

National Careers Service Customer Satisfaction and Progression Annual Report

**Report based on findings from April 2023 –
March 2024**

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Contents

Executive Summary	4
1 Introduction and Methodology	9
1.1 Background.....	9
1.2 Research aims	10
1.3 Methodology	11
1.4 Telephone surveys	11
1.5 Online surveys	13
1.6 Interpretation of the data	13
1.7 The structure of this report.....	14
2 Customer Profile	15
2.1 Customer characteristics.....	15
2.2 Employment status.....	17
2.3 Highest qualification	19
3 How and why do customers contact the National Careers Service?	21
3.1 How did customers first find out about the National Careers Service?	21
3.2 Previous use of the National Careers Service	24
3.3 Reasons for contacting the National Careers Service	24
4 Experiences of using the Service.....	27
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	29
4.4 Use and usefulness of common National Careers Service tools.....	30
4.5 Follow-up actions	34
4.6 Overall perceptions about the quality of the Service	36
4.7 Overall satisfaction with the National Careers Service.....	38
4.8 Satisfaction with different aspects of the adviser sessions.....	43
4.9 Satisfaction with the different aspects of the website	45
4.10 Recommending the National Careers Service	46
4.11 Improvements to the National Careers Service	47
5 Customer Progression	49
5.1 Overview of the extent of progression	49
5.2 Learning progression among face-to-face and telephone customers	50
5.3 Employment progression among face-to-face and telephone customers	52
5.4 Personal Added Value among face-to-face and telephone customers	57
5.5 Career management skills	60
6 How do key results vary across National Careers Service regions?	61
6.1 Customer profile in different areas	62
6.2 Satisfaction	63

6.3 Progression and career management skills	67
7 Conclusions	69

List of Figures

Figure 3.1: Where customers first found out about the National Careers Service	22
Figure 3.2: Where customers first found out about the National Careers Service by key group	23
Figure 3.3: Reasons for contacting the National Careers Service (top mentions)	26
Figure 3.4: Top reasons for customers visiting the National Careers Service website	26
Figure 4.1: Online customers' planned next steps after visiting the National Careers Service website (top mentions)	35
Figure 4.2: Agreement overall quality of service was good, by survey quarter	37
Figure 4.3: Ratings of satisfaction and dissatisfaction amongst face-to-face and telephone customers	38
Figure 4.4: Ratings of satisfaction and dissatisfaction amongst online customers	41
Figure 4.5: Customer satisfaction with logistical arrangements	43
Figure 4.6: Satisfaction with information and advice from the Service	44
Figure 4.7 Customer ratings of various aspects of the website.....	45
Figure 5.1: Trends in progression among face-to-face and telephone customers, by survey quarter	50
Figure 5.2: Forms of learning/training undertaken since the call/meeting with National Careers Service	51
Figure 5.3: Employment progression among face-to-face and telephone customers (%).....	53
Figure 5.4: Employment status at the time of the call/meeting and six months later	54
Figure 5.5: Skills and personal development outcomes	57
Figure 5.6: Positive changes at work	59
Figure 6.1: Satisfaction, perceived service quality and willingness to recommend the National Careers Service by area.....	64
Figure 6.2: Satisfaction with logistical/operational elements of the Service by area.....	65

List of Tables

Table 1.1: Achieved interviews by quarter (face-to-face and telephone customers)	12
Table 2.1: Demographic profile of National Careers Service customers	15
Table 2.2: Economic activity of customers	18
Table 2.3: Highest qualification and NEET status among National Careers Service customers	19
Table 3.1: Website visitor referral	23
Table 4.1: Proportion rating each feature as 'very useful' or 'quite useful'	29
Table 4.2: Proportion of customers who have had follow-up contact from the Service	34
Table 5.1: Changes in employment status among key customer groups.....	55
Table 6.1: Profile of customers by area	63
Table 6.2: Satisfaction with the adviser by area	66
Table 6.3: Satisfaction with the advice/information provided by area	67
Table 6.4: Key progression measures and career management skills by area (%)	68

Executive Summary

Introduction and methodology

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

This report presents the results from Year 13 of the customer satisfaction and progression study. This fieldwork was undertaken from April 2023 to March 2024 and consisted of monthly satisfaction and progression telephone surveys, as well as a continuous online satisfaction survey. This report frequently references the Year 12 results (fieldwork undertaken between April 2022 to March 2023).

The main aims of this research are to monitor customers’ experiences of using the National Careers Service, through a range of Key Performance Indicators and other measures. In addition, the research aims to measure changes in customers’ employment and learning progression, personal development, and career management skills, six months after engaging with the Service to provide a reflective view of customers perception after having used the Service.

Customer profile

The customer profile of those accessing services via telephone, face-to-face or online remains, for the most part, largely consistent with previous years.

Males (53%) continue to be more prevalent than females (45%) as users of the Service at a total level. In a shift to what has been seen in Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023), customers self-reporting a long term disability accessing the Service increased from 20% to 28% in Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024).

Online customers continue to be more likely to have higher qualifications, and more likely to be in work, when compared to face-to-face and telephone customers. In Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) there has been an increase in those customers who are 19 or younger accessing the National Careers Service website, as well as those aged 50+.

Around two thirds of customers taking part in the telephone and face-to-face survey identified themselves as white (60%) whilst 37% identified as BAME. Female customers were significantly more likely to be from a BAME background (42%) compared to their male counterparts (33%) whilst those in the 25-49 age cohort are also more likely to identify as BAME (45%) than the average (37%).

There has been a small, but significant increase in the proportion of customers in work. In Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) a significantly higher proportion of those accessing the Service via the telephone (26%) are likely to be in work than those accessing face-to-face (21%).

Why do customers contact the National Careers Service?

Three in five customers first heard about the National Careers Service through Jobcentre Plus (60%). However, this represents a significant fall from Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) where 64% of customers reported this channel. Customers who had been unemployed for more than 12 months (68%), single parents (70%), 50+ and at risk of unemployment (73%) and those with below a L3 qualification (68%) were all more likely than average to have heard about the Service through a Jobcentre Plus.

Among website users the most common channel for first hearing about the National Careers Service was through searches online (25%), a little higher than in Year 12 (May 2022 – April 2023). This was followed by via Jobcentre Plus (22%), through social media (13%), from a National Careers Service adviser (10%), or from a teacher (8%). Online sources have become more common since Year 11 (May 2021 – April 2022), with the proportion first hearing about the Service via online searches increasing from 16%.

Reasons for contacting the National Careers Service were primarily focused on progressing into employment. Help with CV writing remains a key reason for using the telephone and face-to-face services (32% and 29% respectively). Therefore, providing support for CV writing is often the starting point for the National Careers Service to provide independent and impartial advice to customers. However, there has been a decline in the proportion of customers reporting this as the main reason for contact and increase in those reporting they contacted the Service to get information on how to get a job in a specific career or industry of interest (increasing from 11% to 12%).

Website use continues to be largely for obtaining information and advice about jobs, careers, or apprenticeships (35%).

Experiences of using the National Careers Service

Seven in ten telephone customers had their enquiry handled in one call (69%), which is a decrease compared with Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) (71%). Amongst those who had multiple calls, 86% dealt with the same adviser which is consistent with Year 12 (87%).

Seven in ten face-to-face customers (77%) had just one meeting with an adviser, which is also a significant increase since Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) (75%), and one in five (20%) had more than one which has decreased (from 22% in Year 12 – April 2022 to March 2023). Customers who had been unemployed longer than 12 months (23%) were most likely to have had more than one meeting.

The National Careers Service provides various digital tools to support its customers across multiple platforms, including Explore Careers, the Skills Health Check, and Find A Course. For all tools excluding webchat, around four to six in ten (42% - 57%) of those that had been

referred to the tool had used it, and the vast majority of customers that had used them (around 90%) found each tool useful. Around four in ten face-to-face and telephone customers reported that they had been followed-up by the National Careers Service since their initial contact (42%). These findings are consistent with previous waves.

Customer satisfaction with the National Careers Service

The overall quality of service provided by the National Careers Service continues to be highly rated by telephone and face-to-face customers, with 93% agreeing that it was good. When satisfaction is measured by the proportion of those who “strongly agree” that the Service is good, there was a significant increase between Quarter 1 (51%) and Quarter 2 (54%), however strong agreement that the Service quality is good dropped in Quarter 3 and Quarter 4 (50% and 51%). In line with the positive evaluation of service quality, the vast majority of face-to-face and telephone customers were satisfied with the National Careers Service overall (86%). This remains the same as Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) when 86% of customers were satisfied.

Once again those most engaged with the Service and who recall using the Skills Health Check (95%) or had a Skills Action Plan (96%) were most likely to say the quality of the Service was good.

Among telephone and face-to-face customers, satisfaction with individual aspects of the Service remains high. With one exception (adviser’s knowledge of jobs and training opportunities in the local area) approximately nine in ten customers were satisfied with each element of the information and advice they received. As In Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) the highest satisfaction rating was given to the professionalism of the customer’s adviser (95%).

An important metric when assessing levels of customer satisfaction is the likelihood of customers to recommend a service, and on this measure the National Careers Service continues to score highly. Although it is two percentage points lower than in Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023), more than eight in ten face-to-face or telephone customers had either already recommended or said they would recommend the National Careers Service (84%).

Satisfaction with the National Careers Service website (54%) has decreased since Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) (63%). Half of online customers (50%) said they had recommended the National Careers Service.

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

Overall, Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) has seen consistent employment progression compared to Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023), with an increase in learning progression. Almost all face-to-face and telephone customers (97%) experienced some form of positive outcome in the six months since their call/meeting. Learning progression averaged 71% in Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024), broadly in line with Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) (67%).

Around half of customers (49%) achieved employment progression, consistent with 49% in Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023). Those younger customers, white customers, customers who had been unemployed for less than six months and those without a disability were more likely to

achieve employment progression than average. Some 94% 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. This was highest amongst younger customers (18-24, 97%).

How do key results vary across National Careers Service regions?

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

- Satisfaction with the quality of service received and with the National Careers Service overall were significantly higher than average in Yorkshire and Humber, North East and Cumbria and the South East. On both measures the figure for London was below average.
- People accessing the Service in Yorkshire and Humber (87%), North East and Cumbria (89%) and the South East (87%) were significantly more likely than average (84%) to say they had recommended the National Careers Service or would do so in the future. As with ratings of the Service itself, recommendation levels in London were below the national average (81% compared to 84%).
- The return to high levels of satisfaction with logistical aspects of face-to-face meetings seen in Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) has been consolidated in Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024). London and West Midlands and Staffordshire were the only regions where satisfaction with the location and venue for their meeting was below average (87% against 89%). In the South East (94%), Yorkshire and the Humber (94%), East of England and Buckinghamshire (93%), and North East and Cumbria (93%) it was higher than average. Only in East Midlands and West Midlands (91% and 93%) were satisfaction with the time and date of the customers' meeting below average (94%). In Yorkshire and Humber (96%) it was above average.
- Satisfaction with specific aspects of advisers' people skills, knowledge and helpfulness remains very high. In Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) there were some differences by region with those in North East and Cumbria, Yorkshire and Humber and South East consistently demonstrating the highest level of satisfaction. Compared to other regions, satisfaction tended to be lower in London than elsewhere.
- Customers across all regions were overwhelmingly positive about the information, advice and guidance (IAG) received. As with advisers' skills and knowledge, ratings of IAG were consistently above average in North East and Cumbria, Yorkshire and Humber and the South East. Customers in London were significantly less satisfied than average with each aspect of the IAG they received.
- In Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) approximately 19 in 20 customers (97%) experienced some form of positive outcome in the six months following their intervention. Employment progression was consistent with Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) (49%).

- Customers in South West and Oxfordshire were significantly more likely than average to demonstrate employment progression (54%, compared to 49% average) and it was relatively high in North East (52%). In contrast, employment progression was relatively low in London (43%)

1 Introduction and Methodology

1.1 Background

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

The National Careers Service is delivered via a multi-channel approach: face-to-face, telephone, webchat, and online. Adults living or working in England, aged 19 or over (or aged 18 for those who are not in education employment or training (NEET)) 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 the telephone service. Schools and colleges are responsible for the delivery of careers advice (either directly or through their own contracted provision). It does promote its online and telephone services via schools, colleges and other training providers, as well as providing labour market information and supporting materials to their careers services. The National Careers Service is actively engaged in building partnerships between schools, colleges, and employers.

The National Careers Service is delivered by a network of community-based Prime Contractors. 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 community-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 community-based contractors move away from purely delivering face-to-face advice and diversify into telephone, online and digital methods.

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

During the pandemic, the National Careers Service offered a reduced service, and this had an impact on the way individuals were able to interact with the National Careers Service. The closure of Jobcentre Plus offices resulted in a reduction in face-to-face contact and an increase in telephone or video calls.

During the period that this report covers, there was a further change to the Prime Contractors as a result of a repurchase exercise. As a result of this, the South West region (formerly managed by Adviza) and the North West region (formerly managed by The Growth Company), were transitioned over to management by SEETEC on the 1st October 2023. Of the yearly period covered by this research, Quarters 1 and 2 were undertaken with the old contractors in place, whilst Quarters 3 and 4 were undertaken with SEETEC overseeing the contracts.

