

July 2018

# National Careers Service: Customer Satisfaction and Progression Annual Report

May 2017 – April 2018 fieldwork

Ipsos MORI

# Contents

<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>1 Introduction and Methodology</b> .....	<b>4</b>
1.1 Background.....	4
1.2 Research aims .....	4
1.3 Methodology .....	5
1.4 Online surveys .....	8
1.5 Interpretation of the data.....	8
1.6 The structure of this report.....	9
<b>2 Customer Profile</b> .....	<b>10</b>
2.1 Customer characteristics.....	10
2.2 Employment status .....	13
2.3 Highest qualification .....	15
<b>3 How and why do customers contact the National Careers Service?</b> .....	<b>17</b>
3.1 How did customers first find out about the National Careers Service? .....	17
3.2 Previous use of the National Careers Service .....	21
3.3 Reasons for contacting the National Careers Service .....	22
<b>4 Experiences of using the Service</b> .....	<b>27</b>
4.1 Making contact with the National Careers Service by phone.....	27
4.2 Face-to-face contact with the National Careers Service .....	28
4.3 Using the National Careers Service website .....	30
4.4 Use and usefulness of common National Careers Service tools.....	33
4.5 Follow up actions .....	35
<b>5 Customer Satisfaction</b> .....	<b>38</b>
5.1 Overall perceptions about the quality of the service .....	38
5.2 Overall satisfaction with the National Careers Service .....	40
5.3 Satisfaction with different aspects of the adviser sessions.....	46
5.4 Satisfaction with the different aspects of the website .....	48
5.5 Recommending the National Careers Service .....	50
5.6 Improvements to the National Careers Service .....	51
<b>6 Customer Progression</b> .....	<b>55</b>
6.1 Overview of the extent of progression .....	56
6.2 Employment progression among face-to-face and telephone customers .....	57
6.3 Learning progression among face-to-face and telephone customers .....	65
6.4 Personal Added Value among face-to-face and telephone customers .....	68
6.5 Progression among online customers .....	69

6.6	Career management skills .....	71
7	How do key results vary across National Careers Service contracting areas? .....	74
7.1	Customer profile in different areas.....	75
7.2	Satisfaction .....	76
7.3	Progression and career management skills .....	80

## List of Figures

Figure 3.1:	Where customers first found out about the National Careers Service .....	18
Figure 3.2:	Where customers first found out about the National Careers Service by key group .....	19
Figure 3.3:	How customers accessed the National Careers Service website.....	21
Figure 3.4:	Reasons for contacting the National Careers Service.....	23
Figure 3.5:	Reasons for customers visiting the National Careers Service website.....	24
Figure 4.1:	Number of face-to-face meetings by area .....	29
Figure 4.2:	Location of meeting by area.....	30
Figure 4.3:	Customer usage of website features by status.....	31
Figure 4.4:	Information obtained by first-time visitors to the National Careers Service website by age and employment status .....	33
Figure 4.5:	Online customers' planned next steps after visiting the National Careers Service website .....	37
Figure 5.1:	Agreement overall quality of service was good, by survey quarter.....	39
Figure 5.2:	Annual ratings of satisfaction and dissatisfaction .....	40
Figure 5.3:	Main reasons for being dissatisfied with the Service .....	43
Figure 5.4:	Annual ratings of satisfaction and dissatisfaction .....	44
Figure 5.5:	Face-to-face and telephone customer satisfaction with logistical arrangements of their contact with the National Careers Service .....	46
Figure 5.6:	Satisfaction with information and advice from the Service .....	47
Figure 5.7:	Ratings on various aspects of the website .....	49
Figure 6.1:	Trends in progression among face-to-face and telephone customers, by survey quarter.....	57
Figure 6.2:	Employment status at the time of the call/meeting and six months later, among face-to-face and telephone customers .....	58
Figure 6.3:	Employment progression among face-to-face and telephone customers .....	62
Figure 6.4:	Whether the National Careers Service adviser played a part in employment progression reported by customers.....	63
Figure 6.5:	Positive changes at work.....	64
Figure 6.6:	Forms of learning/training undertaken since the call/meeting with National Careers Service .....	67
Figure 6.7:	Skills and personal development outcomes .....	69
Figure 7.1:	Satisfaction, perceived service quality and willingness to recommend the National Careers Service by area.....	77
Figure 7.2:	Satisfaction with logistical/operational elements of the service by area .....	78

## List of Tables

Table 1.1:	Achieved interviews by quarter (face-to-face and telephone customers) .....	6
Table 2.1:	Demographic profile of National Careers Service customers .....	11
Table 2.2:	Economic activity of National Careers Service customers at the time of the call, meeting or website visit .....	13
Table 2.3:	Highest qualification and NEET status among National Careers Service customers .....	15

<b>Table 3.1: Website visitor referral .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Table 3.2: Specific job-related information sought by website visitors.....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Table 3.3: Specific course-related information sought by website visitors.....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Table 4.1: Proportion rating each feature as 'very useful' or 'quite useful' .....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Table 4.2: Use of Accounts .....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Table 4.3: Customer follow up by area contractor .....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Table 5.1: Main suggested improvements to the face-to-face and telephone service by age .....</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>Table 6.1: Changes in employment status among key customer groups.....</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>Table 6.2: Forms of learning/training undertaken since the call/meeting with National Careers Service, among key customer groups.....</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>Table 7.1: Profile of customers by area .....</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>Table 7.2: Satisfaction with the adviser by area.....</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>Table 7.3: Satisfaction with the advice/information provided by area .....</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>Table 7.4: Key progression measures and career management skills by area.....</b>	<b>81</b>

# 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. 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.

This research consists of the National Careers Service customer satisfaction and progression surveys that are based on regular monthly surveys undertaken by telephone or online. This fieldwork was undertaken from May 2017 to April 2018 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

The customer profile of those responding to the face-to-face, telephone or online services remained largely consistent with previous years. There were also similarities in which customers were accessing each channel and for what purpose.

- Online users had a relatively young age profile, and as expected were often in work; this was also the preferred channel for those in learning. Therefore, the challenge of being an online source for all customer types that is engaging remains key.
- Face-to-face customers, as with previous years, were more likely to be older, unemployed and looking for work, and had lower level qualifications.
- Telephone customers, in contrast, were more likely to be in work and to have higher qualifications.

## Why do customers contact the National Careers Service?

More than half of customers first heard of the National Careers Service through Jobcentre Plus, emphasising the importance of this information channel. For those using the telephone service, internet/google searches are also key points of entry for using the service.

Online customers most often heard about the National Careers Service through Jobcentre Plus, friends and family, colleagues and National Careers Service advisers. However, the main channel was, as expected, from online searches. National Careers Service advisers, and in particular Jobcentre Plus advisers, continue to be an important source of referral particularly for key groups (customers over 50, 18-24 NEET customers, unemployed customers and disabled customers).

Reasons for contacting the National Careers Service were focussed on progressing into employment. Fewer contacted the service to find out more about studying options and apprenticeships. Help with CV writing is the most common reason for using the face-to-face service, whilst the telephone information service is often used to obtain information on courses relating to either a current or future job. Website use is largely for obtaining information and advice about jobs or careers.

## Experiences of using the National Careers Service

Three-quarters of telephone customers had their enquiry handled in one call (75%), the same as last year.

One in five face-to-face customers (21%) had two or more meetings with the National Careers Service adviser, lower than previous years. Customers aged 50 plus and males were more likely to have multiple meetings (both 26%). Almost two thirds of customers who had more than one meeting saw the same adviser each time (62%).

Under half of online customers got all or most of the information they wanted on their first visit to the website (47%). Customers aged 50 plus were less likely than average to find all or most 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 an Account which enables customers to access a range of tools. The majority of customers found these tools useful.

Over a quarter of face-to-face and telephone customers reported that they had been followed-up by the National Careers Service since their initial contact (29%). This was more common among customers likely to be in need of further support: 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 agreeing that it was good (93%).

In line with this, the vast majority of face-to-face and telephone customers were satisfied with the National Careers Service overall (84%), consistent with previous years. Younger customers were more satisfied than older customers.

Among telephone and face-to-face customers, satisfaction with individual aspects of the Service was also high, especially the professionalism and helpfulness of advisers.

Overall, satisfaction with the National Careers Service website has risen since its redesign in Year 6 (64% compared with 48%).

Reflecting the high levels of customer satisfaction and positive views of service quality, almost nine in ten face-to-face or telephone customers either had already recommended or would recommend the National Careers Service (87%). Seven in ten online customers said they would recommend the National Careers Service website to friends, family or colleagues (71%). Again, this represents an improvement compared with the second half of year 6.

Suggestions for improvement from face-to-face and telephone customers focused on more tailored help and follow-up. Online customers felt that improvements could be made to the website, in terms of the appearance and design, the amount of detail on jobs and careers, and ease of use.

### 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 54% across the year, the same as in Year 6. Face-to-face customers were much more likely to have progressed into new employment (36% compared with 25% of telephone 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 7, in line with Year 6. 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 and 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.

Nine in ten face-to-face and telephone customers reported developing career management skills during the six months since their contact with the National Careers Service. This was highest among 18-24 year olds and customers who did not speak English as their first language.

The vast majority of website visitors who completed the online progression survey had achieved some form of progression three months after their visit (86%). This was most commonly learning progression (66%) although more than one third had made progress in employment, either getting or improving a job (37%).

# 1 Introduction and Methodology

## 1.1 Background

The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) is responsible for the commissioning, contracting and performance management of the National Careers Service (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" 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 were introduced from October 2014, the principal ones being the introduction of an outcome-based funding model and the requirement that area-based contractors move away from purely delivering face-to-face advice and diversify into telephone, online and digital methods.

## 1.2 Research aims

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

- Measure customer satisfaction, with face-to-face and telephone customers interviewed in the month after their session, and website visitors asked about their views of the site at the time they access it.



- Assess customer progression, with face-to-face and telephone customers interviewed six months after their last adviser session, and website visitors assessed three months after they completed the online satisfaction survey.

This report is based on fieldwork conducted between May 2017 and April 2018. For face-to-face and telephone customers this means the satisfaction survey covers sessions with an adviser between April 2017 and March 2018. For face-to-face and telephone customers, the progression survey covers the period six months beforehand (i.e. from October 2016 to September 2017).

The research among web visitors covers those accessing the National Careers Service website between April 2017 and March 2018 (for the online satisfaction survey) and between January 2017 and December 2017 (for the progression survey which is conducted three months after 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.
- Monitor changes over time by comparing the annual results for this year with those in the preceding five years.

### 1.3 Methodology

This report presents the results from Year 7 of the customer satisfaction and progression study, covering fieldwork between May 2017 and April 2018.

#### 1.3.1 Telephone surveys

For face-to-face and telephone customers this involved a total of 8,228 interviews for the satisfaction survey and 6,438 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
<b>Quarter 1</b>	Sept 11	Aug 11	2,217	Mar 2011	1,601
<b>Quarter 2</b>	Oct-Dec 11	Sept-Nov 11	2,195	Apr-Jun 11	1,599
<b>Quarter 3</b>	Jan-Mar 12	Dec 11-Feb 12	2,198	Jul-Sept 11	1,638
<b>Year 1</b>			6,610		4,398
<b>Quarter 1</b>	Apr-Jun 12	March-May 12	2,211	Oct-Dec 11	1,599
<b>Quarter 2</b>	Jul-Sept 12	Jun-Aug 12	2,199	Jan-Mar 12	1,599
<b>Quarter 3</b>	Oct-Dec 12	Sept-Nov 12	2,199	Apr-Jun 12	1,599
<b>Quarter 4</b>	Jan-Mar 13	Dec 12-Feb 13	2,199	Jul-Sept 12	1,599
<b>Year 2</b>			8,808		6,395
<b>Quarter 1</b>	Apr-Jun 13	Mar-May 13	2,199	Oct-Dec 12	1,598
<b>Quarter 2</b>	Jul-Sept 13	Jun-Aug 13	2,199	Jan-Mar 13	1,599
<b>Quarter 3</b>	Oct-Dec 13	Sep-Nov 13	2,198	Apr-Jun 13	1,598
<b>Quarter 4</b>	Jan-Mar 14	Dec 13-Feb 14	2,199	Jul-Sept 13	1,597
<b>Year 3</b>			8,795		6,392
<b>Quarter 1</b>	Apr-Jun 14	Mar-May 14	2,100	Oct-Dec 13	1,603
<b>Quarter 2</b>	Jul-Sept 14	Jun-Aug 14	2,210	Jan-Mar 14	1,602
	Oct 14	Sept 14	747		
<b>Quarter 3</b>	Nov 14-Jan 15 (sat) Oct-Dec 14 (prog)	Oct-Dec 14	2,222	Apr-Jun 14	1,064
<b>Quarter 4</b>	Feb-Apr 15 (sat) Jan-Mar 15 (prog)	Jan-Mar 15	2,197	Jul-Sept 14	797
<b>Year 4</b>			9,576		5,066
<b>Quarter 1</b>	May – Jul 2015 (sat) April – Jun 2015 (prog)	Apr-Jun 15	2,200	Oct-Dec 14	1,599
<b>Quarter 2</b>	Aug – Oct 2015 (sat) Jul – Sept 2015 (prog)	Jul-Sept 15	2,210	Jan-Mar 15	1,601
<b>Quarter 3</b>	Nov 15-Jan 16 (sat)	Oct-Dec 15	2,200	Apr-Jun 15	1,600

		Satisfaction survey		Progression survey	
<b>Quarter 4</b>	Oct-Dec 15 (prog)	Jan-Mar 16	2,202	Jul-Sept 15	1,611
	Feb-Apr 16 (sat)				
<b>Year 5</b>	Jan-Mar 16 (prog)		8,812		6,411
<b>Quarter 1</b>	May – Jul 2016 (sat)	Apr-Jun 16	2,201	Oct-Dec 15	1,600
<b>Quarter 2</b>	April – Jun 2016 (prog)	Jul-Sept 16	2,207	Jan-Mar 16	1,605
	Aug – Oct 2016 (sat)				
<b>Quarter 3</b>	Jul – Sept 2016 (prog)	Oct-Dec 16	2,209	Apr-Jun 16	1,606
	Nov 16-Jan 17 (sat)				
<b>Quarter 4</b>	Oct-Dec 16 (prog)	Jan-Mar 17	2,204	Jul-Sept 16	1,602
	Feb-Apr 17 (sat)				
<b>Year 6</b>	Jan-Mar 17 (prog)		8,821		6,413
<b>Quarter 1</b>	May – Jul 2017 (sat)	Apr-Jun 17	2,055	Oct-Dec 16	1,604
<b>Quarter 2</b>	April – Jun 2017 (prog)	Jul-Sept 17	2,051	Jan-Mar 17	1,605
	Aug – Oct 2017 (sat)				
<b>Quarter 3</b>	Jul – Sept 2017 (prog)	Oct-Dec 17	2,061	Apr-Jun 17	1,613
	Nov 16-Jan 18 (sat)				
<b>Quarter 4</b>	Oct-Dec 17 (prog)	Jan-Mar 18	2,061	Jul-Sept 17	1,616
	Feb-Apr 18 (sat)				
<b>Year 7</b>	Jan-Mar 18 (prog)		8,228		6,438

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

- Face-to-face National Careers Service customers;
- Telephone customers who received the information 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) 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.

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 in the corresponding month.

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

## 1.4 Online surveys

In total 4,583 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, 332 online customers took part in the progression survey.

## 1.5 Interpretation of the data

Throughout the chapters, 'customers' refer to those who access the National Careers Service face-to-face at Jobcentre Plus or another location, or receive the advice by telephone from area-based contractors or the National Contact Centre. When referring to telephone or face-to-face customers who have been unemployed for more or less than six months, we mean anyone who has been unemployed for more or less than six months in the last 12 months. For online customers, however, when referring to this category, we mean anyone who has been unemployed for more or less than six months at the point of the survey.

'ASIST customers' ASIST (Apprenticeship Specialist Intervention and Support Team) customers have been identified via the Find an Apprenticeship database and are offered multi-channel national and local, impartial in-depth support to adult customers who have failed to secure an apprenticeship or who are seeking help to apply for an apprenticeship. Support to the customers is provided by either the National Contact Centre (for customer aged between 16 and 24) or the Area Based Contractors (for customers aged 19 or over).

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

The National Careers Service website was redesigned part of the way through Year 6. Comparisons for the satisfaction survey are therefore focused on changes between Year 7 and the period after the redesign in Year 7.

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

## 1.6 The structure of this report

The rest of this report presents the results of Year 7 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); and
- Chapter 7 looks at face-to-face customers’ experiences across the different contracting regions, identifying any variations in performance.

## 2 Customer Profile

**The customer profile of those responding to the face-to-face, telephone or online services remained largely consistent with previous years. There were also similarities in which customers were accessing each channel and for what purpose.**

- **Online users had a relatively young age profile, and as expected were often in work; this was also the preferred channel for those in learning. Therefore, the challenge of being an online source for all customer types that is engaging remains key.**
- **Face-to-face customers, as with previous years, were more likely to be older, unemployed and looking for work, and had lower level qualifications.**
- **Telephone customers, in contrast, were more likely to be in work and to have higher qualifications.**

### 2.1 Customer characteristics

This chapter examines the profile of customers accessing the service in Year 7, from May 2017 to April 2018, and those accessing the National Careers Service website from April 2017 to March 2018. It looks at demographic characteristics such as gender, age and ethnicity, work status, and highest qualification at the time of accessing the service.

Table 2.1 shows the age, gender and ethnicity profiles of National Careers Service face-to-face, telephone and online customers surveyed during Year 7. The figures presented for face-to-face and telephone customers are based on weighted data, whilst online figures are based on unweighted data. Overall the customer base varied by service channel, but still had a similar profile to that found in previous years.

**Table 2.1: Demographic profile of National Careers Service customers<sup>1</sup>**

	Channel used as main way of accessing the service				
	Face-to-face (7,130)	Telephone all (1,098)	Telephone advice (279)	Telephone information (819)	Online (4,583)
<b>Base:</b>	%	%	%	%	%
<b>Gender</b>					
Male	57	49	46	50	37
Female	43	51	54	50	58
<b>Age group</b>					
19 or younger <sup>2</sup>	5	12	4	14	24
20-24	14	21	15	22	9
25-49	48	51	61	49	42
50 or older	33	16	21	15	23
<b>Ethnicity</b>					
White British	70	53	55	53	62
White other	6	11	11	11	10
Black/Black British	9	15	12	16	6
Asian/Asian British	10	12	14	12	9
Mixed/other	5	9	9	9	8
Prefer not to say	*	*	0	*	5
English not first language	16	19	20	19	14
Long term illness/disability	29	20	24	20	19

### 2.1.1 Gender and age

As with the previous year, the majority of face-to-face customers were men (57%). There was an even gender split among telephone customers (49% men and 51% women). Compared with Year 6, more men were using the

<sup>1</sup> Not all categories will add up to 100% as a result of the 'Prefer not to say' code.

<sup>2</sup> The age ranges are 18-19 for face-to-face and telephone customers, 16-19 for online customers.

telephone service (49% Year 7 vs. 44% Year 6), specifically the telephone information service (50% Year 7 vs. 44% Year 6).

Around half of face-to-face and telephone customers were aged 25-49 (48% and 51% respectively), which is broadly in line with previous years. The face-to-face channel had an older age profile than telephone and online channels; one third of face-to-face customers were aged 50 or over (33%), compared with 16% of telephone customers and 23% of online customers. Those using the telephone information service were typically younger than those using the telephone advice service: 14% of telephone information customers were aged 18-19 and 22% were aged 20-24, compared with 4% and 15% respectively among telephone advice customers.

Web users who completed the survey were predominantly women (58%) and aged 25-49 (42%). This profile is very similar to last year. 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.

### 2.1.2 Ethnicity and English as a first language

Seven in ten face-to-face customers were white British (70%), while the profile of telephone users was more ethnically diverse (53% were white British). This is in line with previous years.

Most website users who participated in the survey were White British (62%), the same proportion as in the previous year. The proportion of Black/Black British customers using the online service (6%) was somewhat lower than those using the face-to-face service (9%) and, in particular, the telephone advice (12%) and information services (16%).

One in six face-to-face customers said that English was not their first language (16%), slightly lower than the proportion of telephone customers (19%); both figures were again in line with Year 6. One in seven online customers said that English was not their first language (14%), slightly lower than the other channels, and this represents a continuing fall from previous years (20% in Year 5, 16% in Year 6).

### 2.1.3 Disability

More than a quarter of face-to-face customers had a disability or long-term limiting health condition (29%), up slightly from last year (27%). This was higher than the proportion of telephone customers (20%) and online customers (19%).

As with previous years, the difference among face-to-face customers 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, among disabled customers who replied to our survey, 65% first heard about the National Careers Service from Jobcentre Plus compared with 50% of non-disabled customers.

### 2.1.4 Region

Website users who participated in the survey were asked where they lived; this provides a picture of the regional spread of website users. In total, 85% of online customers said they lived in England, with the remainder living in



Scotland (3%), Wales (2%), Northern Ireland (1%) or outside of the UK (5%); a further 4% preferred not to say where they lived.

At least five per cent of online customers lived in each of the English regions. The highest proportions were in London (17%), the rest of the South East (14%), the North West (11%) and the South West (10%).

## 2.2 Employment status

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

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

Base:	Channel used as main way of accessing the service				
	Face-to-face (7,130)	Telephone (1,098)	Telephone advice (279)	Telephone information (819)	Online (4,583)
	%	%	%	%	%
<b>In work</b>	17	46	42	47	44
Full-time employee	9	26	20	27	29
Part-time employee	7	16	15	16	11
Self-employed	1	5	7	4	4
<b>In learning</b>	5	14	6	15	22
Full-time learning	2	11	4	12	8
Part-time learning	2	3	2	3	1
<b>Unemployed and looking for work</b>	65	29	40	27	20
<b>Other not working</b>	12	9	11	8	8
Unable to work due to health	8	5	7	4	4
Looking after home/family	3	3	4	3	3
Retired	*	1	0	1	1
<b>Other</b>	2	3	2	3	6

As in previous years, face-to-face customers had a very different employment profile to other channels, with the majority being unemployed and looking for work (65%) compared with one in five online customers (20%) and around three in ten telephone customers (29%). Looking more closely at telephone services, those using the

telephone advice service were more likely to be unemployed and looking for work (40%), compared with those using the telephone information service (27%). This is the same pattern as seen in previous years although the gap has narrowed in this year's survey, with an increase in the proportion of telephone information users who were unemployed (from 20% in Year 6 to 27% in Year 7).

