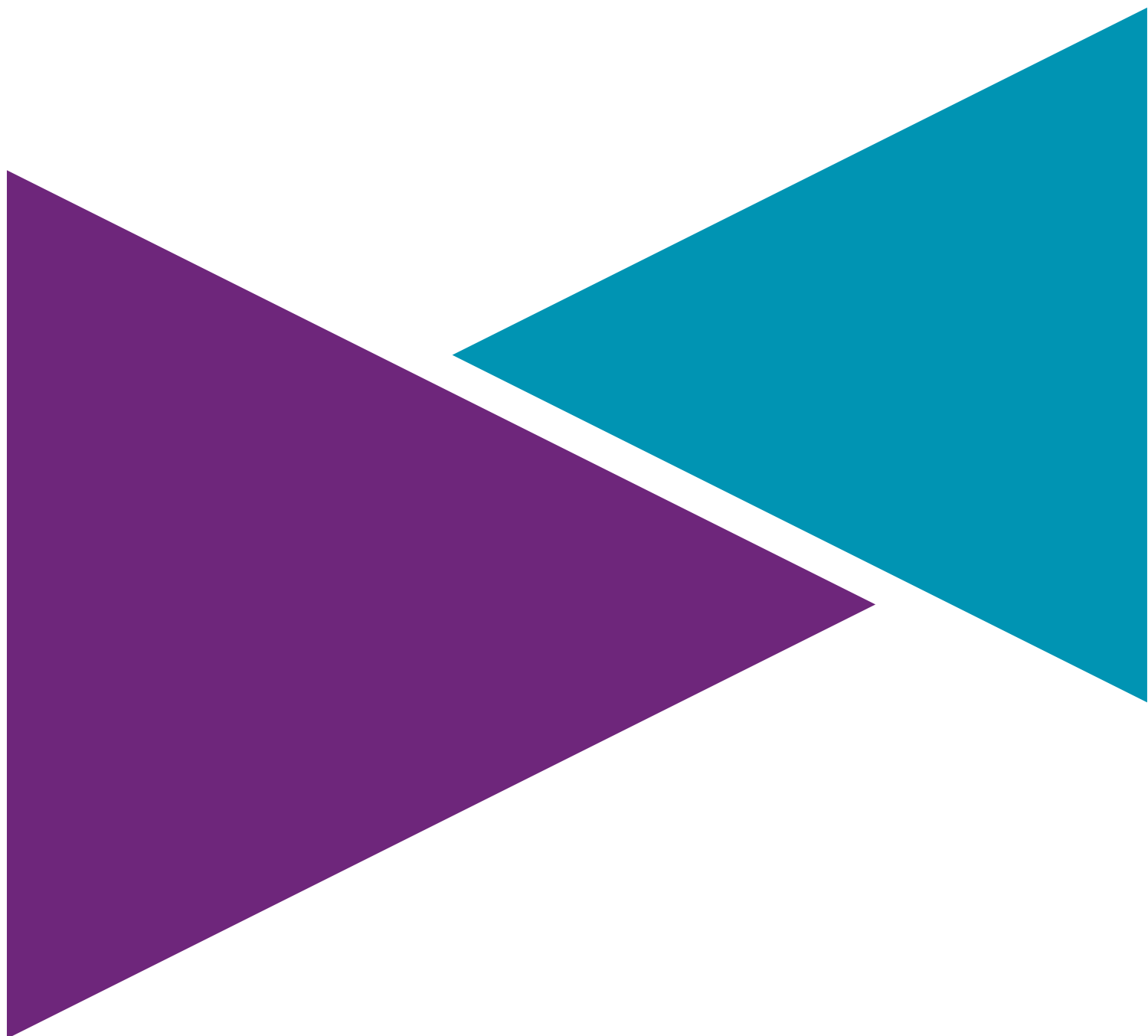


# Customer Feedback Survey

**Summary of Results**  
2016-17





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# 1 About this research

We are committed to listening to our customers' views about our service. We do this regularly and in several ways, including:

- > **In-house research**  
We carry out our own research into customer satisfaction throughout the year. This report is about the results of that work.
- > **Advisory forum**  
We invite people who have used our service to apply to become members of our advisory forum, which also gives feedback about our customers' experience.

## Purpose

This research aims to help us:

- > understand our customers' views about our service;
- > identify what we do well and how we can improve; and
- > monitor our performance over time.

