

RAIL OMBUDSMAN

RAIL CONSUMER EXPERIENCE SURVEY

Report December 2022



Background and objectives

Since its formation in November 2018, the Rail Ombudsman has provided a free and independent expert 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 training whilst also delivering a fair and impartial service when mediating between Rail Consumers and Rail Operating Companies.

The Rail Ombudsman has a broader remit than the individual decision, but it is from each individual's voice that we learn and provide feedback to enable the industry to continuously improve.



Please note: Ipsos will need to internally validate any results prior to publishing externally

The Rail Ombudsman can also make recommendations to service providers to improve the way their service is delivered and publish case studies and data which can provide insight into common complaints and how to raise standards.

The Rail Ombudsman appointed Ipsos, an independent research agency, to collect feedback, where possible, from Rail Consumers who have contacted the Rail Ombudsman.

This research provides an insight into the experience of Rail Consumers. Feedback focuses on Rail 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: 27th September 2022 - 13th October 2022
- 10 minute online survey sent out to 2,290 Rail Consumers who had contacted the Rail Ombudsman between the 1st November 2021 – 16th September 2022
- 26% completion rate
- 435 Rail Consumers with cases that were in scope for the Rail Ombudsman completed the survey in 2022, along with 148 out of scope responses

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 Consumer and the participating Rail Operating Company agree.
Cases resulted in a full or partial Rail Consumers remedy	The Ombudsman instructs Rail Operating Company to take action, Rail Consumer complaint upheld in part, Rail Consumer complaint Upheld in full, resolution reached between both parties prior to mediation and settled through mediation.
Cases ruled in favour of the Rail Operating Company	Rail Consumer complaint not upheld.

Executive Summary

Experience of the Rail Ombudsman remains highly positive



For Rail Consumers whose cases are dealt with by the Rail Ombudsman, the experience remains positive on balance, with half of consumers rating the experience as 'very good'.

In 2022, there has been a higher proportion of consumers with remedy cases responding to the survey, who are more satisfied overall.

Consumers remain likely to reuse (67%) and likely to recommend (65%) the Rail Ombudsman.

Perceptions of the overall experience are particularly strong among those with a simple resolution



Among Rail Consumers who had a simple resolution for their case, four in five (81%) rate their experience of the Rail Ombudsman as fairly or very good overall. This shows a 3% increase from 2021.

Staff professionalism and accessibility continue to be key strengths



Professional staff continue to be highly rated this year, with three-quarters rating this positively. Relative to other aspects in 2022, keeping consumers informed throughout is also positively rated.

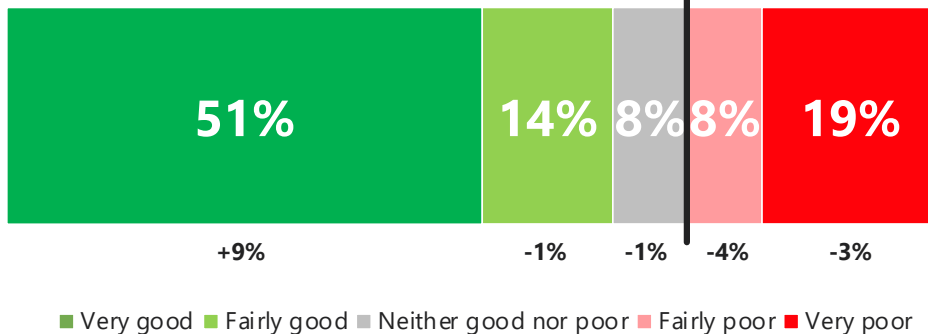
Accessibility and helpfulness are other areas of strength in 2022, along with being trustworthy.

The experience with the Rail Ombudsman is generally positive, 65% rate it as very or fairly good

Percentage rating experience overall as...

65% rate their experience as very or fairly good
+7% vs 2021

Since 2021, there are more consumers saying they have had a very good experience and fewer consumers saying they have had a negative experience. Ratings of fairly good or neither good nor poor remain at similar levels



Change in %pt vs. 2021



Q1. Taking everything into consideration how would you rate your overall experience with the Rail Ombudsman? Base: Cases dealt with by the Rail Ombudsman (434)

