

Contact Centre Research

Report

December 2023

J.235053

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Research Background & Objectives

- This report presents the findings of a survey conducted by Behaviour & Attitudes on behalf of the Department of Social Protection in relation to the Contact Centre and the service it provides.
- The research was conducted by way of telephone interviewing
- 1,006 interviews took place amongst a sample of those who had been in touch with the Department of Social Protection Contact Centre and agreed to take part in an interview.
- The Department of Social Protection had a requirement to establish:
 - ❖ Overall satisfaction with the service
 - ❖ Rating of Contact Staff service
 - ❖ Their experience of contacting the centre and query resolution
 - ❖ Contact Centre waiting time
 - ❖ Satisfaction with information provided
 - ❖ Preferred channel to get in touch with Department of Social Protection
 - ❖ Rating possible online services (i.e. chatbot, online live chat and text/WhatsApp)
 - ❖ Suggestions for improvements (if any).
- This report contains the results from the survey of 1,006 participants. Please note that the figures in the report are based on rounded percentages, rather than to multiple decimal places, for ease of review. This is a standard occurrence in market research statistics and does not negate the accuracy of findings



This report presents the findings of the Contact centre Satisfaction Survey conducted over October /November 2023.



A representative sample of n=1006 callers to the Department of Social Protection was interviewed. The sample was reflective of the lead file provided in terms of gender, age, region and contact centre.



The research was conducted through a Quantitative survey via the use of CATI interviewing (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing).



Fieldwork was conducted from the 18th October to 20th November 2023.



Executive Summary

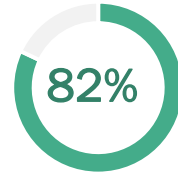


Overall Satisfaction with recent telephone experience (very plus fairly) satisfied **82%**

Contact Process



Satisfaction was high with ease of finding the contact Centre phone number.



Opening hours convenient	84%
Easily able to navigate through interactive voice	86%
Waiting times	65%
Satisfied I was not left on hold	68%

Staff



Satisfaction is very high across all metrics with 92% stating that staff are friendly and made them feel welcome.

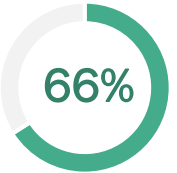


Staff tried their best for me	88%
Staff are very good at their job	86%
Staff provided clear information	86%
Ability to assist with my query	84%

Contact Centre Service



Satisfaction is high with exception of waiting times Just 66% agree waiting time be answered was acceptable

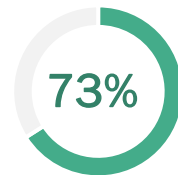


The information communicated in a friendly/professional manner	92%
Information was clear	89%
Services provided during telephone call do not require improvements	74%

Task Resolution



Satisfaction is high with First call resolution at 73%, albeit further contact was necessary for some:



Query during most recent call referred on for further examination	32%
Has to ring back	29%
Attend Social Welfare office for follow up	20%
Referred to online service	43%

Preferences re: FCR or Time to connect



71%

agree that they do not mind waiting a long time to connect to Department staff if their query is resolved during the initial call.

73%

A slightly higher proportion 73% agreed they prefer to connect quickly even though their query may not be resolved during their initial call.

Suggested Improvements



The majority of respondents felt there are no improvements needed (41%).

Of the balance, the main improvement suggested is **to improve waiting times** (put forward by over a third at **36%**). This is higher for Jobseekers at 44%.

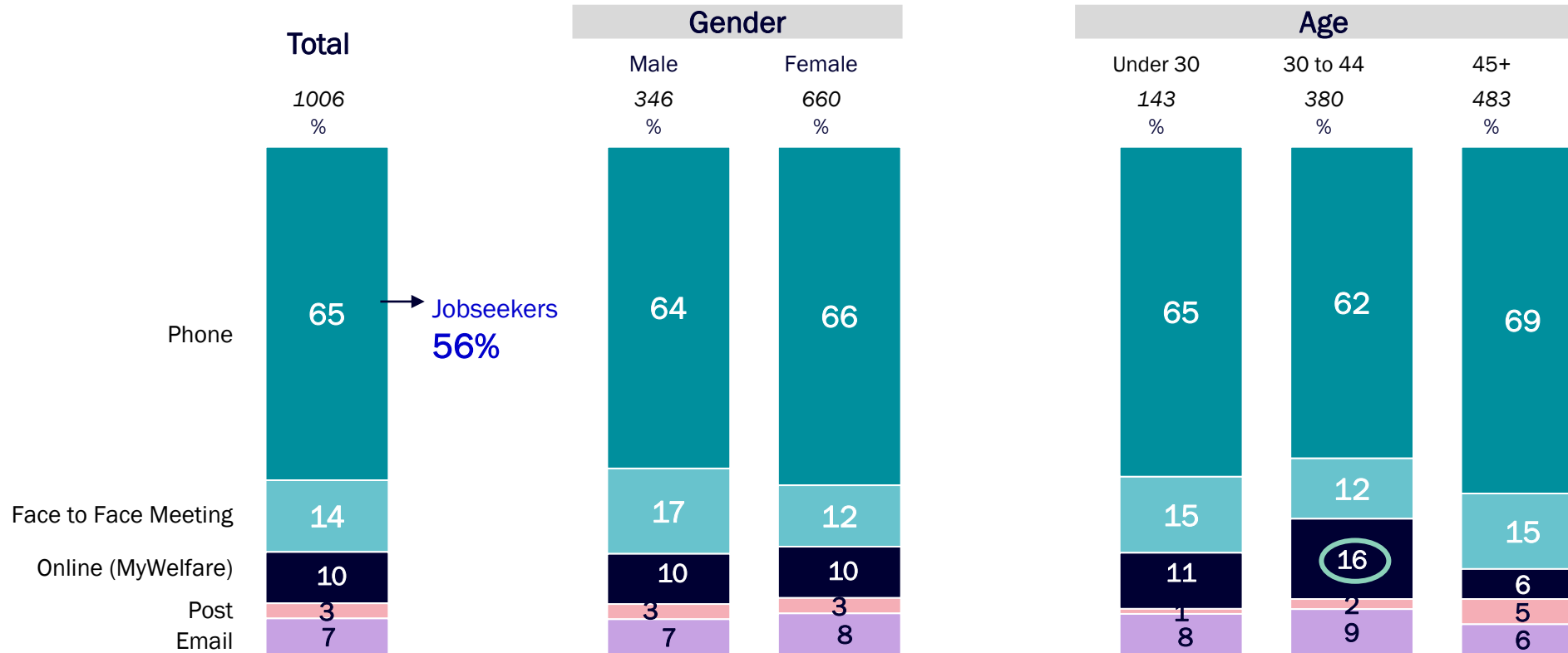
9% suggested that employees should have more information



Preferred channel and nature of call

Preferred contact with the Department of Social Protection

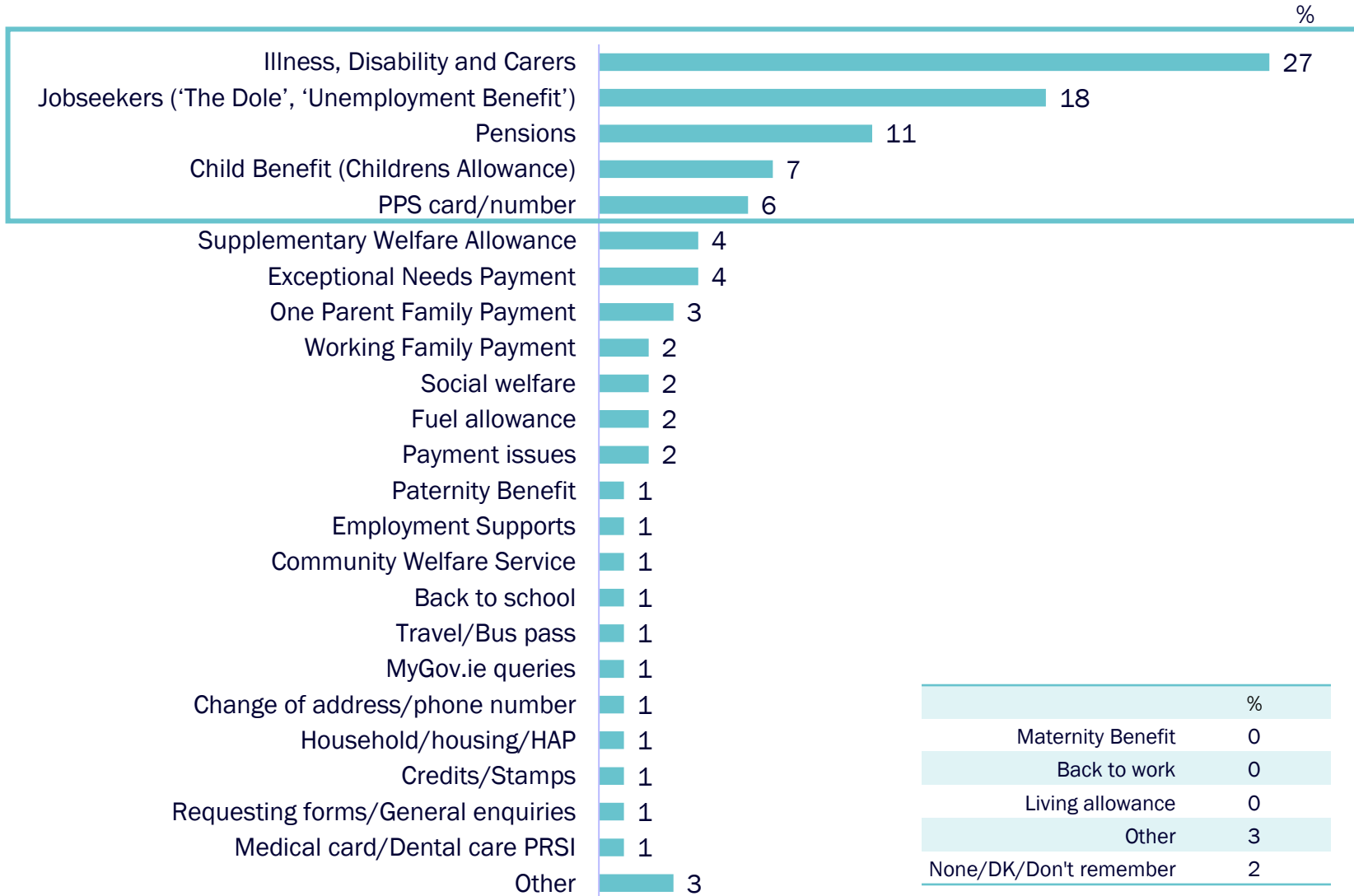
Base: All Respondents N – 1006



The vast majority (65% of the sample) put forward phone as the preferred method of contact. This was slightly lower in the case of Jobseekers where 56% cited phone.

Nature of call with the Department of Social Protection

Base: Recent callers to the Department of Social Protection - 1,006



Category	%
Maternity Benefit	0
Back to work	0
Living allowance	0
Other	3
None/DK/Don't remember	2

0 = less than 1%

A vast amount of reasons were put forward as to the nature of their call to the Department. Illness, Disability and Carers were more likely mentioned at 27%, followed by Jobseekers 18%, Pensions at 11% with Child Benefit at 7% and PPS card or number at 6% making up the top 5 causes.

Nature of call with the Department of Social Protection X demographics

Base: Recent callers to the Department of Social Protection - 1,006

■ = Significantly higher
■ = Significantly lower

	Total	Gender		Age			Region							
		Male	Female	Under 30	30 to 44	45+	IE041 Border	IE042 West	IE051 Mid-West	IE052 South-East	IE053 South-West	IE061 Dublin	IE062 Mid-East	IE063 Midlands
<i>Base (unweighted):</i>	1,006	346	660	143	380	483	90	74	90	86	113	314	179	59
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Illness, Disability and Carers	27	26	27	23	28	27	30	30	34	28	30	24	25	20
Jobseekers	18	21	17	29	21	13	22	15	11	16	14	19	21	22
Pensions	11	14	9	2	1	21	13	14	8	13	12	10	10	8
Child Benefit	7	2	9	4	11	4	2	4	6	7	9	7	7	10
PPS card/number	6	6	6	7	6	6	6	3	6	3	4	8	8	5

Life stage strongly impacts nature of call



Overall Satisfaction

Overall satisfaction with recent telephone experience

Base: Recent callers to the Department of Social Protection - 1,006



A very high overall satisfaction rating of **82%** was achieved by the Contact Centre.

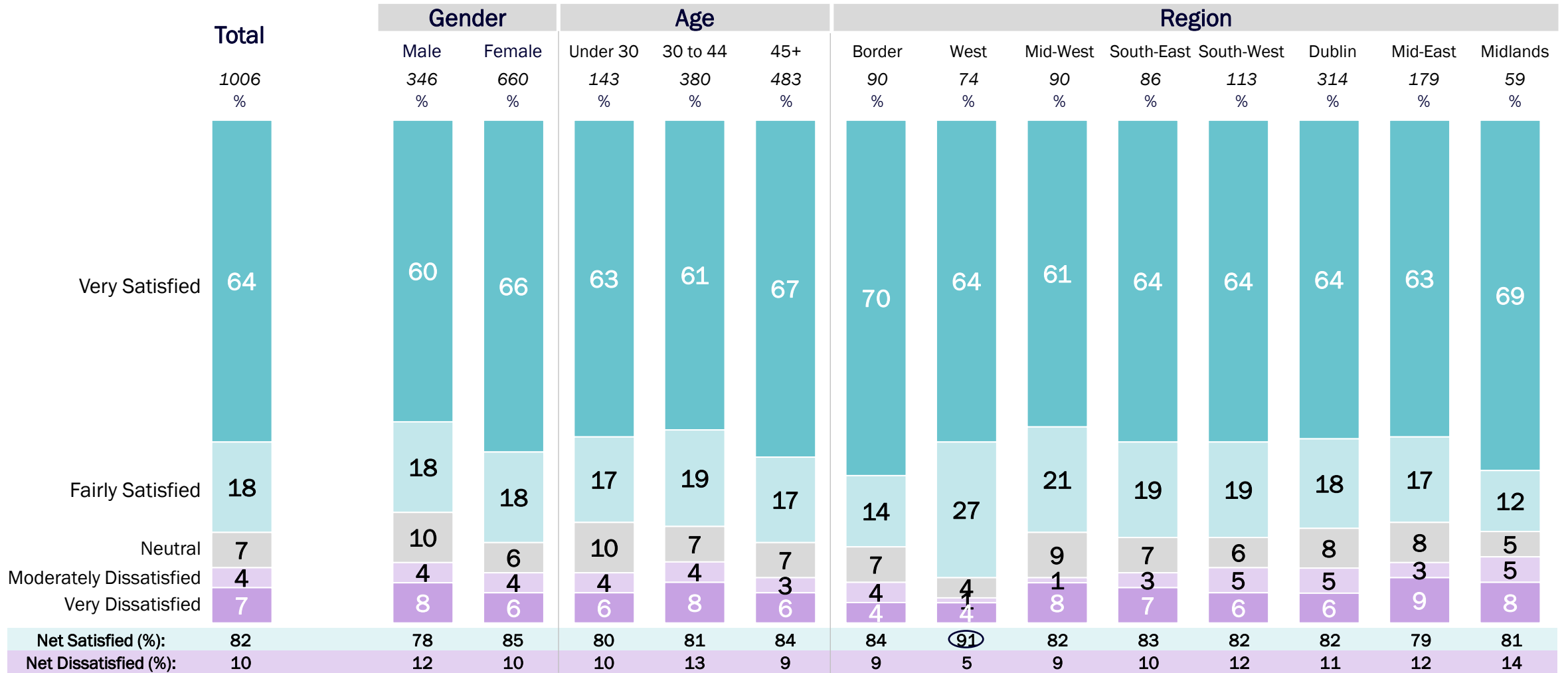
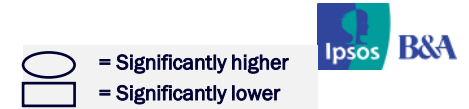
Almost **2/3^{rds}** of contact centre callers awarded the top score possible.

Q2. Thinking about your most recent telephone interaction with the Department of Social Protection, using a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 is 'Very satisfied' and 1 is 'Very dissatisfied' how would you rate your overall satisfaction with your experience during the call?



Overall satisfaction with recent telephone experience - I

Base: Recent callers to the Department of Social Protection - 1,006

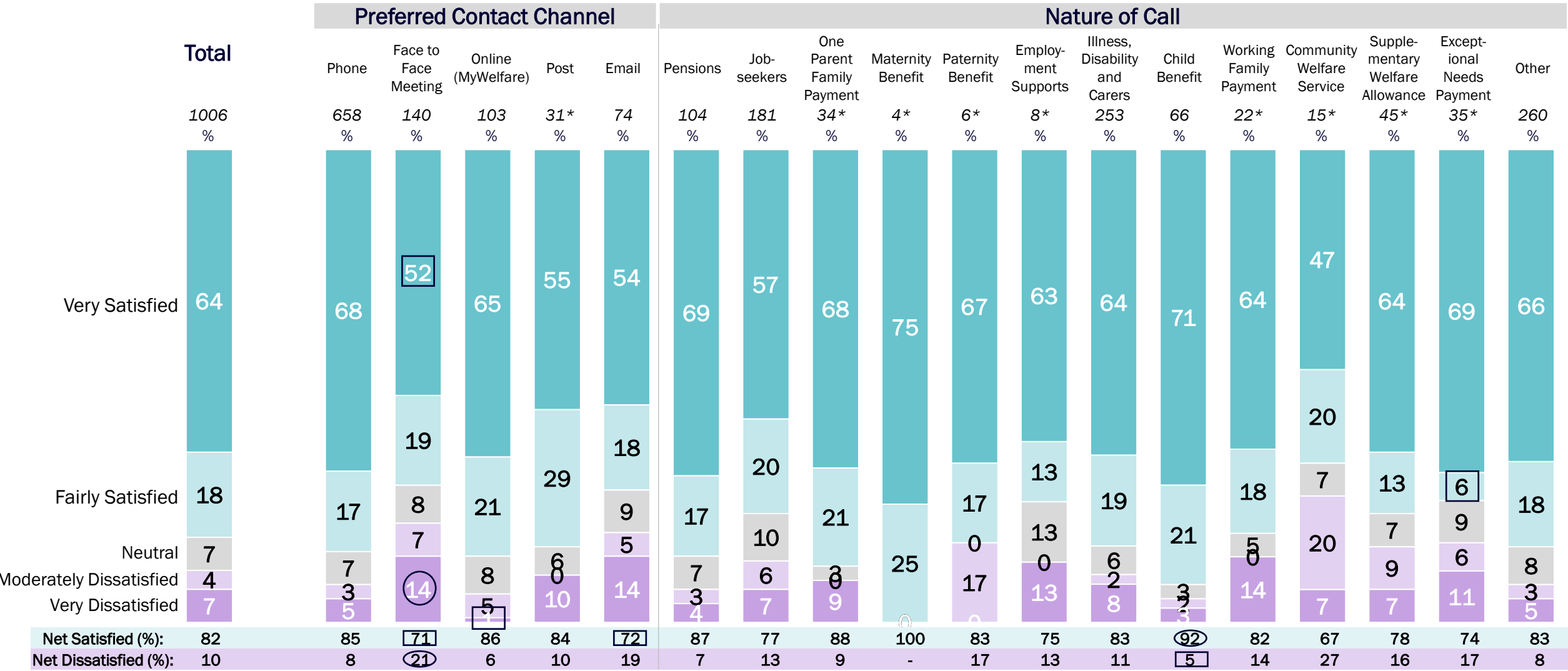


Females and older people more positive

Overall satisfaction with recent telephone experience II

Base: Recent callers to the Department of Social Protection - 1,006

○ = Significantly higher
 □ = Significantly lower



*Caution: Small base size

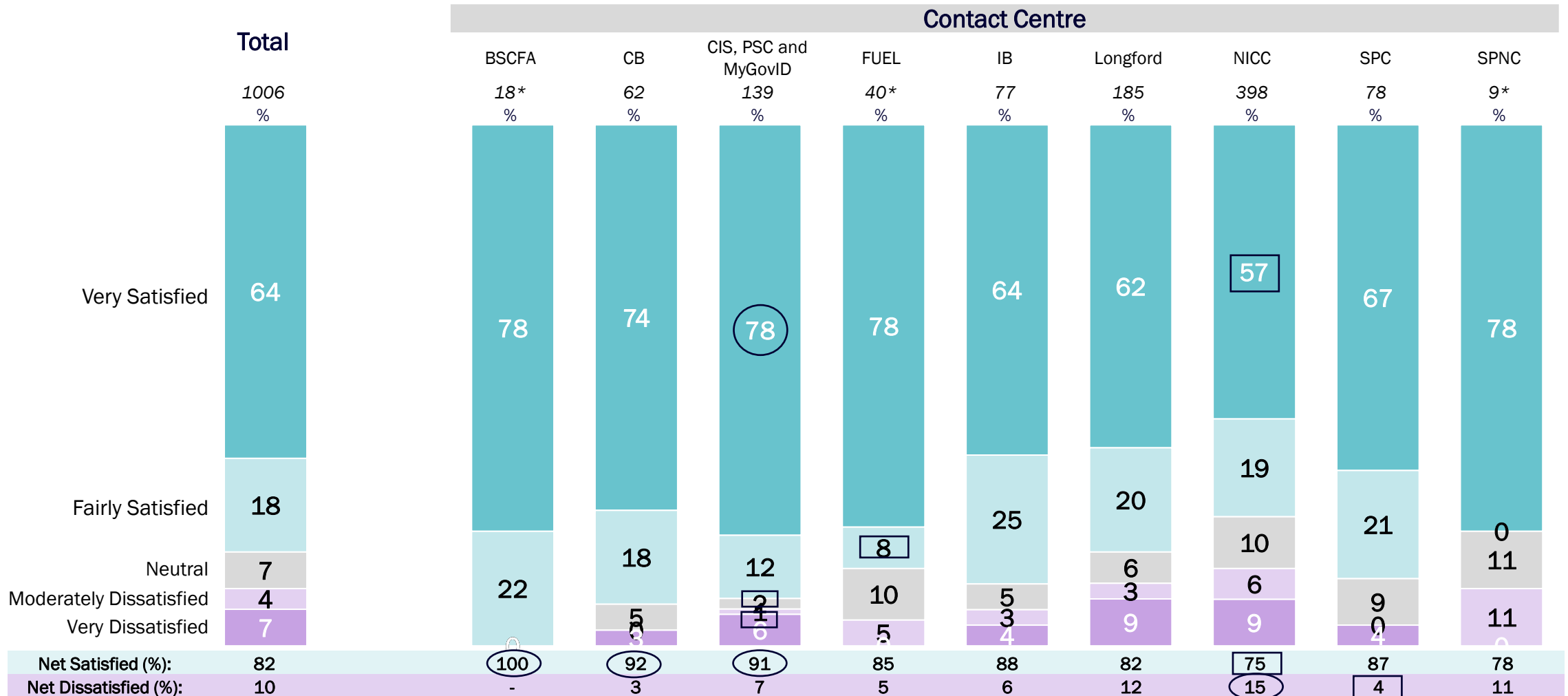
We need to be cautious re: small base sizes but those calling about child benefit slightly more positive

