

Customers' experience of the Tax Credits Helpline

**Findings from the 2009 Panel Study of Tax Credits and Child
Benefit Customers**

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Executive summary

Introduction

This report presents the findings of the Panel Study of Tax Credits and Child Benefit Customers – a major research project looking at the experiences of tax credits and Child Benefit recipients. The study was carried out by the National Centre for Social Research and commissioned by HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC). This report is focused on recipients' experiences of contacting HMRC using the tax credits helpline.

Research findings

Recipients' experience and perception of the tax credits helpline

The majority of recipients had called the helpline both in the 12 months before the 2008 face-to-face interview and the 2009 telephone interview (both 67 per cent). The most frequently mentioned reasons for calling the helpline were reporting changes of circumstances and renewing their award. Most recipients had their call fully dealt with by the first person they spoke to (80 per cent). A smaller proportion experienced some other outcome, for example, their call was transferred or they were told that someone would call them back. The majority of recipients were satisfied with the way their call was dealt with. Satisfaction with the helpline was associated with household type, employment status and the reason for calling. Most recipients also said that they felt it was easy to get in contact with the helpline.

Recipients' call journey

Recipients' experiences of calling the helpline have been examined in greater detail in order to explore their 'call journey'. Recipients were asked what happened the last time they called the helpline (if they had called the helpline in the 12 months before the 2009 interview). Forty-seven per cent got through to the helpline straightaway. Forty-six per cent had to wait to speak to an advisor but had their call answered. Three per cent had to wait but did not have their call answered. The remaining four per cent hung up straightaway. Of those who did not get through or hung up, a very small proportion contacted HMRC in an alternative way. Recipients that had to wait to speak to an advisor were asked if this deterred them from contacting the helpline again in the future – the majority said that it did not. Most recipients said that the number of pre-recorded options they had to listen to before being connected to an advisor was about what they expected.

Views about the information given by the helpline

Most recipients were confident that the advice given by the helpline was correct. Confidence in the accuracy of the information was associated with the reason for calling. Recipients were less likely to feel confident if they were making a general query than if they were calling to renew their award (76 per cent compared with 91 per cent). The majority of recipients also felt confident that they understood the information given to them. Those with a longstanding illness or disability were less likely to have said that they felt confident about their ability to understand the information (84 per cent compared with 92 per cent).

Cost of calls to the helpline

The majority of recipients said that they never called the helpline from a mobile phone. Most of those who said that they never called from a mobile phone owned a landline. However, a substantial number of those who said that they never called from a mobile phone did not own a landline suggesting that they found another landline from which to call the helpline. Of those who did call from a mobile, most thought it was either 'very expensive' or 'expensive'. Nearly ten per cent of those who own a mobile phone had needed to call but did not because of concern about the cost and did not contact HMRC in an alternative way. Recipients with a mobile phone only were more likely to say that they had been deterred from contacting the helpline due to the cost (18 per cent). Those who did not call needed to either report changes of circumstances or renew their award.

Helpline opening hours

Most recipients were aware that the helpline is open from 8am to 8pm with extended opening at busy times such as renewals.¹ However, a notable minority (29 per cent) were unaware. Lack of awareness of the helpline opening hours was associated with a higher household income and shorter length of tax credits receipt. When asked to indicate their preferred time to call the helpline recipients typically said mornings and evenings. Differences in preferences were observed by employment status with those working 16 hours or more per week preferring to call between 6pm and 8pm.

Views about HM Revenue & Customs making proactive outbound calls to recipients

Recipients' views about being contacted by HMRC using different communication channels were explored.

- The majority of recipients said that it was acceptable to be contacted on their landline (90 per cent).
- Sixty per cent said that it was acceptable for HMRC to contact them on their mobile phone.
- Fifty-eight per cent said that it was acceptable to be contacted via text message.
- Fifty-five per cent said that contact via voicemail was acceptable.
- Four per cent said that none of the methods of communication were acceptable.
- Most recipients said that they would prefer to be contacted by HMRC after 6pm.

Interactive voice recording

In spring 2009 HMRC introduced Interactive Voice Recording (IVR) to play recorded messages to callers while they are waiting to be connected to an advisor. Forty-six per cent of recipients called the helpline after IVR was introduced. Of these the majority said that they remembered hearing the message and remembered the content. Most said that they were useful and around half followed the advice given in the message. The main reason given for not following the advice was that recipients did not think that it was relevant to them.

¹ These opening times were correct at the time of interview.

1 Introduction

The tax credits helpline provides information on all aspects of the tax credits process. The helpline serves a dual role for tax credits recipients. Recipients may use the helpline as a source of advice and call to raise any queries about their claim. The helpline may also be used to communicate information to HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) that may have an impact on the tax credits award.

Tax credits were designed to be flexible, reflecting individual circumstances and being responsive to any changes in these circumstances. This means that the tax credits process requires a substantial amount of involvement from recipients. It is important that recipients use the helpline and other facilities available to help them manage their claim, to resolve queries and to report changes of circumstances or any inconsistencies in their tax credits award. Not contacting HMRC could result in incorrect tax credits records which may lead to an underpayment, overpayment or an error in the claim.

This report presents findings on tax credits recipients' experience and views of the tax credits helpline. It is based on analysis of survey data collected as part of the Panel Study of Tax Credits and Child Benefit Customers. The study was conducted by the National Centre for Social Research on behalf of HMRC. The first wave of the Panel Study was conducted in 2008 and involved face to face interviews with 3,706 current and previous tax credits recipients. 1,200 persons who responded to the face-to-face study were interviewed again via telephone in 2009.

Please see the Technical Report for further details about both waves of data collection.²

Fieldwork

Current tax credits recipients were asked about their experiences of the helpline both at the face-to-face interview in 2008 and the telephone interview in 2009. The face-to-face interview broadly asked about recipients' views of the helpline and the findings are discussed in section 2.1. The telephone interview expanded on the questions asked in the face-to-face interview and gave recipients the opportunity to give more details about their experience of calling the helpline. The findings from that part of the study are discussed in the remaining report sections. All of the findings refer to the last time recipients called the helpline.

The following areas are addressed in this report:

- a) Recipients' overall experience of calling the helpline
- b) Recipients' call journey
- c) Recipients' views about the information and advice provided by the helpline
- d) Recipients' views about the cost of calling the helpline
- e) Recipients' awareness of the helpline opening hours
- f) The acceptability of HMRC making outbound calls to recipients
- g) Recipients' view about Interactive Voice Recording messages

² Please refer to the technical report of the 2009 Panel Study of Tax Credits and Child Benefit Customers for the full details (see <http://www.natcen.ac.uk/study/tax-credit--child-benefit-study>)

All findings in this report refer to tax credits recipients who were in receipt of tax credits between 2007/2008 and 2008/2009.

All comparisons discussed in the report are statistically significant at the 95 per cent level, which means that there is less than 5 per cent probability that the observed differences between groups occurred by chance. Tables for these differences are included in the Appendix. All results presented in the report are based on weighted data. Weighting helps to correct for different probabilities of selecting people for the study.

2 Research Findings

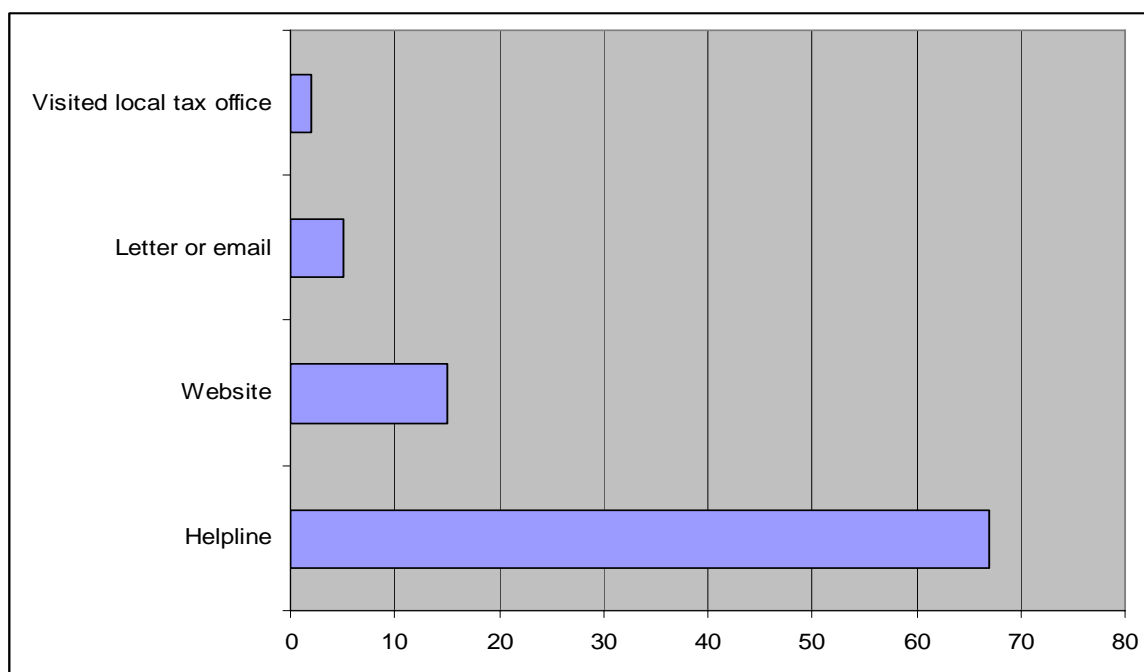
2.1 Recipients' experience and perception of the tax credits helpline

Current tax credits recipients were asked about the channels they used to communicate with HMRC. The helpline was the most frequently mentioned means of making contact.

