

Transport for London

Dial-a-Ride Stakeholder Local Area Panel Meeting Evaluation

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MAYOR OF LONDON

Transport for London



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Prepared by:
SPA Future Thinking

1. Executive summary

Abstract

In order to provide service users with the opportunity to discuss pertinent topics of interest and feedback their experiences of Dial-a-Ride, Regional Forum Meetings are convened biannually. These meetings meet the needs of the majority of attendees, and overall satisfaction with the format is high. Where there were suggestions for how to improve the meetings, the most common was the use of microphones to aid hearing – mentioned by one in ten.

Key findings

Satisfaction with the meeting format is high with 91% of respondents saying they are very or fairly satisfied. This is also reflected in a high proportion (90%) of respondents who feel the meetings meet their needs very/fairly well. Both of these figures have increased over time.

Most attendees (70%) thought that the meetings were held at about the right frequency. Of those who did not, the majority wanted more regular meetings.

The workshop aspect of the meetings is particularly popular with 96% of respondents claiming this part to be very/fairly useful. Over time the proportion of respondents who feel encouraged to speak at meetings has increased to its present level of 93%.

In general, respondents are satisfied that their meeting started on, and ran to, time. High levels of satisfaction are also seen for the transport provided to reach the venue (87%) and the meeting venue itself (90%).

When asked to comment on any other salient issues, a number of suggested improvements to the meetings were raised. These suggestions are diverse in nature though the need for a microphone was mentioned by 11% of respondents.

2. Background and objectives

Background

Twice a year Dial-a-Ride (DaR) holds Regional Forum Meetings with members of the service. These meetings give members a chance to discuss the service with DaR borough representatives.

Meetings are attended by 12-20 service users and six meetings are held every wave. The Regional Forum Meetings held towards the end of 2010 underwent a change in meeting format. The two hour session is now split with half the time devoted to traditional agenda items, and half to a workshop session where attendees are divided into small groups for in-depth discussions on particular topics of interest.

This wave of research covers the six Regional Forum Meetings held between 16 May and 27 June 2011 and forms part of the on-going evaluation of attendees' satisfaction with the meetings.

Objectives

The specific objectives of the research were to:

- Assess satisfaction with the format and timing of meetings
- Gauge whether attendees feel encouraged to contribute at the meetings
- Measure satisfaction with the transport provided to and from the meetings
- Assess how well attendees' needs are met by the meetings
- Provide attendees with an opportunity to express any other concerns

Paper questionnaires were handed out to attendees at the close of meetings. They were encouraged to return the completed questionnaires in a prepaid envelope. Individuals were also given the option of completing the questionnaire over the telephone and two attendees chose to do so.

A total of 70 questionnaires were completed. Previous waves have seen 43 and 67 completes. It should be noted that these are relatively small base sizes meaning that changes over time are indicative rather than statistically significant.

3. Research Findings

Overall satisfaction

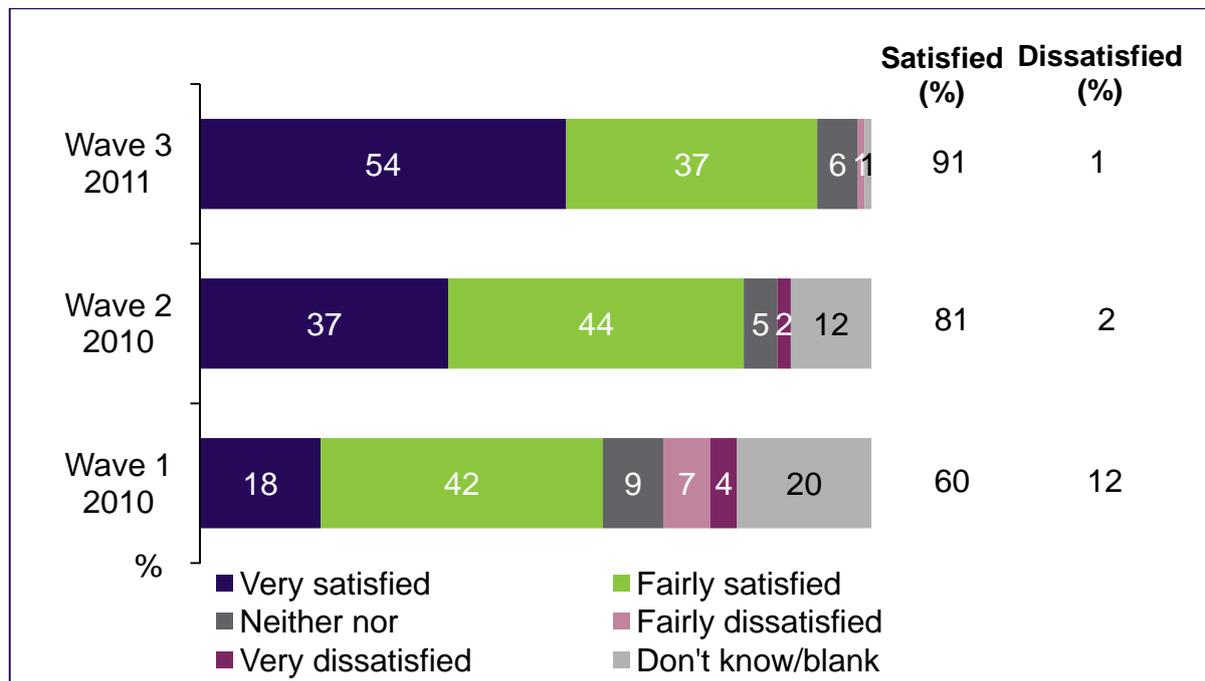
Attendees were asked their overall satisfaction with the format of the Regional Forum Meetings. Over time there is a trend of increasing satisfaction with the meeting format. Of the attendees who completed the questionnaire this wave, 91% said they were either very or fairly satisfied with the meeting format, as commented below.

