



Business Perceptions Survey 2010 Report by FDS International



Conducted on behalf of the Local Better Regulation Office and the National Audit Office



a Munro group company

Disclaimer

This research findings report forms part of the deliverables for a project undertaken by FDS International who were commissioned on behalf of the Local Better Regulation Office and the National Audit office.

The views in this report are the authors' own and do not necessarily reflect those of the LBRO or NAO.

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Introduction

The Regulatory Enforcement and Sanctions Act 2008, which created the Local Better Regulation Office (LBRO), was a part of the regulatory reform efforts that included the Administrative Burdens Reduction Programme started by the Better Regulation Executive (BRE) in 2005. Since 2005 the Government has sought to reduce the cost to businesses of complying with the administrative activities required by regulations. The creation of LBRO represented a continuation of this agenda with local authority regulatory services – environmental health, trading standards, licensing and fire safety – identified in the 2005 review of regulation by Philip Hampton as undertaking the bulk of inspection and regulatory activity in the UK.

The three main components of regulatory reform are:-

- the simplification and modernisation of existing regulations
- the change of attitudes and approaches to regulation, encouraging a risk-based outlook by regulators
- the improvement of the design of new regulations and the communication surrounding them.

Both LBRO and The National Audit Office (NAO) have conducted surveys to assess the impact of regulation on businesses. This year LBRO and the NAO decided to carry out their surveys under the same framework, in order to maximise the opportunity for comparison between different types of regulations and also to save procurement costs for the public purse. There are two datasets, one for the LBRO and one for NAO, stemming from the fact that the businesses were asked to think about a specific area of law from the outset that was either from a group of locally enforced regulations for LBRO, or from a group of laws for the NAO in line with their previous surveys. The LBRO survey explored business views in relation to food safety, consumer protection, fire safety, health and safety (where locally enforced) and licensing, all of which are locally enforced. The NAO survey explored business views in relation to tax law, employment law, health and safety law, planning law and company law. Therefore there are two separate reports, however where possible comparisons between the two sets of results are drawn.

Data for the LBRO draws mainly on the sample of businesses in England and Wales only, to reflect their statutory remit and previous survey approach:-

- 1,000 respondents for questions relating to the burden of administration and communication regarding administration weighted to the profile of businesses in England and Wales (please see Appendix C for details of weighting)
- a raised sample of 1,892 (drawing on 892 English and Welsh businesses interviewed on the NAO-led survey) for the tracking questions on satisfaction with recent dealings with the local council/fire service. LBRO undertook a survey of business views of locally enforced regulation in 2008 and sought to make comparisons with those results. Questions 5-10 and 17-19 are NAO tracking questions continued in this year's survey which the LBRO have adopted. Comparisons are made between results from the LBRO and NAO samples and across all ten areas of law (local and national) where appropriate using English and Welsh companies only. Data is weighted to the profile of businesses in England and Wales

- the total sample of 2,000 for questions relating to general views of regulation. This is a national sample including Scottish businesses. It is the total combined samples of the LBRO survey (1,000) and the NAO survey (1,000). The NAO survey included Scottish companies and so the combined sample of 2,000 does so as well.

There are five questions in the survey that the NAO and LBRO both wanted asked:-

- importance of aspects of regulations (Q22a)
- ease of complying with regulation specific to their business sector (Q23/Q24)
- whether made contact with a body to suggest improvements to the regulatory regime (Q25)
- what imposes the larger burden-nationally or locally enforced regulation (Q31).

These make full use of the grand total of 2,000 responses. Data is weighted to the UK profile of businesses.

Further details of sampling and methodology can be found in the appendices.

Key Findings

Businesses' perceptions of the burden of regulation

In overall terms, attracting and retaining customers is the biggest issue for two in five businesses (41%) although complying with regulation is the most challenging aspect of running a business for one in six companies (17%). The same proportion, 17% of businesses, finds levels of taxation to be the most challenging aspect.

Whilst most companies do not employ any staff specifically to deal with complying with regulation, a quarter of them did claim to employ at least one person to deal with a specific area of locally enforced regulation. A significantly higher proportion of companies employ at least one person to look after compliance in the LBRO survey (26%) than in the NAO survey (21%). Areas of law with the highest proportions of companies having dedicated staff for compliance are food safety (42%) and fire safety (28%).

The majority of businesses agree that it is clear what the purpose of regulation is, that it is straightforward to understand what is required of them to comply, that most regulation is fair and proportionate and that it is easy to comply with regulation, although on this last point, opinion is divided especially in relation to consumer protection and licensing. Opinion is split on whether different local councils take a 'joined-up' approach to regulating. Half do not think local councils understand business well enough to regulate and over half do not believe the Government consults well with business before introducing or changing regulations.

Fifty-six per cent of companies agree that the overall level of regulation is an obstacle to their success with only thirty-four per cent disagreeing. There is an even split between those companies that think there is too much regulation and those that think the balance is about right.

Aspects of regulation that businesses find burdensome

Half or more businesses agree that every aspect of regulation is a burden. Aspects of regulation that companies find most burdensome are: having to keep up to date with existing regulation, changes to existing regulation, the introduction of new regulations and having to provide the same information more than once. Completing paperwork is a particular burden in the case of consumer protection. From the NAO survey, complying with employment law imposes particular burdens in terms of keeping up to date with changes to regulation and updating policy when regulations change or new ones are introduced.

Perception of changes to regulation

The majority of companies believe that the ease of complying with locally enforced regulation has stayed about the same over the last twelve months. However one in six believe that it has become more difficult, and there is some variation by area of law with businesses perceiving licensing to have become more difficult to comply with over the last year.

Communications

Individuals generally rate themselves as fairly well informed about the area of regulation they chose to talk about in the survey but a third do not feel they are informed, rising to 44% in the case of consumer protection. Planning has a similar proportion of not informed in the NAO survey.

Businesses use a wide range of sources for advice on compliance especially trade associations, their local council, insurance companies and accountants. A third uses the Businesslink website. 56% overall use external agents such as insurers, accountants, lawyers and consultants mainly for assurance, independent advice and because they do not have enough time or resource to deal with compliance themselves. Two thirds of businesses use external agents for help in relation to consumer protection, which is the highest level across the five regulations covered in the LBRO survey.

The proportion using their local council for advice (40%) is very similar in the NAO survey (39%). In all areas apart from tax law, at least a third of businesses are getting advice from local councils, which shows that they are a recognised conduit for information.

Satisfaction with last contact with local council/fire service

Half of businesses had made contact with their local council or fire service in the last two years about a local regulatory matter. Around a third made contact with their local council about health and safety and with their fire service about fire safety. Hotels make the most contact with local authorities about regulation and retailers also make contact slightly more often than companies in general

On average, the majority of businesses felt they were treated fairly and that the contact was helpful. Local councils and fire services also perform very well for the courtesy and professionalism of their officers, for treating businesses fairly and for providing information which is easy to understand. The lowest rating (75% satisfied) was given for officers' knowledge about a business's own circumstances.

Businesses are most satisfied with the handling of fire safety and food safety enquiries but not so satisfied when the contact is about consumer protection and health and safety.

Satisfaction levels are fairly consistent with those obtained in the 2008 survey. There have been some improvements with more companies satisfied with being treated fairly, the helpfulness of the officer, ease of understanding information, courtesy and professionalism of officers and speed and timeliness of service in the case of enquires about fire safety.

However, there are slightly increased levels of dissatisfaction when making contact about health and safety and consumer protection for ease of understanding information, officers' knowledge of one's own business circumstances and explanations of what needs to be done to comply. Businesses are less satisfied overall with dealings about consumer protection, down from 77% satisfied in 2008 to 66% satisfied in 2010.

General views of regulation

When asked to rank in order of importance three aspects of regulation, namely certainty of compliance, flexibility in how to comply and simplicity of compliance, businesses are fairly evenly split on which one is most important. Having certainty of compliance just wins out over the other two. This finding applies across all the areas of law covered by the LBRO and NAO surveys.

When considering regulations specific to their own business sector, higher proportions of companies in the automotive, public and retail sectors find their regulations easy to comply with than companies in the finance, manufacturing and transport sectors.

Those finding it difficult to comply with regulation specific to their sector, complain about having too many regulations, the complicated nature of them and how impractical/ difficult they are to comply with.

One in ten businesses have made contact with a body or organisation to make a suggestion as to how the regulatory regime could be improved, mainly to trade associations, their local council or a Member of Parliament.

When given the choice, businesses are more likely to feel that nationally enforced regulation imposes the larger burden, with almost three-in-five (57%) believing so. Meanwhile, a little over a quarter (27%) believe locally enforced regulation carries the greater burden. One in ten believe both to be equal, and a further 6% felt unable to comment.

Advisory role of local councils and consistency of advice

Over 80% of businesses think that the role of local councils is to provide advice as well as enforcement. Opinion is divided as to whether different local councils each interpret the law in the same way. A third of companies dealing with more than one local council feel that the advice they receive from various councils is inconsistent, which is in line with the findings of LBRO's 2008 survey.

Brian Westra
Associate Director

May 2010

Section 1: Businesses' perception of the burden of regulation

Business decision makers were read out a list of six challenges and asked which one presented the greatest challenge.

For those interviewed on the LBRO survey, attracting and retaining customers is the most challenging mentioned by four in ten followed by the level of taxation and complying with regulation (each mentioned by one in six).

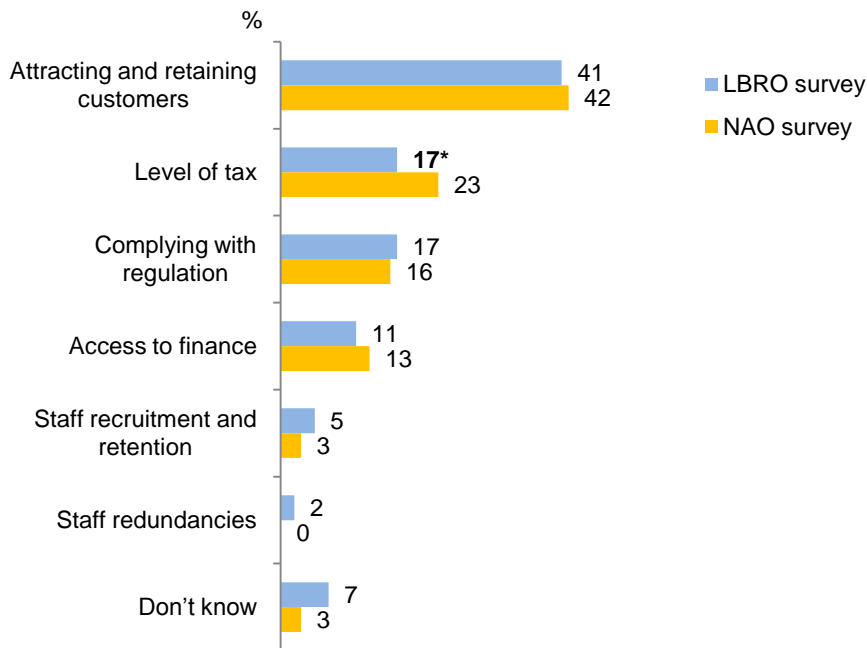
Access to finance is the fourth most challenging aspect.

Companies in the agriculture and finance sectors are significantly more likely to mention complying with regulation as the most challenging aspect (49% and 30% respectively). Older companies (over 20 years) are also more likely to state compliance with regulations (25%). There are no significant differences in terms of business size.

The pattern of response to this question among the 892 English and Welsh businesses interviewed on the NAO survey was very similar except that a significantly higher proportion mentioned level of tax as the most challenging aspect (23% compared to 17%).

Chart 1.1: Views on the most challenging aspect of running a business

(Base: All in England and Wales – 1,892 LBRO 1000 + NAO 892)



*Significantly different to the NAO result

Specific regulation businesses may need to comply with

All businesses were randomly assigned one of five areas of regulation, which they were asked to consider when answering some specific burden-related questions in this research. If the respondent felt unable to answer about their assigned area of regulation, they were given the option of the other four, until they felt comfortable to answer. The sampling methodology is detailed in further depth in Appendix A, whilst the questionnaire is in Appendix F.

Interviews were split evenly between the following five areas of regulation enforced locally, with approximately 200 businesses answering for each:-

- Food safety
- Consumer protection, for example in relation to fair trading, consumer credit and product safety
- Fire safety
- Health and Safety (where regulated by the local councils)
- Licensing of alcohol, taxis, gambling, entertainment or security personnel.

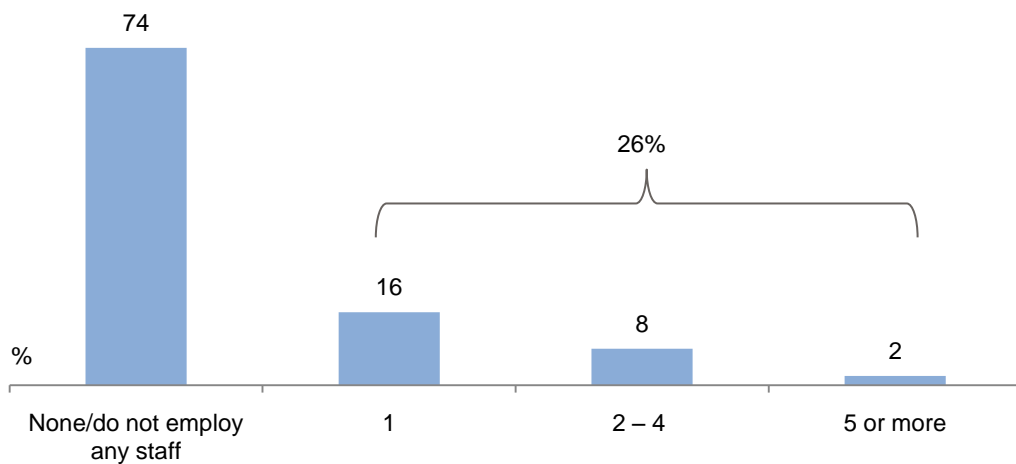
Number of staff employed to deal with regulation

At the start of the survey, business decision makers were asked how many staff, if any, their business specifically employs to deal with complying with one of the five areas of regulation listed above.

A quarter of businesses in England and Wales employ at least one person to deal with that regulation (16 percent employ one person, 8 percent employ two and 2 percent employ three or more).

Chart 1.2: Number of staff employed to deal with regulation

(Base: All 1,000)



Two-thirds of larger companies (employing 50 or more staff) employ at least one person to look after that regulation. There are no significant differences by business age or sector.

Food Safety demands more resource than the other regulations (including the NAO’s national regulations). 41 percent of those answering in relation to food safety have at least one member of staff employed to deal with this regulation.

Comparing the LBRO’s results with those for the NAO, 26% of companies employ at least one person to deal with the specific area of local regulation they were asked to focus on while a significantly lower 21% of companies employ at least one person to deal with an area of national law.

Table 1.3: Number of staff employed specifically to deal with each specific law

Base: (All in brackets)

LBRO Survey	Total (1,000)	Food Safety (202)	Consumer Protection (206)	Fire Safety (208)	Health and Safety (214)	Licensing (170)
None/do not employ any staff	74%+	57%	74%	77%	80%	77%
1	16%	18%	16%	17%	15%	12%
2 – 4	8%	17%*	9%	5%	4%	8%
5 or more	2%	6%*	0%	1%	0%	1%
Don’t know	<1%	<1%	0%	0%	0%	1%

*Significantly different from the total for LBRO

+Significantly different from the total for NAO (see table below)

NAO Survey	Total (892)	Company Law (185)	Employment Law (186)	Health and Safety Law (190)	Planning Law (175)	Tax Law (156)
None/do not employ any staff	79%	85%	77%	72%	81%	79%
1	16%	12%	15%	26%*	9%*	19%
2 – 4	4%	3%	6%	2%	7%*	2%
5 or more	1%	1%	1%	0%	2%	1%
Don’t know	<1%	0%	2%	0%	1%	0%

*Significantly different from the total of NAO

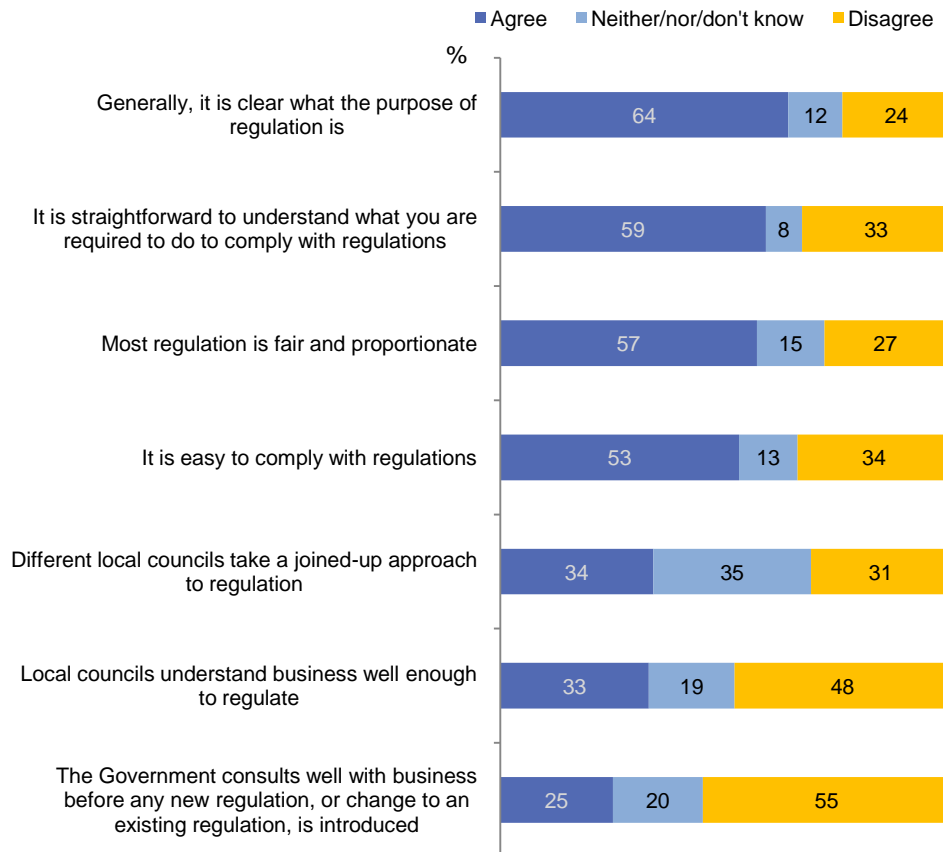
Businesses were asked to say how much they agreed or disagreed with seven positive statements about the government’s approach to regulation. Again, they were still focussing on the area of regulation (food safety, consumer protection, fire safety, health and safety or licensing) they were most qualified to answer about.

The majority agree that it is clear what the purpose of regulation is, that it is straightforward to understand what is required of them to comply, that most regulation is fair and proportionate and that it is easy to comply with regulation, although opinion starts to become divided on this point with 53% agreeing and 34% disagreeing.

Opinion is split on whether different local councils take a ‘joined-up’ approach to regulation.

Half do not think local councils understand business well enough to regulate and 55% do not believe the Government consults well with business before introducing or changing regulation.

Chart 1.4: Businesses’ perception of Government’s approach to regulating
(Base: All 1,000)



Within the LBRO survey, the transport sector agreed to a greater extent that it is straightforward to understand what you are required to do to comply, that Government consults well with them and that local councils take a joined-up approach.

The production and property sectors tend to disagree that it is easy to comply with regulation.

The finance sector shows a much higher level of disagreement that local government understands business well enough to regulate.

The older a company is, the less likely they are to agree that it is easy to comply with regulation and that most regulation is fair and proportionate.

Larger companies and younger companies are more likely to agree that it is generally clear what the purpose of regulation is.

Only the largest companies agree to a greater extent that Government consults well with them before introducing or changing regulation.

There is a higher level of agreement when thinking about food safety with the statements:-

- generally it is clear what the purpose of regulation is
- it is straightforward to understand what you are required to do to comply
- it is easy to comply with regulations.

