# Annual Customer Satisfaction Survey 2016 Detailed results

Solution MillwardBrown

Final report prepared for Invest Northern Ireland



All research conducted in compliance with the International Standard ISO 20252:2012

### Key messages and recommendations

At 85%, overall satisfaction remained consistent with the high level of 2014. Although overall satisfaction had remained consistent, encouragingly there had been a positive trend that had emerged in the last couple of years in relation to those claiming to be 'very' satisfied (56% in 2015; 47% in 2014; 37% in 2013; 37% in 2012). This trend was particularly reassuring given the difficulty in shifting people to this extreme positive view.

In terms of customer advocacy, at 80% there had been a marginal backward slide, from 83% in 2014. There was an upward trend in terms of the Net Promoter Score which had risen from '50' in 2014 to '51' in 2015, with only 9% of customers being identified as 'Detractors'. The NPS score was highest amongst the customers from the Life sciences and electronic and consumer products division (60). This division also scored highest in 2014 at 61.



# **Summary & Conclusions**

#### Image and associations

In terms of Invest NI's remit, the organisation was perceived to perform best in terms of encouraging innovation and investment in research and development (74% in 2015) and helping businesses to develop in export markets (75% in 2015). The area with most room for improvement was helping reduce costs and improve efficiencies with 54% of customers in 2015 rating Invest NI as good in this field. Encouragingly however, this was an improvement on the 2014 level of 46%.

In terms of the organisations image, Invest NI was most strongly linked with the same attributes as in 2014, however there was very marginal declines in agreement. Invest NI was most strongly associated with being polite and friendly (96% agreed; 97% in 2014; 93% in 2013), acting professionally and with integrity (93% agreed; 94% in 2014; 90% in 2013) as well as treating customers fairly (85% agreed; 87% in 2014; 84% in 2013).

# **Summary & Conclusions**

### Communication

The huge uplift in satisfaction with communication between Invest NI and its customers witnessed in 2014 was maintained in 2015 with 88% satisfied (89% in 2014; 80% in 2013; 72% in 2012). Of the 6% dissatisfied with communication, the main criticism was lack of regular contact or communication (49%).

Satisfaction with all key aspects of communication continued to experience an upward trend. Speaking to the most appropriate staff member (85%) and the ease with which they can find the correct contact for their query (77%) remained the top 2 aspects customers were most satisfied with.

### **Marketing materials**

Overall satisfaction with the content of digital communications received from Invest NI sat at 64% in 2015, with 30% very satisfied and 34% fairly satisfied.

#### Websites

Almost half (48%) of customers claimed they had visited Investni.com in the last 3 months, compared to almost 3 in 10 (28%) who had visited nibusinessinfo.co.uk in the same period. When questioned about the aspect they particularly liked about the websites the result was similar across both websites with the content coming out on top (52% for investni.com; 58% for nibusinessinfo.co.uk).



# **Summary & Conclusions**

#### Team and main contact

Satisfaction with the Invest NI team and customers' main contacts had remained fairly consistent with the 2014 levels achieved. Almost 9 in 10 were satisfied with the team (88% in 2015; 89% in 2014; 84% in 2013; 80% in 2012; 73% in 2011). Customers remained satisfied with all aspects regarding their main contact's performance. These Invest NI contacts performed extremely well at being trustworthy (94% satisfied) and responsive (90% satisfied). While most measures remained fairly consistent with 2014, the area experiencing a notable increase was ability to offer tailored solutions (81% in 2015; 77% in 2014).

Majority of customers stated their main Invest NI contact made it clear from the start how INI could assist their business (86% agree) and were provided with realistic timescales (85% agree).

Almost three quarters (73%) had communicated with their main contact at least once every 3 months over the last year, with 31% communicating on a monthly basis. The more frequent the contact with the team the more likely the customer was to be satisfied. Some 84% agreed communication at least once every 3 month was ideal frequency with email (44%), face to face (31%) and telephone (24%) the preferred methods of contact by most.

## Invest NI programmes and advisory services

Almost 4 in 5 customers (78%) were satisfied with the quality of programmes and advisory services offered by Invest NI; increasing from the 2014 level of 72%.

#### Financial assistance and claims' process

Almost 7 in 10 customers (65%) sought funding in 2015 (up from 57% in 2014). Of these, 72% were satisfied with the application process and 73% were content with the time taken to approve their application. Both measurements increased since 2014 (70% and 68% respectively). The preliminary advice visit continued to be rated the strongest performing area of the financial assistance process. Upward trends were evident across all metrics. Satisfaction was generally higher amongst those claiming/seeking funding less than £100,000



#### **Complaints and feedback process**

Over half (54%) of customers were aware of the complaints and feedback process, up from 49% in 2014. Reassuringly almost all (99%) had never had to make a complaint.

