



Customer Satisfaction Tracker

August 2021

Background to research objectives



The SIA commissioned IFF to conduct a tracker survey (last run in 2019) measuring customer satisfaction with the new licence application service (introduced in 2016). New customer satisfaction research is required to provide an up to date and accurate assessment of the latest levels of satisfaction.

The aim was to evaluate the experience of individuals applying for an SIA licence to drive service delivery improvements. This presentation shows the 2021 results (comparing with 2019 where possible).

The more specific objectives of this study are:

- To establish the current level of customer satisfaction with the licence application service;
- To establish the customer satisfaction levels with the ease of use of the licensing system
To identify areas where satisfaction is low and to identify the reasons behind low satisfaction rates;
- To identify areas where satisfaction is high and to identify the reasons behind high satisfaction rates;
- To identify areas and ways in which to improve customer satisfaction;
- To understand the experience of the applicant and their overall views of the process, looking at how the applicant perceives the SIA at each touch point, assessing the quality of information and the level of service provided

How people apply for a licence

Individuals

- Individual registers for a personal online account
- Completes their own online application
- Visit Post Office to verify ID documents, have their photo taken and pay for their application

Licence Management

- Individual registers for a personal online account
- Links to employer, who then completes application, provides photo and pays for their application on the individual's behalf

Licence Assist

- Individual registers for a personal online account
- Links to employer, who completes application and pays for their application on the individual's behalf
- However, individual must visit the Post Office to have their ID documents verified and photo taken when making an application for a new licence and also in certain circumstances for licence renewals.

Licence Pay Only

- Individual registers for a personal online account
- Individuals complete their own application
- Links to employer, who pays and submits the individual's application on their behalf.
- However, individual must visit the Post Office to have their ID documents verified and photo taken when making an application for a new licence and also in certain circumstances for licence renewals.

Quantitative phase



1,000 Computer assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) interviews lasting 17 minutes



Individuals who had recently applied or renewed their SIA licence (14th June - 20th July 2021) – 750 interviews



Employers who had recently submitted applications for employees (14th June - 20th July 2021) – 250 interviews

Sample provided by SIA



Fieldwork conducted
June – July 2021

Qualitative phase

20 in-depth telephone interviews lasting 30 minutes



12 with individuals



8 with employers

Sample derived from those who took part in quantitative survey and gave consent to be re-contacted for qualitative follow-up interviews.

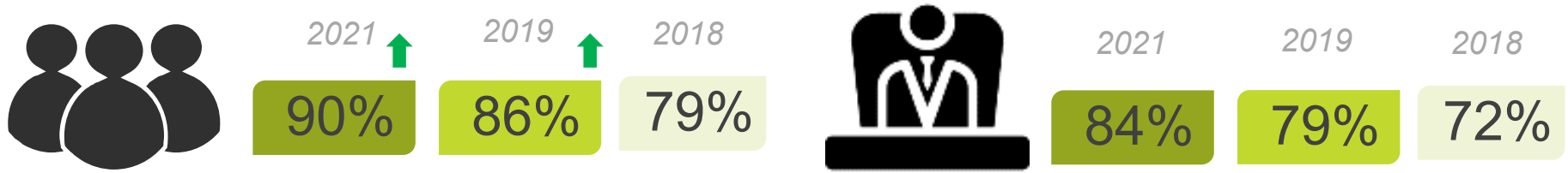


Fieldwork conducted
August 2021

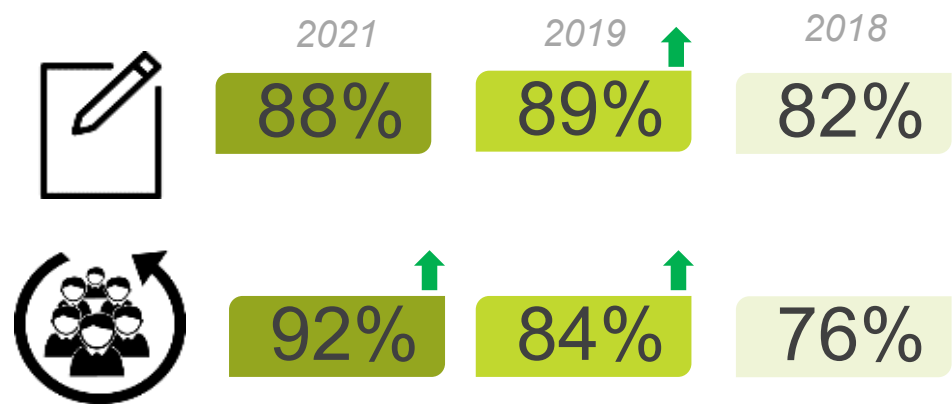
Key findings – satisfaction with application process



