Irish Civil Service Business Customer Survey 2018 research findings

Report prepared for:

The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform

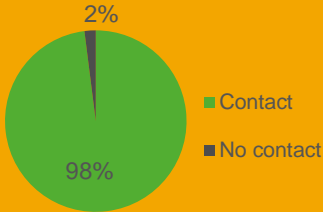**Rialtas na hÉireann**
Government of Ireland

Contents

perceptive**insight**

Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

CIVIL SERVICE BUSINESS CUSTOMER SURVEY

: 510 interviews completed • Representative of businesses in Ireland
• Telephone survey • Fieldwork was conducted between 26th September – 18th October 2018

Department of Public Expenditure and Reform

CONTACT

2%
98%

■ Contact
■ No contact

98% of businesses said they have made contact with the Civil Service in the last year.

Revenue
Cáin agus Custaim na hÉireann
Irish Tax and Customs

The Office of the Revenue Commissioners was contacted by **71%** of businesses.

70% feel that the Civil Service deals with businesses in a fair and equitable way

CONTACT METHOD
IN LAST 12 MONTHS

68%

The most widely used method of contact was online.
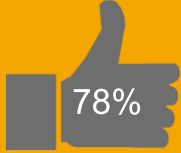↓ from 83% in 2016*

52% made contact via phone.
↓ from 64% in 2016*

34% made contact via email.
↑ from 24% in 2016*

2% made contact in person.
↓ from 8% in 2016*

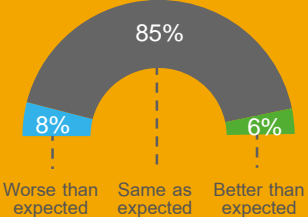2% made contact in writing.
↓ from 8% in 2016*

SATISFACTION OF SERVICE
#### DURING RECENT INTERACTION

78%

Most businesses said that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the service they received during their last interaction.

Quality of service

85%
8%   6%

Worse than   Same as   Better than
expected   expected   expected

82% were satisfied with the outcome of their last interaction.

PERCEPTIONS
OF THE CIVIL SERVICE

18%
9%
73%

■ Dissatisfied ■ Neutral ■ Satisfied
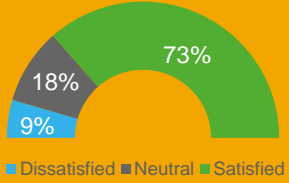
73% said that they are satisfied with the Civil Service in overall terms.

29%
17%
53%
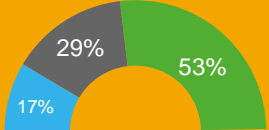
53% consider it easy to get the information they need from Civil Service departments or offices.

22%
11%
66%
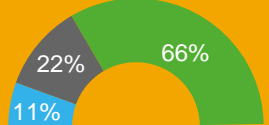
66% believe the Civil Service has become more innovative in the last 5 years.

FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

83% of businesses said that in the future, online interaction would be convenient for them.

Online is the preferred method of interaction for most businesses. Telephone is preferred for resolving an issue.

80% said that they would value a single digital identity to securely access government services online.

perceptiveinsight

Executive Summary

Executive Summary

This report summarises the findings from a representative survey of 510 Irish businesses that was conducted during September and October 2018. The survey examined the following:

- The interaction that businesses have with the Civil Service;
- Level of satisfaction with service provided; and
- Overall satisfaction with the Civil Service.

The last survey was undertaken in 2016.

Interaction with the Civil Service

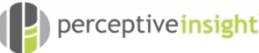**Frequency of contact**
Almost all (98%) businesses report having contact with the Civil Service over the past 12 months. One fifth (21%) reported that this contact was through their accountant or other business professional (this compares to 32% in 2016).

The parts of the Civil Service that businesses were most likely to interact with are:

- Office of the Revenue Commissioners (71% in the past 12 months);
- Central Statistics Office (12%);
- Companies Registration Office (8%);
- Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (7%); and
- Dept. of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (7%).

Nature of contact
When asked about their last interaction with the Civil Service, businesses confirmed the following reasons:

- 41% were providing information;
- 20% were making a payment;
- 17% were carrying out a transaction/business; and
- 14% were seeking information.

Method of communication for last interaction
The method used for this interaction has changed slightly since the 2016 study. **Online remains the most common method**, although this figure has decreased slightly from 62% in 2016 to 56% in 2018. There was a slight increase in the use of telephones to make contact with the Civil Service from 20% in 2016 to 27% in 2018; and email has increased from 10% in 2016 to 15% in 2018.

1% 1%
15%
27%
56%

- Online
- Phone
- Email
- Paper
- In person
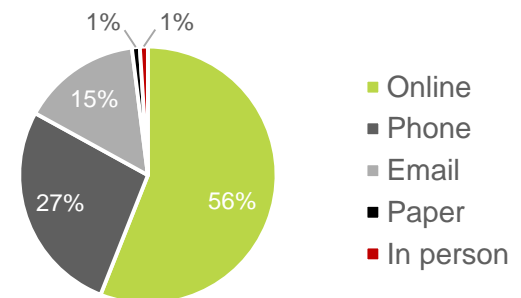
Executive Summary

Less than one in ten have limited access to or do not require the internet

68% have interacted with the Civil Service online in the last year, which is the preferred method for most types of interaction

However, there is still demand for telephone interaction to resolve queries

Internet access

While **91% of respondents avail of broadband and internet access** and use online services within their business, 4% said that they are currently constrained due to broadband quality. 5% of those interviewed do not require access to the internet or online services.

Interacting online

68% of respondents stated that they interact with the Civil Service online. This represents a decrease from 2016 results, however is still higher than the online interactions reported in 2009. More generally, analysis of all interactions used to contact the Civil Service shows **a move away from personal and paper methods of contact**.

Reasons for not interacting online

32% reported that they did not interact online in the last year. The most common reasons for this were a preference for other types of contact (53% telephone, 23% email, 6% face-to-face and 3% written).   **Awareness of online services does not appear to be a major issue** with just 2% giving this reason while 3% found the digital service too hard to use.

Range of methods used for interaction (%)

■ 2018 ■ 2016 ■ 2009

Method	2018	2016	2009
Online	68	83	33
By phone	52	64	93
By email	34	24	61
In person	2	8	24
On paper	2	8	52
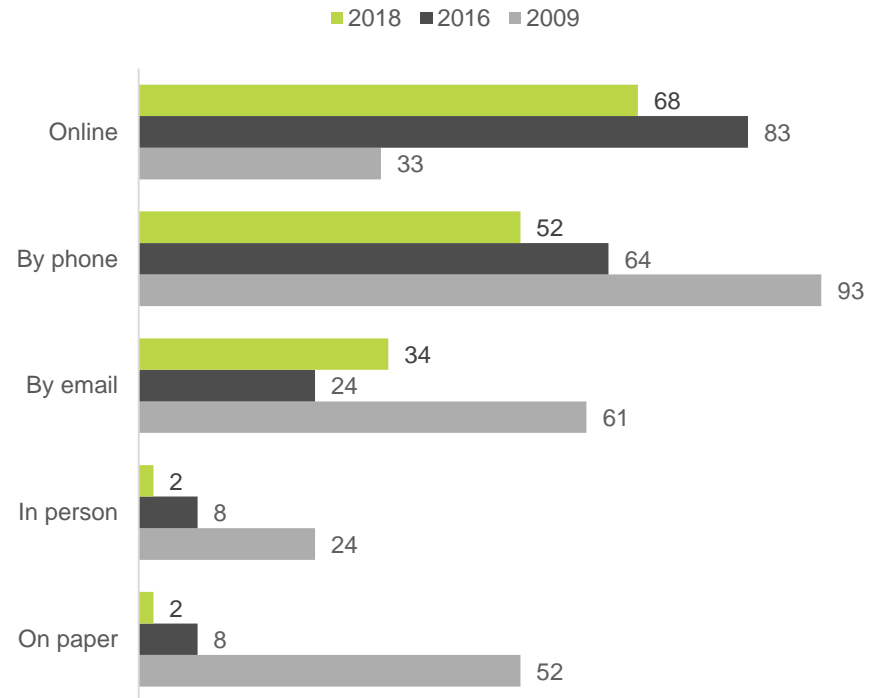
* In 2018, the survey asked about methods used "in last 12 months", as opposed to methods "ever used" in previous surveys.

perceptive**insight**

Executive Summary
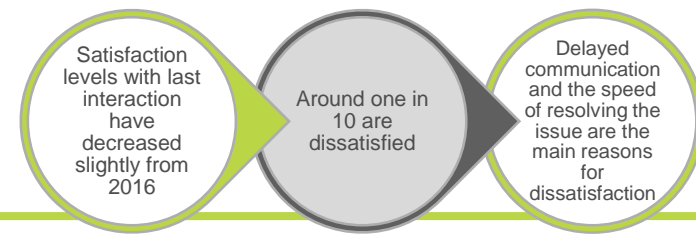
Satisfaction with the last interaction

Satisfaction with the service provided

When asked about their last interaction 78% were satisfied overall with the **service they received** and 11% expressed dissatisfaction. This is an slight decline on the 2016 figures (82% satisfied and 10% dissatisfied) but an improvement to the levels of satisfaction found in the 2009 study (71% satisfied and 16% dissatisfied).

It should also be noted that the percentage who say they are 'very' satisfied rather than 'fairly' satisfied has decreased.

Similar levels of satisfaction were recorded when asked about the **outcome of their last interaction**; 82% were satisfied and 9% dissatisfied which is similar to the 2016 study.

Overall the vast majority (91%) found the experience of their last interaction to be as they expected (85%) or better (6%), while 8% said their experience was worse than expected. The main reasons given for this was as a result of delayed communication and that it took too long to resolve issues.

Satisfaction with last interaction (%)
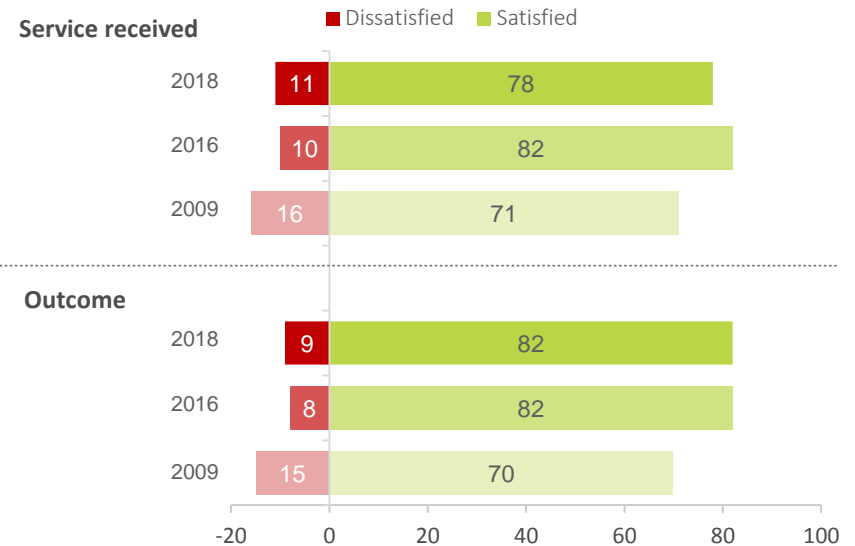
■ Dissatisfied ■ Satisfied

Service received

Year	Dissatisfied	Satisfied
2018	11	78
2016	10	82
2009	16	71

Outcome

Year	Dissatisfied	Satisfied
2018	9	82
2016	8	82
2009	15	70

-20   0   20   40   60   80   100

perceptive insight

7

Executive Summary

Satisfaction with methods of interaction

Analysis of levels of satisfaction by method of contact used indicates some interesting variations. As previously mentioned, online and telephone were the most popular contact methods. While overall dissatisfaction with online experiences remains low, **levels of satisfaction have decreased** (relative to 2016 results). The ease of finding (82%) and navigating (77%) the website, the ease of using the digital interactive service (74%) and the ease of downloading material (73%) attracted the highest levels of satisfaction. The **efficiency (9%) and speed of response** (11%) of the digital interactive service attracted the highest dissatisfaction levels (albeit small), and so there may be room for improvement in these areas.

Notably, **satisfaction with telephone interaction**, the second most used method, **was much lower** and attracted higher levels of dissatisfaction. For example, 50% were satisfied with the speed the phone was answered (34% expressed dissatisfaction); and 49% were satisfied with the telephone menu or automated service (29% expressed dissatisfaction).

Those who used other methods of interaction (i.e. email, in person and on paper) **were generally positive** about their contact, although 34% were dissatisfied with the design and layout of forms and 29% with the speed and efficiency their query was dealt with in relation to face-to-face interaction (note: low base).

Satisfaction with method of interaction (%)

■ Dissatisfied   ■ Satisfied

Online

Item	Dissatisfied	Satisfied
Ease of finding website	7	82
Ease of navigating website	8	77
Ease of using digital interactive service	8	74
Ease of downloading material	7	73
Efficiency of digital interactive service	9	69
Comprehensiveness of digital interactive service	7	68
Speed of response of digital interactive service or follow up	11	65

Telephone

Item	Dissatisfied	Satisfied
Speed the phone was answered	34	50
Telephone menu/automated service	29	49

-40 -20 0 20 40 60 80 100

%

perceptive**insight**

Executive Summary

Perception of the Civil Service

Businesses were asked to comment on their perceptions of the Civil Service irrespective of whether or not they had a recent interaction.

Overall satisfaction with the Civil Service
Based on their satisfaction overall, 73% were satisfied with the service provided by the Civil Service which is similar to the figures from both 2016 (70%) and 2009% (71%). Only 9% reported that they were dissatisfied with the service provided which is an improvement on 2016 (12%) and 2009 (16%).

When probed further 31% said they would speak highly of the Civil Service to other people, while 10% disclosed that they would be critical. The remainder (57%) indicated that they would be either neutral or have no opinion. **19% confirmed that they had been dissatisfied with an aspect of the Civil Service in the previous 12 months**.

How businesses would speak of the Civil Service (%)

- Advocates
- Neutral/no opinion
- Critics

Overall satisfaction with the Civil Service (%)

- Satisfied
- Neutral/no opinion
- Dissatisfied

perceptiveinsight
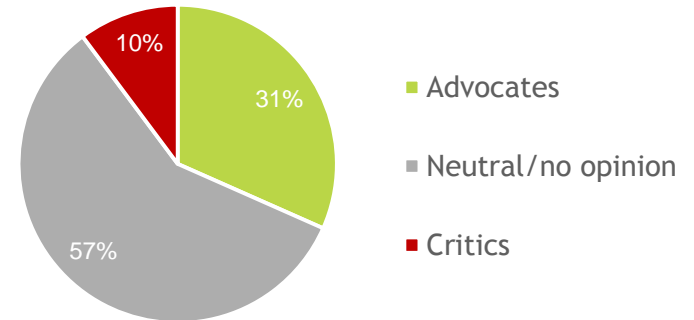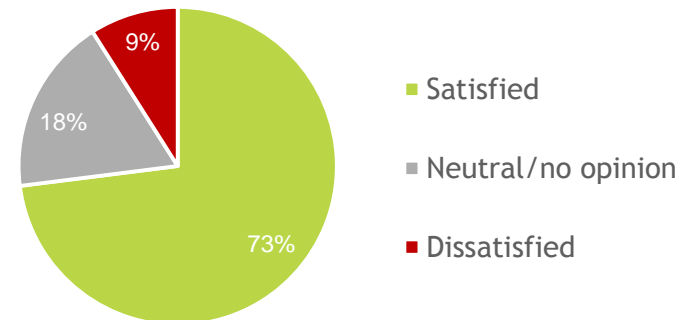
Executive Summary

Views of the Civil Service values

Businesses were provided with a number of statements about the values of the Civil Service and asked if they agreed or disagreed with them. Two thirds felt that the Civil Service is independent and trustworthy (69% agreed, 7% disagreed) while **70% agreed that the Civil Service deals with businesses in a fair and equal way** (8% disagreed).

Views of aspects of the service provided

The majority of respondents agreed (66%) that the Civil Service has become more innovative in the last 5 years, while just over a tenth (11%) disagreed. 55% also agreed that the organisation has become more customer focused over the same time period, with 14% disagreeing. However, 41% agreed that the Civil Service has good procedures for making complaints about the levels of service received, although only 10% disagreed with this statement. **Just under half (49%) of businesses agreed that the Civil Service is very efficient, whilst almost one fifth (19%) disagreed.**

The Civil Service deals with businesses in a fair and equal way (%)

- 23 Neutral
- 8 Disagree
- 70 Agree

Legend: Agree, Neutral, Disagree

The Civil Service is very efficient (%)

- 32 Neutral
- 49 Agree
- 19 Disagree

Legend: Agree, Neutral, Disagree

perceptive**insight**

10
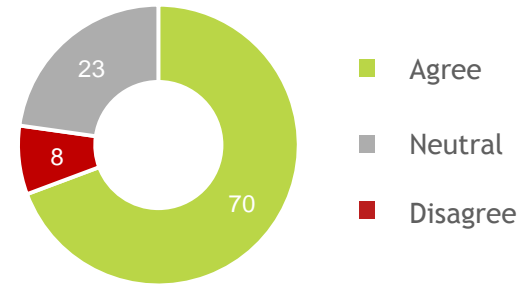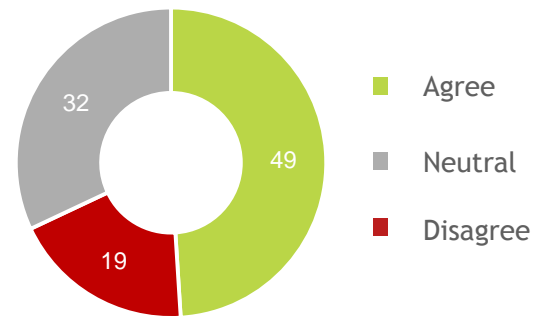
Introduction

Introduction to the research

Introduction

The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER) is responsible for driving and overseeing the implementation of Our Public Service 2020 (OPS2020), the new development and innovation network for the public service. This is aligned with the Civil Service Renewal Plan, a programme of work that seeks to drive change and create a more unified, professional, responsive, and open and accountable Civil Service.

DPER is also responsible for the development, promotion and implementation of the Quality Customer Service (QCS) Initiative in the Civil Service, including the promotion of best practice in customer service and the use of more efficient channels for service delivery.

Aim and objectives of the research

The Reform Evaluation Unit (REU) of DPER commissioned Perceptive Insight to undertake a survey of 500 Irish businesses. The aim of the research was to determine levels of satisfaction with, and perceptions of, the services provided by the Civil Service Departments and major Offices. Included in the study were questions on the use of online services and the appetite to increase this type of provision.

The objectives of the research were:

✔ To analyse the experience of Irish businesses in their interaction with Government Departments and Offices and to establish overall satisfaction with the standards of customer service and delivery;

✔ To assess the impact of Public Service Reform initiatives on business, and in shaping their attitudes to, and perceptions of, the Civil Service; and

✔ To gauge, in a comprehensive manner, the possible reasons for any dissatisfaction with the service provided by the Civil Service to Irish businesses and, therefore, the areas that might require specific attention for improvement.

