



User Perception Survey 2026

Report (F)

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Executive Summary

Background and Objectives

The National Physical Laboratory (NPL), the UK's National Metrology Institute, commissioned a pilot User Perception Survey in late 2025. The survey was designed to explore user engagement, understand the impact of NPL's services, assess satisfaction and gather feedback on NPL's communications. The findings provide actionable insight to support NPL's ongoing role in driving UK innovation, industrial competitiveness, and national priorities.

Methodology and Response Profile

The research was conducted by Pye Tait Consulting in partnership with Qa Research (both now part of Navigator Insight) between January and March 2026. A total of 515 users participated in the research (500 via a telephone survey; 15 via an online survey), drawn from a database of NPL users spanning the previous five years.

Those participating in the research were primarily from the private sector (69%), with representation also from public services (12%), academia (10%), and government or agencies (8%). Over a third of users (36%) reported regular engagement with NPL, over at least five years, while 28% described their use as low-intensity such as making use of events and free resources.

Key Findings

Impact on users

NPL plays a significant role in supporting both operational activity and longer-term development.

- Half of users (52%) said that they have accessed calibration or reference materials, while 39% have worked directly with NPL scientists. Calibration services are particularly important for public service organisations (73%).
- The most commonly reported benefits for users are support with compliance (46%), strengthening measurement capabilities (39%), and enabling product development or improvement (37%).

Communication and accessibility

Interactions with NPL staff are consistently viewed as a strength, though aspects of accessibility and navigation present challenges for some (particularly non-regular) users.

- A large majority of users agree that information is clearly explained (88%) and that they can engage with NPL in ways that suit them (86%). Staff are widely regarded as knowledgeable, professional, and approachable.

- Around two-thirds of users (68%) find it easy to reach the right contact, whilst fewer than half (45%) feel the website was easy to navigate, these are therefore potential areas for improvement. Qualitative feedback points to difficulties experienced by some users, such as unanswered emails, being redirected between teams and a website that is not always considered to be intuitive.

Overall satisfaction

NPL is clearly held in high regard for the quality and integrity of its scientific work, although some operational and commercial aspects detract from the overall experience for a minority of users.

- The Net Promoter Score for 2026 stands at 53% which is considered in the above average range (50 or above) indicating strong customer satisfaction.
- Satisfaction with the overall service by provided by NPL is high (84%) as is satisfaction with quality (86%). NPL is widely seen as a trusted asset amongst its users.
- Whilst satisfaction is lower in relation to pricing (39%) and the timeliness of providing quotes (52%) outright dissatisfaction is extremely low (7% and 4% respectively). Some users however perceive costs as high relative to alternatives, and cited delays in administrative processes – particularly quoting and calibration turnaround.

Conclusions

The 2026 User Perception Survey confirms that NPL delivers highly valued technical expertise and scientific capability, with strong trust amongst users.

- NPL is highly valued for its technical excellence and core services, but improving accessibility, responsiveness, and clarity about service pathways could strengthen satisfaction.
- NPL has a strong and demonstrable positive impact on client outcome, particularly in technical performance and compliance. However there is potential for this impact to be enhanced through more efficient delivery and broader support.
- While NPL's communication is broadly strong, gaps in responsiveness, clarity, and navigation reduce its effectiveness. Strengthening these areas would better align communication quality with NPL's technical expertise and further build user trust.

Recommendations

The following consolidated recommendations reflect the most important, high impact actions that could deliver meaningful improvements across NPL's services.

- **Strengthen communication, responsiveness and contact pathways**

Improve the clarity, speed and reliability of communication, with defined contact routes and proactive updates. This could enhance user experience and access to expertise.

- **Improve operational efficiency**

Streamline workflows and logistics to deliver faster and more reliable turnaround times to reduce delays that can impact on user projects.

- **Enhance consistency and quality assurance**

Strengthen quality assurance and project oversight to ensure deliverables consistently meet the agreed scope, standards and user expectations.

- **Increase accessibility, transparency and support for users**

Improve visibility of services, pricing and expertise while expanding support, training and engagement opportunities to make NPL more accessible.

- **Strengthen and potentially expand the UK calibration and measurement capability portfolio**

Review whether to reinstate high-demand services while investing in emerging areas to maintain a robust, future-focused UK capability.

1. Introduction

1.1 About the National Physical Laboratory

Established in 1900, the National Physical Laboratory (NPL) is the UK's National Metrology Institute (NMI). Now operating on behalf of the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT), its role is to maintain national measurement standards (e.g. time, length, mass, etc.), ensuring that all UK measurements are accurate, consistent, and traceable to international standards. As such, it supports innovation across industries by providing accurate and reliable measurement capabilities, and contributes to the development of scientific impact.

As a cornerstone of DSIT's measurement strategy – which sets the direction for how measurement science supports innovation and national priorities by ensuring the UK has world-leading measurement capabilities¹ – NPL underpins everything from trade and regulation to cutting-edge R&D. This provides the measurement infrastructure that over 75,000 organisations rely on for calibrations and reference materials.² Operating between national competitiveness and scientific excellence, NPL plays a leading role on international committees (e.g. International Committee for Weights and Measures (CIPM)), ensuring the UK's measurements align with global standards and facilitate seamless trade.

A recent independent review of the UK Research, Development and Innovation (RDI) landscape highlighted NPL's vital function in regional development – for example, its network of innovation nodes and industry engagement programmes is explicitly designed to drive economic growth in areas from semiconductors to quantum technologies.³ It is also central to the wider National Measurement System (NMS), providing the technical bedrock upon which industries, regulators, and innovators can rely with confidence. In this role, NPL does not simply generate high-quality science, but translates measurement expertise into value across the economy, in support of government policy priorities (such as the Measurement for Business programme). This programme allows innovative SMEs to access specialist measurement science thus supporting industrial competitiveness, public health, and the transition to net zero.⁴

With this expansive reach across the scientific community, NPL's engaged stakeholders are particularly diverse, with key groups and roles including, for example:

- Large industrial clients such as Rolls-Royce in aerospace, BAE Systems in defence, and AstraZeneca in pharmaceuticals which depend on NPL for precision calibration and confidence in their processes,

¹ DSIT/BEIS, [UK Measurement Strategy 2022](#), 2022

² Katanguru, D.R. and King, M, [Assessing the reach and impact of the NMS laboratories on UK private sector businesses](#), 2024

³ Nurse, P., [Independent Review of the UK's Research, Development and Innovation Organisational Landscape](#), 2023

⁴ NPL, [NPL annual report and accounts 2024](#), 2025

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- SMEs, including companies supported through programmes like Measurement for Business and Measurement for Recovery, who often engage with NPL to overcome specific technical barriers or to validate innovation,
 - Regulators and government departments, such as the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), who rely on its impartial expertise to shape evidence-based policy and to maintain public trust in critical areas such as health, environment, and safety, and
 - Academic collaborators draw on NPL's knowledge and facilities to advance joint research and train the next generation of measurement scientists.⁵
 - Commercial calibration laboratories.

Organisations also turn to NPL because it provides impartial, internationally recognised measurement traceability, world-class facilities, and expertise that bridges research and industry.

1.2 Importance of Effective User Engagement

While NPL has a central role in supporting UK innovation and standards, its wide-ranging remit and diverse client base can create challenges that must be addressed to ensure services are fully effective and deliver maximum impact for all its audiences' needs. One such challenge lies in its multiplicity of client groups and diversity of its stakeholder base. Large industrial clients, SMEs, regulators, academic partners and calibration laboratories all have varying expectations, ways of working, and definitions of "value." Without structured evidence, it is therefore challenging to evaluate how NPL's services meet various needs, or to spot gaps in accessibility, responsiveness, or perceived benefit.

Moreover, this means that communication must be clear, relevant, and actionable. NPL's core staff are predominantly technical specialists, though many of its clients – such as SMEs – require accessible and actionable information. Without assessing the effectiveness of communication and interactions, NPL risks creating barriers to engagement that limit client satisfaction and trust.

Rapid digitalisation across industry and government also means that clients increasingly expect seamless digital access to services, from calibration certificates delivered in machine-readable formats to online platforms for data sharing and reporting. NPL's Corporate Plan 2023-2027 emphasises the importance of integrating digital processes to meet the needs of a modern, data-driven economy.⁶ For some clients, these digital advances make NPL's expertise more accessible, but for others, the transition could risk creating barriers if systems are perceived as complex, inconsistent, or not aligned with their needs. Understanding how different customer groups experience digital interactions will help inform strategic policy and decision making in platforms or processes to support engagement.

At the same time, sectoral pressures are mounting as industries push towards decarbonisation and net zero. For example, while the UK is investing heavily in hydrogen

⁵ NPL, [Written evidence submitted by the National Physical Laboratory \(NPL\) \(IHR0061\)](#), 2025

production, storage, and distribution, the underpinning measurement science is still evolving, creating risks for safety, trade, and investment. NPL's recent report on hydrogen measurement challenges highlights the urgent need for new methods across the entire value chain, from production to end-use.⁷ Developing these capabilities demands R&D effort and long-term partnerships, potentially stretching NPL's resources in a period of rising client expectations. To date NPL have not undertaken any user satisfaction surveys of this scale, and previous research has been undertaken at organisation level rather than at individual level. Therefore, this user perception survey plays a key role in addressing this information gap.

2. Aims, Objectives and Methodology

2.1 Aims and Objectives

Currently, NPL does not have a systematic mechanism for capturing and acting on user feedback across its varied services. This potentially limits opportunities for continuous improvement and can slow adaption to changing expectations or emerging sectoral challenges – as detailed above. NPL therefore commissioned this pilot research to understand how its services are perceived and the value it delivers for users.

Objectives of this research:

- Assess user engagement and satisfaction – to determine how effectively NPL is perceived to connect with users, where expectations are being met, and where improvements may be needed.
- Measure impact on user outcomes – to provide evidence of the tangible benefits NPL delivers, from cost savings to accelerated innovation, strengthening its case for continued investment.
- Evaluate the quality of communication and interactions with NPL staff – to ensure that technical excellence is matched by clarity and responsiveness, building trust across all users.
- Gather actionable feedback – to create and build a mechanism for continuous improvement, enabling NPL to adapt its services and remain indispensable to the UK's innovation and measurement system.

