



The Prime Minister's
OFFICE OF PUBLIC
SERVICES REFORM

Monitoring Performance

*Satisfaction, excellence or
advocacy?*

Research Study conducted for
the Office of Public Services Reform

MORI
social research institute

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Summary and Implications

Introduction

There has been a great deal of research on the impact of using different scales when trying to assess views of services¹. This has provided a number of insights into how people react to scales and how these should be interpreted. However, conclusions are far from clear-cut, and little has been done specifically looking across a range of public services. While in the private sector the focus has long since shifted to more directly commercial measures (for example, intent to repurchase and actual repurchase), the public service equivalents are less obvious. This issue is particularly relevant now, given the renewed focus on target-setting for public services on the basis of user and citizen opinion.

The final wave of the People's Panel provided an excellent opportunity for MORI Social Research Institute to test out some of these issues, using a relatively large sample of respondents. In total, 1,044 interviews were conducted with a random selection of Panel members, between March and May 2002.

All users of a range of public services were asked about their satisfaction with these services, using a traditional five-point scale. Later in the interview, they were also asked to judge the quality of the same public services: half the sample were asked using a five-point scale (very good to very poor) and half asked using a seven point scale (excellent to terrible). The full sample were also asked to describe their attitudes to individual services using a five-point advocacy scale (ie whether they would be critical or would speak highly of services).

Three types of analysis have been used in this report. Firstly, we have simply compared the overall proportions choosing each category in the different scales. This provides an indication of the general level of consistency between scales, and also how demanding they are (how likely they are to elicit positive or negative responses).

However, given that the same respondents were asked to rate services on a number of scales, we can also compare how individual opinions shift when we use a different scale with the same service. This helps highlight the relationship between responses at an individual level.

Finally, we have compared service performance *rankings* using different rating scales and means. This type of analysis illustrates how the relative position of individual services is affected by the choice of scale.

¹ See for example Rating the Rating Scales, Friedman and Ammo 1999, Schwarz, Grayson and Knauper, IJPOR, 1998

Aggregate differences between scales

There is little difference between overall aggregate ratings of public services (good/bad) and satisfaction levels, when using the same number of response categories, as we would have expected from previous work on overall evaluation scales.²

When given the option to rate services as additionally either 'excellent' or 'terrible' (i.e. a seven point scale), there is a tendency for a shift towards positive ratings – that is, the proportions rating the service as “excellent/very good” on the seven point scale is greater than the “very good” response on the five point scale. However, this is generally because respondents tend to move up the positive scale (eg from fairly satisfied to very satisfied), rather than turn their views around from negative to positive. Again, this is consistent with previous research, which has shown that more points on a scale (up to around ten points) generally produce more precise results.³

Much greater proportions are neutral when asked about a service using an advocacy scale than with five-point satisfaction or rating scales. For instance, one in five are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the police (20%) and the same proportion say they rate them as neither good nor poor (21%). However, around half say they would be neutral about the police when asked their opinion (51%). This is fairly consistent across services.

Individual Level Differences

Comparing the consistency of individual-level responses confirms much of what is seen with aggregate data. There is general consistency in responses between the two five-point scales (satisfaction and good/poor), but rather more variation around the margins than suggested by the aggregate comparisons. In particular, this seems to affect the “fairly” responses. For example, noticeable proportions who say they are fairly satisfied are neutral or negative on the good/poor scale, and vice versa. This effect has been noted before in qualitative work which explored the meaning of satisfaction scales with service users.⁴ This highlighted the inconsistencies in interpretations of “fairly satisfied” in particular, with some seeing it as a negative expression – ie that they are “not very satisfied” (though, as noted above, this should be contrasted with the number of “fairly” satisfied users who rate services as “very” good on a different scale).

There are also some notable patterns when we compare the advocacy scales with the other two scales. In particular, there appears to be less downward inconsistency in responses to advocacy scales – ie those who say they would speak highly of a service (either without being asked or when prompted) are very unlikely to also rate it as poor or say they are dissatisfied with it. This suggests

² Amoo and Friedman (2000) *Overall evaluation scales: an assessment* International Journal of Market Research Volume 42 Issue 3

³ Duffy and Skinner (2002) *Public Service Reform: Understanding Customer Satisfaction*, Cabinet Office/MORI

⁴ Explaining Customer Satisfaction, Elam and Ritchie, 1997

advocacy scales are more demanding and may be more consistent indicators of truly positive perceptions.

Comparing Rankings

In general, the relative ratings of key services are little affected by the specific measure used to assess service performance. For example, whether satisfaction, service quality ratings (five or seven point) or advocacy scales are used, GPs and local primary schools appear highest in the performance rankings, while the local Council and train services rank the lowest.

Moreover, use of mean, net scores and 'top-box' responses (e.g. excellent, very good or very satisfied only) all generate very similar relative ratings.

