

In order to monitor customer experiences and satisfaction levels, CISAS undertakes a regular customer satisfaction survey every year. Conducted independently by an external agency (Gabriel Ltd) in two waves during 2009, the latest is the fifth annual survey to be undertaken by CISAS.

Over the course of the year, 1151 people responded to the surveys (of which 659 were Users: 492 Enquirers).

The objectives of the survey were:

- To gauge satisfaction for experiences of CISAS by Users (a person who refers a complaint to CISAS) and Enquirers (a person who made contact with CISAS with an enquiry of some sort but who did not follow through to an actual case)
- To identify potential improvements to the service
- To continually improve CISAS customer service

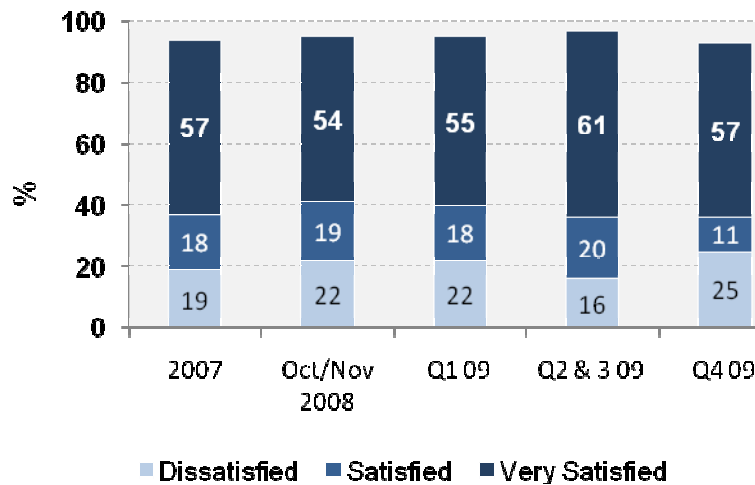
## **OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS**

The survey has shown:

- consistently good feedback from Users of the CISAS service throughout the year
- the very first impression that Enquirers receive can be improved further
- the need to make sure that people can understand the role undertaken by CISAS
- the web site is an increasingly important source of information for people as a first port of call

## OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH CISAS

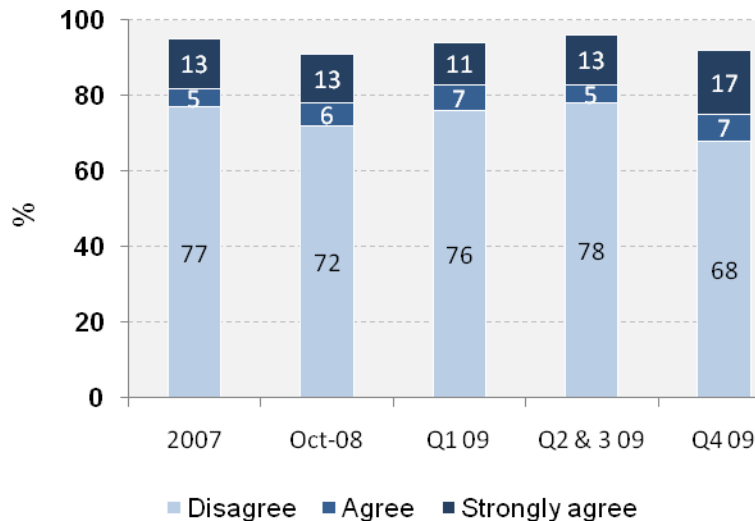
### Users



Those who have gone through the case process with CISAS have consistently said that their experience was satisfactory: Only 1 in 4 have not been satisfied. Not surprisingly perhaps, satisfaction depends largely upon whether or not the complainant achieved the outcome they were hoping to achieve.

Users are confident that the role played by CISAS is effective and authoritative in resolving disputes with the company of complaint.