Our Public Service 2020

OUR GOALS:
Deliver Better Outcomes for the Public
Build Resilient and Agile Public Service Organisations

Our 20 Point Action Plan

Public Spending Code · Spending Review

Governance and Accountability

RESOURCES

Delivering for our Public
- Drive efficiency and effectiveness including through
  - Shared services
  - Centralised procurement
  - Business process improvement
  - Alternative methods of service delivery
- Accelerate digital delivery
- Optimise the use of data
- Professionalise customer service
- Make services more accessible
- Engage more with the public
- Significantly improve communication

Innovating for our Future
- Establish an Innovation Centre
- Strengthen whole-of-Government collaboration
- Embed programme and project management
- Prioritise evidence and evaluation
- Build strategic planning capability

Developing our People and Organisations
- Embed Strategic HRM
- Mainstream strategic workforce planning
- Build capacity and skills
- Strengthen performance management
- Promote equality, diversity and inclusion
- Articulate Public Service vision and values
- Increase employee engagement
- Review Public Service culture and values

OUTCOMES

Support from Centre · **Evaluation** · Reporting

Methodology

Methodology
A total of 510 telephone interviews were conducted with Irish businesses during September and October 2018.

Questionnaire design
The questionnaire retained many of the questions used in previous studies to allow for benchmarking. It was reviewed and updated to include additional questions on interactive digital delivery of services and use of Eircodes. The revised questionnaire was piloted prior to the main study.

Similar studies were undertaken in 2016, 2009, 2006 and 2002. Whilst previous studies included businesses with 1 or more employees, conversely, the 2016 and 2018 studies were widened to include sole traders and businesses with no employees.

Sample
A stratified random sample approach was used with quotas applied by:

• Number of employees; and
• Location

Similar to the previous studies the data was weighted prior to analysis to reflect the national representation of businesses by size and location. This approach provides sufficient numbers in each of the sub-groups to allow analysis to be conducted by size and location.

The table at Appendix A summarises the approach to stratification and weighting.

Margin of error
The survey approach and sample size dictate the reliability of the findings. For this survey, the margin of error, based on a 95% confidence level lies within the range of + or – 4.4%. This means if this survey was replicated, 95 times out of 100 the results would be within + or – 4.4% of what was previously achieved.

perceptive**insight**™

Interaction with the Civil Service

Please note: Questions relating to interactions by paper (n=9) and in person (n=10) have been omitted due to low bases.

Frequency of contact

71% of respondents have had contact with the Office of the Revenue Commissioners within the last 12 months, with 54% of those contacting the Office on 10 or more occasions. 12% have had contact with Central Statistics Office (CSO) and 8% have had contact with Companies Registration Office. One fifth (21%) indicated that all their contact with the Civil Service is through an accountant or other service provider.

Of the 77% who had direct contact (i.e. not through a third party), 74% stated that their most recent contact was with the Office of the Revenue Commissioners. This may be because the survey was carried out during the peak tax pay and file period for businesses.

2018 results indicate that, in general, the interaction that businesses have with a Civil Service department has decreased (compared to results from 2016).

perceptive insight

Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Q201-203 Have you had contact with any of the following in the last 12 months?

Base: all respondents (n=510). Weighted data

Department	Contact within the last 12 months	Number of times*			Most recent contact (base=419)
		1 to 5	6 to 10	More than 10	
Office of the Revenue Commissioners	71%	23%	23%	54%	74%
Central Statistics Office	12%	81%	14%	4%	1%
Companies Registration Office	8%	64%	14%	23%	1%
Dept. of Agriculture, Food and the Marine	7%	58%	23%	16%	5%
Dept. of Employment Affairs and Social Protection	7%	44%	17%	37%	2%
Dept. of Housing, Planning and Local Government	6%	60%	17%	23%	2%
Dept. of Business, Enterprise and Innovation	5%	61%	21%	17%	1%
Dept. of Education and Skills	4%	61%	16%	23%	3%
Dept. of Finance	4%	49%	11%	31%	1%
Dept. of Health	4%	35%	27%	38%	1%
Dept. of Transport, Tourism and Sport	4%	51%	26%	24%	3%
Property Registration Authority	4%	84%	1%	15%	-
Office of Public Works	4%	50%	21%	29%	1%
Dept. of Communications, Climate Action and Environment	2%	44%	13%	33%	1%
Dept. of Foreign Affairs and Trade	2%	43%	31%	25%	1%
Dept. of Rural and Community Development	2%	78%	17%	4%	-
Workplace Relations Commission	2%	65%	2%	33%	-
Dept. of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht	1%	79%	21%	-	-
Dept. of Justice and Equality	1%	37%	2%	59%	-
Courts Service	1%	36%	-	64%	-
Office of Government Procurement	1%	66%	28%	6%	-
Office of the Ombudsman	1%	67%	-	33%	-
Dept. of Defence	1%	79%	8%	13%	-
Dept. of Public Expenditure and Reform	1%	48%	37%	15%	-
Other*	5%	37%	20%	36%	2%
None	2%				
All contact is through an accountant or other service provider	21%				

*Other responses included Council Departments, National Treasury Management Agency, Irish Water, Irish Forestries, Gardia Siochanna

*Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding and respondents who were "not sure"

*"Contact" is defined as any work or business related interaction between the respondent and the Civil Service Department or Office itself by phone, post, email, on the internet or in person

Q201 Have you had contact with any of the following in the last 12 months?

Department	Contact within the last 12 months				
	2018	2016	2009	2006	2002
Office of the Revenue Commissioners	71%	76%	77%	45%	77%
Central Statistics Office (CSO)	12%	18%	37%	20%	34%
Companies Registration Office	8%	17%	43%	-	-
Dept. of Agriculture, Food and the Marine	7%	11%	*9%	*16%	*14%
Dept. of Employment Affairs and Social Protection	7%	*13%	*22%	*19%	*8%
Dept. of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government	6%	6%	*25%	*19%	*22%
Dept. of Business, Enterprise and Innovation	5%	*6%	*37%	*28%	*30%
Dept. of Education and Skills	4%	3%	*16%	*19%	*8%
Dept. of Transport, Tourism and Sport	4%	8%	*15%	-	
Dept. of Finance	4%	7%	18%	19%	11%
Office of Public Works (OPW)	4%	8%	13%	-	-
Property Registration Authority	4%	3%	-	-	-
Dept. of Health	4%	9%	-	-	-
Dept. of Communications, Climate Action and Environment	2%	4%	*25%	*19%	*22%
Office of Government Procurement	1%	3%	-	-	-
Dept. of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht	1%	*2%	*25%	*19%*	*22%
All contact is through an accountant or other service provider	21%	32%	8%	19%	14%

*Civil Service departments and functions have changed since previous studies and therefore data is not directly comparable
*"Contact" is defined as any work or business related interaction between the respondent and the Civil Service Department or Office itself by phone, post, email, on the internet or in person

Method and nature of contact

While online contact is still the most common method of communication in 2018 (68%), it is down since the previous study (83% in 2016). There has been an increase in email usage from 24% in 2016 to 34% in 2018.
In 2009, telephone was most widely used to contact the Civil Service (93%) *

56% of respondents revealed that their most recent contact was made online, while a further 27% stated that it was via the telephone. The use of online services is more common among larger businesses (with 50 or more employees (70%)).

The main reasons for contacting the Civil Service included providing information (41%), making a payment (20%), carrying out a transaction (15%) or seeking information (14%).

* The 2018 study asked about contact used in the last 12 months, whereas previous studies have asked about contact methods "ever used".

perceptive insight

Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Q206 & 207 Method of contact

Method of most recent contact

	2018	2016
Online	56	62
Telephone	27	20
Email	15	10
In writing	1	4
In person	1	4

Method of contact used in the last 12 months*

	2018	2016
Online	68	83
Telephone	52	64
Email	34	24
In writing	2	8
In person	2	8
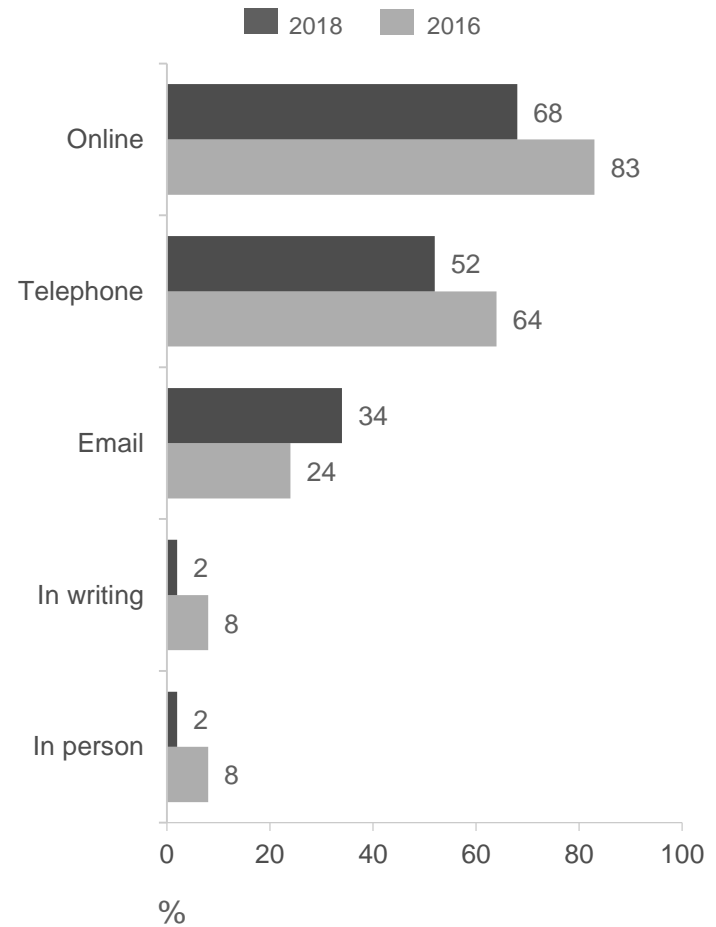
* In 2016, this question was asked as "what methods of communication have you ever used"

perceptiveinsight

Q206 Method of most recent contact

Online (%)

All	56
0 to 9 emp	56
10 to 49 emp	58
50 or more emp	70
Dublin	60
Rest of Leinster	57
Munster	51
Conn/Ulster	55

%

Telephone (%)

All	27
0 to 9 emp	28
10 to 49 emp	18
50 or more emp	13
Dublin	23
Rest of Leinster	25
Munster	36
Conn/Ulster	24

%

perceptiveinsight

Q204 Reason for most recent contact

Base: Those who have had contact within the last 12 months (n=419). Weighted data

■ 2018   ■ 2016

Reason	2018	2016
Providing information	41	18
Making a payment	20	44
Carrying out a transaction/business	17	14
Seeking information	14	0
Resolve an issue	4	4
Enquiring about a service etc	2	2
Seeking payment	1	0
Requesting a form	0	1
Other		5

0   20   40   60   80   100
%

perceptiveinsight
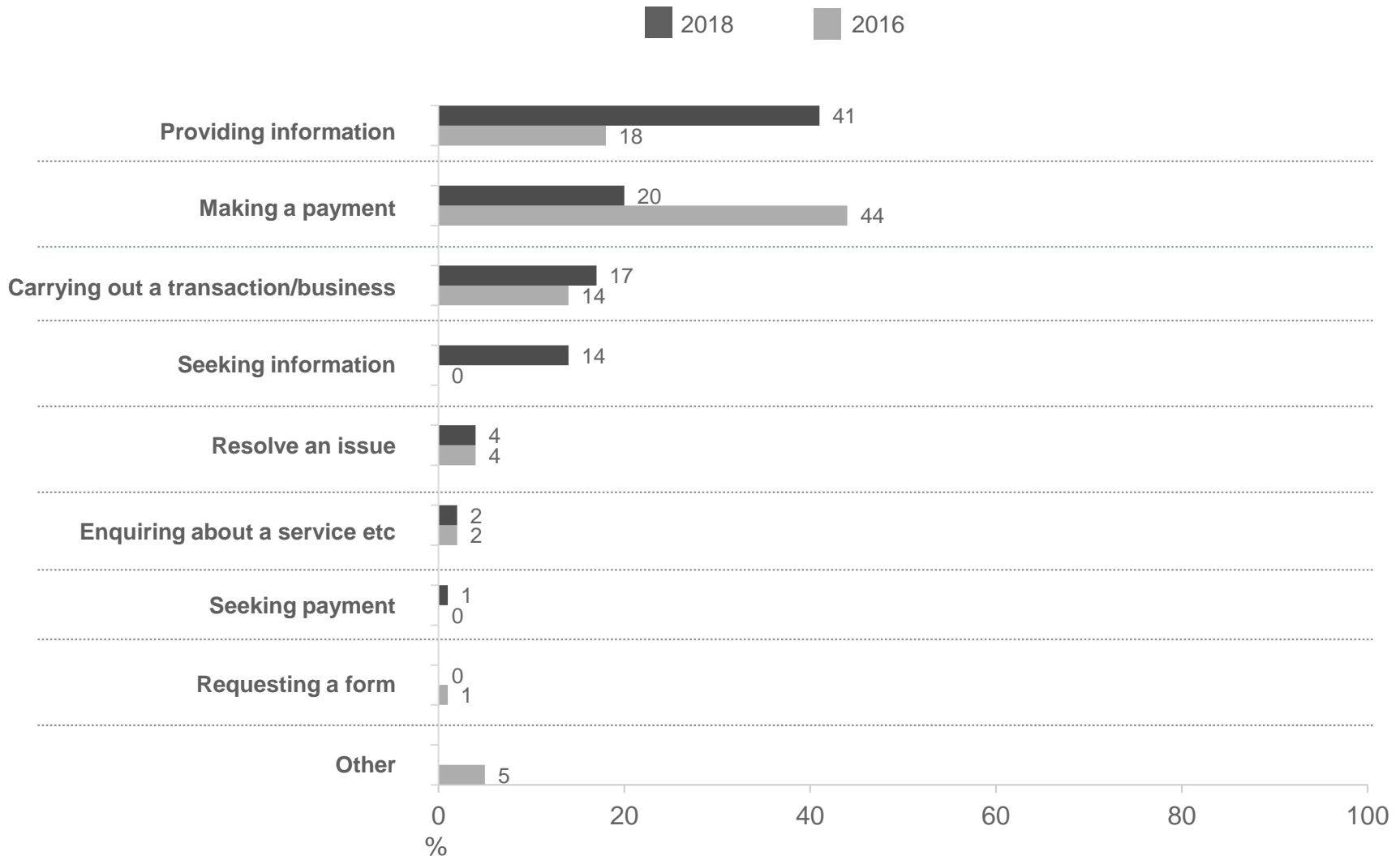
Satisfaction with last interaction

Just under four fifths (78%) were satisfied with the **service received** during their last interaction, while 11% were dissatisfied. Satisfaction levels are slightly down compared to the 2016 study whereby 82% were satisfied and 10% were dissatisfied.

When asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they were with the **outcome** of their most recent transaction, 82% were satisfied and 9% were dissatisfied. This is similar to the figures reported in 2016 (82% satisfied, 8% dissatisfied).

85% said the service received was as they expected, while 6% felt it was better than expected and 8% worse than expected.

perceptive**insight**

Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Q209 & 210 Thinking of the most recent business related interaction – Overall how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with…..

■ Dissatisfied ■ Satisfied

…The service received
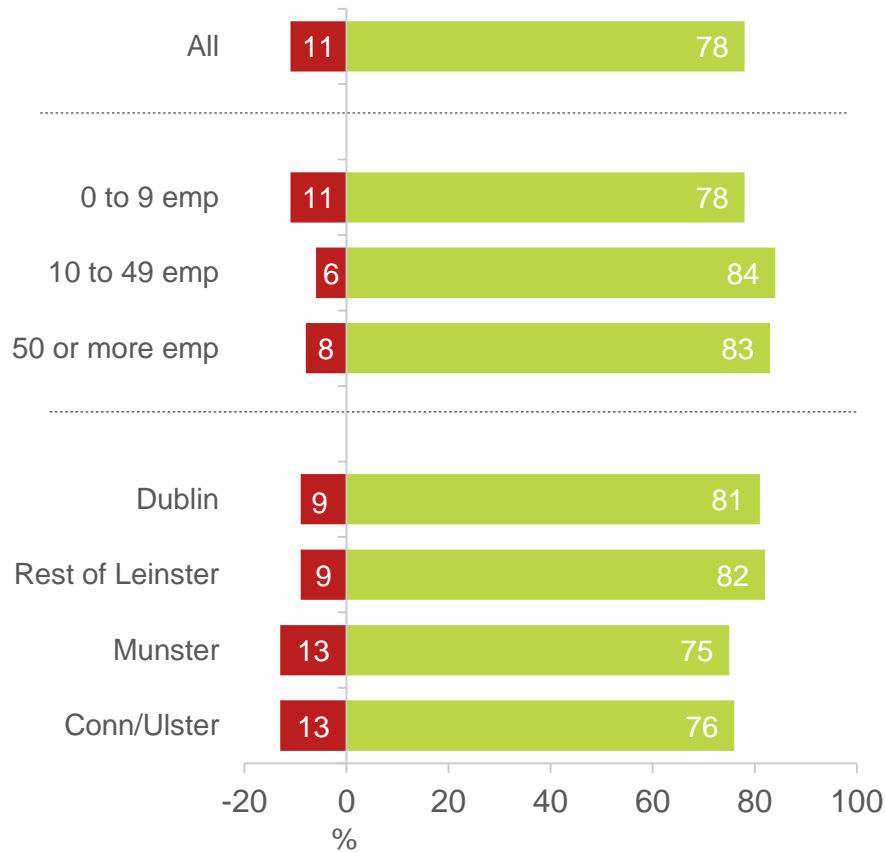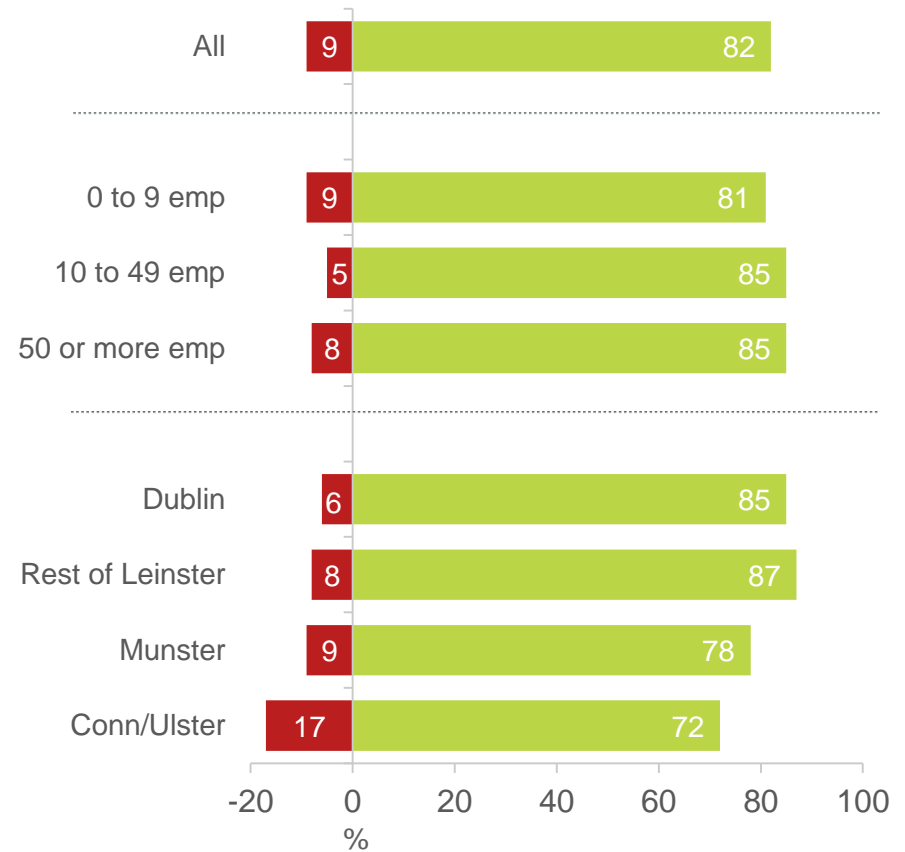
	Dissatisfied	Satisfied
All	11	78
0 to 9 emp	11	78
10 to 49 emp	6	84
50 or more emp	8	83
Dublin	9	81
Rest of Leinster	9	82
Munster	13	75
Conn/Ulster	13	76

%

…The outcome

	Dissatisfied	Satisfied
All	9	82
0 to 9 emp	9	81
10 to 49 emp	5	85
50 or more emp	8	85
Dublin	6	85
Rest of Leinster	8	87
Munster	9	78
Conn/Ulster	17	72

%

perceptiveinsight

Q209 & 210 Thinking of the most recent business related interaction – Overall how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with…..

