



Ipsos MORI
Social Research Institute

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National Careers Service: Customer Satisfaction and Progression Annual Report

May 2015 – April 2016 fieldwork

Ipsos MORI

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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, both through its website and via social media. 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. Furthermore, as part of its “inspiration” agenda, the National Careers Service is also 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 Contact Centre. From October 2014, the service was re-configured under a new contract and a range of other changes was introduced, the principal one being that area-based contractors moved away from purely delivering face-to-face advice and became responsible for the provision of advice by telephone, as well as diversifying into online and digital methods.

This report presents the findings from three strands of research. The first two, the National Careers Service customer satisfaction and progression surveys, are based on regular monthly surveys undertaken by telephone or online, among customers aged 18-plus (using the face-to-face or telephone service) or aged 16-plus (using the website). It is the fifth year of research on telephone and face-to-face customers (fieldwork years are referred to in this report at Year 5, Year 4, etc.), and the fourth year that research evidence has been collected of customers’ experience of using the National Careers Service website. This fieldwork was undertaken from May 2015 to April 2016 by monthly telephone interviews, a continuous online survey, and a quarterly email survey.

The main aims of this research are to monitor customers’ experiences of using the National Careers Service, under 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

On a range of key variables, the customer profile contains many of the same variations by service channel, and in some respects these are becoming more acute. Key points to note are:

- face-to-face customers continue to be more likely to be unemployed, aged 50 plus, to have a disability or long-term health problem, and have lower qualifications. By contrast, people accessing the service by phone were more likely to be in work or learning, younger, and more highly qualified. These differences have widened since last year.

- the profile of website users is the most diverse in terms of demographics such as age and ethnicity. This creates a challenge for the National Careers Service in terms of presenting a website that is engaging and informative for a broad range of audiences.
- a substantial minority of National Careers Service customers have not worked for more than a year, or have never had a paid job. This emphasises the challenges faced by the service in terms of supporting learning and employment outcomes.

Why do customers contact the National Careers Service?

Although the majority of customers first heard about the National Careers Service from Jobcentre Plus, this was much more common among customers of area-based contractors accessing face-to-face or telephone advice. Customers seeking information from the National Contact Centre were more likely to have first heard about the service through the internet, or – less commonly – through their college or training provider, or after it was recommended to them by a friend or relative.

Web users most commonly found out about the site from an internet search, or were signposted to it by Jobcentre Plus, a friend or relative, or a National Careers Service adviser.

Looking at reasons why people contacted the service, there was greater similarity between those using the face-to-face and telephone advice channels (who were more employment and careers focused) than those using the telephone information service (who were more focused on learning and in particular, wanting information about studying courses for jobs and about sources of funding for learning or training).

The majority of website visitors were seeking out information or advice on jobs or careers, but sizeable minorities were looking for information on courses/learning or using the website to access their Lifelong Learning Account.

Experiences of using the National Careers Service

Most telephone customers had their enquiry handled in one call: significantly more calls were handled in one call this year compared with last year (75% versus 66%).

One-quarter (24%) of face-to-face customers had two or more meetings with the National Careers Service adviser and three-quarters (74%) had one meeting; higher than previous years. Customers aged 50-plus were more likely to have multiple meetings (28%). Seven in ten (70%) customers who had more than one meeting saw the same adviser each time.

Three in five website visitors (58%) got all or most of the information they wanted on their first visit to the website. Over time, most website users found all or most of the information they were looking for. People aged 50-plus and those with a disability were more likely than average to only find some or even none of the information they wanted, a similar finding to last year.

The National Careers Service provides three key tools to support its customers across multiple platforms: the Skills Action Plan; the Skills Health Check; and the Lifelong Learning Account. The majority of customers found these tools useful. However, the proportion of customers who have a Lifelong Learning Account has fallen since Year 4, with two thirds of customers stating the adviser did not discuss it with them.

One-quarter (25%) of face-to-face and telephone customers reported that they had been followed-up by the National Careers Service since their initial contact. This was more common among customers likely to be in need of further support: those aged 50 plus, those facing redundancy or recently made redundant and those for whom English is a second language.

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 (93%) agreeing that it was good.

In line with this, the vast majority of face-to-face and telephone customers (85%) were satisfied with the National Careers Service overall, consistent with previous years. Customers who were more satisfied than average were those aged 18-24 (88%), in particular young people who were Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) (87%). This is positive given that 18-24-year-old NEETs are a priority group for the service.

Overall satisfaction with the National Careers Service website remains high (at 79%). This represents a gradual climb since the online survey first began. After significant year-on-year increases in the proportion of 'very satisfied' website visitors, this has levelled out at 39% in Year 4 and Year 5.

Reflecting the high levels of customer satisfaction and positive views of service quality, nine in ten (89%) face-to-face or telephone customers either had already recommended or would recommend the National Careers Service. Similarly, four in five (83%) online customers said they would recommend the National Careers Service website to friends, family or colleagues.

Suggestions for improvement from customers across all channels focused on more tailored help and follow-up, and improvements to the functionality of the website. These suggestions are in line with the most common reasons customers were dissatisfied with the service.

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

Almost all face-to-face and telephone customers (96%) experienced some form of positive outcome in the six months since their call/meeting.

The proportion of customers who achieved any employment progression averaged 55% across the year, the same as Year 4. Face-to-face and telephone advice customers were much more likely to have progressed into new employment (43% and 38% respectively, compared with 34% of telephone information customers). To a large extent this reflects the differences in their employment status at the time they first had contact with the service.

Learning progression averaged 68% in Year 5, down slightly from 70% in Year 4. It was higher among telephone than among face-to-face customers, related to the reasons why telephone customers contact the National Careers Service in the first place.

Customers were asked if they had achieved one or more of the range of 'softer' outcomes known as 'Personal Added Value'. Overall 92% of face-to-face or telephone customers indicated that they had gained some form of Personal Added Value since their contact with the National Careers Service. As a whole, young people aged 18-24

were consistently more likely than older people to report any personal development outcomes, in particular young people who were NEET.

Nine in ten (87%) face-to-face or telephone customers reported developing career management skills during the six months since their contact with the National Careers Service. This was highest among 18-24 year olds NEETs, 18-24 year olds generally, and people qualified at Level 2 or above.

Almost all website visitors (90%) who completed the online progression survey had achieved some form of progression three months after their visit. This was most commonly learning progression (71%) although half (49%) had made progress in employment, either getting or improving a job.

Conclusions

In most respects, findings are very similar to those of last year, with customer satisfaction indicators remaining at a high level and proving remarkably consistent over time. These scores suggest that the National Careers Service is doing well at providing a consistently good service which meets the needs of the majority of customers.

Less encouraging is the continuation of the trend for over-50s and people with a disability to be less satisfied on a range of measures and to exhibit more frustration at issues such as lack of sufficiently tailored advice. These groups also report lower levels of progression. It will be important for the service to continue to maintain and enhance its provision for these groups in the year ahead if it wants to improve its ratings overall.

Differences in profile between face-to-face and telephone customers have widened since last year. This serves to highlight an increasing distinction between the situations and needs of customers who access the service face-to-face and those of customers who access it by telephone.

With regards to progression, almost all customers experienced some form of positive outcome in the months following their use of the service, in line with findings from the previous year. Most customers attributed these outcomes at least in part to the National Careers Service.

1 Introduction and Methodology

1.1 Background

The Skills Funding Agency is responsible for the commissioning, contracting and performance management of the National Careers Service (before April 2012, known as Next Step) 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, both through its website and via social media. 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. Furthermore, in line with the government's "Inspiration Vision Statement"¹ the National Careers Service is also 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 one National Contact Centre. 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 was 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.

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:

¹ BIS Inspiration Vision Statement: Careers, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/careers-inspiration-vision-statement> [Last accessed 7/1/2016]

- 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 (via an overlay survey).
- 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 2015 and April 2016. For face-to-face and telephone customers this means the satisfaction survey covers sessions with an adviser between April 2015 and March 2016. For face-to-face and telephone customers, the progression survey covers the period six months beforehand (i.e. from October 2014 to September 2015).

The research among web visitors covers those accessing the National Careers Service website between April 2015 and March 2016 (for the online satisfaction survey) and between January 2015 and December 2015 (for the progression survey which is conducted three months since they participated in the online satisfaction research).

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 such as young people who are NEET.
- Measure variations in performance among the area-based contractors delivering the service. The research also allows a comparison of customers receiving the face-to-face service at Jobcentre Plus locations with those receiving it elsewhere.
- Monitor changes over time by comparing the annual results for this year with those in the preceding four years.

1.3 Methodology

This report presents the results from Year 5 of the customer satisfaction and progression study, covering fieldwork between May 2015 and April 2016.

1.3.1 Telephone surveys

For face-to-face and telephone customers this involved a total of 8,812 interviews for the satisfaction survey and 6,411 interviews for the progression survey. The fieldwork pattern is shown in the Table 1.1 which also shows 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 ²) Oct-Dec 14 (prog ³)	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 2015 (sat) April – Jun 2015 (prog)	Apr-Jun 15	2,200	Oct-Dec 14	1,599
Quarter 2	Aug – Oct 2015 (sat) Jul – Sept 2015 (prog)	Jul-Sept 15	2,210	Jan-Mar 15	1,601
Quarter 3	Nov 15-Jan 16 (sat) Oct-Dec 15 (prog)	Oct-Dec 15	2,200	Apr-Jun 15	1,600
Quarter 4	Feb-Apr 16 (sat) Jan-Mar 16 (prog)	Jan-Mar 16	2,202	Jul-Sept 15	1,611
Year 5			8,812		6,411

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, namely:

- Face-to-face National Careers Service customers;

² Satisfaction

³ Progression

- Telephone customers who received the information service from the National Contact Centre – referred to as ‘telephone information’ customers; and
- Telephone customers who received the advice service (typically for customers who have more complex needs or require skills assessment) either through the National Contact Centre or, from October 2014 onwards, directly from area-based contractors alongside their face-to-face service provision – these are referred to as ‘telephone advice’ 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. As in previous years, the targets on service channel involved oversampling telephone customers in order to ensure sufficient numbers for robust analysis each quarter.

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 profile of those having contact with advisers in the corresponding month.

At the analysis stage, the data was weighted by the substantive type of service received 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 profile of customer contacts by quarter.

1.4 Online surveys

In total 8,878 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.

The progression survey for website users is entirely longitudinal and conducted online, with respondents sent an email with a link to the online questionnaire. 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. Data for the online progression survey is weighted to reflect the age, gender and employment profile of people who participated in the online satisfaction survey. In the 12 months covered by this year’s survey period, 822 website customers took part in the progression survey.

1.5 The structure of this report

The rest of this report presents the results of Year 5 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);
- 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 face-to-face customers' experiences across the different contracting regions, identifying any variations in performance;

Wherever differences are discussed between respondent sub-groups, or over time, they are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level. 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.

2 Customer Profile

Key findings

On a range of key variables, the customer profile contains many of the same variations by service channel, and in some respects these are becoming more acute.

Key points to note are:

- **face-to-face customers continue to be more likely to be unemployed, aged 50 plus, to have a disability or long-term health problem, and have lower qualifications. By contrast, people accessing the service by phone were more likely to be in work or learning, younger, and more highly qualified. These differences have widened since last year.**
- **the profile of website users is the most diverse in terms of demographics such as age and ethnicity. This creates a challenge for the National Careers Service in terms of presenting a website that is engaging and informative for a broad range of audiences.**
- **a substantial minority of National Careers Service customers have not worked for more than a year, or have never had a paid job. This emphasises the challenges faced by the service in terms of supporting learning and employment outcomes.**

This chapter examines the profile customers accessing the service in Year 5, from May 2015 to April 2016, and those accessing the National Careers Service website from April 2015 to March 2016. 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 website customers surveyed during Year 5. The figures for face-to-face and telephone customers are based on weighted data whereas those for website visitors are unweighted. The customer base is very similar to that found in previous years and continues to vary by service channel.

Table 2.1: Demographic profile of National Careers Service customers

	Channel used as main way of accessing the service				
	Face-to-face (6,890)	Telephone all (1,922)	Telephone advice (1,203)	Telephone information (719)	Online (8,878)
Base:	%	%	%	%	%
Gender					
Male	57	48	54	45	37
Female	43	52	46	55	60
Age group					
19 or younger⁴	7	4	5	4	24
20-24	15	30	17	37	10
25-49	51	53	55	53	43
50 or older	28	12	23	6	21
Ethnicity					
White British	73	62	73	56	61
White other	7	9	9	9	12
Black/ Black British	8	13	6	17	7
Asian/ Asian British	8	9	8	9	9
Mixed/ other	5	7	4	8	8
Prefer not to say	-	-	-	-	4

⁴ The age ranges are 18-19 for face-to-face and telephone customers, 16-19 for website customers.

English not first language	14	17	13	19	20
Long term illness/disability	23	15	22	12	16

2.1.2 Age and gender

The majority of face-to-face customers were men (57%) while the majority of telephone customers were women (52%, rising to 55% of telephone information customers). Compared with last year, the proportion of men among face-to-face customers has increased, while the gender mix among telephone customers has become more balanced.

Most face-to-face (51%) and telephone customers (53%) were aged 25-49 although there was a greater spread of ages accessing the face-to-face and telephone advice channels. For example, more face-to-face customers were aged under-20 (7% compared with 4% of telephone customers) and more were aged 50 plus (28% compared with 12%). By comparison, telephone customers were more concentrated in the 20-24 and 25-49 age groups, in particular those calling the national telephone centre, which deals with a considerably higher proportion of 20-24 year olds than other channels.

Web users who completed the survey were predominantly women (60%) and aged 25-49 (43%). The age profile of website users is notably more diverse than the other channels, with one-quarter (24%) aged 16-19 and one in five (21%) aged 50 plus. The proportion of website customers aged 16-19 has increased significantly since last year, when it was 18%. This diversity creates a challenge for the National Careers Service in terms of designing a website that is equally appealing and informative across all age ranges. 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). However, up to now the demographic characteristics have largely been consistent year on year.

2.1.3 Ethnicity and English as a first language

While three in four face-to-face customers were white British (73%), the profile of telephone users was more ethnically diverse (at 62% white British). The main reason for this is the relatively high proportion of non-white British people calling the national telephone centre (43%). In particular, Black/Black British customers comprised around one in six telephone information customers (17%).

Among website users, three in five were white British (61%) and there was a higher proportion of white non-British (12%) than among face-to-face or telephone customers. As last year, the proportion of Black/Black British people using the website was lower than telephone but in line with face-to-face customers.

One in seven (14%) face-to-face customers reported that English was not their first language but this rose to almost one in five telephone information customers (19%), reflecting their greater ethnic diversity. The proportion of online

customers for whom English was not the first language was higher still at 20% - an increase on last year when it was 16%.

2.1.4 Disability

Around one-quarter (23%) of face-to-face customers had a disability or long-term limiting health condition compared to 12% of telephone information customers and 16% of those who used the website. These figures are very much in line with last year.

The difference among face-to-face customers partly reflects their older age profile, and partly reflects the relatively high proportion of these customers who have been referred for advice by Jobcentre Plus. This will include people who are claiming the work-related component of Employment and Support Allowance (ESA). For example, almost two-thirds (63%) of disabled customers first heard about the National Careers Service from Jobcentre Plus compared with 52% overall, and disabled customers were also more likely to say their main reason for contacting the National Careers Service was to avoid their benefits being cut (9% compared with 6% overall).

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. Like previous years, face-to-face customers have a very different employment profile to other channels, with the majority being unemployed and looking for work (69%) compared with one-quarter of online customers (25%) and one in seven National Contact Centre customers (14%).

Table 2.2: Economic activity of National Careers Service customers at the time of the call, meeting or website visit

	Channel used as main way of accessing the service				
	Face-to-face (6,890)	Telephone (1,922)	Telephone advice (1,203)	Telephone information (719)	Online (8,878)
Base:					
	%	%	%	%	%
In work	15	46	30	54	39
Full-time employee	8	28	17	33	25
Part-time employee	6	14	10	17	10
Self-employed	1	4	3	4	4
In learning	4	18	5	26	23
Full-time learning	2	15	2	22	21
Part-time learning	2	3	2	4	2
All not working	81	36	65	20	38
Unemployed and looking for work	69	28	52	14	25
Unable to work due to health	7	4	7	3	3
Looking after home/ family	3	2	4	1	3
Retired	*	*	*	*	1
Other	1	2	2	2	5

The internal mix of telephone information customers has changed somewhat compared with previous years, in that fewer were unemployed (14%, compared with 22% last year). A similar proportion to last year were in work but substantially more were in learning (26% compared with 16% last year).

The employment profile of website users also reveals an increase in website users who were still in learning at the time of their visit (23%, compared with 18% last year) including 10% who were still at school. The profile of website users by employment status has remained relatively stable, and continues to be the most diverse of all the channels. This has implications for National Careers Service in terms of the design and content of its website, which consequently has to appeal to a very broad range of customers.

In total, almost three in five face-to-face or telephone customers were unemployed and looking for work (56%), a reduction on Year 4 (64%). The same customer groups are more likely to be unemployed as in previous years:

- Under-20s (66%) and over-50s (67%)
- Men (63% compared versus 47% among women)
- People with no or Level 1 qualifications (65%, compared with 41% among those with degree-level qualifications); and
- White British (59% versus 49% among other ethnic groups).

Among face-to-face and telephone customers who were not working at the time of their call/meeting, 18% last worked within a month before their contact with the National Careers Service and 43% (cumulatively) had worked within the past six months. One-third (33%) had not worked for more than a year.

In addition to this, one in ten customers (9%) had never had paid work, a very similar proportion to previous years. This includes two in five 18-19 year olds using the face-to-face or telephone service (38%) and one in six 20-24 year olds (16%). Altogether, one-quarter (23%) of 18-24-year-old customers who were Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET) had never had a paid job.

On a similar theme, 13% of all face-to-face or telephone customers had recently been made redundant and a further three per cent reported they were facing redundancy at the time of their initial contact with the service, similar to Year 4. Among National Careers Service customers, dealing with redundancy was more likely than average among people aged 50 plus and men.

These figures illustrate the continuing challenge faced by the National Careers Service in terms of its diverse customer base. People 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 client group for the National Careers Service is those with low qualifications, defined as people whose highest qualification is below Level 2 (i.e. equivalent to five GCSEs at grade A* to C). The majority of customers already had qualifications at or above this level, regardless of which channel they used to access the service (Table 2.3). This

was particularly the case for telephone information and website visitors. The proportion of face-to-face customers with Level 2 or higher qualifications was 61% - a decrease on last year when it was 67%.

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

	Channel used as main way of accessing the service				
	Face-to-face (6,890)	Telephone (1,922)	Telephone advice (1,203)	Telephone information (719)	Online (8,878)
Base:					
	%	%	%	%	%
Highest qualification					
Level 4 or higher (e.g. degree or equivalent)	22	56	27	71	36
Level 3 (e.g. A-levels)	17	15	20	13	16
Level 2 (5 GCSEs A*-C)	22	11	19	6	19
Level 1/ entry level	14	6	11	3	12
No qualifications	17	7	15	3	7
Level unclear	7	5	8	3	10
Below Level 2	31	13	26	6	19
Level 2 or higher	62	82	66	91	71
Key groups					
18-24 NEET	17	9	14	7	5
Recently made redundant/ facing redundancy	20	9	15	6	n/a

Telephone and face-to-face customers who were more likely than average (25%) to be qualified below Level 2 (including having no qualifications), as were those aged 50 plus (39%) and those with a disability (38%); These groups are likely to require more intensive support in order to help them progress in learning or work.

One in six face-to-face customers (17%) were aged 18-24 and Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) at the time of their meeting, a small decrease on last year (20%). Young people who were NEET predominantly used the face-to-face or telephone advice service and were comparatively less likely to use the telephone information line or the website. This may be because they are more likely to be referred to the service by Jobcentre Plus. Being NEET was more common among customers who were male (16%, versus 12% of females) and white British (16%, versus 11% of non-white British).

