



# Ofcom Text Relay Services: User Experience

Opinion Leader

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Text Relay: User Experience

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# Introduction and Background



## Background & Objectives

Text relay services enable people with hearing and/or speech impairments to communicate with others through telephone or textphone equipment.

Ofcom has required that all UK landline and mobile providers give their customers access to an improved text relay service approved by Ofcom – Next Generation Text Relay (NGTR), which was implemented in October 2014.

The original implementation date was April 2014 however, the introduction of NGTR was delayed due to a safety issue.

Ofcom commissioned Opinion Leader to carry out research to monitor the performance of NGTR compared with the current service.

In order to do this, Ofcom and Opinion Leader have pursued a two stage research process:

- **Phase 1:** a benchmarking exercise to gauge service users' experiences of the current service.
- **Phase 2:** research looking at user experience of NGTR after the improved service has been running for 6 months, comprising:
  - A follow-up quantitative survey
  - Qualitative research with NGTR users

**The key objective of this research was as follows:**

***To measure user experience of the service and to see how this improves with the introduction of NGTR.***

# Recruitment and Methodology for quantitative research – Stages 1 & 2

## Research Instruments

The research instruments Opinion Leader developed to assess user experience of the text relay service consisted of a survey and diary exercise, both of which were available in an online or offline format dependent on participant preference. The questionnaire assessed user opinion of the text relay service overall, whilst the purpose of the diary was to gather call-specific data. Throughout the report these are reported together to give a full picture of user experience.

Participants were given the option of completing the survey either face-to-face with an interviewer at a location of their choosing or via a web link survey.

At **Stage 2** of the research the questionnaire remained largely the same in order to maintain comparability between Stages 1 and 2. New questions relating to NGTR usage were also added.

## The text relay user universe

The exact number of text relay service users is not known but there were approximately 10,000 CLIs (Customer Line Identifications, i.e. telephone numbers) that initiated calls through the text relay service in 2012 using the prefix 18001. The small size of the text relay user universe posed a considerable challenge when it came to recruitment.

Whilst Opinion Leader has made every effort to ensure a representative sample of text relay service users, we cannot be 100% sure that the sample achieved is reflective of the text relay service audience.

## Recruitment strategy

At **Stage 1** Opinion Leader adopted a multi-strand recruitment strategy, consisting of the following elements:

1. Re-contacting respondents who took part in a previous piece of text relay research which Opinion Leader undertook in 2010 to see if they were willing to take part in this project.
2. Contacting external organisations who work with deaf, hearing impaired and speech impaired people as well as social media groups and blogs.
3. Interviewers recruiting from local deaf and/or speech impaired support groups as well as organisations/services that use text relay to communicate with clients and service users.

At **Stage 2**, the recruitment strategy was as follows:

1. Re-contacting respondents who took part in Stage 1
2. Contacting external organisations who work with deaf, hearing impaired and speech impaired people as well as social media groups and blogs

## The recruitment portal

We gave participants the option of contacting us via post or telephone or our online portal to register their interest in taking part in the research.

The online portal assessed whether the respondent was eligible for the research and gathered respondent details.

## Sample for quantitative research - Stages 1 & 2

Opinion Leader recruited people who use the text relay service at least once a month. Given the small size of the text relay user universe we did not impose sample quotas but looked to recruit a mix of the following users of the text relay service:

- Deaf (this includes a range of terms for example Deaf, deaf and deafened)
- Deafblind
- Hearing impaired (this encompasses those who would categorise themselves as hard of hearing or with some form of hearing loss)
- Speech impaired
- Those who are not deaf, hearing or speech impaired but who use the text relay service in a professional capacity or to communicate with friends or family

During the survey, participants were asked to self-classify which of the above categories they fell into.

The relatively small sample size for some of the subgroups needs to be borne in mind. Unless otherwise stated findings are indicative, not significant.

When results are significant the figures are denoted by this box

Total sample achieved	Stage 1 - All	Stage 2 - All	Stage 1 & 2
Deaf	139	94	70
Hearing impaired	22	13	10
Speech-impaired	9	4	0
Deafblind	5	2	1
Not deaf/impaired	7	1	0
Total	169	112	81

NB The S2 classification question was a multicode which is why the above categories don't add up to the total

# Qualitative research - Sample and methodology

## Methodology:

- 12 x 30-40 min face-to-face in-depth interviews with NGT app users
  - At homes or offices
- Communication support used where required
  - BSL Interpreters

## Interview coverage:

- Devices used to access NGT app
- Situations in which use NGT app (and whether users are communicating with more/different people and organisations)
- Likes, dislikes and suggested improvements
- Views on aspects of the text relay service and whether they have improved over time (e.g. conversation speed, number of hang-ups/disconnections)
- General communications and technology use

## Sample demographics:

Text Relay user before NGTR launch	No.
Yes	9
No	3

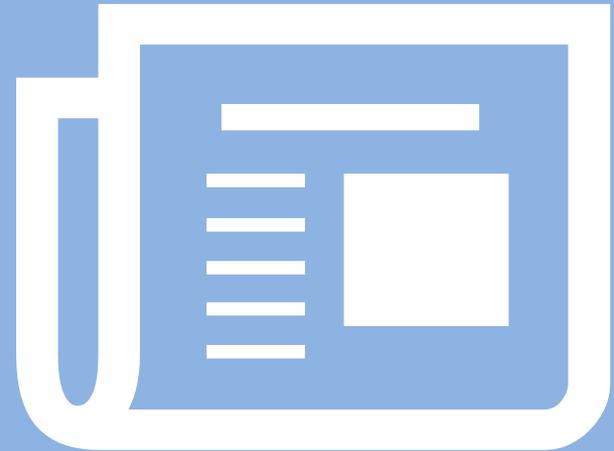
Use BSL	No.
Yes	6
No	6

Gender	No.
Male	6
Female	6

Age	No.
20-34	3
35-49	7
50+	2

Career	
• Local government	• Teaching
• IT	• Charity/ voluntary work
• GP	
• Scientific research	

# Headline findings



## Headline Findings

1

88% of Stage 2 participants were aware of Next Generation Text Relay (NGTR) and 64% of those aware of NGTR have used it at least once via the app (although 14% stopped using it).

2

In terms of usage, 50% of those aware of NGTR continue to use it, with 39% using NGTR for all text relay calls and 11% using it for some calls. 73% of NGTR users make text relay calls using laptops/desktops, 59% use smartphones and 24% use tablets.

3

Among participants who had not used NGTR or had stopped using it, 35% said this was because of difficulties in setting up the app or that NGTR is not compatible with devices they have, and 27% said they are not comfortable with new technology.

4

Levels of satisfaction with the text relay service at Stage 2 of the research (which took place after the introduction of NGTR) remain the same as with Stage 1 (which took place before its introduction). 70% of Stage 2 participants *who took part in Stage 1* were satisfied with the text relay service overall (cf. 75% at Stage 1), 79% were satisfied with the spelling of text typed by relay assistants (cf. 76% at Stage 1). However, 48% were satisfied with the speed at which calls were answered (cf. 65% at Stage 1). While NGT app users were marginally more likely to be satisfied, this difference was not statistically significant.

5

Participants in the qualitative strand of the research identified a number of benefits of using the NGT app, chiefly that it enables them to use text relay 'on the go', affording greater convenience, and independence and being useful for work and personal use. A key barrier to accessing NGTR identified by participants was difficulty setting up the app. Participants also identified potential improvements to make the NGT app easier to use.

# Qualitative research with users of the NGT app



# How and why is the NGT app used?



The NGT app was most commonly used with a smartphone, partly due to type of usage and partly due to difficulties with setting up/using on other devices.



- Commonly used as participants frequently use the NGT app when out and about
- Some have not been able to set up the app on other devices



- Useful as can see a lot of the conversation
- Some use tablet as find it too 'fiddly' to type on smartphone
- Portable, so convenient for use at home



- Useful as can see a lot of the conversation
- Some use laptop/PC as find it too 'fiddly' to type on smartphone
- Less portable than tablet (so used less frequently if tablet owned)

# Customers primarily use the NGT app to make outgoing calls, partly due to types of calls being made and partly due to lack of knowledge about incoming calls

## Not knowing how to receive calls

- There is a lack of understanding about how to receive incoming calls
- The NGT app disconnects after 2 minutes of inactivity
- Some customers thought it was not possible to receive calls if the app was disconnected

*“The app has to be open all the time (sic). Even if it’s running in the background, it cannot receive any calls. You have to press the reconnect button all the time.”*

Female, aged 35-49

*“If I get an incoming call, I have to go to my apps and I have to find the NGT Lite app. I would have to look for it, run it, wait for it to connect and then maybe they’ve given up and hung up.”*

Male, aged 35-49

## Practicalities and personal preferences

- Some customers also dislike the idea of receiving incoming calls
- Practical difficulty of opening the app before people hang up
- If waiting for a call would not be able to hear devices ringing (so would need to feel it vibrating or see that a call is coming in)
- If out and about might be inconvenient to answer a call on a smartphone (if need to type and read)
- Some concern that if do not answer a call on a smartphone then the caller will leave a voicemail message that they cannot pick up

# Participants are using NGTR to contact a variety of places, though more commonly services and organisations rather than friends and family

**Service providers and local councils**

- Utility companies and banks
- Local council
- Central government (e.g. DWP)

**Business communications**

- Suppliers
- Other business contacts
- Colleagues

**Personal services**

Businesses that it would be slower/more difficult to contact by email e.g. taxi firm, hotel, garage, vet, takeaway, hairdresser

**Friends and family**

Only contacted occasionally using NGT, e.g. if out and about NGT might be a quicker way to arrange a place to meet a friend

**Other comms used for audience**

- Instant Chat
- Video online
- Online account

- Email
- Speech-to-text reporter
- Text/Screenphone
- Skype

- Email
- Text/Screenphone
- Partner/friend calling on behalf

- Email
- Skype
- WhatsApp
- Facebook
- SMS

# Views on positive and negative aspects of the NGT app





## The mobile nature of the NGT app is seen as being enormously useful

### Convenience

- No need to be at home to make/receive a call
- Can make/receive calls anywhere in the house

*"It's superb. I can use it in a taxi. I can use it outside my house. I don't have to think about waiting indoors for a phone call via the Minicom. I can be on the go."*  
Female, aged 50+

### Safety

- Enables users to arrange a taxi home at night
- Keeping an eye on small children if make a call
- Can report stolen/lost bank card immediately
- Reassuring that have an option for emergency calls

### Independence

- No need to ask partner, friends, colleagues to make calls on their behalf

*"It makes me more independent. I used to rely a lot on my wife and my mum to call other people."*  
Female, aged 35-49



*"When you're out and about and doing your business and you need to get in touch with a parent, that's going to come in really handy. It's easier to contact someone, because most people are not that great with email or texting."*  
Female, aged 20-34

### Facilitates work

- Useful for those working out of the office
- Also for those where there is no or just one Minicom/Screenphone in building (e.g. teachers)



Accessing the text relay via an app on smartphones, tablets and laptops removes the need for textphones or Screenphones. Some younger people were attracted back to using text relay by the app format

### Current equipment seen as bulky and old-fashioned

- Traditional textphones were seen as bulky and old-fashioned
- Two of the younger participants had only started to use text relay since the service became available via an app

*"I threw out my Minicom [textphone] maybe about six years ago because it was that painful, it just took so long."*

Female, aged 20-34

*"I really didn't like [using Textphones]. It didn't suit me, it was a waste of time trying to type things up, you would miss words. So I decided, 'You know what, I don't like this, get rid of it.'"*

Male, aged 20-34

### Re-supply of new equipment

- Local councils can take a while to supply new equipment

*"When I moved out, [having the app] would be quite handy rather than having to ask the council for equipment that may take ages."*

Female, aged 20-34

Some concern - for older text relay users - that local councils will now stop funding Screenphones/ Minicomms and/or that companies will stop producing them



## Customers who know how the NGT app works cost-wise see it as being beneficial. However other customers say uncertainty about costs is a barrier to using the NGT app more



- Makes use of bundle 'minutes'
- Free to choose own tariff with a provider (not bound to use one provider)

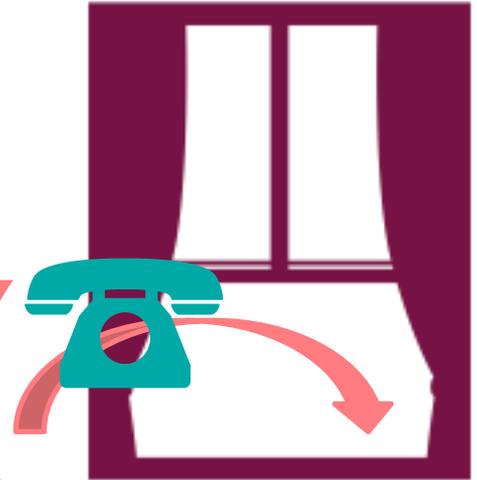
*"That's the good thing...it's cost by your phone plan. Under the old system, we had to pay a special tariff not set by the phone plan but set by TypeTalk at that time. I think it's more transparent now."*

Male, aged 30-49

No need to pay for a landline connection that do not use (as only need an internet connection and mobile phone )

*"We're moving house, we've decided not to get a landline, we don't need one, all we need is good cable broadband, fibre optic, that's it. "*

Female, aged 20-34



*"The thing that I'm wary of is some of the service within the mobile phone. The actual mobile phone companies and the costs that they're going to put on it."*

Female, aged 50+



- However some customers are uncertain about the costs of using the NGT app (preventing them from using it more)
- When out and about, some customers try to only use the NGT app in a free Wi-Fi Zone



## There are several useful features of the NGT app which improve on the experience of using textphones or Screenphones

### Using voice with 'Speak & Read' setting

- Customers can put more of their personality into the conversation
- Customers can participate more fully in conversations

*"It's so much better because I've never not used my voice...being able to express myself and use my voice. Even though I can't hear everything, I know what I'm saying."*

Male, aged 35-49

- A service that is flexible for current and future needs of customers experiencing increasing hearing loss

### More of the conversation is visible

- When using tablets/laptops more of the conversation is visible compared to text/Screenphones

*"It is quite good that you can actually see more of the conversation. On Minicom it disappeared and then it's really annoying if you want to write something down."*

Female, aged 20-34

### Saving a transcript of the conversation

- Useful to have a record of conversation for:
  - Work communications
  - Calls to utility providers and local council

*"Sometimes I've used it when someone says, 'Oh, I don't recall having that conversation.' That sort of thing does not happen very often. It's more about reminding myself."*

Male, aged 35-49

Text relay users wanted to know how to save conversation transcripts (this is done by clicking the 'calls' icon then 'save conversation').



