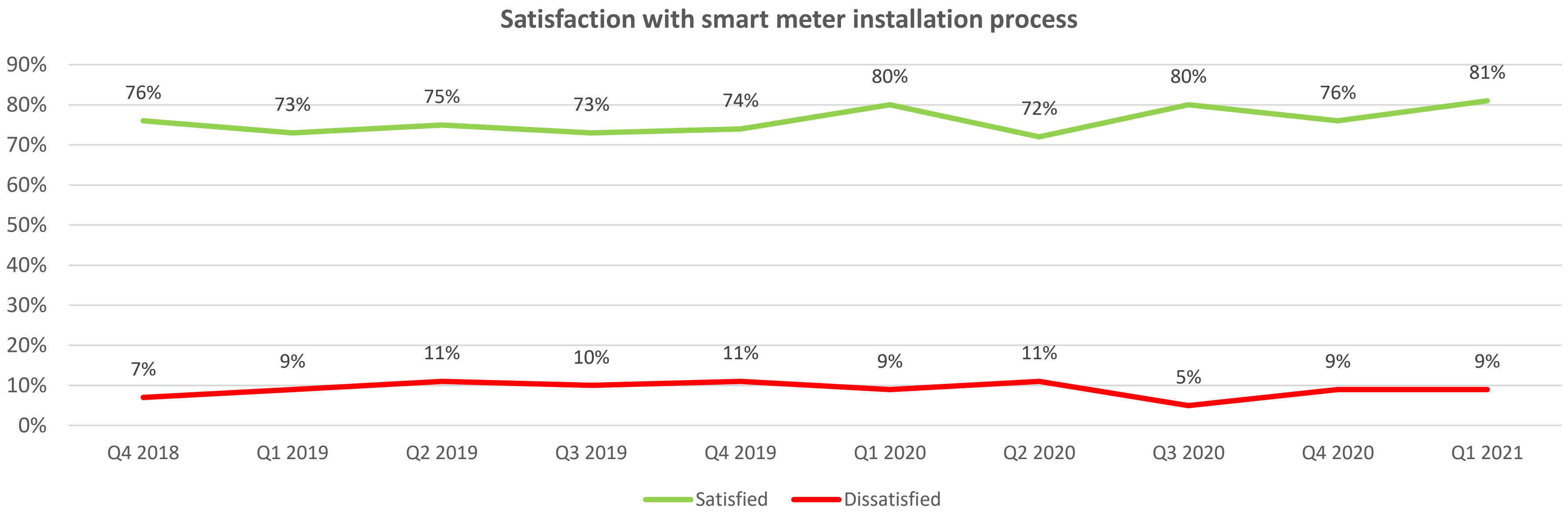


Of the two meters described below, which is the most similar to the one in your home? / When did you have your smart meter installed? (%)
Base: All Participants (3,200) / All with smart meter (1,604)

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 (258)

Satisfaction with smart meter installation over time

While this metric has fluctuated over 2020, the long term trend is an increase in satisfaction with the smart meter installation process.

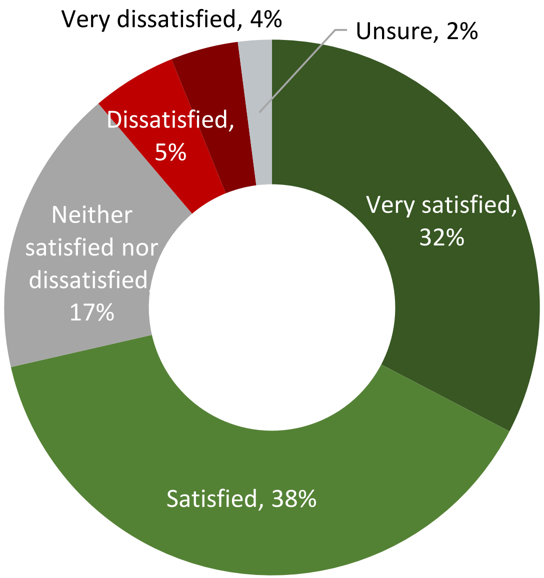


How dissatisfied or satisfied were you with the process you went through to have a smart meter installed?

Base: All with smart meter installed in last 6 months (258)

Satisfaction with smart meter overall

70% are satisfied with their smart meter.



- Satisfaction is highest among these groups:
  - Customers who are satisfied with their supplier (81%)
  - Those without a disability (73%).

Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your smart meter?

Base: All with a smart meter (1,604)

Supplier debt management processes

Supplier support for customers who have fallen behind on bills

Around three in five who are in arrears or who self-disconnected have had contact with their supplier to seek support.

