



Relay UK



Relay UK: Customer Satisfaction Research

carried out in September 2024

Contents



Introduction



Use of the
Relay UK
Service



Satisfaction
with Relay
UK



Satisfaction
with the
website and
Helpdesk



How Relay
UK could be
improved: A
focus on
awareness



Conclusions and
Recommendations

Introduction

Background & Objectives

The overall objective of the research was to measure the user experience of the Relay UK Service, evaluate against previous waves of research and consider the impact of awareness of Relay UK amongst organisations/businesses.

Understanding methods of access and usage patterns of Relay UK



Service experience – Satisfaction, Ease and Reliability



Experience and Satisfaction with Support Services



Considering the impact of poor awareness of the Relay UK service amongst businesses and organisations contacted by users



Approach

Our approach mirrored previous waves to ensure comparability of results



Methodology

This wave of research consisted of a 10–15-minute online survey.

Recruitment was conducted through the RNID's mailing list and through snowballing. A small number of Relay UK Helpdesk users were contacted by BT directly, inviting them to take part.

Participants who took part in the 2022 wave of research were also reinvited to participate had they consented to be recontacted.

The survey ran from 21st of August until the 6th of September 2024.

204 completed surveys were achieved in total.



Sample

Participants were made up of those who have used the Relay UK service within the last 12 months.

Users of the service self classified as one of the following:

- Deaf
- Deafblind
- Hearing impaired
- Speech impaired
- Those who are not deaf, hard of hearing or speech impaired but who use the text relay service in a professional capacity or to communicate with friends or family
- Cannot hear speech over the telephone
- Can hear some speech over the telephone

Executive Summary

Relay UK continues to play a crucial role in the lives of its users. Many speak of the freedom and independence that it affords them, reducing their reliance and dependence on others.

Performance has remained very strong, with 89% of users satisfied with the service that they receive overall from Relay UK. 65% of users are very satisfied with the service, a significant increase since 2022.

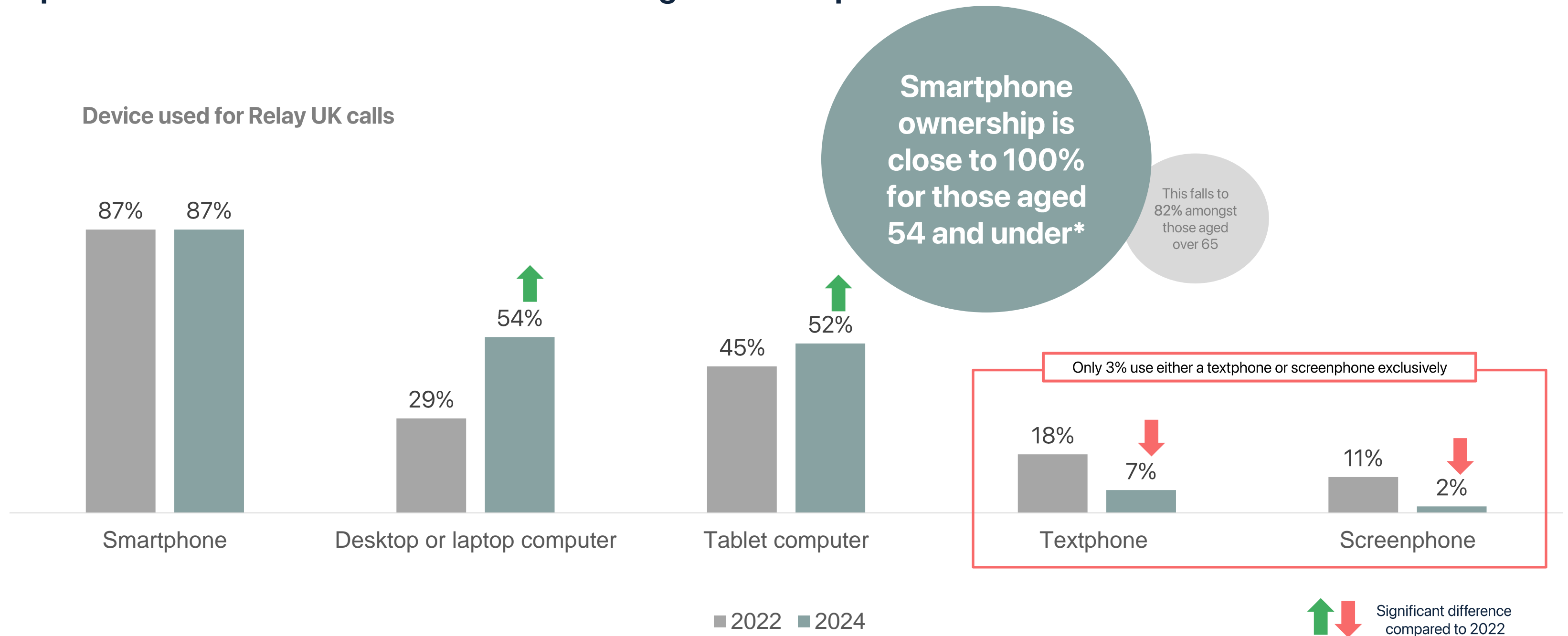
Users do have some suggestions for improving Relay UK but there is little consensus, suggesting that no systemic issues impact on performance or perceptions of service.

Awareness of the Relay UK service outside of the d/Deaf/hearing/speech impaired community is an issue, which impacts and limits users' ability to use the service effectively. Efforts should be made to broaden awareness through outreach and training.

Use of the Relay UK Service

Use of more traditional devices like textphones and screenphones has declined significantly this wave

A corresponding increase is noted in the use of devices with larger screens and keyboards (tablet/laptop/desktop). Smartphones should remain the focus for BT testing and development



The frequency of usage has declined but one in five still rely on Relay UK on a daily basis

