Understanding Consumer Journeys

Premium rate service and micropayment markets
24th January 2014

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1. Executive Summary

1.1. Foreword by PhonepayPlus

We often hear from the consumers who get in touch with us that they have had difficulty getting information about their premium rate services (PRS) and resolving issues they have had with their bill. PhonepayPlus wanted to get to the evidence behind these reports from consumers so we commissioned this research in order to really understand the issues and then assist us with improving the consumer experience, which formed an important part of our business plan for this year and next.

The 4,000 online interviews, over 100 interviews with consumers who contacted PhonepayPlus and the mystery shopping analysis that underpin this report detail these problems:

- Over a quarter (26%) of those who contact PhonepayPlus have made organisational contact seven or more times, and another 37% have made contact between three and six times.

- PhonepayPlus complainants have been charged on average £32.14 by the PRS that they contact us about.

- When asked who is responsible for their issue, 62% of PhonepayPlus complainants considered it the company behind the service and 33% the phone provider.

- Overall, 54% of those making any contact with organisations in relation to their use of a PRS actually registered a complaint.

- The mystery shopping exercise revealed that many have difficulties getting through to the provider of the service and those who contacted their phone provider reported that they were not put at ease by that contact.

In short, this report confirms the PRS industry and PhonepayPlus' suspicions and anecdotal reports that the customer enquiry and complaint experience is sub-optimal and must improve if consumers are to continue using such services over the longer term.

The cost of this repeated customer service is borne as much by businesses in their overheads as by the consumers experiencing bill shock – averaging £32 in the case of complainants to PhonepayPlus . Improving this situation means clear benefits for PRS providers' balance sheets and reputations.

However, the report is not all negative: there are positives for both the PRS industry and PhonepayPlus to take from this report. Since PhonepayPlus' 2009 research into the consumer journey, the number of unnecessary complaint journeys have reduced and become somewhat more straightforward. The Mystery Shopping element of the research and complainants' interviews each rated PhonepayPlus highly for customer support and contact and found examples of good practice amongst the industry's own customer services. If the industry recognise and digest these findings, they will find solid foundations for customer service improvements.

This report also contains our first research on micropayment users' customer service experiences and several findings on parents' attitudes to PRS in Sections 4 and 5.

PhonepayPlus is learning lessons for our own work. We now routinely give comprehensive updates to consumers and have received positive responses to this change. Over the next year, we plan to engage all stakeholders with an interest in this report to identify ways to bring improvements for consumers and industry alike in the important issue of delivery effective service delivery.

This report highlights significant issues and challenges, but as our previous efforts in 2009 show, together we can all improve PRS customers' experience, which is good for both the industry and consumers alike.

Paul Whiteing
Chief Executive

2. Key Messages and Implications

1. A significant number of consumers use premium rate services but many elements of PRS are unknown to people and its unfamiliarity means many are left shocked and confused when they experience issues

A significant proportion of the UK adult population claim to be using PRS (an estimated 17.5m in the last six months) and Micropayments (27.5m). Much of this usage however is around services that are broadly familiar and intuitive to people e.g. for PRS, the use of premium rate phone numbers, paying for something by text.

Yet it is clear that outside these common PRS types, knowledge levels are low and people are generally disengaged with PRS until they experience an issue. Some elements of PRS are particularly counter-intuitive to consumers. For example, there is widespread unawareness that it is possible to be charged to your phone bill when subscribing to services on the Internet or viewing Internet content.

Implication: Most people are unaware of the existence of many types of PRS and even when made aware struggle to understand how it works. This means anger and frustration can be high when people inadvertently access these types of services and the implications, such as cost, not made abundantly clear at the outset.

2. PRS are valued by consumers for convenience but misleading and confusing elements can tarnish the industry to some extent

The majority of PRS users agree that it offers a convenient way of paying, yet significant proportions (almost half) also agree that some elements are deliberately misleading and that they can be confusing. Encouragingly those who have experienced negative issues with PRS generally continue to use PRS and feel positively about it (because they are able to mentally partition good and bad types for future reference).

Implication: These payment methods have inherent value to many consumers; removal of rogue elements and / or education around usage would benefit the consumer experience.

3. The proportion of users experiencing negative issues is high but complaint numbers are low; barriers of hassle and low confidence must be overcome

Over a half of PRS users (56%) claim to have experienced issues in the last six months. This is a higher issue rate than that amongst micropayment users (15%) although users of certain types of micropayment have a much higher issue rate. Users of stored value accounts or digital/virtual currencies have an issue rate of 22-23%. It should also be remembered that the actual number of micropayment users is much higher than PRS users meaning a large number of people can be affected.

However, only a small proportion of those who claim to have experienced PRS issues end up actually complaining. Key barriers to complaining are the perceived hassle and a resigned attitude in that people don't think complaining will do any good. In many cases a lack of confidence may be stopping those with issues from attempting to resolve them.

Implication: Increased education and an easy and simple complaints process combined with a clarification of likely outcomes might help to reassure consumers that their issues are valid and worthy of pursuit.

4. Complainants tend to be more knowledgeable about PRS

The research suggests that those who complain may have greater levels of confidence, usage and positivity towards PRS (all of which are interrelated). This confidence translates into greater certainty about whether the individual is to blame or not and therefore a higher propensity to complain. Those less experienced are often unsure what has happened and where the blame lies and are therefore less inclined to make a complaint.

Those who don't fit this pattern are those who end up contacting PhonepayPlus. They are less experienced and lighter users of PRS and so one might expect a lower inclination to complain / contact PhonepayPlus. However, in their case the amounts they have been charged are so much higher that this tends to overcome a lack of confidence / apathy.

Implication: The avenue to complain if necessary should be open to all; not only the "savvy" or the "desperate". Consistency of process and clarification around preventative measures could improve the experiences of the mass market.

5. Phone providers and PRS merchants are equally likely to be contacted when things go wrong; they must play a role in simplifying processes of complaint for consumers and enabling resolution

PRS issue blame is usually apportioned to the PRS merchant. Two thirds of those claiming to have experienced PRS issues blame the PRS merchant while a fifth blame the phone provider. However, those deciding to make contact are equally likely to contact the phone provider first (45%) as the PRS merchant (44%).

More than a quarter of those who end up making any organisational contact are dissatisfied with the outcome of this contact. Mystery shopping research revealed that, in many cases, consumers are unable to get a satisfactory answer (or advice on next steps) from the organisations that they contact. In several cases they were not even able to get through to any representative of the PRS merchant.

Implication: Phone providers and PRS merchants need to improve customer support with regards to PRS in terms of providing accurate and relevant information about the PRS charge and, where necessary, signposting the customer to further support / information (including PhonepayPlus).

6. Information and preventative action are as valid to consumers as refunds

Although around half of those making contact with organisations about PRS issues say they were looking to get a refund, higher proportions (around 6 in 10) simply wanted to stop it happening again or just to find out why they had been charged (i.e. how it had happened in the first place). However it needs to be borne in mind that those who did receive e refund were generally far more satisfied at the end of the process.

Implication: Clarification around potential pitfalls when using PRS is essential to reduce the incidence of using PRS inadvertently. In addition, there needs to be clearer advice and information from phone companies and PRS merchants when customers call about PRS.

7. PhonepayPlus is a reassuring touch point for consumers but is rarely the first point of call - it is often at the end of a frustrating journey for consumers experiencing PRS issues

PhonepayPlus is rarely contacted by consumers experiencing issues with PRS due to low awareness and phone companies / PRS merchants rarely suggesting it as a contact point. Consumers who contact PhonepayPlus contact (on average) one or more organisations a total of 5 times. They are often frustrated and angry by the time they contact PhonepayPlus. Consumers are generally relieved when they contact PhonepayPlus because they are usually told what has happened, how it has happened and in that PhonepayPlus appear to take their issues seriously.

Implication: PhonepayPlus should consider acting to influence an improvement in what is currently a sub optimal consumer journey. It should also consider raising its profile to ensure that phone companies, PRS merchants and other agencies appropriately refer customers to PhonepayPlus as they are expected to do under obligations imposed on them by Ofcom.

8. PhonepayPlus could increase satisfaction by clarifying next steps towards resolution and keeping in touch with consumers during their journey

The research showed that PhonepayPlus is highly rated for initial aspects of contact (especially phone contact) in terms of being accessible, helpful, putting the customer at ease and advising on next steps. However, after this initial contact, opinions of service declined regarding clarity of next steps and further correspondence (more than 1 in 5 had negative opinions of this aspect).

Implication: PhonepayPlus should ensure that consumers are properly supported throughout the process. In particular, PhonepayPlus should regularly correspond with consumers even if it's just to say that the issue is still ongoing.

9. PRS related issues are of high importance to parents – as important as high bills and access to inappropriate material

More than 6 in 10 parents say that it is "very important" to protect their children from unexpected items on bills, on a par with those saying it was very important to protect their children from high bills and slightly lower than those saying it was very important to protect their children from accessing inappropriate content online/on their phone. Although many parents have taken action to prevent inadvertent PRS usage by their children this is often quite passive until an incident occurs when parents may take more tangible steps to stop this issue re-occurring.

Implications: Education around this issue might encourage parents to take more robust preventative steps from the outset.

10. Consistency of response must be improved across the industry

It was clear from the research that there is a lack of knowledge among consumers about PRS and this can be exacerbated by mixed messages from organisations and from other consumers. Analysis of online "chat" around PRS issues reveals that four key areas could be addressed by the industry in clarifying these payment methods for consumers:

- Should you text STOP to stop receiving text messages?
- It may be irritating but what is actually illegal?
- Who is at fault here (accident/inattention versus actively misleading?)
- What is the process of complaining (to whom, how, and for what?)

Implications: It would be beneficial to consumers if any future clarification around these payment methods included some focus on these four areas, and generally if the process of communication around issues was more streamlined and consistent across and within organisations.

3. Introduction

PhonepayPlus is the regulatory body for premium rate telecommunications services that are accessible in the UK. The primary task of PhonepayPlus is to set and enforce standards for the content and advertising of premium rate services (PRS). These standards include a Code of Practice to protect the consumer from 'harm'.

The customer service centre at PhonepayPlus receives complaints and enquiries from the public who have experienced problems with a PRS. Complaints are most commonly in relation to mobile-based PRS, although they also occur about fixed-line services. Common complaints include:

- Confusion about why the service is on their bill
- Unsolicited billing – including receipt of on-going chargeable SMS messages
- Unsolicited PRS marketing by SMS/Payforit
- Inappropriate promotional material e.g. marketing to children
- Complaints about the quality of digital goods and services used

Overlaying this, there are a number of different types of PRS service people could be calling about, some key categories being:

- Mobile personalisation/subscription services
- Mobile digital content e.g. games
- Adult content/texts
- Competitions/voting
- Directory enquiries (118)

3.1. Background and Objectives

Previous research has identified that there are many variants of the 'typical' consumer journey and that there are usually a number of steps in that journey from experiencing PRS issues to contacting PhonepayPlus. Consumers contacting PhonepayPlus have often done so following a number of calls to other organisations before finding out about the regulator.

Journeys are rarely linear. Consumers often need to be referred back to their network operator to establish the short code or identifier for the service. Many consumers who experience a problem will not contact PhonepayPlus or in fact take any form of action to resolve their situation. A number of consumer journeys may result in a 'dead end' – for example, if they are made to feel it is their own fault by the network provider.

PhonepayPlus was keen to obtain evidence to support their work with industry to improve customer experiences with PRS and any associated customer care, namely:

- By informing policymaking by better understanding risk factors associated with using PRS and consumer expectations of customer care
- Obtaining insight into customer care experiences with industry and PhonepayPlus
- Assisting in the consumer awareness and literacy program – in particular, helping to identify those most prone to experiencing problems with PRS

Research objectives were as follows:

- To determine pre-cursory factors (both attitudinal and behavioural) that lead to consumers experiencing issues, and understand how adult consumers and parents of children with phones learn about and avoid unwanted billing through PRS
- Amongst those PRS users who feel they have experienced issues, to map out consumer journeys and size these, including an understanding of who complains and where to

- To understand whether there are typologies of consumer journey according to key factors (e.g. nature of the complaint, customer service levels) and explore barriers to complaining at all stages of the journey
- To understand those that do complain (versus those that do not) in terms of what motivates them and why they select the route they do
- To obtain in-depth insight into the customer care experience among complainants, understanding differences by channel of communication

3.2. Methodology

Summary of Approach

The research programme was multi-faceted and holistic in nature. The initial phase consisted of stakeholder interviews (with key PhonepayPlus staff) and a small scale qualitative phase with PhonepayPlus complainants. This phase enabled researchers to clarify the key issues and areas of importance.

These were used to develop a quantitative questionnaire to be used among a nationally representative sample of UK adults (to assess PRS usage) as well as a smaller sample of people who had contacted PhonepayPlus.

Additionally desk research was conducted which involved monitoring Internet "chat" about PRS issues, and a formal mystery shopping exercise was used to assess the consistency of response provided to consumers by third parties.

Finally, telephone in-depth interviews were conducted with free-found PRS users/complainants, users of other micropayment methods and interview with the general public who have looked into the issue of PRS (including those with children where PRS is potentially an issue).

Stakeholder Interviews and Desk Research

In order to gain a clear understanding of the issues and priorities for this research, the Jigsaw Research project team conducted stakeholder interviews with key PhonepayPlus staff and reviewed previous research in this area.

Initial Qualitative Stage

12 in-depth interviews were then conducted with people who had complained to PhonepayPlus (with a list of contact details provided by PhonepayPlus). 8 interviews were conducted by telephone and 4 were conducted face-to-face. The interviews comprised a mix of complainant types in terms of PRS services used, demographics/life-stage and whether contact with PhonepayPlus had been by web-form or telephone.

Interviews lasted approximately 45 minutes and respondents were offered a £40 incentive to take part. The findings from this early phase were used to inform questionnaire development for subsequent phases of research, and to gain a basic understanding of some of the relevant issues around PRS.

These interviews were conducted between 7th August and 3rd September 2013.

Quantitative Stage with nationally representative sample of adults

4,000 interviews were conducted with a nationally representative sample of the UK adult population via an online panel. The full questionnaire can be found in the appendices.

Research participants were asked about their usage of PRS and other micropayment methods and PRS users were asked for their overall experiences of these payment methods, sources of information used to find out about them and any issues experienced. Those claiming to experience PRS issues were asked about these instances and any contact they made with organisations as a result. Those making contact and/or complaining were asked about their contact journeys, satisfaction and journey outcomes. Similar questions were asked of users of other micropayment methods so that PRS usage could be benchmarked against other micropayment usage.

Parents with children aged 6-15 with phones, were asked about PRS experiences related to their children using mobile phones. A number of socio-demographic and technology related questions were also asked in order to provide profiling information. These interviews were conducted between 5th and 18th September 2013.

Quantitative stage with PhonepayPlus enquirers/complainants

103 interviews were conducted with people who had contacted PhonepayPlus to enquire or complain about a PRS incident.

These interviews were conducted on the telephone via CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing). The questionnaire used was similar to the one used for the nationally representative sample of the UK adult population so comparisons could be made across the two samples. In addition, this audience was asked detailed questions about their experience of contacting PhonepayPlus.

A number of socio-demographic and technology related questions were also asked in order to provide profiling information. These interviews were conducted between 5th and 13th September 2013.

Internet "Chat" Research

A desk research exercise was conducted in the form of review of websites, consumer forums and social media. The aim was to assess consumer "chat" about PRS (and other micropayment methods). In particular, the research aimed to assess reactions to and actions taken as a result of PRS issues and to identify any key themes or areas of consumer confusion that might be insightful for future communication at PhonepayPlus.

A number of websites were explored and key search words used to identify examples of PRS issues; examining both peer to peer (e.g. social media, consumer forums) and consumer to organisation (e.g. mobile network forums or official social media pages). A full list of sources and search terms can be found in the appendices.

Mystery Shopping

A formal mystery shopping exercise was conducted in order to complement the research findings and assess the consistency of response provided to consumers by third parties. From previous research in this area, it is known that recall of usage of PRS experiences can be sketchy and we could not therefore rely on consumer recall to be an accurate measure of third party (e.g. mobile operators, PRS providers, PhonepayPlus etc.) response.

20 mystery shopping journeys were conducted across a range of PRS incidents and phone providers, and involved 53 mystery 'shops' overall. As an example, one journey might involve 3 'shops' i.e. contacting the phone provider, the PRS merchant and PhonepayPlus.

Interviewers probed on issues covered in the quantitative interviews as well as mapping out the complete customer journey and emotions around that journey.

20 separate phone accounts were used (contract or PAYG mobile as well as a few fixed line phone accounts). Interviewers were provided with a detailed briefing and asked to follow a common journey.

Tailoring of the order of contact was allowed according to how the mystery shoppers were directed by the various contact points e.g. they may have needed to contact the network provider twice.

The mystery shops were conducted between 4th and 19th October 2013.

Follow-up Qualitative Stage

40 telephone in-depth telephone interviews were conducted as follows:

- 20 experiencing PRS issues (10 complainants and 10 non-complainants)
- 10 experiencing other micropayment issues (5 complainants and 5 non-complainants)
- 10 interviews with the general public who are engaged with the subject matter (6 have children living at home using a mobile phone)

This sample was recruited from those identified in the online panel sample and interviews lasted approximately 20-30 minutes. Respondents received an incentive payment of £20 for taking part in the research.

3.3. A caveat

It is important to note that the research was reliant upon participants' understanding of and interpretation of PRS and PRS issues. Although very clear descriptions and examples were provided in the questionnaire (see appendices for full details), it is quite probable that some confusion exists around what constitutes a PRS number (118, 09, 0871 versus 0845, 0870) or a PRS text service as regulated by PhonepayPlus versus, for example, spam texts about PPI. It was not possible to know from their responses if a participant was talking about PRS or PRS issues in their strictest definition, therefore a caveat must be applied, accepting that these findings may include some instances of non-PRS experience.

4. Main Findings

4.1. Clarifying the key consumer types

From a nationally representative online panel sample, 4,000 UK adults were interviewed as part of this research programme. This section of the report focusses on several key types of consumer identified and interviewed within that sample:

- 1,398 PRS users (who have used any of a list of premium rate services in the past 6 months)
- 782 PRS issues i.e. PRS users who claim to have experienced at least one type of issue with PRS (from a prompted list), as defined in section 3.2.2.
- 211 PRS contact i.e. users who claim to have experienced at least one type of PRS issue and made contact with at least one organisation about their experience/s
- 113 PRS complainants i.e. users who claim to have experienced at least one type of PRS issue, made contact with at least one organisation about their experiences and complained about the incident to at least one third party organisation (this could be a fixed or mobile network operator, a PRS provider, a regulator or consumer organisation).

In addition to the main sample, a separate piece of research was conducted (via telephone) amongst a sample of 103 consumers who had contacted PhonepayPlus: PhonepayPlus contacts.

This report also has separate sections examining the behaviour and attitudes of:

- 2,202 Micropayment users (who had used any of a list of non-PRS micropayment methods in the past 6 months)
- 365 parents of children aged 6-15 with mobile phones who were asked some specific questions about PRS issues in relation to their children.

Micropayment users and parents were also recruited using the same online panel as above.

4.2. Incidence of PRS usage and issues

Key Findings

- **35% of all adults claimed to have used any listed PRS in the past 6 months, and 20% of all adults said they had experienced issues when using PRS over that same period (this represents 56% of PRS users). The most prevalent types of issue were unclear call costs for premium rate numbers, follow up marketing and unsolicited chargeable SMS.**
- **The more people use PRS, the greater the potential exposure to any inherent negatives in addition to benefits. However, many who had claimed to have experienced issues still felt PRS offered convenience and were regular users of PRS.**
- **There was a clear link between experiencing PRS issues and seeking out information about related matters. The most common information sources used were Internet searches, family/friends and the news/media.**

To set the scene, Figure 1 shows the incidence of PRS usage (as defined in the next section). It then shows claimed experience of PRS issues, PRS contact about issues and PRS complaints about issues amongst the online UK adult population among all adults (chart to the left) and then as a percentage of PRS users. As can be seen in figure 1, one in five UK adults surveyed claim to have experienced PRS issues (although only a minority

end up making a complaint). When based on PRS users, this equates to 56% experiencing issues and 8% making a complaint.

It is important to note that the research was reliant upon participants' understanding of and interpretation of PRS and PRS issues. Although very clear descriptions and examples were given in the questionnaire (see appendices for full details), it is quite probable that some confusion exists around what constitutes a PRS number (118, 09, 0871 versus 0845, 0870) or PRS text service as regulated by PhonepayPlus versus, for example, spam texts about claiming PPI. It was not possible to know from their responses if a participant was talking about PRS or PRS issues in their strictest definition, therefore a caveat must be applied, accepting that these findings may include some instances of non-PRS experience. In addition, it must be noted that adults were recruited via an online panel and therefore likely to be heavier users of some types of PRS.

It can be estimated from the research that there are approximately 17.5 million adult PRS users in the UK, 10 million who claim to have experienced some kind of issue whilst using these payment methods, and 1.4 million who claim to have made some form of complaint about their experiences.

Figure 1: Summary of PRS journey incidence in the past 6 months
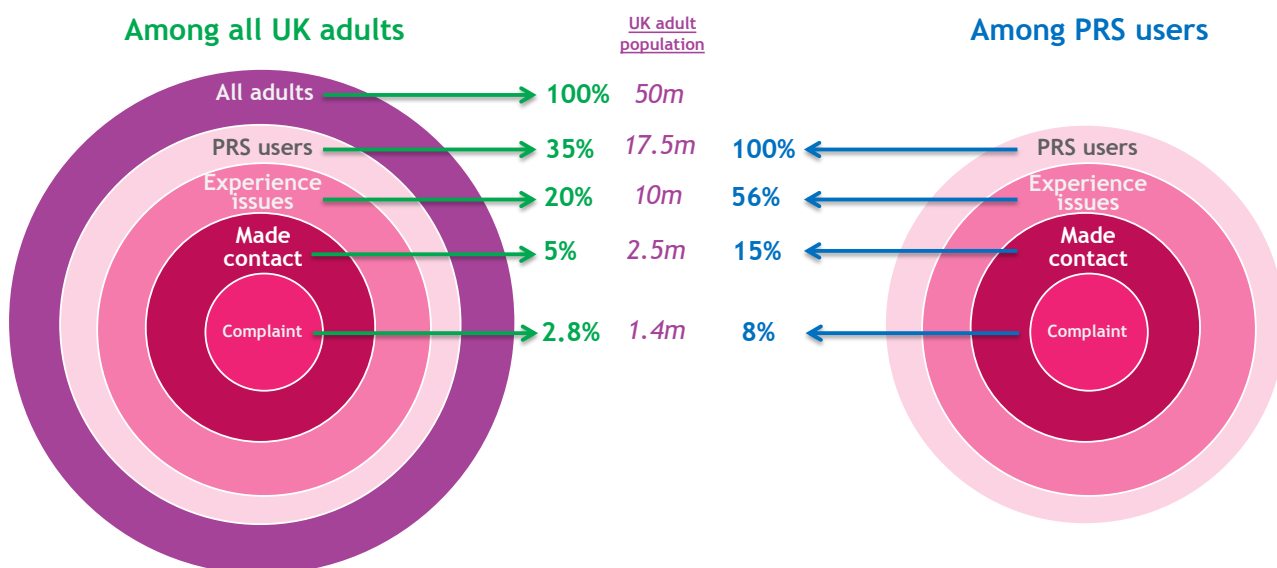
Base: All adults n=4000, All PRS users n = 1398

4.2.1.   Defining PRS usage

Research participants were shown a number of ways in which they might pay for digital goods and services[1]. They were asked to think only about purchases that typically cost up to £10 in a single transaction but which could go above that cost depending on the length of a call or session. Participants were asked if they had used each payment method in the last 6 months, in the last 7-12 months or had not used or experienced that payment method in the last 12 months.

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[1]   This might include things like a game, an app, a music track or an information or entertainment service that is called from a phone or received in a text, but participants were asked NOT to include physical products that would be delivered to them or which they would pick up from a seller.

Figure 2 shows that more than one in three (35%) claimed to have used any of the listed payment methods in the past 6 months. Almost a quarter claimed to have called a premium phone line, although there is likely to have been an overstatement of premium phone line usage[2].

Figure 2: PRS usage in the past 6 months
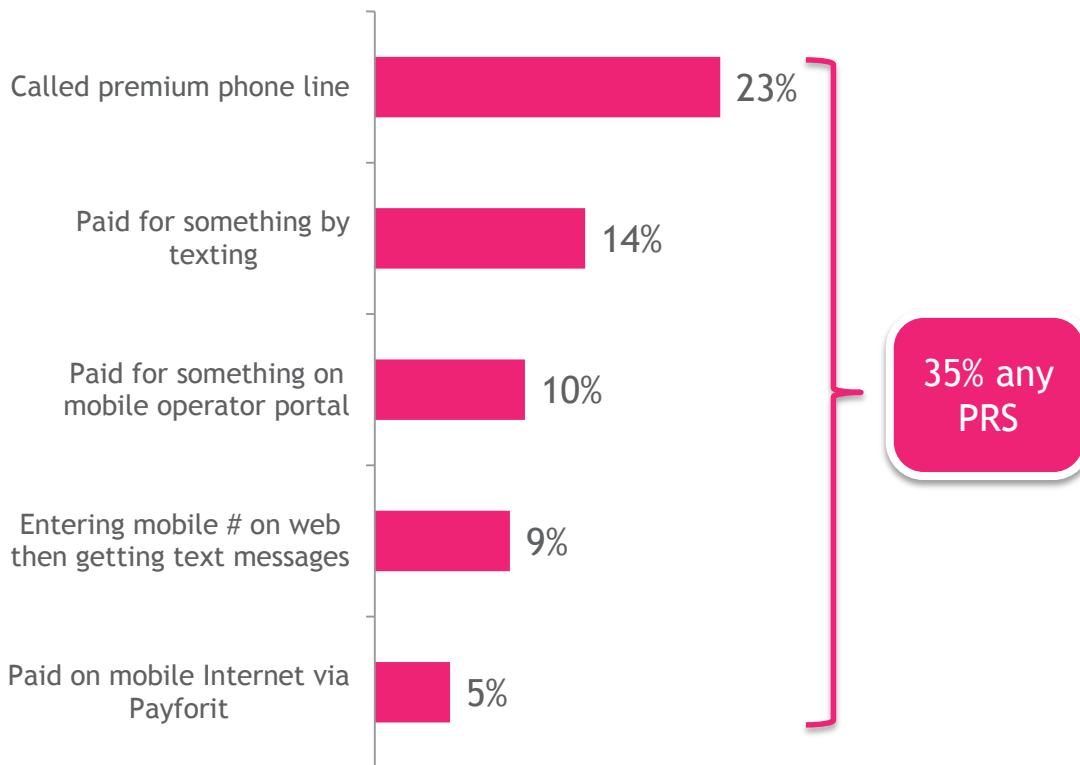
Source: Q1 You will be shown a number of ways to pay for digital goods and services. Please indicate whether you have used this payment method in the last 6 months. Base: Total Sample n=4000. Multiple answers allowed.

[2]   It is possible that participants may have been confusing premium rate with 0844, 0845 and 0870 numbers for example which are not defined by Ofcom as PRS and which are regulated by Ofcom rather than PhonepayPlus.

4.2.2.   PRS users: opinion of PRS

Figure 3 looks at the overall experience of using PRS amongst all who claimed to have used such payment methods in the past 6 months, and Figure 4 examines levels of agreement about more specific aspects of PRS.

More than half (52%) of PRS users had a positive experience of using PRS overall in the past 6 months while 15% had negative experiences. Figure 4 shows that six in ten (61%) agreed these were convenient ways of paying, although just under a half agreed that some PRS were deliberately misleading or could be confusing.

Figure 3: Overall experience of using PRS[3]
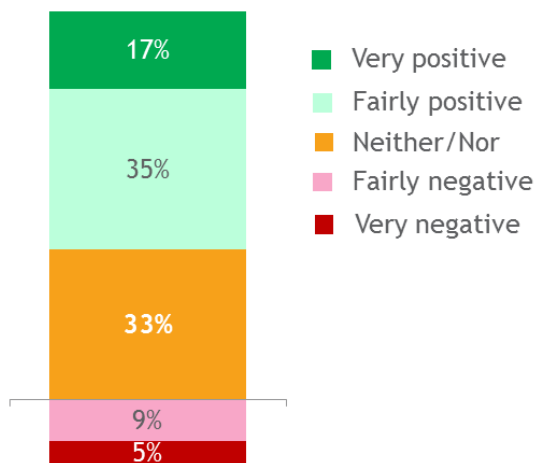
Figure 4: Agreement with statements about PRS (NET agree)
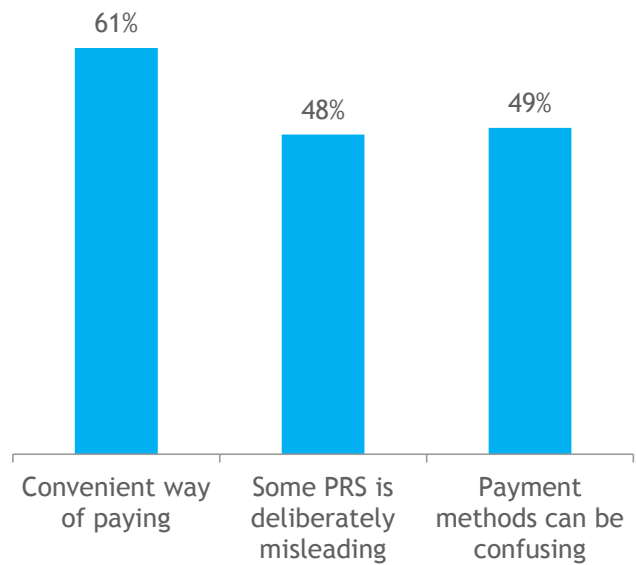
Source: Q3 How would you rate your overall experience of using these types of payment methods over the last 6 months? Base: All PRS users n=1398

Source: Q4 Please say how much you agree or disagree with the statements below? Base: All PRS users n=1398

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[3]   The individual percentages in this chart do not add up to 100% due to rounding.

4.2.3. PRS users: defining PRS issues

Those participants claiming to have used any of the listed PRS in the past 6 months were then asked about their experiences of using those payment methods. They were asked if they had experienced any of a number of listed issues with PRS in the past six months. Figure 5 details these specific issues.

Figure 5: Definitions of PRS issues

A	You received chargeable texts from a third party on your mobile phone even though you didn't recall signing up to receive these texts (each text might cost approximately £1.50)
B	You've called a premium phone line (e.g. 09, 118 or 0871) but don't feel it was made clear what the call costs would be (the calls would typically cost between £0.62 and £1.65 per minute from a landline – more from a mobile)
C	You have been charged to your phone for viewing (not downloading) pages on an Internet site without knowing this would happen
D	You have been billed for something within an application and you were not aware that you would be charged for this e.g. food for an animal in a child's game, extra equipment or levels in an game
E	You agreed to the premium rate service but were billed more than expected
F	You agreed to the premium rate service but thought it was a one off charge and were billed for a regular subscription service
G	You entered a premium rate service competition and discovered later on that the chances of winning were much lower than it originally appeared
H	You received some follow up marketing e.g. advertising texts without knowing you had agreed to this

Source: Q5a Please indicate whether you have experienced any of the issues on the list when using these types of payment methods in the last 6 months; Base: All PRS users n=1398

Figure 6 shows that more than half (56%) of all PRS users claimed to have experienced any PRS issues in the past six months. 30% claimed to have experienced just one type of PRS issue, 21% had experienced two or three types, and 5% had experienced four or more types of PRS issues during the past six months.

The three most prevalent types of PRS issue were calling premium rate numbers where call costs were not made clear (33%), receiving follow-up marketing without knowing you were signed up to it (21%) and receiving unsolicited chargeable SMS (16%). Other types of PRS issue were experienced by fewer than one in ten PRS users.

Some age-related differences were noted in that unclear PR call costs and follow up marketing were more prevalent amongst 55-64 year olds, and unsolicited chargeable SMS was more prevalent amongst those aged under 35.