Prevalence of using the helpline

Over two-thirds of current tax credits recipients had contacted the helpline (67 per cent) in the previous 12 months³. The helpline was the most popular method of contacting HMRC, with other methods being substantially less common - fifteen per cent of recipients had visited the tax credits website in the last year, five per cent had written or sent an email and two per cent had visited their local HMRC Enquiry Centre. (Chart 1)

Chart 1: Method of contacting HM Revenue & Customs



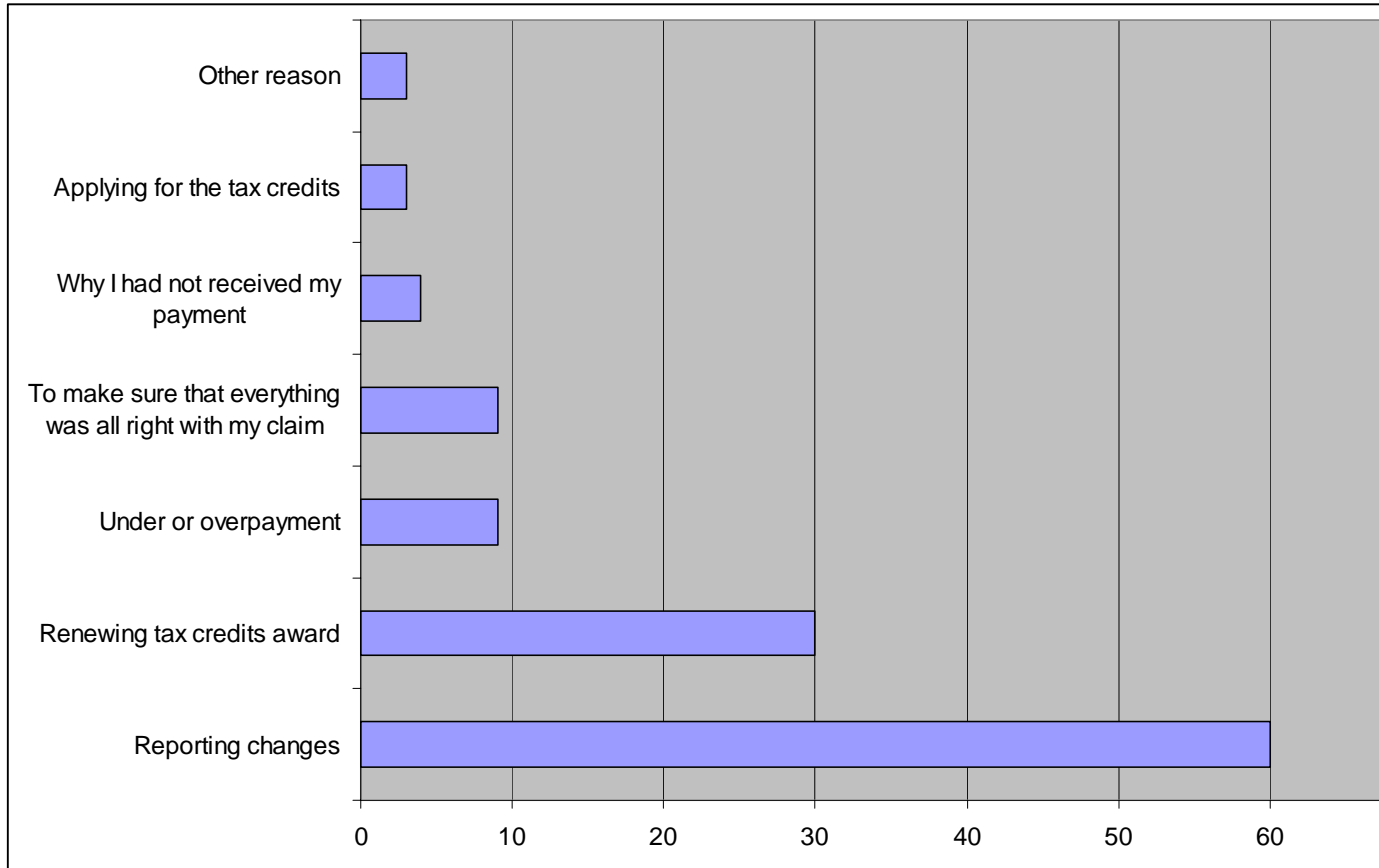
Base: Tax credits recipients in receipt of tax credits between 2007/08 and 2008/09 (n=1092) * Respondents were asked about the twelve months before the 2008 face to face interview

³ In the twelve months before the 2008 face to face interview. The same proportion of recipients called the helpline in the twelve months before the 2009 telephone interview (67 per cent).

Why did recipients call the helpline?

The most common reasons for calling the helpline were reporting changes in circumstances (60 per cent), renewing tax credit award (30 per cent), discussing underpayments or overpayments (nine per cent) and checking that everything was all right with the claim (nine per cent). (Chart 2)

Chart 2: Reason for last call to the helpline*



Base: Tax credits recipients in receipt of tax credits between 2007/08 and 2008/09 and have called helpline in 12 months before 2008 face to face interview (n=733) * Respondents were asked about the twelve months before the 2008 face to face interview

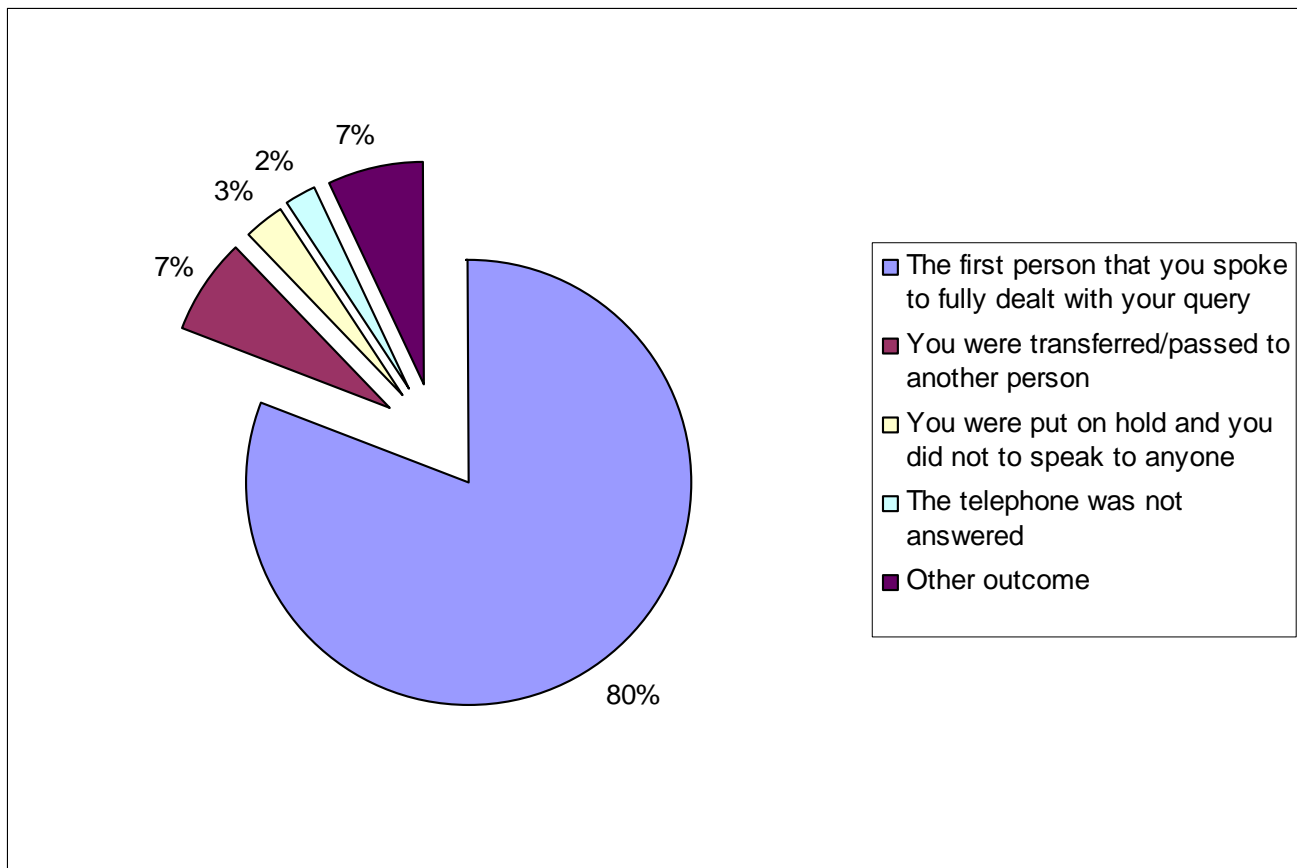
Please note that recipients could have given more than one response to this question and may have called the helpline for multiple reasons.

Did recipients feel that the advisor fully dealt with their call?

Recipients were asked whether they felt their query was fully dealt with by the advisor *the last time* they called the helpline before their interview. Outcomes for this last call were:

- Eight out of ten (80 per cent) recipients who had called the helpline reported that the first person that they spoke to fully dealt with their query.
- Seven per cent were transferred to another advisor.
- Three per cent were put on hold and did not get to speak to anyone else.
- Two per cent said that the telephone was not answered.
- The remaining seven per cent experienced some other outcome (Chart 3)

Chart 3: Outcome of last call to helpline



Base: Tax credits recipients in receipt of tax credits between 2007/2008 and 2008/2009 and have called helpline in 12 months before 2008 face to face interview

Satisfaction with helpline

The majority of recipients were satisfied with how their query was dealt with in the last call they made to the helpline before their interview (83 per cent). Twelve per cent of recipients were dissatisfied. The remaining five per cent were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. Satisfaction with the helpline was associated with household type and employment status. It may be that those with single claims working fewer hours had less complex queries that were easier for the helpline to deal with in a satisfactory way.

- Couple recipients were less likely to be satisfied with how their query was dealt with than recipients who were making a single claim (80 per cent compared with 89 per cent).
- Those working 15 hours or fewer per week were less likely to be satisfied than those working 16 or more hours per week (82 per cent compared with 91 per cent).