Satisfaction levels have continued to increase for a second wave in a row for individuals whilst remaining steady for employers



Renewals are driving the increase in satisfaction levels for individuals



2021 bases: Individuals (750); Employer (250); New application (306); Renewal (444)
 2019 bases: Individuals (750); Employer (250); New application (373); Renewal (377)
 2018 bases: Individuals (781); Employer (219); New application (365); Renewal (416)

Key findings – the individual online experience



The majority said SIA was good (rating 5-7 out of 7) at...

| | 2021 | 2019 | 2018 | |
|---|-------|------|------|--|
| Making consistent and fair decisions | 92% ↑ | 88% | 82% | |
| Having clear information to support the application process | 92% | N/A | N/A | Question only asked for first time in 2021. |
| Making it clear what you needed to do to apply for a licence | 91% | N/A | N/A | Question only asked for first time in 2021. |
| Being kept up-to-date with the application progress | 91% | N/A | N/A | Question only asked for first time in 2021. |
| Making it simple and straightforward to apply/renew (or process for employers) | 89% ↑ | 83% | 77% | |
| Giving prompt service to applicants/renewals (or application submissions for employers) | 88% ↑ | 84% | 77% | |
| Making decisions within the expected time | 88% ↑ | 83% | 75% | Previously “promised time”. Treat comparison with caution. |
| Pricing the licence fairly | 79% ↑ | 70% | 69% | |

Satisfaction amongst individuals with these aspects of the SIA service has continued to increase. There’s been a 9pp increase in pricing, likely due to the drop in cost of a licence from £220 to £190 in late 2019.

2021 bases: Individuals (750)
 2019 bases: Individuals (750)
 2018 bases: Individuals (781)

Key findings – the employer online experience



The majority said SIA was good (rating 5-7 out of 7) at...



- Making consistent and fair decisions
- Being kept up-to-date with the application progress
- Making it clear what you needed to do to apply for a licence
- Having clear information to support the application process
- Making it simple and straightforward to apply/renew (or process for employers)
- Giving prompt service to applicants/renewals (or application submissions for employers)
- Making decisions within the expected time
- Providing timely response to contact via helpline

| | 2021 | 2019 | 2018 |
|---|-------|------|------|
| Making consistent and fair decisions | 85% | 83% | 77% |
| Being kept up-to-date with the application progress | 85% | N/A | N/A |
| Making it clear what you needed to do to apply for a licence | 84% | N/A | N/A |
| Having clear information to support the application process | 84% | N/A | N/A |
| Making it simple and straightforward to apply/renew (or process for employers) | 83% ↑ | 71% | 59% |
| Giving prompt service to applicants/renewals (or application submissions for employers) | 82% ↑ | 74% | 60% |
| Making decisions within the expected time | 82% ↑ | 73% | 61% |
| Providing timely response to contact via helpline | 46% | 48% | 35% |

Question only asked for first time in 2021.

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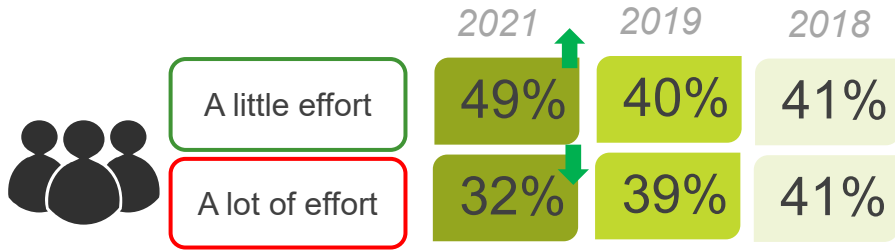
Question only asked for first time in 2021.

Previously “promised time”. Treat comparison with caution.

