



Department for Work and Pensions Customer Experience Survey Child Maintenance Service 2020/21

Annual

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Great Britain**

The Customer Experience Survey (CES) is designed to monitor customer satisfaction with the services offered by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to inform improvements in service delivery. It is a cross-sectional study with quarterly interviewing. This research was externally commissioned by DWP with fieldwork and data analysis independently conducted by Ipsos MORI.

The data in this report is based on 3,365 interviews conducted with Child Maintenance Service customers who had contact with the service between April 2020 and March 2021. This report presents data on overall customer satisfaction and data that is mapped to the DWP Customer Charter. The DWP Customer Charter provides standards against which customer service delivery can be measured and a framework to drive improvements to engagement, interaction and satisfaction for both customers and employees. There are four core areas that inform the Customer Charter, which are Right Treatment, Easy Access, Keeping you Informed and Getting it Right.

CES replaced the previous Claimant Service and Experience Survey (CSES) in 2019 and Child Maintenance Service (CMS) customers were included in the survey for the first time. Due to disruption to fieldwork in 2019/20 because of COVID it was not possible to produce an annual dataset. The 2020/21 data provides a new survey baseline for CMS customers. The incomplete 2019/20 findings are included as an annex.

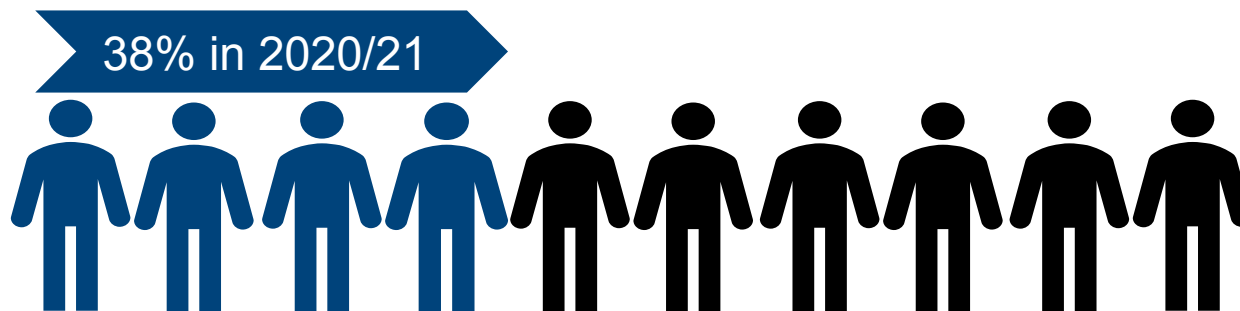
Our thanks go to all those who gave up their time to take part in this study.

About Child Maintenance Service

The Child Maintenance Service (CMS) helps separated families to make financial choices to provide for their children when needed. Child Maintenance is an arrangement between parents to cover the child's living costs when one parent no longer lives with them. Parents use CMS to arrange child maintenance if they do not want to contact the other parent themselves, and many have tried family-based arrangements before deciding to use CMS. CMS is unique in that there are two customers for each case (a Receiving Parent and a Paying Parent), often with an opposing position about their maintenance arrangement. This means that, in many instances, when a positive result for one customer is achieved, the other customer may be less satisfied.

At a glance – Overall customer satisfaction

**Just under four in ten
customers were satisfied with
CMS services overall**



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Abbreviations

| | |
|-------------|--|
| CES | Customer Experience Survey |
| CoC | Change of Circumstances |
| CMS | Child Maintenance Service |
| DWP | Department for Work and Pensions |
| CSES | Claimant Service and Experience Survey |
| PP | Paying Parent |
| RP | Receiving Parent |

About the survey

Survey methodology

Sample

CES is a survey of customers who have had recent contact with CMS rather than all CMS customers. The sample includes parents who have been in contact with the service during each three-month quarter to either: make a new application, report a change of circumstances, or because of arrears. 'Contact' includes any time a customer has phoned, written a letter, emailed, filled in an online form or used the Child Maintenance online portal, or otherwise got in touch with CMS. It is also any time someone from CMS has contacted a customer using any of these methods. For the customer to be included in the overall survey population, the contact needs to have triggered a change in CMS administrative data.

A quota sample design is used to meet minimum interview targets for each parent type and contact reason, with a random sample of CMS customers drawn from the population to meet these quotas. Weighting is then applied to the data so that findings are representative of the survey population: data is weighted by age, gender, length of service use and contact reason.

Fieldwork

The survey moved to a mixed-mode online and telephone approach from 2019, with fieldwork conducted quarterly with CMS customers. The data in this annual report is based on interviews completed with 3,365 CMS customers who had contact with the service between April 2020 and March 2021.

Statistical conventions

Percentages in charts do not always add to 100 per cent due to rounding.

The commentary accompanying this report (in the overall satisfaction and customer characteristics sections) focuses on differences that are statistically significant at a 95 per cent confidence level. This means that you would only expect to see the result caused by chance 1 in 20 times.

Responses for sub-groups with larger base sizes (e.g. White ethnicity) will be more robust and have a lower margin of error than sub-groups with smaller base sizes (such as Asian/Asian British). Therefore, it is possible to identify relatively small differences as being statistically significant when comparing sub-groups which have larger sample sizes.

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Results

Overall satisfaction

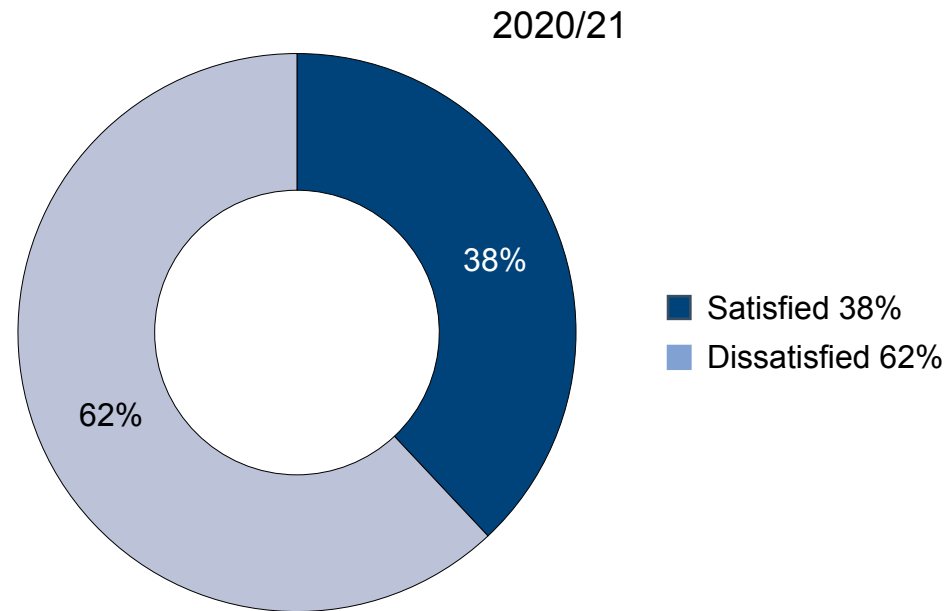
CMS respondents were asked how satisfied they were about the service they had received. It is important when considering the satisfaction of these customers to note that CMS is unique in that there are two customers for each case, often with an opposing position about their maintenance arrangement. This means that, in many instances, when a positive result for one customer is achieved, the other customer may be less satisfied. This can include, for example, where enforcement action is taken to secure child maintenance, where collect and pay arrangements are implemented and where payments and liability are calculated based on known circumstances. Parents often contact CMS at a time where their personal relationships are strained and CMS customers may have a poor quality or non-existent relationship with the other parent. Many have tried family-based arrangements before deciding to use CMS.