This commission is about capturing the difference that NPL makes for those it serves, in order to truly ensure the efficacy of its services and identify what it can do differently as user needs evolve. Considerations from this pilot study will also feed into the feasibility of similar, future studies to assess change over time.

2.2 Methodology

In December 2025, NPL commissioned Pye Tait Consulting, in partnership with Qa Research (Qa) to conduct a survey of its users. A database of 9,316 contacts with populated telephone numbers was shared with the researchers by NPL, comprising individuals that had either worked with NPL or contacted NPL over the preceding five years.

NPL posted information about the research onto its website to encourage engagement and distributed a warm-up email to a portion of the sample.

NPL, Pye Tait and Qa worked together to design the survey questionnaire, which was piloted with 50 users before the full wave of calls commenced.

Between 12 January and 4 March 2026, Qa completed 500 telephone (CATI) survey interviews with users (this includes the pilot 50 which were all useable cases). In total 4,308 records were used to achieve the target, achieving a response rate of 12% for the CATI survey. A random sampling method was adopted; no quotas were set as the survey aimed to explore what the natural fall out of responses would be given this was the first survey of its kind with NPL users. On average the survey took ten minutes to complete (CATI) and a copy of the question-set can be found in Appendix 1.

An online version of the survey was also set up and made available to those that did not wish to take part in a CATI survey but said they would be happy to self-complete a response online. The online survey link was also emailed to all contacts where phone numbers were not recognised/accurate and cases where the call had not been answered after an agreed number of attempts (14). The online survey was sent to a total of 1,291 contacts and 15 responses were received, achieving a response rate of 1%.

Combining CATI and online methods, **515 survey responses** were achieved.

NPL supports individuals working within a wide range of sectors. Table 1 also shows the type of organisation survey NPL users work for:

Table 1: Respondent organisation type

	Count	%
Private sector	355	69%
Public services	64	12%
Academia	50	10%
Government / Government agencies	38	8%
Third sector	7	1%

Based on NPL's population of users relative to the achieved survey response of 515, we can be 95% confident that our research findings have a potential variance (margin of error) of no more than plus or minus 5%. Quantitative data was analysed using Askia software and statistical significance testing was conducted using appropriate inferential methods. When commentary refers to 'significant' differences between sub-groups these are statistically significant differences.

Base sizes are included for all charts and tables, and caution should be taken when interpreting the results for cases where base-sizes are small.

Open-text analysis

The survey questionnaire included several free text questions, some of which sought follow-up comments from NPL users in response to preceding ordinal/Likert-scale question responses. In some cases, a single open-text question sought feedback in relation to ratings from multiple preceding statements.

To prepare the analysis, open question responses were filtered by those agreeing to all linked preceding statements, those disagreeing to all linked preceding statements, and those agreeing to some and disagreeing to others. This allowed comments to be examined in the context of the sentiment expressed from those preceding statements, including base numbers.

Thematic analysis was then conducted for each sub question in turn. The process involved:

- Manually reviewing all relevant comments associated with each rating category.
- Identifying recurring ideas, concerns or explanations provided by respondents.
- Grouping similar responses into preliminary themes.
- Refining themes to ensure they accurately represented the underlying patterns in the data.
- Selecting illustrative quotes that best captured the essence of each theme for inclusion in the report.

This approach ensured that qualitative insights complemented the perceptual ratings and provided deeper understanding of respondents' experiences.

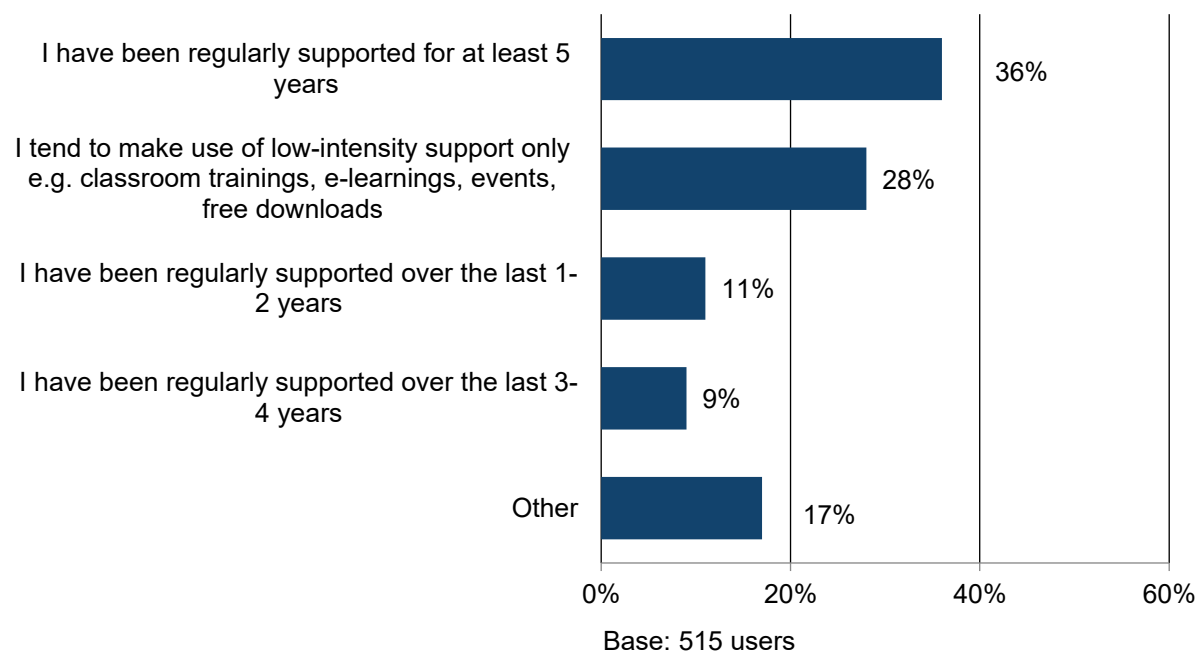
A limitation of the open-ended question analysis relates to the use of single open-ended comment boxes following on from preceding questions containing multiple statements. This meant it was not possible in some cases to determine precisely which linked statement a respondent's open-ended response related to. However, sentiment and thematic analysis allowed appropriate grouping of comments, with findings presented cautiously where attribution to particular preceding statements was unclear.

3. Engagement with NPL

3.1 Individual engagement with NPL

NPL users were asked to describe their individual engagement with NPL. As shown in Figure 1, 36% had been regularly supported for at least five years, while a further 28% noted that they had only used the low-intensity support provided by NPL.

Figure 1: Individual engagement with NPL

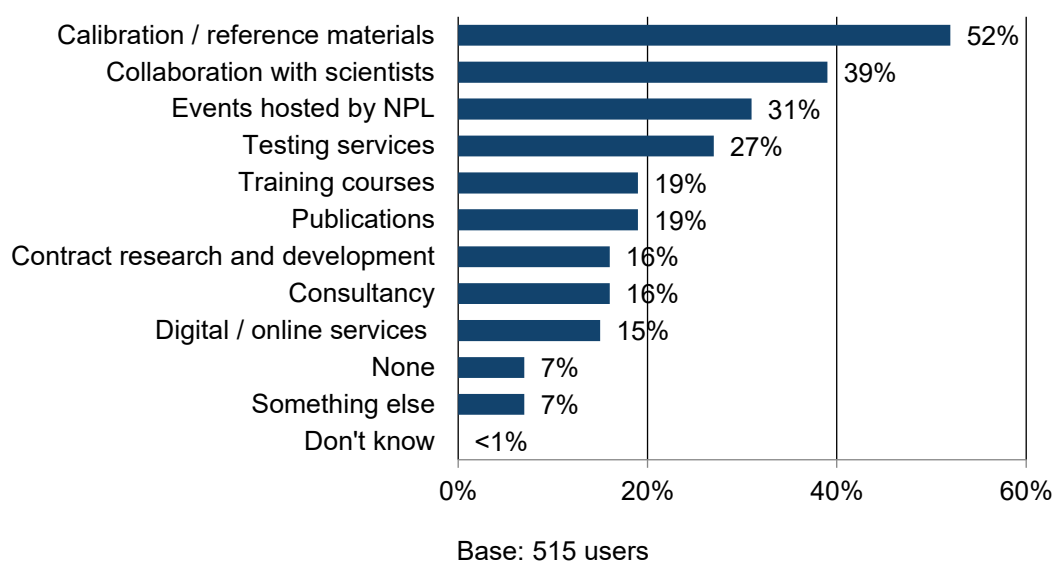


Respondents stating 'Other' described cases where people used to be supported but no longer were; cases where users had sporadic or one-off (rather than regular) support; and some cases where users were suppliers for NPL.

3.2 NPL products and services accessed

NPL users were asked which products and services they used between 2020 and 2025. As Figure 2 shows, just over half (52%) used calibration/reference materials, and 39% collaborated with scientists. Around a third (31%) attended events hosted by NPL. Digital/online services, consultancy, and contract research/development had the lowest uptake at 15% and 16%, respectively.

Figure 2: NPL products and services accessed between 2020 and 2025 (multiple-response question)



Organisations within public services were significantly more likely than those in the private sector (50%) and academia (40%) to report using calibration/reference materials (73%). Those within academia were significantly more likely to have collaborated with scientists (58%) than those within the private sector (37%) or public services (25%).

A small minority of 7% of users had used 'something else' in terms of an NPL product or service. This included support linked to grant funding/applications; audit; imaging and quotations. Those that answered 'none' (7%) largely consisted of those that had brief one-off/sporadic engagement with NPL or had low recall of interactions. Some users had made enquiries/requested quotes that had not proceeded further into working with NPL. A small number of those answering 'none' were suppliers to NPL.