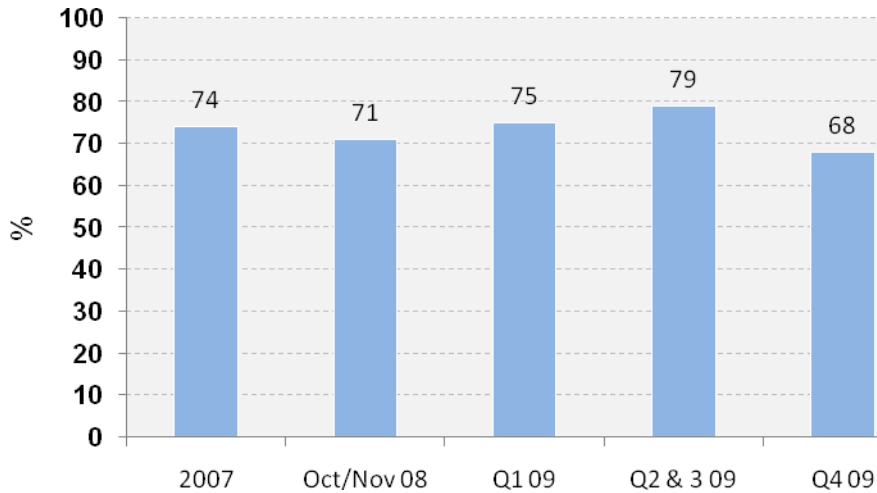
### CISAS had no effect at all – the company still refused to pay me



Most people who have gone through the case process would endorse CISAS to others and be willing to use CISAS again themselves.

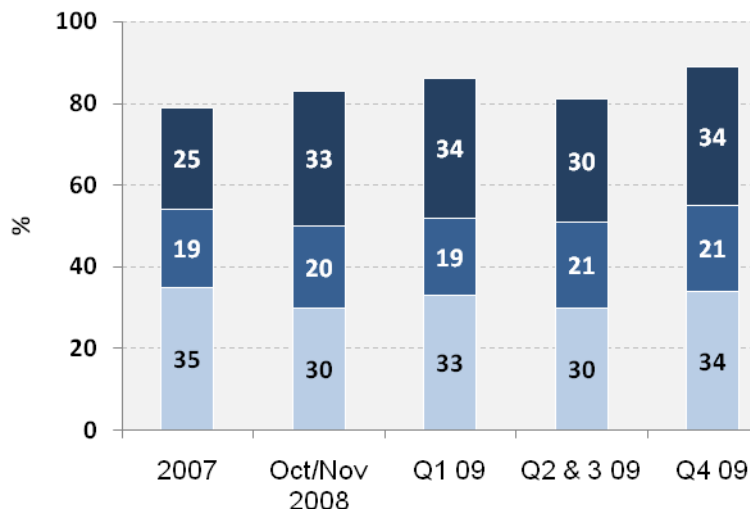
### Would you recommend CISAS to others?

#### Users



#### Enquirers

Enquirers are more likely to have made only one telephone call or email to CISAS requesting information or seeking advice on a query. Their satisfaction levels are based upon a very short 'touch point' and as shown below, most did achieve what they were looking for.



(N.B. Figures do not add up to 100% because the charts do not show the percentage with no option either way).

Nonetheless, 1 in 3 Enquirers said they were not satisfied with the service received from CISAS.

The main reasons for this were:

- A perception that CISAS is not independent (and therefore biased).
- The complaint was outside CISAS's scope.
- Slow response from CISAS.
- Perceived lack of interest by CISAS in their complaint.
- The complaint was outside the time limit required.
- A perception by the Enquirer that the level of complaint was not worth the hassle of pursuing the claim.

## FINDING OUT ABOUT CISAS

### USERS

The high level of recommendation which is reported in the survey is no doubt connected to the growing proportion of people who receive advice from family and friends before contacting CISAS in the first place. By Q4 2009, almost 1 in 5 was influenced by those close to them.

A similar proportion received advice from the Citizens Advice Bureau beforehand.

It is clear from some comments made in the research that not everyone automatically knows about the existence of CISAS, or how and when to contact the organisation:

*“Companies should be forced to publicise the fact that they are attached to a watchdog such as CISAS. It took some internet research for me to find this out”.*

*“Attempt to make themselves better known to consumers. More people would use the service if they knew about it”.*

*“Excellent service, although I did not have any idea that it existed before I was referred by CAB”.*

