

Tracker Survey 2014

Briefing note: Confidence and satisfaction

Key findings:

- Trust in lawyers has halted its decline over recent years, mirroring the trend in other economic sectors. Similarly, confidence that consumer rights will be protected and in complaining about lawyers have also levelled off
- Women, White British, ABC1s and older age groups have more confidence
- 82% of recent users were satisfied with the outcome of their matter; this has increased most in consumer and family law over the last four years
- 79% of recent users were satisfied with the service they received
- ABC1s, White British and older age groups are more satisfied with the service they received than C2DEs, BME and younger groups
- Will-writing is the highest rated for outcome, service and value for money
- 44% of dissatisfied legal services consumers do nothing, which compares to an average of 27% across the services sector overall
- Public awareness of the Legal Ombudsman has fallen over the last four years from 65% in 2011 to 59% in 2014

Note on methodology

For the last four years the Panel has commissioned YouGov to conduct an annual tracker survey in two parts: a nationally representative sample (1,896 adults); and a sample of people who have used legal services in the last two years (1,060 adults). Booster samples were obtained for Wales and BME groups. All the figures below have been weighted and are representative of all GB adults (aged 18+). The results have been tested to the 95% confidence level – we are 95% confident that these findings are not due to chance. Fieldwork took place during 14 February – 12 March 2014.

Public confidence

The Tracker Survey tests public confidence in legal services through three measures: trust in lawyers to tell the truth; whether people feel their consumer rights would be protected when using lawyers; and confidence about complaining to a lawyer.

These measures were on a downward trajectory between 2011-2013, but have levelled off in 2014. The trend in legal sectors mirrors that in other economic sectors, which may suggest the findings reflect overall public confidence in business rather than anything particular to lawyers. Research conducted by the Legal Services Board with the Panel's input, suggests that service failures lie at the heart of trust problems with lawyers.

We are able to segment the results by recent users and non users of legal services. Across all three measures (trust 47% v 42%; consumer rights 53% v 43%; and complaining 48% v 43%), recent users exhibit higher confidence levels.

As in previous years, there are some notable demographic differences. Trust is higher among White British (50%) compared to BME respondents (42%), and is far lower in the Pakistani population (30%). However, the White British/BME gap has narrowed since 2013 (from 14% to 9%). The general picture across all three measures is higher levels of confidence among women, ABC1s and older age groups.