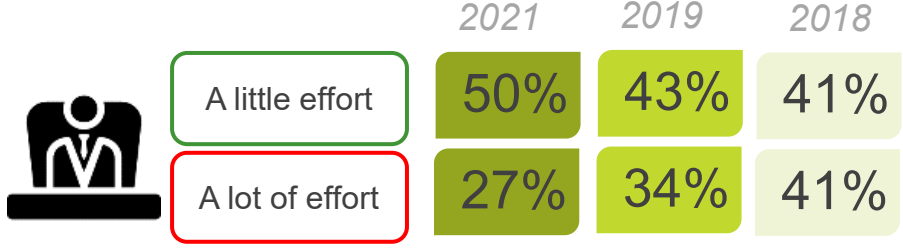
Satisfaction among employers has increased significantly in 2021 across three measures. New statements around clarity and being kept up-to-date have also received strong scores

2021 bases: Employers (250)
 2019 bases: Employers (250)
 2018 bases: Employers (219)

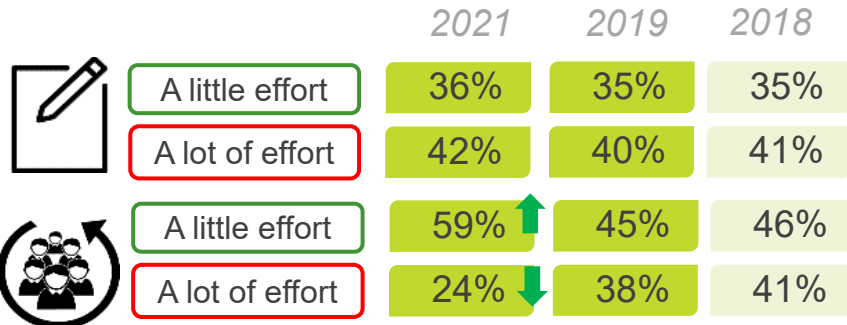
Key findings – Effort involved



Individuals reported that the amount of effort involved in applying has declined

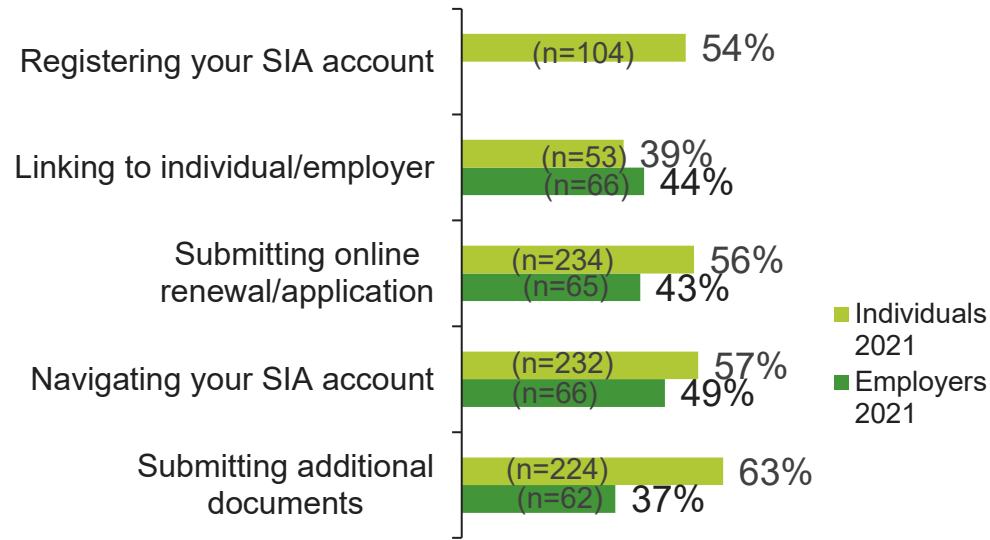


The amount of effort involved for employers has also trended downwards since 2018.



Renewal applicants were significantly more likely to feel that the process took a little effort in 2021 than they were in 2019

Where most effort was involved...