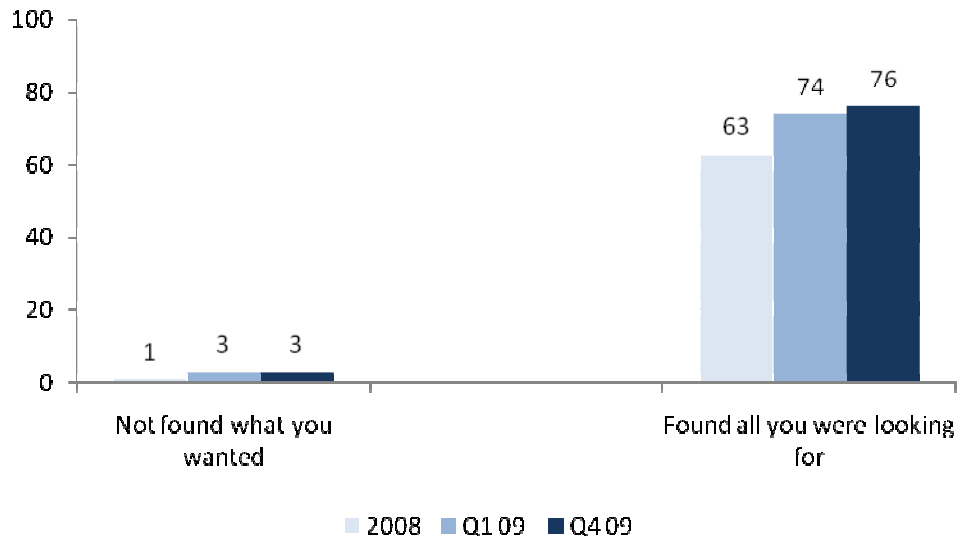
*“I found CISAS very easy to use but initially had problems finding out who the regulating body for the company was”.*

The internet is also a significant first source of information for those seeking redress: 1 in 4 Users had first found out about CISAS from browsing on line.

The propensity to use the Internet is also apparent by the fact that most Users visited the CISAS website at least once – usually before and whilst they were submitting their claim to CISAS. The web site does therefore fulfil an important function and does this well – as testified by the 76% who found all that they were looking for on the site.

## Did you find what you were looking for?

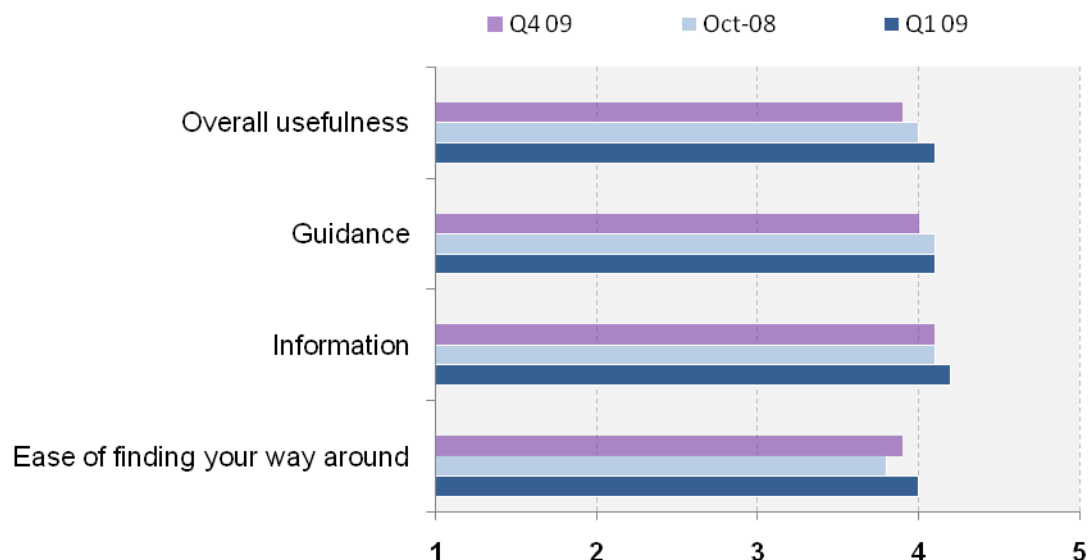
### Users



The positive opinions of the website are reinforced by satisfaction scores for all aspects of its use, as shown in the chart below (which shows average scores on a scale of 1 – 5, where 1 is very poor and 5 is very good)

