



# Customer Satisfaction Survey 2009

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Prepared for  
Information Commissioner's Office



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# 1. Context, Objectives and Approach

Following on from studies conducted in 2005 and 2006, research was required by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) to assess customer satisfaction among individuals submitting written complaints/enquiries to the ICO.

The research encompassed three distinct types of complaint / enquiry:

- Data Protection (DP)
- Freedom of Information (FOI)
- Enquiries

The vast majority of those interviewed (85%) were members of the public making contact in relation to a personal issue. There was some variation across the three groups as can be seen in the table below, but the variation, while significant, is not major. The remainder of the contacts were either in relation to a non-personal matter or were complaints / enquiries on behalf of someone else (with only a small proportion relating to their employer).

	Total	DP	FOI	Enquiries
Contact on own behalf (net)	89%	92%	85%	84%
Personal complaint / enquiry	85%	89%	78%	75%
Non-personal complaint / enquiry	5%	3%	7%	9%
Contact on behalf of someone else	11%	8%	15%	16%
Family member / friend	6%	6%	5%	5%
Employer	2%	1%	4%	4%
Club / other	3%	1%	6%	7%

The key objectives of this research were to assess:

- Satisfaction with **service delivery** and, in particular, to assess how well the ICO staff were seen to perform
- Which **communication channels** were used and how the contact process worked

The focus of this document is on the results from the 2009 research but references are made to the results of the 2006 Data Protection survey where applicable. The FOI survey conducted in 2006 was semi-structured in nature i.e. as much qualitative and quantitative and, with a sample size of only 26, does not allow direct comparisons to be made. The enquiries sample was a new element added in for 2009.

In order to meet the objectives of this study, a three-stage approach was taken to ensure full coverage of the issues.

**Stage 1** was an **immersion** stage involving a full briefing session with the core ICO team, followed by individual interviews with team leaders from across the business. This process built

a robust understanding of the relevant issues among the agency team which then fed into the design of the main part of the research. One of the key outcomes from this immersion session was the decision to delay the quantitative research (Stage 2) until it was felt that the main changes / improvements to internal systems had been given the chance to feed through to customers. Originally, quantitative fieldwork was due to be conducted in February 2009.

**Stage 2** was the main **quantitative** survey, comprising 420 telephone interviews of around 15 minutes duration with individuals who had contacted the ICO. These were split into:

- 263 whose contact was in relation to Data Protection
- 102 whose contact was in relation to Freedom of Information
- 55 whose contact was a general Enquiry

The sample for these contacts was provided by the ICO and was taken from cases that had been completed and closed in the last 3 months for Data Protection and Enquiry contacts, or in the last 6 months for Freedom of Information contacts. The longer time period for FOI contacts was needed in order to deliver sufficient sample for the survey.

Each individual was written to by the ICO to inform them about the study and to give them the opportunity to decline to take part. In the event, 146 individuals (6%) removed themselves from the sample list.

The quantitative Interviewing was conducted from the 20<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> April 2009.

**Stage 3** comprised **follow-up in depth qualitative telephone interviews** with thirty customers who had agreed to be re-contacted following the quantitative interview. These 15-20 minute interviews were designed to provide greater depth of feedback, with a view to supplementing the quantitative data with more detail on issues that might be driving the data. There was a high level of interest in the study as 86% (76% in 2006) of those who took part in Stage 2 agreed to participate in this stage of the research. The respondents involved in this stage of the study were selected to provide a broad cross-section of the different types of customers contacting the ICO. The sample was split as follows:

- 12 Data Protection
- 12 FOI
- 6 Enquiries

In addition to the above, the sample was controlled to be representative according to enquiry/complaint type within each category, use of the website and telephone contact and overall rating within the quantitative study.

These interviews took place between the 8<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> June 2009, there being a delay between the qualitative and quantitative stages because of the Purdah period relating to the European elections.

Both the quantitative questionnaire and the qualitative discussion guide are appended to this report.

## 2. Summary and Implications

Reflecting the findings from 2005 and 2006, the qualitative and quantitative interviewing again showed that when customers were asked about the “quality of service” provided by the ICO, their responses typically included two elements:

- The actual delivery of service i.e. the time taken, the quality of response, the attitude of staff, etc.
- The outcome of the enquiry or complaint itself.

While respondents had been asked to focus on the service rather than the outcome, it is clear that they found it difficult to separate the two when asked about the *overall* quality of service. Indeed the qualitative research revealed that data subjects saw the resolution of their issue as part of the service, particularly when they felt the other party was “in the wrong” i.e. they saw it as the ICO’s job to help put things right, punish offenders, etc.

Despite the link between outcome and overall quality perceptions, customers were able to be more objective when asked to rate individual aspects of service and there are clearly stronger and weaker areas of performance.

Overall, 40% of customers were satisfied with the **outcome** of their contact with the ICO, with 40% indicating that they were not satisfied and the remainder feeling unable to give a rating, principally because they did not feel that their complaint/enquiry was complete. FOI customers were significantly less satisfied than the other two groups, with only 25% satisfied (vs. 40% for DP and 56% for Enquiry customers). The figure for DP was broadly in line with 2006.

The satisfaction with the outcome figures were reflected in the ratings for overall **quality of service**, where 55% gave a rating of good, very good or excellent. Again there was variation across the three groups with the figure for FOI being 48% compared to 55% for DP and 73% for Enquiry customers.

Of the 42% who gave a rating of fair or poor, more (24%) actually gave a rating of poor, this figure being similar to the proportion that were not at all satisfied with the outcome of their case (28%). Cross analysing the two measures confirmed the strong link/overlap between them.

While the proportion giving a rating of good or better for quality of service was relatively low, two-fifths (40%) felt the service was better than other organisations, and 26% felt that it was worse. This finding should be viewed relatively positively in light of the overall rating scores and it may be that respondents are slightly more objective when making comparisons with others and perhaps focus more on service delivery rather than outcomes as well as acknowledging the complexity of the subjects being dealt with.

In terms of individual attributes of service, the proportions giving a rating of good, very good or excellent varied across the different service areas:

- As seen in 2006, delivery related attributes (ease of understanding, clarity of response, tone of letter, quality of spelling/grammar) were again well rated. For tone/politeness of response and quality of spelling grammar, 85% gave one of these top three ratings.
- Content/understanding related attributes were rated lower with only 47% giving a rating of good, very good or excellent in relation to the extent to which the response answered their enquiry/complaint, 55% giving the same rating for the helpfulness of the response. As with the overall rating, scores were better for Enquiries (60% and 71% respectively), lower for FOI (37% and 48%), with DP falling between the two (48% and 54%).

- Only 44% gave a rating of good, very good or excellent in relation to the *speed* of responding to the enquiry/complaint, with the figure being more even across the three groups despite wide variation in the *actual* time taken.

In terms of attitudes towards the ICO (some of which touched on service delivery), scores were reasonably positive for fairness / impartiality (70% thinking this applied to the ICO) and making it clear what the organisation can and cannot do for customers (70%). However, there were concerns evident in relation to trust in the advice given (only 60% felt this applied) and their case being given an appropriate amount of attention (55%). Further, only around half of respondents felt that the ICO did a good job in relation to protecting privacy (51%) and facilitating access to information (53%). Reflecting other areas within the survey, the scores were significantly lower among the FOI customers.

Statistical (regression) analysis performed on the data showed that the main variables driving the overall (quality of service) rating were:

- Giving an appropriate amount of attention to their case
- Being fair and impartial
- Helpfulness of response
- Speed of response / keeping customers informed

In terms of future actions the data and qualitative feedback suggest the following areas of focus:

- As much clarity as possible in relation to the role the ICO can play and the powers that it has. We are conscious that a lot of work has been done in this area, but customers often feel that the ICO should be able to punish organisations and put things right. Many in our sample felt their case was still open, suggesting that the ICO need to clarify that they can take the case no further.
- Responses need to be as clear and jargon free as possible in order that the response is helpful and allows the customer to take any next steps that are appropriate.
- A balance needs to be struck in terms of how long cases take to process. Customers feel strongly that their case needs an appropriate amount of time spent on it, but the timescales seen as "reasonable" are half of those that are being experienced at present. While there is an acknowledgement among many that responses will not be immediate, keeping them informed when there are delays is seen as important.

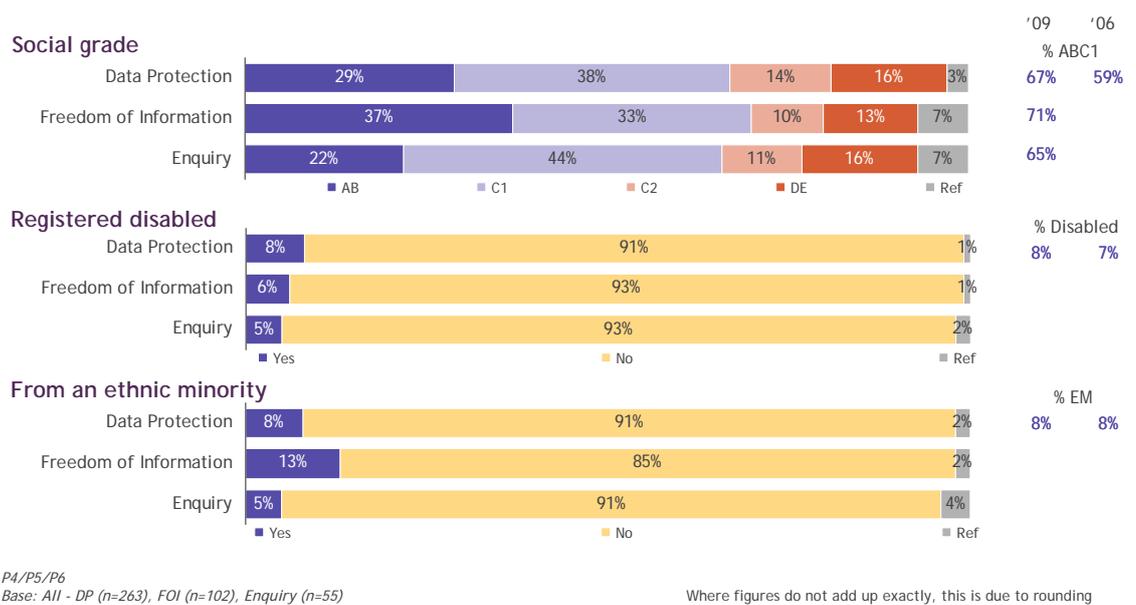
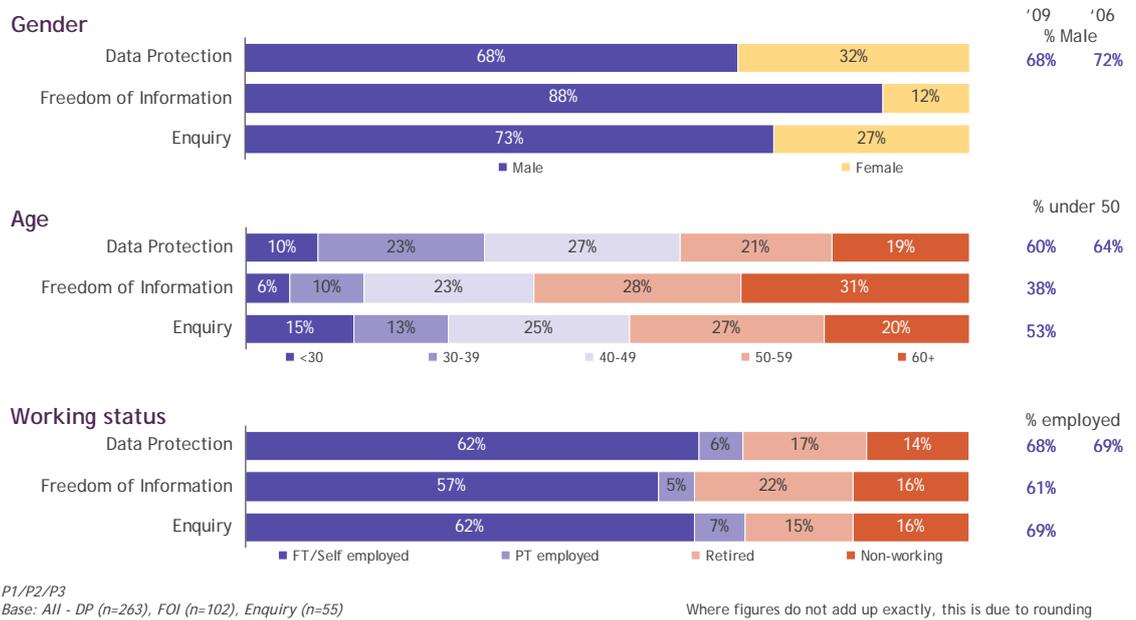
As a final point, and one we have made each time we have done studies for the ICO, is that the organisation's staff are generally well regarded and are seen to be professional, helpful and knowledgeable.

### 3. Detailed Findings

#### 3.1. Sample Profile

Fig 1. below shows the demographic profile of the sample. As in previous years, the sample was skewed towards men (particularly within the FOI group), the older age groups and the upper socio-economic groups (ABC1) in comparison to the UK population. Those registered disabled and from ethnic minorities were also represented in the sample, with the proportions being broadly in line with the UK as a whole.

Fig 1. Demographic Profile



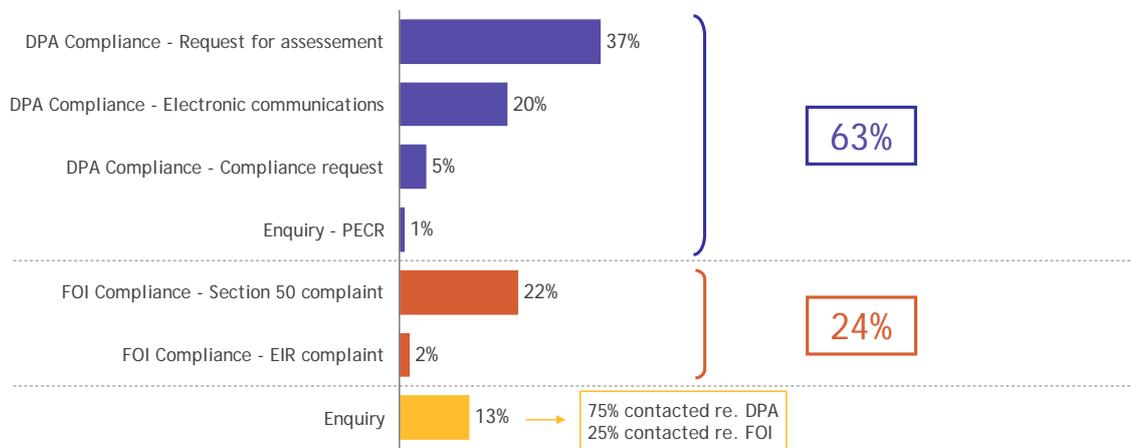
The profiles of the Data Protection and Enquiry customers were broadly similar to each other, and the profile for the DP group is also very similar to that seen for this group in 2006.

There were, however, a number of notable differences between these groups and the Freedom of Information contacts, who were significantly more likely to be:

- male (88% vs. 68% for DP and 73% for Enquiry)
- older (59% aged 50+ vs. 40% for DP and 47% for Enquiry)
- AB social grade (37% vs. 29% for DP and 22% for Enquiry)

Fig 2. provides detail on the specific case type for the sample. These figures are based on data supplied by the ICO from their database.

Fig 2. Case Type



Database information/S1a  
Base: All (n=421)

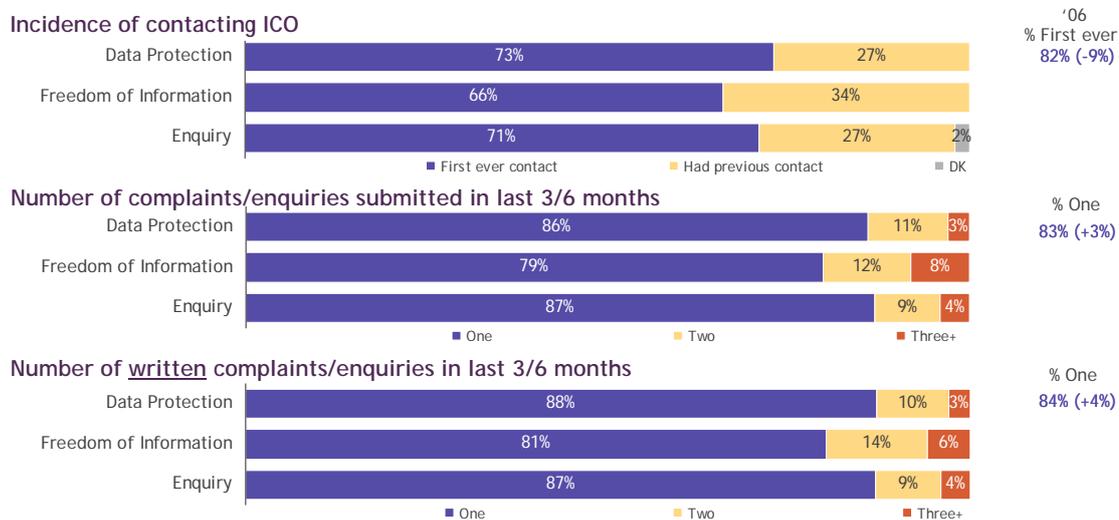
Where figures do not add up exactly, this is due to rounding

This data indicates that:

- The **Data Protection** sample was focused on those contacting the ICO in relation to a request for assessment or about an electronic communications issue (these accounting for 59% and 31% of DP contacts respectively)
- The **Freedom of Information** sample consisted almost exclusively of individuals who had contacted the ICO with a complaint under section 50 of the Act (these accounting for 92% of FOI contacts)
- **Enquirers** were primarily contacting the ICO in relation to the Data Protection Act (accounting for 75% of Enquiry contacts)

Fig. 3 below shows the profile of past, and current, contact with the ICO.

**Fig 3. Past and current contact with the ICO**



Q3a/Q3b/Q3c  
Base: All - DP (n=263), FOI (n=102), Enquiry (n=55)

Where figures do not add up exactly, this is due to rounding

Two-thirds or more of each sample (73%/66%/71%) were contacting the ICO for the first time.

