

# Department of Veterans' Affairs

## Client Satisfaction Survey 2018

November 2018






MELBOURNE CANBERRA SYDNEY BRISBANE

[www.orima.com](http://www.orima.com)



# Summary

The 2018 Client Satisfaction Survey results are presented in this summary report have been divided into the following themes. These align with the structure of the questionnaire.

	<h2>Methodology and respondent profile</h2>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 3,006 respondents</li><li>• Sampling methodology matches that used in 2016, with full representation across Australia and age groups</li></ul>
	<h2>Overall perceptions</h2>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 81% of DVA clients are satisfied overall with DVA's service provision, while 6% are dissatisfied</li><li>• Overall ratings of DVA are slightly lower than in previous years</li></ul>
	<h2>Finding out about DVA</h2>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Among clients who have recently left the defence force, most (79%) find out about DVA's services before or during their transition—but this represents a decline from 2016</li></ul>
	<h2>DVA services</h2>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Most commonly accessed services are medical (77% of clients) and pensions (70%)</li><li>• Satisfaction with DVA's delivery of these services is strong (95% medical, 93% pensions)</li></ul>
	<h2>Contact with DVA</h2>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Traditional contact channels (such as telephone) remain most popular, and record higher levels of satisfaction, particularly among older clients</li><li>• There is increasing take-up of DVA's digital services</li></ul>



# Methodology and respondent profile



➤ **20 minute** telephone survey



➤ **n=3,006** clients

The representative sample included male and female veterans across states/territories and age groups. The survey used the same sample methodology used in 2016, with a deliberate slight over-sampling of younger-clients (compared to the DVA client population). In order to reflect the DVA client population as a whole, results have been weighted to adjust for for this.

Telephone interviews were conducted in **August – September 2018**.

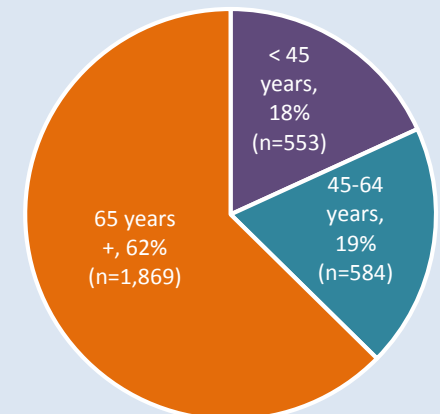
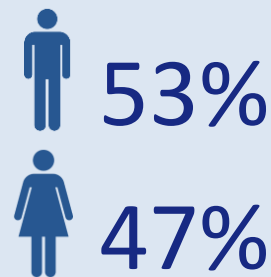
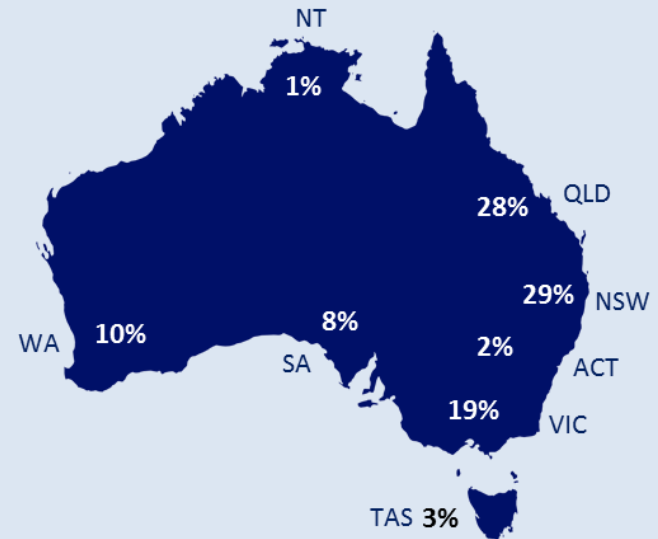
## Survey topics covered:

- Use of DVA benefits and services
- Satisfaction with delivery of benefits and services
- Types of contact with DVA
- What aspects of DVA's contact points contribute to high and low satisfaction
- Usage and preference regarding digital channels
- General impressions of DVA

*Most questions related to veterans' experiences with DVA in the last 12 months.*

## Statistical precision

The survey error margins are within 2 percentage points with 95% confidence (e.g. the error margins around the overall satisfaction score of 81% mean the results could be between 79% and 83%).





# Client types

The composition of DVA's client base remains similar to 2016, with around half of survey respondents identifying as a former permanent member of the Australian Defence Force who had transitioned over five years ago. The next highest client groups identifies as being war widows and widowers (18%) and dependents of veterans or former serving members (12%).

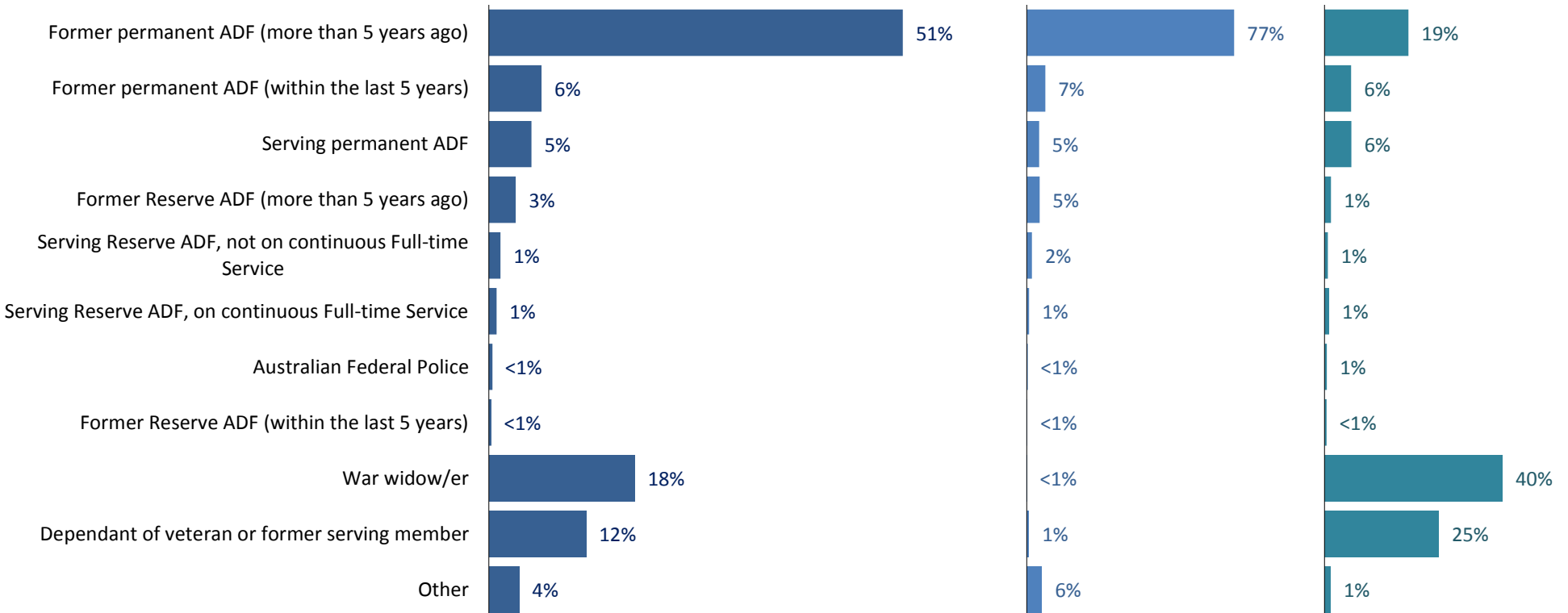
## Which of the following best describes you?