Almost 2 in 5 (37%) had used the new single claims form, with 50% claiming the form made it easier to claim, 13% stated it made the process more difficult and 37% felt it made no difference.

#### Improvements customers want to see

While two fifths (40%) were unable to suggest any improvements, better communication was most commonly mentioned (6%). Some 5% felt customers could be made more aware of what is available. Less bureaucracy (4%), reduction in paperwork (4%) and speeding up of the application process (4%) were all suggested improvements.

# Agenda

# Study Set-up

- Overall Satisfaction, Familiarity and Advocacy
- Image dimensions
- Overview satisfaction KPIs
- Communication
- Team and main contact
- Programmes & Advisory services
- Financial assistance and claims process
- Complaints & Feedback Process
- Suggested Improvements



# Study Set-Up

- 441 telephone interviews were conducted between 1<sup>st</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> March 2016.
- Quotas were placed on division. The table below shows the breakdown of the sample achieved.

Division	% in universe	% of sample	(previous year % of sample)	Achieved sample
Food & Tourism	16%	15%	23%	68
Advanced Engineering & Construction	28%	28%	29%	124
Growth & Scaling	28%	32%	24%	141
Technology & Services	15%	13%	15%	59
Life Sciences, Electronics & Consumer Product	12%	10%	9%	46
International Investment	1%	1%	-	3
Total				441

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Encouragingly, those claiming to be very satisfied with Invest NI has continued to increase.



13 Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the service you have received from Invest NI in the past 12 months? [Base: All Invest NI customers n=441]

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Life Sciences, Electronics and Consumer Products were most satisfied, while Advanced Engineering and Technology were least satisfied. *Sample size for International Investment was too small to draw any conclusions from.* 



14 Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the service you have received from Invest NI in the past 12 months? [Base: All Invest NI customers n=441] \*Small Base

The top 3 reasons cited for being dissatisfied were complicated procedures, the time consuming nature and general unhelpfulness.



Is there a specific reason for saying that?

[Base: Dissatisfied with the service you have received from Invest NI in the past 12 months n=58]



# Those with more frequent contact, have participated in a programme or used an advisory service were much more likely to be satisfied at an overall level.

Overview: Impact of frequent contact, participation in programmes and advisory services on overall satisfaction

#### Contact with main contact <u>at least</u> once every three months



2012 2013 2014 2015

Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the service you have received from6Invest NI in the past 12 months? [Base: All Invest NI customers n=441]



Levels of familiarity with Invest NI have remained consistent with 2014. In 2015 customers are more likely to say they 'know a fair amount' rather than 'know very well' while the reverse was the case in 2014.



[Base: All Invest NI customers n=441]

Advocacy levels have remained fairly consistent in 2015 however there was a downward trend in the number claiming they would 'speak highly of it without being asked'.



[Base: All Invest NI customers n=441]

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## Net Promoter Score- 2015

**NPS by Division** 

	Overall	Growth and Scaling	Life Sciences, Electronics and Consumer Products		Advanced Engineering and Construction	Food and Tourism	International Investment
n=	441	141	46	59	124	68	3
Promoters	60	63	69	57	51	66	33
Passives	30	29	22	38	37	22	33
Detractors	9	9	9	6	13	11	33
NPS (promoters- detractors)	51	54	60	51	38	55	0

Better than overall NPS
Worse than overall NPS

On a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 is not at all likely and 10 is extremely likely, please indicate how likely you are to recommend Invest NI to a friend or colleague?

19 [Base: All Invest NI customers n=441]



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Invest NI's top 2 strongest areas of performance were perceived as being business development in export markets and encouraging innovation.

How Invest NI performs in these areas



Invest NI remains strongly associated with being polite and friendly, acting professionally and with integrity as well as treating customers fairly, although there has been backward trends since 2014. Image dimensions (1 of 2)



22 Agreement ... [Base: All Invest NI customers n=441]

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Invest NI was also associated with being responsive to customers business needs and being an ideal business partner, with a slight uplift in these perceptions since 2014.