Legend: ■ Dissatisfied ■ Satisfied

Service received
- 2018: Dissatisfied 11, Satisfied 78
- 2016: Dissatisfied 10, Satisfied 82
- 2009: Dissatisfied 16, Satisfied 71

Outcome
- 2018: Dissatisfied 9, Satisfied 82
- 2016: Dissatisfied 8, Satisfied 82
- 2009: Dissatisfied 15, Satisfied 70

%

perceptiveinsight

Q211 Thinking of your most recent business related interaction - was the service you received better than expected, the same as expected or worse than expected?

Better than expected — 6

Same as expected — 85

Worse than expected — 8

%
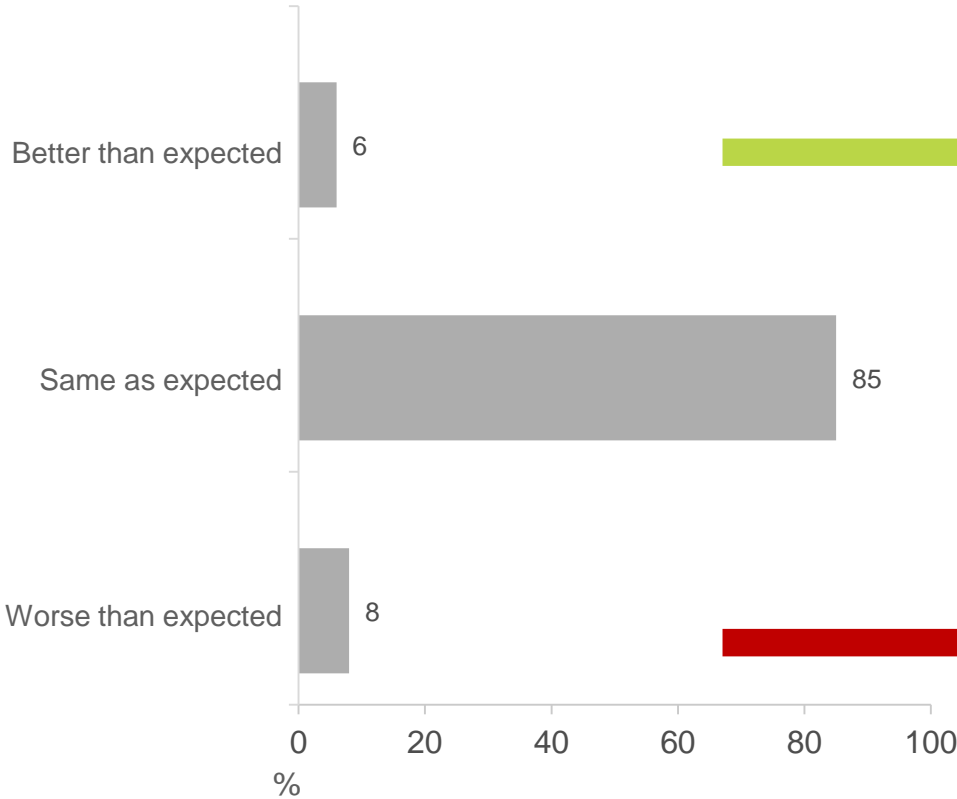
Of the 6% who said the service was better than expected….

- 41% - Efficient
- 26% - Helpful staff
- 8% - Better compared to other departments
- 6% - General improvements

Of the 8% who said the service was worse than expected….

- 30% - Delayed communication
- 20% - Too long to resolve issue / issue still not resolved
- 10% - Too slow
- 10% - Too hard to use
- 7% - Can't get through to right person
- 7% - Passed around departments

perceptiveinsight

Satisfaction with telephone contact

For those whose most recent interaction was by telephone, the areas most likely to be rated as 'satisfied' were; the helpfulness of staff (75%), the quality of advice/information received (73%), and the manner in which staff explained issues/provided information (73%).

Areas for improvement (areas most likely to be rated as 'dissatisfied' were) the speed with which the phone was answered (34%) and the telephone menu/automated service (29%).

The majority of those who used telephone for their last interaction (89%) confirmed that this was their preferred method for that interaction.

perceptiveinsight

Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Q212 Satisfaction with most recent business related interaction by telephone

Base: Those who have contacted the Civil Service by phone (n=223). Weighted data

	Dissatisfied	Satisfied
2018	Dissatisfied	Satisfied
2016	Dissatisfied	Satisfied

Helpfulness of staff
- 2018: 10 (Dissatisfied), 75 (Satisfied)
- 2016: 12 (Dissatisfied), 83 (Satisfied)

Quality of advice/information received
- 2018: 11 (Dissatisfied), 73 (Satisfied)
- 2016: 11 (Dissatisfied), 81 (Satisfied)

Manner in which staff explained issues / provided information
- 2018: 9 (Dissatisfied), 73 (Satisfied)
- 2016: 9 (Dissatisfied), 83 (Satisfied)

Ease of finding the telephone number
- 2018: 21 (Dissatisfied), 66 (Satisfied)
- 2016: 27 (Dissatisfied), 60 (Satisfied)

Speed / efficiency with which query was dealt with
- 2018: 21 (Dissatisfied), 64 (Satisfied)
- 2016: 14 (Dissatisfied), 74 (Satisfied)

Speed with which the phone was answered
- 2018: 34 (Dissatisfied), 50 (Satisfied)
- 2016: 30 (Dissatisfied), 53 (Satisfied)

Telephone menu / automated telephone service
- 2018: 29 (Dissatisfied), 49 (Satisfied)
- 2016: 20 (Dissatisfied), 65 (Satisfied)

%

perceptive insight

Q213 Preferred means of interaction

Was **telephone** your preferred method of interaction?

Base: Those who contacted the Civil Service by phone (n=223). Weighted data

- Yes
- No

12%

88%
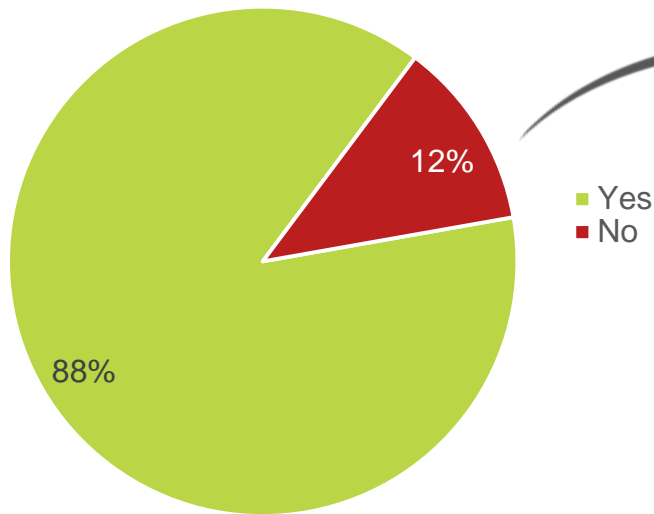
What method would you have preferred?

Base: Those whose preferred method was not telephone (n=37). Weighted data
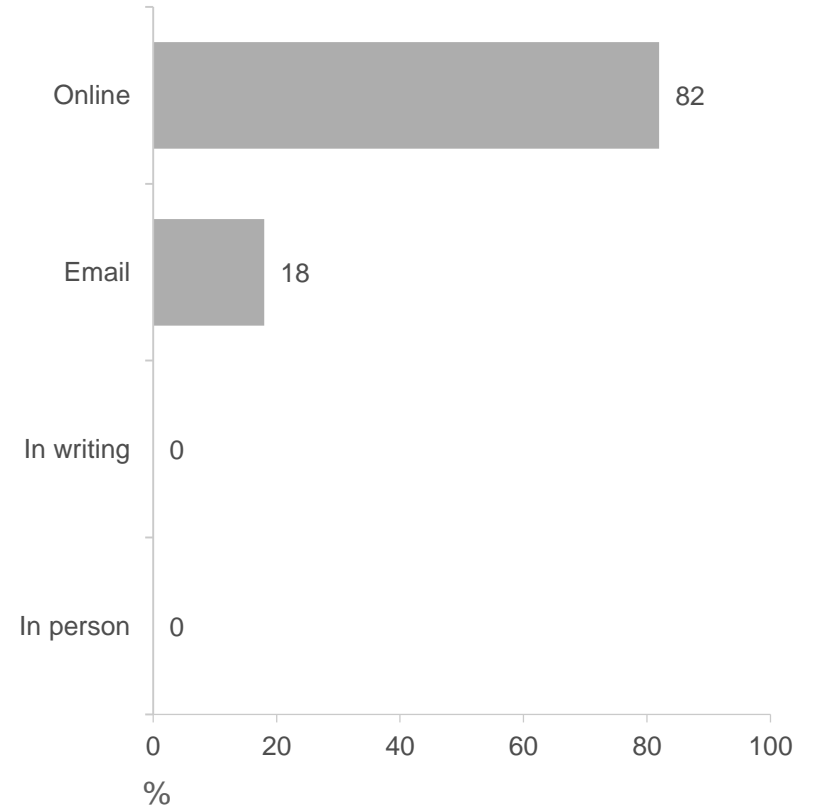
Method	%
Online	82
Email	18
In writing	0
In person	0

%

perceptiveinsight

Q303 For future business dealings with Civil Service Departments, how convenient/inconvenient would contact <u>by phone</u> be for you?
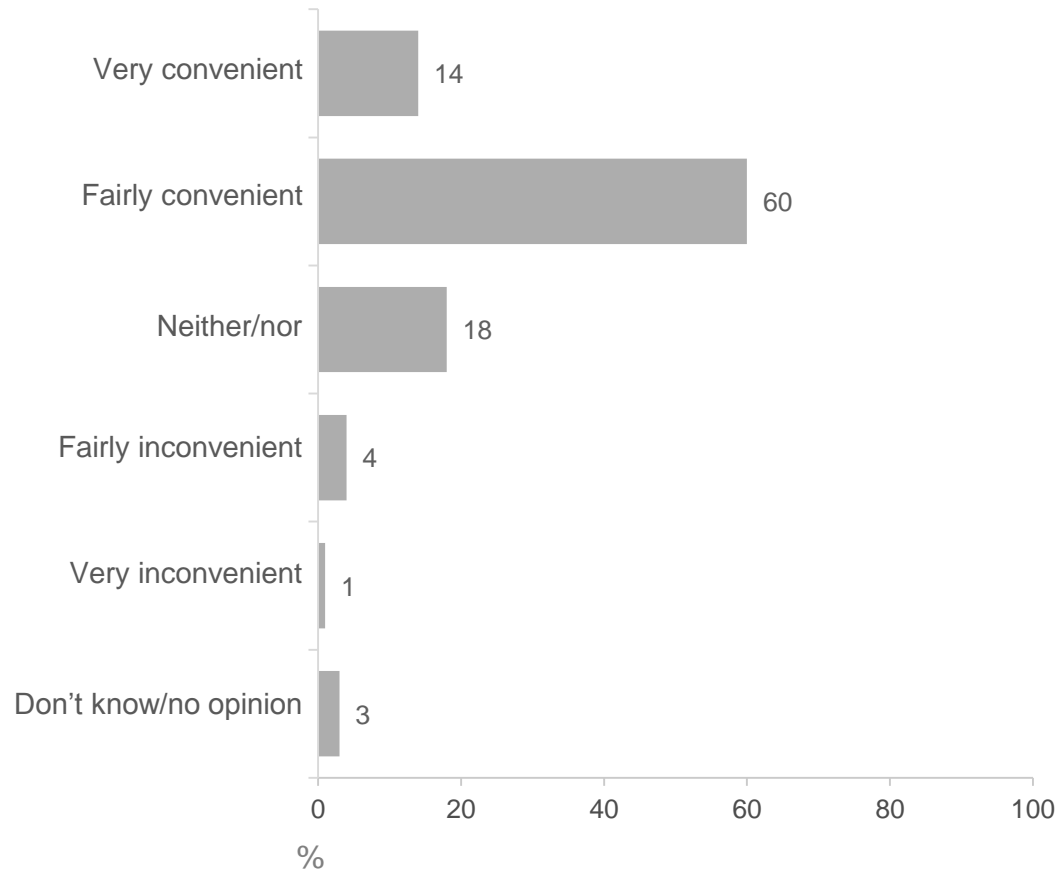
Satisfaction with online interaction

Respondents were asked about their levels of satisfaction in relation to their most recent interaction via online services. Aspects with high levels of satisfaction included of ease of finding (82%) and navigating (77%) the website, ease of using the digital interactive service (74%) and ease of downloading material (73%).

Problem areas identified include speed of response of digital interactive service or follow up (11% dissatisfied), and efficiency of digital interactive service (9% dissatisfied).

The majority of respondents felt that future dealings via online digital services would be convenient (83%). On the other hand, 4% felt that online digital services for future contact would be inconvenient.

Q220 Satisfaction with the most recent business related interaction through online

Base: Those who have contacted the Civil Service via online (n=303). Weighted data

	Dissatisfied	Satisfied
2018	Dissatisfied	Satisfied
2016	Dissatisfied	Satisfied

Ease of finding the website
- 2018: 7 / 82
- 2016: 5 / 93

Ease of navigating website*
- 2018: 8 / 77
- 2016: 10 / 85

Ease of using digital interactive service
- 2018: 8 / 74
- 2016: 11 / 76

Ease of downloading material
- 2018: 7 / 73
- 2016: 6 / 87

Efficiency of digital interactive service
- 2018: 9 / 69
- 2016: 9 / 79

Comprehensiveness of digital interactive service
- 2018: 7 / 68
- 2016: 5 / 83

Speed of response of digital interactive service or follow up
- 2018: 11 / 65
- 2016: 5 / 82

%

-20   0   20   40   60   80   100
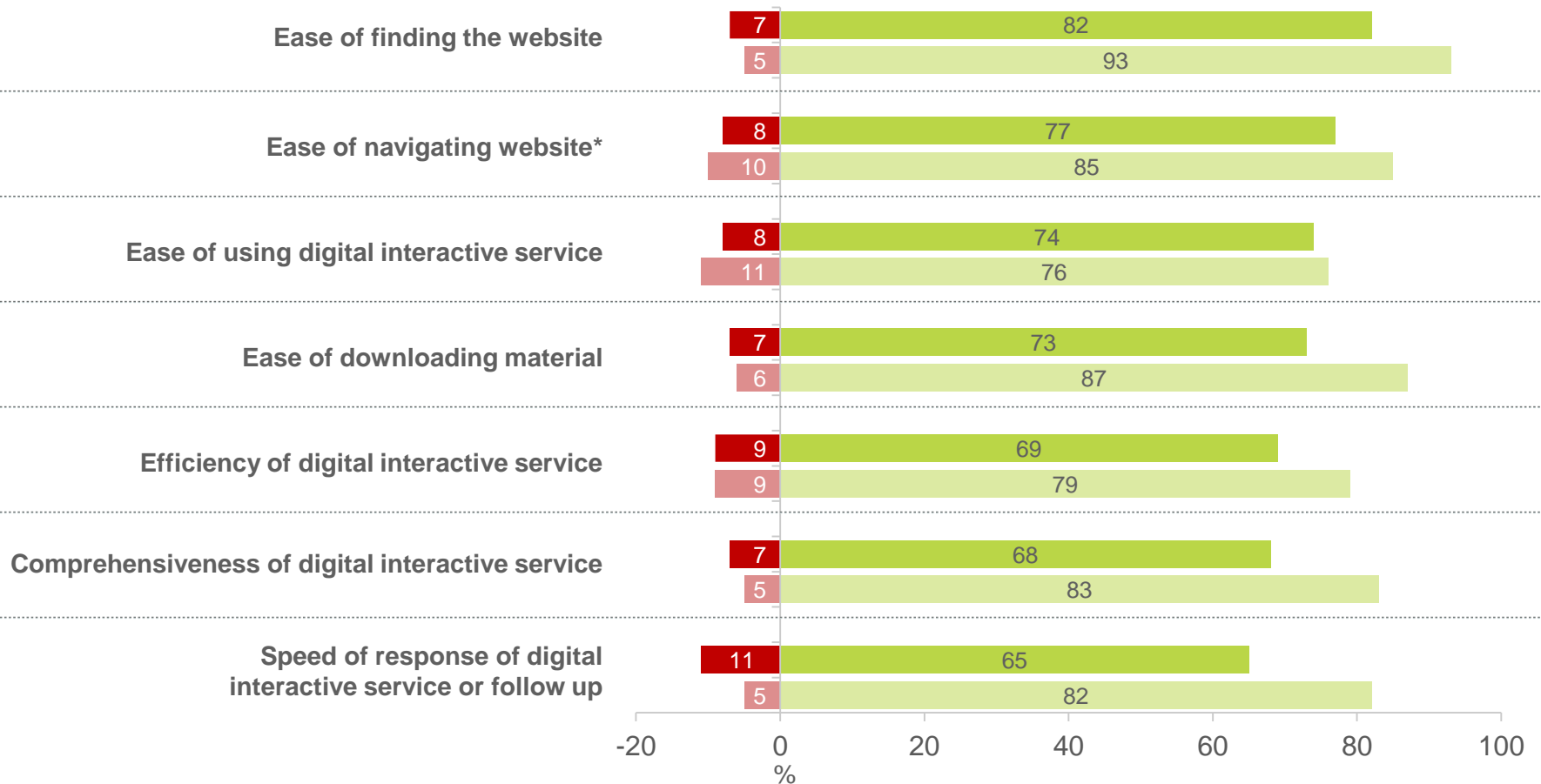
*In 2016 respondents were asked to provide their satisfaction for "presentation and ease of navigating the website". Therefore results are not directly comparable.

perceptiveinsight

Q221 Preferred means of interaction

Was **online** your preferred method of interaction?