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

Customer progression measures include changes in customers' employment and learning progression, personal development, and career management skills.

This report is based on fieldwork conducted between April 2023 and March 2024. For face-to-face and telephone customers, this means the satisfaction survey covers sessions with an adviser between April 2023 and March 2024.

Due to the variations in the base sizes, comparisons across waves should be treated with caution. As a result of smaller base sizes, a larger percentage point difference is needed to show statistically significant differences in results.

For face-to-face and telephone customers, the progression survey covers the period six months beforehand (i.e., from October 2022 to September 2023).

The research among web visitors covers those accessing the National Careers Service website between April 2023 and March 2024 for the online satisfaction survey.

The overall aims of this research are to:

- Provide full analysis of the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the National Careers Service, which incorporate specific measures on customer satisfaction and progression following their contact with an adviser.
- Understand customer views of the Service at different points in their journey in order to provide actionable feedback to help the National Careers Service to identify areas for improvement and to inform its service development.
- Identify and understand any demographic differences in how customers experience and rate the Service, in particular among priority groups, including NEET customers aged 18 to 24, single parents, customers who self-reported a disability, those aged 50 plus who are unemployed or at risk of redundancy, customers who have been unemployed for more than 12 months, and customers with below Level 3 qualifications.
- Measure variations in performance among the community-based contractors delivering the Service.
- Monitor changes over time by comparing the results for Year 13, (April 2023 to March 2024) to the data from Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023).

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..

1.3 Methodology

This report presents the results from Year 13 (fieldwork conducted between April 2023 to March 2024) of the customer satisfaction and progression study. The satisfaction survey measures responses from participants who contacted the Service between March 2023 and February 2024. The progression survey measures responses who originally contacted the Service six months prior (between September 2022 and August 2023).

1.4 Telephone surveys

For face-to-face and telephone customers this involved a total of 8,495 interviews for the satisfaction survey and 5,954 interviews for the progression survey. The number of achieved interviews by quarter is shown in Table 1.1, including comparative sample sizes and fieldwork dates for the previous years of the survey.

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

		Fieldwork month	Satisfaction survey		Progression survey	
			Month of adviser session	No. of interviews	Month of adviser session	No. of interviews
Y11 (May 2021 to April 2022)	Quarter 1	May-Jul 2021	Apr-Jun 2021	1,830	Nov 20-Jan 2021	1,391
	Quarter 2	Aug-Oct 2021	Jul-Sept 2021	1,823	Feb-Apr 2021	1,399
	Quarter 3	Nov 21-Jan 2022	Oct-Dec 2021	1,824	May-Jul 2021	1,394
	Quarter 4	Feb-Apr 2022	Jan-Mar 2022	1,808	Aug-Oct 2021	1,402
	Year 11 Total			7,285		5,586
Y12 (May 2022 to April 2023)	Quarter 1	May-Jul 2022	Apr-Jun 2022	1,835	Nov 21-Jan 2022	1,384
	Quarter 2	Aug-Oct 2022	Jul-Sept 2022	1,802	Feb-Apr 2022	1,380
	Quarter 3	Nov 22-Jan 2023	Oct-Dec 2022	1,802	May-Jul 2022	1,387
	Quarter 4	Feb-Apr 2023	Jan-Mar 2023	1,807	Aug-Oct 2022	1,421
	Year 12 Total			7,246		5,572
Y13 (April 2023 to March 2024)	Quarter 1	Apr-Jun 2023	Mar-May 2023	1,809	Nov 21-Jan 2023	1,419
	Quarter 2	Jul-Sep 2023	Jun-Aug 2023	2,235	Feb-Apr 2023	1,515
	Quarter 3	Oct 22-Dec 2024	Sep-Nov 2023	2,211	May-Jul 2023	1,513
	Quarter 4	Jan-Mar 2024	Dec-Feb 2024	2,240	Aug-Oct 2023	1,507
	Year 13 Total			8,495		5,954

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 can either be offered Information and Advice (IA) or Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) from the Service. Those who are offered IAG will receive a Skills Action Plan. Both customer types have been included in the survey, however, the

volume of IAG sample provided throughout the year was significantly higher than the amount of IA sample.

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

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

Telephone customers can either be offered IA or IAG from the Service.

At the analysis stage, the telephone satisfaction and progression data were weighted by contracting region to match the customer profile.

The customer profile used to set the quotas and weight the data is aligned with the corresponding month or months that these customers used the Service.

1.5 Online surveys

In total, 501 website users took part in the website satisfaction survey. Use of cookies means that someone accessing the site from the same computer will only be asked to participate once. As in previous years, no weighting has been applied to the web satisfaction survey because the demographic profile of the population of website users is unknown.

Typically, an online progression survey would also take place throughout the year. This progression survey for website users is longitudinal and conducted online, with respondents sent an email with a link to the online questionnaire three months after they took part in the online satisfaction survey. The email is only sent to individuals 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. It was not sent to employers or careers advisers. In total, 41 online progression interviews were conducted. Due to the small volume of interviews, this data has been excluded from this report.

1.6 Interpretation of the data

Throughout the chapters, 'customers' refer to those who access the National Careers Service face-to-face at Jobcentre Plus or another location or over a video call or receive the advice by telephone from community-based contractors.

This latest research follows previous sets of comparable surveys. The report highlights relevant differences between the average and subgroup findings, or between findings from previous waves. This only includes differences that are found to be statistically significant at the 95% level of confidence. This means that we can be 95% confident, in other words 19 times out of 20, that the difference is a 'real' difference rather than one resulting from having spoken to a sample of customers. However, not all statistically significant differences are noted – it only

refers to differences that appear consistently across questions, which indicate important subgroups or indicate important shifts over time.

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

1.7 The structure of this report

The rest of this report presents the results of Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) 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 KPIs
- Chapter 7 looks at customers’ experiences across the different contracting regions, identifying any variations in performance

2 Customer Profile

This chapter examines the profile of customers accessing the Service and website in Year 13 from April 2023 to March 2024. It looks at demographic characteristics such as gender, age, ethnicity, work status, and highest qualification at the time of accessing the Service.

The customer profile of those accessing services via telephone, face-to-face or online remains, for the most part, unchanged from previous years. Males continue to be more prevalent than females to use the Service at a total level, with females more likely to identify as BAME than their male counterparts. In a shift to what has been seen previously, customers who self-reported having a long term disability accessing the Service increased from two in ten to three in ten since last year. Online customers continue to be more likely to have higher qualifications, and more likely to be in work, when compared to face-to-face and telephone customers.

2.1 Customer characteristics

Table 2.1 shows the age, gender and ethnicity profiles of National Careers Service face-to-face, telephone and online customers surveyed during Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024). The figures presented for face-to-face and telephone customers are based on weighted data, whilst online figures are based on unweighted data¹. Overall, the customer base varied by service channel, but still had a similar profile to that found in previous years.

Table 2.1: Demographic profile of National Careers Service customers²

	Channel used as main way of accessing the Service			
Base:	Face-to-face (5,319)	Telephone (3,176)	Online (501)	
Gender				
Male	53%	52%	43%	
Female	45%	47%	46%	
Age group				
19 or younger ³	8%	10%	16-17%	9%
18 to 24	24%	28%	18-24%	10%
25 to 49	53%	51%	34%	
50 or older	23%	21%	36%	
Ethnicity				
White (any)	56%	69%	59%	

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

² Not all categories will add up to 100% as a result of the 'Prefer not to say' code. Gender also had an 'other' code as well as prefer not to say.

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

Black, Asian, or Middle Eastern (BAME)	40%	30%	29%
Other demographics			
English not first language	32%	23%	Not available
Long term illness/disability	27%	29%	28%

2.1.2 Gender and age

In previous years, the trend has shown that more males than females use the Service either through face-to-face meetings or via telephone. Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) is no exception, with 53% male and 45% female. These results are on a par with Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023), which was 54% male and 44% female.

Looking at the key priority groups, the largest disparity between gender is for single parents, who continue to be predominantly female (88%) rather than male (12%) and compared to the average (45%). However, those with below Level 3 qualifications (56%), NEET customers aged 18 to 24 (62%), 18-24 and receiving benefits (61%), and customers aged 50+ and at risk of unemployment (61%) were more likely to be male, when compared to the average.

As seen in previous years, the highest proportion of telephone and face-to-face customers were aged between 25 and 49 at 52%, a figure in line with results seen in Year 12 (May 2022 – April 2023) at 50% and Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) at 47%.

There was little difference between age groups for telephone and face-to-face customers, those aged between 25 and 49 represented 53% of face-to-face customers and 51% of telephone customers.

Similar to Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023), customers who self-report a disability are significantly more likely to be aged 50 plus (38%) than younger age groups (23% 19 or under, 25% 20-24) and the average (28%). Single parents remain more likely to be aged 25 to 49 (13%, compared to the average, which is 8%), which is intuitive as this is the usual age range for people living with dependent children.

Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024), females represent just under half the online sample (46%), a figure directionally lower than seen in Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) (50%) and in Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022 at 47%).

2.1.3 Ethnicity and English as a first language

Around six in ten customers taking part in the telephone and face-to-face survey identified themselves as white (60%) whilst 37% identified as BAME. Female customers were significantly

more likely to be from a BAME background (42%) compared to male (33%)⁴, whilst those in the 25 to 49 age cohort are also more likely to identify as BAME (45%) than the average (37%).

Four in five customers say that English is their first language (71%). BAME customers were more likely to suggest that English is not their first language (52%) than the average (29%) and customers who identified as white (14%).

Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) shows that female customers are not only more likely to be from a BAME background, they are also more likely to not have English as a first language (36%) than the average (29%) and than male customers (23%).

Face-to-face customers were significantly more likely to not have English as their first language (32%) than telephone customers (23%).

2.1.4 Disability

Compared to Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) where customers who self-reported a disability or long-term limiting health condition represented a fifth (20%) of customers, Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) shows a significant increase to almost three in ten (28%) customers. Those above 50 have the highest proportion of people self-reporting as having a disability (38%). All other age groups have around 25% of customers self-reporting as having a disability.

In Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024), the proportion of customers self-reporting a disability or long-term limiting health condition using the Service is significantly higher amongst telephone customers (29%) than face-to-face customers (27%).

Customers self-reporting a disability were more likely to identify as white versus the average (35% compared with 17%) and were more likely to be claiming benefits (79%) than those without a disability (62%) and the average (66%).

2.1.5 Region

Website users who participated in the survey were asked where they lived; this provides a picture of the regional spread of website users. In total, 73% of online customers said they lived in England, with the remainder living in Scotland (1%), Wales (>1%) or UK Forces overseas (1%). 11% of website survey respondents preferred not to answer the question.

Those online customers residing in England were predominantly made up of the regions of London (17%), the rest of the Southeast (13%), the North West (8%), West Midlands (8%), East Midlands (7%), and the South West (7%).

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.

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

Table 2.2: Economic activity of customers

	Channel used as main way of accessing the Service		
Base:	Face-to-face (5,319)	Telephone (3,176)	Online (501)
In work	21%	26%	38%
Full-time employee	8%	13%	21%
Part-time employee	10%	10%	10%
Self-employed	3%	3%	4%
In learning	8%	6%	15%
Full-time learning	4%	4%	5%
Part-time learning	4%	2%	2%
School	N/A	N/A	8%
Unemployed and looking for work	59%	54%	30%
Unable to work due to health	5%	7%	4%
Looking after home/family	3%	4%	2%
Retired	>1%	>1%	4%
Other	1%	1%	3%

In Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024), the proportion of those unemployed and looking for work represented six in ten telephone or face-to-face customers (58%), a decline versus Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) from 61%. For those completing the web survey online this was closer to three-in-ten (29%) customers using the Service.

The following customer groups were more likely to be unemployed and looking for work⁵:

- men (63% compared with 52% of women)
- white (61% compared with 53% who identify as BAME)
- customers aged 18 to 24 and receiving benefits (74% compared with the average of 58%)
- customers aged 18 to 24 NEET (89% compared with the average of 58%)

Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) showed that a significantly higher proportion of those accessing the Service via the telephone (21%) are likely to be in work than those accessing face-to-face (19%). Similarly, in Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) a significantly higher proportion of those accessing the Service via the telephone (26%) are likely to be in work than those accessing face-to-face (21%).

⁵ Analysis of customer groups is based on face-to-face and telephone customers (combined).

Overall (face-to-face and telephone), 8% of customers accessing the Service were in education which is a continuation of the upward trend witnessed since Year 10 (May 2020 to April 2021) when it was 5%. Face-to-face customers continue to be more likely than telephone customers to be in education (8% compared to 6%) though both customers have seen an upward shift versus Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) which is significantly so for telephone customers from 4% in Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) to 6% in Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024).

Among face-to-face and telephone customers who were unemployed at the time of their call or meeting, the majority had been unemployed for less than 1 month (58%). One in ten had been unemployed for between 6 and 12 months (13%) and three in ten had been unemployed for more than 12 months (26%). The proportion of those unemployed for more than 12 months is significantly lower than seen in Year 12 (May 2021 to April 2022) (29%) and Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) (43%).