### Breakdown of male clients



### Breakdown of female clients



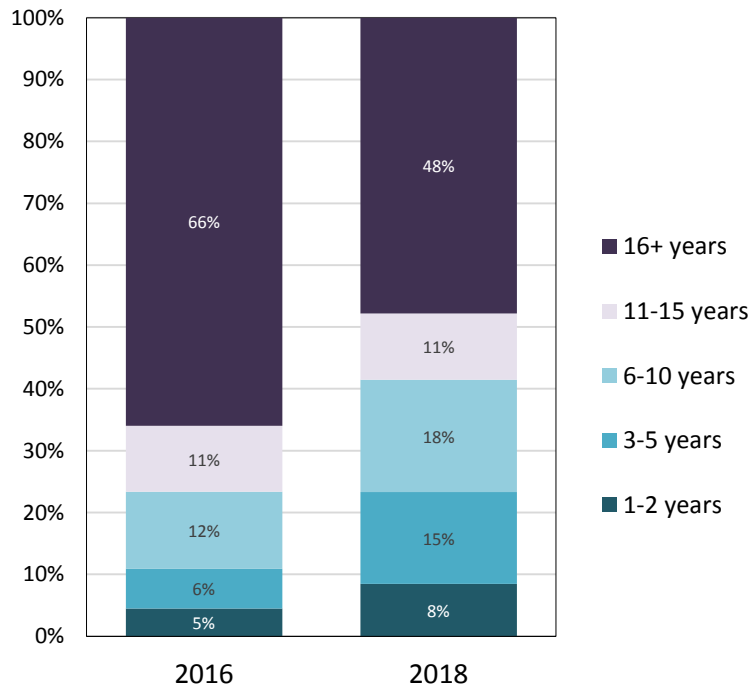


# Time dealing with DVA

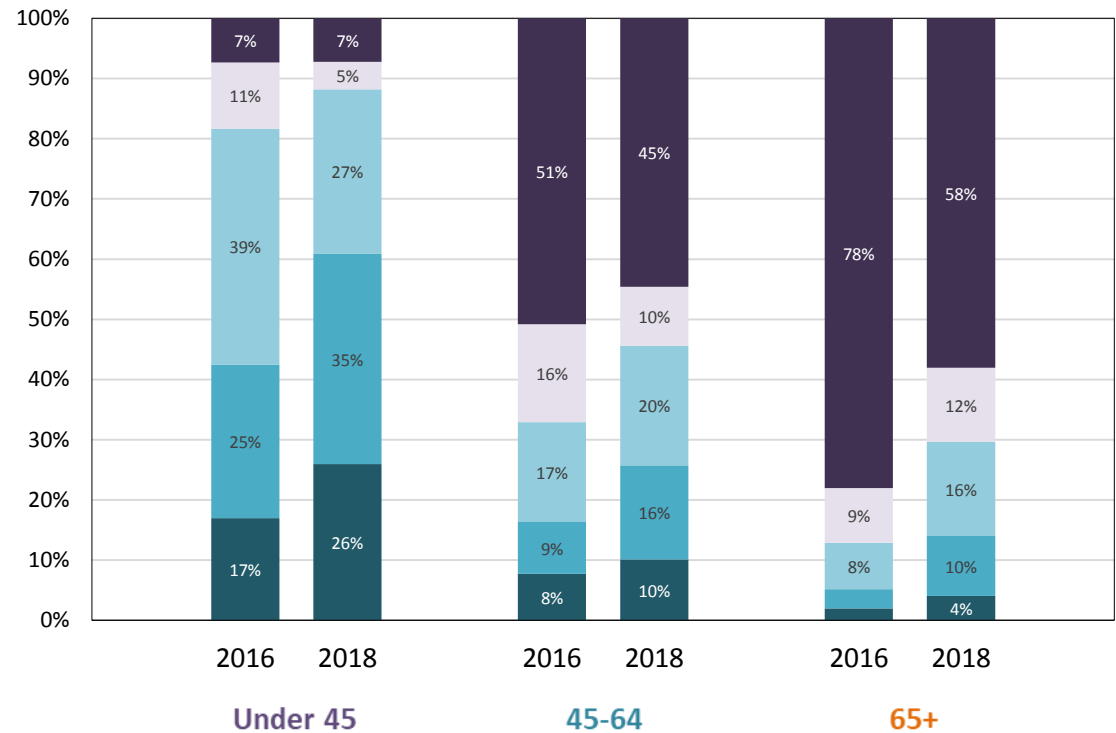
The proportion of clients who have been with DVA for long periods of time is shifting. The majority of clients have been with DVA for over ten years. However, these longer-term clients now make up a smaller proportion of DVA's client base than they did in 2016.

All three main age brackets contain higher proportions of clients who came to DVA relatively recently (within the past five years), and a smaller proportion who have been with DVA for more than one decade.

### How long have you been a client of DVA?



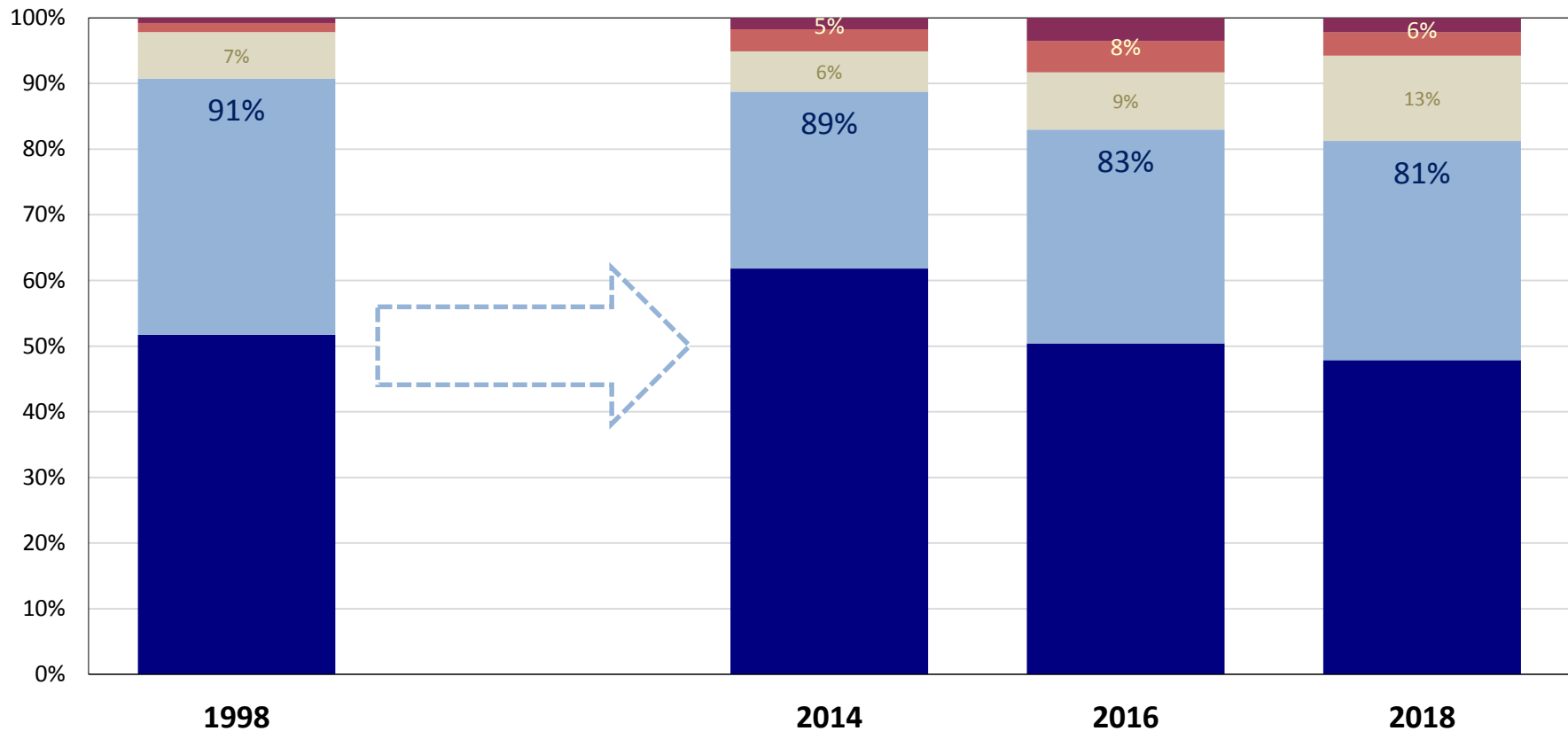
### How long have you been a client of DVA? Across age groups





# Overall satisfaction

Towards the end of the survey, clients were asked to provide an overall rating of satisfaction with the services provided to them by DVA in the last 12 months. Overall 81% of clients were satisfied, with 6% dissatisfied. This result is similar to the most recent previously recorded satisfaction in 2016, but shows a longer-term decline over the past two decades (from 91% satisfied and 2% dissatisfied in 1998).

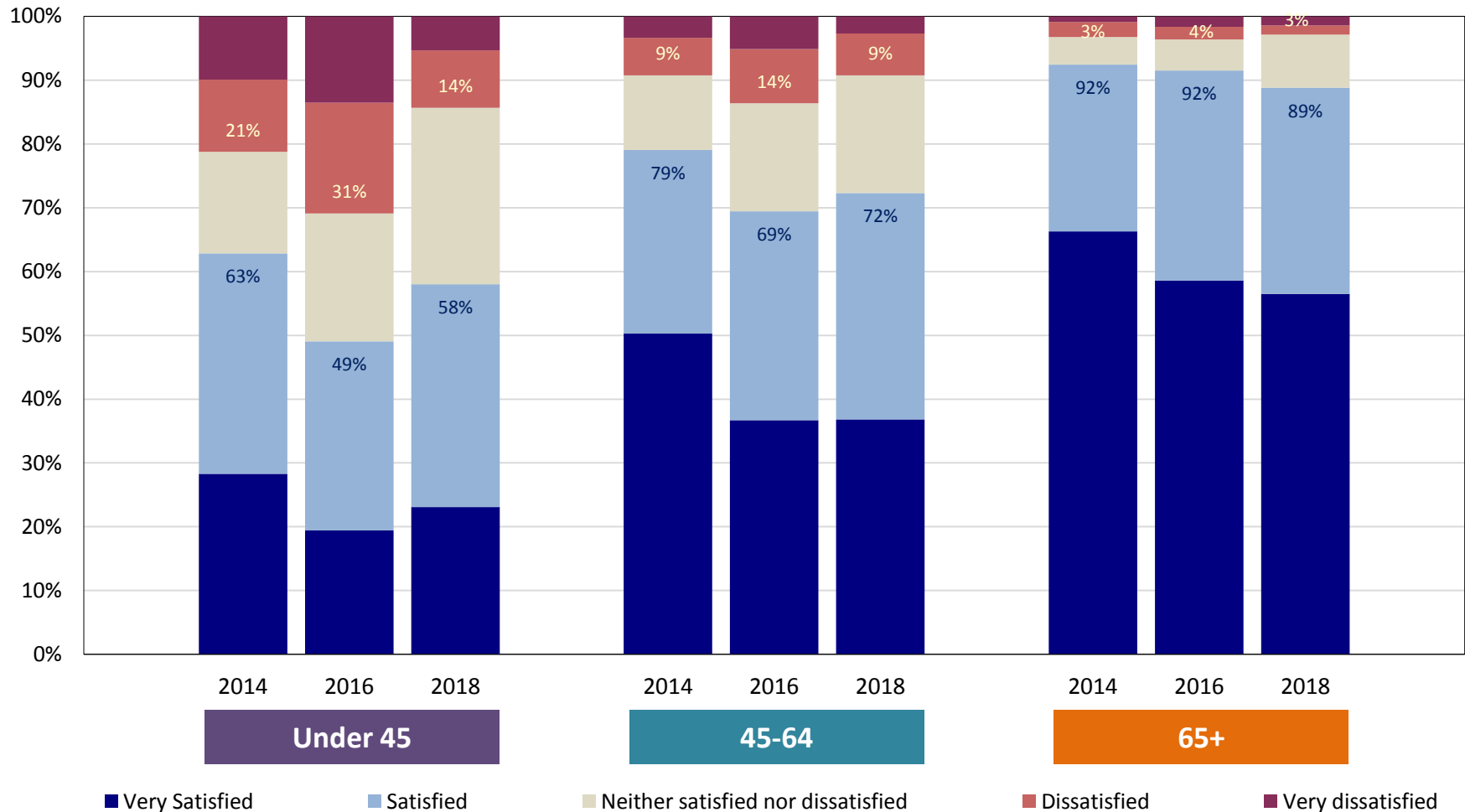


■ Very Satisfied ■ Satisfied ■ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied ■ Dissatisfied ■ Very dissatisfied