“A very good meeting and a most interesting workshop. I thought the 'etiquette' piece was a very good idea.” (Female, 80+)

“[The meeting] is done well and it is useful to get feedback on how the service is running.” (Female, 25-59)

Satisfaction increased substantially between wave 1 and wave 2 when the change in meeting format took place. Last wave, when asked whether they preferred the new or old meeting format, only 9% preferred the old format with the remaining respondents preferring the modified format or expressing no preference.

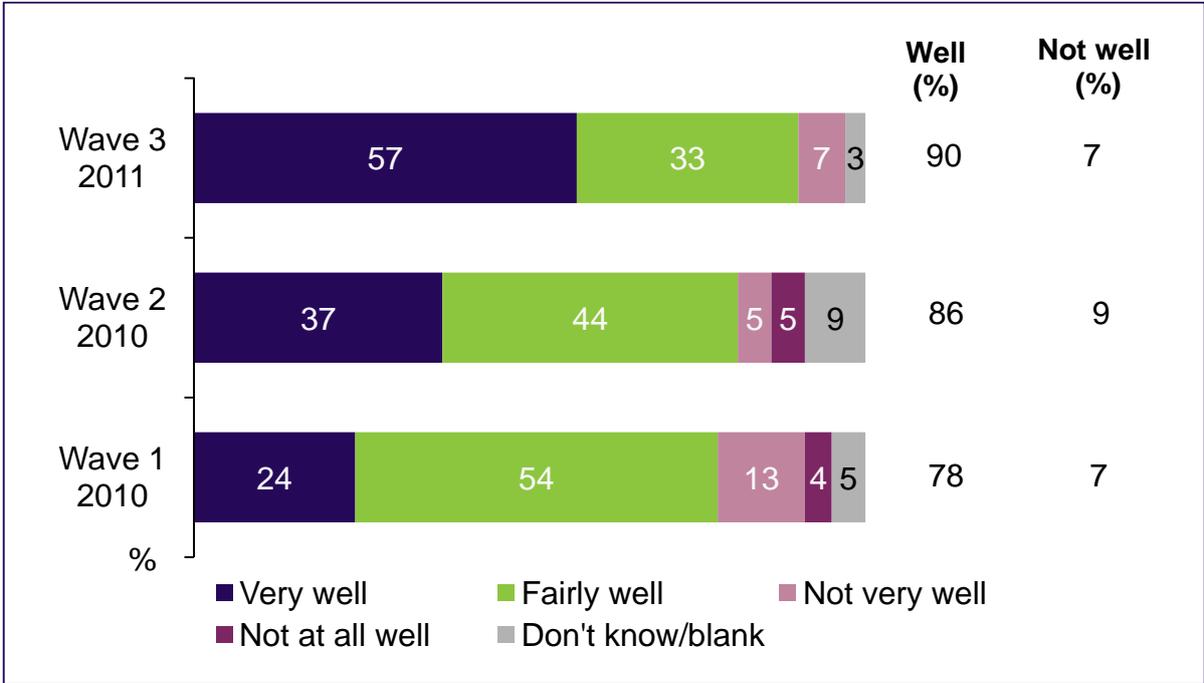
Chart 3.1 Overall satisfaction with meeting format



Q1 Overall how satisfied were you with the format of the Regional Forum you attended?
 Base: All attendees (wave 3: 70, wave 2: 43, wave 1: 67)

A similar picture is seen for how well attendees think the meetings meet their needs, with a steady increase in the proportion saying the meetings met their needs very/fairly well over time. 57% of respondents feel their needs are met very well by the meetings, with a further 33% saying their needs are met fairly well.

