

Department for Work and Pensions

Working Paper No 76

Understanding employer satisfaction with DWP

Suzanne Hall

A report of research carried out by Ipsos MORI on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions

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Abbreviations

Acas	Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service
BIS	Department for Business Innovation and Science
CBI	Confederation of British Industry
CIPD	Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
CMEC	Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission
CSA	Child Support Agency
DACT	Detailed Automatic Credit Transfer
DEO	Deduction from Earnings Orders
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
DSO	Departmental Strategic Objective
HR	Human Resources
HMRC	HM Revenue & Customs
KDA	Key Driver Analysis
PSA	Public Service Agreements
SIC	Standard Industrial Classification
SME	Small & Medium Size Enterprises

Summary

Background

The aim of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is to enable people to fulfil their potential over longer, more active lives. The focus of the Department is firmly on customers, seeking to provide them with the services they need and aiming (wherever possible) to join up services with business partners in both the public and private sectors. The DWP's Departmental Framework¹ highlights its responsibility for the Government's Public Service Agreements (PSAs), which are underpinned by seven Departmental Strategic Objectives (DSOs) that represent the fundamental purpose and future direction of the Department.

Departmental Strategic Objective 7 (DSO7)² is to make DWP an 'exemplar of effective service delivery', for all customers, including both individuals and employers. In support of DSO7 DWP has commissioned a broad research programme; principally to ensure it has an accurate understanding of customers' needs and can continue to monitor levels of satisfaction with its services. The full research programme focuses on both those individuals and employers who have interacted with the Department as two distinct customer groups. As such, representative surveys of individual users were carried out in both 2008 and 2009³, while this report covers exploratory research that was undertaken to develop the Department's approach to measuring employer satisfaction with DWP services.

¹ <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/dept-framework-oct08.pdf>

² DSO7: 'Make DWP an exemplar of effective service delivery to individuals and employers.' The customer satisfaction indicators relating to DSO7 are as follows:

- Level of customer satisfaction with the ease of access to DWP service.
- Level of customer satisfaction with treatment received.
- Level of customer satisfaction with the timeliness of DWP service.
- Level of customer satisfaction with the outcome.

³ http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/dsopsa/DSO7_REPORT.pdf

The aims of the research presented in this report were to get a preliminary understanding about the factors which drive employers' perceptions of satisfaction with DWP services, and to develop and test an approach for measuring employer customer satisfaction over time. As such this research informed the development of the first full wave of the main-stage employer satisfaction research which was conducted in March and April 2009 by IFF Limited and which is reported on separately⁴.

Methodology

The research discussed in this report comprised a mixture of methodologies conducted over two phases. The first phase consisted of:

- Desk research of previous studies which had investigated employers' attitudes to DWP⁵;
- In-depth qualitative interviews with employers (comprising 50 face-to-face and telephone interviews with employers who had contacted DWP within the previous year); and
- Key Driver Analysis (KDA)⁶ of the Annual Employers Survey and the Employer Engagement Target Outcome Survey⁷.

The findings from the first phase of research were then used to develop a questionnaire for assessing levels of satisfaction with DWP (based upon the concept of 'key drivers' of satisfaction). This questionnaire was tested during the second phase of research in a pilot telephone survey of 250 employers. The findings from this survey are presented in this report though it should be noted that the sample size was small and the response rate was low, due to a short fieldwork period.

This report therefore highlights the key drivers of satisfaction found by the first phase of research, and reports on how these were tested in the pilot survey. It also summarises the lessons learned during this research - principally to inform future measurement of employer satisfaction by the Department through the Annual Employers Survey⁸.

⁴ *DWP Annual Employers Survey 2009* (forthcoming).

⁵ See the *References* at the back of this report for a full bibliography.

⁶ KDA is a statistical tool that explores how one particular measure is affected by other, related variables. It uses multiple regression, which is an effective way of exploring how the response an individual gives to one question is affected by their responses to other questions.

⁷ It should be noted that these datasets were not created with this analysis in mind and therefore their analytical potential was limited. As expected the resulting models had relatively low levels of explanatory power and are therefore seen as supplementary to the other sources of evidence examined rather than definitive in their own right.

⁸ *DWP Annual Employers Survey 2009* (forthcoming).

Main findings

This research was successful in highlighting a number of key drivers of satisfaction with DWP and in suggesting a methodology for assessing these key drivers in the future. All parts of the research (including the pilot survey), have suggested that employers' perceptions of DWP are generally good, particularly when employers have had a specific reason to engage with the Department (for example, accessing candidates or information requests).

Key drivers of satisfaction with DWP

The aim of this research was to better understand the key drivers behind employers' perceptions of DWP so that these can inform future priorities and be monitored over time. This section of the summary outlines the main key drivers, the evidence that supports them and the data from the pilot survey which gives a preliminary assessment of how the Department is performing. However, this data is only indicative as it is based on a small sample of businesses and may be subject to selection bias because of a low response rate. For a more robust assessment of customer satisfaction with DWP you are referred to the reports from the two main-stage surveys⁹.

The process for developing the 'key drivers' was to use findings from both the desk research and qualitative research elements of phase 1 of this study to suggest the main factors that employers drew upon in making judgements about the Department. These preliminary key drivers were then validated through secondary analysis of existing data sets of employer customer satisfaction.

In summary, the key drivers of satisfaction with the Department found in this preliminary research were (in broad order of importance):

- 1 Previous experiences of dealing with the Department.
- 2 Specific experiences working with Jobcentre Plus (including access to candidates who meet employers' needs).
- 3 The perceived quality of communication to employers.
- 4 The outcomes from interactions with the Department such as vacancies successfully filled or information requests dealt with; and
- 5 Being able to build a relationship with DWP¹⁰.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ As such, these five key drivers represent a general approximation to the four key drivers used for individual satisfaction with DWP – Ease of Access, Treatment, Timely Response and Outcome. Building upon this, greater consistency of measurement between the key drivers for individual and employer satisfaction has been achieved in the main-stage of the employer customer satisfaction survey.

These are discussed in more detail below. In each case we present the evidence for regarding the issue as a key driver, followed by a description of how each driver was assessed during the pilot survey.

1) **Previous experiences of dealing with the Department.** The evidence from this research suggests that the most important driver of satisfaction is employers' previous experiences of liaising with DWP staff, including factors such as responsiveness to queries, helpfulness and professionalism. Evidence for this was apparent in all strands of the research, but particularly from the qualitative work. In summary, DWP's staff represent employers' main interface between themselves and the Department and how these staff respond to queries (both in manner and also efficiency and effectiveness) forms the basis of employers' judgements.

Employers in this research appear to have had largely positive experiences of liaising with the Department – typically they found staff helpful, friendly and knowledgeable. For the pilot survey a series of questions were developed to measure these factors. These questions worked well and also produced positive results, for example over eight in ten (84 per cent) were satisfied with the professionalism of DWP staff and more than three quarters (78 per cent) were satisfied with the extent to which staff took responsibility for dealing with their query. However, the findings should be treated with caution because of the small sample size. More robust data will be available from the main-stage of the survey (DWP forthcoming).

2) **Specific experiences working with Jobcentre Plus.** Because most of the employers interviewed for this research had interacted with Jobcentre Plus and used vacancy advertising services, these experiences were very important in determining how they regarded the Department as a whole. A critical determinant of satisfaction on this driver was whether or not they had been able to access candidates who had met their needs. Evidence for the importance of this comes particularly from the desk research and the KDA of earlier surveys. Qualities in candidates seen as particularly important were:

- a willing attitude and the scope to be trained in the right skills;
- having the right skills in place; and
- the ability to start work immediately.

Given the importance of this driver for determining overall satisfaction, a number of questions were incorporated into the pilot survey for testing. These included the extent to which the skills of candidates from Jobcentre Plus met employers needs, satisfaction with the number of candidates they had received from Jobcentre Plus and whether the candidates matched the required vacancy. Building on this, the main-stage of employer satisfaction research includes a yet more extensive section on the process of working with Jobcentre Plus to secure access to appropriate candidates.

Each of the factors covered in the pilot survey tested positively. This supported the findings from phase 1 of this research which indicated that Jobcentre Plus is fairly

well regarded by employers – in part because it is a free service but also for the quality of what it does and its unique ability to reach a large number of diverse candidates within short timescales. Also – as with DWP as a whole - the research suggested that employers have noticed an improvement in the service provided by Jobcentre Plus, particularly in terms of customer service, knowledge about job markets, and how to deal with employers.

3) The perceived quality of communications to employers. The quality of DWP communications was also found to be a key driver of satisfaction. This factor covers issues such as the perceived clarity, intelligibility and accuracy of communications, as well as their perceived timeliness and accessibility.

A series of measures were subsequently tested in the pilot survey, which showed that employers were generally satisfied with different aspects of DWP guidance including; accuracy (74 per cent); usability (70 per cent); comprehensiveness (70 per cent) and quality (68 per cent). Overall the survey showed that (73 per cent) agreed that 'DWP communicates with them in a way they can understand'.

Findings from qualitative and desk research also suggested that perceptions of DWP communications were positive. For example, DWP's printed materials were often praised, and employers believed that they conveyed complex policy issues (such as the New Deal (ND) and Statutory Sick Pay (SSP)) in a clear and concise manner. The main area of criticism was to doubt whether information was sent or received at the right time. To illustrate this concern, examples were cited of receiving new policy information from industry organisations (such as the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD)) before learning about them from DWP.

4) The outcomes from interactions with the Department: All strands of the research showed that when making judgements, employers will refer back to the outcome of recent interactions with the Department and consider how satisfied they felt with the service provided. It should be noted however that where interactions concerned requests for information, that this did not necessarily mean that employers expected the outcome to be one that they agreed with – they simply wanted their query resolved efficiently and effectively, in a way that enabled them to take appropriate action. Particularly during the interview stage of the research it was found that those whose interaction had been resolved tended to be more satisfied than those whose interaction was still ongoing.

For the pilot survey a measure was used which tested for satisfaction with the outcome of the respondent's most recent interaction with DWP, an approach which has subsequently been adopted for the main-stage survey. Whilst the findings should be treated as indicative, the survey found that seven in ten (70 per cent) were satisfied with the outcome of their most recent enquiry (although more negatively 14 per cent did not answer the question, suggesting aspects were still unresolved).

5) Being able to build a relationship with DWP: The final key driver is the importance of having an ongoing relationship with the Department (which again

emerged in all strands of the research). It was clear from the qualitative research for example that employers tended to be more satisfied when they felt that DWP was making an effort to work with them (such as by communicating proactively, explaining why information was needed from them and setting expectations about how the relationship will work), rather than simply issuing information requests.

Moreover, it was also clear that the more targeted and individualised the contact is, the higher the level of satisfaction with the service provided. For example, services with dedicated points of contact such as Account Managers and Labour Market Recruitment Advisers all tended to be regarded positively by participants in the qualitative phase of the research.

As with each of the other drivers, key elements of this were tested in the pilot survey and once again the indicative findings were broadly positive. Around eight in ten (82 per cent) were satisfied with the way DWP staff clarified their obligations and a similar proportion were satisfied with how the DWP 'listened to them' (80 per cent). However, a slightly smaller proportion (74 per cent) were satisfied with the way they were kept informed about how long their query would take to resolve. Having been successfully tested, many of these measures have since been incorporated into the main-stage survey, such that these ratings will be more accurately measured with larger samples.

Overall satisfaction

In addition to testing the five key drivers of employer satisfaction with DWP, the pilot survey developed through this research also collected information on overall satisfaction with the Department's services. This enabled a degree of validation of the key drivers as well as providing an indicative assessment of how the Department is performing. Two questions were included in the survey, one on satisfaction with recent contact and one on advocacy. Both questions tested well and found that generally employers were very satisfied with the service provided by DWP over the previous year. Almost three quarters (74 per cent) said they were satisfied, including a quarter (26 per cent) who stated they were 'very' satisfied. Looking at advocacy, one in ten (nine per cent) would speak highly of DWP without being asked, while a further three in ten (30 per cent) would speak highly if asked by another employer.

Questions on advocacy and overall satisfaction were retained for the main-stage of employer customer satisfaction research in support of DSO7 which was conducted in March and April 2009. Similarly many of the specific customer satisfaction measures used in the pilot survey were adopted for the main-stage survey. The key difference between this pilot and the main-stage surveys were that the scales for measuring satisfaction were changed to make them consistent with the parallel surveys being undertaken with individual customers (which records satisfaction on a scale from one to ten rather than the five point 'Likert scale' used in this pilot survey).

Other issues that influence perceptions but do not appear to be key drivers of satisfaction

Knowledge of DWP

The delivery of Departmental services takes place through agencies such as Jobcentre Plus; hence we would not expect knowledge of the Department to be a significant factor in employer satisfaction. This was borne out in the research; people can have a positive perception of the Department without knowing too much about it. For example, lack of knowledge about the precise workings of DWP and its agencies does not necessarily mean that employers actually struggle to get the information that they need. For example, only in one ten (12 per cent) identified DWP as responsible for equal opportunities policy but 37 per cent recalled having contacted DWP about age discrimination responsibilities. Essentially, if employers need information they can find it, and existing systems appear to be effective at facilitating this.

DWP's understanding of employers' needs

It appears from this research that employers have a pretty poor view of how well Government as a whole understands their needs. For example, external research has shown that two thirds of employers disagreed that government consults well or that it understands employers well enough to regulate¹¹ and the pilot survey found that only 54 per cent felt that DWP 'understands the needs of my business'. However this does not seem to translate into negative perceptions of DWP, especially when employers have had positive tangible experiences. Therefore whilst it is an area for improvement across Government, it may not have a direct influence on the DWP's strategic objective of being an exemplar of effective service delivery, which is much more about the actual experience customers have interacting with the Department.

Levels of mandatory contact/bureaucracy

Whilst the research found concern about regulation, the perceived administrative burden does not appear to have a particularly detrimental impact on how DWP is perceived – principally because employers expect to have to provide a certain level of information. Undoubtedly employers reported that they found it a challenge to keep up-to-date with regulations (the pilot survey found only around half of employers (53 per cent) 'find it easy to keep up with regulations'), but similarly they do expect to have to comply, and most had developed processes which minimised the impact. Consequently, only one in four felt that they 'spend too much time undertaking administration for DWP', whilst close to seven in ten (68 per cent) agreed that providing information to DWP was 'easy for them'¹². Having tested effectively in this pilot survey, these measures have been subsequently incorporated into the main-stage questionnaire.

¹¹ *Employers' views on setting up and processing Deduction from Earnings Orders*, DWP/Ecotec, 2008.

¹² Data from pilot survey.

What are the best methods for DWP to communicate with employers?

Face-to-face contact in particular seemed to have a positive impact in levels of satisfaction with the service provided by DWP. Use of this channel of communication helped create a strong relationship between the employers and the Department which, in turn, meant that their needs were better understood. Whilst personal face-to-face contact with trusted officials was a real asset to the relationship with DWP, telephone and email was also seen as valuable in many circumstances – particularly as it was seen as less time consuming (indeed these methods seemed to be very much the default means of getting in touch).

The qualitative research conducted for this project also found that the Department's website (and those of Jobcentre Plus and the Pension Service) was generally well regarded. This was because employers tended to feel that the layout was clear and also the information provided on the website was useful and up-to-date.

Some further issues raised by this research

In the final part of this summary, it is worth discussing some other issues raised by this research which may help the Department to make changes that would improve employers' perceptions of service quality still further.

There is evidence that some employers continue to have some specific issues working with Jobcentre Plus. Principal amongst these is spending time seeing unsuitable candidates. Also, there was some criticism of adverts placed by Jobcentre Plus that occasionally misrepresented positions or were inaccurate or inconsistent in other ways. Variability in adviser quality was also often mentioned as a problem, as was the lack of a single point of contact and advisor accountability when things go wrong. Whilst it is important not to lose sight of the broadly positive views of Jobcentre Plus held by employers, there are clearly still some issues to address.

Another important issue appears to be how the Department engages with employers about changes to legislation. As noted above, whilst employers were generally confident that they understand what they needed to do, they reported feeling more uncertain when things changed (which is made worse when they hear about changes through third parties). There is possibly a need for DWP to be more proactive and focussed on providing employers with clarity about their responsibilities and communicating earlier about any possible changes.

Another area of criticism was clarifying the personal responsibility and accountability taken by DWP employees, illustrated by the difficulty employers have in finding named contacts either through websites or on the phone. It would seem that employers would like to see DWP staff demonstrate that they are willing to take responsibility and be held accountable by employers when dealing with their queries. The Department may therefore wish to formulate options for enabling employers to more easily engage with individual staff members.

From this research it would also seem that some employers would like to see DWP go further than simply set out requirements, and begin to provide advice and good practice around certain issues. For example, it was felt that DWP could demonstrate how to put policies into action in the workplace. It might be argued that this is outside the remit of the Department, but it equally should be recognised that this need/expectation exists amongst employers, and should therefore be addressed in some way (even if only being more explicit about the limitations of its services, or by more active signposting to advice services such as Business Link).

Conclusions

Overall, this research has reviewed the existing body of evidence on employer satisfaction with DWP and added further insights through the qualitative interviews and the pilot survey. Upon the basis of this it developed a set of five key drivers of employer satisfaction with the Department and tested an approach to measuring these. The lessons from this research have subsequently been incorporated into a more comprehensive survey of employer satisfaction, which was conducted in March and April 2009¹³.

In studying the key drivers of satisfaction we were also able to draw some preliminary conclusions about how well DWP is currently perceived and what else it could do to improve customer satisfaction. Positively, in the context of DSO7, DWP is already perceived to be providing good quality services by many employers. The main suggestions for further improvement are as follows.

Collaborative communications: By working collaboratively with employer bodies such as the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) and the CIPD, DWP may be able to improve the reach of its communications, add credibility to them (by associating its messages with an organisation independent of government) and, furthermore, have the key points it needs to get across tailored by either sector or professional role. However, any such communications would need to be clearly labelled; to avoid confusion and to ensure that employers recognise DWP's contribution.

Changing channels of communication: Email is a cost effective means by which DWP can easily communicate with a large number of employers, and is increasingly becoming the norm. This research suggests increasing scope for this channel of communication.

Clarity around timescales: Employers do not always have a realistic idea of how long it will take for DWP to deal with their query or issue, which can be frustrating and hard to manage. To mitigate this and raise satisfaction it may be worthwhile DWP providing employers with an estimated timeframe for action.

¹³ *DWP Annual Employers Survey 2009 (forthcoming).*

Building links in the community: Whilst not all employers *want* a formalised relationship with the Department and Jobcentre Plus, open days and local events could help build an understanding among employers of how the Department can help their business.

Providing named contacts: Employers regularly complained that lack of named contacts within the Department caused difficulties and created the perception of a lack of accountability amongst DWP staff. Whilst this would be a challenging issue to address, the potential benefits could be substantial as the Department would be seen as less remote and more accountable.

Finally, given the overall objectives of this research, of equal importance were the lessons learnt about how a larger survey into employer satisfaction should be carried out. Positively, it was found that employers were willing to give up their time to be surveyed on these issues and had a great deal to contribute with regard to their working relationship with the Department. However, difficulties in finding the right respondents and booking in a suitable time for interview should not be underestimated. A key recommendation is to ensure that sufficient time is allowed for fieldwork to ensure the response rate is not negatively affected – as it was in this pilot by virtue of the interviews taking place shortly before Christmas and at a time when the economic situation was worsening. The effect of this was to lower the response rate achieved and therefore make us less certain about the accuracy of findings.

This was taken on board for the main-stage of the survey which was conducted in March and April 2009. Furthermore, many of the measures tested in this pilot survey were adopted for the main-stage, although more extensive questions were developed on Local Employment Partnerships, using Jobcentre Plus to secure candidates and diversity in the workplace. The main differences between this pilot study and the main-stage survey were; the use of specific questionnaires for HR and finance customers – to enable more precise questioning; and a switch to a numerical satisfaction scales – to make the employer customer satisfaction surveys consistent with parallel surveys of individual customer satisfaction.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background and objectives

Through Departmental Strategic Objective 7 (DSO7), the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has made a public commitment to become an exemplar in effective service delivery to individuals and employers. This research is part of a wider programme of work to develop baseline measures of both employer and individual satisfaction with the Department, and to achieve a better understanding of what drives satisfaction for all DWP's customers. Ultimately, this will help the Department to achieve its ambition by indicating areas where services could be improved and by helping the Department to track satisfaction levels in future years. This research project was specifically aimed at developing an approach for DWP to understand and measure employers' satisfaction with the services it provides and to undertake some preliminary testing of this approach.

The research covered by this report had two phases. At the first phase a mixed methodological approach was used, which combined desk research, secondary data analysis and 'in-depth' qualitative interviews with both employers and stakeholders at DWP. The aims of this were to look in general terms at employer attitudes towards DWP services and to develop some key drivers of satisfaction. The findings from stage 1 were then used to develop a pilot survey questionnaire for measuring the key drivers of employer satisfaction to emerge from stage 1. As the final part of this research this questionnaire was tested in a pilot telephone survey with 250 employers and subsequently a modified questionnaire has been deployed in a much larger survey conducted by IFF¹⁴.

The overall objective of the research was therefore to determine the key drivers of satisfaction for employers when dealing with DWP. As such this report covers these in considerable depth. Findings from the small pilot survey are also included to provide a preliminary assessment of how DWP is performing against these drivers, however these findings should be treated with considerable caution as the sample size was small and the methodology orientated towards testing the approach rather than producing robust findings. The forthcoming main-stage research

¹⁴ DWP Annual Employers Survey 2009 (forthcoming).

conducted by IFF in March and April 2009 will provide a more comprehensive assessment of DWP performance against key drivers of satisfaction.

In addition to the overall aim of determining key drivers, each individual phase of the research had its own specific set of objectives which are highlighted below.

For the desk research and secondary analysis the objectives were to:

- summarise what is already known about the key drivers behind employers' satisfaction regarding their interactions with the Department;
- establish what is known about how employers interact with DWP currently;
- highlight key gaps in what is known about employers' relations with DWP currently; and
- consider different methodological approaches for measuring satisfaction.

The objectives of the qualitative interviews were to:

- gauge employer attitudes towards the Department and how this affects satisfaction;
- understand how previous experiences with the Department shaped employer satisfaction with the service DWP provides; and
- test and assess what the key drivers are behind employer satisfaction.

The aim of the pilot survey was primarily to test the questionnaire which was developed from the findings from phase 1 of this study. The specific objectives of the pilot survey were to:

- test the flow and length of the questionnaire;
- test the question routings;
- test contact procedures;
- gauge anticipated response rates and identify any barriers to securing participation;
- test field materials;
- assist in the development of code frames for open-ended questions, for use in the main survey;
- identify any specific groups of respondents who encounter difficulties in understanding the questionnaire; and
- ensure that respondents are generally willing to discuss their interactions with DWP and the extent to which those that have had less recent contact are able to recall their dealings in sufficient detail.

The pilot was intended to act as a full 'dress rehearsal' for the main survey, meaning that similar procedures as the main-stage were followed. More details on the approach taken to all aspects of the research can be found in Chapter 2 of this report which outlines the methodological approach.

The research as a whole achieved its objectives of suggesting a set of key drivers for employer satisfaction and then developing and testing a questionnaire for assessing these drivers in a robust way. As such, lessons from this research have since been incorporated into the main-stage research conducted in 2009¹⁵.

This report focuses initially on describing the full process for determining the key drivers – both in terms of the methodologies used and the findings from stage 1 of the research – it then discusses preliminary indications of DWP's performance against these drivers, with evidence taken from both stage 1 of the research and the pilot survey.

¹⁵ *DWP Annual Employers Survey 2009* (forthcoming).

2 Methodological approach

Research Methodology:

The research discussed in this report comprised a mixture of methodologies conducted over two phases. The first phase consisted of:

- Desk research of previous studies which had investigated employers' attitudes to Department for Work and Pensions (DWP);
- In-depth qualitative interviews with employers (comprising 50 face-to-face and telephone interviews with employers who had contacted DWP within the previous year); and
- Key Driver Analysis (KDA) of Annual Employers Survey and the Employer Engagement Target Outcome Survey.

The findings from the first phase of research were then used to develop a questionnaire for assessing levels of satisfaction with DWP (based upon the concept of 'key drivers' of satisfaction). This questionnaire was tested during the second phase of research in a pilot telephone survey of 250 employers.

This chapter describes each of the phases of this research in greater depth and highlights the main implications for future research on employer customer satisfaction.

This chapter describes the methodologies used during this research in both stage 1 (determining the key drivers) and stage 2 (preliminary testing of the key drivers through a pilot survey).

In order to meet the objectives of the study, Ipsos MORI conducted an extensive programme of research comprising desk research and secondary analysis on existing literature and datasets, and qualitative interviews with employers. With the findings from this research a survey questionnaire was then developed to test the draft 'key drivers' of employer satisfaction with DWP which was subsequently tested through a pilot telephone survey with employers.

2.1 Desk research

The desk research took place in October and November 2008. The process involved identifying authoritative sources, developing detailed search terms, defining inclusion and exclusion criteria and deciding on quality assessment criteria.

A simple data extraction tool was then developed to record each study that met the criteria and to give a measure of relevance, reliability and validity for each. This ensured that studies are reviewed systematically and that the literature review process was transparent. For the purposes of this work, DWP supplied Ipsos MORI with a considerable amount of in-house research which was then supplemented with other literature sourced from outside the Department; to ensure that the review took into account of all of the latest thinking. The full list of sources can be found in the references.

As part of the desk research process, Ipsos MORI also conducted secondary analysis on two existing datasets; the Annual Employer Survey and the Employer Engagement Target work – both of which were sourced from the Department. These datasets were analysed using KDA which is a statistical tool that explores how one particular measure is affected by other, related variables. It uses multiple regression, which is an effective way of exploring how the response an individual gives to one question is affected by their responses to other questions.

2.2 Qualitative research

At a preliminary stage of the qualitative research five 'in-depth' qualitative interviews were undertaken with senior stakeholders at DWP. These were conducted to more fully understand the issues facing different stakeholders within the Department in relation to achieving DSO7 for employers, and how employer customer satisfaction with the Department might be measured. The research also sought views on the best ways to capture satisfaction based on previous experiences. Interviews were primarily conducted face-to-face throughout October 2008 and lasted up to an hour in length.

Following these preliminary interviews, a further 50 'in-depth' qualitative interviews were conducted throughout November with employers who had had contacted DWP over the previous year. The interviews were split between those that had a formal relationship with DWP (either through their involvement with the Local Employment Partnerships or by virtue of having a managed account¹⁶) and those that did not. In total, 20 interviews were conducted with employers that had a formal relationship with the Department. The remaining interviews were recruited from a sample purchased from Dun and Bradstreet, a commercial company which, among other things, supplies data on UK employers.

¹⁶ Employers with a managed account had access to a dedicated point of contact at Jobcentre Plus. National account managers are only responsible for about 140 accounts (typically large employers). Local Jobcentre Plus manage around a further 2,000 employers.

The interviews were conducted over the telephone and lasted up to an hour in length. The interviews were structured by a discussion guide that sought to understand how employers interact with the Department and, specifically, what they saw as being the key drivers of satisfaction in relation to how they assess the performance of DWP.

In addition to the desk research and qualitative interviews providing useful information in themselves, the findings from this first stage of work were then used to develop a questionnaire which was then tested in a pilot survey. This is described in more detail in Section 2.3.

The qualitative interviews were all transcribed for analysis purposes. Members of the project team then met frequently throughout the fieldwork period to discuss the findings. On the completion of the fieldwork, the findings were thematically coded and plotted into an Excel spreadsheet to enable us to determine the key issues and the links in the data.

2.3 Methodology for the quantitative pilot survey

The pilot survey interviewed 250 organisations who had had direct contact with DWP in the last year, and took place during November and December 2008. A total of 6,450 employer contacts were loaded into a Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing dialling system – 26 of these came from DWP (yielding seven completed primary interviews) and the rest were named sample purchased from Dun and Bradstreet (yielding 243 completed primary interviews). Table 2.1 shows a breakdown of sample outcome for interviews.

Table 2.1 Primary interviews

Final sample status	Total sample used (N)	Total sample used (%)	Valid sample (%)
Total sample	6,450	100.0	
Valid sample			
Achieved interviews	250	3.9	5
Sample still live	2,676	41.5	49
Refusal	1,200	18.6	22
Stopped interviews	73	1.1	1
Unable to take part	1,018	15.8	19
Tried max number of times	202	3.1	4
Total valid sample	5,419	84.0	100
Invalid sample		0.0	
Bad numbers	671	10.4	
Not responsible for tasks	10	0.2	
No dealings with DWP in last 12 months	179	2.8	
Sole traders	164	2.5	
Other ineligibles	7	0.1	
Total invalid sample	1,031	16.0	

Given the short fieldwork period, interviewers needed to call up a large number of employers to get through to the named or HR contact that was also willing to take part. This explains the high proportion of live records (41.5 per cent of total sample) at the end of fieldwork, and the majority of these are 'soft appointments' (i.e. interviewers arrange a general call back without making a firm appointment). The proportion of refusals, including refusals by switchboards, the named or HR contact or his or her colleague, is 18.6 per cent. A similar proportion (15.8 per cent) said they were unable to take part during the fieldwork period, and this percentage may mask those who would like to have refused but did not say so outright.

The low response rate achieved in this study was a result of the tight timescales available for fieldwork and for future research with employers we would firmly recommend releasing a lower number of records and allowing for a longer fieldwork period in order to minimise any non response bias. What this does mean is that the results presented in the report should be treated with caution and should not necessarily be seen as representative of employers as a whole. However, the main point of a pilot survey like this is to test the questionnaire (for clarity and understanding) and the survey process, rather than to generate representative results. As such the survey should be seen as a valid precursor to the main survey, irrespective of concerns about response rates and reliability.

A total of 682 respondents agreed to take part in the survey, however 359 of these were screened-out at the start of interview and further 73 withdrew during

the course of the interview. Out of the 359 of those who were screened out:

- Seven were 'out of quota' (ie. sufficient interviews had already been conducted with this type of business – see below for more information on the quota approach used);
- 164 were sole traders¹⁷;
- Ten were not responsible for dealing with the relevant issues; and
- 179 had had no contact with DWP.

2.4 Secondary interviews

Where respondents said that they were not responsible for one or more tasks but someone else in the organisation would be, they were asked if they are willing to provide the contact details of the colleague responsible for one of those tasks (randomly selected if there were more than one task). This is to allow for organisations where dealings with DWP were divided between more than one person.

A total of 61 leads were generated in this way, which in turn yielded seven completed interviews. Contrary to initial assumptions that only larger companies would have multiple respondents, the size of companies with a secondary contact varied:

- Seven small employers (one to 49 employees);
- 17 medium employers (50-249 employees); and
- 17 large employers (250+ employees).

Table 2.2 below shows a breakdown of sample outcome for those secondary records.

¹⁷ When we ordered the sample from Dun and Bradstreet, we specified that only businesses with at least one employee should be included. However, given the dynamic nature of businesses, it is hard for any database to be completely up to date, and this is a problem facing most business surveys.

Table 2.2 Secondary records breakdown

Final sample status	Total sample used (N)	Total sample used (%)	Valid sample (%)
Total sample	61	100.0	
Valid sample			
Achieved interviews	7	11.5	15
Sample still live	3	4.9	6
Refusal	5	8.2	11
Stopped interviews	2	3.3	4
Unable to take part	23	37.7	49
Tried max number of times	7	11.5	15
Total valid sample	47	77.0	100
Invalid sample			
Bad numbers	9	14.8	
Not responsible for tasks	3	4.9	
No dealings with DWP in last 12 months	2	3.3	
Total invalid sample	14	23.0	

Close to four in ten (37.7 per cent) secondary leads said they were unable to take part in the survey during the fieldwork period. Given a longer fieldwork period, this proportion would have reduced significantly.

In addition, 15 per cent of secondary leads were incorrect numbers. With a longer fieldwork period interviewers would have had the opportunity to reload the phone number used for the primary interview and to ask again for a referral, thereby marginally improving the response rate.