Reflecting the fact that the majority of respondents were making their first ever complaint/enquiry to the ICO, the vast majority had only submitted one complaint/enquiry, written or otherwise, in the previous 3/6 months.

There were again slight differences evident in the profile of the FOI group compared to the DP and Enquiry groups. Those who were contacting the ICO in relation to Freedom of Information were slightly more likely to have had previous contact with the ICO (approximately a third versus a quarter of the other groups) and were slightly more likely to have submitted more than one complaint/enquiry in the last 6 months (20% versus 14%). While many of the FOI contacts were in contact with the ICO for the first time, we will see later in this report that the level and intensity of the contact is relatively high, leading to some in the qualitative stage telling us that they were now on first name terms with the member of staff they were dealing with.

Looking at this year's data for the DP contacts compared to 2006, we can see a slight fall in the proportion who were making their first ever contact with the ICO (down from 82% in 2006 to 73% in 2009). The figures for the number of recent complaints/enquiries have not, however, changed significantly.

### 3.2. Complaint/Enquiry Profile

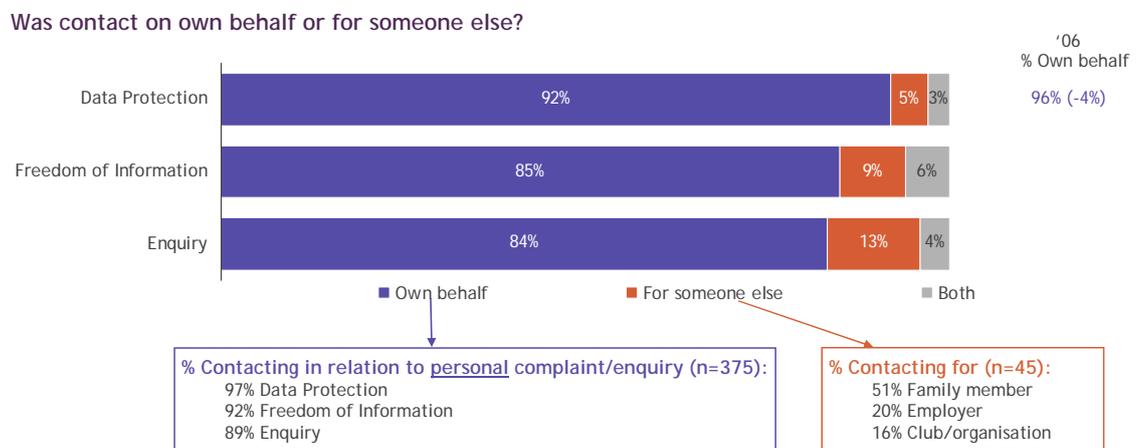
This section of the report provides detail on the type of complaint/enquiry that was made, i.e.

- **Context of the contact:** on whose behalf the contact was made, whether it was a complaint or an enquiry, the type of organisation complained about and the specific focus of the contact
- **How contact was made:** ease of knowing how to contact the ICO, the type and number of communication channels used and the role of the ICO’s website

#### 3.2.1. Context of the contact

The figure below addresses the first of the elements outlined above.

Fig 4. On whose behalf was the contact made



Q1c. Was your recent contact with the ICO on your own behalf or on behalf of someone else? Q1d. And who was the contact on behalf of? Q1e. And can I check, was that contact in relation to a personal complaint or enquiry? Base: All - DP (n=263), FOI (n=102), Enquiry (n=55) ; All contacting on own behalf (n=242/88/46) ; All contacting on other's behalf (n=45)

This data shows that the vast majority of contact was made on the individual’s own behalf. Where the contact was made on behalf of someone else, and this was slightly more common among FOI/Enquiry customers than among the DP group and the beneficiary was often a family member and sometimes an employer or club/organisation.

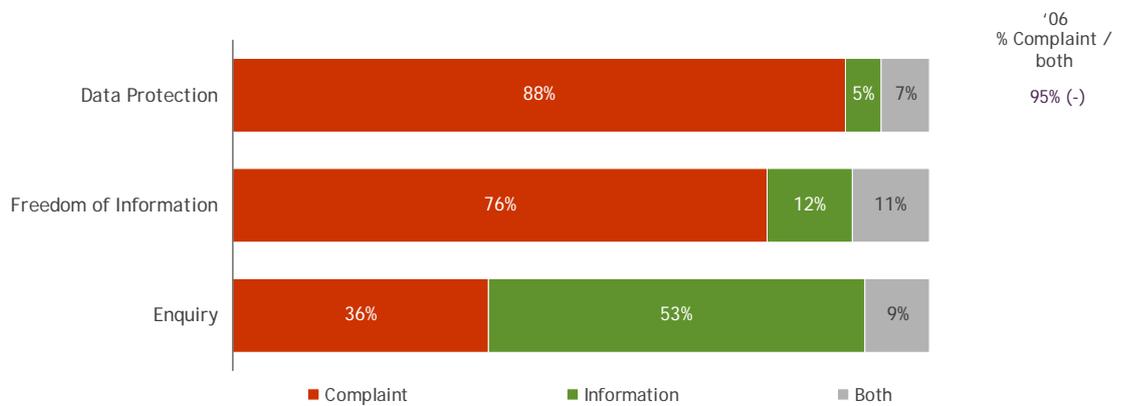
In cases where the contact was made on the individual’s own behalf virtually all these cases referred to a personal matter (95%).

There is little change in this data for the DP group between this year and 2006.

Interestingly, although FOI customers were primarily contacting the ICO ‘for themselves’, we saw in the qualitative interviews that they often viewed themselves as performing a job that benefits the wider society. These individuals often saw themselves as “Warrior Citizens” whose tenacity in dealing with FOI issues is rooted in their need and/or belief to ‘beat the system’. For some of the individuals, the level of contact with the ICO led to them suggesting they had ‘befriended’ members of staff and knew individuals by name.

Whether the individual was making a complaint or requesting information varied widely depending on the overall reason for contact (see Fig 5 below). Almost all of those contacting the ICO in relation to Data Protection were making complaints, just 5% wanting information only. This figure matches that seen in 2006. Although the majority (87%) of those making contact about Freedom of Information were making complaints there was a higher number (12%) who simply wanted information. As would be expected, the Enquiry sample contained a high proportion that were simply seeking information, but it is notable that in almost half (45%) the cases considered to be enquiries by the ICO, the customer actually considered themselves to be a complainant.

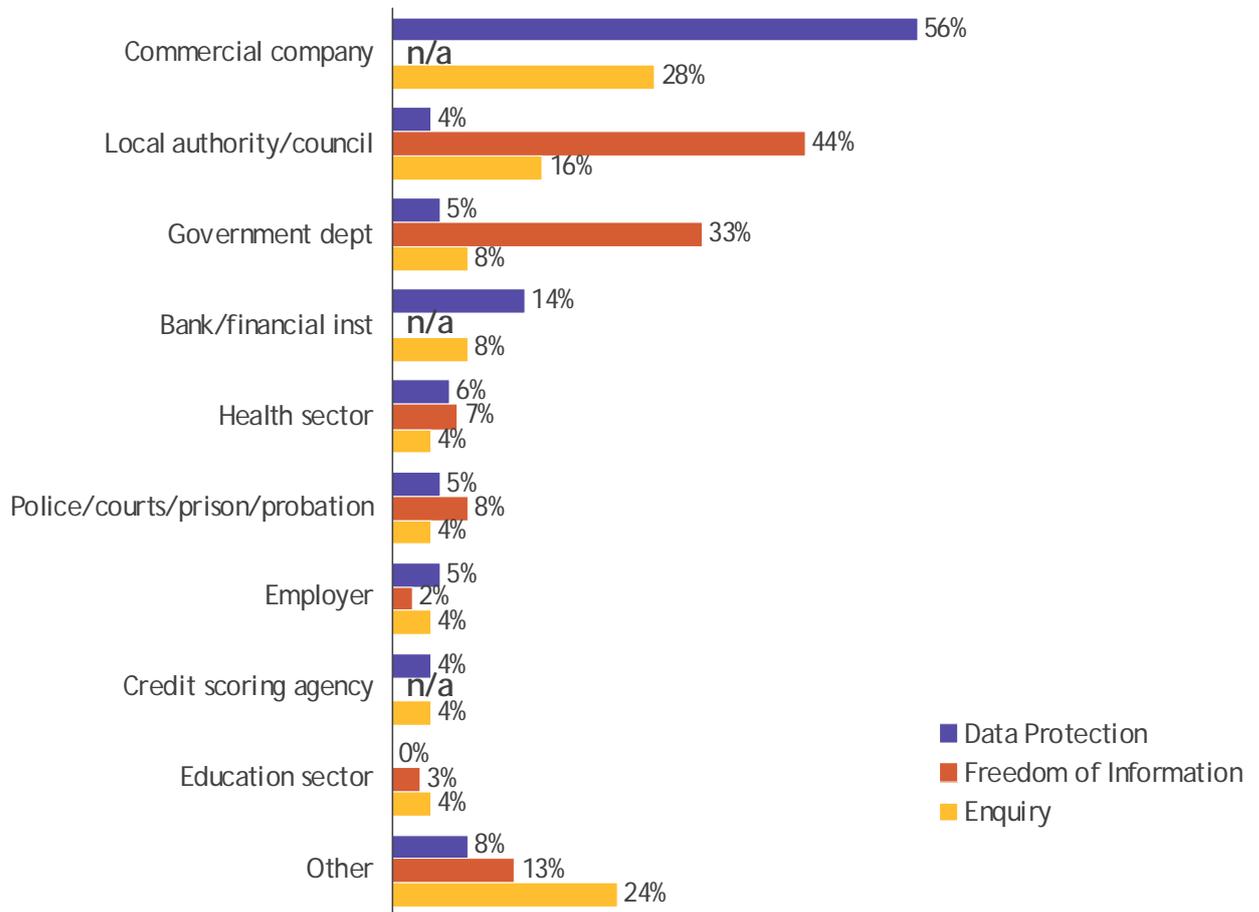
**Fig 5. Information request or complaint**



*Q1a. Firstly, has your recent contact with the ICO been to find out information or has it been in relation to a complaint or complaints you were making?*  
 Base: All - DP (n=263), FOI (n=102), Enquiry (n=55) Where figures do not add up exactly, this is due to rounding

Fig 6 below shows the profile of the organisations being complained about.

**Fig 6. Organisation complained about (among those making a complaint)**



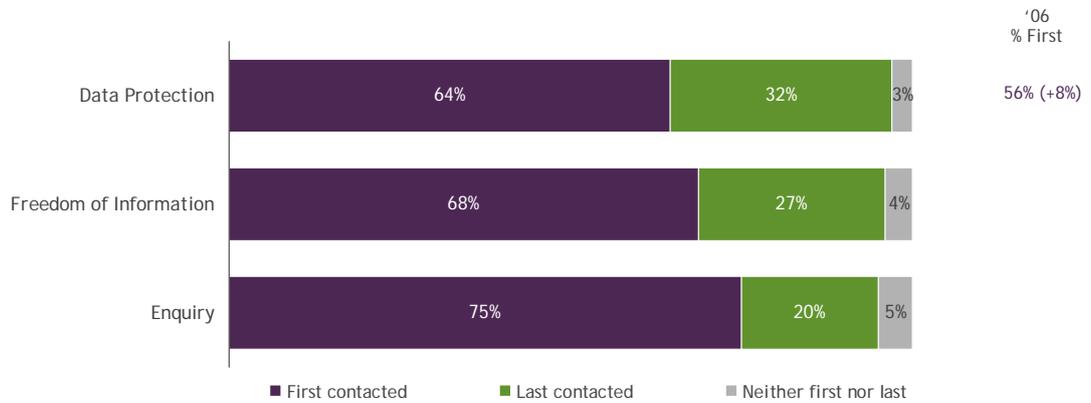
Q1b. And who have you needed to make a complaint about?  
 Base: All making a complaint - DP (n=251), FOI (n=90), Enquiry (n=25)

The profile of organisations complained about, as shown above, is very much as would be expected.

The focus of complaints again varies according to the customer type:

- **Data Protection** complaints focused on commercial companies (these accounting for 56% of DP complaints) and financial institutions (14%)
- Almost all **Freedom of Information** complaints referred to government bodies, primarily local authorities and government departments (44% and 33% of FOI complaints respectively)
- The subject of **Enquiry** complaints was more varied, encompassing both commercial and government entities

Fig 7. Was the ICO the first or last organisation contacted?



Q8. Was the ICO typically the first organisation you contacted in relation to your complaints/enquiries?

Q9. Were they typically the last organisation you contacted?

Base: All - DP (n=263), FOI (n=102), Enquiry (n=55)

Where figures do not add up exactly, this is due to rounding

In most cases the ICO is the first point of contact. This is true for all customer types but is particularly the case among Enquiry customers, 75% of whom contacted the ICO before any other organisation. There is a slight increase evident in the number of DP customers contacting the ICO first in relation to their complaint/enquiry - this figure having risen from 56% in 2006 to 64% this year.

Fig 8. below looks at the specific reasons why Data Protection customers contacted the ICO.

**Fig 8. Description of contact regarding Data Protection Act**



*Q2a. Can you briefly describe what the written complaint/enquiry you have submitted to the ICO in the last 3/6 months have been about?  
Base: All contacting re. DPA (n=304)*

*(note - the sample above also includes Data Protection related enquiries from the enquiries sample)*

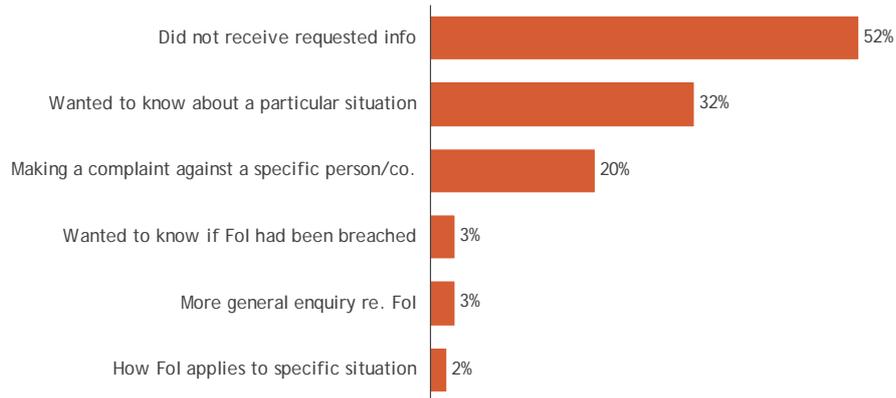
The range of complaints/enquiries was quite varied with the greatest number of contacts being made in relation to unsolicited calls, emails, letters and texts (30%). This figure has, however, fallen since 2006 when almost half the contacts (43%) were made for this reason. The incidence of a number of other issues has increased this year with significant rises in the proportion of contacts made in relation to information security and the DPA's application to specific situations.

In addition to the profile above, the qualitative research highlighted the issue among DP customers of identity theft and credit card fraud which can affect personal credit ratings. Individuals in these situations were particularly concerned with having the necessary ammunition/backing to correct wrong entries and classifications. Clearly issues of this type are very personal to the customer, causing them worry and inconvenience, and leading customers to become quite emotionally involved in the process and in their reaction to the outcome.

*"I suppose it's not that important in the overall scheme of things but it is to me"*

Fig 9. below looks at the specific reasons why Freedom of Information customers contacted the ICO.

Fig 9. Description of contact regarding Freedom of Information Act



Q2a. Can you briefly describe what the written complaint/enquiry you have submitted to the ICO in the last 3/6 months have been about?  
 Base: All contacting re. FOI (n=116)

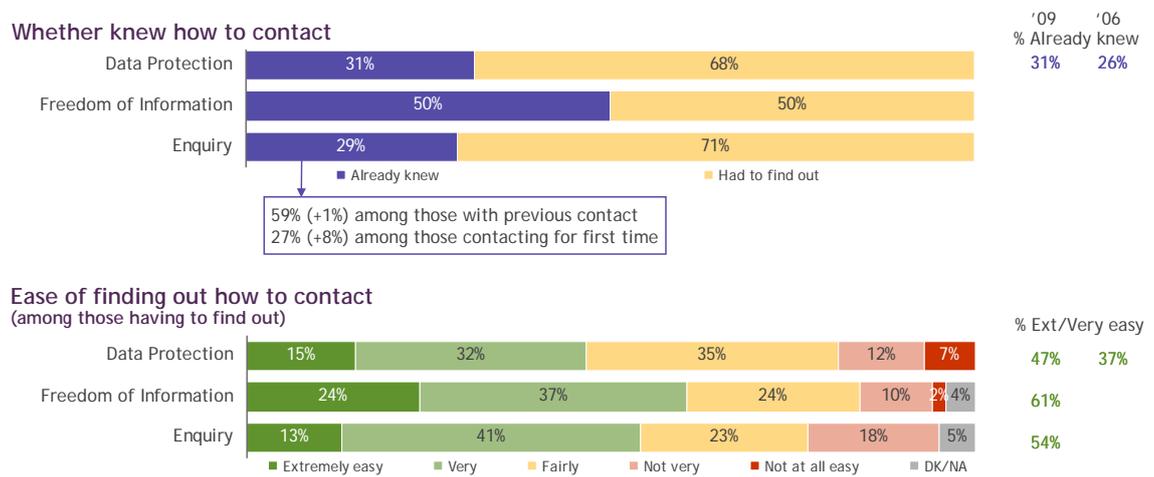
(note - the sample above also includes FOI related enquiries from the enquiries sample)

The profile of complaints/enquiries made by Freedom of Information customers was more focused than that of Data Protection customers. Just over half (52%) of the FOI customers were contacting the ICO in relation to information that they had requested from an organisation but had not received. Around a third (32%) were enquiring about a particular situation and a fifth were making a complaint against a specific person or company.

### 3.2.2. How contact was made with the ICO

Having examined the reasons for the contact with the ICO, the following section of this report looks at the process of how the individual went about initiating their contact.