3.3 How NPL has supported individuals in their work

NPL users were asked whether and how working with NPL had helped or supported them across a range of areas. As shown in Figure 3, support to comply with standards was the most frequent response (46%), followed by development of measurement capabilities (39%) and development of or improving new products (37%). Users were least likely to have had support with establishing spin-out companies (2%) or intellectual property rights (4%).

Figure 3: How working with NPL has helped/supported individuals (*multiple response question*)



Users that answered 'something else' (8%) included cases where users had been supported with calibration services; other testing services and other research/analysis services.

Those that answered 'none' (10%) tended to be users that had sporadic or one-off engagement with NPL (e.g. attending a workshop several years ago; requesting a quote only) therefore they had limited recall or experience to draw on when thinking about potential benefits of the interactions.

Users from public service organisations were significantly more likely to report having support from NPL on compliance with standards (72%) compared to users within other sectors. In terms of the primary scientific focus of organisations, those within the field of medical marine and nuclear, and atmospheric environmental science were significantly more likely to have had support on compliance with standards (63%, 62% respectively).

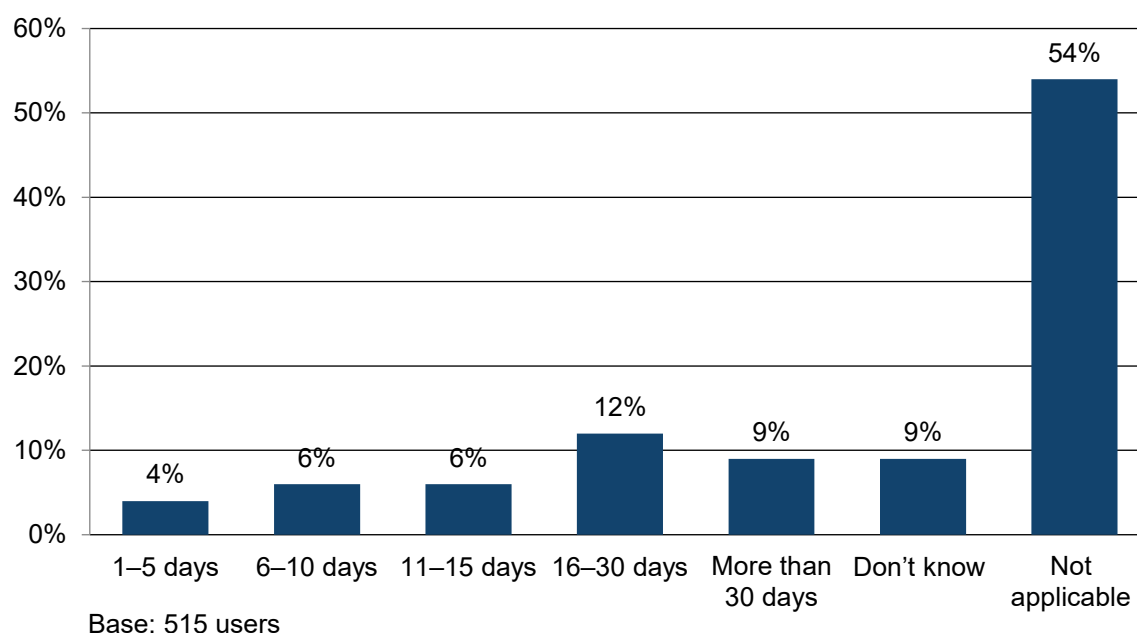
4. Calibration

As part of the survey, users were asked how many business days it takes to receive calibrated equipment back from NPL.

As shown in Figure 4, many users stated this question was not applicable to them (54%) and 9% gave a 'don't know' response. Of those for whom this applied and could give an answer, the highest proportion of users stated it takes 16-30 days to receive calibrated equipment back (12%).

For context, whilst it actually takes an average of two weeks to return equipment,⁶ the time taken to receive calibrated equipment back does vary depending on the type of calibration and specific service requested, therefore a variation in responses was to be expected for this question.

Figure 4: How many business days it takes to receive calibrated equipment back from NPL



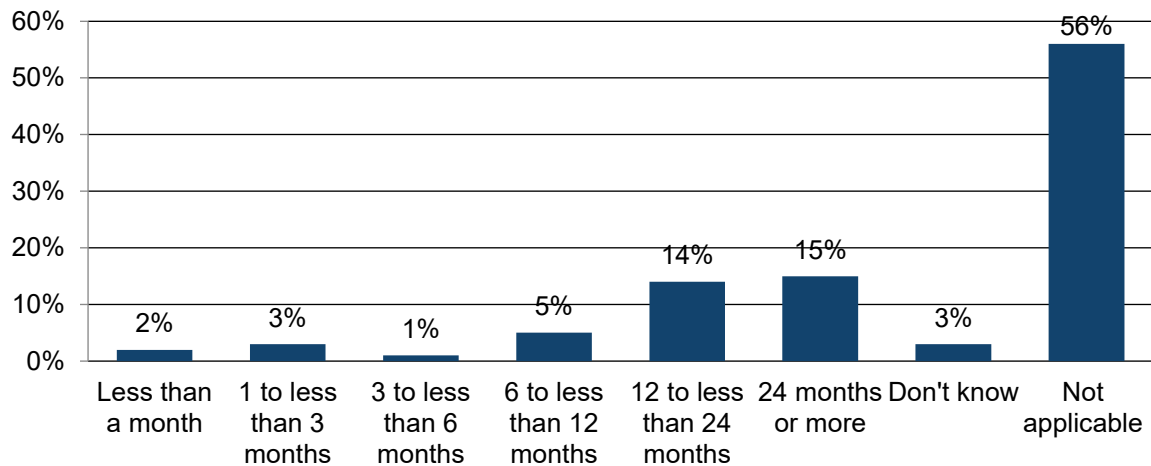
Users were also asked for the standard calibration cycle for equipment sent to NPL. Whilst the NPL website states annual calibration is a common practice,⁷ the calibration cycle can be shorter or longer depending on instrument type, regulatory requirements and how the equipment is used. A range in responses was therefore again to be expected for this question.

⁶ [Electrometer calibrations - NPL](#)

⁷ [Calibration - NPL](#)

Over half of users stated this question was not applicable to them (56%) or answered, 'don't know' (3%). The largest proportions of users stated the standard calibration cycle for their equipment would be 12 to less than 24 months (14%) and 24 months or more (15%).

Figure 5: Standard calibration cycle for equipment sent to NPL



Base: 515 users

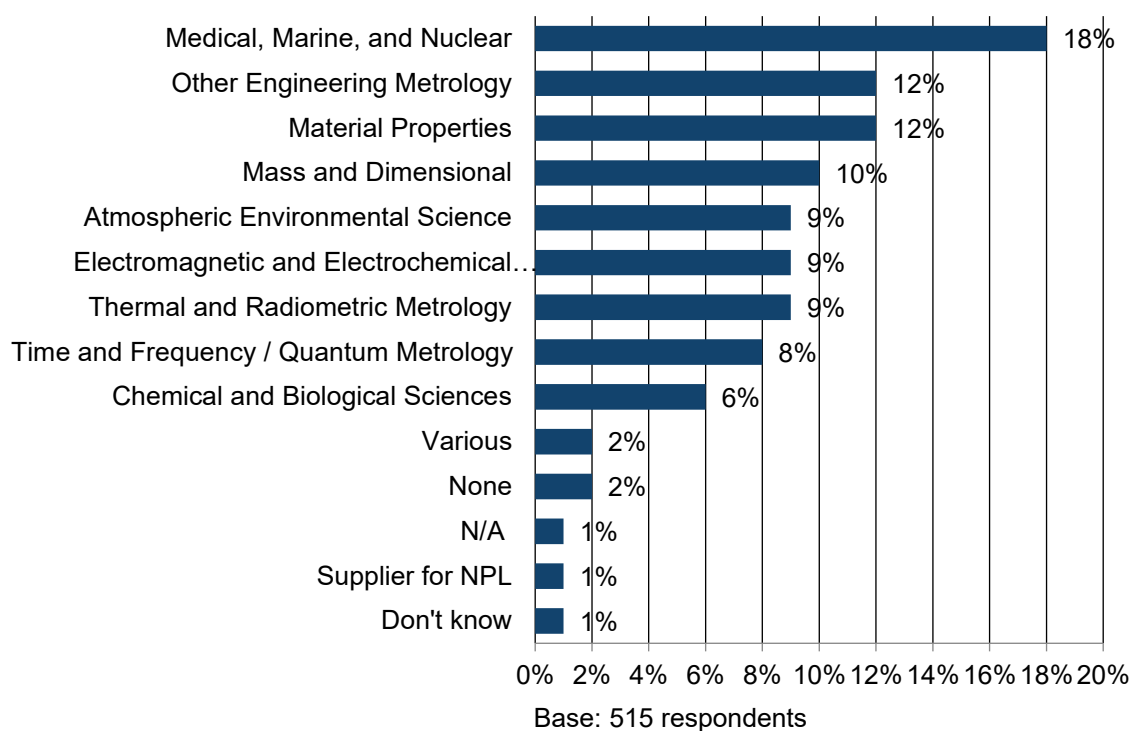
5. Measurement activities and challenges

5.1 Primary focus of measurement activities

Users were asked which scientific areas represent the primary focus of their measurement activities when working with NPL.

For almost a fifth of NPL users (18%) the primary focus was 'Medical, Marine, and Nuclear', for 12% this was 'Other Engineering Metrology' and 'Material Properties'. For one in ten (10%) this was 'Mass and Dimensional'.

