Top 9 Banks

Letter Responses

V1.5 – 22nd April 2025

More than one month's worth of IT failures at major banks and building societies in the last two years

6 March 2025

Chair comment

Chair of the Treasury Select Committee, Dame Meg Hillier MP, said:

"For families and individuals living paycheck to paycheck, losing access to banking services on payday can be a terrifying experience. Even when rectified relatively quickly, it can cause real panic, which is why we wanted to get a proper understanding of why unplanned banking outages happen and how banks and building societies respond. And we know some can go on for several days.

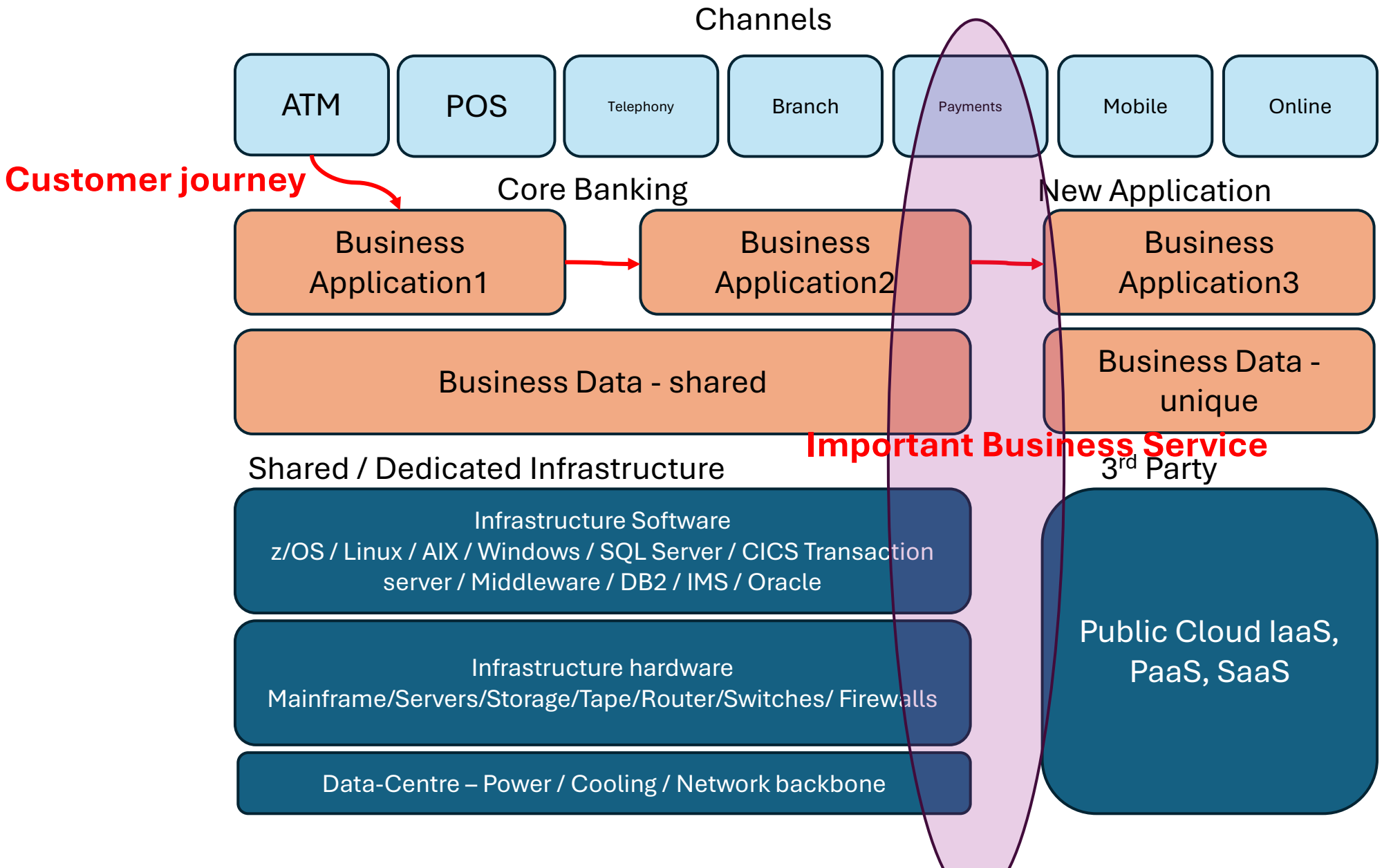
"The fact there has been enough outages to fill a whole month within the last two years shows customers' frustrations are completely valid. The reality is that this data shows even the most successful banks and building societies hit technical glitches. What's critical is they react swiftly and ensure customers are kept informed throughout.

"I am grateful to the banks for their responses and reassured that they are doing all they can to minimise the impact on their customers. I am particularly thankful to those who are compensating their customers well for the stress they endure and would encourage all to reflect on whether they are doing enough in that regard."

Nine of the top banks and building societies operating in the UK accumulated at least 803 hours, the equivalent of more than 33 days, of unplanned tech and systems outages in the last two years, new data published by the Treasury Committee shows.

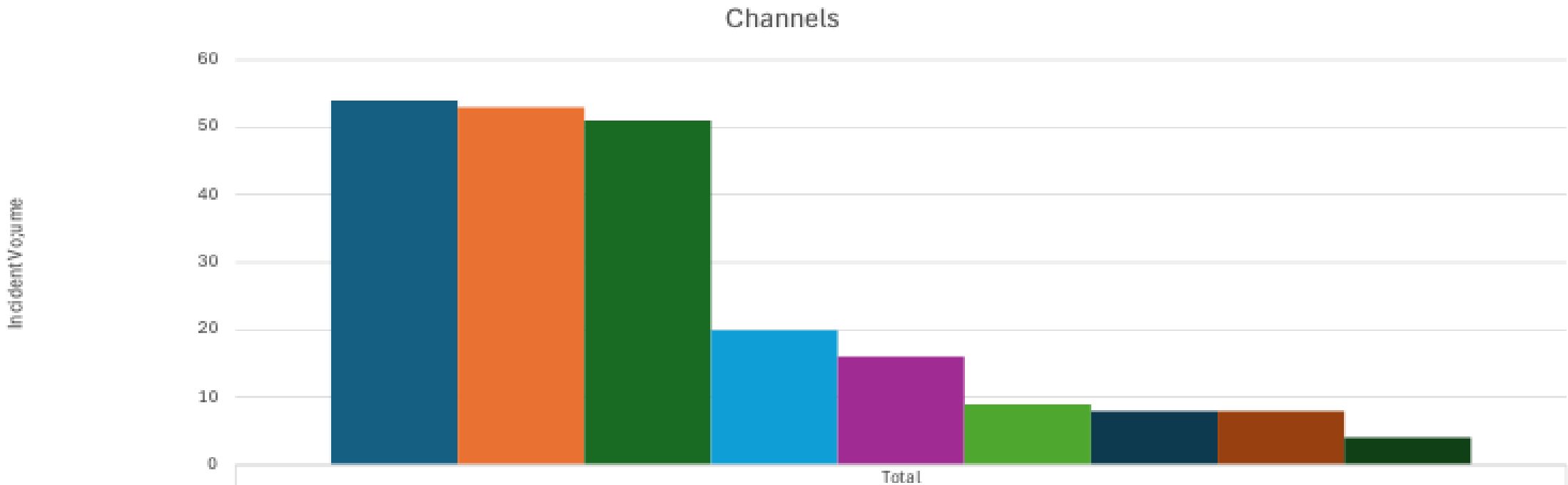
132 customer impacting incidents

High Level Retail Banking model



Channels Impacted

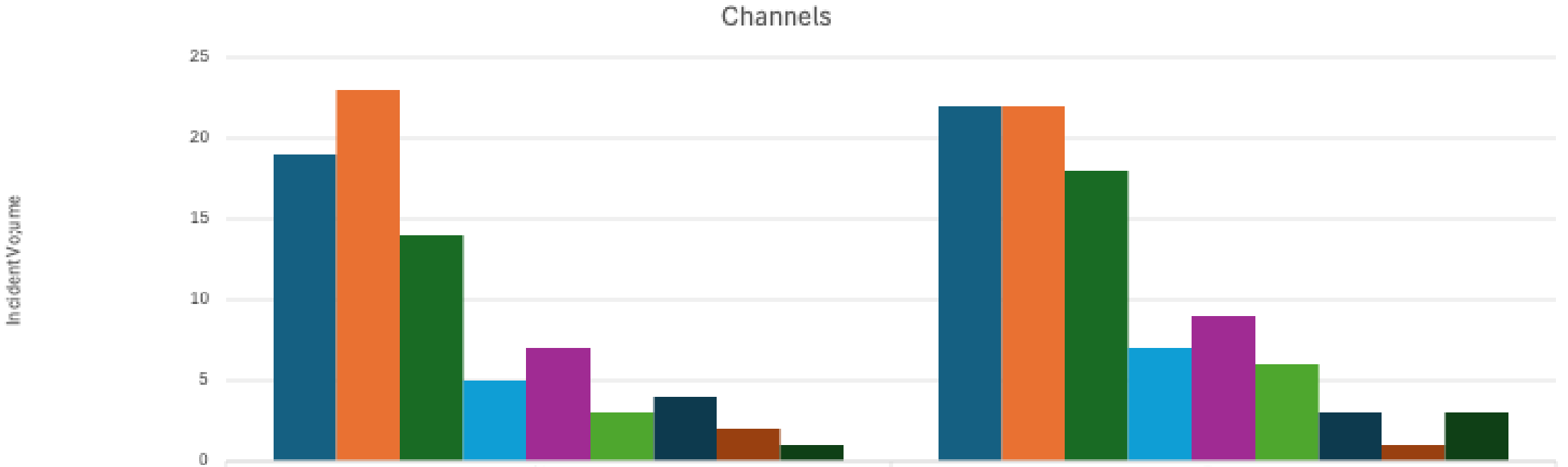
Payments, Online and Mobile banking impacted more frequently than other channels – 70% compared to next channel at 16% - also accounts for 647 hours of customer outage (80%).



	Total
Count of Payments	54
Count of Online Banking	53
Count of Mobile Banking	51
Count of Telephony	20
Count of POS	16
Count of Open Banking	9
Count of ATM	8
Count of Branch	8
Count of Internal Transfer	4

Channel Impact by Driver

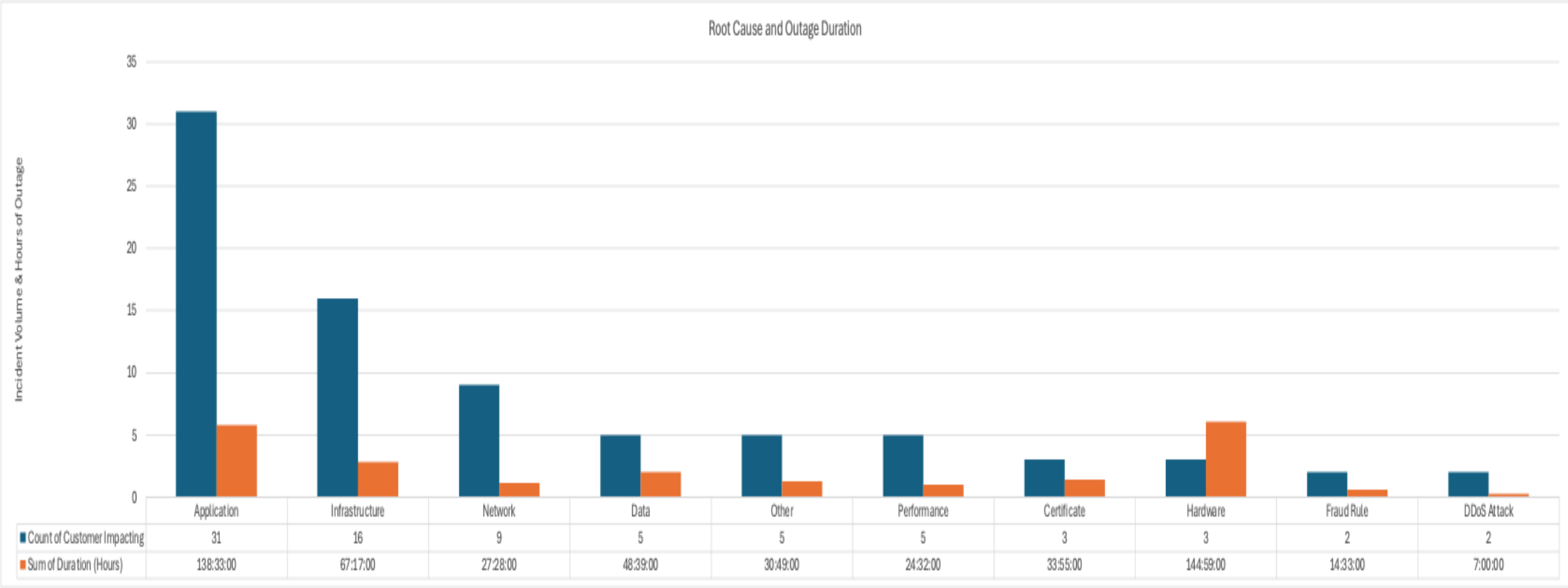
Payments, Online and Mobile banking impacted consistently more frequently by Change or an Event



	Change	Event
Count of Payments	19	22
Count of Online Banking	23	22
Count of Mobile Banking	14	18
Count of Telephony	5	7
Count of POS	7	9
Count of Open Banking	3	6
Count of ATM	4	3
Count of Branch	2	1
Count of Internal Transfer	1	3

Volume and Impact of Outages by Root Cause

Application and Infrastructure identified as most common root cause contributing 205 hours of outage*.

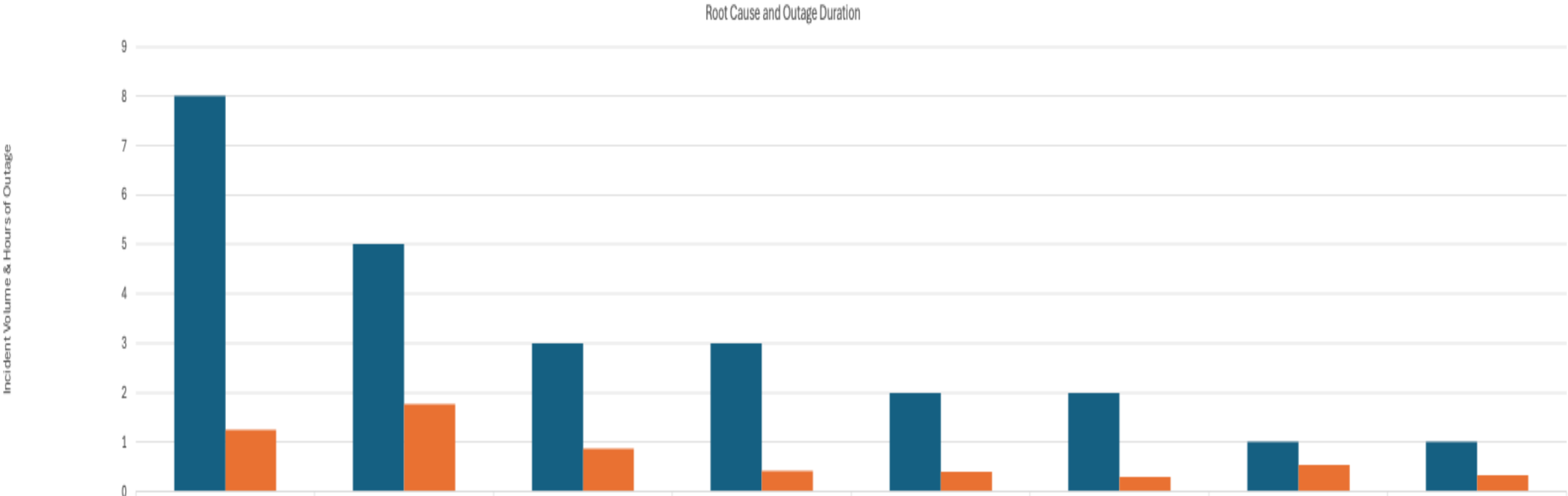


	Application	Infrastructure	Network	Data	Other	Performance	Certificate	Hardware	Fraud Rule	DDoS Attack
Count of Customer Impacting	31	16	9	5	5	5	3	3	2	2
Sum of Duration (Hours)	138:33:00	67:17:00	27:28:00	48:39:00	30:49:00	24:32:00	33:55:00	144:59:00	14:33:00	7:00:00

* 51 Incidents did not have RCA details accounts for 266 hours of outage

3rd Party Impact

3rd Party's have contributed to 17% of customer outage* (140hours), with application being the most common root cause Payments are the most impacted channel (12 incidents with 71 hours of outage).

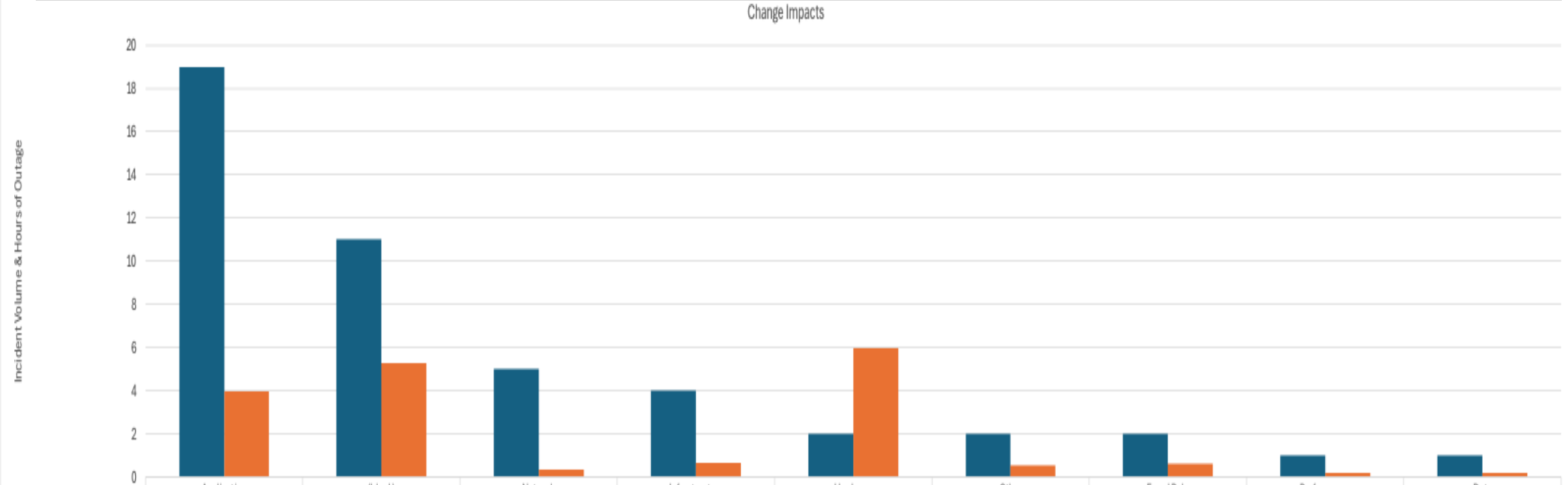


	Application	(blank)	Other	Network	Infrastructure	DDoS Attack	Performance	Certificate
Count of Customer Impacting	8	5	3	3	2	2	1	1
Sum of Duration (Hours)	30:01:00	42:14:00	20:37:00	10:00:00	9:33:00	7:00:00	13:00:00	7:50:00

* 5 Incidents did not have RCA details accounts for 42 hours of outage

Change

Change drives 425 hours of customer outage* (53%) with application as the most common root cause. 3rd party drives 56 hours out of the 425 with the remaining being internal to the Banks.

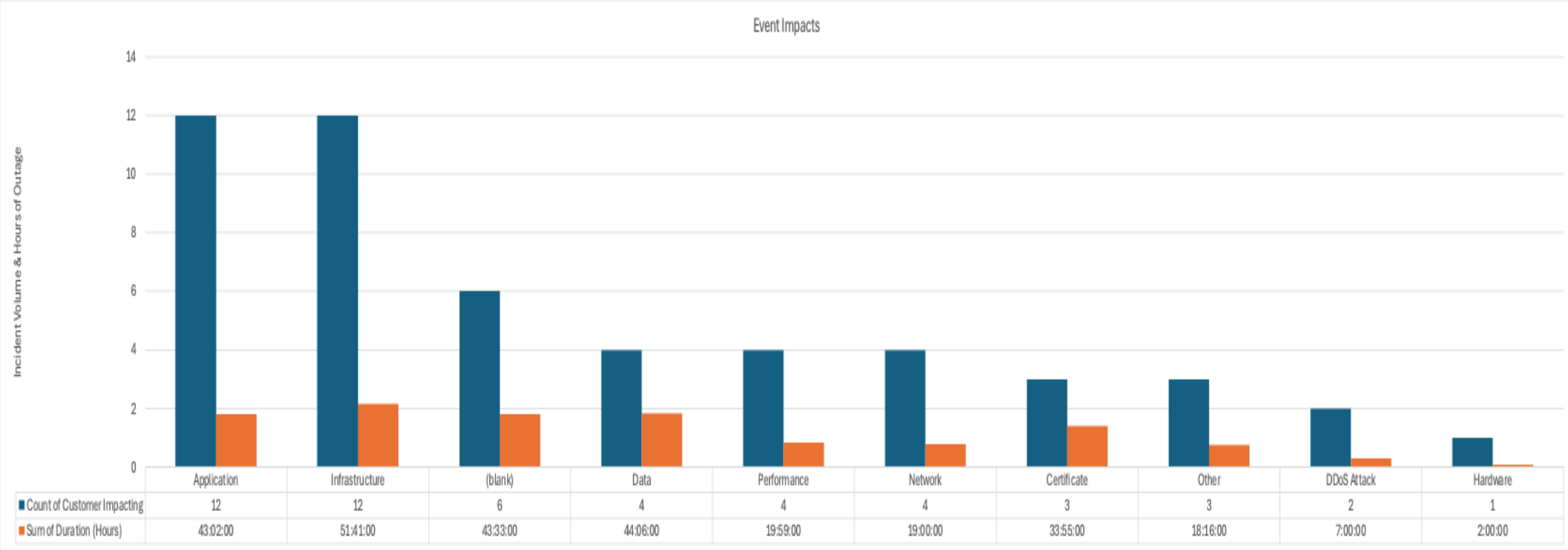


	Application	(blank)	Network	Infrastructure	Hardware	Other	Fraud Rule	Performance	Data
Count of Customer Impacting	19	11	5	4	2	2	2	1	1
Sum of Duration (Hours)	95:31:00	127:04:00	8:28:00	15:36:00	142:59:00	12:33:00	14:33:00	4:33:00	4:33:00

* Missing RCA data, dates & customer impact correlation in some written responses

Event

An event drives 282 hours of customer outage* (35%) with application & infrastructure as the most common root cause. 3rd party drives 84 hours of the 282, the remainder being internal to the Banks.



	Application	Infrastructure	(blank)	Data	Performance	Network	Certificate	Other	DDoS Attack	Hardware
Count of Customer Impacting	12	12	6	4	4	4	3	3	2	1
Sum of Duration (Hours)	43:02:00	51:41:00	43:33:00	44:06:00	19:59:00	19:00:00	33:55:00	18:16:00	7:00:00	2:00:00

* Missing RCA data, dates & customer impact correlation in some written responses

Availability View

Payments, Mobile and Online have the lowest availability across the 9 Banks – average of **98.63%**.

Total channel availability averages – **99.16%**

Total Bank availability averages – **99.51%**

Example:-

A Bank with a single outlier of 142 hours over the period would move from **98.94%** availability to 99.71%. However, customer impact across the period for all Banks would only improve by **0.7% to 96.38%.**

The data shows that Banks are pushing the upper limits of availability, however at an aggregate view as an industry its harder for an individual Bank to overthrow a perception of high customer impact.

ITIL calculation for Availability

$$\text{Availability \%} = \frac{\text{(Agreed Service Time - Downtime)}}{\text{Agreed Service Time}}$$

Agreed Service Time: This is the total time the service is contracted to be available for use. For example, if an ERP system is expected to be available from 6:00 AM to Midnight, the agreed service time would be 18 hours.

Downtime: This is the amount of time the service was unavailable during the agreed service time. This could be due to incidents, maintenance, or planned outages.

Availability: Divide the agreed service time by the total time and subtract the downtime, then express the result as a percentage. For example, if a service is expected to be available for 100 hours, and there are 5 hours of downtime, the availability is (100 - 5) / 100 * 100% = 95%.

25 months

100%	18288 hours
1%	182 hours
0.1%	18.2 hours
0.01%	1.8 hours

803 hours of customer impact = 95.61%