Image dimensions (2 of 2)

Invest NI					Agree		Disagree					
Mean Score 2015 Scale 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly	agree)	2014	2013	2012	2015	2014	2013	2012	2015	2014	2013	2012
Is responsive to your business needs	4.02	3.8	3.8	3.66	74%	74%	69%	59%	7%	7%	11%	13%
Is an ideal business partner	4.01	4	3.7	3.6	74%	74%	60%	56%	7%	7%	12%	13%
They are easy to do business with	3.9	3.93	3.76		71% ?	71%	67%	63%	11%	11%	12%	15%
Is an important contributor to the success of your business	3.88	3.85	3.61	3.46	66%	66%	59%	50%	12%	12%	15%	18%
Offers appropriate solutions for your business	3.85	3.84	3.71	3.53	67%	67%	61%	54%	7%	7%	10%	15%
Provides a robust challenge to your business	3.68	3.67	3.41	3.22	54%	54%	47%	37%	12%	12%	18%	22%

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# Satisfaction with team of people and quality of programmes / advisory services have increased since 2014. Satisfaction levels in relation to communication with main contact have declined marginally. Satisfaction by area



How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the ... offered by Invest NI? [Base: All Invest NI customers n=441]

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# Satisfaction levels in all areas - 2015

**Satisfaction by Division** 

Scale 1 (Very dissatisfied) to 5 (Very satisfied)										
	Overall Average	Growth and Scaling	Life Sciences, Electronics and Consumer Products	Technology and Services	Advanced Engineering and Construction	Food and	International Investment			
Team of people	4.44	4.46	4.59	4.49	4.31	4.5	4			
Communication	4.45	4.46	4.69	4.53	4.34	4.47	3.33			
Quality of programmes / advisory services	4.2	4.26	4.3	4.15	3.17	4.09	4.67			

#### Mean Score 2015 Scale 1 (Very dissectiofied) to 5 (Very setisfied)

Better than overall average

U Worse than overall average



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## Satisfaction with communication has remained fairly consistent with the 2014 levels.

Overall satisfaction with communication



Overall how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the communication between yourself and your main Invest NI contacts over the last 12 months? [Base: All Invest NI customers n=441]

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Only 45 customers were not satisfied with the communication with their main Invest NI contacts. By far the biggest driver of dissatisfaction was the lack of communication.



Why did you say that? What could Invest NI do to improve its communications with you? [Base: Invest NI customers dissatisfied 1-3 n=45]

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Life Science, Electronics and Consumer Products customers were most satisfied with communication in terms of mean scores. *Sample size for International Investment was too small to draw any conclusions from.* 



30 Overall how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the communication between yourself and you main Invest NI contacts over the last 12 months? [Base: All Invest NI customers n=441]

\*Small Base

There was high levels of satisfaction with all areas of communication. All scores have remained fairly consistent with 2014, however there has been an increase in satisfaction with ease of obtaining information.

Satisfaction with communication aspect	ts	Mo	an Sco	r00		Satis	fied			Dissa	ticfied	
<i>Mean Score 2015</i> Scale 1 (Very dissatisfied) to 5 (Very satisfied)		2014	2013	2012	2015			2012		2014		
Overall satisfacton with communication	4.45	4.48	4.13	3.96	88%	88%	80%	72%	6%	4%	7%	8%
Your queries are dealt with by the most appropriate Invest NI personnel	4.26	4.26	4.13	4.08	82%	85%	80%	77%	2%	3%	4%	6%
Ease of finding the corect contact within Invest NI	4.13	4.1	4.05	3.98 🛇	<sup>7</sup> 77%	77%	78%	71%	5%	5%	6%	7%
The speed your enquiries are dealt with	4.05	4.03	3.99	3.93	76%	75%	75%	71%	8%	7%	7%	8%
Ease of obtaining the information your require	4.05	3.99	3.98	3.9	76%	73%	72%	69%	5%	5%	5%	8%

Overall how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with ...between yourself and Invest NI over the last

31 [ **12 months?** [ Base: All Invest NI customers n=441]

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Below is a list of suggested improvements in relation to speed enquires are dealt with, ease of obtaining information and being dealt with by most appropriate person. Reassuringly the majority had no suggestions.



32 Have you any suggestions for improvement in this area? [Base: All Invest NI customers n=441]



79%

Almost two thirds of customers satisfied with digital communications from Invest NI. Very low levels of dissatisfaction while almost a fifth remain neutral.



How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the content of the digital communications, such as the Ezines, you received from Invest NI? [Base: Invest NI Customers n=441]



33

# Customers were more likely to have visited investni.com than nibusinessinfo.co.uk, with it being more likely to have been viewed recently also.

2015 Usage of websites



www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk



6%

When did you last visit the following websites...

34 [Base: All Invest NI customers n=441]

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The content of the websites was the aspect more likely to be favoured by users, followed by ease of use then ability to navigate quickly.



Which of the following aspects did you particularly like about the website? [Base: All who used either website n=211, n=125]



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Tailored emails were, by far, considered the most likely method of encouraging them to visit the websites.