## Methodology

Almost everyone whose complaint we consider is invited to give feedback about their experience of our service<sup>1</sup>. We do this by issuing a questionnaire around six weeks after we make a decision on their complaint.

This report summarises the results from our survey between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017. We invited 8,843 people to take part in this research and we received responses from 2,497 people (28%) whose complaints were decided within that period. A typical response rate is hard to define, but generally a rate of 15-20% is considered good.

For comparison, our response rate was 27% in 2015-16.

## How we use the research

We monitor feedback closely and report key results to both our Leadership Team and Commission on a quarterly basis. We also take a detailed look at a sample of cases where people report satisfaction levels that are especially high or especially low. This helps us to identify examples of good practice and poor practice so we can take steps to improve our service for others.

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<sup>1</sup> Any exceptions are usually because someone tells us they do not want us to contact them.

## 2 Who responded

As part of our survey, we ask people questions about themselves. These questions are optional, but they help us to understand if we need to do more to ensure our service can be accessed equally by everyone<sup>2</sup>.

We compare these characteristics with those of the general population by using [population statistics](#) for England and Wales from Census 2011.

Respondents were more likely to be male (59% vs 49%), and older (31% aged 65+ years vs 16% aged 65+ years) than the general population.

In terms of ethnicity, respondents were slightly more likely to identify as White (89% vs 86%) and less likely to be Asian or Asian British (5% vs 8%).

Finally, respondents were more likely to be more highly qualified than the general population (52% have a Bachelor's degree or higher vs 27% whereas only 8% have no qualifications vs 23%).

Characteristic	Respondents	%
<b>Sex</b>	<b>2,351</b>	<b>100</b>
Male	1,388	59.0
Female	963	41.0
<b>Age</b>	<b>2,366</b>	<b>100</b>
< 16	3	0.1
16-24	13	0.5
25-34	130	5.5
35-44	335	14.2
45-54	546	23.1
55-64	603	25.5
65-74	531	22.4
75-84	168	7.1
85+	37	1.6

Characteristic	Respondents	%
<b>Health</b>	<b>2,310</b>	<b>100</b>
Has health condition	730	31.6
No health condition	1,580	68.4
<b>Education</b>	<b>2,285</b>	<b>100</b>
Degree level or above	1,196	52.3
Other qualification(s)	901	39.4
No qualifications	188	8.2
<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>2,182</b>	<b>100</b>
White British	1,858	85.2
White Other	85	3.9
Asian or Asian British	106	4.9
Black or Black British	70	3.2
Mixed	41	1.9
Other	22	1.0

<sup>2</sup> This gives only an indication of our service's accessibility. This is because it can only measure those who respond to our survey, not all those who use our service.

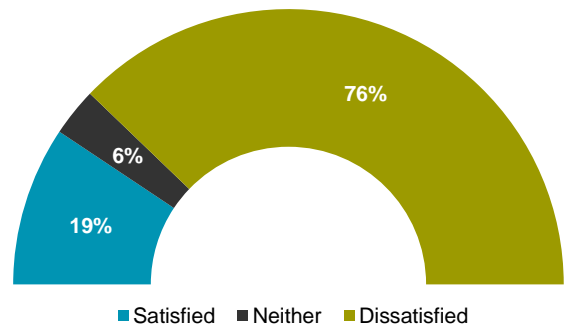
### 3 Overall satisfaction

For 2016-17, the feedback we received closely reflected our results for the previous year.

We also continue to see the same link between service satisfaction and outcome satisfaction: when someone receives a decision they are unhappy with, it can be very difficult for them to separate that from their views about the quality of our service.

Chart 01 shows more than three quarters of respondents said they were dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint (76%). This is similar to the level reported in the previous year (77%).

**Chart 01:**  
How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the outcome of your complaint?



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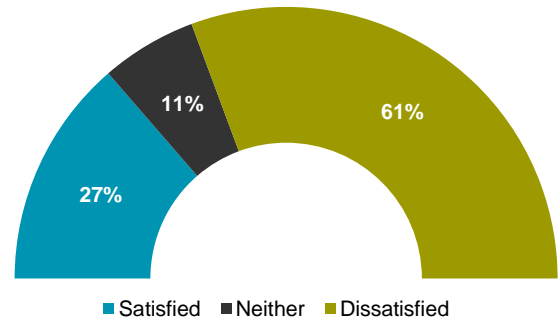
Chart 02 shows only 27% of respondents said they were satisfied with the overall service they received, while 61% said they were dissatisfied.