# Overall satisfaction—by age

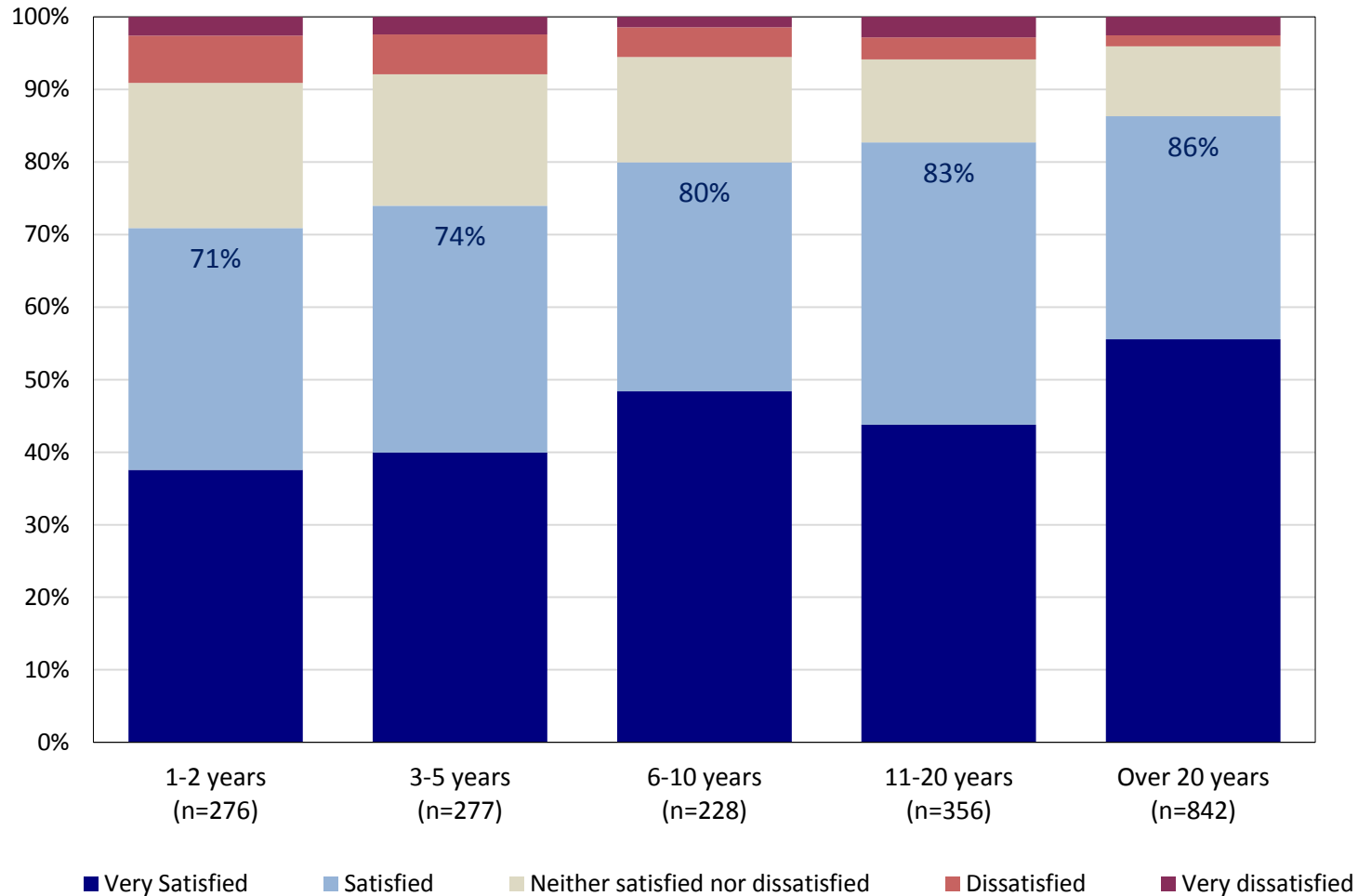
Overall satisfaction ratings of the three broad age groups of DVA clients have changed over time. Compared with 2016, a small decline in satisfaction is evident among older clients, partly counteracted by increased satisfaction among younger clients. Correspondingly, the level of *dissatisfaction* among clients aged under 45 has fallen sharply since 2016.





# Overall satisfaction—by time with DVA

Overall satisfaction varies between older and newer clients of DVA. Satisfaction is highest amongst long-standing clients, and lowest amongst more recent clients, who have been with DVA for less than three years.







# Overall impressions of DVA

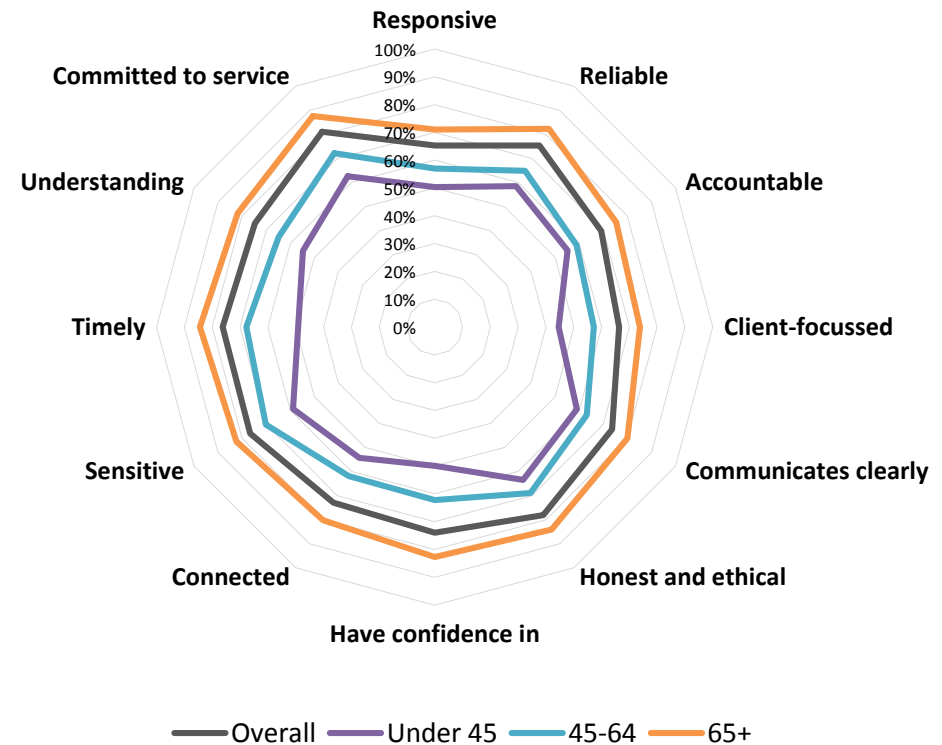
Despite the strong positive impressions of DVA's service and values characteristics at an overall level, ratings of DVA's service and value attributes have declined. Older clients (aged 65 or more) rated DVA more positively across all attributes, consistent with previous years. Clients aged under 45 were least positive, but their ratings in this group were generally stronger than in 2016.

## Overall impressions

% agree that DVA is...	2014	2016	2018
Responsive	73%	74%	65%
Reliable	88%	83%	75%
Accountable	84%	76%	69%
Client-focussed	-	73%	66%
Communicates clearly	88%	80%	74%
Honest and ethical	90%	83%	78%
Have confidence in	89%	78%	74%
Connected	-	76%	73%
Sensitive	88%	79%	77%
Timely	88%	78%	76%
Understanding	86%	76%	75%
Committed to service	90%	81%	81%

Red shading indicates a decline of 5 percentage points or more on the previous year.

## Overall impressions by age group





# Overall impressions of DVA—age groups over time

The overall decline in ratings across DVA’s service and value attributes is most evident clients aged 65 and over. However, ratings of clients aged under 45 are either in line with or more positive than the ratings provided by this age group in 2016, and there have also been improvements in ratings of clients aged 45-64.

% agree that DVA is...	Under 45		45-64		65+	
	2016	2018	2016	2018	2016	2018
Is responsive and listens and responds to feedback	48%	50%	57%	57%	82%	71%
Provides reliable information and advice	56%	58%	71%	65%	90%	82%
Is accountable for decisions it makes	51%	55%	61%	59%	85%	75%
Is client focussed and thinks about the whole person	41%	45%	54%	57%	83%	74%
Communicates clearly	54%	59%	67%	63%	87%	80%
Is honest and ethical in its interactions	61%	63%	69%	69%	90%	84%
Clients have confidence in	42%	50%	61%	62%	88%	83%
Connected to clients	54%	54%	64%	62%	83%	80%
Sensitively acknowledges the service and sacrifice of veterans	53%	59%	62%	70%	87%	82%
Delivers services in a timely manner	43%	49%	62%	68%	87%	84%
Understands the needs of clients	48%	55%	59%	65%	85%	82%
Is committed to providing high quality service to clients	50%	63%	66%	72%	89%	88%

Red shading indicates a decline of 5 percentage points or more on the previous year.

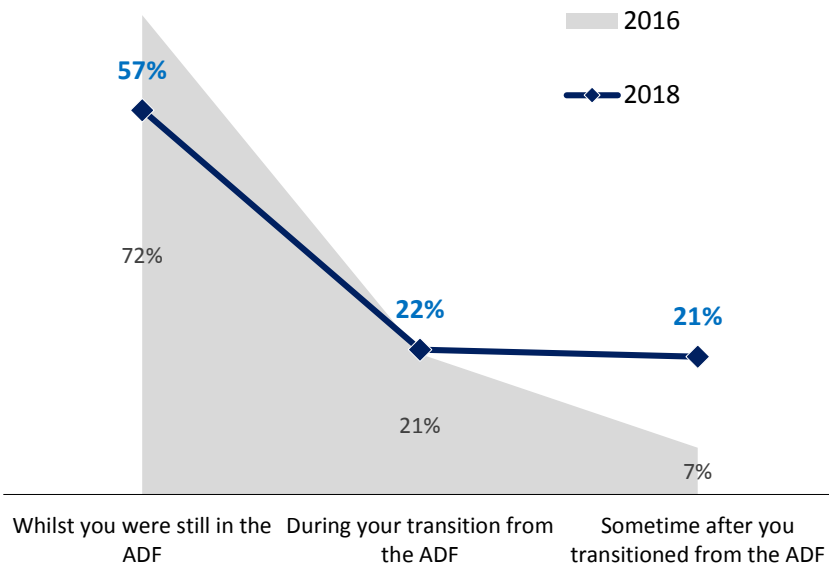
Green shading indicates an improvement of 5 percentage points or more on the previous year.