Figure 6: Incidence of PRS issues amongst all PRS users
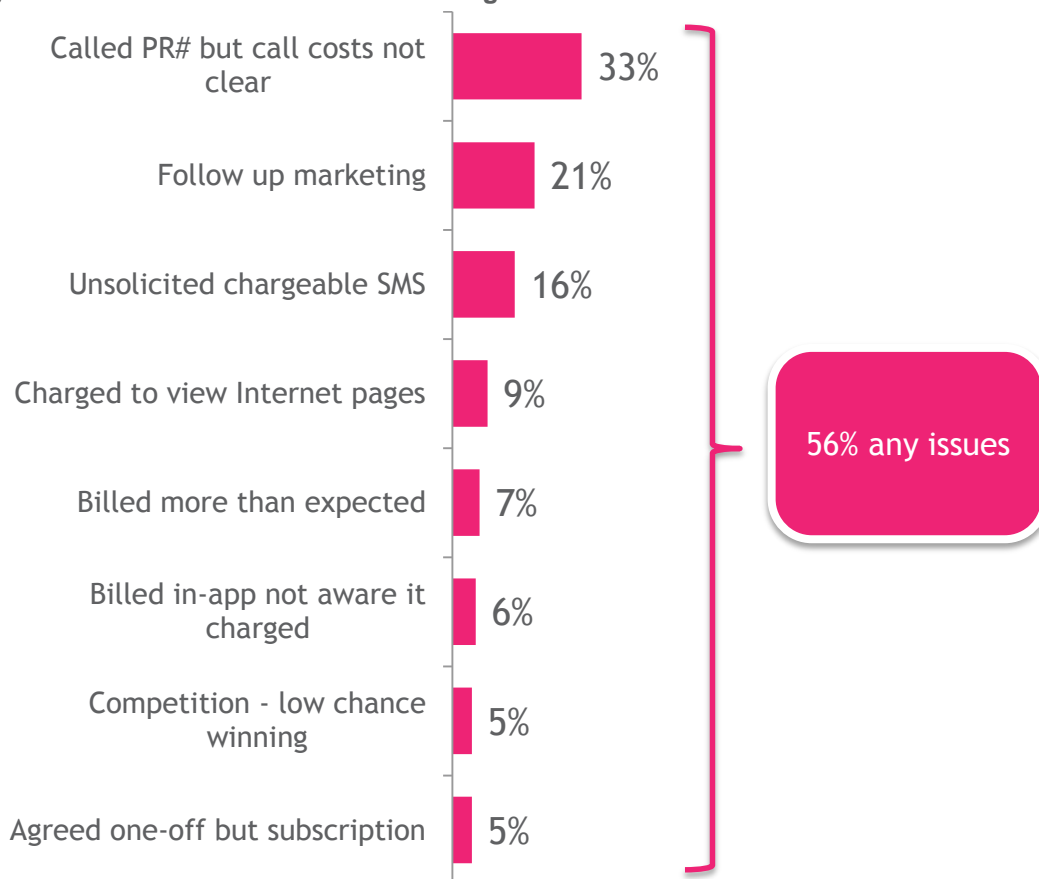
Source: Q5a Please indicate whether you have experienced any of the issues on the list when using these types of payment methods in the last 6 months; Base: All PRS users n=1398. Multiple answers allowed.

Those experiencing each type of PRS issue were then asked the number of times they had experienced that specific problem or issue in the past 6 months. If participants had received multiple charges due to the same issue then they were asked to count this as only one time (although again it's possible that some may count two instances related to the same service twice).

Table 1 shows that on average, those who received follow-up marketing experienced this type of issue almost six times in the past six months. Most types of PRS issue were experienced two or three times on average within the six month period.

Table 1:   Frequency experienced specific PRS issue (among those experiencing each type of issue)

Type of PRS issue	Mean number of times experienced
Follow up marketing	5.72
Called PR# but call costs not clear	3.56
Unsolicited chargeable SMS	3.13
Billed more than expected	3.00
Billed in-app not aware it charged	2.90
Charged to view Internet pages	2.40
Competition – low chance winning	2.35
Agreed one-off but subscription	1.73

Source: Q5b Please type in the number of times you have experienced each problem or issue in the last 6 months?
Base: All experiencing issue with specific payment method.

Figure 7 shows that there was a clear correlation between the frequency of PRS usage and PRS issues experienced; clearly it can be argued that if you are a regular user you are more likely to experience some of the more negative elements inherent in these payment methods.

The average PRS user has used these types of payment methods 3.6 times in the past six months. This rose to 3.9 times amongst those who claimed to have experienced any issues and significantly to 5.2 times amongst those users motivated to complain about the issues they experienced. Conversely, those PRS users who claimed to have experienced no issues with these payment methods were the most infrequent users.

Figure 7: Frequency of PRS use in the past 6 months
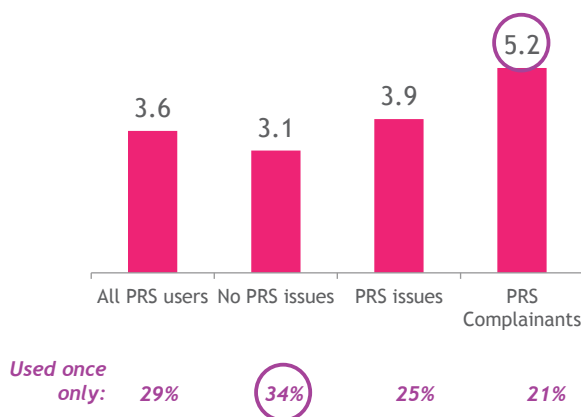
Source: Q2 How many times in total would you say you have used these types of payment methods in the last
6 months; Base: All PRS users n=1398

4.2.4. Opinions of PRS amongst those experiencing issues

PRS users were asked to rate their overall experience of using premium rate payment methods over the past six months. Figure 8 reminds us that more than half (52%) of all PRS users rated their overall experience positively, and only 15% had a negative overall opinion.

Interestingly, although those claiming to experience PRS issues were less positive about PRS (1 in 5 had a negative opinion overall), almost a half (49%) still felt positively about these payment methods.   As mentioned before, those experiencing issues are heavier users of PRS and therefore may be able to distinguish between positive and negative experiences. This means when they experience issues it may not completely tarnish their view of the category.

The youngest PRS users were more positive overall than the oldest, with 63% of under-35s rating their overall experience positively, compared with only 37% of those aged over 65. PRS users who describe themselves as "confident with technology nowadays" were also more likely to have positive overall experiences with their PRS usage than those who lacked confidence in this area.

Figure 8: Overall experience of using PRS[4]
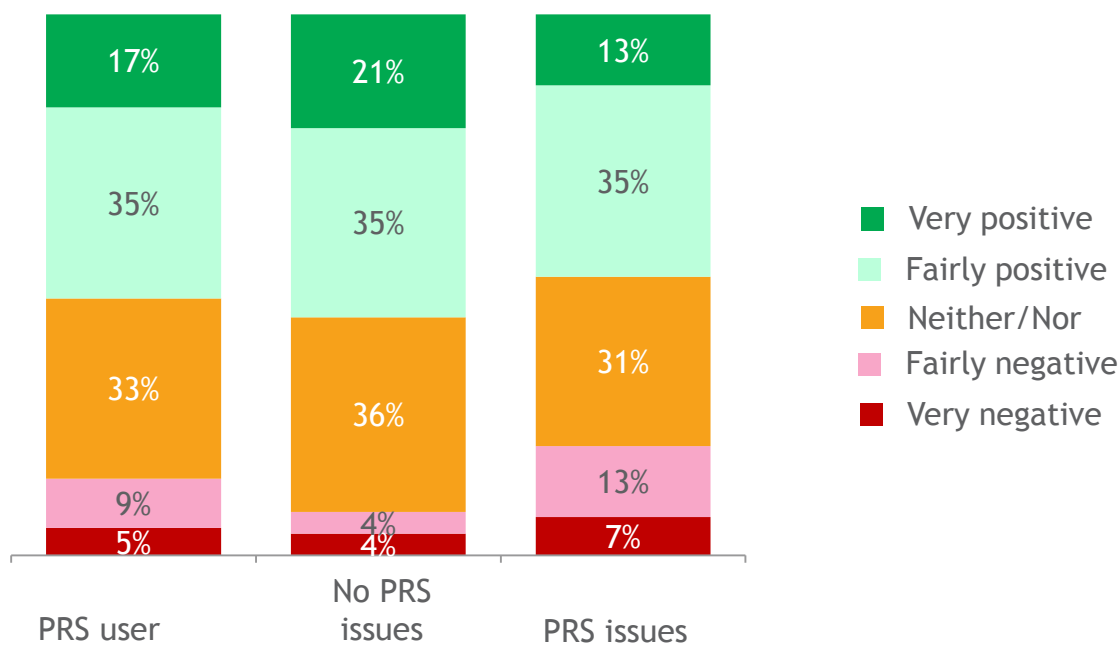
Source: Q3 How would you rate your overall experience of using these types of payment methods over
        the last 6 months? ; Base: All PRS users n=1398/no PRS issues n=616/PRS issues n=782

In addition to rating their overall satisfaction with using PRS, research participants were also asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with a number of statements about these types of payment methods, touching on issues of convenience, clarity and propensity to mislead.

Figure 9 reminds us that PRS were seen to offer convenience but can be deliberately misleading and/or confusing.

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4   The individual percentages in this chart do not add up to 100% due to rounding.

The majority of users viewed PRS as a convenient payment method, and even those claimed to have experienced issues appreciated the convenience benefits it brings. However, around half of all users saw some PRS as deliberately misleading or believed the payment methods could be confusing. This rose to 60% among those experiencing PRS issues.

This further emphasises the fact that many of those who claimed to have experienced issues were able to differentiate between the general PRS category and some specific services they perceived to be confusing / misleading.

Figure 9: Agreement with statements about PRS (% agree strongly or slightly)
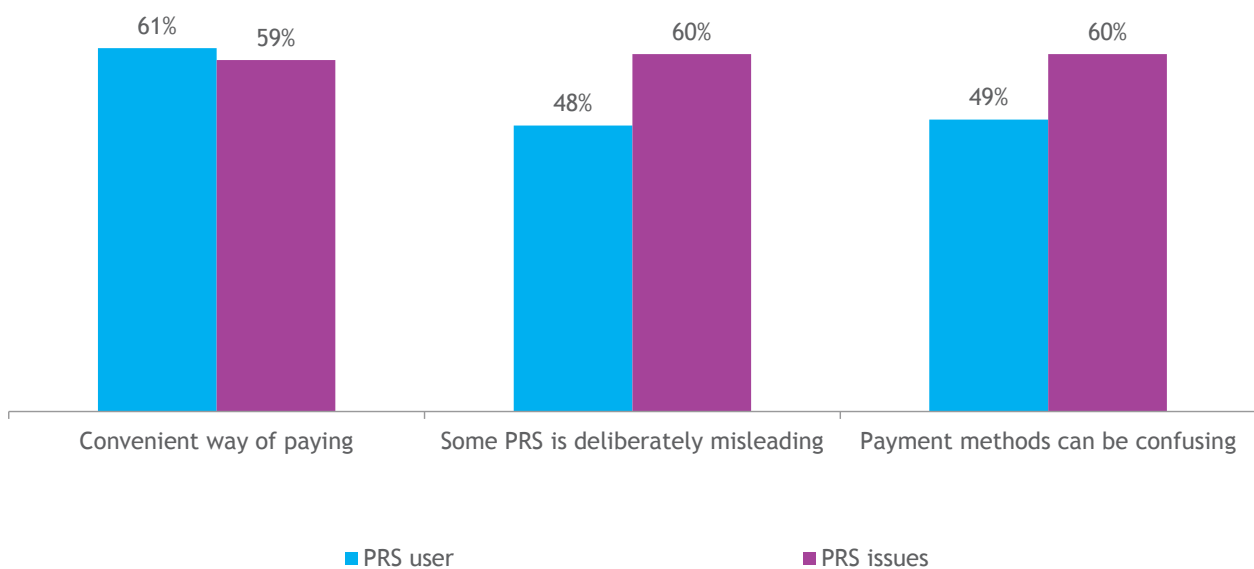
Source: Q4 Please say how much you agree or disagree with the statements below?
          Base: All PRS users n=1398, all PRS users claiming to have experienced issues n=782

4.2.5. Finding out about PRS issues

The findings from the qualitative interviews with PRS users suggested that premium rate issues were typically not top of mind for people unless they had experienced an issue (unlike other micropayment methods) i.e. people were unsurprised to experience or hear about issues related to card payment even if they hadn't personally experienced them (e.g. hearing about children running up large bills on parents' cards when playing in-app games) but they were far less likely to be aware that being charged via a phone for many services was even possible. This means that very few are actually proactively educating themselves about PRS.

Respondents did claim to be using a number of more 'passive' information sources but we know (from the qualitative interviews) that people are usually not actively seeking out the information. For example they might come across information on sites such as Money Savings Expert or another website, or family members or friends having negative experiences could have warned them to be careful.

However, once users had experienced PRS issues then the issue typically became more 'front of mind', and they actively wanted to read up on the issue, sought out ways to stop this happening again and/or were more sensitised to stories or articles on websites or in the press. People felt it would be useful to know more about ways to protect themselves in advance. For example there was low awareness about placing premium rate blocks on your landline/mobile.

Figure 10 shows the information sources used by PRS users to find out more about the types of issues they might need to be aware of when using these payment methods. In the chart, the information sources have been

roughly classified into more "passive" and more "active" types, for example general searching on the Internet is arguably a more passive activity compared with online forums[5].

Passive information sources made up the bulk of activity, with 62% of all PRS users spending time on at least one of those listed. The most common passive information source was general Internet searching, with around one in three (32%) using this method. Word of mouth (friends, family, and other people) and news/media were used by approximately one in four.

Active information sources were less prevalent, with 17% of all PRS users engaging with at least one of those listed. One in ten had used a phone company to find out information about these types of payment methods.

One in three (36%) PRS users said that they had not tried to find out about issues related to these types of payment methods at all.

Table 2 shows that there was clear link between PRS issues and the incidence of users seeking out information about issues related to these payment methods. Those who claimed to have experienced PRS issues were significantly more likely to have used both passive and active information sources. Conversely, more than half (53%) of those experiencing no issues had not tried to find out about PRS issues at all.

Figure 10: Information sources used to find out about issues around premium rate payment methods
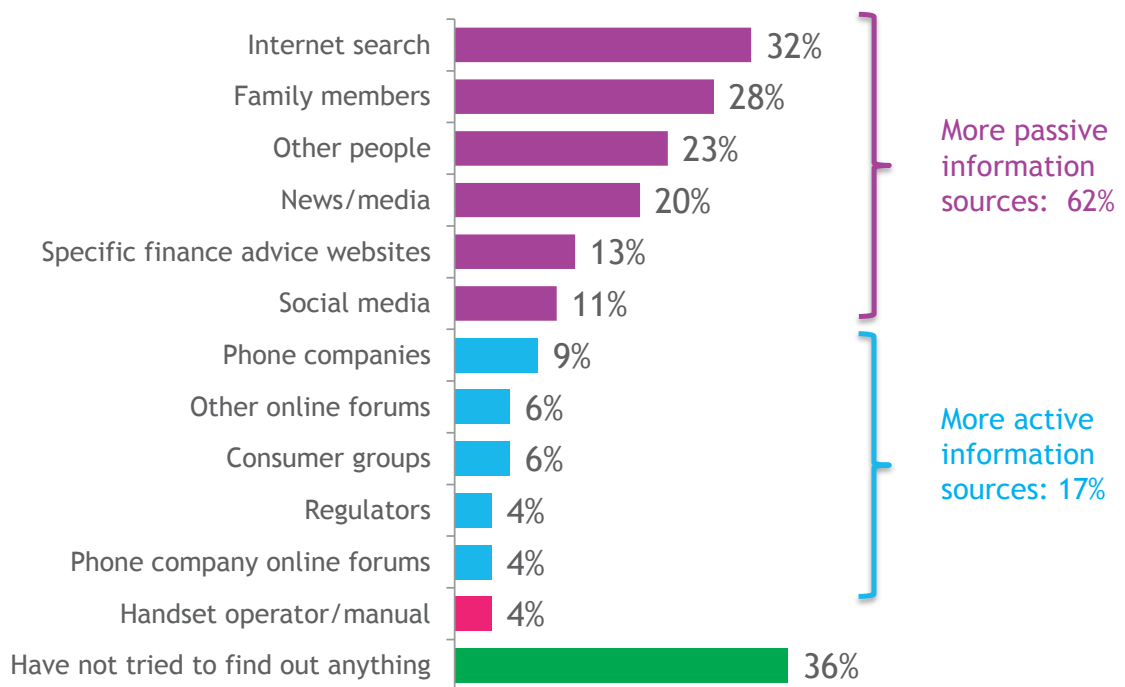
Source: Q4c Which of the following information sources, if any, have you used to find out more about these types of issues? Base: All recent PRS users n=1398. Multiple answers allowed.

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5   These distinctions were not made clear to research participants, who were asked simply to select sources they had used from a long list. For analysis purposes, researchers then made a rough distinction between sources that were perhaps more "passive" (Internet searching, talking to family members or other people, consuming news/media or social media, or looking on financial advice websites) and those which were more "active" in that they were more closely related to PRS specifically (phone companies, regulators) or involved forums (phone company/other) or consumer groups which indicates a higher level of specific research.

Table 2: Information sources used to find out about issues around premium rate payment methods

Sources used:	Total PRS users	No issues	PRS issues
Any passive sources	62%	45%	74%
Any active sources	17%	8%	24%
None	36%	53%	22%

Source: Q4c which of the following information sources, if any, have you used to find out more about these types of issues? Base: All recent PRS users n=1398. Multiple answers allowed.

4.3. Making contact with organisations about PRS issues

Key Findings

- **A quarter (27%) of those claiming to have experienced PRS issues contacted an organisation as a result of their most annoying experience (5% of all UK adults). Among those who do make contact, 39% made some contact just once, 30% twice and 30% three or more times.**
- **Most contact was made in order to stop the incident happening again and/or to identify why people have been charged. Half of those making contact (54%) actually made a complaint.**
- **Most consumer journeys involved contact with one type of organisation only (usually the PRS merchant or the network provider), but often contact was multiple within that (i.e. contacting the same organisation twice or more).**
- **A majority of those who made contact with any organisations had positive experiences overall but around a quarter were left dissatisfied. Dissatisfaction was much more likely if they were not ultimately refunded.**

4.3.1.   Incidence of contact

PRS users who claimed to have experienced any issues in the past six months were asked if they had made contact with any organisations as a result. The contact could have been by email, letter, web form, phone call or some other method of contact. Participants with more than one experience of PRS issues were asked to focus on the experience they considered to be most annoying at the time (in the interests of interview length).

A quarter (27%) of those claiming to have experienced PRS issues contacted an organisation as a result of their most annoying experience (5% of all UK adults). This section focusses on those 211 consumers who made contact with at least one organisation about PRS issues they claimed to have experienced in the past six months.

Figure 11 examines key differences in the incidence of contact (and complaint) by PRS issue type and shows that chargeable texts, in-app purchases and internet page viewing charges were more likely to lead to contact and complaint than other types of issue experienced.

Although unclear call costs to PR numbers was the most prevalent type of issue participants claimed to have experienced, this was the least likely to result in consumers contacting or complaining to organisations.

Figure 11 also shows the clear impact of the level of charge upon likelihood to contact organisations or complain about PRS issues. More than twice as many of those charged more than £5 made contact or complained versus those charged less than this amount.

Figure 11: Key differences in incidence of contact by PRS issue type

	Phone call	SMS		Apps	Web	Cost	
	Called PR# but call costs not clear (33%)	**Follow up marketing texts (21%)**	**Received chargeable texts (16%)**	**Billed for unknown in-app purchase (6%)**	**Charged to view internet pages (9%)**	**Charged £5 or under**	**Charged over £5**
Incidence among PRS users	33%	21%	16%	6%	9%		
Base	(456)	(298)	(223)	(86)	(131)	(484)	(239)
Contacted any organisation	23%	31%	44%	47%	39%	21%	44%
Contacted service provider	14%	21%	28%	24%	20%	12%	26%
Contacted mobile phone co.	11%	11%	25%	26%	37%	10%	22%
Contacted fixed line phone co.	4%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Made complaint	14%	16%	26%	28%	24%	10%	26%
Average (mean) cost	£6.86	NA	£7.75	£10.13	£10.48	NA	NA

Source: Q7a Did you make contact with any organisations as a result of this issue? Base: All claiming to have experienced PRS issues n=782. Q7c Please tick which organisation you contacted first, second, third and so on. Q9 Did you make a complaint as a result of your contact with all the organisations you dealt with? Base: all making at least one contact n=211

Figure 12 shows the amount of number of times contact is made with any organisation (this includes multiple contact with the same organisation so someone contacting their mobile phone company three times (with no other contact) would be classified as 'three times').

On average people contact organisations 2.3 times with 39% only making contact once and 30% making contact twice. A third (31%) made contact three or more times.

Figure 12: Number of times made contact with any organisations after experiencing PRS issues

Mean: 2.28

| Just once | Twice | Three times | Four times | Five or more times |
| 39% | 30% | 16% | 7% | 8% |
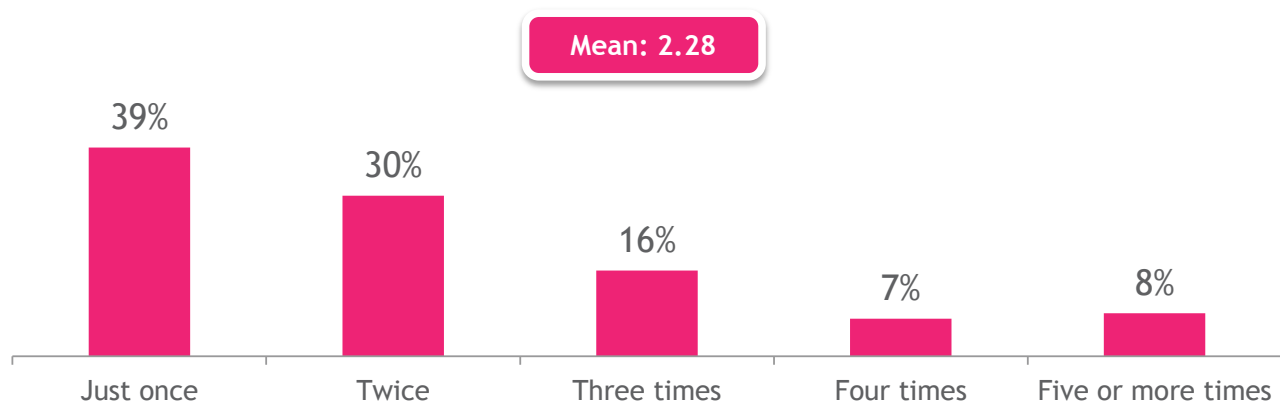
Source: Q7b In total how many times did you make contact with any organisations? Base: all making at least one contact

n=211

As part of the questioning, participants were asked to provide the order in which they had contact with these organisations as a result of the issue in question, to give some understanding of their consumer journey. They were asked to tick which organisation (from a list) they contacted first, second, third and so on.

Figure 13 is based on all making at least one contact, and shows both the organisations which were contacted first (or only in the case of those making just one contact) and those contacted at all.

In the first instance, contact was likely to be either with the PRS merchant (the company behind the service) or the telephone company. Overall around six in ten of those making any contact got in touch with the company behind the PRS service and around half with their mobile phone company.

The figure also shows that very few people will contact Ofcom or PhonepayPlus first. This is far more likely to be after initial contact with the PRS merchant or the telephone company (wither because they are not happy with the response from the PRS merchant or the telephone company or they have been provided with Ofcom or PhonepayPlus contact details during the initial contact).

Figure 13: Organisations contacted after experiencing PRS issues
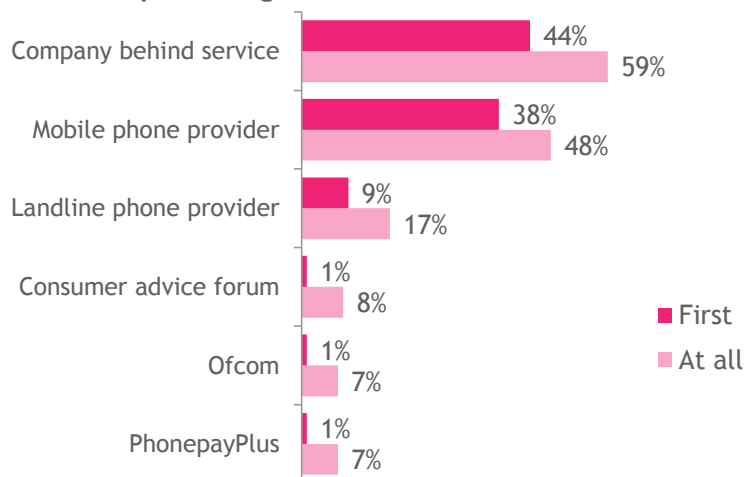
Source: Q7c Please tick which organisation you contacted first, second, third and so on. Base: all making at least one contact n=211. Multiple answers allowed for the "at all" section of this question.

(Note that this figure is based on the 211 people interviewed who had contacted any organisation, not the sample of 103 people who had contacted PhonepayPlus).

We are able to identify the most common organisational contact journeys by looking at the patterns of contact in terms of the number of times contacted and who contact was with. Figure 14 shows that most journeys involved contact with one type of organisation only.

So 18% contacted the PRS merchant once and then their journey ended, while a further 10% contacted the PRS merchant twice and then their journey ended. 15% contacted the phone provider once and then their journey ended, while a further 8% contacted the phone provider twice and then their journey ended.

Figure 14: Most common organisational contact journeys
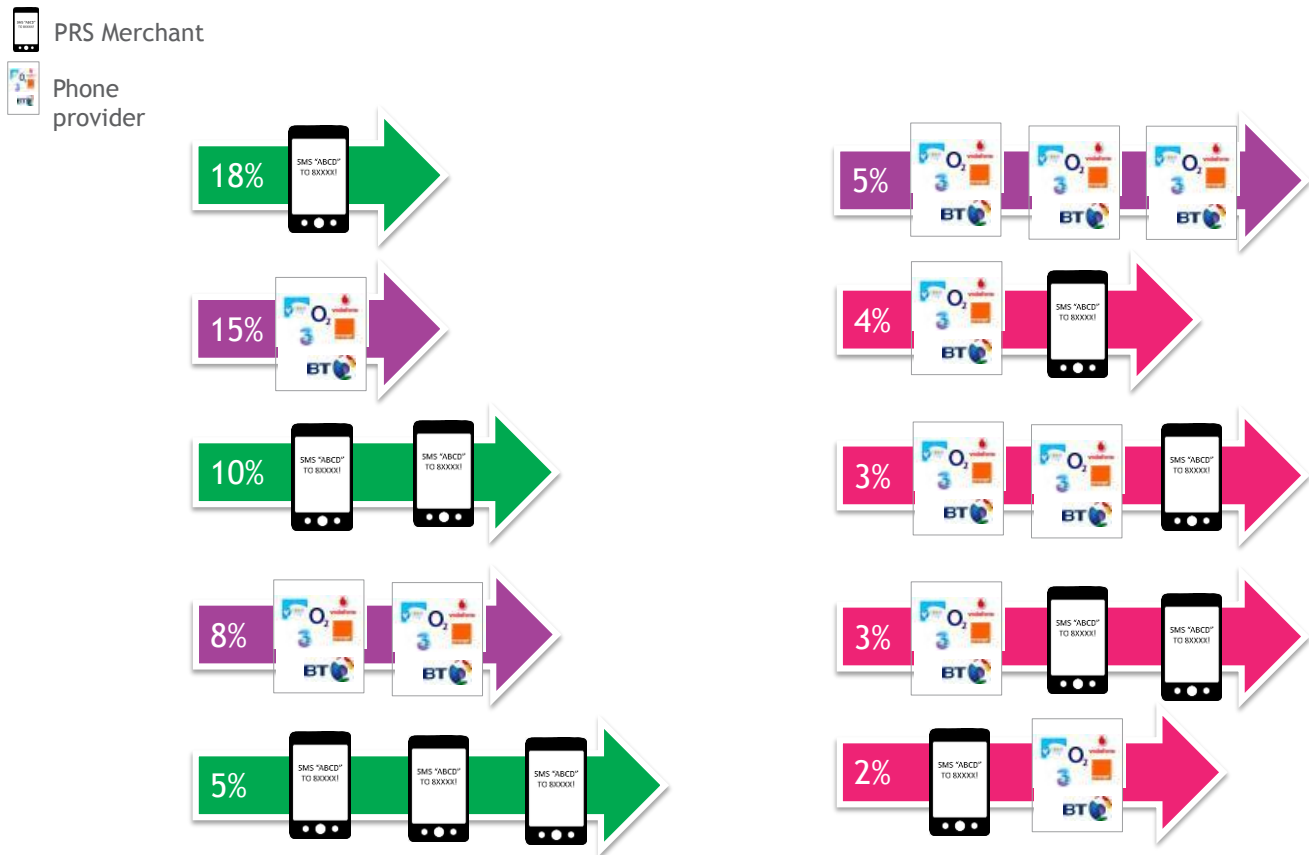
 PRS Merchant

 Phone provider

Source: Q7c Please tick which organisation you contacted first, second, third and so on. Base: All PRS users claiming to have experienced issues and contacting at least one organisation n=211

Those who contacted their mobile phone provider at all were asked which methods of contact they had used to get in touch with that organisation. Phone (72%) was the most likely means of contacting mobile phone providers about PRS issues, followed by email (35%). Webpage forms, letters or online chat were used by slightly more than one in ten, face to face by 7% and social media 2%. Some participants provided more than one answer as they made contact on more than one occasion using a different channel.

Those making any contact with organisations were asked what they had hoped to achieve as a result of that contact. More than one answer was allowed as people will often have more than one goal when making contact. Figure 15 shows that around six in ten sought to stop the issue happening to them again or simply to find out why they had been charged in the first place. Around half (49%) sought a refund of monies lost to the issue.

One in three (37%) intended to make a complaint. In reality, 54% of those making any contact with organisations actually complained (or felt they had done so). Although 37% intended to make a complaint, 9% ended up not complaining whilst an additional 25% complained (even though they hadn't intended to i.e. they may probably found out more about the issue on the call and then decided to make a complaint).

Figure 15: What hoping to achieve as result of contact with all the organisations you dealt with?
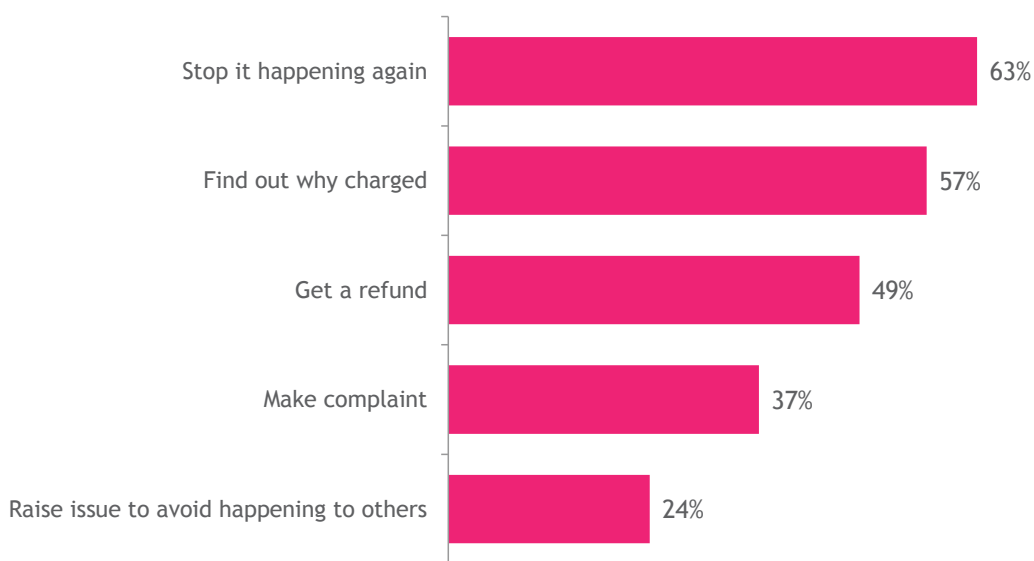
Source: Q8a What were you hoping to achieve as a result of your contact with all the organisations you dealt with? Base: All PRS users claiming to have experienced issues and contacting at least one organisation n=211. Multiple answers allowed.

Table 3 shows that those who made contact just once were significantly less likely to have been seeking a refund or intending to complain as a result of their contact. They were also less likely to have actually complained, regardless of intention.

Table 3:   What hoped to achieve as result of all contact with organisations

	Any contact	Contact just once	Contact twice	Contact 3+ times
Stop it happening again	63%	56%	67%	67%
Find out why charged	57%	61%	52%	59%
Get a refund	49%	39%	51%	62%
Make a complaint	37%	29%	38%	48%
Raise the issue	24%	24%	25%	21%
Actually complained	54%	37%	57%	73%

Figures 16 and 17 examine the reasons why those claiming to have experienced PRS issues either did not make contact with any organisations at all, or if they did make contact, why they did not make a complaint. Perceived hassle and low expectations of a positive outcome were the key reasons for not making contact and key reasons why contact wasn't escalated to a complaint.

16-24 year olds were more likely to say that feeling embarrassed was a reason not to make contact (21% vs. 11% overall).

Figure 16: Why not make contact?
Among those not making contact
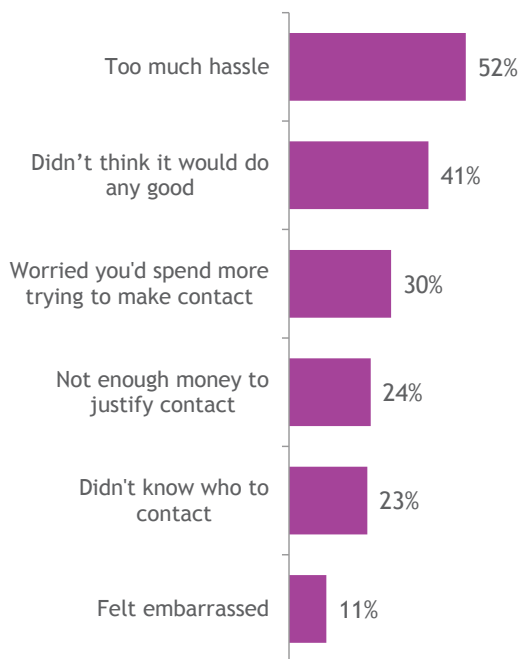
Reason	%
Too much hassle	52%
Didn't think it would do any good	41%
Worried you'd spend more trying to make contact	30%
Not enough money to justify contact	24%
Didn't know who to contact	23%
Felt embarrassed	11%

Figure 17: Why not complain?
Among those making contact but not complaining

Reason	%
Too much hassle	41%
Didn't think it would do any good	33%
Not serious enough to warrant a complaint	23%
Not enough money to justify contact	21%
Didn't know who to complain to	14%

Some related insights from the qualitative research:

From the qualitative research it was evident that 'hassle' encapsulated a number of emotional barriers to complaining. It was clear that a lack of confidence was a key reason for not complaining and that this was an underlying element of many of the other factors mentioned.