However, there are higher levels of disagreement when people are thinking about licensing for:-

- most regulation is fair and proportionate
- local councils understand business well enough to regulate
- the Government consults well with business before introducing or changing regulation.

Results for the NAO's survey reveal lower levels of agreement for:-

- it is clear what the purpose of regulation is (57%)
- it is straightforward to understand what you are required to do to comply (47%)
- most regulation is fair and proportionate (45%)
- it is easy to comply with regulations (38%).

Business are significantly more likely to disagree that it is straightforward to understand what you are required to do to comply with consumer protection regulation.

Table 1.5: Businesses' perception of Government's approach to regulating locally enforced laws
(Base: All replying in relation to each area of regulation)

LBRO survey	Total (1,000)		Food safety (202)		Consumer protection (206)		Fire Safety (208)		Health & Safety (214)		Licensing (179)	
	Agree	Dis-agree	Agree	Dis-agree	Agree	Dis-agree	Agree	Dis-agree	Agree	Dis-agree	Agree	Dis-agree
Generally, it is clear what the purpose of regulation is	64	24	71	16*	57	28	68	23	68	21	60	32
It is straightforward to understand what you are required to do to comply with regulations	59	33	66	25*	53	42*	62	31	58	30	61	33
Most regulation is fair and proportionate	57	27	63	22	55	35	63	20	57	23	49	39*
It is easy to comply with regulations	53	34	61*	26*	49	41	51	34	55	31	47	39
Different local councils take a joined-up approach to regulation	34	31	35	30	29	36	35	29	37	27	33	33
Local councils understand business well enough to regulate	33	48	39	44	29	52	37	47	34	44	23*	54
The Government consults well with business before any new regulation	25	55	23	51	21	59	30	54	24	48	27	64*

*Asterisk denotes a result which is significantly different to the average across all five regulations.

Results among English and Welsh companies in the NAO survey show more positive views for health and safety law compared with the total for:-

- generally it is clear what the purpose of regulation is
- it is easy to comply with regulations
- the Government understands businesses well enough to regulate

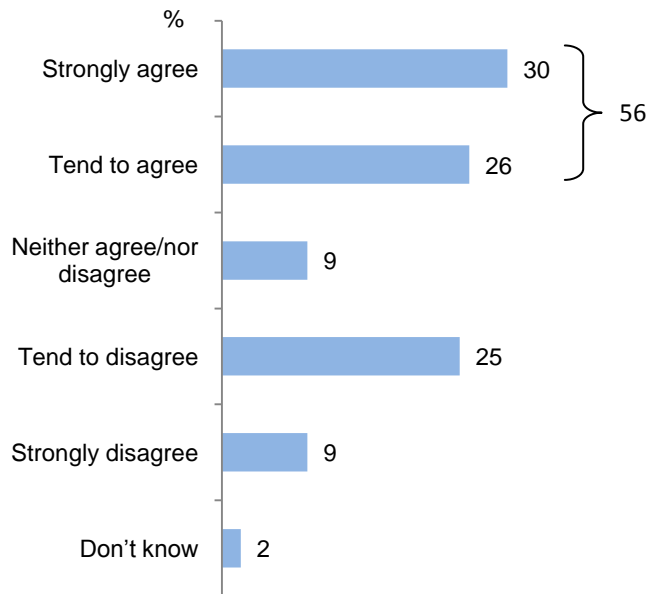
Businesses questioned about health and safety regulation in the NAO survey were less likely to agree that it is easy to comply with regulation than those questioned about health and safety in the LBRO survey (45% compared to 55%). The LBRO survey sample for health and safety only includes businesses which are regulated by their local council, whereas the NAO sample includes both businesses regulated locally and those regulated nationally (by the HSE).

Whether the overall level of regulation in the UK is an obstacle

On balance, companies agree that the overall level of regulation in the UK is an obstacle to their success. 30% agree strongly and 26% tend to agree that this is the case. Only a third disagree.

Chart 1.6: Businesses’ perception of whether the overall level of regulation in the UK is an obstacle to their success

(Base: All 1,000)

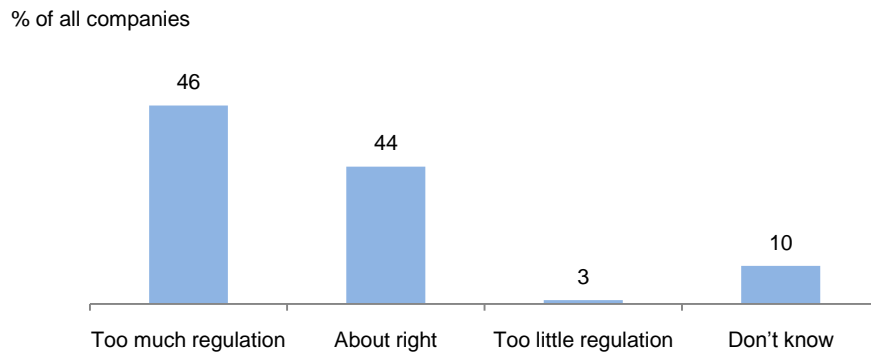


There are no significant differences in agreement/disagreement that the level of regulation is an obstacle to success across different sectors.

Large companies (250+ employees) are significantly more likely to disagree.

A slightly higher proportion of businesses believe there is too much regulation (46%) than feel the level of regulation is about right (44%) when asked to weigh up the cost of complying with regulation against protecting people and the environment from harm.

Chart 1.7: Businesses' perception of whether the Government has balanced the cost of complying with regulation against protecting people from harm
(Base: All 1,000)



Companies in the agricultural (62%) and property (51%) sectors are significantly more likely to feel that there is too much regulation. Just over half (51%) of older companies (20+ years) think there is too much regulation. There are no significant differences in terms of business size.

Comparing results between the LBRO and NAO surveys, significantly more businesses in the NAO survey felt there is too much regulation (53% for NAO / 46% for LBRO).

Section 2: Aspects of regulation that businesses find burdensome

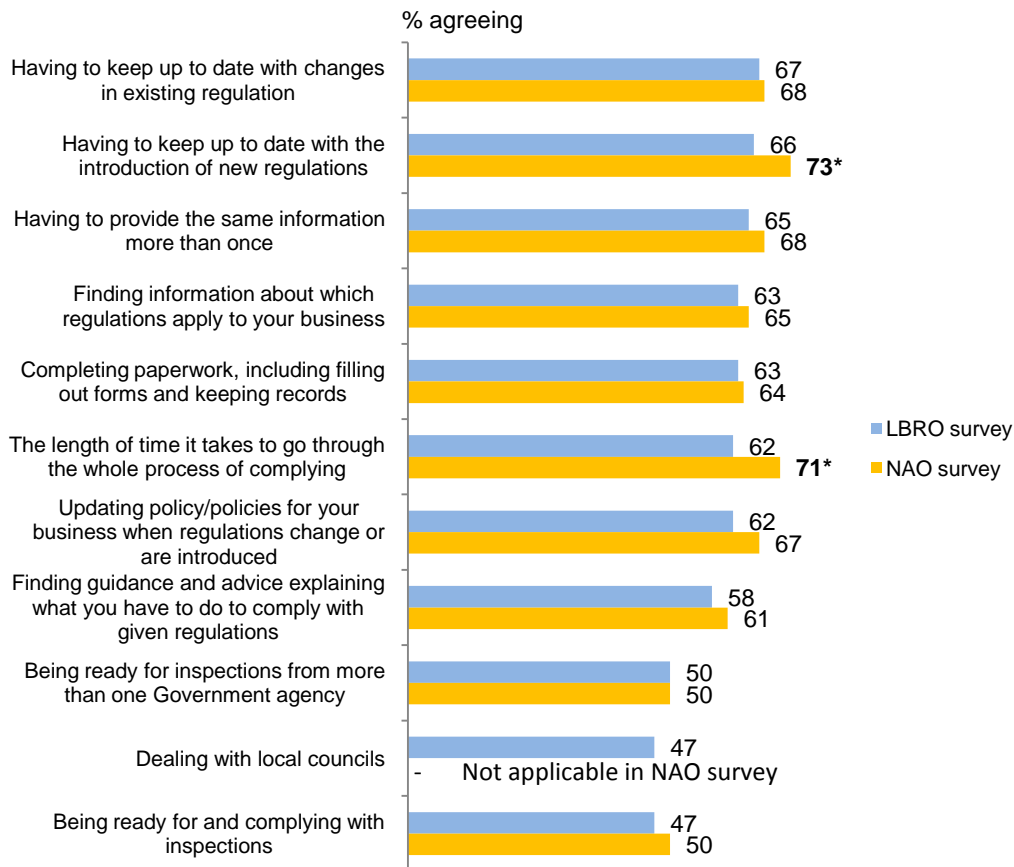
Still in the context of their specific area of regulation, business decision makers were asked whether they agree or disagree that a range of activities are a burden to them when complying with regulation.

Half or more agree that every aspect of regulation is a burden. However the least burdensome areas are dealing with local councils and being ready for and complying with inspections.

Activities found most burdensome (by two thirds) are:-

- having to keep up to date with changes in existing regulation
- having to keep up to date with the introduction of new regulations
- having to provide the same information more than once.

Chart 2.1: Aspects of complying with regulations that businesses find burdensome
(Base: All 1,000)



Large proportions of farmers find the length of time it takes to go through the process of complying with regulation, completing paperwork, keeping up-to-date with changing regulations and updating policy to reflect changes to be burdensome.

Older companies (over 20 years) are significantly more likely to find dealing with local councils a burden.

Businesses taking part in the NAO survey were significantly more likely to find having to keep up to date with the introduction of new regulations and the length of time it takes to go through the whole process of complying, a burden to them than those in the LBRO survey answering in relation to locally enforced regulation.

Table 2.2 shows differences in the levels of agreement and disagreement that aspects of complying with regulation are a burden between the five areas of locally enforced regulations. Significantly more businesses find completing paperwork for consumer protection regulations a burden. Health and Safety is viewed more favourably with significantly fewer finding it a burden keeping up to date with new regulations and providing the same information more than once. Businesses are more likely to disagree that the length of time it takes to become compliant with health and safety regulations is a burden.

Table 2.2: Aspects of complying with regulations that businesses find burdensome about locally enforced regulation

(Base: All replying in relation to each area of regulation)

LBRO survey	Total (1,000)		Food safety (202)		Consumer protection (206)		Fire Safety (208)		Health & Safety (214)		Licensing (179)	
	Agree	Dis-agree	Agree	Dis-agree	Agree	Dis-agree	Agree	Dis-agree	Agree	Dis-agree	Agree	Dis-agree
Having to keep up to date with changes in existing regulation	67	24	64	25	74	20	67	21	63	28	67	26
Having to keep up to date with the introduction of new regulations	66	23	64	24	73	17	67	22	57*	28	67	26
Having to provide the same information more than once	65	24	61	26	71	19	71	18	55*	33*	71	25
Finding information about which regulations apply to your business	63	27	61	30	70	20	56	31	60	31	67	22
Completing paperwork, including filling out forms and keeping records	63	28	60	28	73*	21	57	32	60	30	62	28
The length of time it takes to go through the whole process of complying	62	24	64	23	66	19	58	21	59	31*	65	23
Updating policy/ policies for your business when regulations change or are introduced	62	26	62	24	67	23	64	24	61	27	55	33
Finding guidance and advice explaining what you have to do	58	30	55	33	66	24	50	39	57	32	64	25
Being ready for inspections from more than one Government agency	50	26	46	31	50	25	53	22	48	24	54	30
Dealing with local councils	47	31	46	39*	53	23*	43	31	46	29	46	37
Being ready for and complying with inspections	47	33	46	34	47	25	49	31	41	38	51	36

*An asterisk denotes a result which is significantly different to the average across all five regulations.

Generally higher proportions of businesses find all aspects a burden when considering the NAO survey areas of regulation. In particular, companies find keeping up to date with changes in existing regulation, having to keep up to date with the introduction of new regulations and updating policies for the business when new regulations are changed or introduced a particular burden in relation to employment law (over three quarters find these aspects of employment law a burden).

Section 3: Perception of changes to regulation

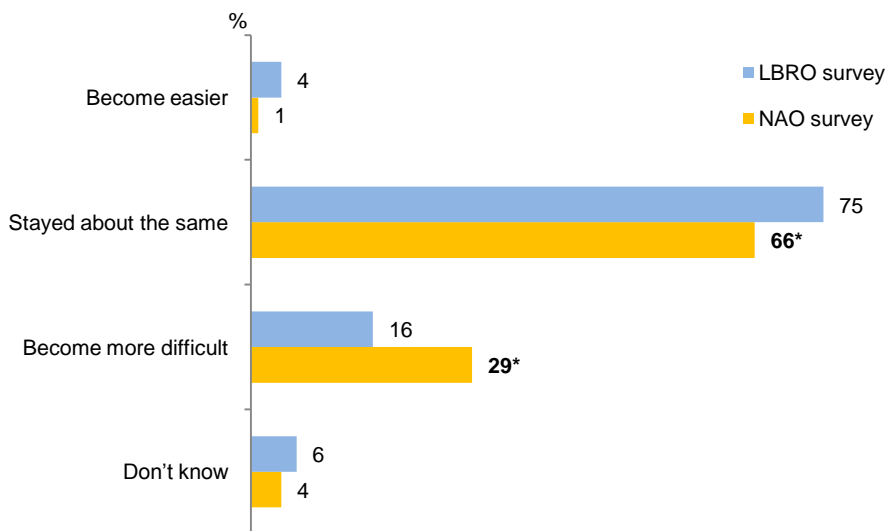
Changes in ease of compliance over the past twelve months

Still thinking about their specific area of local law, businesses were asked whether complying with that law has become easier, more difficult or stayed about the same.

Three quarters believe there has been no change in the ease/difficulty of complying with regulation. However, while only 4% believe it has become easier, 16% say it has become more difficult.

Chart 3.1: Change in overall ease of complying with regulation over past 12 months

(Base: All 1,892 LBRO 1000 + NAO 892)



**Significantly different to the LBRO results*

Businesses in the property (26%) and transport (24%) sectors are significantly more likely to say it has become more difficult.

NAO data shows a significantly higher proportion saying that complying with regulation has become more difficult (29% compared with 16% on the LBRO survey).

Changes in ease of compliance over the past twelve months

While only 7% of those thinking about fire safety regulations think it has become more difficult to comply with these, almost a quarter (23%) of those considering licensing regulations, say these have become more difficult.

7% believe food safety regulations have become easier (the highest proportion across the regulations). A significantly lower proportion than the total believe fire safety regulations have become more difficult to comply with (7% compared to 16%).

Table 3.2: Change in ease of complying with regulation over the past 12 months

(Base: All 1,000)

	Total (1,000) %	Food Safety (202) %	Consumer Protection (206) %	Fire Safety (208) %	Health and Safety (214) %	Licensing (170) %
Become easier	4	7*	2	2	3	5
Stayed about the same	75	66	75	88	73	70
Become more difficult	16	16	17	7*	18	23
Don't know	6	10	6	4	6	3

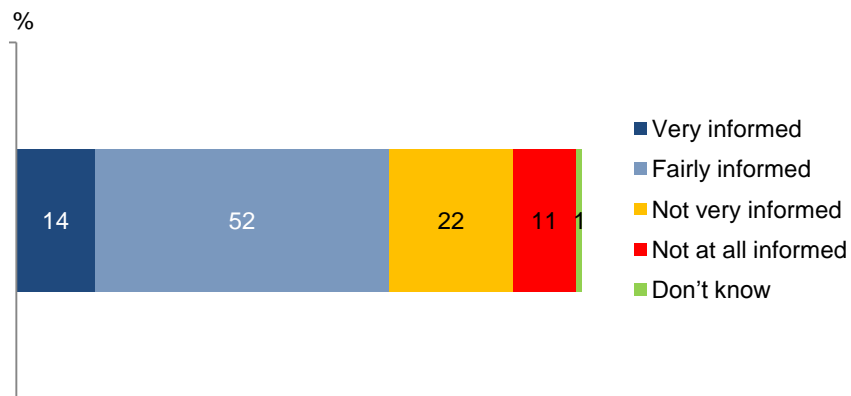
**Significantly different to the average across all five regulations*

Section 4: Communications

Asked how informed they feel about the area of regulation they chose to talk about, one in seven feel very informed and half feel fairly informed. Farmers are the group most informed about regulations (83% say they are very or fairly informed).

The finance sector is least well informed (41% say they are not very or not at all informed).

Chart 4.1: How informed businesses are about the specific regulations that affect them
(Base: All 1,000)



The degree to which businesspeople are informed about locally enforced regulations does not vary that much between four of the five regulations covered but they know less about consumer protection with a significantly higher proportion than the total saying they are not very or not at all informed (44%).

Table 4.2: How informed businesses are about each specific regulation that affects them
(Base: All replying in relation to each area of regulation)

LBRO Survey	Total (1,000) %	Food Safety (202) %	Consumer Protection (206) %	Fire Safety (208) %	Health and Safety (214) %	Licensing (170) %
Net informed	66	69	56*	69	68	65
Very informed	14	23	9	14	10	16
Fairly informed	52	47	47	55	58	49
Not very informed	22	16	29	19	19	25
Not at all informed	11	11	15	10	9	8
Net not informed	33	26	44*	28	29	32
Don't know	1	4	<1	3	3	3

**Significantly different to the average across all five regulations*

Across the areas of law in the NAO survey a similar pattern emerges for planning law with a significantly higher proportion than the average claiming they are not very well or not at all informed (43%).

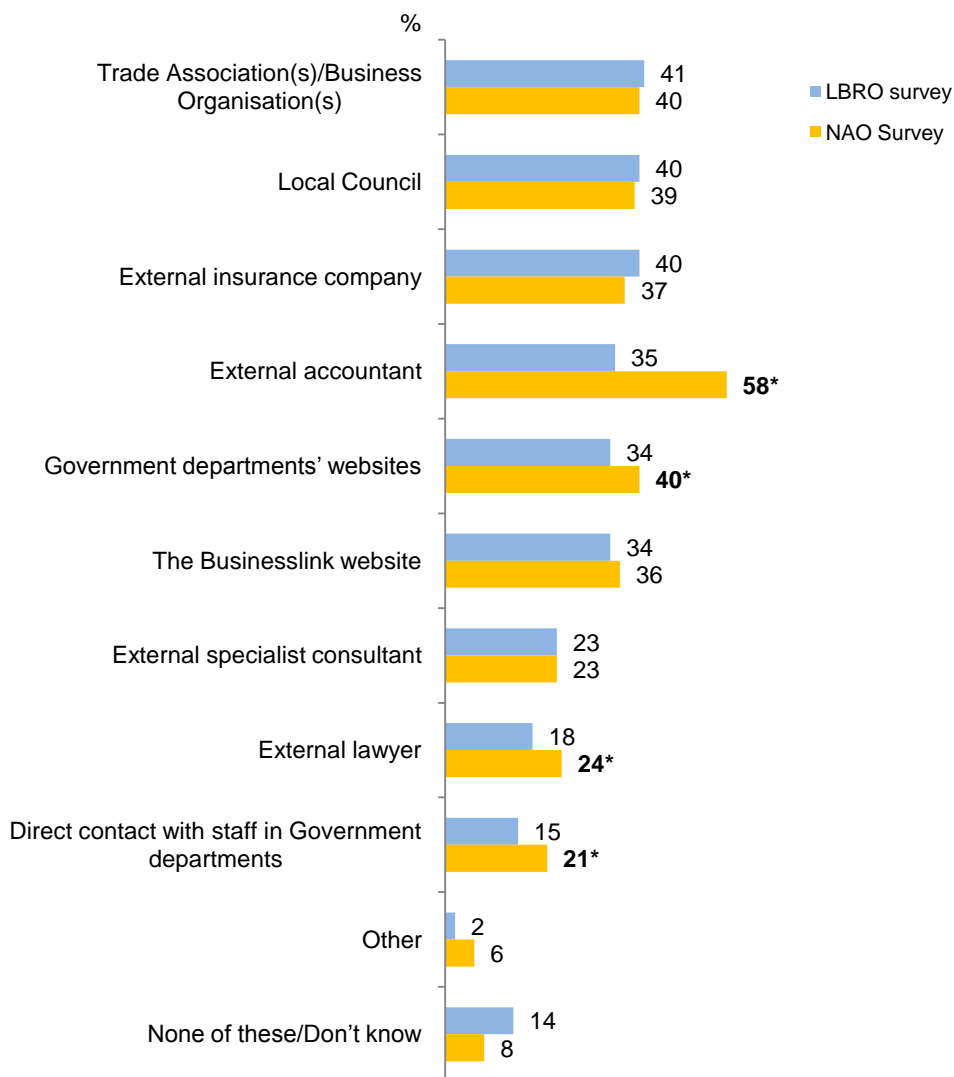
Asked what sources of information they use to help them comply with the regulation they are considering, four in ten mentioned trade associations, the local council and insurance companies.