Chart 1 – Trust trends

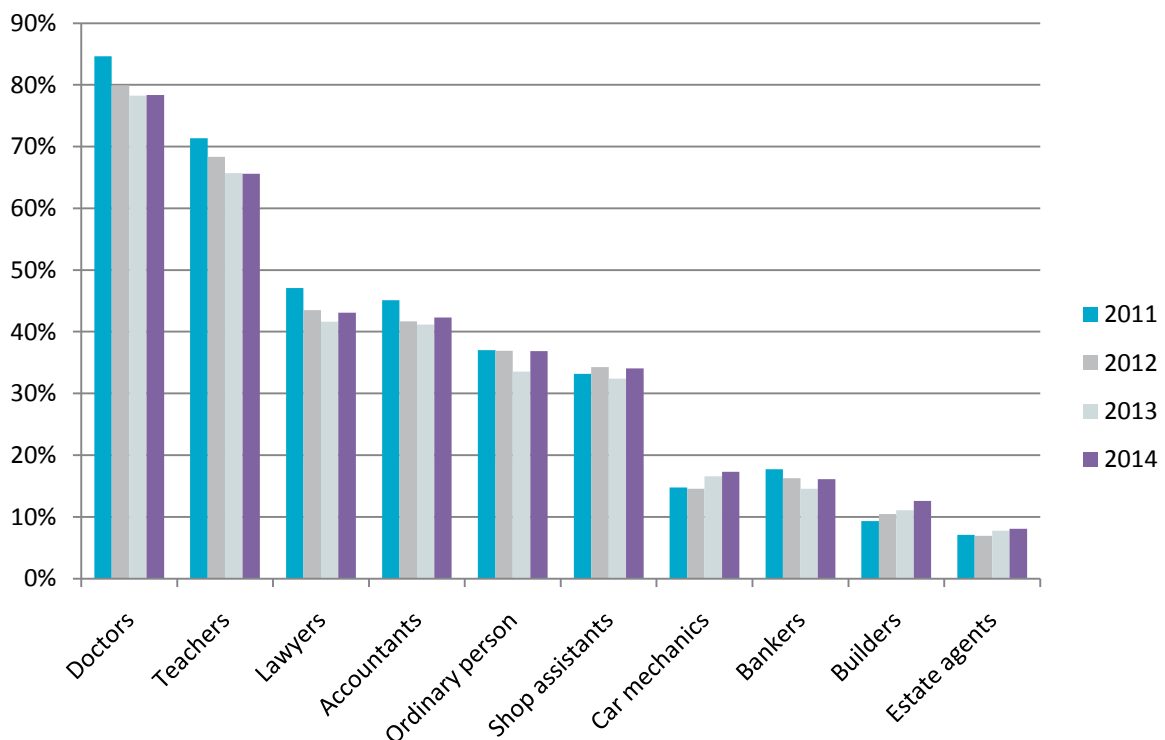


Chart 2 – Confidence that consumer rights