

HM Revenue & Customs Customer Survey 2008-2011



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Executive Summary

Background and method

The Customer Survey was redesigned in 2008 as the cornerstone of a programme of research, providing the insight necessary for HMRC to transform itself further into an organisation that puts customers at the heart of everything it does. The key aim of the survey is to track changes in customer perceptions of HMRC and of the experience of dealing with the Department for each of three main customer groups (individuals, SME businesses and financial agents).

Data is collected using a random sample of customers, with interviews taking place each quarter by telephone. In 2010/2011 the survey reduced in size from over 26,000 interviews over the year to approximately 24,000 interviews.

This report sets out the results for the first three years of data collection, with a focus on changes over time. Where figures are given just from one year, these are from the third year of the survey (unless otherwise stated).

Key findings

Ratings were strongest for SME businesses, with individuals fairly close behind (with Benefits and Credits customers consistently more positive than Personal Tax customers), but least positive for agents, who have most frequent dealings with HMRC. There have been decreases (some marginal), in a number of areas of customer experience across all three overall customer groups. However within the individuals' customer group, there were a small number of improvements in ratings given by Benefits and Credits customers, with declines largely restricted to Personal Tax customers.

For SME businesses ratings of customer experience were relatively high across the board with small decreases since 2008/2009 for ease of getting in touch and how well HMRC staff treated them. Individuals rated HMRC slightly less strongly than SME on most dimensions of experience, with the strongest ratings for being well treated, and HMRC doing what they said they would. There were decreases between 2008/2009 and 2010/2011 in ratings of simplicity, responsiveness and speed of response for individuals. Agents rated HMRC least

well out of all three customer groups in all areas of service and there were a number of decreases between 2008/2009 and 2010/2011. The only exceptions to this were for ease of understanding what to do and ease of completing the processes which retained their high rating throughout the three years of the survey.

Customer Experience

The majority of customers recalled some dealings with HMRC in the past year (almost all agents and SME businesses and 78% of individuals). Whilst 99% of agents had dealt with HMRC in the previous three months, the level was lower for SME businesses at 86% and much lower for individuals at 29%. SME were more likely to have dealt with HMRC in the 2010/2011 financial year than in 2009/2010, in a continuation of the longer term trend. Individuals were slightly less likely to have dealt with HMRC in 2010/2011 than in the two previous years.

For customers with dealings in the previous three months, one of the taxes or benefits they had dealt with was selected at random, and they were asked to describe and rate their experience. Most reported a variety of dealings about the selected tax or benefit. Agents were more likely than other customer groups to have made contact with HMRC (76%) and to have visited the website (59%), and were highly likely to have submitted a return (67%). SME businesses were most likely to have submitted a return (71%) or made a payment (73%). Individual customers were most likely to have received contact from HMRC (69%). Website usage continued to increase in 2010/2011 for all three groups, particularly for SME (56% up from 37% in 2009/2011 and 33% in 2008/2009). More modest increases in website usage among agents and individuals between 2008/2009 and 2009/2010 were repeated in 2010/2011. Customers who contacted HMRC were most likely to have done so by telephone for all three customer groups.

Agents were least positive about the overall experience of the service they received, but the majority were still positive: 56% rated the overall experience as very or fairly good, a decrease from 63% in 2008/2009. Individuals and SME businesses were considerably more likely to rate the overall experience highly. Three quarters of individuals (74%) and eight in ten SME businesses (80%) said the overall experience was very or fairly good, although both had decreased marginally since 2008/2009. Only 8% of SME businesses and 11% of individuals gave a negative rating in 2010/2011, compared with 21% of Agents.

There was some difference in overall experience ratings by the tax or benefit dealt with. Among individual customers, those dealing with Benefits and Credits (Tax Credits and Child Benefit) were more likely to say the overall experience was good than those dealing with

Personal Taxes. For SME businesses, those dealing with SA for the self employed and VAT gave higher ratings, whereas the ratings of those dealing with Company Tax and a general query were lower. For agents, those dealing with Company Tax were more likely to rate the overall experience as good as were those dealing with VAT, with lower ratings from those dealing with Tax Credits.

Whilst the overall ratings of customer experience give a general picture, it is essential to look in more detail at particular dimensions of the experience in order to ascertain what may be behind customer ratings and to identify key areas for action. The twelve dimensions can be split into four key areas:

Area	Dimension
Simplicity	Ease of understanding what to do
	Ease of completing the process
	Ease of getting in touch
	Services designed with your needs in mind
Responsiveness	How well staff treated you
	Giving all the answers you needed
	Keeping you well informed
	Flexibility
Reliability	Doing everything they said they would
	How good they are at getting things right
Speed	How quickly dealt with your issue
	How quickly responded to you

SME businesses were most positive about HMRC across all dimensions of experience, and across all taxes and duties, while agents were least positive. Agents were relatively more positive about the ease of understanding what to do, ease of completing the processes and how well staff treated them, than about other dimensions of experience. SME were relatively less positive about flexibility and ease of getting in touch than all other dimensions (although both were relatively poorly rated across all three groups). Individuals rated HMRC almost as strongly as SME, and most strongly in terms of being well treated by staff, and HMRC doing what they said they would.

As for the overall experience ratings, individuals dealing with Benefits and Credits were more positive about their experience on most dimensions than those dealing with Personal Taxes. Among SME businesses, VAT customers tended to be more positive and Company Tax customers less so. Among agents, those dealing with VAT and Company Tax were most positive about most dimensions, and those dealing with Tax Credits consistently least

positive, across a range of measures. Agents and SME dealing with Self Assessment also tended to be slightly less positive.

There was evidence of change on a number of measures. For individuals, rating of aspects of simplicity and responsiveness had decreased since 2008/2009. After increasing in 2009/2010, ratings of reliability returned to previous levels in 2010/2011. Speed was generally rated relatively highly by individuals but there had been a decrease in perceived speed of response since 2008/2009. The decline was driven by Personal Tax customers, and Benefit and Credit customers were increasingly positive about being well treated, HMRC getting things right, and the speed of dealing with customers' issues.

Between 2008/2009 and 2010/2011 SME ratings fell in particular areas of simplicity (ease of getting in touch) and responsiveness (being well treated by staff). For agents, speed and some aspects of simplicity had decreased since 2009/2010, after remaining stable between 2008/2009 and 2009/2010, and reliability had continued to decrease since 2008/2009. All aspects of responsiveness had decreased since 2008/2009.

Reputation

More than nine in ten agents knew at least a fair amount about HMRC, but this was lower at half of SME businesses and three in ten individuals. These relative levels of familiarity reflect the levels of dealings with HMRC reported by each customer group.

The customer survey also looks at several measures linked to reputation of HMRC, which can be split into the following sub-measures. Those underlined (in blue) are measures used in previous years; those not underlined (in black) are new measures:

Area	Measure
Fairness	Trust HMRC to be fair Dealings are handled fairly HMRC treats customers fairly
Favourability	Favourability of overall opinion HMRC is an organisation I can trust HMRC is an organisation with a good reputation
Trust	HMRC carries out its duties properly and professionally HMRC acts with honesty and integrity HMRC looks after customer interests
Communications	HMRC are effective at communicating with customers HMRC protects my information
Support	Would give HMRC the benefit of the doubt Positive conversation about experiences
Stories	HMRC are good at collecting money, but not paying it out
Lack of non compliance	It is not a big deal to pay taxes late
Other influences	What most influences knowledge
Other	HMRC protects society HMRC makes it as easy as possible to get things right HMRC treats customers as honest

Out of the three customer groups, SME businesses rated HMRC more highly in most areas. Two in three SME or more gave positive ratings in most areas, with slightly lower scores for favourability of overall opinion (62%), and HMRC having a good reputation (62%). Of those who had spoken to someone else about their experiences with HMRC, under a quarter said this had been a positive conversation (22%). There were slight increases from 2008/2009 in the belief that HMRC acts with honesty and integrity and that HMRC protects customer information. The only decrease was for perceived effectiveness of communication.

The perception of HMRC's reputation among individuals was similar or slightly less positive compared with SME businesses. Individuals were less likely than SME businesses to trust HMRC to be fair (54%), give a positive rating on the overall favourability measure (48%), and give HMRC the benefit of the doubt if criticised (63%). Individuals were also less likely to believe HMRC makes it as easy as possible for customers to get things right, and make the interaction efficient and effective (51%), that HMRC protects society (58%) and that HMRC treats customers as honest (63%). These last two measures had decreased from 2008/2009 to 2010/2011. There were slight increases in the belief that HMRC acts with honesty and integrity (76% up from 73%) and 'HMRC protects my information' (69% up from 54%).

Agents had the least favourable opinion of HMRC and this was reflected in lower ratings across most of the measures of reputation, with the exception of three measures: Agents

were relatively likely to believe that dealings are handled fairly (74%), HMRC acts with honesty and integrity (74%), and HMRC protects customer information (65%). Agents were most negative concerning issues of support, with less than half believing that they would give HMRC the benefit of the doubt if criticised (45%). Of those who had spoken to someone else about their experience with HMRC, fewer than one in ten reported a positive conversation (7%). Despite these low scores, there was increased belief from 2008/2009 that HMRC protects their information (65% up from 57%), in common with the other two customer groups. As with SME businesses, agents' opinion of the effectiveness of communication by HMRC has declined over time.

1. Introduction to the Customer Survey

1.1 Background

David Varney's independent review of service transformation in 2006¹ identified a number of areas where improvements could be made to customer experience in public services. In line with the recommendations in this report, HMRC identified a need to transform itself further into an organisation that puts customers at the heart of everything it does. The Customer Survey was designed in 2008 as the cornerstone of a programme of research to provide the necessary insight for this transformation to take place.

1.2 Aims and objectives

The key aims of the survey are to track changes in the experience of dealing with the Department and the reputation of HMRC for each of three main customer groups (individuals, SME businesses and financial agents).

The specific objectives are:

- Quarterly tracking of customer experience of recent dealings with HMRC; and
- Six monthly tracking of HMRC reputation measures (amongst those who have and have not had recent dealings with HMRC).

1.3 Research method

The survey was redesigned in 2008 to take a more rounded view of HMRC's customers. Three key groups of customers are included in the survey: individuals, SME businesses (businesses with fewer than 250 employees and turnover below £40 million) and financial agents (those paid by customers to represent them in dealings with HMRC). The same data collection method is used for all three: Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing. The interview lasts around 15 to 20 minutes for each customer.

¹ Service transformation: A better service for citizens and businesses, a better deal for the taxpayer, Sir David Varney, December 2006: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/4/F/pbr06_varney_review.pdf

Respondents for the survey are selected using Random Probability sampling. This is the most robust sampling method available and statistical techniques can be used on the results to provide confidence about the true level of change over time. Fuller details of the method are given in Appendix A.

1.4 Survey timing

Fieldwork for all three customer groups is carried out quarterly. This allows any differences resulting from seasonality to be accounted for, by comparing quarters at the same time of year, or comparing data collected across full years.

1.5 Survey structure and size

The survey is modular in nature. Every quarter customers who have had any dealing with HMRC in the previous three months are interviewed about their experience. In addition, every other quarter, a random sample of customers (with and without dealings in the previous three months) is selected to answer questions about HMRC's reputation.

HMRC has developed an attitudinal segmentation of its individuals customers, based on four dimensions: awareness of requirement to comply, motivation to comply, ability to comply, and opportunity to not to comply. Individuals can be broken down by these segments, derived from a set of questions within the survey. In alternate quarters (quarters where the reputation module appears), an additional 500 individuals without any dealings in the previous three months are asked only the segmentation questions. This is designed to boost the base size and reliability of the individual segmentation.

In 2010/2011 interviews were carried out with around 24,000 customers: 10,000 individuals, 8,000 SME businesses and 6,000 agents. This was a reduction from approximately 26,000 interviews in the previous two years.

1.6 Reporting conventions

This report discusses the first three full years of data collection, particularly any changes over time.

The following conventions have been used in charts and tables:

- Percentages for single-response questions do not always add up to exactly 100% due to the effect of rounding.
- A '*' symbol denotes a percentage of less than 0.5%
- A '-' symbol denotes zero.

- Charts often combine the top two points of answer scales into one measure (e.g. agree strongly and agree slightly combined to give total agreement)
- Unless otherwise stated, in tables and on charts an arrow head is used to indicate statistically significant change in 2010/2011 from 2009/2010 and an arrow is used to indicate statistically significant change from 2010/2011 from the baseline in 2008/2009. Green indicates a significantly higher result and red indicates a significantly lower result.
- In tables, where previous year's data is highlighted in green this indicates a significantly higher result in 2010/2011 compared with that year; red is used to indicate a significantly lower result in 2010/2011 than in the highlighted year.
- Base sizes are shown on all charts in brackets.

2. The Customer Experience

Questions are asked every quarter about customers' experience of dealing with HMRC.

Key points

- Almost all (99%) agents dealt with HMRC in the previous three months, 86% of SME and 29% of individuals.
- Website usage continued to increase in 2010/2011, particularly for SME (56% up from 37% in 2009/2011 and 33% in 2008/2009). Modest increases in website usage among agents and individuals in 2009/2010 were repeated in 2010/2011.
- Agents were least positive about the overall experience of the service they received: 56% rated the overall experience positively, a decrease from 63% in 2008/2009. Three quarters of individuals (74%) and eight in ten SME businesses (80%) said the overall experience was positive.
- SME businesses were most positive about HMRC across all dimensions of experience, and across all taxes and duties. Individuals rated HMRC almost as strongly as SME, while agents were least positive.
- Agents were relatively more positive about the ease of understanding what to do, ease of completing the processes and how well staff treated them, than about other dimensions of experience. SME were relatively less positive about flexibility and ease of getting in touch than all other dimensions (although both were relatively poorly rated across all three groups). Individuals rated HMRC most strongly in terms of being well treated by staff, and HMRC doing what they said they would.
- For individuals, rating of aspects of simplicity and responsiveness had decreased since 2008/2009. After increasing in 2009/2010, ratings of reliability returned to previous levels in 2010/2011. Speed was generally rated relatively highly by individuals but there had been a decrease in perceived speed of response since 2008/2009.
- Between 2008/2009 and 2010/2011 SME ratings fell in particular areas of simplicity (ease of getting in touch) and responsiveness (being well treated by staff).
- For agents, speed and some aspects of simplicity had decreased since 2009/2010, and reliability had continued to decrease since 2008/2009. All aspects of responsiveness had decreased since 2008/2009.

2.1 Defining customer dealings

Questions rating the customer experience are asked only of customers who have dealt with HMRC in the previous three months. All customers interviewed are read a list of taxes and benefits (including general dealings with HMRC) and asked whether they have dealt with HMRC about any of these in the last year, and in the previous three months. It is explained that dealings can take many forms, including letters, phone calls, visits, making a payment, using the website, submitting returns etc. Individuals are asked to exclude any payments made or received automatically. Businesses are asked to exclude any dealings about their personal tax affairs. Agents are asked to think about dealings on behalf of clients.

One of the taxes or benefits that the customer had dealt with in the previous three months is then chosen at random and the customer is asked to think about their most recent dealings about this issue when answering questions about the customer experience. This random choice helps to ensure coverage of a variety of taxes and duties and reduce the impact of seasonal differences in dealings.

2.2 The nature of customer dealings

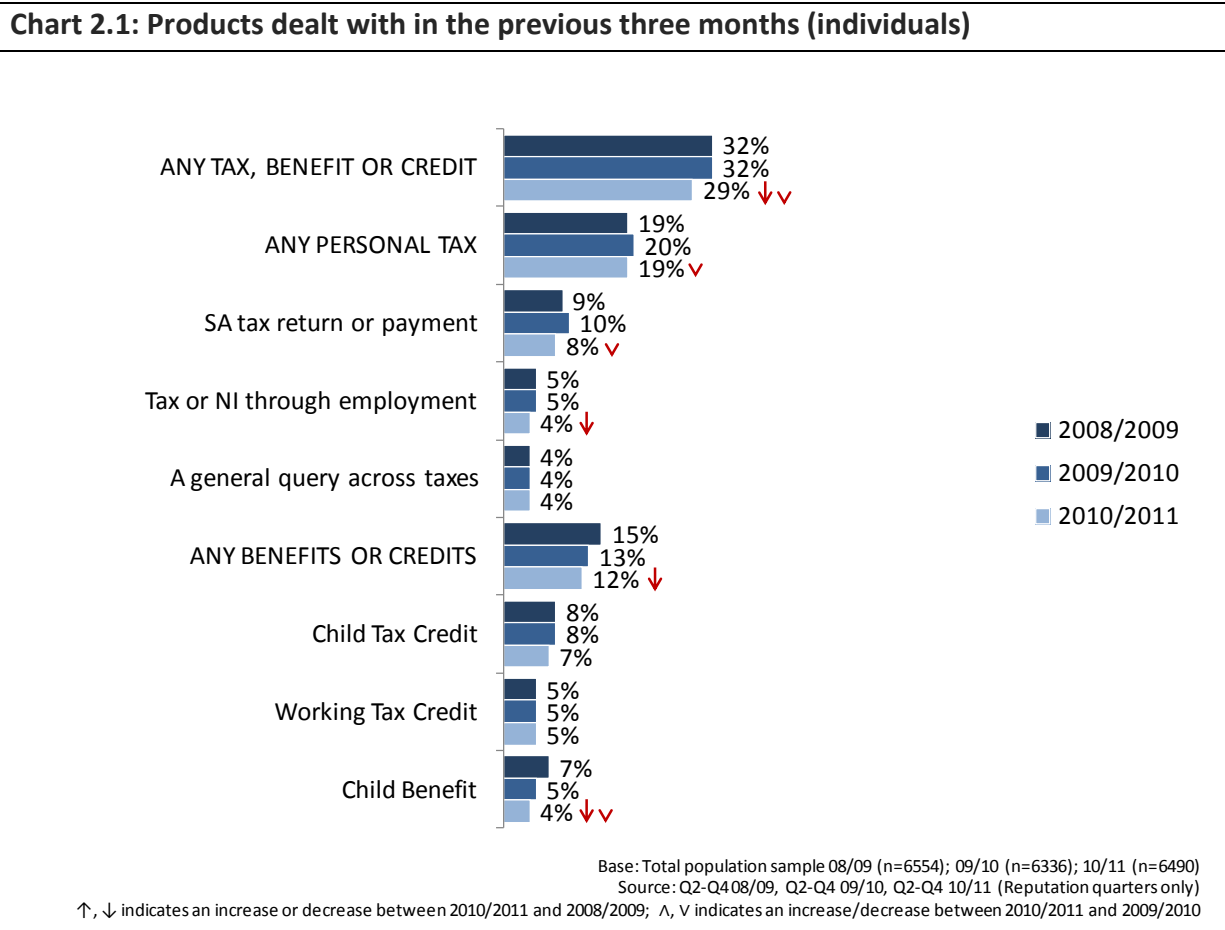
The majority in each customer group recalled some dealings with HMRC in the past year (2010/2011): almost all agents, 97% of SME businesses (a return to the level in 2008/2009 after a decrease to 93% in 2009/2010) and 78% of individuals (a small decrease from 81% in both 2008/2009 and 2009/2010).

While 99% of agents had dealt with HMRC in the previous three months, the level was lower for SME businesses at 86% (although this had continued to rise from 75% in 2009/2010 and 72% in 2008/2009) and for individuals at 29% (a slight decrease from 32% from the previous two years).

2.2.1 Taxes and benefits dealt with

In order to put ratings of their experience of dealing with HMRC in context, it is necessary to understand the nature of these dealings in terms of the specific taxes and benefits customers have dealt with. In the tax year 2010/2011, over the previous three months, individual customers were slightly more likely to have dealt with Personal Taxes products (19% of all individuals) than with Benefits and Credits products (12%, Chart 2.1). The taxes and benefits most commonly dealt with were Self Assessment (8%), Child Tax Credit (7%), Working Tax Credit (5%), followed by Tax or National Insurance through employment, Child Benefit and a general query (all 4%).

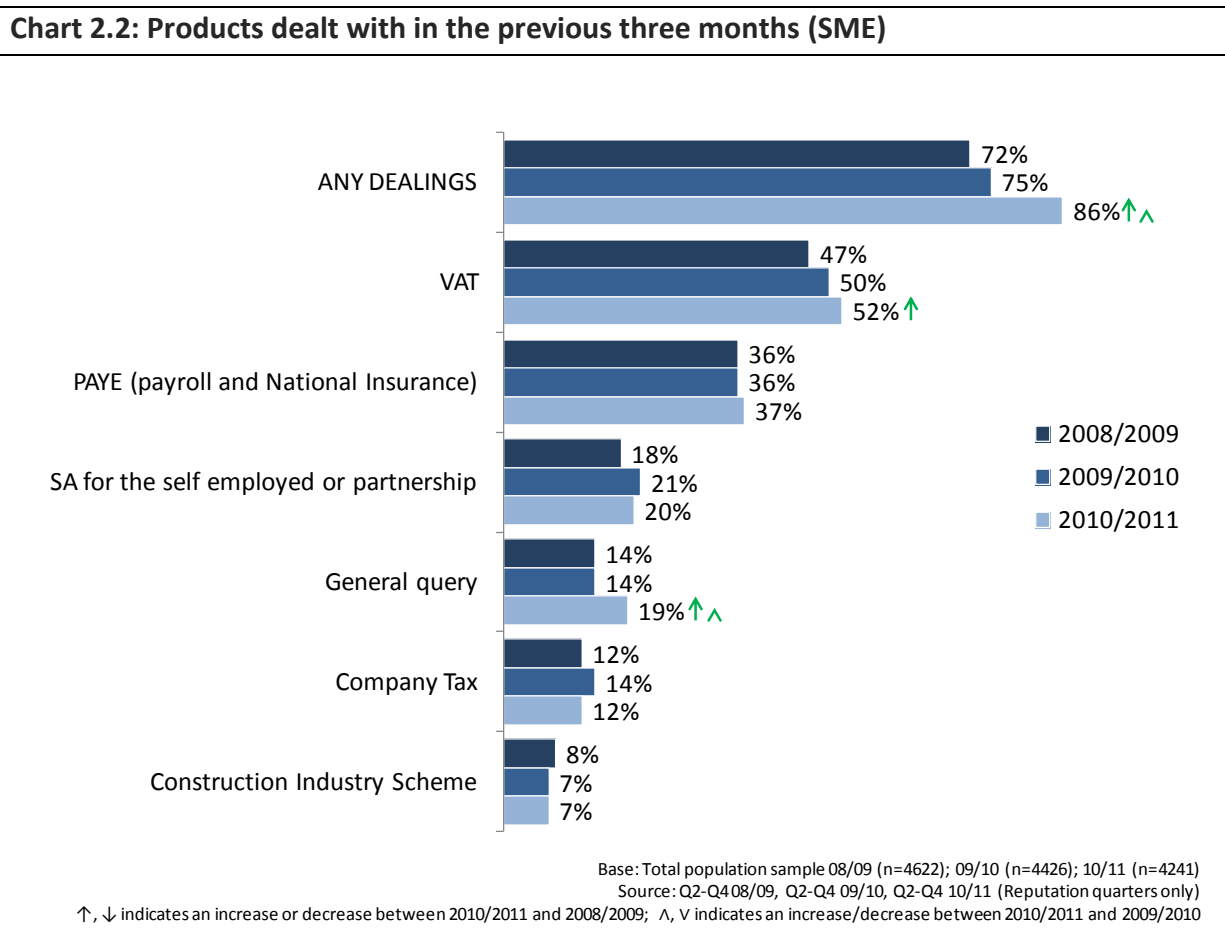
The table shows that there had been a decrease in dealing with Benefits and Credits from 2008/2009 (15%). This was driven by a continued fall in dealings with Child Benefit, down to just 4% of the population from 7% two years previously. Personal Taxes decreased only marginally, from 20% to 19%, in part driven by a decrease in those who had dealt with a self assessment tax return or payment in the previous three months.



There was some seasonal variation, with more customers dealing with Tax Credits in the three months leading up to June and September (with renewals focused around April to July). Self Assessment was dealt with more in the quarters prior to December and March around the time of the SA return deadline of 31st January. In Q3 and Q4 2010/2011 the volume of SA dealings returned to the levels seen in the same quarters of 2008/2009, after an increase in 2009/2010.

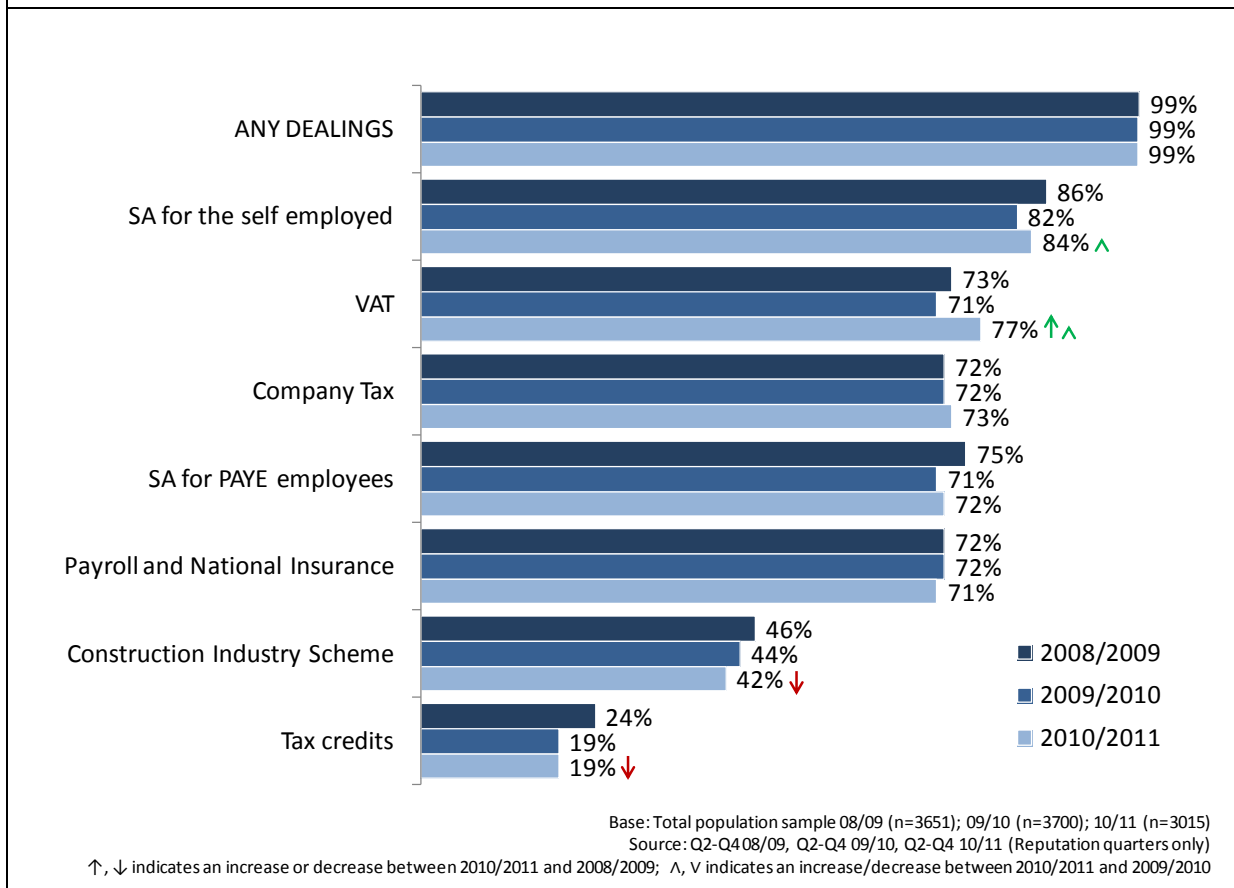
Agents and SME businesses were much more likely to have dealt with HMRC in the previous three months than individuals (Chart 2.2 and Chart 2.3).

