



# The Drivers of Satisfaction with Public Services

Research Study Conducted for  
the Office of Public Services Reform

April - May 2004



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## **Appendices**

- Note on weighting
- Statistical reliability
- Social class definitions



# Introduction

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This report contains the findings of research study conducted by the MORI Social Research Institute on behalf of the Office of Public Service Reform (OPSR) at the Cabinet Office.

MORI SRI has conducted a review of approaches to measuring and understanding customer satisfaction with public services, which summarised existing research and literature on the subject for the OPSR.

This report builds on the body of research reviewed, and ultimately aims to develop a list of key drivers of satisfaction across a range of services, which could be used in general customer satisfaction surveys carried out in different public services.

## Objectives

In order to improve the quality of public services, it is important to understand what elements are most important in determining satisfaction with a public service transaction – the key drivers. While there have been some studies in individual departments and sectors to identify these factors, little has been done in this country to understand the *generic* drivers of satisfaction across the public sector. The main objective of this research was to identify a set of elements that might have an impact on satisfaction with different public services, and to use the experiences of a representative sample of the general public to ask whether a generic set of key drivers can be found.

In addition, the survey also asked overall attitudes towards the public sector, and comparisons with the private sector, and measured expectations of response times, which can be tracked over time.

## Methodology

MORI interviewed a representative sample of 1,502 members of the general public aged 16+. This includes 287 booster interviews about education. The sample for the survey was drawn using Random Digit Dialling (RDD) and results were recorded using Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI). Fieldwork for the survey took place between 23 April – 5 May 2004.

## Quotas

Quotas were set on age, gender, country/region and work status. Data was weighted by ethnicity, social class and working status to reflect the known profile of Great Britain. Additional weighting was carried out on part of the data to correct for extra interviews about education. (Please refer to the Note on Weighting section appended to this report for more details.)

## **Presentation and Interpretation of the Data**

Because a sample, not the entire population of Great Britain has been interviewed, all results are subject to sampling tolerances. This means that both are accurate to within certain limits, and that not all differences between sub-groups are statistically significant. (Please refer to the Statistical Reliability section appended to this report for more details).

Where percentages do not add up to 100, this may be due to multiple responses, computer rounding or the exclusion of 'Don't know/Not stated' responses. Throughout the report an asterisk (\*) denotes a value of less than half a per cent, but more than zero.

## **Publication of Data**

Our standard Terms and Conditions apply to this, as to all studies we carry out. Compliance with the MRS Code of Conduct and our clearing of any copy or data for publication, web-siting or press release which contains any data derived from MORI research is necessary. This is to protect our client's reputation and integrity as much as our own. We recognise that it is in no one's best interests to have survey findings published which could be misinterpreted, or could appear to be inaccurately, or misleadingly, presented.

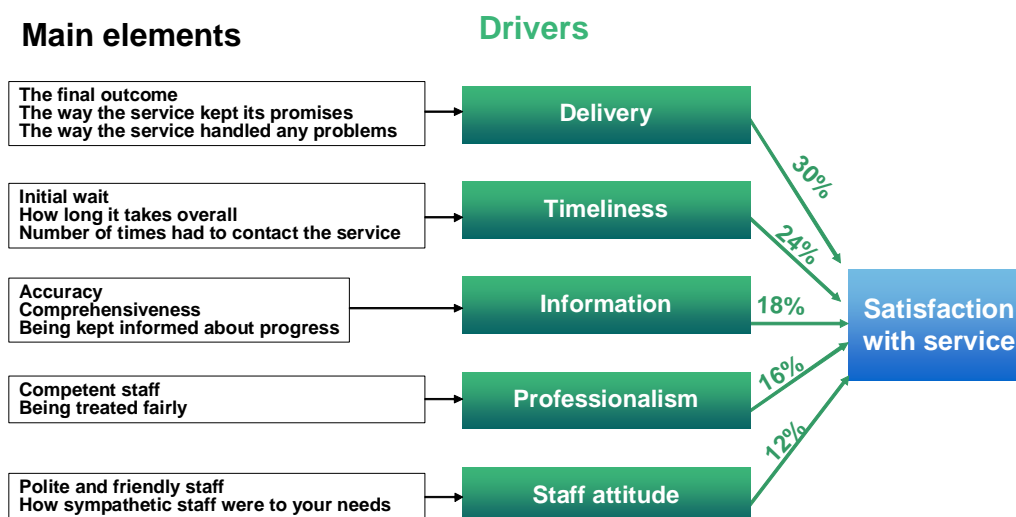
# Executive Summary

## Key Drivers of Satisfaction

This research has identified a powerful set of five factors that drive satisfaction across public services. This model should be seen as a tool to help all those involved in delivering public services identify and monitor the areas that are important to their customers (the techniques used in this study are also transferable). Individual public services will also have different elements they will need to cover, but these five factors should be applicable to all. The key drivers, in order of their impact, are:

1. **Delivery** - the service delivers the *outcome* it promised and manages to deal with any *problems* that may arise.
2. **Timeliness** – the service responds *immediately* to the initial customer contact and deals with the issue at the heart of it *quickly* and without *passing* it on between staff.
3. **Professionalism** – staff are *competent* and treat customers *fairly*.
4. **Information** - the information given out to customers is *accurate* and *comprehensive* and they are kept informed about *progress*.
5. **Staff attitude** - staff are *friendly*, *polite* and *sympathetic* to customers’ needs.

### Key drivers of satisfaction



This model explains 67% of the variation in satisfaction

Source: MORI

Among people who visit offices in person, there is a sixth key driver – the physical environment (whether offices are clean and comfortable, and the appearance of staff). However, it is not as strong as the five identified above. Access is also a

factor affecting people's satisfaction with public services (made up of the choice of different ways there is to access a service and how easy it is to access a service, including opening hours). However, it does not come out as a significant driver of satisfaction in this analysis.

We are also able to identify the key drivers of satisfaction with health services and education specifically. In both cases, the same five key drivers, in the same order, are important in driving customer views.

## **Performance**

Performance on key drivers, reflecting overall satisfaction, tends to be high – especially on ratings of staff. However, satisfaction with public service delivery and timeliness, the top two key drivers, is relatively lower than on the other service aspects.

In particular, areas that are crucial to customers which currently receive lower satisfaction scores are the service's ability to keep customers *'informed about progress'* and the way the service *'handles problems'*. Information provision is traditionally an area where public services could improve, but what this highlights is the importance of keeping people up-to-date throughout the process, not just providing them with information at the initial contact. Additionally, over one in five people are dissatisfied with the *'overall time'* it took to deal with the reason of contact.

Satisfaction with public services tends to be highest among:

- users of health and education services;
- older people; and
- those who contact services in person.

This is not unusual; health and education services often receive high ratings, and older people tend to be more satisfied with services generally. There is also some overlap here: older people are more likely to contact health services, and less likely to use the phone.

For different reasons, the most dissatisfied groups are found among:

- the middle classes (higher expectations); and
- those who have contacted public services by letter (more likely to be complaining).

Local government is the worst performing service by some margin.



## **Expectations of the public and private sector**

Comparing the public and private sector, generally people think the private sector performs better at providing services (particularly men, younger people and the middle classes), and have higher expectations in terms of response times. There is some evidence from this survey that people expect *lower* response times from public services than they did five years ago.

## **Contacting public services**

Personal contact and telephone are the most frequent and preferred methods of contact with public services. More people would prefer to use telephone to contact public services than is currently the case (though it should be noted that people who use the phone tend to be more dissatisfied, so increasing the use of telephone contact may have some implications). Nevertheless, it will remain crucial to offer a range of methods of contact – for example, people tend to prefer the telephone when contacting health services, the police and local councils, but would rather contact education and transport services in person.