Difference between case types

Proportion of participants based on case outcomes

% of in-scope cases in each category

81%
+15%
of cases resulted in a full or partial Rail Consumer remedy

19%
-15%
of cases ruled in favour of the Rail Operating Company

Experience of the Rail Ombudsman

% rating fairly or very good overall

Simple n=258

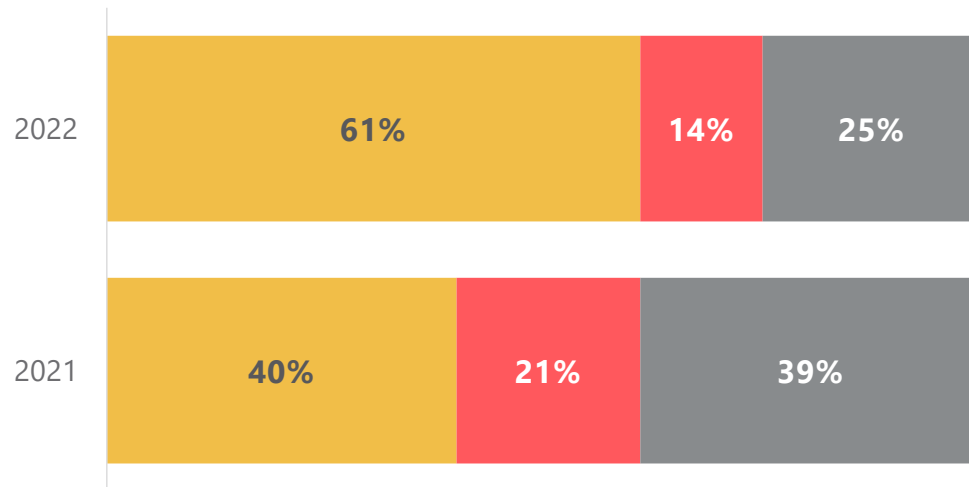
81%
+3%

Mediation n=86

66%
-12%

There is a higher proportion of Rail Consumer remedy cases in the 2022 sample – this impacts the headline rating

Case outcome profile overall

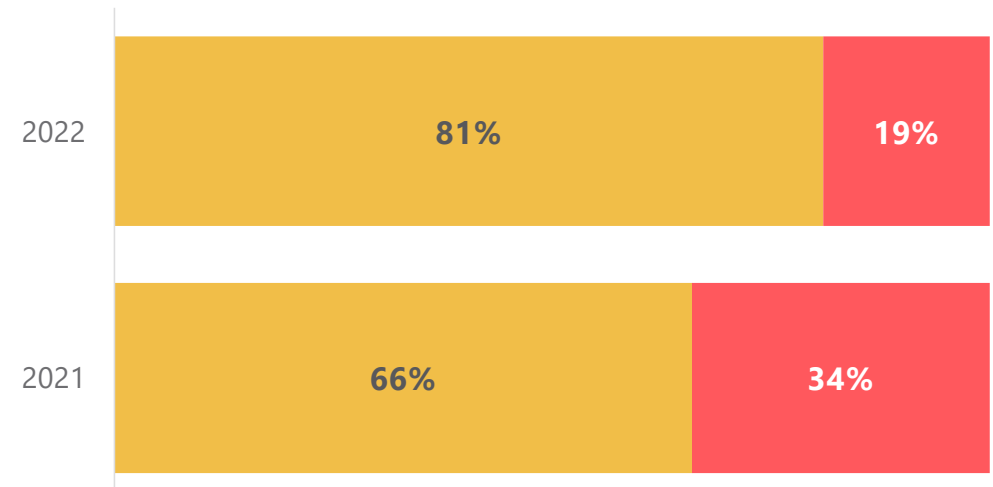


- Cases resulted in full or partial Rail Consumers remedy
- Cases ruled in favour of the Rail Operating Company
- Out of scope

Base: All respondents 2022 (583), 2021 (326)



Case outcome profile excluding Out of Scope



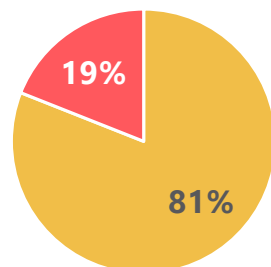
- Cases resulted in full or partial Rail Consumers remedy
- Cases ruled in favour of the Rail Operating Company

NOTE: The case outcome profile excluding Out of Scope in the final survey responses is aligned to the overall profile of cases closed each year i.e. accurately represents the reality of the case mix for each period

...however, breaking the results by outcome shows consistency of overall performance

Differences between case types

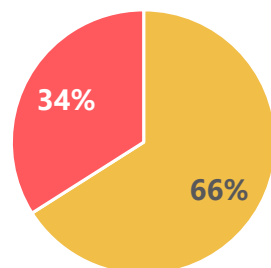
2022



■ Cases resulted in full or partial Rail Consumers remedy

■ Cases ruled in favour of the Rail Operating Company

2021



■ Cases resulted in full or partial Rail Consumers remedy

■ Cases ruled in favour of the Rail Operating Company

Change in %pt vs. 2021

Percentage rating experience overall as...