These circumstances of CMS customers, particularly arrears customers, mean that they may not necessarily be expected to have high levels of satisfaction.

Just under four in ten customers reported being satisfied with CMS services

In 2020/21 38 per cent of CMS customers said they were either fairly or very satisfied with the overall service provided by CMS (Figure 1). Changes to service delivery because of COVID may have had an impact on satisfaction.

Figure 1: Percentage of customers who were very/fairly satisfied or very/fairly dissatisfied with services provided by CMS



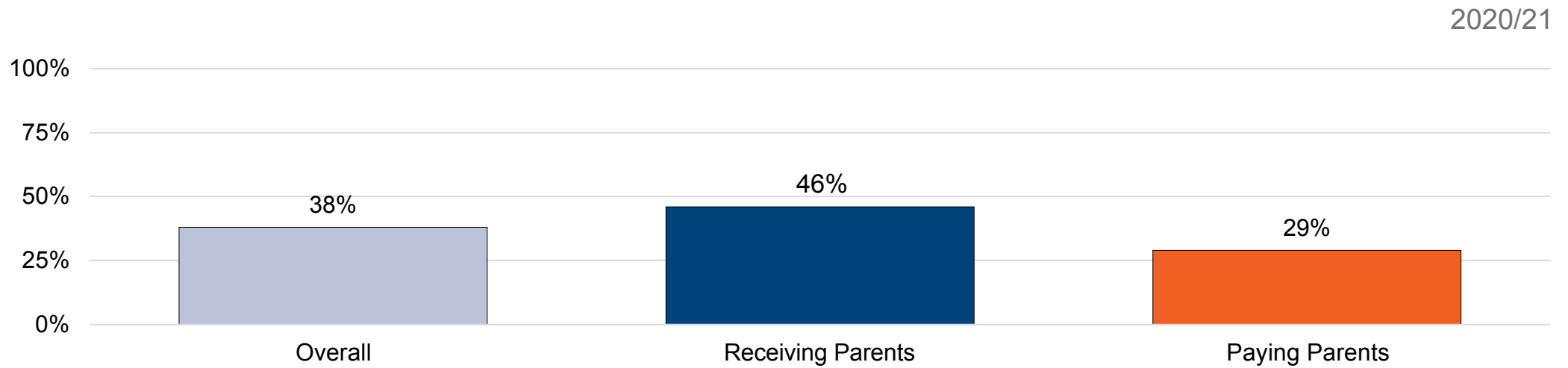
Base: All customers (excludes Don't Know responses)

2020/21: Overall (3,325); Receiving Parents (1,739); Paying Parents (1,586).

Just under half of Receiving Parents and just under a third of Paying Parents were satisfied with CMS services

Receiving Parents were more likely to be satisfied than Paying Parents. Figure 2 shows that in 2020/21 46 per cent of Receiving Parents were satisfied compared to 29 per cent of Paying Parents.

Figure 2: Percentage of customers who were very/fairly satisfied with services provided by CMS, by parent type



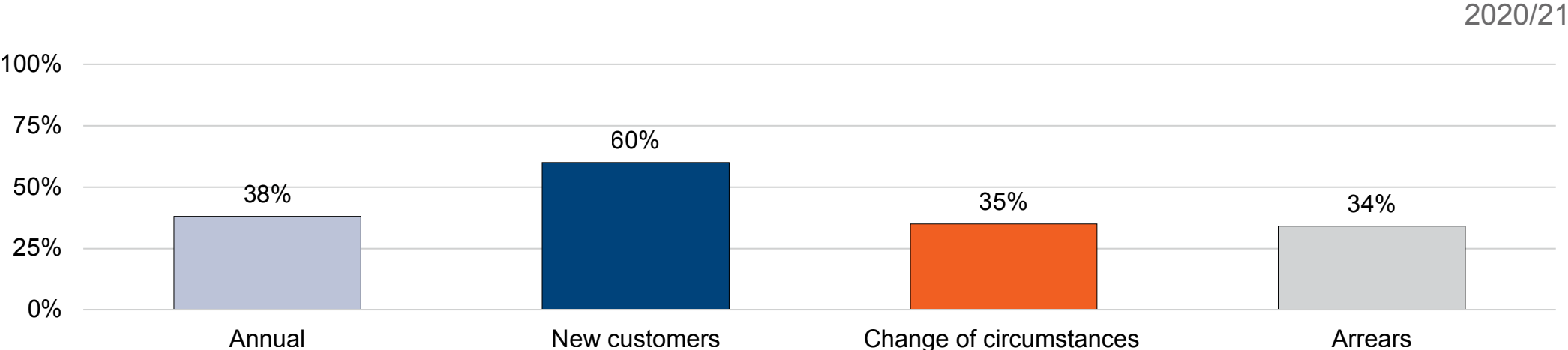
Base: All customers (excludes Don't Know responses)

2020/21: Overall (3,325); Receiving Parents (1,739); Paying Parents (1,586).

Six in ten new customers reported being satisfied with CMS services

In 2020/21 six in ten new customers (60%), and just over a third of change of circumstances (35%) and arrears customers (34%) were satisfied (Figure 3). New customers were more likely to be satisfied than customers in contact with CMS because of either a change in circumstances or arrears.

Figure 3: Percentage of customers who were very/fairly satisfied with services provided by CMS, by contact type



Base: All customers (excludes Don't Know responses)
2020/21: New customers (510); Change of circumstances (2,084); Arrears (731).

DWP Customer Charter measures

This section of the report examines data from survey questions that are mapped against the four core elements of DWP's Customer Charter: 'Right Treatment', 'Easy Access', 'Keeping you Informed' and 'Getting it Right'. These question measures have been selected on the basis that they best represent the charter area topic and have the best coverage of survey respondents (as some questions are only asked to particular customer groups).