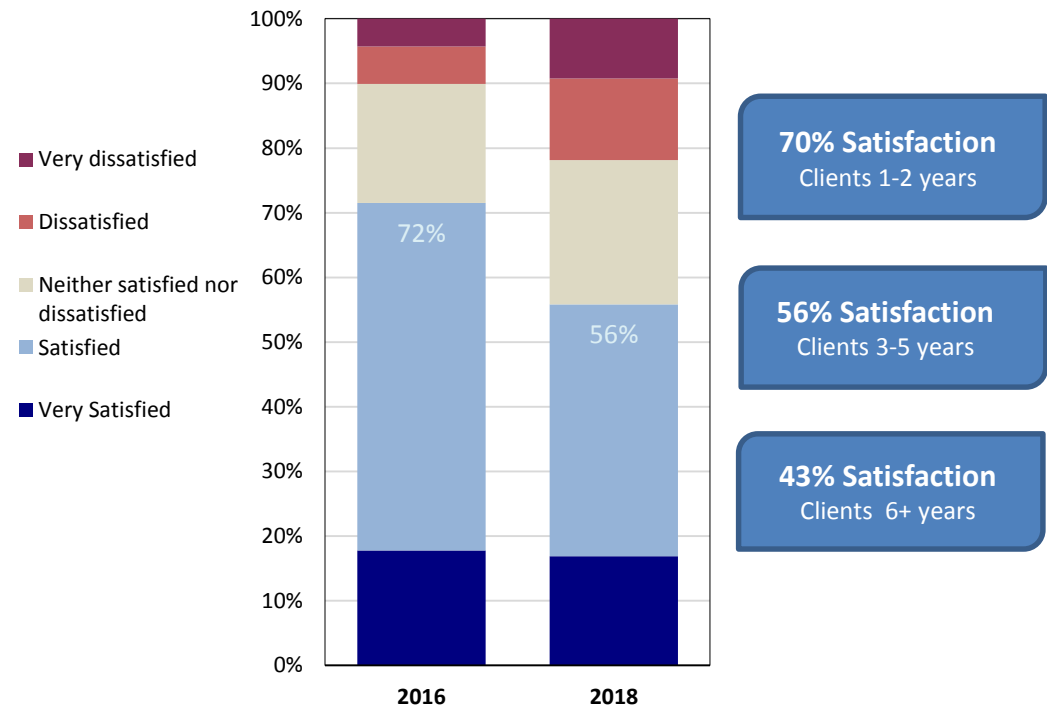
# How clients found out about DVA

Clients who had transitioned from the Australian Defence Force within the past 5 years (7% of all clients) were asked about their transition period. Around four in five first found out about DVA and the services it could provide either during their transition period (22%) or earlier (57%). However, compared to 2016, a higher proportion of clients were finding out about DVA after they had left the ADF. Correspondingly, the proportion of clients satisfied with the timing and way they found out about DVA fell (from 72% satisfied to 56%), and around two clients in five indicated they had trouble accessing or finding out about services during their transition period.

### When did you first find out about DVA and the services it could provide?



### How satisfied were you with the timing and way you found out about DVA?

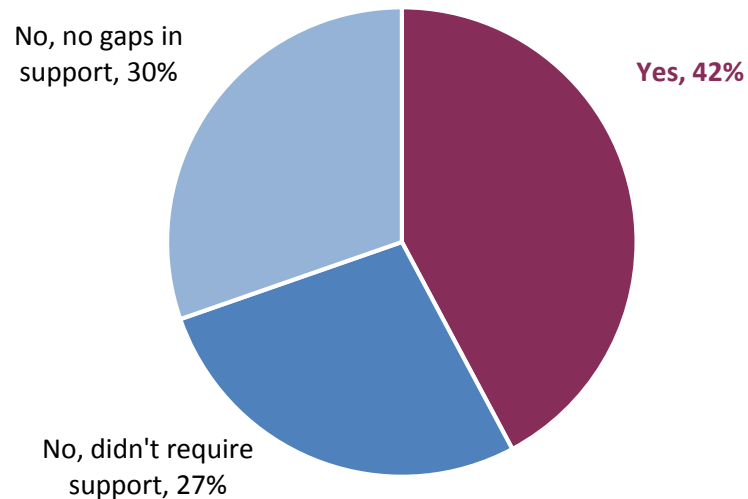




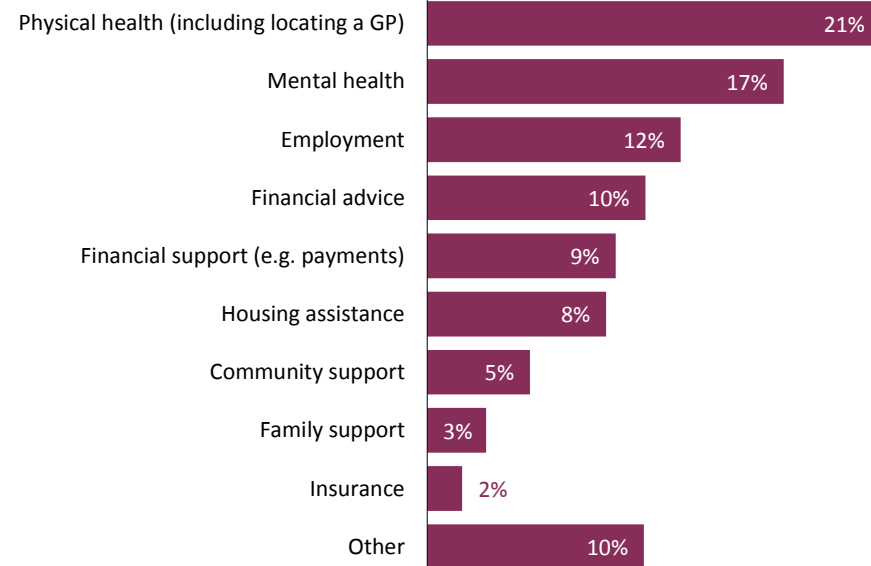
# Initially accessing services

Clients who had left the Australian Defence Force in the past five years were asked about the transitioning process. Of these clients, 42% indicated they had had some trouble accessing or finding out about some of the services provided through DVA (slightly below 45% in 2016). The services which clients most commonly indicated they had difficulty finding during this initial period of leaving the Defence Force related to health—either physical (one in five transitioning clients) or mental (one in six transitioning clients).

**When you were transitioning out of the Defence Force, did you have any trouble accessing or finding support or services to help you?**



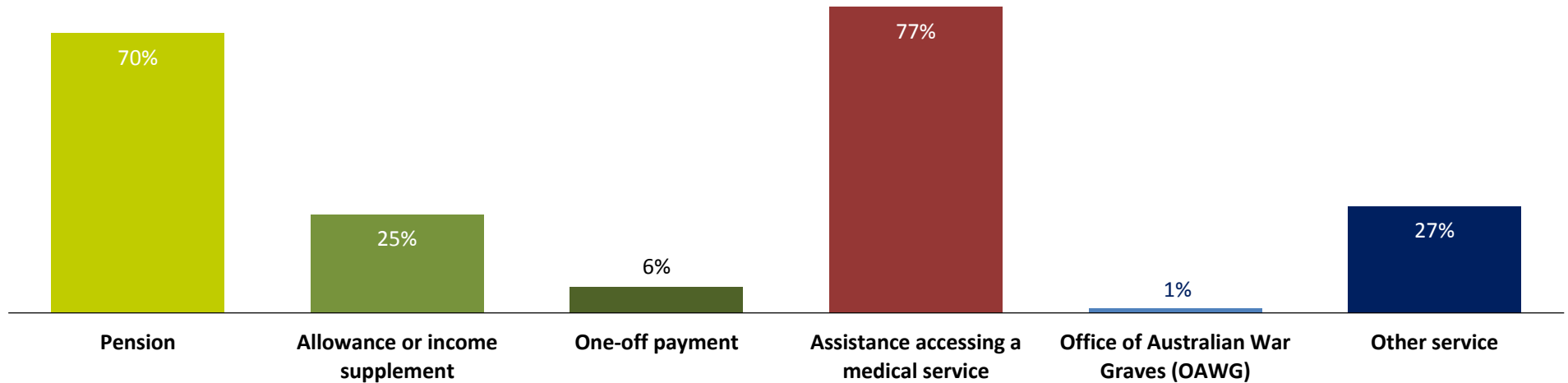
**42% of transitioning clients had trouble accessing the following support and services:**



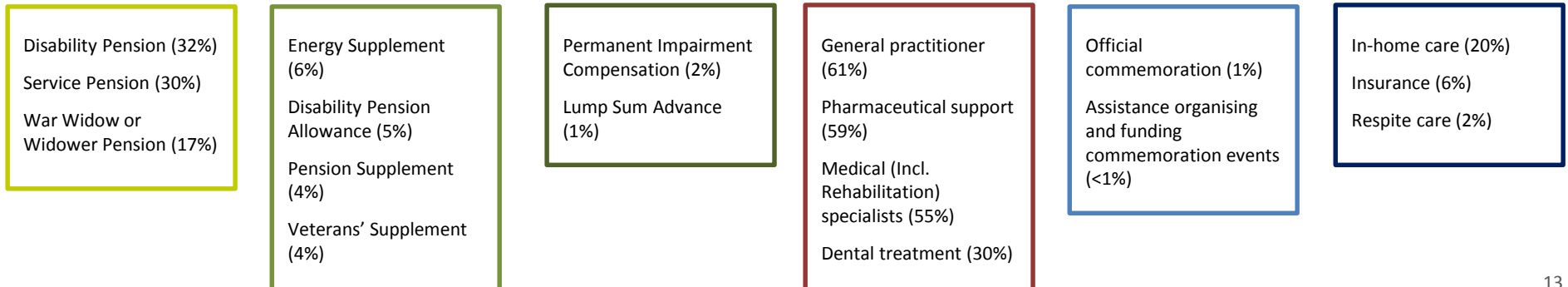


# Services used

93% of clients had received either a payment from DVA or accessed services from DVA in the past 12 months. The chart below shows the broad kinds of services clients had reported receiving from DVA, and the most common specific services within each type.



## Most commonly used services in each service group...





# Services used—by age groups

The diagram below shows the take-up of services by DVA clients across different age groups in the past 12 months.

## Under 45



**78%**

had accessed DVA's services.

