IFF Research

Tax Credits Customer Survey and Digital Renewals Evaluation

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By IFF Research

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The views in this report are the authors' own and do not necessarily reflect those of HM Revenue & Customs.

IFF Research

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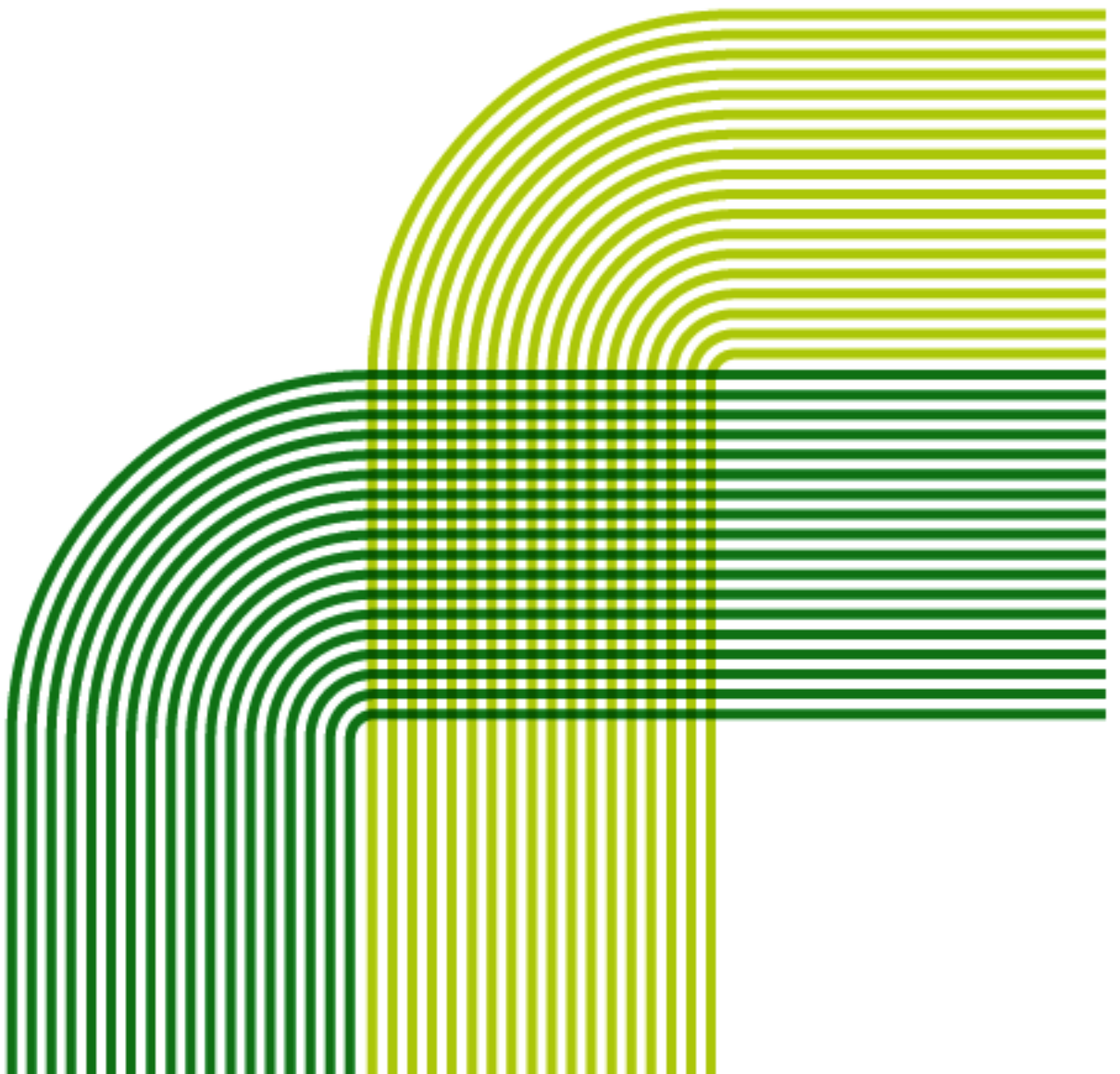
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Executive Summary

Tax credits, comprised of Child Tax Credit (CTC) and Working Tax Credit (WTC), provide a system of support to help families, tackle child poverty and make work pay. HMRC commissioned this research to improve understanding of tax credits customers' experiences, behaviours and attitudes (particularly with regard to the digital channel and online renewal process) and understand preparedness for Universal Credit.

This research involved 1,336 telephone interviews with tax credits customers.

Renewing tax credits

In 2015, 31% of customers[1] renewed by telephone, 20% by post and 19% online; the remaining 28% did not renew their claim (either new claims or auto-renewal claims).

Overall, customers were confident in knowing what to do during the last renewals process (86% of those who went through the process) and thought it was clear what would happen next (84%). That said, one third (37%) of customers contacted the HMRC helpline at some point during the renewals process (other than to renew their claim). Those who renewed via the online service were less likely to have called the helpline than those who renewed via the helpline or via post (27% vs. 42% and 38% respectively).

Most customers were satisfied with the tax credits renewals process (93% online customers, 89% of postal customers and 86% of helpline customers). Specifically, those that completed their renewal online found it easy to use (93%) and were satisfied with the time it took to complete their renewal (94%), although a smaller proportion (77%) found the verification process easy to navigate.

One in ten (10%) customers initially tried to complete their renewal online but gave up. This was mainly because of the online verification process (51% switched to another method due to this).[2]

Among non-users of the digital renewals service, a third (35%) of those who were aware of the online service, and two thirds (66%) of those who were not aware of the service prior to the survey, said that it was likely they would renew online in the future.

The vast majority of customers reported renewing on time (93%), though those who used the helpline to do so were more likely to have missed the deadline (10% of helpline customers compared with 3% postal customers and 1% online).

The renewals pack prompted the vast majority (87%) of claimants to renew their claim. Other effective prompts included the SMS text from HMRC (64% of those who received a text were prompted by this) and the HMRC advertising (39% of those who recalled this were prompted by it).

HMRC provided some income information on the renewals form – 57% recalled it, of those that recalled it - 67% thought it made the process simpler and 91% said the information was correct.

Reporting changes of circumstances

The vast majority of customers (83%) had reported at least one change in circumstance over the course of their tax credits claim, with over half (55%) having reported (at least) one change in the past year.

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[1] The term 'customers' is used throughout this report to refer to the survey respondents whose answers have been weighted so that they are representative of the full population of tax credit customers.
[2] The online verification process was identified as being an issue for those trying to review online during the renewals process and was suspended to ease customer burden.

Around one in ten customers (11%) reported at least one occasion when they had not reported a change in circumstance to HMRC within the 30 day time limit.

Overpayments

Overall, just over half (53%) had received a tax credits overpayment at some point during their claim, which included 22% who were paying back an overpayment at the time of the interview. A quarter (28%) of those who had received an overpayment did not know why their last overpayment occurred, and 48% did not understand how it was calculated.

Error and Fraud

Almost two in three (63%) customers thought that it was common for people to deliberately make inaccurate tax credits claims. However, the majority of customers (71%) thought it was very or quite likely that people who regularly make inaccurate tax credits claims would get caught.

Universal Credit

The introduction of Universal Credit (UC) is fundamentally changing the benefits system by streamlining a range of key benefits and tax credits into one single payment.

Three in four had either heard of UC (55%) or knew that some sort of changes (19%) were happening to tax credits. However, knowledge of impact was fairly limited: over half of those aware of the changes did not think UC would affect their claim (20%) or were unsure how it would affect their claim (34%).

Conclusions

The main conclusions that can be drawn from this study are:

- **While the use of the digital renewal channel has increased considerably since 2014, there is scope to make it make the digital renewal channel work better.** The proportion of customers renewing digitally would have been much higher if all or some of those who started to make an online application completed through this channel.

- **There is scope to grow digital renewal use much further.**

- **Alongside cost savings, increasing the use of the digital renewal channel also has potential to improve customer service.**

- **There is sufficient appetite for considerable growth in the use of the digital channel for reporting change of circumstances.**

- **It may be worth considering a separate strategy for the over 50s.** This group make up 6% of the tax credits population and their attitudes and behaviours are quite different to the rest of the customer base.

- **And perhaps also for those with English as a second language.** Generally these customers express a preference for hard copy written communication.

- **SMS reminders appear to be a valuable service.**

- **Using SMS or e-mail to provide updates on the progress of a renewal could result in savings.**

- **Pre-population using RTI data appears to be effective.**

- **Awareness of Universal Credit is increasingly steadily but it is still only a minority of tax credit claimants who understand the relevance to them.**

1 Background and methodology

Background

1.1 Tax credits, comprised of Working Tax Credit (WTC) and Child Tax Credit (CTC), are a flexible system of financial support designed to deliver support as and when a family needs it, tailored to their specific circumstances. They are part of a wider government policy to provide support to parents returning to work, reduce child poverty and increase financial support for all families. The tax credits system is designed to be responsive; tax credits awards can be adjusted to reflect changes in a family's income and circumstances.

1.2 WTC provides in-work support for people on low incomes, with or without children. WTC can also include added elements of support, such as help towards the cost of approved childcare or disability support. CTC brings together income-related support for children and for qualifying young people aged 16-19 who are in full time non-advanced education or approved training into a single tax credit, payable to the main carer. Families can claim whether or not the adults are in work.

1.3 In April 2015, some 4.6 million families, containing 7.6 million children, were tax credits recipients or were receiving the equivalent child support through benefits. These families comprised 4 million families with children in receipt of CTC (or equivalent support through benefits) and 0.6 million families in work without children, receiving only WTC[3].

Changes to the tax credits system

1.4 The Government's Digital Strategy published in 2012 set out its ambition for Government services to become 'Digital by Default'. In line with this strategy, in 2014, HMRC introduced an online tax credits renewals service. For the first time tax credits customers were able to renew their claim online. Initially this service was only open to those who did not have any changes of circumstances to report as part of their renewal, but then was widened to almost all customers. The online tax credits renewals service for 2015 built on the 2014 service by enabling all customers to renew digitally and report changes of circumstances through an online tool as part of this process.

1.5 HMRC will be looking to move more of its tax credits services online in future years so that it offers a fully digital service.

1.6 Another key change in the tax credits landscape is the introduction of Universal Credit (UC). In 2013 the Government introduced UC as a central feature of Welfare Reform. In those areas where it is operational, UC replaces six working age benefits including WTC and CTC. Eventually UC will be rolled out across the UK and all existing tax credits customers will have either moved to UC – through a change of circumstances or via the mechanism of managed migration – or will have exited the tax credits regime entirely.

Survey Objectives

1.7 HMRC commissioned IFF Research to carry out the 2015 Tax Credits Customer Survey and Digital Renewals Evaluation in order to provide up to date information on tax credits customers' experiences, behaviours and attitudes of the tax credit system (particularly with regard to the digital channel, to help smooth customer transition toward a digital by default position) and understand preparedness for Universal Credit.

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[3]
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/423621/ChildandWorkingTaxCreditsStatistics-April_2015.pdf

Methodology

1.8   A total of 1,336 telephone interviews were conducted with customers who had been claiming tax credits (either CTC, WTC or both) in August 2015. The survey consisted of a core survey of a representative cross-section of tax credits customers and a boost exercise to increase the number of interviews with customers who had used the digital renewals process.

1.9   Interviews were conducted using Computer Aided Telephone Interviewing (CATI) from IFF Research's telephone centre in London. Fieldwork took place from Monday 21st September to Monday 26th October 2015. An opt-out exercise was conducted prior to the survey fieldwork. The questionnaire used for the study and details on the response rates to the survey can be found in the accompanying technical report.

1.10   Prior to fieldwork, all respondents were sent a letter giving them the option to opt out of the survey.

1.11   The questionnaire development phase involved;

- Discussions with HMRC stakeholders;
- Face-to-face cognitive interviews with 8 tax credits customers (between 19th and 25th August 2015);
- A CATI pilot of 20 interviews between 7th and 8th September 2015.

1.12   More information about the methodology can be found in the accompanying technical report.

Approach to analysis

1.13   The data has been weighted to take account of non-response and sample design (i.e. the boost of customers using the digital renewal process). The use of these weights ensures that the data is fully representative of the overall tax credits customer population. Full details on weighting can be found in the technical report.

1.14   The analysis presented in this report includes:

- Comparison with earlier waves of the Tax Credit Customers Panel Survey to look at trends over time;
- Sub-group analysis;
- Key Driver Analysis[4].

1.15   Across each of these analysis techniques, only differences identified as statistically significant[5] have been included in this report.

1.16   For reasons of clarity, 'don't know' or 'prefer not to say' responses have not been included in some tables and figures. Consequently not all figures will necessarily sum to a total of 100%. Figures may also not add to a total of 100% if the response was multi-coded. Where all responses have been included, figures may not sum to exactly 100% due to rounding.

1.17   .The term 'customers' is used throughout this report to refer to the survey respondents whose answers have been weighted so that they are representative of the full population of tax credit customers. The breakdown of the sample by key customer characteristics is included in Appendix A.

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4 Key Driver Analysis (KDA), a statistical technique, was used to help understand the relative importance of different factors relating to customer demographics and the nature of their claim in determining the method used to renew claims or awareness of Universal Credit.

5 This means results are statistically significant using a chi-squared test at the 95% confidence level.

2   Digital Services

2.1   The Government Digital Strategy set out how the government aims to redesign its digital services in a way that people will prefer to use these services over others. In accordance with this strategy, HMRC introduced the facility to renew tax credits online in 2014. HMRC is keen to increase the use of digital channels in preparation for the national roll-out of Universal Credit which will be 'digital by default'.

2.2   This chapter describes the use of online services in renewing tax credits claims and reporting changes in circumstance. It explores customers' opinions of the online service and the reasons for use and non-use of this service.

Use of online services in renewing tax credits

2.3   As shown in Figure 2.1, the most common channel customers used to renew their claim was the HMRC helpline (31%) whilst smaller proportions renewed by post (20%) or online (19%). Some customers did not have to go through the renewal process either because they started their claim very recently (5% of customers) or they went through an automatic renewal (23%).

Figure 2.1: Channel of renewal in 2015

A9: Base: All tax credits customers (1336)
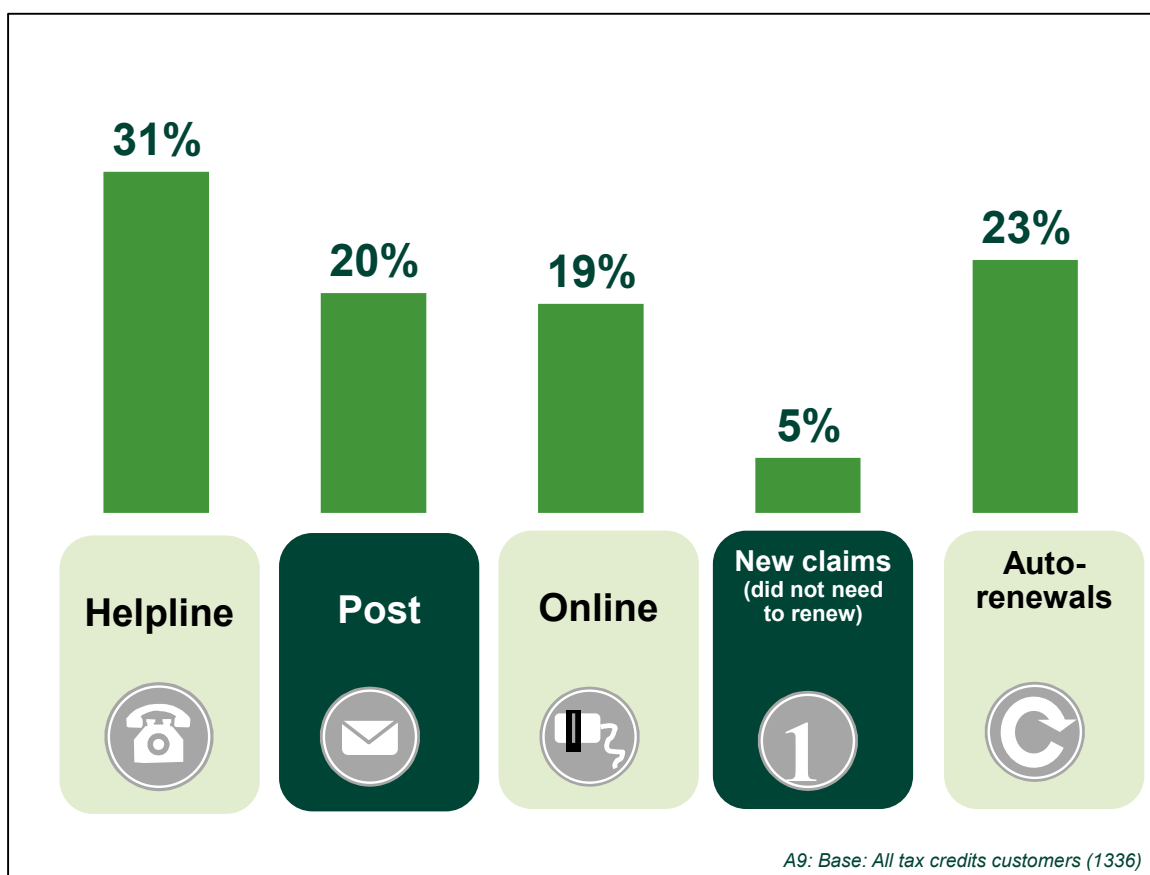
2.4   The online channel was more popular among:

- Those aged 30 or older (11% aged under 30 compared with 21% of those aged 30-39, 23% of those aged 40-49 and 26% of those aged 50 plus).

- Men (24% renewed online vs. 18% of women)

- Those in work (22% vs. 14% not working)

- Those with a higher household income (29% of those with an income of £30k+ vs. 18% of those with an income of below £30k)

- Those with higher educational achievement (21% with at least GCSE level qualifications vs. 12% with lower achievements).

- Those who had been claiming tax credits for at least one year (21% vs. 11% of those who started their claim since September 2014).

2.5   When asked why they used the online channel to renew their claim, customers most commonly said that they thought it would be quicker (61%). Almost one in three (32%) said renewing online allowed them to renew at a time that was convenient for them whilst over a quarter (28%) said it was an easier / more convenient channel to use . One in ten (11%) renewed online because they could not get through to the helpline.

