

RAIL OMBUDSMAN CONSUMER EXPERIENCE SURVEY

Report

November 2019

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Background and objectives

Since its formation in November 2018, the Rail Ombudsman has provided a free and independent service that provides a point of escalation for complaints about service providers in the rail industry.

Part of the Rail Ombudsman's role is to raise standards in the industry by providing learning and accredited consumer training whilst also delivering a fair and impartial service when mediating between consumers and Rail Operating Companies.

The Rail Ombudsman appointed Ipsos MORI, an independent research agency, to collect feedback, where possible, from

consumers who have contacted the Rail Ombudsman.

This research provides an insight into the experience of consumers. Feedback focuses on consumers who have had a case closed by the Rail Ombudsman, with their feedback separated from those whose cases were outside of the Rail Ombudsman's scope.

Methodology

- Fieldwork dates: 19th September 2019 – 7th October 2019
- 8 minute online survey sent out to approximately 1,500 consumers who had contacted the Rail Ombudsman since the start of its operation
- 25% completion rate
- 180 cases were in scope for the Rail Ombudsman, plus 220 out of scope responses. This report focuses on those with cases which were in scope

Definitions

Term	Definition
In scope	A complaint accepted as being eligible for the Rail Ombudsman scheme.
Out of Scope	A complaint that is outside the remit of the Rail Ombudsman scheme.
Simple Resolution	A stage in the Rail Ombudsman process that provides an opportunity, in some circumstances, to quickly resolve an issue.
Complex Resolution	A stage in the Rail Ombudsman process where a Simple Resolution is not possible. The Rail Ombudsman will first Mediate and then where applicable, Adjudicate to resolve an In Scope complaint.
Mediation	The process by which, assisted by an independent view from the Rail Ombudsman, a settlement in relation to an In Scope complaint can be negotiated to which both the Rail Passenger and the participating Rail Operating Company agree.

Executive Summary



Experience of the Rail Ombudsman is, on balance, positive

For consumers whose cases are dealt with by the Rail Ombudsman, the experience tends to be positive. Two in five say that overall the experience is “Very Good” and the proportion rises among simple and mediated cases.



Accessibility is an important strength

Accessibility and ease of contact are areas of strength, with consumers rating the different ways of contacting the Rail Ombudsman and the online complaint form positively. The response to the application portal is particularly positive.



Staff are seen as professional and knowledgeable

Staff are positively rated by a majority of complainants across a range of attributes, especially on their knowledge and professionalism.

Consumers whose cases are dealt with by the Rail Ombudsman tend to have a positive experience overall

Percentage rating experience overall as...

50% Rate their experience as very or fairly good



Difference between case types

'Proportion of respondents based on case outcomes'

75% of cases resulted in a full or partial consumer remedy

25% of cases ruled in favour of the Rail Operating Company

Experience of the Rail Ombudsman
% rating fairly or very good overall

Simple (n=71)

66%

Mediation (n=60)

57%

In favour of Rail Operator (n=29)

21%

Comments highlight positive service, but also concerns over neutrality

Why do you rate your experience positively/negatively?

“ I liked the fact that their advice on how to appeal was very clear. I appreciated the dedicated point of contact and that my case was dealt with quickly.

-Mediation ”

“ The Ombudsman do not have powers to override the resolution made by the train service. The train service had been unfair and the Ombudsman did not acknowledge this. Very disappointing.

-Decision made in favour of Rail Operator ”

“ Amazing service - very understanding, forthcoming, helpful and friendly.

-Simple ”