Base: Those who have contacted the Civil Service via online (n=303). Weighted data

- Yes
- No

94%

6%
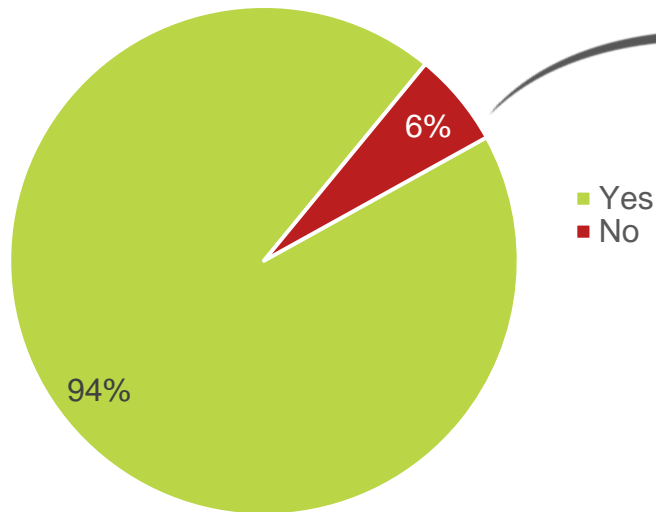
What method would you have preferred?

Base: Those whose preferred method was not online (n=15). Weighted data. NB low base.

Method	%
Telephone	67
In writing	14
In person	10
Email	9

%

perceptive**insight**
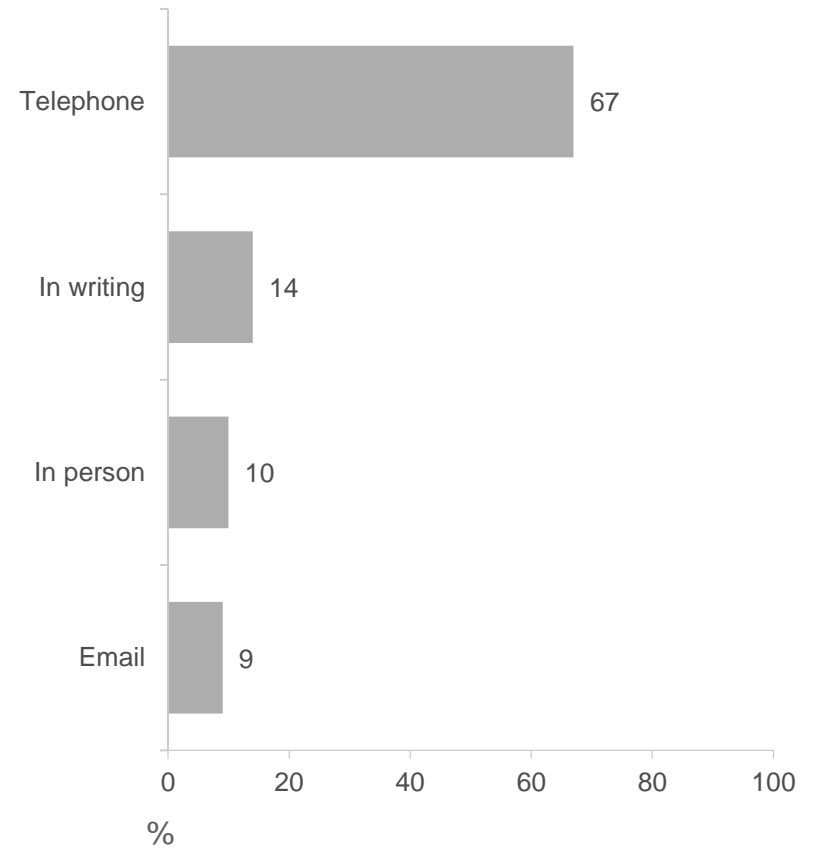
Q303 For future dealings with Civil Service Departments, how convenient would the following contact methods be for you?

...Online digital interactive service (%)

Very convenient	39
Fairly convenient	44
Neither/nor	10
Fairly inconvenient	3
Very inconvenient	1
Don't know/no opinion	3

...Single digital identity to securely access government services online (%)

Very convenient	35
Fairly convenient	45
Neither/nor	13
Fairly inconvenient	3
Very inconvenient	1
Don't know/no opinion	4

perceptiveinsight
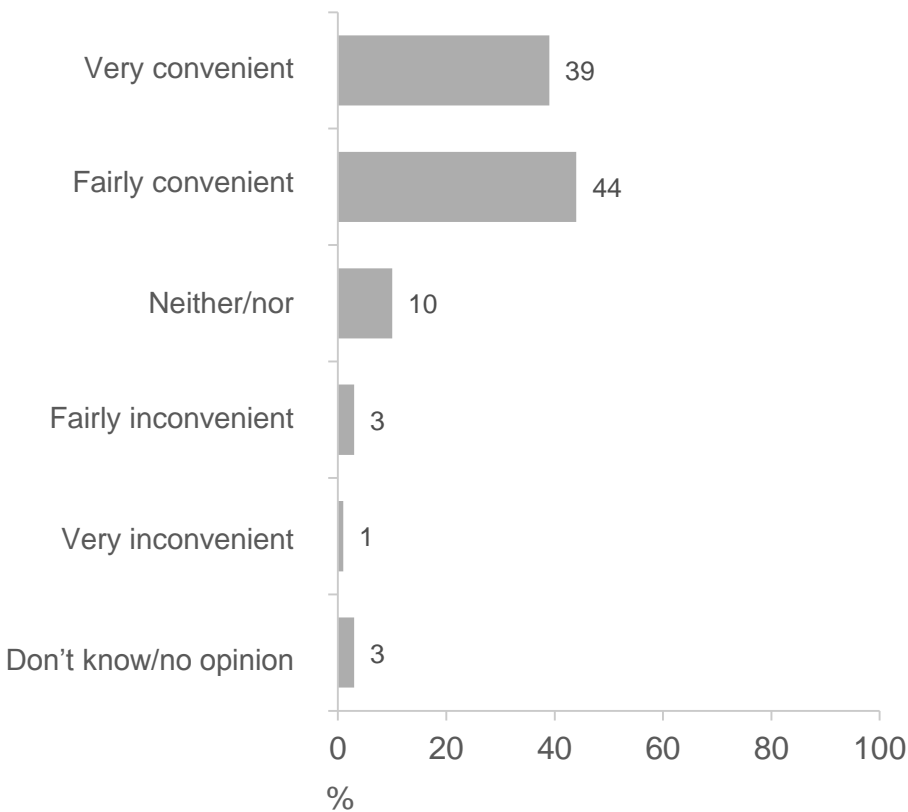
Satisfaction with email interaction

When contacting the Civil Service via email, respondents were most likely to be satisfied in relation to the ease of finding the correct email address/contact (75%), the clarity of language used in email (72%), and quality of advice/information received (71%)

Two thirds (67%) said that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the speed and efficiency of the response to their email. However, this area was most likely to be rated with dissatisfaction, with 20% of respondents citing this. This was closely followed the quality of the advice/information received (15%).

Overall, over three quarters (77%) of respondents felt that future dealings via email would be convenient for them and their organisation, whereas 5% felt it would be inconvenient.

perceptiveinsight

Q218 Satisfaction with most recent business related interaction through email

Base: Those who have contacted the Civil Service via email (n=159). Weighted data

2018   ■ Dissatisfied   ■ Satisfied
2016   ■ Dissatisfied   ■ Satisfied

Ease of finding the correct email address/contact
- 12 | 75
- 6 | 86

Clarity of language used in email
- 10 | 72
- 4 | 81

Quality of advice/information received
- 15 | 71
- 9 | 79

Speed/efficiency of response to query
- 20 | 67
- 10 | 81

-20   0   20   40   60   80   100

%

perceptive insight
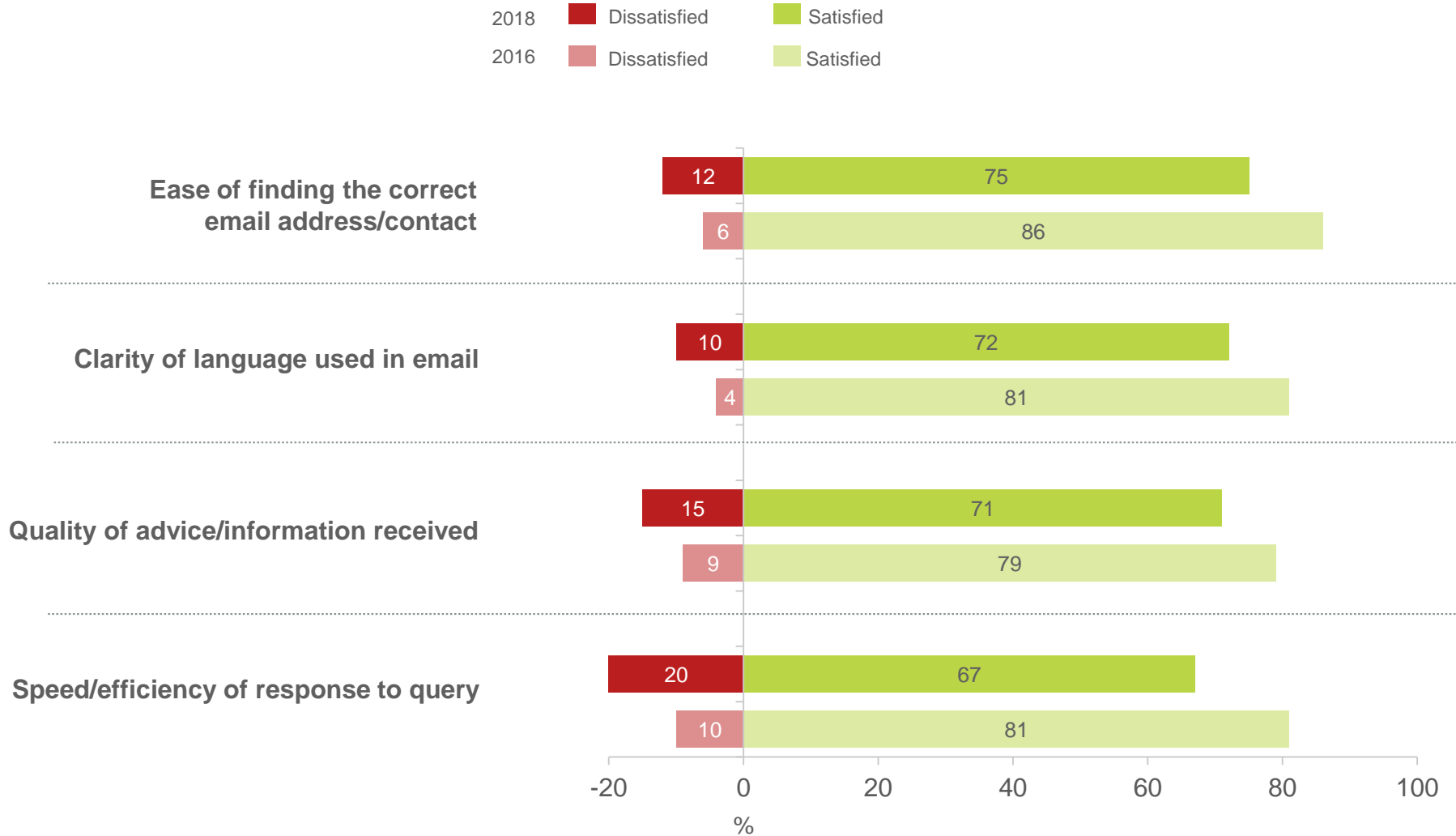
Q219 Preferred means of interaction

Was **email** your preferred method of interaction?

Base: Those who have contacted the Civil Service via email (n=159). Weighted data

What method would you have preferred?

Base: Those whose preferred method was not email (n=32). Weighted data. NB low base.
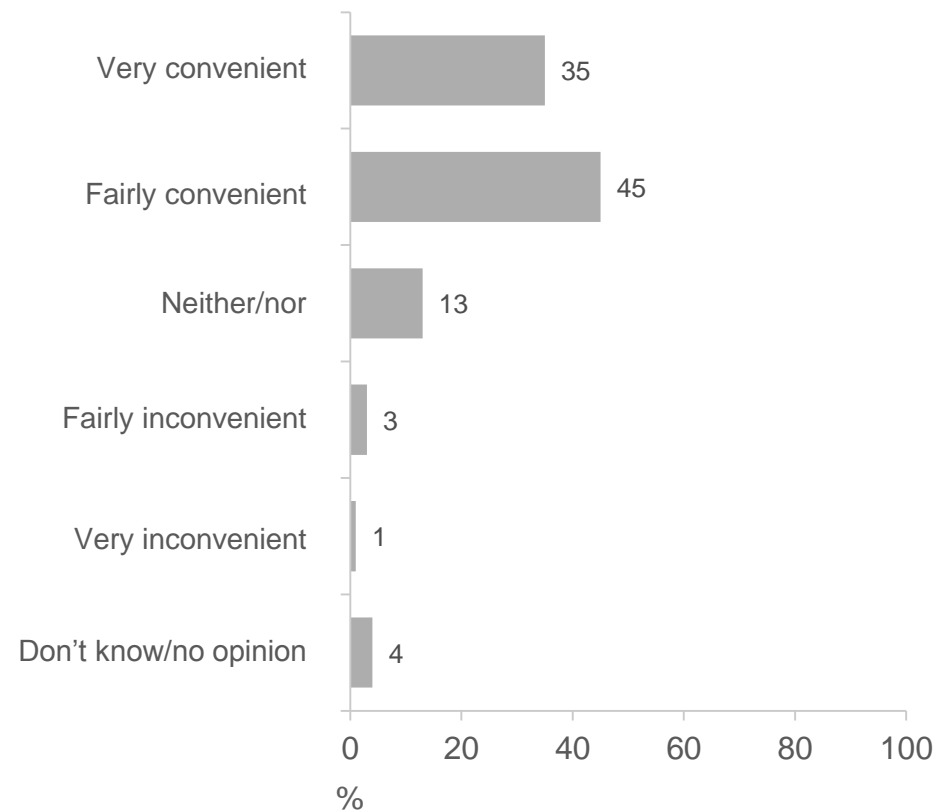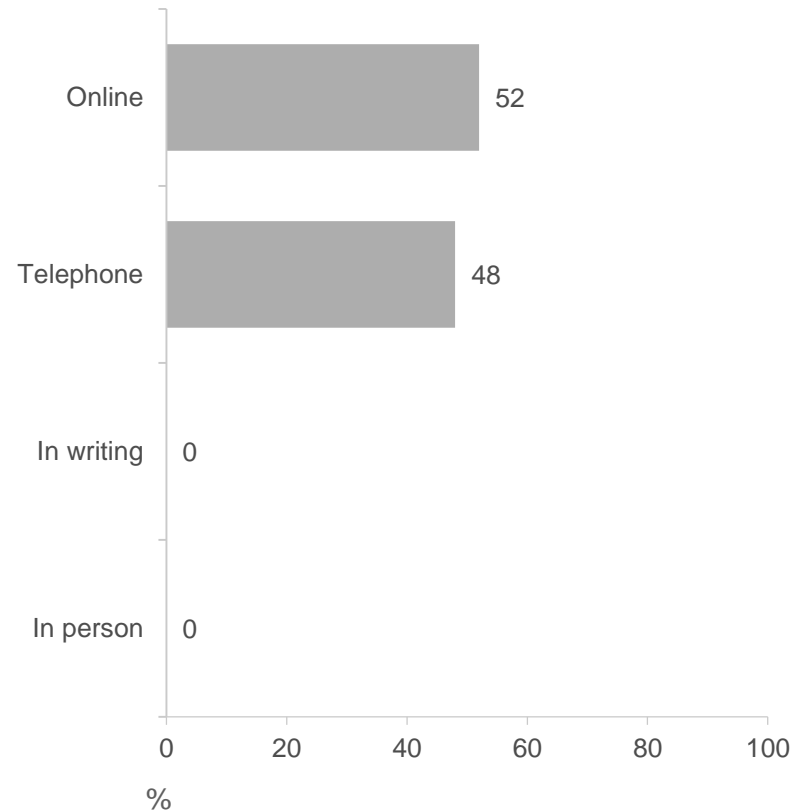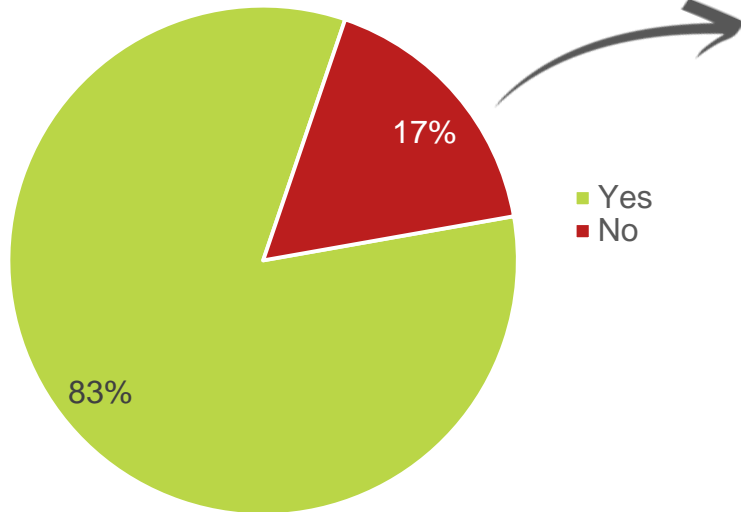

17%

83%

- Yes
- No

Method	%
Online	52
Telephone	48
In writing	0
In person	0

%

perceptiveinsight

Q303 For future business dealings with Civil Service Departments, how convenient/inconvenient would contact <u>by email</u> be for you?

perceptive**insight**
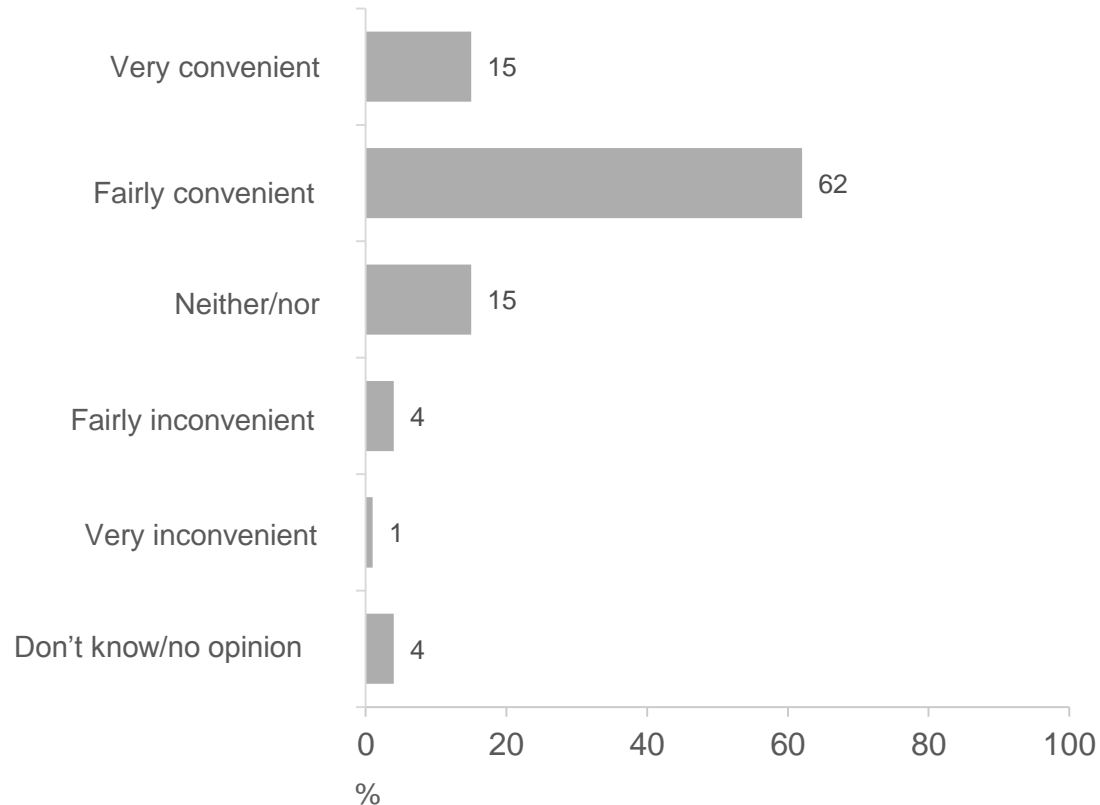
Preferred methods of interaction

Online is most likely to be the preferred method of interaction in all scenarios, apart from when trying to resolve an issue or query, when telephone becomes the option most likely to be preferred.