2.5 Sampling and weighting

To test the pilot questionnaire thoroughly with different types of employers certain groups were oversampled (eg employers in Wales and Scotland, and medium and large employers). Quotas were also set on Standard Industrial Classification groups (SIC) to ensure that a mix of employers would be interviewed. Table 2.3 gives a breakdown of the quotas used.

Table 2.3 Quota breakdown

Country:	BIS SME profile¹ (%)	Quota profile (%)	Quotas
England	88.23	64	160
Wales	4.62	14	35
Scotland	7.14	22	55
	100	100.00	250
Employees			
			250
1 to 49	97.28	60	150
50 to 249	2.33	24	60
250+	0.38	16	40
	100	100	250
SIC			
			250
AB		4.4	11
CDE		7.2	18
F		19.2	48
GH		13.2	33
I		6.4	16
JK		22	55
L		8.40	21
MNO		19.20	48
		100.00	250

¹ We have included public administration organisations (SIC L) in our sample as they tend to have a large number of employees. We have decided to use the BIS SME profile for setting quotas and weighting, even though it excludes public administration organisations, because given the small number of such organisations, we believe that the actual profile should be very similar to the BIS profile. Also, given the tight timetable, there was not enough time to order a bespoke profile from the IDBR team.

Data were not weighted back to the Department for Business Innovation and Science (BIS) employers profile as this is a profile of all employers (excluding public administration organisations); whether or not those employers have had contact with DWP. Whereas in this survey, only employers who had contacted with DWP in the previous 12 months were interviewed. An alternative weighting scheme was therefore calculated by dividing the BIS business profile with the profile of employers who either completed the interview or terminated because they have no contact with DWP in the last 12 months (sole traders and those not responsible for any tasks are excluded from the calculation). Table 2.4 shows how the final weights were calculated.

Table 2.4 Weighting profile

	Business profile according to BIS (%)	Number of achieved interviews	Terminated interview because no contact	Total number employers spoken to	Profile of employers spoken to* (%)	Final weights	Final weighted profile (%)
England 1-49	85.83	84	96	180	43.13	1.990	34
England 50-249	2.06	40	11	51	12.56	0.164	16
England 250+	0.34	37	5	42	7.82	0.044	15
Wales 1-49	4.51	22	21	43	10.43	0.432	9
Wales 50-249	0.10	7	0	7	1.90	0.052	3
Wales 250+	0.02	9	4	13	2.37	0.007	4
Scotland 1-49	6.95	24	30	54	13.03	0.533	10
Scotland 50-249	0.17	13	11	24	6.40	0.027	5
Scotland 250+	0.02	14	1	15	2.37	0.010	6

*This excludes sample from DWP (less than 0.01% of original sample).

With the heavy weighting required to correct for sample stratification, the effective sample size is 114 for the survey findings. Given this low effective sample size along with possible non-response bias resulting from the short fieldwork period, all findings from the pilot survey should be treated as indicative only and not statistically significant.

2.6 Introduction and screener

DWP is responsible for providing help to employers in a wide range of areas, including recruitment, general employment issues, pensions, equal opportunities and training for employees. These services tend to be provided through a number of agencies such as Jobcentre Plus and Disability and Carers Service. However, we know from existing research that the majority of employers tend to be unclear about the remit of DWP, and in the context of a survey this makes establishing the precise level of engagement with DWP something of a challenge. For example:

- Employers may have had contact with DWP without actually realising it (ie contact through an agency).
- Different people within the organisation may have contact with DWP.
- Employers may not recall their contact with DWP; and
- Finally, a proportion of employers will genuinely have had no direct contact with DWP in the last 12 months.

To address these issues the following process was implemented:

- 1 A named sample was drawn from Dun and Bradstreet database. The interviewer would ask to speak to the primary contact in the sample, who tended to be a senior member in the organisation such as the proprietor, managing director or partner. Where the named person was not available, they would ask to be referred to the HR manager or the person responsible for recruitment.
- 2 To measure spontaneous awareness of DWP and to minimise the chance of employers refusing to participate in the survey because they could not recall any contact with DWP, the name of DWP was withheld from respondents at the start of the survey.
- 3 After establishing that the organisation was not a sole trader, interviewers would ask the person on the phone whether they were responsible for any of the following areas: staff recruitment, ensuring employees enjoy equal opportunities, general employment issues, career and staff skills development, staff redundancies, providing information to the Government about their employees and employee pensions.
- 4 If the respondents said that they were not responsible for any of the above areas but someone else in the organisation would be, interviewers asked if they were willing to pass on the contact details of the person responsible for one of those tasks (randomly selected if there were more than one task).

- 5 The questionnaire would initially gauge the spontaneous awareness of the Government agencies responsible for a range of issues. Following this, respondents were told that DWP provides these services through a number of different businesses including Jobcentre Plus and the Disability and Carers Service. This was to ensure that all employers started the interview with equal knowledge.
- 6 Respondents were then prompted with a list of activities, such as staff recruitment and providing company pensions. If they had engaged in any of those activities in the last 12 months, they would be asked immediately whether they had obtained relevant information about the activity from, or did the activity through, DWP. Respondents without any contact with DWP would then be screened out.

2.7 Identifying the right person

The pilot survey showed that the introduction and screener process described above worked very well in identifying the right person to speak to in the organisation – seven in ten (69 per cent) said they were able to talk about all seven areas, two in ten (19 per cent) six areas and one in ten (nine per cent) five areas. This is highlighted in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1 Identifying the right person

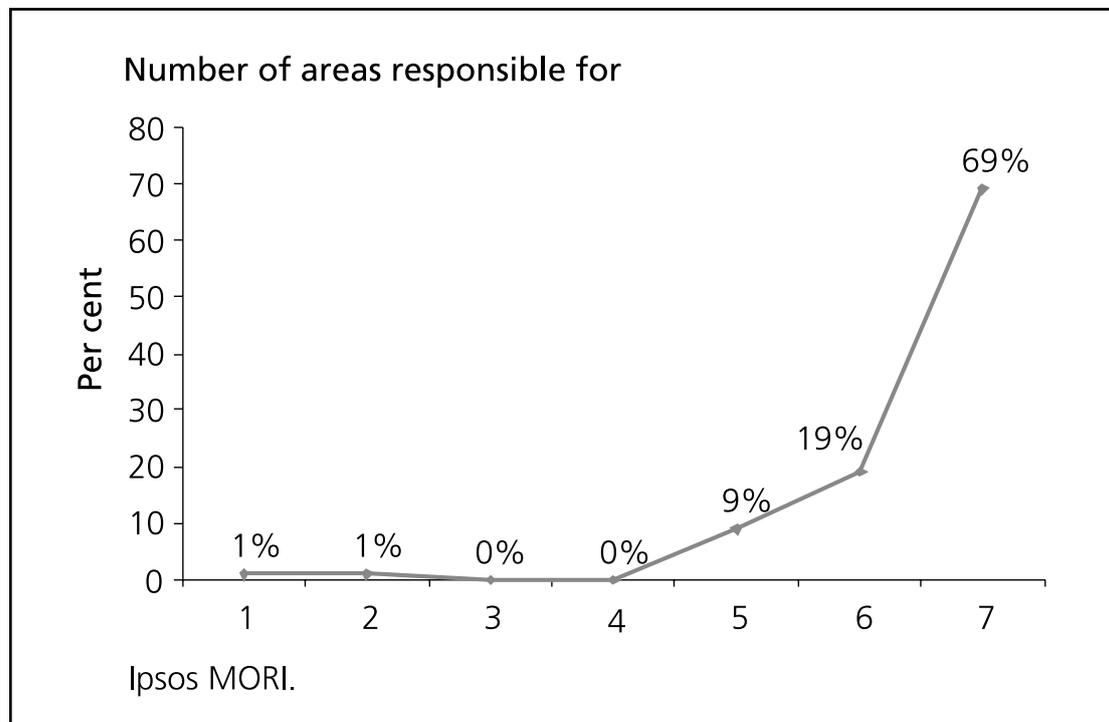


Table 2.5, shows that most areas were covered by over nine in ten respondents. The only area that may benefit from having a secondary interview was providing information to DWP about their employees, as one in ten (nine per cent) said that someone else in the organisation would be better equipped to discuss this, although nine in ten (89 per cent) still said they would be the right person to talk to about this. Employee pensions was the area employers were most uncertain about, as one in ten (ten per cent) said no one in the organisation would be able to talk about this, and a further five per cent said they do not know the answer.

Table 2.5 Areas primary contacts are responsible for

	Yes	No, but someone else would be	No, and nobody would be	Don't know
	%	%	%	%
Staff recruitment	100	*	*	*
Redundancies	95	2	2	1
Ensuring employees enjoy equal opportunities	95	2	1	1
General employment issues such as helping colleagues balance work and home or paying statutory sick pay	94	4	1	*
Career and staff skills development	91	1	5	2
Providing information to Government about employees, such as National Insurance number of payroll information	89	9	3	*
Employee pensions	84	1	10	5

Base: All respondents (250).

2.8 Pilot survey analysis

Finally, in this chapter it bears repeating that the findings from the pilot survey should be treated with extreme caution, or indicative at best. There are a number of reasons for this:

- The sample size of 250 is small, and even if the survey were conducted robustly this sample size would not provide a particularly high level of reliability.
- The sample was constructed not to provide a representative view but rather to test the questionnaire with as many groups as possible. As such, considerable weighting has been undertaken to provide overall findings, with associated further reductions in reliability.

- Because of the relatively small fieldwork period the response rate was particularly low, thereby increasing the possibility of response or non-response bias.

For a considerably more robust assessment of customer satisfaction of DWP amongst employers you are advised to refer to the more extensive Annual Employer Survey, which this study helped to develop¹⁸.

¹⁸ Ibid.

3 Employer attitudes towards DWP

This section of the report examines employers' levels of awareness about the role and remit of the DWP and its main delivery businesses.

Understanding employer attitudes towards and awareness of Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) generally is relevant as it provides useful context and contributes to an understanding of why some employers are more satisfied than others in their dealings with the Department. The qualitative elements of this research found that employers were often unaware of the Department's work and what it is responsible for – and this was reiterated in the pilot survey. The only exceptions to this were larger employers and those with a managed account. However, this lack of awareness did not represent a barrier to satisfaction with individual services, which are more regularly received through businesses of the Department.

When prompted to consider dealing with DWP and its businesses in more detail, it was suggested by those with a long-standing relationship with the Department that it is becoming increasingly customer focussed and many spoke favourably of individual businesses such as Jobcentre Plus as it provided them with a free service that helped them recruit more diverse candidates than would otherwise have been possible.

The qualitative interviews also showed that the Pension Service is seen as a trusted and authoritative source of information. Indeed, the information provided by it was held in such high regard that employers often did not feel the need to double check it. In line with this, DWP staff were also described as being knowledgeable and in-tune with the needs of employers.

These views were echoed in the follow-up pilot quantitative research, in which it was apparent that the Pension Service is seen as the authority on pension provision and legislation. For instance, almost nine in ten (86 per cent) employers agreed that they know where to go to get information about pensions.

3.1 Awareness of the Department for Work and Pensions

The broad view of the Department (and Government as a whole) is that satisfaction with services should not depend upon having a detailed knowledge of departmental and agency structures; rather individuals and employers should have easy access to the information *they need*. This follows Cabinet Office research which suggested that one of the biggest challenges facing government is to deliver services seamlessly, as customers do not relate to government in terms of 'Departments'¹⁹. A good illustration of how this can work was found in an earlier DWP study which found that whilst most employers have equal opportunities statements or policies, and that virtually all have heard of the Disability Discrimination Act, few were aware that DWP was responsible for these specific areas of employment law²⁰.

In the context of this research it was necessary to examine how much employers knew about DWP, if only to confirm that this was not a key driver of satisfaction. Therefore, this section briefly outlines what employers do and do not know about the DWP, whilst the next section looks at the more important issue of attitudes towards it.

Unsurprisingly, all elements of this research found that employers did indeed lack *detailed* knowledge about the work of DWP. In particular, employers tended to conflate the work of government generally and, in specifically, the remits of DWP, HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and the Department for Business, Innovation and Science (BIS).

However, this lack of awareness was not universal. The exceptions were large employers and those with a DWP managed account. Larger employers often reported having dedicated staff whose job it was to know a lot about specific aspects of the Department (for instance a Recruitment Manager might work extensively with Jobcentre Plus, but they would not interact with The Pension, Disability and Carers Service). The role of these staff members is to work with DWP to help meet their business needs (typically with regard to recruitment) or, more generally, establishing how new legislation might affect their operations.

I'd say I have a narrow but deep perspective, if that makes any sense. Thankfully, I don't have to deal with the Pensions side as recruitment is enough on its own.

HR Recruitment Manager, Large business

¹⁹ *Customer Insight in Public Services: A primer*, Cabinet Office, 2006.

²⁰ *Employers and the New Deal for Disabled People*, Qualitative Research Wave 2, DWP/IES, 2005.

Conversely, smaller employers and those without managed accounts tended to have a much broader, though less in-depth, knowledge of the work of the Department. For instance, in the qualitative interviews it was found that Managing Directors of small companies tended to have experience of working with DWP on a number of issues including recruitment, employment legislation and pensions. This was driven by the lack of resources at smaller companies which led to those at the top of an organisation taking responsibility for overseeing a number of different and varied policy areas.

I've been in touch with them about loads over the years, pensions, sick pay... I use the Jobcentre to recruit new people as well ... I need to though don't I, because who else is going to do that in this place?

Director, Micro business

However, it should be noted that even amongst employers who did have a more in – depth awareness about the work of DWP, there was still uncertainty about the way the Department operated. This seems to have been largely driven by the existence of the different delivery businesses such as Jobcentre Plus and the Pension Service. For example, employers often mentioned that they had had regular dealings with Jobcentre Plus over the past year, but did not recognise that Jobcentre Plus was a part of DWP.

Confirmation of the generally low levels of awareness of Departmental responsibilities came from the findings of the quantitative pilot survey conducted during the second phase of this research. In this, employers were asked to spontaneously name the government agencies responsible for the following issues (staff recruitment; pension provision and legislation; equal opportunities legislation; and, developing employees' skills). Even though all those interviewed had had some form of contact with DWP in the previous 12 months, their spontaneous levels of awareness of both the Department itself and its roles remained low. For all the issues outlined above, at least half of all employers did not know which government agencies held the remits.

Although detailed knowledge about Departmental structures should not be a determinant of satisfaction, it ought to be recognised that lack of awareness can lead to genuine dissatisfaction with service levels when it actually has an impact on business activities. For example, where employers are uncertain about who to contact with a particular query it can lengthen the amount of time taken to resolve. The following case study, drawn from the qualitative interviews illustrates this point. In this case lack of awareness of the Department in relation to the specific issue of Personal Accounts was causing confusion which might in-turn reduce satisfaction levels. This is important to stress as 'awareness' as a whole cannot be completely discounted as a driver of satisfaction. Awareness of specific aspects of DWP's work is covered in more depth in Chapter 4.

Case study

Simon is co-founder of a small recruitment firm, with fewer than ten employees. He has used the DWP website on several occasions as a source of information about his responsibilities as an employer to his employees. As a recruitment agency, his business also uses Jobcentre Plus as a source of candidates.

Simon was confused about many of the specific initiatives and programmes emanating from the Department. As a small employer, he tended to get his information about government programmes from the general press and more specialist recruitment press, and his recall of policies such as the workplace pension reforms was patchy and mistakenly attributed to other Departments (in this case, HM Revenue and Customs).

I don't know if it's DWP but there is some change, isn't there, in 2012... I don't know whether I've heard something through the Institute of Chartered Accountants, or may have seen something in an employer bulletin from the Inland Revenue or something in the press... and also I think they talked about, is it Personal Accounts?

This lack of awareness about the roles and responsibilities of different government Departments caused issues for Simon in that he found it difficult, as an employer, to know where to go to get more information on certain forthcoming reforms.

3.2 Attitudes towards DWP and its businesses

As will be shown in the remainder of this chapter, the desk research and the qualitative interviews provided a great deal of information about employers' attitudes towards the Department itself, as well as its main businesses.

Thinking about the Department overall, evidence from the qualitative interviews suggested that DWP is far more customer focused and proactive than it was previously considered to be. Employers stated that they found staff within the Department accessible and easily contactable and that the information they provided was timely, accurate and helpful. Illustrative of this was that employers mentioned how, of late, the Department had proactively provided them with information regarding forthcoming legislation changes. This was appreciated by employers as it not only enabled them to understand what the changes meant for their business but, moreover, gave them the time and information they needed in order to comply.

This sentiment was voiced particularly strongly by those employers that had a managed account with DWP and, therefore, had a lot of face-to-face contact with its staff. They stated that, by virtue of interacting with the same person frequently, DWP staff had built a thorough understanding of their business needs and, therefore, responded helpfully and appropriately.

From my dealings with them in the past, their attitude has changed. I used to see them as some far flung government Department that I had little time for, but that's all changed and some of the people have been really helpful.

Business Manager, Small business

Taking each of DWP's businesses in turn, most is already known about employers' relations and interactions with Jobcentre Plus, and the desk research was particularly helpful in providing a rounded and detailed view on the opinions of employers towards working with it. Data collected by BMRB shows that two-fifths of workplaces that had recruited low-skilled workers said they had used Jobcentre Plus within the last year.²¹ Additionally, according to the Jobcentre Plus Annual Employer Survey 2007-2008, almost three quarters (74 per cent) of those establishments that had used Jobcentre Plus in the past twelve months were satisfied with the services provided.²²

However, levels of satisfaction varied according to the size of the company in question with smaller employers being most likely to be very satisfied: a third of small employers stated they were very satisfied with the service provided compared to a quarter of larger employers (34 per cent versus 25 per cent respectively).²³ Satisfaction also varied according to location with employers in Wales (49 per cent) and the North West (37 per cent) being most likely to be very satisfied and those in London and the South East (both 23 per cent) least likely to be very satisfied.²⁴

Those employers who had an established relationship with DWP also tended to be positive about the service provided by Jobcentre Plus, for example the account management service was viewed very favourably²⁵. Furthermore, these employers mentioned that Account Managers and Labour Market Recruitment Advisers had worked hard to improve communications with them and, in turn, this had helped to foster strong and effective working relationships thus demonstrating the importance of a dedicated single point of contact.²⁶

These positive perceptions were also apparent from research with employers in the Trailblazer districts.²⁷ These two districts (Birmingham and North London) hosted Options and Choices events which were targeted at lone parents whose eligibility for Income Support was due to end in the coming year. In these two pilot areas, District Teams within Jobcentre Plus managed the relationship with employers

²¹ *DWP Employers Survey, DWP/BMRB, 2007.*

²² *Jobcentre Plus Annual Employer Survey 2007-08, DWP/IFF, 2008.*

²³ *Jobcentre Plus Annual Employer Survey 2006-07, DWP/IFF, 2007.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Employer engagement in Jobcentre Plus: Qualitative research of the Employer Engagement Strategy, DWP/BMRB, 2006.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Options and Choices Events: Testing Implementation and delivery in Trailblazer Districts, DWP/GHK Consulting, 2008.*

and selected the most appropriate employers to attend the events. Such close co-operation ensured that suitable vacancies (such as positions with shift patterns) were advertised directly to lone parents thus facilitating their transition into work.

These views were reinforced through the qualitative interviews with employers conducted during phase one of this research. Before going on to explore employers' attitudes towards the Department's main businesses it is useful to discuss what they expected from their interactions with them. For the most part, employers' expectations were quite low. This was partly driven by the fact that they did not have to pay for the service provided and, therefore, expected minimum standards from it. Expectations also reflected perceptions of the public sector generally; there was a sense among employers that there was a lack of competition within the public sector and, consequently, there was less of an imperative to continually improve service delivery.

However, upon interviewing employers it was generally found that their experiences of working with DWP's main businesses far exceeded their expectations of it. For instance, many employers spoke favourably about working with Jobcentre Plus as, at the most basic level, it provided them with a free service which was good quality. This was particularly the case when employers discussed issues related to recruitment as, more often than not, they also had experience of working with private recruitment agencies to help them find candidates and, therefore, parallels were drawn about the service provided. Smaller employers were most positive on this point. Given their lower turnovers and the fact that cash-flow was very often an issue for them, being able to use a service which helped them cut their costs was much appreciated.

I'd be going to a recruitment agency who charges 20 per cent, and I would basically get the same people. Ok, I have to do a bit more work, but the fact that it's free makes perfect sense for someone as small as me.

Director, Small business

More generally, the fact that Jobcentre Plus offered a free service was mentioned in relation to other issues beyond recruitment. For instance, some employers (particularly smaller ones) stated that the Jobcentre Plus website was a useful source of information about more general employment issues, which otherwise, they would either have to search for in specialist trade or occupational publications, or possibly seek external advice on.

Another benefit to emerge through the qualitative interviews was that some employers found that, through working with Jobcentre Plus, employers thought that they were able to enhance their own corporate reputation within the local community. For instance, they mentioned that working with Jobcentre Plus to fill vacancies enabled them to build a diverse workforce which, in turn, helped them to be seen as a 'good' employer.

I love what I do – working in this way with Jobcentre Plus means I work for the community. And, at the end of it, instead of having an untrained unemployed person, you've ended up with a part trained employed person.

Director, Large business

Additionally, they were also able to build their knowledge of employee benefits such as flexible working and the provision of skills training which helped them with staff retention.

The qualitative interviews also revealed that the Pension Service was seen as a trusted and authoritative source of information and advice and that staff were regarded as knowledgeable and in-tune with the needs of employers. The Pension Service was felt to be the most reliable contact for updates and information on pension reforms. For example, employers mentioned that when told something by the Pension Service, they did not feel the need to double check this information (as they would if requesting details from other Government agencies) and, instead, accepted it as fact.

This strong level of association with the Pension Service being seen as the authority was also borne out in the quantitative survey with employers. Almost nine in ten (86 per cent) employers agreed that they know where to go to get information about pensions (compared to only half (53 per cent) of employers who found it easy to keep up to date with DWP rules relating to employment). This may, at first glance, appear contradictory to the findings mentioned in Section 2.1 which showed that only a third (35 per cent) of employers were spontaneously able to name DWP as the Government department responsible for pension provision and legislation. However, this could be seen as encouraging as it demonstrates that knowledge of DWP itself is not required for employers to understand what they need to know in relation to pensions, and that the Pension Service is effectively delivering this service.

4 Working with the DWP

Employers' interaction with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) can be split into two main categories: mandatory and voluntary contact. While the desk research suggested that employers can find responding to mandatory requests difficult, this was less apparent in the qualitative interviews because employers *expected* to have to provide DWP with information and saw this as part of their role in running a business.

Regarding voluntary contact, typically, this related to using Jobcentre Plus as a means of accessing candidates. While, on the whole, employers were often satisfied with the service provided to them there were some concerns about the skills of the people who were put forward or responded to vacancy advertisements. In terms of contact with DWP's other businesses, employers' experiences of working with the Pension Service were very positive – particularly in relation to the information provided by it which was felt to be comprehensive and understandable (as was discussed in the previous section). Least was known about how employers interacted with the Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission (CMEC) or the Child Support Agency (CSA); it was found that employers did not always feel comfortable with Deduction from Earnings Orders (DEO) as they felt it interfered with employees' private lives.

Looking at *how* employers contacted DWP, face-to-face communications were typically restricted to larger employers and those with a managed account. This channel was viewed positively as it helped foster a mutual understanding. Contact by telephone was also valued as it was convenient for the employer and allowed them to receive tailored advice. DWP websites were also often referred to as a source of information as they could be used when they suited the employer and, additionally, the layout and content was thought to be of a generally good quality. The lack of access to named contacts within DWP, however, was frustrating for some employers. Overall however, employers were satisfied with their most recent contact with DWP, with seven in ten (72 per cent) rating it as very/fairly good.

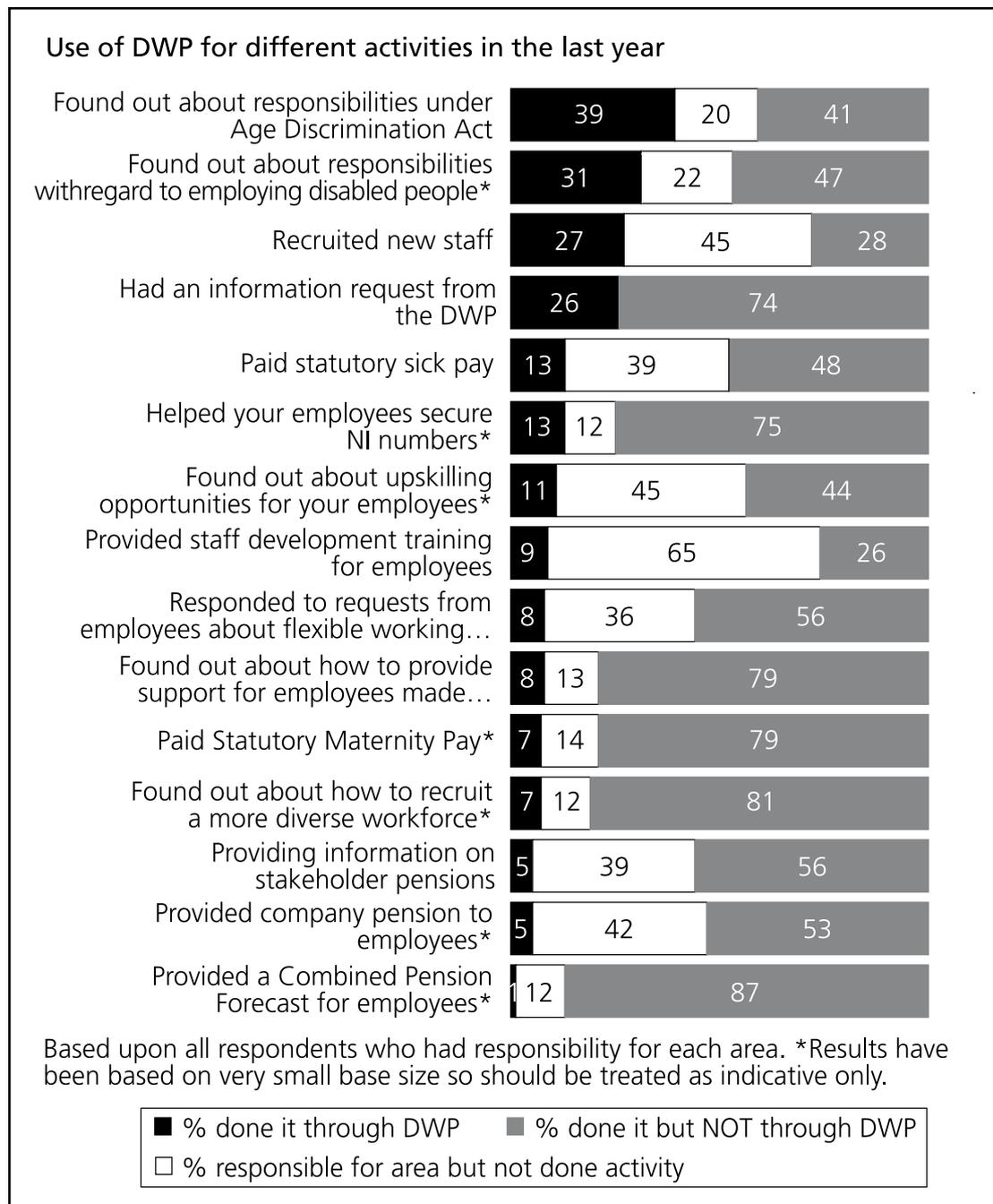
4.1 Reasons for working with DWP

As highlighted in Section 3.2, employers interacted with DWP for a wide range of reasons. Indeed, one of the most effective ways of showing the full range of interactions that employers had with the Department is to examine the findings from one of the questions in the pilot survey which sought to understand the reasons why employers had interacted with DWP over the course of the past year.

Respondents with appropriate responsibilities for areas such as recruitment or general employment issues were asked whether or not they have undertaken a number of activities which are within the remit of DWP. If they had undertaken any of those activities (apart from providing information to DWP), they were then asked if they have done so through DWP or obtained information about it from DWP. For some activities, such as helping employees to get a National Insurance number or finding out information about redundancies, only a small proportion of employers stated they had been involved in the last 12 months. This meant that only a small number of employers answered the second question for those activities. These activities have been marked with an asterisk in the following chart, and as has been stated previously all findings should be treated with caution because of the small sample size.

To summarise this, Figure 4.1 below shows:

- The proportion of employers who had undertaken an activity and involved DWP.
- The proportion of employers who had undertaken an activity but not involved DWP; and
- The proportion of employers who are responsible for an area but had not undertaken the activity in the last 12 months.

Figure 4.1 Use of DWP for different activities

Despite the fact that around one in ten (12 per cent) respondents could spontaneously name DWP as an agency responsible for helping employers with equal opportunities legislation, when prompted, close to four in ten (37 per cent) recalled that they have actually found out about their responsibilities under the Age Discrimination Act through DWP, and almost three in ten (29 per cent) recalled that they have used DWP to find out about their responsibilities with regard to employing disabled people. As has been described already, unprompted awareness of DWP was not a prerequisite for the use of a particular service, as long as employers knew where to look when the need arose.

The survey also highlighted that there seems to be little correlation between the need for a service and the use of DWP for that service. For instance, whilst seven in ten (70 per cent) provided staff development training for employees and two in ten (20 per cent) had obtained information on Statutory Maternity Pay, a smaller proportion (eight per cent and seven per cent respectively) used DWP for those services. This could be related to the availability of alternative sources of advice (e.g. other government departments, advisors, accountants, etc) and this was certainly raised in the qualitative research, in which employers mentioned the importance of professional organisations as a means of obtaining information on key policy areas.

While the chart above shows the range of interactions that employers had with the Department, the types of contact can still, in the main, be split into *voluntary* and *mandatory* contact (such as providing the Department with details about their employees). As such the remainder of this section outlines the ways in which employers work with the Department on this basis, and the impact that this has on their perceptions of it.

4.2 Mandatory contact

Looking first of all at the mandatory contact that employers have with the Department, the desk research highlighted many issues related to this that could, potentially, have a bearing on wider levels of employer satisfaction. Indeed, the National Audit Office's work on the Government's Administrative Burdens Reduction Programme highlighted the extent of negative opinion in employers' attitudes towards regulation²⁸, for example, businesses are positive about *only one* aspect of the Government's approach to regulation – that the purpose of regulation is clear. Furthermore, this issue became particularly evident after the initial scoping interviews with DWP senior representatives, who felt that this was a consistent tension in their work.

Related to this is that one of the issues that emerged from the desk research is that employers felt that the Department does not understand the needs of employers as much as it should²⁹. Evidence for this included the perceived inappropriate communications received from the Department. While this is discussed in more detail below, some employers felt that the frequency of contact from the Department places an undue burden on them.

Aspects of regulation that were identified through the desk research as being particularly burdensome were: keeping up-to-date with legislation; the time it takes to comply; and finding out information about relevant regulations³⁰. Further

²⁸ *The Outcomes of the Government's Administrative Burdens reduction Programme*, NAO/Ipsos MORI, 2007.

²⁹ *Building a coherent strategy for engagement: Deliberative research with employers*, DWP/Ipsos MORI, 2008.

³⁰ *The Outcomes of the Government's Administrative Burdens Reduction Programme*, NAO/Ipsos MORI, 2007.

research found that Health and Safety regulation is regarded as the most time consuming and costly aspect of regulation³¹. That said, nearly nine in ten SMEs (87 per cent) felt they are well placed to comply with health and safety regulations. This compares to around a half (53 per cent) of SMEs who feel the same about employment law³².

However, while all these issues emerged through the desk research, they were less prevalent in the qualitative interviews with employers conducted for this research. Essentially, employers expected that they would have to provide information to Government on a range of issues and, therefore, simply saw this mandatory contact as a part of their work. Furthermore, as employers were required to do this on a regular basis, they quickly were able to develop systems and processes for dealing with information requests from DWP and, therefore, with time, the burden on them decreased.

The administrative burden of complying with DWP's information requests was also compared favourably by employers compared to that imposed by other Government departments and, in particular, by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC). Businesses stated that they are used to filling in many onerous forms for HMRC such as their Self Assessment or Corporation Tax return and, in comparison, the information requested by DWP demanded less of them.