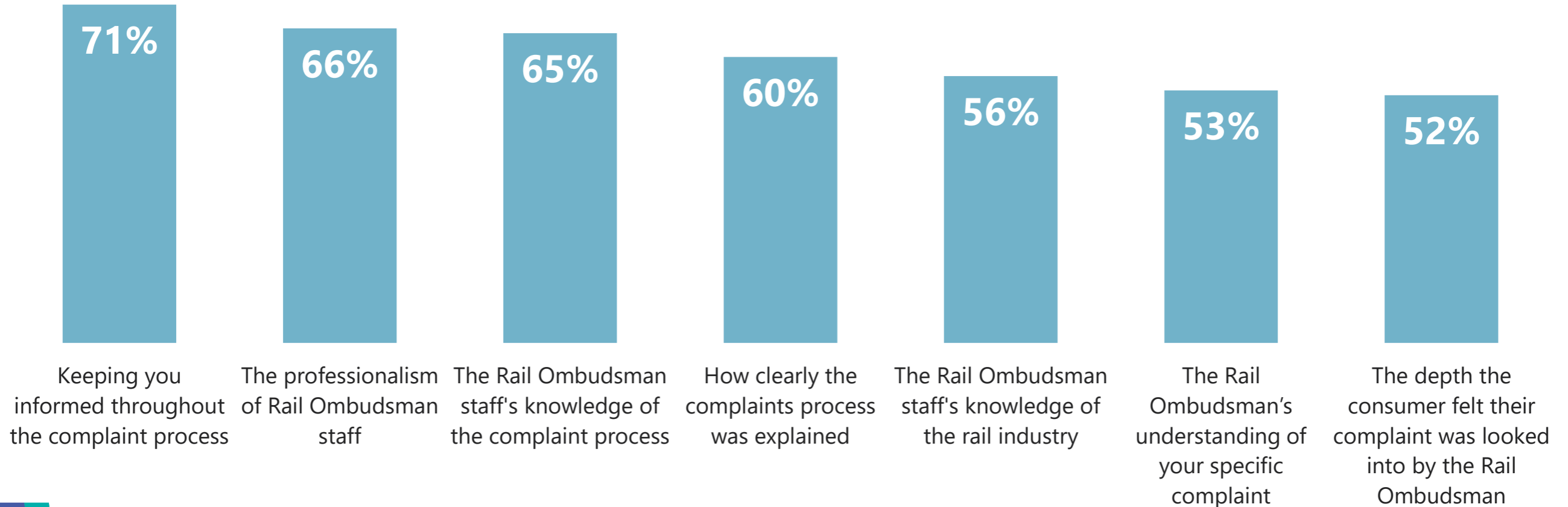


Q2a. Why did you rate your experience of the Rail Ombudsman positively?

Q2b. Why did you rate your experience of the Rail Ombudsman poorly?

Staff are a key strength for the Rail Ombudsman, with their professionalism and knowledge of the complaints process highly rated