## **Conclusions**

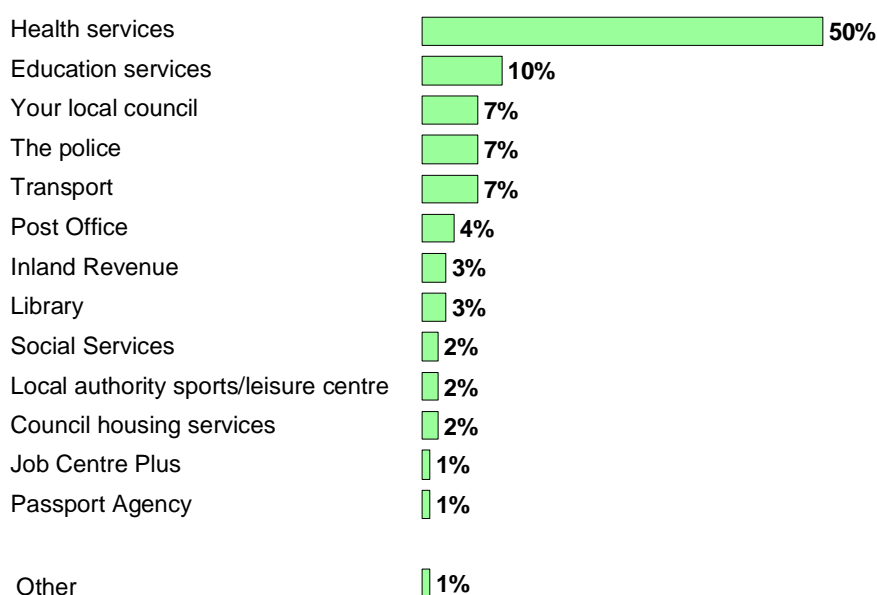
As has been discovered in other countries, there is a coherent framework of key drivers of satisfaction across public services (even if individual services will have their own particular drivers as well). This framework should provide a useful tool for public service managers and policy makers to focus their efforts on improving customer service, and to demonstrate what needs to be monitored to evaluate the impact of these changes on the customer experience.

# Key Drivers of Satisfaction

## Memorable Public Services Experience

On average, people have contacted six public services in the past 12 months. When asked to pick a particularly memorable experience (either good or bad), half choose a health service and they were mostly satisfied with the service they received. Around one in ten choose a memorable contact with a local government service (such as local council or local leisure centres) or identifies education services. Other frequently used services are the police, transport and post offices.

### Memorable public services experience



Base: All (1,502)

Source: MORI

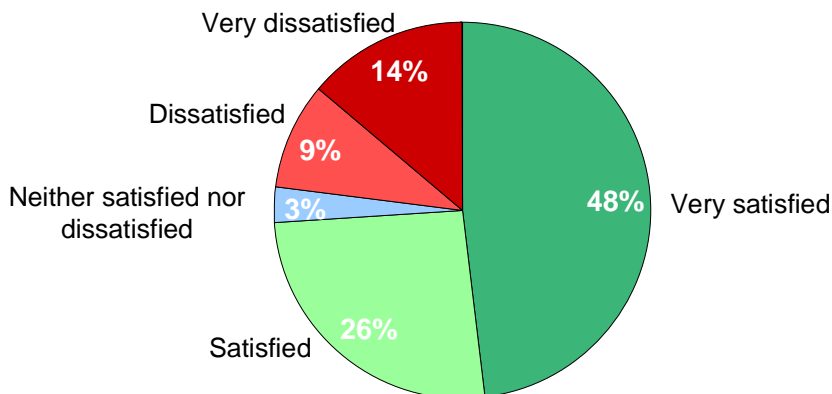
## Overall satisfaction with public services

Three times as many people are satisfied with their memorable experience of public services than dissatisfied. Perhaps because we asked people to think of a *memorable* experience, feelings tend to be concentrated on the more extreme ends of the satisfaction scale – more are *very* satisfied or *very* dissatisfied than just satisfied or dissatisfied.

Dissatisfaction tends to be higher among young people, the middle classes and people living in London.

### Overall satisfaction

Q Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the service you received?



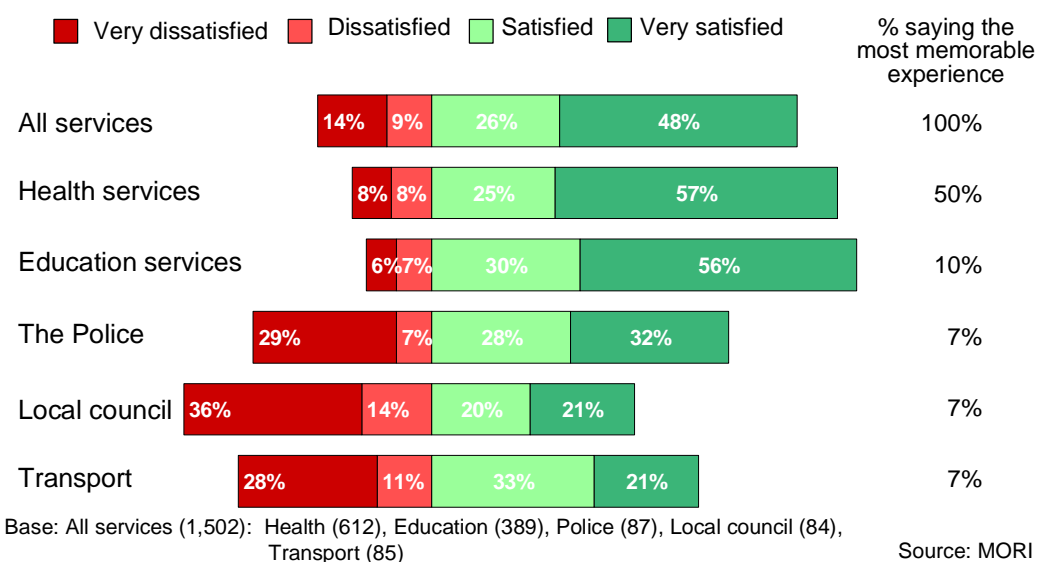
Base: All respondents (1,502)

Source: MORI

Those with health or education related experiences are significantly more likely to be satisfied with the service they received than those who are referring to the police, local council or transport.

### Overall satisfaction with the public service used

Q Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the service you received?



## Key drivers of satisfaction

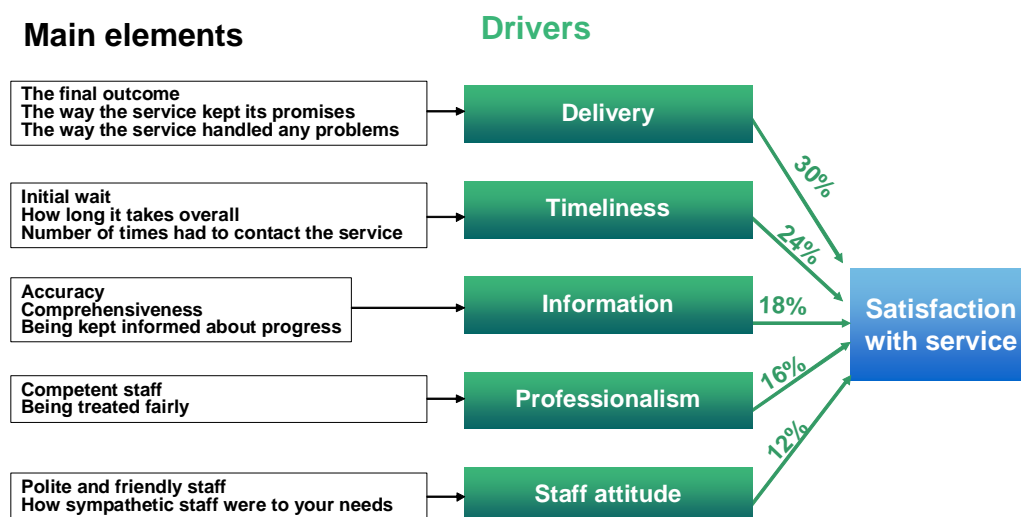
The main aim of the survey was to discover what elements of the public service experience are most closely associated with overall satisfaction. Based on previous research in this area, altogether 24 individual service aspects were identified and tested for satisfaction and importance among the general public.

MORI used statistical techniques to collapse these 24 elements into seven common factors that apply to experiences with the public sector. We then used further analysis to identify the five key drivers of customer satisfaction across the public sector:

1. **Delivery** - the service delivers the *outcome* it promised and manages to deal with any *problems* that may arise.
2. **Timeliness** – the service responds *immediately* to the initial customer contact and deals with the issue at the heart of it *quickly* and without *passing* it on around staff.
3. **Professionalism** – staff are *competent* and treat customers *fairly*.
4. **Information** - the information given out to customers is *accurate* and *comprehensive* and they are kept informed about *progress*.
5. **Staff attitude** - staff are *friendly*, *polite* and *sympathetic* to customers’ needs.