Overall satisfaction with recent telephone experience III

○ = Significantly higher
□ = Significantly lower



Base: Recent callers to the Department of Social Protection - 1,006



*Caution: Small base size

More positive ratings for CIS,PSC and MyGOVID contact Centre

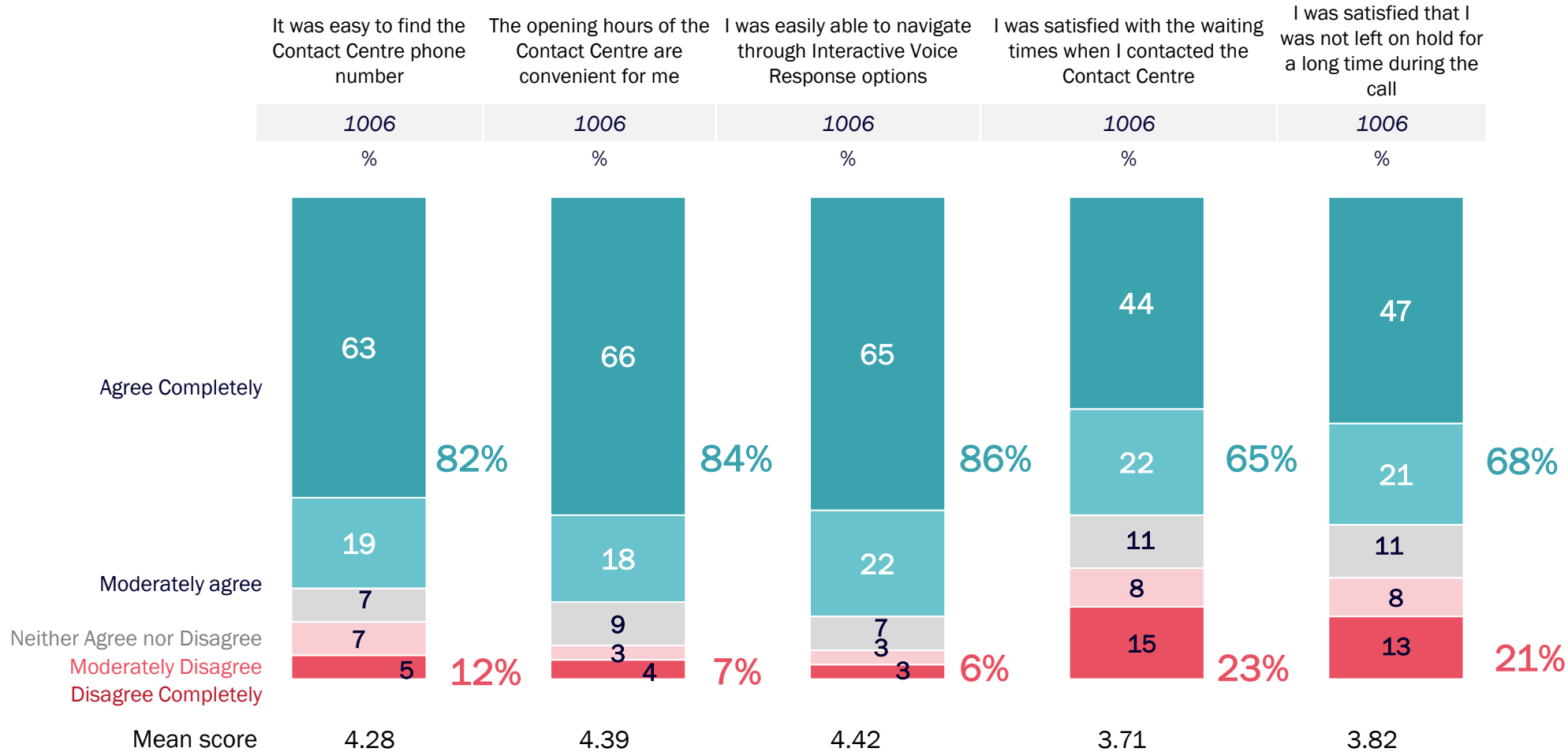




The Contact Process

Overview of Contact process

Base: All Respondents N – 1006



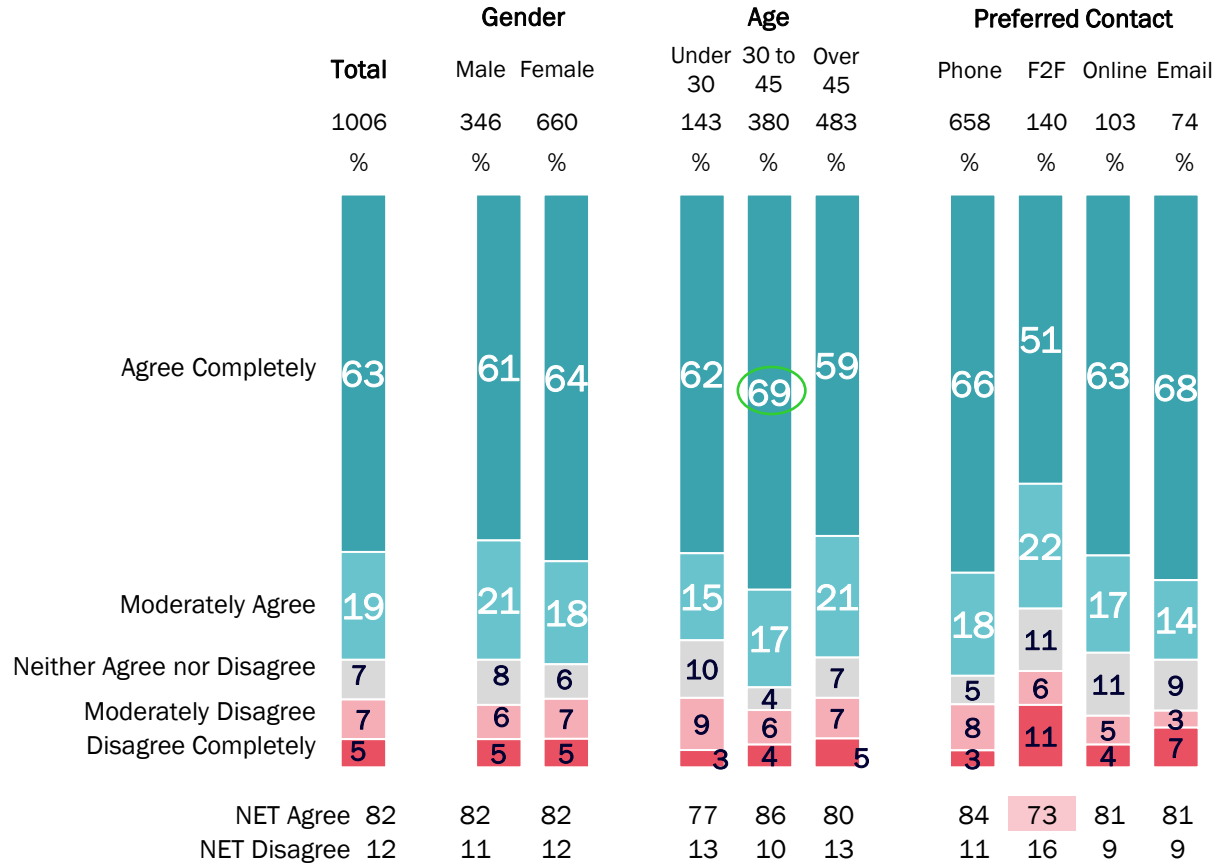
The highest agreement levels were achieved for the ability to navigate through the interactive voice response options at 86%. Convenience of opening hours was registered at 84% and ease of finding the number was reported by 82%.

There were lower agreement levels for satisfaction with being left on hold with 68% agreeing and 21% disagreeing; similarly, 65% reported satisfaction with waiting times and 23% were unhappy.

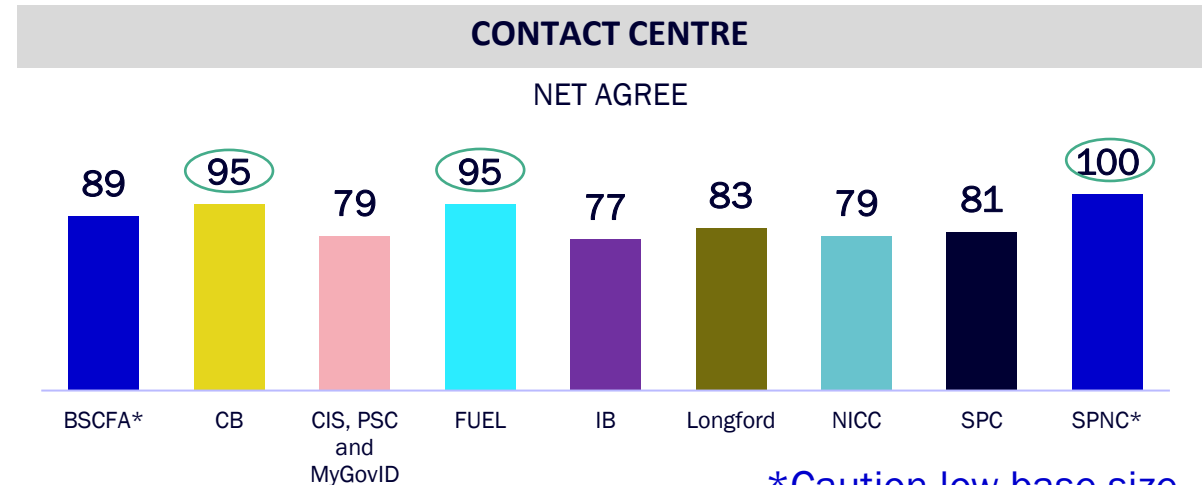
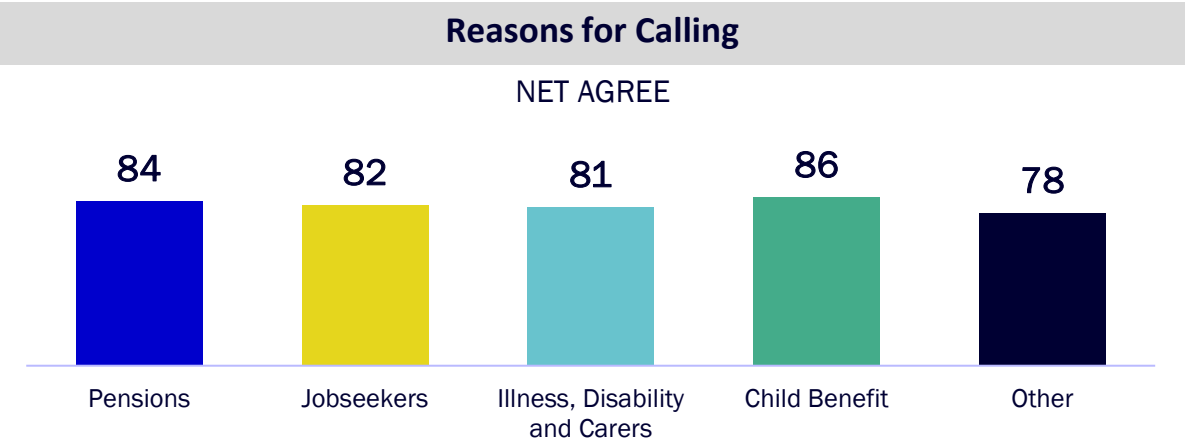


It was easy to find the Contact Centre phone number

Base: All Respondents N – 1006



*Post not shown N - 31

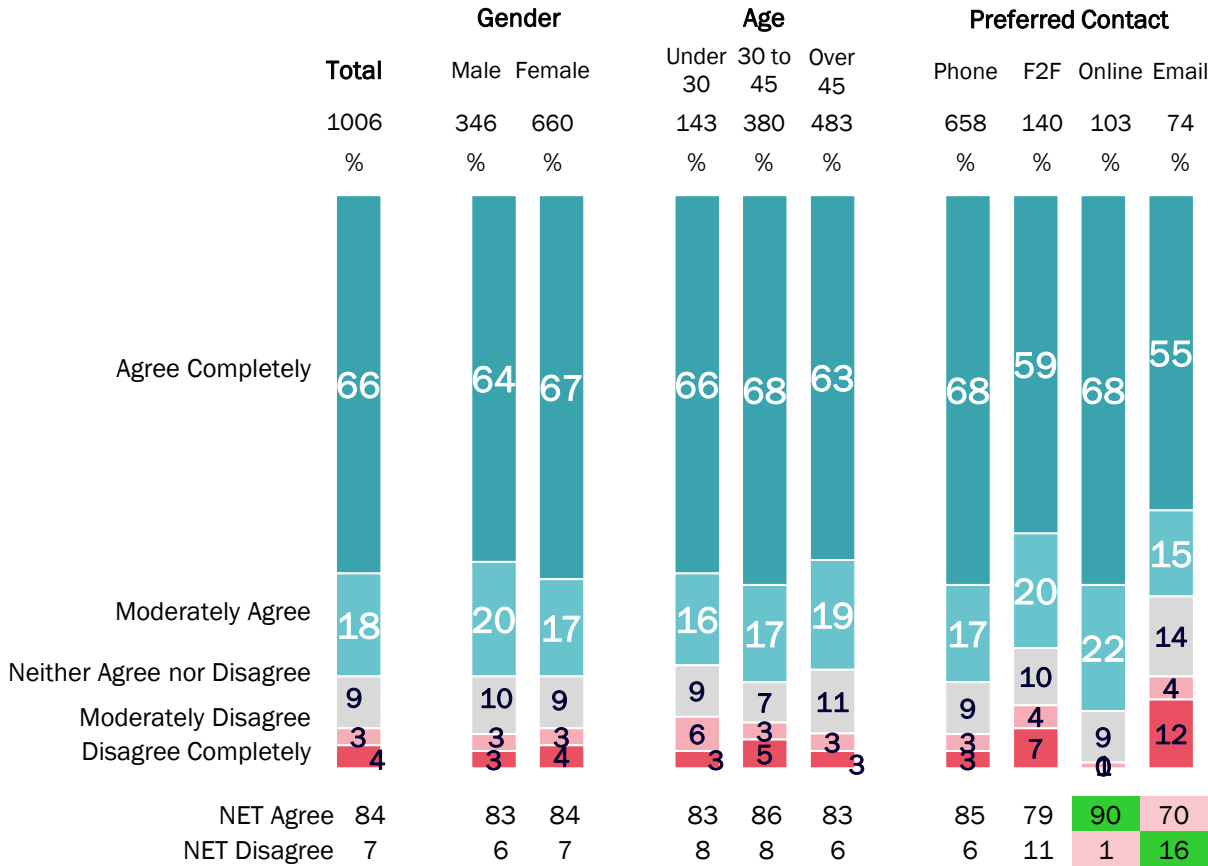


*Caution low base size

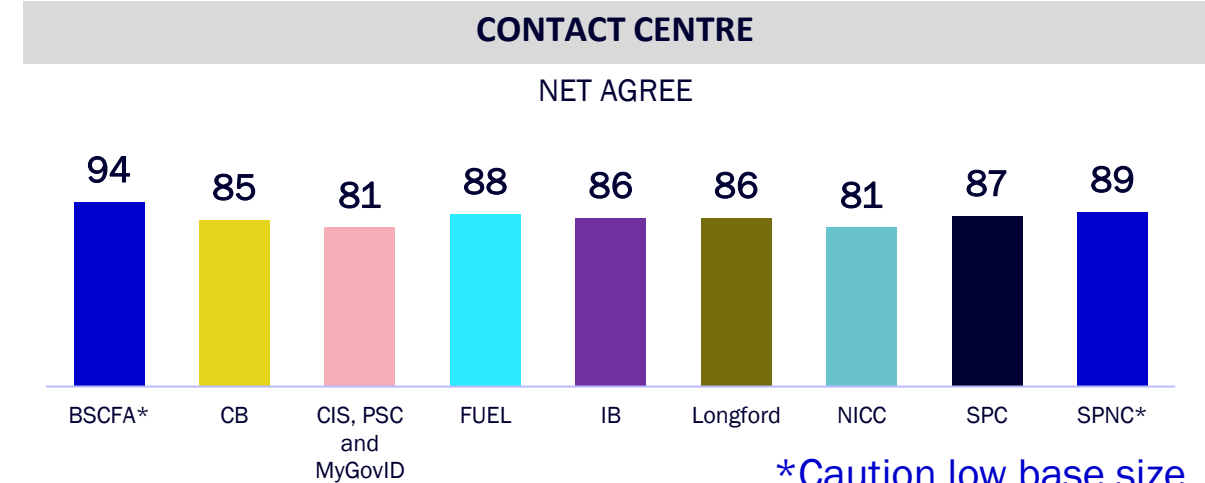
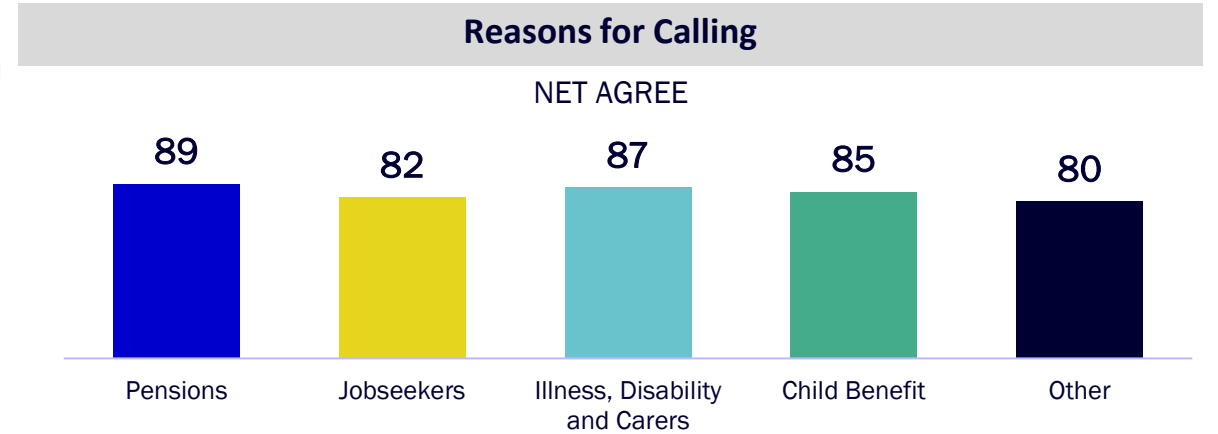
There were high agreement levels with ease of finding the Contact Centre phone number. This was highest for Child Benefit and Fuel.

The opening hours of the Contact Centre are convenient for me

Base: All Respondents N – 1006



*Post not shown N - 31

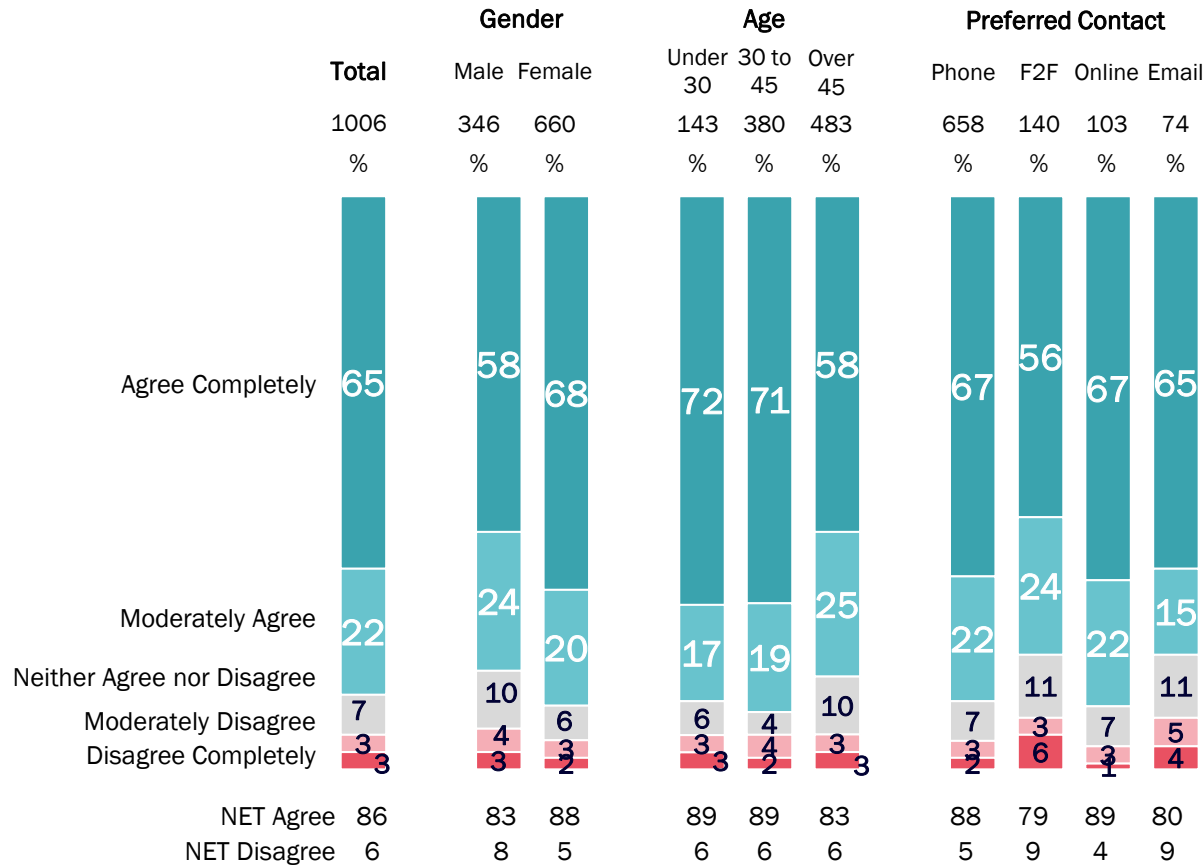


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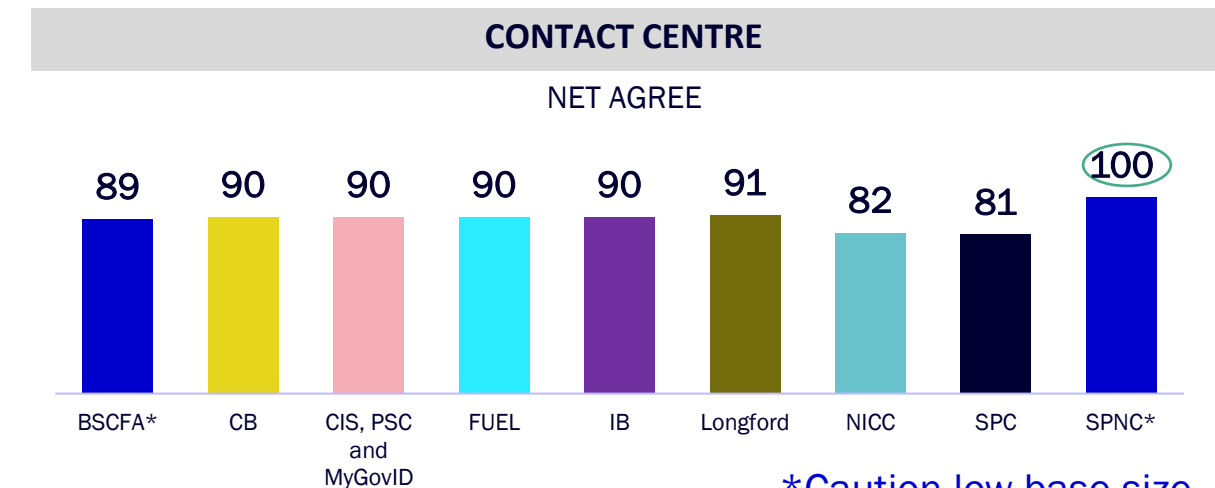
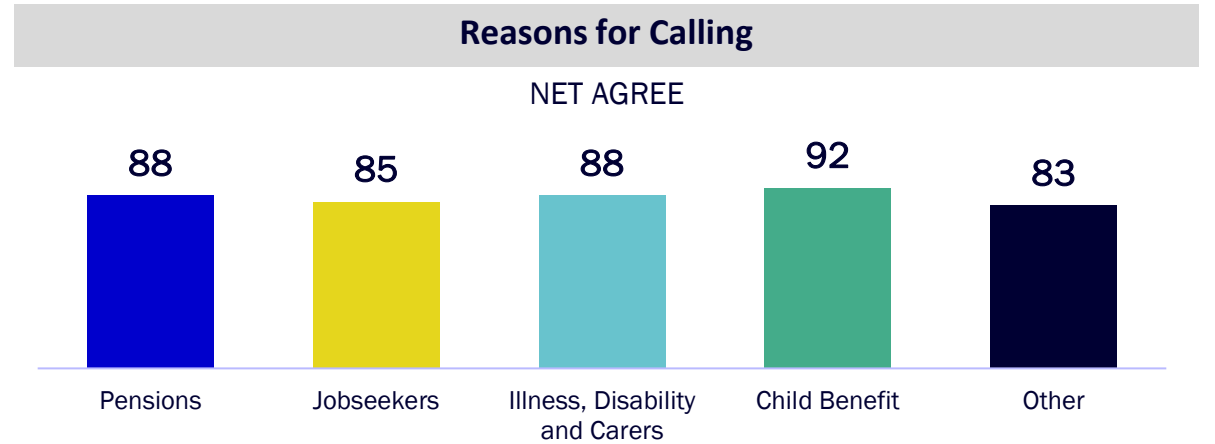
Convenience of opening hours also received high agreement at 84% . 90% of those who prefer online contact agreed.

I was easily able to navigate through Interactive Voice Response options

Base: All Respondents N – 1006



*Post not shown N - 31

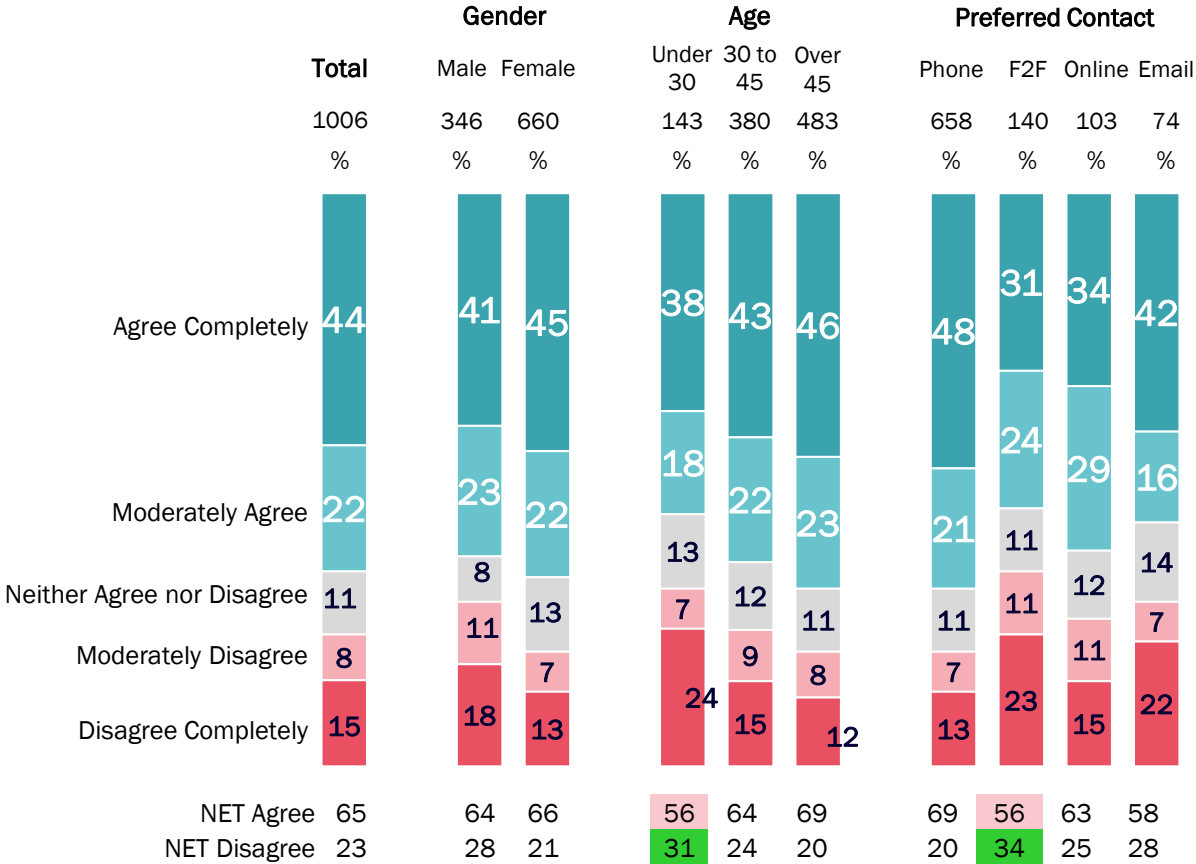


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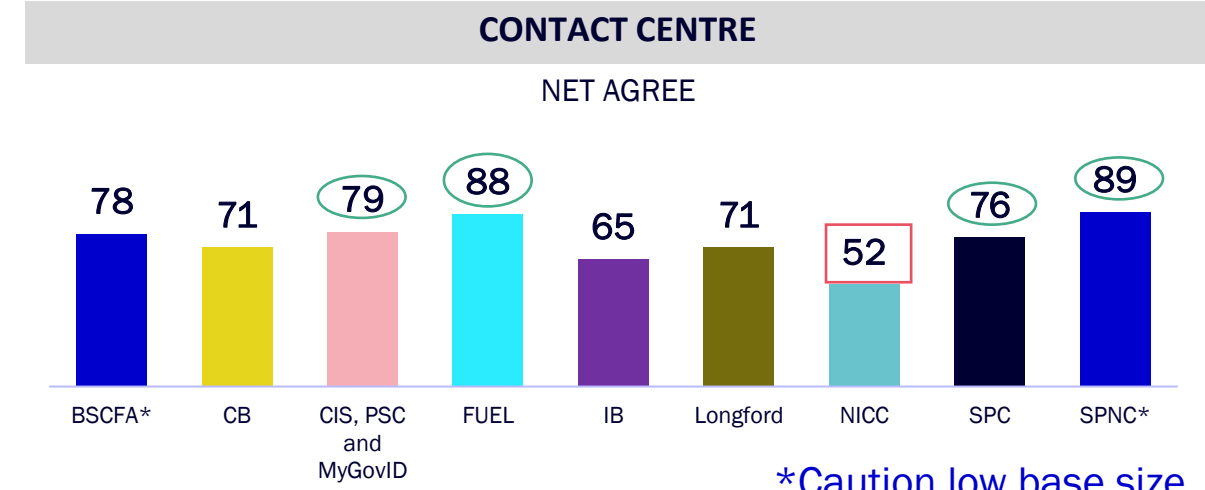
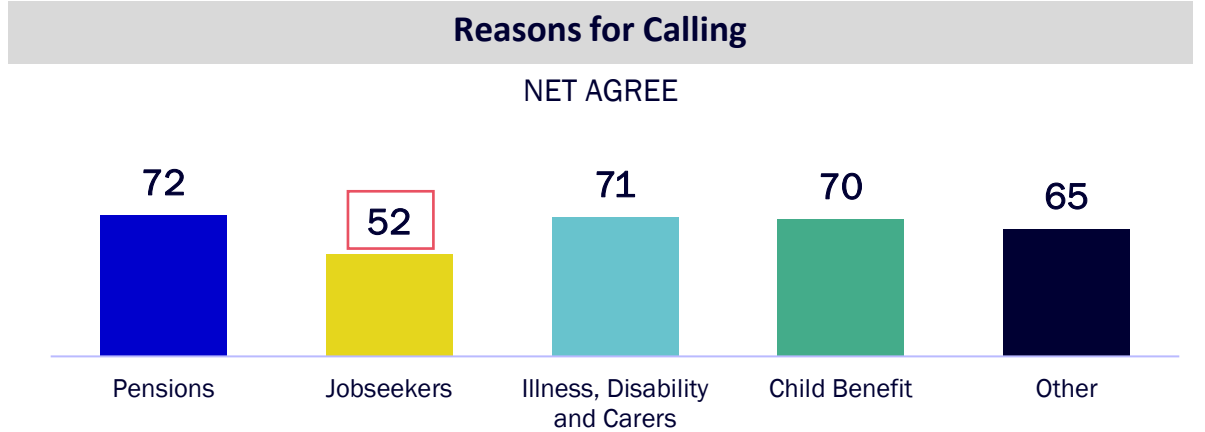
Broad agreement across all cohorts that they were easily able to navigate through the interactive voice response options (at 80%+).