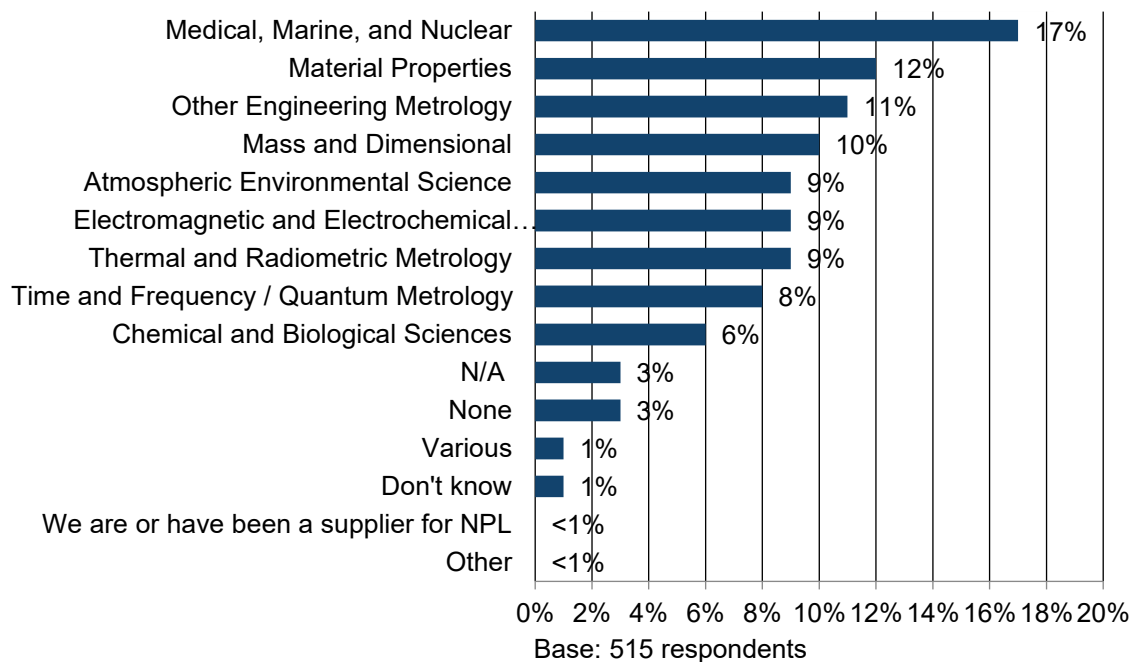
Figure 6: Primary focus of measurement activities



5.2 Greatest measurement challenges

NPL users were also asked which scientific area presents the greatest measurement challenge where they require support. As shown below, the most widely cited measurement challenges for those responding to the survey are 'Medical, Marine, and Nuclear' (17%); 'Material Properties' (12%) and 'Other Engineering Metrology' (11%).

Figure 7: Greatest measurement challenge

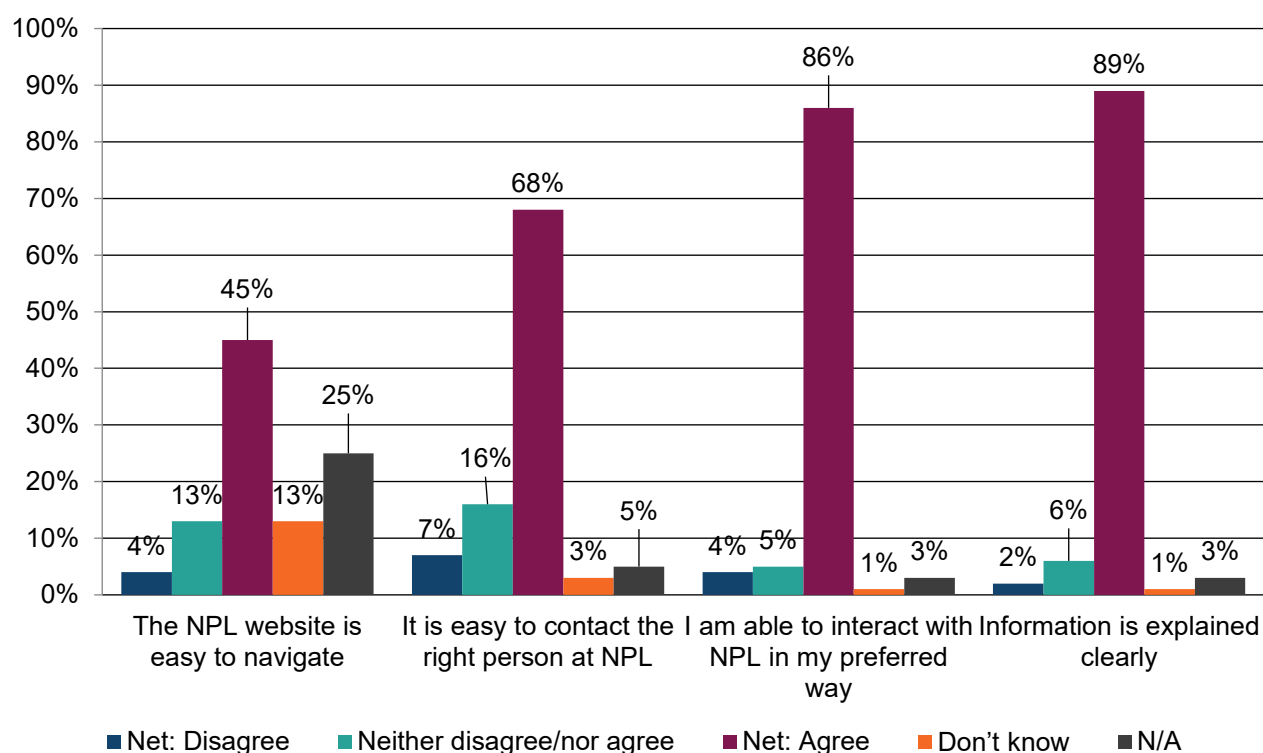


6. Communication with NPL

NPL users were asked the extent to which they agree or disagree with a number of statements relating to communication with NPL.

Overall, NPL users were most likely to agree that information was explained clearly (89%), and that they were able to interact with NPL in their preferred way (86%). Users were slightly less likely to agree that it was easy to contact the right person at NPL (68%) or that the NPL website was easy to navigate (45%), however 25% did state that this was 'not applicable', suggesting that they may not use the website. Levels of disagreement were below 10% for each of the statements.

Figure 8: Views on communication with NPL



Base: 515 users

In terms of being able to contact the right person at NPL, those users that tended to make use of low intensity support only were least likely to agree with this statement (55%), with significantly higher levels of agreement expressed amongst regular users. This is likely to reflect regular users having a named contact at NPL.

NPL users expressing agreement or disagreement to at least one of these statements, were asked for their reasons. This was a general question and not asked in relation to each

statement in turn, although the analysis – below – draws out views in relation to each of the four statements in turn.

‘Information is explained clearly’

Supporting comments from users who strongly agree/agree (base: 456 users)

Most users appear to have strong confidence in the clarity and quality of information provided by NPL. Many mentioned that NPL staff communicate technical concepts effectively and present complex material in a straightforward way. Some users singled out written outputs from NPL such as reports and project communications as being clear, transparent and well structured, particularly in relation to objectives and outcomes. Several users described staff as being professional, knowledgeable and clear in their communications, which they feel supports productive collaboration and smooth project delivery. Others emphasised that NPL staff are generally enthusiastic, helpful, and willing to share their expertise, which contributes to a positive experience when receiving information or guidance.

“We’ve used the training services and found it very good and very high quality. It’s very convenient because it’s modular.”

Private sector user

“The work on Quantum computing and communications is not yet in our engineering curriculum, but seeing the exhibits at the NPL Open Days has increased my understanding in these new and important areas.”

Academic user

Supporting comments from users who strongly disagree/disagree (base: 10 users)

Among this small minority of users, concerns were expressed about the clarity and quality of information provided by NPL. Some noted that scientific staff do not always communicate technical details effectively, making it difficult to understand the information being shared. In a small number of cases, information received is described as “messy” or in an “unacceptable state”, which can reduce its usefulness and create additional work for the user.

‘It is easy to contact the right person at NPL’

Supporting comments from users who strongly agree/agree (base: 351 users)

NPL users who find it easy to contact and reach the right person at NPL generally report positive experiences, with many of the view that communication is smooth and straightforward. Numerous comments point to staff being helpful, accessible, and quick to reply, contributing to efficient interactions across projects and services. Long-standing

relationships are frequently mentioned as a strong enabler of easy contact, with some users emphasising that having an established point of contact ensures fast and reliable communication.

“We have had the same contact at NPL for many years now and they are always quick on communication. They let us know when calibration is available and are very quick in getting back to us.”

Private sector user

Several users praised the clarity of communication once connected, specifically that queries are handled professionally and that NPL staff are knowledgeable and supportive. Many consider staff to be approachable and collaborative, with interactions characterised by responsiveness and clear information sharing.

“We were given a project co-ordinator who is outstanding for his ability to make sure everyone is delivering material on time. The way that NPL has organised project management and communications is very good.”

Private sector user

A smaller number of users agreeing to this question did also indicate occasional challenges. These include difficulties identifying the correct individual, uncertainty about whether they had reached the right person, and instances where staff contact details proved hard to find.

Supporting comments from users who strongly disagree/disagree (base: 42 users)

This small cohort of users described instances of slow or non-responses to emails, difficulty reaching staff through available contact routes, and “long delays” when using the website or email forms. Several mentioned having been passed between departments without clear direction or receiving no reply at all. A recurring theme is a lack of clear contact information, with some saying that phone numbers and direct email addresses can be hard to find, making it difficult to identify the appropriate expert or department.

Several of these users expressed frustration with the time involved in making contact with the right person, describing initial communications as slow, or needing to follow up multiple times or switch to phone calls where email attempts are not successful. Others said that once the correct person is finally reached, communication usually improves, but that the process of getting there can be “inefficient” or “time consuming”. Additional comments point to structural issues, such as reliance on a single point of contact, changes in NPL staff, or scientists being unavailable due to workload.

“It can be difficult getting hold of scientists as they are always extremely busy and often in their laboratory.”

Private sector user

‘The NPL website is easy to navigate’**Supporting comments from users who strongly agree/agree (base: 232 users)**

Many NPL users find the website to be easy to use, noting that they can locate the information they need without difficulty and that the layout feels “intuitive” or “inviting”. Some described the website as well organised and containing useful resources that are simple to access, particularly where they are already familiar with the content or know what they are looking for. For others, the website complements their existing relationships with NPL, enabling them to confirm details or gather background information efficiently before engaging directly with staff.