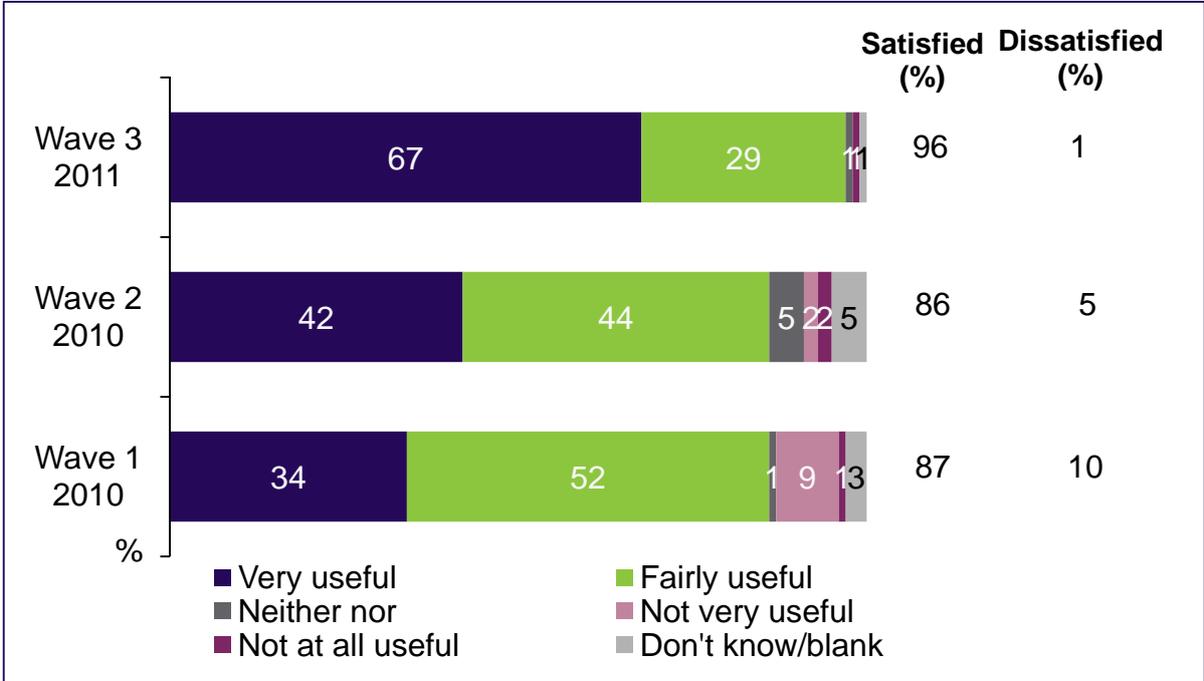
Chart 3.2 Extent to which meeting met needs



Q9 Overall how well did the Regional Forum meet your needs?
 Base: All attendees (wave 3: 70, wave 2: 43, wave 1: 67)

One hour of each meeting is dedicated to a workshop session where attendees discuss topics in greater detail within small groups. This section of the meeting is thought to be very/fairly useful by 96% of respondents.

Chart 3.5 Usefulness of the workshop



Q3 How useful did you find the workshop (open discussion) section of the Regional Forum?
 Base: All attendees (wave 3: 70, wave 2: 43, wave 1: 67)

Meeting frequency

Presently, the Regional Forum Meetings are held every six months. Across all three waves of research, the majority of respondents feel this frequency is “about right”.

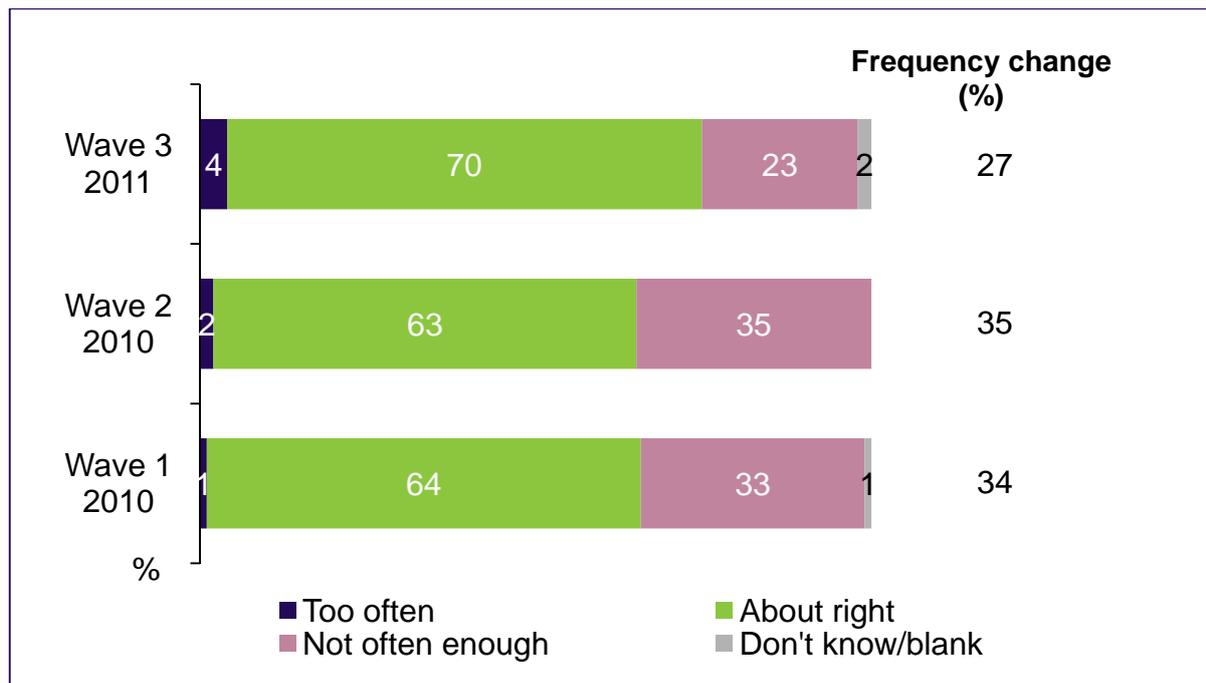
Three respondents (4%) say the meetings are held too often, though this is counterbalanced by 16 individuals (23%) who think the meetings should be held more frequently.