2.6   Key driver analysis was used to identify the factors (demographic or related to nature of tax credits claim) most influencing the use of the different renewal channels.

2.7   The analysis revealed the most important drivers of whether or not a customer renewed online to be:

- Age

- Level of education

2.8   Age and level of education were similar in importance of determining online status. In comparison to those aged under 30, those aged 30-49 were around twice as likely to have renewed online and those aged 50+ were almost 3 times more likely. Those who had at least GCSE level qualifications were around twice as likely to have renewed online (compared to those with other or no qualifications).

2.9   The analysis revealed the key drivers of whether or not a customer renewed through the helpline to be:

- Level of education

- Gender

- Language

2.10   Level of education was the strongest predictor, followed by gender and language. Those who had at least GCSE level qualifications were half as likely to have renewed via the helpline (compared to those with other or no qualifications). Men were less likely to have renewed via the helpline than women. Those who spoke English as a second language were around half as likely to have renewed via helpline than those who spoke English as a first language or who were bilingual in English and another language.

2.11   The analysis revealed the key drivers whether or not a customer renewed by post to be:

- Age

- Language

2.12 Age was twice as important in determining postal status as language. In comparison to those aged under 30, those in older age groups were around half as likely to renew by post. Those who spoke English as a second language were around twice as likely to have renewed via post than those who spoke English as a first language or who were bilingual in English and another language.

2.13 Further information on the type of customer most likely to renew by the different channels (and their reasons for doing so) can be found in Appendix B.

Movement between channels between 2014 and 2015

2.14 The majority of customers used the same channel to renew their tax credits claim in 2015 as they did in 2014 (64% of those who went through the renewal process in both years). However, almost one in four used a different method from 2014 (23% of reply required customers, equating to 17% of all tax credits customers).

2.15 The online renewal method secured the majority of these "channel switchers" with the proportion of customers renewing digitally increasing from 5% of all tax credits customers in 2014 to 19% in 2015. The digital channel gained similar proportions of customers who had previously renewed by helpline or post: 7% of all customers renewed via the helpline in 2014 and online in 2015 whilst 5% of all customers renewed via post in 2014 and online in 2015 (as shown in Figure 2.2). It is also worth noting that the digital channel also retained the majority of its 2014 customers – only 1% of tax credits customers switched from online to the postal route in 2015, and <0.5% from online to the helpline.

Figure 2.2: Channel of renewal in 2015 vs. 2014

A9 / A16: Base: All tax credits customers (1336)
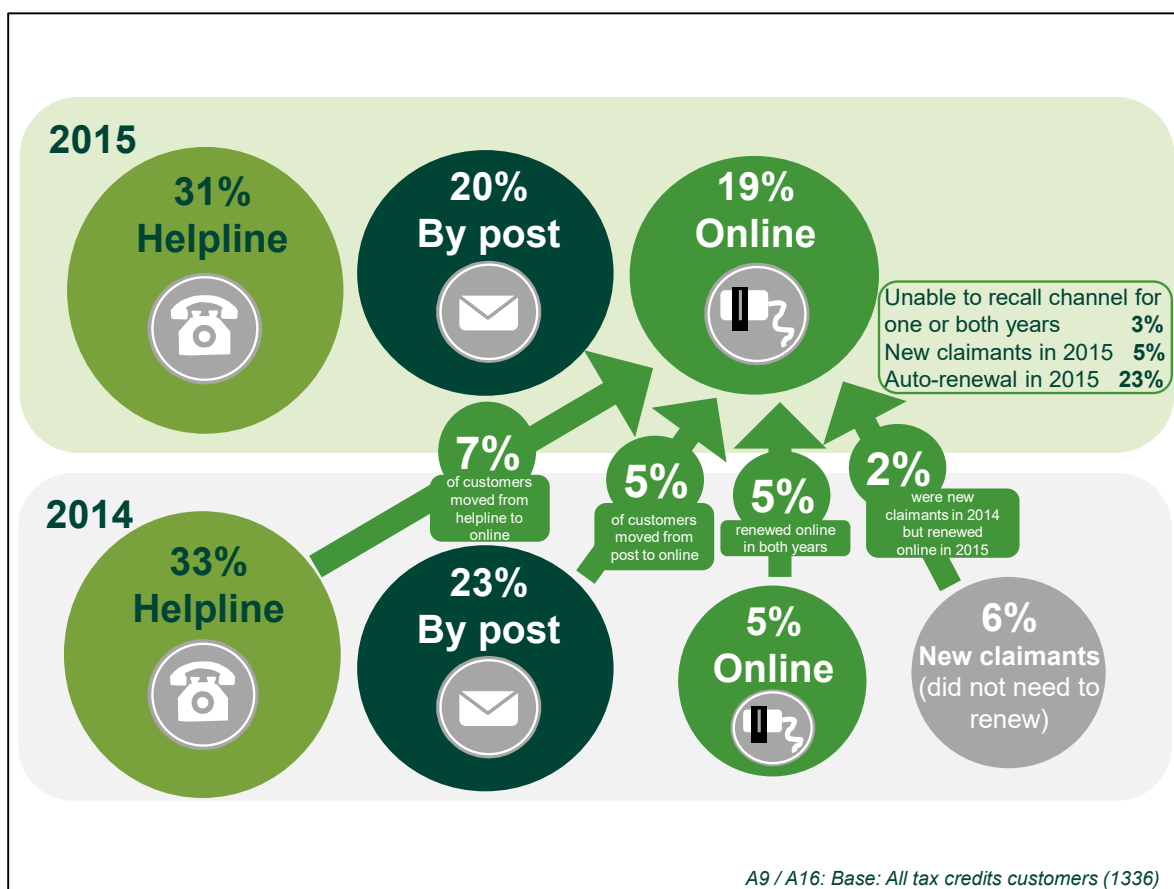
Online activity during the last renewals process

2.16 Figure 6.1 segments customers into four distinct groups by combining their responses to several questions - this looks at only those customers who actively went through the renewals process (i.e. not including auto-renewals or new claims):

- Digital Users: 28% renewed online (i.e. digital users)

- Digital Aborters: 14% attempted to renew online but ended up using a different channel

- Digital Rejectors: 47% were aware of the digital channel but chose to renew by another channel

- Digital Unaware: 11% renewed by post or telephone and were unaware of the possibility to renew online.

Figure 2.3:   Online activity during the last renewals process

Digital Aborters 14% Attempted to renew online but ended up using another channel

Digital Unaware 11% Did not know that it was possible to renew online

Digital Users 28%

Digital Rejectors 47% Aware of digital channel but chose to renew by another channel

A9 / A20: Base: All customers who were required to go through the renewals process (1042)
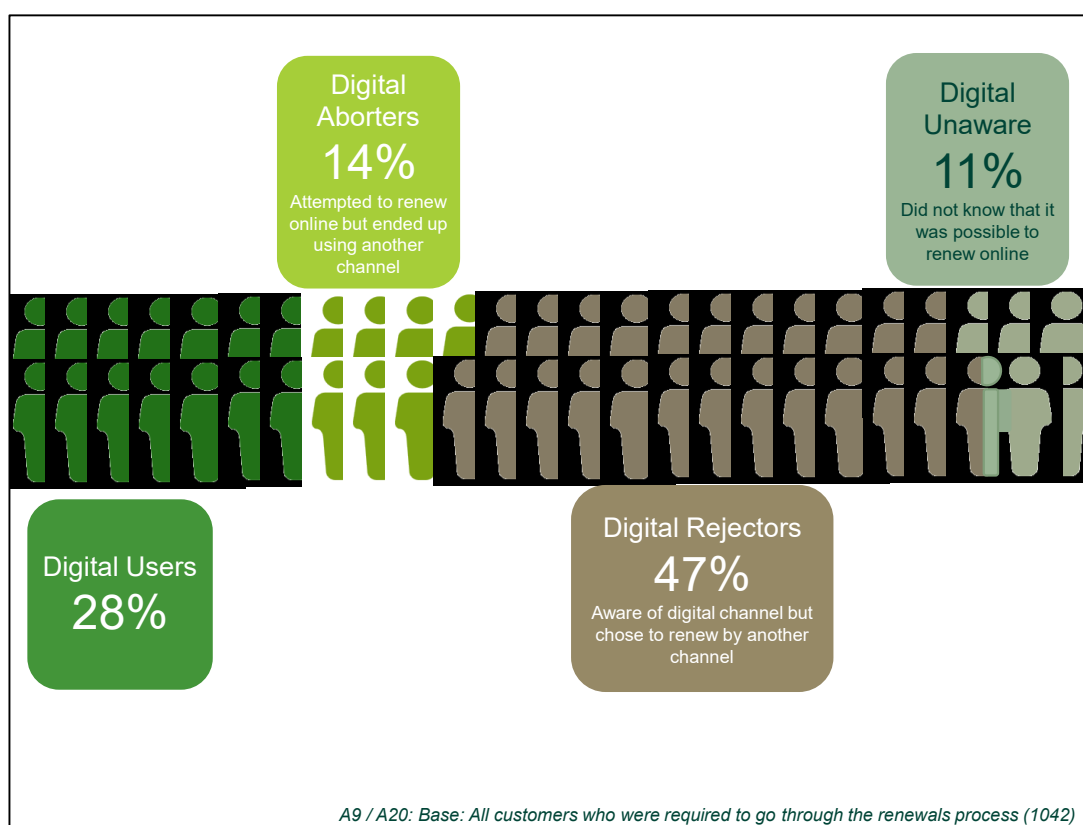
2.17 Key Driver analysis was used to identify the factors (demographic or related to nature of tax credits claim) most influencing which of these groups customers fell into. .

2.18 The analysis revealed the key drivers of digital status to be:

- Level of education

- Work status

- Household income

2.19 Level of education was almost three times as important in determining digital status as the other two factors. Those who had at least GCSE level qualifications were slightly more likely to have renewed online (compared to those with other or no qualifications). Those who were in work were slightly more likely to have renewed online than those not in work. Those who had a household income of at least £30,000 were slightly more likely to have renewed online. More details of this analysis is included in Appendix B.

Customer views of the digital renewal service

2.20   The vast majority of customers who successfully submitted their renewal online found the online service easy to use (93%, with 57% saying that it was very easy). The feature of the online service that customers found easiest to use was the instructions on how to complete the renewal (70% found these to be very easy to use). In contrast, the least user friendly feature was the identity verification process although this was still found to be easy by 77% of those who used the service.

2.21   Although men were more likely to renew by the digital channel, among users women were more likely to find the online renewals process very easy to use (60% vs. 49% men).

2.22   While there was little difference by age in overall ease of use of the online service, older customers were less likely to have found it very easy to get on the particular website (54% aged 50 plus vs. 67% of all online customers) and / or to follow the instructions on how to complete the renewal (55% vs. 70%). Younger customers were more likely to have found it very easy to answer all the questions (81% of those aged under 30 vs. 68%).

2.23   The identity verification process was found to be less easy by those in work (75% of those in work found it easy compared to 85% of those not in work).

2.24   Overall, the vast majority (93%) of online customers were satisfied with the process of renewing their tax credits online. As Figure 2.4 shows, levels of satisfaction with the online renewal process compared favourably with those for the helpline and postal channels (66% online customers were very satisfied vs. 57% of helpline customers and 53% of postal customers).

Figure 2.4:   Satisfaction with renewal process by channel

Online **93%** satisfied / fairly satisfied — 2% 2% 4% 27% 66%
A36 Base: All tax credits customers who renewed online (498)

Helpline **86%** satisfied / fairly satisfied — 4% 4% 4% 29% 57%
A38 Base: All tax credits customers who renewed by telephone (365)

Post **89%** satisfied / fairly satisfied — 1% 1% 8% 36% 53%
A37 Base: All tax credits customers who renewed by post (209)

- Very dissatisfied
- Fairly dissatisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Fairly satisfied
- Very satisfied

2.25   Older online customers were less inclined to be very satisfied with the online service: 53% of those aged 50 plus were very satisfied compared with 66% of all online customers.

2.26   In terms of the time taken to submit the renewal, the vast majority of online customers were satisfied (94%, with 70% very satisfied) - only 2% were dissatisfied. Older customers were less likely to be very satisfied with the time taken (58% aged 50 plus) although had similar levels of overall satisfaction to their younger online counterparts (91% satisfied).

2.27   Positively, the vast majority of customers who used the online service in the latest 2015 renewals said that they would do so again in the next renewals process (96%), with a very high proportion saying they would be very likely to do so (86%).

2.28   The small number of online customers who thought it unlikely that they would use this service again to renew (13 customers) were asked why. Reasons included: difficulty in finding the correct website to renew, difficulty with the verification process (including remembering the right password), and/or finding paper forms easier to follow.

Impact of channel on timing of renewal

2.29   One in seven (13%) online customers reported renewing earlier than they did in 2014, whilst the majority said they renewed at the same time (66%) (13% renewed later). This behaviour was similar across the different renewal channels although postal customers were more likely to have renewed at the same time as they did in the previous year (76% compared with 63% helpline).

2.30   There is no evidence to suggest that moving to the online channel results in earlier renewal. The majority of customers who switched to the digital channel in 2015 from another service in 2014 (helpline, post or other) renewed at the same time (68%) and the proportion who said they renewed earlier (15%) was similar to the average (12%).

Digital aborters

2.31   Multivariate analysis was used to identify the factors (demographic or related to nature of tax credits claim) most influencing whether customers who tried to use the online service to renew aborted.

2.32   The analysis revealed the key drivers of digital aborters to be:

- Age
- Type of tax credit

2.33   Age was over twice as important as type of tax credit in determining whether the customer who tried to renew online aborted use of the service. In comparison to those aged under 30, those aged 30-39 who attempted an online renewal were half as likely to have completed their renewal online, those aged 40-49 were 3 times less likely and those aged 50+ were five times less likely. Those who were claiming Child Tax Credits were slightly more likely than those claiming Working Tax Credits only to have aborted the service, whilst those who claimed both types of tax credits were twice as likely to have done so. More details on this analysis is contained in Appendix B.

2.34   Customers who tried to renew online initially but completed their renewal via another channel gave a variety of reasons for aborting the online service. Over half (51%) said that the online verification process put them off, whilst over a third reported that the instructions on how to complete the form were confusing (38%) and / or the online process took too long (35%) (Figure 2.5).

Figure 2.5:   Reasons for aborting the online renewal service

A21 SUM Base: All tax credits customers who tried to renew online initially but completed their renewal using another method (110)
Note: Respondents were able to give more than one response to this question and therefore the sum of the percentages may be greater than 100.
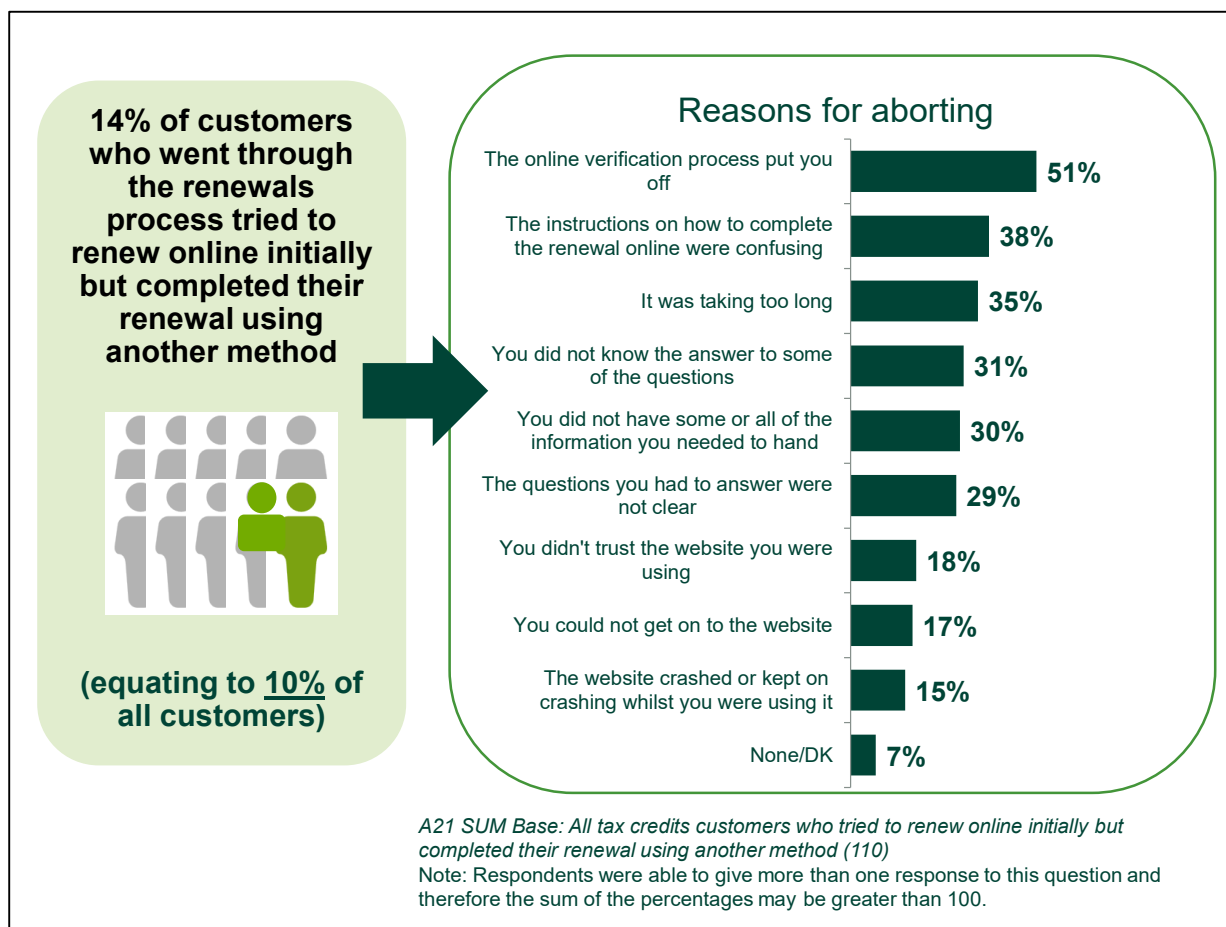
2.35   The reasons given for discontinuing the process of renewing online varied little by customer demographic although those with lower qualification levels were more likely to have had issues following the online instructions (73% of those who did not hold qualifications at GCSE Level vs. 34% of those who did) and / or knowing the answers to some of the questions (59% vs. 29%).

