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National Careers Service: Customer Satisfaction and Progression Annual Report

**Report based on findings from May 2019 –
April 2020**

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Executive Summary

Introduction and methodology

The National Careers Service (“the service”) is delivered via a multi-channel approach: face-to-face, telephone, and online. Adults aged 19 or older (or 18 or older, who have been referred by Jobcentre Plus or are in custody) are eligible for face-to-face advice. Young people aged between 13 and 18 may also use the National Careers Service, through its website or digital channels, or through a dedicated young people’s telephone service. The National Careers Service is actively engaged in building partnerships between schools, colleges and employers.

The services provided by the National Careers Service are contracted to a number of area-based Prime Contractors and a National Careers Helpline.

This fieldwork was undertaken from May 2019 to April 2020 and consisted of monthly satisfaction and progression telephone surveys, as well as a continuous online satisfaction survey.

The main aims of this research are to monitor customers’ experiences of using the National Careers Service, through a range of Key Performance Indicators and other measures, and to measure changes in customers’ employment and learning progression, personal development, and career management skills, six months after dealing with the service.

Customer profile

- The customer profile of those accessing the face-to-face, telephone or online services remained largely consistent with previous years.
- Face-to-face customers were more likely to be male, over 50 years of age and have a long-term illness or disability than telephone and online customers.
- Online and telephone customers were more likely to have higher qualifications, when compared to face-to-face customers.
- National Careers Helpline and online customers were more likely to be in work. National Careers Helpline customers were also more likely to be in learning, be younger and BAME.

Why do customers contact the National Careers Service?

Six in ten customers reported that they found out about the service through Jobcentre Plus (59%), emphasising the importance of this information channel, and showing consistency with Year 8 Q3 and Q4 (59%). The proportion of telephone customers referred into the service through Jobcentre Plus has increased (23% in Year 8 Q3 and 4 and 28% in Year 9).

For those using the National Careers Helpline service, internet/Google searches (44%) are also key points of entry for using the service.

Online customers often heard about the National Careers Service through Jobcentre Plus (25%), a National Careers Service adviser (10%), or a colleague or employer (9%). However, the main channel was, as expected, from online searches (29%). Customers aged 50 plus who were unemployed or at risk of redundancy (53%), customers with qualifications below Level 2 (48%) and customers who have been unemployed for more than 12 months (52%) were more likely than average to have been signposted to the service by Jobcentre Plus.

Reasons for contacting the National Careers Service were primarily focussed on progressing into employment. Help with CV writing was the most common reason for using the face-to-face service (35%), whilst telephone customers most often contacted the service for information about courses to do with a current job or with a potential job in the future (19%). Website use was largely for obtaining information and advice about jobs, careers or apprenticeships (43%).

Experiences of using the National Careers Service

Seven in ten telephone customers had their enquiry handled in one call (72%), similar to previous years. Amongst those who had multiple calls, 64% dealt with the same adviser.

One in five face-to-face customers (19%) had two or more meetings with the National Careers Service adviser. Customers who were unemployed for more than 12 months (21%), customers with a disability (22%), customers who are aged 50 plus and unemployed or at risk of redundancy (21%) and NEET customers aged 18-24 (22%) were more likely to have multiple meetings with their adviser. Two-thirds of customers who had more than one meeting saw the same adviser each time (67%).

The National Careers Service provides tools to support its customers across multiple platforms. The majority of customers found these tools useful. In particular, amongst those who had been referred to the Skills Health Check a third (33%) went on to use the tool and the majority of these customers found the tool useful (88%).

Just under half of online customers got all or most of the information they wanted on their first visit to the website (48%).

Around one-third of face-to-face and telephone customers reported that they had been followed-up by the National Careers Service since their initial contact (35%), again similar to previous waves.

When compared to Year 8 (Q3 and Q4), there has been a significant increase in the number of telephone customers being offered information by the adviser and/or information outlining their conversation and what the customer should do next (75%, up from 68%). 18% of all telephone customers said the adviser did not offer to send them any information. The vast majority of all telephone customers who received information found the information they received useful (90%), and almost six in ten found it very useful (59%).

Customer satisfaction with the National Careers Service

The overall quality of the service continued to be rated highly by telephone and face-to-face customers, with over nine in ten agreeing that it was good (93%).

In line with this, the vast majority of face-to-face and telephone customers were satisfied with the National Careers Service overall (85%), consistent with previous years. Overall, satisfaction with the National Careers Service website has declined since Year 8 Q3 and Q4 from 69% to 58%. Positively, when looking at each of the quarters individually there is a net increase in satisfaction: Quarter 1 (58%) to Quarter 4 (64%).

The customer groups that have been consistently satisfied with the service year on year include those who recall drawing up a Skills Action Plan and / or used the Skills Health Check (both 90%), younger customers (89% of 20-24 year olds) and customers who had the same adviser, if they had multiple appointments (90% amongst face-to-face customers and telephone customers).

Among telephone and face-to-face customers, satisfaction with individual aspects of the service was also high, especially the professionalism of their adviser (96%).

Almost nine in ten face-to-face or telephone customers either had already recommended or would recommend the National Careers Service (88%). Three in ten online customers (31%) said they had already recommended the National Careers Service, and a further half (51%) said they would.

Customer progression six months after their contact with the National Careers Service

Broadly, year 9 has seen a decrease in employment progression and learning progression. Regardless, all face-to-face and telephone customers (97%) experienced some form of positive outcome in the six months since their call/meeting.

Learning progression averaged 69% in Year 9, a decrease on Year 8 Q3 and Q4 (72%). National Careers Helpline customers and customers with qualifications Level 2 and above were more likely to have undertaken each of the specific types of training and learning. For example, 44% of National Careers Helpline customers and 38% of customers with Level 2 qualifications and above were more likely to have taken part in training relating to a future job (compared to the average, 35%).

Just over half of customers (53%) achieved employment progression, a decrease from the 56% Q3 and Q4 in Year 8. Younger customers, those with higher qualifications and those without a disability are most likely to achieve some form of employment progression. The most common developments were increased self-confidence (62%), improvements in CV writing or interview skills (62%), developing skills related to a current or future job (56%) and team working skills (51%).

Ninety-four percent of face-to-face and telephone customers indicated that they had gained some form of Personal Added Value since their contact with the National Careers Service.

Eight in ten face-to-face and telephone customers reported developing career management skills during the six months since their contact with the National Careers Service (79%).

How do key results vary across National Careers Service contracting areas?

Across contracting areas, customers expressed consistently positive views on the service they received. The main distinctions are:

- Across contracting areas, customers expressed consistently positive views on the service they received. The main distinctions are:
- Satisfaction was significantly higher than average in Yorkshire and the Humber (90%) and North East and Cumbria (89%).
- Customers in Yorkshire and Humber were more likely to be satisfied with their adviser, whereas West Midlands and Staffordshire customers were significantly less satisfied with all aspects of the service provided by the adviser.
- There was little variation across region in terms of progression, however customers in South West and Oxfordshire were more likely than average to experience employment progression (58%), whilst customer in London were less likely to (49%).

1 Introduction and Methodology

1.1 Background

The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) is responsible for the commissioning, contracting and performance management of the National Careers Service which provides information, advice and guidance to help individuals make decisions on learning, training and work. The service offers confidential and impartial advice, provided by qualified careers advisers.

The National Careers Service is delivered via a multi-channel approach: face-to-face, telephone and online. Adults aged 19 or older (or 18 or older, who have been referred by Jobcentre Plus or are in custody) are eligible for face-to-face advice. Young people aged between 13 and 18 may also use the National Careers Service, through its website or digital channels, or through a dedicated young people's telephone service. Schools and colleges are responsible for the delivery of careers advice (either directly or through their own contracted provision) and the National Careers Service does not deliver face-to-face advice to young people who are still in full-time education. It does promote its online and telephone services via schools, colleges and other training providers, as well as providing labour market information and supporting materials to their careers services. The National Careers Service is actively engaged in building partnerships between schools, colleges and employers.

The National Careers Service is delivered by a network of area-based Prime Contractors and the National Careers Helpline. To ensure and assure the quality of the National Careers Service, all National Careers Service Prime Contractors and subcontractors must achieve and retain the Matrix Standard. This is a government-endorsed, national, independent quality standard for any organisation that provides information and advice as part of its service offer. To achieve and retain accreditation, organisations must undergo a comprehensive assessment and commit to annual reviews that explore how well the organisation is performing in the areas of leadership and management, deployment of resources, service delivery and continuous quality improvement.

From October 2014, the service was re-configured under a new contract which meant that some area-based contractors were replaced, either by new providers or by providers who were already delivering the service in other regions. A range of other changes were introduced from October 2014, the principal ones being the introduction of an outcome-based funding model and the requirement that area-based contractors move away from purely delivering face-to-face advice and diversify into telephone, online and digital methods.

From October 2018, the service was again re-configured; this meant that some area-based contractors were replaced, again, either by new providers or by providers who were already delivering the service in other regions. The new regions are as follows: East of England and Buckinghamshire, East Midlands and Northamptonshire, South West and Oxfordshire, North East and Cumbria, Yorkshire and Humber, London, West Midlands and Staffordshire, South East and the North West. Changes were also made to the National Contact Centre, which is now referred to as the National Careers Helpline. Following, October 2018, National Careers Helpline customers were offered advice and guidance, as well as information. For this reason, comparisons to Year 8 will only be made to Quarters 3 and 4 of Year 8 to ensure the data is comparable.

During Spring 2019, the position of the online satisfaction survey link on the National Careers Service website was altered. As a result, the number of completed surveys received in Quarter 1 and Quarter 2

declined. In Autumn 2019, changes were made to the tools on the National Careers Service website and were reflected in the online satisfaction questionnaire (from Quarter 3 onwards).

1.2 Research aims

An extensive programme of research has been developed to understand customer views of the National Careers Service and to help inform its development and continuous improvement. This involves continuous monthly research to:

- Measure customer satisfaction, with face-to-face and telephone customers interviewed in the month after their session, and website visitors asked about their views of the site at the time they access it.
- Assess customer progression, with face-to-face and telephone customers interviewed six months after their last adviser session, and website visitors assessed three months after they completed the online satisfaction survey.

This report is based on fieldwork conducted between May 2019 and April 2020. For face-to-face and telephone customers, this means the satisfaction survey covers sessions with an adviser between April 2019 and March 2020. As a result of COVID-19, from the 23rd March 2020, the government advised individuals to stay at home and for certain businesses to close. This had an impact on the way individuals were able to interact with the National Careers Service. Therefore, it is important to note the data collected in April 2020 (which represents contact with the service in March 2020), may have been influenced by this.

For face-to-face and telephone customers, the progression survey covers the period six months beforehand (i.e. from November 2018 to October 2019).

The research among web visitors covers those accessing the National Careers Service website between May 2019 and April 2020 for the online satisfaction survey.

The overall aims of this research are to:

- Provide full analysis of the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the National Careers Service, which incorporate specific measures on customer satisfaction and progression following their contact with an adviser. It should be noted that the progression measures reported here are not designed to provide an impact evaluation of the National Careers Service as they are self-reported outcomes with no counterfactual (i.e. there is no way of knowing whether that impact would have occurred anyway, without the intervention of the National Careers Service).
- Understand customer views of the service at different points in their journey, to provide actionable feedback to help the National Careers Service to identify areas for improvement and to inform its service development.
- Identify and understand any demographic differences in how customers experience and rate the service, in particular among priority groups, including; NEET customers aged 18-24, single parents, customers with a disability, those aged 50 plus who are unemployed or at risk of redundancy, customers who have been unemployed for more than 12 months.
- Measure variations in performance among the area-based contractors delivering the service.

- Monitor changes over time by comparing the results for Year 9 to the data from Year 8 Q3 and Q4. This report does not include comparisons to the combined findings from all of Year 8 as changes were made to the service at the start of Q3.

1.3 Methodology

This report presents the results from Year 9 of the customer satisfaction and progression study, covering fieldwork between May 2019 to April 2020.

1.4 Telephone surveys

For face-to-face and telephone customers this involved a total of 9,996 interviews for the satisfaction survey and 8,200 interviews for the progression survey. The achieved interviews by quarter is shown in Table 1.1, including comparative sample sizes and fieldwork dates for the previous years of the survey.

In order to clearly demarcate satisfaction results under the new National Careers Service contracts which started in October 2014, it was agreed to adjust the quarterly coverage of the satisfaction survey so that it aligned with the start of the new contract. This means that the October 2014 fieldwork (with customers who first had contact with the service in September 2014, the last month under the old contracts) is treated as a stand-alone month, with adjusted quarters then running from November 2014 fieldwork (with customers whose first contact with the service was in October 2014, under the new contract).

Table 1.1: Achieved interviews by quarter (face-to-face and telephone customers)

		Satisfaction survey		Progression survey	
	Fieldwork month	Month of adviser session	No. of interviews	Month of adviser session	No. of interviews
Quarter 1	Sept 11	Aug 11	2,217	Mar 2011	1,601
Quarter 2	Oct-Dec 11	Sept-Nov 11	2,195	Apr-Jun 11	1,599
Quarter 3	Jan-Mar 12	Dec 11-Feb 12	2,198	Jul-Sept 11	1,638
Year 1			6,610		4,398
Quarter 1	Apr-Jun 12	March-May 12	2,211	Oct-Dec 11	1,599
Quarter 2	Jul-Sept 12	Jun-Aug 12	2,199	Jan-Mar 12	1,599
Quarter 3	Oct-Dec 12	Sept-Nov 12	2,199	Apr-Jun 12	1,599
Quarter 4	Jan-Mar 13	Dec 12-Feb 13	2,199	Jul-Sept 12	1,599
Year 2			8,808		6,395
Quarter 1	Apr-Jun 13	Mar-May 13	2,199	Oct-Dec 12	1,598
Quarter 2	Jul-Sept 13	Jun-Aug 13	2,199	Jan-Mar 13	1,599
Quarter 3	Oct-Dec 13	Sep-Nov 13	2,198	Apr-Jun 13	1,598
Quarter 4	Jan-Mar 14	Dec 13-Feb 14	2,199	Jul-Sept 13	1,597
Year 3			8,795		6,392
Quarter 1	Apr-Jun 14	Mar-May 14	2,100	Oct-Dec 13	1,603

Quarter 2	Jul-Sept 14	Jun-Aug 14	2,210	Jan-Mar 14	1,602
	Oct 14	Sept 14	747		
Quarter 3	Nov 14-Jan 15 (sat) Oct-Dec 14 (prog)	Oct-Dec 14	2,222	Apr-Jun 14	1,064
Quarter 4	Feb-Apr 15 (sat) Jan-Mar 15 (prog)	Jan-Mar 15	2,197	Jul-Sept 14	797
Year 4			9,576		5,066
Quarter 1	May-Jul 15	Apr-Jun 15	2,200	Nov 14-Jan 15	1,599
Quarter 2	Aug-Oct 15	Jul-Sept 15	2,210	Feb-Apr 15	1,601
Quarter 3	Nov 15-Jan 16	Oct-Dec 15	2,200	May-Jul 15	1,600
Quarter 4	Feb-Apr 16	Jan-Mar 16	2,202	Aug-Oct 15	1,611
Year 5			8,812		6,411
Quarter 1	May-Jul 2016	Apr-Jun 16	2,201	Nov 15-Jan 16	1,600
Quarter 2	Aug-Oct 2016	Jul-Sept 16	2,207	Feb-Apr 16	1,605
Quarter 3	Nov 16-Jan 17	Oct-Dec 16	2,209	May-Jul 16	1,606
Quarter 4	Feb-Apr 17	Jan-Mar 17	2,204	Aug-Oct 16	1,602
Year 6			8,821		6,413
Quarter 1	May-Jul 2017	Apr-Jun 17	2,055	Nov 16-Jan 17	1,604
Quarter 2	Aug-Oct 2017	Jul-Sept 17	2,051	Feb-Apr 17	1,605
Quarter 3	Nov 17-Jan 18	Oct-Dec 17	2,061	May-Jul 17	1,613
Quarter 4	Feb-Apr 18	Jan-Mar 18	2,061	Aug-Oct 17	1,616
Year 7			8,228		6,438
Quarter 1	May-Jul 2018	Apr-Jun 18	2,054	Nov 17-Jan 18	1,633
Quarter 2	Aug-Oct 2018	Jul-Sept 18	2,052	Feb-Apr 18	1,614
Year 8 (Q1&Q2)			4,106		3,247
Quarter 3	Nov 18-Jan 19	Oct-Dec 18	2,927	May-July 18	3,148
Quarter 4	Feb-Apr 19	Jan-Mar 19	3,184	Aug-Oct 18	3,395
Year 8 (Q3&Q4)			6,111		6,543
Quarter 1	May-Jul 2019	Apr-Jun 19	3,171	Nov 18-Jan 19	2,958
Quarter 2	Aug-Oct 2019	Jul-Sept 19	2,306	Feb-Apr 19	1,723
Quarter 3	Nov 19-Jan 20	Oct-Dec 19	2,255	May-Jul 19	1,759
Quarter 4	Feb-Apr 20	Jan-Mar 20	2,264	Aug-Oct 19	1,760
Year 9			9,996		8,200

All survey interviews among face-to-face or telephone customers were conducted by telephone using Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI). Targets were set each month based on the type of service they received:

- Face-to-face National Careers Service customers;
- Telephone customers who received the information, advice and guidance services from the National Careers Helpline; and
- Telephone customers who received information, advice and / or guidance directly from area-based contractors alongside their face-to-face service provision – these are referred to as ‘area-based’ telephone customers.

The survey identifies whether customers have accessed the service via different means, while continuing to assign them to a ‘primary’ channel based on their first substantive interaction with the service.

In addition to these overall targets, quotas for each month of fieldwork were set on age, gender and employment status at the time of the call (within service type), in proportion to the customer profile.

At the analysis stage, the telephone satisfaction and progression data were weighted by contracting region to match the customer profile. As the same number of interviews was conducted each month regardless of changes in the volume of customers, the annual data was also weighted to the number of customer contacts by quarter.

The customer profile used to set the quotas and weight the data would usually align with the corresponding month(s) that these customers used the service. Across Year 9, this is the case for the National Careers Helpline, but not for the contracting regions. Due to complications obtaining this information, the customer profile used for the regional data is based on customers who use the service in March 2019.

At the start of Year 9, changes were made to both surveys, where relevant, this has been noted throughout the report.

1.5 Online surveys

In total 624 website users took part in the website satisfaction survey. Use of cookies means that someone accessing the site from the same computer will only be asked to participate once. As in previous years, no weighting has been applied to the web satisfaction survey because the demographic profile of the population of website users is unknown.

Typically, an online progression survey would also take place throughout the year. This progression survey for website users is longitudinal and conducted online, with respondents sent an email with a link to the online questionnaire three months after they took part in the online satisfaction survey. The email is only sent to individuals (rather than employers or careers advisers) who accessed the site seeking information on their own behalf, were willing to be re-contacted, and supplied a valid email address for this purpose. The online progression data is only available for Quarter 4 in Year 9. However, given that there were only 23 completes in total, this data has been excluded from the report.

1.6 Interpretation of the data

Throughout the chapters, ‘customers’ refer to those who access the National Careers Service face-to-face at Jobcentre Plus or another location or receive the advice by telephone from area-based contractors or the National Careers Helpline.