Following a small increase in 2009/2010, the proportion of SME businesses who had had dealings with HMRC increased more sharply in 2010/2011 to 86%, driven in particular through general queries (19%, up from 14% in 2009/2010). The products dealt with more frequently included VAT (52%, which has continued to increase from 47% in 2008/2009), PAYE and NI (37%) and Self Assessment for the self-employed or partnership (20%), the latter steadying after an increase in 2009/2010.



With almost all agents having had some kind of dealing with HMRC, many products had been dealt with by a high proportion overall. At least seven in ten agents had dealt with each of SA for the self employed, VAT, Company Tax, SA for employees and PAYE and NI. Dealings with Self Assessment for the self employed returned to a level similar to 2008/2009 after falling in 2009/2010, with a similar pattern for VAT. Dealings with both the Construction Industry Scheme and Tax Credits had fallen since 2008/2009, albeit not significantly in the last year. The decrease in dealings with SA for PAYE employees between 2008/2009 and 2009/2010 was not maintained in 2010/2011.

Chart 2.3: Products dealt with in the previous three months (agents)



As for individuals, there were seasonal variations for both SME businesses and agents, with more customers dealing with Self Assessment in the quarter prior to March and more dealing with PAYE and NI (payroll) in the quarter leading up to June (which includes the deadline for the employers annual return). For agents (as for individuals) dealings with Tax Credits peaked in Q2.

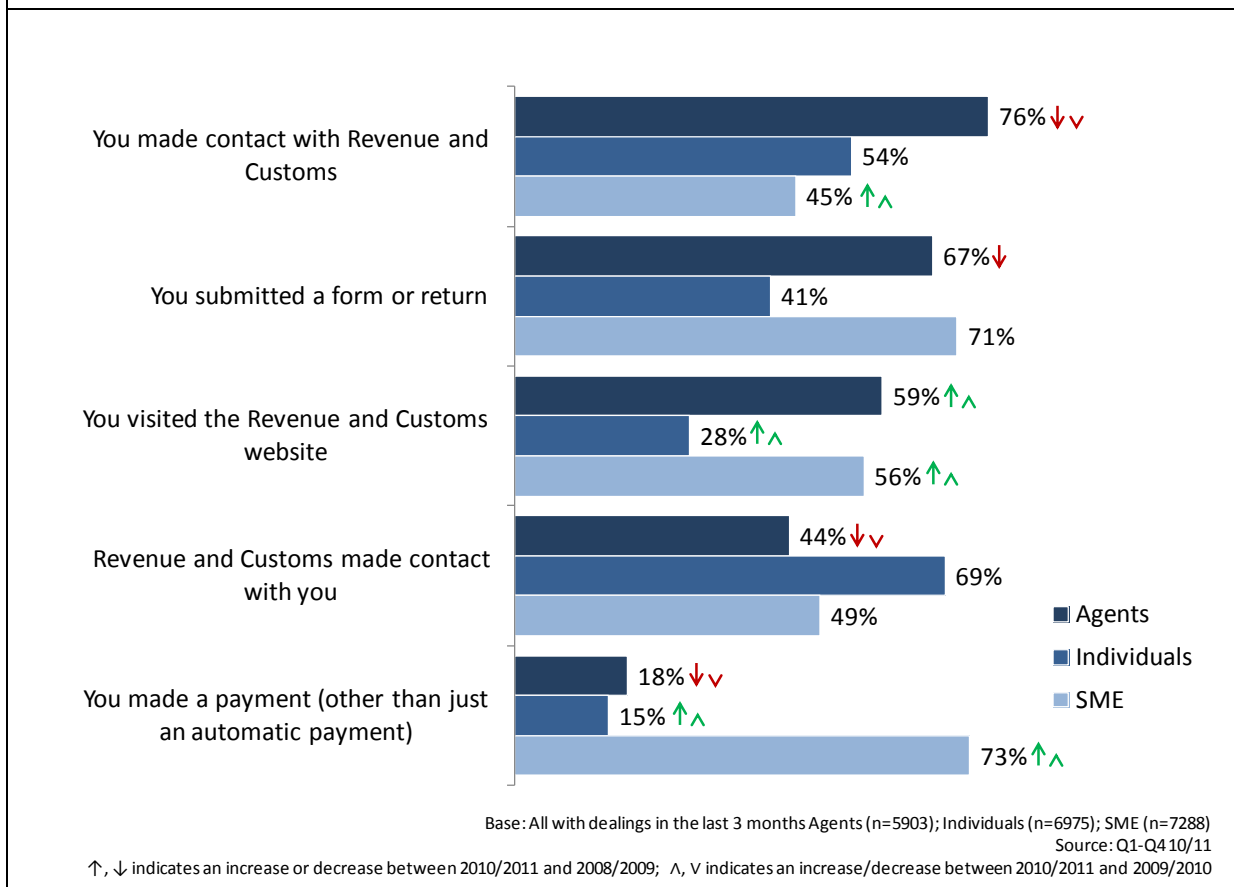
2.2.2 Types of dealings

Most customers who had dealt with HMRC in the previous three months reported a variety of dealings about the selected tax or benefit (Chart 2.4, tables showing results for 2008/09 through to 2010/11 are in Appendix B). Agents were more likely than other customer groups to have made contact with HMRC (76%, a marginal decrease from the previous two years). SME businesses were most likely to have submitted a return (71%) or made a payment (73%, a small increase from previous years), although a high level of agents also reported submitting a form (67%, down slightly from 69% in 2008/2009). Individual customers were most likely to have received contact from HMRC (69%).

There was an increase in visits to the HMRC website in 2010/2011 across all three customer groups. For agents and individuals the gains in website usage have been consistently modest since 2008/2009 (website usage has increased from 52% to 59% for agents and from 23% to 28% for individuals), but for SME businesses the increase was marked in 2010/2011. More than half (56%) of SME with a dealing in the last three months had visited the website, up from 37% in 2009/2010 and 33% in 2008/2009.

Among other trends in the nature of dealings, fewer agents reported HMRC making contact (44% down from 49% in 2008/2009); and more individuals (15% up from 13% in 2008/2009) and fewer agents (18% down from 21% in 2008/2009) had made a payment. In addition to this there were more SME businesses having made contact with HMRC (45% up from 41% in 2008/2009 and 2009/2010).

Chart 2.4: Type of dealing had with HMRC most recently (2010/11)

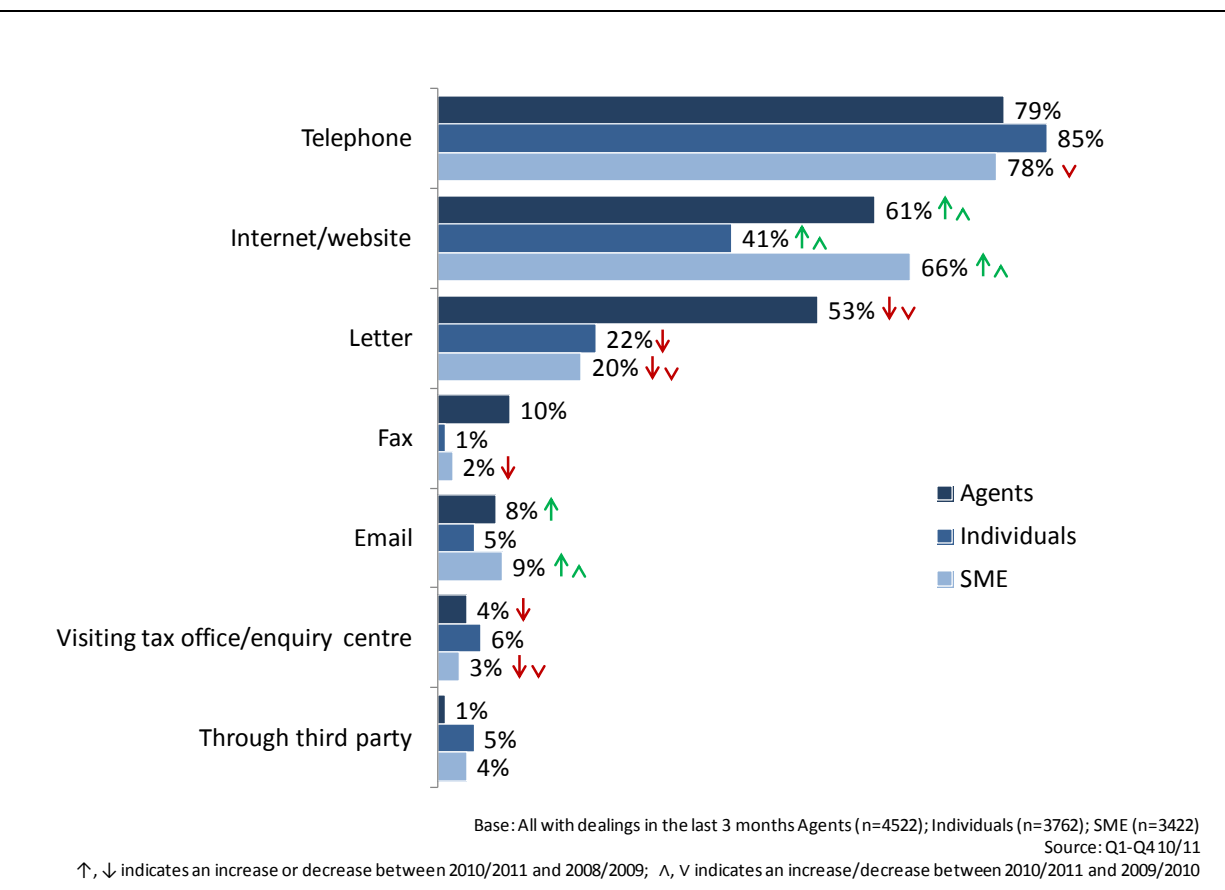


2.2.3 Channels of contact

Methods of contact can also influence the customer experience. Among those with dealings in the previous three months, 54% of individuals, 76% of agents and 45% of SME businesses said they had contacted HMRC in relation to their dealing. Only those who reported making contact with HMRC were asked which channel they used. When making this contact, all three customer groups were most likely to have used the telephone; for SME the level returned to 2008/2009 levels following a slight increase in 2009/2010 (78% from 81% in 2009/2010 and 79% in 2008/2009, Chart 2.5).

Contact through the website was higher for agents (61%) and SME businesses (66%) than for individuals (41%) and, consistent with analysis of the nature of dealings, this had increased for all three customer groups since 2008/2009 (agents: 58%, SME: 49%, individuals: 32%), with the largest increase for SME. Agents were also more likely to have written a letter (53%) as part of their dealing than other customer groups, although this continued to decrease from 58% in 2008/2009, with a similar pattern for SME (20% down from 26% in 2008/2009) and individuals (22% down from 25% in 2008/2009). There had also been marginal increases in the use of email and decreases in visits to a tax office for both SME and Agents over the three survey years.

Chart 2.5: Channel used if made contact with HMRC during dealing (2010/11)



It is important to note that most customers used more than one contact method during their most recent dealings. Among those making contact, 71% of agents, 63% of SME businesses and 49% of individuals used more than one method. Where only one method was used, this was most likely to be the telephone. Eight in ten (82%) individuals who used one method of contact only had used the telephone.

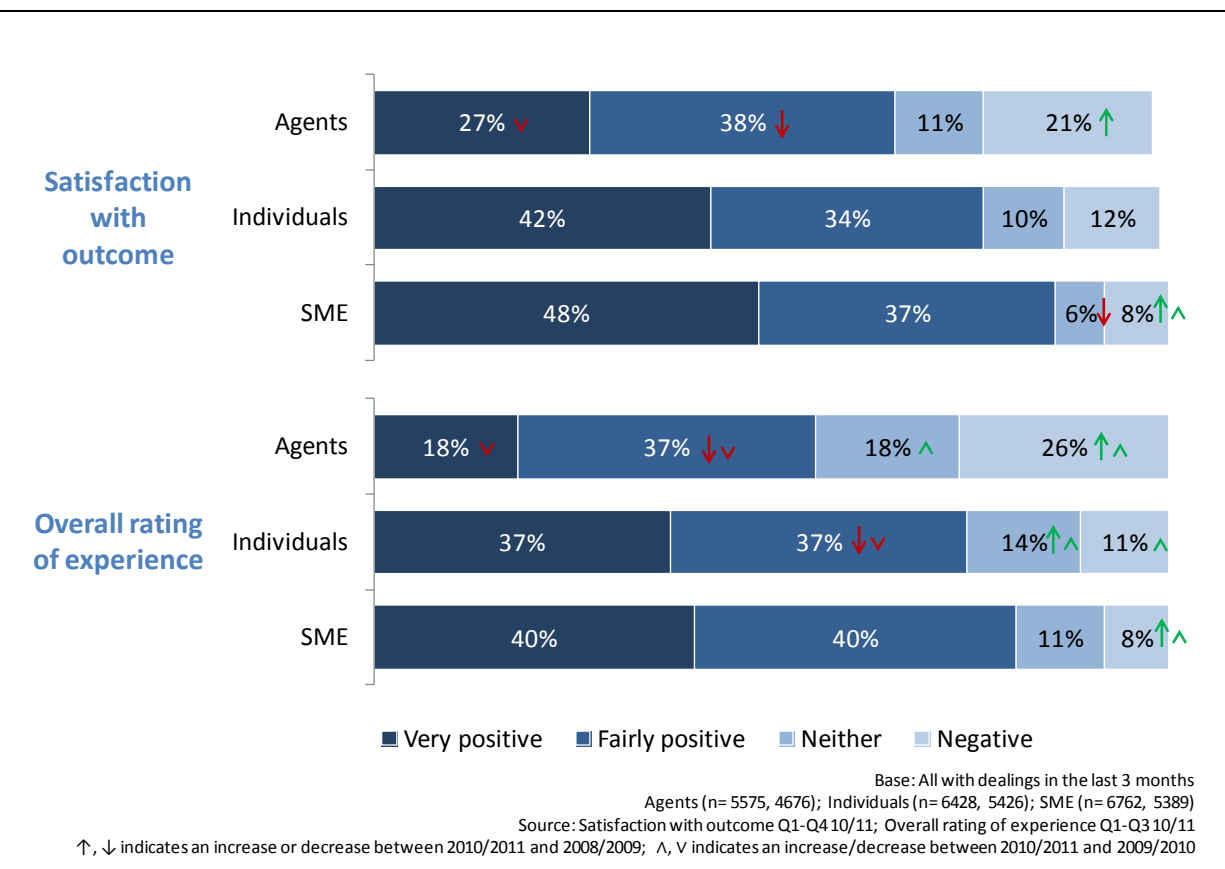
When comparing ratings of customer experience, it is also important to bear in mind the relative frequency of customer dealings. Among those individuals who had dealings in the previous three months, only 9% said they had dealings at least every couple of months, a further 16% every two to six months. Individuals reported less frequent contact in 2010/2011, with more dealing with HMRC less often than once a year (19% up from 16% in 2009/2010). In contrast, 47% of SME had dealings at least every couple of months, and 94% of Agents had dealings at least monthly. There had been no changes in the frequency of dealing with HMRC for any group between 2008/2009 and 2009/2010.

2.3 Overall ratings of the customer experience

Overall ratings of the customer experience can be strongly influenced by two factors: satisfaction with the outcome, and prior expectations. For example, if two customers receive the same level of service, but one gains financially and the other loses, then the customer who gains financially is likely to rate the service more positively. Furthermore, a customer with lower expectations will rate the same service more highly than a customer with very high expectations.

In an attempt to encourage customers to focus on their experience of the service they received when dealing with HMRC and minimise the influence of outcomes on the ratings they gave, customers were first asked to rate their satisfaction with the outcome of their dealings, and then asked to put the outcome aside, and rate their experience of the service they had received (Chart 2.6, tables showing results for 2008/09 through to 2010/11 are in Appendix B). However in Q4 2010/2011 rather than rate their overall experience, customers were asked to rate how straightforward their dealing was, so ratings of the overall experience are only based on the first three quarters of 2010/2011.

Chart 2.6: Satisfaction with outcome of the recent dealing and overall rating of that experience (2010/11)



Agents were least positive about outcome, and overall experience, but the majority were still positive. Two thirds of agents (65%) were very or fairly satisfied with the outcome of their dealing (a decrease from 69% in 2008/2009), and slightly more than half (56%) rated the overall experience as very or fairly good (again a decrease, from 63% in 2008/2009). The proportion who had a negative rating of the overall experience continued to increase to 26% (from 19% in 2008/2009).

Individuals and SME businesses were considerably more likely to rate the outcome, and the overall experience highly. Three quarters of individuals (74%, a small decrease from the previous two years) and eight in ten SME businesses (80%, again a small decrease) said the overall experience was very or fairly good. Around four in ten in each group said the overall experience was very good. Only 8% of SME businesses and 11% of individuals gave a negative rating of their overall experience. For both groups, satisfaction with the outcome of the dealing was rated more highly than the overall experience. Seventy six percent of

individuals (a return to 2008/2009 levels) and 85% of SME were very or fairly satisfied with the outcome of their dealing.

There was some difference in overall experience ratings by the tax or benefit dealt with. Among individual customers, those dealing with Benefits and Credits were more likely to say the overall experience had been good (82% up from 80% in 2008/2009, with 45% saying very good) than those dealing with Personal Taxes (69%, with 31% very good). Personal Tax customers were less positive in 2010/2011 (down from 75% in 2009/2010, 73% in 2008/2009), driven by steady decreases for PAYE for pensions (63% down from 76% in 2008/2009) and general queries (61% down from 69% in 2008/2009), and a return to 2008/2009 levels for SA (73% down from 79% in 2009/2010). Customers dealing with Child Benefit gave the highest ratings (87% good, 47% very good), which probably reflects the relatively low level of burden on the customer. Working Tax Credit customers rated their overall experience more highly in 2010/2011 (85% up from 80% in 2008/2009 and 2009/2010.)

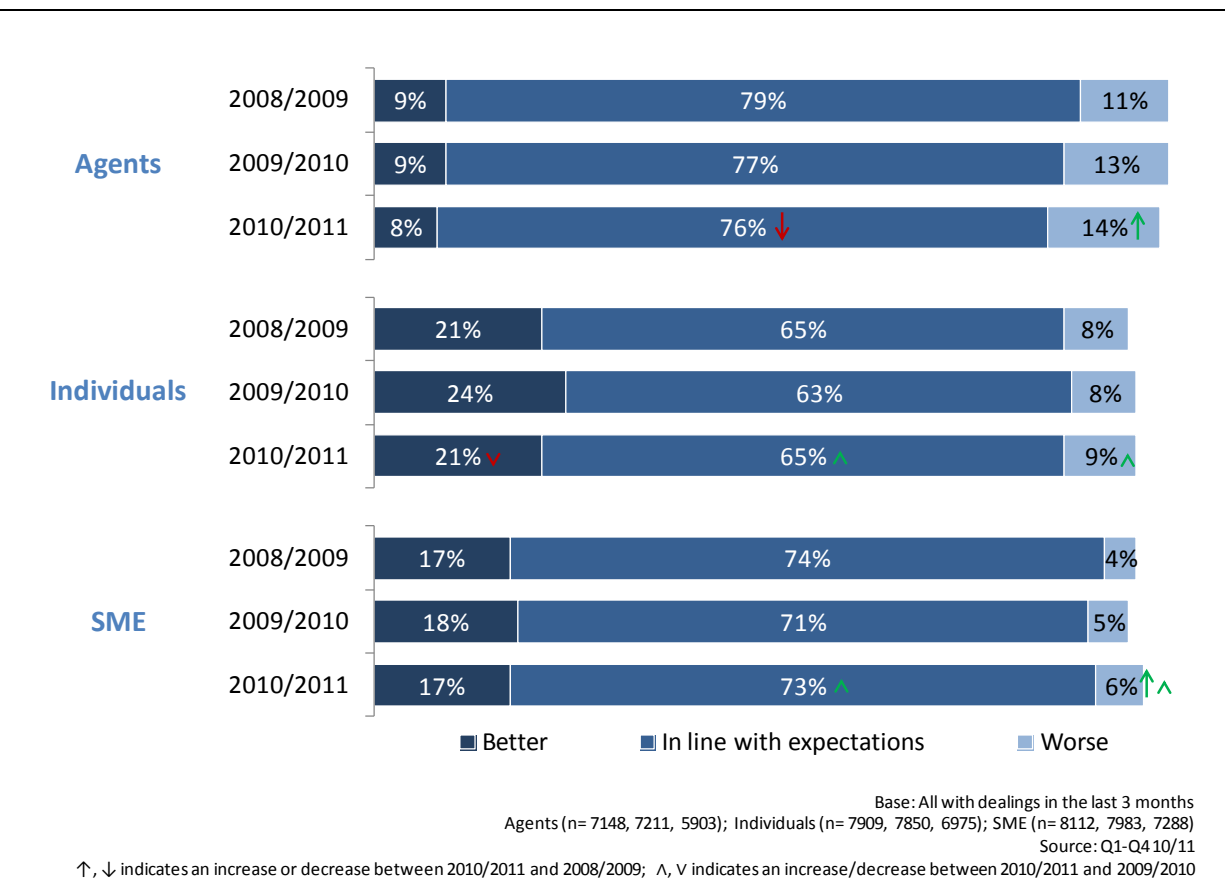
For SME businesses there was some difference by tax dealt with. Those dealing with SA for the self employed (85%) and VAT (83%) gave higher ratings, whereas the ratings for dealing with Company Tax (73%, a decrease from 81% in 2008/2009) and a general query (70%, down from 77% in 2008/2009) were lower. There was also a decrease in positivity about the payroll and NI experience (79% down from 84% in 2009/2010 and 83% in 2008/2009), which helped to drive the decrease in the rating of experience for SME overall.

For agents, there have been long term decreases in ratings across a number of products dealt with. Those dealing with Company Tax were more likely to rate the overall experience as good (62%, although this had decreased from 72% in 2008/2009), as were those dealing with VAT (60%, although there was a decrease from 68% in 2008/2009). The overall experience of dealing with Tax Credits was rated lowest (44%), though relatively fewer Agents had dealt with Tax Credits when compared with other products. There were decreases for dealing with SA for PAYE (51% down from 60% in 2008/2009) and CIS (50% down from 62% in 2008/2009), which placed them among the lowest rated in 2010/2011.

For most customers, the experience of the service that they had received matched their expectations (two in three individuals, three in four SME and agents, Chart 2.7). As would be expected, there is a strong relationship between experience against expectations and overall rating of experience; for example, three in ten individuals (28%) who had a positive overall rating of service thought the experience was better than expected in 2010/2011, compared with one per cent who had a negative overall rating of service who thought the experience was better than expected. On the other hand, of those individuals who rated

their overall experience as neutral or negatively, it exceeded the expectations of just 3% and was worse than expected for 32%.

Chart 2.7: Rating of the overall experience of the most recent dealing against what had been expected



Around one in five individuals (21%) and SME businesses (17%) found the overall experience better than expected. This may be the result of lower levels of familiarity with HMRC leading to lower initial expectations, whereas agents deal with HMRC on a more regular basis and are more likely to know what to expect. As Chart 2.7 shows the proportions of individuals and SME whose dealings were in line with expectations returned to 2008/2009 level after rising in 2010/2011. For agents there had been a steady decline in those whose experience was what they had expected (76% in 2010/2011 down from 79% in 2008/2009). Agents and individuals were more likely than SME businesses to have been disappointed but, even among these customers, only around one in ten said the overall experience was worse than expected.

2.4 Dimensions of customer experience

Whilst the overall ratings of customer experience give a general picture, it is essential to look in more detail at particular dimensions of the experience in order to ascertain what

may be driving customer ratings and to identify key areas for action. Twelve dimensions of experience were identified through previous research, and questions were developed that could apply to any HMRC tax or benefit and be answered by all customer groups.

The twelve dimensions can be split into four key areas:

Area	Dimension
Simplicity	Ease of understanding what to do
	Ease of completing the process
	Ease of getting in touch
	Services designed with your needs in mind
Responsiveness	How well staff treated you
	Giving all the answers you needed
	Keeping you well informed
	Flexibility of the service
Reliability	Doing everything they said they would
	How good they are at getting things right
Speed	How quickly dealt with your issue
	How quickly responded to you

Customers were asked to rate their experience on each dimension using a five point scale (e.g. very good, fairly good, neither good nor poor, fairly poor or very poor). Customers could also say “don’t know” or “not applicable”. Customers who said the question did not apply to them were excluded from the analysis for that measure.