I was satisfied with the waiting times when I contacted the Contact Centre

Base: All Respondents N – 1006



*Post not shown N - 31

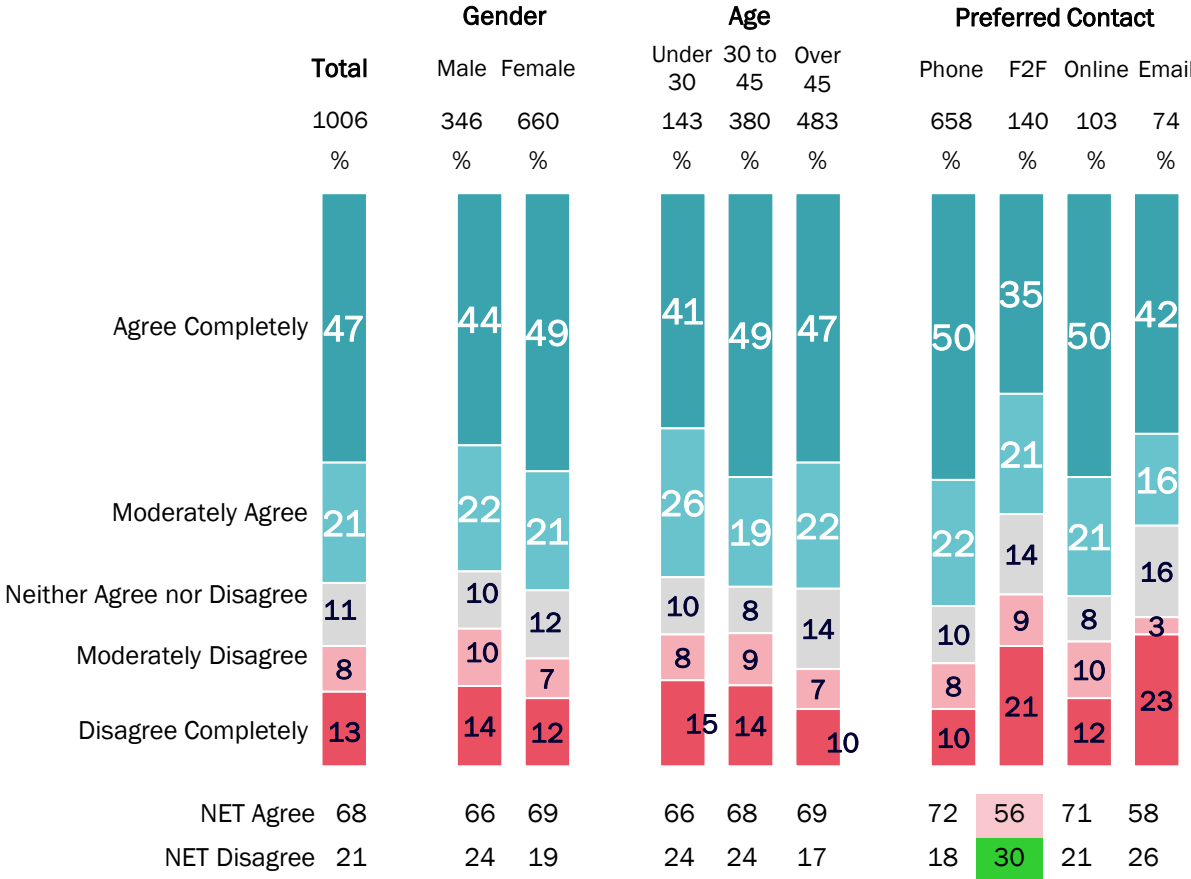


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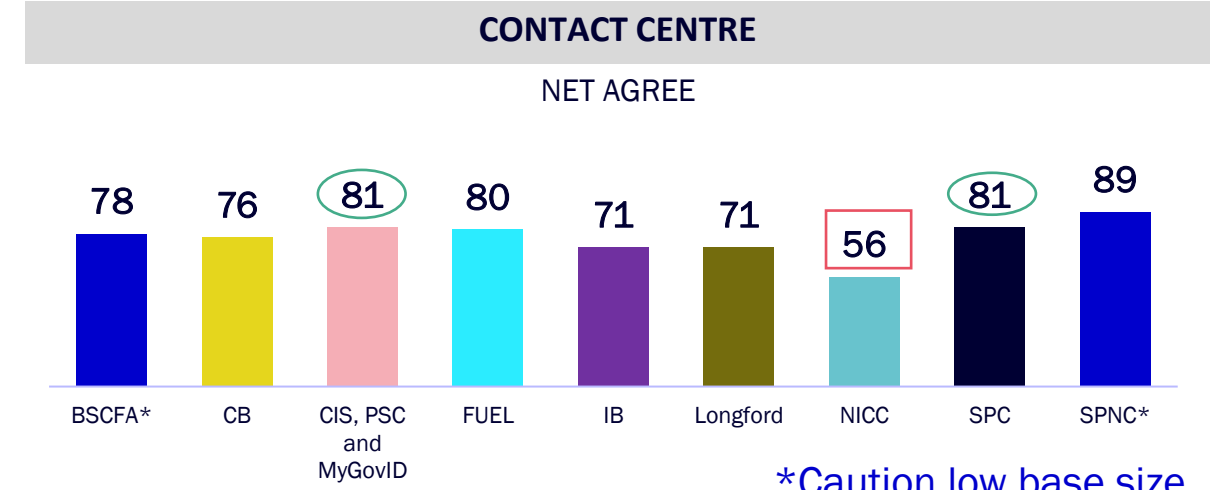
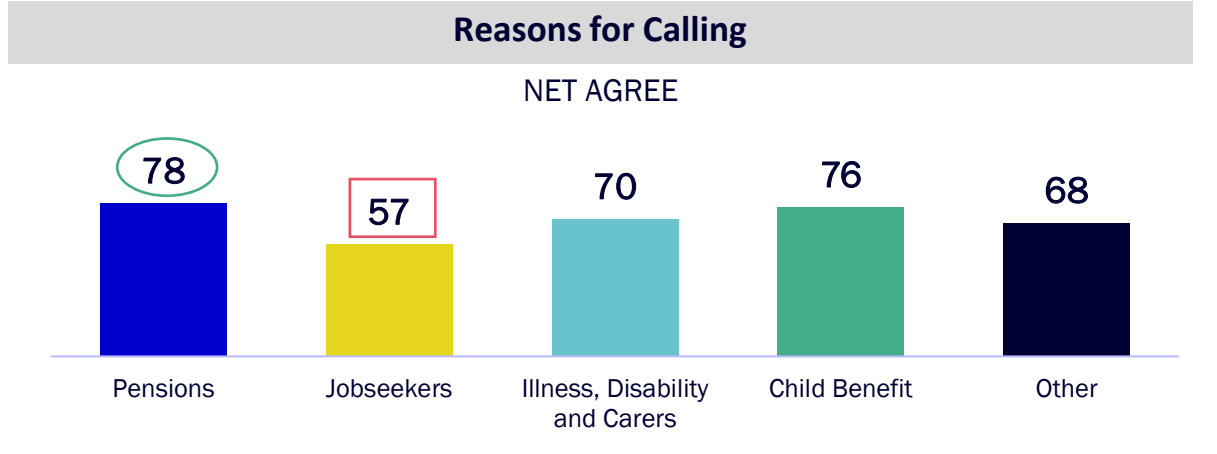
68% This was lower for under 30's at 56%, those who prefer face-to-face contact 56% and Jobseekers (52%). Highest satisfaction was registered for CIS/PSC /MyGov (79%), Fuel (88%) and SPC (76%).

I was satisfied that I was not left on hold for a long time during the call

Base: All Respondents N – 1006



*Post not shown N - 31



*Caution low base size

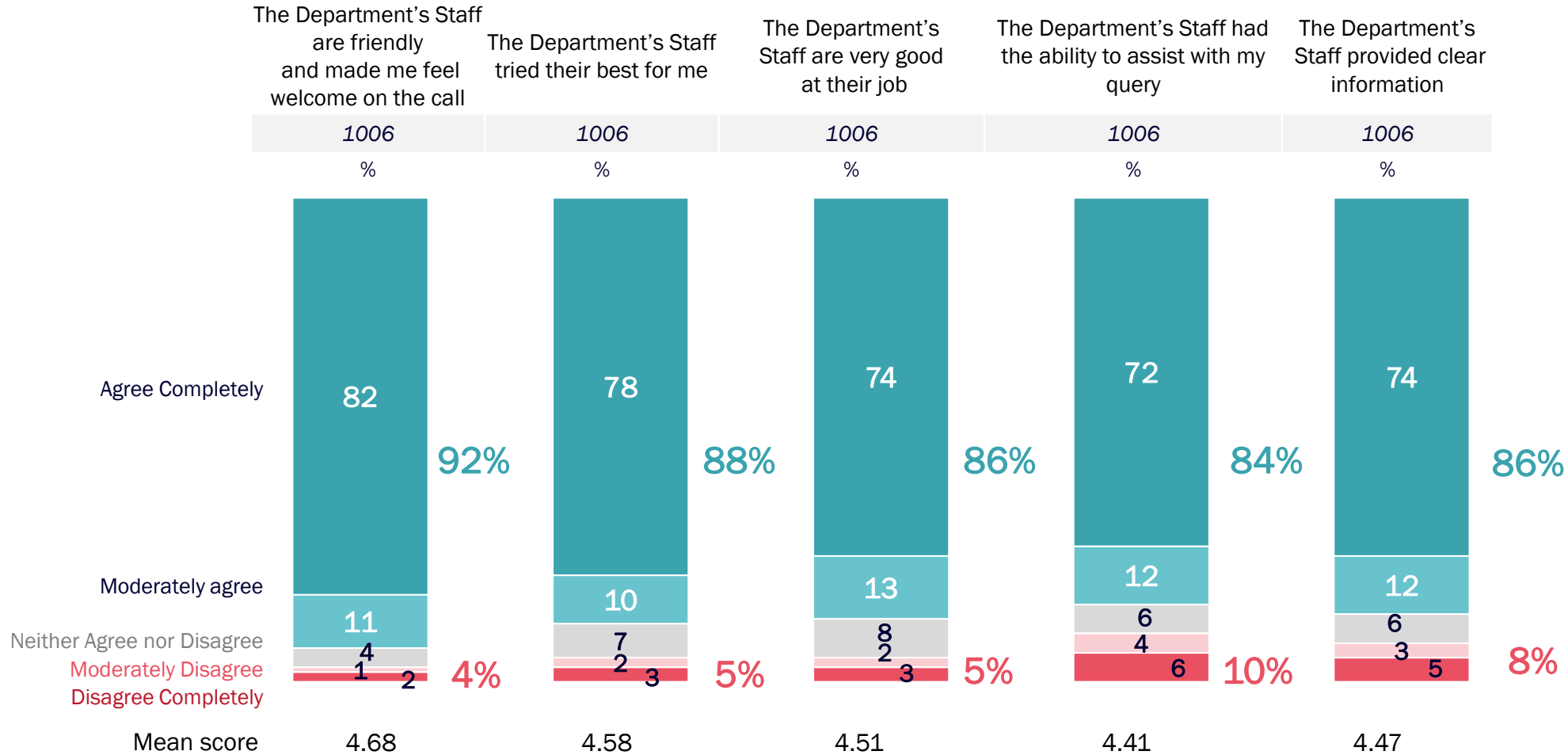
68% of respondents agreed they were satisfied that they were not left on hold for a long time during call. This was highest for those calling with regard to Pensions at 78%. Those calling in relation to Jobseekers were least satisfied at 57%, as were who prefer in-person contact at 56%.



Staff Performance

Overview of Staff Performance – Contact Centre

Base: Recent callers to the Department of Social Protection - 1,006

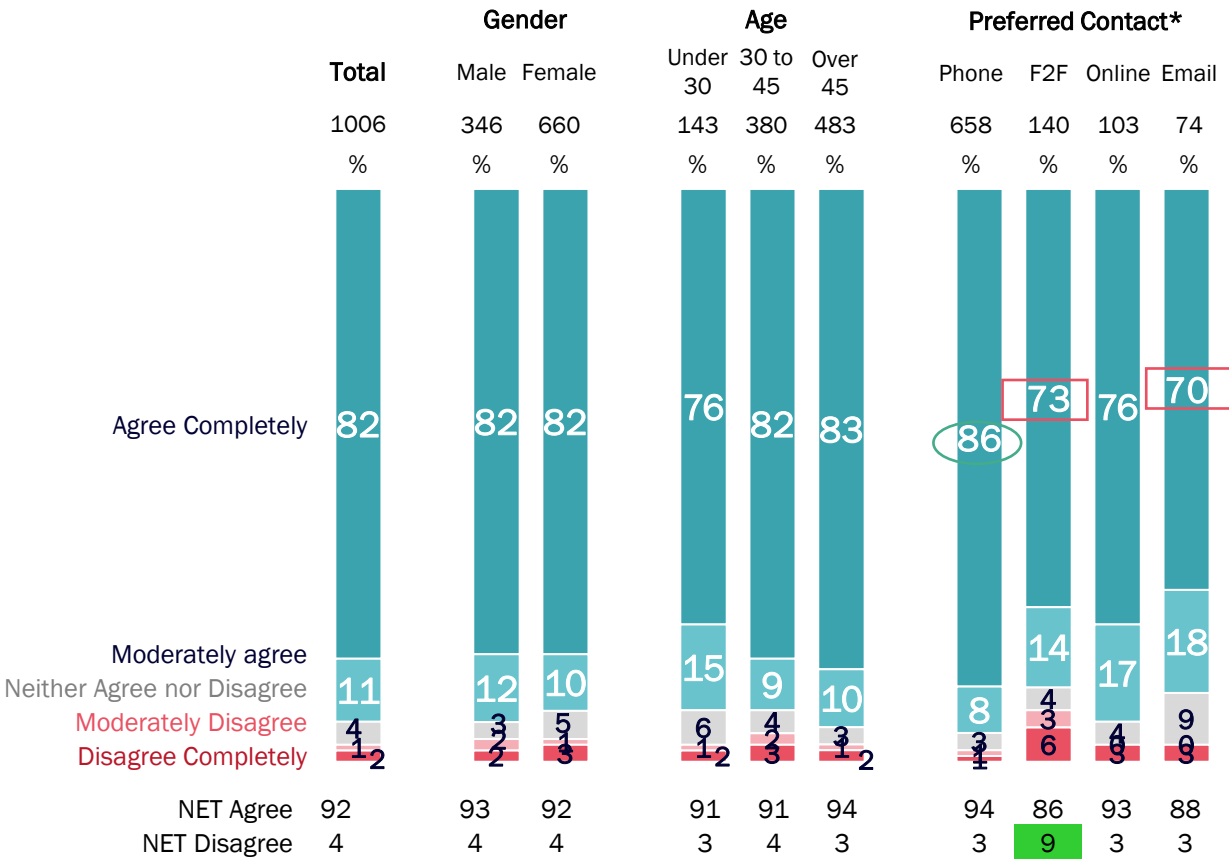


Satisfaction is very high across all metrics with 92% stating that staff are friendly and made them feel welcome. 88% agreed that staff tried their best for them, followed by 86% agreeing that staff are very good at their jobs. There was a similar high agreement level of 86% with the statement that staff provided clear information and 84% net agreement that staff had the ability to assist with their query.

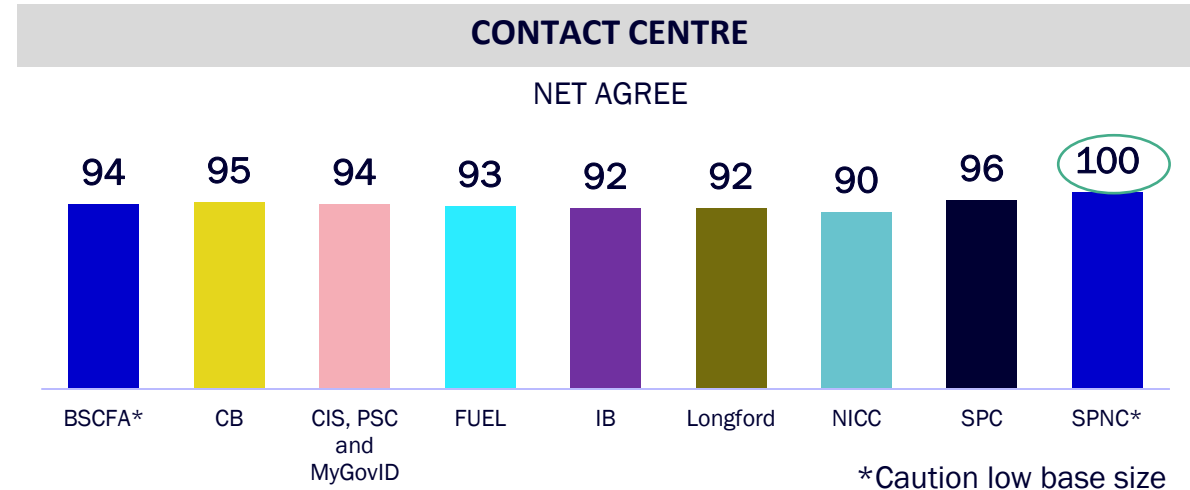
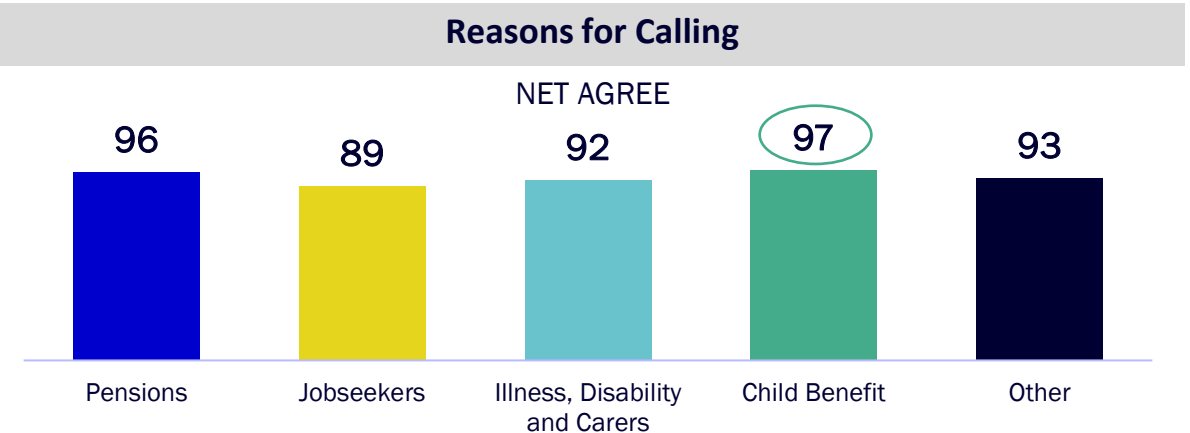


The Department's Staff are friendly and made me feel welcome on the call

Base: All Respondents N – 1006



*Post not shown N - 31



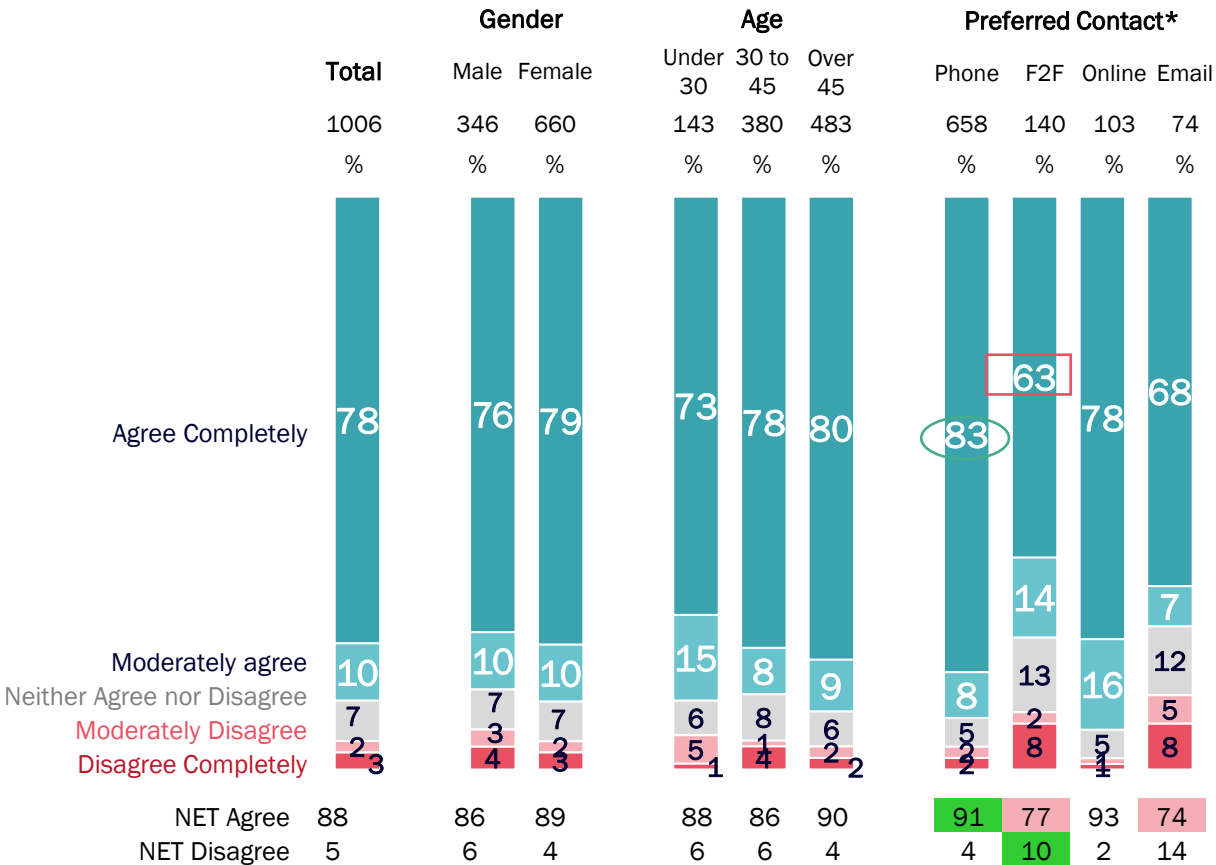
*Caution low base size

The vast majority (92%) agree that staff are friendly and made them feel welcome on the call. This was highest for those calling regarding Child Benefit. There were slightly lower levels of agreement for those who prefer contact via face to face or email.