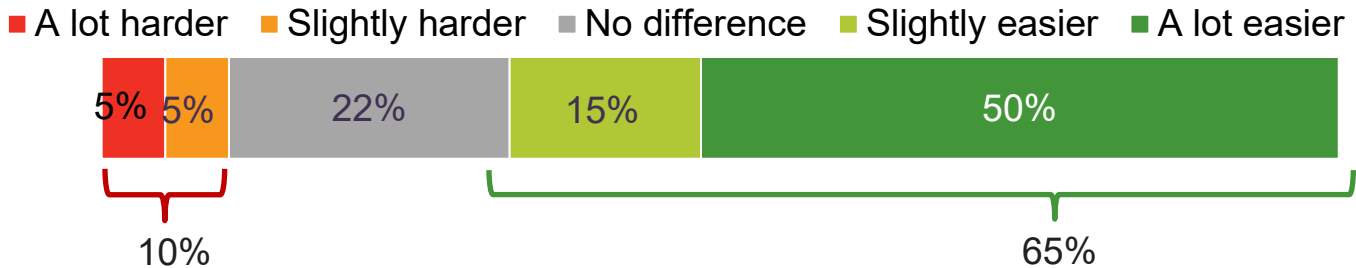
Base: All individuals and employers who put in a lot of effort and for whom these activities applied excluding 'don't knows' (base numbers shown on bars)

2021 bases: Individuals (750); Employer (250); New application (306); Renewal (444)
 2019 bases: Individuals (750); Employer (250); New application (373); Renewal (377)
 2018 bases: Individuals (781); Employer (219); New application (365); Renewal (416)

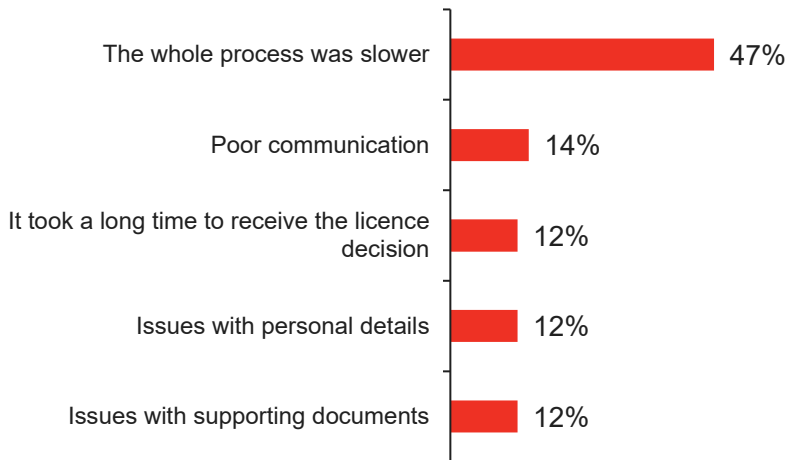
Key findings – Ease in renewing licence



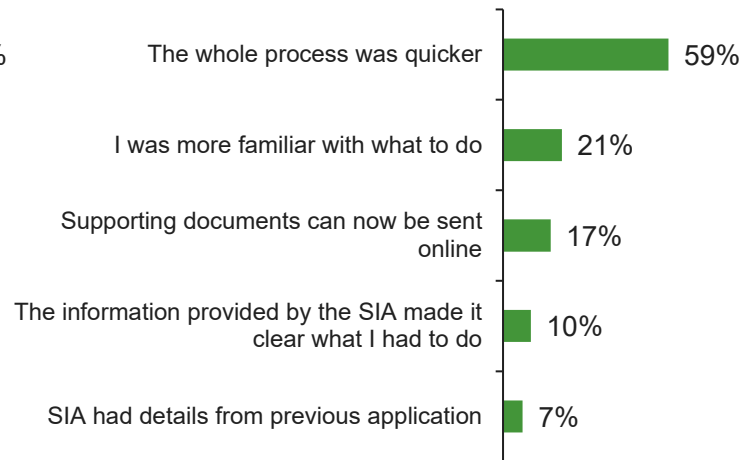
Around two-thirds of individuals renewing their licence found it easier than last time; they reported that this was because the process was quicker this time



Top 5 reasons why it was harder



Top 5 reasons why it was easier



2021 Base: All renewals (444); those who said renewal process was easier (288), those who said renewal process was harder (44)

Key findings – Difficulty involved



The vast majority of individuals find the below activities on the SIA account easy with the exception of contacting the SIA which sits slightly behind the others



Easy

Difficult

Update your contact details

95%

3%

Log in to your account

94%

3%

Link to your employer

93%

4%

Check the progress of your licence application

93%

5%

Apply for a licence

93%

4%

Find information

88%

7%

Contact the SIA

71%





24%

98% of those in the LA channel found it easy to link to their employer, more so than the other channels

2021 individuals (750), "Link to your employer" only asked to those who needed to link to their employer (250). Data for those who found it neither easy nor difficult not shown. 'Don't know' and 'refused' excluded from figures