The same customer groups were more likely to be unemployed as in previous years<sup>3</sup>:

- those aged 50 plus (62%);
- men (63% vs 52% of women);
- customers with no or Level 1 qualifications (62%, compared with 54% of those with degree-level qualifications); and
- White British (61% vs 54% Non-white British).

Just one in six face-to-face customers was in work (17%), compared with almost half of telephone customers (46%) and online users (44%). This is the same pattern as seen in previous years. Among face-to-face and telephone customers, disabled customers were less likely than non-disabled customers to be in work (12% compared with 26%).

Online users were the most likely to be in learning (22%, including 11% who were at school), followed by users of the telephone information service (15%). Just 5% of face-to-face customers and 6% of telephone advice users were in learning at the time of their first contact.

There were no clear differences in service use among those not working due to health problems or because they were looking after their home/family.

The overall profile of website users by employment status has remained very 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 particular, online customers are more likely than other customers to be in learning, or to have recent experience of learning. In addition to the 22% of online customers currently in learning, a further 51% said they had done some form of learning in the previous three years.

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 40% had worked within the past six months. More than one third had not worked for more than a year (35%), an increase on last year (29%).

In addition, one in ten customers had never had paid work (10%), which is similar to the proportion of those who responded to the survey in previous years. This includes over one third of 18-19 year olds using the face-to-face or telephone service (39%) and one-fifth of 20-24 year olds (19%). Altogether, a quarter of 18-24 year-old customers who were Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET) had never had a paid job (24%), which is consistent with

---

<sup>3</sup> Analysis of customer groups is based on face-to-face and telephone customers (combined).

previous years. The proportion who had never had paid work was also relatively high among ASIST customers (26%) and Asian or Asian British customers (21%).

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

## 2.3 Highest qualification

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

Base:	Channel used as main way of accessing the service				
	Face-to-face (7,130)	Telephone (1,098)	Telephone advice (279)	Telephone information (819)	Online (4,583)
	%	%	%	%	%
<b>Highest qualification</b>					
<b>Level 4 or higher (e.g. degree or equivalent)</b>	24	37	42	36	39
<b>Level 3 (e.g. A-levels)</b>	17	26	24	26	16
<b>Level 2 (5 GCSEs A*-C)</b>	21	19	11	21	18
<b>Level 1/entry level</b>	13	6	6	6	10
<b>No qualifications</b>	18	7	8	7	7
<b>Other</b>	5	3	6	2	10
<b>Below Level 2</b>	31	14	13	14	17
<b>Level 2 or higher</b>	61	82	78	82	73
<b>Key groups</b>					
<b>18-24 NEET</b>	14	12	10	13	3
<b>Recently made redundant/facing redundancy</b>	19	8	14	7	n/a

As before, 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, as shown in Table 2.3. Telephone customers were more likely to have a qualification at Level 2 or above (82%), compared with online customers (73%), while the proportion was lowest among face-to-face customers

(61%). In fact, one in six face-to-face customers had no qualifications (18%). These figures are very similar to those seen in Year 6.

One in seven face-to-face customers were aged 18-24 and Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) at the time of their meeting (14%), as were 12% of telephone customers and just 3% of online customers. Compared with last year, more customers using the telephone information service were NEET (13% in Year 7 compared with 8% in Year 6). Being NEET was more common among customers who were male (15%, vs 11% of females), while more than one third of ASIST customers were NEET (38%).

As in Year 6, around one in five face-to-face customers were facing redundancy or had recently been made redundant (19%, 20% in Year 6), and this was again more common among men and those aged 50 plus.

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

**More than half of customers first heard of the National Careers Service through Jobcentre Plus, emphasising the importance of this information channel. For those using the telephone service, internet/google searches are also key points of entry for using the service.**

**Online customers most often heard about the National Careers Service through Jobcentre Plus, friends and family, colleagues and National Careers Service advisers. However, the main channel was, as expected, from online searches. National Careers Service advisers, and in particular Jobcentre Plus advisers, continue to be an important source of referral particularly for key groups (customers over 50, 18-24 NEET customers, unemployed customers and disabled customers).**

**Reasons for contacting the National Careers Service were focussed on progressing into employment. Fewer contacted the service to find out more about studying options and apprenticeships. Help with CV writing is the most common reason for using the face-to-face service, whilst the telephone information service is often used to obtain information on courses relating to either a current or future job. Website use is largely for obtaining information and advice about jobs or careers.**

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

Year 7 sees the same proportion of customers accessing the service through Jobcentre Plus (54%) as in Year 6. The proportion of face-to-face customers being referred to the service through Jobcentre Plus remains similar (66% in Year 6 and 63% in Year 7). The same is also applicable for telephone customers (11% in Year 6 and 13% in Year 7). The prominence of Jobcentre Plus reflects the longstanding referral and co-location arrangements between

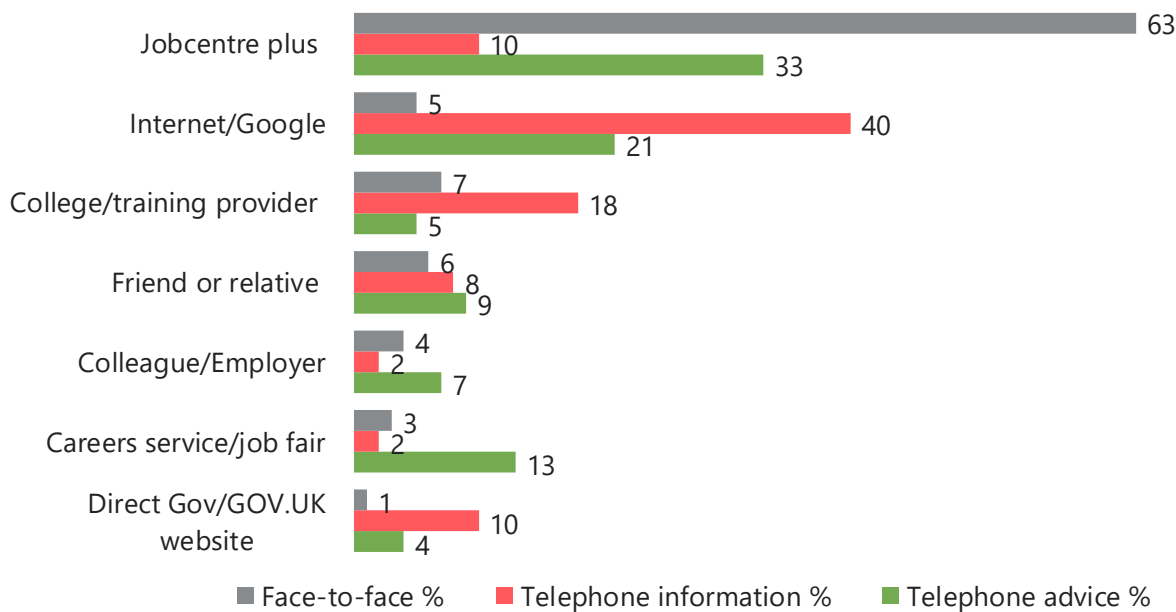
Jobcentre plus and National Careers Service (formerly Next Step) as part of a continued commitment for a more integrated approach to the provision of employment and skills advice to unemployed people.

### 3.1.1 Telephone and Face-to-Face Customers

As with last year, customers who called the National Contact Centre (NCC) were much more likely to have heard about the service through the internet (40%) than area-based telephone advice (21%) or face-to-face (5%) customers. These customers were also more likely to have found the service through their college or training provider. Telephone advice customers more commonly heard about the service through Jobcentre Plus (33%) compared with National Contact Centre customers (10%).

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 were also evident. For example, whilst ten 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.

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



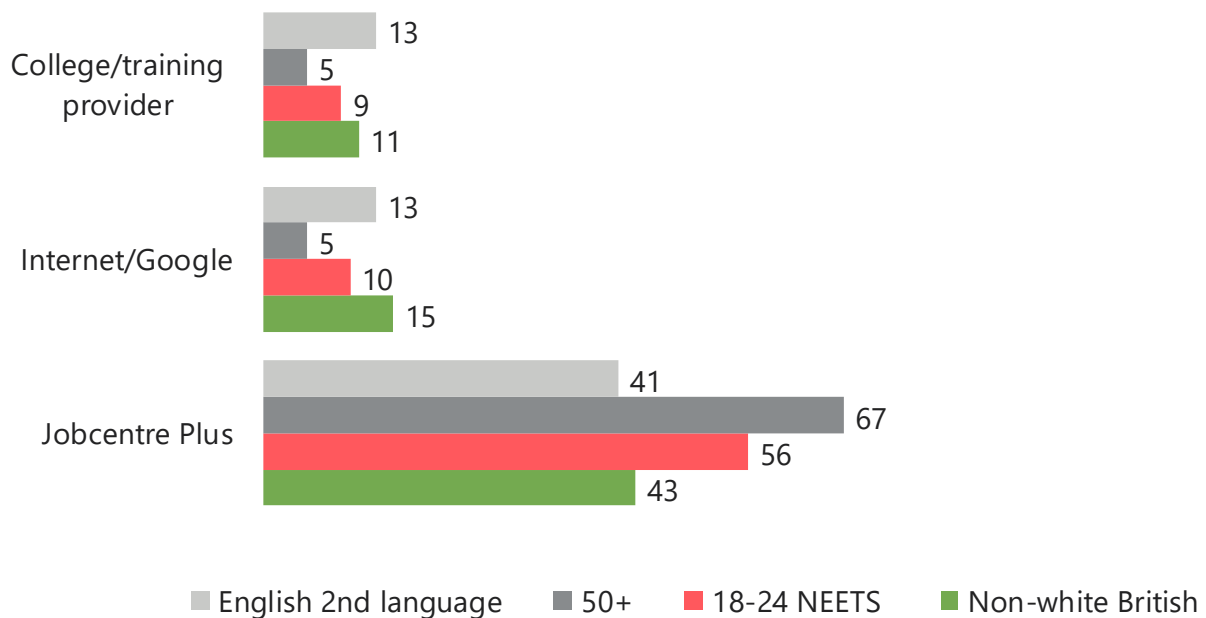
Base: All customers (8,228)

The survey shows 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 this channel (57% vs 51%). This is the same pattern as seen last year and reflects that more men than women are unemployed when they first contact the service. While the most common way for women to find out about the National Careers Service was also via Jobcentre Plus (51%), they were more likely than men to have heard about it through their college or training provider, though this was less common for both groups (11% vs 7%).

Older customers aged 50 plus were more likely to have first heard about the National Careers Service via Jobcentre Plus (67%), especially compared with younger customers aged 18-24 (42%). Other groups more likely than average (54%) to have first found out about the service via Jobcentre Plus were those recently made redundant/facing redundancy (62%), customers with a disability (65%) and customers who were unemployed and looking for work (68%).

Non-white British customers (43%) and those who spoke English as a second language (41%) were less likely than average (54%) to find out about the National Careers Service through Jobcentre Plus. Figure 3.2 shows that these groups were more likely to have first heard about the service through the internet, or through their college/training provider.

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



Base: All customers (8,228)

Since Year 6, the proportion of customers within the key groups who heard about the National Careers Service through colleges and training providers has remained relatively stable; however, there has been a rise among those in learning (31% found out through their college or training provider, compared with 26% in Year 6).

### 3.1.2 Online customers

The most common ways for website users to have first heard about the National Careers Service was through an internet search (41%), via Jobcentre Plus (15%), through a friend or relative (9%) or through a National Careers Service adviser (9%).

Those who were unemployed and looking for work were far more likely to have been signposted to the service by Jobcentre Plus (41%) or by a National Careers Service adviser (14%). In line with this, customers aged 50 plus and those with a disability (who were more likely to be unemployed) were also more likely to have been signposted to the website by Jobcentre Plus (both 27%) or the National Careers Service adviser (11% and 10% respectively).

**Table 3.1: Website visitor referral**

	Overall	18-24 NEET (141)	Disabled (876)	50 Plus (1,046)
<b>Jobcentre Plus adviser</b>	15%	26%	27%	27%
<b>National Careers Service adviser</b>	9%	9%	10%	11%

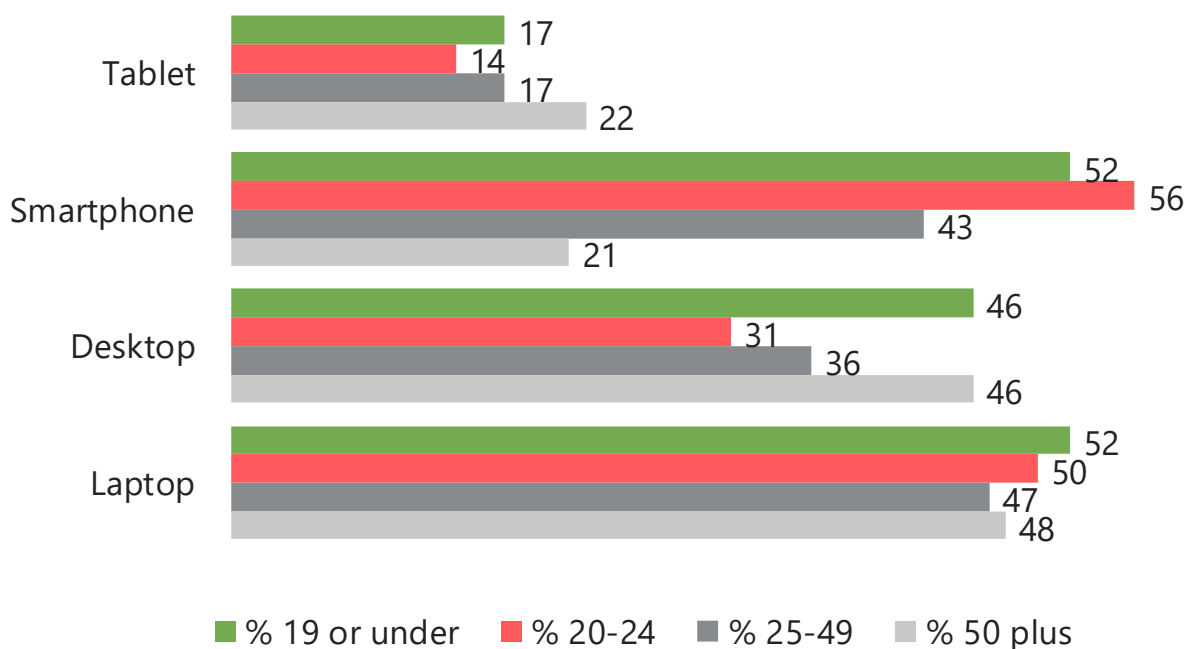
Base: All online satisfaction survey customers (4,583)

Younger customers aged under 19 (16%) or aged 20-24 (14%) were the most likely to find the website through recommendation from a friend or relative (compared with 9% overall). This remains at similar levels as previous waves, showing how important word of mouth is to take-up of the service among young people.

Around seven in ten customers accessed the website at home (71% compared with 15% who accessed it from work), similar to Year 6 (69% and 17% respectively). For those who are employed this rises to 31% that accessed the website from work in Year 7. Overall 13% accessed the site at a school, college or university (rising to 37% of those still currently in learning and 35% of young people aged under-19). Only 4% accessed the service from a library or other public place, although this was more common among those who were unemployed and NEET customers (both 9%) reflecting the fact these customers are less likely to have internet access at home.

This year sees consistent use of laptops (49%) and desktops (41%) as favoured means of accessing the website, with the addition of smartphones (41%). Smartphone use has continued to rise (41%, up from 28% in Year 6, 21% in Year 5, 15% in Year 4 and 10% in Year 3). Tablet use has slightly decreased since Year 6 but still higher than earlier waves (18% vs. 20% in Year 6, 17% in Year 4 and 12% in Year 3). Compared with previous years, the use of laptops amongst all age groups has become less skewed to younger groups (52% of those 19 or under, 50% among 20-24 year olds, 47% among those aged 25-49 and 48% aged 50 and above). However, smartphones were more often used amongst the younger age groups (52% of those 19 or under, 56% among 20-24 year olds compared with 43% among those aged 25-49 and 21% aged 50 and above). Of those aged 16-19, just under half (46%) accessed the site using a desktop, reflecting greater use of computers in school or college among this age group.



**Figure 3.3: How customers accessed the National Careers Service website**

Base: All online satisfaction survey customers (4,583)

## 3.2 Previous use of the National Careers Service

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

Around one in ten telephone (7%) and face-to-face customers (12%) had previously met with a National Careers Service adviser face-to-face. Those who were unemployed (12%), disabled (12%) or had English as a second language (14%) were more likely to have spoken to an adviser face-to-face beforehand. One quarter (23%) of telephone customers had previously spoken to an adviser via the telephone helpline.

One in five (22%) customers had accessed the website before they used the service. As seen in previous waves, the proportion of telephone customers who used the website before accessing the service was significantly higher than for face-to-face customers (45% vs 18%). Those that were working (30%) or in learning (31%) were also more likely to have used the website prior to their contact with the service, as were those that had qualifications of Level 4 or above (26%) and NEET customers aged 18-24 (31%). Again, those with English as a second language were more likely to have visited the website (27%) before using the service, as were those who identified as being Non-white British (28%).

Four in ten online customers (44%) were 'new' service users, visiting the site for the first time, up slightly since Year 6 (41%). This is significantly higher than the number of people who had visited the site for the first time after the website was redesigned (32%). This is expected to be as a result of the high number of careers advisers who completed the online satisfaction survey after the website had been redesigned (25% compared with 7% in Year 7). Those with qualifications below Level 2 were more likely to be first time customers than those with Level 2 or higher

qualifications (56% vs. 41%). Only one in five web customers had previous dealings with the National Careers Service via face-to-face (19%) or phone (9%), which is in line with Year 6.

Consistent with previous years, unemployed web customers were significantly more likely to have had prior contact with the National Careers Service than those in employment, particularly through a face-to-face meeting (38%) rather than speaking to an adviser on the telephone helpline (12%). With regards to prior face-to-face meetings this was also the case for those aged 50 plus (28%), however, compared with previous years this is no longer significantly higher amongst 18-24 NEETs (21%).

Customers with Level 4 qualifications (12%) or above and disabled customers (12%) were more likely than average to have had previous contact through the National Careers Service telephone helpline.

### 3.3 Reasons for contacting the National Careers Service

#### 3.3.1 Telephone and face-to-face customers

##### General service needs

Before asking customers about their detailed reasons for contacting the National Careers Service, they were asked if they mainly wanted to discuss career options, learning or training options, or both. More wanted to explore career options (75%, the same as Year 6) than learning or training options (61%, also the same as last year). The youngest customers were the most likely to be seeking advice on careers options, with 81% of under 19 year olds and 81% of NEET customers aged 18-24 contacting the service for this reason.

Wanting advice on learning or training options was more common among Non-white British groups (70%) and customers who had English as a second language (70%). As seen in previous years, customers already in work and those in learning were also more likely than average to be seeking advice on learning or training options (67% and 74% respectively), as were those aged 25-49 (65%).

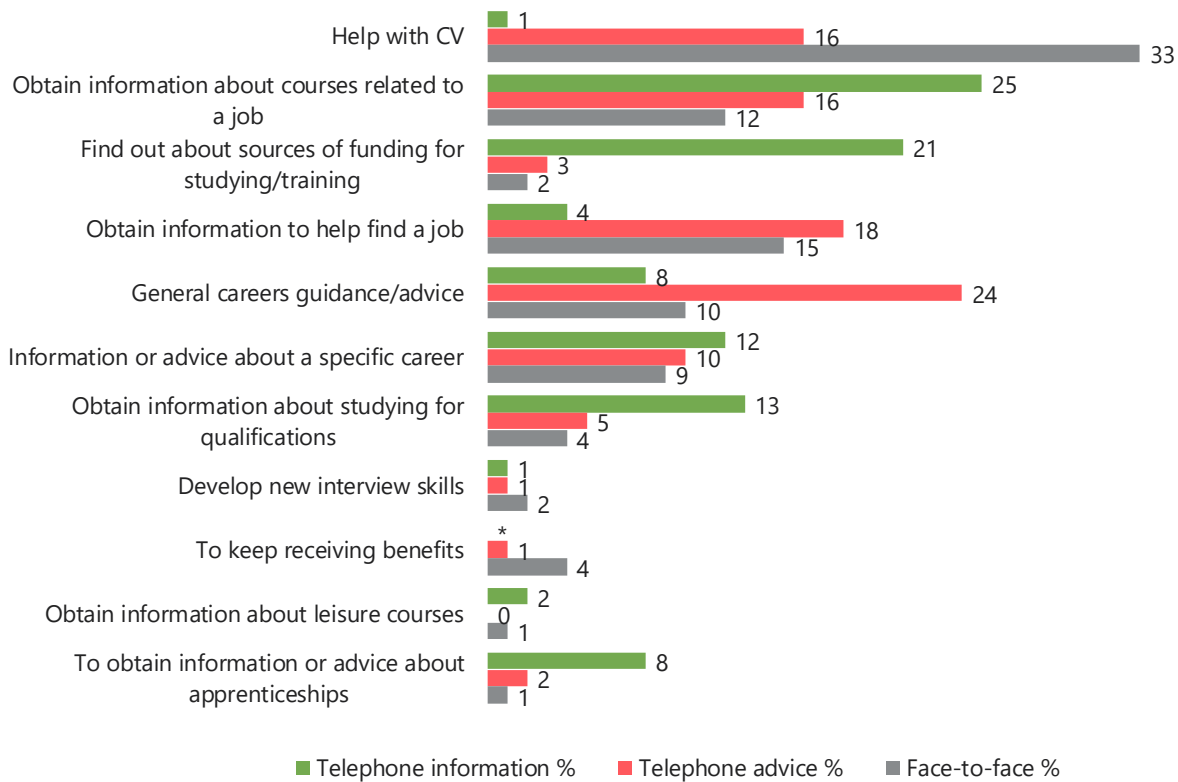
As in Year 6, telephone customers (84%) were more likely to be looking to explore career options than face-to-face (73%) customers; this was more commonly reported among telephone advice customers (89% compared with 83% telephone information customers).

Telephone information customers were most likely to be planning on doing some type of learning or training (87% compared with 64% of telephone advice and 56% of face-to-face customers).

##### Specific service needs

Customers were asked for their main reason for contacting the National Careers Service. We continue to see 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.