will be protected

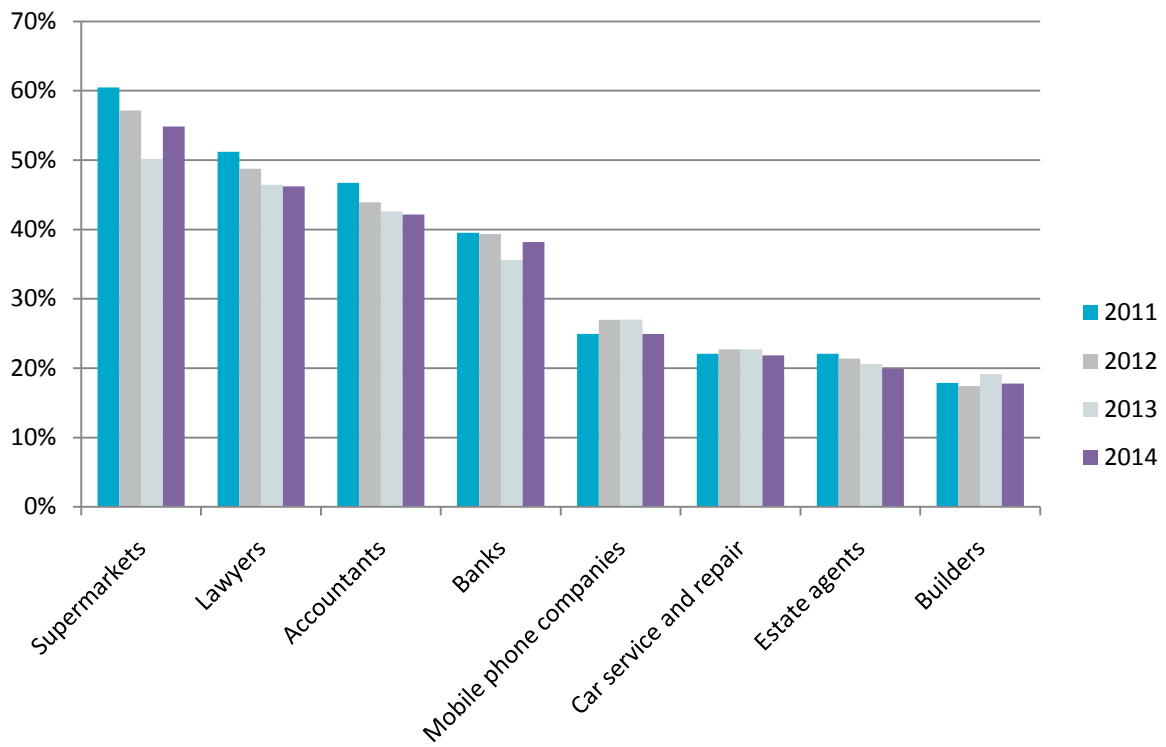
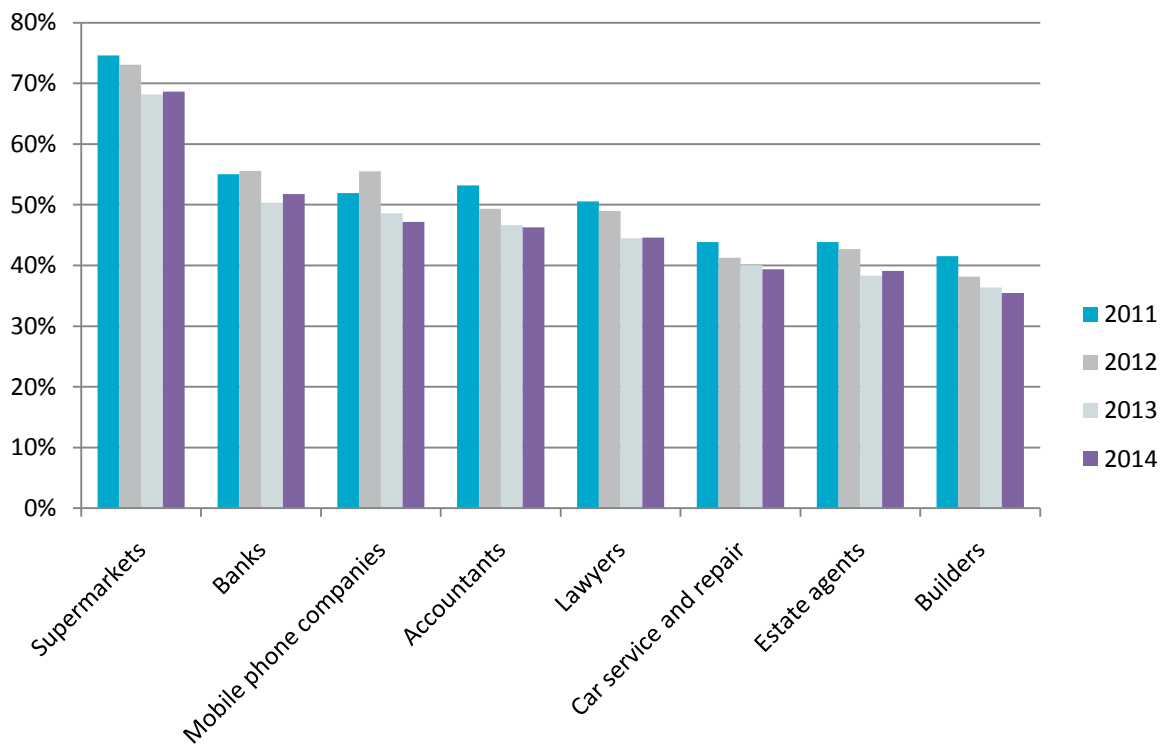


