



Research Report



Customer Satisfaction Surveys 2011-2012

Prepared for: The Legal Ombudsman



Customer Satisfaction Surveys 2011-2012

Prepared for: The Legal Ombudsman

Prepared by: Linda Balodis, Account Manager

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Project: 8611

Registered in England No. 2841970

Registered office:

7 Holt Court North
Heneage Street West
Aston Science Park
Birmingham
B7 4AX
UK

Tel: +44 (0) 121 3336006

UK VAT Registration No. 580 6606 32

Birmingham Chamber of Commerce Member No. B4626

Market Research Society Company Partner

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1 Executive summary

1.1 Introduction

The Legal Ombudsman wished to conduct a programme of surveys to assess customers' perceptions of their confidence in, and satisfaction with, their services.

In the first year of the survey programme, 4 quarterly surveys were undertaken among both complainants and lawyers who had complaints made against them. 1048 interviews with complainants (mainly by telephone) and 484 interviews with lawyers (mainly online) were completed between August 2011 and July 2012. Whilst the survey was conducted quarterly, to ensure that respondents would be able to recall details of their case, the annual data set will be used as a benchmark for future data.

Whilst both complainants and lawyers were reminded throughout the survey that their responses should relate to the Legal Ombudsman's processes and customer service, irrespective of the outcome of the case, inevitably case outcome (in particular whether it was favourable towards the respondent or not) had a sizeable impact on views.

1.2 Background and contact with the Legal Ombudsman (complainants)

Key demographic information about complainants includes:

- A fairly even mix of males and females;
- 59% being 26-55 year olds;
- 29% have a medical condition;
- 15% from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups (including 4% of Indian, 3% of Pakistani, 3% Caribbean, 2% African and 2% of mixed race origin).

In terms of channels of communication and complainants' knowledge of the Legal Ombudsman:

- 91% were making their first complaint to the Legal Ombudsman;
- **27% say they were told about the Legal Ombudsman by their solicitor (with or without prompting);**
- Other main sources of information about the Legal Ombudsman were from friends/family (23%) and internet searches/Legal Ombudsman's website (30%);
- 66% first made contact by phone, 15% by email and 14% by letter;
- 62% of those visiting the Legal Ombudsman's website found it useful.

There is also a mix of reaction as to whether the time taken to resolve cases is slower (28%), faster (20%) or about as expected (41%).

Complainants' frequency of contact with the Legal Ombudsman also varies, with 10% saying 1-3 times to 26% more than 10 times. However, the number of times is generally as expected (73%).

46% of complainants are very/fairly dissatisfied with the outcome of their case, whilst 43% are very/fairly satisfied and 11% 'satisfied' (rating 3 out of 5).

1.3 Satisfaction with aspects of the Legal Ombudsman service (complainants)

Whilst respondents were asked to express satisfaction with different aspects of the *process* of their case irrespective of the *outcome*, in practice this was difficult to do. A positive or negative outcome is often an important influence on satisfaction levels.

Generally complainants are satisfied with most aspects of initial contact (Assessment Centre stage, ie when complainants first made contact with the Legal Ombudsman). More than two thirds are 'very satisfied' with staff being polite and courteous (68%), and more than half that staff on the telephone are clear/easy to understand (56%), calls are answered quickly (51%), letters/emails are easy to understand (51%) and staff clearly explain what will happen (51%). However, two aspects attract sizeable proportions of complainants who are 'very dissatisfied; confidence in staff's ability to help (16%) and staff understanding the nature of the complaint (13%).

Again, complainants are generally satisfied with different aspects of the Resolution Centre (ie once the case had been accepted by the Legal Ombudsman and the case was investigated). More than half are 'very satisfied' with letters/emails being easy to understand (54%), staff on the telephone being easy to understand (54%), being contacted when agreed (54%) and staff being easy to get hold of (52%). However, two aspects attract sizeable proportions of complainants who are 'very dissatisfied'; confidence in the handling of the complaint (25%) and the investigation process being fair (23%).

Where complainants' case continued to Ombudsman stage, satisfaction levels are comparatively lower for all aspects of written communication (ranging from 9% to 28% saying 'very satisfied'). This is not surprising given the nature of the case process, and the fact that these cases were not resolved before reaching Ombudsman stage. Dissatisfaction is particularly high in terms of reflecting the case accurately (54% saying 'very dissatisfied') and taking into account complainants' comments (42%).

1.4 Overall views of the Legal Ombudsman (complainants)

Overall, more than seven in ten complainants (72%) are satisfied with the professional service provided by the Legal Ombudsman, whilst just under three in ten (28%) are dissatisfied. As will be seen throughout this report, satisfaction with the professional service is closely linked with satisfaction with case outcome.

As with many other questions about satisfaction, the key influences of satisfaction with the professional service are:

- Satisfaction with the outcome of case;
- Length of case (the shorter the better);
- Case closure stage (related to length of case);
- Where closing at Ombudsman stage, whether complainants had accepted/rejected the Ombudsman's decision (acceptance being aligned with satisfaction).

In addition, respondents from white ethnic groups are more likely to be satisfied with the professional service than those from BME groups. Prisoners are more likely to be dissatisfied.

In terms of complainants' spontaneous reasons for being satisfied with the professional service, a quarter mention generally that the service is good or that the Legal Ombudsman has handled the case well (25%). Smaller numbers are more specific saying the outcome is good (10%), the process is quick (10%), they understand the process (8%) and that the Legal Ombudsman is helpful (8%).

Reasons for dissatisfaction with the professional service centre on the perception that the process is biased in favour of the legal profession (32%).

The main things that complainants mention spontaneously that have worked well include good communication/contact (13%), a satisfactory outcome (11%), good explanations/clarity (8%), and generally the whole process (8%).

Things that have not worked so well or could be improved are more miscellaneous. The main ones include perceptions of biased decision making (9%), the process being too long (7%), staff not understanding the issues (7%) and more frequent/better communication needed (6%).

Three in ten complainants would speak highly of the Legal Ombudsman to others without being asked (30%), with a further quarter doing so if asked (24%). However, almost one in five would be critical without being asked (17%), and a further one in seven doing so if asked (13%).

More than a half of complainants (56%) feel they have been treated fairly by the Legal Ombudsman in relation to this complaint, whilst a third (33%) feel they have been treated unfairly.

1.5 Background and contact with the Legal Ombudsman (lawyers)

Key profile information about lawyers¹ include:

- Size of organisation varies from 9% with only one employee to 5% with 200+ employees;
- 61% of lawyers responding to the survey are the person handling the complaint process, whilst 37% are the person involved in the original case with the complainant.

In terms of channels of communication and lawyers' knowledge of the Legal Ombudsman:

- 70% know a great deal/fair bit about the Legal Ombudsman, whilst 30% know a little/nothing about it (although all have heard of the organisation);
- For 48%, it is the first time they had been involved with the Legal Ombudsman;
- Of those visiting the Legal Ombudsman's website, 41% found it useful, 14% found it not useful and 45% were neutral;

¹ The term 'lawyer' has been used throughout this report to denote the respondent completing the survey on behalf of the law firm.

- The main method of contact is email (54%), with 28% using the phone and 17% the post.

Perceived length of case varies from 17% saying less than 1 month to 9% longer than 6 months. However, 58% of lawyers feel this is as expected.

The number of times lawyers have had contact with the Legal Ombudsman varies; ranging from 27% of lawyers who have had contact 1-3 times to 16% more than 10 times. Again, this is as expected for most lawyers (83%).

More than a half of lawyers (56%) are very/fairly satisfied with the outcome of the case. In contrast, 20% are very/fairly dissatisfied and 24% 'satisfied' (rating 3).

1.6 Satisfaction with aspects of the Legal Ombudsman service (lawyers)

In terms of the investigator (Resolution Centre stage), more than four in ten lawyers are 'very satisfied' with letters/emails being easy to understand (41%), letters/emails being professional (41%) and staff on the telephone being easy to understand (41%). However, there are other aspects which attract high levels of 'very dissatisfied' lawyers. These are confidence in the Legal Ombudsman's handling of the complaint (12%), the investigation process being fair (10%) and staff knowing what they are talking about (8%).

Again, more than a half of lawyers are satisfied with all aspects of written communication (Ombudsman stage). However, at least one in ten are 'very dissatisfied' that written communication reflected the case accurately (10%) and that the process took into account lawyers' comments (11%).

1.7 Overall views of the Legal Ombudsman (lawyers)

Eight in ten lawyers (80%) are satisfied with the professional service provided by the Legal Ombudsman, whilst one in five (20%) are dissatisfied. As with complainants, lawyers' satisfaction with the professional service is closely linked with satisfaction with case outcome.

As with other aspects of satisfaction, satisfaction with the professional service is mainly influenced by:

- Closure stage (related to length of case);
- Where progressing to Ombudsman stage, complainant's acceptance/rejection of the Ombudsman's decision (rejection being aligned with lawyers' satisfaction);
- Length of case (the shorter the better);
- Those cases where the fee has been waived.

Among those satisfied with the professional service provided by the Legal Ombudsman, the main reasons for this are that the case was handled fairly (27%) or the service was generally effective/professional (27%). Sizeable proportions of lawyers also mention a quick process (19%) or positive outcome (12%).

Reasons for dissatisfaction with the professional service centre on a perception by lawyers that decisions are biased (25%). Sizeable proportions also mention staff's lack of knowledge (15%) or inadequate communication (12%).

All lawyers were asked what had worked well on a spontaneous basis. At least one in ten each mention the satisfactory outcome (13%), good communication generally (11%) and contact by email (10%).

Suggestions of improvement tend to be miscellaneous. However, at least one in twenty mention reducing the length of the process (7%), better communication (6%), ensuring staff have a good knowledge of the issues (6%) and the need to take a more balanced view (5%).

Four in ten lawyers (40%) would be neutral when speaking about the Legal Ombudsman. However, a third say they would speak highly of the Legal Ombudsman if asked (33%), with just under one in ten saying they would speak highly of the organisation without being asked (8%).

More than a half of lawyers (58%) feel they have been treated fairly by the Legal Ombudsman, with three in ten saying 'very fairly'. A quarter feel they have not been treated fairly (24%).

1.8 Key findings

Whilst perceptions of the Legal Ombudsman and case process are generally very positive, there are some areas which need improvement in the perceptions of both complainants and lawyers.

Not surprisingly lawyers are more familiar than complainants with the Legal Ombudsman, having been involved in more cases, and have a greater knowledge of the organisation. This translates into their expectations more likely to be met in terms of length of case and amount of contact.

Complainants are more likely to find the Legal Ombudsman's website useful than lawyers. Those who did not find it useful, feel there needs to be more specific information about case outcomes, and more information for complainants rather than lawyers. Lawyers in contrast feel the website is too focussed on complainants' issues, however they also mention a lack of detailed information.

Whilst complainants are slightly more satisfied with aspects of the Resolution Centre contact, lawyers tend to be more satisfied with the Ombudsman stage contact. It is not clear, whether this is a reflection of lawyers' better understanding of the process, or complainants being more likely to get a negative outcome at this stage. The nature of the case process, means that complainants whose case was not resolved before reaching Ombudsman stage are more likely to be dissatisfied with the case outcome.

Opinions are similar among both groups in terms of satisfaction with the professional service and perceptions of how fairly they were treated. However, lawyers tend to be more neutral in terms of advocacy of the Legal Ombudsman, whilst complainants tend to be more positive.

The survey findings highlight a number of suggestions for improvement or areas that influence satisfaction and perception.

Whilst outcome of case will always have a significant impact on perceptions, other aspects are also important. For both complainants and lawyers, critical factors include:

- **Confidence in the process;**
- **Decisions making being fair;**
- **Information provided and used that reflected the case details;**
- **Taking into account complainants'/lawyers' views at all stages;**
- **Speed of case;**
- **Confidence that the case has been fully investigated.**

The only aspects that differ between complainants and lawyers is that complainants also need to understand the process and have issues explained to them. Lawyers feel conducting the case effectively and professionally is more important.

2 Introduction

2.1 Background

The Legal Ombudsman wished to conduct a programme of surveys to assess customers' perceptions of their confidence in, and satisfaction with, their services.

The Legal Ombudsman wished to gain an understanding of customers' experiences of their services as they progress through the organisation and the business process. It was important that the research was able, as far as possible to distinguish between perceptions of the process and the outcome of respondents' complaint or case.

An important element of the survey was an assessment of how customers perceive the Legal Ombudsman as an organisation and their confidence in its performance against its organisational vision and values.

The main objectives were:

- To gain an understanding of how satisfied customers (those people who use the Legal Ombudsman service: complainants and their representatives and lawyers) are with the service they provide;
- To gain an understanding of how successfully the Legal Ombudsman delivers against their stated vision and values;
- To gain an understanding of customers' experiences as they progress through the service;
- Monitor changing patterns in customer satisfaction and confidence to inform future operational development;
- To establish a baseline of customers satisfaction and confidence to inform organisational objectives and targets.

2.2 Method

In the first year of the survey programme, 4 quarterly surveys were undertaken among both complainants and lawyers who had complaints made against them. Respondents were contacted as soon as possible after their case was closed, to ensure that they would be able to recall the details of their case.

Whilst both complainants and lawyers were reminded throughout the survey that their responses should relate to the Legal Ombudsman's processes and customer service, irrespective of the outcome of the case, inevitably case outcome (in particular whether it was favourable towards the respondent or not) had a sizeable impact on views.

A target of 250 complainant interviews were set per quarter. Surveys were conducted with a sample of customers who had had their case resolved / closed in the preceding quarter. At the time of contact with Legal Ombudsman staff, complainants were asked for their consent to participate in the research, and those who did not give this were screened out of the surveys.

The majority of complainant interviews were undertaken over the telephone, and each interview lasted up to 15 minutes. From Quarter 2, prisoners were also included in the

quarterly samples, and these questionnaires were self completion and returned by post. In total 41 prisoner questionnaires were returned over the four quarters. Both telephone and postal respondents were offered the interview in another language if required.

A target of 100 lawyer questionnaire completions were set per quarter. These were completed online, sending an email to all lawyers in the sample, inviting them to take part in the online survey, and providing them with a link to the website and a unique reference number to access the questionnaire. Reminder emails were also sent to non-responders a couple of weeks after the first email.

Some barristers, who did not have email addresses were offered an interview by telephone. In total 23 barristers completed a telephone interview.

The questionnaire was developed with the client, encompassing each stage of the complaint process. Before the first Quarter fieldwork began, a cognitive pilot was undertaken to develop and test questionnaire content. This included 4 complainant interviews and 6 lawyer interviews. Minor changes or additional questions were added each Quarter to ensure relevant and useful information was being captured on an ongoing basis.

All contacts were provided by the client, including additional information on case closure date, closure stage, Case ID number, whether fee was waived or not and whether representative or complainant (complainants only).

The table below shows the number of completed interviews each quarter.

Figure 1: Number of interviews completed per quarter

	Period in which case was resolved	Fieldwork period	Complainant interviews	Lawyer interviews
Quarter 1	July-September 2011	October-November 2011	250	118
Quarter 2	October-December 2011	January-February 2012	271	150
Quarter 3	January-March 2012	April 2012	264	99
Quarter 4	April-June 2012	July 2012	263	117
Total			1048	484

In order to ensure the sample was representative of the population, data was weighted by resolution method (whether completed at pre-assessment stage, Assessment Centre stage, Resolution Centre stage or Ombudsman stage) and whether the fee was waived or not (which relates to the number of times that a lawyer has had a complaint made against them).

2.3 Reporting of data

This report contains a written analysis of the data for all four quarters as an annual data set.

Graphs and tables are used throughout the report to assist explanation and analysis. Although occasional anomalies appear due to 'rounding' differences, these are never more than +/-1%. These occur where, for example, rating scales have been added to calculate proportions of respondents who are satisfied at all (i.e. either very or fairly satisfied).

Rating questions have been reported on those who provided a valid response, i.e. taking out 'don't know', 'not applicable' and 'not provided' responses.

In addition to this written report, a separate data report has been produced, which shows the total results for each question and also the results cross-tabulated by sub group. The sub groups included in the complainant analysis are:

- Closure stage;
- Whether fee waived or not;
- Whether prisoner or not;
- Whether representative or not;
- No. of complaints made;
- Source of info about the Legal Ombudsman;
- Initial method of contact;
- Length of case;
- Amount of contact;
- Overall satisfaction with professional service
- Satisfaction with outcome of case;
- Gender;
- Age;
- Impairment;
- Ethnicity.

The sub groups included in the lawyer analysis are:

- Lawyer type (solicitor, barrister etc);
- Closure stage;
- Whether fee waived or not;
- No. of employees in the practice;
- Respondent status (complaint handler or person complained about);
- Knowledge of the Legal Ombudsman
- Number of times involved with the Legal Ombudsman;
- Main method of contact;
- Length of case;
- Amount of contact;
- Overall satisfaction with professional service
- Satisfaction with outcome of case.

Data has been analysed by the above sub groups where appropriate to the question and also where sub groups show a statistically significant difference in response.

A copy of the complainant questionnaire can be found in Appendix 1 and a copy of the lawyer questionnaire in Appendix 2.

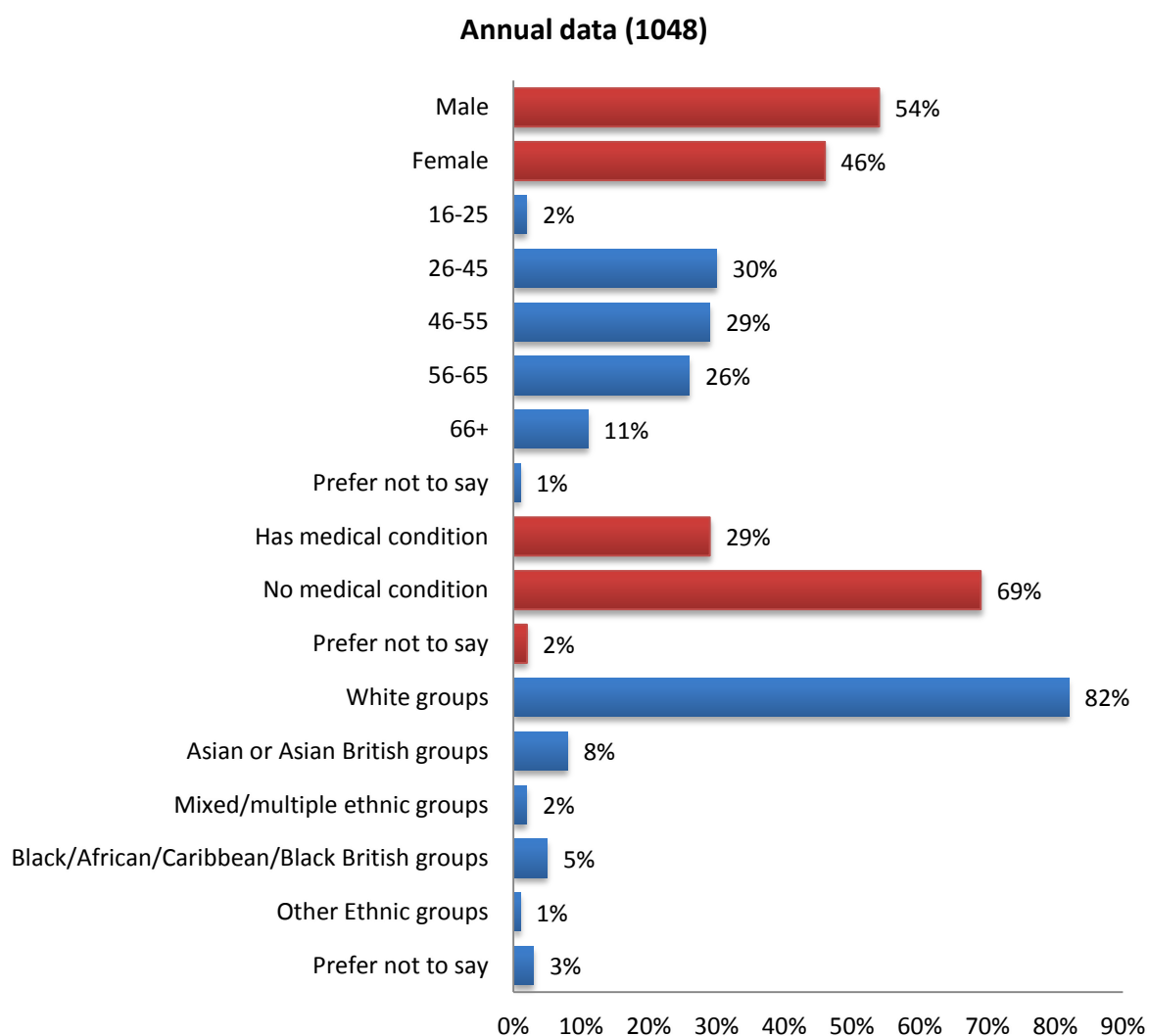
3 Background and contact with the Legal Ombudsman (complainants)

3.1 Demographic profile of complainants

Just over a half of complainants were male. The majority were in the age group 26-55 years, and three in ten had a medical condition (self classified). More than eight in ten were of white ethnic origin, with the biggest other ethnic group being Asian or Asian British.