The most common reason was to get help in writing or developing a CV via face-to-face service and obtaining information about courses related to a current or future job via telephone. Customers who contacted the National Careers Service to get help with writing or developing their CV were more likely to be unemployed during the time that they called (34%, compared with 28% on average)

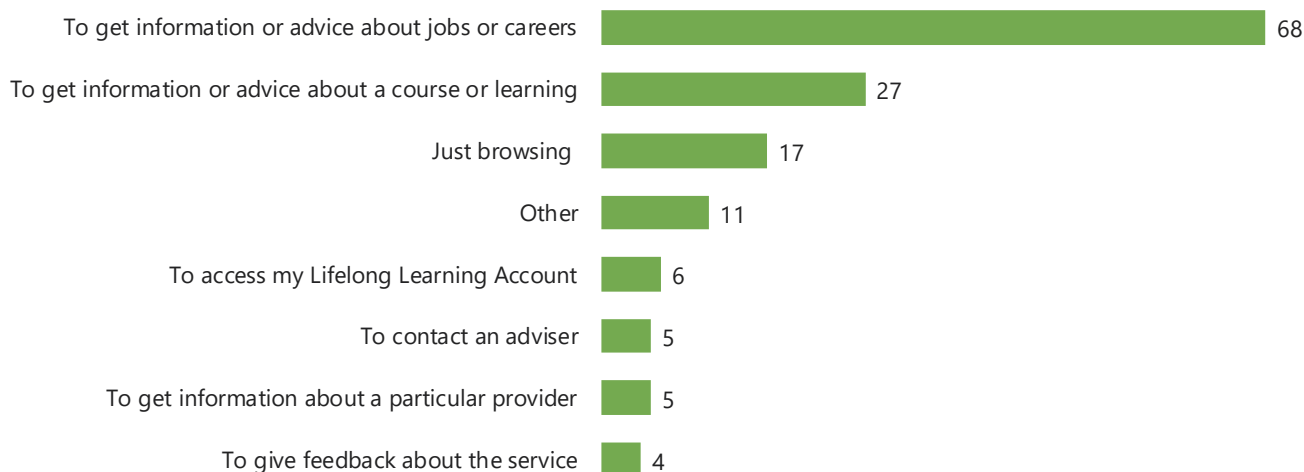
**Figure 3.4: Reasons for contacting the National Careers Service<sup>4</sup>**

Base: All customers (8,228)

### 3.3.2 Website users

Figure 3.5 shows that the majority of website visitors were looking for information or advice on jobs or careers (68%), a rise from Year 6 (66%, but similar to the average result after the redesign in Year 6, 68%), Year 5 (65%), Year 4 (62%) and Year 3 (53%). This increases to 80% of website visitors who were currently in learning (up four percentage points since Year 6) and 81% of NEET customers aged 18-24 (up 13 percentage points since Year 6 as whole, however only 1 percentage point after the redesign in Year 6).

<sup>4</sup> Asterisks denote values greater than zero but less than 0.5

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

Base: All online satisfaction survey customers (4,583)

Men were more likely to be using the website to browse (19% vs. 15% of women) and access their account (8% vs. 5% of women). These differences between men and women are consistent with previous waves.

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

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

	Year 7 (3,121)	Year 6 (4,764)	Year 5 (5,793)	Year 4 (6,129)	Year 3 (5,606)	Year 2 (3,649)
<b>Information about different careers</b>	66%	65%	61%	61%	61%	61%
<b>Information about progressing in a career</b>	35%	32%	30%	29%	28%	29%
<b>Applying for jobs</b>	33%	34%	37%	36%	37%	37%
<b>Information about the jobs market</b>	24%	27%	25%	25%	26%	27%
<b>CVs</b>	21%	27%	30%	34%	37%	39%
<b>How to get back into work</b>	17%	17%	17%	20%	26%	26%
<b>Interview skills</b>	16%	19%	19%	21%	21%	21%
<b>Voluntary work</b>	9%	11%	11%	11%	11%	11%
<b>Issues around redundancy</b>	3%	3%	3%	4%	5%	5%
<b>Other</b>	9%	7%	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 customers were looking for was information about different careers (66%), followed by information about progressing in a career (35%) and advice on applying for jobs (33%). Those in the early stages of career-planning, aged 19 and under, were likely to be looking for information about different careers (74%), as were those in learning (76%) 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 into the job market, either through help with applying for jobs (39% vs 28% of women), information on the jobs market (28% vs 22% of women) or how to get back into work (20% vs 15% of women).
- Customers aged 50 plus were more likely to be seeking help with how to get back into work (33%), information on the jobs market (32%) and CV's (28%).

There was a small minority of those aged over 50 seeking help with issues around redundancy (5%), similar to Year 6.

Table 3.3 below outlines the learning related information that was sought by online customers. Half of customers were looking for information on a specific course (49%).

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

	Year 7 (1,244)	Year 6 (1,791)	Year 5 (2,345)	Year 4 (2,406)	Year 3 (2,459)	Year 2 (1,754)
<b>A specific course</b>	49%	48%	47%	47%	43%	43%
<b>Different ways of learning</b>	34%	36%	38%	39%	41%	38%
<b>How to get back into learning</b>	26%	26%	26%	29%	35%	35%
<b>Apprenticeships</b>	27%	23%	22%	19%	20%	15%
<b>Paying for a course</b>	22%	21%	21%	25%	29%	28%
<b>Other caring responsibilities</b>	9%	10%	10%	9%	8%	7%
<b>Childcare</b>	6%	8%	8%	7%	8%	7%
<b>Other</b>	15%	14%	13%	12%	10%	10%

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

Customers across all age ranges were consistently interested in finding out about different ways of learning. However, information on apprenticeships was more commonly sought by those aged 19 or under (36%) and 20-24 (33%), as well as by 18-24 NEETS (49%). These findings are similar to Year 6. Those who have been unemployed for more than six months were more likely to be looking for information on how to get back into learning (42% compared with those who had been unemployed for less than six months, 25%).



## 4 Experiences of using the Service

**Three-quarters of telephone customers had their enquiry handled in one call (75%), the same as last year.**

**One in five face-to-face customers (21%) had two or more meetings with the National Careers Service adviser, lower than previous years. Customers aged 50 plus and males were more likely to have multiple meetings (26% and 23% respectively). Almost two thirds of customers who had more than one meeting saw the same adviser each time (62%).**

**Under half of online customers got all or most of the information they wanted on their first visit to the website (47%). Customers aged 50 plus were less likely than average to find all or most 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 an Account which enables customers to access a range of tools. The majority of customers found these tools useful.**

**Over one quarter of face-to-face and telephone customers reported that they had been followed-up by the National Careers Service since their initial contact (29%). This was more common among customers likely to be in need of further support: 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 among those using the website. It also looks at the specific tools and features that customers across all channels used, including the Skills Health Check, the Action Plan and Accounts.

### 4.1 Making contact with the National Careers Service by phone

Around three-quarters of telephone customer queries were handled in a single call in Year 7 (75%), similar to Year 6 (76%). Customers who had their query dealt with in a single call were more likely to be female (79%) or qualified to Level 4 or above (80%). Telephone advice customers were almost twice as likely as telephone information customers to have multiple calls (37% compared with 20%).

Of the customers who had their enquiry handled in more than one call, half were dealt with by the same adviser (49%). Telephone advice customers who had more than one call were more likely to have been dealt with by one adviser (54%).

During the phone call with the National Careers Service, four in ten customers were told that their adviser would send them further information (40%). Of these, nearly nine in ten (85%) received this information. Those over 50 (31%) were less likely to be offered information.

Telephone advice customers were more likely than telephone information customers to have been offered further information reflecting the more complex needs of this group (82% compared with 32%). Telephone advice customers were also more likely to say they actually received the information (94% compared with 81%).

Since Year 5, there has been a further decrease in the number of customers being offered information (40%, compared with 48% in Year 6 and 72% in Year 5). However, analysis by quarter shows that this has risen during the year; at Q1 33% were offered information, but by Q4 this had reached 47%.

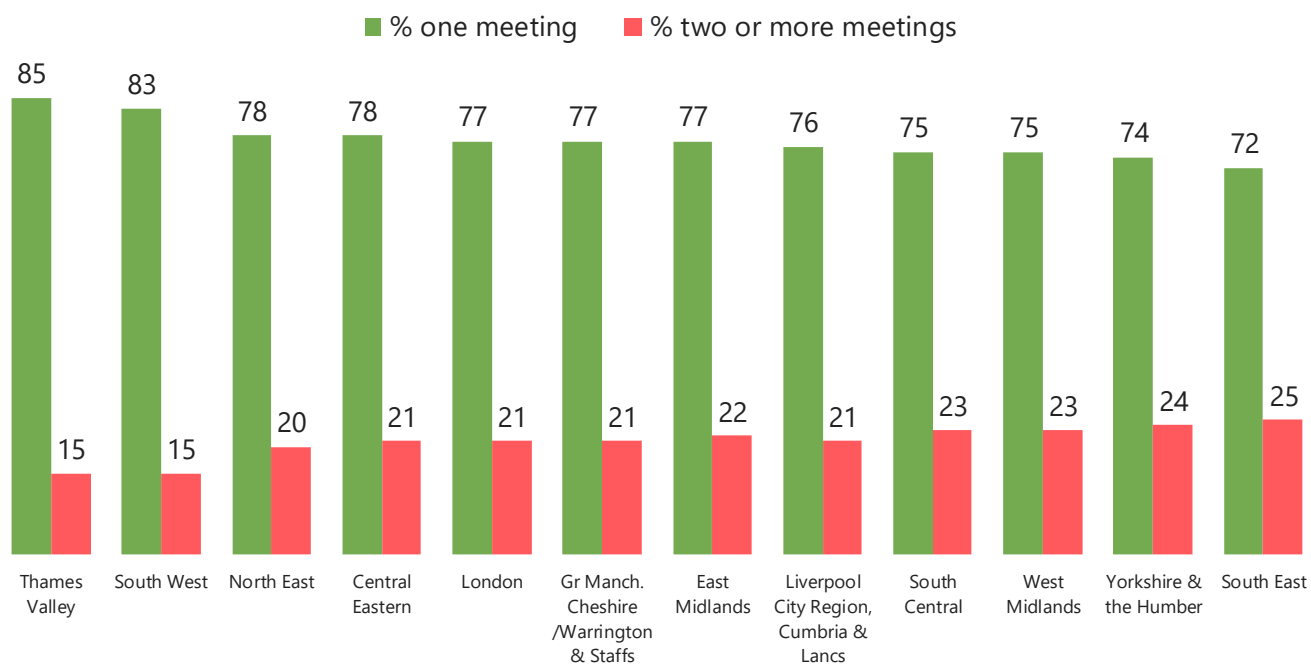
The vast majority of telephone customers found the information they received useful (90%), and over half found it very useful (58%). Seven per cent of customers found the information not very or not at all useful. These findings are mostly in line with previous years, however a lower proportion of customers rated the information as very useful (58% vs 70% in Year 6 and 77% in Year 5).

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

Three-quarters of face-to-face customers had just one meeting with a National Careers Service adviser (77%), while 21% had two or more meetings, remaining consistent with last year. Customers aged 50 plus were more likely to have multiple meetings with their adviser (26% compared with 17% of under 19 year olds), as were customers with either below Level 2 qualifications or no qualifications (24% compared with 20% qualified to Level 2 or higher) and those who were facing redundancy/had been made redundant (24%).

The number of meetings customers had with advisers varied between contracting regions (Figure 4.1). Customers in Thames Valley, the South West and the North East regions were significantly more likely to have just one meeting; customers in the South East, Yorkshire and the Humber and West Midlands were more likely than average to have multiple meetings although the majority still had just one meeting with a National Careers Service advisor.



**Figure 4.1: Number of face-to-face meetings by area**

Base: All face-to-face customers (6,786)

The four main reasons for attending more than one meeting were that: the adviser was reviewing or amending their CV (28%); the adviser recommended they come back (20%); because the adviser could not answer all the questions during the first meeting and needed to provide more information (15%); or because there wasn't time to go through everything in the first meeting (12%).

Customers in Yorkshire and the Humber were more likely than average to visit the adviser again to have their CV reviewed or amended (38%) or because there wasn't time to go through everything in the first meeting (18%). South East and Thames Valley customers were also more likely than average to visit their adviser again because there wasn't enough time to go through everything in the first meeting (18% and 21% respectively).

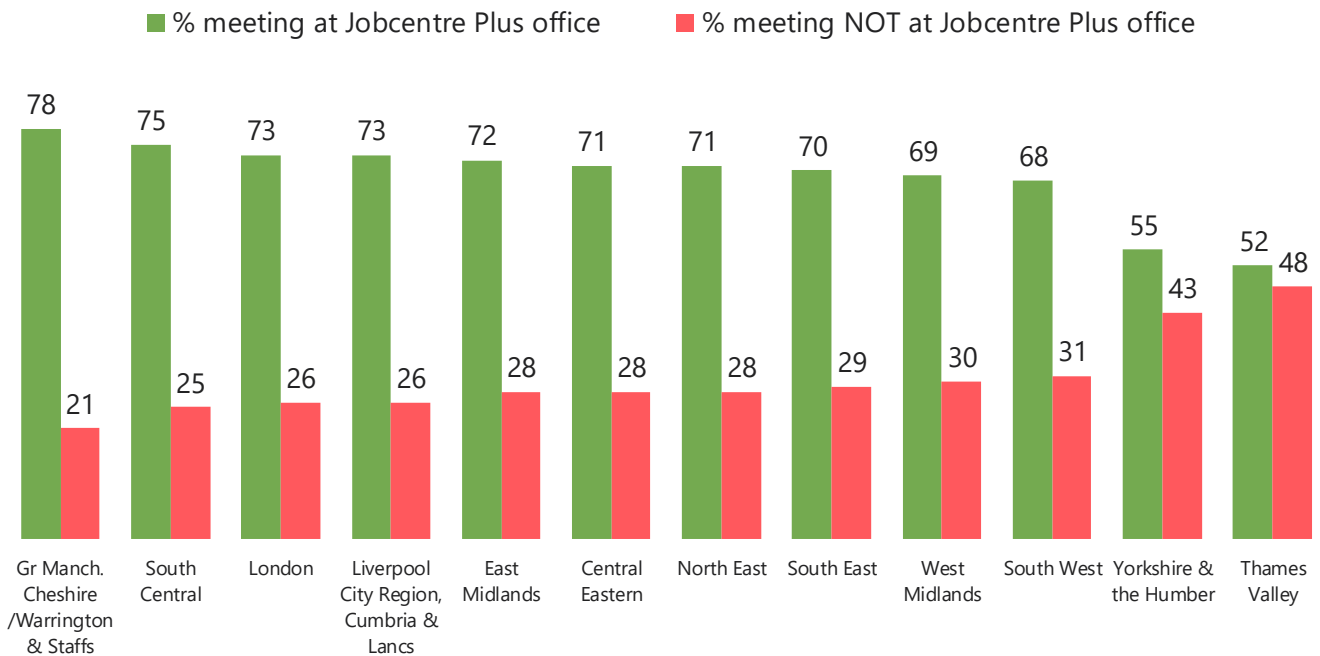
Just under two thirds of customers who had more than one meeting saw the same adviser each time (62%), lower than the proportion in Year 6 (66%). Over one third (37%) saw different advisers, although the vast majority (73%) did not mind this. Female customers were more likely to prefer to see the same adviser for each of their meetings (31%).

More than two thirds of customers had the meeting with an adviser in a Jobcentre Plus office (69%); as might be expected, this was higher among customers who were mandated to the Service (84%). Customers aged 50 or over were also more likely to see an adviser in a Jobcentre Plus office (74%), as were White British customers (73%), those under the age of 19 (75%), disabled customers (75%) and 18-24 year olds who were either seeking benefits (82%) or NEET (80%).

Figure 4.2 shows that the location of the meeting varied by contracting region. Customers in Greater Manchester, Cheshire, Warrington and Staffordshire, South Central, London and Liverpool; City Region, Cumbria and Lancashire

were more likely to have their meeting in a Jobcentre Plus office. Customers in Yorkshire and the Humber and Thames Valley were less likely to have their meeting in a Jobcentre Plus office.

**Figure 4.2: Location of meeting by area**



Base: All face-to-face customers (6,786)

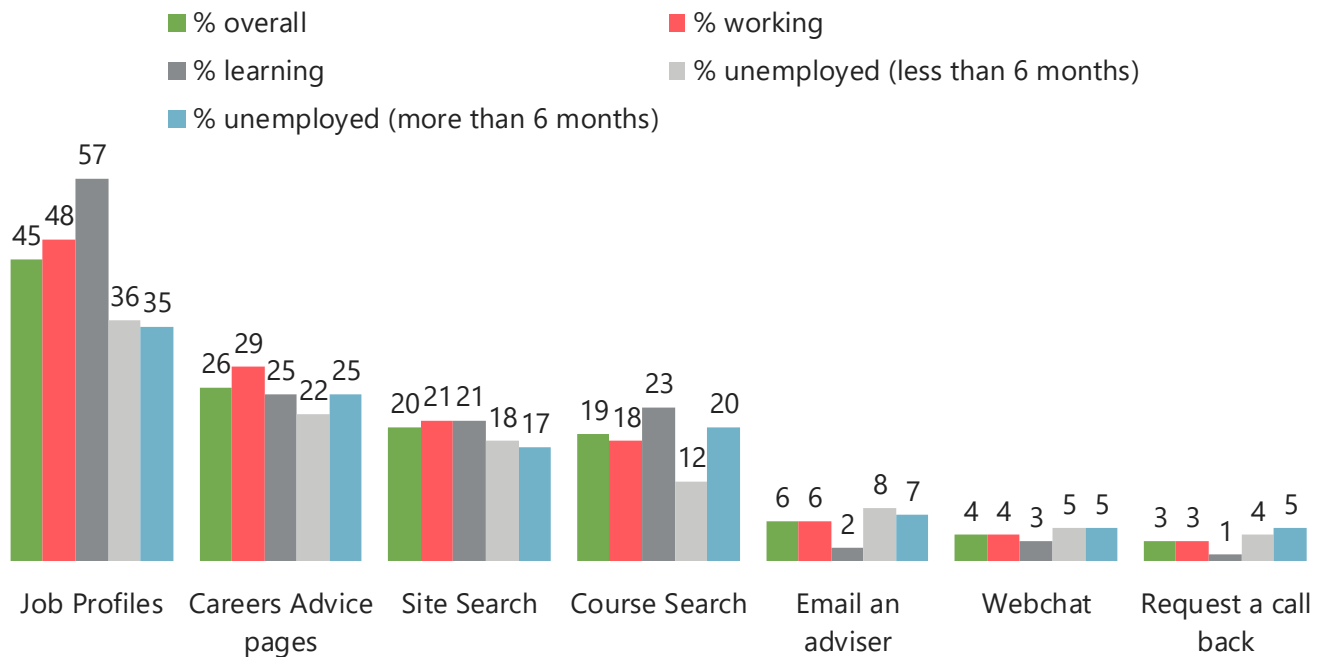
### 4.3 Using the National Careers Service website

Customers who used the National Careers Service website were asked which tools or features they had accessed (Figure 4.3). Usage of all these tools and features varied by employment status (shown in Figure 4.3).

The most commonly used feature was Job Profiles (by 45%). This is 12 percentage points lower than Year 6 (post website redesign), 57%, although significantly higher than the overall average for Year 6 (42%). Careers advisers were more likely to use this feature compared with the general public (87% compared with 42%), as were customers in learning (57%), females (47%) and customers aged 19 or under (56% compared with 38%-45% in the older age groups).

Careers Advice pages were another feature more commonly used by careers advisers than the general public (45% compared with 25%), consistent with Year 6. Those with qualifications Level 4 or higher were more likely to visit these pages (30% compared with 26% overall).

One in five online customers used Site Search (20%), significantly higher than Year 6 (16%). This tool was more commonly used by careers advisers (27% compared with 19% general public customers). A similar proportion used Course Search (19%, unchanged from Year 6). Younger people aged 19 or under (23%) and those in learning (23%) were significantly more likely than average to use this tool, reflecting the greater focus among these customers on information about further learning or training.

**Figure 4.3: Customer usage of website features by status**

Base: All online satisfaction survey customers (4,583)

The majority of customers who used the various tools and features found them useful: Job Profiles (87%), Careers Advice pages (85%), Site Search (82%) and Course Search (74%).

Only six per cent of website visitors had emailed an adviser, four per cent used webchat and three per cent had requested a call back from the adviser. Customers found these tools to be the least helpful, with 70% stating that email was useful and 69% and 73% stating the same for webchat and call back requests (respectively).

Table 4.1 illustrates the usefulness of each website feature for both Careers advisers and the general public for this year, Year 6 as a whole and Year 6 after the website redesign. It is evident that the ratings for the general public have increased since the redesign for all features, excluding Webchat. The same is applicable for Careers advisers, excluding Email an adviser and Request a call back. This again indicates that the scores in Year 6 were impacted by the disproportionate number of Careers advisers taking part in the online survey.