A final point is that, in the qualitative interviews, employers commented on how, while mandatory contact could at times impose a burden on them it was something that they not only *expected* they would have to do but, moreover, wanted to do. In summary, employers felt as though by complying with information requests from DWP they were acting as a 'good' employer. This, they thought, would ensure that they were seen by others as reputable (including government, other companies within their sector, and their employees).

However, the qualitative work also highlighted how mandatory contact with DWP could be improved for employers. These comments were made most often by smaller employers and those where there was a large staff turnover. Smaller employers in general found it harder to meet their obligations to DWP as they often lacked dedicated resources to deal with the information requests and, therefore, these demands had to be fitted in alongside the day-to-day running of the business. For employers that had a high staff turnover, such as those in retail or construction, it was perceived to be more complicated and onerous for them to meet their obligations to DWP and respond to information requests efficiently simply by virtue of the constantly changing nature of their workforce.

In general, these employers mentioned that it would be helpful to know *why* DWP needs the information that it asks employers to provide. It should be noted that,

³¹ *The Anderson Review of Government Guidance on Regulation*, BERR/Ipsos MORI, 2008.

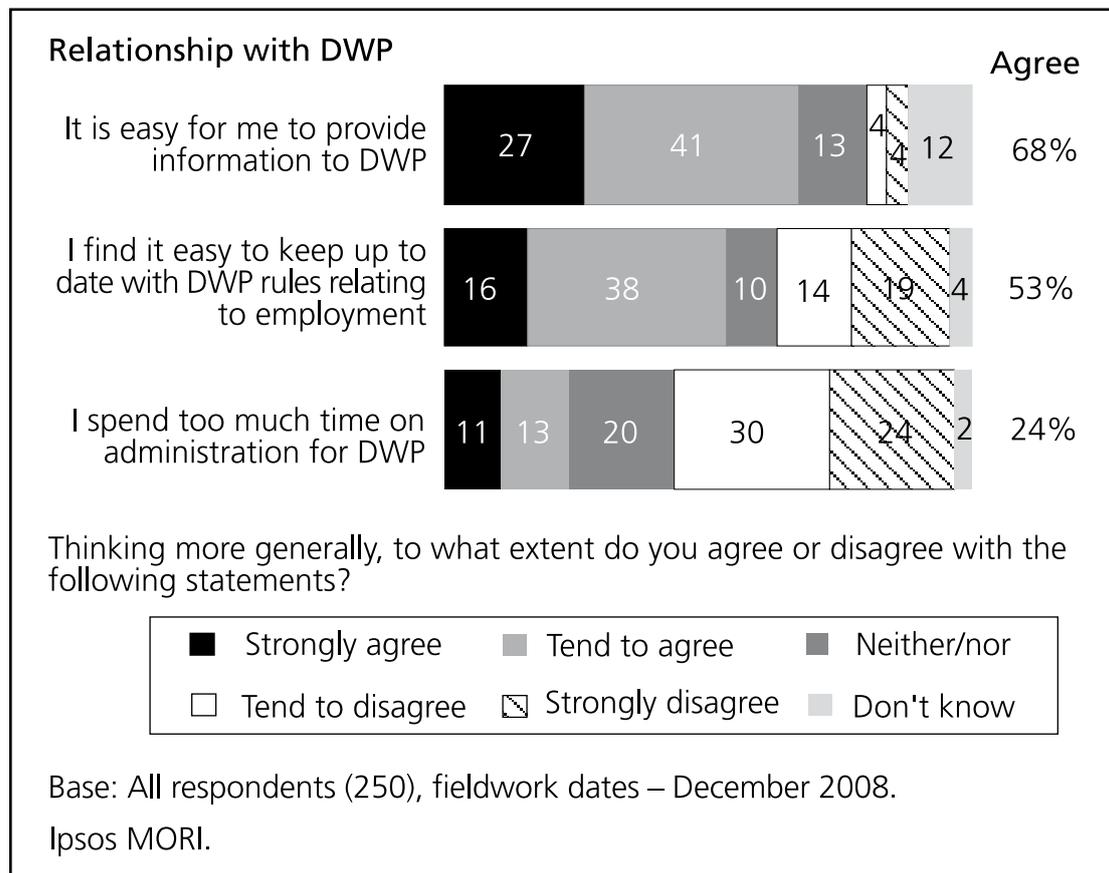
³² *Ibid.*

as mentioned above, these employers wanted to comply with their obligations but, given that it placed a burden on them, wanted to understand the reasoning behind such requests. Furthermore, these employers also suggested that it would be useful if DWP could indicate how long it would take them to respond to any queries employers might have in relation to the provision of information to the Department. There was a sense from these employers that the nature of these transactions could be rather one sided; DWP expects employers to reply within a given timeframe but does not answer queries with the same urgency.

A further issue raised was that employers often feel less comfortable providing information to DWP when it relates to potential fraud investigations, owing to the duty of care to their employees that many employers feel.

However, on the whole, mandatory contact was something that was broadly accepted by employers and these sentiments were echoed in the pilot survey responses as illustrated in Figure 4.2. Close to seven in ten (68 per cent) employees agreed that providing information to DWP was easy for them and only a quarter (24 per cent) felt that they spent too much time on administration for DWP. However, only just over half (54 per cent) of employers agreed that they found it easy to keep up to date with DWP rules relating to employment, which suggests scope for further improvement in this area.

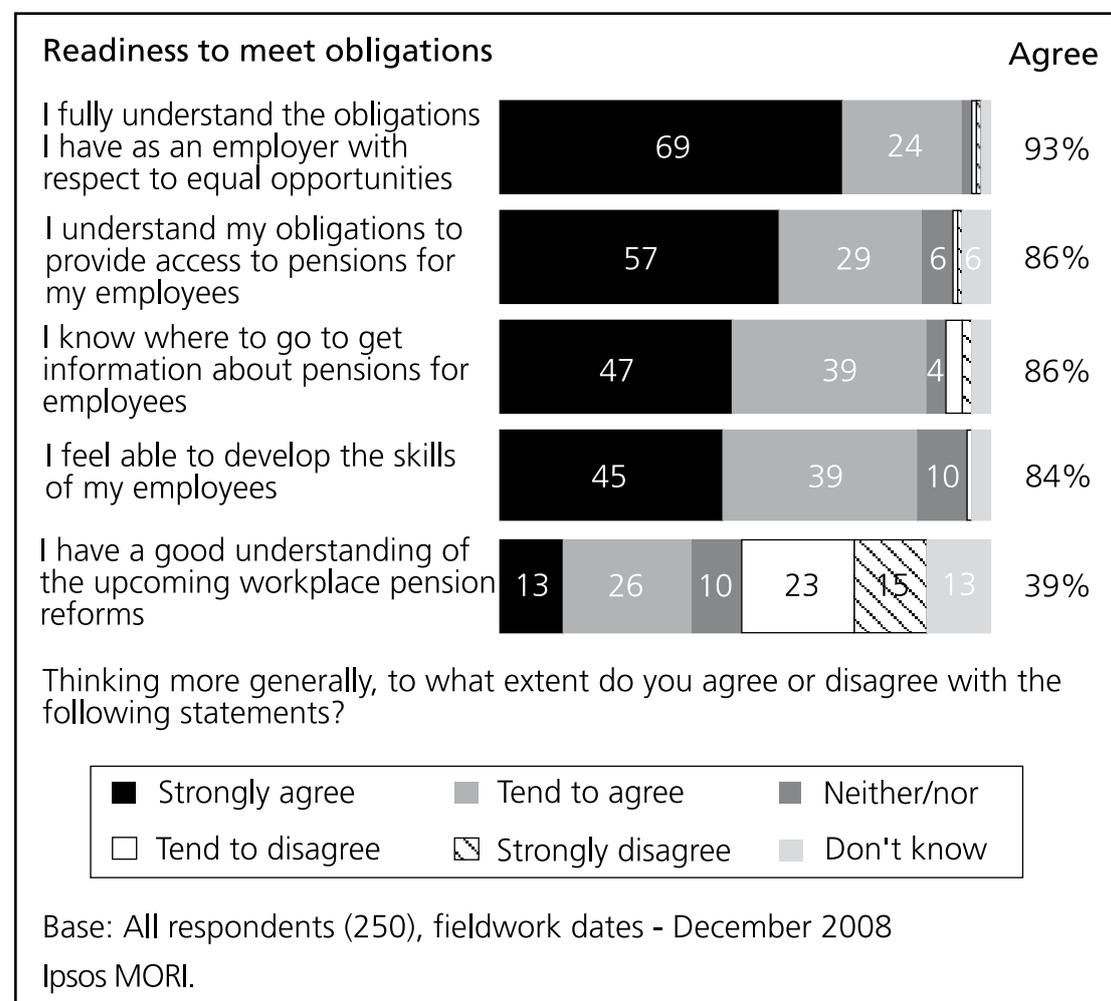
Figure 4.2 Relationship with DWP



The quantitative survey examined employers' readiness to meet their obligations to employees (as set out by DWP) in more detail. These are set out in Figure 4.3. The survey found that employers felt well equipped to meet their obligations as an employer in terms of equal opportunities and pensions - over nine in ten (93 per cent) agreed that they 'fully understand the obligations they have as an employer with respect to equal opportunities' while only slightly fewer (86 per cent) agreed that they 'understand their obligations to provide access to pensions for my employees'. The same proportion (86 per cent) also agreed that they 'know where to go for information about pensions for their employees'. In relation to skills, over four in five (84 per cent) agreed that they 'feel able to develop the skills of my employees'.

However, it is worth noting that while nearly nine in ten knew where to go to find out information about pensions, a significant proportion of employers were unlikely to have actively sought information about the forthcoming workplace pension reforms. Indicative of this is that only two in five employers (39 per cent) agreed that they have a good understanding of the upcoming workplace pension reforms. Furthermore, it should be recognised that in any survey there is usually a degree of over-claim and respondents may say they agree with a statement without understanding what it actually means.

Figure 4.3 Readiness to meet obligations



4.3 Voluntary contact

When conducting the qualitative interviews with employers it became apparent that for most employers their focus was on how the Department could help them. Indeed, many employers saw DWP as an enabler that gave them the resources needed to meet their aims and objectives. Because of this, employers found it much easier to recall the details of the voluntary contacts they had had with the Department than those interactions that arose because they were required to provide DWP with information.

Overall, it became apparent throughout the qualitative interviews that the main reason for employers to make contact voluntarily with DWP was to work with Jobcentre Plus as a means of acquiring candidates for vacancies. In fact, most employers who participated in the qualitative work had, at some point contacted Jobcentre Plus about this and, on the whole, were satisfied with the service provided. This was largely because Jobcentre Plus was always able to access a large pool of candidates and therefore was seen as a reliable source of labour and diverse candidates. This sentiment is illustrated in the comment below.

I've had all sorts come through the Jobcentre; young, old, good workers, some less good; I've even had a few grads through them too.

Head of Human Resources, Medium size employer

Indeed, Jobcentre Plus' ability to provide a diverse range of candidates was a factor which prompted many employers to use the service provided and, additionally, increased their levels of satisfaction with it. In the qualitative interviews, employers stated that their reputation in the local community and the business world more generally was enhanced by virtue of having a diverse workforce as it clearly demonstrated that they were an equal opportunities employer.

Employers participating in the qualitative interviews also perceived that the vacancy service provided by Jobcentre Plus had improved greatly in recent years. Employers spoke of how Jobcentre Plus advisers now had an in-depth understanding of the local job market which, they felt, was a key asset in encouraging employers to approach them for advice and candidates.

Indeed, this theme of improvement was reiterated in the desk research. Evidence from the 2007-2008 Jobcentre Plus Annual Employer Survey suggests that there have been significant improvements in levels of satisfaction with regard to the following: quality of candidates provided; speed of providing candidates; knowledge of the local labour market; and knowledge of dealing with business and skills requirements³³.

However, in spite of this, there were also indications from the desk research that employers remain dissatisfied with some elements of the service received from Jobcentre Plus, particularly when compared to the work of private recruitment

³³ *Jobcentre Plus Annual Employer (Market View) Survey 2006-07, DWP/IFF, 2007.*

agencies³⁴. This perception was driven by the sense that Jobcentre Plus, while having a good knowledge of the local labour market generally, does not do enough to understand the needs of individual employers and, consequently, can lead to some unsuitable candidates being seen for interview.

Other key weaknesses in the service provided by Jobcentre Plus that emerged from the desk research were the perceived low calibre of candidates and that a number of candidates were believed to attend interviews solely as a means of securing their benefits³⁵.

This finding was emphasised further in the qualitative work. The qualitative interviews demonstrated that some employers were unaware that candidate screening does not happen automatically, and that they needed to work with Jobcentre Plus to develop a screening process that suits their needs. The impact of this lack of understanding was that candidates who were not appropriately qualified were sometimes being seen for an interview. This seemed to be a particular issue for smaller employers who felt it was an unnecessary drain on their already limited resources and suggested that Jobcentre Plus needs to help employers better understand the process for candidates coming to them, and how this might be tailored to their needs.

Related to this, the desk research highlighted that there have been doubts over the accuracy of the advertisements posted by Jobcentre Plus with evidence from the Employer Engagement Survey suggesting that, at times, these can be misleading. Ultimately, for the employer this meant that the right person was not matched to the vacancy and, furthermore, that the quality of candidates that made submissions fell below expectations³⁶. However, it should be noted that this criticism originated in earlier research, and steps have subsequently been undertaken to improve the accuracy of advertisements. Whether or not employers perceive an improvement in accuracy could therefore be checked through future research.

This was an issue that was also raised by employers in the qualitative interviews and, in particular, by those employers who did not work with Jobcentre Plus regularly as a means of acquiring candidates. As illustrated in the comment below, the qualitative interviews showed that accuracy in placing advertisements could, at times, cause problems for employers and, therefore, lowered their satisfaction levels with the overall service provided.

I have given them information over the phone about placing an ad and then when it is posted they got it wrong. So next time I sent them an email, but asked them to not to put my email address in the advert. And then I ended up with everyone sending me CVs.

HR Manager, Medium size employer

³⁴ *Building a coherent strategy for engagement: Deliberative research with employers*, DWP/Ipsos MORI, 2008.

³⁵ *Employers' use of alternative Jobcentre Plus delivery channels: Investigation of issues*, DWP/Carol Goldstone Associates, 2006.

³⁶ *Employer engagement in Jobcentre Plus: Qualitative research of the Employer Engagement Strategy*, DWP/BMRB, 2006.

Employers also stated in the qualitative interviews that they had concerns regarding the consistency of the service provided by Jobcentre Plus and that, too often, the quality of it depended on the adviser that they were dealing with at that time (with the exception of those with managed accounts, it was usual for employers to deal with different advisers each time they interacted with Jobcentre Plus).

A related problem was finding out who was accountable when problems did arise, as illustrated in the comment and case study below.

I have rung them and I don't even know who I am speaking to. So when that went wrong [poorly described job advert] I didn't even know who had made the mistake. That's the point; I really don't feel there was any possibility of redress.

HR, Small employer

Case study

Katy is the manager of a hairdresser in Edinburgh with eight part-time staff. She has used Jobcentre Plus for vacancy placements and for taking on staff via the New Deal.

She generally expressed great confidence in the service, and was aware of the benefits that using the service could bring her business. However, she felt that the service she received very much depended on who she spoke to, because 'some people are simply better than others'. She got the best services, especially regarding New Deal, when she was able to 'build a relationship' with someone at her local Jobcentre Plus office. This relationship was generally built over the telephone but she also had a visit from her local Jobcentre Plus office to update her on the recent changes to the New Deal programme.

They were great about the New Deal stuff because I didn't know anything about how it worked and that. They helped me a lot on that which surprised me like, because they'd not been all that before.

Therefore, while Katy was generally satisfied regarding her interactions with Jobcentre Plus, she was concerned that there would be variation in the quality of service provided due to the different skills of individual staff members.

Even though the findings above illustrate that employers could be dissatisfied with the service provided by Jobcentre Plus if unsuitable candidates arrived for an interview, it should also be noted that we found throughout the qualitative work that the definition of an 'unsuitable' or 'unqualified' candidate varied greatly and, more often than not, was not related to that individual's skill set or qualifications. Large employers, in particular, were looking for a candidate with the right attitude, as they had the resources available to re-train people if necessary. Instead, what they wanted was a candidate willing to learn and ready to take on the challenge of working in a new sector. This sentiment is illustrated in a comment from the qualitative interviews below.

It's about finding the right attitude and product. It's less about the skills. I don't mind if they don't have the right skills – I can train them so they do things the way my company does. But they have to want to learn and be willing to make an effort.

Director, Small employer

Indeed, it emerged in the qualitative work that a few larger employers found that recruiting candidates who did not yet have the right skills through Jobcentre Plus actually met their business needs better. It was felt that by recruiting such people, they could be trained in the ways of the company and consequently they would end up fitting-in well. As a result of this, some large employers had come to an arrangement with Jobcentre Plus whereby they worked in partnership to find workers who were unskilled but, crucially, were willing to learn.

We have had initiative overload with JCP. We couldn't do a great deal more with them; we have an Account Manager, LEPS, Train to Gain. But the best has been the Gateways we have set up to get people with the right attitude to work. We ran the homeless recruitment day with JCP last year. We got thirty people turn up, JCP helped us interview and we employed ten. I realise not everyone can do that, but that kind of partnership working is the best method for us.

Community Development Manager, Large employer

This emphasis on attitude over skills was echoed in the desk research. In terms of what employers want from candidates, the DWP Annual Employer Survey stated that the attribute most sought by employers and the one considered to be most important is interpersonal/teamwork skills, followed closely by job-specific experience. Many employers looked for a combination of skills – most often interpersonal/teamwork skills in combination with others. In general, the survey emphasised the importance of 'soft' skills for many low-skilled jobs³⁷.

This theme is highlighted in other research. For example, in a literature review conducted by the Institute for Employment Studies, it was found that overall; employers were less demanding of technical skills, considering candidates trainable if they exhibit employability and soft skills and positive attributes. Of these soft skills, interpersonal and communication skills were considered important and the core characteristics that employers look for included motivation, flexibility, willingness to work and learn, appearance, behaviour, confidence, positive gestures and mannerisms³⁸.

The qualitative phase of this work also highlighted that, when recruiting, employers looked for a number of other key factors in conjunction with whether the individual had the right skills and attitude for the role in question. In the first

³⁷ DWP Employers Survey, DWP/BMRB, 2007.

³⁸ *What employers look for when recruiting the unemployed and inactive: skills, characteristics and qualifications*, DWP/IES, 2005.

instance, the volume of candidates was essential for large employers and those in specific sectors such as construction and retail. Related to this, the need for candidates to be able to start immediately was also important to many. Employers in the qualitative interviews generally reported that Jobcentre Plus had provided them with a service that enabled them to achieve these aims.

I have always used Jobcentre for recruitment because they get you people. You have to be really clear on the phone when you register the job, because they won't help you on that, but that's fine really.

Director, Small employer

Beyond the issue of recruitment, the desk research and qualitative interviews also highlighted other ways in which employers interacted with Jobcentre Plus. Work Trials in particular were mentioned by large employers and were seen as a positive initiative by those that had participated in them. In the main, Work Trials were viewed as an effective means of receiving candidates that were willing to work – an attribute that it was believed to be hard to screen for in any other way. Furthermore, the financial incentive for taking part in Work Trials made many employers feel that they were not going to lose out by taking on the candidate. While this worked well in principle, there were some initial drawbacks such as complicated paperwork at the outset of the process. These points are illustrated in the case study below.

Case study

Frances is a HR consultant and runs a company with over 50 recruits. She frequently refers her clients to Jobcentre Plus, especially with regard to Work Trial candidates, which were of particular interest to clients in the construction industry.

She felt that there was considerable unexploited potential in Work Trials for both the employer and potential employees, especially as many employers were not aware of Work Trials at all. However, this was to some extent sometimes undermined by DWP's procedures. In general, 'the process was a bit longwinded, but once it was in place it was fine' – but several employers had been forced to drop their scheme because the paperwork wasn't completed in time for them to take on the candidate.

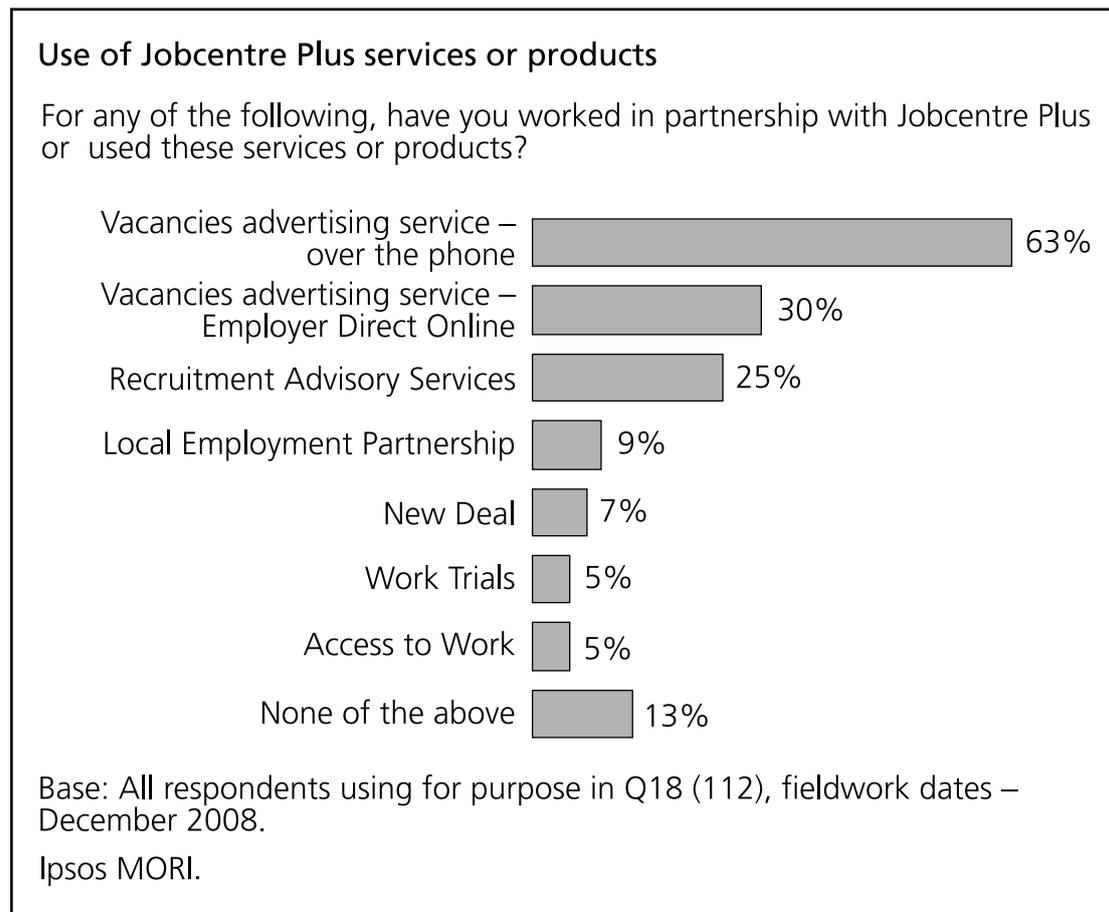
Work Trials is a really good scheme for a company like us but the paperwork involved is not intuitive and it takes too long to process. That's my gripe with it.

Frances found this disappointing, and this did negatively affect her general good perception of DWP.

Given the importance of interacting with Jobcentre Plus around the recruitment of candidates, a number of questions designed to probe this area were included in the quantitative pilot survey. Those employers that had used Jobcentre Plus in the last year were asked which types of Jobcentre Plus services they have used. The

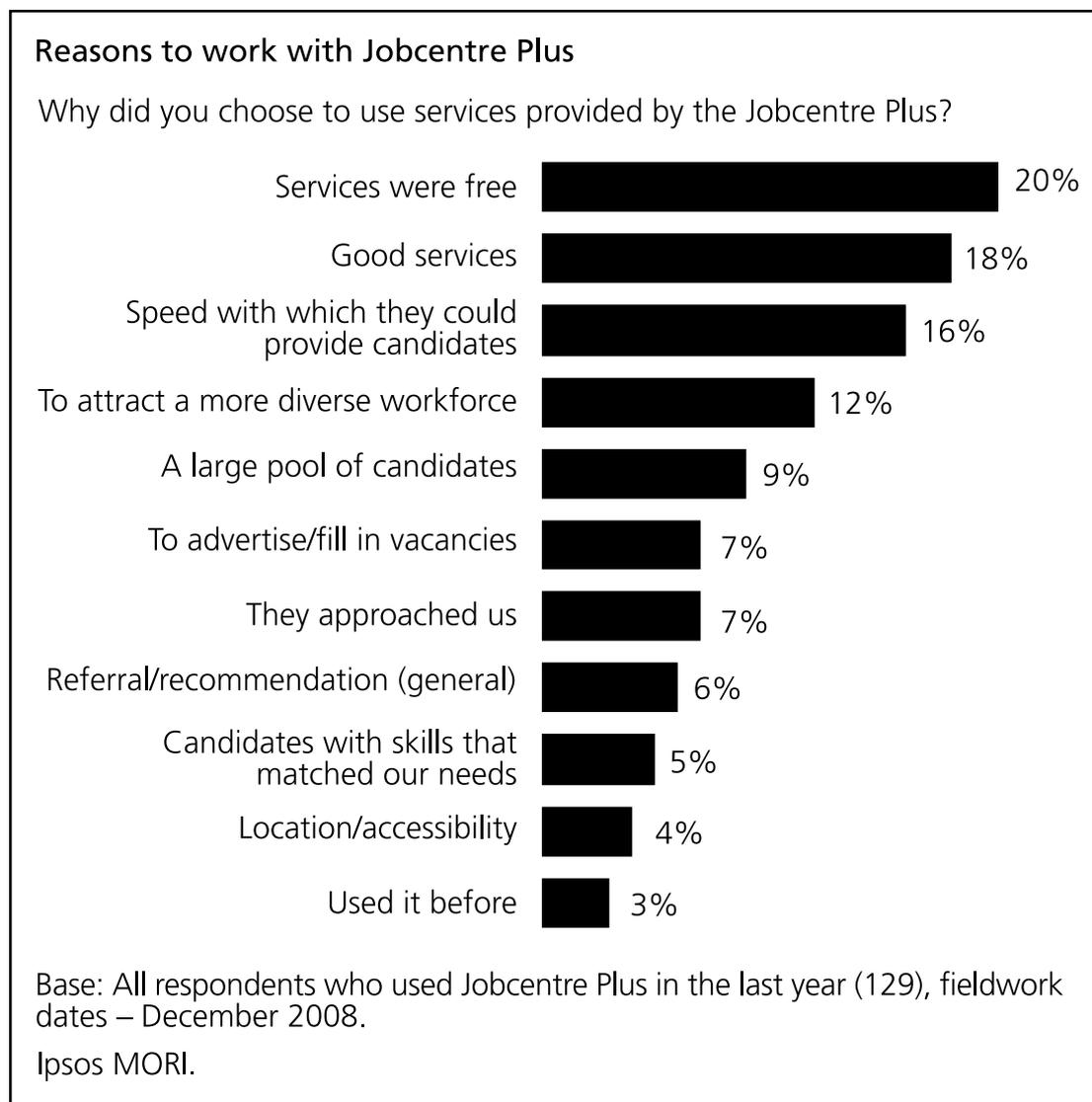
vacancies advertising service both over the phone (63 per cent) and online (30 per cent) and the recruitment advisory services (25 per cent) were the most commonly used by employers. This is illustrated in Figure 4.4.

Figure 4.4 Use of Jobcentre Plus services or products



Having tested well in the pilot survey, this question was developed into a still more detailed series of questions for the main-stage survey, covering not just the types of Jobcentre Plus services used, but also the types of candidates they were looking for and a comprehensive set of satisfaction measures with aspects of the service.

Following some of the issues raised in the qualitative and desk research, the pilot quantitative survey also sought to understand *why* employers used the services provided by Jobcentre Plus. One in five (20 per cent) employers stated that it was because it is a free service but, beyond this, a similar proportion (18 per cent) mentioned that it was because Jobcentre Plus offers good services while 16 per cent cited the speed with which Jobcentre Plus could provide candidates. Around one in eight (12 per cent) mentioned that it enabled them to attract a more diverse workforce while one in ten (nine per cent) stated that it allowed them access to a large pool of candidates (see Figure 4.5).

Figure 4.5 Reasons to work with Jobcentre Plus

Beyond interacting with Jobcentre Plus, the qualitative work and desk research also examined how employers interacted with DWP's other businesses. The desk research found that on the whole employers' experiences of working with the Pension Service and the Disability and Carers Service are very positive. The key driver of this was that the information provided by these employers was felt to be comprehensive and detailed but, at the same time, easy to understand as well as tailored to employers' needs³⁹.

However, research into micro-employers' attitudes suggests that this group are less willing to engage with the Pension Service about guidance on retirement saving for themselves and their employers. In many cases, employers saw this as being outside the remit of their role. In other cases, employers felt insufficiently qualified to offer such guidance – especially given their own lack of knowledge

³⁹ *Building a coherent strategy for engagement: Deliberative research with employers*, DWP/Ipsos MORI, 2008.

about pensions generally⁴⁰. However, the literature did reveal that some micro-employers would be willing to act as a conduit in order to pass on information produced by the Department to employees. However, these micro-employers would need to be reassured that doing so would not have a detrimental effect on their business⁴¹.

This theme was echoed in the qualitative work. Employers were largely satisfied with the service provided by the Pension Service in particular and perceived its advisers to be knowledgeable and efficient. Furthermore, employers felt that the Pension Service made an effort to tailor its information according to the business with which they were dealing. However, there were also a few employers who mentioned that the Pension Service could be more proactive in the way it communicates with employers. Regarding the forthcoming workplace pension reforms, for instance, some mentioned that they had heard about these and the implications for their business through trade bodies and professional organisations rather than from the Department itself which did cause frustration among some. However, in spite of this, employers were often satisfied with the work of the Pension Service due to the way it dealt with business. This sentiment is illustrated in the case study, taken from one of the qualitative interviews, below.

Case study

Samuel is the Managing Director of a small business. He has been relatively successful over recent years in his local area, and has little ambition to expand his business beyond his locality. He feels his success is mainly due to the dedicated staff that work for him, and he likes to reward them accordingly.

He recently heard about forthcoming workplace pension reforms through the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) in a newsletter it sent round to members. When hearing about this, he contacted the Pension Service to talk about what that might mean for his business, and received lots of information to help him take action on it. As a result he has decided to offer his employees a pension before he is forced to.

He was pleased with the information provided as it enabled him to take action and he clearly understood what was required of him.

There is less known about employers' relations with the Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission (CMRC) or its predecessor the Child Support Agency (CSA). The desk research highlighted that, most recently, work looking at employers' relations with the Child Support Agency has focused on employers' perceptions and experiences of the ease with which they are able to set up and pay Deduction from Earnings Orders (DEOs). The research found that employers were generally

⁴⁰ *Micro-employers' attitudes towards pensions for themselves and their employees: A report on small-scale qualitative research with employers*, DWP, 2005.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

satisfied with the current DEO process in terms of set-up, administration and making payments. When problems did occur, these tended to be reported by respondents from large organisations with a higher number of DEOs in operation. However, while the CSA's preferred method of DEO payment is Detailed Automatic Credit Transfer (DACT), employers were generally reluctant to switch to this method as they saw no additional benefit of doing this⁴².

Experiences of working with the CSA or the CMEC were rarely mentioned in the qualitative work conducted for this study. On the few occasions this was raised, employers stated that they did not relish making DEOs as they felt it interfered too much with the personal lives of their employees. However, this did not have a bearing on their levels of satisfaction with the work of either the CSA or the CMEC. Employers realised that these businesses had an important role to fulfill and were trying to achieve their aims and objectives in the most efficient way possible.

4.4 Contacting the Department for Work and Pensions

As well as understanding *why* employers interacted with the Department and its businesses it is also necessary to examine *how* this contact was made; the channel used, the frequency of contact and the manner in which the issue was resolved. These issues are explored throughout the remainder of this chapter.