“The website looks inviting and is well laid out.”

Government/Government agencies user

Supporting comments from users who strongly disagree/disagree (base: 23 users)

Among this minority of users, a general comment is that they find the website difficult to use, saying it is overcomplicated, poorly signposted, or lacking a clear flow. A small minority said they frequently struggle to locate key information such as NPL staff contact details, service descriptions, specialist resources, or previously available materials such as conference content and good practice guides. Another reported challenge is that the website in their view contains a large volume of information but is not necessarily structured in a way that makes it easy to find what they need. Several also mentioned spelling errors, outdated content, or missing information, which further undermines their confidence in the site’s reliability.

“The website is just a wall of words.”

Private sector user

A further recurring theme from this small cohort is that the website does not always help when trying to identify the right person or department to contact, describing the site as “not informative,” or “hard to navigate”. Others mentioned needing to contact multiple people or resort to phone calls after the website failed to guide them effectively.

‘I am able to interact with NPL in my preferred way’**Supporting comments from users who strongly agree/agree (base: 445 users)**

Many users described being able to interact with NPL in ways they like best, emphasising smooth, flexible, and effective communication across different channels. Email is frequently praised as a reliable and convenient method, with several users noting quick responses, clear information, and helpful exchanges. Others appreciate being able to speak directly with

known contacts, whether through phone calls, Teams meetings, or in-person discussions, which makes communication straightforward and personalised.

“A particular member of staff was hugely helpful – they transformed the project. It was a helpful email interaction!”

Private sector user

Long-standing relationships play a strong role in positive experiences. Those who regularly work with NPL feel that interactions are easy, describing direct contacts as responsive and supportive. Some also value one-to-one meetings and ongoing collaboration, which allows them to engage with NPL in a way that suits their workflow.

“I have personally interacted with [NPL] for over 40 years and we're reliant on them. They deliver a quality service.”

Public services user

Other points of note are that communication with NPL is generally “smooth”, “professional” and “well organised”, regardless of the channel used. These users praised NPL staff as approachable, helpful, and technically knowledgeable, enabling them to access the information they need through their preferred method of contact.

Supporting comments from users who strongly disagree/disagree (base: 20 users)

A small cohort of users described barriers when trying to interact with NPL through their preferred communication channels. A recurring issue here is slow or absent responses, with several reporting that emails may go unanswered, updates are not always provided, or that they had to chase NPL staff multiple times without success. Some described needing to contact numerous people before receiving any information, while others said they never received a reply at all.

“Having tried email correspondence as a first choice and then getting no reply, I resorted to telephone and got passed around. I did not know who to speak to.”

Private sector user

Several users mentioned that it can be difficult to identify or reach the right individual, where direct contact details not always available. This can result in users being passed between departments, relying on generic email addresses that do not always lead to the correct team member, or struggling to reach technical specialists who are “frequently unavailable” or lab-based.

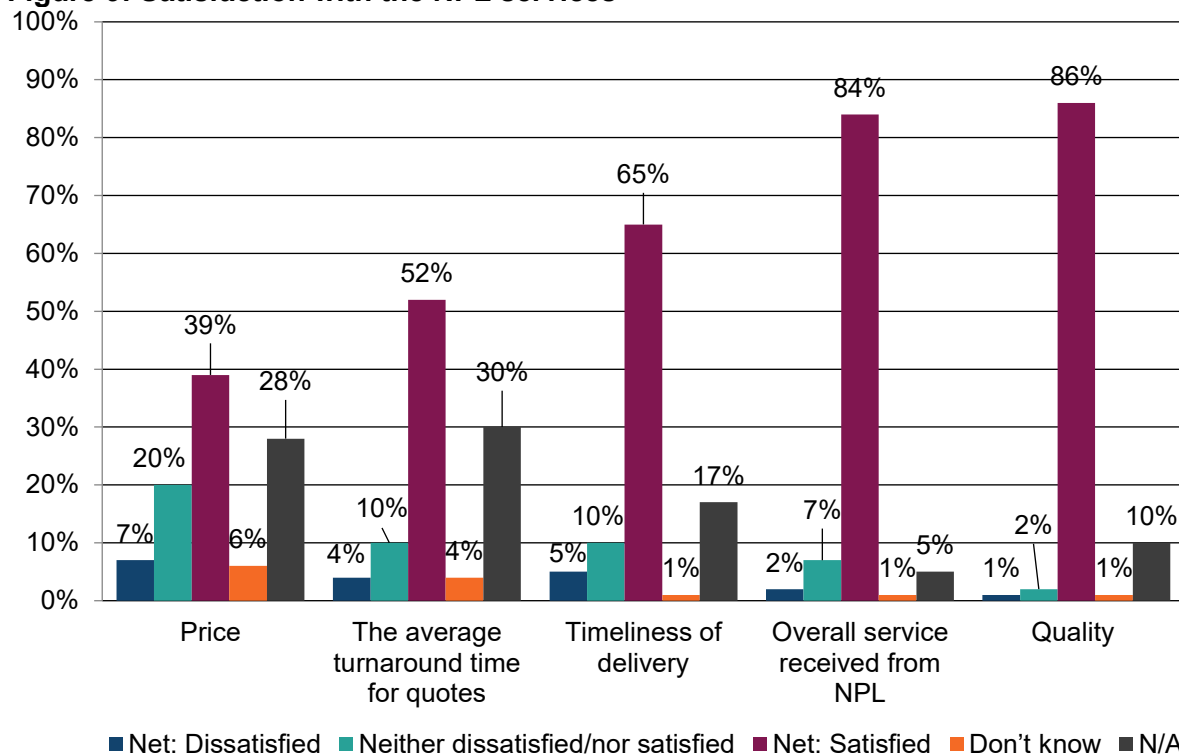
A small minority mentioned what they perceive as structural or cultural barriers, such as NPL’s focus on internal standards or commercial priorities, which they feel can lead to slow engagement or lack of responsiveness.

7. Satisfaction with NPL

NPL users were also asked to rate their satisfaction with NPL in relation to a range of factors. Overall, 86% of users were satisfied with the quality of the service from NPL and 84% were satisfied with the overall service; 65% were satisfied with the timeliness of delivery.

Just over half (52%) were satisfied with the average turnaround time for quotes; however, 30% stated that this option did not apply to them. Users were least likely to be satisfied with the price (39%) although 28% did select this as 'not applicable' to them. Very few NPL users expressed dissatisfaction, less than 10% for each factor.

Figure 9: Satisfaction with the NPL services



Base: 515 users

There were no clear trends in levels of satisfaction according to organisation type or primary activity.

Again users were invited to provide further comments which are summarised in the remainder of this section.

‘Overall service received from NPL’**Supporting comments from users answering very satisfied/satisfied (base: 435 users)**

Users frequently praised NPL’s technical expertise, equipment and scientific capability, describing it as excellent and reliable. Several mentioned that NPL delivers high quality results, supports rigorous research, and provides valuable academic and technical input.

“The range of equipment and expert users at NPL facilitates excellent research and high-quality results.”

Academic user

Positive comments also emphasise NPL’s professional, helpful and knowledgeable staff, with users appreciating clear communication, useful discussions and supportive interactions. Many described their experiences as smooth, straightforward, and well managed, with NPL staff taking a genuine interest in helping users to succeed.

Several users also praised NPL’s swift turnaround times, clearly defined responsibilities, and consistently good service once the right contact is established. Training and webinars are also singled out as high quality, trustworthy, and beneficial.

Long standing users in particular report consistently positive experiences, citing a dependable service, strong collaborative approach, and confidence in NPL’s capabilities. Some described NPL as a “great asset to the UK” and valued the reassurance that comes from working with a nationally recognised centre of excellence.

“We know it's trustworthy and high-quality because it's NPL. Great to provide proof that our staff have had good training because of brand recognition. NPL is a name that customers recognise”

Private sector user

Supporting comments from users answering very dissatisfied/dissatisfied (base: 13 users)

Among this small minority group of users, users reiterated concerns previously raised, including poor or inconsistent communication (including unanswered emails), slow response times, or difficulty reaching the appropriate person. Several commented on long turnaround times, particularly for quotes, calibration work, or technical responses. Users said that lead times could extend to many weeks, and delays sometimes disrupted project timelines, meant projects could not proceed, or required users to seek alternative providers.

Many of these users perceive NPL’s services to be significantly more expensive than competitors, with some describing prices as prohibitively high or having unexpectedly

increased. A small number of users mentioned being billed for work that could not be completed or experienced what they referred to as a “miscommunication” around pricing. A similarly small minority of users raised concerns about service quality or delivery, citing missed deadlines, work that did not meet expectations, or outputs that were off-scope or poorly delivered. Others mentioned operational issues such as unavailable services during lab rebuilds or variability once work was passed between departments.

‘Timeliness of delivery’

Supporting comments from users answering very satisfied/satisfied (base: 337 users)

Many users are complimentary about NPL’s timely and efficient delivery, mentioning that when services progressed smoothly, they found that turnaround times met or exceeded expectations. Users described swift turnarounds, with responsibilities clearly defined and work delivered as agreed. Some commented that information and quotes are generally provided promptly, with a few emphasising that NPL “always responds quickly” and that communication is consistently timely and reliable.

“Every time we have spoken to NPL, there has been excellent response and interactions. Their team focused on our requirements and delivered what we needed.”

Government / Government agencies user

Several users said that once they were connected with the correct person or team, responses and delivery proceeded as expected, with work completed at an appropriate pace and in line with project needs. Others noted that although NPL operates in a busy environment, they generally receive what they need when they need it, and that any delays are minor or quickly resolved when raised.

Several users also praised NPL for providing quick replies, timely feedback, and prompt information, describing interactions as efficient and well managed. In some cases, NPL’s responsiveness is understood to help keep projects moving, even when initial information might be limited.