## How would you rate the Website on these criteria?

### Users



## ENQUIRERS

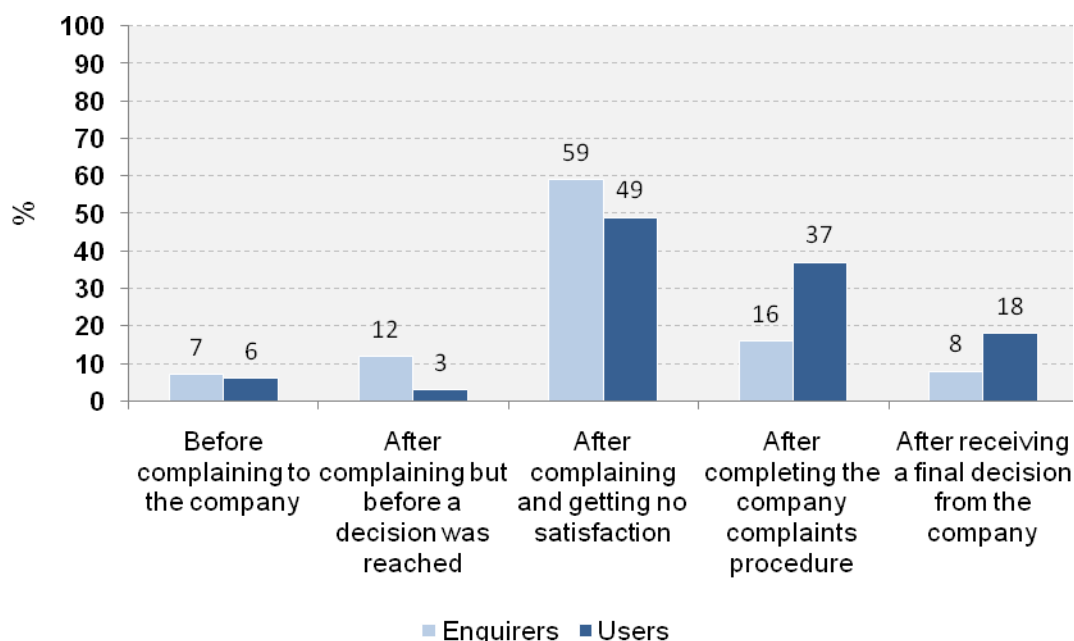
The internet is also a significant source of information for Enquirers: 1 in 4 Users had got the contact details from CISAS online. They are less likely to have visited the CISAS website before contacting CISAS, however. Those who had visited the website found most, but not all, the information they wanted, perhaps because their enquiries were more exploratory e.g.

- How the process works/what to do.
- How to complain about specific companies.
- Knowing their consumer rights.

## CONTACTING CISAS

Over the course of the year, the level of appropriate contact with CISAS has improved among both Enquirers and Users: however, 3 in 4 Enquirers do contact CISAS prematurely – often to discuss their options whilst a complaint is still 'live' with the company concerned.

### When did you first call CISAS? (Q4 2009)



## THE CISAS EXPERIENCE

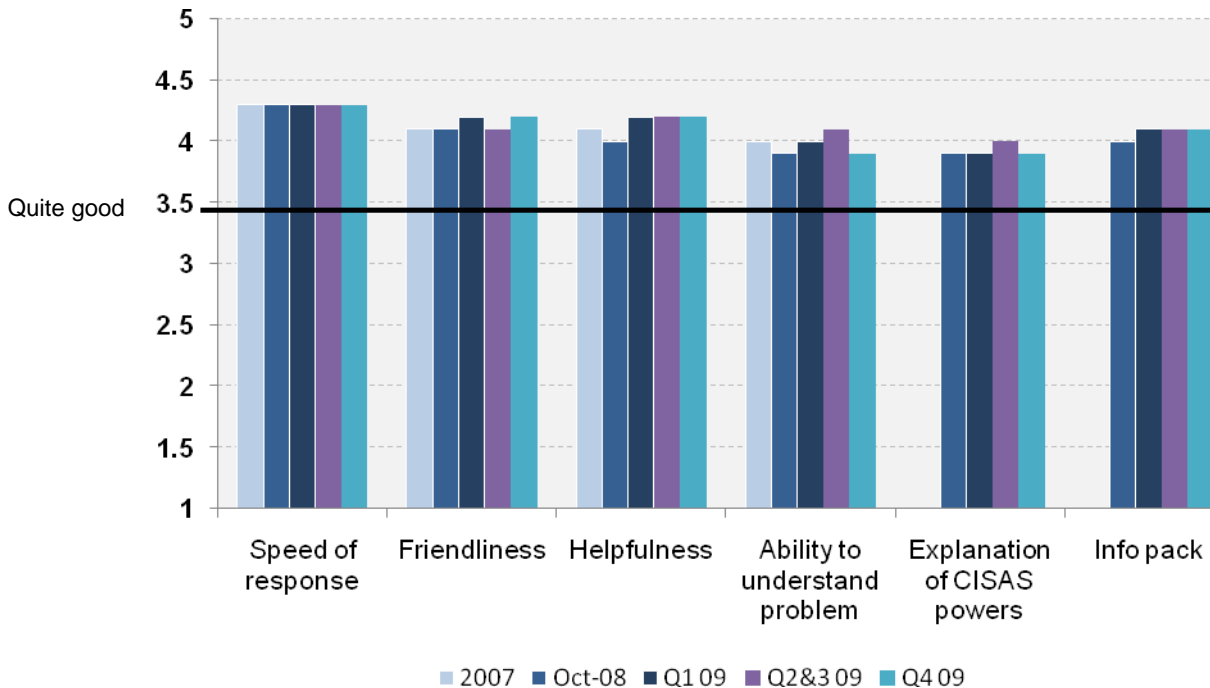
Getting in touch with CISAS is not seen to be a problem for most Users: 89% said it was quite or very easy to get in touch, and the most likely means of contact is by telephone (although 1 in 4 did actually send an email to CISAS in the first instance).