About a third mentioned accountants, Government department websites and the Businesslink website.

56% use an external agent (insurance company, accountant, consultant or lawyer) and this rises to 80% among manufacturers. Companies with 50 or more employees are also significantly more likely to use external agents (70%).

Chart 4.3: Sources used to help with compliance

(Base: All 1,892 LBRO 1000 + NAO 892)



The overall proportion using their local council for advice is the same when complying with locally enforced legislation and with the areas of law in the NAO survey (40% and 39% respectively). In the NAO survey, significantly higher proportions seek advice from external accountants and lawyers and Government departments through their websites and by making direct contact.

The local council is significantly more likely to be consulted in the case of licensing and food safety, insurance companies for licensing, accountants for licensing and consumer protection, specialist consultants for fire safety and lawyers and Government departments for licensing.

External agents (blue text in the table below) are significantly more likely to be used to help with consumer protection regulations (66% compared with 56% overall) and less likely to be used for food safety (36% compared to 56% overall).

Table 4.4: Sources used to help with compliance

(Base: All replying in relation to each area of regulation)

LBRO Survey	Total (1,000)	Food Safety (202) %	Consumer Protection (206) %	Fire Safety (208) %	Health and Safety (214) %	Licensing (170) %
Trade Association(s)/Business Organisations	41	39	48	37	37	45
Local Council	40	54*	31*	31	33	59*
External insurance company	40	22*	41	43	42	53*
External accountant	35	20*	51*	21	28	54*
Government departments' websites	34	31	39	25	33	40
The Businesslink website	34	33	41	26	37	32
External specialist consultant	23	14*	22	38*	20	20
External lawyer	18	15	23	15	12*	28*
Direct contact with staff in Government departments	15	16	13	11	12	29*
Other	2	2	1	6	1	0
NET: External	56	36*	66*	58	52	65
None of these/don't know	14	17	11	18	15	8*

**Significantly different to the average across all five regulations*

Those with at least one person employed specifically to deal with compliance are more likely to use the full range of sources of help with compliance and to use the local council, insurance companies, Government department websites, external lawyers and Government departments directly to a significantly greater extent. Those with no-one employed specifically to deal with compliance are more likely to go to their trade association and to external agents than they are to go to their local council and as likely to go to the Businesslink website as to their local council.

Table 4.5: Sources used to help with compliance

(Base: All with dedicated staff/without dedicated staff)

LBRO Survey	Total (1,000)	Have dedicated staff dealing with compliance (336) %	Do not have dedicated staff (657) %
Trade Association(s)/Business Organisations	41	43	41
Local Council	40	56*	34
External insurance company	40	48*	38
External accountant	35	39	34
Government departments' websites	34	42*	31
The Businesslink website	34	34	34
External specialist consultant	23	29	21
External lawyer	18	27*	15
Direct contact with staff in Government departments	15	22*	13
Other	2	2	3
NET: External	56	63	54
None of these/don't know	14	7	16*

**Significantly different to the total*

The table below shows which sources companies use for help when complying with the areas of law asked in the NAO survey. The proportion using their local council for advice is almost the same as the proportion in the LBRO survey (39% and 40% respectively). In the NAO survey significantly higher proportions approach the local council in relation to health and safety and planning law than across the other areas of law, however this is largely to be expected as local councils have a role in enforcing both of these areas.

In all areas, apart from tax, at least three in ten businesses are getting advice from local councils, which shows that they are a recognised conduit for information.

Across both surveys, the proportion seeking advice from local councils in relation to consumer protection is less than all other areas of law, except for tax and employment.

Table 4.6: Sources used to help with compliance

(Base: All replying in relation to each area of regulation)

NAO Survey	Total (892)	Company Law (185) %	Employment Law (186) %	Health and Safety Law (190) %	Planning Law (175) %	Tax Law (156) %
Trade Association(s)/Business Organisations	40	47	42	37	37	39
Local Council	39	35	30	52*	69*	11
External insurance company	37	43	30	47	33	32
External accountant	58	67*	59*	34	44	85*
Government departments' websites	40	45	51*	34	32	36
The Businesslink website	36	45*	38	38	28	29
External specialist consultant	23	17	26	25	29	19
External lawyer	24	32*	27	17	28	18
Direct contact with staff in Government departments	21	22	21	16	26	23
Other	6	9	4	7	2	7
NET: External	72	77*	73	64	61	88*
None of these/don't know	8	5	10	6	15	3

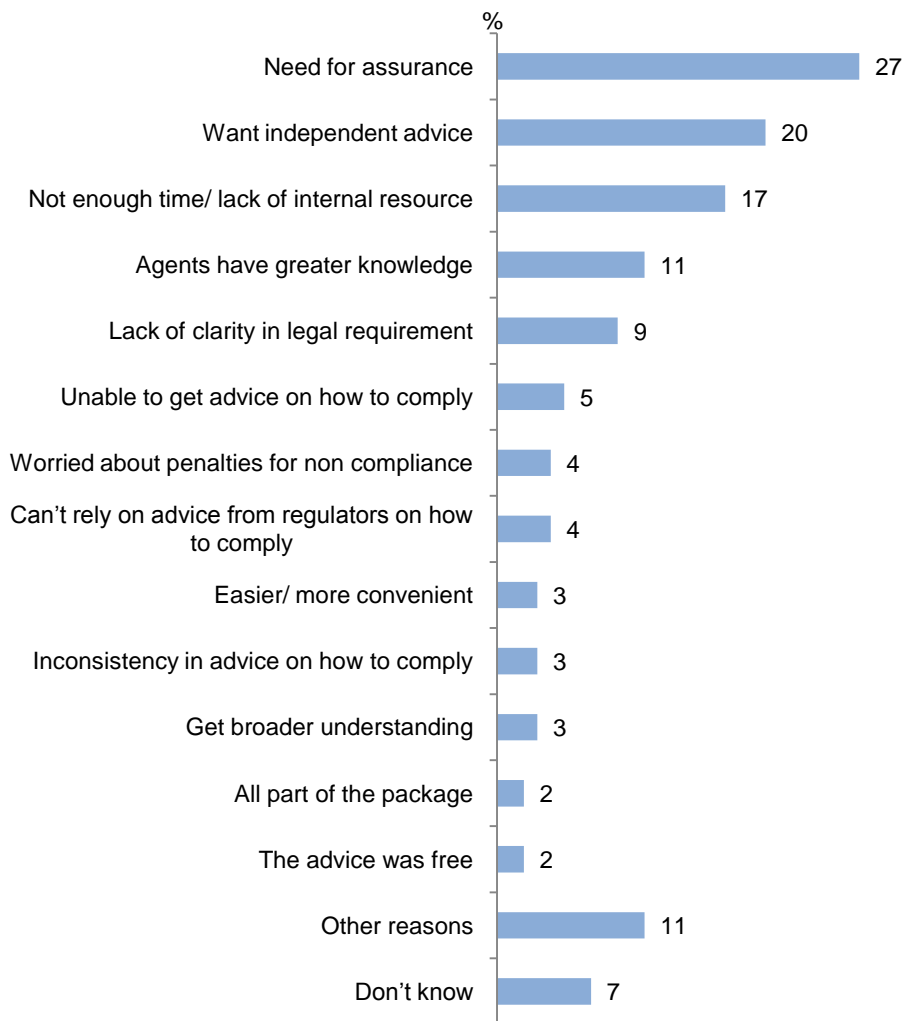
**Significantly different to the average across all five regulations*

Businesses turn to external agents mainly for assurance (27%), independent advice (20%) and because they lack time or resources to deal with regulation themselves (17%).

Those using the Businesslink website are significantly more likely to turn to it because they lack time and resources (23%).

External agents are particularly important for assurance in the case of food safety.

Chart 4.7: Reasons for businesses using external agent to help with compliance
(Base: All 570 using external help in compliance)



Section 5: Satisfaction with last contact with local council/ fire service

LBRO Satisfaction tracking questions making comparisons with 2008

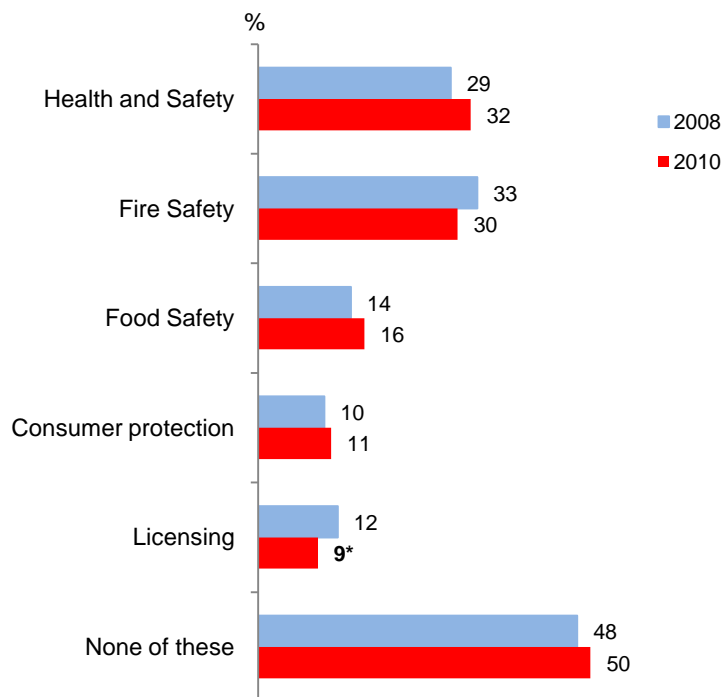
Half way through the survey, businesses were asked for which of the five areas of locally enforced law they had contact with their local council or fire service about in the last two years. Half had been in contact.

A third had contacted the local council about health and safety and three in ten had contacted their fire service about fire safety.

One in six had made contact with the local council about food safety and one in ten about consumer protection or licensing. Proportions of businesses contacting local Government about locally enforced regulations over a two year period remain virtually unchanged since the 2008 survey (50% made contact in 2010 and 48% in 2008) except that fewer made contact about licensing in the latest survey (9% compared to 12% in 2008).

Chart 5.1: Areas of law about which have had contact with local council/fire service in the last two years

(Base: All – 1,892 in 2010, 1,940 in 2008)



*Significantly different to 2008

The only differences in level of contact across industry sectors are for hotels/caterers and retailers. Hotels make the most contact with their local authorities (in the last two years) with six in ten or more contacting about food safety, fire safety and health and safety. Retailers make contact slightly more often than companies in general.

The larger the company, the more likely it is to have contacted the local council or fire service about regulation.

Table 5.2: Areas of law about which have had contact with local council/fire service in the last two years

(Base: All replying in relation to each area of regulation)

	Total (1,892) %	Hotels/catering (169) %	Retailers (199) %
Health and Safety	32	58*	38
Fire Safety	30	65*	34
Food Safety	16	73*	21
Consumer protection	11	17*	16*
Licensing	9	34*	11
None of these	50	15	42

**Significantly higher than the total*

Satisfaction with last contact

Respondents were next asked a series of satisfaction questions about the last contact they had with their local council or fire service in relation to a specific area of locally enforced regulation. If they made contact in the last two years about more than one area of regulation, we prioritised contacts about licensing and consumer protection in order to balance the base sizes for statistical confidence. Comparisons are made with results from the survey conducted in 2008.

The table below shows summary results across all nine assessments (we will be looking at more detailed results for each of the nine later in this section).

A pattern can immediately be seen in which businesses are most satisfied with their local authority’s and fire service’s handling of fire safety and food safety enquiries but not so satisfied when the contact is about health and safety and consumer protection.

Chart 5.3: Overall summary results in relation to each area of regulation

(Base: All replying in relation to each area of regulation)

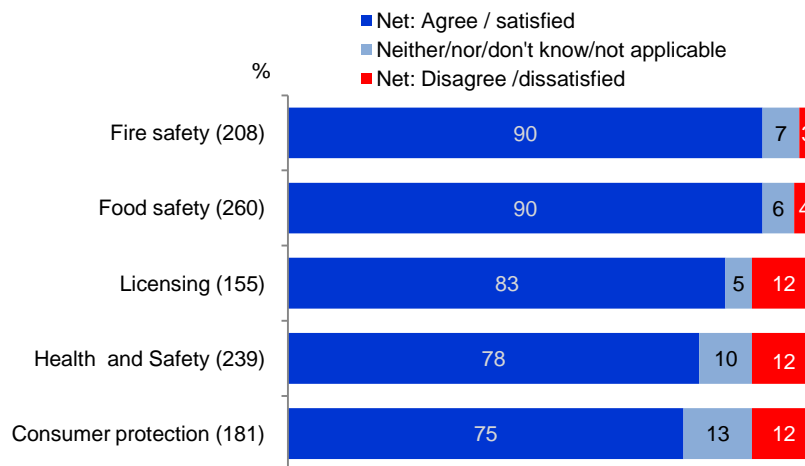


Table 5.4 is a broad overview of the proportions agreeing with positive statements about or satisfied with aspects of service covered in the survey for each of the five areas of regulation and for the total across all regulations.

Companies are most satisfied with the courtesy and professionalism of officers when dealing with food safety and fire safety and for the ease of understanding information given in relation to food safety.

Satisfaction is lowest for the knowledge of officers, helpfulness of contact and overall level of service in relation to consumer protection and for officers' knowledge about health and safety.

Table 5.4: Summary across all nine assessments

(Base: All replying in relation to each area of regulation)

% agreeing with statement /satisfied with aspect of service	Recent contact with local council or fire service was about					
	Total (1,043) %	Food Safety (260) %	Consumer Protection (181) %	Fire Safety (208) %	Health and Safety (239) %	Licensing (155) %
Business was treated fairly	87	93	81	93	83	81
Contact was helpful	81	90	69	91	74	81
Overall level of service	81	91	66	91	77	82
Ease of understanding information	86	95	78	91	80	88
Knowledge of officers about the business situation	75	88	68	80	62	79
Courtesy and professionalism of officer	90	94	85	95	88	88
Speed and timeliness	82	86	78	90	78	79
Explanation of what needed to be done to comply	83	87	76	87	81	86
Final outcome	83	88	76	93	79	83

Results highlighted in blue are significantly higher than the average across all five regulations. Results highlighted in red are significantly lower than the average across all five regulations.

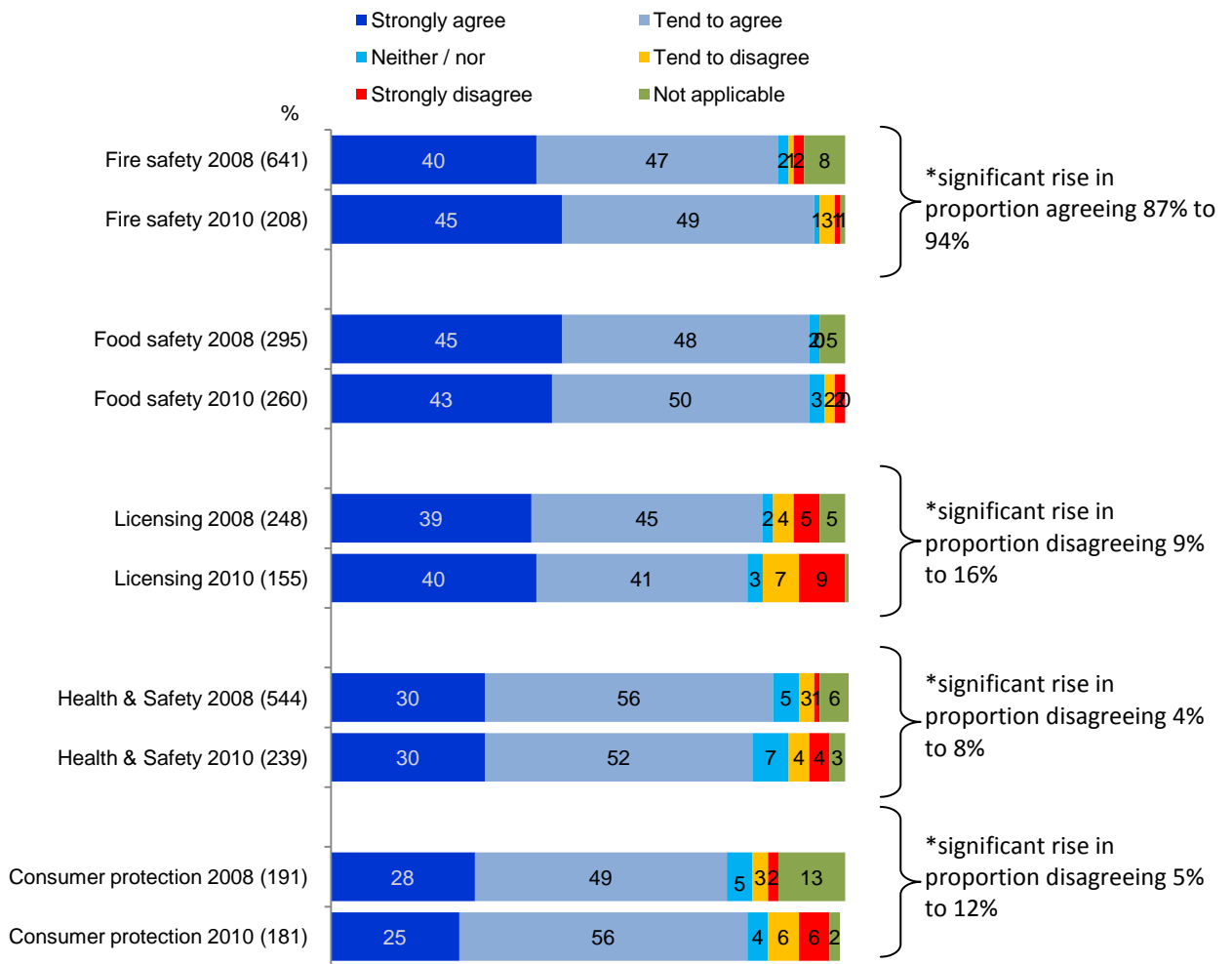
We now look at results for each of the nine satisfaction tracking measures in more detail.

Fair treatment

Most businesses felt they were treated fairly by their local council/fire service when they last made contact. High proportions (between 81% and 94%) are either very or fairly satisfied in the most recent survey and this is true regardless of the area of regulation they were making contact about.