2.36   Three in ten (30%) customers aborted the digital renewal because they did not have some or all of the information they needed to hand. Over half (51%) of those who did not have information to hand did not have details of their income (or that of their partners), whilst smaller proportions did not have their passport / driving licence details (12%) and / or the 15 digit online reference number (11%) (see Appendix C for a full list of reasons given).

Digital rejectors

2.37   Those who did not try to renew online, although they were aware of the service, gave a variety of reasons why they chose not to (see Figure 2.6). The majority said this was because they preferred to talk to someone on the phone (82%) and / or renew by post (44%). It was also relatively common to have chosen not to renew online because of concerns about making mistakes / providing incorrect information online (45%) and / or to be concerned about privacy or security (35%).

Figure 2.6:   Reasons for not using the online renewal service

47% of customers who went through the renewal process were aware of the digital renewal option but chose not to use it

(equating to 34% of all customers)

Reasons for not renewing online

Reason	%
You prefer to talk to someone on the phone	82%
You were worried you would make a mistake/provide incorrect information	45%
You prefer to do things by post	44%
You are concerned about privacy or security	35%
You are unfamiliar with using computers/the internet	24%
It was unclear how to renew online	17%
You do not have access to computers/the internet	16%
You have difficulties reading/writing	6%
You have a disability or impairment which prevents you using computers/...	1%
Other reason	4%
None	2%

A30 SUM Base: All tax credits customers who were aware that could renew online but did NOT do so (387)
Note: Respondents were able to give more than one response to this question and therefore the sum of the percentages may be greater than 100.

2.38   Concerns about online security increased by age of customer from 18% of those aged under 30 to 36% aged 30-39 to 47% aged 40-49, and to 54% among those aged 50 plus.

2.39   Older customers were also more likely to cite barriers which prevented them from using computers / the internet including being unfamiliar with computers (49% aged 50 plus vs. 24% average), having difficulties with reading and / or writing (11% aged 40-49 vs. 6% average), and / or a disability or impairment (4% vs. 1% overall).

2.40   Those with lower qualification levels were also more likely to report being unfamiliar with using computers / the internet (45% of those with lower than GCSE Level qualification vs. 18% with at least GCSE Level qualification) and / or difficulties with reading and writing (19% vs. 3%). In addition to this, lower qualified customers were also more likely to prefer to talk to someone over the phone (94% vs. 80%) and / or to find it unclear how to renew online (29% vs. 14%).

2.41   Overall, although these customers did not use the online service (and had their reasons for not doing so), one in three (35%) thought it was likely that they would use the online renewal service the next time they needed to renew their claim (including 11% who said they would be very likely). Over half, however, said that it would be unlikely (19%) or very unlikely (36%).

2.42   Customers more likely to renew online in the future included those age under 30 (47%) and those with higher levels of educational attainment (39% of those with qualifications of GCSE Level or above).

2.43   Those who renewed by the helpline were less likely to be open to renew online in the future (60% said that they would be unlikely compared with 51% of those who used the postal channel).

Digital unaware

2.44   Among those who did not use the online service and were **not** aware of it prior to the survey, the majority said that they would be likely to use this method should they need to renew their claim in the future (66%, with 38% saying that it would be very likely). Around three in ten said they would be unlikely to (31%).

2.45   Likelihood to renew online in the future among these customers was higher among those in work (78% likely) and those with higher levels of qualifications (73% of those with GCSE Level or above qualifications were likely).

2.46   Figure 2.7 summarises the stated likelihood to use the digital renewal process in future among digital users, digital rejecters and the digital unaware groups.

Figure 2.7:   Likelihood to use digital renewal process in future
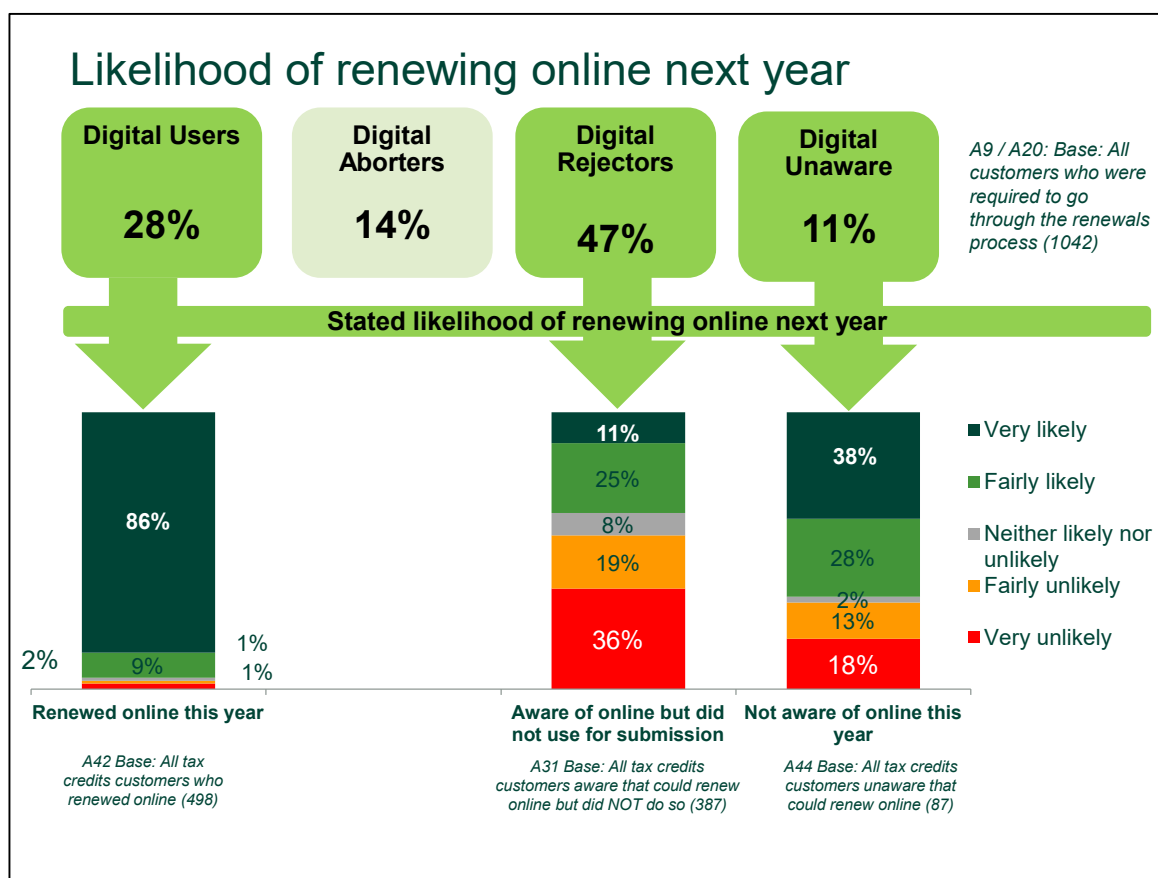
Use of online services in reporting changes of circumstances

2.47   Over half (55%) of all tax credit customers reported a change in circumstance to HMRC in the 12 months prior to the survey. Most commonly, changes were reported via the HMRC helpline (93%) although one in fourteen (7%) reported changes by post and one in twenty (5%) reported by the online route[6] . It should be noted however, that whilst customers were able to report changes by helpline or post all year round, the online service was only available during the renewals process (i.e. between April and July 2015).

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[6] The sum of percentages sum to more than 100% as respondents were able to give more than one response to this question

2.48 The majority of customers found it easy (79%, with half finding it very easy 51%) to report a change in circumstances to HMRC (16% found it to be difficult). Digital users gave higher ratings for ease of use (86% found it to be easy) than helpline users (78%) and postal users (70%) although only the difference between online and postal users was statistically significant.

2.49 As with the online renewal process, satisfaction with the digital service for reporting changes of circumstances was high (93% satisfied, with 56% very satisfied).

2.50 Overall, over half (57%) of customers said that they would be likely to report a change in circumstance online in the future (including 38% who said they would be very likely to), whilst one in three (35%) said they would be unlikely to. Likelihood to use this service in the future increased to 94% among those who had already used the online change of circumstances tool.

2.51 Likelihood to report future changes in circumstances online was lower among those with a lower household income (57% of those with a household income of less than £30k compared with 70% of those earning £30k plus) and those with lower educational attainment (44% of those with no qualifications or lower than GCSE level vs. 60% of those with at least GCSE Level qualifications).

2.52 Those unlikely to report changes in circumstances online were asked why. The typical response was that they would prefer to talk to someone on the phone (97%) whilst it was also common for customers to be worried about making mistakes online (59%) and / or be concerned about online privacy (46%) (Figure 2.8).

Figure 2.8: **Reasons given for being unlikely to report a change in circumstances online**

A30 SUM Base: All tax credits customers unlikely to report a change of circumstances online rather than by post or telephone (392)
Note: Respondents were able to give more than one response to this question and therefore the sum of the percentages may be greater than 100.
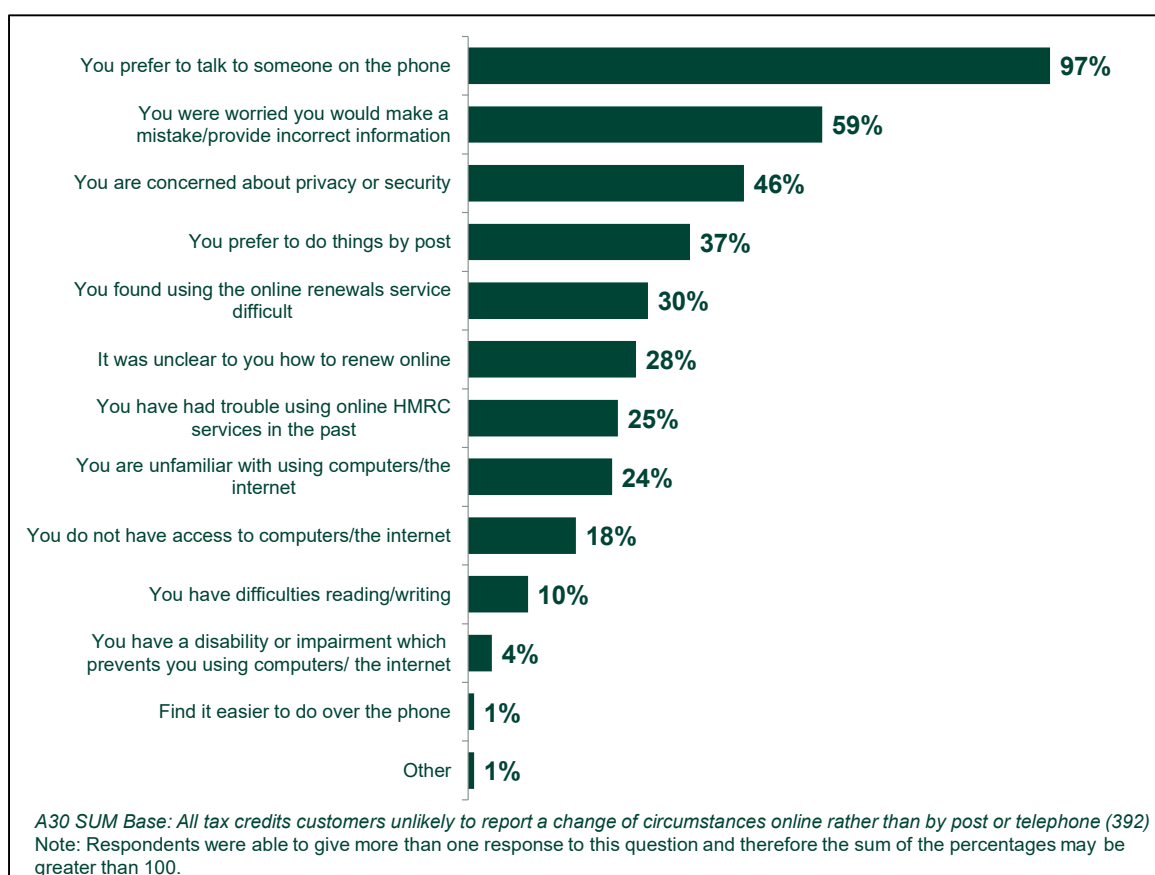
2.53 Older customers (those aged 50 or older) were more likely to have concerns around online privacy/security (70% vs. 59% average); cite difficulties around using the online service (60% vs. 30% average); be unfamiliar with using computers/the internet (55% vs. 24% average) and/or prefer to do things by post (58% vs. 37% average).

2.54 Customers not in work were more likely to cite issues around not being able to access computers / the internet (24% vs. 14% of those in work) and / or difficulties in reading / writing (16% vs. 6% of those in work).

2.55 Those with no (or low level) qualifications were more likely to be hesitant about using the digital service to report changes in circumstances because they had found it difficult to use the online service to renew their claim (51% vs. 24% of those with qualifications of at least GCSE Level). They were also more likely to cite the following barriers: being unfamiliar with computers/the internet (43% vs. 19% of those with qualifications of at least GCSE Level); not having access to computers / the internet (30% vs. 15%), and/or having a disability or impairment (11% vs. 2%).

2.56 When customers were asked what difference the online service would make to reporting changes in circumstance, the majority (64% of all tax credits customers) felt that they would report changes more quickly whilst one in twenty (6%) felt it would make them report changes more slowly). Positively, the vast majority (87%) of customers who did not use the online service to report their last change in circumstance *but who said that they would be likely to use this service in the future* said that being able to report changes via the online service would enable them to report them more quickly.

3 Customer contact

3.1 HMRC has made a commitment to improve customer experience. Understanding customers' experiences of the tax credits system and of making contact with HMRC will help HMRC improve services and the way they respond to customer needs. Improving customer experience is particularly important given the upcoming changes to the tax credits system as Universal Credit rolls out nationally.

3.2 This chapter explores customers' experiences of renewing tax credits and using HMRC materials such as renewals guidance notes, before going onto assess overall customer experience.

Renewing tax credits

3.3 Overall, customers who were required to renew their claim were confident in knowing what to do during the last renewals process (86% reporting that they were confident whilst just 8% of customers felt that they were not confident). These findings were similar to those found in 2014[7], where 85% said they were confident and 8% not confident.

3.4 Confidence levels were higher among those who had renewed online (91%) or by the post (89%) than those who renewed by the helpline (83%). (See Figure 3.1.)

Figure 3.1:   Confidence in knowing what to do during the last renewals process

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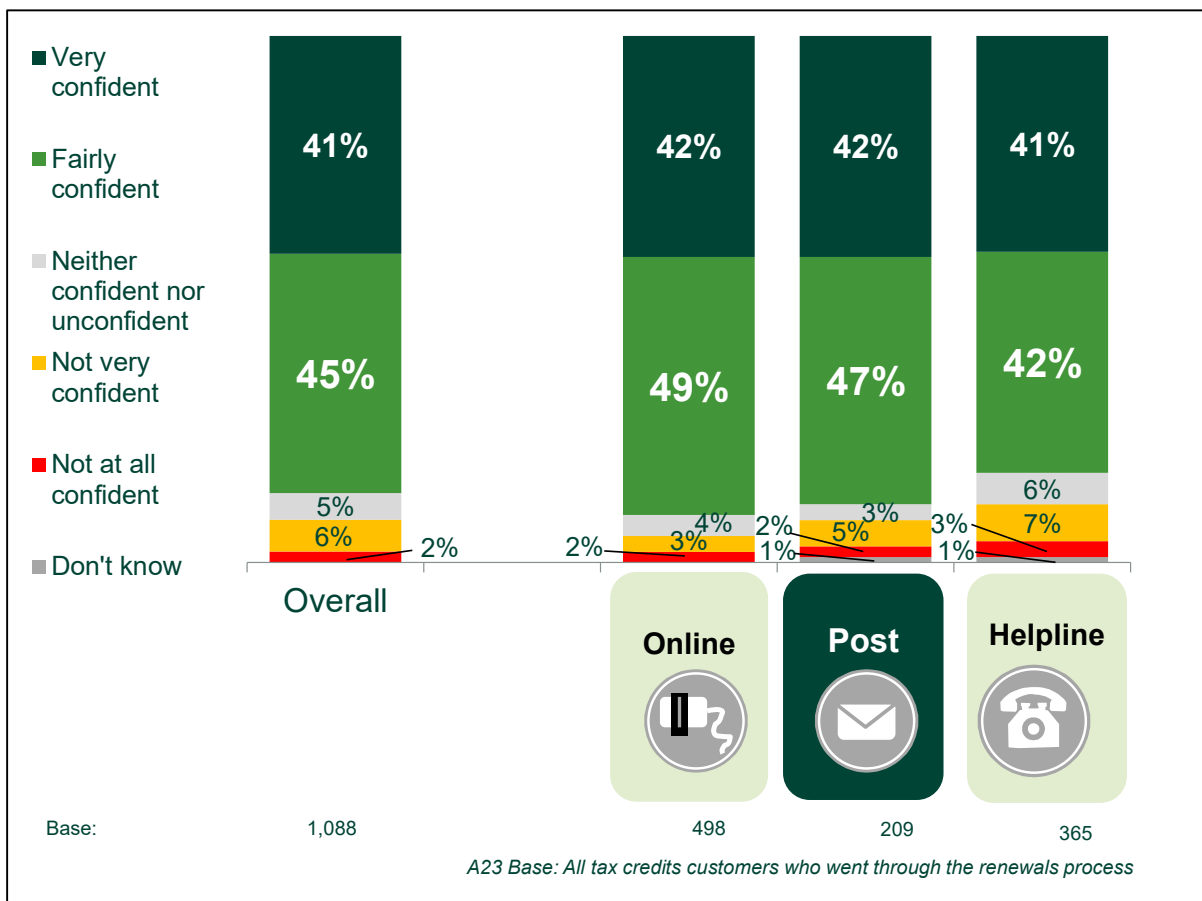
[7]
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/457971/Report_359_Panel_Study_of_Tax_Credits_Customers_2014.pdf

3.5   Those claiming tax credits for longer were more confident about the most recent renewals process: 92% of those who had been claiming for 4 or more years felt confident compared with 80% of those who had been claiming for a shorter period of time (i.e. less than 4 years).

3.6   Younger customers were less likely to be confident (81% of those aged under 30 were confident compared with 86% average), as were those whose household income was less than £30,000 (87% vs. 91% with an income of over £30,000).

3.7   The majority of customers (84%) thought it was clear what would happen after they submitted their renewal (including 50% who said it was very clear). Only 9% felt that it was not clear what would happen next.