As with previous years, these figures illustrate the continuing experience of the National Careers Service of having a diverse customer base with differing support needs. A key consideration for the Service is that customers who have never worked or who have been out of work for several years will likely have different advice and information needs to those who are in work and seeking to progress or change career, or to those who have recently been made redundant and may be looking to re-train or get a new job.

2.3 Highest qualification

A key customer group for the National Careers Service is those with qualifications below Level 3, defined as adults without a Level 3 qualification (equivalent to A-Levels), but does not include people with no qualifications. Just over a quarter of customers had a qualification below Level 3 (26%) and only 1% had no qualifications. The majority of customers (53%) already had qualifications at or above Level 3, regardless of which channel they used to access the Service. The proportions of customers from each channel with each type of qualification is shown in Table 2.3 below.

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

	Channel used as main way of accessing the Service		
	Face-to-face (5,319)	Telephone (3,176)	Online (501)
Base:			
Level 4 or higher	34%	35%	41%
Level 3 or higher	52%	54%	53%
Level 2 or higher	79%	81%	64%
Below Level 2	13%	12%	23%
Level 4 (e.g. Certificate of Higher Education; NVQs at Level 4)	3%	3%	3%

Level 3 (e.g. A-levels)	21%	22%	12%
Level 2 (5 GCSEs A*-C)	18%	20%	11%
Level 1	8%	8%	7%
Entry level	4%	3%	5%
No qualifications	1%	1%	6%

A third (35%) of face-to-face and telephone customers had a Level 4 or higher qualification. This level is significantly higher than in Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) when a third of face-to-face and telephone customer (32%) held a Level 4 or higher qualification.

As seen in Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) and Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022), online customers were more likely to have a Level 4 or higher qualification (41%) than telephone customers (35%) and face-to-face customers (34%).

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

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

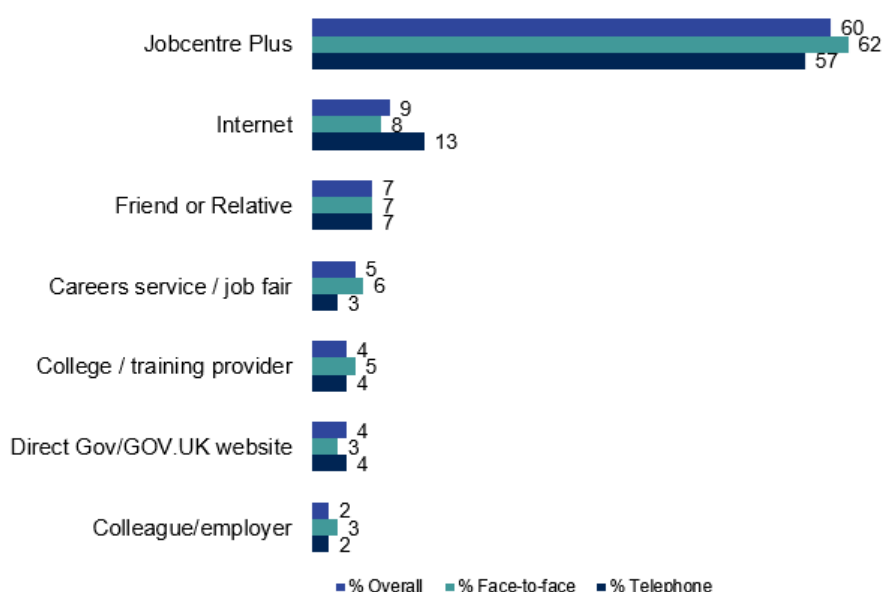
3.1 How did customers first find out about the National Careers Service?

3.1.1 Telephone and Face-to-Face Customers

In Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024), six out of ten customers reported that they found out about the Service through Jobcentre Plus (60%). This represents a decrease since Year 12 (64%) and the peak in Year 11 (67%), but remains above the proportion of customers referred by Jobcentre Plus in Years 9 and 10 (59%). For face-to-face customers, there has been a drop of two percentage points in how many customers were referred in this way (62%, compared 64% in Year 12 and Year 11). However, the proportion of telephone customers being referred by Jobcentre Plus has decreased from 64% in Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) to 57% in Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024), meaning there is now no difference in this regard between these contact types.

The prominence of Jobcentre Plus reflects the longstanding referral and co-location arrangements between Jobcentre Plus and the National Careers Service as part of a commitment for a more integrated approach to the provision of employment and skills advice to unemployed people.

As shown on the chart below, more face-to-face customers had heard about the Service through a careers service or job fair (6%) than telephone customers (3%).

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

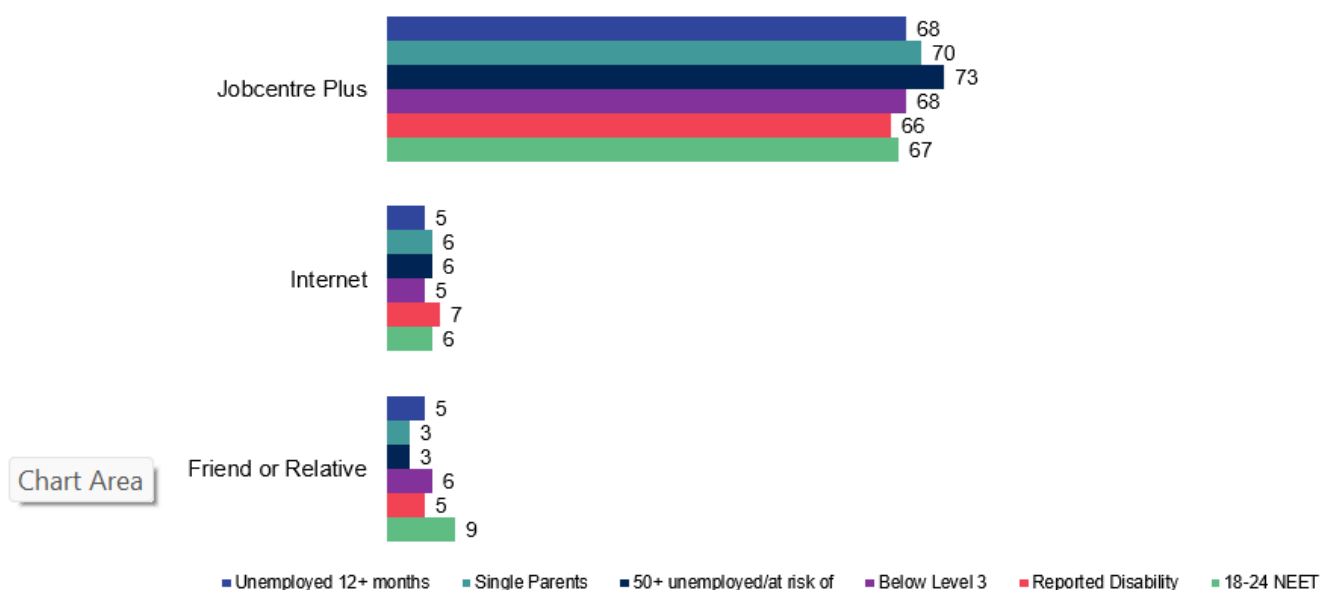
Base: Overall (8,495), Face-to-face (5,319), Telephone (3,176)

Telephone customers seeking information and advice were more likely to have heard about the Service through the internet (26%) than telephone customers seeking information, advice, and guidance (11%) and face-to-face customers (8%).

As was the case in previous years, customers aged 50+ were significantly more likely to have heard about the Service for the first time through the Jobcentre Plus than younger customers (69% vs 62% aged 19 or younger). Moreover, those who were unemployed and looking for work were also more likely to have heard about the Service through Jobcentre Plus than those in work or learning (69% compared to 46% and 36% respectively).

All priority groups were more likely to have heard about the Service through Jobcentre Plus than the average (60%). The figures for each priority group are: aged 50 or more and at risk of unemployment (73%), single parents (70%), unemployed for more than 12 months (68%), who have below level 3 qualifications (68%), aged 18 to 24 NEETs (67%), have a disability (66%). Customers aged 18 to 24 and receiving benefits were also more likely than average to have heard of the Service through Jobcentre Plus (74%).

Non-priority group customers were less likely than average to have heard about the Service through Jobcentre Plus (47%). Figure 3.2 shows how key groups varied in terms of how they first found out about the National Careers Service.

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

Among website users the most common channel for first hearing about the National Careers Service was through online searches (25%), which is similar to Year 12 (21%) but significantly higher than Year 11 (16%). This was followed by Jobcentre Plus (22%), through social media (13%), from a teacher (8%) or from a National Careers Service adviser (10%).

In terms of key priority groups, customers unemployed for 12+ months (54%) and below level 3 qualifications (25%) were more likely than the average (22%) to have been signposted to the Service's website by Jobcentre Plus. Those who are 50+ and at risk of unemployment (67%) and 18-24 NEETs (67%) were most likely to have heard about the Service via Jobcentre Plus, but this was not significantly higher than the average due to base sizes.

Table 3.1: Website visitor referral⁶

Base:	Overall (501)	Reported disability (140)	50 plus and unemployed (12)	Under L3 (116)	L3 plus (261)	Unemployed for 12+ months (35)
Jobcentre Plus adviser	22	26	67	25	20	54
Online	25	28	8	22	27	17
Through social media	13	10	8	10	15	11

⁶ very small bases, caution interpreting results is advised

3.2 Previous use of the National Careers Service

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

Over one in ten customers (13%) had previously met with a National Careers Service adviser face-to-face, which is an increase compared with Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) (10%) and has almost doubled since Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) (7%).

Those who had been unemployed for more than 12 months were more likely to have spoken to an adviser previously (17%). Face-to-face customers were more than twice as likely to have previously met with an adviser face-to-face, compared with telephone customers (17% and 7% respectively).

One in five (21%) customers had previously spoken to an adviser over the telephone, which is consistent (21%) with Year 12.

Specific groups of customers that were more likely to have previously spoken to an adviser via the telephone were BAME customers (26%) and those with lower than Level 3 qualification (23%), as was the case in Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023), as well as those unemployed for more than 12 months (27%).

A quarter of customers (27%) had accessed the website before they used the Service, which has also increased since Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) (23%) and is a recovery in the downward trend from Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) (26%). Those who were younger were more likely to have previously visited the website (31% of those aged 19 or younger compared to 22% of those aged 50 or older), and BAME customers (31%) were more likely to have visited the website than white customers (25%). In terms of key groups, those that were 18 to 24 and NEET (29%) or had Level 4 or higher qualifications (31%) were more likely to have visited the website in the 3 months prior to their contact.

3.3 Reasons for contacting the National Careers Service

3.3.1 Telephone and face-to-face customers

General service needs

Before asking customers for more detail about their reasons for contacting the National Careers Service, they were asked if they were generally looking to explore career options, learning or training options, or both.

More wanted to explore career options (82%) than learning or training options (66%). Both of these have increased since Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) (79% and 63%).

Among the key groups, the results exhibited the same differences as in Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023): customers aged 50 plus and unemployed or at risk of unemployment and customers self-reporting a disability were less likely than average to be exploring career options (76% and 78%). By contrast, customers aged 18 to 24 and receiving benefits (84%), NEET customers aged 18 to 24 (85%), BAME customers (84%), and customers with qualifications Level 3 and above (86%) were more likely to be exploring career options.

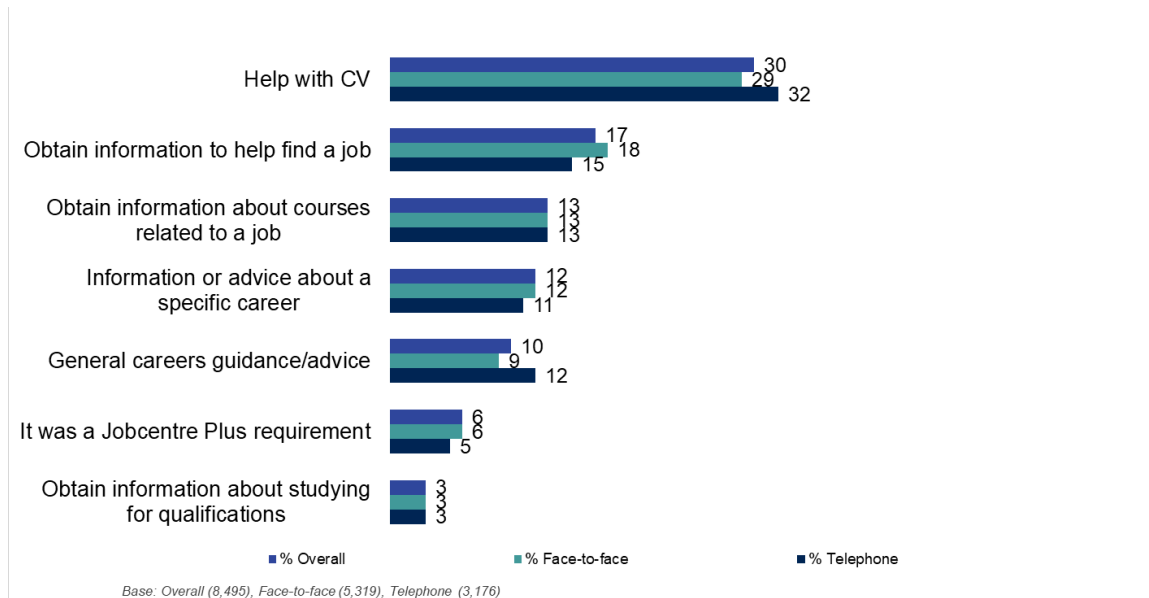
As was the case in Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023), seeking information on learning or training options was more common this year among female customers (68%, compared to 64% of male customers), BAME customers (72%), single parents (76%) and customers aged 25 to 49 (71%). Customers least likely to have sought this advice were NEET customers aged 18 to 24 (60%), customers unemployed for less than six months (62%) and those aged 50+ and at risk of unemployment (58%).