**Table 4.1: Proportion rating each feature as 'very useful' or 'quite useful'**

	Year 7			Year 6		Year 6 (post re-design)	
	Overall	Careers Advisers	General Public	Careers Advisers	General Public	Careers Advisers	General Public
<b>Base:</b>	(4,583)	(331)	(4,252)	(760)	(6,499)	(578)	(1,771)
<b>Job Profiles</b>	87%	70%	89%	63%	90%	55%	86%

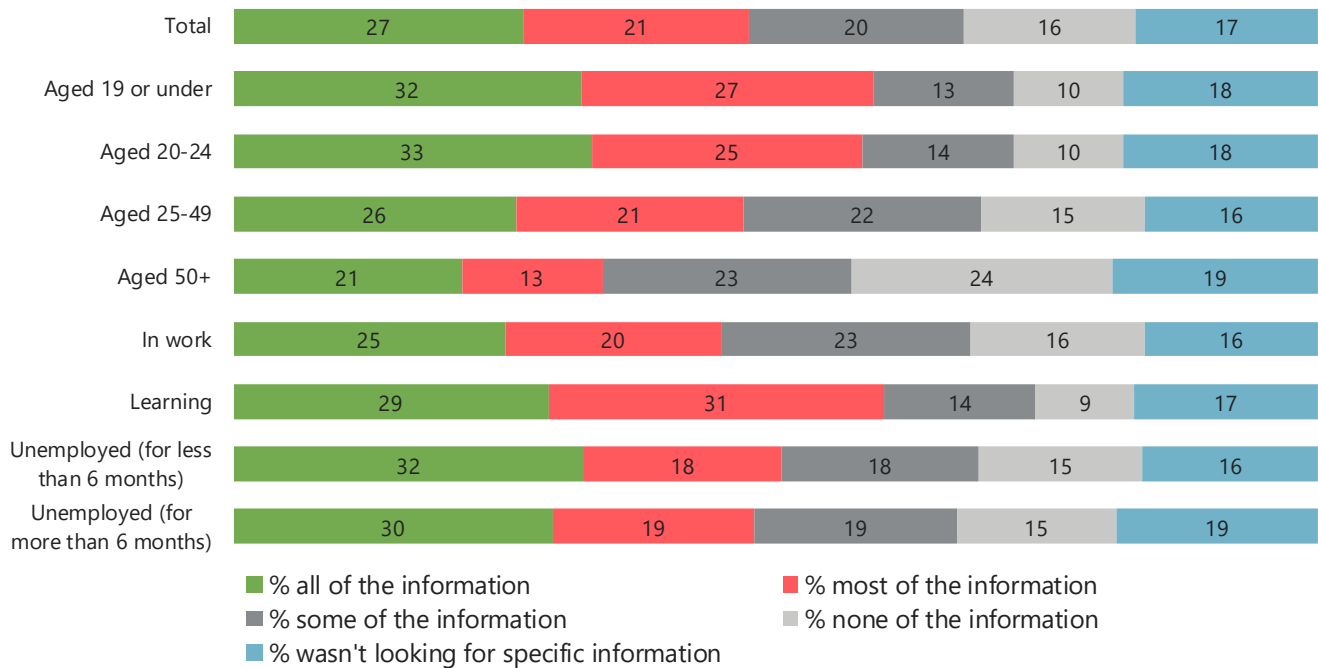
	Year 7			Year 6		Year 6 (post re-design)	
<b>Careers Advice pages</b>	85%	72%	87%	65%	88%	59%	81%
<b>Site Search</b>	82%	71%	83%	65%	85%	56%	83%
<b>Course Search</b>	74%	51%	76%	58%	77%	49%	73%
<b>Email an adviser</b>	70%	50%	70%	73%	67%	75%	59%
<b>Webchat</b>	69%	-	69%	94%	71%	90%	71%
<b>Request a call back</b>	73%	60%	74%	93%	67%	90%	59%

*Base: All those who used the feature*

There were some consistent patterns across the Job Profile feature, Course Search, Site Search and the Careers Adviser pages. General public customers were generally more likely than careers advisers to say they found these features useful. Customers who were in learning were generally more likely to find the features useful, compared with those who were working or unemployed. Customers aged 50 or over were generally less likely than younger customers to find these various features useful.

Just under half of website visitors got all or most of the information they wanted on their first visit to the website (47%), similar to Year 6 after the website was redesigned (46%), but significantly lower than Year 6 as a whole (55%). One in five got some of the information (20%) and 16% got none. The remaining 17% were just browsing. Customers who have visited the website multiple times were more positive, with 56% saying they got all or most of the information they wanted. Those aged under 24 or in learning were also more likely to get all or most of the information they wanted; by contrast, customers aged 50 plus were less likely than average to say this (Figure 4.4).

**Figure 4.4: Information obtained by first-time visitors to the National Careers Service website by age and employment status**



Base: All customers who visited the National Careers Service website once (2,032)

## 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. More than one third of face-to-face customers used this tool (36%, a similar proportion to Year 6), while over half did not (54%) and the remaining ten per cent could not remember. Customers who had more than one face-to-face meeting were more likely to use this tool (43% compared with 34% of those who only had one session), as were those who recalled having an action plan (47% compared with 21% of customers who did not recall an action plan). Usage of the SHC was more common in Greater Manchester, Cheshire, Warrington and Staffordshire (42%), Liverpool City Region and Lancashire (43%) and the South East (40%).

The majority of face-to-face customers who used this tool found it useful to go through (88%), exactly the same proportion as the preceding three years. This includes 47% who found it very useful and 41% who said it was fairly useful. Only nine per cent did not find it useful. Customers aged 18-24 were most likely to find the SHC useful (91%), particularly those who were aged 18-24 and seeking benefits (92%) and 18-24 NEET customers (92%). Those who had an action plan were more likely to find it useful (91%). Customers who were mandated to the Service were more likely to say that the SHC was not useful (16%).

The main reasons why customers did not find the SHC useful were that they thought it told them things they already knew (26%) and that they did not find the questions relevant (19%). Customers with qualifications above Level 2 were more likely than average to say that the SHC told them things they already knew (35%).

Around one in five online customers (22%) used the SHC tool, a fall from Year 6 (27%). Among website visitors, the tool was more commonly used by careers advisers (34%) than the general public (21%). Those who were unemployed (32%) were also more likely to use the Skills Health Check tool, as were disabled customers (31%) and those with qualifications Level 4 or higher (30%).

The majority of online customers found the SHC useful (77% vs 80% in Year 6 as a whole, 76% in Year 6 after the redesign), while 16% said that it was not useful. There were no major differences among different groups of website users, other than fewer disabled customers finding the SHC useful (72% compared with 80% of non-disabled customers).

#### 4.4.2 Skills Action Plan

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 of telephone and face-to-face customers recalled a Skills Action Plan (54%), similar to the proportion in Year 6 (55%). Younger customers aged 18-24 (61%) or 25-34 (58%), those who were working (57%), 18-24 year old NEET customers and 18-24 year olds who were receiving benefits (both 60%) and those who had Level 2 or higher qualifications (57%) were most likely to recall a Skills Action Plan. Furthermore, of the face-to-face customers, those who had multiple meetings (61%) and those who had the same adviser (64%) were more likely to recall a Skills Action Plan being drawn up. This suggests that a more intensive level of interaction has an impact on this occurring. However, overall, telephone advice customers were more likely than face-to-face customers to recall a Skills Action Plan (70% compared with 53%).

Among those with a Skills Action Plan, half of customers had a great deal of involvement in drawing up their plan (50%), while a further 37% reported that they had some involvement, in line with Year 6. Female customers (52%) and those aged 35-49 (53%) were more likely than average to say that they had a great deal of involvement, as were customers qualified to Level 2 or above (53%).

The majority of telephone and face-to-face customers who recalled having a Skills Action Plan found it useful (89%), consistent with Year 6. Around one in ten (9%) found the Skills Action Plan not very or not at all useful; the main reasons were that they did not think it was relevant to their situation (32%), it was too general/insufficiently tailored (29%), or it did not contain any new information (14%).

#### 4.4.3 Accounts (formerly known as Lifelong Learning Accounts)

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

Overall, only six per cent of face-to-face and telephone customers opened an Account during the session, continuing the downward trend since Year 5 (Table 4.2).

**Table 4.2: Use of Accounts<sup>5</sup>**

	Year 7	Year 6	Year 5	Year 4	Year 3	Year 2	Year 1
<b>Base:</b>	(8,228)	(8,821)	(8,812)	(9,576)	(8,795)	(8,808)	(6,610)
<b>Already had an account</b>				6%	4%	3%	2%
<b>Opened an account during the session</b>	6%	7%	10%	8%	8%	7%	6%
<b>Opened an account after the session</b>				8%	8%	6%	4%
<b>Was offered during session but not interested</b>	13%	14%	13%	10%	11%	11%	8%
<b>It was not discussed</b>	69%	68%	66%	55%	58%	64%	70%
<b>Can't remember</b>	10%	10%	9%	10%	10%	8%	8%

Base: All participants

Customers more likely to have opened an Account were:

- Those whose first language was not English (9%).
- Customers who had an action plan (8% vs 3% of customers who did not have an action plan).
- There were no differences by channel, although face-to-face customers who had more than one meeting were more likely to have opened an Account than those who just had one face-to-face meeting (8% compared with 5%).

More than two thirds of customers who had opened an Account had progressed as far as activating it (65% vs 69% in Year 6).

Around one in ten online customers used their Account in Year 7 (12%). This was more commonly used by male customers (14% vs 11% female customers) and unemployed customers (32% vs. those who were working, 23%). Three-quarters of online customers who had used the Account said that they found it useful (75%), a slight drop from Year 6 (77%).

## 4.5 Follow up actions

### 4.5.1 Reported follow-up by the National Careers Service

Over a quarter of face-to-face and telephone customers said that the National Careers Service had been in touch with them again after their initial contact (29%), an increase since Year 6 (26%). Email (16%) and telephone (10%) were the most common communication channels used for follow-up, followed by meeting face-to-face (3%), text

<sup>5</sup> 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'. In Year 7, this code was altered to 'You have opened an Account'.

(3%) or letter (1%), 69% did not receive any follow up. Levels of follow-up remained consistent throughout the year.

Reported follow-up was more common among customers who were Non-white British (31%), not disabled (30%), had qualifications Level 2 or above (30%), those facing or with recent experience of redundancy (33%), or where English was a second language (34%). It was also more common among telephone advice customers (38%) or face-to-face (31%) customers.

Table 4.3 shows that there are variations between area-based contractors in terms of whether customers reported having any follow-up. Customers of the National Contact Centre, Economic Solutions and Prospects were least likely to say their contractor followed up after their first contact.

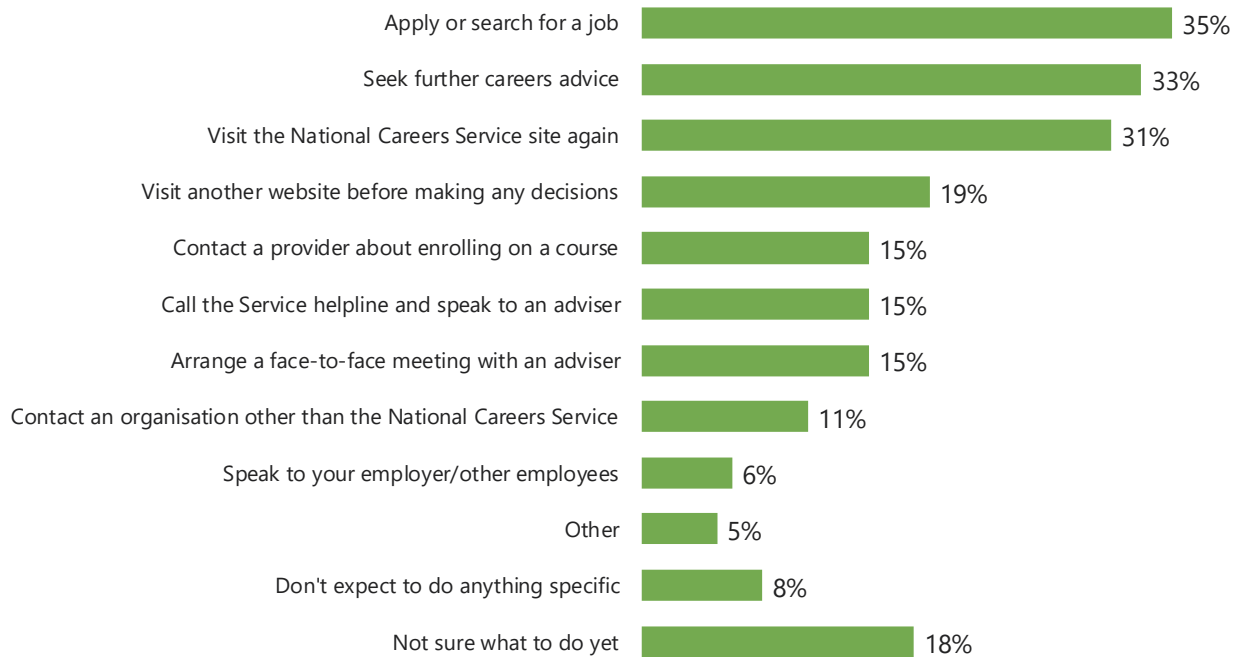
**Table 4.3: Customer follow up by area contractor**

	Base	No	Yes - all	Yes - email	Yes - phone	Yes – face-to-face
<b>Adviza</b>	473	51%	45%	30%	13%	3%
<b>Futures Advice</b>	1,237	58%	40%	24%	10%	4%
<b>Careers Yorkshire &amp; the Humber</b>	696	68%	30%	15%	9%	4%
<b>Prospects</b>	2,042	69%	28%	17%	7%	4%
<b>Babcock/CXK</b>	644	60%	38%	21%	15%	5%
<b>CfBT</b>	1,186	68%	30%	17%	9%	3%
<b>Economic Solutions</b>	1,131	71%	27%	11%	11%	4%
<b>National Contact Centre/Serco</b>	819	84%	13%	5%	11%	*

#### 4.5.2 Follow up actions carried out by online customers

Online customers were asked what they were likely to do as a result of visiting the National Careers Service website (Figure 4.5). The most common response was applying or searching for a job (35%), seeking further careers advice (33%) or visiting the site again before making any further decisions (31%). Customers who planned to apply or search for a job following their visit to the website were more likely to be: male (41% vs 33% of female customers); aged 20-24 (47%); NEET customers (57%) or unemployed rather than in work or learning (47% compared with 33% and 31% respectively); and have English as a second language (44%).



**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 (3,923)

Online customers who were looking for advice for themselves were asked whether various outcomes were likely as a result of visiting the National Careers Service website. One third said that it was more likely that they would start a course or enter learning (32%), undertake some training (26%) or get a job having been unemployed (24%). Over one in ten online customers said it was more likely they would progress at work e.g. get a promotion (17%), start an apprenticeship (14%) or start voluntary work (13%).

Customers with no qualifications or with qualifications below Level 2 were more likely than other customers to say that their visit to the website had increased their likelihood of starting a course or entering learning (37%). NEET customers aged 18-24 were more likely to say their visit had increased their chances of getting a job (58%) or start an Apprenticeship (31%). Those with qualifications Level 4 and above were more likely than average to say that they would progress at work (24%).

## 5 Customer Satisfaction

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

**In line with this, the vast majority of face-to-face and telephone customers were satisfied with the National Careers Service overall (84%), consistent with previous years. Younger customers were more satisfied than older customers.**

**Among telephone and face-to-face customers, satisfaction with individual aspects of the Service was also high, especially the professionalism and helpfulness of advisers.**

**Overall, satisfaction with the National Careers Service website has risen since its redesign in Year 6 (64% compared with 48%).**

**Reflecting the high levels of customer satisfaction and positive views of service quality, almost nine in ten face-to-face or telephone customers either had already recommended or would recommend the National Careers Service (87%). Seven in ten online customers said they would recommend the National Careers Service website to friends, family or colleagues (71%). Again, this represents an improvement compared with the second half of year 6.**

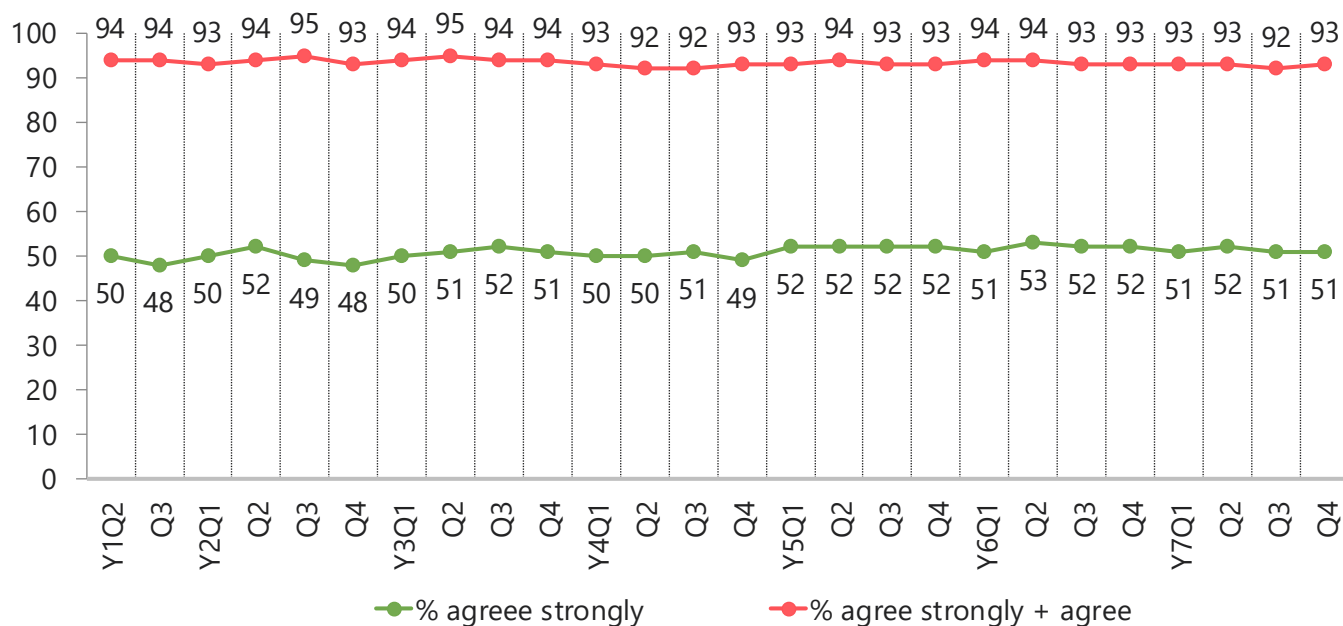
**Suggestions for improvement from face-to-face and telephone customers focused on more tailored help and follow-up. Online customers felt that improvements could be made to the website, in terms of the appearance and design, the amount of detail on jobs and careers, and ease of use.**

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. The vast majority in Year 7 agreed that it was good (93%), while only a small minority disagreed (6%). Ratings have been consistently high over the last six 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)

There were some variations by customer group, as follows:

- Customers aged 18-24 and 25-34 were more likely to agree that the overall quality of the service was good (both 95%), compared with those aged 35-49 (92%) or aged 50 plus (91%). Levels of agreement were high among both 18-24s who were seeking benefits and 18-24 year old NEETs (both 96%).
- There were no differences in levels of agreement according to employment status. However, those in work at the time of contact were more likely to agree strongly (57%), compared with those in learning and those unemployed and seeking work (both 50%).
- Disabled customers were slightly less likely to agree than non-disabled customers (91% compared with 94%).
- There were high levels of agreement among customers who said that English was not their first language (95%).
- Customers who had been mandated to the Service were less positive than other customers: 83% agreed and 14% disagreed.
- Customers who had a deeper level of engagement with the service overall were more likely to agree that the quality of the service was good. For example, levels of agreement were higher among those who recalled using the Skills Health Check (96%) or agreeing an Action Plan (96%).

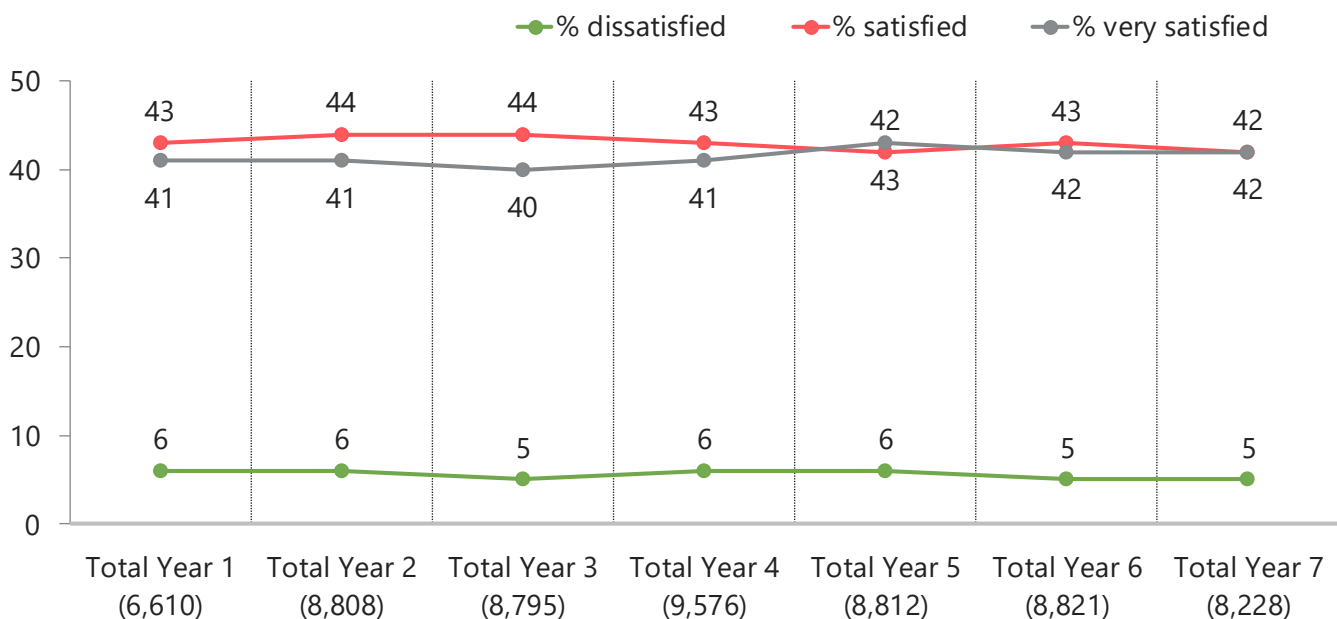
- Overall levels of agreement were consistent across the different contact channels. However, as in previous years, telephone information customers were more likely to agree strongly that the service was good (59% strongly agreed compared with 47% of telephone advice and 50% of face-to-face customers).
- There were no differences according to the number of face-to-face meetings or telephone calls. However, among customers who had multiple telephone calls, those who spoke to just one adviser were more likely to agree than those who spoke to more than one adviser (97% compared with 87%). Similarly, among face-to-face customers who had multiple meetings, agreement was higher if they saw just one adviser as opposed to more than one. This difference was particularly pronounced in relation to the proportions that strongly agreed (57% compared with 43%).

## 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 were satisfied with the National Careers Service overall (84%), and only five per cent of customers were dissatisfied, largely unchanged from previous years (Figure 5.2).

**Figure 5.2: Annual ratings of satisfaction and dissatisfaction**



Base: As shown in chart

Younger customers were more satisfied than older customers, although differences were less pronounced than in the previous wave. The proportion who were satisfied ranged from 86% among 18-24 year olds to 84% of 25-49 year olds and 82% of those aged 50 plus. Among 18-24 year olds, those who were seeking benefits were particularly positive, as were those who were NEET (both 87% satisfied).

There were no differences by employment status in terms of overall satisfaction, although unemployed customers were less likely to be very satisfied (40%) than those in learning or employment (47% and 46% respectively). As in Year 6, satisfaction was lower than average among those who had been mandated to the National Careers Service

(70%). Satisfaction was also slightly below average among disabled customers (82%) and customers who were qualified to Level 4 or above (82%). Satisfaction was higher than average among customers who did not speak English as their first language (87%).