“We always get quotes quickly and [stated] lead times are accurate.”

Private sector users

“[NPL is] better than most commercial organisations because they haven’t dived into answering a limited range of questions using AI and blocking further inquiry”

Third sector user

Supporting comments from users answering very dissatisfied/dissatisfied (base: 30 users)

Delays are the most common concern raised by this small cohort of users, specifically turnaround times for calibration, equipment return, quotations, and deliverables sometimes taking significantly longer than expected. A minority of users described waiting many weeks and occasionally months for work to be completed, certificates to be issued, or quotes to arrive.

“[During the] Initial setup of the lab [it] took forever to get equipment from NPL... It has been fine since it has been set up.”

Academic user

In some cases, work took far longer than originally estimated, deliverables arrived late or off schedule, or services were unavailable due to internal issues such as lab rebuilds. A small minority reiterated that delays caused them to miss deadlines, lose funding opportunities, or having to abandon projects altogether.

‘Quality’**Supporting comments from users answering very satisfied/satisfied (base: 442 users)**

Many users praised the overall quality of service provided by NPL, highlighting consistently high technical standards, excellent scientific expertise, and reliable outcomes once the correct contact or team was engaged. These users described NPL’s work as “brilliant,” “first rate,” and “faultless,” noting that NPL delivers high-quality results, trustworthy training, and strong technical support that adds credibility to their own work.

“[It is] the best equipment for us to get access to and they also they have good scientists to support us from an academic perspective. Comparing with other companies we know, we can get very good results with a reasonable price.”

Private sector user

Several users emphasised positive experiences with knowledgeable, responsive staff who provide clear information, enable helpful discussions, and services that meet expectations. Even when turnaround times or prices are noted as challenges, many still say they are satisfied with the quality delivered, describing NPL as a top-tier organisation whose reputation, precision, and traceability justify the investment.

“The quality of technical expertise is faultless, the facilities are ideal.”

Private sector user

“[We’ve had] helpful discussions with NPL staff. No big collaborations yet but conversations with them have been beneficial.”

Academic user

Supporting comments from users answering very dissatisfied/dissatisfied (base: 6 users)

A small minority of users expressed concerns about the quality of service received from NPL, highlighting issues such as poor communication, unmet expectations, and work that did not align with what was initially agreed. Some repeated earlier comments, not having received replies to enquiries or experiencing slow responses that hindered progress.

“We found deliverables weren’t on time [or] to the agreed schedule. The quality [was] not as promised. It was off topic/out of scope and poorly delivered.”

Private sector user

Others in this small cohort described situations where NPL was unable to deliver the full calibration or service originally promised, yet still issued charges, or where the final results did not align with what was promised at the outset. A small number of users commented that deliverables were not provided to the agreed standard, arriving off scope, poorly executed, or lacking the expected level of understanding from the consultant involved.

‘Price’

Supporting comments from users answering very satisfied/satisfied (base: 205 users)

Users generally expressed positive views about the price of NPL’s services, noting that although costs can be high, the quality, expertise, and traceability make the service good value. Some described NPL as “reassuringly expensive,” emphasising that the price reflects the organisation’s technical excellence, specialist capabilities, and the confidence that comes with working with a nationally recognised body.

“It’s a high price but we’re paying for quality, it’s reassuringly expensive.”

Private sector

Others highlighted that training offered by NPL is high quality and well-priced, providing strong value and credibility for staff development. Some mentioned that prices were fair or competitive for the level of service received, and that NPL’s reputation and accuracy justify the investment.

"We pay for quality, we know we can come to NPL and talk to someone who knows about topics we're interested in, which gives us confidence in the service."

Private sector user

Supporting comments from users answering very dissatisfied/dissatisfied (base: 34 users)

Of the 7% dissatisfied with pricing, the main concern is high cost compared with competitors offering similar work at what they see as a smaller cost.

Several said that NPL's charges exceeded internal spending thresholds, forced them to seek alternative providers, or that it can make it difficult for smaller organisations and early-stage innovators to afford essential calibration or research support. A small number observed that prices had risen sharply, "with increases of over 14% or more," whilst a minority of others described quotes as "outrageously expensive," "unrealistic," or "four times higher than overseas suppliers."

"The cost can stop us from getting things calibrated as it has to make fiscal sense."

Government/Government agencies user

'Average turnaround time for quotes'

Supporting comments from users answering very satisfied/satisfied (base: 270 users)

Users generally find that quotes are delivered promptly, clearly, and within expected timeframes. Many highlighted that NPL is quick to reply, with some receiving quotes on the same day or within a reliable window. They appreciate the transparency around timescales, the clarity of proposals, and the ease of working with staff who communicate well and keep them informed.

"They are really quick and efficient. I have asked for quotes recently and they got back to me on the same day."

Public services user

Some emphasised that once the right contact is established, the process generally becomes smooth and efficient, with quotes arriving on time and supporting timely planning.

Supporting comments from users answering very dissatisfied/dissatisfied (base: 19 users)

Of the 4% dissatisfied with the turnaround time for quotes, the main comments are that quotes are slow, inconsistent, and can be difficult to navigate. Several reported waiting weeks for quotes, with some saying requests were passed between multiple departments or individuals who appeared to lack the necessary context, leading to delays and conflicting information. Others mentioned quotes being received after purchasing deadlines and that having only one point of contact could slow things down further. Occasional consequences have reportedly included missed funding opportunities and stalled projects.

"It is not the quickest turnaround we have compared to other calibration labs; I would prefer it to be less than 30 days."

Private sector user

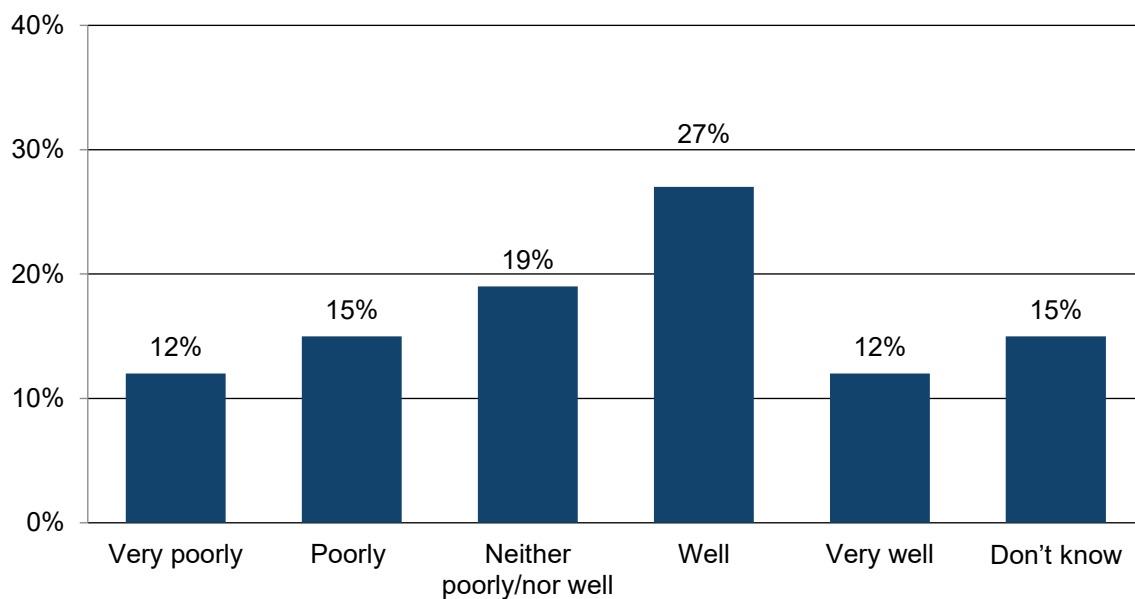
8. Experiences of problems with NPL

Less than one in ten users (8%) had experienced a problem with NPL in the last year.

Of those that had experienced a problem, two-thirds (67%) had contacted NPL about this, 33% had not.

Figure 10 shows how well users felt these problems were handled by NPL. These results are based on a small sample of 26 so are indicative only. Almost four in ten felt the problems were handled well – 27% stating the problem was handled ‘well’ and 12% ‘very well’. Around a quarter of users felt their problem was not handled well – 15% ‘poorly’ and 12% ‘very poorly’. Of the seven users who felt that their problem was handled poorly, six of these were from private sector organisations.

Figure 10: How well problems were handled by NPL



Base: 26 users (those that had contacted NPL about a problem they had experienced)

9. Improvements and Further Support

9.1 Further Services

Users were asked if there was anything that their organisation would value that was currently missing from NPL's range of services. Overall, 22% described services that they felt were missing.

Among this minority of users of the view that something is missing from NPL's services, there is a call for the return of discontinued services such as:

- acoustic calibration
- ambient air auditing
- gas flow calibration
- spectral radiant intensity

There is also a call for new or strengthened capabilities in:

- high-current and high-voltage calibration
- ultra-low current and XPS
- optical radiation
- refractive index measurement
- microfluidics
- biological analysis
- quantum metrology
- fusion-relevant testing
- vibration testing
- combined measurement fields

Several organisations stressed that maintaining a comprehensive UK based calibration portfolio is essential, and that losing long-standing services forces them to find alternatives overseas.

"For the past 30 years Spectral Radiant Intensity has been available and now we are told it is off the list, so this leaves us somewhat stranded. Sadly, we are looking overseas to get a one stop shop i.e. we want to take all of calibrations to the same place."

Private sector user

Other suggestions (from most to least cited) relate to the following themes:

- **Better servicing:** A central contact point, direct staff lists, better website navigation, and a customer portal to manage calibrations, certificates, audit history and reminders.

"[NPL] needs to be more friendly, quick and agile to meet the needs of a start-up. Their slowness meant a promising idea has not been fully investigated before grant opportunities and time windows closed."