Chart 3 – Confidence in complaining



Satisfaction with outcomes

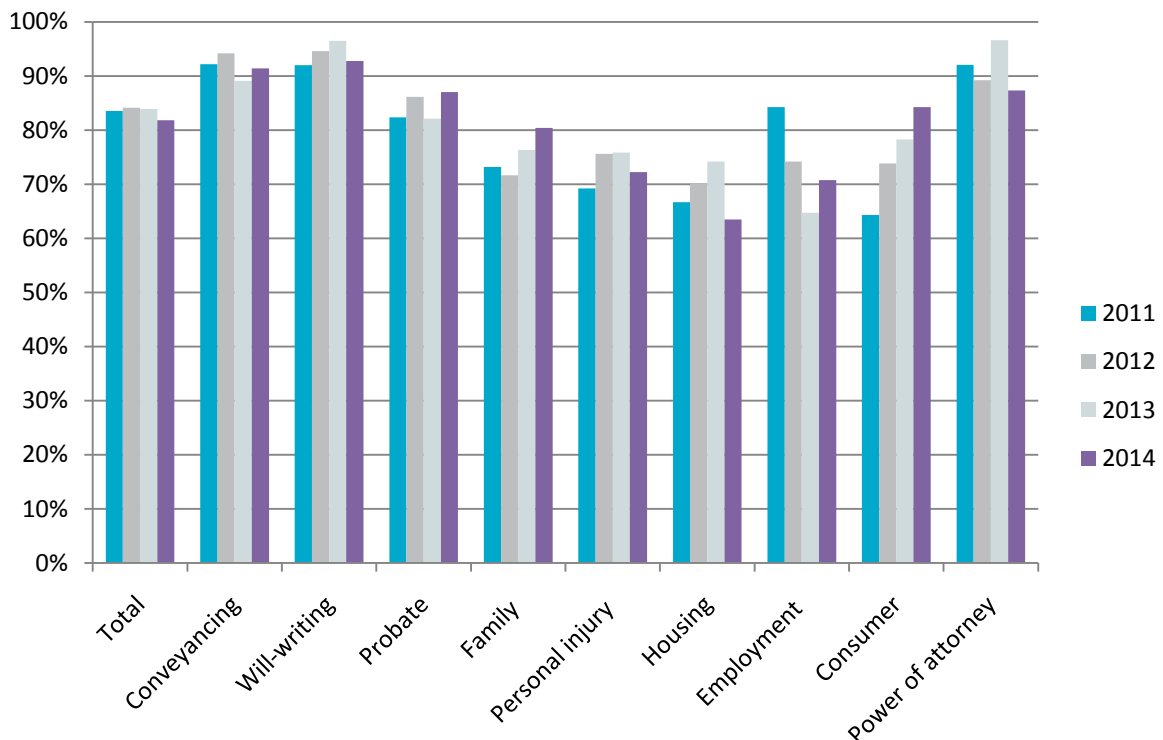
The Panel asks recent users how satisfied they were with the outcome of their legal matter. Satisfaction with outcomes can be expected to be lower in more contested areas of law where there are 'winners and losers' compared to more transactional arenas. Changes in the law and the system within which lawyers work, in addition to the lawyer's performance, will influence responses to this question.

Chart 4 generally shows only small differences in satisfaction with outcomes over the last four years. Satisfaction has particularly increased in consumer and family matters. During the last twelve months housing and power of attorney areas have fallen the most.

Overall, outcome satisfaction is slightly higher than satisfaction with the service received and this has been a consistent finding in each of the four years of our survey. However, a breakdown by area of law shows that while 91% of conveyancing consumers get the outcome they want, 81% were happy with the service they received. Employment is the only area where service (78%) significantly exceeds outcome (71%) satisfaction.

Will-writing is the top area for outcome (93%) and service satisfaction (91%) – although as previous research by the Panel and others has shown highlighting substandard wills, consumers are often poorly placed to assess the technical quality of work.

Chart 4 – Outcome satisfaction



Service satisfaction

Overall levels of service satisfaction have remained static across the four years of the Panel's Tracker Survey, currently 79%.

We ask consumers to rate different elements of customer service based on previous research by the LSB asking people what matters to them. This shows certain indicators, such as clear information on terms and costs, empathy and timeliness edging upwards over the last three years – but the differences are still small. Value for money satisfaction has risen by 6% since 2013. Conveyancing, family, power of attorney and consumer law are among those with the biggest increases, but wills (76%) is the highest rated area.

Closer analysis of the data reveals possible influences on satisfaction, for example:

- Finding a lawyer through past usage, personal recommendation and local offices have higher satisfaction than referrals by companies and internet searches
- Choice satisfaction and shopping around correlates to higher satisfaction
- Work funded by trade unions and no win no fee produces the lowest satisfaction

There also appear to be some key demographic differences: ABC1s, White British and older age groups are more satisfied with service than C2DEs, BME and younger groups. However, caution is needed since these differences might be explained by the areas of law that tend to be used by these groups rather than different treatment by lawyers.