The reason for the query was also important, those calling because of an error were less likely to be satisfied:

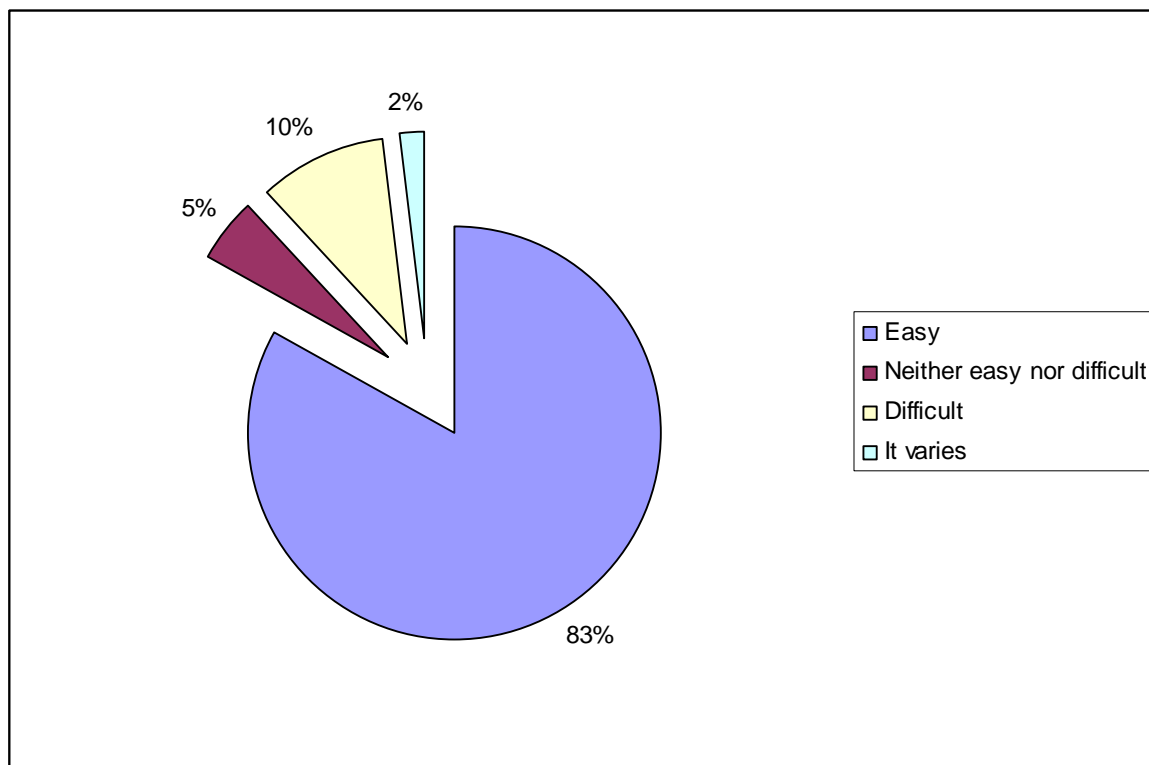
- Those calling about under or overpayments, or why they had not received a payment were likely to be satisfied (60 per cent and 51 per cent respectively) than those that called for other reasons such as reporting changes (85 per cent) and renewing tax credits (92 per cent).⁴

⁴ Please refer to Appendix A for a list of other characteristics that were considered but were found not to be related to satisfaction with the helpline

Perceived ease of contacting the helpline

Sixty-seven per cent of current tax credits recipients had called the helpline and of these eighty-three per cent felt that it was easy to get in touch using the helpline⁵. Ten per cent said that it was difficult or very difficult to contact the helpline, five per cent said that it was neither easy nor difficult and two per cent said that it varied⁶. (Chart 4)

Chart 4: Perceived ease of contacting the helpline*



Base: Tax credits recipients in receipt of tax credits between 2007/08 and 2008/09 and have called helpline in 12 months before 2009 telephone interview (n=562) * In the 12 months before the interview in 2009

2.2 Recipients' call journey

In the 2009 telephone interview questions were included to collect detailed information about the recipients' last call to the helpline to help us to explore their call journey.

How were recipients' calls dealt with?

When contacting the helpline just under a half of recipients were put through to an advisor straightaway (47 per cent) and around half had to wait (53 per cent). Of those who had to wait four per cent hung up straightaway⁷. Forty-nine per cent waited for a while – forty-six per cent had their call answered and three per cent did not have their call answered by an advisor. Chart 5 shows the proportions in each group.

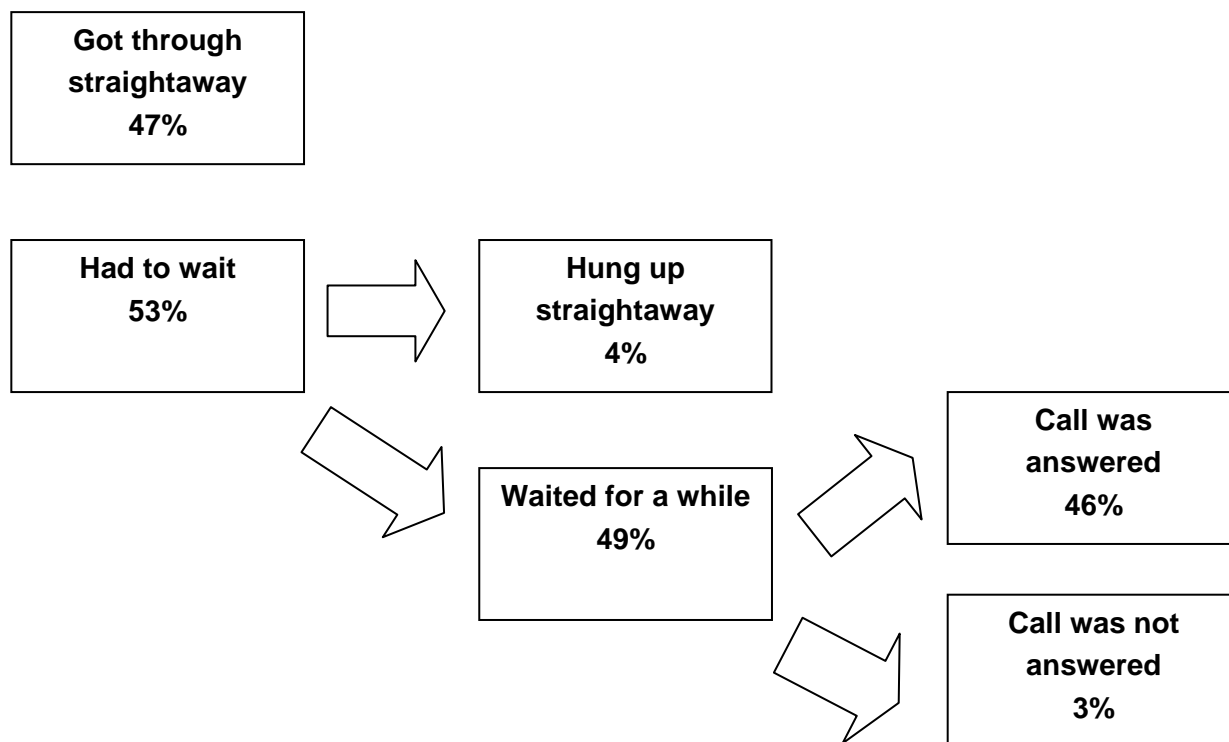
⁵ Please refer to Appendix A for a list of other characteristics that were considered but were found not to be related to perceived ease of contacting the helpline.

⁶ This question on ease of contact was not asked in the autumn/winter 2008/09 interview so trend data is not available.

⁷ The bases for those who had to wait to speak to an advisor but did not have their call answered and those who hung up straight away are too low for any further analysis by recipient characteristics.

Recipients who had to wait to speak to an advisor were asked if this experience discouraged them from contacting the helpline again. The majority of recipients were not put off calling in the future (81 per cent). However, some said they would be less likely to use the helpline again (19 per cent).

Chart 5: Flowchart showing outcome of last call to helpline



Base: Tax credits recipients in receipt of tax credits between 2007/08 and 2008/09 and have called helpline in 12 months before 2009 telephone interview (n=536)
Please note that percentages show the final outcomes and sum to 100.

Certain groups of recipients had slightly different call journeys.

- Seventy per cent of Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) recipients said that they had to wait compared with fifty-two per cent of white recipients.
- Those that had to wait said, perhaps unsurprisingly, that it was difficult or neither easy nor difficult to contact the helpline (82 per cent) compared to those who got through straightaway who said it was easy (49 per cent).
- Those who said they were less likely to contact the helpline in the future were more likely to say that their experience of contacting the helpline was difficult or neither easy nor difficult (49 per cent).
- Only ten per cent of those who had found contacting the helpline easy who said they would be deterred in the future.⁸

⁸ Please refer to Appendix A for a list of other characteristics that were considered but were found not to be related to the outcome of recipients' last call to the helpline.

What did recipients think about the number of options they had to listen to before being connected to an advisor?

In 2009 when this research was conducted the tax credits helpline used a system which asks callers to select a pre-recorded option to indicate the reason of their call before connecting them to an advisor. The reasons covered calls related to:

1. Renewals
2. Letters informing the caller that their tax credits payments had stopped
3. Reporting a change in circumstances
4. Applying for tax credits for the first time
5. All other reasons

Recipients were asked about their views on the number of options they have to select.

Eighty-five per cent said that the number of options was about what they expected the last time they called the helpline. Around one in ten (nine per cent) said it was more than they expected. The remaining six per cent said that it was fewer than they expected.

The only significant difference to emerge was perceived ease of contacting the helpline. Experiencing more options than expected could be seen as negative and may contribute to feeling that contact with the helpline was difficult. Those who thought it was difficult or neither easy nor difficult to contact the helpline were twice as likely to say there were more options than they expected as those who thought it was easy (16 per cent compared with eight per cent).

2.3 Views about information given by the helpline

Recipients were asked how confident they felt about the accuracy of the guidance given by the helpline and their own ability to understand the guidance (Chart 6). Please note that this is the recipients' view of the accuracy of the information and may be an incorrect judgement.

