

Property Services (DVS) Customer survey: Findings 2015/16

Prepared by: TNS BMRB



Valuation Office
Agency

Main Findings

1. Almost all District Valuer Services (DVS) customers were satisfied with their most recent dealing with DVS (94 per cent), including almost seven in ten who were very satisfied (69 per cent).
2. Customer satisfaction was consistently high across all the different aspects of DVS' performance, with satisfaction scores ranging from 87 per cent to 98 per cent.
3. Customers were particularly satisfied with the independence/impartiality and professionalism of staff; with 85 per cent and 83 per cent of customers respectively reporting that they were very satisfied. These areas have been cited as the top performing aspects of service in previous years, and the results this year showed further improvement.
4. DVS was more likely to deliver their work to budget than timescale. 89 per cent of customers reported that DVS had delivered their work to the originally agreed budget, whereas only 79 per cent of respondents reported that DVS delivered their work to the original timescales.
5. The majority of customers who had used DVS more than once in the last two years felt that the service was consistent with their previous experience (73 per cent). Customers were almost twice as likely to say that the service they received had improved (17 per cent), rather than worsened (nine per cent) compared to the last time they used the service.

Methodology

The methodology was consistent with that of the 2013/14 and 2014/15 surveys. Interviews were undertaken using Computer Aided Telephone Interviewing (CATI) and were conducted in two waves, the first from November to December 2015 and the second from April to May 2016. VOA supplied a sample of 475 customer contacts who had personally had dealings with DVS services in the last two years. The sample spanned contacts in sectors such as health, transport and local government and was released following a one week opt out period. TNS BMRB achieved 303 completed interviews, representing a 64 per cent response rate.

A sample size of 303 carries a maximum confidence interval of approximately ± 5 per cent at the 95 per cent level of confidence, although the size of this confidence interval reduces as the proportion of respondents giving an answer gets closer to zero per cent or 100 per cent. Differences between quarters/years and between subgroups have been indicated at the 95 per cent level of confidence, i.e. where we can be 95 per cent confident that the differences are real and did not occur by chance.

About this report:

Property Services (known externally as DVS) is the specialist property arm of the VOA and provides professional property advice to clients from across the public sector.

This report summarises the annual results from the 2015/2016 Property Services (DVS) Customer survey, undertaken on behalf of the VOA, and makes comparison with the 2013/14 and 2014/15 results. Differences between the current survey and previous years are only reported where they are statistically significant.

This report has been written by TNS BMRB Research, based on research carried out in September 2015 to May 2016. The views and findings expressed in the report are the authors' own and do not necessarily reflect those of the Valuation Office Agency (VOA).

In this publication:

Main Findings	1
Results	2
Appendix.....	7
Overview of results.....	7
Background Notes	8
Use Made of the Data	8
Further Information	8

Responsible Researchers:

Philip Cole

Enquiries:

research@voa.gsi.gov.uk

Media Enquiries:

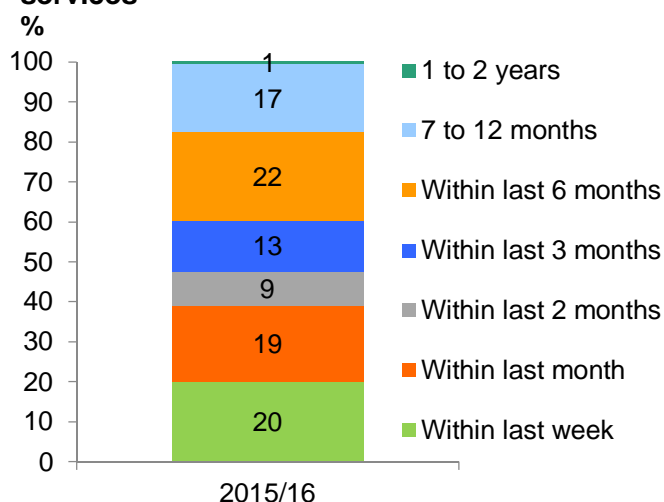
03000 585 015

Results

Usage and most recent interaction

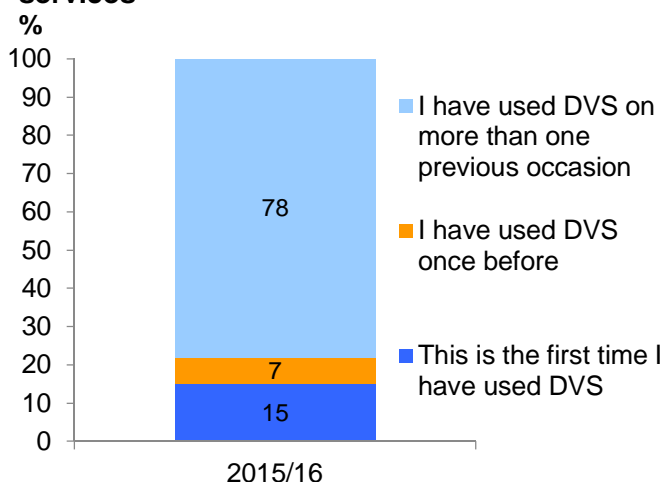
Respondents were asked about their previous contact with DVS and their most recent dealings. Nearly all respondents (99 per cent) had used DVS in the last 12 months; 60 per cent of customers had their most recent dealing within the last three months, and 20 per cent reported having used the service in the last week. The vast majority (85 per cent) of customers stated they had used DVS once or more before.

Figure 1: Most recent use of DVS services



Q2. Which of the following statements best describes your use of DVS prior to your most recent dealings

Figure 2: Previous usage of DVS services

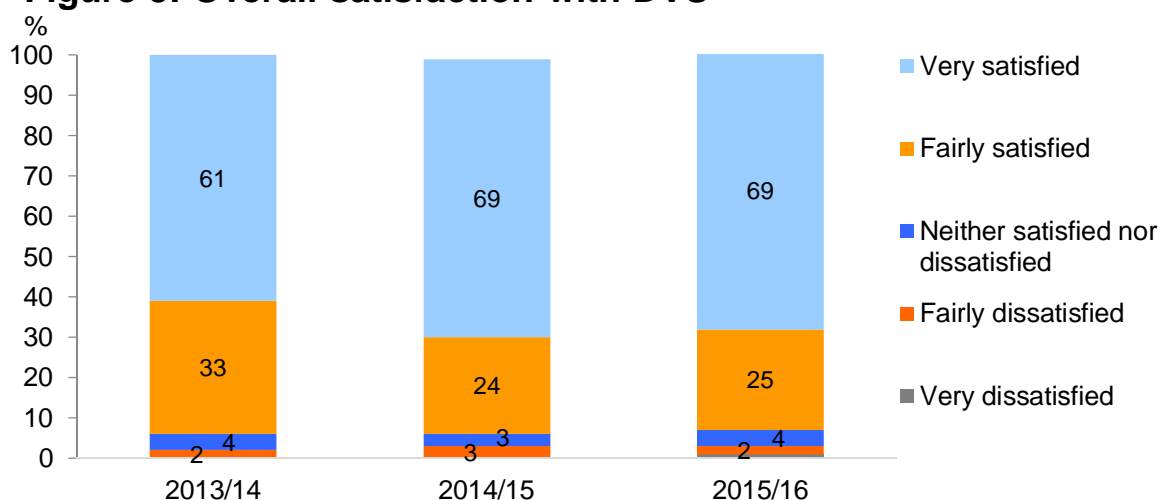


Q1. When was your most recent dealing with DVS? Base: All Customers (303)

Overall satisfaction

Respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with the overall performance of the service they had received in their current or most recent contract with DVS. Over nine in ten customers (94 per cent) reported being very or fairly satisfied with their most recent contract, consistent with results in 2013/14 and 2014/15.

Figure 3: Overall satisfaction with DVS



Q4. I'm going to read out some aspects relating to DVS' work for you. Could you please rate how satisfied you were with their performance on each one in your current or most recent contract? *Overall service you received*
Base: All Customers (303)