The desk research highlighted that employers expressed concern with the way that government generally communicates with them. To illustrate, two thirds disagreed that government as a whole consults well or that it understands employers well enough to regulate⁴³. This is reiterated by research conducted for the Local Better Regulation Office who, in a survey of employers, found that nine in ten employers stated that they had never been consulted by Local Authorities about the enforcement of trading laws covering key areas like consumer protection and health and safety⁴⁴ (though it should be noted that these findings relate to Government as a whole and not DWP specifically).

In spite of this it was apparent in the qualitative interviews conducted for this research that employers were largely satisfied with the contact they had with the Department. Face-to-face contact in particular helped to increase levels of satisfaction with the services provided. It was felt that this channel of communication enabled a strong relationship to be fostered between employers and the Department which, in turn, meant that their needs as an employer were better understood and as a consequence they were more likely to receive a tailored service.

⁴² *Employers' views on setting up and processing Deduction from Earnings Orders*, DWP/Ecotec, 2008.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ *Employers' views of regulation*, LBRO/Ipsos MORI, 2008.

Face-to-face contact was most frequently used by larger employers who had signed up to specific policy initiatives (such as Local Employment Partnerships) or those that had a dedicated Account Manager, although this was not always the case. Indeed a few employers, and particularly those that had been in operation for a number of years, had managed to forge informal contacts within the Department (and within Jobcentre Plus specifically) and, therefore, turned to these individuals when seeking help and information. This is in-line with Jobcentre Plus policy, which encourages account managers to develop informal relationships with local employers.

This is not to say, however, that face-to-face contact is without its limitations. Those employers with managed accounts stated that the success of this relationship hinged on both the personality and the skills of the Account Manager in question. Furthermore, a few mentioned that the Account Managers changed quickly and, therefore, there were limited opportunities to build a good and longstanding relationship with them.

That said, when large employers were allocated an Account Manager they were not satisfied with, the employer often chose to contact other members of Jobcentre Plus. This was because they often had a long history of using Jobcentre Plus services and knew who can help them. Furthermore, there was recognition among these employers that the Department needed to maintain good relations with them as a means of realising its aims and objectives. Therefore, they assumed that the Department would seek to quickly rectify any issues that employers may have with individual Account Managers. This sentiment is illustrated in the verbatim comment, taken from one of the qualitative interviews, below.

I've worked with Jobcentre Plus for years now, and I know the ones that are good, and the ones that can't be bothered ... I have had three Account Managers this last year. I've not actually had a set-up meeting with the last one, and they have already moved on. No, I use the ones who I know are good.

Community development manager, large employer

Additionally, while face-to-face contact was seen to bring a number of advantages it was not necessarily seen as suitable for all employers. For instance, small employers mentioned that they did not feel they had the time or resources needed to dedicate to this.

Consequently, it emerged from the qualitative work that, for many employers, the telephone was the most used and preferred form of communications for contacting the Department. Many felt that by its very nature it allowed them to access tailored advice as they were able to ask questions specific to them. This was particularly true of those employers who called the Pension Service seeking information about the provision they should make for their employees. Additionally, telephone contact was seen as a useful 'follow-up' to written communications which enabled employers to query issues over which they were unsure. This viewpoint is illustrated in the comment below.

It was a good service, what can I say. The guy on the phone asked good questions and helped me at the end, so I was happy with that.

HR manager, Small employer

Telephone contact was also seen as a convenient method of communications. Employers mentioned that they were able to contact the Department as and when it suited them. This was particularly appreciated by smaller employers and those based on multiple sites, who often lacked the resources and time they felt would be needed to build a face-to-face relationship with advisors from the Department.

The website was often referred to as a source of information by employers. As with telephone contact, the convenience of this channel was appreciated as employers could use it when it was appropriate for them to do so. Furthermore, the qualitative work found that, generally, the Department's website (and that of Jobcentre Plus and the Pension Service) was felt to be of a much higher quality than those of other Government departments. This was because employers tended to feel that the layout was clear and also that the information provided on the website was useful and up-to-date.

This was, however, not the case for all employers. Some, and particularly smaller employers, mentioned that they found the sites they had used hard to navigate and, consequently, this negatively affected their levels of satisfaction with this communication channel (although it should be mentioned that this research was conducted prior to the most recent version of Business Link being available). Another difficulty that some employers referred to was the lack of named contacts on the website. This frustrated some employers as it did not give confidence that, should they email the Department from the website, their query would be dealt with efficiently and by the right person. Furthermore, as employers perceived that, going forward, the Department would seek to conduct much of its communications with employers electronically, this was an issue they felt should be addressed in the near future.

While the information on the website was felt to be useful, there was a sense from the qualitative interviews that DWP was not fully exploiting the potential of its website as a means of communicating with employers. This was particularly true of large employers who were more likely to deal with the Department on complex policy issues. For instance, the qualitative interviews found that large employers were more likely to be dealing with disability issues, and often used the Department's website as a source of information on the legislation. These employers felt that the information provided was adequate as it stated the legislation in clear terms that they could understand. However, there was a desire to see some tailoring of advice, for instance, the types of adaptation that are considered best practice to help different disabilities. In this respect there was a basic level of satisfaction from the website, but the Department was considered to supply the bare minimum.

There's just the basic information there - finding out how to provide a good service to employees is simply left to individuals.

UK Managing Director, Medium size employer

This desire for improved, and potentially tailored, information from the website came out in a number of the qualitative interviews. Employers wanted to use the website as a first port of call for information, and believed that case studies highlighting success stories along with examples of best practice from other employers would help ensure the information on the website addressed their queries and, furthermore, would demonstrate how to put policies into action in the workplace. This sentiment is highlighted overleaf in the case study taken from one of the qualitative interviews.

Case study

Martin is the Managing Director of the UK arm of a European multi-national furniture company. It has over 2,000 employees UK wide, and has sought to employ people through Local Employment Partnerships. In his view, he has an excellent relationship with Jobcentre Plus, whom he considers extremely helpful and enthusiastic: *'It's difficult to fault the service we've had with Jobcentre Plus'*.

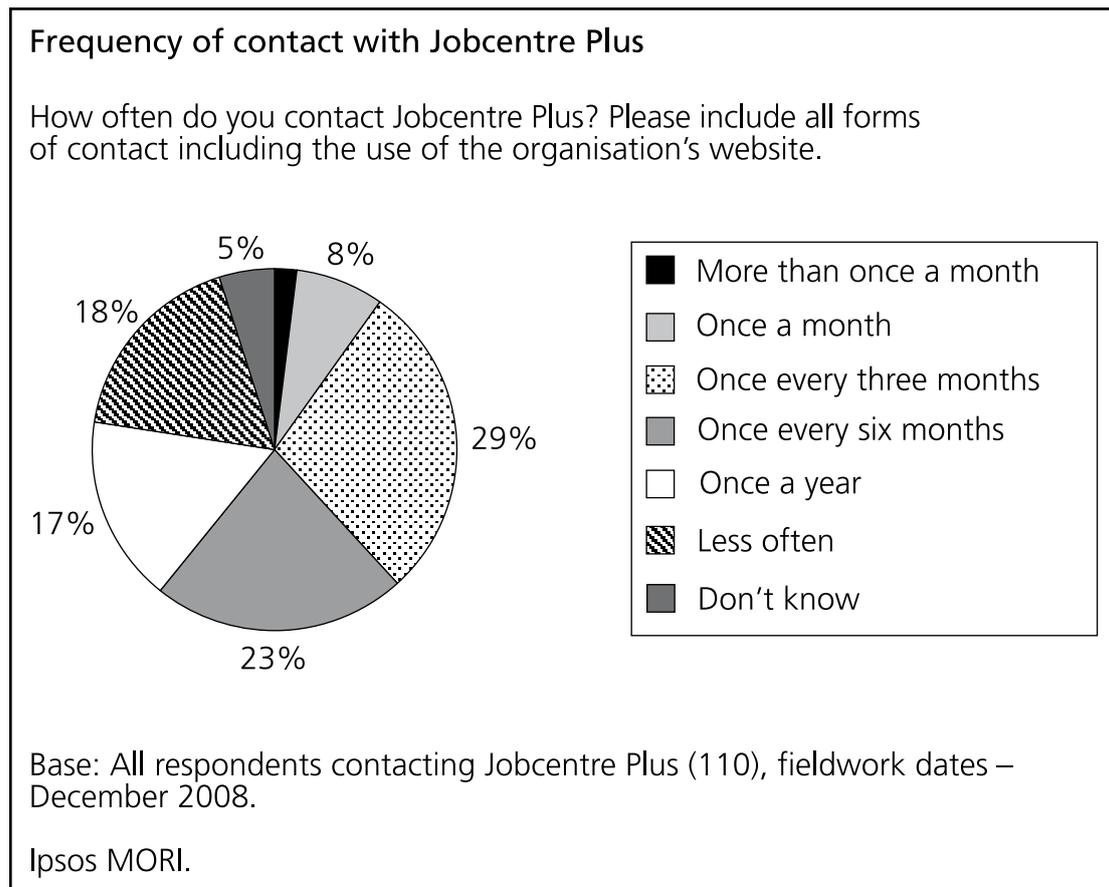
He is also satisfied with the DWP website for information on employment regulations – but only up to a point. He was frustrated by the lack of any advice of 'best practice' on the website, and felt that the bare legal requirements provided were not enough. He also felt strongly that because there were so many complications in setting up a business, a set of case studies on employment law, health and safety, Statutory Sick Pay and Statutory Maternity Pay, for example, would be extremely helpful. Information such as this is available through Business Link, however at the time of interview Martin was not aware of this service. This suggests that DWP should consider more active signposting of Business Link services through its own communications.

Given the importance of communications to employers, and the bearing this had on their levels of satisfaction with the service received, a great deal of the quantitative survey was set aside for examining these issues in more detail.

Although all employers in the survey would have had some form of contact with DWP in the last 12 months, when asked how many times they have contacted Jobcentre Plus, Disability and Carers Service or DWP (with a separate query in the last year, four in ten (41 per cent) said they had no contact with any of these agencies. This is despite the fact that interviewers have emphasised that 'contact' includes access to the DWP website. It is possible that a significant proportion of employers do not consider their contact with DWP a 'query', and for the main-stage of the survey a more precise set of questions has been adopted.

Those who said they have contacted Jobcentre Plus with at least one separate query (37 per cent) were asked the frequency of their contact, and the majority contacted Jobcentre Plus once every three months (29 per cent) or once every six months (23 per cent). This is illustrated in Figure 4.6.

Figure 4.6 Frequency of contact with Jobcentre Plus

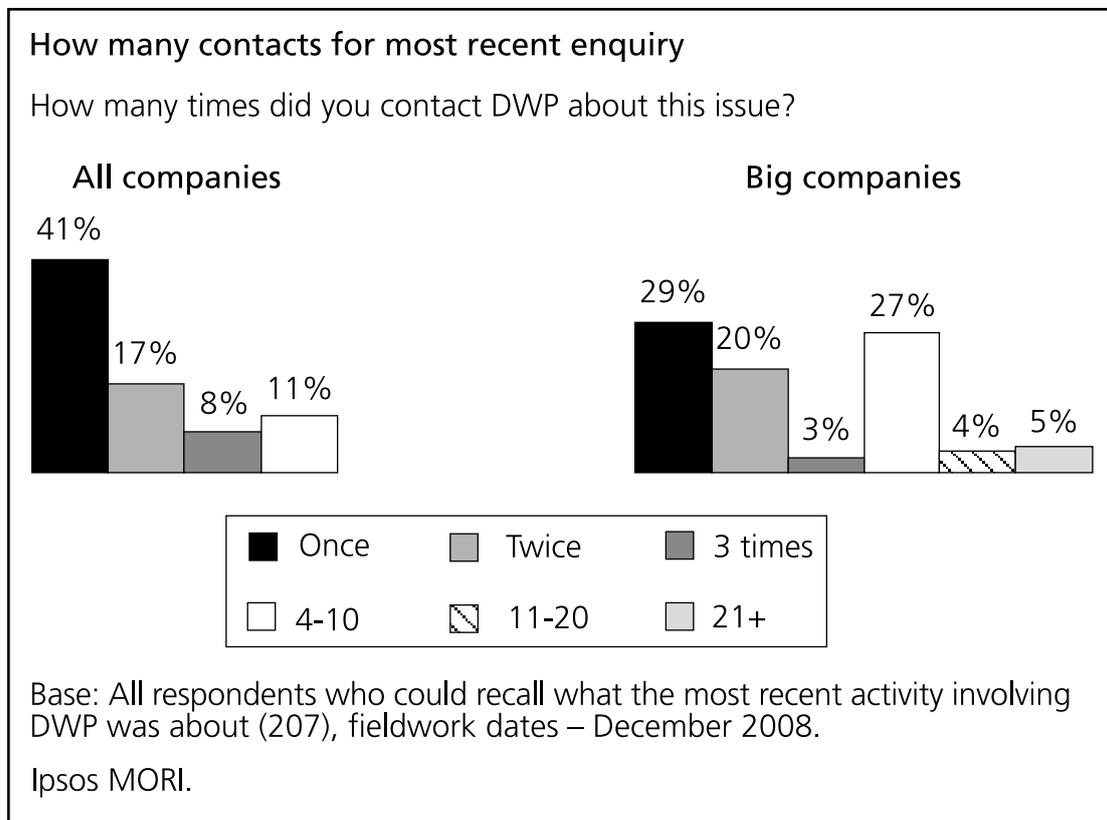


4.4.1 Most recent contact with DWP

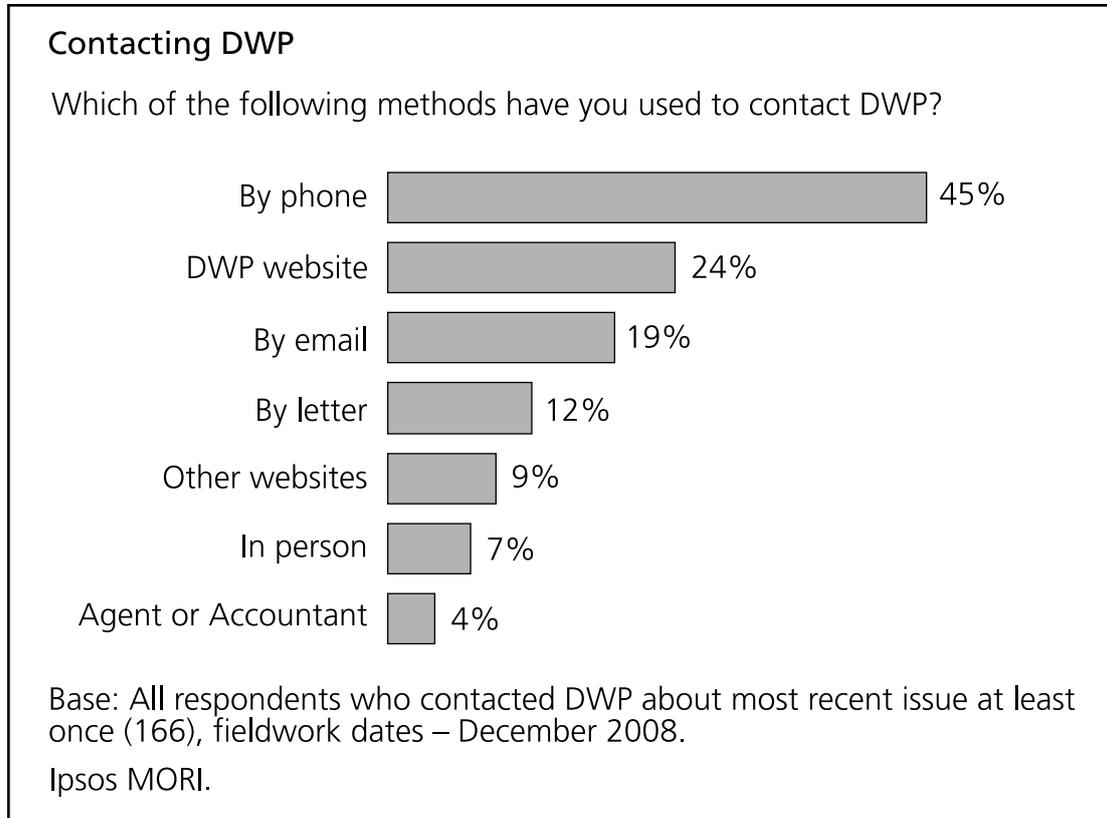
Respondents were asked a series of questions about their most recent contact with DWP (because respondents are more likely to be able to recall details of something that has happened more recently).

However, given the infrequent contact some companies have with DWP, interviewers reported that some respondents have found it hard to recall details from the most recent contact, (67 per cent who contacted had contacted DWP at least their once about their most recent issue said that they made their query more than three months ago). Recent contacts also ranged in type, from looking up information on DWP's website or using Jobcentre Plus' Recruitment Advisory Service.

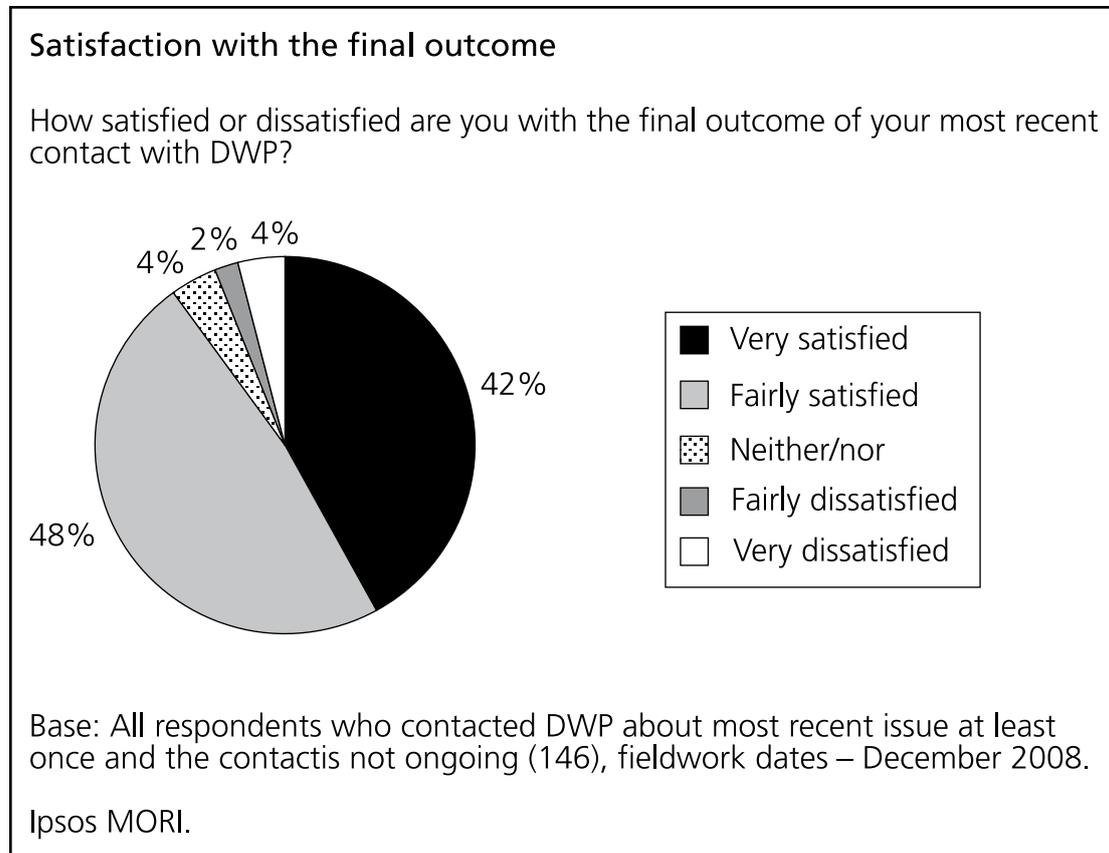
Four in ten employers (41 per cent) stated that they have only contacted DWP once about their most recent issue, although larger companies seem to have been more likely to have contacted DWP more than once, perhaps reflecting the more complex queries larger employers may have. These points are highlighted in Figure 4.7.

Figure 4.7 Number of contacts

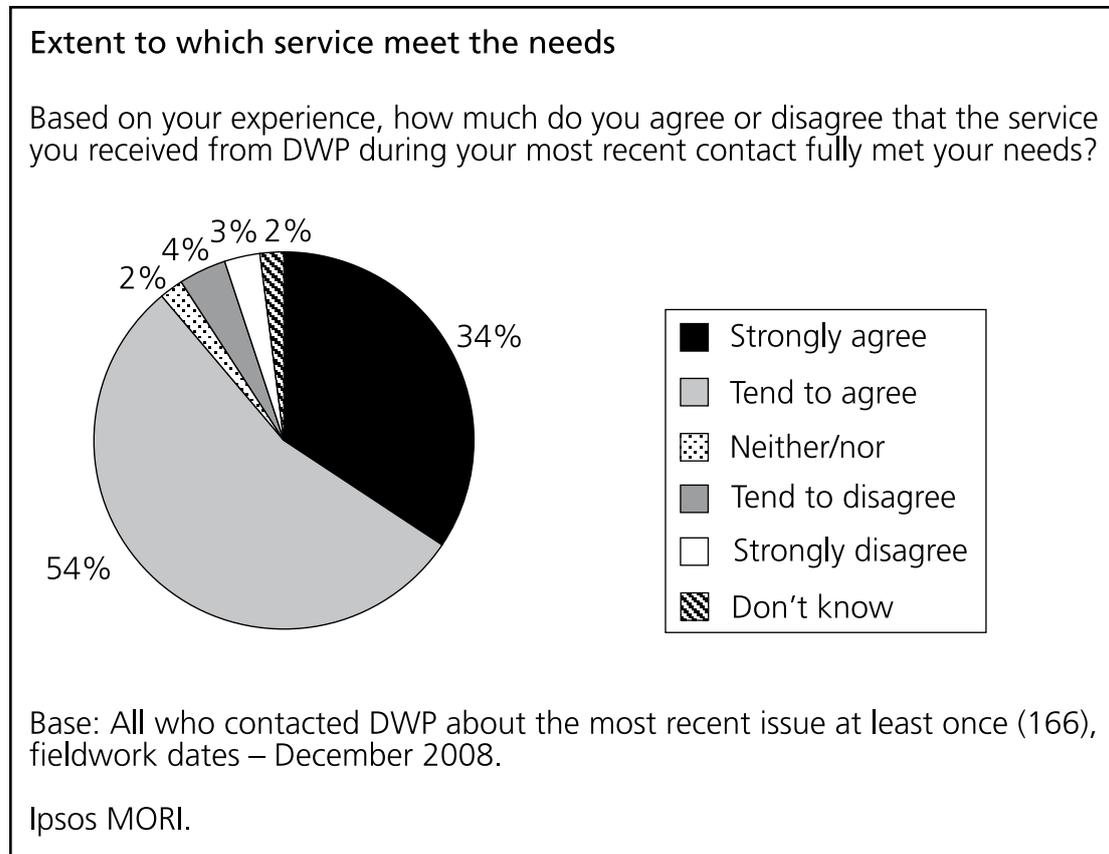
Regarding channels of communication, the telephone (45 per cent) was the most common channel used in employers' most recent enquiry to DWP, while a quarter (24 per cent) stated that their most recent contact was via the DWP website and a fifth (19 per cent) by email. This is shown in Figure 4.8.

Figure 4.8 Methods of contacting DWP

Overall, employers were satisfied with their most recent contact with DWP, with seven in ten (72 per cent) employers rating it as very (33 per cent) or fairly good (39 per cent). Amongst those whose issue has been resolved (85 per cent of all issues), nine in ten (90 per cent) were satisfied with the final outcome (see Figure 4.9). However, it should be remembered that 15 per cent of issues remained unresolved, which should be regarded as a potential concern.

Figure 4.9 Satisfaction with the final outcome

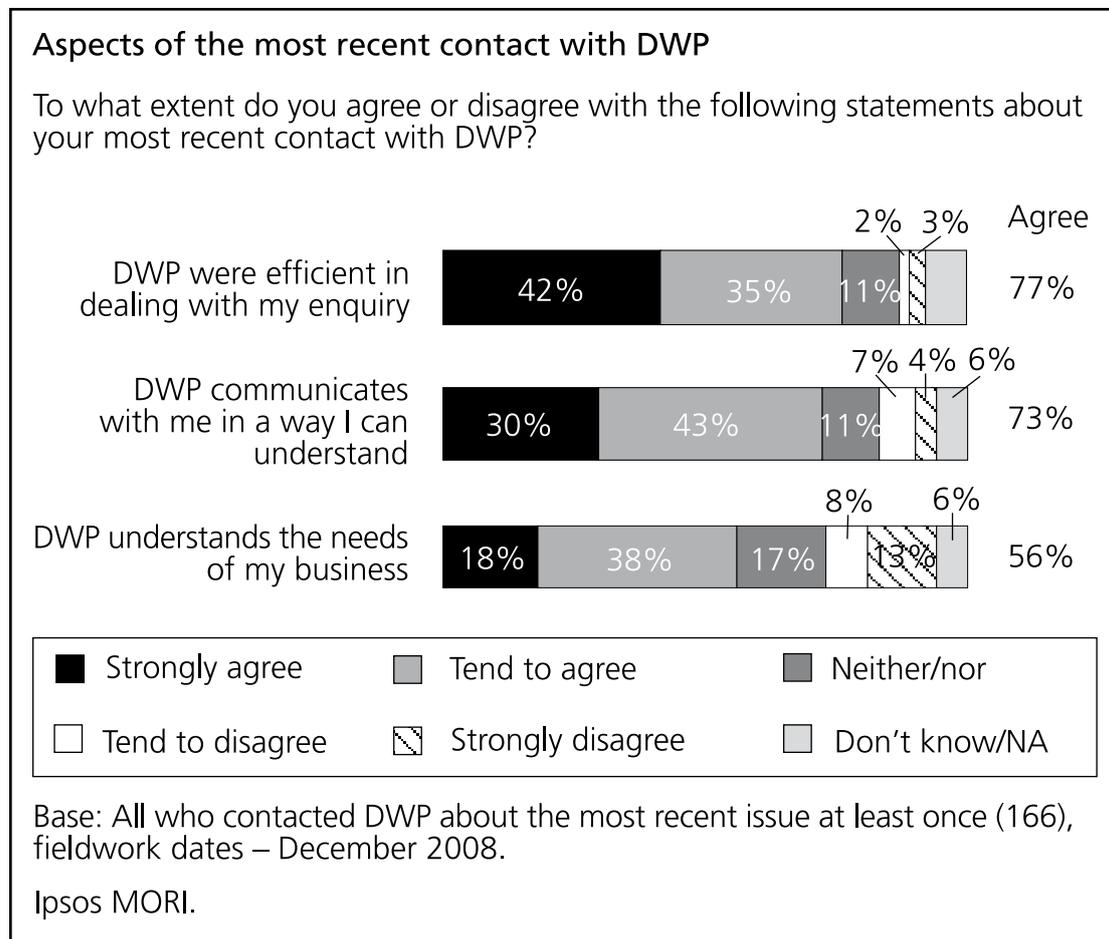
Close to nine in ten (88 per cent) said the services they received from DWP fully met their needs. A third (34 per cent) agreed with this strongly (see Figure 4.10). This was an issue that also emerged strongly in the qualitative work. Employers did not assume that, each time they contacted DWP with a query, the answers given would be ones that they always agreed with. However, they understood that there would always be tensions between Government and business with regard to what the right course of action to take should be. Consequently, the most important factor when contacting the Department was that their query would be handled effectively and in a manner which suited them and enabled them to take appropriate action.

Figure 4.10 Meeting employers' needs

Eight in ten (83 per cent) employers said that the service they received during their most recent contact with DWP was in-line with their expectations (although as discussed earlier in Chapter 4 expectations may have been somewhat low).

Looking specifically at different aspects of the service, the picture is also very positive. More than three quarters (77 per cent) of employers agreed, and four in ten (42 per cent) strongly agreed, that DWP was efficient in dealing with their enquiry. A similar proportion (73 per cent) agreed that DWP communicates with them in a way they can understand, but the proportion agreeing strongly was lower at three in ten (30 per cent).

However, there are aspects which employers were slightly less satisfied with as shown in Figure 4.11. Of the statements tested in the survey, employers were least likely to agree that DWP understands the needs of their business, with only 56 per cent agreeing. This mirrors the qualitative work which found that some employers felt that DWP did not understand their needs as it only offered information rather than advice. The qualitative interviews illustrated that smaller employers in particular wanted the Department to offer its suggestions as to what course of action they should take with regard to offering provision for their employees in retirement. That all they could access was information – without recommendations attached – was, at times, a source of frustration for some and could help explain why they did not think that the Department always understood their needs.

Figure 4.11 Aspects of the most recent contact

Having been tested successfully in the pilot survey many of the satisfaction measures discussed above have since been incorporated into the main-stage of customer satisfaction research conducted in March and April 2009⁴⁵, and reported separately. It should be remembered that the quantitative findings reported in this report are indicative only, due to the small sample size and the fact that it was not designed to be representative.

⁴⁵ DWP Annual Employers Survey 2009 (forthcoming).

5 Drivers of satisfaction for employers

The main objective of this study was to understand the key drivers of satisfaction for employers. Chapters 3 and 4 have discussed the background research that informed the development of these key drivers, this section now turns to the drivers themselves, and the preliminary findings from the pilot survey questionnaire which was designed to assess them. Upon the basis of this research the key drivers of employer satisfaction with Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) have been determined as follows:

Previous experiences of dealing with the Department:

The Department's staff are the main interface with employers, and this research found clearly that employer's perceptions of how they were treated on previous occasions went a long way to determining how satisfied they are with the Department as a whole. Most employers recalled that DWP's staff were, helpful, friendly and knowledgeable (hence largely positive ratings for the Department as a whole in the pilot survey), but thought more effort could be made by staff to demonstrate that they took responsibility for the queries they responded to, and that they were accountable for their actions.

Specific experiences working with Jobcentre Plus (including access to candidates who meet employers' needs):

This was a key driver of overall satisfaction as most employers in the research had interacted with Jobcentre Plus to get access to candidates, and therefore judged the Department on how successfully it delivered this service for them. Employers held differing views on what the preferred attributes of candidates were, and, for some, it was more about attitude than skills, suggesting that it is important for Jobcentre Plus to be flexible in its approach to employers. Many employers were pleased with the candidates they had accessed. However, because there was only limited awareness that Jobcentre Plus does not automatically screen candidates, it was sometimes perceived to be accountable for instances of inappropriate or unwilling candidates being seen for interview.

The perceived quality of communications to employers:

DWP's communications emerged from the qualitative work as being a key driver of satisfaction for employers. This was particularly true of those who had a more informal relationship with the Department and those that only tended to interact with DWP on an infrequent basis. In these cases, the quality of communications received from the Department often formed the evidence base on which employers judged their levels of satisfaction with the service received.

The outcomes from interactions with the Department such as vacancies successfully filled or information requests dealt with:

The qualitative interviews demonstrated that when asked how satisfied they are with the service they received, employers would refer back to the outcome of any recent queries (which included whether a vacancy was successfully filled). Where the query was a request for information, this did not necessarily mean that employers expected the outcome to be one that they agreed with – they simply wanted their issue resolved in a way that was clear and that enabled them to take action.

Being able to build a relationship with DWP:

This was also highlighted as being a key driver of satisfaction because those with stronger relationships not only felt that the Department understood their needs better but, additionally, the employer also had a more detailed understanding of the ways that DWP could and could not help them. Linked to this, employers tended to be more satisfied when they felt that DWP was making an effort to work with them such as by explaining why information was needed from them.

The five key drivers described in this chapter represent a general approximation to the four key drivers that have been developed to look at individual satisfaction with DWP – Ease of Access, Treatment, Timely Response and Outcome⁴⁶. Building upon the work presented in this report, further consistency of measurement between the key drivers for individual and employer satisfaction has been achieved in the main-stage of the employer customer satisfaction survey (for example through the use of consistent satisfaction scales)⁴⁷.