Chart 5.5: Agreement/disagreement that business was treated fairly when thinking about last contact with local council/fire service

(Base: All replying in relation to each area of regulation)



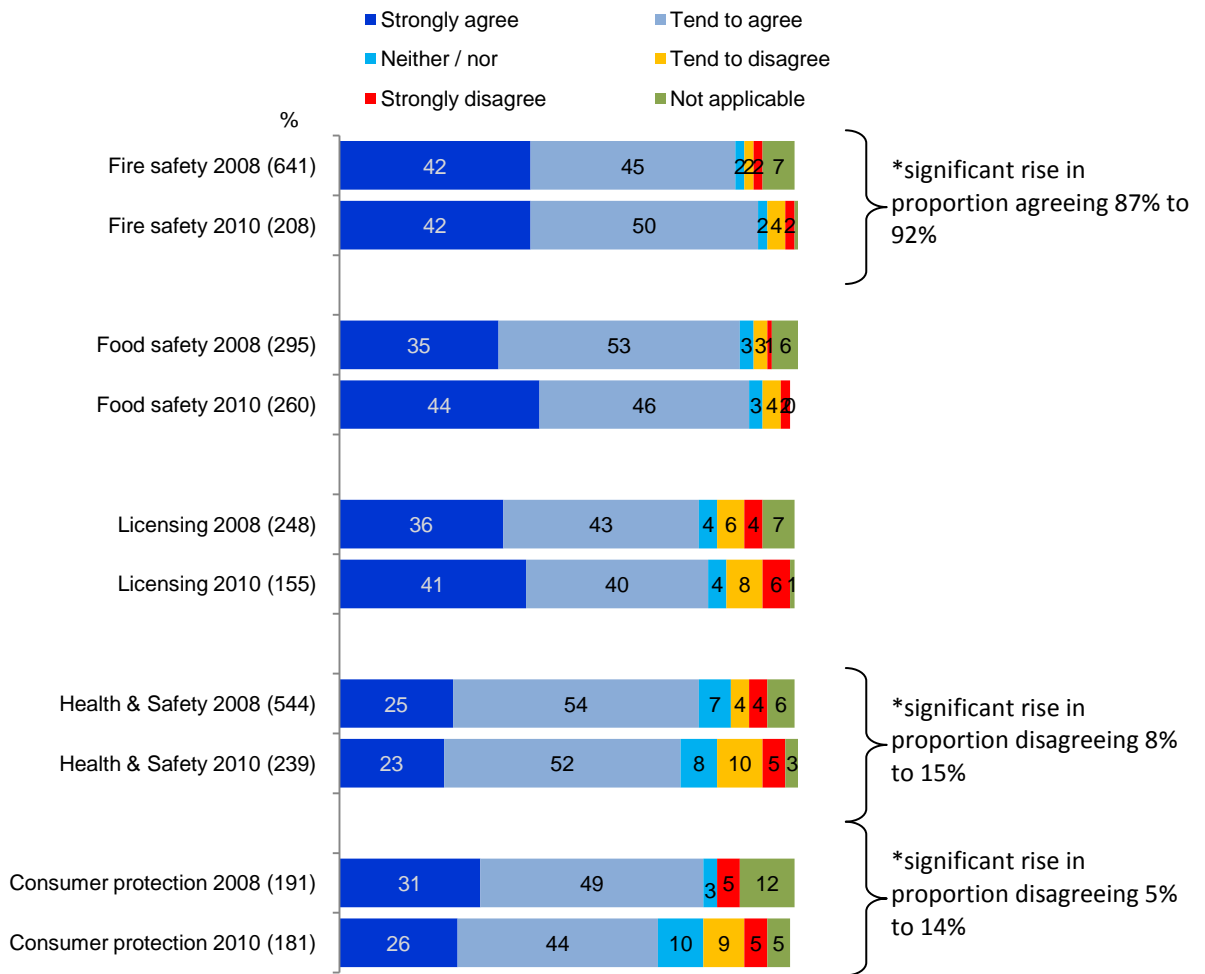
Agreement that their business was treated fairly has increased significantly for dealings about fire safety (up from 87% to 94%) but disagreement that they were treated fairly has roughly doubled for licensing, health and safety and consumer protection.

Helpfulness

Chart 5.6 below shows that large majorities agree that their contact at the local council/fire service was helpful in the case of all areas of regulation but a lower 60% agreed with this in the case of consumer protection.

Chart 5.6: Agreement/disagreement that contact was helpful when thinking about last contact with local council/fire service

(Base: All replying in relation to each area of regulation)



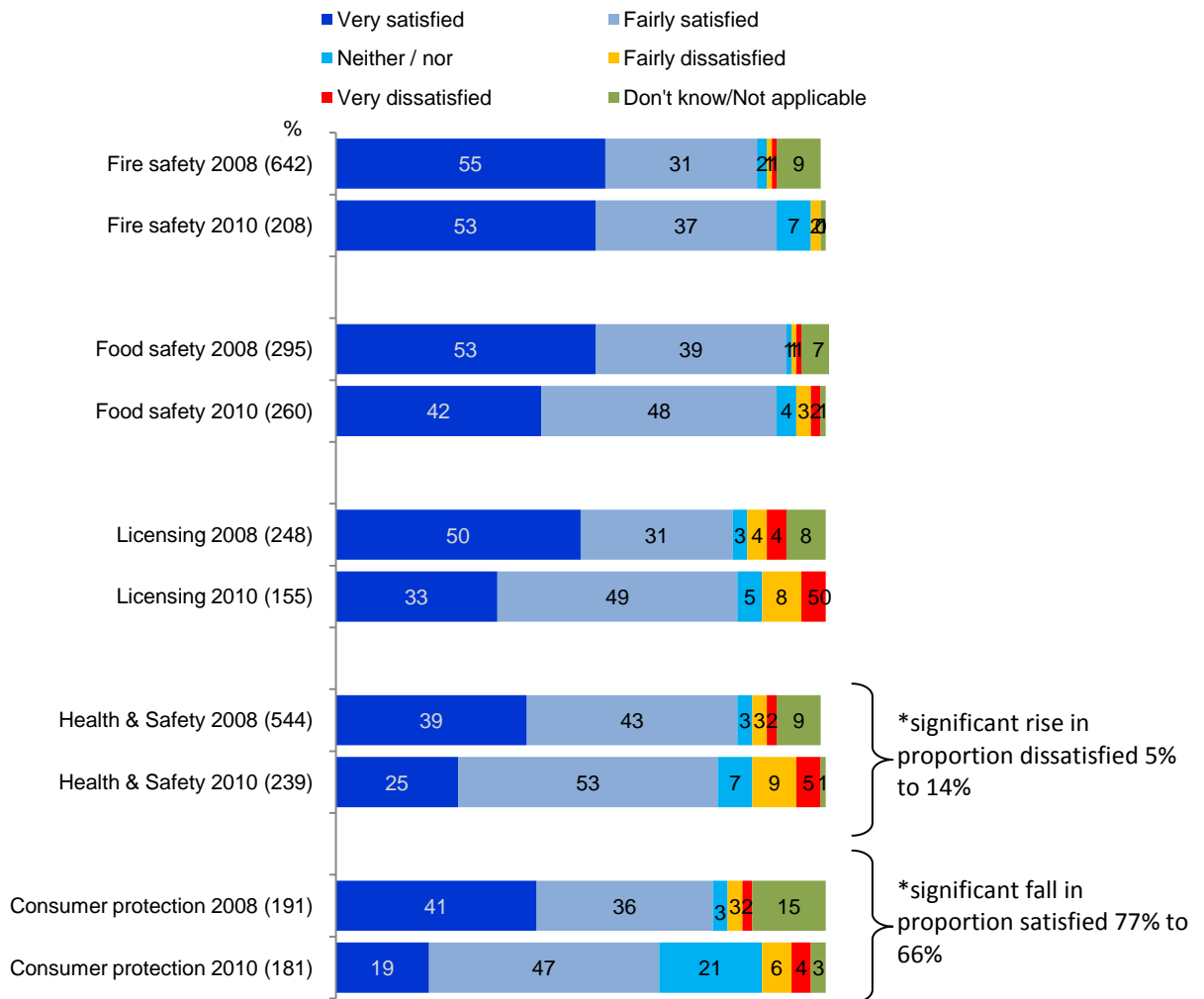
Officers are significantly more helpful since the last 2008 survey in the case of fire safety but more do not think so for health and safety and consumer protection (proportions disagreeing have risen significantly).

Overall level of service

Satisfaction with the overall level of service from the local authority is high for contacts about all areas of regulation except for consumer protection where only two thirds were satisfied.

Chart 5.7: Satisfaction with overall level of service when thinking about last contact with local council/fire service

(Base: All replying in relation to each area of regulation)



Businesses are less satisfied overall with dealings about consumer protection (down from 77% satisfied in 2008 to 66% satisfied in 2010). More are dissatisfied overall with the handling of contacts about health and safety (up from 5% to 14%).

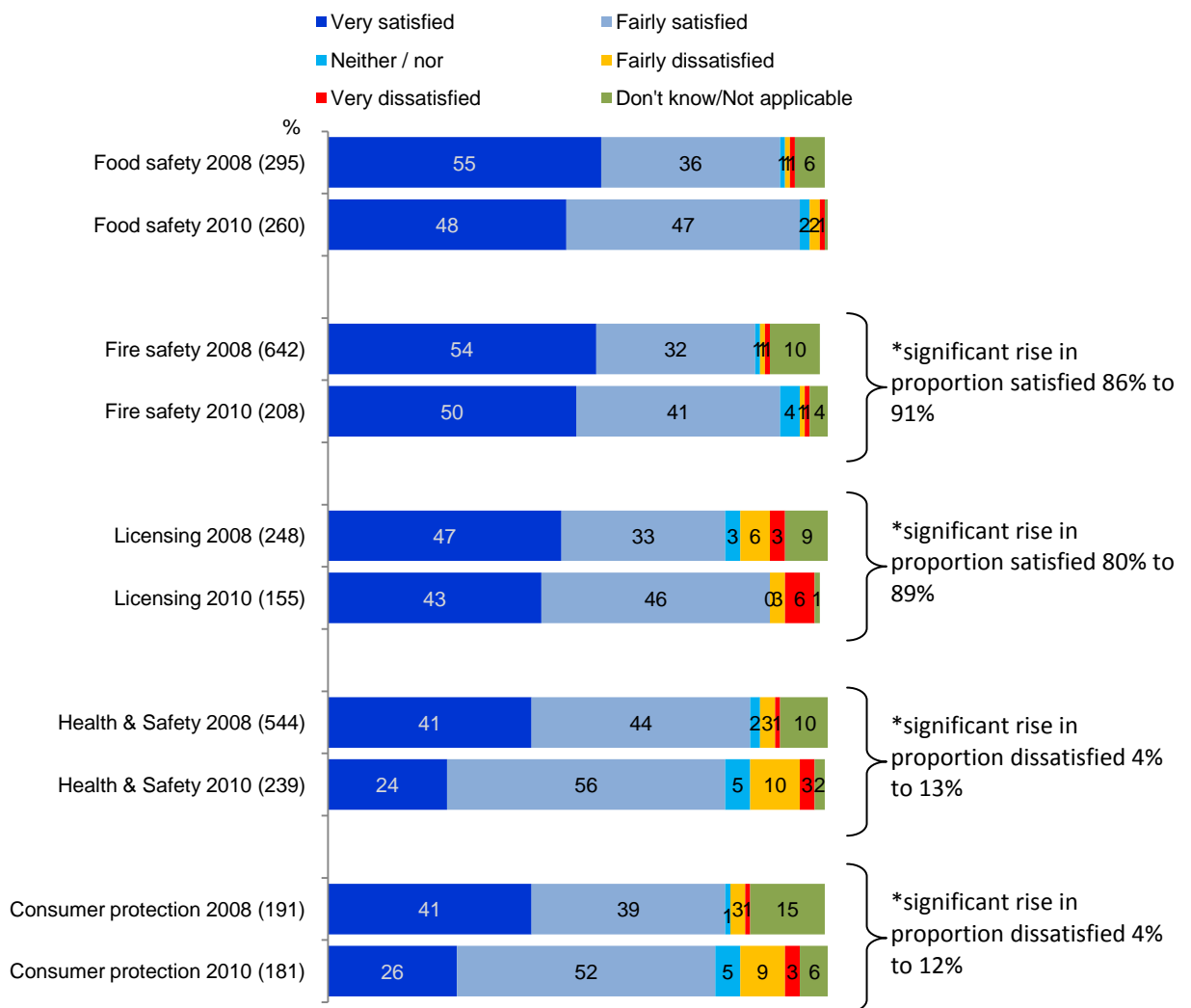
Easy to understand information

Between 78% and 95% are satisfied with their local authority for how easy it was to understand the information given out. This is the aspect of service businesses are most satisfied with when thinking about their last contact.

Hotels, retailers and wholesalers are significantly more satisfied with this aspect than companies in general. The property sector is significantly more likely to be dissatisfied (13%).

Chart 5.8: Satisfaction with local council / fire service for ease of understanding information given when thinking about the last contact

(Base: All replying in relation to each area of regulation)



There have been significant rises in the proportions satisfied in the case of fire safety (up from 86% to 91%) and licensing (up from 80% to 89%) but also increases in the proportions dissatisfied in the case of health and safety (up from 4% to 13%) and consumer protection (up from 4% to 12%).

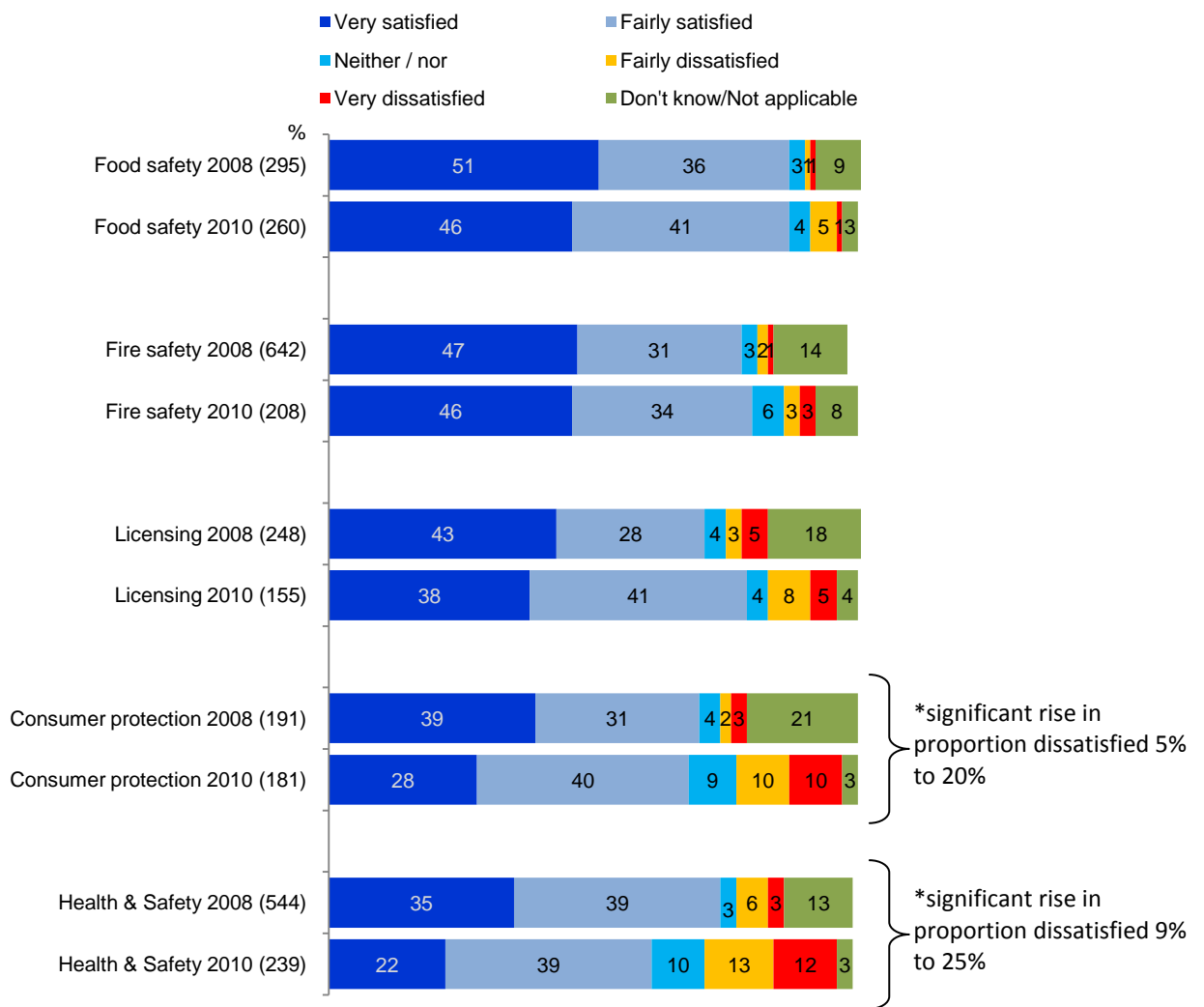
Officers' knowledge of the business situation

Local authorities are rated highly for the knowledge of their officers about the situation of businesses they deal with, in the case of food safety, fire safety and licensing. Hotels are particularly satisfied.

However, a fifth of businesses having dealings about consumer protection are not satisfied with officers' understanding of their situation and a quarter are not satisfied in the case of health and safety.

Chart 5.9: Satisfaction with local council / fire service for knowledge of officers about the business situation when thinking about last contact

(Base: All replying in relation to each area of regulation)



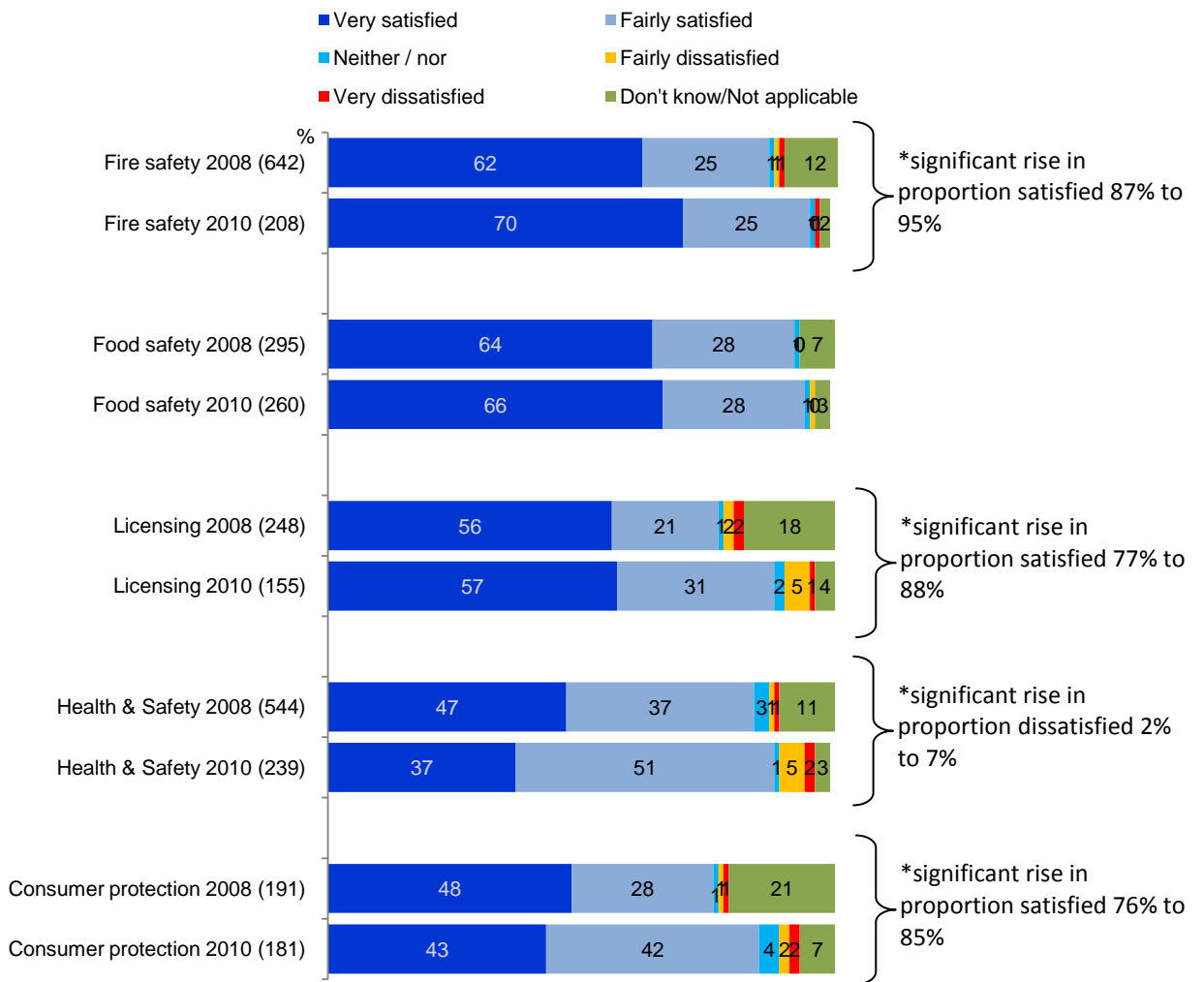
Dissatisfaction has risen significantly since 2008 in the case of consumer protection (up from 5% to 20%) and health safety (up from 9% to 25%).