The online application



| | | 2019 | 2018 | | 2019 | 2018 |
|---|------------------|----------|------|-----|--------------|------|
|  | Individuals | 90% easy | 89% | 87% | 5% difficult | 5% |
|  | New applications | 88% easy | 89% | 87% | 6% difficult | 5% |
|  | Renewals | 91% easy | 90% | 88% | 4% difficult | 5% |
|  | Employers | 84% easy | 87% | 81% | 4% difficult | 6% |

Both employers and individuals found the online application easy, in line with previous years

Base: All who completed or submitted all/part of an online application: 2021 individuals (577), new applications (334), renewals (243), employers (153); 2019 individuals (591), new applications (342), renewals (249), employers (168); 2018 individuals (537), new applications (313), renewals (224), employers (141)

As a result of changes made to the online platform, some customers no longer had to visit the Post Office to verify their documents and could instead upload them when applying. In 2021, **56%** of customers had to go to the Post Office as part of your application process.



New applications

93% Of new applicants had to go to the Post Office



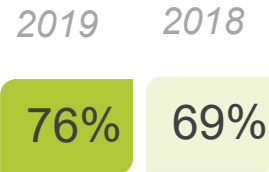
Renewals

28% Of renewals had to go to the Post Office

39% of those who had to go to the Post Office said that the application process took a **lot of effort**. This drops to **23%** amongst those who did not go to the Post Office.

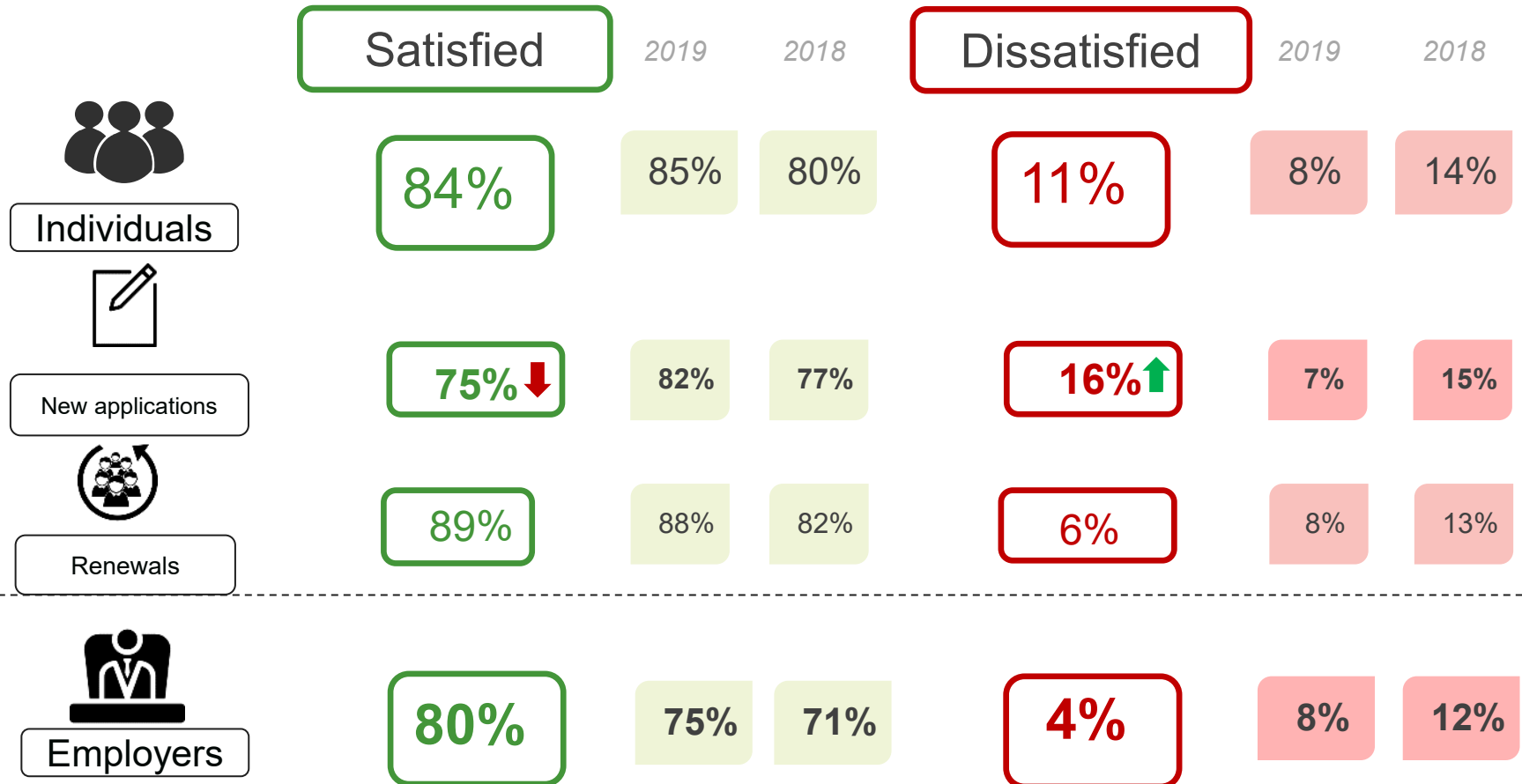
Base: All individuals who were not LM (668)