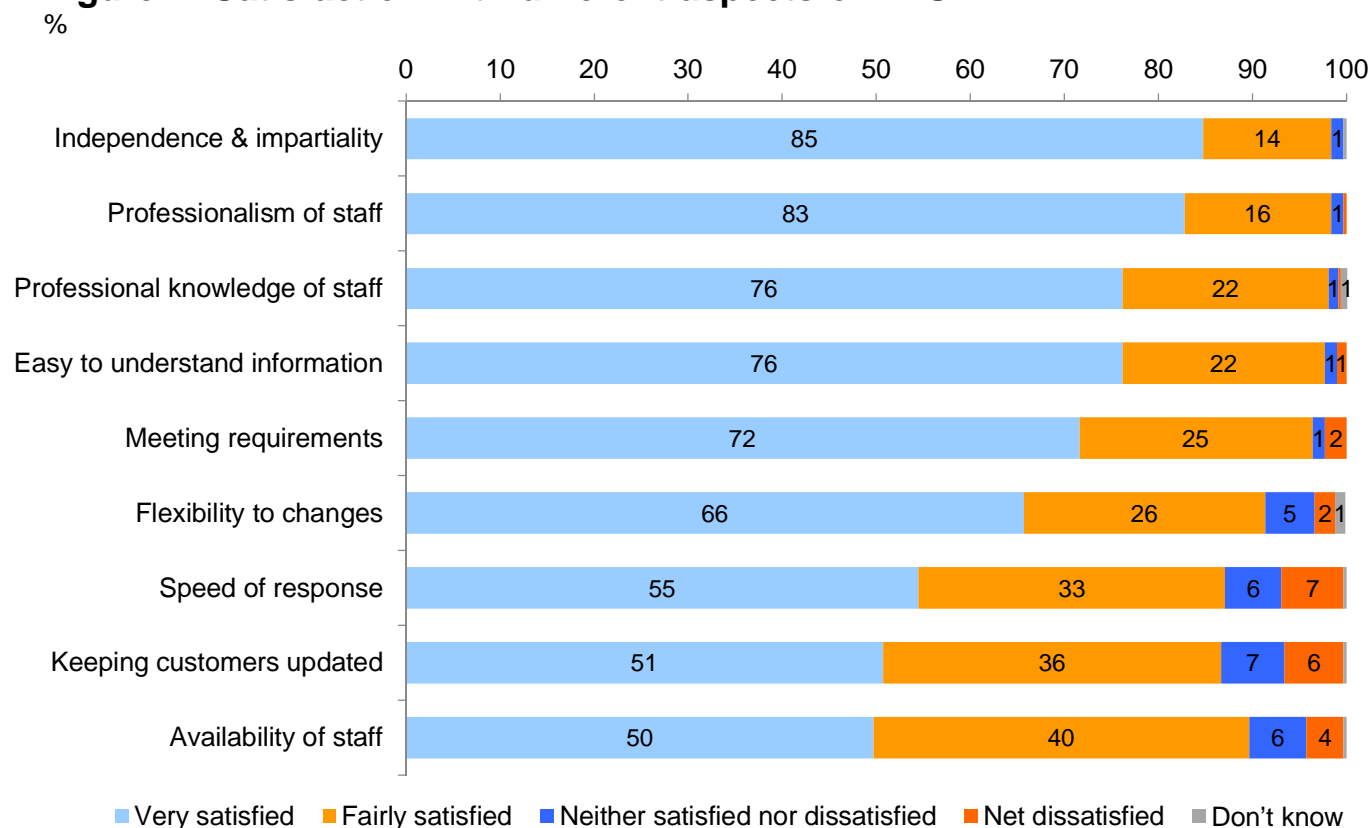
The proportion of customers who were 'very satisfied' with DVS' performance increased between 2013/14 and 2014/15 (61 to 69 per cent) but has remained consistent in 2015/16 (69 per cent). Dissatisfaction remains low; only three per cent of DVS customers reported being dissatisfied overall with their most recent dealing.

Satisfaction with specific aspects of performance

Respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with DVS across nine different service areas. Satisfaction levels were high across all aspects of performance with satisfaction (very and fairly satisfied) ranging from 87 per cent to 98 per cent.

Looking at the scores for 'very satisfied' alone shows more granularity between the different aspects of DVS performance. DVS customers were most satisfied with the 'professionalism of staff' and the 'independence and impartiality' of the service. DVS customers were less likely to be completely satisfied by the 'availability of staff' and how well they were 'kept updated'.