Courtesy and professionalism

Another high scoring attribute of local authorities is the courtesy and professionalism of the officers. Large majorities are satisfied with this aspect across the board.

Chart 5.10: Satisfaction with local council / fire service for courtesy and professionalism of the officer when thinking about last contact

(Base: All replying in relation to each area of regulation)



Businesses are significantly more satisfied with the courtesy and professionalism of officers dealing with fire safety (proportion satisfied has risen from 87% to 95%), licensing (up from 77% to 88%) and consumer protection (up from 76% to 85%) than they were in 2008.

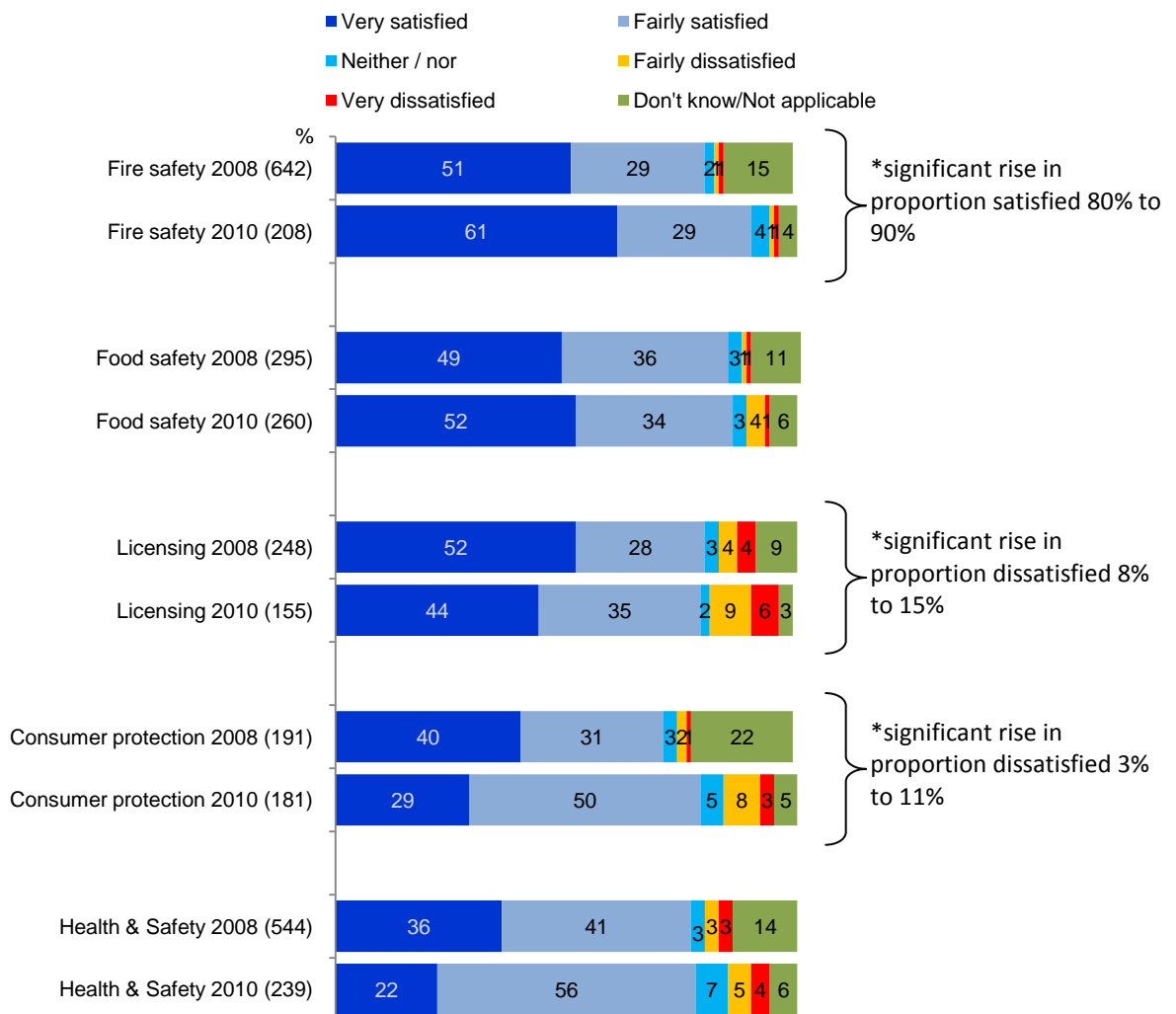
The proportion dissatisfied with the courtesy and professionalism of officers has risen significantly in the case of health and safety enquiries (up from 2% to 7%).

Speed and timeliness of service

A large majority of businesses are satisfied with the speed and timeliness of the service they received the last time they made contact and satisfaction has risen in the case of fire safety since the 2008 survey (up from 80% to 90%). However, there has been an increase in the proportions dissatisfied in the case of licensing (up from 8% to 15%) and consumer protection enquiries (up from 3% to 11%).

Chart 5.11: Satisfaction with local council / fire service for speed and timeliness of the service when thinking about last contact

(Base: All replying in relation to each area of regulation)

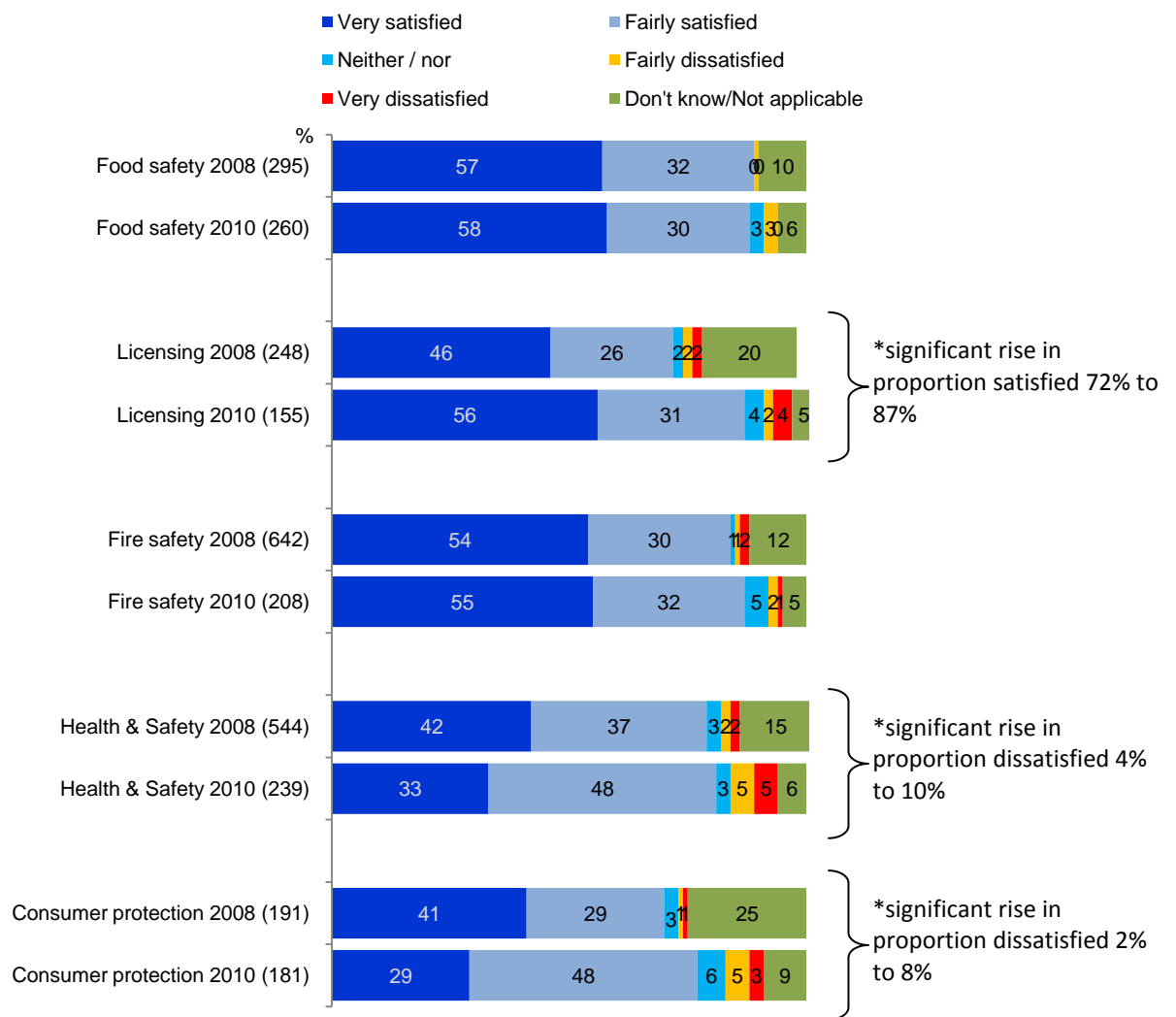


Explanations of what needs to be done to comply

Again, most businesses are satisfied that their local council or fire service explained what needed to be done in terms of the legal requirement not just guidance or best practice.

Chart 5.12: Satisfaction with local council / fire service for explaining what needed to be done to comply ie. the legal requirement as opposed to guidance or best practice when thinking about the contact

(Base: All replying in relation to each area of regulation)



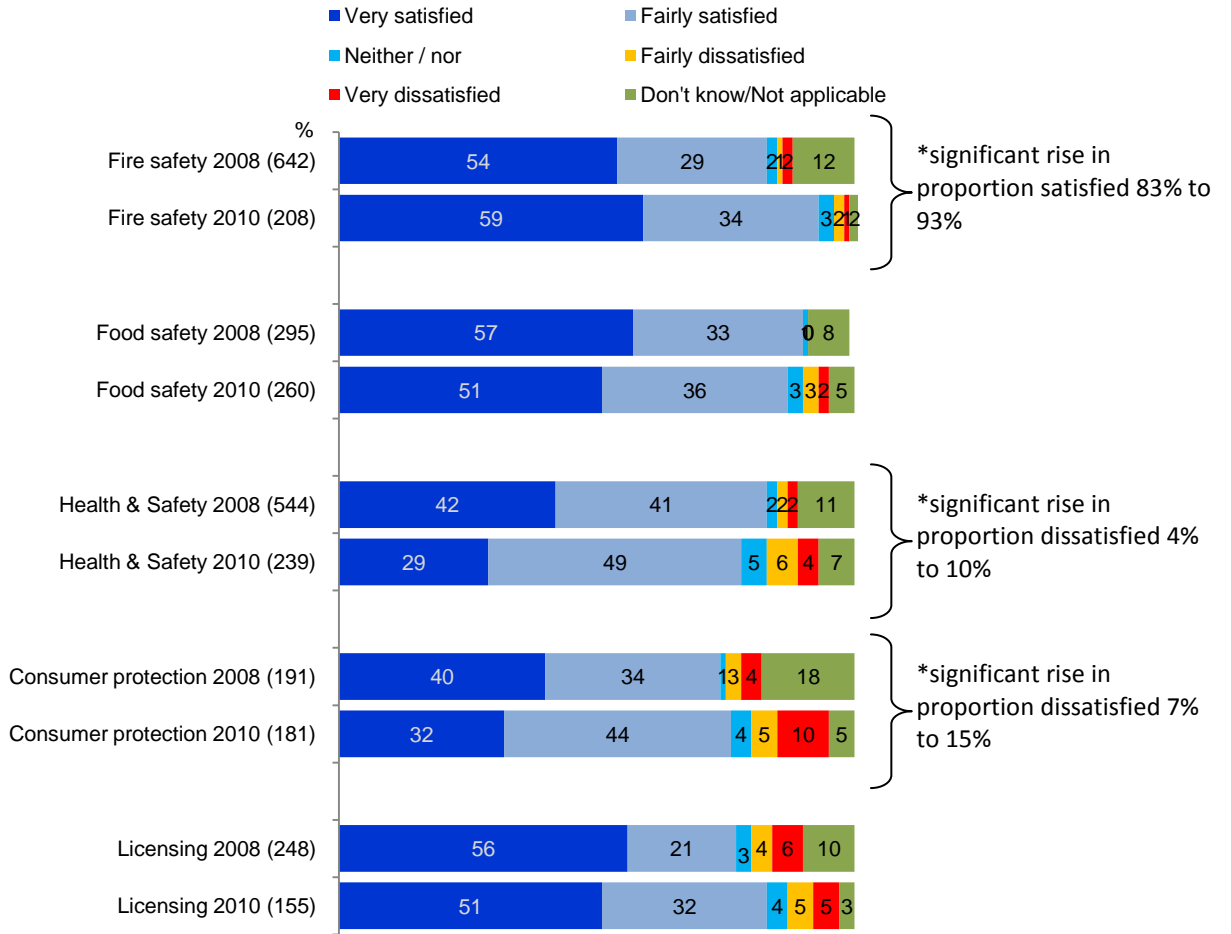
In the case of licensing, satisfaction with this aspect of service has increased from 72% to 87% since 2008. However, more are dissatisfied in the case of enquiries about health and safety (4% to 10%) and consumer protection (2% to 8%).

The final outcome

Most were satisfied with the final outcome of their contact with the local authority (between 76% and 93%) and satisfaction has risen in the case of enquiries about fire safety (up from 83% to 93%).

Chart 5.13: Satisfaction with final outcome when thinking about last contact

(Base: All replying in relation to each area of regulation)



The proportion of those dissatisfied with the final outcome regarding calls to do with consumer protection has doubled from 7% to 15% and more than doubled in the case of calls about health and safety from 4% to 10% between the two surveys.

Summary of movements between 2008 and 2010

There have been some significant movements in levels of satisfaction with the local council / fire service between 2008 and 2010 as can be seen in charts 5.5 to 5.13.

The local fire services have done particularly well in raising levels of satisfaction significantly across six of the nine areas of service measured.

Licensing has done well too, improving on three aspects (although it also declined on two aspects).

Both health and safety and consumer protection have declined significantly on eight of the nine measures.

Section 6: General views of regulation

All 2,000 respondents were asked a number of more general questions relating to regulatory burdens, allowing for greater levels of statistical reliability by sub-group.

They were presented with three aspects of regulation, as follows, and asked to rank them in importance:-

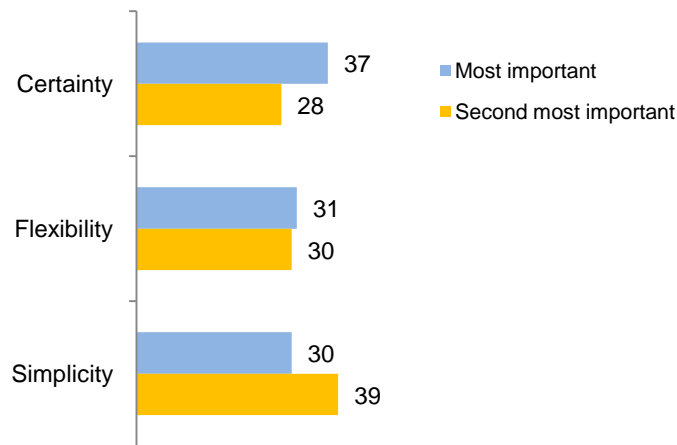
- having flexibility in how you choose to comply with regulation
- it being simple to comply with regulation
- having certainty that you are compliant.

Certainty is chosen by 37% as the most important aspect of regulation followed by flexibility (31%) and simplicity (30%).

Ease/simplicity is ranked as second most important by four in ten ahead of flexibility and certainty (three in ten).

Chart 6.1: Importance of aspects concerning regulation in general
(Base: All 2,000)

% claiming aspect is most important and second most important



There are differences in what is considered the most important aspect of regulation by size of company. Micro businesses (1 employee) are significantly more likely to choose simplicity (37% compared to 30% overall) while medium and large companies employing 50 or more are significantly more likely to choose certainty and less likely to choose flexibility.

Table 6.2: Importance of aspects concerning regulation in general
(Base: All 2,000)

	% claiming aspect is most important				
	Total (2,000) %	Company size (number of employees)			
		1 (446) %	1-49 (1,648) %	50-249 (173) %	250+ (175) %
Certainty	37	32	37	59*	65*
Flexibility	31	29	31	15*	14*
Simplicity	30	37*	30	25	21*

**Significantly different result to the total*

Certainty is even more important for businesses in the finance (54%) and property sectors (44%).

A higher proportion of farmers chose flexibility (39%) and a higher proportion of property firms chose simplicity (37%). Definitions of industry sectors are given in the appendices.

Table 6.3: Importance of aspects concerning regulation in general
(Base: All 2,000)

	% claiming aspect is most important												
	Total (2,000) %	Sector											
		Agriculture (156) %	Construction (162) %	Hotels (177) %	Production (148) %	Motor (55) %	Property (428) %	Public (200) %	Retail (212) %	Wholesale (104) %	Finance (131) %	Transport (131) %	Other (96) %
Certainty	37	31	40	40	32	39	44*	39	33	35	54*	36	37
Flexibility	31	39*	32	30	38	39	18*	33	35	32	24	27	25
Simplicity	30	28	26	28	28	22	37*	26	29	31	20*	36	35

**Significantly different result to the total*

Young companies (less than a year old) were significantly more likely to choose certainty as the most important aspect of regulation (56% compared to 37% overall).

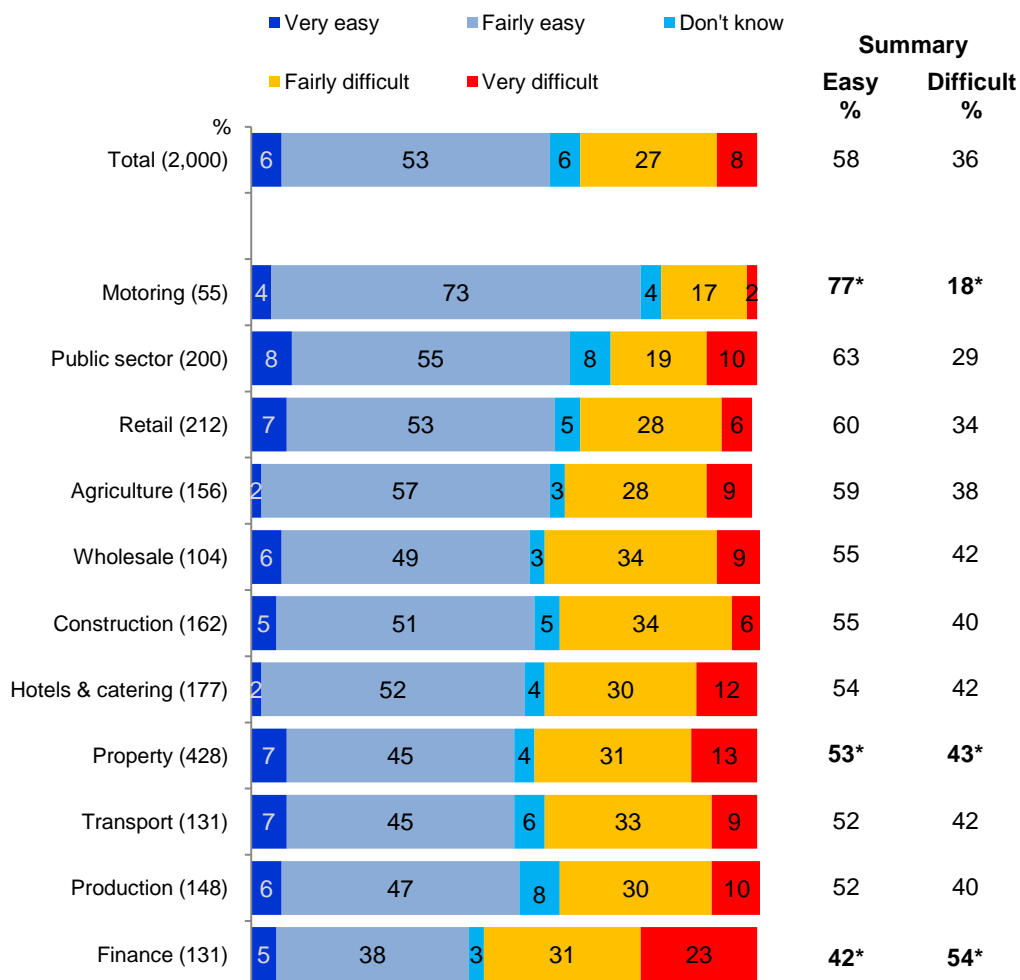
They were next asked to exclude regulations that apply to all businesses such as tax and employment law and say how easy or difficult are the regulations that apply to their specific business sector to comply with.