77% rate their experience as very or fairly good



10% rate their experience as very or fairly good



79% rate their experience as very or fairly good



15% rate their experience as very or fairly good

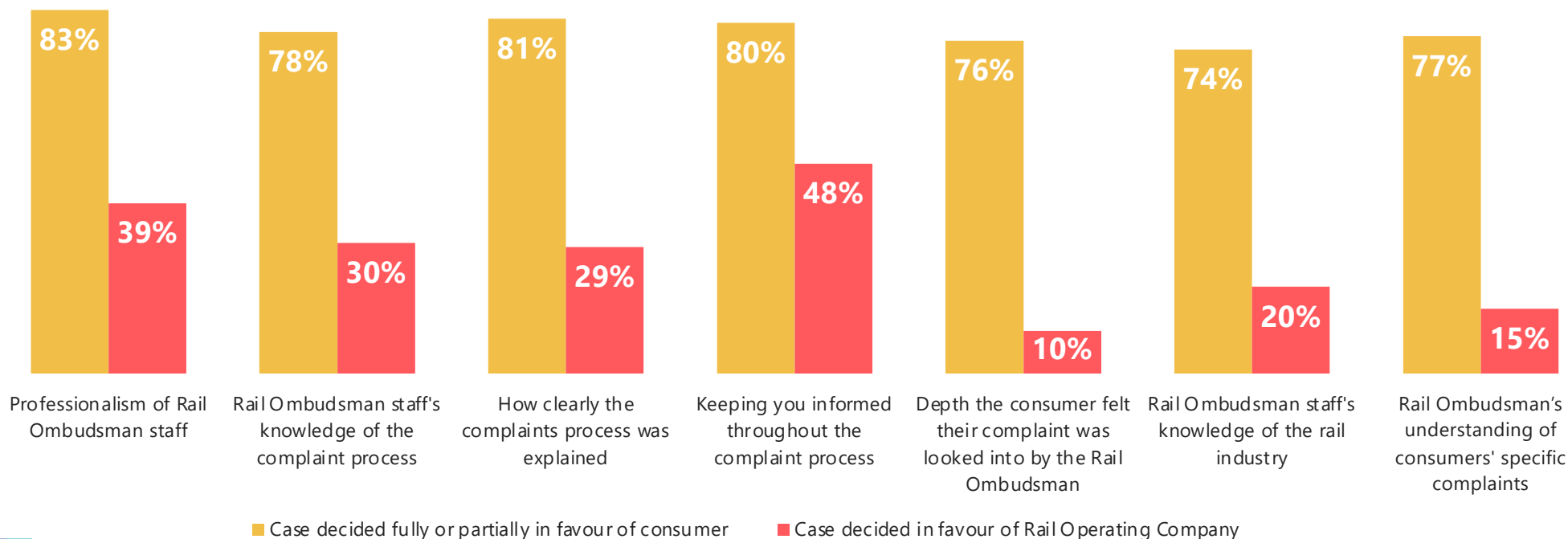
■ Very good ■ Fairly good ■ Neither good nor poor ■ Fairly poor ■ Very poor



Q1. Taking everything into consideration how would you rate your overall experience with the Rail Ombudsman? Base: Cases dealt with by the Rail Ombudsman 2022 (434), 2021 (198)

Consumers with a case decided in their favour remain more satisfied

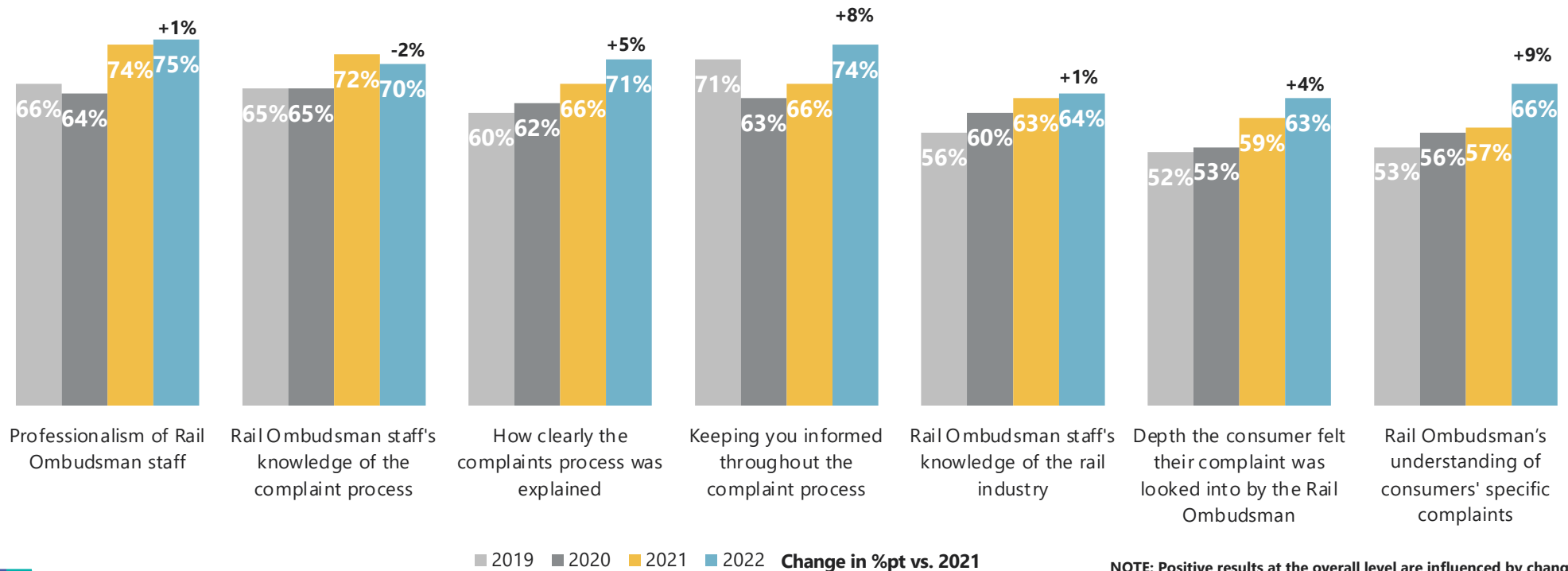
Percentage rating as fairly good or very good



Q11. How would you rate the following aspects of the Rail Ombudsman's service? Base: Cases dealt with by the Rail Ombudsman. Cases decided fully or partially favour of rail passenger (354), Cases decided in favour of Rail Operating Company (80).