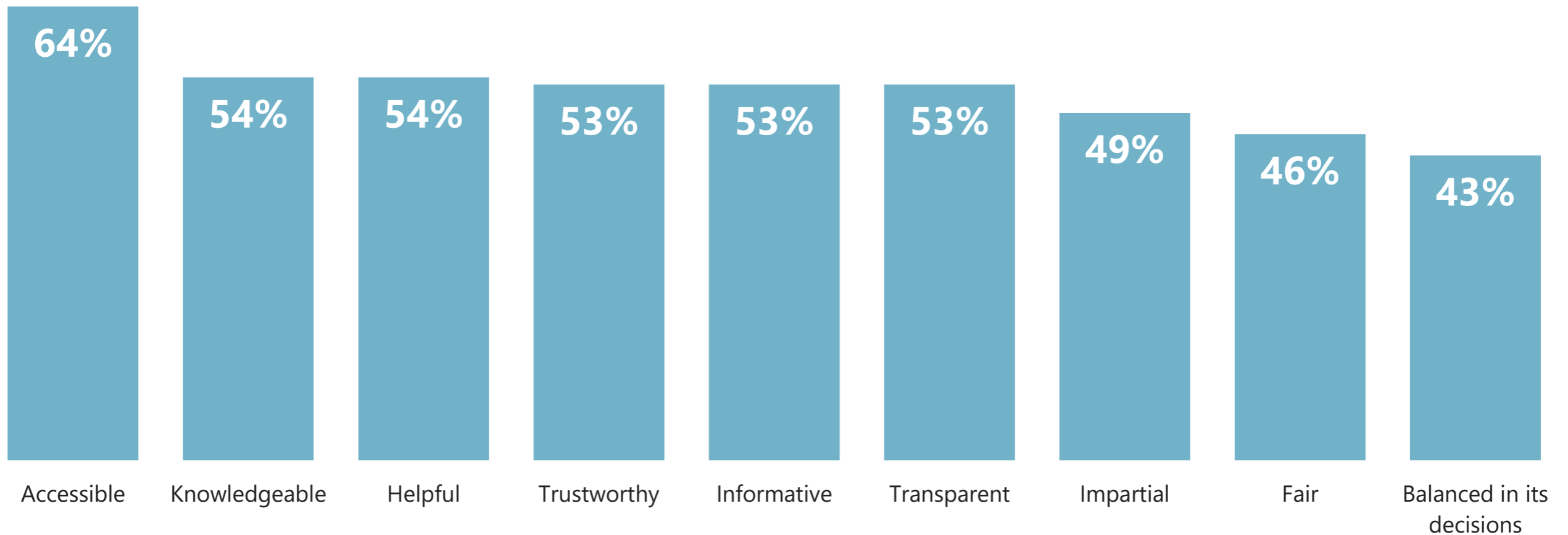
Percentage rating as good or very good



Q11. How would you rate the following aspects of the Rail Ombudsman's service? Base: Cases dealt with by the Rail Ombudsman (180)

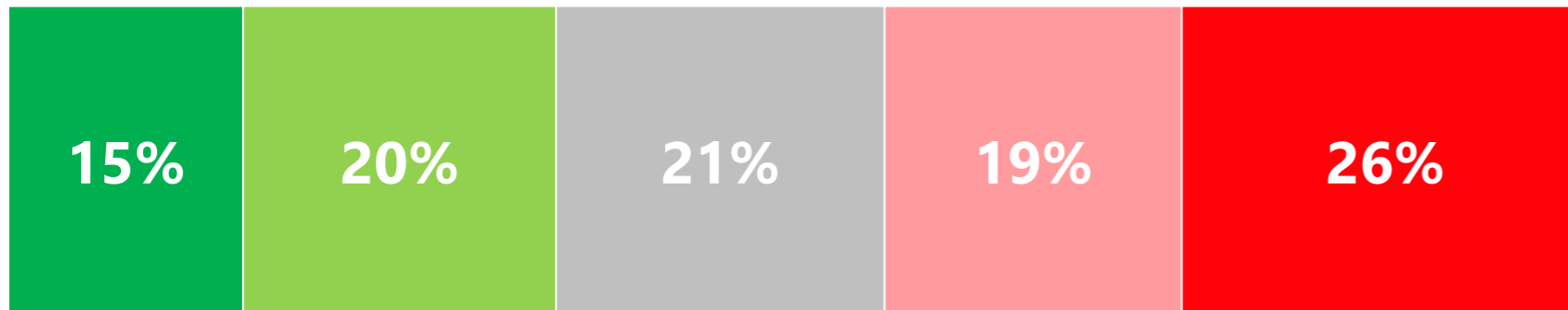
The Rail Ombudsman performs strongly on accessibility as well as knowledgeable and helpful staff

Percentage agreeing that the Rail Ombudsman is...



Signposting to the Rail Ombudsman earlier in the complaints process is a priority – most complainants were only informed at the point of escalation

The Rail Ombudsman was well signposted by the Train Operating Company...



■ Strongly agree ■ Tend to agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Tend to disagree ■ Strongly disagree