Very few say that their sector specific regulations are easy to comply with (only 6%) but just over half say they are fairly easy to comply with (53%).

On the other hand, 35% say their sector specific regulations are difficult to comply with.

Sectors with the highest proportions claiming sector specific regulations are difficult to comply with are finance, property, transport, hotels and catering and production:-

Chart 6.4: Ease of complying with regulation relevant to specific business sectors
(Base: All 2,000)



**Significantly different to the total*

Those saying their sector’s regulations are easy to comply with where asked why they feel this is so.

The main reasons are that the legislation is straightforward and easy (30%), that there are not many regulations (24%), that they have already been complying with regulations for a long time (12%) and that there is good, clear information, communication and advice (9%).

Micro businesses are also more likely to say they find regulations easy to comply with because there are not too many regulations to deal with (30%).

Property companies are particularly likely to say they find their regulations easy to comply with because there are not many regulations to deal with. The motor trade is more likely to praise the good and clear information and advice they receive.

Table 6.5: Reasons for considering regulations specific to their business sector easy to comply with
(Base: All finding regulations specific to their sector easy to comply with – 1,090)

	Total (1,090) %	Sector											
		Agriculture (84) %	Construction (81) %	Hotels (99) %	Production (74) %	Motor (37) %	Property (223) %	Public (104) %	Retail (132) %	Wholesale (58) %	Finance (54) %	Transport (71) %	Other (73) %
Easy, straightforward	30	35	36	32	29	26	28	29	30	28	42	37	24
Not many rules/regulations to comply with	24	18	20	16	15	21	33*	32	27	23	24	21	28
Do it already/been doing it a long time	12	15	9	15	10	3	12	7	14	16	14	6	13
Good/clear information/communication/advice	9	10	11	10	9	20*	7	15	8	2	6	11	6
No complaints / problems	6	2	3	8	2	14	6	2	4	7	6	12	12
It’s common sense / obvious	3	-	1	6	2	-	2	3	9*	2	-	1	5
Available online	3	-	4	1	5	6	2	4	5	2	5	5	2
Help/support available	3	1	3	5	1	3	1	<1	4	2	-	3	5
We cope / we manage	3	5	-	1	5	3	2	4	1	4	4	3	3

**Significantly different to the total*

Asked why they think their regulations are difficult to comply with, the biggest complaints are that there are too many regulations (22%), that regulations are complicated, unclear or confusing (15%), that regulations are impractical, challenging and difficult to comply with (13%) and that they change too frequently (11%).

A large proportion of finance companies finding their regulations difficult to comply with say that this is because there are too many of them (44%).

Property firms are more likely to complain about regulations being too complicated and confusing (20%).

Organisations in the public sector and manufacturers are more likely to say that regulations are impractical, challenging and difficult to comply with.

Three in ten wholesalers finding regulations difficult, complain that their regulations change too frequently.

Table 6.6: Reasons for considering regulations specific to their business sector difficult to comply with

(Base: All finding regulations specific to their sector difficult to comply with – 836)

	Sector												
	Total (836) %	Agriculture (67) %	Construction (74) %	Hotels (73) %	Production (66) %	Motor (16) %	Property (191) %	Public (87) %	Retail (71) %	Wholesale (42) %	Finance (72) %	Transport (56) %	Other (21) %
Too many regulations / keep introducing new regulations	22	23	21	32	15	9	17	34	26	30	44*	20	12
Regulations complicated / unclear / confusing	15	15	16	6	10	18	20*	5	23	16	16	13	14
Regulations impractical / challenging / difficult to comply with	13	11	11	15	24*	26	11	27*	5	8	10	9	-
Regulations change too frequently	11	5	13	11	8	1	15	5	9	29*	14	12	2
Slow / time consuming	11	8	11	13	20	2	9	6	13	9	3	6	3
Poor / lack of information / not informed of changes	10	7	16	10	6	-	9	5	8	9	4	9	30
Cost / expensive to comply	9	6	11	14	9	27	5	2	12	3	9	4	12
Too much paperwork involved	6	10	7	2	10	1	8	16*	2	3	9	4	-
Too much bureaucracy / red tape	5	5	4	5	9	-	6	8	4	6	2	2	1
Have to employ someone to deal with it	4	-	4	2	2	-	5	4	6	3	4	12*	-

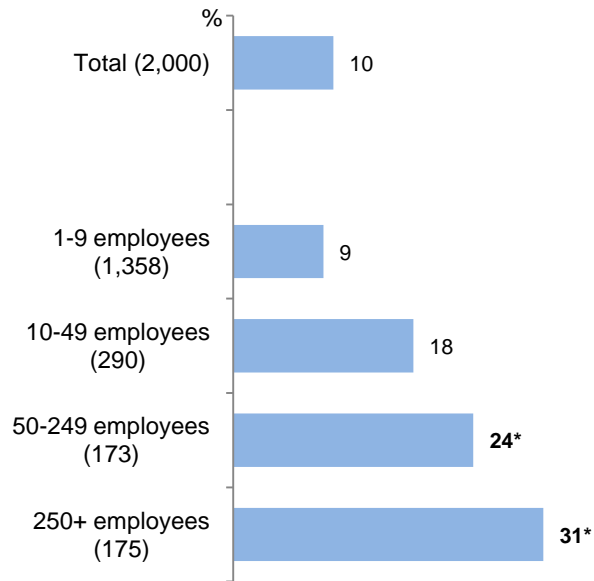
**Significantly different to the total*

One in ten companies have made contact with a body or organisation to make a suggestion on how the regulatory regime could be improved.

A third of large companies employing over 250 people have made a suggestion about the regulatory regime.

Chart 6.7: Ever made contact with any body/organisation to make a suggestion on how the regulatory regime could be improved by company size

(Base: All)

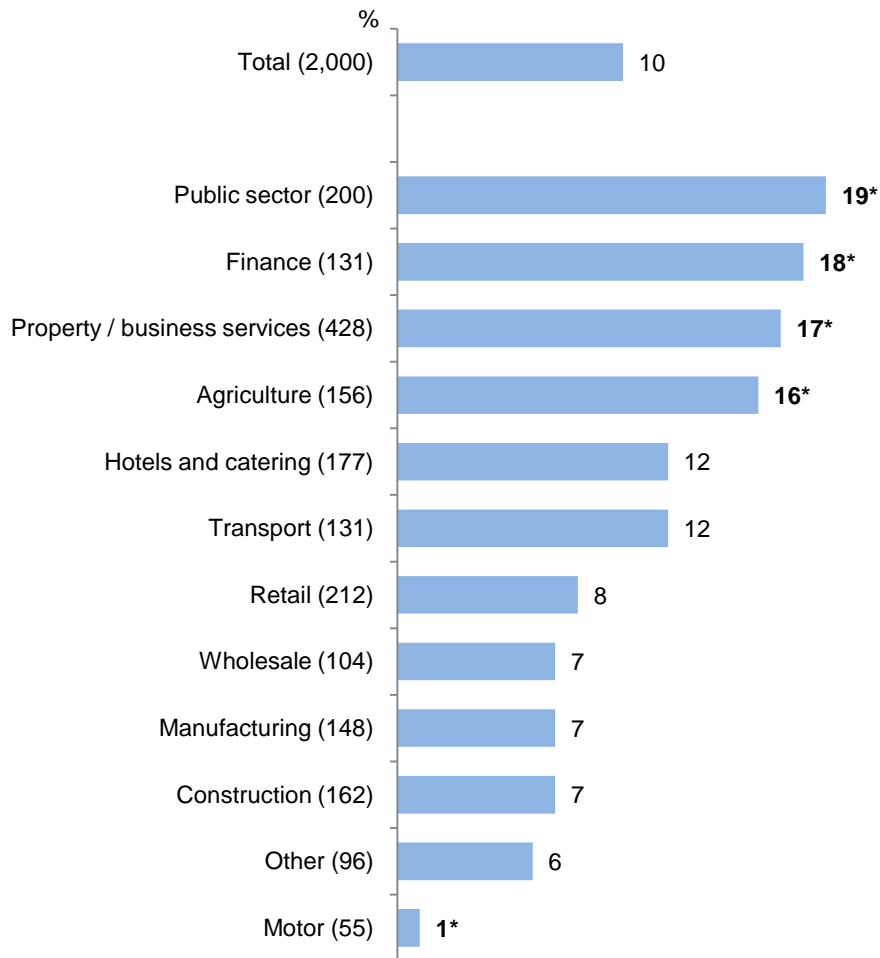


**Significantly different to the total*

Companies in the public, finance, property and business services and agricultural sectors are significantly more likely to have made contact with a suggestion.

Chart 6.8: Ever made contact with any body/organisation to make a suggestion on how the regulatory regime could be improved by sector

(Base: All)

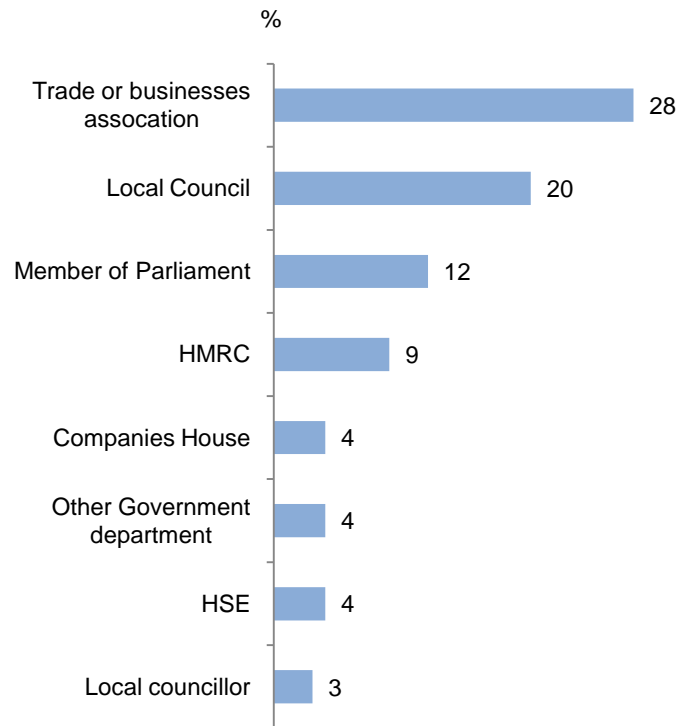


**Significantly different to the total*

Trade associations (28%) and local councils (20%) were contacted most often with suggestions about the regulatory regime. 12% of those making contact, went to a Member of Parliament and 9% to the HM Revenue and Customs.

Chart 6.9: Organisation contacted to make a suggestion on how the regulatory regime could be improved

(Base: All making a suggestion to a body or organisation – 312)

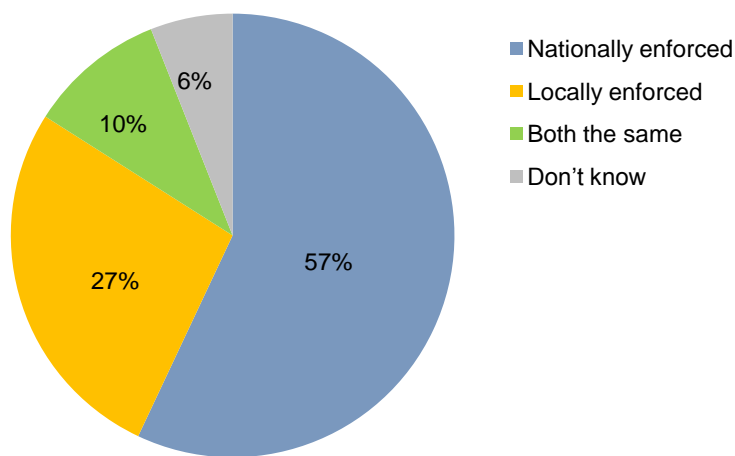


All companies interviewed on both the LBRO led survey and the NAO led survey were asked which imposed the greater burden of regulation upon them – nationally or locally enforced regulation.

The majority (57%) felt that nationally enforced regulation imposed the greater burden, especially finance, property and construction firms.

27% felt that locally enforced regulation imposed the greater burden rising to 40% among hotels and 37% among transport companies.

Chart 6.10: Perceptions of what imposes the larger burden of regulation – nationally or locally enforced regulation
(Base: All 2,000)



When comparing the opinion of the two different sample sets, those that were interviewed on behalf of the LBRO (and therefore predominantly interviewed with regard to local regulation) were significantly more likely to feel local regulation carried the bigger burden (or at least carried the same burden as national regulation) than the total sample. However, among the LBRO audience, there is still a higher proportion finding national regulation the greater burden (51%).

Table 6.11: Perceptions of what imposes the larger burden of regulation – nationally or locally enforced regulation by sample type

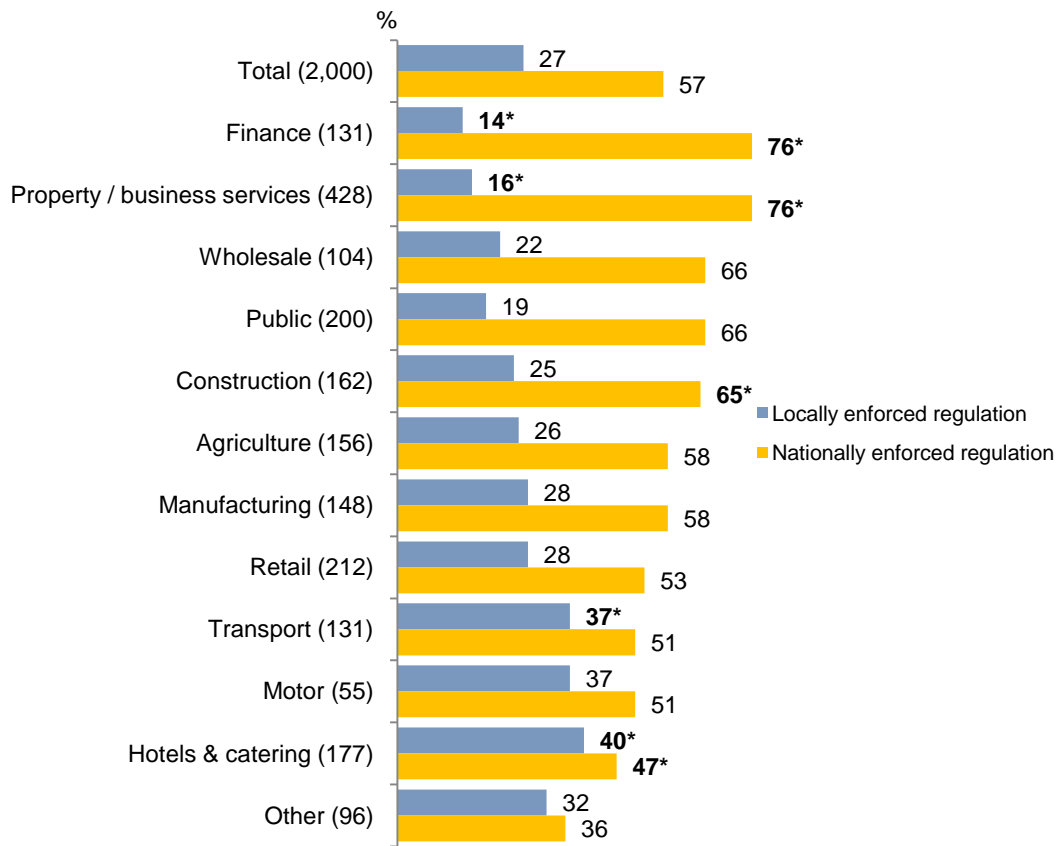
	Total (2,000)	NAO sample (1,000)	LBRO sample (1,000)
Nationally enforced	57%	62%*	51%*
Locally enforced	27%	23%*	32%*
Both the same	10%	7%*	12%*
Don't know	6%	7%	5%

*Significantly different to the total

By sector, businesses operating in finance, property and business services and construction are significantly more likely to believe nationally enforced regulation to be the larger burden. The transport companies and hotels and caterers were significantly more likely than average to see local regulation as a bigger burden, however in both of these cases a greater number of businesses still felt nationally enforced regulation to be the bigger burden.

Businesses operating in the public administration sector were most likely to be unable to comment, with 14% doing so.

Chart 6.12: Perceptions of what imposes the larger burden of regulation – nationally or locally enforced regulation by sector
(Base: All)



**Significantly different to the total*

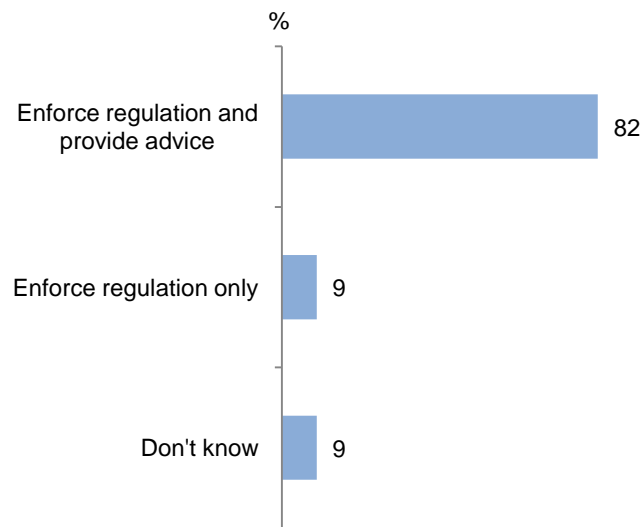
Section 7: Advisory role of local councils and consistency of advice

In the LBRO survey, businesses were asked whether they thought the role of local councils was to enforce rules and regulations only or to enforce regulations and provide advice. Here they were thinking in relation to the specific area of regulation they had most knowledge about.

On the whole, companies expect councils to provide an advisory role alongside the role of enforcement (82%).

Chart 7.1: Is the role of local councils to enforce regulation only or to enforce regulation and provide advice

(Base: All 1,000)



There are no significant differences in response between businesses focussing on different areas of law nor by sector, company size and age of company.

Businesses were asked to think in general terms and say how confident they are when local councils enforce the law, they each interpret in the same way.

Opinion is split on this point with half thinking that they do interpret the law in the same way and four in ten thinking that they do not. 11 per cent could not say.