One-in-five (20%) face-to-face customers was facing redundancy or had recently been made redundant, and this was more common among those aged 50 plus.

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

Although the majority of customers first heard about the National Careers Service from Jobcentre Plus, this was much more common among customers of area-based contractors accessing face-to-face or telephone advice. Customers seeking information from the National Contact Centre were more likely to have first heard about the service through the internet, or – less commonly – through their college or training provider, or after it was recommended to them by a friend or relative.

Web users most commonly found out about the site from an internet search, or were signposted to it by Jobcentre Plus, a friend or relative, or a National Careers Service adviser.

Looking at reasons why people contacted the service, there was greater similarity between those using the face-to-face and telephone advice channels (who were more employment and careers focused) than those using the telephone information service (who were more focused on learning and in particular, wanting information about studying courses for jobs and about sources of funding for learning or training).

The majority of website visitors were seeking out information or advice on jobs or careers, but sizeable minorities were looking for information on courses/learning or using the website to access their Lifelong Learning Account.

This chapter explores how customers first found out about the National Careers Service and the drivers behind 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?

A similar proportion of customers had accessed the service through Jobcentre Plus as in Year 4, with a slight decrease for National Contact Centre customers (down from 8% in Year 4 to 5% in Year 5). The proportion of face-to-face customers being referred to the service through Jobcentre Plus has increased in comparison to Year 4, up

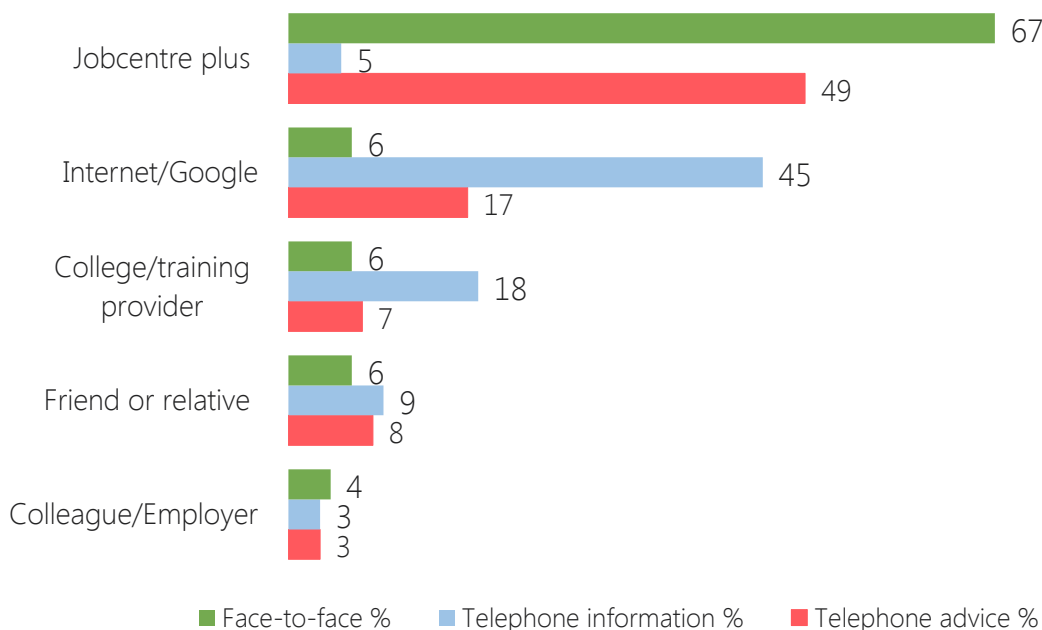
from 63% to 67%. Similarly, the proportion of telephone advice customers being referred this way has increased from 43% to 49%. That Jobcentre Plus is still the dominant means in which customers first hear about the service reflects the longstanding referral and co-location arrangements between Jobcentre plus and National Careers Service (formerly Next Step) as part of a continued commitment for a more integrated approach to the provision of employment and skills advice to unemployed people.

3.1.1 Telephone and Face-to-Face Customers

Customers who called the National Contact Centre (NCC) were much more likely to have heard about the service through the internet than area-based telephone advice or face-to-face customers. These customers were also more likely to have found the service through their college or training provider. Telephone advice customers instead more commonly heard about the service through Jobcentre Plus (49%) compared to National Contact Centre customers (5%).

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. Channel-related differences also existed in less common ways of hearing about the service. Whilst eight per cent of National Contact Centre customers first heard about the service through the direct.gov website, only one per cent of face-to-face customers reported finding out about the service in this way. Less common ways that people first heard about the National Careers service were through a careers or jobs fair, banks or building societies or through recruitment agencies or charities.

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



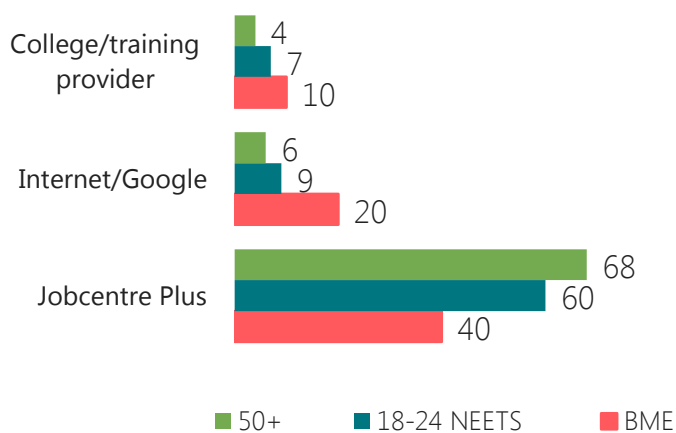
Base: All customers (8,812)

Data reflects that whilst Jobcentre Plus was the main way in which customers heard about the service, men were significantly more likely than women to have heard about the service for the first time through these means (56% vs 47%), reflecting that they were more likely to be unemployed. While the most common way for women to find out about the National Careers Service was also via Jobcentre Plus, they were more likely than men to have heard about it via alternative means such as the internet/Google (18% vs 13%) or through their college or training provider, though this was less common for both groups (10% vs 7%).

Older customers aged 50 plus were more likely to have first heard about the National Careers Service via Jobcentre Plus (68%), especially compared to younger customers aged 18-24 (40%). Other groups more likely than average to have first found out about the service via Jobcentre Plus were 18-24 year olds NEETs (60%) and people with a disability (63%) – both groups that were more likely to be unemployed and seeking advice about finding a job.

Finding out about the National Careers Service through means other than Jobcentre Plus was more common among Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) customers and those who spoke English as a second language. Figure 3.2 shows that these groups were more likely than average to have first heard about the service through the internet, through family or friends, or through a learning/ training provider.

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



Base: All customers (8,812)

Whilst the results suggest that it has maintained its strong links with the Jobcentre Plus network, the National Careers Service still has some work to do to ensure their service is promoted more widely through colleges and training providers, although this has increased since last year. Of those who heard about the service while in learning, 23% found out through their college or training provider, compared to 20% in Year 4. In Year 4, 31% of customers in learning had heard about the National Careers Service through Jobcentre Plus but this has declined to 15% in Year 5. Instead, evidence shows 31% of those in learning first heard about the service through the internet, reflecting that customers in learning or training are likely to be younger. This proportion has nearly doubled compared to Year 4, in which 17% of those in learning found the service through the internet.

3.1.2 Website customers

The most common ways for website users to have first heard about the National Careers Service were through an internet search (41%), via Jobcentre Plus (17%), from a friend or relative (10%) or from a National Careers Service adviser (10%).

People who were unemployed and looking for work were far more likely to have been signposted to the service by Jobcentre Plus (39%) or a National Careers Service adviser (15%). In line with this, customers aged 50 plus and people with a disability (who were all more likely to be unemployed) were also more likely to have been signposted to the website by Jobcentre Plus or National Careers Service adviser.

Table 3.1: Website visitor referral

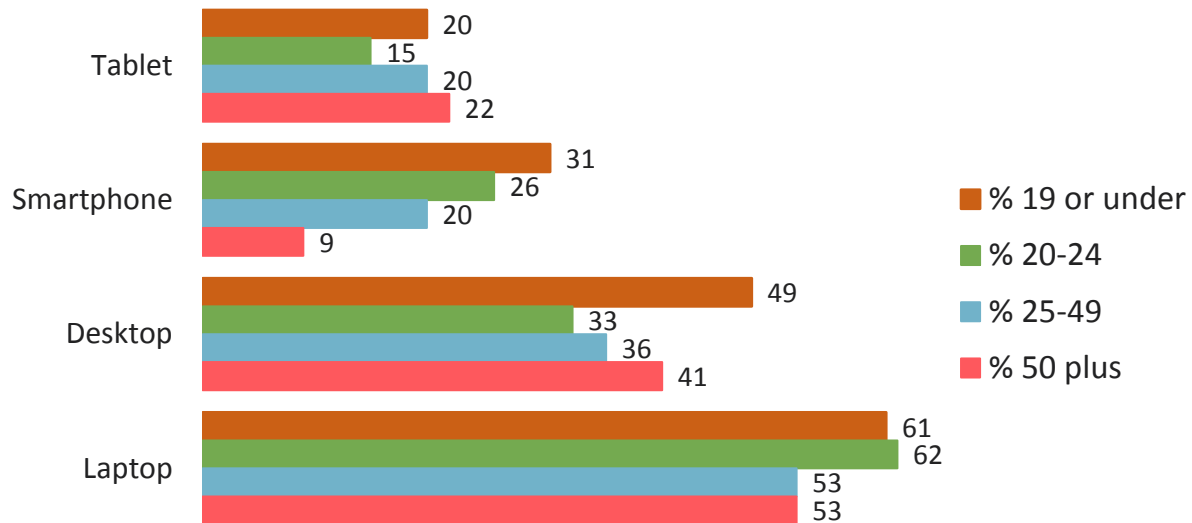
	Overall	18-24 NEET (402)	Disabled (1,435)	50 Plus (1,889)
Jobcentre Plus adviser	17%	28%	28%	26%
National Careers Service adviser	10%	12%	14%	12%

Base: All online satisfaction survey customers (8,878)

The proportion of younger people aged under-19 (16%) or 20-24 (12%) who found the website through recommendation from a friend or relative was higher than average and had also increased from Year 4, showing how important word of mouth is to take-up of the service among young people. A further key point to note in terms of how young people first heard about the National Careers Service website is that almost one-third (29%) cited 'other', compared to 14% in Year 4.

As in previous years, the majority of customers were at home when they accessed the website (74%). One in ten accessed it from work (11% overall, rising to 25% of those who were employed), 12% from school, college or university (rising to 38% of those still in education and 39% of young people aged under-19), and 4% from a library or other public place. This was more common among 18-24 year-old NEETs (7%) and people who were unemployed (9%) who are likely to have more limited internet access at home.

Laptops (56%) and desktops (40%) remain the favoured means of accessing the website. There continues to be increasing use of smartphones (21%, up from 15% in Year 4 and 10% in Year 3) and tablets (20%, up from 17% in Year 4 and 12% in Year 3). As in previous years, young people below the age of 25 were most likely to use laptops (62% compared with 53% among those aged 25 and above), or smartphones (31% of 16-19s, and 26% of those aged 20-24, compared with just nine per cent of those aged 50 plus). Those aged 50 plus (41%) and 16-19 (49%) were the most likely to have used a desktop, with the figure for those aged 16-19 likely to reflect the use of computers in school or college.

Figure 3.3: How customers accessed the National Careers Service website

Base: All online satisfaction survey customers (8,878)

3.2 To what extent have customers used the National Careers service before?

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.

Around one in ten telephone and face-to-face customers (12%) had previously met with a National Careers Service adviser face-to-face or spoken to one via the telephone helpline (10%). Those aged 35 and over were more likely than average to have had previous face-to-face contact with an adviser, as were those that were unemployed (13%), disabled (15%) or had English as a second language (15%). It is conceivable that some of these customers had initial contact with the service before being followed up by someone who is able to speak their first language.

Nearly one third (30%) of customers had accessed the website before they used the service. As is consistent with Year 4, the number of telephone customers who used the website before accessing the service was significantly higher than face-to-face customers (44% vs 23%). Those that were working (38%) or in learning (40%) 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 (38%). Again, those with English as a second language were more likely to have visited the website before using the service, as were those who identified as being from an ethnic minority.

Compared with Year 4, fewer customers in Year 5 had obtained advice about careers, improving their skills or about doing a course or learning from some other organisation prior to using the service (26% compared with 27% last

year). These customers were more likely to have been in learning at the time of their contact (33%), be aged 18-24 (30%) or to have been 18-24 NEET (30%).

Half of web users were 'new' service users who were visiting the site for the first time (46%). Those with qualifications of Level 2 or below were more likely than average to be visiting the website for the first time (53% as were those aged 20-24 (53%). The majority of web customers also had no previous dealings with the National Careers Service via face-to-face or phone (76%). The proportion of such 'fresh' customers who had no previous contact with the service has continued to increase from 69% in Year 3 and 74% in Year 4. Those with prior contact were more likely to have had a face-to-face meeting with an adviser (20%) than to have spoken to someone by telephone (7%).

Consistent with Year 4 and previous years, unemployed web customers were significantly more likely to have had prior contact with the National Careers Service than the average customer, particularly through a face-to-face meeting (34%), as were those aged 50 plus (26%), and NEET young people aged 18-24 (24%).

Customers with qualifications of Level 4 or above and disabled customers were more likely than average to have had previous contact through the National Careers Service telephone helpline (10%).

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 options, or both. More wanted to explore career options (74%) than learning options (64%). The youngest customers were the most likely to be seeking advice on careers options, with 82% of 18-19 year olds and 80% of NEET customers aged 18-24 contacting the service for this reason. Also more likely than average to want to explore career options were those that were recently made redundant or facing redundancy (80%).

Wanting advice on learning or training options was more common among BME groups (71%) and people who had English as a second language (74%) compared to 60% of white British customers. Customers already in work, those in learning and those aged 25-34 were also more likely than average to be seeking advice on learning or training options (76% and 70% respectively).

Notably, NEET young people were less likely than average to be considering learning or training options (58% of NEET customers were exploring these options compared to 64% overall).

By channel, telephone advice customers were more likely than telephone information customers to be looking to explore career options (78% compared to 69%), though overall, telephone customers were less likely to be exploring career options than face-to-face customers (72% compared to 75%).

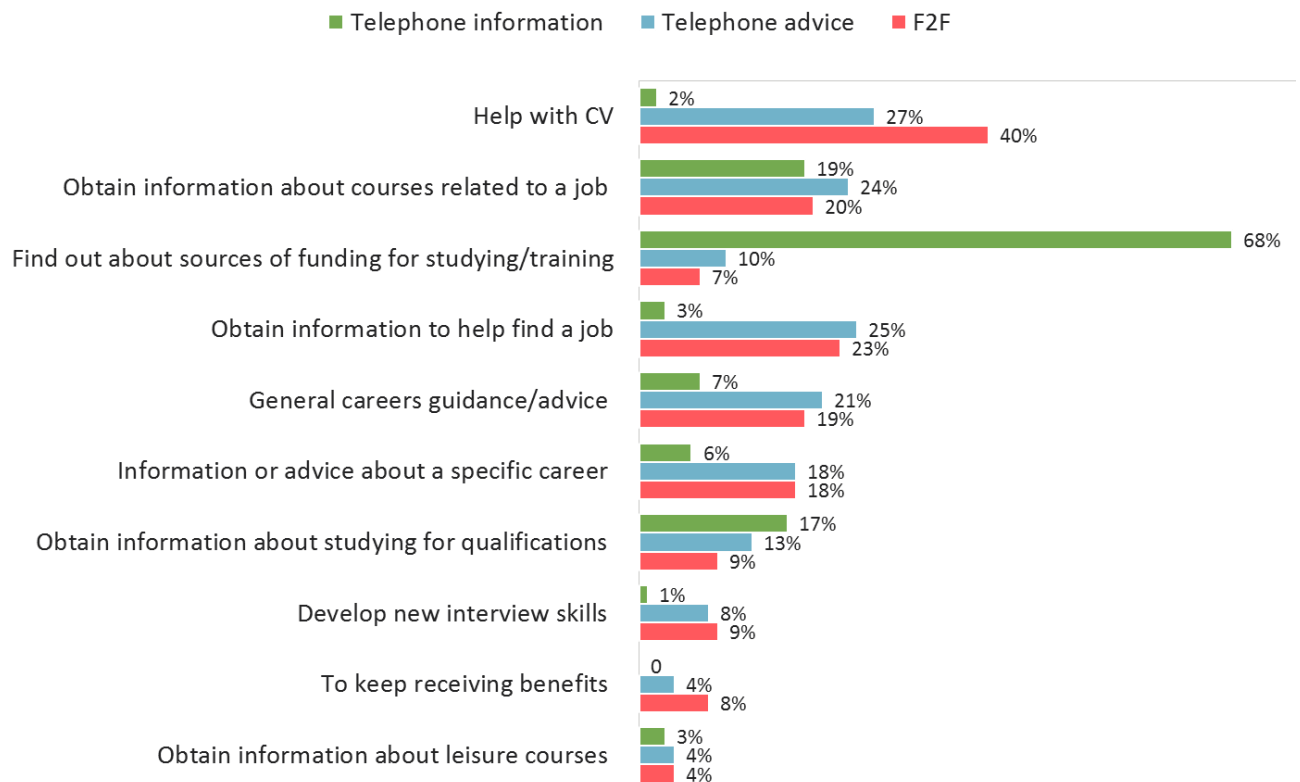
Telephone information customers were most likely to be planning on doing some type of learning or training (88%), compared to 63% of telephone advice and 56% of Face-to-face customers. Whilst the proportion of telephone information customers planning on learning or training has increased since Year 4, customers accessing

the service for this reason via other channels has in fact decreased (65% of telephone advice and 61% of face-to-face customers in Year 4 versus 63% and 56% in Year 5.)

Specific service needs

When asked why they had contacted the National Careers Service, the majority of customers gave multiple reasons, but the most common was to get help in writing or developing a CV.

Figure 3.4: Reasons for contacting the National Careers Service



Base: All customers (8,812)

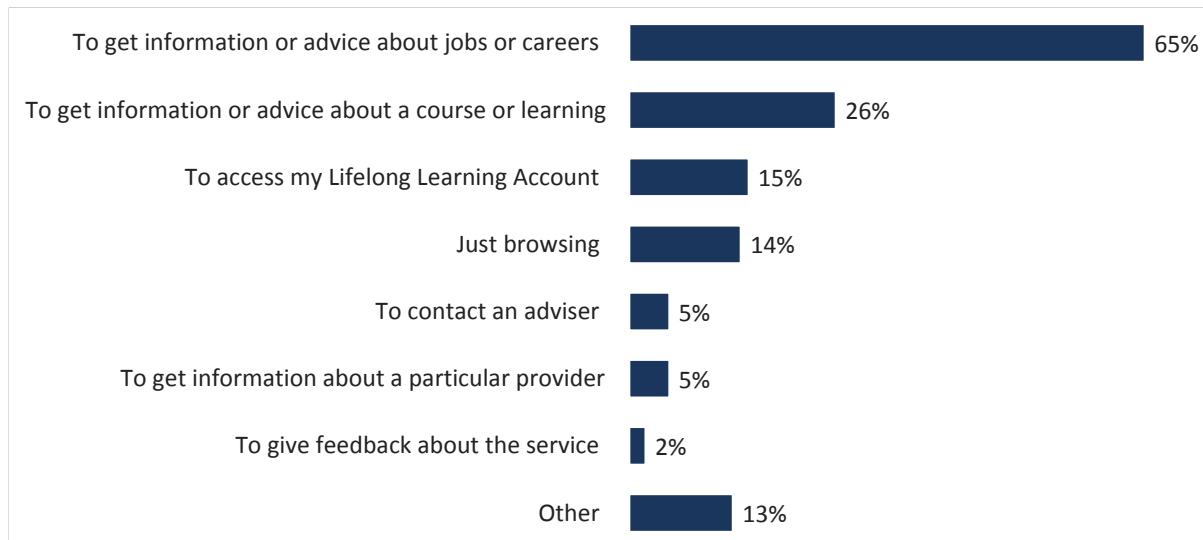
Overall there was a wide variety of reasons for using the service covering careers/jobs and learning, and ranging from information on courses relating to a specific job to developing interview skills. Due to a higher proportion of telephone information customers in the population sample, there is an emphasis on a preference for specific, practical advice in response to targeted needs such as help with writing a CV or more information on funding for studying training.