3.8   Those who renewed via the online or helpline channels were more likely to find it very clear what would happen next (55% and 54% respectively) than those who renewed by post (41%). Those who had been claiming for a longer period of time were also more likely to have found it clear what would happen next (88% of those claiming for 4 or more years felt it was clear compared to 77% of those claiming less than a year), perhaps as they had been through the process more frequently.

Contact with the helpline

3.9   Customers who went through the renewal process were asked whether they contacted the HMRC helpline to discuss the renewal with them (separately to actually making their claim). Overall, one third (37%) contacted the HMRC helpline at some point during the renewals process, with:

- 21% contacting the HMRC helpline before they attempted to renew their claim;
- 9% while trying to renew their claim[8]; and
- 20% after submitting the renewal for their claim.

3.10   Those who renewed online were less likely to have called the helpline at any stage of the renewal process (27% vs. 42% of helpline customers and 38% of postal customers). Within this group, repeat online customers were less likely still than first time online users (22% vs. 29% respectively).

3.11   Those with higher educational attainment levels were more likely to have contacted the HMRC helpline prior to attempting to renew their claim (22% of those qualified to at least GCSE level vs. 14% of those with lower level or no qualifications).

3.12   Reasons given for calling the helpline are shown in Figure 3.2.

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[8] Those who renewed via the helpline were excluded from this question

Figure 3.2:   Reasons given for calling the helpline at each stage of the renewals process

Reason	Before renewal process	During renewal process	After renewal process
To change some of the information on the renewal	16%	14%	28%
To confirm details/talk through a complicated renewal	19%	24%	22%
General clarification / guidance	16%	23%	14%
To check on the progress of the renewal	9%	24%	23%
Wanted to report a change in circumstances	14%	8%	12%
To see if I could renew by phone	10%	10%	1%
To find out how to renew	9%	9%	3%
Query / clarification concerning under / over payment	4%	2%	8%
To check they had received the renewal	2%	10%	8%
To get help with calculations	7%	12%	4%
Needed to query stopped payments / threats to stop payments	4%	4%	7%
To find out if I needed to renew	6%	6%	1%
Had not received renewal pack	5%	1%	1%
To find out how long the renewal would take	1%	5%	5%
I had issues with the online service	2%	12%	1%

D3: Base: All tax credits customers who called the helpline at any point during the renewals process (378)
Note: Respondents were able to give more than one response to this question and therefore the sum of the percentages may be greater than 100.

3.13   One in twenty (5%) tax credits customers whose claim needed to be renewed in the last renewals process (i.e. all apart from those who started their claim since April 2015) sought help from somewhere besides the helpline around the time of the renewals process.

3.14   Most commonly, those who sought help from elsewhere did so from friends / relatives (34%) and or independent professional advisers (e.g. an accountant) (30%). A smaller proportion sought advice from local council offices (8%). A full list of places help was sought and queries customers had can be found in Appendix C.

Renewal Guidance notes

3.15   Renewal guidance notes are included in the renewals packs sent to tax credits customers between April–June each year. They provide a detailed step-by-step guide on how to go about informing HMRC of a change in circumstances and how to fill out the 'annual declaration' form needed to renew.

3.16   Over half of customers who renewed their claim this year (54%) used renewals guidance notes provided by HMRC. This is a statistically significant decrease from that found in the 2014 panel survey[9] where 67% used the guidance notes.

9
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/457971/Report_359_Panel_Study_of_Tax_Credits_Customers_2014.pdf

3.17 Guidance notes were more commonly referred to by those who renewed by post (72%) than those who renewed online (53%) and, in turn, those who renewed by the helpline (44%).

3.18 Customers aged 50 or older were more likely to have referred to the guidance notes (70% compared with 51% – 56% among the younger age bands) as were those who were qualified to at least GCSE level (55% vs. 47% of those with low level or no qualifications).

3.19 The majority of those who used the guidance notes found them useful (90%), with 45% finding them very useful.

Late renewal of claims

3.20 Customers who do not renew their tax credits on time (by 31st July each year unless otherwise stated in the renewal pack) risk having their payments stopped[10].

3.21 Among those who went through the last renewals process, the vast majority (93%) reported renewing their tax credits on time, whilst one in twenty (5%) said they did not. Older customers were more likely to have missed the renewal deadline (11% of those aged 50 or older did not renew on time).

3.22 Customers who renewed their tax credits by helpline were more likely to have missed the renewal deadline than those who used alternative methods of renewal (10% compared with 3% postal customers and 1% online customers).

3.23 The most common reasons for failing to renew on time were being disorganised / forgetting to do it (38% of those who missed the renewals deadline) and / or because of the time delay in 'waiting for documents (e.g. P60) / collecting information' (36%). Other reasons included not getting a reminder from HMRC (8%), being unable to get through to the helpline (5%) and not knowing about the deadline (3%). One in seven (14%) gave other responses which reflect a range of personally-specific responses given for late renewal[11].

3.24 The vast majority (87%) of customers who went through the renewals process said that the renewals pack prompted them to renew their claim, although this dropped to 80% among the youngest customers (those aged under 30). Over a quarter (28%) of customers said that the HMRC advertising campaign (which was launched to help remind customers to renew their claim) helped prompt them to renew their claim, whilst smaller proportions were prompted by their own remainder (e.g. a calendar note) (18%), receiving a text message from HMRC (16%) and/or family/friends (8%)[12].

3.25 Looking specifically at the HMRC advertising campaign revealed that not all customers were exposed to it – only 73% recalled the campaign. Hence, although 28% of all customers were prompted by the campaign, this rises to 39% among those who were exposed to the campaign. The campaign was more effective among younger customers (47% of those aged under 30 exposed to the campaign said it prompted them to renew their claim) and those who spoke English as a first language or who were bilingual in English and another language (39% vs. 18% of those who spoke English as a second language).

3.26 Calendar notes were more readily used by those who were qualified to at least GCSE Level (19% said they had their own reminder to renew compared with 9% of those with lower level or no qualifications).

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[10] https://www.gov.uk/renewtaxcredits
[11] Please note the small base size for this question (35 respondents)
[12] The sum of these percentages add to more than 100% as respondents were able to give more than one response

3.27 As for the SMS texts, only one in four (25%) customers said they received an SMS message from HMRC. Among those who received a text, the majority (64%) said it prompted them to renew. The SMS message reminder seemed to be less effective among those who had been claiming for 4 or more years (57% of those who recalled receiving a text said it prompted them to renew).

Real time information

3.28 HMRC are striving to make it easier for customers to deal with their taxes and get things right, by making their products and processes more simple and straightforward. From April 2014, HMRC introduced a new system whereby employers must report payroll information to HMRC[13]. This data – known as Real Time Information (RTI) – is being used to pre-populate renewal applications to make it easier for customers to renew their tax credits.

3.29 Approaching three-fifths (57%) of those who went through the renewals process recalled information (i.e. RTI) being displayed on the renewal form or online. Of those who recalled this information, two-thirds thought it made the process easier (67%, with 49% saying it made it 'a lot' easier), three in ten (31%) thought it made no difference and 1% thought it made the process either a bit or a lot harder.

3.30 Men were more likely to find that RTI made the process easier (81% vs. 63% of women) as were those whose household income was less than £30,000 (69% vs. 61% of those with an income over £30,000).

3.31 Of those who recalled information, the vast majority (91%) said the information displayed was correct. The 8% of customers whose information was incorrect most commonly contacted HMRC to query it (7% of all those who recalled the information) whilst 1% corrected the form themselves.

Understanding of auto-renewal packs

3.32 Renewal packs are sent to tax credits customers between April-June each year to remind customers to renew their claim and tell them how to do so. Customers are either sent an auto-renewal pack which informs them that their tax credits will be renewed automatically (unless they need to report a change in circumstances) or a reply-required pack which informs them that they need to renew their claim.

3.33 Just over a quarter (27%) of tax credits customers recalled receiving an auto-renewals pack. The majority of this group thought it was clear what to do next (53% very clear and 35% clear) compared with only 7% who felt it was unclear.

3.34 Among those who received an auto-renewal pack, one in ten (10%) contacted HMRC about something else in relation to their claim. Of those customers, virtually all did so by calling the HMRC helpline (99%) although 5% did so via the HMRC online renewals service[14]. The most common reason given by these customers for making contact was to let HMRC know about a change in their circumstances (42%)[15]. All reasons provided can be found in Appendix C.

Overall customer experience

3.35 Among all tax credits customers, one in five (20%) had contacted HMRC over the previous 12 months for a reason other than the process of renewing their tax credits. Women were roughly twice as likely to have done so (21% compared to 12% of men).

[13] http://www.revenuebenefits.org.uk/tax-credits/guidance/how-do-tax-credits-work/real-time-information-and-tax-credits-/
[14] The sum of these percentages add to more than 100% as respondents were able to give more than one response
[15] Please note the small base size for this question (27 respondents)

3.36 Most commonly customers had contacted HMRC in order to report a change of circumstance (45%). Other relatively common reasons included: making a query / get advice (21%), discussing an overpayment (12%) and/or informing HMRC of a change of address (6%). A full list of queries customers had can be found in Appendix C.

3.37 Customers were asked about their expectations of HMRC's customer service. In terms of how long they would expect it to take for HMRC to respond to an enquiry they submitted customers were roughly evenly divided into those who would expect a response within a week and those who would expect it to take longer (45% within a week and 50% longer). More precisely, 9% of customers expect a response within a day; 10% within 2-3 days; 26% within a week; 25% within 1-2 weeks and 25% expect a response to take longer than 2 weeks.

3.38 One in three (33%) customers would wait longer than two weeks to chase up an enquiry to which they did not receive a response. A quarter (26%) would wait between one and two weeks, another quarter (24%) would wait up to 1 week, one in ten (9%) would wait up to 3 days, whilst one in twenty (5%) would chase up an enquiry if they had no response within a day.

3.39 Customers were asked how they would prefer to receive confirmation that HMRC had received an enquiry/submission of a form. Responses were fairly evenly split between email (59%), text message (56%) and letter (56%) with telephone being the least popular option (34%).

3.40 Letters were the preferred method of communication among: those who speak English as a second language (71%), older customers (66% of those aged over 50) and those not in work (62%).

3.41 In contrast, e-mail is the preferred method of communication among: those with a household income of £30,000 or above (77%), younger customers (64% of those aged 30-39), those in work (63%) and those who speak English as a first language or who are bilingual in English and another language (60%). The popularity of text messages decreased with age: 61% of under-30s specified it as their preferred channel compared with 40% of over 50s.

4   Understanding the Tax Credits system

4.1   HMRC is committed to minimising levels of error and fraud in the tax credits system. This chapter looks at customers' experiences and understanding of reporting of changes of circumstances (a factor which may affect the accuracy of customers' claims), before exploring customers' understanding of overpayments and perceptions of error and fraud in the tax credits system. Finally it examines customers' awareness and understanding of Universal Credit (and how this has changed over time), which is of particular importance with the ongoing transition of customers from tax credits to Universal Credit.

Reporting changes of circumstances

4.2   Tax credits are designed to be flexible and responsive to changes in customers' circumstances as and when they occur. The vast majority (83%) of customers had reported at least one change in circumstance over the course of their tax credits claim, with over half (55%) having reported at least one change in the past year. Men (69%), those aged 50 or over (72%) and those not in work (79%) were less likely to have ever reported a change of circumstance.

4.3   The most common changes reported by customers within the last 12 months were (in descending order):

- A change in income (or partner's income) (14% of all tax credits customers);
- A change in working hours (or partner's working hours) (11%);
- A change in job (or partner changed job) (9%);
- A change in childcare costs (8%); and
- A partner moving in or out (6%)

4.4   A full list of the change of circumstances reported over the past year is included in Appendix C.

4.5   Customers were read a list of six examples of changes of circumstances that need to be reported according to the guidance on HMRC's website[16] and asked to state for each whether they thought each was something that would need to be reported to HMRC. The majority of customers recognised that the examples given needed to be reported:

- If you start or stop a job (98% thought that HMRC should be notified of this change)
- If you move in with a new partners (97%)
- If your working hours fall below, or go above, the minimum required to qualify for tax credits (96%)
- If your income goes up by more than £5,000 (94%)
- If your child aged over 16 leaves an approved education or training course (91%)
- If your childcare costs change by £10 or more a week (80%)

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[16] https://www.gov.uk/changes-affect-tax-credits

4.6 The changes least likely to be recognised by customers related to children. Those claiming Working Tax Credits only were least likely to recognise these changes:

- if childcare costs change by £10 or more a week (73% among those claiming Working Tax Credits only vs. 77% of those claiming Child Tax Credits and 85% of those claiming both types of credits);

- if a child aged over 16 leaves an approved education or training (86% among those claiming Working Tax Credits only vs. 91% of those claiming Child Tax Credits and 94% of those claiming both types of credit)

Late reporting of changes of circumstances

4.7 Guidance on the HMRC website informs customers that all changes of circumstances should be reported within 30 days[17]. However, only a minority (38%) of customers were aware of the 30 day time limit. More specifically, 13% said (unprompted) that they thought that changes of circumstances had to be reported within 7 days and a further 25% thought that changes had to be reported within 30 days.

4.8 Although only a minority (38%) of customers knew changes should be reported within 30 days, the majority said that they generally reported of circumstances within 7 days (45%) or within one month (27%). Others said they generally waited longer than one month or waited until they renewed their claim.

4.9 Around one in ten (11%) customers admitted that there had been at least one occasion when they had not reported a change in circumstance to HMRC within the 30 day time limit. This was the case even though just over half (53%) of this group were aware of the time limit. However, the majority said they went on to report the change to HMRC leaving only 1% of customers who said that they did not go on to report the change.

4.10 The nature of changes that were not reported within 30 days varied, the most common of which are listed below (in descending order):

- A change in income (or partner's income) – 23% of those who did not report the change within 30 days)

- A change in childcare costs – 19%

- A partner moving in or out – 14%

- A change in working hours (or partner's working hours) – 12%

- The customer (or partner) had a baby – 10%.

4.11 When asked about the reasons for not reporting a change within the 30 day period, customers most commonly said that they did not know whether they needed to report that particular change in circumstance or not (28%) and / or that they did not have the time to report it (18%) (see Figure 4.1).

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[17] https://www.gov.uk/changes-affect-tax-credits

Figure 4.1:   Reasons given for not reporting a change in circumstances within the 30 day period

11% of customers stated that there had been at least one occasion when they had not reported a chance of circumstances to HMRC within 30 days

Reasons for late reporting

Reason	%
Unsure whether I needed to report that particular type of change in circumstance	28%
I did not have the time	18%
Unaware I had to report any changes in circumstances to HMRC	9%
Did not have all the information I needed	8%
I forgot	7%
Couldn't get through to the helpline to report the change	6%
Due to personal circumstances i.e. on holiday, in hospital	6%
Unsure of the timeframe for reporting	5%
Unsure how to report a change in circumstance	5%
I didn't realise I'd had a change in circumstances	4%
I was waiting until I needed to renew my claim	3%
Other	8%
Don't Know	2%

B19: Base: All tax credits customers who have not reported a change of circumstances TO HMRC within 30 days (145) Note: Respondents were able to give more than one response to this question and therefore the sum of the percentages may be greater than 100.

Overpayments

4.12   If changes in circumstances are not reported within the 30 time period, tax credits customers may need to repay any tax credits that they were not entitled to (overpayments). Overpayments may also occur if mistakes are made on claim forms or if tax credits are not renewed on time[18].

4.13   Overall, just over half (53%) of customers had received a tax credits overpayment at some point during their claim, including 22% who were paying back an overpayment at the time of the interview.

4.14   The following groups were more likely to have paid back an overpayment at some point during their tax credits claim:

- Women (56% vs. 39% of men)

- Those with a household income of over £30,000 (66% vs. 52% of those with one with less than £30,000)

- Those claiming Child Tax Credits (or both type of tax credits) (57% and 52% respectively vs. 42% of those claiming Working Tax Credits only).

4.15   Customers who had received an overpayment at some point during the course of their tax credits claim gave a variety of reasons why their last overpayment occurred (see Figure 4.2).

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18 . https://www.gov.uk/tax-credits-overpayments/overpayments

Figure 4.2: Reasons given for being overpaid

53% of customers had received an overpayment at some point in their claim

Reasons for overpayment

Reason	%
Error when submitting renewal (e.g. incorrect income levels)	26%
Had a change of circumstances but did not report it to HMRC within 30 days	14%
Error / miscalculation on the part of HMRC	10%
Had a change of circumstances and DID report it in the timeframe but still overpaid	6%
Had a change of circumstances but did not report it to HMRC at all	6%
Working hours / earnings fluctuate - difficult to calculate	5%
Change of circumstances concerning partner (various)	2%
Change in income / earnings / hours	2%
Other	7%
Don't know	28%

D3: Base: All who had had an overpayment (723)
Note: Respondents were able to give more than one response to this question and therefore the sum of the percentages may be greater than 100.
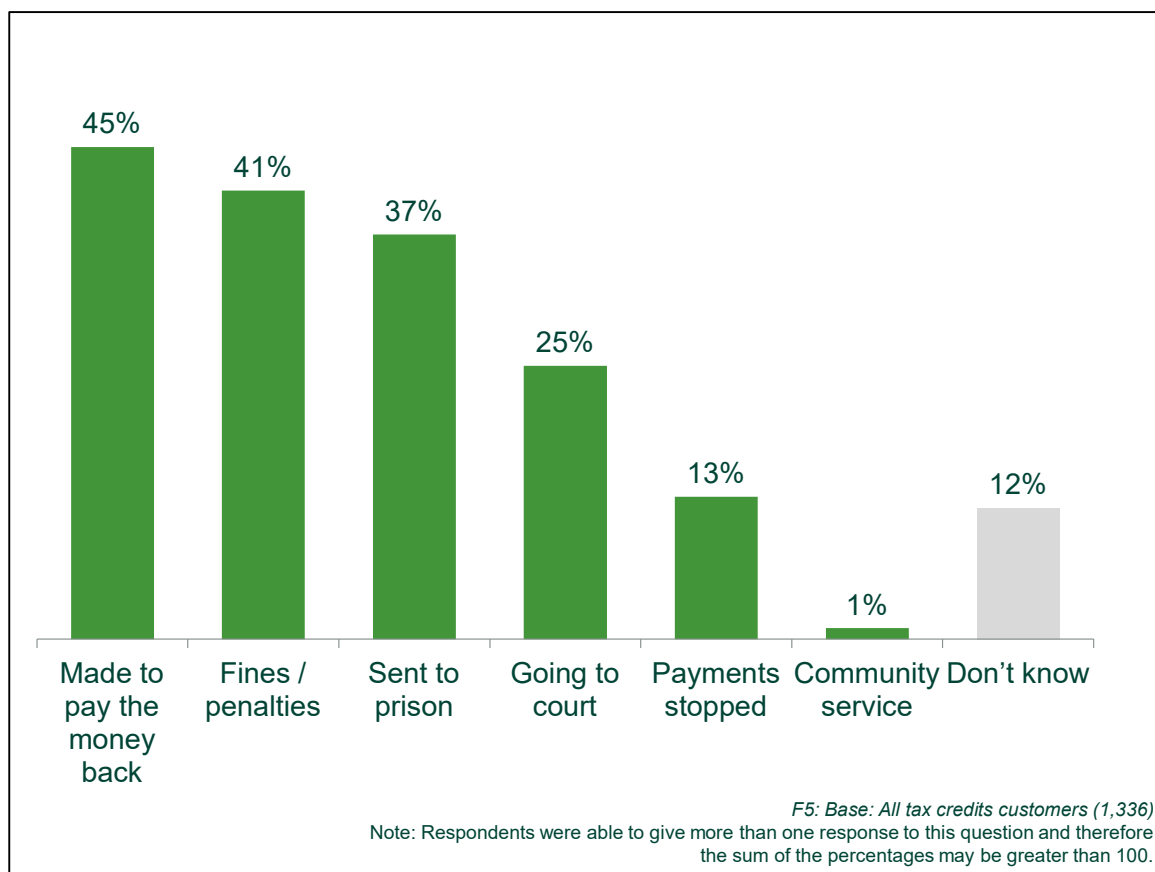
4.16 The most common reason given for receiving an overpayment was an error on their renewal form (26%). This reason was more common among those with household incomes of less than £30,000 (27% vs. 16% those with incomes of £30,000 or more) and those who spoke English as a second language (40% vs. 25% of those who spoke English as a first language or were bilingual in English and another language).