Right Treatment

Questions that relate to the Right Treatment charter area are reported on below, including whether customers:

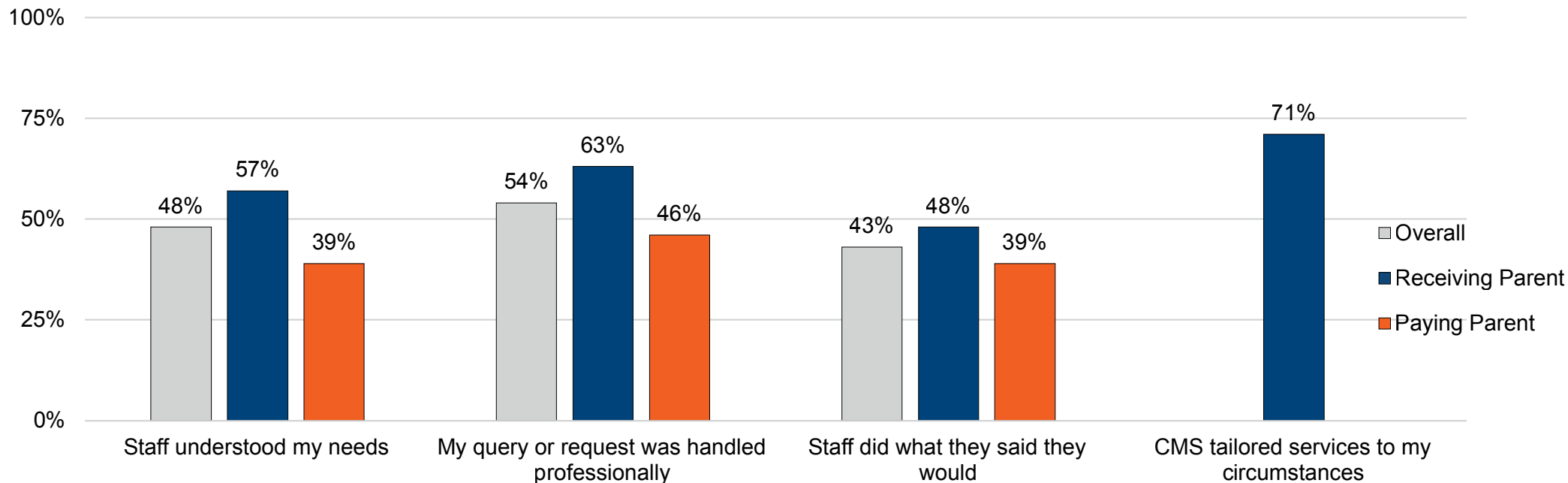
- Agreed staff understood their needs
- Agreed their query or request was handled professionally
- Agreed staff did what they said they would
- Agreed CMS tailored their services to the customer's personal circumstances.

Figure 4 shows that overall, roughly half of customers agreed that staff understood their needs (48%) and their query or request was handled professionally (54%), while 43 per cent agreed staff did what they said they would. Seven in ten Receiving Parents (71%) agreed that CMS tailored their services to their personal circumstances (this question was only asked to Receiving Parents).

Where data is available for both parent types, Receiving Parents were more likely than Paying Parents to agree with each of the 'Right Treatment' questions.

Figure 4: Percentage of customers who agree with key questions relating to the Right Treatment charter area, by parent type

2020/21



Bases:

Staff understood my needs: All who contacted CMS in the past 3 months excluding N/A (2,643; 1,362; 1,281).

My query or request was handled professionally: All who contacted CMS in the past 3 months excluding N/A (2,643; 1,369; 1,274).

Staff did what they said they would: All who contacted CMS in the past 3 months excluding N/A (2,560; 1,315; 1,245).

CMS tailored services to my personal circumstances: All new customers (excluding Paying Parent) (excluding not applicable) (241).

Easy Access

Questions that relate to the Easy Access charter area are reported on below, including whether customers:

- Found it easy to find all the relevant pages/information they needed on the government website (GOV.UK)
- Agreed that the communication they received from CMS was easy to understand
- Found the process of submitting a new claim/reporting a change of circumstances easy
- Found it easy to use their CMS online portal
- Were able to get the information they needed the first time trying.

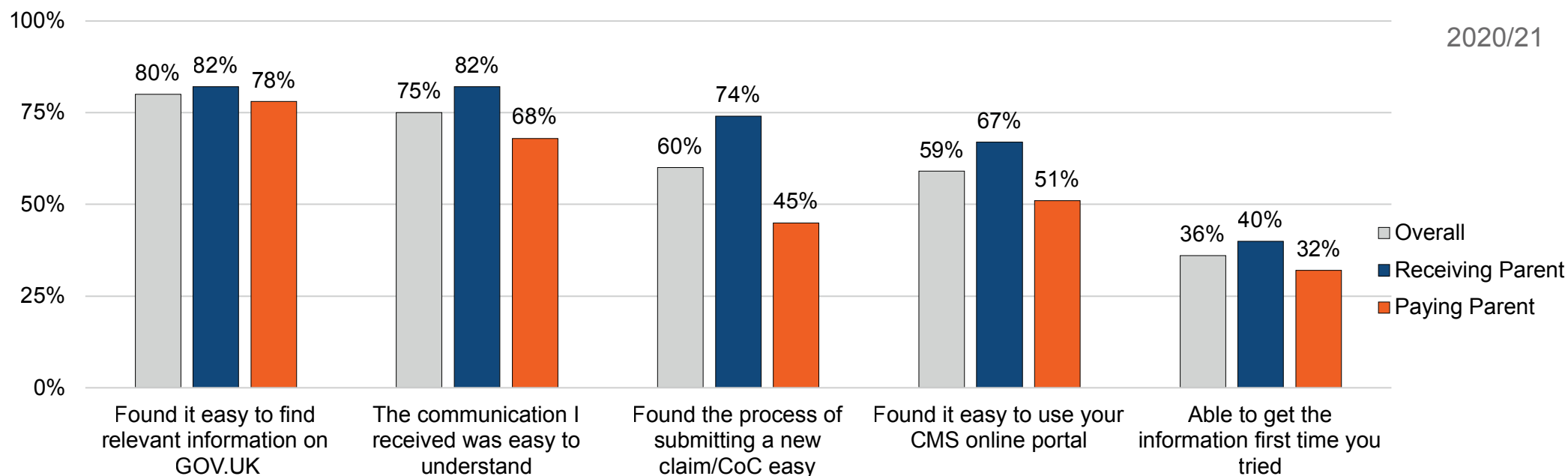
Overall, 80 per cent of new customers found it easy to find all the relevant information on GOV.UK when they were looking to set up a child maintenance arrangement, and three-quarters (75%) agreed the communication they received from CMS was easy to understand (Figure 5).

Overall, six in ten customers (60%) found the process of submitting a new claim or reporting a CoC easy, although the views of Receiving and Paying Parents differed widely.

Over half of those who had access to their CMS online portal found it easy to use (59%), while a third of customers (36%) were able to get the information they needed the first time they tried when they contacted CMS.

Except for ease of finding information on GOV.UK, Receiving Parents were statistically significantly more likely to find it easy to access CMS services compared to Paying Parents.

Figure 5: Percentage of customers who agree/strongly agree with key questions relating to the Easy Access charter area, by parent type



Bases:

Found it easy to find relevant information: All new customers who used GOV.UK (271; 165; 106).

The communication I received was easy to understand: All new customers excluding N/A (516; 274; 242).

Found the process of submitting a new claim/CoC easy: All new and CoC customers (2,058; 1,116; 942).