Levels of satisfaction were consistent across different contact channels. However, face-to-face customers who had multiple meetings were more likely to be satisfied (87%), compared with those who had just one meeting (83%). Satisfaction was particularly high among face-to-face customers who saw the same adviser across multiple sessions (89%).

As was the case for the rating of overall service quality, customers who recalled using the Skills Health Check or agreeing an Action Plan were more positive than other customers (89% satisfied in each case).

The main reasons for satisfaction relate to the individual advisers that customers dealt with. Most frequently, customers said that the adviser was knowledgeable, helpful or gave good advice (50%), while the other main reasons were that the adviser was friendly, personable or understanding (36%), gave good advice or helped with their CV (29%), or gave good advice relating to courses or training (16%). In addition, nine per cent said they were satisfied because the service was straightforward, convenient or easy to use. These responses were very similar to those seen in the previous wave.

The main reasons for dissatisfaction were consistent with those given in Year 6, and are summarised below:

- Some customers felt that they did not receive the help or information that they wanted and/or needed (63%). This was by far the most common reason for dissatisfaction.

*"I was supposed to see someone and had three appointments with her, but she was not there, and I was sent away. The next time she was not there I was sent to someone else, who saw me for 30 seconds and told me to look on the website. That is all the help I got. I expected to get more help."*

*"More comprehensive advice on employment and help and advice for someone in my unique situation. I am 39 and have been self-employed since I was 17 so I don't have an employment history as such."*

*"Just more concrete, specific information on things, not just printing a sheet of information off the printer and sign to say you received it. It was so basic."*

*"Was expecting more help with mental health things, that's why I had agreed the appointment. I was already doing everything she recommended, [it was] really the mental health side of things she had said she would help with, [I was] disappointed when that was not the case."*

*"I'm being made slowly redundant, I wouldn't have minded some guidance about retraining. Something specific to my situation."*

- One in five dissatisfied customers pointed to a lack of follow-up from advisers (20%).

*"I was looking for general advice after coming off probation and nobody has helped me achieve anything. I was hoping for some call-backs but they didn't come."*

*"No follow up appointment offered. No offer of advice re job search or CV creation given."*

*"Looking for more direction of where to find the type of courses that would help me, so I didn't feel that I received any of that information, there was no follow-up to bring anybody back."*

- There was criticism of insufficient help to get a relevant course or training (16%).

*"I [was] expecting some more guidance with respect to training and improving skills for my next job. I was hoping to get a quick course that would improve my chances of finding a job."*

*"[I was] hoping for more information about what courses would be available and have more of a start. I thought they had info they wanted to deliver to me but didn't - just had a chat. A very vague meeting."*

*"I was looking to get information about studying for qualifications; not just a routine job search which I could have easily done myself."*

- Some customers wanted help with their CV, and felt the support they received was insufficient (13%).

*"More help with [my] CV. I felt I have been in and out of short term employment and it looks very 'bitty' - I needed advice on what to do to make it look better, and I didn't feel I got that. It felt as though he gave me the same advice as he gave to everybody, but it was not very specific to your case."*

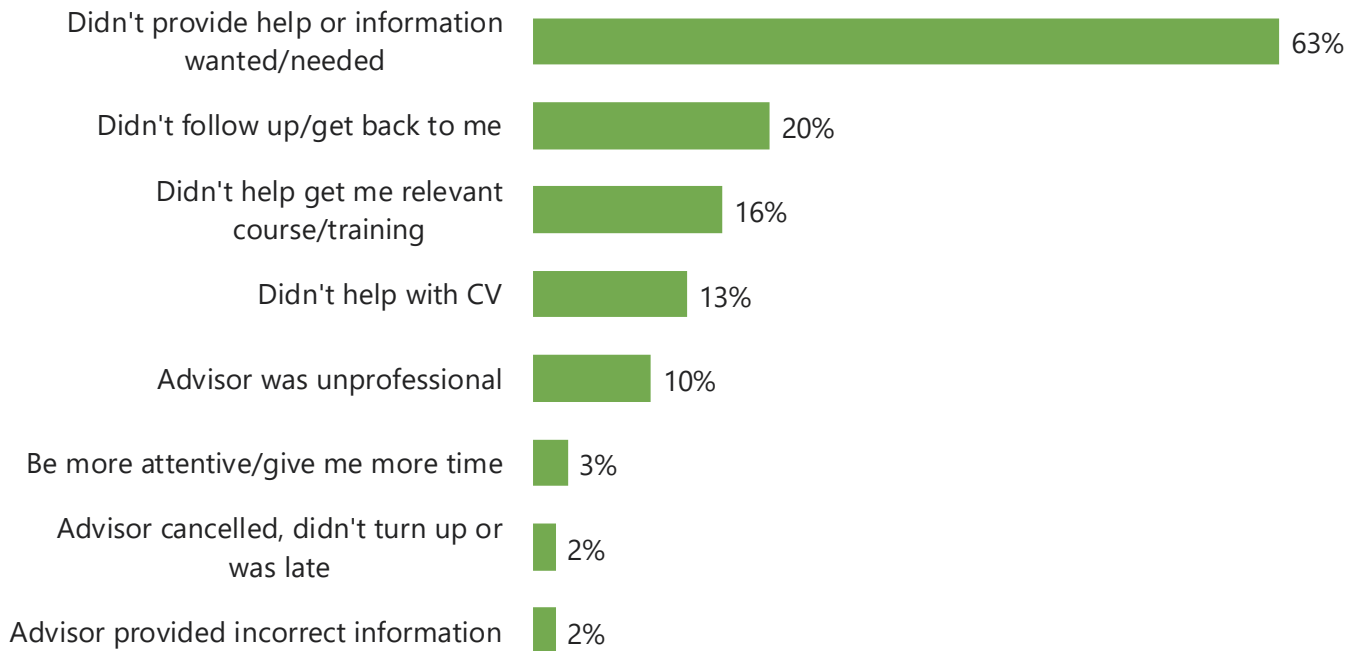
*"I thought I'd receive a CV a bit quicker and a bit more in depth, I felt like I wasn't really listened to."*

*"I wanted more help with my CV and to get help getting a job. She did not send me promised information."*

- There were also comments about advisers, some of whom were perceived as unprofessional (10%).

*"I thought it was advice, someone was going to sit there and give me advice for a new career, I was looking for something other than what I have done my entire life. I didn't receive any advice. The adviser was playing on his phone, shouting 'come over', asked me to get there early then told me to wait."*

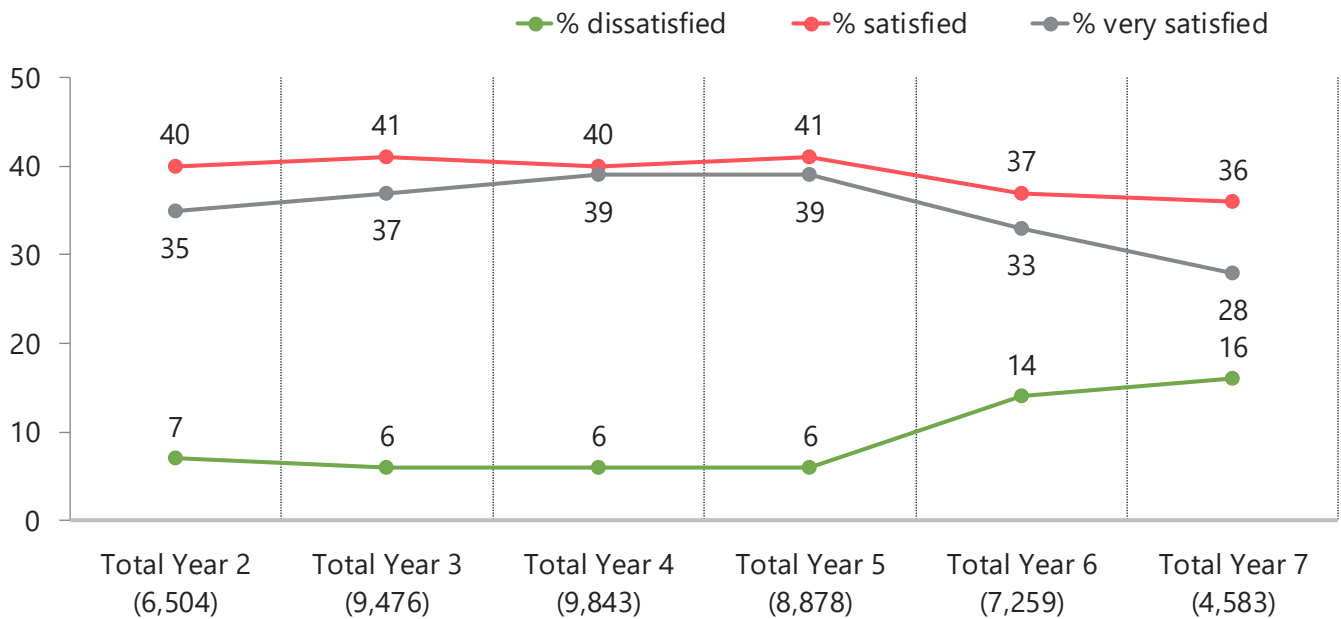
*"I want information about how to use computers and help to write a CV. She just told me to go home and get my daughter to help."*

**Figure 5.3: Main reasons for being dissatisfied with the Service**

Base: All dissatisfied customers (420)

### 5.2.2 Online customers

Overall satisfaction with the National Careers Service website has fallen over the last two years, from 80% in Year 5 to 70% in Year 6, and 64% in Year 7 (Figure 5.4). This can be linked to the redesign of the website which took place part of the way through Year 6; customers were much less positive after the website was redesigned. However, if this year's figures are compared with the period after the redesign of the website in Year 6, there is evidence of some improvement: in Year 6 after the redesign, 48% were either very satisfied or satisfied and 32% were dissatisfied, compared with 64% and 16% respectively in Year 7.

**Figure 5.4: Annual ratings of satisfaction and dissatisfaction**

Base: As shown in chart

Last year's report identified some large differences in satisfaction between different groups of online customers after the redesign of the website. These differences still apply, although they are less extreme in Year 7 than after the redesign in Year 6. In general, the groups that were the most critical after the redesign in Year 6 have become more muted in their dissatisfaction. Year 7 differences were as follows:

- Satisfaction decreased with age, from 79% of young people aged 19 or under to 51% of those aged 50 plus.
- In relation to employment status, satisfaction was higher among those in learning (79%) than those who were unemployed (63%) or in work (59%).
- Those with no qualifications or with qualifications below Level 2 were more likely to be satisfied than those qualified to Level 2 or above (70% compared with 63%).
- Customers who did not speak English as their first language were more satisfied than those who did have English as their first language (75% compared with 63%).
- There continued to be a large difference between customers in the general public (67% of whom were satisfied and 13% dissatisfied) and careers advisers (30% satisfied and 51% dissatisfied).

The reasons for dissatisfaction can be grouped into three broad areas, as set out below.

- The information on the website was seen as too general or lacking in detail.



*"It does not offer sufficient information - the course search is patchy, information in the job profiles is too basic. The A-Z of funding which was available in the old NCS website was very useful but now no longer available." (Careers Adviser)*

*"The information is generic and vague at best. The site search is not clearly marked. To actually get through to an adviser requires filling out a form that requires some very personal information, and then there is a long wait." (General Public)*

*"The website in its current state does not hold enough information, I did not feel encouraged - instead it is just a few pages of bland information. Also, the website does not have any features for people in my age group who are returning to the job market after being in one job of some time." (General Public)*

*"Everything is on the internet these days, so I expected a much more interactive website, in fact what happened to the old one? This one is depressing." (General Public)*

*"The Job profiles are so brief. They literally almost say nothing. Other sites have far more information." (General Public)*

- The visual design of the website continued to be compared negatively with the previous version.

*"The new design of the website is very poor. This is no longer a resource that would appeal to students. It is boring and uninspiring. I much preferred the old website that I was able to use with young people and was good at inspiring them into different careers." (Careers Adviser)*

*"I prefer the old website - it looked better, much more colourful, which in a way to me made it motivating, exciting to find out new information, look at different job roles, etc. It was also easy to chat online with an adviser when needed; now the website is rubbish, you can't speak to anyone and it looks depressing" (General Public)*

*"I find it unappealing. The lack of colour makes me want to leave quite quickly. It's cold, dull and clinical and I prefer the old look." (General Public)*

*"It is not engaging; the black and white design makes it appear dull and uninspiring." (General Public)*

- The website was seen as difficult to use, and there were comments about technical problems.

*"The whole site needs an up-date to be more user friendly for people with limited computer skills." (General Public)*

*"Trying to find relevant information in the pages I'd expect to find, and could not. This makes my job search harder and much more frustrating." (General Public)*

*"I cannot find what I need, I am a mature student who needs to apply for an advanced learner loan. I was directed by my college to a link that doesn't work, then to this site which again couldn't provide the form I require. I work and have limited time, I was hoping to complete the form tonight!" (General Public)*

*"Every time I clicked on what I was looking for it just said "Page not found". (General Public)*

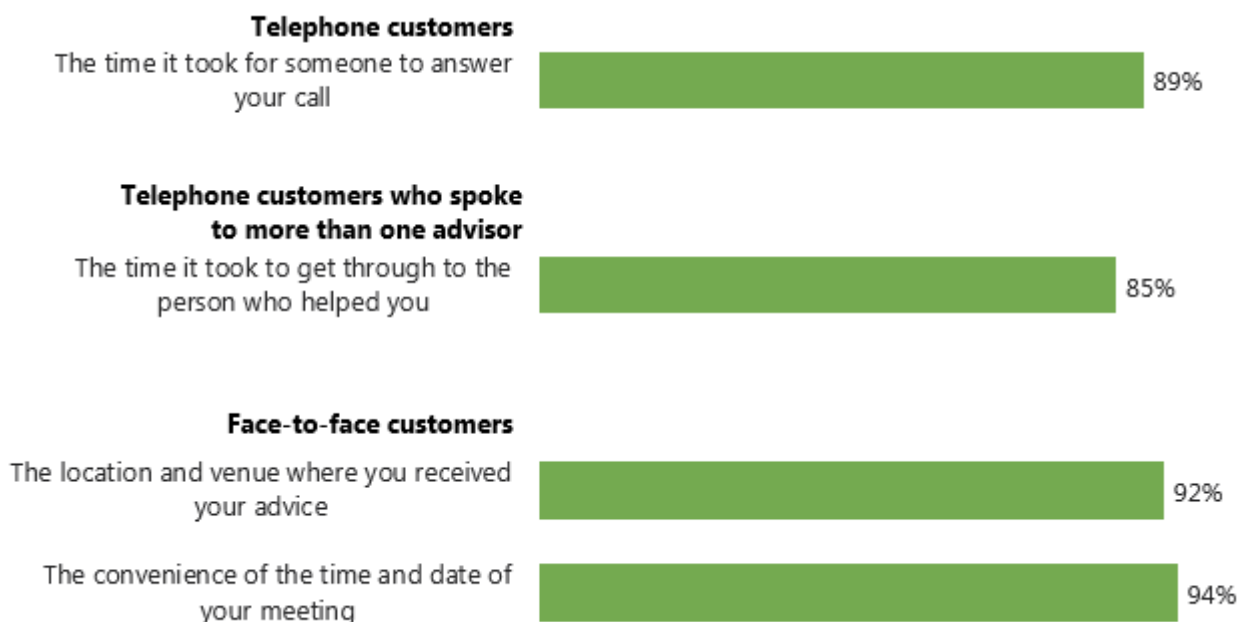
*"Because a fault with the service meant I could not even log in, giving an error message about the URL when I clicked on the "sign in" link." (General Public)*

*"Because opening an account, which the website recommends on the front page, was impossible today, like advertising a shop widely and then rudely turning all customers away." (General Public)*

### 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 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 (1,098); telephone customers who spoke to more than one advisor (123); all face-to-face customers (7,130)

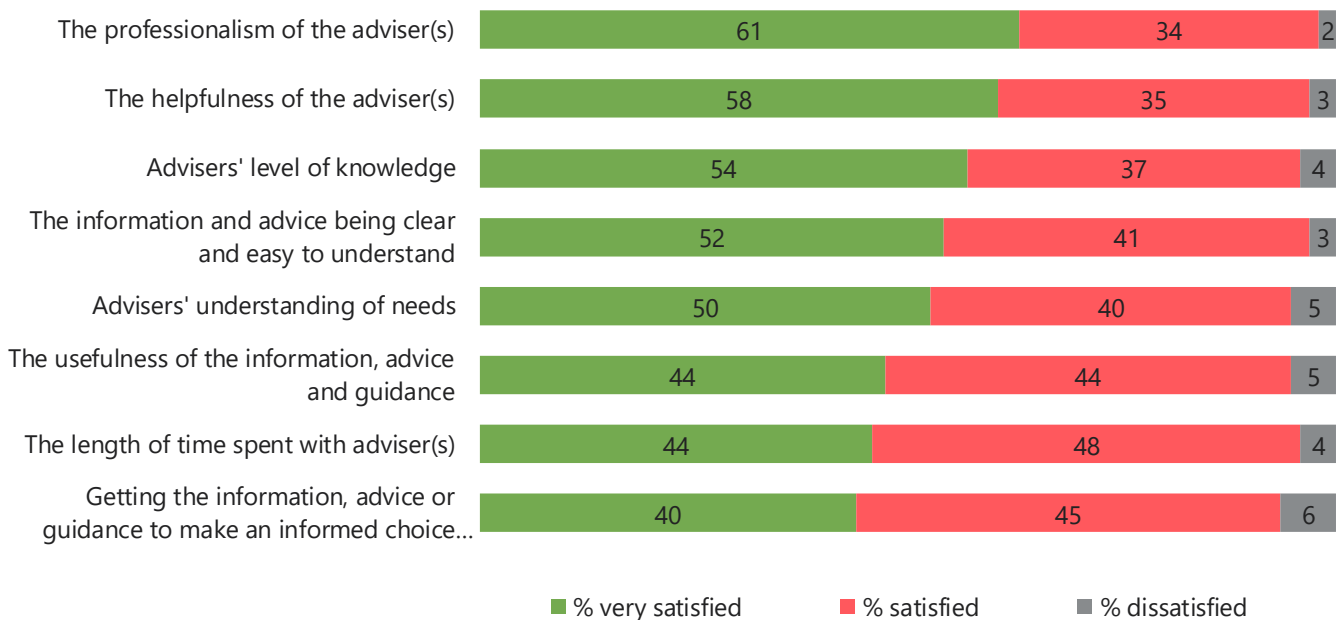
Around nine in ten telephone customers were satisfied with the time it took for someone to answer their call (89%). When telephone customers spoke with more than one adviser, 85% said they were satisfied with the time it took to get through to the person who helped them.

More than nine in ten face-to-face customers were satisfied with the convenience of their appointment time (94%) and with the location and venue where they received their advice (92%). These findings were consistent across customer groups, the only difference being that customers who were mandated to the service were less satisfied than other customers; for example, 82% of these customers were satisfied with the location, compared with 92% of customers overall.

Satisfaction with the logistical aspects of the services have remained at similar levels to those seen in previous years.

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 the various measures, around 90% of customers were satisfied, with over two-fifths very satisfied. The two areas that customers were particularly satisfied with were the professionalism and helpfulness of the advisers. This confirms the findings in section 5.2.1 on the reasons for overall satisfaction, which focused on positive impressions of advisers' helpfulness and ability to give good advice.

**Figure 5.6: Satisfaction with information and advice from the Service**



Base: All telephone and face-to-face customers (8,228)

Although satisfaction across all of the measures was consistently high (at around 90%), there were some variations between customer groups, as detailed below.

- Younger customers were slightly more satisfied than older customers on a number of measures. In particular, 18-24 year olds who were seeking benefits and/or who were NEET tended to be particularly positive; for example, in each of these groups 95% were satisfied with advisers' level of knowledge.
- Satisfaction was slightly lower on some measures among Non-white British customers and those who did not speak English as their first language; differences are most pronounced in relation to the proportions who were very satisfied. For instance, 61% of white British customers were very satisfied with the helpfulness of the adviser(s), compared with 51% of Non-white British customers; among those who did not speak English as their first language, 49% were very satisfied.
- Disabled customers were slightly less satisfied than non-disabled customers. When asked about the information, advice and guidance to make an informed choice about what to do next, disabled customers were less likely to be satisfied than non-disabled customers (82% compared with 86%).
- Customers who were mandated to the service were less satisfied than other customers. For example, 78% were satisfied with the usefulness of the information, advice and guidance, compared with 88% of customers overall.
- Customers who had a deeper level of engagement with the service overall were more likely to be satisfied with the various aspects of services. For example, among those who recalled using the Skills Health Check or agreeing an Action Plan, 97% were satisfied with the professionalism of the adviser(s).
- Satisfaction levels were consistent across contact channels, although face-to-face customers were more likely than telephone customers to be satisfied with advisers' level of knowledge (92% compared with 88%). On other measures, telephone information customers were more likely than other customers to be very satisfied; for example, 58% were very satisfied with the information and advice being clear and easy to understand (compared with 52% overall).

Among face-to-face customers, satisfaction was slightly higher if they had multiple meetings and saw the same adviser each time; for example, 96% were satisfied with the adviser's level of knowledge, compared with 91% of those who saw different advisers or who had only one meeting. Similarly, satisfaction was higher among telephone customers who spoke with the same adviser across multiple contacts, rather than speaking to different advisers; for example, 94% of customers who spoke to the same adviser were satisfied that the adviser understood their needs, compared with 81% of those who spoke to different advisers.