The table below shows the full demographic breakdown of complainants.

Figure 2: Q21-Q25 Profile of complainants (all complainants)



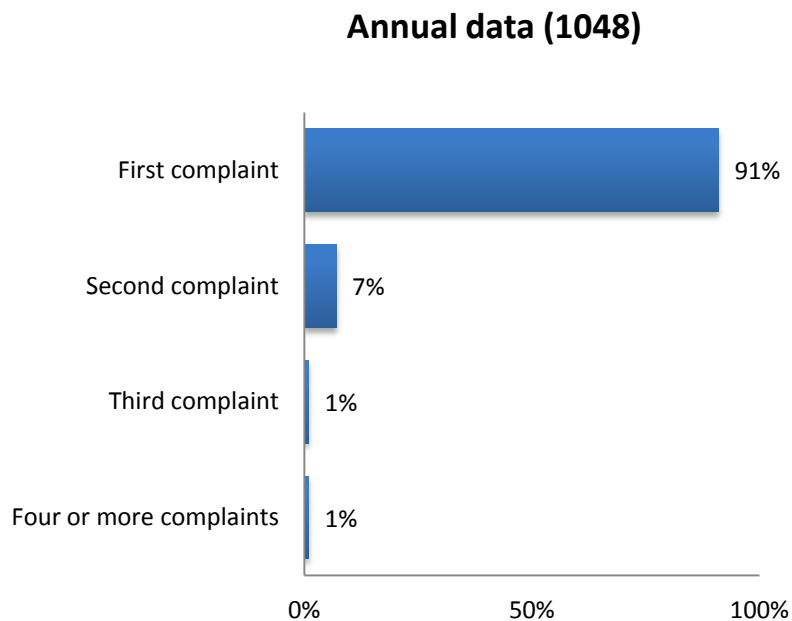
Unweighted bases shown in brackets

3.2 Familiarity with the Legal Ombudsman

In total, 11 complainants had used a representative to deal with the Legal Ombudsman. Of these 8 were friends or relatives.

Nine in ten complainants had not made any previous complaints to the Legal Ombudsman, prior to the current complaint.

Figure 3: Q2 Number of complaints made to the Legal Ombudsman (all complainants)



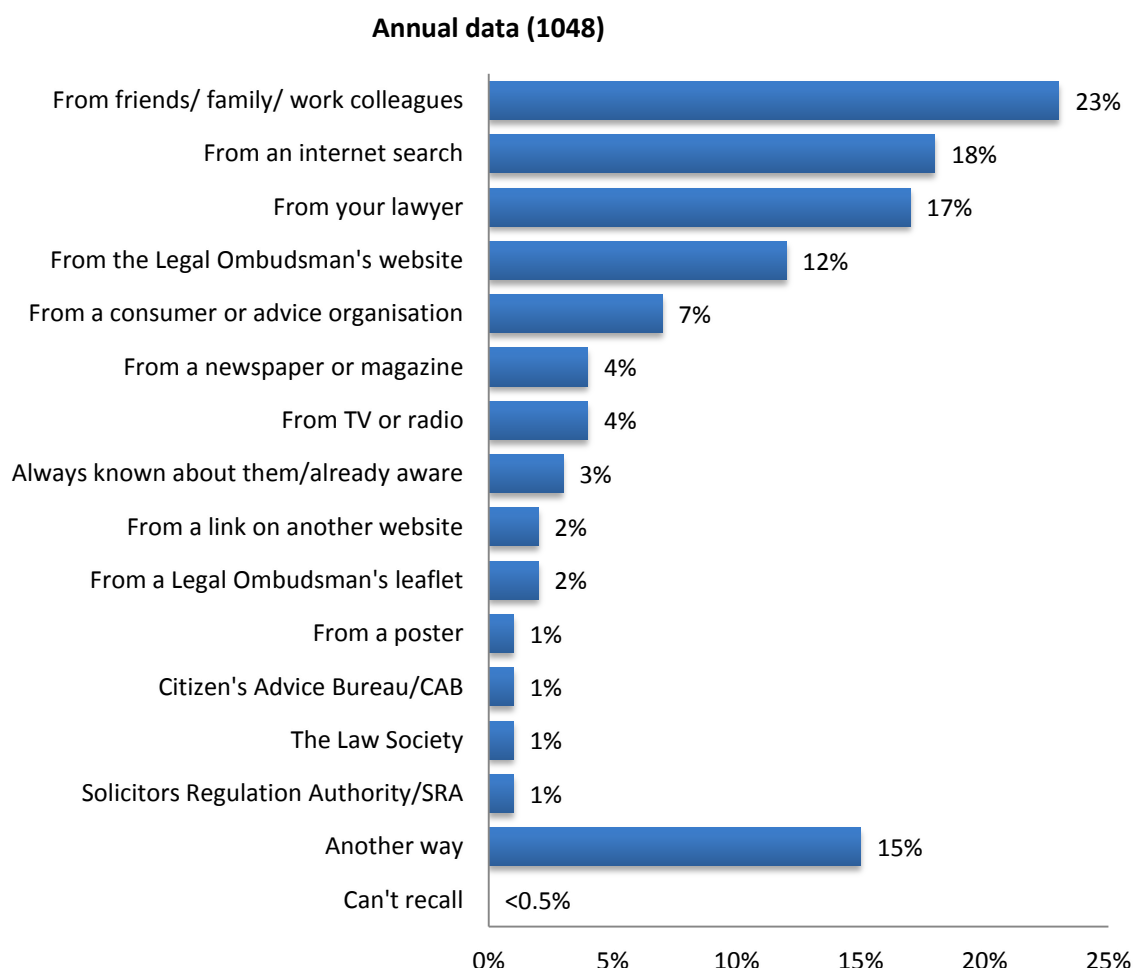
Unweighted bases shown in brackets

Those who were more likely to use the phone for initial contact (94%) were more likely to be making their first complaint than those who had sent a letter (88%) or email (85%).

3.3 Channels of communication

Almost a quarter of complainants had first heard about the Legal Ombudsman from friends or family. Just under one in five had heard about the organisation from an internet search or from their lawyer.

Figure 4: Q3a How first heard about the Legal Ombudsman (all complainants)



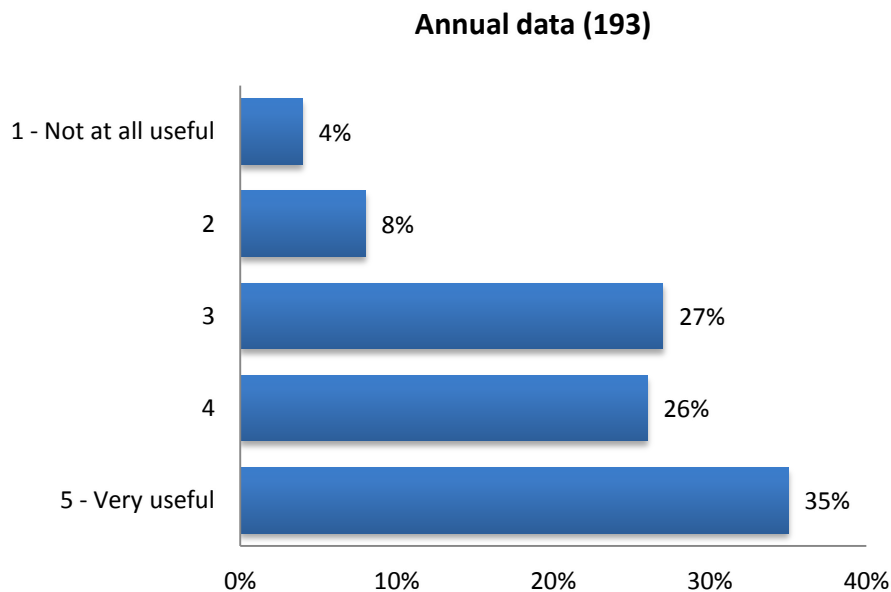
Unweighted bases shown in brackets
Multi response question

Those complainants who had not mentioned their lawyer above, were further prompted and asked whether their lawyer had told them about the Legal Ombudsman. Thus, **in total 27% of complainants had been signposted to the Legal Ombudsman by their lawyer.** This was particularly so among those whose case closed at Ombudsman stage (35%). It was also higher among 46-55 year olds (34%) and those from white ethnic groups (31%).

Those who had first heard of the Legal Ombudsman via the Legal Ombudsman website were asked how useful they had found the website. They were asked to rate it using a 5 point scale, where 1 indicates not at all useful and 5 indicates very useful.

Almost two thirds of complainants (62% rating 4-5) had found the website useful, whilst just over one in ten (12% rating 1-2) had not found it useful.

Figure 5: Q4a Usefulness of the Legal Ombudsman's website (all complainants providing a valid response)



Unweighted bases shown in brackets

Those most likely to have found the website useful were:

- Those satisfied (very/fairly satisfied) with the case outcome (85%);
- Those satisfied (very/fairly satisfied) with the Legal Ombudsman's professional service (81%);
- Those whose case lasted up to 2 months (72%);
- Those where the case was closed at Resolution Centre stage (70%).

Those more likely to find the website *not* useful were:

- Those dissatisfied (very/fairly dissatisfied) with Legal Ombudsman's professional service (35%);
- Those whose case lasted 7+ months (27%);
- Those dissatisfied (very/fairly dissatisfied) with the case outcome (22%).

Complainants who had not found the Legal Ombudsman's website useful were asked how it could be improved, on an unprompted basis. Due to the small sample size, it was not possible to create a code frame for the question, but the verbatim responses are shown below:

"There seems to be more information for solicitors and they seem more biased towards solicitors, rather than clients."

"The website was extremely confusing, about when you should contact the Legal Ombudsman, i.e. at what stage of the case. It should be made crystal clear which body you should contact, in which case."

"Targeted for the legal profession not the consumer."

"They can be more honest and transparent They say that they are impartial but they are not."

"I only used it to get the number."

"I felt it was hard navigating round just to get a number."

"The fact that they can't do very much about anything."

"It didn't give any information about what they did and how they went about doing it."

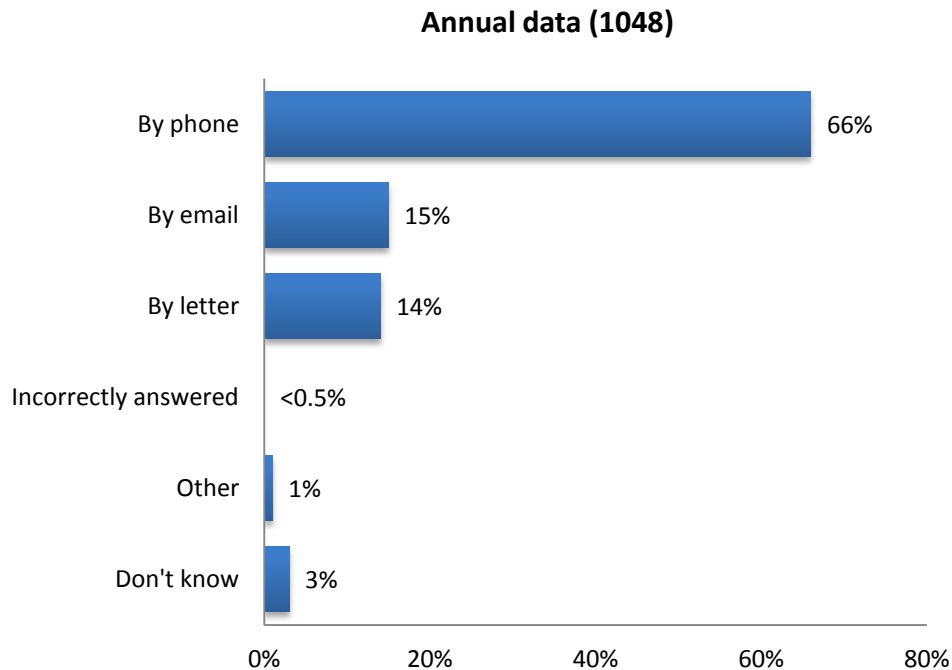
"The problem was that it didn't discuss individual names of the solicitor that people were having problems with. There were literally one or two cases listed on the site."

"I don't think anything could be improved. I just think you need personal advice, rather than the website information."

Twenty-three complainants had found out about the Legal Ombudsman via the Legal Ombudsman's leaflet. Of these, 8 found it useful (rating 4-5), 9 found it 'average' (rating 3) and 5 did not find it useful (rating 1-2). One further respondent felt unable to respond.

Two thirds of complainants first made contact with the Legal Ombudsman by telephone. About one in seven each made initial contact by email and letter.

Figure 6: Q6 How first contact was made with the Legal Ombudsman (all complainants)



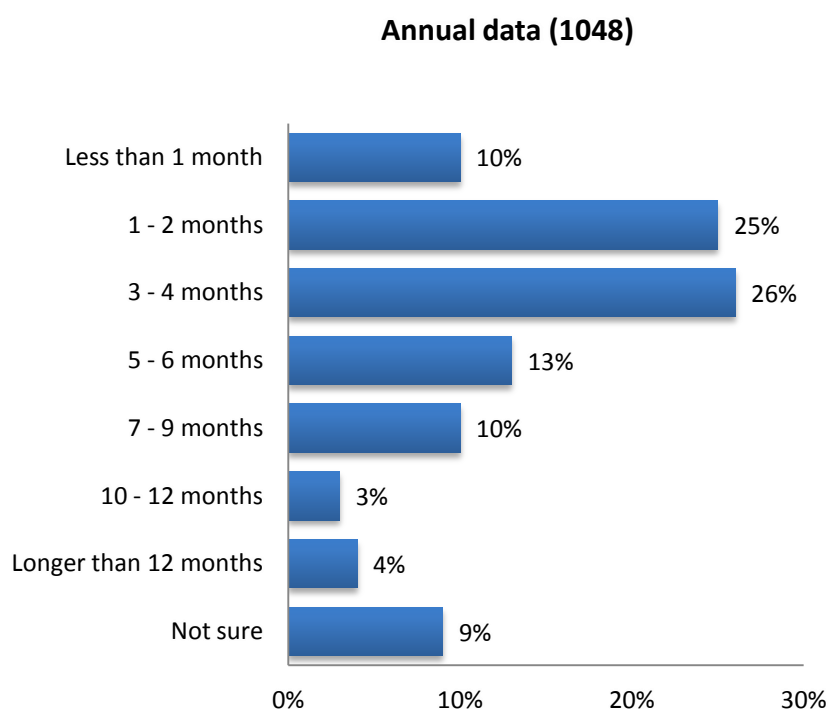
Unweighted bases shown in brackets

Method of initial contact was generally determined by age group. 66+ year olds were much more likely to contact the Legal Ombudsman by letter (29%) than other age groups, whilst 36-45 year olds were much more likely to phone (76%). Females (71%) were also more likely to phone than males (58%).

3.4 Length of case

The majority of cases lasted between 1 and 6 months, however some complainants felt they had taken much longer; in a small number of cases longer than 12 months.

Figure 7: Q7 Time taken to resolve the case (all complainants)

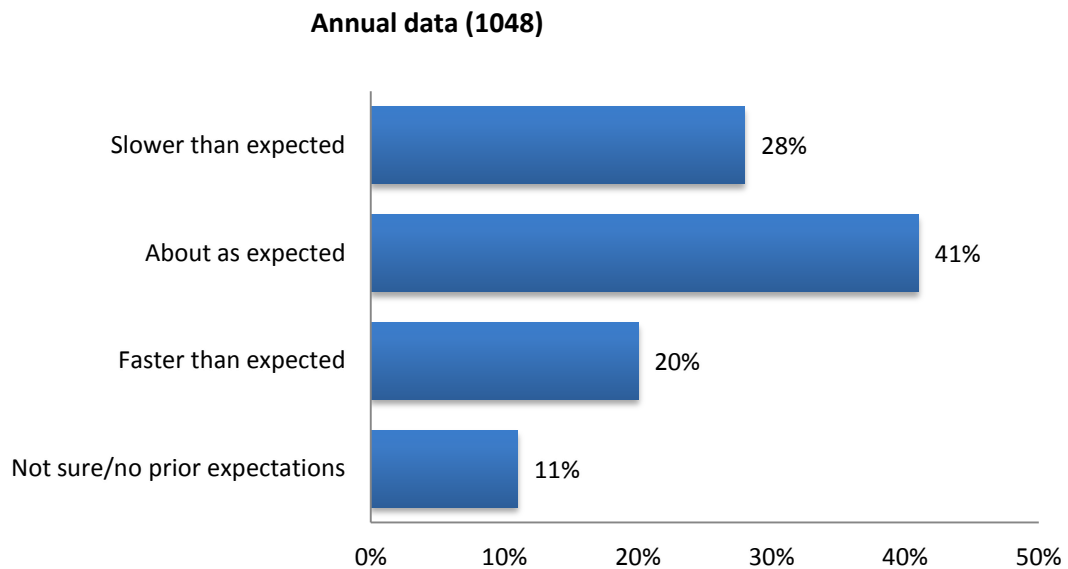


Unweighted bases shown in brackets

As might be expected, perceptions of length of case were closely aligned with closure stage. A third (32%) of those reaching Ombudsman stage took more than 6 months to complete. In contrast, almost a half of those not being progressed (ie closing before reaching Assessment Centre Stage) lasted up to 2 months.