## TextNumbers are seen as beneficial by some customers, though there are some concerns about their ability to receive SMS messages



### Online forms

TextNumbers will fit into boxes on online forms - unlike telephone numbers + the 18002 prefix

*“When you register online, or when you go to the bank, sometimes you can’t fit in the prefix.”*  
Female, aged 35-49



### The 18002 prefix causes confusion

- Lack of awareness about text relay means general public/businesses are unsure what this number is
- One participant felt the 18002 prefix enabled employer discrimination in a job application situation

*“A lot of people, when they see the 18002, would actually go, ‘Oh, don't recognise that. That's obviously really strange,’ and would disconnect and ignore it.”*  
Female, aged 50+



- However, there was some concern that if a TextNumber is mistaken for a mobile phone number and an SMS message is sent to it there is no notification that the text message has not been delivered
- Some users would prefer one combined mobile number and TextNumber



# The set up process was seen as difficult and a major barrier to using the NGT app.

**Website instructions not easy to follow**

- Described as being difficult to follow
- Language not suitable for BSL users

**Registering work tel numbers difficult**

- Not clear that tel. numbers need caller ID
- Jargon not explained

**Set up/registration call difficult**

- Not clear beforehand what need to do
- One network includes automated message

**Extra help needed beyond NGTR written instructions**

- E.g. A friend/YouTube video/organisation
- NGTR helpdesk seen as very helpful

**People put off setting up other devices**

- Some users had set up NGTR on only one device - too much hassle to do more set-up



- Users wanted an interactive step-by step guide on the website (and/or an in-app tutorial)
- There should be captioned and signed videos for BSL users

*"I think it might help if on the help page there was something that explained it more for people who don't know what a firewall is."*  
Female, aged 50+

*"It's not that straightforward, you have to go into the normal phone, punch in your number, and then go back in. It's not that obvious that that's what happens, and you do have to be shown how to make a phone call sometimes, because you have to go back into the normal phone , and then back into the app."*  
Female, aged 20-34

*"Something interactive, where you click a button. "I'm using the app for the first time", 'click here'. Next step "Right, you need to register the mobile number". You do that, then click the button and that will take you to the next step."*  
Male, aged 20-34



# A number of general usability issues were identified by participants. Not being able to import contacts into the app and a repeated error message (for one participant) caused the most inconvenience

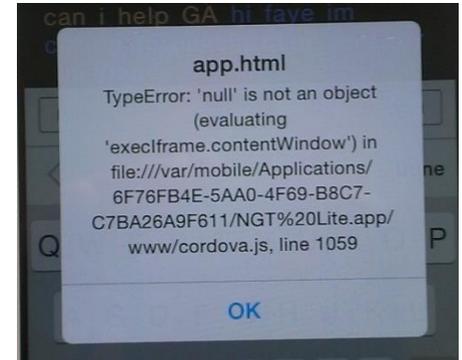
## Cannot import telephone numbers into the app

- Time consuming to enter contact list by hand
- Makes app less convenient to use when out

*“When you actually push the connect, you should be able to access your contacts through it and then be able to phone the number. Otherwise you have to go toggle backwards and forwards.”*  
Male, aged 35-49

## Repeated error message (for one participant)

- This error message repeatedly appears when using iPhone 4
- This is a bug that BT are in the process of fixing (though the website does not provide instructions on what users should do to access the fix)



## Icons not intuitive

- E.g. call operator icon

*“The icons aren’t very obvious and intuitive. What does that one mean?”*  
Female, aged 50+

## No autocorrect

- Would speed up the process of typing (correctly)

*“The mobile is so small and you're trying to type with two fingers, sometimes you might make a spelling mistake.”*  
Female, aged 50+

## App interface not attractive

- Not as important as usability issues but some users were disappointed by ‘retro’ interface

*“It reminds me of seventies or eighties computing. The design is outdated.”*  
Female, aged 35-49

# Qualitative summary



## Conclusions - Benefits of the NGT app

- Participants in the qualitative stage of the research identified a number of benefits of using the NGT app
  - **Mobility** - As the NGT app can be accessed on smartphones and laptops this enables communication 'on the go', affording:
    - **Increased independence** - Removing the need to ask friends or family to make calls to services that are required when out of the house.
    - **Greater convenience** - Text relay calls can be made and received when 'out and about', and users do not have to return home to make a call or to wait at home to receive a call through their textphone or Screenphone.
    - **Safety and security** - The NGT app enables users to book taxis if out during the evening and means that if a bank card is lost or stolen this can be reported to the bank immediately. It is also reassuring that calls to the emergency services can be made from any location.
    - **Work usage** - the NGT app enables professionals to make work calls from parts of their building that do not have a textphone or Screenphone, or when offsite.
  - **Equipment** - Accessing the text relay service through laptops, PCs, tablets or smartphones rather than through textphones and Screenphones was seen as being advantageous for two reasons:
    - **Flexibility** - As textphones and Screenphones need to be attached to a landline, they can only be used in one part of the house. The NGT app enables text relay calls to be made from any part of the house using a mobile phone.
    - **Cost saving** - Accessing text relay through the NGT app removes the need for a landline connection, meaning users in entirely deaf households no longer need to pay for this service. Some participants said accessing NGT on a smartphone uses up 'free minutes' on tariffs that may not have been previously used.
  - **TextNumbers** - Seen as being potentially more useful than the current system of adding the prefix 18002 to a telephone number for incoming calls, as the latter results in a telephone number that is often too long to fit the space provided on online contact details forms. Participants also felt that low awareness of text relay among the general public means some people assume the 18002 prefix is an error or an international number and will not call it.

## Conclusions - Barriers to further use

- A key barrier to using the NGT app identified by participants was the process of activating it, which was seen as being very difficult. Some participants required help from a friend or family member who had already set up the NGT app to be able to set it up themselves:
  - **Poor instructions on the NGTR website** - The instructions on the set up were seen as being difficult to follow.
  - **Activation call** - The activation call that is required as part of the set-up process is not explained clearly in the website instructions and some participants found it difficult to complete.
  - **Improvements** - Participants wanted the set up instructions to adopt a clearer step-by-step approach and ideally to include captioned videos showing the different steps. Participants wanted a BSL signed version of the videos to also be available. Some participants wanted the app to have a 'set-up tutorial' built into it so that, when it is opened for the first time, users are taken through the set up process with step-by-step instructions.
- Other barriers to further usage related to:
  - **Incoming calls** - There was a lack of awareness on how to receive incoming calls. It was commonly believed that when the app is in 'disconnected' mode (which happens automatically after 2 minutes of inactivity), calls cannot be received.
  - **Costs** - Some participants were concerned about incurring large bills for phone calls or data usage and tried to limit their usage of the app. When out and about some participants tried to lower costs by trying to use the app in free Wi-Fi zones where possible.
  - **Set up on additional devices** - Some participants had not yet set up the NGT app on their laptop or tablet due to lack of awareness of how to do this; the negative experience of setting up a first device had made them reluctant to investigate how to do the set-up.
  - **'Bugs' with the app** - One participant with an iPhone 4 received an error message repeatedly when using the app. Although BT are fixing this problem, the webpages on its site about problems are not easy to find and also do not contain a timeframe for fixing the problem or information about what users should do to access the 'fix'.

# Recommendations of research participants

## Improving the set-up instructions displayed on the NGTS website

- Participants experienced real difficulty with the NGT app set up process due to the set up instructions on the NGTS website not being at all clear. They wanted the instructions on the NGTS website to be in clearer a step-by-step format and to be accompanied by videos.
- Although there have been recent updates to the website, including the addition of more pictures and videos, there is scope for further improvements and we recommend that:
  - Videos should be captioned and versions including a BSL signer should be included.
  - The set up section should be a 'Step-by-step' guide to set up with a clearer 'Step 1', 'Step 2' 'Step 3' structure
  - There should be a prominent note inviting users to call the NGT helpdesk if they are experiencing any difficulties or have any questions
  - User testing should be undertaken (including BSL users) to guide the updating process.



## Informing text relay users of changes to the website

- The research suggests that there may be people who would like to use the NGT app but who have not been able to successfully set it up (on one or more devices).
- Organisations such as AOHL and NADP have been running training events to support people in downloading and using the NGT app. We would suggest that these organisations may be willing to publicise any changes to the website or the fact that that users experiencing problems can call the NGTS helpdesk via text relay to receive help with set up and usage of the NGT app.
- Given there may be situations in future where further 'bugs' occur with the app, we would suggest that the NGTS web pages about these potential problems (and a timeframe for fixing them) should be positioned in a more prominent place on the website. We also wonder whether, in the long term, an efficient way of informing users about new service features would be to collect email addresses and issue an e-newsletter periodically.

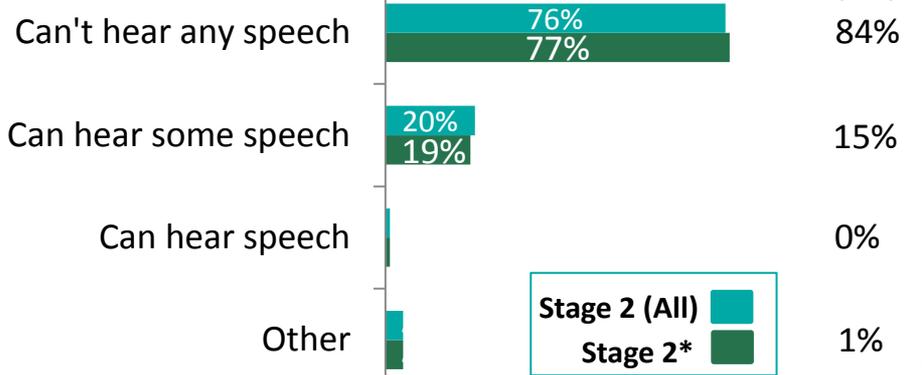


# Quantitative research - Demographics



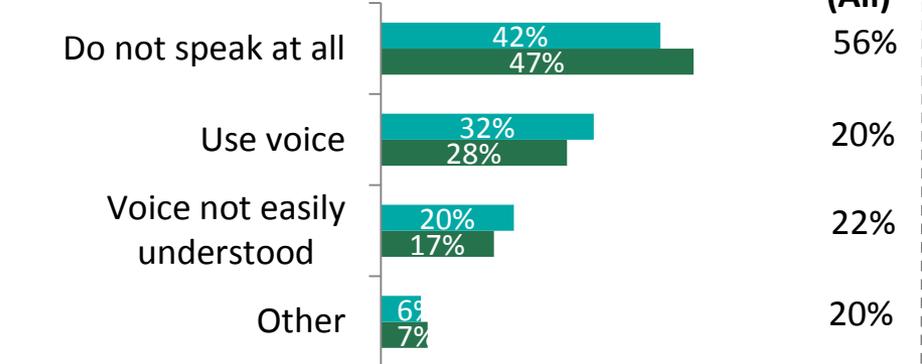
# 84% of those interviewed at Stage 2 self-identified as deaf and 12% as hearing impaired. The majority can't hear any speech over the telephone, but 32% use their voice to speak in telephone conversations

## Level of hearing on telephone (Stage 2)



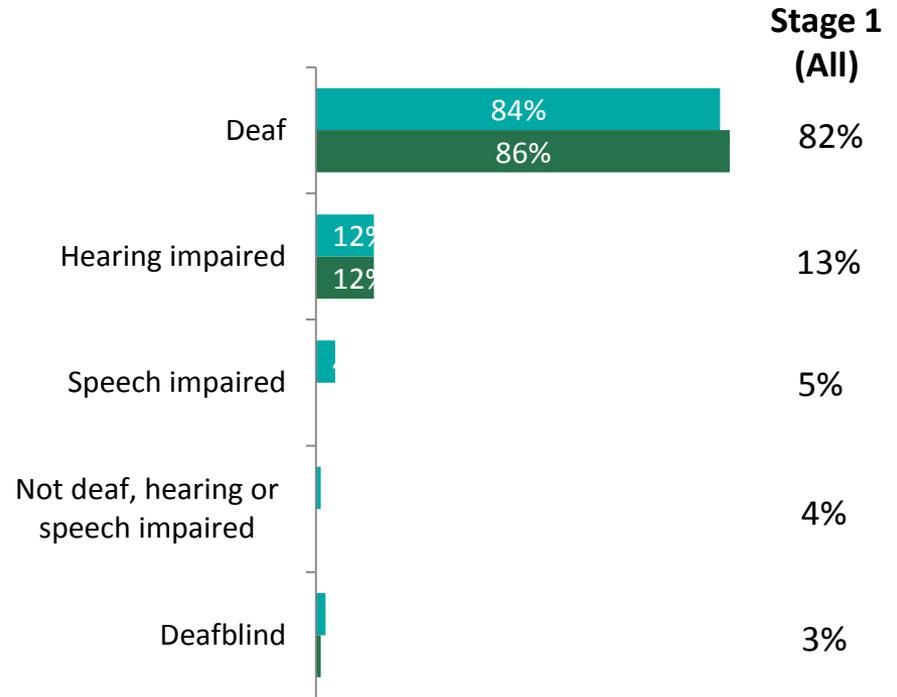
Q1A. Please can you tell me which best describes you when using the telephone?  
Base: All who are deaf / impaired : Stage 2 (111); Stage 2\*(81) ; Stage 1 (169)

## Level of speech on telephone (Stage 2)



Q1B. Please can you tell me which best describes you when using the telephone? Base:  
All who are deaf / impaired : Stage 2 (111); Stage 2\*(81) ; Stage 1 (169)

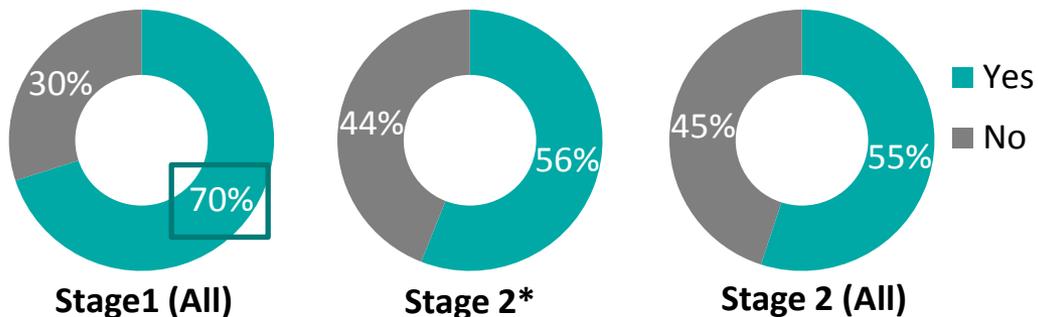
## Profile of text relay users (self-defined) Stage 2



S2. Please can you select which of the following options best describes you?  
Base: All respondents – Stage 2 (112); Stage 2\*(81) ; Stage 1 (169)  
NB The S2 classification question was a multicode which is why the above categories don't add up to 100%.

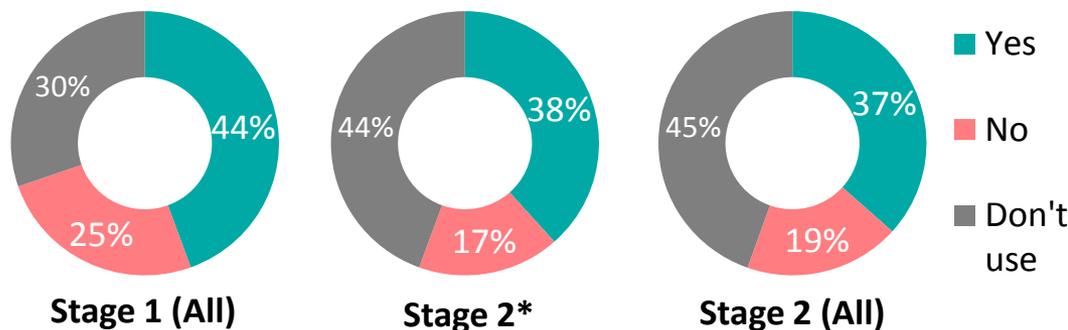
Overall the age and BSL usage profile differs slightly between Stages 1 and 2. For the rest of the report Stage 1 and 2 comparisons are made only between those who completed both stages (unless specified)

### Do you use British Sign Language?



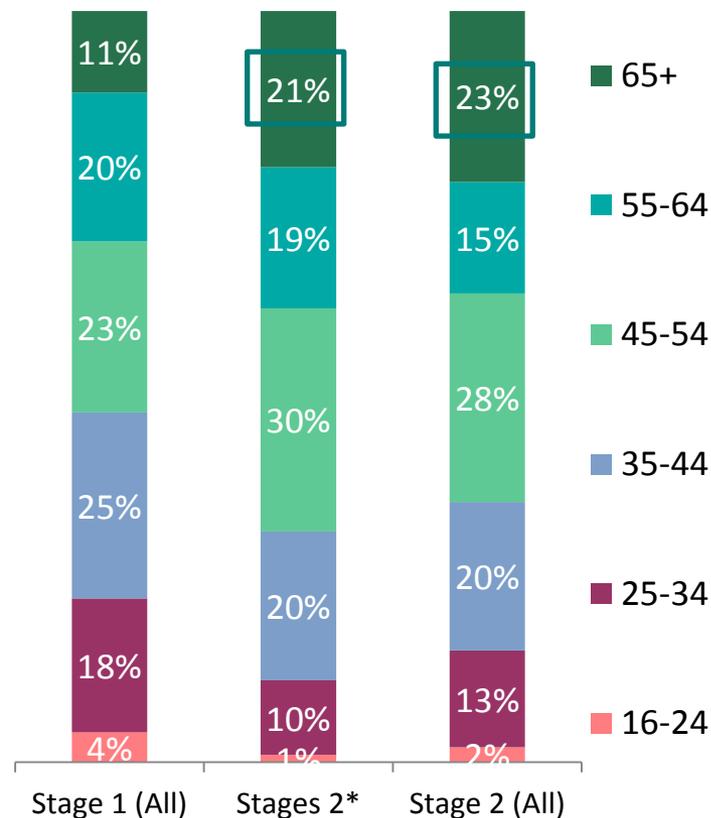
Q16. Do you use BSL? Base: All respondents: Stage 2 (112); Stage 2\*(81); Stage 1\*(81)