✓ **Over 8 in 10 (84%) ↑ of applicants found going to the Post Office easy, a significant improvement since 2019.**



Base: All individuals who needed to go to the Post Office, 2021 (368), 2019 (676), 2018 (684)

There has been a decline in new applicants who were satisfied in the length of time taken to receive a licence decision

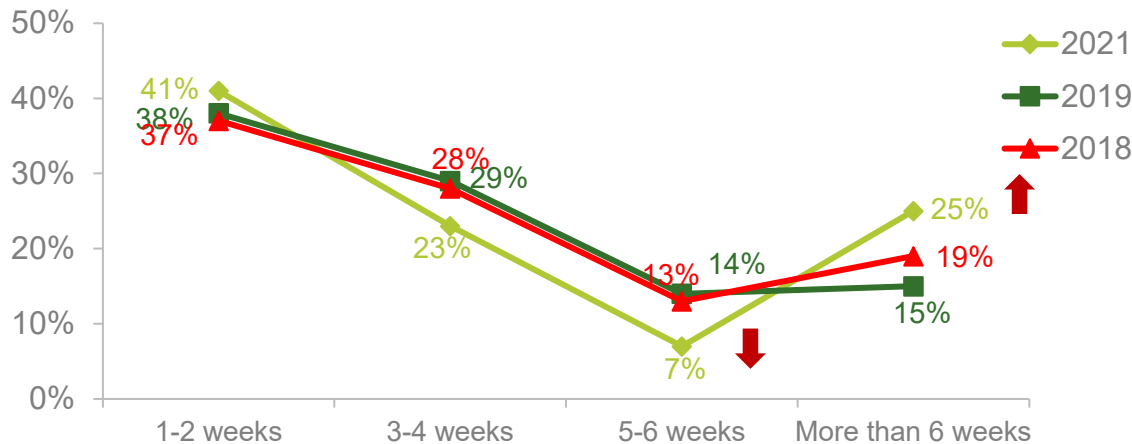


Base: All individuals who have a decision: 2021 (748), new applications (304), renewals (444), 2019 (677), new applications (318), renewals (358), 2018 (598), new applications (251), renewals (347) ; Employers 2021 (250), 2019 (250), 2018 (219)

This dissatisfaction amongst new applicants is driven by an increase in the number who are having to wait more than six weeks for a decision



Length of time taken for a decision amongst **new applications**:



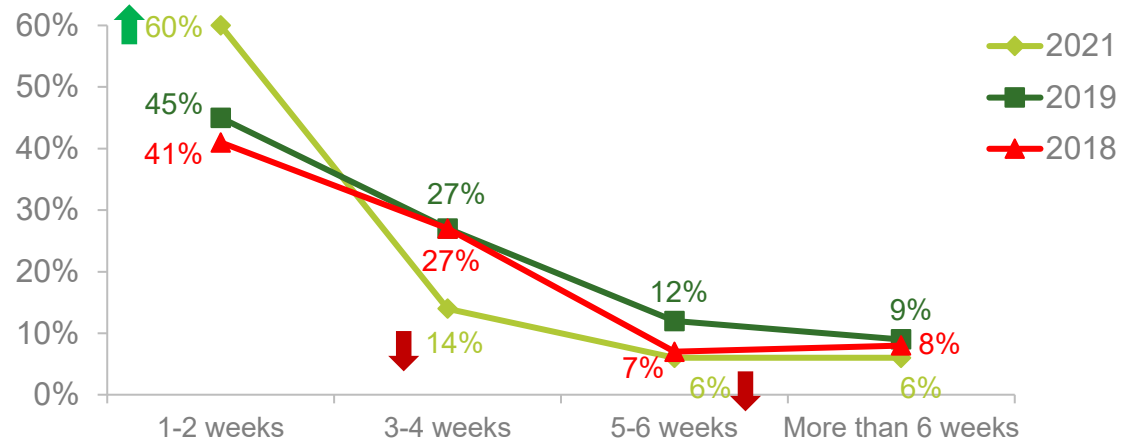
[After waiting 9 weeks for a licence] there were potential jobs that I was going for but by the time I did get my licence and went back to engage with these companies the jobs that I had been going for had already been filled."

