



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

Veterans Agency

An Executive Agency of the Ministry of Defence

TREATMENT SURVEY

2006

Produced by the Business Improvement Team



TREATMENT SURVEY 2006

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1. Introduction

The mission of the Veterans Agency (VA) is to “deliver modern, high-quality, customer-focused services to war disablement pensioners, war widows, their dependants and carers, and other veterans and in-Service beneficiaries of AFCS; and to deliver them consistently, efficiently and effectively in recognition of the many extraordinary and unique personal sacrifices made in defence of the nation”.

To help VA achieve this the Treatment Group consider claims from War Disablement Pensioners for the following:

Appliances	Part-time Treatment Allowance
Chiropody	Prescription Charges
Convalescence	Priority Treatment
Home Nursing Care	Private Treatment
Home Nursing Equipment	Provision of Treatment Overseas
Hospital Travelling Expenses	Remedial Treatment
House Adaptation Grants	Skilled Nursing Care
Treatment Allowance and Maintenance	

2. Objective

The objective of this survey is to assist VA in establishing the current and future needs of War Disablement Pensioners with particular emphasis on determining:

- The level of satisfaction with the services VA provide
- The cause(s) of any dissatisfaction
- Customer choices
- Customer preferences
- Customer priorities
- Customer ideas for improvement

3. Approach

475 questionnaires were issued between May and October 2006. The overall response rate to the questionnaires issued was 51% (240). Of the questionnaires issued, 70% of the recipients received a favourable decision with the remaining 30% receiving a non-favourable decision.

4. Management Summary

78% of respondents received a favourable decision and the remaining 22% an unfavourable decision.

The Claim Form

- 84% found the claim form easy or acceptable to fill in.

Access and Contact

- 86% know who to contact regarding any questions they may have.
- 90% of respondents were either very satisfied or satisfied with the help, information and/or advice they received from us.
- 94% of customers were satisfied or very satisfied with the standard of written communication received from the Treatment Group.

The Internet

- 57% of respondents are aware VA has a website, of which 35% have accessed the site.
- Of those who have accessed the VA website, 73% were able to find relevant information regarding treatment.

Service Quality

- The most important of VA's targets and service standards was considered to be friendly and helpful staff (38% of respondents).
- 84% described the overall service from VA as excellent or good. 9% described the service as adequate and 7% as inadequate.
- 93% of customers would recommend the service to others.

5. Recommended Areas for Improvement

Identified areas for improvement	Recommendations
“Show rates of payment of all War Pension related items on your website and complete list of all benefits available”.	Consider inserting a clearer link on the Internet site to information relating to treatment.
“Need to be aware of facts and legislation”.	Consider placing the legislation regarding treatment onto the website.
“In your WP help booklet it explains what you can/cannot claim for. In the priority treatment section it tells you anyone can use this. It does not say anywhere that it is not available in N Ireland. This is discriminating against WP in NI so either change the rule or the wording”.	Highlight on leaflets and on the website that priority treatment is not recognised in Northern Ireland.
“I can't really think of any areas that need improvement except for the initial form being complex”.	Include Helpline number on Treatment forms advising that if difficulties encountered then Welfare Service can be contacted.
“I think that if possible your organisation should make more official visits to the Combat Stress units. I have only seen one rep over 10 years of treatment at Tyrwhitt House”.	Possibly include staff from Treatment team on WPWS visits to organisations such as Combat Stress to highlight services provided.
“Information needs to be clearer in documents as to the criteria of not awarding and under what regulation”.	Consider re-writing VA leaflets to include more details of what is available from the Treatment team.
“Not many GP's, Doctors or Nurses are aware of priority treatment. Also Doctors/GP's should get a letter from VA advising them of this agreement with War Pensioners”.	Consider contacting the NHS to highlight Priority Treatment regulations.
	Give some consideration to delivering awareness sessions to Operational staff regarding Treatment and its associated allowances.

6. Next Steps

Hard copies of this report will be issued to Directors. It will also be placed on the VA Internet and VA Intranet websites. Recommended areas for improvement will be considered and taken forward where appropriate.