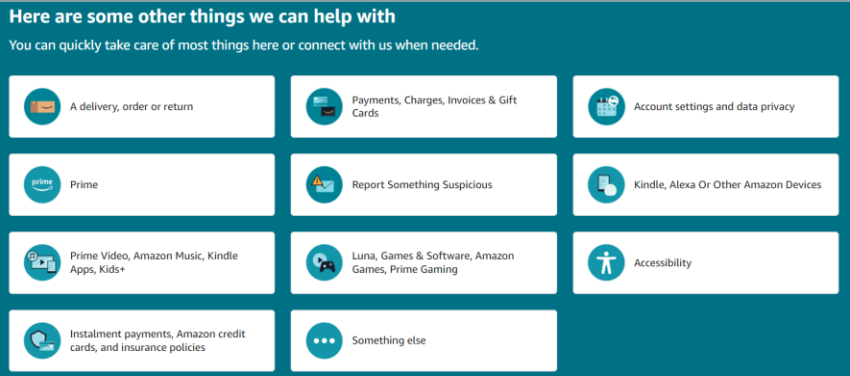
Frequency of using the Relay UK service



Trends away from using the telephone for the basics

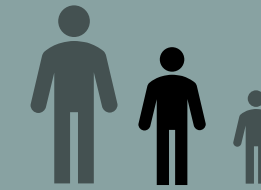
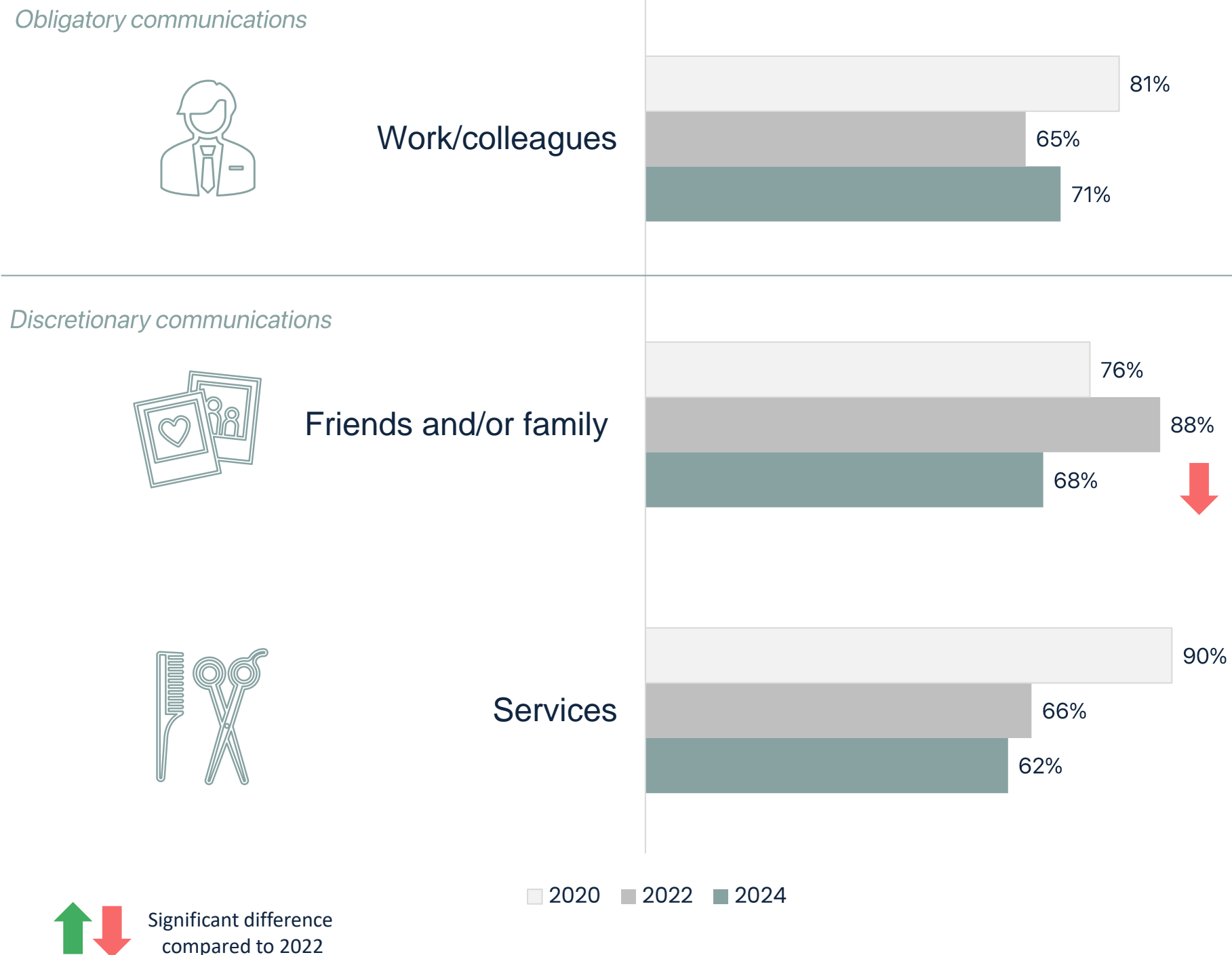
Many companies attempt to ensure that telephone communications are kept to a minimum. Making it more challenging to get through by telephone (or identify appropriate contact information) ensures that customers are forced down the less expensive digital channel.

One example is Amazon, the UK's largest e-commerce retailer, where customers are encouraged to engage with a digital channel irrespective of the nature of their query.



The FCA's introduction of their Consumer Duty means that this trend is likely to be bucked for providers of financial products and services. This imposes an obligation on providers to eliminate undue hindrance across all customer channels.

There has been a significant decline in usage of Relay UK when communicating with friends and family. Use in a professional capacity is now most common



Younger people are hung up on answering the telephone

In August 2024, U Switch published the results of a survey conducted with 2,000 consumers about their telephone habits and behaviour.

It found that:-

23%
of 18-34-year-olds never answer the telephone

70%
of 18-34-year-olds prefer a text to a call

5 mins 30 secs
is the average time spent on the telephone daily

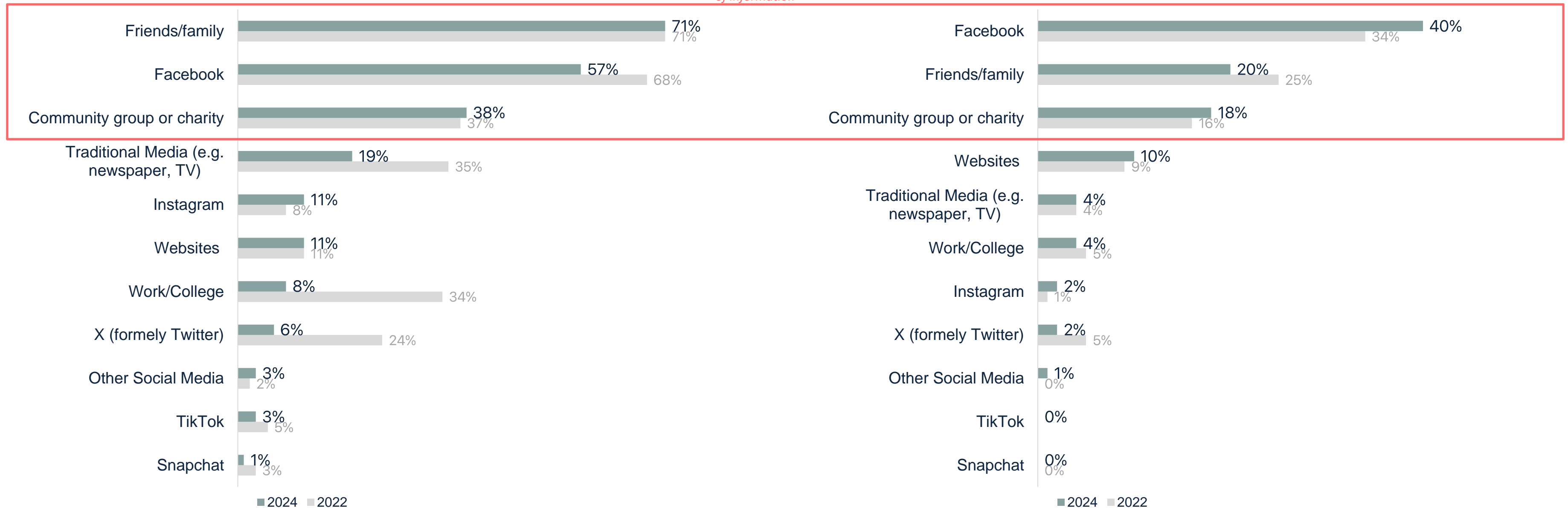
The stated preferences of Millennials (28-43 year olds) and Gen Z (12-27 years old) suggests that they will always look for a journey not requiring an oral interaction. Generation Alpha (0-11 years old) are unlikely to buck this trend. However, telephone calls are not going anywhere soon. Relay UK should be mindful that facilities like staffed webchat when seeking support are likely to be preferred to telephone helpdesks.

Facebook, word of mouth and community groups/charities remain the key sources of information for information about support available.