5.1 Literature review findings on measuring satisfaction

Much of the literature review conducted for this project concentrated on models of best practice with regard to measuring customer satisfaction. It was important to do this to ensure that the resultant pilot survey materials drew upon recent

⁴⁶ http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/dsopsa/DSO7_REPORT.pdf

⁴⁷ *DWP Annual Employers Survey 2009* (forthcoming).

practice and built on these accordingly. In the first instance, the literature reviewed highlighted the importance of defining the service which is being tested. This could include considerations such as:

- How do customers come to use the service? Is it opt-in, or do they have to use it by law?
- Does the service involve an outcome that is likely to affect satisfaction?
- Do customers pay for the service or is it free at the point of delivery?
- Are customers involved in simple (one-off transactions for example) or complex interactions with the service?
- How do customers interact with the service (e.g. Online, telephone or face-to-face)?
- Do customers define the service in the same way that the organisation does?⁴⁸

Other literature also debated whether, when measuring satisfaction, the focus should be on *experience* (of the customer during the service) or *outcomes* (of the service delivery for the customer). While guidance tends to focus on experience as being key it should be noted that for simple transactional services, the outcome is typically straightforward and the impact of the outcome is easy to understand. However, for more complex services (and arguably, DWP falls into this category), satisfaction with the process by which the service is delivered and the outcome for the customer are harder to separate⁴⁹.

The desk research also showed that there are many indicators of satisfaction and ways of measuring it, which go beyond asking a respondent simply whether they are 'satisfied' with a particular service provided. Instead, it is important to look at the different *components* of satisfaction. The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (Acas), for example uses advocacy (i.e. whether someone would recommend or speak highly of its service to others) and likelihood of future use of the services, as proxies for overall satisfaction⁵⁰. Both these issues were incorporated into the pilot survey material developed for this project, and are reported on later in this chapter.

Of course, the literature reviewed helped to demonstrate that it is not just *what* is measured but how this is done which is important when it comes to determining levels of satisfaction with the service provided. The literature revealed that there has been a great deal of research on the impact of using different scales when trying to assess views of services⁵¹. This has provided a number of insights into how

⁴⁸ *How to measure customer satisfaction*, BMRB/Henley Centre HeadlightVision, 2007.

⁴⁹ *Promoting Customer Satisfaction*, BMRB/Henley Centre HeadlightVision, 2007.

⁵⁰ *Acas workplace training impact survey*, Acas/IES, 2008.

⁵¹ See for example *Rating the Rating Scales*, Friedman and Ammo 1999, Schwarz, Grayson and Knauper, IJPOR, 1998.

people react to scales and how these should be interpreted. However, conclusions are far from clear, and little research has been done specifically looking at how people rate public services. While in the private sector the focus has long since shifted to more directly commercial measures (for example, intention to repurchase and actual repurchase), the public service equivalents are less obvious. This issue is particularly relevant now, given the renewed focus on target-setting for public services on the basis of user opinion.

The desk research into *how* to measure satisfaction did show that it is clearly very difficult to capture a full understanding of attitudes towards a service in one single measure, and each scale and approach will have different advantages and disadvantages⁵². It may therefore be useful to monitor performance for a service on more than one measure, which explains why both this pilot survey and the subsequent main-stage survey⁵³ that were developed as a result of this work look at a number of aspects of DWP's service, rather than focussing on just a few.

5.2 Developing the key drivers of employer satisfaction with DWP

As has been stated the overall aim of this project was to develop and test a comprehensive questionnaire for measuring the key drivers of employer satisfaction with DWP. The process for creating the key drivers combined desk research, secondary analysis of existing datasets and qualitative interviews with employers themselves. During these qualitative interviews the topic of overall determinants of satisfaction with the DWP and the factors behind it occurred at the end of the discussions – when participants were best able to reflect broadly on their recent dealings with DWP. This section discusses the key drivers to emerge from this process and the evidence behind them.

5.2.1 Previous experiences of dealing with DWP

Upon the basis of the qualitative work, how employers felt they were treated by DWP staff during previous interactions emerged as the *most important key driver* of satisfaction with the Department. In summary, DWP's staff are employers' main interface between themselves and the Department and, therefore, how they respond to queries (both in manner and also efficiency and effectiveness) contributes significantly to employers' levels of satisfaction with the Department.

When examining this issue in more detail, it was found that its staff were generally thought to be friendly, helpful and, most importantly, knowledgeable. This was regarded as particularly important by employers; they wanted their query to be dealt with as quickly as possible and, furthermore, did not want to have to double

⁵² Duffy and Skinner (2002). *Public Service Reform: Understanding Customer Satisfaction*, Cabinet Office/MORI.

⁵³ *DWP Annual Employers Survey 2009* (forthcoming).

check the information provided. Therefore, having knowledgeable staff ensured that the Department was seen as credible and trusted.

Some employers also made the point that they felt their treatment by DWP staff had improved of late with DWP contacts making a concerted effort to understand the needs of employers. Additionally, a few stated that the Department (and Jobcentre Plus in particular) is more proactive than it used to be and has made attempts to highlight to employers initiatives which may help their business, for example, Work Trials.

However, the qualitative work also highlighted areas where improvements could be made. For example, employers would like to see DWP staff demonstrate that they are willing to take responsibility and be held accountable by employers when dealing with their queries. Some employers cited the lack of named contacts on the website and, additionally, a few perceived that staff were unwilling to give their names when they spoke to them on the telephone. These observations created the impression that DWP's staff did not wish to be held accountable for how they dealt with employers, which was frustrating to employers who believed that they themselves were held accountable – not only by government but by a broader set of stakeholders including their employees and the wider business community. Therefore, they wanted to see the same standards applied to DWP staff.

Beyond this, a few employers wanted DWP staff to offer more of an advisory service rather than simply providing information. These comments typically came from smaller employers who lacked the resources or specialist knowledge to make decisions on issues such as pension provision. However, it is understood that this is outside of DWP's remit and, indeed, some employers accepted as much in the interviews. Therefore, it may be worth considering laying out the parameters of what DWP can and cannot do when contacted by employers, to ensure they have appropriate expectations. Alternatively, the Department might consider more active signposting to advice services such as Business Link.

5.2.2 Specific experiences of working with Jobcentre Plus

This report has already highlighted that the bulk of employers' interactions with the Department were with Jobcentre Plus. Therefore, it is perhaps not surprising that the quality of candidates employers have been able to access emerged as the second key driver of employers' satisfaction with the Department as a whole.

Whilst the quality and appropriateness of candidates was a key issue for most employers, it is worth remembering that employers have different definitions of what a good candidate might mean. Larger employers, who have the resources necessary to offer training programmes, often felt that as long as a candidate was willing to work then this was the key factor – over and above whether that particular individual had worked in a similar field or had the relevant expertise. Additionally, the volume of candidates was also important to some employers – and particularly larger employers who experienced seasonal fluctuations in demand for labour, such as those working in construction, hospitality and retail. These

employers tended to be more satisfied with the service provided by Jobcentre Plus as it was the only place they could go to get the numbers of candidates they needed. Finally, being able to access candidates who could start immediately was also of importance for some employers, again typically those in industries where demand for work fluctuated.

As mentioned previously, the extent (or otherwise) to which candidates met employers' needs could cause problems and therefore adversely affect the extent to which they were satisfied with the service provided. The research found that few employers were aware that Jobcentre Plus does not automatically screen candidates, which can lead to the perception among employers that it was knowingly recommending unqualified individuals for interviews. This left employers with the impression that either Jobcentre Plus did not understand their business needs, or that its customer base tended to comprise those who did not actually want to work, and only attended interviews as part of the conditions attached to their claiming Jobseeker's Allowance.

This is an issue which really matters. If left unchecked, it can affect employers' propensity to use the vacancy service provided by Jobcentre Plus in the future and, ultimately reduce levels of satisfaction or advocacy. Therefore, it may be important for Jobcentre Plus to be more explicit about the limitations of its service with respect to the provision of candidates, to ensure that levels of reported satisfaction are fair, and not based on misconceptions of what it can do.

Given the importance of this driver for determining overall satisfaction a number of questions were incorporated into the pilot survey for testing. These included the extent to which the skills of candidates from Jobcentre Plus matched employers' needs, satisfaction with the number of candidates they had received from Jobcentre Plus and whether the candidates matched the required vacancy (the preliminary findings from these questions are outlined below). Building on this, the main-stage of employer satisfaction research⁵⁴ includes a yet more extensive section on the process of working with Jobcentre Plus to secure access to appropriate candidates.

5.2.3 Perceived quality of communications to employers

DWP's communications emerged from the qualitative work as being another key driver of satisfaction for employers. This was particularly true of those who had an informal relationship with the Department and those that only tended to interact with DWP on an infrequent basis. In these instances, the communications received from the Department often formed the evidence base on which employers judged their levels of satisfaction with the service received.

Looking at communications in more detail, it became apparent in the qualitative work that each of the communications channels had specific strengths and weaknesses. In the first instance, face-to-face contact was well received by all those that had experienced it. It is worth noting that face-to-face contact was

⁵⁴ *DWP Annual Employers Survey 2009* (forthcoming).

not simply restricted to those with managed accounts; some employers who had been in operation for a number of years had built good relations with their local Jobcentre Plus office and knew individual contacts who they could go to for help and information.

However, while face-to-face contact was not deemed necessary for all interactions (given the time it took in comparison to other channels); some employers questioned why they were not offered this option more often when dealing with DWP and, specifically, Jobcentre Plus. This was typically the case when employers were located near to a Jobcentre Plus and were frustrated, that in spite of using the services provided by it had never actually been invited to go and meet the staff at that particular office.

The telephone service provided by DWP was also well regarded. Not only was it felt to be convenient, the call centre staff were perceived to be knowledgeable and informative. This ensured that the information received via this channel was seen as credible and trusted. Beyond this, communicating with DWP via the telephone ensured that the service offered was personalised as employers could ask questions specific to their business and receive tailored answers.

However, a few did mention that when contacting DWP on the telephone, staff could, at times, be unwilling to give their name (typically their surname) and contact details. This was frustrating for employers on two levels. In the first instance, it gave the impression that the staff in question were seeking to avoid responsibility for the employer's query. Secondly, it meant that if the query needed another contact in order to be resolved, then the employer would need to speak with another member of staff and possibly have to give the same information again. This made some employers question the efficiency of telephone contact with DWP.

The qualitative interviews also demonstrated that online methods of communication were only used by a minority of employers but, for this subsection, offered clear advantages and benefits. As with the telephone, this channel was perceived as being extremely convenient as employers could choose to contact the Department as and when suited them. Furthermore, the email replies from the Department gave employers proof of contact (particularly when dealing with a contentious issue or when responding to a mandatory information request from DWP) and consequently provided a clear evidence trail they could refer back to if needed. Additionally, employers using online methods also assumed that the information provided via this channel was more up to date and, therefore, more accurate and credible.

However, these benefits only really materialised when the employer was able to converse electronically with a *named* contact at DWP. When queries were simply sent to a generic email address (as was often the case when emailing directly from the website) employers were concerned as to whether their correspondence would actually be picked up by someone in the Department. Furthermore, no indication was given as to how long their request would take to process.

The increasing prevalence of online communications concerned some employers and, particularly, those that were not office based. This included those working in the retail and construction sectors for whom internet access was limited. They wanted reassurance from the Department that, as a result of not being online as much as other sectors, they would not be missing out on important information or damaging their chances of building an effective relationship with DWP.

The qualitative interviews also covered the quality of the printed communications DWP produced. There was a widely held view that the information provided in this manner was authoritative and credible. In addition, employers stated that given the complexity of the topics DWP provides them with information about, its printed materials were seen as comparatively easy to understand. The materials provided to employers on the New Deal and their obligations in relation to Statutory Sick Pay were cited in this regard.

However, this is not to say that DWP's printed communications were without fault. In the qualitative interviews there was a sense among employers that the Department could do more to make their communications via this channel more timely. This was particularly pertinent as some of those we engaged with throughout the qualitative work had received printed information from trade or professional bodies about the forthcoming workplace pension reforms but not, at the point of the interview, from DWP itself.

With this in mind, it is also important to consider the role of third parties when it comes to communications. Some employers used the service of advisers as a means of helping them meet their obligations to DWP. This was particularly true of smaller employers who often lacked the resources they felt were necessary to keep up-to-date with what was required of them. Alongside this, professional networks were also very important to employers as a means of keeping up to date with legislative changes and how they would affect their business. For instance, the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) and the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) were two highly regarded and widely used sources of information. Importantly, the information offered by these kinds of organisations was perceived to be more tailored – either to the business size, the relevant sector or the employer's role within the organisation.

It is also necessary to consider how these organisations affected employers' propensity to work with DWP in the future. For instance, a few of the employers we spoke with in the qualitative work mentioned that, by attending a networking event hosted by CIPD, they became aware of the different services offered by Jobcentre Plus and, in particular, Work Trials. The experiences relayed to them at this event prompted them to investigate how they might benefit from these services. Moving forward, it may be worthwhile for the Department to consider issuing joint communications with professional bodies as a means of widening its reach and adding credibility to its messages.

As a result of the importance of communications, much of the pilot questionnaire was developed with these issues in mind. Method of contact was examined as

well as frequency in order to determine how effective DWP was seen at dealing with employer queries.

5.2.4 Outcomes from interactions with the Department

While not always the case, the qualitative interviews demonstrated that, ultimately, employers will refer back to the outcome of any given interaction that they have had with the Department as a means of formulating a judgement on how satisfied they are with the service received. This is in-line with the parallel research supporting Departmental Strategic Objective 7 (DSO7) in relation to individual customers, which has level of satisfaction with outcomes as one of its four key customer satisfaction indicators.

In some cases an outcome could mean whether or not a vacancy was filled, but in others, where the interaction was a request for information, this did not mean that employers expected the outcome would be one they agreed with; but more importantly, they wanted their query dealt with quickly and effectively. In line with this, it was highlighted in the qualitative interviews that those employers whose most recent interaction with the Department had been finalised tended to be more satisfied than those whose contact was still ongoing. In the latter case, employers preferred to reserve judgement when commenting on how satisfied they were until their interaction had been resolved in order that they could take a full and rounded view of their dealings with DWP.

As a result of the importance of outcomes, the quantitative survey was designed to cover these issues. Not only was frequency of contact examined but, additionally, the questionnaire unpicked attitudes towards specific aspects of the most recent contact (such as the extent to which the employer agrees that the Department was efficient in dealing with their enquiry). The questionnaire also examined the nature of the outcomes that resulted from the most recent contact and looks in detail at the impact on the business. Building upon the work presented here, many of these measures were incorporated into the subsequent main-stage of the employer customer satisfaction survey conducted in March and April 2009⁵⁵.

5.2.5 Being able to build a relationship with DWP

The final key driver is the relationship that employers feel they have with the Department. The qualitative interviews demonstrated that employers with a formal relationship tended to be more satisfied with their dealings with DWP. This was because they felt that the Department understood them better and they understood the Department better as well. Taking these two points in turn, firstly, having a formal relationship with DWP meant that the Department (and more often than not Jobcentre Plus) understood their business needs and which policies and initiatives could help support them. However, through sustained contact, employers also felt that they were able to build a more in-depth understanding of the work of the Department and, in particular, the limits of its remit and powers.

⁵⁵ *DWP Annual Employers Survey 2009* (forthcoming).

This helped build satisfaction as; employers were aware of what the Department was responsible for and, therefore, only contacted it with a query that fell within its remit. This then cut down on the numbers of failed contacts and ensured employers did not have unrealistic assumptions about how the relationship would operate or how the Department could help their business.

For the purpose of the quantitative survey however it should be noted that employers with formal relationships with the Department were not necessarily those that had a managed account or were signed up to specific initiatives such as Local Employment Partnerships. Instead, a few employers, by virtue of the fact that they had been in operation for a long time, had managed to forge close informal links with their local Jobcentre Plus office and, therefore, had dedicated contacts that they turned to regularly.

Linked with this was the extent to which employers felt they had a two-way relationship with the Department. The employers who responded to the pilot survey tended to be more satisfied when they had the impression that DWP was making an effort to work with them; either by communicating with employers proactively about forthcoming changes or by explaining why it had requested specific information from them.

However, many employers were pragmatic about this point. As mentioned earlier in this report, employers expected that they would have to provide information to government and saw this as part of their role in running a business. Therefore, ultimately, while employers would appreciate communication from DWP on these matters they were not thought to be essential in the way that the other factors mentioned above were.

Finally, a few employers mentioned that the Department and Jobcentre Plus in particular, should become a more visible presence in the local community. This was particularly mentioned by those employers that had a great number of interactions with the Department but did not have a managed account. This was driven by a feeling that the relationship with the Department was somewhat one-sided; there was the sense that DWP and Jobcentre Plus staff only contacted employers when they wanted their help in driving forward a new policy or initiative. The New Deal and Work Trials were cited as examples of this. As a result, a few stated that they felt that the Department took advantage of them as employers and, therefore, wanted to see some effort made in return to get to understand them as employers. These employers stated that, for example, Jobcentre Plus could hold events in the local community highlighting to employers what services and help it could offer them and how this could be accessed. Employers thought that doing this would convey the sense that the relationship between themselves and the Department is one based on reciprocity.

5.3 Validating the key drivers

The qualitative work helped with understanding what the key drivers of employer satisfaction with DWP services might be. This was done in conjunction with another stage of secondary analysis which looked at both the Jobcentre Plus Annual Employer Survey⁵⁶ and the Employer Engagement Target Outcome Survey⁵⁷ to assess whether there were other key drivers of satisfaction that should be considered. To do this, a statistical tool called Key Driver Analysis (KDA) was used. KDA explores how one particular measure is affected by other, related variables. It uses multiple-regression, which is an effective way of exploring how the response an individual survey respondent gives to one question is associated with their responses to other questions. It is useful to use KDA to find out how much of the variation in responses to an outcome of interest to the client (e.g. Satisfaction with Jobcentre Plus) can be explained by their answers to other questions (e.g. opinions of specific services provided by Jobcentre Plus).

Before going on to discuss the findings from the KDA it is useful to point out the differences in the two datasets used. The Annual Employer Survey uses an attitudinal Likert scale for responses and, moreover, assesses satisfaction with the Jobcentre Plus vacancy service. In contrast, the Employer Engagement Target Outcome Survey⁵⁸ predominantly consists of 'yes' or 'no' questions and examines satisfaction with a specific contact with Jobcentre Plus. These different approaches have meant that the KDA for the Annual Employer Survey⁵⁹ was ultimately more useful. However, it should be noted that, for both surveys, the KDA explained less than half of the variation. This, to some extent, suggests that the current measures of satisfaction used do not capture the full range of the key drivers influencing employers therefore making this study all the more timely.

In the case of the Annual Employer Survey,⁶⁰ overall satisfaction with Jobcentre Plus was considered in relation to eight separate indicators, as illustrated in Figure 5.1 below.⁶¹ The strength of each driver relative to the strength of other drivers in the model is illustrated by the percentage next to the driver.

⁵⁶ *DWP Annual Employer Survey, 2007/08.*

⁵⁷ *DWP Employer Engagement Target Outcome Survey, 2006/07 and 2008 collected data.*

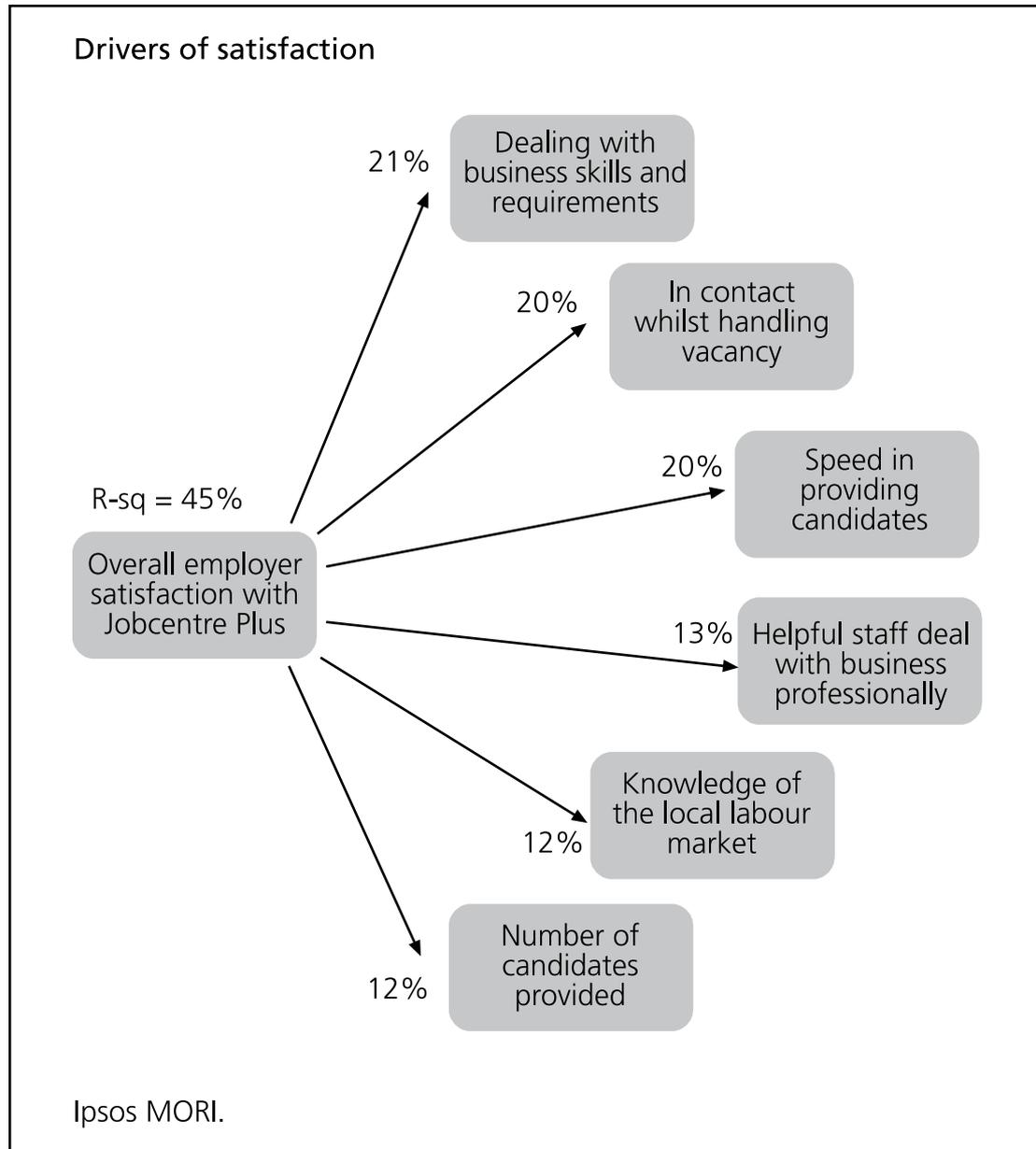
⁵⁸ *DWP Employer Engagement Target Outcome Survey, 2006/07 and 2008 collected data.*

⁵⁹ *DWP Annual Employer Survey, 2007/08.*

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ Generally speaking a good model will be able to explain the majority of the variation (R-sq > 50%). The size of R-sq is largely dependent on the way the questionnaire has been designed, i.e. to what extent it has incorporated the key drivers of satisfaction in the first place. In the current questionnaire, only eight aspects around Jobcentre Plus staff and service provision have been included in the questionnaire. Using the data from the Jobcentre Plus Annual Employer Survey provided by DWP, the maximum R-sq value achieved was 45%.

Figure 5.1 Drivers of satisfaction

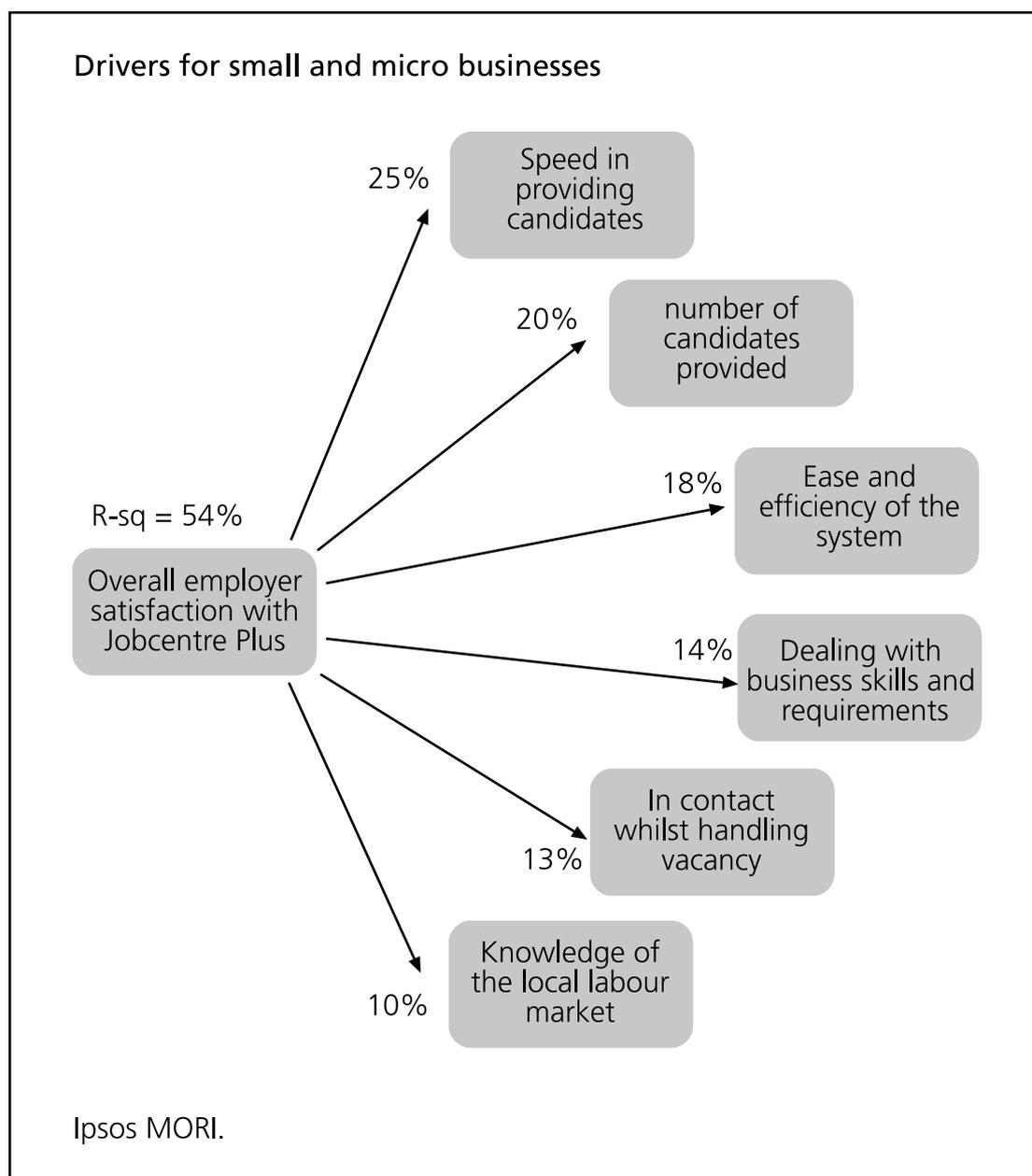


For employers who had used Jobcentre Plus, the strongest drivers of overall satisfaction were the knowledge of staff in dealing with their business skills and requirements, the way they kept in touch with them and the speed with which they could provide candidates; all factors which, as mentioned earlier, emerged in the qualitative work. Although having helpful and professional staff, having staff that have knowledge of the local market and the number of candidates provided by Jobcentre Plus also contributed to overall satisfaction, their impact was less marked.

Further analysis by size of employer indicated that drivers differ between small and micro-employers (those that employ nine people or less) and larger employers (ten or more employees).

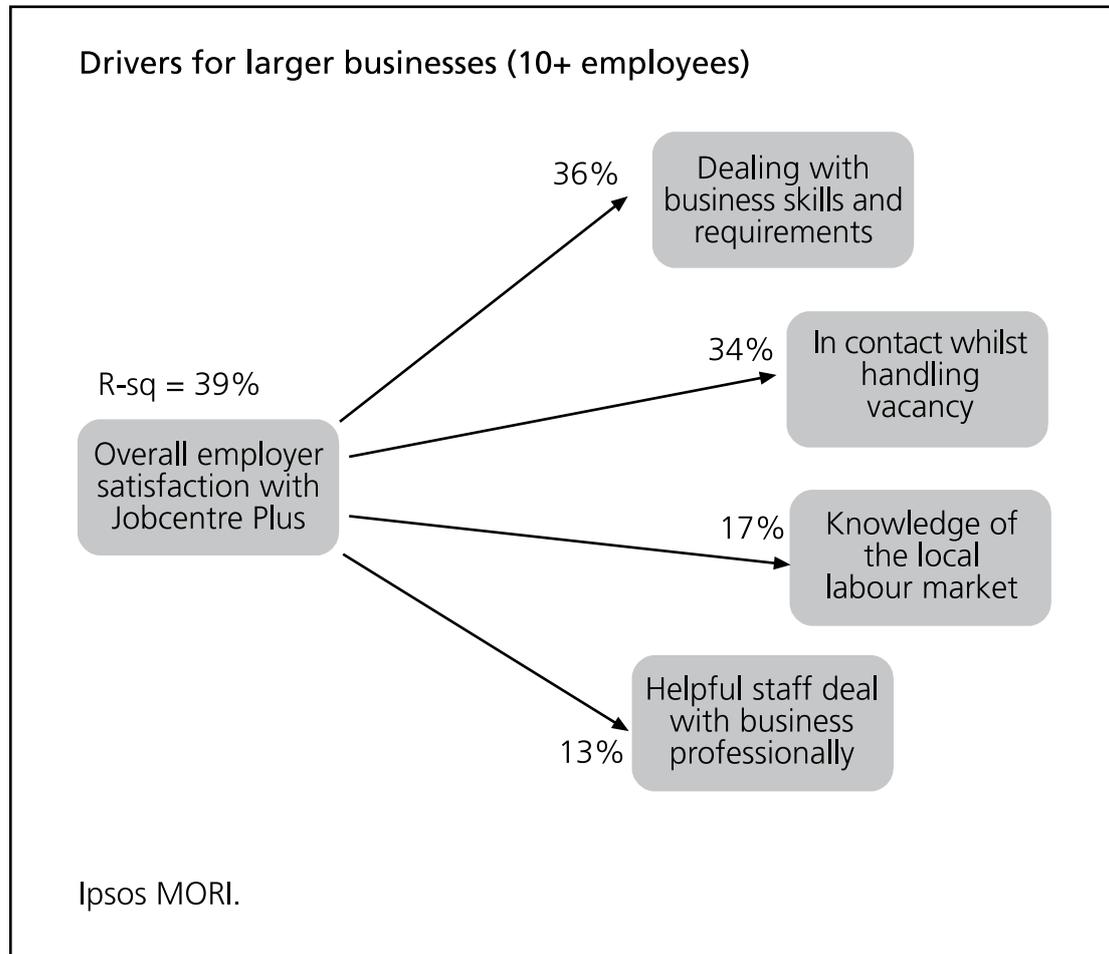
The analysis on smaller employers shows that the speed with which Jobcentre Plus could provide candidates and the number of candidates it can provide are the top drivers of satisfaction. This is illustrated in Figure 5.2. Again, this is a factor which emerged in the qualitative work. However, it was found to be largely related to sector with those employers that experiences fluctuating demands for labour (such as those in retail or construction) citing this as most important.

Figure 5.2 Drivers of satisfaction for small and micro employers



On the other hand, larger employers tended to place more emphasis on the knowledge of Jobcentre Plus staff of their business requirements and the way the staff kept in contact with them. These factors are illustrated in Figure 5.3.

Figure 5.3 Drivers of satisfaction for larger employers



In summary, the smallest employers were much more concerned with those aspects that are most likely to have a direct impact on their business. On the other hand, larger employers tended to be concerned with service driven factors.