7. Comments/Enquiries

Any comments/enquiries about this report should be made to:

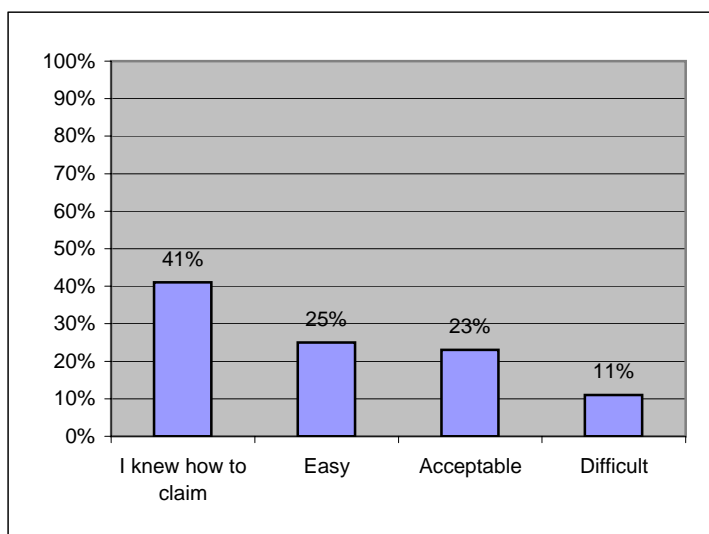
Chris Pinder
VA Customer Research
Room 6421
Tomlinson House
Norcross
Blackpool
FY5 3WP
Tel: 01253 338537
Email: chris.pinder@veteransagency.gsi.gov.uk

MAKING A CLAIM

1. When you made your claim to the Treatment Group, how did you find getting information on how to apply?

	2006
I knew how to claim	41%
Easy	25%
Acceptable	23%
Difficult	11%

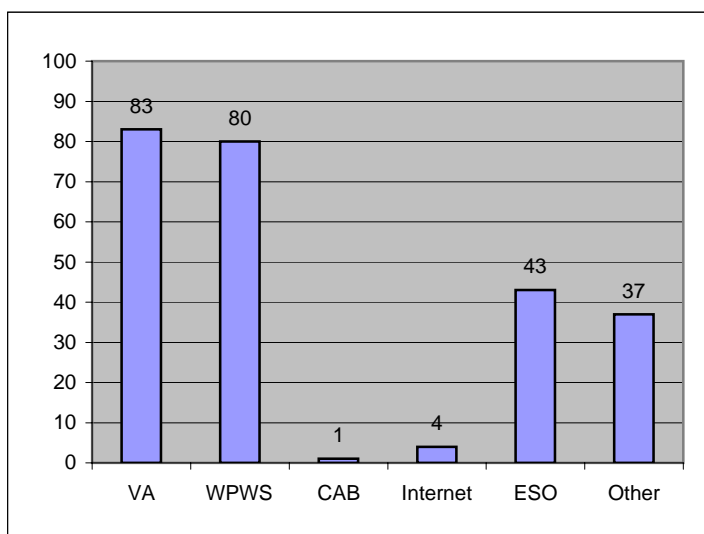
Total Respondents	221
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2. Where did you get the information on how to apply for treatment?

	2006
Veterans Agency	83
War Pensioners Welfare Service	80
Citizens Advice Bureau	1
The Internet	4
Ex-Service Organisation	43
Other	37

Total Respondents	230*
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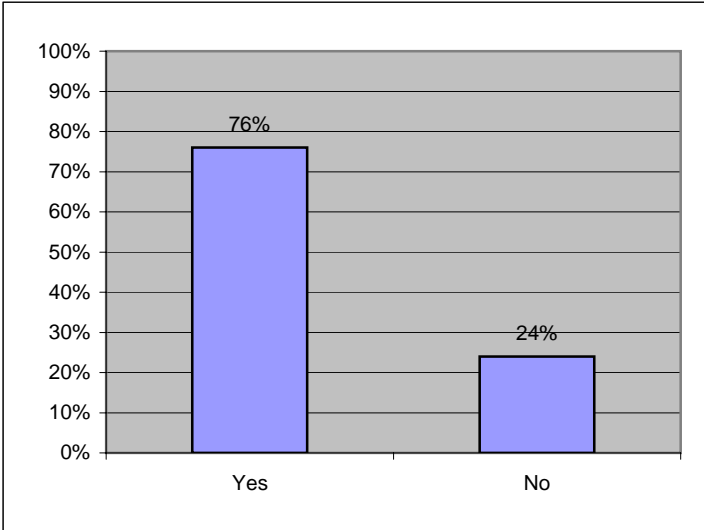
* Individuals could get information regarding treatment from several sources, therefore total respondents is less than responses to question.