Fig 10. Knowing how to contact the ICO

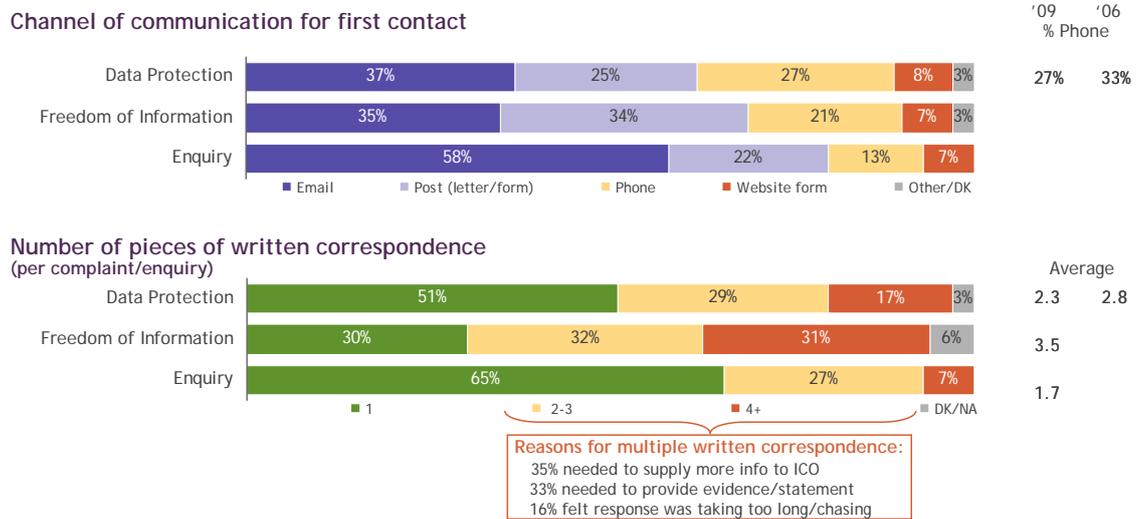


Q5. With regard to written complaints/enquiries over the last 3/6 months did you typically know how to get in contact with the ICO or did you need to find out?  
 Q6. And typically how easy was it to find out how to get in contact, would you say it was...  
 Base: All /All having to find out - DP (n=263/180), FOI (n=102/51), Enquiry (n=55/39) Where figures do not add up exactly, this is due to rounding

Half the FOI customers already knew how to get in contact with the ICO, a significantly higher proportion than the c.30% of DP and Enquiry customers. This difference can be explained, at least in part, by the fact that the FOI contacts were more likely to have had previous contact with the ICO. Indeed, across the total sample, the figure for those knowing how to contact the ICO rose to 59% among previous ICO customers, as compared to 27% of those who were contacting the ICO for the first time.

For those who had to find out how to contact the ICO, half found it very or extremely easy (50% overall) whilst a significant minority did not (17% of all customers). The DP and Enquiry customers appear to have found this a more difficult task than their FOI counterparts with almost a fifth experiencing problems. However, it is promising to see that the proportion of DP customers rating this issue as very/extremely easy has increased from roughly a third in 2006 to almost half in this survey. The re-launch of the ICO website (in September 2006) may well have helped to improve these figures. In addition, as was noted in 2006, ensuring that the main organisations referring people to the ICO (CAB, telecoms providers, etc.) can route people quickly will help to ensure that consumers do not struggle to make contact.

Fig 11. Method, and frequency, of contact



Q11. Typically how did you first make contact with someone at the ICO? Q13a. Typically how many separate pieces of written correspondence did you send in relation to each individual complaint/enquiry? Q13c. Why did you need to send in more than one piece of written correspondence?  
 Base: All - DP (n=263), FOI (n=102), Enquiry (n=55); All with multiple correspondence (n=206) Where figures do not add up exactly, this is due to rounding

By definition, all contacts within the sample had submitted at least one recent written complaint/enquiry to the ICO.

The top half of Fig 11. above shows how customers first made contact with the ICO. Approximately a quarter of all contacts made their initial contact by telephone, which then lead to a letter/email/fax being sent. The results for the DP and FOI customers show similar preferences among these groups for the different channels of communication while the Enquiry sample had a strong preference for email (58%) over both postal and phone mediums (22% and 13% respectively). Given the fact that Enquiry contacts were more likely to want information rather than making complaints we can infer that the more informal nature of the email channel is better suited to this type of contact.

The qualitative interviews provided some insight into preferences between the communication channels and specific instances where one channel was felt to be more appropriate than another:

- Letters were seen as a safe channel and copies could be kept for future reference (or 'proof')  
*"I'm a record person - I like to have everything in writing"*
- Emails were viewed as a quick and convenient form of communication  
*"I've got three kids and it's difficult to find a time to make calls; I do all my online stuff when they've gone to bed"*
- Telephone was preferred in instances where the complainant/enquirer felt that their case was urgent, where a quick answer was needed, and/or for simple check ups on the progress of a case
- The website form was praised for its ease of use  
*"I found the form and it was clear so I just filled it in and sent it off"*

Looking at the bottom half of Fig. 11, the simpler nature of most Enquiry contacts is also evident in the fact that almost two-thirds (65%) had sent the ICO just one piece of written communication, compared to half the DP customer and only a third of FOI customers. The more

involved nature of the contact, and the greater personal importance of the issue to the individual, is apparent in the high incidence of multiple correspondence in relation to DP and FOI contacts. On average, FOI customers submitted 3.5 separate pieces of written communication concerning their complaint/enquiry and DP customers submitted 2.3 (slightly fewer than was seen in 2006).

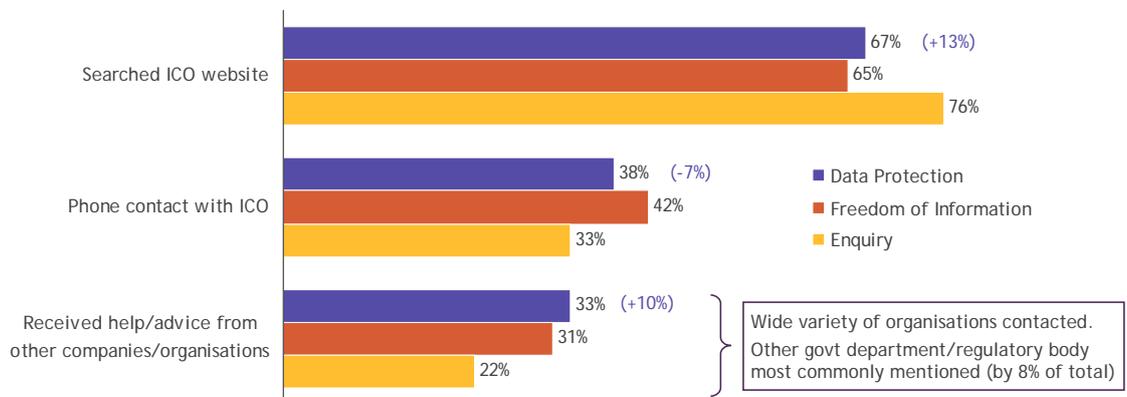
The primary reason for multiple written communication was the need to provide more information to the ICO, for example sending evidence and/or statements. In some cases enquirers had to follow up with correspondence in order to chase replies or ask for more complete answers either because they did not understand or did not agree with the response itself.

The qualitative interviews showed evidence of repeat customers learning the type and detail of information required by the ICO and these customers then tailoring their correspondence to reflect this.

*“I’ve learned to ask very specific questions or else they come back to you and say they can’t give you the information as it’s not specific enough”*

Fig 12. below outlines the channels and parties involved in the complaints/enquiries, in addition to the written communication with the ICO. Changes from the 2006 figures are shown in parentheses for the DP data.

**Fig 12. Contact in addition to written communication with the ICO**



*Q7/Q10a-b/Q10c-d. Have any of your written complaints/enquiries in the last 3/6 months involved... receiving help or advice from other companies, organisations, employers or Government departments? telephone conversations with staff at the ICO? searching the ICO website?*  
 Base: All - DP (n=263), FOI (n=102), Enquiry (n=55)

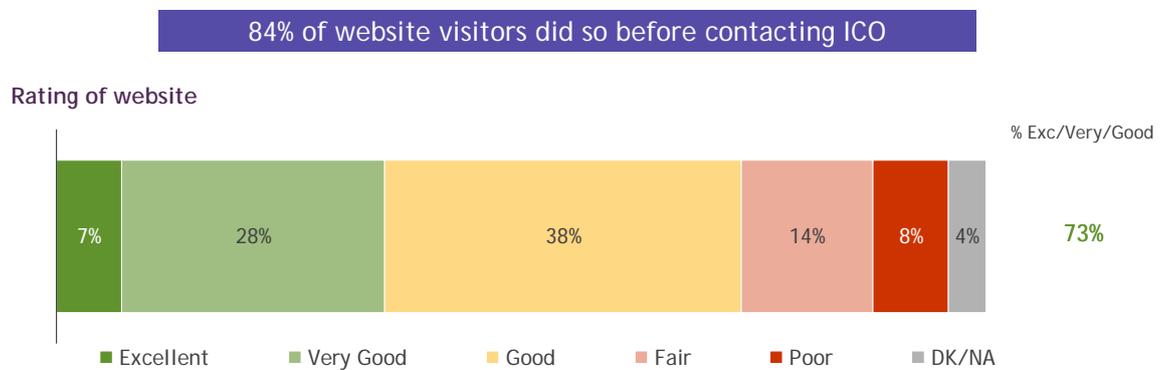
These results show a high incidence of multi-channel contact. In addition to their written contact, over two-thirds of all customers (67%) had made use of the ICO website and over a third (38%) had had some form of telephone contact with the ICO. Almost a third of customers (31%) had also received help and/or advice from organisations other than the ICO in the course of trying to solve problems/find out information. The identity of these organisations was wide ranging and encompassed various government departments/regulatory bodies (mentioned by 8% of the total sample), legal practitioners (2%), credit reference agencies (1%) etc.

The different nature of Enquiry contacts is again evident here. In common with their preference for email communication, this group also exhibits a higher incidence of using the ICO website (76% of these customers searching the site as part of the process of resolving their complaint/enquiry). They were also less likely to have had phone contact with the ICO or been in contact with other companies/organisations in relation to their issue. This fits with the hypothesis that their reason for contact tends to be less complex and/or less personally important to the individual.

The widening role of the website is evident in the increase in the proportion of DP customers who visited the ICO website, this rising from 54% in 2006 to 67% in 2009 and it is clear from the data that the website is an important channel for all customer groups.

More detail on contact with the website is provided in Fig 13. below

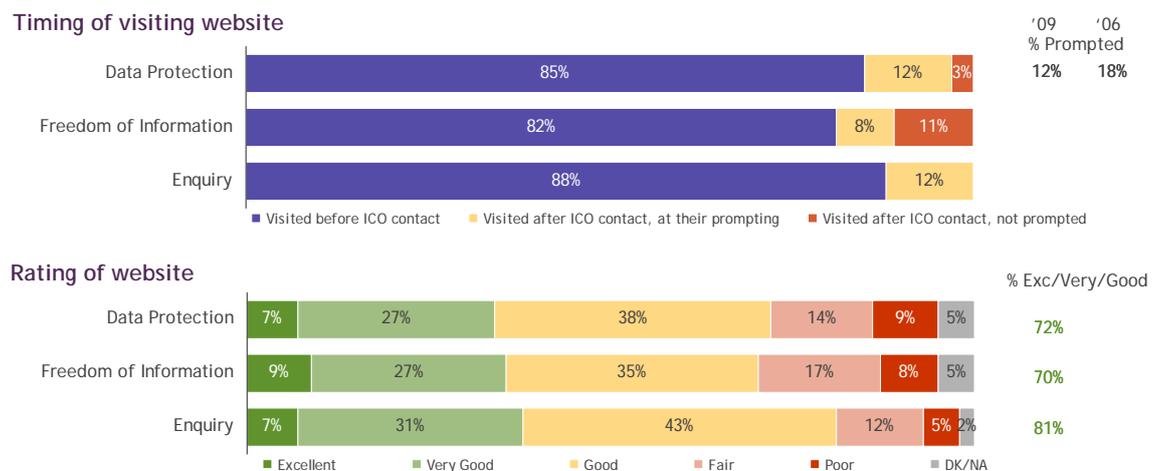
Fig 13a. Role and rating of the website - total sample



Q10e. And was that suggested by someone from the ICO? Q10f. Did you visit the website before contacting the ICO?  
 Q10g. And how would you rate the website, would you say it was .... ?  
 Base: All contacting website (n=284)

Where figures do not add up exactly, this is due to rounding

Fig 13b. Role and rating of the website - for each customer group



Q10e. And was that suggested by someone from the ICO? Q10f. Did you visit the website before contacting the ICO?  
 Q10g. And how would you rate the website, would you say it was .... ?  
 Base: All contacting website - DP (n=175), FOI (n=67), Enquiry (n=42)

Where figures do not add up exactly, this is due to rounding

The vast majority (over 80%) of customers who had visited the website were using it as a starting point for their contact with the ICO, looking at the site **before** contacting the ICO. Previous qualitative research has shown that the website was often used as a means of working out who they needed to contact.

Ratings of the site were positive overall with over 70% rating it as excellent, very good or good. Enquiry customers were slightly more positive, with 81% giving a good or better rating compared to 70% of DP and FOI customers. Given the more straightforward nature of the Enquiry issues, it is perhaps not surprising that this group found the site to be more useful.

Mirroring this data, the website was generally well regarded in the qualitative interviews where it was viewed as a convenient and useful source of information.

*"My mindset is 'I'll have a quick look and if it's not obvious, I'll look somewhere else' - their website was good"*

*"I got to the website and looked at the FAQs and knew I was in the right place"*

Positive feedback was given by users in terms of the site's clarity, ease of use and navigation. One potential improvement that was expressed was a preference for pdf over Word files as a means of broadening accessibility to the information.

### 3.3. Expectations of Service

Before looking in detail at how customers viewed the service provided by the ICO, it is useful to examine the general expectations that they had. These expectations were assessed in the qualitative follow-on interviews.

Overall, customers in this year's research appeared to have a better understanding, and hence a clearer expectation, of the ICO's role than in 2006. The key expectation was that the ICO was on the side of the customer and would be able to solve their problem.

Data Protection customers were looking to the ICO to identify breaches of the DPA and to support the customer's case against the offending organisation.

*"I just want them to come back and tell me they [organisation] were wrong and that they should apologise to me"*

As noted earlier in this report, certain Freedom of Information customers were more likely to see themselves in a 'battle' and anticipated a longer and more difficult process beset with red tape and delays.

*"People in power don't like to be questioned"*

In other cases, customers were looking for help to compile their case for the adjudicator by ensuring that all the information was complete and their questions were crystal clear to secure the information they sought

*"I was amazed they called me up and said that I hadn't submitted my application in a way that would get me the information I wanted. They asked specifically what I wanted, and helped me re-write it and asked for some extra information. They came back with a 'no' but I was still impressed they got in touch"*

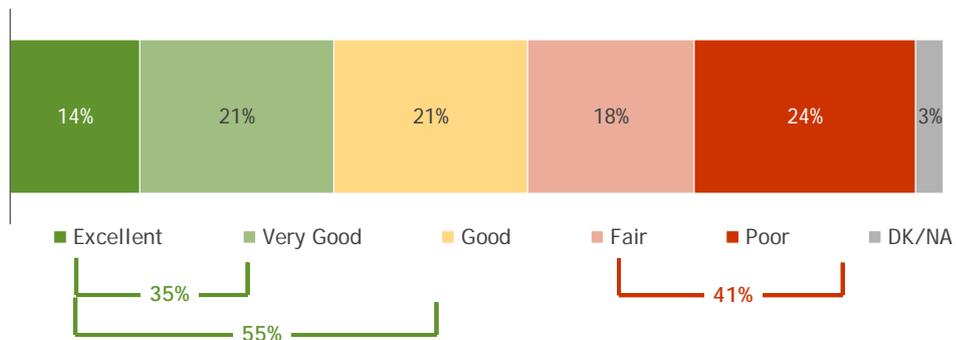
### 3.4. Overall Ratings

The following section of this report examines customers' overall satisfaction with the service provided by the ICO in terms of:

- an overall rating of the quality of service
- a rating of the service provided by ICO in comparison to that of other organisations they had dealt with
- and, a rating of their satisfaction with the actual outcome of the complaint/enquiry to the ICO.

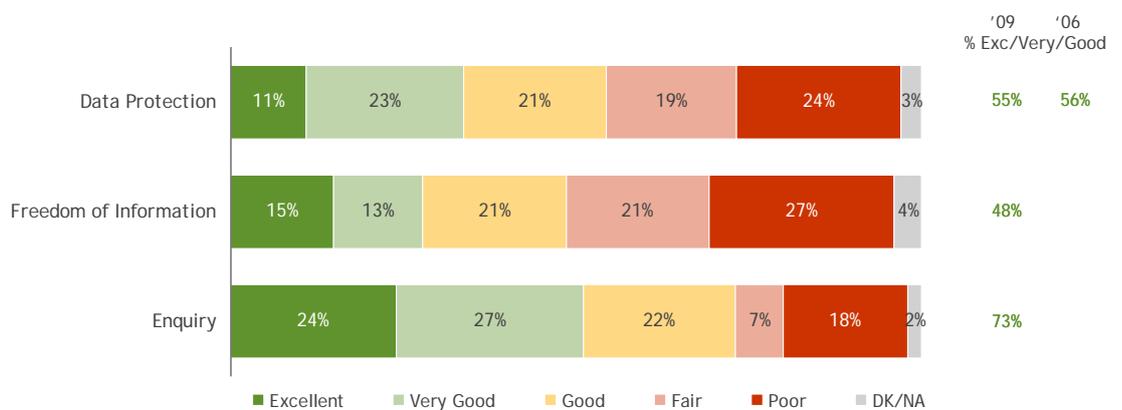
Fig 14. below shows the overall quality of service ratings given by customers in relation to their most recent written complaint/enquiry to the ICO.