Specific service needs

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

As was the case in Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023), for telephone and face-to-face customers, the most common reason for contacting the Service this year was to get help in writing or developing a CV (30%), although this is a statistically significant decrease from Year 12 (34%) and Year 11 (36%). Telephone customers were again more likely to call the Service for this reason than face-to-face customers (32% compared to 29%), and BAME customers were less likely to have used the Service for this reason than white customers (23% compared to 35%). Customers more likely to contact the National Careers Service to get help with writing or developing their CV than customers overall (30%) were aged 50 and over and unemployed or at risk of redundancy (39%), unemployed for less than 6 months (37%), qualified below Level 3 (35%), unemployed for more than 12 months (34%), and 18-24 and NEET (33%).

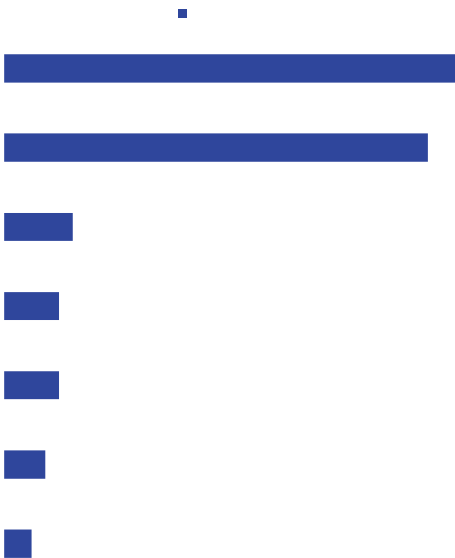
Figure 3.3: Reasons for contacting the National Careers Service (top mentions)



3.3.2 Website users

Consistent with Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023), the main reason website visitors used the site was to find information or advice on jobs, careers, or apprenticeships (35%). A third of website visitors were looking to get information or advice about a course or learning (32%), and below one in ten used it to access various tools or digital content, namely ‘Explore Careers’ (5%), ‘Careers Advice’ (4%), ‘Skills Health Check’ (4%), ‘Discover your skills and careers’ (3%), and ‘Find a course’ (2%). These results were a significant drop from Year 12. This information is displayed in Figure 3.4 below.

Figure 3.4: Top reasons for customers visiting the National Careers Service website



4 Experiences of using the Service

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

Seven in ten telephone customers had their enquiry handled in one call (69%), which is comparable with Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) (71%). Amongst those who had multiple calls, 86% dealt with the same adviser, which is consistent with Year 12 (87%).

Seven in nine face-to-face customers (77%) had just one meeting with an adviser, which is in line with Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) (75%), and one in five (20%) had more than one meeting, which has been consistent with Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) (22%). Customers who had been unemployed for longer than 12 months (23%) were more likely to have had more than one meeting.

Of those who had a face to face meeting, three fifths (58%) of those who had more than one meeting saw the same adviser each time. A similar proportion (61%) of customers had a meeting at a Jobcentre Plus office, which shows a large increase from 35% in Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) which in turn had increased from 10% in Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) as service delivery returned to normal following the Covid-19 outbreak. However, this is below the pre-pandemic figures in Year 9 (May 2019 to April 2020) when 75% of customers had a meeting at a Jobcentre Plus office.

The National Careers Service provides various tools to support its customers across multiple platforms. For all tools except the webchat, around four to six in ten (42% to 57%) of those that had been referred to the tool had used it, and the vast majority of customers that had used them (around 90%) found each tool useful. Around four in ten face-to-face and telephone customers reported that they had been followed-up by the National Careers Service since their initial contact (42%). These findings are consistent with previous waves.

4.1 Making contact with the National Careers Service by phone

Seven in ten telephone customer queries were handled in a single call in Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) (69%), which is comparable to Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) (71%). Consistent with Year 12, customers who were aged 18 to 24 and receiving benefits (83%) and those aged 18 to 24 and NEET (80%) were among those most likely to have their query dealt with in one call, as were female customers (72%, compared with 68% of male customers). In contrast BAME customers (65%) were the least likely to have their query resolved in one call. Amongst those who had multiple calls, seven in ten (86%) dealt with the same adviser which is similar to Year 12 (87%).

On average, customers spent 34 minutes speaking with their adviser during their first call, which is in line with the Year 12 average (May 2022 to April 2023) (35 minutes).

Eight in ten telephone customers reported that their adviser said they would send information outlining the conversation and what to do next (82%), as was the case in Year 12 (79%). However, among those with lower than Level 3 qualification (79%) and those unemployed for more than 12 months (76%), this proportion was lower, which is in line with the findings with respect to key groups in Year 12.

Overall, around nine in ten (88%) recall receiving this information, which is on par with Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) (86%). Female customers (91%) and those with Level 3 or higher qualifications (92%) were particularly likely to report they received the information, whereas those with qualifications below Level 3 (85%) were least likely to recall receiving it.

The vast majority of telephone customers found the information they received useful (92%), and six in ten found it very useful (56%). Seven per cent of customers found the information not very or not at all useful. These results are in line with Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) (93%, 57% and 5% respectively), demonstrating the continued value of the information provided to telephone customers, with very few not finding it useful. Single parents were more likely to find the information useful (68%), as were female customers (63% compared to 50% of male customers), and customers aged 25 to 49 (59%). In terms of key groups, those aged 18 to 24 and receiving benefits (96%) were the most likely to find the information useful.

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

Three quarters of customers (77%) had just one face-to-face meeting with a National Careers Service adviser, which has increased since Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) (75%). Around one in five (20%) had two or more meetings which is comparable to the findings for Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) (22%). Customers who had been unemployed for longer than 12 months (23%) were the most likely to have had at least two meetings. Male customers (21%) were more likely to have had multiple meetings than female customers (18%).

Face to face customers from the South West and Oxfordshire were more likely to have had one meeting (84% versus 77% average).

On average, customers spent 39 minutes speaking to their adviser, which is in line with Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) (39 minutes). Those who only had one meeting reported it took 41 minutes on average, compared to 33 minutes for the first meeting among those who required more than one. Meetings with younger customers aged 18 to 24 were shorter on average (37 minutes, compared with 40 minutes for those aged 50 and over). Meetings with customers with Level 4 or higher qualifications took longer (41 minutes on average), as did meetings with those who have used the Skills Health Check (42 minutes), and with customers in the North East and Cumbria (44 minutes) and South East (41 minutes).

The two main reasons for attending more than one meeting were that the adviser was reviewing or amending their CV (23%) or that the adviser could not answer all the questions during the

first meeting and needed to provide more information (18%). These were also the two main reasons reported in Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) (Both 20%). However, almost as many customers (17%) said they had more than one meeting because the adviser suggested they come back in.

Six in ten customers (58%) who had more than one meeting saw the same adviser each time, whereas four in ten (40%) saw different advisers. The majority (74%) of customers did not mind this, as was the case previously.

Six in ten customers (61%) had a meeting at a Jobcentre Plus office, which continues the upward trend from Year 10 (May 2020 to April 2021) (10%) to Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) (35%) as service delivery returns to normal from the adaptations that were necessary during the Covid-19 pandemic. However, this proportion remains below pre-pandemic levels of 75% in Year 9. Customers aged 50 or above and at risk of unemployment (70%), those unemployed for less than 6 months (70%) and younger customers (67% of those aged 19 or younger) were among those most likely to have had a meeting at a Jobcentre Plus office.

4.3 Using the National Careers Service website

Customers who used the National Careers Service website were asked which tools or features they had accessed. The most commonly used feature that customers were referred to was Careers Advice (57%). The proportion of customers who had accessed Careers Advice is higher than in Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) (52%). This was followed by Find A Course (47%), Explore Careers (44%), Discover your Skills and Careers (43%) all of which were consistent with Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023). Skills Health Check was accessed by 42% of customers, which was significantly higher than in Year 12 (38%). There was limited variation among key groups on the features they had used; those without a disability were more likely to have used Careers Advice (59%, compared with 57% overall). The majority of customers who used the various tools and features found them useful, as shown in Table 4.1. The Careers Advice tool was found to be the most useful with over nine in ten (94%) rating it as useful, consistent with Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) (94%), and around six in ten (56%) rated it as 'very' useful.

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

	Careers advice	Explore Careers	Webchat	Discover your Skills and Careers	Skills Health Checks	Find A Course
Base: All who used feature	2,660	1,714	463	914	650	1,794
Very/quite useful	94%	92%	90%	89%	89%	87%

Not very/at all useful	5%	7%	8%	9%	9%	11%
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4.4 Use and usefulness of common National Careers Service tools

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

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

4.4.1 Skills Health Check

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

Of the face-to-face customers, half (50%) went through the Skills Health Check diagnostic tool in a meeting, consistent with Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) (51%). Face-to-face customers who had the same adviser (if they had more than one meeting) were more likely to have gone through the tool (57% compared to 49% who had different advisers). In terms of key groups, those unemployed for more than 12 months were most likely to have gone through the Skills Health Check (53%). By region, those in the West Midlands and Staffordshire were most likely to report that they went through the Skills Health Check (54%) and customers in the East Midlands and Northamptonshire and Yorkshire and Humber were least likely (both 45%). Those who are satisfied with the Service were also more likely to have used the tool (52% compared to 35% who were dissatisfied with the Service).

Nine in ten (91%) customers that had gone through the Skills Health Check said this it was useful, which is comparable to Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) (90%), and half (50%) said it was 'very' useful. Fewer than one in ten customers (7%) found the Skills Health Check to be not very or not all useful. Single parents (63%), BAME customers (58%) and customers aged 25 to 49 (55%) were more likely to say that it was very useful, whereas those with Level 3 or Level 4 or higher qualifications (8% and 9% respectively) were more likely to say that the Skills Health Check was not very useful.

The main reasons given by customers for not rating the Skills Health Check as useful were that it told them things they already knew (34%) and that the questions weren't relevant (28%).⁷

⁷ Small base size (69) should be treated with caution.

Overall, one in four (25%) customers said their adviser referred them to the Skills Health Check digital tool, which has remained consistent from Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) (25%). As was the case in Year 12, telephone customers (32%) were more likely than face-to-face customers (19%) to say they had been referred to this tool. There were few differences among key groups, although BAME customers (23%) were less likely to have been referred. Customers with an action plan were again much more likely to report their adviser referred them to the Skills Health Check (33% compared to 13% of those with no action plan).

Of those who had been referred to Skills Health Check, four in ten said that they had used it (42%), which is higher than in Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) (38%). Telephone customers were more likely than face-to-face customers to have used the diagnostic tool (46% compared to 37%), as were those with an action plan (44%, compared to 35% of those without). Among key groups, customers with Level 3 or higher qualifications (50%) were more likely to have used it and those with below Level 3 qualifications (34%) and single parents (27%) were less likely to have used the tool.

Nine in ten customers who used this tool found it useful (89%), which is in line with Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) (89%) and includes 50% who found it 'very useful'. Only nine percent did not find this tool useful.

4.4.2 Discover your Skills and Careers

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

Three in ten customers (31%) recalled going through Discover your Skills and Careers with their adviser in their meeting. This is broadly on par with Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) (29%). Similar proportions of customers also reported they did not recall going through Discover your Skills and Careers (55%) compared with 56% in Year 12. As was the case previously, telephone customers (38%) were more likely than face-to-face customers (26%) to recall being referred to this service by their adviser. There was also variation among key groups, with those aged 18 to 24 and receiving benefits or NEET (both 37%), and without a disability (33%) more likely to say they had been referred, whereas those self-reporting a disability (28%), those unemployed between 6 and 12 months (25%), or aged 50 and above and at risk of unemployment (23%) were less likely. Those with an action plan were also more likely to have been referred (40% compared to 18% with no action plan).

Overall, four in ten customers (43%) that were referred to Discover your Skills and Careers said that they had used it, in line with previous results. Usage of the tool was higher among telephone customers (49% compared to 37% of face-to-face customers), customers aged 18 to 24 (47%) and those with higher levels of qualifications (47% level 3 or higher).

The vast majority of customers who used this tool found it useful (89%), and nearly half (48%) found it 'very useful'. Only 9% did not find it useful. These results are consistent with Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023). Single parents (1%) were less likely than average (9%) to say they found the Discover your skills and career tool not useful. Those with an action plan were more

likely than those without to find it useful (91% compared to 83%), as were those who were satisfied with the Service (92%).⁸

The main reasons why customers did not find the Discover your Skills and Careers useful were that they did not find the questions relevant, and they thought it told them things they already knew. However, the small base size makes these findings indicative only.