THE CLAIM FORM

3. Did you have to complete a claim form?

	2006
Yes	76%
No	24%

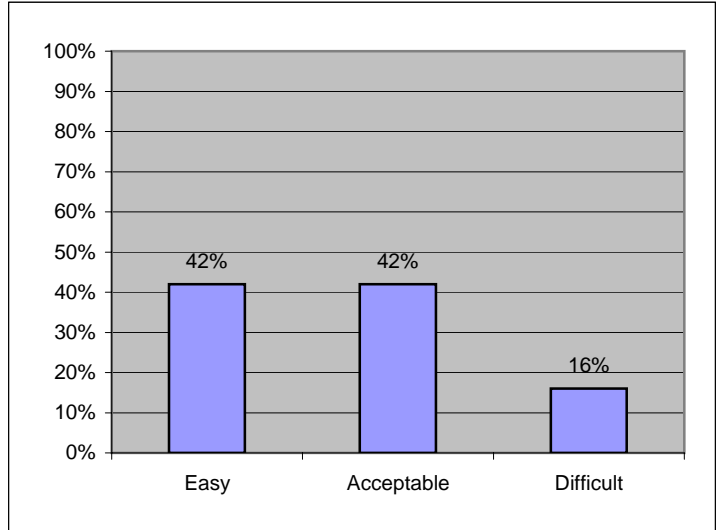
Total Respondents	224
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4. How easy was the claim form to complete?

	2006
Easy	42%
Acceptable	42%
Difficult	16%

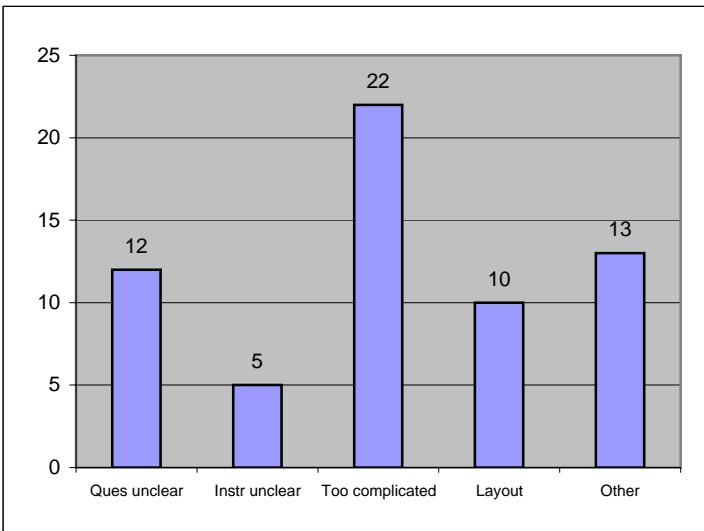
Total Respondents	166
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5. What difficulties did you encounter?

	2006
The questions were not clear	12
The instructions were not clear	5
The form was too complicated	22
The layout of the form made it difficult to complete	10
Other	13