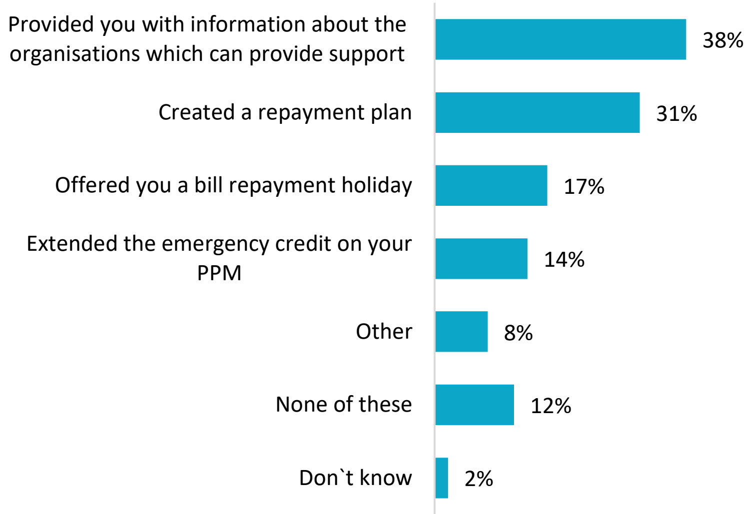
We asked consumers who had run out of credit on their PPM or fallen behind on bills if they had contact with their energy supplier to ask for help.

60% of consumers had contact, including:

- 43% who contacted their supplier themselves
- 17% who were contacted by their supplier.

These are similar proportions compared to Q4 2020.

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

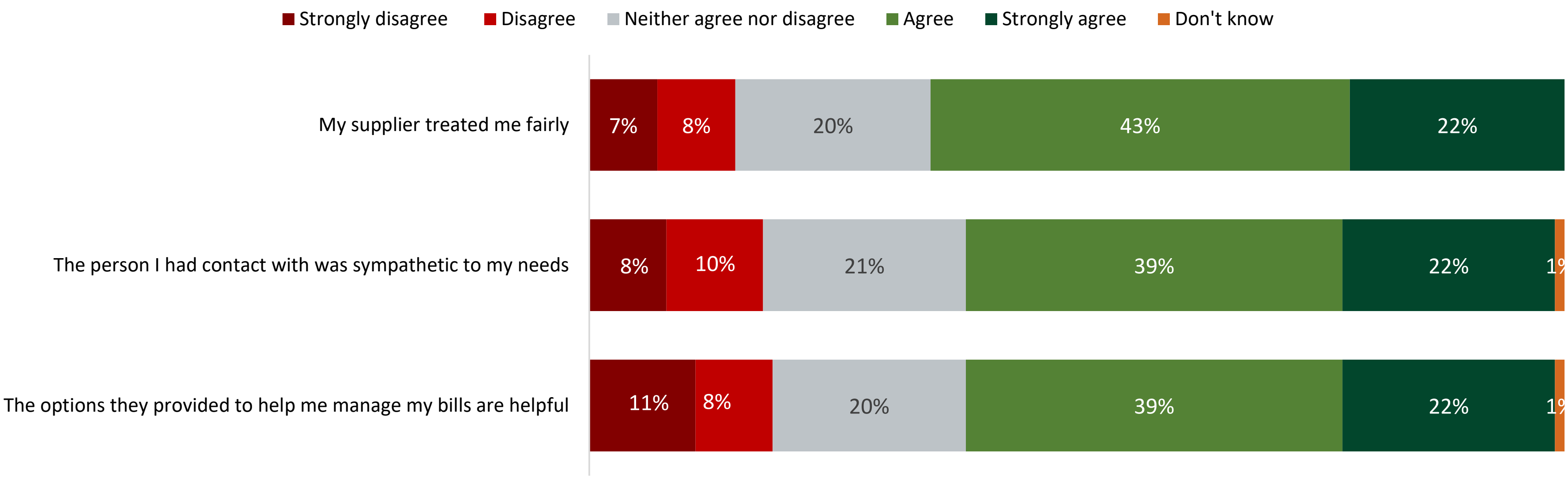


Have you been in contact with your energy supplier to ask for help with paying your bills? Base: All households running out of credit on PPM or running behind on energy payments (509)

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 (309)

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 falling behind on energy payments (309)

Annex

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

Ben Butler
Tel +44 (0)20 8742 2211
Ben.Butler@accent-mr.com