Online contact was most popular for carrying out a transaction and making a payment.

perceptive**insight**

Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Q307 For each of the following services, what would be your preferred method of interaction for business related matters?

Base: All respondents (n=510). Weighted data

	Online	By phone	By email	In writing on paper	In person	Don't know/ No opinion	Total
Seeking general information	60%	19%	14%	-	-	6%	100%
Providing information to a government department/office	55%	18%	19%	1%	-	6%	100%
Carrying out a transaction	62%	14%	15%	-	1%	7%	100%
Making a payment	63%	15%	15%	-	1%	6%	100%
Enquiring about a particular service / entitlement / application	39%	34%	21%	1%	-	6%	100%
Seeking payment / collecting allowance	46%	27%	20%	-	-	7%	100%
Resolving an issue / querying the meaning or accuracy in documentation received	35%	40%	16%	1%	2%	6%	100%

* Due to rounding, percentages add to 99%-101%.

perceptiveinsight

Q307 For each of the following services, what would be your preferred method of interaction for business related matters?

Base: All respondents (n=510). Weighted data

	Online		By phone		By email		In writing (on paper)		In person		Don't know/ no opinion		Total	
	2018	2016	2018	2016	2018	2016	2018	2016	2018	2016	2018	2016	2018	2016
Seeking general information	60%	54%	19%	28%	14%	10%	-	1%	-	3%	6%	4%	100%	100%
Providing information to a Government Department/Office	55%	51%	18%	25%	19%	16%	1%	1%	-	3%	6%	4%	100%	100%
Carrying out a transaction	62%	71%	14%	12%	15%	6%	-	2%	1%	3%	7%	7%	100%	100%
Making a payment	63%	71%	15%	13%	15%	6%	-	1%	1%	3%	6%	6%	100%	100%
Enquiring about a particular service/ entitlement / application	39%	42%	34%	32%	21%	17%	1%	1%	-	4%	6%	4%	100%	100%
Seeking payment/ collecting grant	46%	48%	27%	22%	20%	17%	-	1%	-	4%	7%	8%	100%	100%
Resolving an issues/ querying the meaning or accuracy in documentation received	35%	21%	40%	53%	16%	15%	1%	1%	2%	5%	6%	5%	100%	100%

* Due to rounding, percentages add to 99%-101%.

perceptiveinsight

Views of online interaction

Online communication was rated as more convenient than telephone contact across respondents in all business sizes and locations.

Of those rating online interaction as inconvenient, the main reason given was because they preferred telephone contact.

Half of respondents were aware of the Government's digital services gateway, Gov.ie. 66% of those who were aware of it have used the service.

perceptive insight

Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Q303 Thinking of future business dealings how convenient or inconvenient are the following types of interaction?

	Online digital interactive service	Having a single digital identity	By telephone	By email	Visiting a Department or Offices in person	In writing on paper
Very convenient	39%	35%	14%	15%	3%	2%
Fairly convenient	44%	45%	60%	62%	18%	18%
Neither/nor	10%	13%	18%	15%	38%	43%
Fairly inconvenient	3%	3%	4%	4%	26%	27%
Very inconvenient	1%	1%	1%	1%	10%	6%
Don't know/No opinion	3%	4%	3%	4%	5%	4%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

* Due to rounding, percentages add to 99%-101%.

perceptive**insight**

Q303 Convenience of online and telephone interaction

Online digital interactive service (% convenient)

All	4 / 83
0 to 9 emp	4 / 82
10 to 49 emp	2 / 93
50 or more emp	1 / 91
Dublin	0 / 88
Rest of Leinster	5 / 78
Munster	8 / 78
Conn/Ulster	4 / 86

-20 0 20 40 60 80 100
%

Telephone (% convenient)

All	5 / 74
0 to 9 emp	5 / 73
10 to 49 emp	5 / 83
50 or more emp	19 / 77
Dublin	2 / 70
Rest of Leinster	7 / 76
Munster	9 / 74
Conn/Ulster	4 / 77

-20 0 20 40 60 80 100
%
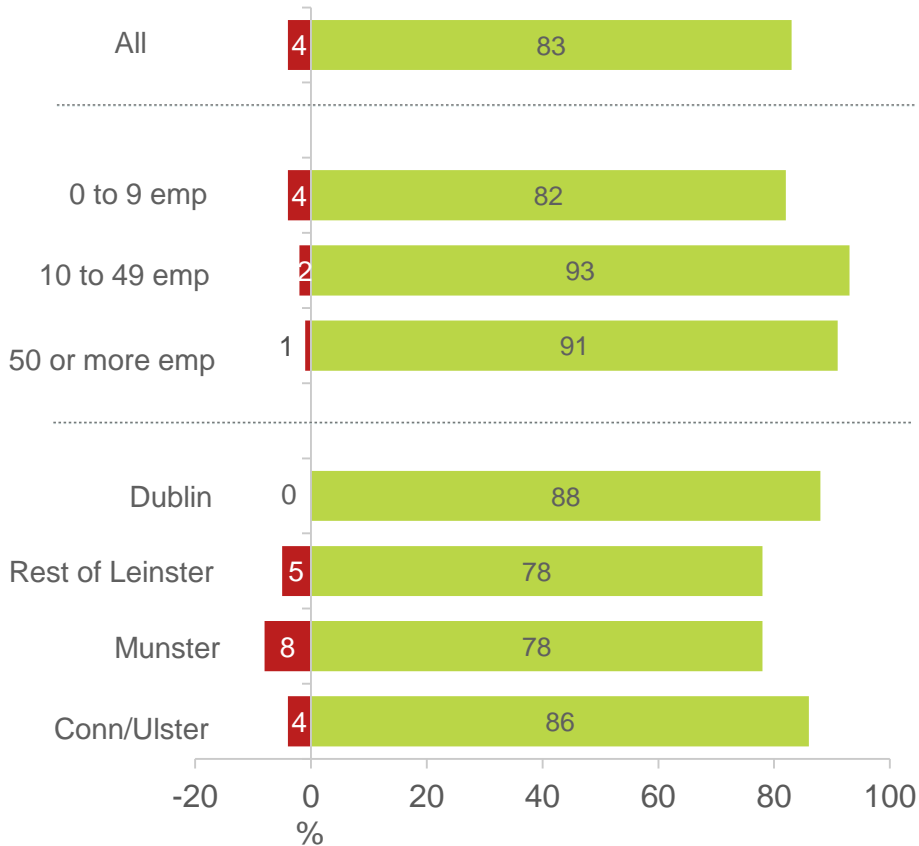
perceptiveinsight
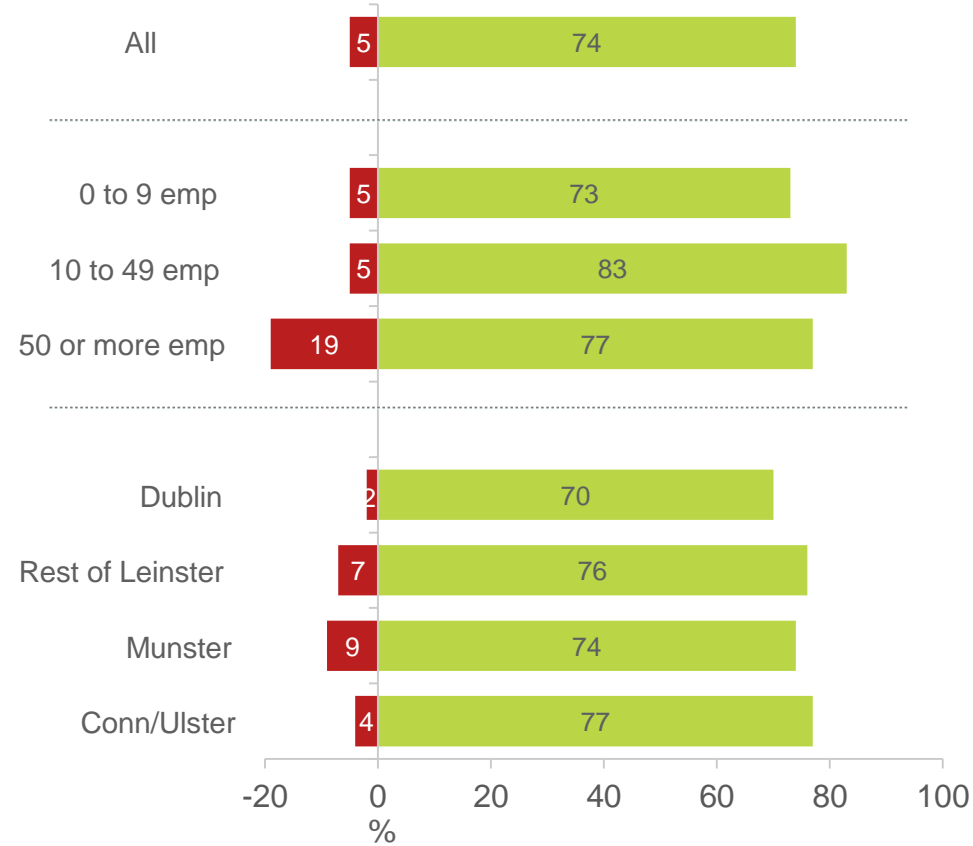
Q205 Which of the following represents your business's circumstances in relation to internet/email access?

Pie chart:
- 91% — Avail of broadband internet access and online services (green)
- 4% — Currently constrained due to inadequate broadband service quality (grey)
- 5% — Do not require access to the internet or online services (red)

perceptiveinsight
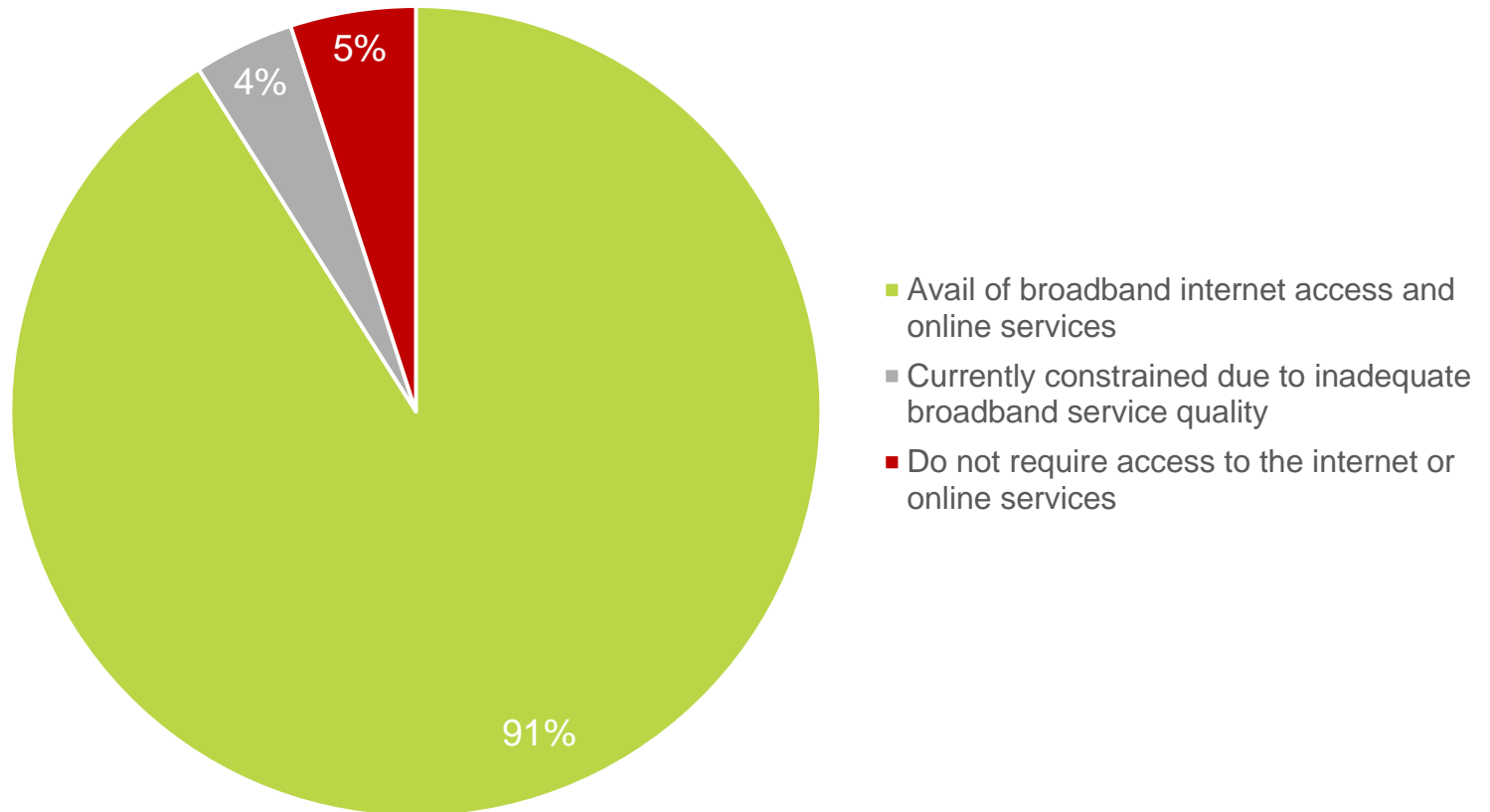
Reasons for not interacting online

Q208 Of the 24% who have **not interacted with a Government department or Office online**, the main reasons given were:

Base: All respondents (n=116). Weighted data

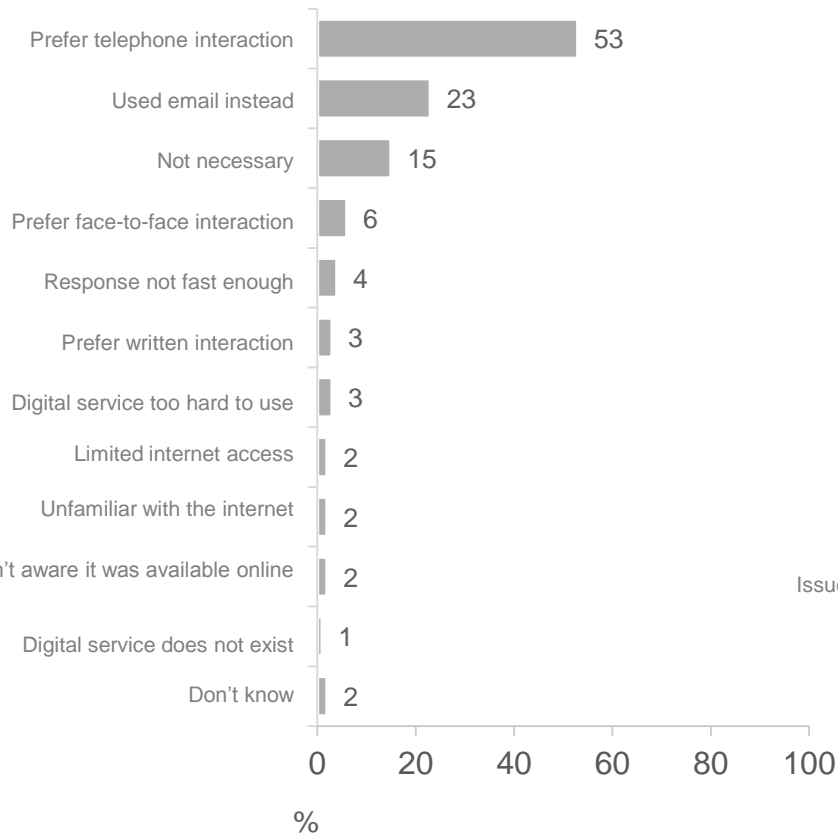|	
Prefer telephone interaction	53
Used email instead	23
Not necessary	15
Prefer face-to-face interaction	6
Response not fast enough	4
Prefer written interaction	3
Digital service too hard to use	3
Limited internet access	2
Unfamiliar with the internet	2
I wasn't aware it was available online	2
Digital service does not exist	1
Don't know	2

%

Q304 Of the 7% who have **rated email and/or online an inconvenient way to communicate**, the main reasons given were:

Base: All respondents (n=42). Weighted data.