### Is British Sign Language your main language?



Q16b. Is BSL your main language? Base: All respondents Stage 2 (112); Stage 2\*(81); Stage 1(169)

### Age



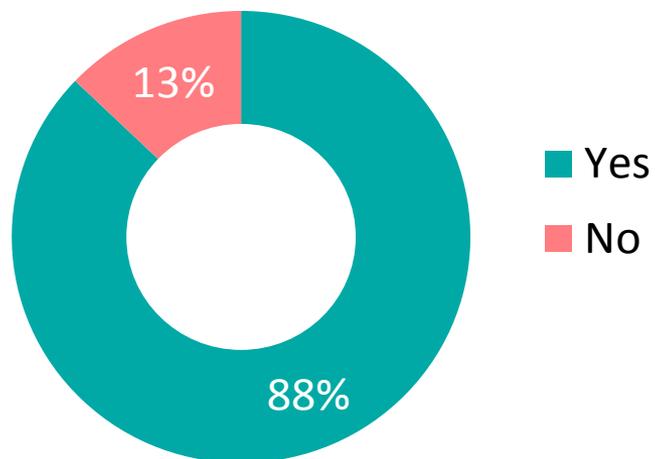
Q18. Which of the following age bands do you belong to? Base: All respondents - Stage 2 (112); Stage 2\*(81); Stage 1 (169)

## Device use

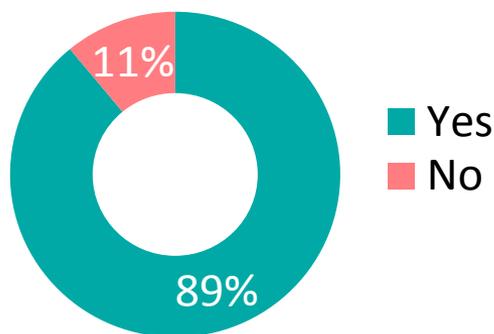


# The NGT app has been used by 64% of Stage 2 participants who are aware of it, and half (50%) of Stage 2 participants continue to use it

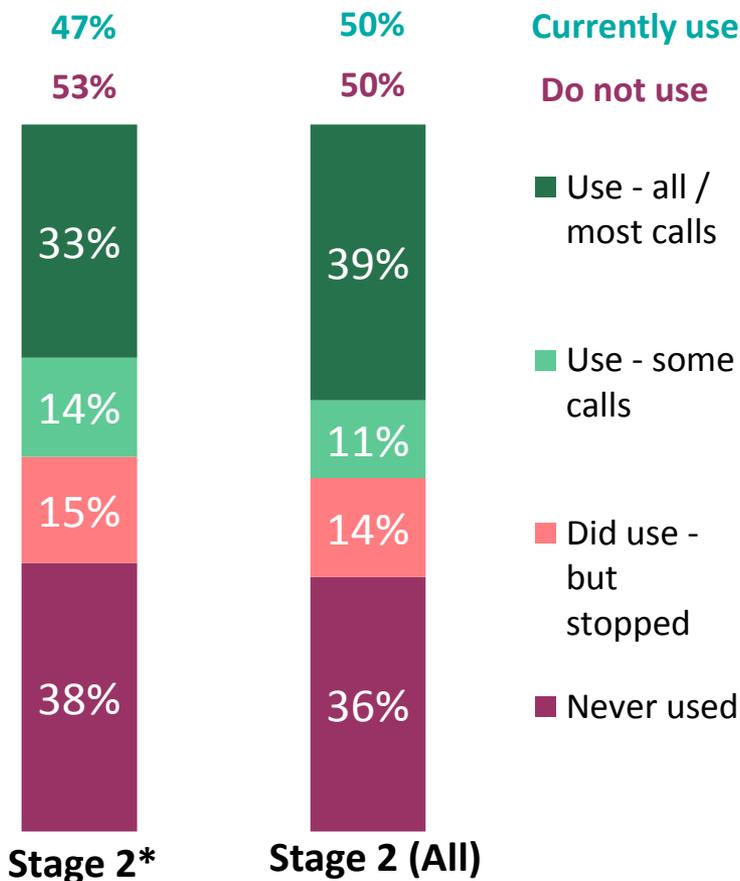
**Awareness of NGT app (Stage 2 - All)**



**Awareness of NGT app (Stage 2\*)**



**Usage of NGT app among those aware**

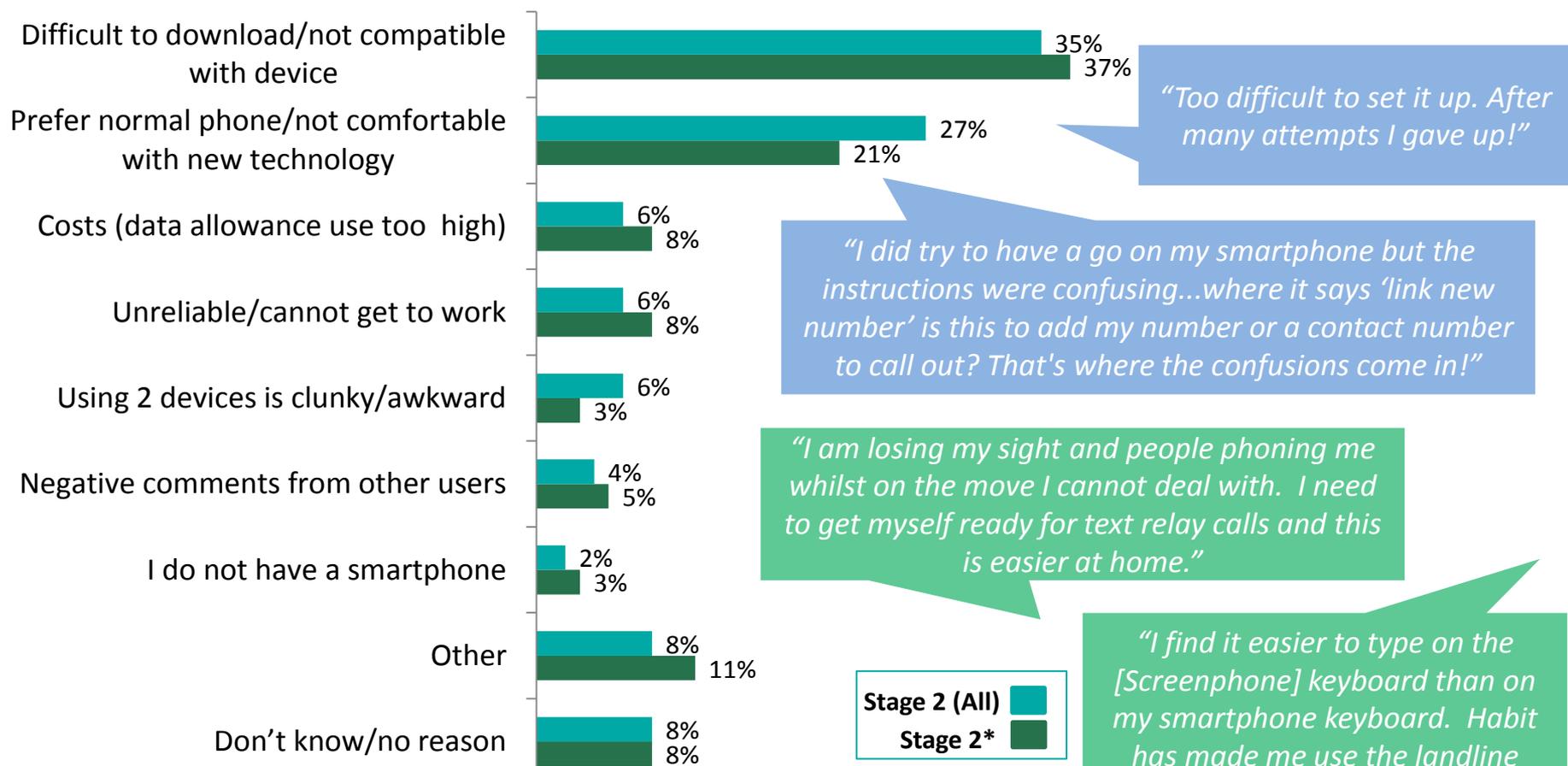


Q3N. Before today were you aware of a new version of the text relay service that could be accessed via an app in smartphones, tablets, laptops and PCs?  
Base: Stage 2 (112); Stage 2\*(81)

Q3N1. Which one of the following best describes your usage of the text relay service on the NGT Lite app?  
Base: All aware of the NGT Lite App: Stage 2 - All (98); Stage 2\* (72)

# A third (35%) of those who are aware of the NGT app have not used it or have stopped using it due to difficulties with how to set it up or operate it

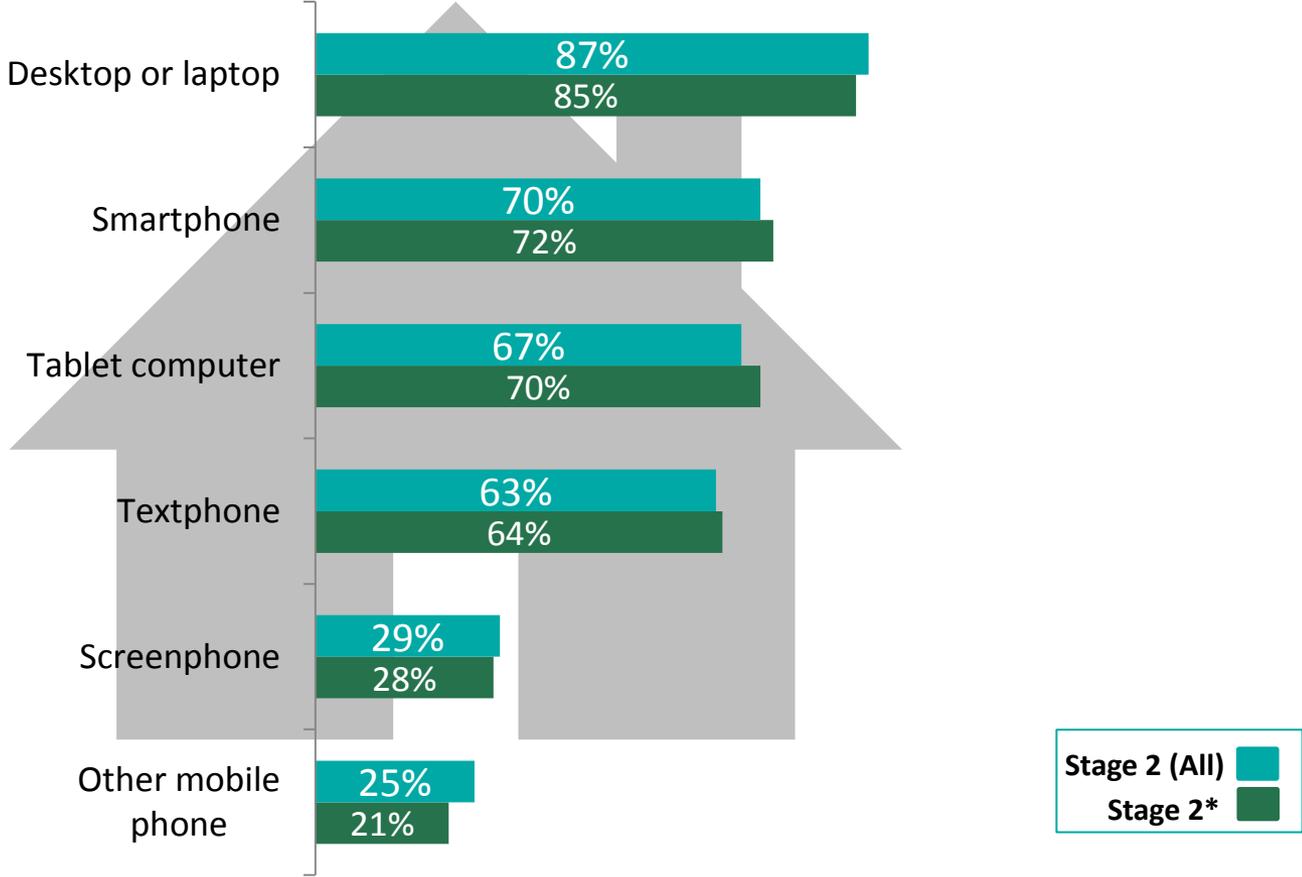
## Reasons for not using or stopping using the NGT app (among those aware of it)



Q3N2. Why have you stopped using/not used the NGT Lite app? Base: All participants who have stopped using or never used the NGT Lite app but who are aware of it - Stage 2(49); Stage 2\* (38)

# A high proportion of those not using the NGT app are using devices such as a laptop, smartphone or tablet for other activities

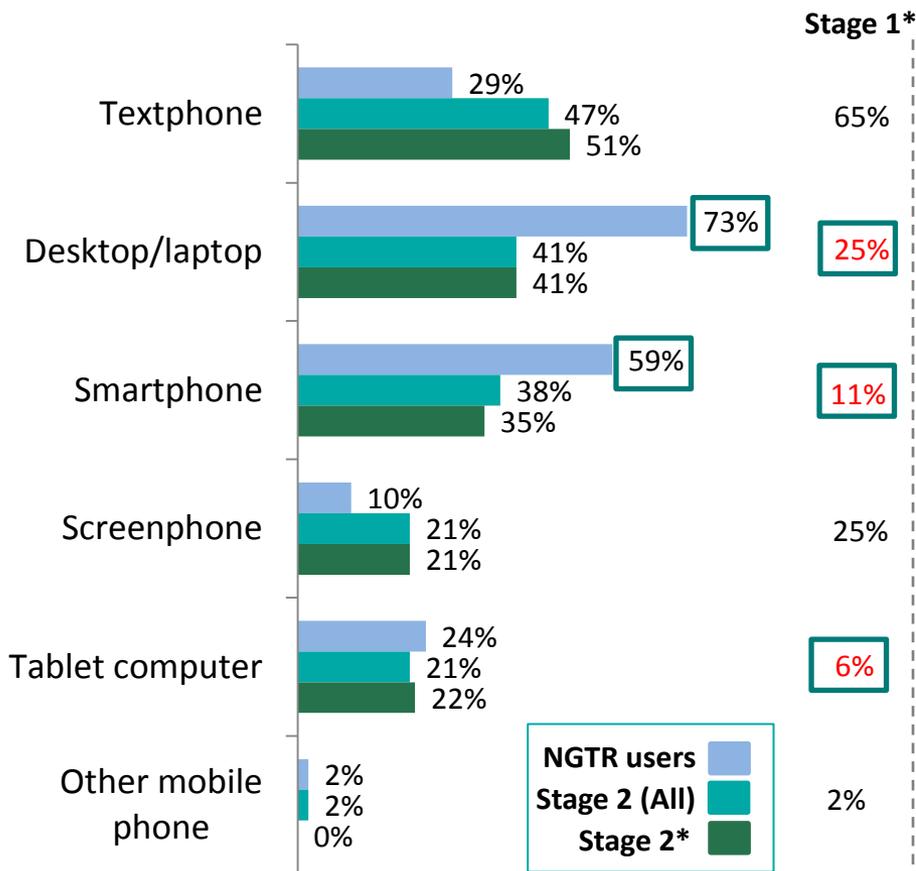
### Devices used at home by those not using the NGT app



Q15. Which of these devices and equipment do you use at home?  
Base: All respondents not using the NGT Lite app Stage 2 - All (63); Stage 2\* (47)

