Technical report – Reasons to Complain Tracker 2021 (Nov)

Preface

Since 2009, Ofcom has been tracking the proportion of customers using a landline, broadband and mobile service who say they have had reason to complain about their provider in the previous 12 months. Pay TV was included for the first time in the 2016 wave of research. Up to and including the 2019 wave, research was conducted via a face to face omnibus. More information on the previous wave's approach and methodology can be found here.

In line with the 2020 wave of tracking, the current study ran solely with an online methodology, in part due to restrictions in face-to-face interviewing during the coronavirus pandemic.

Data Comparability and Limitations

Whilst the YonderLive panel has been carefully built to ensure that it remains demographically balanced, this survey does not capture the views of the offline population who do not have access to the internet and therefore results are skewed to those who are online.

It is also important to acknowledge any potential behavioural differences that a respondent might exhibit when completing a survey face to face versus completing a survey online. In particular, it is known that online panels can result in fewer responses in the top satisfaction/ agreement category.

Due to the change in methodology in 2020 (from face to face to online) we cannot compare these data to those from waves prior to 2020. However, data from this wave can be compared to that from 2020.

Study Objectives

The specific objectives of the study are to explore whether consumers have had reason to complain about their landline, fixed broadband, mobile and/or pay TV provider in the last 12 months, and if so, what was the reason for the complaint. The study also explores whether customers with a reason to complain actually went on to make a complaint, if they did, who they complained to; and, if they did not go on to make a complaint, why not. Where sample sizes allow, the data generated by this study is split (within each sector) by communications provider.

All interviews were conducted over an eight day period between the 24 and 30 of November 2021. The last 12 months therefore refers to the 12 months prior to fieldwork (November 2020 – November 2021). In the current study, Yonder interviewed a nationally representative sample of 6,442 adults aged 16+ via it's own Online Omnibus conducted through the YonderLive panel.

Sample Design

Quotas

Nationally representrative quotas were used to closely represent the offline UK population. Targets for quotas were also taken from the National Readership Survey and were set on the following:

- Age (16-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64, 65+)
- Socio-economic grade (SEG)
- Gender
- Region

Fieldwork

An online survey was conducted using Yonder's Online Ombnibus methodology to reach c.6,000 adults aged 16+ over three waves (c.2,000 in each wave). Exclusions were put in place in order to prevent respondents completing the survey in more than one wave of the Omnibus.

Weighting

As mentioned above, Yonder set quotas by age interlocked with gender, region and social grade. Any discrepancy between the final achieved sample and the known offline profile of the UK was adjusted by RIM[1] weighting, using the known demographic profile of the population. Data was weighted using 8 different variables - age, gender, government office region, social grade, taken a foreign holiday in the last 3 years, tenure, number of cars in the household and working status. The current study used PAMCO 2019 to weight these demographics – this is a widely used population data source employed by many research agencies to provide more up-to-date demographic proportions of the UK population than the 2011 census.

[1]Random Iterative Method. RIM weighting is a form of survey weighing to accurately showcase demographics among a population or customer base. RIM weighting allows each variable and question to be weighed as an individual entity to assure each data point and demographic is accurately represented. Rim weighting is used when there are a number of weighting variables but the inter-relationship between them is not known. It tries to change the weights of each weighting variable as little as possible while interpolating these relationships.

Guide to Statistical Reliability

The variation between the sample results and the "true" values (the findings that would have been obtained if every telecoms customer had been interviewed) can be predicted from the sample sizes on which the results are based, and on the number of times that a particular answer is given. The confidence with which we can make this prediction is usually chosen to be 95%, that is, the chances are 95 in 100 that the "true" values will fall within a specified range. However, as the sample is weighted, we need to use the effective sample size[2] (ESS) rather than actual sample size to judge the accuracy of results. The following table compares ESS and actual samples for some of the main groups across all respondents.

[2] Effective Sample Size shown as Effective Weighted Sample in the data tables produced

	ACTUAL	ESS
TOTAL	6442	6442
GENDER: Male	3125	3150
GENDER: Female	3317	3292
AGE: 16-24	758	889
AGE: 25-34	1046	1076
AGE: 35-44	1014	998
AGE: 45-54	1080	1108
AGE: 55-64	1039	928
AGE: 65-74	1064	1026
AGE: 75+	441	418
SEG: AB	1756	1752
SEG: C1	1816	1817
SEG: C2	1329	1308
EG: DE	1541	1565