Among face-to-face customers, four in ten (39%) went through the Discover your Skills and Careers tool in their meeting, comparable to Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) (38%). Those who had more than one face-to-face meeting (47%) and who had the same adviser (48%) were more likely to have gone through the diagnostic tool, as were single parents (44%). As was the case previously, almost all of these face-to-face customers found the tool useful (94%) and around half (55%) said it was very useful, compared with just six percent who did not find the tool useful. 18-24 year olds, both those receiving benefits and those NEET (both 97%) were more likely to find it useful.

4.4.3 Explore Careers

Four in ten customers (47%) were referred to Explore Careers by their adviser. This was more common among face-to-face customers than telephone customers (48%, compared with 45% of telephone customers). Of the key groups, those aged 18 to 24 and NEET (51%) or those without a disability (49%) were more likely to have been referred to Explore Careers, whereas customers self-reporting a disability (43%) or those aged 50 and above and at risk of unemployment (40%) were less likely to have been referred to Explore Careers.

Amongst those who have been referred, just under half (44%) have gone on to use the tool. Those with qualifications above Level 3 and Level 4 (47% and 48%, compared with 40% of those with qualifications below Level 3) or that had been unemployed for less than 6 months (46%) were more likely to have used it. Customers over 50 and at risk of unemployment were less likely to have used the tool (40%). Overall, the majority of these customers found the tool useful (92%) and nearly half found it very useful (46%). All of these results are in line with Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023).

4.4.4 Find a Course

Nearly half (46%) customers were referred to Find a Course by their adviser. This was more likely to be the case amongst customers aged 25 to 49 (48%), and BAME customers (48%). Those with Level 4 or higher qualifications (44%), self-reporting a disability (43%) and 50+ and at risk of unemployment (39%) were less likely to have been referred.

Amongst those who have been referred, less than half (47%) have gone on to use the tool. Female customers were more likely to have used the tool (50%, compared with 45% of male customers), and as with other diagnostic tools, usage was also higher among those with

⁸ The figure for dissatisfied customers (25%) has not been included in the main text as the base was too low to report on (base of 5 customers).

qualifications at Level 3 or higher (51%) and those with an action plan (52%, compared with 34% of those without and action plan).

Most of these customers found the tool useful (87%), and half (50%) found it very useful, whereas just 11% said it was not useful. There were few differences among the key groups, those unemployed for longer than 12 months (92%) and those with lower than Level 3 qualifications (90%) were more likely to say that the tool was useful. In comparison, those with higher than Level 3 qualifications (12%) and those with Level 4 or higher qualifications (16%) and those Unemployed between 6 and 12 months (19%) were more likely to say they didn't find it useful.

The results for this tool are all consistent with Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023).

4.4.5 Webchat

Around one in four customers (23%) were referred to webchat by their adviser, similar to Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) (23%). Those more likely to be referred to the Service were those aged 25 to 49 (24%) and those either working (26%) or in learning (30%), whereas customers aged 18 to 24 and NEET (20%) or self-reporting a disability (20%) were less likely to have been referred.

Amongst those who have been referred, a quarter (25%) have gone on to use the tool. Those in learning were more likely to have used it (36%) as were BAME customers (30%). Usage of this tool was lower among customers aged 18-24 and NEET (18%) and those unemployed for less than 6 months (20%).

As with other tools, nine in ten of those that had used webchat said it was useful (90%). Six in ten (58%) rated it as 'very useful', whereas less than one in ten (8%) said it was not useful. Female customers were more likely to rate the tool as useful (93%, compared to 87% of male customers), as were those with an action plan (93%, compared with 83% of those without).

4.4.6 Skills Action Plan

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

Six in ten telephone and face-to-face customers recalled having a Skills Action Plan drawn up (61%) which is significantly higher compared to Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) (59%). Those with Level 3 qualifications or higher (66%) were more likely to recall drawing up an action plan, as were female customers (63%, compared to 59% for male customers) and those aged 25-49 (63%). In contrast, those aged 50 and above (32%) and those self-reporting a disability (31%) were more likely than average (29%) to say they did not have an action plan drawn up.

Furthermore, among face-to-face customers, those who had multiple meetings (67%, compared with 58% who only had one) and who had the same adviser (71%, compared with 63% who had

different advisers) were more likely to recall a Skills Action Plan being drawn up. Similarly, telephone customer who had multiple calls (68%) were more likely to recall a Skills Action Plan being drawn up than those who had one call (64%). This suggests that having a more intensive level of interaction may relate to recalling having a Skills Action Plan.

Among those who recalled having a Skills Action Plan, half of customers felt they had a great deal of involvement in drawing up their plan (50%), while a further four in ten (37%) reported that they had some involvement, which is in line with previous years. Single parents (56%), female customers (53%), those aged 25 to 49 (51%) were more likely to report having a great deal of involvement.

Nine in ten customers who recalled having a Skills Action Plan found it useful (90%), consistent with Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) (90%), and half (50%) rated it as 'very useful' (again consistent with 50% in Year 12). Single parents (61%) and BAME customers (55%) were more likely to find the Action Plan very useful. Just eight percent found the Skills Action Plan 'not very' or 'not at all' useful, and this was more common among those with Level 3 or Level 4 or higher qualifications (9% and 10%); as was the case in Year 12, the main reasons were that it was too general/insufficiently tailored (28%), they did not think it was relevant to their situation (22%), or they already knew the information (16%).

4.5 Follow-up actions

4.5.1 Reported follow-up by the National Careers Service

Four in ten face-to-face and telephone customers said that the National Careers Service had been in touch with them again after their initial contact (42%), comparable with Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) (41%).

Those with Level 3 or Level 4 or Higher qualifications (44% and 46%), 50+ and at risk of unemployment (45%) and Unemployed for less than 6 months (44%) and without a self-reported disability (43%) were more likely than average to have received follow-up. In contrast, those aged 18 to 24 and receiving benefits (61%) or NEET (60%), those with qualifications below level 3 (58%) and those self-reporting a disability (58%) were more likely than average (55%) to have not had any contact since their initial contact. In terms of region, Yorkshire and the Humber (50%), and the North East and Cumbria (49%) and East of England and Buckinghamshire (48%) were most likely to have received a follow-up as shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Proportion of customers who have had follow-up contact from the Service

	Total	London	East of England & Bucks.	East Midlands & North.	Yorkshire & Humber	West Midlands & Staff.	South West & Ox.	South East	North West	North East & Cumbria
Base:	8,495	1,072	862	765	1,283	1,172	496	904	975	966

No	55%	53%	49%	57%	47%	60%	60%	53%	64%	48%
Yes	42%	44%	48%	39%	50%	36%	37%	43%	33%	49%

4.5.2 Follow up actions carried out by online customers

Online customers were asked what they were likely to do as a result of visiting the National Careers Service website (Figure 4.1). The most common response was applying or searching for a job (29%), followed by seeking further advice (21%) and visiting another website before making final decisions (18%) tools. These findings are consistent with Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023).

Figure 4.1: Online customers’ planned next steps after visiting the National Careers Service website (top mentions)



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 the helpfulness and professionalism of the adviser. It also details satisfaction with specific aspects of the National Careers Service website.

The overall quality of service provided by the National Careers Service continues to be highly rated by telephone and face-to-face customers, with over nine in ten agreeing or strongly agreeing that it was good quality (92% and 93% respectively). There was an increase in the proportion of customers strongly agreeing that the quality of the Service was good between Year 13 Q1 and Q2 (51% and 54%) and a decrease after that during Q3 and Q4 (50% and

51%). In line with the positive evaluation of service levels, the majority of face-to-face and telephone customers were satisfied with the National Careers Service overall (86%).

Once again those most engaged with the Service and who recall using the Skills Health Check (95% vs 91% who did not use Skills Health Check) or had a Skills Action Plan (96% vs 87% without an Action Plan) were most likely to agree the quality of the Service was good. These customers were also more likely to be satisfied with the National Careers Service as a whole.

Among telephone and face-to-face customers, satisfaction with individual aspects of the Service remains high. With one exception (adviser's knowledge of jobs and training opportunities in the local area) eight to nine in ten customers were satisfied with each element of the information and advice they received. The metrics that the highest proportion of customers were satisfied with were the professionalism of the adviser (95%), convenience of date and time of meeting (94%), and clarity of information (93%). As in Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023), the highest satisfaction rating was given to the professionalism of the customer's adviser (95%).

An important metric when assessing levels of customer satisfaction is the likelihood of customers to recommend a service, and on this measure the National Careers Service continues to score highly. Although it is two percentage points lower than in Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023), almost nine in ten face-to-face or telephone customers had either already recommended or said they would recommend the National Careers Service (84%).

Satisfaction with the National Careers Service website has decreased since Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) (63%). This year, just over half (54%) were satisfied to at least some degree. Half of online customers (50%) said they had already recommended the National Careers Service website. This is similar to Year 12 (43%) and significantly higher than Year 11 (34%).

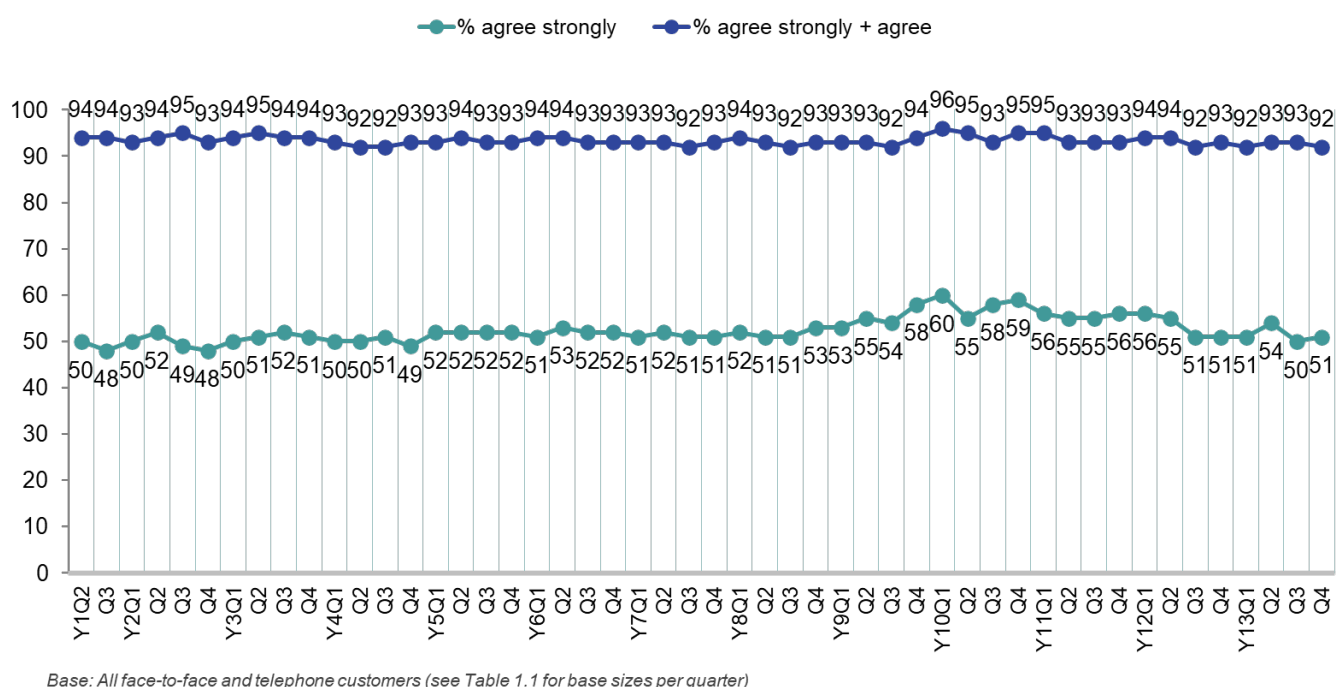
4.6 Overall perceptions about the quality of the Service

4.6.1 Face-to-face and telephone customers

The overall quality of the Service continues to be rated highly by telephone and face-to-face customers. Most Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) customers agreed that it was good (93%), while only a small minority disagreed (6%).

Ratings have been consistently high over time but the proportions of those who strongly agree that the Service is good have slightly decreased since Year 11 (Figure 5.1). The fall from 54% in Year 13 Q2 to 50% in Q3 and 51% in Q4 is statistically significant.

Figure 4.2: Agreement overall quality of service was good, by survey quarter



Within every customer group at least 90 percent agreed that the overall service was good. But there were some variations, as follows:

- Younger customers were most likely to agree the Service was good (96% of those aged 19 or younger and 95% of 18-24 year-olds) while those aged 50 plus were the least likely to agree (90%).
- There was slightly stronger agreement among women (93%) than men (92%) that the Service was good.
- Agreement that the quality of the Service was good was also relatively high among those who have been unemployed for six to 12 months (91%) and among single parents (93%).
- In each region at least 90% of customers agreed that the Service was good. It was highest in Yorkshire & Humber (95%), North East & Cumbria (95%) and the South East (95%). These figures are significantly higher than in London (90%).
- NEET customers aged 18 to 24 and customers aged 18 to 24 receiving benefits were more likely than average to agree that the Service was good (96% and 94% respectively).
- 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 (95%). As in Year 12, those who had a Skills Action Plan (96%) were more likely than those who did not (87%) to agree that the quality of the Service was good.