Implications

The initial lesson from this review is clearly that monitoring performance based solely on aggregate satisfaction scores (very and fairly combined) does not provide a full picture. There is significant evidence for the view that decision-makers should also take into account more discriminating measures, that may be more successful in pinpointing truly positive attitudes. While 'fairly satisfied' does appear to be generally internally consistent, there is some volatility around the edges, and other research suggests that this may merely signify an 'adequate' service experience⁵.

There are three key alternatives considered here. Firstly, we could use a different scale altogether – for example, an advocacy scale. The benefit of this is that when people say they would speak highly of the service it does reflect fairly unequivocal positive feelings about the service. However, the key drawback could be that for many services a large proportion say they would be neutral. This should be investigated further, as it could be a true reflection of the reality of opinions (ie that a large proportion of people have no strong views on most services) or it could be just that respondents find it a difficult question to answer in an interview. Cognitive question testing in the context of attitudes to public services could be very useful.

An alternative approach could be a move to a seven-point performance scale, with target-setting based on the combination of excellent/very good only. Again this does appear to identify unequivocally positive views, and the additional points on the scale do seem to improve precision. However, most services will have very long runs of past information based on satisfaction scales, and it may be difficult – and arguably misguided - to encourage service managers to give up these useful trend series.

The simplest solution could therefore be to encourage greater attention to be paid to the proportion who say they are "very satisfied" alone. Again this does appear to represent a positive view, but it appears that for many services it may be too exclusive; that is, a relatively large proportion of those who say they would

⁵ See this reviewed in Duffy and Skinner (2002) *op.cit*

Speak highly of a service are less than very satisfied with it. There is also still a presentational problem here, as it is likely that it will be difficult for some service managers to accept targets that cover such a small proportion of service users.

A further alternative is the use of mean scores. This does have the benefit of providing one single measure that uses all of the data, as opposed to an analysis of top box or top two box scores which take no account of the extent of customer *dissatisfaction*. However, this does raise other difficulties; it is less straightforward to provide those using these measures with a rule of thumb about the differences in results that are required for us to say that these are significant. Perhaps more seriously, they can also hide a very wide range of different situations; for example, a middling mean score could be the result of all responses being around the middle or half at the top of the range and half at the bottom.

Overall, it is clearly very difficult to capture a full understanding of attitudes towards a service in one single measure, and each scale and approach will have different advantages and disadvantages. It may be useful to monitor performance for a service on more than one measure.

Finally, though, we should bear in mind the 'real-life' objectives for public service managers when measuring customer satisfaction. The main purpose will often be to compare performance between different services (or areas, units etc) or for the same service over time. So even if there are particular strengths and drawbacks associated with each scale, there should be consistency between services and over time – and, for example, an improvement on any of these measures over time is likely to represent an improvement in perceptions. In the end these measures are only tools and the first stage of a process, and, as comparisons of the rank orders of services when using different measures show, it may not be that vital what is measured as long as something is and it is done consistently.

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Aggregate Differences between Scales

This first section examines differences in aggregate patterns of response between the different scales. This gives an idea of the impact of moving to different scale types on responses as a whole.

The Police

There are no statistically significant differences between the satisfaction and rating scales. There is though a shift towards the positive from five-point to seven-point rating scales (up 4 points). Twenty seven per cent rate the police excellent or very good (7 point scale) compared with 16% saying very good on a 5 point scale. This appears to be a shift from fairly good to these higher categories, rather than a more fundamental change, as the negative proportions remain similar. These findings are also reflected in the mean scores, which are shown to be very consistent for the satisfaction and five-point rating scales, but increase from 0.55 to 0.76 with the use of a seven-point rating scale.

The advocacy scale appears much more demanding of the service, with much lower proportions saying they would speak highly of the service and more saying they would be critical. However, the largest change when moving to this scale is the large proportion who say they would be neutral.

Qa How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the quality of the Police?							
Qb How good or poor would you rate the Police?							
Satisfaction	% (1044)	Rating (5)	% (494)	Rating (7)	% (550)	Advocacy	% (1044)
				Excellent	4		
Very satisfied	15	Very good	16	Very good	23	Speak highly unprompted	4
Fairly satisfied	38	Fairly good	40	Fairly good	34	Speak highly prompted	23
Neither	20	Neither	21	Neither	21	Neutral	51
Fairly dissatisfied	12	Fairly poor	13	Fairly poor	9	Critical prompted	16
Very dissatisfied	4	Very poor	3	Very poor	3	Critical unprompted	5
				Terrible	1		
DK	11	DK	6	DK	6	None/DK	3
Satisfied	53	Good	56	Excellent/Good	60	Speak highly	27
Dissatisfied	15	Poor	16	Terrible/Poor	13	Critical	21
Net Satisfied	+38	Net Good	+39	Net Excellent/Good	+47	Net highly	+6
<i>Mean</i>	<i>0.55</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>0.55</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>0.76</i>		

Source: MORI

Local Council

Again, there are no statistically significant differences between the five point satisfaction and five point rating scales. Fifty one per cent rate their local council as good using the 7 point scale – a difference of 7 points from 5 point scale. More choose the top two options with the 7 point scale (12%) than are top rating with the 5 point scale (4%). The seven point scale also has fewer people rating the service as poor.