Point at which consumers were told about the Rail Ombudsman

3%

Told about the Rail Ombudsman when first complained to the Rail Operator

17%

During the complaints process

80%

When the complaint needed escalating beyond the Rail Operator

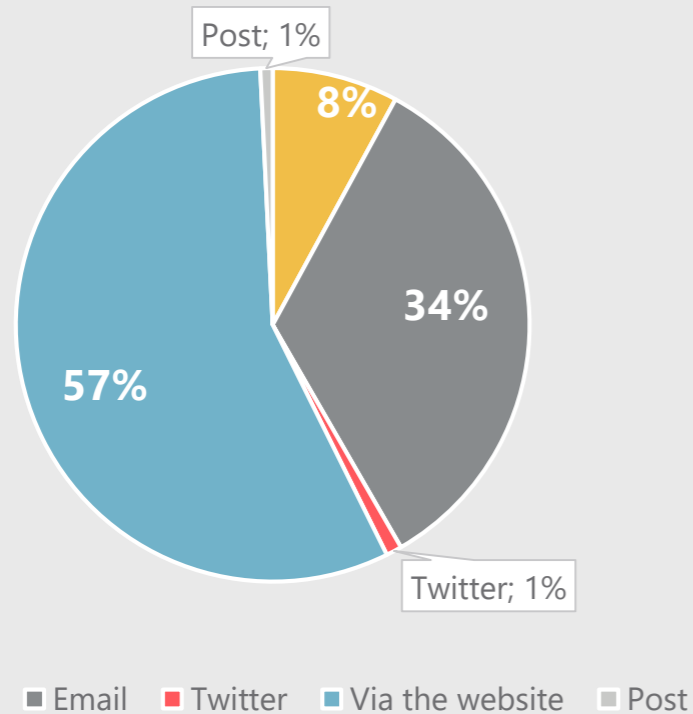


Q6. How strongly do you agree or disagree that the Rail Ombudsman was well signposted by the Train Operating Company? Q7. At what point were you told about the Rail Ombudsman during the complaint process with the Train Operating Company? Base: Cases dealt with by the Rail Ombudsman (180)

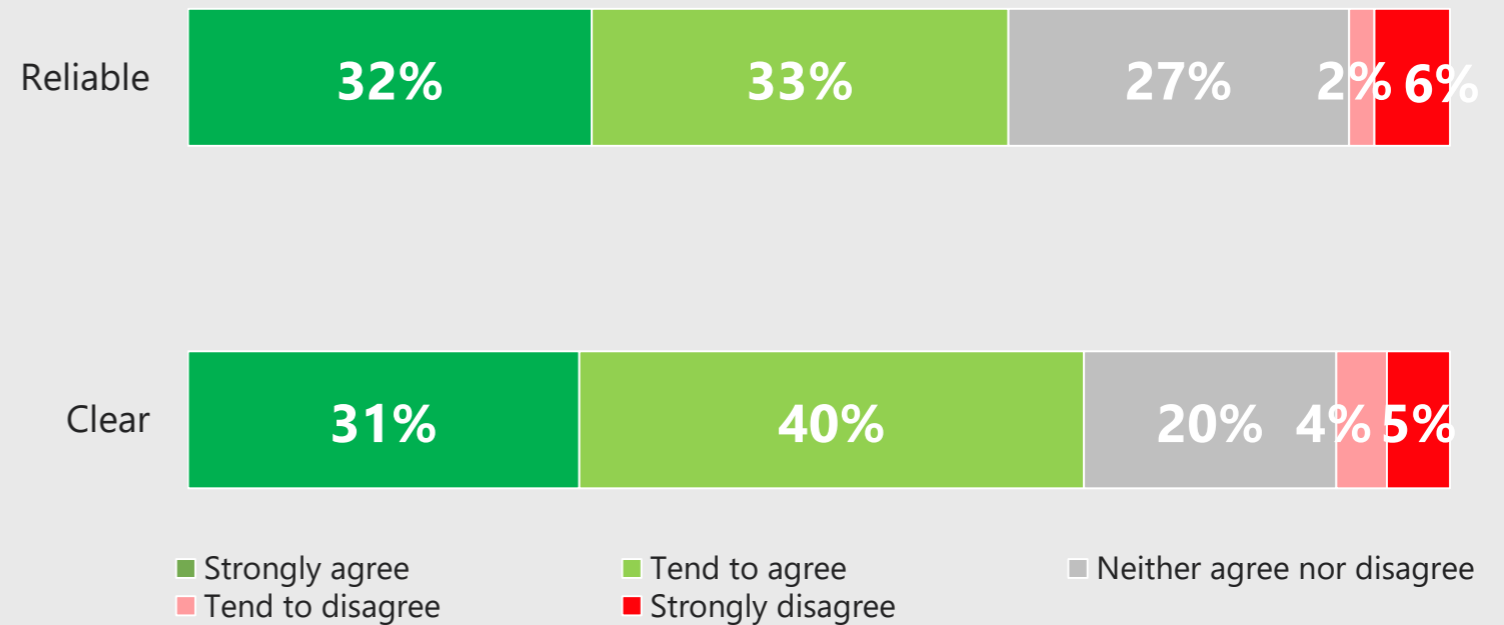
Online channels were the most popular methods of accessing the Rail

Ombudsman

Method of Contact



Online complaint form was...