Fig 14a. Overall rating of quality of service provided by the ICO - total sample



Q18a. Overall, how would you rate the quality of service provided to you by the ICO in relation to enquiries or complaints submitted in writing?  
 Base: All (n=420)  
 Where figures do not add up exactly, this is due to rounding

Fig 14b. Overall rating of quality of service provided by the ICO - for each customer group



Q18a. Overall, how would you rate the quality of service provided to you by the ICO in relation to enquiries or complaints submitted in writing?  
 Base: All - DP (n=263), FOI (n=102), Enquiry (n=55)  
 Where figures do not add up exactly, this is due to rounding

This data indicates a very mixed picture among customers concerning their dealings with the ICO. Overall (across the three groups), the quality of service from the ICO was rated good, very good or excellent by just over half the total sample (55%) and just over a third (34%) gave a rating of either very good or excellent. However there were a significant number (24%) who felt that the quality of service was poor.

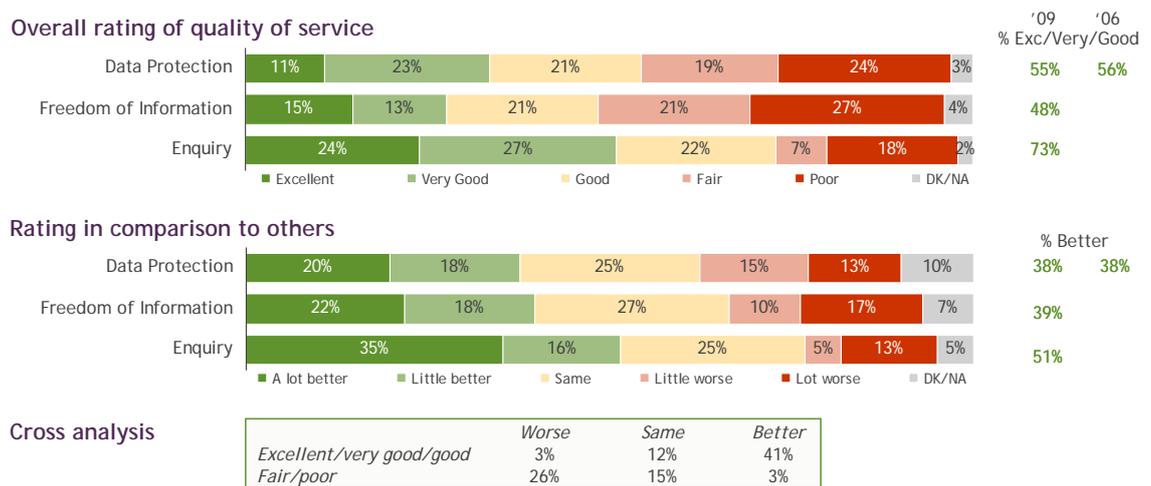
The perceptions of service were markedly better among the Enquiry group, 73% of whom rated the service as excellent, very good or good. By contrast, almost half the FOI group (48%) rated the service as being only fair or poor, and this figure was only slightly better among the DP group (43%). The data for DP customers is very similar to that seen in 2006. While it would have been hoped to have seen an improvement since 2006, we are aware that there has been substantial change at the ICO which, together with staffing issues has inevitably hampered efforts to increase satisfaction.

As suggested earlier in this report, the nature of the contact by FOI and DP customers is more likely to have been a complaint, and probably more complex and/or more personal to the individual, and hence these groups may be inherently harder to satisfy.

The level of satisfaction, or dissatisfaction, that customers felt with the service received from the ICO will inevitably be driven, at least in part, by the outcome of their complaint/enquiry and we will examine this link in more detail later in this section of the report. What we would say, however, is that while the outcome of the complaint/enquiry will invariably influence the overall rating above, it is still important to understand the attitudes of customers to specific elements of service such as the quality of letters, helpfulness of staff etc.

Fig 15. below compares the overall quality of service scores with the ratings given by customers of how well the service from the ICO compared with that experienced from other organisations.

Fig 15. Overall rating of quality of service provided by the ICO



Q18a. Overall, how would you rate the quality of service provided to you by the ICO in relation to enquiries or complaints submitted in writing?  
 Q18b. And how would you compare the quality of service provided by the ICO with that of other organisations you have dealt with generally?  
 Base: All - DP (n=263), FOI (n=102), Enquiry (n=55)

Where figures do not add up exactly, this is due to rounding

Despite the relatively low ratings of the ICO's overall service, 40% of all respondents rated the service from the ICO as being better than that from other organisations, while a quarter (26%) felt that it was worse. While this may seem slightly contradictory, our hypothesis here is that customers are aware of how complex the areas of DP and FOI are and in the case of FOI, the

qualitative interviews showed that many feel that the public authorities 'make things difficult' for the ICO.

As before, the ratings here are better among the Enquiry customers compared to the DP/FOI customers - half the Enquiry group (51%) felt that the ICO's service was better than that of other organisations while this figure fell to less than 40% with the two other groups (38% and 39%). The DP figures were again very much in line with those seen in 2006.

As mentioned before, in the majority of cases the reason for contacting the ICO was to lodge a complaint (95% for DP contacts and 87% of FOI ones) and we would note that, relative to other organisations, the ICO often has a more challenging set of customers to deal with.

The table at the bottom of Fig 15. shows that, as might be expected, there is a high level of cross-over between these two questions. The vast majority of those who felt the ICO service was worse than that of other organisations had rated the ICO service as being only fair or poor, while the vast majority of those who felt that the ICO performed better than other organisations had rated their service as being excellent, very good or good.

The qualitative findings suggested that the ICO was often seen as offering a better overall service than other public sector or authoritarian type organisations, for example banks, utilities and local authorities/councils. Within this type of comparison the ICO was seen as more responsive and 'professional'.

*"They keep you informed"*

*"They're very personable and helpful when you deal with them"*

However, some customers were less positive in their comparisons and felt that the ICO typified some of the less favourable public sector stereotypes:

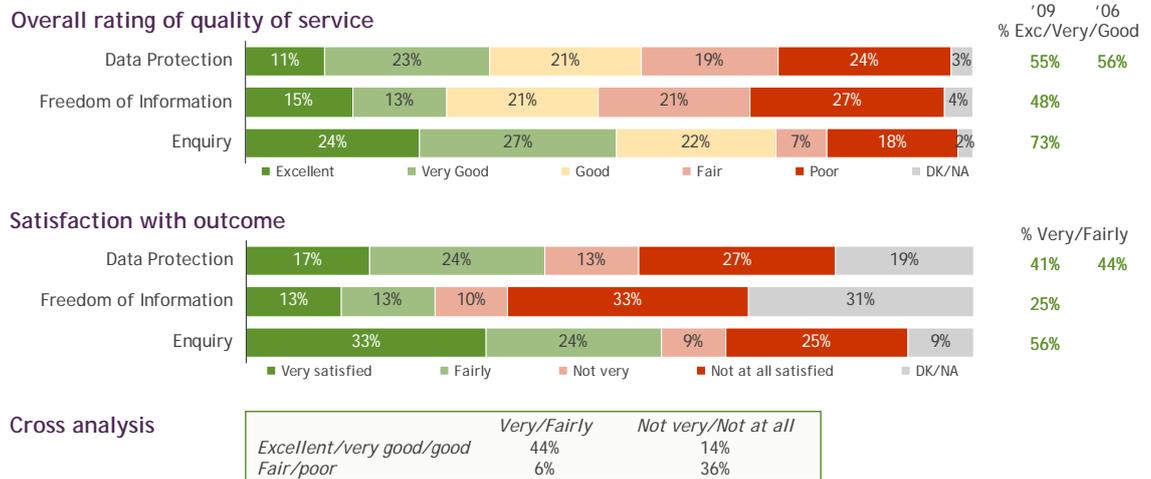
*"By no means the worst, but not the best"*

*"They're like a stuffy old solicitor's office"*

*"All public sector offices are slow and jobsworth"*

Fig 16. below provides a comparison of the quality of service ratings with the customers' reactions to the outcome of their complaint/enquiry.

**Fig 16. Satisfaction with outcome of contact**



Q18a. Overall, how would you rate the quality of service provided to you by the ICO in relation to enquiries or complaints submitted in writing?  
 Q19. While we have focused on the service provided by the ICO, how satisfied were you with the actual outcome of your recent enquiries or complaints?  
 Base: All - DP (n=263), FOI (n=102), Enquiry (n=55)  
 Where figures do not add up exactly, this is due to rounding

The 'Satisfaction with outcome' data shows widely varied feelings towards the outcome of their contact across the three customer groups:

- In common with previous results, the **Enquiry** group were the most positive in their ratings with more than half of these customers (56%) rating themselves as very or fairly satisfied, although we should note that a quarter felt not at all satisfied with the outcome
- Within the **Data Protection** group, a lower proportion (41%) were very/fairly satisfied with their outcome, and this figure closely matches that observed in 2006 (44%). We can also see a significant number (19%) not willing to rate the outcome at all. Later in the report we will see that this is caused by the fact that these customers did not feel that their case had been resolved yet (although the ICO had classified all contacts as closed cases).
- A similar, but more extreme, pattern is evident among the **Freedom of Information** group, with only quarter expressing themselves as very/fairly satisfied with their outcome and almost a third (31%) not feeling able to rate it at all.

The qualitative interviews also indicated higher levels of dissatisfaction with the outcome among the FOI customers than their DP counterparts and there appeared to be two specific issues at play among this group:

- More and/or longer delays in receiving information back from the ICO (this issue is examined in more detail later in this report)
- Perceptions of there being a more complex submission procedure for complaints/enquiries, particularly in terms of the need for very specific details

*"If you're too general, not specific enough, they'll say they can't give you the information on the grounds that it will take too long to gather"*

*"If you don't quote exactly what you're looking for forget it"*

*"You have to be precise, not too general otherwise your request gets refused"*

Cross analysing the two questions above showed that the vast majority of those satisfied with the outcome of the complaint/enquiry were happy with the service received and that around three-quarters of those not happy with the outcome had rated the service as being only fair or poor.

Both the qualitative and the quantitative findings show a clear link between reactions to the outcome and the overall perceptions of service, and indeed many felt that part of the service was to "solve the problem".

This year's qualitative results suggested that the customers' ability to divorce the outcome from the customer service has improved compared to previous years and this may be attributable to the ICO doing a better job of referring outcomes to the appropriate Act.

However, as in previous years, many customers were frustrated by the ICO's perceived 'lack of teeth' when dealing with offending organisations. This frustration was largely due to the high expectations customers held of the ICO's power to solve problems by putting pressure on 'offending' individuals or organisations.

Where there had been breaches of the law, respondents expected the ICO to be able to 'punish' the organisation or force it to make certain reparations. When this did not happen, there was disappointment that the ICO did not seem to have the authority to prosecute.

*"They should be able to fine the company if it's broken the law"*

*"It should make companies send a letter outlining what they're doing to ensure it doesn't happen again, offer us compensation if it's appropriate and to apologise"*

In case of FOI customers, the specific grievance was often centred on the ICO's perceived lack of authority in 'forcing' local councils to part with information earlier than they do, especially for time-sensitive information.

*"They don't do anything with councils that hold on to information until the last minute - I could have got it earlier but I had to go to ICO, but they still waited until two days before the deadline. ICO didn't do anything"*

*"ICO aren't waving the big stick to councils who make excuses not to give information"*

*"By the time I got it, the story was old and I couldn't do anything with it - they did it on purpose and ICO stood by and let them"*

In addition to examining the link between satisfaction with the overall quality of service and satisfaction with the outcome, we can also examine whether overall satisfaction varies according to other aspects of the contact profile. The following table shows how the profile of those rating their overall satisfaction as excellent/very good, good and fair/poor varies according to certain characteristics of their contact with the ICO.

Fig 17. Overall rating - according to contact profile

## Overall rating of quality of service

%	Excellent/ Very good	Good	Fair/ Poor
No previous contact with ICO	79%	69%	63%
First organisation contacted	72%	70%	60%
Communication involved phone contact	36%	32%	44%
Multiple written contact required	41%	47%	59%
Acknowledgement rec'd within 5 days	46%	30%	18%
No acknowledgement rec'd (perceived)	2%	0%	10%
Final response rec'd within 28 days	43%	27%	12%
Not resolved yet	14%	17%	34%

Q18a. Overall, how would you rate the quality of service provided to you by the ICO in relation to enquiries or complaints submitted in writing? Base: Those rating overall QoS as - Excellent/Very good (n=145), Good (n=88), Fair/Poor (n=175)

This data indicates a number of significant trends.

Those rating the service as **excellent or good** were more likely to:

- Have had no previous contact with the ICO
- Have received an acknowledgement of their written communication within 5 days
- Have received a final response within 28 days

Those rating the service as only **fair or poor** were more likely to:

- Have had to provide multiple written contact
- Feel that they did not receive any initial acknowledgement to their complaint/enquiry
- Feel that their case was still unresolved

These results are perhaps not surprising but they serve to highlight the impact that timely and clear communications can have on the customer's perceptions of service.

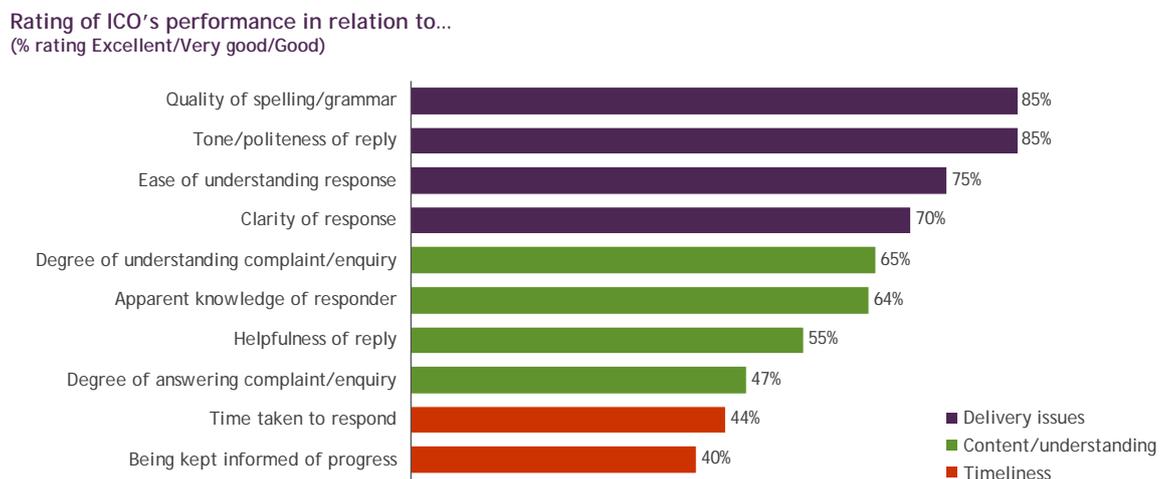
### 3.5. Detailed Service Attribute Ratings

The following section of this report looks in detail at perceptions of individual elements of customer service at the ICO.

Customers were asked to rate the ICO on a range of performance attributes. Fig 18. below summarises the performance scores by showing the proportions that gave a rating of good, very good or excellent for each of the attributes. The attributes are colour coded and split into three sections:

- Delivery issues - whether the response was well written and clear
- Content/understanding - the extent to which the enquiry/complaint was understood and answered by the ICO
- Timeliness - how long the process took and whether the enquirer was kept informed

Fig 18. Overview of service attribute ratings



Q16a. I'd now like you to think about the emails and letters you have received back from the ICO in relation to your complaints/enquiries in the last 3/6 months. I'd like you to tell me whether you think the performance of the ICO has generally been...  
Base: All (n=421)

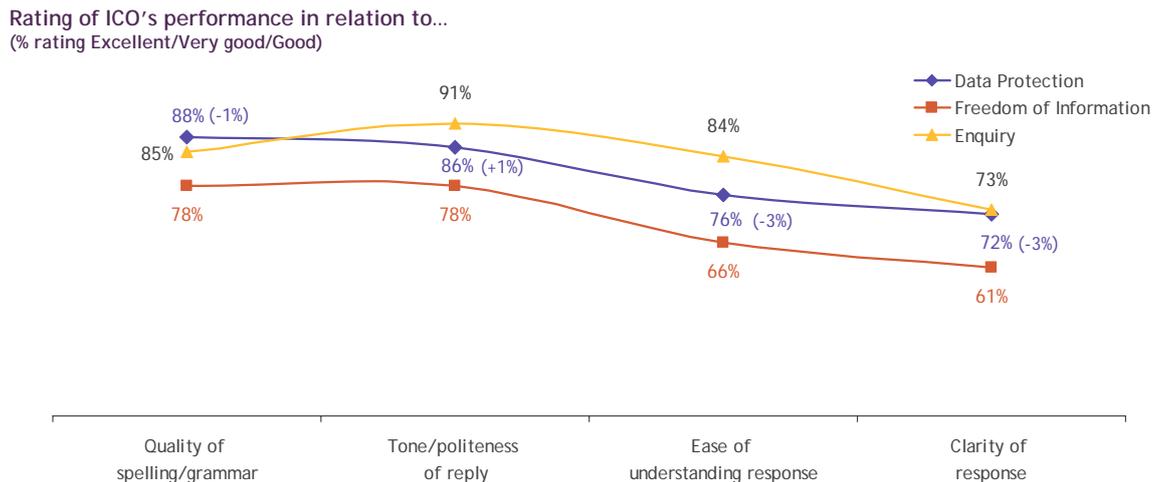
The chart above clearly shows that attributes relating to the content/understanding and timeliness of the response were rated lower than aspects relating to the basic delivery of the response.

We discussed earlier in this report that many respondents equated responding to the complaint/enquiry with the ICO "solving the problem". Given the importance of this aspect of service, if the ICO is unable to rule in favour of the customer it should clearly outline why this is the case as otherwise it could be interpreted by customers as a service 'failure'.