The professionalism of staff and keeping consumers informed remain high

Percentage rating as fairly good or very good

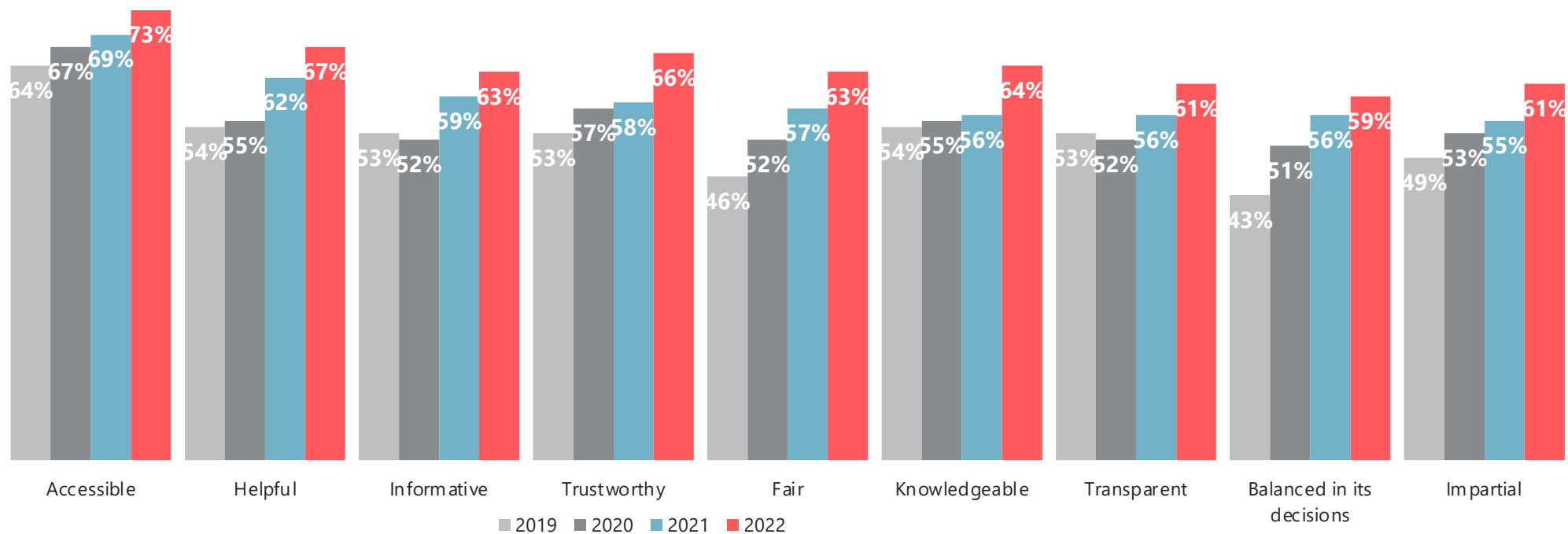


Q11. How would you rate the following aspects of the Rail Ombudsman's service? Base: Cases dealt with by the Rail Ombudsman (2022: 434, 2021: 198, 2020: 504, 2019: 180).

NOTE: Positive results at the overall level are influenced by change in profile - higher volumes of cases in favour of consumer in 2022 which score higher