Found it easy to use your CMS portal: All customers excluding those who did not have access to the CMS online portal (2,742; 1,494; 1,248).

Able to get the information first time you tried: All who contacted CMS in the past 3 months (2,758; 1,442; 1,316).

Keeping you Informed

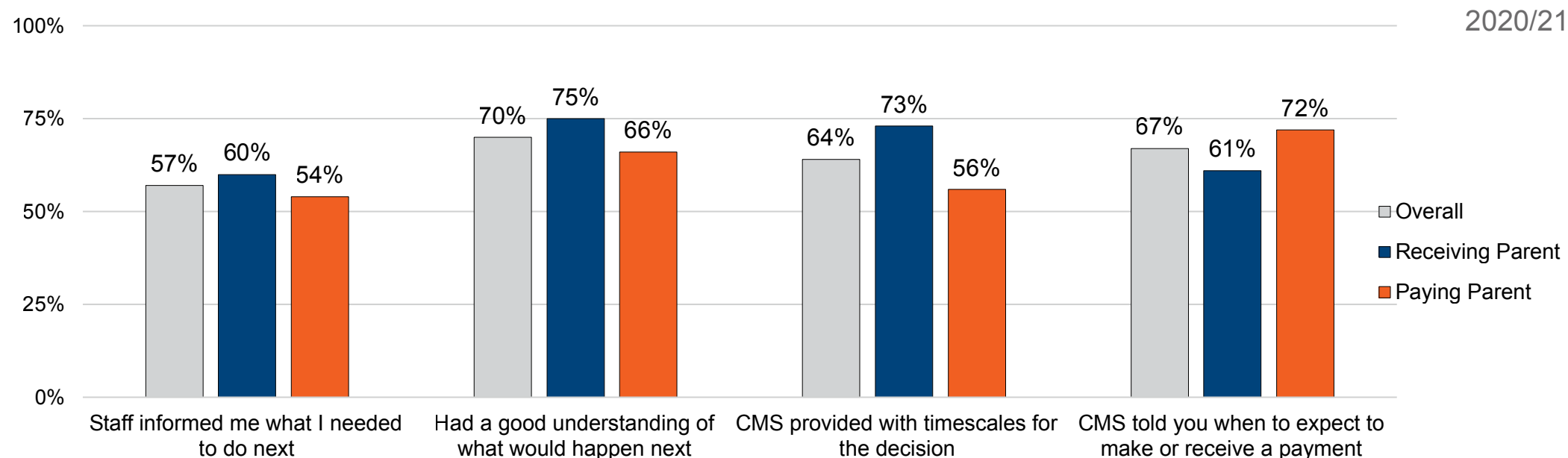
Questions that relate to the Keeping you Informed charter area are reported on below, including whether customers:

- Agreed staff informed them what to do next
- Agreed they had a good understand of what would happen next
- Reported that CMS provided them with timescales for processing the decision around their application
- Reported that CMS told them when to expect to make or receive a payment.

Overall, Figure 6 shows that just under six in 10 customers (57%) agreed that staff informed them what they needed to do next after they had been in contact with CMS, while 70 per cent of new customers agreed they had a good understanding of what would happen next during the application process. Around two thirds agreed that CMS provided them with timescales for processing the decision around their application (64%) and told them when they could expect to make or receive a payment (67%).

Receiving Parents were more likely than Paying Parents to agree with all questions except 'CMS told you when to expect to make or receive a payment', where Paying Parents were more likely to agree (72%).

Figure 6: Percentage of customers who agree/strongly agree with key questions relating to the Keeping you Informed charter area, by parent type



Bases:

Staff informed me what I needed to do next: All who contacted CMS in the past 3 months excluding N/A (2,530; 1,277; 1,253).

I had a good understanding of what would happen next: All new customers excluding N/A (520; 276; 244).

CMS provided with timescales for processing the decision around your application: All new customers (521; 276; 245).

CMS told you when you could expect to make or receive a payment: All new customers excluding N/A (507; 268; 239).

Getting it Right

Questions that relate to the Getting it Right charter area are reported on below, including whether customers:

- Agreed that staff provided accurate information
- Reported that they had to contact CMS more than once to explain the same information
- Reported that the outcome of their claim was explained with enough detail to understand CMS's decision
- Were satisfied with the time it took CMS to tell them the outcome of their claim.

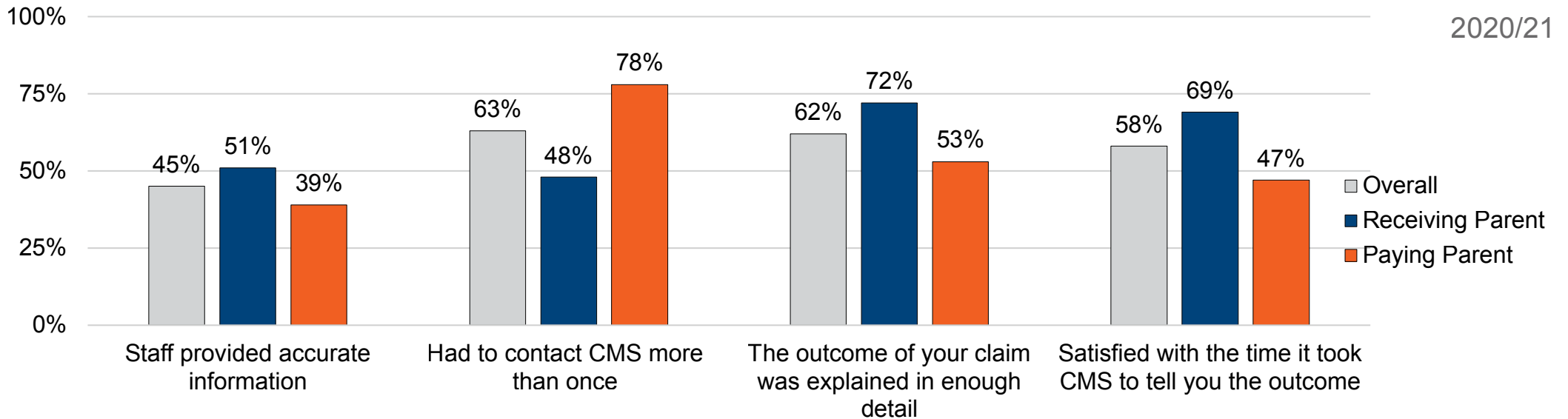
Figure 7 shows that overall, around six in ten customers reported that:

- they had to contact CMS more than once to explain the same information about their new application or change of circumstances (63%), although the experiences of Receiving and Paying Parents differed widely;
- the outcome of their claim was explained in enough detail to understand CMS’s decision (62%);
- and were satisfied with the time it took for CMS to tell them the outcome of their claim (58%).

Under half of customers (45%) agreed staff provided accurate information.

Receiving Parents were more likely than Paying Parents to agree with all questions except for whether customers had to contact CMS more than once, where Paying Parents were more likely to agree (78%).