This latest research follows previous sets of comparable surveys. The report highlights relevant differences between the average and subgroup findings, or between findings from previous waves. This only includes differences that are found to be statistically significant at the 95% level of confidence. This means that we can be 95% confident (i.e. 19 times out of 20) that the difference is a ‘real’ difference rather than one resulting from having spoken to a sample of customers. However, not *all* statistically significant differences are noted – it only refers to differences that appear consistently across questions, which indicate important subgroups, or indicate important shifts over time.

Throughout the report, due to rounding of percentages, exclusion of a very small number of “refused” responses, or questions that allow more than one response, figures in charts do not always add to 100%. Asterisks denote values greater than zero but less than 0.5.

1.7 The structure of this report

The rest of this report presents the results of Year 9 of the National Careers Service customer satisfaction and progression surveys, as follows:

- Chapter 2 details the profile of customers accessing the National Careers Service;
- Chapter 3 explores customers’ reasons for contacting the service, how they found out about it, and what they wanted from it;
- Chapter 4 examines the customer journey in detail, looking at their experiences of using specific aspects of the service across all of its main channels;
- Chapter 5 assesses customer satisfaction with the service, and willingness to recommend it to other people, including relevant National Careers Service Key Performance Indicators (KPIs); and
- Chapter 6 explores customer progression six months on from their interaction with the service, including relevant National Careers Service Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).
- Chapter 7 looks at customers’ experiences across the different contracting regions, identifying any variations in performance.

2 Customer Profile

The customer profile of those accessing the face-to-face, telephone or online services remained largely consistent with previous years.

Face-to-face customers were more likely to be male, over 50 years of age and have a long-term illness or disability than telephone and online customers.

Online and telephone customers were more likely to have higher qualifications, when compared to face-to-face customers.

National Careers Helpline and online customers were more likely to be in work. National Careers Helpline customers were also more likely to be in learning, be younger and BAME.

This chapter examines the profile of customers accessing the service in Year 9, from April 2019 to March 2020, and those accessing the National Careers Service website from May 2019 to April 2020. It looks at demographic characteristics such as gender, age and ethnicity, work status, and highest qualification at the time of accessing the service.

2.1 Customer characteristics

Table 2.1 shows the age, gender and ethnicity profiles of National Careers Service face-to-face, telephone and online customers surveyed during Year 9. The figures presented for face-to-face and telephone customers are based on weighted data, whilst online figures are based on unweighted data¹. Overall the customer base varied by service channel, but still had a similar profile to that found in previous years.

Table 2.1: Demographic profile of National Careers Service customers²

	Channel used as main way of accessing the service (%)				
	Face-to-face (7,908)	Telephone all (2,088)	Area-based telephone (478)	National Careers Helpline (1,610)	Online (624)
Base:					
Gender					
Male	56	47	51	45	41
Female	44	53	49	54	53
Age group					
19 or younger ³	5	8	4	9	12

¹ The National Careers Service does not collect any management information on the demographic profile of its website users, so it is not possible to ascertain how representative the survey profile is (and the data is therefore unweighted).

² Not all categories will add up to 100% as a result of the 'Prefer not to say' code.

³ The age ranges are 18-19 for face-to-face and telephone customers, 16-19 for online customers.

20-24	15	18	14	19	8
25-49	49	55	52	56	43
50 or older	31	20	30	16	33
Ethnicity					
White	79	68	85	62	72
Black/Black British	9	11	5	13	6
Asian/Asian British	8	11	6	13	8
Mixed/other	4	9	4	11	8
Prefer not to say	*	1	1	1	4
English not first language	16	16	11	18	16
Long term illness/disability	30	21	23	20	24

2.1.2 Gender and age

In line with previous waves, the majority of face-to-face customers were men (56%, compared to 44% of female customers). Telephone customers were more likely to be female (53%, compared to 47% being male customers).

In terms of the key priority groups, single parents are more likely to be female (75%), compared to the average, 45%), whereas NEET customers aged 18-24 (62%), customers with qualifications below Level 2 (61%) and customers with a disability (57%) were more likely to be male, when compared to the average (55%).

The highest proportion of telephone and face-to-face customers were aged between 25-49 (55% and 49% respectively). Compared to Year 8 Q3 and Q4, there has been a slight decrease in the number of customers aged 50 plus (29%, compared to 32%). Overall, National Careers Helpline customers saw the lowest presence of over 50s (16%), compared to the face-to-face channel (31%), area-based telephone channel (30%) and online channel (33%). Also, face-to-face customers were more likely to consist of those who are aged 50 plus and unemployed or at risk of redundancy (23%, compared to telephone customers, 10%).

Customers with qualifications below Level 2 (33%) and customers with a disability (39%) were more likely to be 50 plus, compared to the average (29%), whilst single parents were more likely to be aged 25-49 (74%, compared to the average, 50%).

Online web users who completed the survey were predominantly women (53%) and aged 25-49 (43%). Compared to Year 8 Q3 and Q4 there has been a decrease in the number of customers aged 18-24 (13%, compared to Year 8 Q3 and Q4, 17%) and an increase in customers aged 50 plus (33%, compared to Year 8 Q3 and Q4, 21%).

2.1.3 Ethnicity and English as a first language

Most website users who participated in the survey were White (72%), a similar proportion to Year 8 Q3 and Q4 (75%). Higher proportions of area-based telephone and face-to-face customers were White (85% and 79% respectively), compared to National Careers Helpline customers (62%). The proportion of BAME customers using the service was highest amongst National Careers Helpline customers, with 13% being Black/Black British and a further 13% being Asian/Asian British.

The proportion of customers who said that English was not their first language was split mostly equally across face-to-face, telephone and online channels (16% face-to-face, 16% telephone, and 16% online). In comparison, area-based telephone customers were less likely to report that English was not their first language (11%).

2.1.4 Disability

Just under a third of face-to-face customers had a disability or long-term limiting health condition (30%), the same as in Year 8, Q3 and Q4. This was significantly higher than the proportion of online and telephone customers (24% and 21% respectively).

As with previous years, the higher proportion of customers with a disability who used the face-to-face channel reflects the high proportion of face-to-face customers that were referred for advice by Jobcentre Plus (59%). For example, among customers with a disability who replied to our survey, 63% first heard about the National Careers Service from Jobcentre Plus compared with 57% of customers without a disability. Face-to-face customers were also more likely to be claiming benefits (73%, compared with the average, 69%), which will include people who are claiming the welfare support for a disability, such as ESA.

Customers with qualifications below Level 2 (35%) and those who had been unemployed for more than 12 months (38%) were more likely to have a disability when compared to the average (29%).

2.1.5 Region

Website users who participated in the survey were asked where they lived; this provides a picture of the regional spread of website users. In total, 83% of online customers said they lived in England, with the remainder living in Scotland (1%), Wales (1%), Northern Ireland (1%) or outside of the UK (1%).

At least six per cent of online customers lived in each of the English regions. The highest proportions were in London (15%), the rest of the South East (12%) and the South West (12%).

2.2 Employment status

Table 2.2 provides an overview of customers' employment status at the time of their first adviser session or visit to the website.

Table 2.2: Economic activity of customers

Base:	Channel used as main way of accessing the service (%)				
	Face-to-face (7,908)	Telephone (2,088)	Area-based telephone (478)	National Careers Helpline (1,610)	Online (624)
In work	18	38	25	44	45
Full-time employee	8	21	13	24	31
Part-time employee	8	12	8	14	8
Self-employed	2	5	3	5	4
In learning	5	11	2	14	11
Full-time learning	3	9	1	11	5
Part-time learning	2	2	1	3	1
Unemployed and looking for work	64	38	61	29	25
Unable to work due to health	7	5	5	5	5
Looking after home/family	4	3	3	3	3
Retired	1	1	*	1	1
Other	2	3	3	3	8

As in previous years, face-to-face customers had a very different employment profile to other channels, with the majority being unemployed and looking for work (64%) compared with 25% of online customers and almost four in ten telephone customers (38%). Looking more closely at telephone services, area-based telephone customers were more likely to be unemployed and looking for work (61%), compared with National Careers Helpline customers (29%).

The following customer groups were more likely to be unemployed and looking for work⁴.

- men (65%, compared with 53% of women); and
- customers with qualifications below Level 2 (62%)

The Year 9 data demonstrates that those aged 20-24 and customers aged 50 plus are more likely to be unemployed and looking for work (62% and 63% respectively, compared to customers aged 25-49, 56%). This represents a decrease from Year 8 Q3 and Q4 when 67% of those aged 20-24 were unemployed and looking for work.

A far lower proportion of face-to-face customers reported being in work than telephone or online customers (18% compared with 38% and 45% respectively), this is the same pattern as seen in previous

⁴ Analysis of customer groups is based on face-to-face and telephone customers (combined).

years. National Careers Helpline customers were more likely than area-based telephone customers to be in work (44%, compared with 25%). Among face-to-face and telephone customers, customers with a disability were less likely than customers without a disability to be in work (15% compared with 25%).

National Careers Helpline customers were most likely to be in learning (14%, compared to face-to-face customers, 5%, and area-based telephone customers, 2%). One in ten online customers were in learning, 11%, representing a decrease when compared to Year 8 Q3 and Q4, 23%.

Among face-to-face and telephone customers who were unemployed at the time of their call/meeting, half (51%) had been unemployed for less than six months, 14% had been unemployed for six to 12 months and a third (34%) had been unemployed for more than 12 months. Customers with qualifications below Level 2 (43%), customers with a disability (48%) and single parents (51%) were all more likely than average (34%) to have been unemployed for more than 12 months.

As with previous years these figures illustrate the continuing challenge faced by the National Careers Service in terms of its diverse customer base. Customers who have never worked or who have been out of work for several years will have very different advice and information needs to those who are in work and seeking to progress or change career, or to those who have recently been made redundant and may be looking to re-train or get a new job.

2.3 Highest qualification

A key customer group for the National Careers Service is those with qualifications below Level 2, defined as adults without a Level 2 qualification (i.e. equivalent to five GCSEs at grade A* to C), this does not include people with no qualifications. The majority of customers already had qualifications at or above this level, regardless of which channel they used to access the service, as shown in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3: Highest qualification and NEET status among National Careers Service customers

Base:	Channel used as main way of accessing the service (%)				
	Face-to-face (6,718)	Telephone (1912)	Area-based telephone (427)	National Careers Helpline (1485)	Online (624)
Highest qualification					
Level 4 or higher (e.g. degree or equivalent)	25	35	33	36	45
Level 3 (e.g. A-levels)	21	26	25	26	10
Level 2 (5 GCSEs A*-C)	26	21	22	20	13
Level 1	11	6	5	7	9
Entry level	3	2	3	1	4
No qualifications	1	*	*	*	7
Other	4	3	4	3	n/a
Level 2 or higher	65	78	74	79	67

Below Level 2	12	7	7	7	13
18-24 NEET	15	12	14	12	18

Telephone customers were more likely to have a qualification at Level 2 or above (78%), compared with face-to-face customers (65%).

Overall, telephone customers generally had achieved higher levels of qualifications than face-to-face customers, with 78% of telephone customers holding a Level 2 or higher qualification compared to 65% of face-to-face customers. Furthermore, telephone customers were also more likely to hold a qualification at Level 4 or higher (35%, compared with face-to-face customers, 25%). Online customers have the highest proportion of customers that hold a Level 4 or higher qualification (43%), an increase compared to Year 8 Q3 and Q4 (36%).

Almost one in five online customers (18%) were 18-24 and NEET at the time of their meeting, a significantly higher proportion than face-to-face and telephone customers (15% and 12% respectively). Being NEET was more common among customers who were male (17%, compared to 12% of females).

3 How and why do customers contact the National Careers Service?

Six in ten customers reported that they found out about the service through Jobcentre Plus (59%), emphasising the importance of this information channel, and showing consistency with Year 8 Q3 and Q4 (59%). The proportion of telephone customers referred into the service through Jobcentre Plus has increased (23% in Year 8 Q3 and 4 and 28% in Year 9).

For those using the National Careers Helpline service, internet/Google searches (44%) are also key points of entry for using the service.

Online customers often heard about the National Careers Service through Jobcentre Plus (25%), a National Careers Service adviser (10%), or a colleague or employer (9%). However, the main channel was, as expected, from online searches (29%). Customers aged 50 plus who were unemployed or at risk of redundancy (53%), customers with qualifications below Level 2 (48%) and customers who have been unemployed for more than 12 months (52%) were more likely than average to have been signposted to the service by Jobcentre Plus.

Reasons for contacting the National Careers Service were primarily focussed on progressing into employment. Help with CV writing was the most common reason for using the face-to-face service (35%), whilst telephone customers most often contacted the service for information about courses to do with a current job or with a potential job in the future (19%). Website use was largely for obtaining information and advice about jobs, careers or apprenticeships (43%).

This chapter explores how customers first found out about the National Careers Service and the reasons why they got in contact, including what sort of information or advice they were seeking prior to using the service. It is important to look at these factors because customers' reasons for contacting the service and whether their expectations of it were met will influence subsequent views on satisfaction. It is also important for the National Careers Service to be aware of how motivators for accessing the service may vary amongst different customer groups so that they can tailor provision more closely to customer need.

3.1 How did customers first find out about the National Careers Service?

3.1.1 Telephone and Face-to-Face Customers

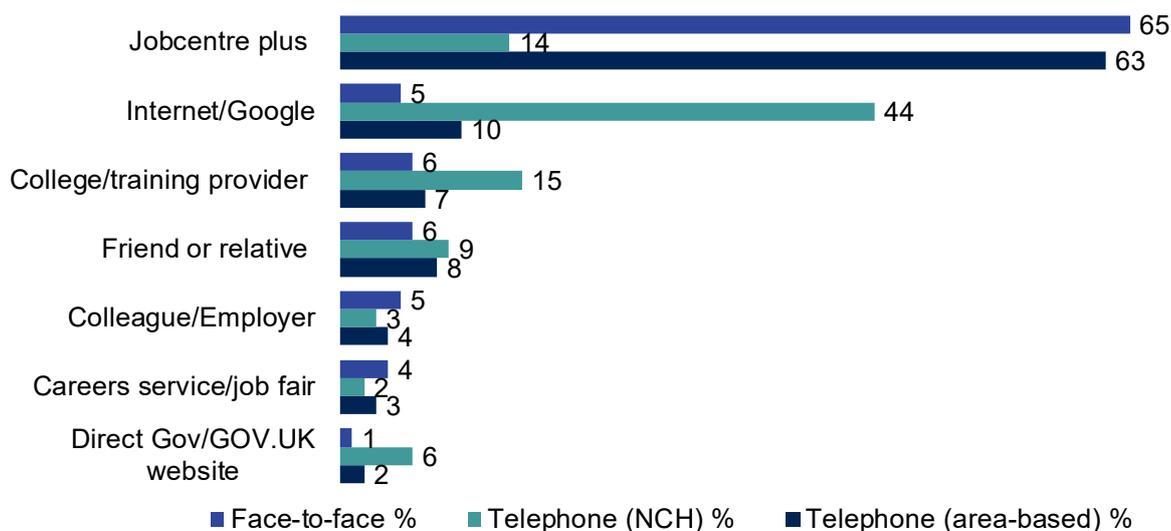
Across Year 9, more than half of all customers reported that they found out about the service through Jobcentre Plus (59%), consistent with Year 8 Q3 and Q4 (59%). The proportion of face-to-face customers being referred to the service through Jobcentre Plus remained largely the same as last year (65% in Year 9 compared to 66% in Year 8 Q3 and Q4) but had increased among telephone customers (28% in Year 9 compared to 23% in Year 8 Q3 and Q4). A higher proportion of area-based telephone customers first heard about the service through Jobcentre plus this year than in Year 8 Q3 and Q4 (63% Year 9 compared to 44% Year 8 Q3 and Q4). The prominence of Jobcentre Plus reflects the longstanding referral and co-location arrangements between Jobcentre Plus and National Careers

Service as part of a continued commitment for a more integrated approach to the provision of employment and skills advice to unemployed people.

Customers who called the National Careers Helpline were most likely to have heard about the service through the internet (44%), compared to area-based telephone customers (10%) or face-to-face (5%) customers. National Careers Helpline customers were also more likely to have found the service through their college or training provider (15%), a friend or relative (9%) and the GOV.UK website (6%).

Despite more telephone customers being in work than face-to-face customers, similar proportions of telephone and face-to-face customers first heard about the service through their employer.

Figure 3.1: Where customers first found out about the National Careers Service



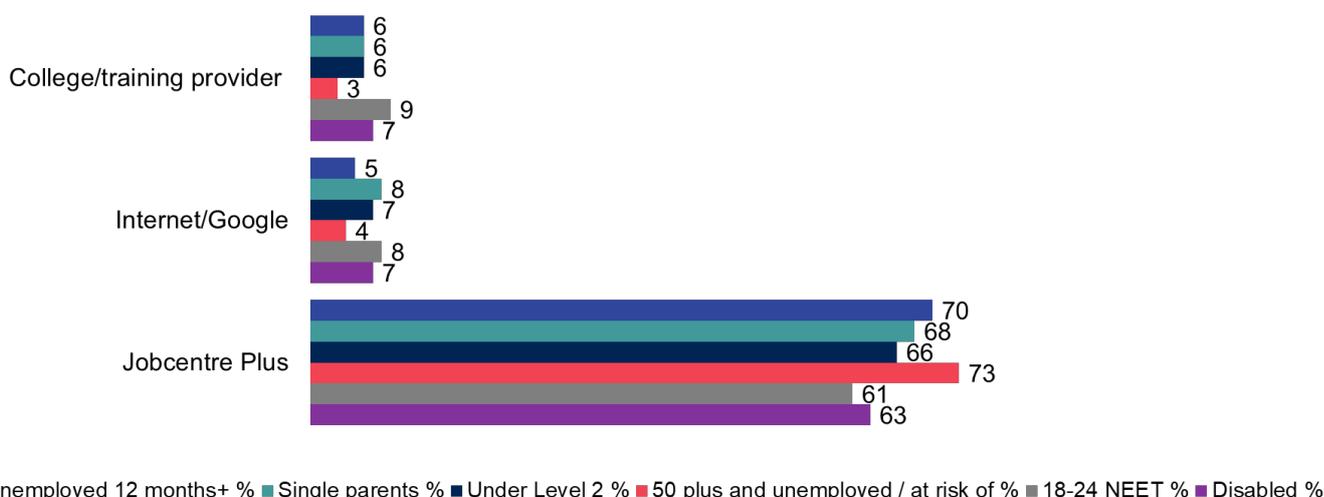
Base: Face-to-face customers (7,908), National Careers Helpline customers (1,610), Area-based telephone customers (478)

The survey shows that whilst Jobcentre Plus was the main way in which customers heard about the service (59%), men were significantly more likely than women to have heard about the service for the first time through this channel (61% vs 56%). This is the same pattern as seen in previous years and reflects that more men than women are unemployed when they first contact the service. While the most common way for women to find out about the National Careers Service was also via Jobcentre Plus (56%), they were more likely than men to have discovered the service through the internet or google, though this was less common for both groups (12% vs 9%).