All sources typically used to find information about support for people who are D/deaf/hard of hearing/speech impaired

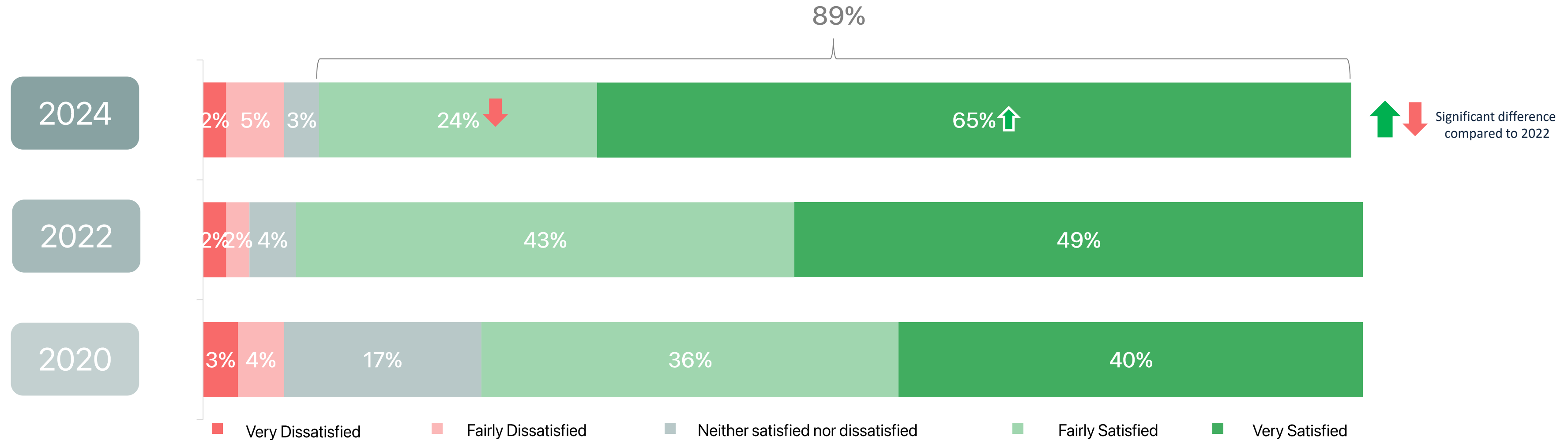
Main source typically used to find information about people who are D/deaf/hard of hearing/speech impaired

Top 3 are most common and main source of information

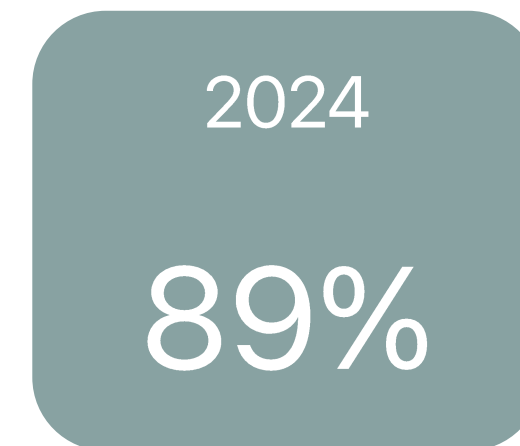


Satisfaction with BT Relay UK

The decline in the level of overall satisfaction with Relay UK is not significant. Users who are very satisfied have increased significantly.



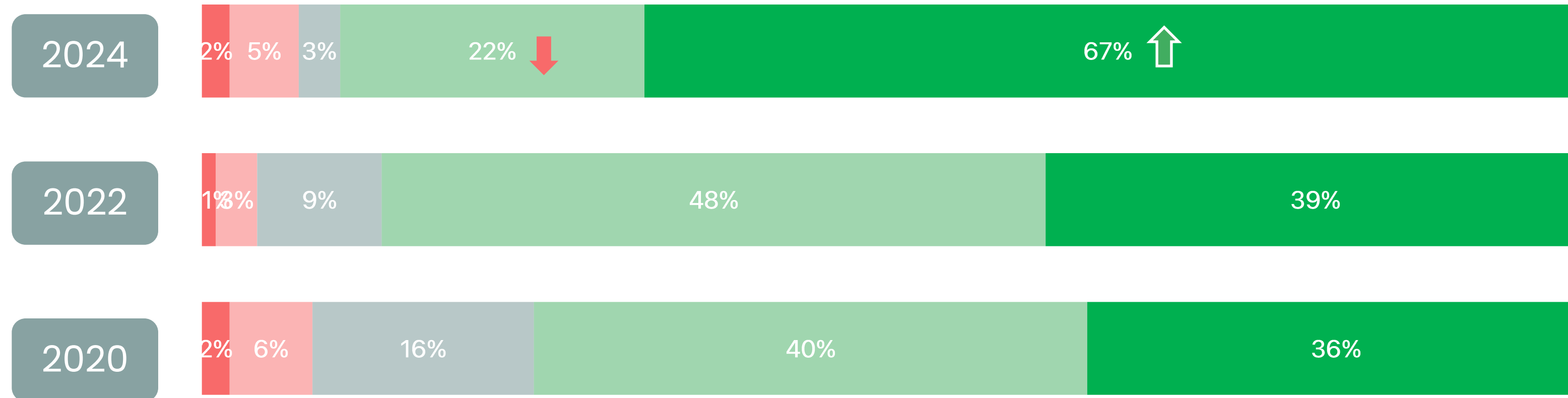
Overall satisfaction
(Top 2 Box Satisfied)



Perceptions of customer effort have slightly improved. Two thirds of users consider Relay UK to be very easy to use.

Difficult
7%
2022: 8%

Easy
89%
2022: 87%



■ Very difficult
 ■ Fairly difficult
 ■ Neither easy nor difficult
 ■ Fairly easy
 ■ Very easy

↑ ↓ Significant difference compared to 2022

Satisfaction with aspects of the service provided by Relay Assistants has remained consistently high.

Satisfaction with specific service aspects (With Relay assistant)