> *"Was it an error on my part?"*

> *"I probably was in a rush and did not read the small print?"*

> *"I probably accepted something by accident?"*

The amount of money involved (among those not complaining) was also typically fairly small which combined with the lack of confidence means that those experiencing issues often resigned themselves to being more careful next time. Some felt aggrieved that companies were being somewhat duplicitous or even concerned it may be illegal.

There were also a number of practical barriers to complaining. Some didn't know who to complain to. There was low awareness and understanding of PhonepayPlus for example. This lack of awareness was not helped by telephone companies often not passing on potential next steps to the consumer.

The consumer may have got the service stopped or money back from the phone company and so the issue went away for them. It could then feel rather 'after the fact' to officially complain, especially if they were not sure if it was their fault or not. The qualitative research (and indeed the mystery shopping confirms this) found that consumers were rarely encouraged by the mobile companies to make a complaint.

Some people needed to feel sufficiently outraged or sufficiently out of pocket to get over the initial barriers to complaining. The qualitative research found that people were more likely to complain once it became clear that someone was in the wrong, rather than putting it down to just a bad consumer experience.

The propensity to complain was also partly driven by the personality type of the individual involved, but also a sense of grievance if anything was obviously unsolicited or unclear or if it felt somewhat dishonest or fraudulent. In addition, it was often easier for some to feel outrage on another's behalf (e.g. their children) rather than their own.

Those who ended up contacting PhonepayPlus often felt there was a principle involved e.g. a need to stop it happening to them or others again. Amongst these consumers the amount of money tended to be more significant, they may not have felt that they got satisfactory answers or the desired outcome from their initial point of contact, or in some cases, perhaps the immediate assistance was more supportive or positive in encouraging them to take it further.

4.3.2. Taking other action

Regardless of whether they had made a complaint or contacted any organisation as a result of their issues, participants claiming to have experienced PRS issues were asked if they had done anything else about it.

Figure 18 shows that those who contacted any organisations about issues were more likely to have taken other "action" than those who did not, although more than one in three who made no organisational contact did complain to friends or warn family members i.e. even if they didn't make organisational contact some were still willing to warn others.

Figure 18: Whether did anything else
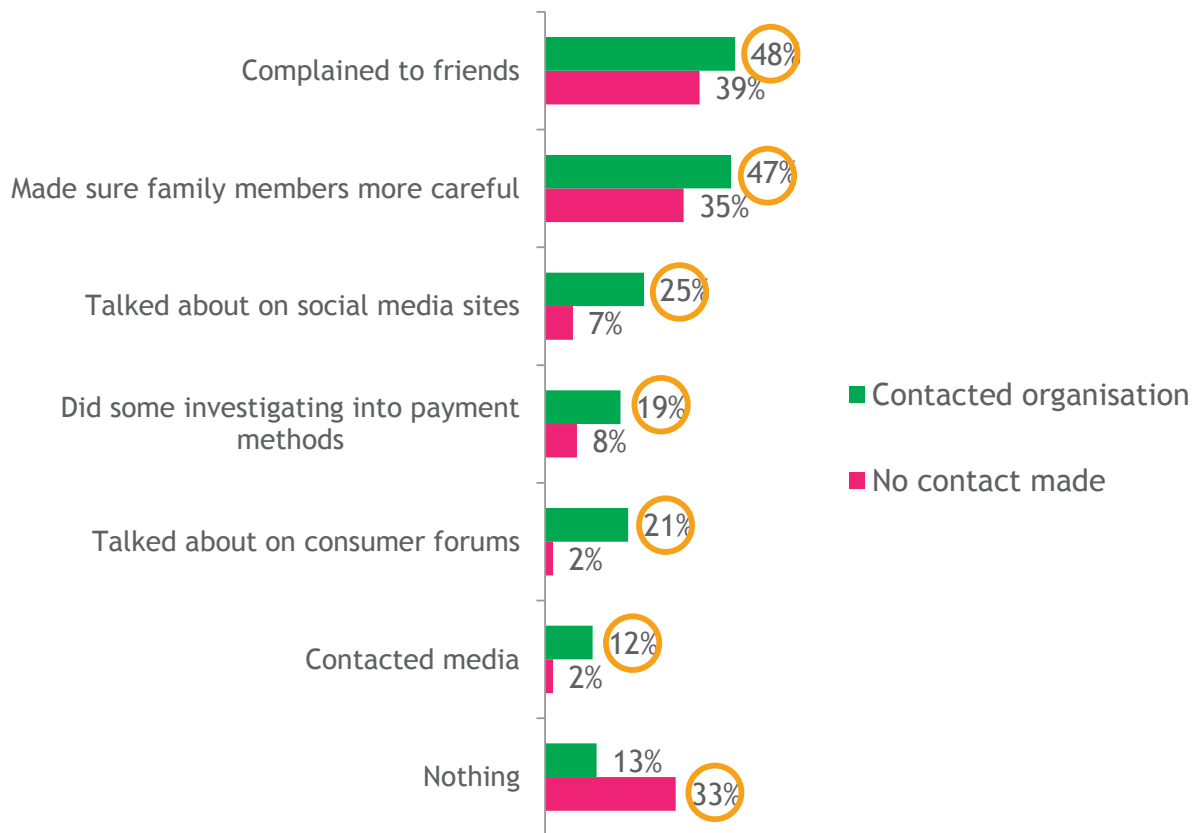
Source: Q11b Regardless of whether you made a complaint or contacted anyone as a result of this issue, did you do anything \else about it? Base: All PRS issues n=782 (making contact n=211, not making contact n=523. Multiple answers allowed.

4.3.3. Satisfaction with contact

Those PRS users who contacted any organisation about their claimed experiences of PRS issues were asked about their overall levels of satisfaction with the outcome of all their contact. Figure 19 shows that around a quarter were dissatisfied in this respect and just over half were satisfied.

There was a strong correlation between satisfaction and refund receipt. 53% of those not receiving a refund were dissatisfied compared with 7% of those who did receive a refund.

Figure 19: Satisfaction with outcome of contacts with all the organisations you dealt with
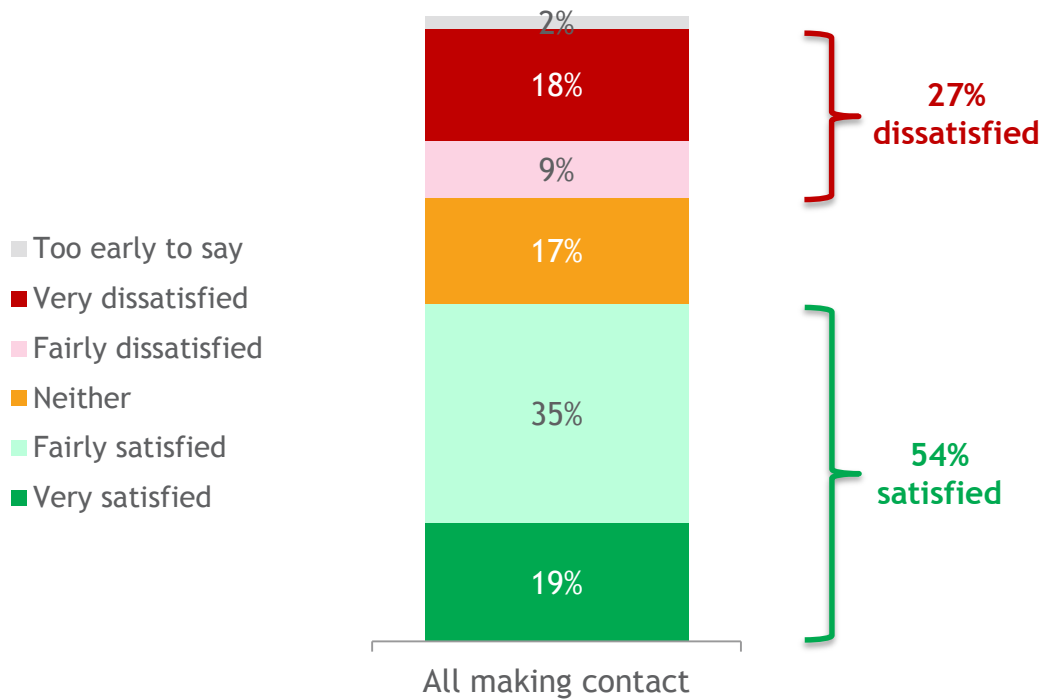
Source: Q8b How satisfied were you with the outcome of your contact? Base: All PRS users claiming to have experienced issues and contacting at least one organisation n=211

Not surprisingly, those making organisational contact more than once tended to be somewhat less satisfied than those who only needed to make contact once (Table 4).

Table 4:   Satisfaction with outcome of contact

	Any contact	Contact just once	Contact twice	Contact 3+ times
Very satisfied	19%	30%	13%	10%
Fairly satisfied	35%	28%	41%	40%
Dissatisfied	27%	23%	25%	33%

Source: Q8b How satisfied were you with the outcome of your contact? Base: All PRS users claiming to have experienced issues and contacting at least one organisation n=211making contact just once/twice/3+ times n=82/63/63. Multiple answers allowed.

Dissatisfaction levels were also slightly higher (30%) among those who have a journey that involved contacting the PRS merchant (30%).

4.4. PRS complaints

Key Findings

- **Only 15% of those claiming to have experienced PRS issues made a complaint (this represents 2.8% of all UK adults).**
- **Those who complained had, on average, been charged significantly more money (£11.14 vs. £6.80 for all experiencing an issue), which will have had some impact upon the decision to escalate contact to a complaint.**
- **More than half (52%) were satisfied and a quarter (27%) were dissatisfied with the way their complaint was handled.**
- **Those who complained about PRS issues were actually more positive about PRS than non-complainants. This may be due to the fact that they are more savvy, heavy PRS users and believe the positives outweigh the negatives. However, those complaining were more likely to agree that some PRS were deliberately misleading or could be confusing.**

4.4.1. Incidence and methods of complaint

This section focusses on the 113 consumers who made a complaint as a result of their contact with any organisations they dealt with. Only 15% of those claiming to have experienced PRS issues made a complaint (this represents 2.8% of all UK adults).

4.4.2. Opinion of PRS amongst complainants

Figure 20 looks again at the overall experience of using PRS, and compares PRS users overall with those who claim to have experienced issues (or not), and those who have complained about issues (to any organisation).

Interestingly, those who had actually complained about PRS issues were the most positive of all, with 72% rating their overall experience using PRS in the last 6 months as very or fairly positive. It can perhaps be hypothesised that, for some savvy, heavy PRS users, the positives clearly outweigh the negatives, especially when users have the confidence and knowledge to take action when necessary. Also many who complained will have received a refund and thus their opinion of the category may be unaffected or even more positive.

Additionally, those complaining may well have come away from the experience with a better understanding of PRS and how their issues happened, for example if they had forgotten about using a service or misunderstood what had occurred. This understanding may well colour future opinions in a positive way and improve confidence around using or managing experiences with PRS.

Figure 20: Overall experience of using PRS in the last 6 months[6]
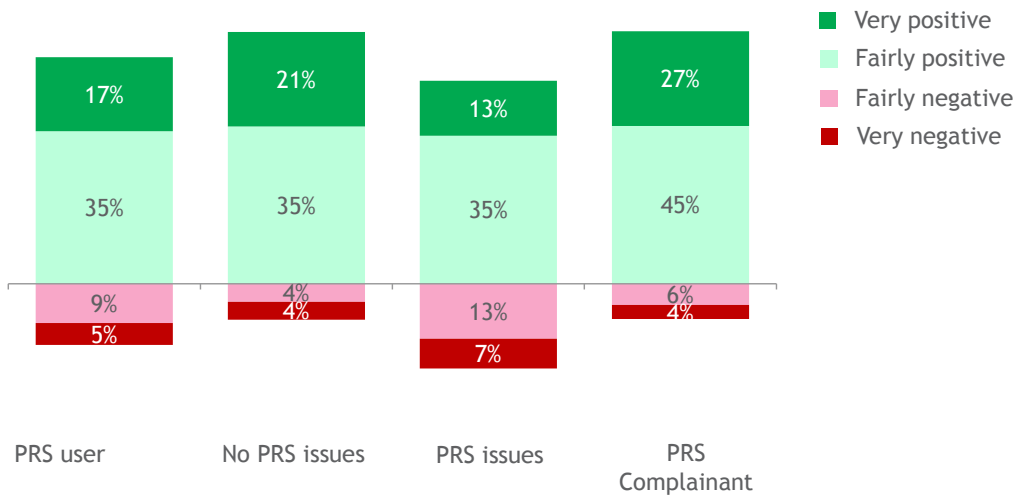
Legend: Very positive · Fairly positive · Fairly negative · Very negative

	PRS user	No PRS issues	PRS issues	PRS Complainant
Very positive	17%	21%	13%	27%
Fairly positive	35%	35%	35%	45%
Fairly negative	9%	4%	13%	6%
Very negative	5%	4%	7%	4%

Source: Q3 How would you rate your overall experience of using these types of payment methods over the last 6 months? Base: All PRS users n=1398 (no PRS issues/PRS issues/PRS complainant n=616/782/113)

Figure 21 shows that 68% of those who complained about PRS issues (to any organisation) agreed that PRS offer a convenient way of paying, which was marginally higher than the 61% of PRS users overall.

Those experiencing issues generally or complaining about them were, as you might imagine, more likely than those who had had no claimed experience of issues to agree that some PRS were deliberately misleading or could be confusing.

Figure 21: Agreement with statements about PRS

	PRS user	No PRS issues	PRS issues	PRS complainant
Convenient way of paying	61%	64%	59%	68%
Some PRS is deliberately misleading	48%	33%	60%	58%
Payment methods can be confusing	49%	34%	60%	62%

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6   Percentages in this chart do not add up to 100% because the chart does not show the mid-point (people rating "neither positive nor negative")

4.4.3. Understanding the financial impact of PRS issues and apportioning of blame

Research participants claiming to have experienced issues with PRS were asked how much money they had been charged as a result of the particular issue they had been referring to throughout the survey. This was the amount they were charged in total before any refunds. Figure 22 shows that on average, those claiming to have experienced PRS issues were charged £6.80 in total, before any refunds were given. However, almost two-fifths were charged less than £3, and only 5% were charged more than £20.

Those who went on to complain to any organisation about PRS issues had, on average, been charged significantly more money (£11.14), which will have had some impact upon the decision to escalate contact to complaint.

Figure 22: How much charged before any refund (amongst those claiming to have experienced PRS issues)

Mean £ — PRS issues £6.80, PRS complainant £11.14

	PRS issues	PRS complainant
Can't remember	8%	1%
Over £20	5%	15%
>£10-£20	8%	14%
>£5-£10	17%	27%
>£3-£5	24%	20%
>£0-£3	29%	18%
£0	9%	5%

Research participants were then asked to apportion blame for the PRS issues they claimed to have experienced. Figure 23 examines this, again with a comparison between claiming to have experienced issues overall and those complaining about it. Respondents could blame more than one party.

Overall, approaching two-thirds of those claiming to have experienced PRS issues blamed the company behind the PRS service, and a quarter blamed themselves.

Around a third of those who actually complained about PRS issues blamed their phone provider (significantly more than the 20% overall).

Overall, those aged 25-34 were more likely to blame themselves for PRS issues; 36% did so compared with 26% overall.

Figure 23: Who is to blame? (among those experiencing issues)
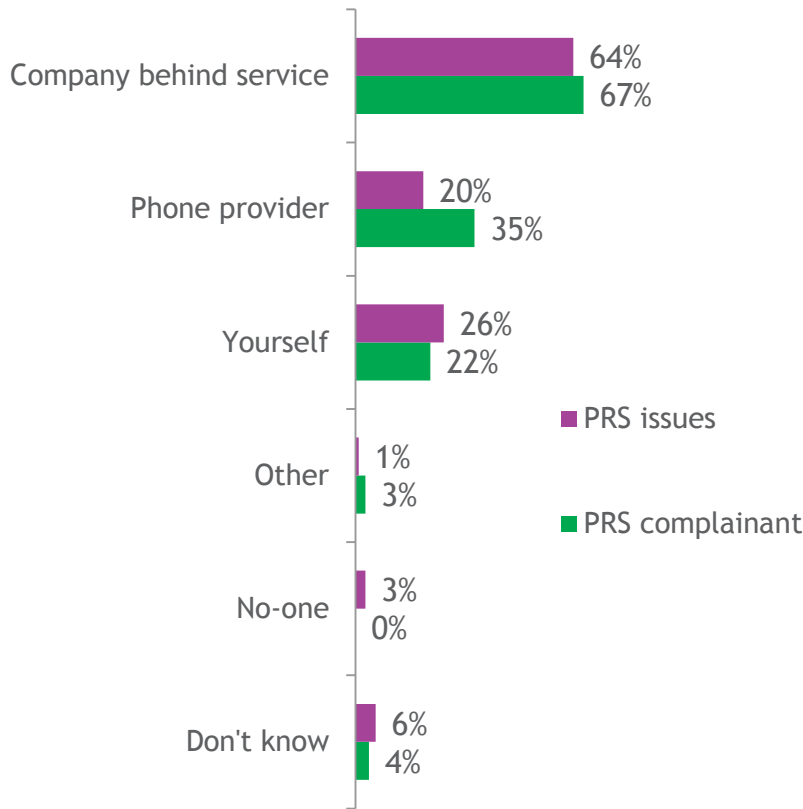
4.4.4. Satisfaction with outcomes

Figure 24 shows that those who complained were more likely to be motivated by an intention to seek a refund. This was probably due to the higher amounts of monetary loss involved.

More than half (56%) of those who complained were seeking a refund, compared with 41% of those who made contact with any organisation but did not go on to make a complaint. It can be hypothesised therefore that non-receipt of the desired refund may have led to the eventual escalation of contact to complaint.

Figure 24: What hoping to achieve as result of contact with organisations
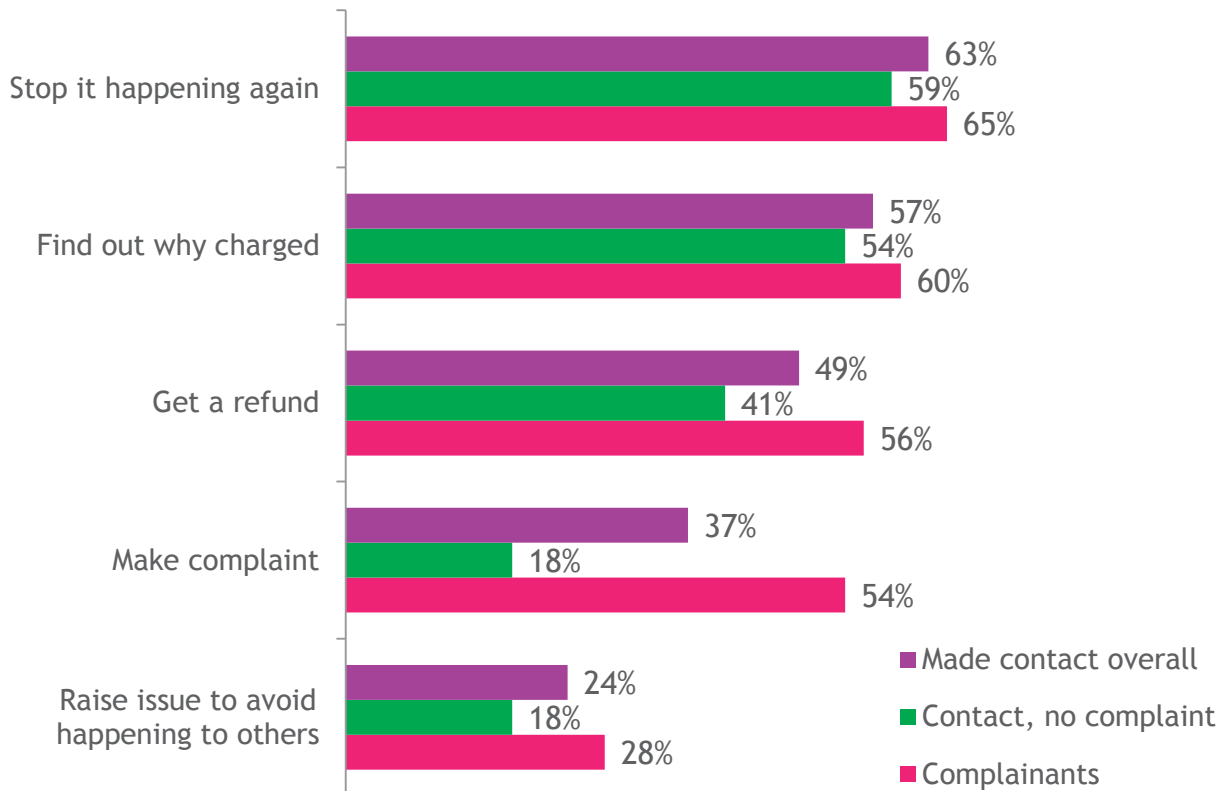
Source: Q8a What were you hoping to achieve as a result of your contact with all the organisations you dealt with? Base: All PRS users claiming to have experienced issues and contacting at least one organisation/contact but no complaint/complaining n=211/96/113. Multiple answers were allowed.

Figure 25 examines levels of satisfaction with complaint handling amongst complainants generally (i.e. regardless of the organisation(s) to which they complained). More than half (52%) were satisfied. Satisfaction was higher amongst those who complained to phone companies (63% satisfied) versus those who complained to the provider of the PRS service (43% satisfied).

A quarter (27%) were dissatisfied with the way their complaint was handled. Here there was a strong correlation with refund. 41% of those not receiving a refund were dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint compared with only 10% of those who did receive a refund.

Figure 25: Satisfaction with way complaint was handled[7]
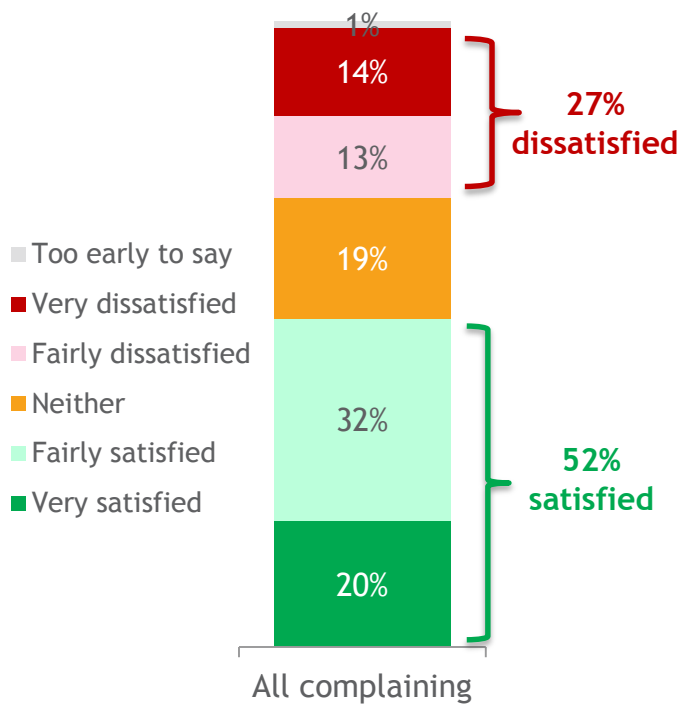
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[7] The individual percentages in this chart do not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Looking finally at consumers' final outcome following contact, Figure 26 shows no significant difference in satisfaction with outcome of contact amongst those who complained or those who made contact but did not complain.

Figure 26: Satisfaction with ultimate outcome of contacts[8]
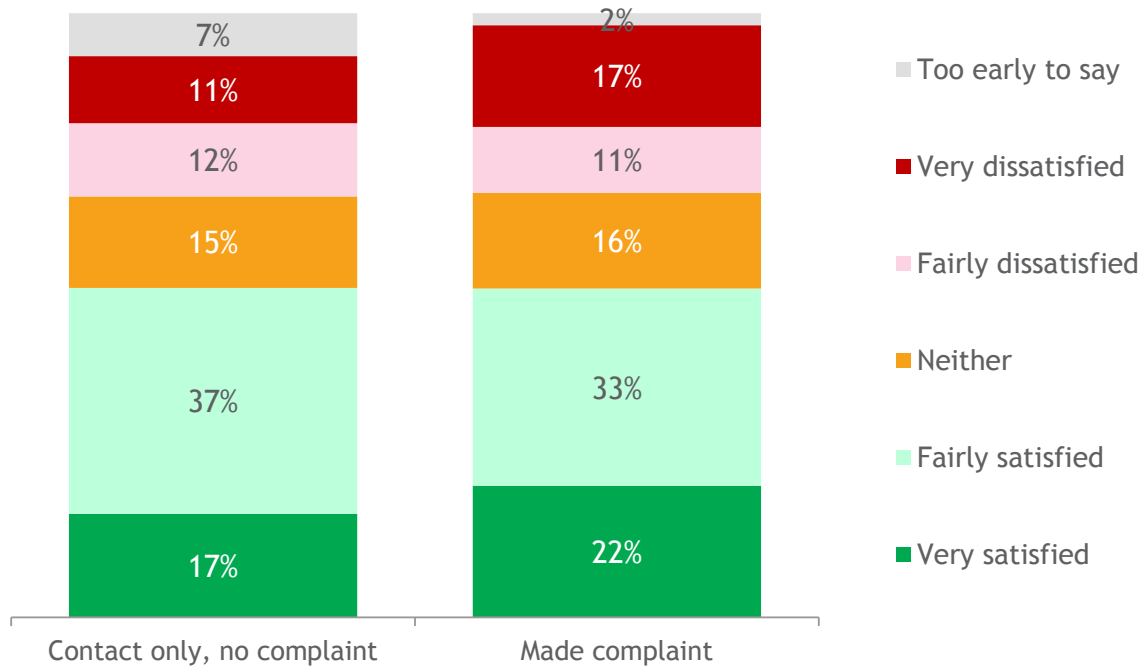
Source: Q14d How satisfied were you with the ultimate outcome of any contacts you had? Base: All PRS issues who complained/made contact but no complaint with any organisation n=113/98.

However, Figure 27 shows that those who made a complaint were somewhat more likely to have had a sense of action being taken. 17% felt this to be the case, compared with only 7% of those who made contact but did not complain. Those who did not complain were also more likely to say it was "too early" or that they didn't know the final outcome of their enquiry.

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[8] The individual percentages in this chart do not add up to 100% due to rounding

Figure 27: Final outcome of any organisational contact

62% of those who obtained a refund received this from the company behind the PRS service, and 28% from their phone provider.

Table 5 shows that regardless of whether they complained or not, those who made contact 3+ times were significantly more likely to say they felt confident action was being taken

Table 5:   Final outcome of any organisational contact

Sources used:	Any contact	Contact just once	Contact twice	Contact 3+ times
Found out why charged	53%	54%	54%	51%
Obtained a refund	41%	38%	48%	40%
Felt confident action being taken	12%	9%	8%	21%

4.5. PhonepayPlus Contacts

This section examines the consumer journeys of the 103 participants who were interviewed via telephone as a separate survey of people contacting PhonepayPlus about their experiences of issues with PRS payment methods.

Key Findings

- **Only a very small proportion of those who claim to have experienced PRS issues end up contacting PhonepayPlus. Of those that do, PhonepayPlus is rarely the first port of call for consumers and usually a next step after failing to have the issue resolved via the phone company and/or PRS merchant.**
- **Many of those contacting PhonepayPlus had experienced a convoluted journey involving much organisational contact (much higher than for PRS complainants in the general population survey). Consumers who contact PhonepayPlus contact (on average) one or more organisations a total of 5 times with a quarter (26%) making organisational contact on seven or more occasions.**
- **They are often frustrated and angry by the time they contact PhonepayPlus. Consumers are generally relieved when they contact PhonepayPlus because they are usually told what has happened, how it has happened and in that PhonepayPlus appear to take their issues seriously.**
- **Those contacting PhonepayPlus were generally more inexperienced PRS users who had suffered a much more negative PRS issue (involving much larger sums) and were less likely to feel they were to blame in any way. They were therefore more motivated to seek a refund rather than simply register a complaint.**
- **PhonepayPlus performed relatively well on ratings for initial contact and taking issues seriously, but there was room for improvement on issues related to updates, explanation of process and speed of resolution.**

4.5.1. PRS usage

All of those who had contacted PhonepayPlus were asked about their general usage of PRS in the past 6 months. Figure 28 shows that only 46% claimed to have actually used any PRS. This would indicate that more than half (54%) of PhonepayPlus contacts didn't consider that they had initiated a PRS incident recently. For example, they may have received chargeable SMS (and contacted PhonepayPlus as a result) but didn't (or don't recall) entering their mobile number on a website.

Around a quarter (24%) of those who contacted PhonepayPlus said that they had started receiving text messages after entering their mobile number on a website. 19% claimed to have called a premium phone line. Other types of PRS were less prevalent.

Figure 28: Claimed use of PRS in last 6 months
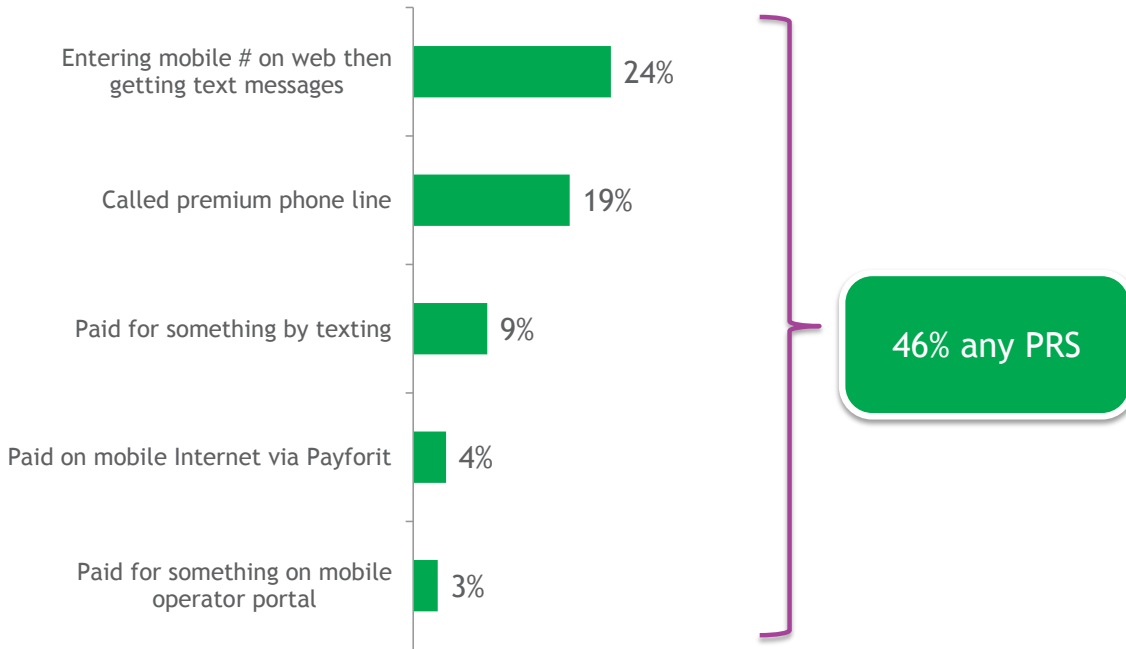
Source: Q1 You will be shown a number of ways to pay for digital goods and services. Please indicate whether you have used this payment method in the last 6 months, in the last 7-12 months, or not used/experienced in the last 12 months. Base: all PhonepayPlus contacts =103. Multiple answers were allowed.

4.5.2.   Opinion of PRS

Figure 29 looks at the overall experience of using PRS amongst those 47 PhonepayPlus contacts who claimed to have used such payment methods in the past 6 months.

Strikingly, those who contacted PhonepayPlus had a much more negative experience of using PRS overall than other PRS users (and other PRS complainants) in the main survey.

Figure 29 shows that almost seven in ten (68%) of PRS users who had contacted PhonepayPlus said that their overall experience of using PRS was very negative. A further 9% said it was fairly negative.

Specific attitudes towards PRS amongst those users who had contacted PhonepayPlus were also much more negative than those of PRS users in the general sample survey (where only 14% had very or fairy negative experiences of PRS). Those general PRS complainants who complained but not to PhonepayPlus (covered earlier in this report) had far less negative experiences (only 10% had negative experiences vs. 75% of PhonepayPlus contacts) demonstrating how angry and frustrated people are by the time they get in touch with PhonepayPlus.

Figure 30 shows that only 13% of this group agreed that PRS was a convenient way of paying (compared with 61% of PRS users in the general population survey and 68% of general PRS complainants), and almost nine in ten (87%) agreed that some PRS were deliberately misleading or that payment methods could be confusing (compared with around half in the general population survey). This again suggests that PhonepayPlus contacts have suffered more than general complainants to the extent that it has tarnished their overall view of the category. PhonepayPlus contacts are also less frequent users of PRS suggesting that they don't have as much experience of positive PRS usage to counter the poor experiences.