Those that were mandated to the service through Jobcentre Plus were most likely to have visited the National Careers Service seeking help with writing or developing a CV (46%), as were customers that were unemployed and looking for work (39%) and those aged 50 plus (38%). Younger customers and those already in learning or training were more likely than average to have used the service to find out about sources of funding for learning or training (33% of people aged 20-24, 38% of people working and 47% of people in learning compared to 20% overall).

3.3.2 Website users

Figure 3.3 shows that the majority of website visitors were looking for information or advice on jobs or careers (65%- an increase on 62% on Year 4 and 53% in Year 3). This increased to 72% of website visitors who were currently in-learning and 73% of 18-24 NEET customers. Sizable minorities were using the website to access their Lifelong Learning Account- notably people who were unemployed (24%), disabled (21%) or young people not in education or training (19%).

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



Base: All online satisfaction survey customers (8,878)

Similar demographic differences existed this year as in previous years. Women remain more likely than men to have used the website to access information or advice on jobs and careers (68% versus 62% of men) whilst men were more likely to be using the website to access their Lifelong Learning Account (17% versus 14% of women).

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

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

	Year 5 (5,793)	Year 4 (6,129)	Year 3 (5,606)	Year 2 (3,649)
Information about different careers	61%	61%	61%	61%
Applying for jobs	37%	36%	37%	37%
CVs	30%	34%	37%	39%
Information about progressing in a career	30%	29%	28%	29%
Information about the jobs market	25%	25%	26%	27%
Interview skills	19%	21%	21%	21%
How to get back into work	17%	20%	26%	26%
Voluntary work	11%	11%	11%	11%
Issues around redundancy	3%	4%	5%	5%
Other	8%	7%	5%	5%

Base: All those looking for information/advice about jobs and careers on the National Careers Service website

The most common form of employment related information that people were looking for was information about different careers, followed by more practical support in applying for jobs and with CVs. Those in the early stages of career-planning, aged 19 and under, were more likely to be looking for information about different careers (69%), as were those in learning (70%) who may have still been in school or college. There were also other notable differences:

- Men were more likely to be looking for information on actively getting back on the job market, either through help with applying for jobs (45% versus 32% of women), information on the jobs market (31% versus 22% of women) or how to get back into work (22% versus 14% of women).
- Those aged 20-24 were particularly interested in information about progressing within a career (37%) or applying for jobs (46%).

People aged 50 plus were more likely to be seeking help with CVs (35%) or how to get back into work (34%). Although a small minority, they were also twice as likely as the average to be seeking help with issues around redundancy (6% versus 3%).

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

	Year 5 (2,345)	Year 4 (2,406)	Year 3 (2,459)	Year 2 (1,754)
A specific course	47%	47%	43%	43%
Different ways of learning	38%	39%	41%	38%
How to get back into learning	26%	29%	35%	35%
Apprenticeships	22%	19%	20%	15%
Paying for a course	21%	25%	29%	28%
Other caring responsibilities	10%	9%	8%	7%
Childcare	8%	7%	8%	7%
Other	13%	12%	10%	10%

Base: All those looking for information/advice about a course or learning on the National Careers Service website

The proportion seeking information about apprenticeships has increased over time. This is encouraging given the government target to expand apprenticeship take-up. People across all age ranges were consistently interested in finding out about different ways of learning, whereas information on apprenticeships was more commonly sought by those aged 20-24 (32%), and by 18-24 NEETS (46%). Amongst those seeking learning related information, men were also more likely to be seeking information on apprenticeships than women (25% versus 21%).

4 Experiences of using the Service

Most telephone customers had their enquiry handled in one call: significantly more calls were handled in one call this year compared with last year (75% versus 66%).

One-quarter (24%) of face-to-face customers had two or more meetings with the National Careers Service adviser and three-quarters (74%) had one meeting; higher than previous years. Customers aged 50-plus were more likely to have multiple meetings (28%). Seven in ten (70%) customers who had more than one meeting saw the same adviser each time.

Three in five website visitors (58%) got all or most of the information they wanted on their first visit to the website. Over time, most website users found all or most of the information they were looking for. People aged 50-plus and those with a disability were more likely than average to only find some or even none of the information they wanted, a similar finding to last year.

The National Careers Service provides three key tools to support its customers across multiple platforms: the Skills Action Plan; the Skills Health Check; and the Lifelong Learning Account. The majority of customers found these tools useful. However, the proportion of customers who have a Lifelong Learning Account has fallen since Year 4, with two thirds of customers stating the adviser did not discuss it with them.

One-quarter (25%) of face-to-face and telephone customers reported that they had been followed-up by the National Careers Service since their initial contact. This was more common among customers likely to be in need of further support: those aged 50 plus, those facing redundancy or recently made redundant, and those for whom English is a second language.

This chapter examines customer experience of contacting the National Careers Service over the phone and face-to-face, and of using the website. It also looks at the specific tools and features that customers across all channels used, including the Skills Health Check, the Action Plan and Lifelong Learning Accounts.

4.1 Making contact with the National Careers Service by phone

Approaching nine in ten telephone customers were satisfied with the time it took for someone to answer their call (88%), a similar proportion as last year when it was 89% and only three per cent were dissatisfied. While these figures are positive, it should be remembered that the customer survey only covers people who got through to the service: it does not include those who tried to get through but could not get an appointment or speak directly with an adviser.

Three-quarters (75%) of customer queries were handled in a single call in Year 5 compared with two-thirds (66%) in Year 4. The customers who had their query dealt with in a single call were most likely to be in work or learning (79% and 82%), were young people aged 18-24 (83%) or held Level 2 or higher qualifications (77%). They were also more

likely to have called the national helpline for information (83%) rather than to receive advice (61%); implying that the calls to the national helpline may be more straightforward requests for information about a course or type of work. Indeed, those requiring more than one call were twice as likely to be telephone advice customers (32% compared with 16% telephone information), and aged 50 plus or unemployed (29% each), suggesting that these customers may have needed more long-term, wider-reaching advice requiring more follow up calls.

Of the customers who had their enquiry handled in more than one call, 41% dealt with the same adviser while just over half (55%) dealt with two or more advisers. Telephone advice customers who had more than one call were more likely to have dealt consistently with one adviser, whereas telephone information customers who had more than one call were more likely to have two or more different advisers. This is because people calling the national helpline will come through to any adviser who is available, rather than to the adviser they spoke to originally.

During the phone call with the National Careers Service, seven in ten (72%) customers were told that their adviser would send them further information. Of these, over nine in ten (93%) received this information. Customers who already engaged with the National Careers Service by visiting the website beforehand were more likely to say they were told they would receive further information following their call (75%), as were those who only called the service once (74%). These were also more likely to be young people aged 18-24 (76%) or people in work or learning (80% each). Furthermore, telephone information customers more likely than telephone advice customers to have been offered further information (80% versus 56%) with the exception of telephone advice customers in London; where the majority (90%) were offered further information.

Since Year 4, there has been a large increase in the proportion of customers offered further information (from 60% to 72% in Year 5), and a higher proportion of customers have received that information (89% to 93%). In Year 5, contrary to previous years, telephone information customers were more likely to be offered further information than telephone advice customers (increase from 55% in Year 4 to 80% in year 5 for telephone information customers and a decrease from 66% in Year 4 to 56% in Year 5). This may be due to the majority of telephone information customers being dealt with in one call; telephone advice customers are more likely to have two or more calls and so may receive their information during these calls rather than being sent follow up information after one session.

The vast majority of telephone customers (94%) found the information they received useful, and most (77%) found it very useful. Five per cent of customers found the information not very or not at all useful. This has remained consistent with Year 4.

Unemployed (31%) and older customers aged 50 plus (33%) were least likely to be offered or sent information, as were customers with either below Level 2 or no qualifications (42%), or young people aged 18-24 NEET (32%). This suggests the type of information and advice the service provides to these customers may be specific to their own circumstance and these customers may be better helped through one on one advice rather than general information.

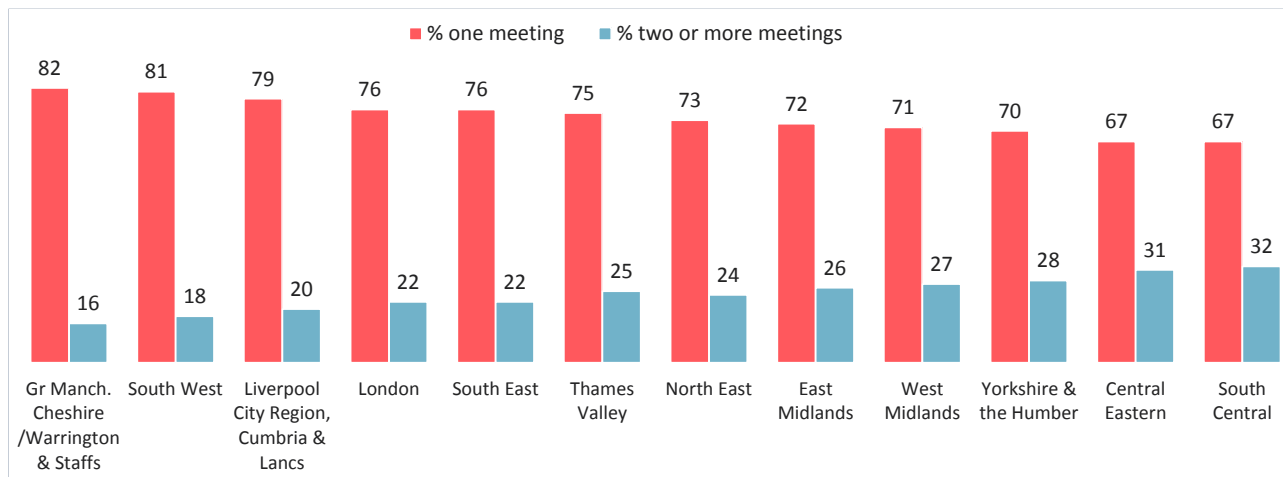
4.2 Face-to-face contact with the National Careers Service

One-quarter (24%) of face-to-face customers had two or more meetings with the National Careers Service advisers and three-quarters (74%) had just one meeting; an increase from previous years (64% in Year 4 and 66% in Year 3). Customers aged 50 plus were more likely to have multiple meetings with their adviser (28%, compared with 21% of

18-24 year olds and 22% of 25-49 year olds) as were customers with either below Level 2 qualifications or no qualifications (27% compared with 23% qualified Level 2 or higher).

The number of meetings customers had with advisers varied between contracting regions (Figure 4.1). Customers in the Greater Manchester, Cheshire, Warrington and Staffordshire, South West and Liverpool City regions were significantly more likely to have just one meeting and customers in South Central and Central Eastern were more likely to have multiple meetings.

Figure 4.1: Number of face-to-face meetings by contracting region



Base: All face-to-face customers (6,890)

The four main reasons for attending more than one meeting were that: the adviser was reviewing or amending their CV (37%); the adviser recommended they come back (20%); because the adviser could not answer all the questions during the first meeting and needed to provide more information (17%); or because there wasn't time to go through everything in the first meeting (16%). These reasons were more commonplace for particular customers: customers with a disability were more likely to be asked to come back by an adviser (26%); customers with Level 2 or higher qualifications were more likely to have another meeting because the adviser could not answer all of their questions (19%); and customers who were recently made redundant were more likely to have run out of time to go through everything (20%).

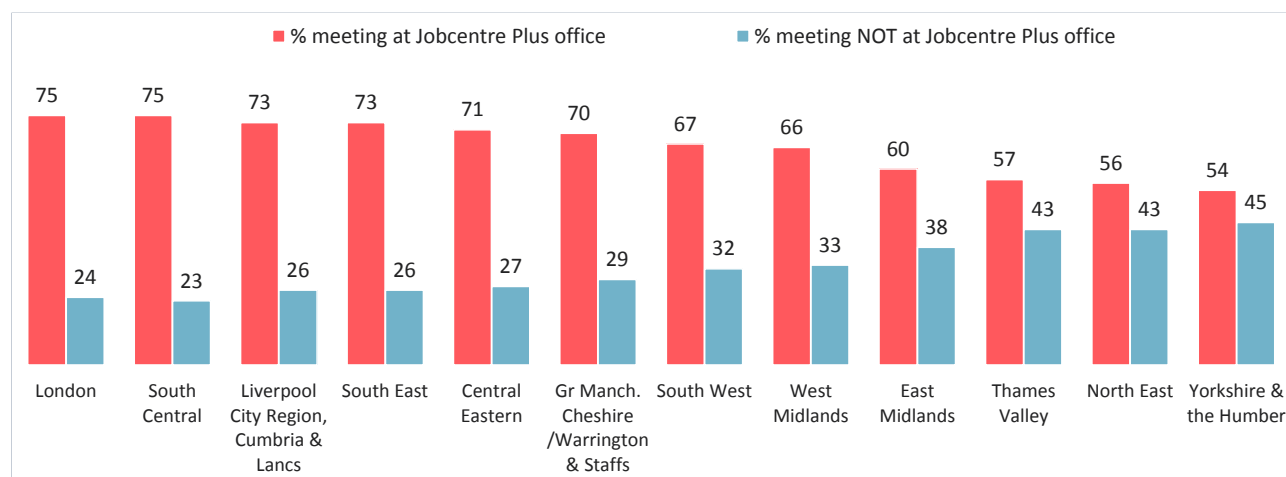
Customers in Central Eastern and South Central were most likely to visit the adviser again to have their CV reviewed or amended (45% and 44%). Customers in South Central were also more likely to have multiple meetings because the adviser needed to provide more information.

Seven in ten (70%) customers who had more than one meeting saw the same adviser each time (the same proportion as in Year 4). A further three in ten (29%) saw different advisers, although the vast majority (75%) did not mind this. Customers who did not speak English as their first language were more likely to prefer to see the same adviser for each of their meetings (37% versus 21% overall). This may be because the adviser would already know their situation from the first session, reducing the need to repeat information.

Two-thirds (67%) of customers had the meeting with an adviser in a Jobcentre Plus office and one third (32%) did not. Mature customers aged 50 or over were more likely to see an adviser in a Jobcentre Plus office, as were young NEETs (both 72%) – all these groups were more likely to be unemployed.

Figure 4.2 shows that location of the meeting varied by contracting region; customers in London (75%), South Central (75%), Liverpool City Region (73%), South East (73%) and Central Eastern (71%) were more likely to have their meeting in a Jobcentre Plus office.

Figure 4.2: Location of meeting by contracting region



Base: All face-to-face (6,890)

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 (Figure 4.3). Usage of all these tool and features varies by employment status (shown in Figure 4.3) and age.

The most commonly utilised feature was Job Profiles (used by 34% - an increase from 32% in Year 4). Careers advisers were significantly more likely to use this feature compared with the general public (72% versus 32%), as were customers in learning (43%) and customers under the age of 50 (36% versus 27% of 50 plus).

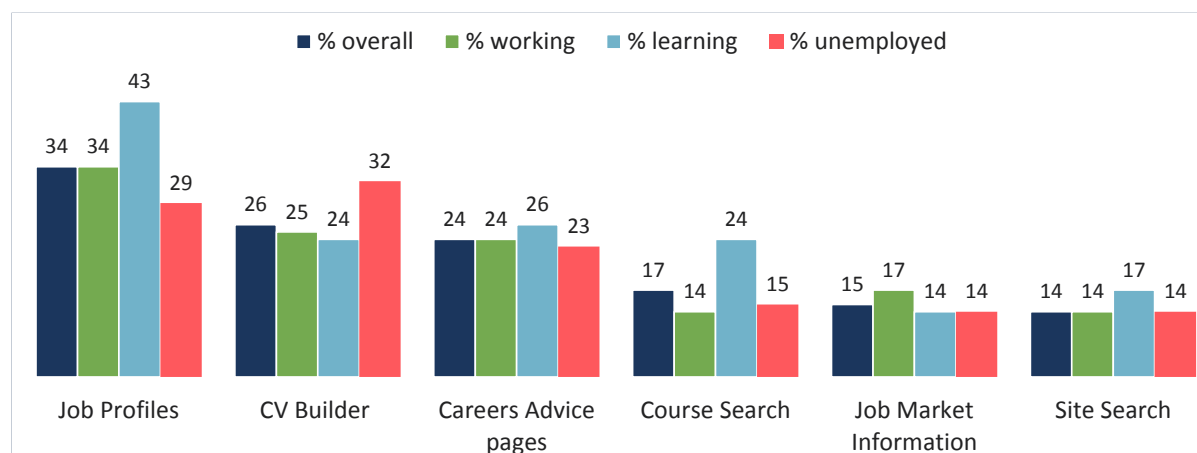
The CV builder tool was used by a quarter (26%) of customers and was more likely to be used by unemployed customers (32%) or older customers aged 50 or over (30%). Fewer customers in Year 5 used the CV builder tool compared with customers in Year 4 (26% versus 31%).

Careers Advice Pages were another feature more commonly used by careers advisers than the general public (44% versus 23%), consistent to Year 4. As shown in Figure 4.3, customers in learning were also more likely to use this feature, as were those aged under 50 (25%).

Seventeen per cent used Course Search (similar to 16% in Year 4); with younger people aged 19 or under (23%) and those in learning (24%) significantly more likely than average to use this tool (Figure 4.2) reflecting that they were more likely to be seeking information about further learning or training.

One in seven website visitors used the Job Market Information (15%) or Site Search (14%), these tools were especially popular among career advisers (45% and 24%). Also, as shown in Figure 4.2 the Job Market Information was mostly used by those in work and Site Search by those in learning. By age the former is least likely to be used by those aged 19 or under (12% versus 17% aged 20-24 and 16% aged 25+) and the latter is mainly used by customers aged 19 or under or aged 20-25 (16% each versus 13% aged 25+). The usage of both of these tools have increased since Year 4.

Figure 4.3: Customer usage of website features by status



Base: All online satisfaction survey customers (8,878)

The vast majority (94%) of customers who used them found the Jobs Profiles useful. Over four in five of those who used them found the CV Builder (84%), Careers Advice pages (91%), Job Market information (87%), Site Search (89%), and Course Search (81%) useful.