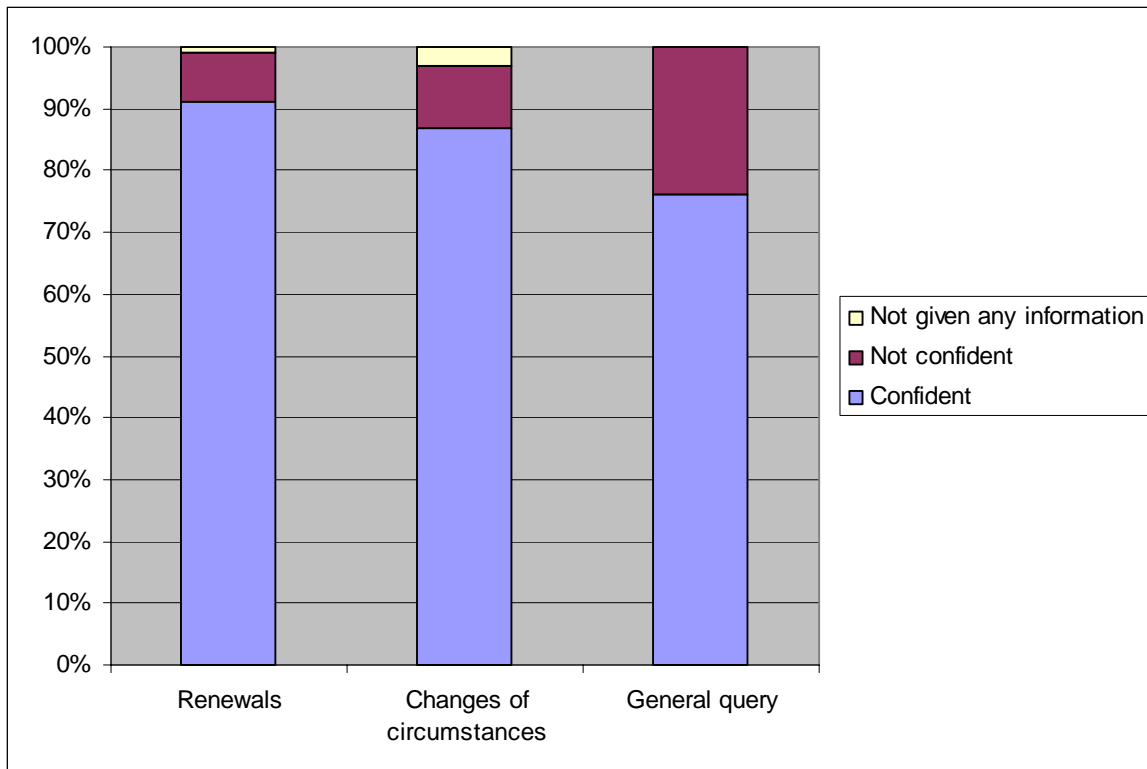
The majority of recipients were confident about the information or advice they received from the helpline (86 per cent) the last time they called. Twelve per cent were not confident and two per cent were not given any information. Of those recipients that were not given any information the majority were calling to let HMRC know something or reporting changes of circumstances – scenarios where information from HMRC would not necessarily be required.

Confidence in the accuracy of the information provided was associated with the reason for calling the helpline. Those calling to make a general query were less likely to feel confident about the accuracy of the advice given than those calling about renewals (76 per cent compared with 91 per cent).

Overall, nine out of ten recipients (90 per cent) were confident they understood the information or advice provided by the helpline.

- Those with a longstanding illness or disability were less likely to feel confident that they understood than those without an illness or disability (84 per cent compared with 92 per cent).⁹

Chart 6: Recipients' confidence in accuracy of information provided by reason for calling the helpline



Base: Tax credits recipients in receipt of tax credits between 2007/08 and 2008/09 and have called helpline in 12 months before 2009 telephone interview (n=516)

Please note: Not given any information not applicable for recipients' own ability to understand information provided

2.4 Cost of calls to the helpline

The tax credits helpline is an 0845 number so the cost of a call can vary depending on whether it is made from a landline or mobile phone (the call will typically cost between 0 and 40 pence per minute).¹⁰ Questions were asked around the cost of calls to the helpline:

- Whether recipients thought it was expensive to call the helpline from a mobile phone or not?
- Had recipients ever needed to contact the helpline but did not because of the cost?
- If the helpline was too costly did recipients use any alternative communication channels?

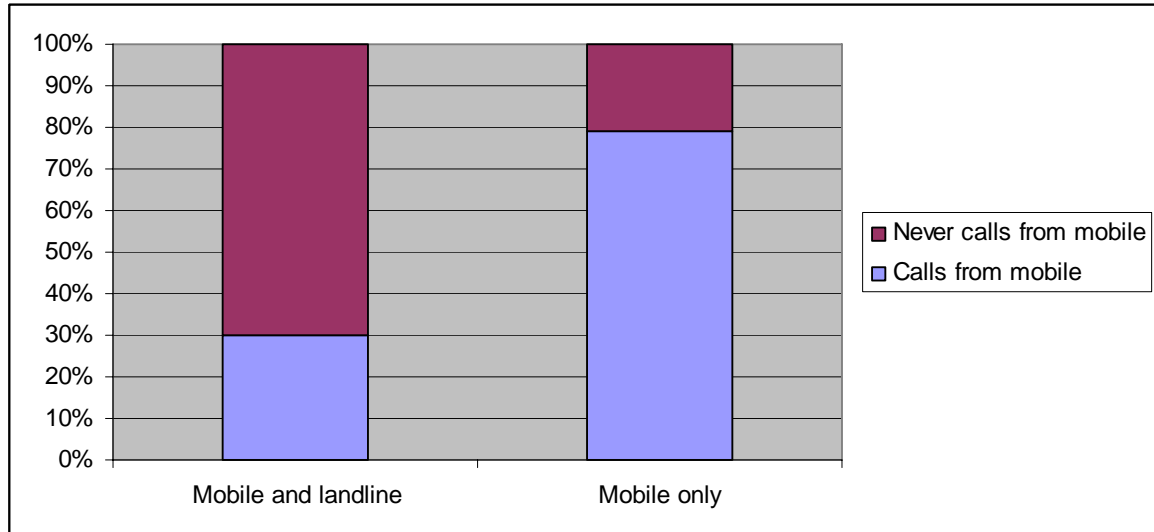
Two-thirds of all recipients said they would never call the helpline from a mobile phone (65 per cent). Those that had a landline generally preferred to use that to call the helpline:

⁹ Please refer to Appendix A for a list of other characteristics that were considered but were found not to be related to recipients' confidence in the accuracy of information provided by the helpline and confidence in their understanding of it.

¹⁰ Information correct at the time of publication.

- Those that had a mobile phone only (did not own a landline) were more likely to say that they called the helpline from a mobile phone than those that had both a landline and a mobile phone (79 per cent compared with 30 per cent) (Chart 7).
- The data suggests that some of those (21 per cent) who did not own a landline found another landline to call from as they did not call using a mobile (Chart 7).

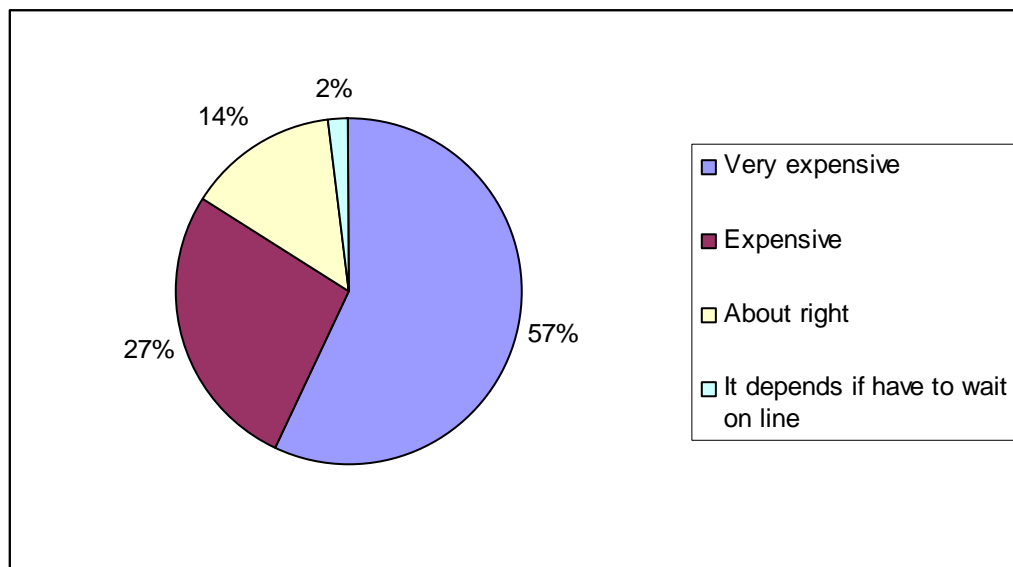
Chart 7: Use of mobile phones to call the tax credits helpline by mobile phone ownership



Base: Tax credits recipients in receipt of tax credits between 2007/08 and 2008/09 and have called helpline in 12 months before 2009 telephone interview (n=928). Respondents with a landline only were not routed to this question (n=152)

Excluding those who never called the helpline from a mobile, fifty-seven per cent of those who would call the helpline from a mobile phone thought that it was very expensive and twenty-seven per cent thought it was expensive. Fourteen per cent said that the cost was about right and two per cent that it depended on whether they had to wait on the line¹¹. (Chart 8)

Chart 8: Opinion of cost of calling the tax credits helpline from a mobile phone*



¹¹ Please refer to Appendix A for a list of other characteristics that were considered but were found not to be related to views about the cost of calling the helpline.

Recipients were asked to recall if they had ever needed to call the helpline but had not done so because of the cost of calling from a mobile. Nearly one in ten recipients had needed to call the helpline but had not because of concern about the cost of calling from a mobile (nine per cent). Recipients with a mobile phone only were more likely to say that they had been deterred from contacting the helpline due to the cost (18 per cent) than those with a landline and a mobile (seven per cent) or those with a landline only (six per cent).

- Those people who had, on at least one occasion, not called the helpline because of the cost were asked if they then made contact in another way. The majority (83 per cent) did not – although this represents only seven per cent of **all** recipients.
- Recipients who needed to call the helpline, but decided not to call because of the cost of calling from a mobile were asked what their call was related to the last time that this happened. Around half said that the potential call was related to reporting changes of circumstances (45 per cent) and around a quarter said it related to renewing the award (25 per cent).

2.5 Helpline opening hours

In 2009 the tax credits helpline was open seven days a week from 8am to 8pm, with extended opening at busy times such as renewals. The helpline opening hours were stated on various tax credits documents including the annual review form, annual declaration form and award notice as well as the HMRC website. Recipients were asked if they were aware of the correct opening hours.

Seven in ten (71 per cent) recipients said they were aware of the helpline opening hours. Around three in ten were unaware (29 per cent).

- Those that had been receiving tax credits for a longer period of time were more likely to be aware of the opening hours. Sixty-four per cent were aware among those who had been receiving tax credits for two years or less, compared to seventy-three per cent among those who had been receiving for five years or more.
- Those with the lowest household income were more likely to be aware of the opening hours. Eighty-one per cent of those with an annual household income of up to £10,399 were aware compared to sixty-two per cent among those with an annual household income of £26,000 or more. It is possible that recipients with lower household incomes were more dependent on tax credits and were therefore more likely to be in touch with HMRC.