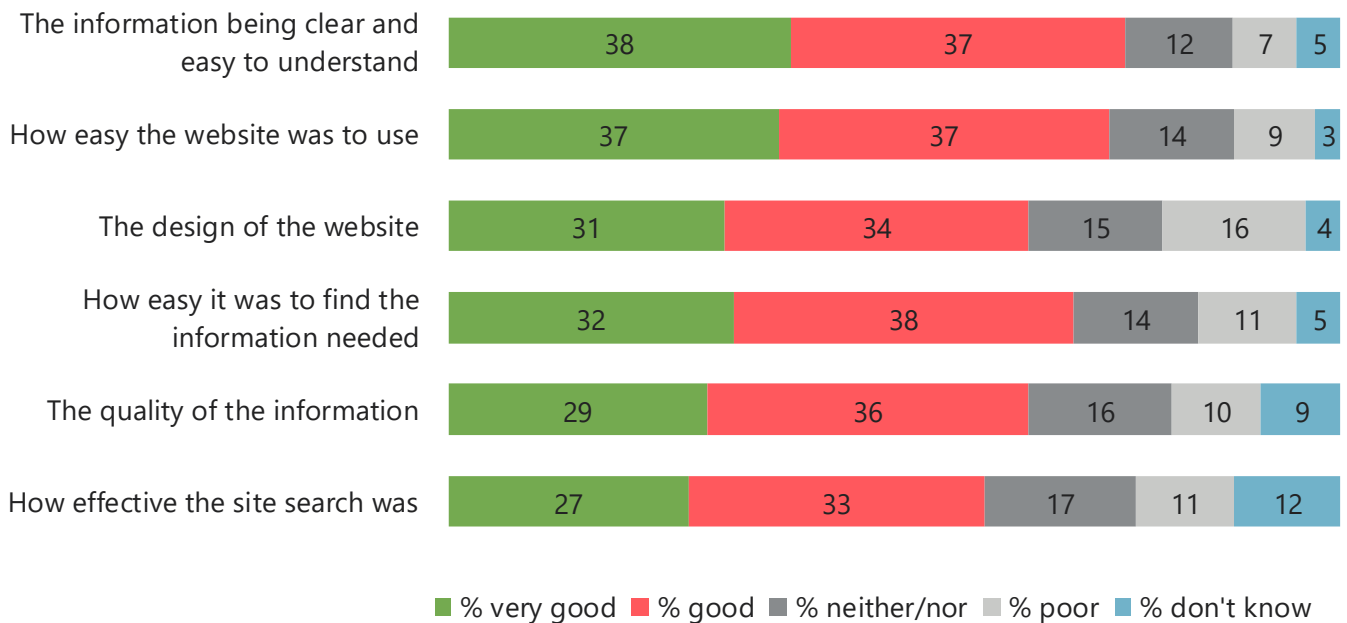
Levels of satisfaction have remained consistently high between Year 6 and Year 7, with no changes in satisfaction levels. Variations between customer groups are also similar to those seen in the previous wave.

## 5.4 Satisfaction with the different aspects of the website

Visitors to the National Careers Service website were asked to rate a number of different features of the website, on a scale from very good to very poor. Around two thirds or three-quarters of customers rated the individual aspects of the website as good or very good. Customers were most positive towards information being clear and easy to understand (75% rated this as good or very good) and the website being easy to use (74% good or very good). Customers were least positive in relation to the effectiveness of the site search (60%).

Customer ratings in Year 7 were slightly less positive than in Year 6, but showed a clear improvement from the ratings seen in 2016, after the redesign of the website. This pattern applied to all the individual aspects covered and suggests that customer perceptions are improving again after the initial criticism of the redesigned website. For example, 65% of customers said that the design of the website was good or very good in Year 7, which was lower than the figure for Year 6 as a whole (71%) but considerably higher than the figure for Year 6 after the redesign (49%). Looking across the six individual aspects of the website, the proportion of good or very good ratings fell by between three and six percentage points compared with Year 6 as a whole, but increased by between 8 and 16 points compared in Year 6 after the redesign.

**Figure 5.7: Ratings on various aspects of the website**



Base: All online satisfaction survey customers (4,583)

Careers advisers were less positive than general public customers about the various aspects of the website, the largest difference being in relation to the design of the website (19% of careers advisers rated this as good or very good, compared with 69% of general public customers).

Ratings were more positive from younger customers. For example, when rating the quality of the information, 77% of those aged 19 or under rated it as good or very good, falling to 53% of customers aged 50 plus. Related to this, ratings were more positive among customers who were in learning, compared with those in work or unemployed. For instance, 83% of those in learning said that the website was good or very good in terms of ease of use, compared with 74% of unemployed customers and 71% of those in work.

Ratings were also more positive among:

- Customers whose first language was not English: when rating the design of the website, 76% of those who spoke English as a second language rated this as good or very good, compared with 64% of those who spoke English as their first language.

- Customers with no qualifications or with qualifications below Level 2: 70% of these customers rated the website as good or very good in terms of the effectiveness of the site search, compared with 59% of those with Level 2 qualifications or above, and 52% of those qualified to Level 4 or above.

## 5.5 Recommending the National Careers Service

### 5.5.1 Face-to-face and telephone customers

Just under one quarter of face-to-face or telephone customers said they had already recommended the National Careers Service to someone else (23%), slightly lower than in Year 6 (26%). Of the remainder, the majority said that they would recommend the Service (84%). In total, this means that almost nine in ten customers either had recommended the Service or said that they would recommend it (87%). This is in line with previous years.

Customers aged 50 plus were less likely than younger customers to have recommended the National Careers Service or to say that they would recommend it (84%, compared with 18-24 year olds, 90%). Unemployed customers were less likely than those in work or learning to say that they had recommended or would recommend it (87% compared with 91% in learning and 90% in work); those in learning were particularly likely to say that they had already recommended it (34%). The proportion that said they had recommended or would recommend the Service was also lower among those who were mandated to the Service (73%).

Customers were more likely to have already recommended the Service if they did not speak English as their first language (38%) or were from a non-white British ethnic group (31% compared with 19% of white British customers). ASIST customers were also more likely than average to have already recommended the Service (35%).

The proportion of customers that either had recommended or would recommend the Service was higher among those who had engaged most with National Careers Service tools such as the Action Plan and the Skills Health Check (91% in each case).

Telephone customers were slightly more likely than face-to-face customers to say that they either had recommended or would recommend the Service (90% compared with 87%).

### 5.5.2 Online customers

Seven in ten customers said they would recommend the National Careers Service website to friends, family or colleagues (71%), while 11% said they would not recommend it and 17% were unsure. As on other issues, responses were slightly less positive than for Year 6 as a whole (when 76% said they would recommend the website), but more positive than the period after the website redesign in Year 6 (6%).

Careers advisers were less likely to say they would recommend the website (50% compared with 73% of general public customers). Customers were more likely to say they would recommend the website if they were younger (83% of those aged 19 or under), in learning (83%), with no qualifications or qualifications below Level 2 (77%) or if they did not speak English as their first language (82%).

## 5.6 Improvements to the National Careers Service

### 5.6.1 Face-to-face and telephone customers

Around three-fifths of face-to-face and telephone customers could not think of any improvements that the National Careers Service needed to make (61%). Suggestions for improvement focused on more tailored help, more follow-up and more publicity (Table 5.1). The findings are very similar to those seen in Year 6.

Younger customers aged 18-19 were most likely to be happy with the service and suggest no improvements (69%). Customers aged 25 or over were most likely to say that more tailored help was required (10%) and that the Service should be publicised more (6%).

**Table 5.1: 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+
<b>Base:</b>	8,228	488	1,223	3,964	2,553
<b>No improvements/fine as it is</b>	61%	69%	66%	59%	61%
<b>More tailored help</b>	9%	7%	7%	10%	10%
<b>More follow up</b>	6%	4%	6%	7%	6%
<b>Publicise it more</b>	6%	3%	4%	6%	6%
<b>More knowledgeable advisers</b>	4%	4%	4%	5%	4%
<b>Listen more/communicate better</b>	4%	5%	3%	4%	4%
<b>Offer more help/information on training</b>	4%	4%	2%	4%	4%

Customers were more likely to make at least one suggestion for improvement if they spoke English as a second language or if they were from a non-white British ethnic group. For example, both of these customer groups were more likely than average to suggest more tailored help (11% and 12% respectively). Customers were also more likely to make at least one suggestion if they had Level 4 qualifications or higher; this included 15% who suggested more tailored help. By contrast, the majority of those qualified to below Level 2 had no improvements to suggest (73%).

Suggestions for improvement were linked to the service channel the customers used. Telephone information customers were more likely than other customers to feel the service should be publicised more (8% compared with 6% of telephone advice and 5% of face-to-face customers). Telephone advice customers were more likely than other customers to suggest more tailored help (14%) and more knowledgeable advisers (9%). Overall, telephone advice customers were the most likely to make at least one suggestion for improvement.

## 5.6.2 Online customers

Website visitors were asked how the website could be improved. Comments were wider-ranging, but can be grouped into several main areas of suggested improvements, as outlined below.

- In last year's survey, following the redesign of the website, many customers commented on the design of the new website, which was seen as bland and uninviting compared with the previous version. These comments continued into Year 7.

*"Make it more user friendly and appealing to young people. Please look at the Careers Wales website, this is fantastic". (Careers Adviser)*

*"It needs to be colourful, it's too dull and boring." (General Public)*

*"Would be nice to have more images, [it's] very text rich, looks very formal and not friendly." (Careers Adviser)*

*"The look and feel of it - it appears quite dull - needs a bit of a spruce up/to look more attractive/appealing - maybe a brighter colour scheme and/or more modern look." (General Public)*

- Some customers wanted more detailed information about jobs, careers and courses.

*"Add more information about different courses, especially on apprenticeships." (General Public)*

*"Depth of information. While the info on the page is always clear and easy to understand, it often is very bare bones. However, I do like the fact that I can get follow up info from an adviser." (General Public)*

*"On the pages about the specific jobs, have more information about how to become qualified for it - such as examples for degrees to take or what level of apprenticeship would be best for the job." (General Public)*

*"Just more detailed information - it's hard for someone who really knows nothing and is using the site as a total starting point to fill in any gaps. For example, I was looking for info on what steps to take to become a reception teacher, but I could only find sections on primary or early years teaching, which did not include any mention of reception. I think that perhaps the qualification for a reception teacher is the same as a nursery or early years' teacher, but this is not specified in any way. And given that a reception teacher is a very different job [than] for higher aged pupils I couldn't take the risk of just filling in the gap myself..." (General Public)*

*"How to get a job in that career. The entry requirements on the job profile for Clinical Psychologist/Psychotherapist are very helpful but doesn't provide enough information to know how to actually get a job in those areas." (General Public)*

- There were requests for more tailored information to be made available for people in particular circumstances.



*"Add more information for people returning to work after a prolonged period of time at home raising a family. How can they get back to work if they are planning a career change? Most jobs require relevant experience, how can you overcome this obstacle?" (General Public)*

*"Add in a section for disabled job seeker. For example, an area offering advice for job searching or any other key aspect - interview advice/disclosing a disability, schemes available, Access to Work etc." (General Public)*

*"Perhaps a more defined area for those older people (i.e. not school leaver age) or returning to work after a career break, and advice on this and retraining and any funding you might be entitled to." (General Public)*

*"More help for older people trying to get back into work." (General Public)*

- Some customers had comments about the search facilities on the website.

*"Improve site search. Make the site look more interesting. It is very utilitarian and does not encourage exploration." (Careers Adviser)*

*"I was trying to look for 'Marine Biology' and I found it confusing that it was under 'Biologist'. It would be better if specific careers had their separate spaces of information, so salary and requirements for that specific career choice is available. Because this makes everything so confusing as I am not getting the very specific info I need that can make me change what specific path I want to go down. Otherwise a wonderful website, good work!" (General Public)*

*"When searching for certain terms, the search engine also looks for similar words and makes it too vague (e.g. will also find 'programme' when searching for 'programming'). Changing/removing this feature would make the course/job search more accurate." (General Public)*

- There were comments that focused on the Skills Health Check.

*"Skills Health Check: The current questionnaire and system no doubt serves very well for the purpose required. However, personally, it would be helpful if perhaps there was a detailed skills assessment; giving guidance on current skills situation and future basic requirements, perhaps for a specific job/role, perhaps linked to training recommendations for any gaps or deficiencies." (General Public)*

*"The questions asked in the job skills are quite obscure! I often found it hard to answer a question as none of the options applied, and yet I had to choose one." (General Public)*

*"The Skills Health Check is very lengthy and could be arranged into shorter questions." (General Public)*

*"So far I've only used the Skills Health Check (not yet 100% completed) and my observations are that some of the questions are out of date and a few others confusing, and I've found one I considered to be incorrect. Otherwise the experience has been positive so far." (General Public)*

- There were also comments on technical difficulties that customers had experienced.

*"Loading times! The page re-loads in total every time one clicks on a link. This particularly slows down the skills test. Consider updating it to allow loading of only parts of the page." (General Public)*

*"Difficulty downloading graphics on a couple of Skills Health Check questionnaires." (General Public)*

*"Site crashes/doesn't load when filtering search or trying to navigate to the next page of search results." (General Public)*

*"[Suggestion is] that everything was available, e.g. courses and CV come up as 'not available at this time' when selected." (General Public)*

## 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 54% across the year, the same as in Year 6. Face-to-face customers were much more likely to have progressed into new employment (36% compared with 25% of telephone 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 7, in line with Year 6. 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 and 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.**

**Nine in ten face-to-face and telephone customers reported developing career management skills during the six months since their contact with the National Careers Service. This was highest among 18-24 year olds and customers who did not speak English as their first language.**

**The vast majority of website visitors who completed the online progression survey had achieved some form of progression three months after their visit (86%). This was most commonly learning progression (66%) although more than one third had made progress in employment, either getting or improving a job (37%).**

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.

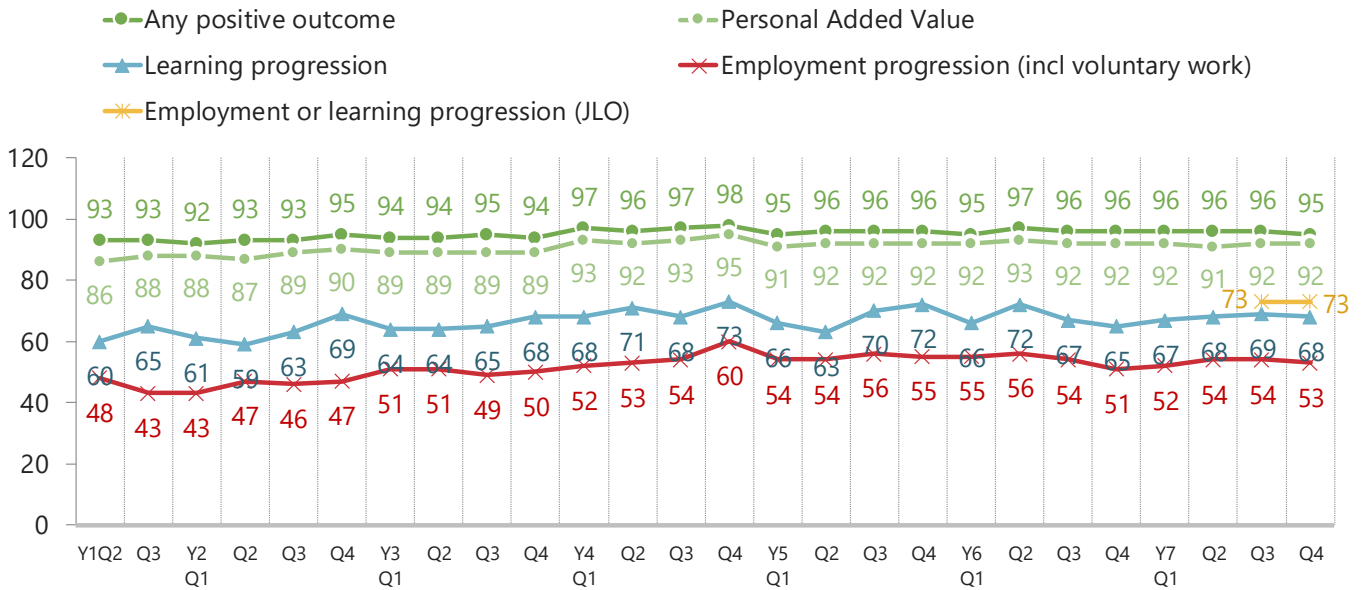
**3. Personal Added Value** – whether customers have achieved one or more of a range of 'softer' outcomes such as improved work-related or more personal skills (IT skills, team working skills etc.), improved their self-confidence, increased ability to make decisions for the future regarding work or learning, increased job satisfaction, or achieving a new and/or higher level qualification.

Customers who reported any of the three types of progression were asked about the extent to which advice from the National Careers Service played a role in 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 7 as a whole, the annual figures for the three types of progression were similar to those seen in Year 6: 68% for learning progression, 54% for employment progression and 92% for Personal Added Value.

In addition, Figure 6.1 shows figures for the proportion of customers who have experienced Employment or Learning progression; this analysis is limited to the two most recent quarters of the survey (Year 7 Q3 and Q4, 2017).

**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)

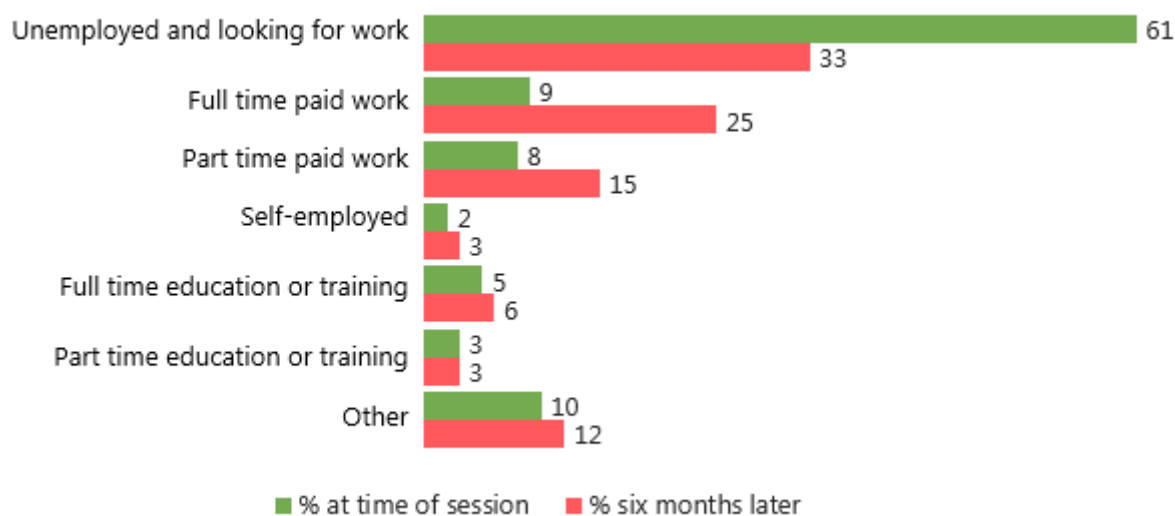
## 6.2 Employment progression among face-to-face and telephone customers

### 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 (61%), in line with last year (60%). One in five customers were in work (20%), with the remainder in learning (8%) or doing something else (10%) 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 6.

**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 (6,438)

There were large increases in employment among the different customer groups (Table 6.1). For example, three times as many customers aged 50 plus were in work after six months than at the time of their adviser session. Among customers with no or low qualifications below Level 2, there was a similar level of movement into work.

There were substantial moves into employment (42%) and education (8%) among 18-24 year olds who were NEET at the time of their initial interaction with the service. More than half of customers who were facing redundancy or had recently been made redundant were in work after six months (55%), compared with just 15% at the time of their adviser session.

Disabled customers also showed positive movement (though not to the same extent as other customers). Six months after their adviser session, 30% of disabled customers were in work or learning (up from 15% at the time of their session). This compares with an increase from 32% to 62% among non-disabled customers.

Looking more closely at customers who were unemployed at the time of their adviser session, just under half of these customers moved into either work (39%) or learning (5%) six months later, while 46% remained unemployed. There was a clear difference in relation to unemployment duration: those who had been unemployed for less than six months were much more likely to move into work or learning (73%) than those who had been unemployed for more than six months (29%).

Employment progression has remained relatively stable when compared to the previous year across the key customer groups. The only group however to stand out is those who are 18-19 years old. This group has seen a less substantial move away from unemployment to employment or education when compared to Year 6 (due to fewer being unemployed at the time of their initial adviser session).

Table 6.1: Changes in employment status among key customer groups

Customer group		Year 7			Year 6		
		Status at point of contact with National Careers Service	Status 6 months after contact	Change (ppts) <sup>6</sup>	Status at point of contact with National Careers Service	Status 6 months after contact	Change (ppts) <sup>6</sup>
<b>18-19 year olds (331)</b>	Unemployed	53%	29%	-24	65%	31%	-34
	In work	17%	42%	+25	10%	40%	+30
	In education	26%	21%	-5	21%	23%	+2
<b>20-24 year olds (908)</b>	Unemployed	59%	30%	-30	53%	25%	-28
	In work	22%	48%	+26	25%	48%	+23
	In education	13%	15%	+2	16%	20%	+4
<b>Aged 50 plus (2,047)</b>	Unemployed	70%	40%	-30	71%	39%	-32
	In work	12%	36%	+24	14%	37%	+23
	In education	2%	3%	+1	2%	5%	+2
<b>Disabled (2,002)</b>	Unemployed	61%	40%	-21	62%	39%	-24
	In work	10%	23%	+13	12%	24%	+12
	In education	5%	7%	+2	4%	8%	+4
<b>Below Level 2 quals (1,947)</b>	Unemployed	65%	40%	-25	70%	42%	-28
	In work	13%	34%	+21	12%	33%	+21
	In education	6%	6%	-	4%	5%	+2
<b>Long-term unemployed (6 months+)<sup>7</sup></b>	Unemployed	72%	50%	-22%	-	-	-
	In work	4%	21%	+17%	-	-	-
	In education	3%	8%	+5%	-	-	-
<b>18-24 NEET</b>	Unemployed	91%	40%	-51%	92%	39%	-52%
	In work	0%	42%	+42%	0%	44%	+44%
	In education	0%	8%	+8%	0%	9%	+9%

<sup>6</sup> Where percentage point changes do not appear to match the given status figures, this is due to the rounding of the two status figures.

<sup>7</sup> Data for this customer group is not available for Year 6

		Year 7			Year 6		
<b>Recently made redundant/facing redundancy</b>	Unemployed	78%	32%	-46%	78%	30%	-48%
	In work	15%	55%	+40%	17%	55%	+38%
	In education	3%	4%	+2%	2%	5%	+4%

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

- Among face-to-face customers, the proportion who were unemployed and seeking work almost halved over the six-month period, from 69% to 37%. There was a corresponding increase in the proportion in work (including self-employment), up from 14% at the time of their session to 41% six months later.
- Telephone information customers were more likely to be in work (43%) or learning (21%) at the time of their first interaction with the National Careers Service, and less likely to be unemployed (27%). Six months on, the proportion in work had increased to 53%, while the proportion who were unemployed had dropped to 14%.
- More than half of telephone advice customers were in work six months after their first interaction (54%), increasing from 36%. There was a corresponding fall in the proportion that was unemployed, from 50% to 29%.