4.17 Notably, a quarter (28%) of those who had ever received an overpayment did not know why their last overpayment occurred. Women were less likely to know why it occurred (31% vs. 15% of men).

4.18 When customers receive an overpayment, HMRC will write to them to tell them how much they owe (and how to pay this back). Customers who had paid back an overpayment at some point were split between those who understood how the overpayment was calculated (49%) and those who did not (48%). Men were more likely to understand how they were calculated (58% vs. 48% of women).

4.19 Of those that were paying back an overpayment at the time of the interview, a quarter (25%) had noticed changes in the way their overpayment had been paid back to HMRC. Most commonly customers had noticed how monthly payments had decreased (13%). Other changes noticed varied, each one only mentioned by 2% or less (shown in Appendix D).

Perception of Error and Fraud

4.20 HMRC is committed to minimising levels of error and fraud in the tax credits. Customers were asked about their opinions of error and fraud by being asked a series of questions about 'inaccurate' claims where this referred to the deliberate provision of incorrect information.

4.21 Almost two in three (63%) customers thought that it was either very (18%) or fairly (45%) common for people to deliberately make inaccurate tax credits claims. A quarter thought it was either not very (20%) or not at all (4%) common, whilst 13% were unsure.

4.22 Trust in other customers generally increased with age with those aged under 30 most likely to think that inaccurate claims were common (73% compared to 62% of 30-39 year-olds, 56% of 40-49 year-olds and 58% of those aged over 50).

4.23 Just over half (52%) of tax credits customers thought that HMRC was putting in the right amount of effort into reducing inaccurate tax credits claims, whilst others felt HMRC were putting in too little (15%) or too much (2%) effort (around 30% were unsure). Those with a higher household income were more likely to think that HMRC were not putting enough effort into reducing fraudulent claims (24% of those with a household income of over £30,000 compared to 15% of those with a household income of less than £30,000), as were those with a higher educational attainment (16% of those with at least GCSE level qualifications vs. 9% of those who did not).

4.24 The majority of customers thought it was very likely (38%) or quite likely (33%) that people who regularly made inaccurate tax credits claims would get caught whilst 16% thought it was not very likely (14%) or not at all likely (2%).

4.25 Those with a household income under £30,000 thought it was more likely that inaccurate tax credits customers would be caught (72% compared to 56% of those with a household income over £30,000), as were those who were not in work (75% vs. 69% in work).

4.26 Four in ten (42%) thought that compared to two to three years ago, HMRC were dealing more firmly with those who make inaccurate tax credits claims. One in three (33%) thought that HMRC were dealing with about the same level of firmness, whilst 1% felt they were dealing with it less firmly. Almost a quarter (23%) were unsure.

4.27 In terms of possible consequences for people caught making inaccurate tax credits claims, most commonly customers thought an offender would be made to pay the money back (45%) and/or incur fines/penalties (41%) (see Figure 4.3).

Figure 4.3:   Consequences for people caught making inaccurate tax credits claims

F5: Base: All tax credits customers (1,336)
Note: Respondents were able to give more than one response to this question and therefore
the sum of the percentages may be greater than 100.

4.28   Nearly three in four (71%) of customers agreed that HMRC penalties deterred people from intentionally making inaccurate tax credits claims, whilst one in ten (9%) disagreed. Those with a higher household income were more likely to disagree (15% of those with a household income of over £30,000 compared to 9% of those with a household income of less than £30,000), as were those with a higher educational attainment (10% of those with at least GCSE level qualifications vs. 3% of those without).

4.29   One in twenty (6%) tax credits customers said that they had been contacted by HMRC about making an inaccurate tax credits claim, whilst 1% of customers were unsure. A similar proportion (7%) personally knew of someone who had been contacted by HMRC about making an inaccurate tax credits claim.

Universal Credit

4.30   The introduction of Universal Credit is fundamentally changing the benefits system by streamlining a range of key benefits and tax credits into one single payment. Currently being rolled out, it will be made available in all Jobcentres in 2018. To ensure a smooth transition, it is important for HMRC to understand levels of awareness of Universal Credit and therefore where to target support.

4.31   Overall, over half (55%) of tax credits customers had heard of Universal Credit whilst a further one in five (19%) were aware of some sort of changes to the way tax credits are going to be managed over the next few years. Around a quarter (26%) of customers were not aware of any impending changes. These findings fit into a trend of increasing awareness of Universal Credit amongst tax credits customers over the past few

years: Similar studies have found that 45% of customers were aware in 2014[19], 38% in 2013[20], and 24% in 2012[21].

4.32 Awareness of Universal Credit increased with age of the claimant: Almost two-thirds of those aged under 30 had heard of Universal Credit or were aware of some sort of changes (64%), rising to three-quarters of those aged 30-39 (75%) and those aged 40-49 (78%), and rising again to over four-fifths of those aged 50 or older (85%).

4.33 Customers with at least GCSE Level qualifications (57%) were more likely to have heard of Universal Credit than those with other or no qualifications (41%) and were, overall, more aware of the impending changes to the tax credits system (75% compared with 66% respectively).

4.34 Tax credits customers were also asked whether they thought the introduction of Universal Credit would affect their claim for tax credits. The 74% of customers who had heard of Universal Credit or were aware of the some upcoming changes were split between those who knew that it would affect their claim (20%) and those who did not (20%) (see Figure 4.4). A higher proportion, however, were unsure whether it would affect their claim (34%).

Figure 4.4: Awareness of Universal Credit

G2 AND G3 Base: All tax credits customers (1,336)
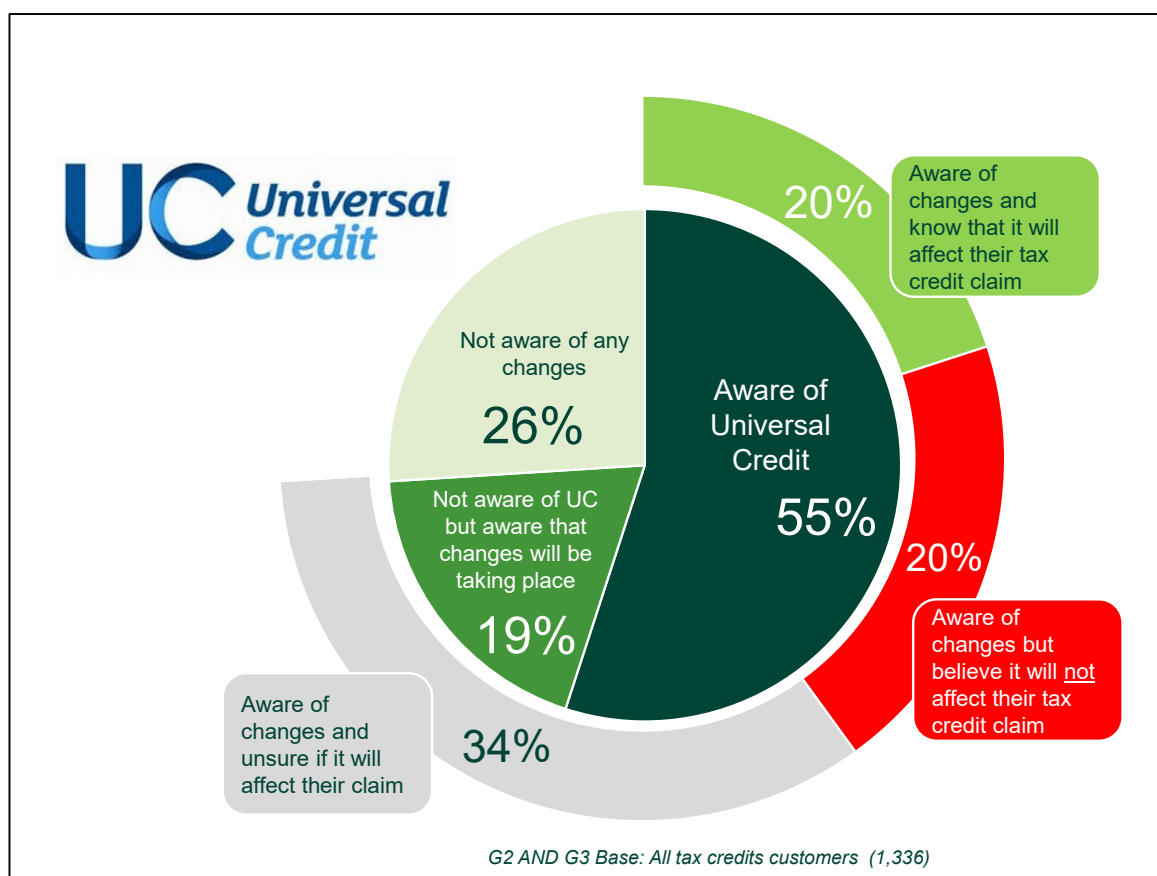
4.35 Over half of those who had heard of Universal Credit or were aware of upcoming changes recognised that they would no longer be able to claim tax credits once transferred onto Universal Credit (58%). Whilst 13%

19
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/457971/Report_359_Panel_Study_of_Tax_Credits_Customers_2014.pdf
20 https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/panel-study-of-tax-credits-customers-telephone-survey-2013
21 https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tax-credits-customers-telephone-survey-2012

were unsure, three in ten thought (incorrectly) that they would still be able to continue claiming tax credits (30%).

4.36   A similar proportion of customers (60%) understood that once they started to claim Universal Credit their tax credits will automatically be stopped. One in ten (11%) customers were unsure whilst three in ten (29%) thought that their tax credits will **not** be stopped.

4.37   Key Driver analysis was used to identify the factors (demographic or related to nature of tax credits claim) which had the more influence on awareness/understanding of the impact of the introduction of Universal Credit. The results are shown in Figure 4.5 below. The relative importance of each characteristic is illustrated by the size of the box. The boxes at the right of the figure show the groups of customers most likely to be closest to understanding that Universal Credit will affect their tax credits claim.

Figure 4.5: Multivariate Analysis: Awareness of Universal Credit
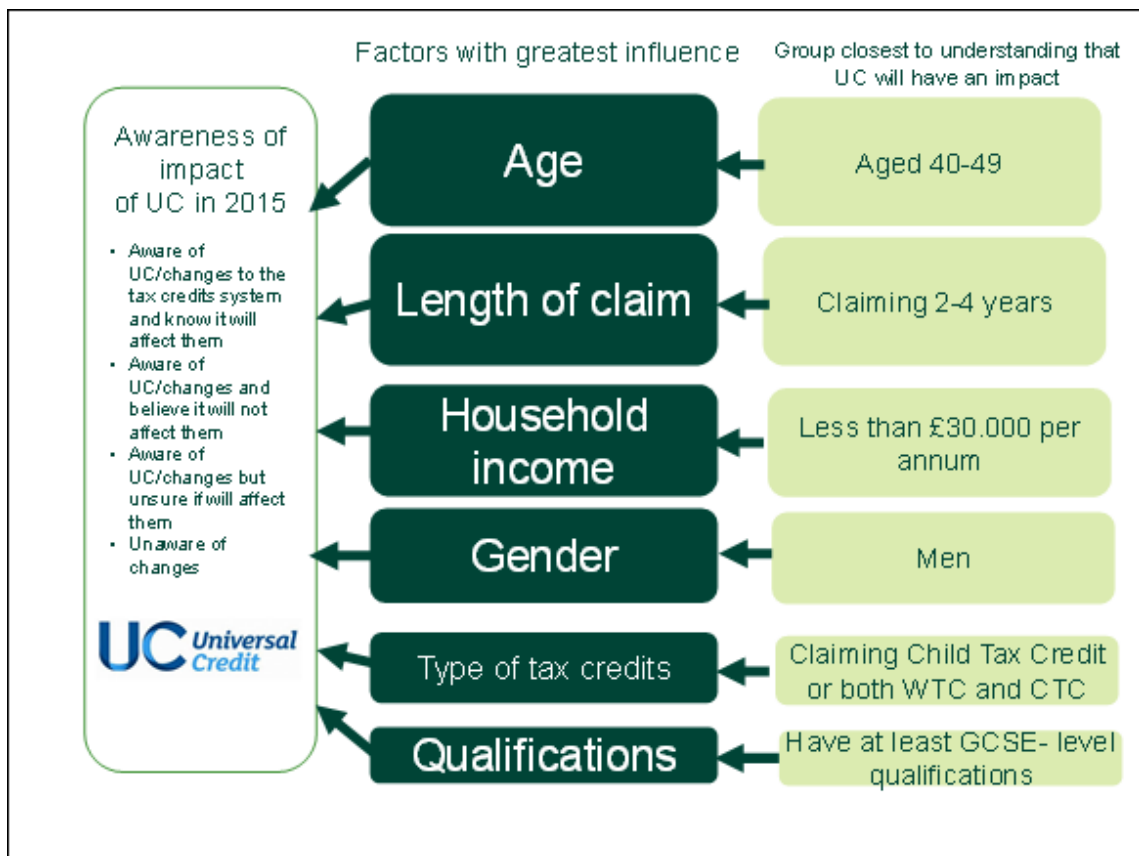
4.38   The factors with the greatest influence on likelihood to be aware of Universal Credit and understand that it will have an impact on tax credit claims were age (with those aged 40+ slightly more likely to be aware of Universal Credit/changes to the tax credits system and know there will be an impact on tax credit claims) and length of claim (with those who had been claiming for 2-4 years being slightly more likely to be aware and know that there will be an impact on their claim compared to those claiming for a shorter or longer period). Factors having a slightly lower level of influence were income, gender, the type of tax credit claim and levels of qualification.

5   Conclusions

5.1   Below we summarise some of the key conclusions that can be drawn from this survey:

5.2   **Use of the digital renewal channel has increased considerably since 2014.** Only 5% of the surveyed customer base renewed online in 2014 while 19% did so in 2015.

5.3   **However there is scope to make the digital renewal channel work better.** The proportion of customers renewing digitally would have been much higher if all or at least some of those who started to make an online application completed through this channel. The reasons given for aborting an online application indicate that improvements could be made to the instructions on completing the online renewal and also to raising the awareness of customers, before they start the process, of the questions they will be asked / the information they will need.

5.4   **There is scope to grow digital renewal use much further.** A relatively small proportion of all customers were unaware of the digital renewal channel prior to interview but the majority of these said that they would be likely to renew online next year. In addition, around a third of those who were aware of the digital channel but who had chosen not to use it said they would next year.

5.5   **Alongside cost savings, increasing the use of the digital renewal channel also has potential to improve customer service.** Digital service users showed higher levels of satisfaction with the renewals process than helpline or postal service users (although satisfaction was high with all 3 channels).

5.6   **There is appetite for considerable growth in the use of the digital channel for reporting change of circumstances.** Only 5% of customers who had a change of circumstances in the last 12 months did so digitally (it was only possible to do this if customers were renewing online and reporting a change of circumstances at the same time). Over half of customers said they would be likely to use this service in the future (including nearly all of those that used it in 2015). The majority of customers feel that use of the online channel would make them report a change of circumstances more quickly.

5.7   **It may be worth considering a separate digital strategy for the over 50s.** This group make up just 6% of the tax credits population but their attitudes and behaviours are quite different to the rest of the customer base. They were more likely to renew by post. Even where they had used digital renewals, the over 50s were less likely to be satisfied with it than younger customers. Within the 'digital rejecters' group, older customers were more likely to be concerned about security or to state that they were unfamiliar with computers. These customers were also more likely to have missed the renewal deadline.

5.8   **And perhaps also for those with English as a second language.** Generally these customers (who make up 4% of the tax credits population) express a preference for hard copy written communication.

5.9   **SMS reminders appear to be a valuable service.** More reminders to renew might result in benefits in terms of the proportion using the digital channel (customers who renewed late were more likely to end up using the helpline). The SMS reminder sent out in 2015 was an effective prompt for the majority of those who received it. If possible, it could be valuable to extend this service to other customers.

5.10   **Making use of SMS or e-mail to provide updates on the progress of a renewal could result in fewer progress chasing calls to the helpline.** A very high proportion of customers contacted the helpline during the renewals process (other than for the purpose of making a claim). A fifth of customers got in contact with HMRC after submitting their claim. Some of these calls were to confirm receipt or to check the progress of the claim or find out how long the process would take.

