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JUSTICE

HM Courts Service

Court User Survey 2009-10

Ministry of Justice

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Executive summary

This report presents the results from the year four (2009-2010) of Her Majesty's Courts Service (HMCS) Court User Survey. This survey provides robust measures of user satisfaction across different service areas whilst identifying key drivers for further improvements.

Findings in this report are based on responses from 8,832 interviews conducted across all jurisdictions between May 2009 and March 2010. Like the results for year three, data for year four has been weighted to match the profiles of year two (the baseline year for the survey) across key variables at an area level. This increases the validity of trends over time.

Overall satisfaction with the court experience

The large majority of court users continue to express satisfaction with their overall court experience (82 per cent satisfied in year four), with 40 per cent saying they are 'very' satisfied. These levels are consistent with the baseline year two findings, though the proportion who are 'very' satisfied has fallen slightly over the past year (down two percentage points from 42 per cent). Fewer than one in ten (8 per cent) express dissatisfaction, consistent with both the baseline year two and year three figures.

As in previous years, there are major differences in overall satisfaction levels across user types and court types. These reflect the different types of engagement and business that courts/users are involved. For example, professional users are significantly more likely to be satisfied than public users (amongst whom, witnesses, victims, defendants and those in court to support a friend or relative are the least positive about their experiences). Civil courts record the highest levels of satisfaction and magistrates' courts the lowest.

Slightly fewer users say that the experience was better than they had expected it to be (23 per cent in year four, compared to 25 per cent in the year two baseline), though still the large majority say it was in line with what they expected (64 per cent).

Satisfaction with the wider justice system has not changed amongst court users over the four years of the survey, with just under half continuing to express satisfaction (47 per cent in year four). As in previous years, the more satisfied a user is with their court experience, then the more likely they are to express satisfaction with the wider justice system.

What is driving overall satisfaction?

Further analysis of the data can identify the issues which have the biggest impact on users' overall views of their court experience. As in previous years, waiting times and staff are the strongest drivers of overall satisfaction, particularly the time waited for the case to be dealt with, being treated fairly and sensitively by court staff, staff being able to respond promptly to queries, and staff keeping users informed of reasons for delays. Similar factors have the largest impact on the proportions of 'very' satisfied users.

Having information available about court procedures and facilities also has a significant role to play in users' overall experiences. There are notable variations in the importance of different factors in influencing the views of different groups; convenience of sitting/opening times emerges as a key factor for professional users (but not public users), whilst information on procedures and facilities is particularly likely to influence the overall perceptions of defendants.

Pre-court experience

Around one in three (35 per cent) public court users say they were contacted by the court prior to arrival, the large majority of them via letter (78 per cent). The level and methods of pre-court contact are consistent with previous years, as are the variations by court type, with those attending civil courts most likely to have been contacted and those attending Crown Court least likely.

Findings show that it is not this contact in itself that appears to make users more confident what to expect, but satisfaction with the information provided.

Overall, however, the majority of users are satisfied with the information provided before arriving at the court, as well as with the hearing/trial taking place when they were told it would.

Experiences at court (Key Service Areas)

Accessibility issues continue to be generally well rated, with the proportions who are 'very' satisfied having stabilised following improvements between years two and three. Professional users are more likely to express satisfaction than public users, which presumably reflects their generally greater familiarity with court buildings, staff and schedules.

There have been increases since the year two baseline in the proportions 'very' satisfied with **waiting times** both at the public counter/reception and for the case to be dealt with on the day (both up two percentage points in year four, compared to year two). That said, overall satisfaction ratings (i.e. those very or fairly satisfied) remain consistent with the baseline across all aspects of waiting times.

Similarly, ratings of all factors relating to both **information provided by the court** and **court staff** have remained consistent since the year two baseline, both in terms of overall satisfaction and the proportions who are 'very' satisfied.

Whilst the proportions of users who are 'very' satisfied with some aspects of the **court environment and facilities** have increased since the baseline – for example, refreshments, availability of discussion rooms, separate waiting areas, cleanliness and facilities taking into account particular needs – again, overall satisfaction levels (very/fairly satisfied) have remained consistent.

Improving the court experience

The key drivers analysis (see chapter 3) and respondents' own ranking of service areas highlight the importance of waiting times in influencing users' satisfaction with the court experience; it is consistently prioritised as the most important issue by some

margin across survey years and across user types. As in previous years, users tend to attach fairly similar weight to other aspects of service when asked directly about their importance.

Professional users tend to place greater emphasis on accessibility and the court environment than public users.

Over half (58 per cent) of respondents in year four did not make a specific suggestion for how the court experience could have been improved, which partly reflects the high levels of user satisfaction overall. As in previous years, those who do make suggestions tend to focus on the court environment/facilities.

Differences in users' experiences

It is important to recognise that different types of user are more or less likely to include particular demographic subgroups; for example, men are more likely than women to be defendants and/or victims, whilst women are more likely than men to be at court in a supportive role; those aged 16-34 are disproportionately less likely to be at court in a professional role, whilst black respondents are disproportionately more likely to be in court as a defendant and less likely to be a professional user.

Variations in satisfaction by user type may be reflected in differences by demographics – although the demographic difference in itself may not be a reason for the variations – and, therefore, differences across demographic groups must be interpreted accordingly.

There are also variations in user experience across court type. Differences on individual survey measures by court type are reflected in the overall satisfaction pattern by jurisdiction, with ratings in civil and family courts tending to be higher than in Crown and magistrates' courts.

Courts clearly deal with a range of different types of business which will impact upon relative levels of user satisfaction. However, local areas and regions will still benefit from using the findings to identify which groups/areas are most satisfied with relevant aspects of service and learning from examples of good practice.

1. Introduction

Background

This report presents the results from year four (2009-2010) of Her Majesty's Courts Service (HMCS) Court User Survey. This survey provides robust measures of user satisfaction across different service areas whilst identifying key drivers for further improvements.

The main element of the research involves interviewing both professional and public court users as they exit court buildings (this is referred to as the 'exit survey') and this report focuses solely on the findings from these interviews.

Benchmarking and survey objectives

HMCS has used the exit survey results to monitor court user satisfaction and to inform areas for improvement. Performance is principally monitored relative to the year two results, which constitute the baseline year for the survey and which provides the basis for weighting of results (see next subsection) to ensure comparability of data between years. The results for year four build upon those from previous years and identify key trends over time and explore differences by user type.

Methodology

Below is a brief overview of the methodology for the exit survey. Full details can be found in a separate year four technical note. Fieldwork for year four of the Court User Survey ran from 1 May 2009 to 31 March 2010. Findings are compared to those from previous years:

- Year one of the survey for which fieldwork ran over a shorter period, between 16th January to 15th May 2007
- Year two for which fieldwork ran between 1st May 2007 to 28th March 2008
- Year three with a fieldwork period from 1st May 2008 to 7th April 2009.

Ipsos MORI interviewers attended court buildings across all jurisdictions to interview users as they left the relevant building. Respondents were approached at random, though 'public' users were prioritised over 'professional' users where possible. Public users are those who are not attending the court in a professional capacity. These include defendants, victims, witnesses, those supporting friends or relatives, and those viewing cases or searching records. Professional users are comprised of solicitors, barristers, police officers and other legal executives. Survey respondents are shown a list of possible reasons for attending court and select the most appropriate, so defining themselves as being in court in a professional capacity or not. The questionnaire within the appendices includes the full list of categories.

A total of 8,832 interviews were carried out with users across 376 courts (though findings in this report are typically based on slightly fewer completed interviews since 'not applicable' and 'not stated' responses have been removed from the final figures for each question in line with previous analysis of court user data). This compares against 12,987 interviews carried out with court users in year three of the survey,

11,519 interviews carried out with court users in year two and 5,122 completed questionnaires in year one (which ran for a shorter period of time). The fewer interviews in year four (compared to years two and three) is due to a reduction in overall interviewer days rather than any reduction in the number of interviews achieved per day (indeed, the number of interviews per day increased slightly in year four). An indicative response rate of 50 per cent is based on interviewer records.

A full breakdown of the sample across all survey years is included in the technical note. This shows the numbers of interviews achieved by court type, area and region across the survey years.

Weighting has been applied to findings from years one, three and four to increase the validity of trends from year two (the baseline year). Weighting was applied to the data for years one and three in the 2008/09 published report (which released results for year three for the first time); therefore figures in this report for years prior to 2009/10 are consistent with those in the year three report. Data has been weighted at an HMCS area level to be consistent with the year two baseline profiles across key factors that have been proven to impact upon key survey results:

- court type: magistrates versus non-magistrates
- user type: public versus professional users
- satisfaction with outcome: satisfied versus dissatisfied versus neutral

Interpretation of data

When interpreting the findings of the survey, it is important to remember that the results are based on the **sample** of respondents who took part in the survey and not the entire population of court users in England and Wales. Consequently, results are subject to sampling tolerances, and not all differences between sub-groups will be **statistically significant**. For example, on a question where 50 per cent of the people in a sample of 8,832 respond with a particular answer, the chances are 95 in 100 that this result would not vary more than plus or minus one per cent from the result that would have been obtained from a census of all users (using the same procedures). While this is the case it should be noted that we are **assuming** the sample is a random selection of all court users in these calculations.

In the 'Differences in users' experiences' chapter of the report we highlight differences between demographic sub-groups of respondents – on the basis of, for example, age, gender, and ethnicity. Differences are only commented on where they are statistically significant. Throughout this report, comparisons are made between results across different 'court types' or jurisdictions. A respondent is typically matched to a court type depending on how they have answered a survey question (which asks, 'which type of court did you attend today'). We sometimes also refer to the organisational jurisdiction of the court where the interviewer was located using classification information provided by HMCS though this is sometimes problematic where courts of different jurisdictions are co-located.

Where percentages in the charts or tables in the report do not add up to 100 per cent, it is due to multiple answers, computer rounding and/or the exclusion of neutral responses. All findings exclude those who stated "not applicable" or who did not

provide any response. Throughout the report an asterisk (*) denotes any value less than a half of one per cent.

Future publication of data

Year four (2009/10) constituted the last year of fieldwork of this survey.

2. Overall satisfaction with the court experience

The large majority of court users continue to express satisfaction with their overall court experience (82 per cent satisfied in year four), with 40 per cent saying they are 'very' satisfied. These levels are consistent with the baseline year two findings, though the proportion who are 'very' satisfied has fallen slightly over the past year (down two percentage points from 42 per cent). Fewer than one in ten (8 per cent) express dissatisfaction, consistent with both the baseline year two and year three figures.

As in previous years, there are major differences in overall satisfaction levels across user types and court types. These reflect the different types of engagement and business that courts/users are involved in. For example, professional users are significantly more likely to be satisfied than public users (amongst whom, witnesses, victims, defendants and those in court to support a friend or relative are the least positive about their experiences). Civil courts record the highest levels of satisfaction and magistrates' courts the lowest.

Slightly fewer users say that the experience was better than they had expected it to be (23 per cent in year four, compared to 25 per cent in the year two baseline), though still the large majority say it was in line with what they expected (64 per cent).

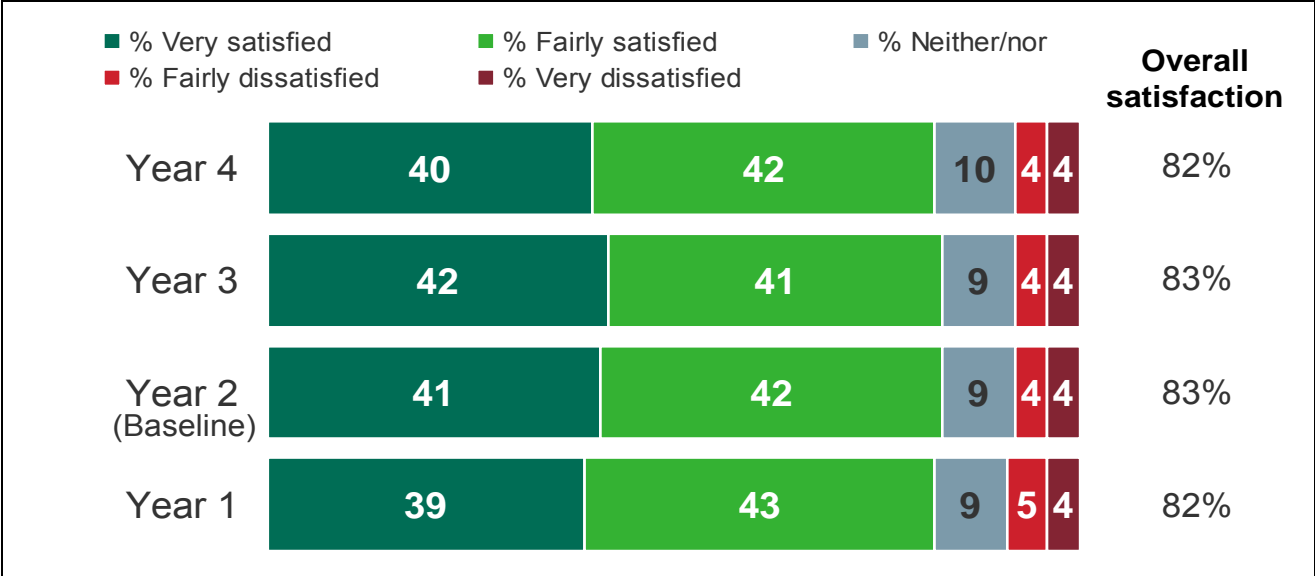
Satisfaction with the wider justice system has not changed amongst court users over the four years of the survey, with just under half continuing to express satisfaction (47 per cent in year four). As in previous years, the more satisfied a user is with their court experience, then the more likely they are to express satisfaction with the wider justice system.

Trends over time

Overall satisfaction levels with the court experience have remained consistent over the four survey years, with just over eight in ten saying they are either very or fairly satisfied (82 per cent in year 4). Mirroring findings from previous years of the survey, fewer than one in ten court users express dissatisfaction (8 per cent). The proportion of those who are 'very' satisfied has varied slightly more although again has stayed broadly in line. The gains made from year two to three (up from 41 per cent to 42 per cent) have not been seen from year three to four (down two percentage points to 40 per cent 'very' satisfied). Therefore, the proportion of those 'very' satisfied in year four remains in line with the baseline findings in year two (at one percentage point the difference is not statistically significant).

Overall satisfaction with experience graph

Disregarding the outcome of your visit, or the result of your case, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you generally with your experience?



- Year four data recorded between 1 May 2009 – 31 March 2010; Base: all valid responses (8,616)
- Year three data recorded between 1 May 2008 – 7 April 2009; Base: all valid responses (12,856)
- Year two data recorded between 1 May 2007 – 28 March 2008; Base: all valid data responses (11,400)
- Year one data recorded between 16 January – 15 May 2007; Base: all valid data responses (5,069)

Changes in key service areas

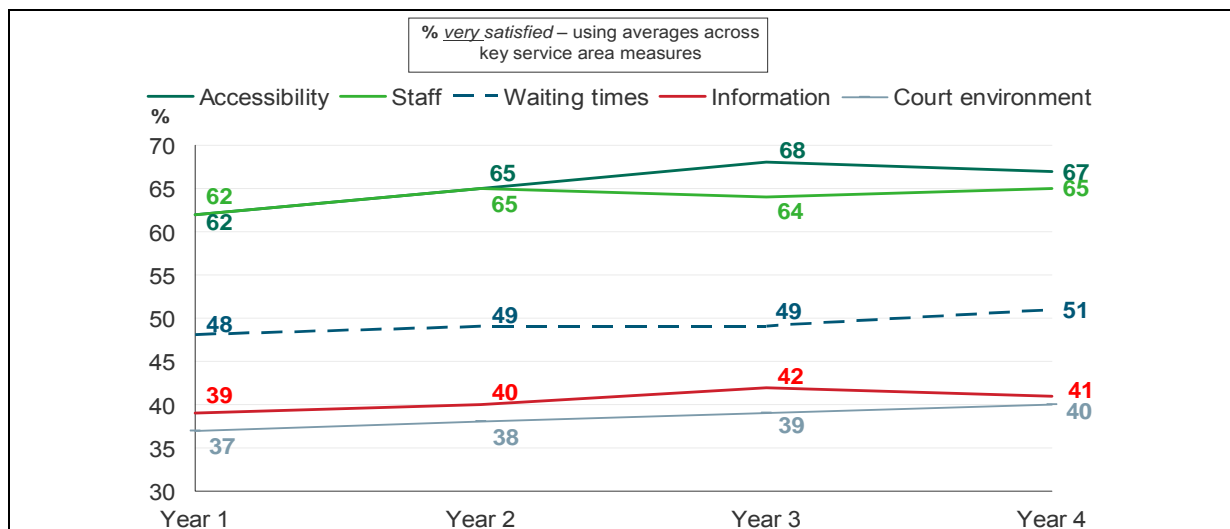
Questions in the survey are structured within the key service areas and by taking average ratings from the questions within an area it is possible to obtain a broad indication of overall ratings across service areas.

- On the whole court users are satisfied with the **accessibility of courts**. Satisfaction levels with the convenience of the sitting/opening times, how easy it is to find the building, and the extent to which the staff are easily identifiable and available to deal with queries have shown significant improvements since the baseline survey in year two and all are consistent with findings from year three.
- There has been some upward trend in those ‘very’ satisfied with **waiting times** (using an average score across the time waited at the public counter/reception, the time waited for the court or its staff to deal with their case and being kept informed of any reasons for any delay to the case) over the four survey years, though overall satisfaction (very/fairly satisfied) is consistent with the baseline findings.