Most commonly accessed services were:

- Pharmaceutical Support (40%)
- Medical specialists (38%)
- General practitioners (34%)
- Disability Pension (25%)
- Counselling (18%)

## 45-64



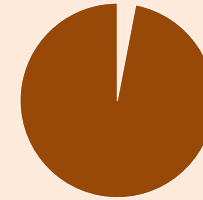
**91%**

had accessed DVA's services.

Most commonly accessed services were:

- Pharmaceutical support (50%)
- Disability Pension (49%)
- General practitioners (49%)
- Medical specialists (46%)
- Service Pension (21%)

## 65+



**97%**

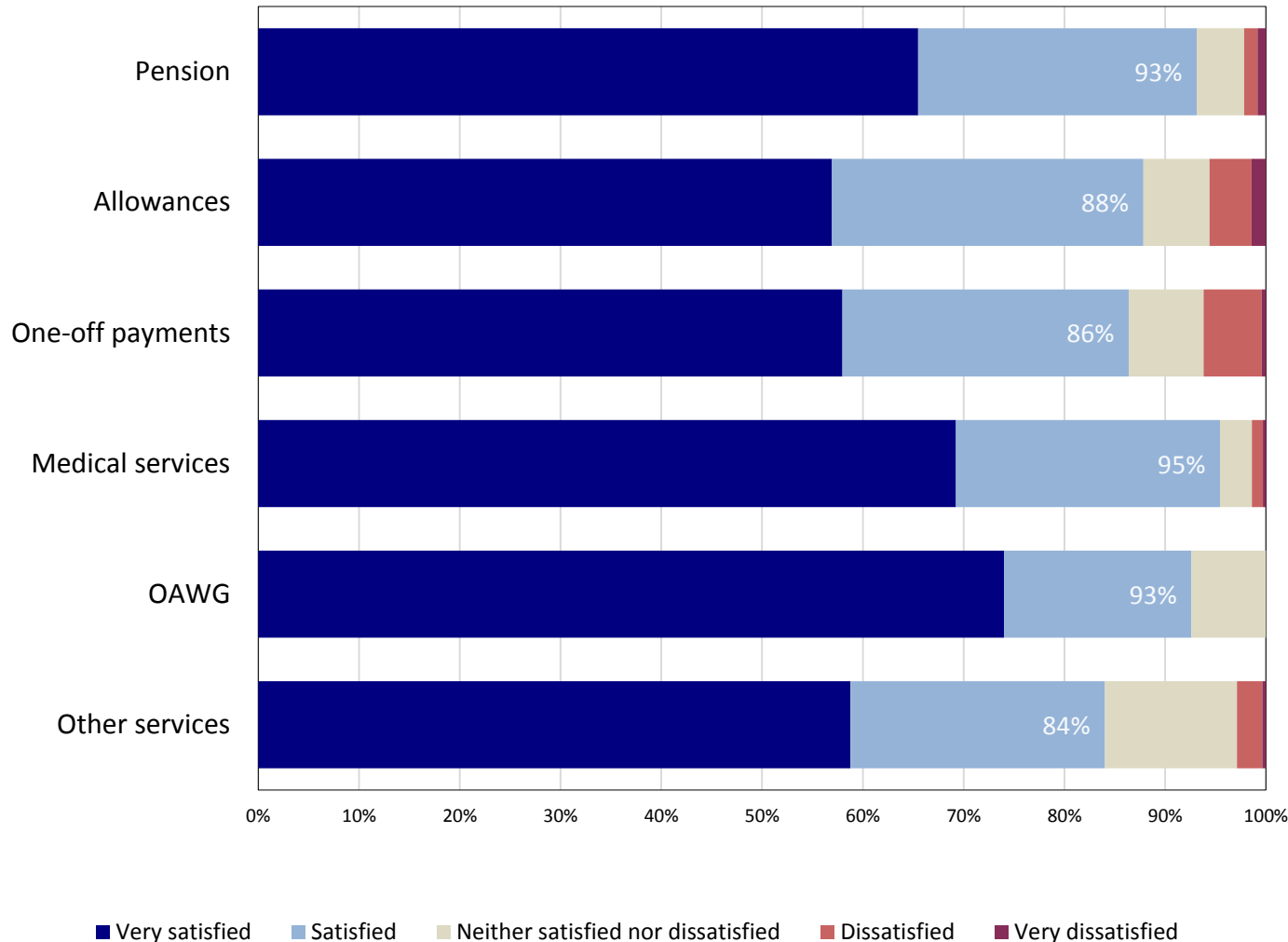
had accessed DVA's services.

Most commonly accessed services were:

- General practitioners (70%)
- Pharmaceutical support (66%)
- Medical specialists (62%)
- Service Pension (38%)
- Disability Pension (28%)



# Overall satisfaction across service types

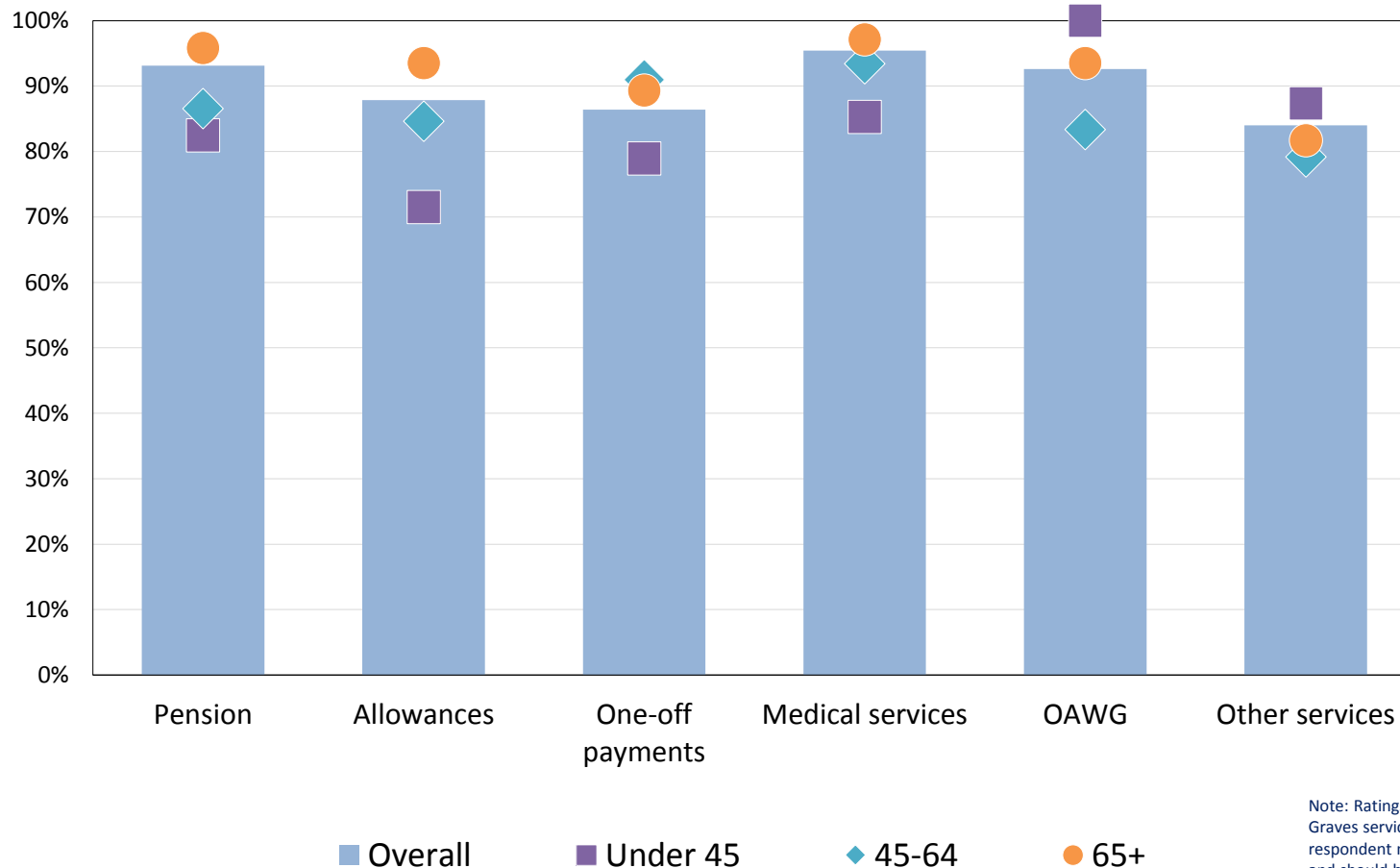


- Among recipients of regular payments (pensions and allowances), satisfaction ranged from 78% (for those receiving an Incapacity Payment) to 99% (among War Widow/Widower Pension recipients).
- Satisfaction with DVA's handling of one-off payments ranged from 74% (Permanent Impairment Compensation) to 100% (Bereavement Payments and Funeral Benefits)
- Satisfaction with medical services ranged from 92% (DVA's assistance in accessing counselling) to 97% (assistance accessing GPs, private hospital treatment, and community nursing).
- Satisfaction with 'other' services—where 10 or more clients surveyed had used such a service—ranged from 82% (housing loans) to 93% (in-home care).



# Most significant contact with DVA

Younger clients (aged under 45) were least satisfied with all types of payments, and with medical services. By contrast, clients aged 65 or older were the most satisfied group when rating DVA's handling of regular payments (pensions and allowances), and also recorded high satisfaction levels for one-off payments and medical services (as did clients 45-64 years old).



Note: Ratings of Office of Australian War Graves services are based on low respondent numbers for each age group, and should be treated with caution.





# Most significant contact with DVA

42% of clients had contacted (or sought information from) DVA in the past 12 months. As part of the survey these clients were asked questions about the **most significant or important matter** they contacted or sought information from DVA about in this time.

Of these clients...