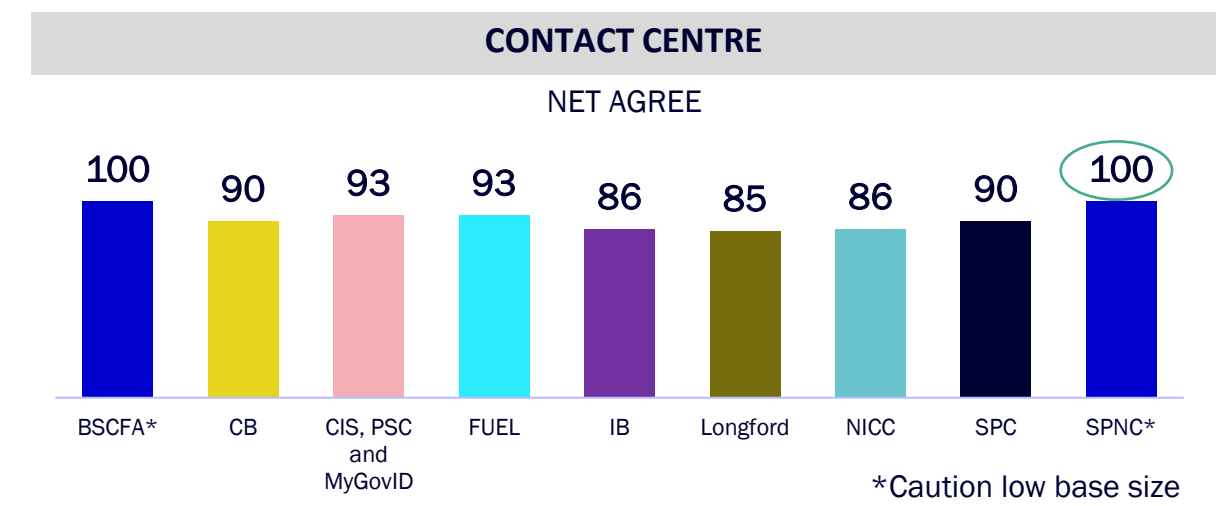
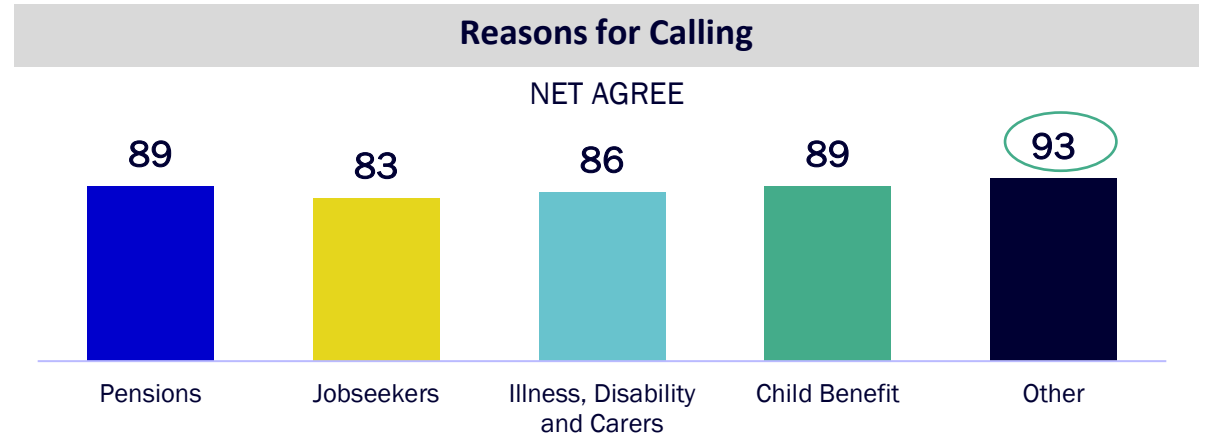
Q.3 Now thinking about Contact Centre service staff, please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements. For each statement, please use a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 is 'Agree Completely' and 1 is 'Disagree Completely'

The Department's Staff tried their best for me

Base: All Respondents N – 1006



*Post not shown N - 31

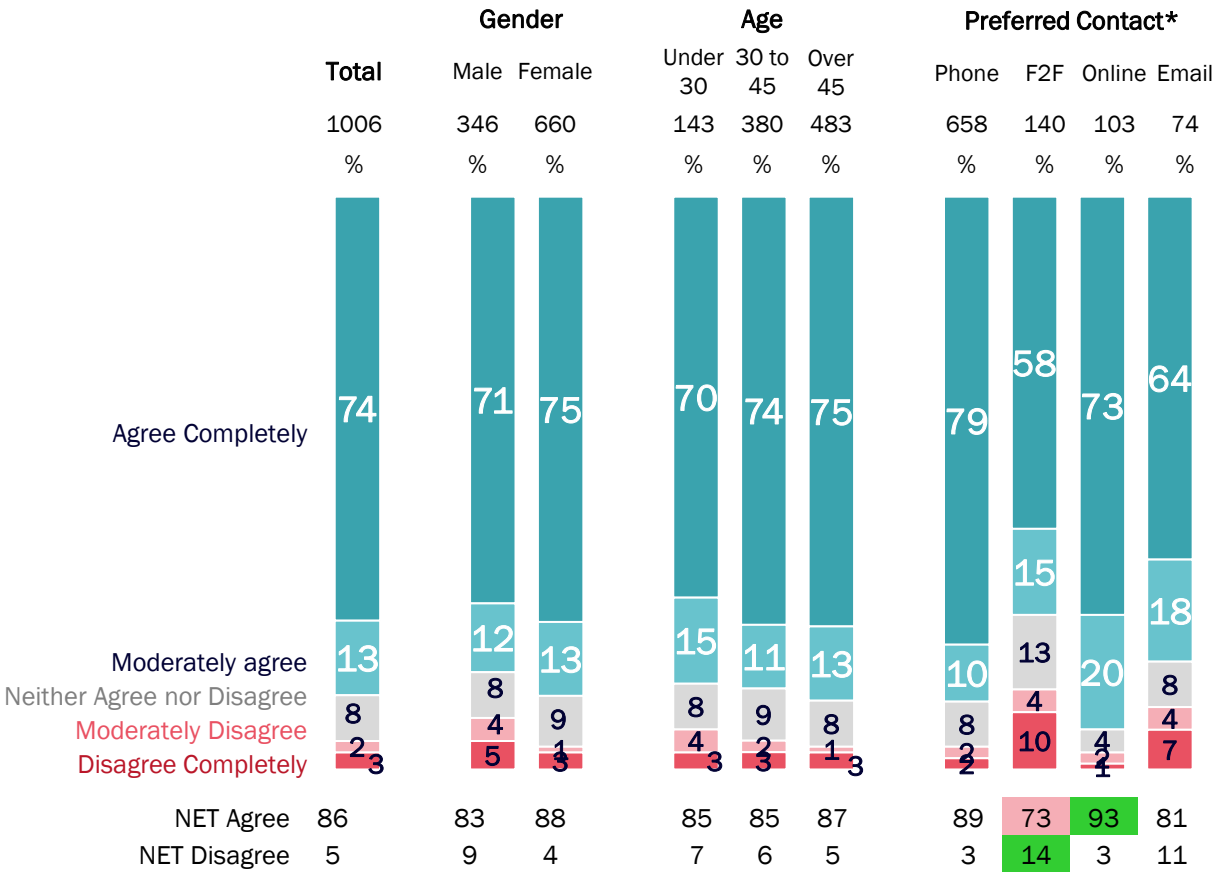


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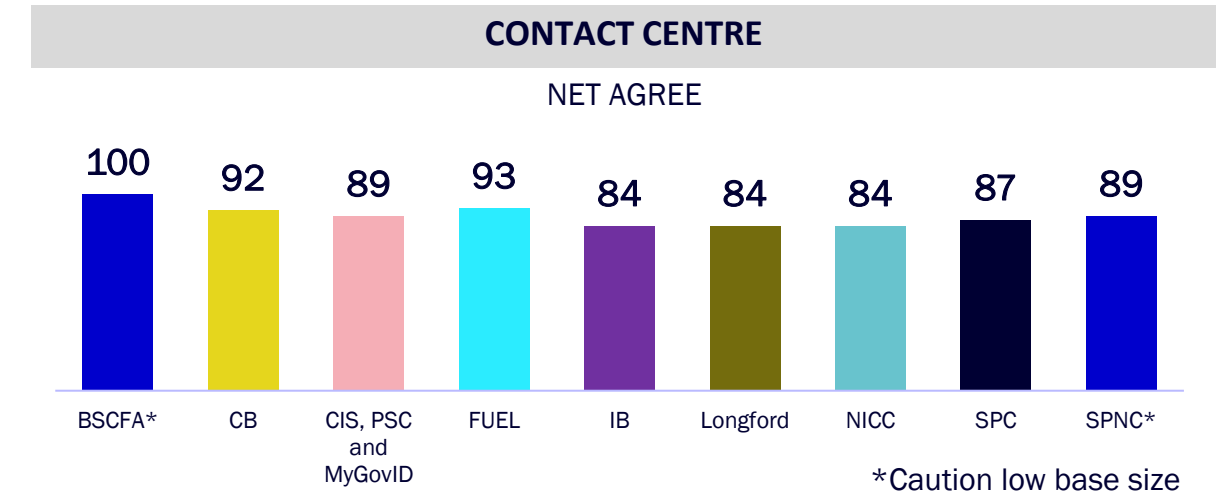
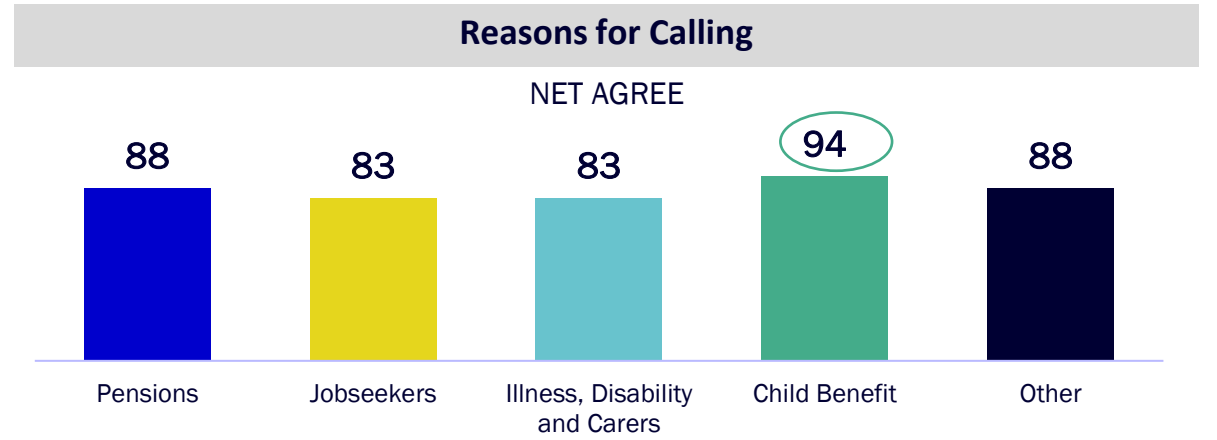
A total of 88% agree that staff tried their best for them, this was highest for those who prefer contact by phone at 91%.

The Department's Staff are very good at their job

Base: All Respondents N – 1006



*Post not shown N - 31

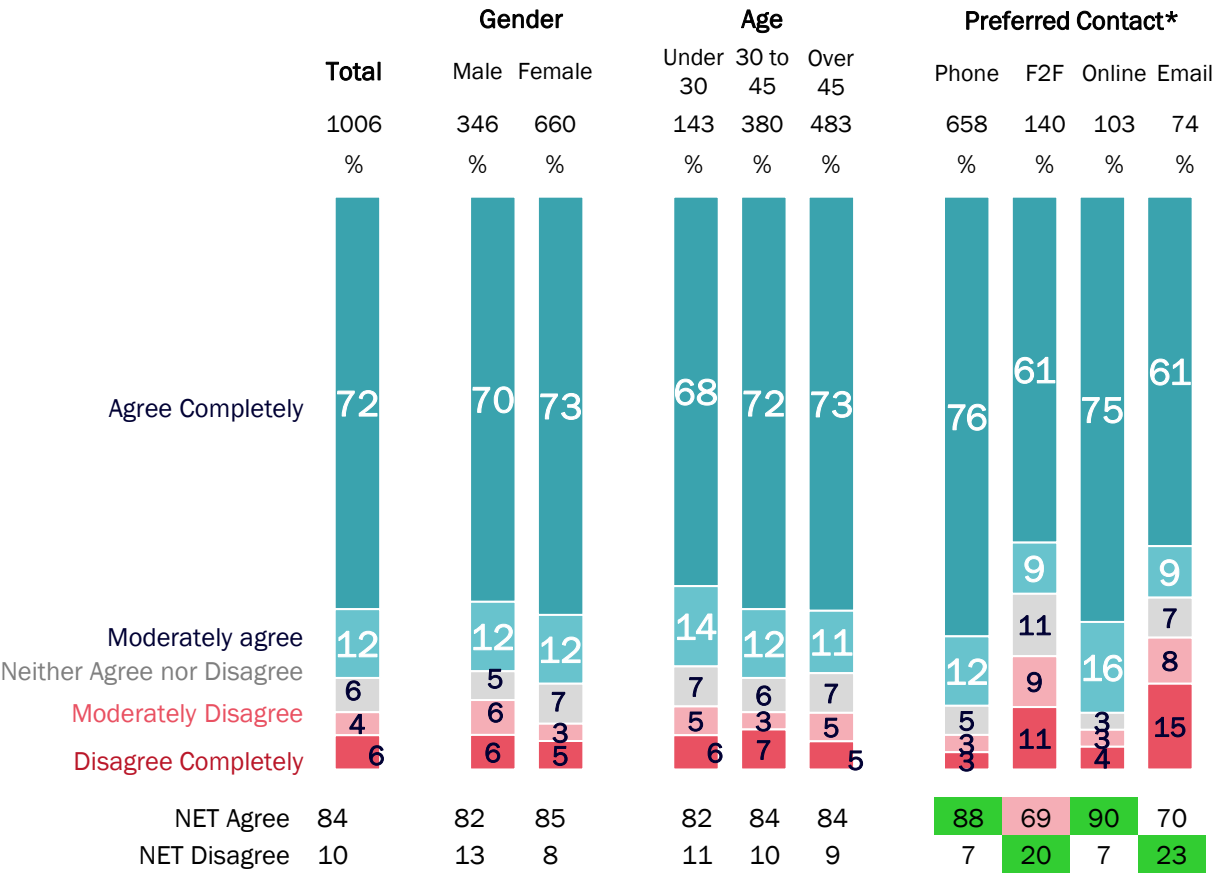


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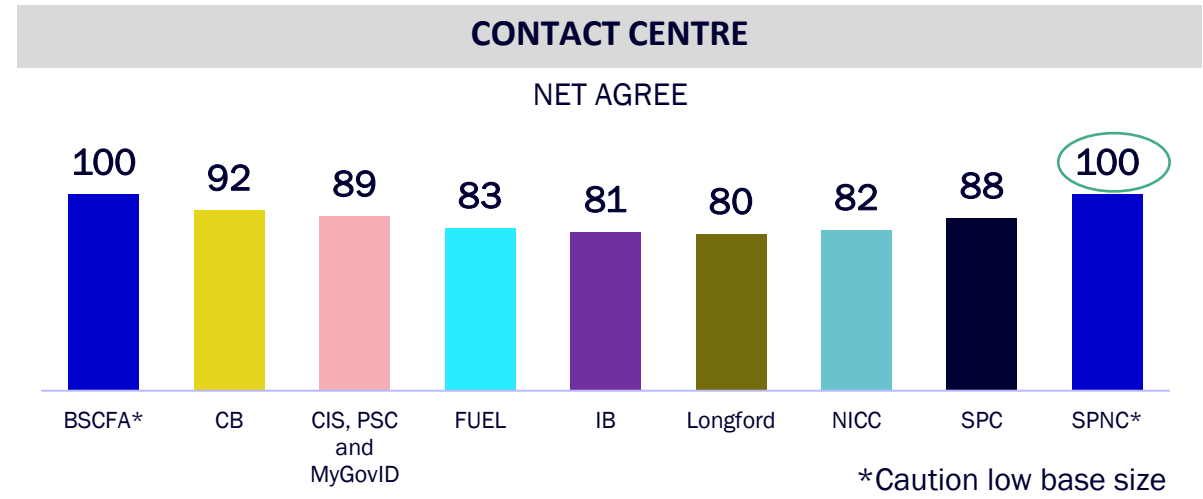
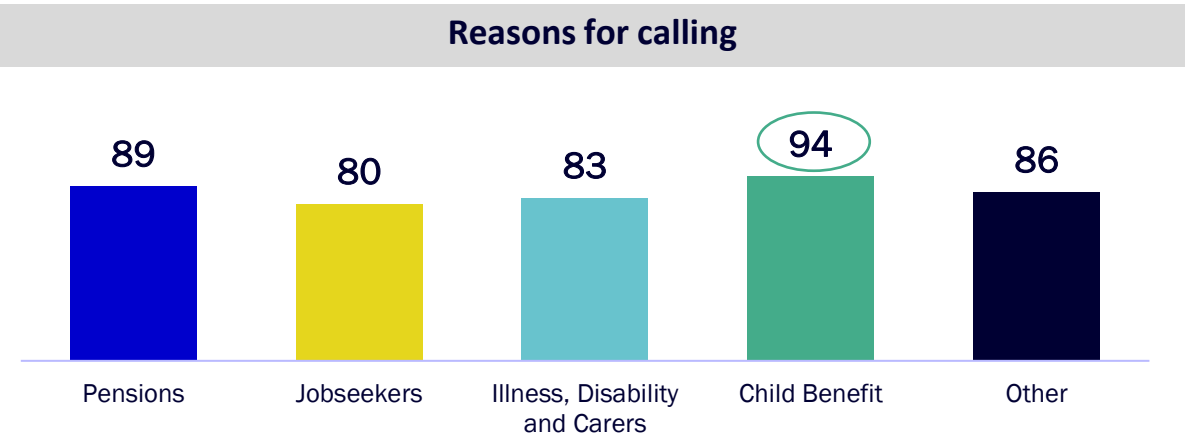
There were high levels of agreement with the statement that staff are very good at their jobs. This was highest for those calling in relation to Child Benefit.

The Department's Staff had the ability to assist with my query

Base: All Respondents N – 1006



*Post not shown N - 31

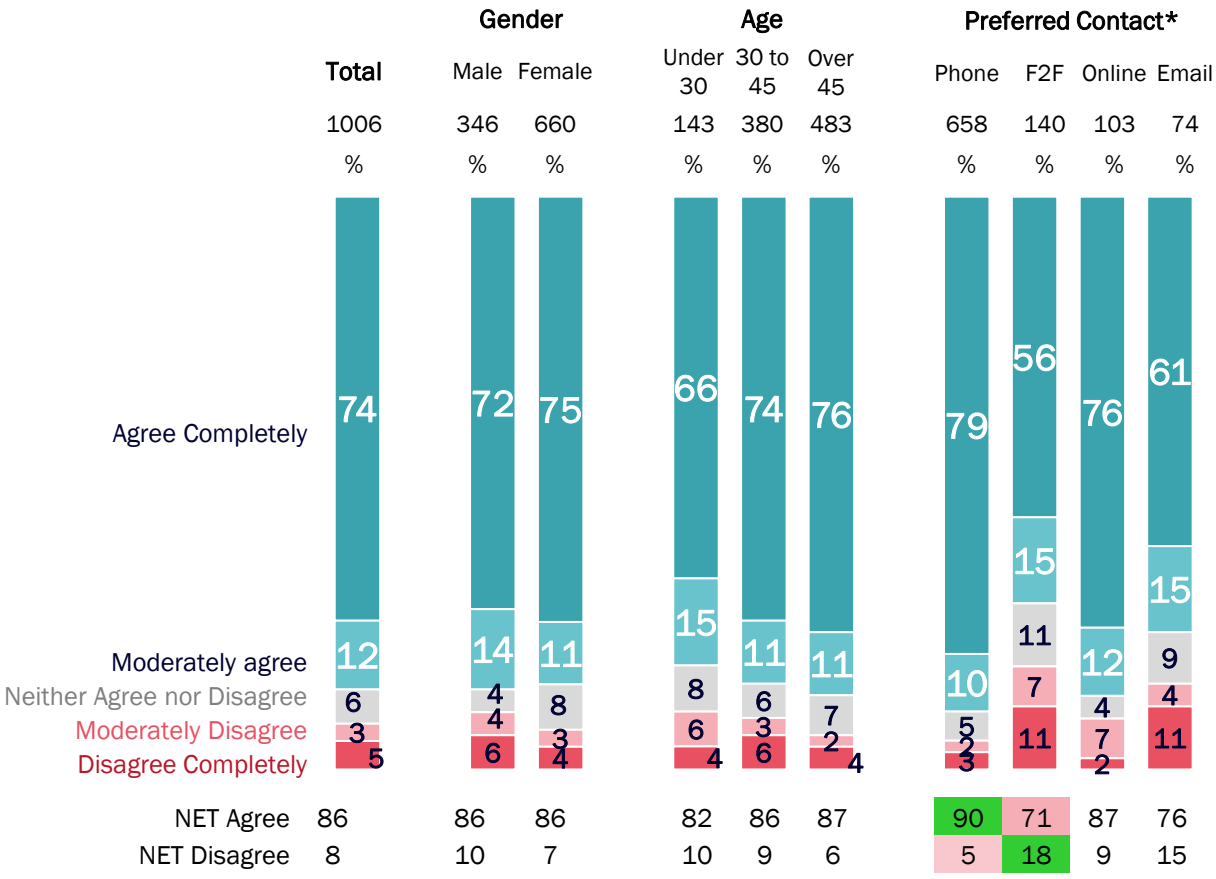


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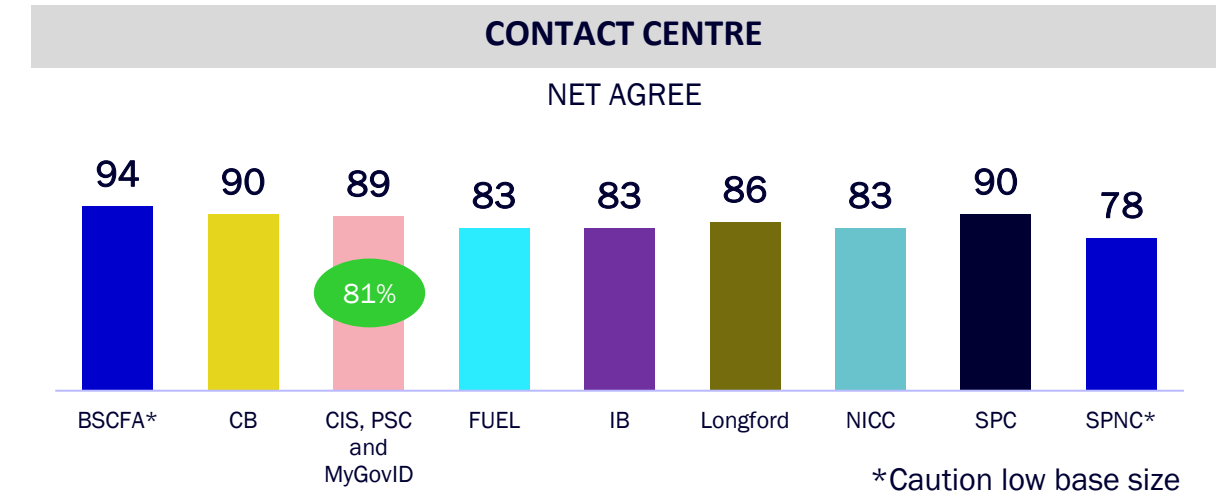
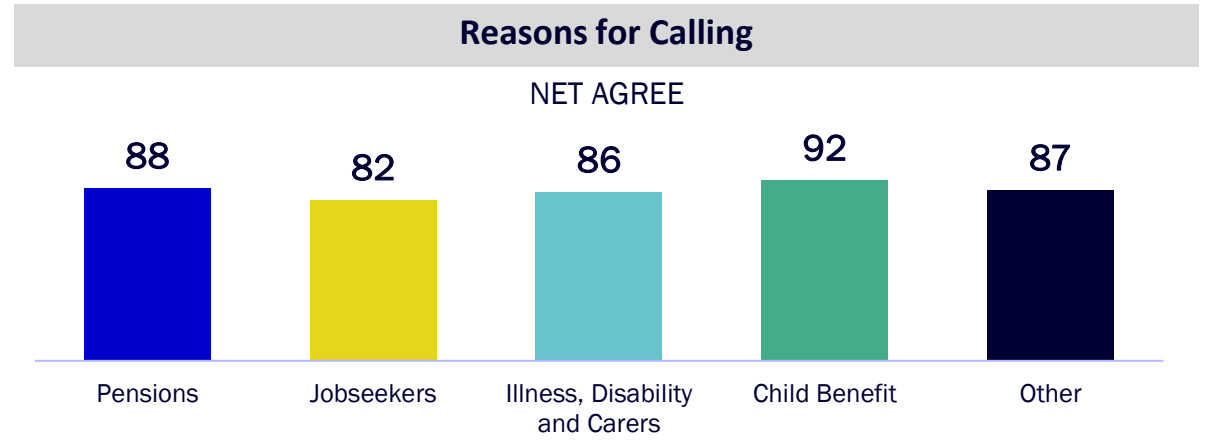
84% agreed that staff had the ability to assist with their query. There were mixed views in terms of preferred interaction, with 69% of those who prefer face to face interaction agreeing versus 88% for those who prefer phone, and 90% of those who prefer online interaction.