- Satisfaction levels with **information provided by the court** have remained broadly in line over the survey years; the majority of court users are satisfied with both the information available regarding court procedures and facilities and the forms being clear and easy to understand.
- Satisfaction levels with **court staff** have also remained consistent over time. The vast majority of users are satisfied overall (i.e. very or fairly satisfied) with the ability of staff to respond and deal with queries there and then and with staff treating them fairly and sensitively.
- As with previous survey years levels of satisfaction with **court environment and facilities** vary the most. These have been positive gains over the last year and there has been a steady upward trend over the past four years.

The trends in those who are 'very' satisfied with each area (using average ratings across relevant survey questions) are shown in the following chart and perceptions across key service areas are discussed in more detail in chapter 5.

Trends in satisfaction with key service areas graph



- Year four weighted data recorded between 1 May 2009 – 31 March 2010. Based on question aggregates. Base varies.
- Year three weighted data recorded between 1 May 2008 – 7 April 2009. Based on question aggregates. Base varies.
- Year two data recorded between 1 May 2007 – 28 March 2008. Based on question aggregates. Base varies.
- Year one weighted data recorded between 16 January 2007 – 15 March 2010. Based on question aggregates. Base varies.

Overall satisfaction trends by user type

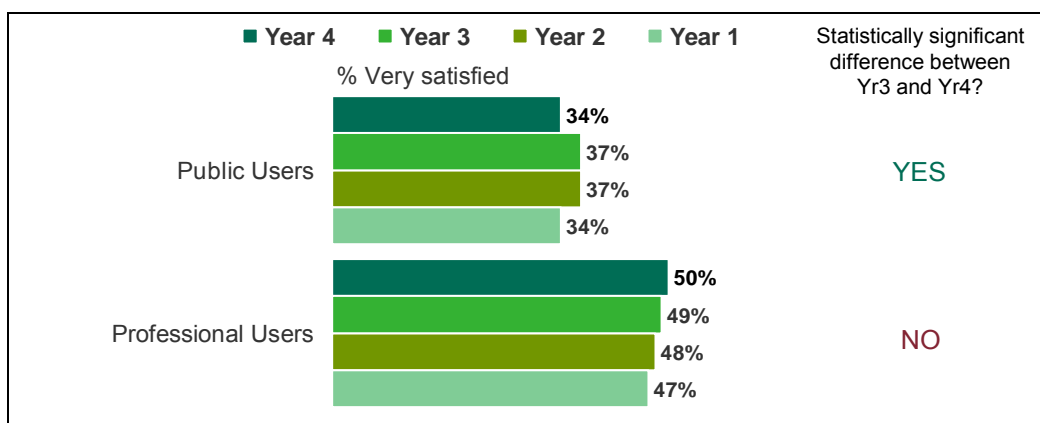
In line with previous years, professional users are significantly more likely to be 'very' satisfied than public users with their experience at court (50 per cent and 34 per cent

'very' satisfied respectively) and also satisfied overall (90 per cent and 77 per cent respectively).

Whilst the proportion of professional users saying they are 'very' satisfied has seen an upward trend over the four years, satisfaction levels among public users has decreased from years two and three (down four percentage points from 37 per cent to 34 per cent and now in line with year one).

Public and professional users

Disregarding the outcome of your visit, or the result of your case, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you generally with your experience today?



- Year four weighted data recorded between 1 May 2009 – 31 March 2010. Base: 8,616
- Year three weighted data recorded between 1 May 2008 – 7 April 2009. Base: 12,761
- Year two data recorded between 1 May 2007 – 28 March 2008. Base: 11,400
- Year one weighted data recorded between 16 January 2007 – 15 March 2010. Base: 5,069

The following table shows satisfaction levels among public court users broken down by reasons for attendance at court. As in previous years, defendants, victims, witnesses and those supporting a friend or relative are the least 'very' satisfied with their court experience.

Satisfaction by user type (Year 3 versus Year 4)				
User type	Percentage 'very' satisfied		Percentage satisfied (very and fairly satisfied combined)	
	Year 3	Year 4	Year 3	Year 4
Public				
Make a payment/pay a fee	52	46	87	86
Pre court visit	46	45	80	77
Appear as a party in a case	38	35	79	82
Witness	32	27	81	80
Defendant	30	26	72	71
Victim	27	27	71	82
Supporting friend/relative	24	24	71	70
Source: Ipsos MORI				

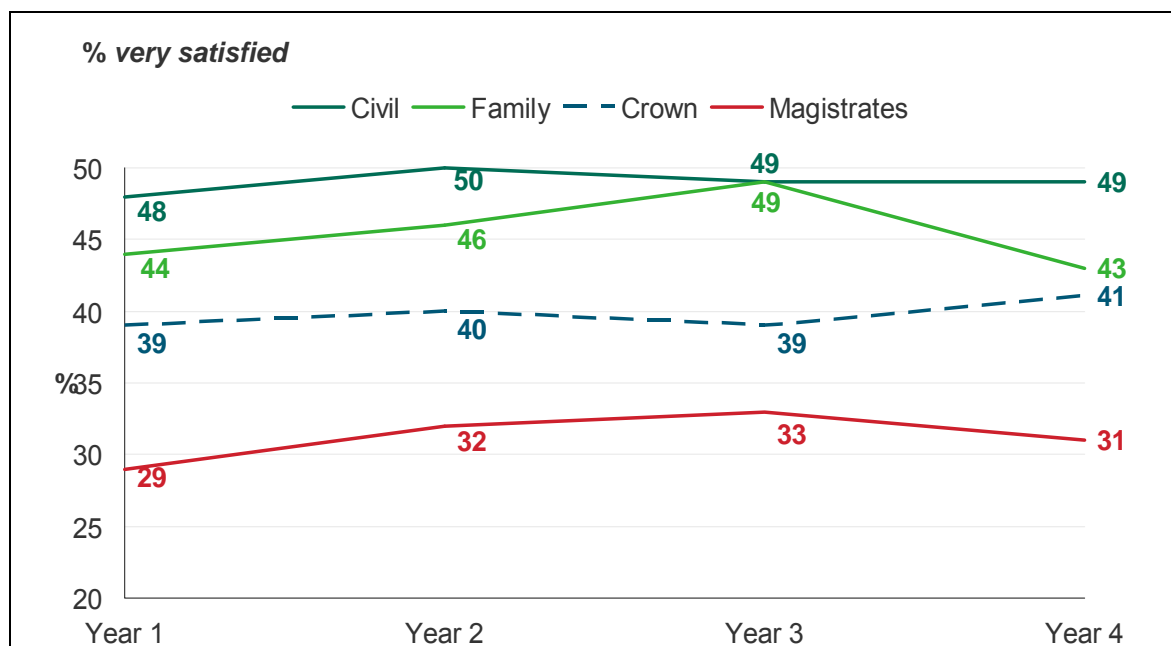
Overall satisfaction trends by court type and case type

Mirroring findings from previous survey years, civil court users remain the most satisfied of all users with their experience at court (49 per cent 'very' satisfied compared to 40 per cent on average). Those attending magistrates' courts continue to remain the least satisfied (31 per cent).¹

The only statistically significant change in the proportion 'very' satisfied over the past year has been among users of family courts, although satisfaction levels remain broadly in line with the year two baseline survey.

¹ As with previous years these definitions of court user type are based on how respondents classify themselves during the interview. It is worth noting that satisfaction ratings are additionally broken down by court type as pre-defined in the sample frame (i.e. based on the type of court where interviewers are told to interview). However, we have not used this information to analyse findings in this report because some of the definitions of court type (in particular RCJ) have changed over the course of the three years and therefore cannot be compared on a like-for-like basis across years.

Satisfaction by court type (defined by users)



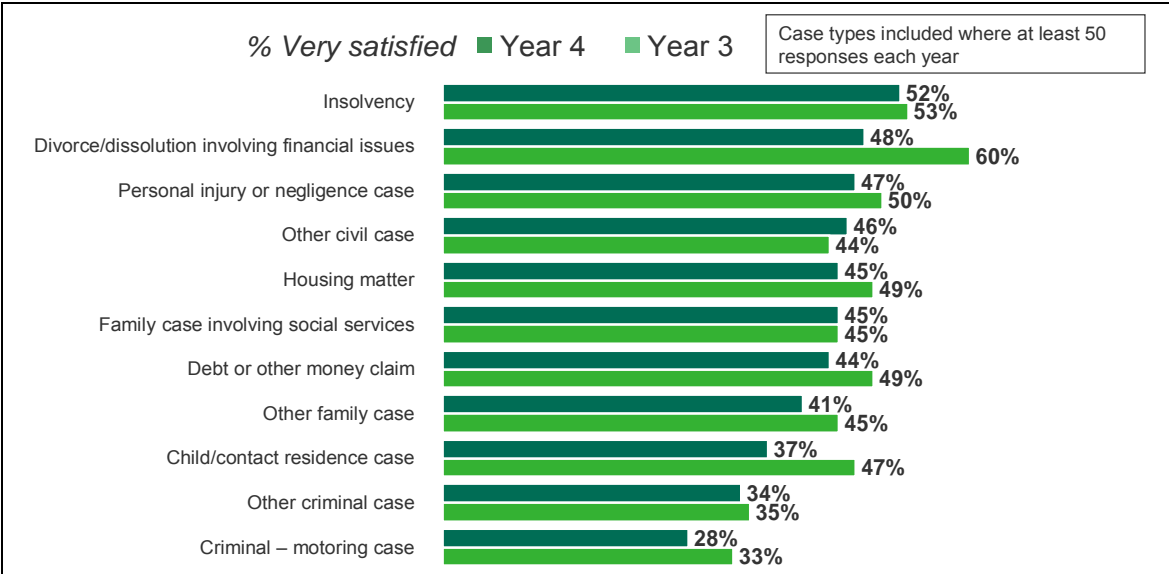
- Year four data recorded between 1 May 2009 – 31 March 2010; Base: all valid responses (8,616); civil court (1,407), family court (1,114), Crown Court (1,419), magistrates' court (3,338)
- Year three data recorded between 1 May 2008 – 7 April 2009; Base: all valid responses (12,761)
- Year two data recorded between 1 May 2007 – 28 March 2008; Base: all valid data responses (11,400)
- Year one data recorded between 16 January – 15 May 2007; Base: all valid data responses (5,069)

Those who attended court for insolvency cases² are the most likely to say that they are 'very' satisfied with the experience received at court (52%). In contrast, those attending court regarding criminal cases, particularly motoring cases, remain the least likely to be very satisfied (28%).

² It is worth bearing in mind that case type is self-defined by users when asked about the purpose of their visit.

Satisfaction by case type

Disregarding the outcome of your visit, or the result of your case, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you generally with your experience?



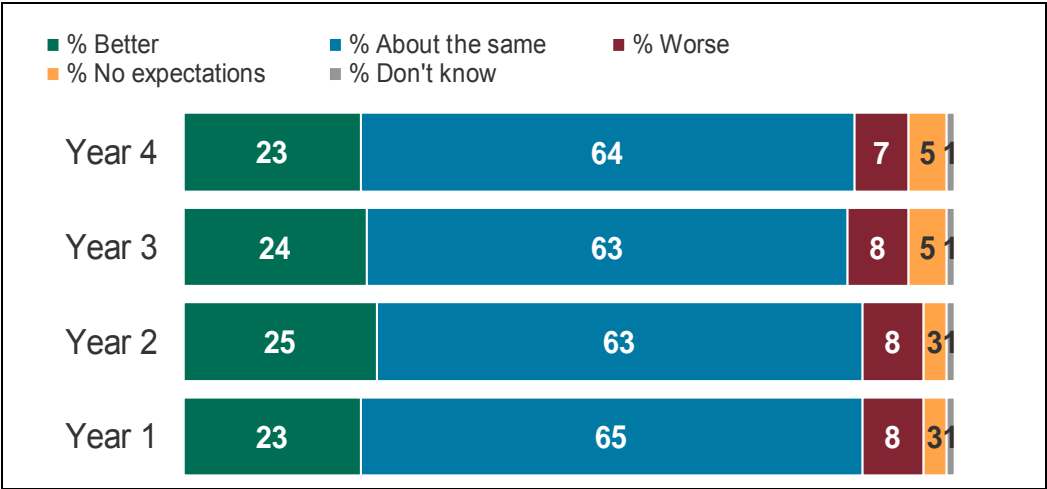
- Year four data recorded between 1 May 2009 – 31 March 2010; Base: all valid responses (8,616)
- Year three data recorded between 1 May 2008 – 7 April 2009; Base: all valid responses (12,761)

Trends in user expectations

Expectations among court users have shown little change over time, with around two thirds continuing to say that they feel their experience had been about the same as expected (64 per cent - in line with 63 per cent recorded in years two and three). Just under a quarter of court users say that their experience was better than they expected, with only 7 per cent saying that it was worse than expected. As with previous years, a small minority were unsure what to expect beforehand (5 per cent).

Comparing court expectations of all users

Has your experience today been better, worse or about the same as you expected it to be?



- Year four data recorded between 1 May 2009 – 31 March 2010; Base: all valid responses (8,742)
- Year three data recorded between 1 May 2008 – 7 April 2009; Base: all valid responses (12,848)
- Year two data recorded between 1 May 2007 – 28 March 2008; Base: all valid data responses (11,473)
- Year one data recorded between 16 January – 15 May 2007; Base: all valid data responses (5,101)

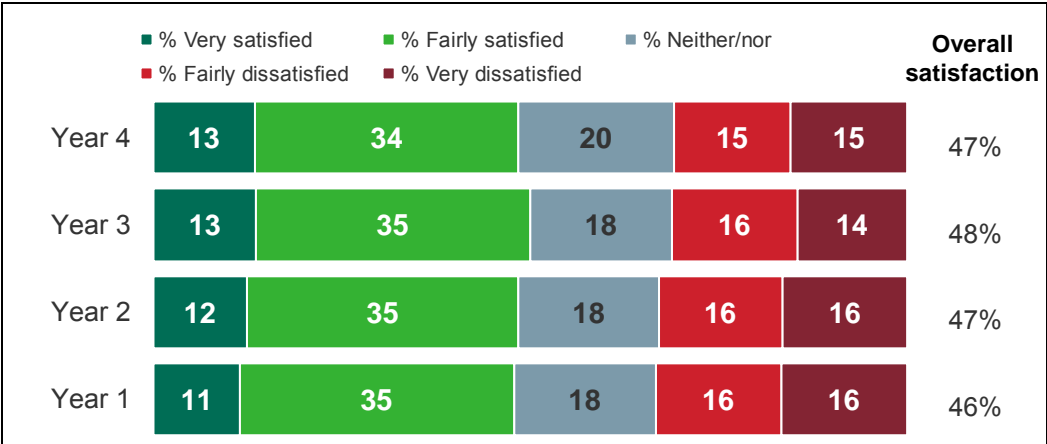
Those attending civil courts and public users, notably victims are more likely than average to say that their court experience was better than they expected (27 per cent, 27 per cent and 43 per cent respectively). In contrast, magistrate court users and witnesses are more likely to express that their experience was worse than expected (9 per cent and 12 per cent compared to 7 per cent on average). Unsurprisingly, those who are dissatisfied with the outcome of their visit/case are also significantly more likely to say that their experience was worse than expected (34 per cent compared to 7 per cent overall).

Trends in satisfaction with the justice system as a whole

Consistent with findings from previous years, just under half of all court users are satisfied with the justice system as a whole (47 per cent). Levels of dissatisfaction have remained static since year three (30 per cent), but have seen a decrease of two percentage points since the baseline survey in year two.

Satisfaction with justice system as a whole

Other than your experience with Her Majesty’s Courts Service, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the justice system as a whole?

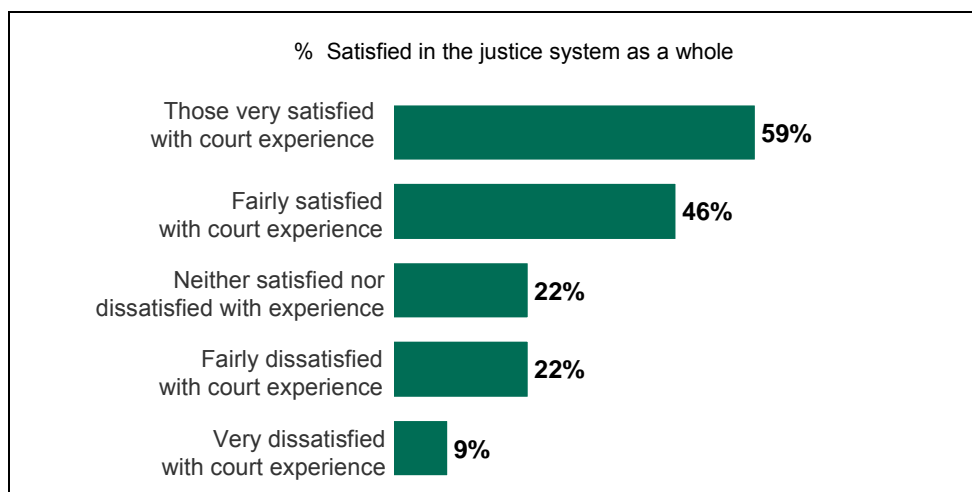


- Year four data recorded between 1 May 2009 – 31 March 2010; Base: all responses (8,632)
- Year three data recorded between 1 May 2008 – 7 April 2009; Base: all valid responses (12,709)
- Year two data recorded between 1 May 2007 – 28 March 2008; Base: all valid data responses (11,330)
- Year one data recorded between 16 January – 15 May 2007; Base: all valid data responses (5,023)

Public users, particularly defendants, express the greatest levels of dissatisfaction with the criminal justice system (37 per cent compared to 30 per cent overall) as do those attending magistrates’ courts (35 per cent dissatisfied). Conversely, those attending civil courts and professional users generally are among the most satisfied (52 per cent and 53 per cent respectively, compared to 47 per cent overall).