When given the opportunity to express further comments about the DaR service, a handful of individuals commented specifically about the frequency of meetings. Some of their comments are shown below.

“Regional forums held every 6 months is not good at all. Holding regional forums every 4 months will be okay. Thereby users will be able to give their views and opinions. Users will also be given feedback about the service.” (Female, 25-59)

“I would prefer quarterly meetings.” (Male, 25-59)

Chart 3.3 Frequency of meetings

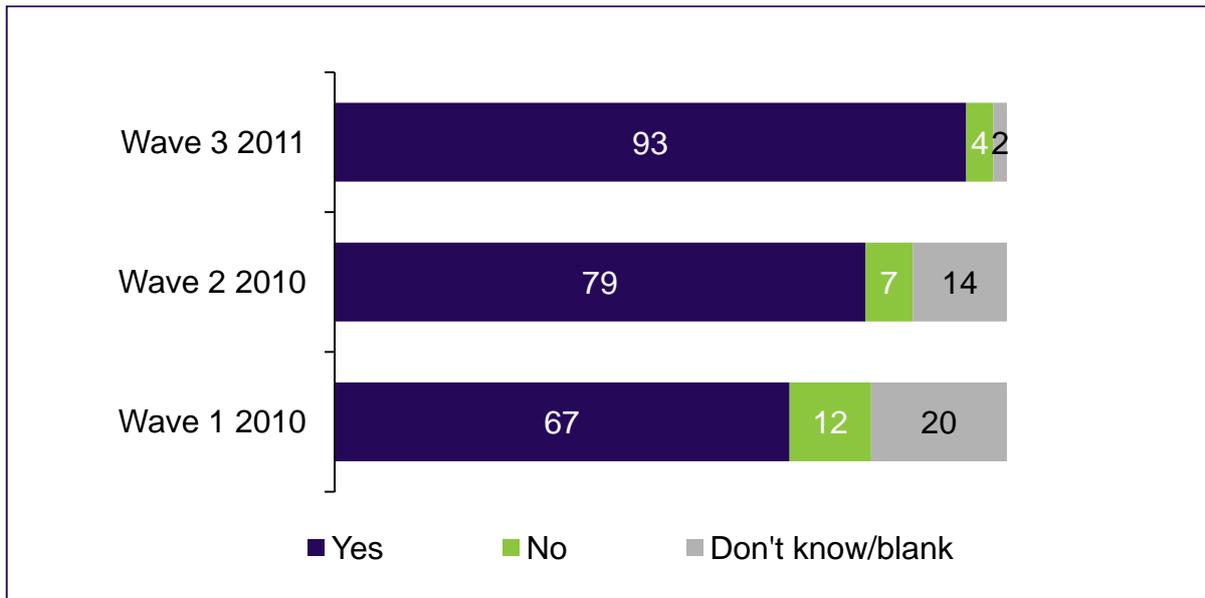


Q10 It is intended that the Regional Forums be held every 6 months. Do you think this is...?
 Base: All attendees (wave 3: 70, wave 2: 43, wave 1: 67)

Involvement at meetings

Presently, 93% of respondents feel they are encouraged to speak at the Regional Forum Meetings. This proportion has increased from 67% in early 2010 and 79% in late 2010. The parallel increase in overall satisfaction with meeting format may well be linked to the increased sense that speaking up is encouraged at the meetings.