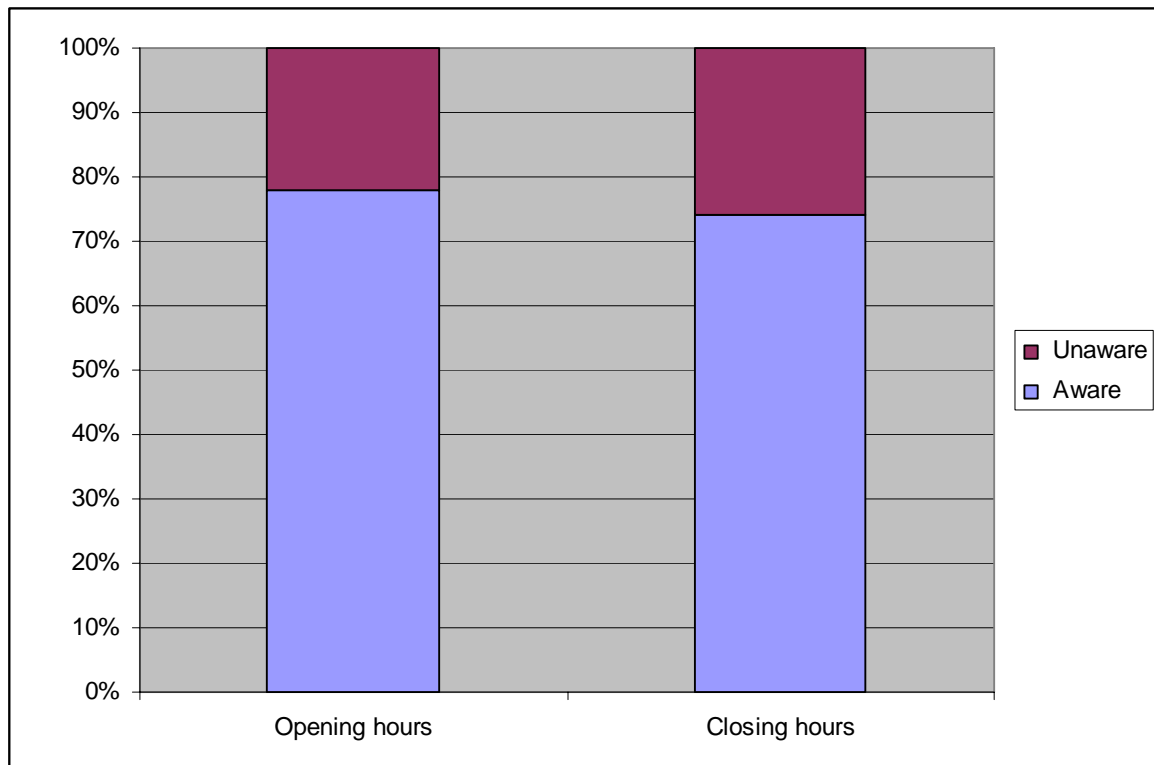
What did recipients think were the correct opening hours?

When recipients said they were not aware of times the helpline was open, it was the closing time that the greatest proportion of recipients were confused about.

- Seventy-eight per cent of all claimants knew the correct opening hours (opening at 8am).
- A smaller proportion (74 per cent) correctly identified 8pm as the correct closing time.

Recipients were also asked about the days of the week they thought the helpline was open. Ninety-nine per cent were aware that the helpline was open on weekdays, seventy-five per cent on Saturdays and seventy-two per cent on Sundays.

Chart 9: What recipients thought tax credits helpline opening and closing time was, asked if unsure of opening and closing times



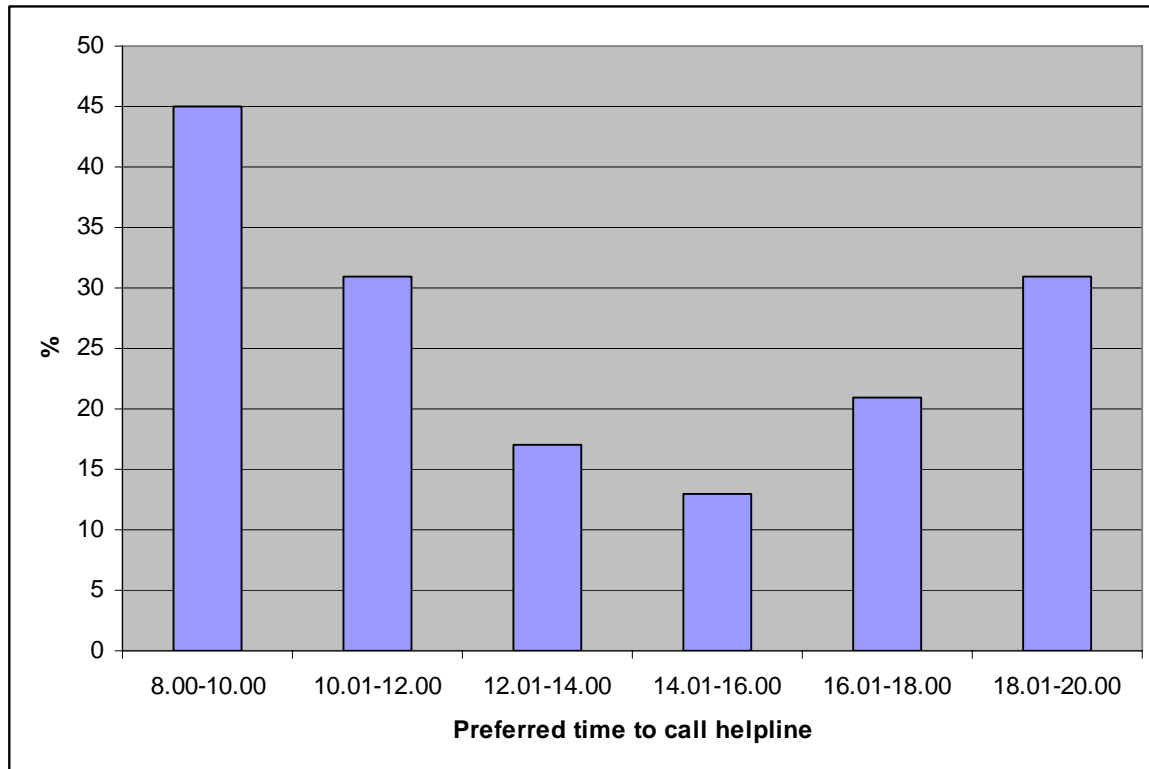
Base: Tax credits recipients in receipt of tax credits in 2007/2008 and 2008/2009, interviewed by telephone in 2009 (n=1092)

All recipients were asked when they preferred to call the helpline. Chart 10 shows that the most frequently mentioned time that recipients would prefer to call the helpline was mornings and evenings. Nearly half (45 per cent) mentioned that they wanted to call between 8am and 10am. Calling between 10am and 12 noon and 6pm and 8pm were the next most frequently mentioned times that recipients would like to call; both these times were given by around a third of respondents. Ten per cent of recipients had no preference. There were some differences in preferred time by hours worked:

- Recipients working 16 hours or more a week were more likely to want to call in the evening. Recipients working 16 or more hours per week were more likely prefer to call the helpline between 6pm and 8pm than those working 15 hours or less (42 per cent compared with eight per cent).
- Those working 15 hours or less were more likely to want to call during the day. Fifty-six per cent of recipients working 15 hours or less called the helpline between 10 and 12 compared with twenty per cent of those working 16 or more hours.
- Household type was not associated with preferred times to call the helpline.

Recipients were asked if the time they preferred to call the helpline was also the time that they usually called the helpline. The majority of recipients contacted the helpline at their preferred time (96 per cent).

Chart 10: Preferred time to call the helpline*



Base: Tax credits recipients in receipt of tax credits between 2007/08 and 2008/09 and have called helpline in 12 months before 2009 telephone interview (n=101). *Totals do not sum to 100% as recipients could give more than one answer

2.6 Views about HM Revenue & Customs making proactive outbound calls to recipients

In addition to making available a helpline service for recipients, HMRC also contacted some recipients directly in 2009 by phone. Questions were asked about contact by phone and other methods such as text and voicemail messages.

This section explores the acceptability of HMRC making outbound calls to tax credits recipients. The following questions were asked:

- How acceptable was it for HMRC to make contact by landline, mobile phone, text message and voicemail?
- When would recipients prefer to receive calls from HMRC on their landline and mobile phone?
- Would recipients be prepared to call back HMRC on a phone number that was different to the helpline?

How acceptable is it for HM Revenue & Customs to make contact by landline, mobile phone, text message or voicemail? ¹²

Nine out of ten (90 per cent) recipients with a landline said it was acceptable for HMRC to contact them in this way. Differences emerged, amongst those with landlines, by age and ethnicity.

- Ninety-five per cent of those aged 50 or over with a landline said that it was acceptable for HMRC to call their landline compared with 86 per cent of those aged under 30.
- White recipients were also more likely to say that it was acceptable to be contacted on their landline than BAME recipients (92 per cent compared with 75 per cent).

A smaller proportion of recipients who had a mobile phone said that it was acceptable to be called on their mobile phone (60 per cent).

- Younger recipients were more willing to be contacted in this way. Seventy-seven per cent of those aged under 30 said that it was acceptable for HMRC to call on their mobile compared with fifty-three per cent of those aged 50 or over.
- Differences also emerged by household type. Single recipients were more likely to say that it was acceptable for HMRC to make contact on their mobile phone than those living in couple households (71 per cent compared with 55 per cent).
- Employment status also mattered. Eighty-three per cent of those working 15 hours or fewer per week said that mobile phone contact was acceptable compared with fifty-seven per cent of those working 16 hours or more.
- Recipients with a longstanding illness or disability were also more likely to say that it was acceptable for HMRC to call their mobile phone (71 per cent compared with 58 per cent).

Fifty-eight per cent of recipients who had a mobile phone said that it was acceptable to be contacted by text message. Differences emerged by age, household type and employment status.

- As with calls to the mobile, younger people were more willing to be contacted by text. Two-thirds (sixty-five per cent) of recipients aged under 30 stated that it was acceptable for HMRC to make contact by text message while about half of those aged 50 or over said this was acceptable (48 per cent).
- Sixty-six per cent of single households said it was acceptable to be contacted by text message compared with fifty-four per cent of couple households.
- Those working 15 hours or less per week were also more likely to say it was acceptable for HMRC to make contact by text message than those working 16 hours or more per week (75 per cent compared with 55 per cent).