Again, mean scores are very similar when using the satisfaction and five-point rating scale, and increase with the use of the seven-point scale, as ratings shift upwards. In fact, this is a common pattern for most of the services considered in this report.

The pattern on the advocacy scale is also very similar to that seen with the police, though if anything more marked, turning the ‘net’ score around from a positive to a negative.

Qa How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the quality of your local Council?							
Qb How good or poor would you rate your local Council?							
Satisfaction	% (1044)	Rating (5)	% (494)	Rating (7)	% (550)	Advocacy	% (1044)
				Excellent	1		
Very satisfied	6	Very good	4	Very good	11	Speak highly unprompted	1
Fairly satisfied	41	Fairly good	39	Fairly good	39	Speak highly prompted	15
Neither	26	Neither	29	Neither	27	Neutral	53
Fairly dissatisfied	14	Fairly poor	16	Fairly poor	11	Critical prompted	22
Very dissatisfied	7	Very poor	6	Very poor	5	Critical unprompted	8
				Terrible	2		
DK	7	DK	5	DK	5	None/DK	2
Satisfied	47	Good	44	Excellent/ Good	51	Speak highly	16
Dissatisfied	21	Poor	22	Terrible/Poor	17	Critical	30
Net Satisfied	+26	Net Good	+22	Net Excellent/Good	+34	Net highly	-14
<i>Mean</i>	<i>0.26</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>0.21</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>0.41</i>		

Source: MORI

GP

Five-point satisfaction and rating scales produce almost identical results. Similarly, overall good and poor ratings in 5 and 7 point scales are very similar. More rate GPs as either 'excellent' or 'very good' (66%) than just 'very good' on the 5 point scale (53%). The shifts seen when we move to an advocacy scale are again similar to those seen above, although interestingly there are fewer who would be neutral about their GP than with other services considered.

Qa How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the quality of your GP?							
Qb How good or poor would you rate your GP?							
Satisfaction	% (971)	Rating (5)	% (458)	Rating (7)	% (513)	Advocacy	% (971)
				Excellent	22		
Very satisfied	53	Very good	53	Very good	44	Speak highly unprompted	21
Fairly satisfied	38	Fairly good	38	Fairly good	24	Speak highly prompted	50
Neither	4	Neither	5	Neither	4	Neutral	19
Fairly dissatisfied	4	Fairly poor	3	Fairly poor	3	Critical prompted	8
Very dissatisfied	2	Very poor	2	Very poor	1	Critical unprompted	2
				Terrible	1		
DK	*	DK	-	DK	*	None/DK	*
Satisfied	91	Good	90	Excellent/ Good	90	Speak highly	71
Dissatisfied	5	Poor	5	Terrible/Poor	6	Critical	10
Net Satisfied	+85	Net Good	+85	Net Excellent/Good	+85	Net highly	+61
<i>Mean</i>	<i>1.37</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>1.37</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>1.72</i>		

Source: MORI

NHS Hospitals

As with other services the percentage choosing top 2 ratings from the 7-point scale is higher than the top rating with the 5-point scale, and the advocacy scale follows a similar pattern to that seen with GPs

Qa How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the quality of your NHS hospitals?							
Qb How good or poor would you rate NHS hospitals?							
Satisfaction	% (630)	Rating (5)	% (288)	Rating (7)	% (342)	Advocacy	% (630)
				Excellent	11		
Very satisfied	30	Very good	33	Very good	33	Speak highly unprompted	11
Fairly satisfied	46	Fairly good	48	Fairly good	33	Speak highly prompted	42
Neither	9	Neither	8	Neither	8	Neutral	28
Fairly dissatisfied	11	Fairly poor	8	Fairly poor	10	Critical prompted	12
Very dissatisfied	3	Very poor	3	Very poor	2	Critical unprompted	6
				Terrible	2		
DK	1	DK	1	DK	1	None/DK	1
Satisfied	76	Good	81	Excellent/ Good	76	Speak highly	53
Dissatisfied	14	Poor	11	Terrible/Poor	14	Critical	18
Net Satisfied	+62	Net Good	+70	Net Excellent/Good	+62	Net highly	+35
<i>Mean</i>	<i>0.90</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>1.00</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>1.12</i>		

Source: MORI

Local Schools/Nurseries

Small user base sizes mean that care should be exercised when comparing results for education services. None of the overall differences in ratings are statistically significant when using the five or seven point scale for any of the services, and in general the advocacy scales follow a similar pattern to those seen earlier (although nursery schools/class users are rather more likely to be positive on this scale than we would have expected).