To further check the key drivers of satisfaction, KDA was also run on the Employer Engagement Target Outcome Survey⁶². As mentioned above, due to the design of the questionnaire it was less appropriate for KDA⁶³ but it still highlighted useful information. According to this survey, the most important variable in determining satisfaction with Jobcentre Plus was whether it successfully filled the employers' vacancy. Other variables which were also highlighted as being important were whether the candidates were ready and able to start, whether the candidates met the vacancy requirements and whether the details of the vacancy were correct. As with the Annual Employer Survey⁶⁴, these were all issues that emerged throughout

⁶² *DWP Employer Engagement Target Outcome Survey, 2006/07 and 2008 collected data.*

⁶³ The R-sq value for the Employer Engagement Target Outcome Survey was 30 per cent based on 12 variables. This meant that there was 70 per cent variation unaccounted for, which is fairly high and means the analysis is not particularly powerful.

⁶⁴ *DWP Annual Employer Survey, 2007/08.*

the qualitative work, although it was found in the qualitative interviews conducted for this project that, for large employers in particular, whether the candidates met the vacancy requirements was less of an issue as long as they were willing to work and learn.

A conclusion from the KDA of both surveys was that the key drivers developed from the qualitative research and described in the previous section were broadly accurate, and therefore ready to be developed into the quantitative pilot questionnaire. As described in Section 2 this questionnaire was then tested with a small sample of employers in order to check that the survey process was effective and that the questions were intelligible to respondents and produced useful findings. The central conclusion was that the survey was generally effective, although problems were highlighted around the length of the questionnaire, establishing the nature of employer's contacts with DWP and a relatively high refusal rate. A more thorough discussion of the survey process can be found in Chapter 2 of this report and in the methodological conclusions in Chapter 6.

The remainder of this section discusses the findings from the pilot quantitative survey and thereby provides a preliminary assessment of key satisfaction measures. It should be remembered throughout, that all findings presented are strictly indicative as they are based upon a small sample that was designed to test the survey approach rather than develop robust statistics. More reliable findings are available in the follow-up project to this research (see DWP forthcoming).

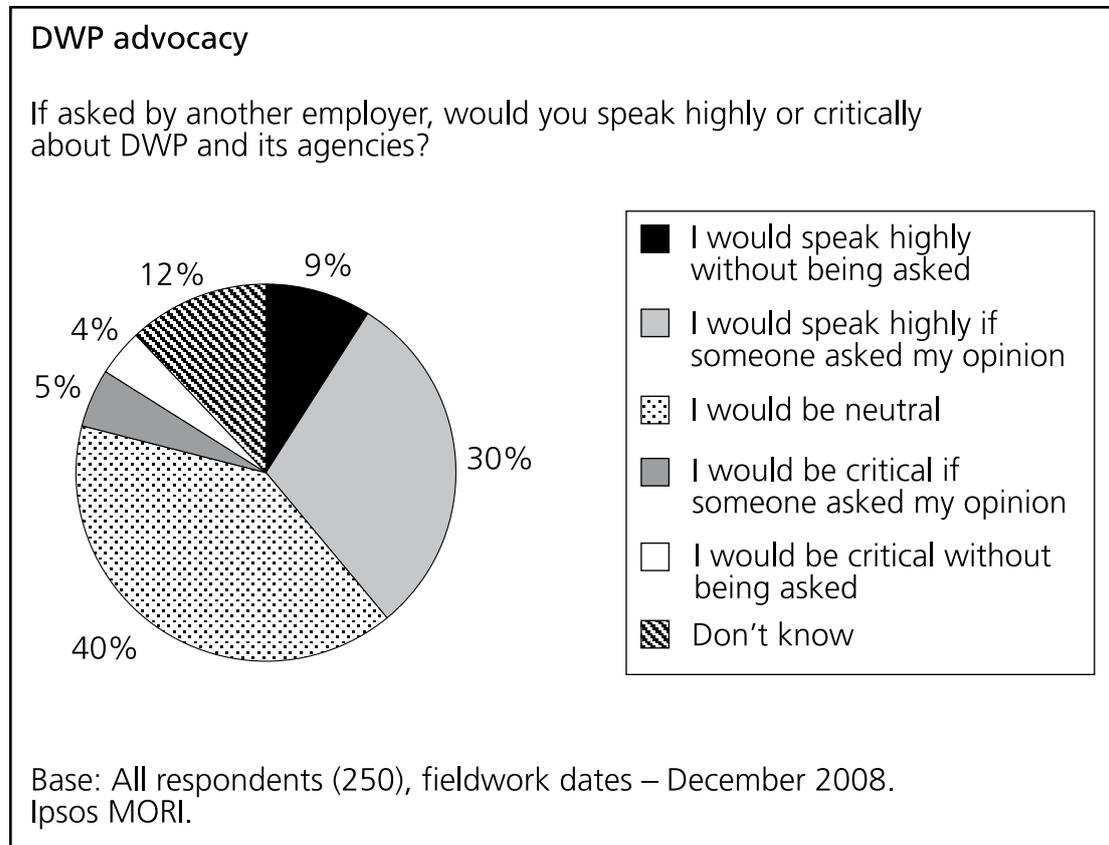
5.3.1 Overall satisfaction and advocacy

Overall, employers were satisfied with the overall service provided by DWP over the past year (74 per cent). This figure included a quarter (26 per cent) who said they were very satisfied.

When comparing the past and recent experiences of working with DWP, two thirds (65 per cent) stated that the quality has stayed the same; one in ten (11 per cent) said it has got better; and five percent said it has got worse.

As was mentioned in Section 5.1, earlier research has indicated that advocacy is often a more discriminating measure of satisfaction; hence this was included in the pilot questionnaire. Examining this subject, one in ten (nine per cent) said they would speak highly of DWP without being prompted, and another three in ten (30 per cent) said they would speak highly of it if asked by another employer. One in ten (nine per cent) employers would be critical. This is highlighted in Figure 5.4. Having been tested successfully in the pilot survey this advocacy question has since been included in the main-stage of the employer customer satisfaction survey⁶⁵. Similarly a question on employers' overall satisfaction with most recent contact has also been included, but with a different scale (rating from 1 to 10); to bring into line with the parallel customer satisfaction work in support of DSO7.

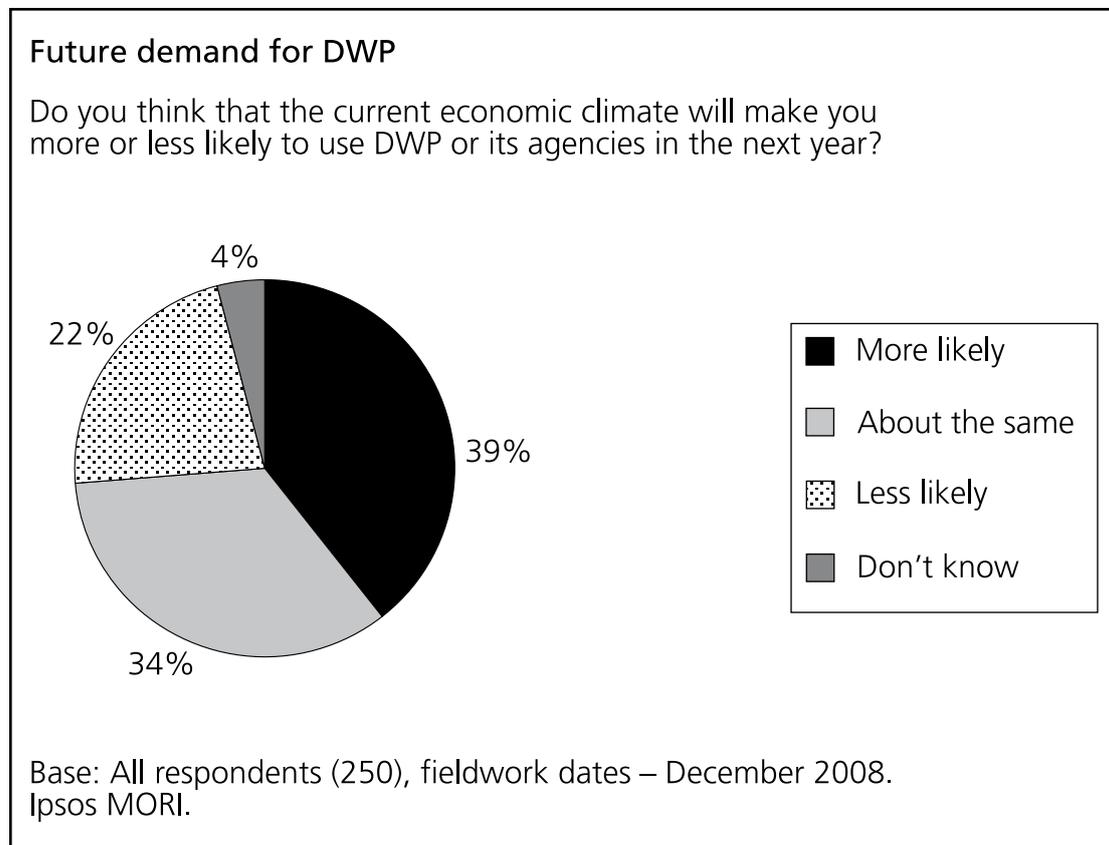
⁶⁵ *DWP Annual Employers Survey, 2009* (forthcoming).

Figure 5.4 Advocacy of DWP

5.3.2 Using services in the future

Related to advocacy, the desk research also highlighted that an important test of satisfaction is the extent to which employers felt they might use the services provided by the Department in the future. To this end, these measures were incorporated into the survey in relation to the current economic climate.

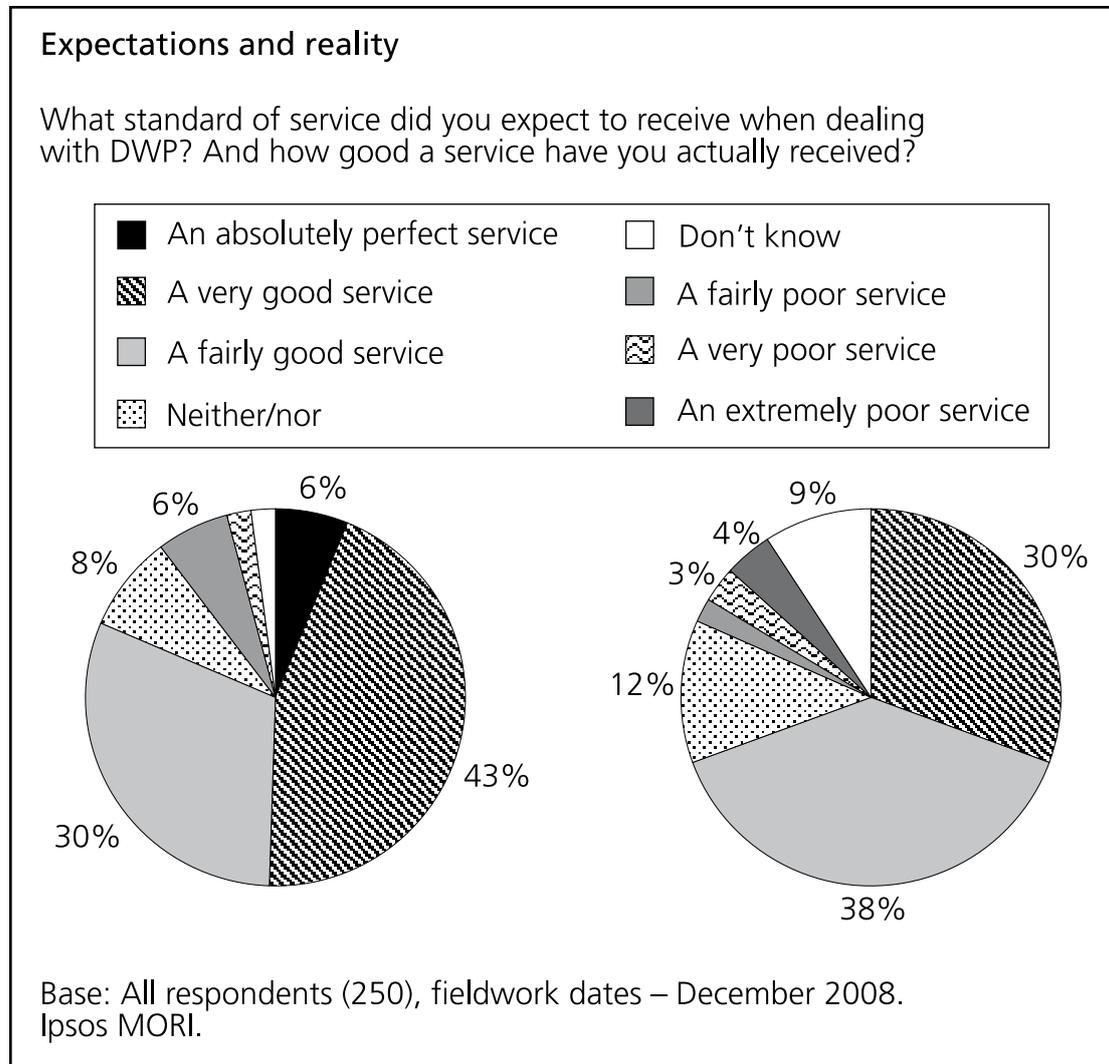
Looking at the future demand for DWP services, as Figure 5.5 shows, four in ten (39 per cent) employers thought that the current economic climate would make them more likely to use DWP and its agencies. More than two in ten (22 per cent) thought that they would be less likely to use DWP and a third of employers (34 per cent) thought that the current economic climate would not have any impact on their use of DWP and its agencies.

Figure 5.5 Future demand for DWP's services

5.3.3 Expectations

Fewer than half employers (49 per cent) expected to receive an absolutely perfect (six per cent) or a very good service (43 per cent) from DWP, although this is still higher than would have been expected from the earlier qualitative research which suggested that expectations would be low. We know from experience that qualitative research tends to illicit slightly more negative views than quantitative because respondents are encouraged by the setting to be more critical (which is what they tend to think will be most helpful to the researcher). Conversely, in a quantitative interview, respondents are encouraged to give top of mind responses without giving so much thought to the issue. This process is probably at work here and goes some way to explaining why the quantitative and qualitative findings differ.

Looking at how services compared to reality, 30 per cent of employers in the pilot survey said the service they received was very good, with less than 0.5 per cent saying it was absolutely perfect as illustrated in Figure 5.6. The difference between expectations and reality suggests that there is some scope to improve levels of customer satisfaction. However, more positively, 68 per cent of employers regarded services as very or fairly good.

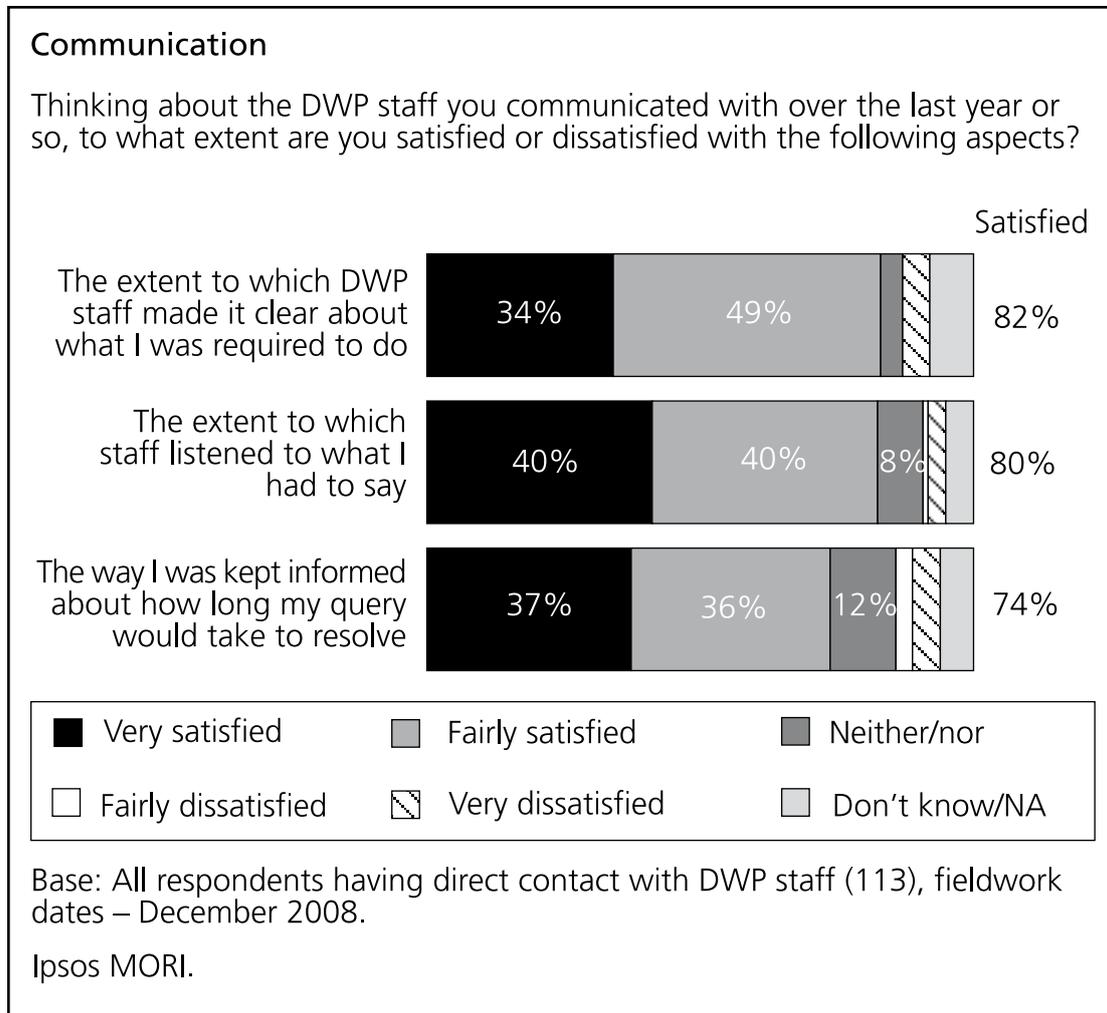
Figure 5.6 Expectations and reality

5.3.4 Communications

As highlighted in Figure 5.7, employers who have had direct contact with DWP staff tended to be happy with the communications they have received. Around eight in ten were satisfied with the way DWP staff clarified their obligations (82 per cent) or listened to them (80 per cent). However, a slightly smaller proportion (74 per cent) were satisfied with the way they have been kept informed about how long their query would take to resolve.

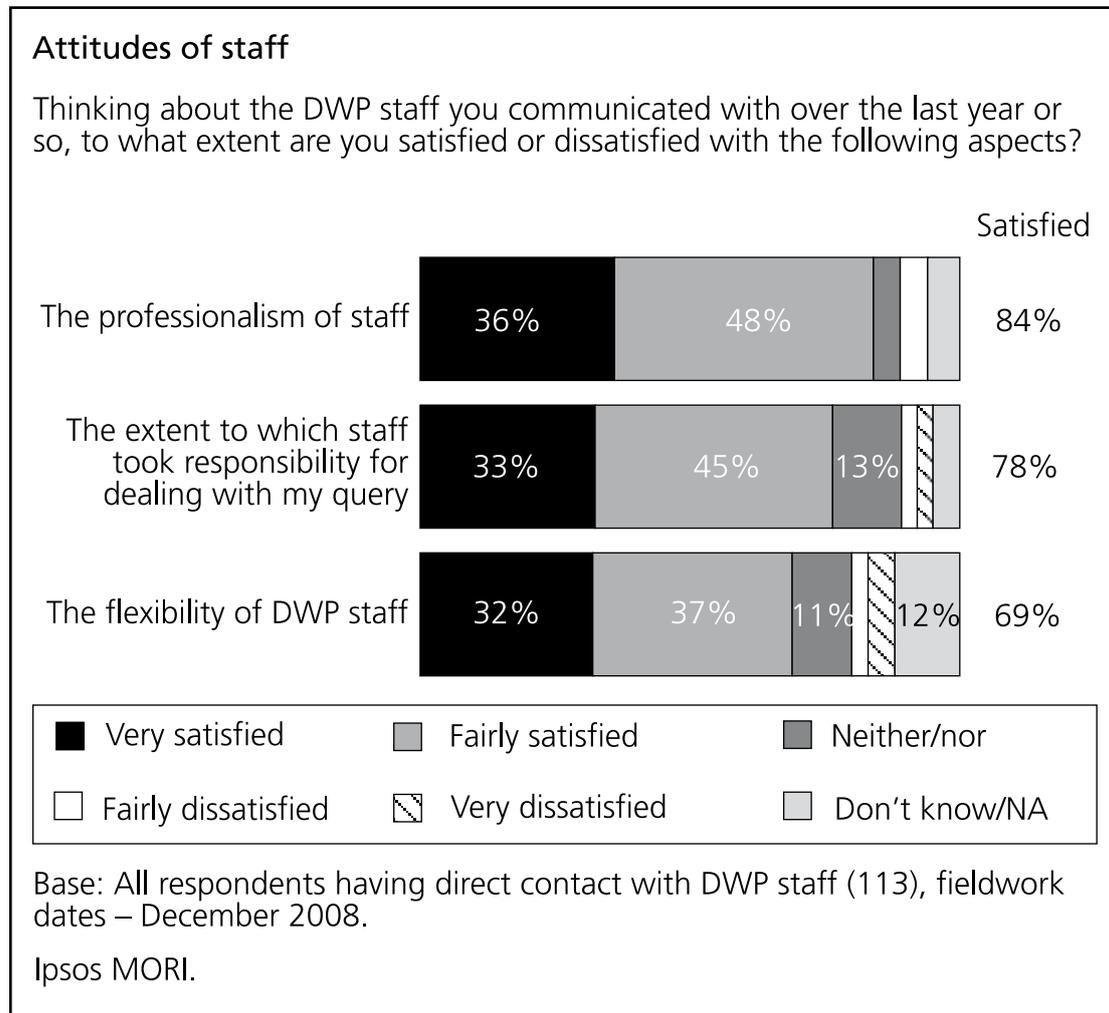
Again, this was also an issue in the qualitative research and particularly in relation to information requests from DWP. Employers did not resent having to provide this information but were keen to know, if they had a query about what they were required to do, how long it would take to action. Employers mentioned that they, at times, felt like there was an imbalance here; they were expected to provide information to DWP within a set timeframe but the same rules did not apply to the Department.

Figure 5.7 Communications



5.3.5 Attitudes of staff

Figure 5.8 below shows a high proportion (84 per cent) of employers were satisfied with the professionalism of DWP staff, and more than three quarters (78 per cent) were satisfied with the extent to which staff took responsibility for dealing with the query. On the basis of this indicative survey there appears to be some room for improvement in terms of the flexibility of staff, however, as only seven in ten (69 per cent) were satisfied with this aspect. Indeed, the qualitative work showed that treatment by staff was one of the key factors that employers took into account when making an assessment of how satisfied they were with the service provided.

Figure 5.8 Attitudes of staff

Employers in direct contact with DWP staff were generally happy with the speed of the service (83 per cent satisfied), although they were slightly less satisfied with the speed with which their query was resolved (76 per cent satisfied). More than three-quarters (77 per cent) of employers were satisfied with the depth of knowledge DWP staff have in the area, and a similar proportion (74 per cent) were satisfied with the extent to which the service has been tailored to their needs. These points are shown in Figure 5.9.

Figure 5.9 Delivery of services

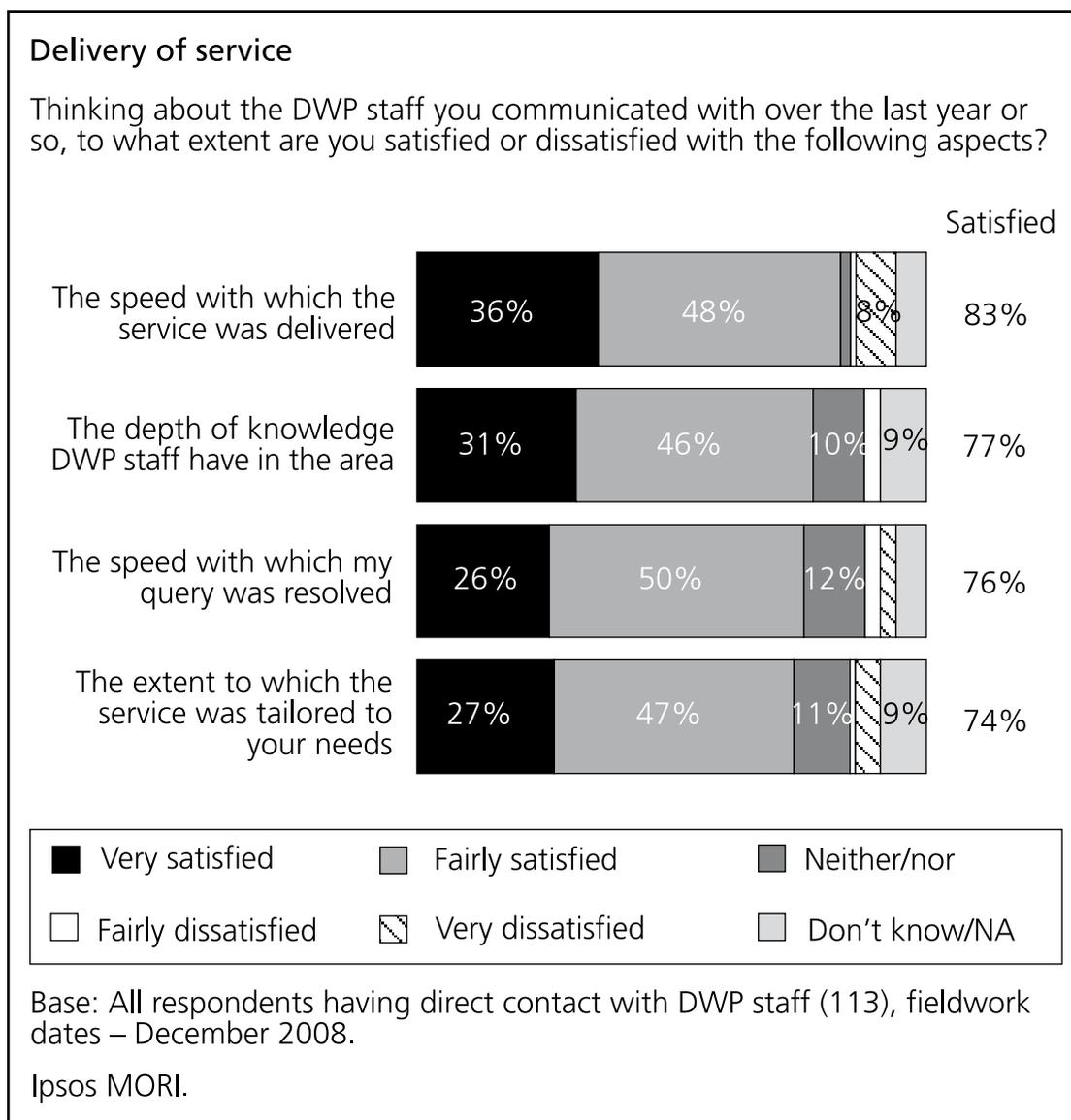
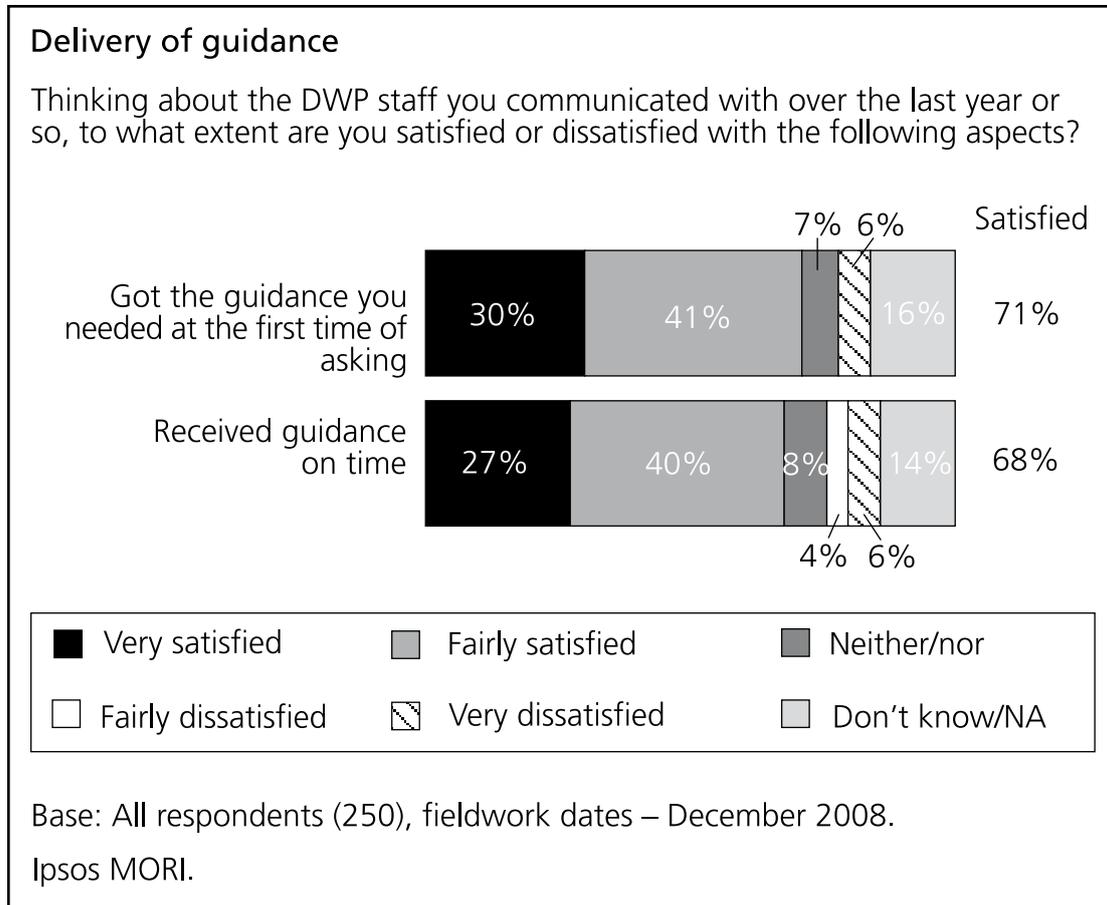


Figure 5.10 shows that around seven in ten respondents to the pilot survey were satisfied that they received the guidance they needed at the first time of asking (71 per cent) or that they received their guidance on time (68 per cent).