Analysis shows the potential impact of the court experience on wider attitudes towards the justice system; 59 per cent of those who are ‘very’ satisfied with their court experience say they are satisfied with the justice system generally. This compares to only 9 per cent of those ‘very’ dissatisfied with their court experience who go on to say they are satisfied with the justice system as a whole. As the following chart shows, there is a strong correlation; the more satisfied a user is with their experience, the more likely they will be to express satisfaction towards the justice system.

Impact of court experience on users' satisfaction in the justice system



- Year four data recorded between 1 May 2009 – 31 March 2010; Base: all valid responses (8,616)

3. What is driving overall satisfaction?

Further analysis of the data can identify the issues which have the biggest impact on users' overall views of their court experience. As in previous years, waiting times and staff are the strongest drivers of overall satisfaction, particularly the time waited for the case to be dealt with, being treated fairly and sensitively by court staff, staff being able to respond promptly to queries, and staff keeping users informed of reasons for delays. Similar factors have the largest impact on the proportions of 'very' satisfied users.

Having information available about court procedures and facilities also has a significant role to play in users' overall experiences. There are notable variations in the importance of different factors in influencing the views of different groups; convenience of sitting/opening times emerges as a key factor for professional users (but not public users), whilst information on procedures and facilities is particularly likely to influence the overall perceptions of defendants.

The previous section showed how levels of overall satisfaction have changed over time and vary across jurisdiction and user types. To increase satisfaction it is essential to understand what it is that lies behind the overall figures; what drives these levels of satisfaction. Key Driver Analysis (KDA) is used to help us understand what factors influence overall satisfaction with users' experiences at court. Answers to the question 'how satisfied or dissatisfied are you generally with your experience today?' are analysed and compared with answers to other questions to create a mathematical model. The model indicates how responses to different questions can predict responses to overall satisfaction with experience.

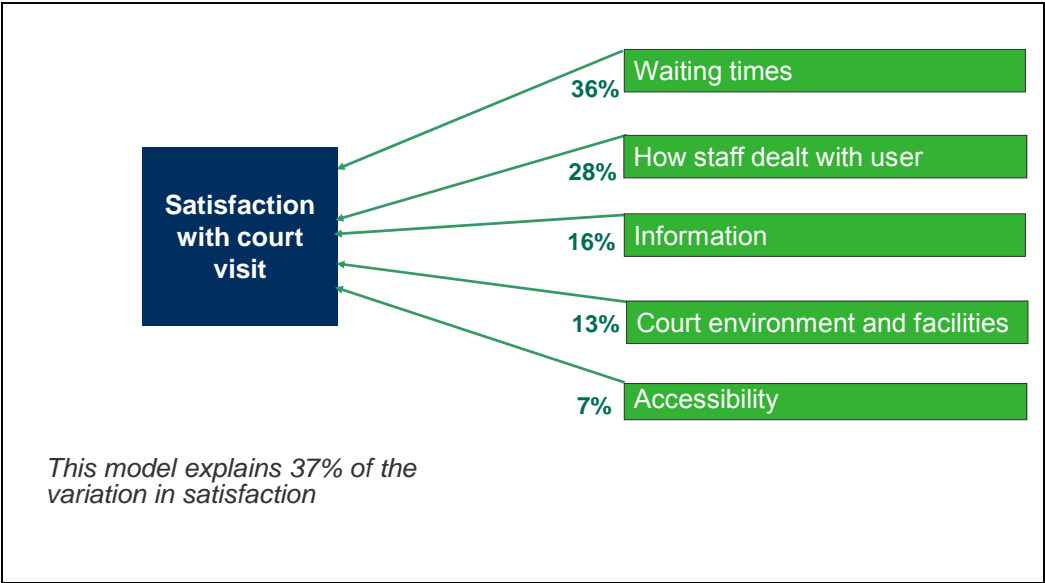
We have run the analysis at the overall level and also for different court types, for different types of court users.

Overall satisfaction models

The first model uses aggregates of the key service area questions to produce a general view of which areas of service have the largest influence on overall satisfaction. This model explains 37 per cent of the variation in satisfaction, which indicates a relatively robust model and is comparable with the year three analysis. As in year three, waiting times have the greatest influence on overall satisfaction, followed by how staff dealt with the user. These two key service areas have the greatest influence on overall satisfaction and should therefore continue to be the focus for improving satisfaction levels across courts.

Information provided by the court, and the court environment and facilities contribute similar amounts to the model, whilst accessibility exerts the least influence on the scores for overall satisfaction of all the key service areas.

Key drivers of satisfaction with court experience (all court users)



The relative importance of key service areas and the individual aspects of service within them are shown in the following table. The question that exerts the greatest influence within waiting times is the time waited for the court or its staff to deal with cases. The questions relating to staff exert relatively equal influence on overall satisfaction.

Some questions have little influence on levels of overall satisfaction; in particular this table shows satisfaction with refreshments, waiting areas and ease of finding the court building are poor predictors of overall satisfaction with court experience. Therefore, if users are dissatisfied with these aspects but satisfied with stronger predictors such as waiting times and treatment by staff, then they are likely to be satisfied overall (and vice versa).

Key Service Area	Service specific	Relative Contribution within Key Service Area
Waiting times (Explains 36% of variance in overall satisfaction)	The time that you waited for the court or its staff to deal with your case	49%
	Being kept informed by the court staff of the reasons for any delay to your case	33%
	The time that you waited at the public counter / reception to be seen	18%
	Total contribution (waiting times)	100%
How staff dealt with user (Explains 28% of variance in overall satisfaction)	The ability of staff to respond and deal with your query there and then	53%
	Staff treating you fairly and sensitively	47%
	Total contribution (how staff dealt with user)	100%
Information (Explains 16% of variance in overall satisfaction)	Information available regarding court procedures and facilities	68%
	The forms you needed being clear and easy to understand	32%
	Total contribution (information)	100%
Environment and facilities (Explains 13% of variance in overall satisfaction)	How easily you found the courtroom or office that you needed	29%
	Cleanliness of public areas	26%
	Facilities that take into account any particular needs that you may have	20%
	Refreshments available at the court	13%
	Waiting areas which keep the parties safe and separate	12%
	Total contribution (environment and facilities)	100%
Accessibility (Explains 7% of variance in overall satisfaction)	The convenience of sitting / opening times	48%
	Easily identifiable staff available to deal with any queries	46%
	How easy it was to find the building	7%
	Total contribution (accessibility)	100%

Similar key driver analyses conducted using responses from particular types of court or users tend to show similar patterns of results, though there are some variations, as outlined below.

Differences between court user types

For those appearing in a professional capacity, a general theme of time urgency emerges. The time waited for the court or its staff to deal with cases appears to account for 26 per cent of the professional users' model, more than double the strength of the next predictor; ability of court staff to deal with queries, at 12 per cent. The convenience of sitting/opening times is a much stronger predictor of overall satisfaction in this model than others. The ease of finding the correct courtroom or office and the availability of private discussion rooms do not feature in the overall

users' model, but are lower ranking predictors here.

For defendants, the model is similar to the overall model, but it is interesting to note that information regarding court procedures and facilities features second, above the staff variables. For those appearing as a party in a civil case, being presented with forms that are clear and easy to understand appears in the model whereas it is absent from the overall model.

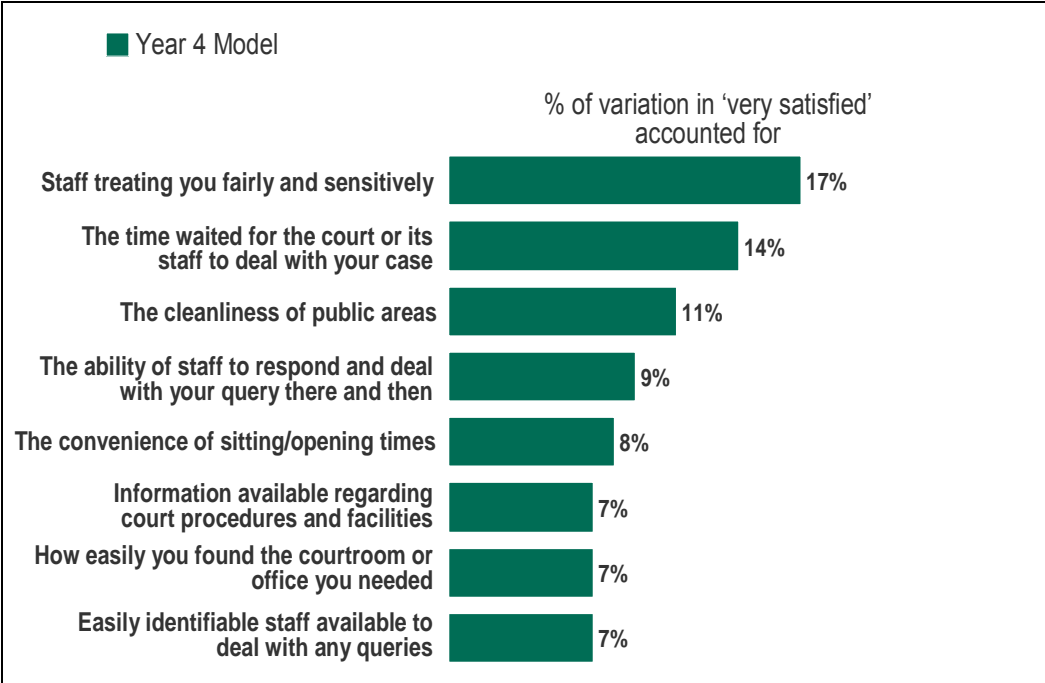
These variations emphasise the need to target measures for improving satisfaction levels at different users to meet their needs.

What makes a user 'very' satisfied or 'very' dissatisfied?

The individual questions within the key service areas can also be modelled to establish what makes users satisfied. The time that was spent waiting for the court or staff to deal with cases is the single most influential driver of overall satisfaction, followed by staff treating users fairly and sensitively and the ability of staff to deal with queries there and then. Responses around information, court environment and facilities and accessibility appear further down the list.

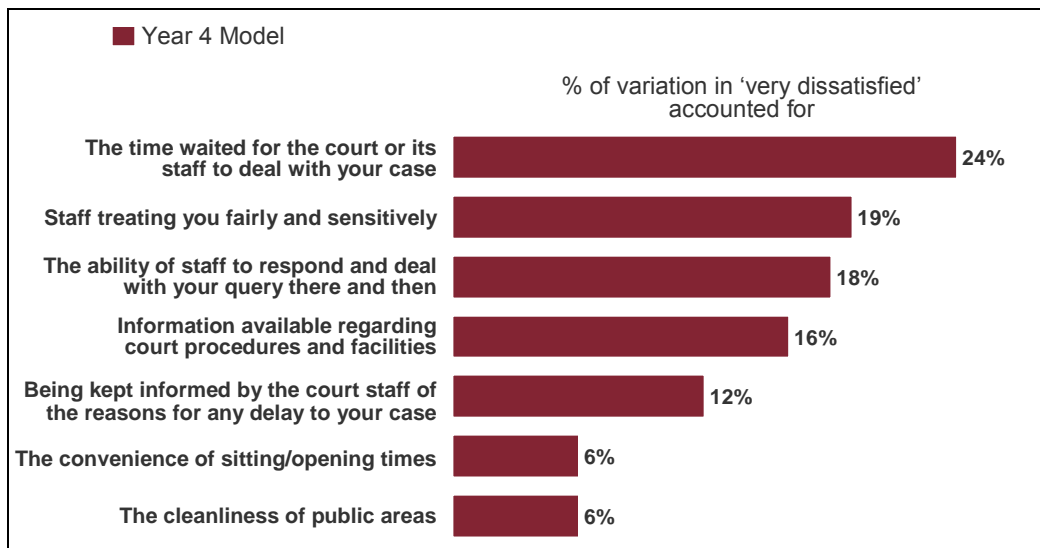
Key driver analysis has also been conducted with a focus on those answering 'very' satisfied or 'very' dissatisfied. The outputs are compared to the results of similar analysis in year three. Staff treating users fairly and sensitively is the strongest predictor of users being 'very' satisfied in year four. Although still an important factor, time waited for the court or its staff to deal with cases has less of an influence on whether users are 'very' satisfied compared to year three. These are the areas where courts must focus attention to increase the number of users who are 'very' satisfied with their court experience overall and are consistent with Year Three (indeed, the models are very similar year-on-year, highlighting that the key drivers have not changed over time).

What makes a user very satisfied?



As in year three, the time waited for the court or its staff to deal with cases has the strongest influence on court users saying they are 'very' dissatisfied. Staff treating users fairly and sensitively has more of a bearing on dissatisfaction this year, followed by the ability of staff to respond and deal with queries.

What makes a user 'very' dissatisfied?



4. Pre-court experience

Around one in three (35 per cent) public court users say they were contacted by the court prior to arrival, the large majority of them via letter (78 per cent). The level and methods of pre-court contact are consistent with previous years, as are the variations by court type, with those attending civil courts most likely to have been contacted and those attending Crown Court least likely.

Findings show that it is not this contact in itself that appears to make users more confident what to expect, but satisfaction with the information provided.

Overall, however, the majority of users are satisfied with the information provided before arriving at the court, as well as with the hearing/trial taking place when they were told it would.

Contact prior to arrival

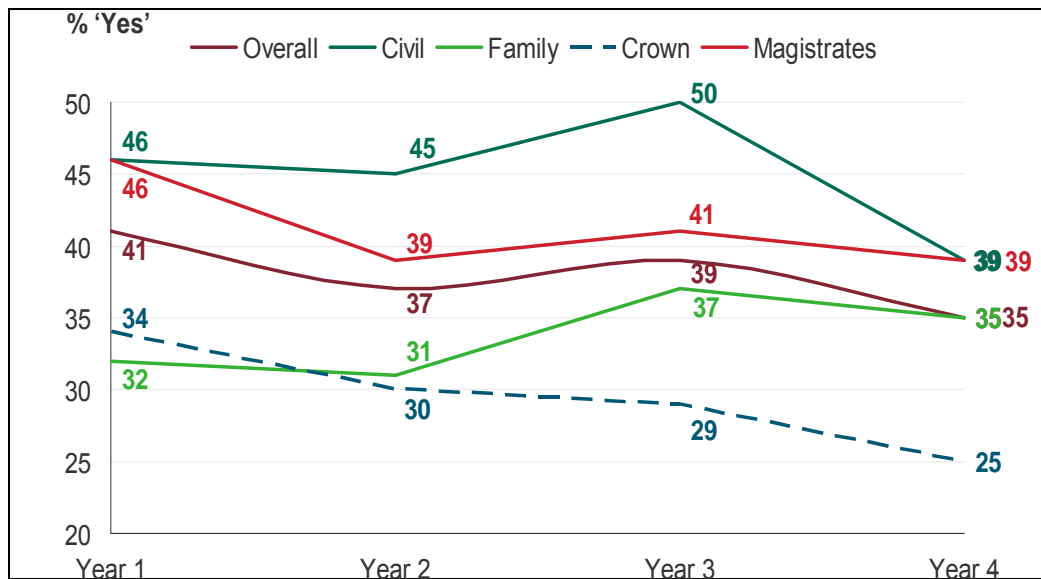
Across all survey years the questions relating to the pre-court experience (as outlined in this chapter) have been asked of **public** court users only (i.e. those in a professional capacity are not asked these questions).

Just over a third of all public court users say they have been contacted prior to arrival at court (35 per cent), down four percentage points since year three (39 per cent). However, it is worth bearing in mind that there has been no statistically significant change in levels of pre-court contact between the baseline survey in year two (37 per cent) and year four.

The pattern of pre-court contact has remained consistent over the four survey years, with those attending civil courts remaining the most likely to have been contacted prior to arrival (39 per cent, though down from 50 per cent in year three). Those attending Crown Court continue to report the lowest levels of contact prior to arrival (25 per cent). Whilst the overall trends remain consistent, the proportion of those who have been contacted has decreased across all jurisdictions between years three and four. However, they remain broadly in line with levels recorded in the year two baseline survey. In terms of user type, half of victims/witnesses say they have been contacted prior to arrival at court (50 per cent).

Pre-court contact

Were you contacted before you arrived today?



- Year four data recorded between 1 May 2009 – 31 March 2010; Base: all public court users (5,158); civil court (866), family court (588), Crown Court (615), magistrates' court (2,354)
- Year three data recorded between 1 May 2008 – 7 April 2009; Base: all public court users (8,275)
- Year two data recorded between 1 May 2007 – 28 March 2008; Base: all public court users (6,738)
- Year one data recorded between 16 January – 15 May 2007; Base: all public court users (3,248)

How users are contacted prior to arrival

As in all three previous years, the majority of public users contacted by courts prior to arrival were sent a letter (78 per cent of all those with pre-contact in year four). Other contact methods, include telephone (12 per cent) summons (6 per cent) and in person (3 per cent)³.

³ Please note that some users reported being contacted by more than one method. As a result of this the figures in the following table do not sum 100 per cent.

Method of contact

What method was used by the court to contact you?