Older customers aged 50 plus were more likely to have first heard about the National Careers Service via Jobcentre Plus (68%), especially compared with customers aged 18-19 (47%). Other groups more likely than average to have first found out about the service via Jobcentre Plus were customers aged 50 plus *and* unemployed or at risk of redundancy (73%), customers who had been unemployed for more than 12 months (70%), single parents (68%), those with qualifications under Level 2 (65%), and customers with a disability (63%).

Figure 3.2 shows how key groups varied in terms of how they first found out about the National Careers Service.

Figure 3.2: Where customers first found out about the National Careers Service by key group



Base: Unemployed 12 months+ (1,964), Single parents (1,448), Under Level 2 (2,435), 50 plus and unemployed / at risk of (2,041), 18-24 NEET (1,452), Disabled (2,830)

3.1.2 Online customers

The most common ways for website users to have first heard about the National Careers Service was online (29%), via Jobcentre Plus (25%), through a National Careers Service adviser (10%) or a colleague / employer (9%). Those who had been unemployed for at least 12 months were far more likely to have been signposted to the service by Jobcentre Plus (52%) or by a National Careers Service adviser (17%).

In line with this, customers aged 50 plus and unemployed or at risk of redundancy (53%) and customers with qualifications below Level 2 (48%) were more likely than average to have been signposted to the service by Jobcentre Plus.

Table 3.1: Website visitor referral

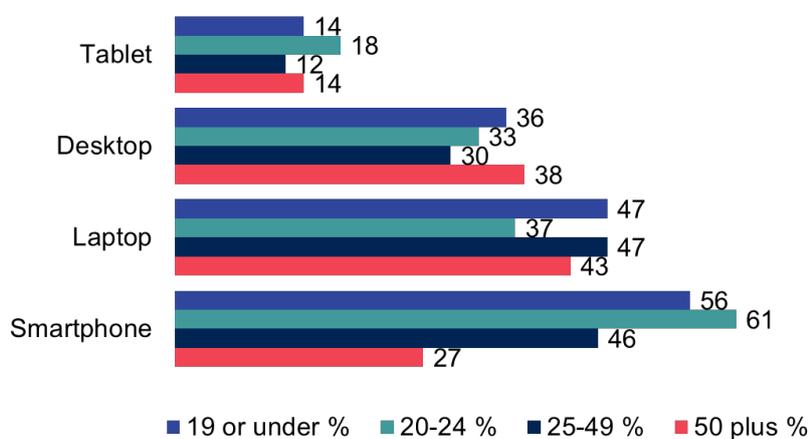
Base:	Overall (624)	Disabled (151)	50 plus and unemployed (95)	Under L2 (79)	L2 plus (417)	Unemployed for 12 months + (54)
Jobcentre Plus adviser	25%	25%	53%	48%	19%	52%
National Careers Service adviser	10%	17%	14%	11%	11%	17%
Colleague/employer	9%	5%	7%	4%	12%	2%

Seven in ten customers accessed the website at home (71% compared with 17% who accessed it from work), similar to previous years. Overall 6% accessed the site at a school, college or university a decrease on last year (13% in Year 8 Q3 and Q4), rising to 28% of those still currently in learning and 29% among young people aged under 19. Only 5% accessed the service from a library or other public

facility, although this was more common among those who had been unemployed for at least 12 months, and customers aged 50 plus who were unemployed or at risk of redundancy (17% and 12% respectively) reflecting the fact these customers are less likely to have internet access at home.

Customers most commonly access the website with the use of a laptop (45%) or a smartphone (41%), with the use of desktops at 34%, in line with previous years. The use of laptops amongst all age groups continues to become less skewed to younger groups (47% of those 19 or under, 37% among 20-24 year olds, 47% among 25-49 and 43% aged 50 plus). However, there is much greater distinction between age groups regarding smartphone use with a greater number of young people accessing the website using a smartphone (56% among those 19 or under, 61% among 20-24 year olds, 46% among 25-49, and 27% aged 50 and above). These findings are in line with Year 8 Q3 and Q4.

Figure 3.3: How customers accessed the National Careers Service website



Base: Under 19 (73), 20-24 (51), 25-49 (270), 50 plus (208)

3.2 Previous use of the National Careers Service

All customers were asked whether they had previously had any contact with the National Careers Service or another organisation providing advice about learning, skills or careers. As the service offers an integrated and multi-channel approach, it remains important to monitor cross-referrals between face-to-face, telephone and web services.

Over one in ten customers (12%) had previously met with a National Careers Service adviser face-to-face. Those who had been unemployed for more than 12 months (16%) or with qualifications below Level 2 (15%) were more likely to have spoken to an adviser face-to-face previously. Face-to-face customers were twice as likely to have previously met with an adviser face-to-face, compared with telephone customers (13% and 6% respectively).

One in ten (10%) customers had previously spoken to an adviser via the National Careers Helpline. Telephone customers were more likely to have previously spoken through the National Careers Helpline, compared with face-to-face customers (19% and 8% respectively). Those who were in work and / or learning were more likely than average to have previously spoken to an adviser via the telephone helpline (13% and 16% respectively, compared to 10% of customers overall).

Over a fifth (22%) of customers had accessed the website before they used the service. As seen in previous years, the proportion of telephone customers who used the website before accessing the service was significantly higher than for face-to-face customers (37% vs 18%). Those that were working (26%) or in learning (30%) were also more likely to have used the website prior to their contact with the service, as were those that had qualifications of Level 4 or above (26%) and NEET customers aged 18-24 (27%).

Half of all online customers (51%) were 'new' service users, visiting the site for the first time, in line with previous years. Customers who had been unemployed for more than 12 months were less likely to be visiting the site for the website (35%, compared to the average, 51%). A quarter of web customers had previous dealings with the National Careers Service via face-to-face (25%) or phone (12%), similar to previous years.

Increasing on previous years, unemployed web customers were still significantly more likely to have had prior contact with the National Careers Service than those in employment. For example, 59% of customers who had been unemployed for at least 12 months had previous dealings with the National Careers Service via face-to-face meetings (59%, compared to the average, 25%). As were customers aged 50 plus who were unemployed or at risk of redundancy (52%), customers with qualifications below Level 2 (38%) and customers with a disability (40%). Customers with a disability were also more likely to have had previous dealings the National Careers Service via phone (20%, compared to the average, 12%).

3.3 Reasons for contacting the National Careers Service

3.3.1 Telephone and face-to-face customers

General service needs

Before asking customers about their detailed reasons for contacting the National Careers Service, they were asked if they mainly wanted to discuss career options, learning or training options, or both.

More wanted to explore career options (79%, similar to Year 8 Q3 and Q4, 77%) than learning or training options (63%, also similar to Year 8 Q3 and Q4, 61%).

Customers aged 50 plus were less likely than average to be exploring career options (71%). Whereas NEET customers aged 18-24 (84%), customers in work (85%) and customers with qualifications Level 4 and above (83%) were more likely to be exploring career options.

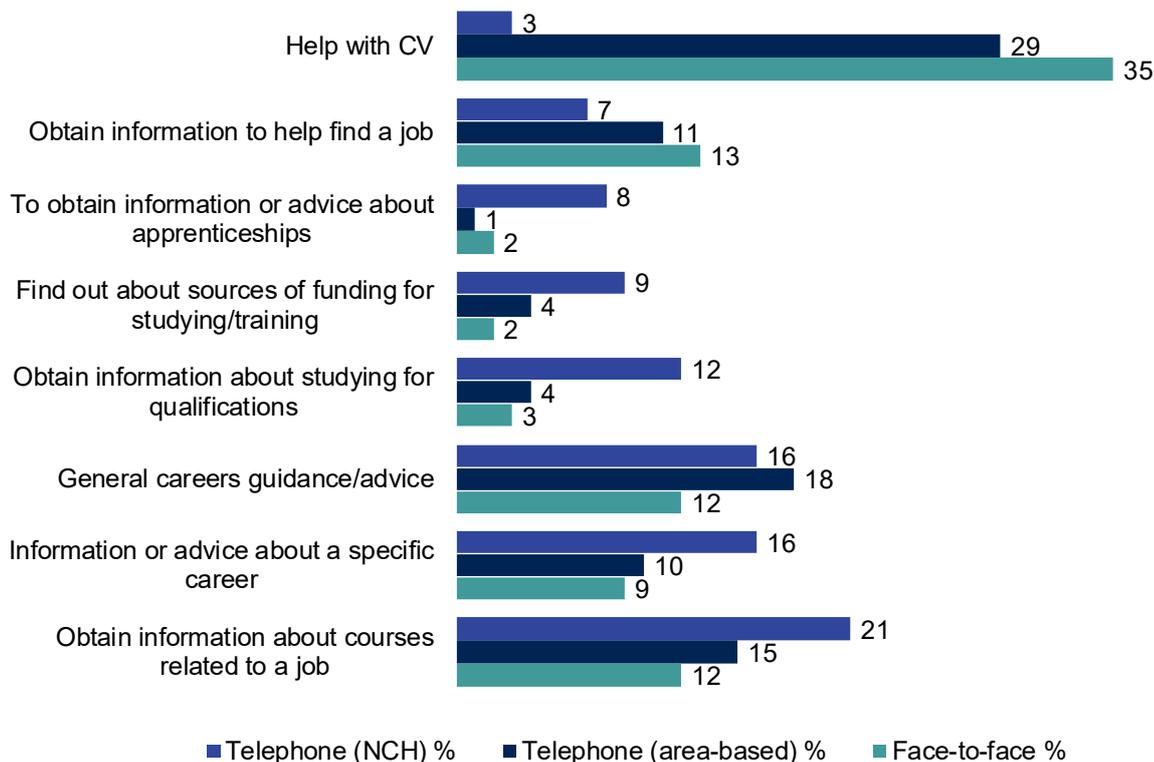
Seeking advice on learning or training options was more common among female customers (65%, compared to male customers, 62%), BAME customers (71%) and single parents (69%). As seen in previous years, customers already in work and those in learning were also more likely than average to be seeking advice on learning or training options (67% and 71% respectively). National Careers Helpline (NATIONAL CAREERS HELPLINE) customers were most likely to be planning on doing some type of learning or training (81%) compared with area-based telephone customers (59%) and face-to-face customers (61%).

Specific service needs

Customers were asked for their main reason for contacting the National Careers Service. There continues to be a wide variety of reasons for using the service covering careers/jobs and learning and ranging from information on courses relating to a specific job to developing interview skills.

Amongst face-to-face customers, the most common reason was to get help in writing or developing a CV (35%), as for telephone customers, the most common reason was to obtain information about courses related to a current or future job (19%). Customers who have been unemployed for more than 12 months (36%), customers aged 50 plus and unemployed or at risk of redundancy (39%), single parents (38%) and customers with qualifications below Level 2 (34%) were more likely to contact the National Careers Service to get help with writing or developing their CV (31%).

Figure 3.4: Reasons for contacting the National Careers Service (top mentions)⁵

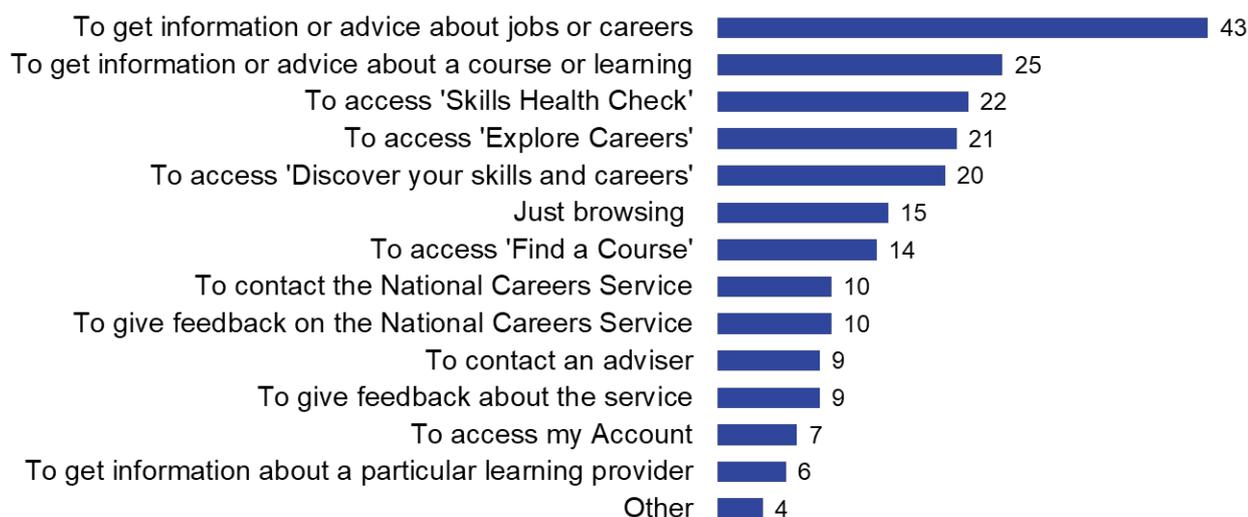


Base: Face-to-face customers (7,908), NCH customers (1,610), Area-based telephone customers (478)

3.3.2 Website users

Figure 3.5 shows that almost half of website visitors were looking for information or advice on jobs, careers or apprenticeships (45%). This increases to 58% of website visitors who were currently in learning.

⁵ Asterisks denote values greater than zero but less than 0.5 per cent.

Figure 3.5: Reasons for customers visiting the National Careers Service website

Base: All online satisfaction customers (624)

Customers using the website for jobs or careers advice or information on learning were asked what sort of information they wanted (Tables 3.2 and 3.3).

The most common form of employment-related information that customers were looking for was information about different careers (59%), followed by advice on applying for jobs (39%) and information about progressing in a career (37%). Those aged 50 plus and customers with a disability were more likely to look for information about how to get back into work (both 41%, compared to the average, 29%), this increase further amongst those aged 50 plus and unemployed or at risk of redundancy (61%).

Table 3.2: Specific job-related information sought by website visitors

Base (all those looking for information/advice about jobs and careers on the National Careers Service website):	Year 9	Q3 and	Q1 and	Year 7	Year 6	Year 5	Year 4	Year 3
	2019/20 (282)	Q4 Year 8 2018/19 (453)	Q2 Year 8 2018 (807)	2017/18 (3,121)	2016/17 (4,381)	2015/16 (5,793)	2014/15 (6,129)	2013/14 (5,606)
Information about different careers	59%	65%	68%	66%	64%	61%	61%	61%
Information about progressing in a career	37%	36%	36%	35%	32%	30%	29%	28%
Applying for jobs	39%	37%	36%	33%	34%	37%	36%	37%
Information about the jobs market	27%	29%	23%	24%	27%	25%	25%	26%

CVs	22%	27%	22%	21%	27%	30%	34%	37%
Information on apprenticeships ⁶	21%	n/a						
How to get back into work	29%	19%	18%	17%	17%	17%	20%	26%
Interview skills	18%	21%	20%	16%	19%	19%	21%	21%
Voluntary work	12%	10%	12%	9%	11%	11%	11%	11%
Issues around redundancy	4%	3%	3%	3%	4%	3%	4%	5%
Other	10%	7%	8%	9%	8%	8%	7%	5%

Table 3.3 below outlines the learning related information that was sought by online customers. Over half of customers were looking for information on a specific course (48%).

Customers across all age ranges were consistently interested in finding out about different ways of learning. Customers with a disability were more likely than customers without a disability to want information on how to get back into learning (49%, compared with 20%). BAME customers are more likely to want information on paying for a course (37%, compared to white customers, 16%).

Table 3.3: Specific course-related information sought by website visitors

Base (all those looking for information/advice about a course or learning on the National Careers Service website):	Year 9	Q3 and	Q1 and	Year 7	Year 6	Year 5	Year 4	Year 3
	2019/20 (162)	Q4 Year 8 2018/19 (222)	Q2 Year 8 2018 (373)	2017/18 (1,244)	2016/17 (1,647)	2015/16 (2,345)	2014/15 (2,406)	2013/14 (2,459)
A specific course	48%	45%	52%	49%	48%	47%	47%	43%
Different ways of learning	35%	40%	37%	34%	36%	38%	39%	41%
How to get back into learning	30%	25%	28%	26%	26%	26%	29%	35%
Apprenticeships	n/a	32%	31%	27%	24%	22%	19%	20%
Paying for a course	21%	20%	24%	22%	22%	21%	25%	29%

⁶ 'Information on apprenticeships' was removed from the question surrounding learning and training and added to the jobs and careers question at the start of Year 9.

Other caring responsibilities	5%	6%	7%	9%	10%	10%	9%	8%
Childcare	3%	5%	6%	6%	9%	8%	7%	8%
Other	7%	10%	13%	15%	14%	13%	12%	10%

4 Experiences of using the Service

Seven in ten telephone customers had their enquiry handled in one call (72%), similar to previous years. Amongst those who had multiple calls, 64% dealt with the same adviser.

One in five face-to-face customers (19%) had two or more meetings with the National Careers Service adviser. Customers who were unemployed for more than 12 months (21%), customers with a disability (22%), customers who are aged 50 plus and unemployed or at risk of redundancy (21%) and NEET customers aged 18-24 (22%) were more likely to have multiple meetings with their adviser. Two-thirds of customers who had more than one meeting saw the same adviser each time (67%).

The National Careers Service provides tools to support its customers across multiple platforms. The majority of customers found these tools useful. In particular, amongst those who had been referred to the Skills Health Check a third (33%) went on to use the tool and the majority of these customers found the tool useful (88%).

Just under half of online customers got all or most of the information they wanted on their first visit to the website (48%).

Around one-third of face-to-face and telephone customers reported that they had been followed-up by the National Careers Service since their initial contact (35%), again similar to previous waves.

When compared to Year 8 (Q3 and Q4), there has been a significant increase in the number of telephone customers being offered information by the adviser and/or information outlining their conversation and what the customer should do next (75%, up from 68%). The vast majority of telephone customers found the information they received useful (90%), and almost six in ten found it very useful (59%).

This chapter examines customer experiences contacting the National Careers Service over the phone and face-to-face, and among those using the website. It also looks at the specific tools and features that customers across all channels used, including the Skills Health Check, Discover your Skills and Careers, Explore Careers, Find a Course, the Skills Action Plan and an Account, which enables customers to access a range of tools such as updating and storing their CV and actions plans which they can return to as their career develops.

4.1 Making contact with the National Careers Service by phone

Seven in ten telephone customer queries were handled in a single call in Year 9 (72%), in line with previous years. National Careers Helpline customers were more likely than average to have their query dealt with in a single call (75%), as were those in learning (83%). Amongst those who had multiple calls, 64% dealt with the same adviser. Area-based telephone customers who had more than one call were more likely to have been dealt with by one adviser (78%).

On average, customers spent 27 minutes speaking with their adviser.

When compared to Year 8 (Q3 and Q4), there has been a significant increase in the number of people being offered information by the adviser and/or information outlining their conversation and what the customer should do next (75%, up from 68%). Of these, nine in ten (90%) recall receiving this information. Those aged 50 plus were less likely to be offered information (71%), while 18% of all telephone customers said the adviser did not offer to send them any information.

Area-based telephone customers were more likely than National Careers Helpline customers to have been offered further information reflecting the more complex needs of this group (90% compared with 70%). Area-based telephone customers were also more likely to say they actually received the information than National Careers Helpline customers (95% compared with 87%).