Total Respondents	55*
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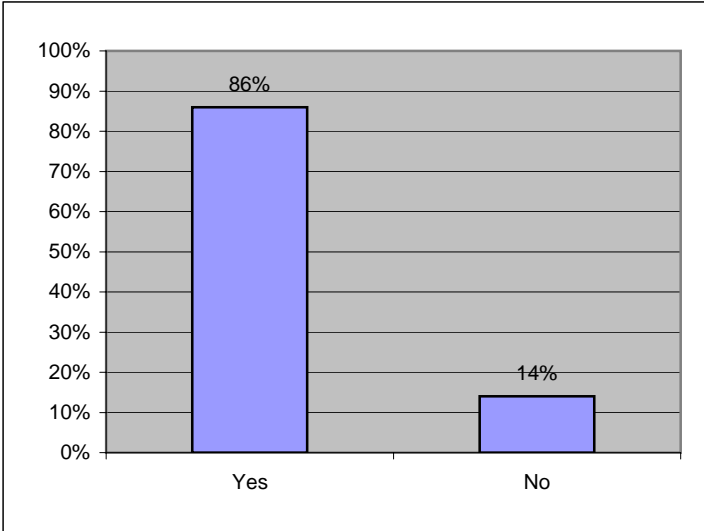
* Individuals could encounter more than one difficulty, therefore total respondents is less than problems encountered

ACCESS AND CONTACT

6. Do you know who to contact regarding any questions you may have?

2006	
Yes	86%
No	14%

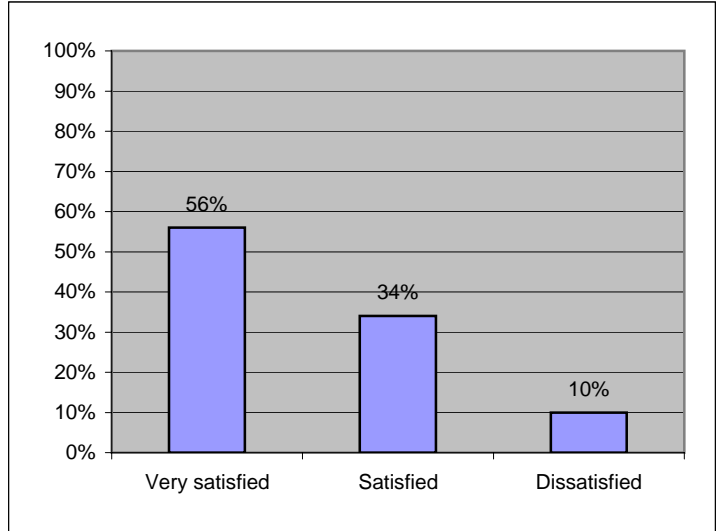
Total Respondents	223
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7. How satisfied are you with the help, information and/or advice you receive from us?

2006	
Very satisfied	56%
Satisfied	34%
Dissatisfied	10%

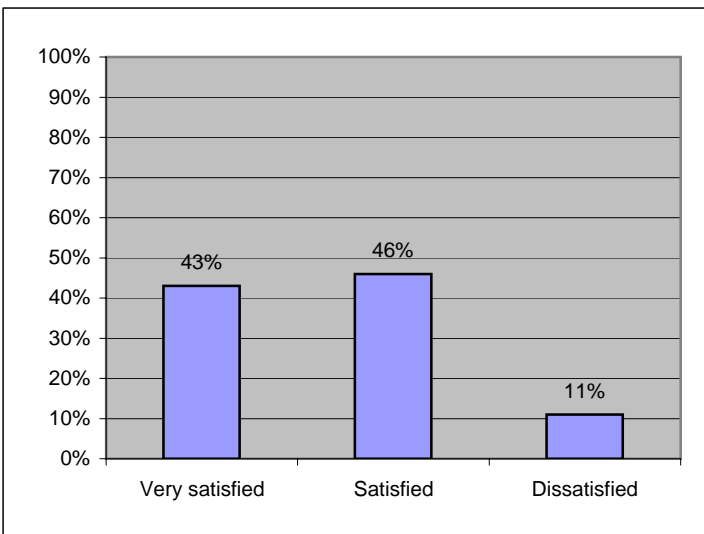
Total Respondents	225
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8. How satisfied are you with the speed with which we deal with your queries?