Those who have gone through the process have a high impression of the CISAS service. All the aspects of service measured in the survey (helpfulness, friendliness, speed of response, ability to understand the problem, explanation of CISAS and its powers and the information pack requested) were rated at least 'good' by Users.

## How would you rate the service provided by CISAS?

### Mean scores 1 – 5

#### Users



The most satisfied customers are those who have been 'vindicated' by contacting CISAS

*"Generally, trying to get restitution from a company is time consuming, confusing and quite frustrating. By approaching CISAS for help, the process was made very much faster".*

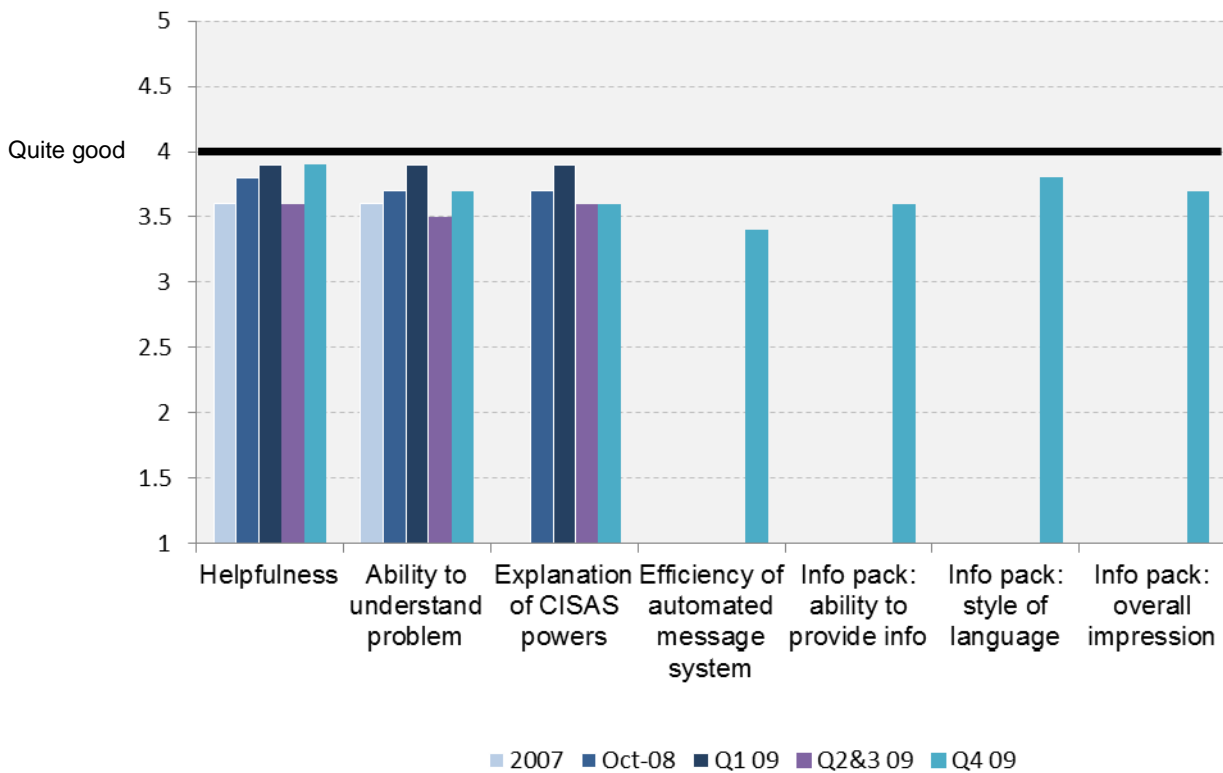
*"I found this service both friendly and helpful; I believe that the company would have maintained their stance that it was our fault. When in fact it was a totally chaotic situation caused by the company itself. One side not knowing what the other was doing and giving totally contradictory information".*