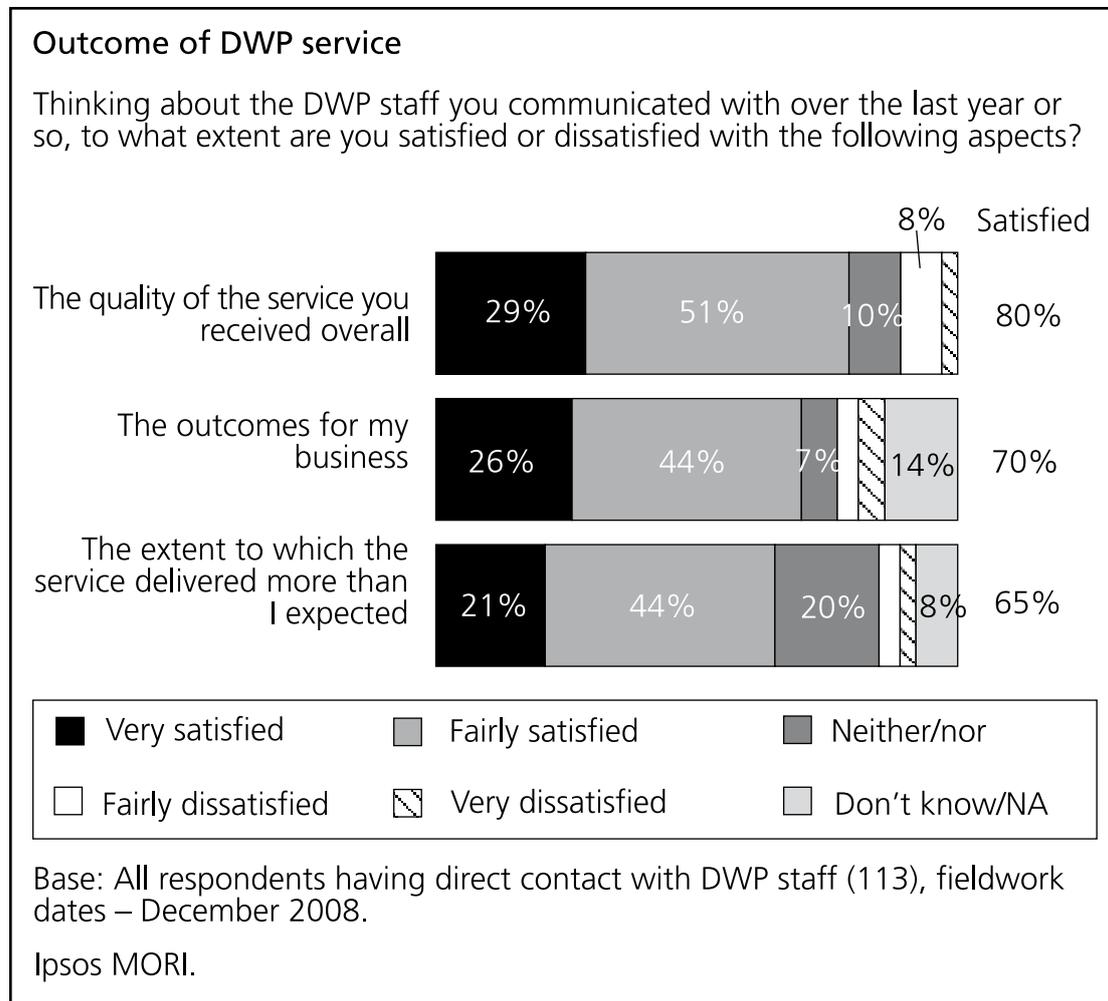
Figure 5.10 Delivery of guidance

5.3.6 Outcome of direct contact

As was described in Section 5.2 the satisfactory resolution of queries appears to be a key driver of employer satisfaction with the Department, and as such this was covered in detail in the pilot survey. The indicative findings suggest that eight in ten (80 per cent) employers were satisfied with the quality of service they received overall, with three in ten (29 per cent) being very satisfied. Seven in ten (70 per cent) were satisfied with the outcome for their business, though 14 per cent stated that they did not know the answer to this question. A slightly lower proportion (65 per cent) were satisfied with the extent to which the service delivered more than what they expected. However, little should be made of these relatively minor differences in satisfaction levels because of the very small sample size involved, more thorough analysis will be possible at the main-stage of the survey⁶⁶.

⁶⁶ DWP Annual Employers Survey, 2009 (forthcoming).

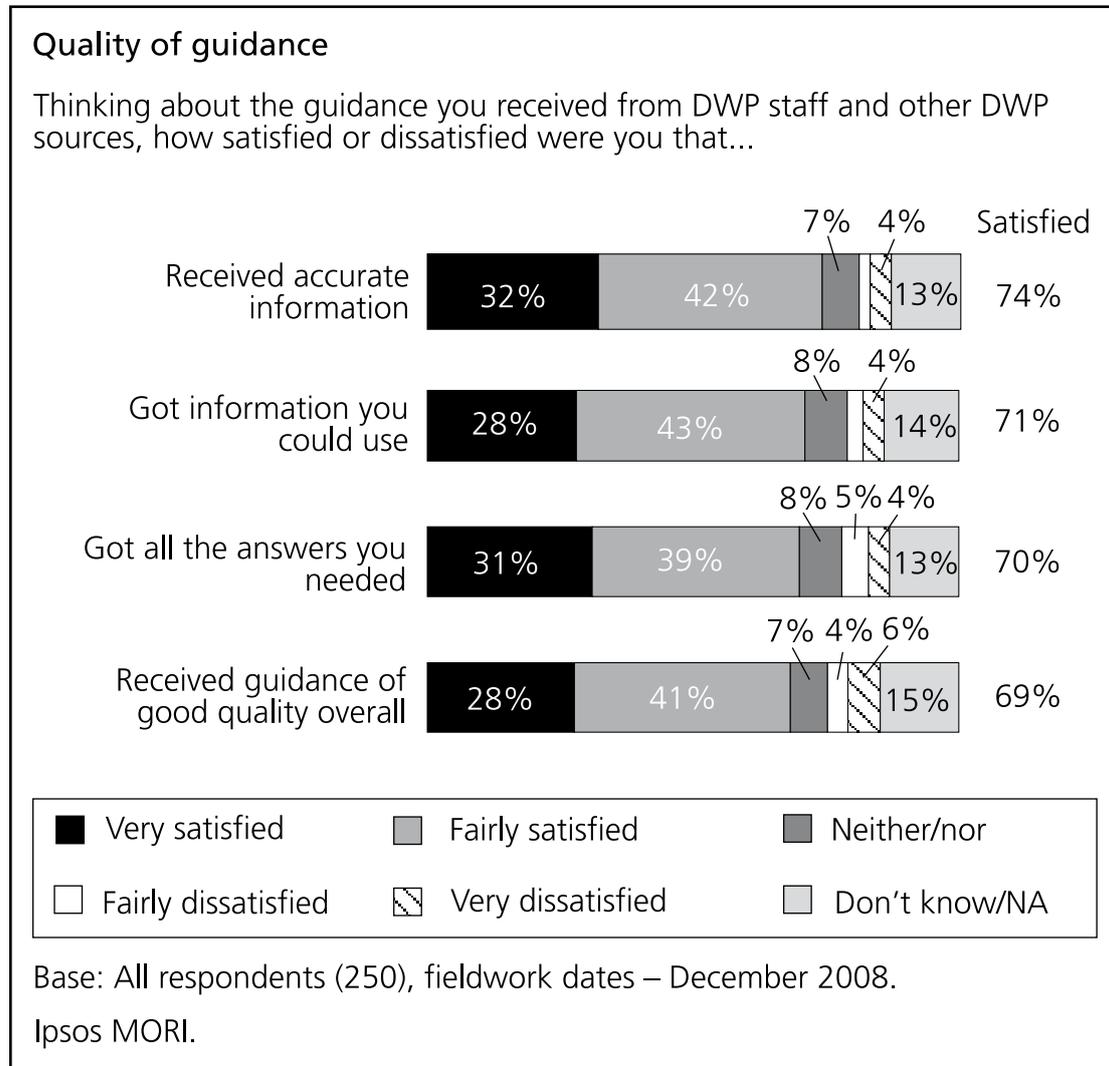
Figure 5.11 Outcome of services



5.3.7 Guidance

As the qualitative work displayed, another factor which played a role in employers' satisfaction with DWP services was the quality of information and guidance that they received from DWP staff. As demonstrated in Figure 5.12, the survey showed that employers were generally satisfied with different aspects of DWP guidance they received, including accuracy (74 per cent), usability (71 per cent), comprehensiveness (70 per cent) and quality (69 per cent).

Figure 5.12 Quality of guidance



5.3.8 Drivers of satisfaction specific to Jobcentre Plus

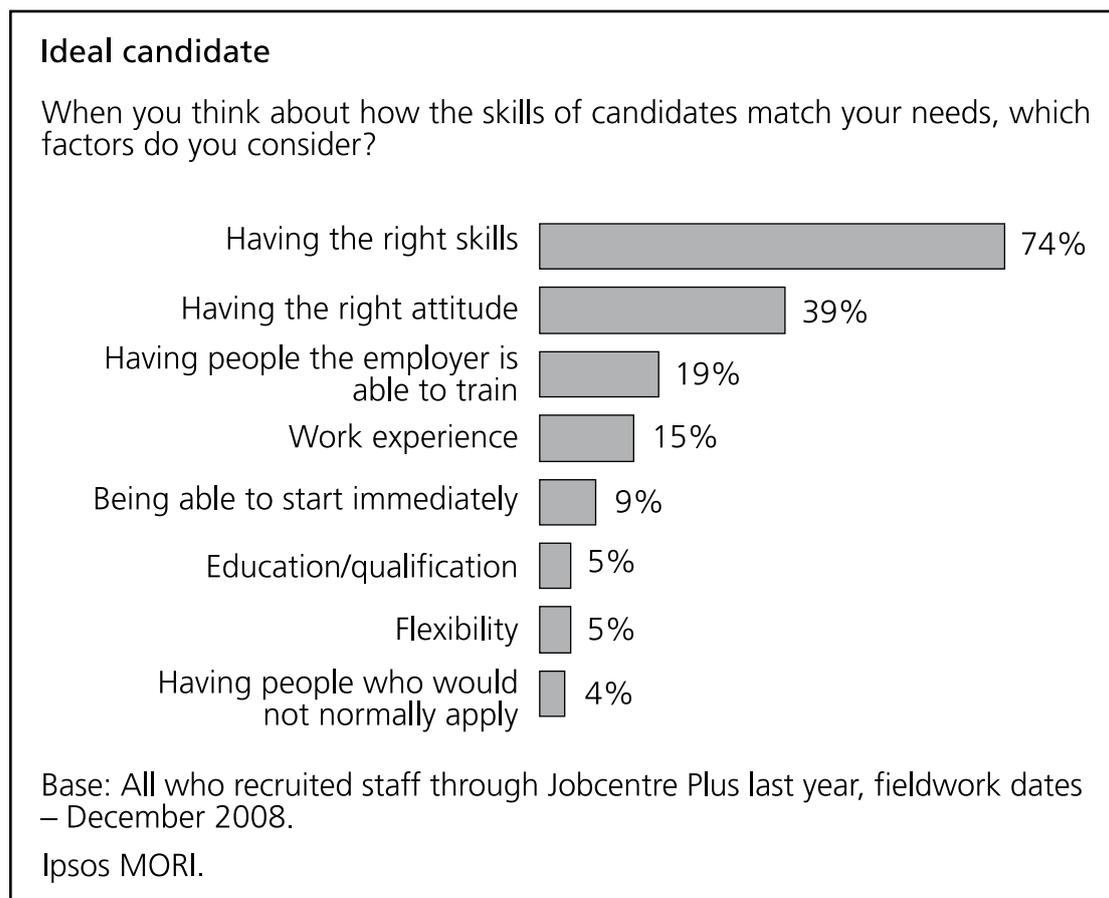
As the qualitative work and desk research highlighted, the bulk of employers' interactions with DWP tended to be with Jobcentre Plus and, in the main, regarded the recruitment of candidates. The pilot survey was therefore designed to be reflective of this.

It showed that employers using Jobcentre Plus tended to be satisfied with the services they have received in terms of the number of candidates (74 per cent), the extent to which the skills of candidates matched their needs (72 per cent) or the extent that the candidates matched the requirement of their vacancy (68 per cent).

However, as the qualitative work showed, there were a number of factors (over and above skills) that employers took into account when judging whether a candidate provided by Jobcentre Plus met their needs. The pilot survey was consequently designed to investigate these issues in more detail. A question was developed asking 'when you think about how the skills of candidates match your needs, what factors do you consider?'

Unfortunately, as highlighted in Figure 5.13, this question did not test well as the use of the word 'skills' in the question led respondents to select 'skills' as the response, leading to findings that contradicted the earlier qualitative research which suggested that attitudes might be equally as important. This question was therefore subsequently dropped for the main-stage of research⁶⁷.

Figure 5.13 Qualities of an ideal candidate



In conclusion, both the key drivers of satisfaction that the qualitative work and desk research highlighted, DWP can be seen to have performed strongly against the most important measures. It has also demonstrated that the survey approach will be effective in monitoring employer satisfaction levels over time. The final chapter focuses on areas where there is room for improvement, the difference this might make to how satisfied employers feel, and the methodological implications for the main-stage of employer satisfaction research⁶⁸.

⁶⁷ DWP Annual Employers Survey, 2009 (forthcoming).

⁶⁸ Ibid.

6 Conclusions

This concluding section presents the key findings from this research into two themes; firstly the policy implications for Department for Work and Pensions (DWP); and secondly the methodological implications for the next stage of employer customer satisfaction research⁶⁹.

6.1 Policy conclusions

This project began with a detailed study of the factors that influence employer satisfaction with DWP, and then translated these into five key drivers of satisfaction. These drivers were then tested through a small pilot survey, which has since been developed into a full survey which took place in March and April 2009⁷⁰.

The key drivers are listed below (but discussed in greater detail elsewhere in this report)

1. Earlier positive experiences of dealing with the Department.
2. Specific experiences working with Jobcentre Plus (including access to candidates who meet employers' needs).
3. The perceived quality of communication to employers.
4. The outcomes from interactions with the Department such as vacancies successfully filled or information requests dealt with; and
5. Being able to build a relationship with DWP.

In studying these drivers we were also able to draw some preliminary conclusions about how well DWP is currently perceived and what else it could do to improve customer satisfaction. Positively in the context of Departmental Strategic Objective 7 (DSO7), DWP is already perceived to be providing good quality services by many employers. It was evident in all strands of the work that, on the whole, DWP communicates effectively with employers and, beyond this, employers can see the benefits of working with the Department. Moreover, those employers that had a long standing relationship with the Department spoke of how, in their opinion,

⁶⁹ *DWP Annual Employers Survey, 2009* (forthcoming).

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

the services provided have improved in recent years. Because of these positive perceptions, it was found that employers were often satisfied when dealing with the Department. However, DWP will need to be mindful of employers' key drivers of satisfaction and ensure that these are at the forefront of any future strategy.

Indeed, there was evidence from the qualitative research to suggest that by making a few changes, the Department will be able to improve the customer experience for employers, with improved satisfaction ratings as a result. These changes could incorporate:

- **Improved communications:** By working collaboratively with employer bodies such as the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) and the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), DWP may be able to improve the reach of its communications, add credibility to them (by associating its messages with an organisation independent of government) and, furthermore, have the key points it needs to get across tailored by either sector or professional role. This will help convey the message that the Department is mindful of business needs and is proactive in its communications. However, the provenance of such communications should be clearly expressed to ensure recipients are not confused by the joint labelling or messages and that DWP is given due recognition.
- **Changing channels of communication:** Email is a cost effective means by which DWP can easily communicate with a large number of employers. Furthermore, as employers become more internet savvy it will become 'the norm' for them. An expansion of on-line communication is therefore likely to be well received.
- **Planning:** Employers do not always have a realistic idea of how long it will take for DWP to deal with their query or issue. This can lead to frustration as, firstly, they are unable to plan accordingly but, in addition, they can get the sense that DWP is not treating their query or issue with the urgency they feel it deserves. To mitigate this and raise levels of satisfaction it may be worthwhile for DWP to provide employers with an estimated timeframe for action.
- **Building links in the community:** Not all employers want a formalised relationship with the Department and, specifically, with Jobcentre Plus. However, open days and local events will help build an understanding among employers of how the Department can help their business and, furthermore, will foster the sense that DWP is taking a proactive approach to communications. More generally, it will help counter out-of-date perceptions of Jobcentre Plus which still hold true for a number of employers.
- **Providing named contacts:** Employers regularly complained that the lack of named contacts within the Department caused difficulties. For example, named contacts would give greater confidence that queries were being dealt with and awareness of who to follow-up with if things go wrong. This issue is both a challenge and an opportunity for the Department. For example, whilst it may not be possible to provide named contacts on websites, the team that a query or issue is going to be given, along with alternate telephone number if employers do not get a response. The potential benefit of addressing this issue is that the Department will be seen as less remote and more accountable.

6.2 Methodological conclusions

As a main aim of this project was to establish and test an approach for measuring employer customer satisfaction it is appropriate to end with the main methodological conclusions from the pilot survey.

Methodologically, this work also raised a number of considerations for the Department which have been fed into the design of the main-stage survey⁷¹. Encouragingly, the survey flowed well and respondents were also able to answer the questions easily. A key issue to consider going forward is eligibility criteria for participation, as in the pilot significant numbers of respondents were screened out because they did not believe they had had contact with DWP. From our analysis of the data, there are a number of alternative measures that would help convert these respondents into useful interviews should this prove useful to the Department:

- Read out a definition of 'contact' i.e. the Department may wish to consider whether using the DWP website or receiving some information through the post could be viewed as a contact. As it stands, it may be that respondents are considering only direct contact with an individual; and
- Formulating a set of questions aimed at those who said they have had no contact to ascertain why this has been the case, the circumstances under which they would contact the Department and the extent to which they would know where to go in order to do this.

Looking ahead, it may also be worth investigating measures to lower the refusal rate. We believe there are two main ways that this could be achieved:

- Rewording the introduction to illustrate why the respondent should take part, for instance, highlighting that their contribution will help DWP better understand the instances in which it works well with employers along with the areas on which it needs to improve; and
- Reducing the overall length of the questionnaire.

Furthermore, if possible, it would be helpful if DWP could provide the sample for the survey rather than it being procured from a commercial supplier. It was apparent in the qualitative work that recruitment was much more straightforward when using sample provided by DWP as opposed to that purchased from a commercial supplier. This was because the contact details were more likely to be up to date and, furthermore, participants tended to be more willing to take part in the research.

⁷¹ *DWP Annual Employers Survey, 2009* (forthcoming).

In the main, the key lesson for the main-stage was allowing long enough for the fieldwork⁷². This is especially important given that the respondents have a number of other demands on their time and, we know from other work, that participating in research is not a priority, especially when the economic climate is challenging. On the whole, the preparatory work undertaken as part of this programme of research has helped to ensure DWP has a comprehensive and workable means of tracking employer satisfaction over time.

⁷² Ibid.

Appendix A

Discussion guide

DWP Employer Interviews
Telephone and Face-to-Face
AMENDED – 14 November

Objectives

These 50 in-depth interviews are designed to uncover new insights into how employers interact with the Department, their drivers of satisfaction and how these vary according to business segment. This guide also picks up on the findings from the desk research and secondary analysis and explores these in more detail.

Participant Details

Name

Job Title

Company

Location

Discussion thread	Approximate timings
<p>Introduction and explanation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviewer introduces self, explains purpose of research, confidentiality and gets permission to audio-record. 	
<p>1. Current perceptions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thinking generally, what do you think of when you hear 'Department for Work and Pensions'? • ALLOW PARTICIPANTS TO PROVIDE THEIR SPONTANEOUS PERCEPTIONS TO GAUGE LEVELS OF AWARENESS. • How much would you say you know about the work and responsibilities of DWP? Why do you say this? What do you think it does? PROBE FOR WHAT THEY THINK IT IS AND IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR – THIS WILL SUBTLY TEASE OUT CONFUSION WITH THE WORK OF OTHER DEPARTMENTS. • PROBE FULLY ON EMPLOYMENT (AND FOR WHICH GROUPS IN SOCIETY), PENSION PROVISION (STATE AND PRIVATE/EMPLOYER PENSIONS), CHILD MAINTENANCE ETC. • How far do you feel you have a clear idea of what the Department does? What areas do you have most knowledge about? And the least? Why do you say this? • And what about its three main businesses? To what extent would you say you know about their work? • PROBE IN TURN FOR JOBCENTRE PLUS, PENSION, DISABILITY AND CARERS SERVICE AND THE CHILD MAINTENANCE AND ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION (ASK ABOUT CSA IF AWARENESS OF CMEC IS LOW). • Generally, how far do you think employers have a responsibility to help DWP in its work? Where do you think they can help? And where can't they? 	10 minutes
<p>Experiences of working with DWP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thinking about the last year or so, what contact have you, as an employer, had with DWP? 	25 minutes

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PROBE FULLY – ASCERTAIN SPONTANEOUS PERCEPTIONS ABOUT LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT WITH DWP. MODERATOR EXPLAIN IF THIS HAS NOT ALREADY BEEN COVERED THAT DWP IS MADE UP OF JCP, PDCS AND CMEC (FORMERLY KNOWN AS THE CSA) • And thinking in more detail, have you had any contact with DWP about any of the following issues: MODERATOR TO PROBE ON EACH IN TURN. 	
<p>1.RECRUITMENT.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASCERTAIN SPONTANEOUS PERCEPTIONS FIRST OF ALL THEN PROBE ON THE FOLLOWING: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For example, have you worked with JCP to either fill or advertise vacancies? • IF NO – Why not? PROBE FOR ATTITUDES AND AWARENESS AS BARRIERS. • IF YES – How did you find this experience ? What did you have to do in order for your vacancy to be advertised ? What were your experiences? PROBE ON LENGTH OF TIME TAKEN TO RESOLVE THE QUERY, ATTITUDE OF THE STAFF – DOING THIS WILL PROBE FURTHER ON THE RESULTS FROM THE KDA. • When you placed your vacancy with Jobcentre Plus did you call Employer Direct or input it directly via ED online? PROBE ON WHETHER IF EDon WAS NOT THEIR PREFERRED OPTION WHAT WERE THE REASONS FOR THIS • Were your contact details, displayed on the vacancy, so that candidate could apply directly to you? • And what about your experiences with the candidates that applied for the job? Why do you say this? PROBE FULLY TO DETERMINE WHETHER QUALITY OF CANDIDATES IS A KEY DRIVER OF SATISFACTION OR NOT. • To what extent do you think that this could have been dealt within the vacancy description? Why do you say this? • Would you be willing to recruit Jobcentre Plus customers in an economic downturn or would you prefer to recruit the recently redundant? Why do you say this? 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • And have you worked with DWP with regard to employment programmes such as Local Employment Partnerships, Work Trials ,New Deal , Access to Work, Train to Gain, or the Job Introduction Scheme ? • IF YES – How did you find this? What did you have to do? What were your experiences? • Has the experience of LEP , Work Trials , New Deal, Access to Work, JIS, or Train to Gain altered the employers opinion of Jobcentre Plus/DWP/Govt.? • IF NO – Why not? PROBE FOR ATTITUDES AND AWARENESS AS BARRIERS. • And, more generally, have you ever worked with DWP to make sure you are recruiting a diverse range of people? PROBE FULLY – INCLUDING BME GROUPS, DISABLED PEOPLE, LONG TERM UNEMPLOYED, LONE PARENTS AND CARERS. • IF NO – why not? PROBE FULLY – DETERMINE WHETHER THIS IS CORRELATED TO COMPANY SIZE AS PER EXISTING RESEARCH SUGGESTS WITH LARGER COMPANIES HAVING THE RESOURCES TO DEAL WITH THIS IN HOUSE. • IF YES – What prompted you to do this? And who did you contact? How did you find this? What were your experiences? PROBE FULLY – INCLUDING ON OUTCOMES AND THE TYPES OF GROUPS EMPLOYED AS A RESULT. 	
<p>2. EMPLOYMENT ISSUES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • And have you ever worked with DWP on issues to do with your employees? In what ways? • ASCERTAIN SPONTANEOUS PERCEPTIONS FIRST OF ALL THEN PROBE ON THE FOLLOWING: • For example, have you ever worked with DWP to find ways to help your employees balance their work and personal life more effectively? Such as people with child care responsibilities? • IF NO – Why not? PROBE ON WHETHER THIS HAS NEVER BEEN RAISED BY EMPLOYEES or considered by managers, WHETHER THEY ARE UNAWARE OF THE LEGISLATION ETC. 	

- IF YES – And how did you find this? What issues were discussed? PROBE ON JOB SHARE, COMPRESSED HOURS, FLEXIBLE WORKING ETC. Who did you contact? What were your experiences of this? PROBE FULLY.
- If you have employed people with disabilities , have you worked with the department to ensure you are aware of your legal responsibilities regarding reasonable adjustment ?
- PROBE – If yes, how and who did you contact ? What you're your experiences of this?
- IF NO - Why not? PROBE FULLY.
- And, for instance, have you ever worked with the Department about making sure all your employees have National Insurance Numbers?
- IF NO – Why not? PROBE FOR WHETHER THERE HAS NOT BEEN A NEED TO, WHETHER THEY KNOW WHAT THEIR OBLIGATIONS ARE AND DO NOT NEED HELP ETC.
- IF YES – And how did you find this? Who did you contact? What were your experiences of this? PROBE FULLY.
- Have you ever contacted DWP with regard to providing information to the Department, for example, payroll or fraud investigations?
- Have you ever had an information request from DWP which required you to fill in forms? PROBE IF NEEDED – E.G. REGARDING PENSION FORMS, CHILD MAINTENANCE FORMS ETC.
- IF NO – Why not? PROBE FULLY
- IF YES – And how did you find this? What forms did you have to fill in – what information was required? Who did you contact? What were your experiences of this? PROBE FULLY.
- What about the payment of Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) or Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP)? Have you worked with DWP to help you on this?
- IF NO – Why not? PROBE FULLY
- IF YES – And how did you find this? Who did you contact? What were your experiences of this? PROBE FULLY.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you ever worked with DWP to get advice about providing training or increasing the level of skills of your employees? • IF NO – Why not? PROBE FULLY – DETERMINE WHETHER THE EMPLOYER FEELS THEY HAVE APPROPRIATE PROVISION IN PLACE ETC. • IF YES – And how did you find this? Who did you contact? What were your experiences of this? PROBE FULLY. • And finally, when thinking about employment issues, have you ever worked with DWP on issues to do with redundancy? PROBE FULLY. • IF NO – Why not? PROBE FULLY. • Do you think you might need to work with DWP regarding redundancy in the future? Why is this? Who might you contact? How do you think DWP will be able to help you with this? Why do you say this? • IF YES – And how did you find working with DWP in this instance? Who did you contact? What were your experiences of this? PROBE FULLY. • More generally, have recent economic events altered your view of DWP? Or changed your requirements from DWP? PROBE AS TO WHETHER THEY CAN SEE THESE CHANGING IN THE FUTURE. 	
<p>3. PENSIONS ISSUES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • And have you ever worked with DWP on issues to do with pensions? In what ways? • ASCERTAIN SPONTANEOUS PERCEPTIONS FIRST OF ALL THEN PROBE ON THE FOLLOWING: • For example, have you needed to contact the Department about issues related to providing a company pension (either a company pension or stakeholder pension) to your employees? • IF NO – Why not? PROBE FULLY – ESPECIALLY ON ISSUES RELATED TO COMPANY SIZE. ARE PENSIONS AN ISSUE OF INTEREST TO EMPLOYEES ETC? • IF YES - And how did you find this? Who did you contact? What were your experiences of this? And what happened as a result? PROBE FULLY. • Related to this, have you ever contacted DWP about providing Combined Pension Forecasts? 	

- MODERATOR NOTE: IF NEED TO EXPLAIN STATE THAT THE CPF IS A FORECAST WHICH LETS PEOPLE KNOW THE TOTAL AMOUNT THEY WILL BE ENTITLED IN RETIREMENT TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE STATE PENSION AND THE ANY SAVINGS THEY HAVE MADE WITH A COMPANY OR PRIVATE PENSION. IT REQUIRES EMPLOYERS TO PROVIDE INFORMATION ON THE PENSION SCHEME FOR THIS TO BE CALCULATED.
- IF NO – why not? PROBE FULLY – INCLUDING ON WHETHER THEY ARE AWARE ON WHETHER THEY ARE REQUIRED TO OR NOT, AWARENESS OF THE POLICY AND SO ON.
- IF YES - And how did you find this? Who did you contact? What were your experiences of this? And what happened as a result? PROBE FULLY.
- And finally, have you heard anything about any changes to workplace pension schemes? PROBE FULLY.
- IF YES – what have you heard? How do you think this might affect you? What do you think you might need to do as a result? To what extent do you think this will involve working with DWP? Why do you say this?
- IF NO – Have you heard of Personal Accounts due to be introduced in 2012? Where do you think you might go to find out information about this?

ASK ALL:

- Thinking about all the contacts you have had with DWP and its agencies, to what extent did the Department deliver what you expected of it? PROBE FULLY – FULL OUT THE INSTANCES WHERE IT DELIVERED MORE, LESS OR WHAT WAS EXPECTED AND THE REASONS FOR THIS.
- MODERATOR NOTE: MAKE SURE THAT IF EMPLOYERS DISCUSS VACANCIES ALONE, WE PROBE THEM ON OTHER ISSUES AS WELL.
- And how does this make you feel about working with the Department in the future? Do you think you would be more likely to work with them again given your experiences?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IF YES – Why do you say this? And to what extent would you advocate working with DWP to other employers? Why/why not? • IF NO – Why do you say this? What might change your opinion? • MODERATOR NOTES; THESE QUESTION AREAS ARE DESIGNED TO PULL OUT ISSUES RELATED TO ADVOCACY AND EFFICACY AS TRACKED IN THE EET SURVEY. 	
<p>3. Channels of communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thinking generally, what is your preferred method of contact with the Department? Why do you say this? PROBE - Do you prefer to telephone or is there a preference to a 24/7 website containing everything you need to know? • Thinking about all your experiences of working with DWP as we have just talked about, how did you contact DWP? PROBE FULLY TO GATHER SPONTANEOUS RESPONSES THEN DISCUSS THE FOLLOWING ISSUES: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thinking about this in more detail, have you used DWP’s website? What was this for? And how did you find this? PROBE FULLY FOR POSITIVES AND NEGATIVES. • And have you contacted DWP by phone? What was this for? And how did you find this? PROBE FULLY FOR ATTITUDE OF THE STAFF, EASE OF GETTING THROUGH ON THE PHONE, EASE OF FINDING OUT THE RIGHT PEOPLE TO SPEAK TO, LENGTH OF TIME TAKEN TO RESOLVE A QUERY, CONSISTENCY IN RESPONSE ETC. • And have you ever had any face to face contact with DWP? MODERATOR NOTE – THIS MAY BE MORE APPLICABLE TO THOSE EMPLOYERS SIGNED UP TO LEPS OR WITH MANAGED ACCOUNTS. What issues was this for? And how did you find this? PROBE FULLY – INCLUDING POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE OPINIONS SUCH AS DETAILED KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION VERSUS TIME TAKEN TO ACCESS THIS INFORMATION. 	<p>10 minutes</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What other channels of communication do you use to contact DWP? How do you feel about each of these? PROBE FULLY FOR POSITIVES AND NEGATIVES. • And thinking about your communications with DWP, who makes the contact? PROBE FOR WHETHER IT IS INSTIGATED BY DWP OR THE EMPLOYER AND HOW THIS VARIES DEPENDING ON THE ISSUE IN QUESTION. • And how do you feel about this? • What about the frequency of contact? How often do you speak with DWP? How do you feel about this? PROBE FOR WHETHER IT IS TOO INFREQUENT, TOO FREQUENT, JUST RIGHT. • And thinking about the ways in which you communicate with DWP and vice versa, how does this affect your views of the Department? Why do you say that? • How might DWP communicate with you more effectively? Why do you say this? What difference would this make to you, as an employer? 	
<p>4. Voluntary and mandatory contact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thinking in more detail about your recent experiences with DWP, which of these were instigated by you, because you wanted help or advice? • And which of your experiences of working with DWP were because you were legally required to? PROBE FULLY TO GAUGE LEVELS OF AWARENESS AS TO THEIR LEGAL OBLIGATIONS TO DWP E.G. PROVIDING PAYROLL INFORMATION. • Thinking about these experiences, where you had to contact DWP, how do you feel about them? • How were you made aware of your requirements/ And how do you feel about this? • How easy is it for you, as an employer, to meet your obligations to DWP? • What makes it easy? PROBE FULLY – INCLUDING ON EASE OF CONTACT, QUALITY OF ADVICE GIVEN, SIMPLICITY OF FORMS ETC. • And what makes it hard? PROBE FULLY. 	<p>10 minutes</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • And how does this interaction with DWP affect you as an employer? PROBE ON ADMIN BURDEN, KEEPING UP TO DATE WITH CHANGE ETC. How does this affect your view of DWP? In what way? 	
<p>5. Conclusion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thinking about all the issues we have discussed today, overall, how satisfied would you say you are with the service you receive from DWP? Why do you say this? • And thinking about your answer, what are the most important aspects for you when rating DWP? PROBE FULLY – UNPICK WHETHER IT IS ATTITUDE OF STAFF, EXPERIENCES OF WORKING WITH INDIVIDUAL BUSINESSES, QUALITY OF INFORMATION PROVIDED, TIME TAKEN TO RESOLVE CONTACT AND SO ON. • Do you think this will be the same for all employers? Why do you say this? How might it be different and why? • And finally, what could DWP do to improve how it works with employers? PROBE FULLY. Why do you say this? Why would this make such a difference? • Are there any other issues that you would like to raise? Why is this important to you? • THANK AND CLOSE – EXPLAIN NEXT STEPS. •ASK PERMISSION TO RECONTACT IN CASE NEEDED FOR QUANT SURVEY. 	<p>5 minutes</p>

Appendix B

Questionnaire

DWP Employers Engagement Survey

First pilot revised questionnaire – 17 December 2008

Please note that:

- All answer codes to be read out are in bold
- All interviewer instructions are CAPITALISED

NOTE TO SCRIPT WRITER: IF THE RESPONSIBILITIES (QE) ARE DIVIDED BETWEEN MORE THAN ONE PEOPLE IN THE ORGANISATION, WE'LL ATTEMPT TO INTERVIEW A MAXIMUM OF TWO PEOPLE IN THE SAME ORGANISATION. PLEASE USE SEPARATE INTRODUCTIONS AND SCREENING QUESTIONS FOR PRIMARY AND SECONDARY INTERVIEWS.