Accessible and helpful perceptions remain key areas of strength

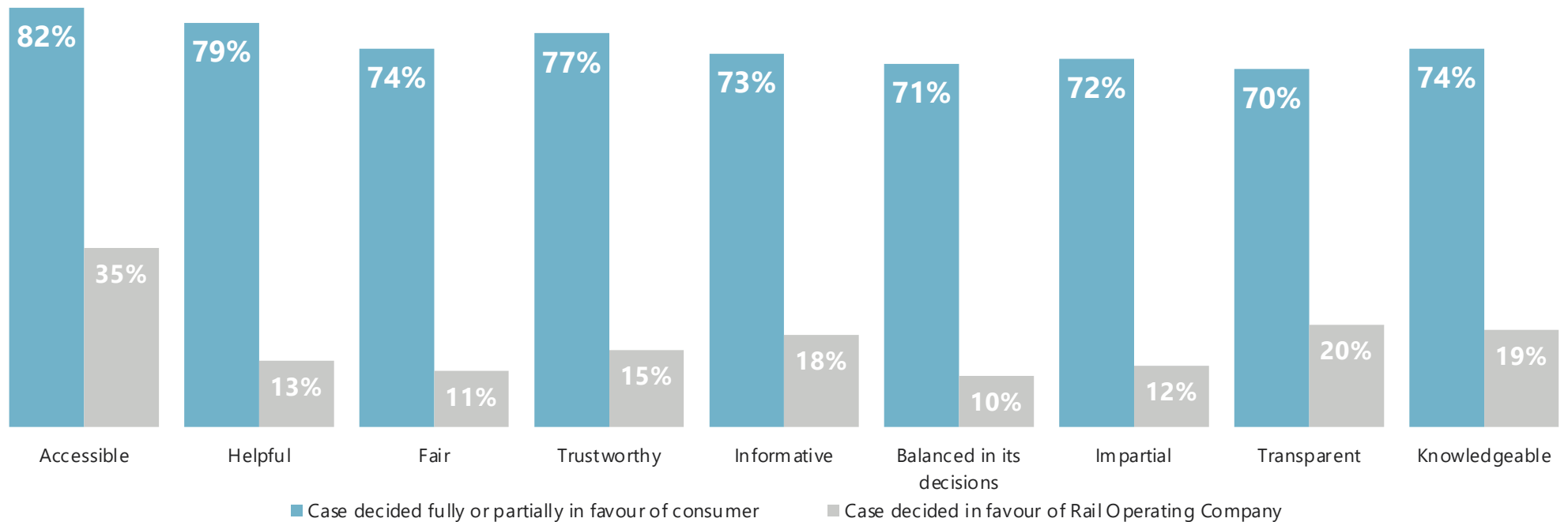
Percentage agreeing that the Rail Ombudsman is...



Q4. Taking into account your overall experience, how strongly do you agree or disagree that the Rail Ombudsman is... Base: Cases dealt with by the Rail Ombudsman (2022: 434, 2021: 198, 2020: 504, 2019: 180).

Accessibility continues to be the top rated traits among both case outcomes

Percentage agreeing that the Rail Ombudsman is...



Q4. Taking into account your overall experience, how strongly do you agree or disagree that the Rail Ombudsman is... Base: Cases dealt with by the Rail Ombudsman
Cases decided fully or partially favour of rail passenger (354), Cases decided in favour of Rail Operating Company (80).

Having a case resolved quickly, in a hassle free way is appreciated by consumers

Why do you rate your experience positively/negatively?

“ Our concern was dealt with quickly, fairly and efficiently. The Ombudsman was extremely professional and listened to each of our concerns. **Complex case** ”

“ I had made several attempts over a long period of time, by phone and email, to resolve an issue without success. Once the Rail Ombudsman got involved the matter was quickly sorted out. **Simple case** ”

“ The Rail Ombudsman took prompt action to resolve the issue I had with the rail company. I believe the rail company would not have acted without the Ombudsman stepping in. **Simple case** ”

“ They seem to find lots of reasons not to help you. And have barriers for e.g. a letter you have to get from the rail company, but the rail company won't provide the letter so you're already frustrated. **Out of scope** ”

“ I think the 4-week period for a rail operator to respond is too long and should be 2-weeks maximum. This time scale is I believe dictated by yourselves. **Complex case** ”

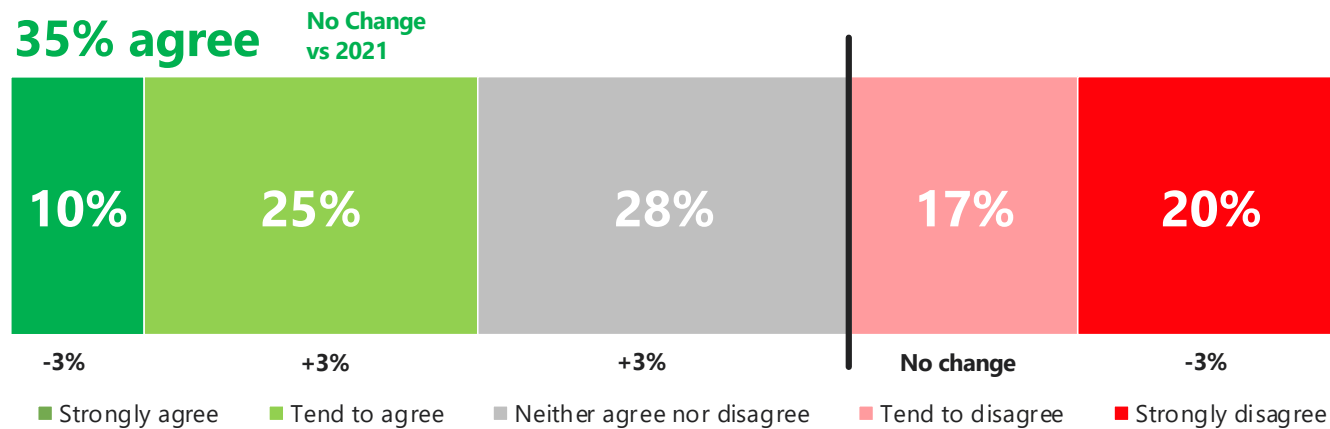


Q2a. Why did you rate your experience of the Rail Ombudsman positively?
Q2b. Why did you rate your experience of the Rail Ombudsman poorly?