Chart 3.4 Encouragement to speak at meetings

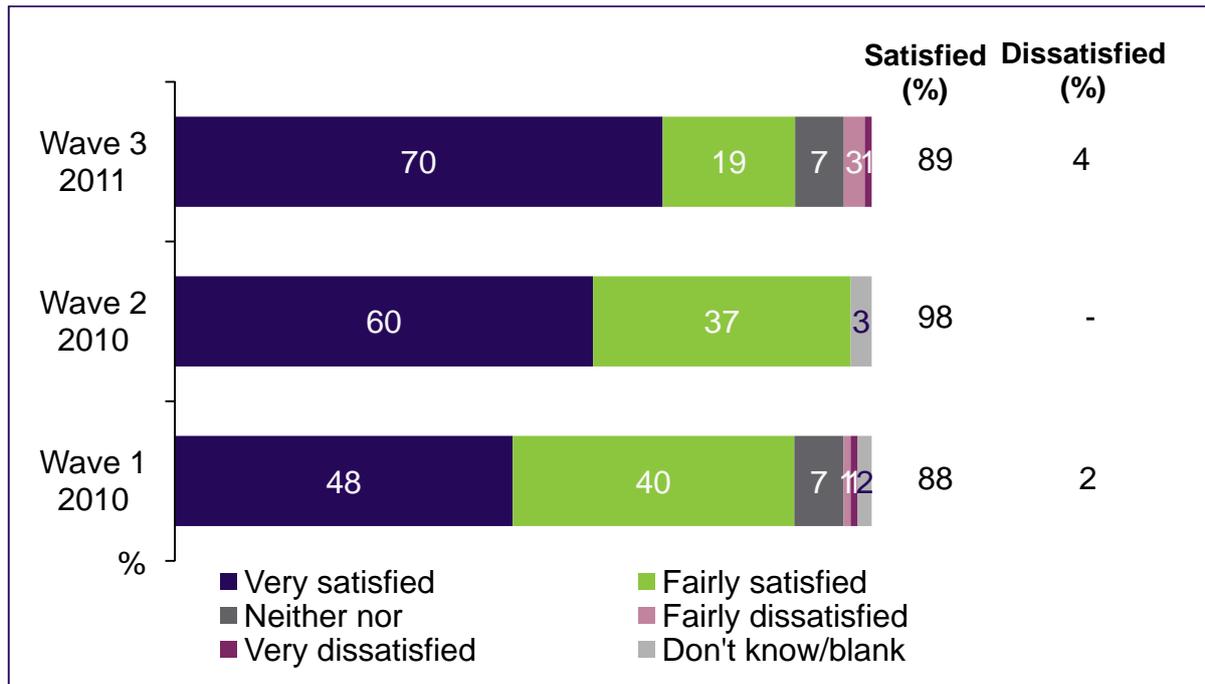


Q2 Did you feel encouraged to speak at the Regional Forum?
Base: All attendees (wave 3: 70, wave 2: 43, wave 1: 67)

Meeting timings

70% of respondents are very satisfied that the meeting started on time, with a further 19% claiming they are fairly satisfied. Only three individuals (4%) say they are dissatisfied that the meeting started on time; two of whom attended the meeting held on 23 May.

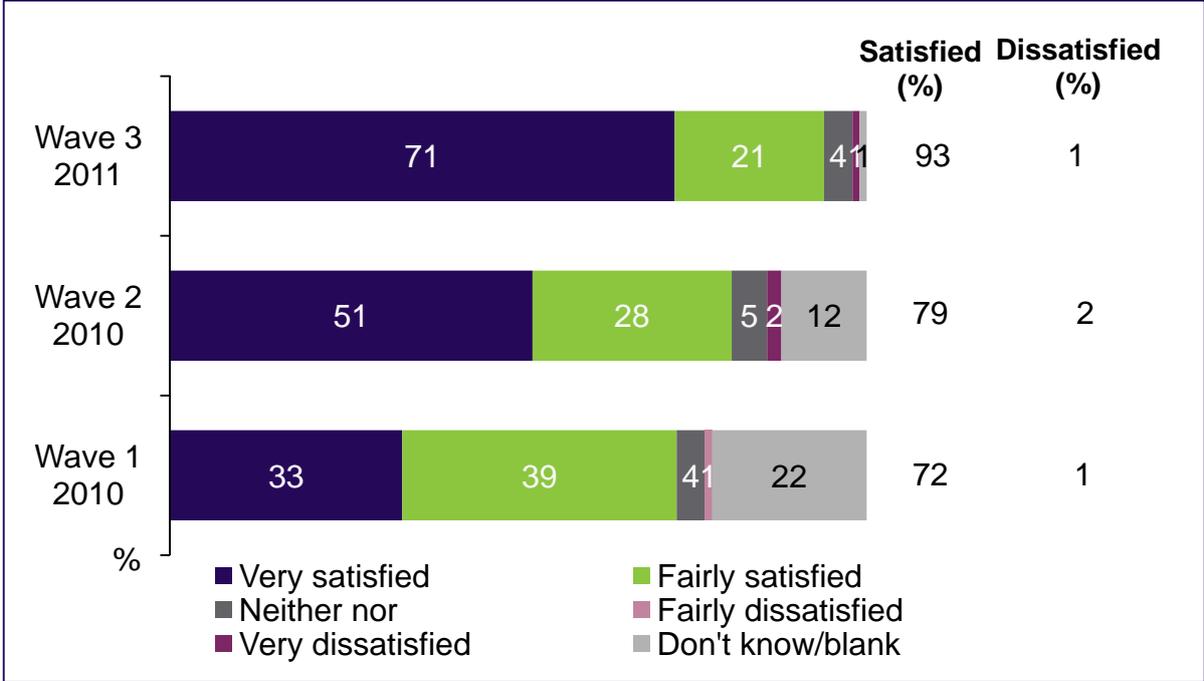
Chart 3.6 Satisfaction that meetings started on time



Q4 Overall how satisfied are you that the Regional Forum started on time?
 Base: All attendees (wave 3: 70, wave 2: 43, wave 1: 67)

As with satisfaction for meeting start time, a similar proportion of respondents are satisfied that the meeting ran to time (93%). Earlier waves of research saw lower satisfaction scores for meetings running to time, suggesting there has been an improvement in the time-keeping element of the meetings.