Spelling of the words typed by the Relay Assistant

93%
92%
80%



How quickly the Relay Assistant relays the conversation

92%
92%
83%



The reliability of the Relay UK service technology

89%
88%
79%



How quickly the Relay Assistant joins your call

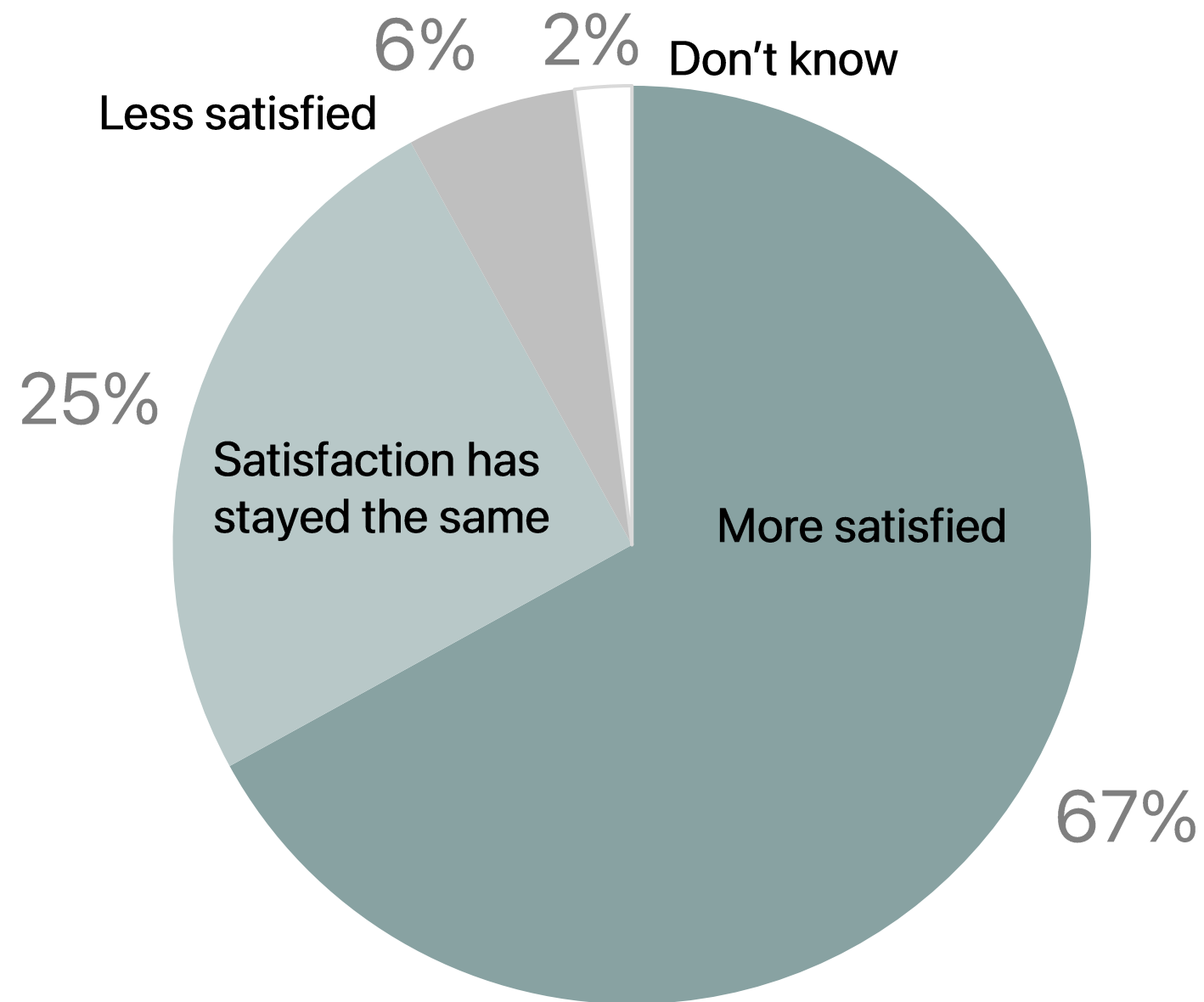
88%
91%
77%

■ 2024 ■ 2022 □ 2020

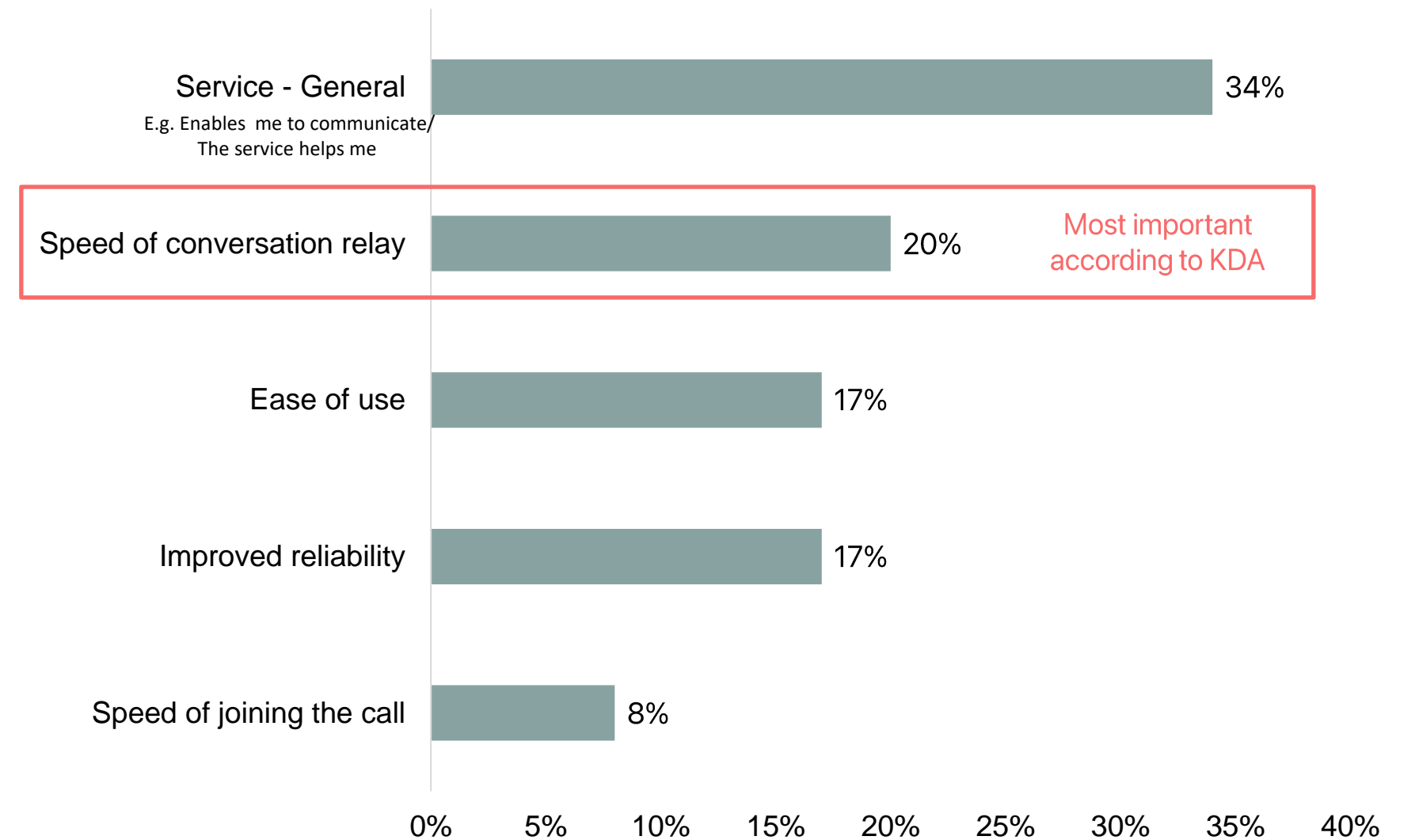
No Significant differences compared to 2022

Two thirds of participants are more satisfied than 12 months ago, with the key aspects of service being chiefly responsible

Has your overall satisfaction changed in the last 12 months?