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Overall satisfaction with the team of people worked with had remained consistent with 2014, while those very satisfied had increased.

Satisfaction with Invest NI team



Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the service provided by the team of people you have been working with at Invest NI in the last 12 months? [Base: All Invest NI customers n=441]



Customers of the Life Sciences and Advanced Engineering and Growth and Scaling divisions were most satisfied with the team of people they work with. Sample size for International Investment was too small to draw any conclusions from. Satisfaction with team by segments



Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the service provided by the team of people you have been working with at Invest NI in the last 12 months? [Base: All Invest NI customers n=441] 39

\*Small Base Scholar MillwardBrown

Almost all customers had been in contact with their direct liaison in the last 12 months, with the most common frequency being at least every 3 months.



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## Proactivity varies across division, however the majority of customers were being contacted at least once every 3 months.

Contact intensity with main contact by segments



At least once every 3 months was preferred frequency of contact for the majority, with the largest proportion citing email as their preferred method of communication.

Ideal Frequency and preferred method of Contact



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More frequent contact can be correlated with higher levels of satisfaction with the Invest NI team.

Customer satisfaction by contact intensity

Satisfaction with team of people by frequency of contact with main contact



Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the service provided by the team of people you have been working with at Invest NI in the last 12 months?

[Base: Base: All Invest NI customers n=441]

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There remained high levels of satisfaction with the main contacts. Levels peaked in terms of trustworthiness and responsiveness, with most notably improvements across knowledge of business and ability to offer tailored solutions.

Satisfaction with aspects regarding main contact



Satisfaction with main contact's performance?

44 [Base: All who have had contact n=400]

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### On the whole, main contacts made it clear how Invest NI can assist the business and provide realistic timelines.

Expectancy management and timescale planning

Your main contact ...

Mean Mean Score 2015 Disagree Agree Scores Scale 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) 2014 2013 2012 2015 2014 2013 2012 2015 2014 2013 2012 ... makes it clear from the outset if and how 4.42 Invest NI could assist your business 4.44 4.33 86% 89% 88% 83% 4% 3% 4% 3% 4.3  $\bigotimes$ ... discusses and agrees realistic timescales for 4.42 planned activities 4.35 4.24 4.21 85% 80% 80% 80% 5% 4% 5% 4%

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Life Sciences, Electronics and Consumer Products and Food and Tourism customers were most likely to have sought support.



47 [Base: All Invest NI customers n=441]

\*Small Base MillwardBrown The most commonly utilised support areas were research and development support and financial support for job creation.





There was almost universal satisfaction with the support received, with the largest proportion very satisfied. Life Sciences, Electronics and Consumer Products customers had slightly higher levels of satisfaction.



49 How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the support that you received? [Base: Invest NI customers seeking support n=315] \*Small Base

# The level of satisfaction with the quality of programmes and advisory services had increased since 2014.

Satisfaction with quality of programmes & advisory services



How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the quality of programmes and advisory services offered by Invest NI? [Base: All Invest NI customers n=441]



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There had been an increased in the proportion of customers this year who had sought financial assistance to help expand or develop their business.

Seeking financial assistance by year



Have you sought financial assistance in the past 12 months to help you expand or develop your
business (includes Growth Accelerator Programme)? [Base: All Invest NI customers n=441]



Technology and Services as well as Advanced Engineering and Construction customers were slightly more likely to have sought financial assistance. *Sample size for International Investment was too small to draw any conclusions from.* 

2015 seeking financial assistance by division



Have you sought financial assistance in the past 12 months to help you expand or develop your53business (includes Growth Accelerator Programme)? [Base: All Invest NI customers n=441]

\*Small Base MillwardBrown Technology and Services and Advanced Engineering and Construction had the highest proportion of customers seeking levels of financial assistance over £100,000+. The vast majority of customers however wanted financial assistance of less than £100,000.

Amounts applied for by division - 2015



How much was the amount you sought?

[Base: All Invest Northern Ireland customers who have applied for financial assistance in the last 12 months n=286]

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\*Small Base

### Satisfaction with the application process had increased since 2014, particularly those claiming to be very satisfied.

Satisfaction with application process



How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the following aspects of applying for financial assistance – the application process? [Base: All Invest Northern Ireland customers who have applied for financial assistance in the last 12 months n=286]

#### There has been a upward trend in relation to satisfaction with time taken to approve funding.

Satisfaction with funding application approval time



How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the following aspects of applying for financial assistance – The time taken to obtain approval in relation to the level of funding? [Base: All Invest Northern Ireland customers who have applied for financial assistance in the last 12 months n=256]

There was an increase in the proportion strongly agreeing they were kept informed by the Invest NI team about the status of their application as it progressed through the organisation.