Chart 5 – Service elements

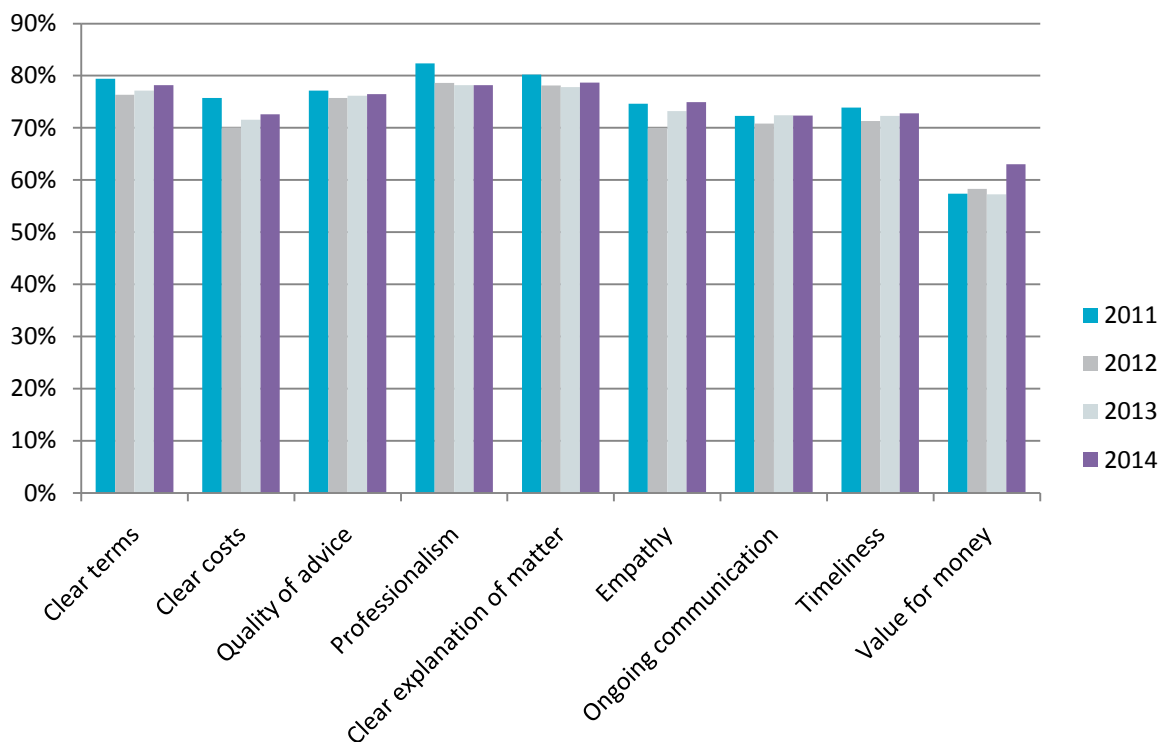


Chart 6 – Possible influences on