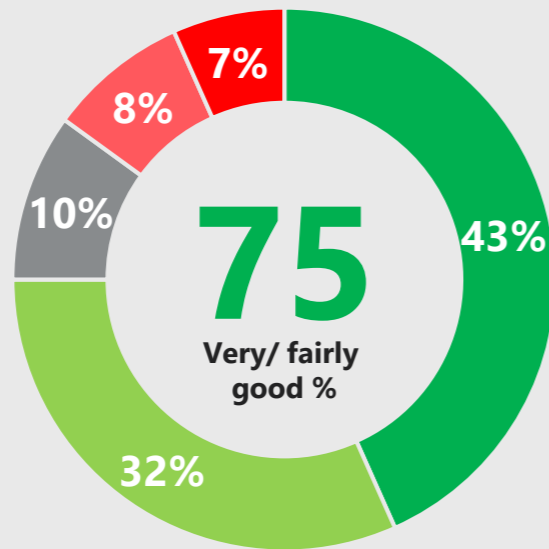
Most people agreed the online complaint form was reliable and clear



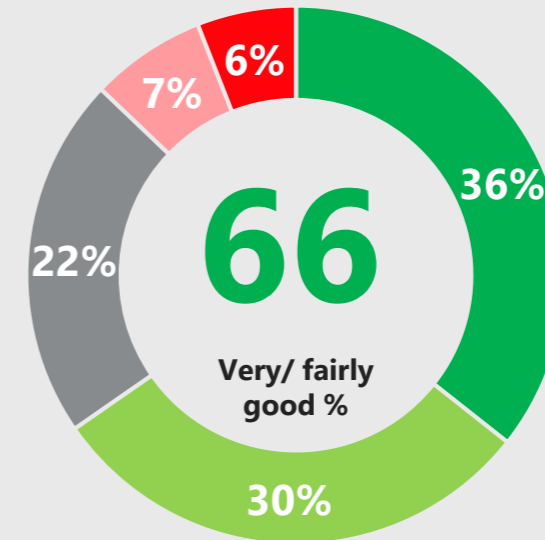
Q8. How did you first access the Rail Ombudsman to make your complaint? Q9. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the initial online complaint form was...
Base: Cases dealt with by the Rail Ombudsman (180) . N.B. % in pie chart add to over 100 due to rounding

Three-quarters felt that the speed of the Rail Ombudsman's response was good. Two-thirds said the different ways to contact were good

Speed with which the consumer received an initial response



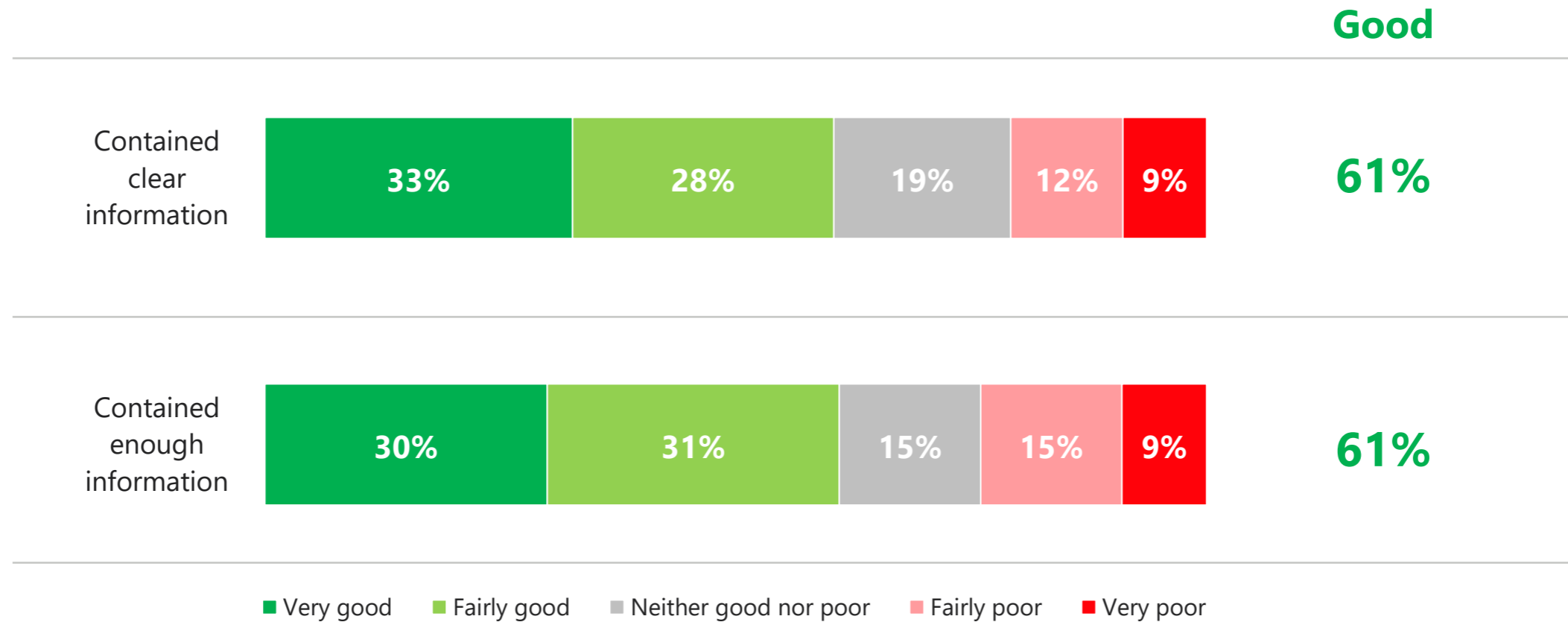
The different ways to contact the Rail Ombudsman about the complaint