2006	
Very satisfied	43%
Satisfied	46%
Dissatisfied	11%

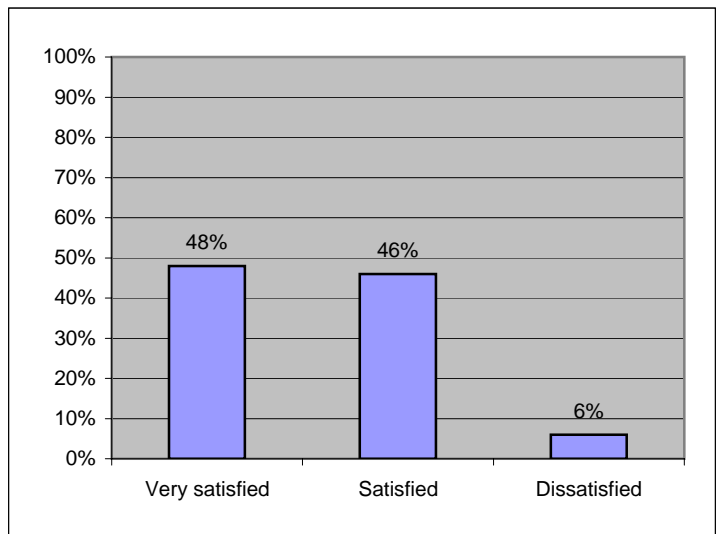
Total Respondents	228
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9. How satisfied were you with the presentation and content of the written communication you received from the Treatment Group?

2006	
Very satisfied	48%
Satisfied	46%
Dissatisfied	6%

Total Respondents	220
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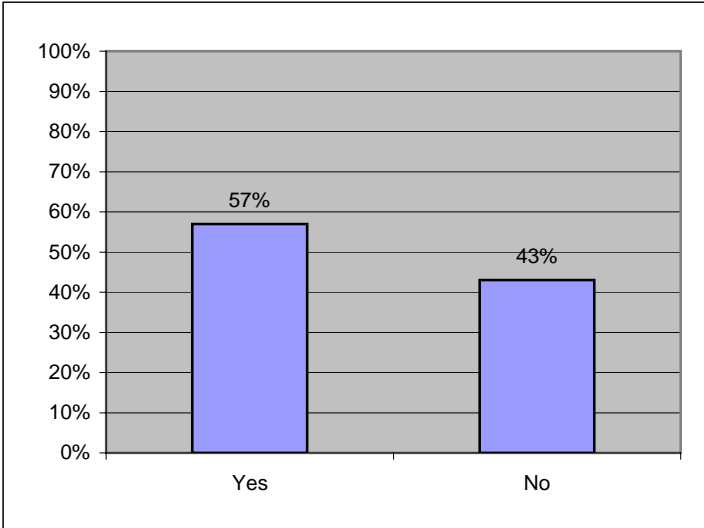


THE INTERNET

10. Are you aware the Veterans Agency has a website on the Internet?

	2006
Yes	57%
No	43%

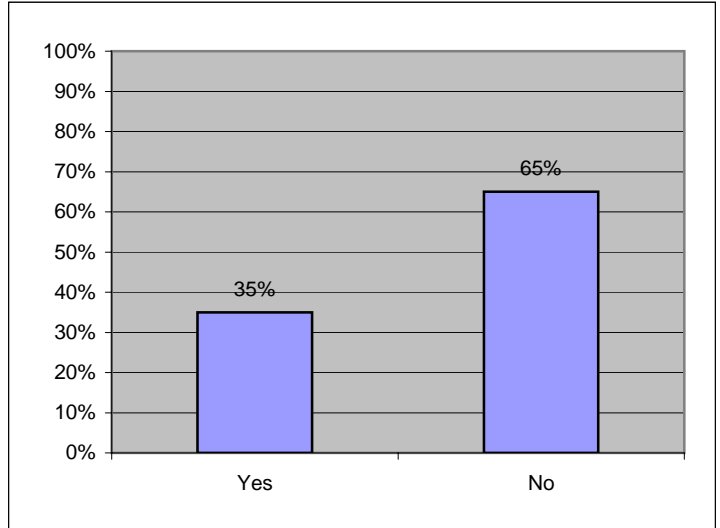
Total Respondents	221
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11. Have you ever accessed the Veterans Agency website?