	Yr 4 %	Yr 3 %	Yr 2 %	Yr 1 %
Letter	78	82	80	81
Telephone	12	9	11	9
Summons	6	5	4	5
In person	3	3	4	4
Hearing notices	2	2	2	2
Order	1	1	1	2
Other	2	2	1	2

- Year four all public users who were contacted previously (1,800); 1 May 2009 – 31 March 2010
- Year three all public users who were contacted previously (3,234); 1 May 2008 – 7 April 2009
- Year two all public users who were contacted previously (2,507); 1 May 2007 – 28 March 2008
- Year one all public users who were contacted previously (1,313); 16 January – 15 May 2007

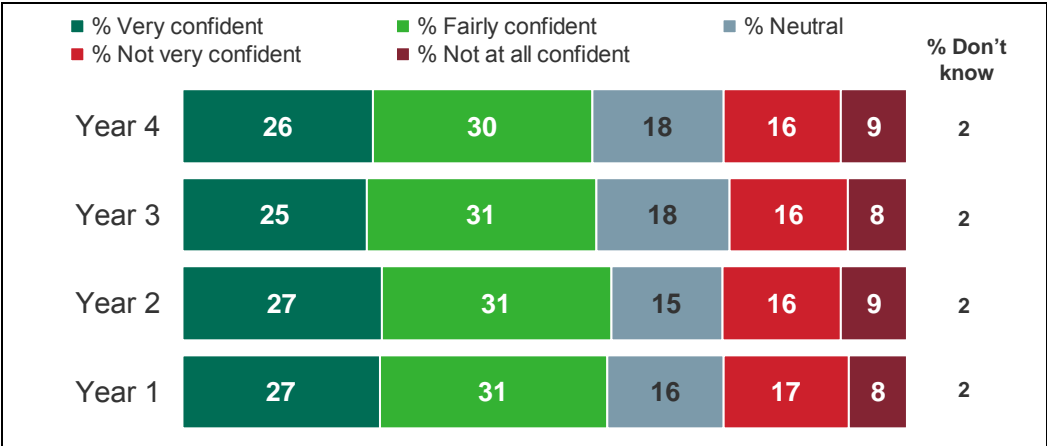
Public users at civil courts remain the most likely to have been contacted by letter (88 per cent - in line with both years two and three), while those attending Crown Court are more likely than other users to have been contacted via telephone (28 per cent - up from 22 per cent in year three and in line with 29 per cent in year two).

Court users' expectations and information provided prior to arrival

Confidence levels about what to expect at court remain in line with previous survey years; just over half of all public users say they were confident they knew what to expect from their visit (56 per cent), with 26 per cent 'very' confident. However, a quarter of users say they were not confident (25 per cent).

Confidence about what to expect

Before you came to court today, how confident were you that you knew what to expect from your visit?



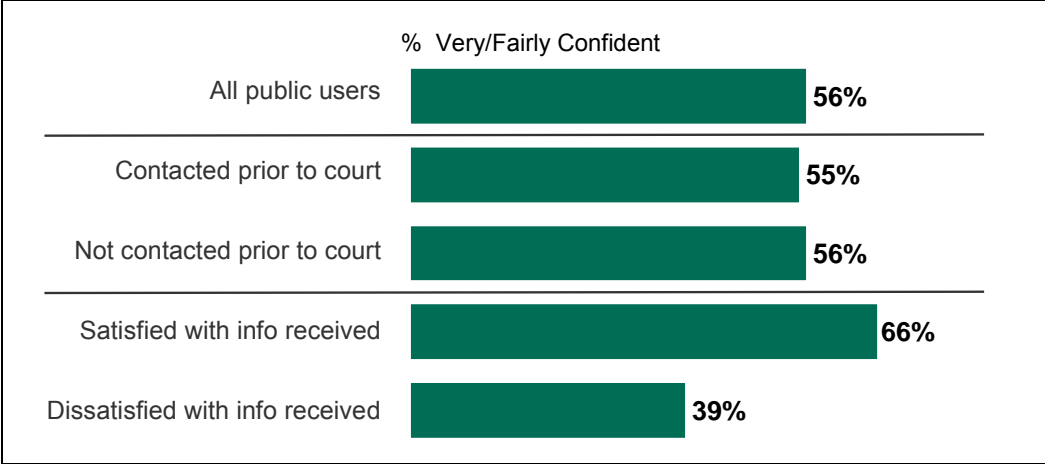
- Year four all public users recorded between 1 May 2009 – 31 March 2010; Base: all valid responses (5,156)
- Year three all public users recorded between 1 May 2008 – 7 April 2009; Base: all valid responses (8,277)
- Year two all public users recorded between 1 May 2007 – 28 March 2008; Base: all valid responses (6,724)
- Year one all public users recorded between 16 January – 15 May 2007; Base: all valid responses (3,254)

In line with previous years, those attending family courts are significantly more likely to say that they knew what to expect (64 per cent compared to 56 per cent overall). Those attending magistrates’ courts remain the least confident (28 per cent say that they are not confident compared to 25 per cent overall). Looking specifically at differences by user type, victims are the least confident (38 per cent say they are not confident compared to 25 per cent overall).

As illustrated in the following chart and echoing findings from year three, confidence levels among those who have been contacted prior to their court visit are similar to those who do not recall any contact (55 per cent and 56 per cent respectively). Those who received prior information and were satisfied with this provision are significantly more likely than those who were dissatisfied with the information received to say they were confident (66 per cent versus 39 per cent respectively). This highlights the importance of making information relevant and effective to different types of users, it is not the contact per se that appears to make people confident, but the quality of the information provided.

Confidence about what to expect by contact prior to court and satisfaction with information received

Before you came to court today, how confident were you that you knew what to expect from your visit?

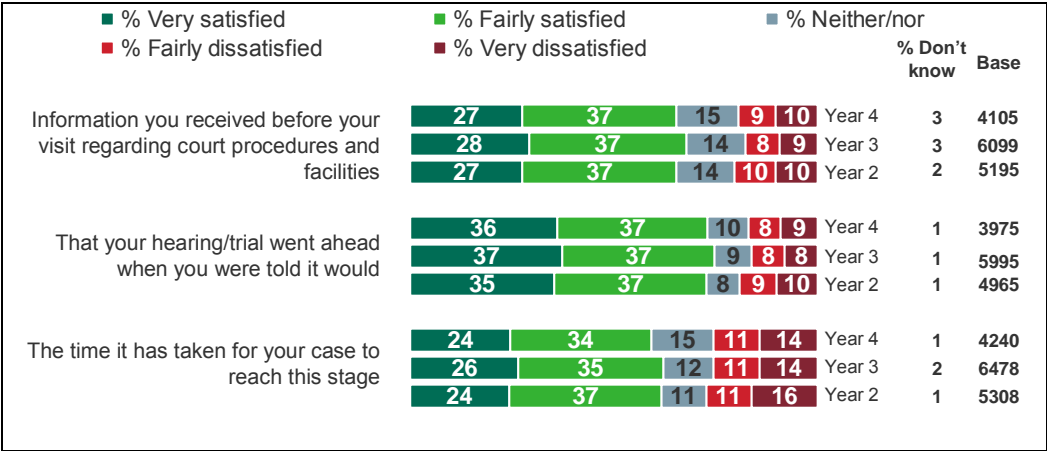


- Year four all public users recorded between 1 May 2009 – 31 March 2010; Base: all valid responses (5,156)

Satisfaction levels with various aspects of the pre-court experience have remained consistent over the four survey years. Around a quarter of public users are ‘very’ satisfied with both the information received prior to their visit regarding court procedures and facilities and the time taken for the case to reach this stage (27 per cent and 24 per cent respectively). Over a third are ‘very’ satisfied that the hearing/trial went ahead at the time the user was told it would (36 per cent). Users are most satisfied that the hearing/trial went ahead when they were told it would (73 per cent very or fairly satisfied) and are least satisfied with the time taken for their case to reach this stage (59 per cent satisfied); again reflecting the findings from previous years.

Satisfaction with information provided prior to arrival at court

How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the following provided by the court and not by anyone else...?



- Base: all public users giving a valid response, fieldwork dates: Year two 1 May 2007 to 28 March 2008, Year three 1 May 2008 to 7 April 2009, and Year four 1 May 2009 – 31 March 2010

Those attending magistrates’ courts and victims overall are among the most dissatisfied with the **information received prior to their court visit regarding procedures and facilities, and what to expect** (20 per cent and 22 per cent dissatisfied respectively compared to 18 per cent overall).

Those attending civil and family courts are significantly more likely to be satisfied that their **hearing went ahead when they were told it would** (82 per cent and 78 per cent compared to 73 per cent overall), mirroring findings from year three. Once again, those attending magistrates’ courts are the least satisfied (19 per cent dissatisfied which is consistent with year three of the survey).

Those who attended civil courts are most satisfied with the **time taken for their case to reach this stage** (65 per cent compared to 59 per cent overall), with those attending Crown Court the least satisfied (34 per cent dissatisfied compared to 25 per cent overall). Whilst defendants are significantly more satisfied than average with this aspect (61 per cent), a high proportion of victims are dissatisfied (43 per cent versus 25 per cent overall).

5. Experiences at court (Key Service Areas)

Accessibility issues continue to be generally well rated, with the proportions who are 'very' satisfied having stabilised following improvements between years two and three. Professional users are more likely to express satisfaction than public users, which presumably reflects their generally greater familiarity with court buildings, staff and schedules.

There have been increases since the year two baseline in the proportions 'very' satisfied with **waiting times** both at the public counter/reception and for the case to be dealt with on the day (both up two percentage points in year four, compared to year two). That said, overall satisfaction ratings (i.e. those very or fairly satisfied) remain consistent with the baseline across all aspects of waiting times.

Similarly, ratings of all factors relating to both **information provided by the court** and **court staff** have remained consistent since the year two baseline, both in terms of overall satisfaction and the proportions who are 'very' satisfied.

Whilst the proportions of users who are 'very' satisfied with some aspects of the **court environment and facilities** have increased since the baseline – e.g. refreshments, availability of discussion rooms, separate waiting areas, cleanliness and facilities taking into account particular needs – again, overall satisfaction levels (very/fairly satisfied) have remained consistent.

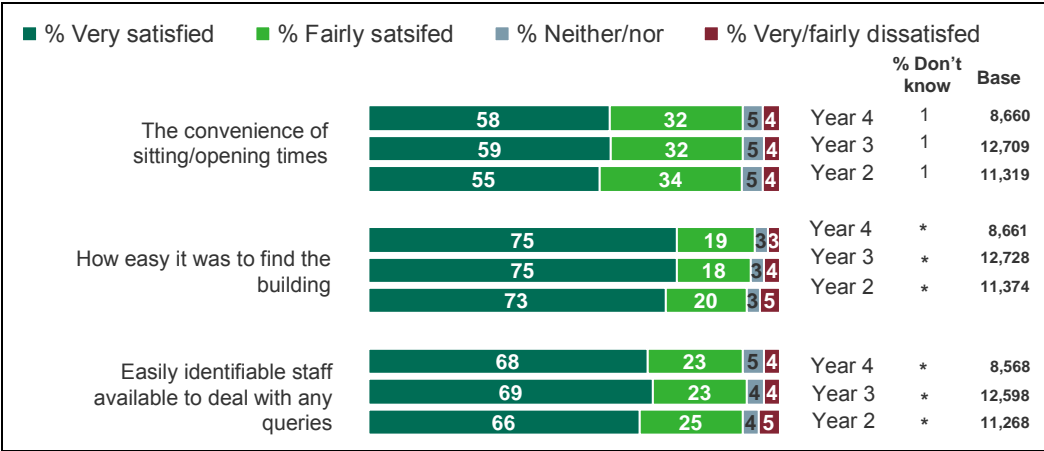
Accessibility

The vast majority of court users are satisfied with the accessibility of courts - over nine in ten are either very or fairly satisfied with the convenience of the sitting/opening times, how easy it is to find the building and the extent to which the staff are easily identifiable and available to deal with queries. Ratings on all these factors have shown significant improvements since the baseline survey in year two and ratings remain in line with findings from year three.

Court users are most satisfied with **how easy it was to find the building** with three-quarters saying they are 'very' satisfied with this aspect of accessibility. Over two-thirds (68 per cent) are 'very' satisfied with the extent to which the **staff are easily identifiable and available to deal with queries** and six in ten (58 per cent) are 'very' satisfied with the **convenience of the sitting/opening times**.

Satisfaction with accessibility of courts

Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with each of the following aspects of accessibility?



- Base: all public users giving a valid response, fieldwork dates: Year two 1 May 2007 to 28 March 2008, Year three 1 May 2008 to 7 April 2009, and Year four 1 May 2009 – 31 March 2010

The following table shows the types of users who are most and least satisfied with the various aspects of accessibility. Quotes from court users are included to illustrate some of the suggestions for improvements which relate to factors around accessibility. They should not be interpreted as being representative of all users' views.

Accessibility	
Most satisfied (percentage 'very' satisfied)	Least satisfied (percentage 'very' satisfied)
Convenience of sitting/opening times	
Civil courts users (61% - down from 62% in year 3 and up from 59% in year 2) Professional court users (68%)	Those attending magistrates' courts (52% - down from 55% in year 3 but up from 49% in year 2) 'Earlier opening times would be helpful, say 9am' – County Court, Surrey and Sussex. 'The opening times. I'd like to come here first thing in the morning or later in the evening. To be able to come here at 5pm to drop things off' – County Court, Greater Manchester.

Accessibility	
Most satisfied (percentage 'very' satisfied)	Least satisfied (percentage 'very' satisfied)
How easy it was to find the building	
Those attending family courts (79% - in line with year 3) Professional court users (84%)	Civil court users (70% - down from 73% in year 3 and 77% in year 2). 'Better signs indicating where court is. Sign is not viewable from the main road' – Magistrates Court, South East Wales
Easily identifiable staff	
No significant differences between satisfaction levels across jurisdictions (family and Crown – 69% and civil and magistrates – 68% f). 'Identifiable ushers - difficult to know as they do not have a uniform.' - County Court, Cambridgeshire, Norfolk and Suffolk.	

Waiting times at court

On the whole satisfaction levels with waiting times are consistent with the year two baseline findings, though there are some improvements in the proportions who are 'very' satisfied.

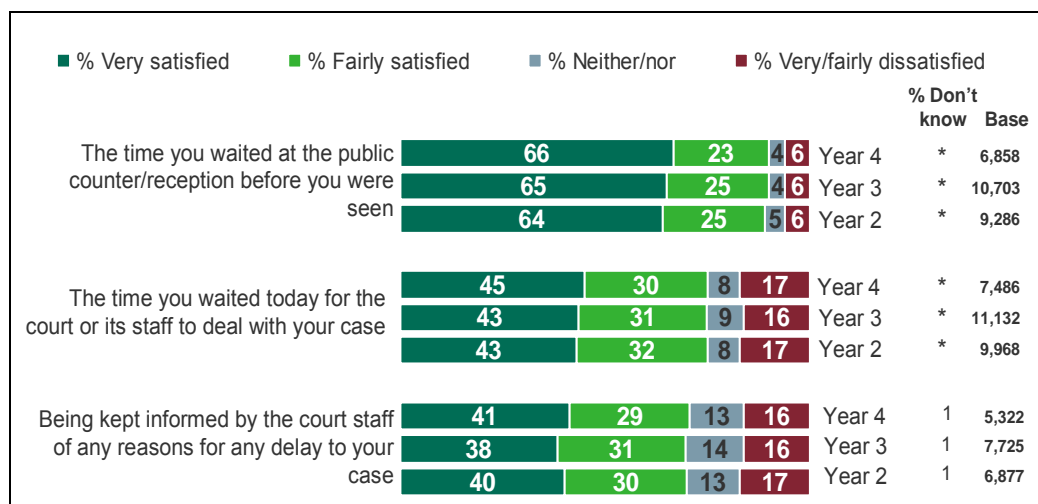
The **time waited at the public counter/reception** remains the highest factor (90 per cent are either very or fairly satisfied), with two-thirds saying they are 'very' satisfied with this aspect – in line with year three but higher than the year two baseline (though the overall satisfaction level - very/fairly satisfied - is in line).

In line with previous years, three-quarters of users are satisfied with the **time waited for the court or its staff to deal with their case**. Whilst not statistically significant the proportion of those who are 'very' satisfied with this aspect has increased by two percentage points since years two and three (up from 43 per cent to 45 per cent).

Following a slight decrease last year in the proportion of those who are 'very' satisfied with **being kept informed of any reasons for any delay to the case**, there has been an increase in year four (up from 38 per cent in year three to 41 per cent). Satisfaction levels with this aspect are now back in line with year two baseline findings.

Satisfaction with waiting times

Now thinking about the time that you waited at the court today, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with?



- Base: all public users giving a valid response, fieldwork dates: Year two 1 May 2007 to 28 March 2008, Year three 1 May 2008 to 7 April 2009, and Year four 1 May 2009 – 31 March 2010

The following table shows those who are most and least satisfied with the various aspects of waiting times. Quotes from court users are included to illustrate some of the suggestions for improvements which relate to factors around accessibility. They should not be interpreted as being representative of all users' views.