- Very good
- Fairly good
- Neither good nor poor
- Fairly poor
- Very poor

Updates are a clear strength, with the complainants rating the clarity and volume of information given by the Rail Ombudsman highly

Updates throughout the complaint process...

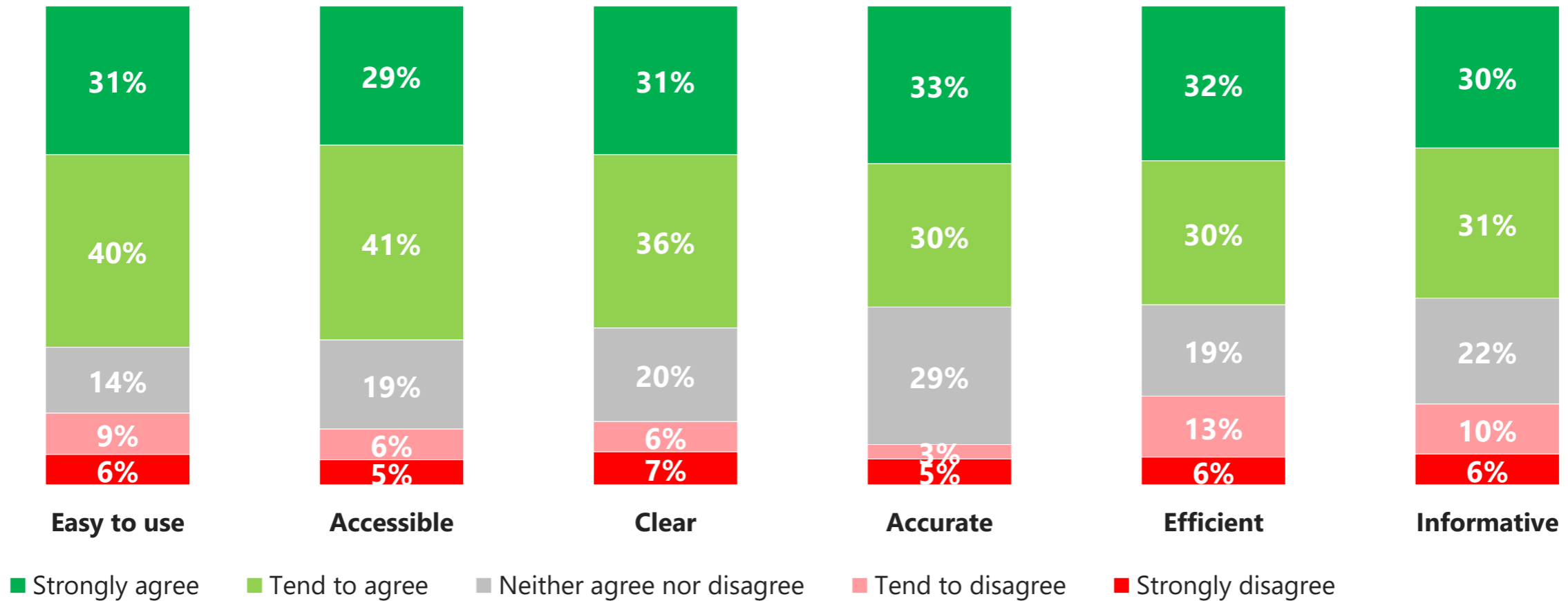


Q16. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following aspects of the updates you received from the Rail Ombudsman throughout the complaint process?