5.11   **Pre-population using RTI data appears to be effective.** The majority of customers felt it made the process easier and nearly all said the information displayed was correct.

5.12   **Awareness of Universal Credit is increasing steadily but it is still only a minority of tax credit claimants who understood the relevance to them.** Over half of customers were aware of Universal Credit (55%) compared with 45% in 2014. However only 20% were aware of Universal Credit (or were aware that there are changes taking place to the tax credit system) and knew that this will ultimately affect their tax credit claim.

Appendix A: Customer Profile

This section describes the demographic profile of customers claiming Child Tax Credits, Working Tax Credits or both, in August 2015 (i.e. those eligible for the survey). It focuses on characteristics which are of particular significance for tax credits claims, including age, work status, and income.

Age

Around half of tax credits customers (51%) were in the 30-39 years age bracket, whilst smaller (and similar) proportions were aged under 30 (22%) or 40-49 (19%) (see Figure A1).

Figure A1: Age of tax credits customers

Base: All tax credits customers (1336)
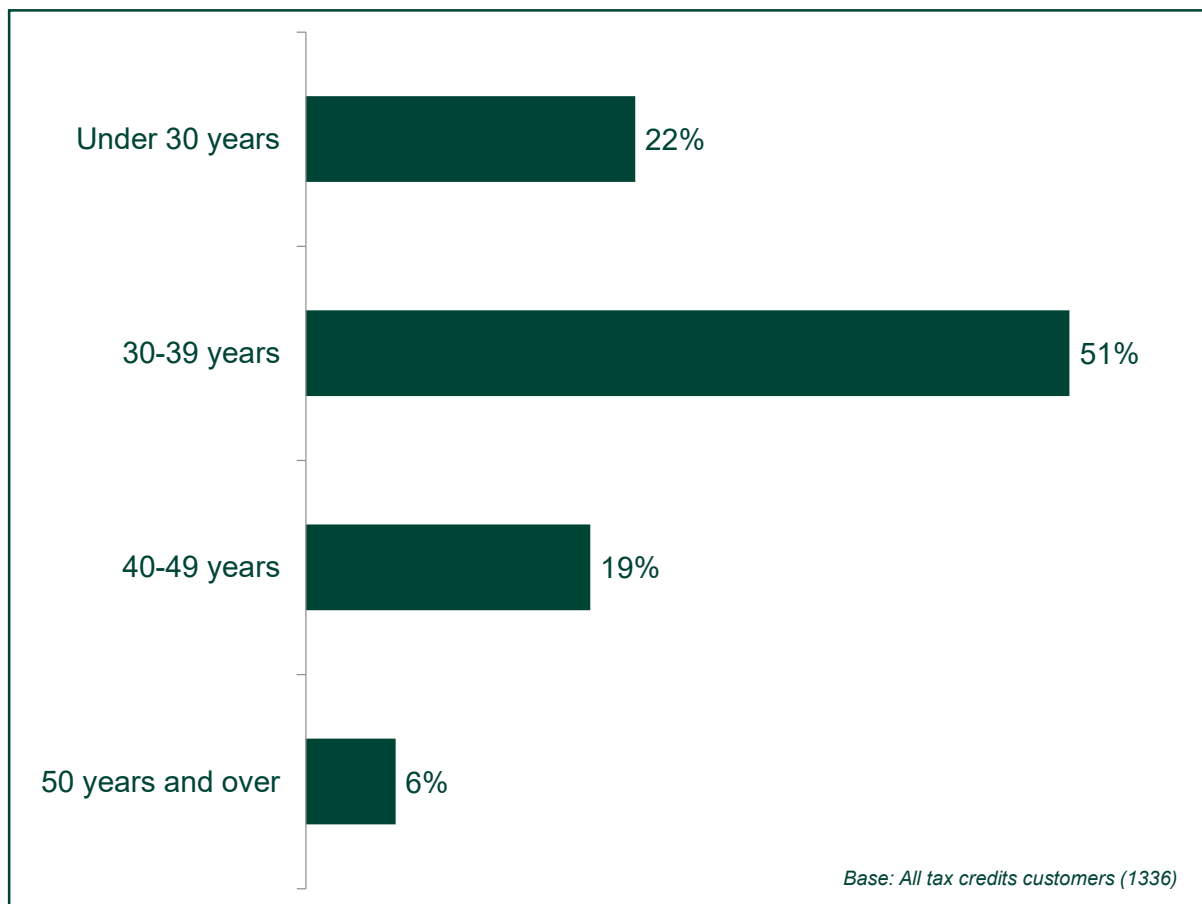
Employment status

Around two-thirds of all tax credits customers were in work at the time of the survey (65%). Specifically, 58% were working full-time and 6% were working part-time (i.e. less than 16 hours a week). Over a third (35%) said that they were not working. Nearly a fifth of those in work said that they were self-employed (18%, equating to 11% of all tax credits customers).

Figure A2 shows customer's work status combined with that of their partner, to provide a more thorough understanding of the circumstances of those who took part in the survey.

Figure A2: Household working status

Base: All tax credits customers (1336)
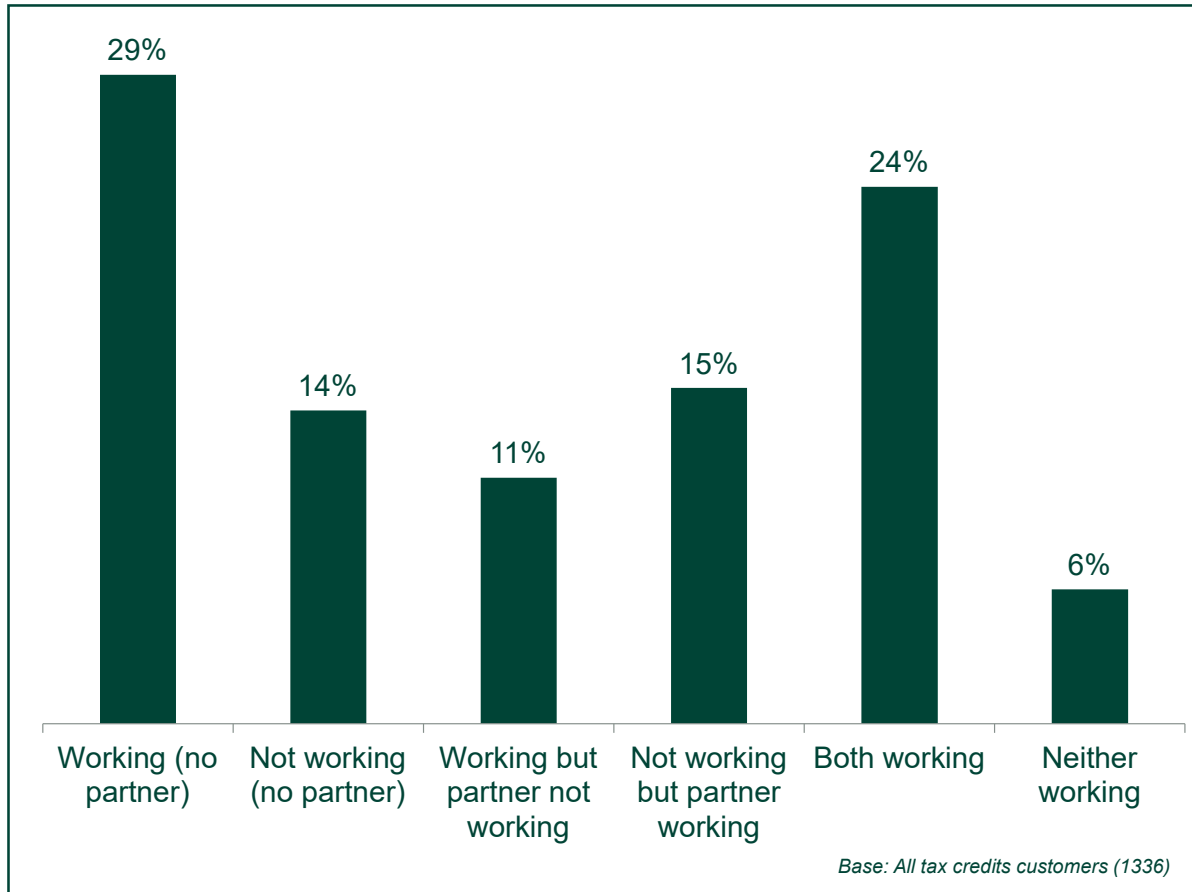
Income

The amount of tax credits that customers are eligible is based on their household income. As shown in Figure 5.2, the majority of customers had an annual household income of less than £30,000 (81%). The largest proportion reported an income of between £10,000 and £20,000 a year.

Figure A3: Household income

Less than £10,000	10%
£10,000 a year up to £20,000	57%
More than £20,000 up to £30,000	14%
More than £30,000 a year	8%
Don't know	1%
Refused	10%

Base: All tax credits customers (1336)
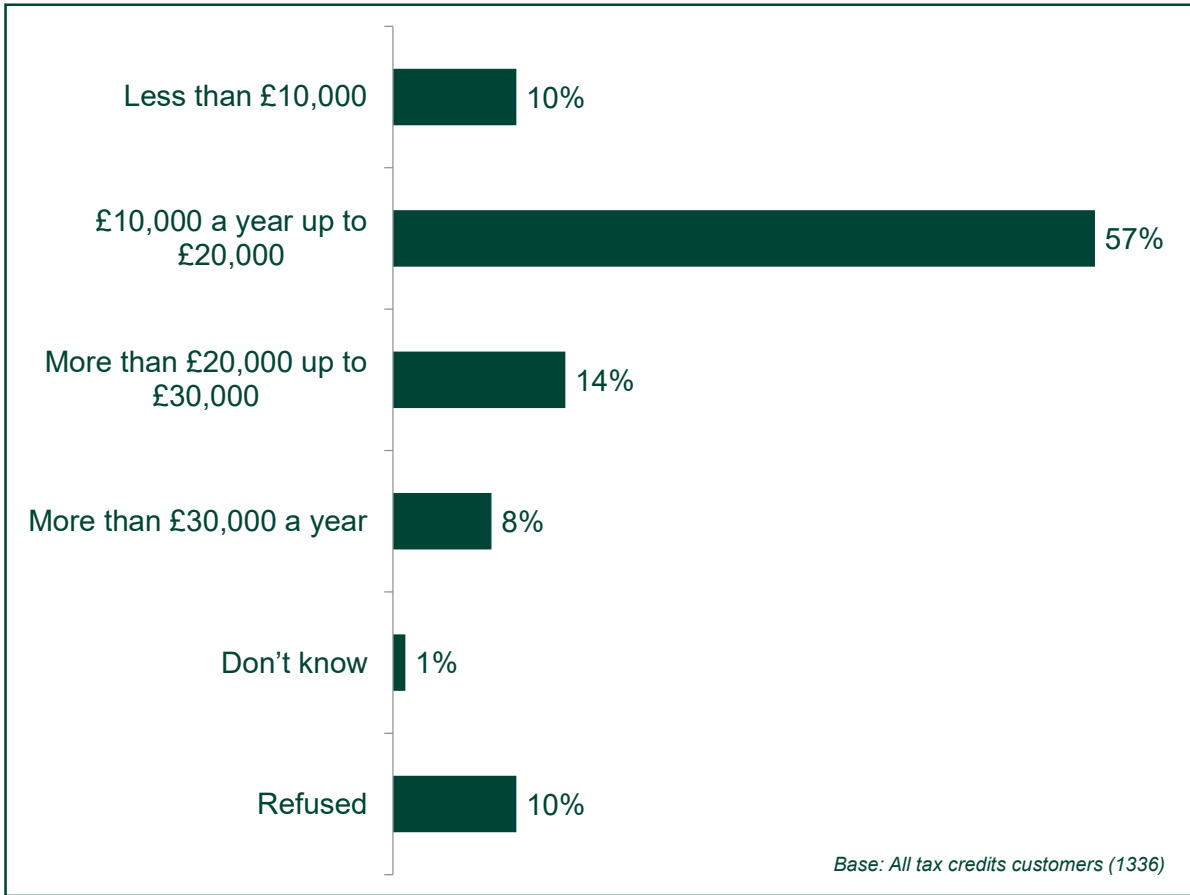
Appendix B: Multi-variate analysis

Key Driver Analysis was conducted to help to provide additional insight into some of the key findings from the report.

Key Driver Analysis is a statistical technique which aims to show the relative influence of different factors on the finding of interest. In this case we looked to understand which of a range of demographic factors and factors relating to the nature of customers' tax credits claims were most important in determining how they renewed their claim and their understanding of the impact of Universal Credit.

A stepwise Ordinal Logistic Analysis was performed on two Derived Variables (DVs) using the GOLDmineR[5] algorithm. The optimal set of drivers was selected using their un-merged original categories, except in instances where there were empty categories where a manual merge was performed. The importance of each predictor across all of its levels was determined based on a function of its overall correlation with and standardised effect on the DV.

Further to this the effect sizes for each of the categories of the retained predictors relative to a reference category is presented in the form of a higher or lower than average odds of a higher score. Odds which are significantly different from one (equivalent to "same odds as reference category") are highlighted.

This analysis can be interpreted as assessing the effects of the predictor on the DV while holding all other predictors equal and, unlike the univariate analysis, takes account of correlations between the predictors.

Four categorical outcome variables of interest were defined; to be used as dependent variables (DVs) in the analysis:

1. Renewal method

2. Digital status

3. Digital completion

4. Knowledge/awareness of Universal Credit

The purpose of the analysis was to understand the extent to which customers' experiences could be predicted by a number of socio-demographic independent variables:

- Type of tax credit claimed

- Gender

- Age

- Whether in work or not

- Working hours (full time vs. part time)

- Household income

- Education level

- Whether English spoken as a first language (or bilingual in English and another language) or English spoken as a second language

- Length of claim

These were all treated as categorical predictors, with the effect of each category considered in terms of its causal relationship with each of the four DVs.

Statistically significant outputs of the multivariate analysis is shown in the tables below.

Renewal method

Renewed online

Socio-demographic independent variables	P-value multivariate analysis	Direct importance to Derived Variable
Age	0.0029	52%
Level of education	0.00017	48%

Renewed online: odds for each category of importance of being different from average category outcome

Socio-demographic independent variables	Odds of a one point increase in score on a DV (from a baseline) v. predictor reference category (shown by a *)
Age	
Under 30	1
30-39	1.93
40-49	2.22
50+	2.71
Refused	1.62
Education level	
Other / No quals / unknown*	1
At least GCSE level	2.17

Renewed by helpline

Socio-demographic independent variables	P-value multivariate analysis	Direct importance to Derived Variable
Education level	0.00041	35%
Gender	0.026	26%
Language	0.032	17%

Renewed by helpline: odds for each category of importance of being different from average category outcome

Socio-demographic independent variables	Odds of a one point increase in score on a DV (from a baseline) v. predictor reference category (shown by a *)
Education level	
Other / No quals / unknown*	1
At least GCSE level	0.55
Gender	
Female	1
Male	0.69

Socio-demographic independent variables	Odds of a one point increase in score on a DV (from a baseline) v. predictor reference category (shown by a *)
Language	
English first lang / bilingual in English	1
English Second language	0.52

Renewed by post

Socio-demographic independent variables	P-value multivariate analysis	Direct importance to Derived Variable
Age	0.064[22]	49%
Language	0.027	24%

Renewed by post: odds for each category of importance of being different from average category outcome

Socio-demographic independent variables	Odds of a one point increase in score on a DV (from a baseline) v. predictor reference category (shown by a *)
Age	
Under 30	1
30-39	0.72
40-49	0.55
50+	0.68
Refused	0.44
Education level	
English first lang / bilingual in English	1
English Second language	1.94

Digital Status

Socio-demographic independent variables	P-value multivariate analysis	Direct importance to Derived Variable
Education level	0.0000018	60%
Whether in work or not	0.0098	21%
Household income	0.042	19%

[22] Variable is included in the model even though it has a p value about 0.05 as it is close to this level and at least one age band shows a statistically significant difference to the reference category i.e. those under 30.