Again, this is very similar to the previous year in which 27% were satisfied and 62% were dissatisfied.

Chart 03 (page 7) gives a clearer picture about the relationship between views about our service and views about our decisions.

Those who were satisfied with their outcome were ten times more likely to say they were satisfied with the service (95%) compared to those who were dissatisfied with their outcome (9%).

**Chart 02:**  
How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the overall service provided by the LGO?



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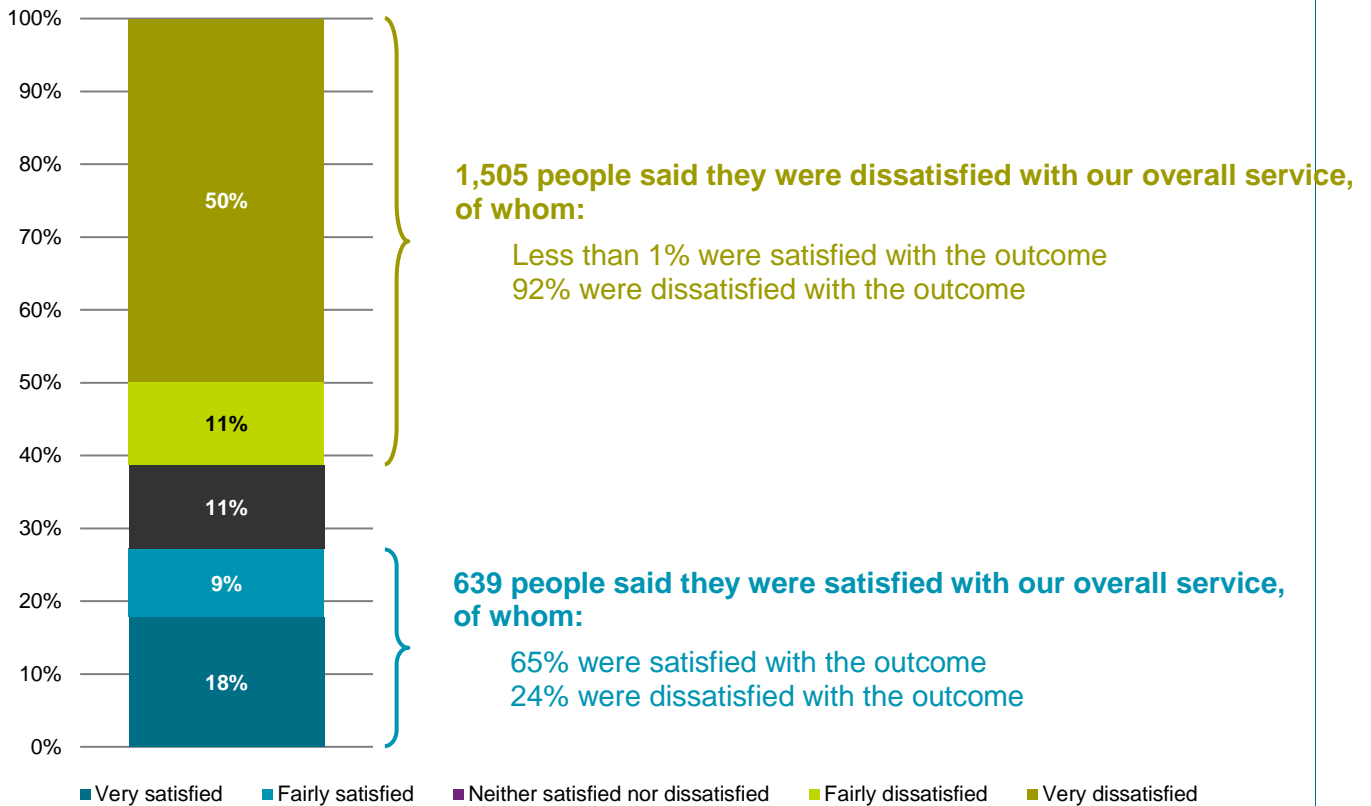
**0.80**

⋮ **Correlation coefficient**

⋮ This is a measure of the relationship between two sets of data. A score of 0.80 shows  
⋮ a strong relationship between views about outcomes and views about service quality.