Base: Cases dealt with by the Rail Ombudsman (180)

Complainants agreed that the application portal was easy to use and accessible

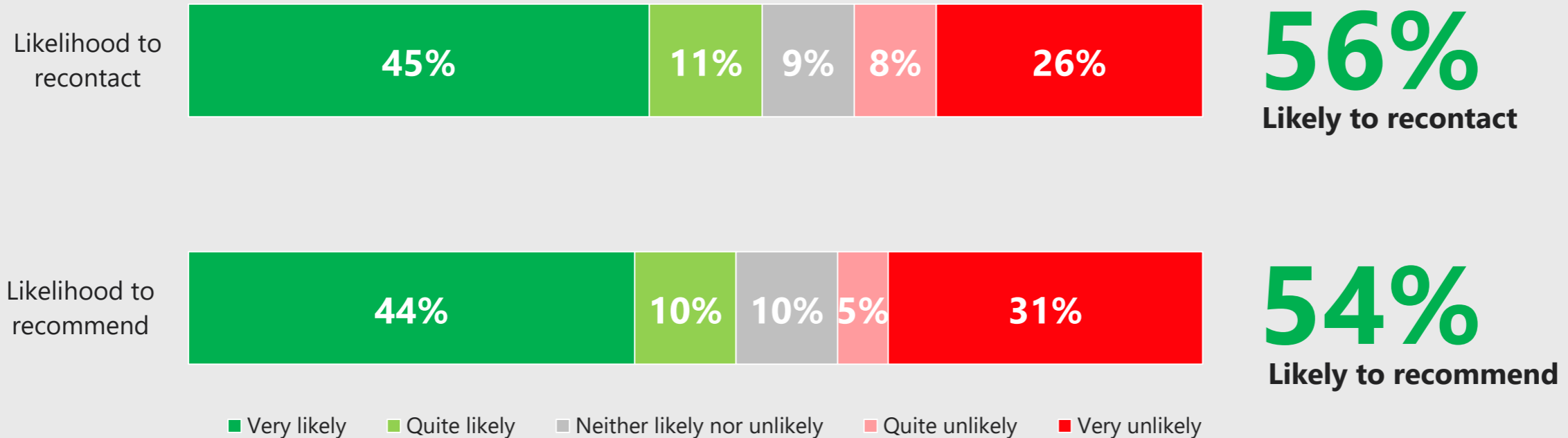
The application portal was...



Q17. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the application portal is... Base: Cases dealt with by the Rail Ombudsman (180)

More than half of complainants say they would be likely to use the Rail Ombudsman's service again

Based on the experience...