This is a strong model, as it explains 67 % of the variation in overall satisfaction with public services.

### Key drivers of satisfaction

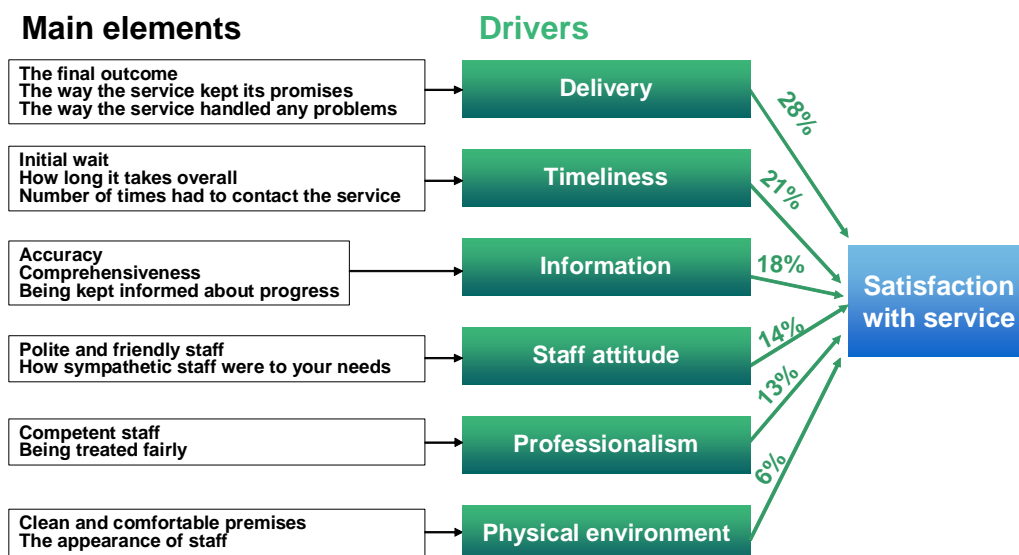


This model explains 67% of the variation in satisfaction

Source: MORI

For people who visit offices in person, there is a sixth key driver – **the physical environment**. However, the five key drivers identified above are still the most important factors to take into account.

### Key drivers of satisfaction – personal contact only



*This model explains 66% of the variation in satisfaction*

Source: MORI

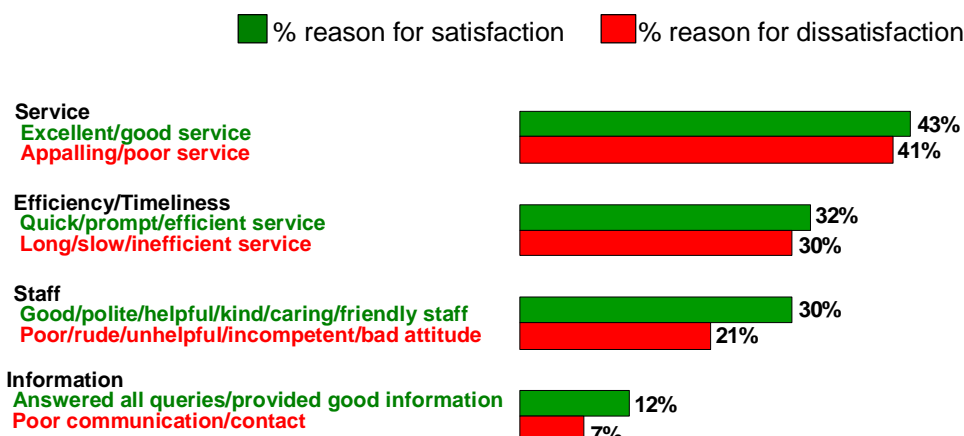
## Reasons for satisfaction and dissatisfaction

When asked to explain why they are satisfied or dissatisfied with the service they received, the five key factors identified above compare well with what people express in their own words. The key four issues on top of people’s minds are the overall service, its efficiency, quality of staff and the information provided to customers.

### Reasons for service satisfaction

Q Why were you satisfied?

Q Why were you dissatisfied?



Base: All satisfied with service (1143). All dissatisfied with service (311).

Source: MORI

# Performance on Key Drivers

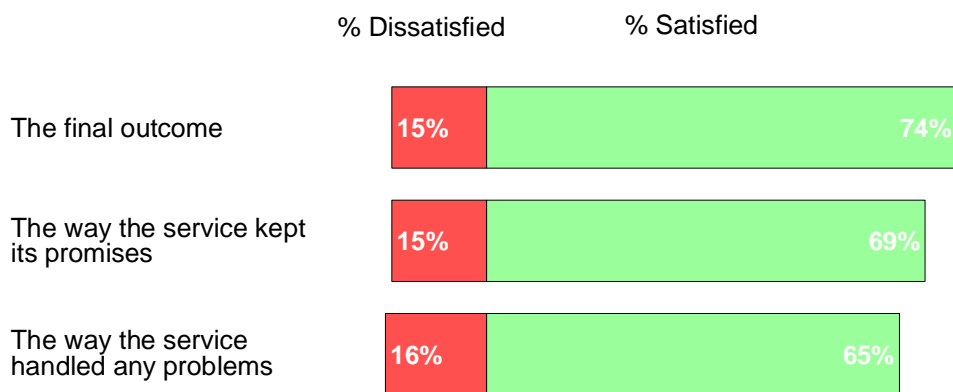
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## Key Driver 1: Delivery

Three quarters are satisfied with the outcome of their contact, but fewer are satisfied with the way the service kept its promises and handled any problems. Handling problems in particular is one of the lowest ratings out of all the different aspects measured. Other research has shown that ‘learning from mistakes’ is a key driver of trust in public services.

### Delivery

Q How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with..?



Base: All respondents (1,502)

Source: MORI

People who contact the service in person tend to be most satisfied, as are those who contact health and education services. Younger people and those using telephone or a letter to contact public services are most dissatisfied.

	<i>Base</i>	<b>The final outcome</b>		<b>The way the service kept its promises</b>		<b>The way the service handled any problems</b>	
		Satis- fied	Dis- satis- fied	Satis- fied	Dis- satis- fied	Satis- fied	Dis- satis- fied
		%	%	%	%	%	%
<b>Type of service</b>							
Health services	(612)	79	11	77	8	74	10
Education services	(389)	82	9	76	10	71	10
Local council	(84)	58	23	40	43	45	35
The Police	(87)	54	35	52	25	53	30
Transport	(85)	54	35	52	31	38	31
<b>Method of contact</b>							
Personally	(812)	78	13	73	11	70	12
Telephone	(525)	69	21	64	22	61	22
Letter	(78)	64	11	60	23	48	25
Email	(39)	83	11	66	17	55	22

*Source: MORI*

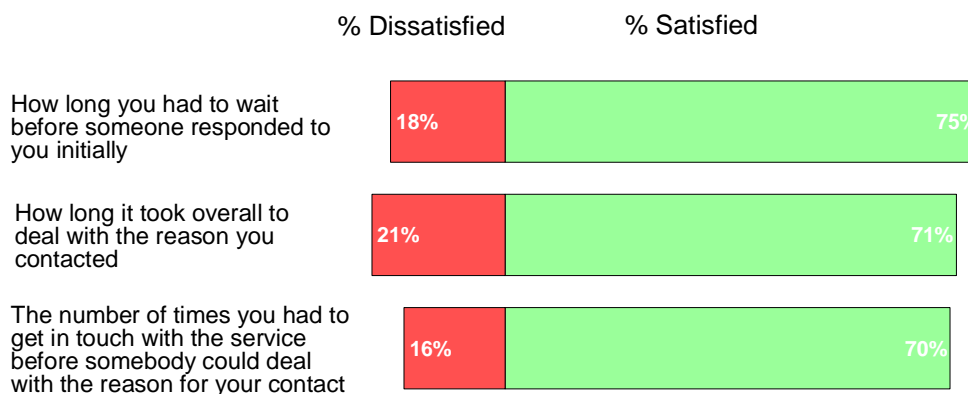


## Key Driver 2: Timeliness

Most customers are satisfied with the speed the public service deals with them. However, more effort may need to be put into the overall time it takes to get things done, as this is the area of highest dissatisfaction among all 24 service aspects measured.