Voicemail was considered the least acceptable way for HMRC to contact recipients (55 per cent). Fifty-six per cent of white recipients said it was acceptable to be contacted by

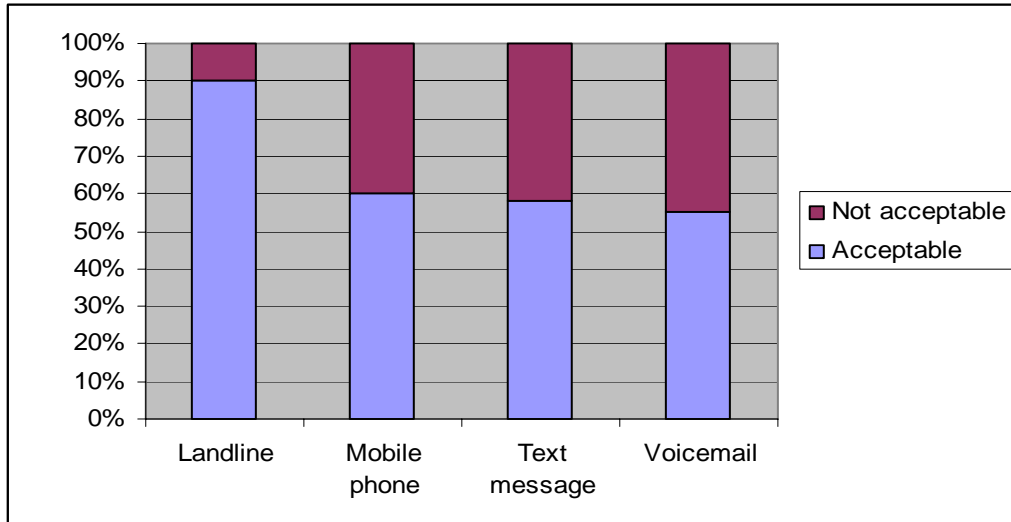
¹² Please note that recipients were asked about the acceptability of contact by mobile phone and text message if they owned a mobile phone and by landline if they had a landline

voicemail compared with forty-three per cent of BAME recipients. Recipients' views did not vary by the other characteristics explored.¹³

A small percentage of recipients (four per cent) reported that none of the communication channels were acceptable.¹⁴

A summary of recipient preferences is presented in Chart 11.

Chart 11: Acceptability of HM Revenue & Customs making contact with recipients about their tax credits claim by mode of contact



Base: Tax credits recipients in receipt of tax credits in 2007/2008 and 2008/2009 (Landline=998, Mobile phone=940, Text message=940, Voicemail=1091)

When would recipients prefer to be contacted by HM Revenue & Customs?

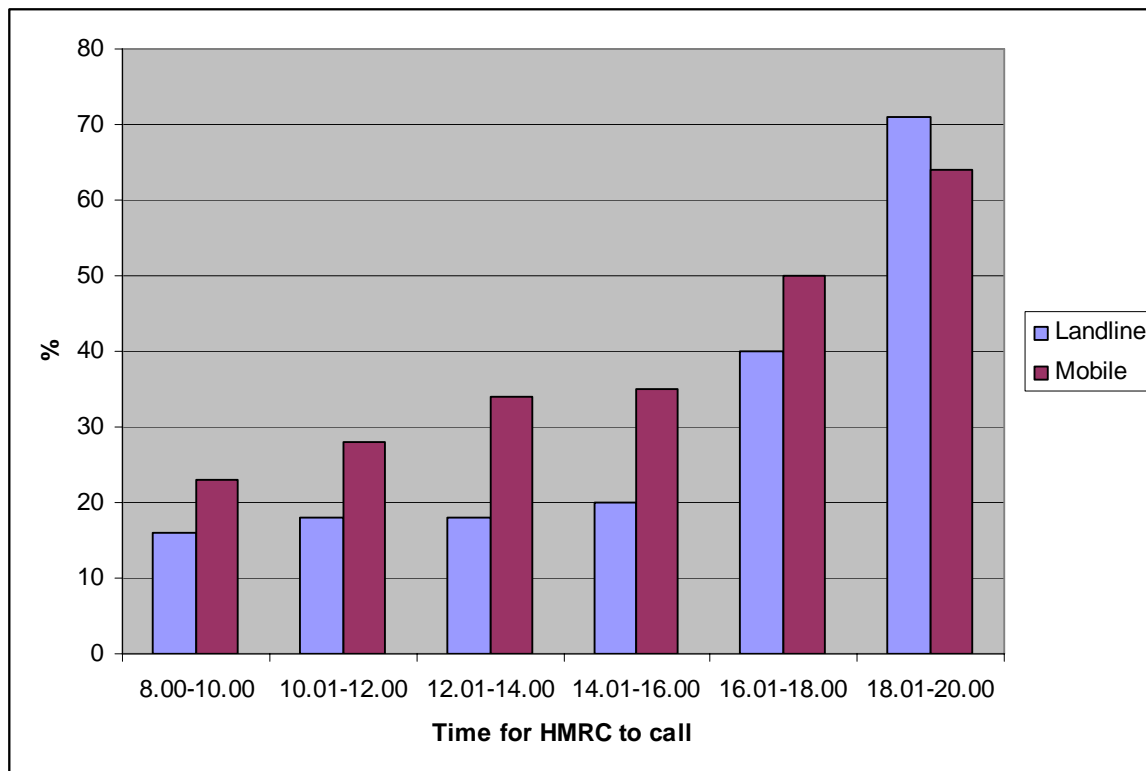
Recipients who owned a landline or mobile were asked further questions as appropriate. Recipients most often mentioned that they would prefer to be contacted after 6pm both on their landline or mobile phone (71 per cent and 64 per cent) (Chart 12).

- Recipients working 16 hours or more per week were more likely, than those working 15 hours or less, to prefer to be contacted on their landline (73 per cent compared with 53 per cent) between 6 and 8pm.
- Recipients working 16 hours or more a week were also more likely to prefer to be contacted on their mobile phone between 6 and 8pm (67 per cent preferred this compared with 49 per cent working 15 hours or less a week).

¹³ Please refer to Appendix A for a list of other characteristics that were considered but were found not to be related to the acceptability of HM Revenue & Customs making contact via landline, mobile phone, text message and voicemail.

¹⁴ The number of cases is too low for analysis by recipient characteristics.

Chart 12: Preferred time for HM Revenue & Customs to call mobile or landline*



Base: Tax credits recipients in receipt of tax credits in 2007/2008 and 2008/2009 * Mobile times asked of those owning a mobile n=567 and landline times asked of those owning a landline n=902. Totals add to over 100% as recipients could give more than one answer

Would recipients call back on a number that was different to the helpline?

Recipients were asked if they would call HMRC back on a number that was different from the helpline number, if HMRC asked them to do so. Around four in ten (46 per cent) said that it would depend on the circumstances and forty-two per cent said they would call back. Twelve per cent would not call back on a different number. Recipients that said that calling back would depend on the circumstances were asked what these were. Fifty-three per cent who said it would depend on whether they could be sure that the call was really from HMRC, forty-seven per cent said it would depend on the cost of the call. Twenty-one per cent said it would depend on what the call was about and five per cent said another reason.¹⁵

2.7 Interactive voice recording

HMRC introduced Interactive Voice Recording (IVR) in April 2009 to play recorded messages to callers while they are waiting to be connected to an advisor. These messages provided a range of information to callers, for example, advising them to make sure that they had all the necessary information at hand, to send in the renewal form by post, when to expect their payment etc. Some messages were only played at specific times during the year, for example during the renewals period. Questions were asked about whether recipients recalled hearing the messages and whether or not they found them useful.

¹⁵ Note: Recipients may have given more than one response to this question

Recipients who had called the helpline after March 2009 and waited for their call to be answered were asked further questions (as they would have been played the IVR messages). Most remembered hearing the messages and thought that the information was useful.

- Eighty-six per cent of recipients said that they remembered that they heard the messages. Of those, eighty-seven per cent remembered the message content.

Of those who remembered the message content:

- Seventy-two per cent thought that it was useful.
- Half reported that they followed the advice given by the message (51 per cent).

3 Conclusions

Experience and perception of the tax credits helpline

Sixty-seven per cent of recipients had used the helpline in the 12 months before the interviews took place. The majority of recipients called the helpline to report a change or renew tax credit award. Most recipients said that their query to the helpline had been dealt with by the first person that they spoke to (80 per cent). Overall, recipients were satisfied with their experience of calling the helpline.

Recipients' 'call journey'

Overall, the majority of recipients had their call answered by the helpline but some had to wait before their call was answered. Of those who did not get through to an advisor or hung up straightaway a very small proportion made contact with HMRC in another way (less than one per cent). Those who had to wait to get through to an advisor were generally not deterred from contacting the helpline again in the future. Most recipients that had called the helpline said that the number of options they had to listen to before being connected to an advisor was about what they expected (87 per cent).

Views about information given by the helpline

Most recipients were confident about the accuracy of the information or advice provided by the helpline (86 per cent) and their own ability to understand the advice given (90 per cent). The small minority of recipients that were not given any information tended to be calling to let HMRC know something or reporting changes of circumstances. If recipients were making a general query they were less likely to feel confident about the accuracy of the information given.

Cost of calling the tax credits helpline

The majority of those that called the helpline from a mobile phone thought that it was either very expensive or expensive. Nine per cent of all recipients were deterred by the cost from calling the helpline again. Recipients that had a mobile phone only were most likely to be deterred by the cost (18 per cent). Those who found the helpline too costly tended not to use another method to contact HMRC. A large proportion of these recipients said that they were calling to report changes of circumstances (45 per cent) or renew their award (25 per cent). This means that queries may not have been raised and information not reported possibly leading to errors.

Helpline opening hours

Recipients were generally aware of the helpline opening hours (71 per cent) although more than a quarter were unaware. The majority of recipients were aware that the helpline was open on weekdays with a smaller proportion aware that it was open on Saturdays (75 per cent) and Sundays (72 per cent). Recipients that were newer to the tax credits system were less likely to be aware of the opening and closing times.

Views about HM Revenue and Customs making proactive outbound calls to recipients

Overall, recipients were happy to be contacted by HMRC although some communication channels were seen as more acceptable than others. Contact by landline was acceptable

to the majority of recipients that owned a landline (90 per cent). The percentage of mobile phone owners that said contact by mobile phone (60 per cent) or text message (58 per cent) was acceptable was lower. Voicemail message were acceptable for the smallest percentage of recipients (55 per cent). Very few recipients said that none of these means of communication was acceptable (four per cent). Certain groups of recipients were more likely to find contact by particular communication channels acceptable. White recipients and those in older age groups were more likely to say that the landline was an acceptable means of making contact. Those in younger age groups, in single households and working less than 15 hours per week were more likely to say that it was acceptable for HMRC to make contact by mobile phone or text message.