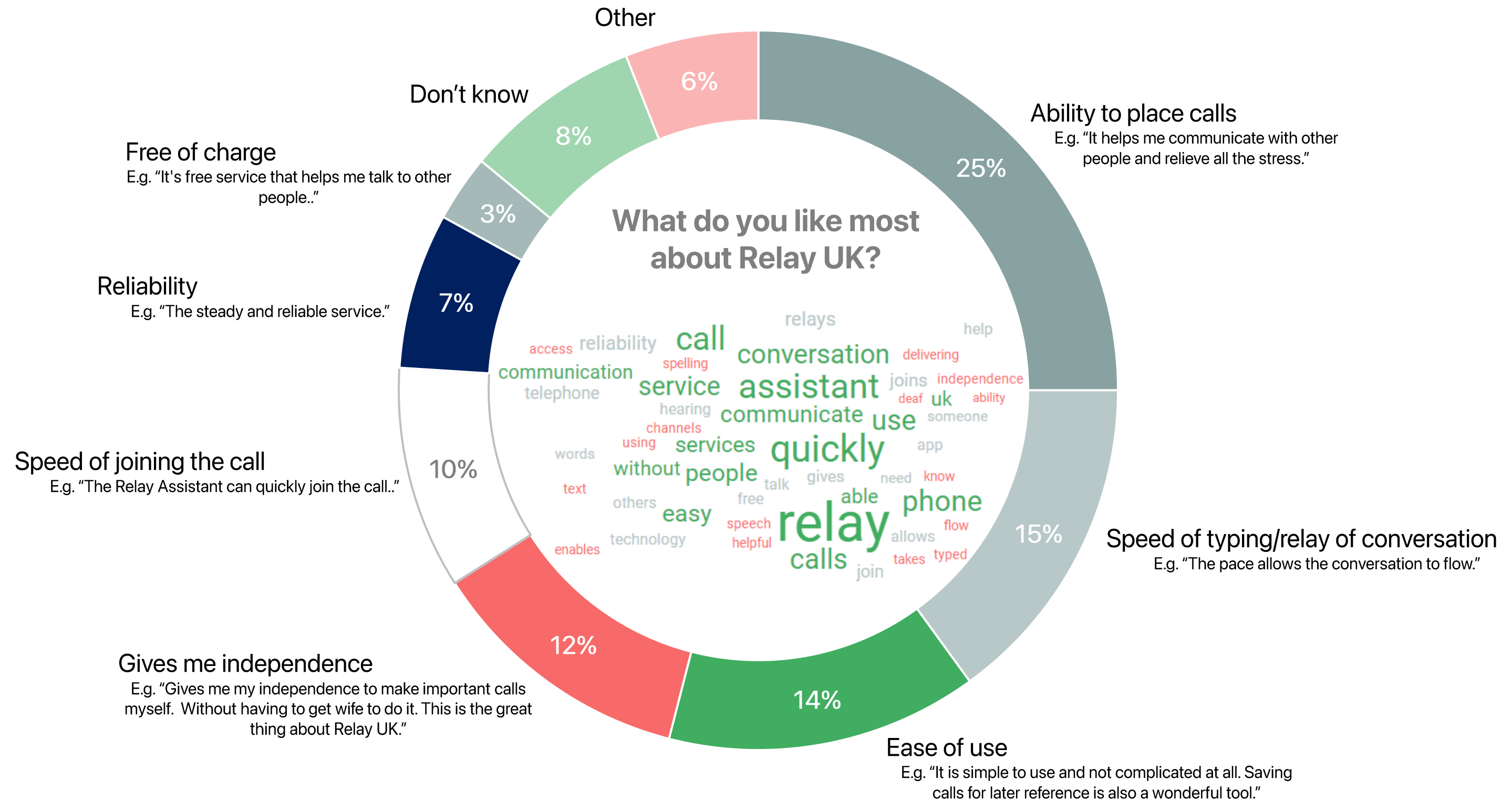


Why are you more satisfied than 12 months ago?



Most important according to KDA

A variety of performance metrics are appreciated by users. Relay UK's primary function resonates most with one in four users.



Relay UK continues to serve as an indispensable and invaluable resource to its users. Many consider the service a lifeline, preserving their independence.

Enables me to access businesses and medical care that I would otherwise struggle with

The accessibility it offers. I recently received hospital at home care where I had to call the hospital every day to provide an update, and I don't think I would have been able to do that without Relay UK

This is the only way I can reach a "telephone number"

It solves the otherwise intractable problem of being so deaf

It gives me peace of mind that I can make a phone call whenever I need it. It is nice to have a saved conversation that I can refer to if needed where other apps or BSL video interpreters don't offer that.

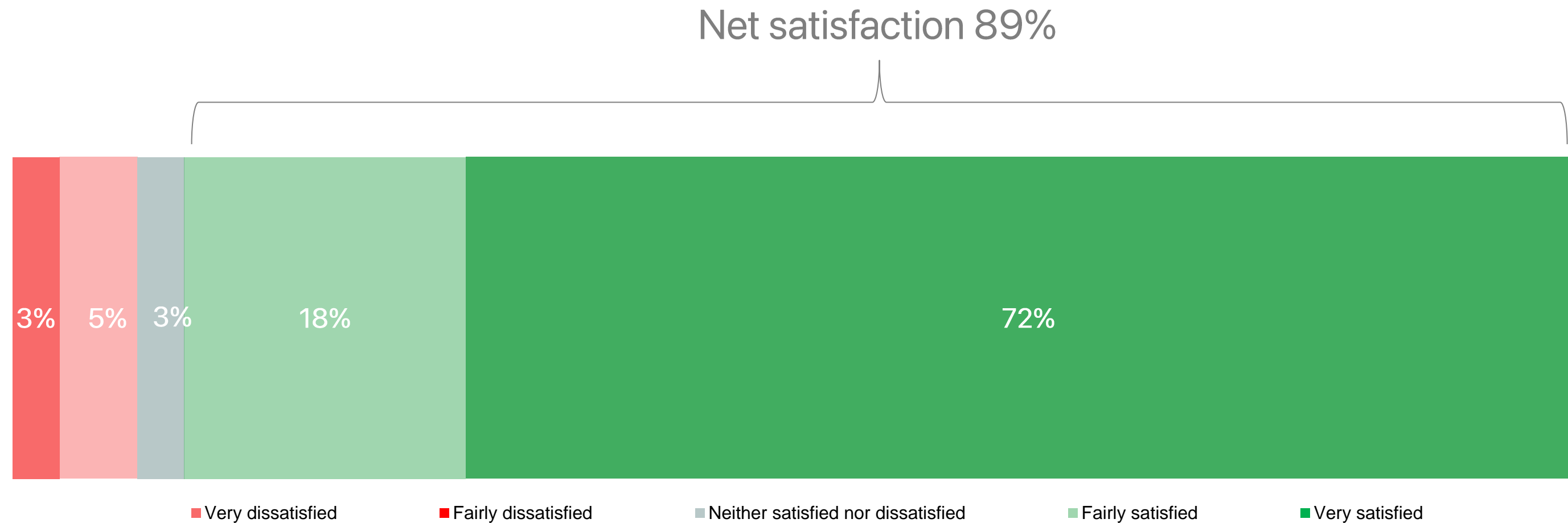
Best way for me to communicate with others

Helps to provide communication to services if needed

To provide assistance with phone calls that otherwise I wouldn't be able to manage. Relay operators are extremely helpful - they are brilliant!

Means I can make a phone call. It gives me confidence

Satisfaction with the app is similar to overall satisfaction. Customer testimonials about the app further underline that Relay UK is not just “another service”



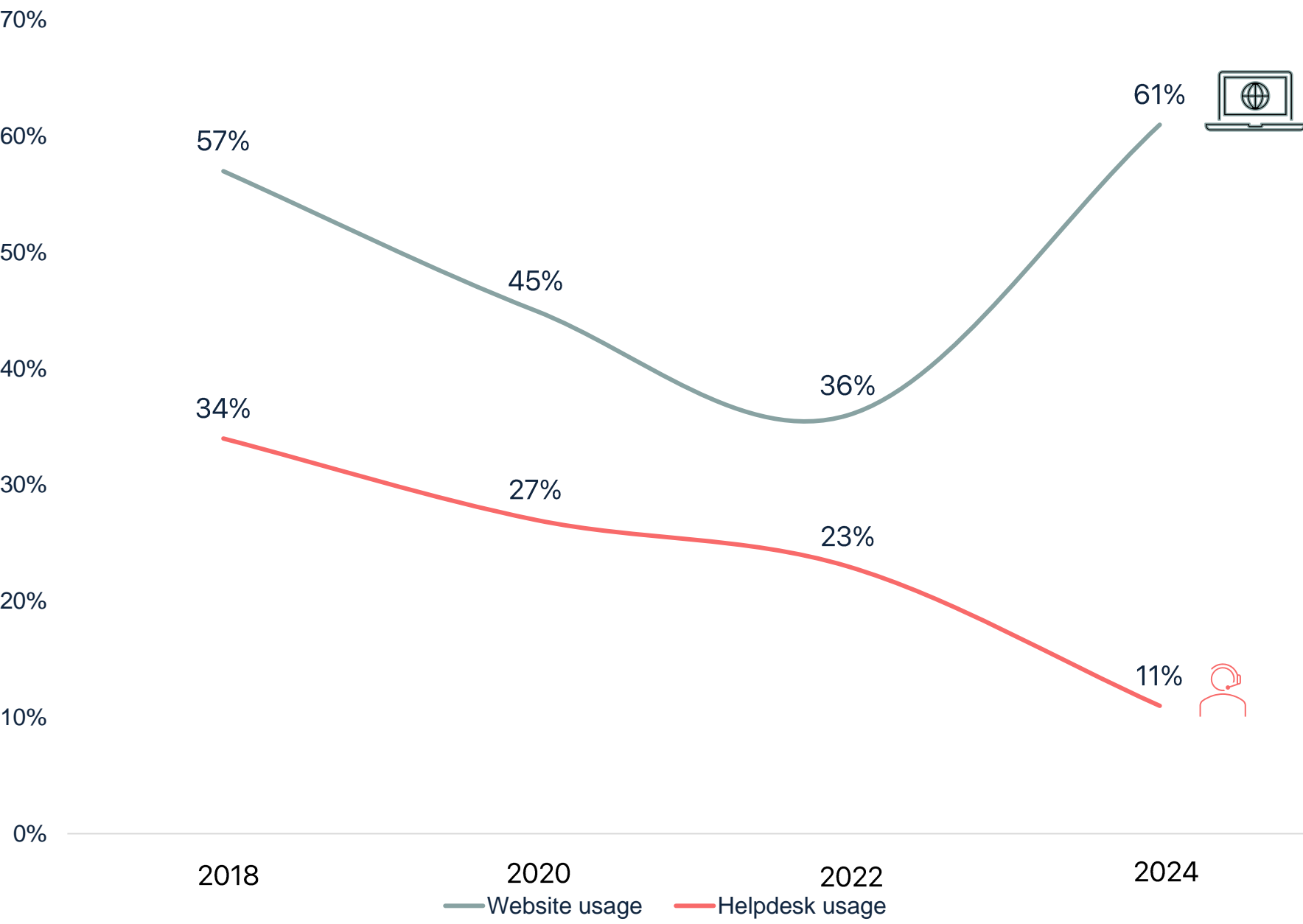
The approach on the app to every individual using it