The vast majority of telephone customers found the information they received useful (90%), and almost six in ten found it very useful (59%). Eight per cent of customers found the information not very or not at all useful. These findings are mostly in line with previous years, however, a lower proportion of customers rated the information as very useful in Year 8 (Q3 and Q4) (49%, compared with 59%). Female customers were more likely to find the information useful (93%, compared to male customers, 85%).

4.2 Face-to-face contact with the National Careers Service

Almost eight in ten customers had just one face-to-face meeting with a National Careers Service adviser (79%), an increase when compared to Year 8 Q3 and Q4 (75%). Two in ten (19%) had two or more meetings. Customers who were unemployed for more than 12 months (21%), customers with a disability (22%), customers who aged 50 plus and unemployed or at risk of redundancy (21%) and NEET customers aged 18-24 (22%) were more likely to have multiple meetings with their adviser.

South West and Oxfordshire customers are more likely than average to have one meeting (83%), whilst West Midlands and Staffordshire customers are more likely to have had multiple meetings (23%).

On average, customers spent 43 minutes speaking to their adviser.

The four main reasons for attending more than one meeting were that: the adviser was reviewing or amending their CV (28%); the adviser recommended they come back (21%); the adviser could not answer all the questions during the first meeting and needed to provide more information (19%); or because there wasn't time to go through everything in the first meeting (14%). Customers in Yorkshire and the Humber and East Midlands and Northamptonshire were more likely than average to visit the adviser again to have their CV reviewed or amended (35% and 36% respectively). South East customers were more likely than average to visit their adviser again because there wasn't enough time to go through everything in the first meeting (20%).

Two-thirds of customers who had more than one meeting saw the same adviser each time (67%). Three in ten (32%) saw different advisers, although the majority (78%) did not mind this. BAME customers were more likely to say they would have preferred to have seen the same adviser each time (24%, compared to White customers, 20%)

Three-quarters of customers had the meeting with an adviser in a Jobcentre Plus office (75%); as might be expected, this was higher among customers who are unemployed (81%). NEET customers aged 18-24 (82%), customers with a disability (78%), customers aged 50 plus and unemployed or at risk of

redundancy (78%) and single parents (78%) were also more likely to see an adviser in a Jobcentre Plus office.

Customers in London (78%), West Midlands and Staffordshire (80%) and South East (84%) were more likely to have their meeting in a Jobcentre Plus office. Customers in East Midlands and Northamptonshire (64%) and Yorkshire and Humber (72%) were less likely to have their meeting in a Jobcentre Plus office.

4.3 Using the National Careers Service website

Customers who used the National Careers Service website were asked which tools or features they had accessed.

The most commonly used feature was Skills Health Check (34%), followed by Discover your Skills and Careers and Explore Careers (both 25%)⁷. Customers that have a disability and customers who have been unemployed for more than 12 months were more likely than average to have used the Skills Health Check (46% and 54% respectively). Just over one in five used none of the tools (23%).

The majority of customers who used the various tools and features found them useful, as shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Proportion rating each feature as ‘very useful’ or ‘quite useful’

	Explore Careers (Q3 and Q4)	Discover your Skills and Careers (Q3 and Q4)	Account	Skills Health Check	Find a Course (Q3 and Q4)	Contact the service (Q3 and Q4)
<i>Base: All who used feature</i>	159	154	175	210	111	72
Very/quite useful	86%	75%	73%	71%	66%	63%
Not very/at all useful	8%	21%	18%	20%	25%	35%

Just under half of website visitors got all or most of the information they wanted on their first visit to the website (48%), similar to Year 8 Q3 and Q4 (46%). Four in ten either got some (17%) or none of the information they required (23%). The remaining 11%⁸ were just browsing.

4.4 Use and usefulness of common National Careers Service tools

Customers were asked about the range of tools they have accessed through the National Careers Service. The questions covered the following:

- Face-to-face customers were asked if they went through the Skills Health Check tool and the Discover your Skills and Careers tool with their adviser in their meeting.

⁷ As of Q3 changes were made to the website features. Discover your Skills and Careers, Explore Careers, Find a Course and Contact the service were added at Q3, therefore this data is based on Q3 and Q4.

⁸ The percentages do not add up to 100 due to rounding.

- All customers were asked if their adviser referred them to the Skills Health Check tool and the Discover your Skills and Careers tool (excluding those who had been through these tools with their adviser in a face-to-face meeting).
- All customers were asked if their adviser referred them to the following tools: Explore Careers, Find a Course and Webchat⁹.

4.4.1 Skills Health Check

The Skills Health Check is a diagnostic tool that helps customers to decide which jobs might be right for them.

Almost half of face-to-face customers (48%) recalled going through the Skills Health Check with their adviser in their meeting, whilst a third (33%) stated they had not and 19% said they could not remember. Customers were less likely to say they had not been through this tool when compared to Year 8 Q3 and Q4 (33%, compared with 47%).

Customers who had more than one face-to-face meeting (51% compared with 47% of those who only had one session) and had the same adviser (52% compared with 48% of those who did not have the same adviser) were more likely to use this tool, as were those who recalled having a Skills Action Plan (59% compared with 34% of customers who did not recall a Skills Action Plan) and those who had visited the NCS website in the previous three months (56%, compared to 46% among customers who had not visited the website). These findings are in line with Year 8 Q3 and Q4.

BAME customers (40%) were more likely than average to say they had not gone through the Skills Health Check tool, as were customers with qualifications Level 4 and above (35%) and customers who had been unemployed for less than six months (35%).

The majority of face-to-face customers who used this tool found it useful (89%), similar to previous years. This includes 47% who found it 'very useful' and 42% who said it was 'fairly useful'. Only nine per cent did not find it useful. Younger customers were most likely to find the Skills Health Check useful (97% of those aged 19 or under and 91% of customers aged 20-24), as were NEET customers aged 18-24 (93%). Those who had a Skills Action Plan were also more likely than average to find it useful (92%).

The main reasons why customers did not find the Skills Health Check useful were that they thought it told them things they already knew (36%) and that they did not find the questions relevant (28%). NEET customers aged 18-24 were more likely than average to say that the Skills Health Check told them things they already knew (54%).

Amongst those who did not go through the Skills Health Check with an adviser in a face-to-face meeting, one in five (20%) had advisers who referred them to the Skills Health Check. This was more likely to be the case amongst those who were working (24%) or had Level 4 or above qualifications (25%). Of these, a third (33%) have gone on to use the tool and the majority of these customers found the tool useful (88%).

⁹ Respondents were only asked about Webchat from Q3 onwards.

4.4.2 Discover your Skills and Careers¹⁰

Discover your Skills and Careers is a tool that assesses customer skills, interests and motivations.

Almost four in ten face-to-face customers (38%) recalled going through Discover your Skills and Careers with their adviser in their meeting, whilst half (50%) stated they had not and 13% said they could not remember.

Customers more likely to recall going through this tool include:

- Customers who had more than one face-to-face meeting (42% compared with 36% of those who only had one session) and had the same adviser (45% compared with 38% of those who did not have the same adviser) and;
- those who recalled having a Skills Action Plan (48% compared with 23% of customers who did not recall a Skills Action Plan) and;
- those who had called the National Careers Helpline in the last three months (46%, compared to those who had not, 37%) and;
- those who had visited the NCS website in the previous three months (45%, compared to 36% of customers who had not visited the website).

Customers over the age of 50 (53%) were more likely than average to say they had not gone through Discover your Skills and Careers, as were customers with qualifications Level 4 and above (55%), customers who had been unemployed for less than six months (52%) and Yorkshire and Humber and South East customers (both 54%).

The majority of face-to-face customers who used this tool found it useful (91%). This includes 53% who found it 'very useful' and 38% who said it was 'fairly useful'. Only eight per cent did not find it useful. Younger customers were most likely to find Discover your Skills and Careers useful (96% of 20-24-year olds), as were NEET customers aged 18-24 (96%) and customers with qualifications below Level 2 (95%). Those who had a Skills Action Plan were also more likely than average to find it useful (94%).

The main reasons why customers did not find the Discover your Skills and Careers useful were that they thought it told them things they already knew (29%) and that they did not find the questions relevant (28%).

Amongst those who did not go through the Discover your Skills and Careers with an adviser in a face-to-face meeting, over one in five (22%) had advisers who referred them to this tool. This was more likely to be the case amongst those who were working (25%), female customers (24%) or NEET customers aged 18-24 (28%). Of these, three in ten (29%) have gone on to use the tool and the majority of these customers found the tool useful (89%).

4.4.3 Explore Careers

Almost four in ten customers (37%) were referred to Explore Careers by their adviser. This was more likely to be the case amongst those who were working (41%), NEET customers aged 18-24 (44%) and those with qualifications above Level 4 (42%). Customers less likely to be referred to Explore Careers

¹⁰ Questions regarding this tool were only added from Q2 onwards.

included customers with a disability (53% compared to 49% on average), those aged 50 plus and unemployed or at risk of redundancy (56%) and those who have been unemployed for more than twelve months (52%).

Amongst those who have been referred, almost four in ten (38%) have gone on to use the tool and the majority of these customers found the tool useful (88%).

4.4.4 Find a Course

Thirty-six percent of customers were referred to Find a Course by their adviser. This was more likely to be the case amongst those who were working (38%), female customers (38%), NEET customers aged 18-24 (39%) and single parents (39%). National Careers Helpline customers (40%), as well as East of England and Buckinghamshire (41%) and East Midlands and Northamptonshire customers (44%) were more likely to be referred to Find a Course. Customers less likely to be referred to Find a Course included customers with qualifications Level 4 and above and those aged 50 plus and unemployed or at risk of redundancy (both 58%, compared to 55% on average).

Amongst those who have been referred, four in ten (40%) have gone on to use the tool and the majority of these customers found the tool useful (87%).

4.4.5 Webchat¹¹

One in five customers (21%) were referred to Webchat by their adviser. Those less likely to be referred to Webchat included NEET customers aged 18-24 (77%, compared with the average, 70%).

Amongst those who have been referred, one in six (16%) have gone on to use the tool and the majority of these customers found the tool useful (90%).

4.4.6 Skills Action Plan

Face-to-face and telephone advice customers were asked if a Skills Action Plan had been drawn up for achieving their goals and targets. The expectation is that the majority of these customers should participate in the creation of a Skills Action Plan which sets out their agreed next steps.

Just over half of telephone and face-to-face customers recalled having a Skills Action Plan (57%), similar to previous waves. Working customers (59%) were more likely than average to have a Skills Action Plan drawn up for them, as were 18-24 year old NEET customers (61%) and those with qualifications Level 4 and above (63%). Yorkshire and Humber (62%) and North East and Cumbria customers (60%) are also more likely to recall having a Skills Action Plan drawn up.

Furthermore, among face-to-face customers, those who had multiple meetings (61%) and those who had the same adviser (62%) were more likely to recall a Skills Action Plan being drawn up. Similarly, telephone customer who had multiple calls (82%) and those who had the same adviser (84%) were more likely to recall a Skills Action Plan being drawn up. This suggests that having a more intensive level of interaction may relate to having a Skills Action Plan. However, overall, telephone advice customers were more likely than face-to-face customers to recall having a Plan (77% compared with 56%).

¹¹ Questions surrounding Webchat were added from Q3 onwards.

Customers with a disability (37%), those who have been unemployed for more than 12 months (35%) and those aged 50 plus and unemployed or at risk of redundancy (40%) were all less likely than average to have a Skills Action Plan drawn up.

Among those with a Skills Action Plan, over half of customers had a great deal of involvement in drawing up their plan (55%), while a further 34% reported that they had some involvement, again, in line with previous years.

The majority of telephone and face-to-face customers who recalled having a Skills Action Plan found it useful (89%), consistent with previous years. Eight percent found the Skills Action Plan 'not very' or 'not at all' useful; the main reasons were that they did not think it was relevant to their situation (25%), it was too general/insufficiently tailored (21%) or it did not contain any new information (21%).

4.4.7 Accounts

An Account allows customers to access a range of tools, such as updating and storing their CV, actions plans, qualifications and other information into an account which they could return to as their career develops.

Overall, only six per cent of face-to-face and telephone customers opened an Account during the session, in line with previous years.

Table 4.2: Use of Accounts

	Year 9 2019/20	Q3 and Q4 Year 8 2018/19	Q1 and Q2 Year 8 2018	Year 7 2017/18	Year 6 2016/17	Year 5 2015/16
<i>Base (all customers):</i>	(9,996)	(6,111)	(2,954)	(8,228)	(8,821)	(8,812)
You have opened an account	6%	6%	6%	6%	7%	10%
Was offered during session but not interested	15%	14%	14%	13%	14%	13%
It was not discussed	65%	65%	67%	69%	68%	66%
Can't remember	12%	12%	11%	10%	10%	9%

Customers more likely to have opened an Account were:

- Customers who had a Skills Action Plan (8% vs 3% of customers who did not have a Skills Action Plan).
- Customers who, in the previous three months, have visited the National Careers Service, had a face-to-face meeting or called the National Careers Helpline (all 8%).
- North West customers (7%).

Six in ten customers who had opened an Account had progressed as far as activating it (59%, similar to Year 8 Q3 and Q4, 60%).

4.5 Follow up actions

4.5.1 Reported follow-up by the National Careers Service

Over a third of face-to-face and telephone customers said that the National Careers Service had been in touch with them again after their initial contact (35%). Email (21%) and telephone (11%) were the most common communication channels used for follow-up.

Customers with Level 4 and above qualifications (39%), those without a disability (36%) and those who have been unemployed for less than 6 months (37%) were more likely than average to have received follow-up. In contrast, customers with qualifications below Level 2 (65%) and those who have been unemployed for more than 12 months (65%) were more likely than average (62%) to have not received follow-up.

Table 4.3 outlines the type of follow-up customers have received by region.

Table 4.3: Different types of follow-up customers have received by region

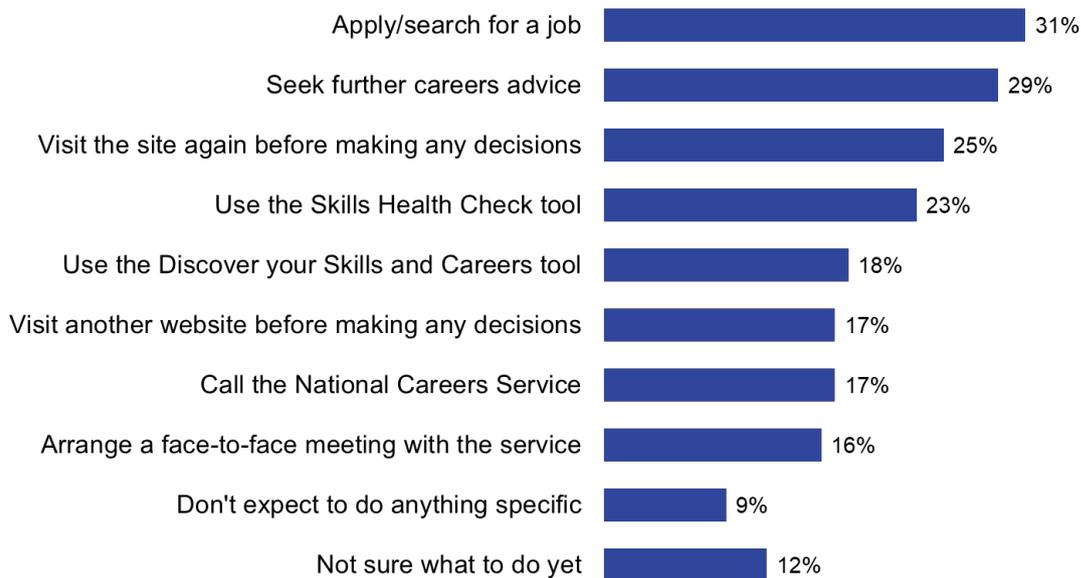
	Average	National Careers Helpline	London	East of England & Bucks.	East Midlands & North.	Yorkshire & Humber	West Midlands & Staff.	South West & Ox.	South East	North West	North East & Cumbria
Base:	9,996	1,610	1,054	769	736	1,044	860	910	873	1,136	1,004
No	62%	74%	62%	59%	55%	56%	65%	57%	54%	68%	62%
Net: Yes	35%	23%	35%	39%	44%	42%	32%	40%	44%	29%	35%
Yes - phone	11%	16%	14%	7%	9%	13%	12%	11%	12%	8%	9%
Yes - email	21%	11%	19%	28%	32%	22%	17%	26%	27%	17%	19%
Yes – face-to-face	3%	1%	5%	3%	5%	2%	5%	3%	3%	4%	4%
Yes - text	5%	1%	2%	5%	5%	12%	4%	8%	8%	3%	8%

4.5.2 Follow up actions carried out by online customers

Online customers were asked what they were likely to do as a result of visiting the National Careers Service website (Figure 4.1). The most common response was applying or searching for a job (31%),

seeking further careers advice (29%) and visiting the site again before making any further decisions (25%).

Figure 4.1: Online customers planned next steps after visiting the National Careers Service website¹²



Base: All online satisfaction customers (624)

¹² "Use the Discover your Skills and Careers tool" was added from Q3 onwards.

5 Customer Satisfaction

The overall quality of the service continued to be rated highly by telephone and face-to-face customers, with over nine in ten agreeing that it was good (93%).

In line with this, the vast majority of face-to-face and telephone customers were satisfied with the National Careers Service overall (85%), consistent with previous years. Overall, satisfaction with the National Careers Service website has declined since Year 8 Q3 and Q4 from 69% to 58%. However, positively, when looking at each of the quarters individually, there is a net increase in satisfaction: Quarter 1 (58%) to Quarter 4 (64%).

The customer groups that have been consistently satisfied with the service year on year include those who recall drawing up a Skills Action Plan and / or used the Skills Health Check (both 90%), younger customers (89% of 20-24 year olds) and customers who had the same adviser, if they had multiple appointments (90% amongst face-to-face customers and telephone customers).

Among telephone and face-to-face customers, satisfaction with individual aspects of the service was also high, especially the professionalism of their adviser (96%).

Almost nine in ten face-to-face or telephone customers either had already recommended or reported they would recommend the National Careers Service (88%). Three in ten online customers (31%) said they had already recommended the National Careers Service, and a further half (51%) said they would.