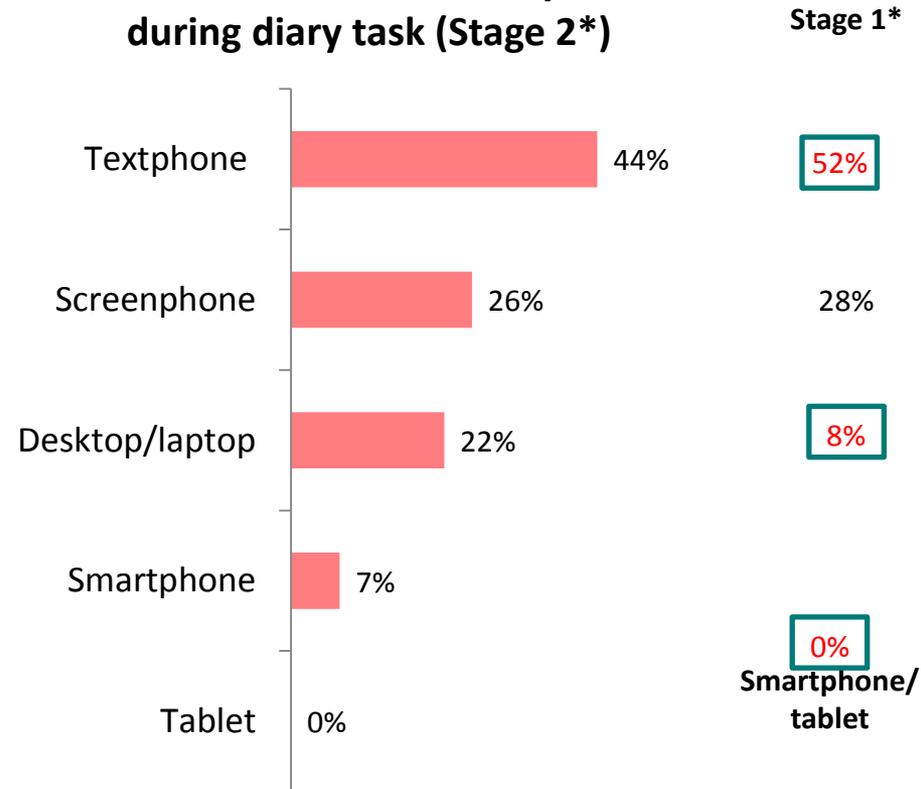
# Use of mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets has increased since Stage 1. NGT app users are most likely to make text relay calls on a laptop/desktop

## Devices used for text relay calls



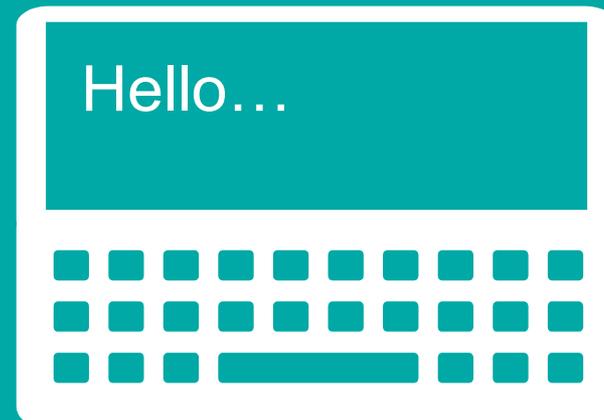
Q4. What devices or equipment do you use for text relay calls? Base: All respondents: Stage 2NGT Lite users (49); Stage 2 (112); Stage 2\*(81); Stage 1\*(81)

## Devices used for text relay calls during diary task (Stage 2\*)



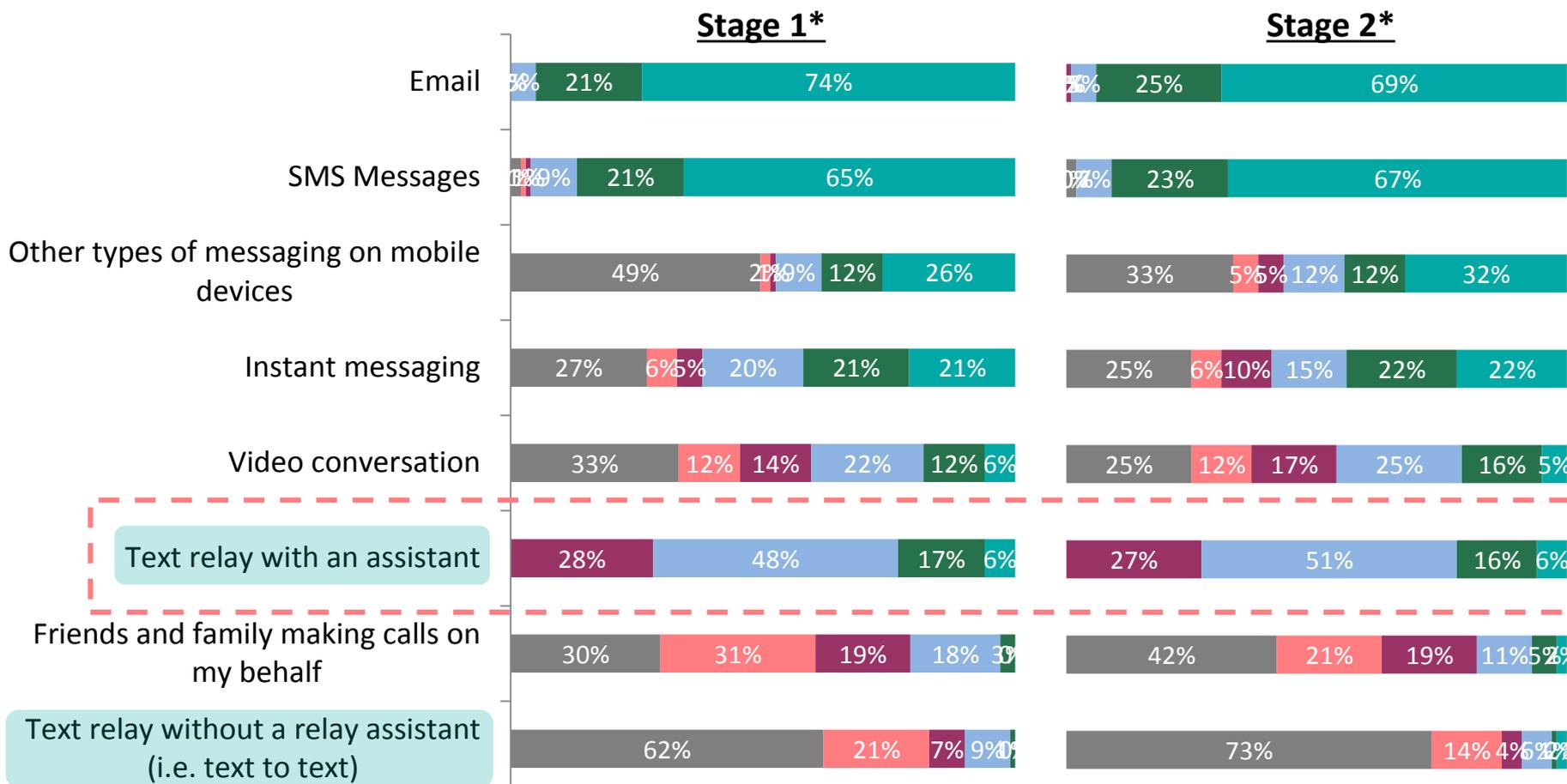
Diary: Q4. Equipment used to make the call? Base: Stage 2\* 266 calls; Stage 1\* 195

# Text relay usage



# Participants are using text relay with a relay assistant as frequently as they were during Stage 1

## Frequency of using communication methods

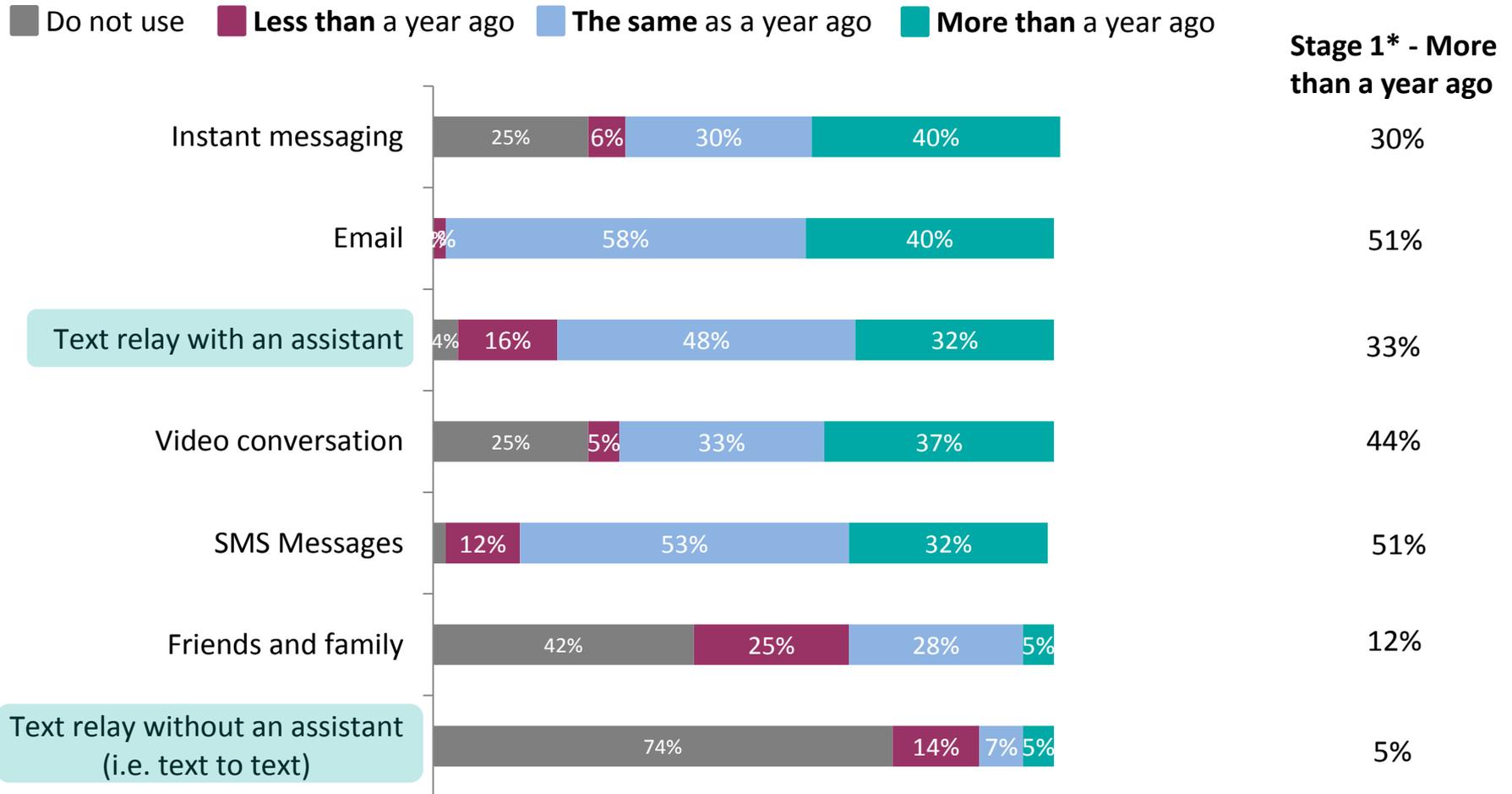


Q5. How often do you use each of the following to communicate with others?

Base: All Stage 2 respondents who took part in Stage 1 (81); Stage 1 respondents who took part in Stage 2 (81)

# A third (32%) of participants who took part in Stage 1 are using the text relay with a relay assistant more than they were a year ago

## Frequency of using communication methods (compared to a year ago)

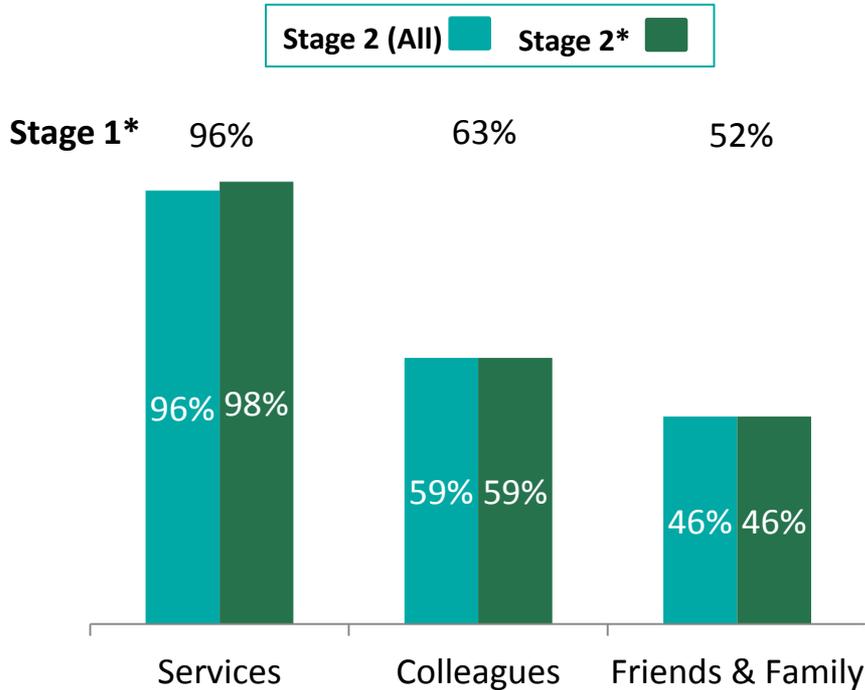


Q6. Are you using the following to communicate more, less or the same as you were a year ago?

Base: Stage 2\*(81) ; Stage 1\*(81)

# The service is more frequently used in a functional capacity to contact services or colleagues as opposed to being used for socialising with family and friends

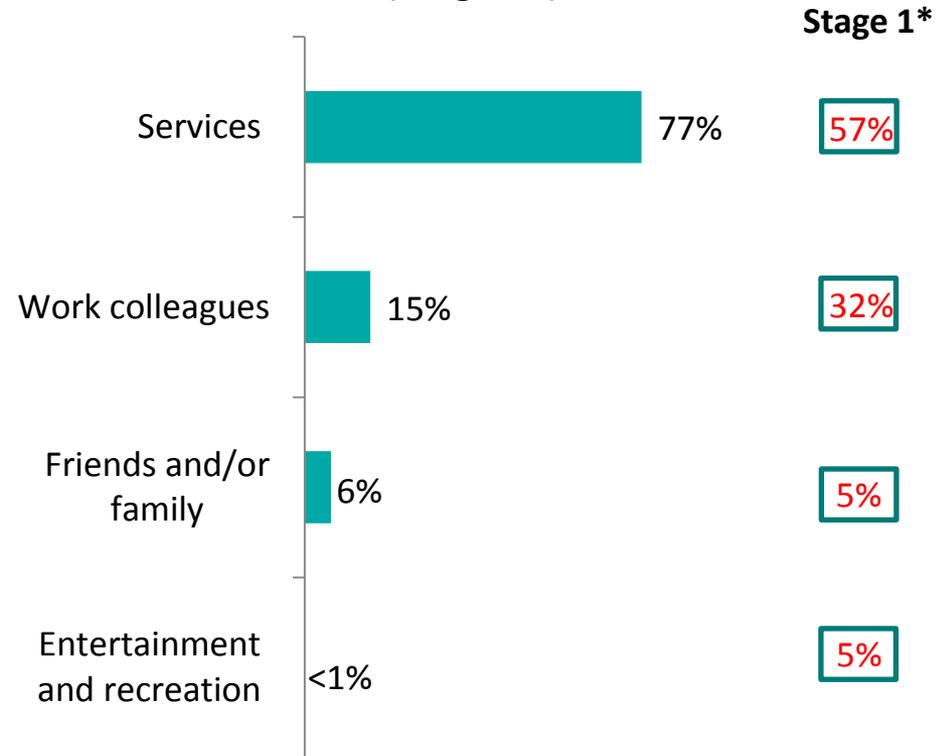
Groups of people contacted by the text relay service



Q3. Do you use the text relay service involving a relay assistant/operator to communicate with any of these?