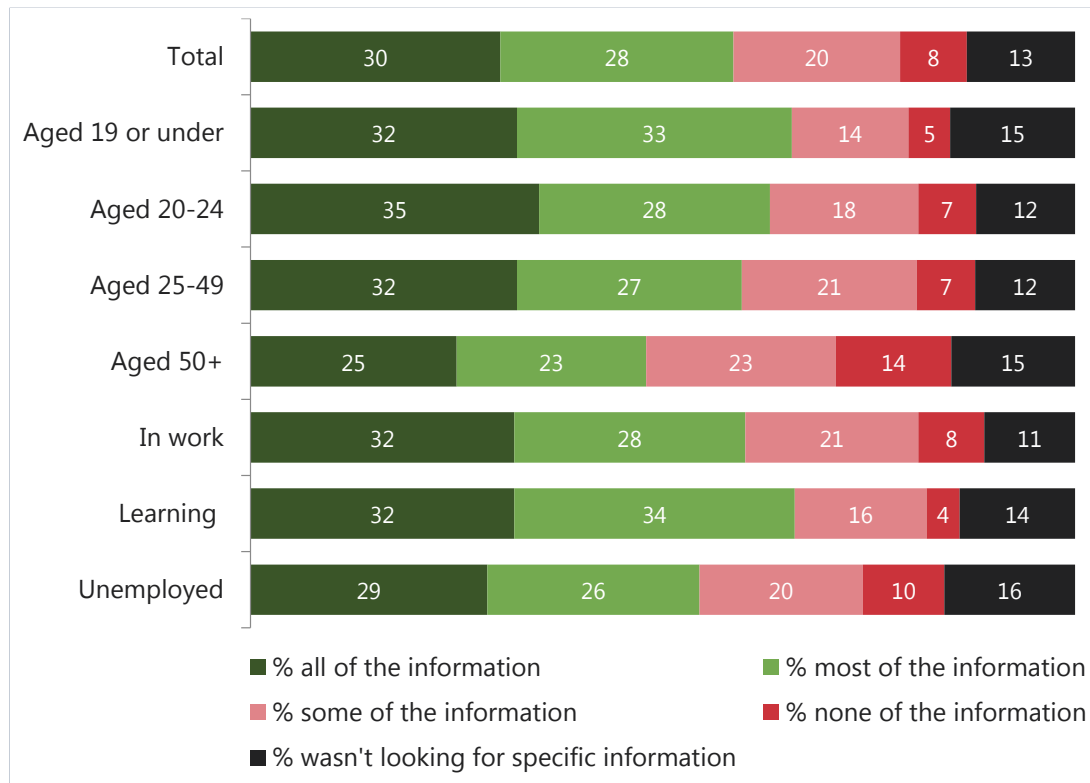
Only four per cent of website visitors had used webchat and three per cent had requested a call back from the adviser. Customers found these tools to be the least helpful, with one in five (21% and 20% respectively) stating they were not very or not at all useful.

Compared with Year 4, customers in Year 5 were significantly more likely to find the Job Profiles (92% in Year 4 versus 94% in Year 5) and Careers Advice Pages useful (88% in Year 4 to 91% in Year 5). Usefulness of the CV builder, Job Market Information, Site Search, webchat and call backs remained consistent throughout the years.

Three in five website visitors (58%) got all or most of the information they wanted on their first visit to the website, while one in five (20%) got some of the information and eight per cent got none. The remaining 13% were just browsing. These figures were similar for customers who visited the website multiple times, the main difference being that customers who visited more than once were more likely to be looking for specific information rather than browsing the website, and a higher proportion of them eventually found most of the information they wanted (39% versus 28%).

Through either single or multiple visits to the website, younger customers aged 16-19 or 20-24 and those in learning, were all more likely than customers overall to eventually get most of the information they wanted. By contrast, customers aged 50 plus or who were disabled were less likely than average to get all or most of the information they wanted.

Figure 4.4: Information obtained by one-time visitors to the National Careers Service website by age and work status



Base: All customers who visited the National Careers Service website once (4,122)

4.4 Use and usefulness of common National Careers Service tools

4.4.1 Skills Health Check

The Skills Health Check (SHC) is a diagnostic computer programme that assesses your skills, interests, personal working style and motivations. Almost two in five (38%) face-to-face customers used this tool (a similar proportion to Year 4), while over half did not (52%) and the remaining 10 per cent could not remember. Customers who were facing redundancy or were already made redundant were most likely to make use of the tool (40%), as were those who had more than one face-to-face meeting (45% compared with 35% of those who only had one session), and who also recalled having an action plan (49% compared with 23% of customers who did not recall an action plan). Usage of the SHC was also prominent in Thames Valley and Greater Manchester, Cheshire, Warrington and Staffordshire (43% and 42% respectively).

The majority of face-to-face customers who used this tool found it useful (88%) and this was exactly the same proportion as the preceding three years. Among these, slightly more customers found it very useful (47%) than quite useful (40%). Only ten per cent did not find it useful; these were more likely to be mature customers aged 50 plus (12%) or held Level 4 or higher qualifications (13%). The main reason why customers did not find the Skills Health Check useful was because they thought it told them things they already knew (30%) or did not find the questions relevant (24%). Unemployed customers were most likely to find the SHC told them things they already

knew (34%). This was a particular issue among people with Level 2 or higher qualifications (36% compared with 9% qualified to Level 1 or with no qualifications).

One-quarter (26%) of online customers also used the Skills Health Check (SHC), in particular customers aged 25-49 (30%) or 50 plus (33%), those who were unemployed and seeking work (37%) and people with a disability or long-term health problem (38%).

The majority of website users found the SHC useful (80%), although this was lower than among telephone and face-to-face customers. There were no major demographic differences other than fewer customers with a disability finding the SHC useful (76% versus 83% without a disability). Since Year 4 fewer customers have found the SHC useful (decrease from 83% in Year 4 to 80% in Year 5).

4.4.2 Skills Action Plan

As part of their interaction with National Careers Service, face-to-face and telephone advice customers were asked if an 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.

Overall, just over half (54%) of customers recall a Skills Action Plan (fewer compared with Year 4; 59%). Younger customers aged 18-24 (59%) or 25-34 (58%), 18-24 year olds who were NEET (59%), had Level 2 or higher qualifications (58%), had Level 4 or higher qualifications (60%) and those recently made redundant or facing redundancy (57%) were most likely to recall a Skills Action Plan. Furthermore, those who also recall using the Skills Health Check were also more likely to recall a Skills Action Plan being drawn up (71%) and had more than one meeting with an adviser (62%) suggesting these customers have a more intensive level of interaction with the service.

Half (51%) of customers had a great deal of involvement in drawing up their Skills Action Plan – these were more likely to be customers qualified to Level 2 or higher (55%). Customers who had the same adviser across multiple meetings were also more likely to have a great deal of involvement (56% versus 49% who had different advisers). A further 36% of customers reported that they had some involvement.

The majority (89%) of telephone and face-to-face customers who recall having a Skills Action Plan found it useful. This is consistent with last year (89%). Only one in ten (9%) found the Skills Action Plan not very or not at all useful: the main reasons being they did not think it was relevant to their situation (35%), it was too general/ insufficiently tailored (30%), or it did not contain any new information (20%).

For website users, the National Careers Service offers a self-completed online action plan as an initial step. Eight per cent of online customers recall completing an action plan on the website. In particular, customers not in work or learning (10% compared with 8% in work and 7% in learning), or disabled customers (11% versus 8% not disabled).

Three-quarters (76%) of online customers who completed an action plan on the website found it useful, similar to last year (77%). Online customers in learning, work or who were unemployed were more likely to find their action plan useful than online customers in other categories, such as looking after the home or children (78% versus 64%).

4.4.3 Lifelong Learning Accounts

A Lifelong Learning 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, one in ten face-to-face and telephone customers had a Lifelong Learning Account (10%) and four in five (79%) did not – a decrease since last year. The data suggests that, since Year 4, the Lifelong Learning Account is less likely to be a part of the discussion as the proportion of customers stating that it was not discussed as part of their session with the adviser increased from just over half (55%) of customers in Year 4 to two-thirds (66%) of customers in Year 5.

Table 4.1: Use of Lifelong Learning Accounts

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Base:	(6,610)	(8,808)	(8,795)	(9,576)	(8,812)
Already had an account	2%	3%	4%	6%	
Opened an account during the session	6%	7%	8%	8%	10%
Opened an account after the session	4%	6%	8%	8%	
Was offered during session but not interested	8%	11%	11%	10%	13%
It was not discussed	70%	64%	58%	55%	66%
Can't remember	8%	8%	10%	10%	9%

Note: the question was altered in Year 5 to merge 'already had an account', 'opened an account during the session' and 'opened an account after the session' into one code 'you have opened a Lifelong Learning Account'.

Customers who were more likely to have opened an account were dealing with redundancy or the threat of it (13%), were aged 35-49 (12%) or had Level 2 or higher qualifications (11%). By channel, telephone information customers were significantly less likely to have a Lifelong Learning Account compared with face-to-face and telephone advice customers (8% versus 11%).

Two-thirds of customers who had opened a Lifelong Learning Account had progressed as far as activating it (67%): a similar proportion to Year 4 (69%). Telephone information customers and BME customers were less likely to have activated their account (47% and 58%).

Around one in seven (15%) online customers used their Lifelong Learning Account in Year 5 (a reduction from 18% in Year 4). Online customers who were most likely to use the Lifelong Learning Account when they visited the website were more likely to speak English as their first language (16% versus 10% who speak English as a second language).

Four in five (82%) online customers who had one found the Lifelong Learning Account useful, with 40 per cent finding it very useful. Customer with no qualifications or qualifications below Level 2 were most likely to have found the Account very useful (46% versus 37% of customers with Level 4 qualifications or higher).

4.5 Follow up actions

4.5.1 Reported follow-up by the National Careers Service

One-quarter (25%) of face-to-face or telephone customers stated that the National Careers Service had been in touch with them again after their initial contact, similar to Year 4. Email (13%) and telephone (10%) were the most common communication channels used for follow-up, followed by meeting face-to-face (3%), letter (2%) or text (2%). Levels of follow-up remained consistent throughout the year.

Reporting follow-up was more common among customers aged 50 plus (28%), facing or made redundant (34%), or where English was their second language (30%). It was also substantially more common among telephone advice customers (42%) or face-to-face (28%) customers than among those accessing the service for telephone information (8%).

Table 4.2 shows there are variations between area-based contractors in terms of whether customers report having any follow-up. Customers of Prospects, Economic Solutions and the national telephone centre were least likely to say their contractor followed up after their previous meeting/call.

Table 4.2: Customer follow up by contractor

	Base	No	Yes - all	Yes - email	Yes - phone	Yes – face-to-face
Adviza	580	60%	39%	26%	10%	6%
Futures Advice	1,278	64%	35%	18%	13%	4%
CfBT	1,399	65%	33%	17%	13%	3%
Careers Yorkshire & the Humber	1,005	65%	32%	13%	16%	3%
CXK	614	69%	29%	16%	12%	3%
Prospects	2,004	72%	27%	15%	7%	4%
Economic Solutions	1,213	74%	24%	12%	9%	4%
National Telephone Centre	719	90%	8%	2%	4%	*%

4.6 Follow up actions carried out by customers

Encouragingly, within the month following the first meeting or call with the National Careers Service adviser four in five (78%) face-to-face customers who recalled having a Skills Action Plan had carried out at least one of the actions

agreed in it. The proportion of customers doing this has remained consistent with Year 4. Customers who were most likely to carry out these actions were:

- unemployed and looking for work (80%) or recently made redundant or facing redundancy (81%);
- people with Level 2 or higher qualifications (81%); and
- customers who had more than one face-to-face meeting and had the same adviser (82% each).

It was less common among customers who were in work (22% of whom had not carried out any of the actions in their Skills Action Plan within the first month of their contact), potentially due to more limited time. It was also less common among those who did not have English as their first language (29%) or had no qualifications or qualifications below Level 2 (24%). In these cases, there may be more limited understanding about what to do or how to go about completing the actions.

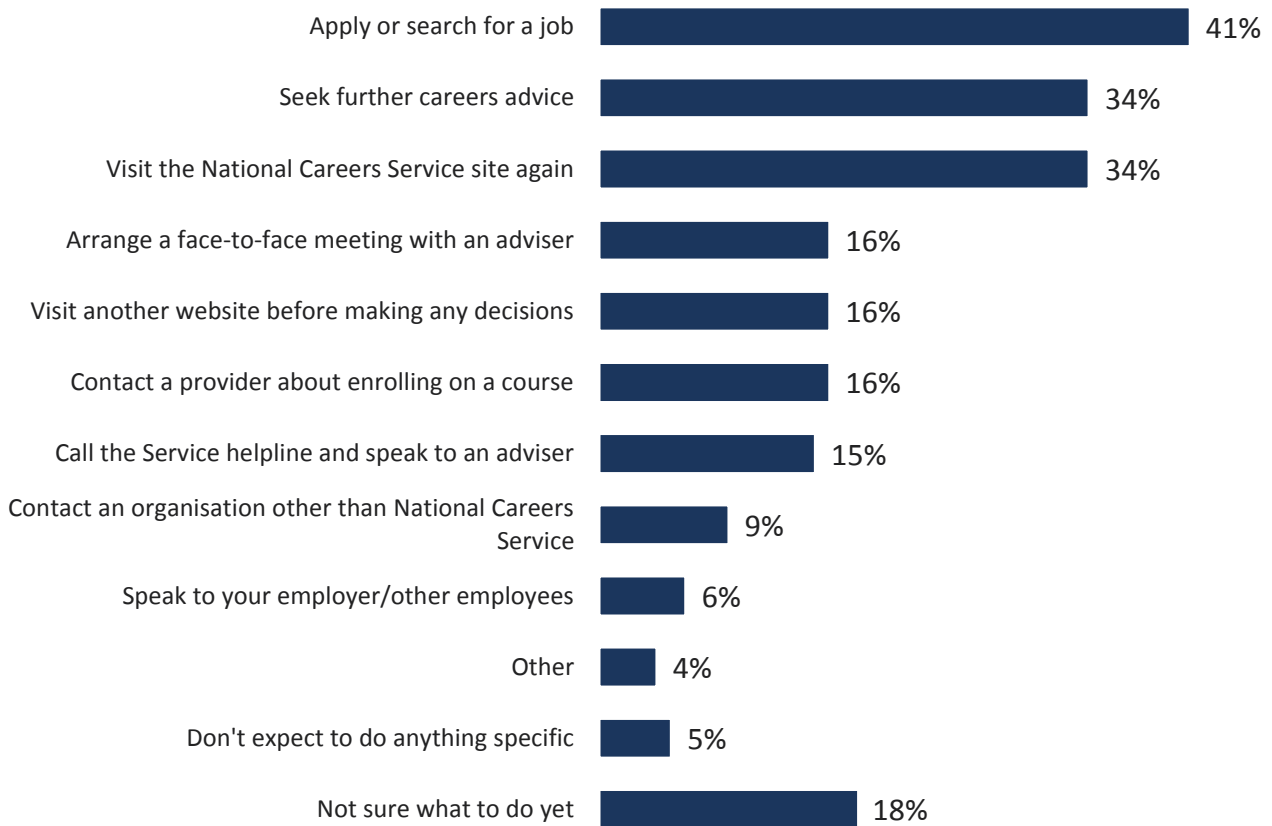
Around two-thirds (67%) of telephone customers who had been sent any information by their adviser had acted upon this in the month following their session. There were few significant differences other than 18-24 year olds (74%) or those with Level 2 or higher qualifications (68% compared with 58% with below Level 2 qualifications or no qualifications) were far more likely than average to have done so.

Over half (54%) of the remaining telephone and face-to-face customers (who did not recall an Action Plan or who had not been sent any follow-up information) had acted on something they discussed with their adviser within the first month. This was more common among 18-24-year-old NEET (59%), people with Level 2 or higher qualifications (57%) and less common among those who did not speak English as their first language (50%).

Following their first contact, almost a third (37%) of telephone and face-to-face customers visited the National Careers Service website. Customers significantly more likely to have done this were face-to-face customers (40%), 18-24-year-old NEETs (45%), people qualified to Level 2 or higher (39%), speak English as a second language (41%) or were recently made redundant (41%).

One in five telephone or face-to-face customers (22%) had started a new course since their initial session. This was more common among customers aged 20-24, BMEs, had English as a second language and held Level 4 qualifications or higher (25% each). As were people who had contacted the telephone information line (30%). Of the remaining customers, a further 30% reported they had decided to start a new learning or training course. This rose to almost three in five (56%) customers using the telephone information line, which reflects that they were already more interested in finding out about learning/training when they used the service.

Online customers were asked what they were likely to do as a result of visiting the National Careers Service website (Figure 4.5). They were most likely to apply or search for a job following their visit (41%), seek further careers advice or visit the site again (34% each). Customers who planned to apply or search for a job following their visit to the website were more likely to be unemployed or in work rather than in learning (52% and 40% versus 34%).

Figure 4.5: Online customers' planned next steps after visiting the National Careers Service website

Base: All online customers looking for advice for themselves or someone else (7,885)

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 (93%) agreeing that it was good.

In line with this, the vast majority of face-to-face and telephone customers (85%) were satisfied with the National Careers Service overall, consistent with previous years. Customers who were more satisfied than average were those aged 18-24 (88%), in particular young people who were NEET (87%). This is positive given that 18-24-year-old NEETs are a priority group for the service.

Overall satisfaction with the National Careers Service website remains high (at 79%). This represents a gradual climb since the online survey first began. After significant year-on-year increases in the proportion of 'very satisfied' website visitors, this has levelled out at 39% in Year 4 and Year 5.

Reflecting the high levels of customer satisfaction and positive views of service quality, nine in ten (89%) face-to-face or telephone customers either had already recommended or would recommend the National Careers Service. Similarly, four in five (83%) online customers said they would recommend the National Careers Service website to friends, family or colleagues.

Suggestions for improvement from customers across all channels focused on more tailored help and follow-up, and improvements to the functionality of the website. These suggestions are in line with the most common reasons customers were dissatisfied with the service.

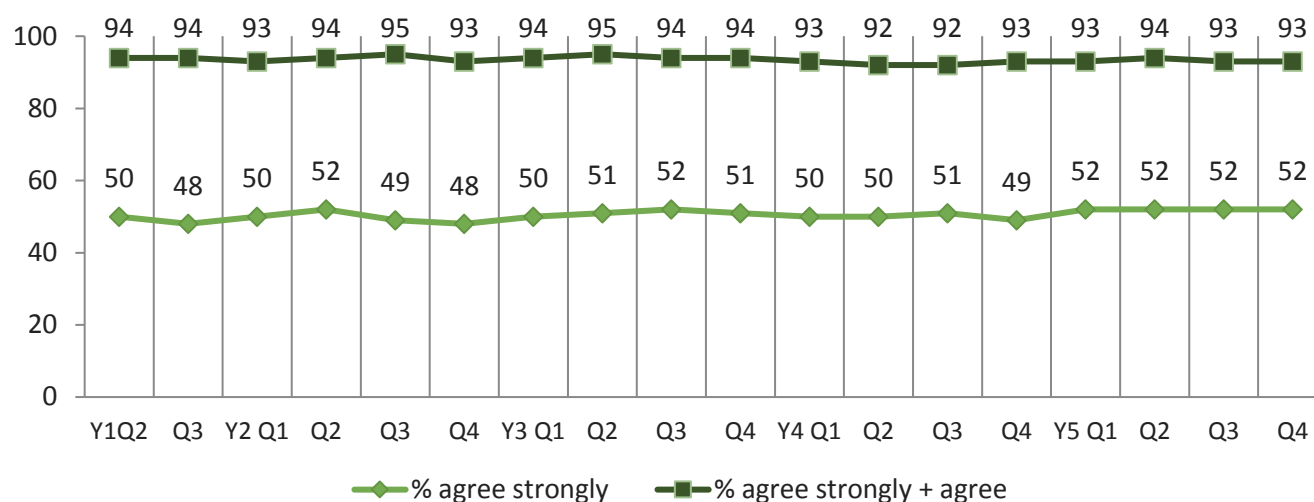
This chapter examines customer satisfaction with the National Careers Service. As well as overall satisfaction, it explores satisfaction with more specific aspects of the service ranging from logistical issues, such as the timing of appointments, to views on the quality of the advice received and on 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, with the vast majority (93%) agreeing that it was good, and a small minority who disagreed (6%). This has been consistently high over the last five years (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)

A number of customer groups were more likely to agree that the overall quality of the service was good, including:

- Young people aged 18-24 (96%), including 18-24 year old NEETs (95%) who are a priority group for the National Careers Service.
- Customers who did not have a disability (94% versus 92% who did).
- Customers who had more than one face-to-face session compared with those who had just one (94% compared with 92%) – and among these, people who saw the same adviser (96%). Consistency of contact appears to be important in this regard.
- Customers who called the National Careers Service once compared with customers calling multiple times (97% compared with 88%).
- Customers who have more than one call talking to the same adviser compared with talking to multiple advisers (92% compared with 85%).
- Customers who had a deeper level of engagement with the service overall, so for example – those who visited the website before or after their discussion with the adviser (94%), or who recalled using the Skills Health Check (96%) or agreeing an Action Plan (95%).