Private sector user

- **More easily accessible and better structured collaboration pathways with NPL:** Specific examples include more scheduled meetings, clearer communication channels, and greater visibility of NPL's ongoing work and areas of expertise. Others would like to see NPL work more closely with industry, provide better support for funding applications, offer clearer information about available grants, and offer assisted programmes to help smaller companies access NPL expertise affordably.
- **More specialised and accessible training, particularly in technical areas where expertise is limited:** Specific gaps were mentioned in relation to ultra-low current measurement, XPS, electrical metrology, temperature uniformity surveying, nuclear related science, and medical imaging. These users would value dedicated courses, e-learning modules, webinars, workshops and conferences to build capability in these fields, as well as the ability to re-access previous training materials. Clearer categorisation of training – especially for niche areas – is also seen as important, which ties in with a request for improved website navigation.
- **Standards development:** Users would like to see NPL take a stronger role in developing standards rather than only testing against customer requirements.
- **A stronger regional presence:** Users would like to be able to access more hubs beyond the South East, particularly in Wales, the Midlands and the North, as well as mobile units and university-based sessions to improve access.

9.2 Improvements

When asked, a majority of 59% of users could not specify any improvements that NPL could make, however 41% did offer some suggestions many of which were also featured in section 9.1. Of those offering suggestions for change, suggestions can be grouped into the following themes (from most to least cited);

- **Faster, more reliable and more efficient service delivery:** The most common requests are for quicker turnaround times, faster calibration, faster report delivery, and significantly quicker responses to emails, phone calls and online enquiries.

- **Improved communication:** Users would like to see clearer points of contact, better internal coordination between departments, faster quotation turnarounds, more proactive updates, clearer communication between commercial staff and scientists, and fewer delays caused by miscommunication or difficulty reaching the right specialist.
- **Smoother logistics and operational processes:** Examples include simpler courier arrangements, better packing of equipment, clearer calibration pathways, and more flexibility in scheduling calibration windows.

“When we deal with other calibration companies, the equipment gets calibrated and they bring it back to us. With NPL, we have to deal with post rooms and this creates delays.”

Private sector user

- **More competitive pricing:** Many users would value more affordable pricing, particularly SMEs and start-ups who struggle to justify the cost of calibration or testing. Several noted that NPL can be twice or even three times more expensive than alternative providers, making it difficult to continue working with NPL despite the fact they value the quality of service. There are also calls for greater price transparency, more flexible or subsidised options.

“Price wise, NPL was four times more expensive than sending the equipment to Germany.”

Public services user

Greater visibility and awareness of NPL’s work, services and expertise: Many users feel that NPL’s activities “fly under the radar” and would value more regular communication, including newsletters, monthly updates and clearer information about available tests, grants and facilities. Examples include more visibility of NPL’s work in areas such as air quality and climate, and clearer articulation of NPL’s strategy in fields such as 3D metrology.

Several users emphasised the importance of more events, open days and in-person engagement, noting that current activities are often too physics-focused or not widely promoted. This ties in with calls for more information visible on the website, including clearer summaries of services, upcoming projects and directories showing who does what within NPL to make it easier to find the right expertise.

Access to a wider range of technical and calibration services from NPL as echoed in 9.1: This includes the introduction or reinstatement of key capabilities, including (for example):

- high-voltage and high-current calibration
- ambient air auditing

- radiometry
- gas-flow calibration
- on-site calibration options

There are also calls for additional specialist services such as:

- local chemical analysis
- metals testing
- gigahertz-range transmission signal support
- larger-capacity measurement for long cylinders
- barograph calibration
- expanded nuclear metrology services

Several suggested NPL broaden its service portfolio further, particularly in emerging or underserved areas such as nanotechnology standards and radiometry, ensuring that the UK retains access to comprehensive, up-to-date measurement and calibration expertise.

Improved accessibility, support and smoother operational processes: Several users emphasised the importance of greater engagement with start-ups and SMEs, including access to grants, vouchers, small scale funding opportunities, as well as more flexible collaboration models. A small number re-emphasised earlier points asking for clearer points of contact, department level contact details and a single, reliable route into NPL. This, they feel could be well supported by better improved website navigation and a customer portal for managing services, reminders and documentation. Other suggestions relating to this theme include:

- Better maintenance of facilities and equipment
- Clearer timeframes for downtime
- The ability to book calibration slots in advance
- Improved handling of quotes and enquiries
- Better-trained staff and project managers
- Greater openness to new collaborations and ventures

More and better training: Specific examples mentioned by users here include shop floor level training, metrology courses, nuclear related e-learning, mobile educational units, and opportunities for NPL speakers to visit universities and regional locations.

“We often get customers approaching us for training. If there was an appropriate NPL training course, we could recommend that to our customers.”

Private sector user

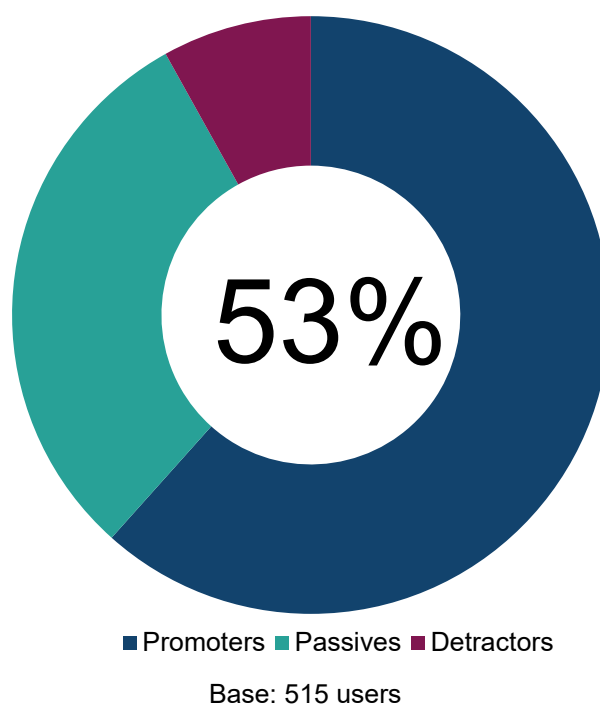
10. Net Promoter Score

Net Promoter Scores (NPS) are useful for benchmarking customer loyalty and satisfaction. As such, this was included as a metric as part of this survey of NPL users. The question asked users to rate the likelihood that they would recommend NPL to a colleague or another organisation on a scale from 0 to 10 (where 0 is not at all likely and 10 is very likely). Responses were then categorised into either “promoters” (those providing ratings of 9 or 10); “passives” (those providing ratings of 7 or 8) and “detractors” (those providing ratings of 6 or lower). A “net promoter score” is calculated by subtracting the percentage of detractors from the percentage of promoters.

The NPS for 2026 stands at **53%** which as an absolute marker is considered in the above average range (50 or above) according to Bains & Company⁸ indicating strong customer satisfaction. However, competitor benchmarking is not possible as NPS data for comparable organisations is not readily available.

Six in ten users (61%) were “promoters”; 30% were “passives” and fewer than one in ten (8%) were “detractors”.

Figure 11: NET Promoter Responses - Overall



⁸ [Net Promoter Score \(NPS\) & System | Bain & Company](#)

Although the small base figures for some types of organisation should be considered, data suggests those working in academia and (indicatively) the third sector are particularly satisfied, with higher net promoter scores amongst these organisation types as shown below.

Table 2: NET Promoter Responses – By Organisation Type

	Private Sector	Government/Government agencies	Public services	Third Sector	Academia
Base	355	39	64	7	50
Detractors (0-6)	8%	8%	8%	14%	6%
Passives (7-8)	31%	36%	34%	-	20%
Promoters (9-10)	60%	56%	58%	86%	74%
NPS	52%	48%	50%	72%	68%

There was some variation, as might be expected, according to the extent of engagement by users. Those making use of low intensity support only had lower net promoter scores than those that were regularly supported, where net promoter scores were considerably greater. This breakdown is shown in the next table.

Table 3: NET Promoter Responses – By Engagement with NPL

	I tend to make use of low-intensity support only e.g. classroom trainings, e-learning, events, free downloads	I have been regularly supported for at least 5 years	I have been regularly supported over the last 3-4 years	I have been regularly supported over the last 1-2 years
Base	142	185	44	56
Detractors (0-6)	11%	4%	7%	5%
Passives (7-8)	39%	27%	27%	20%
Promoters (9-10)	51%	69%	66%	75%
NPS	40%	65%	59%	70%

11. Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

User engagement and satisfaction with NPL products and services

NPL is highly valued for its technical excellence and core services, but improving accessibility, responsiveness, and clarity about service pathways could strengthen satisfaction.

Overall, users demonstrate high levels of engagement and satisfaction with NPL's products and services, particularly in relation to calibration, reference materials, and collaboration with scientific staff. NPL services align well with user needs around standards compliance, measurement capability development, and product innovation.

Results indicate user expectations are largely being met, particularly in terms of technical delivery and outcomes. Satisfaction levels are consistently strong, with high ratings for the overall service provided by NPL (84%) and quality (86%), supported by a positive Net Promoter Score of 53%. Satisfaction levels are higher amongst regular users, in terms of the NPS score for example this varies from 40% for low-intensity users to 65-70% for regularly supported users.

Engagement is somewhat concentrated in core technical services when NPL's full service portfolio is considered. With lower usage of consultancy and digital services, intellectual property and spin-out support there could be limited awareness, accessibility issues or this could relate to perceived value in these services.

The research highlights some areas where expectations are not fully met, particularly:

- Pricing (low satisfaction at 39%)
- Timeliness and responsiveness (e.g. in terms of quotes and delivery)
- Ease of navigating services (e.g. website usability)

Areas of dissatisfaction on price relate to a need for greater transparency and more competitive pricing for smaller organisations, however comments also acknowledged the quality of the service being provided by NPL. Some feel this is justified, while others say competitors offer similar work for less.

In terms of connection with users, NPL is generally seen as accessible and clear in its communications, but a more seamless and intuitive user experience would be welcomed especially when users need to identify the right contact or navigate systems. This is less of an issue for repeat and long-standing users of NPL services.