Prefer phone interaction	47
Limited internet access	23
Email is inconvenient	17
Less efficient to interact online	14
Difficult website interface	14
Unfamiliar with internet	9
I wasn't aware it was available online	5
Response not fast enough	5
Lack of flexibility online	3
Issues relating to using a single business e-identifier	3
Prefer face-to-face interaction	2
The service didn't exist	1

%

perceptive**insight**
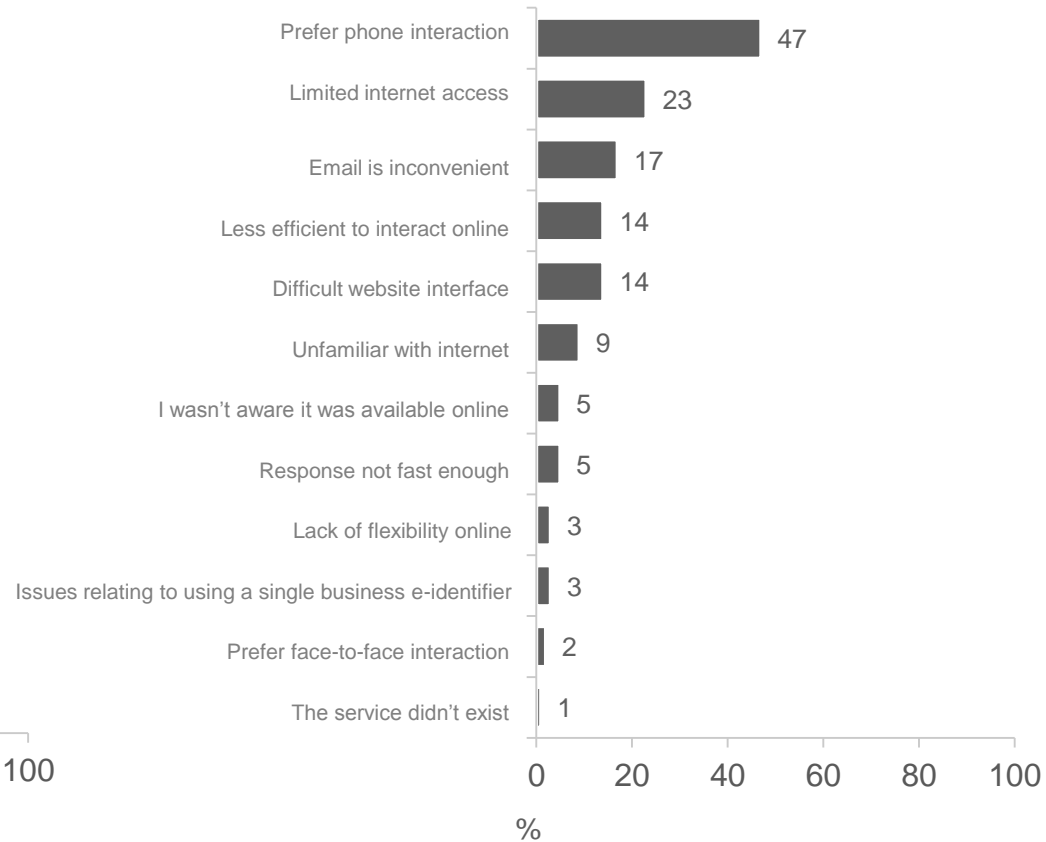
Q305 Are there any services provided by the Civil Service which are not currently online, but which you would like?

94% of respondents stated that there was nothing they would like added to the online services, and a further 1% did not know if/what they would like to see added. Only 1% said all the services their business requires are currently online. Of those who felt there was a service they would like to see online, comments and suggestions included:

"If there was some way to have a web chat to avoid lengthy waits on the phone"

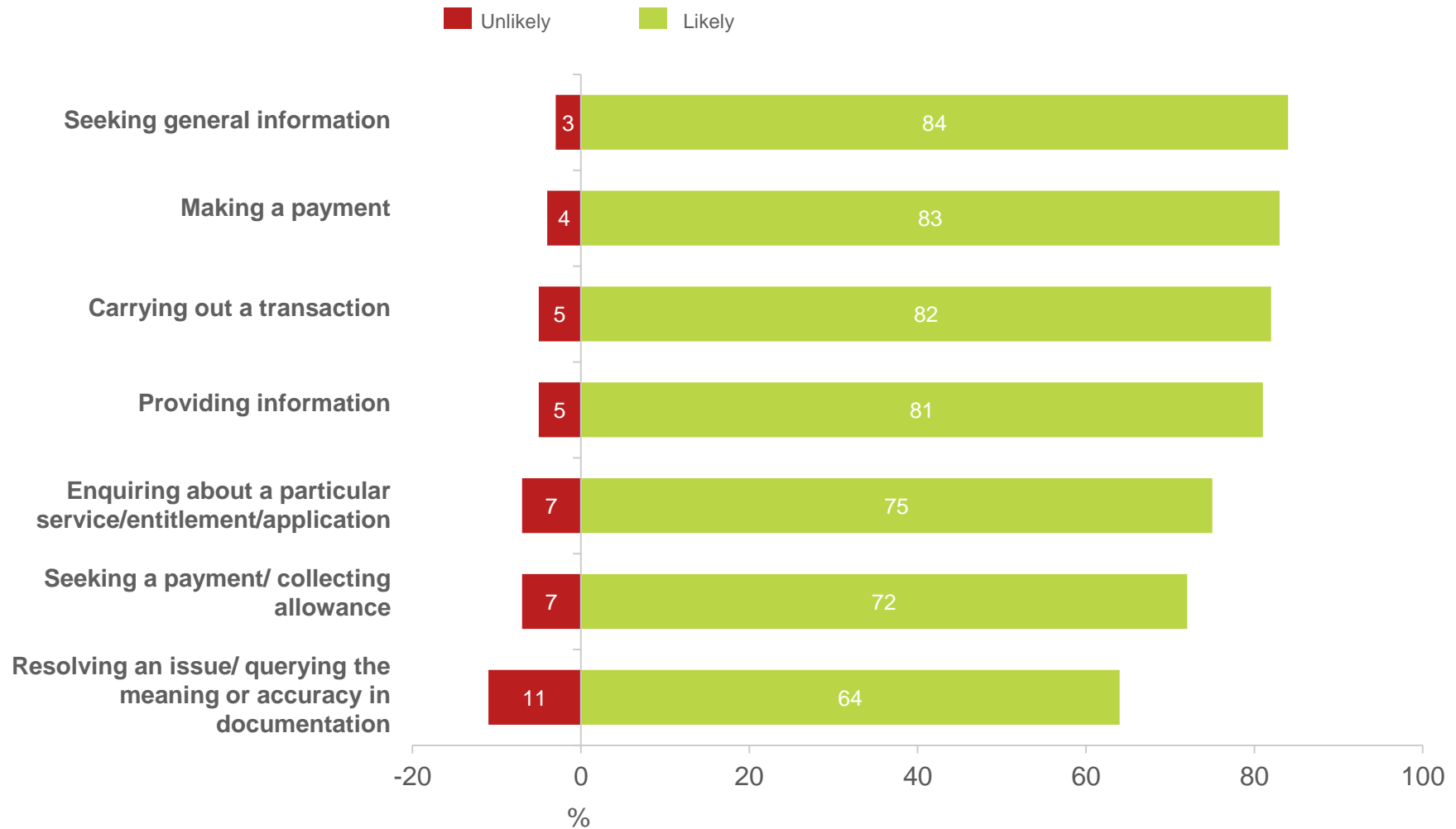"Social Welfare doesn't have access to online info, and their info is out of date"

"The information pages are not that informative, I actually have to google to find forms as it is quicker than the website"

"Being able to print off tax assessments all at once rather than having to individually print it off"

"We can't apply to Social Welfare for records on behalf of clients"

perceptiveinsight

Q308 How likely would you be to avail of the following online service in relation to business matters?

Legend: ■ Unlikely ■ Likely

Category	Unlikely	Likely
Seeking general information	3	84
Making a payment	4	83
Carrying out a transaction	5	82
Providing information	5	81
Enquiring about a particular service/entitlement/application	7	75
Seeking a payment/ collecting allowance	7	72
Resolving an issue/ querying the meaning or accuracy in documentation	11	64

%

perceptiveinsight

Q306 Dealings with the Government's digital services gateway, Gov.ie

Are you aware of gov.ie?

Base: All respondents (n=510). Weighted data

50% No
50% Yes

- Yes
- No
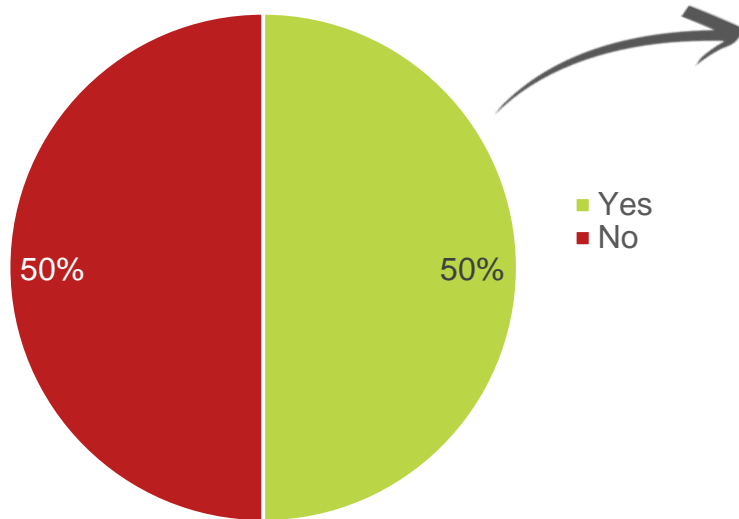
Have you used this service?

Base: Those who have heard of gov.ie (n=282). Weighted data.

Yes — 66
No — 34

%

perceptiveinsight
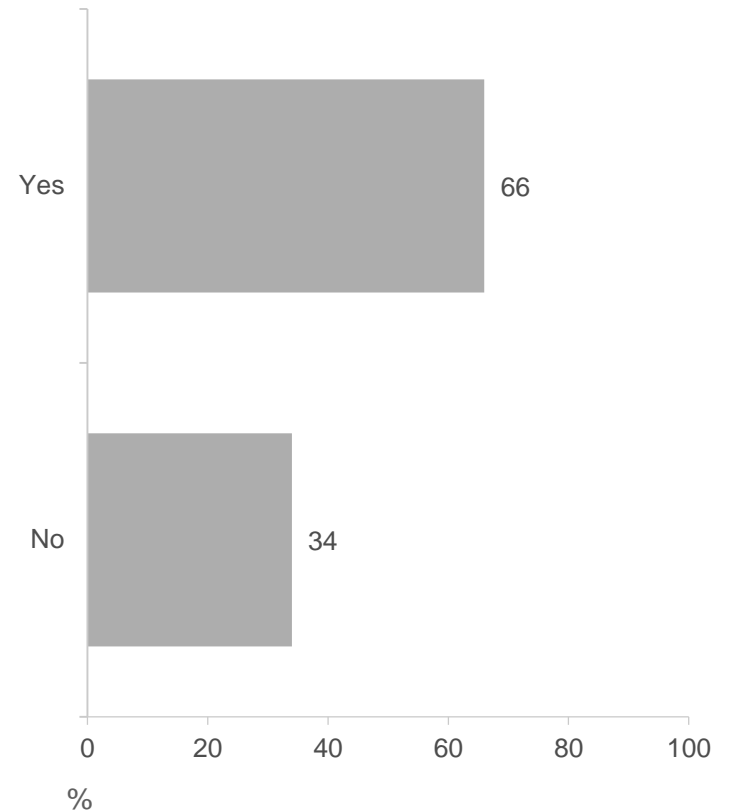
Q309 Have you ever used any service from the Irish Civil Service in the Irish language?

perceptiveinsight
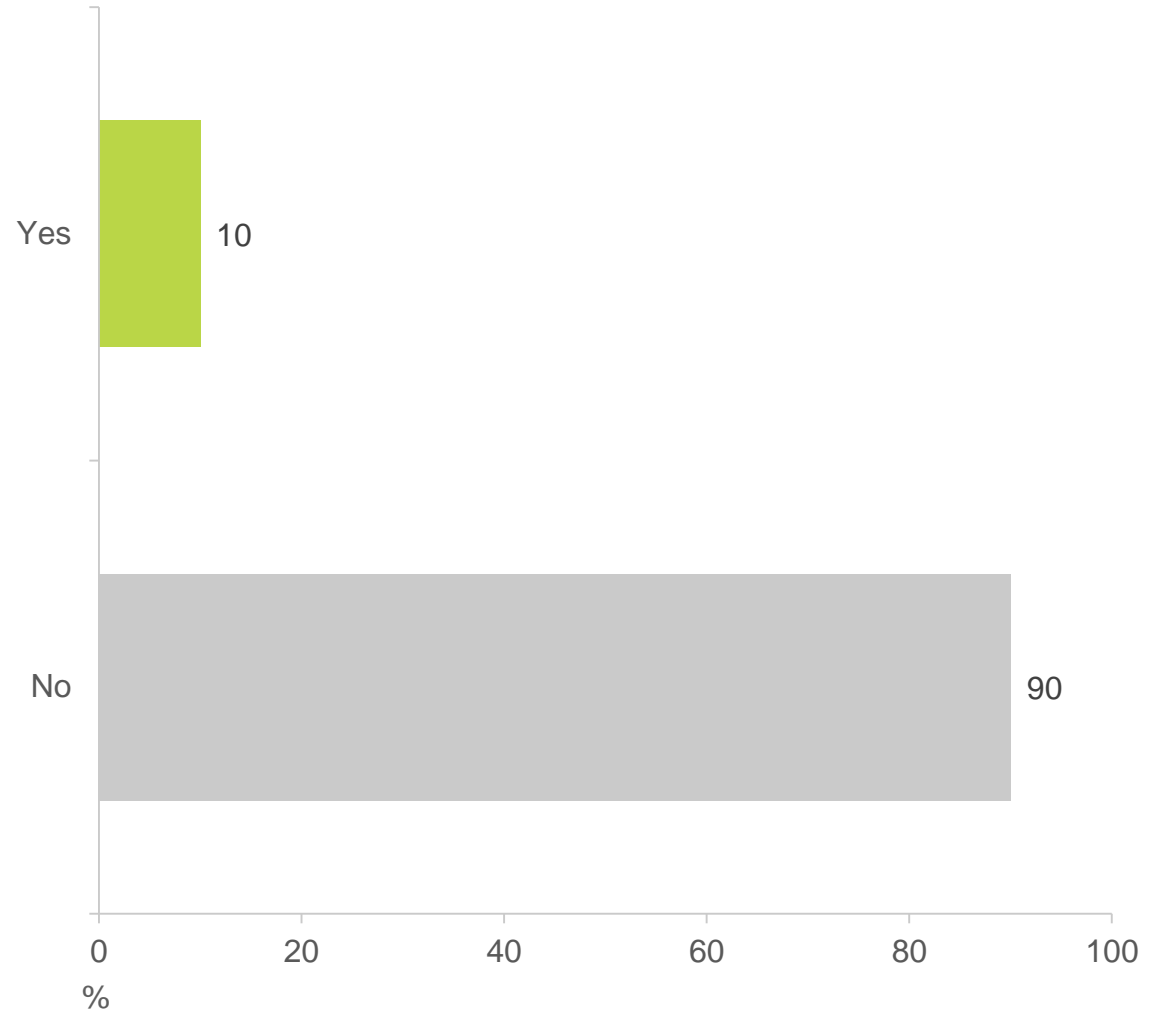
General perceptions of the Civil Service

In overall terms, 73% of business are satisfied with the service the Civil Service provides.

31% of businesses would speak highly of the Civil Service to other people; 5% without being asked and 26% if asked.

perceptive**insight**

Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Overall satisfaction levels

Q301 Thinking of the Civil Service in **overall terms, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you** with the service it provides?

■ 2018   ■ 2016

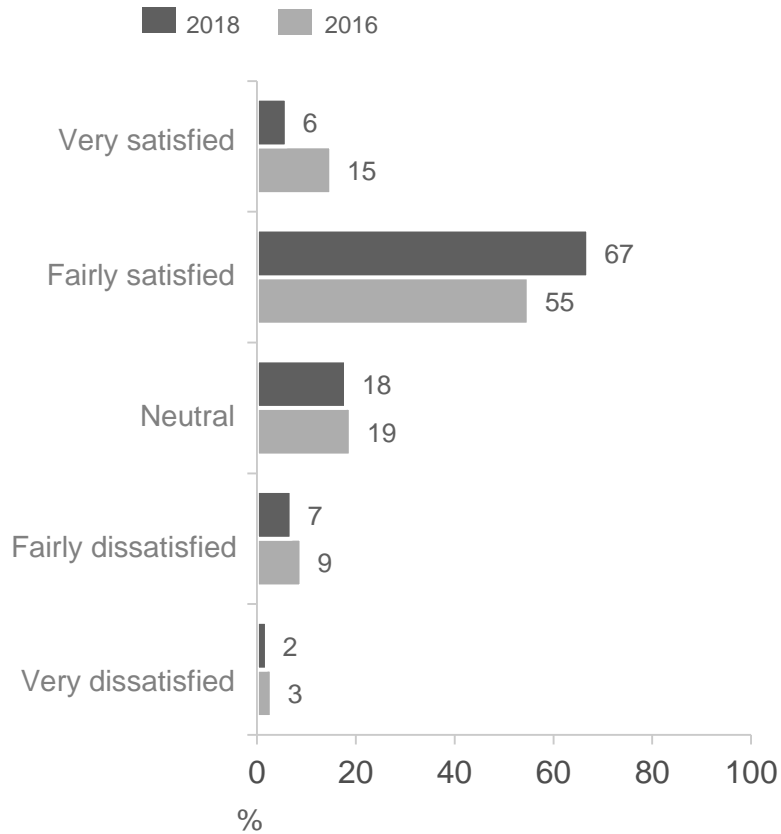|	2018	2016
Very satisfied	6	15
Fairly satisfied	67	55
Neutral	18	19
Fairly dissatisfied	7	9
Very dissatisfied	2	3

0   20   40   60   80   100
%

Q310 Taking into account your own experiences or impressions, which of these phrases best describes **the way you would speak of the Civil Service to other people**?