Very high proportions of face-to-face (93%), telephone advice (92%) and telephone information (96%) customers rated the overall quality of the service as good. Telephone information customers are increasingly more likely to rate the service they received as good; since Year 3 the proportion of these customers increased significantly by seven percentage points from 89% to 96%. Continuing the trend since last year, these customers are also significantly more likely to strongly agree the service was good compared with customers of other service types (66% strongly agree compared with 50% telephone advice and 48% face-to-face).

Around one in twenty customers disagreed that the quality of the service was good (6%), and this was higher among customers aged 50 plus (8%) and those who are facing or were recently made redundant (7%). Customers with a disability were also more likely to disagree that the quality of service was good (7% compared with 5% without a disability). The main reasons why customers disagreed the service was good were that they did not receive any relevant information they requested (49%), they did not consider they had received any help (30%) and that staff lacked knowledge/ could not answer their questions (26%). In addition, 15% reported they did not receive a promised callback.

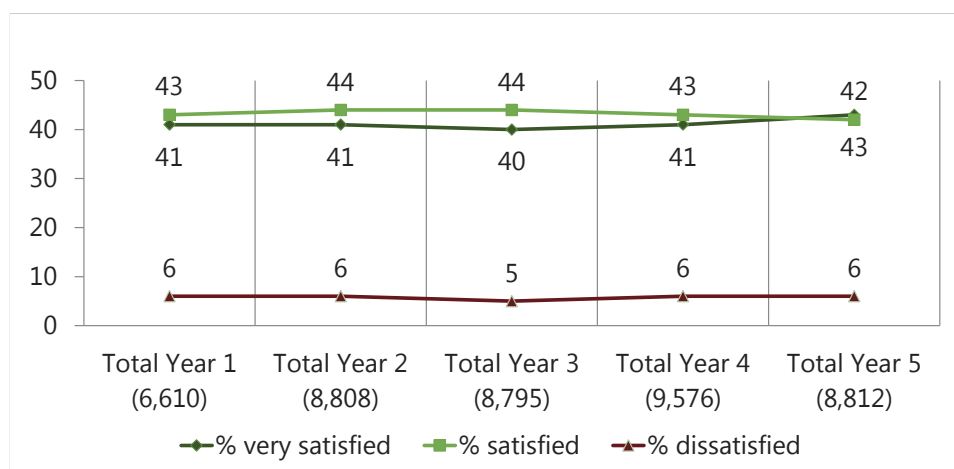
The main reasons why the customers disagreed the service was good has remained consistent throughout Year 4. However, compared with last year, significantly more customers who did not think the service was good cited not receiving any relevant information they requested (49% in Year 4 compared with 38% in Year 3). This issue first came to prominence after the service change in Year 3, suggesting that the operational issues which ensure customers receive callbacks or are sent the information they requested remain an issue for a minority of service users.

5.2 Overall satisfaction with the National Careers Service

5.2.1 Face-to-face and telephone customers

The vast majority of face-to-face and telephone customers (85%) were satisfied with the National Careers Service overall and only six per cent of customers were dissatisfied, largely unchanged from previous findings (Figure 5.2).

Figure 5.2: Annual ratings of satisfaction and dissatisfaction



Base: As shown in chart

Customers who were more satisfied than average were those aged 18-24 (88%), in particular 18-24 year olds who were NEET (87%). This is positive given that 18-24 year old NEETs are a priority group for the service. Similar patterns were found in Year 4. Further to this customers qualified to Level 2 or higher were significantly more likely to be *very satisfied* (45% compared with 38% of those with below Level 2 qualifications or no qualifications).

Historically, telephone customers whose enquiry was dealt with over more than one call have always felt less satisfied and results this year suggest the same. Three-quarters of those who had more than one call were satisfied with the service overall (79%), compared with 90% of those whose enquiry was handled in one call. As for those who had more than one call and remained satisfied overall, 65% of them liked the service because they thought the adviser was knowledgeable and provided good advice (versus 61% of telephone customers overall). This suggests that while customers who had more than one call may have had more complex enquiries, they still appreciated the help and advice provided.

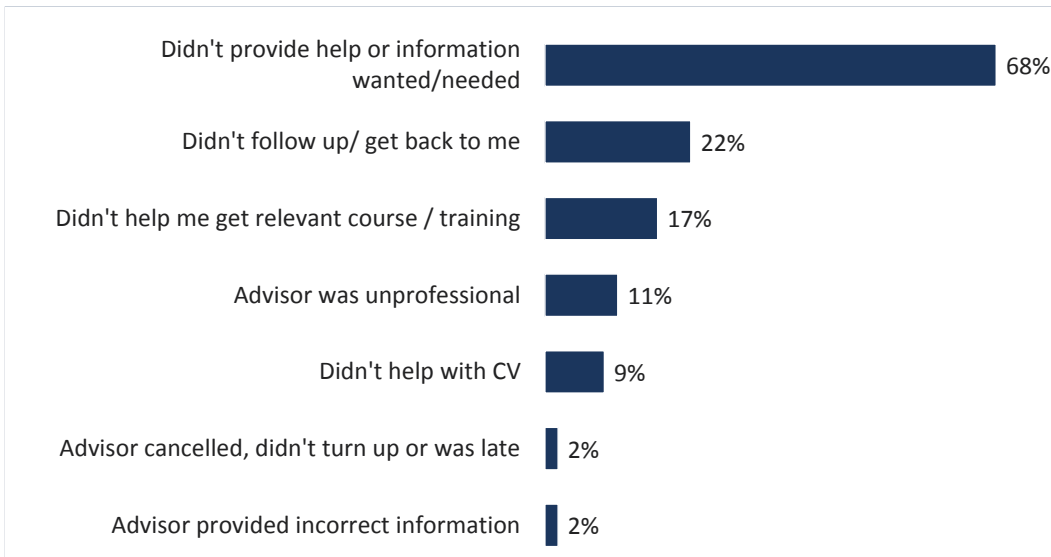
In contrast, face-to-face customers who had more than one meeting were more likely to be satisfied overall than those who only had one session (89% versus 82%), and in particular, those who saw the same adviser across multiple sessions (91% satisfied, including 48% of whom were very satisfied, compared with those who did not see the same adviser, of whom 83% were satisfied including 35% very satisfied).

Reflecting the overall service quality rating, telephone information customers are much more likely to be satisfied with the service compared with customers of area-based services (89% vs. 84% face-to-face and 83% telephone advice). However, it is worth noting that the level of satisfaction is consistent with Year 4 among the area-based customers; but satisfaction, particularly those who are *very satisfied* has increased significantly between Year 4 and Year 5 for telephone information customers (from 44% in Year 4 to 56% in Year 5).

The proportion of dissatisfied customers has remained consistently low throughout the years, and remains at just six per cent in Year 5. Customers who were more likely than average to be dissatisfied with their overall experience of the National Careers Service were face-to-face customers (6%) and people aged 35-49 or 50 plus (7% each).

The main reasons for dissatisfaction among customers were not receiving help or information they wanted and/or needed (68%), followed by lack of follow-up (22%). Those who disagreed that the quality of the service was good cited similar reasons, and these serve to underline the importance of getting these things right. The importance of the main issues remain consistent across all quarters of Year 5, however, although a minority report the adviser providing incorrect information or being late or missing the appointment (2% each overall), those reporting these issues increased in quarter 4 to five per cent.

Figure 5.3: Main reasons for being dissatisfied with the Service



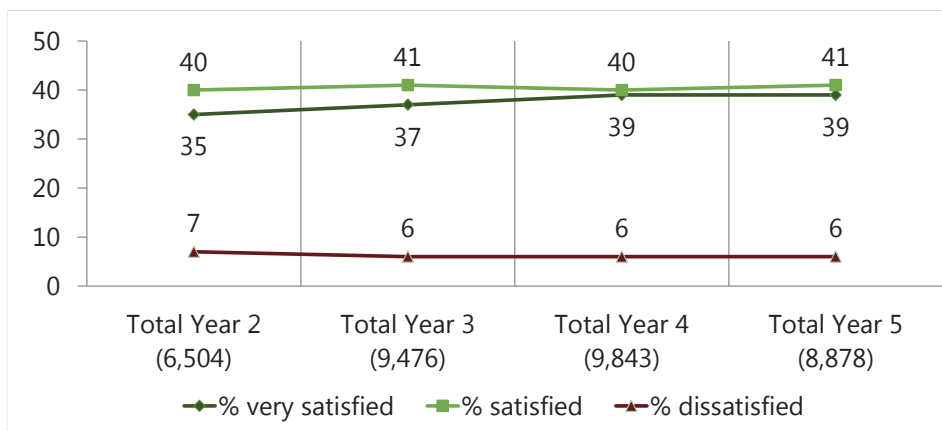
Base: All dissatisfied customers (516)

Generally, reasons for dissatisfaction were consistent among most subgroups. One exception was seen with customers qualified to Level 4 or above – these found the Service did not provide the help or information they wanted or needed (79% compared with 58% of those whose qualifications are below Level 2).

5.2.2 Online customers

Overall satisfaction with the National Careers Service website remains high (at 79%); with most online customers either satisfied (41%) or very satisfied (39%). This represents a gradual climb since the online survey first began but has levelled out in the past few years of the survey. In particular, there has been a significant increase on the proportion of very satisfied customers, from 35% in Year 2 to 39% in Year 4 and Year 5 (Figure 5.4).

Figure 5.4: Annual ratings of satisfaction and dissatisfaction



Base: As shown in chart

Website visitors who were more satisfied overall than others were:

- women (83% satisfied compared with 77% of men)
- young people aged 19 or under (86% satisfied) or aged 20-24 (82%) compared with 72% of those aged 50+
- those in learning (86%) or in work (81%) compared with people who were unemployed (76%)
- those with Level 2 or higher qualifications (81%) compared with those who had below Level 2 or no qualifications (78%).

One in twenty (6%) were dissatisfied with the website, the same proportion as Year 4, and the same groups were more likely to be dissatisfied – typically those aged 50 plus (10%) and those who were disabled (9%).

The main reasons people were dissatisfied with the website related to similar issues raised last year, which suggests that these have not yet been fully resolved. However, issues with webchat and the site search tool have become more prominent.

- The site being too slow or crashing, or inability to save information that has been compiled or produced already. This was a particular issue with the CV Builder and Skills Health Check:

"I clicked on the 'save my CV' icon and the page crashed losing everything I had done."

"Constantly thrown to start of CV builder, even when halfway through typing a word, making it incredibly frustrating and pretty impossible to use. Also any helpful information would scroll too fast to read!"

- Webchat issues and adviser's lack of knowledge

"Adviser terminated chat before I was able to send my enquiry."

"The site doesn't contain the information I require and the chat advisers don't help as they don't have the appropriate information or training to help me."

"Because in a web chat I was asking for careers advice, all I got was links to various parts of the website pasted to the conversation. I was looking for ideas/suggestions/ADVICE. I could have just looked at the website; the conversation was no help."

- Issues with the search tool

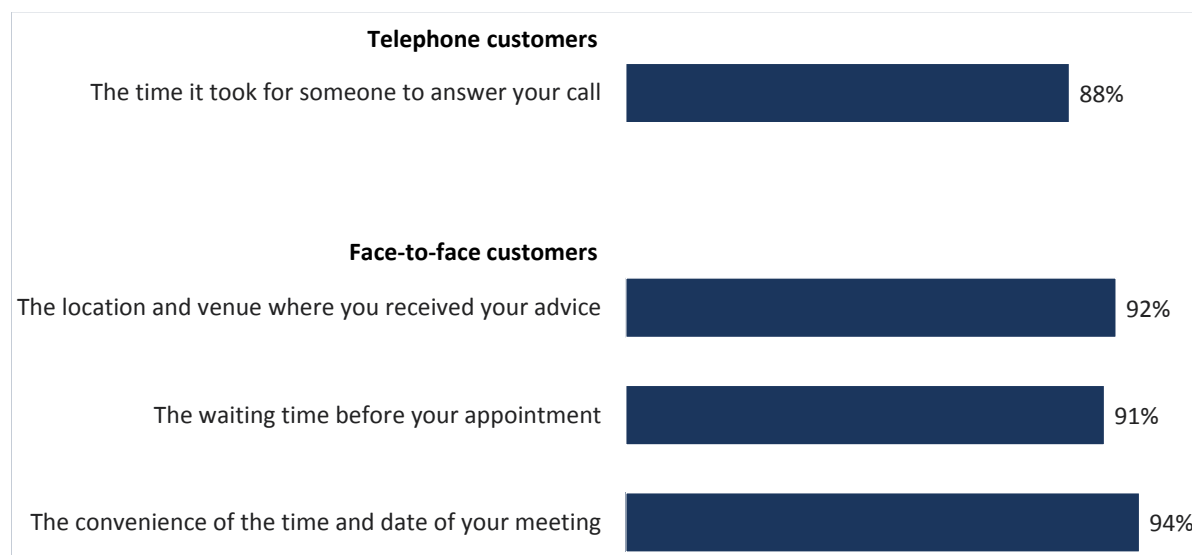
"I have not found any new information. The search requirements are too specific. I want to find who does courses and where as I don't know. But the site says I have to know this already. "

"I searched accounts and selected sage accounts from a drop down menu, informed that no results were available, then searched accountancy, again no results, then accounts no results, then with accountancy in main search top right.... Discussions came up with no specific help."

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, carrying on the trend we have seen in previous years (Figure 5.5).

Figure 5.5: Face-to-face and telephone customer satisfaction with logistical arrangements of their contact with the National Careers Service



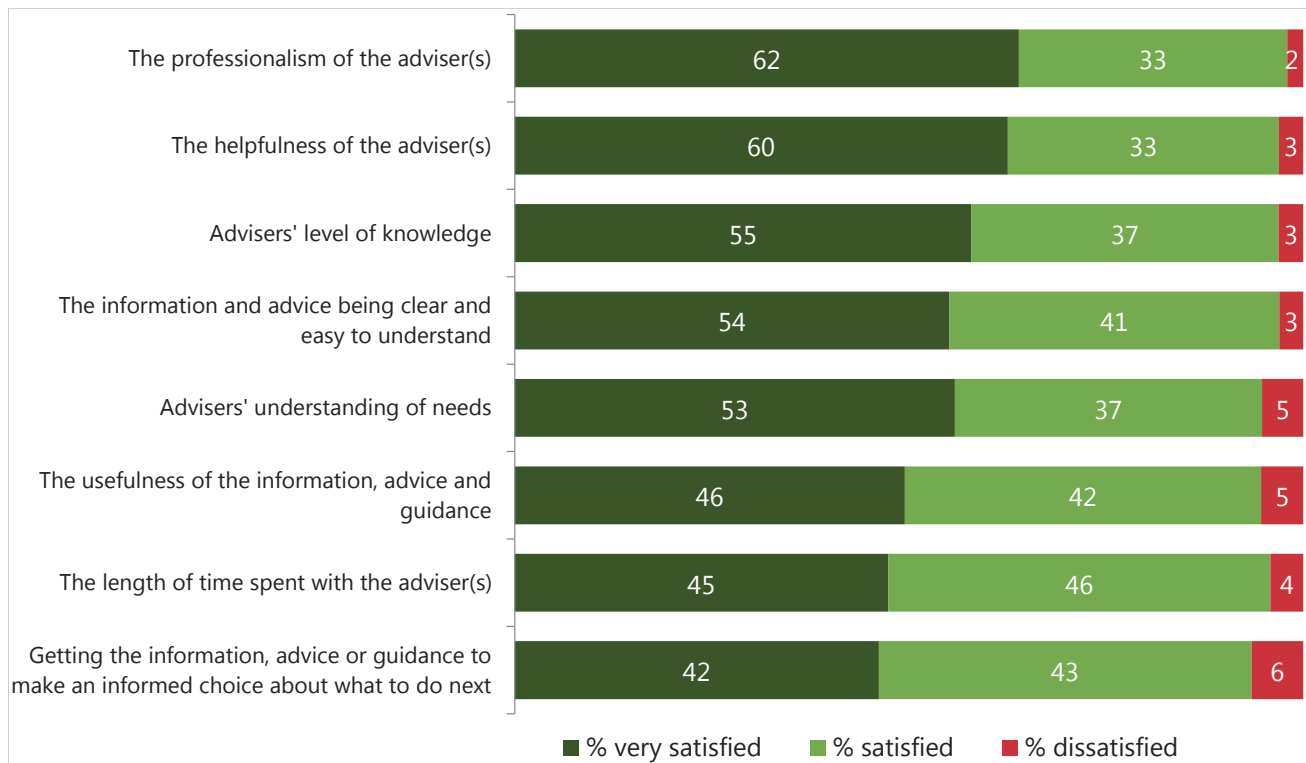
Base: All telephone customers (1,922); all face-to-face customers (6,890)

Almost nine in ten (88%) of the telephone customers were satisfied with the time it took for someone to answer their calls; satisfaction was higher among telephone information customers (92%) compared with telephone advice customers (81%).

Customers whose enquiry was dealt with in a single call were significantly more satisfied with the overall service than those having multiple calls (90% versus 85%, or 49% versus 37% when comparing the very satisfied).

Over half (55%) of customers had multiple calls with different advisers contacting them. When the customers spoke with more than one adviser almost four in five (78%) said they were satisfied with the time it took to get through to the person who helped them.

Customers were predominantly happy with both the assistance of their advisers and with the content and outcome of the National Careers Service intervention, as demonstrated by Figure 5.6. On each measure, around 90% of customers from all streams were satisfied, with over two-fifths very satisfied. The three areas that customers were particularly satisfied was the professionalism of the advisers, how helpful they were and the advisers' level of knowledge.

Figure 5.6: Satisfaction with information and advice from the Service

Base: All customers (8,812)

Although satisfaction across all of the measures remain high (around 90%) the following groups were most likely to be satisfied with the information and advice received from the service:

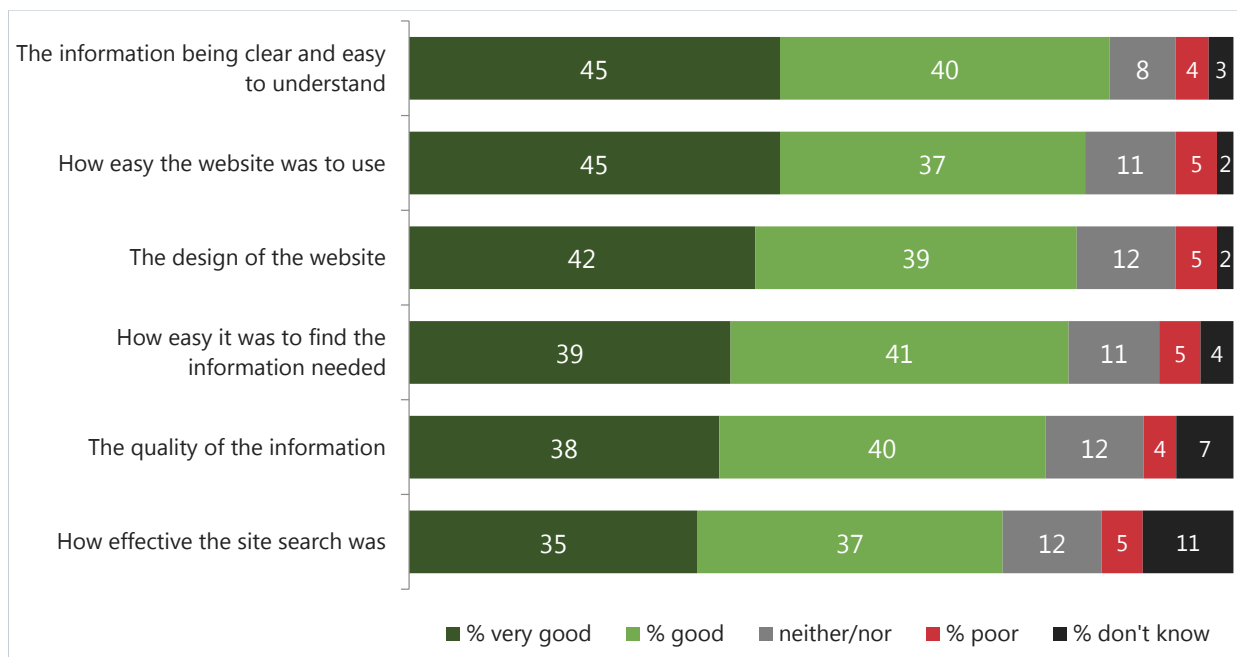
- Younger customers aged 18-24. For example, 92 per cent of young people were satisfied with the usefulness of the information, advice and guidance received compared with 86 per cent of people aged 50 or over.
- White British customers compared with BME. For instance, 96 per cent of white British customers were satisfied with the professionalism of the adviser, compared with 93 per cent of BME customers.
- Non-disabled customers. For instance, when asked about the advisers' understanding of their needs, non-disabled customers were more likely to be satisfied than disabled customers (91% versus 88%).
- Those who had multiple face-to-face meetings were more likely to be very satisfied than those who had just one meeting in several aspects, including: the adviser understanding their needs (55% versus 49%); the adviser's level of knowledge (57% versus 52%); and the usefulness of the information, advice and guidance they received (46% versus 42%).
- As with overall satisfaction telephone information customers were most likely to be satisfied with the information and advice provided and in most measures they were most likely to be *very satisfied*. For example, the vast majority of customers were satisfied with the length of time the adviser spoke with them, however almost three in five (57%) telephone information customers were very satisfied compared with just over two in five face-to-face and telephone advice customers (42% and 44% respectively).