1 in 10 indicate they were told about the Rail Ombudsman on first contact.

A third of consumers still believe the signposting was appropriate

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



Change in %pt vs. 2021



Q6. How strongly do you agree or disagree that the Rail Ombudsman was well signposted by the Train Operating Company? Base: All responding (434)
 Q7. At what point were you told about the Rail Ombudsman during the complaint process with the Train Operating Company? Base: All responding (325)

Point at which Rail Consumers were told about the Rail Ombudsman

66% +2%

When the complaint needed escalating beyond the Rail Operator

9% -8%

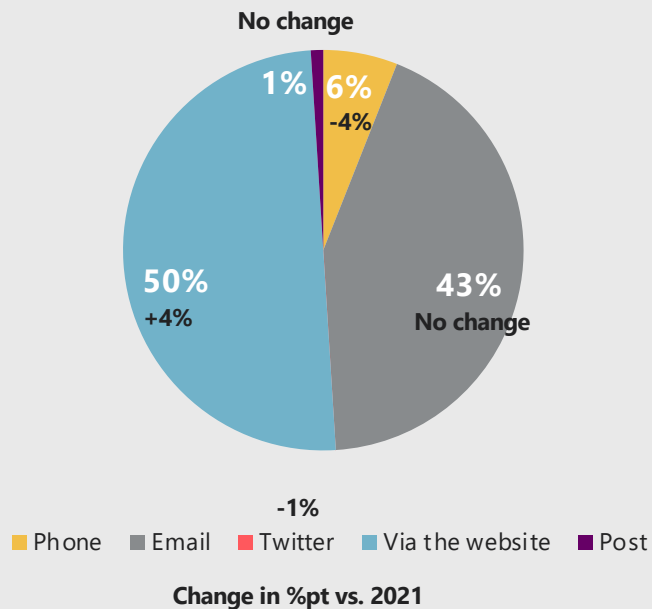
Told about the Rail Ombudsman when first complained to the Rail Operator

25% +6%

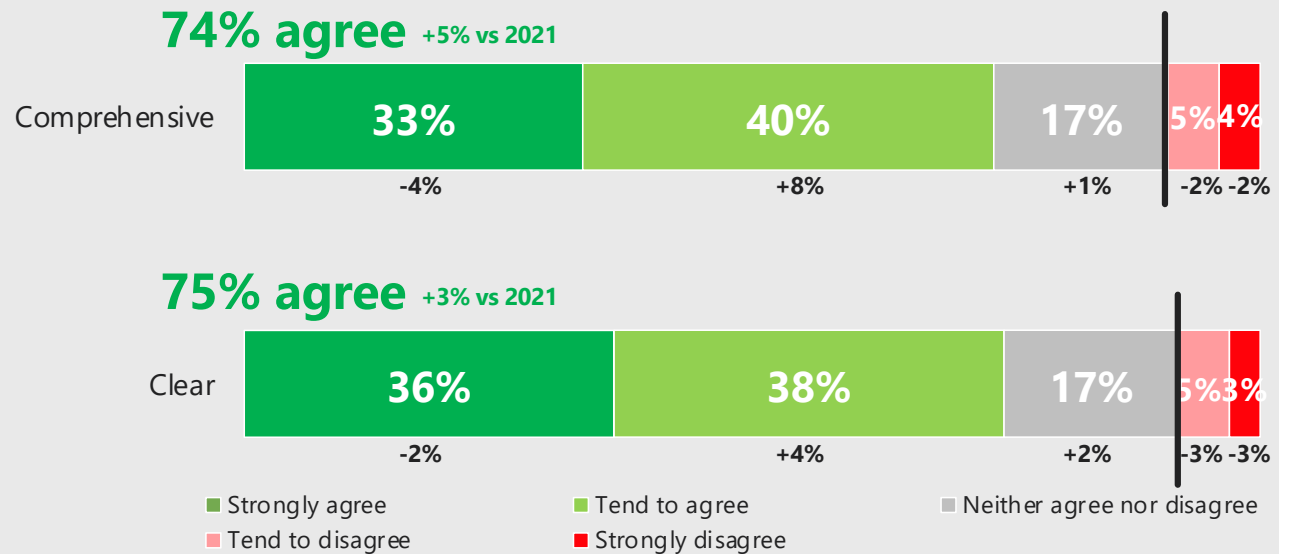
During the complaints process

Half of consumers are now making first contact via the website. Clarity and comprehension remain positive

Method of Contact



Complaint form was...