Base: All respondents - Stage 2 (112) Stage 2\*(81) ; Stage 1\*(81)

Groups of people diary calls were with (Stage 2\*)

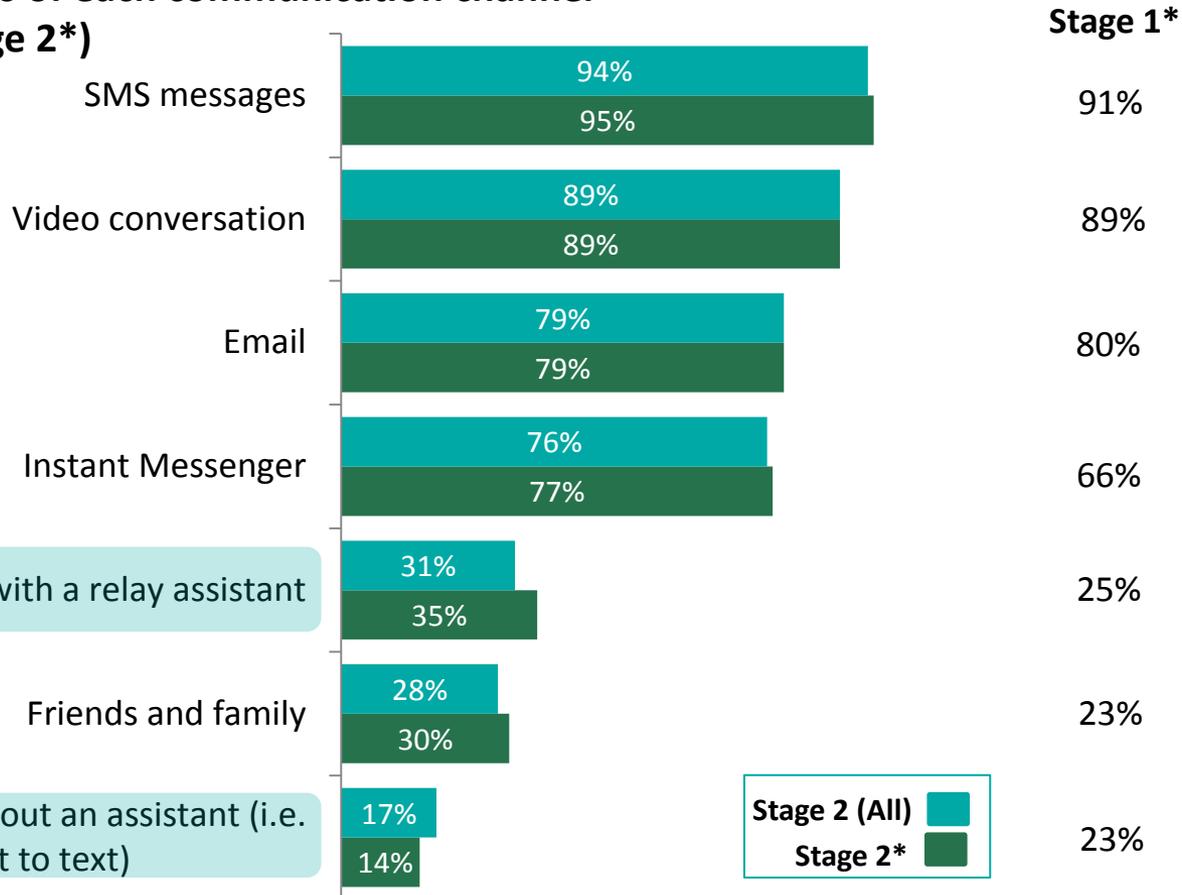


Diary: Q5. Who was the call with?

Base: All Stage 2\* 258 calls; All Stage 1\*(195)

# As with Stage 1, the service is not favoured as much as other forms of communication when it comes to making social calls with friends and family

**Main methods used to communicate with friends & family  
- among users of each communication channel  
(Stage 2/Stage 2\*)**

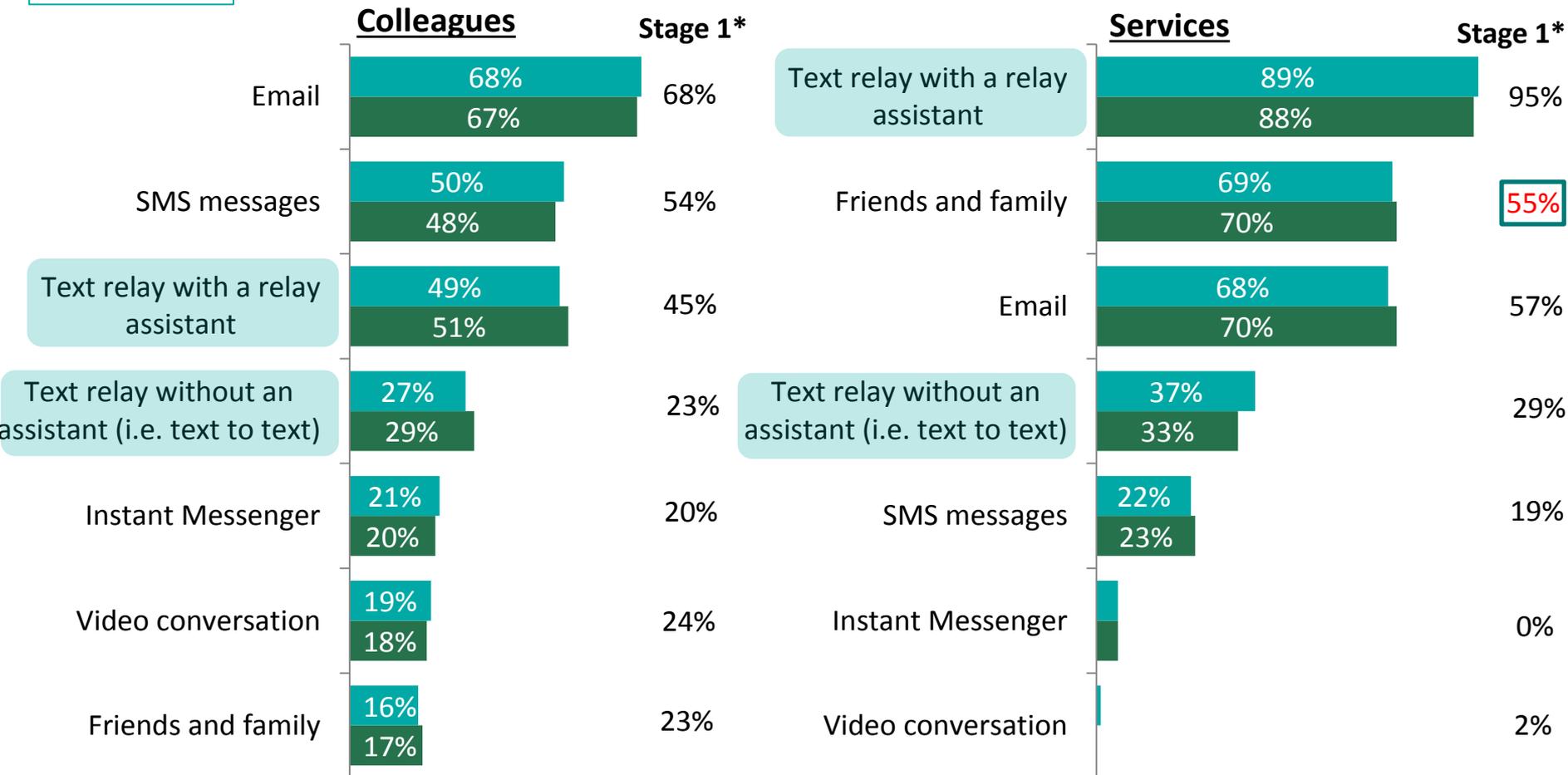


Q7. Which of the following are the main methods you use to communicate with the groups listed below? Base: All users of each channel at Stage 1, Stage 2\* and Stage 2 (All): SMS users (79; 79; 109); video conversation users (54; 61; 81); email users (81; 81; 111); text relay users –with relay assistant (81; 81; 112); text relay users - without a relay assistant (31; 21; 30); friends and family making calls on their behalf (56; 47; 68); instant messenger users (59; 61; 86)

# Text relay continues to be a key means of contacting services as well as being an important means of conversing with colleagues and clients

Stage 2 (All) ■  
Stage 2\* ■

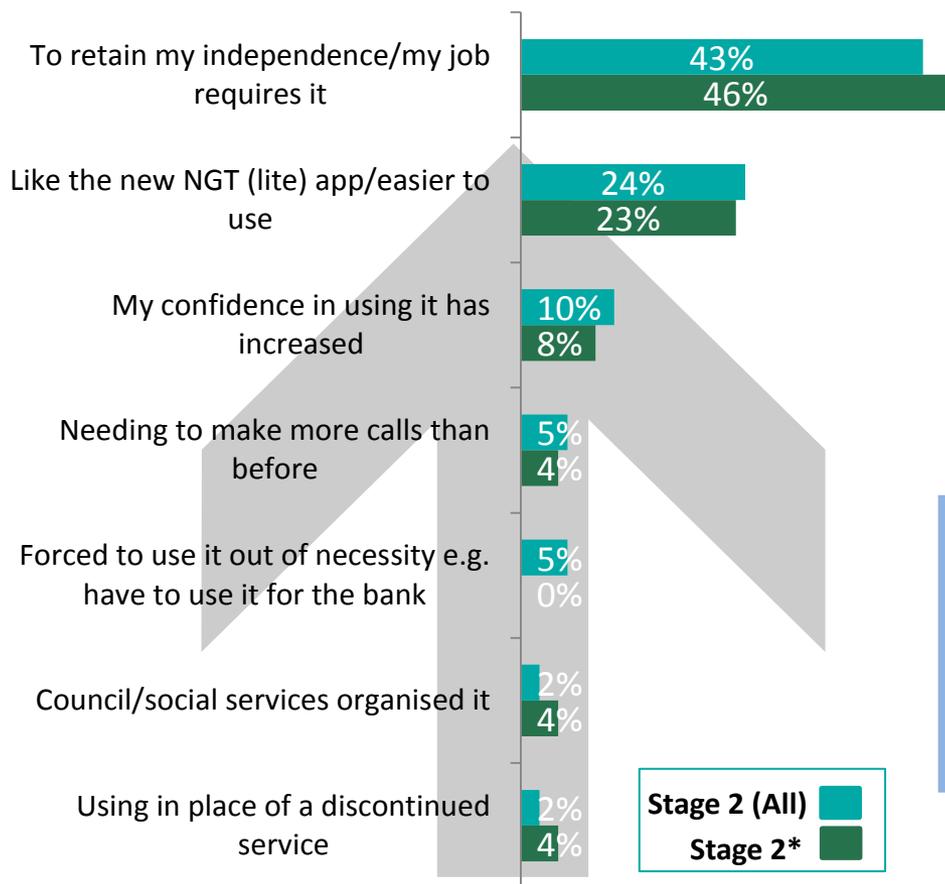
Main methods used to communicate with colleagues/services (Stage 2/Stage 2\*) among users of each communication channel



Q7. Which of the following are the main methods you use to communicate with the groups listed below? Base: All users of each channel at Stage 1, Stage 2\* and Stage 2 (All): SMS users (79; 79; 109); video conversation users (54; 61; 81); email users (81; 81; 111); text relay users –with relay assistant (81; 81; 112); text relay users - without a relay assistant (31; 21; 30); friends and family making calls on their behalf (56; 47; 68); instant messenger users (59; 61; 86)

# A quarter (24%) of those using the text relay service with a relay assistant more than they did a year ago are doing so because of the NGT app

## Reasons for using text relay service with an assistant more than a year ago



*"The new NGT Lite app makes it a lot easier."*

*"it is now available as an app, therefore making it more accessible than ever before."*

*"Because of the availability of the NGT Lite app. Previously I had been using the RNID service, which was discontinued, and then the TC Phone app developed by Aupix, which required an extra payment and was not very user-friendly."*

Q6b. Why are you using the text relay service using a relay assistant more than you did a year ago?

Base: All respondents using the text relay service more than a year ago Stage 2 (All) (42); Stage 2\* (26) CAUTION: Low Base

Overall, 362 calls were made, of which 90% were connected and 10% weren't. Approaching half of calls were less than 10 minutes in length

## Diary call length



**71%** of calls recorded were 10 minutes or less in length

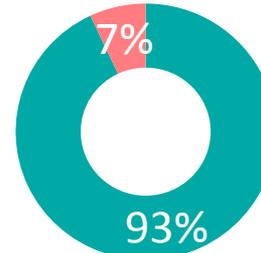
The most recorded call length (**18%**) was five minutes

**10 minutes** was the average call length

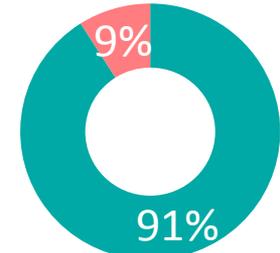
- 41 - 60 minutes
- 21 - 40 minutes
- 16 - 20 minutes
- 11 - 15 minutes
- 6 - 10 minutes
- 1 - 5 minutes

Diary: Q3. Length of call Base: All Stage 2\* 244 calls

## Call connected



Stage 1\*

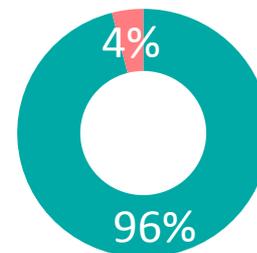


Stage 2\*

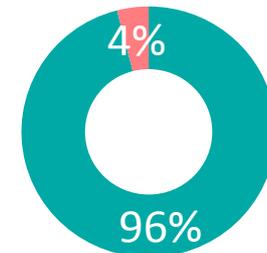
Yes  
No

Diary: Q2. Call connected?  
Base: Stage 2\* 268 Stage 1\* 195 calls

## Made or received call



Stage 1\*



Stage 2\*

Make  
Receive

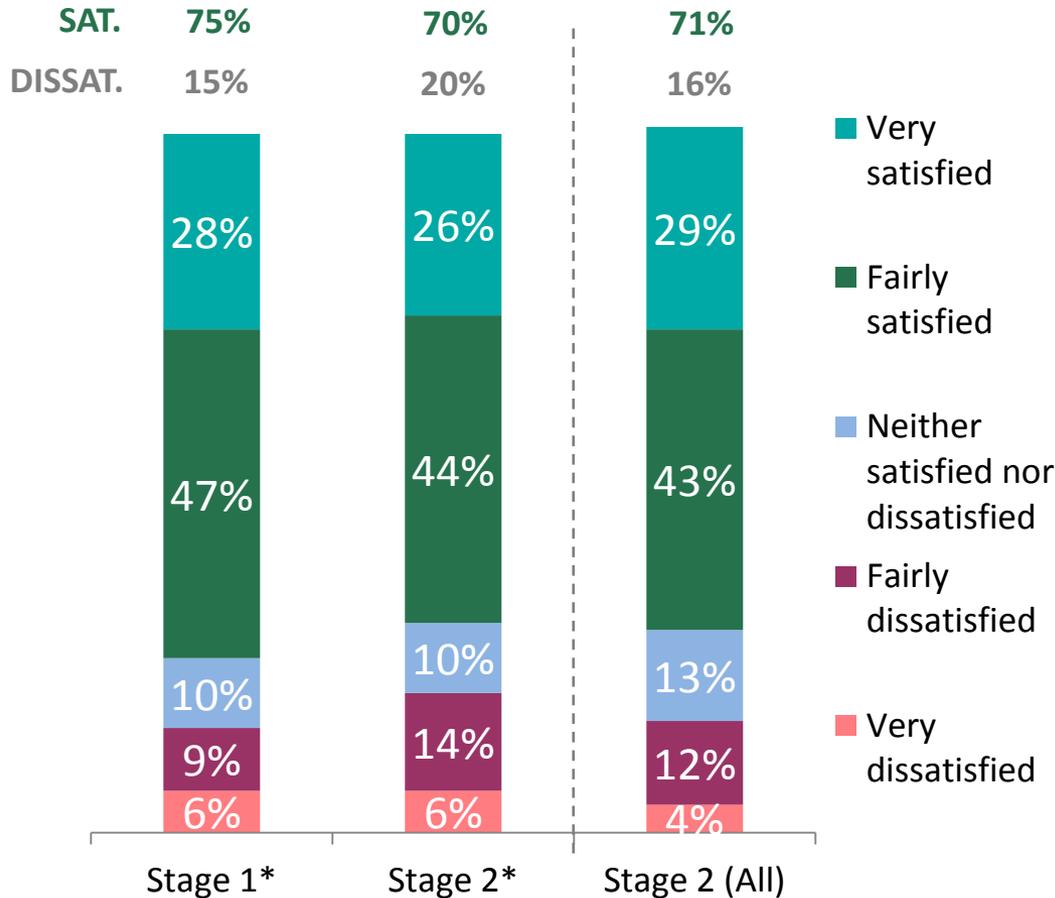
Diary: Q1. Make or receive calls?  
Base: Stage 2\* 268 Stage 1\* 195 calls