	2006
Yes	35%
No	65%

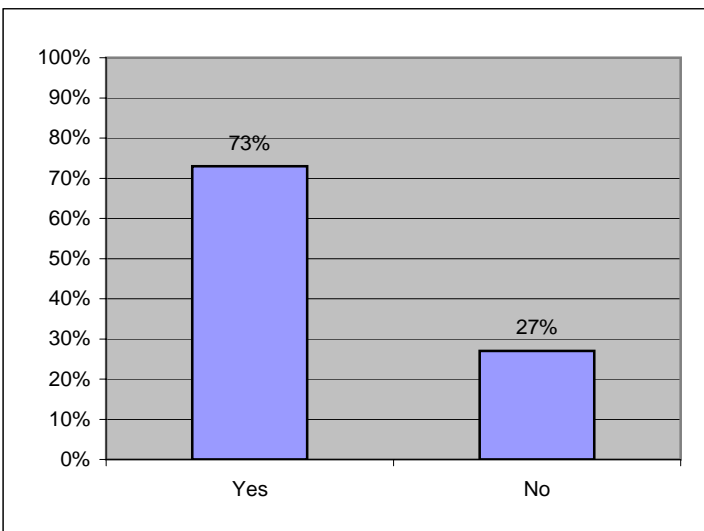
Total Respondents	126
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12. Were you able to find relevant information regarding treatment on the website?

	2006
Yes	73%
No	27%

Total Respondents	40
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13. Was the level of information displayed on the website sufficient or is there any information which you feel should be displayed?

Rates of pensions. Rates of mileage. All other rates of associated benefits and benefits available from VA would be useful.

It would have helped if there were more information about availability of help with respite.

All information was presented and displayed well.

Easy to follow and browsing.

All info needed was on the website and clearly displayed.

Reading the website and contacting the welfare service was beneficial.

I was quite impressed with the site as it is useful. I have referred others I know to the site.

For my particular need it was excellent.

SERVICE QUALITY

14. The VA has targets and service standards that it recognises as important to customers. Which statement is most important to you?

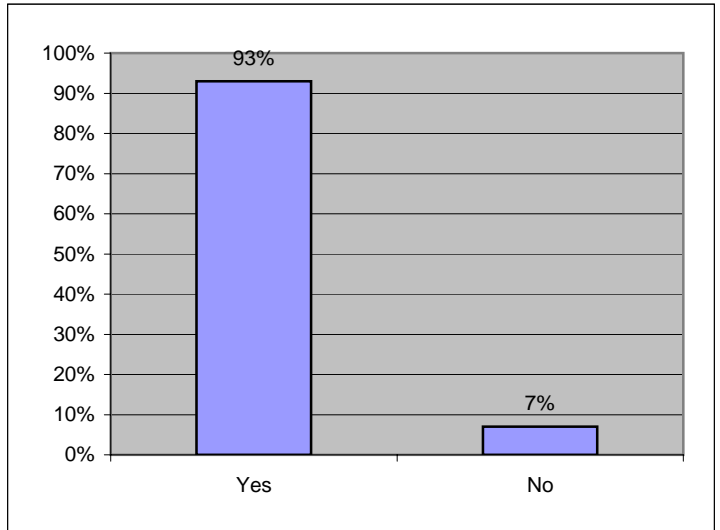
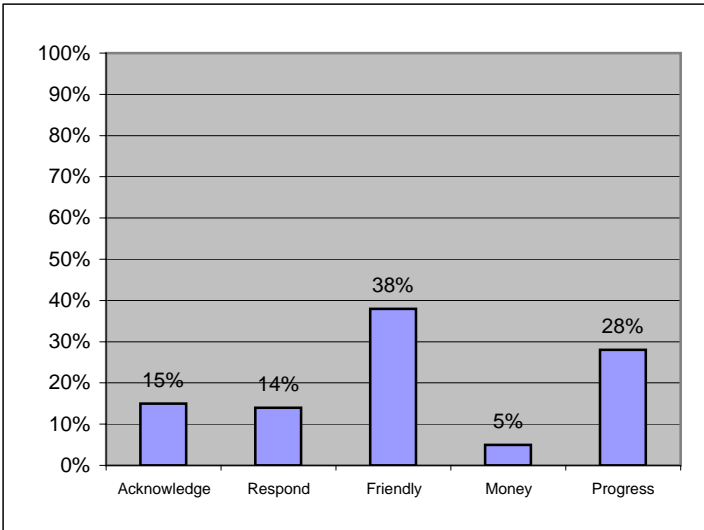
15. Would you recommend this service to others?