Interactive voice recording

Eighty-six per cent of recipients asked about the IVR messages recalled hearing them. The majority of these people thought that the messages were useful and followed the advice given if it was relevant to them.

Appendix A considered

Respondent characteristics

The report discusses only subgroup differences that were statistically significant. The table below presents subgroups that were analysed for each topic but found not to be related to the outcome.

Table A.1. Respondent characteristics used in the analysis

Topic	Considered but not significant
Satisfaction with helpline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethnicity • At least one adult in benefit unit with limiting long standing illness • Household income • Length of tax credits receipt
Perceived ease of contacting the helpline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethnicity • At least one adult in benefit unit with limiting long standing illness • Household income • Household type • Employment status • Length of tax credits receipt
Outcome of calling helpline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethnicity • At least one adult in benefit unit with limiting long standing illness • Date helpline last called • Reason for calling helpline
Discouraged from calling helpline if had to wait	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethnicity • At least one adult in benefit unit with limiting long standing illness • Household income • Household type • Employment status
Confidence in accuracy of information provided by helpline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethnicity • At least one adult in benefit unit with limiting long standing illness • Household income • Household type • Employment status
Confidence in own ability to understand information provided by helpline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethnicity • Household income • Household type • Employment status • Reason for calling helpline
Views about cost of calling helpline from a mobile phone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethnicity • At least one adult in benefit unit with limiting long standing illness • Household income • Landline ownership
Awareness of helpline opening hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethnicity • At least one adult in benefit unit with limiting long standing illness

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Household type • Employment status
Preferred time to call tax credits helpline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethnicity • Household type
Acceptable for HM Revenue & Customs to contact landline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least one adult in benefit unit with limiting long standing illness • Household type • Employment status
Acceptable for HM Revenue & Customs to contact mobile phone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethnicity
Acceptable for HM Revenue & Customs to contact via text message	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethnicity • At least one adult in benefit unit with limiting long standing illness
Acceptable for HM Revenue & Customs to contact via voicemail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age group • At least one adult in benefit unit with limiting long standing illness • Household type • Employment status
Call back on a number different to the helpline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethnicity • Age group • At least one adult in benefit unit with limiting long standing illness • Household type • Employment status

Appendix B Table Conventions

Guide to methods used in tables and figures cited in the text

The majority of tables report on questions or variables with mutually exclusive responses, for example the number of changes of circumstances reported in the last year. In these tables the percentages will generally sum to 100, however there may be some instances where percentages will not sum to exactly 100% because of rounding.

Where the question allowed multiple responses, (i.e. the respondent could choose a number of responses rather than just one) the percentages will not sum to 100.

Base The weighted count is the base presented in all tables.

0 Percentage value is greater than 0, but less than 0.5, which is rounded down.

* Figures are based on less than 25 cases and are not robust, therefore results not presented in this report.

“ “ A blank space in a table where a percent figure is expected indicates that there were no responses in the category.

Statistical significance was tested using logistic regression for complex samples. Unless stated otherwise, all the differences cited in the text or presented in the charts are statistically significant at the 95% level.

The information presented in this report uses data from the Panel Study that have been statistically weighted to take account of the technical issues such as sample design.

Appendix C Tables

Table 1. Method of contacting HM Revenue & Customs in 12 months before interview in 2008

	%
Helpline	67
Website	15
Letter or email	5
Visited local tax office	2
Weighted base (n)	1092

Base: Tax credits recipients in receipt of tax credits between 2007/2008 and 2008/2009

Table 2. Called tax credits helpline in 12 months before interview in 2009

	%	Weighted base
Yes	67	562
No	33	275
Total	100	837

Base: Tax credits recipients in receipt of tax credits between 2007/2008 and 2008/2009

Table 3. Reason for calling the helpline

	%
Reporting changes	60
Renewing tax credits award	30
Under or overpayment	9
To make sure that everything was all right with my claim	9
Why I had not received my payment	4
Applying for the tax credits	3
Other reason	3
All	118
Weighted base (n)	733

Base: Tax credits recipients in receipt of tax credits between 2007/2008 and 2008/2009 and have called helpline in 12 months before 2008 telephone interview

Note: Recipients may have given more than one response to this question and the helpline may have been called for multiple reasons

Table 4. How call to helpline was dealt with

	%	Weighted base
The first person that you spoke to fully dealt with your query	80	586
You were transferred/passed to another person	7	50
You were put on hold and you did not to speak to anyone	3	22
The telephone was not answered	2	14
Other outcome	7	56
Total	100	729

Base: Tax credits recipients in receipt of tax credits between 2007/2008 and 2008/2009 and have called helpline in 12 months before 2008 face to face interview

Table 5. Satisfaction with helpline last time called by household type

	Single	Couple	All
	%	%	%
Satisfied	89	80	83
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	3	6	5
Dissatisfied	8	14	12
Total	100	100	100
Weighted base	268	465	733

Base: Tax credits recipients in receipt of tax credits between 2007/2008 and 2008/2009 and have called helpline in 12 months before 2008 face to face interview

Table 6. Satisfaction with helpline last time called by employment status

	0-15 hours per week	At least one adult working 16 or more hours per week	All
	%	%	%
Satisfied	82	91	83
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	6	2	5
Dissatisfied	13	7	12
Total	100	100	100
Weighted base	103	629	733

Base: Tax credits recipients in receipt of tax credits between 2007/2008 and 2008/2009 and have called helpline in 12 months before 2008 face to face interview

Table 7. Satisfaction with helpline last time called by reason for calling

		Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Total	Weighted base
Applying for the tax credits	%	90	5	5	100	
Reporting changes	%	85	5	9	100	4
Renewing tax credits award	%	92	4	4	100	2
Under or overpayment	%	60	6	34	100	
Why I had not received a payment	%	51		49	100	
To make sure that everything was all right with my claim	%	88	6	6	100	
Other reason	%	62	12	26	100	
All	%	83	5	12	100	7

Base: Tax credits recipients in receipt of tax credits between 2007/2008 and 2008/2009 and have called helpline in 12 months before 2008 face to face interview

Table 8. Ease of contacting helpline

	Called helpline in last 12 months before interview	All cases
	%	%
Easy	83	81
Neither easy nor difficult	5	6
Difficult	10	10
It varies	2	2
Total	100	100
Weighted base	562	1053

Base: Tax credits recipients in receipt of tax credits between 2007/2008 and 2008/2009

Table 9. Ease of contacting helpline

	%	Weighted base
Very easy	37	388
Fairly easy	45	469
Neither easy nor difficult	6	65
Fairly difficult	6	63
Very difficult?	4	46
It varies	2	22
Total	100	1053

Base: Tax credits recipients in receipt of tax credits between 2007/2008 and 2008/2009

Table 10. Outcome of last call to helpline

	%	Weighted base
Got through straightaway	47	250
Waited and call was answered	46	247
Waited and call was not answered	3	17
Hung up straightaway	4	22
Total	100	536

Base: Tax credits recipients in receipt of tax credits between 2007/2008 and 2008/2009 and have called helpline in 12 months before 2009 telephone interview

Table 11. Outcome of last call to helpline by ethnicity

	White	Black & minority ethnic	All
	%	%	%
Got through straightaway	48	30	46
Had to wait	52	70	54
Total	100	100	100
Weighted base	494	47	541

Base: Tax credits recipients in receipt of tax credits between 2007/2008 and 2008/2009 and have called helpline in 12 months before 2009 telephone interview

Table 12. Outcome of last call to helpline by perceived ease of contacting helpline

	Easy	Neither easy or difficult/Difficult	All
	%	%	%
Got through straightaway	51	18	46
Had to wait	49	82	54
Total	100	100	100
Weighted base	453	79	532

Base: Tax credits recipients in receipt of tax credits between 2007/2008 and 2008/2009 and have called helpline in 12 months before 2009 telephone interview

Table 13. Whether less likely to contact helpline in future by ease of contacting helpline

	Easy	Neither easy or difficult/Difficult	All
	%	%	%
Yes	10	49	19
No	90	51	81
Total	100	100	100
Weighted base	220	65	285

Base: Tax credits recipients in receipt of tax credits between 2007/2008 and 2008/2009 and have called helpline in 12 months before 2009 telephone interview and had to wait for the call to be answered

Table 14. Views about number of options by ease of contacting helpline

	Easy	Neither easy or difficult/Difficult	All
	%	%	
More than expected	8	16	9
About what expected	87	77	85
Less than expected	5	7	6
Total	100	100	100
Weighted base	437	73	510

Base: Tax credits recipients in receipt of tax credits between 2007/2008 and 2008/2009 and have called helpline in 12 months before 2009 telephone interview

Table 15. Confidence in accuracy of information given by helpline and own ability to understand information

	Accuracy of information given	Own ability to understand information
	%	%
Confident	86	90
Not confident	12	10
Not given any information	2	*
Total	100	100
Weighted base	526	516

Base: Tax credits recipients in receipt of tax credits between 2007/2008 and 2008/2009 and have called helpline in 12 months before 2009 telephone interview

Table 16. Confidence in accuracy of information given by reason for calling helpline

	Renewals	Changes of circumstances	General query	All
	%	%	%	%
Confident	91	87	76	86
Not confident	8	10	24	12
Not given any information	1	3	*	2
Total	100	100	100	100
Weighted base	217	279	58	554

Base: Tax credits recipients in receipt of tax credits between 2007/2008 and 2008/2009 and have called helpline in 12 months before 2009 telephone interview

Table 17. Confidence that understood information given by the helpline, by longstanding illness or disability

	Longstanding illness	No longstanding illness	All
	%	%	%
Confident	84	92	90
Not confident	16	8	10
Total	100	100	100
Weighted base	94	422	516

Base: Tax credits recipients in receipt of tax credits between 2007/2008 and 2008/2009 and have called helpline in 12 months before 2009 telephone interview

Table 18. Calls helpline from mobile phone

	%	Weighted base
Calls from mobile phone	35	323
Never calls from mobile phone	65	605
Total	100	928

Base: Tax credits recipients in receipt of tax credits between 2007/2008 and 2008/2009 who had a mobile phone