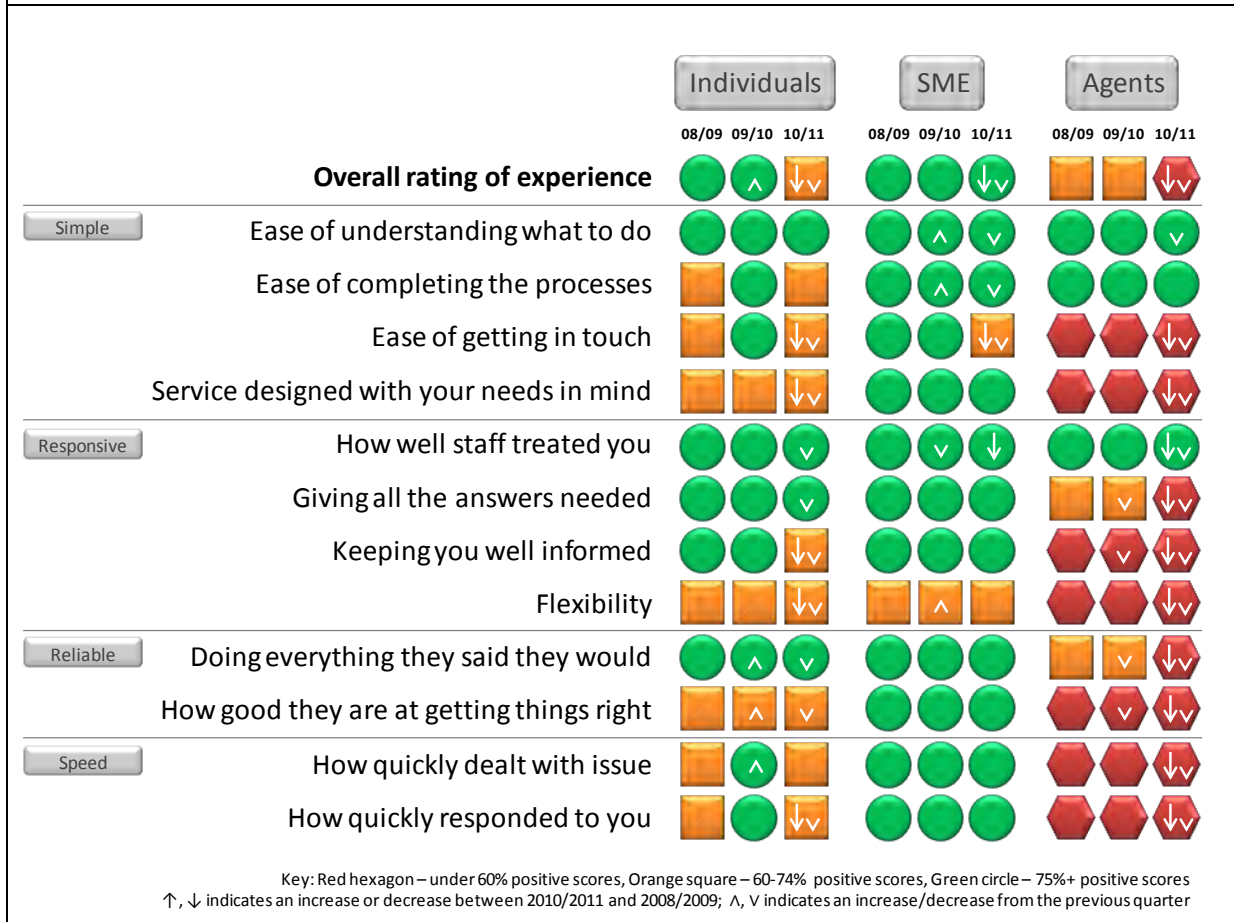
If a customer had dealt with HMRC about more than one issue in the previous three months (e.g. about VAT and Company Tax), one of these issues was chosen at random by the questionnaire programme. Customers were asked to think of their most recent dealings about the selected issue and answer all questions in relation to this single recent dealing, rather than their dealings more generally.

2.5 Relative ratings of experience and changes over time

Chart 2.8 gives an overview of the relative ratings of the twelve dimensions of experience and changes between the 2008/2009 baseline, and 2010/2011. The colour coding shows relative levels of positive scores (very or fairly good etc) across the three customer groups. The arrows show where there has been a significant change in performance from 2008/2009 to 2010/2011 and between quarters. Further details on whether this constituted

a consistent change over the three years, or a varying pattern of change, will be given in the sections that follow.

Chart 2.8: Ratings of customer experience and change between 2008/2009 and 2010/2011



This chart shows clearly that SME businesses were most positive about HMRC across most dimensions of service, individuals were generally positive and that agents were least positive. More detailed findings for the different dimensions are discussed in sections 2.5.1 to 2.5.4.

The direction of all change at overall customer group level since 2008/2009 has been negative for all three groups. For agents, aspects of speed and simplicity had only decreased since 2009/2010, whereas reliability had continued to decrease since 2008/2009. All aspects of responsiveness had decreased in the last year, with responses for giving all the answers needed and keeping you well informed showing a continued decreased since 2008/2009.

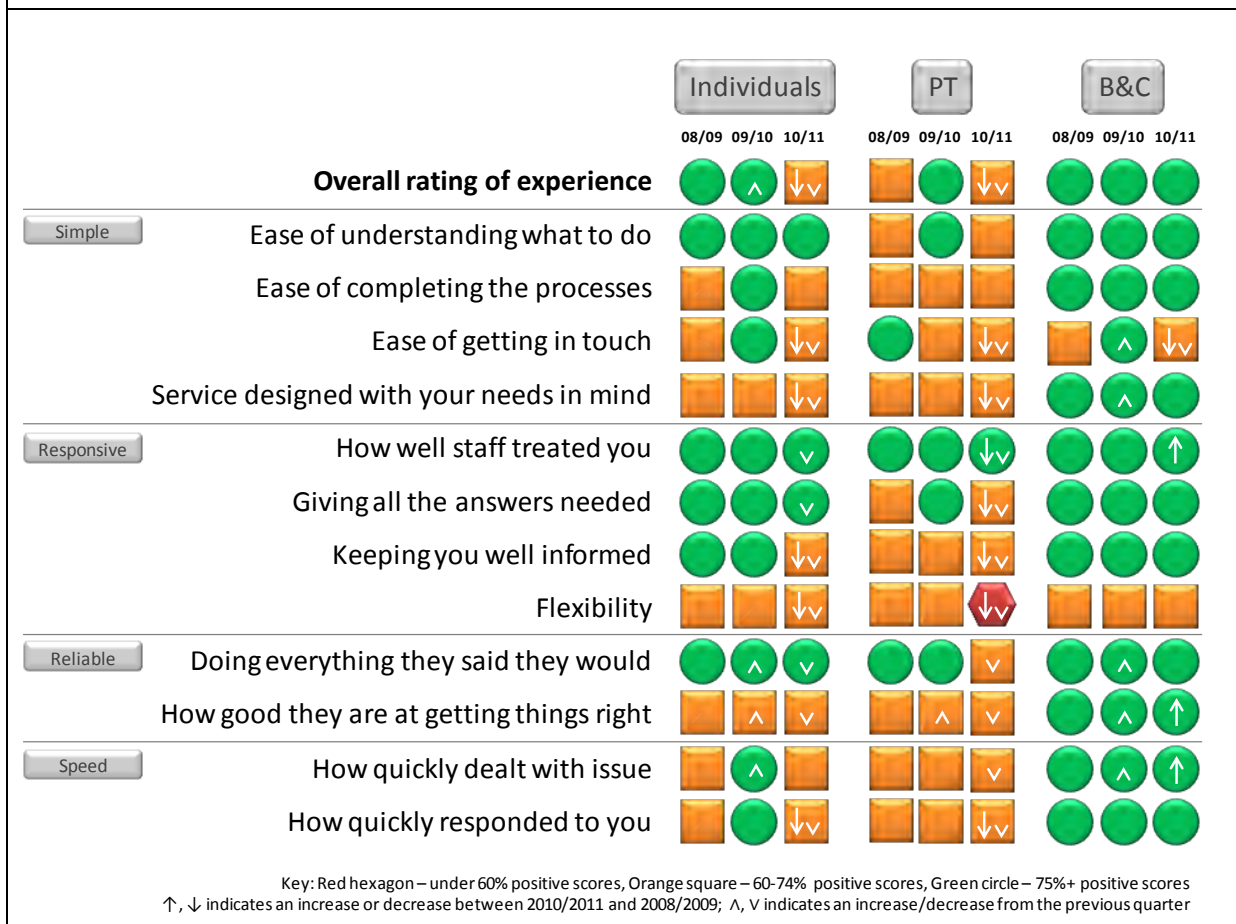
Fewer aspects of the SME customer experience had decreased compared to agents. Falls were restricted to simplicity (ease of getting in touch) and responsiveness (being well

treated by staff). Ease of understanding what to and ease of completing the processes had returned to 2008/2009 levels, following rises in 2009/2010.

For individuals some aspects of responsiveness had decreased since 2008/2009, and there had been some decrease in simplicity. Reliability returned to 2008/2009 levels in 2010/2011 after increasing in 2009/2010. Speed was rated relatively high by individuals but there had been a decrease in speed of response since 2008/2009.

Chart 2.9 shows clearly that ratings are generally higher for all dimensions for customers dealing with Benefits and Credits, and that declines in scores for individuals are largely restricted to those customers dealing with Personal Taxes, with improvements in speed, responsiveness and reliability for customers dealing with Benefits and Credits.

Chart 2.9: Ratings of customer experience and change between 2008/2009 and 2010/2011: individual customers

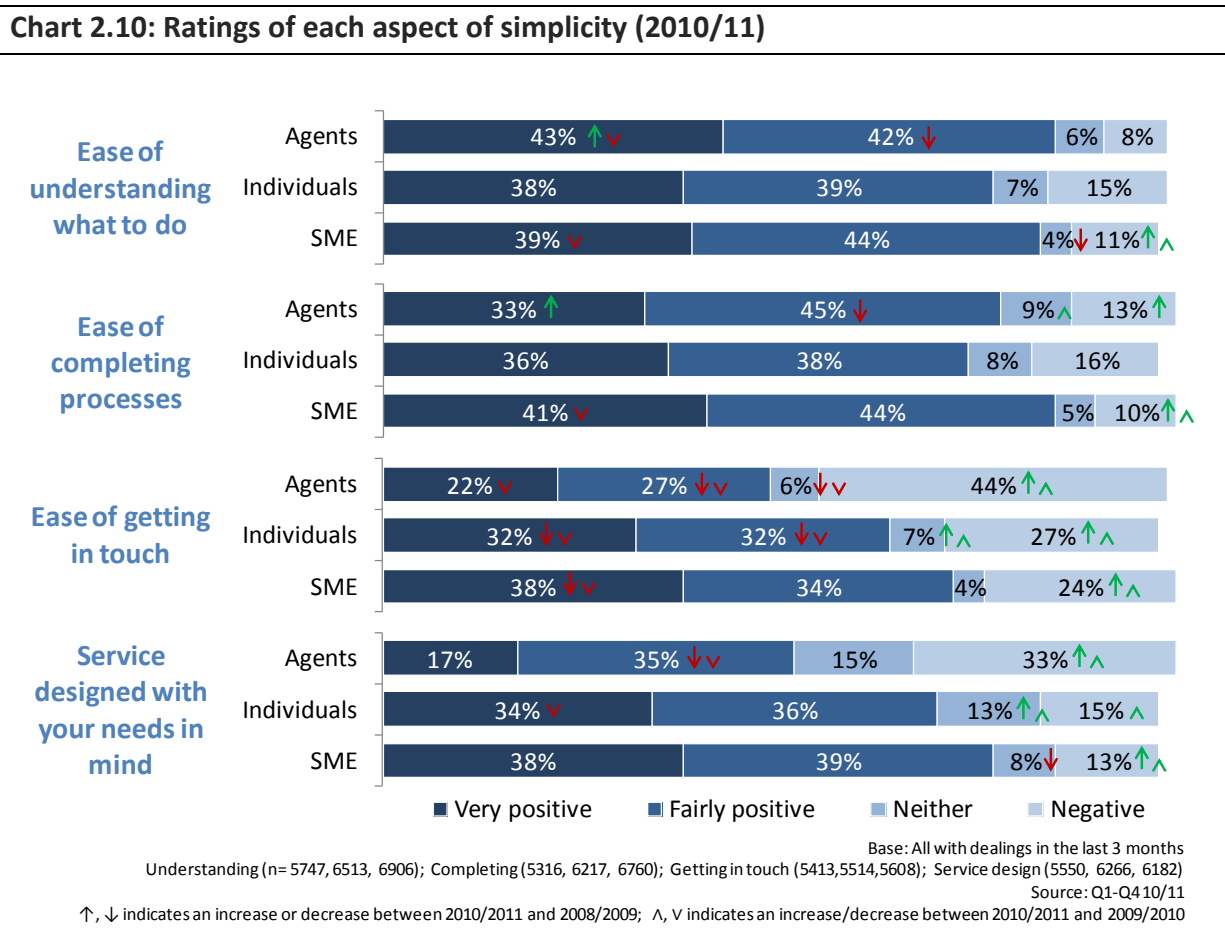


For those dealing with Benefits and Credits, there were improvements in how customers are treated by staff, how good HMRC are at getting things right and the speed at which HMRC responded to customers.

2.5.1 Simplicity

Simplicity includes a number of measures designed to find out how easy HMRC makes the experience for their customers, in terms of understanding what to do, completing processes, and getting in touch, as well as feeling that the service was designed with their needs in mind.

For all of the simplicity measures SME businesses were most positive, followed closely by individuals for most measures, and agents were least positive, but there was an exception for ease of understanding what to do (Chart 2.10, tables showing results for 2008/09 through to 2010/11 are in Appendix B).



At least three in four customers in all three customer groups felt that it was easy to understand what they needed to do, and that it was easy to complete the processes related to their dealings. Agents and SME businesses were slightly more likely than individuals to feel these things were easy, probably reflecting relative levels of familiarity with the processes. However, agents were less likely to agree that the processes were very easy to complete (33%, up from 31% in 2008/2009) compared with SME businesses (41%).

Perceived ease of getting in touch had decreased for all groups. Agents (49% down from 56% in 2008/2009) were considerably less positive than individuals (64% down from 74% in 2008/2009) and SME businesses (72% down from 81% in 2008/2009). Agents were also least likely to have felt that the service had been designed with their needs in mind (52%, a decrease from 56% in 2008/2009) compared with individuals (70% down from 72% in 2008/2009) and SME (77%). The changes in these measures emerged between 2009/2010 and 2010/2011 for all customer groups after remaining stable between 2008/2009 and 2009/2010.

In 2010/2011 individuals who had dealt with HMRC about Benefits and Credits rated HMRC more highly in terms of simplicity than those dealing with Personal Taxes. There was one exception: Benefit and Credit customers were no more likely to believe it was easy to get in touch with HMRC (63% positive, down to a new low from 72% in 2008/2009, despite an increase to 78% in 2009/2010) than customers dealing with Personal Taxes (65%, down from 75% in 2008/2009). The fall overall was not attributable to any product(s) specifically but rather a general fall across them all.

The decrease in providing a service designed with your needs in mind was driven by Personal Tax customers (65%, down from 69% in 2009/2010 and 2008/2009) and, within this, by those dealing with SA (67% down from 72% in 2009/2010 and 2008/2009) and general queries (61% down from 68% in 2009/2010 but similar to 64% in 2008/2009). There had been no change in the rating of this measure for Benefits and Credits customers (78%) since 2008/2009.

There was some difference by tax for SME businesses. Those dealing with VAT were slightly more likely to rate HMRC highly for simplicity, but even for this group of customers, for all measures other than providing a service designed with needs in mind, ratings decreased between 2009/2010 and 2010/2011. VAT customers were less likely to give positive ratings ease of understanding (86%, back down to 2008/2009 levels), ease of completing the processes (88%, back down to 2008/2009 levels) and ease of getting in touch (77% down from 85% in 2008/2009) highly. Payroll and NI customers also rated ease of getting in touch more poorly than in 2008/2009 (67% down from 78%). Customers dealing with a general

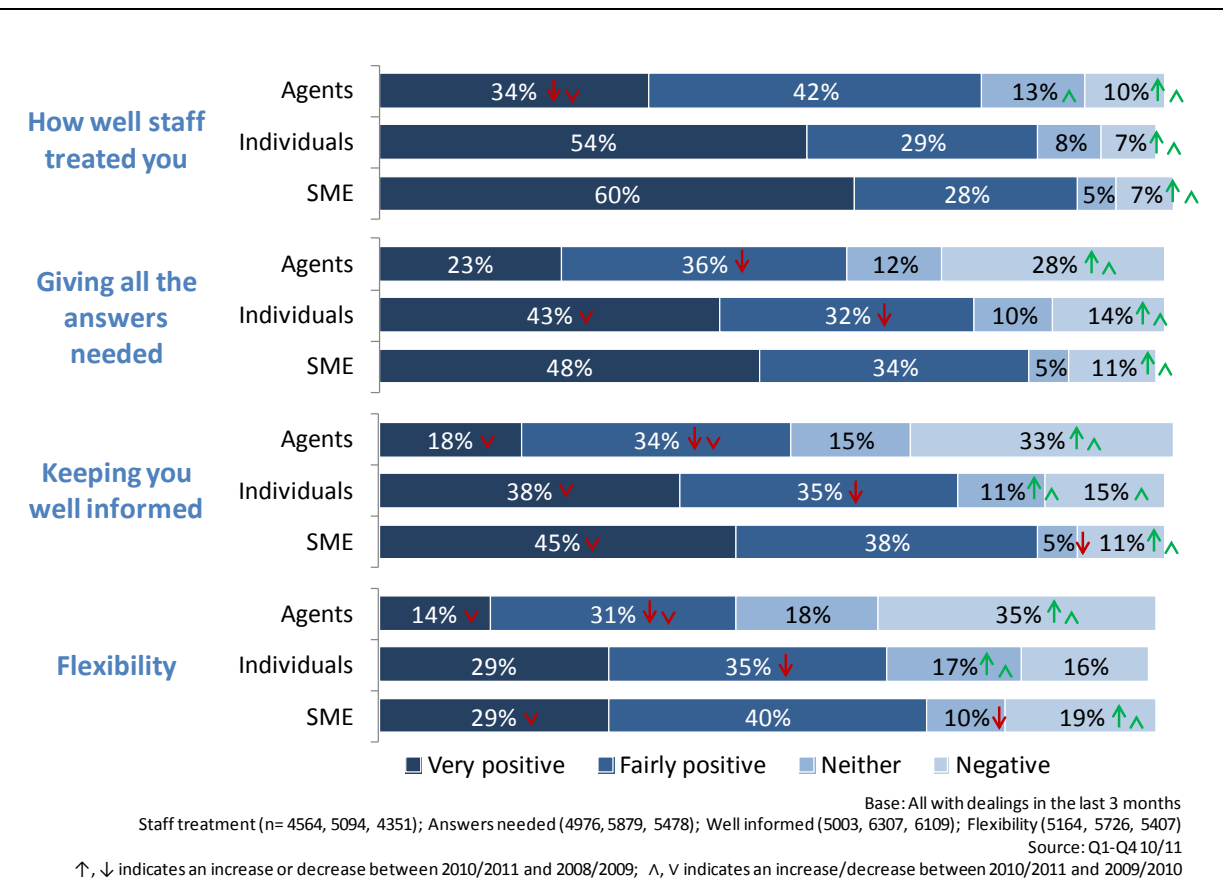
query rated all aspects of simplicity below average, though the only measure to decrease was ease of getting in touch (64% having declined steadily from 81% in 2008/2009). Company Tax customers rated ease of getting in touch and providing a service designed with needs in mind more poorly than SME overall but neither had changed since 2009/2010. Over the longer term Company Tax customers gave lower ratings for ease of getting in touch (67% down from 76% in 2008/2009).

Agents dealing with Tax Credits were least likely of all customer groups to feel it was easy to understand what to do (75%), to get in touch (34% down steadily from 48% in 2008/2009) and that the service was designed with their needs in mind (44%). CIS customers drove a decrease in perceived ease of completing the processes between 2009/2010 and 2010/2011 (71% down from 78% in 2009/2010 although it was similar to 2008/2009 levels). There was a drop in ratings for 'providing a service designed with their needs and mind' between 2009/2010 and 2010/2011 which was attributable to SA for PAYE, payroll and CIS. The drop for ease of getting in touch between 2008/2009 and 2010/2011 was spread across most products.

2.5.2 Responsiveness

Customers were asked to rate the responsiveness of HMRC in terms of how well staff treated them, getting the answers they needed, being kept informed, and feeling HMRC were flexible.

Chart 2.11: Ratings of each aspect of responsiveness (2010/11)



Both SME businesses and individuals were highly likely to believe HMRC were good at giving all the answers that customers needed, and keeping customers well informed (three in four among individuals, eight in ten among SME). For individuals there was a decrease in giving the answers customers needed (75%, returning to 2008/2009 levels) which was driven by SA customers, while the decrease in keeping you well informed (73% down slightly from 75% in 2008/2009 and 2009/2010) was driven by PAYE pension and SA customers and those with a general query.

Agents were considerably less positive, and positive ratings continued to decline on both of these measures from 2008/2009: 58% thought HMRC good at giving the answers they needed, down from 63% in 2008/2009, and 52% thought HMRC good at keeping them well informed, down from 58% in 2008/2009.

All three groups thought that they were well treated by staff, although this had fallen slightly in the past year for individuals (83%, a small decrease from 84% in 2009/2010, driven by PAYE pension customers) and agents (76%, a decrease from 79% in 2009/2010, driven by Company Tax and payroll and NI customers). Ratings given by SME customers had also decreased over the longer term (87% down from 90% in 2008/2009).

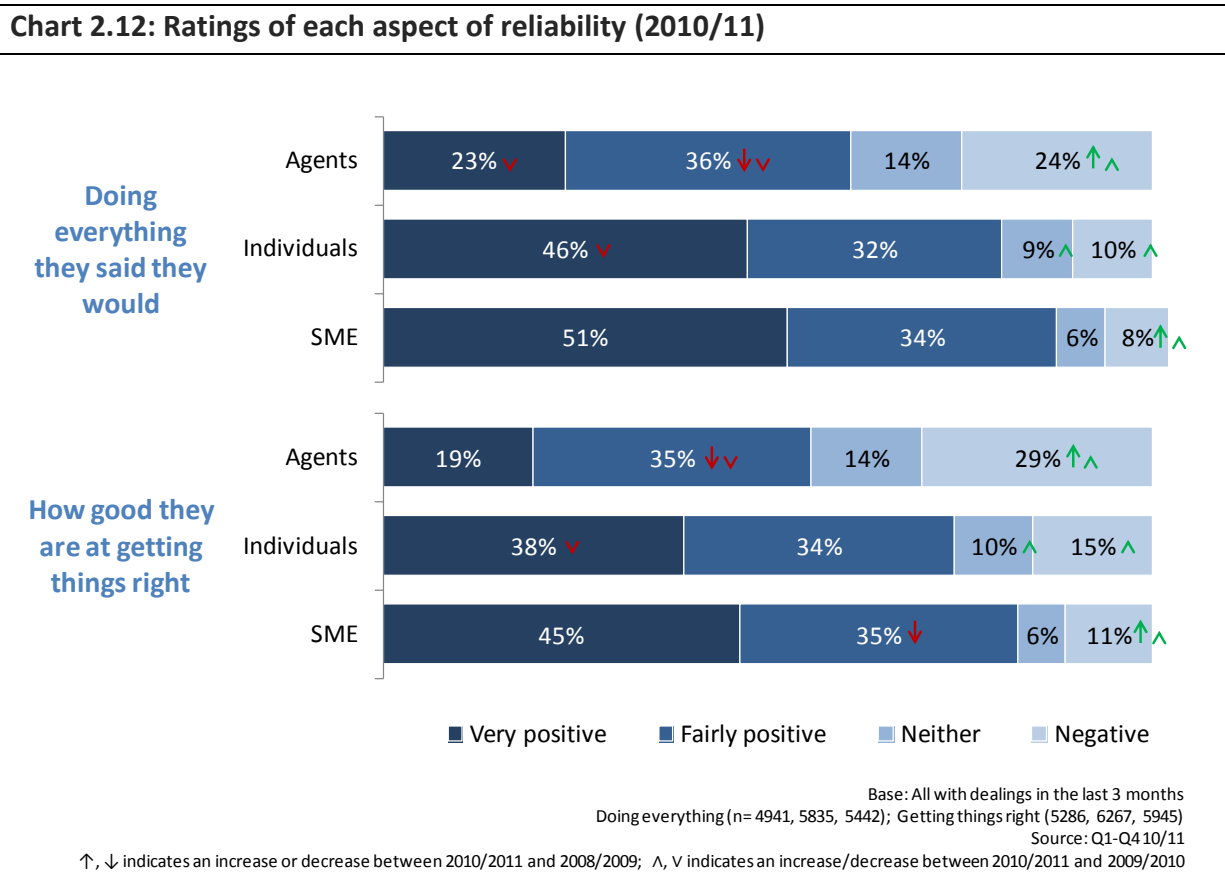
All three customer groups rated HMRC less strongly in terms of flexibility. Seven in ten SME businesses (69%), and two in three individuals thought HMRC were flexible (63% down from 66% in 2009/2010 and 2008/2009), compared with less than half of agents (45% down from 49% in 2008/2009).

Among individuals, customers dealing with Benefits and Credits were again more positive than those dealing with Personal Taxes. There was no change in any of the measures of responsiveness among either customer group between 2008/2009 and 2009/2010, with all changes taking place between 2009/2010 and 2010/2011. Ratings given by Personal Tax customers all fell between 2009/2010 and 2010/2011: how good HMRC were at giving all the answers needed (70% down from 75%), how good HMRC were at keeping you well informed (68% down from 72%), how well HMRC staff treated you (79% down from 82%) and flexibility (58% down from 62%). Looking back at the longer term trend, ratings given by Benefits and Credits customers for treatment by staff had increased marginally from 86% in 2008/2009 to 88% in 2010/2011. Those dealing with income tax through their wages or pension, and those dealing with tax repayments tended to be less positive.