### 3.5.1. Delivery

Figure 19 below shows the ratings of the aspects of service concerning the delivery of the response, for each of the three customer groups. Changes from 2006 are shown in parenthesis for the DP data.

Fig 19. Rating of delivery issues



Q16a. I'd now like you to think about the emails and letters you have received back from the ICO in relation to your complaints/enquiries in the last 3/6 months. I'd like you to tell me whether you think the performance of the ICO has generally been...  
Base: All - DP (n=263), FOI (n=102), Enquiry (n=55)

As noted earlier, these attributes were the ones that received the highest ratings. Over three-quarters of all three customer types rated the quality of spelling and grammar, and the tone and politeness of the responses as being excellent, very good or good.

However, lower proportions, particularly among the FOI group, gave a positive rating to the ease of understanding of the response and the clarity of the response. Within the FOI contacts over a quarter rated the ICO's performance on these two issues as being only fair or poor (26% and 29% respectively).

The more complex nature of the FOI/DP complaints/enquiries is likely to play a part in the lower ratings among these two groups. The qualitative element of the research indicated that FOI customers experienced difficulty in fully understanding the ICO's response to some of the more complex cases. In these situations the responses were felt to be full but possibly too detailed, and/or too jargonised to be easily understood.

*"I've got a degree but I struggled to understand it - I had to translate it on the web"*

*"They're all engaged in a secret professional language"*

*"It was a very wordy letter - it explained their answer over two pages but I didn't want to read it all"*

*"I wasn't sure if there had been a breach ... they sent me two pages but I couldn't tell you if there was a breach and if I could take it further"*

As in previous years, although the ICO performed relatively well on delivery aspects, the qualitative interviews showed that customers were more likely to look towards the substance

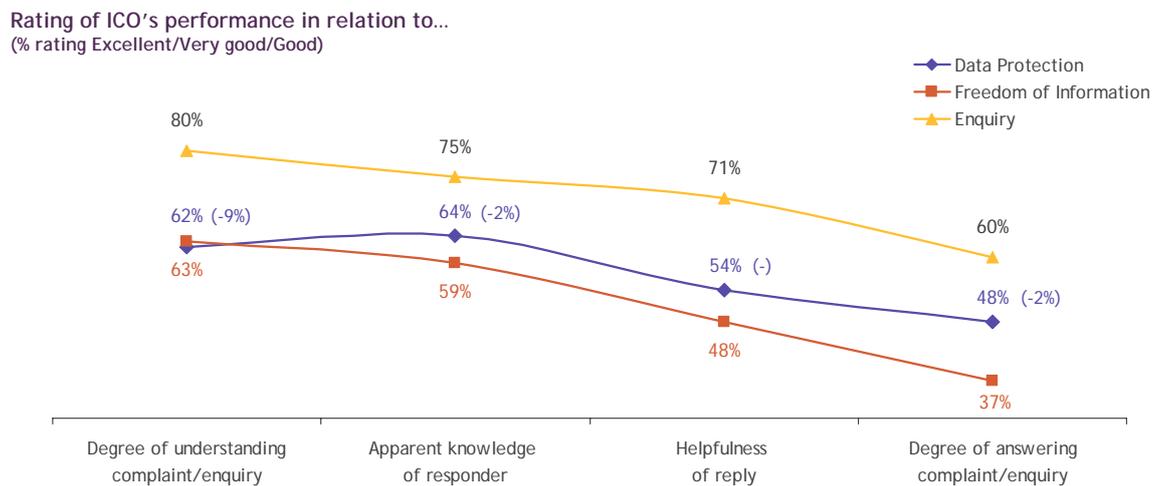
and direction of the answers. Key for them was knowing what the reply meant for them and what their next steps should be. However, we know from experience that aspects such as tone and spelling are expected to be of the highest standard and that any deterioration in this area would lead to problems. If data subjects start to question the quality of the delivery, then they invariably start to question the content also as poor grammar or an inappropriate tone can bring the professionalism of the response and the organisation into question.

In common with the 2006 results, customers generally felt that they were given individual replies and there was an appreciation of having personalised rather than standard letters.

### 3.5.2. Content / Understanding

Fig 20. below shows the customer ratings of the specific aspects of service related to the content and understanding of the response, again showing changes from the 2006 DP data in parenthesis.

Fig 20. Rating of content and understanding issues



Q16a. I'd now like you to think about the emails and letters you have received back from the ICO in relation to your complaints/enquiries in the last 3/6 months. I'd like you to tell me whether you think the performance of the ICO has generally been...  
Base: All - DP (n=263), FOI (n=102), Enquiry (n=55)

The Enquiry customers continued to give relatively high ratings to these attributes of service, with over 70% rating performance on three of the four aspects as excellent, very good or good.

However, as seen in previous results, satisfaction levels among the other two groups, and particularly among the FOI customers, was significantly lower. Over 40% of DP and FOI customers rated the ICO performance with respect to the helpfulness of their reply and the degree to which the reply answered the complaint/enquiry as being only fair or poor. There were also a notable proportion of customers (up to 20%) who did not feel able to give the ICO a rating at all on these issues.

One further point of note is the fall in ratings given by DP customers to the issue of how well the ICO appeared to have understood the customer's complaint/enquiry - positive ratings of this issue have fallen by almost 10 percentage points (from 71% in 2006 to 62% this year).

Some of this dissatisfaction with the individual service elements will invariably be linked to any disappointment felt with the actual outcome, but these results again highlight the need for the ICO to be very clear in terms of:

- What they (the ICO) can and cannot do for the customer
- Why they are unable to take further action (if that is the case)
- The next steps that are open to the customer

The qualitative interviews revealed that, in common with the 2006 findings, the ICO staff were generally well regarded in terms of their helpfulness and knowledge. Specific behaviour that was praised included occasions when the staff were fully informed and showed a good understanding of the customer's issue, and when customers perceived that an extra personal effort was being made.

*"It was really good; she outlined my enquiry, what she did, what it means and told me the case is now closed"*

There was also evidence of greater proactivity from the ICO staff in terms of helping customers succeed with their case and, in one case, an FOI customer also having it pointed out to them that the authority in question may also have breached the DPA.

*"I was amazed as I submitted a claim and the person handling my case called me up and told me she was my case worker but based on the stuff I sent, I wasn't going to go anywhere, so she told me what I needed before she could hand it forward to the adjudicator - I didn't think they would do that so I was impressed"*

One specific area for improvement that was highlighted referred to the need for more engagement and communication from the ICO staff in relation to complex cases where, for example, it would be helpful for the customer to know whether or not they had submitted all the necessary information.

Other than this, the major weakness of staff was that they were seen by some as being unable to resolve issues because they were not perceived to have enough power to investigate, prosecute or enforce the law.

### 3.5.3. Timeliness

This section of the report looks in detail at the issue of how quickly the ICO was felt to respond to complaints/enquiries. The data covered here relates to perceptions of how long the ICO actually took to respond plus general ratings of the ICO's performance on this issue. As context to this section, we were aware going into the research that there had been significant backlogs at the ICO and fully expected there to be criticism in this area.

Fig 21. (overleaf) shows that less than a third of all customers felt that they received an initial acknowledgement of their complaint/enquiry within five days, most replies taking longer.

Results among the Enquiry group were again more positive here than among the DP and FOI groups. But, on the positive side, it is notable that the proportion of Data Protection customers who reported receiving an acknowledgement within 5 days rose from 21% in 2006 to 30% this year.

Fig 21. Speed of receiving initial acknowledgement

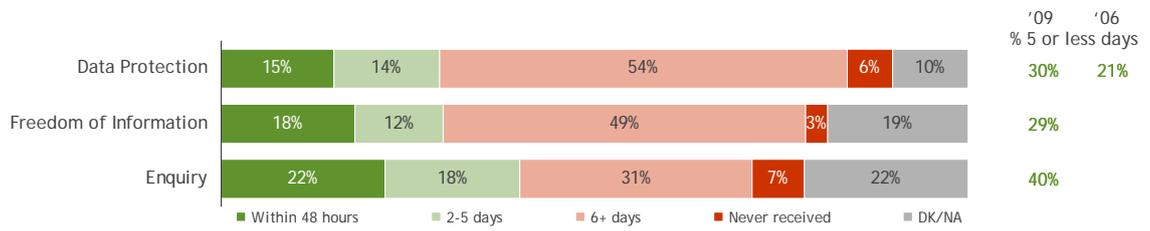


Fig 22. Total time taken for response

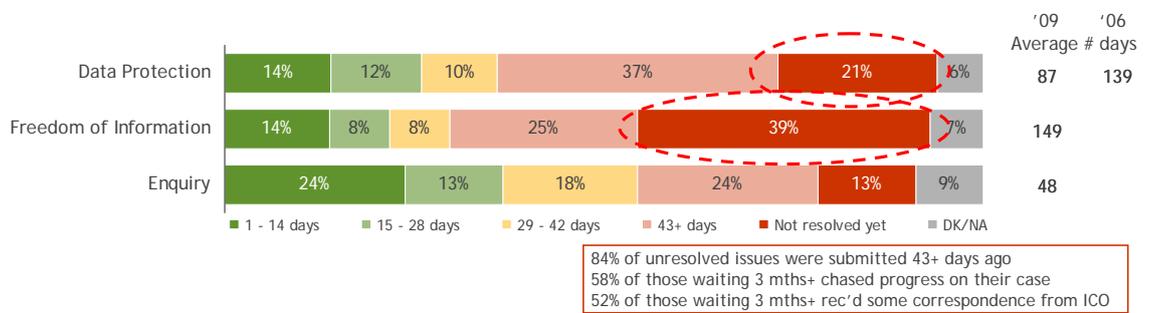


Fig 22. above shows the reported response times, from start to finish, for the ICO to answer the customer's complaint/enquiry.

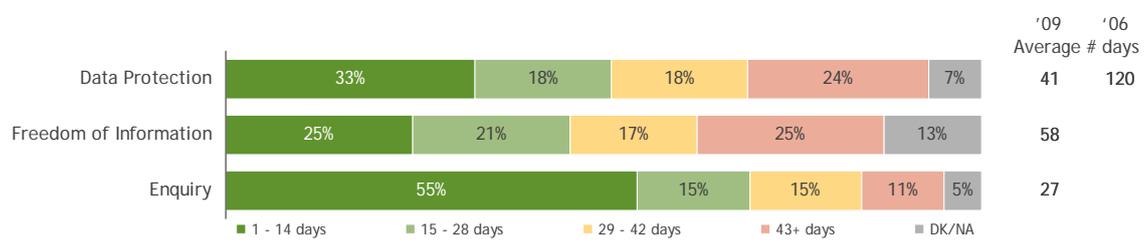
*(note - in assessing the data above, we would note that over half (55%) of the FOI cases had been closed for more than three months prior to the interview being conducted)*

These results highlight significant differences in the experiences of the three customer types:

- The average response time reported by **Enquiry** customers was approximately 7 weeks (48 days), and just over one in ten (13%) felt that their case was still unresolved
- The proportion of **Freedom of Information** customers who felt that their cases had not been resolved yet is much higher, at over a third (39%), and where customers did feel that their issue had been addressed the average response time was three times as long at almost 5 months (149 days)
- The experience of **Data Protection** customers falls between these two extremes; a significant minority (21%) considered their case still open, while the remainder reported the average time taken to provide a final answer as being approximately 3 months (87 days). This response time is significantly better than the 139 days reported 2006 but this positive shift is offset by the fact that in 2006 none of the DP customers stated that their cases had not yet been resolved.

The chart below provides some context for these responses by showing the response time that customer felt would be reasonable to expect for the ICO to provide an answer to their complaint/enquiry.

Fig 23. Time considered reasonable to expect for a response

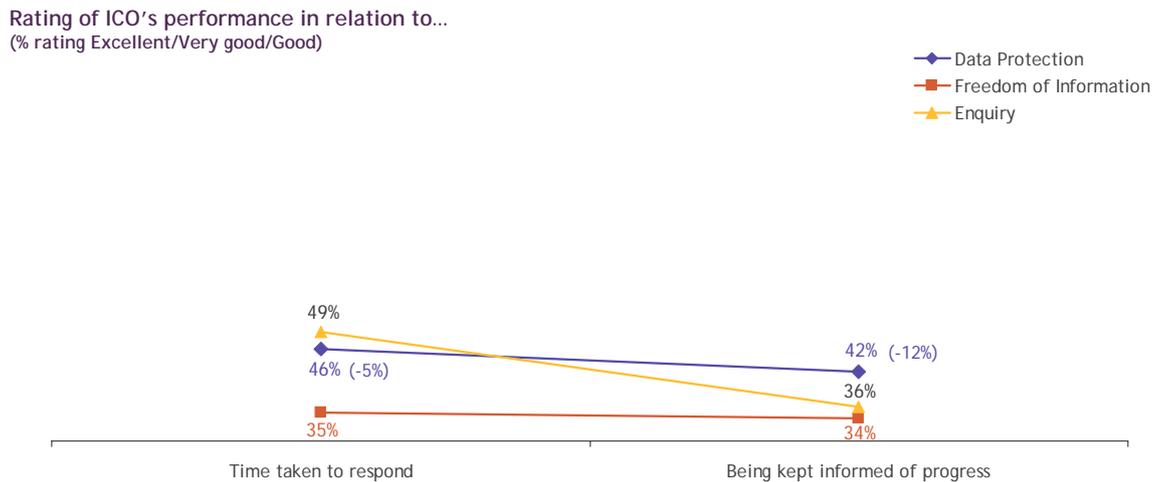


The average response times considered 'reasonable' by customers from all three groups are approximately half as long as those actually experienced. The feedback from the qualitative stage was that timescales were either 'reasonable' or too long, with no customers claiming that the ICO had dealt with their case too quickly.

While expectations are high across the board, it is interesting that the pattern of responses from the three customer groups mirrors their actual experiences. There appears to be an acknowledgement among many of the FOI and DP customers that their type of issue will require consideration and/or investigation and are more likely to be answered in a matter of months rather than weeks.

The net impact of the perceived slow, or unfinished, outcome and the high expectations of response times was that the overall rating for the time taken by the ICO to provide a response was relatively poor, as can be seen in the following chart.

Fig 24. Rating of timing issues



Q16a. I'd now like you to think about the emails and letters you have received back from the ICO in relation to your complaints/enquiries in the last 3/6 months. I'd like you to tell me whether you think the performance of the ICO has generally been...  
Base: All - DP (n=263), FOI (n=102), Enquiry (n=55)

60% of the FOI and half the DP customers gave the ICO a rating of only fair or poor for the time they took to provide a response and for the extent to which they were kept informed about the progress of their complaint/enquiry. These two issues represent the lowest ratings for the ICO on the individual service attributes.

While it may not be possible to significantly reduce the time taken to provide a final answer, the frustration that customers feel about this wait could be tempered by ensuring that the initial acknowledgement is sent out promptly and by making further efforts to keep the individual informed of progress on their case. If they are given an indication of how long their case may take, and the reasons why, this can help allay fears that their case has been 'forgotten'.

Not surprisingly, the qualitative feedback provided ample evidence of frustration with the perceived delays and backlogs. While there was some appreciation of how busy the ICO has become over the past few years there was also concern that the workforce was not sufficient to deal with this volume of work.

*"I don't blame the people there [for delays], they were always really helpful when I contacted them"*

There were also concerns voiced about some of the working methods of the ICO staff in relation to:

- a perceived public sector attitude to deadlines; where these are considered more fluid than would be the case in a commercial setting
- concern that the case allocation system meant a replication of work by the ICO staff; while it was considered beneficial to have cases dealt with by individual case workers this was offset by the potential gains to be had by grouping similar enquiries together and dealing with these as one

*"I can't imagine I'm the first question to ask for this, why can't they group it all together and answer as one"*

A number of the FOI cases covered in the qualitative research concerned time-critical information and, not surprisingly, these respondents were particularly frustrated with the delays they experienced (even where they acknowledged that the delays were being driven by the Public Authority). On occasion this led some individuals to feel that the delays were in fact intentional.

*"They (Councils) deliberately hold on to information till it's lost its value"*

*"They think they have power, they don't think we should have information so they hold off ... just because they can"*

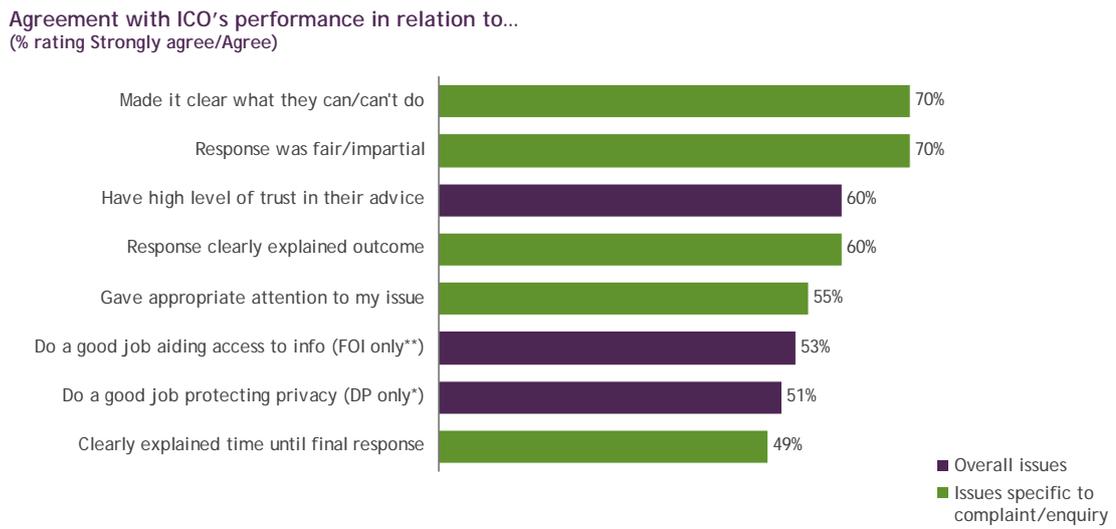
*"They hope you'll lose the will ..."*

### 3.6. Attitudes Towards the ICO

After examining the respondents' type of contact with the ICO and their feelings about how well the ICO performed with respect to that contact, customers were asked to state how much they agreed, or disagree, with a series of attitude statements concerning the ICO.