### Timeliness

Q How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with..?



Base: All respondents (1,502)

Source: MORI

Older people are more satisfied with these aspects of service delivery, as are those who deal with health or education services and those who made the contact in person. Those using a letter to contact public services are most dissatisfied, together with those using local councils which receive the lowest scores for timeliness.

	<i>Base</i>	How long you had to wait before someone responded to you initially		How long it took overall to deal with the reason you contacted		The number of times you had to get in touch with the service before somebody could deal with the reason for your contact	
		Satis- fied %	Dis- satis- fied %	Satis- fied %	Dis- satis- fied %	Satis- fied %	Dis- satis- fied %
<b>Type of service</b>							
Health services	(612)	80	15	78	16	78	9
Education services	(389)	82	10	81	11	80	9
Local council	(84)	56	38	45	47	48	45
The Police	(87)	69	24	58	34	61	28
Transport	(85)	52	23	53	23	46	17
<b>Method of contact</b>							
Personally	(812)	78	14	75	15	72	11
Telephone	(525)	72	22	67	28	69	23
Letter	(78)	64	28	58	31	61	28
Email	(39)	66	20	54	27	64	23

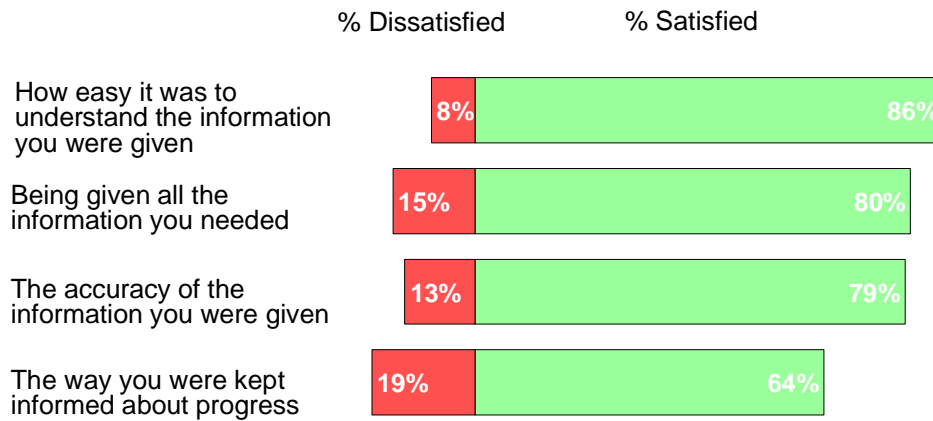
*Source: MORI*

### Key Driver 3: Information

Most people are satisfied with the information they receive, but nearly one in five are dissatisfied with how the service keeps them informed about progress, one of two areas of lowest satisfaction among all 24 aspects (the other being the overall time it took to deal with the reason of contact).

#### Information

Q How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with..?



Base: All respondents (1,502)

Source: MORI

Similar groups of people tend to be more satisfied with information as with the previous service aspects – older people, referring to health and education and those who contact the service in person. Those contacting a local council or using the telephone or a letter to contact public services are most dissatisfied.

	<i>Base</i>	How easy it was to understand the information you were given		Being given all the information you needed		The accuracy of the information you were given		The way you were kept informed about progress	
		Satis- fied %	Dis- satis- fied %	Satis- fied %	Dis- satis- fied %	Satis- fied %	Dis- satis- fied %	Satis- fied %	Dis- satis- fied %
<b>Type of service</b>									
Health services	(612)	91	6	87	9	87	8	73	13
Education services	(389)	92	3	87	9	87	6	75	13
Local council	(84)	72	16	53	39	56	32	36	43
The Police	(87)	78	11	69	26	63	21	52	38
Transport	(85)	71	15	68	24	59	29	33	31
<b>Method of contact</b>									
Personally	(812)	87	6	83	11	82	10	67	15
Telephone	(525)	84	10	75	20	74	18	57	25
Letter	(78)	82	15	77	19	74	12	63	28
Email	(39)	89	5	81	14	83	14	66	26

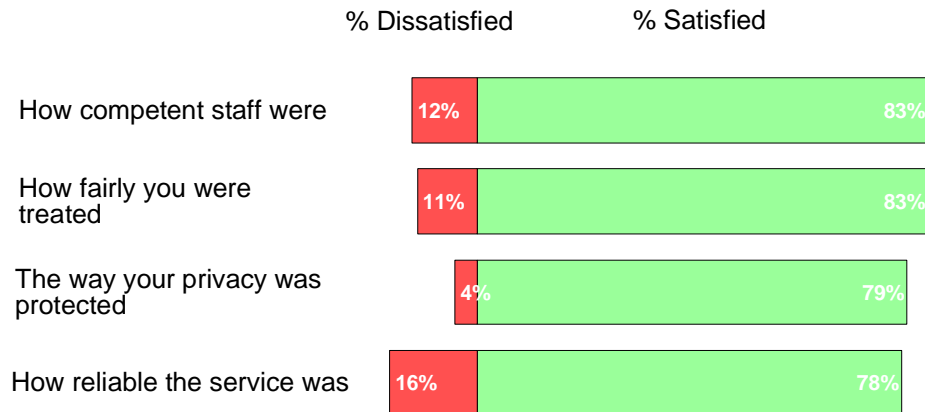
*Source: MORI*

## Key Driver 4: Professionalism

There is high satisfaction with the competency of staff and most people feel they were treated fairly and their privacy was protected. Slightly fewer people consider the service reliable.

### Professionalism

Q How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with..?



Base: All respondents (1,502)

Source: MORI

Younger people, those contacting the police, local council or transport and those who use a letter or telephone to contact public services are most dissatisfied.

	<i>Base</i>	<b>How competent staff were</b>		<b>How fairly you were treated</b>		<b>The way your privacy was protected</b>		<b>How reliable the service was</b>	
		Satis- fied	Dis- satis- fied	Satis- fied	Dis- satis- fied	Satis- fied	Dis- satis- fied	Satis- fied	Dis- satis- fied
		%	%		%	%	%	%	
<b>Type of service</b>									
Health services	(612)	91	6	90	6	92	2	87	9
Education services	(389)	89	7	86	6	76	4	84	8
Local council	(84)	53	39	64	22	55	5	40	40
The Police	(87)	77	19	75	22	68	10	62	28
Transport	(85)	68	19	65	20	48	4	58	37
<b>Method of contact</b>									
Personally	(812)	88	8	86	8	80	5	83	12
Telephone	(525)	78	17	78	15	79	3	72	23
Letter	(78)	70	17	67	15	62	8	64	23
Email	(39)	60	21	75	18	79	0	70	21

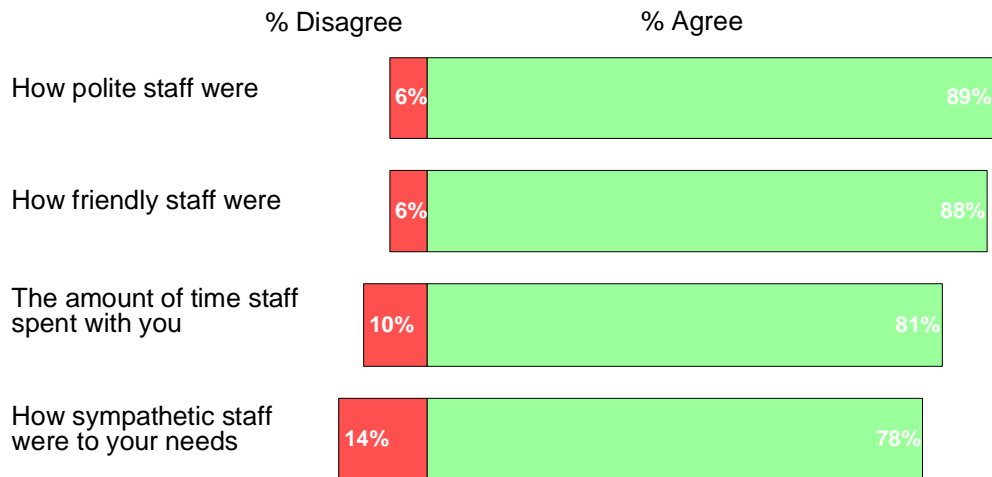
*Source: MORI*

## Key Driver 5: Staff attitude

Public services staff generally come across as polite and friendly and people are satisfied with how much time they spend with them. Relatively speaking, people are slightly less happy with how sympathetic staff are to their needs, although this still amounts to nearly eight out of ten people who are happy.