Figure 7: Percentage of customers who agree/strongly agree with key questions relating to the Getting it Right charter area, by parent type



Base:

Staff provided accurate information: All who contacted CMS in the past 3 months excluding N/A (2,615; 1,344; 1,271).

Had to contact CMS more than once: All new and CoC customers (1,985; 1,055; 930).

The outcome of your claim was explained in enough detail: All new customers (521; 276; 245).

Satisfied with the time it took for CMS to tell you the outcome: All new customers (521; 276; 245).

Customer characteristics

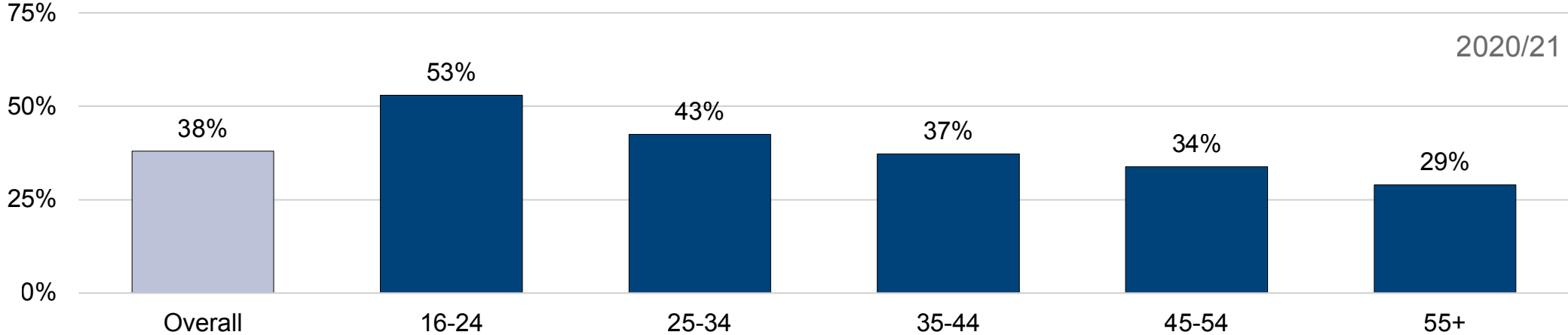
Equality Measures

The following section explores overall customer satisfaction by age, gender, ethnicity, and whether customers reported having a long-term health condition.

Age: Younger age groups (16-34) had higher overall satisfaction

Younger age groups were more likely to be satisfied. Figure 8 shows that those aged between 16 and 24 (53%) and 25-34 (43%) had higher satisfaction than those aged 45-54 (34%) and 55+ (29%). To note, the base size for the age group 16-24 is low (86) so this result should be treated with caution.

Figure 8: Percentage of customers who were very/fairly satisfied with services provided by CMS, by age

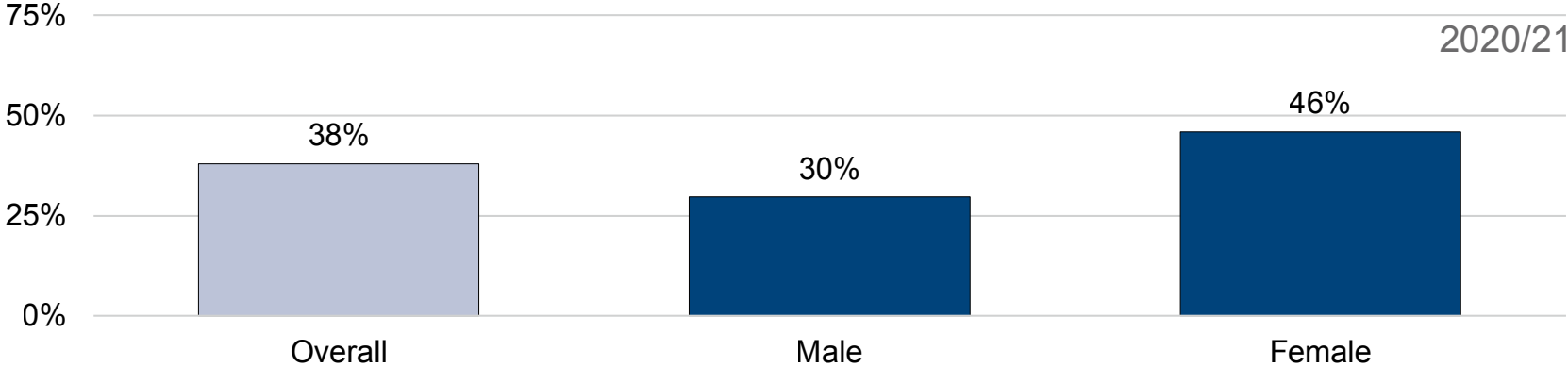


Base: All customers (excluding Don't Know responses): Overall (3,325); 16-24 (86); 25-34 (802); 35-44 (1,227); 45-54 (924); 55+ (286).

Gender: Females were more likely to be satisfied than males

Female customers were more likely to be satisfied with the service overall than those who were male, with Figure 9 showing that 46 per cent of females reported they were satisfied compared to just 30 per cent of males. This is because male CMS customers are more likely to be Paying Parents, for whom overall satisfaction is lower.

Figure 9: Percentage of customers who were very/fairly satisfied with services provided by CMS, by gender

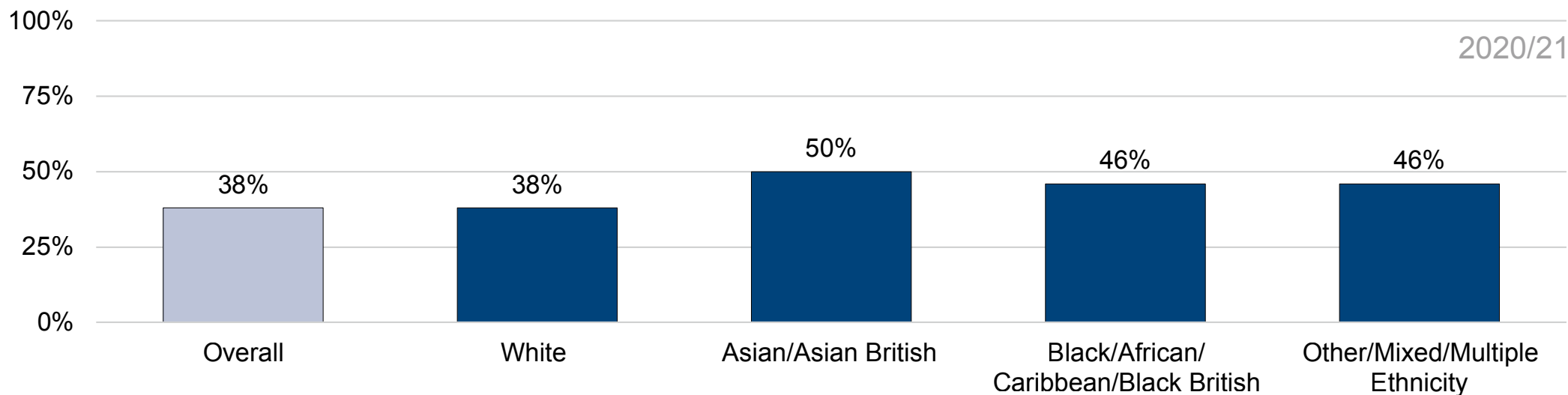


Base: All customers (excluding Don't Know responses): Overall (3,325); Male (1,558); Female (1,691).