Chart 3.7 Satisfaction that meetings ran to time



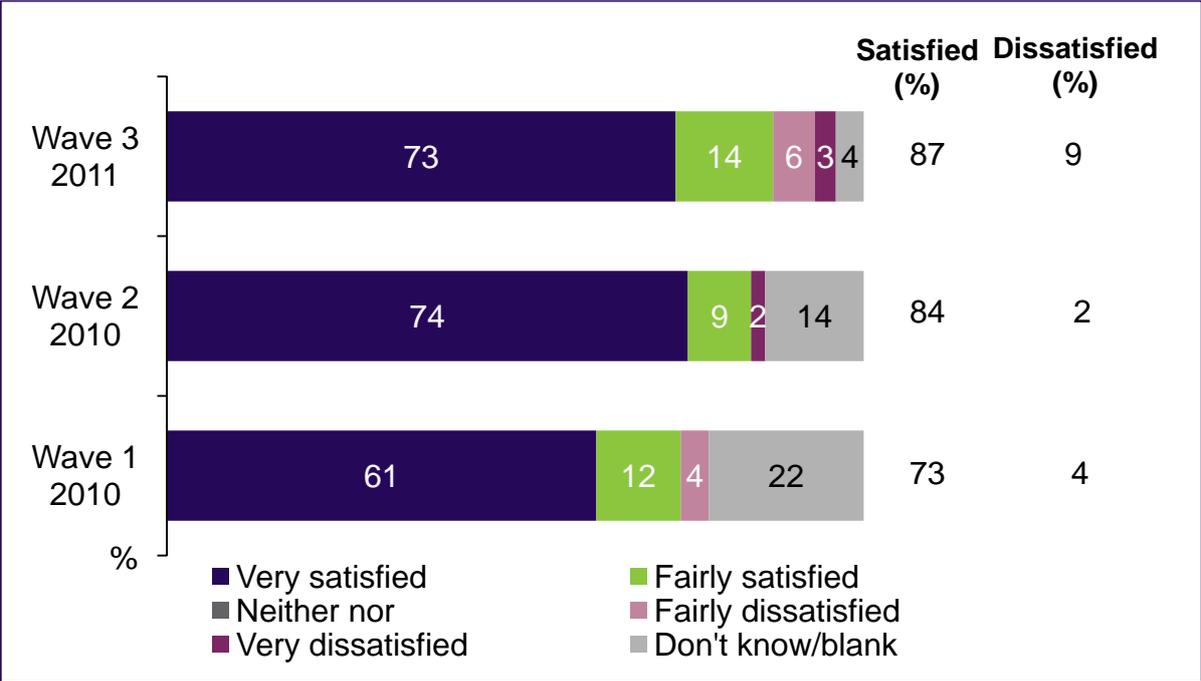
Q5 Overall how satisfied are you that the Regional Forum ran to time?
 Base: All attendees (wave 3: 70, wave 2: 43, wave 1: 67)

Travelling to the meeting

Many respondents travelled to the meeting using the DaR service. Satisfaction with the transport provided is high (87%). Of the nine individuals who say they were fairly/very dissatisfied, one provided explanation by saying:

“When being informed of the pick-up time, it should be given correctly - not one hour later.” (Male, 65-69)

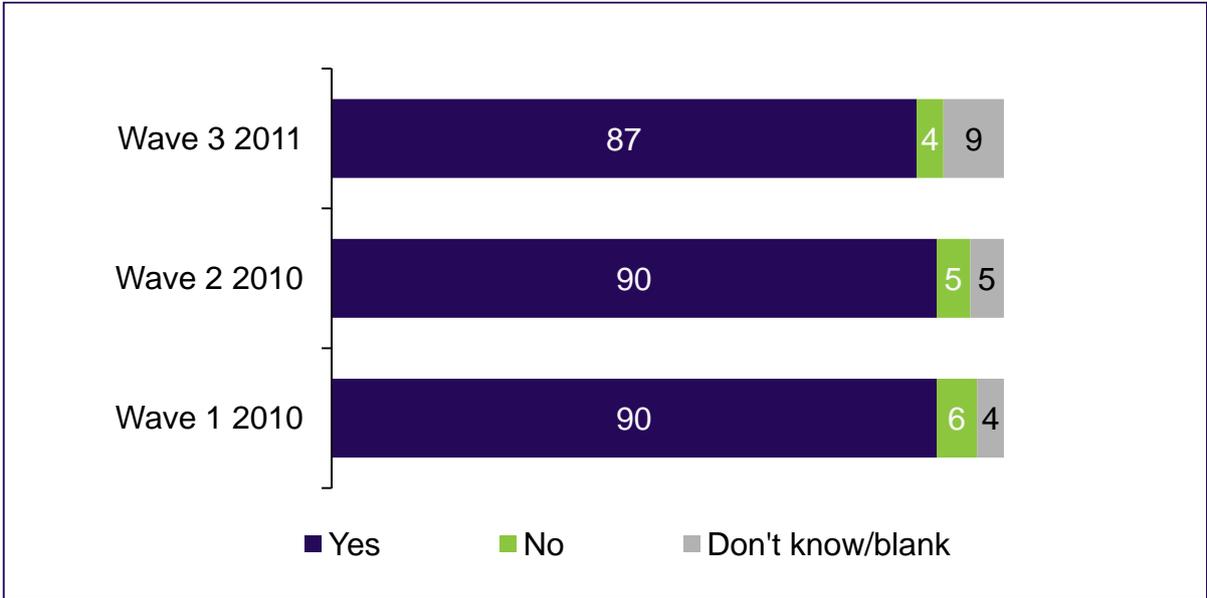
Chart 3.8 Satisfaction with transport provided to attend meeting