Fig 25. below provides the data for this series of questions for the total sample.

Fig 25. General attitudes towards the ICO



Q17. I'd like to read out some statements that people have made about dealing with the Information Commissioner's Office. For each one, please tell me how much you agree or disagree with that statement.  
Base: All (n=421), \*DP only (n=304), \*\*FOI only (n=116)

Overall, the ICO scored reasonably well in relation to making it clear what they can and cannot do with respect to a complaint/enquiry and customers feeling that the response received was fair and impartial.

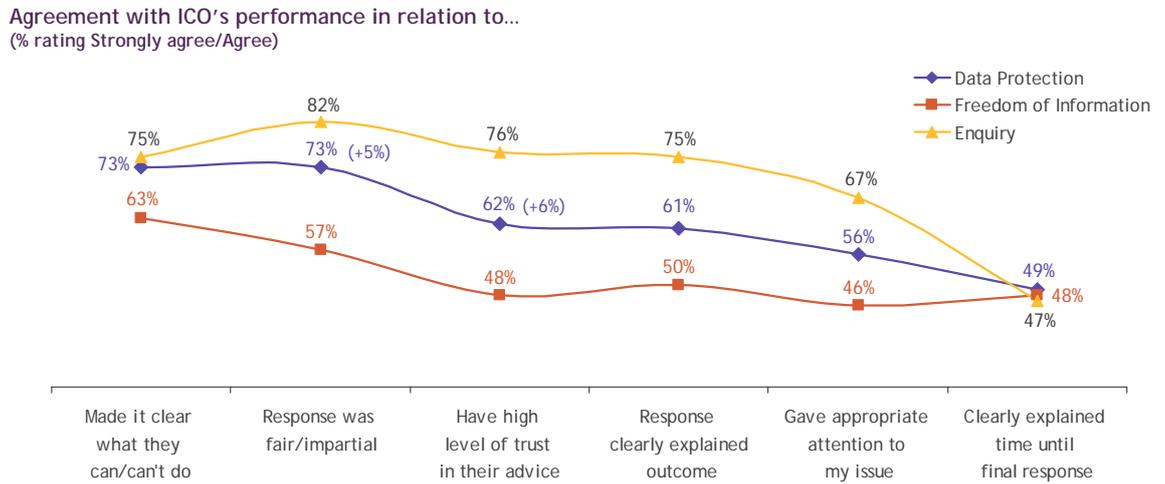
However customer concerns raised earlier in this report regarding the ICO lacking the 'teeth' to enforce legislation and not adequately managing response time expectations are evident in the high proportion of customers who disagreed with the following statements:

- They clearly explain how long it might take to give a final response (35% disagreeing)
- They do a good job in protecting the public's privacy (24% disagreeing)
- They do a good job in helping people gain access to information (21% disagreeing)

As noted earlier, where the ICO is unable to rule in favour of a customer, they should clearly state why this is the case. This may help correct some perceptions, although the qualitative research showed that there will always be some members of the public that question the role of the ICO if they are not able to help solve what they perceive to be clear breaches of law.

The following chart, illustrates the results for these questions for each of the three customer groups.

Fig 26. General attitudes towards the ICO by customer type



Q17. I'd like to read out some statements that people have made about dealing with the Information Commissioner's Office. For each one, please tell me how much you agree or disagree with that statement. Base: All - DP (n=263), FOI (n=102), Enquiry (n=55)

This chart shows a familiar pattern of responses across the three types of customer with Enquiry contacts tending to be more positive in their views and FOI contacts being more negative.

It is, however, notable that all three groups showed the same low level of agreement that the ICO effectively managed their response time expectations.

### 3.7. Customer Satisfaction Index

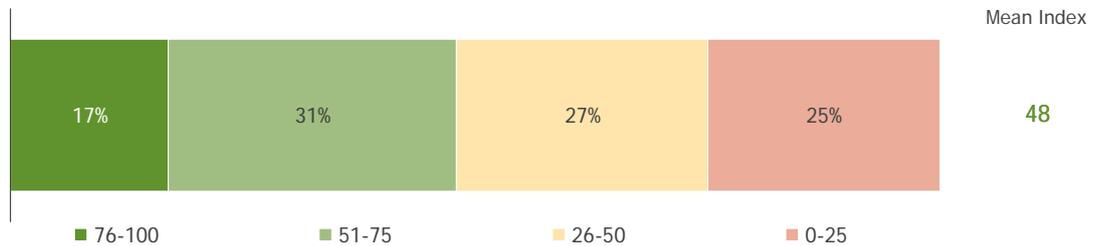
At the set up phase of the programme, the requirement for a single figure Customer Satisfaction Index was discussed and agreed. To meet this objective, data from the overall satisfaction rating, the ratings of specific service attributes, and from the customers' general attitudes to ICO have been combined to produce an overall Customer Satisfaction Index for the ICO.

The weightings that were applied to each category of response were:

Overall quality of service rating	30%
Quality of response (answering query, helpfulness, etc)	25%
Timeliness of response	25%
Overall impression (trust, fairness, doing a good job)	10%
Ease of contact	5%
How well kept informed	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

A score was calculated for each individual respondent using this Index and Fig 27. below shows the distribution of these scores for the total sample and for each of the three customer types.

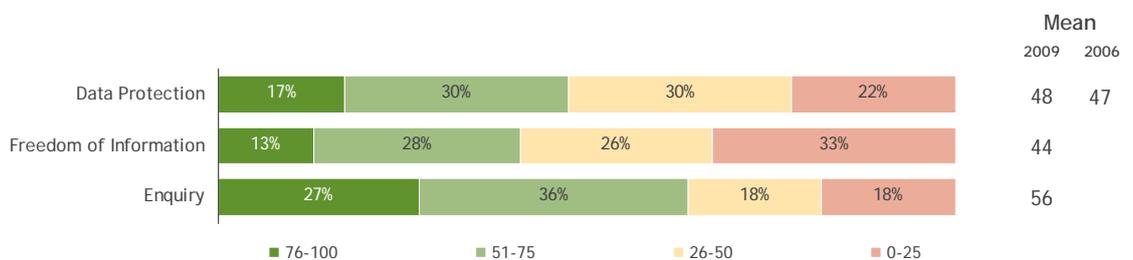
Fig 27a. Index distribution - summary for total sample



Base: All (n=420)

Where figures do not add up exactly, this is due to rounding

Fig 27b. Index distribution - summary for each customer group



Base: All - DP (n=263), FOI (n=102), Enquiry (n=55)

Where figures do not add up exactly, this is due to rounding

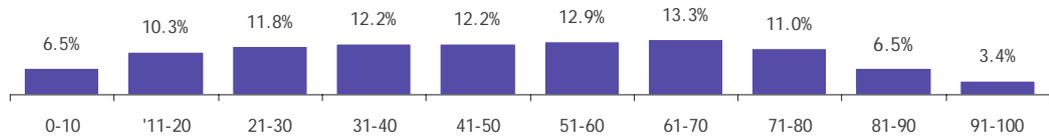
Reflecting data seen throughout the report, Fig 27b. shows a mixed picture of satisfaction levels within all three groups:

- The **Data Protection** sample is particularly spread out across the four tiers with roughly 50% of customers scoring above the 50 level and 50% below.
- The **Freedom of Information** sample is more skewed towards the bottom end, with a third at the low scoring 0-25 level and 13% at the top scoring level.
- The **Enquiry** sample shows the opposite leaning, with over a quarter at the top 76-100 end and 18% at the bottom end.

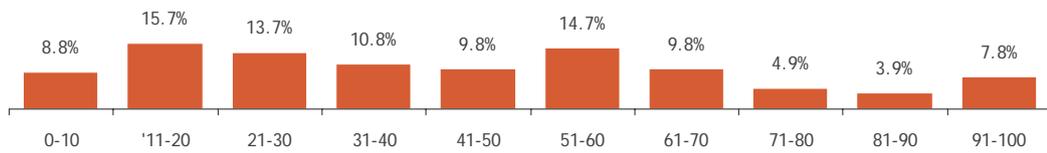
The following chart provides a more detailed breakdown of these index distributions.

**Fig 28. Full Index Distribution**

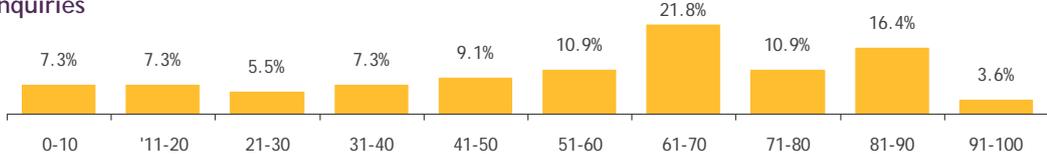
**Data Protection**



**FOI**



**Enquiries**



Base: All - DP (n=263), FOI (n=102), Enquiry (n=55)

Where figures do not add up exactly, this is due to rounding

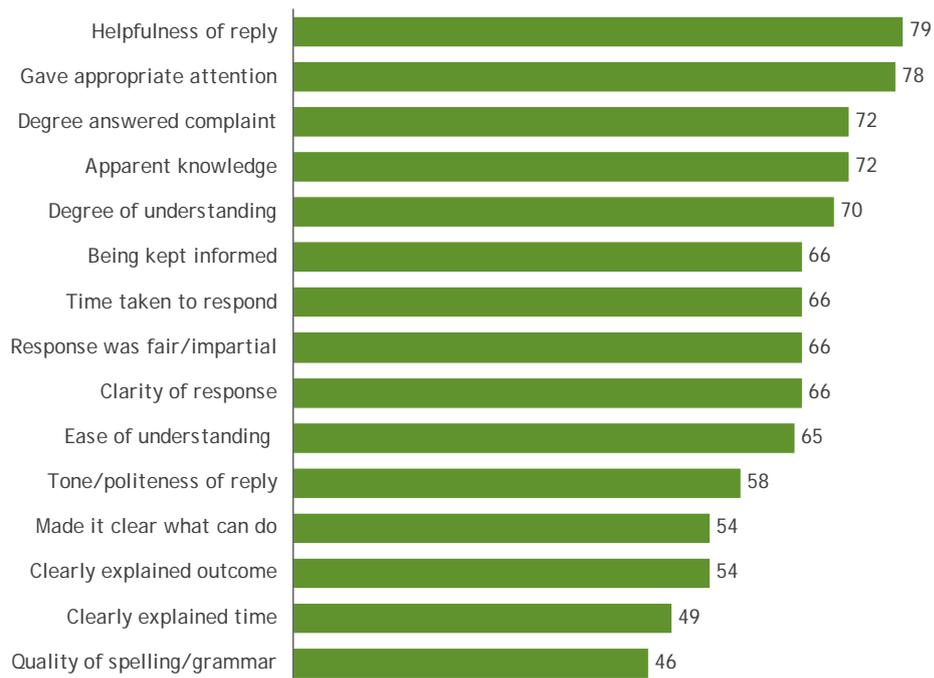
### 3.8. Drivers Analysis

Within the previous sections of this report we have made reference to the likely impact of certain issues on overall satisfaction with the ICO, for example the time taken to respond and the clarity of the response. As part of our further analysis of the data, we have also used statistical procedures to help examine which elements of delivery **drive** overall satisfaction. By doing this, we can help the ICO to understand what customers see as the key aspects of service.

There are two approaches that we have applied here, the first of which is **correlation analysis**. This analysis compares the scores given by respondents to the overall quality of service question with the scores they gave to individual service attributes and with the level of agreement they gave to the general attitude questions. The analysis assesses the strength of the link between these scores; a perfect link, or correlation, would be a score of 100, and anything above 50 can be considered strong.

The results of this analysis are provided below in Fig 29. It should be noted that while these results do reveal certain links across the various data points, some caution needs to be exercised in assuming causality.

Fig 29. Correlation analysis

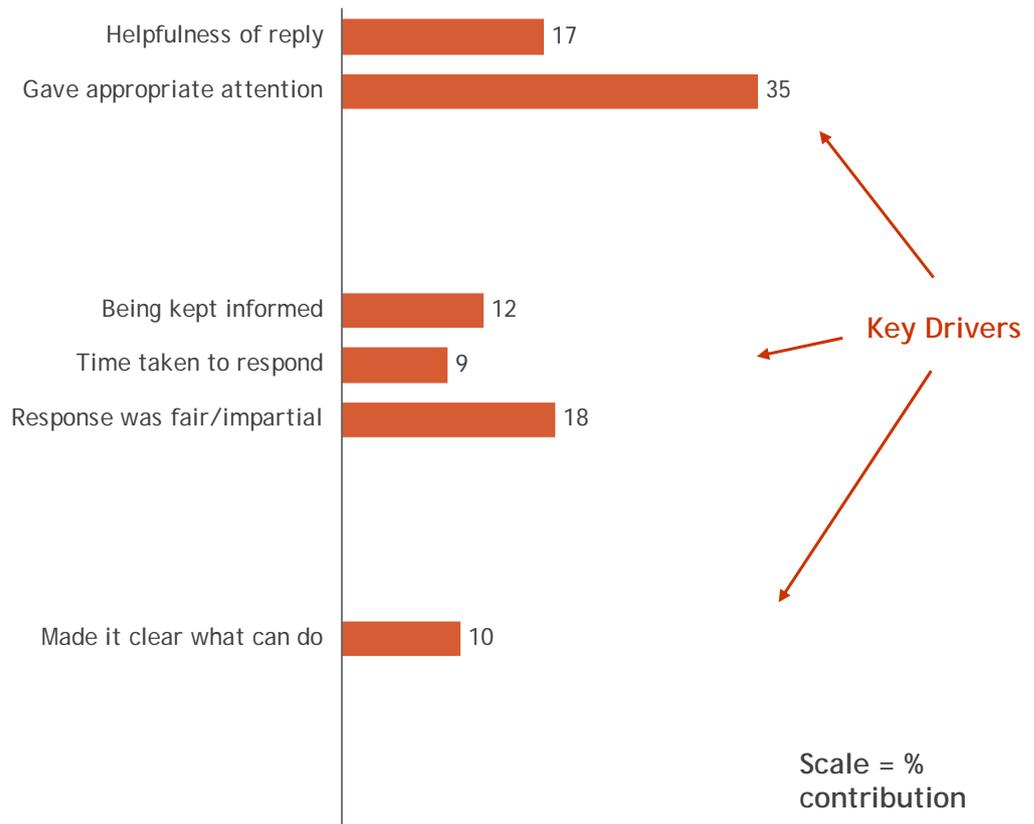


It is clear from the chart above that all of the issues included in the questionnaire have a link with satisfaction, although unfortunately the areas where the ICO is strongest (spelling/grammar and tone/politeness) are at the lower end of the chart.

Correlation analysis is a useful tool in that it shows links between all individual attributes and the target outcome of overall satisfaction. However, there are inevitably links within the attributes that mean that improving performance on one attribute would also lead to an improvement in another attribute, this is often referred to as collinearity.

To overcome this, **regression analysis** is used to identify the variables that are the best predictors of overall satisfaction - the interlinking of individual attributes often means it is not just those with the strongest links that are key drivers. The results of this second stage of analysis are provided below (we have retained the order from Fig. 29 to aid comparison).

**Fig 30. Regression analysis**



This analysis reduces the 15 items to just six that truly 'drive' the overall rating. Clearly from the above, there is a requirement from customers that their complaint or enquiry is given the appropriate amount of attention and dealt with in a fair and impartial way, with the response being delivered in a helpful way (so that action can be taken). This suggests that customers are primarily looking for a level of service where they feel listened to and are treated with respect and consideration. They do not necessarily require a perfect service or an exceptionally fast response but they do expect a fair hearing. We noted earlier that there is an expectation among many that cases will take some time to investigate and what the figures above show is that being kept informed is just as important as the actual time taken to respond.

# Appendices

- A. Quantitative questionnaire
- B. Qualitative discussion guide

**JIGSAW RESEARCH LIMITED**  
13-14 Margaret Street, London, W1W 8RN  
Tel: 020 7291 0810

September 10, 2009

**INFORMATION COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE**  
**CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY 2008/09**  
**Quantitative Questionnaire**  
**99741**

Interviewer Name: \_\_\_\_\_ I.D. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
Respondent Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Respondent Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone No: \_\_\_\_\_

**INTERVIEWER DECLARATION**

I declare that this interview has been conducted strictly in accordance with your specifications within the MRS Code of Conduct and with a person totally unknown to me.

Signed (**INTERVIEWER**): \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**DP / FOI – (QUOTA VARIABLE – TAKEN FROM DATABASE)**

Data Protection - complaint ..... 1 → target = 250  
Freedom of Information – complaint ..... 2 → target = 100  
Enquiry ..... 3 → target = 50

**INTRODUCTION FOR DP COMPLAINTS AND FOI COMPLAINTS**

Good morning/afternoon/evening. My name is \_\_\_\_\_, calling on behalf of Jigsaw Research, an independent market research agency based in London. We have been given your contact details by the Information Commissioner’s Office who I believe wrote to you recently in relation to a research study we are conducting on their behalf. We have been asked to carry out a short interview regarding the service levels they provide to the public in relation to dealing with complaints or enquiries that involve the \_\_\_\_\_ [INSERT Data Protection Act / Freedom of Information Act AS APPROPRIATE). Could I ask you a few questions?

**IF YES, CONTINUE**

**IF NO, ARRANGE A TIME FOR CALLBACK IF POSSIBLE**

S1 Firstly, can I just confirm that you have had some contact with the Information Commissioner’s Office in the last [INSERT 3 months FOR DATA PROTECTION COMPLAINT / 6 months FOR FOI COMPLAINT] in relation to a \_\_\_\_\_ [INSERT Data Protection / Freedom of Information AS APPROPRIATE) issue?