The Department's Staff provided clear information

Base: All Respondents N – 1006



*Post not shown N - 31



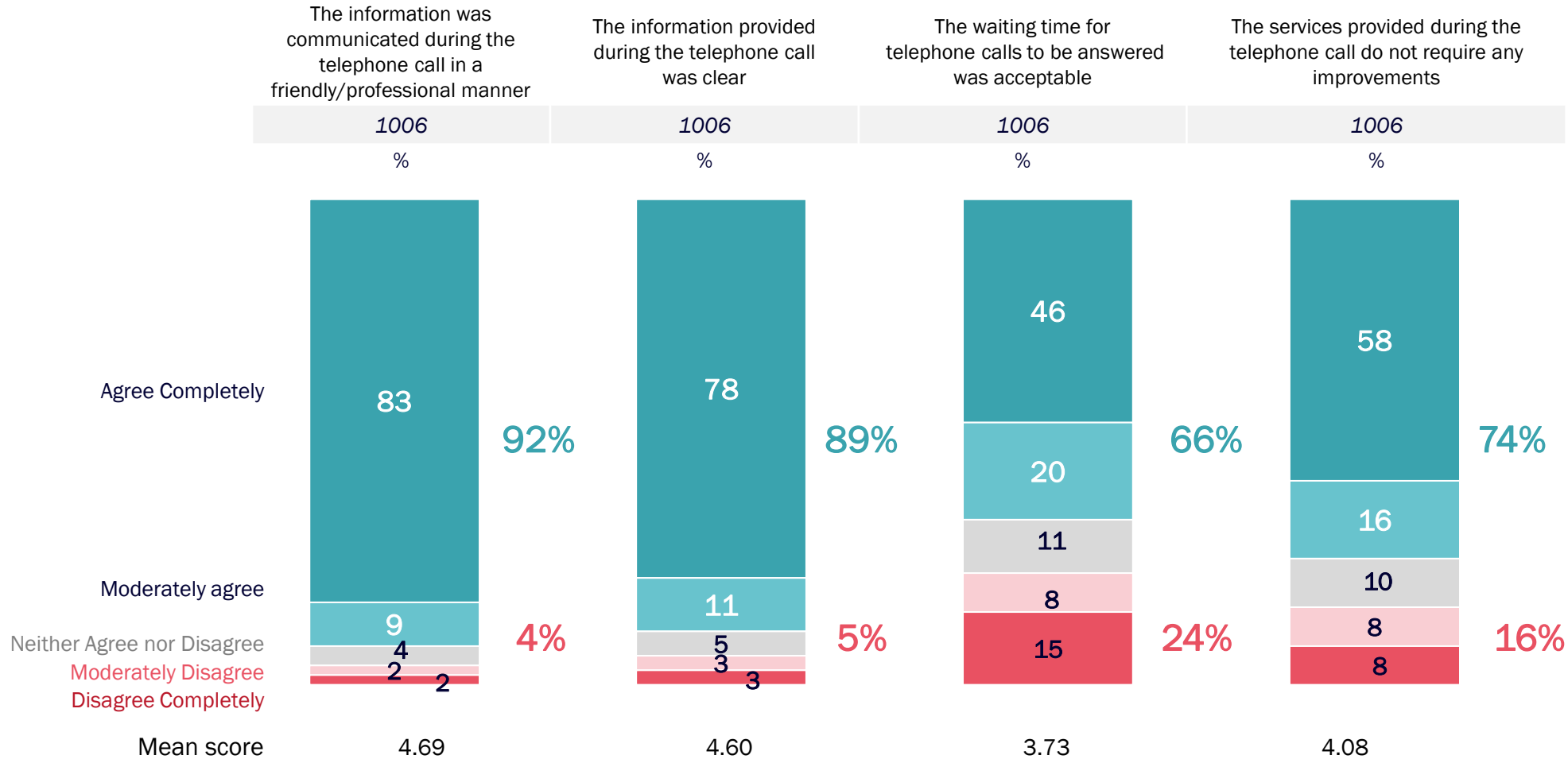
There was strong agreement with the statement that staff provided clear information with 86% agreeing on an overall basis, this rose to 90% for those who prefer telephone interaction. A large majority 81% completely agree for the CIS PSC/MyGov ID Contact Centre,



The Contact Centre Service

Overview of Contact Centre Service

Base: All Respondents N – 1006

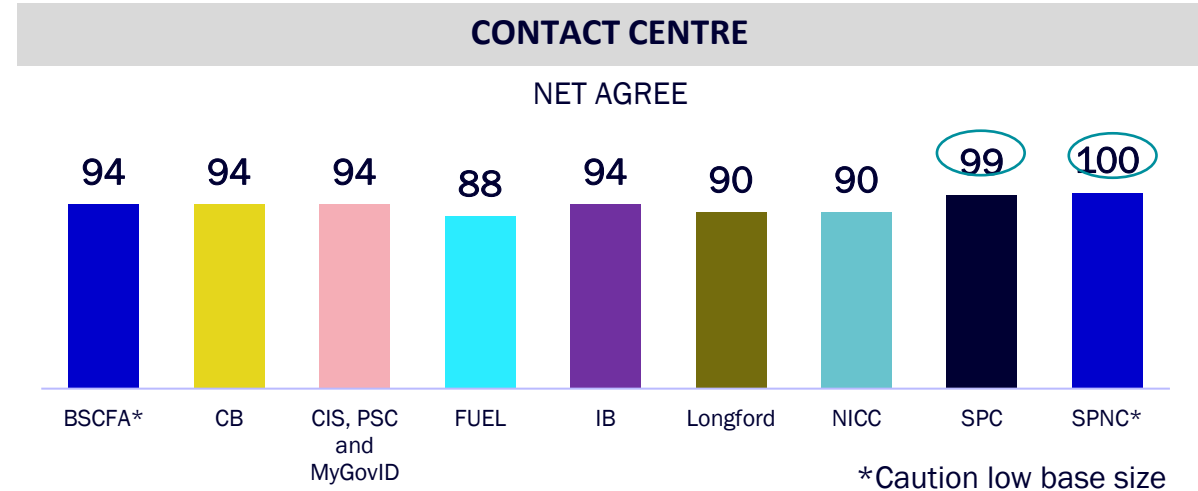
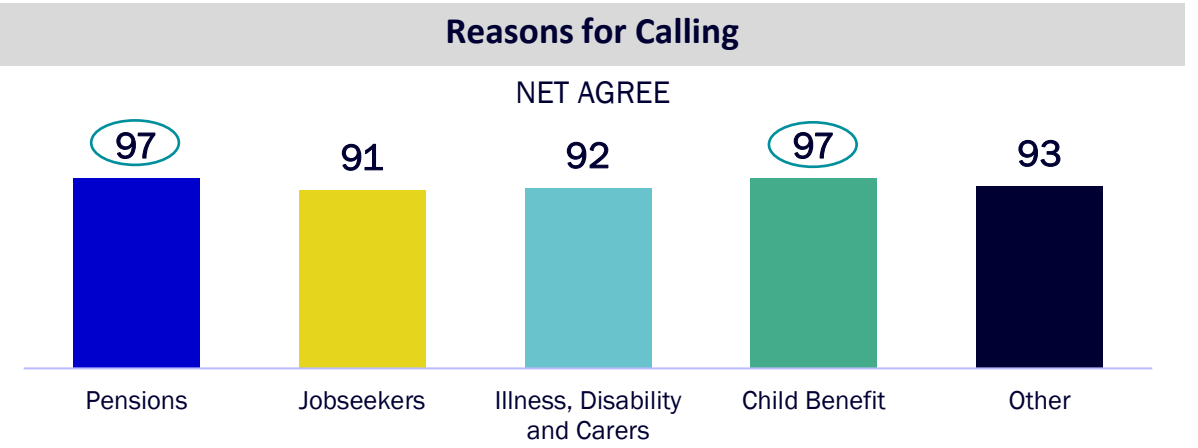
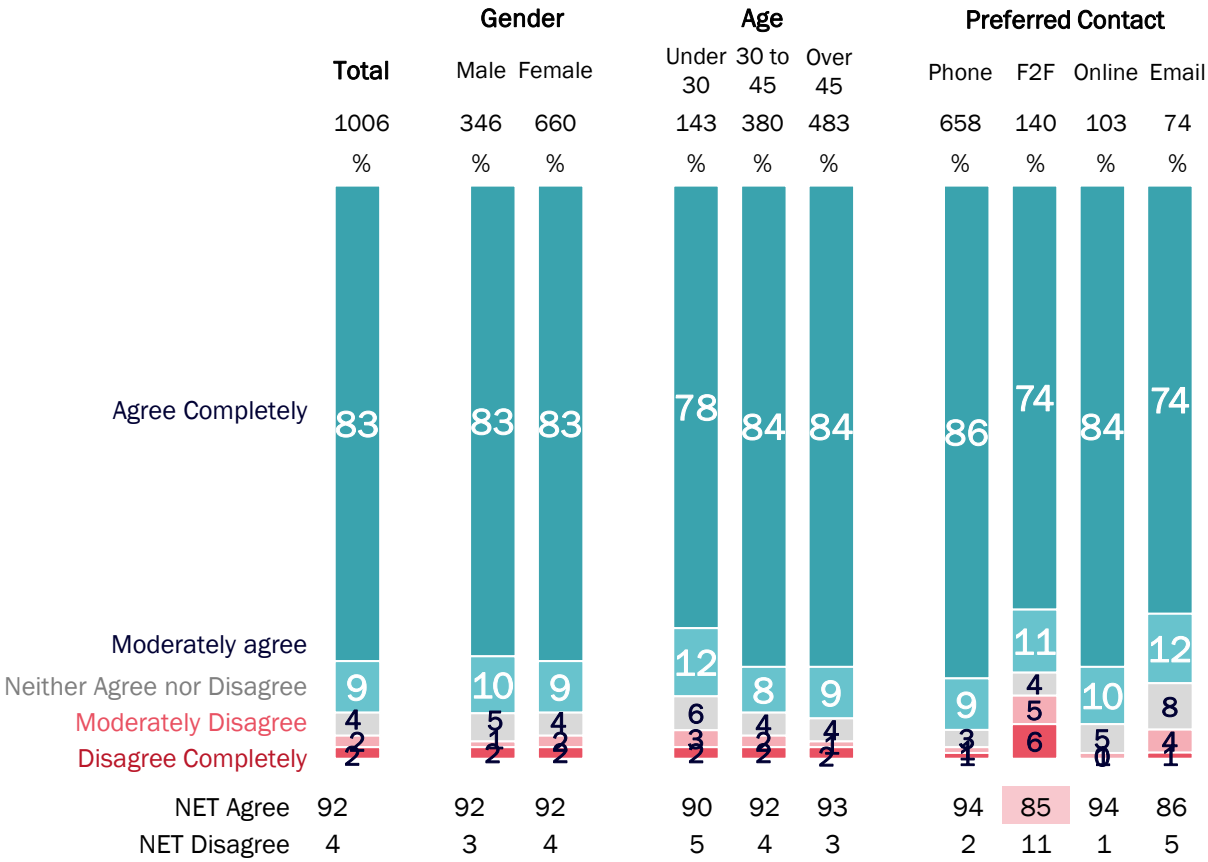


In terms of service performance, a very high rating of **92%** was registered for information communicated in a friendly/professional manner and 89% for clarity of information.

Three-quarters reported that the service does not require any improvements (74%) whilst two-thirds (66%) agreed that the waiting time for calls to be answered was acceptable with 24% disagreeing.

The information was communicated during the telephone call in a friendly/professional manner

Base: All Respondents N – 1006



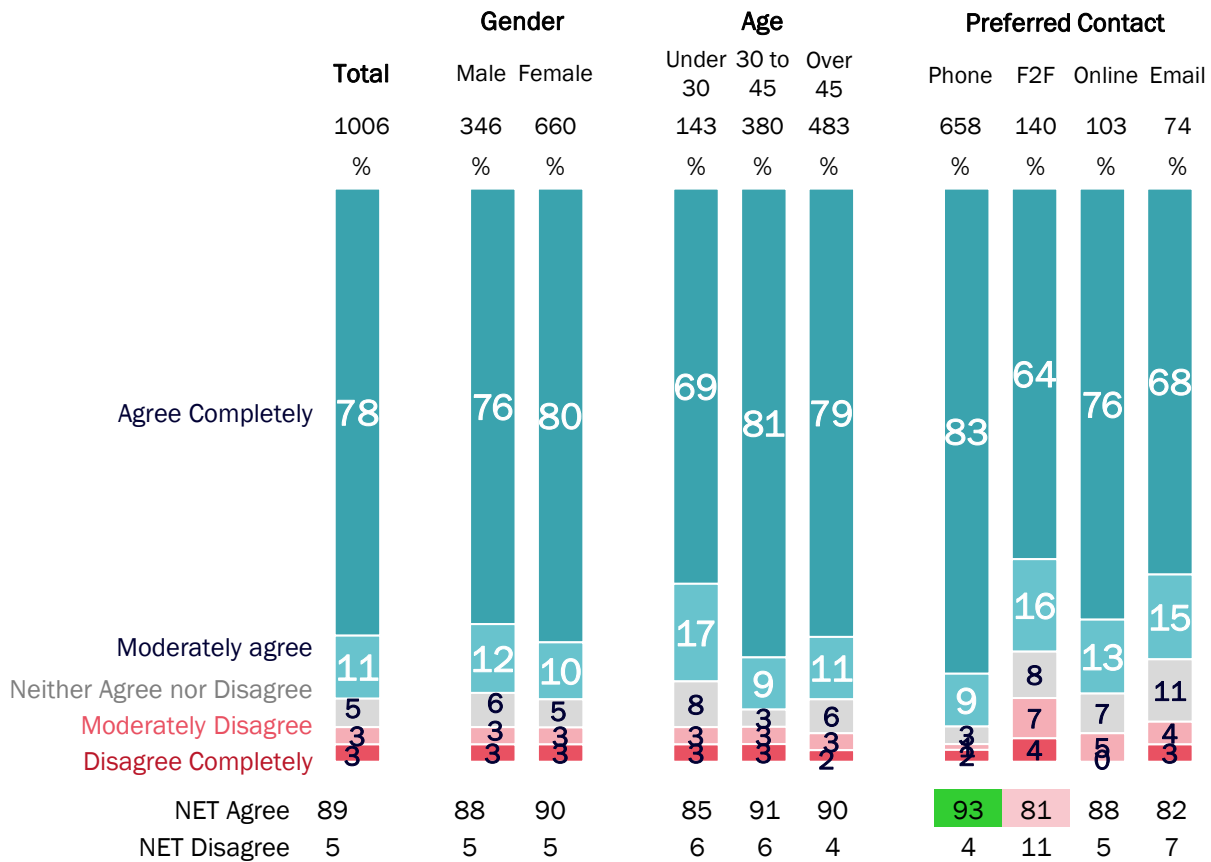
*Post not shown N - 37

*Caution low base size

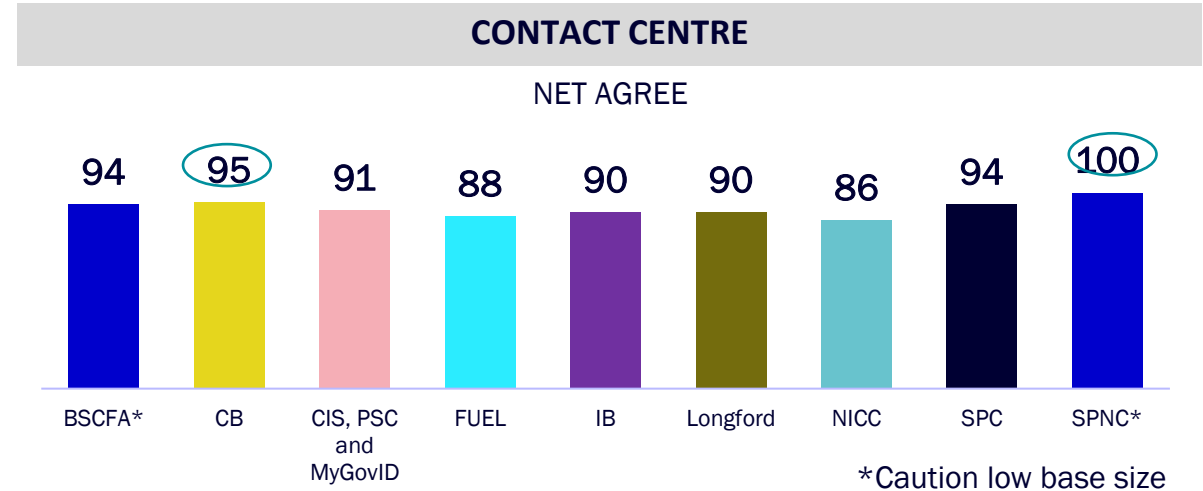
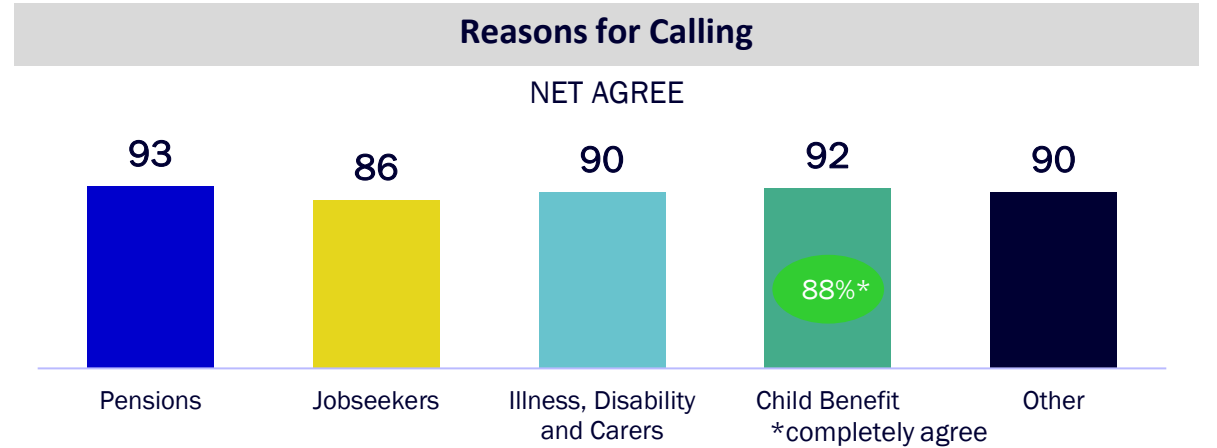
Very high agreement across the board that information was communicated during the telephone call in a friendly/professional manner and this was particularly so for those calling about Pensions or Child Benefit.

The information provided during the telephone call was clear

Base: All Respondents N – 1006



*Post not shown N - 37

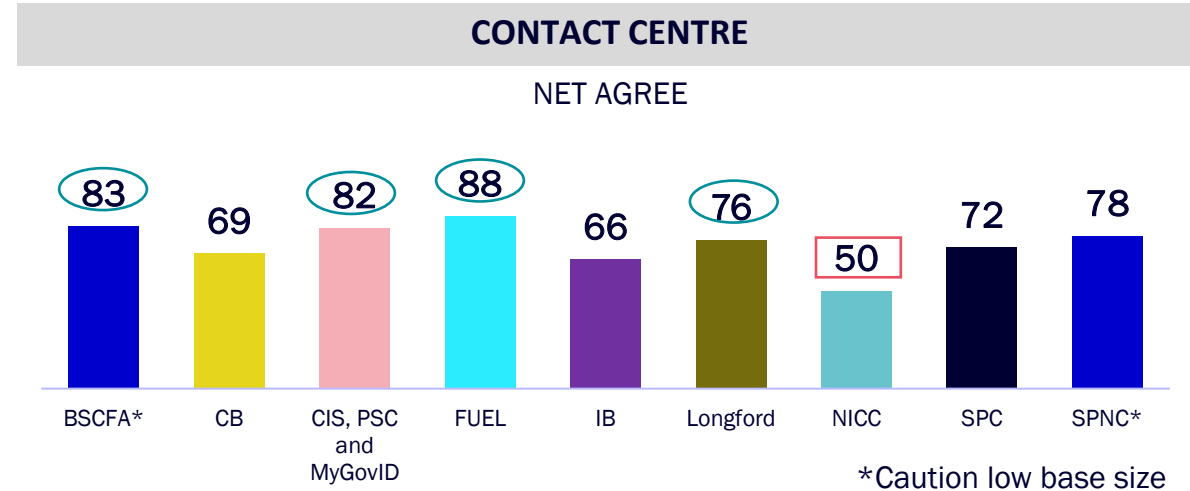
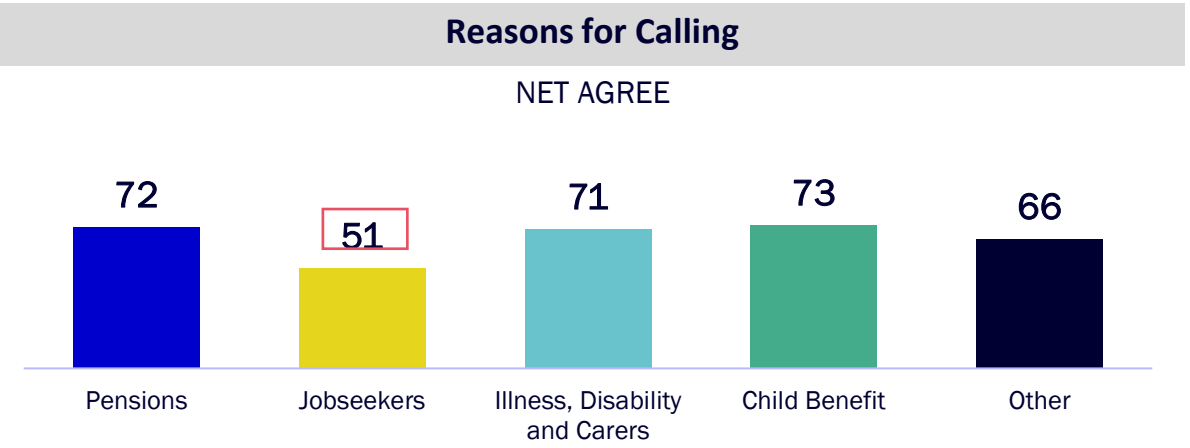
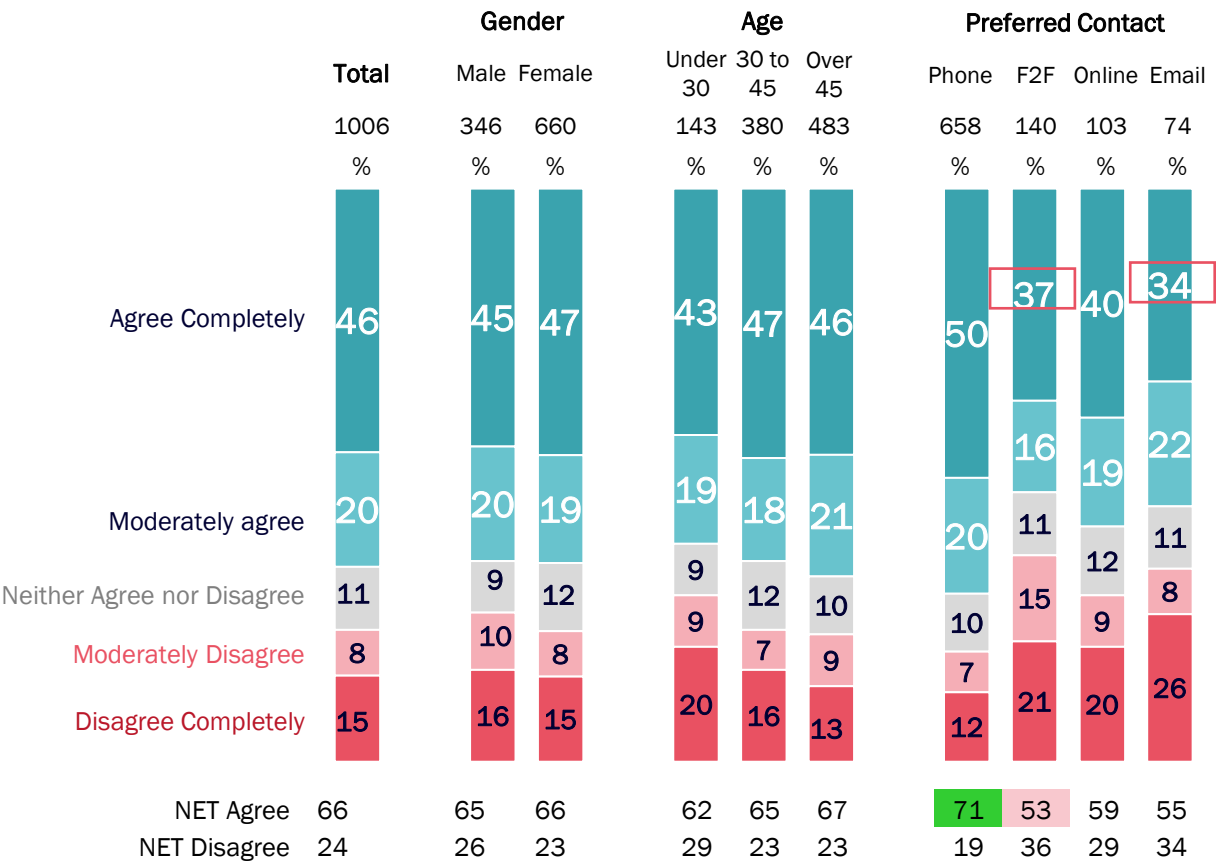


There is also high agreement for the statement that the information provided during the telephone call was clear with 89% agreement at total level, rising to 93% for those whose preferred contact is by phone, 92% for those calling in relation to Child Benefit.