Digital status: odds for each category of importance of being different from average category outcome

Socio-demographic independent variables	Odds of a one point increase in score on a DV (from a baseline) v. predictor reference category (shown by a *)
Education level	
Other / No quals / unknown*	1
At least GCSE level	1.27
Work status	
Not in work / refused*	1
In work	1.16
Household income	
Less than £30k*	1
£30k plus	1.21
Unknown/Missing	0.91

Digital completion

Socio-demographic independent variables	P-value multivariate analysis	Direct importance to Derived Variable
Age	0.0011	60%
Type of tax credits	0.017	24%

Digital completion: odds for each category of importance of being different from average category outcome

Socio-demographic independent variables	Odds of a one point increase in score on a DV (from a baseline) v. predictor reference category (shown by a *)
Age	
Under 30	1
30-39	0.72
40-49	0.55
50+	0.68
Refused	0.44
Type of tax credit	
Working tax credits only	1
Child tax credits only	1.26
Both	1.98

Knowledge/Awareness of Universal Credit

Socio-demographic independent variables	P-value multivariate analysis	Direct importance to Derived Variable
Age	0.0095	27%
Length of claim	0.048	20%
Household income	0.02	16%
Gender	0.003	15%
Type of tax credit received	0.014	12%
Education level	0.049	10%

Knowledge/Awareness of Universal Credit: odds for each category of importance of being different from average category outcome

Socio-demographic independent variables	Odds of a one point increase in score on a DV (from a baseline) v. predictor reference category (shown by a *)
Age	
Under 30*	1*
30-39	1.24
40-49	1.37
50+	1.33
Refused	0.94
Length of claim	
Up to 1 year*	1*
1 - 2 years	1.07
2 - 3 years	1.31
3 - 4 years	1.3
4+ years	1.07
Household income	
Less than £30k*	1*
£30k plus	0.91
Unknown/Missing	0.78
Gender	
Female*	1*
Male	1.27
Type of tax credit claimed	
Working Tax Credit*	1*
Child Tax Credit	1.32
Both	1.23
Education Level	
Other / No quals / Unknown*	1*
At least GCSE Level	1.17

Appendix C: Tables

S5. Are you currently receiving Working Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit, or both?	
Base: All	*1336*
Working Tax Credit	16%
Child Tax Credit	43%
Both	41%

S6. Can I just check, are you currently living with a husband / wife, or partner?	
Base: All	*1336*
Yes	57%
No	43%

A1. I'm going to ask you some questions about renewing your tax credits. Can I just check, did you start your tax credits claim before 6th April 2015?	
Base: All who started their claim since September 2014	*166*
Yes – started claim BEFORE 6th April 2015	67%
No – started claim SINCE 6th April 2015	30%
Don't know	4%

A2. Thinking about the last time your tax credits were renewed, we understand you received a renewals pack from HMRC with an Annual Review form saying that your claim for Tax Credits would be automatically renewed? Do you recall receiving this?	
Base: All automatic renewal (from sample) who did not start claim since 6th April 2015	*277*
Yes	89%
No	8%
Don't know	3%

A3. After you received your renewals pack, how clear was it what you needed to do next? Was it...	
Base: All who received auto-renewal pack	247
Very clear	53%
Fairly clear	35%
Neither clear or unclear	1%
Fairly unclear	6%
Very unclear	1%
Don't know	3%

A4. At the time your tax credits were due for renewal, did you...?	
Base: All who received auto-renewal pack	247
Report any change in circumstances to HMRC and in the process renew your tax credits?	17%
Or did you not report any changes in circumstances or do anything to renew your tax credits?	83%

A5. At the time your tax credits were due for renewal, did you do anything to renew your tax credits?	
Base: All who DON'T KNOW type of pack they received	9
Yes	55%
No	45%

A5Dum. Whether went through a renewals process	
Base: All	1336
Went through renewals process	72%
Did not go through renewals process	28%

A6. When you received your renewals pack, did you contact HMRC about anything else in relation to your claim?	
Base: All who received auto-renewal pack	247
Yes	10%
No	89%
Don't know	1%

A7. How did you contact HMRC? Was it...	
Base: All who contacted HMRC about anything else about claim	*27*
By calling the HMRC helpline	99%
Via the HMRC online renewals service	5%

A8. What was the reason for contacting HMRC?	
Base: All who contacted HMRC about anything else about claim	*27*
To let them know about a change in my circumstances	42%
To find out what I needed to do	18%
To get reassurance about how income or costs were calculated	11%
To check on the progress of the renewal	11%
To report mistakes on the form	4%
To tell them I wanted to renew	4%
Other	17%

A9. How did you most recently renew your tax credits with HMRC? By this I mean what method you finally used to submit the renewal for your tax credits. Did you...	
Base: All who went through renewals process	*1088*
Send a form or letter by post to renew	28%
Call HMRC helpline to renew	43%
Renew using the HMRC online renewal service	27%
Other	*%
Don't know	2%

A9. How did you most recently renew your tax credits with HMRC? By this I mean what method you finally used to submit the renewal for your tax credits. Did you…	
Base: All	*1336*
Send a form or letter by post to renew	20%
Call HMRC helpline to renew	31%
Renew using the HMRC online renewal service	19%
Other	*%
Don't know	1%
Auto-renewal	23%
Did not go through renewals process as new claimant	5%

A10. Thinking about your most recent renewal, did you renew your tax credits on time?	
Base: All who went through renewals process	*1088*
Yes	93%
No	5%
Don't know	2%

A11. What were the reasons you did not renew on time the last time?	
Base: All who DID NOT renew on time	*35*
Disorganised / Forgot to renew / Personal circumstances	38%
Waiting for documents (e.g. P60) / Collecting information	36%
Did not get a reminder from HM Revenue & Customs	8%
Unable to get through to the helpline	5%
Did not know about the deadline	3%
Other	14%
Don't Know	5%

A12. What prompted you to renew your tax credits?	
Base: All who went through renewals process	*1088*
Receiving a letter / renewals pack from HMRC	87%
Advertising campaigns	28%
Own reminder e.g. calendar note	18%
Receiving a text message from HMRC	16%
Friends and family	8%
Change in circumstances i.e. returned to work	1%
I just know / remembered	1%
They stopped paying it	1%
I rang up the HMRC and was reminded	*%
Accountant prompted / end of year accounts	*%
Other	1%
Don't Know	1%

A13. Did you receive a text message from HMRC to remind you to renew your tax credits?	
Base: All who went through renewals process	*1088*
Yes	25%
No	62%
Don't Know	13%

A14. Did you see or hear any HMRC advertising campaigns to remind tax credit claimants to renew?	
Base: All who went through renewals process	*1088*
Yes	73%
No	25%
Don't Know	1%

A15. Did you most recently renew your tax credits in the same way as last year or in a different way?	
Base: All who went through renewals process	*1088*
By using the same method as last year	64%
By using a different method from last year (including if automatically renewed)	23%
Or have your tax credits only been renewed once	9%
Don't know	4%

A16. How did you renew your tax credits last year? Was it...	
Base: All who have renewed via different method from last time	*370*
By sending a form or letter by post to renew	44%
By calling HMRC helpline to renew	47%
By using the HMRC online renewal service	4%
Or you did not need to renew your tax credits because it was automatically renewed	4%
Other	*%
Don't know	1%

A16. How did you renew your tax credits last year? Was it...	
Base: All who went through renewals process	*1088*
By sending a form or letter by post to renew	32%
By calling HMRC helpline to renew	46%
By using the HMRC online renewal service	7%
Or you did not need to renew your tax credits because it was automatically renewed	1%
Other	*%
Tax credits been renewed once	9%
Don't know	4%

A17. Why did you decide to submit your renewal by post?	
Base: All who have submitted renewal by post	*209*
I have always renewed by post	24%
I couldn't use the online service	14%
I thought I had to submit by post	11%
It was sent by post so I renewed it by post	7%
I couldn't get through to the helpline	4%
I thought it would be quicker	4%
I like to be able to take my time to think about the application	3%
I thought it would be safer	3%
Cheaper to renew by post (e.g. no phone bill, free postage)	2%
Recommended this method by HMRC	2%
First method I came across / most obvious way	1%
Recommended to use this method by someone else (not HMRC)	1%
Was not aware of any other method	1%
Other	11%
Don't know	27%

A18. Why did you decide to submit your renewal by calling HMRC?	
Base: All who have submitted renewal by telephone	*365*
I prefer to talk to someone	34%
Easiest, most convenient method	23%
Had a query/issue I couldn't resolve when trying to renew online/by post	15%
I thought my renewal would be processed quicker	13%

I couldn't use the online service	12%
I have always renewed by phone	12%
I thought it would be quicker	5%
I had a change of circumstance	5%
Can check for mistakes there and then	4%
Prefer personal acknowledgement that it's done	3%
I thought it would be safer	3%
Have trouble with reading and writing	3%
I left it a bit late / had gone over the deadline	2%
I was calling concerning another issue and was prompted to renew	1%
I thought I had to renew by phone	1%
I was chasing for the renewals pack	1%
Recommended this method by HMRC	1%
Was not aware of any other method	*%
Recommended to use this method by someone else (not HMRC)	*%
Other	2%
Don't know	1%

A19. Why did you decide to submit your renewal online?	
Base: All who have submitted renewal online	*498*
I thought it would be quicker	61%
I could renew when it was convenient for me	32%
Easiest, most convenient method	28%
I couldn't get through to the helpline	11%

I thought my renewal would be processed quicker	6%
Didn't know I could renew online last year	2%
I thought it would be safer	2%
Online forms made more sense / were easier to follow	2%
Cheaper to renew online (e.g. no phone bill)	1%
Just wanted to give it a go	1%
Recommended this method by HMRC	1%
I thought I had to renew online	1%
I renewed online last year	1%
Previously didn't have access to a computer / the internet	1%
Was not aware of any other method	1%
I saw a TV advert	*%
Recommended to use this method by someone else (not HMRC)	*%
Other	3%
Don't know	*%

A20. Before you renewed your tax credits, did you try to renew your tax credits in any of the following ways …	
Base: All who remembered how they renewed their recent tax credit claim	*1074*
By sending a form or letter by post	4%
By calling the HMRC helpline	11%
By using the HMRC online renewal service	14%
Some other way	*%
Or did you not try to renew your tax credits in any other way	72%
Don't know	1%

A20. Before you renewed your tax credits, did you try to renew your tax credits in any of the following ways …	
Base: All who went through renewals process	*1088*
By sending a form or letter by post	4%
By calling the HMRC helpline	11%
By using the HMRC online renewal service	14%
Some other way	*%

Or did you not try to renew your tax credits in any other way	71%
Don't know	3%

A20Dum. Online activity	
Base: All who went through renewals process	*1088*
Renewed online	27%
Tried to renew online but ended up renewing via another channel	14%
Did not renew online and has not tried to do so	60%

A21SUM. Which, if any, of the following are reasons why you tried to renew online but ended up using another method to complete your renewal? SUMMARY	
Base: All who have tried to renew online but ended up renewing via another channel	*110*
You could not get on to the website	17%
The website crashed or kept on crashing whilst you were using it	15%
The instructions on how to complete the renewal online were confusing	38%
The questions you had to answer were not clear	29%
You did not know the answer to some of the questions	31%
You did not have some or all of the information you needed to hand	30%
It was taking too long	35%
You didn't trust the website you were using	18%
The online verification process put you off	51%
It wouldn't let me submit the information / had to speak to someone	15%
Error made when submitting online	1%
Not very good with computers	2%
Other	6%
None/DK	7%

A22. What information did you have difficulty in getting when trying to renew online?	
Base: All who did not have information to hand	*31*
Income of you (and partner) in the last tax year	53%
Passport / Driving license details	12%
The 15 digit online reference number on annual review	11%
Details of changes in circumstances	8%

Bank details	3%
Address	2%
Other	8%
None of these	2%
Don't know	7%

A23. How confident were you that you knew what to do during the last renewal process. Were you...	
Base: All who went through renewals process	*1088*
Very confident	41%
Fairly confident	45%
Neither confident nor unconfident	5%
Not very confident	6%
Not at all confident	2%
Don't know	1%

A24. After you submitted your most recent renewal, how clear was it what would happen next? Was it...	
Base: All who went through renewals process	*1088*
Very clear	50%
Fairly clear	34%
Neither clear or unclear	5%
Fairly unclear	5%
Very unclear	4%
Don't know	2%

A25-1. Thinking about your most recent renewal, did you call the HMRC Tax Credits helpline to discuss the renewal with them at any of the following stages…? Before you attempted to renew your claim	
Base: All who went through renewals process	*1088*
Yes	21%
No	76%
Don't know	3%

A25-2. Thinking about your most recent renewal, did you call the HMRC Tax Credits helpline to discuss the renewal with them at any of the following stages…? Whilst you were trying to renew your claim	
Base: All who went through renewals process and did not renew by phone	*723*

Yes	9%
No	89%
Don't know	1%

A25-3. Thinking about your most recent renewal, did you call the HMRC Tax Credits helpline to discuss the renewal with them at any of the following stages…? After submitting the renewal for your claim	
Base: All who went through renewals process	*1088*
Yes	20%
No	78%
Don't know	2%

A25SUM. Whether called HMRC Tax Credits Helpline at ANY stage. SUMMARY	
Base: All who went through renewals process	*1088*
Yes	37%
No	60%
Don't Know	*%
No/Don't Know	3%

A26-1. Why did you call the HMRC helpline before you attempted to renew your claim?	
Base: If called HMRC helpline before attempted to renew claim	*204*
To confirm details/talk through a complicated renewal	14%
To change some of the information on the renewal	13%
Wanted to report a change in circumstances	13%
General clarification / guidance	12%
To see if I could renew by phone	10%

To find out how to renew	9%
To find out if I needed to renew	6%
Had not received renewal pack	5%
To get help with calculations	4%
Needed to query stopped payments / threats to stop payments	3%
Query / clarification concerning under / over payment	3%
I had issues with the online service	2%
Needed additional information	1%
To check on the progress of the renewal	1%
Other	8%
Can't remember	2%
Don't know	2%

A26-2. Why did you call the HMRC helpline whilst you were trying to renew your claim?	
Base: If called HMRC helpline whilst trying to renew your claim	*58*
To confirm details/talk through a complicated renewal	20%
To check on the progress of the renewal	14%
General clarification / guidance	13%
I had issues with the online service	12%
To get help with calculations	11%
To change some of the information on the renewal	8%
To find out how to renew	7%
Wanted to report a change in circumstances	6%
To see if I could renew by phone	5%
To check they had received the renewal	4%
To find out how long the renewal would take	2%
Other	9%
Don't know	3%

A26-3. Why did you call the HMRC helpline after submitting the renewal for your claim?	
Base: If called HMRC helpline after trying to renew your claim	*208*
To change some of the information on the renewal	26%
To check on the progress of the renewal	21%
To confirm details/talk through a complicated renewal	18%
General clarification / guidance	10%
Wanted to report a change in circumstances	9%
To check they had received the renewal	8%

Query / clarification concerning under / over payment	7%
Needed to query stopped payments / threats to stop payments	6%
To find out how long the renewal would take	4%
To get help with calculations	2%
Needed additional information	1%
To find out how to renew	1%
Other	7%
Can't remember	*%
Don't know	1%

A27. Did you seek any help/ help from anywhere else around the time of the renewals process?	
Base: All except those who started their claim since 6th April 2015	*1293*
Yes	5%
No	95%
Don't Know	*%

A28. Where did you seek help from?	
Base: All who sought other help	*61*
Friends or relatives (including other Tax Credit claimants)	34%
Independent professional advisor e.g. accountant	30%
Local council offices	8%
Citizens Advice Bureau	6%
Job centre/ Jobcentre Plus	5%
HMRC website	5%
A voluntary/ community/ charitable organisation	4%

Spouse / partner	3%
Gov.uk or Direct.gov website	1%
Write a letter/fax to HMRC	1%
Another website	*%
Other	17%

A29. Were you aware that you could renew online?	
Base: All who did NOT renew online and have NOT tried to do so	*480*
Yes	80%
No	19%
Don't know	1%

A30. Could you tell me whether any of the following are reasons why you did not try to apply online...?	
Base: All aware that could renew online but did NOT do so	*387*
You prefer to talk to someone on the phone	82%
You were worried you would make a mistake/provide incorrect information	45%
You prefer to do things by post	44%
You are concerned about privacy or security	35%
You are unfamiliar with using computers/the internet	24%
It was unclear how to renew online	17%
You do not have access to computers/the internet	16%
You have difficulties reading/writing	6%
You have a disability or impairment which prevents you using computers/ the internet	1%
Other reason	4%
None	2%

A31. How likely do you think it is that you will renew your tax credits online next time you come to renew? Would you say that you would be...	
Base: All aware that could renew online but did NOT do so	*387*
Very likely to renew online	11%
Fairly likely	25%
Neither likely nor unlikely	8%
Fairly unlikely	19%
Very unlikely to renew online	36%
Don't know	1%

A32. Thinking about the online renewal process, how easy or difficult did you find it to use?	
Base: All who renewed ONLINE	*498*
Very easy	57%
Fairly easy	36%
Neither easy nor difficult	3%
Fairly difficult	3%
Very difficult	*%
Don't know	*%

A33-1. Using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means very easy and 5 means very difficult, how easy or difficult did you find the following aspects of making your renewal online...? Getting on to the correct website to renew	
Base: All who renewed ONLINE	*498*
1 - Very easy	67%
2	21%
3	8%
4	2%
5 - Very difficult	1%
Don't know	*%

A33-2. Using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means very easy and 5 means very difficult, how easy or difficult did you find the following aspects of making your renewal online...? Following the instructions on how to complete the renewal	
Base: All who renewed ONLINE	*498*
1 - Very easy	70%
2	18%
3	7%
4	4%
5 - Very difficult	1%
Don't know	*%

A33-3. Using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means very easy and 5 means very difficult, how easy or difficult did you find the following aspects of making your renewal online...? Going through the identity verification process	
Base: All who renewed ONLINE	*498*
1 - Very easy	57%
2	20%
3	12%
4	5%
5 - Very difficult	4%
Don't know	1%
N/A	*%

A33-4. Using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means very easy and 5 means very difficult, how easy or difficult did you find the following aspects of making your renewal online...? Answering the questions	
Base: All who renewed ONLINE	*498*
1 - Very easy	68%
2	23%
3	5%
4	1%
5 - Very difficult	1%
Don't know	*%

A33-5. Using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means very easy and 5 means very difficult, how easy or difficult did you find the following aspects of making your renewal online...? Getting the information required	
Base: All who renewed ONLINE	*498*
1 - Very easy	60%
2	26%
3	10%
4	2%
5 - Very difficult	2%
Don't know	*%
N/A	*%

A33-6. Using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means very easy and 5 means very difficult, how easy or difficult did you find the following aspects of making your renewal online...? Calculating income	
Base: All who renewed ONLINE	*498*
1 - Very easy	59%
2	23%
3	11%
4	3%
5 - Very difficult	3%
Don't know	1%
N/A	*%

A34. How easy or difficult was it to register for using the online renewal service? Would you say that it was...	
Base: All who renewed ONLINE	*498*
Very easy	49%
Fairly easy	36%
Neither easy nor difficult	7%
Fairly difficult	5%
Very difficult	1%
Don't know	2%

A35. How satisfied are you with how long it took to submit complete your renewal online? Would you say that you are...	
Base: All who renewed ONLINE	*498*
Very satisfied	70%
Fairly satisfied	24%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	3%
Fairly dissatisfied	2%
Very dissatisfied	*%
Don't know	*%

A36. Overall, how satisfied are you with the process of submitting your tax credits renewal online? Would you say that you are...	
Base: All who renewed ONLINE	*498*

Very satisfied	66%
Fairly satisfied	27%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	4%
Fairly dissatisfied	2%
Very dissatisfied	2%

A37. Overall, how satisfied are you with the process of renewing your Tax Credits by post? Would you say that you are...	
Base: All who renewed BY POST	*209*
Very satisfied	53%
Fairly satisfied	36%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	8%
Fairly dissatisfied	1%
Very dissatisfied	1%
Don't know	*%

A38. Overall, how satisfied are you with the process of renewing your Tax Credits by telephone? Would you say that you are…	
Base: All who renewed BY TELEPHONE	*365*
Very satisfied	57%
Fairly satisfied	29%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	4%
Fairly dissatisfied	4%
Very dissatisfied	5%
Don't know	1%

A39. Would you say that you submitted your most recent renewal earlier or later than previous renewals, or was it at about the same time?	
Base: All who renewed ONLINE	*498*
Earlier	13%
Later	13%
Same time	66%
Don't know	9%

A40. Would you say that you submitted your most recent renewal earlier or later than previous renewals, or was it at about the same time?	
Base: All who renewed BY TELEPHONE	*365*
Earlier	13%