### Staff attitude

Q How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with..?



Base: All respondents (1,502)

Source: MORI

Again, older people and those making personal contact tend to be more satisfied. Additionally to health and education, police staff are also praised for their attitude.

	<i>Base</i>	How polite staff were		How friendly staff were		Amount of time staff spent with you		How sympathetic staff were to your needs	
		Satis- fied	Dis- satis- fied	Satis- fied	Dis- satis- fied	Satis- fied	Dis- satis- fied	Satis- fied	Dis- satis- fied
		%	%		%	%	%	%	%
<b>Type of service</b>									
Health services	(612)	94	4	94	4	88	8	85	8
Education services	(389)	92	4	91	4	85	7	82	8
Local council	(84)	73	14	69	18	63	19	48	39
The Police	(87)	89	8	85	8	79	14	76	16
Transport	(85)	72	12	70	14	58	10	57	27
<b>Method of contact</b>									
Personally	(812)	92	5	92	5	84	9	83	10
Telephone	(525)	87	8	85	9	79	12	73	17
Letter	(78)	70	6	70	6	68	10	63	22
Email	(39)	70	14	72	13	74	11	61	14

*Source: MORI*

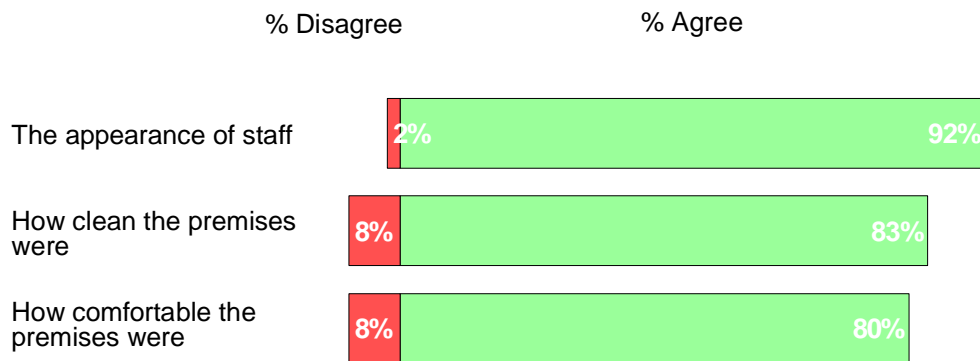


## Key Driver 6: Physical environment

The general public are largely satisfied with the way public services premises and staff look. In particular, very few are dissatisfied with staff appearance.

### Physical environment

Q How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with..?



Base: All who contacted a public service in person (957)

Source: MORI

Younger people and those from higher social class are more dissatisfied with the physical environment overall. Additionally, those using transport are particularly dissatisfied with the cleanliness and the comfort of premises (though note the small base size here).

	<i>Base</i>	The appearance of staff		How clean the premises were		How comfortable the premises were	
		Satis- fied	Dis- satis- fied	Satis- fied	Dis- satis- fied	Satis- fied	Dis- satis- fied
		%	%	%	%	%	%
<b>Type of service</b>							
Health services	(441)	94	1	88	9	87	7
Education services	(236)	92	5	92	3	88	6
Local council	(30)	84	3	77	0	70	5
The Police	(38)	83	4	39	2	44	4
Transport	(49)	82	2	61	21	56	25
<b>Method of contact</b>							
Personally	(812)	93	2	85	8	82	8
Telephone	(114)	88	1	71	4	69	8
Letter	(15)	67	6	70	13	56	7
Email	(9)	64	0	45	5	80	0

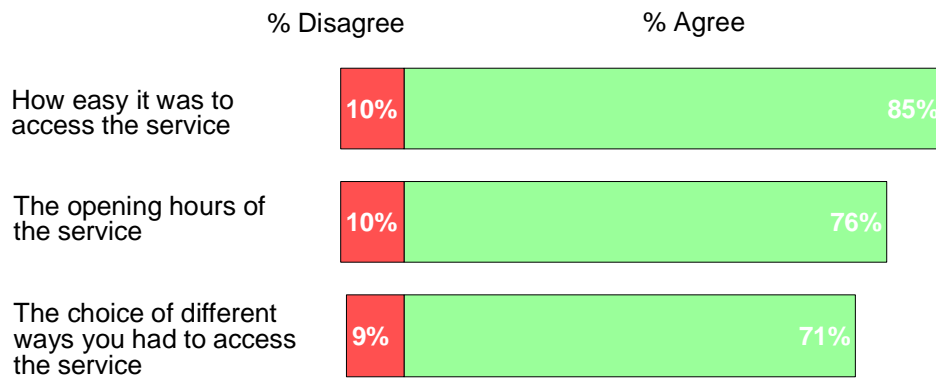
*Source: MORI*

## Factor 7: Access

Generally, people find it easy to access public services. However, there is slightly less satisfaction with the choice of different ways to access the service and with the opening hours.

### Access

Q How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with..?



Base: All respondents (1,502)

Source: MORI

Younger people and those from higher social class are most dissatisfied with access issues (perhaps because they have less free time, or because they have higher expectations), as are those using telephone, letter or email to contact public services instead of a personal contact.

	<i>Base</i>	How easy it was to access the service		The opening hours of the service		The choice of different ways you had to access the service	
		Satis- fied	Dis- satis- fied	Satis- fied	Dis- satis- fied	Satis- fied	Dis- satis- fied
		%	%	%	%	%	%
<b>Type of service</b>							
Health services	(612)	88	7	80	10	70	7
Education services	(389)	89	5	80	6	80	4
Local council	(84)	74	16	71	16	70	14
The Police	(87)	76	18	56	14	65	19
Transport	(85)	78	14	66	14	66	14
<b>Method of contact</b>							
Personally	(812)	88	6	81	9	69	6
Telephone	(525)	81	15	73	13	73	13
Letter	(78)	77	16	63	11	75	6
Email	(39)	72	16	68	15	90	3

*Source: MORI*

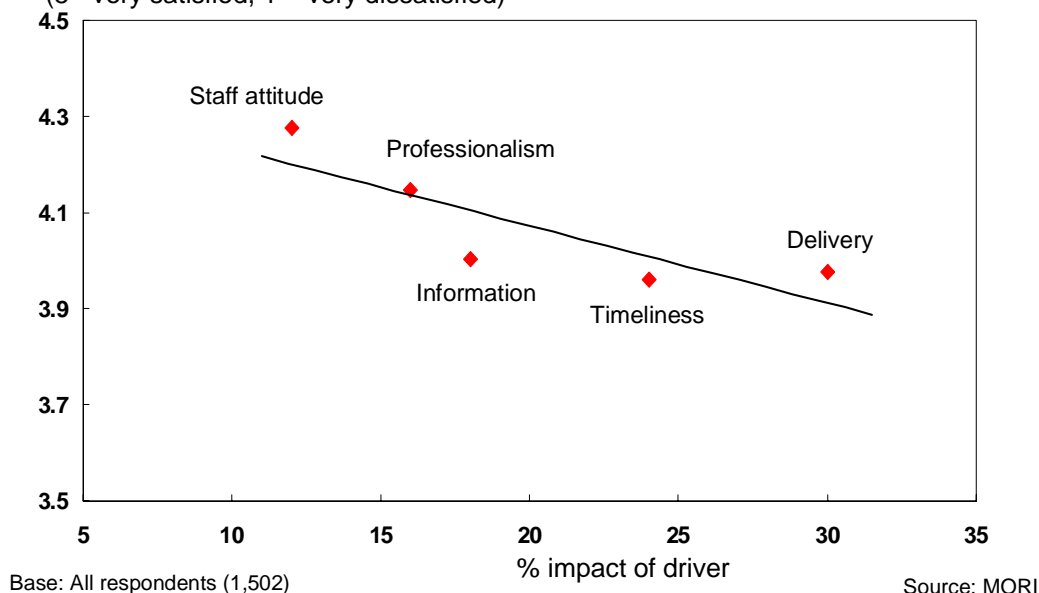
## Summary of Performance on Key Drivers

We created an overall average of performance for each factor and plotted it against the impact it has on satisfaction with public services, as shown on the chart below. The higher up on the chart a key driver is, the more satisfied people are with it and the further along a key driver is, the more impact it has on satisfaction with public services.