	2006
To acknowledge written enquiries within 5 working days	15%
To respond to written enquiries within 10 working days	14%
Friendly and helpful staff	38%
To pay the right money the first time	5%
To regularly inform customers of the progress of their case	28%

	2006
Yes	93%
No	7%

Total Respondents **202**

Total Respondents **222**

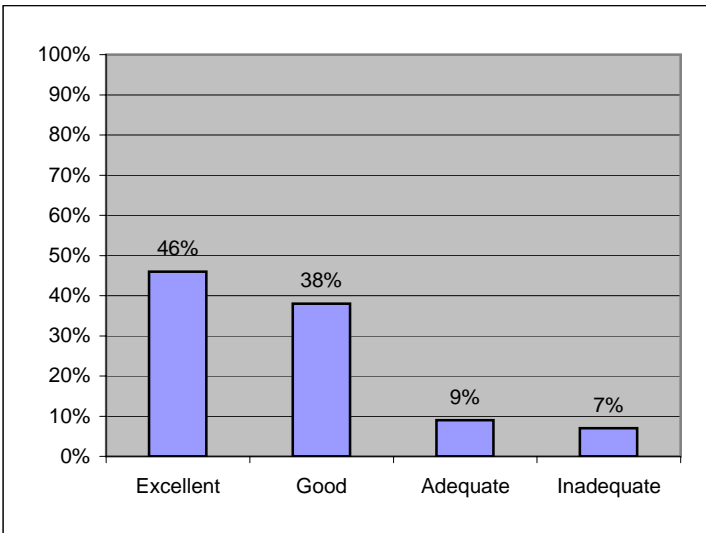


SERVICE QUALITY

16. Which of these words best describes the overall service you received from the Veterans Agency?

	2006
Excellent	46%
Good	38%
Adequate	9%
Inadequate	7%

Total Respondents	225
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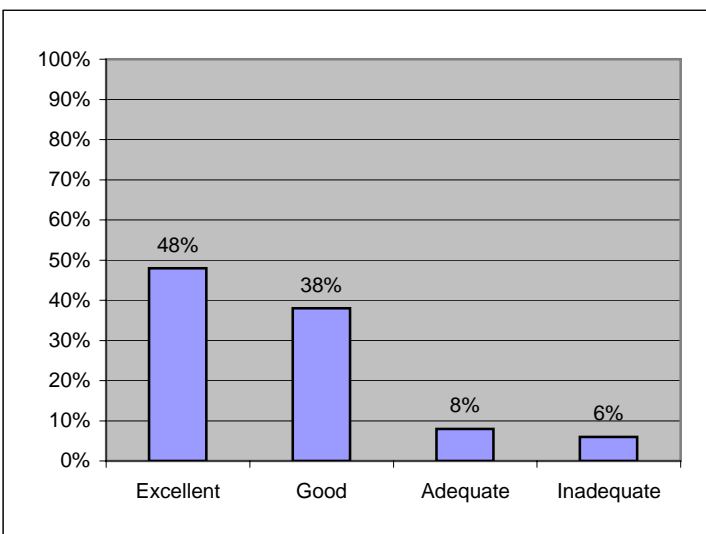