SME businesses rated HMRC responsiveness at a similar level regardless of the tax they were dealing with, though ratings tended to be a little higher for those dealing with VAT. Among agents, as for simplicity, those dealing with Tax Credits were consistently less positive on all measures of responsiveness. Agents dealing with Self Assessment were also slightly less positive on these measures. Agents dealing with Company Tax and VAT were again most positive, although ratings by Company Tax customers for all measures decreased from 2008/2009. SA customers were also less positive than in 2008/2009 for HMRC keeping customers well informed and flexibility.

2.5.3 Reliability

Ratings of reliability (whether HMRC did all they said they would, and whether HMRC get things right) followed a similar pattern, with SME businesses most positive, and agents again least positive (Chart 2.12).



Eight in ten SME businesses believed that HMRC are good at getting things right and doing everything they say they would. Individuals were marginally less positive: 78% thought HMRC good at doing everything they said they would and 72% thought HMRC good at getting things right (both returning to 2008/2009 levels after rising in 2009/2010). Just over half of agents thought HMRC were good at getting things right (54%), and six in ten (59%) thought that HMRC was good at doing everything they say they would. Both of these measures fell again in 2010/2011 continuing the decline seen in 2009/2010.

Among individuals, as with other measures, customers dealing with Benefits and Credits were more positive than those dealing with Personal Taxes. Rating of reliability returned to 2008/2009 levels after an increase in 2009/2010 for Personal Tax customers. Ratings given by Benefits and Credits customers for how good HMRC are at getting things right had increased over the longer term. The decreased belief among individuals that HMRC is good

at getting things right from 2009/2010 was driven by Self Assessment customers (72% drop from 77%), but as with the trend overall this was a return to the level seen in 2008/2009. Customers dealing with income tax through their wages were slightly less likely to believe that HMRC is good at doing everything it says it will (71% down from 77% in 2009/2010 but again returning to 2008/2009 levels).

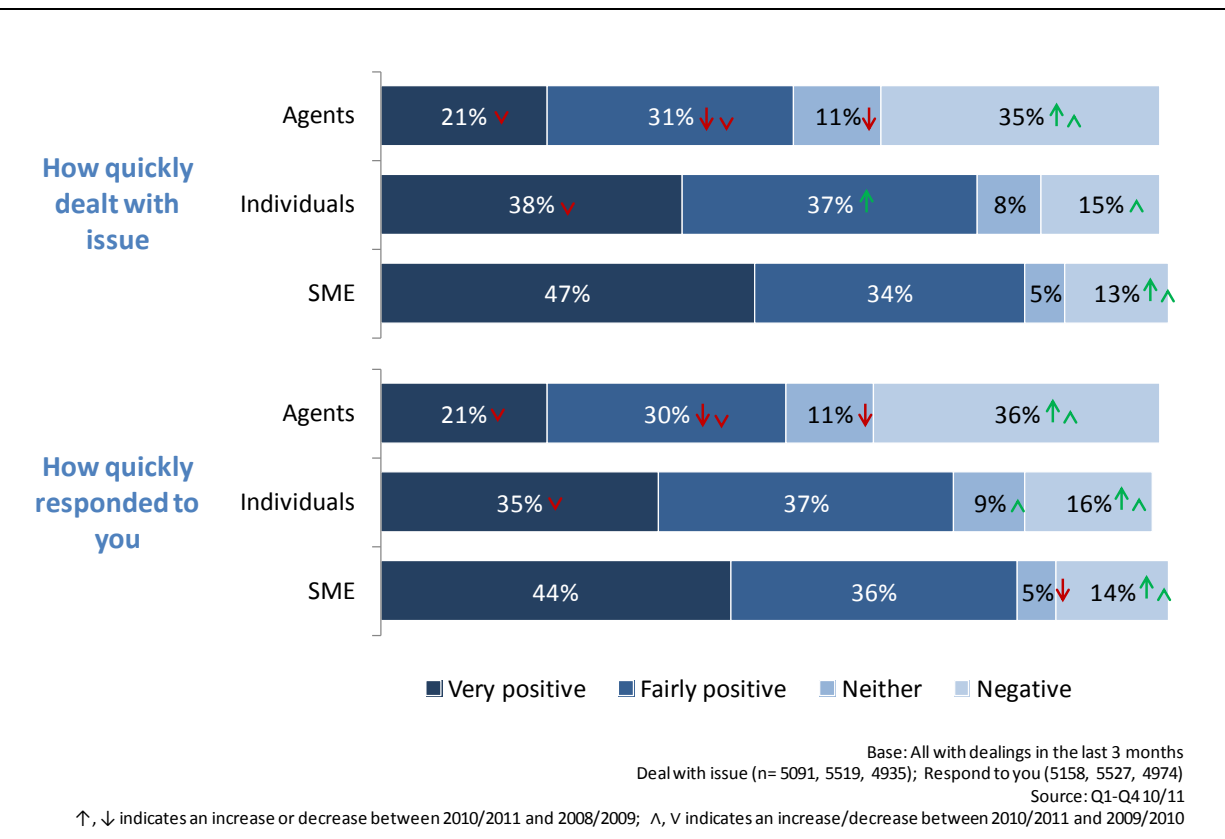
Among agents, those dealing with Tax Credits were again least positive, with just 39% saying HMRC were good at getting things right. Agents dealing with SA also rated this poorly, in particular those dealing with SA for PAYE employees, where 44% said HMRC were good at getting things right, a decrease from 54% in 2008/2009. Positivity towards HMRC doing everything they said they would dropped for those dealing with SA for the self employed (54% down from 60% in 2008/2009 and 2009/2010) and payroll and NI (57% down from 66% in 2008/2009). Agents dealing with VAT and Company Tax gave the highest ratings, though ratings for those dealings with Company Tax had also decreased from 2008/2009: HMRC were good at getting things right (62% down from 69%) and HMRC doing everything they said they would (65% down from 74%).

Ratings among SME businesses did not vary greatly according to the tax dealt with, though those dealing with general queries gave lower scores on both measures: 77% thought HMRC was good at doing everything they said they would and 70% thought HMRC was good at getting things right. Ratings for both measures decreased for customers dealing with payroll and NI 2008/2009 and 2010/2011.

2.5.4 Speed

Ratings of speed of response, and speed of dealing with customer issues also followed a similar pattern, with SME businesses most positive, and agents again least positive (Chart 2.13).

Chart 2.13: Ratings of each aspect of speed (2010/11)



The majority of all customers thought HMRC dealt quickly with their issue and responded quickly: eight in ten SME businesses, and three in four individuals, but lower at just over half of agents. However, more than three in ten agents responded negatively on each measure. Both measures had decreased for agents since 2009/2010 after remaining steady between 2008/2009 and 2009/2010.

There was a small decrease from 2009/2010 to 2010/2011 for individuals customers overall in the belief that HMRC responded quickly (72% down from 75%). This was not driven by any specific taxes or benefits but rather by small decreases across a number of products.

Among agents, those dealing with Tax Credits were (as for other measures) least positive, with just 35% saying HMRC was quick to respond. Only slightly more (42%) rated speed of dealing with the issue positively. Agents dealing with SA and payroll also rated this more

poorly, while agents dealing with VAT and Company Tax gave the highest ratings. The decreases in the overall measures from 2009/2010 were driven by a number of taxes: there were decreases in ratings for those dealing with VAT, SA for self employed, SA for PAYE and payroll in 2010/2011.

Ratings among SME business did not vary greatly according to the tax dealt with.

3. Reputation

Key points

- More than nine in ten agents knew at least a fair amount about HMRC, but this was lower at half of SME businesses and three in ten individuals. These relative levels of familiarity reflect the levels of dealings with HMRC reported by each customer group.
- Out of the three customer groups, SME businesses rated HMRC more highly in most areas. The perception of HMRC's reputation among individuals was similar or slightly less positive compared with SME businesses.
- Agents had the least favourable opinion of HMRC and this was reflected in lower ratings across most of the measures of reputation, with only a few exceptions.
- Agents were most negative concerning issues of support, with less than half believing that they would give HMRC the benefit of the doubt if criticised (45%).

3.1 Reputation overview

Every second quarter a module is included in the customer survey to measure HMRC's reputation among those who may or may not have had any recent direct dealings with the Department and therefore encompass a broader target population than the customer experience questions. These questions were developed to provide measures to track HMRC's reputation and to evaluate the performance of its ambition and values over time among different audiences. Measurement was integrated within the Customer Survey from 2008, although the measures were substantially changed in 2010/2011.

Questions about reputation were asked of all customers and not just those who had dealt with HMRC in the previous three months. This means that questions about reputation are not linked to any specific dealings but to customers' general perceptions.

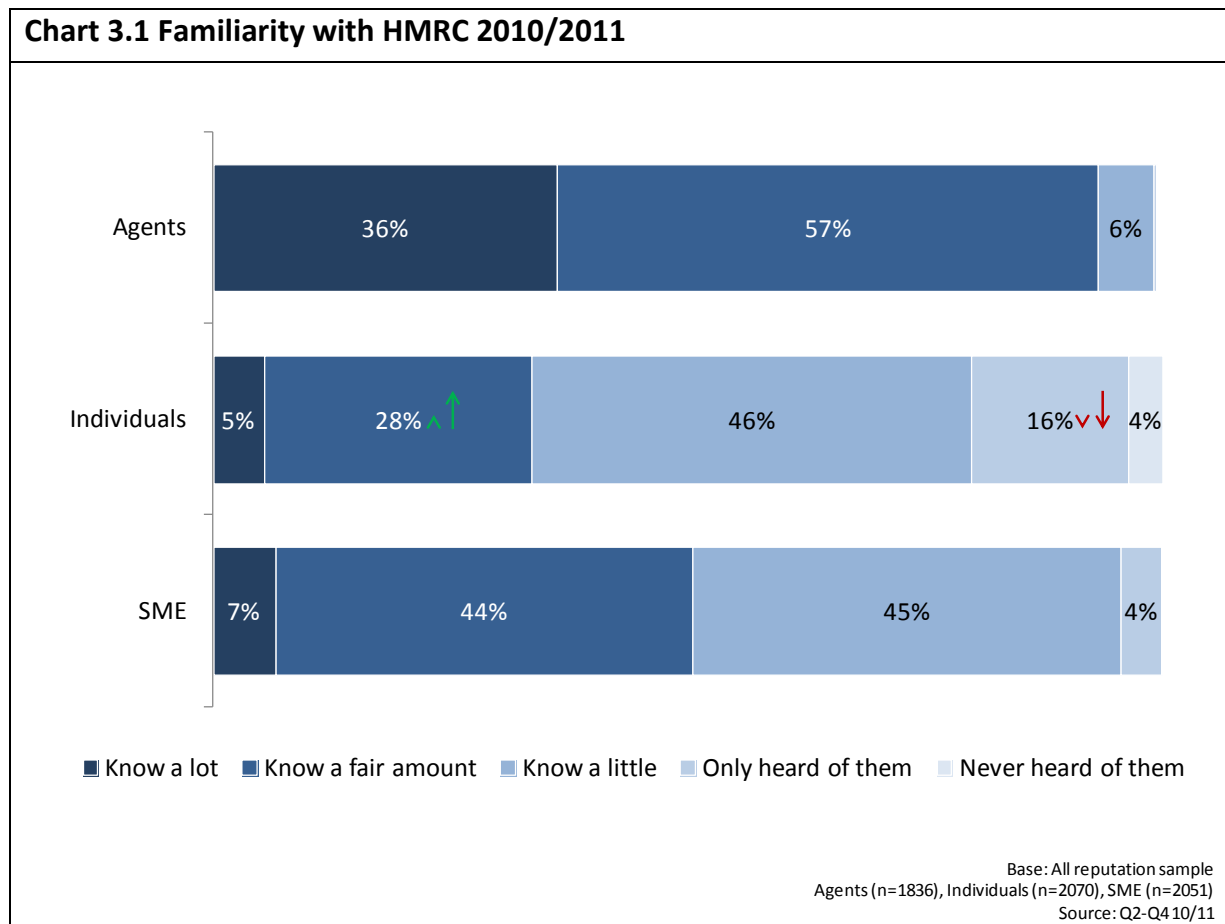
To measure reputation, customers give an overall rating of favourability towards HMRC (familiarity and frequency of dealings are measured to provide further context), and then answer questions related to these areas:

- Fairness
- Favourability
- Trust
- Communications
- Support
- Stories
- Lack of non compliance
- Other influences
- Other

As for the section on the customer experience, this chapter focuses on the findings of the third full year of the Customer Survey, and where applicable draws on any significant changes from 2008/2009.

3.2 Familiarity

It is important to establish familiarity (in conjunction with frequency of dealing with HMRC) to help determine the extent to which opinions of HMRC are likely to be based on experience or other influences. As Chart 3.1 shows, the level of familiarity with HMRC varied by customer group. There was little change between 2008/2009 and 2010/2011 so only the latest year's figures are shown.



Λ, V indicate a statistically significant increase/decrease between 2010/2011 and 2009/2010

↑, ↓ indicate a statistically significant increase/decrease between 2010/2011 and the baseline in 2008/2009

Note: The “don’t know” response has been omitted from the chart

More than nine in ten (93%) agents knew at least a fair amount about HMRC, but this was roughly half of SME businesses, and three in ten individuals (33% up from 28% in 2008/2009). That agents have the most knowledge of HMRC (36% said they knew a lot) is not surprising, since their professions require a high level of interaction with HMRC.

SME businesses reported a more moderate level of familiarity with HMRC, and although the vast majority knew at least a little (96%), only seven percent of SME businesses felt they knew a lot about HMRC.

Individual customers were least familiar with HMRC. Three in ten knew at least a fair amount however the vast majority only knew a little or merely recognised the name HMRC (62%). This lack of familiarity suggests that for a large proportion of individual customers, HMRC's reputation is judged on other influences, rather than personal experience.

These relative levels of familiarity correspond with the level of recent dealings reported in Section 2.2, whereby only 29% of individuals had dealt with HMRC in the previous three months, rising to 86% of SME businesses and almost all agents.

Generally, across all three groups, familiarity with HMRC increases with frequency of dealings. This is most pronounced for agents. Half of agents (51%) who deal with HMRC on a daily basis know a lot about HMRC, falling to 20% of agents who deal with HMRC on a less than weekly basis.

3.3 Measures of reputation

The customer survey looks at several additional measures which may well influence the overall reputation of HMRC. Some of these measures have changed from 2009/2010, following developmental work by HMRC. The measures can be split into categories in the table below. Those underlined (in blue) are measures used in previous years; those not underlined (in black) are new measures:

Area	Measure
Fairness	Trust HMRC to be fair Dealings are handled fairly HMRC treats customers fairly
Favourability	Favourability of overall opinion HMRC is an organisation I can trust HMRC is an organisation with a good reputation
Trust	HMRC carries out its duties properly and professionally HMRC acts with honesty and integrity HMRC looks after customer interests
Communications	HMRC are effective at communicating with customers HMRC protects my information
Support	Would give HMRC the benefit of the doubt Positive conversation about experiences
Stories	HMRC are good at collecting money, but not paying it out
Lack of non compliance	It is not a big deal to pay taxes late
Other influences	What most influences knowledge
Other	HMRC protects society HMRC makes it as easy as possible to get things right HMRC treats customers as honest

The next section of this chapter explores the results from the third full year of the survey on these measures. Where measures have been included since 2008, comparison will be made with data from the previous two years of the survey.

Different answer lists were used for different questions. Most used a five point scale (e.g. very good, fairly good, neutral, fairly poor and very poor). Others used a scale of 1 to 10 (1 is most negative, 10 is most positive). To aid comparison of different measures where questions are compared, each will be presented using the following scale:

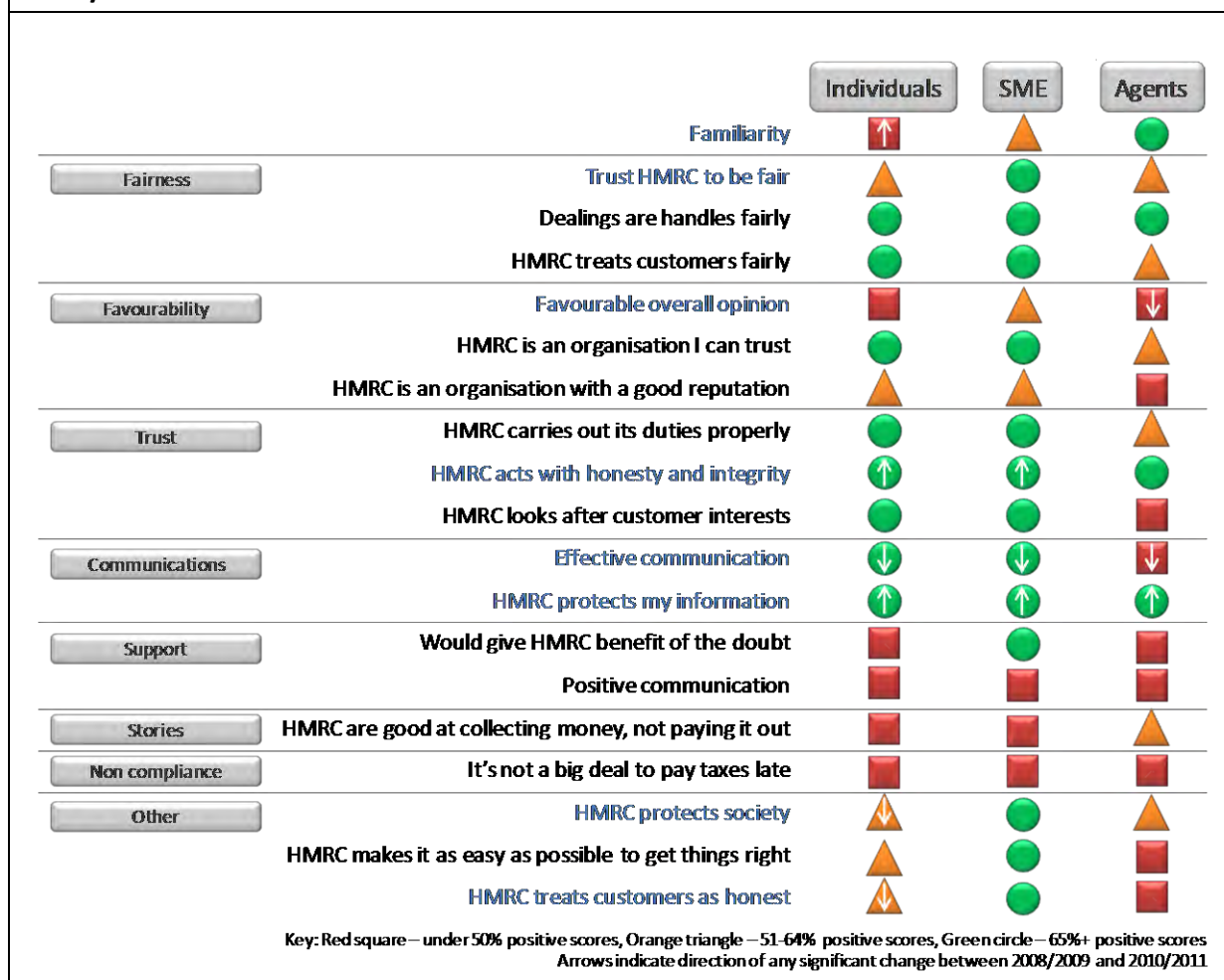
- Very positive (top of 5 point scale, 9-10 on numerical scale)
- Fairly positive (second of 5 point scale, 7-8 on numerical scale)
- Neither (mid-point of 5 point scale, 5-6 on numerical scale)
- Negative (fourth or fifth of 5 point scale, 1-4 on numerical scale)

Where figures do not add up to 100%, the remainder of answers were 'don't know' responses.

3.4 Relative ratings of reputation and changes over time

Chart 3.2 gives an overview of the relative ratings of the different reputation measures and, where comparable, changes from 2008/2009 to 2010/2011. The colour coding shows relative levels of positive scores (very or fairly good etc) across the three customer groups. The arrows show where there has been a significant change in performance from the baseline in 2008/2009 to 2010/2011. This indication of change only applies to measures shown in turquoise, which were included in the previous two years of the survey.

Chart 3.2: Ratings of reputation measures and change between 2008/2009 and 2010/2011



SME businesses were favourable towards HMRC in most of the reputation areas measured, with positive scores of 65% or more for many measures. Trust in HMRC to act with honesty and integrity increased from 2008/2009 to 2010/2011, as did agreement that HMRC protects information, whereas there was a decrease in rating for effectiveness of communication.

Among individuals familiarity had increased from 2008/2009. Individuals gave their most positive ratings on trust and communications, with trust in HMRC to protect their information, and ratings of HMRC's honesty and integrity both increasing from 2008/2009 to 2010/2011. Ratings in most other areas were relatively low, and the belief that HMRC protects society, treats customers as honest and effectiveness of communication all dropped from 2008/2009 to 2010/2011.

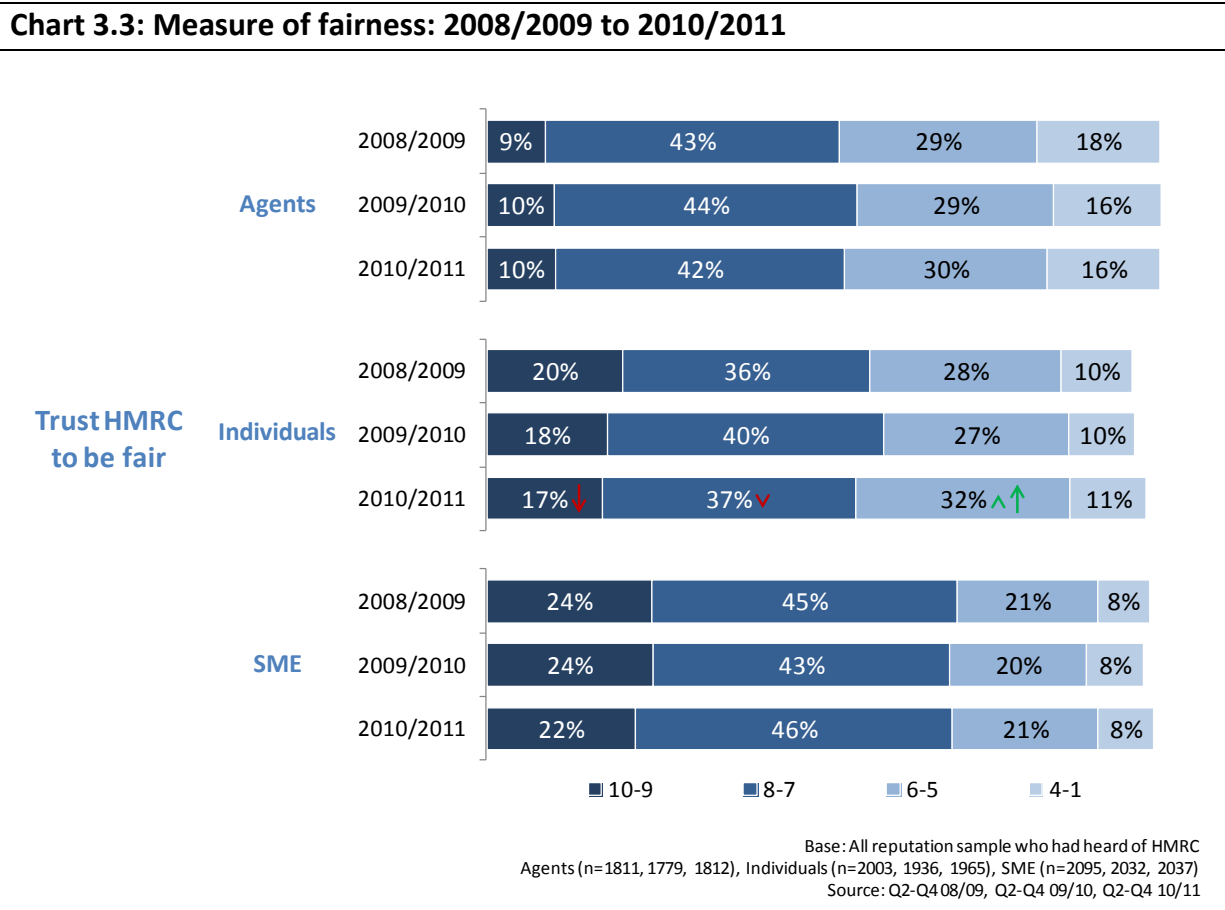
Agents gave most positive responses on fairness; however for other areas the range of ratings was mixed. Like SME businesses, belief that HMRC protects their information increased from 2008/2009 to 2010/2011, but ratings of effectiveness of communication declined over the same period. Favourability in HMRC to be fair had also decreased.

These measures are discussed in more detail in the following four sections of this chapter.

3.4.1 Fairness

The pattern for perceived fairness of HMRC is consistent across the three measures and is quite similar to favourability. SME businesses were more likely to believe that HMRC is fair as well as have a more favourable opinion, individuals were slightly less positive and agents were least likely to be positive.

SME businesses were most likely to trust HMRC to be fair and agents least likely (Chart 3.3). Seven in ten (68%) SME businesses gave HMRC a positive rating, compared with just over a half of individuals (54%, down from 58% in 2009/2010 but similar to 2008/2009) and agents (53%). Agents were least likely to give a very positive rating (10%) compared with SME businesses (22%) and individuals (17%).