# Satisfaction with the service

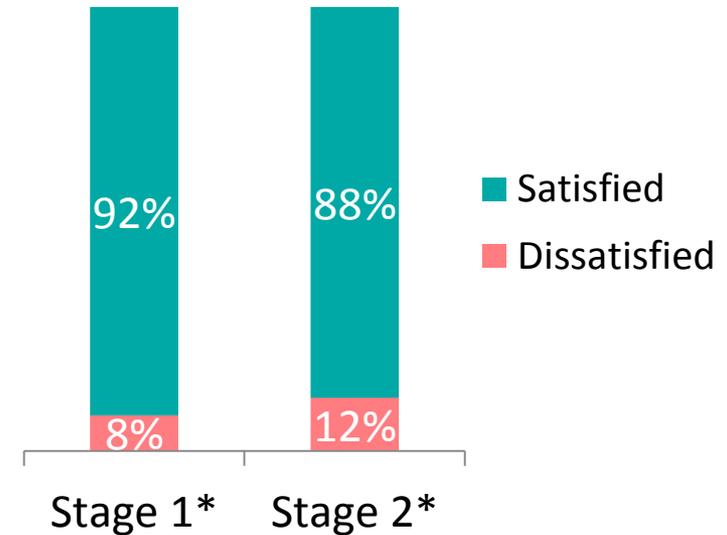


# In line with Stage 1, 71% of those we surveyed at Stage 2 were satisfied with the service, and 89% of the customer calls recorded in the diary were satisfactory

## Overall satisfaction with text relay service



## Satisfaction with the text relay service during diary calls

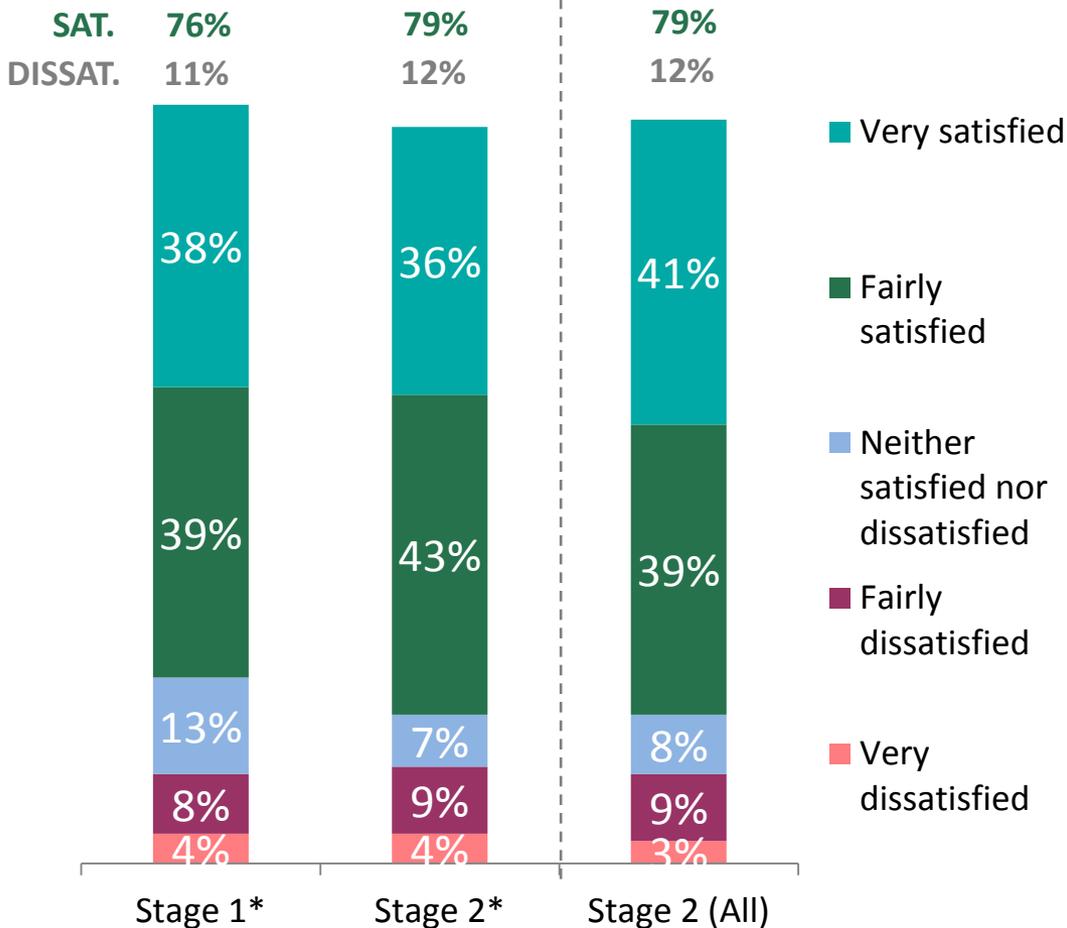


Diary: Q7i. Satisfaction overall  
 Base: Stage 2\* 243 calls; Stage 1\* 181 calls

Q8. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the text relay service generally?  
 Base: All respondents Stage 2 (112) Stage 2\*(81) ; Stage 1\*(81)

# In line with Stage 1, satisfaction with the text relay assistants' spelling is high at 79%. However, in the diary task, satisfaction with spelling has decreased from 95% at Stage 1 to 90% at Stage 2

## Satisfaction with spelling of text relay assistants



## Diary: Satisfaction with spelling

At Stage 1\*, the spelling of the relay assistant in 95% of the calls recorded in the diary was considered satisfactory...



This decreased to 90% at Stage 2

## Diary: Satisfaction with speed of conversation

At Stage 1\*, the conversation speed in 92% of the calls recorded in the diary was considered satisfactory.

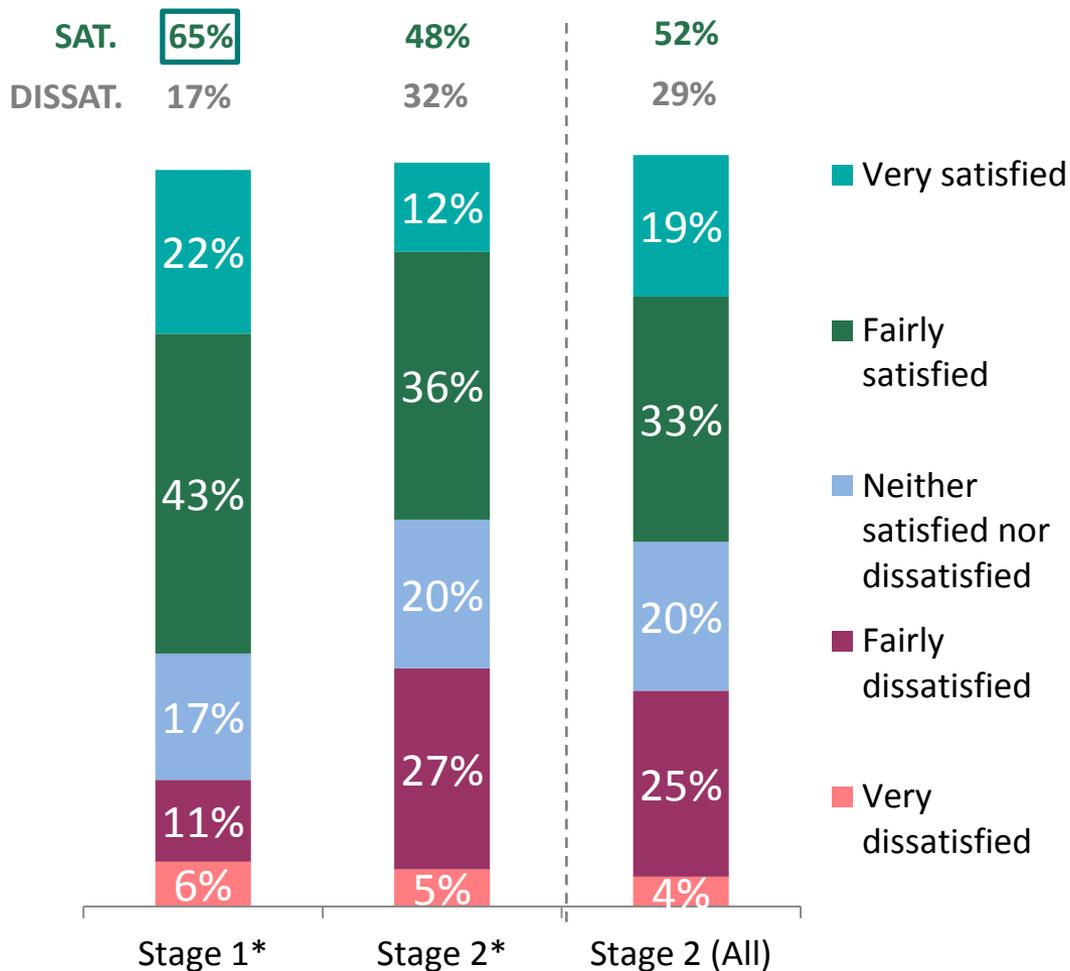
90% of calls at Stage 2\* were reported as being satisfactory

Diary: Q7iii and Q7iiii

Base: Stage 2\* 243 calls, Stage 1\* 181 calls

Q9. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the spelling of the text typed by the relay assistant during calls through the service? Base: Those who are deaf or impaired S2 – All (111) Stage 2\*(81) ; Stage 1\*(81)

# 48% of Stage 2 participants who took part in Stage 1 were satisfied with the speed at which text relay calls are answered which is lower satisfaction rating than this group gave at Stage 1



Q10. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with how quickly the relay assistant answers your call?  
Base: All respondents S2 – All (112) Stage 2\*(81) ; Stage 1\*(81)

# Satisfaction levels among those using the NGT app were the same as with the overall sample

## Text relay service overall

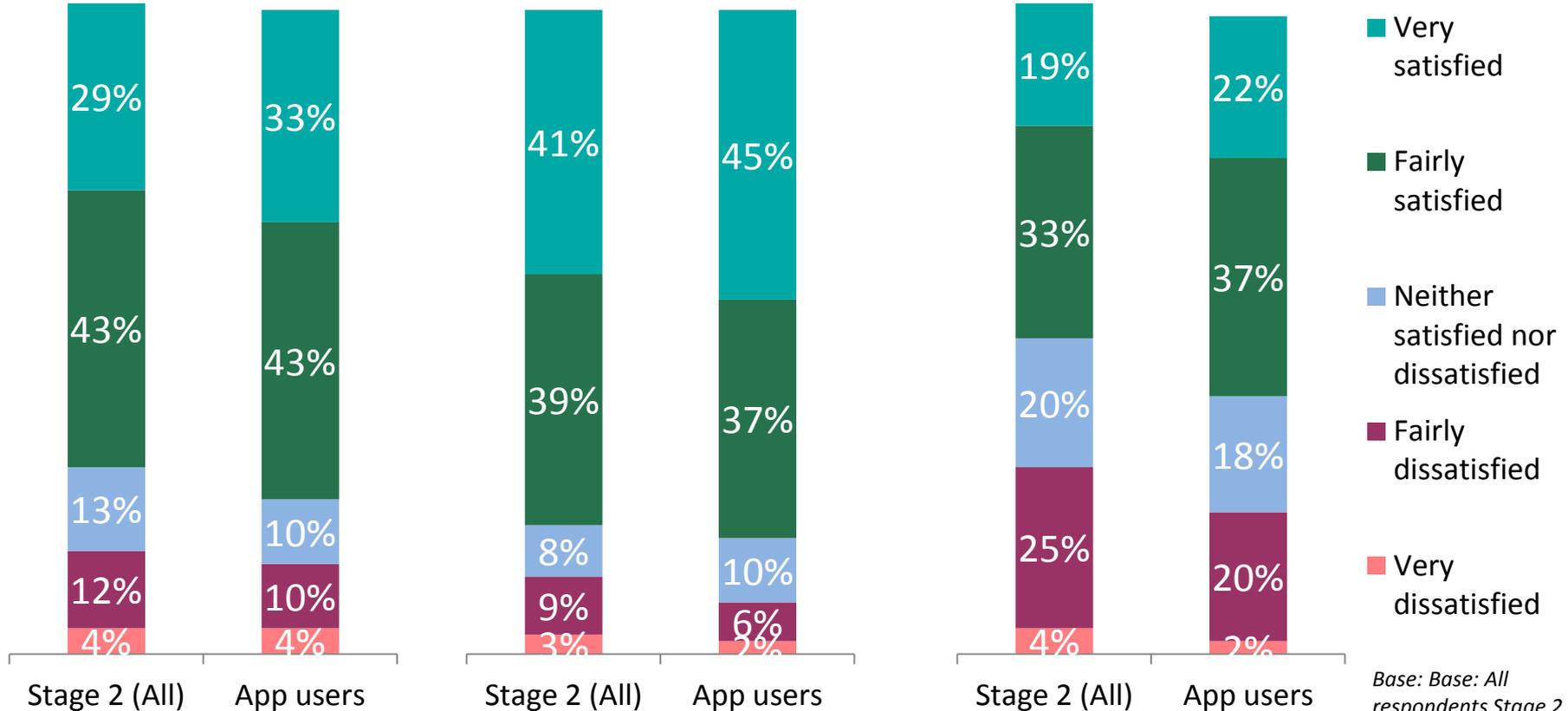
## Spelling of the text typed by the relay assistant

## How quickly relay assistants answer calls

SAT. 71%      76%  
DISSAT. 16%    14%

79%      82%  
12%      8%

52%      59%  
29%      22%



Q8. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the text relay service generally?

Q9. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the spelling of the text typed by the relay assistant

Q10. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with how quickly the relay assistant answers your call?