■ 2018   ■ 2016

	2018	2016	
Speak highly without being asked	5	5	31% advocates
Speak highly if asked	26	25	
Neutral	57	49	
Critical if asked	8	11	10% critics
Critical without being asked	2	6	
No opinion	1	4	

0   20   40   60   80   100
%

perceptive**insight**
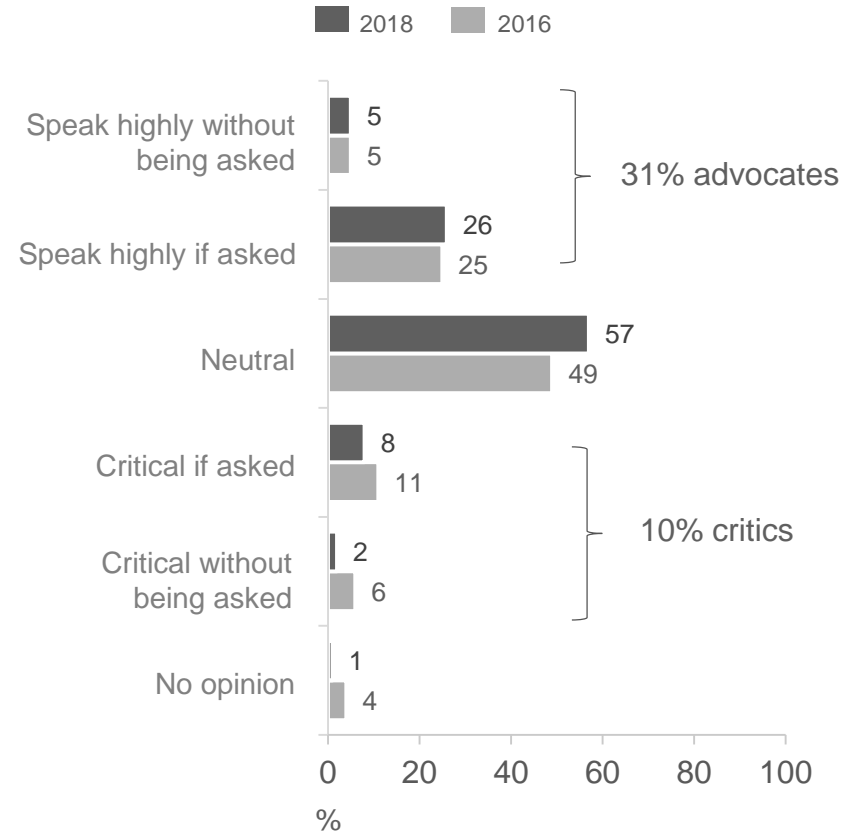
Attitudes towards the Irish Civil Service

Seven out of ten (70%) feel the Civil Service deals with businesses in a fair and equal way, while 69% believe the Civil Service is independent and trustworthy.

66% of respondents believe that the service offered by the Civil Service has become more innovative over the last 5 years, while just over half (55%) believe the Civil Service has become more customer focused within the same time period. However, less than half (49%) consider the Civil Service to be very efficient.

The statements with the greatest percentage disagreement was "the Civil Service is very efficient" (19% disagreed), closely followed by "it is easy to get the information I need from Civil Services/Offices" (17% disagreed).

Q302 Now thinking about the Irish Civil Service in general, please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Legend:
- 2018 — Disagree — Agree
- 2016 — Disagree — Agree

The Civil Service deals with businesses in a fair and equal way
- 8 | 70
- 14 | 71

The Civil Service is independent and trustworthy
- 7 | 69
- 17 | 67

I feel that the service provided by the Civil Service has become more innovative in the last 5 years*
- 11 | 66

X-axis: -20, 0, 20, 40, 60, 80, 100
%

* This question was not asked in 2016.

perceptive**insight**

Q302 Now thinking about the Irish Civil Service in general, please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements?

| 2018 | ■ Disagree | ■ Agree |
| 2016 | ■ Disagree | ■ Agree |

The Civil Service has become more focussed on the needs of the business customer over the past 5 years
- 2018: Disagree 14, Agree 55
- 2016: Disagree 23, Agree 55

It is easy to get the information I need from Civil Service Departments/Offices*
- 2018: Disagree 17, Agree 53
- 2016: Disagree 40, Agree 39

The Civil Service has good procedures for making complaints about levels of service received
- 2018: Disagree 10, Agree 41
- 2016: Disagree 10, Agree 14

%
-40 -20 0 20 40 60 80 100
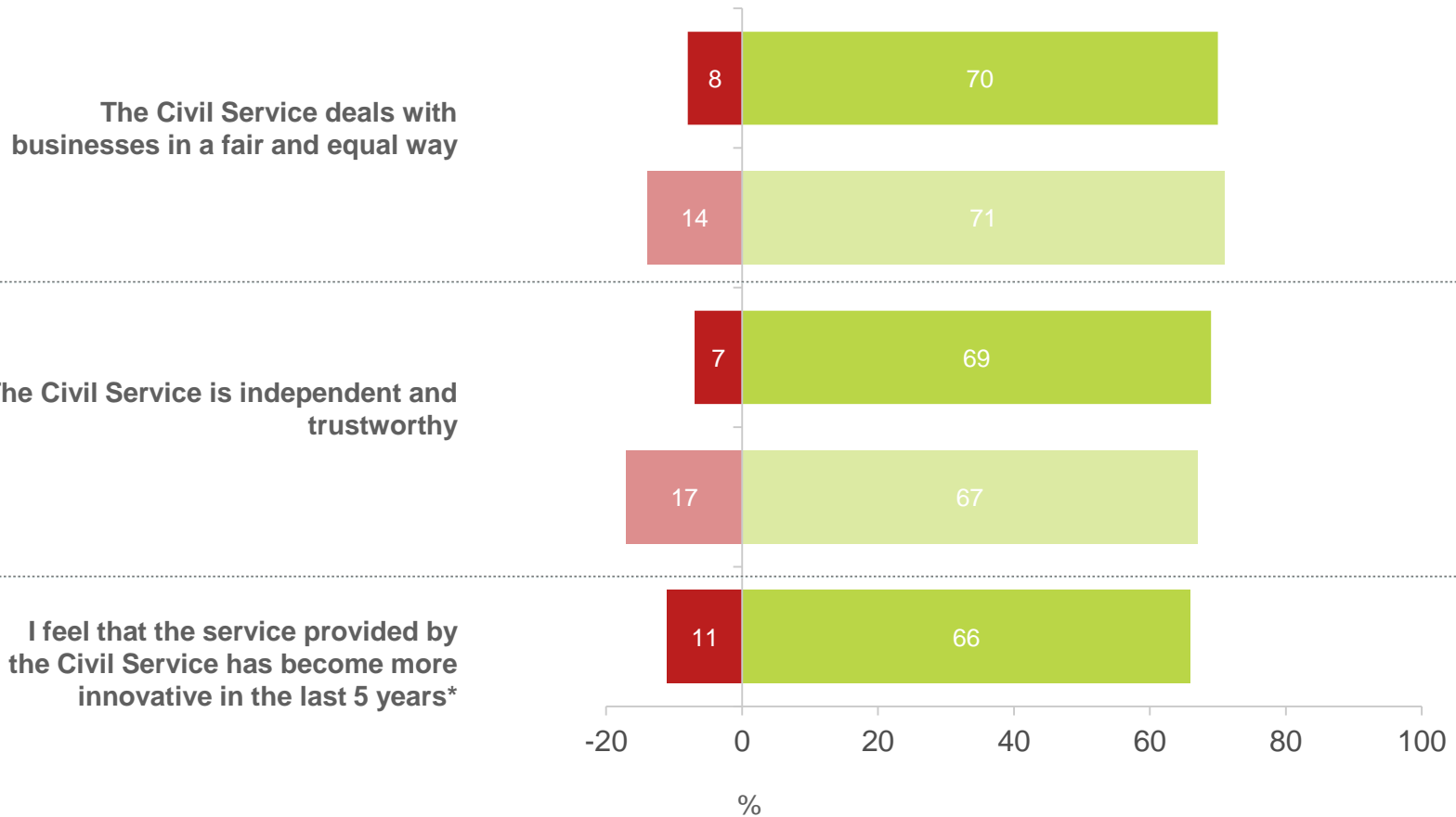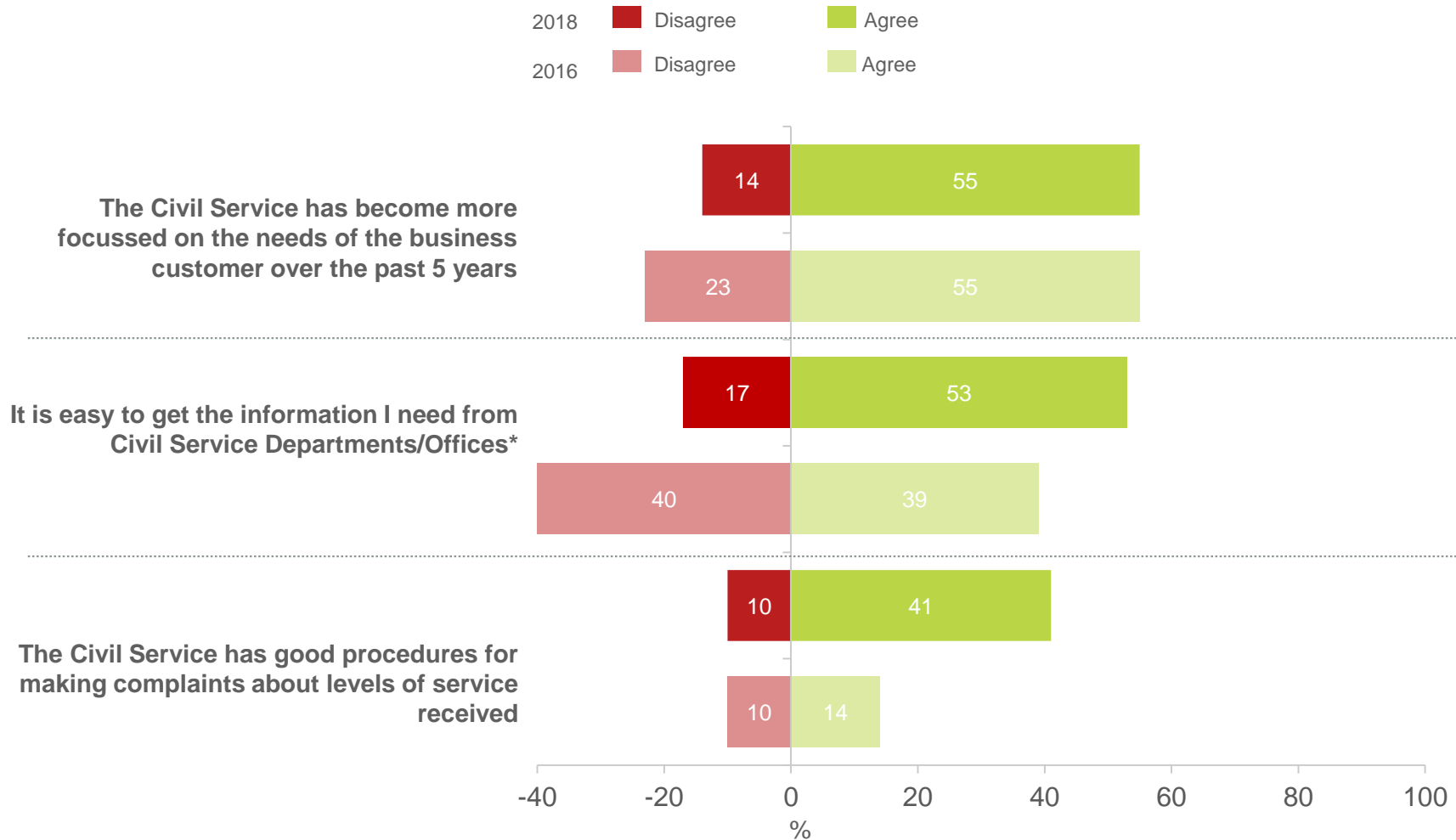
*This question was asked as "It is difficult to get.." in 2016 (40% agree, 39% disagree in 2016) and therefore not directly comparable.

perceptiveinsight

Q302 Now thinking about the Irish Civil Service in general, please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements?
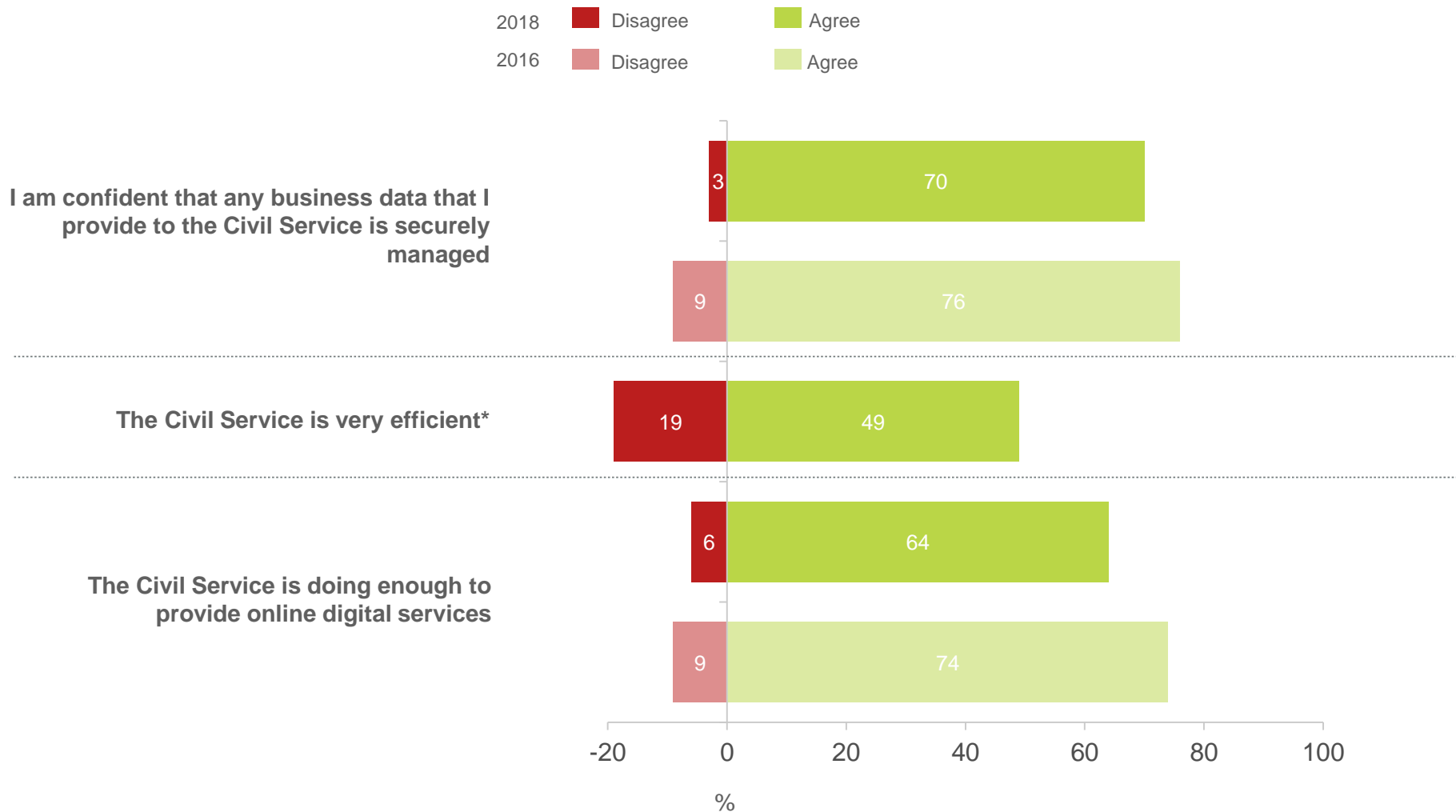
Legend:
- 2018 — Disagree / Agree
- 2016 — Disagree / Agree

I am confident that any business data that I provide to the Civil Service is securely managed
- 2018: Disagree 3, Agree 70
- 2016: Disagree 9, Agree 76

The Civil Service is very efficient*
- 2018: Disagree 19, Agree 49

The Civil Service is doing enough to provide online digital services
- 2018: Disagree 6, Agree 64
- 2016: Disagree 9, Agree 74

X-axis: -20, 0, 20, 40, 60, 80, 100 %

* This question was not asked in 2016.

perceptive**insight**

Reasons for dissatisfaction

Almost one fifth (19%) of businesses have been dissatisfied with a business related aspect of service or contact received from the Civil Service in the 12 months.

Reasons for dissatisfaction include the process was too slow, waiting time on the phone, quality/ease of access of the online digital service, and lack of communication between staff/ departments.
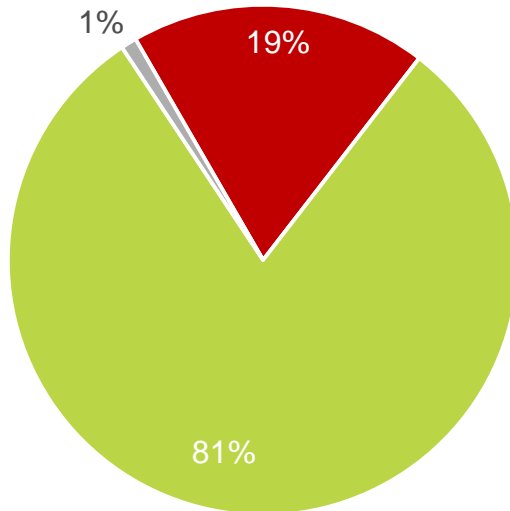
perceptiveinsight

Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Q311 In the last 12 months, have you been dissatisfied with any business related aspect of service or contact you received from the Civil Service?

Yes   No   Not had any interaction

Satisfaction in 2018

1%
19%
81%

Satisfaction in 2016
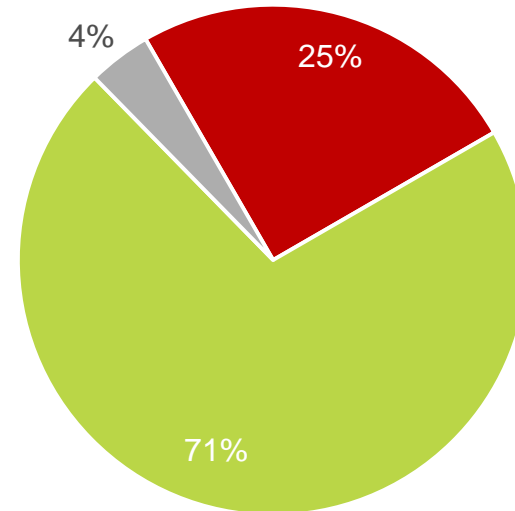
4%
25%
71%

perceptiveinsight

Q311 In the last 12 months, have you been dissatisfied with any business related aspect of service or contact you received from the Civil Service?