NOTE: IF RESPONDENT UNSURE, EXPLAIN THAT THE INFORMATION COMMISSIONER’S OFFICE IS THE GOVERNMENT BODY THAT DEALS WITH THE \_\_\_\_\_ [INSERT Data Protection Act / Freedom of Information Act. AS APPROPRIATE]

- Yes have had contact.....1 CONTINUE
- No have not had contact.....2 CLOSE

**INTRODUCTION FOR ENQUIRIES**

Good morning/afternoon/evening. My name is \_\_\_\_\_, calling on behalf of Jigsaw Research, an independent market research agency based in London. We have been given your contact details by the Information Commissioner’s Office who I believe wrote to you recently in relation to a research study we are conducting on their behalf. We have been asked to carry out a short interview regarding the service levels they provide to the public in relation to dealing with complaints or enquiries that involve the Data Protection Act and the Freedom of Information Act. Could I ask you a few questions?

**IF YES, CONTINUE**

**IF NO, ARRANGE A TIME FOR CALLBACK IF POSSIBLE**

S1 Firstly, can I just confirm that you have had some contact with the Information Commissioner’s Office in the last 3 months?

NOTE: IF RESPONDENT UNSURE, EXPLAIN THAT THE INFORMATION COMMISSIONER’S OFFICE IS THE GOVERNMENT BODY THAT DEALS WITH THE Data Protection Act and the Freedom of Information Act

Yes have had contact.....1 CONTINUE  
No have not had contact.....2 CLOSE

S1a And was your contact in relation to the Data Protection Act or the Freedom of Information Act?

Data Protection Act.....1  
Freedom of Information Act.....2

USING S1a IN COMBINATION WITH THE DATABASE INFO, WE NOW KNOW WHETHER THE RESPONDENT WILL ANSWER ABOUT THE DATA PROTECTION ACT OR THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT.

SAY: Throughout the interview I would like you to give your answers in relation to the **service** provided by the Information Commissioner’s Office rather than the outcome of the complaint or enquiry or the \_\_\_\_\_ [INSERT Data Protection Act / Freedom of Information Act AS APPROPRIATE) itself.

I would also like to stress that all answers should be given in relation to contact that you have had in the last [INSERT 3 months FOR DP COMPLAINTS/ 6 months FOR FOI COMPLAINTS / 3 months FOR ENQUIRIES] that relate to enquiries or complaints you have submitted either by email, letter or fax or by using a form.

<b>MAIN</b>
-------------

<b>SECTION 1 - BACKGROUND AND NATURE OF ENQUIRY(IES)</b>
--

**ASK ALL**

Q1a. Firstly, has your recent contact with the Information Commissioner's Office been to find out information or has it been in relation to a complaint or complaints you were making?

**SINGLE CODE**

- |                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| Information ..... | 1 |
| Complaint.....    | 2 |
| Both .....        | 3 |
|                   |   |
| Neither .....     | 4 |
| Don't know .....  | 5 |
| Refused .....     | 6 |

***NOTE TO SCRIPTWRITER – FOR THE REST OF THE INTERVIEW WE WILL NEED TO TAILOR THE QUESTIONS BASED ON WHETHER THE RESPONDENT WAS MAKING AN ENQUIRY, A COMPLAINT OR BOTH. THIS INFORMATION WILL BE TAKEN FROM Q1a AND WE WILL NEED TO INSERT TEXT IN SUBSEQUENT QUESTIONS AS FOLLOWS:***

***IF CODE 1 OR 4 OR 5 OR 6, THE CONTACT WILL BE DEFINED AS AN ENQUIRY(IES)***

***IF CODE 2, THE CONTACT WILL BE DEFINED AS A COMPLAINT(S)***

***IF CODE 3, THE CONTACT WILL BE DEFINED AS ENQUIRY(IES) OR COMPLAINT(S)***

***(NOTE WORDING WILL VARY FROM QUESTION TO QUESTION, DEPENDING ON WHETHER SINGLE OR MULTIPLE ENQUIRER AND WHAT THE ACTUAL QUESTION IS)***

**ASK Q1b IF COMPLAINT OR BOTH (CODES 2 OR 3) AT Q1a**

 Q1b. And who have you needed to make a complaint about? **CODE AS MANY AS APPLY**
**FOR BOTH DP AND FOI**

Employer.....	1
Government department (HM Revenue & Customs, Dept for Work and Pensions, etc.).....	2
Health sector (local health authority, hospital, G.P., Doctor, Dentist, clinic, etc).....	3
Police, courts, prison service, probation service, etc .....	4
Education sector (local education authority, school, University, college) .....	5
Local authority, local council.....	6

**FOR DP ONLY**

Bank or financial institution.....	7
Credit scoring or credit reference agency .....	8
Commercial company.....	9
Charity .....	0
Club, organisation or membership body .....	1

**FOR BOTH DP AND FOI**

Other (WRITE IN).....	2
-----------------------	---

\_\_\_\_\_

Don't know .....	1
Refused .....	2

Q1c. Was your recent contact with the Information Commissioner's Office on your own behalf or on behalf of someone else? **SINGLE CODE.**

- Own behalf..... 1
- On behalf of someone else..... 2
- Both ..... 3
  
- Don't know ..... 4
- Refused ..... 5

**IF ON BEHALF OF SOMEONE ELSE OR BOTH (CODES 2 OR 3) AT Q1c ASK Q1d**

Q1d. And who was the contact on behalf of? **CODE ALL THAT APPLY**

- Family member ..... 1
- Friend..... 2
- Employer..... 3
- Other (e.g. someone they look after, someone attending a group or class they run, etc) **WRITE IN ANSWER GIVEN** ..... 4

---

- Don't know ..... 5
- Refused ..... 6

**IF ON OWN BEHALF AT Q1c (CODE 1) ASK Q1e.**

Q1e. And can I check, was that contact in relation to a personal complaint or enquiry?

**[NOTE FOR INTERVIEWER - THIS IS AS OPPOSED TO IT BEING A BUSINESS RELATED COMPLAINT OR ENQUIRY]**

- Yes..... 1
- No ..... 2
- Don't know ..... 3

**ASK ALL**

Q2. Can you **briefly** describe what the written \_\_\_\_\_ [INSERT enquiry or enquiries / complaint or complaints / enquiries or complaints AS APPROPRIATE FROM Q1a) you have submitted to the Information Commissioner’s Office in the last [[INSERT 3 months FOR DP COMPLAINTS/ 6 months FOR FOI COMPLAINTS / 3 months FOR ENQUIRIES]] have been about.

**INTERVIEWER – TYPE IN ANSWER VERBATIM AND GO BACK AND PRECODE AT THE END. DO NOT READ OUT.**

**INTERVIEWER – CODE CLOSEST RESPONSE. CODE AS MANY AS APPLY**

**Q2 CODE LIST FOR DATA PROTECTION**

- Received unsolicited call/email/letter ..... 1
- Enquiry about credit check / being refused financial product.....2
- Issue with personal details being passed on.....3
- Dispute with employer / former employer .....4
- A problem with getting a copy of your personal information .....5
- Your information was inaccurate .....6
- Your information was not kept securely .....7
- Wanted to know if Data Protection Act had been breached.....8
- How Data Protection Act applies to specific situation .....9
- Did not think that their data should be being held by  
a company or organisation ..... 10
- Did not think the data being held on them was relevant or  
adequate (even though it was correct or accurate)..... 11
- Other ..... 12

**Q2 CODE LIST FOR FREEDOM OF INFORMATION**

- Did not receive the information they requested..... 1
- Wanted to know if Freedom of Information Act had been breached 2
- Wanted to know how Freedom of information Act  
applies to specific situation.....3
- Wanted general information about the Freedom of Information Act 4
- Other .....5

Q3a. And has your contact in the last \_\_\_\_\_ [INSERT 3 months FOR DP COMPLAINTS/ 6 months FOR FOI COMPLAINTS / 3 months FOR ENQUIRIES] been the first time you have had contact with the Information Commissioner’s Office? **SINGLE CODE.**

- Yes, first ever contact ..... 1
- No, have been in contact before.....2
- Don’t know .....9

Q3b. And in the last \_\_\_\_\_ [INSERT 3 months FOR DP COMPLAINTS/ 6 months FOR FOI COMPLAINTS / 3 months FOR ENQUIRIES], how many different \_\_\_\_\_ [INSERT enquiries / complaints / enquiries or complaints AS APPROPRIATE FROM Q1a) have you submitted to the Information Commissioner’s Office? **WRITE IN NUMBER.**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Don’t know ..... 1

**IF 2 OR MORE AT Q3b THEN ASK Q3c**

Q3c. And how many of those were written \_\_\_\_\_ [INSERT enquiries / complaints / enquiries or complaints AS APPROPRIATE FROM Q1a)? **WRITE IN NUMBER.**

\_\_\_\_\_ 1  
 Don't know ..... 1

**RESPONDENT CLASSIFICATION FOR LATER QUESTIONS**

**IF RESPONDENT HAS SUBMITTED ONLY 1 ENQUIRY/COMPLAINT AT Q3b or Q3c, CLASSIFY AS 'SINGLE ENQUIRER'. OTHERWISE CLASSIFY AS MULTIPLE ENQUIRER.**

**Q4 REMOVED**

**ASK ALL. IF MULTIPLE ENQUIRER ASK Q5a. IF SINGLE ENQUIRER ASK Q5b**

Q5a With regard to written \_\_\_\_\_ [INSERT enquiries / complaints / enquiries or complaints AS APPROPRIATE FROM Q1a) over the last \_\_\_\_\_ [INSERT 3 months FOR DP COMPLAINTS/ 6 months FOR FOI COMPLAINTS / 3 months FOR ENQUIRIES] did you typically know how to get in contact with the Information Commissioner's Office or did you need to find out? **SINGLE CODE**

Q5b And did you already know how to get in contact with the Information Commissioner's Office or was this something you had to find out before contacting them? **SINGLE CODE**

Already knew ..... 1  
 Had to find out ..... 2  
 Varies/both (**ONLY FOR THOSE ANSWERING Q5a**) ..... 3  
 Don't know/can't remember ..... 4

**Q6a/b ONLY FOR THOSE WHO HAD TO FIND OUT OR VARIES AT Q5a/b (CODE 2/3)**

**IF MULTIPLE ENQUIRER ASK Q6a. IF SINGLE ENQUIRER ASK Q6b**

Q6a And typically how easy was it to find out how to get in contact, would you say it was... **READ OUT. SINGLE CODE**

Q6b How easy was it to find out how to get in contact, would you say it was.....**READ OUT. SINGLE CODE**

Extremely easy ..... 1  
 Very easy ..... 2  
 Fairly easy ..... 3  
 Not very easy ..... 4  
 Not at all easy ..... 5  
 Don't know/can't remember ..... 6

**ASK ALL.****IF MULTIPLE ENQUIRER ASK Q7a. if SINGLE ENQUIRER ASK Q7b**

Q7a Have any of your written \_\_\_\_\_ [INSERT enquiries / complaints / enquiries or complaints AS APPROPRIATE FROM Q1a) in the last \_\_\_\_\_ [INSERT 3 months FOR DP COMPLAINTS/ 6 months FOR FOI COMPLAINTS / 3 months FOR ENQUIRIES] involved receiving help or advice from other companies, organisations, employers or Government departments?

IF YES ASK. Who else gave you help or advice? MULTICODE

Q7b Did your recent \_\_\_\_\_ [INSERT enquiry / complaint / enquiry or complaint AS APPROPRIATE FROM Q1a) involve receiving help or advice from any other companies, organisations, employers or Government departments?

IF YES ASK. Who else gave you help or advice? MULTICODE

No other contact/ no-one .....	1
Employer.....	2
Private / commercial company .....	3
Local Education Authority (LEA) .....	1
Department of HEALTH.....	2
Department for WORK AND PENSIONS .....	3
Department for BUSINESS ENTERPRISE (BERR).....	4
HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) .....	5
DVLA .....	7
Child Support Agency (CSA) .....	8
Other Government Department .....	9
Local MP .....	0
Local Authority/Council.....	X
Social Services .....	1
Educational establishment.....	2
Health organization e.g. hospital, G.P/ doctor.....	3
The Police.....	4
The Prison Service/ probation service.....	5
Trade Union.....	6
Industry or Trade Organisation.....	7
Solicitor / lawyer / barrister .....	8
Consultant / adviser .....	9
Trading Standards Office.....	1
Citizen's Advice Bureau.....	2
Credit reference agency (e.g. Experian, Equifax) .....	3
Bank or building society.....	4
Other regulatory body.....	1
Other (WRITE IN) .....	2
Don't know/cant remember.....	X
Refused .....	V

**IF MULTIPLE ENQUIRER ASK Q8a. if SINGLE ENQUIRER ASK Q8b**

- Q8a Was the Information Commissioner’s Office typically the first organisation you contacted in relation to your \_\_\_\_\_ [INSERT enquiries / complaints / enquiries or complaints AS APPROPRIATE FROM Q1a)?
- Q8b Was the Information Commissioner’s Office the first organisation you contacted in relation to your \_\_\_\_\_ [INSERT enquiry / complaint / enquiry or complaint AS APPROPRIATE FROM Q1a)?

- Yes..... 1  
 No .....2  
 Varied (MULTIPLE ENQUIRERS ONLY).....3  
 Don’t know .....3

**IF NO OR IT VARIED, THEN ASK Q9a/b**

**IF MULTIPLE ENQUIRER ASK Q9a. IF SINGLE ENQUIRER ASK Q9b**

- Q9a Were they typically the last organisation you contacted?
- Q9b Were they the last organisation you contacted?

- Yes..... 1  
 No .....2  
 Don’t know .....3

**IF MULTIPLE ENQUIRER ASK Q10a. if SINGLE ENQUIRER ASK Q10b**

- Q10a Have any of your written \_\_\_\_\_ [INSERT enquiries / complaints / enquiries or complaints AS APPROPRIATE FROM Q1a) sent in the last \_\_\_\_\_ [INSERT 3 months FOR DP COMPLAINTS/ 6 months FOR FOI COMPLAINTS / 3 months FOR ENQUIRIES] also involved telephone conversations with staff at the Information Commissioner’s Office?
- Q10b Did your recent \_\_\_\_\_ [INSERT enquiry / complaint / enquiry or complaint AS APPROPRIATE FROM Q1a) involve any telephone conversations with staff at the Information Commissioner’s Office?

- Yes..... 1  
 No .....2  
 Don’t know/cant remember.....3

**IF MULTIPLE ENQUIRER ASK Q10c. if SINGLE ENQUIRER ASK Q10d**

- Q10c And have any of those \_\_\_\_\_ [INSERT enquiries / complaints / enquiries or complaints AS APPROPRIATE FROM Q1a) also involved searching the Information Commissioner’s Office website?
- Q10d Did your recent \_\_\_\_\_ [INSERT enquiry / complaint / enquiry or complaint AS APPROPRIATE FROM Q1a) involve searching the Information Commissioner’s Office website?

- Yes..... 1  
 No .....2  
 Don’t know/cant remember.....3

**IF YES AT Q10c/d**

- Q10e And was that suggested by someone from the Information Commissioner’s Office?

- Yes..... 1  
 No .....2  
 Don’t know/cant remember.....3

**IF NO OR DON'T KNOW AT Q10e ASK Q10f**

Q10f Did you visit the website before contacting the Information Commissioner's Office?

- Yes..... 1
- No ..... 2
- Don't know/cant remember..... 3

**IF YES AT Q10c/d**

Q10g. And how would you rate the website, would you say it was .... ?

**READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.**

- Excellent ..... 1
- Very Good..... 2
- Good ..... 3
- Fair..... 4
- Poor ..... 5
- Don't Know (DO NOT READ OUT) ..... 6

**SECTION 2 – SPECIFICS RELATING TO ENQUIRY(IES)**

**IN THE FOLLOWING SECTION, THE QUESTION WORDING WILL BE DRIVEN BY THE CLASSIFICATION. IF THE RESPONDENT IS A MULTIPLE ENQUIRER THEN THEY WILL BE ASKED THE a) VERSION I.E. Q11a, Q12a, Q13a, ETC. THE SINGLE ENQUIRERS WILL BE ASKED THE b) VERSION OF THE QUESTION I.E. Q11b, Q12b, Q13b ETC.**

**ASK ALL**

Q11a Typically how did you first make contact with someone at the Information Commissioner’s Office? **SINGLE CODE. READ OUT IF NEEDED.**

Q11b How did you first make contact with someone at the Information Commissioner’s Office? **SINGLE CODE. READ OUT IF NEEDED.**

- Email..... 1
- By post (letter or form).....2
- Phone .....3
- Fax.....4
- DO NOT READ OUT**
- Don’t know/can’t remember.....5

**Q12 REMOVED**

**ASK ALL**

Q13a Typically how many separate pieces of written correspondence did you send in relation to each individual \_\_\_\_\_ [INSERT enquiry / complaint / enquiry or complaint AS APPROPRIATE FROM Q1a)?

Q13b How many separate pieces of written correspondence did you send in relation to this recent \_\_\_\_\_ [INSERT enquiry / complaint / enquiry or complaint AS APPROPRIATE FROM Q1a)?