Levels of general satisfaction have remained consistently high between Year 4 and Year 5. Moving forward, as well as maintaining the high general satisfaction levels that the National Careers Service currently provides, there is therefore potential to target further improvements in the proportion of customers who are 'very satisfied', focusing on those least likely to be very satisfied at present (BME customers, disabled customers, customers with Level 1 or no qualifications and customers where English is their second language).

5.4 Satisfaction with the different aspects of the website

Visitors to the National Careers Service website were also asked to rate an array of different features of the website, on a scale from very good to very poor. Encouragingly, the website appears to serve its purpose well, with around four-fifths of the customers rating each individual aspect of the website as good or very good (with the exception of the site search). The two outstanding categories are information being clear and easy to understand (which 85% of customers rated good or very good), and the website being easy to use (which 82% rated good or very good). There was a very similar pattern to previous years.

Figure 5.7: Ratings on various aspects of the website



Base: All online satisfaction survey customers (8,878)

Young people aged 19 or under were particularly more positive than average about all aspects of the site, while those aged 50+ and disabled people were less so. For example, when rating the quality of the information, 82% of the younger people rated it as good or very good, compared with 70% of people aged 50+. Similar to overall satisfaction with the website, women and people in learning were more positive than average on most measures. People whose first language was not English were also more positive. For instance, when rating the design of the website those in learning (86%), women (84%) and those who speak English as a second language (84%) were all more positive compared with others overall (81%).

5.5 Would customers recommend the National Careers Service?

5.5.1 Face-to-face and telephone customers

In Year 5, almost nine in ten (89%) face-to-face or telephone customers either had already recommended or, if not, would recommend the National Careers Service (27% and 85% respectively). This is in line with previous years.

As we might expect, the inclination to recommend the service was stronger among customers who rated the service as good quality, and among those who were satisfied overall. This was particularly the case among people aged 18-24 (89% would recommend versus 85% overall), face-to-face customers who had multiple face-to-face meetings with the same adviser (89% versus 83% who had only one meeting), and those who had engaged most with common National Careers Service tools including the Action Plan and the Skills Health Check (89% each). Customers who were in work (88%) were also more likely to be inclined to recommend the service, as were white British customers, customers who were not disabled (86% each) and customers qualified to Level 4 or higher (87%).

Having recommended the National Careers Service was more common among telephone customers than among face-to-face customers (32% compared with 25%). Two in five customers (40%) whose first language was not English had also recommended the service.

5.5.2 Online customers

Four in five (83%) online customers said they would recommend the National Careers Service website to friends, family or colleagues. Among the rest, more people said they were unsure (11%) rather than said they would not recommend it (5%). These results are in line with the previous three years.

The likelihood of recommending the website was higher among career advisers (94%), women (87%), people aged under 50 years (85%) and people whose first language was not English (87%).

5.6 How do customers think the National Careers Service could improve?

5.6.1 Face-to-face and telephone customers

Over three-fifths (63%) of face-to-face and telephone customers thought that the National Careers Service did not require any improvement. Suggestions for improvement focused on more tailored help and more follow-up, particularly among older customers (Table 5.1), younger customers aged 18-19 were most likely to be happy with the service and suggest no improvements. NEET young people (74%) were also more positive in this regard. These suggestions are in line with the most common reasons customers were dissatisfied with the service and are consistent with previous patterns on customer satisfaction.

Table 5.1: The main suggested improvements to the face-to-face and telephone service by age

	Overall	Age 18-19	Age 20-24	Age 25-49	Age 50+
Base:	8,812	558	1,494	4,513	2,247
No improvements/ fine as it is	63%	77%	67%	60%	62%
More tailored help	9%	3%	6%	10%	10%
Publicise it more	6%	3%	7%	7%	6%
More follow up	6%	4%	4%	6%	6%
More knowledgeable advisers	5%	2%	4%	6%	4%

Customers with Level 4 qualifications or higher, with English is their second language, or who were facing redundancy were more likely to make these suggestions. For example, all these customer types were more likely than average to suggest more tailored help (11%, 12%, 10% respectively).

As expected, suggestions for improvement were linked to the service channel the customers used. For instance, customers of the National Contact Centre were significantly more likely than the area-based customers to feel the service should be publicised more (11% versus 6% telephone advice and 5% face-to-face customers) and area-based customers were more likely to suggest more follow ups compared with telephone information customers (7% telephone advice and 6% face-to-face versus 4% telephone information). While these differences are small, they are statistically significant.

5.6.2 Website users

Website visitors were asked how the website could be improved, the main issues are listed below.

- Improving design to make it easier to use on tablets and mobiles

"More user friendly when accessing from a tablet."

"I can only access the site on my main PC as my iPad and iPhone struggle to load the page; I think this is because there are so many graphics."

- Including more information for mature customers

"More information about free courses for unemployed people so that the service would get that bit better."

"I'd like to see a section 'Jobs for older people'."

"Something that would be useful for me is some guidance around starting new careers later in working life. It gets more difficult and maybe some specific guidance for older workers would be useful."

- Including more information for disabled customers or those with learning difficulties

"Make it more accessible for people with learning disabilities. At present it requires very good reading and comprehension due to the amount of information on the homepage."

"Information on jobs that people who are disabled or have learning difficulties could do. As there are not many sites with this information."

- Overall, many people were positive about the website and did not recommend any improvements:

"I think this website is really useful. I got all the information I needed today. I will definitely recommend this website to my friends."

"Nothing, keep doing what you are all doing, 10/10 Good work!"

6 Customer Progression

Almost all face-to-face and telephone customers (96%) experienced some form of positive outcome in the six months since their call/meeting.

The proportion of customers who achieved any employment progression averaged 55% across the year, the same as Year 4. Face-to-face and telephone advice customers were much more likely to have progressed into new employment (43% and 38% respectively, compared with 34% of telephone information customers). To a large extent this reflects the differences in their employment status at the time they first had contact with the service.

Learning progression averaged 68% in Year 5, down slightly from 70% in Year 4. It was higher among telephone than among face-to-face customers, related to the reasons why telephone customers contact the National Careers Service in the first place.

Overall 92% of face-to-face or telephone customers indicated that they had gained some form of Personal Added Value since their contact with the National Careers Service. As a whole, young people aged 18-24 were consistently more likely than older people to report any personal development outcomes, in particular young people who were NEET.

Nine in ten (87%) face-to-face or telephone customers reported developing career management skills during the six months since their contact with the National Careers Service. This was highest among 18-24 year olds NEETs, 18-24 year olds generally, and people qualified at Level 2 or above.

Almost all website visitors (90%) who completed the online progression survey had achieved some form of progression three months after their visit. This was most commonly learning progression (71%) although half (49%) had made progress in employment, either getting or improving a job.

This chapter examines the extent to which National Careers Service customers progressed in the six months since their call or meeting with the adviser, or in the three months since their visit to the website. 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, including 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 bear in mind 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

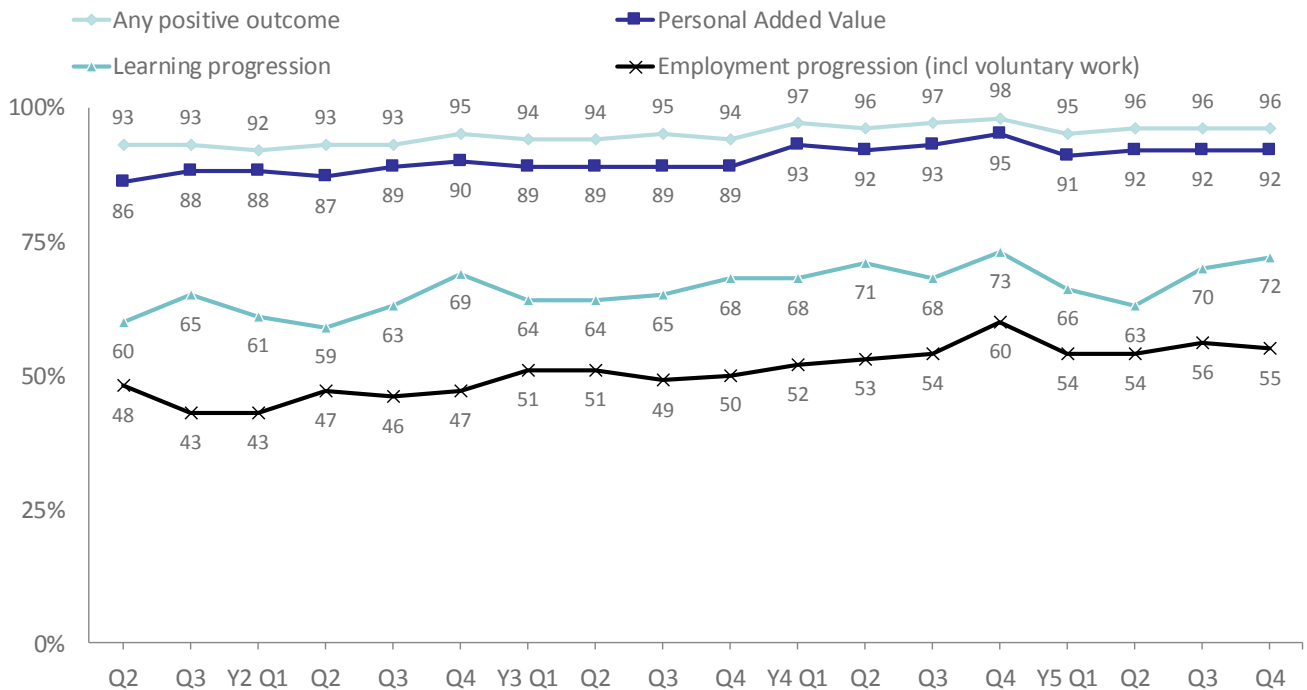
6.1.1 Defining progression

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, increased job satisfaction, or achieving a new and/or higher level qualification.

Customers who report any of the three types of progression are asked about the extent to which advice from the National Careers Service played a role in it.

Almost all face-to-face and telephone customers (96%) experienced some form of positive outcome in the six months since their call/meeting. The various measures are shown in Figure 6.1. In Year 5 there have been fluctuations in learning progression, and the annual average is slightly lower than last year (68% compared with 70%). Employment progression is the same as last year, at 55%.

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

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

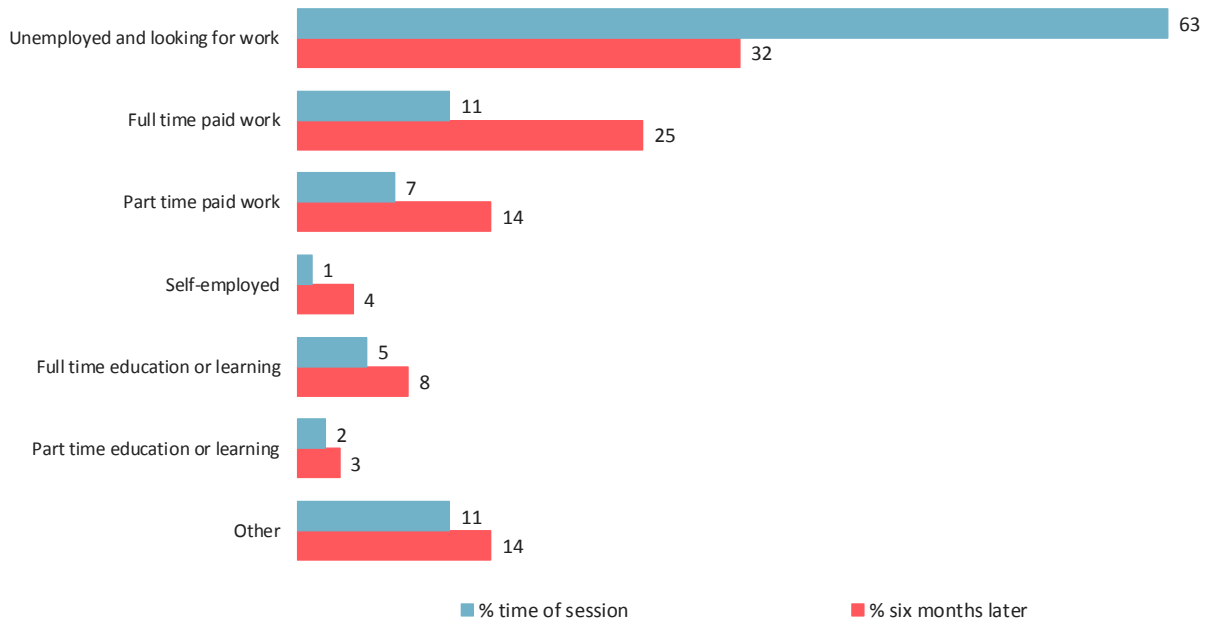
6.2 Employment progression among face-to-face and telephone customers

6.2.1 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 (63%), similar to last year. One in five (20%) were in work, with the remainder in learning (7%) or doing something else (11%) including those unable to work due to ill health, with home or family responsibilities, or retired.

Figure 6.2 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. Overall, these changes are similar to Year 4.

Figure 6.2: Employment status at the time of the call/meeting and six months later, among face-to-face and telephone customers



Base: All progression survey customers (6,411)

The largest increases in employment were seen among young people (Table 6.1) in particular those aged 18-19 years old. There was a positive move into work among those aged 50 plus (increasing by 24 percentage points over the six-month period) - this was much lower than the increase among young people, it is an improvement on last year. Disabled customers and people with no or low qualifications below Level 2 were among those with the lowest movement into work (although still showing a positive change). These customers may need more intensive support or face more deep-seated barriers in the labour market.

There were also positive moves into employment (43%) and education (10%) among 18-24 year olds who were NEET at the time of their initial interaction with the service. There is a similar, albeit smaller, increase in employment for people who were mandated to the service by Jobcentre Plus (with 31% in work and 3% in education). Among the latter group, one in five (22%) have now been categorised as unable to work due to ill-health or disability. These are similar findings to last year.

Table 6.1: Changes in employment status among key customer groups

		Status at point of contact with National Careers Service	Status 6 months after contact	Change (ppts) ⁵
18-19 year olds (365)	Unemployed	70%	39%	-31
	In work	10%	42%	+31
	In education	15%	15%	0
20-24 year olds (1,079)	Unemployed	53%	23%	-29
	In work	26%	43%	+17
	In education	16%	28%	+11
Aged 50 plus (1,731)	Unemployed	73%	40%	-32
	In work	12%	35%	+24
	In education	1%	2%	+1
Disabled (1,659)	Unemployed	61%	37%	-25
	In work	10%	25%	+14
	In education	4%	6%	+2
Below Level 2 quals (1,271)	Unemployed	72%	43%	-29
	In work	9%	30%	+20
	In education	2%	4%	+2

⁵ Where percentage point changes do not appear to match the given status figures, this is due to the rounding of the two status figures.

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 groups show significant movements into employment and learning over the six months since their contact. The key changes are:

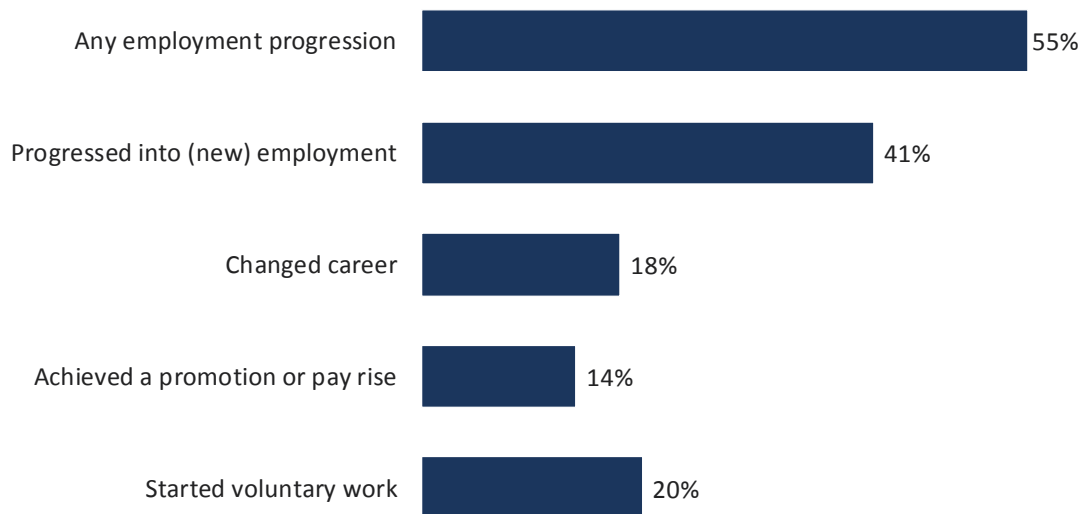
- Among face-to-face customers, the proportion who were unemployed and seeking work halved over the six-month period, from 72% to 36%. There was a corresponding increase in the proportion in work (including self-employment), up from 13% at the time of their session to 42% six months later.
- Telephone information customers were more likely to be in work (52%) or learning (24%) at the time of their first interaction with the National Careers Service, and less likely to be unemployed (18%). Six months on, the proportion in work had decreased (to 41%) as had the proportion who were unemployed, at 8%. By far the biggest change was a large increase in the proportion moving into education or learning, in particular full-time education, which increased from 22% to 41% across the six-month period.

6.2.2 Changing job role or employer

Customers who were in work at both points (i.e. at the time of the meeting/call and at the time of their progression interview six months later) were asked whether they were still in the same job at the same organisation. Just over half (54%) were, whereas one in four (25%) were doing a different job in a new organisation, similar to Year 4 (27%). Fewer were doing the same type of job with a new employer (14%) or working for the same organisation in a different job (6%).

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

The proportion of customers who achieved some form of employment progression remained steady across the year. Figure 6.3 shows the types of employment progression achieved. It is important to note that this includes those who got a job and then left it within the six-month period since their interaction with the service. Two in five (41%) of all face-to-face or telephone customers had progressed into new employment in those six months, either from having been out of work, or moving into a new job – this is identical to last year. One in five (18%) had achieved a career change, or taken up voluntary work (20%), while one in seven (14%) had achieved a promotion or pay increase. There has been no change since last year.

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

Base: All progression survey customers (6,411)

Customers more likely to have moved into new employment were:

- those with Level 2 or higher qualifications (50%)
- young people aged 18-24 (48%) and in particular those who were NEET (52%)
- people who were unemployed at the point they first had contact with the service (46%) or who had been made redundant or were facing redundancy (57%)
- people without a disability (47%).

By channel, face-to-face and telephone advice customers were more likely to have progressed into new employment than telephone information customers (43% and 38% respectively, compared with 34%). To a large extent this reflects the differences in their employment status at the time they first had contact with the service, six months previously, when telephone information customers in particular were more likely to already be in work.

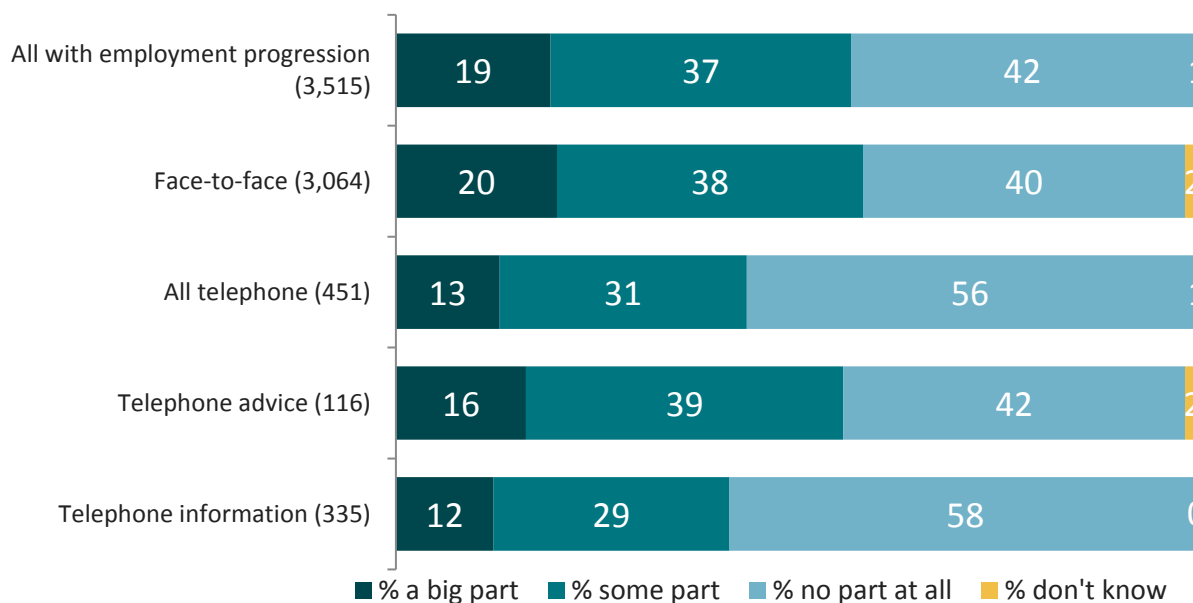
On the other hand, reflecting that telephone information customers were more likely to be in work at the time of their session, they were also more likely to have achieved a promotion or pay rise (19% compared with 13% of face-to-face customers). This was particularly the case for people with Level 2 or higher qualifications (16% compared with 8% of those with qualifications below Level 2), people aged 25-34 (18%), and those dealing with redundancy (18%).

6.2.4 The perceived role of the National Careers Service in supporting employment progression

Customers who had achieved any employment progression were asked to what extent their interaction with the National Careers Service adviser had contributed to this. Almost three in five of them agreed (56%) it had, lower than last year (60%). The proportion who said the adviser played a big part in their employment progression remained stable at 19%. Face-to-face (59%) and telephone advice customers (56%) were more likely to say their

adviser played some role than telephone information customers (41%), which reflects different levels of adviser input.

Figure 6.4: Whether the National Careers Service adviser played a part in employment progression reported by customers



Base: All face-to-face and telephone customers who had achieved employment progression (3,515)

Those aged 18-19 (72%) and 18-24-year-old NEETs (64%) were particularly likely to consider their adviser had played at least some role in their employment progression. Notably too, people with below Level 2 qualifications (23%) and those aged 50 plus (21%) who had made positive progress in employment were more likely than average to regard their adviser's support as playing a large role in this.

Of those who did not achieve any employment progression, the majority of them (82%) thought the adviser could *not* have done anything more to help. While 14% thought the adviser could have done more, this was lower than last year (16%). Customers who had English as a second language (25%), who were non-white British (21%) – particularly Asian or Asian British (26%) – dealing with redundancy (18%) or aged 35-49 (18%) were all significantly more likely to think their adviser could have done more to help them progress in work. Customers in London were particularly likely to think their adviser could have done more to help (33%) – although there is a strong overlap here with people who were non-white British and who spoke English as a second language.

The top five mentions that customers felt the adviser could have done more of to help them progress in work are the same as last year, although the proportion saying their adviser could have followed up or called back has increased (from 14% in Year 4):

- Given more advice/ information on jobs (26%)
- Given more advice/ information on courses (20%)

- Been more attentive/ given me more time (20%)
- Given me more options (17%)
- Followed up or called back (17%).

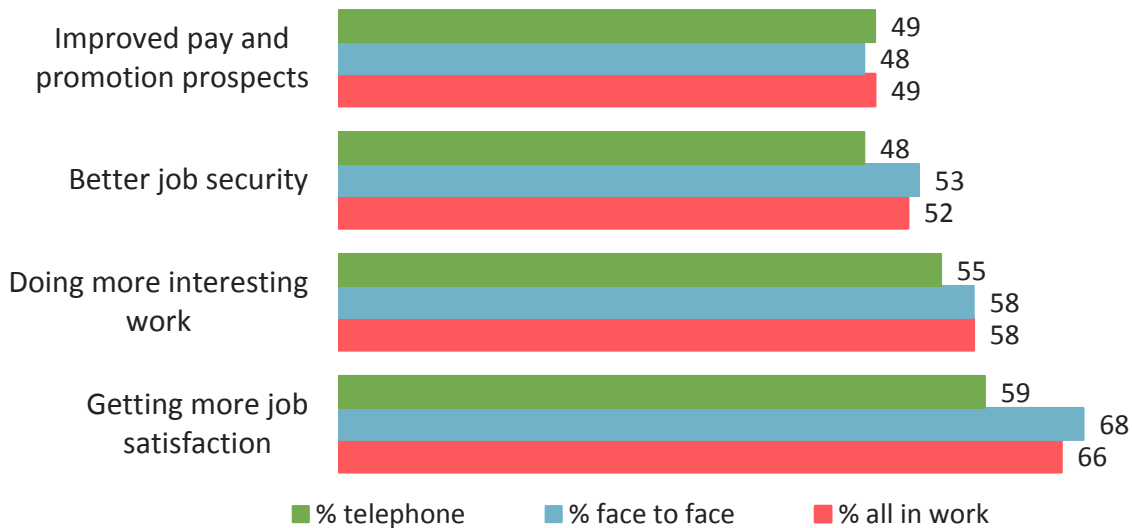
There were few significant differences here other than disabled customers were more likely than others to want more information on courses (27%) and the following groups felt their adviser could have given them more time/ been more attentive: older people aged 50 plus (27%), people with Level 2 or higher qualifications (26%) and people who were unemployed (23%).

6.2.5 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. Young people were consistently more likely to cite any of these positive changes at work, in particular those aged 18-19. For example, 78% of 18-19 year olds now said they had more job security, 80% said they were doing more interesting work, and 88% said they were getting more job satisfaction. The other key groups most likely to cite any of the wider job-related benefits were young people aged 18-24 who were NEET, and people with qualifications at Level 2 or above.

The results by channel are shown in Figure 6.5 and were similar to Year 4 overall. Face-to-face customers were more likely to cite improved job security and job satisfaction than telephone customers.

Figure 6.5: Positive changes at work



Base: All customers in work at time of the progression survey (2,774)

Approaching three in five (58%) 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. This was more common among face-to-face customers (61%) than among telephone ones (41%). Young people aged 18-19 who experienced positive changes at work were more likely than average to say that the adviser played a part (70%) – an increase since last year (65%). Although they were no more likely to say their adviser had played a part overall, people with qualifications below Level 2 were among the most positive that their adviser had played a big part in their employment progression (24%, compared with 18% overall), as were customers of Careers Yorkshire and the Humber, and Economic Solutions.

6.2.6 Moving into work

Three in ten (29%) of all customers had been unemployed at the time of their interaction with the service but were in work six months later, in line with previous years. Just over half (53%) considered that the information, advice or support from their adviser, and any actions taken directly as a result of their discussion, had played a part in them getting their job, including 19% who felt it had played a big part (the same as Year 4).

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

Learning progression dropped slightly to 68% in Year 5. This follows consecutive increases from 63% in Year 2 to 65% in Year 3 and to 70% in Year 4. Certain customer groups were much more likely to have done any learning or training (Table 6.2) – in particular, young people (especially 18-19 year olds and 18-24-year-old NEETs), people who already had qualifications at Level 2 or above, and people who were not white British. Black/ Black British customers were consistently the most likely to have done any forms of learning. Learning was consistently lower among people who were aged 50 or older, who had a disability, or who had qualifications below Level 2. Arguably, these groups may be most in need of updating their skills and qualifications but equally they are likely to face wider barriers to learning, such as lack of confidence, physical access issues, or insufficient entry qualifications. People referred to the National Careers Service by Jobcentre Plus (i.e. customers aged 50 or above) are also likely to prioritise looking for work above doing any learning or training.

Table 6.2: Forms of learning/ training undertaken since the call/meeting with National Careers Service, among key customer groups⁶

	Base	Leading to a qualification	Related to previous/current job	Related to a future job	Related to personal interests	Course work or portfolio	Evening class	Not a formal taught course	Apprenticeship	Some other form of learning or training
18-24 NEET	959	33%	16%	35%	20%	15%	4%	37%	6%	28%
18-19 year olds	365	39%	20%	44%	24%	20%	6%	37%	11%	26%
20-24 year olds	1,079	45%	19%	44%	26%	18%	6%	37%	3%	26%
25-49 year olds	3,236	36%	20%	36%	19%	19%	6%	39%	2%	23%
Aged 50 plus	1,731	26%	15%	25%	14%	14%	3%	32%	1%	17%
Disabled	1,659	31%	14%	30%	18%	15%	4%	35%	2%	16%
Below Level 2 quals	1,271	27%	10%	23%	13%	12%	4%	28%	2%	14%
Not white British	1,768	39%	20%	41%	22%	23%	8%	42%	3%	24%

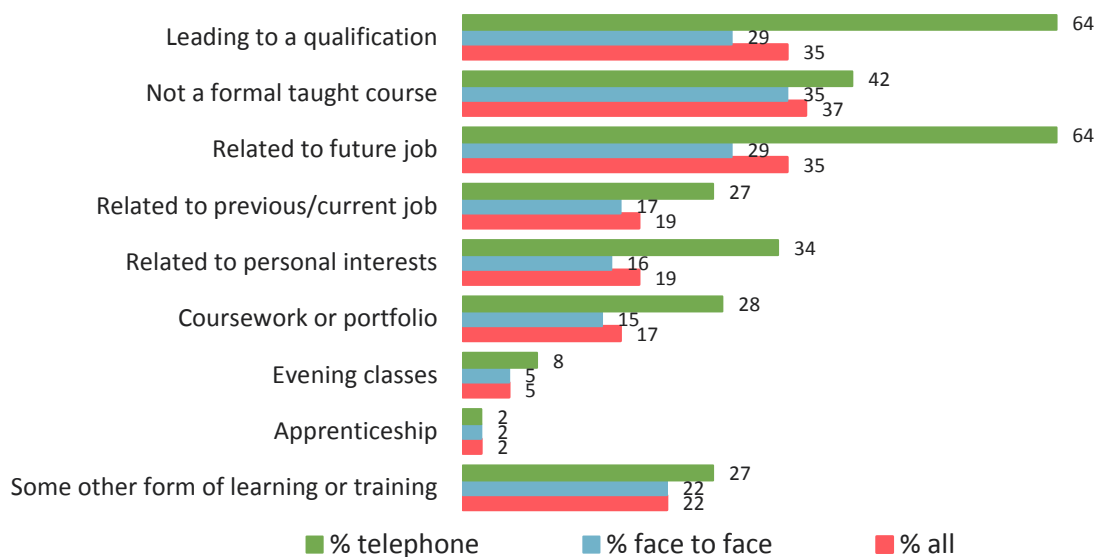
Like last year, learning progression was higher among telephone than among face-to-face customers, related to the reasons why telephone customers contact the National Careers Service in the first place (as discussed in Chapter 3). Figure 6.6 shows that telephone customers were more likely to have undertaken each form of learning than face-to-

⁶ Highlighted figures are statistically significantly different to the average

face ones, in particular learning related to a current or future job, and the prevalence of this was much higher this year compared with last year among this customer group.

Note that over half (57%) of the people who had identified more than one type of learning at this question reported these were all part of the same course or training.

Figure 6.6: Forms of learning/ training undertaken since the call/meeting with National Careers Service



Base: All progression survey customers (6,411)

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

- to progress in a current job or career (92%). This was more common among telephone information customers, in women rather than men, and among young people aged 18-24.
- to develop or improve job-related skills (86%). This motivation was stronger than average among telephone customers, 25-34 year olds, people with English as a second language, and people who were not white British, in particular those who were Black/ Black British.
- to get or change a job (81%). This was more common among 35-49 year olds, people with English as a second language, and people who were not white British, again higher among those who were Black/ Black British.
- to obtain a qualification (72%). This was more common among telephone information customers (85%) than among face-to-face (68%) or telephone advice ones (77%). People doing learning or whose first language was not English were all more likely than average to be motivated by getting a qualification.

Among customers who had done any learning or training in the intervening six months, two in five (42%) had completed it, while 8% left the course early and 51% were still doing it at the time they were surveyed. The majority

(87%) were satisfied with the course they were doing. One in ten (10%) National Careers Service customers now have a higher qualification than the one they started out with, when they last had contact with the service – a similar proportion to last year (9%). Notably, postgraduate level qualifications such as a Master's degree, MBA, or NVQ Level 5 are the most common ones being taken (19%) followed by NVQ Level 2 (10%).

In Year 5, a similar proportion of customers as in previous years considered that their National Careers Service adviser had contributed to their decision to do the learning or training (60%), with one in four saying that the adviser played a big part (24%). Face-to-face and telephone advice customers who had achieved any learning progression were more likely to attribute this at least in part to contact with their adviser (61% and 59% respectively, compared with 55% of telephone information customers). People with no or low qualifications (70% versus 58% of those with Level 2 or higher qualifications) were also more likely to consider the adviser played a part in their learning progression.

Around one in seven (14%) of customers who had not progressed in learning within the past six months thought their adviser could have done more to help them to start a course, especially telephone advice customers (34%), people with an Asian/ Asian British background (34%) and people with English as a second language (23%). The main ways that customers felt their adviser could have done more to help were:

- Giving the customer more information about courses (37%) – an increase on last year (33%)
- Providing the customer with more general information about learning (25%)
- Following up or calling back (16%) – also higher than last year (12%)
- Offering the customer a wider range of options (22%) – another increase on last year (12%); and
- Giving the customer more specific careers advice (14%)

Clearly National Careers Service advisers may be limited in what specific learning options they can advise, depending on the availability of appropriate courses in the customers' vicinity – but the areas where they could do more to encourage learning are in terms of following up, providing more specific careers advice, and giving customers more information about courses, generally.

Over half (56%) of customers considered that they were now more likely to participate in any learning in future as a result of the information or advice they got from the National Careers Service. This was more common than average among:

- people with no or low qualifications below Level 2 (61%);
- 18-24-year-old NEET young people (63%);
- Black/ Black British customers (65%); and
- Customers who did not speak English as a first language (64%).

6.4 Personal added value among face-to-face and telephone customers

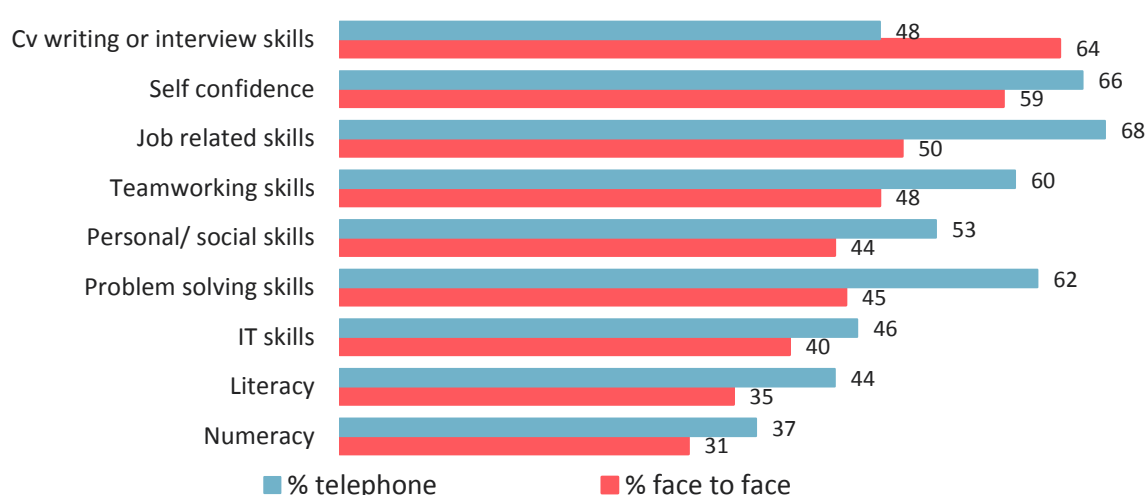
Overall 92% of face-to-face or telephone customers indicated that they had gained some form of Personal Added Value since their contact with the National Careers Service, consistent with last year. The most common additions were improvements in CV writing or interview skills (61%), increased self-confidence (61%) and developing skills related to a current or future job (53%). All of these are identical to last year.

As a whole, young people aged 18-19 and 20-24 years old were consistently more likely than older people to report any personal development outcomes, in particular young people who were NEET. For example, three-quarters of NEET young people reported improved CV writing or interview skills (76%) or increased self-confidence (74%), both higher than among customers overall. Customers who were not white British were also consistently more likely to report gaining any personal development skills, in particular those who were Black/ Black British or Asian/ Asian British. Other differences worth highlighting compared to the all-customer average were that:

- people with no or below Level 2 qualifications were more likely to consider they had improved their literacy (40%) or their numeracy (35%) although in both cases this was a lower percentage than last year;
- people whose first language was not English were more likely than average to consider they had gained in self-confidence (73%) or improved their literacy (59% - an increase on last year);

Figure 6.7 shows that there were consistent differences between customers who used different channels, with telephone customers more likely to report developing each of the skills listed, other than CV or interview skills. These differences are linked to the differing profiles in face-to-face versus telephone service users. More unemployed people access the face-to-face service, often referred by Jobcentre Plus, while more people already in work or learning, or who are interested in taking part in further learning, use the telephone service.

Figure 6.7: Skills and personal development outcomes



Base: All progression survey customers (6,411)

People who reported gaining Personal Added Value since their contact with the National Careers Service six months before were far more likely to attribute this at least partly to their adviser than they were for employment or learning progression. Consistent with previous years and with other progression measures, face-to-face customers were more likely than telephone ones to attribute some of this role to their adviser, as were customers using telephone advice compared with telephone information.

6.5 Progression among online customers

Progression is measured somewhat differently among online customers, at three months after they completed the website satisfaction survey. Customers are likely to have had varying levels of interaction with the National Careers Service during that time, and of those who completed the progression survey, one in five (22%) had face-to-face contact and one in eight (13%) had telephone contact with an adviser after they had used the website.

Almost all website visitors (90%) who completed the survey had achieved some form of progression three months on from their visit. This was most commonly learning progression (71%) although half (49%) had made progress in employment, either getting or improving a job.

6.5.1 Employment progression among website users

The main types of employment progression among website users were as follows (these figures are not mutually exclusive):

- 25% had progressed into new employment
- 18% had changed career
- 11% had achieved a promotion or pay increase
- 24% had started voluntary work.

These results are similar to Year 4. Half (49%) of the people who progressed in employment reported that the National Careers Service website had helped them to achieve this, equivalent to 24% of all website customers who took part in the progression survey.