Figure 4: Satisfaction with different aspects of DVS



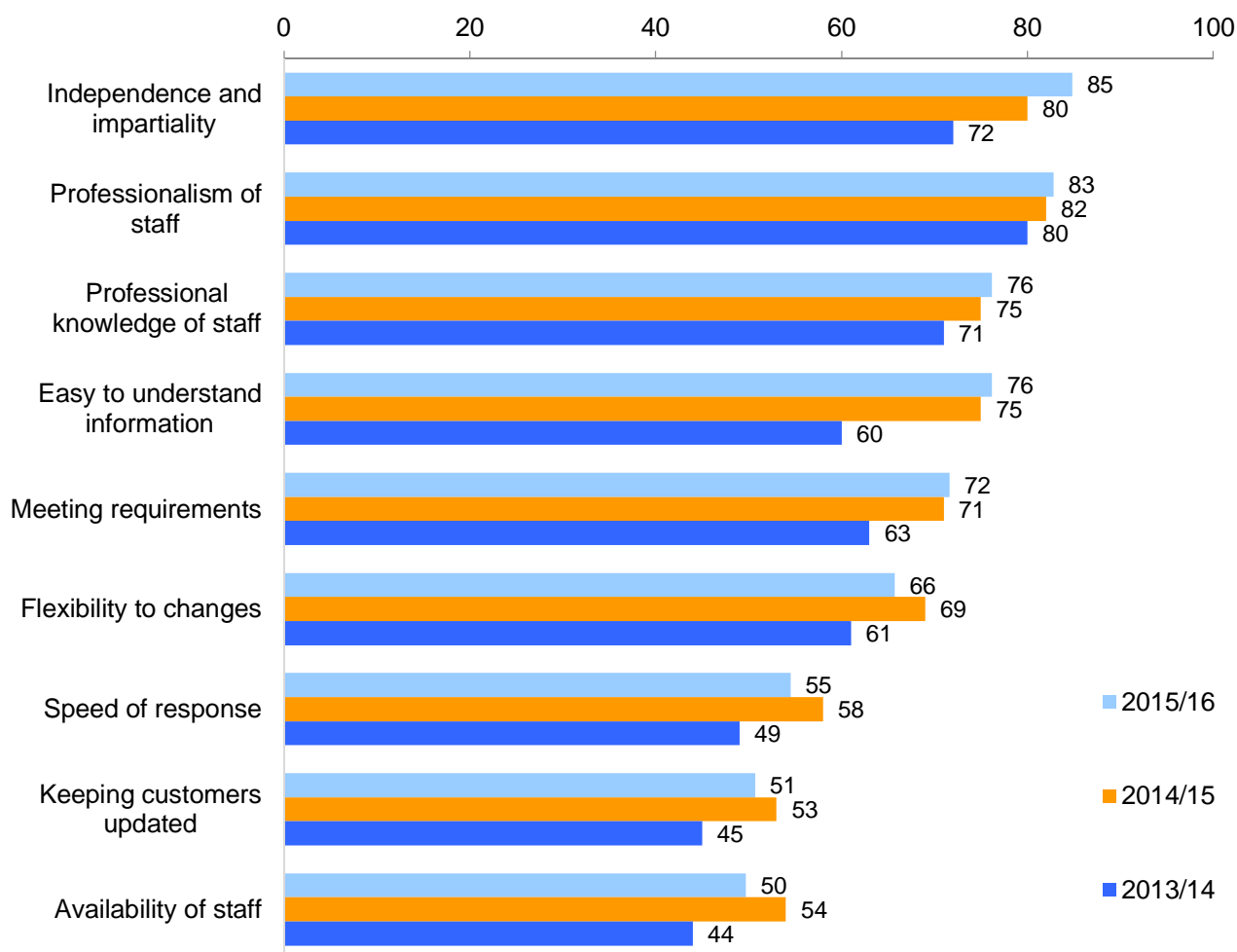
Q4. I'm going to read out some aspects relating to DVS' work for you. Could you please rate how satisfied you were with their performance on each one in your current or most recent contract?

Base: All Customers (303)

Figure 5 shows satisfaction with the different aspects of DVS service overtime. Since 2013/14 there have been improvements in DVS' performance in terms of 'independence and impartiality,' providing 'easy to understand information', 'meeting requirements' and 'keeping customers updated'

Figure 5: Satisfaction with different aspects of DVS

% Very satisfied



Q4. I'm going to read out some aspects relating to DVS' work for you. Could you please rate how satisfied you were with their performance on each one in your current or most recent contract?