Within the qualitative feedback some users also highlighted a desire for a stronger regional presence from NPL, with suggestions for accessible hubs in Wales, the Midlands and the North. This suggests that geographic accessibility may be a barrier to engagement for some users and that expanding into different areas (in a viable format e.g. mobile units; university based sessions) could help to broaden reach and strengthen connection with users.

Impact of NPL's products and services on client outcomes

NPL has a strong and demonstrable positive impact on client outcome, particularly in technical performance and compliance. However there is potential for this impact to be enhanced through more efficient delivery and broader support.

NPL delivers clear and tangible benefits to its users, particularly in enabling:

- Compliance with industry standards (46%)
- Development of measurement capabilities (39%)
- Innovation and product improvement (37%)

These outcomes demonstrate that NPL plays a key enabling role in users' technical and regulatory success, particularly in sectors facing complex measurement challenges such as medical, marine, and nuclear industries.

The emphasis on measurement capability and standards compliance highlights NPL's position as a trusted authority, contributing directly to users' operational effectiveness and product quality.

The limited uptake of services related to commercialisation amongst those surveyed (e.g. spin-outs and IP support) suggests that NPL's impact may be currently concentrated in technical and operational domains with areas for development in innovation or commercial pathways.

Some negative impacts on outcomes are indirectly evident through service delivery challenges. Delays, unclear timelines, and misalignment with initial requests can reduce the effectiveness or timeliness of benefits delivered, particularly where users are relying on time-sensitive work.

Effectiveness of communication and interactions with NPL staff

While NPL's communication is broadly strong, gaps in responsiveness, clarity, and navigation reduce its effectiveness. Strengthening these areas would better align communication quality with NPL's technical expertise and further build user trust.

Communication with NPL is generally effective and positively perceived, with the majority of users agreeing that information is clear (89%) and that they can communicate through their preferred channels (86%). This indicates that NPL has established a strong foundation for user interaction.

There are however some areas where communication effectiveness could be improved, specifically in terms of:

- Identifying and accessing the right contact (68% agreement)
- Website usability (45% agreement)
- Speed of responses and clarity on timelines

Qualitative feedback suggests a need for more structured and pro-active communication, including clearer points of contact and better expectation management around delivery times and processes. Responsiveness could also be improved, with delays in email replies, quotes and deliverables which negatively affects perceptions amongst users (albeit a minority).

Whilst very few NPL users had experienced a problem with NPL (8%) - which is a positive finding - it is also worth noting that of those that had experienced a problem 27% felt their problem was handled poorly, therefore this suggests a further area for improvement.

Recommendations

Feedback from users highlights a consistently positive view of NPL's technical expertise, scientific capability and the professionalism of its staff. However, several recurring themes also point to opportunities to strengthen service delivery, improve accessibility, and enhance the overall user experience. The following consolidated recommendations reflect the most important, high impact actions that could deliver meaningful improvements across NPL's services.

1. Strengthen communication, responsiveness and contact pathways

Across multiple areas of feedback, users emphasised the need for clearer, more reliable and more timely communication. This includes faster responses to emails and enquiries, more predictable turnaround times for quotes and deliverables, and clearer routes to the right specialist or department. Improving internal coordination, reducing delays caused by miscommunication, and ensuring users receive proactive updates throughout their engagement would significantly enhance satisfaction. Strengthening contact pathways through clearer staff directories, a central contact point, or a customer portal would make it easier for users to navigate NPL and engage with the appropriate expertise.

2. Improve operational efficiency

Users consistently highlighted the importance of faster and more reliable service delivery. Delays in calibration, equipment return, report delivery, and quoting, can disrupt project timelines and, in some cases, encourage users to seek alternative providers. Reviewing internal workflows, capacity constraints and handover processes would help ensure turnaround times are realistic, transparent and consistently met. Enhancing logistical processes such as courier arrangements, equipment handling and scheduling would further reduce friction and improve the overall service experience.

3. Enhance consistency and quality assurance

While 86% of users are satisfied with the quality of NPL's services and 84% satisfied with the service overall, a small minority reported issues such as off-scope deliverables, unmet expectations, or work not delivered to the agreed standard. Strengthening quality assurance processes particularly around scoping, internal communication and final review would help ensure that outputs consistently meet user expectations. Clearer communication during projects and early identification of risks or changes would reinforce confidence in NPL's reliability and precision.

4. Increase accessibility, transparency and support for users

Users expressed a strong desire for clearer information about NPL's services, expertise and ongoing work. Improving website navigation, increasing visibility of staff and service areas, and providing more regular updates (e.g., newsletters, events, open days) would help users better understand what NPL offers and how to engage. Greater pricing transparency, more flexible or competitive options particularly for SMEs and start-ups, and clearer guidance on funding opportunities, would further support accessibility. Expanding training provision, including specialist courses and regional delivery, would also help users build capability and engage more effectively with NPL.

5. Strengthen and potentially expand the UK calibration and measurement capability portfolio

A recurring theme among users is the importance of maintaining a comprehensive, UK based calibration service. The discontinuation of long-standing services has forced some organisations to seek alternatives overseas. NPL should review opportunities to reinstate high value capabilities where demand remains strong and assess the feasibility of expanding into emerging or underserved areas such as high-current and high-voltage calibration, optical radiation, microfluidics, biological analysis, and quantum metrology. Ensuring a robust, future focused national capability would help to support UK industry, research and innovation.

Appendix 1 – Copy of Questionnaire

Q1 Firstly, can I ask which of the following types of organisation you work for?

Private sector
Government / Government agencies
Public services
Third sector
Academia

Q2 Which of the following best describes your individual engagement with NPL?

I tend to make use of low-intensity support only e.g. classroom trainings, e-learning, events, free downloads
I have been regularly supported for at least 5 years
I have been regularly supported over the last 3-4 years
I have been regularly supported over the last 1-2 years
Other [DO NOT PROMPT]
Please specify

Q3 Which of the following NPL products, services or collaborations have you made use of between 2020 and 2025?

Multiple response question
Calibration / reference materials
Collaboration with scientists
Consultancy
Contract research and development
Digital / online services
Events hosted by NPL
Publications
Testing services
Training courses
Something else
Please specify
Don't know
NONE

Q4 I'm now going to read out a list of various ways in which working with NPL may have supported you in your work. Has working with NPL helped or supported you with any of the following...?

Multiple response question.

Compliance with standards
Conducting pre-normative research
Developing test methods / standards
Improved comparability / reproducibility of your data
Publications
Access to new stakeholders / collaborators
Developing or improving new products / processes
Products / services reaching new markets
Development of measurement capabilities in-house
Securing additional grant funding
Establishing a spin-out company
Obtain intellectual property rights
Something else

Please specify

None of these

Don't know

N/A

Q5 On average, how many business days does it take to receive calibrated equipment back from NPL?

1–5 days

6–10 days

11–15 days

16–30 days

More than 30 days

Don't know [DO NOT READ OUT OUT]

Not applicable [DO NOT READ OUT OUT]

Q6 What is the standard calibration cycle (in months) for the equipment you send to NPL?

Less than a month

1 to less than 3 months

3 to less than 6 months

6 to less than 12 months

12 to less than 24 months

24 months or more

Don't know [DO NOT READ OUT OUT]

Not applicable [DO NOT READ OUT OUT]

Q7 Which of the following scientific areas represents the PRIMARY focus of your measurement activities when working with NPL?

Mass and Dimensional
 Material Properties
 Thermal and Radiometric Metrology
 Electromagnetic and Electrochemical Technologies
 Other Engineering Metrology
 Chemical and Biological Sciences
 Medical, Marine, and Nuclear
 Atmospheric Environmental Science
 Time and Frequency / Quantum Metrology
 Something else [DO NOT PROMPT]
Please specify

Q8 Which of the following scientific areas presents the GREATEST measurement challenge where you require support?

Mass and Dimensional
 Material Properties
 Thermal and Radiometric Metrology
 Electromagnetic and Electrochemical Technologies
 Other Engineering Metrology
 Chemical and Biological Sciences
 Medical, Marine, and Nuclear
 Atmospheric Environmental Science
 Time and Frequency / Quantum Metrology
 Something else [DO NOT PROMPT]
Please specify

Q9a On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is completely disagree and 5 is completely agree, to what extent do you agree with the following statements about the communication you have with NPL and their employees..?

	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neither disagree/ nor agree	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree	Don't know	N/A
Information is explained clearly							
It is easy to contact the right person at NPL							
The NPL website is easy to navigate							
I am able to interact with NPL in my preferred way [e.g. telephone/email/webform]							

Q9b. Please can you tell me more about the reasons behind your response?

Q10a I'm now going to ask you to rate how satisfied you have been with different aspects of the service provided by NPL. If your experience has varied please think about your most recent interaction with NPL. Using a scale of 1 to 5 - where 1 is completely dissatisfied and 5 is very satisfied - can you tell me how satisfied you are with the service NPL provided to you in terms of the...?

	1 Very dissatisfied	2 Dissatisfied	3 Neither dissatisfied /nor satisfied	4 Satisfied	5 Very satisfied	Don't know	N/A
Overall service received from NPL							
Timeliness of delivery							
Quality							
Price							
The average turnaround time for quotes							

Q10b. Please can you tell me more about the reasons behind your response?

Q11a Have you experienced any kind of problem with NPL in the last year?

Yes

No

Q11b Did you contact NPL about this problem?

Yes

No

Q11c On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is very poorly and 5 is very well, how well do you feel this problem was handled?

1 Very poorly

2 Poorly

3 Neither poorly/nor well

4 Well

5 Very well

Don't know

Q12a Is there anything that you feel is missing from NPL's services that your organisation would value?

Yes

No

Q12b Please can you tell me what you feel is missing that your organisation would value?

Q13 What could be changed to improve your overall satisfaction with the service (s) provided to you by NPL?

Q14 On a scale of 0-10 (where 0 is not at all likely and 10 is very likely) how likely are you to recommend NPL to a colleague or another organisation?

0 – not at all likely

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10 – very likely

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