## 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. More than half said they were (55%), whereas a quarter were doing a different job in a new organisation (24%). Fewer were doing the same type of job with a new employer (12%) or working for the same organisation in a different job (7%). These figures are in line with Year 6.

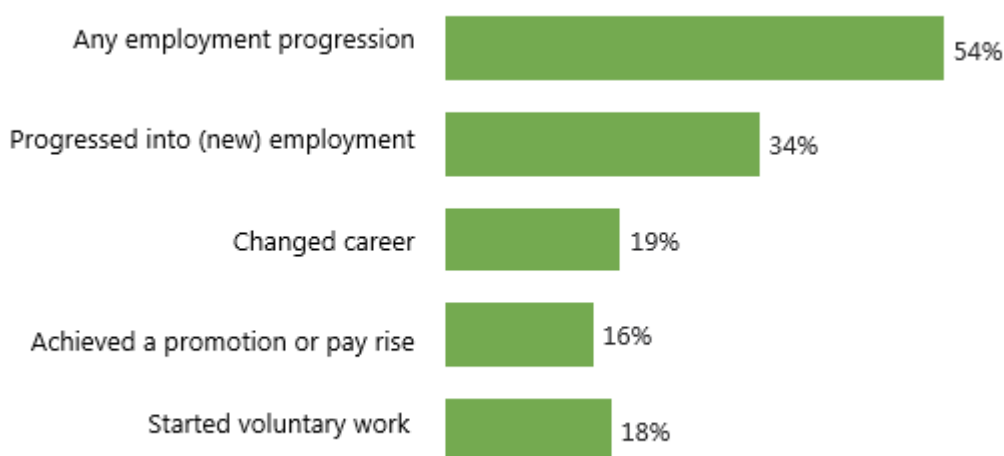
## 6.2.3 Employment progression among face-to-face and telephone customers

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.

One third of face-to-face or telephone customers had progressed into new employment in those six months (34%), either from having been out of work, or moving into a new job, in line with last year. Around one in five had a career change (19%) or took up voluntary work (18%), while one in six had achieved a promotion or pay increase (16%). The overall proportion that experienced any employment progression was the same as in Year 6 (54%).





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

Base: All progression survey customers (6,438)

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

- Those with higher qualifications: 57% of those qualified to Level 2 or above, compared with 46% of those with no qualification or with qualifications below Level 2. Specifically, those qualified to Level 2 or above were more likely to have moved into new employment (36% compared with 30%) or had a promotion of pay rise (18% compared with 11%).
- Young people aged 18-24 who were NEET at the time of the initial contact: 62%, including 49% who moved into new employment.
- People who were unemployed at the point they first had contact with the service (59%), although this was much higher among those who had been unemployed for less than six months (76%) than for more than six months (42%).
- Customers who had been made redundant or were facing redundancy (64%), including 50% who had moved into new employment.

Customers aged 50 plus were less likely than younger customers to have experienced employment progression of any kind (48%), and in particular people in this age group were less likely to have had a promotion or pay rise (9%). Young people aged 18-24 were most likely to have moved into new employment (38%).

Disabled customers were less likely than non-disabled customers to have seen any employment progression (41% compared with 59%). Specifically, they were less likely to have progressed into new employment (21% compared with 40%), to have had a career change (11% compared with 23%) or had a promotion or pay rise (8% compared with 19%). They were more likely, however, to have started voluntary work (21% compared with 17%).

There was no difference by channel in relation to overall employment progression. However, face-to-face customers were more likely to have progressed into new employment than telephone customers (36% compared

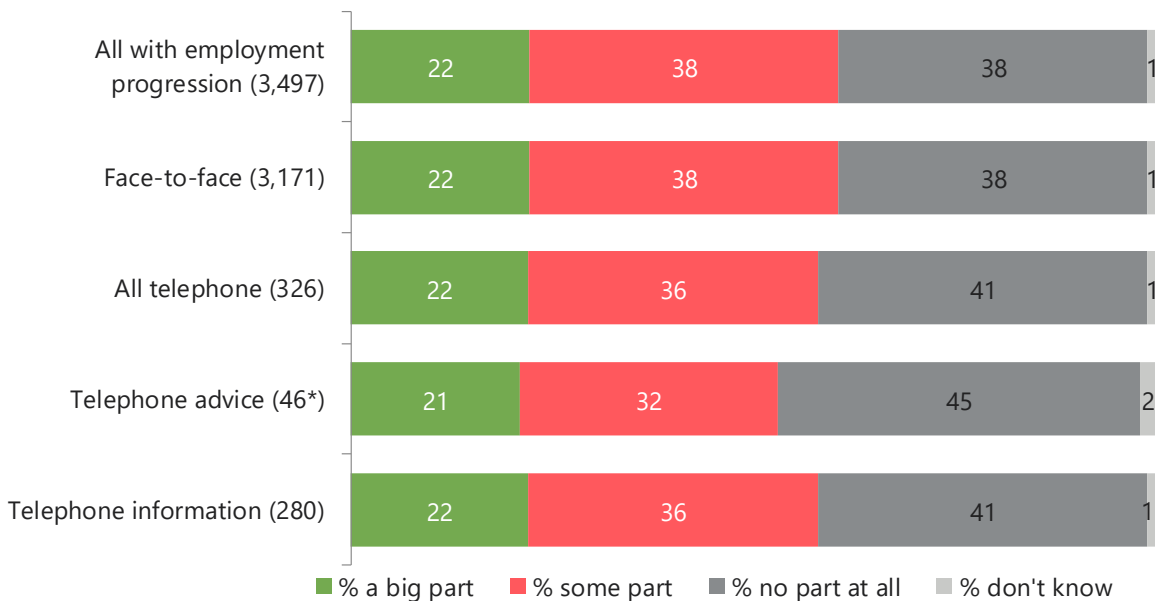
with 25%). To a large extent, this reflects the differences in their employment status at the time they first had contact with the service six months previously, when face-to-face customers were less likely to be already in work.

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 (24% compared with 14% of face-to-face customers and 16% of telephone advice customers).

#### 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. Three in five agreed the adviser had an impact (60%), including one in five who said the adviser played 'a big part' in their employment progression (22%). These figures are in line with Year 6. Findings were consistent by contact channel, as shown in Figure 6.4.

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



Bases: Those with employment progression (see chart)

\*Small base means that results must be considered indicative only

Those aged 18-24 were particularly likely to consider their adviser had played at least some role in their employment progression (66%), while those aged 50 plus were less likely to say this (54%). Disabled customers were less likely than other customers to say the adviser had played at least some part (56%), as were those who had either recently been made redundant or were facing redundancy (55%). These findings are related, as disabled customers and those experiencing or facing redundancy tend to have an older age profile.

### 6.2.5 Positive changes at work

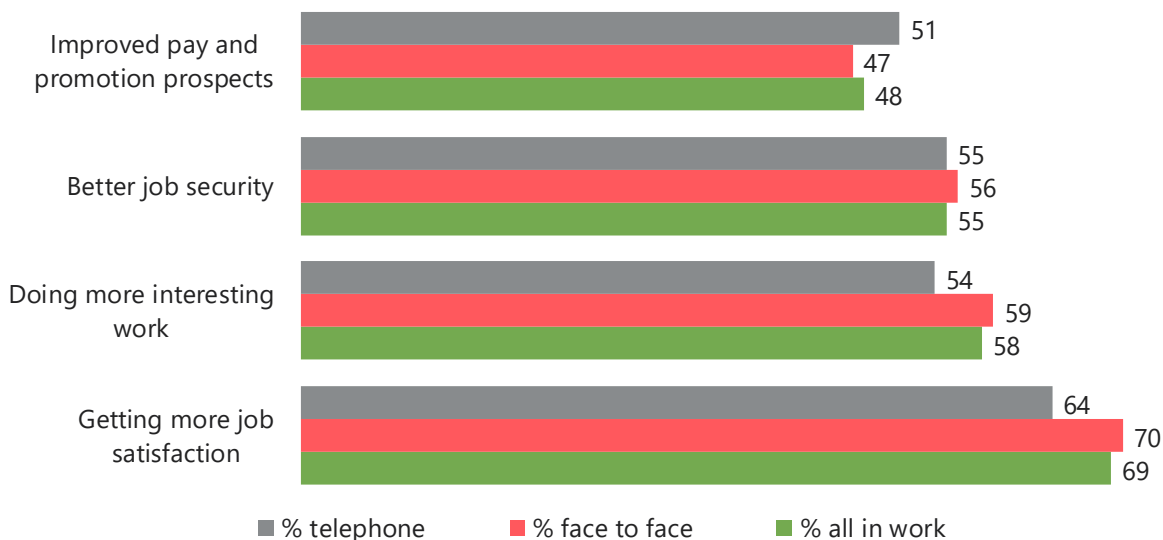
Customers who were in work when interviewed were asked about a range of other benefits they may have experienced in their job or career in the six months following their interaction with the National Careers Service. Young people aged 18-24 were consistently more likely to cite any of these positive changes at work. For example, 73% of 18-24 year olds now said they had more job security, 80% said they were getting more job satisfaction and 68% said they were doing more interesting work. Young people aged 18-24 who were NEET were particularly likely to cite the positive changes; for example, 85% of these customers said that their job satisfaction had increased.

Disabled customers were less likely than non-disabled customers to say they had experienced these positive changes; for example, 49% of disabled customers were doing more interesting work, compared with 60% of non-disabled customers.

Customers who were more highly qualified were more likely to cite some of the changes, compared with less highly qualified customers. Specifically, 52% of those qualified to Level 2 or above said that their pay or promotion prospects had improved, compared with 40% of those with no qualifications or with qualifications below Level 2. In addition, 60% of those qualified to Level 2 or above said they were doing more interesting work, compared with 54% of those with no qualifications or with qualifications below Level 2.

The results by channel are shown in Figure 6.5 and were similar to Year 6. Face-to-face customers were more likely than telephone customers to say that they were doing more interesting work and getting more job satisfaction.

**Figure 6.5: Positive changes at work**



Base: All customers in work at time of progression survey (2,779)

Three in five 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 (61%). This was more common among face-to-face customers (62%) than among telephone customers (57%). The findings varied by age group,

with young people aged 18-19 the most likely to say that the adviser played a part in positive changes at work (71%).

### 6.2.6 Moving into work

More than a quarter of all customers had been unemployed at the time of their interaction with the service but were in work six months later (28%), in line with previous years. The majority of these customer 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 (58%); this included 22% who felt it had played a big part (similar to Year 6). Once again, younger customers were more likely to acknowledge the support they had received as having had an impact: 62% of 18-24 year olds and 64% of 25-34 year olds, compared with 55% of 35-49 year olds and 51% of those aged 50 plus.

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

Learning progression is in line with last year at 68%. This figure has remained constant since Year 5, following increases from 63% in Year 2 to 65% in Year 3 and to 70% in Year 4, before dropping to 68% in Year 5.

Customers had taken part in various types of training or learning, most commonly learning that was not part of a formal, taught course (40%). In total, four per cent of customers had started on an Apprenticeship since their initial contact with the National Careers Service, and this figure was particularly high among 18-19 year olds (16%).

Certain customer groups were much more likely to have done any learning or training (Table 6.2), in particular, 18-24 year olds, people who already had qualifications at Level 2 or above, and customers who were not white British. Learning was consistently lower among customers who were aged 50 or above, who had a disability, or who had qualifications below Level 2. The same patterns were observed in Year 6. 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.

**Table 6.2: Forms of learning/training undertaken since the call/meeting with National Careers Service, among key customer groups<sup>8</sup>**

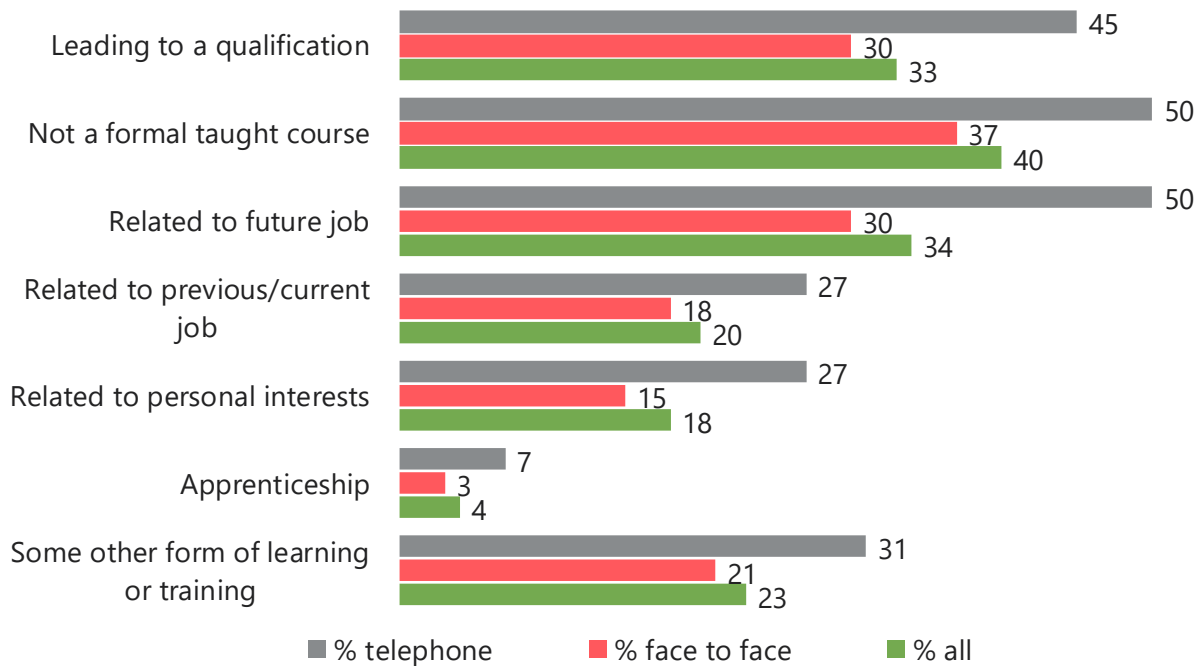
	Base	Leading to a qualification	Related to previous / current job	Related to a future job	Related to personal interests	Not a formal taught course	Apprenticeship	Some other form of learning or training
<b>Overall</b>	6,438	33%	20%	34%	18%	40%	4%	23%
<b>18-24 NEET</b>	875	35%	19%	34%	18%	<b>43%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>27%</b>
<b>18-19 year olds</b>	331	36%	17%	39%	18%	45%	<b>16%</b>	<b>31%</b>
<b>20-24 year olds</b>	908	<b>38%</b>	20%	<b>38%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>29%</b>
<b>25-49 year olds</b>	3,152	<b>34%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>19%</b>	40%	<b>2%</b>	23%
<b>Aged 50 plus</b>	2,047	<b>27%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>19%</b>
<b>Disabled</b>	2,002	<b>31%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>30%</b>	17%	39%	<b>2%</b>	<b>16%</b>
<b>Below Level 2 quals</b>	1,947	<b>27%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>Not white British</b>	1,909	<b>36%</b>	20%	<b>39%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>21%</b>

Like last year, learning progression was higher among telephone than among face-to-face customers, related to the reasons that 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-face customers, in particular learning related to a future job.

Almost six in ten customers who had identified more than one type of learning at this question reported these were all part of the same course or training (58%).

<sup>8</sup> Highlighted figures are statistically significantly different to the average

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



Base: All progression survey customers (6,438)

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

- *To progress in a current job or career (90%).* This was more common among non-white British customers and less common among customers aged 50 plus and disabled customers.
- *To develop or improve job-related skills (85%).* This motivation was stronger than average among Black/Black British customers, and again was less common among customers aged 50 plus and disabled customers.
- *To help get a job or change job (82%).* This was more common among non-white British customers, as well as customers with no qualifications or with qualifications below Level 2.
- *To obtain a qualification (73%).* This was more common among telephone customers (80%) than among face-to-face customers (70%). Non-white British customers and those whose first language was not English were also more likely than average to be motivated by getting a qualification, as were those with no qualifications or with qualifications below Level 2.

Among customers who had done any learning or training in the intervening six months, more than two in five had completed it (43%), while eight per cent left the course early and 47% were still doing it at the time they were surveyed. The majority were satisfied with the course they were doing (85%).

Among those who had studied towards a qualification, NVQ Level 2 was the most common qualification being taken (12%). Customers were also taking degree-level (Level 4) qualifications (6%) and postgraduate level qualifications such as a Master's degree, MBA or NVQ Level 5 (5%).

In total, eight per cent of National Careers Service customers gained a higher qualification than the one they had when they last had contact with the service – a similar proportion to last year (9%).

In Year 7, 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 (61%), with one in four saying that the adviser played a big part (26%). Those aged 18-19 were most likely to say this (71%), and this view was also more prevalent among non-white British customers (66%) and those who speak English as a second language (68%). Customers with no qualifications or with qualifications below Level 2 were also more likely to consider the adviser played a part in their learning progression (70% vs 58% of those with Level 2 or higher qualifications).

Around six in ten 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 (59%). This was more common among 18-19 year olds (69%), Non-white British customers (63%) and customers who do not speak English as a first language (65%).

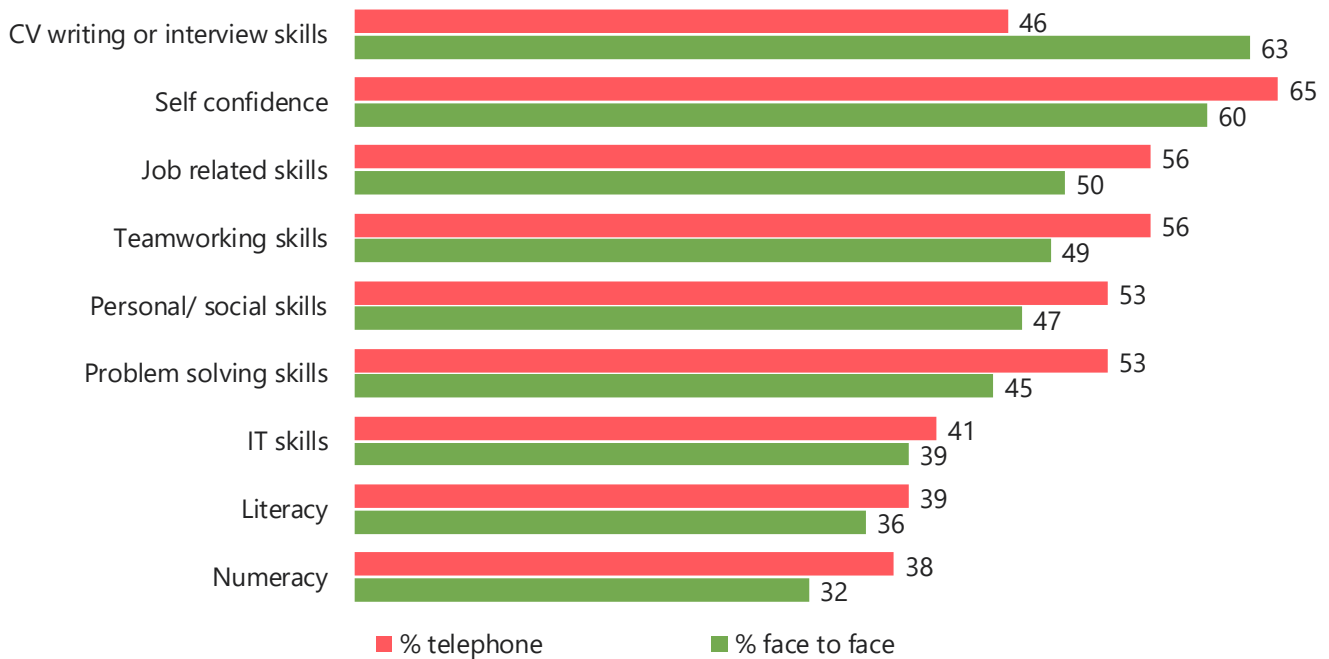
#### 6.4 Personal Added Value among face-to-face and telephone customers

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 and 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 increased self-confidence (61%), improvements in CV writing or interview skills (59%), developing skills related to a current or future job (51%) and team working skills (51%) – all in line with Year 6.

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. For example, 70% of 18-19 year olds and 65% of 20-24 year olds reported improved team working skills, while 75% and 72% respectively reported increased self-confidence. Customers who were not white British (in particular those who were Black/Black British or Asian/Asian British) were consistently more likely than average to report any personal development outcomes, as were customers whose first language was not English.

Figure 6.7 shows that there were consistent differences between customers who used different channels, with telephone customers more likely to report developing most of the skills listed. The exception was CV or interview skills, which face-to-face customers were more likely to say they had improved. These differences are linked to the differing profiles of face-to-face and telephone service users.



**Figure 6.7: Skills and personal development outcomes**

Base: All progression survey customers (6,438)

Among customers who reported gaining Personal Added Value since their contact with the National Careers Service six months before, seven in ten (71%) said that the adviser played at least some part in this, including 23% who said that the adviser played a big part. Young people aged 18-24, particularly those aged 18-24 and NEET, were most likely to say that these outcomes were at least partly the result of their adviser (74% and 76% respectively). Consistent with previous years and with other progression measures, face-to-face customers were more likely than telephone customers to attribute some of this role to their adviser (73% compared with 61%).

## 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. For example, among those who completed the progression survey, one in five had face-to-face contact (20%) and one in eight had telephone contact with an adviser after they had used the website (12%).

The vast majority of all website visitors who completed the survey had achieved some form of progression three months on from their visit (86%). This was most commonly learning progression (66%) although just over one third had made progress in employment (37%), either getting or improving a job. The figure for learning progression is in line with Year 6, although employment progression was lower in Year 7 than in Year 6 (37% compared with 49%).

### 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):

- 16% had progressed into new employment.
- 14% had changed career.
- 7% had achieved a promotion or pay increase.
- 20% had started voluntary work.

Some of these figures are lower than in Year 6: progression into new employment (down from 23% to 16%) and starting voluntary work (down from 27% to 20%).

Two in five customers who progressed in employment reported that the National Careers Service website had helped them to achieve this (40%), equivalent to 15% of all online customers who took part in the progression survey. Again, this is lower than the corresponding figure for Year 6 (25% all online customers).

### 6.5.2 Learning progression among website users

The most common type of learning or training started by online customers since visiting the website remains the same as Year 6; self-teaching to try and improve knowledge or skills without taking part in a formal course (46%). Again, as in Year 6, significant minorities had undertaken a course leading to a qualification (27%), course work that they completed in their own time, other than homework (26%), a course, instruction or tuition related to their interests, hobbies or personal development (23%), or some other type of learning or training (33%)<sup>9</sup>. Overall, four per cent of customers who had visited the website had increased their highest qualification in the three months since they had used the website.