To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about Invest NI - The Invest NI team kept me informed on the progress of my application for support as it went through the approvals process?

[Base: All Invest Northern Ireland customers who have applied for financial assistance in the last 12 months n=286]



57

### As would be expected, satisfaction with application process was higher in instances when funding had been granted.



 Satisfaction when applying for financial assistance, with the application process, and the time
 \*Small Base

 taken to obtain approval in relation to the level of funding? [Base: All Invest Northern Ireland
 \*Small Base

 customers who have applied for financial assistance in the last 12 months n=286 ]
 \*MillwardBrown

#### Levels of satisfaction with all aspects of the claims process have increased since 2014.

Satisfaction with aspects regarding claims process

<i>Mean Score 2015</i> Scale 1 (Very dissatisfied) to 5 (Very satisfied)		Mean Scores			Satisfied				Dissatisfied			
		2014	2013	2012	2015	2014	2013	2012	2015	2014	2013	2012
The pre claims advice visit by Invest NI	4.4	4.27	4.24	4.13	82%	78%	82%	72%	2%	3%	4%	6%
Communication with Invest NI claims team	4.37	4.14	4.14	3.94	83%	76%	77%	68%	5%	6%	6%	11%
The length of time taken from advice visit to submission of claims form	4.04	3.93	3.99	3.82	71%	66%	72%	60%	8%	8%	9%	11%
The ease of completing the claims schedule / form	3.92	3.73	3.98	3.72	67%	61%	72%	60%	11%	13%	8%	15%
That your claim was process within 30 days	4.18	4.05	3.89	3.69	73%	68%	66%	56%	10%	10%	14%	18%

How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with each of the following aspects of the process? 59 [Base: All who have sought / claimed funding from Invest NI in the past 12 months n=241]

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General satisfaction with different aspects of the claims process tended to be higher on amounts less than £100,000. This is a shift since 2014 although the sample size is small for those applying for £100k+ (n=24) Aspects regarding claims process by amount applied for

<b>Satisfaction (codes 4 and 5)</b> Scale 1 (Very dissatisfied) to 5 (Very satisfied)			Overall Satisfaction			More than 100K	Less than 100K		
			2014	2013	2012	2015 2014 2013 2012	2015 2014 2013 2012		
The pre claims advice visit by Invest NI		82%	78%	82%	72%	75% 86% 74% 67%	85% 79% 85% 74%		
Communication with Invest NI claims team		83%	76%	77%	68%	79% 83% 66% 62%	82% 81% 82% 70%		
The length of time taken from advice visit to submission for claims form	719	%	66%	72%	60%	67% 77% 73% 62%	77% 70% 76% 62%		
The ease of completing the claims schedule / form	67%	,	61%	72%	60%	71% 71% 58% 51%	68% 63% 76% 64%		
That your claim was process within 30 days	73	8%	68%	66%	56%	67% 77% 61% 44%	71% 68% 73% 63%		

How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with each of the following aspects of the process? 60 [Base: All who have sought / claimed funding from Invest NI in the past 12 months n=241]

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Awareness of the complaints and feedback process is highest among Technology and Services, as well as Life Sciences, Electronics and Consumer Products customers.



#### Base size in brackets

**Do you know that Invest NI has complaints and feedback process? 62** [*Base: All Invest NI customers n=441*] \*Small Base



Only 4 of the 441 customers had to make a complaint during the past year with 1 very satisfied with how it was dealt with and 1 very dissatisfied.



Have you had to make a complaint to invest NI at any time during the past year? 63 [Base: All Invest NI customers n=441]

How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the way this complaint was handled? [Base: All who made complaint =4]



Those Life Sciences, Electronics and Consumer Products customers were more likely to have used the new single claims form since its introduction.



#### Base size in brackets

 The new Invest NI single claims form was introduced in August 2015. Have you used the new Invest

 64
 NI single claims form since it was introduced? [Base: All Invest NI customers n=441]

\*Small Base



Half of those who had used the new single claims form considered it easier to make claims utilising it.



65 [Base: All Invest NI customers n=441]

Does this form make it easier for you to make claims, more difficult or make no difference? [Base: All who used form n=163]



The main reason the new form was regarded as not making the claims process easier was due to the similarities with the old form.



Why does the form not make it easier for you to make claims? [Base: All not finding it easier n=82]



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Suggestions of improvements customers would like to see are highlighted below.



What, if anything, would you like Invest NI to improve upon, so that they have a more positive impact

upon your business? [Base: All Invest NI customers n=441]

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40%

# 397 customers (90%) who participated agreed to make their responses attributable

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