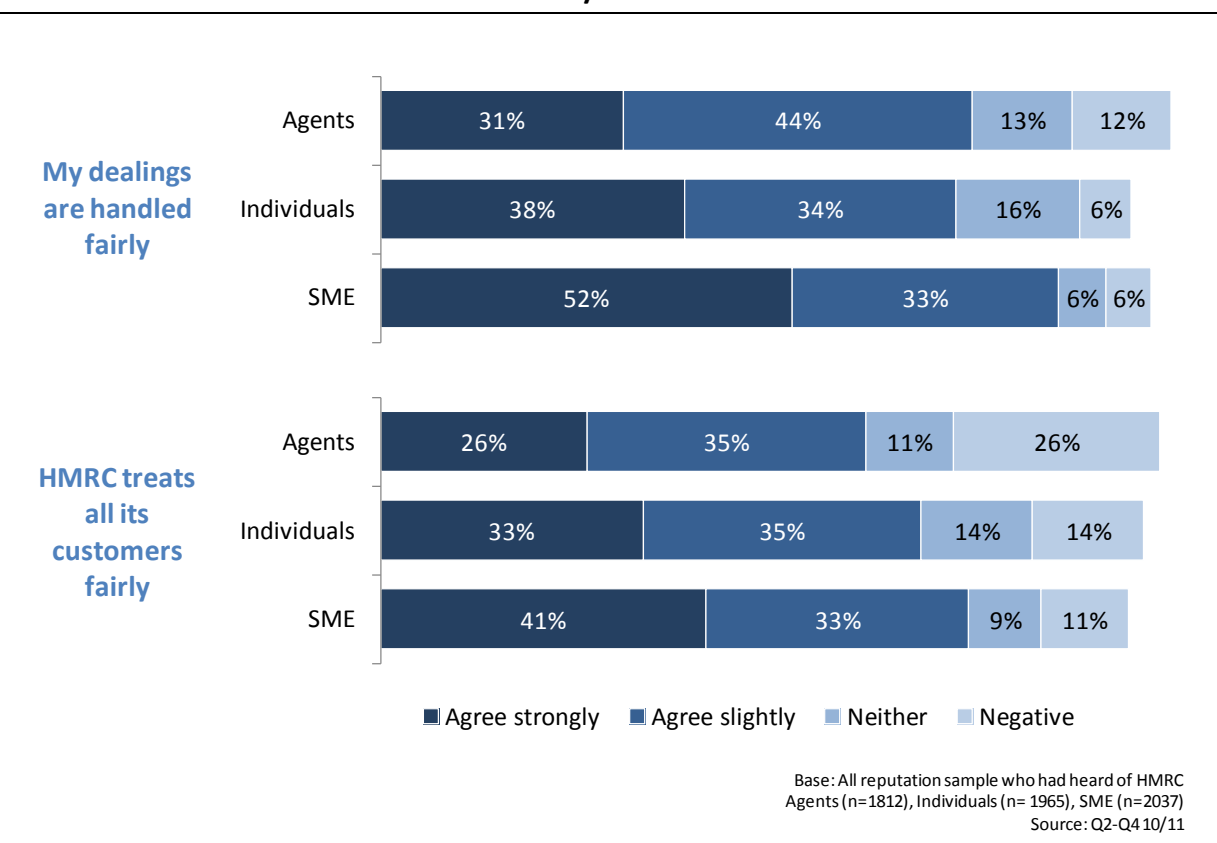


Λ, V indicate a statistically significant increase/decrease between 2010/2011 and 2009/2010
 ↑, ↓ indicate a statistically significant increase/decrease between 2010/2011 and the baseline in 2008/2009
 Note: The “don’t know” response has been omitted from the chart

Individuals were less likely to give a very positive rating in 2010/2011 (17% down from 20% in 2008/2009) with a move to giving HMRC neither a positive nor negative rating (32% up from 28%).

Based on the measures introduced in 2010/11, positive ratings for HMRC handling dealings fairly were similar across all three groups (85% SME businesses, 72% individuals, and 74% agents). For SME businesses this was driven by over a half (52%) giving a very positive rating whereas agents were more likely to give a fairly positive rating (44%), (Chart 3.4).

Chart 3.4 New measures of fairness: 2010/2011

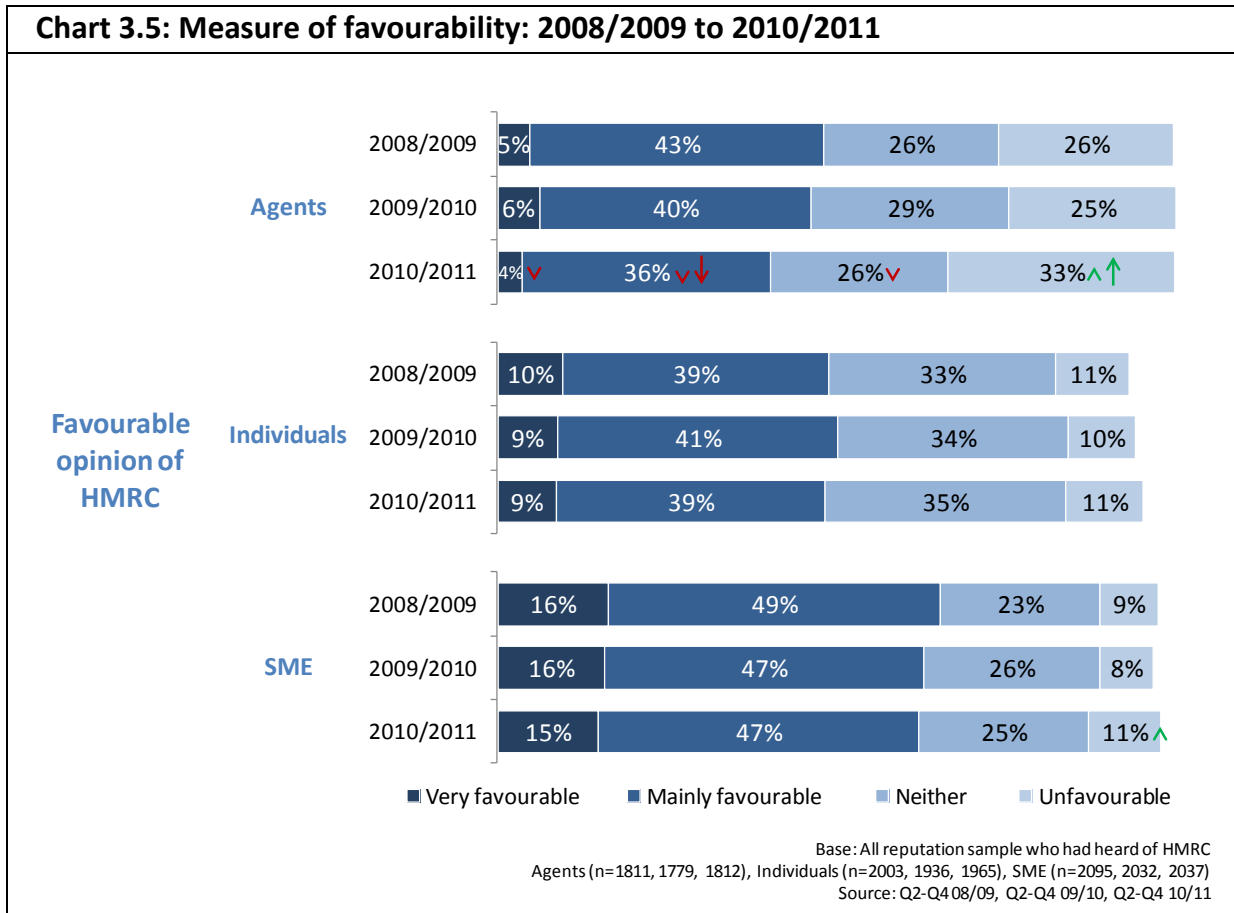


Note: The “don’t know” response has been omitted from the chart

Around seven in ten SME businesses and individuals (74% and 68% respectively) agreed that HMRC treats all its customers fairly. Slightly fewer agents agreed with this (61%) with around a quarter being very positive in their reaction (26%).

3.4.2 Favourability

Among those who had heard of HMRC, all three groups were more likely to have a favourable impression of HMRC than unfavourable. Showing a similar, though slightly more pronounced pattern as for ratings of customer experience, SME businesses were most favourable and agents were least (Chart 3.5).

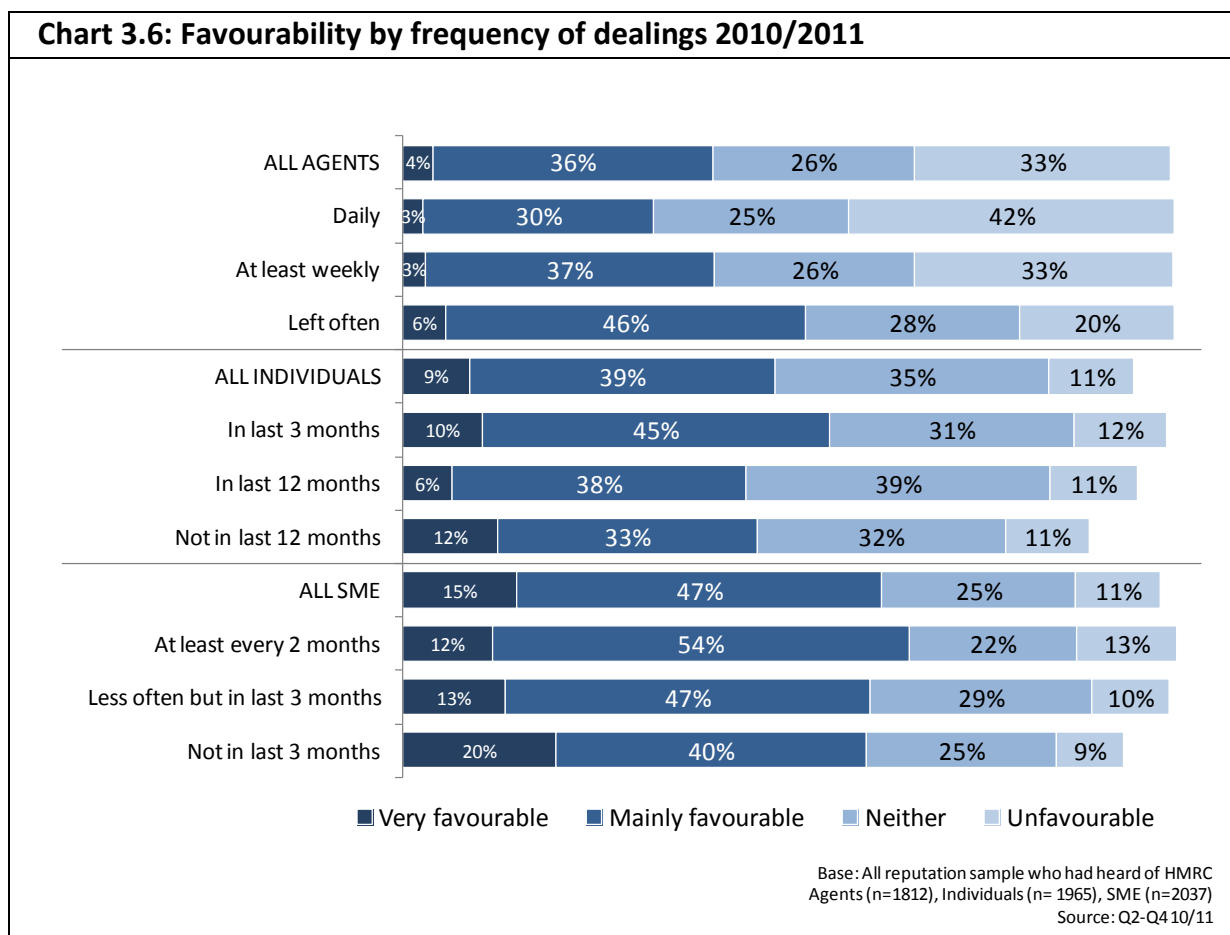


Δ, V indicate a statistically significant increase/decrease between 2010/2011 and 2009/2010
 ↑, ↓ indicate a statistically significant increase/decrease between 2010/2011 and the baseline in 2008/2009
 Note: The “don’t know” response has been omitted from the chart

In 2010/2011, six in ten SME businesses (62%) had a favourable opinion of HMRC, far outweighing the eleven percent who were unfavourable. Slightly fewer individuals were favourable (48%) although a similar proportion (11%) to SME were unfavourable. Whilst four in ten agents (40%) were favourable towards HMRC, they were far more likely to have an unfavourable opinion (33%) than the other two groups. Agents were also decreasingly likely to give a mainly favourable rating (36% in 2010/2011, down from 43% in 2008/2009) with a shift towards those who were mainly unfavourable.

Whilst favourable opinions outweighed the unfavourable for all groups, there was a sizeable minority in each group who felt neither favourable nor unfavourable (a quarter of SME businesses and agents, and a third of individuals).

Favourability is strongly linked to frequency of dealing with HMRC for all three groups (Chart 3.6).

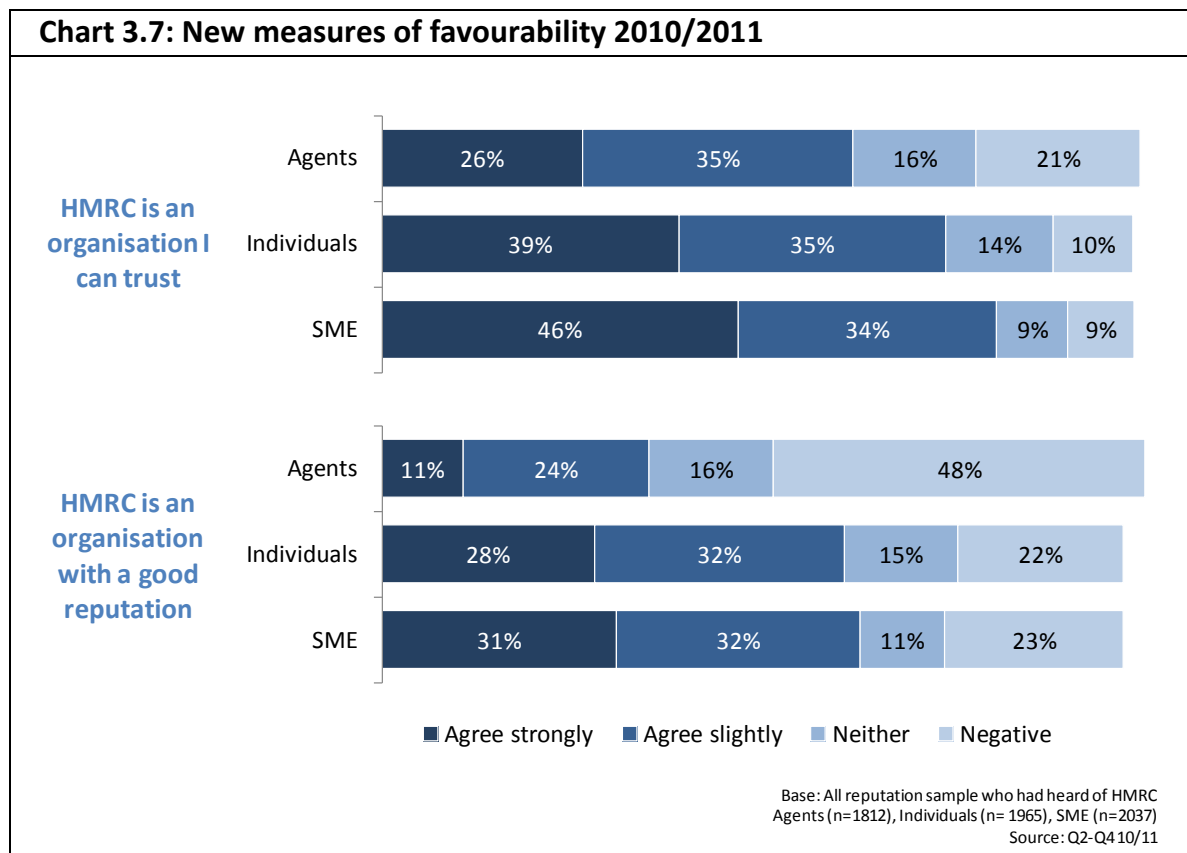


Note: The “don’t know” response has been omitted from the chart

Since the three customer groups had very different patterns of frequency of dealing, different frequency categories are used for each in Chart 3.6, breaking down dealings into three levels from most frequent/recent through to least frequent/recent.

The more frequently an agent dealt with HMRC the less likely they were to be favourable. Whilst a third (33%) who dealt with HMRC daily had a favourable opinion, a half of agents (52%) who dealt with them less often than weekly were favourable. However, the reverse was seen for individuals, with higher levels of favourability for those who had contacted HMRC in the last three months. There was little variation for SME businesses.

Two new favourability measures were added in 2010/2011 (Chart 3.7).

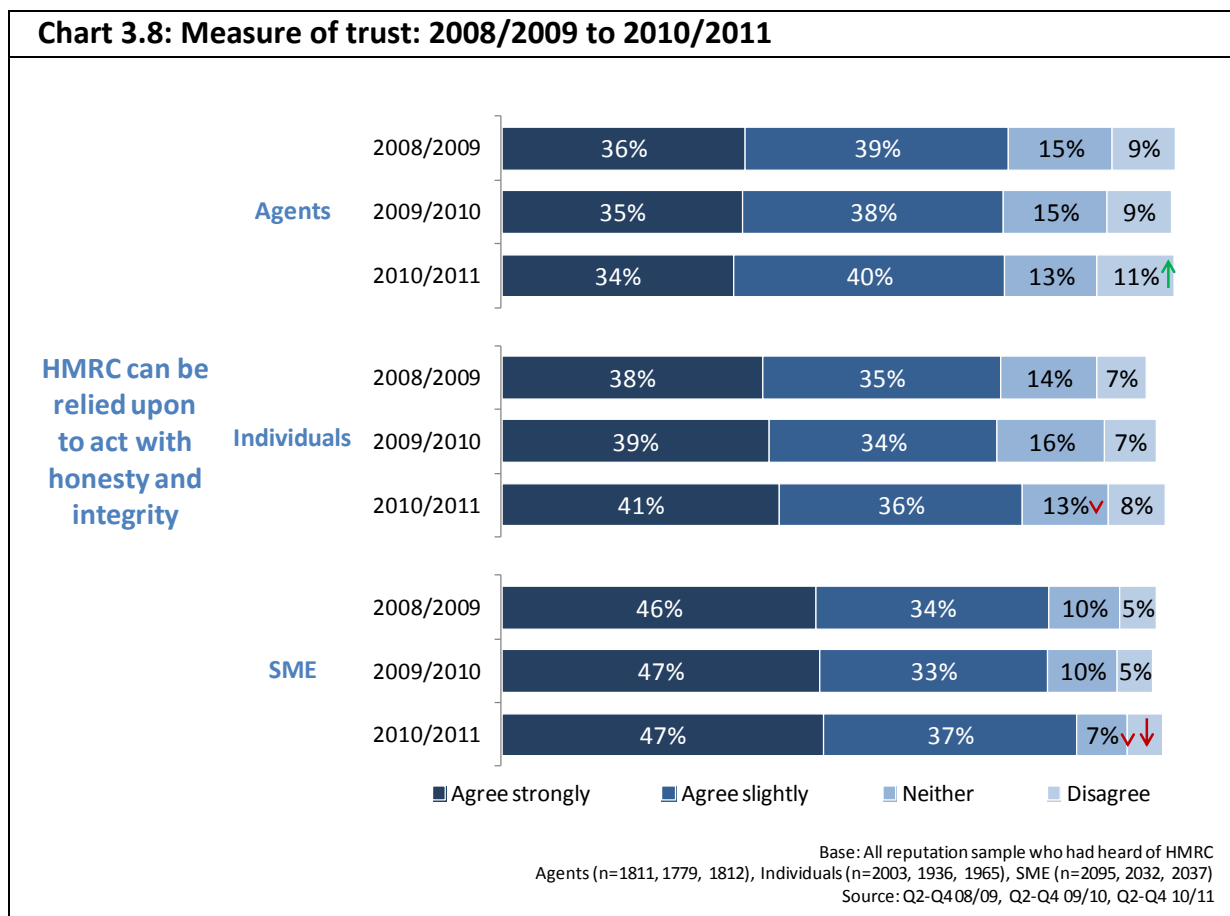


Note: The “don’t know” response has been omitted from the chart

Around three quarters of SME businesses (80%) and individuals (73%) agreed that HMRC was an organisation they could trust. Agents were less likely to agree (61%) with two in ten giving a negative response (21%). There were lower levels of agreement that HMRC is an organisation with a good reputation, with six in ten SME businesses (62%) and individuals (60%) agreeing with the statement. Agents were more likely to disagree that HMRC has a good reputation than agree (48% compared with 35%).

3.4.3 Trust

The pattern for trusting HMRC is similar to that for favourability and fairness, with SME businesses most likely to trust HMRC, and agents least likely (Chart 3.8).



∧, ∨ indicate a statistically significant increase/decrease between 2010/2011 and 2009/2010

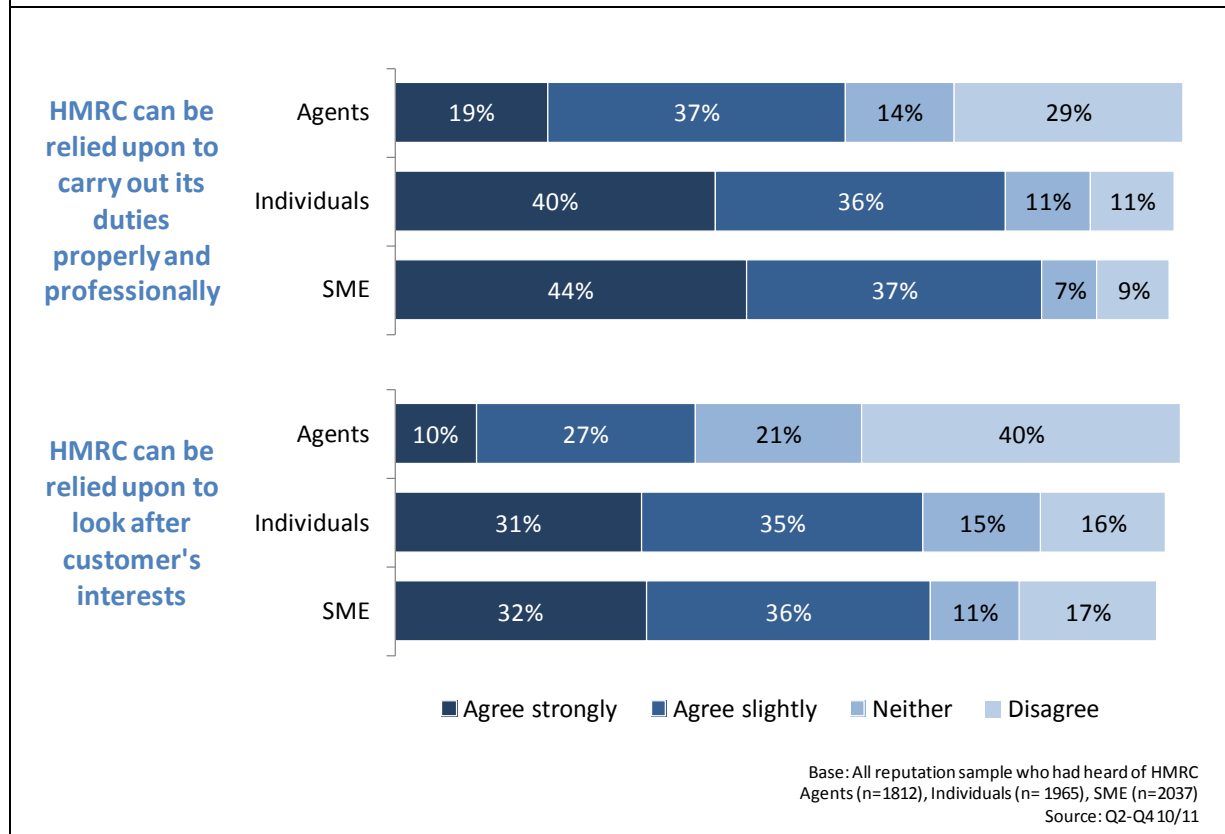
↑, ↓ indicate a statistically significant increase/decrease between 2010/2011 and the baseline in 2008/2009

Note: The “don’t know” response has been omitted from the chart

A high proportion of all three customer groups agreed that Revenue and Customs are honest and have integrity (84% of SME businesses, 76% of individuals and 74% of agents). Overall, positive ratings amongst individuals increased from 73% in 2008/2009 to 76% in 2010/2011, and among SME businesses from 80% up to 84%.

Similar proportions of SME businesses and individuals felt that HMRC can be relied upon to carry out its duties properly and professionally (81% and 77% respectively), while this was lower for agents (57%, Chart 3.9).

Chart 3.9: New measures of trust: 2010/2011

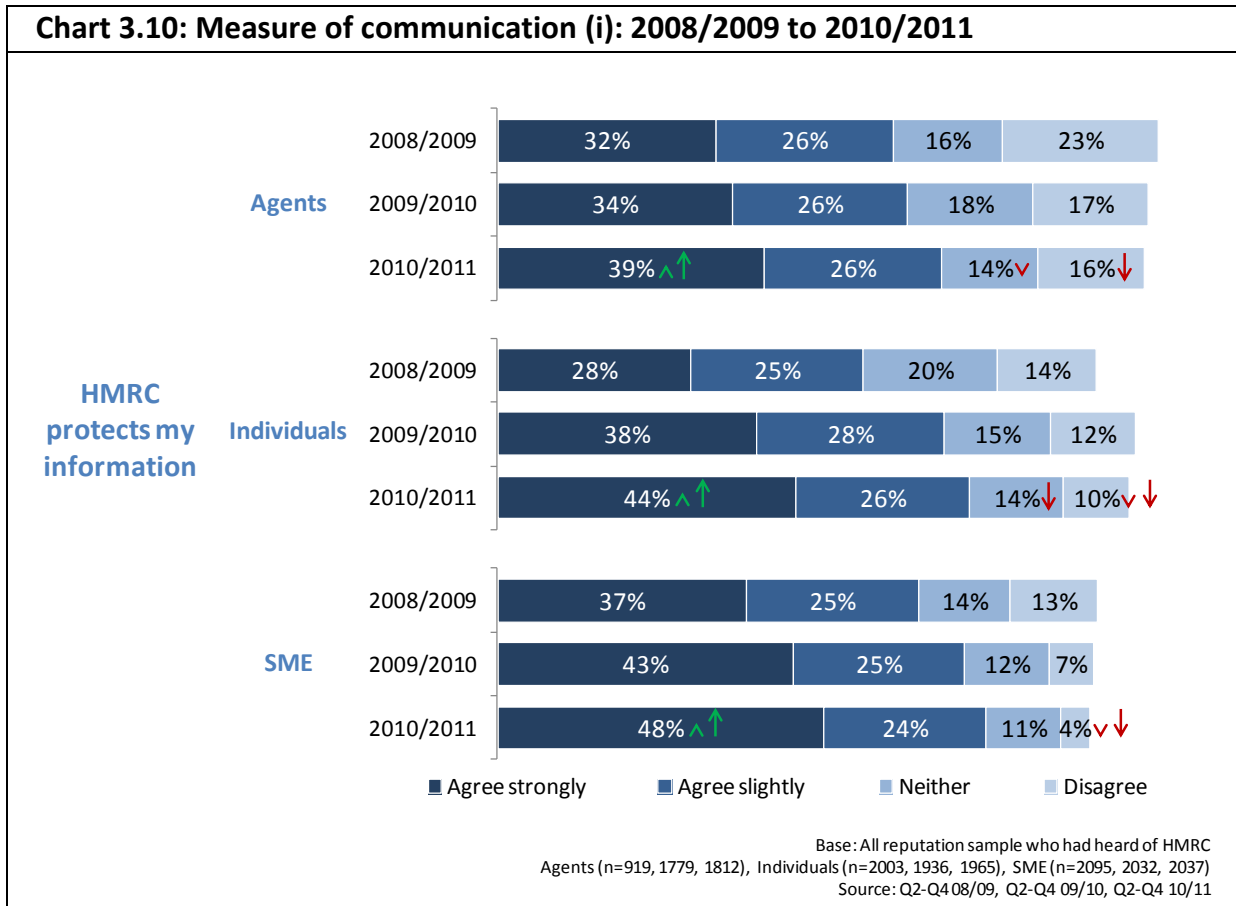


Note: The “don’t know” response has been omitted from the chart

Just under seven in ten SME businesses (67%) and individuals (66%) trusted HMRC to look after its customers interests, but only four in ten agents agreed with this (38%) and four in ten disagreed with the statement (40%).