Figure 29: Overall experience of using PRS[9]

- Very positive — 4%
- Fairly positive — 4%
- Fairly negative — 9%
- Very negative — 68%
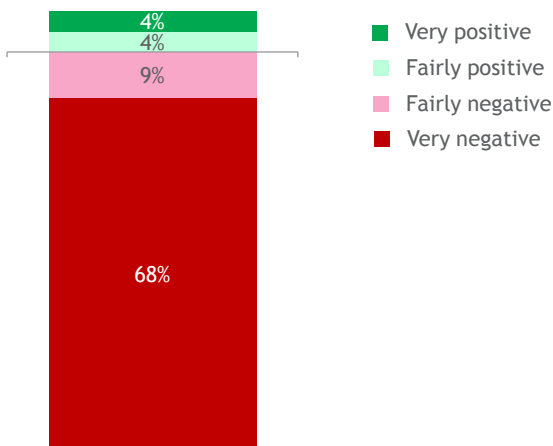
Figure 30: Agreement with statements about PRS (% slightly or strongly agree)
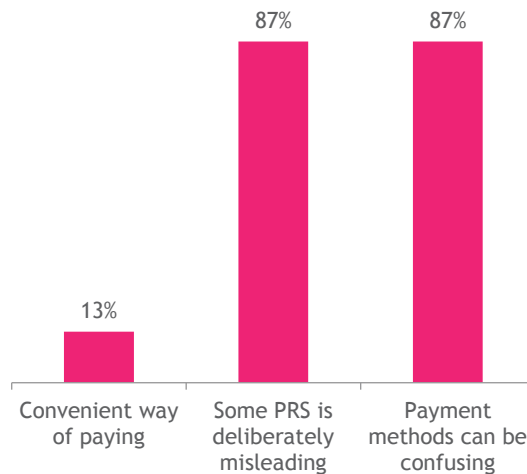
Convenient way of paying	Some PRS is deliberately misleading	Payment methods can be confusing
13%	87%	87%

Source: Q3 How would you rate your overall experience of using these types of payment methods over the last 6 months? Base: All PhonepayPlus contacts who claim to have used PRS in past 6 months n=47

Source: Q4 Please say how much you agree or disagree with the statements below? Base: All PhonepayPlus contacts who claim to have used PRS in past 6 months n=47

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[9]   Percentages in this chart do not add up to 100% because the chart does not show the mid-point (people rating "neither positive nor negative"
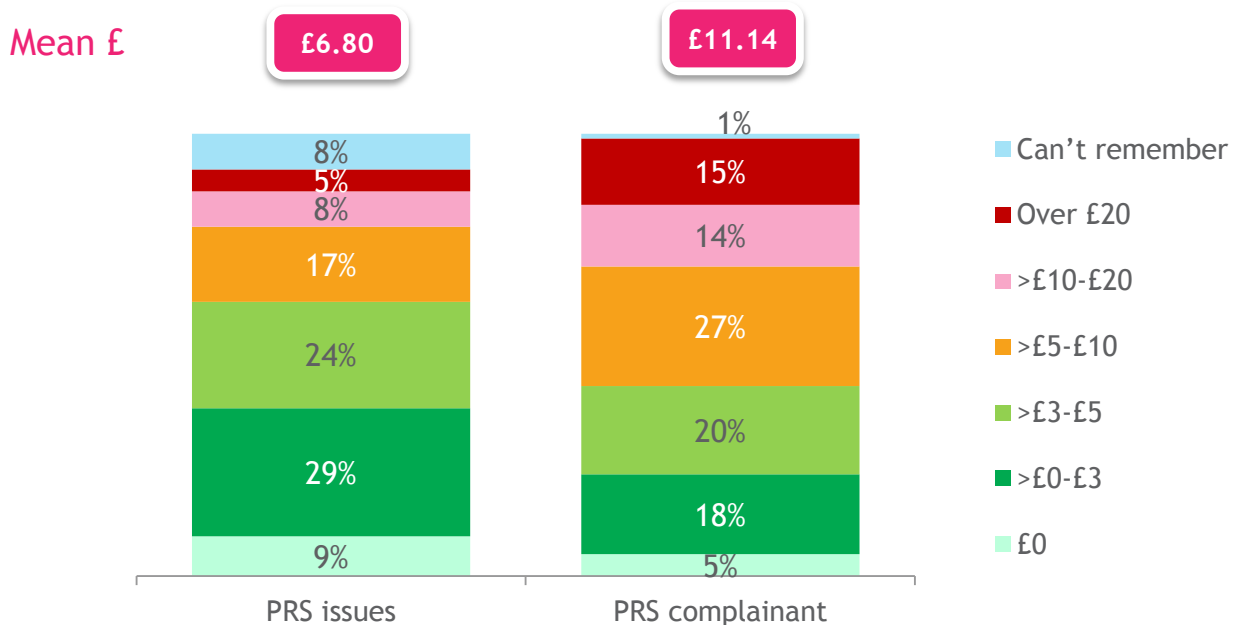
4.5.3. Understanding the financial impact of PRS issues and apportioning of blame

Those who had contacted PhonepayPlus were asked how much money they had been charged as a result of the particular issue that they had contacted PhonepayPlus about. This was the amount they were charged in total before any refunds.

Figure 31 shows that those contacting PhonepayPlus had typically been charged significant sums of money. On average, those contacting the regulator were charged £32.14 (about five times the average of £6.80 found amongst those claiming to have experienced PRS issues in the general population survey and about three times the average of £11.14 found amongst general PRS complainants).

More than half (54%) claimed to have been charged more than £20 as a result of the issue in question. One in three (32%) said it was more than £50.

This is likely to have had a huge impact on their reason for contacting PhonepayPlus i.e. those experiencing lower charges may have been less inclined to contact PhonepayPlus and are possibly more likely to believe they may have been, in part to blame. However, we know from the qualitative interviews with PhonepayPlus contacts that because the sums were quite large that there was a feeling that they couldn't have been at fault i.e. it feels more like a deliberate scam than a silly mistake.

Figure 31: How much charged before any refund
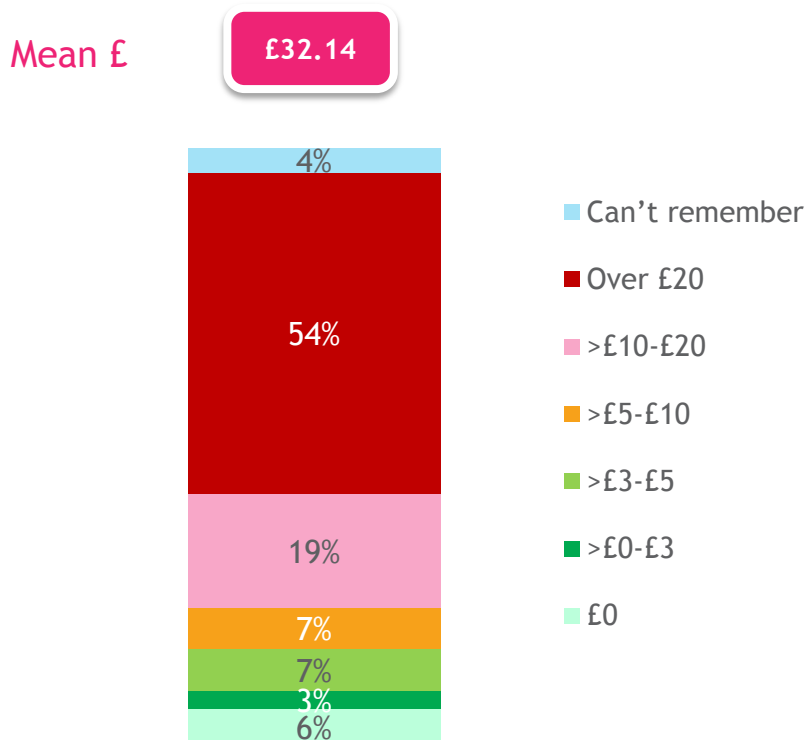
Source: Q6c In total approximately how much money were you charged as a result of this particular issue? Base: PhonepayPlus contacts n=103

Those who had contacted PhonepayPlus were then asked to apportion blame for the PRS issues they had experienced.

Figure 32 shows that 62% blamed the company behind the PRS service and around a third blamed their phone provider. Only 9% blamed themselves (a lower proportion than the 26% amongst those in the general population claiming to have experienced PRS issues). Again this is likely to be because the sums were large and a feeling that they had been deliberately exploited.

Figure 32: Who is to blame? (among those contacting PhonepayPlus about PRS issues)
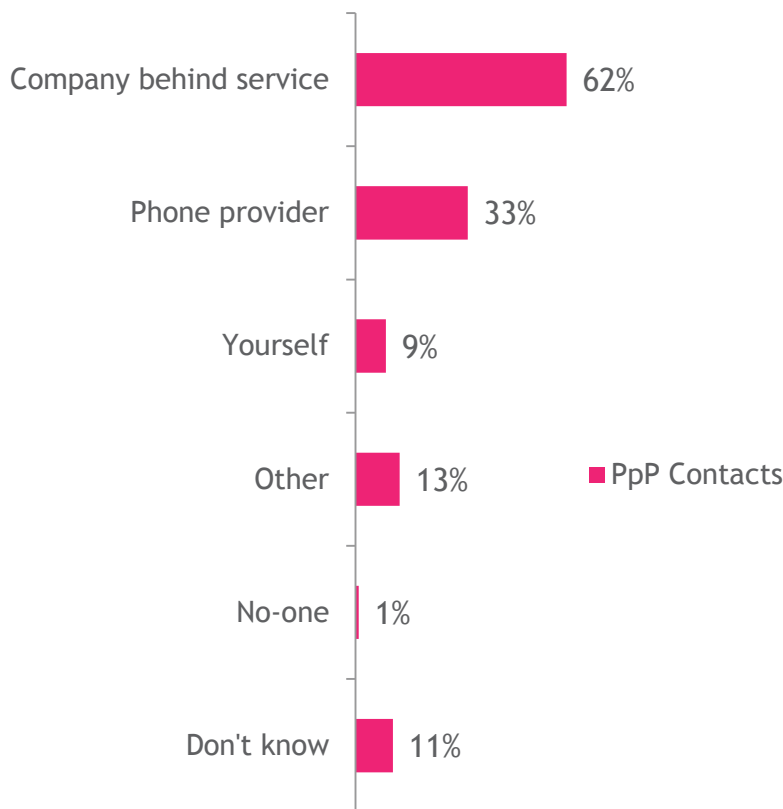
Source: Q6d Who do you blame for this issue? Base: Contacted PhonepayPlus (n=103). Multiple answers allowed.

4.5.4. Methods of contacting PhonepayPlus

Figure 33 shows that equal proportions contacted the regulator via the webpage form (52%) or by telephone (48%). As we found with complainants in the general population survey, there was a strong correlation between channel usage and preference, although more than one in ten (13%) would have preferred an email option (not available at the time of this research). However, it is possible that people confused the webpage form with email and were actually happy with the channel they used.

Figure 33: Actual/preferred PhonepayPlus contact method
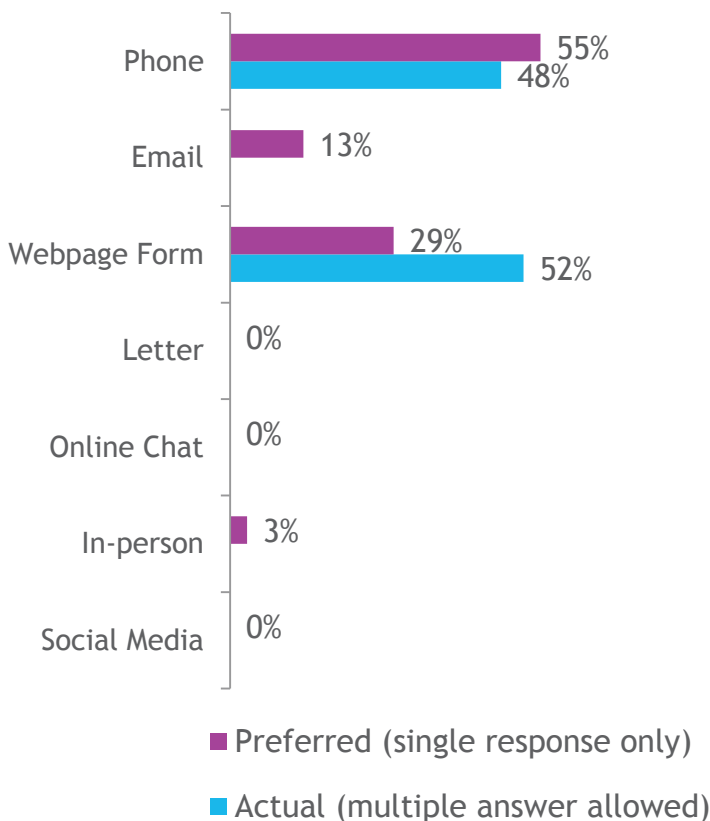
Source: Q13a How did you make your initial enquiry or complaint with PhonepayPlus? Q14 How would you have preferred to have made your enquiry or complaint with PhonepayPlus assuming all options were available to you? Base: all PhonepayPlus contacts n=103

4.5.5. PhonepayPlus contact journeys

Figure 34 shows which organisations were contacted at all, amongst those contacting PhonepayPlus. In addition to contacting the regulator, seven in ten also contacted their mobile phone provider and one in three contacted the company behind the PRS service.

Compared with complainants in the general population survey, those who contacted PhonepayPlus were more likely to have had contact with their phone provider and less likely to have had contact with the PRS service provider than others claiming to have experienced PRS issues or complaining about these. 71% of those contacting PhonepayPlus also contacted their mobile phone provider, compared with 55% of general complainants and 48% of those claiming to have experienced PRS issues overall. This may be because phone providers are more likely to pass on PhonepayPlus contact details than the PRS merchants i.e. it's possible that the more equal split found among general PRS users is a more accurate reflection of how consumers make contact.

Only 17% of journeys started with PhonepayPlus. 70% started their journey by contacting their phone company (65% mobile, 5% fixed line). Only 6% contacted the PRS merchant first.

Figure 34: Organisations contacted first/at all
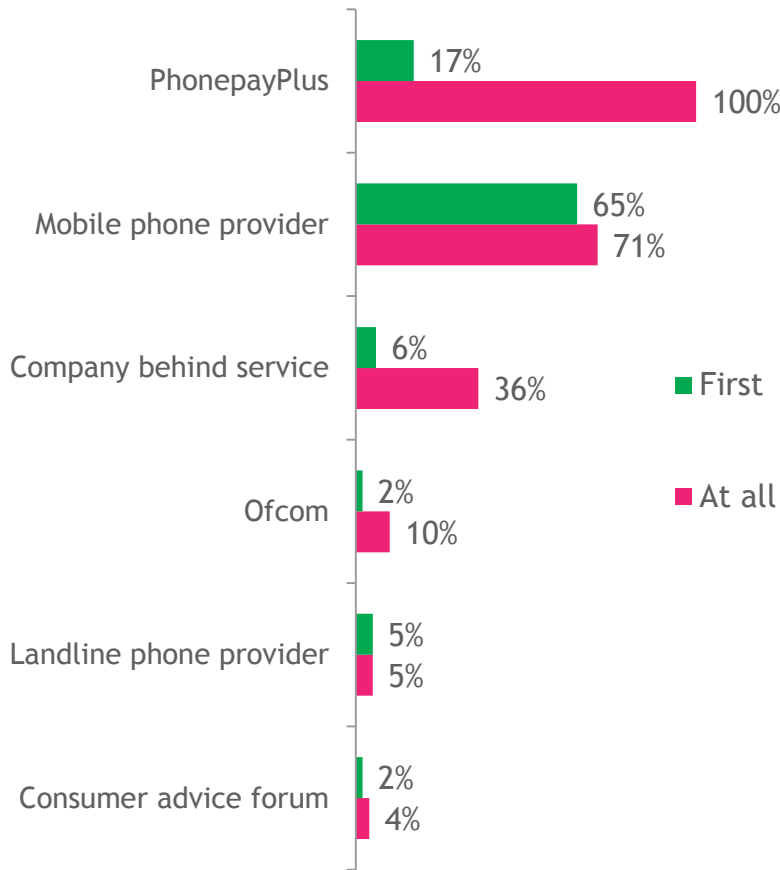
Organisation	First	At all
PhonepayPlus	17%	100%
Mobile phone provider	65%	71%
Company behind service	6%	36%
Ofcom	2%	10%
Landline phone provider	5%	5%
Consumer advice forum	2%	4%

Source: Q7c Please tick which organisation you contacted first, second, third and so on. Base: all PhonepayPlus contacts n=103. All (multiple answers allowed), First (single answer allowed)

Many of those contacting PhonepayPlus had experienced a convoluted journey involving much organisational contact. Figure 35 shows the four most common organisational contact journeys made by these people. The most common journey (made by 17%) started with a phone provider and ended with PhonepayPlus. Just under 1 in 10 (9%) only contacted PhonepayPlus.

Figure 35: Most common organisational contact journeys amongst PhonepayPlus contacts

Table 6 shows the number of times that those contacting PhonepayPlus had contact with organisations overall. This amount of contact was much higher than for general PRS complainants (39% of whom made one contact only).

Table 6:   Number of times organisation contact made (amongst those contacting PhonepayPlus) [10]

One contact only (PhonepayPlus)	9%
Made organisational contact twice	27%
Made organisational contact 3-6 times	37%
Made organisational contact 7+ times	26%

Those contacting PhonepayPlus had, on average, made five contacts (with any organisation) about their PRS issue.

Those contacting PhonepayPlus were asked how they had found out about the regulator. There was a correlation between the method of finding out and eventual contact method. 38% said that their phone provider

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[10]   The individual percentages in this table do not add up to 100% due to rounding

had provided details (rising to 54% of those who contacted PhonepayPlus by phone). 28% had found out via searching on the Internet (rising to 42% amongst those who contacted PhonepayPlus via the webpage form)

Smaller proportions had found out about PhonepayPlus via an online forum (9%) or via Ofcom (6%).

4.5.6. Satisfaction with Outcomes

Those who had contacted PhonepayPlus were asked about their satisfaction with the way that the regulator had handled their complaint and 59% were either very or fairly satisfied about this (Figure 36). Satisfaction was higher amongst those who contacted PhonepayPlus by phone (73% very or fairly satisfied) versus website (47% very or fairly satisfied).

Amongst those who contacted their phone company in addition to PhonepayPlus, satisfaction with the way their phone company handled the enquiry was significantly lower (Figure 37), with almost two-fifths (39%) expressing strong dissatisfaction and more than half (51%) very or fairly dissatisfied overall.

Figure 36: Satisfaction with way PhonepayPlus handled <u>complaint</u>[11]
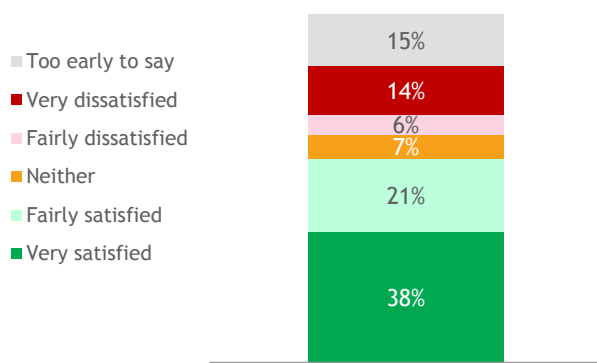
Figure 37: Satisfaction with way phone company[12] handled <u>enquiry</u>

Source: Q15 How satisfied were you with the way in which your complaint was handled by PhonepayPlus? Base: 103
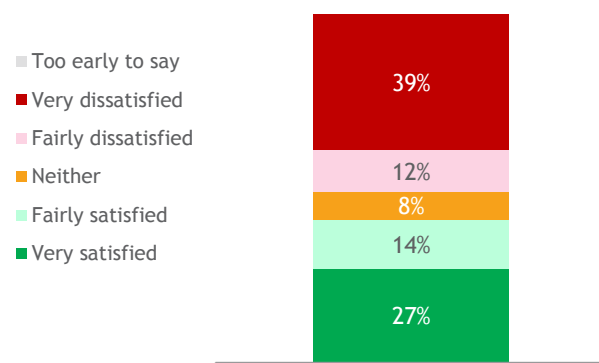
Source: Q9a How satisfied were you with the way your phone company handled your enquiry? Base: all contacting phone company n=77

4.5.7. Rating PhonepayPlus on aspects of service

Those who contacted PhonepayPlus were asked to rate the regulator on several aspects of the service they received. Figure 38 shows that PhonepayPlus performed relatively well on initial contact, but was somewhat weaker on issues related to updates, explanation of process and speed of resolution. It is important to bear in mind when considering these ratings that it was clear from the qualitative depth interviews that people were generally angry by the time they felt the need to contact PhonepayPlus. This state of mind is likely to have had some influence upon their perceived service expectations and ultimate experience.

69% rated PhonepayPlus positively (very good or good) with regard to "taking the issue seriously". Table 7 shows that rating of this service element was significantly higher amongst those who contacted PhonepayPlus via telephone (83%) compared with those who did so via the website (56%). 92% of telephone contacts rated the manner of the person they spoke to positively (very good or good), and 79% were positive (rating very good

[11] The individual percentages in this chart do not add up to 100% due to rounding.

[12] Predominantly mobile phone companies (72 mobile phone and 5 fixed line phone companies)

or good) about the information provided by this person. Jigsaw Research staff listened into some consumer calls at PhonepayPlus and it was clear that people were often made to feel at ease when talking to a staff member (especially when they were told that PhonepayPlus had received a number of similar calls from other people).

This demonstrates the key role played by a human interface, notably when considering the emotional state of mind in which these consumers may have been during contact.

Relatively speaking, speed of resolution was the area of lowest rating for PhonepayPlus, with almost one in three (31%) finding it to be poor or very poor. This is however perhaps the area over which the regulator has least control – particularly as other organisations are likely to become involved as a complaint is moved forwards. However, it was clear from the in-depth interviews that an increased number of updates from PhonepayPlus could contribute to an increase in confidence and satisfaction.

Figure 38: Rating PhonepayPlus on aspects of service[13]
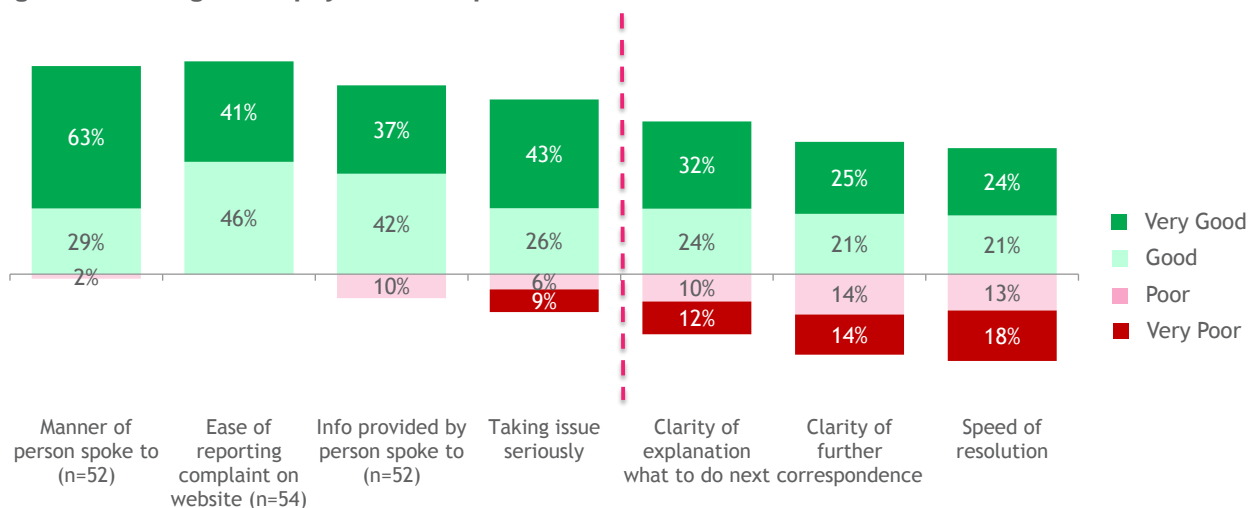
Source: Q16 How would you rate PhonepayPlus on the following aspects of their service?
Base: all who contacted PhonepayPlus n=103

Table 7: Rating PhonepayPlus on aspects of service (% rating very good or good)

	Phone contact	Web contact
Overall satisfaction	73%	47%
Taking issue seriously	83%	56%
Clarity of explanation what to do next	65%	49%
Clarity of further correspondence	52%	42%
Speed of resolution	50%	42%

Source: Q15 How satisfied were you with the way in which your complaint was handled by PhonepayPlus? Q16 How would you rate PhonepayPlus on the following aspects of their service? Base: all who contacted PhonepayPlus n=103, by phone/web n=48/55

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[13] Percentages in this chart do not add up to 100% because the chart does not show the mid-point (people rating "neither positive nor negative")

5. Micropayments

In addition to detailed discussion about PRS and related issues, the general population survey also asked research participants about their usage and experiences of other micropayment payment methods.

Key Findings

- **Compared with PRS usage, Micropayment usage is more prevalent (55% of UK adults versus 35% for PRS). Of those using micropayment, 15% claimed to have experienced an issue when using these payment methods.**
- **Opinions of micropayment were generally positive. 85% of Micropayment users had a positive opinion and only 2% felt negatively about Micropayments. More than eight in ten Micropayment users agreed that Micropayments offer "a convenient way of paying."**
- **However, users of stored value accounts and digital/virtual currencies were more likely to claim to have experienced any Micropayment issues than users of other Micropayment payment mechanisms.**

5.1. Incidence of Micropayment usage and issues

To set the scene, figure 39 shows the incidence of Micropayment usage (as defined in the next section), claimed experience of issues and complaining amongst the UK adult population. Compared with PRS usage, Micropayment usage is more prevalent (55% of UK adults versus 35% for PRS).

It can be estimated from the research that there are approximately 27.5 million adult Micropayment users in the UK (compared with 17.5m PRS users). Of those, 4 million claimed to have experienced some kind of issues whilst using these payment methods, which although significantly less and at a lower proportion (8% versus 20%) than the 10 million PRS users who claimed this, still represents a sizeable portion of people.

500,000 have made some form of complaint about their experiences (compared with 1.4 million PRS users). As with PRS usage, it must be noted that adults were recruited via an online panel and therefore likely to be heavier users of micropayment.

Although Micropayment usage is more prevalent in the UK adult population than PRS, the proportion of micropayment users claiming to have experienced issues is lower than for PRS users. However, there is probably more scope for confusion with PRS i.e. many may have mistakenly claimed PRS issues (e.g. 0845 or PPI texts) whereas there is arguably less room for confusion with other micropayment payment methods.

Figure 39: Summary of Micropayment Journey Incidence in past 6 months

Among all UK adults

UK adult population

Among Micropayment users

	Among all UK adults	UK adult population	Among Micropayment users
All adults	100%	50m	
Micropayment users	55%	27.5m	100%
Experience issues	8%	4m	15%
Made contact	3%	1.5m	5%
Complaint	1%	0.5m	1.7%
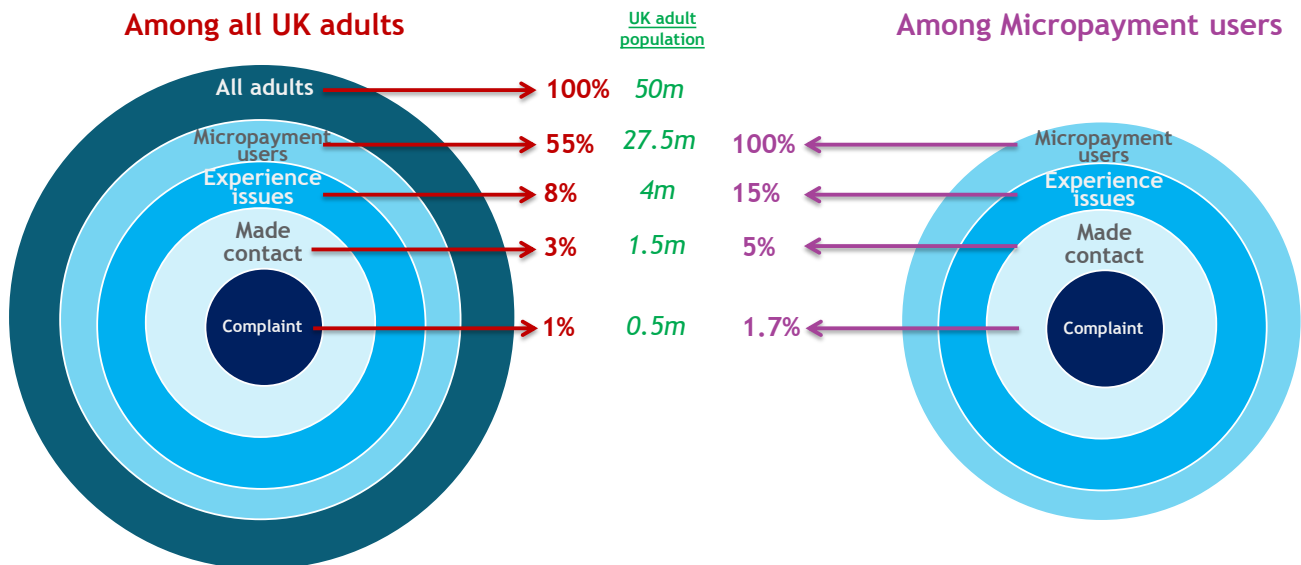
Source: Base: All Adults n=4000, all PRS users n=1398, all Micropayment users n=2202, all PRS issues n=782, all Micropayment issues n=332, all PRS making contact n=211, all Micropayment making contact n=120, all PRS complainant n=113, all Micropayment complainant n=39

5.2. Defining Micropayment usage

Research participants were shown a number of ways in which they might pay for digital goods and services. They were asked to think only about purchases that typically cost up to £10 in a single transaction but which could go above that cost depending on the length of a call or session. Participants were asked if they had used each payment method in the last 6 months, in the last 7-12 months or had not used or experienced that payment method in the last 12 months.

Figure 40 shows that more than half (55%) claimed to have used any of the listed Micropayment methods in the past 6 months. Paying for digital/virtual goods with credit, debit, PayPal or iTunes were the most common types of Micropayment.

Figure 40: Used in past 6 months
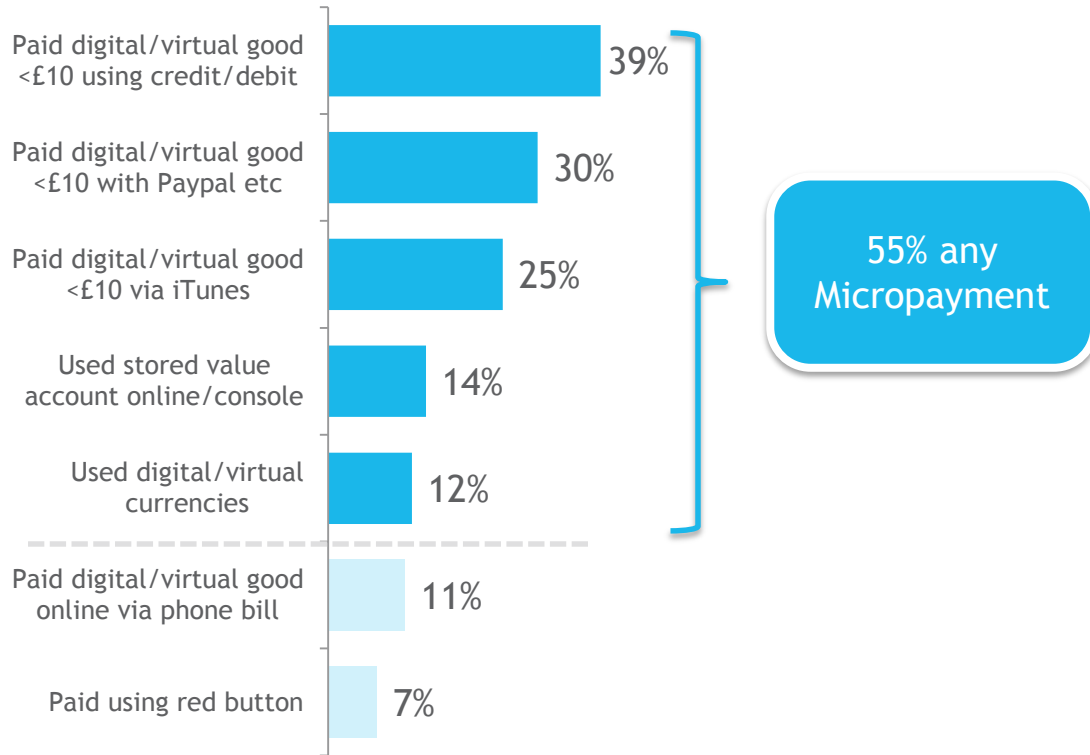
5.3. Micropayment Users: opinion of Micropayments

PRS and Micropayment users were asked the same questions about their overall experience of using these types of payment methods, along with probing their more specific attitudes in the areas of convenience, confusion and intention to mislead.

Figure 41 shows that Micropayment users were significantly more positive about Micropayments in an overall sense, than PRS users were about PRS payment methods. 85% of Micropayment users had a positive opinion compared with just over half (52%) of PRS users, and only 2% felt negatively about Micropayments.