Individual, Dissatisfied, new application

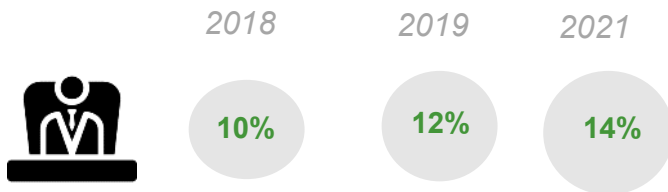
Base: All new applications who have decision: 2021 (304), 2019 (318), 2018 (251)

✓ **Most employers (80%) were very (49%) or fairly (31%) satisfied with the length of time it took to process their online application / renewal**

6 in 10 (60%) of employers got a response within 1-2 weeks, significantly higher than in 2019



14% of employers say they don't know how long it takes to receive a decision



...I think they do warn you that it can take up to ten weeks, and I don't think anyone took quite as long as that. So I suppose, the service as far as you're concerned, was pretty good".

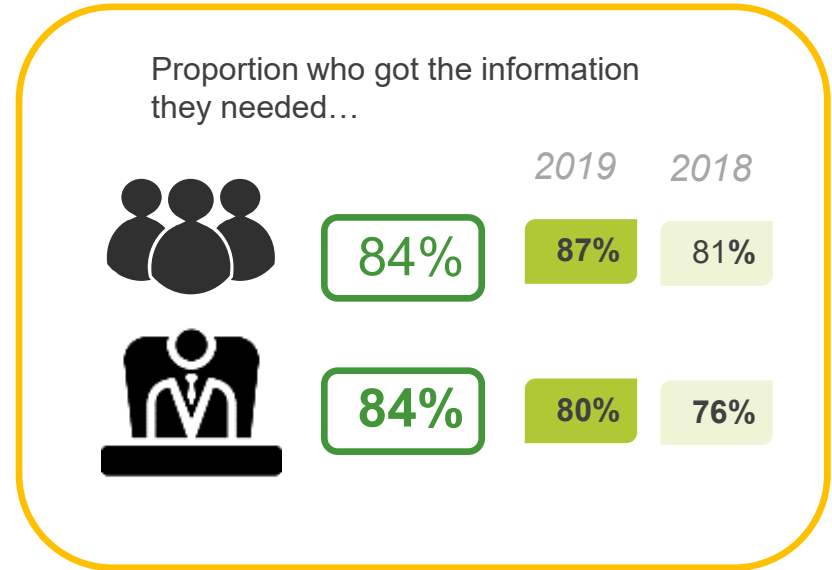
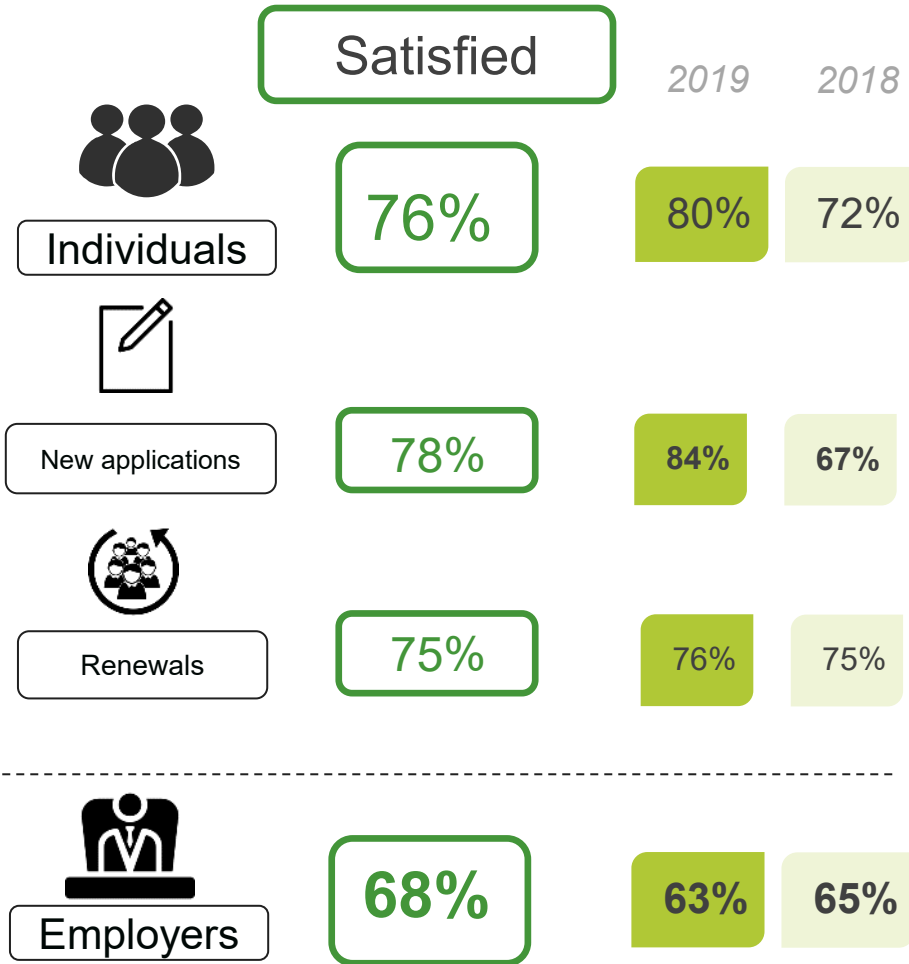
Employer, LPO, Dissatisfied