People are most satisfied with staff attitude, which has a relatively smaller impact on their overall satisfaction with public services. Delivery has a comparatively larger impact on overall satisfaction with public service but people are less satisfied with this aspect of public services – better information and timeliness are also priorities for improvement.

### Performance on Key Drivers of Satisfaction

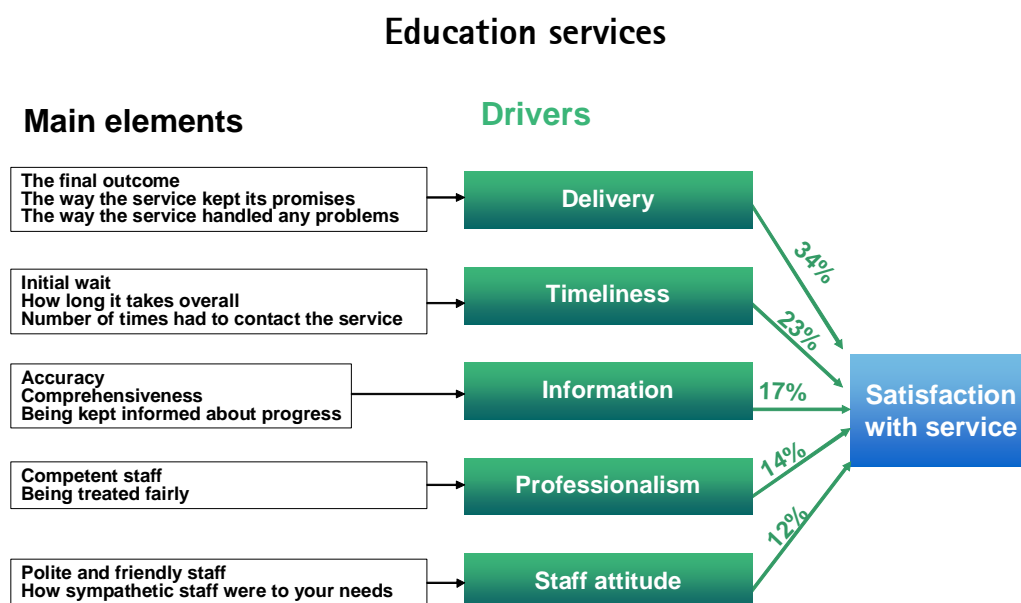
Average weighted satisfaction score  
(5= very satisfied, 1 = very dissatisfied)



# Additional Key Drivers Analysis

Key driver analysis was also carried out on specific subgroups: those who have contacted education services, those who have contacted health services and those who have contacted other services (primarily local government, the police and transport).

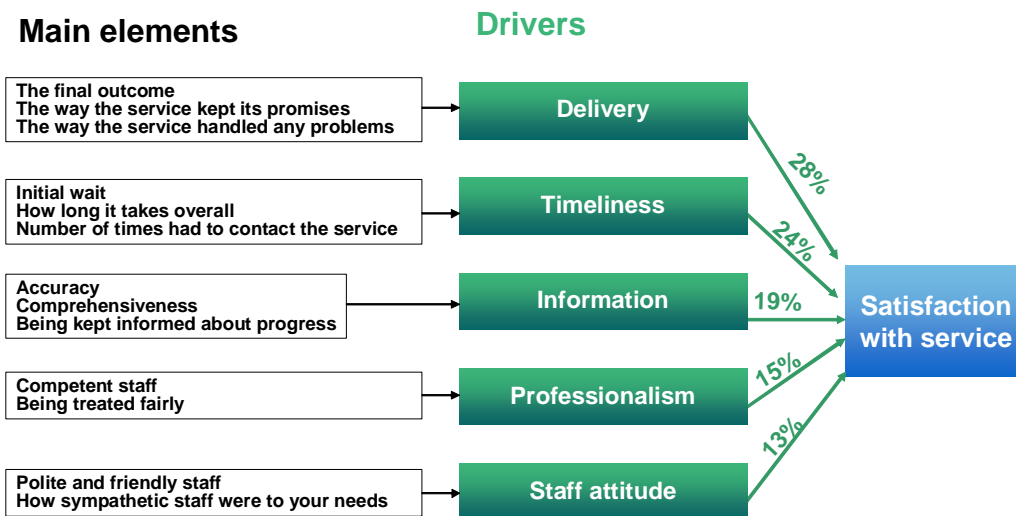
In each case, the same factors, in broadly the same order, are key drivers of satisfaction. This suggests that even though there will be specific issues particular to each service, these five factors are important across the board.



*This model explains 62% of the variation in satisfaction*

Source: MORI

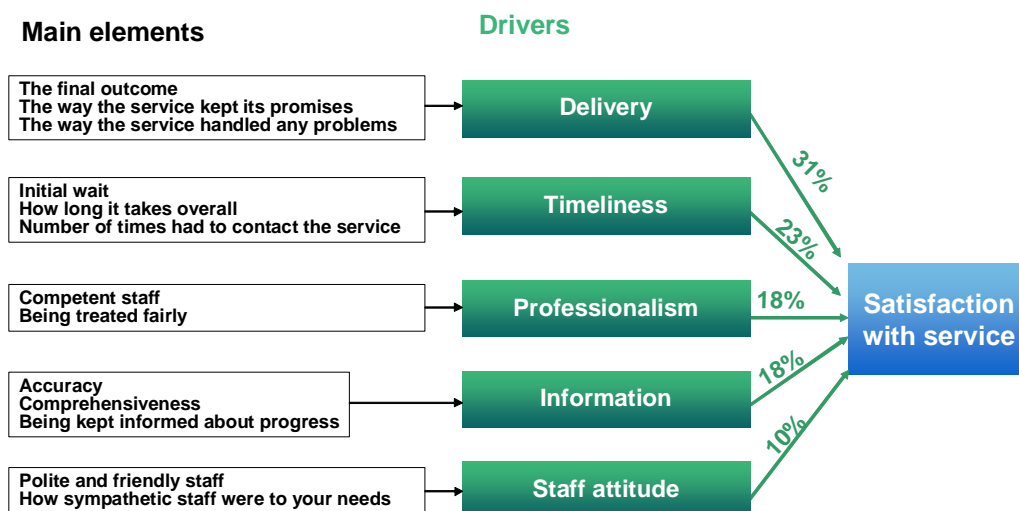
## Health services



*This model explains 59% of the variation in satisfaction*

Source: MORI

## Other services



*This model explains 72% of the variation in satisfaction*

Source: MORI

# Expectations of the Public and Private Sector

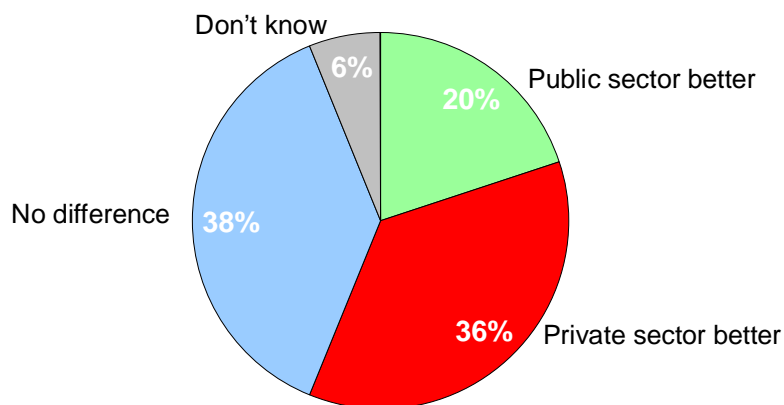
## What are the perceptions of public services?

Where possible, the perceptions and expectations of public services among the general public should be placed in context. As part of this research, two comparisons can be offered – one is between perceptions and expectations of public services compared with private sector companies and the other is looking at changes in expectations of public services over time.

People think the private sector is better at providing services than the public sector by a margin of more than 3:2. Just as many though, think there is no difference between the two. Similarly, more people say the private sector has improved over the last five years than say the same of the public sector. The middle classes and younger people are most likely to praise the private sector over the public sector (although older people are more likely to think both public and private services have got worse over the last five years).