INTRODUCTION FOR PRIMARY INTERVIEW:

Good morning/afternoon/evening, my name is ... and I am calling from Ipsos MORI, an independent social research organisation. We are carrying out a survey for a major government department about the dealings employers people have with them.

Can I speak to <INSERT CONTACT NAME> please?

IF NECESSARY: I would need to speak to the person who has the lead responsibility for dealing with recruiting employees, employee legislation and pensions in your organisation?

INTERVIEWER NOTE: IN LARGER ORGANISATIONS, THE PRIMARY ROLE COULD BE SPLIT BETWEEN A FEW DIFFERENT PEOPLE. IN THIS CASE, PLEASE ASK TO SPEAK TO THE HR MANAGER.

INTERVIEWER NOTE: DO NOT REVEAL CLIENT YET – LOOKING FOR AWARENESS OF ACTIVITIES BEFORE TELLING THEM WHO IT IS.

We are conducting a pilot study for a major government department to explore how it communicates with you and how well you think it delivers its services. Because one of the elements we are discussing is awareness, we will let you know which department later in the survey.

Taking part in this survey will help towards assessing and improving if necessary the running of a government department for your and other employers benefit

The survey should only take on average 25 minutes although this will depend on the answers you provide. We guarantee that all your answers will be kept confidential and the government department will not be able to identify any individual from their answers.

NOTE TO SCRIPT WRITER: CONFIRM/UPDATE NAME AND TELEPHONE NUMBER OF NAMED PERSON. PLEASE USE SAME LOOP OF QUESTIONS AS LSC LEARNER INVOLVEMENT PROVIDER LONGITUDINAL SURVEY (J34267PL).

INTRODUCTION FOR INTERVIEW WITH SECONDARY, REFERRED CONTACT

Good morning/afternoon/evening, my name is ... and I am calling from Ipsos MORI, an independent social research organisation. We are carrying out a survey for a government department about the dealings employers people have with them.

Your colleague <INSERT NAME OF PRIMARY CONTACT> mentioned that you are the person responsible for <INSERT ANSWER CHOSEN AT QH> in your organisation.

INTERVIEWER NOTE: DO NOT REVEAL CLIENT YET – LOOKING FOR AWARENESS OF ACTIVITIES BEFORE TELLING THEM WHO IT IS.

We are conducting a pilot study for a major government department to explore how communicates with you and how well you think it delivers its services. Because one of the elements we are discussing is awareness, we will let you know which department later in the survey.

Taking part in this survey will help towards assessing and improving if necessary the running of a government department for your and other employers benefit

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INTRODUCTION FOR INTERVIEW WITH SECONDARY, REFERRED CONTACT

Good morning/afternoon/evening, my name is ... and I am calling from Ipsos MORI, an independent social research organisation. We are carrying out a survey for a government department about the dealings employers people have with them.

Your colleague <INSERT NAME OF PRIMARY CONTACT> mentioned that you are the person responsible for <INSERT ANSWER CHOSEN AT QH> in your organisation.

INTERVIEWER NOTE: DO NOT REVEAL CLIENT YET – LOOKING FOR AWARENESS OF ACTIVITIES BEFORE TELLING THEM WHO IT IS.

We are conducting a pilot study for a major government department to explore how communicates with you and how well you think it delivers its services. Because one of the elements we are discussing is awareness, we will let you know which department later in the survey.

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NOTE TO SCRIPT WRITER: CONFIRM/UPDATE NAME TELEPHONE NUMBER OF NAMED PERSON. PLEASE USE SAME LOOP OF QUESTIONS AS LSC LEARNER INVOLVEMENT PROVIDER LONGITUDINAL SURVEY (J34267PL).

SECTION A1: SCREENING QUESTIONS FOR PRIMARY CONTACT

ASK ALL

QA **Is this workplace...?**

READ OUT

One of a number of workplaces belonging to the same organisation	1
A single independent workplace not belonging to any other organisation	2
Don't know	3
Refused	4

ASK ALL

QB **And can you tell me how many people are there in the organisation as a whole?**

INTERVIEWER NOTE: WE ARE ONLY INTERVIEWING ORGANISATIONS WITH AT LEAST ONE EMPLOYEE. HENCE, IF THERE IS ONLY ONE PERSON IN THE ORGANISATION, WE ASSUME THAT IT IS A SOLE TRADER AND THE INTERVIEW WILL BE TERMINATED.

INTERVIEWER NOTE: IF RESPONDENT IS NOT SURE ASK THEM TO ESTIMATE.

ENTER NUMBER (RANGE 0-100,000)	1	TERMINATE IF <2, OTHERS GO TO QC
Don't know	3	TERMINATE
Refused	4	TERMINATE

IF INTERVIEW TERMINATED: This survey is for the Department and Work and Pensions and asks questions about employers' relationship with the department concerning employment. As a result, we are only interviewing organisations with at least one employee. Thank you very much for your time.

ASK IF ONE OF A NUMBER OF WORKPLACES IN AN ORGANISATION (QA = 1)

QC **Can you tell me how many people are currently employed at this work place?**

INTERVIEWR NOTE: IF RESPONDENT IS NOT SURE ASK THEM TO ESTIMATE.

ENTER NUMBER (RANGE 0-100,000)	1
Don't know	2
Refused	3

ASK ALL

QD **Can I just check, is this workplace...**

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE ONLY.

A branch	1
A division/ subsidiary	2
An area/ regional office	3
The head office	4
A franchised organisation	5
Other (specify)	6
Don't know	7
Refused	8

ASK ALL

QE **Can I just check are you are able to talk about the following in your organisation?**

SINGLE CODE ONLY.

	Yes	No but someone else in organisatio n would be	No and no one else in the organisatio n would be	DK/NA
A Staff recruitment	1	2	3	4
B Staff redundancies	1	2	3	4
C Employee pensions	1	2	3	4
D Ensuring employees enjoy equal opportunities	1	2	3	4
E Career and staff skills development	1	2	3	4
F General employment issues such as helping colleagues balance work and home or paying statutory sick pay	1	2	3	4

G	Providing information to government about your employees, such as National Insurance Number or payroll information	1	2	3	4
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NOTE TO SCRIPT WRITER:

IF CODE 3 / DK TO ALL = TERMINATE INTERVIEW

IF CODE 1 TO ALL = CONTINUE WITH INTERVIEW

IF AT LEAST ONE CODE 1 AND CODE 3 / DK TO REST = CONTINUE WITH INTERVIEW

IF AT LEAST ONE CODE 1 AND AT LEAST ONE CODE 2 = COLLECT CONTACT DETAILS OF PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR OTHER TASKS THEN CONTINUE WITH INTERVIEW → CONTACT DETAILS WILL BE USED FOR SECONDARY INTERVIEW

IF CODE 2 TO ALL = CONTACT DETAILS OF PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR OTHER TASKS AND RESTART INTERVIEW.

IF AT LEAST ONE CODE 2 AND CODE 3/DK TO REST = COLLECT DETAILS OF PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR OTHER TASK AND RESTART INTERVIEW.

TEXT IF TERMINATE: This survey is conducted for the Department for Work and Pensions and we are only interviewing people who are responsible for at least some of these. Thank you for your time.

IF MORE THAN ONE CODE 2 AT, RANDOMLY SELECT ONE OF THEM TO INSERT IN QF.

QF **Could you tell me the name of the person responsible for <ENTER ANSWER CODED AS CODE 2 AT QE> in your organisation please?**

ENTER NAME	1
Don't know	2
Refused	3

IF GIVEN NAME AT QF

QG **Could you tell me his/her direct phone number please?**

ENTER PHONE NUMBER	1
Don't know	2
Refused	3

SECTION A2: SCREENING QUESTION FOR SECONDARY CONTACT
--

SCREENING QUESTION FOR SECONDARY CONTACT

QH **Can I just check if you are responsible for the following?**

READ OUT. MULTICODED.

NOTE TO SCRIPT WRITER: PLEASE ONLY SHOW ANSWERS NOT GIVEN BY PRIMARY CONTACT AT QE (QE = NOT 1)

Staff recruitment	1
Staff redundancies	2
Employee pensions	3
Ensuring employees enjoy equal opportunities	4
Career and staff skills development	5
General employment issues such as helping colleagues balance work and home or paying statutory sick pay	6

Providing information to government about your employees, such as National Insurance Number or payroll information	7	
None of these	8	TERMINATE
Don't know	9	TERMINATE
Refused	10	TERMINATE

IF NONE OF THESE /DK / REFUSED = TERMINATE INTERVIEW

TEXT IF TERMINATE: This survey is conducted for the Department for Work and Pensions and we are only interviewing people who are responsible for at least some of these. Thank you for your time.

NOTE TO SCRIPT WRITER:

PLEASE CREATE DUMMY VARIABLE QRES TO RECORD WHICH TASKS THE RESPONDENT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR (QE = YES OR ANSWER GIVEN AT QH). THIS WILL BE USED FOR TEXT SUBSTITUTION FOR THE REST OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE.

QRES = 1 (Staff recruitment)

QRES = 2 (Staff redundancies)

QRES = 3 (Employee pensions)

QRES = 4 (Ensuring employees enjoy equal opportunities)

QRES = 5 (Career and staff skills development)

QRES = 6 (General employment issues)

QRES = 7 (Providing information to government about your employees)

SECTION B: AWARENESS OF THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF DWP

ASK ALL

Q1 **Do you know which government agencies are responsible for helping employers with...?**

DO NOT READ OUT. MULTI-CODED.

NOTE TO SCRIPT WRITER: ROTATE ORDER OF SERVICES.

	Jobcentre Plus	Pension, Disability and Carers Service	The Department for Work and Pensions	Other (Specify)	Don't know	
A	Staff employment services	1	2	3	4	5
B	Pension provision and legislation	1	2	3	4	5
C	Equal opportunities legislation	1	2	3	4	5
D	Developing employees' skills	1	2	3	4	5

Q2 This survey has been commissioned by the Department of Work and Pensions, or DWP. It provides the services such as the ones I mentioned just now through a number of different businesses like Jobcentre Plus and the Pensions, Disability and Carers Service.

Were you aware that these businesses were part of the Department for Work and Pensions before this interview?

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

SECTION C: EXPERIENCE OF WORKING WITH DWP

ASK ALL

Q3 In the past year, have you...?

READ OUT.

NOTE TO SCRIPT WRITER: ONLY SHOW TASKS RESPONDENT IS RESPONSIBLE AT DUMMY VARIABLE QRES.

	Yes	No	DK
A Recruited new staff to your organisation (SHOW IF QRES = 1)	1	2	3
B Found out about how to recruit a more diverse workforce (SHOW IF QRES = 1)	1	2	3
C Found out about how to provide support for employees who are to be made redundant (SHOW IF QRES = 2)	1	2	3
D Provided a company pension to employees (SHOW IF QRES = 3)	1	2	3
E Provided information on stakeholder pensions (SHOW IF QRES = 3)	1	2	3
F Provided a Combined Pension Forecast for employees (SHOW IF QRES = 3)	1	2	3
G Found out about your responsibilities as an employer with regard to employing disabled people (SHOW IF QRES = 4)	1	2	3
H Found out about your responsibilities as an employer under the Age Discrimination Act (SHOW IF QRES = 4)	1	2	3
I Provided staff development training for employees (SHOW IF QRES = 5)	1	2	3
J Found out about training and upskilling opportunities for your employees (SHOW IF QRES = 5)	1	2	3
K Responded to requests from employees about flexible working policies (SHOW IF QRES = 6)	1	2	3

L	Helped your employees secure National Insurance numbers (SHOW IF QRES = 6)	1	2	3
M	Paid Statutory Maternity Pay (SHOW IF QRES = 6)	1	2	3
N	Paid statutory sick pay (SHOW IF QRES = 6)	1	2	3
O	Had an information request from the DWP to fill in a form with regard to the employment history or salary of an employee, ex-employee or their partner (SHOW IF QRES = 7)	1	2	3

IF Q3 = 'YES' FOR STATEMENTS B, C, G, H, J
ASK IMMEDIATELY AFTER EACH SERVICE AT Q3.

Q4A **Did you get this information from DWP or its agencies?**

IF NECESSARY: **The agencies are the Jobcentre Plus or Pension, Disability and Carers Service?**

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

IF Q3 = 'YES' FOR STATEMENTS A and I
ASK IMMEDIATELY AFTER EACH SERVICE AT Q3.

Q4B **Did you do this through DWP or its agencies?**

IF NECESSARY: **The agencies are the Jobcentre Plus or Pension, Disability and Carers Service.**

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

IF Q3 = 'YES' FOR STATEMENTS D, E, F, K, L, M, N
ASK IMMEDIATELY AFTER EACH SERVICE AT Q3.

Q4C **Did you ask for any information about this from the DWP or its agencies?**

IF NECESSARY: The agencies are the Jobcentre Plus or Pension, Disability and Carers Service.

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

NOTE TO SCRIPT WRITER: PLEASE INSERT DUMMY VARIABLE FOR CONTACT WITH DWP (STATEMENTS A TO N: QDWP = Q3 = YES AND Q4A-C = YES; STATEMENT O: Q3 = YES). LIST IS SAME AS Q7.

- QDWP = 1 Recruited new staff through DWP
 QDWP = 2 Found out about how to recruit a diverse workforce from DWP
 QDWP = 3 Found out about how to provide support for employees who are to be made redundant from DWP
 QDWP = 4 Asked for information on how to provide a company pension to employees from

- DWP
- QDWP = 5 Asked for information on how to provide stakeholder pensions from DWP
- QDWP = 6 Asked for information on how to provide a Combined Pension Forecast for employees using information from DWP
- QDWP = 7 Found out about your responsibilities as an employer with regard to employing disabled people from DWP
- QDWP = 8 Found out about your responsibilities as an employer under the Age Discrimination Act from DWP
- QDWP = 9 Provided staff development training for employees through DWP
- QDWP = 10 Found out about training and upskilling opportunities for your employees from DWP
- QDWP = 11 Asked for information on how to respond to requests from employees about flexible working policies from DWP
- QDWP = 12 Asked for information on how to help your employees secure National Insurance numbers from DWP
- QDWP = 13 Asked for information on how to pay Statutory Maternity Pay from DWP
- QDWP = 14 Asked for information on how to provide statutory sick pay from DWP
- QDWP = 15 Had an information request from the DWP to fill in a form
- QDWP = 16 DO NOT USE ANY DWP SERVICES OR DO NOT KNOW IF THEY USE ANY

Q5 How many times have you contacted ... with a separate query in the past year? By contact I mean...

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE ONLY.

	Once	2 to 4 times	5 to 9 times	10 times or more	No contact	Don't know
A Jobcentre Plus	1	2	3	4	5	6
B The Pension, Disability and Carers Service	1	2	3	4	5	6
C The Department of Work and Pensions (excluding Jobcentre Plus and the Pension, Disability and Carers Service)	1	2	3	4	5	6

IF QDWP = 16 AND Q5_A; Q5_B AND Q5_C=No contact/DK AND HAVE PROVIDED SECONDARY CONTRACT – RESTART INTERVIEW REPLACING SECONDARY CONTACT WITH THIS CONTACT

IF QDWP = 16 AND Q5_A; Q5_B AND Q5_C=No contact/DK AND NOT HAVE PROVIDED SECONDARY CONTRACT – ADD IN LOOP TO COLLECT ALTERNATIVE CONTACT (I.E. ARE YOU AWARE OF ANYONE IN YOUR ORGANISATION WHO HAS HAD CONTACT WITH DWP OR ITS AGENCIES?)

IF UNABLE TO PROVIDE - TERMINATE INTERVIEW OR ADD IN ALTERNATIVE QUESTIONS

ASK IF CONTACTED ANY AGENCIES AT Q5
Q5 = 1-4

Q6 How often do you contact ...? Please include all forms of contact, including the use of the organisation's website.

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE ONLY.

ONLY SHOW IF CONTACTED AGENCY AT Q5

		More than once a week	Once a week	Once every two weeks	Once a month	Once every three month s	Once every six month s	Once a year	Less often	DK
A	Jobcentre Plus	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
B	The Pension, Disability and Carers Service	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
C	The Department of Work and Pensions (excluding Jobcentre Plus and the Pension, Disability and Carers Service)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

IF QDWP=16 AND Q5A, B, C OR D = 1 TO 4 (I.E. THEY HAVE HAD CONTACT BUT NOT FOR ANY OF REASONS SPECIFIED IN Q3) ASK:

Q6B: Can I just check why you contacted <INSERT AS APPROPRIATE FROM Q5>?

REPEAT FOR EACH CONTACTED AT Q5

WRITE IN

GO TO Q18

SECTION D: MOST RECENT CONTACT WITH DWP

ASK IF USE TWO OR MORE DWP SERVICES AT Q4A-C.

QDWP = MORE THAN 1

Q7 **You mentioned that you have <used DWP services (QDWP = 1, 9) (and) asked for information from DWP (QDWP = 2-8, 10-15)>.**

Can I just check which of these have happened most recently?

READ OUT ONLY IF NECESSARY. SINGLE CODE ONLY.

Recruited new staff through DWP	1
Found out about how to recruit a diverse workforce from DWP	2
Found out about how to provide support for employees who are to be made redundant from DWP	3
Asked for information on how to provide a company pension to employees from DWP	4
Asked for information on how to provide stakeholder pensions from DWP	5
Asked for information on how to provide a Combined Pension Forecast for employees	6

using information from DWP	
Found out about your responsibilities as an employer with regard to employing disabled people from DWP	7
Found out about your responsibilities as an employer under the Age Discrimination Act from DWP	8
Provided staff development training for employees through DWP	9
Found out about training and upskilling opportunities for your employees from DWP	10
Asked for information on how to respond to requests from employees about flexible working policies from DWP	11
Asked for information on how to help your employees secure National Insurance numbers from DWP	12
Asked for information on how to pay Statutory Maternity Pay from DWP	13
Asked for information on how to provide statutory sick pay from DWP	14
Had an information request from the DWP to fill in a form	15
Don't know	16

NOTE TO SCRIPT WRITER: IF RESPONDENTS HAVE ONLY USED ONE SERVICE AT Q4A-Q4C, PLEASE BACKCODE THEIR MOST RECENT CONTACT INTO Q7.

ASK ALL WHO KNEW WHAT THEIR MOST RECENT CONTACT WAS ABOUT

Q7 = 1 TO 15

Q8 **Now, I would like you to think about the last time you <INSERT SERVICE AT Q7>.**

How many times did you contact DWP about this issue? This includes the number of the phone calls or face-to-face meetings you have had with DWP staff as well as the number of times you have written to them or access their websites.

ENTER NUMBER

Don't know

IF CONTACT DWP AT LEAST ONCE ABOUT ISSUE

IF Q8 = 1 OR MORE

Q9 **And when <did you/was the last time (TEXT SUB BASED ON NUMBER OF CONTACT AT Q5> you deal with the DWP about this issue?**

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE ONLY.

In the last one or two days	1
In the last week	2
In the last two weeks	3
In the last month	4
In the last three months	5

In the last six months	6
In the last 12 months	7
Don't know	8

IF CONTACT DWP MORE THAN ONCE ABOUT ISSUE

IF Q8 = 2 OR MORE

Q10 **And, thinking back, when was the first time you dealt with DWP about this issue?**

NOTE TO SCRIPT WRITER: ONLY SHOW ANSWERS BEFORE TIME GIVEN AT Q9 (E.G. IF SAY IN THE LAST MONTH (CODE 4), ONLY SHOW CODES 4-7) HERE.

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE ONLY.

In the last one or two days	1
In the last week	2
In the last two weeks	3
In the last month	4
In the last three months	5
In the last six months	6
In the last 12 months	7
Don't know	8

IF CONTACT DWP AT LEAST ONCE ABOUT ISSUE

IF Q8 = 1 OR MORE

Q11 **Which of the following methods have you used to contact DWP the last time you <INSERT SERVICE AT Q7>>?**

READ OUT. MULTICODED.

INTERVIEW NOTE: IF RESPONDENT MENTIONS WEBSITE, ASK WHICH WHETHER IT WAS A DWP WEBSITE.

In person	1
By phone	2
By letter	3
By fax	4
By email	5
By text message	6
DWP's or its agencies' website	9
Other websites	10
Agent or Accountant	11
Professional organisation	12
Other (specify)	13
Don't know	14

IF CONTACT DWP AT LEAST ONCE ABOUT ISSUE

IF Q8 = 1 OR MORE

Q12 **Which of the following best describe the result of your contact with DWP?**

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE ONLY.

Contact reached a conclusion (e.g. service provided or found information looked for)	1
Contact abandoned (e.g. service not received or could not find information)	2
Ongoing contact	3
Don't know	4

SECTION E: RATING OF MOST RECENT CONTACT WITH DWP

IF CONTACT DWP AT LEAST ONCE ABOUT ISSUE

IF Q8 = 1 OR MORE

Q13 **Overall, how would you rate your most recent contact with DWP? Would you say it was...**

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE ONLY.

Very good	1
Fairly good	2
Neither good nor bad	3
Fairly poor	4
Very poor	5
Don't know	6

IF CONTACT DWP AT LEAST ONCE ABOUT ISSUE

IF Q8 = 1 OR MORE

Q14 **To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your most recent contact with the DWP? Is that strongly or tend to agree/disagree?**

SINGLE CODE ONLY. ROTATE ORDER.

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Not applicable	Don't know
A DWP communicates with me in a way I can understand	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B DWP were efficient in dealing with my enquiry	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
C DWP understands the needs of my business	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

IF CONTACT DWP AT LEAST ONCE ABOUT ISSUE AND CONTACT IS NOT ONGOING

IF Q8 = 1 OR MORE AND Q12 = 1 OR 2

Q15 **How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the final outcome of your most recent contact with DWP? Is that very or fairly?**

SINGLE CODE ONLY.

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

IF CONTACT DWP AT LEAST ONCE ABOUT ISSUE

IF Q5 = 1 OR MORE

Q16 **Based on your experience, how much do you agree or disagree that the service you received from DWP during your most recent contact fully met your needs?**

SINGLE CODE ONLY

Strongly agree	1
Tend to agree	2
Neither agree nor disagree	3
Tend to disagree	4
Strongly disagree	5
Don't know	6

IF CONTACT DWP AT LEAST ONCE ABOUT ISSUE

IF Q5 = 1 OR MORE

Q17 **Thinking about your most recent dealings with DWP, would you say the service you received was better than you expected, worse than you expected, or in line with your expectations?**

SINGLE CODE ONLY.

Better	1
Worse	2
In line with expectations	3
Don't know	4

SECTION F: Jobcentre Plus

Text: In the rest of this interview, we would like you to think about all the contact you had with DWP, not just your most recent contact.

IF CONTACTED JOBCENTRE PLUS IN THE LAST YEAR

IF Q5_A= 1 TO 4

Q18 **You mentioned that you used Jobcentre Plus in the last year. For any of the following, have you worked in partnership with JCP, or used these JCP services or products?**

READ OUT. MULTICODED.

Vacancies advertising service – Employer Direct Online	1
Vacancies advertising service – Over the phone	2
Recruitment Advisory Services to help you fill your vacancies	3
Candidate screening service	4
Local Employment Partnerships	5
Work Trials	6
New Deal	7
Access to Work	8
Job Introduction Scheme	9

With your account manager	10
Other (Specify)	11
None of the above	12
Don't know	13

ASK IF CONTACTED JOBCENTRE PLUS IN THE LAST YEAR

Q18 = 1-11

Q19 **Why did you choose to use services provided by the Jobcentre Plus?**

DO NOT READ OUT. MULTICODED.

A large pool of candidates	1
Candidates with skills that matched what we needed	2
Speed with which they could provide candidates	3
Services were free	4
The staff knew the types of candidates we were looking for	5
To attract a more diverse workforce	6
Good services	7
Heard from another employer	8
They are local to us	9
Corporate Social Responsibility reasons	10
Advised to use them by internal colleagues	11
Other (specify)	12
Don't know	13

IF USED JOBCENTRE PLUS TO RECRUIT STAFF IN THE LAST YEAR

QDWP = 1

Q20 **To what extent are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the following aspects of Jobcentre Plus recruitment service? Is that very or fairly satisfied/dissatisfied?**

SINGLE CODE ONLY. ROTATE ORDER.

	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know
A The extent to which the skills of candidates from Jobcentre Plus matches my needs	1	2	3	4	5	6
B The number of candidates from Jobcentre Plus	1	2	3	4	5	6
C That the candidates met the requirements of my vacancy	1	2	3	4	5	6

IF USED JOBCENTRE PLUS TO RECRUIT STAFF IN THE LAST YEAR
 QDWP = 1

Q21 **When you think about how the skills of candidates match your needs, which factors do you consider?**

DO NOT READ OUT. MULTICODED.

Having the right skills	1
Being able to start immediately	2
Having the right attitude	3
Having people who would not normally apply	4
Having people an employer is able to train	5
Having the right experience	6
Factors vary depending on role	7
Other (specify)	8
Don't know	9

SECTION G: Pension, Disability and Carers Service

IF CONTACTED PDCS AT LEAST ONCE IN THE LAST YEAR
 Q5_B = 1 TO 4

Q22 **You mentioned that you have contacted the Pension, Disability and Carers Service at least once in the last year. Why did you choose to use its services?**

DO NOT READ OUT. MULTICODED.

It offers credible advice on pensions	1
I wanted to be seen as a good employer	2
It provides a free service	3
It provides a good service	4
Another employer recommended its services	5
My employees encouraged me to contact the PDCS	6
To prepare my organisation for forthcoming workplace pension reforms	7
It seemed like the logical place to go to	8
Other (specify)	9
Don't know	10

SECTION H: Rating of DWP overall and advocacy

ASK ALL

Q24 **Thinking about all your contact with DWP and its agencies, can I just check whether you have any direct contact with DWP staff, either face-to-face, on the phone or by email, in the last year?**

A

SINGLE CODE ONLY

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

ASK IF HAVE DIRECT CONTACT WITH DWP STAFF

Q24 = 1

Q24 **Thinking about the DWP staff you communicated with over the last year or so, to what extent are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the following aspects? Is that very or fairly satisfied/dissatisfied?**

SINGLE CODE. ROTATE STATEMENTS.

	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know	Not applicable
A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
C	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
E	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
F	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
G	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
H	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
J	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
L	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
M	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

ASK IF RECEIVED INFORMATION FROM DWP

QDWP = 1-15

Q25 **Now, thinking about the guidance you received <from DWP staff and other DWP sources (Q24A = 1)/from other DWP sources (Q24A = 2 or 3)> how satisfied or dissatisfied were you that you...?**

SINGLE CODE. ROTATE STATEMENTS.

	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know
A	1	2	3	4	5	6
B	1	2	3	4	5	6
C	1	2	3	4	5	6
D	1	2	3	4	5	6
E	1	2	3	4	5	6
F	1	2	3	4	5	6

ASK ALL

Q26 **Thinking more generally, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Is that strongly or tend to agree/disagree?**

SINGLE CODE ONLY. ROTATE STATEMENT.

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
A	1	2	3	4	5	6
B	1	2	3	4	5	6
C	1	2	3	4	5	6
D	1	2	3	4	5	6
E	1	2	3	4	5	6
F	1	2	3	4	5	6
G	1	2	3	4	5	6
H	1	2	3	4	5	6

ASK ALL

Q27 **What standard of service did you expect to receive when dealing with DWP and its agencies? Would you say you expected a good or poor service?**

PROBE ON FAIRLY, VERY OR ABSOLUTELY PERFECT/EXTREMELY POOR etc.

SINGLE CODE ONLY

An absolutely perfect service	1
A very good service	2
A fairly good service	3
Neither expect a good nor poor service	4
A fairly poor service	5
A very poor service	6
An extremely poor service	7
Don't know	8
No expectations	9

ASK ALL

Q28 **Thinking about your experiences with DWP and its agencies over the last year as a whole, how good a service have you actually received?**

ASK ALL. SINGLE CODE ONLY

An absolutely perfect service	1
A very good service	2
A fairly good service	3
Neither expect a good nor poor service	4
A fairly poor service	5
A very poor service	6
An extremely poor service	7
Don't know	8

ASK ALL

Q29 **Would you say the quality of service you receive from DWP and its agencies has got better or worse over the last year, or has it stayed the same?**

SINGLE CODE ONLY

Better	1
Worse	2
Stayed the same	3
Don't know/ no opinion	4

IF Q29 = NOT 4

Q29 **Why do you say it is <better/worse/the same>?**

A

OPEN ENDED	1
Don't know	2

ASK ALL

Q30 **If asked by another employer, would you speak highly or critically about DWP and its agencies?**

SINGLE CODE ONLY

I think so much of them that I would speak highly of them without being asked	1
I would definitely speak highly of them if someone asked my opinion	2
I would be neutral if someone asked my opinion	3
I would be critical of them if someone asked my opinion	4
I would be critical of them without being asked	5
Don't know/ no opinion	6

ASK ALL

Q31 **Do you think that the current economic climate will make you more or less likely to use DWP or its agencies in the next year?**

ASK ALL. SINGLE CODE ONLY

More likely	1
About the same	2
Less likely	3
Don't know	4

ASK ALL

Q32 **Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the service provided by DWP over the past year?**

ASK ALL. SINGLE CODE ONLY

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

SECTION H: About your organisation

ASK ALL

Q33 **For how long has this business been trading?**

CODE TO SCALE OR READ OUT IF NECESSARY. SINGLE CODE ONLY.

IF UNSURE, PROBE FOR ESTIMATE

Less than 6 months	1
Between 6 months and a year	2
Between 1 and 2 years	3
2 – 5 years	4

5-10 years	5
10 or more years	6
Don't know	7
Refused	8

ASK ALL

Q34 **Which of the following categories best describes the business or activities of your organisation?**

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE ONLY.

Agriculture or fishing	1
Mining, electricity or gas and water supply	2
Manufacturing	3
Construction	4
Wholesale and retail trade	5
Hotels and restaurants	6
Transport, storage and communication	7
Real estate, Renting or Business Activities	8
Public sector	9
Education	10
Health and social work	11
Other Services	12
Other (Specify)	13
Don't know	14

ASK ALL

Q35 **Roughly, what is your firm's annual turnover before tax?**

READ OUT ONLY IF NECESSARY.

Less than £15,000	1
Over £15,000 but less than £59,999	2
Between £60,000 and £150,000	3
Over £150,000 but not more than £250,000	4
Over £250,000 but not more than £500,000	5
Over £500,000 but not more than £660,000	6
Over £660,000 but not more than £1million	7
Over £1million but not more than £1.5million	8
Over £1.5million but not more than £2million	9
Over £2million but not more than £3million	10
Over £3million but not more than £4million	11
Over £4million but not more than £5million	12
Over £5million but not more than £6million	13
Over £6million but not more than £7million	14
Over £7million	15

Don't know	16
Unable to provide (public sector or not for profit)	17
Refused	18

ASK ALL

Q36 **Could you tell me what your position or job title is please?**
DO NOT READ OUT. SINGLE CODE ONLY.

Chief Accountant	1
Chief Finance Officer	2
Company Accountant	3
Company Secretary	4
Finance manager/ Director	5
General manager	6
Human resources/ personnel manager	7
Management Accountant	8
Owner/ proprietor	9
Payroll or Deputy Payroll Manager	10
Supervisor	11
Tax manager	12
Other (specify)	13
Refused	14

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