The waiting time for telephone calls to be answered was acceptable

Base: All Respondents N – 1006

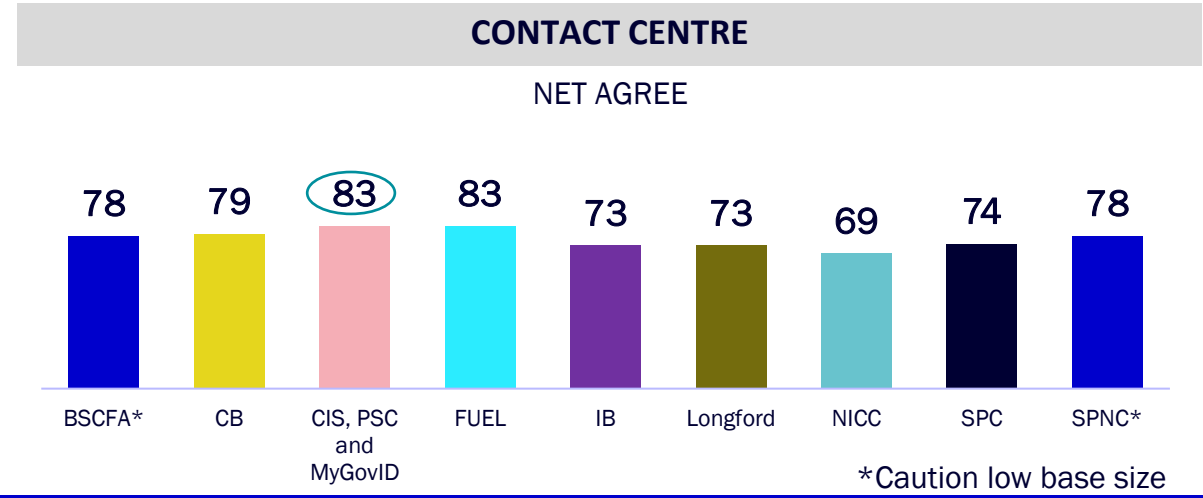
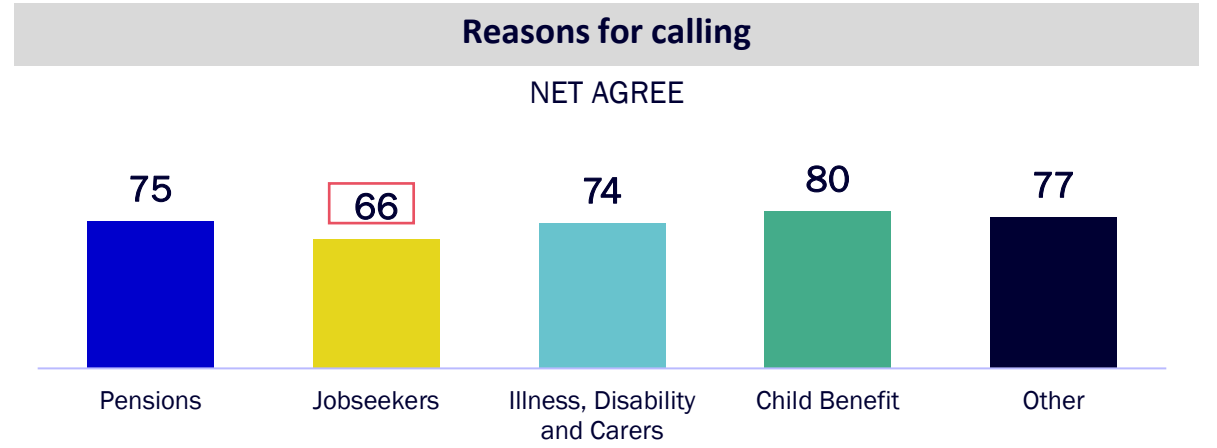
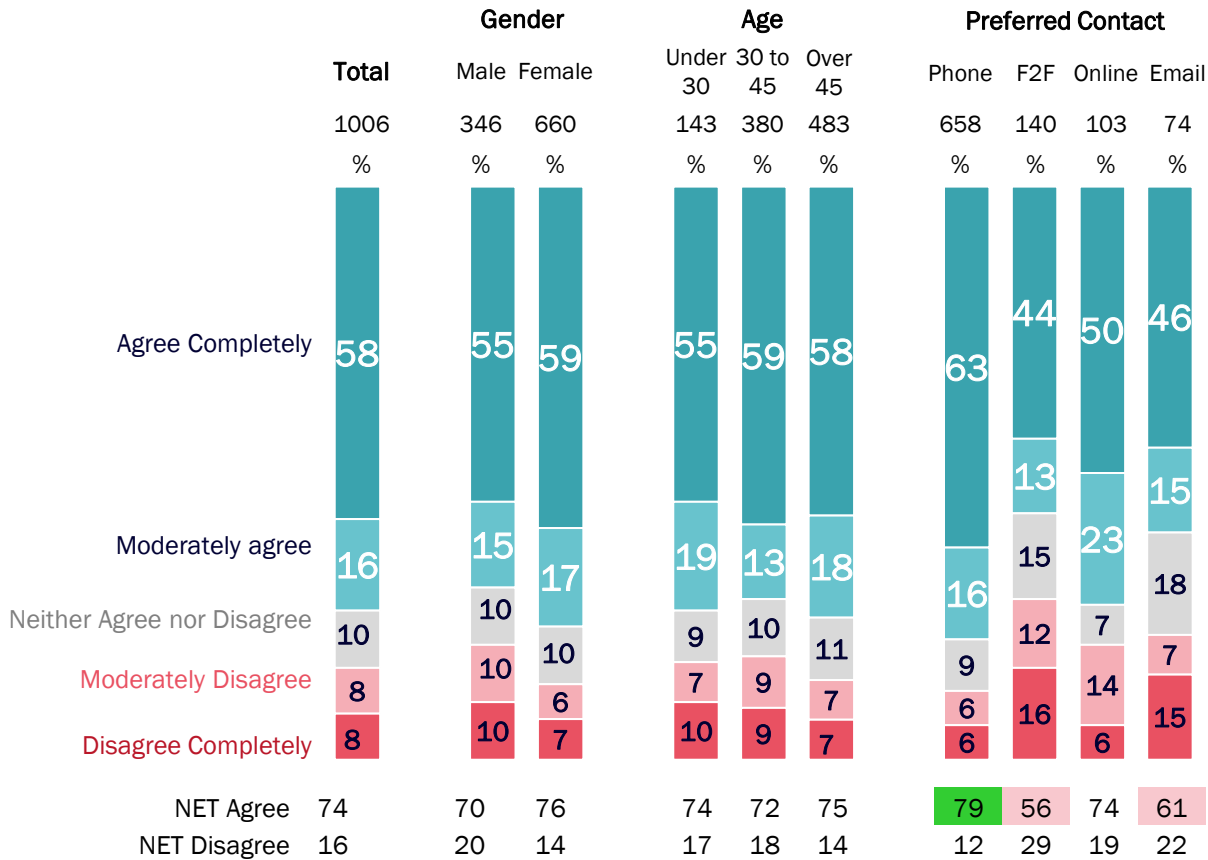


*Post not shown N - 37

In response to the metric 'the waiting time for telephone calls to be answered was acceptable', a solid two-thirds agreed at 66% with 24% who disagreed. Agreement varied across the different contact centres ranging from 88% for Fuel to 50% of NICC.

The services provided during the telephone call do not require any improvements

Base: All Respondents N – 1006



*Post not shown N - 37

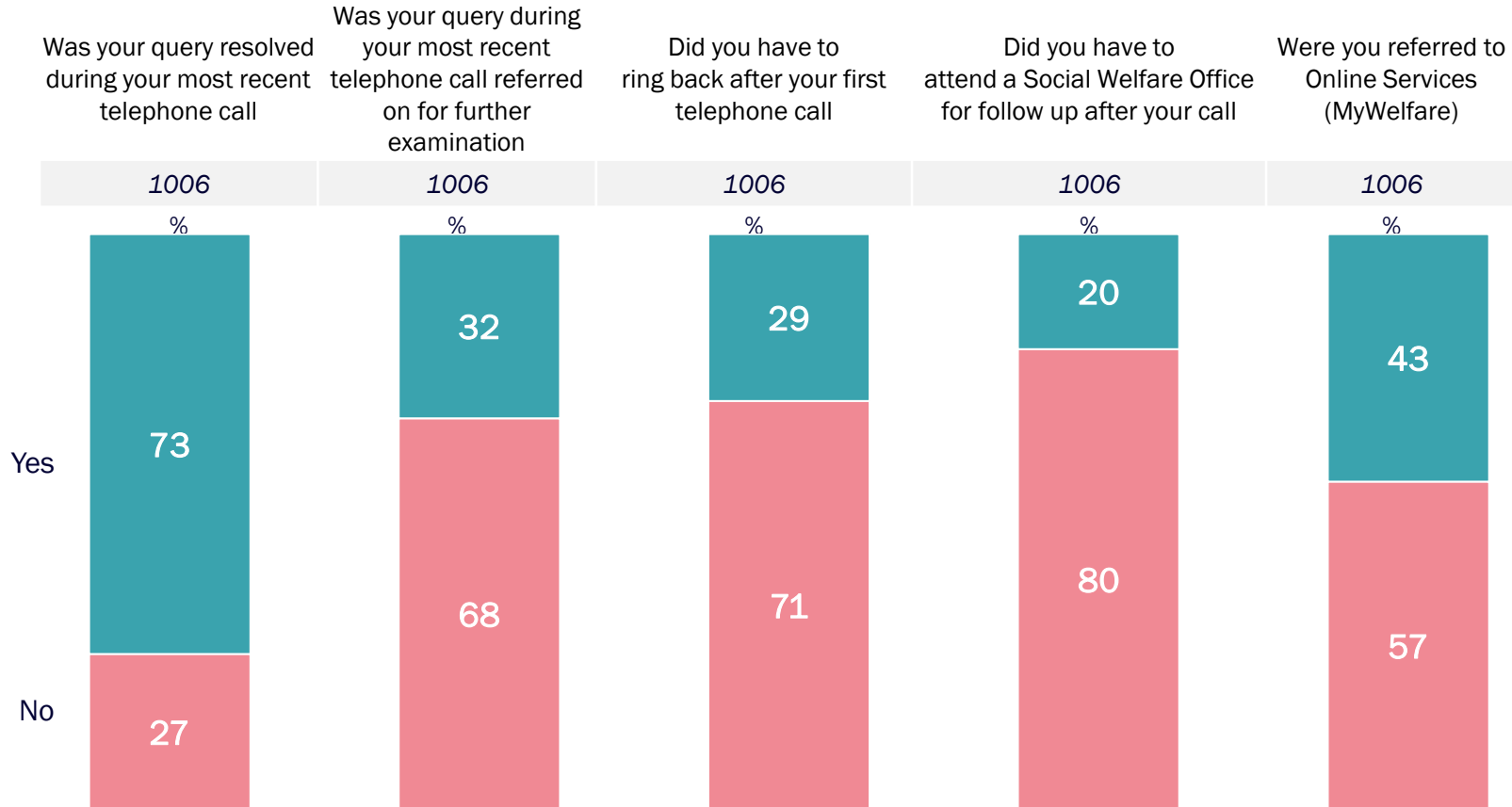
Three-quarters agreed that the services provided during the call do not require any improvements, this was higher for CIS, PSC, MyGovID and FUEL at 83%. NICC were least satisfied at 69% and those who said they were calling with regard to Jobseekers (66%)



Task Resolution

Overview of contact experience

Base: All Respondents N – 1006

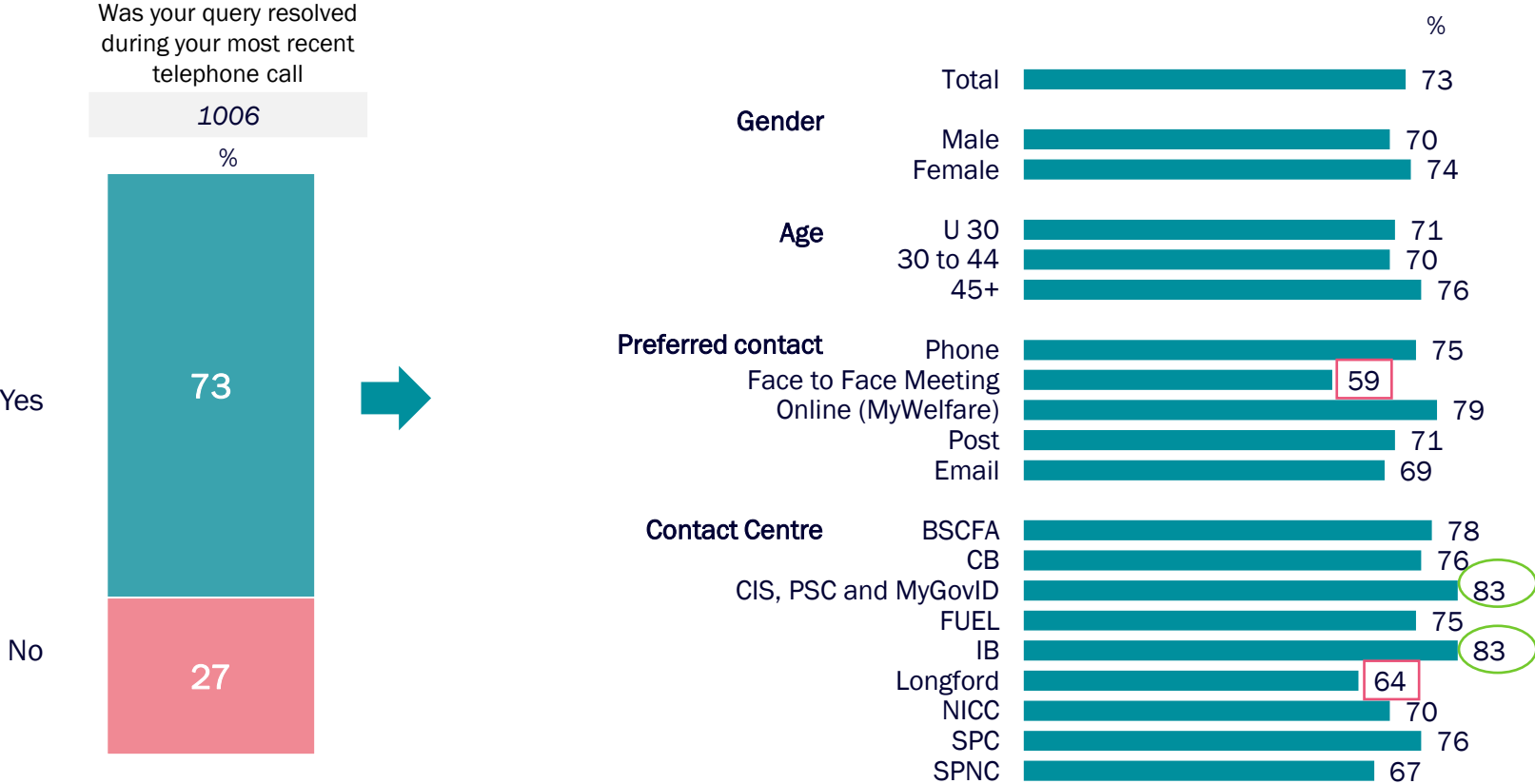


Almost three-quarters of those who took part in the survey (73%) agreed the query was resolved during their most recent telephone call. 43% reported they were referred to Online Services. 32% state their call was referred on for further examination, with 29% saying they had to ring back after first call. One in five report they had to attend a social welfare office for follow up after call.

Was your query resolved during your most recent telephone call

Base: All Respondents N – 1006

 Statistically higher than total
 Statistically lower than total



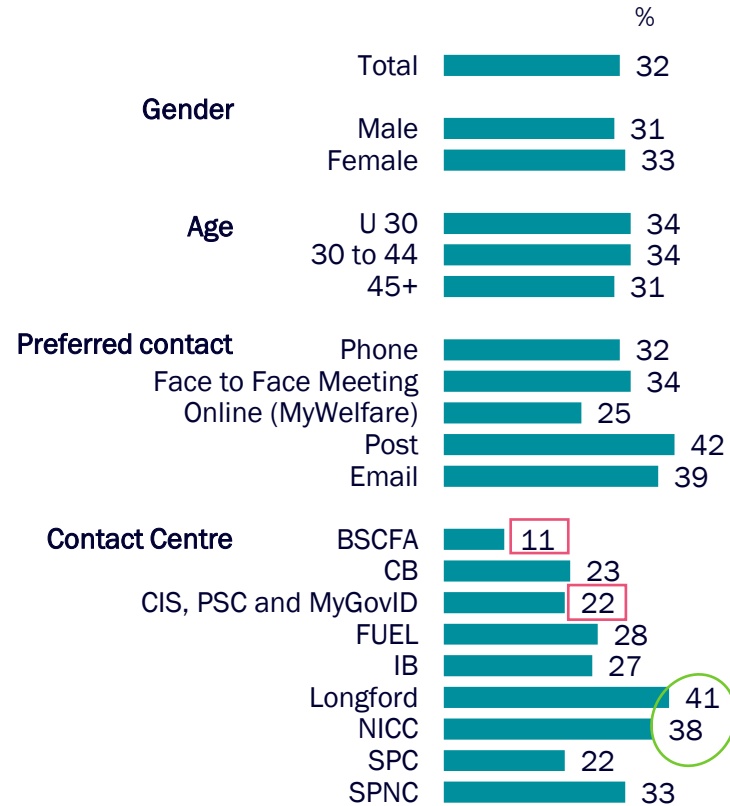
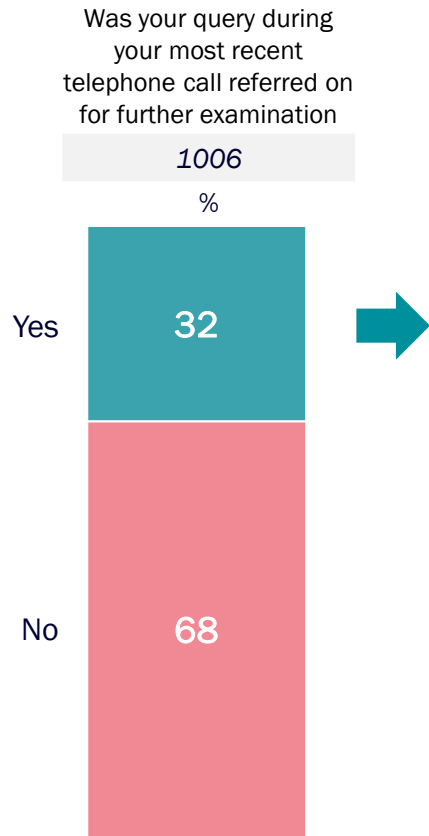
*Caution low base size BSCFA and SPNC

Those who prefer face to face contact were least likely to report that their query was resolved during most recent telephone call (59%). Query resolution was highest for CIS PS MyGovId at 83% and IB (Illness Benefit) 83%, lowest for Longford at 64%.

Was your query referred on for further examination

Base: All Respondents N – 1006

 Statistically higher than total
 Statistically lower than total



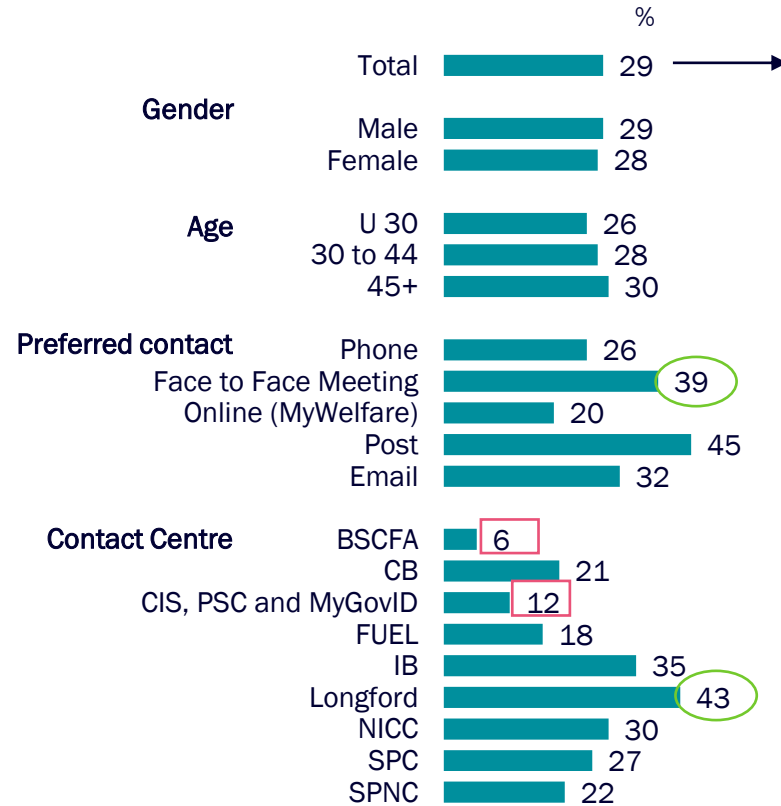
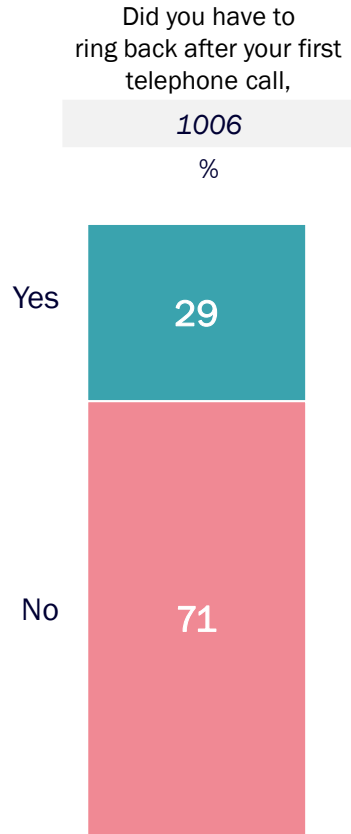
*Caution low base size BSCFA and SPNC

Almost a third, 32% reported their query was referred on for further examination and this was highest for Longford 41% and NICC (National Intreo Contact Centre). 38%.

Did you have to ring back after your first telephone call

Base: All Respondents N – 1006

 Statistically higher than total
 Statistically lower than total



Higher for Illness/Disability/Carers **38%** (n – 253)
 Higher for Exceptional Needs Payment **46%** (n – 35)

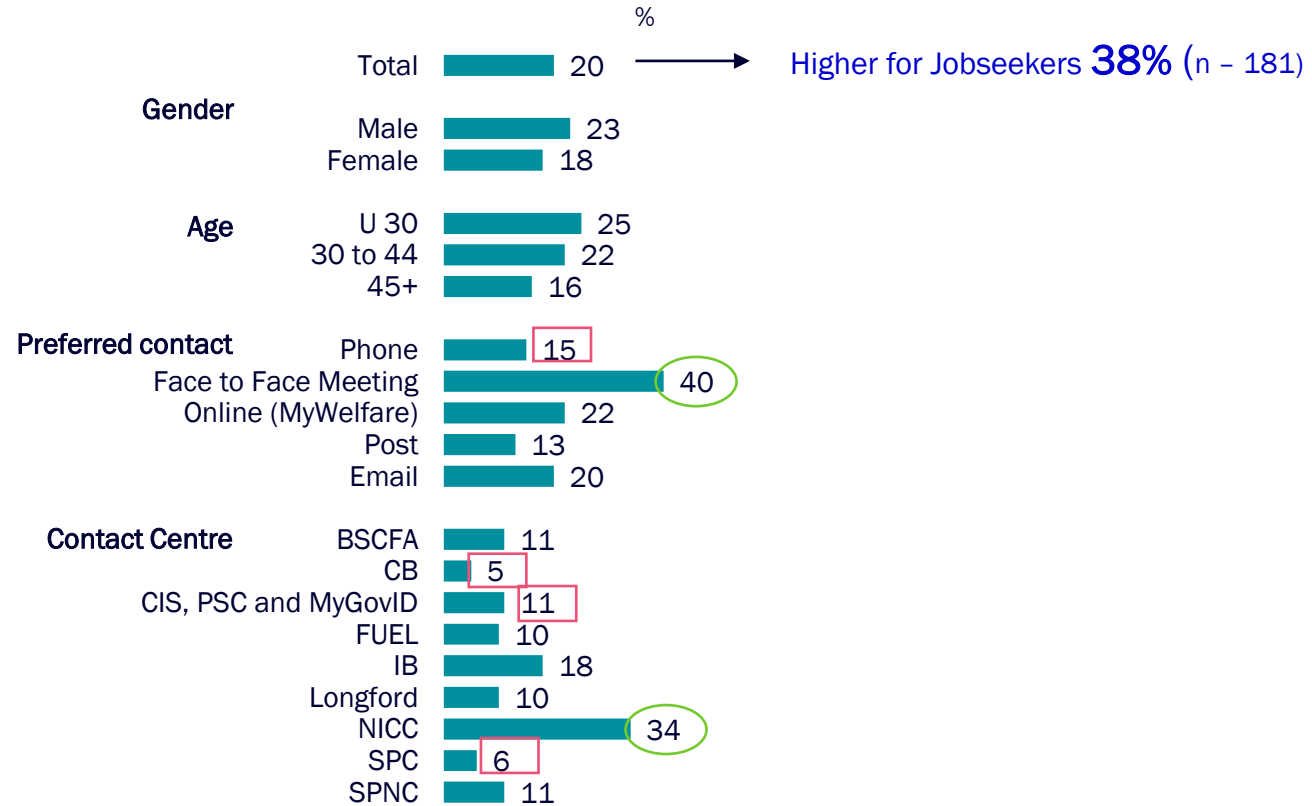
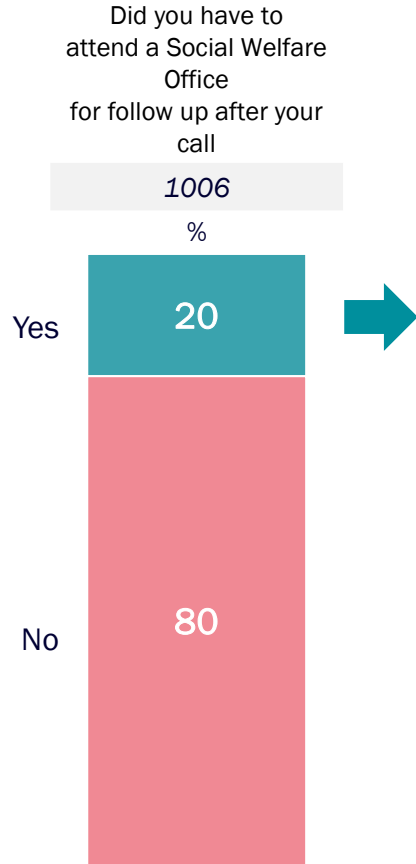
*Caution low base size BSCFA and SPNC

39% of those who prefer face to face contact report having to ring back after first call, as did 43% for Longford.