6.5.2 Learning progression among website users

The most common type of learning or training started by online customers since going on the website remains the same as Year 4; self-teaching to try and improve knowledge or skills without taking part in a formal course (51%). Again as in Year 4, significant minorities had undertaken a course leading to a qualification (29%), a course, instruction or tuition related to their interests, hobbies or personal development (27%), course work that they completed in their own time, other than homework (27%) or some other type of learning or training (38%)⁷. Overall, six per cent of people who had visited the website had increased their highest qualification in the three months since they had used the website.

⁷ This sums to more than 100% as people may have done more than one type of learning and courses can fit into more than one category.

Over half (56%) of online customers felt that they were more likely to do learning in the future as a result of their visit to the website, and seven in ten (71%) felt that they would be likely to start learning in the next 12 months, including 44% who felt this was very likely. A third (36%) had opened a Lifelong Learning Account with the National Careers Service since their visit to the website, slightly lower than last year (40%).

6.5.3 Soft outcomes and Personal Added Value among online customers

Like the telephone and face-to-face customers, website customers were asked if they had achieved one or more of the range of 'softer' outcomes since visiting the National Careers Service website known as 'Personal Added Value'.

Seven in ten online customers (71%) experienced some form of personal added value in the three months following their visit to the website. Over half (56%) reported an increase in confidence about making decisions regarding their future or about planning their next career move (51%). Slightly fewer reported feeling more confident about applying for jobs (48%) or courses/ training (45%).

Website users were asked about other benefits they may have experienced since their visit to the site three months previously, and for the most part the findings were consistent with Year 4:

- More interested in doing learning (64%)
- More aware of learning opportunities (61%), significantly lower than Year 4 (66%)
- More aware of job and career opportunities (67%)
- More motivated to find work or to change their job (61%)
- Felt that their chances of finding a job had improved (42%), significantly higher than Year 4.

Most of these customers felt that the National Careers Website has contributed to their progression in these areas (64%, similar to Year 4).

6.6 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. This is the first year that career management skills have been examined specifically within the progression survey of face-to-face and telephone customers, utilising the existing questionnaire. To this end, the development of career management skills has been defined as follows:

- The customer has re-used the National Careers Service website or other source of advice, *acted on* the suggestion of their adviser, or followed up this advice by contacting another organisation;
- The customer has *activated* their Lifelong Learning Account;
- The customer has done any learning or training *for career-related reasons* – *informed by* discussion with the National Careers Service; or
- The customer has developed any job-related skills, job application/CV skills or confidence – *informed by* discussion with the National Careers Service.

- 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.

6.6.1 Career management skills overall

Altogether, nine in ten (87%) face-to-face or telephone customers reported developing career management skills during the six months since their contact with the National Careers Service. This was consistent across different types of customer, with the following exceptions:

- Telephone information customers (82%) were less likely to report the development of career management skills than telephone advice (90%) or face-to-face ones (88%). This may be because they have a lighter-touch intervention but it may also be due to them being more mindful of career-management *before* they called the National Careers Service, as most telephone information customers were seeking advice about doing some job-related learning or training.
- Customers aged 50 plus (84%) were less likely to report building career management skills than younger customers aged 18-24 (90%) or 25-34 (89%).

In the remainder of this section we focus on a selection of the changes reported by customers since their interaction with the National Careers Service, which equate to improvements in their career management skills.

6.6.2 Better awareness of possible work/career and learning opportunities

Three-quarters of face-to-face and telephone customers (75%) reported their awareness of work/ career opportunities had increased over the past six months. This includes 41% who felt it had increased a lot. Views were again fairly consistent across different types of customer and service channel did not appear to have any influence. What was more important was age, with 34% of those aged 50 plus reporting their awareness of work/ career opportunities had not increased at all, compared with just 14% of 18-24s and 22% of those aged 25-49.

Around three-quarters (73%) of face-to-face and telephone customers reported their awareness of learning or training opportunities had increased over the past six months, and this was significantly higher among telephone information customers (79%). Older people aged 50 plus were more likely than others to think this had not increased at all (34%, compared with 25% of those aged 25 to 49 and 18% of those aged 18-24).

6.6.3 Increased motivation

Three-quarters (73%) of face-to-face and telephone customers reported that their motivation to find work or change career had improved in the past six months. There were no significant differences by service channel. Young people aged 18-19 (54%) and 20-24 (53%) were especially likely to report a large increase in motivation, as were those who were NEET at the time of their initial contact with the service (55%). Customers of non-white British origin (51%) or who did not speak English as their first language (54%) were also more likely than average to report that their motivation had increased a lot in the six months since they contacted the service, especially those of Black/ Black British origin (61%).

Customers most likely to report no increase in their motivation over this period were those aged 50 plus (34%), or mandated by Jobcentre Plus (46%).

6.6.4 More clarity and confidence about making career/ learning decisions

Three-quarters (74%) of face-to-face and telephone customers also reported that their ability to make decisions about the future in terms of careers, training or learning had improved over the past six months. One-quarter (24%) felt this had not improved at all. Telephone information customers were more likely to feel this had improved than face-to-face customers (79% compared with 73%). A number of demographic differences emerged, as follows:

- Customers more likely than average to consider their ability to make career decisions had improved **a lot** tended to be younger (52% of 18-19 year olds and 50% of 20-24 year olds), and were not white British (47%) or spoke English as an additional language (51%).
- Customers more likely than average to regard no improvement in their ability to make decisions about the future were a disparate group, and likely to have different reasons why they saw no improvement. They were more likely than average to be aged 50 plus (34%), to have been mandated to the National Careers Service by Jobcentre Plus (44%), to be dealing with redundancy (30%) or to be disabled (30%).

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

There have been few changes to area differences in overall satisfaction and progression since last year. The main distinctions are:

- **Customers in the North East have above average levels of satisfaction across a number of measures: perceptions of higher quality provision; greater satisfaction with the operational elements of the service; their interaction with the adviser.**
- **Customers in London express lower than average satisfaction levels across a number of measures, such as: the location and venue of the appointment; the service provided by the adviser; and the information, the advice and guidance they receive.**

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.

7.1 Customer profile in different areas

Table 7.1 shows area-based differences in the key demographics of: age, gender, those with qualifications below Level 2, the proportion who are white British 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. Profiles which are significantly different to average among particular areas are highlighted.

The areas tend to have a fairly similar demographic profile, with the exception of London. As previous years, the London profile is distinct, comprising higher than average proportions of: those aged 25-49 (59% compared with 52% on average); and non-white British (35% of London customers were white British, compared with 69% on average). Customers in London are also twice as likely to have English as a second language (30%) than the national average (15%).

Customers in the North West Manchester sub-region (71%), London (70%), North East (69%) and East Midlands (69%) were the most likely to be unemployed and looking for work at the time of their initial interview. The proportion of unemployed customers was lower in 2015 across all regions than in 2014, reflecting lower unemployment rates across the country.

Table 7.1: Profile of customers, by area⁸

	All (incl. NCC)	CE	EM	NW -M	NW-L	L	NE	SC	SE	SW	TV	WM	YH
Base:	8812	647	631	615	598	819	736	663	614	508	580	677	1005
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
18-24	26	19	25	20	24	18	22	20	20	20	19	23	27
25-49	52	50	48	54	50	59	49	49	53	50	54	50	47
50+	22	31	26	26	27	23	29	31	27	30	27	27	25
Male	54	52	53	59	61	52	64	57	50	58	49	57	62
<L2 quals	25	33	29	33	30	26	28	26	35	24	27	32	36
White British	69	75	75	80	90	35	93	83	86	86	75	61	79
In work	25	16	17	15	16	14	17	16	21	21	21	17	17
Unemployed	56	66	69	71	66	70	69	68	60	61	63	66	67

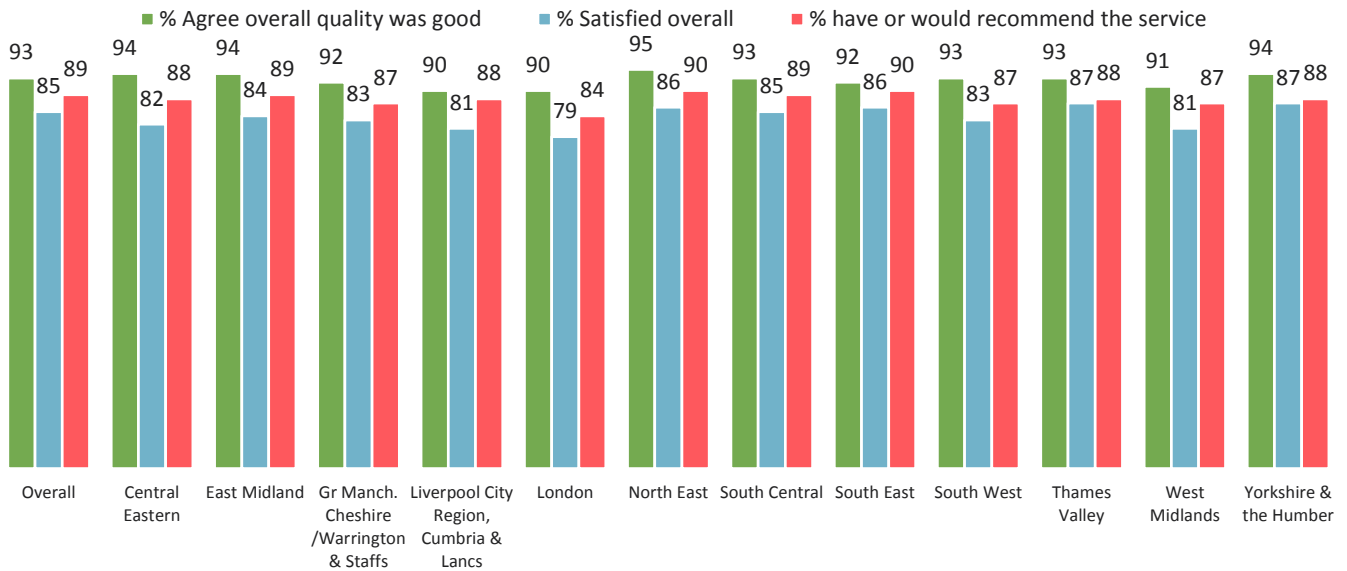
7.2 Satisfaction

7.2.1 Overall satisfaction

Four of the contracting areas exceeded the average satisfaction level of 85%. Satisfaction was significantly higher than average in Yorkshire and the Humber (87%). Thames Valley, Yorkshire and the Humber and South East were the top three areas for overall satisfaction. Satisfaction was significantly lower than average in the West Midlands (81%) and the North West Liverpool sub-region (81%). Customers in London (84%) were significantly less likely than average to recommend the service. The proportion of customers who agree that the overall quality of the service was good is significantly higher in the North East (95%) than the national average (93%).

⁸ Highlighted figures are statistically significantly different to the average

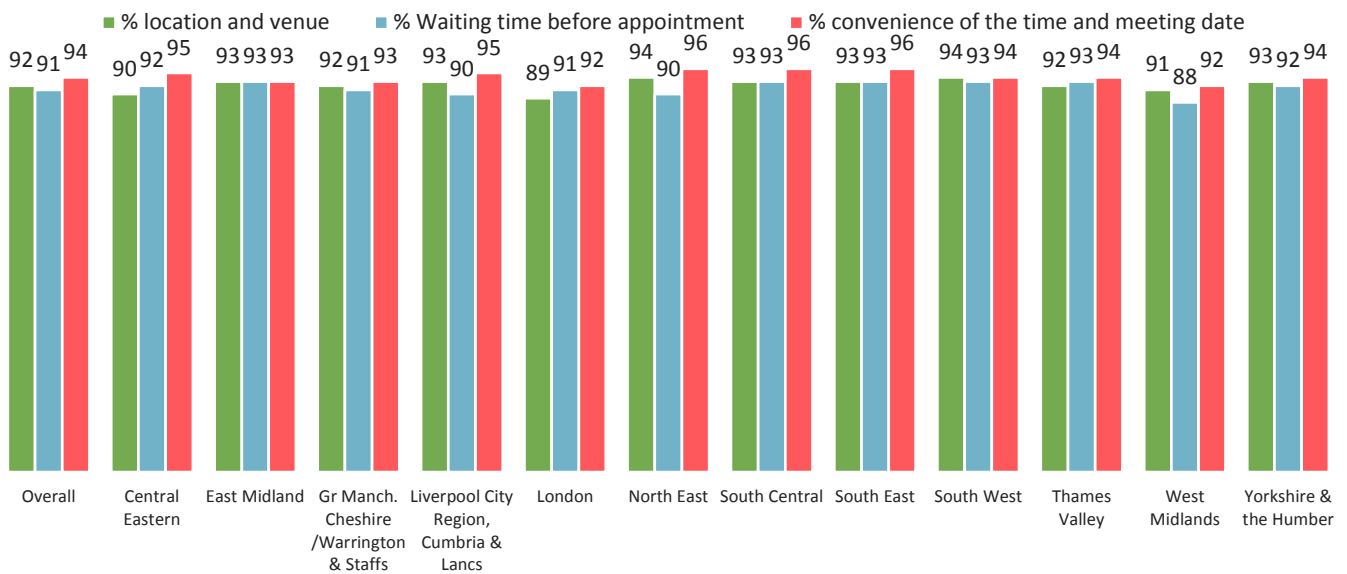
Figure 7.1: Satisfaction, perceived service quality and willingness to recommend the National Careers Service, by area



Base: All satisfaction survey area-based customers (8,093)

7.2.2 Satisfaction with operational aspects

Customers in the North East (96%) and South Central (96%) had significantly higher levels of satisfaction with the convenience of the date and time of their meeting. As in previous years, London (89%) satisfaction with the location and venue of their appointment was significantly lower than average.

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

Base: All satisfaction survey area-based customers (8,093)

7.2.3 Satisfaction with the adviser

As last year, customers in the North East consistently expressed significantly higher levels of satisfaction than other areas with the professionalism (97%), helpfulness (96%) and knowledge (95%) of the adviser. They are also significantly more likely than other areas to feel that the adviser understood their needs (95%).

In contrast, customers in London experienced significantly lower levels of satisfaction with all elements of service provided by the adviser. We know that BME customers (93%) are significantly less likely to be satisfied with the professionalism of the adviser than white British customers (96%) (as discussed in Chapter 2). The lower proportion of white British customers in London could help to explain this.

Other areas which saw significant variation from the average were:

- Customers in North West (Great Manchester) were significantly less satisfied with the time spent with the adviser (89%) and the perceived helpfulness of the adviser (90%)
- Customers in the West Midlands had significantly lower than average satisfaction on time spent with the adviser (89%); the knowledge of the adviser (88%) and that the adviser understood their needs (86%)
- Customers in the Central Eastern area had significantly lower than average satisfaction with the ability of the adviser to understand their needs (88%)
- Customers in the East Midlands were significantly more satisfied than average (95%) with the knowledge of their adviser.

Table 7.2: Satisfaction with the adviser, by area⁹

	All (incl. NCC)	CE	EM	NW -M	NW-L	L	NE	SC	SE	SW	TV	WM	YH
Unweighted base	8812	647	631	615	598	819	736	663	614	508	580	677	1005
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Length of time with adviser	92	91	93	89	93	89	94	90	91	93	91	89	92
Professionalism of adviser	95	94	96	95	94	92	97	94	95	96	95	94	96
Helpfulness of adviser	93	92	94	90	92	89	96	92	92	93	93	91	94
Adviser knowledge	91	92	95	91	90	87	95	91	90	91	91	88	92
Adviser understood needs	91	88	90	89	90	87	95	91	91	90	91	86	91

7.2.4 Satisfaction with the information or advice received

North East customers were significantly more likely than average to be satisfied with the clarity (97%) and the usefulness of the information (92%). The other key differences were:

- Customers in London were significantly less likely to be satisfied across all measures of satisfaction with the information, advice and guidance provided
- Customers in the West Midlands were significantly less likely to be satisfied with the clarity (92%) and usefulness of the information (86%)
- Customers in North West (Greater Manchester) were significantly less likely than average to be satisfied with the clarity (92%) and usefulness of the information (85%). This also represents a significant decrease in satisfaction with the usefulness of the information in this region since 2014 (down from 91%)

⁹ Highlighted figures are statistically significantly different to the average

Table 7.3: Satisfaction with the advice/information provided, by area¹⁰

	All (incl. NCC)	CE	EM	NW-M	NW-L	L	NE	SC	SE	SW	TV	WM	YH
Unweighted base	8812	647	631	615	598	819	736	663	614	508	580	677	1005
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
IAG was clear/ easy to understand	94	93	95	92	93	91	97	95	95	93	95	92	94
IAG was useful	89	88	90	85	87	85	92	88	88	88	89	86	89
Got IAG to make informed decision	85	84	86	84	83	81	88	86	84	86	85	83	86

¹⁰ Highlighted figures are statistically significantly different to the average

7.3 Progression and career management skills

As in Year 4, almost all customers in Year 5 (96%) experienced some form of positive outcome in the six months following their intervention (as discussed in Chapter 6). The main progression Key Performance Indicators are shown in Table 7.4, together with development of career management skills.

Table 7.4: Key progression measures and career management skills, by area¹¹

	All (incl. NCC)	CE	EM	NW – GM	NW – LCL	Lon	NE	SC	SE	SW	TV	WM	YH
Unweighted base	6411	489	488	382	460	638	544	506	80	480	429	559	675
Learning progression	68	63	65	61	63	67	65	63	65	71	65	68	62
Employment progression (excl. voluntary)	42	44	52	44	37	38	41	47	39	43	48	39	43
Personal Added Value	92	92	92	90	91	91	92	90	94	91	93	93	91
Any positive progression (excl. voluntary)	96	96	97	95	96	96	96	95	99	96	96	97	94
Career management skills	87	89	89	87	87	88	89	86	84	87	92	89	88

As in previous years, there is little significant variation across the measures of progression. The main exception was significantly lower than average learning progression in Central Eastern (63%) and both North West sub-regions (Greater Manchester 61%, Lancashire and Liverpool 63%).

The North-West Sub-regions have seen a significant drop in this measure since 2014 (Greater Manchester 71%, Lancashire and Liverpool 72%).

The Thames Valley area stands out as having significantly higher than average progression in career management skills (92%).

¹¹ Highlighted figures are statistically significantly different to the average

Conclusions

In most respects, findings are very similar to those of last year, with customer satisfaction remaining remarkably consistent over time. As last year, the vast majority (93%) of face-to-face and telephone customers agreed that the overall quality of the service was good. Also encouraging was that 85% of face-to-face and telephone customers were satisfied with the National Careers Service overall, while 79% of users were satisfied with the website overall.

These scores suggest that the National Careers Service is doing well at providing a consistently good service which meets the needs of the majority of customers.

Less encouraging is the continuation of the trend for customers aged 50 plus and those with a disability or long-term health problem to be less satisfied on a range of measures and to exhibit more frustration at issues such as lack of sufficiently tailored advice. These groups also reported lower levels of progression. It will be important for the service to enhance its provision for these groups in the year ahead if it wants to improve its ratings overall.

Face-to-face customers were more likely to be aged 50 plus, to have a disability or long-term health problem and have lower qualifications. Customers accessing the service by phone were more likely to be younger, with higher qualifications and in work or learning. Indeed, differences in profile by service channel have widened since last year. Related to this, satisfaction and learning progression among telephone information customers has increased significantly in the same period. This serves to highlight an increasing distinction between the situations and needs of customers who access the service face-to-face and those of customers who access it by telephone.

With regards to progression, almost all face-to-face and telephone customers (96%) experienced some form of positive outcome in the six months since using the service, whether that be employment progression (55%), learning progression (68%) or Personal Added Value (92%). Nine in ten (90%) website visitors who completed the online progression survey had experienced some form of progression three months after their visit, including learning progression (71%) and employment progression (49%). These scores are in line with the previous year. Most customers attributed these outcomes at least in part to the National Careers Service.

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