Base: All Customers 2013/14 (300) 2014/15 (280) 2015/16(303)

Perceived importance of specific aspects of performance

Customers were asked to rate each aspect of performance as to how important it is to their work and their organisation.

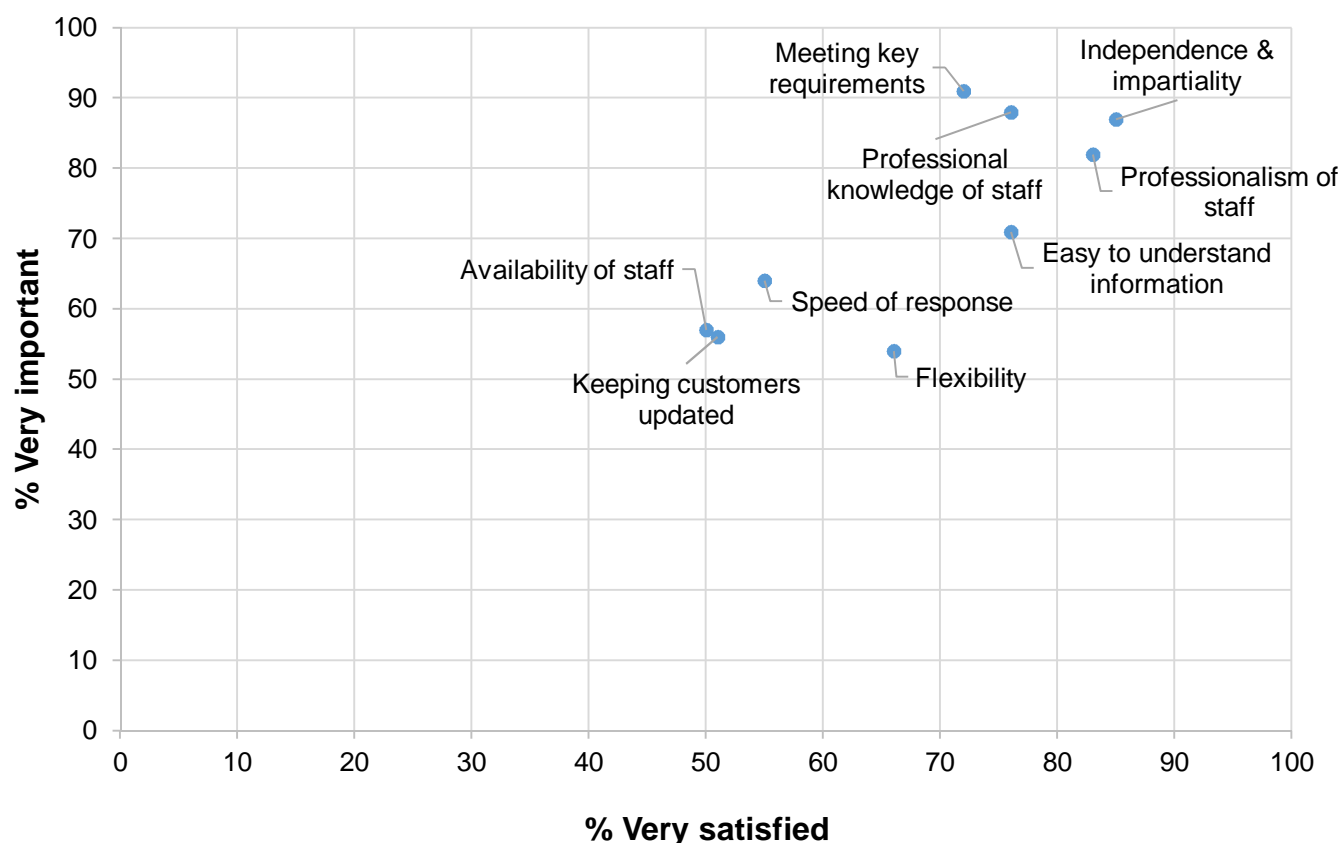
Meeting key requirements was perceived to be the most important aspect of DVS performance, with 91 per cent of customers saying this was 'very important.' 'Professional knowledge of staff' (88 per cent) as well as 'independence and impartiality' (88 per cent) were also very important to DVS customers. 'Flexibility', 'Keeping customers updated' and 'availability of staff' were the least important aspects, although still considered 'very important' by 54, 56 and 57 per cent of customers respectively.