Most people agreed the complaint form was comprehensive and clear

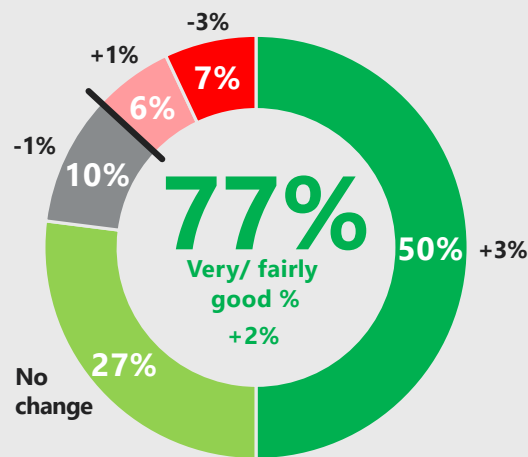


Q8. How did you first access the Rail Ombudsman to make your complaint? Base: Cases dealt with by the Rail Ombudsman (434)

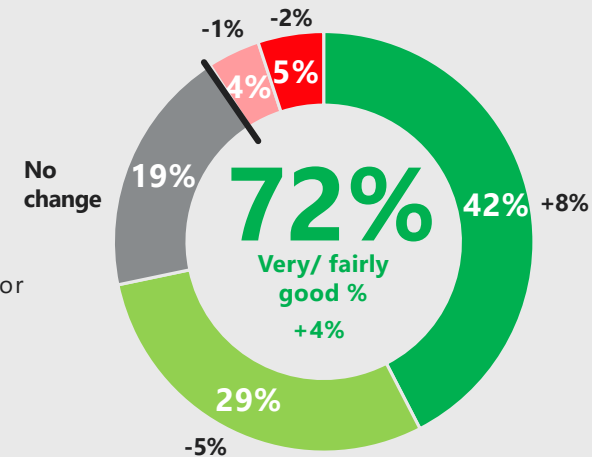
Q9. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the initial complaint form was... Base: Cases dealt with by the Rail Ombudsman (434)

Speed of response is a real strength, with over 3/4 stating the initial timeframe was about right. The range of contact avenues is also praised

Speed with which the Rail Consumer received an initial response



The different ways to contact the Rail Ombudsman about the complaint



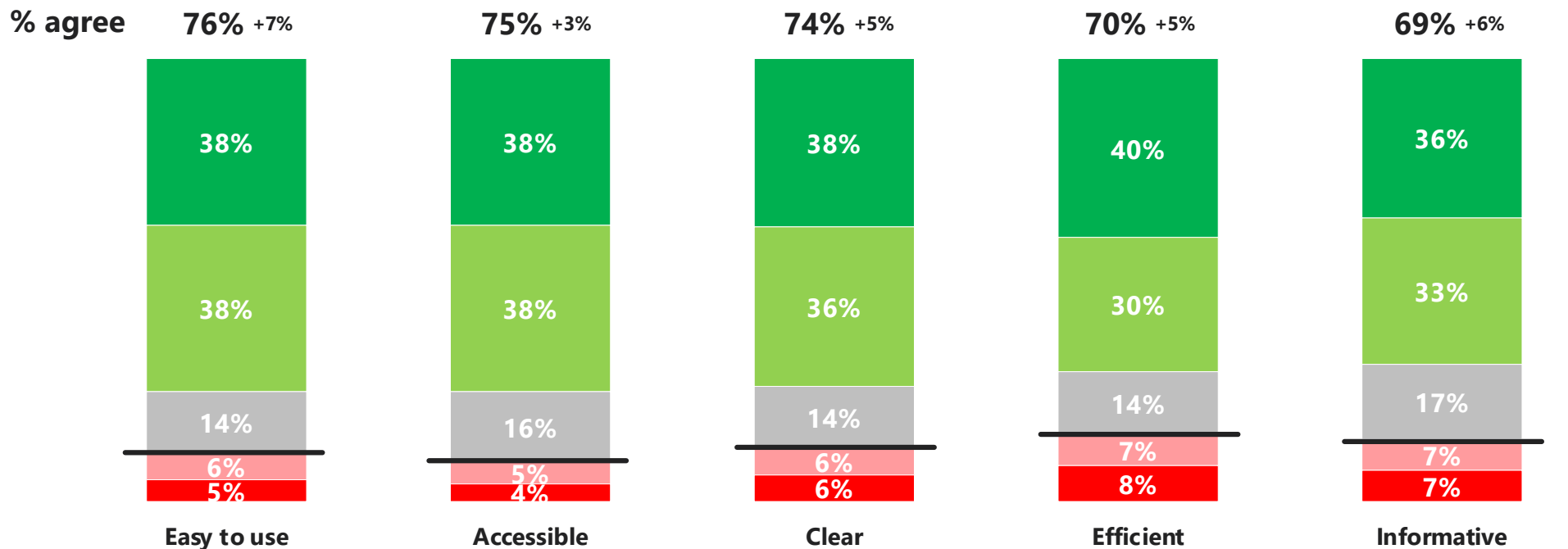
Change in %pt vs. 2021



Q10. How would you rate the following aspects of your initial contact with the Rail Ombudsman? Base: Cases dealt with by the Rail Ombudsman (434)

The application portal comes across as easy, accessible and clear

The online application portal was...