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**Chart 03:**  
**How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the overall service provided by the LGO?**



We monitor two key measures of overall service satisfaction:

> **KPI-1**

The proportion of customers who are neutral or satisfied with the outcome of their complaint and who are neutral or satisfied with our overall service. Our target is for this figure to be 95% or above.



**97%**

*the proportion of customers who are neutral or satisfied with the outcome of their complaint and who are neutral or satisfied with our overall service*

**KPI-1, 2016-17; vs 96% in 2015-16**

> **KPI-2**

The proportion of customers who are dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint but who are neutral or satisfied with our overall service. Our target is for this figure to be 20% or above.



**21%**

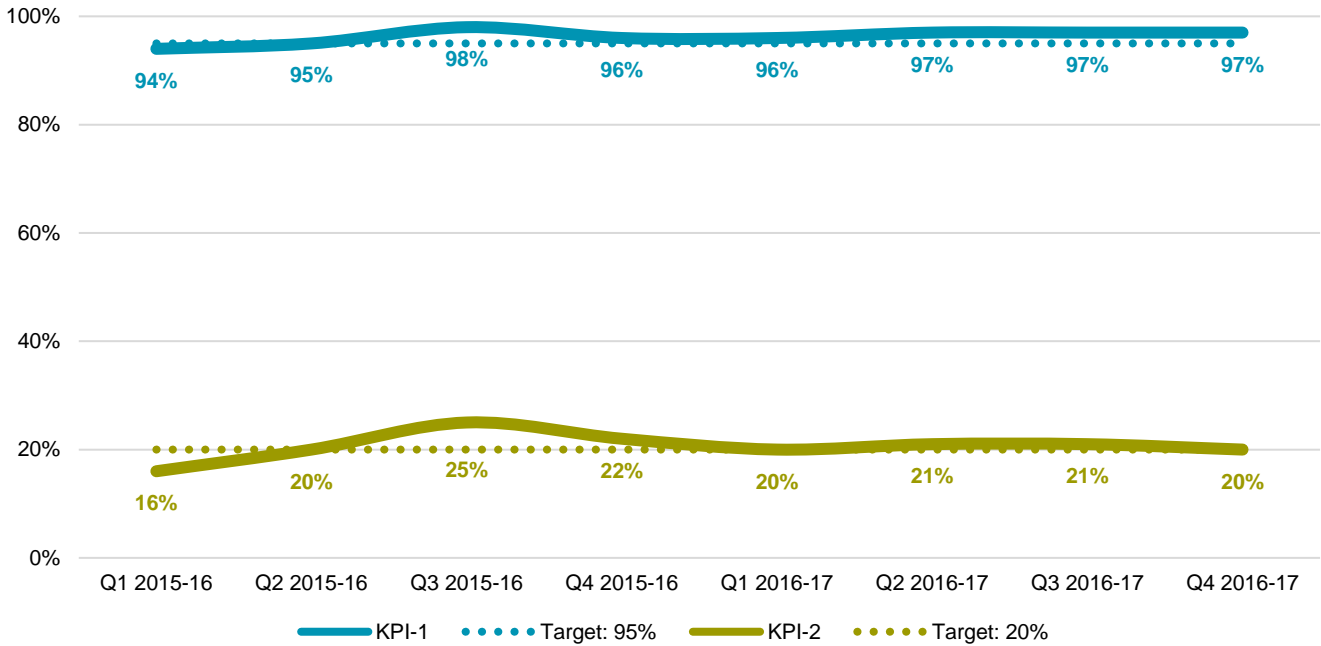
*the proportion of customers who are dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint but who are neutral or satisfied with our overall service*

**KPI-2, 2016-17; vs 22% in 2015-16**

We met both key targets for overall service satisfaction in 2016-17: we recorded scores of 97% for KPI-1 and 21% for KPI-2. These figures are very similar to those for 2015-16, when they stood at 96% and 22% respectively.

Chart 04 (below) gives a more detailed quarterly breakdown of how these two key measures of service satisfaction have changed over time.

**Chart 04:**  
**How our satisfaction rates have changed over time**



“Whilst the complaint was complex, I feel it took far **too long.**”

“The LGO **impartially** investigated very thoroughly... Even if I had lost my argument, the service I got was **first class.**”

“Although disappointed with the decision... I am satisfied that the LGO conducted a **thorough, independent review** of my case.”