Just under three in ten complainants felt that the time taken to complete the case was slower than expected, whilst one in five felt it was faster than expected. Four in ten felt it was about as expected, whilst one in ten had had no prior expectations.

Figure 8: Q8 Whether the time taken was slower, faster or about as expected (all complainants)



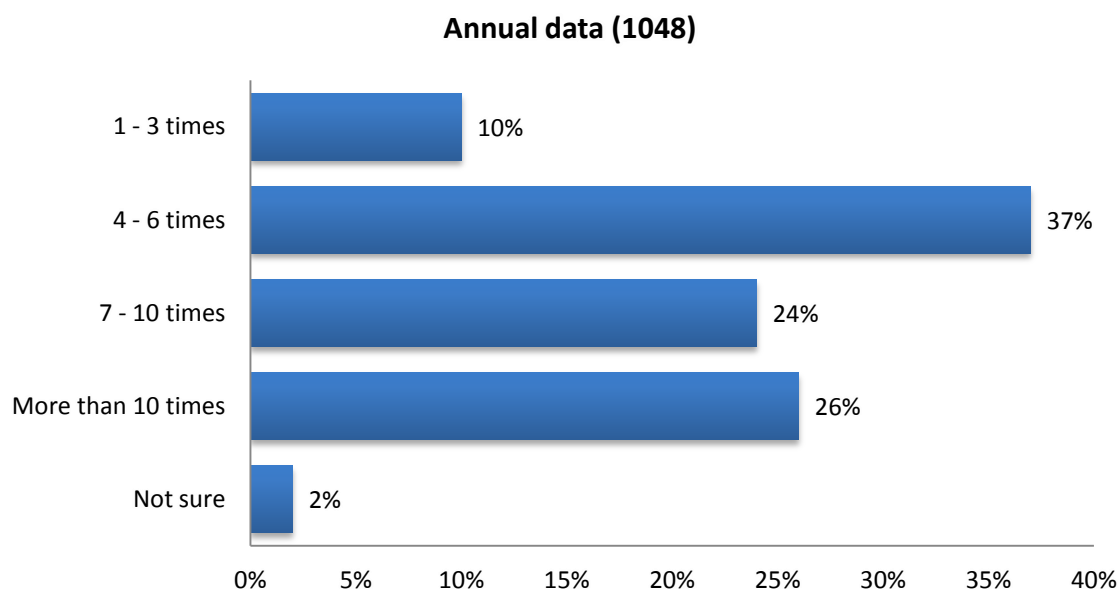
Unweighted bases shown in brackets

The speed of case followed closely the perceived length of case, with complainants who had been involved in cases lasting 7+ months much more likely to say the case had been slower than expected (65%).

3.5 Level of contact with the Legal Ombudsman

The number of times complainants had spoken to or had contact with the Legal Ombudsman varied. One in ten had done so up to 3 times, whilst over a quarter had done so more than 10 times.

Figure 9: Q9 Number of times spoken to / had contact with the Legal Ombudsman (all complainants)

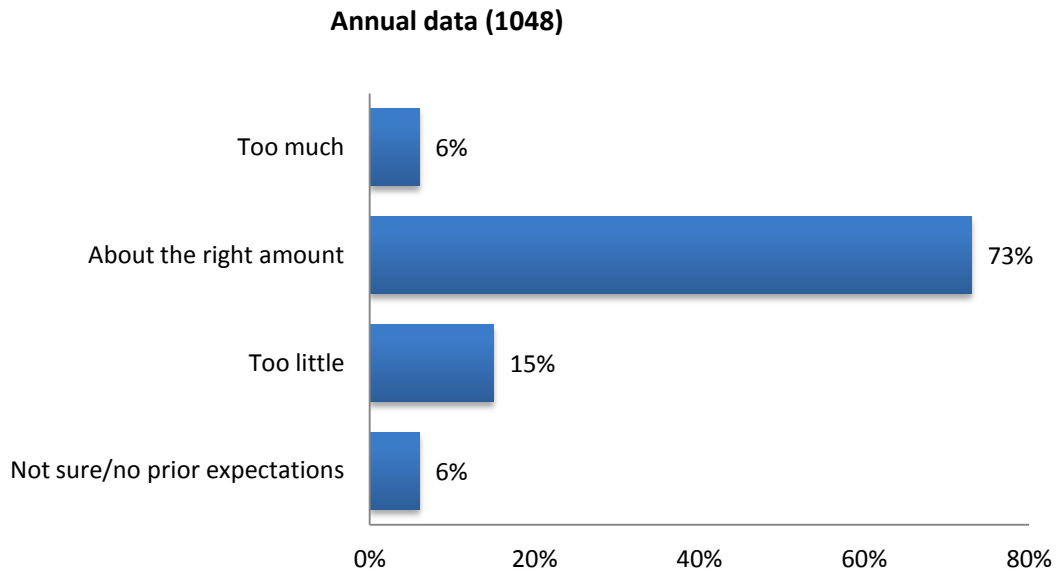


Unweighted bases shown in brackets

Again the number of times contact was made was closely aligned with closure stage and perceived length of case.

Almost three quarters of complainants felt the amount of contact was about right, with very few saying it was too much or too little.

Figure 10: Q10 Whether the amount of contact was too little, too much or about the right amount (all complainants)



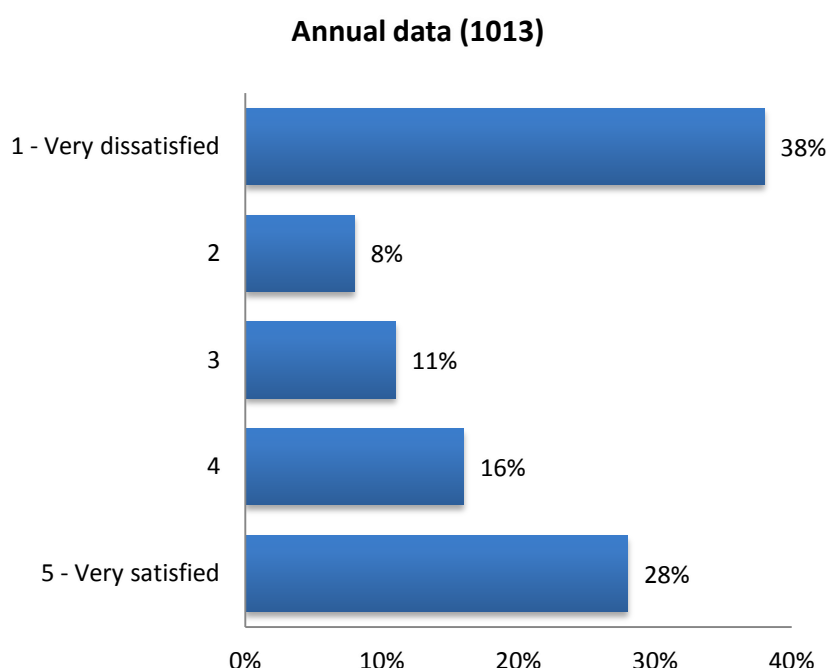
Unweighted bases shown in brackets

3.6 Satisfaction with the outcome

Whilst complainants were reminded throughout the interview, to provide responses irrespective of the outcome of the case, it was felt important to monitor their perceptions against the outcome. Thus, they were asked how satisfied they had been with the outcome.

Overall, similar proportions of complainants were satisfied (43% rating very/fairly satisfied) or dissatisfied (46% rating very/fairly dissatisfied).

Figure 11: Q19 Satisfaction with the outcome of the case (all complainants providing a valid response)



Unweighted bases shown in brackets

Those complainants more likely to be satisfied with the case outcome were:

- Those where the case was closed at Resolution Centre stage (55% satisfied);
- Those where length of case was up to 2 months (59%);
- Those who were making their first complaint (45%);
- Those from white ethnic groups (44%).

Those more likely to be dissatisfied were:

- Those where the case was closed at Ombudsman stage (76% dissatisfied);
- Those who had made more than one complaint (62%);
- Those where length of case was perceived as being 7+ months (60%) or 3-6 months (52%);
- Those from BME ethnic groups (54%).

4 Satisfaction with aspects of the Legal Ombudsman service (complainants)

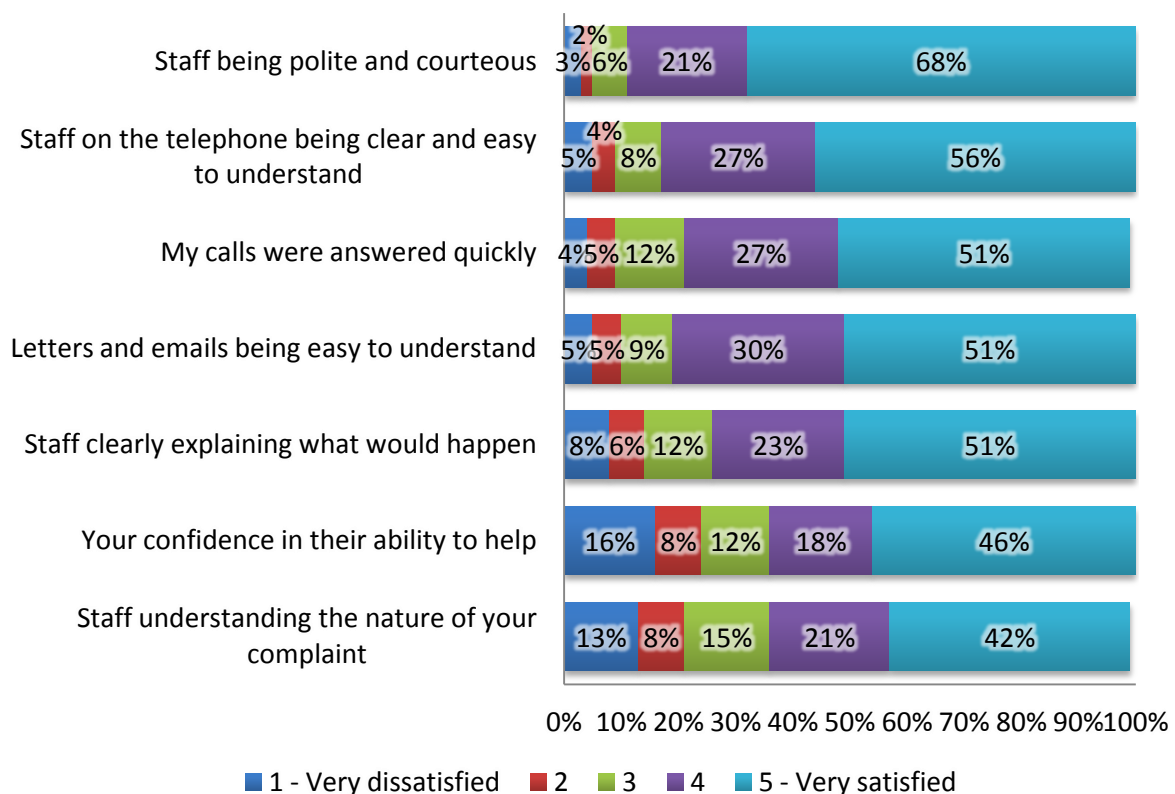
4.1 Satisfaction in initial contact (Assessment Centre stage)

Complainants were asked about the different stages of contact, and how satisfied they were with specific aspects of the service and staff they had contact with at the Legal Ombudsman. The graph below shows the responses (on a 5 point scale, where 1 indicates 'very dissatisfied' and 5 indicates 'very satisfied') for each statement concerning initial contact (Assessment Centre stage). The responses are based on valid responses only, having taken out 'don't know', 'refused' or other invalid responses.

Generally complainants were satisfied with most aspects of initial contact. More than two thirds were 'very satisfied' with staff being polite and courteous, and more than half that staff on the telephone were clear/easy to understand, calls were answered quickly, letters/emails were easy to understand and staff clearly explained what would happen.

There was less satisfaction with complainant's confidence in staff's ability to help and staff understanding the nature of the complaint, with more than one in ten complainants being 'very dissatisfied' with each of these.

Figure 12: Q11 Satisfaction with initial contact with the Legal Ombudsman (all complainants providing a valid response)



Unweighted bases vary

Focussing on those aspects attracting the highest levels of dissatisfaction, those complainants most likely to be 'very dissatisfied' with their confidence in staff's ability to help were:

- Those where the case was closed at Ombudsman stage (34%);
- Those dissatisfied with the outcome of the case (33%);
- Prisoners (29%);
- Those who had made more than one complaint (29%).
- Those whose cases lasted 7+ months (29%).

Those complainants most likely to be 'very dissatisfied' with staff understanding the nature of the complaint were generally the same groups, including:

- Prisoners (37%);
- Those where the case was closed at Ombudsman stage (29%);
- Those who had made more than one complaint (29%);
- Those dissatisfied with the outcome of the case (27%).

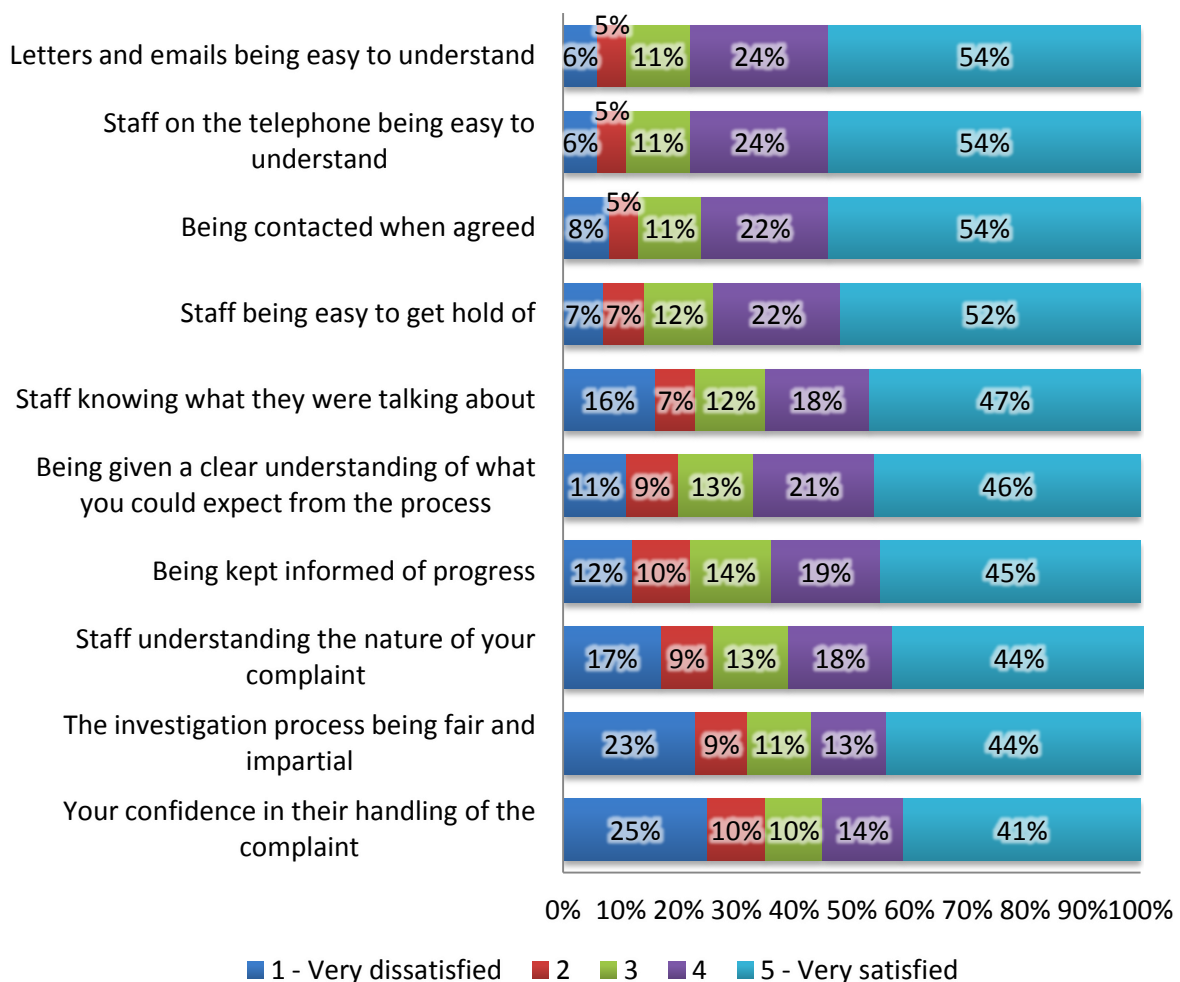
4.2 Satisfaction with the investigator (Resolution Centre stage)

In a similar way to rating of satisfaction with the Assessment Centre, complainants were asked to rate specific aspects of the Resolution Centre.

Again, generally complainants were satisfied with different aspects of the Resolution Centre. More than half were 'very satisfied' with letters/emails being easy to understand, staff on the telephone being easy to understand, being contacted when agreed and staff being easy to get hold of.

However, two aspects attracted sizeable proportions of complainants who were 'very dissatisfied'; confidence in the handling of the complaint and the investigation process being fair, with more than one in five saying this for each of these statements.

Figure 13: Q12 Satisfaction with the investigator (all complainants providing a valid response)



Unweighted bases vary

Again focussing on those aspects attracting the highest levels of dissatisfaction, those complainants most likely to be 'very dissatisfied' with their confidence in staff's ability to help were:

- Those dissatisfied with the outcome of the case (55%);
- Those where the case was closed at Ombudsman stage (54%);
- Prisoners (43%);
- Those who had made more than one complaint (43%).
- Those whose cases lasted 7+ months (42%).

Those complainants most likely to be 'very dissatisfied' with the investigation process being fair and impartial were:

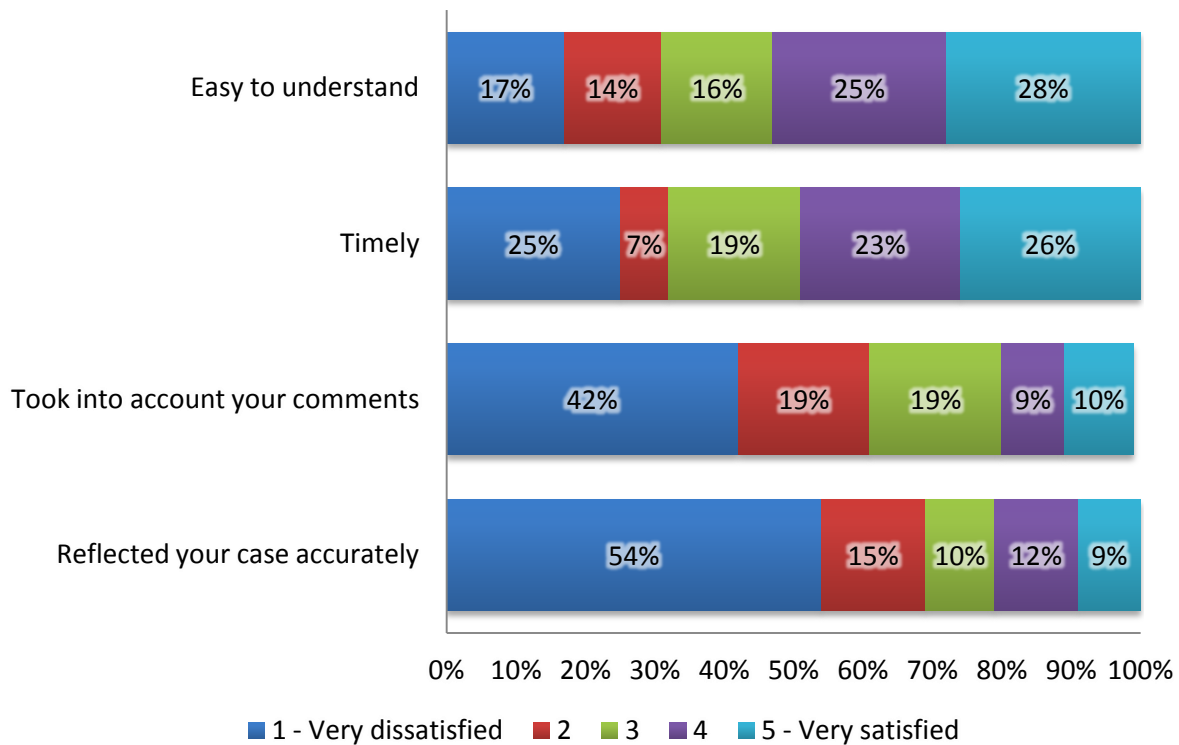
- Those where the case was closed at Ombudsman stage (51%);
- Those dissatisfied with the outcome of the case (50%);
- Prisoners (40%);
- Those whose cases lasted 7+ months (40%);
- Those who had made more than one complaint (38%);
- BME groups (34%).