Waiting times	
Most satisfied (percentage 'very' satisfied)	Least satisfied (percentage 'very' satisfied)
The time you waited at the public counter/reception before you were seen	
Family court users (70% - down from 73% in year 3 but up from 66% in year 2)	N.B. There are no specific groups below average
The time waited for the court or its staff to deal with your case	
Those attending civil and family courts (both 52% and in line with year 2 and year 3)	Magistrates court users (35% - up 2% on Year 2 and Year 3) 'Whole process of getting everyone here for 10am and then all kept hanging around when they clearly knew that case reports would not be done until the afternoon' – Magistrates Court, Greater Manchester
Being kept informed by the court for any reasons for any delay to your case	
Crown Court users (47% - up from 45% in year 3)	Those attending magistrates' courts (34% - up from 32% in year 3 and 33% in year 2) 'Efficient organisation of hearings to avoid unnecessary waits. Explanation of how the system is organised to give some expectation of timings to people waiting' – Magistrates Court, Kent

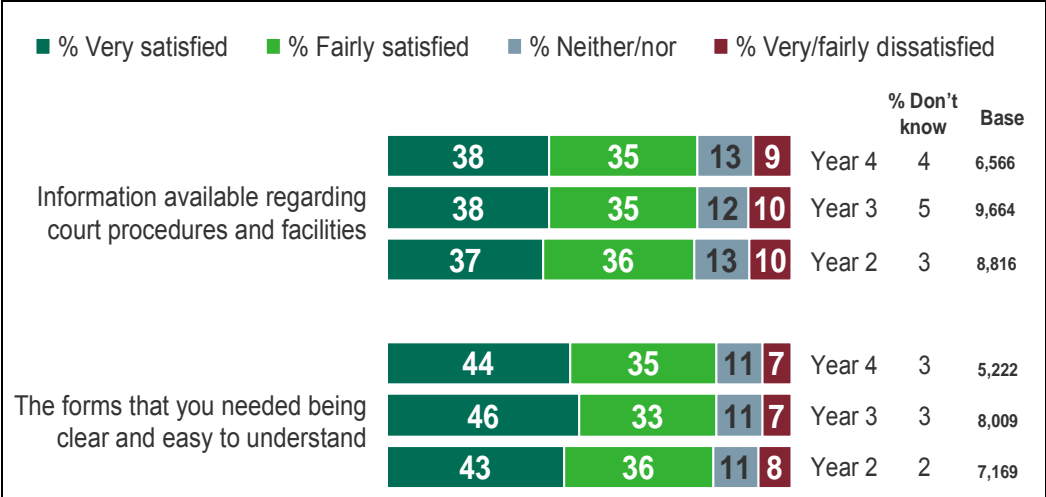
Information provided by the court

Satisfaction levels with information provided by the court have remained broadly consistent since year one of the survey, with around three-quarters satisfied with both the information available regarding court procedures and facilities and the forms being clear and easy to understand (73 per cent and 78 per cent respectively).

The proportion who are ‘very’ satisfied with each of these aspects remains high, though has now stabilised following improvements from year one to year three. Two in five are ‘very’ satisfied with the **information provision regarding court procedures and facilities** (38 per cent - in line with years two and three) and the **forms being clear and easy to understand** (44 per cent - down two percentage points from last year but in line with the baseline survey in year two).

Satisfaction with the information provided by the court

Now thinking about the information provided by the court, overall how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with?



- Base: all public users giving a valid response, fieldwork dates: Year two 1 May 2007 to 28 March 2008, Year three 1 May 2008 to 7 April 2009, and Year four 1 May 2009 – 31 March 2010

The following table profiles those who are most and least satisfied with information provision. Quotes from court users are included to illustrate some of the suggestions for improvements which relate to factors around accessibility. They should not be interpreted as being representative of all users’ views.

Information	
Most satisfied (percentage 'very' satisfied)	Least satisfied (percentage 'very' satisfied)
Information available regarding court procedures and facilities	
Crown and family court users (44% and 43% respectively)	Those attending magistrates' courts (34% - up from 33% in year 3 and 31% in year 2) 'Thought I would have just filled a form in, did not know I would be in front of magistrate. Someone should have told me what would happen, going to lodge a formal complaint.' - Magistrates Court, North and West Yorkshire
The forms needed being clear and easy to understand	
Those attending family courts (48% - down from 52% in year 3 but up from 41% in year 2)	Magistrates court users (41% - up from 33% in year 3 and 31% in year 2) 'Forms need to be in more jargon-free language' - Combined Court, Surrey and Sussex

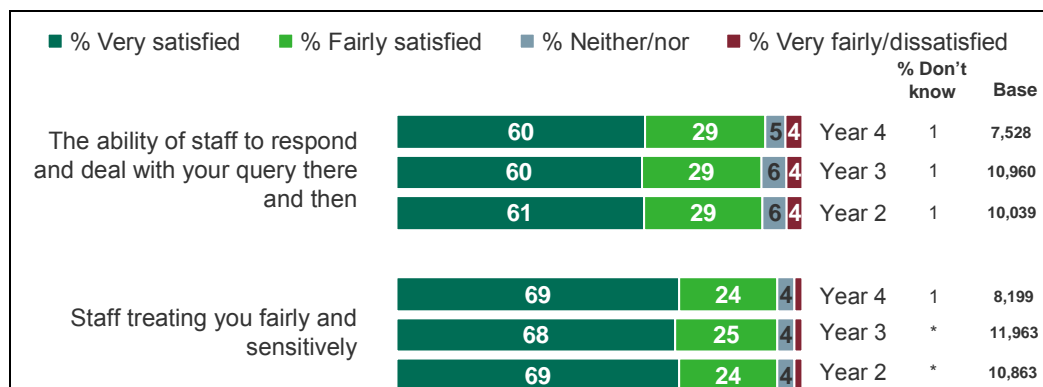
How staff deal with court users

Since year one of the survey satisfaction levels with court staff have remained consistent. The vast majority of users are satisfied overall (i.e. very or fairly satisfied) with the ability of staff to respond and deal with queries there and then and with staff treating them fairly and sensitively (90 per cent and 93 per cent respectively).

Three in five (60 per cent) are 'very' satisfied with the **ability of staff to deal with queries there and then** which is in line with years two and three, whilst a higher proportion are 'very' satisfied with **staff treating them fairly and sensitively** (69 per cent - also in line with years two and three).

Satisfaction with court staff

Now thinking about your experiences with court staff here today, overall how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with?



- Base: all public users giving a valid response, fieldwork dates: Year two 1 May 2007 to 28 March 2008, Year three 1 May 2008 to 7 April 2009, and Year four 1 May 2009 – 31 March 2010

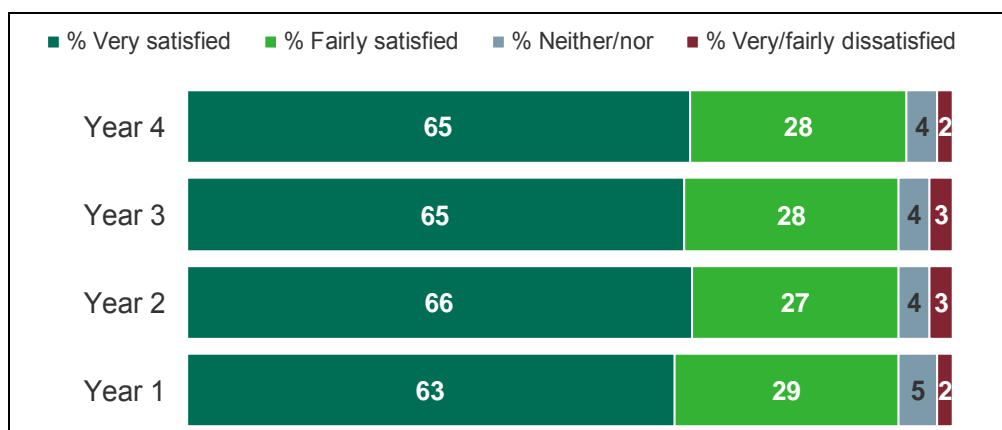
The following table profiles those who are most and least satisfied with their experiences with court staff. Quotes from court users are included to illustrate some of the suggestions for improvements which relate to factors around accessibility. They should not be interpreted as being representative of all users' views.

How staff deal with user	
Most satisfied (percentage 'very' satisfied)	Least satisfied (percentage 'very' satisfied)
The ability of staff to respond and deal with your query there and then	
Those attending family courts (67% - down from 69% in year 3 but up from 65% in year 2) Civil court users (64%)	Those attending magistrates' courts (55% - up from 53% in year 3 and year 2) 'More staff available at the counter for enquiries' - Magistrates Court, Hampshire and Isle Of Wight
Staff treating you fairly and sensitively	
Those attending family and Crown Court (75% and 72% respectively)	Those attending magistrates' courts (64% - up from 62% in year 3 and year 2) 'Should be more communication between departments.' - RCJ

When asked a general question about court staff to gauge satisfaction levels towards the end of the interview, the vast majority of users say they are either very or fairly satisfied with how they were treated by court staff (93 per cent). This will reflect the high satisfaction levels with staff dealing with queries there and then and treating you fairly and sensitively as previously discussed. Overall satisfaction levels have stayed consistent over the survey years, as has the proportion of users saying they are 'very' satisfied (65 per cent - in line with year three and down one percentage point on year two, which is not statistically different).

Satisfaction with court staff across survey years

Ignoring the outcome of your case today, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way that you were treated by court staff?



- Year four all valid responses recorded between 1 May 2009 – 31 March 2010; Base: all valid responses (8,525)
- Year three all valid responses recorded between 1 May 2008 – 7 April 2009; Base: all valid responses (12,598)
- Year two all valid responses recorded between 1 May 2007 – 28 March 2008; Base: all valid data responses (11,243)
- Year one all valid responses recorded between 16 January – 15 May 2007; Base: all valid data responses (4,963)

As in previous years, those who attended family or civil courts are most likely to say they are 'very' satisfied with the court staff (72 per cent and 71 per cent respectively). Professional users are significantly more likely to say they are 'very' satisfied with the court staff than public users (77 per cent and 58 per cent respectively). Those dissatisfied with their court experience are also significantly more likely to be dissatisfied with the way in which they were treated by court staff (20 per cent compared to 2 per cent on average), which is reflected in the emergence of staff as a key driver of overall satisfaction (see chapter 3 – What is driving overall satisfaction?).

Court environment and facilities

Satisfaction levels with court environment and facilities vary the most among all the key service areas – a trend seen since the start of the survey four years ago. There have been some improvements in satisfaction levels.

Court users remain most satisfied with how easy it was to find the courtroom or office needed (93 per cent either very or fairly satisfied), with two-thirds (65 per cent) saying they are 'very' satisfied with this aspect. Most are also positive about the cleanliness of public areas (86 per cent satisfied overall and 53 per cent 'very' satisfied), continuing a positive trend of increasing satisfaction in every year of the survey. A slightly smaller proportion express satisfaction with facilities that take into account any particular needs (70 per cent satisfied) and this too has seen an increase in the proportion of those saying they are 'very' satisfied (up from 33 per cent in years two and three to 37 per cent now).

Over half of court users are satisfied with the availability of private discussion rooms and refreshments available at court (59 per cent and 51 per cent respectively), of which a significant proportion say they are 'very' satisfied (31 per cent and 23 per cent respectively). These findings are in line with year two and three measures with no statistically significant shifts.

Satisfaction with court environment and facilities

Now thinking about court environment and facilities here today, overall how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with...?

	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither / nor	Very/fairly dissatisfied		% Don't know	Base
Refreshments available at the court	23	27	12	21	Year 4	16	6,990
	22	28	13	22	Year 3	16	10,230
	21	27	13	23	Year 2	16	9,276
	23	30	14	19	Year 1	13	4,187
Availability of private discussion rooms	31	28	11	19	Year 4	10	6,425
	29	28	12	19	Year 3	11	9,375
	29	29	11	21	Year 2	10	8,257
	28	29	12	21	Year 1	10	3,851
How easily you found the courtroom or office you needed	65	27	4	3	Year 4	1	8,310
	66	27	4	3	Year 3	1	12,232
	65	29	3	3	Year 2	*	10,820
	61	30	4	3	Year 1	*	4,779
Waiting areas that kept the parties safe and separate	32	30	13	19	Year 4	6	6,484
	30	30	14	18	Year 3	7	9,578
	30	31	14	20	Year 2	4	8,335
	30	32	14	20	Year 1	5	4,010
Cleanliness of public areas (including toilets)	53	33	7	5	Year 4	2	8,589
	51	35	6	5	Year 3	2	12,606
	50	36	6	5	Year 2	2	11,257
	48	37	8	6	Year 1	2	4,993
Facilities that take into account any particular needs that you may have	37	33	16	8	Year 4	6	4,072
	33	33	17	9	Year 3	8	5,767
	33	35	17	9	Year 2	6	5,825
	33	33	19	9	Year 1	6	2,867

- Base: all giving a valid response, fieldwork dates 1 May to 31 March 2010, 1 May 2008 to 7 April 2009, 1 May 2007 to 28 March 2008, and 16 January to 15 May 2007

The following table shows the profiles of those who are most and least satisfied with the court environment and facilities. Quotes from court users are included to illustrate some of the suggestions for improvements which relate to factors around accessibility. They should not be interpreted as being representative of all users' views.

Court environment and facilities	
Most satisfied (percentage 'very' satisfied)	Least satisfied (percentage 'very' satisfied)
Refreshments available at the court	
Those attending magistrates' courts (27% - mirroring year 3 and up from 25% in year 2)	Civil court users (17% - up from 14% in year 3) Solicitors and barristers (22%) 'Should have been informed beforehand about food and refreshments being inadequate. I would have brought my own.' – Magistrates Court, Cleveland, Durham and Northumbria
Availability of private discussion rooms	
Those attending magistrates' courts (34% - up two percentage points since year 3) Public users, in particular victims (49% - up from 44% in year 3)	Professional users, in particular solicitors and barristers (21% - in line with year 3) 'It would have been helpful to have had a private room to talk to my solicitor - this was not suggested or offered. I would have preferred a separate waiting area from other parties in my case' – Combined Court, Cumbria and Lancashire
How easily you found the courtroom or office you needed	
Family and Crown Court users (both 70%)	Defendants (57%) 'Better signposting of courtrooms. The number of the court should be on the door' – Magistrates Court, London Central and South (Crime)
Waiting areas that kept the parties safe and separate	
Those attending civil and magistrates' courts (35% and 34% respectively) Public users, particularly witnesses (41%)	Those attending family courts (30%) Professional users, particularly solicitors and barristers (25%) 'I would have preferred to be in a separate waiting area away from my ex partner. I was uncomfortable to be in the same area.' - Combined Court, Cumbria and Lancashire
Cleanliness of public areas (inc toilets)	
Those attending family and civil courts (59% and 58% respectively – up from 55% in year 3)	Those attending magistrates' courts (48% - up three percentage points since year 3) 'The toilets are disgusting state, the walls graffiti all over them. Should be cleaned. Also backs of some chairs had names on them (graffiti)' – Magistrates Court, Dorset, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire

Court environment and facilities	
Most satisfied (percentage 'very' satisfied)	Least satisfied (percentage 'very' satisfied)
Facilities that take into account any particular needs that you may have	
Family court users (44%)	Those attending magistrates' courts (35%) 'More access for disabled people, better entrance. Better waiting areas/rooms - need widening for a wheelchair.' - Magistrates Court, Cleveland, Durham and Northumbria

6. Improving the court experience

The key drivers analysis (see chapter 3) and respondents' own ranking of service areas highlight the importance of waiting times in influencing users' satisfaction with the court experience; it is consistently prioritised as the most important issue by some margin across survey years and across user types. As in previous years, users tend to attach fairly similar weight to other key aspects of service when asked directly about their importance.

Professional users tend to place greater emphasis on accessibility and the court environment than public users.

Over half (58 per cent) of respondents in year four did not make a specific suggestion for how the court experience could have been improved, which partly reflects the high levels of user satisfaction overall. As in previous years, those who do make suggestions tend to focus on the court environment/facilities.

Through key driver analysis detailed in chapter 3, a number of key factors have been identified that are statistically proven to strongly influence court users' overall perceptions of their court experience, most notably:

- time spent waiting for the court or its staff to deal with cases
- staff treating users fairly and sensitively
- ability of staff to respond and deal with queries there and then
- information available regarding court procedures and facilities
- being kept informed by the court staff of the reasons for any delay to the case
- cleanliness of public areas
- convenience of sitting/opening times

In this chapter we outline what users explicitly say is most important to them and how they feel services could be improved.

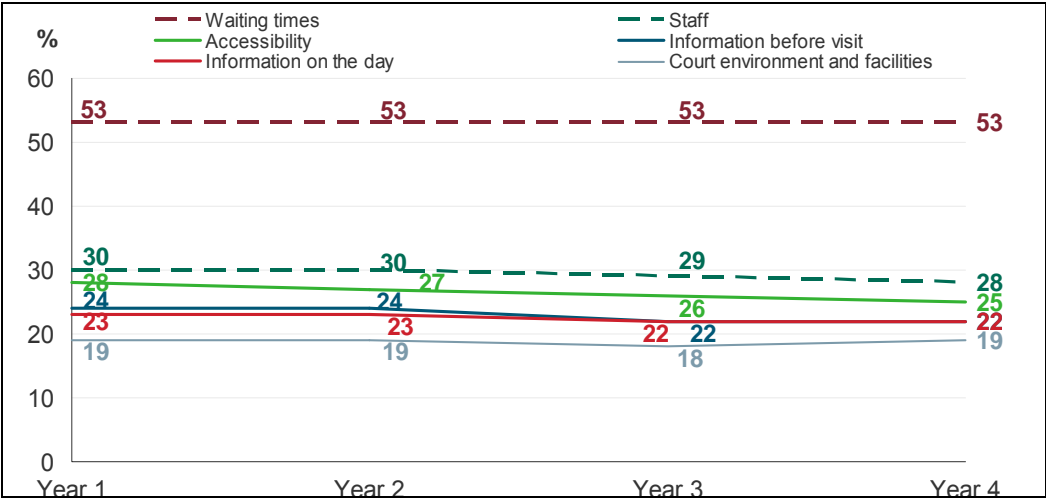
Trends in users' priorities

Waiting times are consistently noted by users as the most important aspect of service provision in courts, prioritised by over half of all respondents (53 per cent) when asked which one or two key service areas are most important to them, far more than any of the other service areas. In comparison, around a quarter (28 per cent) stated staff, a quarter accessibility (25 per cent), 22 per cent mentioned information (before the visit and on the day) and one in five (19 per cent) stated the court environment and facilities.

This rank ordering of the importance of service areas has been consistent across all years of the survey as illustrated in the following chart.

Overall priorities

Overall, which one or two of these are most important to you regarding the service you receive from the court?