### Public and private sector performance

Q I would like you to think about public sector organisations like local councils, schools, and hospitals, and private sector companies like shops and banks. Which do you think is better at providing services – public sector organisations or private sector companies – or do you think there is no difference?



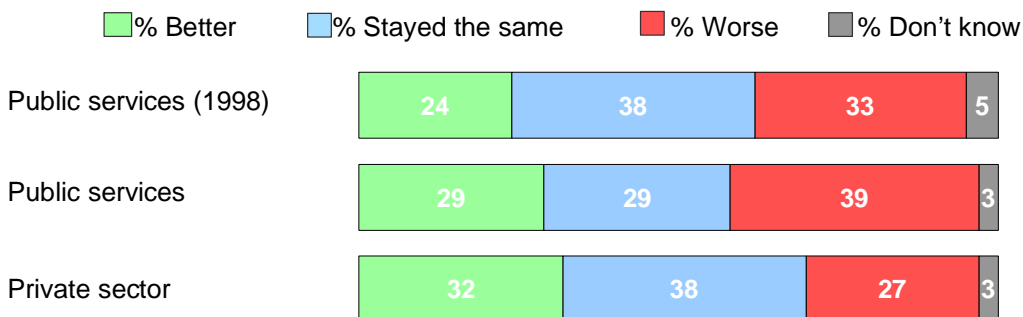
Base: All respondents (1,502)

Source: MORI



### Performance of Public Services

Q On balance, do you think public services like local councils, schools or hospitals / private sector companies like shops or banks have got better or worse over the last five years, or do you think they have stayed the same?



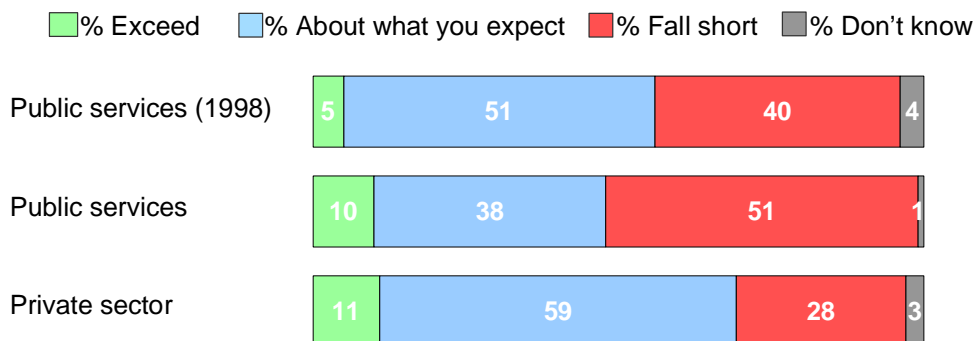
Base: 2004 - all respondents (1,502). 1998 – all respondents (5,064)

Source: MORI

Since 1998, the proportion who say public services exceed their expectations has risen by five points. Unfortunately, there has been an even bigger, significant rise in those who say public services fail to meet their expectations (up 11 points). People are more likely to say the private sector meets their expectations (though this in itself does not prove whether people have higher or lower expectations of the private sector over the public sector).

### Expectations of Public Services

Q Thinking generally about what you expect of public services like local councils, schools or hospitals/private sector companies like shops or banks, would you say they greatly exceed or slightly exceed your expectations, are about what you expect, fall slightly short or fall a long way short of your expectations?



Base: 2004 - all respondents (1,502). 1998 – all respondents (5,064)

Source: MORI

## What are the expectations of responsiveness?

There is an ongoing debate over whether how people perceive public services may be caused by changes in their expectations of public services. In particular, some believe that expectations have risen over the past few years, which may lead to greater dissatisfaction with the services currently provided, regardless of changes in service quality.

One of the ways we are able to measure any changes in expectations is to ask what people perceive to be an acceptable wait when they contact public and private sector services. Some shifts towards lower expectations of public services can be observed, as shown on the chart below.

When contacting a service in person, but without an appointment, or when a letter is sent, people have lower expectations of the speed of response public services should provide now than they did in 1999. They also expect a faster response from private sector companies than from public services.

**Q When you visit your local council or a government department / a private sector company like a shop or a bank without an appointment, how long do you think it is reasonable to wait before someone deals with your query or problem?**

	Public sector 1999 <i>Base (1,003)</i>	Public sector <i>Base (753)</i>	Private sector <i>Base (749)</i>
	%	%	%
Immediately	4	5	11
0-5 minutes	9	9	18
Over 5 minutes – 10 minutes	19	21	25
Over 10 minutes – 15 minutes	24	20	14
Over 15 minutes – 20 minutes	13	10	8
Over 20 minutes – 25 minutes	3	2	1
Over 25 minutes – 30 minutes	16	11	8
Over 30 minutes	8	14	11

**Q. When you send a letter to your local council or government department / a private sector company like a shop or a bank, how long do you think it is reasonable to wait for your letter to be answered?**

	%	%	%
1-3 working days	9	9	21
Over 3 working days – 1 week	62	55	59
Over 1 week – 2 weeks	23	27	16
Over 2 weeks – 3 weeks	4	4	2
Over 3 weeks – a month	1	1	*
Over a month	*	2	*

*Source: MORI*

When the contact is made by email, the private sector is again expected to provide a speedier response, but the expectations of how quickly public services should respond have remained the same between 1999 and 2004.

**Q. When you send an e-mail to your local council or government department / a private sector company like a shop or a bank, how long do you think it is reasonable to wait for your email to be answered?**

	<b>Public sector 1999</b>	<b>Public sector</b>	<b>Private sector</b>
	<i>Base: all with email</i>	<i>Base: all who use emails</i>	
	<i>(116)</i>	<i>(476)</i>	<i>(475)</i>
	%	%	%
Answered immediately	1	4	4
Less than one hour	6	4	5
Over one hour – 2 hours	3	5	6
Over 2 hours – 4 hours	7	5	5
Over 4 hours – 8 hours	5	3	3
Over 8 hours – 24 hours	27	25	35
Over 1 – 2 working days	24	26	26
Over 2 – 3 working days	13	9	6
Over 3 – 5 working days	4	11	1
Over one week	5	2	1

*Source: MORI*

The expectations of the speed of response when contacting a public or private sector organisation by telephone are similar, without any significant changes in expectations of public services between 1999 and 2004.

**Q. When you contact your local council or government department/a private sector company like a shop or a bank, by telephone, how long do you think it is reasonable to wait for your call to be answered?**

	<b>Public sector 1999</b>	<b>Public sector</b>	<b>Private sector</b>
	<i>Base (1,003)</i>	<i>Base (753)</i>	<i>Base (749)</i>
	%	%	%
Within 15 seconds (5 rings)	20	25	23
Within 30 seconds (10 rings)	31	24	25
Within 1 minute (20 rings)	18	18	20
Over 1 – 2 minutes	13	13	12
Over 2 minutes	16	19	19
Don't know	2	2	1

*Source: MORI*

## Methods of Contact

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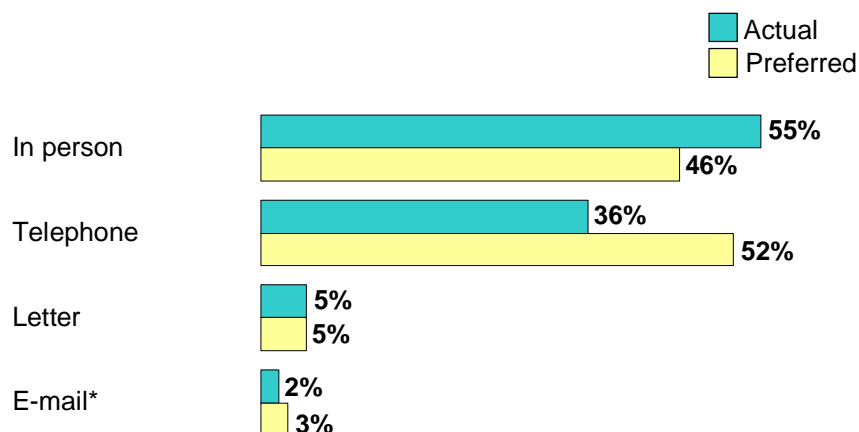
Personal contact and telephone are the two most frequent methods of contact people *used* to get in touch with public services. Only a small proportion wrote letters or emails. Telephone and personal contact are also the two most preferred methods, but this time people would rather use the phone than face-to-face contact.