4.3 Satisfaction with written communication (Ombudsman stage)

Those complainants whose case closed at Ombudsman stage were asked to rate their satisfaction with specific aspects of written communication.

As can be seen below, satisfaction levels were much lower for all aspects of written communication, with dissatisfaction high; particularly in terms of reflecting the case accurately, where more than half were ‘very dissatisfied’.

Figure 14: Q13 Satisfaction with written communication (all complainants providing a valid response)



Unweighted bases vary

As we have seen with earlier analyses, those complainants reaching Ombudsman stage have generally been more dissatisfied across many aspects than other groups. Within this group, perhaps not surprisingly, the key difference is whether the complainant accepted or rejected the Ombudsman's decision.

- 74% of those most likely to be 'very dissatisfied' with how written communication reflected their case accurately were those who rejected the Ombudsman's decision;
- 61% of those most likely to be 'very dissatisfied' with how written communication took into account complainants' comments were those who rejected the Ombudsman's decision;
- 33% of those most likely to be 'very dissatisfied' with how written communication was timely were those who rejected the Ombudsman's decision;

Customer Satisfaction Surveys 2011-2012

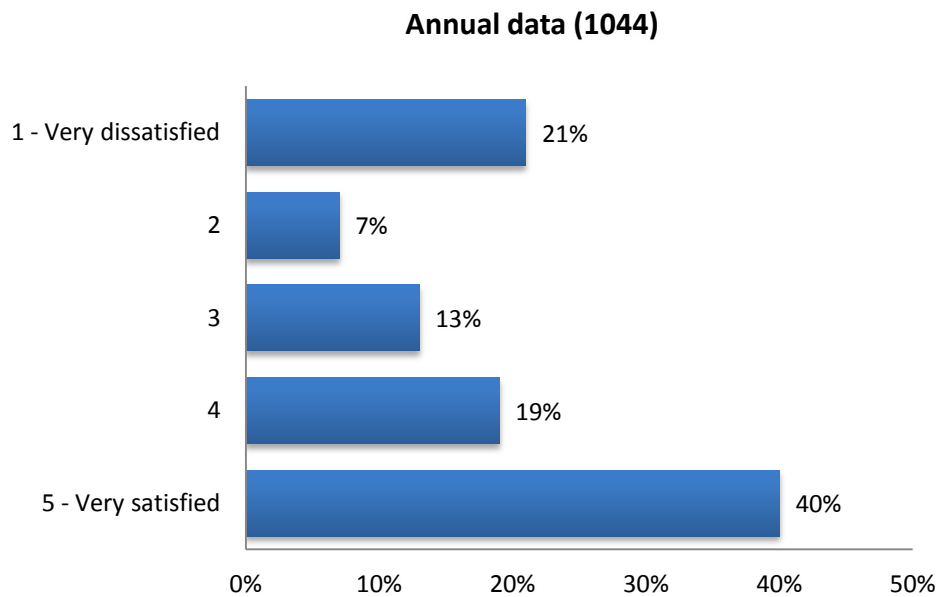
- 28% of those most likely to be 'very dissatisfied' with how easy written communication was to understand were those who rejected the Ombudsman's decision.

5 Overall views of the Legal Ombudsman (complainants)

5.1 Overall satisfaction with the professional service provided by the Legal Ombudsman

Overall, more than seven in ten complainants (72%) were satisfied with the professional service provided by the Legal Ombudsman, whilst just under three in ten (28%) were dissatisfied.

Figure 15: Q14a Overall satisfaction with the professional service provided by the Legal Ombudsman (all complainants providing a valid response)



Unweighted bases shown in brackets

The table below shows clearly that the outcome of case has a big impact on overall satisfaction levels. The figures in bold are significantly higher than their counterparts.

Thus, more than nine in ten of those satisfied with the outcome of their case were also satisfied with the professional service. In contrast six in ten who were dissatisfied with the outcome were also dissatisfied with the professional service.

Figure 16: Q14a Overall satisfaction with the professional service provided by the Legal Ombudsman by outcome of case (all complainants providing a valid response)

	Satisfaction With Outcome Of Case		
	Very/ Fairly satisfied	Satisfied	Very/ Fairly dissatisfied
Very/ fairly satisfied	93%	60%	24%
Satisfied	5%	32%	16%
Very/ fairly dissatisfied	1%	8%	59%
Unweighted Bases	398	109	505

Apart from outcome of case, other aspects which impact on overall satisfaction are shown below. Those more likely to be satisfied with the professional service were:

- Those where length of case was up to 2 months (79% very/fairly satisfied);
- Those where the case was closed at Resolution Centre stage (70%);
- Those from white ethnic groups (64%).

Those more likely to be dissatisfied were:

- Those whose case closed at Ombudsman stage *and* where the complainant rejected the Ombudsman's decision (74% rated very/fairly dissatisfied);
- Those whose case closed at Ombudsman stage irrespective of whether the decision was accepted or rejected (52%)
- Those who had made more than one complaint (46%);
- Those where length of case was 7+ months (44%);
- Those from BME ethnic groups (43%);
- Prisoners (42%).

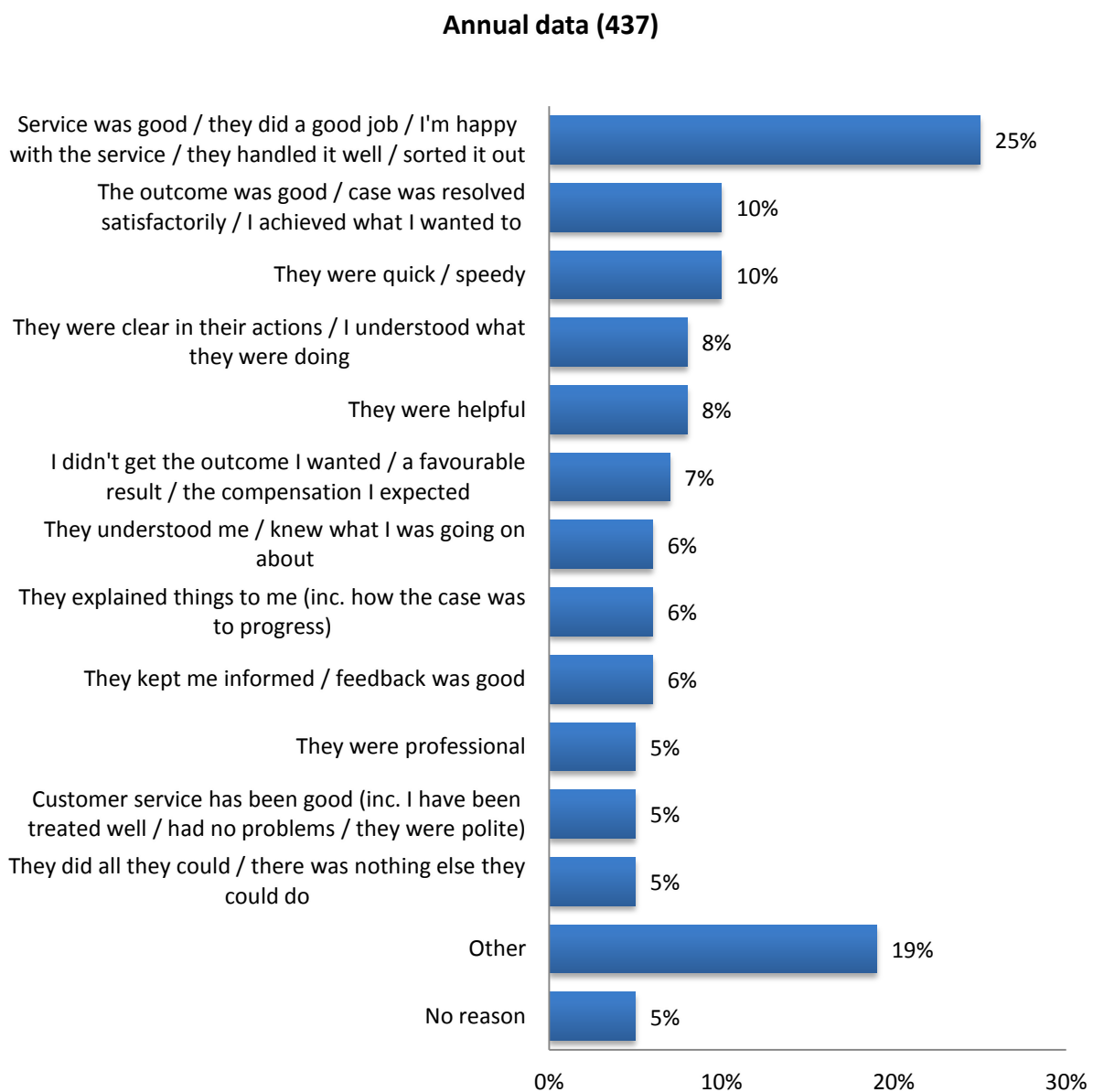
There is a high correlation between many of these determinants of dissatisfaction, for example, prisoners are more likely to be dissatisfied with the outcome and therefore also more likely to be dissatisfied with the professional service.

5.2 Reasons for satisfaction and dissatisfaction

Complainants were asked to explain, on an unprompted basis, the reasons for rating the Legal Ombudsman's overall professional service as they did. The first graph below shows the responses from those saying they were satisfied with the professional service.

A quarter mentioned generally that the service had been good or that the Legal Ombudsman handled the case well. Smaller numbers were more specific saying the outcome was good, the process was quick, they understood the process and that the Legal Ombudsman was helpful.

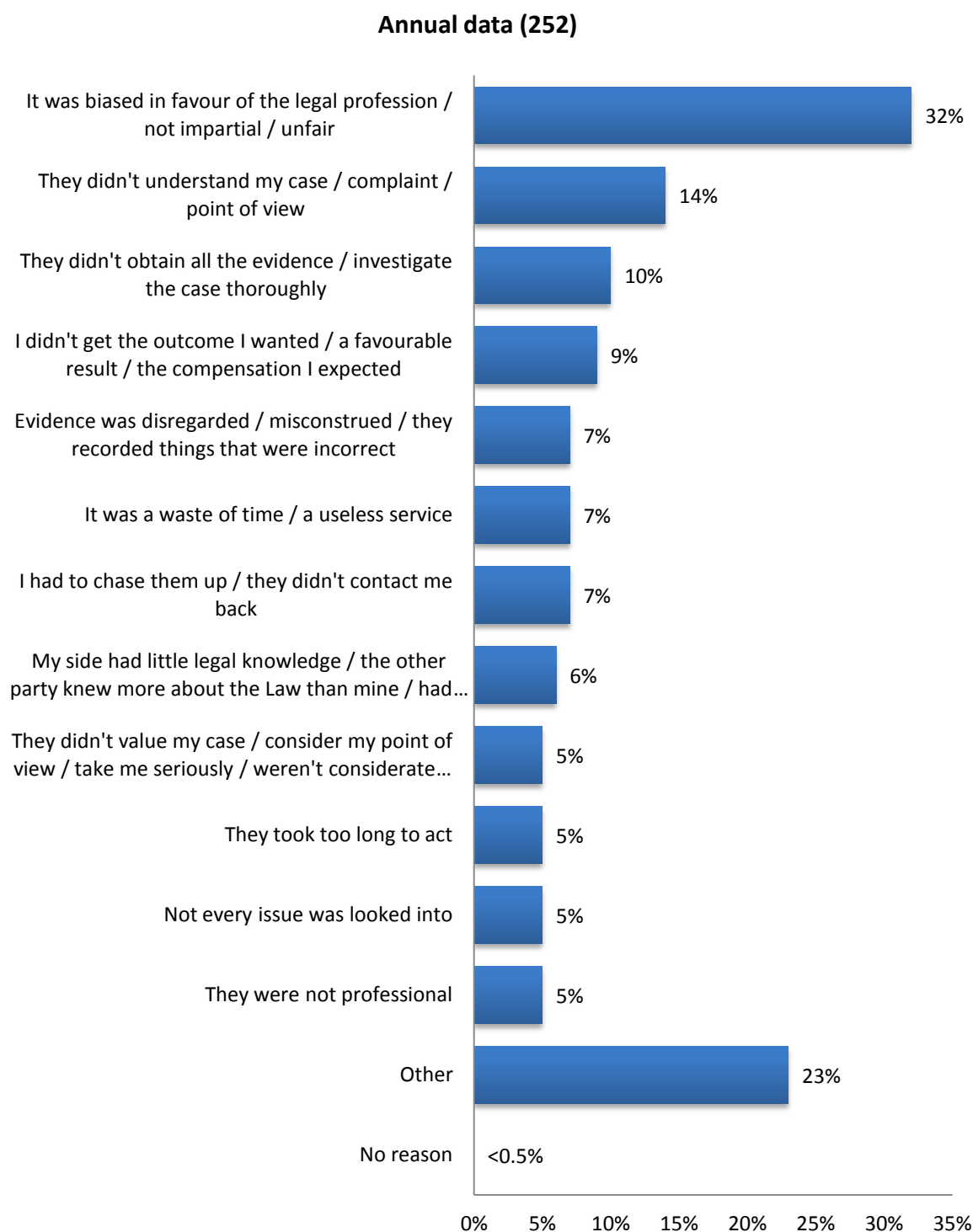
Figure 17: Q14b Reasons for satisfaction with the professional service provided by the Legal Ombudsman - unprompted (where satisfied)



Unweighted bases shown in brackets

Among those who were dissatisfied with the professional service provided by Legal Ombudsman, reasons for this centred on the process being biased in favour of the legal profession or unfair.

Figure 18: Q14b Reasons for dissatisfaction with the professional service provided by the Legal Ombudsman – unprompted (where dissatisfied)

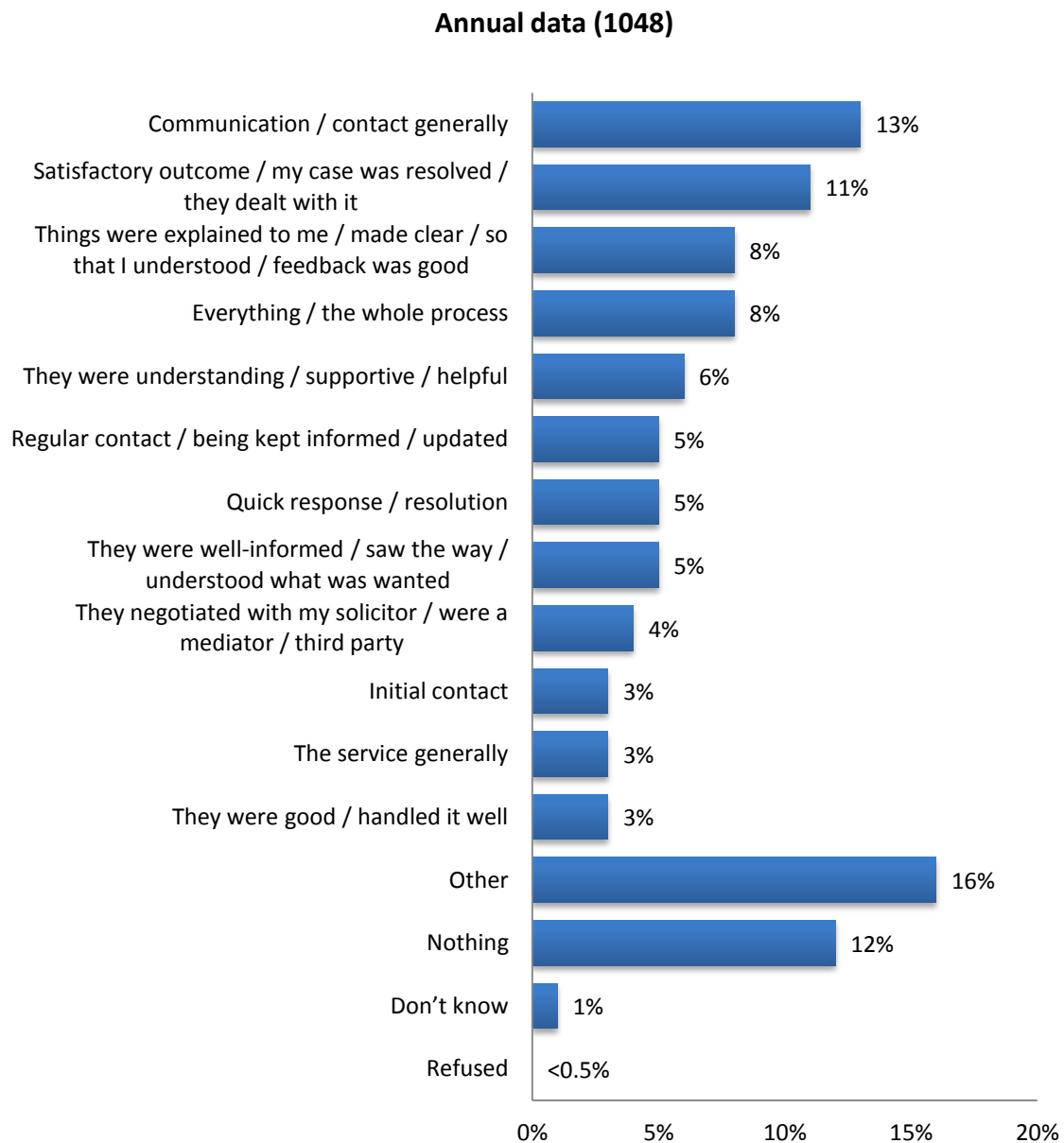


Unweighted bases shown in brackets

5.3 Things that have worked well or could be improved

All complainants were asked (unprompted) what had worked well during the process of the complaint. The main things mentioned included good communication/contact, a satisfactory outcome, good explanations/clarity, and generally the whole process being good.