- Year four data recorded between 1 May 2009 – 31 March 2010; Base: all valid responses (8,752)
- Year three data recorded between 1 May 2008 – 7 April 2009; Base: all valid responses (12,637)
- Year two data recorded between 1 May 2007 – 28 March 2008; Base: all valid data responses (11,270)
- Year one data recorded between 16 January – 15 May 2007; Base: all valid data responses (5,022)

Public versus professional priorities

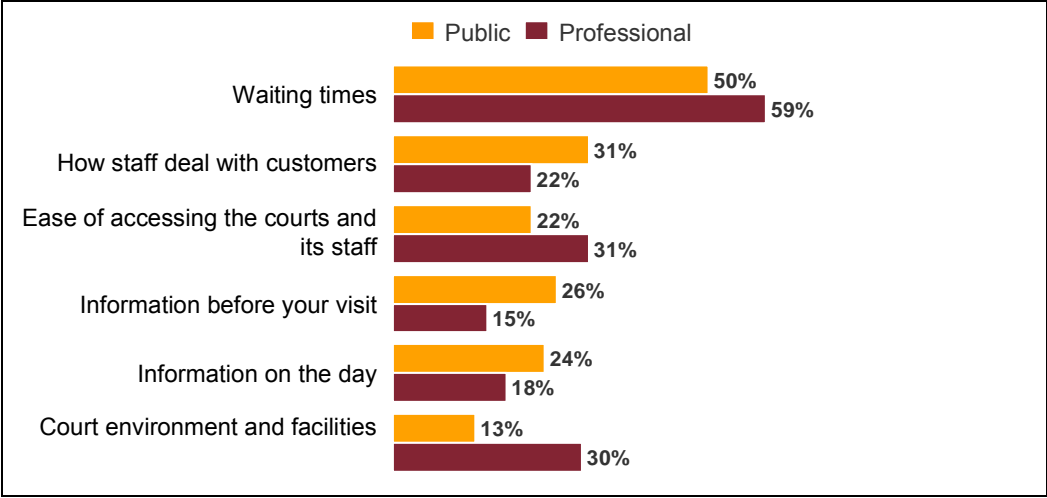
There are notable differences between professional and public users’ priorities, which reflect the differences previously identified in the key driver analyses in chapter 3. Professional users are more likely to state waiting times are most important to them (59 per cent compared to 50 per cent of public users) and they are also more likely to prioritise the ease of accessing the courts and its staff (31 per cent of professional users compared to 22 per cent of public users).

Professional users are also more than twice as likely to prioritise the court environment and facilities (30 per cent of professional users compared to 13 per cent of public users), presumably because professional users typically spend far more time in court than public users.

Public users are more likely than professional users to prioritise staff and information (31 per cent prioritise how staff deal with users compared to 22 per cent of professionals), though waiting times remain the number one priority across all user types.

Public versus professional

Overall, which one or two of these are most important to you regarding the service you receive from the court?



- Data recorded between 1 May 2009 – 31 March 2010; Base: 8,752, public users: 5,254, professional users: 3,473

Users’ suggestions for improvements

At the end of the survey, court users were asked to provide suggestions of changes that could be made to improve their experience at court.

When interpreting the responses to this question it is important to bear in mind that respondents are asked specifically about improvements as they leave the court building. It does not seek to identify drivers of satisfaction but to provide some practical suggestions for improvements.

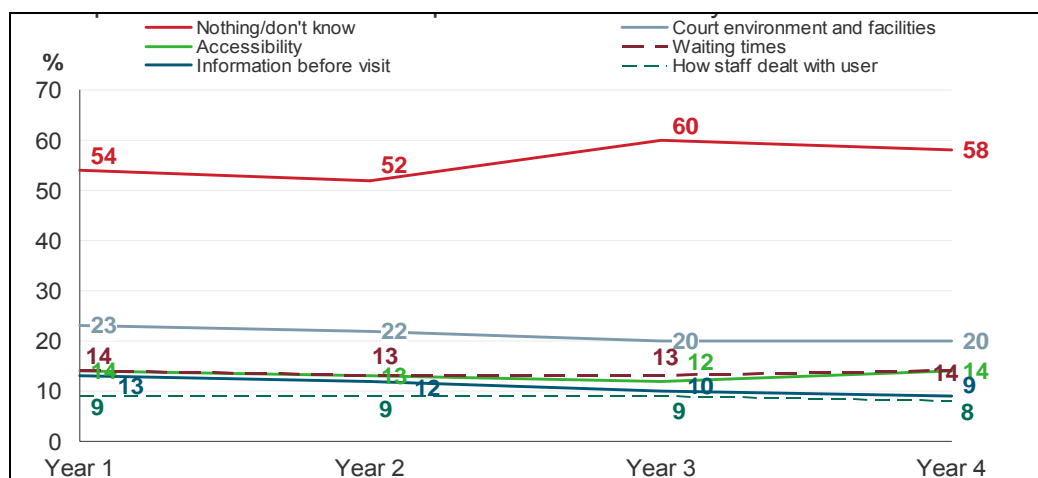
It is important to note that due to the way it is worded, this type of question is more likely to invite a response from those who are dissatisfied with their experience at court. Indeed, those who say that they are satisfied with their experience are more likely not to give a response at all; that is that their experience has not led them to feel that any particular improvements could be made.

The verbatim responses are read through and coded into the key service area categories. Overall, the majority state there is nothing that can be improved upon or they ‘don’t know’; nearly three in five (58 per cent) this year, continuing the increase seen between years two and three. In terms of the service areas that are covered by the suggestions for improvements, there is little variation in the patterns of suggestions across all four years of the survey; verbatim suggestions relating to the court environment and facilities are most common, (highlighted by 20 per cent overall), followed by waiting times (14 per cent), accessibility (14 per cent), the information provided before the visit (9 per cent) and how staff dealt with them (9 per cent).

It is important to note that although the court environment/facilities tops the list in terms of most frequently mentioned suggestions, this does not mean it should be interpreted as a number one priority. Indeed, the key drivers analysis and respondents' own ranking of factors shows this is not the case. Its prominence here will reflect the comparative ease with which users can make suggestions for improvements compared to what they may see as more complex issues such as waiting times or staff.

Suggested improvements – trends over time

What, if anything, would have improved your experience today? Top mentions – verbatim responses coded into key service areas

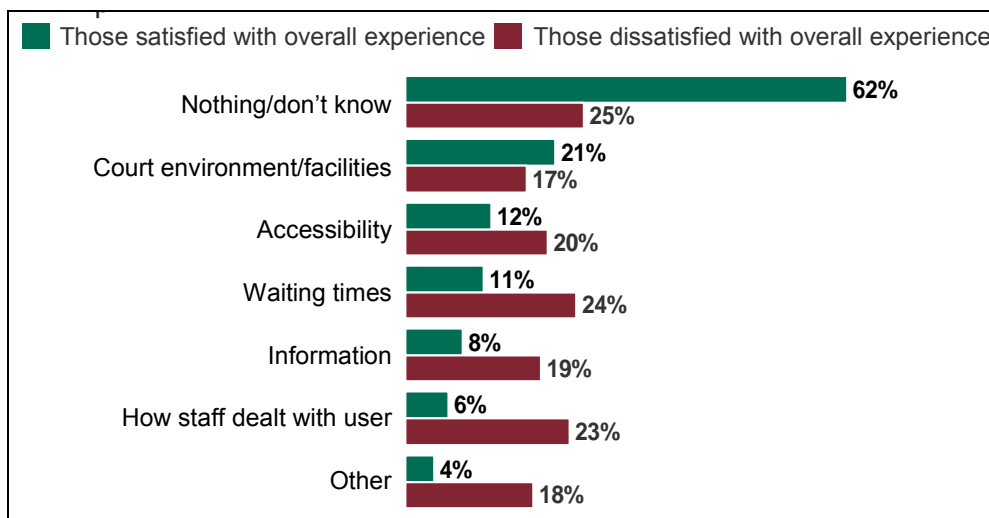


- Year four data recorded between 1 May 2009 – 31 March 2010; Base: all valid responses (8,627)
- Year three data recorded between 1 May 2008 – 7 April 2009; Base: all valid responses (12,637)
- Year two data recorded between 1 May 2007 – 28 March 2008; Base: all valid data responses (11,270)
- Year one data recorded between 16 January – 15 May 2007; Base: all valid data responses (5,022)

The following chart shows that those who are satisfied overall with their experience are more likely to put forward a suggestion relating to court environment and facilities, or state that there was 'nothing' that could be improved than those who were dissatisfied with their experience. Those with negative views overall are more likely to suggest improvements around accessibility, waiting times and/or information.

Suggested improvements by overall satisfaction

What, if anything, would have improved your experience today? Top mentions



- Year four data recorded between 1 May 2009 – 31 March 2010; Base: Satisfied (6,136), Dissatisfied (970)

Further illustrations of verbatim suggestions for improvement

Analysis of the verbatim suggestions gives further insight into users' experiences and illustrates how key service areas are related. For example, if there are issues with staff not being available, or security taking too long, this will have a knock on effect on waiting times.

Comments from professional users include:

“Less waiting. More than one court sitting for general list. Larger waiting area. Better advocates' room. Client interview rooms.” **Professional user, Magistrates court, London North and West (Crime)**

“Security - more organised, more staff and quicker to get into the building. Toilets made more clean. The canteen needs to be more adequate, as too expensive.” **Professional user, Crown Court, Greater Manchester**

“Better food and more healthy options. More private consultation areas/rooms. Gaolers to bring defendants up quicker; waited 15 minutes today.” **Professional user, Crown Court, London North and West (Crime)**

“Need facilities at family courts to find out which court the case is in. Here nobody available to advise. Other courts provide this service. At the moment, time is wasted locating which court to go to.” **Professional user, Family court, London Civil and Family**

These comments illustrate how different service areas influence overall experience of the day at court. It can be argued that professional users have a slightly different perspective from public users, since they will typically use the courts on a regular

basis and will, therefore, suggest improvements they see as systemic, whereas public users will base their views on problems they may have encountered during their visit on a particular day.

Although more than half of all public users (56 per cent) were confident they knew what to expect before attending court, a quarter (25 per cent) stated they were not confident. They are reflected in some of the comments:

“Someone to show me around and see if you want a drink. A map showing you how to get to the court, we went to three courts before we found the right building.” **Public user, civil court, Avon and Somerset**

”Someone to advise you before you go into court. Someone you can speak to if you are concerned as to what is going to happen - what to expect.” **Public user, civil court, South East Wales**

“More signposting to the court rooms. The toilets, they were not easy to find.” **Public user, Magistrates court, Cleveland, Durham & Northumbria**

As analysis has shown, waiting times and how staff dealt with the users are key drivers of satisfaction with experience. The following quotes illustrate how these are often linked:

“A few more staff to assist and to be "more on the ball" A long queue, two people to help and inefficient service. Such time-wasting.” **Public user, civil court, London Civil and Family**

“People giving us a reason for the delay, I think there is a two hour delay. Not having a delay at all [would improve the court experience].” **Public user, Magistrates court, North and West Yorkshire**

7. Differences in users' experiences

It is important to recognise that different types of user are more or less likely to include particular demographic subgroups; for example, men are more likely than women to be defendants and/or victims, whilst women are more likely than men to be at court in a supportive role; those aged 16-34 are disproportionately less likely to be at court in a professional role, whilst black respondents are disproportionately more likely to be in court as a defendant and less likely to be a professional user.

Variations in satisfaction by user type may be reflected in differences by demographics – although the demographic difference in itself may not be a reason for the variations – and, therefore, differences across demographic groups must be interpreted accordingly.

There are also variations in user experience across court type. Differences on individual survey measures by court type are reflected in the overall satisfaction pattern by jurisdiction, with ratings in civil and family courts tending to be higher than in Crown and magistrates' courts.

Courts clearly deal with a range of different types of business which will impact upon relative levels of user satisfaction.

Profiling court users

The following table shows the breakdown of all court users surveyed in years three and four, focusing on key demographics. The table also splits the sample into public users and professional users. The profile of users remains consistent across the two years. In year four court users were asked for the first time whether or not English was their first language. As the table shows, a total of 7 per cent of those interviewed do not speak English as a first language.

Profiles of court users						
All valid responses (base sizes vary)						
	All users		Public users only		Professional users only	
	%		%		%	
	Year 3	Year 4	Year 3	Year 4	Year 3	Year 4
Age:						
16 – 34	44	44	47	47	39	38
35 – 54	44	44	41	41	49	49
55 – 64	9	9	9	9	11	11
65+	3	3	3	4	2	2
Ethnicity:						
White	84	85	83	84	85	86
Mixed	2	2	2	2	2	2
Asian	6	6	6	6	7	7
Black	6	6	7	7	5	4
Chinese or other	1	1	1	1	1	1

Profiles of court users						
All valid responses (base sizes vary)						
	All users		Public users only		Professional users only	
	%		%		%	
	Year 3	Year 4	Year 3	Year 4	Year 3	Year 4
Illness/disability:						
Yes	9	9	13	13	3	3
No	91	91	87	87	97	97
Children under 16:						
Yes	41	40	46	43	33	34
No	59	60	54	57	67	66
Gender:						
Male	56	58	58	61	53	55
Female	44	42	42	39	47	45
English as first language:						
Yes	n/a	93	n/a	92	n/a	94
No	n/a	7	n/a	8	n/a	6
Source: Ipsos MORI						

The following table focuses specifically on public users and profiles key demographics across a number of user groups. As with the previous table, it includes figures for both years three and four.

Consistent with last year there are notable differences between user groups; for example, younger users (i.e. those aged between 16 and 34) are proportionately more likely to be attending court as a defendant or a victim. Defendants are more likely than other types of user to be male.

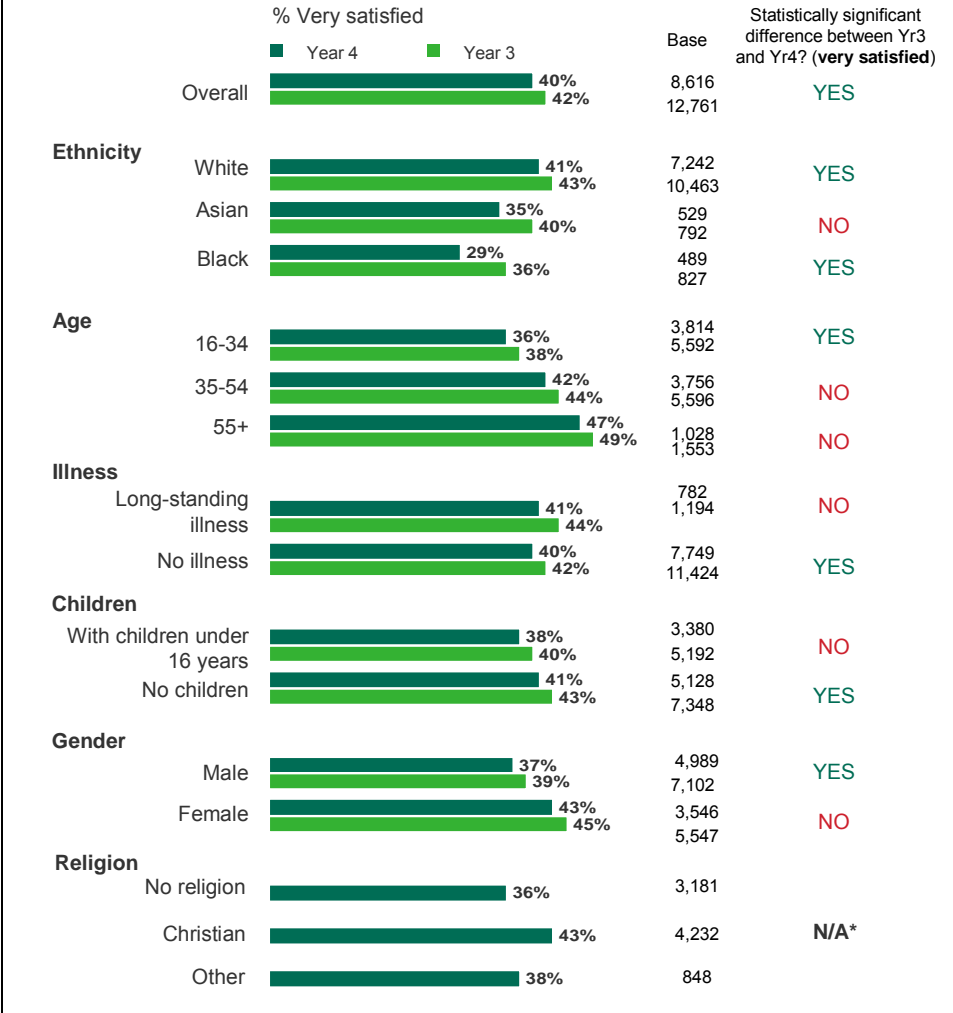
Demographics by user type (public only)										
	All public users		Defendant		Victim		Witness		Supporting friend or relative	
	%		%		%		%		%	
	Year 3	Year 4	Year 3	Year 4	Year 3	Year 4	Year 3	Year 4	Year 3	Year 4
Age:										
16 – 34	47	47	57	58	57	60	45	42	43	44
35 - 54	41	41	36	35	35	29	42	41	43	42
55 - 64	9	9	5	5	5	5	12	14	10	10
65+	3	4	1	2	1	4	1	3	4	3
Ethnicity:										
White	83	84	81	84	86	75	87	88	89	86
Mixed	2	2	2	2	1	3	1	*	2	2
Asian	6	6	7	6	5	10	5	4	3	5
Black	7	7	8	7	7	9	5	7	5	6
Chinese or other	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	*	*	1

Demographics by user type (public only)										
	All public users		Defendant		Victim		Witness		Supporting friend or relative	
	%		%		%		%		%	
	Year 3	Year 4	Year 3	Year 4	Year 3	Year 4	Year 3	Year 4	Year 3	Year 4
Illness/disability:										
Yes	13	13	15	14	18	16	10	10	11	12
No	87	87	85	86	82	84	90	90	89	88
Gender:										
Male	58	61	72	76	59	61	55	53	39	39
Female	42	39	28	24	41	38	45	47	61	61
Source: Ipsos MORI										
NB * denotes any value less than a half of one percent										

The following chart illustrates overall satisfaction levels by key demographic groups across years three and four and includes both professional and public users. The slight drop of two percentage points in the proportion overall who are 'very' satisfied with their court experience is mirrored across most types of users. When comparing levels of satisfaction across demographic groups the differences highlighted in the previous tables must be borne in mind. For example, younger court users aged 16-34 are less likely than those aged 55+ to be appearing in a professional capacity and are more likely to be a defendant or victim. Therefore, differences in satisfaction are highly likely to reflect these variations as much as, or more than, age as a factor itself.