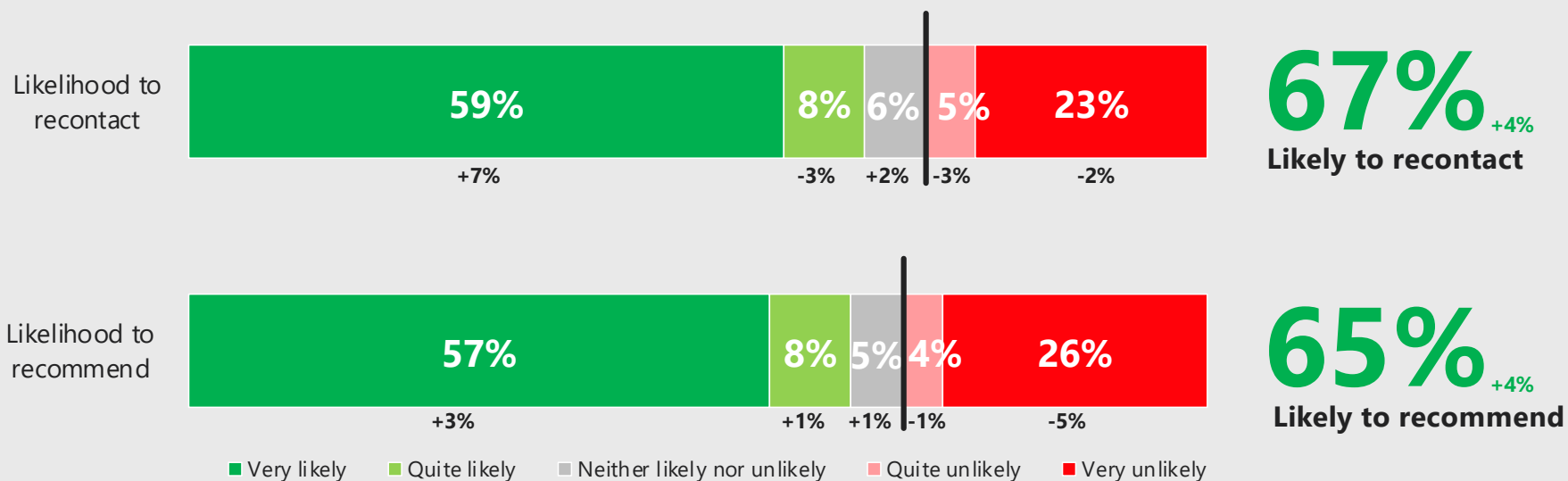


■ Strongly agree
 ■ Tend to agree
 ■ Neither agree nor disagree
 ■ Tend to disagree
 ■ Strongly disagree
 Change in %pt vs. 2021

Q17. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the online application portal is... Base: Cases dealt with by the Rail Ombudsman (434)

Consumers remain likely to reuse and recommend the Rail Ombudsman

Based on the experience...



Change in %pt vs. 2021



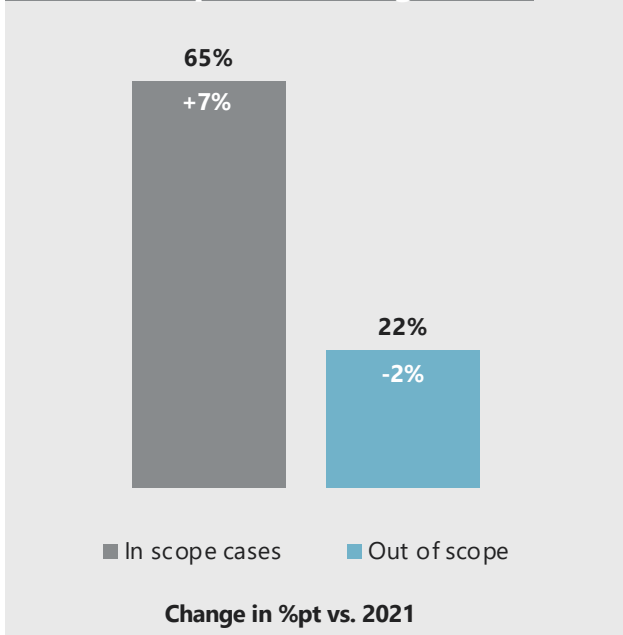
Q22. Based on your recent experience, how likely or unlikely are you to contact the Rail Ombudsman again if you had another complaint?

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 (434)

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

Naturally, Out of Scope consumers remain less satisfied overall. Providing alternative solutions can still lead to a positive experience

Overall experience % good



Q1. Taking everything into consideration how would you rate your overall experience with the Rail Ombudsman? Base: Cases dealt with by the Rail Ombudsman (434), Out of scope (149)

Why do you rate your experience positively?

“They told me quickly that a revenue issue could not be dealt with, but referred me to another org.”

Out of Scope

Why do you rate your experience negatively?

“[My complaint] was dismissed at the outset, despite the fact that the rail company would not provide the required documentation.”

Out of Scope

THANK YOU

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Ipsos Standards & Accreditations

Ipsos'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 UK was the first company in the world to gain this accreditation.



MRS Company Partnership – By being an MRS Company Partner, Ipsos UK 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 UK was the first research company in the UK to be awarded this in August 2008.



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



HMG Cyber Essentials – A government backed and key deliverable of the UK's National Cyber Security Programme. Ipsos UK 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 UK 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