What I like most about the Relay UK service is how it has made communication so much more accessible and convenient for me. The app is incredibly user-friendly, and I appreciate that I can use it on multiple devices, whether it's my smartphone, tablet or computer. This flexibility means I can stay connected no matter where I am.

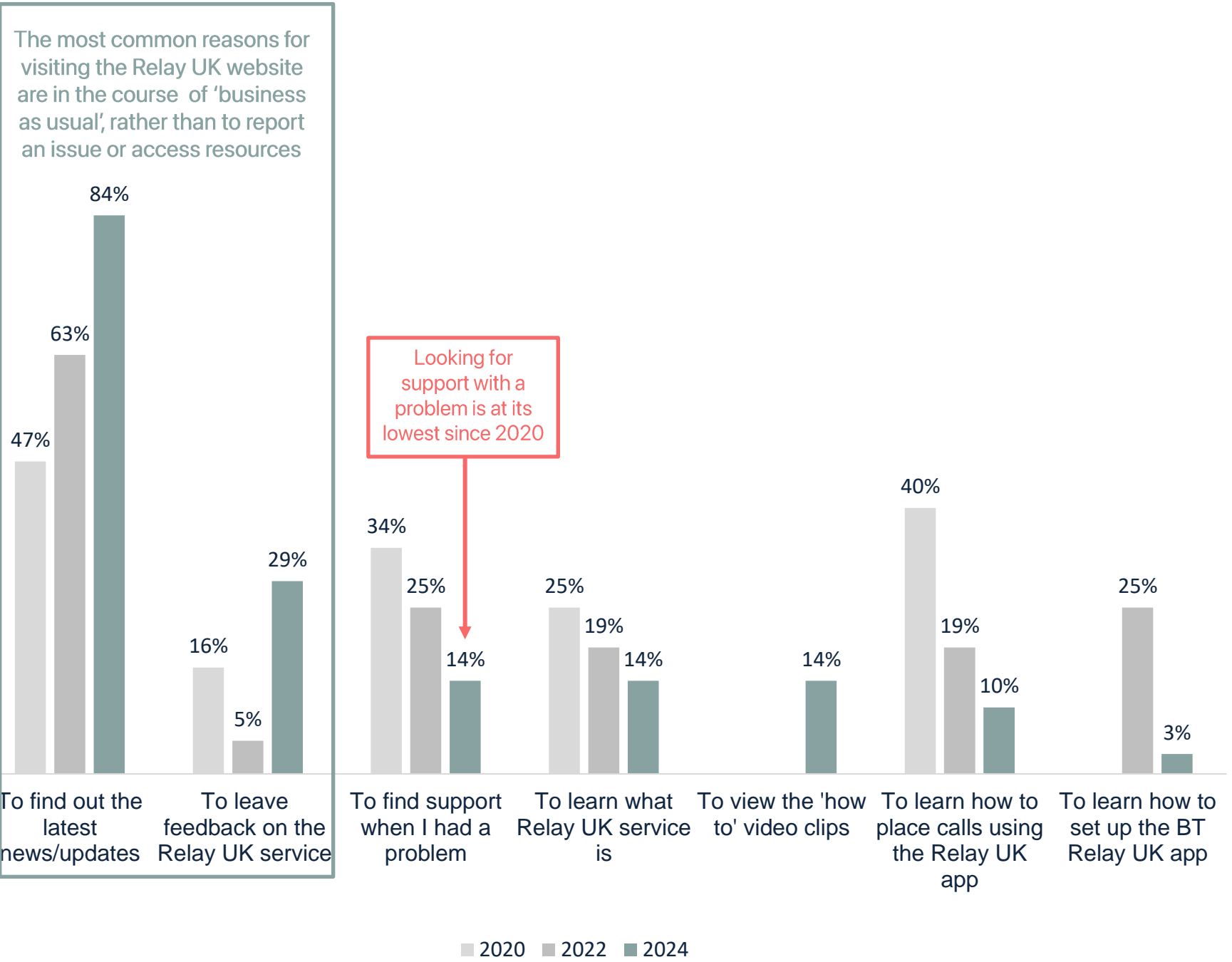
Website and Helpdesk Satisfaction

Customers are increasingly seeking to self-serve online. Website traffic has increased significantly with a corresponding dip in contacting the Helpdesk

Users visiting the Relay UK website or contacting Helpdesk within the last 12 months



What were your reasons for visiting the Relay UK website?



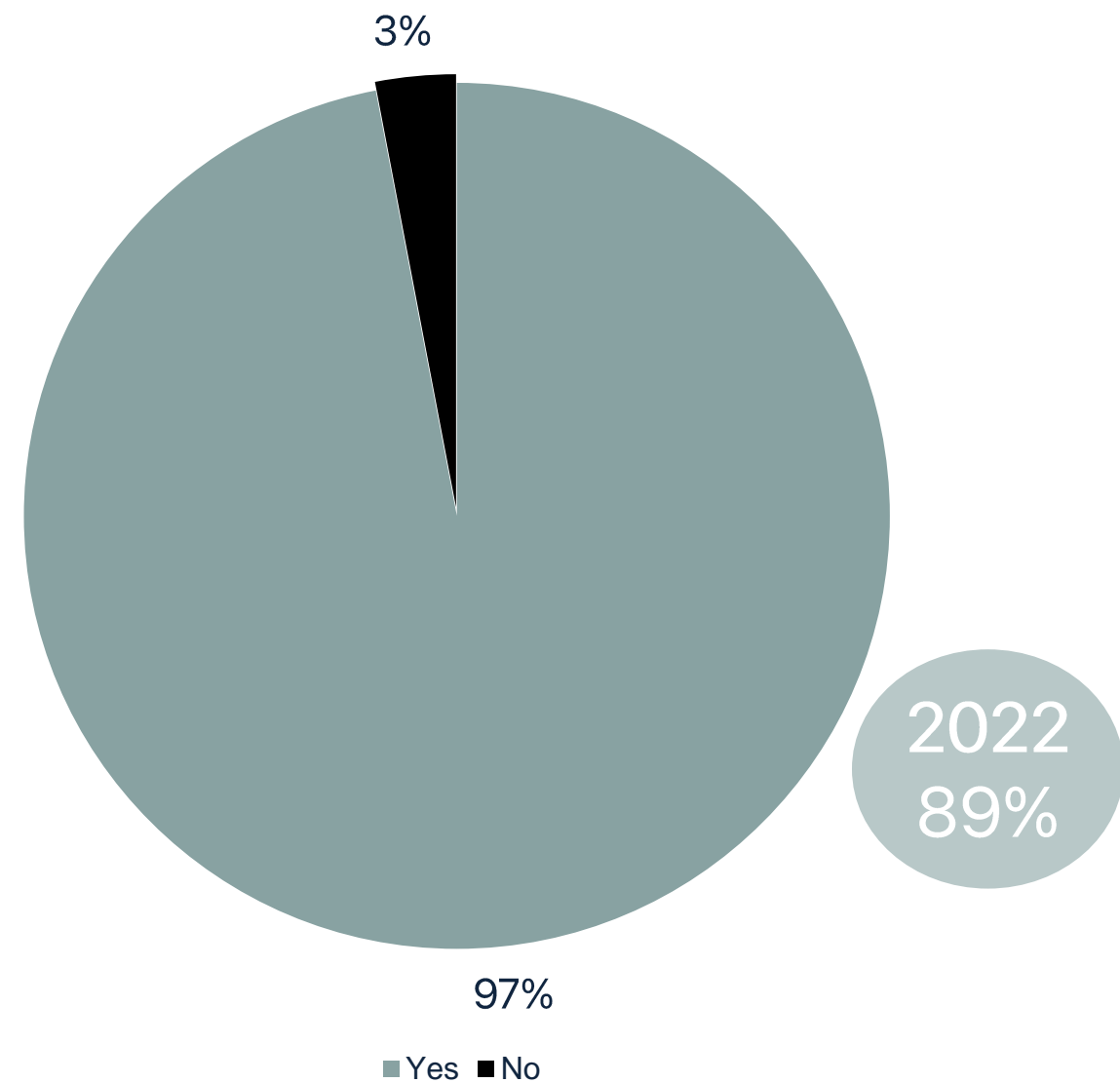
BT Relay Satisfaction Research 2022: All participants. 2024 (204). Using website (125)