Did you have to attend a Social Welfare Office for follow up after your call

Base: All Respondents N – 1006

 Statistically higher than total
 Statistically lower than total



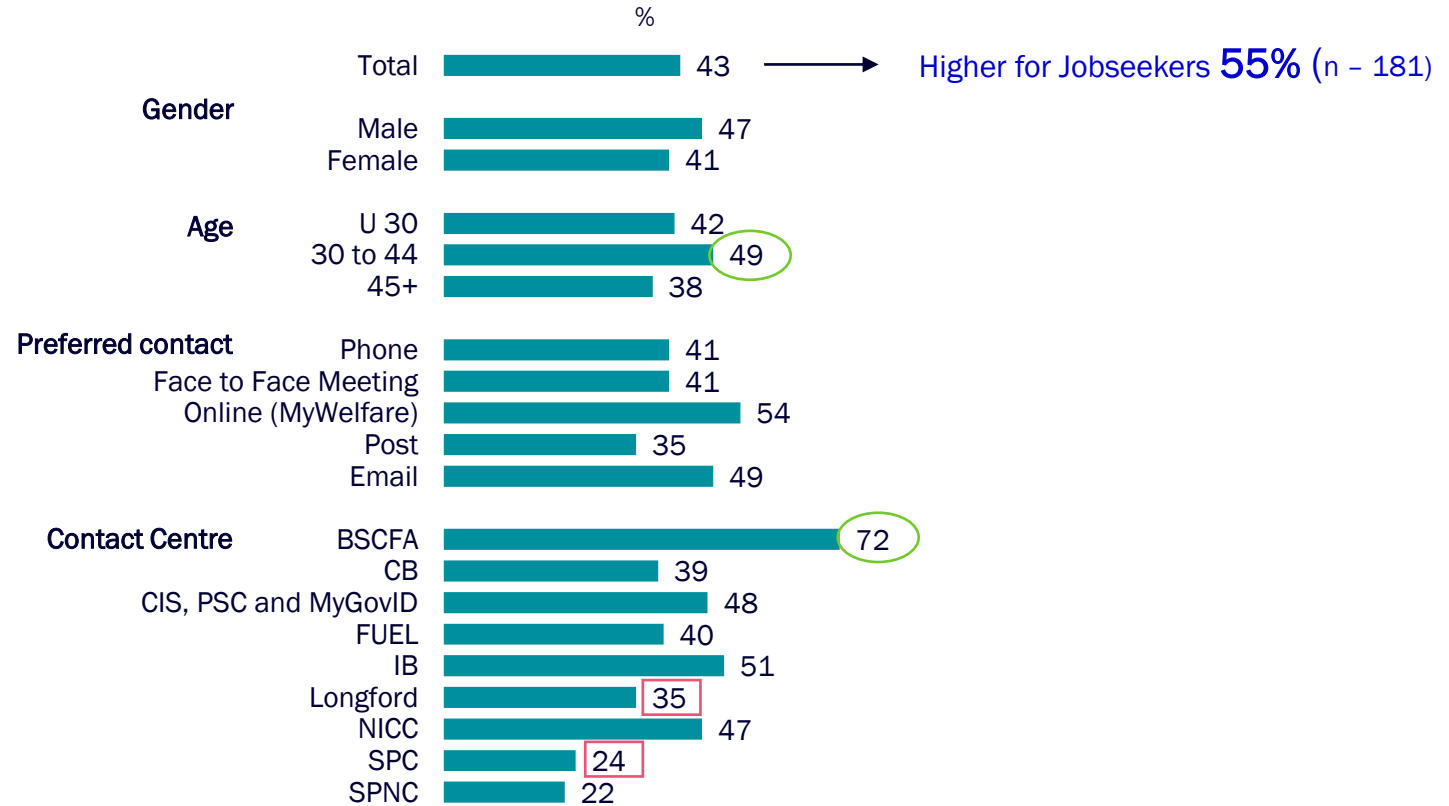
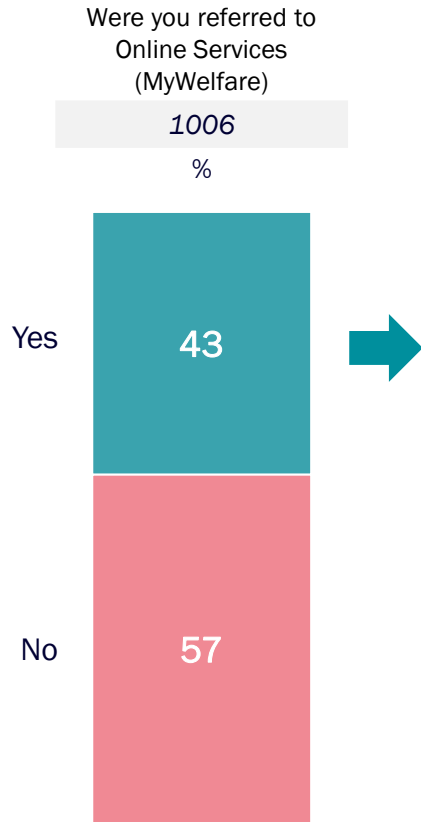
*Caution low base size BSCFA and SPNC

40% of those who prefer face-to-face meetings say they had to attend for follow-up after call as did 34% for NICC (National Intreo Contact Centre).

Were you referred to Online Services (MyWelfare)

Base: All Respondents N – 1006

 Statistically higher than total
 Statistically lower than total



*Caution low base size BSCFA and SPNC

72% who applied for Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance report they were referred to online services.

Contact experience x Region

Base: All Respondents N – 1006

	Total	Region							
		IE041 Border	IE042 West	IE051 Mid-West	IE052 South-East	IE053 South-West	IE061 Dublin	IE062 Mid-East	IE063 Midlands
Base:	1006	90	74	90	86	113	314	179	59
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Was your query resolved during your most recent telephone call	73	73	72	70	71	71	73	76	75
Were you referred to Online Services (MyWelfare)	43	37	36	39	44	49	46	41	44
Was your query during your most recent telephone call referred on for further examination	32	32	32	36	35	26	32	32	37
Did you have to ring back after your first telephone call,	29	28	31	23	35	32	28	27	29
Did you have to attend a Social Welfare Office for follow up after your call	20	24	15	22	12	16	23	18	17

*Caution low base size

Those in the South East were least likely to report attending a Social Welfare Office for a follow up after the call.

Contact experience x Nature of Call

Base: All Respondents N – 1006

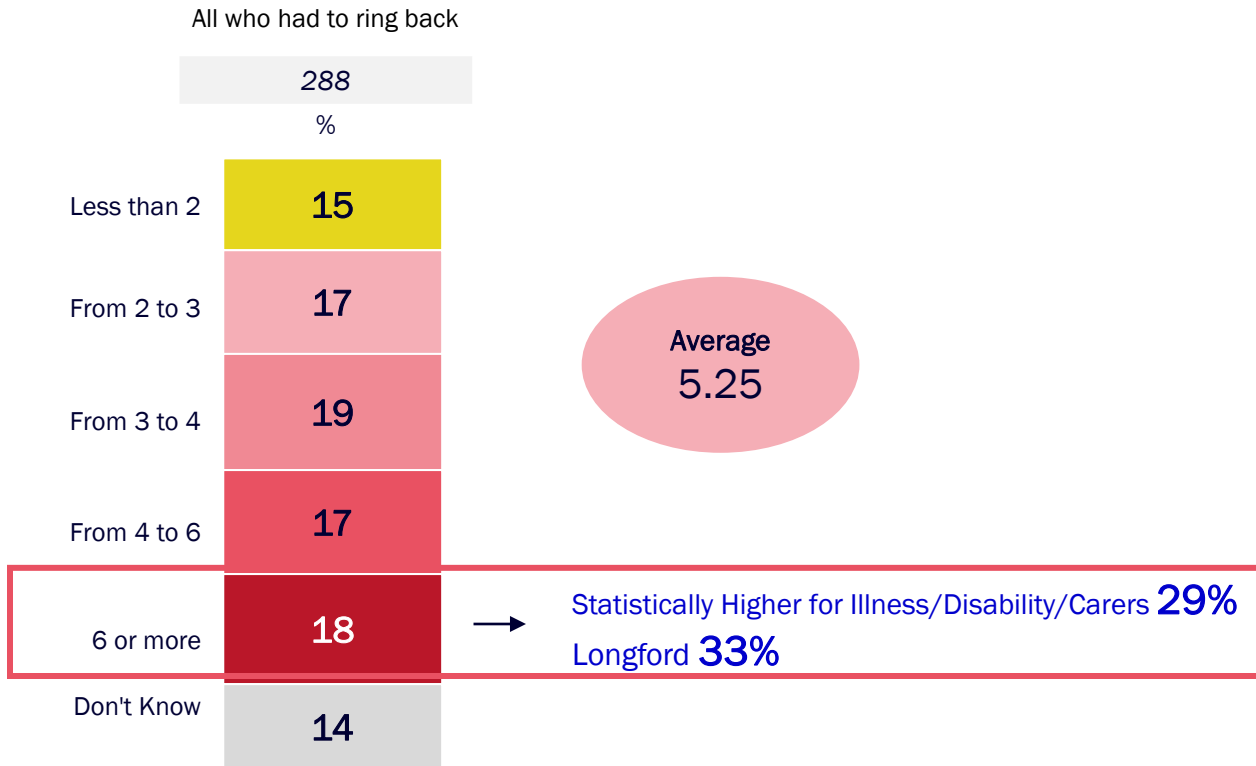
	Total	Nature of call to DSP												
		Pensions	Jobseekers	One Parent Family Payment	Maternity Benefit	Paternity Benefit	Employment Supports	Illness, Disability and Carers	Child Benefit	Working Family Payment	Community Welfare Service	Supplementary Welfare Allowance	Exceptional Needs Payment	Other
Base:	1006	104	181	34*	4*	6*	8*	253	66	22*	15*	45	35*	260
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Was your query resolved during your most recent telephone call	73	73	72	74	100	83	75	67	79	73	67	67	69	79
Were you referred to Online Services (MyWelfare)	43	26	55	38	75	50	25	42	44	59	27	51	51	38
Was your query during your most recent telephone call referred on for further examination	32	28	34	44	-	17	13	36	27	32	60	33	37	28
Did you have to ring back after your first telephone call,	29	26	29	29	-	33	38	38	24	32	53	27	46	20
Did you have to attend a Social Welfare Office for follow up after your call	20	13	38	29	-	-	38	13	5	5	27	27	20	18

*Caution low base size

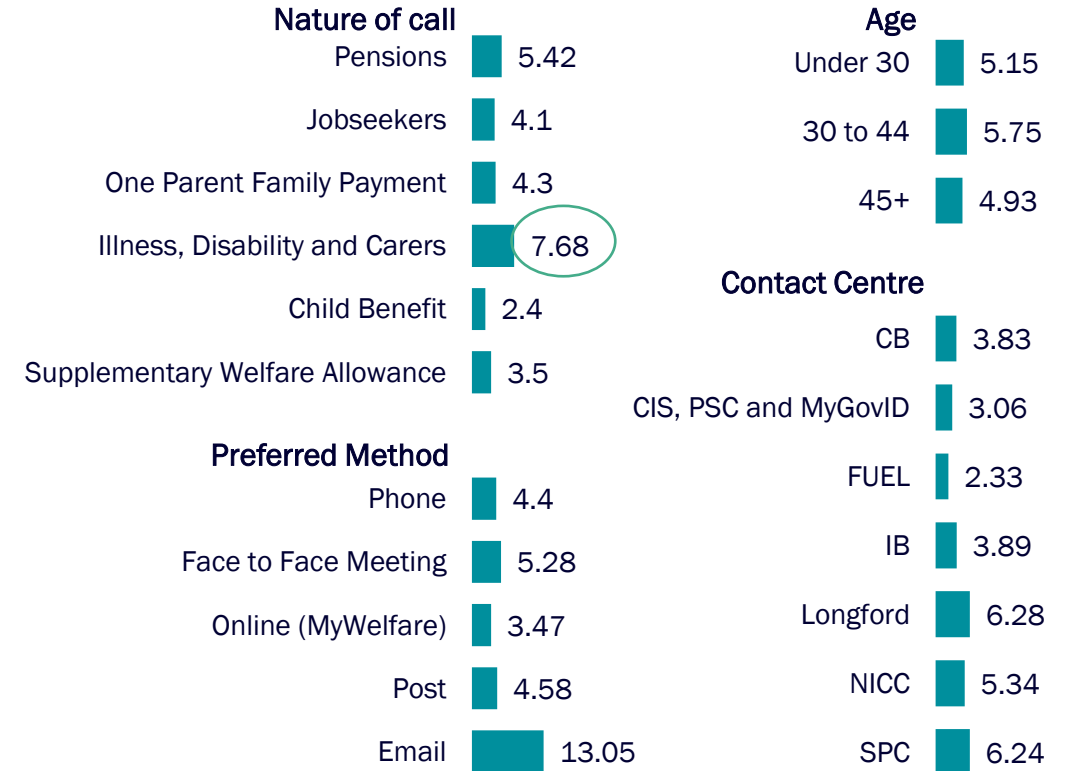
55% of job seekers report they were referred to Online Services (mywelfare.ie) with 38% of Jobseekers stating they had to attend a Social Welfare office for follow up after a call.

No. of times had to call back

Base: All Respondents who had to ring back N – 288



Average No of Times Called Back



For those who had to call back(29%) the average number of times was reported as 5.25. 18% report having to ring 6 or more times and this is statistically higher for those ringing in relation to illness/disability or Carers allowance at 29% which is handled by Longford at 33%.



Preferences re: FCR or Time to connect

Contact Centre waiting time

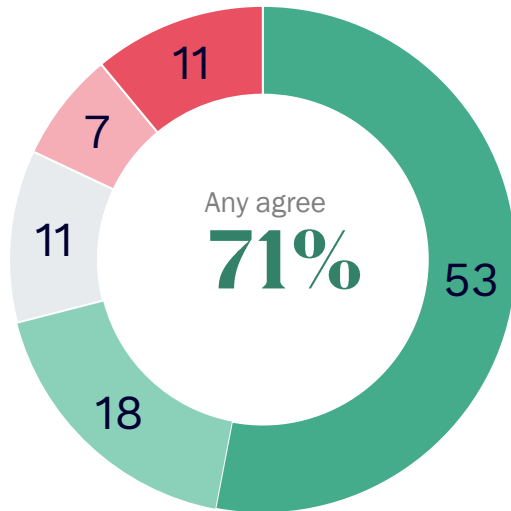
Base: All Respondents N – 1006

Key

- Agree Completely
- Moderately agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Moderately disagree
- Disagree completely

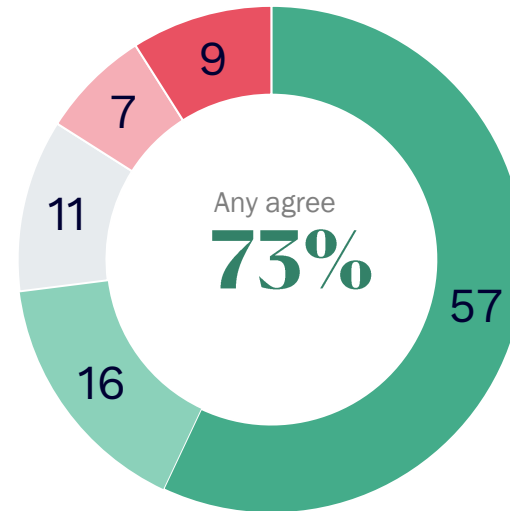
I don't mind a long wait time to connect to Department staff if my query is resolved during my initial call

1006
%



I prefer to connect quickly to Department staff even though my query may not be resolved during my initial call

1006
%



71%

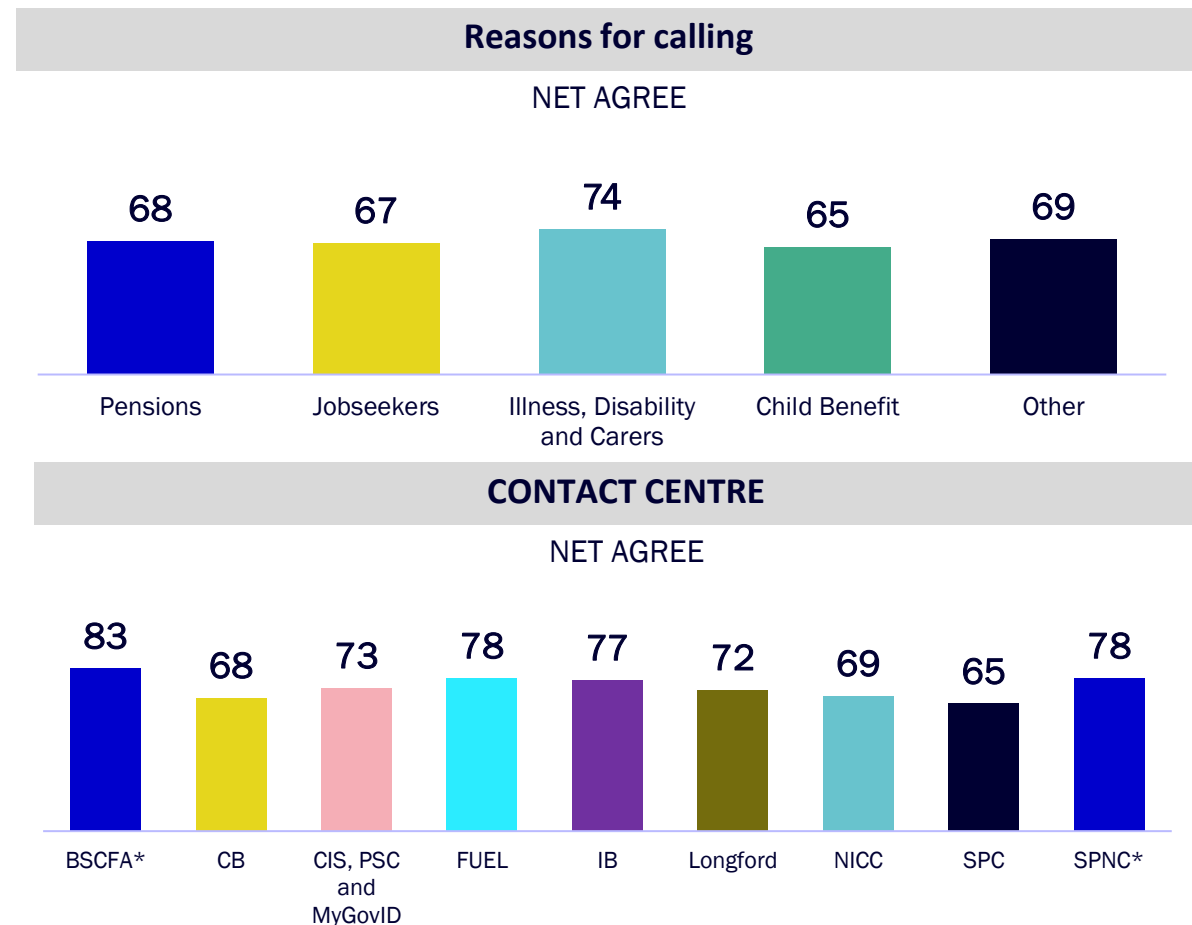
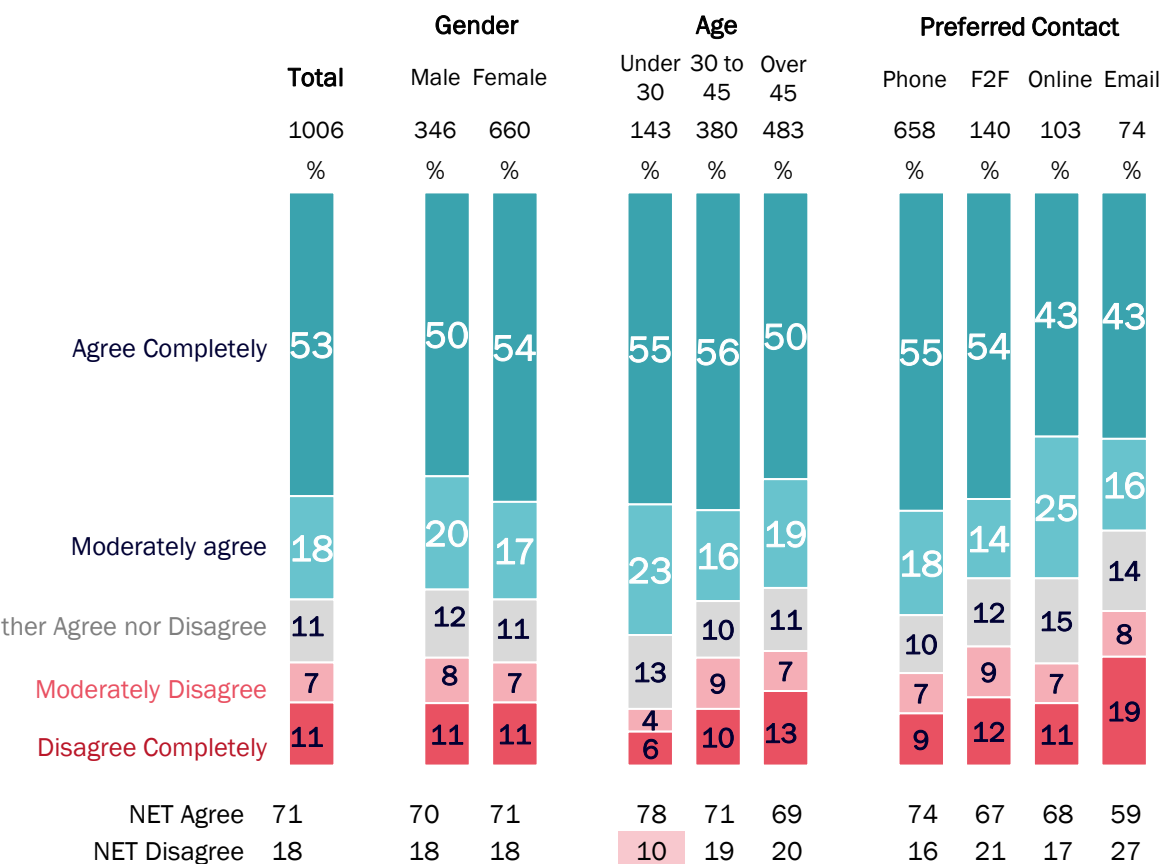
agree that they do not mind waiting a long time to connect to Department staff if their query is resolved during the initial call.

A slightly higher proportion **73%** agreed they prefer to connect quickly even though their query may not be resolved during their initial call.



I don't mind a long wait time to connect to Department staff if my query is resolved during my initial call

Base: All Respondents N – 1006



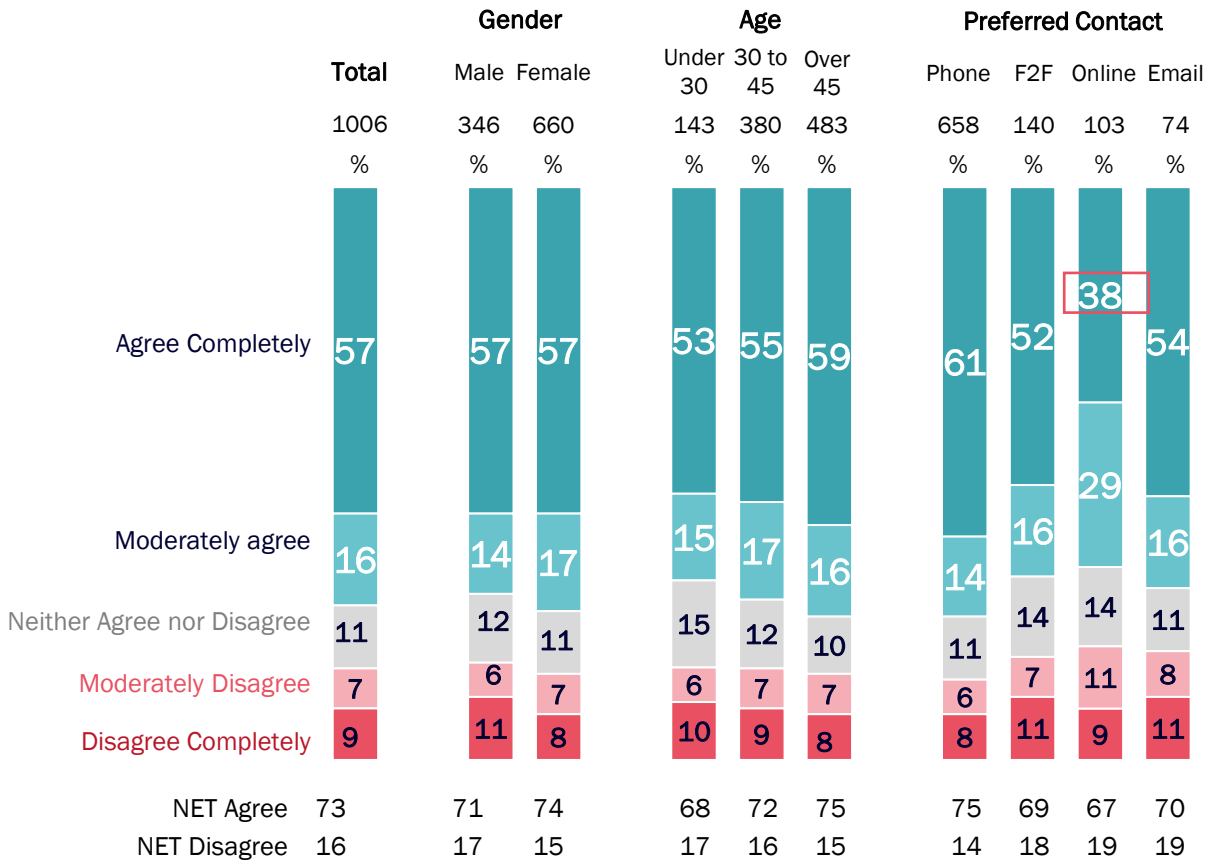
*Post not shown N - 31

*Caution low base size

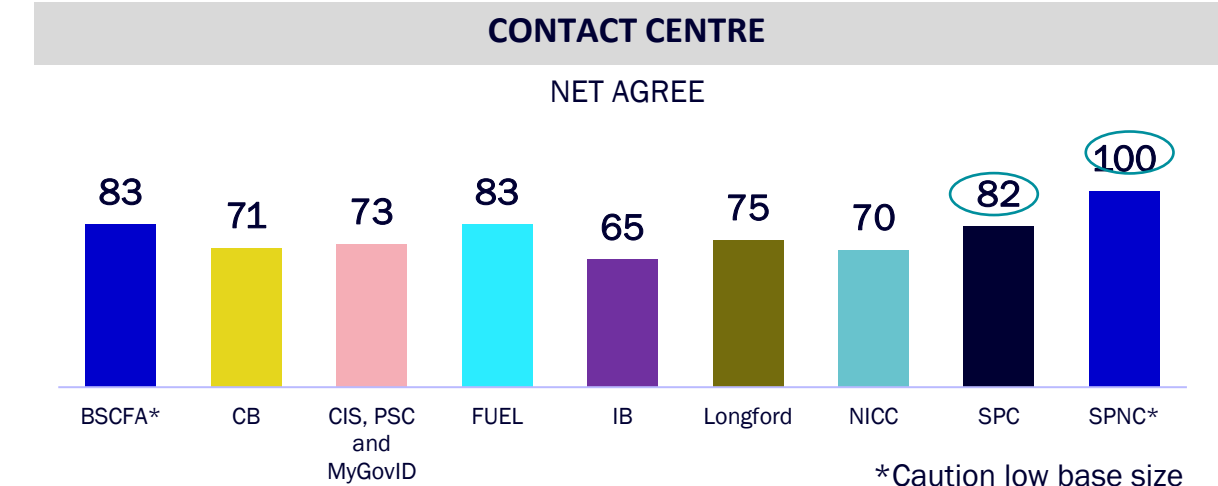
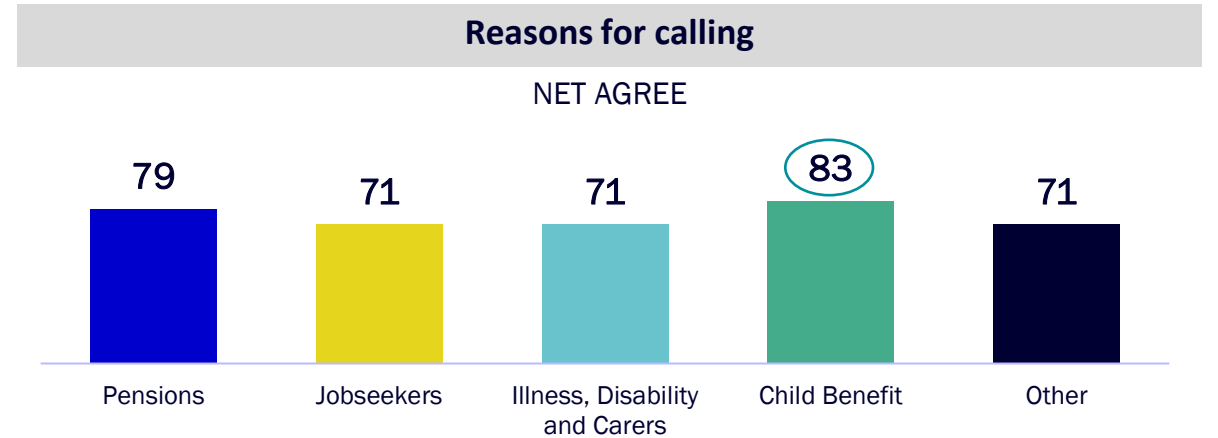
There were varying levels of agreement across the cohorts, with younger participants most inclined to agree they don't mind waiting if their query is resolved at 78% and those aged over 45 years displaying lower agreement at 69%. Again, we see higher agreement for those who prefer phone contact versus those who prefer face-to-face, online or email contact.