Later	15%
Same time	63%
Don't know	9%

A41. Would you say that you submitted your most recent renewal earlier or later than previous renewals, or was it at about the same time?	
Base: All who renewed BY POST	*209*
Earlier	8%
Later	7%
Same time	76%
Don't know	9%

A42. How likely is it that you would renew your tax credits online the next time you need to do so? Would you say that you would be...	
Base: All who renewed ONLINE	*498*
Very likely to renew online	86%
Fairly likely	9%
Neither likely nor unlikely	1%
Fairly unlikely	1%
Very unlikely to renew online	2%

A43. Why do you say that?	
Base: All who unlikely to renew online again	*13*
Paper forms are a lot easier to follow / online form not clear	37%
Prefer personal acknowledgement that it's done	21%
Too much margin for error - put in the correct information but still get incorrect information back	19%
Misunderstanding concerning whether or not I had applied	8%
Verification process was difficult	3%
Other	22%

A44. How likely is it that you would renew your tax credits online? Would you say that you would be...	
Base: All unaware that could renew online	*87*

Very likely to renew online	38%
Fairly likely	28%
Neither likely nor unlikely	2%
Fairly unlikely	13%
Very unlikely to renew online	18%
Don't know	1%

A47. Last time you renewed your tax credits, your income information may have been displayed on the renewal form or online. Can you recall this information being displayed?	
Base: All who went through renewals process	*1088*
Yes	57%
No	31%
Don't know	12%

A48. Do you think having this information already provided for you by HMRC made the renewal process...	
Base: All who recall information being displayed	*577*
A lot easier	49%
A little easier	18%
A bit harder	1%
A lot harder	*%
Or did it make no difference	31%
Don't know	1%

A49. Was the information provided by HMRC on the form correct?	
Base: All who recall information being displayed	*577*
Yes	91%
No	8%
Did not check the information (assumed it would be correct)	1%
Don't know	1%

A50. What did you do after finding that this information was incorrect?	
Base: All for whom information on form was incorrect	*41*
Just corrected the form	11%
Contacted HMRC to query the incorrect information	84%
Nothing	6%

Other	3%

A51. Did you use the HMRC guidance notes when renewing your tax credits?	
Base: All who renewed tax credits claim	*1088*
Yes	54%
No	44%
Don't know	2%

A52. How useful were these guidance notes for helping you submit your renewal? Would you say they were...	
Base: All who used guidance notes	*589*
Very useful	45%
Fairly useful	45%
Neither useful nor not useful	5%
Not very useful	3%
Not useful at all	2%

A53. Where do you go to get information about tax credits more generally?	
Base: All	*1336*
HMRC website	40%
Call Tax Credits helpline	27%
Gov.uk or Direct.gov website	22%
Search using Google	21%
Nowhere (doesn't seek advice)	8%
Friends or relatives (including other Tax Credit claimants)	5%
Job centre/ Jobcentre Plus	3%
Citizens Advice Bureau	2%
Independent professional advisor e.g. accountant	1%
Local council offices	1%
A voluntary/ community/ charitable organisation	1%
Another website	1%

Guidance notes in the renewal pack	1%
Search using another search engine tool	1%
Email to HMRC	1%
Letters / forms (from HMRC)	1%
Other	3%
Don't know	1%

B1-1. Do you think that this change in circumstance would need to be reported to HMRC? If your child aged over 16 leaves an approved education or training course	
Base: All	*1336*
YES- Would need to report to HMRC	91%
NO - would not need to report to HMRC	5%
Don't Know	4%

B1-2. Do you think that this change in circumstance would need to be reported to HMRC? If you start or stop a job	
Base: All	*1336*
YES- Would need to report to HMRC	98%
NO - would not need to report to HMRC	2%
Don't Know	1%

B1-3. Do you think that this change in circumstance would need to be reported to HMRC? If your income goes up by more than £5,000	
Base: All	*1336*
YES- Would need to report to HMRC	94%
NO - would not need to report to HMRC	2%
Don't Know	4%

B1-4. Do you think that this change in circumstance would need to be reported to HMRC? If your working hours fall below or go above the minimum required to qualify for Tax Credits	
Base: All	*1336*
YES- Would need to report to HMRC	96%
NO - would not need to report to HMRC	2%
Don't Know	2%

B1-5. Do you think that this change in circumstance would need to be reported to HMRC? If you move in with a new partner	
Base: All	*1336*
YES- Would need to report to HMRC	97%
NO - would not need to report to HMRC	2%
Don't Know	2%

B1-6. Do you think that this change in circumstance would need to be reported to HMRC? If your childcare costs change by £10 or more a week	
Base: All	*1336*
YES- Would need to report to HMRC	80%
NO - would not need to report to HMRC	6%
Don't Know	15%

B2. In the past 12 months, have you informed HMRC of a change in your circumstances related to your Tax Credits claim? This may include informing HMRC of any changes when you renewed your tax credits.	
Base: All	*1336*
Yes	55%
No	43%
Don't know	2%

B3. What was the change of circumstance?	
Base: All who have reported a change in circumstances	*740*
Income changed (or partner's income changed)	26%
Working hours changed (or partner's working hours changed) in some other way (i.e. did not start	20%
Changed job (or partner changed job)	16%
Childcare costs changed	14%
Partner moved in or out	12%
Had a baby	8%
A child over 16 continued in full time education	8%
Moved home	7%
Started working 30 hours or more per week (or partner did)	4%
A child left full-time education	3%
Change in disability status of child	2%
Changes to other benefits	2%
A child started full-time education	2%
Child moved in or out	2%
Child became eligible	1%
Became self-employed / went from employed to self employed	1%
Got married	1%
Change of name	1%
Became employed / went from employed to self employed	1%
Other	4%
Don't know	1%

B4. Thinking about the last change you reported how did you inform HMRC of this change in your circumstance? Was it....	
Base: All who have reported a change in circumstances	*740*
By calling the HMRC helpline	93%
By post	7%
Online	5%
Other	*%
Don't know	1%

B5. Did you update HMRC of this change in circumstances at the same time as submitting your tax credit renewal?	
Base: All who have reported a change in circumstances	*740*
Yes	37%
No	59%
Don't know	4%

B6. How easy or difficult was it to tell HMRC about your change in circumstance? Was it....	
Base: All who have reported a change in circumstances	*740*
Very easy	51%
Fairly easy	28%
Neither easy nor difficult	5%
Fairly difficult	10%
Very difficult	7%
Don't know	*%
EASY	79%
DIFFICULT	16%

B7. How easy was it to use the online service to update HMRC on your change of circumstances? Would you say that it was…	
Base: All those updated change in circumstances online	*64*
Very easy	60%
Fairly easy	32%
Neither easy nor difficult	5%
Fairly difficult	1%
Don't know	1%

B8. Overall, how satisfied are you with the process of using the online service to update HMRC on your change of circumstances? Would you say that you are…	
Base: All those updated change in circumstances online	*64*
Very satisfied	56%
Fairly satisfied	37%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	4%
Fairly dissatisfied	2%
Don't know	1%

B9. Do you think being able to report a change of circumstances online would make a difference to how quickly you can report such changes to HMRC?	
Base: All	*1336*
Yes – can report quicker	64%
Yes – would report slower	6%
No difference	22%
Don't know	8%

B10. How likely is it that you would report a change of circumstances online, rather than via post or telephone?	
Base: All	*1336*
Very likely	38%
Quite likely	19%
Neither likely nor unlikely	6%
Quite unlikely	14%
Very unlikely	21%
Don't know	1%

B11. Are any of the following reasons why you would be unlikely to report a change in circumstances online?	
Base: All unlikely to report change of circumstances online rather than post or telephone	*392*
You have a disability or impairment which prevents you using computers/ the internet	4%
You are unfamiliar with using computers/the internet	24%
You do not have access to computers/the internet	18%
You prefer to talk to someone on the phone	97%
You prefer to do things by post	37%
You are concerned about privacy or security	46%
You have difficulties reading/writing	10%
You were worried you would make a mistake/provide incorrect information	59%
It was unclear to you how to renew online	28%
You found using the online renewals service difficult	30%
You have had trouble using online HMRC services in the past	25%
Find it easier to do over the phone	1%
Other	1%
None/Don't know	*%

B12. Have you ever reported a change in circumstances to HMRC whilst claiming Tax Credits?	
Base: All	*1336*
Yes - in last 12 months	55%
Yes - but not in last 12 months	28%
Never	16%
Ever	83%
Don't Know	1%

B13. Are you aware of there being a time limit in which you would have to report the change of circumstance to HMRC?	
Base: All	*1336*
Yes	55%
No	42%
Don't know	2%

B14. What do you think is the time limit for reporting a change of circumstance to HMRC?	
Base: All aware of a time limit for reporting change in circumstance	*739*
Within 7 days	23%
Within 30 days	45%
30+ days	15%
Don't know	17%

B15. Thinking about all of the times your circumstances have changed while you have been claiming Tax Credits, in what timeframe from the change occurring have you informed HMRC of the change in circumstances? Has it generally been…	
Base: All who have reported a change in circumstances (in last 12 months or ever)	*1129*
Within 7 days	54%
Within 30 days	32%
Within 3 months	6%
Or at the point at which your claim is renewed	4%
Other	1%
Don't know	3%

B15SUM. Thinking about all of the times your circumstances have changed while you have been claiming Tax Credits, in what timeframe from the change occurring have you informed HMRC of the change in circumstances? Has it generally been…	
Base: All	*1336*
Within 7 days	45%
Within 30 days	27%
Within 3 months	5%
Or at the point at which your claim is renewed	3%
Other	1%
Don't know	2%
Never reported a change	16%
Don't know if ever reported a change	1%

B16. Has there ever been a time when you have not reported a change of circumstance to HMRC within 30 days of the change occurring for any reason?	
Base: All	*1336*
Yes	11%
No	87%
Don't know	2%

B17. Did you go on to report the change of circumstance to HMRC despite not reporting it within 30 days?	
Base: All who have at some point not reported a change in 30 days period	*145*
Yes	88%
No	12%

B18. What was the change of circumstances that you had but did not report?	
Base: All who have had a change in circumstances but not reported it to HMRC within 30 days	*145*
Respondent or their partner's income changed	23%
Childcare costs changed	19%
Partner moved in or out	14%
Respondent or their partner's working hours changed	12%
Respondent or their partner had a baby	10%
Respondent or their partner changed job	9%
A child left full-time education	4%
Respondent or their partner started working 30 or more hours per week	4%
Respondent moved home	3%
Changes to other benefits	2%
Change in disability status of child	1%
A child over 16 continued in full time education	1%
Other	5%
Don't know	3%

B19. Why did you not report this change in circumstance to HMRC?	
Base: All who have ever not reported a change of circumstances within 30 days	*145*
Unsure whether I needed to report that particular type of change in circumstance or not	28%
I did not have the time	18%
Unaware I had to report any changes in circumstances to HMRC	9%
Did not have all the information I needed	8%
I forgot	7%
Due to personal circumstances i.e. on holiday, in hospital	6%
Couldn't get through to the helpline to report the change	6%
Unsure how to report a change in circumstance	5%
Unsure of the timeframe for reporting	5%
I didn't realise I'd had a change in circumstances	4%
I was waiting until I needed to renew my claim	3%
Other	8%
Don't Know	2%

C1. Aside from the process of renewing your Tax Credits, over the past 12 months have you contacted HMRC about your tax credits for any other reason?	
Base: All	1336
Yes	20%
No	80%
Don't know	1%

C2. What was the reason for contacting HMRC about your tax credits on the last occasion that you contacted them?	
Base: All who have contacted HMRC for any reason other than a change in circumstances	256
To report a change of circumstance	45%
To make a query / get advice	21%
To discuss my under or overpayment	12%
To inform HMRC of a change of address	6%
To query my award	5%
To check entitlement	5%
To find out why I hadn't received a payment	4%
To make sure everything was alright with my claim	4%
To check eligibility	1%
To request a claim pack	1%
To make a complaint	1%
To appeal my award	*%
Other	9%
Can't remember	1%

C3. If you were to submit an enquiry to HMRC, how long would you expect it to take for HMRC to respond to you?	
Base: All	1336
On the same day	6%
Within a day	3%
Within 2-3 days	10%
Within one week	26%
Within 1 to 2 weeks	25%
Longer than 2 weeks	25%
Don't know	5%

C4. If you did not receive a response to your enquiry from HMRC, how long would you wait to chase it up with HMRC?	
Base: All who gave a length of time for how long they would expect it to take for HMRC to respond to them	1265
On the same day	2%
Within a day	3%
Within 2-3 days	9%
Within one week	24%
Within 1 to 2 weeks	26%
Longer than 2 weeks	33%
I would not chase it up	1%
Don't know	1%
It depends on what the enquiry is	1%

C5. If you could receive confirmation that HMRC have received your enquiry or submission of a form would you prefer to receive these via…	
Base: All	1336
Email	59%
Text message	56%
Letter	56%
Telephone	34%
Other	*%
Don't know	*%

D1. Are you currently paying back a tax credits overpayment?	
Base: All	1336
Yes	22%
No	74%
Don't know	3%

D2. Have you ever been told by HMRC that you have received a tax credits overpayment?	
Base: All who are not currently paying back an overpayment or don't know	1026
Yes	39%
No	58%
Don't know	3%

D3. Thinking about the last time you had an overpayment, why do you think you were overpaid?	
Base: All who currently or ever had an overpayment	*723*
Error when submitting renewal (e.g. incorrect income levels)	26%
Had a change of circumstances but did not report it to HMRC at all	6%
Had a change of circumstances but did not report it to HMRC within 30 days	14%
Error / miscalculation on the part of HMRC	10%
Working hours / earnings fluctuate - difficult to calculate	5%
Had a change of circumstances and DID report it in the timeframe but still overpaid	6%
Change in income / earnings / hours	2%
Change of circumstances concerning partner (various)	2%
Other	7%
Don't know	28%

D4. Still thinking about the last time you had an overpayment, did you understand how this overpayment was calculated?	
Base: All who currently or ever had an overpayment	*723*
Yes	49%
No	48%
Don't know	3%

D5. Since starting to pay back your overpayments, have you noticed any changes in how your overpayments have been paid back to HMRC?	
Base: All who currently have an overpayment	*310*
Yes	25%
No	73%
Don't know	2%

D6. What changes have you noticed?	
Base: All who currently have an overpayment	*310*
Monthly payments have decreased / reduced	13%
They deduct it from my reward e.g. tax credits	2%
Instalment amount has changed (unspecified)	2%
I get a report on how much I've paid off	1%
Repayment period has changed e.g. gone from weekly to monthly	1%
Other	5%
Not noticed any changes	73%
Don't know if noticed any changes	2%

E1. Overall, how easy or difficult would you say your experience of tax credits claims in the last 12 months has been?	
Base: All	*1336*
Very easy	33%
Fairly easy	44%
Neither easy nor difficult	11%
Fairly difficult	6%
Very difficult	5%
Don't know	1%

F1. How common do you think people making an inaccurate tax credits claim is? Is it...	
Base: All	*1336*
Very common	18%
Fairly common	45%
Not very common	20%
Not common at all	4%
Don't know	13%

F2. In your view, do you think HMRC is currently putting too much, too little, or about the right amount of effort into reducing inaccurate tax credit claims?	
Base: All	*1336*
Too much	2%
Too little	15%
About the right amount	52%
Don't know	30%

F3. How likely would you say it is for people who regularly make inaccurate tax credits claims to get caught? Is it...	
Base: All	*1336*
Very likely	38%
Quite likely	33%
Not very likely	14%
Not at all likely	2%
Don't know	13%

F4. Compared to 2-3 years ago, do you think that HMRC deals more or less firmly now with people who make inaccurate tax credits claims? Is it...	
Base: All	*1336*
More firmly	42%
Less firmly	1%
About the same	33%
Don't know	23%

F5. What do you think the possible consequences are for people caught making inaccurate tax credits claims?	
Base: All	*1336*
Made to pay the money back	45%
Fines / penalties	41%
Sent to prison	37%
Going to court	25%
Payments stopped	13%
Community service	1%
Don't know	12%

F6. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: HMRC penalties deter people from intentionally making inaccurate tax credit claims. Do you...	
Base: All	*1336*
Strongly agree	22%
Agree	49%
Neither agree nor disagree	15%
Disagree	7%
Strongly disagree	2%
Don't know / unable to say	6%

F8. As far as you are aware, have you been contacted by HMRC about making an inaccurate tax credits claim?	
Base: All	*1336*
Yes	6%
No	94%
Don't know	1%

F9. Do you personally know of anyone that has been contacted by HMRC about making an inaccurate tax credits claim?	
Base: All	*1336*
Yes	7%
No	92%
Don't know	1%

G1. Have you ever heard of Universal Credit?	
Base: All	*1336*
Yes	55%
No	45%
Don't know	*%

G2. Are you aware that there may be changes to the way tax credits are managed over the next few years?	
Base: All who have not heard of Universal Credit	*590*
Yes	43%
No	56%
Don't know	1%

G1/G2. Whether heard of Universal Credit / aware of changes to the way tax credits are managed over the next few years	
Base: All	*1336*
Heard of Universal Credit	55%
Aware of changes	19%
Not aware	26%
HEARD OF OR AWARE	74%
Don't know	*%

G3. Do you think the introduction of Universal Credit will affect your claim for tax credits?	
Base: All who have heard of Universal Credit or are aware of changes to management of tax credits	*998*
Yes	27%
No	27%
Don't know	46%

G3SUM. Do you think the introduction of Universal Credit will affect your claim for tax credits?	
Base: All	*1336*
Heard of / aware of UC and that it will affect them	20%
Heard of / aware of UC but do not think it will affect them	20%
Heard of / aware of UC and don't know whether it will affect them	34%
Not aware	26%
Don't know if aware of UC	*%

G4. Firstly, I'm going to read two statements and would like you to select which one you think is correct...	
Base: All who have heard of Universal Credit	*746*
Once transferred onto Universal Credit I will still be able to claim Tax Credits	30%
Once transferred onto Universal Credit I will no longer be able to claim Tax Credits	58%
Don't know	13%

G5. I'm now going to read a statement and would like you to say if you think it is true or false: 'Once I claim Universal Credit my tax credits will be automatically stopped.' Do you think this is true or false?	
Base: All who have heard of universal credit	*746*
True	60%
False	29%
Don't know	11%