*"In the first instance I wasn't getting any satisfaction with my complaint but when I was told about CISAS and mentioned yourselves to [the company] it was like magic, my complaint was dealt with immediately and to my satisfaction".*

Enquirers are much more likely to have phoned CISAS rather than email (or write in), and will have heard an automated message system giving them options to proceed - a simple process if they just wanted to request an information pack (and this applied to 1 in 3 callers). But for these Enquirers, there is a message for CISAS to seek further ways of improving the automated system and the information pack itself.

## How would you rate the service you received from CISAS?

### Enquirers

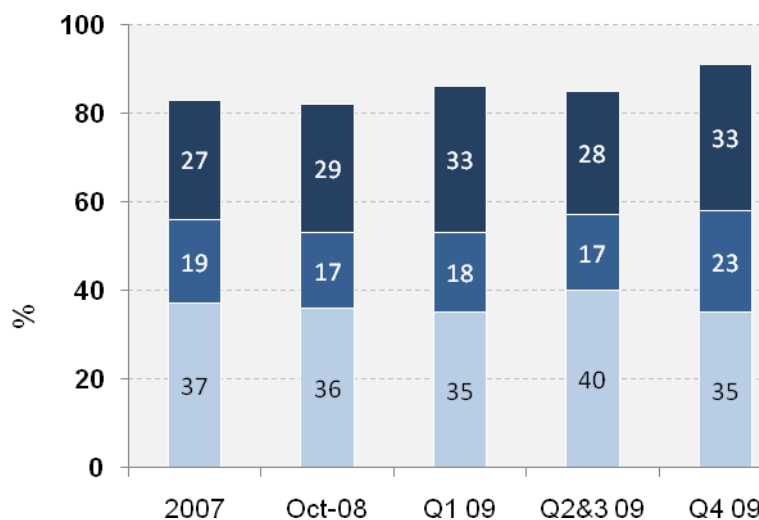


## THE CASE PROCESS

About half of all Users said that the company offered to settle their case once they knew that CISAS was involved. For the most part, the settlement was in the applicants' favour.

### Once the company knew I contacted CISAS, it settled

#### Users



Over the course of 2009, the proportion of cases involving an adjudicator has increased: approximately 2 out of 3 cases were decided this way by the end of the year.

Most applicants accepted the adjudicators' decisions, but quite often did so begrudgingly e.g.

*"The Adjudicator failed to understand my situation and did not read all the documents and made several mistakes in summing up. They completely failed to spot blatant lies told by the company. Whilst in effect I 'won' the case, the adjudicator's compensation award was pathetic. It did not even cover photocopying and postage. I would have been better off not bothering. If he is correct then Ofcom, Trading Standards, my solicitor and others are ALL wrong. It was on advice on the wording of my original complaint given to me by Ofcom that my 'stance' was based. I have always thought, when winning a case, the least one should be compensated, is one's actual costs when bringing the case, otherwise there is no point".*

*"CISAS staff were prompt and helpful. The adjudicator was in my opinion, inflexible and biased. I had no sense that my case had been objectively considered and that the judgement was unfair to me, and arbitrary".*

*"The adjudicator judged in my favour, although criticised me for not providing documented evidence of loss (which was severe but intangible) and awarded me compensation less than that offered by the company".*

Some people felt unsure about the level of compensation they could claim for, and wanted advice on this, although this is not within the remit of CISAS.

*"I was asked to state how much compensation required. Some guidance on this would be helpful. My payment covered my costs and no more. I did not ask for additional compensation for the severe inconvenience that had been caused, otherwise CISAS is excellent".*

*"In the award they made I do not believe that CISAS took sufficient account of all my costs, time and stress".*

*"I should have asked for more compensation but was not so advised, although positive ruling on small compensation was better than nothing".*

*"I did not ask for compensation, on reflection I probably should have done. Advice on this would have been helpful".*