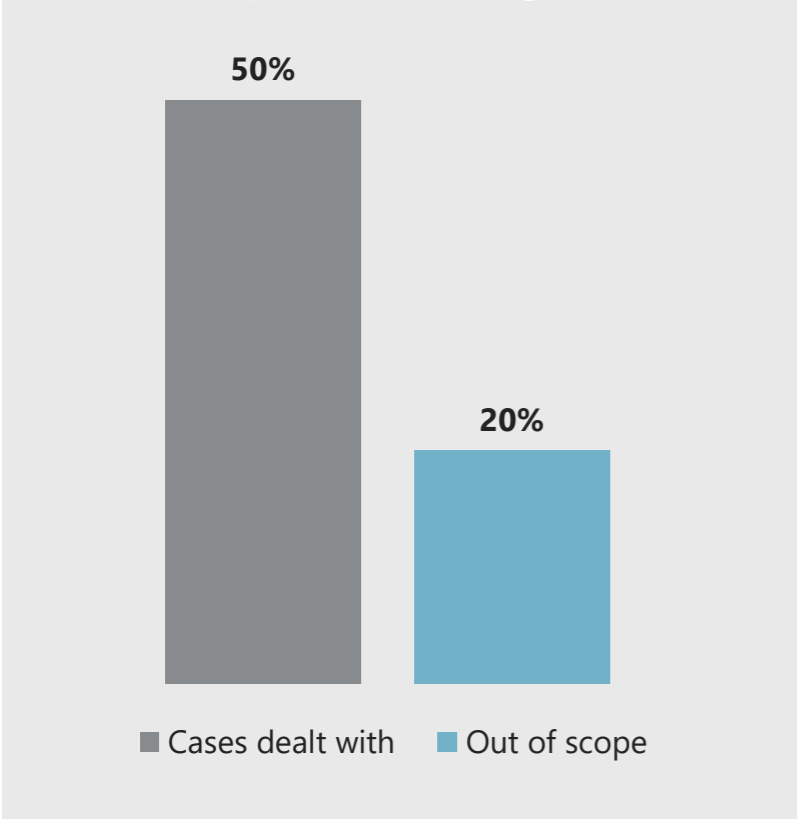


Q22. Based on your recent experience, how likely or unlikely are you to contact the Rail Ombudsman again if you had another complaint? Q23. Based on your recent experience, how likely or unlikely are you to recommend the Rail Ombudsman to someone who has a complaint? Base: Cases dealt with by the Rail Ombudsman (180)

In addition to cases dealt with by the Rail Ombudsman, we also surveyed consumers whose cases were out of scope

Due to the limited scope of the Rail Ombudsman's remit, some consumers are less positive about their experience

Overall experience (% good)



Why do you rate your experience negatively?

“I was expecting the Ombudsman service to be able to action my complaint against the Rail Company and act as independent adjudicator. But it seems that the nature of my complaint falls outside their remit. There was no other organisation/process to act on my behalf.” **Out of scope**”

“Did not help at all, saying could not assist despite my grievances (arising from timetable changes) spanning before and after the introduction of the Ombudsman.” **Out of scope**”



Q1. Taking everything into consideration how would you rate your overall experience with the Rail Ombudsman? Base: Cases dealt with by the Rail Ombudsman (180), Out of scope (202)

APPENDIX



Ipsos MORI'S Standards & Accreditations

Ipsos MORI's standards & accreditations provide our clients with the peace of mind that they can always depend on us to deliver reliable, sustainable findings. Moreover, our focus on quality and continuous improvement means we have embedded a 'right first time' approach throughout our organisation.



ISO 20252 – is the international market research specific standard that supersedes BS 7911 / MRQSA & incorporates IQCS (Interviewer Quality Control Scheme); it covers the 5 stages of a Market Research project. Ipsos MORI was the first company in the world to gain this accreditation.



MRS Company Partnership – By being an MRS Company Partner, Ipsos MORI endorse and support the core MRS brand values of professionalism, research excellence and business effectiveness, and commit to comply with the MRS Code of Conduct throughout the organisation & we were the first company to sign our organisation up to the requirements & self regulation of the MRS Code; more than 350 companies have followed our lead.



ISO 9001 – International general company standard with a focus on continual improvement through quality management systems. In 1994 we became one of the early adopters of the ISO 9001 business standard.



ISO 27001 – International standard for information security designed to ensure the selection of adequate and proportionate security controls. Ipsos MORI was the first research company in the UK to be awarded this in August 2008.



The (EU) 2016/679 General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) & the UK Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA) – Ipsos MORI is required to comply with the General Data Protection Regulation and the UK Data Protection Act; it covers the processing of personal data and the protection of privacy.

Ipsos MORI is an active member of **EphMRA** and **BHBIA**.



HMG Cyber Essentials – A government backed and key deliverable of the UK's National Cyber Security Programme. Ipsos MORI was assessment validated for certification in 2016. Cyber Essentials defines a set of controls which, when properly implemented, provide organisations with basic protection from the most prevalent forms of threat coming from the internet.



Fair Data – Ipsos MORI is signed up as a 'Fair Data' Company by agreeing to adhere to ten core principles. The principles support and complement other standards such as ISOs, and the requirements of Data Protection legislation.

This work was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the international quality standard for market research, ISO 20252

THANK YOU

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