66% had their questions or concerns fully addressed on their first attempt



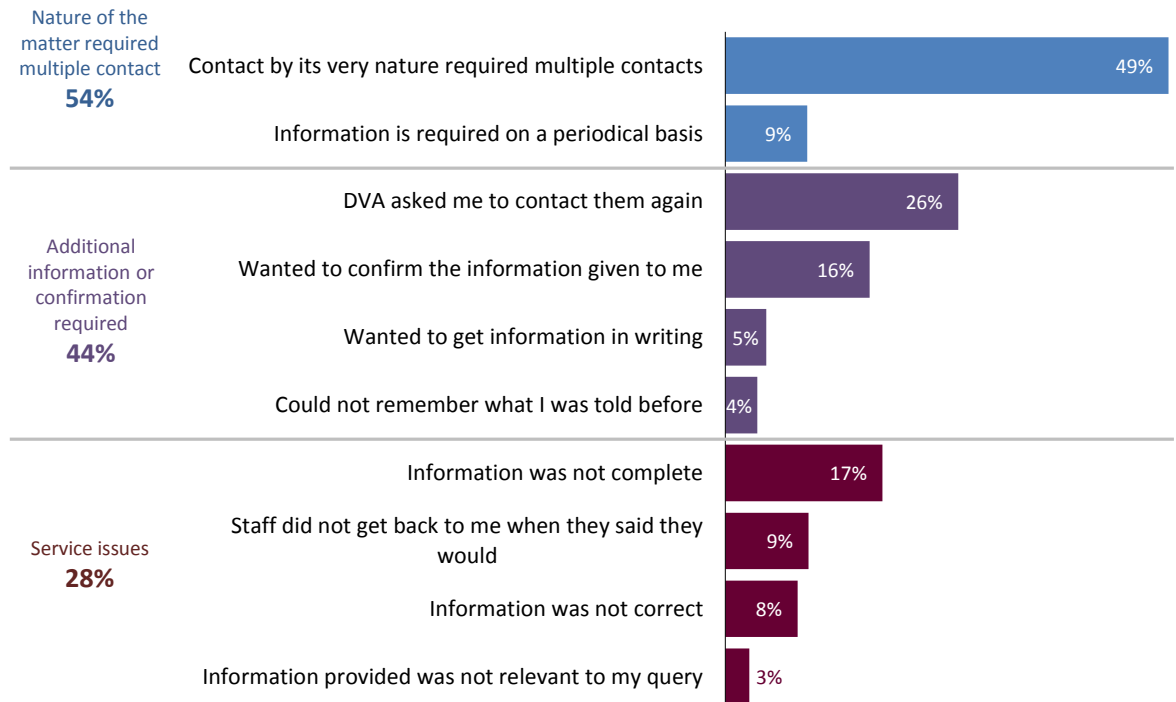
78% had their questions or concerns fully or mostly addressed on the first attempt



29% made further contact attempts on the same matter.

(Reasons for these multiple contacts are shown at right)

## Reasons for multiple contact

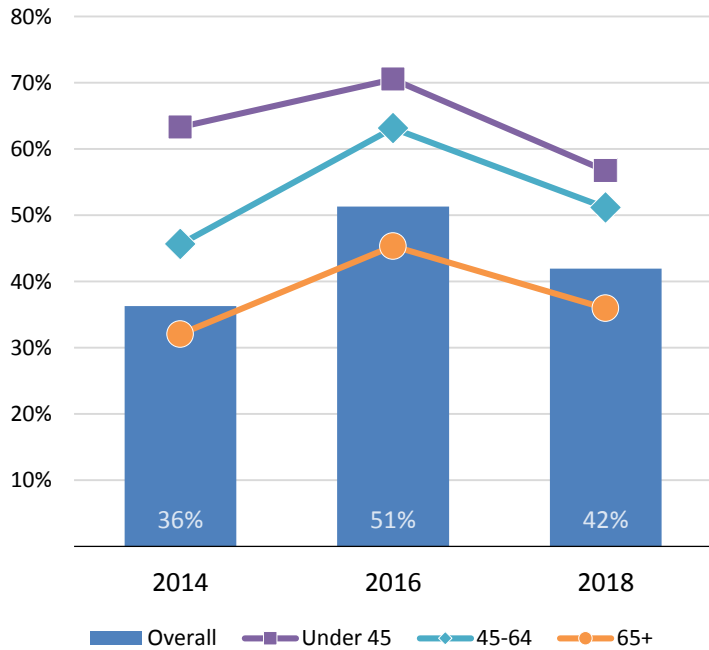




# Contact channels

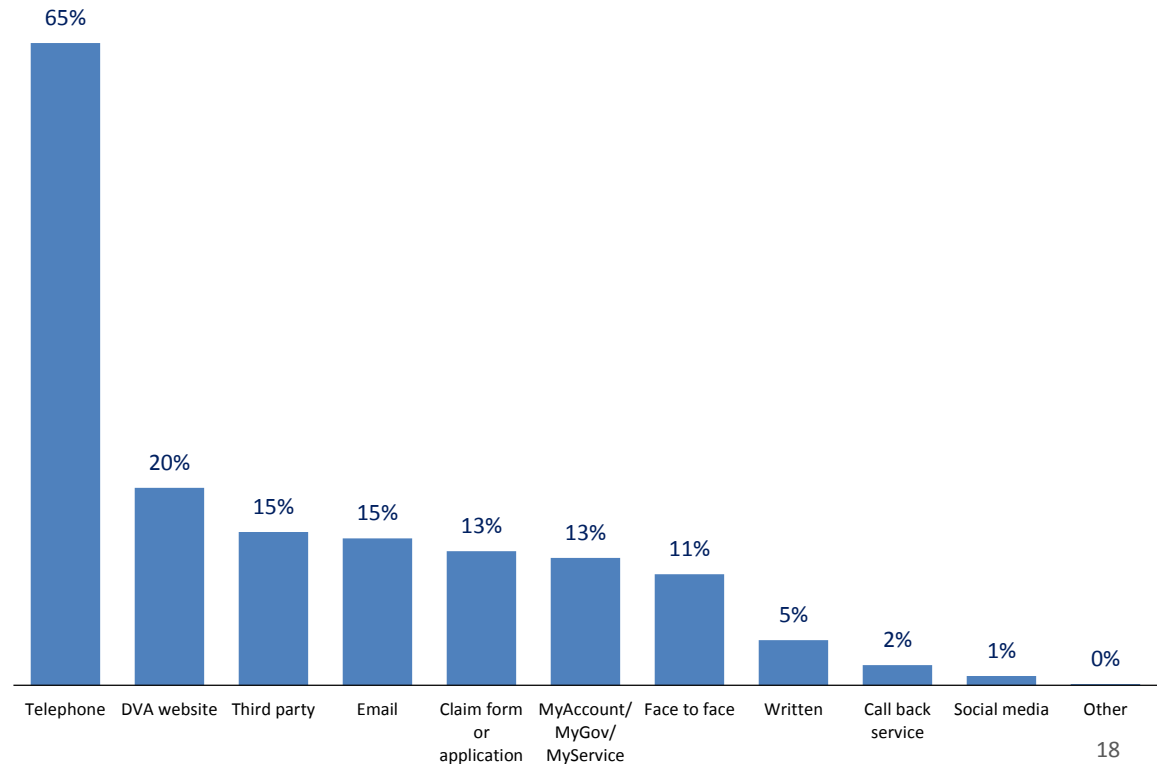
The number of clients contacting DVA is lower than in 2016 (51%), but higher than in 2014 (36%). Younger clients were more likely to make contact or seek information from DVA. Of clients who sought information from DVA, nearly two thirds did so by telephone (65%). This equates to 27% of all clients.

### Proportion of clients who had contacted or sought information from DVA in the past 12 months



### Channels by which clients contacted or sought information from DVA

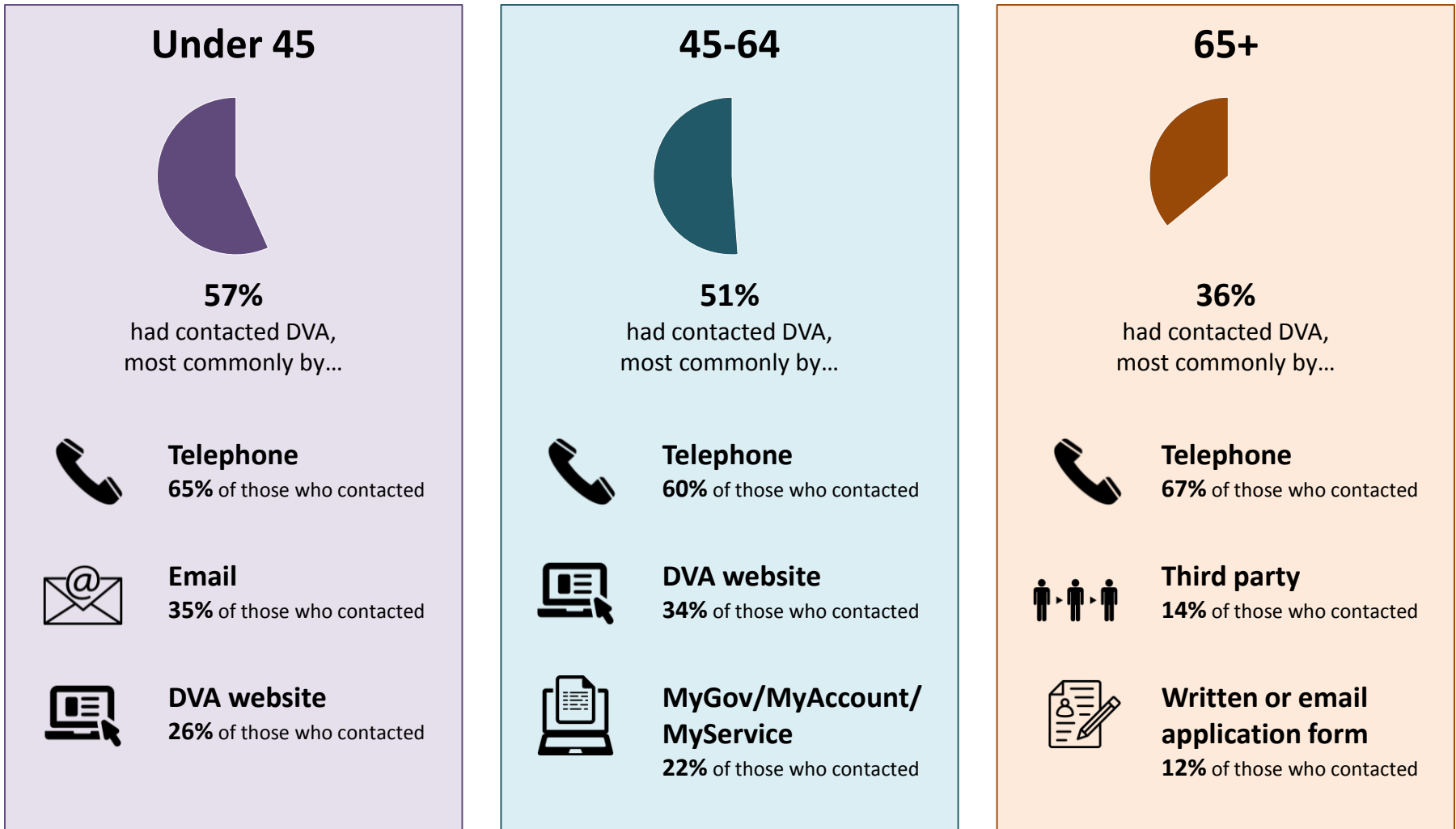
Base: Clients who contacted or sought information in the past 12 months





# Contact channels—by age groups

The diagram below shows patterns of contact with DVA across different age groups in the past 12 months.