Base: Base: All respondents Stage 2 (112), All Stage 2 NGTR users (49)

# Satisfaction levels among NGT app users were the same as with the overall sample

## Text relay service overall

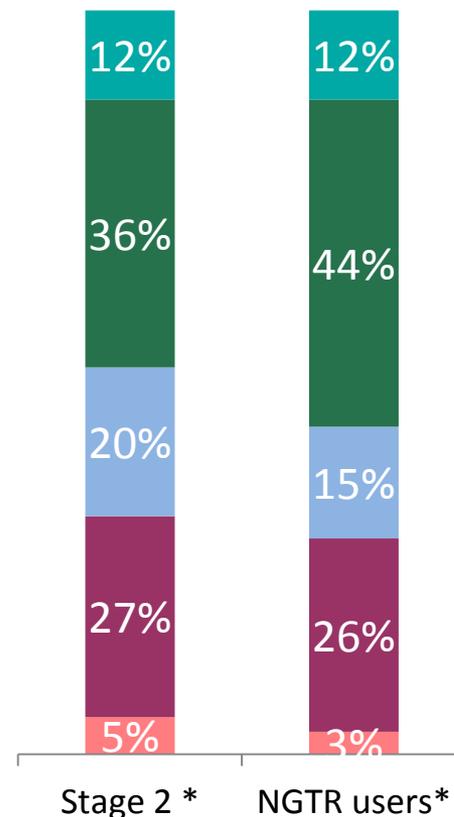
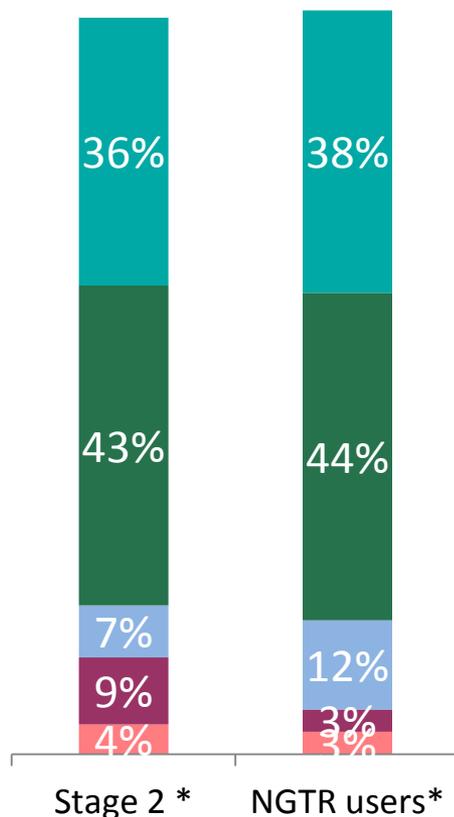
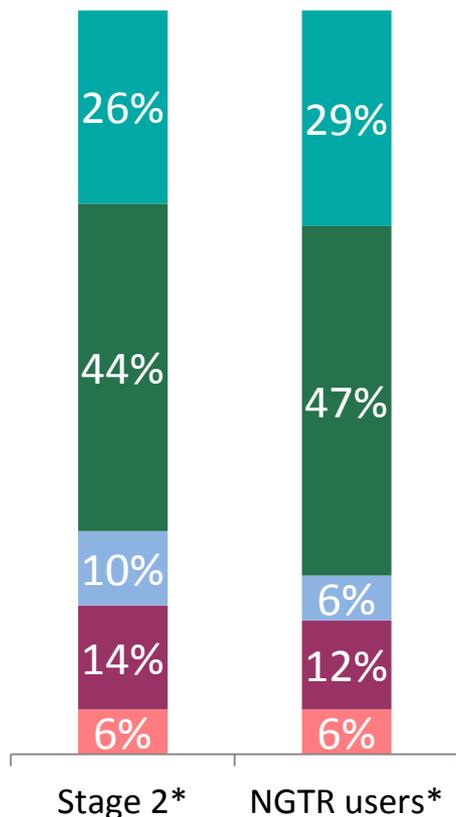
## Spelling of the text typed by the relay assistant

## How quickly relay assistants answer calls

SAT. 70% 76%  
DISSAT. 20% 18%

79% 82%  
12% 6%

48% 56%  
32% 29%



- Very satisfied
- Fairly satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Fairly dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

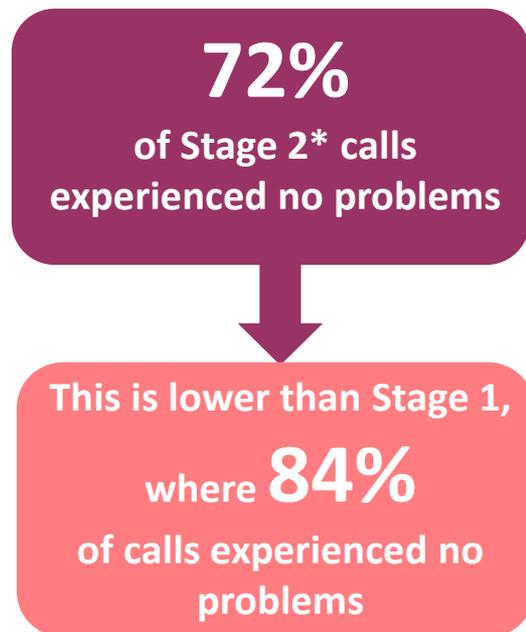
Q8. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the text relay service generally?

Q9. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the spelling of the text typed by the relay assistant

Q10. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with how quickly the relay assistant answers your call?

Base: Base: All respondents Stage 2\* (81), All Stage 2 NGTR users\*(34)

At Stage 2, 7 out of 10 calls to the text relay service experienced no problems, whereas at Stage 1, 8 out of 10 calls experienced no problems.



## Stage 2 Diary issues:

(% of all connected calls)

**10%** long time to get through to a relay assistant

**6%** issues with the operator and errors

**2%** bad customer service from the relay assistant

**2%** switched relay assistant

**2%** issues with person on other end of phone  
i.e. hung up

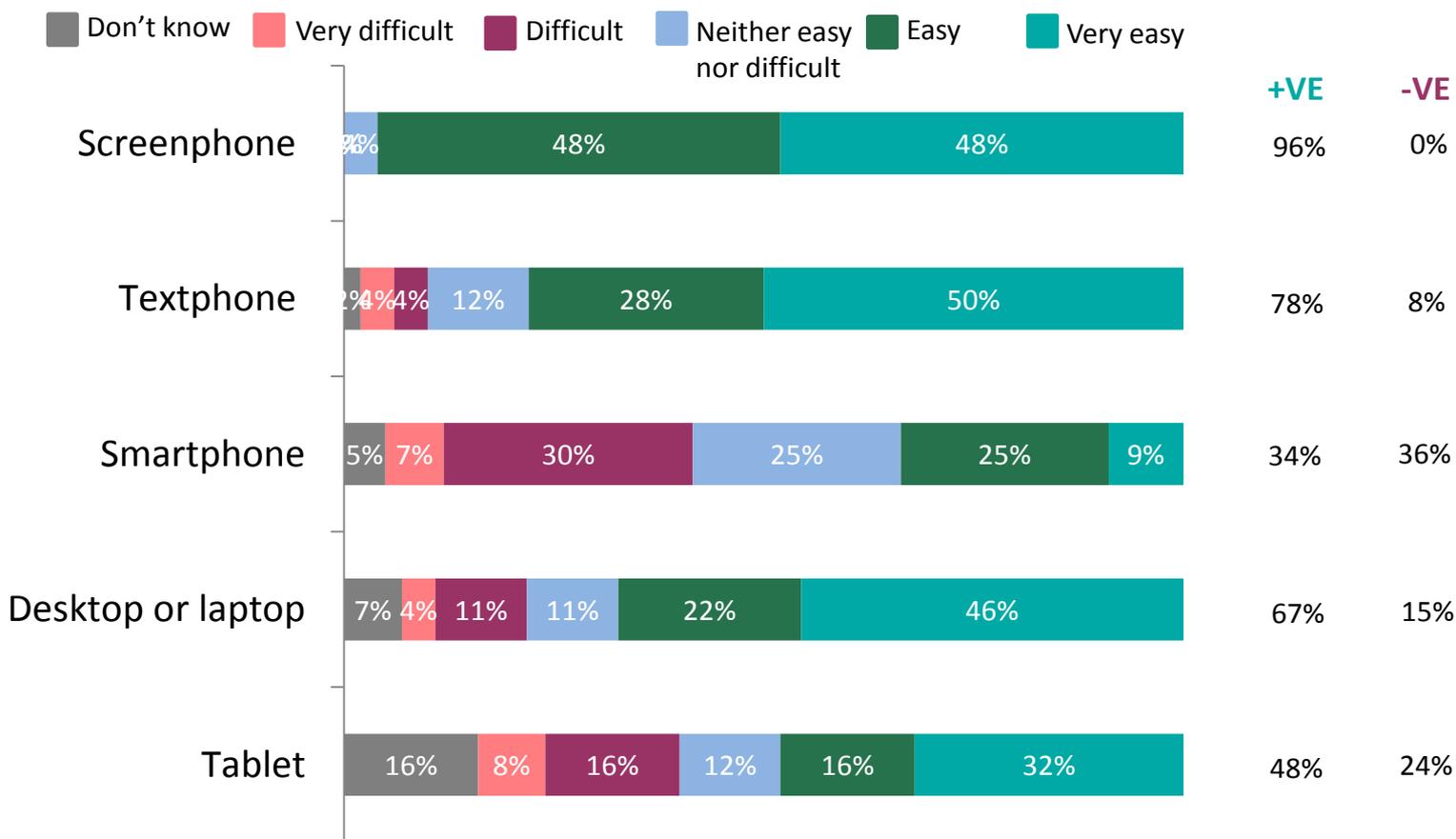
*Diary: Q6. Any issues with the text relay service? Base: Stage 2\* 243 calls, Stage 1\* 181 calls*

# Satisfaction with the service by devices used



# The text relay service was considered less easy to use on smartphones and tablets than on desktop or laptop computers, textphones and Screenphones

## Ease of use of text relay service with different devices

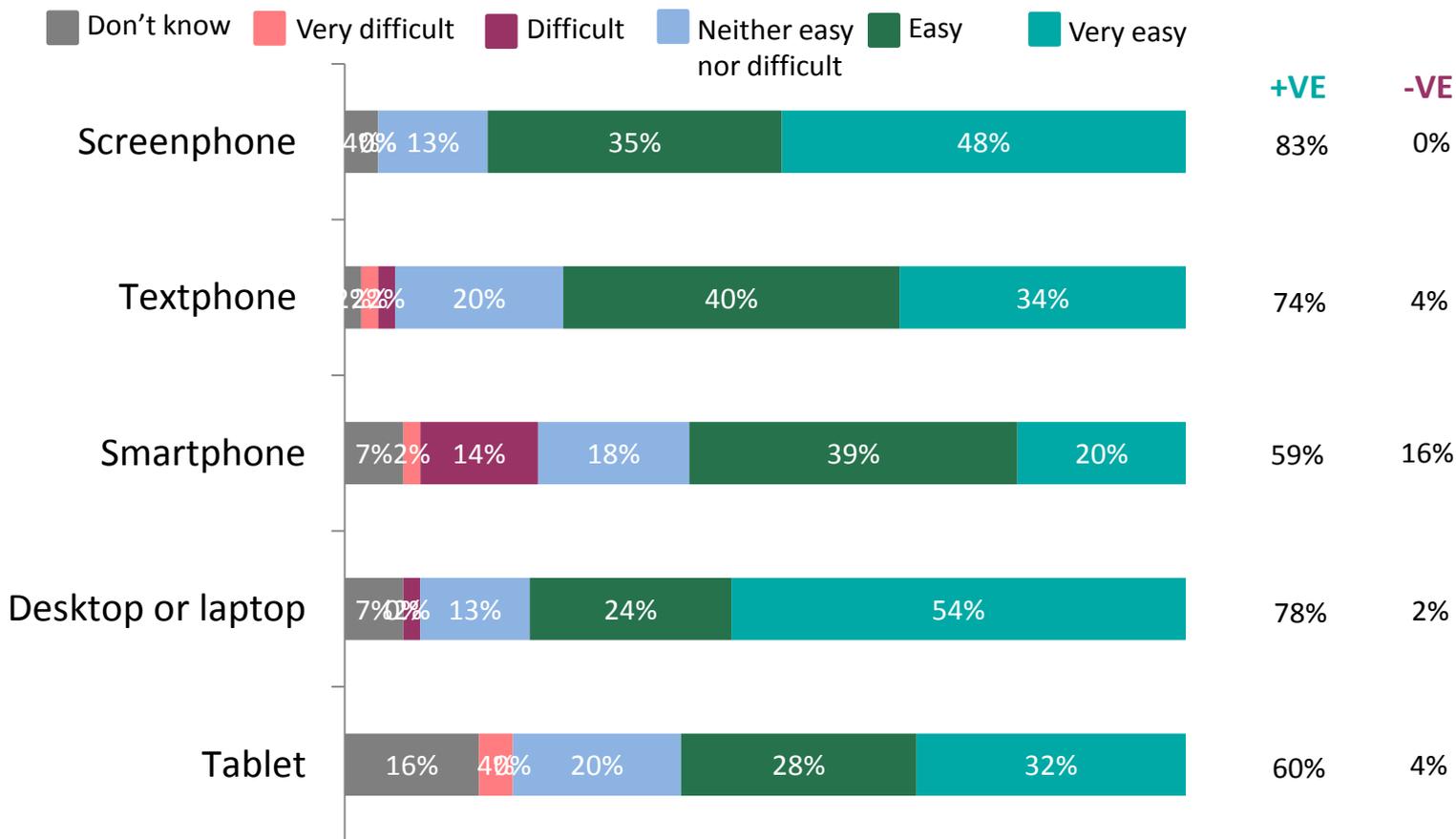


Q11. How easy or difficult would you say the text relay service is to use?

Base: All Stage 2 - Textphone users (50), Screenphone users (23), Smartphone users (44), Desktop/laptop users (46), Tablet users (25)

# Smartphones were seen as being the least easy devices on which to follow a text relay conversation

## Ease of following text relay conversation with different devices

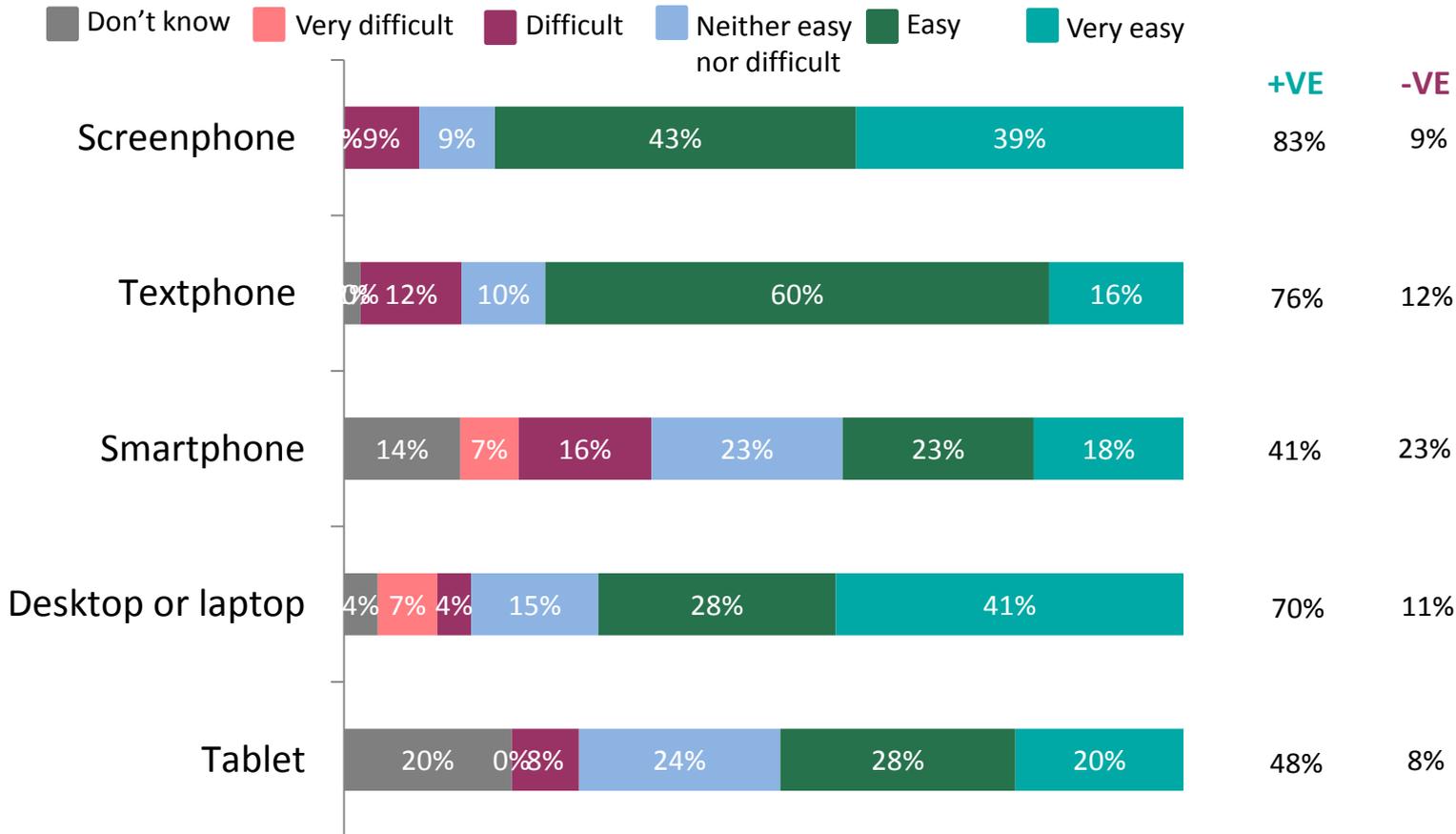


Q11. How easy or difficult is it to follow the conversation using the text relay service?

Base: All Stage 2 - Textphone users (50), Screenphone users (23), Smartphone users (44), Desktop/laptop users (46), Tablet users (25)

Similarly, smartphones were the devices seen as being least easy on which to follow the flow of the conversation when using the service.