Figure 41: Overall experience of using PRS/Micropayments[14]
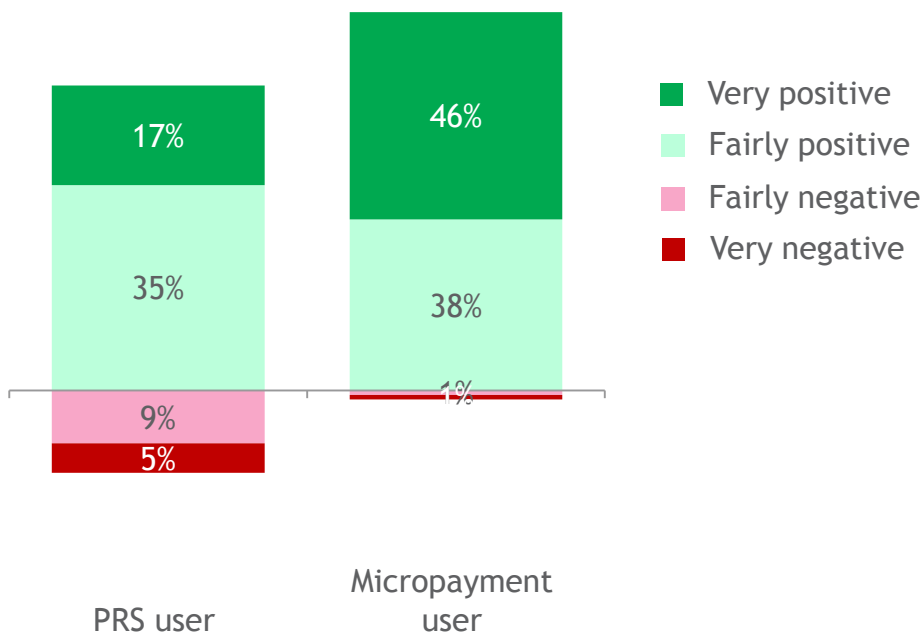
Source: Q3/Q21 How would you rate your overall experience of using these types of payment methods over the last 6 months? Base: All PRS/Micropayment users n=1398/2202

Figure 42 substantiates this more positive attitude towards Micropayment. Again, PRS users were asked about their agreement with statements about PRS, and Micropayment users were asked the same questions about Micropayments.

More than eight in ten Micropayment users agreed that Micropayments offer "a convenient way of paying" compared with six in ten PRS users saying this about PRS. Micropayment users were also significantly less likely to agree that Micropayments can be confusing or deliberately misleading, whereas around half of PRS users believed this about PRS.

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[14] Percentages in this chart do not add up to 100% because the chart does not show the mid-point (people rating "neither positive nor negative")

Figure 42: Agreement with statement about PRS/Micropayments (NET agree)
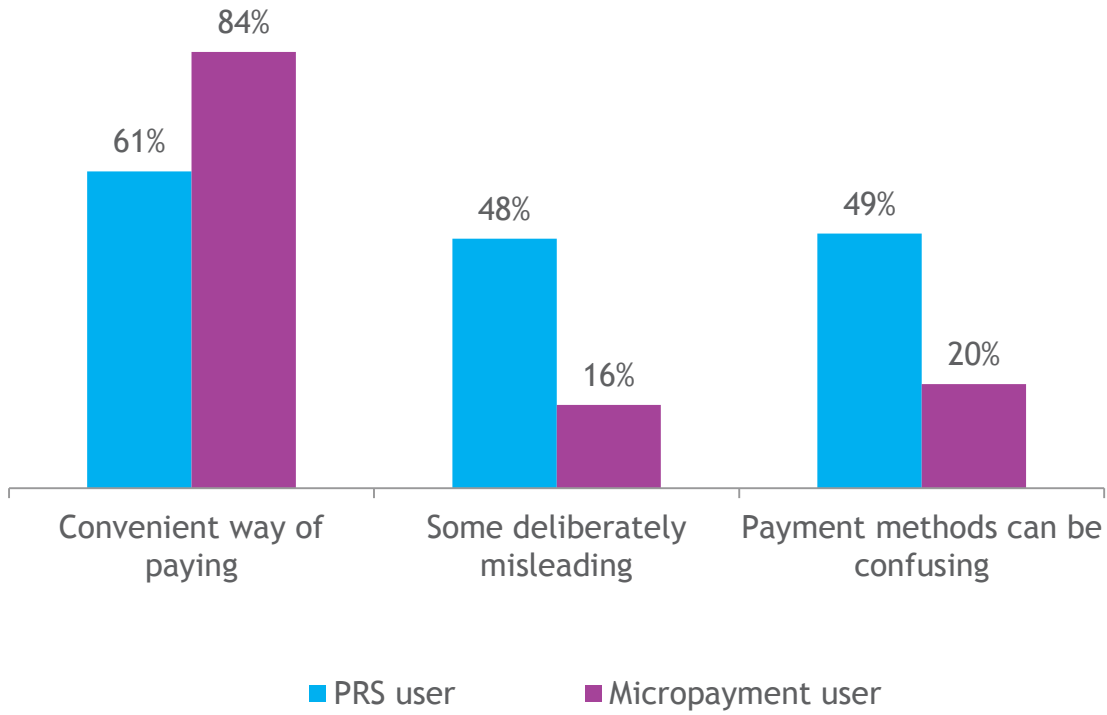
Source: Q4/Q16 Please say how much you agree or disagree with the statements below? Base: All PRS/Micropayment users n=1398/2202

5.4. Defining Micropayment issues

Those participants claiming to have used any of the listed Micropayments in the past 6 months were then asked about their experiences of using those payment methods. They were asked if they had experienced any of a number of listed issues in the past six months. Figure 43 details these specific issues.

Figure 43: Definitions of Micropayment issues

A	You were billed for something within an application and not aware that you would be charged for this e.g. food for an animal in a child's game, extra equipment or levels in an game
B	You agreed to the purchase but were billed more than expected
C	You agreed to the purchase but thought it was a one off charge and were billed for a regular subscription service
D	You received some follow up marketing e.g. advertising texts without knowing you had agreed to this

Source: Q23 Please look at the list below and indicate whether you have experienced any of the issues on this list when using these types of payment methods in the last six months. Base: all Micropayment users n=2202

Figure 44 shows that 15% of Micropayment users had experienced any of the listed issues in the past six months. 12% had experienced just one issue and 3% more than one issue. Unsolicited marketing was the most common issue (8% of Micropayment users had experienced this).

Claimed incidence of issues amongst Micropayment users was much lower than it is amongst PRS users (15% versus 56%). However, as mentioned earlier there is probably more scope for confusion with PRS i.e. many may have mistakenly claimed PRS issues (e.g. 0845 or PPI texts) whereas there is less room for confusion with other micropayment payment methods.

Users were asked to comment further about their experiences of such issues and some of these comments are shown here:

"Once they know your phone number you seem to get a lot more random text adverts and calls which is annoying"

"Online magazine subscription which was made to seem like a one off offer but actually in the small print it was for a subscription of a minimum 6 months"

"Daughter bought donuts on a game on iPad she thought were free, only found out when appeared on credit card bill"

"The eventual bill was more than I was led to expect"

Figure 44: Experienced Micropayment issues

Follow up marketing — 8%
Agreed to one off charge not subscription — 4%
Billed in-app without knowing would be charged — 4%
Billed more than expected — 3%

15% any issues

Billed for inappropriate adult content — 1%
Other — 1%
No issues — 77%
Not sure — 6%
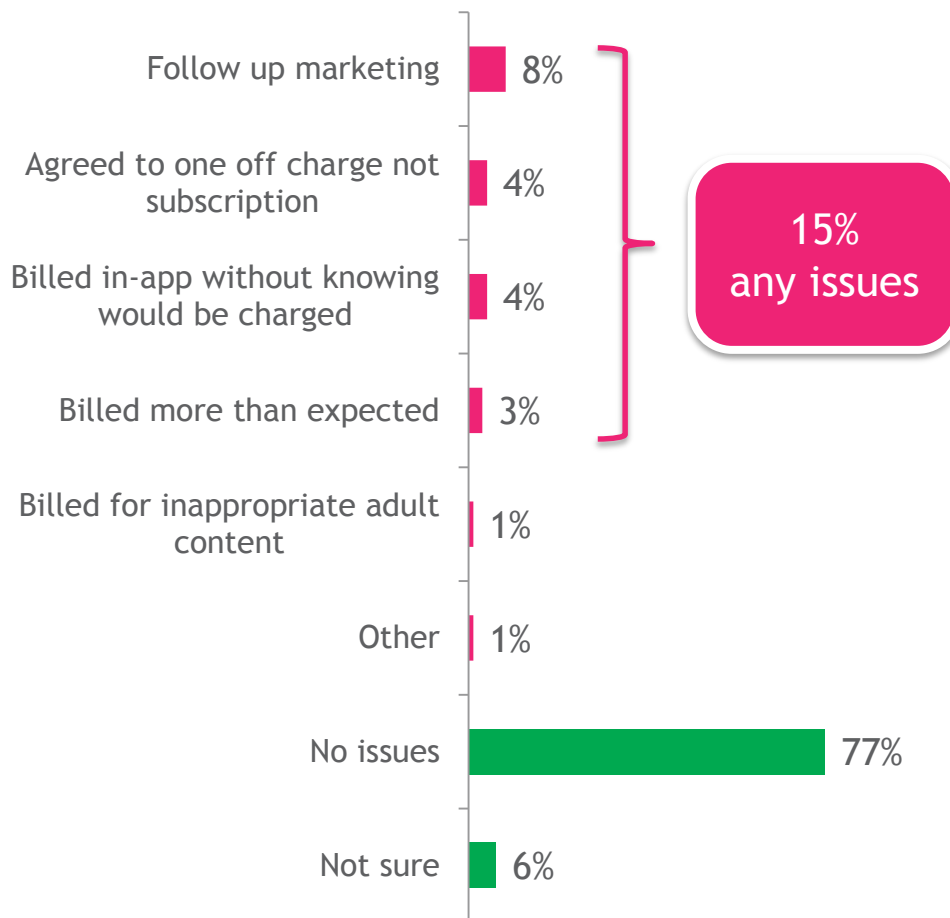
Source: Q23 Please indicate whether you have experienced any of the issues on the list when using these types of payment methods in the last 6 months. Base: All Micropayment users n=2202. Multiple answers allowed.

Looking more closely at the claimed levels of issues experienced amongst Micropayment users, the research found that users of stored value accounts and digital/virtual currencies were more likely to claim to have experienced any Micropayment issues than users of other Micropayment payment mechanisms.

Figure 45 shows that amongst Micropayment users, although stored value accounts and digital/virtual currencies had lower levels of incidence, they had higher proportions of associated issues. Approaching a quarter of those who had used stored value accounts or digital/virtual currencies claimed to have experienced issues compared with the 15% of Micropayment users overall.

Males and those aged 16-24 were more likely to be users of stored value accounts or digital/virtual currencies.

Figure 45: Specific Micropayment usage in last 6 months (amongst Micropayment users)

Proportion of users of each Micropayment mechanism type experiencing any MP issues
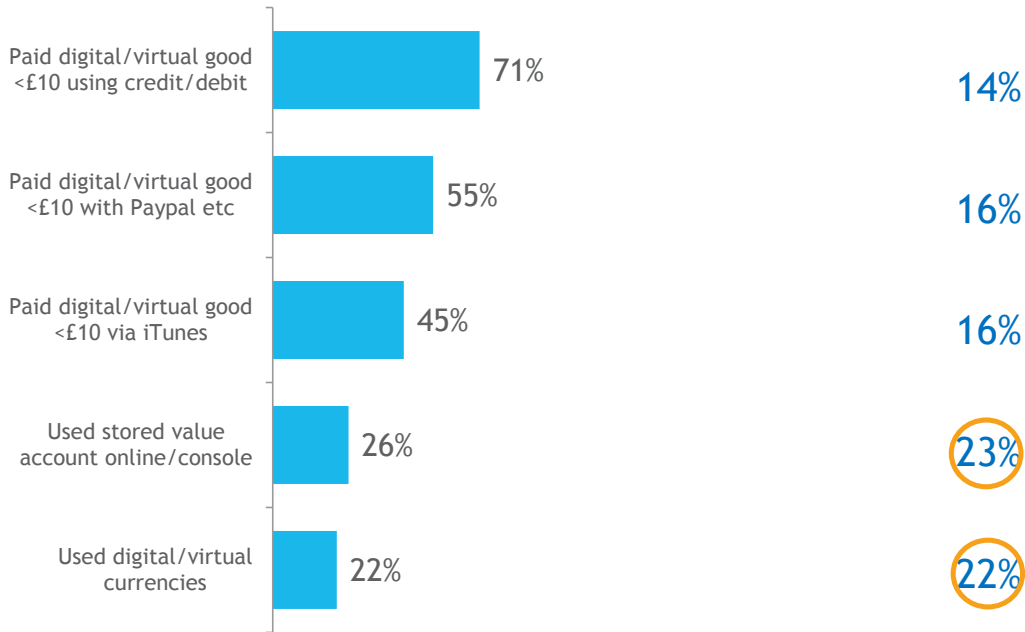
Mechanism	Usage	MP issues
Paid digital/virtual good <£10 using credit/debit	71%	14%
Paid digital/virtual good <£10 with Paypal etc	55%	16%
Paid digital/virtual good <£10 via iTunes	45%	16%
Used stored value account online/console	26%	23%
Used digital/virtual currencies	22%	22%

Source: Q1 You will be shown a number of ways to pay for digital goods and services. Please indicate whether you have used this payment method in the last 6 months, in the last 7-12 months, or not used/experienced in the last 12 months. Base: Micropayment Users n=2202. Multiple answers allowed.

6. Children and PRS issues

Key Findings

- **Overall, high bills and charges were of equal concern to parents as content or contact issues, and these became more top of mind amongst the parents of those children who had had experiences of PRS issues themselves.**
- **Many had taken steps to ensure their children don't experience problems with PRS when using their phones. For the majority this involved talking to their children about the potential issues, but significant proportions were actively monitoring calls or blocking the use of premium rate numbers or app downloads. Again, the parents of children who had experienced PRS issues were more likely to have taken preventative action of this kind.**

In addition to asking adults about their experiences with PRS and any issues resulting from use of such payment methods, the research also addressed the issue of children using PRS and the attitude of their parents towards issues related to children using mobile phones.

All recent PRS or Micropayment users with children aged 6-15 who had their own mobile phones, were asked about any issues experienced by those children in the past six months.

Figure 46 shows that one in three (33%) parents claimed that their children (6-15 with phones) had experienced any of the listed PRS issues in the past 6 months. 23% claimed to have experienced just one type of issue, 9% had experienced 2-3 types and 2% had experienced 4 or more types.

Figure 46: Children experienced PRS issues?

Among all adults who have children aged 6-15 with mobile phone
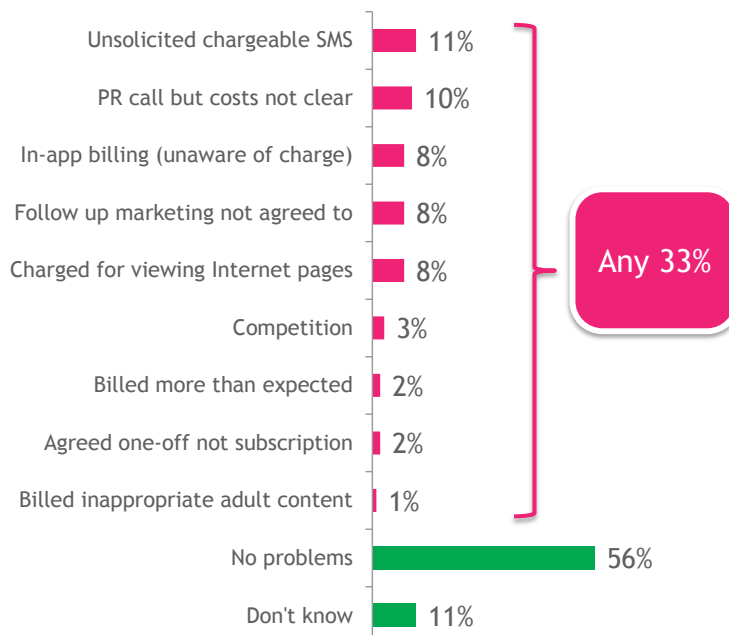
Source: Q16d Please indicate whether your children have experienced any of the issues on this list when using these types of premium rate payment methods within the last 6 months. Base: All recent PRS or Micropayment users with children aged 6 to 15 who have a mobile n=365. Multiple answers allowed.

The majority agreed with the need to protect children from PRS issues. When asked how important an issue it was to protect children from a number of elements (Figure 47), 60% said it was very important to protect them from unexpected items on phone bills (e.g. PRS) and 62% from overly high mobile bills. This was only slightly lower than the proportion rating very important for accessing inappropriate content online (68%) or on a phone (71%).

Figure 47: Importance of issues when protecting children[15]
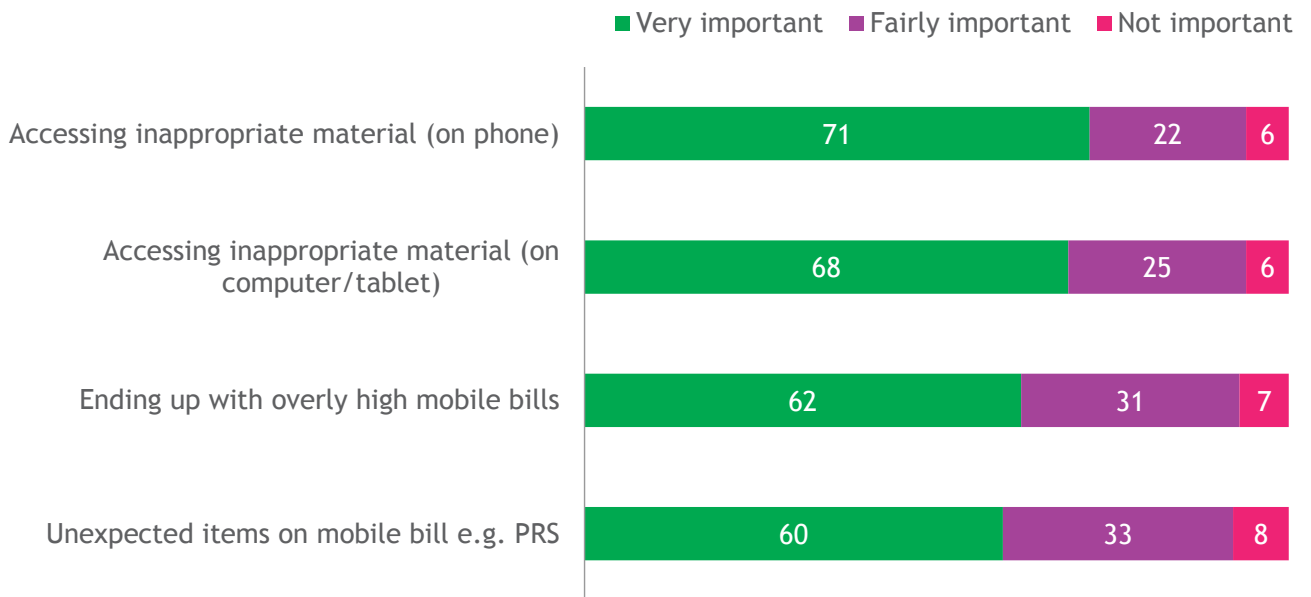
Source: Q18 How important an issue would you say protecting your children from each of the following is to you? Base: All recent PRS or Micropayment users with children aged 6 to 15 who have a mobile n=365

Parents of children aged 6-15 with phones were asked to choose from a list of factors that they might worry about with their children having a mobile phone. Figure 50 shows which factors were of concern at all, and also which factors represented parents' main concerns. Around one in five said they had no real concerns about their children having a mobile phone.

Figure 48 shows that overall high bills or charges were of equal concern as content and contact issues (although "inappropriate content" was somewhat more likely to be seen as a main concern).

The parents of children who claimed to have actually experienced any PRS issues were more likely to worry about unexpected charges (52%), high bills (53%) or in-app purchasing (30%) than parents overall.

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[15]   The individual percentages in this chart do not add to 100% due to rounding.

Figure 48: What parents worry about child's mobile phone
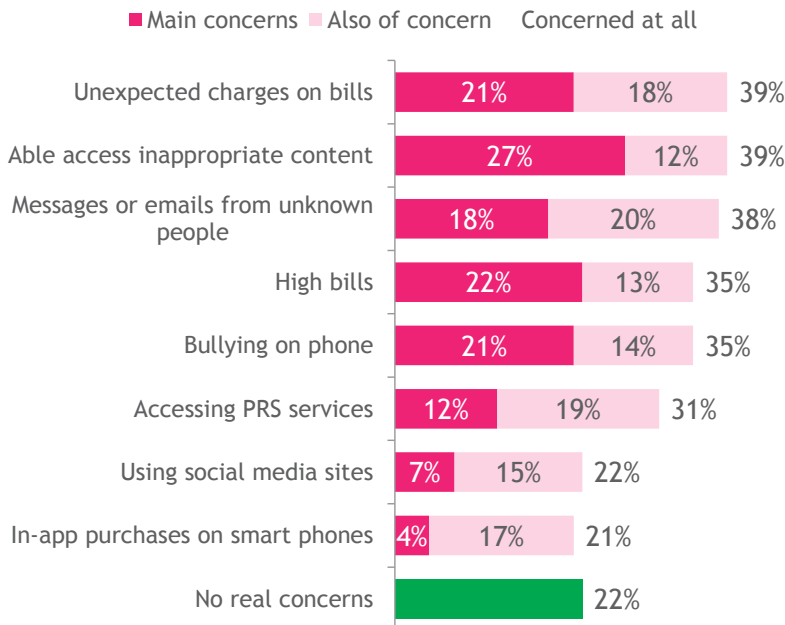
Source: Q16a Which of the following are things you worry about with your children having a mobile phone? Which are your top two concerns? Base: All recent PRS or Micropayment users with children aged 6 to 15 who have a mobile n=365. Multiple answers allowed.

Parents of children 6-15 with phones were asked an open-ended question about what steps they may have taken to help ensure their children don't experience any issues with premium rate payment methods when using phones. 59% mentioned some action and 41% said that no steps had been taken.

Examining the response of those who claimed to have taken such steps, the research found that more than half had talked to their children, to explain, educate or advise, warn, suggest or caution, or to encourage them to tell a parent first before doing anything that might lead to PRS issues..

"I have discussed issue and consequences with child. I have explained how these things can work, and to check with us before using them"

"We have taught them to be sensible and not to go on anything that they are not sure of and they know exactly what limits are on their phone"

Other popular actions were caps or limits (e.g. PAYG only), blocks, bars or passwords, monitoring and regular checks.

"I only allow my daughter on a Pay as you Go where I am in control of how much is spent"

"Phone bill is capped and no premium rate numbers can be accessed and Internet is blocked fully"

"I check the bills and they know it. They have been told that infringement will result in curtailment of telephone and Internet"

Parents were then asked to choose from a list of steps that they might have taken to avoid being charged for children using premium rate payment methods inadvertently. Figure 49 shows that only 20% claim to have done "nothing" when asked in this more direct way. It is likely that some of the 41% who gave this response to the open-ended question may not have immediately called to mind some of the actions they may have undertaken in the past.

Figure 49 shows that (in line with responses to the open ended question), more than half (57%) had spoken to their children about PRS issues. A further third (35%) were engaged in the active monitoring of calls and a quarter had blocked the use of premium rate numbers.

Table 8 shows that parents of children who claimed to have actually experienced any PRS issues were more likely to actively monitor calls (43%) or block app download usage (25%).

This, to some degree, explains why a number of children have experienced PRS issues even though the parents have taken steps to address this issue. Many parents will have adopted quite a passive stance when first providing their child with a phone i.e. a general warning about possible dangers. It's often not until the child experiences an issue that parents then take more active steps to address the issue e.g. blocking premium rate services, more actively monitoring calls etc.

Figure 49: Steps taken to avoid inadvertent premium rate charging
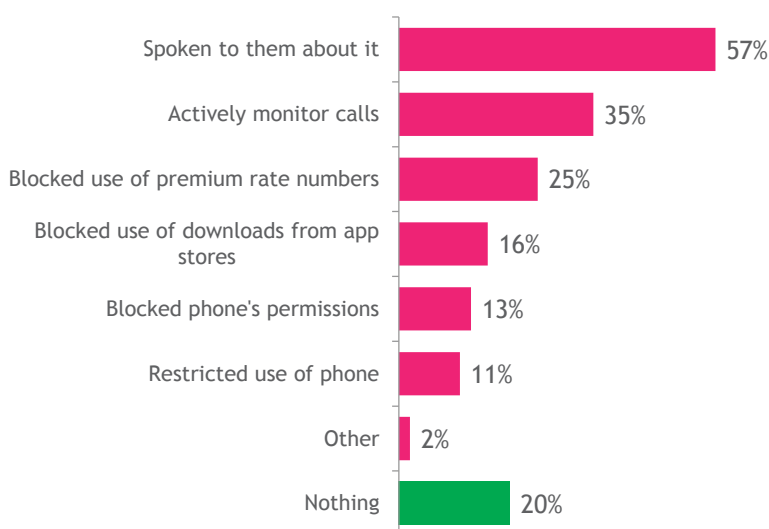
Source: Q19a Which of the following steps, if any, have you taken to avoid being charged for using premium rate payment methods inadvertently? Base: All recent PRS or Micropayment users with children aged 6 to 15 who have a mobile n=365. Multiple answers allowed.

Table 8:   Steps taken to avoid inadvertent premium rate charging

	Child HAS experienced PRS issues	Child has NOT experienced PRS issues
Spoken to them about it	60%	56%
Actively monitor calls	43%	30%
Blocked use of premium rate #	31%	22%
Blocked downloads app stores	25%	12%
Blocked phones permissions	14%	12%
Nothing	7%	26%

Source: Q19a Which of the following steps, if any, have you taken to avoid being charged for using premium rate payment methods inadvertently? Base: All recent PRS or Micropayment users with children aged 6 to 15 who have a mobile n=365. Multiple answers allowed.

As with adult PRS issues, the research found that claimed experience of PRS issues by children clearly led to fact-finding activity. Figure 50 looks at the information sources used by parents to find out more about any

issues around children using premium rate payment methods and how to protect their families from experiencing these issues.

Overall, word of mouth (other people, family) and general Internet searching were key information sources (used by more than a quarter and described as most useful by around one in five). 38% claimed not to have tried to find out anything about these issues.

Parents of children who claimed to have experienced any PRS issues were more likely to have used information sources to find out more about these issues. Only 18% of these parents said they had not tried to find out about these issues, compared with 38% of parents overall and 48% of parents whose children had not experienced any PRS issues.

Figure 50: Information sources used to find out about issues around children using premium rate methods
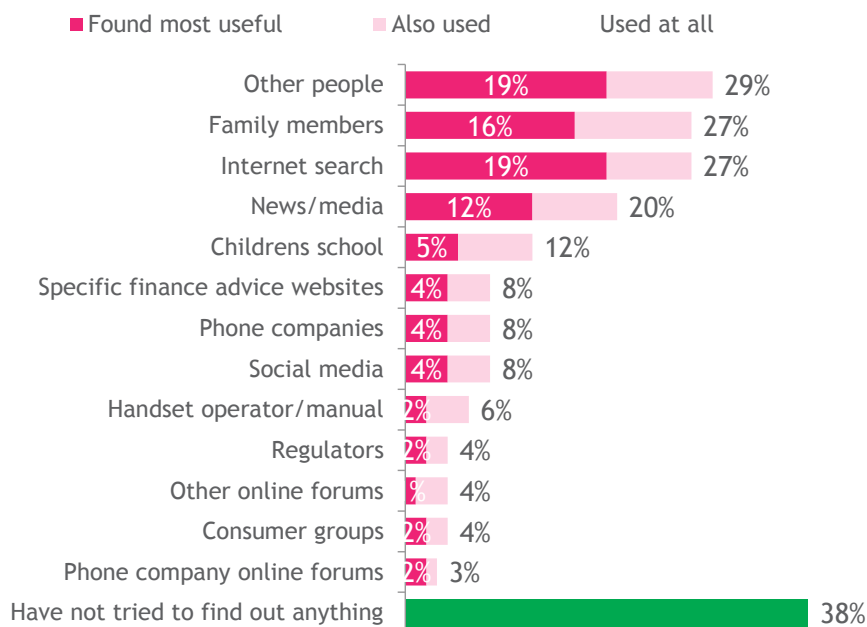
Source: Q19b/c Which of the following information sources, if any, have you used to find out more about any issues around your children using premium rate payment methods and how to protect your family from experiencing these issues? Which have your found most useful? Base: All recent PRS or Micropayment users with children aged 6 to 15 who have a mobile n=365. Multiple answers allowed.

7. Profiling PRS users

Key Findings

- **PRS users differed from non-users in that they had a younger age profile and were more likely to be social grade AB.**
- **General PRS complainants were more likely (than PRS non-complainants) to be male, younger and to have children aged 6-15 with their own phones. They were also much more likely than non-complainants to have a mobile phone on contract, use mobile devices and be very confident about technology.**
- **Compared with PRS complainants overall, those who had contacted PhonepayPlus were older and slightly less confident about technology than general PRS complainants. They were also more likely to have a computer or a fixed line phone than general PRS complainants.**

7.1. Profile of PRS users and complainants

Figure 51 looks at gender and age differences between all adults and PRS users, those claiming to have experienced PRS issues and those complaining about it. Figures 52 and 53 compare Socio-Economic Group (SEG), education, the presence of children with phones in the household, device ownership and confidence with technology.

7.1.1.   PRS users versus non-users

PRS users differed from non-users in that they had a younger age profile, with 39% aged less than 35, compared with 27% of non-users. Users were more likely to be social grade AB (45% vs. 38% of non-users) and less likely to be social grade DE (14% vs. 20% of non-users).

Amongst all PRS users, those claiming to have experienced PRS issues were no different demographically to other PRS users.

7.1.2.   PRS complainants

General PRS complainants (not PhonepayPlus contacts) were more likely to be male (65% vs. 54% of PRS users overall) and to have children aged 6-15 with their own phones (29% vs. 18% of PRS users overall). They were even more likely than PRS users to have a younger profile, with 58% aged less than 35. PRS complainants were also much more likely to have children aged 6-15 with their own mobile phones.

PRS complainants were much more likely than non-complainants to have a mobile phone on contract (82% versus 69% of all PRS users), use mobile devices and be very confident about technology i.e. suggesting they are heavier users of PRS and more likely confident that they are in the right when things go wrong. Almost half (49%) of PRS complainants described themselves as "very confident" about technology (compared with 32% of PRS users overall).

Figure 51: Profile: gender, age[16]

	All adults	PRS		
		All PRS users	PRS issues	PRS complainant
Male	49%	54%	54%	65%
Female	51%	46%	46%	35%
16-24	15%	18%	17%	21%
25-34	17%	21%	24%	37%
35-44	17%	19%	17%	16%
45-54	17%	17%	16%	13%
55-64	14%	12%	12%	8%
65-74	17%	12%	11%	4%
75+	3%	2%	2%	0%
MEAN AGE	46	42	42	36

Source: Profiling questions. All adults n=4000, PRS users n=1398, PRS issues n=782, PRS complainant n=113

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[16] The individual percentages in this table do not add to 100% due to rounding.

Figure 52: Profile: SEG, education, children[17]

	Total Sample	PRS		
		All PRS users	PRS issues	PRS complainant
AB	40%	45%	47%	48%
C1C2	41%	41%	41%	38%
DE	18%	14%	13%	14%
University/higher degree	37%	42%	45%	49%
Have children aged 6-16 with own phones	11%	18%	20%	29%

Source: Profiling questions. All adults n=4000, PRS users n=1398, PRS issues n=782, PRS complainant n=113

Figure 53: Profile: devices, technology

	PRS		
	All PRS Users	PRS issues	PRS Complainant
Ownership of devices:			
Smartphone	72%	73%	75%
Mobile Phone	31%	30%	31%
Tablet	41%	42%	49%
Fixed line home phone	63%	61%	52%
Computer/ laptop	77%	75%	65%
Mobile Phone:			
Contract	69%	71%	82%
PAYG	31%	29%	18%
Technology Confidence:			
Very confident	32%	32%	49%
Fairly confident	54%	56%	46%

Source: Profiling questions. All adults n=4000, PRS users n=1398, PRS issues n=782, PRS complainant n=113. Multiple answers allowed (on ownership of devices)

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[17]   The individual percentages in this chart do not add to 100% due to rounding.

7.2. Profile of PhonepayPlus contacts

There were some interesting differences between the two sample surveys, comparing PhonepayPlus contacts with PRS complainants from the general adult population. Figure 55 looks at gender and age differences, and Figure 54 compares device ownership and confidence with technology.

Compared with PRS complainants overall, those who had contacted PhonepayPlus were older (mean age 47 versus 36) and slightly less confident about technology (15% not confident versus 5%). They were more likely to have a computer or a fixed line phone than PRS complainants from the general population sample.

Figure 54: Profile: gender, age[18]

	All adults	PRS			
		All PRS users	PRS issues	PRS complainant	PpP contact
Male	49%	54%	54%	65%	68%
Female	51%	46%	46%	35%	32%
Under 35	32%	40%	41%	58%	22%
35-44	17%	19%	17%	16%	23%
45-54	17%	17%	16%	13%	23%
55 or older	34%	26%	25%	12%	33%
MEAN AGE	*46*	*42*	*42*	*36*	*47*

Source: Profiling questions. All adults n=4000, PRS users n=1398, PRS issues n=782, PRS complainant n=113, PpP contact n=103

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[18]   The individual percentages in this chart do not add to 100% due to rounding.

Figure 55: Profile: devices, technology

	PRS			
	All PRS users	**PRS issues**	**PRS complainant**	**PpP contact**
Ownership of devices:				
Smartphone	72%	73%	75%	83%
Mobile Phone	31%	30%	31%	30%
Tablet	41%	42%	49%	56%
Fixed line home phone	63%	61%	52%	84%
Computer/ laptop	77%	75%	65%	94%
Mobile Phone:				
Contract	69%	71%	82%	85%
PAYG	31%	29%	18%	15%
Technology Confidence:				
Confident	86%	87%	95%	85%
Not confident	14%	13%	5%	15%

Source: Profiling questions. All adults n=4000, PRS users n=1398, PRS issues n=782, PRS complainant n=113, PpP contact n=103. Multiple answers allowed (on ownership of devices)

8. PRS "chat" on the Internet

A further element of the research programme was a qualitative exercise in reviewing the Internet for "chat" about PRS payment methods. This involved looking at websites, forums and social media to assess what consumers were discussing and any reactions or behavioural patterns towards PRS issues.