3.4.4 Communications

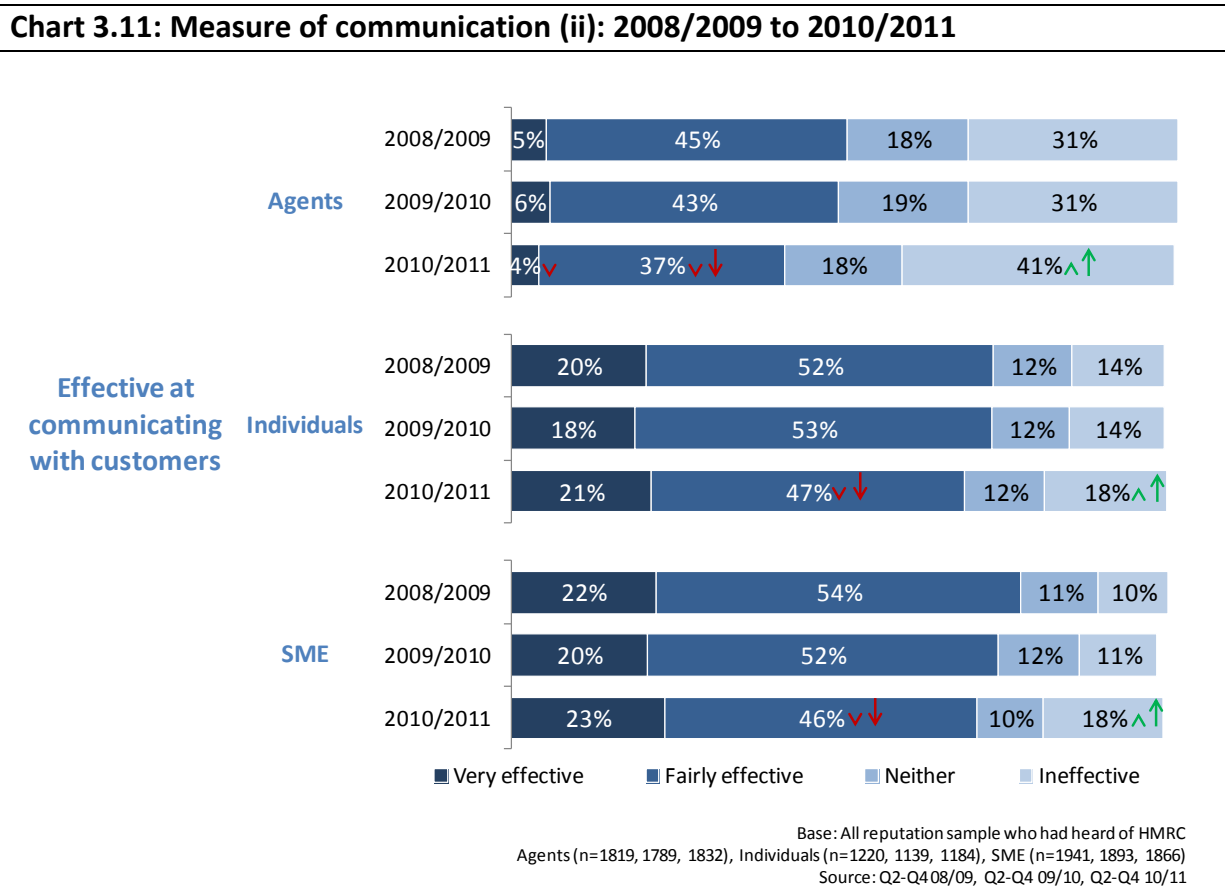
The two measures evaluating HMRC’s communications broadly follow the same pattern that has been seen for other measures of reputation. Both have been tracked since 2008/2009. There was continued improvement for all three groups from 2008/2009 to 2010/2011 in the belief that HMRC protects their information (Chart 3.10).



^, ∇ indicate a statistically significant increase/decrease between 2010/2011 and 2009/2010
 ↑, ↓ indicate a statistically significant increase/decrease between 2010/2011 and the baseline in 2008/2009
 Note: The “don’t know” response has been omitted from the chart

Agents remained least positive, but there was an increase in positive ratings from 58% to 65%. For individuals, positive ratings rose from 53% to 69% and for SME businesses there was an increase from 62% to 72%. These mirrored significant declines in negative responses to this statement for all three groups.

Around seven in ten of SME businesses (69%) and individuals (68%) gave HMRC a positive rating for the effectiveness of their communications (Chart 3.11). Among agents, who had the most dealings with HMRC, only four in ten agents (41%) gave a positive rating, with a similar proportion (41%) giving a negative response.

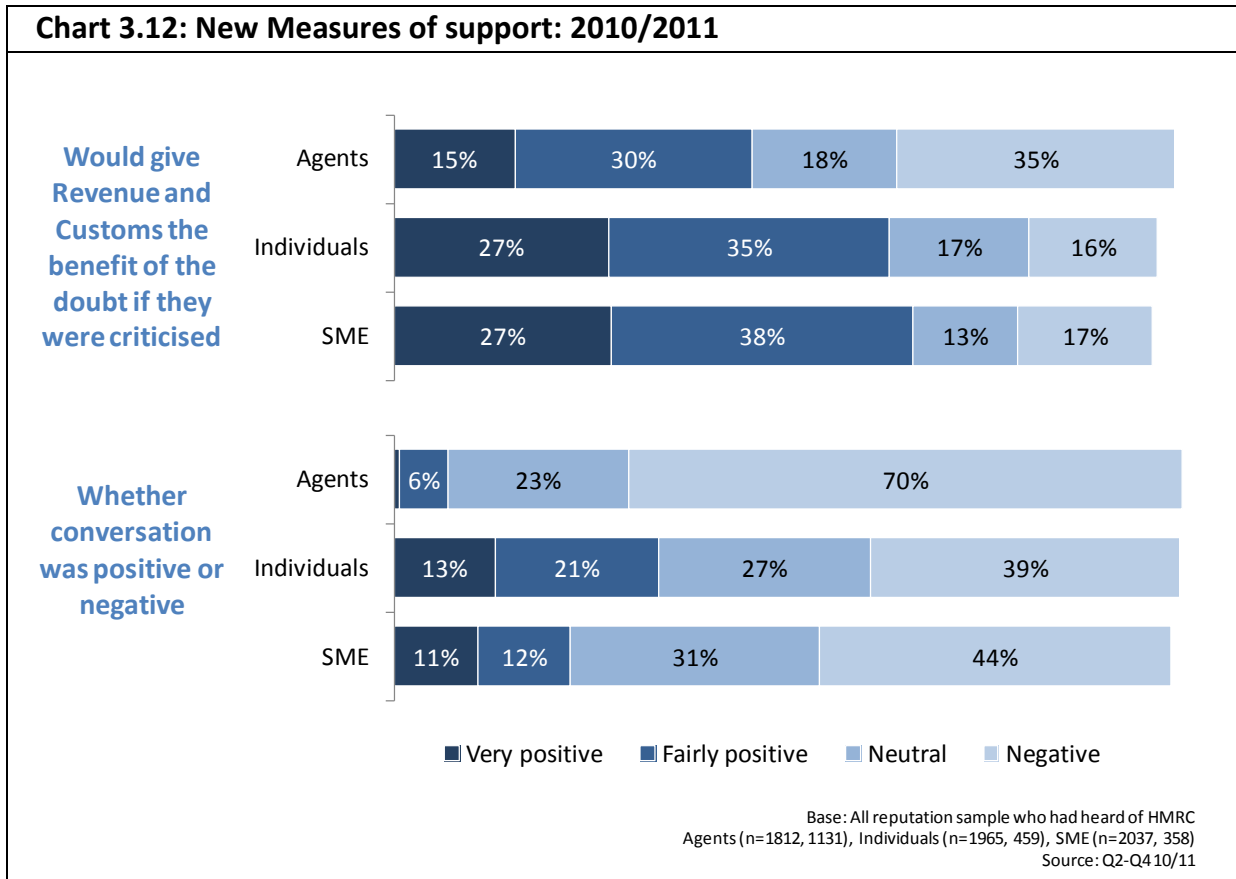


Δ, V indicate a statistically significant increase/decrease between 2010/2011 and 2009/2010
 ↑, ↓ indicate a statistically significant increase/decrease between 2010/2011 and the baseline in 2008/2009
 Note: The “don’t know” response has been omitted from the chart

There had been a decline in the belief that HMRC was effective at communicating with customers from 2008/2009 to 2010/2011, driven by a decrease in those giving a fairly positive rating. Customers were no less likely to give a very positive rating, however, compared with the baseline. There was a shift towards negative ratings over the three years of the survey (31% to 41% for agents, 14% to 18% for individuals and 10% to 18% for SME businesses).

3.4.5 Support

A new measure was added in 2010/2011 to measure support (Chart 3.12). SME businesses and individuals, who gave more positive ratings of fairness, were also more likely than Agents to give HMRC the benefit of the doubt if criticised.



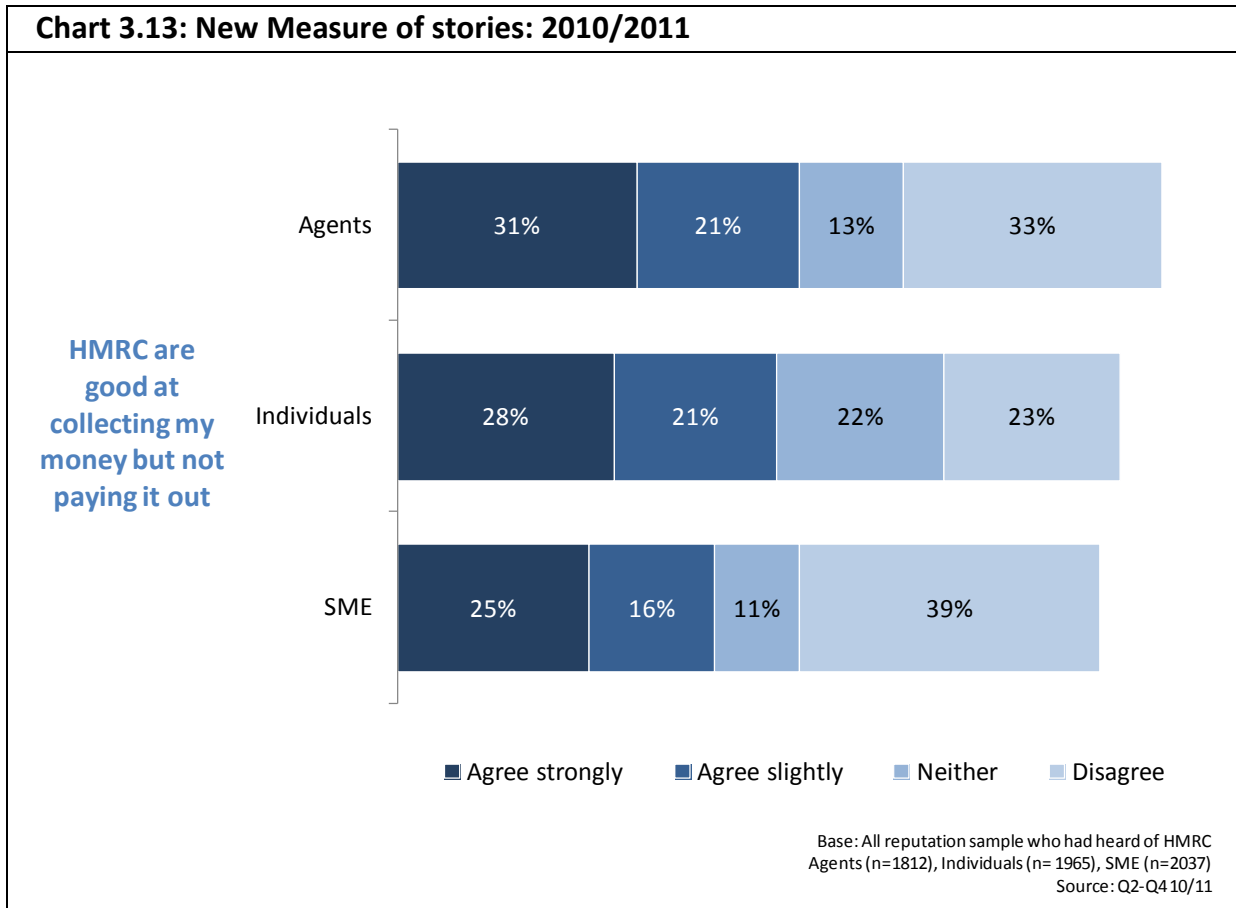
Note: The “don’t know” response has been omitted from the chart

Around six in ten SME businesses (65%) and individuals (63%) agreed that they would give HMRC the benefit of the doubt if they were criticised. Less than half of agents (45%) gave the same positive rating, and just over a third (35%) said they would not.

To provide further context for this measure, of those who had spoken to family, friends or colleagues about their experiences with Revenue and Customs in the last year (60% of agents, 24% of individuals and 29% of SME businesses) all were more likely to have said something negative (70% agents, 39% individuals and 44% SME businesses) than positive. Only 1% of agents reported a conversation that was very positive.

3.4.6 Stories

All those who had heard of HMRC were asked to rate HMRC on how good they were at collecting money but not paying it out (Chart 3.13). This was another new question in 2010/2011.

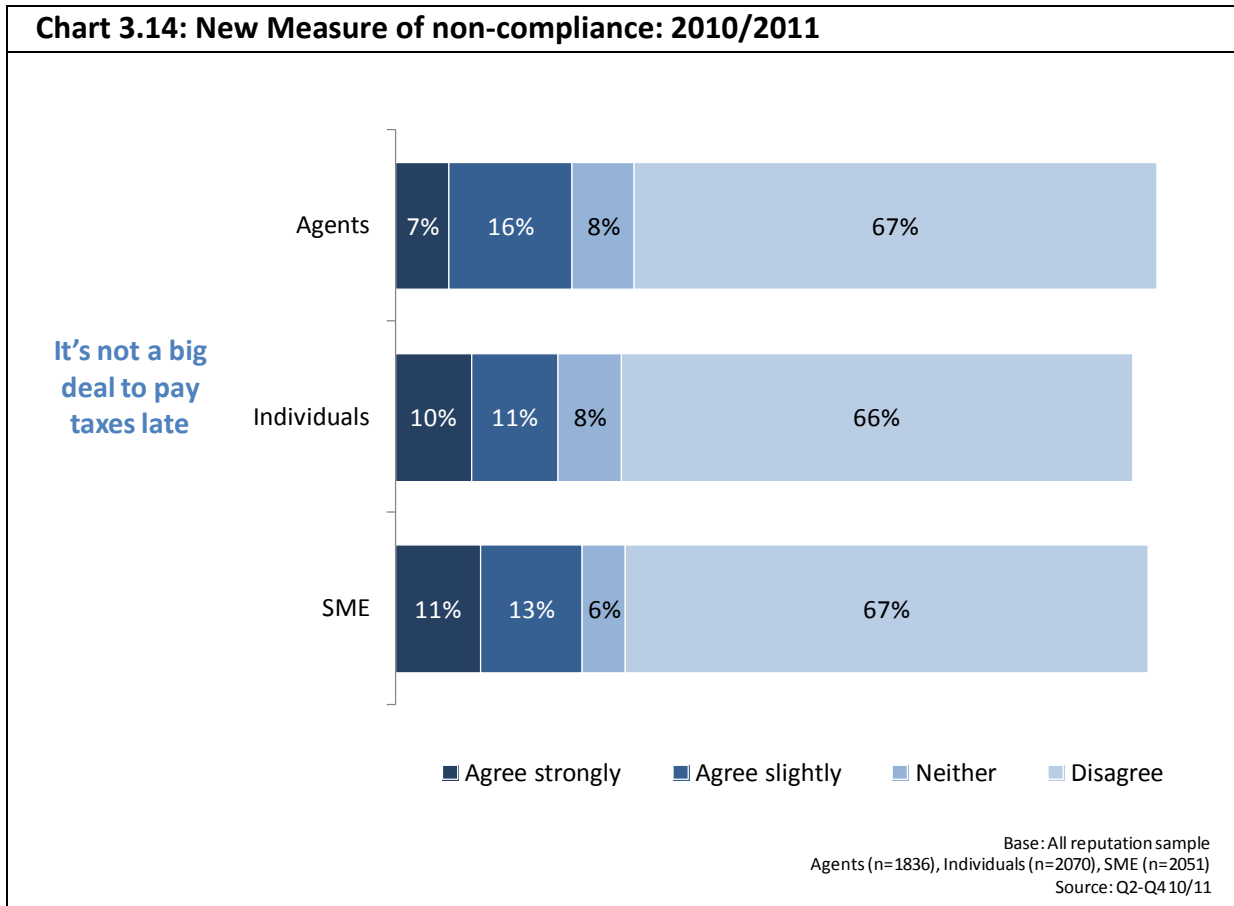


Note: The “don’t know” response has been omitted from the chart

Agents and individuals were the most likely to agree with the statement with just over a half doing so (52% and 49% respectively). SME businesses, who had the most favourable rating of HMRC, were the least likely to agree (41%), with a similar proportion disagreeing with the statement (39%).

3.4.7 Non-compliance

In another new measure, a minority of respondents from all three customer groups (Chart 3.14) agreed that it is not a big deal to pay taxes late (23% for agents, 24% of SME businesses and 21% for individuals). Two in three of each customer group disagreed; suggesting most think late payment is a big deal.

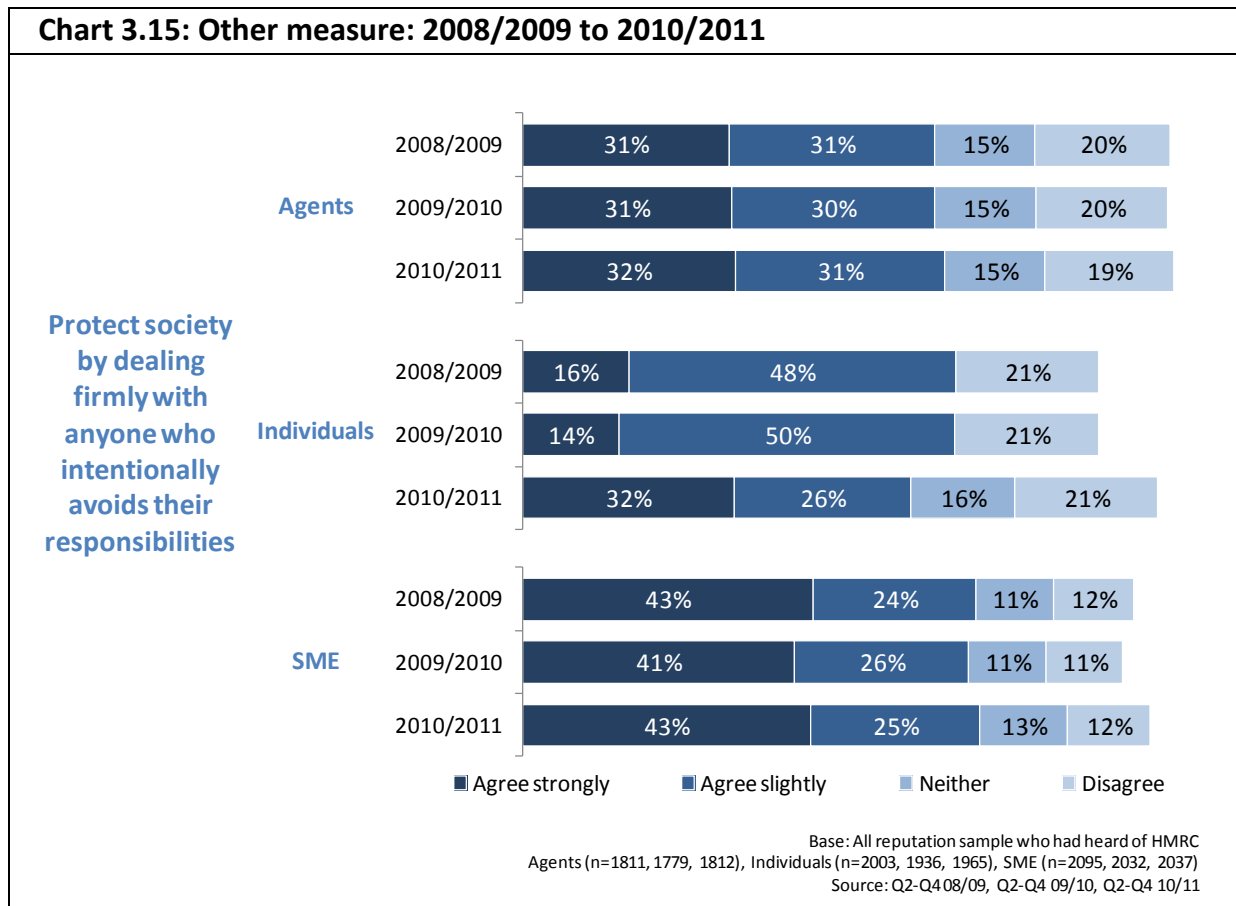


Note: The “don’t know” response has been omitted from the chart

3.4.8 Other reputation measures

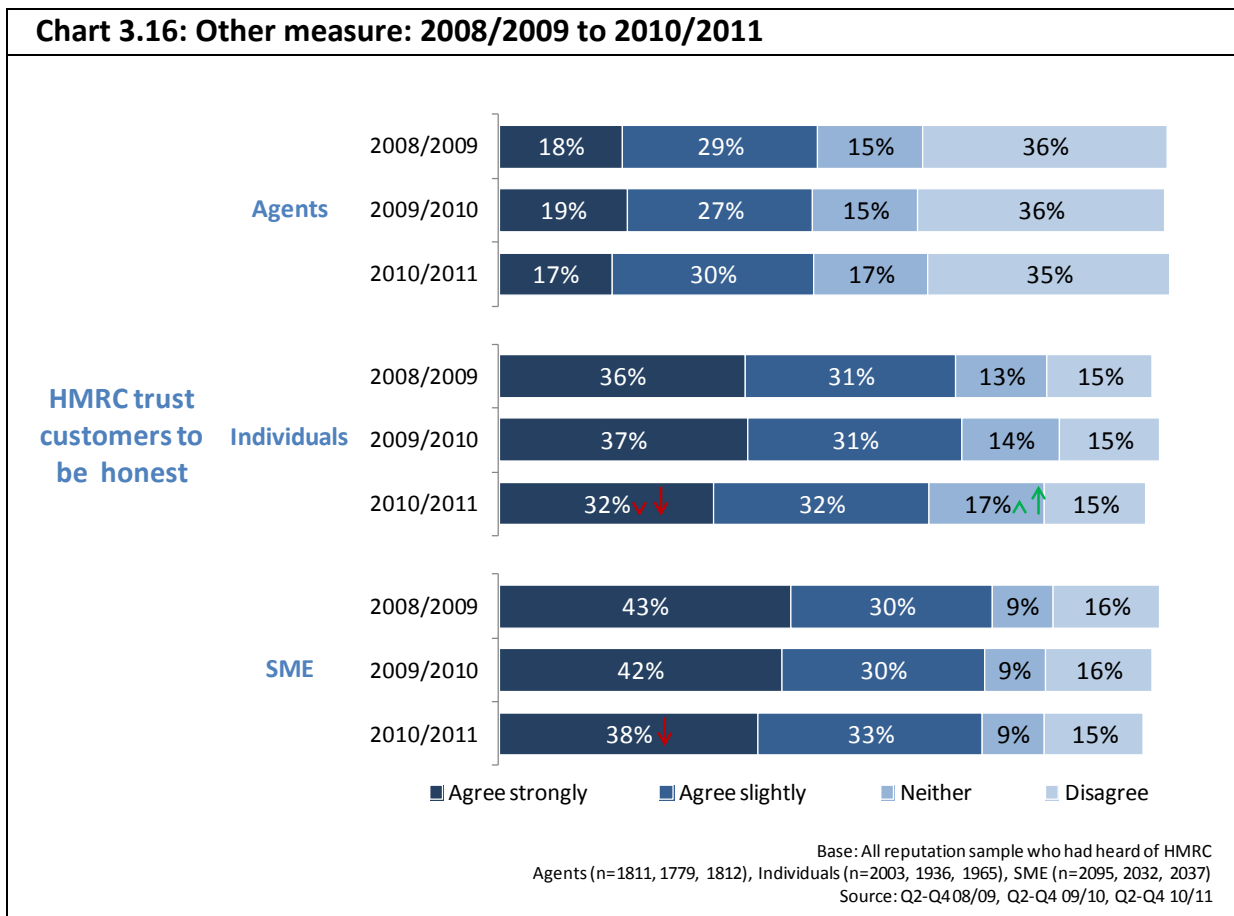
The last three measures to evaluate HMRC’s reputation were two existing measures: protecting society by dealing with those who avoid responsibility; and HMRC trusting customers to be honest; and one new measure (Chart 3.15-3.16): HMRC makes it as easy as possible for customers to get things right, and make the interaction efficient and effective (Chart 3.17).