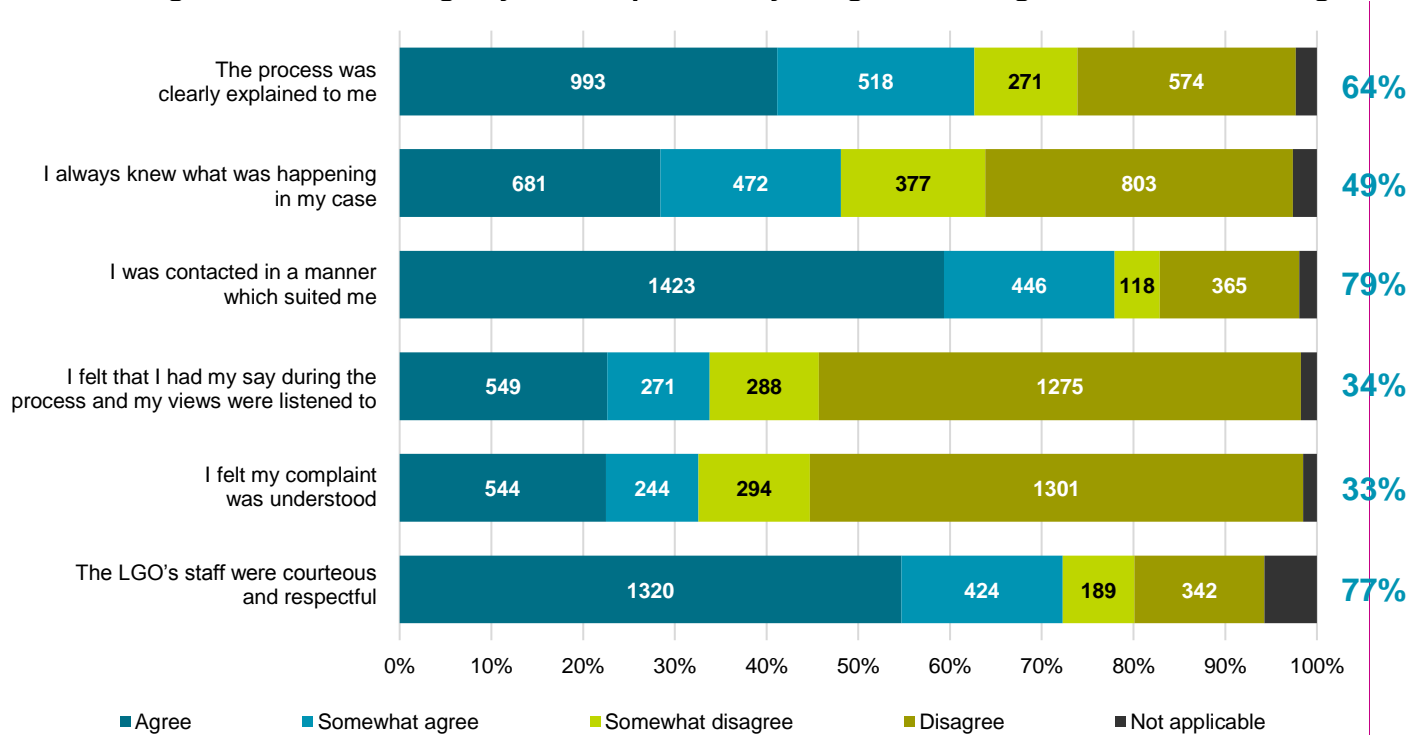
## 4 Our complaint handling

We list six features of good complaint handling and ask people to say how well our service performed on each of those features.

The figures on the right of the Chart 05 show the proportion of people who agree or somewhat agree with each statement.

Chart 05:

Thinking about the handling of your complaint, do you agree or disagree with the following?



Almost two thirds of respondents believed the process was clearly explained (64%) and a large majority said our staff were courteous (77%) and made contact in a suitable manner (79%).

Again, these results are similar to those from 2015-16. The only notable change was a small increase in the proportion of people who thought our staff were courteous and respectful: 77%, compared to 73% in 2015-16.

“I think you need **more power** to regulate local government.”

“The service was **first class**. It took a while but that was to ensure both sides **had their say**.”