Legend: Yes (red), No (green)

Category	Yes	No
All	19	81
0 to 9 emp	18	81
10 to 49 emp	22	78
50 or more emp	23	77
Dublin	12	88
Rest of Leinster	18	80
Munster	26	74
Conn/Ulster	22	78

%

perceptive**insight**
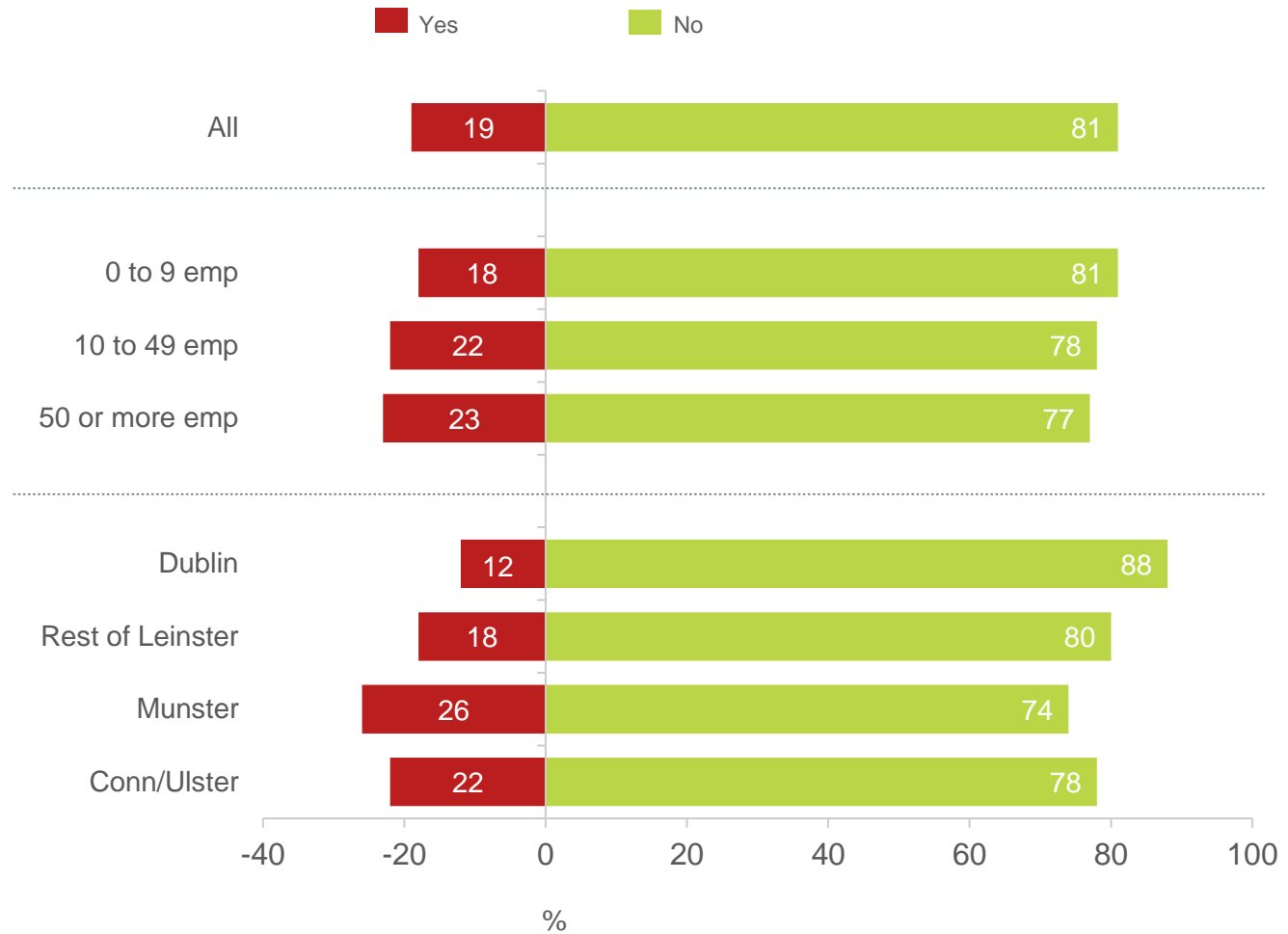
Q311 Why were you dissatisfied?

Category	%
Process was too slow	65
Waiting time on phone/ holding time/ automated service	36
Quality / ease of access and use of online digital services	34
Lack of communication between staff/ departments	31
Multiple people dealing with enquiry/being passed around	26
Provided with wrong information	25
No response to query	24
Lack of knowledge of staff	24
Disappointing outcome	20
Issue/problem/error was not resolved	20
Poor customer care/staff not trained to deal with customers	12
Offices not clearly laid out/poor queuing system	11
Service was not available online	10
Attitude of staff / felt rushed	6
Not enough staff on duty	6
Lack of privacy	2

%

*Multiple choice, therefore results add to over 100%
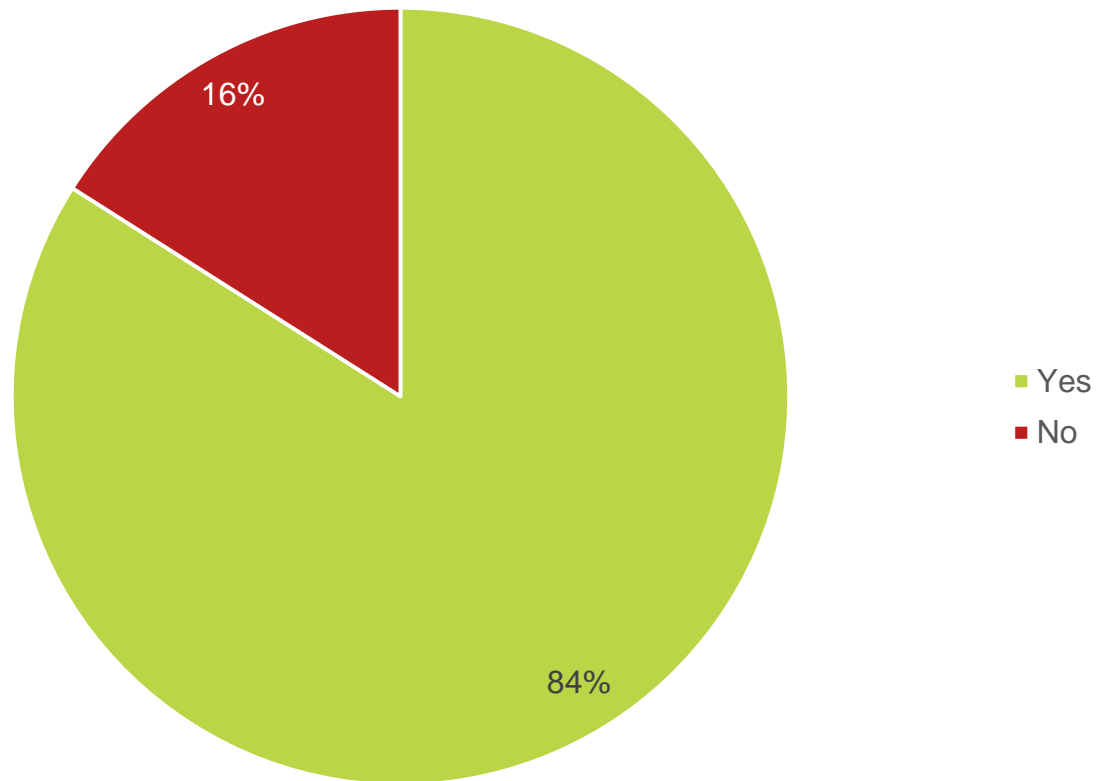
perceptiveinsight

Eircode

The majority of businesses (84%) use Eircode.

Businesses mostly use Eircode by including it in a delivery address for a supplier or delivery (69%), when publishing / providing a business address (51%) or by including it in a letter/package they sent (42%).

For those businesses that don't use Eircode, 69% said it is not needed in their business. 6% of businesses reported that they plan to/should be using Eircode.
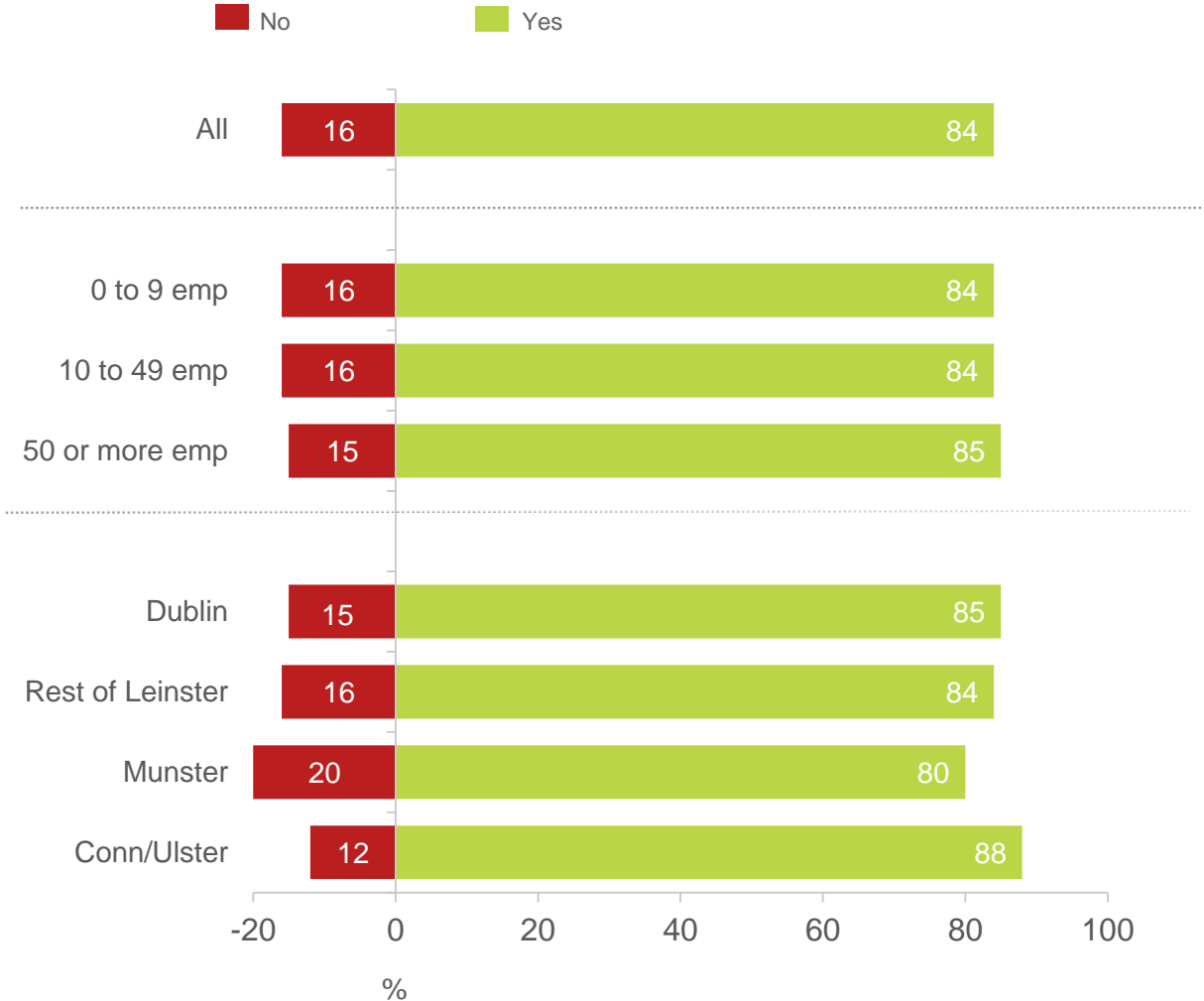
Q312 Does your business use Eircode?

Legend:
- Yes
- No

16%

84%

perceptiveinsight

Q312 Does your business use Eircode?

Legend: 🟥 No 🟩 Yes

Category	No	Yes
All	16	84
0 to 9 emp	16	84
10 to 49 emp	16	84
50 or more emp	15	85
Dublin	15	85
Rest of Leinster	16	84
Munster	20	80
Conn/Ulster	12	88

%

perceptiveinsight

Q312 For what purpose has your business used Eircode?

Of those who **use Eircode (84%)**, purposes included:

Purpose	%
Included Eircode in delivery address for a supplier or delivery	69
Included Eircode when publishing/providing business address	51
Included Eircode in address on letter/package I sent	42
Included Eircode when sending my business address to a client or business contact	36
Plan to use Eircodes or currently use Eircodes in providing services to customers	19
Looked up a Client or Business Contact's premises on Google Maps using the Eircode	11
Gave Eircode to Emergency Services to help them find my business	7
Used Eircode when making business purchases online	7
Used Eircode to check Broadband in the area where my business is located	6
Gave Eircode to Utility Company or Repair Person to help them find my business	4
Marked equipment or valuables with an Eircode	1

%

perceptive**insight**

Q312 Why did you not use Eircode?

Of those who **don't use Eircode (16%)**, reasons included:
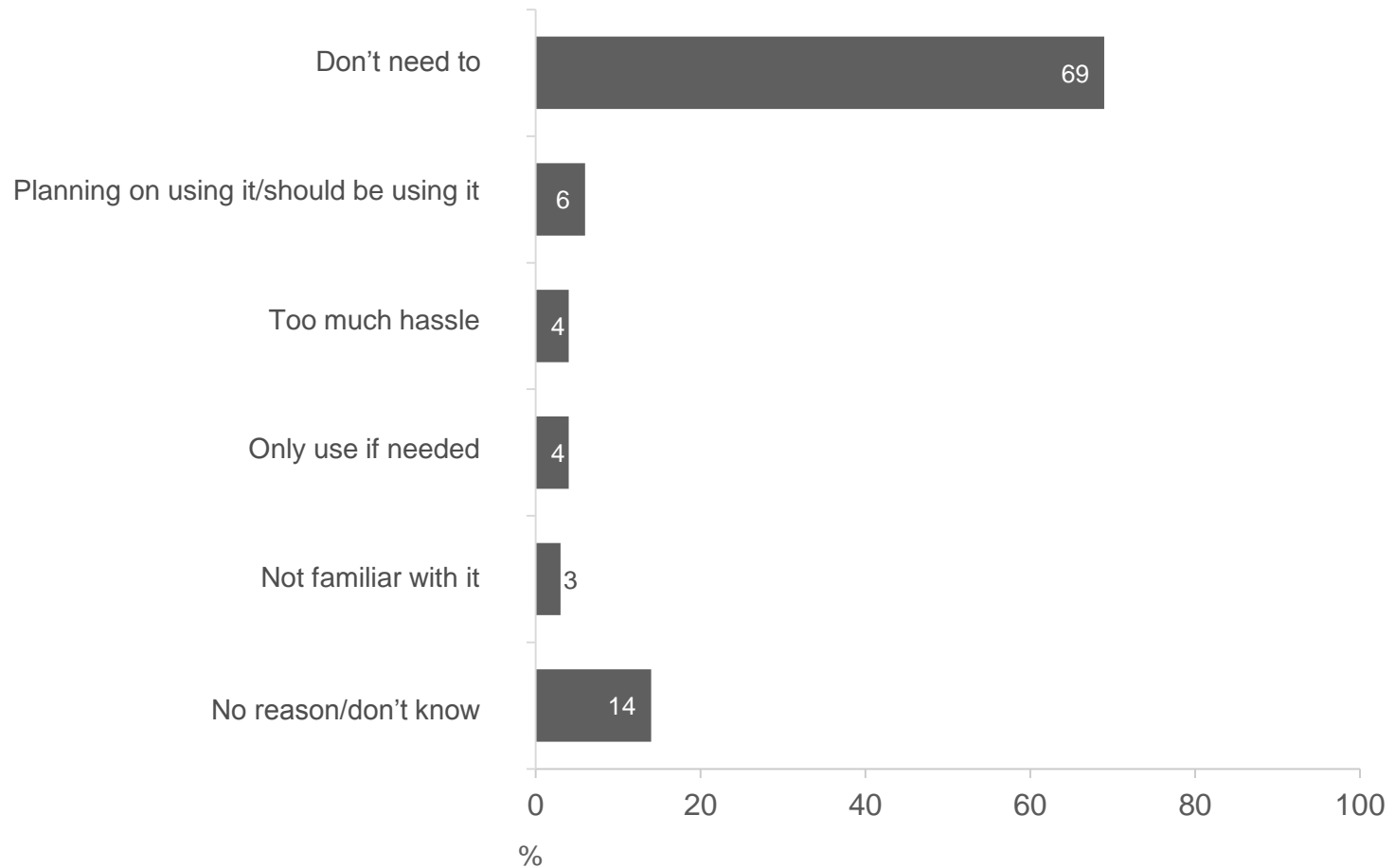
Summary - Key findings & recommendations

Summary of key findings

Interaction with the Civil Service

✓ **Interaction levels remain high**

Similar to 2016 results, most businesses (98%) have been in contact with a Civil Service department in the last 12 months.

✓ **Direct contact has increased**

79% have made direct contact, with one in five (21%) making contact through their accountant or another service provider, (compared to one in three (32%) in 2016).

✓ **Reason for contact has shifted**

In 2018, businesses were most likely to contact the Civil Service to provide information (41%). In 2016, the most commonly cited reason for contact was to make a payment (44%).

✓ **A preference for online and telephone**

Although interaction online has fallen, it is still most likely to be the preferred method of interaction in all scenarios, apart from when resolving an issue or query (telephone preferred).

Satisfaction with the Civil Service

✓ **Overall satisfaction remains high**

Over three quarters (78%) were satisfied with the service they received during their last transaction and 82% were satisfied with the outcome of this interaction.

This is similar to satisfaction scores given in 2016.

Perceptions of the Civil Service

✓ **Equitable**

70% feel that the Civil Service deals with businesses in a fair and equal way.

✓ **Trustworthy**

Over two thirds (69%) consider the Civil Service to be independent and trustworthy.

Reasons for dissatisfaction

One in five (19%) were dissatisfied with an aspect of the service or contact they received from the Civil Service in the last 12 months. Reasons provided were:

! **Delays and wait time**

65% of those dissatisfied said that the process was too slow, whilst 36% felt that the waiting time on the phone was unsatisfactory.

! **Digital interface**

34% of those who indicated dissatisfaction reported issue with ease of finding and using the Civil Services' online digital services.

! **Problems with communication**

31% of those dissatisfied feel that there is a lack of communication between staff and departments, whilst 26% expressed frustration with their enquiry being referred on to another employee.

perceptive**insight**

Appendix A – Sample stratification

Appendix A: Sample stratification

	Number of interviews achieved	Percentage of businesses surveyed	Weighting applied
Industry/Manufacturing	48	9%	-
Construction	105	21%	-
Wholesale and retail trade, repair of motor vehicles	102	20%	-
Transportation and storage	48	9%	-
Accommodation and food service activities	52	10%	-
Information and communication	30	6%	-
Financial and insurance activities	35	7%	-
Professional, scientific and technical activities, real estate activities	90	18%	-
Total	510	100%	-
0 to 9*	302	59%	92%
10 to 49	106	21%	7%
50 or more	102	20%	1%
Total	510	100%	100%
Dublin	127	25%	32%
Rest of Leinster	130	25%	24%
Munster	126	25%	26%
Connaught/Ulster	127	25%	17%
Total	510	100%	100%

* Previous studies included businesses with 1 or more employees. Similar to the 2016 study, the 2018 survey was widened to include sole traders and those businesses with no employees

perceptive insight

Thank you.

If you have any questions please get in touch with the team

Amy Black
Research Consultant
Amy.Black@pimr.co.uk

Maureen Treacy
Managing Director
Maureen.Treacy@pimr.co.uk

Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland