



**FieldworkHub**

SMB Perceptions of Trigger Messages  
to stimulate shopping around and  
Summary Box Layouts to simplify price  
comparisons of Card Acquiring Services

**The Executive Summary of the Findings of  
Independent Qualitative Research Testing**

Prepared for



# 1 Project Overview and Executive Summary

## 1.1 Background and Purpose

1. The Payment Systems Regulator (PSR) has identified, through its Card Acquiring Services Market Review (CAMR), certain market features that mean some merchants are not benefiting as they should from competition. The PSR is particularly concerned that some smaller merchants are not engaging effectively, missing out on good deals and thus paying more, or receiving a poorer level of service than they should, for card acquiring services (CAS).
2. The PSR is proposing a package of remedies to help address the harms identified above, including:

### **Trigger Messages:**

- To stimulate merchants to seek competitive quotes for their card acquiring services and to create a call to action to shop around to get a better deal on those services.

### **Summary Boxes:**

- Layouts to simplify price comparisons enabling merchants to compare pricing information more easily and seek competitive quotations that can easily be compared for card acquiring services.
3. Prior to implementing these remedies, FieldworkHub was commissioned to carry out qualitative research to test and explore the responses of smaller merchants to different options for the Trigger Messages and Summary Box layouts.

## 1.2 Method

4. Twenty one-hour individual qualitative online video in-depth interviews were conducted with senior personnel in small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) accepting card payments. The interviewees were responsible either solely or jointly for their company's card payment services and receivers/users of statements for those services. A range of business types, sizes and sectors, a mix of gender and a spread of business locations across the UK were covered. Interviewees were presented with different styles of trigger message and summary boxes, some more complex than the others.

## 1.3 Summary of Research Findings

### 1.3.1 FOR TRIGGER MESSAGES

5. The type of Trigger Message with the greatest potential to stimulate merchants to seek a competitive quote and consider switching provider for a better deal will include:
  - A short, to-the-point, easily consumable presentation style;
  - Highlighting of the contract end date;

- A brief statement of the merchant’s ability to shop around for an alternative provider and the benefits of doing this (potentially being better rates and/or services);
  - A direct ‘Click-On’ link to a resource that helps in the CAS review and comparison process which can further trigger an immediate investigative response.
6. None of the three Trigger Messages tested in this research completely meets these specifications, although all have positive points to draw on and the PSR will need to consider how to change the drafting based on the online testing as well as from feedback received from stakeholders during its consultation on the Provisional Remedies.

### 1.3.2 FOR SUMMARY BOX LAYOUTS

7. A Summary Box of a merchant’s current agreement is a strong element to mention within a Trigger Message, especially as a hyperlink within an online statement or email, that a merchant can click on there and then, increasing their likelihood to take a first action that begins their shopping around and switching journey.
8. A Summary Box also has potential to be useful in simplifying the alternative provider sourcing and comparison process which is particular to CAS.
9. Of the two different layout designs presented in this research, Summary Box 1 is endorsed unanimously by merchants for being the preferred and easier-to-use layout for reviewing and comparing ‘basic benchmark’ costs and in its own right presents a good template for developing the Summary Box remedy.
10. Summary Box 2 is seen as unusable, as well as unnecessary, for most ‘normal’ SMBs and is more likely to switch them off the whole idea of considering an alternative provider.