

Independent Service Quality Survey

Detailed methodology - Business current account

This section provides more detailed information on the methodology that has been applied to this survey for business current accounts (BCAs).

Background

In November 2014, the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) board made a reference for a market investigation into the supply of retail banking services to personal current account customers and to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs*) in the United Kingdom (the market investigation).

In August 2016 the CMA published its report on the market investigation, entitled '*Retail Banking market investigation: Final report*' (the Final Report) and in February 2017 the CMA published '*The Retail Banking Market Investigation Order 2017*' (the CMA Order).

Under Part 3 of the above Order, an independent survey is required to be conducted to ask customers of the largest business current account providers in Great Britain and in Northern Ireland if they would recommend their provider to other small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). See lists of participating providers below.

Sampling

The survey is based on a random probability sample of each provider's customers. Providers have supplied a breakdown of their qualifying customer base by region, sector, turnover and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) / Clubs, Charities and Societies (CC&S) so BVA BDRC can check that survey samples submitted by each provider are representative of each provider's total qualifying customer base.

Data collection and volumes

Interviewing is conducted on a continuous basis for all brands throughout the fieldwork period. Data collection is by computer assisted telephone interviewing (CATI).

The annual survey aims to achieve 1,200 respondents per provider for Great Britain and 600 per provider for Northern Ireland. Quota controls are set to ensure that for each provider the achieved sample is representative by sector, region, turnover and SME /CC&S.

The questionnaire & results

The questionnaire asks respondents how likely they are to recommend their business account provider for each of the following:

- Overall service
- Relationship and Account Management
- Online and mobile banking
- Branch and Business Centre services
- Overdraft and loan facilities

For each recommendation question results are in the form of the percentage saying that they were "extremely likely" or "very likely" to recommend the provider. Percentages will be calculated by excluding those who answered "don't know", "no experience" and also excluding those who had not used that service in the past 12 months (except for Overall Service where there is no timeframe applied).

Where providers score equally in terms of the percentages based on whole numbers, these will be shown as scoring equally, but in order to create a position in a list they will be positioned according to their percentage calculated by using two or more decimal points.

Results are weighted by size, region and sector to represent the overall customer profile of each provider.

Publication of results

The first set of service quality indicators was published by all Providers on 15 August 2018 falling six weeks after all the data, incorporating results from October 2017 (at the latest) to June 2018, was collected.

The service quality indicators are updated on the first Working Day after 14 February and 14 August each year based on data collected on a rolling basis over the 12 months from, respectively:

- the beginning of January to the end of December of the previous calendar year; and
- the beginning of July to the end of June incorporating six months of results from the previous calendar year and six months from the prevailing calendar year.

Providers participating in the survey in Great Britain

Allied Irish Bank (GB), Bank of Scotland, Barclays, Clydesdale Bank**, Handelsbanken, HSBC UK, Lloyds Bank, Metro Bank, NatWest, Royal Bank of Scotland, Santander, Starling Bank, The Co-operative Bank, TSB, Virgin Money, Yorkshire Bank**.

**Interviews with customers of Clydesdale Bank and Yorkshire Bank are reported as Virgin Money.

Providers participating in the survey in Northern Ireland

AIB, Bank of Ireland UK, Danske Bank, Santander, Ulster Bank.

Additional information on the Virgin Money re-brand

The Virgin Money re-brand was completed in March 2021. Following the re-brand the brands Clydesdale Bank and Yorkshire Bank are known as Virgin Money. From the August 2021 publication of results, interviews with customers of Clydesdale Bank and Yorkshire Bank are reported under the single brand 'Virgin Money'. Results for the single brand 'Virgin Money' have been created using the following process:

- Between July 2020 and June 2021, 1200 interviews were conducted for each of Clydesdale Bank and Yorkshire Bank.
- The results for the two brands have been combined, giving an overall sample size of 2400.
- The individual legacy brands have been weighted separately to be representative of the original customer profile for that brand. Once combined, they have been weighted according to the percentage each brand represents of the total Virgin Money customer base.
- As a result of the above re-branding, in view of the fact that a) the Clydesdale Bank and Yorkshire Bank Business Current Account offers are no longer open to new customers; and

b) as those brands will not be reported in the full results publication on the BVA BDRC website, the number of the largest Business Current Account providers as required to be published in the rankings will be reported as being 14, rather than 15.

Eligibility criteria for participating providers:

Subject to Articles 4.2 and 4.3 of the CMA Order, Part 3 of the Order applies in relation to the:

- GB BCA market to Brands with more than 20,000 Active BCAs in GB; and
- NI BCA market to Brands with more than 15,000 Active BCAs in NI;

Further information

Further information on the CMA Order may be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/retail-banking-market-investigation-order-2017>

Exclusions

The following cases are intended to be excluded from the sample provided by providers:

- Dormant Accounts (no credits or debits within past 12 months)
- Pension Accounts
- Trustee Accounts
- Customers marked as deceased
- Customers in Receivership / Liquidation / Bankruptcy
- Dissolved Businesses
- Non-current account holders
- No valid telephone number
- Under 16 (Sole Trader BCAs may be opened at age 16)
- No to Market Research marker
- Not Ordinarily Resident (NOR)
- In the case of GB providers, customers with trading addresses outside of England, Scotland or Wales
- In the case of NI providers, customers with trading addresses outside NI or the Republic of Ireland
- Offshore branch customers
- Overseas / Non Residents
- Non Co-operative Countries & Territories
- Solicitors / Other Client Accounts
- Power of Attorney - Business
- 'Stopped' accounts (includes e.g. bankrupt sole traders or partners; deceased sole traders; liquidations; receiverships; formal demand for repayment; formal legal proceedings)

*SMEs include businesses, clubs, charities and societies with an annual turnover/income of up to £25m (exclusive of VAT and other turnover-related taxes).