Table 19. Use of mobile to call helpline by landline ownership

	Landline	No landline	All
	%	%	%
Calls from mobile	30	79	35
Never calls from mobile	70	21	65
Total	100	100	100
Weighted base	837	91	928

Base: Tax credits recipients in receipt of tax credits between 2007/2008 and 2008/2009 and have called helpline in 12 months before 2009 telephone interview who had a mobile phone

Table 20. Opinion of cost of calling helpline from mobile phone (excluding cases that never call from a mobile phone)

	%	Weighted base
Very expensive	57	183
Expensive	27	88
About right	14	44
It depends if have to wait on line	2	7
Total	100	322

Base: Tax credits recipients in receipt of tax credits between 2007/2008 and 2008/2009 and have called helpline in 12 months before 2009 telephone interview (Cases that never call the helpline from a mobile phone have been excluded)

Table 21. Ever needed to call helpline but did not because of cost of calling from mobile phone

	%	Weighted base
Yes	9	101
No	91	989
Total	100	1092

Base: Tax credits recipients in receipt of tax credits between 2007/2008 and 2008/2009

Table 22. Contacted HM Revenue & Customs using alternative mode of contact

	%	Weighted base
Yes	17	17
No	83	84
Total	100	101

Base: Tax credits recipients in receipt of tax credits between 2007/2008 and 2008/2009 and have ever needed to call helpline but did not because of cost of calling

Table 23. Reason why needed to contact helpline, but did not because of cost

	%	Weighted base
Applying for tax credits	10	8
Renewing your tax credits award	25	21
Reporting changes in circumstances	45	38
Just a general query	23	19
Other reason	8	7
Total	111	84

Base: Tax credits recipients in receipt of tax credits between 2007/2008 and 2008/2009 and have ever needed to call helpline but did not because of cost of calling from a mobile and did not contact HMRC by other means.

Note: Totals add to more than 100 per cent because some recipients gave more than one answer.

Table 24. Awareness of opening hours by length of tax credits receipt

	Less than 2 years	2-3 years	3-5 years	More than 5 years	All
	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	64	68	73	73	71
No	36	32	27	27	29
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Weighted base	127	91	197	656	1089

Base: Tax credits recipients in receipt of tax credits between 2007/2008 and 2008/2009

Table 25. Awareness of opening hours by annual household income

	Up to £10,399	£10,400-£25,999	£26,000 or more	All
	%	%	%	%
Yes	81	79	62	71
No	19	21	38	29
Total	100	100	100	100
Weighted base	142	473	418	1089

Base: Tax credits recipients in receipt of tax credits between 2007/2008 and 2008/2009

Table 26. Awareness of helpline opening and closing times

	Opening hours %	Closing hours %
Aware	78	74
Unaware	22	26
Total	100	100
Weighted base	1092	1092

Base: Tax credits recipients in receipt of tax credits between 2007/2008 and 2008/2009, interviewed by telephone in 2009

Table 27. Awareness of helpline opening and days

	Weekdays %	Saturday %	Sunday %
Aware	99	75	72
Unaware	1	25	28
Total	100	100	100
Weighted base	1092	1092	1092

Base: Tax credits recipients in receipt of tax credits between 2007/2008 and 2008/2009, interviewed by telephone in 2009

Table 28. Usually calls helpline at preferred time

	%	Weighted bases
Yes	96	78
No	4	4
Total	100	81

Base: Tax credits recipients in receipt of tax credits between 2007/2008 and 2008/2009 and have called helpline in 12 months before 2009 telephone interview

Table 29. Preferred time to call helpline by employment status

	0-15 hours	Over 16 hours	All
	%	%	%
8.00-10.00	55	40	45
10.01-12.00	56	20	31
12.01-14.00	24	14	17
14.01-16.00	17	11	13
16.01-18.00	7	28	21
18.01-20.00	8	42	31
Weighted bases	29	72	101

Base: Tax credits recipients in receipt of tax credits between 2007/2008 and 2008/2009 and have called helpline in 12 months before 2009 telephone interview

Note: Totals add to more than 100 per cent because some recipients gave more than one answer.

Table 30. Acceptable for HM Revenue & Customs to call landline by ethnicity

	White	Black & minority ethnic	All
	%	%	%
Acceptable	92	75	90
Not acceptable	8	25	10
Total	100	100	100
Weighted base	919	79	998

Base: Tax credits recipients with a landline, in receipt of tax credits between 2007/2008 and 2008/2009 and own landline

Table 31. Acceptable for HM Revenue & Customs to call landline by age

	Under 30	30-39	40-49	50 and over	All
	%	%	%	%	%
Acceptable	86	90	91	95	90
Not acceptable	14	10	9	5	10
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Weighted base	119	383	396	101	999

Base: Tax credits recipients with a landline in receipt of tax credits between 2007/2008 and 2008/2009 and own landline

Table 32. Acceptable for HM Revenue & Customs to call mobile phone by age

	Under 30	30-39	40-49	50 and over	All
	%	%	%	%	%
Acceptable	77	58	58	53	60
Not acceptable	23	42	42	47	40
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Weighted base	133	370	356	81	940

Base: Tax credits recipients with a mobile phone in receipt of tax credits between 2007/2008 and 2008/2009, and own mobile phone

Table 33. Acceptable for HM Revenue & Customs to call mobile phone by household type

	Single	Couple	All
	%	%	%
Acceptable	71	55	60
Not acceptable	29	45	40
Total	100	100	100
Weighted base	321	619	940

Base: Tax credits recipients with a mobile phone in receipt of tax credits between 2007/2008 and 2008/2009 and own mobile phone

Table 34. Acceptable for HM Revenue & Customs to call mobile phone by employment status

	0-15 hours	At least one adult working over 16 hours	All
	%	%	%
Acceptable	83	57	60
Not acceptable	17	43	40
Total	100	100	100
Weighted base	124	816	940

Base: Tax credits recipients with a mobile phone in receipt of tax credits between 2007/2008 and 2008/2009 and own mobile phone

Table 35. Acceptable for HM Revenue & Customs to call mobile phone by longstanding illness or disability

	Longstanding illness	No longstanding illness	All
	%	%	%
Acceptable	71	58	60
Not acceptable	29	42	40
Total	100	100	100
Weighted base	172	768	940

Base: Tax credits recipients with a mobile phone in receipt of tax credits between 2007/2008 and 2008/2009 and own mobile phone

Table 36. Acceptable for HM Revenue & Customs to make contact by text message by age

	Under 30	30-39	40-49	50 and over	All
	%	%	%	%	%
Acceptable	65	61	54	48	58
Not acceptable	35	39	46	52	42
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Weighted base	133	370	356	81	940

Base: Tax credits recipients with a mobile phone in receipt of tax credits between 2007/2008 and 2008/2009 and own mobile phone

Table 37. Acceptable for HM Revenue & Customs to make contact by text message by household type

	Single	Couple	All
	%	%	%
Acceptable	66	54	58
Not acceptable	34	46	42
Total	100	100	100
Weighted base	321	619	940

Base: Tax credits recipients with a mobile phone in receipt of tax credits between 2007/2008 and 2008/2009 and own mobile phone

Table 38. Acceptable for HM Revenue & Customs to make contact by text message by employment status

	0-15 hours	Over 16 hours	All
	%	%	%
Acceptable	75	55	58
Not acceptable	25	42	42
Total	100	100	100
Weighted base	124	816	940

Base: Tax credits recipients with a mobile phone in receipt of tax credits between 2007/2008 and 2008/2009 and own mobile phone

Table 39. Acceptable for HM Revenue & Customs to make contact by voicemail by ethnicity

	White	Black & minority ethnic	All
	%	%	%
Acceptable	56	43	55
Not acceptable	44	47	45
Total	100	100	100
Weighted base	1003	88	1091

Base: Tax credits recipients in receipt of tax credits between 2007/2008 and 2008/2009

Table 40. Preferred time to be contacted by HM Revenue & Customs on landline by employment status

	0-15 hours	Over 16 hours	All
	%	%	%
8.00-10.00	27	15	16
10.01-12.00	32	17	18
12.01-14.00	37	16	18
14.01-16.00	35	19	20
16.01-18.00	34	41	40
18.01-20.00	53	73	71
Weighted base	91	811	902

Base: Tax credits recipients in receipt of tax credits between 2007/2008 and 2008/2009 and own landline

Note: Totals add to more than 100 per cent because some recipients gave more than one answer.

Table 41. Preferred time to be contacted by HM Revenue & Customs on mobile phone by employment status

	0-15 hours	Over 16 hours	All
	%	%	%
8.00-10.00	35	21	23
10.01-12.00	43	26	28
12.01-14.00	49	31	34
14.01-16.00	50	33	35
16.01-18.00	38	52	50
18.01-20.00	49	67	64
Weighted base	103	464	567

Base: Tax credits recipients in receipt of tax credits between 2007/2008 and 2008/2009 and own mobile phone

Note: Totals add to more than 100 per cent because some recipients gave more than one answer.

Table 42. Call back on a number that was different to the helpline

	%	Weighted base
Yes, definitely	42	454
Depends on the circumstances	46	498
No	12	136
Total	100	1088

Base: Tax credits recipients in receipt of tax credits between 2007/2008 and 2008/2009

Table 43. What would call back depend on

	%	Weighted base
The cost of the call	47	233
What the call is about	21	105
Sure it is from HMRC	53	263
Other	5	25
Total		498

Base: Tax credits recipients in receipt of tax credits between 2007/2008 and 2008/2009

Note: Totals add to more than 100 per cent because some recipients gave more than one answer.

Table 44. Remembered hearing IVR message

	%	Weighted base
Yes	86	105
No	14	16
Total	100	121

Base: Tax credits recipients in receipt of tax credits between 2007/2008 and 2008/2009, called helpline after March 2009 and had to wait to speak to advisor

Table 45. Remembered message content

	%	Weighted base
Yes	87	91
No	13	13
Total	100	105

Base: Tax credits recipients in receipt of tax credits between 2007/2008 and 2008/2009, called helpline after March 2009 remembered hearing IVR message

Table 46. Found advice given in message useful

	%	Weighted base
Yes	72	66
No	28	25
Total	100	91

Base: Tax credits recipients in receipt of tax credits between 2007/2008 and 2008/2009, called helpline after March 2009 remembered message content

Table 47. Followed advice given in message

	%	Weighted base
Yes	51	47
No	49	44
Total	100	

Base: Tax credits recipients in receipt of tax credits between 2007/2008 and 2008/2009, called helpline after March 2009 remembered message content