Local nursery schools/classes

Qa How satisfied or dissatisfied are you overall with your local authority's local nursery schools/classes?							
Qb How good or poor would you rate local nursery schools/classes?							
Satisfaction	% (111)	Rating (5)	% (60)	Rating (7)	% (51)	Advocacy	% (111)
				Excellent	18		
Very satisfied	34	Very good	42	Very good	33	Speak highly unprompted	16
Fairly satisfied	42	Fairly good	42	Fairly good	18	Speak highly prompted	53
Neither	12	Neither	11	Neither	16	Neutral	20
Fairly dissatisfied	1	Fairly poor	1	Fairly poor	2	Critical prompted	1
Very dissatisfied	2	Very poor	2	Very poor	-	Critical unprompted	1
				Terrible	-		
DK	8	DK	1	DK	13	None/DK	8
Satisfied	76	Good	84	Excellent/ Good	69	Speak highly	69
Dissatisfied	3	Poor	3	Terrible/Poor	2	Critical	2
Net Satisfied	+73	Net Good	+81	Net Excellent/Good	+67	Net highly	+67
<i>Mean</i>	<i>1.14</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>1.22</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>1.56</i>		

Source: MORI

Local Primary Schools

Qa How satisfied or dissatisfied are you overall with your local authority's local primary schools?							
Qb How good or poor would you rate local primary schools?							
Satisfaction	% (185)	Rating (5)	% (88)	Rating (7)	% (97)	Advocacy	% (185)
				Excellent	20		
Very satisfied	50	Very good	53	Very good	39	Speak highly unprompted	21
Fairly satisfied	39	Fairly good	34	Fairly good	34	Speak highly prompted	60
Neither	5	Neither	5	Neither	4	Neutral	9
Fairly dissatisfied	3	Fairly poor	3	Fairly poor	1	Critical prompted	5
Very dissatisfied	1	Very poor	1	Very poor	-	Critical unprompted	3
				Terrible	1		
DK	1	DK	4	DK	1	None/DK	3
Satisfied	90	Good	87	Excellent/ Good	93	Speak highly	81
Dissatisfied	5	Poor	4	Terrible/Poor	2	Critical	8
Net Satisfied	+85	Net Good	+83	Net Excellent/Good	+91	Net highly	+73
<i>Mean</i>	<i>1.35</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>1.40</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>1.69</i>		

Source: MORI

Local Secondary Schools

Qa How satisfied or dissatisfied are you overall with your local authority's local secondary schools?							
Qb How good or poor would you rate local secondary schools?							
Satisfaction	% (173)	Rating (5)	% (81)	Rating (7)	% (92)	Advocacy	% (173)
				Excellent	9		
Very satisfied	38	Very good	31	Very good	42	Speak highly unprompted	16
Fairly satisfied	40	Fairly good	43	Fairly good	31	Speak highly prompted	47
Neither	5	Neither	15	Neither	3	Neutral	18
Fairly dissatisfied	9	Fairly poor	5	Fairly poor	10	Critical prompted	10
Very dissatisfied	3	Very poor	3	Very poor	-	Critical unprompted	7
				Terrible	-		
DK	3	DK	4	DK	4	None/DK	3
Satisfied	78	Good	73	Excellent/ Good	83	Speak highly	63
Dissatisfied	13	Poor	8	Terrible/Poor	10	Critical	17
Net Satisfied	+65	Net Good	+65	Net Excellent/Good	+73	Net highly	+46
<i>Mean</i>	<i>1.04</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>0.97</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>1.38</i>		

Source: MORI

Local Bus Services

More users are very satisfied with local bus services (17%) than rate them very good (11%), though there are no significant differences in overall ratings.

'Excellent' and 'very good' ratings (28%) are higher with the 7 point scale than 'very good' (11%) using the 5 point scale. The advocacy scale shows a similar shift to other examples, with a more critical and neutral response.

Qa How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the quality of local bus services?							
Qb How good or poor would you rate local bus services?							
Satisfaction	% (658)	Rating (5)	% (290)	Rating (7)	% (368)	Advocacy	% (658)
				Excellent	3		
Very satisfied	17	Very good	11	Very good	25	Speak highly unprompted	4
Fairly satisfied	49	Fairly good	50	Fairly good	37	Speak highly prompted	29
Neither	11	Neither	15	Neither	10	Neutral	36
Fairly dissatisfied	17	Fairly poor	15	Fairly poor	13	Critical prompted	21
Very dissatisfied	6	Very poor	8	Very poor	8	Critical unprompted	9
				Terrible	2		
DK	1	DK	1	DK	2	None/DK	1
Satisfied	66	Good	61	Excellent/ Good	66	Speak highly	33
Dissatisfied	23	Poor	22	Terrible/Poor	22	Critical	30
Net Satisfied	+43	Net Good	+39	Net Excellent/Good	+43	Net highly	+3
<i>Mean</i>	<i>0.54</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>0.43</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>0.65</i>		

Source: MORI

Train companies

There is an increase in the proportion with a neutral “neither/nor” response between the satisfaction and ratings scales. Very few rate trains as excellent on the seven point scale, but there is an increase in those saying “very” good from the five point scale (from 6% to 13%).