Ethnicity: Customers from a White ethnic background were the least satisfied

Customers from a White ethnic background were the least satisfied at 38 per cent. Half of Asian/Asian British customers were satisfied (50%), while just under half of Black/African/Caribbean/Black British customers (46%) and Other/Mixed/Multiple Ethnicity customers (also 46%) were satisfied. However, the base sizes for ethnic minority groups are small so these results should be treated with some caution.

Figure 10: Percentage of customers who were very/fairly satisfied with services provided by CMS, by ethnicity

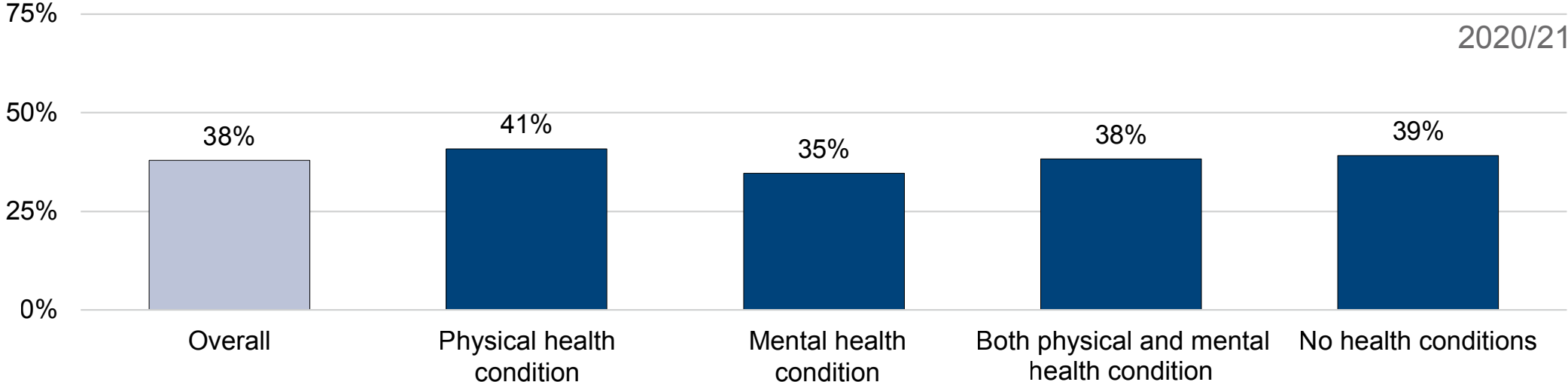


Base: All customers (excludes Don't Know responses): Overall (3,325); White (2,839); Asian/Asian British (91); Black/African/Caribbean/Black British (155); Other & Mixed/Multiple Ethnicity (112).

Long-term health conditions: There was no statistically significant difference in satisfaction for those who had a long-term health condition

Those who reported having any kind of long-term health condition had similar levels of satisfaction to those with no health conditions, with satisfaction ranging between 35 per cent for those with a mental health condition and 41 per cent for those who reported having a physical health condition (Figure 11).

Figure 11: Percentage of customers who were very/fairly satisfied with services provided by CMS, by long-term health condition



Base: All customers (excludes Don't Know responses): Overall (3,325); Physical health condition (326); Mental health condition (379); Both physical and mental health condition (216); No health conditions (2,232).

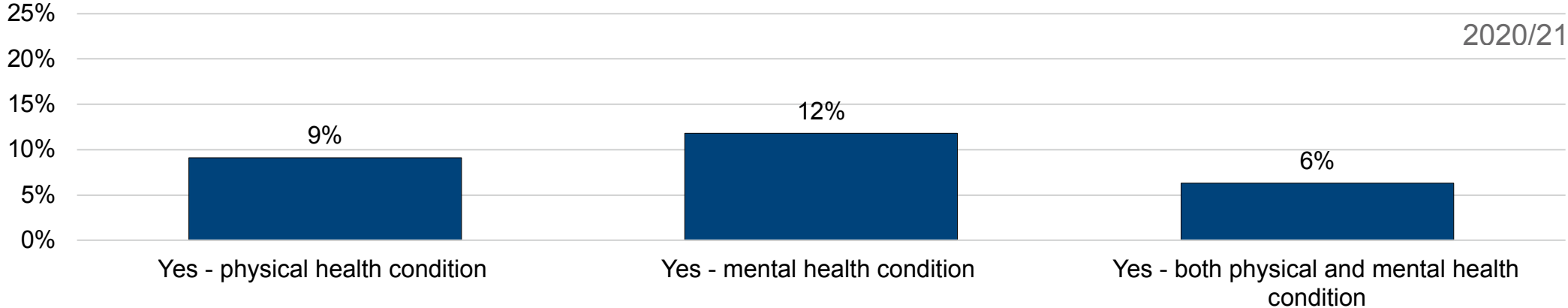
Long-term health condition profile

Just over a quarter of customers reported having a long-term health condition

A long-term health condition is defined as: any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last for 12 months or more, that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Overall, just over a quarter of customers reported that they had a long-term health condition (27%, not shown in chart). Of these: nine per cent had a physical health condition; twelve per cent had a mental health condition; and six per cent had both a physical and mental health condition.

Figure 12: Percentage of CMS customers who reported having a long-term health condition



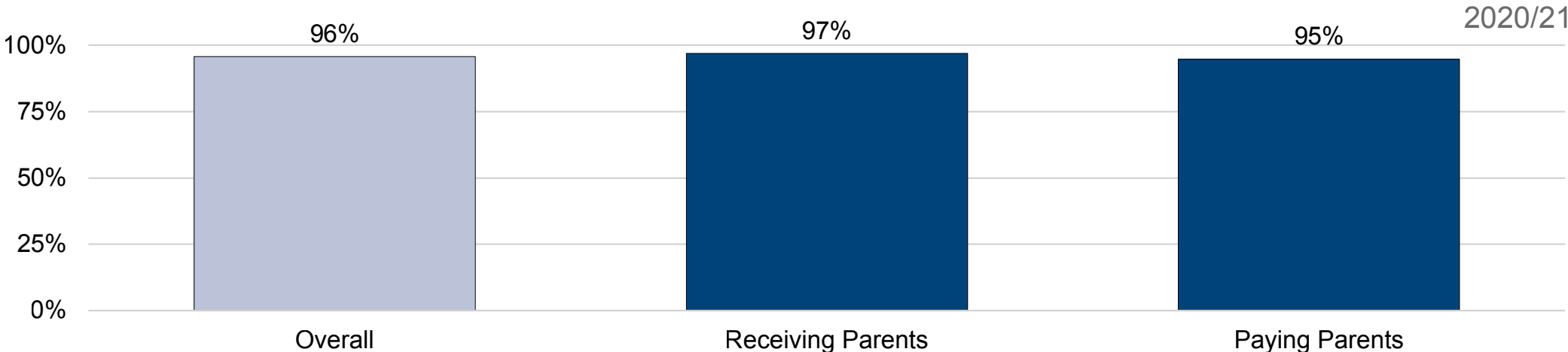
Base: All customers: Physical health condition (329); Mental health condition (383); Both physical and mental health condition (218).