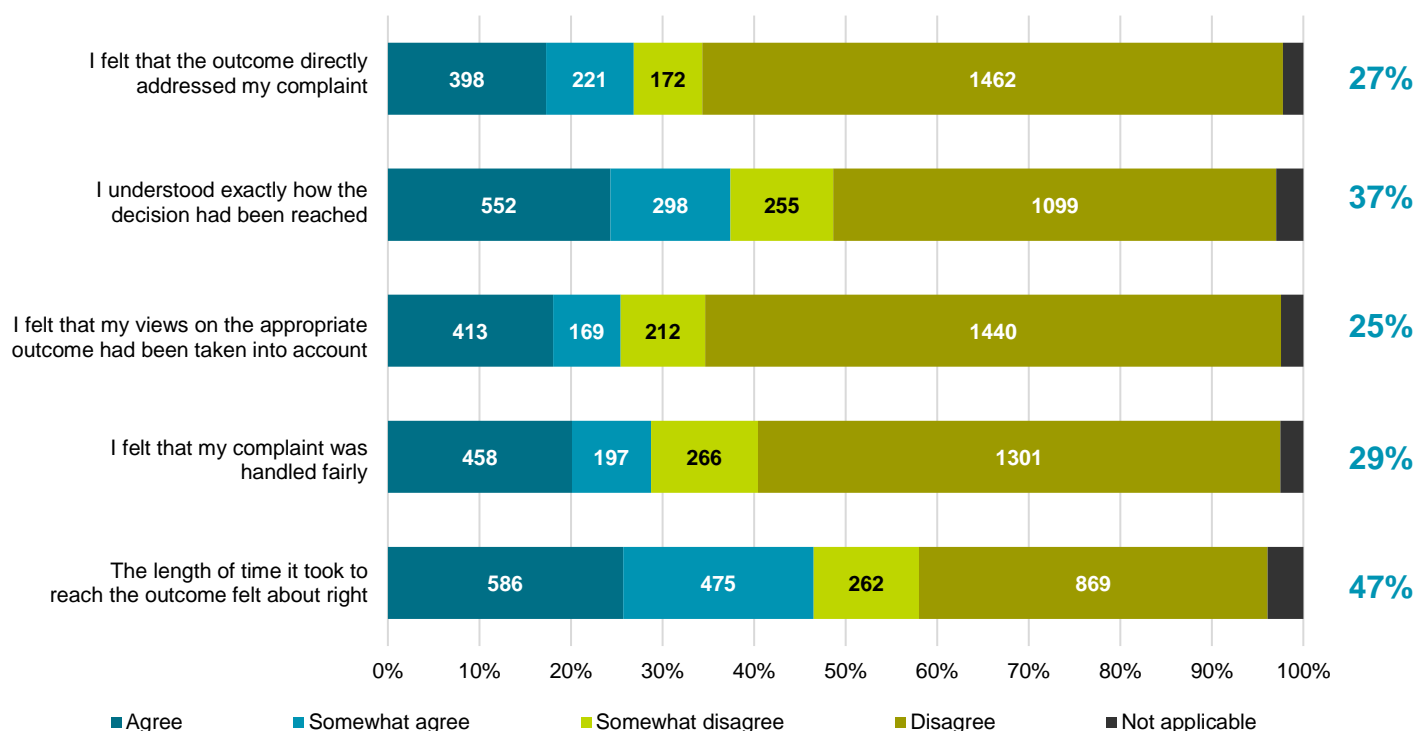
## 5 Our decision making

We ask more detailed questions about our decision making and how well the final outcome was communicated.

The figures on the right of Chart 06 show the proportion of people who agree or somewhat agree with each statement.

Chart 06:

Thinking about the outcome of your complaint, do you agree or disagree with the following?