The advocacy scale is similar to buses and other services, with a shift to the negative and neutral categories. As with councils, the advocacy scale actually changes the net rating from a positive to a negative score.

Qa How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the quality of train companies?							
Qb How good or poor would you rate train companies?							
Satisfaction	% (563)	Rating (5)	% (262)	Rating (7)	% (301)	Advocacy	% (563)
				Excellent	*		
Very satisfied	8	Very good	6	Very good	13	Speak highly unprompted	1
Fairly satisfied	41	Fairly good	37	Fairly good	32	Speak highly prompted	15
Neither	17	Neither	23	Neither	17	Neutral	44
Fairly dissatisfied	22	Fairly poor	17	Fairly poor	22	Critical prompted	23
Very dissatisfied	9	Very poor	13	Very poor	9	Critical unprompted	12
				Terrible	3		
DK	4	DK	4	DK	6	None/DK	4
Satisfied	48	Good	43	Excellent/ Good	45	Speak highly	16
Dissatisfied	31	Poor	30	Terrible/Poor	33	Critical	35
Net Satisfied	+17	Net Good	+13	Net Excellent/Good	+11	Net highly	-19
<i>Mean</i>	<i>0.17</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>0.06</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>0.10</i>		

Source: MORI

Individual Level Differences

This section compares the consistency of responses from individuals when presented with the different scales for three key services – GPs, the police and the local council. Please note that actual numbers are reported and not percentages so that results can be compared both across and down the tables.

GP

The first table below compares satisfaction with the five-point performance (good/poor) scale. If the scales are interpreted in a consistent way we would expect respondents to choose the same point in the scale – eg if they said they thought their GP was very good on the rating scale they would be very satisfied with their GP, if they rated the service as fairly good, they would be fairly satisfied etc.

However, we know that the descriptive terms used in scales do have an impact on interpretation – and this is seen in the table below. In particular, there appears to be rather less consistency around the “fairly” categories – with a number of those who say fairly satisfied rating the service as very good or neither/nor, and vice versa. This is consistent with findings from a large number of previous studies.⁶

Q25 *I would like you to tell me how satisfied or dissatisfied you are with the quality of each of the following ... your GP.*

Q100 *How good or poor would you rate... your GP?*

	Very good	Fairly good	Neither/nor	Fairly poor	Very poor	No opinion	Total
<i>Base: Sample V1</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>
Very satisfied	215	27	1	0	0	0	243
Fairly satisfied	30	150	16	1	0	1	198
Neither/nor	1	9	11	3	0	0	24
Fairly dissatisfied	1	4	2	11	4	0	22
Very dissatisfied	0	0	0	1	5	0	6
No opinion	0	0	1	0	0	1	2
Total	247	190	31	16	9	2	495

Source: MORI

⁶ Worcester and Burns (1975) *A statistical examination of the relative precision of verbal scales*

We can also compare the satisfaction scale with the seven-point rating scale. The findings are similar, with the least consistency of responses around the “fairly” categories. For example, those who say they are fairly satisfied with their GP are almost as likely to rate the service as a combination of very good, neither/nor or fairly poor as they are to rate them as fairly good.

Q25 *I would like you to tell me how satisfied or dissatisfied you are with the quality of your GP.*

Q109 *How good or poor would you rate your GP?*

	Exc- ellent	Very good	Fairly good	Nei- ther/ nor	Fairly poor	Very poor	Terr- ible	No opin- ion	Total
<i>Base: Sample V2</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>
Very satisfied	115	166	13	1	0	0	0	0	295
Fairly satisfied	4	76	97	10	7	1	1	1	197
Neither/nor	0	2	9	9	1	0	0	1	22
Fairly dissatisfied	0	0	7	6	8	2	0	1	24
Very dissatisfied	0	0	0	0	1	5	3	0	9
No opinion	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
Total	119	245	127	26	17	8	4	3	549

Source: MORI

The table below compares satisfaction with the advocacy rating of GPs. The first point to note is that the advocacy scale is clearly more demanding – ie people who are satisfied with the service (particularly if they are only fairly satisfied) will not automatically speak highly about it, even when asked.

However, there is quite a high level of consistency between the two questions for those who are very satisfied – ie although most of those who are very satisfied would need prompting before speaking highly about the service, they are unlikely to be critical. It therefore appears that, for GPs at least, the two scales are measuring a similar construct, with advocacy just more difficult to achieve.