--	--

Don’t know/can’t remember..... 1

**ASK Q13c IF 2 OR MORE AT Q13a OR Q13b**

Q13c Why did you need to send in more than one piece of written correspondence?  
**INTERVIEWER – TYPE IN ANSWER VERBATIM AND GO BACK AND PRECODE AT THE END. DO NOT READ OUT.**

**CODE LIST FOR Q13c**

- They needed me to supply more information ..... 1
- They needed me to fill in a form (for further details)..... 2
- I needed more information from them / response lead  
to new questions I needed answers to ..... 3
- Response not complete ..... 4
- Did not understand response ..... 5
- Disagreed with response ..... 6
- Response was taking too long / chased them to see what  
was happening ..... 7
- Don't know / can't remember ..... X

**ASK ALL**

Q14a And typically how quickly did you get an initial acknowledgement of any written \_\_\_\_\_ [INSERT enquiry / complaint / enquiry or complaint AS APPROPRIATE FROM Q1a)? **CODE CLOSEST ANSWER. SINGLE CODE**

Q14b Did you receive an initial acknowledgement of your written \_\_\_\_\_ [INSERT enquiry / complaint / enquiry or complaint AS APPROPRIATE FROM Q1a)? **IF YES, ASK** How long did it take to get the acknowledgement? **CODE CLOSEST ANSWER. SINGLE CODE**

- Within 24 hours..... 1
- Within 48 hours ..... 2
- Between 2 and 5 days ..... 3
- Longer than 5 days..... 4
- Never receive(d) one ..... 5
- Don't Know (DO NOT READ OUT) ..... 6

Q15a And on average, how long did it take from start to finish to get answers to your written \_\_\_\_\_ [INSERT enquiries / complaints / enquiries or complaints AS APPROPRIATE FROM Q1a)? **WRITE IN**

Q15b. From start to finish, how long did it take to answer your \_\_\_\_\_ [INSERT enquiry / complaint / enquiry or complaint AS APPROPRIATE FROM Q1a)? **WRITE IN**

Months	Weeks	Days

- Enquiry not resolved (FOR Q15b ONLY)..... 1**
- Don't know ..... 2

**IF NOT RESOLVED AT Q15b, ASK Q15c. OTHERS TO Q15d**

Q15c. How long ago did you submit the \_\_\_\_\_ [INSERT enquiry / complaint / enquiry or complaint AS APPROPRIATE FROM Q1a) to the Information Commissioner's Office?  
**WRITE IN**

Months	Weeks	Days

Don't know ..... 1

**ASK ALL**

Q15d Given the nature of your \_\_\_\_\_ [INSERT enquiries / complaints / enquiries or complaints AS APPROPRIATE FROM Q1a), what do you think is a reasonable amount of time for the Information Commissioner's Office to take to give you a response? **WRITE IN**

Months	Weeks	Days

**IF Q15b OR Q15c > 3 MONTHS ASK Q15e**

Q15e While you were waiting for the response did you .... **READ OUT**

	YES	NO	DK
Receive any correspondence telling you that your case was still in the queue waiting to be dealt with .....	1	2	3
Chase or make any enquiries as to how your case was progressing .....	1	2	3

**RESPONDENT TO ANSWER EITHER Q16a IF MULTIPLE ENQUIRER OR Q16b IF SINGLE ENQUIRER**

Q16a. I'd now like you to think about the emails and letters you have received back from the Information Commissioner's Office in relation to your \_\_\_\_\_ [INSERT enquiries / complaints / enquiries or complaints AS APPROPRIATE FROM Q1a) in the last [INSERT 3 months FOR DP COMPLAINTS/ 6 months FOR FOI COMPLAINTS / 3 months FOR ENQUIRIES]I'm going to read out a number of aspects to do with the replies and as I read each one I'd like you to tell me whether you think the performance of the Information Commissioner's Office has generally been Excellent, Very Good, Good, Fair or Poor.  
SINGLE CODE

So firstly how would you rate.....**READ OUT FIRST STATEMENT.** And how would you rate.... **READ OUT OTHER STATEMENTS**

**RANDOMISE ORDER**

	Excellent Don't	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Know
The degree to which they understood your _____ (INSERT enquiries / complaints / enquiries or complaints AS APPROPRIATE FROM Q1a)	1 .....	2 .....	3 .....	4.....	5.....	6
The clarity of the responses	1 .....	2 .....	3 .....	4.....	5.....	6
Ease of understanding of the responses	1 .....	2 .....	3 .....	4.....	5.....	6
The degree to which the replies answered your _____ (INSERT enquiries / complaints / enquiries or complaints AS APPROPRIATE FROM Q1a)	1 .....	2 .....	3 .....	4.....	5.....	6
Overall helpfulness of replies	1 .....	2 .....	3 .....	4.....	5.....	6
Apparent level of knowledge of the people who replied to you	1 .....	2 .....	3 .....	4.....	5.....	6
The tone and politeness of the responses	1 .....	2 .....	3 .....	4.....	5.....	6
The quality of spelling and grammar	1 .....	2 .....	3 .....	4.....	5.....	6
The time it took to provide responses to your _____ (INSERT enquiries / complaints / enquiries or complaints AS APPROPRIATE FROM Q1a)	1 .....	2 .....	3 .....	4.....	5.....	6
The extent to which you were kept informed about the progress of your _____ (INSERT enquiries / complaints / enquiries or complaints AS APPROPRIATE FROM Q1a)	1 .....	2 .....	3 .....	4.....	5.....	6

Q16b. I'd now like you to think about the emails and letters you have received back from the Information Commissioner's Office in relation to your most recent written \_\_\_\_\_ [INSERT enquiry / complaint / enquiry or complaint AS APPROPRIATE FROM Q1a). I'm going to read out a number of aspects to do with the replies and as I read each one I'd like you to tell me whether you think the performance of the Information Commissioner's Office was Excellent, Very Good, Good, Fair or Poor. SINGLE CODE

So firstly how would you rate.....**READ OUT FIRST STATEMENT.** And how would you rate.... **READ OUT OTHER STATEMENTS**

**RANDOMISE ORDER**

	Excellent	Very	Good	Fair	Poor	
	Don't	Good				Know
The degree to which they understood your _____ [INSERT enquiry / complaint / enquiry or complaint AS APPROPRIATE FROM Q1a)	1	2	3	4	5	6
The clarity of the response	1	2	3	4	5	6
Ease of understanding of the response	1	2	3	4	5	6
The degree to which the reply answered your _____ [INSERT enquiry / complaint / enquiry or complaint AS APPROPRIATE FROM Q1a)	1	2	3	4	5	6
Overall helpfulness of reply	1	2	3	4	5	6
Apparent level of knowledge of the person who replied to you	1	2	3	4	5	6
The tone and politeness of the response	1	2	3	4	5	6
The quality of spelling and grammar	1	2	3	4	5	6
The time it took to provide a response to your _____ [INSERT enquiry / complaint / enquiry or complaint AS APPROPRIATE FROM Q1a)	1	2	3	4	5	6
The extent to which you were kept informed about the progress of your _____ [INSERT enquiry / complaint / enquiry or complaint AS APPROPRIATE FROM Q1a)	1	2	3	4	5	6

**ASK ALL**

Q17. I'd like to read out some statements that people have made about dealing with the Information Commissioner's Office. For each one, please tell me how much you agree or disagree with that statement.

So firstly how much do you agree or disagree.....**READ OUT FIRST STATEMENT.**  
Do you ... **READ SCALE**

And what about.... **READ OUT OTHER STATEMENTS**

**RANDOMISE ORDER**

	Strongly Don't Agree Know	1	2	3	4	5	6	Strongly Disagree
I have a high level of trust in their advice	1	2	3	4	5	6		
The response[s] I received [was/were] fair and impartial	1	2	3	4	5	6		
I feel they gave an appropriate amount of attention to the case[s] I submitted	1	2	3	4	5	6		
They make it clear what they can and can't do in relation to an enquiry or complaint	1	2	3	4	5	6		
They clearly explain how long it might take to give a final response	1	2	3	4	5	6		
Their response[s] clearly explain the outcome of their investigation	1	2	3	4	5	6		
<b>DATA PROTECTION ONLY</b>								
They do a good job in protecting the public's privacy	1	2	3	4	5	6		
<b>FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ONLY</b>								
They do a good job in helping people gain access to information	1	2	3	4	5	6		

Q18a. Overall, how would you rate the quality of service provided to you by the Information Commissioner's Office in relation to enquiries or complaints submitted in writing?

**READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.**

- Excellent ..... 1
- Very Good.....2
- Good .....3
- Fair.....4
- Poor .....5
- Don't Know (DO NOT READ OUT) .....6

**ASK ALL**

Q18b. And how would you compare the quality of service provided by the Information Commissioner’s Office with that of other organisations you have dealt with generally. Would you say their service is.... **READ OUT. SINGLE CODE**

- A lot better ..... 1
- A little better.....2
- About the same .....3
- A little worse .....4
- A lot worse.....5
- DO NOT READ**
- Refused .....6
- Don’t know .....7

Q19 While we have focused on the service provided by the Information Commissioner’s Office, how satisfied were you with the actual outcome of your recent enquiries or complaints, were you.... **READ OUT**

- Very satisfied ..... 1
- Fairly satisfied.....2
- Not very satisfied .....3
- Not at all satisfied .....4
- Don’t Know (DO NOT READ OUT) .....6

SAY: Finally I would just like to ask you a few questions about yourself. These are purely to help us in our analysis:

P1. GENDER (DO NOT ASK, CODE AS APPROPRIATE)

- Male ..... 1
- Female.....2

P2. Which of the following age bands are you in?

- 29 or under ..... 1
- 30-39.....2
- 40-49.....3
- 50-59.....4
- 60 or over.....5
- DO NOT READ**
- Refused .....6

P3. And are you....**READ OUT?**

- Employed full time (30+ hours per week) ..... 1
- Employed part time (8-29 hours per week) .....2
- Self employed .....3
- Retired .....4
- Student .....5
- Homemaker .....6
- Non-working.....7
- DO NOT READ**
- Refused .....8

P4. And what is the occupation of the main income earner in the household? WRITE IN. PROBE FULLY AND CODE SOCIAL GRADE AS APPROPRIATE.

- AB..... 1
- C1..... 2
- C2..... 3
- DE..... 4

P5 Are you registered disabled?

- Yes..... 1
- No..... 2
- Don't know / refused..... 3

P6 Are you from an ethnic minority

- Yes..... 1
- No..... 2
- Don't know / refused..... 3

P7 We may be conducting some follow-up work in the near future. If the work goes ahead, would you be willing to be re-contacted.

- Yes..... 1
- No..... 2

**THANK AND CLOSE**

That's the end of the interview. If there are any other comments you would like to make about the service provided by the Information Commissioner's Office you can email the following address [informationcommissioner@jigsaw-research.co.uk](mailto:informationcommissioner@jigsaw-research.co.uk)

I would just like to confirm that my name is.....and I have been calling on behalf of Jigsaw Research in London, and that all your responses will be kept completely anonymous and confidential. Should you wish to verify this information in anyway I can provide you with either the name and telephone number of the executive in charge of this project or alternatively you can call Freephone Market Research Society on 0500 396999 who will be able to confirm our status as a legitimate market research agency.

**IF REQUIRES EXECUTIVE NAME AND NUMBER**

Mark Yeomans on 020 7291 0810

## Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)

### DATA SUBJECTS

### IN DEPTH INTERVIEWS

### JIGSAW RESEARCH 99741

#### INTRODUCTION

*Purpose of this section is to set the scene for the interview, gaining an understanding of who the respondent is and why they were in contact with the ICO.*

- Explain purpose of research
- Explain Jigsaw acting on behalf of ICO (may even need to explain that contractually *Jigsaw are tied not to disclose or use the information for any other purpose*); *confidentiality/MRS code. Stress that the purpose of the interview is to talk about service levels provided by the ICO and not the actual legislation and policies themselves, or the outcome of their case.*

#### NATURE OF ENQUIRY/COMPLAINT

*Purpose of this section is to understand the enquiry(ies) or complaint(s) made by the respondent. This will act as a context for their expectations and experiences with the ICO. We will aim to take data from the quantitative interview in order that we have a sense of their opinions.*

- Was the recent contact your first time in contact with the ICO? IF NOT How many times have you been in contact before and how long ago?
- Please can you briefly describe the nature of the most recent enquiry(ies) or complaint(s) you made to the ICO?
  - What was (were) the enquiry(ies) or complaint(s) about? Would you describe your enquiry(ies) or complaint(s) as simple or complex? Was the ICO (typically) the first/last organisation you contacted? IF OTHERS Who else were you in contact with and why?

*NOTE - ensure we understand whether the contact was in relation to a complaint or an enquiry.*

- Was whole enquiry/complaint conducted via e-mail/letter or did you talk to the ICO over the phone and/or use their website? *Ask respondent to explain the process they went through and why particular channels used.*
- Did the enquiry/complaint involve more than one piece of correspondence and/or did it involve the respondent filling out a form. IF YES, why did they need to send in more than one piece of correspondence and/or a form?

## EXPECTATIONS PRIOR TO CONTACT

*Before looking at exactly what happened, it is useful to assess expectations in order to determine whether the service received came as a surprise and whether certain aspects are out of line with experiences with other Government bodies.*

- Thinking of the entire enquiry(ies) / complaint (s) from start to finish, before writing to the ICO, what were your expectations of how the enquiry(ies) / complaint(s) would be handled?
- (Type of) Person who you thought you would get through to (for example, did they think the person dealing with their enquiry/complaint would be an expert on their issue or area of concern, did they think the person would have an influence on policy, what level of seniority/experience did they expect)?
- How long it would take to get
  - a) an initial response that the enquiry(ies) / complaint(s) had been received,
  - b) a response to your enquiry(ies) / complaint(s).
- Number of people it would take to answer enquiry(ies) / complaint(s)?
- What sort of response you would get from them and what they would do in relation to the enquiry/complaint?
- What did you expect you would have to do in relation to the enquiry/ complaint (provide information, fill in forms, etc)?
- How would you describe what you expected in terms of the following:
  - Helpfulness?
  - Level of detail/knowledge in the response?
  - Clarity of the response
  - Tone of the response
  - Anything else to do with the actual person or people dealing with the enquiry(ies) / complaint(s)?

## EXPERIENCE / IMPROVEMENTS

*Purpose of this section is to run through recent contact. Responses would be probed fully and respondents would be asked for suggested improvements where any dissatisfaction exists.*

- How did you know who and where to write to? (Did they initially contact them by phone?)
  - How easy / difficult was getting through to someone that could deal with your enquiry / / complaint understood your issue(s)?
  - How, if at all, could this element be improved?
- IF IN CONTACT BY TELEPHONE How well were you dealt with over the phone? FOR ANY AREA OF DISSATISFACTION ASK What could be done to improve the response? What would you recommend they change or do?
  - Politeness of staff
  - Understanding of your situation
  - Helpfulness of staff

- Clarity and usefulness of explanations and guidance (even if only to inform respondent how to submit enquiry)
  - Knowledge of the person who dealt with your enquiry/complaint
  - To what extent was it explained how the law could or could not help in their situation?
  - How long did it take to get a written response from the ICO?
    - How did you feel about the length of time it took to get the written response to you?
  - Was this a full reply or a reply telling you when a final reply would be sent? Were you happy with this?
    - How long did it take to receive a final response from the ICO?
      - How satisfied were you with this.
      - What would you ideally have liked/expected?
  
  - How would you describe the response(s) you received? FOR ANY AREA OF DISSATISFACTION ASK: What could be done to improve the response? What would you recommend they change or do?
    - Tone of written response?
    - Clarity/use of abbreviations/acronyms/jargon/legal terms/ etc?
    - Spelling and grammar?
    - Whom the reply had come from?
    - How well they understood your:
      - (1) Enquiry / complaint,
      - (2) response requirements
    - Degree to which response answered your enquiry / complaint?
- Ensure here that we understand exactly what they were looking for the ICO to do for them and how that relates to the response given - the ICO can only advise on the law and how it impacts their situation and so (for example) they cannot deal with poor service from a company or sort out a problem for the respondent.*
- Extent to which the response allowed you to take action
  - Perceived level of knowledge of person answering enquiry / complaint?
    - (3) How knowledgeable were they
    - (4) What specifically did you expect them to know/help you with, eg:
      - (a) Sector knowledge/expertise/business sector - what would be the benefits/drawbacks
      - (b) General advice/help via the helpline - what would be the benefits/drawbacks

**QUALITY OF ADVICE (IF NOT COVERED ABOVE)**

- How much trust do you have in the response you received? Why is that?
  - What would have made it more credible/helpful?
  - What else could they do to make you trust the advice/help they give you
- How clear was the advice you were given - did you understand it?
  - IF NO: why did you not understand it?
    - EXPLORE ALL MENTIONS OF COMPLEXITY/LEGALISTIC NATURE - what made it too complex/legalistic - can you give us some examples
    - Some issues may be complex/bound by legality - how would you like ICO to cover such issues with you? What could they be doing to help you understand them more clearly?

**WEBSITE (IF USED)**

- How would you rate the website in terms of:
  - Content - quantity, clarity, usefulness
  - Ease of navigation
- What was your intention when you accessed the website? Why did you choose to access it?
  - For information
  - To find out who to contact
  - To check on information provided by ICO/someone else
  - To try and understand the guidance I was given
  - Was advised to visit by compliance department/other individual or organisation

**STAFF (IF NOT COVERED ABOVE)**

- Overall, how satisfied would you say you were with the staff you encountered at ICO
- What would you change/improve?
- How easy was it to get hold of the person who dealt with your enquiry/complaint?
- How well do you think they understood your enquiry/complaint?
  - How satisfied were you that they took it 'seriously' enough - ie, showed interest/concern in resolving it for you

**COMPARISONS**

- Thinking about other organisations you deal with (eg Utilities, banks, etc) how does the service you received from ICO compare
  - In what ways is ICO better - please give examples
  - In what ways is ICO worse
    - What could they learn from other organisations in the way that they deal with and help you solve problems/issues?

### END RESULT

- When your enquiry/complaint was first raised, was ICO your first port of call or did you go elsewhere/ask someone else beforehand?
  - Why did you choose this option
  - How far were they able to help you
  - Why did you go to ICO first/eventually?
- To what extent do you consider your enquiry/complaint resolved?
- IF NOT RESOVLED: What are your next steps? - eg , continue to deal with ICO or go elsewhere
  - IF GO ELSEWHERE - where will you go for help/advice?

### COMMUNICATIONS

- How do you prefer to deal with ICO - eg, phone, web, writing
  - Why is this your preferred method?
- Generally speaking, how well informed did you feel regarding the progress of your enquiry/complaint?
  - How often were you contacted with progress updates?
  - How did you feel about this frequency
  - What would you change/improve?

### OVERALL

- Overall, how satisfied would you say you were with the whole experience? Why? How would you describe the overall level of service provided by the ICO?
- Would you recommend others in a similar situation to contact the ICO, based on the service they provide to customers?
- What suggestions would you make to the ICO in order to help them improve the service they provide to people like yourself?
  - Anything else?