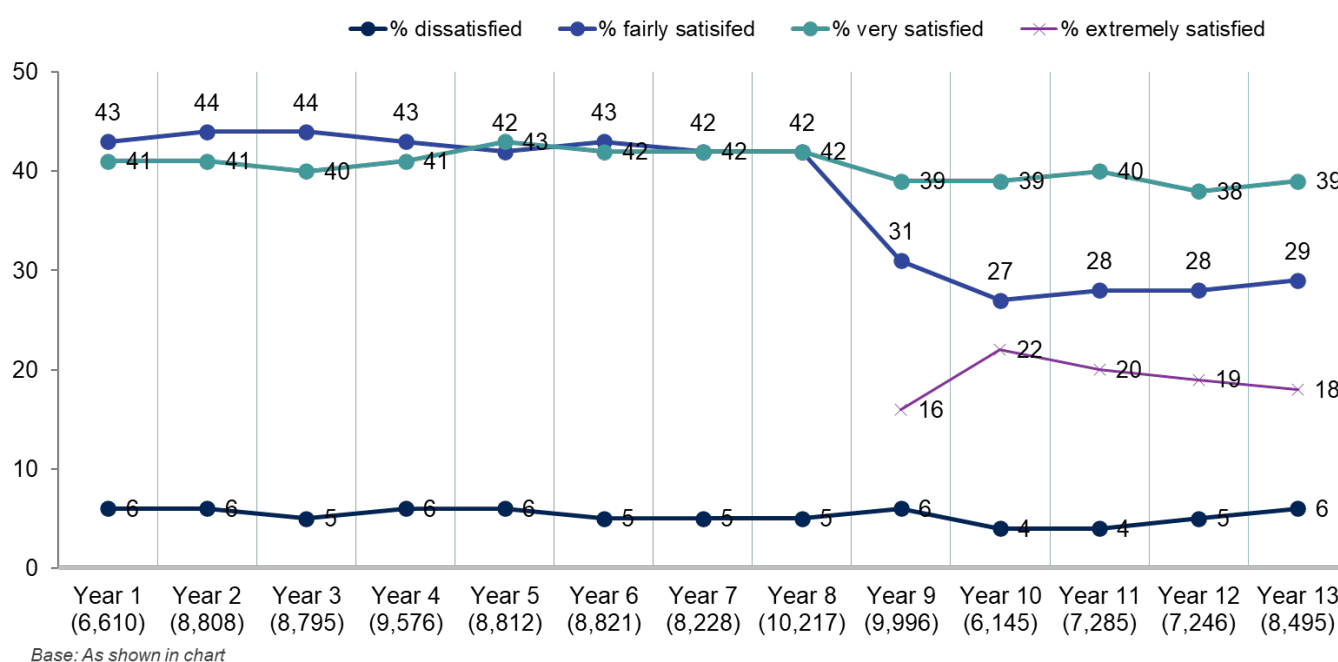
- Among customers who had multiple calls, those who only spoke to one adviser were significantly more likely than customers who spoke to multiple advisers to regard the Service as good (93% compared to 87%). This is an equal difference when compared to Year 12 (94% compared to 88%).

4.7 Overall satisfaction with the National Careers Service

4.7.1 Face-to-face and telephone customers

Most face-to-face and telephone customers were satisfied with the National Careers Service as a whole (86%). This is consistent with Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023). Only 6% of customers were dissatisfied, with all figures similar to previous years, as shown in Figure 5.2 below.

Figure 4.3: Ratings of satisfaction and dissatisfaction amongst face-to-face and telephone customers⁹



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

- Young customers were more likely to be satisfied than older customers. 89% of those 19 or younger and 88% of 18 to 24-year-olds were satisfied compared to 85% of customers aged 50 plus.
- Female customers were more likely to be satisfied (87% compared with 85% male customers). Among single parents, satisfaction stands at 87%.

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

- Customers aged 18 to 24 and receiving benefits (89%) were more likely to be satisfied than average. This figure is similar to that recorded in Year 12 (88%), but lower than in Year 11 (91%).
- Customers aged 50 or above and at risk of unemployment (86%) were in line with average satisfaction levels.
- Customers who self-reported a disability were less likely to be satisfied than customers who did not self-report a disability (84% compared to 86%).
- Telephone customers who had one call were more likely to be satisfied with the Service (87%), compared to the average (86%).
- Telephone customers who had multiple calls were more likely to be satisfied if they spoke to the same adviser rather than multiple people (87% compared to 82%).
- Customers who had their meetings in a Jobcentre Plus (88%) office were more likely to be satisfied than customers who did not (80%).
- By region, customers in the South East (91%), the North East & Cumbria (90%) and Yorkshire and Humber (89%) were the most likely to be satisfied. Satisfaction was lower in London (83%) and East Midlands & Northamptonshire (83%).
- As was the case for the rating of overall service quality, satisfaction levels were higher among customers who recalled using the Skills Health Check (89%, compared to 83% of those who did not) or agreeing a Skills Action Plan (91% compared to 77% who did not).

Respondents who were satisfied with the Service were asked why this was the case. The main reasons for satisfaction relate to the individual advisers that customers dealt with. Most frequently, customers said that the adviser was knowledgeable or gave good advice (48%), while the other main reasons were that the adviser was friendly, personable, or understanding (33%), gave good advice about CVs or generally helped with their CV (33%), or gave good advice relating to courses or training (16%). As shown in Figure 5.3 below, these responses were very similar to those seen in Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023).

Figure 5.3: Top reasons for satisfaction with service in Year 13, Year 12 and Year 11

Base: All telephone and face-to-face satisfaction customers who are satisfied (Year 11: 6,405, Year 12: 6,263, Year 13: 7,342)

Among the small proportion of dissatisfied customers (6%), the main reasons for dissatisfaction were also consistent with previous findings, and are summarised below:

- The most common criticism, as stated by a majority of those dissatisfied with the Service, was they did not feel they received the help or information they wanted and/or needed (58%).

“There were no recommendations and no ideas of courses that would help.”

- Almost three in ten dissatisfied customers reported a lack of follow-up from advisers (26%).

“Lack of communication & follow-up was not as discussed. Just received generic email.”

- There was some criticism of not being helped to get a relevant course or training (17%).
- Some customers wanted help with their CV and felt the support they received was insufficient (11%).

Other criticisms focussed on skills and knowledge of advisers. One in twenty of those dissatisfied with the Service said their adviser(s) lacked knowledge about local job or training opportunities (7%), was ‘unprofessional’ (4%), or did not help the customer to get a job (1%).

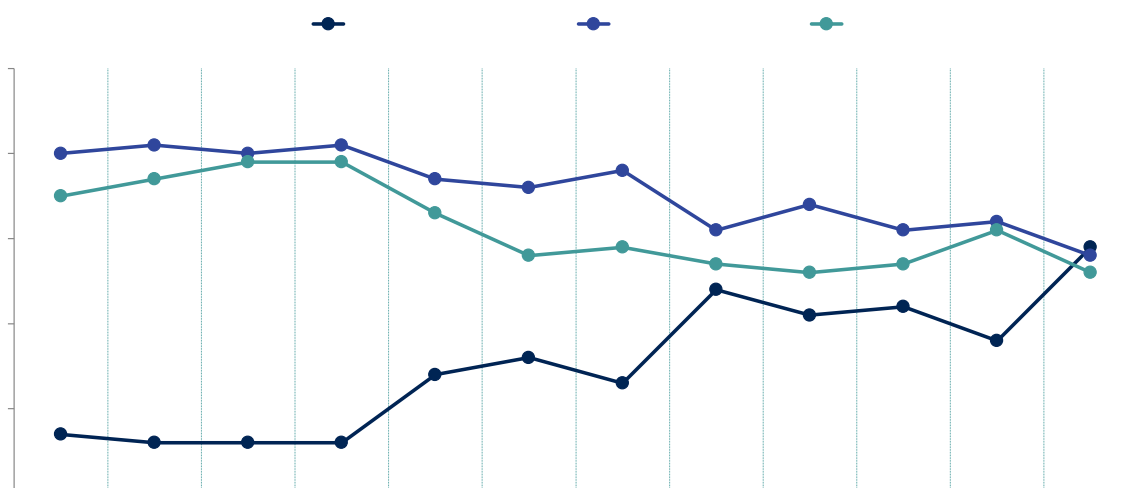
“Helpful but basic service. I had already done the things they advised me to do and needed something more advanced.”

“Just gave general information not specific to me. I already knew from online websites what he told me”.

“They were not knowledgeable about my field.”

Following the website’s redesign in Year 6, approximately two-thirds of customers were satisfied with the Service. In Year 7, satisfaction reached 67%. However, in Years 9, 10 and 11 (May 2021 to April 2023) there was a significant decline and satisfaction levels were between 58% and 59%. This trend may have started to be reversed in Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) when satisfaction increased to 63%. However, there was a significant increase in dissatisfaction this year (Year 13 April 2023 to March 2024) from 18% last year to 29% this year. This is matched by a significant decrease in satisfaction from 63% to just over half (54%).

Figure 4.4: Ratings of satisfaction and dissatisfaction amongst online customers



There were some notable differences among online customers between priority groups and demographic groups:

- Satisfaction was much higher among BAME than white customers (73%, compared to 51%). Over a third of (35%) BAME customers were ‘very satisfied’ compared to 25% of white customers.
- Customers with qualifications below level 3 (64%) were more likely to be satisfied with the website than those with qualifications at Level 3 and above (35%) or Level 4 and above (52%).
- Single parents were one of the key groups most likely to be satisfied with the website (73%).

- Over six in ten (63%) of those who have been unemployed for 12 months or more were satisfied with the online service.
- Customers aged 50 or above and unemployed or at risk of unemployment were also more likely to be satisfied with the website (67%) than not.

Slightly less than three in ten customers (29%) were dissatisfied with the website. Differences in dissatisfaction between subgroups suggests that the website caters to the needs of some customers more than others. For example, customers with Level 3 qualifications or above (32%) were more likely to be dissatisfied with the website than customers with below Level 3 qualifications (19%), suggesting the website content is more helpful for lower qualified customers. On the other end of the spectrum, customers who were not employed nor in education or training (including those unemployed and looking for work, retired, unable to work due to poor health, or homemakers) (51%) were much more likely to be dissatisfied with the website than customers who were already employed (27%) or in education or training (12%) when using the website.

Satisfaction is a subjective measure and depends on the customer's interpretation of the word and their overall experience of the website. Dissatisfaction of the Service website may therefore be driven by expectations that were not delivered rather than poor quality content. This could explain why customers further from the labour market (those not in employment, education or training) were more dissatisfied than employed customers, while at the same time those likely to be closer to the labour market (those with higher qualifications) are also more dissatisfied than customers with lower qualifications.

In Year 12 the most common reason for dissatisfaction was the website's layout (22%). However, the situation has improved in Year 13 and the proportion of dissatisfied customers mentioning the website's poor layout has fallen to 9%. The most common reason for dissatisfaction this year was website instability (18%), including things such as out-of-date or faulty links, and general website or webchat crashes.

The other main reasons for website users' dissatisfaction are summarised below:

- Some customers felt the information was not specific enough, too generic or lacked relevance (15%). However, very few of those dissatisfied with the website said the information was poor, unclear or difficult to understand (3%).

"The Skills Assessment had irrelevant questions entirely out of context. It was very generalised"

- Some customers could not find what they were looking for, sometimes linked to a perceived poor layout (9%). Others complained of a general lack of information (9%).

"I searched for a specific course, and it brought up the wrong courses. When I do find the correct course, it's hundreds of miles away from me"

“It’s out-of-date. A number of listed providers and courses haven’t run in over a year or in some cases don’t have a functioning website anymore”

- Another reason for dissatisfaction was linked to issues with the webchat and not being able to contact National Careers Service staff or finding them unresponsive via this channel (8%).

A fifth of customers who were satisfied with the Service (20%) said that they liked the website because it was easy to use, which is similar to the 19% who said this at Year 12. A further 20% considered the website to have helpful and relevant information, while 13% described it as being clear with a good layout that made it easy to find what was being looked for. Except for being “easy to use,” the proportion of customers who gave these responses is broadly in line with Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023).