service satisfaction

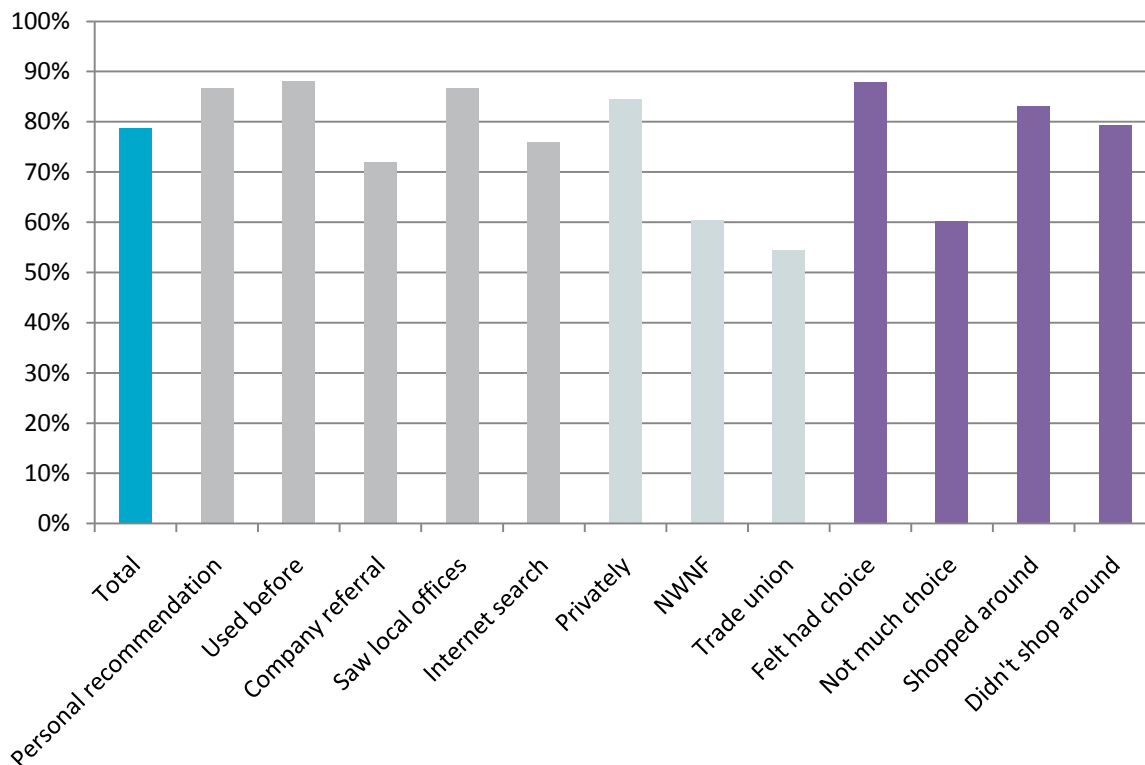
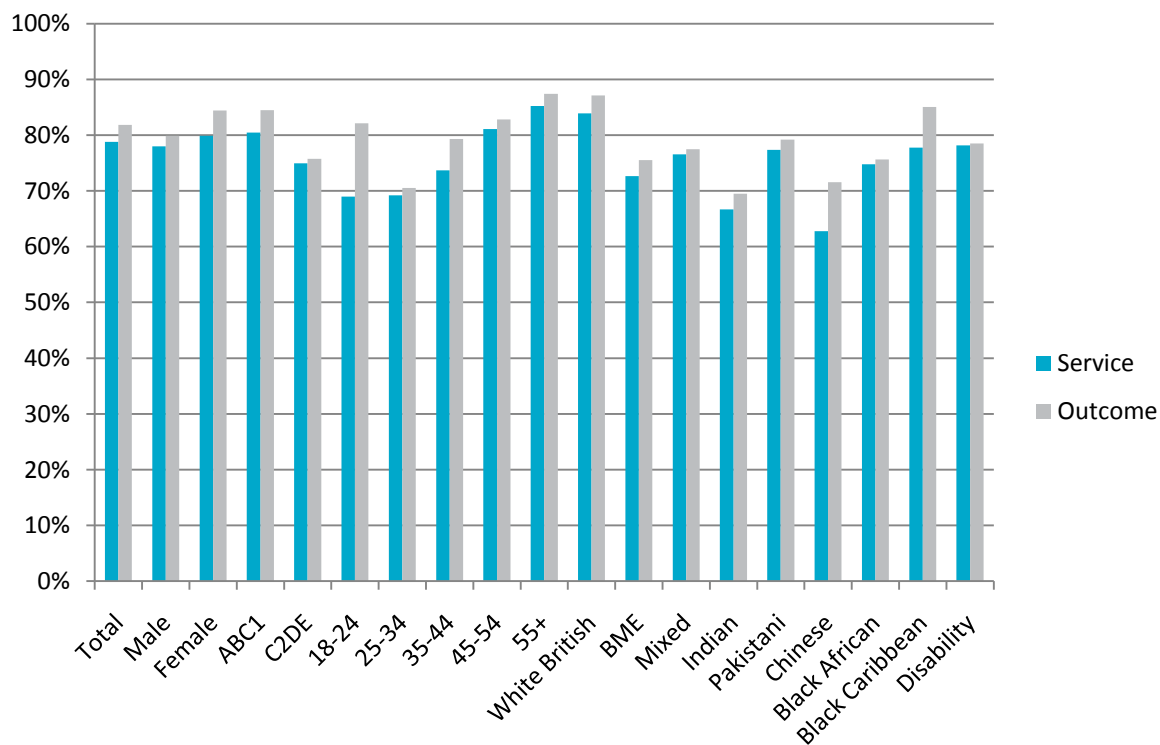