Digital Propensity

Over nine in ten CMS customers have access to the internet

Overall, digital propensity was high with 96 per cent of CMS customers stating they could access the internet (Figure 13). Receiving Parents were more likely to have access to the internet (97%) than Paying Parents (95%). To note, using a mixed-mode push-to-web survey approach means responses to this question may be influenced by the proportion of respondents who completed the survey online.

Figure 13: Percentage of customers who had access to the internet

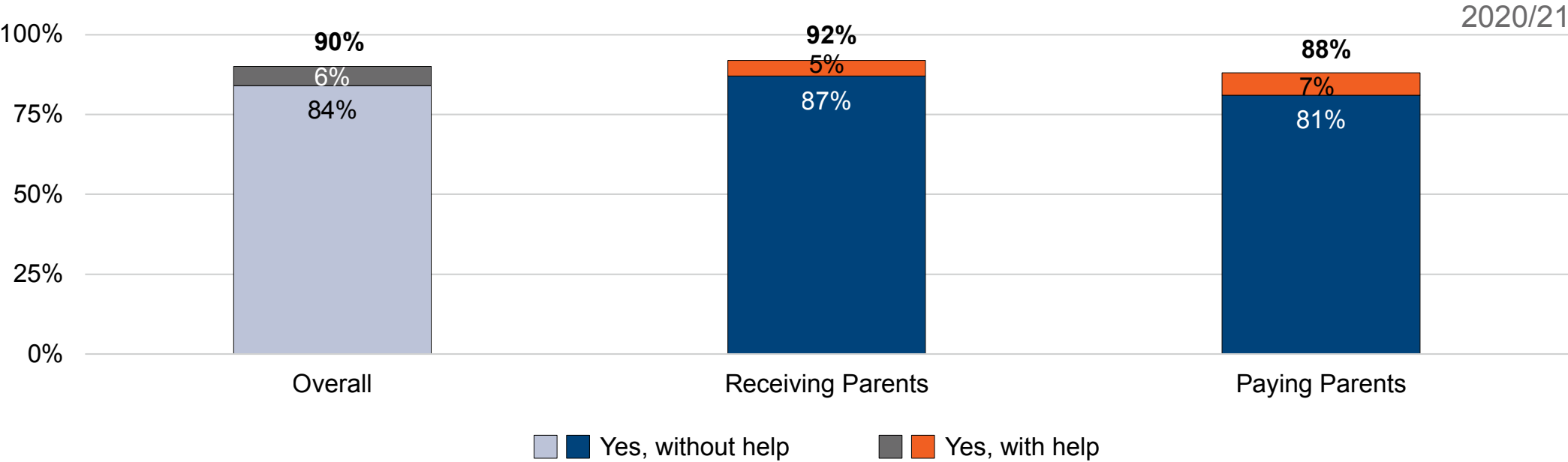


Base: All customers: Overall (3,365); Receiving Parents (1,755); Paying Parents (1,610).

Nine in ten CMS customers said they could have accessed government services using the internet

Figure 14 shows that when CMS customers were asked if they could have used the internet to access government services if it was available, 84 per cent responded that they could do so without help. A further six percent could access government services online with help. Receiving Parents were more likely to be able to access government services online without help (87%) than Paying Parents (81%).

Figure 14: Percentage of customers who could access government services online, either with or without help



Base: All customers: Overall (3,365); Receiving Parents (1,755); Paying Parents (1,610).

Annex: Customer Experience Survey 2019/20 Quarters 1 – 3 (April – Dec 2019) results

Note: Results are only available for April – Dec 2019 and therefore cannot be compared to 2020/21 results.

This annex presents the survey data from CES 2019/20. Due to the impact of COVID in 2019/20 fieldwork was suspended and prevented the collection of Quarter 4 data (January – March 2020). In total 2,398 interviews completed with customers who contacted the Child Maintenance Service between April and December 2019. This is instead of the 3,200 interviews that were planned to take place across the whole of the survey year 2019/20. This means that any overall scores presented for 2019/20 cover only Quarters 1 to 3 and for this reason no annual report was published for 2019/20.

In 2020/21 the survey questionnaire was revised to align with changes made to service delivery because of COVID. This limits the comparability between the 2019/20 and 2020/21 survey data for some questions.

In this annex we report findings on:

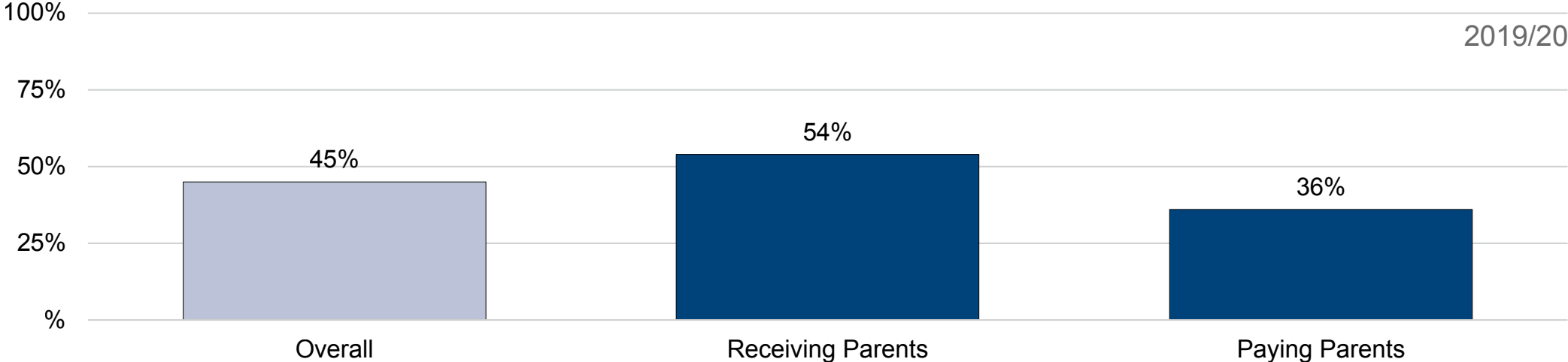
- Overall satisfaction
- DWP Customer Charter measures covering: Right Treatment, Easy Access, Keeping you Informed and Getting it Right
- Overall satisfaction by equality measures
- Long-term health condition profile
- Digital propensity.

Overall satisfaction results – 2019/20

Just under half of customers reported being satisfied with CMS services

In 2019/20 overall satisfaction for CMS customers was 45 per cent (Figure 15). Paying Parents reported significantly lower satisfaction (36%) than Receiving Parents (54%).