E1a. Have you visited the Relay UK website in the last 12 months? E1_1 What were your reasons for visiting the Relay UK website (www.relayuk.bt.com) in the last 12 months?

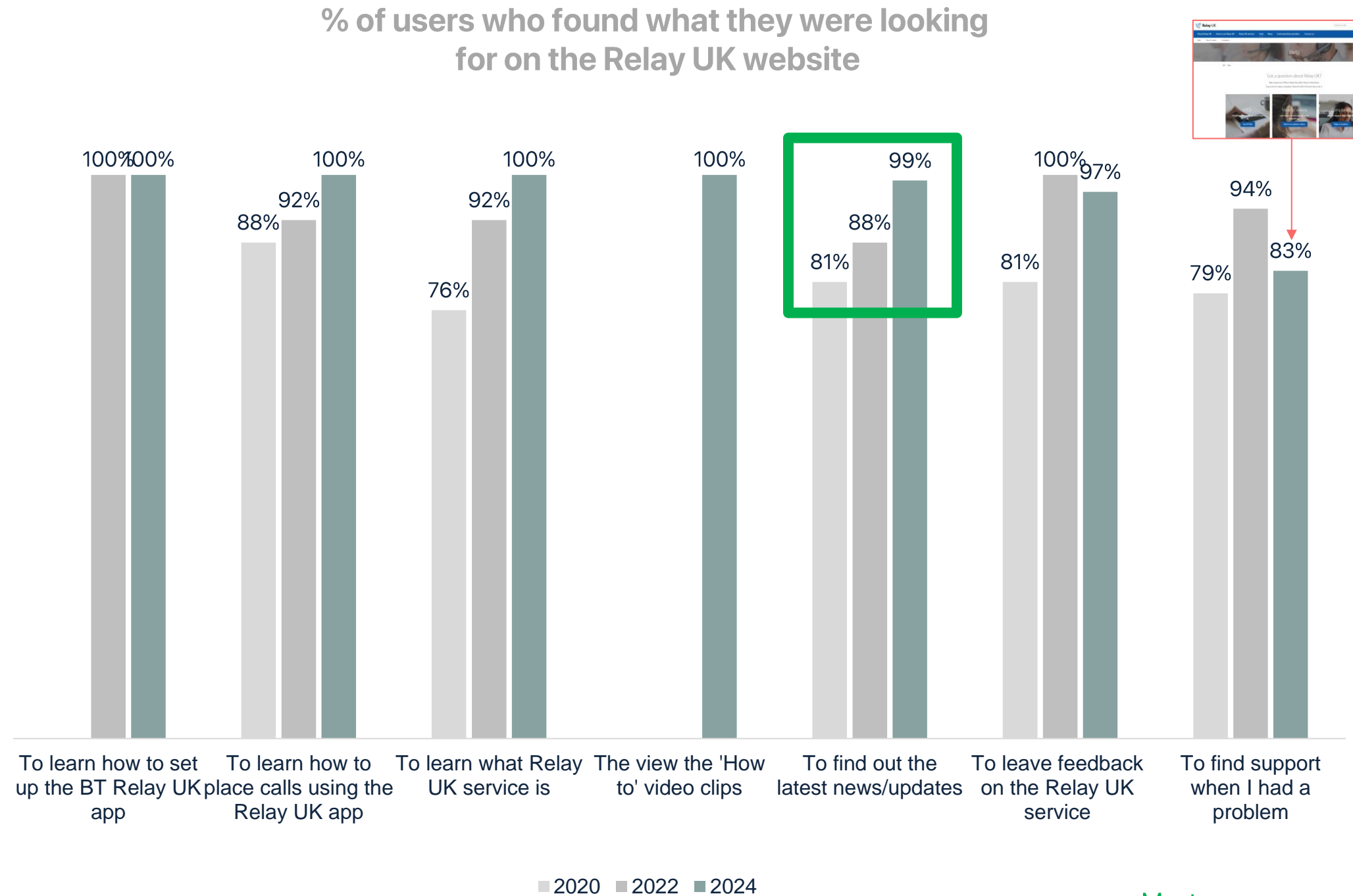
Customers are still finding it easy to search for and access the information and support that they need on the website.

Attention should be given to how information is displayed when looking for support. Customers will assume that information will be in the "Help" section, it is not, it is in the "Contact Us" section. The Helpdesk telephone number should be added to the "Help" section of the website.

Did you find the information/support that you were looking for?



% of users who found what they were looking for on the Relay UK website



Most common reason for visiting website

How could Relay UK be improved?

80% of Relay UK users cannot think of any features that they would like to see added. There is little consensus on what features users would like to see

Faster/More reliable connection

I want reliable first connection in a timely manner. I just don't get this and so have spent even less time trying to connect with Relay UK

A faster connection. I can't access it so I struggle to be able to make use of it at all now.

Easier to use

More user friendly

I would like for the app to be easier to use.

A smoother app the whole process to use it is too complicated and long

Real time capture/AI

It would be great to have a feature that allows for real-time captioning during voice calls.

Sometimes the relay assistant is a bit delayed, and having captions would help me follow the conversation more easily. Also, it would be helpful to have a dark mode option for the app, especially for use in low-light environments

Video relay

A video relay service would be incredibly beneficial. This would allow for more natural and expressive communication, especially in situations where visual cues are important. It could work similarly to existing video call apps, but with the added support of Relay Assistants.

Improved awareness

External companies actually knowing what Relay is, a lot of companies have to be told and this wastes time both mine and the assistant

Some departments which are supposed to be user friendly do not have Relay UK Service such as banks, health services-although online chat or email is available

Disable auto-correct/predictive text

Auto -correction needs to be switched off

Always have to remove predictive text before using app. Speech needs scrolling down all the time on Samsung smartphone text enters before pressing send

Receiving incoming calls through the app

Would really like to be able to take incoming calls through the mobile app, this is a big problem for me currently

To see if a call is using the relay linked number (rather than my direct dial) so I know if I can answer the call with relay support

Providing a summary pre-call

Ability to provide a summary before starting a call. Assistant can be thrown into an automated system and it's helpful for them to know what we need, but are "forced" to try and type what is being said while we try to "force" through what we need to make everyone's life easier! I don't need to know my call is important to the company...I do need the assistant to be able to effectively navigate the system by a basic understanding of what I'm trying to achieve

Look and feel

Have a whole screen colour background option for someone with light eye photosensitivity and the ability to remove the bubble too. So it flows better with coloured text font on whatever colour background works for the user. For me it was a weird pale blue with green tinge to it and had yellow font text and a purple or similar font text. This is how I had it prior to the whole overhaul to what it is now and it needs to cope with fast typing!