Overall satisfaction by demographic groups across year 3 and year 4

Disregarding the outcome of your visit, or the result of your case, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you generally with your experience today?



* Please note this question was asked for the first time in year four. Other religions are not shown due to low base sizes

- Year four data recorded between 1 May 2009 – 31 March 2010; Year three data recorded between 1 May 2008 – 7 April 2009; Base: all giving a valid response

Information about users’ declared sexuality was collected in year four for the first time, but relatively small numbers of users falling in to many of the categories of response mean that the results are very volatile and, partly as a result of this, there are no statistically significant differences in satisfaction between categories.

The following table highlights satisfaction levels with various elements of the court experience across key demographics, focusing predominantly on those who are ‘very’ satisfied’.

Satisfaction by demographics	
Most satisfied (percentage 'very' satisfied)	Least satisfied (percentage 'very' satisfied)
Ethnicity	
White court users are the most satisfied with their court experience (41% 'very' satisfied - down from 43% in year 3)	Black or Black British are the least satisfied with their court visit (29% - down from 36% in year 3 and 31% in year 2) and also with the outcome of their visit (15% dissatisfied compared to 12% on average). This will likely relate to the fact that they are also significantly more likely to be attending court as a defendant (29% compared to 23% on average).
Age	
Those over the age of 65 (47%) Those over 65 are more likely to have attended civil courts (27% compared to 17% on average)	16-34 year olds (36% - down from 38% in year 3 and in line with year 2) Younger court users (i.e. those aged between 16 and 34) are significantly more likely to have attended magistrates' courts (44% compared to 37% on average) – it is worth bearing in mind that satisfaction levels in general are lowest among those attending magistrates' courts. They are also more likely to be appearing at court as a defendant (30% compared to 23% on average).
Disability/Long standing illness	
41% of those with a long term illness or disability are 'very' satisfied with their court experience – broadly in line with last year's findings. However, they are also significantly more likely than those who do not have a disability to express dissatisfaction (11% versus 8% on average) Those with a long term illness or disability are also significantly more likely to be dissatisfied with the criminal justice system as a whole (42% dissatisfied compared to 28% of those without) and with the outcome of their visit (17% dissatisfied and 12% respectively).	
With children under 16	
Consistent with findings over the four years, those without children are significantly more likely than those with children to say that they are 'very' satisfied with their court experience (41% and 38% respectively). This will relate, in part, to the reasons why they are in court; for example, those without children under 16 are significantly more likely to be appearing at court in a professional capacity (66% compared to 57% of public users).	
Gender	
Women are significantly more satisfied with the court experience than men (43% compared to 37% respectively) – a finding that is consistent with year three (45% and 39% respectively). Women are also significantly more satisfied overall than men with the outcome of their visit (76% and 72% respectively) Men are significantly more likely to have attended a magistrates court (43% compared to 29% of women); women on the hand are more likely to have attended civil and family courts (19% and 20% respectively).	

Differences in user experience by court type

As shown by the following table, there are differences in the types of users attending different types of courts. Reflecting the relevant case types, the proportions of defendants are significantly higher in magistrates' courts, whereas users are more likely to be professionals at Crown and family courts. As explained earlier in this chapter, defendants are less likely to be satisfied with their court experience, which will clearly have a bearing on overall levels of satisfaction across magistrates' courts.

Court type	Solicitor/ Barrister	Other professional	Supporting friend or relative	Victim or witness	Defendant
Civil	20%	6%	4%	3%	18%
Family	26%	7%	9%	2%	8%
Crown	28%	8%	16%	7%	12%
Magistrates	14%	3%	15%	4%	40%

Civil courts

Users of civil courts are more likely to be satisfied with their overall experience than users of other court types. Half of all civil court users (49 per cent) stated they were 'very' satisfied with the overall experience compared to two in five (40 per cent) overall. It therefore follows that there are particular service areas where civil courts score higher levels of satisfaction.

Satisfaction with waiting times is higher in civil courts than other courts; half of users (52 per cent) are 'very' satisfied with the time waited for the court or its staff to deal with their case compared to 45 per cent overall and 35 per cent in magistrates' courts.

Satisfaction is also higher than average on another key driver, staff. Nearly two thirds (64 per cent) are 'very' satisfied with the ability of staff to deal with queries there and then compared to three in five (60 per cent) overall. Civil court users are also more likely to be satisfied with waiting areas that keep the parties safe and separate (35 per cent versus 32 per cent overall).

There are a couple of less essential areas in which there is room for improvement. Civil court users are less likely to be satisfied with the refreshments available at court (17 per cent versus 23 per cent overall) and how easy it was to find the building (70 per cent versus 75 per cent overall).

Crown Court

Overall levels of satisfaction amongst Crown Court users with their court experience are in line with the national average. Two in five (41 per cent) are 'very' satisfied overall, comparable to the national figure (40 per cent).

There are some areas where Crown Court users are more likely to be 'very' satisfied than the average. They are the most likely court users to be satisfied with information regarding court procedures and facilities; 44 per cent state they are 'very' satisfied compared to 38 per cent of all other users. More than three in five (63 per cent) are 'very' satisfied with the convenience of sitting/opening times compared to 58 per cent

overall. Positively, Crown Court users are also more likely to be satisfied with being kept informed by the court staff of the reasons for any delay to cases. Nearly half (47 per cent) were 'very' satisfied with this compared to two in five (41 per cent) overall. Satisfaction with staff is also high; 72 per cent are 'very' satisfied that staff treated them fairly and sensitively compared to 69 per cent overall.

Family courts

Family court users are more likely to be satisfied with their court experience than most other court users (other than civil court users) in most aspects of service. Overall, they are more likely to be 'very' satisfied; 43 per cent compared to 40 per cent of all court users.

They are also more likely to be 'very' satisfied with the following key service areas:

- convenience of sitting/opening times (62 per cent versus 58 per cent overall)
- time waited at the public counter/reception before being seen (70 per cent versus 66 per cent overall)
- time waited for the court or its staff to deal with your case (52 per cent versus 45 per cent overall)
- being kept informed by court staff of the reasons for any delay to cases (46 per cent versus 41 per cent overall)
- information regarding court procedures and facilities (43 per cent versus 38 per cent overall)
- forms needed being clear and easy to understand (48 per cent versus 44 per cent overall)
- ability of court staff to respond and deal with your query there and then (67 per cent versus 60 per cent overall)
- staff treating you fairly and sensitively (75 per cent versus 69 per cent overall)
- how easily you found the courtroom or office you needed (70 per cent versus 65 per cent overall)
- facilities that take into account any particular needs that you may have (44 per cent versus 37 per cent overall)

Magistrates' courts

As in previous years, court users attending magistrates' courts are the least likely to be satisfied with many aspects of service. Consequently, they are significantly less likely to be 'very' satisfied with their experience (31 per cent compared to the overall proportion of 40 per cent).

The areas where they are least likely to be 'very' satisfied compared to other users are:

- convenience of sitting/opening times (52 per cent versus 58 per cent overall)
- time waited for the court or its staff to deal with your case (35 per cent versus 45 per cent overall)
- being kept informed by court staff of the reasons for any delay to cases (34 per cent versus 41 per cent overall)
- information regarding court procedures and facilities (34 per cent versus 38 per cent overall)
- forms needed being clear and easy to understand (41 per cent versus 44 per cent overall)
- ability of court staff to respond and deal with your query there and then (55 per cent versus 60 per cent overall)
- staff treating you fairly and sensitively (64 per cent versus 69 per cent overall)
- cleanliness of public areas (48 per cent versus 53 per cent overall)

There are a few areas in which magistrates' court users are more likely to be positive. More than a quarter are 'very' satisfied with the refreshments provided at court (27 per cent) compared to an overall figure of 23 per cent. They are also more likely to be 'very' satisfied with the availability of private discussion rooms (34 per cent versus 31 per cent overall).

However it is worth noting that the areas where magistrate court users are more likely to be 'very' satisfied are not areas that are important in the key driver analysis; therefore they will have little influence on levels of satisfaction with the overall experience.

Appendices

Appendix A: Statistical reliability

The variation between the sample results and the “true” values (the findings which would have been obtained if everybody taken part in the study) can be predicted from knowledge of the sample sizes on which the results are based and the number of times that a particular answer is given. The confidence with which we can make this prediction is usually chosen to be 95 per cent, that is if we were to repeatedly take a sample of the same size from our population, the chances are that, on average, in 95 out of 100 samples the 95 per cent confidence intervals will contain the “true” population value. The table below illustrates the predicted ranges for different sample sizes and percentage results at the “95 per cent confidence interval”.

Sample size on which survey result is based	Approximate sampling tolerances applicable to percentages at or near these levels		
	10% or 90%	30% or 70%	50%
	±%	±%	±%
500	3	4	4
1,000	2	3	3
2,000	2	2	3
5,000	1	2	2
8,832	1	1	1

For example, with a total sample size of 8,832 where 30 per cent give a particular answer, the chances are 19 in 20 that the “true” value (which would have been obtained if the whole population had been surveyed) will fall within the range of one percentage point, plus or minus, from the sample result (i.e. between 29 per cent and 31 per cent).

When the results are compared between separate sub-groups within a sample, different results may be obtained. The difference may be “real”, or it may occur by chance (because not everyone in the population has been surveyed). To test if the difference is a real one – i.e. that it is “statistically significant” – it is again necessary to know the total population, the size of the samples, the percentage giving a certain answer, and the degree of confidence chosen. Assuming a “95 per cent confidence interval”, the differences between the two sub-sample results must be greater than the values shown in the following table.

Sample size on which survey result is based	Differences required for significance at or near these percentage levels		
	10% or 90%	30% or 70%	50%
	±%	±%	±%
300 and 400 (i.e. HMCS area comparisons)	5	7	8
1200 and 1300 (i.e. HMCS region comparisons)	3	4	4
6000 and 6000	2	2	2
12000 and 12000	1	2	2

Where there are sub-groups comprised of very few respondents, caution has to be exercised when comparing findings as the sample size has become too small for any statistically reliable analysis to be carried out.

Appendix B: Marked up questionnaire

Her Majesty's Courts Service User Survey

Year 4 (2009/10) Topline Results (Exit Survey, including RCJ)

- **Year 4** results are based on face to face interviews with 8,832 court users. Fieldwork conducted between 1st May 2009 and 31st March 2010. Results are in bold.
- **Year 3** results are based on face to face interviews with 12,949 court users. Fieldwork conducted between 1st May 2008 - 7th April 2009. Results are in bold.
- **Year 2** results are based on face to face interviews with 11,519 court users. Fieldwork conducted between 1st May 2007 - 28th March 2008.
- **Year 1** results are based on face to face interviews with 5,122 court users. Fieldwork conducted between 16th January 2007 – 15th May 2007.
- Interviews were conducted within individual court premises, using paper questionnaires.
- Where results do not sum to 100 per cent, this may be due to multiple responses or computer rounding.
- Results are based on all valid responses unless otherwise stated. Unweighted bases are stated where questionnaire routing applies.
- An asterisk (*) represents a value of less than one percent, but not zero.
- Year 4, Year 3 and Year 1 data are weighted by court type (using HMCS classifications) user type (self-definition via survey) and satisfaction with outcome within HMCS area to the profile of year 2 results.

Q1.	Which type of court did you attend today?⁴			
	Single code only			
	Year 4	Year 3	Year 2	Year 1
	(8,731)	(12,803)	(11,396)	(5,068)
	%	%	%	%
Magistrates	37	35	35	35
Crown	18	19	21	18
Civil	17	20	19	20
Family	13	12	13	15
Other	6	8	6	8
Administrative Court	1	1	*	1
Court of Appeal – Civil ⁵	1	1	*	*

⁴ The following options at this question are included in the RCJ survey only: Court of Appeal – Civil, Court of Appeal – Criminal, Administrative Court, Admiralty & Commercial Court, Chancery Chambers, Bankruptcy & Companies Court, Technology & Construction Court, Queens Bench Action Department, High Court Appeals, Family – High Court, Fees Office, Costs Office.

⁵ In Years 1 and 2 this option was called Civil Appeal.

Q1.	Which type of court did you attend today?⁴			
	Single code only			
	Year 4 (8,731) %	Year 3 (12,803) %	Year 2 (11,396) %	Year 1 (5,068) %
Court of Appeal - Criminal ⁶	1	1	1	1
Chancery Chambers	1	1	n/a	n/a
Bankruptcy & Companies Court	1	1	n/a	n/a
Queens Bench Action Department	1	1	n/a	n/a
Family – High Court	1	*	n/a	n/a
Don't know	1	1	3	1
Admiralty & Commercial Court	*	*	n/a	n/a
Technology & Construction Court	*	*	n/a	n/a
High Court Appeals	*	*	n/a	n/a
Fees Office	*	*	n/a	n/a
Costs Office	-	-	n/a	n/a
Probate ⁷	n/a	n/a	*	1

Q2.	What did you do at the court today?			
	Single code only			
	Year 4 (8,755) %	Year 3 (12,869) %	Year 2 (11,332) %	Year 1 (5,121) %
Appear in a professional capacity	37	37	36	35
Appear as a defendant	23	23	22	23
Support a friend or relative	11	11	10	9
File/deliver papers	5	5	6	6
Appear as a party in a case	5	5	5	6
Make a payment/pay a fee ⁸	3	4	4	4
Obtain other information	3	3	3	3
Appear as a witness	3	3	3	3
Search court records/obtain documents	2	2	2	2
Applicant	2	2	1	n/a
View a case but not connected to any person in the proceedings	2	1	2	2
Appear as a victim of a criminal offence	1	1	1	1
Pre-court visit	1	*	1	1
Appear as an expert witness	*	*	*	*
Claimant ⁹	*	*	*	*
Other	3	3	2	5

⁶ In Years 1 and 2 this option was called Criminal Appeal.

⁷ Probate users were not included in the Year 4 and Year 3 survey (they are now surveyed separately).

⁸ In Years 1 and 2 this option was called **Make a payment** in both exit and RCJ questionnaires. In Year 3 it was changed to **Pay a fee** in the RCJ survey only (it remains **Make a payment** in the exit survey).

⁹ This option is included in the RCJ survey only.

	Q3. Which of the following describes you/your role?			
	Single code only			
	Base: All court professionals			
	Year 4	Year 3	Year 2	Year 1
	(3,471)	(4,355)	(3,990)	(1,702)
	%	%	%	%
Solicitor	33	35	33	34
Barrister	23	22	25	22
Police Officer	10	9	8	6
Legal Executive	5	5	6	7
Legal Secretary/ Outdoor Clerk	5	4	6	4
Social service staff	3	3	3	3
Other Local Authority staff	2	3	3	3
Prosecutor	2	2	2	3
Interpreter	2	2	2	2
Victim or Witness Support Worker	2	2	2	2
Probation Officer	1	1	2	2
Other Criminal Justice System Officer	1	1	1	2
Press/Media	2	1	1	2
Expert Witness	1	1	1	1
Citizen's Advice Bureau ¹⁰	*	1	*	-
Witness	1	*	1	*
PSU Volunteer ¹¹	*	*	*	-
Prison Officer ¹²	-	-	n/a	n/a
Other	7	7	5	7

¹⁰ This option was included in the RCJ survey only in Year 1, but it has been in both the Exit and RCJ surveys since Year 2.

¹¹ This option is included in the RCJ survey only.

¹² This option was included for the first time in Year 3. It is included in the RCJ survey only.

Q4	What type of case brought you to the courthouse today? Single code only			
	Year 4	Year 3	Year 2	Year 1
	(8,626)	(12,428)	(11,263)	(5,076)
	%	%	%	%
Other criminal case ¹³	39	38	40	36
Debt or other money claim	9	11	11	10
Criminal - motoring case ¹⁴	9	10	10	11
Housing matter	7	9	8	8
Other civil case	5	5	5	5
Child contact/residence case	5	5	5	5
Family case involving social services	5	4	4	5
Divorce/dissolution involving financial issues	4	4	5	5
Other family case	4	4	4	4
Personal injury or negligence case	3	3	3	2
Insolvency ¹⁵	3	2	1	2
Criminal ¹⁶	2	1		
Adoption case	*	*	1	*
Costs assessment ¹⁷	*	-	*	*
Contested will ¹⁸	*	*	*	*
Asylum and Immigration ¹⁹	*	*	n/a	n/a
Contract dispute ²⁰	*	-	n/a	n/a
Probate ²¹	n/a	n/a	*	1
Other	3	1	3	4
None of these	1	*	1	1

¹³ This option was included in both Exit and RCJ surveys in Years 1 and 2, but in Year 3 and Year 4 it is included in the Exit survey only.

¹⁴ This option was included in both Exit and RCJ surveys in Years 1 and 2, but in Year 3 and Year 4 it is included in the Exit survey only.

¹⁵ In Year 3 and Year 4 the wording of this option was slightly changed for the RCJ. It is now called Insolvency/Bankruptcy in the RCJ survey only.