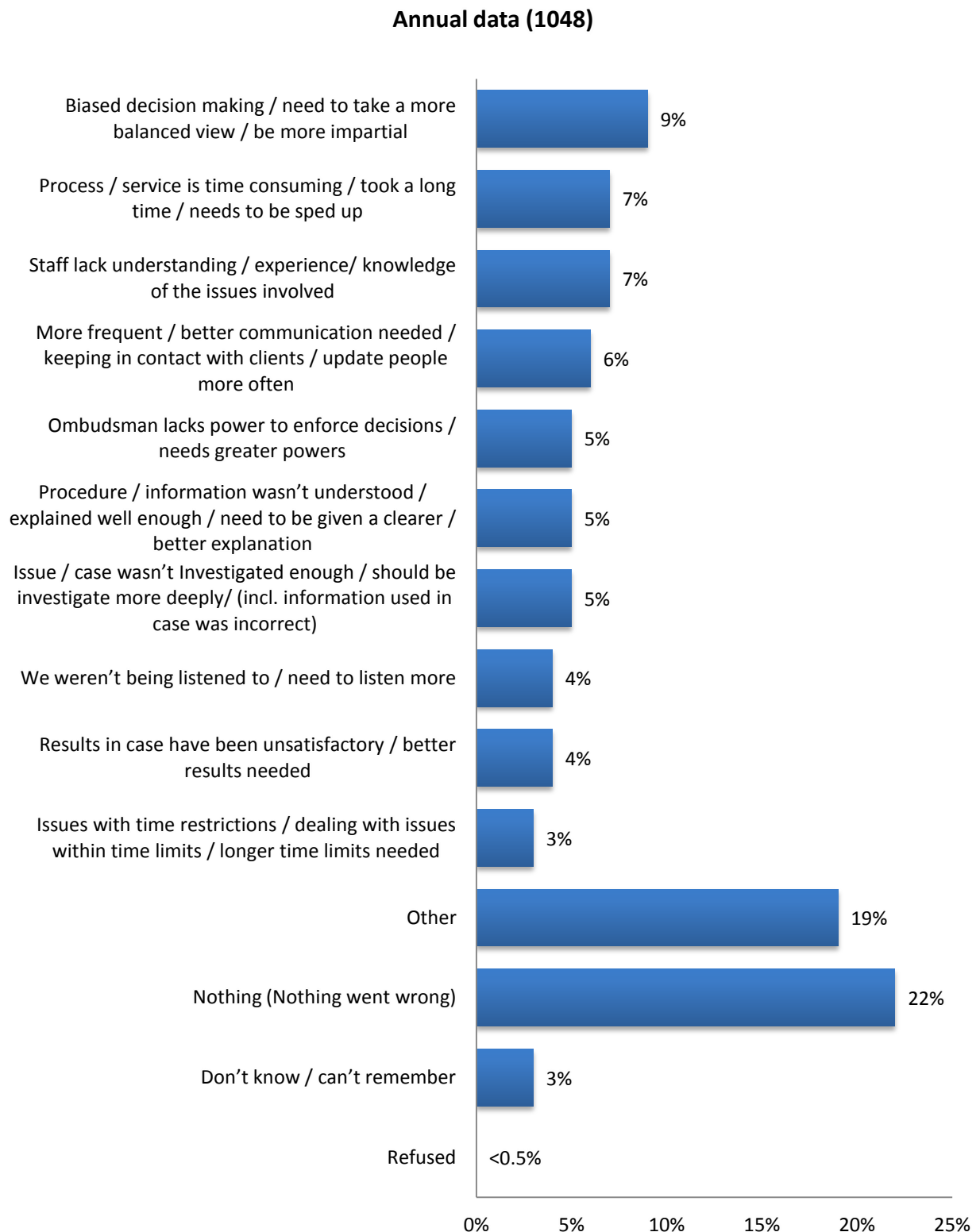
Figure 19: Q15 Things that have worked well - unprompted (all complainants)



Unweighted bases shown in brackets

In terms of things that had not worked so well or could be improved, most of the responses were miscellaneous, with less than one in ten complainants mentioning each. The main ones included biased decision making, the process being too long, staff not understanding the issues and more frequent/better communication needed.

Figure 20: Q16 Things that could be improved (all complainants)

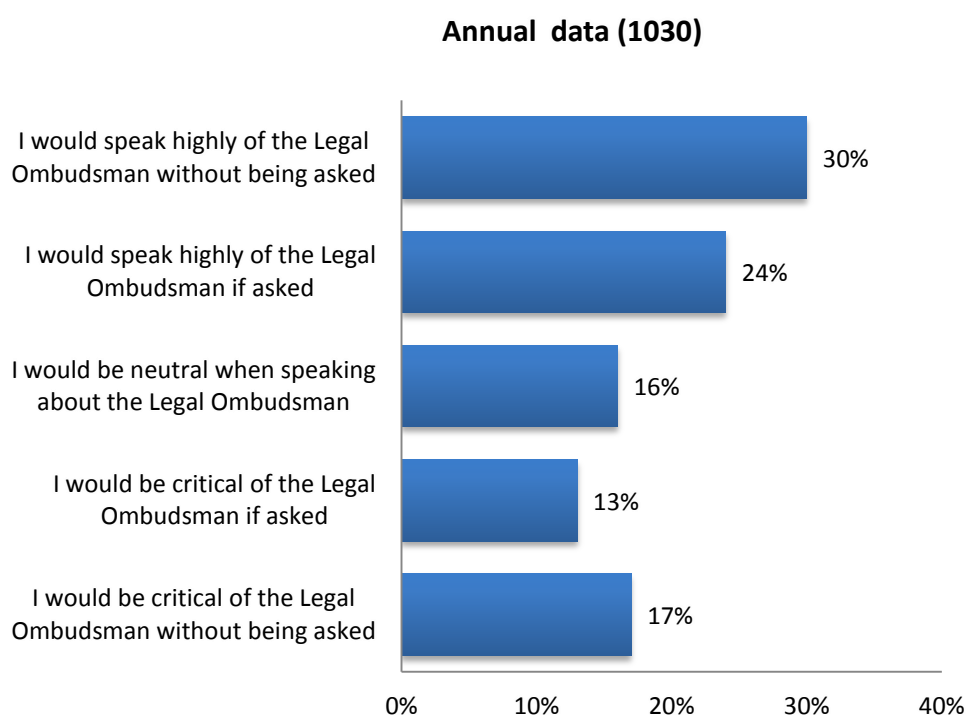


Unweighted bases shown in brackets

5.4 Advocacy

Three in ten complainants would speak highly of the Legal Ombudsman to others without being asked, with a further quarter doing so if asked. However, almost one in five would be critical of the Legal Ombudsman without being asked, and a further one in seven doing so if asked.

Figure 21: Q17 How complainants would speak about the Legal Ombudsman to others (all complainants providing a valid response)



Unweighted bases shown in brackets

Those most likely to speak highly of Legal Ombudsman without being asked were:

- Those satisfied (very/fairly satisfied) with the case outcome (57%);
- Those satisfied (very/fairly satisfied) with the professional service (49%);
- Those whose case length was up to 2 months (41%).

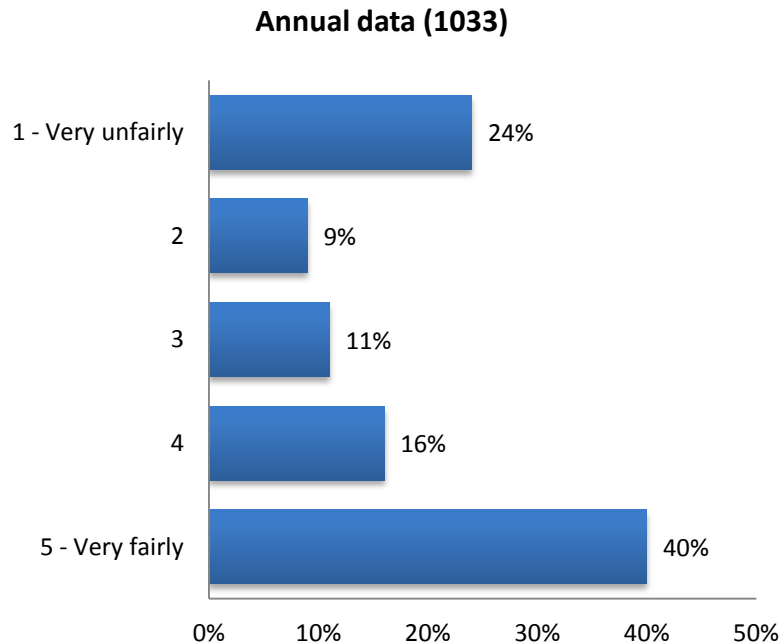
Those most likely to be critical without being asked were:

- Those dissatisfied (very/fairly dissatisfied) with the professional service (50%);
- Those who rejected the Ombudsman's decision (47%);
- Those dissatisfied (very/fairly dissatisfied) with the case outcome (37%);
- Those whose case closed at the Ombudsman stage irrespective of whether they accepted/rejected the Ombudsman's decisions (34%).

5.5 Perceptions of how fairly complainants feel they have been treated

More than a half of complainants (56%) felt they had been treated fairly by the Legal Ombudsman in relation to this complaint (rating 4-5), whilst a third (33%) felt they had been treated unfairly (rating 1-2).

Figure 22: Q18 How fairly complainants have been treated by the Legal Ombudsman (all complainants providing a valid response)



Unweighted bases shown in brackets

Opinions were more varied on this aspect than a lot of other aspects. Those more likely to feel they had been treated fairly were:

- Those satisfied (very/fairly satisfied) with the case outcome (97%);
- Those satisfied (very/fairly satisfied) with the professional service (87%);
- Those whose case length was up to 2 months (76%).

Those most likely to feel they had been treated unfairly were:

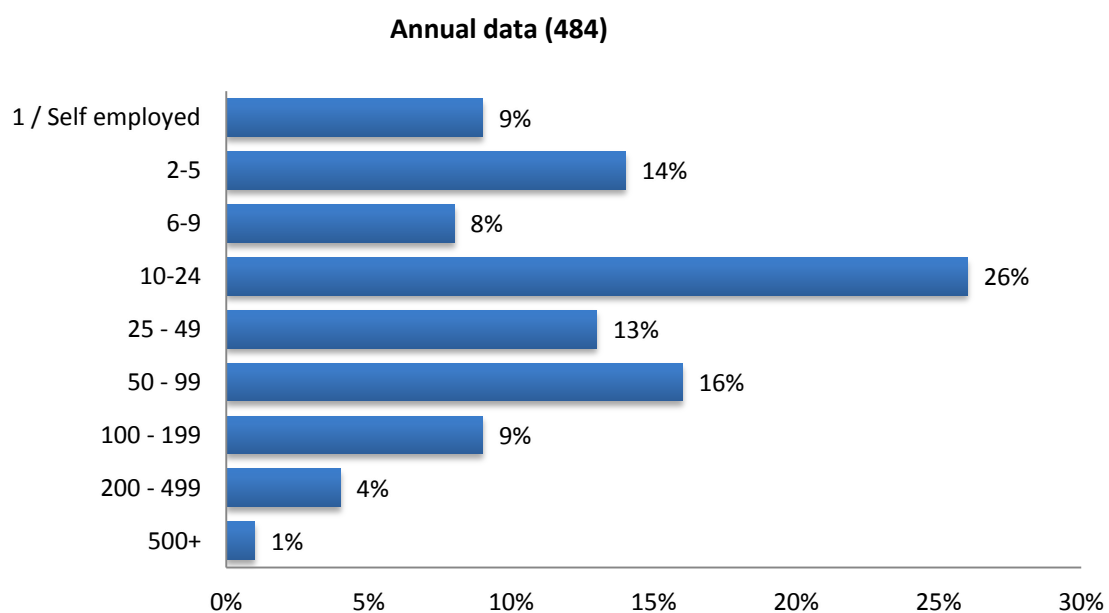
- Those dissatisfied (very/fairly dissatisfied) with the professional service (90%);
- Those who rejected the Ombudsman's decision (88%);
- Those dissatisfied (very/fairly dissatisfied) with the case outcome (73%);
- Those whose case closed at the Ombudsman stage irrespective of whether they accepted/rejected the Ombudsman's decisions (66%).

6 Background and contact with the Legal Ombudsman (lawyers)

6.1 Profile of lawyers

Lawyers' organisations were a broad mix of size bands, with one in ten having just one employee/self employed to one in twenty with 200+ employees.

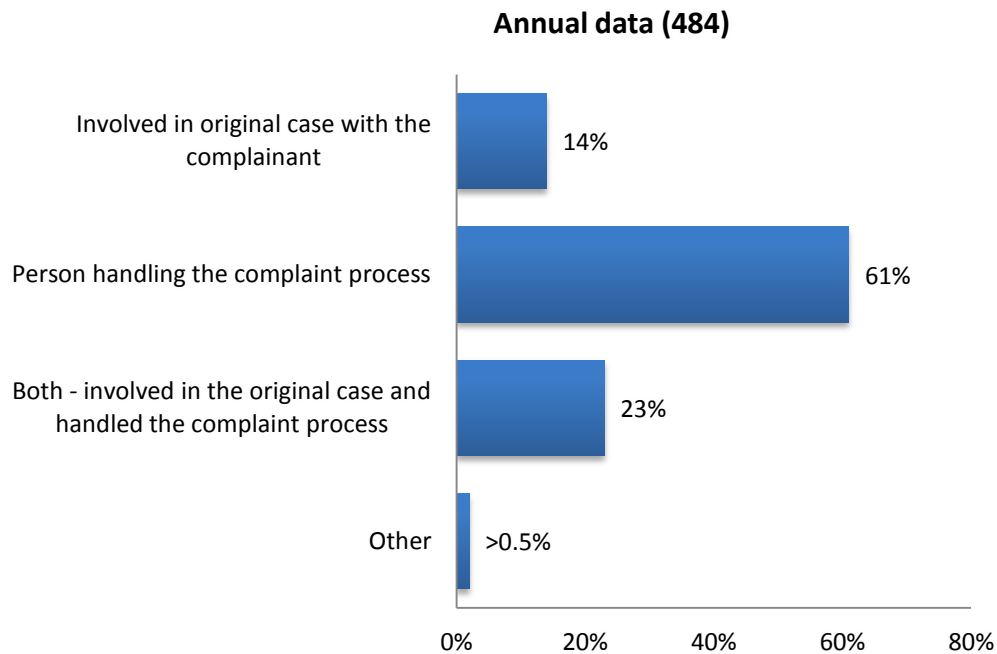
Figure 23: Q1 Size of organisation (all lawyers)



Unweighted bases shown in brackets

In six in ten cases, the lawyer dealing with the Legal Ombudsman was the person handling the complaint process. In one in seven cases it was the person involved in the original case, and in a quarter of cases it was both.

Figure 24: Q1a Whether the respondent is the complaint handler or person being complained about (all lawyers)



Unweighted bases shown in brackets

There were fairly few differences across sub groups. However, those lawyers most likely to be the person handling the complaint process rather than involved in the original case were:

- Those with 50+ employees (81%);
- Those who had been involved with the Legal Ombudsman more than once (73%).

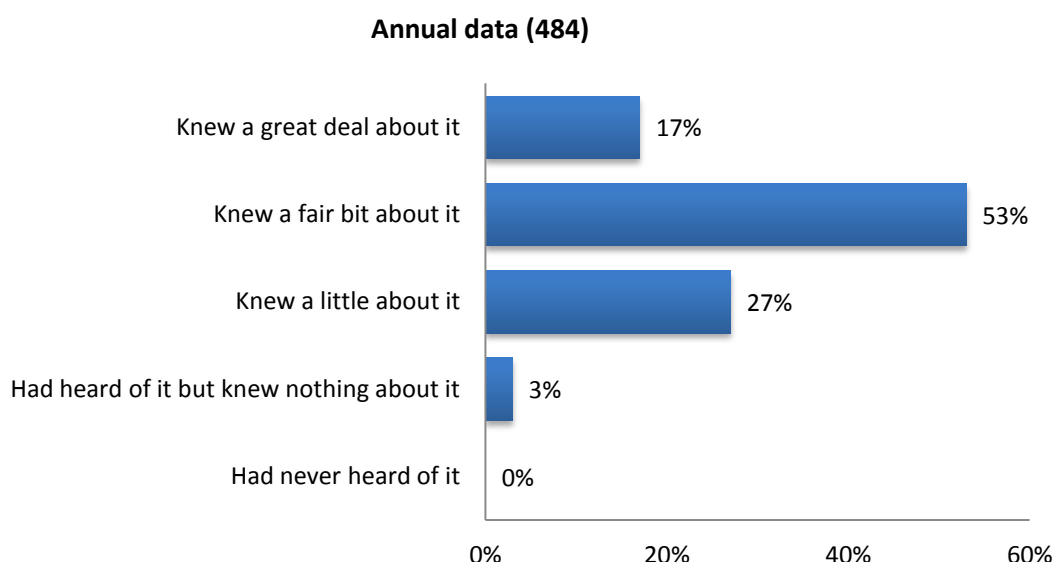
Those lawyers more likely to be the person involved in the original case were:

- Those with 1-5 employees (27%);
- Those who had contact with the Legal Ombudsman 1-3 times (22%);
- Those where the case was the first one they had been involved in (21%).

6.2 Familiarity with the Legal Ombudsman

More than a half of lawyers said they knew a fair bit about the Legal Ombudsman before this complaint, whilst one in six knew a great deal. Very few knew nothing about the organisation, and all lawyers had at least heard of the Legal Ombudsman.

Figure 25: Q2 Level of knowledge of the Legal Ombudsman (all lawyers providing a valid response)

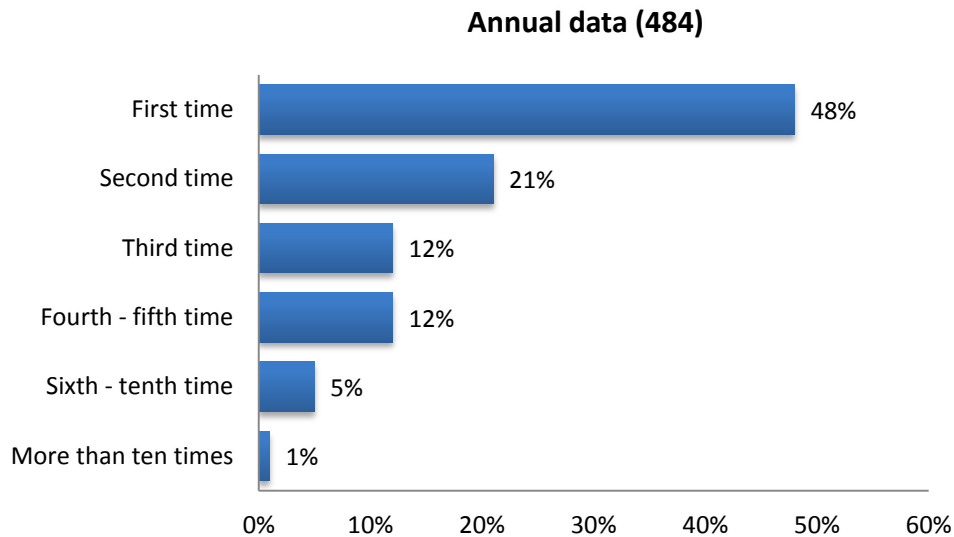


Unweighted bases shown in brackets

Those lawyers with 50+ employees were the most likely to say they knew a great deal about the Legal Ombudsman (31%) compared to 9% of those with 1-5 employees and 11% those with 6-49 employees.