Key Findings

- **Usually responses to online posts about PRS issues are a mix of practical prevention and next steps for escalation, along with anecdotal experiences to help the poster on their journey.**
- **Key areas of preventative advice are: texting STOP, changing phone settings or cancelling the phone contract / changing telephone number.**
- **Common next steps offered revolve around how/who to see a refund from or how/who to complain to. Advice usually suggests contacting the phone company or contacting a regulator (PhonepayPlus and Ofcom are often suggested).**
- **Consumers generally seek out the most relevant forums for their particular enquiry including: Telecoms specific forums, specific demographic forums (e.g. Mumsnet), general forums e.g. Money Savings Expert, social media and commenting on media articles online.**
- **Key areas of confusion included whether or not texting STOP was the best way of unsubscribing to unwanted PRS, what was legal or illegal in terms of PRS, where should the blame for PRS issues lie, and a lack of clarity around the process of complaining.**

8.1. Typical consumer queries and sources of "chat"

Figure 56 shows a typical query flow. A consumer asks for help, advice or support. Opinion, experiences and/or practical advice are dispensed, and then the original poster replies to thank others or report back on outcomes.

Figure 56: Typical PRS-related query flow on a consumer or telecom provider Internet forum

Source: Review of Internet "chat" about PRS issues

Usually responses to online posts about PRS issues are a mix of practical prevention and next steps for escalation, along with anecdotal experiences to help the poster on their journey.

Key areas of practical preventative advice are:

- Texting STOP. This seems to work for legitimate services but consumers may not always be able to tell the difference between these and illegal ones or scams
- Changing phone settings. Changing passwords or security, blocking specific numbers, disabling premium rate calling
- Cancelling the phone contract or changing telephone number. These are something of a last resort (but one that some consider in despair).

Common practical next steps offered revolve around how/who to see a refund from or how/who to complain to. Advice usually suggests the following:

- Network provider. This is the first port of call for many but they can differ in attitude to responsibility and therefore propensity to issue refunds.
- Company behind the service. Network providers sometimes offer to help identify the third parties involved, but it's usually up to the consumer to contact these organisations and complain and/or seek refunds.
- Regulators. PhonepayPlus and Ofcom are often suggested by the networks and other consumers as sources of issue escalation.

The review found that consumers seek out the most relevant forums for their particular enquiry, seeking and/or offering advice for dealing with existing issues, avoiding recurrence of issues and sharing their experiences with others. Typical locations for these types of discussion would be:

Telecoms specific consumer forums

These either have a separate URL or are accessed via the websites of most of the main mobile or fixed line phone operators and are branded as such. Some of these are moderated by the operators in that advice is given by operator staff in addition to other consumers. Others are consumer-only with peer-to-peer advice and discussion.

Typical "posts" include those experiencing surprises at bills for PRS calls or texts (particularly those that consumers claim were not made or unsolicited), accidental subscription to PRS, or calls for advice about how to stop spam texts or calls. Victims of scams or fraud also turn to these forums, often clearly in emotional or stressed states of mind. Typically posts are entitled in similar ways to these examples:

> *"Premium rate text scam"*

> *"Receiving unwanted texts from XXXXX, worried about premium charges"*

> *"Charged in-app via text (scam?)"*

Specific demographic consumer forums

Examples of this are Mumsnet, Gransnet or Saga. Some have information pages which deal with PRS issues, for example Mumsnet has a page entitled "How to stop your children running up huge online bills" (which links to a wider consumer forum for further support. They also have forums where like-minded or those in a similar life-stage discuss issues of relevance.

In the PRS context, these are primarily concerned with online or mobile purchases or in-app purchases by children/grandchildren (either involuntarily or with knowledge but not permission), or warning others about scams. Posters are typically looking for ways of getting a refund and/or finding out how to prevent these issues occurring in future.

Typically posts are entitled in similar ways to these examples:

> *"Premium rate calls on my phone bill not made by us – any experience?"*

> *"How to stop children buying in-app purchases"*

> *"Don't fall for this one – or any others"*

General consumer forums

Examples of this are MoneysavingExpert.com or Which? They deal with a very broad selection of issues, of which PRS is just one element. As a result, the level of active discussion of these issues is lower than on telecoms specific forums. However, several posts on these types of forum suggest that consumers have tried engaging with the telecoms companies and got nowhere, so are seeking alternative information and advice sources.

Some consumer websites have specific forums where consumers can report offending phone numbers, companies, games or apps, or run related campaigns (e.g. Which? campaign against nuisance calls and texts).

Social Media

Most organisations (e.g. the telecoms providers) have some social media presence. Consumers are able to post and respond to the organisation or other consumers on providers' Facebook or Twitter pages, or via their own personal social media accounts using hashtags and so on.

Media articles

Another rich source of consumer "chat" online is in responses to articles or advice in the press via comments boxes. Often the public are invited to comment on issues raised in the article, for example:

July 2013 – Which? launched a campaign against nuisance calls and texts

July 2013 – The Guardian reported on an apps firm being fined £250k for 'misleading' subscriptions in children's apps.

> *"In app purchases for kiddies games are a modern form of highway robbery. Their inherent design is optimised to maximise revenue."*

> *"The gold coins correspond to amounts of real money but the children don't notice"*

8.2. Key areas of consumer confusion

The analysis of online "chat" flagged up four key areas in which consumers were easily confused by PRS issues; the practicalities of texting STOP, understanding legality, establishing fault/blame and the process of complaining.

8.2.1. Should you text STOP?

Usually (but not always), the official advice from network providers etc. is to text STOP to the message sender if you are receiving unwanted text messages or calls. However, some think that this only encourages the sender, particularly when the sender is overseas, with scams or providers on the limits of legality.

> *"Stop sending STOP, all you are doing is confirming you have a working phone. Sending STOP will only work with legitimate companies, not these cowboy outfits"* (Consumer posting on a telecoms specific online forum)

> *"Luckily, services like these are very easy to cancel. To stop unwanted subscription texts, simply text STOP back to the sender of the message"* (Official response on a network provider website)

> *"Never reply to any sort of spam message. It confirms your number is active and you'll be likely to get more. If you confirm interest then your details will be sold on to a firm that is likely to call you to try and get you to use them. The legitimacy of these firms often can't be confirmed"* (Official response on a general consumer forum)

8.2.2. What is or isn't illegal?

There is confusion amongst consumers regarding the legality or otherwise of some PRS. Some issues which are extremely irritating or distressing can still be technically legal. Some "chat" relates to the high cost of calling 09/0871 or PRS 'government numbers' which appear at the top of some Internet searches, often above the official numbers. These can be annoying and expensive but not necessarily "reportable".

Some are confused about what is marketing "spam" versus a real "scam"; is the PRS merchant a legitimate company (in which texting STOP might work), or is it actually criminal? Some are unclear about whether they signed up to something by mistake, or whether calls/texts are just randomly generated. It can be very difficult to determine in some cases if someone has just been inattentive or has actually been tricked or misled into accessing PRS. Can something be misleading yet still technically legal?

Others wonder about PRS merchants operating overseas and whether or not they are liable to the same rules and regulations which govern UK companies.

8.2.3. Who is at fault here?

PRS can be a very grey area with regard to apportioning fault or blame for costs incurred. Downloads and clicks can be accidental or caused by inattention, but scamming and active misleading does operate widely.

Some consumers fail to protect passwords (e.g. from children) or to disable purchases in-app. Is ignorance an excuse? Are games or apps really being misleading or are people just not paying due care and attention? PRS can be accessed knowingly or unknowingly, especially with children/teenagers.

Lots of the "chat" online involves posters arguing about parents giving access to phones/devices to children and trying to determine whose fault it is if they then purchase things in-app or sign up to PRS. Debate can be quite heated. As consumers have found, it can be very difficult to prove if an app is deliberately misleading children

into purchasing or simply using clever and legal (if highly suspect to parents!) marketing practices to encourage purchase.

> *"Today I called (network provider) to explain that I did not request that premium text message and that I should not pay for something I have not requested. I actually don't know what it is"* (Consumer posting on a telecoms specific online forum)

> *"I really don't understand why people think they are entitled to money back in these circumstances. You definitely always have to confirm a purchase. I just think it is irresponsible, same as people who rack up a huge phone bill and expect the mobile company to let them off* (Consumer talking about in-app purchasing)

8.2.4.   Process of complaining – to whom, how and for what?

If a consumer gets to the point of wanting to complain about PRS issues, confusion then exists around the process for doing so. There is confusion around how to complain, what to complain about and who to call, for example:

- The PRS service provider itself – but some are concerned about racking up additional costs in calling or texting them
- Phone network or phone handset manufacturer
- App or game supplier, or via the app itself
- The regulators e.g. PhonepayPlus, Ofcom, Action fraud, ICO

Several report the frustration of "going around the houses" and debate whether or not it is really worth the effort of complaining, as this example from a telecoms specific online forum demonstrates:

> *"I've had texts from (XXXXXX) showing up on my bill for the last three months. Each one is costing me £1.50. I don't actually receive anything on my phone, the first I know about them is when I see the bill. They seem to be following a pattern of 2 a week at the same time every Friday - so last month has cost me £15 extra."*

> *"I've rang (mobile operator customer services). The first month they refunded me, I suggested they blocked the number, they said they couldn't do that so they said they would continue to refund if it happened again. The second month I rang they said they wouldn't refund unless I texted STOP to the number, which I did."*

> *"The third month (now) I haven't been refunded, and have been charged for a further 10 calls. I've just rung (mobile operator customer services) and they've told me to contact the company and ask them to stop sending me the texts and give me a refund. I'm not sure how this is my responsibility. but I have done what they asked - the number given was for (XXXXXXX). This got me through to the reception of another company who had apparently purchased that company, who then put me through to 'Customer Service' which turned out to be an answer machine. I have requested they contact me, but my hopes aren't high."*

> *"So I'm now stuck as to what to do next. (Mobile operator customer services) have also suggested changing my number, which I don't really want to do"*

PhonepayPlus is often referred to (by official or consumer sources) as a next step, often with a link to the website or telephone number.

> *"You can complain to PhonepayPlus, an agency of Ofcom"*

> *"PhonepayPlus is the correct place to register your complaint"*

> *"Look into PhonepayPlus, they can help to find where/what the number is and it's the place to register a complaint"*

> *"You can try to trace the sender of the texts and make a complaint to the regulator by using the link below (to PhonepayPlus)"*

> *"PhonepayPlus is the organisation that regulates phone-paid services in the UK. Follow the advice on their website. It's a problem that crops up regularly on the forum."*

Some telecoms providers and other forums have pages on their websites dealing with PRS related issues and in some cases linking to PhonepayPlus website. In addition to referrals such as those above, there are positive posts of experience about the action taken by PhonepayPlus.

> *"With the help of posters on here, I contacted PhonepayPlus to make a complaint. Today I was informed that this text service had been cancelled and a refund of £36 had been paid into my PayPal account. Wonderful thanks very much for your assistance."*

9. PRS Mystery Shopping and Qualitative Case Studies

Key Findings

- **PhonepayPlus was rated highly for phone contact, notably for offering clear advice on next steps consumers might take.**
- **In contrast, ratings for phone companies and PRS merchants were significantly lower. In particular these reflect many failed attempts to get through to PRS merchants.**
- **For almost half of mystery shops, researchers found that the phone company was only "fair/poor" at putting you at ease, and for one in three (37%) they found they were equally lacking in terms of offering clear advice about next steps.**
- **Across the mystery shopping journeys it was clear there was a lack of consistency of response both between and within providers and merchants.**
- **On no occasions (out of twenty journeys) did the phone provider suggest the caller contact PhonepayPlus.**

9.1. PRS Mystery Shopping

A formal mystery shopping exercise was used to complement the research findings and assess the consistency of response provided to consumers by third parties. From previous research in this area, it is known that recall of usage of PRS experiences can be sketchy and we could not therefore rely on consumer recall to be an accurate measure of third party response.

20 mystery shopping journeys were conducted across a range of PRS incidents and phone providers, and involved 53 mystery 'shops' overall. One journey would typically involve 3 'shops' i.e. contacting the phone provider, the PRS merchant and PhonepayPlus.

A range of PRS incidents were initiated by researchers using different phone accounts. 7 different PRS services were tested including adult services, quizzes, premium rate phone services and in-app purchases. A mix of phone accounts were used across different networks. A mix of contract and PAYG accounts were used for mobile.

Figure 57 compares overall ratings of the experience across the three types of organisation; regulator (i.e. PhonepayPlus), phone company and PRS merchant.

PhonepayPlus was rated highly for phone contact, notably for offering clear advice on next steps consumers might take. More than six in ten mystery shops rated PhonepayPlus as "excellent" for the ease of getting through, putting you at ease and being helpful. In 85% of mystery shops, the regulator was rated as "excellent" for giving clear advice on the next steps a consumer should take, and in no cases was PhonepayPlus rated as fair or poor.

In contrast, ratings for phone companies and PRS merchants were significantly lower. In particular these reflect many failed attempts to get through to PRS merchants, with 42% of mystery shops rated as "poor" for the ease of getting through to these organisations and significant proportions unable to answer at all on issues of helpfulness, advice or putting at ease, due to difficulties of getting through to someone who could or was willing to discuss issues. The high number of 'Not applicable' scores is because the caller could not get through and experience the service provided.

For almost half (46%) of mystery shops, researchers found that the phone company was only "fair/poor" at putting you at ease, and for one in three (37%) they found they were equally lacking in terms of offering clear advice about next steps.

Looking at the 20 mystery shopping journeys in more qualitative detail, what was clear was a lack of consistency of response both between and within providers and merchants. Each journey was different, not simply because of the variable issues themselves but because of a lack of reliability in terms of getting through to someone who can help, organisations taking responsibility or not, and consistency of suggesting next steps.

Phone providers generally confirmed the charges or amounts. Sometimes they identified the PRS merchant and suggested looking them up online, and occasionally gave a contact number for that merchant. The usual advice was to contact the PRS merchant and seek complaint satisfaction therein. On a few occasions they offered a refund as a goodwill gesture, but usually would not take responsibility for the charges. On no occasions (out of twenty journeys) did the phone provider suggest the caller contact PhonepayPlus

PRS merchants were often very difficult to get hold of in order to discuss issues. There were several instances of mystery shoppers unable to get past automated phone services or get through to anything at all. Sometimes they had to try several contact numbers or methods. If mystery shoppers did speak to someone, these people were often defensive in manner about charges being clear upfront. In a couple of instances a refund was given, in others mystery shoppers were asked to email head office in pursuit of further complaint but in several cases requests to unsubscribe were met but refunds flatly refused.

PhonepayPlus did seem to offer high levels of consistency, often explaining to consumers how this sort of charging usually works and always suggesting a next step e.g. texting STOP, trying a new contact number for the PRS merchant or officially registering and taking on a complaint. They always left the door open for mystery shoppers to call back if they wanted further advice or to escalate issues via the complaints process, or took phone or email details in order to contact the consumer themselves.

It is however worth nothing that despite strong performance on "next steps" within the mystery shopping exercise, amongst PhonepayPlus contacts in the quantitative survey, there was some negativity around clarity of explaining what to do next or further correspondence (around a quarter rating PhonepayPlus poor or very poor for these elements). This is likely to be partially explained by the fact that the mystery shoppers did not have the opportunity to assess PhonepayPlus over a longer period of time (and certainly not to resolution stage) as the quantitative contacts did.

Figure 57: Experience with contacting different organisations[19]

Legend:
- Excellent
- Very good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

PhonepayPlus

	Ease of getting through	Being helpful	Clear advice on next steps	Putting you at ease
Excellent/Very good	62%	69%	85%	62%
Good	23%	15%	8%	23%
Fair	8%	8%	8%	8%
Poor	8%	8%		8%

Phone Company

	Ease of getting through	Being helpful	Clear advice on next steps	Putting you at ease
Excellent	32%	32%	16%	21%
Very good	11%	11%	16%	5%
Good	32%	32%	32%	16%
Fair	5%	11%	16%	26%
Poor	21%	16%	21%	21%

PRS Merchant

	Ease of getting through (5% NA)	Being helpful (47% NA)	Clear advice on next steps (53% NA)	Putting you at ease (47% NA)
Excellent	26%	11%	11%	11%
Very good	11%	11%	16%	16%
Good	11%	16%	5%	11%
Fair	5%	11%	5%	5%
Poor	42%	5%	11%	11%

Source: Q4 Please rate (organisation) on the following. Base: all mystery shops n=53

9.2. Qualitative Case Studies

52 in-depth interviews were conducted in total, with consumers across a range of participant types.

12 interviews were conducted with PhonepayPlus complainants via sample provided by PhonepayPlus. A mixture of phone and face to face interviews were conducted with a range of participants (different life-stages, different PRS incident types/issues).

The remaining 40 interviews were from free-found sample (recruited from the online survey):

20 interviews were conducted with those claiming to have experienced any PRS issues, across a range of types (amount charged, whether made contact or complained to organisations, type of PRS incident experienced)

10 interviews were conducted with those claiming to have experienced any Micropayment issues, again across a range of types (whether made contact or complained to organisations, type of Micropayment incident experienced)

10 interviews were conducted with the general public, amongst relatively engaged participants who had thought about PRS issues and, for some, had taken steps to protect themselves or families

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[19] Percentages in this chart do not add up to 100% because the chart does not show the mid-point (people rating "neither positive nor negative"

The findings from these qualitative interviews were very consistent with the main quantitative findings and we have added extra commentary from these qualitative interviews (in previous sections) where it adds detail or helps further explain the quantitative findings.

Typical consumer experiences again highlighted the lack of consistency of response from organisations and outcomes e.g. refunds. What was consistent was a sense of annoyance and frustration amongst consumers, both in blaming themselves for lapsed concentration but equally in feeling somehow "duped" by merchants.

One of the ultimate outcomes of experiencing PRS or Micropayment issues was clearly a heightened sense of awareness about these types of issues and a desire to avoid the experience in future by being careful and cautious, as this research participant says:

"My advice to consumers is to be careful what you sign up for. Be careful what you tick. And if you get texts you're not expecting then ignore them at your peril"

Two examples from the qualitative case studies are shown below in Figure 58 and Figure 59.

Figure 58: Example of PRS number

Woman, Single, no children and on a tight budget

The issue
- Kept missing calls on her phone to a certain number. She is very careful about who she gives her number to and so eventually called them back as she thought it must be something important. She phoned them back and realised that she did not know the company but wanted to know who they were and more importantly why they were calling her and how they had her number.
- They said that they did not know why she had called but kept transferring her to someone else in order to get to the bottom of the issue and was then being put on hold. She eventually found out it was a sales call. One she got her bill she realised she had been charged a considerable sum of money for the call.

The action
- She phoned up her mobile company who told her it was a premium rate number and that she could block calls like that in the future, which she did. They said she would have to obtain a refund from the company itself as she had actually called them.
- She found our their name and got an email address from their site, after repeated emails to them asking for her money back she gave up.

The outcome
- She did not get the money back and feels that she was 'conned'. She now thinks that they must have known they were making sales calls to numbers at that time and so is confused as to why she was kept on hold and passed around so much.
- Ultimately she was left annoyed and would be much more aware of potential premium rate numbers in future.

Source: Qualitative case studies

Figure 59: Example of PRS texts

Female, Aged 70 with 3 grown-up kids and 8 grand children

The issue
- Received an email asking her if she'd like to be a secret shopper; she signed up for this and there were lots of questions and also competitions to enter. She must have entered her mobile number as she started receiving texts which she realised she was being charged for

The action
- Son gave her the number for PpP and she called them. When she mentioned the name of the company PpP said they were already investigating it and advised her to ring them and ask for a refund which she did

The outcome
- Did receive a refund from the company which she was pleased with. Just made her more wary of signing up to things in the future; more likely to be cautious about what information she gave

Source: Qualitative case studies

A. Appendices

A.1. PRS Customer Journey Research Questionnaire

PHONEPAYPLUS PRS CUSTOMER JOURNEY RESEARCH
QUESTIONNAIRE FINAL
101037

ONLINE INVITATION

Panel provider will send invitation to their panellists. Within the invitation is an indication of the subject matter – i.e. buying digital services.

SCREENER / QUOTAS

First of all, we'd like to ask you a few questions about yourself, just to make sure we are surveying a good cross section of the population.

S1.   Do you work in any of the following occupations?

MULTICODE

Marketing	1
Market research	2
Public relations	3
Journalism/broadcasting	4
Finance	5
Civil service	6
Travel / tourism	7
None of the above	8

IF ANY OF CODES 1-4 THEN CLOSE

S2.   Are you?
SINGLE CODE

Male	1
Female	2

RECRUIT TO QUOTA

S3a.   How old are you?

RECRUIT TO QUOTA

S3b.   How many children aged under 16 years, if any, that you are the parent or guardian of do you have (if you have no children in that age group, please put zero)

Age	Number per age group
0-5 years old	
6-10 years old	
11-15 years old	

ASK S3c IF HAVE ANY CHILDREN AGED 6-15 AT S3b
S3c.   Do any of your children have their own mobile phone even if the phone is on a contract under your name?

Yes.. 1
No.. 2

S4.   Whereabouts in the UK do you live?

<u>England</u>
  North West   1
  North East   2
  Yorkshire/Humberside   3
  West Midlands   4
  East Midlands   5
  East of England   6
  Greater London   7
  South East (exc. Greater London)   8
  South West   9
Scotland   10
Wales   11
Northern Ireland   `   12
Live outside the UK   13   **CLOSE**

S5. Which of the following best describes your employment status?
SINGLE CODE

Employed full time	1
Employed part time	2
Self-employed	3
Housewife/husband	4
Retired	5
Student (i.e. school, university etc)	6
Apprentice/trainee	7
Unemployed	8

S6. Which of the following best describes the occupation status of your household's chief income earner?

Higher managerial/professional/administrative (e.g. Chief executive, senior civil servant, surgeon)	1
Intermediate managerial/professional/administrative (e.g. middle management, bank manager, teacher)	2
Supervisory/clerical/junior managerial/professional/ administrative (e.g. shop floor supervisor, bank clerk, sales person)	3
Skilled manual worker (e.g. electrician, carpenter)	4
Semi-skilled and unskilled manual worker (e.g. assembly line worker, refuse collector, messenger)	5
Casual labourer, pensioner, student, unemployed (e.g. pensioner without private pensions and anyone living on basic benefits)	6

S7. What is the highest level of educational qualification you have achieved ?
Select one response only

No qualifications
Any GCSEs
One to four GCSEs (grade A*-C)
Five or more GCSEs (grade A*-C)
Any A Level or equivalent
One or more A level or equivalent (grades A-C)
Vocational qualification (e.g. BTEC, HND, NVQ, etc.)
University degree
Higher degree
. Other (specify) [OE CHA]
Don't know

PRS / MICROPAYMENT USAGE

ASK ALL

Q1.   We'd like you to think about buying digital or virtual goods and services. This might include things like a game, an app, a music track or an information or entertainment service that you call from your phone or receive in a text. Please don't include physical products that would be delivered to you or that you would pick up from the seller.

Please only think about purchases that typically cost up to £10 in a single transaction, but may go above depending on the length of a call or session.

You will be shown a number of WAYS TO PAY for digital goods and services.. Please indicate whether you have used this payment method:

- In the last 6 months

- in the last 7-12 months (but not in the last 6 months)

- Not used/experienced in the last 12 months

SINGLE CODE FOR EACH PAYMENT METHOD – RANDOMISE

EACH PAYMENT METHOD TO BE SHOWN ON A SEPARATE SCREEN

		In the last 6 months	In the last 7-12 months	Not in last 12 months	Can't remember
A	**Paid for something by texting from your mobile phone**, with the charge appearing on your phone bill or deducted from your pay as you go allowance *This might be voting by text on a reality show, giving to a charity using text or various other services*	1	2	3	4
B	**Entering your mobile number on the web**, and then getting text messages that bill you to your phone *This might include instances when you don't think you did enter your mobile number on the web but received these chargeable text messages anyway*	1	2	3	4
C	**Called a premium phone line** (such as directory enquiries (a 118 number) an 09 number or an 0871 number). *This could be for a range of things such as voting on a TV show, donating to a charity through the cost of the call, or accessing chat or pre-recorded messages (e.g. quizzes, horoscopes or weather).* *These calls can be made from your fixed or mobile line.*	1	2	3	4
D	**Paid for something on your 'mobile operator's own portal' e.g. Vodafone Live, Orange World, O2 Active** i.e. with the charge appearing on your phone bill or pay as you go allowance (NOT on a credit card or deducted from iTunes or other). *This is a payment for a service or download on your mobile operator's mobile web homepage or menu*	1	2	3	4
E	**Paid for something on the mobile internet through a screen branded "Payforit",** with the charge appearing on your phone bill or pay as you go (NOT on a credit card or deducted from iTunes or other). *Payforit is a payment service that lets you*	1	2	3	4

	pay through your phone bill on mobile internet site. You might have seen the name Payforit on the payment screen, and your operator logo might have been there too				
F	**Paid for a digital or 'virtual' good costing less than £10 using PayPal** or a similar payment service like Google Wallet. This could be an app, a game, some music or some other form of digital content. This excludes physical products	1	2	3	4
G	**Paid for a digital or 'virtual' good costing less than £10 using a credit or debit card.** This could be an app, a game, some music or some other form of digital content. This excludes physical products	1	2	3	4
H	**Paid for a digital or 'virtual' good costing less than £10 using my iTunes account.**	1	2	3	4
I	**Used digital/virtual currencies**, such as Facebook Credits, PSP points, Smurfberries, Swapits, Ukash or Xbox LIVE points - you pay an amount and that is turned into some other "currency" you can use on the service. *You can buy these sorts of "digital money" and use them to pay for things online*	1	2	3	4
J	**Used a 'stored value account' online, or on your games console** - you pay upfront (i.e. add money to your account) and money is deducted as you use a service. *This is a sort of "pay as you go" method online, for example used by Skype for calling phones*	1	2	3	4
K	Purchased a digital or virtual good online (e.g. an app) and selected 'pay by phone bill' in order to pay	1	2	3	4
L	**Paid for a digital or 'virtual' good using the red button on your Sky or Cable remote** but excluding video on demand or TV content.	1	2	3	4

CLOSE IF <u>NOT</u> CODE 1 AT ANY OF: A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J

CODE 1 AT ANY OF: A, B, C, D, E = PRS USER

CODE 1 AT ANY OF: F, G, H, I, J = MICROPAYMENT USER

IF CODE I OR 2 AT I ASK

Q1b. You say you have used **digital/virtual currencies**, such as Facebook Credits, PSP points, Smurfberries, Swapits, Ukash or Xbox LIVE points, how do you tend to ultimately pay for these is it:

    SINGLE CODE

    With money coming direct from my bank account 1
    Via my mobile phone bill (e.g. Paypal Mobile)........................ 2
    Other (specify)... 3
    Don't know 4

CODE I OR 2 AT J ASK

Q1c. You say you have used **a 'stored value account' online, or on your games console** how do you tend to ultimately pay for these is it:

    SINGLE CODE

    With money coming direct from my bank account 1
    Via my mobile phone bill (e.g. Paypal Mobile)........................ 2
    Other (specify)... 3
    Don't know 4

EXPERIENCE OF PRS

THIS SECTION TO BE ASKED OF ALL PRS USERS (NON USERS GO TO Q16a)

You indicated that you had used the following payment methods in the last 6 months: (SHOW PAYMENT METHODS A, B, C, D, E IF CODED 1 AT Q1).

You will now be asked some questions about your experience of accessing these specific premium rate payment methods in the last 6 months.

Q2.   Firstly, how many times in total would you say you have used these types of payment methods in the last 6 months?

Once... 1
Twice... 2
3 – 5 times... 3
6 - 10 times.. 4
11 - 20 times 5
More than 20 times.. 6
Not sure... 7

Q3.   And how would you rate your overall experience of using these types of premium rate payment methods over the last 6 months?

Very positive 1
Fairly positive... 2
Neither positive nor negative.. 3
Fairly negative 4
Very negative 5

Q4.   Please say how much you agree or disagree with the statements below?

	Agree strongly	Agree slightly	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree slightly	Disagree strongly
These types of payment methods offer a convenient way of paying for services	1	2	3	4	5
It is clear when using these payment methods for services how much you will be charged	1	2	3	4	5
Some of these payment methods are deliberately misleading	1	2	3	4	5
The way these payment methods work can be confusing	1	2	3	4	5

Q4b. When using these types of payment methods what, if any, are the potential issues you need to be aware of or would advise others who have not used these types of payment methods to look out for?
WRITE IN ANY ISSUES YOU CAN THINK OF BELOW

There are no issues I am aware of 1

Q4c. Which of the following information sources, if any, have you used to find out more about these types of issues?

Family members (e.g. your parents, your children)................... 1
Other people I know e.g. friends, colleagues, other parents........ 2
General searching on the Internet..................................... 3
News/media.. 4
Specific finance advice websites e.g. Money Saving Expert 5
Other online forums (e.g. Mumsnet,, The Scream,
Digital Spy) 6
Social media e.g. Twitter, Facebook 7
Regulators e.g. Ofcom, PhonepayPlus.................................. 8
Phone companies (websites, contacting them) 9
Phone company online consumer forums (where you can get advice
from other network users) 10
Consumer groups (e.g. Citizen's Advice Bureau, GetsafeOnline,
Which?) 11
Other (specify)... 12
I have not tried to find out about these issues..................... 13

Q5a. Please look at the list below and indicate whether you have experienced any of the issues on this list in the past six months when using these types of payment methods, If you have not experienced these issues please select 'I have not experienced any issues'.

ONLY ASK FOR AREAS WHERE EXPERIENCED PROBLEMS AT Q5a

Q5b. For each of the following can you type in the number of times you have experienced each problem or issue with that payment method in the last 6 months (please note that if you received multiple charges due to the same issue then this only counts as 1 time).

IF JUST ONE CATEGORY CODED AT Q5a, THEN AUTOMATICALLY CODE SAME CATEGORY AT Q5c

IF RESPONDENT TICKS MORE THAN ONE CATEGORY AT Q5a THEN SHOW LIST OF THOSE CODED AT Q5a AND ASK FOLLOWING QUESTION.

Q5c. And of those that you have experienced, which one would you consider to be most annoying at the time it happened?

		Q5a Whether experienced	Q5b. Number of times	Q5c. Most annoying
A	You **received chargeable texts** from a third party on your mobile phone even though you didn't recall signing up to receive these texts (each text might cost approximately £1.50)			
B	You've called a **premium phone line (e.g. 09, 118 or 0871)** but don't feel it was made clear what the call costs would be (the calls would typically cost between £0.62 and £1.65 per minute from a landline – more from a mobile)			
C	You have been **charged to your phone for viewing (not downloading) pages on an Internet site** without knowing this would happen			
D	You have been billed for something within an application and you were not aware that you would be charged for this e.g. food for an animal in a child's game, extra equipment or levels in an game			
E	You agreed to the premium rate service but were billed more than expected			
F	You agreed to the premium rate service but thought it was a one off charge and were billed for a regular subscription service			

G	You entered a premium rate service competition and discovered later on that the chances of winning were much lower than it originally appeared			
H	You received some follow up marketing e.g. advertising texts without knowing you had agreed to this			
I	Accessed and was billed for inappropriate adult content			
J	Other problems or issues with the way I was charged for a premium rate service (please specify)			
K	I have not experienced any issues			
L	I am not sure			

IF ANY OF Q5a A-H CODED = PRS DETRIMENT

PRS DETRIMENT

THIS SECTION TO BE ASKED OF ALL PRS DETRIMENT

SHOW RESPONDENT THE SELECTED PRS DETRIMENT CATEGORY FROM Q5c
You mentioned that you have experienced the following issue in the last 6 months. [ADD FOLLOWING TEXT IF RESPONDENT EXPERIENCED ISSUE 2+ TIMES AT Q5b): You experienced this issue on more than one occasion in the last 6 months, so please think about the experience you consider to be most annoying at the time it happened.]

Q6a   Please describe in detail the problem or issue you experienced when using that premium rate payment method in the last 6 months? **TYPE IN**

Q6b.   In total, approximately how much money were you charged as a result of this particular issue? This is the amount you were charged in total before any refunds. Don't worry if you cannot remember exactly - an approximate estimate is fine.

CODE BELOW

Nothing.. 0
£0 - £3.. 1
£3.01 - £5.. 2
£5.01 - £10 3
£10.01 - £20 4
£20.01 - £50.. 5
Over £50 6
Can't remember 7

Q6c.   Who do you blame for this issue? **CODE ALL THAT APPLY**

Your phone provider 1
The company that was behind the service that you paid for 2
Yourself 3
Other (specify).. 4
No-one 5
Don't know 6

Q7a. Did you make contact with any organisations as a result of this issue? This might include by email, letter, web form or phone call etc. **CODE BELOW**

Yes.. 1   CONTINUE
No.. 2   SKIP TO Q10
Can't remember 3   SKIP TO Q10

ASK Qs7b-9 IF CODE 1 AT Q7a (CONTACT)
Q7b. In total, how many times did you make contact with any organisations (e.g. by email, letter, web form or phone call etc.)?