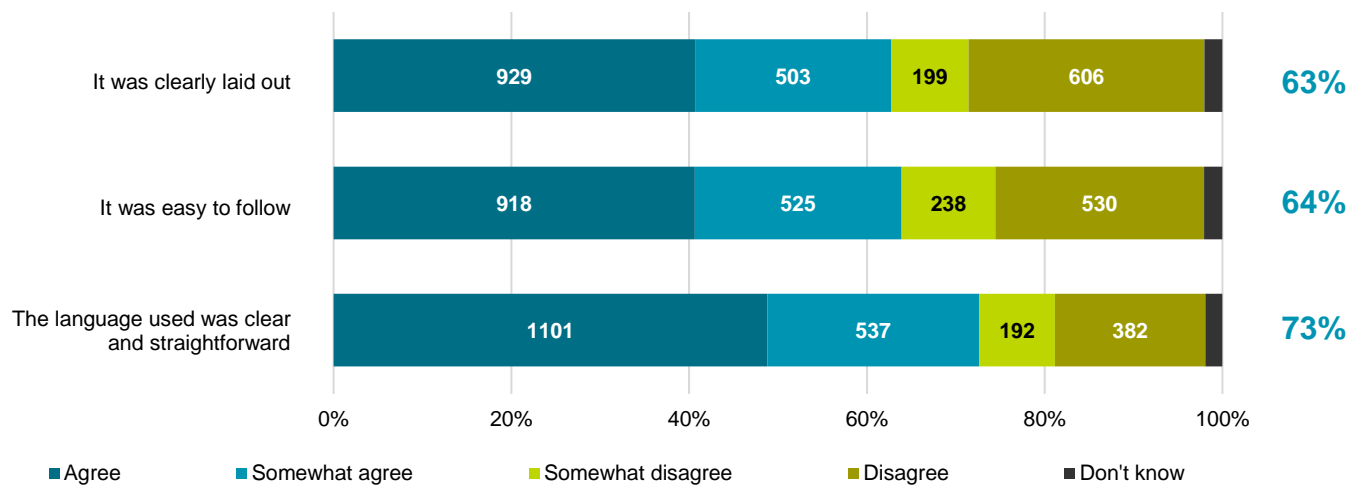


A majority of people thought their views about the outcome were not taken into account (72%), the outcome did not address their complaint (71%) and their complaint was not handled fairly (69%).

But those who were satisfied with the outcome of their complaint were almost ten times more likely to agree it was handled fairly (93%) compared to those who were dissatisfied (10%).

Most people agree we communicate our decisions well. The figures on the right of Chart 07 show the proportion of people who agree or somewhat agree with each statement.

**Chart 07:**  
**Thinking about the letter, statement or report that explained the outcome of your complaint, do you agree or disagree with the following?**



“The complaint was **handled appropriately** but I was very unhappy with the outcome.”

“The draft decision document is **well structured, clear and logical.**”

“I found the letter from the Ombudsman **very intimidating.** I did not find it clear. **I did not understand** what it was trying to say.”

## 6 The recommendations we make

When we investigate a complaint, and find fault that caused injustice to the individual, we may recommend the organisation takes steps to put things right.

Of the 579 people who said the outcome of their complaint was wholly or partially in their favour, 93% said at least one recommendation was made to remedy the fault in their case.

Of those, four in five said they were satisfied with our recommendations (81%).

In some cases, we may uphold a complaint but decide against making recommendations. Reasons for this include, for example:

- > while we may have found an organisation to be at fault, we might decide no personal injustice was caused; or
- > we may decide the organisation has already taken appropriate action to remedy the person's injustice.

“The service is relatively **quick** and **streamlined** but I find that the LGO **needs greater powers** to insist that councils comply with their findings.”

“The handling of my case was **fantastic** and the outcome has made a **real difference** to my disabled son's life.”

“Thanks to your intervention, the council... **reinstated my blue badge.**”

“I think that what lets the process down is that the LGO is unable to **police or force** councils to take action.”

## 8 About us

The Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) is the final stage for complaints about councils, independent care providers and some other organisations that provide local public services.

Our service is free, independent and impartial – we do not take sides. We look at what happened, and what the law says should have happened, to decide whether an organisation acted with fault.

If we find an organisation did something wrong, we can ask it to take action to put things right.

What we ask an organisation to do will depend on the particular complaint, how serious the fault was and how the complainant was affected.

Some examples include:

- > apologise;
- > pay a financial payment; and
- > improve its procedures so similar problems do not happen again.

Although we do not have powers to force organisations to follow our recommendations, they almost always do.

When we receive a complaint about an organisation, we follow a process to decide whether it's something we can investigate (*see right*).

### 01 We check whether it is something we are allowed to look into

The law places restrictions on our work so we cannot deal with every complaint we receive.

### 02 We assess whether there is good reason for us to formally investigate

Our service is funded by public money and we have a responsibility to ensure it is spent wisely.

### 03 We investigate the facts of the matter without taking sides

When we formally investigate, our job is to find out whether the organisation did what it should have done and whether injustice was caused if it failed to do so.

### 04 We reach our decision

Based on our findings, we decide whether the organisation was at fault causing injustice.



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