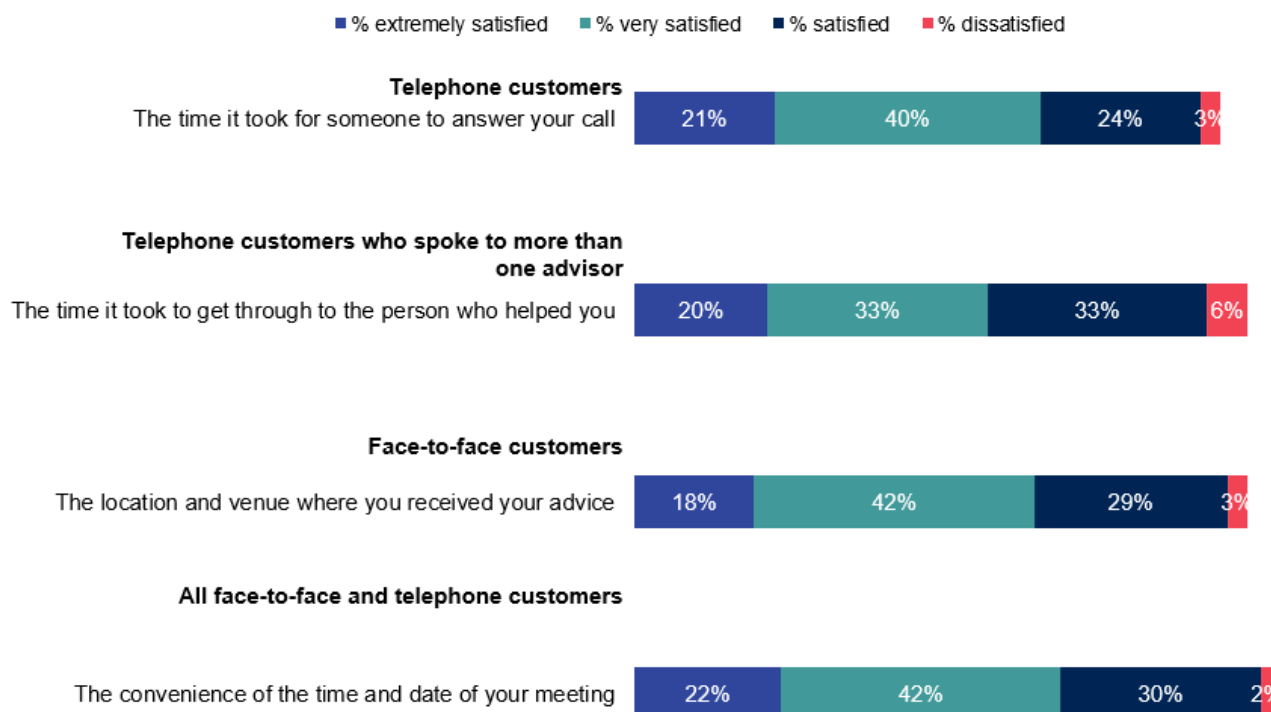
“Really clear and easy to find what I was looking for and to navigate around”

“Straight to the point information, which is useful to provide a general idea”

4.8 Satisfaction with different aspects of the adviser sessions

Face-to-face and telephone customers of the National Careers Service were highly satisfied with specific aspects of their session(s), which is similar to previous years.

Figure 4.5: Customer satisfaction with logistical arrangements



Base: Telephone IAG customers (2,686), Telephone customers who spoke to more than one adviser (371), Face-to-face customers (5,319), All face-to-face and telephone customers (8,005)

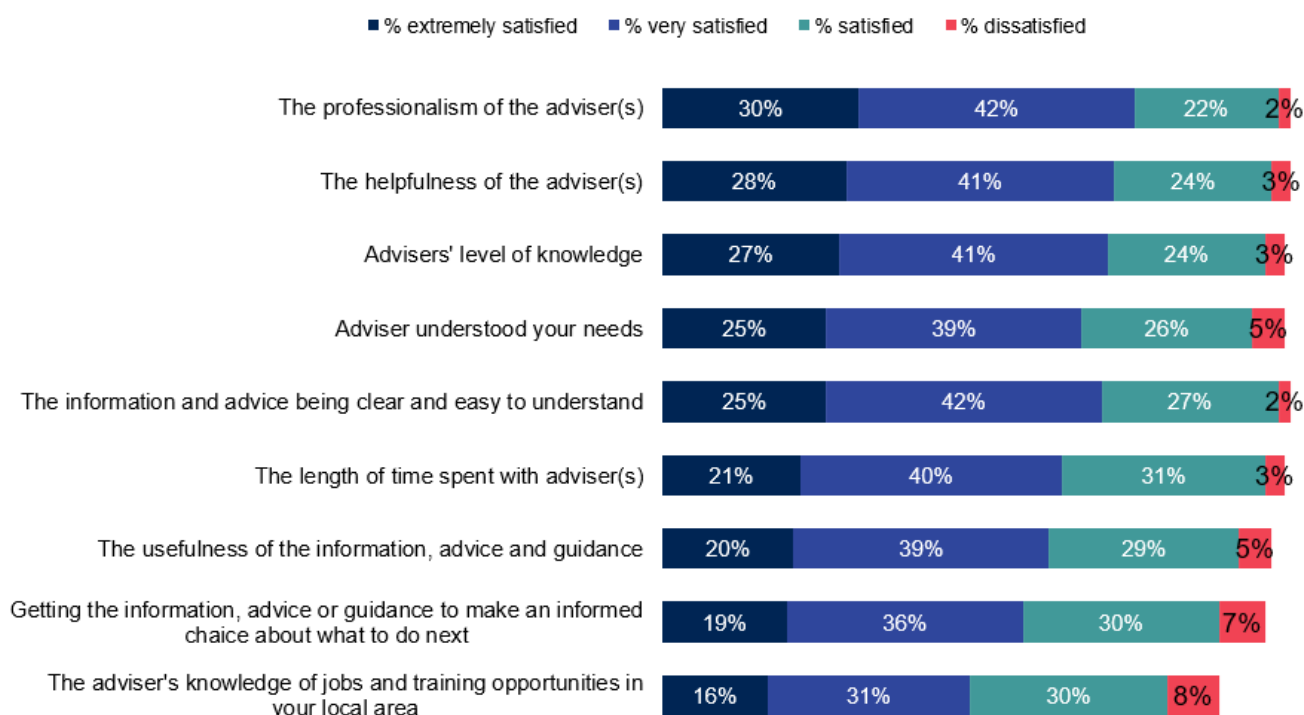
Over eight in ten (85%) telephone customers were satisfied with the time it took for someone to answer their call. Amongst telephone customers who spoke to one adviser, 86% were satisfied with the time it took to get through to the person who helped them. Both figures are similar to Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) (85% and 88%, respectively).

Approximately nine in ten face-to-face customers were satisfied with the convenience of their appointment time (94%) and the location and venue where they received their advice (89%). These figures are also similar to Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) and perhaps represents the 'norm' now that those who prefer face-to-face meetings have this option following the easing of pandemic-related restrictions.

Customers also remained positive about both the assistance their advisers provided and the content and outcome of the National Careers Service intervention. As illustrated in Figure 5.6, with one exception, approximately nine in ten customers were satisfied with each element of the information and advice they received. The exception was the adviser's knowledge of jobs and training opportunities in the local area for which satisfaction stands at 78%. As In Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) the highest satisfaction rating was given to the professionalism of the customer's adviser (95%).

No element had more than one percentage point difference in satisfaction to Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023).

Figure 4.6: Satisfaction with information and advice from the Service



Base: All face-to-face and telephone customers (8,495)

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

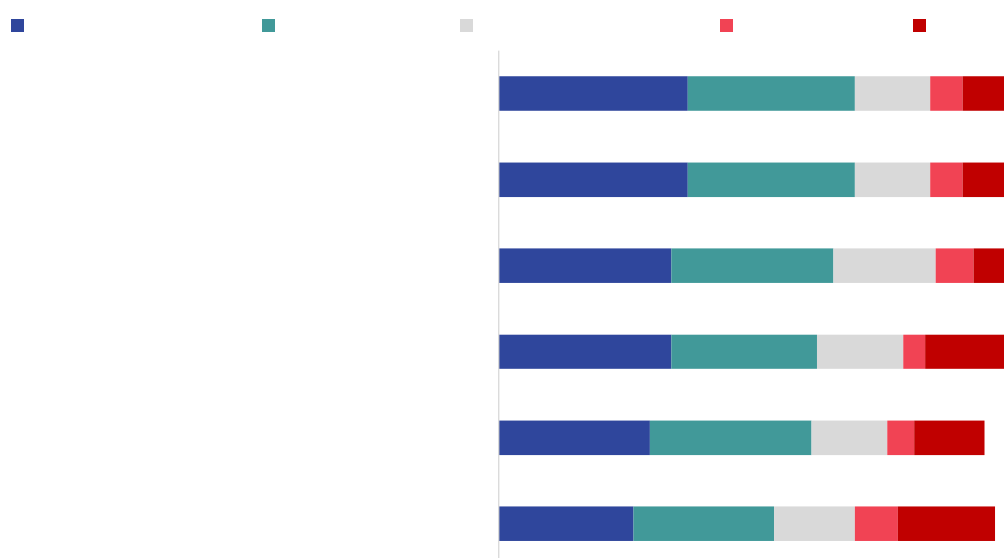
- Customers who had a deeper level of engagement with the Service overall were more likely than those who did not to be satisfied with the various aspects of the information and advice received. For example, those who recalled using the Skills Health Check were more likely to be satisfied with the helpfulness of the adviser (95% compared to those who had not, 90%).
- Customers who were 18 to 24 NEETs were more likely than average to have higher levels of satisfaction on several measures. They were significantly more likely to say they were satisfied with the following measures: the professionalism of the adviser, the helpfulness of the adviser, the advisers' level of knowledge, the adviser understood their needs, the information, advice and guidance was useful, the information, advice, and guidance allowed them to make informed choices, and the adviser's knowledge of local job opportunities.

4.9 Satisfaction with the different aspects of the website

Visitors to the National Careers Service website rated seven elements of its content and usability using a five-point scale of 'very good' to 'very poor'. The most highly regarded aspect of the website was its ease of use, which two-thirds (66%) said was 'good' or 'very good.' Two-thirds also said the information on the website was clear and easy to understand (66%) and had a 'good' design (62%). The lowest level of 'satisfaction' was seen with respect to the website's information being relevant to customers' personal circumstances (51%).

In general, the ratings are a decrease from those recorded in Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023).

Figure 4.7 Customer ratings of various aspects of the website



The key variations between customer groups are detailed below and are similar to the differences in Year 12:

- BAME customers were more likely than white customers to rate as good the ease of finding information (75% compared to 55%), the quality of information (74% compared to 55%) and that the information available was relevant to their personal circumstances (69% compared to 48%).
- Customers aged 25-49 were more positive about most aspects of the website compared to those aged 50 and above. For instance, 66% of 25-49-year-olds said the information was good quality, compared to 54% of customers aged 50 and above, and 66% of 25-49-year-olds said it was easy to find the information they needed, compared to 52% of customers aged 50 and above.
- Those with qualifications under Level 3 were more likely to say that the information on the website was relevant to their circumstances (62%) than those with Level 3 or above qualifications (49%).

4.10 Recommending the National Careers Service

4.10.1 Face-to-face and telephone customers

Just under nine in ten customers had either recommended the National Careers Service or said they would recommend it to a friend, relative or colleague (84%). This is a significant decrease compared to Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) when it was 86% and Year 11 when it was four percentage points higher at 88%.

The following groups were more likely than average (84%) to say they had either recommended or would recommend the Service:

- Single parents (87%) and people of white ethnicity (85% compared to 83% among BAME customers)
- Younger customers (87% of people aged 18-24, compared to 81% of those 50 and over).
- Those who are aged 18 to 24 and NEET, and those who are 18 to 24 and receiving benefits (both 87%).
- People accessing the Service in Yorkshire & Humber (87%), North East & Cumbria (89%) or the South East (87%).
- Those who experienced relatively straightforward access. For example, those who accessed the Service with one call (87%) or only had one adviser across multiple telephone calls (87%).
- Those who had engaged with National Careers Service tools such as the Skills Action Plan (89%) and the Skills Health Check (88%).

- Those who were satisfied with the Service overall (91%).

4.10.2 Online customers

Half of online customers have already recommended the National Careers Service website (50%). This is a significant increase from Year 11 (34%) and a non-significant increase from Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) when the figure was 43%.

The groups significantly more likely than average (49%) to say that they have recommended the National Careers Service were those with below Level 3 qualifications (62% compared to 49% with Level 3 or above qualifications) and BAME customers (72% compared to 46% of white customers).

4.11 Improvements to the National Careers Service

4.11.1 Face-to-face and telephone customers

The majority of face-to-face and telephone customers could not think of any improvements that the National Careers Service needed to make (58%), a significant decrease from Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) when it was 64%. The two main suggestions for improvements remain consistent with Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023), which are suggestions for more follow-up after initial meetings (9%) and for help to be more specific or better tailored (9%). No more than 6% of respondents gave any other type of suggestion.

Out of all age groups, younger customers aged 19 and under (76%) and 18-24 (69%) were more likely to be content with the Service and suggest no improvements than customers aged 50 and above (56%).

In terms of key groups, those 18 to 24 and receiving benefits (73%), 18 to 24 and NEET (71%), with qualifications under Level 3 (69%) or have been unemployed for more than 12 months (67%) were the most likely to say they could not think of any improvements.

Accessing the Service in Yorkshire & Humber and North East & Cumbria (both 67%) said no improvements came to mind or were required. Customers accessing the Service in London were least likely than average to say there were no changes required (50%).