As an example, if you contacted your phone provider twice (once by phone, once by email) and Ofcom once by phone then this would count as three contacts **CODE BELOW**

Just once 1
Twice... 2
Three times 3
Four times 4
Five times 5
Six times 6
Seven times 7
Eight times 8
Nine times 9
Ten or more times.. 10
Can't remember 11

Q7c. You mentioned that you had contact with organisations (ANSWER FROM Q7b). Please could you explain more about the order in which you had contact with these organisations (e.g. by email, letter, web form or phone call etc.) as a result of this issue? . Please tick which organisation you contacted first, second, third and so on
SHOW NUMBER OF COLUMNS AS APPROPRIATE FROM Q7b

	1ST CONTACT	2ND CONTACT	3RD CONTACT	4TH CONTACT	5TH CONTACT
Your mobile phone provider	1	1	1	1	1
Your landline phone provider	2	2	2	2	2
The company that was behind the service you paid for	3	3	3	3	3
Ofcom	4	4	4	4	4
PhonepayPlus	5	5	5	5	5
Consumer Advice Forum (e.g.Citizen's Advice, GetSafeOnline, Which?)	6	6	6	6	6
Other (specify)	7	7	7	7	7
Can't remember name	8	8	8	8	8

ASK ALL WHO MADE CONTACT WITH THEIR MOBILE PHONE PROVIDER AT Q7c

Q7d.   You said you contacted your mobile phone provider, which mobile phone provider did you contact? **CODE BELOW**

CODE ALL THAT APPLY

3 1
O2... 2
Orange 3
T Mobile 4
Everything Everywhere 5
Vodafone 6
Virgin Mobile 7
Giff Gaff 8
Tesco 9
Other (specify).. 10

ASK ALL WHO MADE CONTACT WITH THEIR LANDLINE PHONE PROVIDER AT Q7c

Q7e.   You said you contacted your landline phone provider, which landline phone provider did you contact? **CODE BELOW**

CODE ALL THAT APPLY

BT... 1
Everything Everywhere 2
Virgin Media 3
Sky   4
Talk Talk/Carphone Warehouse 5
Plusnet 6
Other (specify)... 7

ASK ALL WHO MAKE CONTACT WITH THEIR MOBILE PROVIDER AT Q7C

Q7f   And which of the following methods of contact did you use to get in touch with your mobile phone provider? **CODE BELOW**

CODE ALL THAT APPLY

Phone 1
Email 2
Completing a form on a webpage 3
Letter 4
In person.. 5
Online chat/messaging (e.g.on a mobile operators website)........ 6
Providers social messaging page- Facebook, Twitter etc............. 7
Other (specify)... 8
Can't remember 9

ASK ALL WHO MAKE CONTACT WITH THEIR LANDLINE PROVIDER AT Q7C

Q7g   And which of the following methods of contact did you use to get in touch with your landline provider? **CODE BELOW**

CODE ALL THAT APPLY

Phone 1
Email 2
Completing a form on a webpage 3
Letter 4
In person... 5
Online chat/messaging (e.g.on a provider's website) 6
Providers social messaging page- Facebook, Twitter etc............. 7
Other (specify)... 8
Can't remember 9

Q8a.   What were you hoping to achieve as a result of your contact with all the organisations you dealt with? **CODE ALL THAT APPLY**

Find out why you had been charged / what it was.................... 1
To stop this sort of thing happening again to you 2
To get a refund 3
To make a complaint 4
To raise the issue and help avoid it happening to others
in the future 5
Other (specify)... 6

Q8b.   How satisfied were you with the outcome of your contact?

Very satisfied 1
Fairly satisfied 2
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied...................................... 3
Fairly dissatisfied... 4
Very dissatisfied 5
Too early to say – outcome still not known............................ 6

Q9.   Did you make a complaint as a result of your contact with all the organisations you dealt with? **CODE ALL THAT APPLY**

Yes... 1
No.. 2

ASK Q10 IF CODE 2 AT Q7a (NO CONTACT)

Q10. Which of the following reasons explains why you didn't contact any organisations as a result of this issue? **CODE ALL THAT APPLY**

It would have been too much hassle 1
You felt embarrassed 2
You didn't think it would do any good 3
You didn't know who to contact 4
It wasn't enough money to justify making contact.................. 5
You were going to but forgot about it.................................. 6
You were worried you'd spend more money trying to call them.... 7
Other (specify)... 8
Don't know 9

ASK Q11 IF MADE CONTACT BUT NO COMPLAINT I.E. CODE 1 AT Q7A BUT <u>NOT</u> CODE 1 AT Q9b

Q11. Why did you not make a complaint? **CODE ALL THAT APPLY**

It would have been too much hassle 1
It wasn't serious enough to warrant a complaint..................... 2
You didn't think it would do any good 3
You didn't know who to complain to 4
It wasn't enough money to justify a complaint 5
You were going to but forgot about it.................................. 6
Other (specify)... 7
Don't know 8

ASK OF ALL WHO EXPERIENCED DETRIMENT (IF 1+ AT ANY OF Q5a A-H CODED)

Q11b. Regardless of whether you made a complaint or contacted anyone as a result of this issue, did you do anything else about it? **CODE ALL THAT APPLY**

Talked about it on social media sites 1
Talked about it on consumer forums e.g. phone network, financial specialists (e.g. Money Saving Expert), social forums .e.g
Mumsnet 2
Contacted the media 3
Complained about it to friends.. 4
Made sure others in my family were aware to be careful in future. 5
Did some investigating into payment methods
of this nature 6
Other (specify)... 7
Don't know 8

PRS COMPLAINT

THIS SECTION TO BE ASKED OF ALL PRS COMPLAINANTS (CODE 1 AT Q9)

You mentioned that you made a complaint as a result of this issue. You will now be asked a number of questions about your complaint.

Q12.   Who did you complain to?

CODE ALL THAT APPLY

Your mobile phone provider 1
Your landline phone provider.. 2
The company that was behind the service you were charged for ... 3
Ofcom 4
PhonepayPlus 5
Consumer Advice Forum (e.g.Citizen's Advice, GetSafeOnline,
Which?) 6
Other (specify).. 7
Can't remember 8

Q13.   And how did you make that complaint?

SHOW FOLLOWING TEXT IF MORE THAN ONE PROVIDER CODED AT Q12:

IF YOU COMPLAINED TO MORE THAN ONE ORGANISATION, PLEASE THINK OF THE ORGANISATION WHERE YOU CONSIDER YOUR MAIN COMPLAINT WAS MADE

CODE ALL THAT APPLY

Phone 1
Email 2
Completing a form on a webpage 3
Letter 4
In person.. 5
Online chat/messaging (e.g.on a mobile operators website)........ 6
Organisation's social messaging page- Facebook, Twitter etc....... 7
Other (specify).. 8
Can't remember 9

Q14.   And how would you have preferred to have made your complaint (assuming all options were available to you)?

CODE ONE ONLY

Phone 1
Email 2
Completing a form on a webpage 3
Letter 4
In person.. 5
Online chat/messageing (e.g.on a mobile operators website) 6
Organisation's social messaging page- Facebook, Twitter etc....... 7
Other (specify)... 8

PRS DETRIMENT OUTCOME

THIS SECTION TO BE ASKED OF ALL PRS DETRIMENT & WHO MADE CONTACT AT Q7A (CODE 1)

Q14b. What was the final outcome of any contacts you had? **CODE ALL THAT APPLY**

Found out why I had been charged 1
Obtained a refund... 2
Felt confident action was being taken against the parties
 involved 3
Other (specify).. 4
Don't know/too early to tell.. 5

ASK Q14c IF CODE 2 AT Q14b
Q14c. Who did you obtain the refund from? **SINGLE CODE**

Your phone provider 1
The company that was behind the service you were charged for ... 2
Other (specify).. 3
It was not clear 4
Can't remember 5

Q14d. How satisfied were you with the ultimate outcome of any contacts you had?

Very satisfied 1
Fairly satisfied 2
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied...................................... 3
Fairly dissatisfied.. 4
Very dissatisfied 5
Too early to say – outcome still not known........................... 6

ASK ALL PRS COMPLAINANTS (CODE 1 AT Q9)
Q15. How satisfied were you with the way in which your complaint was handled?

Very satisfied 1
Fairly satisfied 2
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied...................................... 3
Fairly dissatisfied.. 4
Very dissatisfied 5
Too early to say – outcome still not known........................... 6

PRS FAMILY PROTECTION

SECTION ASKED IF HAVE CHILDREN AGED 6-15 AT S3b who have mobiles at S3c, apart from Q16b(ii) which was asked of ALL

You mentioned earlier that you have children who have their own mobile phone…

Q16a. Which of the following are things you worry about with your children having a mobile phone? **CODE ALL THAT APPLY**

ASK Q16b IF MORE THAN TWO FACTORS CODED AT Q16a
Q16b   Which are your top two concerns? CODE TWO ANSWERS

Having high bills 1
Unexpected charges on their bills 2
Being able to access inappropriate content 3
Bullying on the phone.. 4
Using social media sites 5
Receiving messages or emails from people they don't know 6
Downloading or accessing services paid for using premium rate
payment methods(e.g.ring tones,
games, quizzes, voting on TV shows).................................... 7
In-app purchases on smart phones...................................... 8
Other (specify)... 9
I have no real concerns... 10

NO Q16C

Q16d. Please look at the list below and indicate whether, to the best of you knowledge, either your children or any other relatives have experienced any of the the issues on this list when using these types of premium rate payment methods in the last six months, If they have not experienced these issues please select 'I have not experienced any issues'.. Please look at the list below and say whether this has occurred to:
- *(ONLY ASK IF HAVE CHILDREN AGED 6-15 AT S3b and a phone at Q3c)* Your children where you were involved in helping resolve the issue
- *(ALL)* Any of your relatives (excluding children) where you were involved in resolving the issue

		Children	Other relatives
A	They **received chargeable texts** from a third party on their mobile phone even though they didn't recall signing up to receive these texts (each text might cost approximately £1.50)		
B	They called a **premium phone line (e.g.09, 118 or 0871)** but don't feel it was made clear what the call costs would be (the calls would typically cost between £0.62 and £1.65 per minute from a landline)		
C	They had been **charged to their phone for viewing (not downloading) pages on an Internet site** without knowing this would happen		
D	Billed for something within an application and not aware that they would be charged for this e.g. food for an animal in a child's game, extra equipment or levels in a game		
E	Agreed to the premium rate service but billed more than expected		
F	Agreed to the premium rate service but thought it was a one off charge and was billed for a regular subscription service		
G	Entered a premium rate service competition and discovered later on that the chances of winning were much lower than it originally appeared		
H	Received some follow up marketing e.g. advertising texts without knowing they had agreed to this		
I	(Children/they) accessed & were billed for inappropriate adult content		
J	Other problems or issues with the way I was charged for a premium rate service (please specify)		
K	No problems experienced		
L	I am not sure		

ASK IF HAVE CHILDREN AGED 6-15 AT S3b AND A PHONE AT Q3c)

Q17 What steps, if any, have you taken to help ensure your children don't experience any issues with premium rate payment methods when using phones? **TYPE IN**

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ASK IF HAVE CHILDREN AGED 6-15 AT S3b AND A PHONE AT Q3c)

Q18. And how important an issue would you say protecting your children from each of the following is to you?

	Very Important	Fairly Important	Not very Important	Not at all Important
Ending up with overly high mobile bills	1	2	3	4
Having unexpected items on their mobile bill (e.g.for services charging using premium rate payment methods)	1	2	3	4
Accessing inappropriate content online or on their phone	1	2	3	4

ASK Q19a-b IF CHILDREN HAVE MOBILE PHONE (CODE 1 AT S3c)

Q19a. You mentioned earlier that you have children who have their own mobile phone. Which of the following steps, if any, have you taken to avoid being charged for using premium rate payment methods inadvertently?

Blocked use of premium rate numbers through the phone network operator..1
Blocked the use of downloads from app stores such as Apple, Google Play, Amazon...2
Actively monitor the calls on an on-going basis.......................3
Spoken to them about using services which charge in this way...4
Restricted using the phone except at certain times of the day 5
Blocked the phone's permissions 6
Other (specify)..7
Nothing...8

Q19b. Which of the following information sources, if any, have you used to find out more about any issues around your children using premium rate payment methods and how to protect your family from experiencing these issues?

Family members (e.g. your parents, your children)................... 1
Other people I know e.g. friends, colleagues, other parents........ 2
General searching on the Internet...................................... 3
News/media.. 4
Specific finance advice websites e.g. Money Saving Expert 5
Other online forums (e.g. Mumsnet,, The Scream,
Digital Spy) 6
Social media e.g. Twitter, Facebook.................................. 7
Regulators e.g. Ofcom, PhonepayPlus................................. 8
Phone companies (websites, contacting them) 9
Phone company online consumer forums (where you can get advice
from other network users) 10
Consumer groups (e.g. Citizen's Advice Bureau, GetsafeOnline,
Which?) 11
The children's school 12
Other (specify)... 13
I have not tried to find out about these issues...................... 14

ASK ALL USING TWO OR MORE INFORMATION SOURCES AT Q19B.

Q19c. And which of the following information sources, if any, have you found most useful when finding out more about these issues?

Family members (e.g. your parents, your children)................... 1
Other people I know e.g. friends, colleagues, other parents........ 2
General searching on the Internet...................................... 3
News/media.. 4
Specific finance advice websites e.g. Money Saving Expert 5
Other online forums (e.g. Mumsnet,, The Scream,
Digital Spy) 6
Social media e.g. Twitter, Facebook.................................. 7
Regulators e.g. Ofcom, PhonepayPlus................................. 8
Phone companies (websites, contacting them) 9
Phone company online consumer forums (where you can get advice
from other network users) 10
Consumer groups (e.g. Citizen's Advice Bureau, GetsafeOnline,
Which?) 11
The children's school 12
Other (specify)... 13
I have not tried to find out about these issues...................... 14

EXPERIENCE OF MICROPAYMENT

THIS SECTION TO BE ASKED OF ALL MICROPAYMENT USERS (Q1/1 at any of F-J)

You indicated that you had purchased digital or virtual goods and services using the following payment methods in the last 6 months: (SHOW PAYMENT METHODS F, G, H, I, J IF CODED 1 AT Q1).

You will now be asked some questions about your experience of these payment methods in the last 6 months.

Q20. Firstly, how many times in total would you say you have used these types of payment methods in the last 6 months?

Once... 1
Twice... 2
3 – 5 times... 3
6 - 10 times.. 4
11 - 20 times 5
More than 20 times.. 6
Not sure... 7

Q21. And how would you rate your overall experience of using these types of payment methods over the last 6 months?

Very positive 1
Fairly positive... 2
Neither positive nor negative.. 3
Fairly negative 4
Very negative 5

Q22. Please say how much you agree or disagree with the statements below?

	Agree strongly	Agree slightly	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree slightly	Disagree strongly
These types of payment methods offer a convenient way of paying for services	1	2	3	4	5
It is clear when using these payment methods for services how much you will be charged	1	2	3	4	5
Some of these payment methods are deliberately misleading	1	2	3	4	5
The way these payment methods work can be confusing	1	2	3	4	5

Q23.   Please look at the list below and indicate whether you have experienced any of the issues on this list when using these types of payment methods in the last six months. If you have not experienced these issues please select 'I have not experienced any issues'.

ONLY ASK FOR AREAS WHERE EXPERIENCED PROBLEMS
Q23b.   For each of the following can you type in the number of times you have experienced each problem or issue in the last 6 months (please note that if you received multiple charges due to the same issue then this only counts as 1 time). DON'T ALLOW RESPONDEDENT TO CODE ZERO

		Q23a Whether experienced	Q2b. Number of times
A	You werebilled for something within an application and not aware that you would be charged for this e.g. food for an animal in a child's game, extra equipment or levels in an game		
B	You agreed to the purchase but were billed more than expected		
C	You agreed to the purchase but thought it was a one off charge and were billed for a regular subscription service		
D	You received some follow up marketing e.g. advertising texts without knowing you had agreed to this		
E	Accessed and was billed for inappropriate adult content		
F	Other problems or issues with the purchase(please specify)		
G	I have not experienced any issues		
H	I am not sure		

Q24   Please describe in detail the problems or issues you experienced when using these types of payment methods in the last 6 months? **TYPE IN**

Q25a. Did you make contact with any organisations as a result of these issues? This might include by email, letter, web form or phone call etc. **CODE BELOW**

Yes 1   CONTINUE
No 2   SKIP TO Q26
Can't remember 3   SKIP TO Q27

ASK Qs25b-c IF CODE 1 AT Q25a (CONTACT)
Q25b. What were you hoping to achieve as a result of your contact? **CODE ALL THAT APPLY**

Find out why you had been charged / what it was 1
To stop this sort of thing happening again to you 2
To get a refund 3
To make a complaint 4
To raise the issue and help avoid it happening to others
in the future 5
Other (specify) 6

Q25c. How satisfied were you with the outcome of your contact?

Very satisfied 1
Fairly satisfied 2
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied 3
Fairly dissatisfied 4
Very dissatisfied 5
Too early to say – outcome still not known 6

ASK Q26 IF CODE 2 AT Q25a (NO CONTACT)
Q26. Which of the following reasons explains why you didn't contact any organisations as a result of this issue? **CODE ALL THAT APPLY**

It would have been too much hassle 1
You felt embarrassed 2
You didn't think it would do any good 3
You didn't know who to contact 4
It wasn't enough money to justify making contact 5
You were going to but forgot about it 6
You were worried you'd spend more money trying to call them 7
Other (specify) 8
Don't know 9

PROFILE

THIS SECTION TO BE ASKED OF ALL

Finally a few questions about your use of phones and technology.

Q27.   Which of the following devices do you have for your own use? **CODE ALL THAT APPLY**

Smartphone (that you can browse the internet and use apps on)... 1
Mobile phone (non Smartphone) 2
Tablet (such as the iPad or Kindle Fire) 3
Fixed line telephone at home 4
Computer/laptop.. 5
None of the above.. 6

ASK Q28 IF USE SMARTPHONE OR MOBILE PHONE AT Q (CODES 1-2)
Q28.   Thinking about [TEXT AS APPROPRIATE: your Smartphone / your mobile phone /the Smartphone or mobile phone you use most often to make calls / send texts], is this phone on a contract or is Pay As You Go? **CODE ONE ONLY**

Contract 1
PAYG 2

ASK ALL
Q29.   How confident would you say you are with technology nowadays? Would you say you are…**CODE ONE**

Very confident about technology 1
Fairly confident about technology 2
Not very confident about technology.................................... 3
Not at all confident about technology 4

Q30. Which of the following, if any, applies to you?

CODE ALL THAT APPLIES

You are deaf or have partial hearing loss.............................. 1
You they are blind or have partial sight loss 2
You they have a mobility difficulty/disability 3
You they have a learning difficulty/disability........................ 4
You they have had a mental health condition in the last
12 months 5
You they have had a health condition in the last 12 months
which has impeded you/their day to day activities 6
You they are a registered disabled person 7
None of the above.. 8
(DO NOT READ OUT) Prefer not to say 9

Q30. In principle, would you be willing to take part in a short telephone interview to discuss your experience in more detail. If chosen, you would receive a payment of £20 as a thank you for your time. The research would be carried out by Jigsaw Research on behalf of PhonepayPlus (PhonepayPlus is the organisation that regulates phone-paid services in the UK). **SINGLE CODE**

Yes 1
Please provide your telephone number:

_____

No 2

A.2. PhonepayPlus Customer Research Questionnaire

PHONEPAYPLUS COMPLAINT RESEARCH

QUESTIONNAIRE FINAL

101037

SCREENER / QUOTAS

Good morning/afternoon/evening, my name is <<INSERT FIRST NAME>> and I'm calling from an independent market research company called Critical Research. You recently contacted PhonepayPlus to make an enquiry / complaint. We are conducting a research exercise on behalf of PhonepayPlus. They would like to understand in more detail the factors that lead to people making a complaint and to help identify where improvements can be made to reduce these instances in the future. Is it okay to ask you a few quick questions?

ALL INFORMATION ON THE SAMPLE WILL BE LINKED TO THE DATA FROM THIS SURVEY

S1.   Do you recall contacting PhonepayPlus?
        SINGLE CODE

        Yes   1   CONTINUE
        No   2   CLOSE

        RECRUIT TO QUOTA
S2.   Record gender (DO NOT ASK)
        SINGLE CODE

        Male   1
        Female   2

        RECRUIT TO QUOTA

S3a.   How old are you?

        RECRUIT TO QUOTA

S3b.   How many children aged under 16 years, if any, that you are the parent or guardian of do you have (if you have no children in that age group, please put zero)

Age	Number per age group
0-5 years old	
6-10 years old	
11-15 years old	

ASK S3c IF HAVE ANY CHILDREN AGED 6-15 AT S3b

S3c.   Do any of your children have their own mobile phone even if the phone is on a contract under your name?

Yes...1
No..2

S4.   Whereabouts in the UK do you live?

<u>England</u>
North West   1
North East   2
Yorkshire/Humberside   3
West Midlands   4
East Midlands   5
East of England   6
Greater London   7
South East (exc. Greater London)   8
South West   9
Scotland   10
Wales   11
Northern Ireland   `   12

S5.   Which of the following best describes your employment status?
SINGLE CODE

Employed full time   1
Employed part time   2
Self-employed   3
Housewife/husband   4
Retired   5
Student (i.e. school, university etc)   6
Apprentice/trainee   7
Unemployed   8

S6. Which of the following best describes the occupation status of your household's chief income earner?

Higher managerial/professional/administrative (e.g. Chief executive, senior civil servant, surgeon)	1
Intermediate managerial/professional/administrative (e.g. middle management, bank manager, teacher)	2
Supervisory/clerical/junior managerial/professional/ administrative (e.g. shop floor supervisor, bank clerk, sales person)	3
Skilled manual worker (e.g. electrician, carpenter)	4
Semi-skilled and unskilled manual worker (e.g. assembly line worker, refuse collector, messenger)	5
Casual labourer, pensioner, student, unemployed (e.g. pensioner without private pensions and anyone living on basic benefits)	6

S7. What is the highest level of educational qualification you have achieved ?
Select one response only

No qualifications
Any GCSEs
One to four GCSEs (grade A*-C)
Five or more GCSEs (grade A*-C)
Any A Level or equivalent
One or more A level or equivalent (grades A-C)
Vocational qualification (e.g. BTEC, HND, NVQ, etc.)
University degree
Higher degree
Other (specify) [OE CHA]
Don't know

PRS / MICROPAYMENT USAGE

ASK ALL

Q1.   We'd like you to think about buying digital or virtual goods and services. This might include things like a game, an app, a music track or an information or entertainment service that you call from your phone or receive in a text.. Please don't include physical products that would be delivered to you or that you would pick up from the seller.

Please only think about purchases that typically cost up to £10 in a single transaction, but may go above depending on the length of a call or session.

You will be shown a number of WAYS TO PAY for digital goods and services.. Please indicate whether you have used this payment method:

- In the last 6 months

- in the last 7-12 months (but not in the last 6 months)

- Not used/experienced in the last 12 months

SINGLE CODE FOR EACH PAYMENT METHOD – RANDOMISE

EACH PAYMENT METHOD TO BE SHOWN ON A SEPARATE SCREEN

		In the last 6 months	In the last 7-12 months	Not in last 12 months	Can't remember
A	Paid for something by **texting from your mobile phone**, with the charge appearing on your phone bill or deducted from your pay as you go allowance *This might be voting by text on a reality show, giving to a charity using text or various other services*	1	2	3	4
B	**Entering your mobile number on the web**, and then getting text messages that bill you to your phone *This might include instances when you don't think you did enter your mobile number on the web but received these chargeable text messages anyway*	1	2	3	4
C	**Called a premium phone line** (such as directory enquiries (a 118 number) an 09 number or an 0871 number). *This could be for a range of things such as voting on a TV show, donating to a charity through the cost of the call, or accessing chat or pre-recorded messages (e.g. quizzes, horoscopes or weather).* *These calls can be made from your fixed or mobile line.*	1	2	3	4
D	**Paid for something on your 'mobile operator's own portal' e.g. Vodafone Live, Orange World, O2 Active** i.e. with the charge appearing on your phone bill or pay as you go allowance (NOT on a credit card or deducted from iTunes or other). *This is a payment for a service or download on your mobile operator's mobile web homepage or menu*	1	2	3	4
E	**Paid for something on the mobile internet through a screen branded "Payforit",** with the charge appearing on your phone bill or pay as you go (NOT on a credit card or deducted from iTunes or other). *Payforit is a payment service that lets you pay through your phone bill on mobile internet site. You might have seen the name Payforit on the payment screen, and your operator logo might have been there too*	1	2	3	4

EXPERIENCE OF PRS

THIS SECTION TO BE ASKED OF ALL PRS USERS (*CODE 1 AT ANY OF: A, B, C, D, E)*

I'd like you to think about the payment methods I just read out and that you have used in the last 6 months. I will ask some questions about your experience of accessing these specific premium rate payment methods in the last 6 months.

Q2.   Firstly, how many times in total would you say you have used these types of payment methods in the last 6 months?

Once.. 1
Twice... 2
3 – 5 times 3
6 - 10 times.. 4
11 - 20 times 5
More than 20 times.. 6
Not sure... 7

Q3.   And how would you rate your overall experience of using these types of premium rate payment methods over the last 6 months?

Very positive 1
Fairly positive.. 2
Neither positive nor negative...................................... 3
Fairly negative 4
Very negative 5

Q4.   Please say how much you agree or disagree with the statements below?

	Agree strongly	Agree slightly	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree slightly	Disagree strongly
These types of payment methods offer a convenient way of paying for services	1	2	3	4	5
It is clear when using these payment methods for services how much you will be charged	1	2	3	4	5
Some of these payment methods are deliberately misleading	1	2	3	4	5
The way these payment methods work can be confusing	1	2	3	4	5

Q5.	Which of the following information sources, if any, have you used to find out more about potential issues you need to be aware of when using these types of payment methods?

Family members (e.g. your parents, your children)................... 1
Other people I know e.g. friends, colleagues, other parents........ 2
General searching on the Internet..................................... 3
News/media.. 4
Specific finance advice websites e.g. Money Saving Expert 5
Other online forums (e.g. Mumsnet,, The Scream,
Digital Spy) 6
Social media e.g. Twitter, Facebook 7
Regulators e.g. Ofcom, PhonepayPlus................................. 8
Phone companies (websites, contacting them) 9
Phone company online consumer forums (where you can get advice
from other network users) 10
Consumer groups (e.g. Citizen's Advice Bureau, GetsafeOnline,
Which?) 11
Other (specify).. 12
I have not tried to find out about these issues....................... 13

PHONEPAYPLUS COMPLAINT

THIS SECTION TO BE ASKED OF ALL
I'd now like to discuss your enquiry or complaint with PhonepayPlus in detail (If complained more than once to PhonepayPlus then select last occasion)

Q6a   Please describe in detail the problem or issue you experienced with the premium rate payment method which led to you contacting PhonepayPlus?
PROBE FULLY – AIM TO GET CHRONOLOGICAL STORY STARTING FROM INCIDENCE OCCURING TO END

Q6b.   Who experienced the problem or issue? i.e. were you calling on behalf of you or someone else?
CODE BELOW – MULTICODE (BUT LIKELY TO BE SINGLE CODE)

I experienced the issue 1
One of my children experienced the issue (ONLY INCLUDE IF
HAVE CHILDREN) 2
Another family member experienced the issue 3
Someone else experienced the issue 4

Q6c.   In total, approximately how much money were you charged as a result of this particular issue? This is the amount you were charged in total before any refunds. Don't worry if you cannot remember exactly an approximate estimate of what you can remember is fine.

CODE BELOW – PROBE IF NECESSARY

Nothing... 0
£0.01 - £3.. 1
£3.01 - £5.. 2
£5.01 - £10 5
£10.01 - £20 6
£20.01 - £50 7
Over £50 8
Can't remember 9

Q6d. Who do you blame for this issue? **CODE ALL THAT APPLY – READ OUT ONLY IF NECESSARY**

Your phone provider 1
The company that was behind the service 2
Yourself 3
Other (specify)... 4
No-one 5
Don't know 6

NO Q7A

Q7b. In total, how many times did you make contact with any organisations (e.g. by email, letter, web form or phone call etc.)?

As an example, if you contacted your phone provider twice (one phone, once email) and PhonepayPlus once by phone then this would count as three contacts **CODE BELOW**

Just once 1
Twice... 2
Three times 3
Four times.. 4
Five times 5
Six times.. 6
Seven times 7
Eight times 8
Nine times.. 9
Ten or more times... 10
Can't remember 11

Q7c. You mentioned that you had contact with organisations (ANSWER FROM Q7b). Please could you explain more about the order in which you had contact with these organisations (e.g. by email, letter, web form or phone call etc.) as a result of this issue? . Please tick which organisation you contacted first, second, third and so on
SHOW NUMBER OF COLUMNS AS APPROPRIATE FROM Q7b – ENSURE PHONEPAYPLUS CODED AT ONE CON TACT POINT – PROBE IF NECESSARY

	1ST CONTACT	2ND CONTACT	3RD CONTACT	4TH CONTACT	5TH CONTACT
Your mobile phone provider	1	1	1	1	1
Your landline phone provider	2	2	2	2	2
The company that was behind the service you paid for	3	3	3	3	3
Ofcom	4	4	4	4	4
PhonepayPlus	5	5	5	5	5
Consumer Advice Forum (e.g.Citizen's Advice, GetSafeOnline, Which?)	6	6	6	6	6
Other (specify)	7	7	7	7	7
Can't remember name	8	8	8	8	8

ASK ALL WHO MADE CONTACT WITH THEIR MOBILE PHONE PROVIDER AT Q7c

Q7d.   You said you contacted your mobile phone provider, which mobile phone provider did you contact? **CODE BELOW**

CODE ALL THAT APPLY

3 1
O2.. 2
Orange 3
T Mobile 4
Everything Everywhere 5
Vodafone 6
Virgin Mobile 7
Giff Gaff 8
Tesco.. 9
Other (specify)... 10

ASK ALL WHO MADE CONTACT WITH THEIR LANDLINE PHONE PROVIDER AT Q7c

Q7e.   You said you contacted your landline phone provider, which landline phone provider did you contact? **CODE BELOW**

CODE ALL THAT APPLY

BT... 1
Everything Everywhere 2
Virgin Media.. 3
Sky   4
Talk Talk/Carphone Warehouse 5
Plusnet... 6
Other (specify)... 7

ASK ALL WHO MAKE CONTACT WITH THEIR MOBILE PROVIDER AT Q7C

Q7e   And which of the following methods of contact did you use to get in touch with your mobile phone provider? **CODE BELOW**

CODE ALL THAT APPLY

Phone 1
Email 2
Completing a form on a webpage 3
Letter 4
In person.. 5
Online chat/messageing (e.g.on a mobile operators website) 6
Providers social messaging page- Facebook, Twitter etc............. 7
Other (specify)... 8
Can't remember 9

ASK ALL WHO MAKE CONTACT WITH THEIR LANDLINE PROVIDER AT Q7C

Q7f   And which of the following methods of contact did you use to get in touch with your mobile phone provider? **CODE BELOW**

CODE ALL THAT APPLY

Phone 1
Email 2
Completing a form on a webpage 3
Letter 4
In person.. 5
Online chat/messageing (e.g.on the provider's website) 6
Providers social messaging page- Facebook, Twitter etc............. 7
Other (specify)... 8
Can't remember 9

Q8.   What were you hoping to achieve as a result of your contact with all the organisations you dealt with? **CODE ALL THAT APPLY – PROBE IF NECESSARY**

Find out why you had been charged / what it was 1
To stop this sort of thing happening again to you 2
To get a refund 3
To make a complaint 4
To raise the issue and help avoid it happening to others
in the future 5
Other (specify)... 6

ASK Q9a IF CONTACTED MOBILE PHONE COMPANY (CODE 1 AT Q7c)

Q9a.   How satisfied were you with the way your mobile phone company handled your enquiry?

Very satisfied 1
Fairly satisfied 2
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.. 3
Fairly dissatisfied... 4
Very dissatisfied 5

Q9b   Why do you say that? **PROBE FULLY**

ASK Q10a IF CONTACTED LANDLINE PHONE COMPANY (CODE 2 AT Q7c)

Q10a. How satisfied were you with the way your landline phone company handled your enquiry?

Very satisfied 1
Fairly satisfied 2
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied... 3
Fairly dissatisfied... 4
Very dissatisfied 5

Q10b Why do you say that? **PROBE FULLY**

Q11. Over above the complaint you made, have you done anything else about it? **CODE ALL THAT APPLY – PROBE IF NECESSARY**

Talked about it on social media sites 1
Talked about it on consumer forums e.g. phone network, financial specialists (e.g. Money Saving Expert), social forums .e.g
Mumsnet 2
Contacted the media 3
Complained about it to friends.. 4
Made sure others in my family were aware to be careful in future. 5
 Did some investigating into services of this nature 6
Other (specify)... 7
Don't know 8

Q12. How did you find out about PhonepayPlus? – **PROBE IF NECESSARY**

CODE ALL THAT APPLY

Your phone provider gave you the details 1
Via a general search on the Internet 2
Via phone provider's website.. 3
Via an online forum 4
Ofcom 5
The Media 6
Citizens Advice Bureau 7
Trading Standards 8
GetsafeOnline.. 9
Childnet.. 10
Which? 11
Someone told me.. 12
Other (specify)... 13
Can't remember 14

Q13a. How did you make your initial enquiry or complaint with PhonepayPlus?

CODE ALL THAT APPLY – PROBE IF NECESSARY

By phone... 1
By completing a form on the PhonepayPlus website 2
Other (specify)... 3
Can't remember 4

IF NOT Q13a/1 – IF CODE 1 AT Q13a THEN AUTOMATICALLY CODE AS CODE 1 AT Q13b

Q13b. During your enquiry or complaint with PhonepayPlus did you get in touch by phone at any stage?

CODE ALL THAT APPLY

Yes.. 1
No 2
Can't remember 3

IF NOT Q13A/2 – IF CODE 2 AT Q13a THEN AUTOMATICALLY CODE AS CODE 1 AT Q13c

Q13c. During your enquiry or complaint with PhonepayPlus did you use their website any stage?