Around six in ten (63% agents, 58% individuals, 68% SME businesses) agreed that HMRC protects society by dealing firmly with those who avoid responsibility (Chart 3.15). There was a change in the scale in 2010/2011 from 4-points to 5-points.



Note: The “don’t know” response has been omitted from the chart

In a similar pattern to previous measures, SME businesses were most likely to agree that HMRC trusts customers to be honest (71%), followed by individuals (63%) with agents least likely to agree (46%), (Chart 3.16).



Λ, V indicate a statistically significant increase/decrease between 2010/2011 and 2009/2010

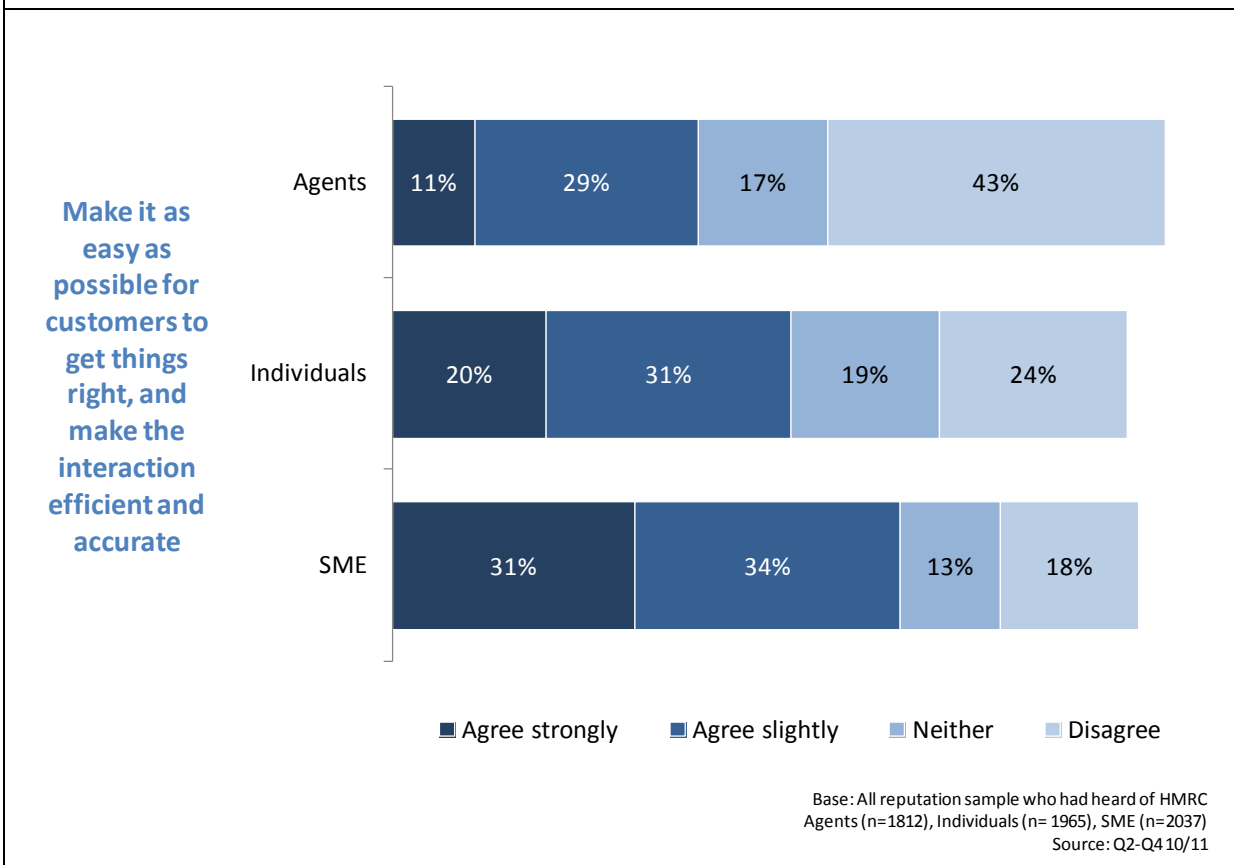
↑, ↓ indicate a statistically significant increase/decrease between 2010/2011 and the baseline in 2008/2009

Note: The “don’t know” response has been omitted from the chart

Very positive ratings declined for both SME businesses and individuals from 2008/2009 to 2010/2011 (37% dropping to 32% for individuals and 43% down to 38% for SME businesses). Whilst fairly positive ratings increased slightly for SME businesses over the same period (30% to 33%) meaning no changes in overall positive scores, for individuals there was a shift towards those unable to give an opinion either way.

While a similar proportion among all three groups gave a fairly positive response to the new statement ‘HMRC makes it as easy as possible for customers to get things right, and make the interaction efficient and effective’ (34% of SME businesses, 29% of agents and 31% of individuals), only one in ten (11%) agents gave a very positive response compared with two in ten individuals (20%) and three in ten of SME businesses (31%), meaning SME and individuals were more positive overall than agents (Chart 3.17). Negative responses (43%) slightly outweighed positive responses (39%) amongst agents.

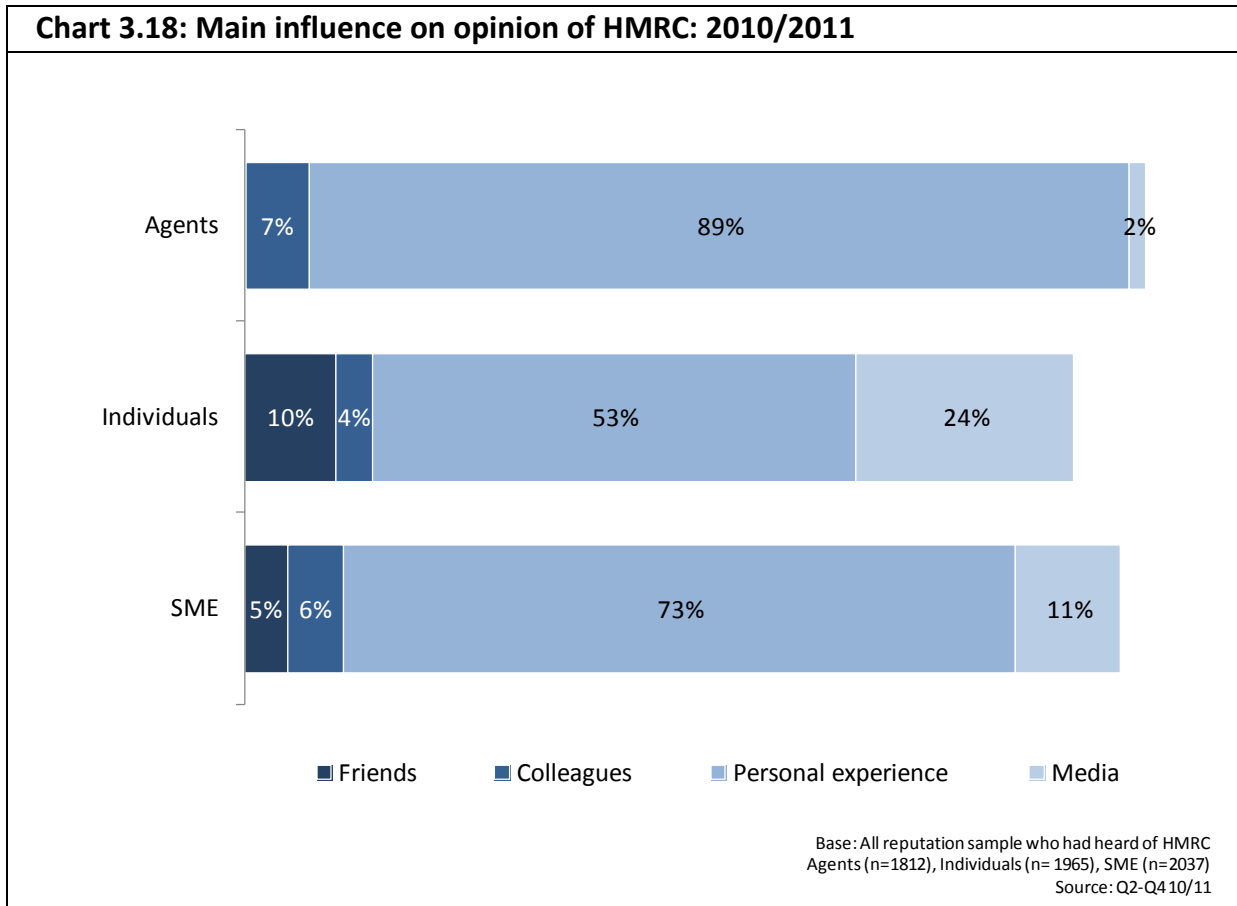
Chart 3.17: New Other measure: 2010/2011



Note: The “don’t know” response has been omitted from the chart

3.4.9 What influences opinions of HMRC

To provide further context for the reputation measures, customers were asked what most affected their attitudes towards HMRC. Personal experiences were most influential for all three groups (Chart 3.18). This was higher for agents (89%) compared with SME businesses (73%) and individuals (53%).



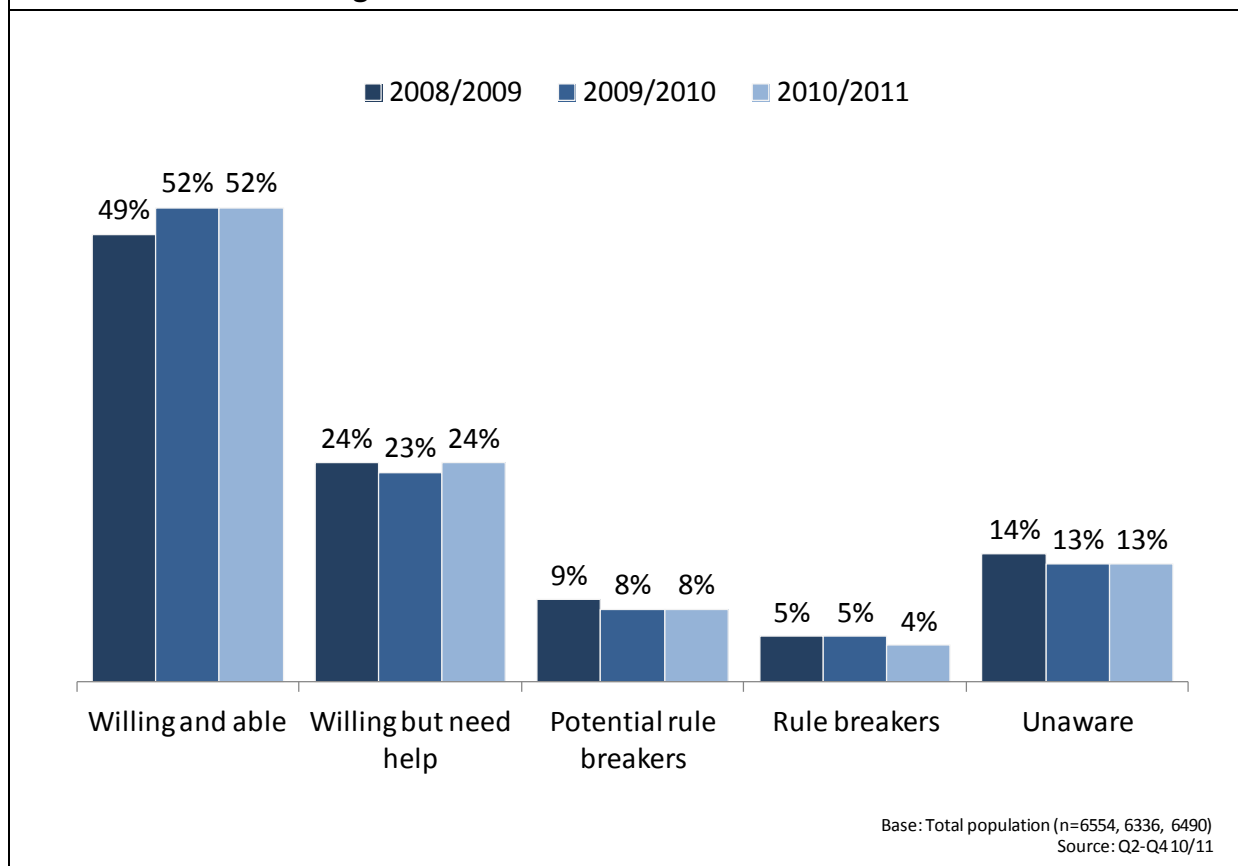
Note: The “don’t know” response has been omitted from the chart

The media was next most influential amongst individuals (24%), and SME businesses (11%) but was only the main influence for 2% of agents. Individuals were most likely to choose friends or colleagues as their main influence (14% in total).

4. Segmentation

HMRC has developed an attitudinal segmentation of its individuals customers, based on four dimensions: awareness of requirement to comply, motivation to comply, ability to comply, and opportunity not to comply². Individuals can be broken down by these segments, derived from a set of questions within the survey (Chart 4.1).

Chart 4.1: Individuals segment size over time



In 2010/2011 slightly over half of individuals fitted in to the 'willing and able' segment (52%). Around a quarter were 'willing but need help' (24%), roughly 1 in 10 were identified

² For further information, see HMRC Research Report 92, <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/research/individuals-prioritisation-publication.pdf>

as 'potential rule breakers' (8%) and 13% of respondents were categorised as 'unaware'. Only four per cent were categorised as 'rule breakers'.

Segment sizes have tended to remain stable over the three year period (2008/2009; 2009/2010; 2010/2011), with no significant increases and decreases observed in each of the categories during that time.

5. Conclusions

The customer experience

For all customers with dealings with HMRC in the previous three months, ratings of the experience were by and large positive, but many had decreased since 2008/2009 particularly among agents. Ratings were strongest for SME businesses, with individuals fairly close behind, but less positive for Agents who had most dealings with HMRC. Levels of dealings did, however, vary by customer group: three in ten individuals, 86% of SME businesses and almost all agents had had some dealings with HMRC in the previous three months.

For SME businesses, ratings of customer experience were high across most dimensions of service, and across all taxes and duties. HMRC were rated positively by around eight in ten or more SME customers for all dimensions other than flexibility and ease of getting in touch where seven in ten gave a positive rating. There had been a small decrease in the overall rating of customer experience over time, as well as for ease of getting in touch and how well staff treated them.

At least seven in ten individuals rated HMRC positively for all dimensions, other than flexibility and ease of getting in touch where slightly more than six in ten gave a positive rating. Ratings were particularly strong for being well treated by staff, HMRC doing what they said they would and ease of understanding what to do (around eight in ten or more were positive). Customers dealing with Benefits and Credits were more positive about the service than those dealing with Personal Tax issues. In 2010/2011 the only issue not rated more highly by Benefit and Credit customers was the ease of getting in touch with HMRC, where they were similar. For individuals all aspects of responsiveness had decreased over the longer term, and there had been some fall in simplicity. Ratings of reliability fell back to baseline levels in 2010/2011 after increasing in 2009/2010. Speed was rated relatively well by individuals but there had been a decrease in the perceived speed of response since 2008/2009. Despite these changes for the individuals customer group as a whole, there were improvements on a small number of measures for Benefits and Credits customers, including how they are treated by staff, how good HMRC are at getting things right and the speed at which HMRC responds to customers.

Agents rated HMRC least well out of all three customer groups. Positive ratings were considerably lower for all dimensions of experience (around five to six in ten), with the exception of ease of understanding what to do, ease of completing the processes and being well treated by staff (eight in ten or above). Agents dealing with VAT and Company Tax gave higher ratings across most dimensions, but agents dealing with Tax Credits (and to some extent those dealing with Self Assessment) gave lower ratings of service. There were a number of decreases between 2008/2009 and 2010/2011 in ratings given by agents. The only exceptions to this were for ease of understanding what to do and ease of completing the processes which remained stable.

Reputation

Individuals were least familiar with HMRC, with SME businesses more familiar, and almost all agents knowing at least a fair amount about HMRC. This corresponds closely to the levels of dealings these customers have with HMRC.

Six in ten SME businesses and half of individuals held favourable opinions of HMRC, with only around one in ten unfavourable. For both groups the level of favourability towards HMRC rose with increased frequency of contact. Agents had a less favourable impression of HMRC with one in four unfavourable, and in contrast to other customers, agents were less favourable the more dealings they had with HMRC.

Of all customer groups, SME businesses rated HMRC more positively on most reputation measures (including fairness, favourability, support). There were slight increases from 2008/2009 to 2010/2011 in the belief that HMRC acts with honesty and integrity and that HMRC protects their information. Positive ratings of effective communication declined over the same period.

While familiarity with HMRC had increased from 2008/2009 to 2010/2011 for individuals, they remained more likely than SME businesses to hold a favourable opinion. Ratings of fairness, favourability, trust and communications were similar to those given by SME, but ratings of other reputation measures were less positive. There had been increases since 2008/2009 in the belief that HMRC acts with honesty and integrity and HMRC protects customer information. There were, however, declines over the same period in the belief that HMRC protects society and HMRC treats customers as honest.

Agents, who had the highest level of dealings, rated HMRC least well out of all three customer groups. Ratings were considerably less positive on most reputation measures.

Agents gave positive ratings in terms of the belief that HMRC handles dealings fairly, HMRC acts with honesty and integrity and HMRC protects customer information. Rating of this last measure increased from 2008/2009 to 2010/2011, as did trust in HMRC to be fair. Positive ratings of the effectiveness of communication, however, decreased over the same period.

6. Appendix A: Further Details on Method

Details of the survey method are included below.

6.1 Data collection method

Three key groups of customers are included in the survey: individuals, SME businesses and financial agents. The same data collection method is used for all three: Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing. This offers advantages over a paper based approach of data quality, and efficiency of fieldwork and data entry. The fieldwork is set up as one survey for each customer group.

6.2 Sampling method

Respondents for the survey are selected using Random Probability sampling. This is the most robust sampling method available and statistical techniques can be used on the results to provide confidence about the true level of change over time.

Sample for individuals is selected using Equal Probability of Selection (EPSEM) Random Digit Dialling (RDD). This means telephone numbers were selected at random from Ofcom's database containing all UK landline number blocks allocated for residential use. The vast majority of numbers within these blocks have not yet been allocated but HMRC opted for this method as it ensures 100% coverage of all telephone numbers. All numbers are phoned, and screened to identify residential households. When a household includes more than one eligible respondent, one adult is selected at random to take part in the survey.

SME and agent samples are selected from the Inter Departmental Business Register (IDBR). This contains all businesses that are either VAT registered or have a PAYE system in place. The local business unit was selected as the sample unit as dealings with HMRC can be carried out at all levels within the business. There are some businesses that are not listed on IDBR, mainly self-employed individuals. HMRC's Self Assessment database is, therefore, used to supplement the IDBR SME business sample.

Whilst all agent businesses listed in the IDBR are sampled over the space of a year, a sample of SME businesses is selected at random. This over-represents larger businesses (defined by number of employees on site) and under-represents smaller business units, in order to allow analysis of the larger units.

In SME and agent businesses interviewers were asked to identify the most senior person responsible for dealing with HMRC for the interview. They were allowed to accept deputies if there was no chance of speaking to the first choice contact.

6.3 Survey timing

Fieldwork for all three customer groups is carried out quarterly, completed in February/March, May/June, August/September and November/December each year. This allows any differences resulting from seasonality to be accounted for, by comparing quarters at the same time of year, or comparing data for full years.

6.4 Survey structure and size

The survey reduced in size in Q3 2010/2011. The following tables show the approximate number of interviews for each quarter before and after the reduction in size. There was no change to the size of the reputation sample.

2008/2009, 2009/2010, Q1 & Q2 2010/2011	Frequency	Number of Interviews		
		Individuals	SME	Agents
Customer experience	Quarterly	2000	2000	1750
Eligibility: dealings in last 3 months		c.30%	c.80%	c.99%
Reputation (1 in n of all)	Six monthly	1000	1000	900
Segmentation boost (1 in n of all with no dealings)	Six monthly	500	-	-
Total interviews in reputation quarters		3250	2250	1760
Total interviews per year (Y1,Y2)		10400	8600	7200

Q3 & Q4 2010/2010	Frequency	Number of Interviews		
		Individuals	SME	Agents
Customer experience	Quarterly	1300	1650	1150
Segmentation boost (1 in n of all with no dealings)	Six monthly	1000	-	-
Total interviews in reputation quarters		3250	2000	1160
Total interviews per year (Y3)		10000	8000	6000

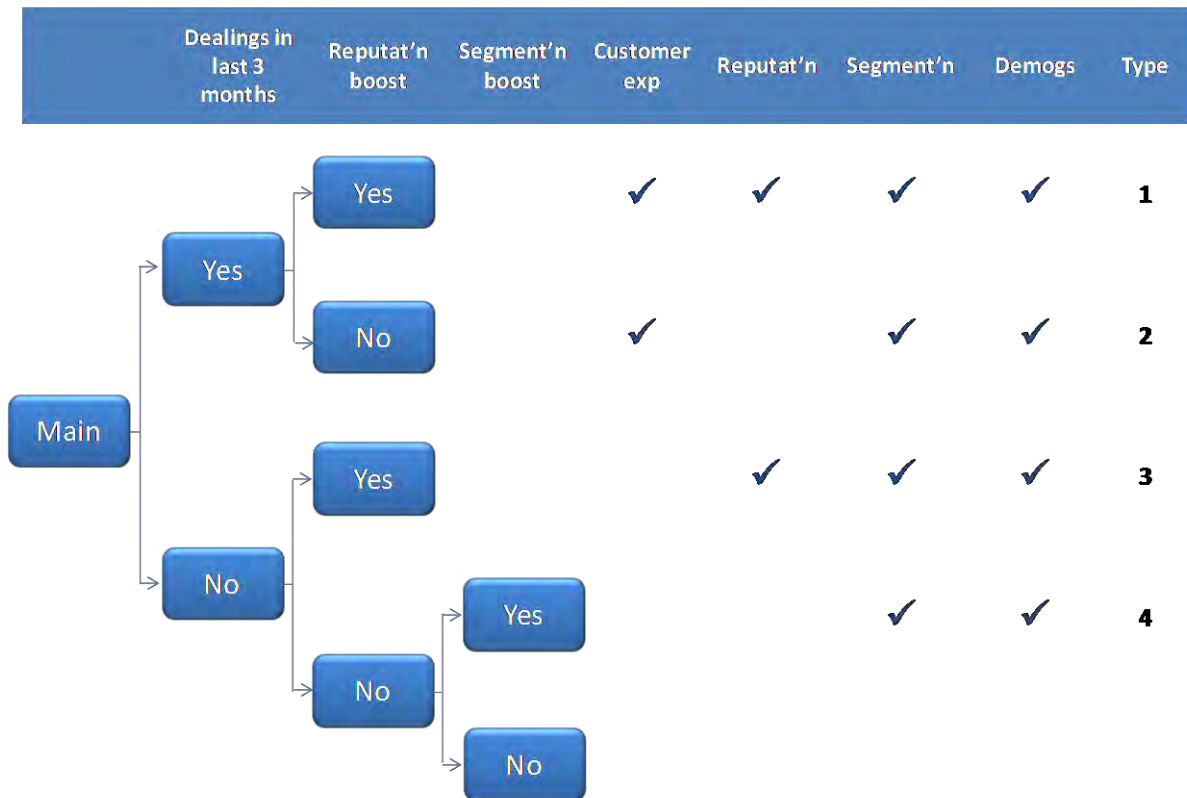
The survey is modular in nature. Every quarter all customers in the sample are contacted to identify those who have had any dealing with HMRC in the previous three months. These customers are then interviewed about their experience. This equates to around a third of individuals, three in four businesses and almost all agents.

Every second quarter, a random sample of customers (with and without dealings in the previous three months) is selected to answer questions about HMRC's reputation. This includes some customers who are being asked about their customer experience, and others who are just asked the reputation questions.

All individual customers interviewed are asked questions to enable customer segments to be reproduced and every second quarter (the same quarter as the reputation questions) a further boost of customers with no dealings in the previous three months is selected to answer these questions.

6.5 Questionnaire content and length

The questionnaire is made up of a number of modules. The chart below shows eligibility for the different sections of the questionnaire in the survey quarters including reputation questions. In quarters when reputation is not measured, type two of the survey is asked of all respondents (only those with recent dealings are interviewed, about their customer experience).



The following table shows the average length in minutes of the different versions of the questionnaire for each customer group.

Type	1 All sections	2 Experience only	3 Reputation only	4 Segmentation boost	Average
Individuals	21	17	15	9	16
SME	21	16	13	NA	17
Agents	19	14	12	NA	17

6.6 Response rates

Response rates are estimated at around 48%-55% for SME businesses and Agents, and around 20-25% for individuals each quarter. These are estimated figures as assumptions are used for numbers where no final outcome is achieved (e.g. no answer).

It is difficult to estimate an accurate response rate for the Random Digit Dialling survey of individuals, since many of the telephone numbers are never answered. Where numbers are not answered it is impossible to determine whether these are residential phone numbers that are currently in use, or not, so the true response rate may be higher than the 20-25%

reported above. Where someone answered the phone, around 45% of households agreed to take part in the survey.

6.7 Corrective weighting

Design weights are applied to the final individuals data to correct for oversampling of households with multiple landlines (a household with two lines has two chances of being contacted, for example), and under-representation of people living in multi-adult households (someone in a one person household has a one-in-one chance of being selected, whilst in a two person household each person only has a one-in-two chance). This weighting gives a 'design effect' of 1.1 that needs to be taken into account when calculating confidence intervals or testing for significant changes between waves of research.

Weighting is also applied to the SME data to correct for the over-sampling of larger business units (defined by number of employees), and differential response rates by size of business to return them to the population profile. A design effect of 1.5 is applied to the customer experience data, and of 1.6 to the reputation data when calculating confidence intervals or testing for significance of change over time.

Similar weights were applied to the agent sample to correct for slight differences in response rates by size of business unit. These weights are minimal and no design effect is included in significance tests.