All aspects of the DVS services appeared to be less important to customers in 2015/16 than they were in 2014/15 (although some decreases are not significant). In particular, the proportion who consider the 'flexibility of staff' to be 'very important' fell by 10 per cent (64 to 54 per cent), whilst 'providing easy to understand information' fell by nine per cent (80 to 71 per cent).

Mapping the scores for stated importance of each attribute against the satisfaction results indicates whether DVS met their customers' expectations (see Figure 6). In general, DVS customers were more likely to be satisfied with the more important attributes, such as their 'independence and impartiality' and the 'professionalism of staff'. However, satisfaction levels were comparatively lower for 'meeting key requirements', and the 'professional knowledge of staff', which were perceived as the two most important service attributes.

Figure 6: Satisfaction with and Importance of the difference aspects of DVS

% Very satisfied and % Very important



Q4. I'm going to read out some aspects relating to DVS' work for you. Could you please rate how satisfied you were with their performance on each one in your current or most recent contract? Q9. I'm now going to ask you to rate these aspects of performance in terms of how important they are to you. For each one, could you please say whether you think they are...?

Base: All Customers (303)

Delivery of work

Customers generally felt that it was important for work to be done both to the originally agreed timescale and to the originally agreed budget. However, the perceived importance of sticking to timescales was slightly higher, with 78 per cent stating it was very important that DVS kept to original timescale compared to 70 per cent for keeping to the original budget.

More than three quarters (79 per cent) reported that DVS delivered work to the originally agreed timescale; on the other hand, 18 per cent reported that DVS did not deliver in time. These customers were then asked whether changes to the timescale had been fully explained and agreed by DVS, and almost half (49 per cent) reported that changes had been agreed and fully explained. The remaining eight per cent of respondents said that cases were not delivered on time nor were the changes fully explained by DVS and agreed.

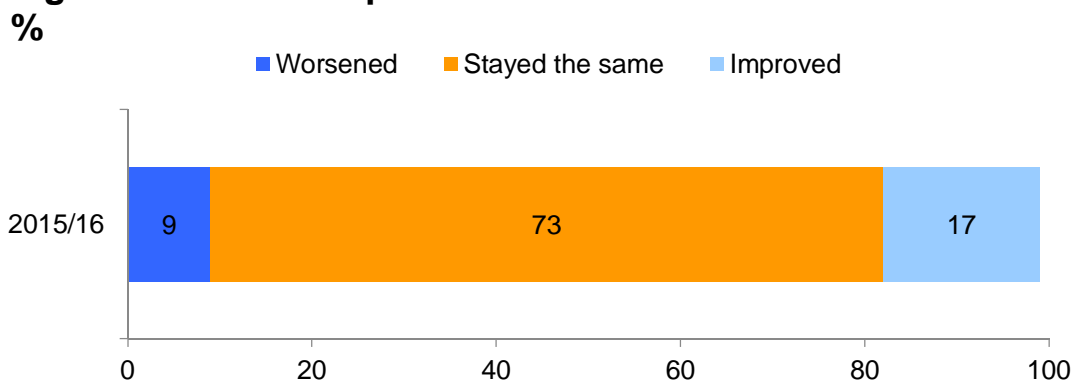
Almost nine in ten (89 per cent) respondents reported that DVS had delivered the work within the originally agreed budget. In a further four per cent of cases, customers reported that they had not delivered to the original budget but had fully explained and agreed changes to the budget. Only six customers (two per cent) felt that DVS had not stayed within budget and had failed to explain or agree this change. These results were consistent with the 2014/15 survey.

Customers were asked if any aspects of DVS' performance were particularly impressive, and 54 per cent gave a response. Amongst those who gave a response, staff knowledge (29 per cent), helpfulness and approachability (23 per cent) and speed (22 per cent) were the most common spontaneous mentions. The professionalism (19 per cent) and flexibility (13 per cent) of staff members was also praised. Customers were also asked whether they had any concerns with DVS, and 72 per cent did not express any concerns. A minority did mention issues with the timescales (27 per cent of mentions) and receiving a slow response (23 per cent of mentions).