Just under a half of lawyers had only been involved in the one current case with the Legal Ombudsman. In contrast, more than one in twenty had been involved more than 5 times.

Figure 26: Q5 Number of times been involved with the Legal Ombudsman (all lawyers)

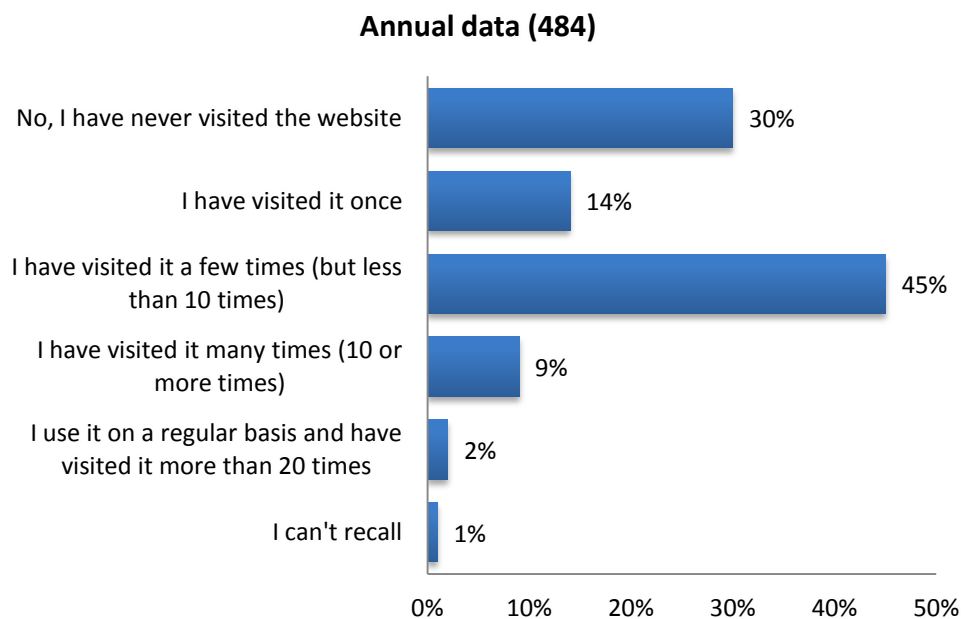


Unweighted bases shown in brackets

6.3 Channels of communication

Seven in ten lawyers said they had visited the Legal Ombudsman website with more than one in ten having visited it at least 10 times.

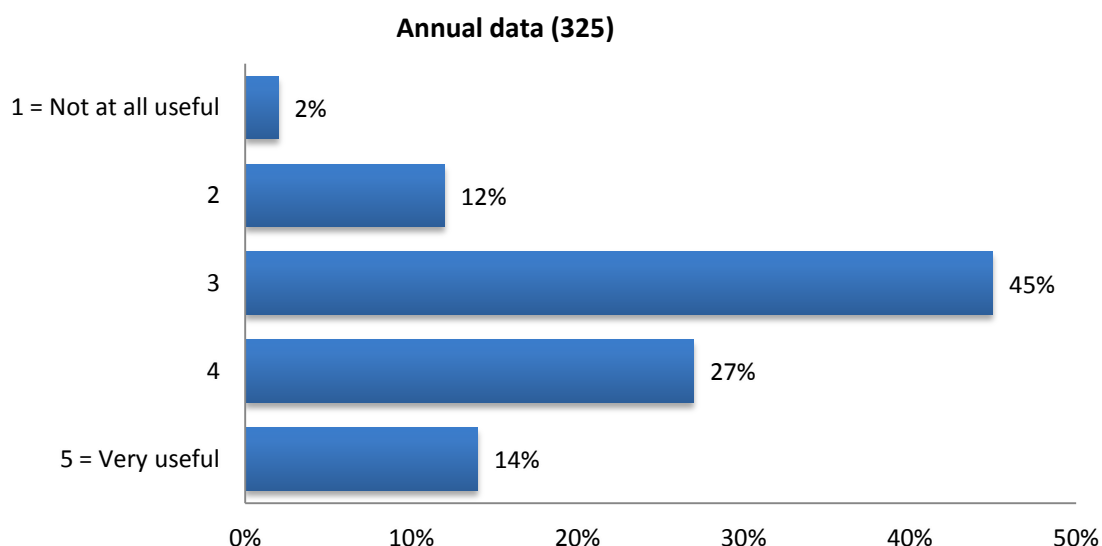
Figure 27: Q3 Number of times used the Legal Ombudsman website (all lawyers)



Unweighted bases shown in brackets

Among those who had visited the Legal Ombudsman's website, more than four in ten (41%) had found the website useful (rating 4-5). In contrast, one in seven (14%) had found the website not useful (rating 1-2).

Figure 28: Q4a Usefulness of the Legal Ombudsman website (all lawyers providing a valid response)



Unweighted bases shown in brackets

Those lawyers more likely to find the website not useful were

- Those who had rejected the Ombudsman's decision (24%);
- Those who were both complaint handler and person being complained about (23%).

Lawyers who found the website not very/not at all useful were asked why not or how it could be improved. Their verbatim comments are shown below:

"It didn't give me any information I wasn't aware of or needed."

"It needs to show how decisions are made and that they are impartial, which unfortunately, at the moment they are not."

"It is designed to assist the complainants rather than legal professionals."

"It's rather predictable in its content, as it has not offered me anything I didn't already know."

"For practitioners, it's not very precise and does not clearly explain the Ombudsman's remit."

"There needs to be clear information about the procedure which should be coming from the Legal Ombudsman. It would be useful to provide guidelines on compensation."

"Provide more information on level of conciliation payments. Legal Ombudsman have these internally as far as I am aware. If this was made

available, it would assist us in pitching the conciliation payment at the correct level.”

“More aimed at complainers, rather than the people whom receive the complaint.”

“I don’t remember it as being particularly informative. I think I just logged in to examine the process.”

“Provide information on how to deal with a complaint and what are the ground rules when the Legal Ombudsman receives a complaint about a lawyer.”

“We found it difficult to source the relevant information on how their decisions are reached.”

“Stories? What’s that about? I found it patronising, even to the people who complain! Having stories implies an element of fiction, so actually may not be to off when I think about it!”

“No facilities on the website to give any advice.”

“It doesn’t have much guidance for solicitors.”

“It’s information is misleading, can lead to mistakes and misunderstandings.”

“Too much complainant orientated.”

“Search facility”

“There seems to be a lack of ease to find guidance on the process that the LeO follows and the circumstances in which the £400 does and does not apply.”

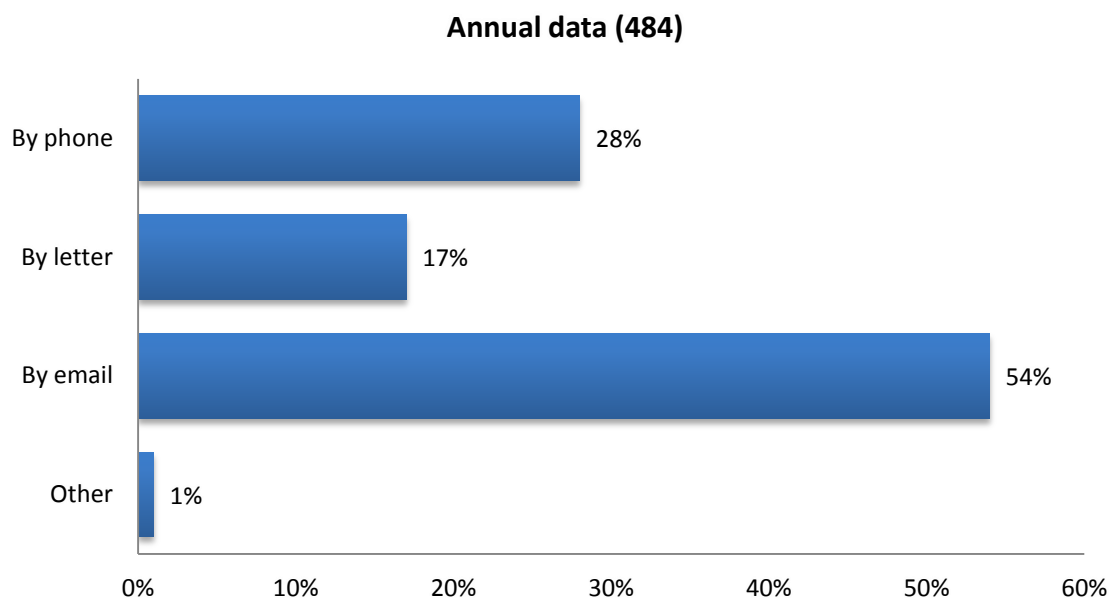
“The site needs to be more easily navigable.”

“The way one can navigate is very old fashioned.”

“Did not seem to address whatever point I was looking for help with.”

More than a half of lawyers said the main method of contact between them and the Legal Ombudsman was email. Just under three in ten used the phone and one in six corresponded by letter.

Figure 29: Q6 Main method of contact with the Legal Ombudsman (all lawyers)



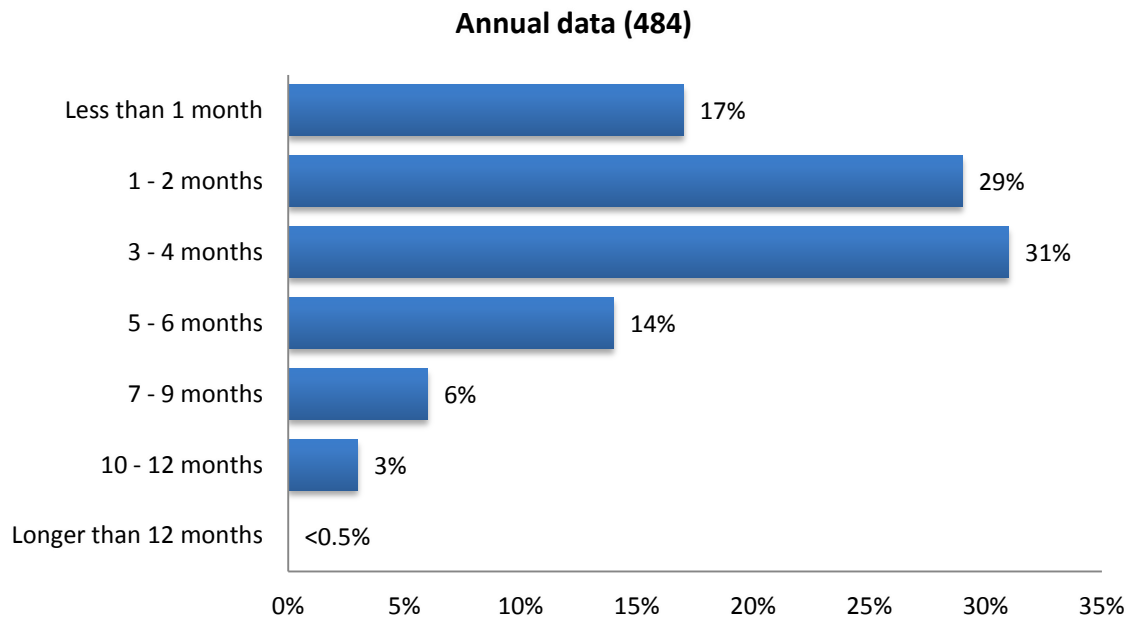
Unweighted bases shown in brackets

Larger organisations (65% of those with 50+ employees) were even more likely to use email as their main means of communication.

6.4 Length of case

The length of case varied from one in six lawyers saying less than one month to one in ten saying longer than 7 months.

Figure 30: Q7 Time taken to resolve the case (all lawyers)

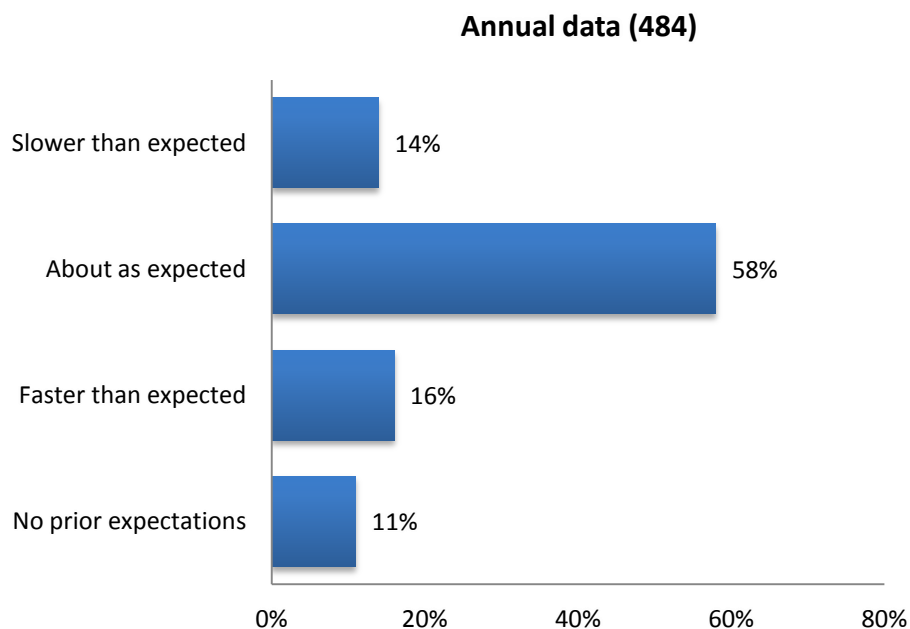


Unweighted bases shown in brackets

Not surprisingly, perceived length of case closely corresponded to the stage at which the case was closed. 51% of complainants that did not reach Assessment Centre stage were resolved within 2 months, whilst in contrast, 26% of those closing at Ombudsman stage lasted at least 7 months.

The majority of lawyers felt the length of case was about expected, whilst about one in six each felt it was slower or faster than expected.

Figure 31: Q8 Whether the time taken was slower, faster or about as expected (all lawyers proving a valid response)



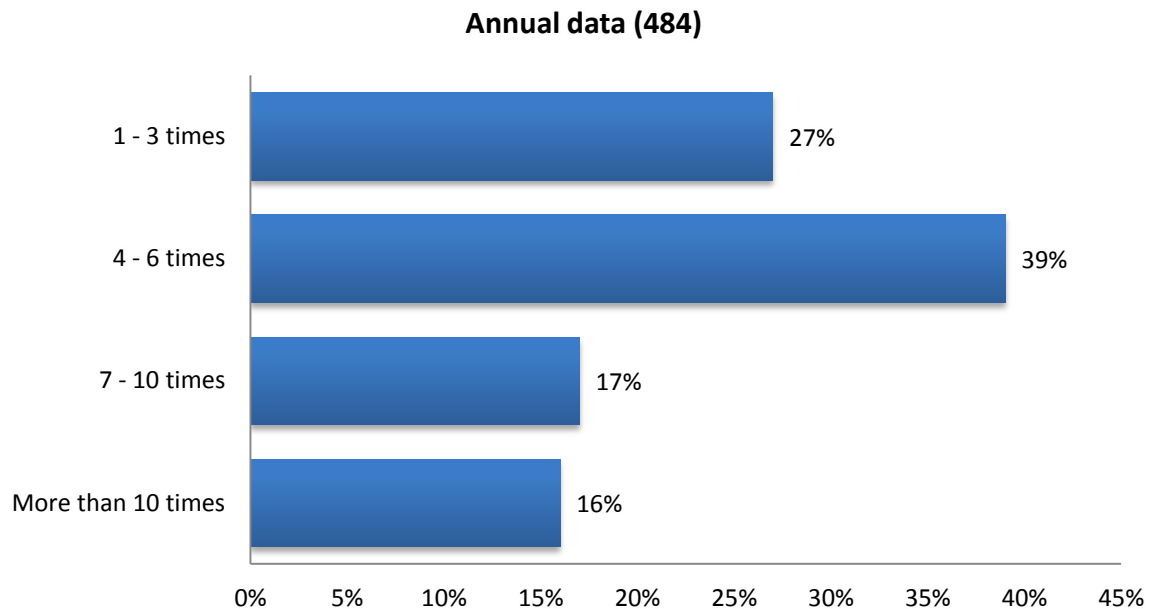
Unweighted bases shown in brackets

Those with 50+ employees were more likely to feel the case had progressed as expected (67%), whilst those with 1-5 employees were more likely to feel it had been slower than expected (19%).

6.5 Number of times contacted the Legal Ombudsman

The number of times that lawyers spoke to or had contact with the Legal Ombudsman for the case varied. More than a quarter had only been in contact 1-3 times, whilst one in six had been in contact more than 10 times.

Figure 32: Q9 Number of times had contact with /spoken to the Legal Ombudsman about the case (all lawyers)

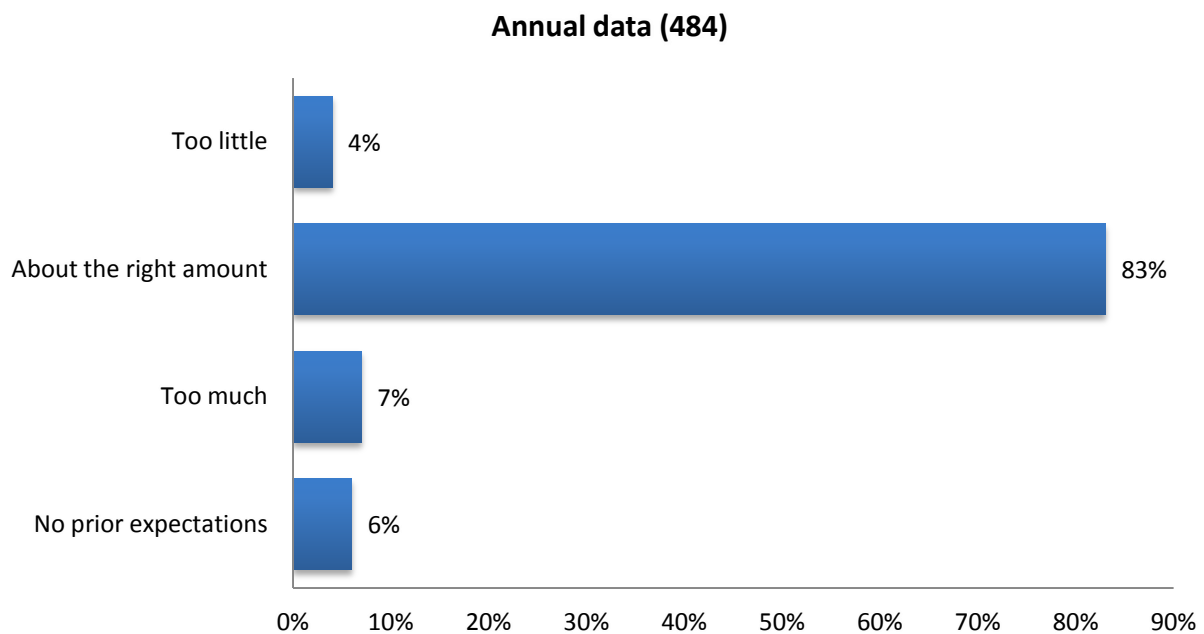


Unweighted bases shown in brackets

Again, the number of times lawyers had been in contact with the Legal Ombudsman related closely to the stage at which the case was closed as well as the length of case.