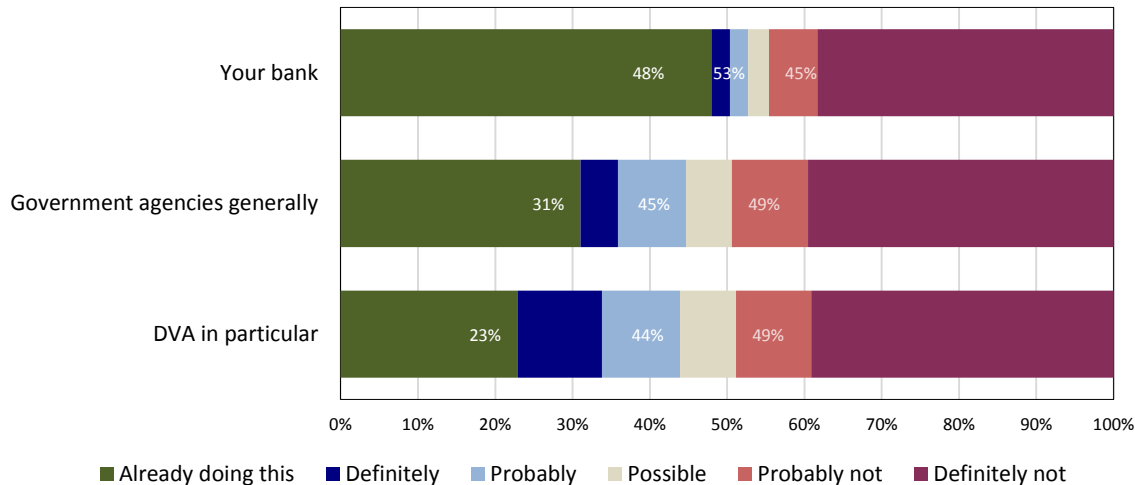




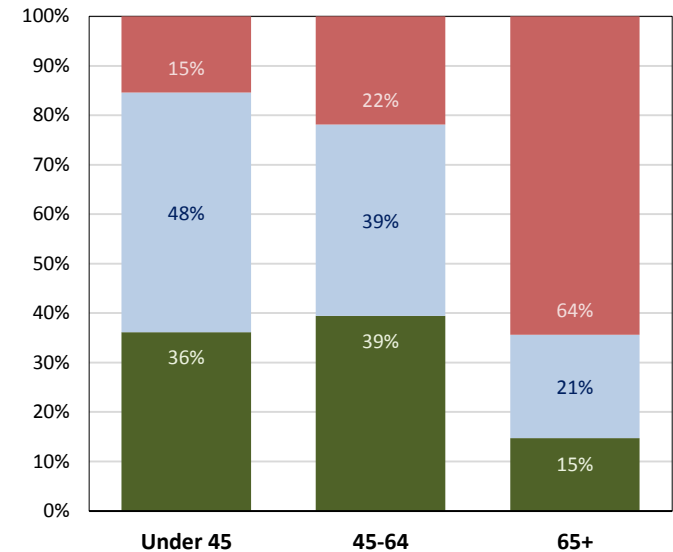
# Online interaction

Just over half of clients (51%) indicated they are open to the possibility of interacting with DVA online—for routine, day-to-day matters—including 23% who are already doing so. While this leaves half of clients who would probably or definitely *not* interact routinely with DVA online, this proportion is falling (down from 59% in 2016).

To what extent would you be willing to interact online—for routine, day-to-day matters—with...



Willingness to interact with DVA online, by age



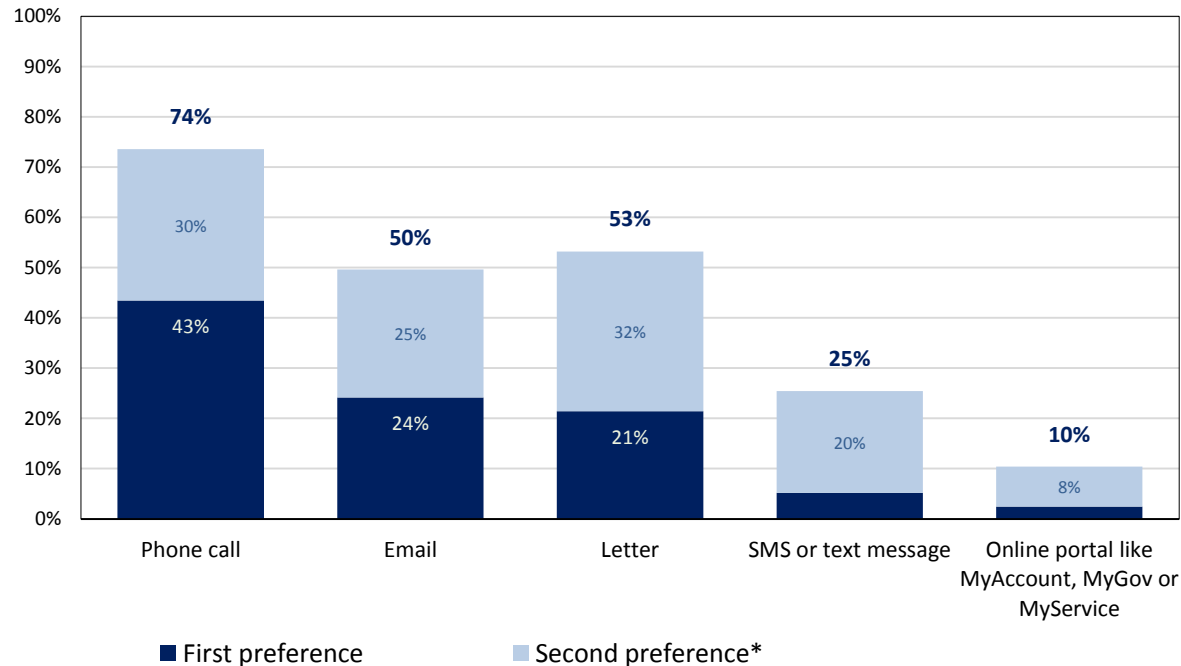
- Unwilling to interact with DVA online (probably not or definitely not)
- Willing to interact with DVA online (definitely, probably or possibly)
- Already having routine interactions with DVA online



# Online interaction

Just as telephone remains the preferred method for clients to contact DVA, it is also the preferred means by which clients would like DVA to contact them. However, email is a slightly more common preference among clients aged under 45.

When DVA needs to contact you about day-to-day, routine matters, how would you prefer that they do this?



\* Includes clients indicating 'no preference – don't mind how DVA contacts me'

## Under 45

Most common **first** preferences:

- Email (38%)
- Phone call (36%)
- SMS or text message (12%)

## 45-64

Most common **first** preferences:

- Phone call (37%)
- Email (37%)
- Letter (12%)

## 65+

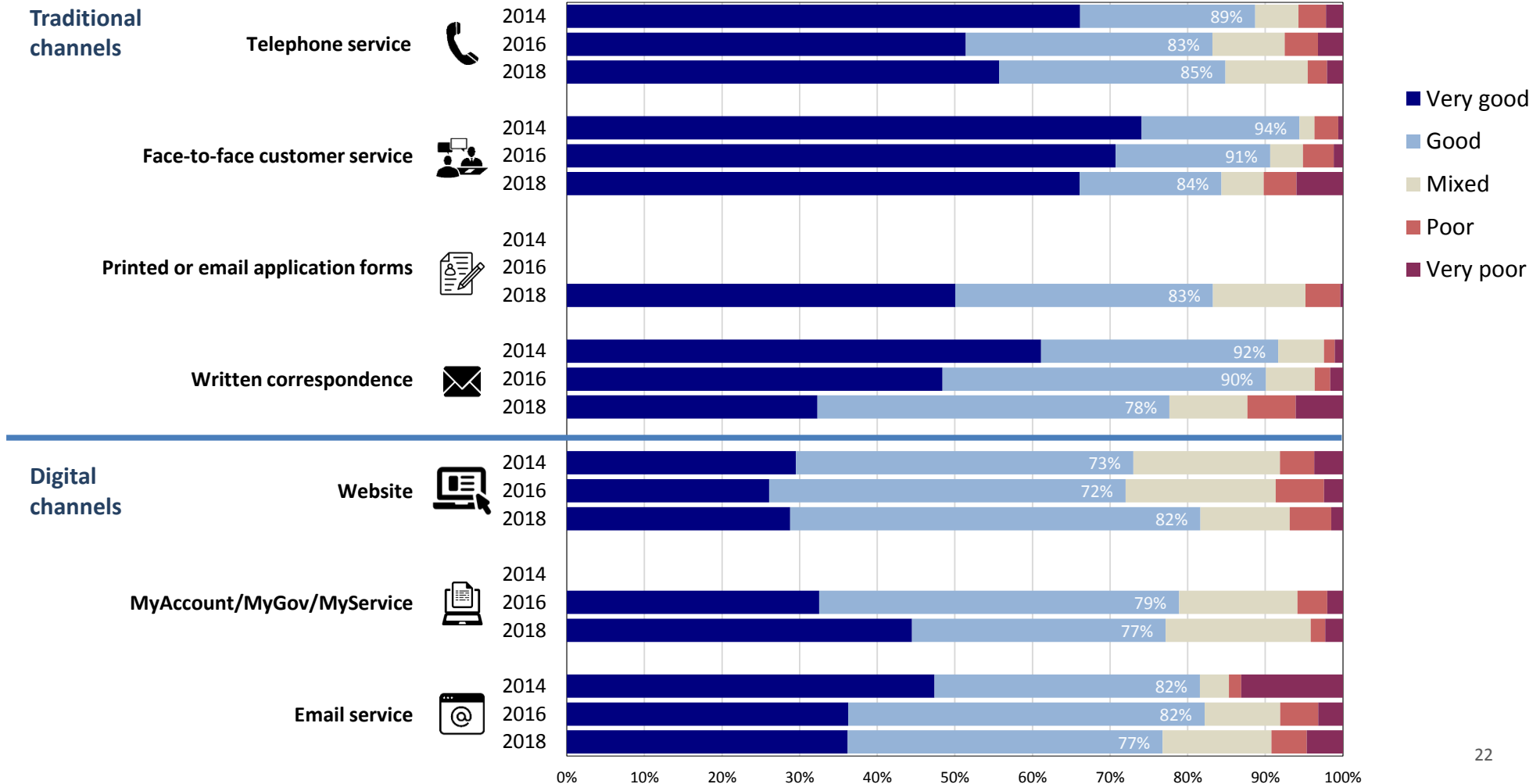
Most common **first** preferences:

- Phone call (47%)
- Letter (28%)
- Email (17%)



# Satisfaction with contact channels

Clients' overall ratings of DVA's most commonly used contact channels are shown below. The charts to the right show how contact channel ratings have changed over the years. The largest declines recorded in 2018 were in relation to traditional channels (such as written correspondence), while the largest improvements were in relation to digital channels (such as DVA's website).