Chart 7.2: Confidence that when enforcing the law, local councils each interpret it in the same way
(Base: All in England and Wales – 1,892)

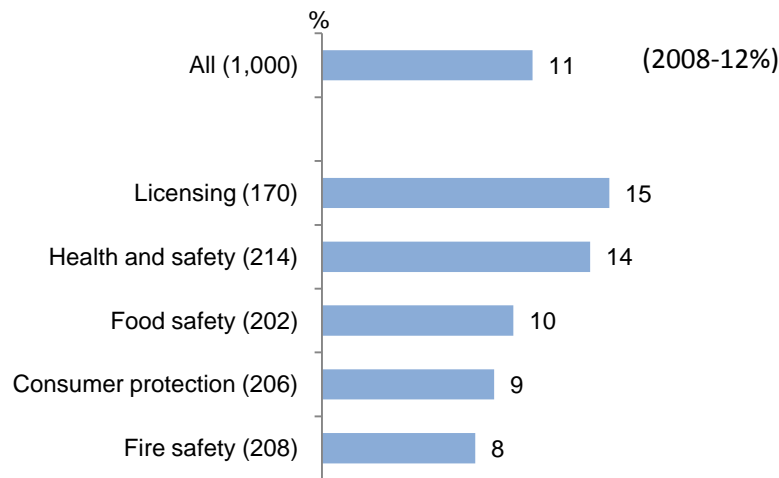


Manufacturers and wholesalers are particularly likely to say that local councils do not interpret the law in the same way. 49 per cent and 48 per cent respectively are not confident that they do so. Larger companies employing 250 or more are significantly less confident that local councils interpret the law in the same way than companies in general (41 per cent versus 50 per cent overall).

Dealings with more than one local council

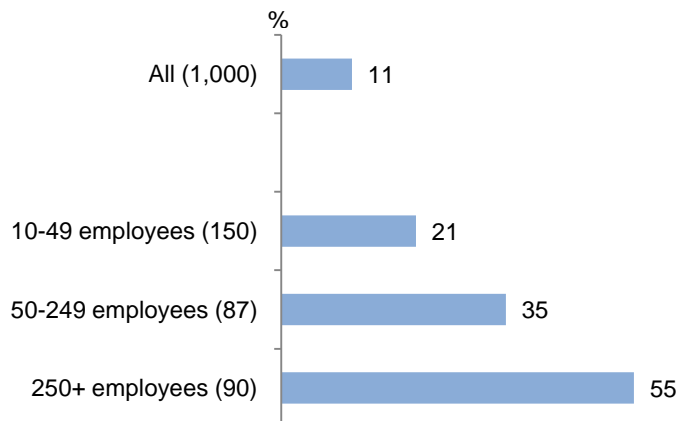
One in ten deal with more than one local council in relation to the specific area of regulation they were asked to focus on during the first half of the interview. This varies from 15% in the case of licensing law to 8% in the case of fire safety. Comparisons can be made with the 2008 survey and show a very similar result with 12% contacting more than one council but it should be remembered that this question was asked in 2008 about contacting local councils about locally enforced legislation generally while this year it was asked only in the context of the specific area of law they were focussing on.

Chart 7.3: Whether deal with more than one local council in relation to specific laws by area of law
(Base: All)



The larger the company, the more likely it is to have dealings with more than one local authority.

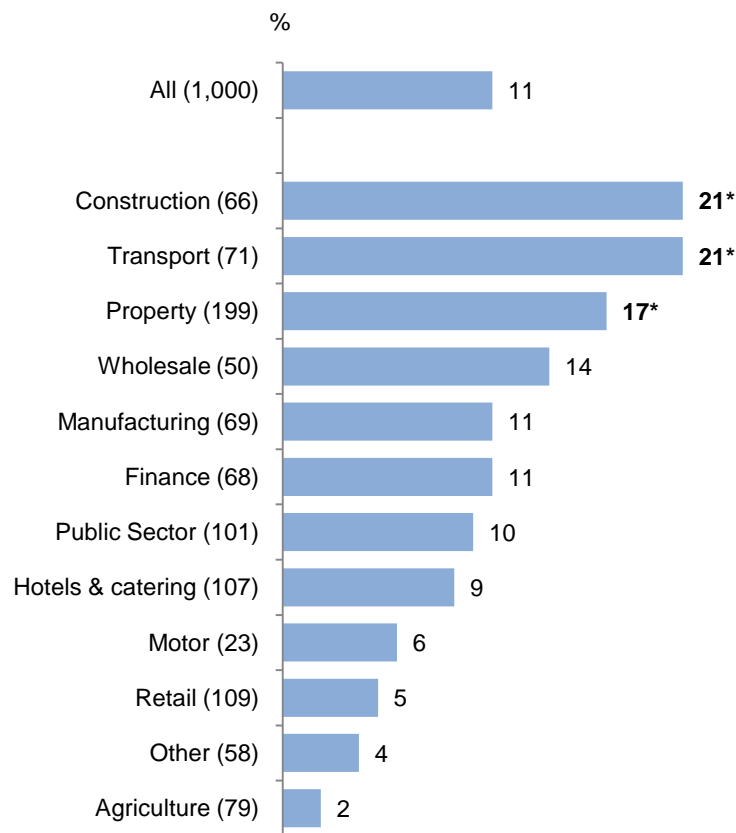
Chart 7.4: Whether deal with more than one local council in relation to specific laws by company size
(Base: All)



Sectors that are significantly more likely to deal with more than one council about a specific area of law are construction, transport and property/business services.

Larger companies are more likely to deal with more than one local council. The results by sector are not a function of the share of large companies within each sector. 23 percent of public sector organisations, 20 percent of transport companies and 18 percent of finance companies had 10 or more employees (higher than the average of 10 percent across all companies) and yet the proportion of financial and public sector organisations dealing with more than one council is the same as the average across all companies.

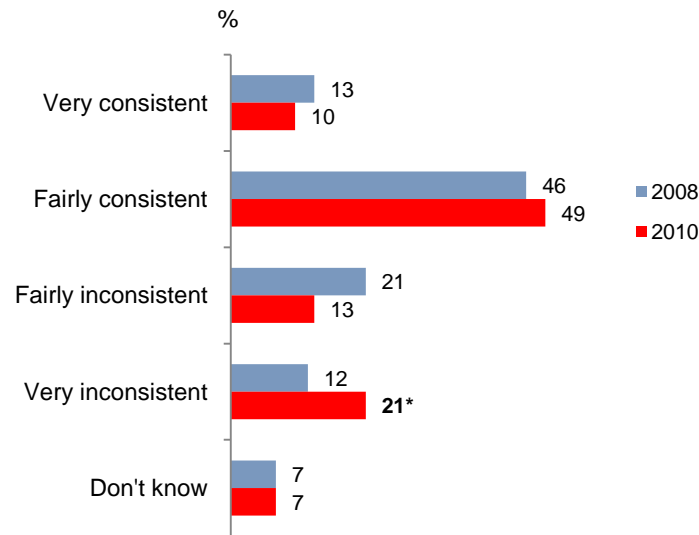
Chart 7.5: Whether deal with more than one local council in relation to specific law
(Base: All)



**Significantly higher than the total*

Six in ten of those dealing with more than one local council feel that the advice they receive from various councils is consistent. However, a third do not think it is consistent. The base size of those answering this question is smaller (181) but this sample size is still robust enough to give results of +/-7% for the proportions saying consistent and non consistent.

Chart 7.6: Consistency of advice received from various councils deal with
 (Base: All dealing with more than one council – 181 in 2010, 119 in 2008)



**Significantly higher in 2010*

There are no significant differences by area of law or size of company. Older companies are more likely to say the advice from different councils is consistent (74%).

Compared to the result of the 2008 survey, there are no significant changes in the proportions saying that different local councils’ advice is consistent (very or fairly) and inconsistent (very or fairly), however there are significantly more businesses choosing very inconsistent as an answer (21%) in 2010 than in 2008 (12%).

Appendices

Appendix A – Methodology and sample profile

Methodology and sample profile

Sample bases used for different questions

In conjunction with the National Audit Office, 2,000 interviews were conducted with UK businesses (England and Wales only for the LBRO sample) between 10 March and 26 April 2010. In most cases, this report presents the results of the 1,000 businesses interviewed on behalf of the LBRO, but where larger base sizes were required for satisfaction with last contact with local councils, we include English and Welsh businesses interviewed on the NAO survey to raise the base to 1,892.

In Section 6 looking at general views of regulation, we use the total sample of 2,000 including Scottish companies interviewed on the NAO survey.

In order to measure changes over time, the questionnaire remained similar to the LBRO/Mori 2008 survey, and included new questions that the National Audit Office uses in its annual administrative burdens study. A full version of the questionnaire can be found at the end of this appendix.

The questionnaire was structured as follows:-

- Businesses' perception of the burden of regulation
- Aspects of regulation that businesses find burdensome
- Perception of changes to regulation
- Communications
- Satisfaction with last contact with local council/fire service
- General views on regulation
- Advisory role of local councils and consistency of advice

Fieldwork

A sample of 16,729 business contacts were obtained by FDS International in order to achieve the 2,000 interviews required, giving a conversion rate of 8:1. All contacts were sent an advance letter prior to fieldwork (a copy of which can be found at the end of this appendix), providing further information about the research and an opportunity to supply an alternative contact name or number if required.

After a period of one week following the advance letter being sent, contacts were issued to the FDS telephone centre for interviewing.

Appendix B – Business Sectors

Business sectors

Business were split into sectors using the same groupings as used in the 2008 study and based on the Standard Industrial Classification 2003.

- A, B **Agriculture, hunting, forestry and fishing**
- D, E **Manufacturing** including electricity, gas and water supply
- F **Construction**
- G-1 **Wholesale trade**
- G-2 **Retail trade**
- G-3 **Motoring** includes repair of motor vehicles, motorcycles and personal and household goods
- H **Hotels and restaurants**
- I **Transport, storage and communication** includes airlines, railway companies, coach services, taxi companies, ferry services, shipping lines, furniture removals, cargo handling, storage and warehousing, travel agencies and tour operators, postal and telecommunications companies
- J **Finance** includes banks, building societies, financial services, insurance and pension funding
- K **Property and business services** includes estate agents and letting agents, renting of machinery, computing services, maintenance and repair of office equipment, research and development, legal, accounting, book-keeping and auditing activities, tax consultancy, market research and management consultancy, architects, advertising, temporary staff services, investigation and security activities, industrial cleaning, photography and film processing
- L, M, N **Public** includes public administration and defence, compulsory social security, education, health and social work
- O, P, Q **Other** includes other community, social and personal services activities, sewage and refuse disposal, professional organisations, recreational, cultural and sporting activities, news agencies, libraries, museum, zoos, private households employing staff and extra-territorial organisations

Appendix C – Sample quotas and weighting

Sample quotas

Quotas were set by area of law, industry sector and size of business to ensure robust enough sample sizes for good levels of statistical confidence when comparing results across these sub groups.

	Total	LBRO Survey	NAO Survey
Total	2,000	1,000	1,000
Area of Law			
Food safety	202	202	0
Consumer protection	206	206	0
Fire safety	208	208	0
Health and safety*	214	214	0
Licensing	170	170	0
Sector			
Agriculture	156	79	77
Construction	162	66	96
Finance	131	68	63
Hotel / catering	177	107	70
Manufacturing	148	69	79
Property / business services	428	199	229
Wholesale	104	50	54
Retail	212	109	103
Motor	55	23	32
Transport	131	71	60
Public administration	200	101	99
Other	96	58	38
Business size			
Small (1-49 employees)	1,648	821	827
Medium (50-249 employees)	173	87	86
Large (250+ employees)	175	90	85
Length of time business has been existence			
Less than a year	66	36	30
1-5 years	363	196	167
6-20 years	798	382	416
More than 20 years	764	380	384

*Respondents were asked whether they were inspected by the Health and Safety Executive or their local council. If HSE, they were not interviewed for health and safety in the LBRO survey.

Weighting

Data was weighted by company size and sector due to the stratification of the sample. Weights were applied to reflect the profile of companies in England and Wales, as larger businesses and businesses in certain sectors were over-sampled in order to achieve robust base sizes.

Appendix D – Margins of error and significance

Margins of error

The overall sample size of 2,000 was designed to give robust results across sub groups and with previous surveys. In many cases the sub group of 1,000 businesses interviewed on the LBRO survey was used for analysis or the group of 1,892 English and Welsh businesses interviewed on both surveys where the questions were common to both. For the section about general views of regulations, the full base of 2,000 was used.

A base size of 1,000 means that as a worst case scenario, findings are accurate to within ± 3 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. By this we mean that if 50% of our sample of 1,000 agreed with a statement in the questionnaire, we can be 95% confident (ie in 19 times out of 20) that the response from the whole of the England and Wales would lie between 47% and 53%.

Measuring a margin of error at 50% is referred to as a 'worst case scenario', as the margin of error decreases the closer results approach 0% or 100% (ie, where greater agreement in the sample occurs). Table A2 demonstrates how the margin of error decreases as opinion converges.

Table A2: Margin of error at the 95% confidence limit (95% confidence, infinite population, random sample)			
Number of interviews in sub group	Margin of error at 50%	Margin of error at 70%/30%	Margin of error at 90%/10%
2,000	$\pm 2.2\%$	$\pm 2.0\%$	$\pm 1.3\%$
1,000	$\pm 3.1\%$	$\pm 2.8\%$	$\pm 1.9\%$
800	$\pm 3.5\%$	$\pm 3.2\%$	$\pm 2.1\%$
600	$\pm 4.0\%$	$\pm 3.7\%$	$\pm 2.4\%$
500	$\pm 4.4\%$	$\pm 4.0\%$	$\pm 2.6\%$
400	$\pm 4.9\%$	$\pm 4.5\%$	$\pm 2.9\%$
300	$\pm 5.7\%$	$\pm 5.2\%$	$\pm 3.4\%$
200	$\pm 6.9\%$	$\pm 6.4\%$	$\pm 4.2\%$
150	$\pm 8.0\%$	$\pm 7.3\%$	$\pm 4.8\%$
100	$\pm 9.8\%$	$\pm 9.0\%$	$\pm 5.9\%$

Significance testing

At some points in the report, results are described as significantly different. These are tested by standard statistical formulae, also at the 95% confidence level. Where significant, we can be 95% confident that the differences are real and did not occur by chance or sampling error. Results that are not significant are those that we are less than 95% confident that they did not appear naturally. These should be treated with more caution but need not be written off as random chance.

Appendix E – Response rate

Response rate

Table A3 shows the breakdown of response rates for the telephone fieldwork, both for the total sample and also the LBRO sub group.

Table A3: Outcomes for all sample provided		
	Total 2010	LBRO 2010
Completed interviews	2,000	1,000
	12%	10%
Refused	6,257	3,812
	37%	38%
Out of quota	1,377	242
	8%	2%
Number unobtainable	1,343	748
	8%	7%
Not available during interviewing period	611	378
	4%	4%
Active at close	606	464
	4%	5%
Close at QF (knowledge of legal area)	264	158
	2%	2%
Dialler issue	252	252
	2%	2%
Close at QD (area of law practiced)	247	180
	1%	2%
Incomplete	99	71
	1%	1%
Other	3,673	2,819
	22%	28%
Total	16,729	10,124

Appendix F – The Questionnaire



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**NAO/ LBRO – ADMIN BURDENS SURVEY 2010
7774**

SURVEY

NAO SURVEY 1

LBRO SURVEY 2

Good morning/afternoon, I'm calling from FDS, the independent research organisation and we are carrying out a survey on behalf of the National Audit Office (NAO) and the Local Better Regulation Office (LBRO). A letter from us should have been received by you asking for your help with this important study.

ESTABLISH CONTACT WITH NAMED SAMPLE OR REFERRAL IF RELEVANT

INTRODUCTION

ONCE CONTACT WITH RELEVANT COMPANY REPRESENTATIVE ACHIEVED:

IF NAO SURVEY

As a totally independent organisation to Government, The National Audit Office (NAO) is carrying out an independent evaluation of Government's efforts to reduce the cost to business of complying with regulation. Participating in this survey gives you the opportunity to provide feedback on your experience of complying with regulation and to share your ideas for improvement. The interview should take no more than 15 minutes.

This survey is being run in conjunction with the Local Better Regulation Office (LBRO), a public body under the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills. Some of your answers may be used by both parties in their final analysis.

ADD IF NECESSARY: All the information you give us is completely confidential. The NAO and LBRO will not know who has taken part and all responses will be aggregated before presenting the findings.

IF LBRO SURVEY

The LBRO was created in 2008 to improve the effectiveness of locally enforced regulation and its impact on businesses and consumers. It is an executive non-departmental public body, accountable to the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS). LBRO are building their understanding of businesses' views in order to inform their agenda and also to measure their progress. Participating in this survey gives you the opportunity to provide feedback on your experience of complying with regulation and to share your ideas for improvement. The interview should take no more than 15 minutes.

This survey is being run in conjunction with the National Audit Office (NAO), which independently evaluates Government expenditure on behalf of Parliament. Some of your answers may be used by both parties in their final analysis.

ADD IF NECESSARY: All the information you give us is completely confidential. The LBRO and NAO will not know who has taken part and all responses will be aggregated before presenting the findings.

YES – continue

NO – terminate

**MAIN STAGE SURVEY
SCREENING QUESTIONS**

	Col	Route
QA. INDUSTRY – CODED FROM SAMPLE		
Agriculture	1	
Production	2	
Construction	3	
Accommodation and food	4	
Transport and storage	5	
Property/ business services/ professional	6	
Public admin/ education/ health	7	
Finance	8	
Retail	9	
Wholesale	10	
Motor	11	
Other	12	
QB. When answering most of the survey questions, we would like you to focus on the area of <i>[insert area of law1 from sample]</i> Law. SINGLE CODE ONLY		
If respondent says they do not know enough about selected law prompt: Part of the survey is also to understand <u>how much</u> businesses know about regulation so if you don't know too much about specific regulations you can still answer on <i><selected area of law></i>		
OK to Continue	1	Q1 EXCEPT IF HEALTH & SAFETY – THESE GO TO QE
Objections raised – cannot answer on this area of law	2	QC
Referred to another person	3	LOG DETAILS AND RE-CONTACT
IF CODE 1 AT QB – SCRIPT TO LOG LAW1 FROM SAMPLE EXCEPT IF LBRO SURVEY AND HEALTH & SAFETY		
ASK IF CODE 2 AT QB		
QC: In that case we would like you to focus on <i>[insert area of law2 from sample]</i> Law. SINGLE CODE ONLY		
OK to Continue	1	Q1 EXCEPT IF HEALTH & SAFETY – THESE GO TO QE
Objections raised – cannot answer on this area of law	2	QD
Referred to another person	3	LOG DETAILS & RE-CONTACT
IF CODE 1 AT QC – SCRIPT TO LOG LAW2 FROM SAMPLE EXCEPT IF LBRO SURVEY AND HEALTH & SAFETY		

<p>ASK IF CODE 2 AT QC QD: Which of the following areas of law would you be most able to complete the survey about? READ OUT a) – e) or f) – j) NOT USED AT QB OR QC. SINGLE CODE ONLY</p> <p style="text-align: center;">LIST FOR NAO SURVEY</p> <p style="text-align: center;">a) Company Law b) Employment Law c) Health and Safety Law d) Planning Law e) Tax Law</p> <p style="text-align: center;">LIST FOR LBRO SURVEY</p> <p style="text-align: center;">f) Food Safety g) Consumer Protection, for example in relation to fair trading, consumer credit and product safety h) Fire Safety i) Health and Safety j) Licensing of alcohol, taxis, gambling, entertainment or security personnel</p> <p style="text-align: center;">None of these</p>		<p>Q1 Q1 QE Q1 Q1 Q1 Q1 Q1 QE Q1 CLOSE</p>
<p>IF HEALTH AND SAFETY SELECTED IN THE LBRO SURVEY, CHECK TO MAKE SURE THEY ARE NOT SOLELY INSPECTED BY THE HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE BUT THAT THEY DO RECEIVE INSPECTIONS BY THEIR LOCAL COUNCIL</p> <p>IF CODE 3 OR 9 (HEALTH AND SAFETY) AT QB, QC OR QD, ASK QE</p>		
<p>QE: With regards to Health and Safety regulations, are you inspected by the Health and Safety Executive, your local council or both?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Health and Safety Executive Local Council Both Don't know</p>	<p>1 2 3</p>	
<p>IF LBRO SURVEY AND ONLY HSE, DON'T ASK ABOUT HEALTH AND SAFETY, GO TO QF TO SELECT ANOTHER AREA OF LAW IF NAO SURVEY, GO TO Q1 WITH HEALTH AND SAFETY SCRIPTED AS AREA OF LAW</p>		

<p>ASK IF LBRO SURVEY AND HSE AT QE</p> <p>QF: Which of the following areas of law would you be most able to complete the survey about? READ OUT a) – e) or f) – j) NOT USED AT QB, QC OR QD. SINGLE CODE ONLY</p> <p style="text-align: center;">LIST FOR NAO SURVEY</p> <p>a) Company Law 1 Q1</p> <p>b) Employment Law 2 Q1</p> <p>c) Health and Safety Law 3 Q1</p> <p>d) Planning Law 4 Q1</p> <p>e) Tax Law 5 Q1</p> <p style="text-align: center;">LIST FOR LBRO SURVEY</p> <p>f) Food Safety 6 Q1</p> <p>g) Consumer Protection, for example in relation to fair trading, consumer credit and product safety 7 Q1</p> <p>h) Fire Safety 8 Q1</p> <p>i) Health and Safety 9 Q1</p> <p>j) Licensing of alcohol, taxis, gambling, entertainment or security personnel 0 Q1</p> <p style="text-align: center;">None of these CLOSE</p>		
<p>SCRIPT TO LOG LAW (CODE 1 – 10) FROM QF</p>		

SECTION 1 - CLASSIFICATION

Before we begin, can I just confirm a few details about you and your organisation? This information will be used for analysis purposes only – neither you nor your organisation will be identified in the results.