The vast majority of lawyers felt the amount of contact had been about right.

Figure 33: Q10 Whether the amount of contact was too little, too much or about the right amount (all lawyers providing a valid response)



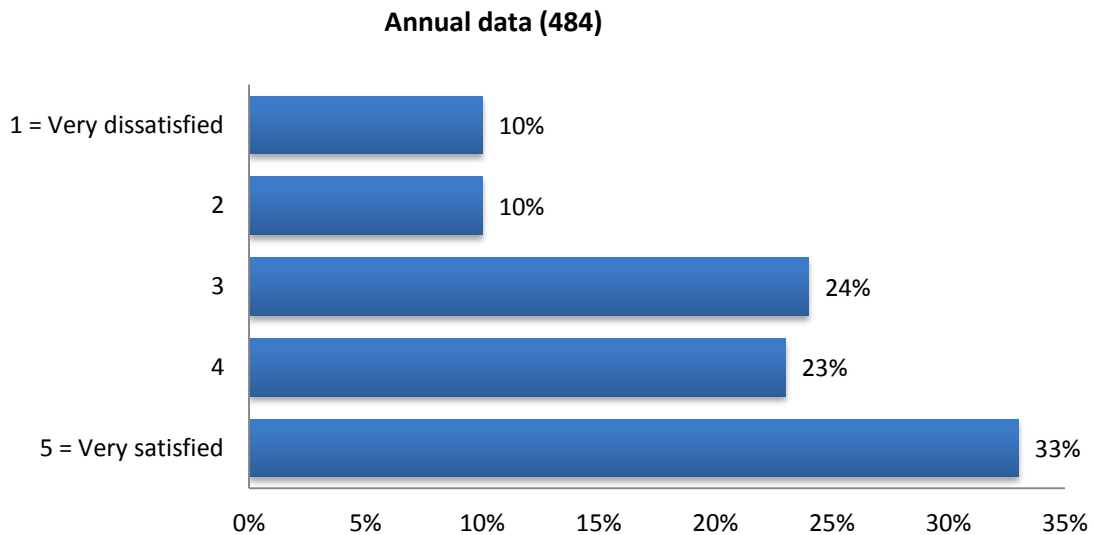
Unweighted bases shown in brackets

Interestingly, those lawyers whose case closed at Ombudsman stage were more likely to feel the amount of contact was too little (8%) or too much (14%) than those whose case closed earlier.

6.6 Satisfaction with the outcome

More than a half of lawyers were satisfied (rating very/fairly satisfied) with the outcome of the case. In contrast, one in twenty were dissatisfied (rating very/fairly dissatisfied).

Figure 34: Q18 Satisfaction with the outcome of the case (all lawyers providing a valid response)



Unweighted bases shown in brackets

Those lawyers more likely to be satisfied were:

- Those whose fee was waived (76% very/fairly satisfied);
- Those whose case did not progress to Assessment Stage (69%);
- Those who had contact with the Legal Ombudsman 1-3 times (69%);
- Those whose case lasted up to 2 months (68%);
- Those who rejected the Ombudsman's decision (67%);
- Those with 50+ employees (65%).

Those more likely to be dissatisfied were:

- Those where the complainant had accepted the Ombudsman's decision (62%);
- Those whose case closed at Ombudsman stage (35%);
- Those whose case lasted 7+ months (29%);
- Those who had contact with the Legal Ombudsman 7+ times (29%).

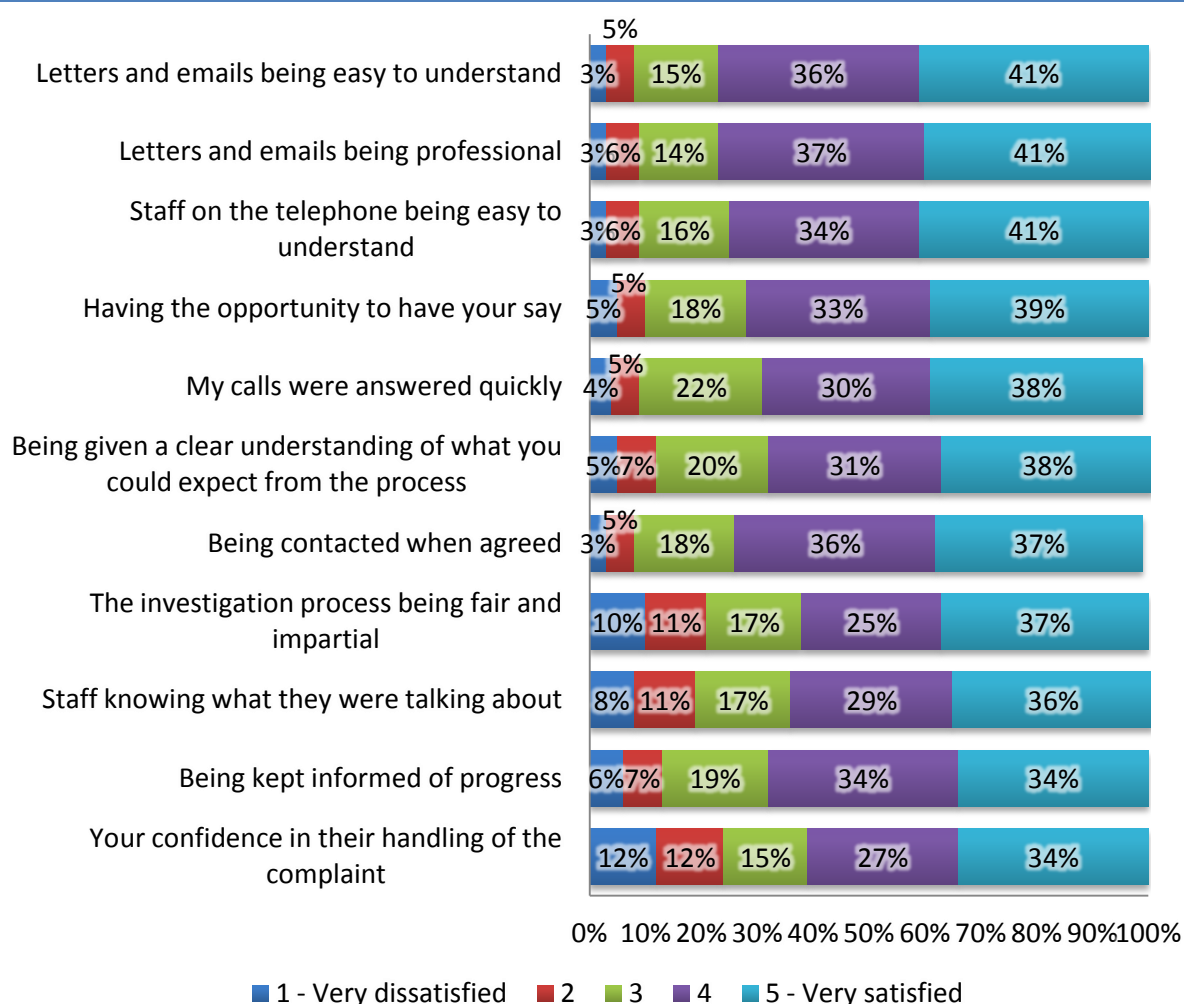
7 Satisfaction with aspects of the Legal Ombudsman service (lawyers)

7.1 Satisfaction with the investigator (Resolution Centre stage)

Lawyers are generally satisfied with aspects of the investigator, with each aspect being rated satisfactory (rating 4-5) by more than a half of lawyers. Indeed, more than four in ten were each 'very satisfied' with letters/emails being easy to understand, letters/emails being professional and staff on the telephone being easy to understand.

Those areas attracting the highest levels of 'very dissatisfied' lawyers were confidence in the Legal Ombudsman handling of the complaint, the investigation process being fair and staff knowing what they were talking about.

Figure 35: Q11 Satisfaction with the investigator (all lawyers providing a valid response)



Unweighted bases shown in brackets

Once again, focussing on those aspects which received a higher number of negative responses, those more likely to be 'very dissatisfied' with their confidence in Legal Ombudsman handling the complaint were:

- Those who were dissatisfied with the case outcome (45%);
- Those where the complainant had accepted the Ombudsman's decision (29%);
- Those whose case lasted 7+ months (26%);
- Those whose case closed at Ombudsman stage (21%);

Those more likely to be 'very dissatisfied' with the investigation process being fair were:

- Those who were dissatisfied with the case outcome (39%);
- Those whose case lasted 7+ months (20%).

Those more likely to be 'very dissatisfied' with the staff knowing what they were talking about were:

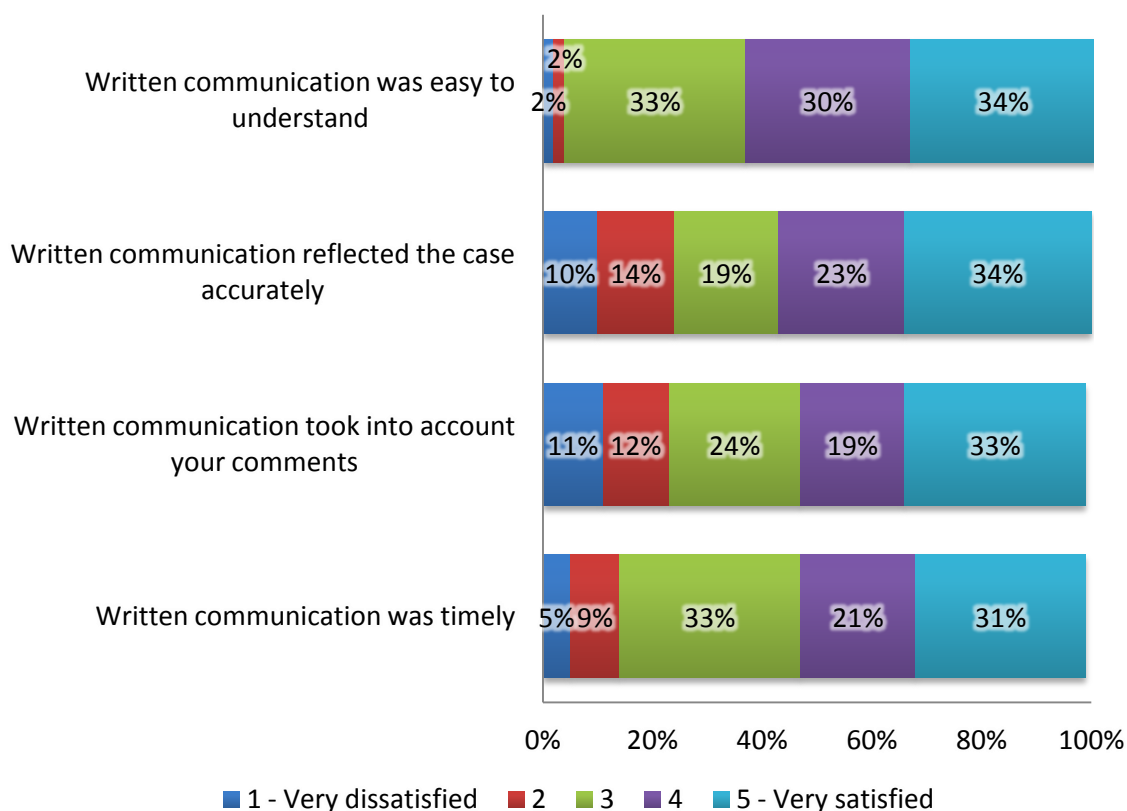
- Those who were dissatisfied with the case outcome (26%);
- Those whose case lasted 7+ months (19%).

7.2 Satisfaction with written communications (Ombudsman stage)

Where the case was closed at Ombudsman stage, lawyers were asked how satisfied they were with specific aspects of written communication.

Again, more than a half of lawyers were satisfied (rating 4-5) with all aspects of written communication. However, at least one in five were each dissatisfied (rating 1-2) that written communication reflected the case accurately and that it took into account their comments.

Figure 36: Q12 Satisfaction with written communications (all lawyers providing a valid response)



Unweighted bases shown in brackets

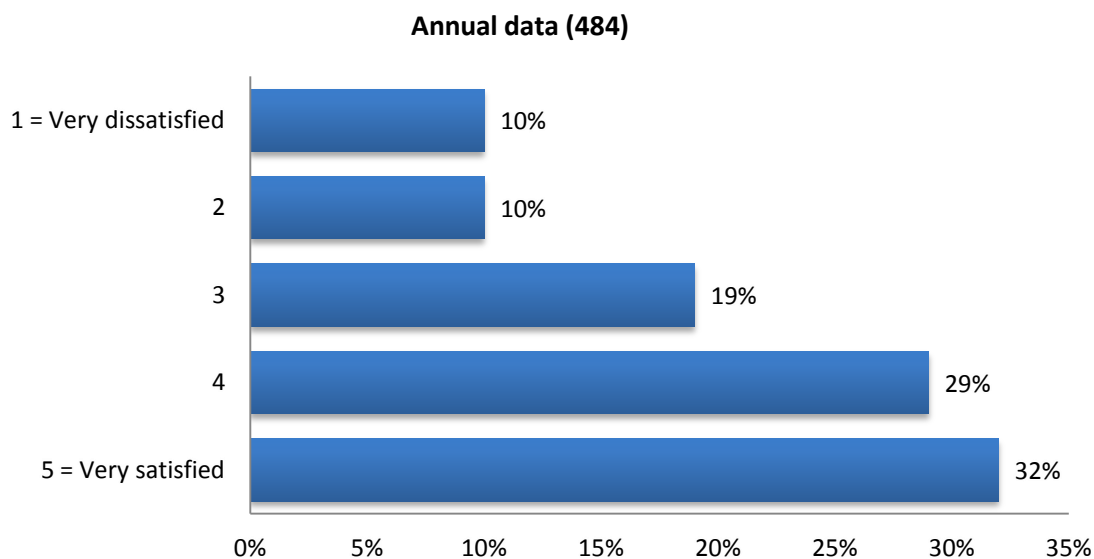
There were few significant differences across sub groups due to small sample sizes.

8 Overall views of the Legal Ombudsman (lawyers)

8.1 Overall satisfaction with the professional service

Eight in ten lawyers (80%) were satisfied with the professional service provided by the Legal Ombudsman, whilst one in five (20%) were dissatisfied.

Figure 37: Q13a Satisfaction with the professional service provided by the Legal Ombudsman (all lawyers providing a valid response)



As the table below shows, those lawyers satisfied with the case outcome were much more likely to be satisfied with Legal Ombudsman's professional service. Figures shown in bold are significantly higher.

Figure 38: Q13a Satisfaction with the professional service provided by the Legal Ombudsman by outcome of case (all lawyers providing a valid response)

	Satisfaction With Outcome Of Case		
	Very/ Fairly satisfied	Satisfied	Very/ Fairly dissatisfied
Very/ fairly satisfied	86	44	11
Satisfied	10	39	24
Very/ fairly dissatisfied	4	17	65
Unweighted Bases	312	95	77

Looking at other sub groups, those lawyers more likely to be satisfied with the professional service were:

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- Those where the complaint did not progress to Assessment Centre stage (76% very/fairly satisfied);
- Those where the case lasted up to 2 months (75%);
- Those where the fee had been waived (73%).

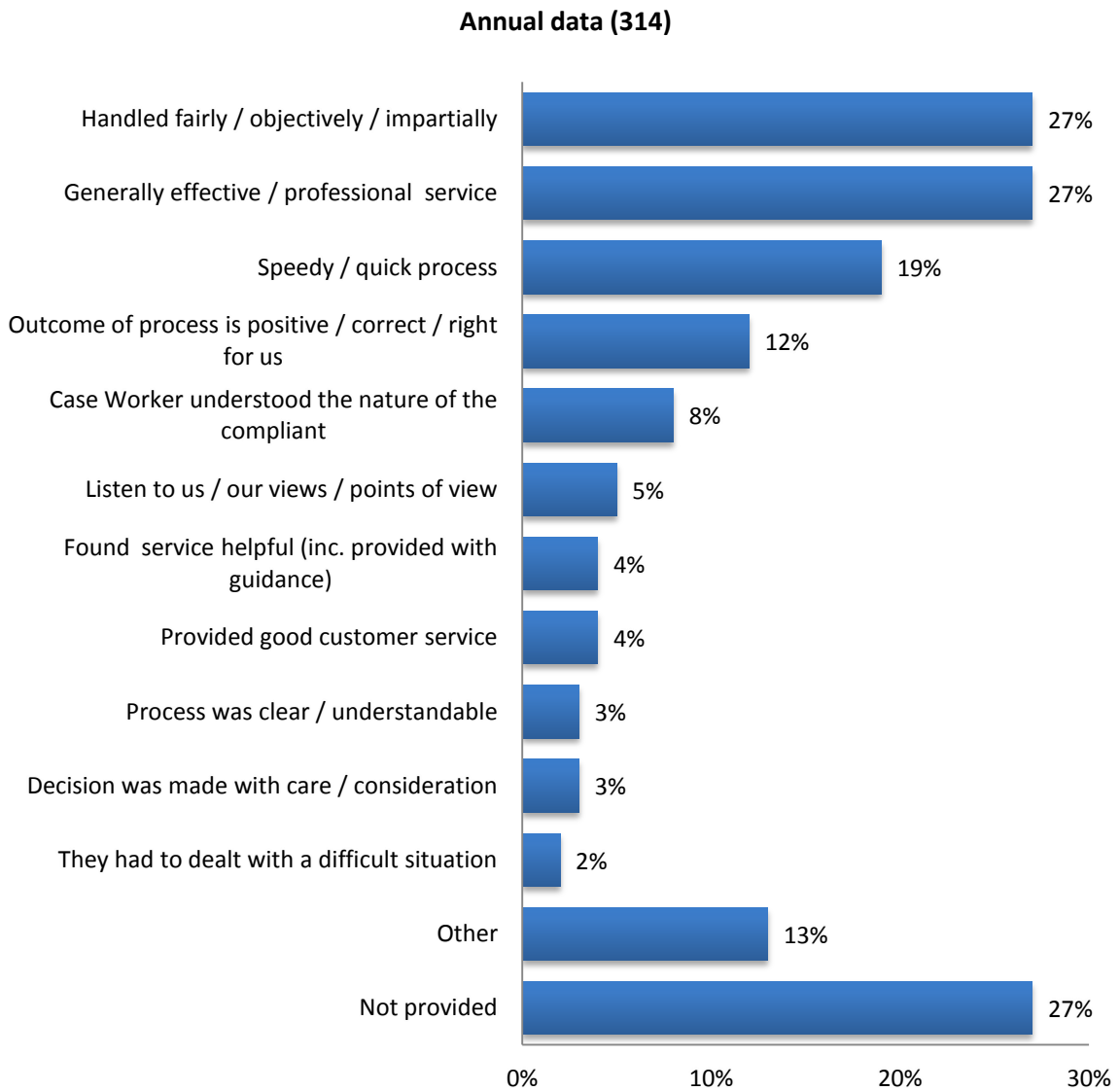
Those more likely to be dissatisfied were:

- Those where the case lasted 7+ months (47% very/fairly dissatisfied);
- Those where the complainant had accepted the Ombudsman's decision (44%).