Chart 7 – Demographic differences



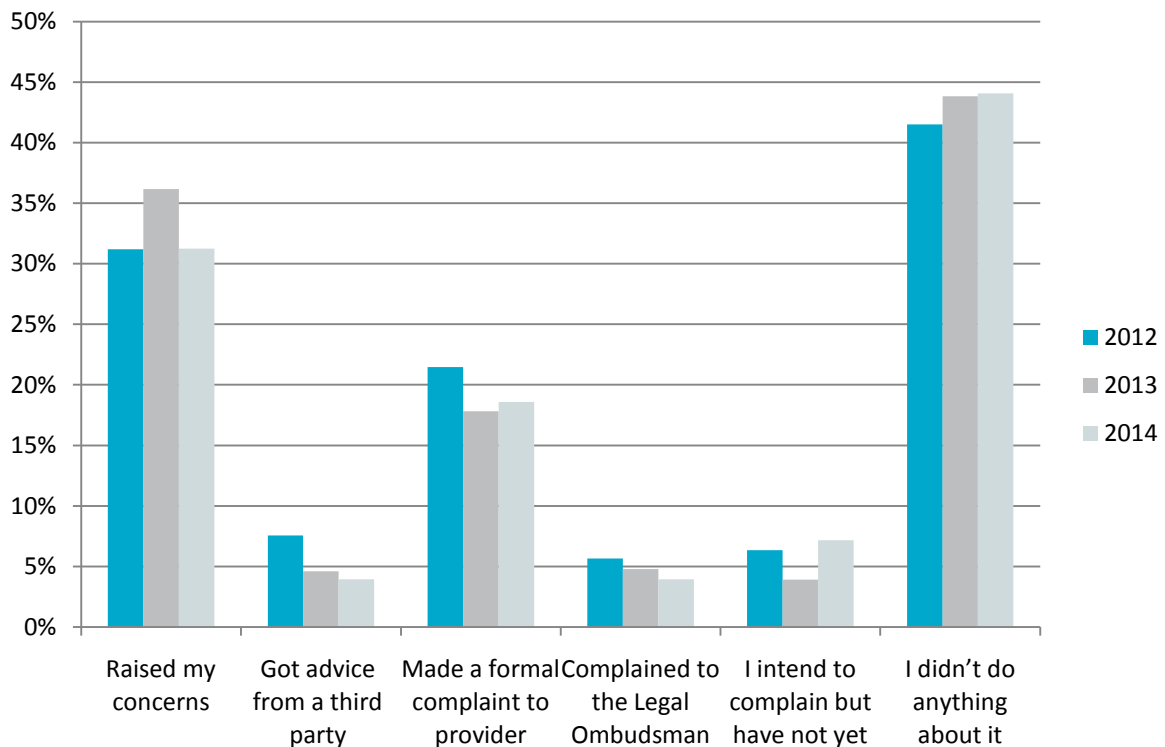
Complaints

The Tracker Survey asks respondents who said they were dissatisfied with the service they received what they did about this.

As last year, 44% of people – the silent sufferers – did nothing. Data from the Institute of Customer Service suggests that the average for the services sector overall is 27%¹. Previous research by the Legal Ombudsman and the Panel has revealed that people are confused about what to do, get overwhelmed by legal jargon, believe they won't get a fair hearing and fear that upsetting their lawyer could have repercussions for their case.

Each year we ask our general public sample whether they have heard of the Legal Ombudsman, among other organisations. This has fallen steadily from 65% in 2011 to 59% in the 2014 edition of the survey. There are wide differences between ABC1s (64%) and C2DEs (51%) and White British (63%) and BME groups (54%). Unsurprisingly, those who have used legal services within the last two years (64%) are more likely to say they have heard of the Legal Ombudsman than non users (56%).

Chart 8 – Complaints behaviour



¹ Institute of Customer Services, UK Customer Satisfaction Index, January 2014.