Q25 *I would like you to tell me how satisfied or dissatisfied you are with the quality of your GP.*

Q122 *I would like you to select the statement which best applies to your view of some public services. Which of these statements apply to your view of your GP?*

	Would speak highly without being asked	Definitely speak highly if asked opinion	Neutral	Critical if asked opinion	Critical without being asked	Don't know	Total
<i>Base: All respondents</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>
Very satisfied	189	313	28	7	0	0	537
Fairly satisfied	23	184	146	37	3	3	396
Neither/nor	1	7	23	12	4	0	47
Fairly dissatisfied	2	1	16	21	6	0	46
Very dissatisfied	0	1	0	4	12	0	17
No opinion	0	1	1	0	0	1	3
Total	215	507	214	81	25	4	1,046

Source: MORI

The comparison between advocacy and general rating scales suggests a similar pattern to satisfaction – that advocacy is more difficult to achieve. Again this suggests that we need to be careful with any interpretation of “fairly good” as a positive response, as large proportions of these would be neutral (78 out of 190) or even critical (22 out of 190) if asked their opinion.

Q122 *I would like you to select the statement which best applies to your view of some public services. Which of these statements apply to your view of your GP?*

Q100 *How good or poor would you rate... your GP?*

	Very good	Fairly good	Neither/nor	Fairly poor	Very poor	No opinion	Total
<i>Base: Sample V1</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>
I think so much of them I would speak highly without being asked	100	5	1	0	0	0	106
I would definitely speak highly of them if someone asked my opinion	136	83	3	0	0	0	222
I would be neutral about them if someone asked my opinion	11	78	17	5	1	1	113
I would be critical of them if someone asked my opinion	1	19	9	11	1	0	41
I would be critical of them without being asked	0	3	1	0	7	0	11
Don't know	0	2	0	0	0	1	3
Total	24	190	31	16	9	2	496

Source: MORI

There is a similar pattern again when we compare advocacy with a seven-point rating scale.

Q122 *I would like you to select the statement which best applies to your view of some public services. Which of these statements apply to your view of your GP?*

Q109 *How good or poor would you rate ...your GP?*

	Exc- ellent	Very good	Fairly good	Nei- ther/ nor	Fairly poor	Very poor	Terr- ible	No opin- ion	Total
<i>Base: Sample V2</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>
I think so much of them I would speak highly without being asked	58	45	4	1	1	0	0	0	109
I would definitely speak highly of them if someone asked my opinion	57	168	54	2	2	0	0	1	284
I would be neutral about them if someone asked my opinion	1	25	54	17	4	0	0	1	102
I would be critical of them if someone asked my opinion	3	6	12	4	9	3	0	1	38
I would be critical of them without being asked	0	0	2	2	1	5	4	0	14
Don't know	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	119	244	127	26	17	8	4	3	548

Source: MORI

Police

A similar pattern also emerges when comparing satisfaction and rating scales with the Police. Of those who say they are very satisfied with the Police, almost half as many rate them fairly good (23) as very good (53).

As before, the spread is even greater when we consider those who say they are fairly satisfied – significant numbers rate the Police as either very good (20) or neither/nor (24). The inconsistency as to what is meant by the ‘fairly’ category is also seen when we consider those who are neither/nor (dis)satisfied – almost as many of this group rate the Police as fairly good (42) as rate them as neither good nor poor (49).

Q29 *I would like you to tell me how satisfied or dissatisfied you are with the quality of Police.*

Q102 *How good or poor would you rate Police?*

	Q102 Rate Police						
	Very good	Fairly good	Neither/nor	Fairly poor	Very poor	No opinion	Total
<i>Base: Sample V1</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>
Q29 Police							
Very satisfied	53	23	0	0	0	1	77
Fairly satisfied	20	109	24	9	0	7	169
Neither/nor	2	42	49	8	2	5	108
Fairly dissatisfied	0	6	18	37	4	0	65
Very dissatisfied	0	0	1	7	9	1	18
No opinion	2	18	13	3	2	18	56
Total	77	198	105	64	17	32	493

Source: MORI

When comparing the five point satisfaction and seven point rating scales, most of those who are very satisfied also rate the Police as very good or excellent (65 out of 79), but again there is less consistency with the 'fairly' category.

Q29 *I would like you to tell me how satisfied or dissatisfied you are with the quality of Police.*

Q111 *How good or poor would you rate Police?*

	Q111 Rate Police								Total
	Exc- cellent	Very good	Fairly good	Nei- ther/ nor	Fairly poor	Very poor	Terr- ible	No opin- ion	
<i>Base: Sample V2</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>
Q29 Police									
Very satisfied	15	50	12	1	0	0	0	1	79
Fairly satisfied	4	55	115	37	8	2	0	10	231
Neither/nor	0	12	28	51	3	1	0	6	101
Fairly dissatisfied	1	2	11	13	24	5	0	1	57
Very dissatisfied	0	0	0	0	7	8	6	0	21
No opinion	0	6	19	12	7	1	0	17	62
Total	20	125	185	114	49	17	6	35	551

Source: MORI

Respondents who are very satisfied with the Police do not necessarily spontaneously speak highly of them. Indeed, more of these would be neutral about the Police if asked (39), than would speak highly without being asked (27).