People contact health, education and transport services in person, but they are more likely to use the telephone to contact the police and transport. A letter is used primarily to contact a local council.

Telephone is the preferred method for contacting health services, the police and local councils, while more people would rather contact education and transport services in person. Younger people and the middle classes are slightly more likely to prefer email contact with public services.

### Methods of contact

- Q *Still thinking about your contact with <service>, could you tell me how you were in contact with the service?*
- Q *And if you had to contact <service> again, how would you prefer to do it?*



Base: All respondents (1502). \*All who use email (392)

Source: MORI

# Conclusions

This study has derived a generic model of what drives satisfaction with public services. This is useful as it provides a framework for the public sector within which it can focus its efforts on improving customer service: when an organisation performs well on each of the key drivers, it will substantially improve its chances of receiving high satisfaction scores for the services it provides.

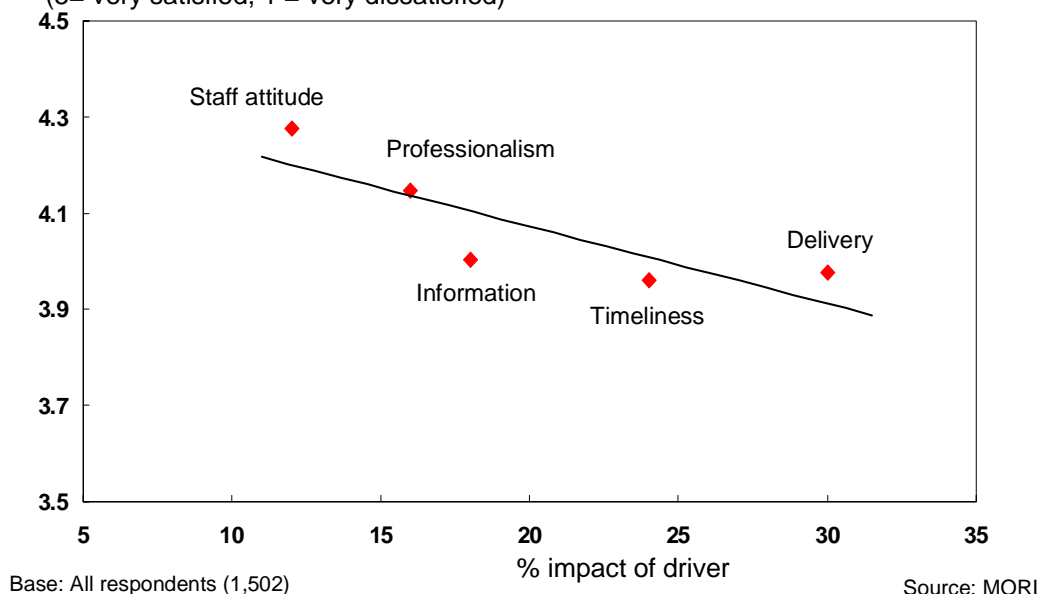
The key drivers, in order of their impact, are:

1. **Delivery** - the service delivers the *outcome* it promised and manages to deal with any *problems* that may arise.
2. **Timeliness** – the service responds *immediately* to the initial customer contact and deals with the issue at the heart of it *quickly* and without *passing* it on between staff.
3. **Professionalism** – staff are *competent* and treat customers *fairly*.
4. **Information** - the information given out to customers is *accurate* and *comprehensive* and they are kept informed about *progress*.
5. **Staff attitude** - staff are *friendly*, *polite* and *sympathetic* to customers' needs.

By looking at the average performance for each factor and plotting it against the impact it has on satisfaction with public services, we are also able to indicate what the priorities for improvement should be. As described earlier, on the chart below the higher up a driver is, the higher its average satisfaction score, and the further to the right the more impact it has on overall satisfaction with public services.

## Performance on Key Drivers of Satisfaction

Average weighted satisfaction score  
(5= very satisfied, 1 = very dissatisfied)



This indicates that while people are generally satisfied with the attitude and professionalism public sector staff demonstrate in their jobs, delivery in particular, but also timeliness (and to an extent information provision), should be priorities for public services.

Of course, given the very nature of public services, there are inevitably going to be occasions when the public sector does not provide what the customer wants, or in cases of regulatory or enforcement services can actually provide a ‘negative’ outcome (from the customer’s point of view). However, even in these situations, emphasis can be placed on the other components of “delivery” – keeping promises (which requires expectations of the outcome to be well managed at the outset), and dealing effectively with any problems that may arise.

Following on from this, good performance on the remaining four drivers of satisfaction can also begin to make up for dissatisfaction with the final outcome. Even negative outcomes can be handled without wasting the customers’ time, by friendly and polite staff who are competent at what they do and provide accurate and comprehensive information.

The drivers identified in this research form a useful starting point for managers and policy makers to direct service improvement where it will have the biggest impact on satisfaction. Additionally, individual public services should of course conduct research to identify the specific drivers for their services, but these five factors should be applicable to all.

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# Appendices

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## **Note on Weighting**

The results in the computer tables are weighted to reflect the demographic profile of the general public aged 16+ in Great Britain based on the Census 2001 data. In particular, weighting was carried out to match the profile in terms of age, country/region and work status.

A total of 1,502 interviews were conducted, 287 of which were 'education booster' interviews. These interviews followed special routing in the questionnaire which meant that respondents who declared a contact with education services in the last 12 months were then forced to answer questions on satisfaction with the service and importance of different aspects (Q14 – Q71) based on that experience with an education service, regardless of other services they may or may not have used.

This meant that the data from Q14 – Q71 had to be additionally weighted to correct for the effect of extra interviews conducted about education. In practice, this meant reducing the overall proportion of education interviews from an initial 25% within the sample to 10%. Only the results of Q14 – Q71 were affected by downweighting education interviews.

## Statistical Reliability

The sample tolerances that apply to the percentage results for the MORI/OPSR survey are given in the table below. This table shows the possible variation that might be anticipated because a sample, rather than the entire population of the general public, was interviewed. As indicated, sampling tolerances vary with the size of the sample and the size of the percentage results.

For example, on a question where 50% of the people in a sample of 1,502 people respond with a particular answer, the chances are (95 in 100) that this result would not vary by more than three percentage points, plus or minus, from a complete coverage of the general public using the same procedures.

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### Approximate sampling tolerances applicable to percentages at or near these levels

(Adjusted to take account of weighting)

	10% or 90%	30% or 70%	50%
<b>Size of sample on which survey result is based</b>	<b>±</b>	<b>±</b>	<b>±</b>
All respondents (1,502)	1.5	2.3	2.5

Source: MORI

Tolerances are also involved in the comparison of results from different parts of the sample. A difference, in other words, must be of at least a certain size to be considered statistically significant. The following table is a guide to the sampling tolerances applicable to comparisons.

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### Differences required for significance at or near these percentages

	10% or 90%	30% or 70%	50%
<b>Size of sample on which survey result is based</b>			
All satisfied with service (1,143) vs. all dissatisfied (311)	3.8	5.8	6.3
All female respondents (771) vs. all male respondents (731)	3.1	4.7	5.2
Health respondents (612) vs. Education respondents (389)	3.8	5.8	6.4
All Midlands respondents (381) vs. all respondents from Scotland (134)	5.9	9.0	9.9

Source: MORI

## Social Class Definitions

The grades detailed below are the social class definitions as used by the Institute of Practitioners in Advertising, and are standard on all surveys carried out by MORI (Market & Opinion Research International Limited).

<b>Social Grades</b>			
	<b>Social Class</b>	<b>Occupation of Chief Income Earner</b>	<b>Percentage of Population</b>
A	Upper Middle Class	Higher managerial, administrative or professional	3.0
B	Middle Class	Intermediate managerial, administrative or professional	20.8
C1	Lower Middle Class	Supervisor or clerical and junior managerial, administrative or professional	27.3
C2	Skilled Working Class	Skilled manual workers	21.2
D	Working Class	Semi and unskilled manual workers	17.4
E	Those at the lowest levels of subsistence	State pensioners, etc, with no other earnings	10.3