Base: All employers: 2021 (250), 2019 (250), 2018 (219)

Satisfaction with contacting the SIA



Satisfaction with contacting the SIA is in line with 2019. Most employers and individuals were able to find the information they needed.



Base: All individuals who contacted SIA: 2021 (220) new application (120), renewal (100), 2019 (248), new application (116), renewal (132) 2018 (269), new application (128), renewal (141). All employers who contacted SIA: 2021 (101), 2019 (120), 2018 (126)

Improving the process of contacting the SIA



Most individuals are satisfied with the usefulness of the response, the ease, and the length of time it takes to respond. However, amongst those who were dissatisfied, the qualitative findings demonstrate a sense of frustration in the time they have to wait to get a response, or the generic nature of the response.



Whilst the survey data clearly shows that the majority are satisfied with the response received, there is a sense that some queries are not dealt with quick enough or are ignored. This may be down to the perceived difficulty in reaching someone over the phone

It's easy for me to contact them - I write a message - but then it's waiting for them to respond to me I find frustrating

Individual, LPO, renewal, dissatisfied

It's just very generic... I'd never send an email to somebody at work like that, 'you'll have to create a new account', ... Not, 'I'm ever so sorry for the problems you had up until now, but if you wouldn't mind creating a new account, we'll resolve it', none of that. It was, 'YOU need to create a new account'

Individual, LPO, renewal, dissatisfied

"I've never had anywhere where I can't speak to somebody, it's the only place I know of that trying to speak to somebody is so challenging. If you take that out, it's ok the majority of the time, but that's the only thing that puts the downside to it".

Employer, LPO, Dissatisfied

"[SIA's online offering is] really good, just the lack of contact, being able to contact someone from what the participants are saying - it's just the contact thing for me".

Employer, LPO, Satisfied

- Overall, favourability has trended upwards for employers and satisfaction has increased amongst individuals. The online experience was also very positive for both employers and individuals.
- There was also a decline amongst individuals who reported that the application process was a lot of effort. This could be attributed to not having to go to the Post Office in order to verify documents.
- The length of time taken for a decision to come through has stayed steady compared to 2019 amongst renewals and employers. Satisfaction amongst new applicants has declined in this metric, this may be attributed to the increase in the number who are having to wait more than six weeks for a decision compared to previous years
- Satisfaction amongst both individuals and employers has remained consistent with regards to contacting the SIA.