Similarly, being fairly satisfied does not equate to advocacy – in fact, the majority (239 of 398) say they would be neutral about the Police.

Q29 *I would like you to tell me how satisfied or dissatisfied you are with the quality of Police.*

Q122 *I would like you to select the statement which best applies to your view of some public services. Which of these statements apply to your view of Police?*

Q122c Best Applies to View of Police

	Speak highly without being asked	Speak highly if asked	Neutral	Critical if asked	Critical without being asked	None	Don't know	Total
<i>Base: All respondents</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>
Q29 Police								
Very satisfied	27	83	39	1	4	0	1	155
Fairly satisfied	6	107	239	37	6	0	3	398
Neither/nor	0	27	147	26	5	2	3	210
Fairly dissatisfied	2	2	30	70	12	1	3	121
Very dissatisfied	2	0	1	18	18	0	1	40
No opinion	0	20	73	9	3	3	12	120
Total	37	239	529	162	48	6	23	1,044

Again, the response pattern seen for police services suggests that a similar construct is being measured in the performance and advocacy scales (next two tables), but that the advocacy scale is more demanding.

Q122 *I would like you to select the statement which best applies to your view of some public services. Which of these statements apply to your view of Poice?*

Q102 *How good or poor would you rate Police?*

	Q102 Rate Police						Total
	Very good	Fairly good	Neither/nor	Fairly poor	Very poor	No opinion	
<i>Base: Sample V1</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>
Q122c Best Applies							
I think so much of them I would speak highly without being asked	18	3	2	0	0	0	23
I would definitely speak highly of them if someone asked my opinion	39	52	11	0	0	1	103
I would be neutral about them if someone asked my opinion	14	122	73	14	2	18	243
I would be critical of them if someone asked my opinion	2	11	17	42	8	3	83
I would be critical of them without being asked	4	5	2	7	8	0	26
None	0	0	0	0	0	5	12
Don't know	0	5	2	1	0	4	12
Total	77	198	107	64	18	31	495

Source: MORI

Q122 *I would like you to select the statement which best applies to your view of some public services. Which of these statements apply to your view of Police?*

Q111 *How good or poor would you rate Police?*

	Q111 Rate Police								Total
	Exc- ellent	Very good	Fairly good	Nei- ther/ nor	Fairly poor	Very poor	Terr- ible	No opin- ion	
<i>Base: Sample V2</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>
Q122c Best Applies									
I think so much of them I would speak highly without being asked	5	4	4	0	0	0	2	0	15
I would definitely speak highly of them if someone asked my opinion	14	75	34	11	1	1	0	2	138
I would be neutral about them if someone asked my opinion	1	43	124	81	12	1	0	24	286
I would be critical of them if someone asked my opinion	0	2	21	19	30	5	1	1	79
I would be critical of them without being asked	0	1	2	1	6	10	3	0	23
None	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Don't know	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	8	10
Total	20	125	186	114	49	17	6	35	552

Source: MORI

Local Council

The pattern for local council services is just about identical to those seen above for GPs and the police; that is, with satisfaction and rating scales being broadly similar, most variation in the “fairly” and “neither/nor” categories, and with advocacy being the most demanding scale. Indeed it appears that respondents react to the scales in consistent ways for a wide range of services. The tables for local council questions are shown below.

Q30 *I would like you to tell me how satisfied or dissatisfied you are with the quality of your local Council.*

Q106 *How good or poor would you rate your local Council?*

Q106 Rate Your Local Council							
	Very good	Fairly good	Neither/nor	Fairly poor	Very poor	No opinion	Total
<i>Base: Sample V1</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>
Q30 Local Council							
Very satisfied	12	13	2	0	0	1	28
Fairly satisfied	6	123	42	13	2	6	192
Neither/nor	2	34	66	17	1	6	126
Fairly dissatisfied	0	12	21	30	7	3	73
Very dissatisfied	0	2	7	12	19	0	40
No opinion	2	10	4	7	0	8	31
Total	22	194	142	79	29	24	490

Source: MORI

Q30 *I would like you to tell me how satisfied or dissatisfied you are with the quality of your local Council.*

Q115 *How good or poor would you rate your local Council?*

Q115 Rate Your Local Council									
	Exc- ellent	Very good	Fairly good	Nei- ther/ nor	Fairly poor	Very poor	Terr- ible	No opin- ion	Total
<i>Base: Sample V2</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>
Q30 Local Council									
Very satisfied	3	19	11	0	0	0	0	1	34
Fairly satisfied	4	32	132	43	7	1	0	12	231
Neither/nor	0	6	45	69	13	3	2	5	143
Fairly dissatisfied	0	0	11	18	33	6	1	0	69
Very dissatisfied	0	0	3	7	5	16	6	0	37
No opinion	0	1	13	11	1	0	0	10	36
Total	7	58	215	148	59	26	9	28	550