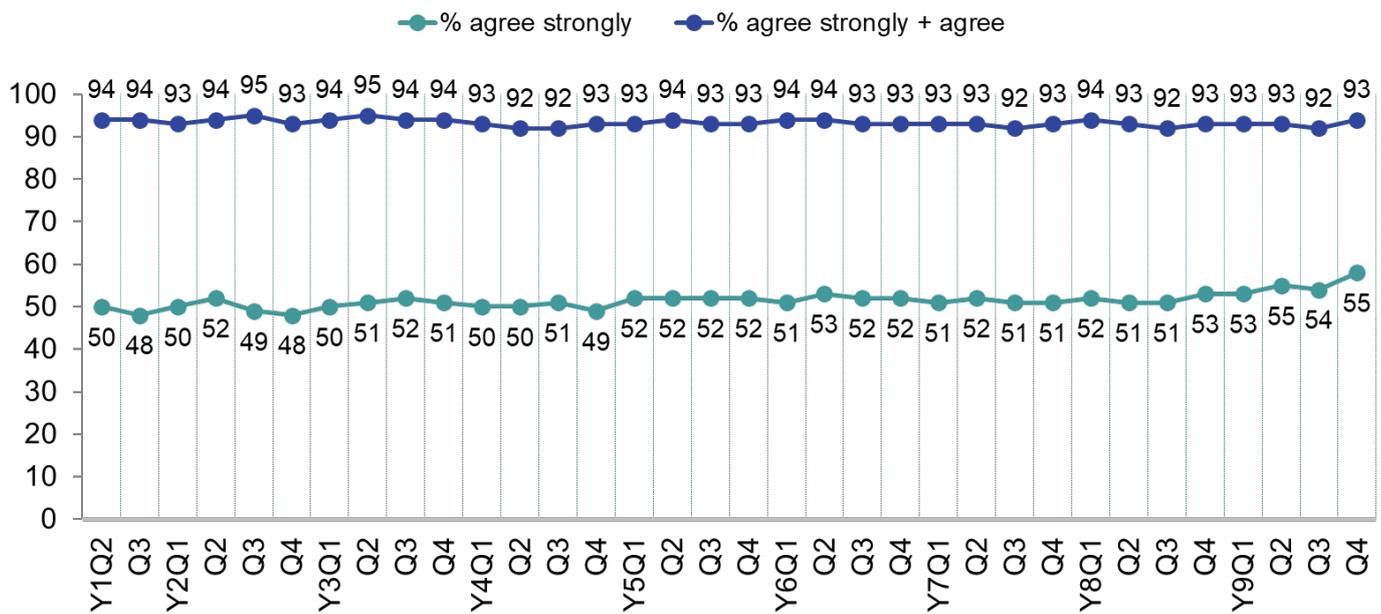
This chapter examines customer satisfaction with the National Careers Service. As well as overall satisfaction, it explores satisfaction with more specific aspects of the service ranging from logistical issues, such as the timing of appointments, to views on the quality of the advice received and, on the helpfulness, and professionalism of the adviser. It also details satisfaction with specific aspects of the National Careers Service website.

5.1 Overall perceptions about the quality of the service

5.1.1 Face-to-face and telephone customers

The overall quality of the service was rated highly by telephone and face-to-face customers. Most Year 9 customers agreed that it was good (93%), while only a small minority disagreed (6%). Ratings have been consistently high over time (Figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1: Agreement overall quality of service was good, by survey quarter



Base: All face-to-face and telephone customers (see Table 1.1 for base sizes per quarter)

There were some variations by customer group, as follows:

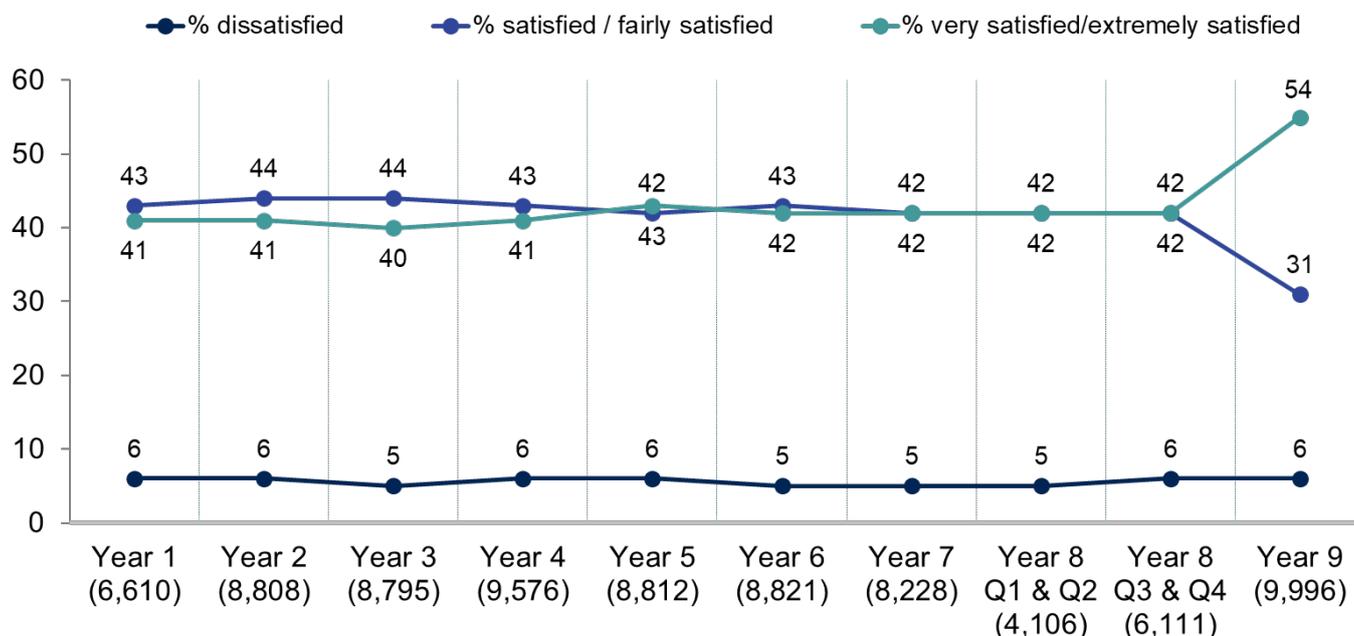
- By age group, customers aged 18-19 and 20-24 were the most likely to agree that the overall quality of the service was good (97% and 96% respectively), while those aged 50 plus were the least likely to agree (91%).
- Customers in learning were more likely than average to agree that the service was good (96%).
- NEET customers aged 18-24 were more likely than average to agree that the service was good (96%).
- Customers with qualifications of Level 4 or above were less likely to agree the service was good (92%) than customers with qualifications below Level 2 (94%).
- Customer who are aged 50 plus and unemployed or at risk of redundancy are less likely to agree the service was good (91%).
- Customers who had a deeper level of engagement with the service overall were more likely to agree that the quality of the service was good. For example, levels of agreement were higher among those who recalled using the Skills Health Check (96% compared to 91% who did not) or agreeing a Skills Action Plan (96% compared to 89% who had not).
- Among customers who had multiple calls, those who only spoke to one adviser were more likely to regard the service as good compared to customers who spoke to more than one adviser (94% compared to 88%). This also applies to customers who had multiple face-to-face meeting and spoke to the same adviser (95%, compared to those who had different advisers, 93%).

5.2 Overall satisfaction with the National Careers Service

5.2.1 Face-to-face and telephone customers

Most face-to-face and telephone customers were satisfied with the National Careers Service overall (85%), and only 6% of customers were dissatisfied, largely unchanged from previous years (Figure 5.2).

Figure 5.2: Ratings of satisfaction and dissatisfaction amongst face-to-face and telephone customers¹³



Base: As shown in chart

Satisfaction was high among all customer groups, although there were some variations:

- Young customers were more likely to be satisfied than older customers, with 89% of 20-24-year olds being satisfied compared to 85% of 25-49-year olds and 83% of customers aged 50 plus.
- Female customers were more likely to be satisfied (87%, compared with male customers, 84%).
- NEET customers aged 18-24 were more likely to be satisfied with the service (88%).
- Customers with qualifications of Level 4 or above were less likely to be satisfied (83%) and more likely to be dissatisfied (7%).
- Customers with a disability were less likely to be satisfied than customers without a disability (83% compared to 86%) and were more likely to be dissatisfied (7% compared to 5%).
- Customers aged 50 plus who were unemployed and at risk of redundancy were more likely to say that they were dissatisfied with the service (7%).

¹³ In Year 9, the scale used to measure satisfaction was changed to a 7-point scale: Extremely satisfied, Very satisfied, Fairly satisfied, Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, Fairly dissatisfied, Very dissatisfied, Extremely dissatisfied.

- Area-based telephone customers were more likely to be satisfied with the service (90%, compared with National Careers Helpline customers (84%) and face-to-face customers (85%).
- Face-to-face customers who had multiple meetings were more likely to be satisfied with the service (88%, compared to those who had one meeting, 85%) and spoke to the same adviser each time (90%, compared to those who had different advisers, 85%). Similarly, telephone customers who spoke to the same adviser where they have had multiple calls were also more likely to be more satisfied (90%, compared to those who did not, 82%).
- As was the case for the rating of overall service quality, satisfaction levels were higher among customers who recalled using the Skills Health Check (90%, compared to those who did not, 82%) or agreeing a Skills Action Plan (90% compared to 79% who did not).
- Face-to-face customers who had a meeting at a Jobcentre Plus were more satisfied than face-to-face customers who did not (86% compared to 84%).

Respondents who were satisfied with the service were asked why this was the case. The main reasons for satisfaction relate to the individual advisers that customers dealt with. Most frequently, customers said that the adviser was knowledgeable, helpful or gave good advice (46%), while the other main reasons were that the adviser was friendly, personable or understanding (35%), gave good advice or helped with their CV (29%), or gave good advice relating to courses or training (18%). These responses were very similar to those seen in previous waves.

“The advisor took me through all the options very comprehensively and helped me formulate ideas I hadn’t come up with before.”

“I felt very lucky that people want to help you so much to find a job. I didn’t get judged for not being computer literate and the support I received went above and beyond.”

The main reasons for dissatisfaction were also consistent with previous findings, and are summarised below:

- The most common reason for dissatisfaction was that some customers did not feel they received the help or information that they wanted and/or needed (52%).

“They advised me to look for jobs in London and I can’t afford to get to London. The apprenticeships looked at required A levels which I did not have.”

- Over one in five dissatisfied customers reported a lack of follow-up from advisers (25%).

“I’d done a CV and she said she’d send me a blank email so I could send a CV onto her so she could look at it and she never sent an email to me. Then I got in touch with the job centre, emailed her and spoke to her about it, still waiting for an email...”

- There was criticism of not being helped to get a relevant course or training (16%).

“I wanted to explore teaching, but I was told to forget college because they want a degree. I was told there was job for a chef and felt steered away from my goals.”

- Some customers wanted help with their CV and felt the support they received was insufficient (11%).

“I thought he would spend a bit more time with me rather than just directing me to the skills check diagnostic tool. He did not go through my CV with me.”

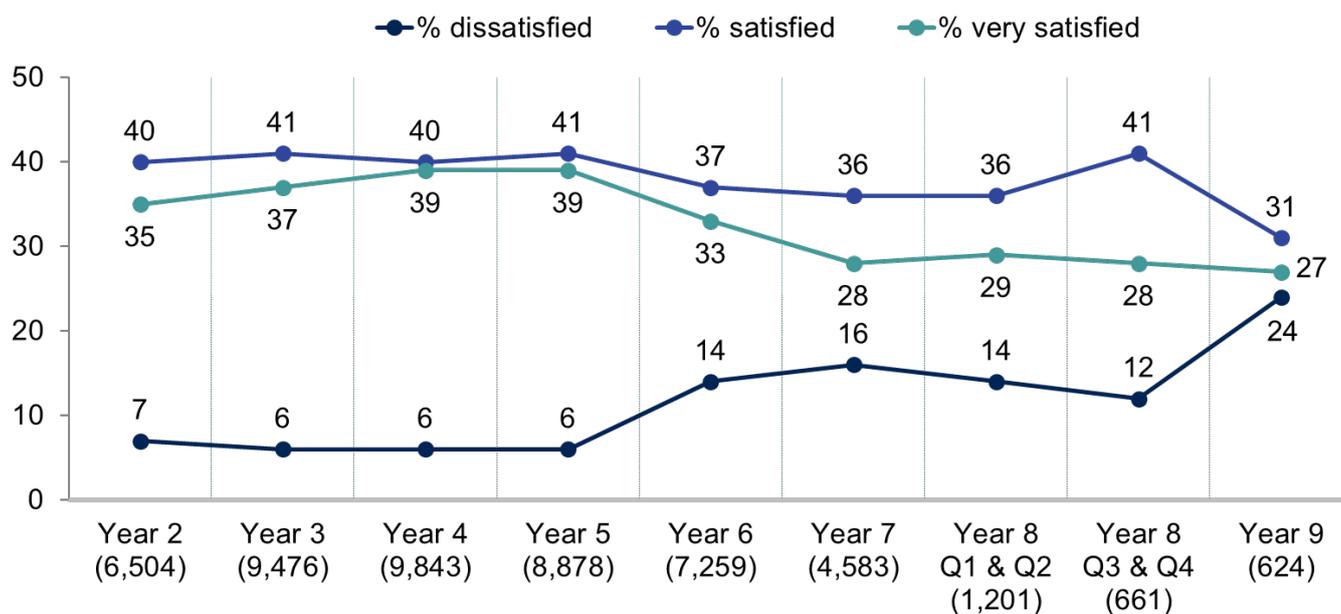
- Some felt the advisers were rude or unprofessional (11%).

“They gave me false hope. I got passed around advisors and they forgot to follow up. It was all very unprofessional, she said she would contact me again and she never did. I emailed her my CV and she never got back to me.”

5.2.2 Online customers

Following the redesign of the website in Year 6, there had been an uplift in satisfaction to 64% in Year 7, 65% in Q1 and Q2 of Year 8 and 69% in Q3 and Q4 of Year 8. However, in Year 9 there has been a significant decline in satisfaction (58%) (Figure 5.3). However, positively, when looking at each of the quarters individually there is a net increase in satisfaction: Quarter 1 (58%), Quarter 2 (52%), Quarter 3 (54%), Quarter 4 (64%).

Figure 5.3: Ratings of satisfaction and dissatisfaction amongst online customers



Base: As shown in chart

There were some notable differences among online customers:

- Satisfaction was highest among BAME customers (72%, compared to White customers, 57%).
- Customers with qualification below Level 2 (72%) were more likely to be satisfied with the website than those with qualifications Level 2 and above (55%).
- Dissatisfaction was highest amongst Careers Advisers (37%, compared with the general public, 23%).
- Dissatisfaction was higher among those aged 50 plus (26%, compared to those aged 19 or under, 14%). This may reflect the higher proportion of dissatisfaction across Year 9, as online customers were more likely to be aged 50 plus when compared to Year 8 Q3 and Q4 (33%, compared to 21%).

In addition to a greater proportion of customers aged 50+ using the website, who are more likely to be dissatisfied, the open responses showed that online customers had varying technical issues. In particular, customers reported problems using the Skills Health Check and webchat. The issues experienced with the functionality of these tools could explain the increased levels of dissatisfaction as illustrated below.

Of those customers who were dissatisfied with the website, one in ten (11%) said this was because they experienced issues with the Skills Health Check, 8% felt the website lacked information and 7% felt the information was too generic.

“I was very dissatisfied that I was unable to complete the Skills Health Check. I attended a course at my local JCP yesterday and one of the items on the Skills Action Plan I made was to complete the skills assessment. I have only been able to complete the ‘discover your skills’ and careers section which is useful but not the key reason for visiting the site.”

“You should redesign the entire website in order to make it easier to understand and able to locate relevant information to the individual.”

“If you’re going to do a webchat get people who can actually help narrow down careers you’re interested in rather than just sending links of the career list of the page I’m already on!”

‘The problems with logging on really hindered my session’

However, a fifth of customers (21%) said that they liked the website because it was easy to use, a further 16% felt that the website had a clear layout and 14% reported that the website was helpful and contained relevant information.

“Easy to use. The fact you can save your Skills Health Check and come back to it later is useful.”

“I found the live chat useful and I was dealt with by someone who was very helpful, polite and friendly. I would recommend this website to people looking for work.”

5.3 Satisfaction with different aspects of the adviser sessions

National Careers Service face-to-face and telephone customers were asked for their views on a range of specific aspects of their session(s). The logistical aspects of the services scored highly on satisfaction, maintaining the trend seen in previous years (Figure 5.4).

Figure 5.4: Customer satisfaction with logistical arrangements

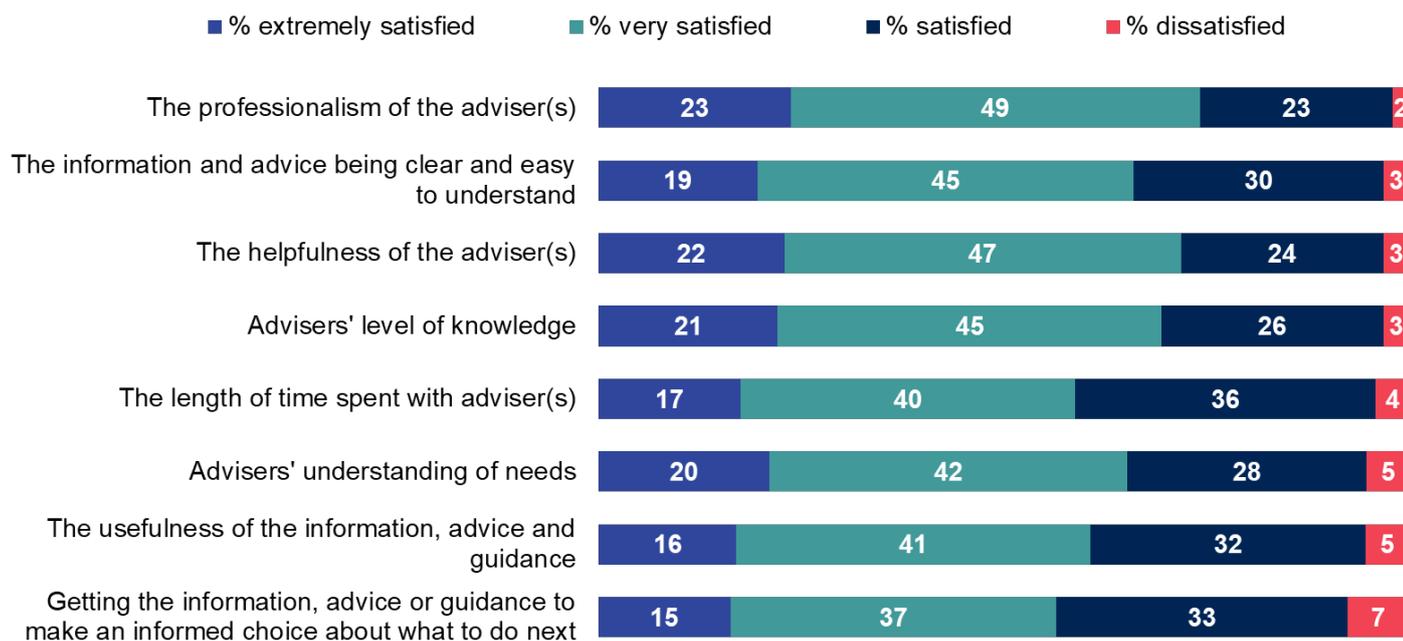


Base: Telephone customers (2,088), Telephone customers who spoke to more than one adviser (248), Face-to-face customers (7,908)

Nine in ten telephone customers were satisfied with the time it took for someone to answer their call (89%). National Careers Helpline customers were more likely to be positive about this (91%, compared to area-based telephone customers, 86%). Amongst telephone customers who spoke to more than one adviser, 86% were satisfied with the time it took to get through to the person who helped them.

More than nine in ten face-to-face customers were satisfied with the convenience of their appointment time (95%) and with the location and venue where they received their advice (93%). These findings were broadly consistent across customer groups.

Customers were also positive about both the assistance of their advisers and with the content and outcome of the National Careers Service intervention, as demonstrated by Figure 5.5. On the various aspects asked about customers rated aspects highly, with the professionalism of their adviser receiving the highest level of satisfaction. This mirrors earlier findings in section 5.2.1 on the reasons for overall satisfaction, which focused on positive impressions of advisers’ helpfulness and their ability to give good advice.

Figure 5.5: Satisfaction with information and advice from the service

Base: All telephone and face-to-face customers (9,996)

Although satisfaction across all of the measures was consistently high, there were some variations between customer groups, as detailed below.

- Customers who had a deeper level of engagement with the service overall were more likely to be satisfied with the various aspects of the information and advice received. For example, among those who recalled using the Skills Health Check or agreeing a Skills Action Plan were more likely to be satisfied with the advisers' understanding of their needs (both 94%, compared to the average, 91%).
- Customers with qualifications of Level 4 or above had lower satisfaction levels on several measures (although still the majority were satisfied). For instance, 86% were satisfied with usefulness of the information, advice and guidance, compared to 89% of customers with qualifications below Level 2.
- Younger customers were more likely to be satisfied on several measures. For instance, almost all of 20-24-year olds (94%) were satisfied with the helpfulness of their adviser.
- Customers with a disability were less likely to be satisfied with many elements of the service, including the information and advice provided being clear and easy to understand (93% compared to 95% of customers without a disability), the usefulness of the information, advice and guidance (87% compared to 90%) and getting the information, advice or guidance to make an informed choice about what to do next (83% compared to 87%).
- Customers seeing an adviser face-to-face were more likely to be satisfied than telephone customers on several measures, for instance the advisers' level of knowledge (92% compared to 90%).

- Face-to-face customers who had more than one meeting had higher levels of satisfaction for some measures. For instance, 92% were satisfied with the usefulness of the information, advice and guidance, compared to 89% of customers who only had one meeting.
- Customers who saw the same adviser if they had multiple face-to-face meetings were more satisfied on all measures, for instance 96% were satisfied with the information and advice provided being clear and easy to understand compared to 94% of customers who had had different advisers.

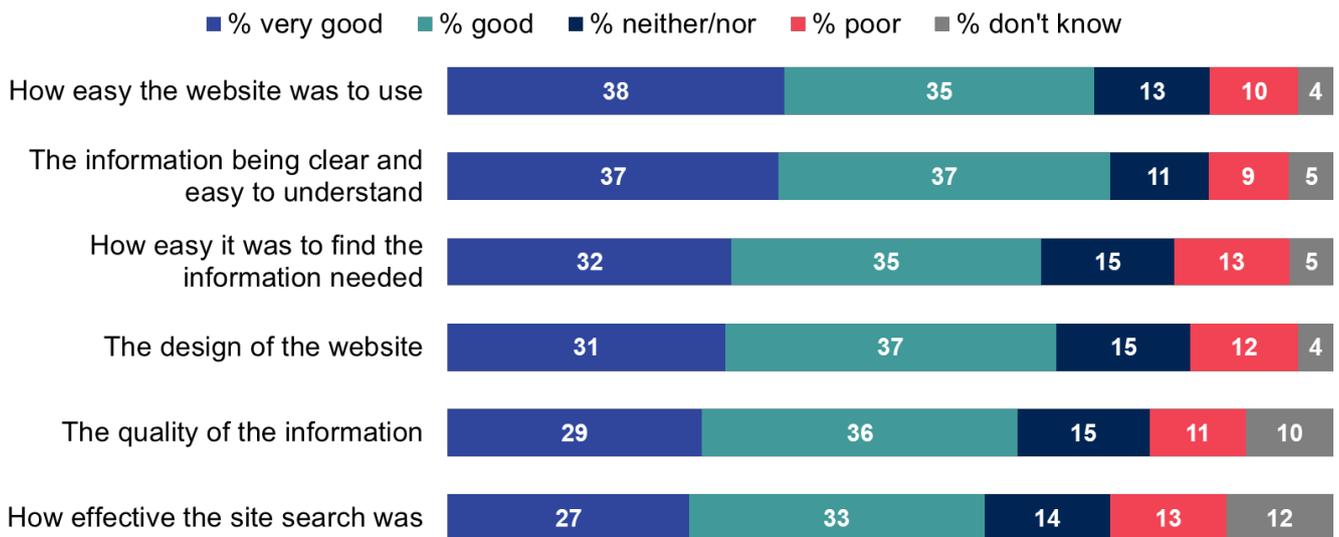
Levels of satisfaction have remained consistently high and ratings are in line with previous findings. Variations between customer groups are also similar to those seen previously.

5.4 Satisfaction with the different aspects of the website

Visitors to the National Careers Service website were asked to rate a number of different features of the website, on a scale from ‘very good’ to ‘very poor’. Around two-thirds to three-quarters of customers rated the individual aspects of the website as ‘good’ or ‘very good’. The most highly rated aspect of the website was that the information was thought to be clear and easy to understand (74% rated this as good or very good) followed by the website being easy to use (73%). Customers were least positive in relation to the effectiveness of the site search (61%).

As previously mentioned, overall satisfaction with the website has declined when compared to Year 8 Q3 and Q4. When looking at the different aspects of the website in comparison to Year 8 Q3 and Q4, customers are less positive about how easy it was to find the information they need (61%, compared to 72%), the clarity of the information (71%, compared to 78%), the quality of the information (60%, compared to 69%) and the effectiveness of the site search (58%, compared to 63%). Website design and how easy the website was to use have remained stable.

Figure 5.6: Ratings on various aspects of the website



Base: All online satisfaction customers (624)

The key variations between customer groups, are detailed below:

- Customers whose first language is not English were more positive about the design (78% rated it good compared to 65% of customers whose first language is English), the effectiveness of the site search (74% compared to 55%) and how easy it is to use the website (82% compared to 70%).
- Customers aged 19 or under were more positive about most aspects of the website, particularly in comparison with customers aged 50 plus. For instance, 81% rated the ease of being able to find information as good, compared to 55% of customers aged 50 plus and 82% said the information was clear and easy to understand, compared to 66% of customers aged 50 plus.
- Customers who were in learning were more likely than those in work to be positive about how easy it was to find the information they needed (75% rated this as very good or good, whilst only 59% of working customers did).
- Certain key groups were more likely to be positive about numerous website features. Those with qualifications under Level 2 (82%), those who are aged 50 plus and unemployed or at risk of unemployment (81%) and those who have been unemployed for more than a year (89%) are more likely than average (71%) to be positive about the clarity of the website. Customers who have been unemployed for more than 12 months are also more likely to be positive about the quality of the information on the website (78%, compared to the average, 60%) as well as how easy the website is to use (85%, compared to the average, 72%), the design of the website (87%, compared to the average, 66%) and the effectiveness of the site search (80%, compared to the average, 58%).
- Careers advisers were less positive than general public customers about the various aspects of the website (and reflecting previous waves since the redesign). The largest difference was in relation to the design of the website (69% of careers advisers rated this as good or very good, compared with 35% of general public customers). However, this should be treated with caution due to the small base size (52).

5.5 Recommending the National Careers Service

5.5.1 Face-to-face and telephone customers

Around a quarter of face-to-face or telephone customers said they had already recommended the National Careers Service to someone else (24%). Of the remainder, the majority said that they would recommend the Service (85%). In total, this means that almost nine in ten customers either had recommended the Service or said that they would recommend it (88%). This is in line with previous years.

The following groups were more likely to say that they either had recommended or would recommend the Service:

- Younger customers (91% of both 18-19-year olds and 20-24 year olds, falling to 85% of those aged 50 plus).
- Female customers (89%, compared to 87% of male customers).

- Customers who were working at the time of their first contact with the National Careers Service (90%) compared to those who were unemployed and looking for work (though still the large majority at 88%).
- Customers who have visited the National Careers Service website in the past three months (90% compared to 88% of customers who have not).
- Customers without a disability (89% compared with 86% of customers with a disability).
- Those who had engaged with National Careers Service tools such as the Skills Action Plan (92%, compared to those who did not 83%) and the Skills Health Check (92%, compared to those who did not, 86%).
- Telephone customers (91% compared with 88% of face-to-face customers).

5.5.2 Online customers

Three in ten have already recommended the National Careers Service website (31%), and a further half said they would recommend the National Careers Service website to friends, family or colleagues (51%). A third (32%) said they would not and 17% were unsure.

BAME customers (69%), customers with qualifications below Level 2 (73%) and those aged 50 plus and unemployed or at risk of redundancy (71%) were more likely than average to say that they would recommend the National Careers Service.

5.6 Improvements to the National Careers Service

5.6.1 Face-to-face and telephone customers

Around three-fifths of face-to-face and telephone customers could not think of any improvements that the National Careers Service needed to make (61%). However, suggestions for improvement focused on more tailored help (8%), more follow-up (8%) and more publicity (6%). The findings are very similar to previous waves.

“Learn more about the people you were going to meet. They should have known more about my circumstances given that it was linked to my employer.”

“Be more specific and provide specific information leading to real opportunities specifically for adults.”

“Just some guidance on future inspiration on jobs for people with disabilities.”

“A bit more advice on how to use apps on phones, how to apply for jobs, more on interview skills, a reading and writing test and security and guidance.”

Younger customers aged 18-19 (74%) and 20-24 (68%) were most likely to be happy with the service and suggest no improvements. This pattern is also seen with customers with qualifications below Level 2 (70%) in comparison to customers with Level 4 or above qualifications (46%); men (63%) compared to women (59%), customers who have been unemployed for more than 12 months (66%) and customers who recall having completed a Skills Action Plan (64%) or Skills Health Check (65%).

Telephone customers were more likely than face-to-face customers to say that more tailored help was required (10% compared to 7%). More tailored help was also more likely to be suggested by customers with Level 4 qualifications or above (12%), who were more likely to suggest many of the most frequently mentioned improvements.

Telephone customers who had multiple calls and spoke to more than one adviser were more likely to suggest more tailored help, compared with those who spoke to just one adviser over multiple calls (17% compared with 7%), more follow-up (13% compared to 5%) and more knowledgeable advisers (13% compared with 6%).

5.6.2 Online customers

When asked how the website could be improved, over a third (34%) of website visitors felt that the website was fine as it is. However, the comments below illustrate the main areas for suggested improvements:

- Layout / ease of use

“Please add some colour! It looks so boring and non-engaging! Images would be good but at the very least a bit of colour - to represent the National Careers Service branding.”

- Job profiles / career information

“I would like to be able to Print a Job Profile - I used to be able to do this. This is extremely helpful for working with clients.”

- Information on training / learning

“There was no information that had not been given to my sister already at a face to face meeting so they obviously all work from the same script. The links did not work, and the online chat was unhelpful at best.”

6 Customer Progression

Overall, Year 9 has seen a decrease in employment progression and learning progression. Regardless, all face-to-face and telephone customers (97%) experienced some form of positive outcome in the six months since their call/meeting.

Learning progression averaged 69% in Year 9, a decrease on Year 8 Q3 and Q4 (72%). National Careers Helpline customers and customers with qualifications Level 2 and above were more likely to have undertaken each of the specific types of training and learning. For example, 44% of National Careers Helpline customers and 38% of customers with Level 2 qualifications and above were more likely to have taken part in training relating to a future job (compared to the average, 35%).

Just over half of customers (53%) achieved employment progression, a decrease from the 56% Q3 and Q4 in Year 8. Younger customers, those with higher qualifications and those without a disability are most likely to achieve some form of employment progression. The most common developments were increased self-confidence (62%), improvements in CV writing or interview skills (62%), developing skills related to a current or future job (56%) and team working skills (51%).

Ninety-four percent of face-to-face and telephone customers indicated that they had gained some form of Personal Added Value since their contact with the National Careers Service.

Eight in ten face-to-face and telephone customers reported developing career management skills during the six months since their contact with the National Careers Service (79%).

This chapter examines the extent to which National Careers Service customers progressed in the six months since their call or meeting with the adviser. The chapter considers the three main areas of progression which form part of the National Careers Service's Key Performance Indicators (KPIs): employment progression, learning progression, and a measure of Personal Added Value incorporating the development of a range of different skills since their interaction with the National Careers Service; this includes job-related skills and 'soft' skills such as team working and social skills. The chapter also examines the extent to which customers attribute any of their progression outcomes to their interaction with the National Careers Service.

When interpreting the following results, it is important to understand that these provide information on changes over time in employment and learning status and do not imply that these were caused by interaction with the National Careers Service. On a similar note, as the results only provide a snapshot of the progression of National Careers Service customers six months after their interaction with the service, it is important to consider that some customers might not be seeking learning or employment progression at that point in time, or indeed may achieve this over a longer timeframe.

6.1 Overview of the extent of progression

6.1.1 Defining progression

Three core Key Performance Indicators are used to determine progression levels of National Careers Service customers six months after their intervention with the service:

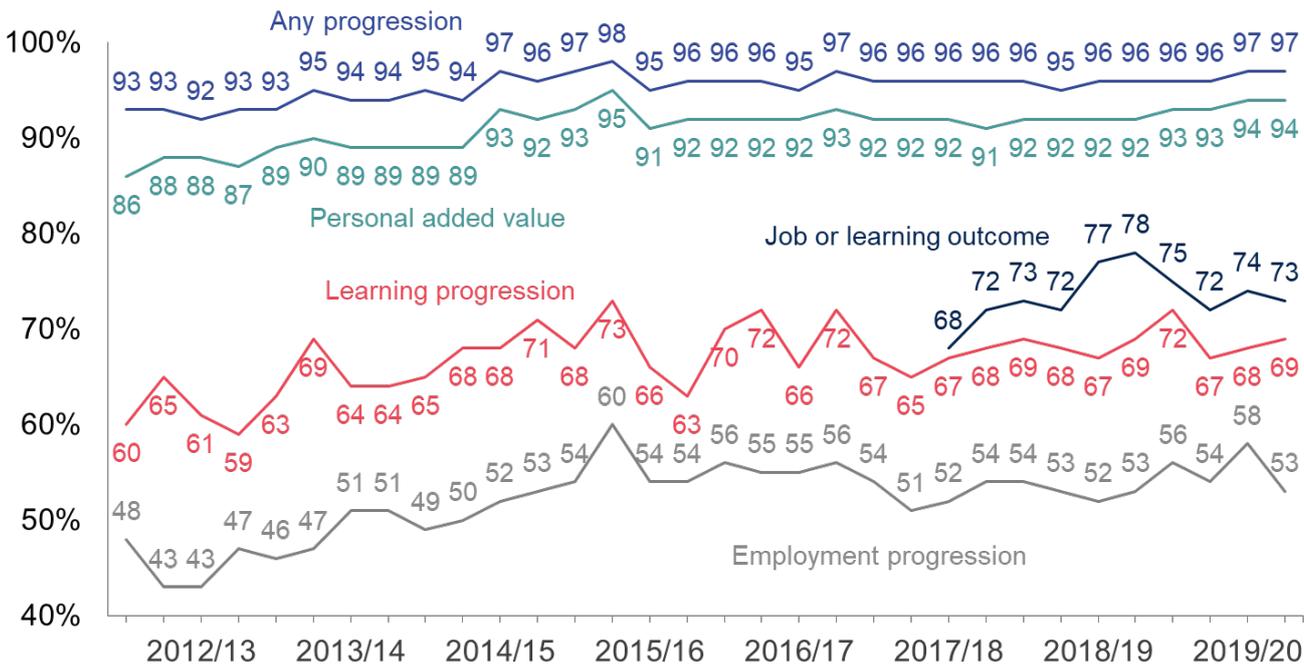
- 1. Learning progression** – whether customers have undertaken formal or informal learning or training in the six months since the call/meeting.
- 2. Employment progression** – examining whether customers have entered new employment, changed career, were promoted or improved their salary, and/or have taken up voluntary work.
- 3. Personal Added Value** – whether customers have achieved one or more of a range of ‘softer’ outcomes, such as improved work-related or more personal skills (IT skills, team working skills etc.), improved their self-confidence, increased ability to make decisions for the future regarding work or learning or increased job satisfaction.

Customers who reported any of the three types of progression were asked about the extent to which advice from the National Careers Service played a role in it¹⁴.

Almost all face-to-face and telephone customers (97%) experienced some form of positive outcome in the six months since their call/meeting. The various measures are shown in Figure 6.1. When compared to Year 8 Q3 and Q4, there has been a significant decrease across learning progression (69%, compared to 72% in Year 8 Q3 and Q4) and employment progression (53%, compared to 56% in Year 8 Q3 and Q4). Positively, Personal Added Value has remained consistent (94%, compare to 93% in Year 8 Q3 and Q4).

¹⁴ The question used to measure ‘adviser played a part’ was updated at the start of Q2, therefore, no data collected prior to this is included nor comparable.

Figure 6.1: Trends in progression among face-to-face and telephone customers, by survey quarter



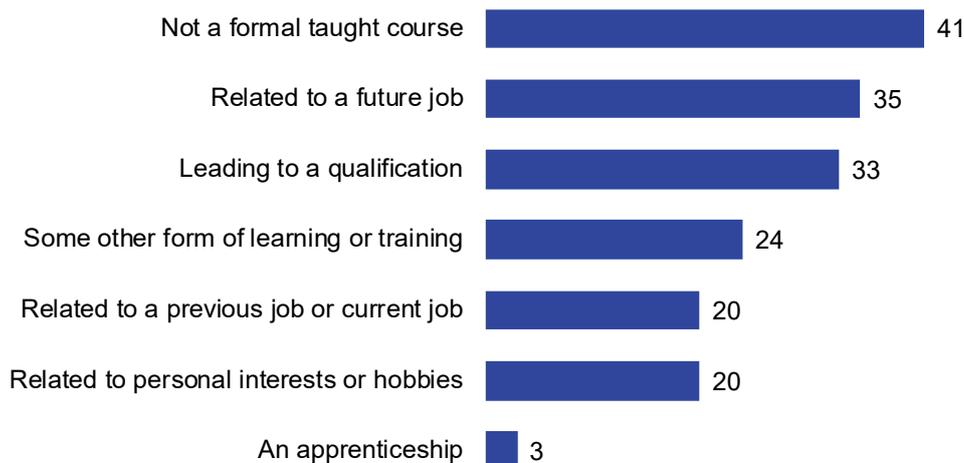
Bases: All face-to-face and telephone customers (1,760)

6.2 Learning progression among face-to-face and telephone customers

In total, 69% of face-to-face or telephone customers achieved some form of learning progression, a decrease from 72% in Year 8 Q3 and Q4. Figure 6.2 details the different forms of learning and training customers have undertaken since their contact with the service.

Customers had taken part in various types of training or learning, most commonly learning that was not part of a formal, taught course (41%, a decrease compared to Year 8 Q3/Q4, 44%). The proportion of customers undertaking learning leading to a qualification decreased slightly to 33% from 36% in Year 8 Q3 and Q4.

Figure 6.2: Forms of learning/training undertaken since the call/meeting with National Careers Service



Base: All progression survey users (8,200)

The following groups of customers were more likely to have achieved (any) learning progression:

- Those with higher qualifications: 73% of those qualified to Level 2 or above, compared with 66% of those with qualifications below Level 2.
- Younger customers (75% of those aged 18-19, 74% of 20-24-year olds, falling to 65% of those aged 50 plus).
- Customers without a disability (71%) compared with disabled customers (65%, this is a further decrease from 71% in Q3 and Q4 in Year 8).
- BAME customers (71%) compared to White customers (68%).
- Customers whose first language is not English (74%, compared to those whose is, 68%).
- Customers who were learning (81%) or working (72%) at their time of first contact with the National Careers Service, compared to those who were unemployed (67%).
- Telephone customers (76%) compared with face-to-face customers (67%).

National Careers Helpline customers and customers with qualifications Level 2 and above were more likely to have undertaken specific types of training and learning. For example, 44% of National Careers Helpline customers and 38% of customers with Level 2 qualifications and above were more likely to have taken part in training relating to a future job (compared to the average, 35%). Also, four in ten (41%) National Careers Helpline customers and 34% of customers with Level 2 qualifications and above were more likely to have taken part in training leading to a qualification (compared to the average, 33%).

Younger customers were also more likely to have undertaken different types of learning or training; 26% of 18-19 years old and 22% of 20-24 year olds had taken part in learning or training related to their interests (compared to the average, 20%). They were also more likely to have undertaken an apprenticeship (11% of 18-19-year olds and 5% of 20-24 years old, compared to the average, 3%). NEET customers aged 18-24 were also more likely to have undertaken an apprenticeship (6%).

Customers whose first language was not English were more likely to take part in training leading to a qualification (35%, compared to the average, 33%) and learning or training that is related to a previous or current job (25%, compared to the average, 20%).

Overall, learning was consistently lower among customers who were aged 50 or above, who had a disability, or who had qualifications below Level 2.

The main motivations for doing further learning or training were very much job or career-related:

- To progress in a current job or career (88% said this was very or fairly important);
- To raise qualification level (88%);
- To develop or improve job-related skills (87%);
- To help get a job or change job (83%);
- To obtain a qualification (75%);
- To help change career (70%).

Among customers who had done any learning or training in the intervening six months, a quarter (26%) obtained a qualification and 9% received credits towards a qualification. A further 60% did neither of these and 3% said they did not finish their qualification, similar figures to Year 8 Q3 and Q4.

Over half (54%) considered that their National Careers Service adviser had contributed to their decision to do the learning or training. This view was more prevalent among customers who do not speak English as a second language (61%), customers who have been unemployed for more than 12 months (57%) and single parent customers (60%).

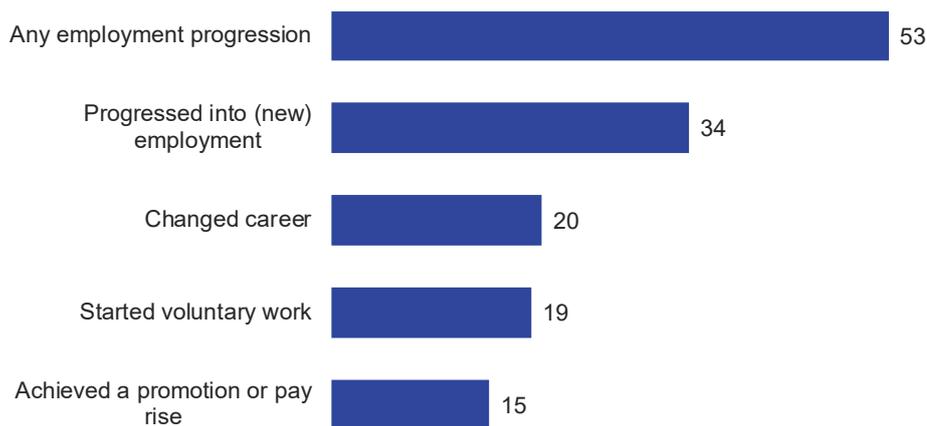
6.3 Employment progression among face-to-face and telephone customers

6.3.1 Overall employment progression

In total, 53% of face-to-face or telephone customers achieved some form of employment progression, a decrease from 56% in Year 8 Q3 and Q4. Figure 6.3 shows the types of employment progression achieved¹⁵.

Four in ten face-to-face and telephone customers had found a new job or role in those six months (41%), a decrease when compares to Year 8 Q3 and Q4 (43%). Amongst those who found a new job or role, half (50%) changed their career. One in five took up voluntary work (19%) and 15% achieved a pay rise or promotion.

¹⁵ It is important to note that this could include those who got a job and then left it within the six-month period since their interaction with the service.

Figure 6.3: Employment progression among face-to-face and telephone customers (%)

Base: All progression survey users (8,200):

Customers more likely to have experienced employment progression (of any kind) were:

- Those with higher qualifications: 57% of those qualified to Level 2 or above, compared with 45% of those with qualifications below Level 2.
- Younger customers (61% of those aged 18-19, 60% of 20-24-year olds, compared with 54% of 25-49 year olds and 48% of those aged 50 plus).
- People who were unemployed and looking for work at the point they first had contact with the service (58%, compared to those who were in work, 47% or learning, 50%). Looking closely at unemployed customers, this was much higher among those who had been unemployed for less than six months (68%), compared to customers who had been employed for more than twelve months (41%).
- Customers without a disability (58%) compared with disabled customers (43%).
- NEET customers aged 18-24 (61%, compared to the average, 53%).

There was no difference by channel in relation to overall employment progression. However, telephone customers were more likely to have achieved a promotion or pay rise (21%, compared to face-to-face customers, 14%). To an extent, this reflects the differences in their employment status at the time they first had contact with the service six months previously, when telephone customers were more likely to be already in work.

Customers who had achieved any employment progression were asked to what extent their interaction with the National Careers Service adviser had contributed to this. Half agreed the adviser had an impact (51%). Face-to-face customers were more likely than telephone customers to say that the adviser had an impact (52% compared with 43%), as were single parents (59%).

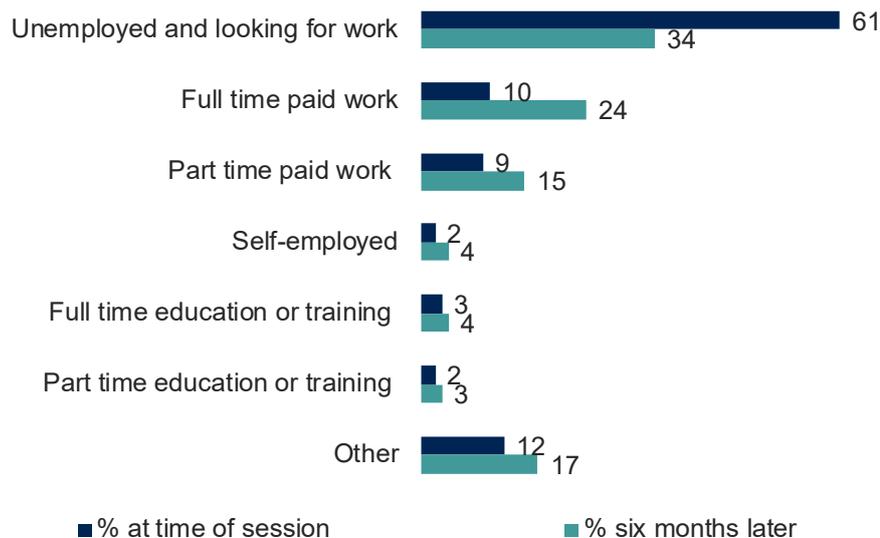
6.3.2 Change in employment status

The majority of customers interviewed for the progression survey had been unemployed and looking for work at the time of their adviser session six months previously (61%). Just over one in five customers

were in work (22%), with the remainder in learning (6%) or doing something else (12%), including those unable to work due to ill health, with home or family responsibilities, or retired.

Figure 6.4 shows that, six months on, there was a large fall in the proportion of customers who were unemployed and seeking work and a large increase in the proportion who were in any form of work. When compared to Year 8 Q3 and Q4, there has been a decrease in the number of people who are in full-time work six months on (24%, compared to 27% in Year 8 Q3 and Q4).

Figure 6.4: Employment status at the time of the call/meeting and six months later



Base: All progression telephone and face-to-face customers (8,200)

There were large increases in employment among the different customer groups (Table 6.1). For example, three times as many customers aged 19 and under were in work after six months than at the time of their adviser session (13%, compared to 40% six months later). There were substantial moves into employment (38%) among 18-24-year olds who were NEET¹⁶ at the time of their initial interaction with the service.

The number of single parents in work almost doubled, six months on (44%, compared with 23% at the time of their adviser session). A similar pattern was seen amongst customers with a disability (27% were in work, compared with 14% at the time of their adviser session).

Looking closely at customers who have been unemployed for more than 12 months, 72% were unemployed and looking for work at the time of their adviser, dropping to half (50%) six months on.

Table 6.1: Changes in employment status among key customer groups

	Year 9	Year 8 (Q3 and Q4)
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¹⁶ NEET customers are those Not in Employment, Education or Training (at the point at which they had a meeting with their adviser).

Customer group	<i>ULW = Unemployed and looking for work</i>	Status at point of contact with National Careers Service	Status 6 months after contact	Change (ppts) ¹⁷	Status at point of contact with National Careers Service	Status 6 months after contact	Change (ppts) ⁶
18-19 year olds (354)	ULW	66%	35%	-31	64%	34%	-30
	In work	13%	40%	+27	13%	41%	+28
	In education	16%	18%	+2	20%	19%	-1
20-24 year olds (1,250)	ULW	64%	36%	-28	65%	31%	-34
	In work	19%	44%	+25	17%	50%	+33
	In education	10%	10%	-	12%	13%	+1
Aged 50 plus (2,504)	ULW	64%	38%	-26	68%	40%	-28
	In work	19%	37%	+18	14%	38%	+24
	In education	2%	4%	+2	2%	4%	+2
Aged 50 plus and unemployed or at risk of redundancy (1,748)	ULW	90%	48%	-44	93%	49%	-44
	In work	8%	34%	+28	4%	36%	+32
	In education	0%	2%	+2	0%	3%	+3
Customers with a disability (2,685)	ULW	59%	38%	-21	62%	39%	-23
	In work	14%	27%	+12	12%	24%	+12
	In education	4%	6%	+2	5%	8%	+3
Below Level 2 quals (898)	ULW	64%	46%	-18	68%	45%	-23
	In work	14%	31%	+16	12%	31%	+19
	In education	6%	6%	-	8%	7%	-1
Unemployed for more than 12 months (2,477)	ULW	72% ¹⁸	50%	-22%	70%	51%	-19
	In work	4%	19%	+15%	4%	22%	+18
	In education	5%	8%	+3%	7%	8%	+1
18-24 NEET (1,134)	ULW	90%	46%	-44%	93%	40%	-53%
	In work	0%	38%	+38%	0%	45%	+45%
	In education	0%	6%	+6%	0%	7%	+7%
Single parents (1,180)	ULW	58%	32%	-26	60%	34%	-26
	In work	23%	44%	+21	19%	41%	+22
	In education	5%	6%	+1	6%	11%	+5

¹⁷ Where percentage point changes do not appear to match the given status figures, this is due to the rounding of the two status figures.

¹⁸ This percentage does not equal 100% because customers who have been unemployed for more than 12 months may not consider themselves to be 'unemployed and actively seeking work'

As discussed in Chapter 2, the work status of face-to-face and telephone customers at the time of their initial interaction with the National Careers Service was quite different, with face-to-face customers far more likely to be unemployed and seeking work. Nevertheless, both face-to-face and telephone customers showed significant movements into employment and learning over the six months since their contact. The key changes are:

- Among face-to-face customers, the proportion who were unemployed and seeking work almost halved over the six-month period, from 66% to 38%. There was a corresponding increase in the proportion in work (including self-employment), up from 18% at the time of their session to 41% six months later.
- Telephone information customers were more likely to be in work (42%) or learning (11%) at the time of their first interaction with the National Careers Service, and less likely to be unemployed (33%). Six months on, the proportion in work had increased to 54%, while the proportion who were unemployed had dropped to 16%.
- Just under half of area-based telephone customers were in work six months after their first interaction (49%), increasing from 27%. There was a corresponding fall in the proportion that was unemployed, from 54% to 24%. An increase in those in work was also seen amongst National Careers Helpline customers (increasing from 45% to 55% six months on).

Amongst those who were not working at the time of their meeting, but were six months on, four in ten (42%) said that their adviser played a role in this. This was more common among face-to-face customers (43%, compared to 28% of telephone customers) and South West and Oxfordshire customers (53%).

6.4 Personal Added Value among face-to-face and telephone customers

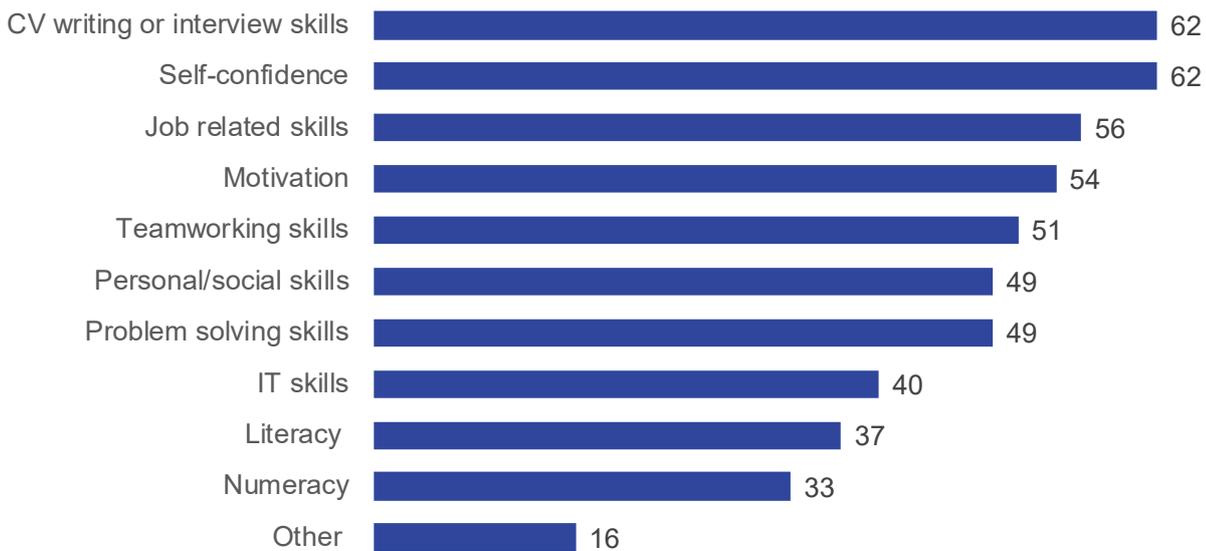
6.4.1 Overall Personal Added Value

Almost all customers said that they had gained some form of Personal Added Value since their contact with the National Careers Service (94%, similar to Year 8 Q3 and Q4, 93%). Customers more likely to experience Personal Added Value include customers with Level 2 and above qualifications (95%), customer aged 18-19 (99%), aged 20-24 (97%), customers whose first language is not English (97%) and customers who do not have a disability (96%, compared to those who do, 89%). Telephone and face-to-face customers were equally likely to have gained some form of Personal Added Value (both 94%).

6.4.2 Skills and personal development outcomes

Customers were asked if they had developed their skills since speaking to their adviser. The Personal Added Value outcome consists of those who said they had developed these skills. These skills are included in Figure 6.5.

The most common developments were increased self-confidence (62%), improvements in CV writing or interview skills (62%), developing skills related to a current or future job (56%) and team working skills (51%).

Figure 6.5: Skills and personal development outcomes

Base: All progression telephone and face-to-face customers (8,200)

Telephone customers were more likely to develop their skills, compared to face-to-face customers, including:

- problem solving skills (48% of face-to-face customers, compared to 54% of telephone customers),
- job related skills (55% of face-to-face customers, compared to 60% of telephone customers)
- literacy skills (36% of face-to-face customers, compared to 41% of telephone customers)
- IT skills (39% of face-to-face customers, compared to 42% of telephone customers)
- numeracy skills (32% of face-to-face customers, compared to 38% of telephone customers)
- motivation to take action (54% of face-to-face customers, compared to 57% of telephone customers).

The exception was CV writing and/or interview skills, 64% of face-to-face customers said they had achieved this, compared to 49% of telephone customers.

Women (38%) were more likely than men (36%) to say their literacy skills had improved, and also more likely than men to mention increased self-confidence (64% versus 61%).

Broadly, younger customers, customers with Level 2 and above qualifications and customers who do not have a disability are more likely to have developed their skills. For example, 69% of 18-19 years olds and 68% of 20-24 year olds said that their skills relating to a current or future job have improved (compared to 46% of those aged 50 plus), similarly 59% of customers with a Level 2 or above qualification said this (compared with 50% of customers with qualifications below Level 2) and six in ten (60%) of those who do not have a disability said this (compared to 48% of those who do).

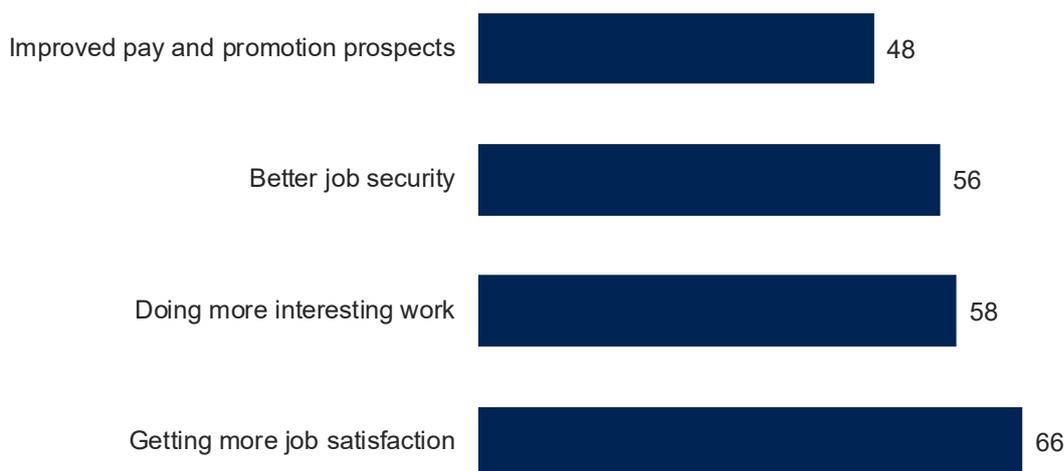
Amongst those who had developed their skills in some way, over half (55%) said that their adviser helped them to do this. Female customers (58%), those whose first language is not English (60%), single parents (60%) and North East and Cumbria customers (60%) were all more likely to say that their adviser helped them.

The Personal Added Value key performance indicator also includes those who, in the past 6 months, have increased their ability to make decisions about the future in terms of career, training or learning had improved over the past six months. Almost eight in ten (79%) said that their ability to do this has increased, including 44% who said it has increase 'a lot' and 35% saying 'a little'. National Careers Helpline customers (49%), female customers (46%), single parents (50%) and NEET customers aged 18-24 (49%) were all more likely to say that this has increased 'a lot' for them.

6.4.3 Positive changes at work

Customers who were in work when interviewed were asked about a range of other benefits they may have experienced in their job or career in the six months following their interaction with the National Careers Service. These benefits are included in Figure 6.6. It is important to note that only 'getting more job satisfaction' is the only code which contributes to the overall Personal Added Value key performance indicator.

Figure 6.6: Positive changes at work



Base: All progression telephone and face-to-face customers who are in work (3,541)

Across each of the measures there were consistent differences between the age groups with 18-19- and 20-24-year olds being more likely to cite positive changes, while those aged 50 plus were less likely. NEET customers aged 18-24 were also particularly likely to cite the positive changes; for example, 82% of these customers said that their job satisfaction had increased.

Face-to-face customers were more likely than telephone customers to say that they were getting more job satisfaction (68% compared with 59%) and are doing more interesting things at work (60%, compared to 51% of telephone customers). White customers were also more likely to report greater job satisfaction (68% in comparison to 62% of BAME customers). Customers with qualifications below Level 2 were less likely to say they are doing more interesting work (56% compared with 59% of those with Level 2 qualifications or above).

Male customers are more likely to say that they are getting more job satisfaction (70%, compared to 63% of female customers) and that they have better job security (58%, compared to 54% of female customers).

Some groups of customers were more likely to say that their pay and promotion prospects had improved: men (52%) compared to women (44%), White customers (50%) compared to BAME customers (43%) and NEET customers (68%).

Half of customers who had benefitted from positive changes at work attributed these at least in part to the information, advice or support they received from the National Careers Service (49%). This was more common among face-to-face customers (51%) than among telephone customers (39%).

6.5 Career management skills

Alongside satisfaction and progression, developing career management skills among its customers is the third key outcome area for the National Careers Service. The development of career management skills has been defined as follows:

- The customer has re-used the National Careers Service website, visited the National Careers Service in person or used the National Careers Helpline;
- The customer has activated their Account;
- The customer has done any learning or training for career-related reasons – informed by discussion with the National Careers Service;
- The customer has developed any job-related skills, job application/CV skills or confidence – informed by discussion with the National Careers Service; or
- or other source of advice, acted on the suggestion of their adviser, or followed up this advice by contacting another organisation;
- The customer has improved their ability to make decisions about future careers or learning, has a better idea about where to look for information on jobs or on learning, has increased their motivation to find work or change career, or developed more confidence – informed by discussion with the National Careers Service.

Altogether, eight in ten face-to-face and telephone customers reported developing career management skills during the six months since their contact with the National Careers Service (79%). This included:

- 79% who reported that their awareness of work/career opportunities had increased over the past six months;
- 77% who said that their awareness of learning or training opportunities had increased;
- 78% who reported that their motivation to find work or change career had improved;
- 78% said that their interest in learning had increased.

7 How do key results vary across National Careers Service contracting areas?

Across contracting areas, customers expressed consistently positive views on the service they received. The main distinctions are:

- Satisfaction was significantly higher than average in Yorkshire and the Humber (90%) and North East and Cumbria (89%).
- Customers in Yorkshire and Humber were more likely to be satisfied with their adviser, whereas West Midlands and Staffordshire customers were significantly less satisfied with all aspects of the service provided by the adviser.
- There was little variation across region in terms of progression, however customers in South West and Oxfordshire were more likely than average to experience employment progression (58%), whilst customer in London were less likely to (49%).

The face-to-face elements of the National Careers Service are delivered through a number of different area-based contractors across the country. This chapter looks at area-based differences in Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and other relevant results, starting by looking at the demographic differences in customer profile across the areas. References to 'customers' in this section refers solely to face-to-face and telephone customers.

7.1 Customer profile in different areas

Table 7.1 shows area-based differences in the key demographics of: age, gender, qualifications and working status (specifically the proportion in work and the proportion unemployed and looking for work at the time of their contact with an adviser). Results are shown as row percentages.

- East of England and Buckinghamshire (36%), East Midlands and Northamptonshire (35%) and the South East (37%) had a higher than average share of customers aged over 50.
- Some areas had a relatively high proportion of male customers: North East and Cumbria (64%), Yorkshire and Humber (58%) and the North West (58%). London had a relatively high proportion of female customers (51%).
- The proportion with qualifications below Level 2 was higher than average in Yorkshire and Humber (13%).
- Customers in the North East and Cumbria were more likely to be unemployed and looking for work at the time of their initial contact (71%) as were customers in West Midlands and Staffordshire (66%), London (66%), Yorkshire and Humber (64%), South East (63%), North West (63%) and North East and Cumbria (71%).

Table 7.1: Profile of customers by area

	All (incl. NCH)	London	East of England and Buckinghamshire	East Midlands and Northamptonshire	Yorkshire and Humber	West Midlands and Staffordshire	South West and Oxfordshire	South East	North West	North East and Cumbria
Base:	9996	1054	769	736	1044	860	910	873	1136	1004
18-24	21	15	16	20	19	21	21	17	23	24
25-49	50	55	47	45	49	50	45	46	52	45
50+	29	30	36	35	31	29	33	37	25	31
Female	45	51	46	47	42	44	45	44	41	35
Male	55	49	53	53	58	55	55	56	58	64
Below Level 2	11	10	11	12	13	12	12	12	12	11
Level 2 and above	67	64	63	66	64	65	67	63	66	68
In work	22	15	20	23	22	18	22	18	18	15
Unemployed	59	66	62	60	64	66	56	63	63	71

7.2 Satisfaction

7.2.1 Overall satisfaction

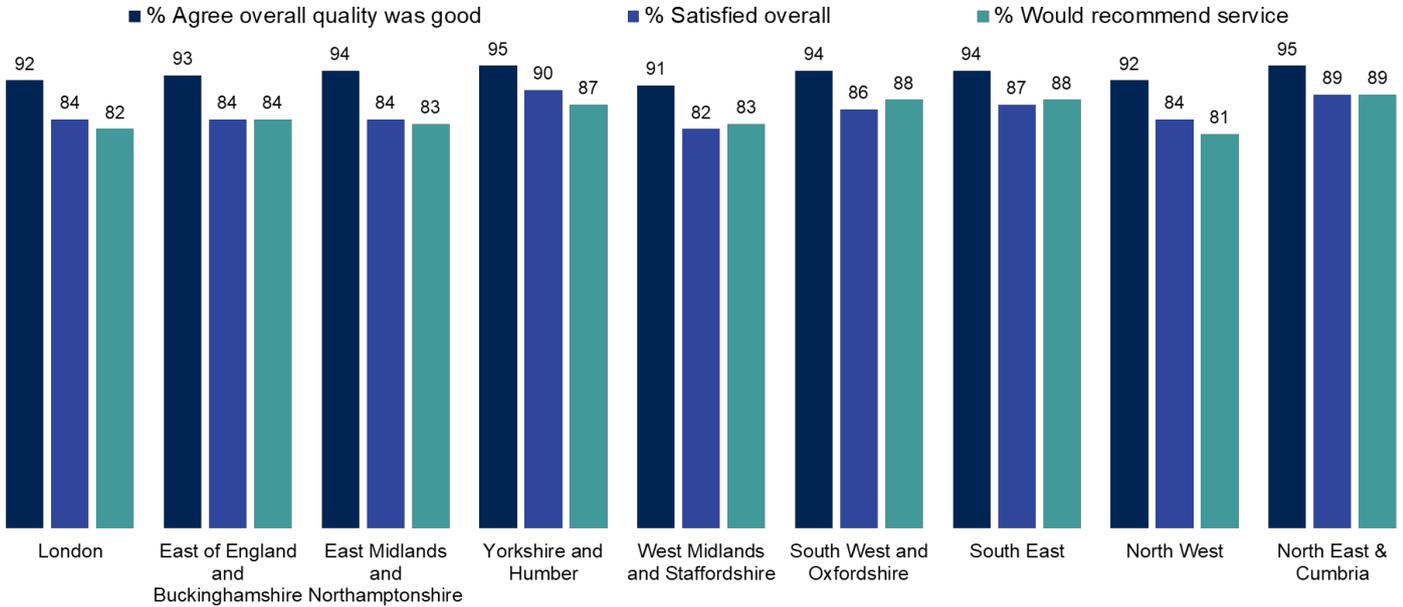
Overall perceptions of the Service were consistently positive across the contracting areas. There were very few statistically significant differences in relation to overall satisfaction, perceived service quality, or whether customers had recommended or would recommend the service (Figure 7.1).

Satisfaction was significantly higher than average in Yorkshire and the Humber (90%) and North East and Cumbria (89%). Dissatisfaction was higher than average in West Midlands and Staffordshire (8%).

Customers were more likely to agree that the quality of the service was good in Yorkshire and the Humber (95%) and North East and Cumbria (95%).

With regards to likelihood to recommend service, customers in the North East and Cumbria (89%) and the South East (88%) were more likely than average to recommend the service, whereas customers in the North West (81%) and London (82%) were less likely than average to do so.

Figure 7.1: Satisfaction, perceived service quality and willingness to recommend the National Careers Service by area



Base: All telephone and face-to-face customers (9,200)

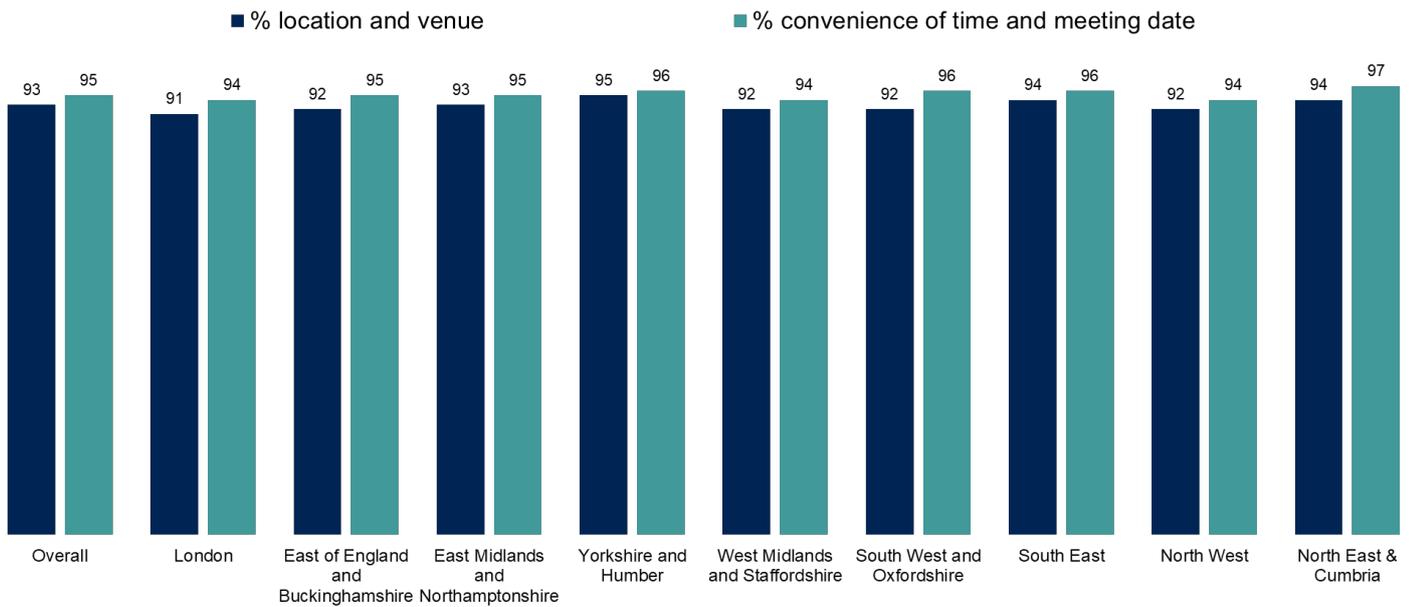
7.2.2 Satisfaction with operational aspects and the adviser

Across all contracting areas, face-to-face customers were consistently positive about the logistical and operational elements of the service. There were only minor variations by area, as shown in Figure 7.2.

Customers in Yorkshire and Humber (95%) were significantly more satisfied than average with the location and venue where they received the advice.

Satisfaction with the convenience of the time and date of the meeting was similar across the different regions, apart from the North East and Cumbria where it was significantly higher (97%) compared to average.

Figure 7.2: Satisfaction with logistical/operational elements of the service by area



Base: All telephone and face-to-face customers (9,200)

Customers in Yorkshire and Humber were more likely to be satisfied with their adviser, whereas West Midlands and Staffordshire customers were significantly less satisfied with all aspects of the service provided by the adviser.

Other areas showing significant variation from the average were:

- Customers in Yorkshire and Humber and the South East expressed higher levels of satisfaction with the length of time their adviser spoke to them (both 95%), compared to the average.
- Customers in North East and Cumbria were also more likely to be satisfied with the professionalism of their adviser (97%) and their level of knowledge (94%).
- Customers in Yorkshire and Humber and North East and Cumbria were more likely to be satisfied with the helpfulness of their adviser (96% and 95% respectively), as well as their advisers' level of knowledge (both 94%).
- Yorkshire and the Humber (96%), the North East and Cumbria and the South East (both 95%) were significantly more satisfied with the professionalism of the adviser. In contrast, levels of satisfaction with professionalism among customers in the West Midlands and Staffordshire (91%) were below average.
- Yorkshire and Humber customers were more likely than average to say they were satisfied that their adviser understood their needs (93%).

Table 7.2: Satisfaction with the adviser by area

	All (incl. NCC)	London	East of England and Buckinghamshire	East Midlands and Northamptonshire	Yorkshire and Humber	West Midlands and Staffordshire	South West and Oxfordshire	South East	North West	North East and Cumbria
Base:	9996	1054	769	736	1044	860	910	873	1136	1004
Length of time with adviser	93	92	91	92	95	91	93	95	92	92
Professionalism of adviser	96	94	96	96	97	93	96	97	95	97
Helpfulness of adviser	93	92	94	94	96	91	93	95	93	95
Adviser knowledge	92	91	93	94	94	90	93	94	91	94
Adviser understood needs	91	89	91	91	93	88	92	92	89	92

7.2.3 Satisfaction with the information or advice received

Across contracting areas, customers were consistently positive about the advice and information they received. The only statistically significant differences are shown below:

- Customers in Yorkshire and the Humber were significantly more satisfied than average on the usefulness of the information (93%), the extent to which it allowed them to make an informed decision (90%), as well as that it was clear and easy to understand (96%).
- Customers in the North East and Cumbria were more likely than average to be satisfied that the information and advice was clear and easy to understand (96%), was useful (91%) and the information given helped them to make an informed decision (88%).
- Customers in the South East were significantly more satisfied than average about the usefulness of the information they were given (91%) and the information given helped them to make an informed decision (88%).
- Customers in West Midlands and Staffordshire were less likely to be satisfied that the advice was clear and easy to understand (93%).

Table 7.3: Satisfaction with the advice/information provided by area

	All (incl. NCC)	London	East of England and Buckinghamshire	East Midlands and Northamptonshire	Yorkshire and Humber	West Midlands and Staffordshire	South West and Oxfordshire	South East	North West	North East and Cumbria
Base:	9996	1054	769	736	1044	860	910	873	1136	1004
IAG was clear/easy to understand	94	93	95	95	96	93	95	95	94	96
IAG was useful	89	88	89	90	93	87	89	91	87	91
Got the IAG to make informed decision	86	86	85	85	90	84	87	88	84	88

7.3 Progression and career management skills

Almost all customers in Year 9 (97%) experienced some form of positive outcome in the six months following their intervention (as discussed in Chapter 6). The main progression Key Performance Indicators by contracting region are shown in Table 7.4, together with development of career management skills.

Table 7.4: Key progression measures and career management skills by area

	All (incl. NCC)	London	East of England and	East Midlands and Northamptonshire	Yorkshire and Humber	West Midlands and Staffordshire	South West and Oxfordshire	South East	North West	North East and Cumbria
Base	8200	955	640	630	923	689	755	857	852	735

Any positive outcome	97	97	96	97	97	95	98	97	96	97
Learning progression	69	69	69	69	65	66	71	63	65	72
Employment progression	53	49	50	57	55	52	58	53	52	55
Personal Added Value	94	95	92	92	93	92	94	94	94	95
Career management skills	79	79	77	80	78	79	81	80	78	81

Across each of the regions, there were no regions that scored higher than average for learning progression. However, learning progression was significantly below average in the South East (63%), Yorkshire and the Humber and North West (both 65%).

Some regional variation on employment progression is reported. Customers in South West and Oxfordshire were more likely than average to experience employment progression (58%), whilst customer in London were less likely to (49%). However, customers in London were more likely than average to have experience Personal Added Value (95%).

Variation across regions in career management skills was minimal in Year 9 with all regions scoring close to the average of 79%.

8 Conclusions

The Year 9 findings remain broadly consistent with previous years and show both satisfaction and quality of service remaining high since the service redesign. The overall quality of the National Careers Service continued to be rated highly by telephone and face-to-face customers, with over nine in ten agreeing that it was good (93%). Additionally, the majority of telephone and face-to-face customers continue to be satisfied with the National Careers Service overall (85%). Recommendation of the service also continues to remain high with almost nine in ten customers saying that they had already or would recommend the National Careers Service (88%).

Amongst face-to-face and telephone customers, those who recall drawing up a Skills Action Plan and/or used the Skills Health Check were more likely to be satisfied (both 90%), in addition to those in the younger age groups (89% of 20-24-year olds) and customers who had the same adviser, if they had multiple appointments (90%). The professionalism and helpfulness of the adviser are the top aspects these customers were particularly satisfied with. Over six in ten (61%) did not feel that any improvements needed to be made to the National Careers Service, however there were those who suggested that more tailored help could be offered and that there could be more follow-ups. On this point, around one-third reported being followed up by a National Careers adviser since their initial contact, suggesting that this is an area of improvement.

There has been a significant decline in satisfaction with the National Careers Service website (58%) compared to Year 8 Q3/Q4. Of those customers who were dissatisfied with the website, one in ten (11%) said this was because they experienced issues with the Skills Health Check. The open responses also showed that online customers had varying technical issues, with reported problems using the Skills Health Check and webchat. The issues experienced with the functionality of these tools could explain the increased levels of dissatisfaction in Year 9.

Half of website users reported this was the first time visiting the site and as seen in previous years, the main reason for visiting the site was information on jobs/careers or apprenticeships.

Online customers reported that just under half (48%) got all or most of the information they wanted on their first visit to the website. When these customers were asked how they thought the website could be improved, the following themes were mentioned; the layout/ease of use of the website, the job profiles/career information given and the information on training/learning.

Overall, there has been a decline in employment and learning progression compared to Year 8 Q3/Q4.

Breaking this figure down, over half of these customers achieved any employment progression (53%), a decrease from 56% Q3 and Q4 in Year 8. Younger customers, those with higher qualifications and those without a disability are most likely to achieve some form of employment progression. The most common developments were increased self-confidence (62%), improvements in CV writing or interview skills (62%), developing skills related to a current or future job (56%) and team working skills (51%). There was no difference by channel in relation to overall employment progression.

Learning progression averaged 69% in Year 9, a decrease on Year 8 Q3 and Q4 (72%). National Careers Helpline customers and customers with qualifications Level 2 and above were more likely to have undertaken specific types of training and learning. Over half (54%) considered that their National Careers Service adviser had contributed to their decision to do the learning or training.

However, the majority of face-to-face and telephone customers (97%) experienced some form of positive outcome in the six months following their meeting or call.

Ninety-four percent of face-to-face and telephone customers indicated that they had gained some form of Personal Added Value since their contact with the National Careers Service. Eight in ten face-to-face and telephone customers reported developing career management skills during the six months since their contact with the National Careers Service (79%).

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