CODE ALL THAT APPLY

Yes.. 1
No 2
Can't remember 3

Q14. And how would you have preferred to have made your enquiry or complaint with PhonepayPlus (assuming all options were available to you)? – **PROBE IF NECESSARY**

CODE ONE ONLY

Phone 1
Email 2
Completing a form on a webpage 3
Letter 4
In person... 5
Online chat/messaging (e.g.on PhonePayPlus's website) 6
Organisation's social messaging page – Facebook, Twitter etc...... 7
Other (specify).. 8

Q15. How satisfied were you with the way in which your complaint was handled by PhonepayPlus?

CODE ONE ONLY

Very satisfied 1
Fairly satisfied 2
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied...................................... 3
Fairly dissatisfied... 4
Very dissatisfied 5
Too early to say – outcome still not known........................... 6

ASK ALL

Q16.   And how would you rate PhonepayPlus on the following aspects of their service?

	Very good	Good	Adequate	Poor	Very poor	Not applicable
(ONLY ASK IF CONTACTED PpP BY PHONE AT Q13A OR Q13B) The information provided by the person you spoke to	1	2	3	4	5	6
(ONLY ASK IF CONTACTED PpP BY PHONE AT Q13 A) The manner of the person you spoke to (i.e. being friendly and helpful)	1	2	3	4	5	6
(ONLY ASK IF CONTACTED PpP BY WEB AT Q13 A or Q13c) The ease of reporting your complaint on the website						
The clarity of the explanation around what you had to do next to resolve your problem	1	2	3	4	5	6
The clarity of any further correspondence you received from them as a result of your compaint						
The speed with which they resolved your issue	1	2	3	4	5	6
Taking your issue seriously						

PRS FAMILY PROTECTION

THIS SECTION TO BE ASKED IF HAVE CHILDREN AGED 6-15 AT S3b

ONLY ASK IF HAVE CHILDREN AGED 6-15 AT S3b who have mobiles at S3c

You mentioned earlier that you have children who have their own mobile phone…

Q16a. Which of the following are things you worry about with your children having a mobile phone? **CODE ALL THAT APPLY – READ OUT**

ASK Q16b IF MORE THAN TWO FACTORS CODED AT Q16a
Q16b   Which are your top two concerns? **- READ OUT -** CODE TWO ANSWERS

```
Having high bills ................................................................ 1
Unexpected charges on their bills ...................................... 2
Being able to access inappropriate content .......................... 3
Bullying on the phone..................................................... 4
Using social media sites ................................................. 5
Receiving messages or emails from people they don't know ........ 6
Downloading or accessing services paid for using premium rate
payment methods (e.g.ring tones,
games, quizzes, voting on TV shows)................................... 7
In-app purchases on smart phones..................................... 8
Other (specify)............................................................ 9
I have no real concerns ................................................. 10
```

ASK Q17-19b IF HAVE CHILDREN AGED 6-15 AT S3b AND HAVE A PHONE AT Q3c
Q17   What steps, if any, have you taken to help ensure your children don't experience any issues with premium rate payment methods when using phones? **TYPE IN**

ASK Q17-19b IF HAVE CHILDREN AGED 6-15 AT S3b AND HAVE A PHONE AT Q3c

Q18.   And how important an issue would you say protecting your children from each of the following is to you?

	Very Important	Fairly Important	Not very Important	Not at all Important
Ending up with overly high mobile bills	1	2	3	4
Having unexpected items on their mobile bill (e.g. for services charging using premium rate payment methods)	1	2	3	4
Accessing inappropriate content on a computer/tablet	1	2	3	4
Accessing inappropriate content on their phone	1	2	3	4

ASK Q19a-b IF CHILDREN HAVE MOBILE PHONE (CODE 1 AT S3c)

Q19a.   You mentioned earlier that you have children who have their own mobile phone. Which of the following steps, if any, have you taken to avoid being charged for using premium rate payment methods inadvertently?

Blocked use of premium rate numbers through the phone
network operator.. 1
Blocked the use of downloads from app stores such as Apple,
Google Play, Amazon... 2
Actively monitor the calls on an on-going basis........................ 3
Spoken to them about using services which charge
in this way.. 4
Restricted using the phone except at certain times of the day 5
Blocked the phone's permissions 6
Other (specify).. 7
Nothing... 8

Q19b. Which of the following information sources, if any, have you used to find out more about any issues around your children using premium rate payment methods and how to protect your family from experiencing these issues? **READ OUT – CODE ALL THAT APPLY**

Family members (e.g. your parents, your children)................... 1
Other people I know e.g. friends, colleagues, other parents........ 2
General searching on the Internet...................................... 3
News/media.. 4
Specific finance advice websites e.g. Money Saving Expert 5
Other online forums (e.g. Mumsnet,, The Scream,
Digital Spy) 6
Social media e.g. Twitter, Facebook................................... 7
Regulators e.g. Ofcom, PhonepayPlus.................................. 8
Phone companies (websites, contacting them) 9
Phone company online consumer forums (where you can get advice
from other network users) 10
Consumer groups (e.g. Citizen's Advice Bureau, GetsafeOnline,
Which?) 11
The children's school 12
Other (specify)... 13
I have not tried to find out about these issues...................... 14

ASK ALL USING TWO OR MORE INFORMATION SOURCES AT Q19B.

Q19c. And which of the following information sources, if any, have you found most useful when finding out more about these issues? **READ OUT ALL CODED AT Q19b – CODE ALL THAT APPLY**

Family members (e.g. your parents, your children)................... 1
Other people I know e.g. friends, colleagues, other parents........ 2
General searching on the Internet...................................... 3
News/media.. 4
Specific finance advice websites e.g. Money Saving Expert 5
Other online forums (e.g. Mumsnet,, The Scream,
Digital Spy) 6
Social media e.g. Twitter, Facebook................................... 7
Regulators e.g. Ofcom, PhonepayPlus.................................. 8
Phone companies (websites, contacting them) 9
Phone company online consumer forums (where you can get advice
from other network users) 10
Consumer groups (e.g. Citizen's Advice Bureau, GetsafeOnline,
Which?) 11
The children's school 12
Other (specify)... 13
I have not tried to find out about these issues...................... 14

PROFILE

THIS SECTION TO BE ASKED OF ALL
Finally a few questions about your use of phones and technology.

Q27.   Which of the following devices do you have for your own use? **CODE ALL THAT APPLY**

Smartphone (that you can browse the internet and use apps on)... 1
Mobile phone (non Smartphone) 2
Tablet (such as the iPad or Kindle Fire) 3
Fixed line telephone at home 4
Computer/laptop.. 5
None of the above.. 6

ASK Q28 IF USE SMARTPHONE OR MOBILE PHONE AT Q (CODES 1-2)
Q28.   Thinking about [TEXT AS APPROPRIATE: your Smartphone / your mobile phone /the Smartphone or mobile phone you use most often to make calls / send texts], is this phone on a contract or is Pay As You Go? **CODE ONE ONLY**

Contract 1
PAYG 2

ASK ALL
Q29.   How confident would you say you are with technology nowadays? Would you say you are…**CODE ONE**

Very confident about technology 1
Fairly confident about technology 2
Not very confident about technology................................... 3
Not at all confident about technology 4

Q30.   To help us better understand who is experiencing problems, which of the following, if any, applies to you/the person you contacted PhonepayPlus about?

CODE ALL THAT APPLIES

You/they are deaf or have partial hearing loss 1
You/they are blind or have partial sight loss.......................... 2
You/they have a mobility difficulty/disability 3
You/they have a learning difficulty/disability 4
You/they have had a mental health condition in the last
12 months 5
You/they have had a health condition in the last 12 months
which has impeded you/their day to day activities 6
You/they are a registered disabled person............................. 7
None of the above.. 8
(DO NOT READ OUT) Prefer not to say 9

A.3. Mystery Shopping Questionnaire

PHONEPAYPLUS MYSTERY SHOPPING RESEARCH

QUESTIONNAIRE

101037

All to contact phone company as first port of call

Ensure mix of:
- Complete ignorance (don't recognise charge) vs. recognise charge but much more expensive than thought vs. not clear I would receive follow up contact from PRS merchant
- Ask phone provider how can end these charges (where applicable)
- Follow-up question to phone company: want to find out name of PRS merchant so can contact them vs. want to make a complaint to the phone company vs. are there any regulators responsible for this (if so, who and contact details)

Scenario Type
TYPE BELOW

Date of PRS usage
TYPE BELOW

Q1.   Describe what happened when using the PRS
- Process you went through and how process deviated from scenario, if at all

Q2.   How was PRS evident?

Started receiving texts 1
Charge on phone bill 2
Other (specify)... 3

PHONE PROVIDER

Q3.   REASONS FOR CALL TO PHONE PROVIDER

MULTICODE

Complete ignorance i.e. don't recorgnise charge 1
Cost too much i.e. it wasn't clear I would be charged so much..... 2
Complaint to phone company 3
Wanted PRS merchant's details 4
Other (specify)... 5

Q3.   When contacting your phone company, please describe what you told them and what they said to you in detail?

Q4.   Please rate phone company on the following?

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor	Not applicable
Ease of getting through	1	2	3	4	5	6
Being helpful	1	2	3	4	5	6
Clearly providing advice on next steps	1	2	3	4	5	6
Putting you at ease	1	2	3	4	5	6

Q5.   Were you offered a refund?

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

AT Q5: IF REFUND PROVIDED, INTERVIEWER TO RECORD WHETHER FELT THIS WAS A GOODWILL GESTURE FROM PHONE COMPANY OR GENUINE REFUND DUE TO OBVIOUS MALPRACTICE

Q6.   Did they tell you the name of the PRS merchant that you'd used?

Yes - specify...1
No – no need because identity of Merchant obvious from
bill/texts etc..
No – phone company didn't tell me and merchant name not
obvious..2

Q7.   Did they recommend you contact any other organisations to progress your query?

Yes - specify...1
No..2

PRS MERCHANT

Q8.   REASONS FOR CALL TO PRS MERCHANT

MULTICODE

Wanted to end contact from them 1
Make a complaint...2
Other (specify)..3

Q9.   When contacting PRS merchant, please describe what you told them and what they said to you in detail?

Q10.   Please rate PRS merchant on the following?

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor	Not applicable
Ease of getting through	1	2	3	4	5	6
Being helpful	1	2	3	4	5	6
Clearly providing advice on next steps	1	2	3	4	5	6
Putting you at ease	1	2	3	4	5	6

Q11.   Were you offered a refund?

Yes - specify.. 1
No... 2

Q12.   Did they recommend you contact any other organisations to progress your query?

Yes - specify.. 1
No... 2

PHONEPAY PLUS

Q13.   REASONS FOR CALL TO PHONEPAYPLUS
        MULTICODE

Just through Phoepay Plus should know – so can do something
about it 1
Make a complaint.. 2
Other (specify)... 3

Q14.   When contacting PhonepayPlus, please describe what you told them and what they said to you in detail?

Q15.   Please rate PhonepayPlus on the following?

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor	Not applicable
Ease of getting through	1	2	3	4	5	6
Being helpful	1	2	3	4	5	6
Clearly providing advice on next steps	1	2	3	4	5	6
Putting you at ease	1	2	3	4	5	6

REPEAT SECTIONS WHERE RELEVANT E.G. IF CONTACT PHONE PROVIDER, THEN PHONEPAY PLUS AND RECOMMENDED TO RE-CONTACT PHONE PROVIDER, THEN COMPLETE PHONE PROVIDER SECTION TWICE

A.4. Discussion Guide for depth interviews with general PRS users

Consumer Journey Research

PRS User Guide

30 minute telephone depth interviews	
Primary Objectives:	
• Map out the consumer journey that the respondent went through • Probe fully around the issue of PRS detriment • Explore barriers (personal or encountered) to complaining at all stages of the journey • Understand what motivates them to enquire or complain or not, why they choose the option they have. • Understand how adult consumers and parents of children with phones learn about and avoid unwanted billing via PRS (& triggers of interest)	

2 mins	**Introduction**
	
	Moderator introductions:
	
	• PhonepayPlus, which regulates certain telephone services in the UK, is doing some research looking into what people do when they experience issues with premium rate methods of payment, including the journey consumers go through when making a complaint.
	• No right or wrong answers, not a test, recording, confidential
	
	General background/warm up:
	
	  o Name
	  o How do you feel about your mobile? What do you typically use it for?
	    ▪ Is it contract or PAYG
	  o Do you have children? What age?
	  o Do your children have a mobile phone? – contract or PAYG
	    ▪ What do they typically use it for?

13 mins	**Use of Premium Rate & Other Micropayment Methods of payment**
	
	• **REVIEW USE OF EACH OF THE FOLLOWING METHODS OF PAYMENT:**
	  o Paid for something by texting from your mobile phone, with the charge appearing on your phone bill or deducted from your pay as you go allowance *(This might be voting by text on a reality show, giving to a charity using text or various other methods of payment)*
	  o Entering your mobile number on the web, and then getting text messages that bill you to your phone (*This might include instances when you don't think you did enter your mobile number on the web but received these chargeable text messages anyway*)
	  o Called a premium phone line (such as directory enquiries (a 118 number) an 09 number or an 0871 number). *This could be for a range of things such as voting on a TV show, donating to a charity through the cost of the call, or accessing chat or pre-recorded messages (e.g. quizzes, horoscopes or weather). These calls can be made from your fixed or mobile line.*

- o Paid for something on your 'mobile operator's own portal' e.g. Vodafone Live, Orange World, O2 Active i.e. with the charge appearing on your phone bill or pay as you go allowance (NOT on a credit card or deducted from iTunes or other). *This is a payment for a service or download on your mobile operator's mobile web homepage or menu*
- o Paid for something on the mobile internet through a screen branded "Payforit", with the charge appearing on your phone bill or pay as you go (NOT on a credit card or deducted from iTunes or other). *Payforit is a payment service that lets you pay through your phone bill on mobile internet site. You might have seen the name Payforit on the payment screen, and your operator logo might have been there to.*

- What types of methods of payment have you used if any?
- How do you know whether these types of service are premium rate?
- How do you find out the ultimate cost of these methods of payment? (establish whether known in advance vs. post the bill)
  - o Where do you find this information?
- You gave a rating for your overall experience of using these types of service (Q3) as xxxx? What made you say that?
- What could have been done to improve your experience?

ASK MORE GENERALLY:

- What are these types of service offering? Why do you think people use these sorts of methods of payment?
- Can you give examples of when using these methods of payment has been a good experience? What made for a good experience in this instance?
- Describe any experiences you have had where you may have used these methods of payment inadvertently, had an unexpected charge on your bill or where the charges were higher than anticipated on your bill?
  - o How did the costs come to light?
  - o What did you do on these occasions?
  - o What, if any, steps did you take any steps to find out what the charge related to?
  - o Did you make a complaint at any stage? Why/Why not?
  - o What was the outcome of the complaint and or enquiry?
  - o How were you left feeling?
  - o Who did you blame? Yourself or the organisation? (which one?)
- Can you think of other types of digital content – downloads, digital payments or phone services which are similar in the way that they charge for their services?
- I notice that you also use/don't use any of the micropayment methods of payment we asked about in the survey i.e. methods of payment where you make a payment to buy a digital good without directly inputting your card details or account number?
  - o ITunes
  - o Amazon payments (e.g. Kindle) *(NB: As with all of these, not for physical purchases – ie not things that would be delivered to your home)*
  - o PayPal *(NB: As with all of these, not for physical purchases – ie not things*

	that would be delivered to your home)
	o Google Wallet
	• How do these methods of payment and your experiences with these compare to the other types of premium rate texts or calls we were talking about?
	o How are they the same/different? Why?
	o How do you find out about the cost of these types of methods of payment? How is this similar to/different from the other methods of payment? Why?
	• IF RELEVANT: What about your children – what do you tell them about how to be conscious of and/or control their spending if considering using micropayment or premium rate services to ensure they do not end up with higher than expected bills? PROBE: paying by text, accesing digitial content etc
	o How do you feel about them using these methods of payment?
	o Does this differ for premium rate or micropayment methods of payment?
	o Have you had any issues with them using these methods of payment inadvertently? Describe these.
	o inadvertently? Describe these.
	o Have you taken any steps to manage the costs of using these services to ensure costs are not higher than expected? IF IF SO What?
	o How did you find out about what steps to take? How easy is it to find out what steps to take?
	o How much of a concern is this for you as a parent? How does this sit alongside other parenting concerns/issues? e.g. what they watch on TV/what they access online? Why?
	• How do you inform yourself/your children about these sorts of methods of payment, including knowing what to look out for to prevent any unwanted costs? For example to avoid getting bill shock by being charged for things you were not expecting or that were more expensive than you realised, or accidently signing up to a service which you then get charged for on an ongoing basis)
	o How do you find out this information?
	o How do you know where to go/what to do?
	o Does this differ for premium rate and/or micropayment methods of payment?
15 mins	**The PRS Detriment Journey**
	READ OUT: We are now interested in finding out more about the consumer journey you took when you recently (DESCRIBE REASON FOR SELECTING E.G. MADE AN ENQUIRY, MADE A COMPAINT ETC), including how you felt at each stage. COVER AREAS NOT MENTIONED PREVIOUSLY
	• First of all, can you tell me in detail what happened to you?
	o Allow them to tell in own words but ensure understand how they 'got into' the service, exactly what type of service they were accessing, what they thought was going to happen and then what did happen, how they accessed the service and how long the problem went on for
	o How, if at all, did the costs come to light? How did you feel at this point? Who did you blame? Or what it more an issue of principle and not the costs?
	o How do you think this confusion/problem arose?
	o What were your thoughts on cost prior to accessing the service? What gave

you that impression?

- o Other issues: content delivery, ongoing charges resulting from a user not knowing how to control a service (ie opt out), inappropriate promotion to minors, inappropriate control to prevent usage by minors etc

- What was it about the experience that drove you to contact someone about the charge on your bill/on the text

- What was your motivation for contacting someone initially e.g. were you looking to enquire about what the charge was or were you looking to complain?

- Did you end up complaining at any stage in the process?

- **IF COMPLAINED/ENQUIRED**: What were you hoping to achieve by enquiring or complaining?/What did you expect the outcome to be?

  - o Money back vs. 'justice'

- How did you know/decide who to contact first? Why them?

  - o How did you obtain their number/email/web address (relates to online forms)?

  - o Can you please describe to me in detail all the steps you went through in making your complaint, including all contacts you made in the order of making them and why you took each step in the process, please talk this through in the exact order of getting in touch including describing separate calls to the same organisation separately? ENSURE ARE CLEAR EXACTLY WHO THEY THOUGHT THEY WERE CONTACTING AT EACH STAGE AND THEY CHANNEL SELECTED.   ENSURE UNDERSTAND ALL STEPS IN THE JOURNEY INCLUDING THE ORDER OF GETTING IN TOUCH WITH THE DIFFERENT ORGANSIATIONS AND HOW MANY TIMES THEY GOT IN TOUCH WITH EACH

- How long did the whole thing take?
- Describe the experience at each stage, including anything that could be improved to make it easier for you? FOR EACH CONTACT ASK: What did you need to do at each stage?

- **IF DID NOT COMPLAIN:** What were the key things that put you off complaining?

- Did you have any intention to complain at any stage? What put you off?
- Descibe any steps you did take?
- What could hve been done to encourage you/to make it easier to complain?/What could have been improved?

- ONCE THE CONSUMER HAS DESCRIBED IN THEIR OWN WORDS ASK

- What has been the outcome to-date of your complaint?

  - o How do you feel about that?

  - o How well informed do you feel you have been since the complaint?

- How would you describe your experience overall? Why?
- Do you think the process was worthwhile?
-
  Had you heard of PhonepayPlus prior to contacting them OR this research taking place?

		o Why did you think they were there/what did you think was their purpose?
		o How would you now describe them/what they do?
		o Is there anything else you have not mentioned that they could do to improve the overall complaints process for people like you?
		• If you were put in charge of improving the complaints process for premium rate numbers what would you do?
		o If you were in charge of an education process for consumers around premium rate methods of payment what would you make sure you communicated to avoid issues arising? & to help people know how to take steps if they experienced an issue?
		o (Where the experience of children has been discussed) What would make you communicate to children to avoid issues arising with them as far as possible?
		• If you had to put measures in place for other micropayment methods of payment would they be the same or different? Why/Why not?
		Follow-up
		• It's possible that PhonepayPlus might want to talk to you themselves and use your story as a case study. Of course they wouldn't do this without your permission. Would it be okay, in principle, if PhonepayPlus contacted you at some point in the future to seek your permission?
		Thank and close

A.5. Discussion Guide for depth interviews with PhonepayPlus customers

Customer Journey Research

PhonepayPlus – Complainant Guide

45 minute telephone depth interviews	
Primary Objectives:	
• Understand how adult consumers and parents of children with phones learn about and avoid unwanted billing via PRS (& triggers of interest) • Map out the consumer journey that led to the complaint • Explore barriers (personal or encountered) to complaining at all stages of the journey • Understand what motivates them to enquire or complain, why they select the route they do Obtain in-depth insight into the customer care experience among complainants – understanding differences by channel of communication	

5 mins	**Introduction**
	
	<u>Moderator introductions:</u>
	
	• PhonepayPlus, which regulates certain telephone services in the UK, is doing some research looking into what people do when they experience issues with premium rate services, including the journey consumers go through when making a complaint.
	• No right or wrong answers, not a test, recording, confidential
	
	General background/warm up:
	
	  o Name & and current work/living situation
	  o What do you enjoy doing in your spare time
	  o How do you feel about your mobile? What do you typically use it for?
	    ▪ Is it contract or PAYG
	  o Do you have children? What age?
	  o Do your children have a mobile phone? – contract or PAYG
	    ▪ What do they typically use it for?

15 mins	**Use of Premium Rate & Other Micropayment Services**
	
	• **ASK RESPONDENTS IF THEY HAVE USED FOLLOWING PREMIUM RATE SERVICES IN THE LAST 6 MONTHS:**
	• What **paid by texting in services** have you used if any? i.e. paid by texting in with the charge appearing on your phone bill or deducted from your 'pay as you go' allowance
	  o Voting on TV or radio shows
	  o Quizzes or competitions played by text or online and charged to your phone bill.
	  o Charity donations by text
	  o Buying a virtual currency or credits or extra levels etc in a mobile or internet game where you pay by phone
	  o Adult content – video clips or pictures
	• How do you know the texting in service is premium rate?
	• What paid after putting your **mobile number in on the web services** have you used,

if any? i.e. subsequently getting getting text messages that bill you to your phone bill?

- Which premium rate **phone services** have you used, if any?
    - o 09 numbers
    - o Directory enquiries
    - o Customer service enquiry lines
    - o Chatlines
    - o Voting on a TV show
    - o Donating to a charity through the cost of the call
    - o Pre-recorded messages e.g. horroscopes, weather
    - o Others
    - o *This exludes all 08 numbers*
- How do you know whether a phone service is premium rate?
    - o Phone code, amount per minute
- What paid for **'mobile operator portal services'** have you used, if any_ i.e with the charge appearing on your phone bill or pay as you go (NOT on a credit card or deducted from iTunes or other)
    - o *This is a payment for a service or download on your mobile operator's mobile web homepage or menu*
- Have you paid for something on the mobile internet through a screen branded **"Payforit",** with the charge appearing on your phone bill or pay as you go (NOT on a credit card or deducted from iTunes or other)
    - o *Payforit is a payment service that lets you pay through your phone bill on mobile internet site. You might have seen the name Payforit on the payment screen, and your operator logo might have been there too*
- What about paying for something costing **less than £10 using PayPal** or a similar payment service (virtual goods not physical goods)?
- What about using **digital/virtual currencies**, such as Facebook Credits, PSP points, Smurfpoints, Swapits, Ukash or Xbox LIVE points - you pay an amount and that is turned into some other "currency" you can use on the service
- What about using a **'stored value account'** online, or on your games console - you pay upfront (i.e. add money to your account) and money is deducted as you use a service. It is not turned into a different currency but stays as £ value

- In general, how do you feel about these types of services?

- What are they offering? Why do you think people use these sorts of services?

- Can you give examples of when using these services has been a good experience? What made for a good experience in this instance?

- How do you find out how much these services cost before you use them?

- Where do you find out this type of information?

- Describe any experiences you have had where you may have used these services inadvertently or where the charges were higher than anticipated on your bill (excluding the one you called PhonepayPlus about which we will discuss in detail in a moment)?

    - o How did the costs come to light?

    - o What did you do on these occasions?

    - o Why did you/did you not complain?

	- o What was the outcome? - o How were you left feeling? - o Who did you blame? Yourself or the organisation? (which one?) - Can you think of other types of digital content – downloads, digital payments or phone services which are similar in the way that they charge for their services? - What other types of micropayment services do you use i.e. services where you make a payment to buy a digital good without directly inputting your card details or account number? *NB: We are not talking about major purchases or physical purchases – ie not things that would be delivered to your home or things like annual online subscriptions for content online such as newspapers)* - o ITunes - o Amazon payments (e.g. Kindle) *(NB: As with all of these, not for physical purchases – ie not things that would be delivered to your home)* - o PayPal *(NB: As with all of these, not for physical purchases – ie not things that would be delivered to your home)* - o Google Wallet - How do these services and your experiences with these compare to the other types of premium rate texts or calls we were talking about? - o How are they the same/different? Why? - o How do you find out about the cost of these types of services? How is this similar to/different from the other services? Why? - Describe any experiences you have had where you may have used these micropayment services inadvertently or you've experienced problems? - o How did the costs come to light? - o What did you do on these occasions? - o Why did you/did you not complain? - o IF DID COMPLAIN – How did you know where to go? Describe what happened/the steps you took? - o What was the outcome? - o How were you left feeling? - IF RELEVANT: What about your children – what do you tell them about using either micropayment or premium rate services? PROBE: paying by text, accesing digitial content etc - o How do you feel about them using these services? - o Does this differ for premium rate or micropayment services? - o Have you had any issues with them using these services inadvertently? Describe these. - o Have you taken any steps to stop them accessing these types of services? IF SO What? - o How much of a concern is this for you as a parent? How does this sit alongside other parenting concerns/issues? e.g. what they watch on TV/what they access online? Why? - How do you inform yourself/your children about these sorts of services, including knowing what to look out for to prevent any unwanted costs?

	o How do you find out this information?
	o How do you know where to go/what to do?
	o Does this differ for premium rate and/or micropayment services?
25 mins	**The Complainant Journey**
	READ OUT: We are now interested in finding out more about the consumer journey you took when you complained recently to PhonepayPlus, including how you felt at each stage.
	• First of all, can you tell me in detail what happened to you initially to make you want to complain or make enquiries?
	o Allow them to tell in own words but ensure understand how they 'got into' the service, exactly what type of service they were accessing, what they thought was going to happen and then what did happen, how they accessed the service and how long the problem went on for
	o How, if at all, did the costs come to light? How did you feel at this point? Who did you blame? Or what it more an issue of principle and not the costs?
	o How do you think this confusion/problem arose?
	o What were your thoughts on cost prior to accessing the service? What gave you that impression?
	o Other issues: content delivery, ongoing charges resulting from a user not knowing how to control a service (ie opt out), inappropriate promotion to minors, inappropriate control to prevent usage by minors etc
	• What was it about the experience that drove you to complain?
	• What were you hoping to achieve by enquiring or complaining?/What did you expect the outcome to be?
	o Money back vs. 'justice'
	• How did you know/decide who to contact first? Why them?
	• Can you please describe to me in detail all the steps you went through in making your complaint, including all contacts you made in the order of making them and why you took each step in the process? ENSURE ARE CLEAR EXACTLY WHO THEY THOUGHT THEY WERE CONTACTING AT EACH STAGE AND THEY CHANNEL SELECTED
	• How long did the whole thing take?
	• ONCE THE CONSUMER HAS DESCRIBED IN THEIR OWN WORDS AND YOU ARE SURE YOU UNDERSTAND ALL STEPS BREAK DOWN EACH STEP AND ASK: How would you describe that experience?
	o Why did you get in touch with them? What made you feel they could help you?
	o How did you obtain their number/email/web address (relates to online forms)?
	o FOR ALL EXCEPT MOBILE COMPANY: Who exactly did you feel you were contacting at this point?
	o What did you expect them to do for you/how did you anticipate them being able to help you?
	o How were you left feeling at the end of the contact?

	- o What was good about it? - o What was not as good about the experience? - o How could it have been improved? - What has been the outcome to-date of your complaint? - o How do you feel about that? - o How well informed do you feel you have been by PhonepayPlus about the steps that are being taken? - How would you describe your experience overall? Why? - Do you think the process was worthwhile? - How have you been left feeling? Why? - Had you heard of PhonepayPlus prior to contacting them? - o Why did you think they were there/what did you think was their purpose? - o When you first contacted them what did you think they would do for you? - o How did your actual experience compare to your expectations? - o Would you recommend someone else get in touch with PhonepayPlus? When & Why?/Why not? - o How would you now describe them/what they do? - o Is there anything else you have not mentioned that they could do to improve the overall complaints process for people like you? - Taking your complaints journey as a whole how would you improve it? - o If you were put in charge of improving the complaints process for premium rate numbers what would you do? - o If you were in charge of an education process for consumers around premium rate services what would you make sure you communicated to avoid issues arising? & to help people know how to take steps if they experienced an issue? - o (Where the experience of children has been discussed) What would make you communicate to children to avoid issues arising with them as far as possible? - If you had to put measures in place for other micropayment services would they be the same or different? Why/Why not?
	Summary What one thing would you do to improve the customer journey of people like you wanting to make complaints
	Follow-up It's possible that PhonepayPlus might want to talk to you themselves and use your story as a case study. Of course they wouldn't do this without your permission. Would it be okay, in principle, if PhonepayPlus contacted you at some point in the future to seek your permission? **Thank and close**

A.6. Consumer Journey Research – social media, consumer forums and search terms

CONSUMER JOURNEY RESEARCH –

SOCIAL MEDIA, CONSUMER FORUMS

& SEARCH TERMS

SOCIAL MEDIA - GENERIC

Social Mention (searches other social media websites but doesn't always work and is global so need to look at specific SM websites as well). http://socialmention.com/

SOCIAL MEDIA - SPECIFIC
- Twitter (TweetDeck for searching on specific subjects)
- Facebook

(It is worth searching both in general using # or on the specific Twitter or Facebook pages of organisations)

CONSUMER FORUMS - GENERIC

The Scream (forums) http://www.the-scream.co.uk/

Moneysupermarket.com (news and community forums) http://www.moneysupermarket.com/

Moneysaving expert (forums) http://www.moneysavingexpert.com/

http://www.scambook.com/

http://www.nuisancecalls.org.uk/

http://forums.digitalspy.co.uk/

Which? – http://conversation.which.co.uk/ - they also have their own complaints tool where you can send details of the phone numbers involved and just launched a major campaign (July 2013)

Although we don't currently monitor these regularly, it might be worth looking at http://www.mumsnet.com/ and http://www.saga.co.uk/ - not just for complaints but also for how specific groups of people might seek advice on safe use of mobiles/avoiding scams etc.

Also http://www.gransnet.com/ (Mumsnet but for grandparents)

CONSUMER FORUMS – TELECOMS SPECIFIC

Who calls me (worldwide – need to look for UK related complaints) http://whocallsme.com/

Smswatchdog (worldwide – need to look for UK related complaints) http://smswatchdog.com/index.php

Caller (worldwide – need to look for UK related complaints) http://callerr.com/

Whotextsme (worldwide – need to look for UK related complaints) http://whotextsme.com/index.php

Scamwarners (worldwide – need to look for UK related complaints) http://www.scamwarners.com/

Tellows – a "who calls me" type website where people post details http://www.tellows.co.uk/

CONSUMER FORUMS – TELECOMS SPECIFIC (UK fixed line and mobile operators)

Note – some links take you to 'forum' pages, sometimes, you'll need to look at social media or blog links from these pages.

Also worth looking briefly at the Facebook / Twitter pages of these companies, but the forums seem most fruitful

Virginmedia - http://community.virginmedia.com/

02 - http://community.o2.co.uk/

Vodafone - http://forum.vodafone.co.uk/

T-Mobile - http://support.t-mobile.co.uk/

Orange - http://help.orange.co.uk/

(Twitter is @orangehelpers)

Three - http://www.three.co.uk/Support

Giffgaff - http://community.giffgaff.com/

BT - http://community.bt.com/

Talktalk - http://www.talktalkmembers.com/forums/

Sky - http://helpforum.sky.com/

Everything Everywhere - http://community.ee.co.uk/

Apple - https://discussions.apple.com/index.jspa

OTHER

Very worthwhile also looking at comments posted in response to press articles in online versions of newspapers and bbc etc – often get people posting about similar experiences and in some cases naming the numbers involved

SEARCH TERMS

Banner ad

Competition scam

In app charges / mobile app charges

Inappropriate texts / marketing

Kids app scam

KKO mobile / mydoo (seem to be a common offender)

Missed call scam

Payforit

PhonepayPlus

Premium charges

Premium rate

Premium rate services

Premium rate texts

Premium SMS

Premium text

Prize scam

Quiz scam

Scam / hoax / fraud (texts, calls)

Scam app

SMS scam

Survey scam

Text scam

Win an iPad; Win an iPhone

Premium rate number codes (or those considered to be premium rate – 084, 087, 09

It might also be worth searching on specific text short codes (in the format scam+ number, text+number, charges+number etc.) – this helps ensure you only pick up information relevant to the UK on global websites as these short codes are generally unique to the UK.

Current 'top 10' complained about short codes (source: PhonepayPlus 2013 Jan-May complaints analysis) are as follows:-

64546

81121

88990

66033

81002

88770

64055

85150

60555

61973