Performance over time

Of the 303 respondents that completed the survey, 236 had used the DVS service more than once within the last two years. These customers were asked whether they felt DVS' performance had improved, stayed the same or worsened over the last two years. Nine in ten (90 per cent) felt that the service they had received from DVS had stayed the same or improved. The majority (73 per cent) felt that services had stayed the same, and 17 per cent felt it had improved, which is in line with 2014/15 results (76 and 19 per cent respectively). Only nine per cent felt that the service had worsened, which was not significantly different compared to eight per cent in 2014/15.

Figure 7: Service improvement over time



Q13. Compared to your previous experiences over the last two years, would you say the service you received from DVS the last time you used them has...?

Base: All who had previously used DVS (236)

Of those who reported the service had worsened, two thirds also reported that DVS had not delivered their work to the original timescale in their most recent dealing. Likewise, 89 per cent of the cases where respondents said DVS had improved, they had also delivered to the original timescale.

Almost all customers (96 per cent) would commission work from DVS in the future, with only two per cent unwilling to consider doing so. This is broadly consistent with the 2014/15 results. When asked if anything would increase the likelihood of commissioning work, around half of respondents (52 per cent) had no suggestions for improvement. Of those who made a suggestion, 13 per cent mentioned that reduction in cost would increase the likelihood of them commissioning work, and nine per cent also mentioned a more competitive price. Speed of responses (12 per cent) and better response time (six per cent) were also mentioned.

Overview of results

To protect confidentiality, cells derived from values of less than 5 have been suppressed, denoted with a "*". Cells may not sum due to rounding.

Table 1: Overview of key results

	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither	Dis-satisfied	Don't know
Overall rating of service received	69%	25%	4%	3%	0%
Satisfaction with performance (excludes 'not applicable')	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither	Dis-satisfied	Don't know
Professionalism of staff	83%	16%	*	*	0%
Independence and impartiality	85%	14%	*	0%	*
Professional knowledge of DVS staff	76%	22%	*	*	*
Providing information that is easy to understand	76%	22%	*	*	0%
Meeting your key requirements	72%	25%	*	2%	0%
Flexibility of DVS staff to adapt to changes in your requirements	66%	26%	5%	2%	*
Speed of response to queries	55%	33%	6%	7%	*
Availability of staff when you wanted to get in contact with them	50%	40%	6%	4%	*
Keeping you updated on progress of work	51%	36%	7%	6%	*
Timings and budget	Yes		No		Don't know
Completed within agreed timescales		79%		18%	4%
Work delivered within agreed budget		89%		6%	6%
Importance of elements of performance	Very important	Fairly important	Neither	Un-important	Don't know
Professionalism of staff	82%	18%	*	0%	0%
Independence and impartiality	88%	11%	*	0%	*
Professional knowledge of DVS staff	88%	11%	*	0%	*
Providing information that is easy to understand	71%	28%	0%	*	0%
Meeting your key requirements	91%	9%	0%	0%	0%
Flexibility of DVS staff to adapt to changes in your requirements	54%	39%	4%	0%	4%
Speed of response to queries	64%	35%	*	0%	0%
Availability of staff when you wanted to get in contact with them	57%	41%	2%	0%	0%
Keeping you updated on progress of work	56%	40%	3%	*	*
Meeting agreed timescales	78%	22%	0%	*	*
Keeping to agreed budget	70%	27%	*	*	*
Comparison to previous experience (had dealings in the last 2 years)	Improved		Same	Worse	Don't know
Improvement		17%	73%	9%	*

Background Notes

The Valuation Office Agency (VOA) is an executive Agency of HMRC. Its strategic function is to provide the valuations and property advice required to support taxation and benefits in England and Wales. Information and Analysis is a Directorate within the Strategy Group of the VOA.

Use Made of the Data

This publication is being released as part of a general drive towards making VOA data more accessible. The report will support the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and Wales Government (WG) in carrying out its duties and the data will also be used to inform government policy, respond to Freedom of Information requests and to parliamentary questions as well as to conduct operational analyses to support the VOA.

Further Information

The 2013/14 annual report of the DVS Surveys is available at the following location:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/property-services-dvs-customer-survey-findings-2013-2014>

The 2014/15 annual report of the DVS Surveys is available at the following location:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/460026/20150910_Property_Services_Survey_2014-15_Final_Report.pdf