Q6 How satisfied were you with the transport provided for you to attend the Regional Forum?
 Base: All attendees (wave 3: 70, wave 2: 43, wave 1: 67)

Three individuals were not informed of their pick up time, though this had seemingly little effect on their opinion of the transport with all three claiming to be very satisfied with the transport provided to attend the meeting. For all three waves, approximately nine out of ten respondents were informed of their pick-up time.

Chart 3.9 Whether informed of pick-up time

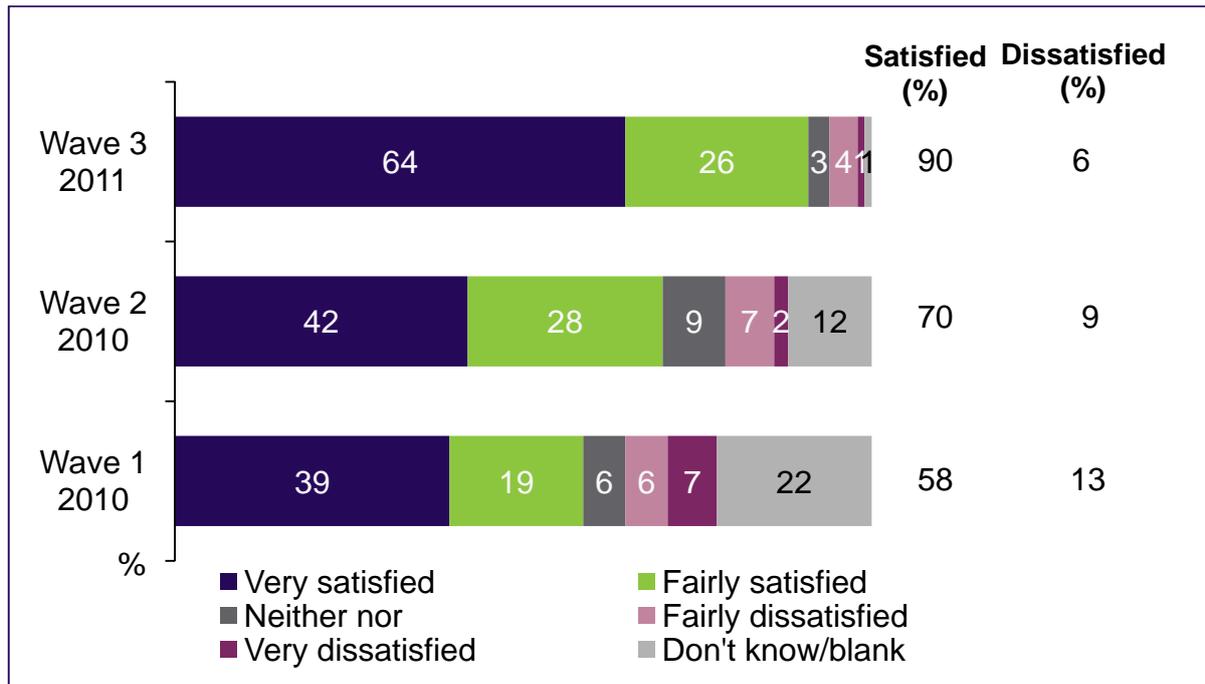


Q7 Were you informed about your pick-up time before the Regional Forum?
Base: All attendees (wave 3: 70, wave 2: 43, wave 1: 67)

The venue

Over time the proportion of respondents satisfied with the meeting venue has increased, reaching 90% in the latest wave of research. In particular there has been an increase in those saying they are very satisfied from 42% in late 2010 to 64% presently.

Chart 3.10 Satisfaction with the meeting venue



Q8 How satisfied were you with the venue for the Regional Forum?