Source: MORI

Q30 *I would like you to tell me how satisfied or dissatisfied you are with the quality of your local Council.*

Q122 *I would like you to select the statement which best applies to your view of some public services. Which of these statements apply to your view of your local Council?*

Q122d Best Applies to View of Local Council

	Speak highly without being asked	Speak highly if asked	Neutral	Critical if asked	Critical without being asked	None	Don't know	Total
<i>Base: All respondents</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>
Q30 Local Council								
Very satisfied	5	33	19	3	1	0	3	64
Fairly satisfied	3	87	269	52	7	2	3	423
Neither/nor	2	23	181	53	7	3	1	270
Fairly dissatisfied	0	4	35	83	20	0	2	144
Very dissatisfied	0	0	6	27	42	2	0	77
No opinion	1	6	43	9	3	0	6	68
Total	11	153	553	227	80	7	15	1,046

Q122 *I would like you to select the statement which best applies to your view of some public services. Which of these statements apply to your view of your local Council?*

Q106 *How good or poor would you rate your local Council?*

Q106 Rate Your Local Council							
	Very good	Fairly good	Neither/nor	Fairly poor	Very poor	No opinion	Total
<i>Base: Sample V1</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>
Q122d Best Applies							
I think so much of them I would speak highly without being asked	2	2	2	0	0	0	6
I would definitely speak highly of them if someone asked my opinion	12	44	7	0	1	1	65
I would be neutral about them if someone asked my opinion	7	130	97	14	1	16	265
I would be critical of them if someone asked my opinion	1	13	30	47	13	3	107
I would be critical of them without being asked	0	4	5	19	15	1	44
None	0	1	1	0	0	0	2
Don't know	0	2	2	0	0	3	7
Total	22	196	144	80	30	24	496

Source: MORI

Q122 *I would like you to select the statement which best applies to your view of some public services. Which of these statements apply to your view of your local Council?*

Q115 *How good or poor would you rate your local Council?*

	Q115 Rate Your Local Council								
	Exc- ellent	Very good	Fairly good	Nei- ther/ nor	Fairly poor	Very poor	Terr- ible	No opin- ion	Total
<i>Base: Sample V2</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>
Q122d Best Applies									
I think so much of them I would speak highly without being asked	1	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	5
I would definitely speak highly of them if someone asked my opinion	5	32	42	5	1	0	0	3	88
I would be neutral about them if someone asked my opinion	0	19	139	98	13	3	0	16	288
I would be critical of them if someone asked my opinion	0	5	30	34	38	7	1	5	120
I would be critical of them without being asked	1	0	0	4	7	16	8	0	36
None	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	1	5
Don't know	0	0	3	2	1	0	0	3	9
Total	7	59	216	146	60	26	9	28	551

Source: MORI

Comparing Rankings

This section illustrates how the rankings of key public services vary according to the particular performance measure adopted.

The table below illustrates a great deal of consistency in terms of performance rankings, regardless of the specific measure used to rate services. In general, primary schools and GPs are rated the highest, while local train companies and the Council are consistently rated the lowest, followed closely by the police and the local bus service. There is some degree of 'switching' around the middle, but in general rankings only change by an order of one, and at most two (the latter for secondary schools *within* five/seven point service quality rating scales).

Of some interest is that advocacy scores also generate broadly consistent rankings, despite the large number of 'neutral' responses to these types of questions. However, local schools (particularly primary schools) do tend to perform better when advocacy scales are adopted instead of satisfaction or rating scales. Conversely, people are less likely to speak highly of their GP than their relative satisfaction and rating scores would suggest.

Comparing Rankings									
	GP	Primary	Secondary	Nursery	NHS Hospitals	Local Bus Service	Police	Train companies	Council
<i>Ranking</i>									
Satisfaction:									
Very/fairly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Very satisfied only	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Net	1	1	4	3	5	6	7	9	8
Mean	1	2	4	3	5	7	6	9	8
Rating (5 point scale):									
Very/fairly good	1	2	5	3	4	6	7	8	9
Very good only	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Net	1	2	5	3	4	6	7	9	8
Mean	2	1	5	3	4	7	6	9	8
Rating (7 point scale):									
Excellent/very good	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Excellent only	1	2	5	3	4	7	6	9	8
Net	2	1	3	4	5	7	6	9	8
Mean	1	2	4	3	5	7	6	9	8
Advocacy:									
Speak highly	2	1	4	3	5	6	7	8	9
Speak highly (unprompted only)	2	1	3	4	5	7	6	8	9
Net	3	1	4	2	5	7	6	9	8

Source: MORI

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