7. Appendix B: Customer Experience Tables

Table 2.1: Products dealt with in the previous three months (individuals)

Individuals	2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011
ANY TAX, BENEFIT OR CREDIT	32%	32%	↓ v 29%
ANY PERSONAL TAX	19%	20%	v 19%
Self Assessment tax return or payment	9%	10%	v 8%
Income tax or NI paid from your wages	5%	5%	↓ 4%
A general query across taxes	4%	4%	4%
ANY BENEFIT AND CREDIT	15%	13%	↓ 12%
Child Tax Credit	8%	8%	7%
Working Tax Credit	5%	5%	5%
Child Benefit	7%	5%	↓ v 4%
Base	6554	6336	6490

Λ, v indicate a statistically significant increase/decrease between 2010/2011 and 2009/2010

↑, ↓ indicate a statistically significant increase/decrease between 2010/2011 and the baseline in 2008/2009

Table 2.2: Products dealt with in the previous three months (SME)

SME	2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011
ANY DEALINGS	72%	75%	↑ Λ 86%
VAT	47%	50%	↑ 52%
PAYE (payroll and National Insurance)	36%	36%	37%
SA for the self employed or partnership	18%	21%	20%
General query across a number of taxes	14%	14%	↑ Λ 19%
Company Tax, also known as Corporation Tax	12%	14%	12%
Construction Industry Scheme	8%	7%	7%
Base	4622	4426	4241

Λ, v indicate a statistically significant increase/decrease between 2010/2011 and 2009/2010

↑, ↓ indicate a statistically significant increase/decrease between 2010/2011 and the baseline in 2008/2009

Table 2.3: Products dealt with in the previous three months (agents)

Agents	2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011
ANY DEALINGS	99%	99%	99%
Self assessment for the Self-employed	86%	82%	∧ 84%
VAT	73%	71%	↑ ∧ 77%
Company Tax	72%	72%	73%
Self-assessment for PAYE employees	74%	71%	72%
Payroll and National Insurance	72%	72%	71%
Construction Industry Scheme	46%	44%	↓ 42%
Tax credits	22%	19%	↓ 19%
Base	5421	3700	3015

∧, V indicate a statistically significant increase/decrease between 2010/2011 and 2009/2010

↑, ↓ indicate a statistically significant increase/decrease between 2010/2011 and the baseline in 2008/2009

Table 2.4: Brief description of the type of dealing had with HMRC most recently

Agents	2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011
You made contact with Revenue and Customs	77%	78%	↓ V 76%
Revenue and Customs made contact with you	49%	46%	↓ V 44%
You submitted a form or return	69%	68%	↓ 67%
You visited the Revenue and Customs website	52%	54%	↑ ∧ 59%
You made a payment (other than just an automatic payment)	21%	20%	↓ V 18%
Base	7148	7211	5903

Individuals	2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011
You made contact with Revenue and Customs	53%	52%	54%
Revenue and Customs made contact with you	69%	69%	69%
You submitted a form or return	41%	41%	41%
You visited the Revenue and Customs website	23%	26%	↑ ∧ 28%
You made a payment (other than just an automatic payment)	13%	14%	↑ ∧ 15%
Base	7909	7850	6975

∧, V indicate a statistically significant increase/decrease between 2010/2011 and 2009/2010

↑, ↓ indicate a statistically significant increase/decrease between 2010/2011 and the baseline in 2008/2009

Table 2.4 cont: Brief description of the type of dealing had with HMRC most recently

SME	2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011
You made contact with Revenue and Customs	41%	41%	↑ Λ 45%
Revenue and Customs made contact with you	51%	50%	49%
You submitted a form or return	71%	72%	71%
You visited the Revenue and Customs website	33%	37%	↑ Λ 56%
You made a payment (other than just an automatic payment)	70%	71%	↑ Λ 73%
Base	8112	7983	7288

Λ, V indicate a statistically significant increase/decrease between 2010/2011 and 2009/2010

↑, ↓ indicate a statistically significant increase/decrease between 2010/2011 and the baseline in 2008/2009

Table 2.5: Channel used if made contact with HMRC during the most recent dealing

Agents	2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011
Internet/ website	58%	59%	↑ Λ 61%
Telephone	79%	78%	79%
Visiting tax office/ enquiry centre	5%	4%	↓ 4%
Letter	58%	55%	↓ V 53%
Email	6%	7%	↑ 8%
Fax	10%	11%	10%
Through third party	1%	1%	1%
Base	5575	5624	4522

Individuals	2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011
Internet/ website	32%	37%	↑ Λ 41%
Telephone	85%	85%	85%
Visiting tax office/ enquiry centre	5%	5%	6%
Letter	25%	24%	↓ 22%
Email	4%	4%	5%
Fax	1%	1%	1%
Through third party	5%	5%	5%
Base	4201	4132	3762

Λ, V indicate a statistically significant increase/decrease between 2010/2011 and 2009/2010

↑, ↓ indicate a statistically significant increase/decrease between 2010/2011 and the baseline in 2008/2009

Table 2.5 continued: Channel used if made contact with HMRC during the most recent dealing

SME	2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011
Internet/ website	49%	53%	↑ Λ 66%
Telephone	79%	81%	∨ 78%
Visiting tax office/ enquiry centre	5%	5%	↓ ∨ 3%
Letter	26%	24%	↓ ∨ 20%
Email	7%	7%	↑ Λ 9%
Fax	4%	3%	↓ 2%
Through third party	5%	5%	4%
Base	3556	3522	3422

Λ, ∨ indicate a statistically significant increase/decrease between 2010/2011 and 2009/2010

↑, ↓ indicate a statistically significant increase/decrease between 2010/2011 and the baseline in 2008/2009

Table 2.6: Satisfaction with outcome of the recent dealing and overall rating of that experience

Agents		2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011
Satisfaction with final outcome in recent dealings	Very satisfied	27%	29%	∨ 27%
	Fairly satisfied	42%	39%	↓ 38%
	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	12%	11%	11%
	Fairly dissatisfied	9%	10%	9%
	Very dissatisfied	8%	10%	↑ Λ 12%
	Total Positive	69%	68%	↓ ∨ 65%
	Total Negative	17%	20%	↑ 21%
	Base	6710	6766	5575
Overall rating of recent experience dealing	Very good	19%	21%	∨ 18%
	Fairly good	43%	41%	↓ ∨ 37%
	Neither good nor poor	18%	16%	Λ 18%
	Fairly poor	12%	13%	↑ Λ 14%
	Very poor	7%	9%	↑ Λ 12%
	Total Positive	63%	62%	↓ ∨ 56%
	Total Negative	19%	22%	↑ Λ 26%
	Base	7009	7101	4676

Λ, ∨ indicate a statistically significant increase/decrease between 2010/2011 and 2009/2010

↑, ↓ indicate a statistically significant increase/decrease between 2010/2011 and the baseline in 2008/2009

Table 2.6 continued: Satisfaction with outcome of the recent dealing and overall rating of that experience

Individuals		2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011
Satisfaction with final outcome in recent dealings	Very satisfied	41%	43%	42%
	Fairly satisfied	35%	35%	34%
	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	10%	9%	10%
	Fairly dissatisfied	5%	5%	5%
	Very dissatisfied	7%	6%	7%
	Total Positive	76%	78%	v 76%
	Total Negative	12%	11%	^ 12%
	Base	7174	7129	6428
Overall rating of recent experience dealing	Very good	37%	39%	37%
	Fairly good	39%	39%	↓ v 37%
	Neither good nor poor	13%	12%	↑ ^ 14%
	Fairly poor	6%	5%	6%
	Very poor	5%	5%	5%
	Total Positive	76%	77%	↓ v 74%
	Total Negative	10%	10%	^ 11%
	Base	7576	7502	5426

SME		2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011
Satisfaction with final outcome in recent dealings	Very satisfied	48%	49%	48%
	Fairly satisfied	37%	37%	37%
	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	8%	6%	↓ 6%
	Fairly dissatisfied	3%	3%	4%
	Very dissatisfied	3%	3%	↑ 4%
	Total Positive	85%	86%	85%
	Total Negative	6%	6%	↑ ^ 8%
	Base	7416	7304	6762
Overall rating of recent experience dealing	Very good	41%	42%	40%
	Fairly good	41%	40%	40%
	Neither good nor poor	12%	11%	11%
	Fairly poor	3%	3%	↑ ^ 5%
	Very poor	2%	3%	↑ ^ 4%
	Total Positive	82%	83%	↓ v 80%
	Total Negative	5%	6%	↑ ^ 8%
	Base	7629	7537	5389

^, v indicate a statistically significant increase/decrease between 2010/2011 and 2009/2010

↑, ↓ indicate a statistically significant increase/decrease between 2010/2011 and the baseline in 2008/2009

Table 2.7: Rating of the overall experience of the most recent dealing against what had been expected

Agents	2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011	
Better	9%	9%		8%
In line with expectations	79%	77%	↓	76%
Worse	11%	13%	↑	14%
Base	7148	7211		5903

Individuals	2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011	
Better	21%	24%	∨	21%
In line with expectations	65%	63%	∧	65%
Worse	8%	8%	∧	9%
Base	7909	7850		6975

SME	2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011	
Better	17%	18%		17%
In line with expectations	74%	71%	∧	73%
Worse	4%	5%	↑ ∧	6%
Base	8112	7983		7288

∧, ∨ indicate a statistically significant increase/decrease between 2010/2011 and 2009/2010

↑, ↓ indicate a statistically significant increase/decrease between 2010/2011 and the baseline in 2008/2009

Table 2.10: Ratings of each aspect of simplicity

Agents		2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011	
Understand what you had to do	Very easy	41%	45%	↑	∨ 43%
	Fairly easy	44%	41%	↓	42%
	Neither easy nor difficult	7%	7%		6%
	Fairly difficult	5%	4%		5%
	Very difficult	3%	3%	↑	3%
	Total Positive	85%	86%		85%
	Total Negative	7%	7%		8%
	Base	6998	7019		5747
Complete the processes	Very easy	31%	34%	↑	33%
	Fairly easy	48%	45%	↓	45%
	Neither easy nor difficult	9%	8%	∧	9%
	Fairly difficult	7%	6%		7%
	Very difficult	5%	6%	↑	6%
	Total Positive	79%	79%	∨	78%
	Total Negative	12%	12%	↑	13%
	Base	6594	6592		5316
Get in touch with Revenue and Customs	Very easy	24%	25%		∨ 22%
	Fairly easy	32%	30%	↓	∨ 27%
	Neither easy nor difficult	8%	7%	↓	∨ 6%
	Fairly difficult	18%	18%		18%
	Very difficult	17%	19%	↑	∧ 26%
	Total Positive	56%	55%	↓	∨ 49%
	Total Negative	35%	36%	↑	∧ 44%
	Base	6640	6701		5413

∧, ∨ indicate a statistically significant increase/decrease between 2010/2011 and 2009/2010

↑, ↓ indicate a statistically significant increase/decrease between 2010/2011 and the baseline in 2008/2009

Table 2.10 continued: Ratings of each aspect of simplicity

Agents		2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011
Providing a service designed with your needs in mind	Very good	17%	19%	17%
	Fairly good	39%	37%	↓ V 35%
	Neither good nor poor	16%	15%	15%
	Fairly poor	15%	14%	↑ Λ 16%
	Very poor	12%	14%	↑ Λ 17%
	Total Positive	56%	55%	↓ V 52%
	Total Negative	27%	28%	↑ Λ 33%
	Base	6709	6818	5550

Individuals		2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011
Understand what you had to do	Very easy	38%	38%	38%
	Fairly easy	39%	39%	39%
	Neither easy nor difficult	7%	7%	7%
	Fairly difficult	9%	9%	10%
	Very difficult	5%	5%	5%
	Total Positive	77%	77%	77%
	Total Negative	15%	14%	15%
	Base	7396	7343	6513
Complete the processes	Very easy	35%	36%	36%
	Fairly easy	40%	39%	38%
	Neither easy nor difficult	8%	8%	8%
	Fairly difficult	10%	10%	11%
	Very difficult	6%	5%	6%
	Total Positive	74%	75%	74%
	Total Negative	16%	15%	16%
	Base	6954	6933	6217
Get in touch with Revenue and Customs	Very easy	40%	42%	↓ V 32%
	Fairly easy	34%	34%	↓ V 32%
	Neither easy nor difficult	6%	6%	↑ Λ 7%
	Fairly difficult	9%	9%	↑ Λ 12%
	Very difficult	8%	7%	↑ Λ 15%
	Total Positive	74%	75%	↓ V 64%
	Total Negative	18%	16%	↑ Λ 27%
	Base	6294	6166	5514

Λ, V indicate a statistically significant increase/decrease between 2010/2011 and 2009/2010

↑, ↓ indicate a statistically significant increase/decrease between 2010/2011 and the baseline in 2008/2009

Table 2.10 continued: Ratings of each aspect of simplicity

Individuals		2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011	
Providing a service designed with your needs in mind	Very good	35%	37%	∨	34%
	Fairly good	37%	36%		36%
	Neither good nor poor	12%	11%	↑ ∧	13%
	Fairly poor	7%	7%		7%
	Very poor	7%	6%	∧	7%
	Total Positive	72%	73%	↓ ∨	70%
	Total Negative	14%	13%	∧	15%
	Base	7050	6972		6266

SME		2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011	
Understand what you had to do	Very easy	41%	42%	∨	39%
	Fairly easy	43%	44%		44%
	Neither easy nor difficult	6%	5%	↓	4%
	Fairly difficult	6%	6%	↑ ∧	8%
	Very difficult	3%	3%		3%
	Total Positive	84%	86%	∨	84%
	Total Negative	10%	9%	↑ ∧	11%
	Base	7608	7436		6906
Complete the processes	Very easy	42%	44%	∨	41%
	Fairly easy	43%	43%		44%
	Neither easy nor difficult	5%	5%		5%
	Fairly difficult	5%	5%	∧	6%
	Very difficult	3%	3%	∧	4%
	Total Positive	85%	86%	∨	85%
	Total Negative	9%	8%	↑ ∧	10%
	Base	7417	7331		6760
Get in touch with Revenue and Customs	Very easy	45%	44%	↓ ∨	38%
	Fairly easy	36%	35%		34%
	Neither easy nor difficult	5%	4%		4%
	Fairly difficult	8%	8%	↑ ∧	11%
	Very difficult	6%	7%	↑ ∧	12%
	Total Positive	81%	79%	↓ ∨	72%
	Total Negative	13%	15%	↑ ∧	24%
	Base	6007	5882		5608

∧, ∨ indicate a statistically significant increase/decrease between 2010/2011 and 2009/2010

↑, ↓ indicate a statistically significant increase/decrease between 2010/2011 and the baseline in 2008/2009

Table 2.10 continued: Ratings of each aspect of simplicity

SME		2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011	
Providing a service designed with your needs in mind	Very good	36%	39%		38%
	Fairly good	41%	39%		39%
	Neither good nor poor	10%	9%	↓	8%
	Fairly poor	6%	5%	↑ ^	7%
	Very poor	5%	5%	↑ ^	6%
	Total Positive	77%	78%		77%
	Total Negative	10%	10%	↑ ^	13%
	Base	6648	6567		6182

^, v indicate a statistically significant increase/decrease between 2010/2011 and 2009/2010

↑, ↓ indicate a statistically significant increase/decrease between 2010/2011 and the baseline in 2008/2009

Table 2.11: Ratings of each aspect of responsiveness

Agents		2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011	
How well treated by staff	Very well	37%	39%	↓ V	34%
	Fairly well	42%	40%		42%
	Neither well nor poorly	12%	11%	∧	13%
	Fairly poorly	4%	5%		5%
	Very poorly	4%	4%	↑ ∧	5%
	Total Positive	78%	79%	↓ V	76%
	Total Negative	8%	8%	↑ ∧	10%
	Base	5951	5934		4564
Giving you all the answers you needed	Very good	22%	24%		23%
	Fairly good	41%	37%	↓	36%
	Neither good nor poor	13%	13%		12%
	Fairly poor	12%	12%		13%
	Very poor	10%	13%	↑ ∧	15%
	Total Positive	63%	61%	↓ V	58%
	Total Negative	22%	25%	↑ ∧	28%
	Base	6238	6294		4976
Keeping you well-informed	Very good	19%	20%	V	18%
	Fairly good	40%	36%	↓ V	34%
	Neither good nor poor	16%	15%		15%
	Fairly poor	14%	14%	↑ ∧	15%
	Very poor	11%	13%	↑ ∧	17%
	Total Positive	58%	56%	↓ V	52%
	Total Negative	24%	27%	↑ ∧	33%
	Base	6258	6400		5003
How flexible service was in taking needs and circumstances into account	Very flexible	14%	15%	V	14%
	Fairly flexible	35%	34%	↓ V	31%
	Neither flexible nor inflexible	18%	17%		18%
	Fairly inflexible	16%	15%	∧	17%
	Very inflexible	15%	16%	↑ ∧	18%
	Total Positive	49%	50%	↓ V	45%
	Total Negative	31%	32%	↑ ∧	35%
	Base	6375	6382		5164

∧, V indicate a statistically significant increase/decrease between 2010/2011 and 2009/2010

↑, ↓ indicate a statistically significant increase/decrease between 2010/2011 and the baseline in 2008/2009

Table 2.11 continued: Ratings of each aspect of responsiveness

Individuals		2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011	
How well treated by staff	Very well	53%	55%		54%
	Fairly well	30%	29%		29%
	Neither well nor poorly	8%	8%		8%
	Fairly poorly	3%	2%	∧	3%
	Very poorly	3%	3%		3%
	Total Positive	83%	84%	V	83%
	Total Negative	6%	5%	↑ ∧	7%
	Base	5843	5728		5094
Giving you all the answers you needed	Very good	43%	46%	V	43%
	Fairly good	34%	32%	↓	32%
	Neither good nor poor	9%	8%	∧	10%
	Fairly poor	6%	6%	↑	7%
	Very poor	6%	6%		7%
	Total Positive	76%	78%	V	75%
	Total Negative	12%	12%	↑ ∧	14%
	Base	6637	6545		5879
Keeping you well-informed	Very good	39%	40%	V	38%
	Fairly good	36%	35%	↓	35%
	Neither good nor poor	9%	10%	↑ ∧	11%
	Fairly poor	7%	7%	∧	8%
	Very poor	7%	7%		7%
	Total Positive	75%	75%	↓ V	73%
	Total Negative	14%	14%	∧	15%
	Base	7089	7001		6307
How flexible service was in taking needs and circumstances into account	Very flexible	29%	30%		29%
	Fairly flexible	37%	36%	↓	35%
	Neither flexible/inflexible	15%	15%	↑ ∧	17%
	Fairly inflexible	7%	7%		7%
	Very inflexible	8%	7%		8%
	Total Positive	66%	66%	↓ V	63%
	Total Negative	15%	15%		16%
	Base	6452	6388		5726

∧, V indicate a statistically significant increase/decrease between 2010/2011 and 2009/2010

↑, ↓ indicate a statistically significant increase/decrease between 2010/2011 and the baseline in 2008/2009

Table 2.11 continued: Ratings of each aspect of responsiveness

SME		2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011	
How well treated by staff	Very well	60%	60%		60%
	Fairly well	30%	28%		28%
	Neither well nor poorly	5%	5%		5%
	Fairly poorly	2%	2%	↑ ^	4%
	Very poorly	2%	3%	↑	3%
	Total Positive	90%	87%	↓	87%
	Total Negative	3%	5%	↑ ^	7%
	Base	4994	4909		4351
Giving you all the answers you needed	Very good	48%	50%		48%
	Fairly good	36%	34%		34%
	Neither good nor poor	6%	5%		5%
	Fairly poor	5%	4%	^	6%
	Very poor	4%	4%	↑ ^	5%
	Total Positive	84%	84%		83%
	Total Negative	8%	8%	↑ ^	11%
	Base	5870	5841		5478
Keeping you well-informed	Very good	46%	47%	v	45%
	Fairly good	37%	36%		38%
	Neither good nor poor	7%	6%	↓	5%
	Fairly poor	4%	5%	↑	6%
	Very poor	4%	4%	↑ ^	6%
	Total Positive	83%	84%		82%
	Total Negative	8%	9%	↑ ^	11%
	Base	6725	6639		6109
How flexible service was in taking needs and circumstances into account	Very flexible	29%	33%	v	29%
	Fairly flexible	39%	38%		40%
	Neither flexible/inflexible	13%	10%	↓	10%
	Fairly inflexible	8%	7%	^	9%
	Very inflexible	7%	7%	↑ ^	10%
	Total Positive	67%	71%		69%
	Total Negative	15%	15%	↑ ^	19%
	Base	5910	5675		5407

^, v indicate a statistically significant increase/decrease between 2010/2011 and 2009/2010

↑, ↓ indicate a statistically significant increase/decrease between 2010/2011 and the baseline in 2008/2009

Table 2.12: Ratings of each aspect of reliability

Agents		2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011	
Doing everything they said they would	Very good	23%	25%	∨	23%
	Fairly good	42%	38%	↓ ∨	36%
	Neither good nor poor	14%	14%		14%
	Fairly poor	10%	11%		11%
	Very poor	8%	10%	↑ ∧	13%
	Total Positive	65%	64%	↓ ∨	59%
	Total Negative	18%	21%	↑ ∧	24%
	Base	6246	6249		4941
Getting things right	Very good	19%	20%		19%
	Fairly good	40%	38%	↓ ∨	35%
	Neither good nor poor	15%	15%		14%
	Fairly poor	14%	14%		15%
	Very poor	10%	12%	↑ ∧	14%
	Total Positive	59%	58%	↓ ∨	54%
	Total Negative	24%	26%	↑ ∧	29%
	Base	6544	6568		5286

∧, ∨ indicate a statistically significant increase/decrease between 2010/2011 and 2009/2010

↑, ↓ indicate a statistically significant increase/decrease between 2010/2011 and the baseline in 2008/2009

Table 2.12 continued: Ratings of each aspect of reliability

Individuals		2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011	
Doing everything they said they would	Very good	45%	48%	v	46%
	Fairly good	33%	32%		32%
	Neither good nor poor	9%	8%	^	9%
	Fairly poor	4%	4%		5%
	Very poor	5%	4%	^	5%
	Total Positive	78%	80%	v	78%
	Total Negative	9%	9%	^	10%
	Base	6580	6524		5835
Getting things right	Very good	38%	40%	v	38%
	Fairly good	34%	34%		34%
	Neither good nor poor	9%	9%	^	10%
	Fairly poor	6%	6%	^	7%
	Very poor	8%	7%	^	8%
	Total Positive	72%	74%	v	72%
	Total Negative	14%	13%	^	15%
	Base	7030	6953		6267

SME		2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011	
Doing everything they said they would	Very good	50%	52%		51%
	Fairly good	36%	33%		34%
	Neither good nor poor	6%	6%		6%
	Fairly poor	3%	3%		4%
	Very poor	3%	3%	↑	4%
	Total Positive	86%	85%		84%
	Total Negative	6%	6%	↑ ^	8%
	Base	5897	5875		5442
Getting things right	Very good	43%	45%		45%
	Fairly good	38%	35%	↓	35%
	Neither good nor poor	7%	7%		6%
	Fairly poor	4%	4%	↑ ^	6%
	Very poor	4%	4%		5%
	Total Positive	81%	81%		80%
	Total Negative	9%	8%	↑ ^	11%
	Base	6517	6410		5945

^, v indicate a statistically significant increase/decrease between 2010/2011 and 2009/2010

↑, ↓ indicate a statistically significant increase/decrease between 2010/2011 and the baseline in 2008/2009

Table 2.13: Ratings of each aspect of speed

Agents		2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011	
Respond to you	Very quickly	21%	24%	∨	21%
	Fairly quickly	37%	33%	↓ ∨	30%
	Neither quickly nor slowly	13%	11%	↓	11%
	Fairly slowly	14%	16%		15%
	Very slowly	13%	14%	↑ ∧	21%
	Total Positive	58%	57%	↓ ∨	51%
	Total Negative	27%	31%	↑ ∧	36%
	Base	6348	6403		5158
Deal with your issue	Very quickly	22%	23%	∨	21%
	Fairly quickly	36%	34%	↓ ∨	31%
	Neither quickly nor slowly	12%	10%	↓	11%
	Fairly slowly	14%	16%	∨	14%
	Very slowly	13%	15%	↑ ∧	21%
	Total Positive	59%	57%	↓ ∨	52%
	Total Negative	27%	31%	↑ ∧	35%
	Base	6287	6283		5091

Individuals		2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011	
Respond to you	Very quickly	36%	37%	∨	35%
	Fairly quickly	37%	38%		37%
	Neither quickly nor slowly	9%	8%	∧	9%
	Fairly slowly	7%	7%	↑ ∧	8%
	Very slowly	7%	7%		8%
	Total Positive	74%	75%	↓ ∨	72%
	Total Negative	15%	14%	↑ ∧	16%
	Base	6243	6199		5527

∧, ∨ indicate a statistically significant increase/decrease between 2010/2011 and 2009/2010

↑, ↓ indicate a statistically significant increase/decrease between 2010/2011 and the baseline in 2008/2009

Table 2.13 continued: Ratings of each aspect of speed

Individuals		2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011	
Deal with your issue	Very quickly	39%	40%	V	38%
	Fairly quickly	34%	35%	↑	37%
	Neither quickly nor slowly	8%	8%		8%
	Fairly slowly	7%	6%	∧	7%
	Very slowly	8%	7%		8%
	Total Positive	73%	75%		74%
	Total Negative	15%	14%	∧	15%
	Base	6201	6162		5519

SME		2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011	
Respond to you	Very quickly	44%	45%		44%
	Fairly quickly	38%	36%		36%
	Neither quickly nor slowly	6%	5%	↓	5%
	Fairly slowly	5%	5%		6%
	Very slowly	4%	6%	↑ ∧	8%
	Total Positive	81%	81%		80%
	Total Negative	10%	11%	↑ ∧	14%
	Base	5343	5323		4974
Deal with your issue	Very quickly	47%	48%		47%
	Fairly quickly	35%	33%		34%
	Neither quickly nor slowly	6%	5%		5%
	Fairly slowly	5%	5%		5%
	Very slowly	5%	5%	↑ ∧	7%
	Total Positive	81%	81%		81%
	Total Negative	10%	10%	↑ ∧	13%
	Base	5404	5343		4935

∧, V indicate a statistically significant increase/decrease between 2010/2011 and 2009/2010

↑, ↓ indicate a statistically significant increase/decrease between 2010/2011 and the baseline in 2008/2009