I prefer to connect quickly to Department staff even though my query may not be resolved during my initial call

Base: All Respondents N – 1006



*Post not shown N - 31



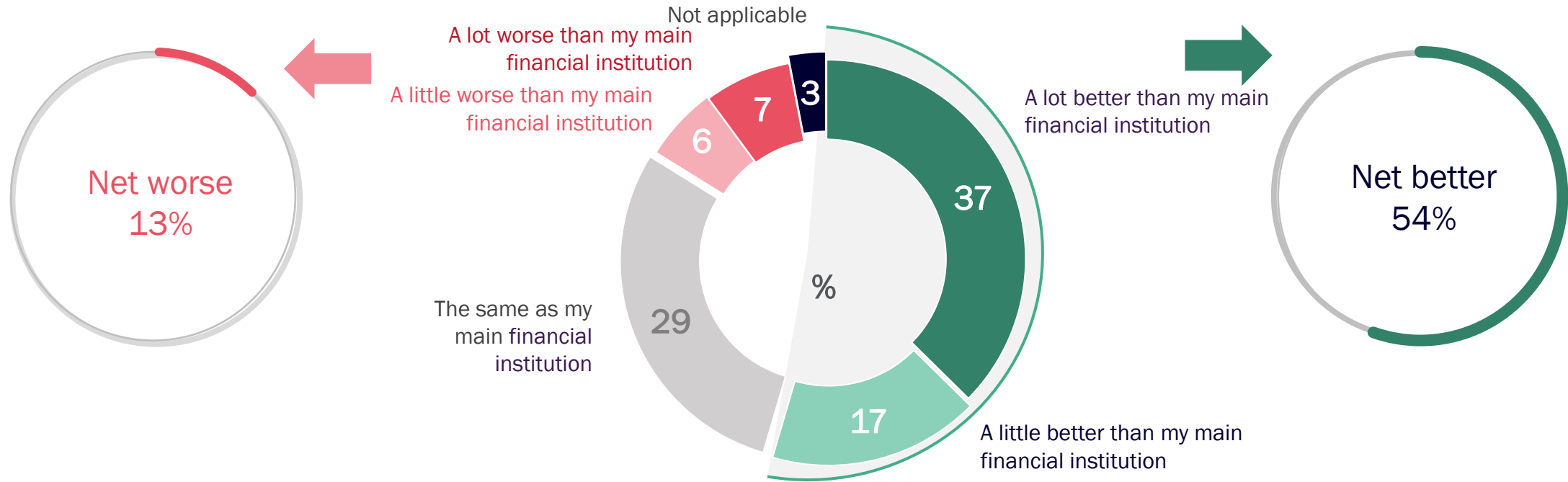
75% of those aged over 45 years agree they prefer to connect quickly to Department staff even though their query may not be resolved during initial call, with 68% of those aged under 30 agreeing. There were varying levels of agreement in relation to nature of call with those applying for Child Benefit most likely to agree completely at 83%.



Comparison with main financial institution

Rating of Contact Centre compared to main financial institution

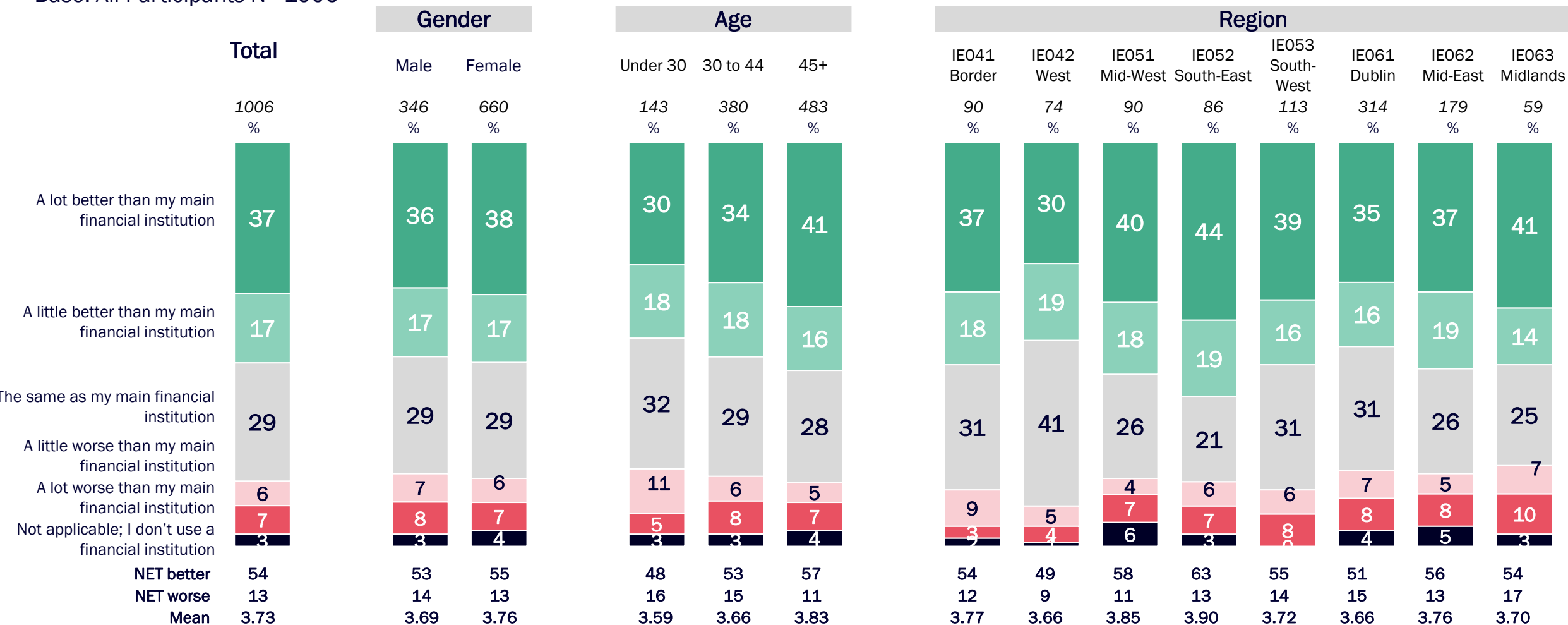
Base: All Participants N - 1006



A greater proportion rate the Contact Centre service as better than their main financial institution by a difference of more than four in ten at **+41%**

Rating of Contact Centre compared to main financial institution x demographics

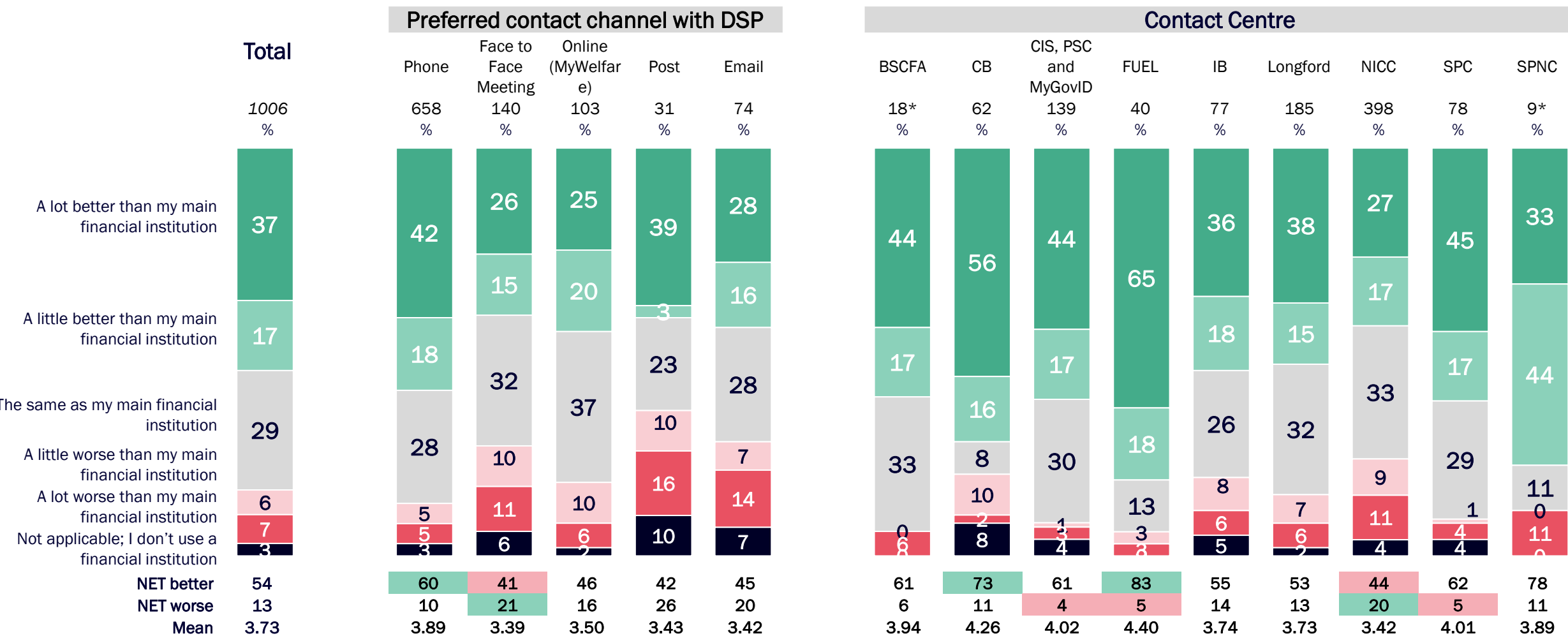
Base: All Participants N - 1006



There were no statistically significant differences across gender, age and region for rating of the Contact Centre compared to their main financial institution although those aged 45+ attributed a higher top two score for Contact Centre net better at 57%. This compared to 48% for those aged under 30 years.

Rating of Contact Centre compared to main financial institution x demographics

Base: All Participants N - 1006



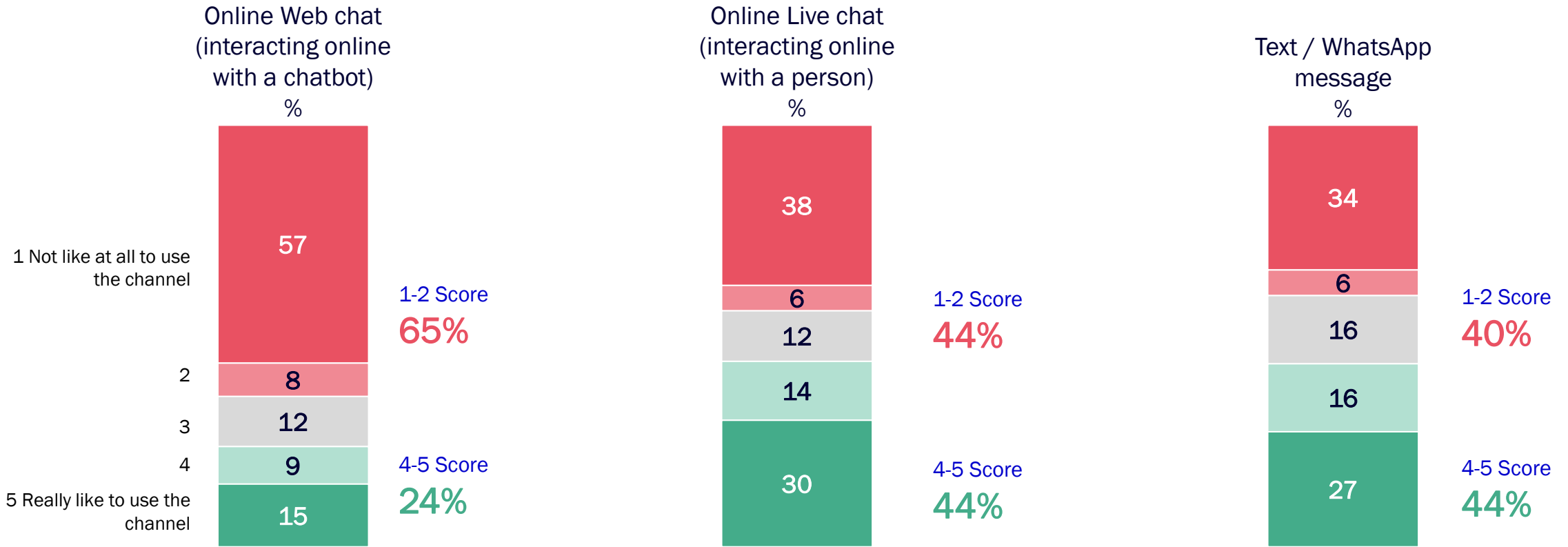
When we examine the results of the comparison by preferred contact channel and contact centre, we see that those who prefer to contact by phone allocated a higher score of 60%. In terms of contact centre, Fuel received 83% and IB 73% rating as being a lot better than their main financial institution.



Interest in Online Channels

Interest in using online channels for contact

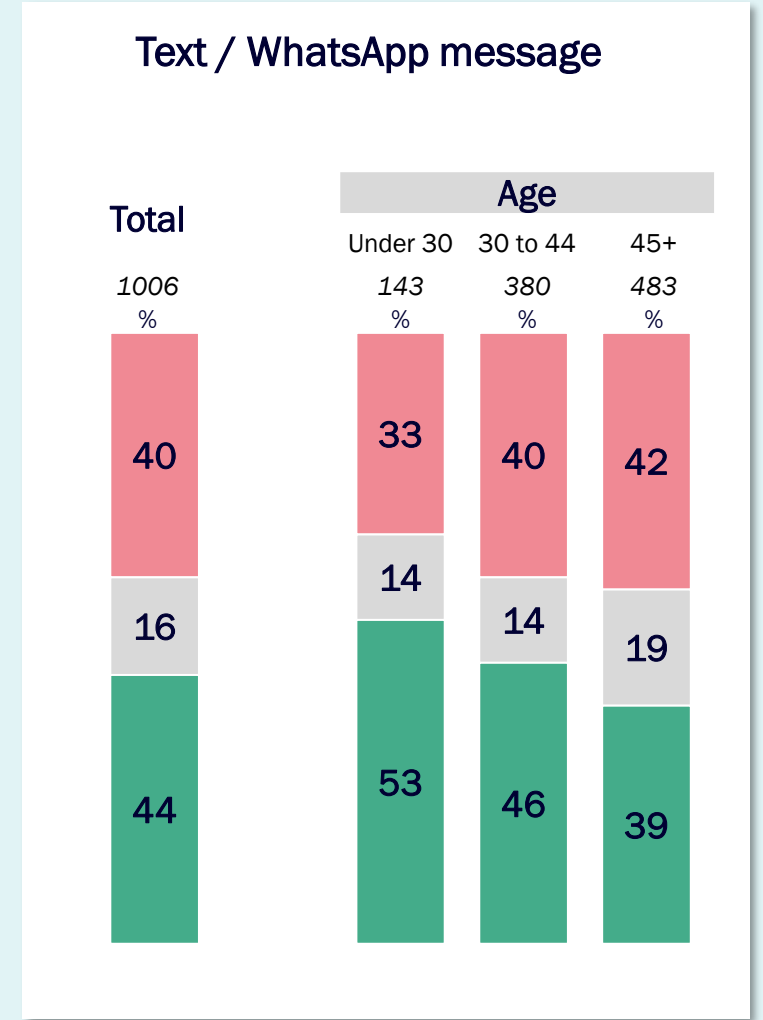
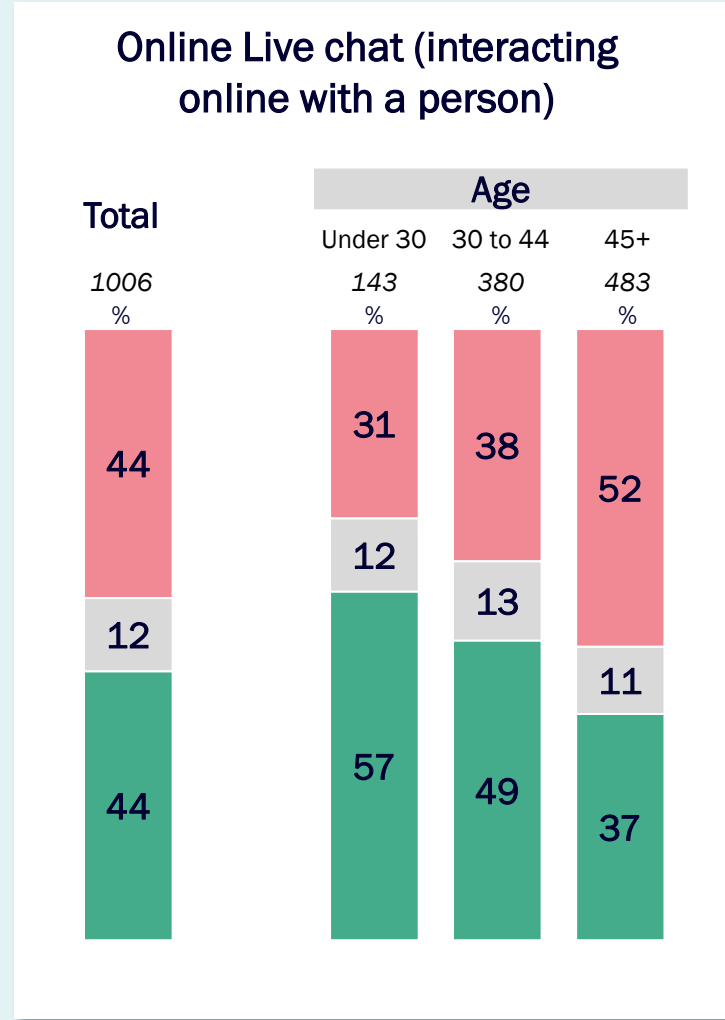
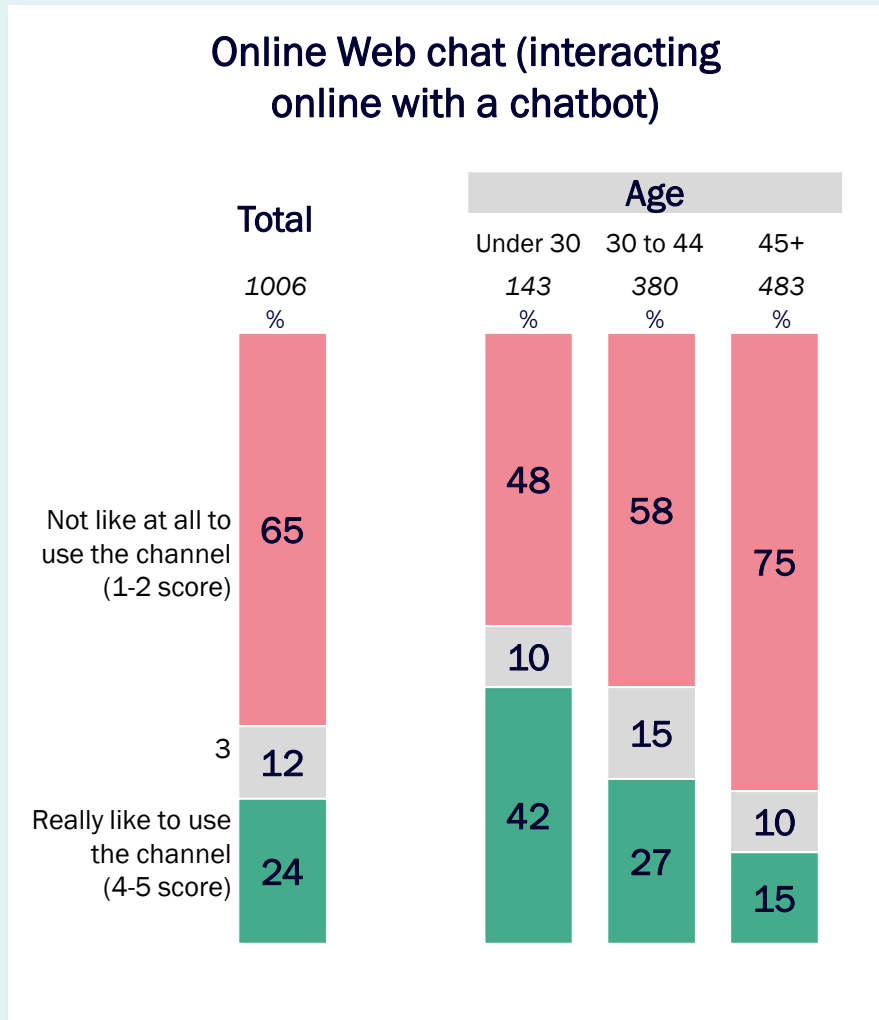
Base: All Respondents N – 1006



When asked to rate online contact channels, two-thirds of the sample (65%) reported they would not like to use online web chat with a chatbot. There was an even split of 44% who felt they would like to interact online with a person, with 44% disagreeing. Text or WhatsApp message also appeared to be the most acceptable with 44%

Interest in using online channels for contact x Age

Base: All Respondents N – 1006



In analysing interest in using online channels by age, there is higher interest among the younger cohorts.





Suggestions for improvements

Suggested improvements to Contact Centre

Base: All Respondents N – 1006



The majority of respondents felt there are no improvements to be suggested (41%).

Of the balance, the main improvement suggested is to improve waiting times (put forward by over a third at 36%). This is higher for Jobseekers at 44%.

9% suggested that employees should have more information.

Suggested improvements to Contact Centre x nature of call and Contact Centre

Base: All Respondents N – 1006

Filter: All interviews Weights: No weighting	Total	Nature of Call													Contact Centre								
		Pensions	Jobseekers	One Parent Family Payment	Maternity Benefit	Paternity Benefit	Employment Supports	Illness, Disability and Carers	Child Benefit	Working Family Payment	Community Welfare Service	Supplementary Welfare Allowance	Exceptional Needs Payment	Other	BSCFA	CB	CIS, PSC and MyGovID	FUEL	IB	Longford	NICC	SPC	SPNC
	1006	104	181	34	4	6	8	253	66	22	15	45	35	260	18	62	139	40	77	185	398	78	9
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Nothing/all good	41	47	33	47	50	33	63	43	48	45	27	38	46	38	44	50	53	63	31	49	30	44	78
Improve waiting times	36	34	44	41	25	67	25	33	30	41	40	33	11	39	28	31	24	10	45	29	46	37	22
Employees should have more info	9	10	8	12	25	-	-	13	3	5	13	11	11	8	-	3	8	10	13	12	10	10	-
Be friendlier/more civil	4	-	6	9	-	-	-	4	2	14	13	9	-	5	11	-	4	5	3	6	5	1	-
Improve getting to the right dept/people who can help	4	7	3	6	-	17	13	6	2	5	7	-	6	5	6	2	5	-	5	4	5	6	-
Improve online/website/live chat	2	1	4	-	-	-	-	1	8	-	-	2	3	2	6	6	1	3	-	1	3	1	-
Call back if query not resolved on call	2	2	1	3	-	-	-	2	3	-	-	2	9	2	6	3	2	-	-	2	2	1	-
More face to face contact/make clear what can be done face to face	2	3	1	3	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	2	5	-	1	2	1	-
Have a translator	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	0	3	-	-	2	-	1	11	-	1	-	3	-	1	-	-
Availability out of office hours	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	3	-	-	2	-	2	-	8	1	3	3	-	1	-	-
Phone number should be clearer/should be free	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	6	2	-	-	2	-	1	-	1	1	-
Other	2	3	3	-	-	-	-	2	3	-	-	4	3	3	11	2	2	3	3	1	3	6	-
None/dK	2	4	3	-	-	-	-	2	2	-	13	2	9	2	-	2	4	8	-	2	3	1	-

Thank You



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