Real-time translation

I would love to see a feature that allows for real-time language translation during calls. This would be incredibly helpful for communicating with people who speak different languages. Additionally, it would be great to have an option for video calls with relay assistants, as this could enhance the communication experience by allowing for visual cues and lip-reading. These features would make the app even more versatile and user-friendly.

Features relating to the Relay assistant

It would be helpful if there was some way for the relay assistant to cope with the 'Press one for this...,' 'Press two for that...' etc. The assistant will say 'Sorry, caller, the message is too fast...'

I would like to choose how the operator opens the call to minimise being hung up on

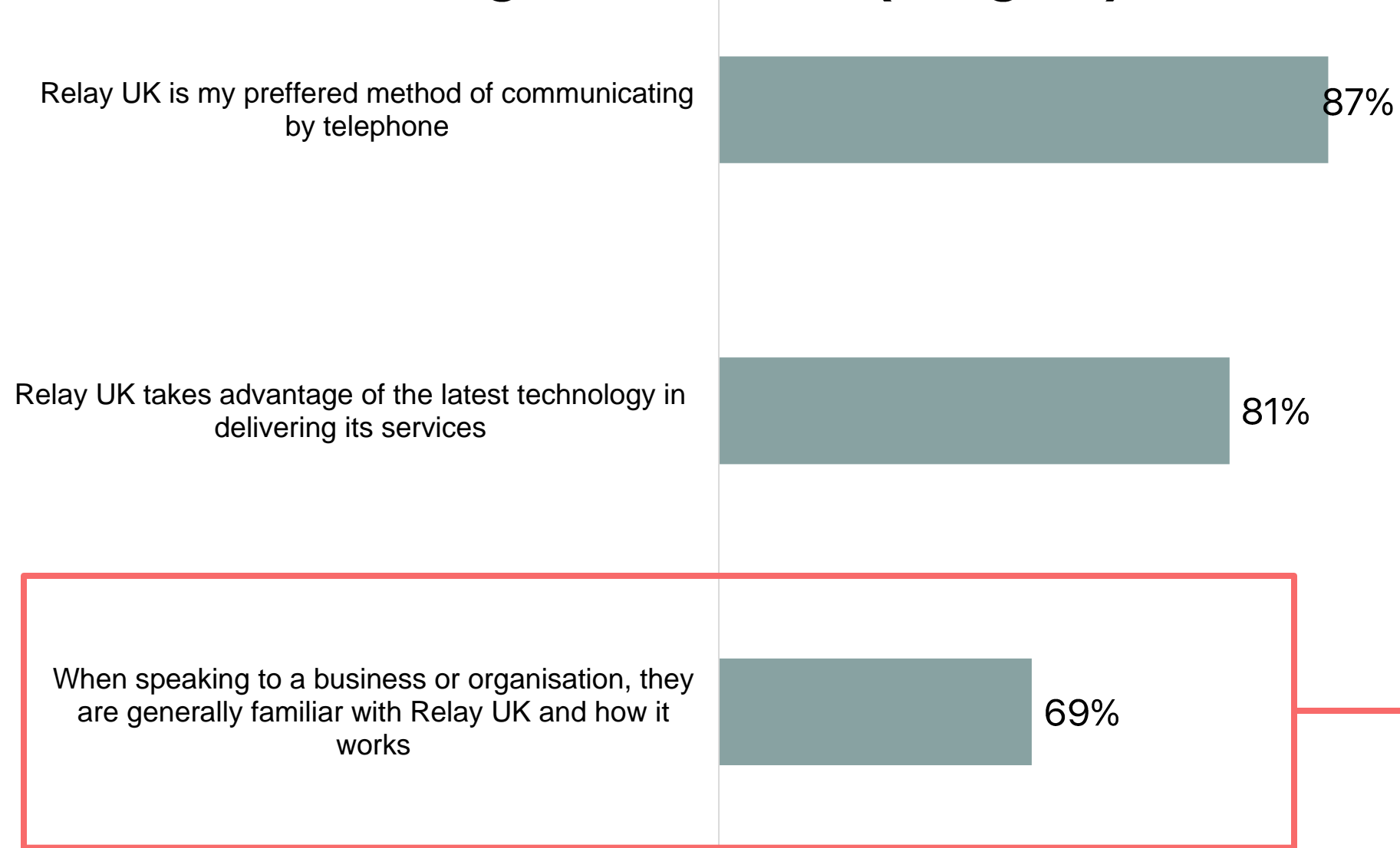
Would be nice to a Name for the assistant rather the assistant.

Ability to interact with other apps

The ability to use other apps and still see when the operator has typed something, perhaps a pop up box.. particularly when on hold or looking for info during a phone call. Also would be good to have the option to turn on additional visual prompts when an operator types i.e.; if you are on hold for a long time, you have to keep looking at the screen, but it would be handy if I could get the option of a flashing light or vibration when we are no longer on hold or when they are typing again

Almost one in three users feel that businesses or organisations are unfamiliar with Relay UK and how it works

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (% agree)



What is the impact of organisations being unfamiliar with Relay UK?

A lack of understanding can impact of users' ability to access services

On occasions, they were giving excuses of it would go against their company policy to take Relay calls but couldn't tell me where in the policy it states this is a breach of the data protection. It is just amazing when the government using an organisation to assess person's capabilities where they refused the Relay call but is advertised as disability aware and they make no reasonable adjustment to accept a relay call. All because they don't understand how Relay UK works, not familiar or they don't want to take a Relay UK call.

The interpreter has always had to explain what Relay UK is when talking to a business/organisation, I've never encountered someone who has heard of it. Most businesses get the hang of it quite quickly but I've had a few people refuse to continue the call or refuse to provide me the service I'm calling about because they say using Relay UK doesn't count as 'speaking to them directly'

Train their switchboard operators and customer contacts about Relay UK. I have had calls cut off because they thought they were receiving scam calls when the Relay Assistant was trying to explain the service.

They don't always understand the call us from a deaf person and say "not today thank-you." Some businesses won't accept a call unless they have a prior email stating you use text relay.

Conclusions & Recommendations

Conclusions and recommendations

- ① Relay UK has repeated the level of service satisfaction reported in 2022, with an overwhelming majority of users being satisfied with the service. The smartphone app remains the most popular device for using Relay UK so this should be prioritised in terms of development and resource, however, usage on other devices (PC/laptop/tablet) have increased significantly in the last two years and should therefore not be neglected.
- ② Traffic to the Relay UK website has increased since 2022. Attention should be paid to the resources available on the website, including making the Helpdesk telephone number more prominent. BT is currently developing resources for the hearing community to promote awareness of Relay UK and how it works. This approach is validated by the findings of this study – with many users likely to welcome any steps taken to improve awareness more generally.
- ③ Users do have suggestions for improvement to the service, but there is little consensus. A small number of users feel that the approach of the Relay Assistants should be standardised to ensure that the quality of the service is consistent and of a high standard.

Conclusions and recommendations continued

- ④ For this wave of research, a new question was incorporated to ask users about the response from businesses and organisations when receiving a call using Relay UK. Around one in three users felt that there was not a general understanding/awareness of Relay UK and how it works. This had a detrimental impact on the user experience:-
 - Users reported that the Relay assistant would have to spend time explaining the service;
 - Others reported that organisations would not accept calls using Relay UK;
 - Poor understanding led to some organisations believing that a call placed using Relay UK was either a sales call or a scam;
 - Some were offered a call-back when unable to receive inbound calls.

- ⑤ Improving awareness of Relay UK more generally would improve the user experience. Developing training in-house would enable BT to control the narrative about its service whilst also providing a free resource to businesses to educate, develop and engage their staff.