Among customers who had started any learning since visiting the website, around half (48%) said that their decision was influenced by their visit to the website.

More than half of online customers felt that they were more likely to do learning in the future as a result of their visit to the website (57%), and three-quarters felt that they would be likely to start learning in the next 12 months (76%), including 47% who felt this was very likely. One in six had opened an account, formerly known as a Lifelong Learning Account, with the National Careers Service since their visit to the website (16%); this is lower than in Year 6 (32%).

### 6.5.3 Soft outcomes and Personal Added Value among online customers

Like the telephone and face-to-face customers, online 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'.

Around six in ten online customers experienced some form of Personal Added Value in the three months following their visit to the website (62%), lower than the proportion in Year 6 (71%). Specifically, around half reported an increase in confidence about making decisions regarding their future (54%), about planning their next career move (50%) or about applying for courses or training (48%). Slightly fewer reported feeling more confident about applying for jobs (44%).

---

<sup>9</sup> This sums to more than 100% as customers may have done more than one type of learning and courses can fit into more than one category.

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 6:

- More interested in doing learning (62%).
- More aware of learning opportunities (55%).
- More aware of job and career opportunities (65%).
- More motivated to find work or to change their job (57%).
- Felt that their chances of finding a job had improved (32%).

Most of these customers felt that the National Careers Service website has contributed to their progression in these areas (59%), lower than in Year 6 (69%).

## 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 second year that career management skills have been examined specifically within the progression survey of face-to-face and telephone customers. 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 face-to-face and telephone customers reported developing career management skills during the six months since their contact with the National Careers Service (89%), slightly higher than the Year 6 figure (88%). The overall figure for career management skills was consistent between face-to-face and telephone customers. However, there were differences between other customer groups:

- Customers aged 18-19 (93%) and 20-24 (92%) were more likely to report building career management skills than older customers aged 25-49 (89%) or 50 plus (86%).

- Non-white British customers (91%), in particular Black or Black British customers (95%), were more likely than average to report the development of career management skills. This was also higher among those whose first language was not English (92%).
- Disabled customers were less likely than non-disabled customers to report the development of career management skills (85% compared with 90%).

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 relating to improvements in 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 that their awareness of work/career opportunities had increased over the past six months. This includes 40% who felt it had increased a lot. Differences were evident by age, with 86% of 18-24 year olds reporting that their awareness of work/career opportunities had increased, compared with 76% of 25-49 year-olds and 66% of those aged 50 plus.

Increased awareness of work/career opportunities was also higher than average among those whose first language was not English (80%), while it was lower than average among those without qualifications or with qualifications below Level 2 (68%).

While the proportion saying their awareness had increased was very similar between service channels, telephone customers (46%) were more likely than face-to-face (39%) customers to say that it had increased *a lot*.

Around seven in ten face-to-face and telephone customers reported their awareness of learning or training opportunities had increased over the past six months (72%). Again, younger customers were more likely to think this had increased, with the proportion ranging from 83% among 18-24 year olds, to 73% among 25-49 year-olds and 63% among those aged 50 plus.

As with work or career opportunities, increased awareness of learning or training opportunities was higher than average among those whose first language was not English (77%), while it was lower than average among customers without qualifications or with qualifications below Level 2 (68%).

Again, while the proportion saying their awareness had increased was similar between service channels, telephone customers were more likely than face-to-face customers to say that it had increased *a lot* (45% compared with 36%).

### 6.6.3 Increased motivation

Three-quarters of face-to-face and telephone customers reported that their motivation to find work or change career had improved in the past six months (73%). While the proportion saying that this had improved was again similar between service channels, telephone customers were again more likely than face-to-face customers to say that it had improved *a lot* (52% compared with 46%).

Young people aged 18-24 were especially likely to report a *large* increase in motivation (56%), as were customers of non-white British origin (52%), especially those of Black/Black British origin (57%), and those who did not speak English as their first language (51%).

#### 6.6.4 More clarity and confidence about making career/learning decisions

Three-quarters 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 (74%). One-quarter felt this had not improved at all (25%).

Telephone customers were again more likely than face-to-face customers to say that it had improved *a lot* (48% compared with 39%). 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 47% of 20-24 year olds), and were non-white British (46%) or spoke English as a second language (48%).

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

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

- Customers in Yorkshire and the Humber had above average levels of satisfaction overall and in relation to their adviser.
- Customers in the Thames Valley had above average levels of satisfaction with information and advice provided
- Customers in London expressed lower than average satisfaction levels across the various measures, including overall satisfaction.
- There were a number of key changes since Year 7:
  - Satisfaction in the Thames Valley and Central Eastern regions increased from Year 6 to Year 7 on location and venue where you received your advice and professionalism of the adviser respectively.
  - Satisfaction in the Thames Valley and Central Eastern regions increased from Year 6 to Year 7 on location and venue where you received your advice and professionalism of the adviser respectively.
  - However, satisfaction fell in Greater Manchester, Cheshire, Warrington and Staffordshire on the convenience of the time and date of the meeting and the length of time with the adviser.
  - Satisfaction also fell in the South West on information and advice provided being clear and easy to understand and the professionalism of the adviser.
  - In the West Midlands satisfaction fell on both the information and advice provided being clear and easy to understand, as well as the convenience of the time and date of the meeting.

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

## 7.1 Customer profile in different areas

Table 7.1 shows area-based differences in the key demographics of: age, gender, 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.

- Yorkshire and the Humber had a relatively younger profile with a higher share of 25-44 year olds (42%), while Central Eastern (23%), Liverpool (25%) and the South East (24%) had a higher than average share of customers aged over 55.
- Some areas had a relatively high proportion of male customers: East Midlands (61%), Liverpool and Cumbria (61%), the North East (63%) and Yorkshire and the Humber (61%). London had a relatively high proportion of female customers (48%).
- The proportion with qualifications below Level 2 was higher than average in Liverpool (37%), the West Midlands (33%), Yorkshire and the Humber (32%) and Central Eastern (32%). The number of those with no qualifications was highest in the Liverpool city area (23%).
- Both London and the West Midlands had relatively high proportions of non-white British customers (65% and 41% respectively).
- Customers in the North East were the most likely to be unemployed and looking for work at the time of their initial contact (74%). In contrast, customers in Thames Valley were the most likely to be in work (29%).

**Table 7.1: Profile of customers by area**

	All (incl. NCC)	Central Eastern	East Midlands	Greater Manchester	Liverpool Region	London	North East	South Central	South East	South West	Thames Valley	West Midlands	Yorkshire & Humber
<b>Base:</b>	8228	611	626	571	560	842	585	601	644	573	473	627	696
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<b>18-24</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>18</b>	24	20	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	21	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	19	<b>15</b>	22	19
<b>25-49</b>	<b>49</b>	45	<b>43</b>	49	45	53	46	<b>44</b>	<b>44</b>	49	54	49	52
<b>50+</b>	<b>30</b>	37	33	31	37	30	33	39	38	32	31	29	29
<b>Male</b>	<b>56</b>	58	61	56	61	<b>52</b>	63	59	54	59	52	53	61

	All (incl. NCC)	Central Eastern	East Midlands	Greater Manchester	Liverpool Region	London	North East	South Central	South East	South West	Thames Valley	West Midlands	Yorkshire & Humber
<b>&lt;L2 quals</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>32</b>	29	30	<b>37</b>	27	26	29	31	28	24	<b>33</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>White British</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>85</b>	67	<b>59</b>	<b>72</b>
<b>In work</b>	<b>22</b>	20	<b>17</b>	<b>15</b>	19	<b>16</b>	<b>14</b>	20	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>18</b>	19
<b>Unemployed</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>64</b>	61	<b>51</b>	61	61

## 7.2 Satisfaction

### 7.2.1 Overall satisfaction

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

Four of the contracting areas exceeded the average satisfaction level of 84%. Satisfaction was significantly higher than average in the Thames Valley (89%), Liverpool City region, Cumbria and Lancashire (87%) and Yorkshire & the Humber (87%) were most likely to be satisfied overall. Overall satisfaction was lower than average in the South West (79%), West Midlands (80%) and London (81%).

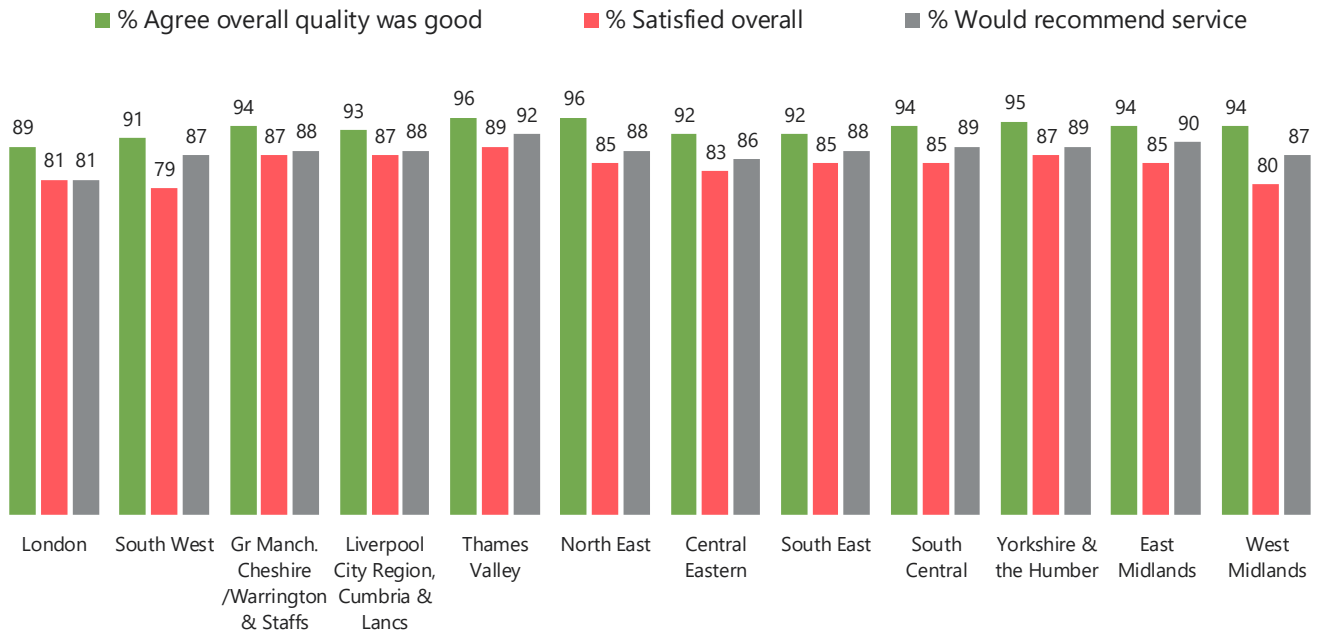
Customers were most likely to agree that the quality of the service was good in the North East (96%, significantly higher than average), Thames Valley (96%) and Yorkshire & the Humber (95%); and least likely to agree in London (89%).

With regards to likelihood to recommend service, customers in the Thames Valley (92%) were more likely than average to recommend the service, whereas customers in London (81%) were less likely than average to do so.

There were no significant changes from Year 6 to Year 7 on a regional level on any of the overall satisfaction measures.



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



Base: All telephone and face-to-face customers (8,228)

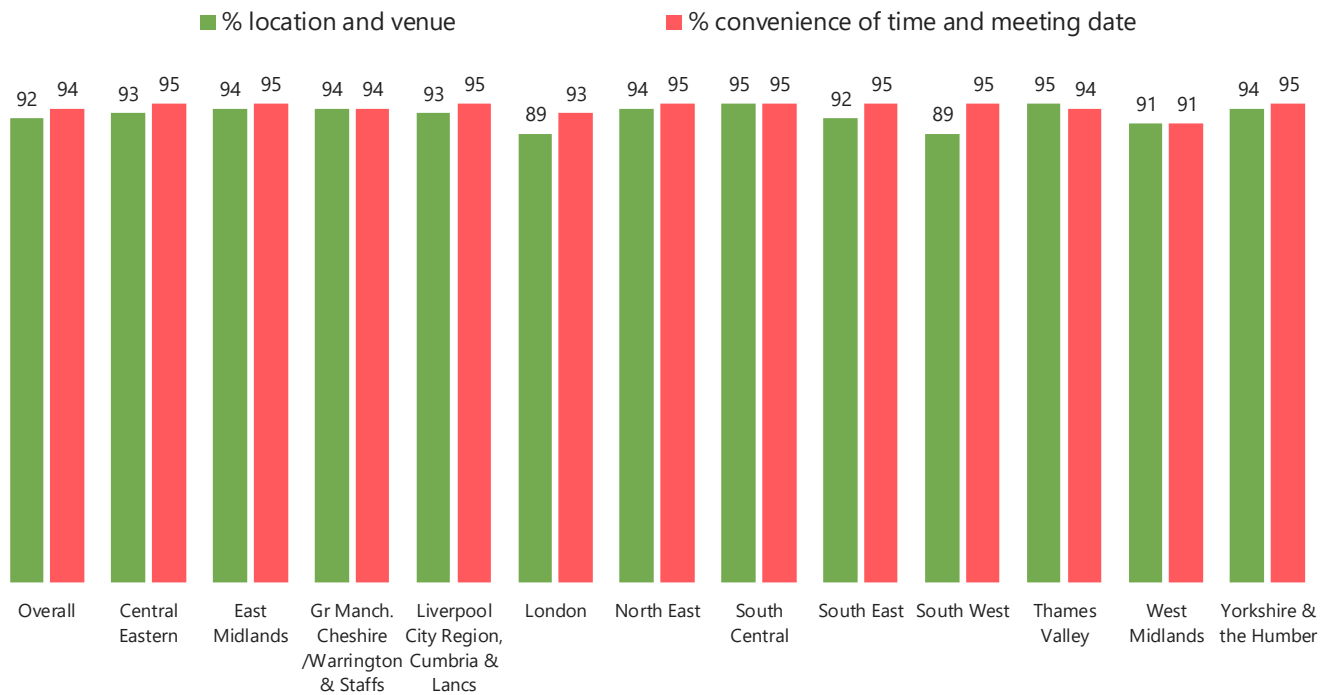
## 7.2.2 Satisfaction with operational aspects

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

Customers in the Thames Valley (95%) and South Central (95%) were significantly more satisfied than average with the location and venue where they received the advice, while customers in London and the South West were less satisfied (89%) than average.

Satisfaction with the convenience of the time and date of the meeting was similar across the different regions, apart from the West Midlands where it was significantly lower although still a majority were positive (91%).

In comparison with Year 6, ratings were more positive in Year 7 in the Thames Valley (up from 91% to 95%) in relation to the location and venue where advice was given. However, customers were less satisfied than last year about the convenience of the time and meeting date in Greater Manchester, Cheshire, Warrington and Staffordshire (down from 97% to 94%) and the West Midlands (down from 94% to 91%).

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

Base: All face-to-face customers (7,130)

### 7.2.3 Satisfaction with the adviser

Customers in Yorkshire and the Humber expressed significantly higher levels of satisfaction with their adviser on all five measures, specifically in relation to the length of time the adviser spoke to them (94%), the adviser's professionalism (97%), helpfulness (95%), level of knowledge (94%) and the advisor's understanding of their needs (92%), as shown in Table 7.2.

As seen in last year's survey, customers in London were again significantly less satisfied with almost all aspects of the service provided by the adviser. Satisfaction with the adviser's level of knowledge (89%) was the only measure where satisfaction was not significantly lower than the average rating. Satisfaction was slightly lower on some measures among those with L4 qualifications or higher, non-white British customers and those who did not speak English as their first language. The higher proportion of these groups in London may explain to some extent the lower satisfaction scores in this area.

Other areas which saw significant variation from the average were:

- Customers in the Thames Valley and South East (both 97%) were significantly more satisfied with the professionalism of the adviser. In contrast, levels of satisfaction with professionalism among customers in the South West (92%) were below average.
- Customers in Greater Manchester, Cheshire, Warrington and Staffordshire were more likely than average to be satisfied with the extent to which the adviser met their needs (93%).

- Ratings in the North East were significantly higher for satisfaction with the adviser's helpfulness (95%) and that the advisor understood their needs (92%) but other measures were similar to average.
- Ratings in the East Midlands area were lower than average for the length of time the adviser spoke to them (88%) but above average on the adviser's level of knowledge (95%).
- Areas which saw a significant shift since Year 6 included Greater Manchester, Cheshire, Warrington and Staffordshire (down from 96% to 91%) in relation to the length of time the adviser spoke to them. Satisfaction with the professionalism of the adviser increased significantly on Year 6 in the Central Eastern region (up to 96% from 93%), although the South West saw a significant fall on this measure (92% down from 95%).

**Table 7.2: Satisfaction with the adviser by area**

	All (incl. NCC)	Central Eastern	East Midlands	Greater Manchester	Liverpool Region	London	North East	South Central	South East	South West	Thames Valley	West Midlands	Yorkshire & Humber
<b>Base:</b>	8228	611	626	571	560	842	585	601	644	573	473	627	696
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<b>Length of time with adviser</b>	91	91	<b>88</b>	93	93	<b>89</b>	92	93	91	91	<b>94</b>	91	<b>94</b>
<b>Professionalism of adviser</b>	95	96	95	96	95	<b>93</b>	96	96	<b>97</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>97</b>	94	<b>97</b>
<b>Helpfulness of adviser</b>	93	93	94	93	93	<b>91</b>	<b>95</b>	93	95	91	95	92	<b>95</b>
<b>Adviser knowledge</b>	91	92	<b>95</b>	93	91	89	92	93	92	91	93	90	<b>94</b>
<b>Adviser understood needs</b>	90	88	90	<b>93</b>	91	<b>85</b>	<b>92</b>	91	90	89	92	88	<b>92</b>

#### 7.2.4 Satisfaction with the information or advice received

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

- Customers in the Thames Valley were significantly more satisfied than average on the usefulness of the information (92%), the extent to which it allowed them to make an informed decision (90%), as well as that it was clear and easy to understand (96%).
- Customers in Yorkshire and the Humber were significantly more likely than average to be satisfied that the information, advice and guidance was clear and easy to understand (95%).

- Customers in the North East were more likely than average to be satisfied that the information and advice given helped them to make an informed decision (88%).
- Customers in London were significantly less likely to be satisfied with the usefulness of the information, advice and guidance (84%), the extent to which it allowed them to make an informed decision (81%) and that the advice was clear and easy to understand (91%).
- There were few significant changes in Year 7 compared with Year 6. The only measure which saw a significant change was satisfaction with information and advice being clear and easy to understand, which decreased in the South West (down to 92% from 95%) and the West Midlands (down to 91% from 95%).

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

	All (incl. NCC)	Central Eastern	East Midlands	Greater Manchester	Liverpool Region	London	North East	South Central	South East	South West	Thames Valley	West Midlands	Yorkshire & Humber
<b>Base:</b>	8228	611	626	571	560	842	585	601	644	573	473	627	696
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<b>IAG was clear/easy to understand</b>	<b>93</b>	93	95	94	94	<b>91</b>	95	94	94	92	<b>96</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>95</b>
<b>IAG was useful</b>	<b>88</b>	89	90	89	89	<b>84</b>	89	90	89	85	<b>92</b>	87	88
<b>Got IAG to make informed decision</b>	<b>85</b>	85	86	87	87	<b>81</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>88</b>	82	<b>90</b>	<b>82</b>	86

### 7.3 Progression and career management skills

Almost all customers in Year 7 (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 by contracting region are shown in Table 7.4, together with development of career management skills.

Table 7.4: Key progression measures and career management skills by area<sup>10</sup>

	All (incl. NCC)	Central Eastern	East Midlands	Greater Manchester	Liverpool Region	London	North East	South Central	South East	South West	Thames Valley	West Midlands	Yorkshire & Humber
<b>Base</b>	6438	937	928	861	814	1351	956	929	894	970	749	1181	1160
<b>Any positive outcome</b>	97	96	97	95	96	96	96	95	96	96	96	95	96
<b>Learning progression</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>62</b>	65	<b>63</b>	<b>62</b>	68	67	<b>62</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>65</b>	66	<b>62</b>	66
<b>Employment progression (excl. voluntary)</b>	<b>41</b>	44	<b>49</b>	44	40	<b>36</b>	41	<b>46</b>	42	43	43	39	42
<b>Personal Added Value</b>	<b>92</b>	91	<b>93</b>	91	93	<b>94</b>	92	<b>90</b>	92	91	93	91	91
<b>Career management skills</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>89</b>	89	87	87	89	90	87	90	88	<b>93</b>	<b>86</b>	89

Learning progression was highest in London (68%) and the North East (67%), although this was not significantly higher than average. However, learning progression was significantly below average in Central Eastern (62%), both North West sub-regions (Greater Manchester 63%, Lancashire and Liverpool (62%)), South Central (62%), South East (63%), the South West (65%) and the West Midlands (62%).

There was some regional variation on employment progression (excluding voluntary work). East Midlands (49%) and South Central (46%) both had a significantly higher than average score on this measure, while London (36%) was significantly lower than average.

As in Year 6, Thames Valley stands out as having significantly higher than average progression in career management skills (93%). The West Midlands (86%) was the only region to have a significantly lower than average score on this measure.

Both London (94%) and the East Midlands (93%) achieved significantly above average ratings on Personal Added Value, whereas in South Central (90%), this figure was significantly lower than average.

<sup>10</sup> Highlighted figures are statistically significantly different to the average

**Rebecca Klahr**

Research Director

[rebecca.klahr@ipsos.com](mailto:rebecca.klahr@ipsos.com)

**Yasmin White**

Senior Research Executive

[Yasmin.White@ipsos.com](mailto:Yasmin.White@ipsos.com)

**Helen Motha**

Senior Research Executive

[Helen.Motha@ipsos.com](mailto:Helen.Motha@ipsos.com)

## For more information

3 Thomas More Square  
London  
E1W 1YW

t: +44 (0)20 3059 5000

[www.ipsos-mori.com](http://www.ipsos-mori.com)

<http://twitter.com/IpsosMORI>

### About Ipsos MORI's Social Research Institute

The Social Research Institute works closely with national governments, local public services and the not-for-profit sector. Its c.200 research staff focus on public service and policy issues. Each has expertise in a particular part of the public sector, ensuring we have a detailed understanding of specific sectors and policy challenges. This, combined with our methods and communications expertise, helps ensure that our research makes a difference for decision makers and communities.