<p>Q1: As far as you know, roughly how many staff are employed by the organisation you work for, excluding owners, partners and directors? Please include anyone who works for the organisation, even if they work in a different location or plant to you. PROMPT WITH BANDS IF NECESSARY. SINGLE CODE ONLY</p>	<p>None 1 1 - 4 2 5 - 9 3 10-19 4 20 - 49 5 50 - 99 6 100 - 249 7 250-499 8 500-999 9 1,000+ 10 Don't know</p>	
<p>Q2: Thinking about the next 12 months, does your business expect to take on staff, reduce staff or stay the same? SINGLE CODE ONLY.</p>	<p>Take on staff 1 Stay the same 2 Reduce staff 3 Don't know</p>	
<p>Q3: Roughly how long has your company been in existence? SINGLE CODE ONLY</p>	<p>Less than a year 1 1 - 3 years 2 4 - 5 years 3 6 - 20 years 4 More than 20 years 5 Don't know</p>	

<p>NAO SURVEY ONLY</p> <p>Q4: Does your business have a formal written business plan? IF YES: How long ago was this business plan written or last revised? SINGLE CODE ONLY</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Yes:</p> <p style="text-align: right;">...within the last two years 1</p> <p style="text-align: right;">...2-5 years ago 2</p> <p style="text-align: right;">...over 5 years ago 3</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Do not know when written/revised 4</p> <p style="text-align: right;">No 5</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Don't know</p>		
<p>Q5: Of the following six challenges which may affect your business, which would you say, currently presents the <u>greatest</u> challenge? READ OUT. ROTATE CODES 1 -5 IN THE READ OUT. SINGLE CODE ONLY</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Access to finance 1</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Complying with regulation 2</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Level of tax 3</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Staff recruitment and retention 4</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Staff redundancies 5</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Attracting & retaining customers 6</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Don't know</p>		

SECTION 2 – BUSINESS’ PERCEPTIONS OF THE BURDEN OF REGULATION

Interviewer Note: If at any time during the interview the respondent wishes to make further points, which they feel have not been covered in the survey, please tell them that you will provide them with an email address at the end of the survey which they can email their comments to.

READ OUT

When answering the following questions, I would like you to respond with specific reference to complying with *[input area of law logged at QB, C, D or F]*

QUESTIONNAIRE VERSION 1 - Q5 DELETED		
ASK IF CODE 2-11 AT Q1		
Q6: How many staff, if any, does your business specifically employ to deal with complying with <i>[input area of law logged at QB, C, D or F]</i> ? SINGLE CODE ONLY		
None	1	
1	2	
2 – 4	3	
5 – 9	4	
10+	5	
Don't know		

<p>Q7: Do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the Government's / local government's (READ OUT AS APPROPRIATE DEPENDING ON WHETHER NAO OR LBRO SURVEY) approach to regulating in this area?</p> <p>ONLY PROMPT IF NECESSARY: Is that strongly (dis)agree or tend to (dis)agree?</p> <p>READ OUT a) – g). SINGLE CODE ONLY FOR EACH STATEMENT. ROTATE STATEMENTS</p> <p>SCALE [Strongly agree, tend to agree, neither agree nor disagree, tend to disagree, strongly disagree, don't know, not applicable]</p> <p>a) Generally, it is clear what the purpose of regulation is.</p> <p>b) It is straightforward to understand what you are required to do to comply with regulations.</p> <p>c) It is easy to comply with regulations.</p> <p>d) Most regulation is fair and proportionate.</p> <p>e) The Government understands/ local councils understand (DEPENDENT ON SURVEY) business well enough to regulate.</p> <p>f) The Government consults well with business before any new regulation, or change to an existing regulation, is introduced.</p> <p>g) Different parts of government/ different local councils (DEPENDENT ON SURVEY) take a joined-up approach to regulation.</p>		
<p>Q8: Do you agree or disagree that the overall level of regulation in the UK is an obstacle to your business's success? Is that strongly (dis)agree or tend to (dis)agree?</p> <p>SINGLE CODE ONLY</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Strongly agree 1 Tend to agree 2 Neither agree nor disagree 3 Tend to disagree 4 Strongly disagree 5 Don't know</p>		
<p>QUESTIONNAIRE VERSION 1 - Q8b DELETED</p>		
<p>QUESTIONNAIRE VERSION 1 - Q8C DELETED</p>		

<p>ASK ALL</p> <p>Q9a: Government has to weigh-up the cost to business of complying with rules and regulations, against protecting people and the environment from harm. Overall, do you think that the Government has got the balance about right...? SINGLE CODE ONLY</p>	<p>Yes 1 No 2 Don't know</p>	
<p>ASK IF NO AT Q9a</p> <p>Q9b: So do you think...</p> <p>There is too much regulation There is too little regulation Don't know</p>	<p>1 2</p>	

SECTION 3 – IDENTIFYING WHICH ASPECTS OF REGULATION BUSINESSES FIND BURDENSOME

<p>Q10: Still responding with specific reference to complying with <i>[input area of law logged at QB, C, D or F]</i>, do you agree or disagree that the following activities are a burden when complying with the regulation? By agreeing with a statement, you are indicating that the activity is a burden. ONLY PROMPT IF NECESSARY: Is that strongly (dis)agree or tend to (dis)agree?</p> <p>READ OUT a) – k). SINGLE CODE ONLY FOR EACH STATEMENT. ROTATE STATEMENTS (STATEMENTS G AND H ARE ROTATED AS A PAIR WITH G ALWAYS PRECEDING H)</p> <p>SCALE [Strongly agree, tend to agree, neither agree nor disagree, tend to disagree, strongly disagree, don't know, not applicable]</p> <p>a) The length of time it takes to go through the whole process of complying.</p> <p>b) Finding information about which regulations apply to your business.</p> <p>c) Finding guidance and advice explaining what you have to do to comply with a given regulation.</p> <p>d) NAO ... Preparing and reporting facts and figures for Government/ LBRO Dealing with local councils</p> <p>e) Completing paperwork, including filling out forms and keeping records.</p> <p>f) Having to provide the same information more than once FOR NAO ADD ...to Government.</p> <p>g) Being ready for and complying with inspections.</p> <p>h) Being ready for inspections from more than one Government agency</p> <p>i) Having to keep up to date with changes in existing regulation.</p> <p>j) Having to keep up to date with the introduction of new regulations.</p> <p>k) Updating policy/policies for your business when regulations change or are introduced</p>		
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<p>LBRO SURVEY ONLY</p> <p>Q11: Still in relation to <i>[input area of law logged at QB, C, D or F]</i>, in your view is the role of local council regulators to ... READ OUT</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Enforce rules and regulations only 1</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Enforce rules and regulations and provide advice 2</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Don't know</p>		
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SECTION 4 – COMMUNICATIONS

<p>Q12: How informed do you feel about <i>[input area of law logged at QB, C, D or F]</i> regulations which affect your business? SINGLE CODE ONLY. READ OUT</p>	<p>Very informed 1 Fairly informed 2 Not very informed 3 Not at all informed 4 Don't know</p>	
<p>CANDIDATE FOR DROPPING FROM NAO SURVEY IF SURVEY TOO LONG</p>		
<p>Q13: Which, if any, of the following do you use to help the business in complying with <i>[input area of law logged at QB, C, D or F]</i> regulation? READ OUT. MULTICODE OK</p>	<p>Local Council 1 The Businesslink website 2 Government departments' websites 3 Direct contact with staff in Government departments 4 External accountant 5 External insurance company 6 External lawyer 7 External specialist consultant 8 Trade Association(s)/Business Organisation(s) 9 Other (WRITE IN) None of these Don't know</p>	

<p>IF EXTERNAL ACCOUNTANT, EXTERNAL INSURANCE COMPANY, EXTERNAL LAWYER AND/ OR EXTERNAL SPECIALIST CONSULTANT, ASK Q14</p>		
<p>CANDIDATE FOR DROPPING FROM NAO SURVEY IF SURVEY TOO LONG Q14: Why does your business use an external agent to help with complying with <i>[input area of law logged at QB, C, D or F]</i> regulations?</p> <p style="padding-left: 100px;">Not enough time/ lack of internal resource 1 Unable to get advice on how to comply from regulators 2 Can't rely on advice on how to comply from regulators 3 Inconsistency in advice on how to comply from regulators 4 Lack of clarity in legal requirement 5 Need for assurance 6 Want independent advice 7 Worried about penalties for non compliance 8 Other (TYPE IN)</p> <p style="text-align: right; padding-right: 50px;">Don't know</p>		
<p>LBRO SURVEY ONLY ASK Q15 & Q16</p>		
<p>Q15: Do you deal with more than one local council in relation to <i>[input area of law logged at QB, C, D or F]</i> ?</p> <p style="text-align: right; padding-right: 50px;">Yes 1 No 2 Don't know</p>		
<p>IF YES</p>		
<p>Q16: How consistent or inconsistent is the advice that you receive in relation to <i>[input area of law logged at QB, C, D or F]</i> from the various councils you have contact with about it?</p> <p style="text-align: right; padding-right: 50px;">Very consistent 1 Fairly consistent 2 Fairly inconsistent 3 Very inconsistent 4 Don't know</p>		

SECTION 5 – perceptions of changes to regulation

NAO SURVEY ONLY ASK Q17 – Q18, LBRO GO TO Q19

Still responding with specific reference to complying with [input area of law logged at QB, C, D or F]

<p>Q17: For each of the following aspects of regulation would you say it has become less time consuming, more time consuming or has stayed about the same over the last twelve months?</p> <p>READ OUT STATEMENTS a) – i). SINGLE CODE ONLY FOR EACH</p> <p>SCALE [Less time consuming, more time consuming, stayed the same, don't know, not applicable]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Finding information about which regulations apply to your business. b) Finding guidance and advice explaining what you have to do to comply with a given regulation. c) Preparing and reporting facts and figures for government. d) Completing paperwork, including filling out forms and keeping records. e) Having to provide the same information more than once to Government. f) Being ready for and complying with inspections. g) Having to keep up to date with changes in existing regulation. h) Having to keep up to date with the introduction of new regulations i) Updating policy/policies for your business when regulations change or are introduced 		
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<p>Q18: Overall, has complying with regulation become less time consuming, more time consuming or stayed about the same over the last twelve months? SINGLE CODE ONLY</p> <p style="text-align: right;"> Become less time consuming 1 Become more time consuming 2 Stayed about the same 3 Don't know </p>		
<p>BOTH SURVEYS</p> <p>Q19: In the course of your business operations, has complying with NAO regulation/ LBRO <i>[input area of law logged at QB, C, D or F]</i> become easier, more difficult or stayed about the same over the last twelve months? SINGLE CODE ONLY</p> <p style="text-align: right;"> Become easier 1 Become more difficult 2 Stayed about the same 3 Don't know </p>		
<p>NAO SURVEY ONLY ASK Q20 – Q21, LBRO GO TO Q22A</p> <p>Q20: In the next 12 months, do you think that the burdens resulting from national regulation will decrease, stay the same or increase? SINGLE CODE ONLY</p> <p style="text-align: right;"> Decrease 1 Stay the same 2 Increase 3 Don't know </p>		
<p>ASK IF INCREASE AT Q20</p> <p>Q21: Why do you say that? PROBE FULLY AND TYPE IN</p>		

SECTION 6 – GENERAL VIEWS OF REGULATION

Now I would like to ask you about your views of regulation in general. It doesn't matter whether it is national regulation like company and employment law or local regulation like food safety and consumer protection, I would like you to think about regulation in general

<p>Q22a: I am going to read out three aspects of regulation and ask you to rank them in order of importance to you. They are:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Having flexibility in how you choose to comply with regulation ii. It being simple to comply with regulation iii. Having certainty that you are compliant <p>Which one is most important to you?</p>	<p>Flexibility 1 Ease 2 Certainty 3 Don't know</p>	
<p>Q22b: And which is the second most important?</p>	<p>Flexibility 1 Ease 2 Certainty 3 Don't know</p>	

<p>Q23: Not including regulations that apply to all businesses, such as tax and employment, how easy or difficult are the regulations relevant to your specific business sector to comply with? Are they READ OUT</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Very easy to comply with 1 Fairly easy 2 Fairly difficult 3 Very difficult 4 Don't know</p>		
<p>Q24: Why do you say that? OPEN-ENDED PROBE FULLY</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Don't know</p>		
<p>Q25a: Have you ever made contact with any body or organisation to make a suggestion on how the regulatory regime could be improved in any way? This could be about any area of law – nationally or locally enforced.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Yes 1 No 2</p>		
<p>IF YES AT Q25a Q25b: Who did you contact to make your suggestion?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Companies House 1 HM Revenue and Customs 2 Your Local Council 3 A Local Councillor 4 A Member of Parliament 5 A trade or business association 6 Another Government body (PLEASE SPECIFY) 7 Any other body (PLEASE SPECIFY) 8 Don't know</p>		

SECTION 7 – LBRO QUESTIONS

TO BE ASKED OF BUSINESSES IN ENGLAND & WALES (1890) – SCOTLAND & N IRELAND GO TO Q31

<p>Q27: I'd now like to ask you a few questions in relation to regulation enforced by local councils. About which of the following areas of law have you had contact with your local council or Fire Service in the last two years? READ OUT</p>		
<p style="text-align: right;">Food Safety</p>	<p>1</p>	
<p style="text-align: right;">Consumer Protection for example in relation to fair trading, consumer credit and product safety</p>	<p>2</p>	
<p style="text-align: right;">Fire Safety</p>	<p>3</p>	
<p style="text-align: right;">Health and Safety</p>	<p>4</p>	
<p style="text-align: right;">Licensing of alcohol, taxis, gambling, entertainment or security personnel</p>	<p>5</p>	
<p style="text-align: right;">None of these</p>		<p>Q30</p>
<p>IF MENTION MORE THAN ONE, ORDER OF PRIORITY FOR SELECTION IS:-</p>		
<p style="text-align: center;">CONSUMER PROTECTION</p>		
<p style="text-align: center;">FOOD SAFETY</p>		
<p style="text-align: center;">LICENSING</p>		
<p style="text-align: center;">HEALTH & SAFETY</p>		
<p style="text-align: center;">FIRE SAFETY</p>		

<p>Q28: Thinking about your most recent contact with your local council/ fire service (DEPENDENT ON AREA SELECTED FROM Q27) with regard to <i>(input area of law selected from Q27)</i>, do you agree or disagree with each of the following two statements about this contact? PROMPT WITH – Is that (dis)agree or strongly (dis)agree?</p> <p>a) I felt my business was treated fairly</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Strongly agree 1 Agree 2 Neither agree nor disagree 3 Disagree 4 Strongly disagree 5</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Not applicable</p>		
<p>b) I felt the contact was helpful</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Strongly agree 1 Agree 2 Neither agree nor disagree 3 Disagree 4 Strongly disagree 5</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Not applicable</p>		

<p>Q29: Still thinking about your most recent contact with your local council/ fire service (DEPENDENT ON AREA SELECTED FROM Q27) with regard to (<i>input area of law selected from Q27</i>), how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the following aspect of service? PROMPT WITH – Is that very (dis)satisfied or fairly (dis)satisfied?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The overall level of service b) That the information given was easy to understand c) That the officer was knowledgeable about your business' situation d) The courteousness and professionalism of the officer e) The speed and timeliness of the service f) That the officer explained what you needed to do to comply and what was a legal requirement, as opposed to guidance or best practise g) The final outcome 	<p>Very satisfied 1 Fairly satisfied 2 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied 3 Fairly dissatisfied 4 Very dissatisfied 5 Don't know Not applicable</p>	
<p>ASK ALL Q30: In general terms, how confident are you that when local councils enforce the law, they each interpret it in the same way? READ OUT</p>	<p>Very confident 1 Fairly confident 2 Not very confident 3 Not at all confident 4 Don't know</p>	

<p>Q31: Finally, which do you perceive as imposing the larger burden of regulation upon your business, nationally enforced regulation e.g. Company, Employment and Tax Law or locally enforced regulation e.g. Fire Safety, licensing, food safety and consumer protection? ROTATE NATIONALLY ENFORCED AND LOCALLY ENFORCED WITH EACH ALTERNATE INTERVIEW</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Nationally enforced 1 Locally enforced 2 DO NOT READ OUT Both the same 3 Don't know</p>		
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Thank you very much for answering these questions. The NAO and LBRO appreciate you taking the time to participate in this survey. Do you have any comments you would like to pass back to either of them?

IF REQUIRED: If you would like any further information please contact Brian Westra or Andrew Powell on 020 7272 7766. If there are further points that you would like to make in relation to this survey, which have not been covered, please send your comments to [\[email address to be assigned\]](#) – your name and company will be kept confidential and only your comments will be passed on to the relevant party.

Appendix G – Introductory letter

Ref: 7774/SER

Contact Name
Company Name
Address 1
Address 2
Address 3
Post Code

March 2010

Dear Contact Name

Assessing the Administrative Burden of Regulation on Business

The Local Better Regulation Office (LBRO) and the National Audit Office (NAO) are working with FDS International, an independent opinion research company, to conduct a nationwide survey evaluating the Government's agenda for improving the regulatory environment in Britain.

The LBRO is an executive non-departmental public body, accountable to the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) through the Better Regulation Executive. It was created in 2008 to improve the effectiveness of locally enforced regulation and its impact on businesses and consumers. LBRO previously conducted a survey in 2008 looking at satisfaction with local council regulatory services among businesses.

For this year LBRO are building their understanding of business' views through conducting a joint survey with the NAO. The NAO is a body totally independent of government who scrutinise spending by government departments and agencies on behalf of Parliament. It currently conducts an annual survey of businesses to gauge perceptions of regulation and measure any changes from year to year.

This year's survey is being conducted with a broad representative selection of Senior Managers of companies across the country and the survey will focus on [LAW].

We do hope that you can spare the time to take part in this very important survey. It is vital that we know what businesses think so we can analyse and track attitudes towards regulation and its enforcement. If your company is keen to participate but you do not think that you are the most appropriate person to speak to about [LAW], we would be very grateful if you could let us know the details of the best person to contact. You can either do this when we contact you or by emailing adminburden@fds.co.uk quoting the reference number at the top of this letter.

We will be contacting companies by telephone to request interviews from 16 April 2010. The interview will be conducted by telephone and will last around 15 minutes. We would like to stress that your views will remain strictly confidential to FDS, and that no individual names or companies will be passed to the LBRO or NAO. If you do not wish to participate in the study, you can inform the FDS interviewer when they telephone.

Thank you in advance for your help with this important study. If you have any queries about the research, please email us at adminburden@fds.co.uk or call Brian Westra or Andrew Powell on 020 7272 7766.

Yours sincerely



Brian Westra

Associate Director, FDS International