Figure 15: Percentage of customers who were very/fairly satisfied with services provided by CMS in 2019/20



Base: All customers (excluding Don't Know responses): Overall (2,354); Receiving Parents (1,244); Paying Parents (1,110).

DWP Customer Charter measures

This section of the report presents data from survey questions that are mapped against the four core elements of DWP's Customer Charter: 'Right Treatment', 'Easy Access', 'Keeping you Informed' and 'Getting it Right'. These question measures have been selected on the basis that they best represent the charter area topic, whilst also providing the best coverage of survey respondents (as some questions are only asked to particular customer groups).

Right Treatment – 2019/20 results

Table 1: Percentage of customers who agree with key questions relating to the Right Treatment charter area, by parent type

| | Overall | Receiving Parent | Paying Parent |
|--|---------|------------------|---------------|
| Staff understood my needs | 63% | 76% | 49% |
| My query or request was handled professionally | 68% | 77% | 58% |
| Staff did what they said they would | 52% | 57% | 47% |
| CMS tailored services to my circumstances | | 77% | |

Bases:

Staff understood my needs: All who contacted CMS by phone in the past 3 months excluding N/A (1,575; 819; 756).

My query or request was handled professionally: All who contacted CMS by phone in the past 3 months excluding N/A (1,583; 825; 758).

Staff did what they said they would: All who contacted CMS by phone in the past 3 months excluding N/A (1,545; 796; 749).

CMS tailored services to my circumstances: All new customers excluding Paying Parents and excluding N/A (127).

Note: 'CMS tailored services to my circumstances' was only asked to Receiving Parents.

Easy Access – 2019/20 results

Table 2: Percentage of customers who agree with key questions relating to the Easy Access charter area, by parent type

| | Overall | Receiving Parent | Paying Parent |
|--|---------|------------------|---------------|
| Found it easy to find relevant information on GOV.UK | 91% | 87% | 99% |
| Found it easy to use your CMS online portal | 56% | 64% | 46% |
| Able to speak to someone the first time you rang | 65% | 73% | 57% |
| Communication was easy to understand | 82% | 84% | 80% |
| Found the process of submitting a new claim easy | | 96% | |

Bases:

Found it easy to find relevant information on GOV.UK: All new customers who use the government website (105; 69; 36).

Found it easy to use your CMS online portal: All customers excluding those who did not have access to their CMS online portal (1,549; 870; 679).

Able to speak to someone the first time you rang: All who contacted CMS by phone in the past 3 months (1,612; 839; 773).

Communication was easy to understand: All new customers excluding N/A (223; 130; 93).

Found the process of submitting a new claim easy: All new customers (130; 130).

Note: Bases for 'found it easy to find relevant information on GOV.UK' and 'communication was easy to understand' are low so these results should be interpreted with caution.

'Found the process of submitting a new claim easy' was only asked to Receiving Parents.

Keeping you Informed – 2019/20 results

Table 3: Percentage of customers who agree with key questions relating to the Keeping you Informed charter area, by parent type

| | Overall | Receiving Parent | Paying Parent |
|--|----------------|-------------------------|----------------------|
| Staff informed me what I needed to do next | 65% | 68% | 63% |
| I had a good understanding of what would happen next | 77% | 73% | 82% |
| CMS provided with timescales for processing the decision around your application | 70% | 77% | 62% |
| CMS told you when to expect to receive or make a payment | 82% | 81% | 82% |

Base:

Staff informed me what I needed to do next: All who contacted CMS by phone in the past 3 months (1,578; 818; 760).

I had a good understanding of what would happen next: All new customers (excludes N/A) (223; 130; 93).

CMS provided you with timescales for processing the decision around your application: All new customers (excludes N/A) (225; 130; 95).

CMS told you when to expect to receive or make a payment: All new customers (excludes N/A) (224; 130; 94).

Getting it Right – 2019/20 results

Table 4: Percentage of customers who agree with key questions relating to the Getting it Right charter area, by parent type

| | Overall | Receiving Parent | Paying Parent |
|---|----------------|-------------------------|----------------------|
| Staff provided accurate information | 57% | 64% | 50% |
| Had to contact CMS more than once to explain the same information | 57% | 41% | 72% |
| Satisfied with the time it took CMS to tell you the outcome | 68% | 74% | 63% |

Bases:

Staff provided accurate information: All who contacted CMS by phone in the past 3 months (1,568; 820; 748).

Had to contact CMS more than once to explain the same information: All new RPs and all who confirmed they reported a CoC (1,275; 613; 662).

Satisfied with the time it took for CMS to tell you the outcome: All new customers (225; 130; 95).

Equality measures – 2019/20 results

Table 5: Percentage of customers who were satisfied overall, by equality measures

| Age | % Satisfied | Unweighted base |
|---|--------------------|------------------------|
| 16-24 | 60% | 79 |
| 25-34 | 48% | 654 |
| 35-44 | 45% | 790 |
| 45-54 | 39% | 649 |
| 55+ | 40% | 182 |
| Gender | % Satisfied | Unweighted base |
| Male | 36% | 1,092 |
| Female | 53% | 1,211 |
| Ethnicity | % Satisfied | Unweighted base |
| White | 46% | 1,983 |
| Asian/Asian British | 54% | 82 |
| Black/African/Caribbean/Black British | 44% | 130 |
| Other/Mixed/Multiple Ethnicity | 40% | 65 |
| Long-term health condition | % Satisfied | Unweighted base |
| Yes – physical health condition | 46% | 181 |
| Yes – mental health condition | 41% | 257 |
| Yes – both physical and mental health condition | 41% | 132 |
| No long-term health condition | 47% | 1,699 |

Long-term health profile – 2019/20 results

Table 6: Percentage of customers who answered that they had a long-term health condition

| | Overall | Receiving Parent | Paying Parent |
|---|----------------|-------------------------|----------------------|
| Yes – physical health condition | 7% | 7% | 7% |
| Yes – mental health condition | 11% | 10% | 13% |
| Yes – both physical and mental health condition | 6% | 7% | 5% |
| Total | 24% | 23% | 25% |

Base: All customers: Overall (2,398); Receiving Parents (1,264); Paying Parents (1,134).

Note: The total percentages of those who reported a long-term health condition may differ to the sum of the individual categories due to rounding.

Digital propensity – 2019/20 results

Table 7: Percentage of customers who reported having access to the internet

| | Overall | Receiving Parent | Paying Parent |
|--|---------|------------------|---------------|
| Reported having access to the internet | 96% | 97% | 95% |

Base: All customers: Overall (2,398); Receiving Parents (1,264); Paying Parents (1,134).

Table 8: Percentage of customers who reported being able to use the internet to access government services

| | Overall | Receiving Parent | Paying Parent |
|---|------------|------------------|---------------|
| Able to use the internet to access government services without help | 81% | 82% | 79% |
| Able to use the internet to access government services with help | 6% | 7% | 6% |
| Total | 87% | 89% | 86% |

Base: All customers: Overall (2,398); Receiving Parents (1,264); Paying Parents (1,134).

Note: The total percentages may differ to the sum of the individual categories due to rounding.