8.2 Reasons for satisfaction and dissatisfaction

Among those satisfied with the professional service provided by the Legal Ombudsman, the main reasons for this were that the case was handled fairly or the service was generally effective/professional. Sizeable proportions of lawyers also mentioned a quick process or positive outcome.

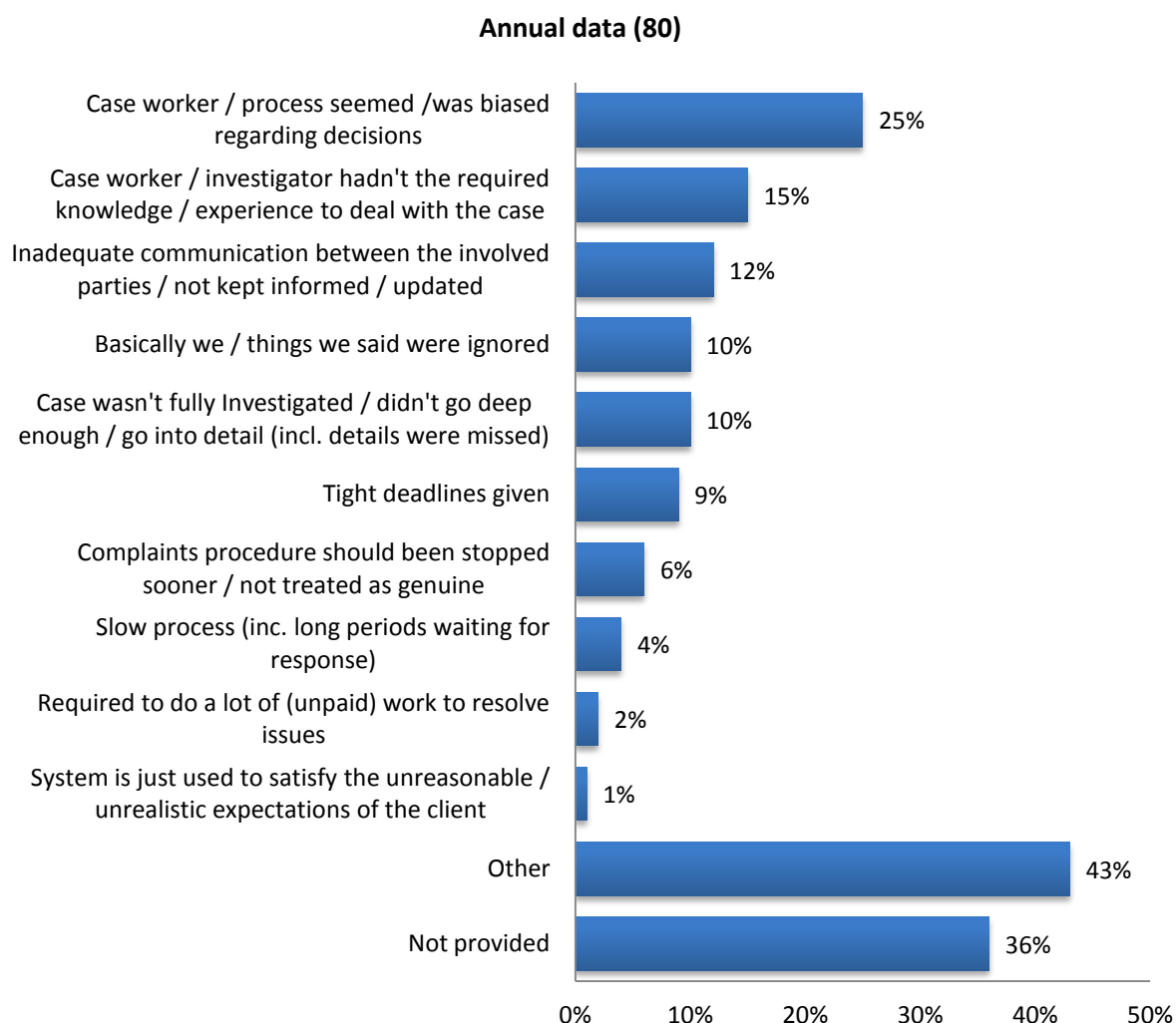
Figure 39: Q13b Reasons for satisfaction n with the professional service provided by the Legal Ombudsman - unprompted (where satisfied)



Unweighted bases shown in brackets

Reasons for dissatisfaction with the professional service centred on a perception by lawyers that decisions were biased. Sizeable proportions also mentioned staff's lack of knowledge or inadequate communication.

Figure 40: Q13b Reasons for dissatisfaction with the professional service provided by the Legal Ombudsman - unprompted (where dissatisfied)

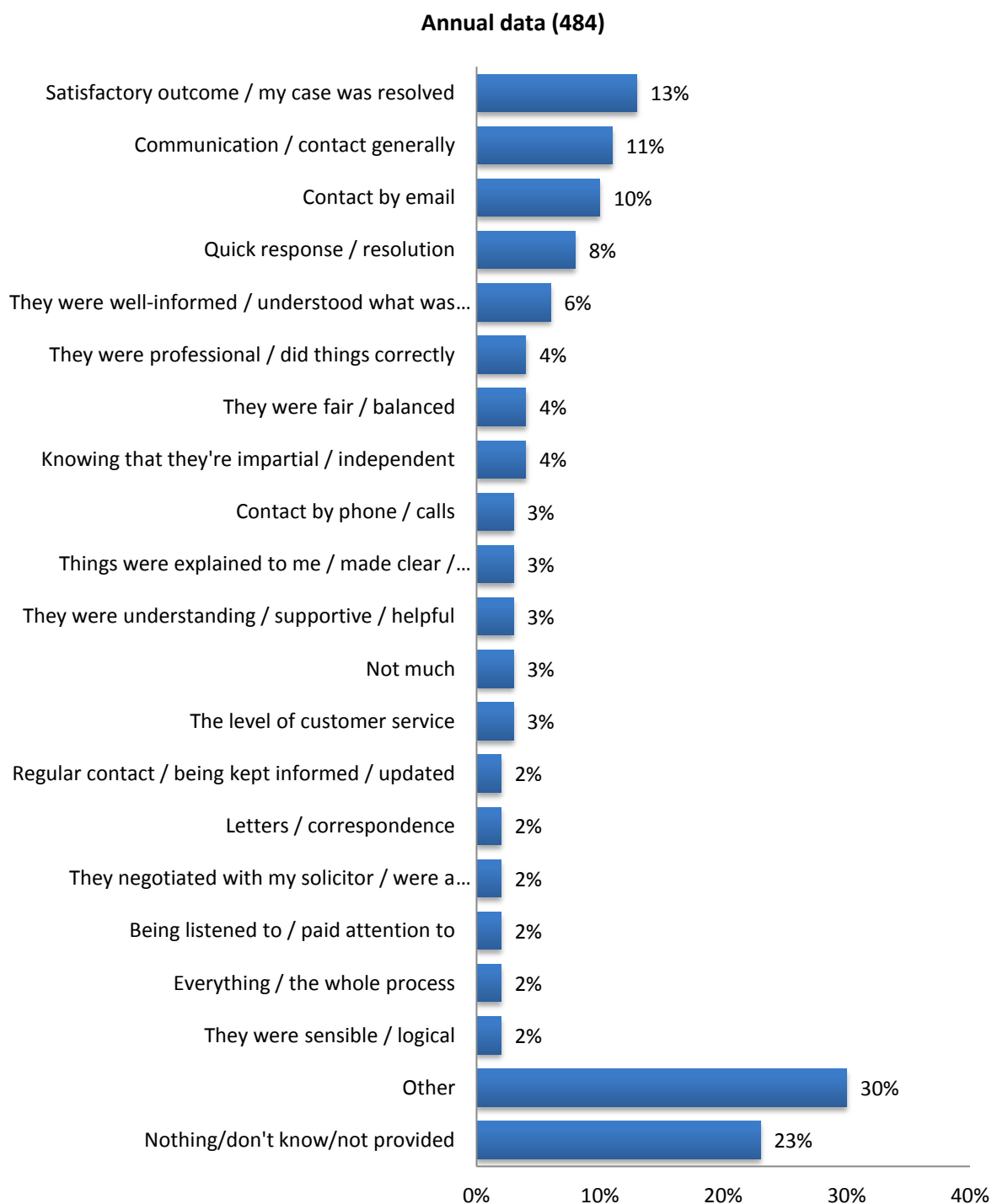


Unweighted bases shown in brackets

8.3 Things that have worked well or could be improved

All lawyers were asked what had worked well on a spontaneous basis. At least one in ten each mentioned the satisfactory outcome, good communication generally and contact by email.

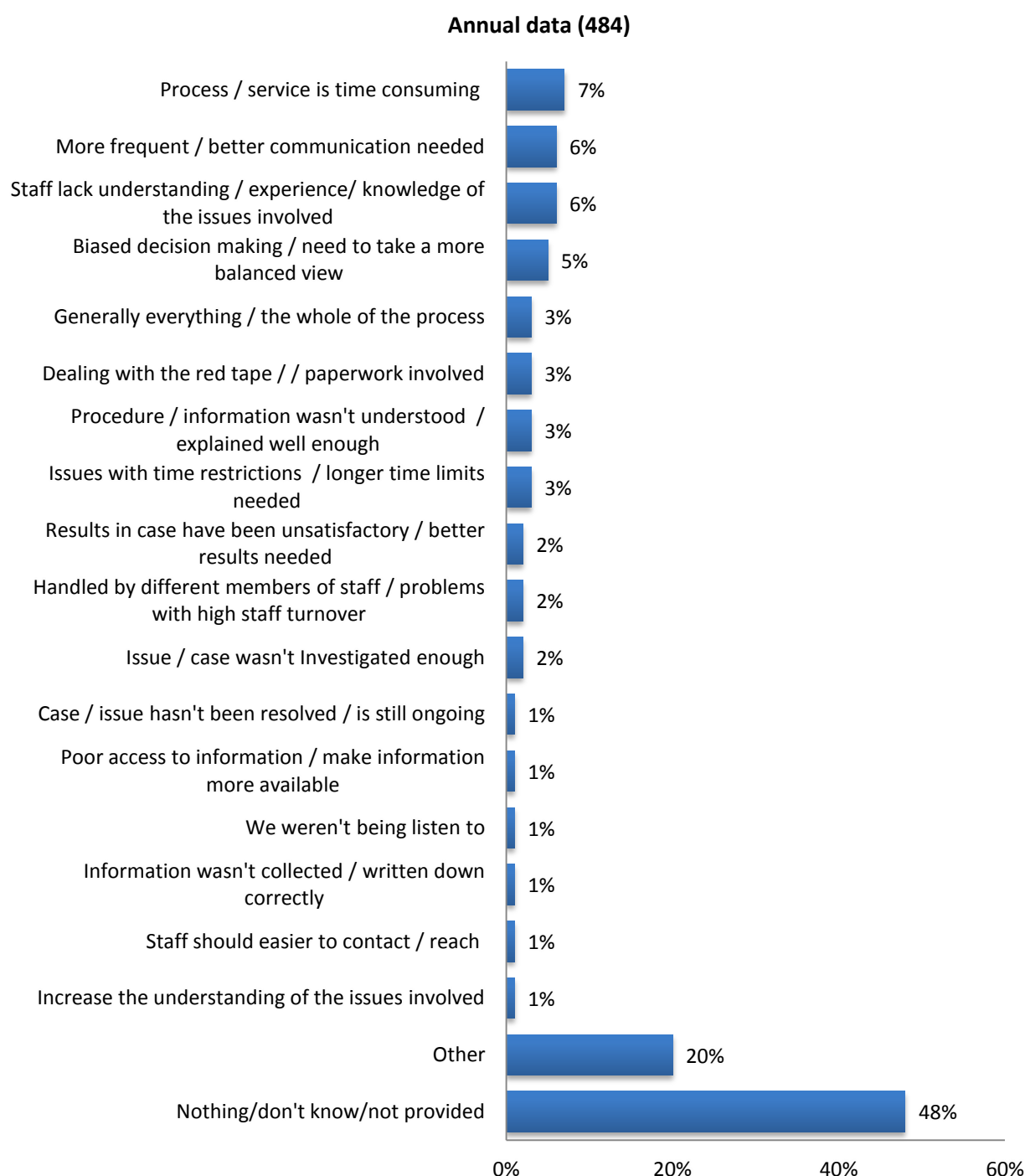
Figure 41: Q14 Things that have worked well - unprompted (all lawyers)



Unweighted bases shown in brackets

Suggestions of improvement tended to be miscellaneous. However, at least one in twenty mentioned reducing the length of the process, better communication, ensuring staff had good knowledge of the issues and the need to take a more balanced view.

Figure 42: Q15 Things that could be improved - unprompted (all lawyers)

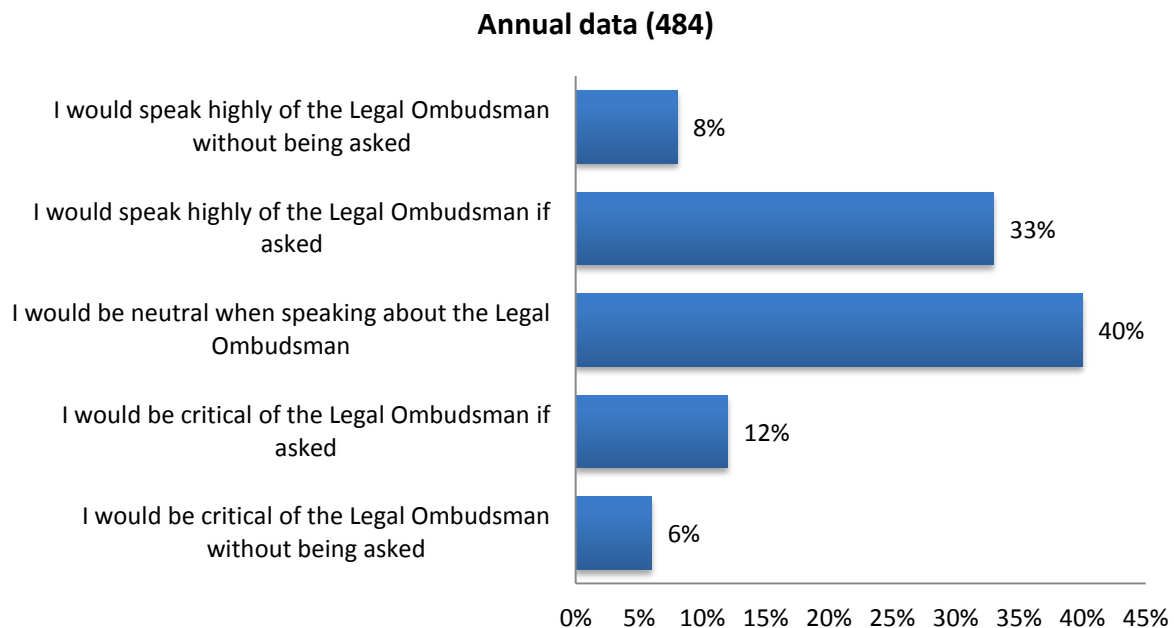


Unweighted bases shown in brackets

8.4 Advocacy

Four in ten lawyers would be neutral when speaking about the Legal Ombudsman. However, a third would speak highly of the Legal Ombudsman if asked, with just under one in ten saying they would speaking highly of the organisation without being asked.

Figure 43: Q16 How lawyers would speak about the Legal Ombudsman to others (all lawyers providing a valid response)



Unweighted bases shown in brackets

Those who would speak highly of the Legal Ombudsman without being asked were:

- Those where the complaint did not progress to Assessment Centre stage (20%);
- Those where the fee had been waived (16%).

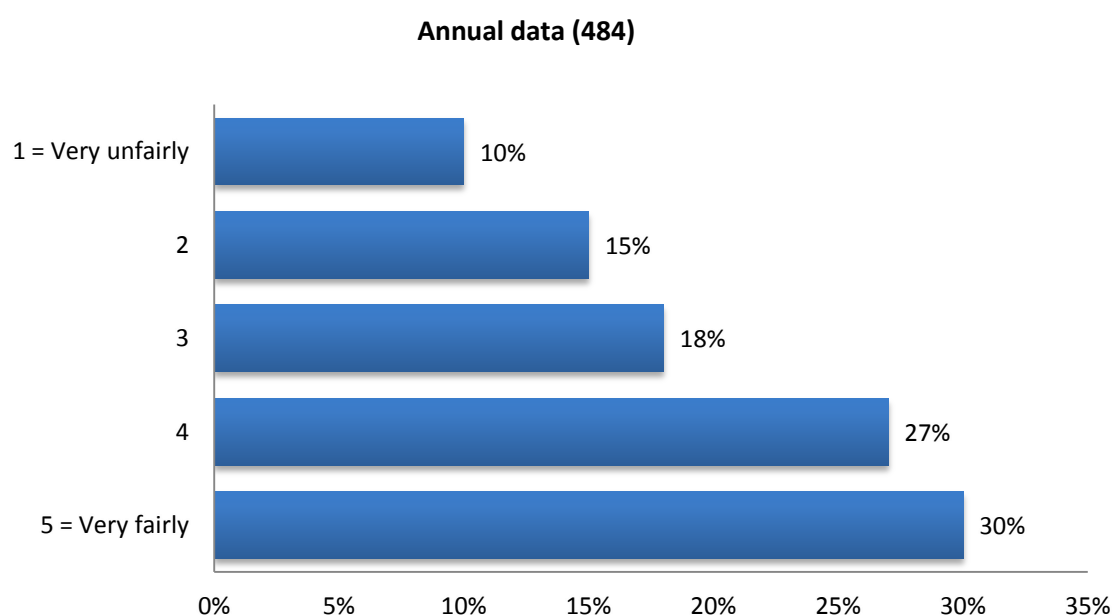
Those who would be critical without being asked were:

- Those who were dissatisfied with the case outcome (26%);
- Those where the case lasted 7+ months (21%);
- Those whose case closed at Ombudsman stage (12%).

8.5 Perceptions of how fairly lawyers feel they have been treated

More than a half of lawyers (58% rating 4-5) felt they had been treated fairly by the Legal Ombudsman, with three in ten saying 'very fairly'. A quarter felt they had not been treated fairly (24% rating 1-2).

Figure 44: Q18 How fairly lawyers have been treated by the Legal Ombudsman (all lawyers providing a valid response)



Unweighted bases shown in brackets

Those more likely to feel they had been treated 'very fairly' were:

- Those satisfied with the case outcome (52%)
- Those where the complaint did not progress to Assessment Centre stage (52%);
- Those where the fee had been waived (50%);
- Those satisfied with the professional service (48%).
- Those where the case lasted up to 2 months (38%);
- Those where the complainant had rejected the Ombudsman's decision (34%).

Those more likely to feel they had been treated 'very unfairly' were:

- Those dissatisfied with the case outcome (38%);
- Those dissatisfied with the professional service (30%);
- Those where the complainant had accepted the Ombudsman's decision (27%);
- Those whose case closed at Ombudsman stage (18%);
- Those where the case lasted 7+ months (18%).

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