### Satisfaction with flow of the text relay conversation with different devices

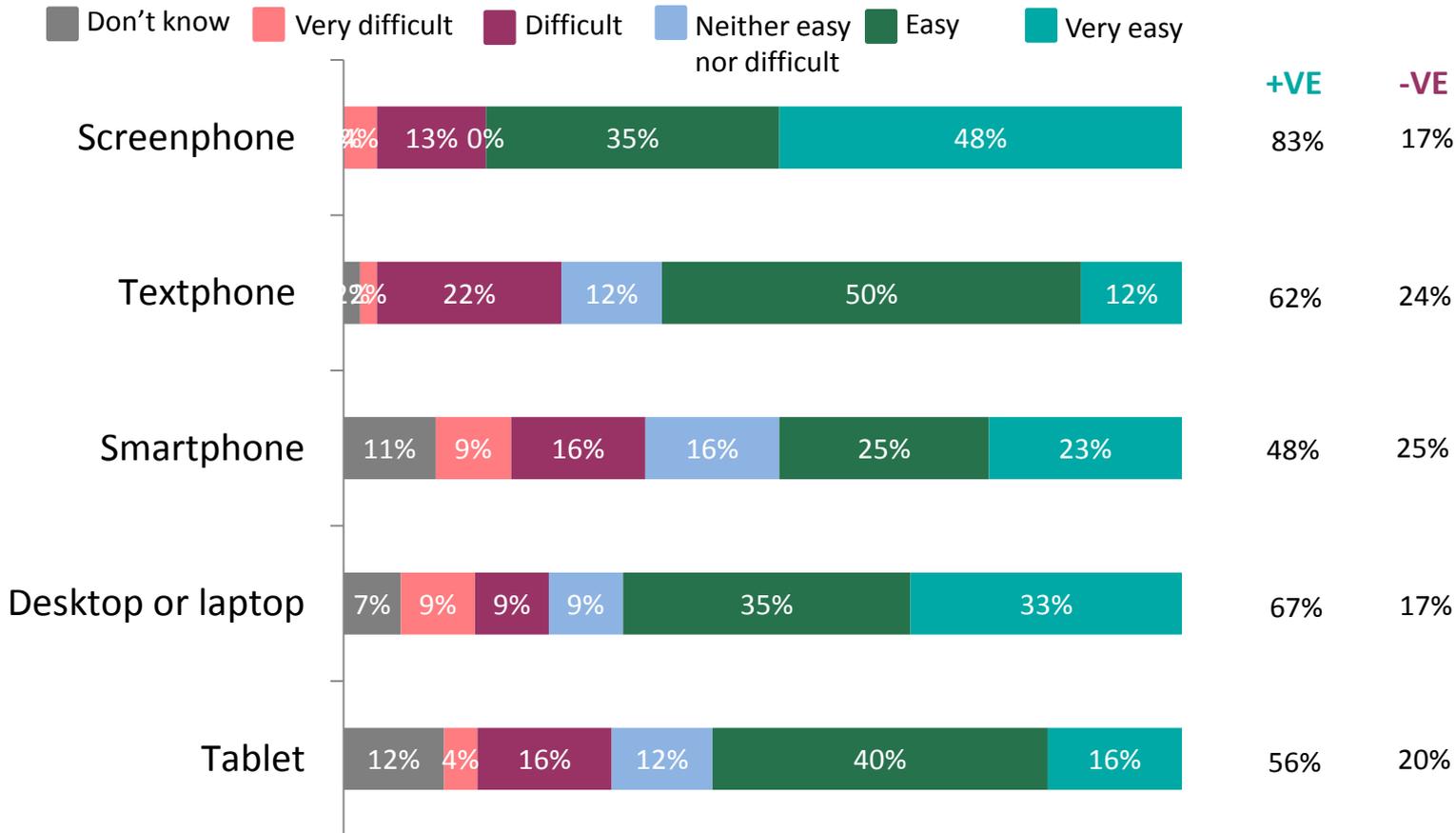


Q11b. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the flow of the conversation using the text relay service?

Base: All Stage 2 Textphone users (50), Screenphone users (23), Smartphone users (44), Desktop/laptop users (46), Tablet users (25)

# Smartphones and textphones were seen as being the least satisfactory devices regarding the time it takes to have a text relay conversation

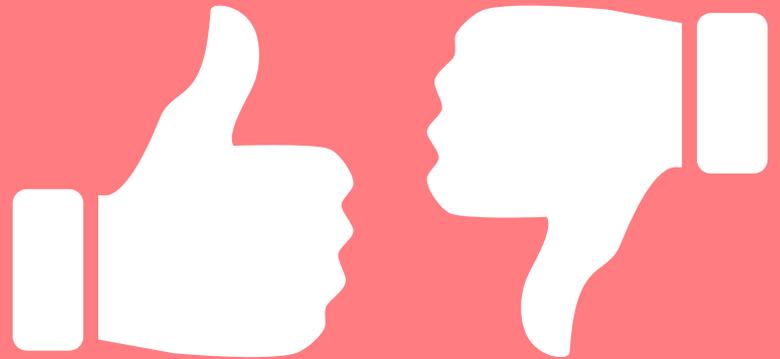
## Satisfaction with the time it takes to have a conversation using the text relay conversation with different devices



Q11b. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the time it takes to have a conversation using the text relay service?

Base: All Stage 2 Textphone users (50), Screenphone users (23), Smartphone users (44), Desktop/laptop users (46), Tablet users (25)

# Advantages, disadvantages and improvements



# Ease of use is a key factor in why different devices are used. Accessibility of the service was seen as an advantage for using smartphones, laptops and tablets

## Top 3 Advantages of using the text relay service with different devices (Stage 2\*)

Advantage	Advantage for devices used (Caution: Low base sizes)				
	Textphone (39)	Screenphone (16)	Smartphone (30)	Desktop / laptop (33)	Tablet (19)
Accessibility	0	1	20	2	8
Allows deaf people to use the phone to communicate with hearing people	8	5	4	1	1
Easy to use/understand	11	9	1	18	8
Provides independence	5	2	4	3	2
Fast/near real time	6	0	3	1	3
Don't need to use a computer/accessible via landline	3	1	2	0	0
Good in emergencies	5	0	4	0	1
Reasonably priced	2	0	1	1	0

Q13. What, if any, do you think are the advantages of using the text relay service with [DEVICE]?

Base: Stage 2\* Textphone users (39), Screenphone users (16), Smartphone users (30), Desktop/laptop users (33), Tablet users (19)

Across all devices, a key disadvantage was lack of information about the other person. Technical issues such as loss of connection were also mentioned.

**Top 3** Disadvantages of using the text relay service with different devices (Stage 2\*)

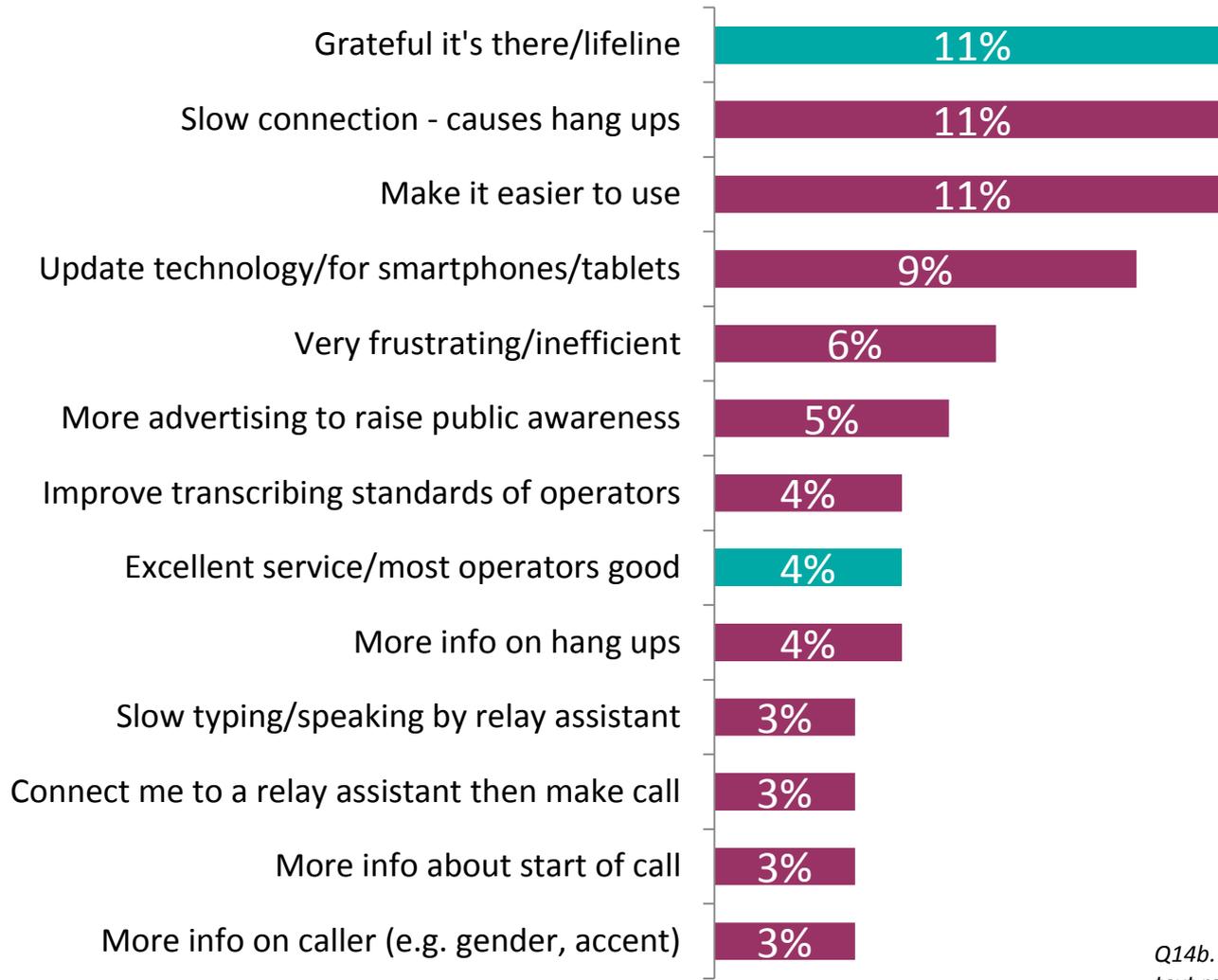
Disadvantage	Disadvantage for devices used (Caution: Low base sizes)				
	Textphone (39)	Screenphone (16)	Smartphone (30)	Desktop / laptop (33)	Tablet (19)
Too slow/time consuming	8	2	2	2	0
Lack of awareness of the service/hearing people refuse to take the calls	5	4	0	0	0
Lack of facilities/information on call	8	5	4	4	2
Getting cut off/connection/technical issues	3	4	13	5	1
Complicated to use	4	0	8	5	2
Lack of flow in conversation - unable to interrupt	1	0	0	0	0
Difficult to transmit feelings and understand context	3	1	0	0	0
Doesn't work with mobile phones	3	1	0	0	0
Nothing in particular	3	3	2	9	6

Q12. What, if any, do you think are the disadvantages of the text relay service with [DEVICE]?

Base: All Stage 2 Textphone users (39), Screenphone users (16), Smartphone users (30), Desktop/laptop users (33), Tablet users (19)

# Additional comments focused on a range of issues, with technical issues such as slow connections and ease of use being most frequently mentioned.

## Additional comments about text relay service (Stage 2 – All)



Q14b. Do you have any additional comments about the text relay service? Base: All Stage 2 respondents (112)

# Conclusions and Recommendations

## Conclusions and recommendations - NGTR usage

- Eighty eight per cent of Stage 2 participants were aware of the NGT app and 64% of those aware of the app have used it at least once.
- Fifty per cent of those aware of the app continue to use it, with 39% using the app for all text relay calls and 11% using it for some calls. Among those who said they were using text relay more than a year ago, 24% said this was because of the NGT app.
- Seventy three per cent of NGTR users make text relay calls using laptops/desktops, 59% use smartphones and 24% use tablets. NGTR users have not completely abandoned their old equipment; 29% still use a textphone to make text relay calls and 10% use a Screenphone.
- Of those Stage 2 participants who were aware of the app but who do not currently use it, 14% had used it but then stopped and 36% had not used it at all. Among participants who had not used the app or had stopped using it, 35% said this was because of difficulties in setting up app or that the app is not compatible with devices they have, 27% said they are not comfortable with new technology, 6% were concerned about how much usage would cost and 6% said that NGTR is unreliable and does not work sometimes.
- In terms of ease of use, text relay users found it less easy to use text relay with the 'newer' devices (that are used to access NGTR than with the 'older' devices); whereas 96% of Stage 2 participants found it easy to use text relay with a Screenphone and 78% found it easy to use text relay with a textphone, 67% found using a desktop/laptop/PC with text relay easy, 48% found using a tablet easy and 34% found using a smartphone easy.
- The key reasons for using text relay with these newer devices was accessibility; 68% of smartphone users said that an advantage of using a smartphone to make text relay calls was that it makes the service easily accessible because they already had a smartphone, and 32% of tablet users mentioned accessibility of the text relay service as an advantage of using this device.

## Conclusions and recommendations - Participants taking part in both stages

- Among participants who took part in both stages of the research, levels of satisfaction with the text relay service at Stage 2 (which took place after the introduction of the NGT app) remain the same as with Stage 1 (which took place before its introduction);
  - At Stage 2, 70% were satisfied with the text relay service overall (cf. 75% at Stage 1)
  - At Stage 2, 79% were satisfied with the spelling of text typed by relay assistants (cf. 76% at Stage 1)
  - At Stage 2, 48% were satisfied with the speed at which calls were answered (cf. a higher proportion - 65% - being satisfied at Stage 1)
  - App users were marginally more likely to be satisfied. However this difference was not statistically significant.
- The text relay service continues to be an important means of communication with some channels. The vast majority of Stage 2 participants who took part in Stage 1 (98%) use the text relay service to contact services (cf. 96% at Stage 1) and 59% use it to contact colleagues (cf. 63% at Stage 1). Fewer participants use text relay to contact friends and family (46% at Stage 2 and 52% at Stage 1).
- In terms of how text relay is used compared to other communication channels:
  - As with Stage 1, text relay with a relay assistant was the most commonly used means of communication for contacting services at Stage 2 (mentioned by 88% those taking part in both stages at Stage 2 and 95% at Stage 1). This is compared to 70% contacting services through friends and family and 70% through email.
  - Text relay with a relay assistant is, again, also an important means of communicating with colleagues by those taking part in both stages; mentioned by 51% of this group at Stage 2 (cf. 45% at Stage 1). The most common means of communicating with colleagues were email (67% at Stage 2) and SMS message (48%).
  - As with Stage 1, text relay with a relay assistant was less commonly used to communicate with friends and family by those taking part in both stages; it was mentioned by 35% of this group at Stage 2 (cf. 25% at Stage 1) uses it to communicate with this audience compared with 95% communicating via text message at Stage 2.

## Conclusions and recommendations

- In terms of recommendations from the quantitative strand of the research, the text relay service is a key means of communicating with services and also with colleagues; given that this is the case, there is a need to ensure any barriers to using the service are removed so that those who need to access it are able to do so.
- Next Generation Text Relay (NGTR) brings important benefits to users such as being able to access the text relay 'on the go', the ability to have parallel speech and text via the app, the ability to see more of the conversation than through a textphone or Screenphone and the increased convenience of being able to use 'standard' (and less bulky) equipment such as laptops, tablets and smartphones to access the service.
- 35% of those who had never used NGTR or had stopped doing so said the reason for this was difficulty in setting up or using the app and also participants felt devices such as laptops, smartphones and tablets were less easy to make text relay calls with than textphones and Screenphones.
- This suggests that more support and information needs to be provided in order to enable text relay customers who want to access the new features of NGTR to do so.
- Satisfaction with the text relay service has not risen since Stage 1; findings from the qualitative stage of the research (at Stage 2) - together with the proportion of those not using NGTR at Stage 2 - suggest barriers to take up of NGTR mean that users have not been able to take advantage of new features of the service, which may have led to satisfaction levels remaining the same.