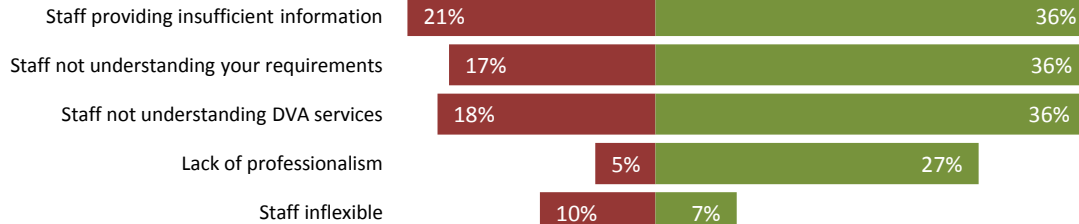
# Attributes of customer service

Clients were asked to rate up to three contact channels (telephone, face-to-face, email, etc.) they had made use of in the course of their most important dealing with DVA in the past 12 months. Following their rating clients were asked to indicate what service aspects were responsible for their positive (or negative) rating.

## Attributes contributing to *negative* ratings



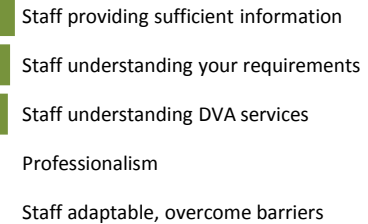
People  
45%



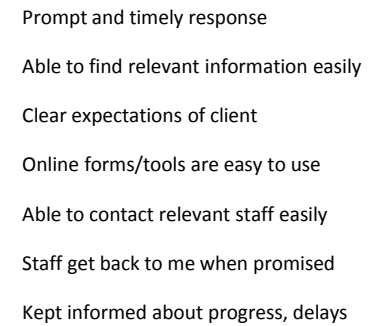
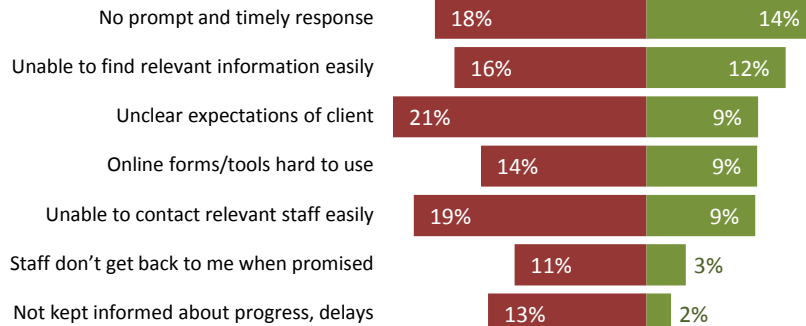
## Attributes contributing to *positive* ratings



People  
75%



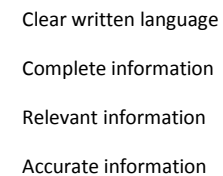
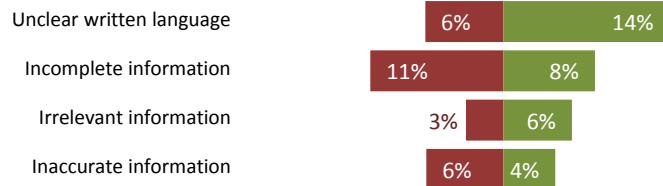
Process  
73%



Process  
43%



Product  
20%



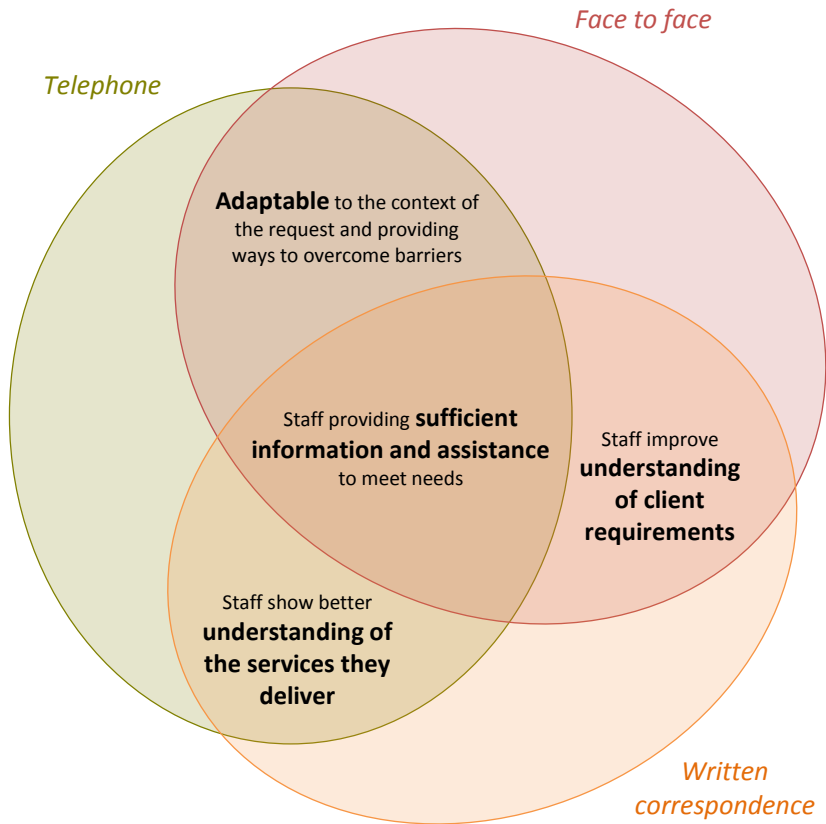
Product  
22%



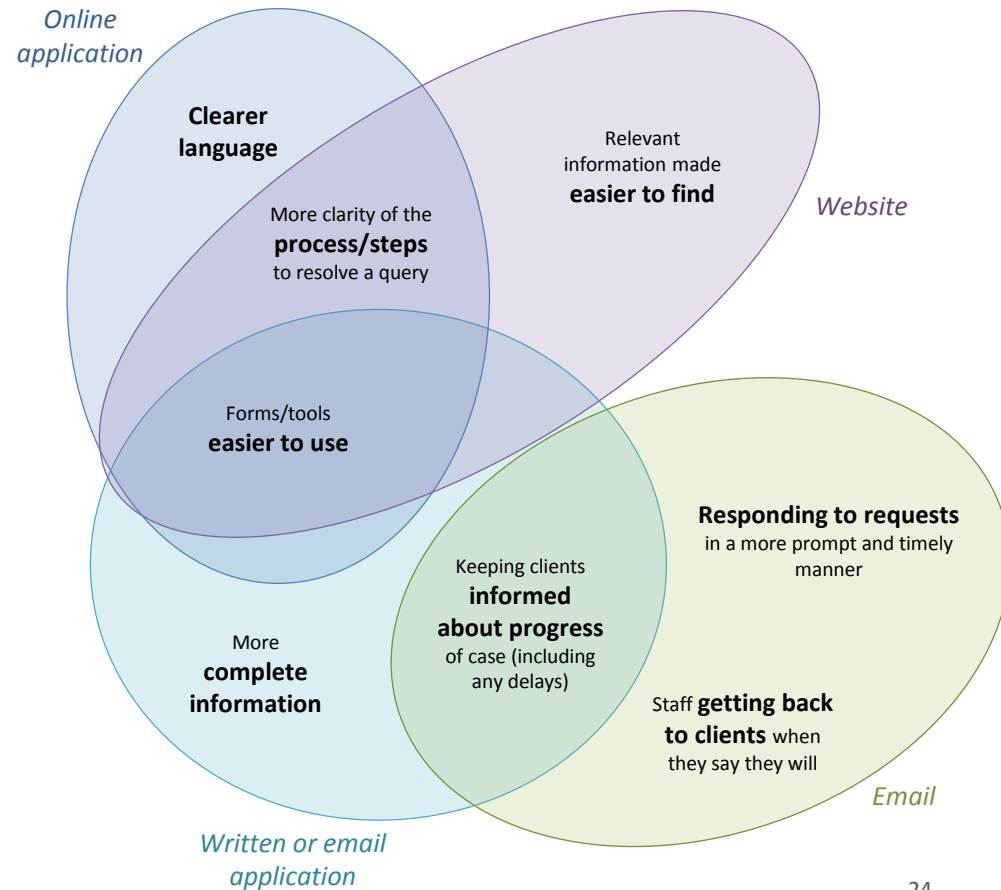
# Channel summary— Top three suggestions for improvement

When DVA clients were less than positive in rating a touchpoint with DVA they were asked to indicate what aspects of the service were responsible for this low rating. The diagram below summarises the most commonly cited reasons for each touchpoint.

## Traditional channels



## Digital channels





This project was conducted in accordance with the international quality standard ISO 20252 and the Australian Privacy Principles contained in the Privacy Act 1988.



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Veterans' Affairs**