16. Which of these words best describes the overall service you received from the Veterans Agency?

Successful claims

	2006
Excellent	48%
Good	38%
Adequate	8%
Inadequate	6%

Total Respondents	178
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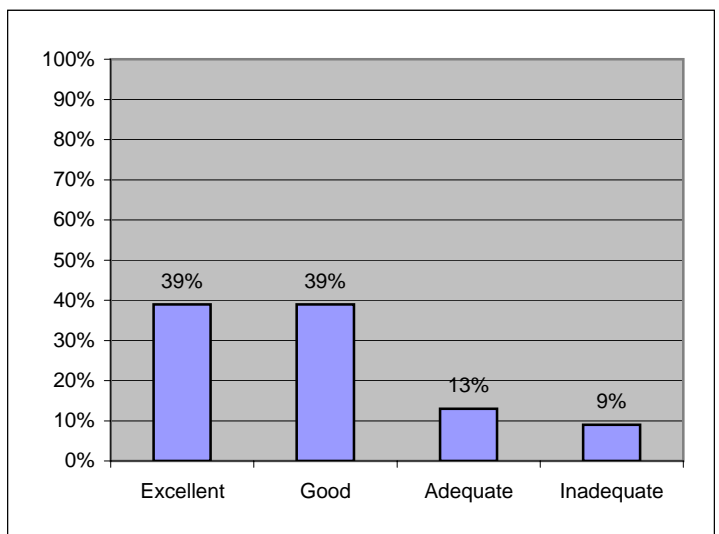


16. Which of these words best describes the overall service you received from the Veterans Agency?

Unsuccessful claims

	2006
Excellent	39%
Good	39%
Adequate	13%
Inadequate	9%

Total Respondents	46
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17. Finally, please tell us if you have any thoughts or ideas on how we can further improve the service we provide

Over 30 comments stated that the standard of service was either good or excellent and they could not think of any ways to improve it.

Show rates of payment of all War Pension related items on your website and complete list of all benefits available.

The usual one would be more money, but I understand that is not going to happen with the present Government, but apart from that I have only praise for the way I have been treated.

Whilst occasional errors occur the overall service provided is excellent. I can't really think of any areas that need improvement except for the initial form being complex.

I wish to have more treatment at any Welfare Centre.

When treatment payment is due i.e. every 4 to 8 weeks it should be paid straight away and not delayed because of Hospital/Consultants failure to reply to your correspondence.

I am very happy with the way I have been looked after. It would be better for me if the bill for my dental treatment could be paid direct to the dental surgery.

In your WP help booklet it explains what you can/cannot claim for. In the priority treatment section it tells you anyone can use this. It does not say anywhere that it is not available in N Ireland. This is discriminating against WP in NI so either change the rule or the wording.

I hope that you carry on with the splendid work that you are doing. However please give us more money for our respite care. Every year the price for these treatment homes go up and the allowances that is given is somewhat inadequate to pay for it. I am not able to take the four weeks that has been allocated to me because of rise in payment to them and the amounts that you are giving us. I would appreciate it very much if you could reevaluate what you are giving us so we can go there yearly and pay less from our own pockets. I also hope that you could try and find other homes that are cheaper to attend and so we can take the 4 weeks that is given. Thank you for listening

To have to wait 8 weeks for treatment allowance is a very long time to be paid out when you can't work in my case I will be off work up to a year. My surgeon's secretary just sat on the letters you sent them and is still doing so. Her response was 'but I had some last month do I have to do it all again'. I felt communication between hospital staff and doctors on return of information should be more computerised.

My claim related to dental treatment costs. Assistance whilst gratefully received was set at NHS charges. Where does one access an NHS dental practice in the current climate? The Agency should state initially that any reimbursements/financial assistance is set at the equivalent NHS tariffs.

Perhaps the travelling expenses could be paid a little faster when going for treatment. Apart from the small detail you do a very good job.

I still cannot understand that if my War Pension stops me from working why I am not entitled to treatment allowance when I have treatment i.e. operation. The info needs to be clearer in documents as to the criteria of not awarding and under what regulation.

The service is quite adequate for formal requests. However following an accident or operation treatment is urgently required and a telephone call should be used instead of typing a letter and sending it second-class. How much slower can you get. You obviously do not appreciate trauma and stress of a patient and your attitude is very uncaring I am sorry to say.

Let customers know of the progress of their case if any.

Staff snap when you ask questions. I required a treatment form and was told I should have one. The travel form is long winded it doesn't take into account sea travel. In short one dreads having to make a call to your staff. It all seems too much hassle for them. It doesn't help when you have a hearing problem.

Use 1st class post (I usually add a 1st class stamp on my applications). The service has improved a great deal during the last 5 years.

Not many GP's, Doctors or Nurses are aware of priority treatment. Also Doctors/GP's should get a letter from VA advising them of this agreement with War Pensioners.

It would be good to have a page on what criteria you must meet.