Base: All attendees (wave 3: 70, wave 2: 43, wave 1: 67)

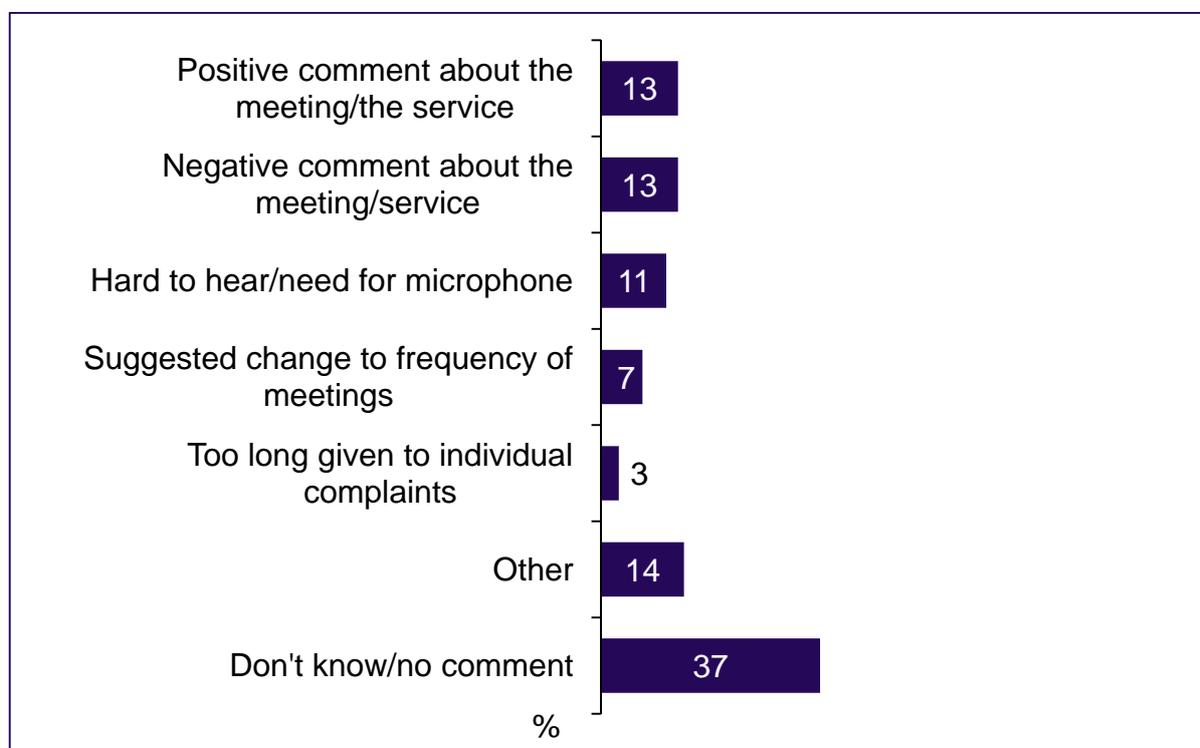
Further feedback

Respondents were given the chance to highlight any specific issues concerning the DaR service and the Regional Forum meetings. Many of the comments are positive, praising both the service and the meetings, though suggested improvements are also raised.

The most commonly mentioned issue is the need for a microphone at the meetings.

“I have a hearing problem but although I have an NHS hearing aid, I found it almost impossible to hear. A microphone is very necessary, especially with disabled people.” (Female, 80+)

Chart 3.11 Specific issues raised by attendees



Q11 Are there any other specific issues you would like to highlight?
Base: All attendees (wave 3: 70)

The suggested improvements cover a broad range of topics. To give a feel for the comments being made, many of the suggested improvements are shown below.

“I felt the agenda could have been trimmed back somewhat and extra time given to the longer discussions, more in keeping with the reason we meet.” (Female, 80+)

“There is still a difficulty with the workshop - some members are there to push their own gripes rather than look at issues - it is quite difficult as they didn't stick to the subject. Other than that, it is done well and it is useful to get feedback on how the service is running.” (Female, 25-59)

“I was not convinced that my comments would be addressed seriously.” (Male, 80+)

“Too much time was spent discussing the ‘five mile’ limit.” (Female, age unknown)

“I was shocked to see biscuits served on kitchen roll on the tables. What happened to disposable plates?” (Gender and age unknown)

“At the last 2 meetings we were seated round the speaker. This time we were seated at a rectangular table – more difficult to react with each other.” (Gender and age unknown)

“When people at the meeting were divided into workshop smaller groups, it became apparent to me that several people in wheelchairs or mobility scooters were positioned around the tables quite awkwardly and it would have been better for them had the tables first been moved further apart to allow them more space and a better vantage and participation point.” (Male, 65-69)

“There should have been a sign towards the venue building within the church grounds to avoid disabled people walking the wrong way. The chairs provided at the venue were not suitable for several people who need arm rests to press when they need to rise from their seats.” (Female, 80+)

Whilst attendees had suggestions of how to improve the Regional Forum Meetings, many were very complimentary.

“I found this forum was well organised and feel that comments and suggestion will be dealt with.” (Female, 80+)

“I found the meeting very good – workshop even better.” (Female, 60-64)

Overall, the Regional Forum Meetings achieve high levels of satisfaction with attendees and the revised meeting format seems to be contributing to increased satisfaction with particular compliments paid towards to workshop aspect.

4. Appendix

	Total	%
Gender		
Male	20	29
Female	44	63
Prefer not to say/blank	6	9
Age		
16-59	9	13
60-64	4	6
65-69	6	9
70-79	14	20
80+	30	43
Prefer not to say/blank	7	10
Ethnicity		
White	44	63
BAME	14	20
Prefer not to say/blank	12	17