¹⁶ This option is included in the RCJ survey only. In Year 3 and Year 4 it replaced the options Criminal – motoring case and Other criminal case.

¹⁷ This option is included in the RCJ survey only.

¹⁸ This option was included in the RCJ survey only in Year 1, but it has been in both the Exit and RCJ surveys since Year 2.

¹⁹ This option was included for the first time in Year 3 for the RCJ survey only.

²⁰ This option was included for the first time in Year 3 for the RCJ survey only.

²¹ This option was included in the RCJ survey only in Year 1, it was in both the Exit and RCJ surveys in Year 2 and it was removed from both surveys in Year 3 and Year 4 (as probate users are now surveyed separately).

Outcome

Q5	How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that your visit to court today was necessary? Single code only	Year 4	Year 3	Year 2	Year 1
		(8,609)	(12,681)	(11,308)	(5,008)
		%	%	%	%
Very satisfied	58	59	59	55	
Fairly satisfied	23	23	22	25	
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	7	6	6	6	
Fairly dissatisfied	5	5	5	6	
Very dissatisfied	7	6	7	7	
Don't know	*	*	*	*	

Q6	And how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the outcome of your visit/ case here today? Single code only	Year 4	Year 3	Year 2	Year 1
		(8,521)	(12,549)	(11,197)	(4,921)
		%	%	%	%
Very satisfied	45	46	47	44	
Fairly satisfied	28	27	27	28	
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	11	11	11	11	
Fairly dissatisfied	6	6	6	6	
Very dissatisfied	6	7	7	7	
Don't know	3	3	4	4	

Pre-court experience

Q7	Were you contacted by the court before you arrived today? Single code only Base: All public users	Year 4	Year 3	Year 2	Year 1
		(5,158)	(8,275)	(6,738)	(3,246)
		%	%	%	%
Yes	35	39	37	40	
No	65	61	63	60	

Q8	What method was used by the court to contact you?			
	Multicode ok			
	Base: All public users who were contacted previously			
	Year 4	Year 3	Year 2	Year 1
	(1,800)	(3,234)	(2,507)	(1,313)
	%	%	%	%
Letter	78	82	80	81
Telephone	12	9	11	9
Summons	6	5	4	5
In person	3	3	4	4
Hearing notices	2	2	2	2
Order	1	1	1	2
Email	1	1	*	*
Witness Service	1	*	*	1
Other	2	2	1	2
Don't know	*	*	*	*

Q9	Before you came to court today how confident were you that you knew what to expect from your visit?			
	Single code only			
	Base: All public users			
	Year 4	Year 3	Year 2	Year 1
	(5,156)	(8,277)	(6,724)	(3,254)
	%	%	%	%
Very confident	26	25	27	27
Fairly confident	30	31	31	31
Neutral	18	18	15	16
Not very confident	16	16	16	16
Not at all confident	9	8	9	8
Don't know	2	2	2	2

Q10 - Q12		Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with each of the following provided by the court and not by anybody else e.g. police, solicitor, etc?						
		Single code per row						
		Base: All public users						
		Very satisfied %	Fairly satisfied %	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied %	Fairly dissatisfied %	Very dissatisfied %	Don't know	
Q10	Information you received before your visit regarding court procedures and facilities, and what to expect	Year 4 (4,015)	27	37	15	9	10	3
		Year 3 (6,099)	28	37	14	8	9	3
		Year 2 (5,195)	27	37	14	10	10	2
		Year 1 (2,611)	26	40	13	8	11	2

Q10 - Q12		Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with each of the following provided by the court and not by anybody else e.g. police, solicitor, etc? Single code per row Base: All public users						
			Very satisfied %	Fairly satisfied %	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied %	Fairly dissatisfied %	Very dissatisfied %	Don't know
Q11	That your hearing/ trial went ahead when you were told it would	Year 4 (3,975)	36	37	10	8	9	1
		Year 3 (5,995)	37	37	9	8	8	1
		Year 2 (4,965)	35	37	8	9	10	1
		Year 1 (2,476)	34	38	9	8	9	1
Q12	The time it has taken for your case to reach this stage	Year 4 (4,240)	24	34	15	11	14	1
		Year 3 (6,478)	26	35	12	11	14	2
		Year 2 (5,308)	24	37	11	11	16	1
		Year 1 (2,614)	24	36	13	10	16	1

Experiences today

Accessibility

Q13 - Q15		Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with each of the following aspects of accessibility? Single code only per row						
			Very satisfied %	Fairly satisfied %	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied %	Fairly dissatisfied %	Very dissatisfied %	Don't know %
Q13	The convenience of the sitting/opening times	Year 4 (8,658)	58	32	5	2	2	1
		Year 3 (12,709)	59	32	5	3	1	1
		Year 2 (11,319)	55	34	5	3	2	1
		Year 1 (5,019)	51	38	6	3	2	1
Q14	How easy it was to find the building	Year 4 (8,661)	75	19	3	2	1	*
		Year 3 (12,728)	75	18	3	3	1	*
		Year 2 (11,374)	73	20	3	3	2	*
		Year 1 (5,028)	72	21	3	3	2	*
Q15	Easily identifiable staff available to deal with any queries	Year 4 (8,570)	68	23	5	2	1	*
		Year 3 (12,598)	69	23	4	3	1	*
		Year 2 (11,268)	66	25	4	3	2	*
		Year 1 (5,018)	63	27	5	3	1	*

Waiting times

Q16 - Q18		Now thinking about the time you have waited at court today, overall how satisfied of dissatisfied are you with ...? Single code only per row						
			Very satisfied %	Fairly satisfied %	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied %	Fairly dissatisfied %	Very dissatisfied %	Don't know %
Q16	The time you waited at the public counter/ reception before you were seen	Year 4 (6,915)	66	23	4	3	3	*
		Year 3 (10,703)	65	25	4	3	3	*
		Year 2 (9,286)	64	25	5	3	3	*
		Year 1 (4,209)	63	25	5	3	3	*
Q17	The time you waited today for the court or its staff to deal with your case²²	Year 4 (7,464)	45	30	8	9	8	*
		Year 3 (11,132)	43	31	9	9	7	*
		Year 2 (9,968)	43	32	8	9	8	*
		Year 1 (4,472)	42	30	9	9	9	*
Q18	Being kept informed by the court staff of the reasons for any delay to your case	Year 4 (5,231)	41	29	13	8	8	1
		Year 3 (7,725)	38	31	14	8	8	1
		Year 2 (6,877)	40	30	13	8	9	1
		Year 1 (3,260)	38	29	14	8	10	1

²² In year 3 the wording of this option was slightly changed for the RCJ. It is now called **The time you waited today to go into court** in the RCJ survey only.

Information

Q19 - Q20		Now thinking about the information provided by the court, overall how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with...? Single code only per row						
Very			satisfied %	Fairly satisfied %	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied %	Fairly dissatisfied %	Very dissatisfied %	Don't know %
Q19	Information available regarding court procedures and facilities	Year 4 (6,630)	38	35	13	5	4	4
		Year 3 (9,664)	38	35	12	5	4	5
		Year 2 (8,816)	37	36	13	6	4	3
		Year 1 (4,045)	36	38	13	6	5	3
Q20	The forms you needed being clear and easy to understand	Year 4 (5,217)	44	35	11	4	3	3
		Year 3 (8,009)	46	33	11	4	3	3
		Year 2 (7,169)	43	36	11	5	3	2
		Year 1 (3,453)	41	36	12	5	3	3

How staff dealt with user

Q21-Q22		Now thinking about your experiences with court staff here today, overall how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with...? Single code only per row						
			Very satisfied %	Fairly satisfied %	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied %	Fairly dissatisfied %	Very dissatisfied %	Don't know %
Q21	The ability of staff to respond and deal with your query there and then	Year 4 (7,482)	60	29	5	2	2	1
		Year 3 (10,960)	60	29	6	3	2	1
		Year 2 (10,039)	61	29	6	2	2	1
		Year 1 (4,532)	59	30	7	2	2	1

Q21-Q22		Now thinking about your experiences with court staff here today, overall how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with...? Single code only per row						
			Very satisfied %	Fairly satisfied %	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied %	Fairly dissatisfied %	Very dissatisfied %	Don't know %
Q22	Staff treating you fairly and sensitively	Year 4 (8,180)	69	24	4	1	1	1
		Year 3 (11,963)	68	25	4	1	1	*
		Year 2 (10,863)	69	24	4	1	1	*
		Year 1 (4,854)	65	27	5	1	1	*

Court environment and facilities

Q23 - Q28		Now thinking about the court environment and facilities here today, overall how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with...? Single code only per row						
			Very satisfied %	Fairly satisfied %	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied %	Fairly dissatisfied %	Very dissatisfied %	Don't know %
Q23	Refreshments available at the court	Year 4 (6,920)	23	27	12	11	10	16
		Year 3 (10,230)	22	28	13	11	11	16
		Year 2 (9,276)	21	27	13	11	12	16
		Year 1 (4,187)	23	30	14	9	10	13
Q24	Availability of private discussion rooms	Year 4 (6,306)	31	28	11	12	8	10
		Year 3 (9,375)	29	28	12	11	8	11
		Year 2 (8,257)	29	29	11	12	9	10
		Year 1 (3,851)	28	29	12	13	8	10

Q23 - Q28		Now thinking about the court environment and facilities here today, overall how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with...? Single code only per row						
			Very satisfied %	Fairly satisfied %	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied %	Fairly dissatisfied %	Very dissatisfied %	Don't know %
Q25	How easily you found the courtroom or office you needed	Year 4 (8,300)	65	27	4	2	1	*
		Year 3 (12,232)	66	27	4	2	1	*
		Year 2 (10,820)	65	29	3	2	1	*
		Year 1 (4,779)	61	30	4	2	1	*
Q26	Waiting areas that keep the parties safe and separate	Year 4 (6,374)	32	30	13	12	7	6
		Year 3 (9,578)	30	30	14	11	7	7
		Year 2 (8,335)	30	31	14	12	8	4
		Year 1 (4,010)	30	32	14	12	8	5
Q27	Cleanliness of public areas (including the toilet areas)	Year 4 (8,579)	53	33	7	3	2	2
		Year 3 (12,606)	51	35	6	3	2	2
		Year 2 (11,257)	50	36	6	3	2	2
		Year 1 (4,993)	48	37	8	3	3	2
Q28	Facilities that take into account any particular needs that you may have	Year 4 (3,985)	37	33	16	5	3	6
		Year 3 (5,767)	33	33	17	5	4	8
		Year 2 (5,825)	33	35	17	5	4	6
		Year 1 (2,867)	33	33	19	5	4	6

Overall priorities

Q29	Overall, which one or two of these are most important to you regarding the service you receive from the court? Code up to two maximum			
	Year 4	Year 3	Year 2	Year 1
		(8,752)	(12,856)	(11,483)
	%	%	%	%
Waiting times	53	53	53	53
How staff deal with customers	28	29	30	30
Ease of accessing the courts and its staff	25	26	27	28
Information before your visit	22	22	24	24
Information on the day	22	22	23	23
Court environment and facilities	19	18	19	19
Other	1	1	1	1
None of these	2	2	1	1
Don't know	1	1	1	1

Overall satisfaction with experience

Q30	Thinking about the types of issues we have just been discussing, and disregarding the outcome of your visit, or the result of your case, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you generally with your experience today? Single code only			
	Year 4	Year 3	Year 2	Year 1
		(8,616)	(12,761)	(11,400)
	%	%	%	%
Very satisfied	40	42	41	39
Fairly satisfied	42	41	42	43
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	10	9	9	8
Fairly dissatisfied	4	4	4	5
Very dissatisfied	4	4	4	4
Don't know	*	*	*	*

Q31	And has your experience today been better, worse or about the same as you expected it to be? Single code only			
	Year 4	Year 3	Year 2	Year 1
		(8,742)	(12,848)	(11,473)
	%	%	%	%
Better	23	24	25	23
Worse	7	8	8	8
About the same	64	63	63	65
No expectations	5	5	3	3
Don't know	1	1	1	1

Improvements

Q32	What, if anything, would have improved your experience today? ²³			
	Year 4	Year 3	Year 2	Year 1
	(8,627)	(12,637)	(11,270)	(5,022)
	%	%	%	%
None/nothing/everything was okay/no answer	58	60	52	54
Court environment/facilities	20	20	22	23
Waiting times	14	13	13	14
Accessibility	14	12	13	14
Information	9	10	12	13
How staff dealt with user	8	9	9	9
Other	5	4	6	6

Treatment

Q33	Ignoring the outcome of your case today, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way you were treated by the court staff? Single code only			
	Year 4	Year 3	Year 2	Year 1
	(8,525)	(12,598)	(11,243)	(4,963)
	%	%	%	%
Very satisfied	65	65	66	63
Fairly satisfied	28	28	27	29
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	4	4	4	5
Fairly dissatisfied	1	2	2	1
Very dissatisfied	1	1	1	1
Don't know	*	*	*	*

Justice system

Q34	Other than your experience with Her Majesty's Courts Service, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the justice system as a whole? Single code only			
	Year 4	Year 3	Year 2	Year 1
	(8,632)	(12,709)	(11,330)	(5,023)
	%	%	%	%
Very satisfied	13	13	12	11
Fairly satisfied	34	35	35	35
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	20	18	18	18
Fairly dissatisfied	15	16	16	16
Very dissatisfied	15	14	16	16
Don't know	4	4	3	5

²³ Please note this question is open ended. Respondents' verbatim comments are categorised under the headings noted here.

Demographics

QA	Gender Single code only				
		Year 4	Year 3	Year 2	Year 1
		(8,698)	(12,784)	(11,363)	(5,048)
		%	%	%	%
	Male	58	56	57	57
	Female	42	44	43	43

QB	Age Single code only				
		Year 4	Year 3	Year 2	Year 1
		(8,760)	(12,850)	(11,446)	(5,102)
		%	%	%	%
	16-24	16	15	15	17
	25-34	28	28	27	26
	35-44	25	26	26	26
	45-54	19	18	19	19
	55-59	5	6	6	6
	60-64	4	4	4	4
	65-74	2	2	2	2
	75+	*	*	*	*

QC	Do you have any long-term illness, health problem or disability which limits your daily activities or the work you can do? Single code only				
		Year 4	Year 3	Year 2	Year 1
		(8,688)	(12,741)	(11,333)	(5,050)
		%	%	%	%
	Yes	9	9	10	9
	No	91	91	90	91

QD	What is the nature of your condition(s)? Multicode ok Base: All respondents with a long-term illness, health problem or disability				
		Year 4	Year 3	Year 2	Year 1
		(710)	(1,034)	(1,046)	(435)
		%	%	%	%
	Longstanding illness or health condition (such as cancer, HIV, diabetes, chronic heart disease, or epilepsy)	43	41	39	41
	Physical impairment (such as using a wheelchair to get around and/or difficulty using your arms)	30	32	34	35
	Mental health condition (such as depression, schizophrenia or severe anxiety)	24	25	25	20

QD	What is the nature of your condition(s)? Multicode ok Base: All respondents with a long-term illness, health problem or disability	Year 4	Year 3	Year 2	Year 1
		(710)	(1,034)	(1,046)	(435)
		%	%	%	%
	Sensory impairment (such as being blind / having a serious visual impairment or being deaf / having a	6	6	5	7
	Learning disability, (such as Down's syndrome or dyslexia) or cognitive impairment (such as autism or head injury)	5	4	7	5

QE	Do you have any children under 16? Multicode ok	Year 4	Year 3	Year 2	Year 1
		(8,665)	(12,661)	(11,267)	(4,982)
		%	%	%	%
	Yes – aged 0-5	20	20	19	18
	Yes – aged 6-10	16	18	17	16
	Yes – aged 11-15	16	16	16	16
	No	60	59	61	62

QF	Is English your first language? ²⁴ Single code only	Year 4	Year 3
		(8,693)	(9,105)
		%	%
	Yes	93	92
	No	7	8

QG	Ethnicity Single code only	Year 4	Year 3	Year 2	Year 1
		(8,713)	(12,611)	(11,190)	(4,991)
		%	%	%	%
	White	85	84	81	85
	Mixed	2	2	5	2
	Asian or Asian British	6	6	6	6
	Black or Black British	6	6	7	6
	Chinese or other ethnic group	1	1	1	1
	Refused	1	1	1	*

²⁴ This question was asked for the first time in Year 3.

QH	Which of the following do you consider yourself to be? ²⁵ Single code only
	Year 4
	(8,634)
	%
Bisexual	1
Gay man	1
Gay woman/lesbian	1
Heterosexual/straight	94
Other	*
Refused	3

QI	Which of the groups on this card do you closely identify yourself with? ²⁶ Single code only
	Year 4
	(8,670)
	%
No religion	38
Baha'i	*
Buddhist	1
Christian	50
Hindu	1
Jain	*
Jewish	1
Muslim	5
Sikh	1
Other	1
Refused	3

²⁵ This question was asked for the first time in Year 4.

²⁶ This question was asked for the first time in Year 4.

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Explanatory notes

1. For a brief summary of the methodology used in this survey, refer to the relevant introductory paragraphs. A more detailed explanation of the methods employed can be found in the accompanying technical note, which builds on the technical report from the 2008/09 survey.
2. The survey was conducted via face to face interviews during 2009/10. This was the fourth year that the survey has been carried out by Ipsos MORI for Her Majesty's Courts Service, and constitutes the last of the planned initial four years of fieldwork.
3. Year four (2009/10) constituted the last of the planned initial four years of fieldwork for the survey. Users of these statistics will be advised about future years of the survey in due course.

Symbols and conventions

The following symbols have been used throughout the tables in this bulletin:

- = no response
- * = denotes a finding of less than 0.5 per cent but greater than zero
- n/a = not applicable

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