4.11.2 Online customers

When asked how the website could be improved, just under four in ten (38%) website visitors felt that the website was fine as it is, which is lower than Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) (44%), but not significantly. A fifth (19%) said they were not sure how it could be improved, which is in line with Year 12 (22%). As in Year 12, the most common suggestions for improvements this year included improving the layout and making it easier to navigate (6%) and have more information on training courses and qualifications (3%). No more than 2% of customers suggested other types of improvements, such as improving the skills test tool and providing more detailed job profiles or career information. These suggested improvements are illustrated by the verbatim comments below:

“Provide specific guidance about a specific course and job sector”

“Build something for the older people. I did not feel like it was for my age group”

“Have more localised advisers”

5 Customer Progression

Overall, Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) employment progression has remained consistent with Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023), both of which were lower than Year 11, while learning progression has increased. Almost all face-to-face and telephone customers (97%) experienced some form of positive outcome in the six months since their call or meeting. Learning progression averaged 70% in Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024), a significant increase from Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) (67%).

Half of customers (50%) achieved employment progression, consistent with 50% in Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023). Those with Level 3 or 4 or higher qualifications, 18-24 year olds, those working or looking for work, or unemployed for less than 6 months, white customers, those who did not self-report a disability and those not in priority groups were more likely to achieve employment progression than average. Ninety-three percent of face-to-face and 94% of telephone customers indicated that they had gained some form of Personal Added Value since their contact with the National Careers Service. This was highest amongst younger customers aged 19 or younger (98%).

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

5.1 Overview of the extent of progression

5.1.1 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:

- Learning progression: whether customers have undertaken formal or informal learning or training in the six months since the call/meeting.
- Employment progression: whether customers have entered new employment, changed career, were promoted, started an apprenticeship¹⁰ or improved their salary, and/or have taken up voluntary work.
- 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,

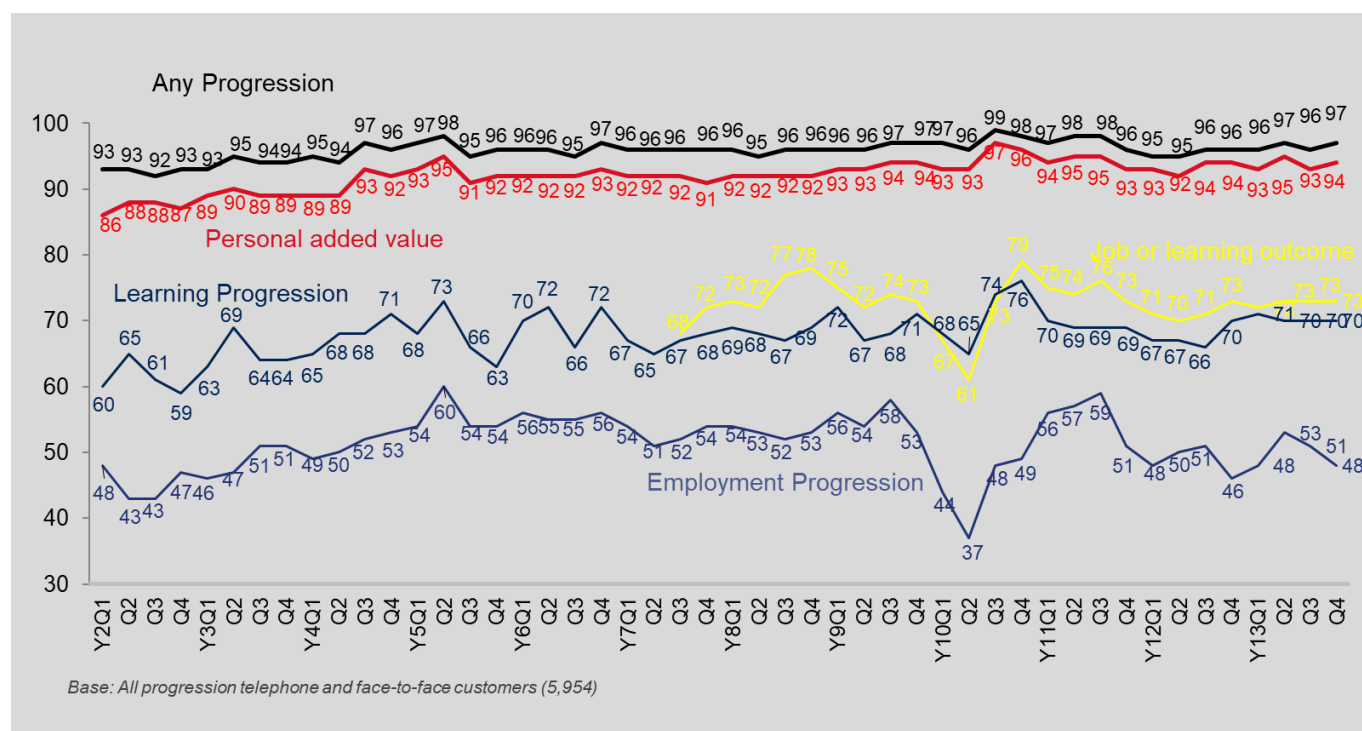
¹⁰Started an apprenticeship was moved to employment progression in Year 13, and all results in this report are based on this new definition

team working skills etc.), improved their self-confidence, increased ability to make decisions for the future regarding work or learning or increased job satisfaction.

Customers who reported any of the three types of progression were asked about the extent to which advice from the National Careers Service played a role in it.¹¹

Almost all face-to-face and telephone customers (97%) experienced some form of positive outcome in the six months since their call or meeting. The various measures are shown in Figure 6.1. Key Performance Indicators have remained broadly consistent since Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023).

Figure 5.1: Trends in progression among face-to-face and telephone customers, by survey quarter



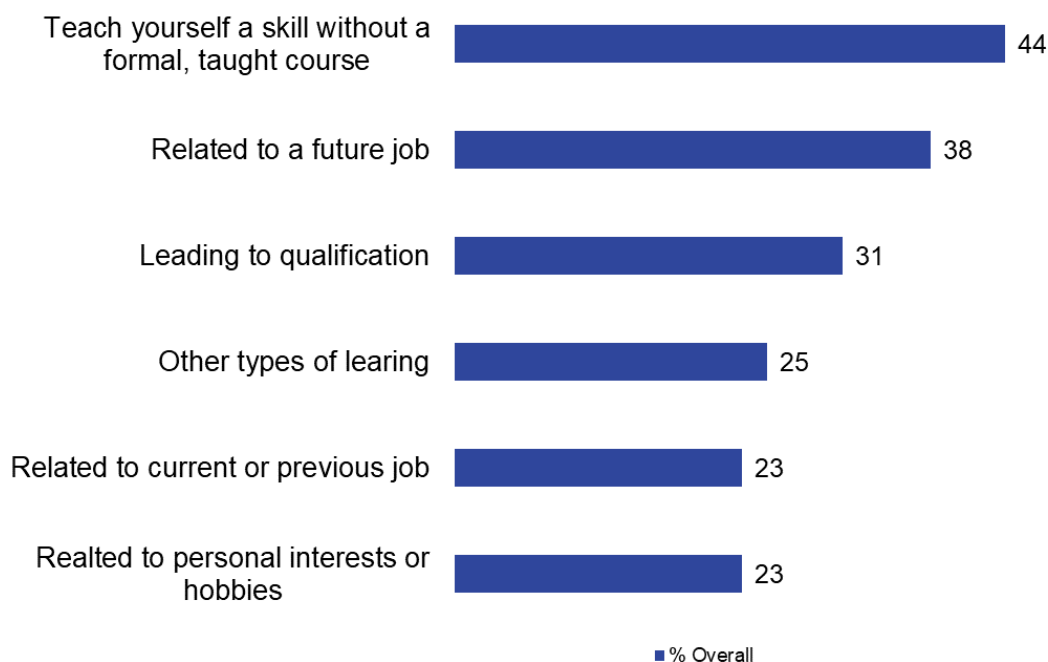
5.2 Learning progression among face-to-face and telephone customers

In total, 70% of face-to-face or telephone customers achieved some form of learning progression, which is consistent with Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) (67%). Figure 6.2 details the different forms of learning and training customers have undertaken since their contact with the Service.

Customers had taken part in various types of training or learning, most commonly learning that was not part of a formal, taught course (44%, an increase compared to Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023), 42%), followed by training related to a future job (38%). Customers undertaking any other learning has increased slightly to 25% from 23% in Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023).

¹¹ The scale used to measure 'adviser played a part' was updated to a 7-point scale at the start of Year 9. This replaced the previous 3-point scale: 'a lot', 'a little' and 'not at all'.

Figure 5.2: Forms of learning/training undertaken since the call/meeting with National Careers Service



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

- Those with higher qualifications: 78% of those qualified to Level 3 or above and 79% qualified to Level 4 or above, compared with 67% of those with qualifications below Level 3.
- Younger customers (75% of those younger than 19, 77% of those aged 20 to 24, compared to 72% of those aged 25 to 49 and 62% of those aged 50 plus).
- Younger customers who were not in education, employment or training (74%)
- Customers who did not self-report a disability (73%) compared with customers who did self-report a disability (66%).
- BAME customers (74%) compared to white customers (68%).
- Customers whose first language is not English (73%, compared to 70% of those whose is English)

Those who self-reported a disability, aged 50+ and at risk of unemployment, or have below level 3 qualifications were least likely to have experienced most types of training or learning progression.

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

- to progress in a current job or career (89% said this was very or fairly important)

- to develop or improve job-related skills (89%)
- to raise qualification level (88%)
- to help get a job or change job (85%)
- to obtain a qualification (78%).
- to help change career (76%).

Among customers who had done any learning or training in the intervening six months, a fifth (22%) obtained a qualification, in line with Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023). A further 8% received credits towards a qualification. Almost two thirds (62%) did neither of these and 5% said they did not finish their qualification, which is also consistent with Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023).

Over half (57%) considered that their National Careers Service adviser had contributed to their decision to do the learning or training, the same proportion as Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023). This view was more prevalent among customers with a qualification below Level 3 (63%), who were female (60%), who do not speak English as a first language (66%), who were unemployed for more than 12 months (61%), and those without a self-reported disability (59%),

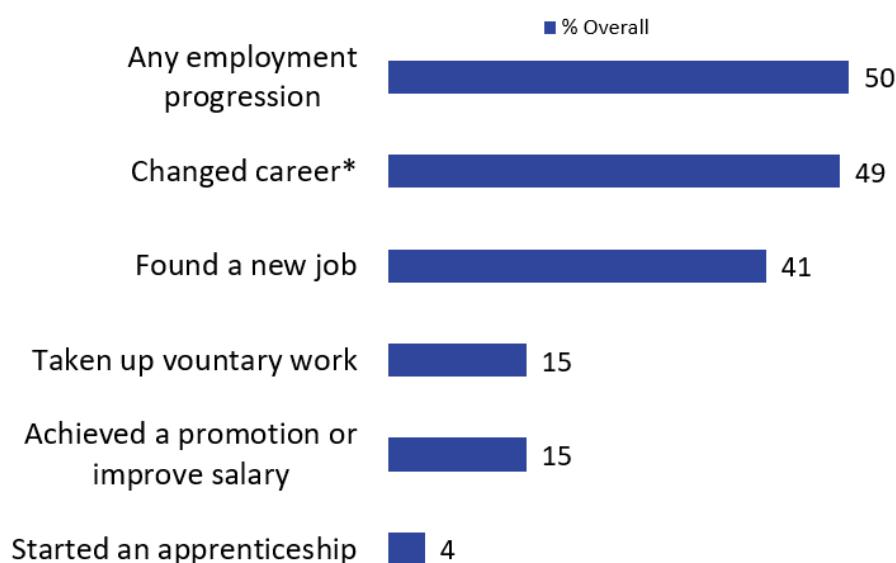
5.3 Employment progression among face-to-face and telephone customers

5.3.1 Overall employment progression

In total, 50% of face-to-face or telephone customers achieved some form of employment progression. This is consistent with Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) (50%) and is down from the figure of 55% reported in Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022). Figure 6.3 shows the types of employment progression achieved.¹²

Around two in five (41%) face-to-face or telephone customers had found a new job or role in those six months, a significant decrease from Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) (43%) and Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) (49%). Amongst those who found a new job or role, half (49%) changed their career, which is a significant decrease from 52% in Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023), but the same as the 49% in Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022). One in six (15%) achieved a pay rise or promotion, and the same proportion took up voluntary work (15%).

¹² It is important to note that this could include those who got a job and then left it within the six-month period since their interaction with the Service.

Figure 5.3: Employment progression among face-to-face and telephone customers (%)

*Only customers who got a new job or role were asked if they had changed their career.

- Customers who were more likely to have experienced employment progression (of any kind) were:
- Those with higher qualifications: 57% of those qualified to Level 3 or above, 58% of those qualified to Level 4 or above, compared with 44% of those with qualifications below Level 3.
- Younger customers (57% of 18 to 24-year-olds, compared with 46% of those aged 50 plus).
- Younger customers who were not in education, employment or training (58%)
- People who had been unemployed for less than 6 months (66%).
- Customers who did not self-report a disability (54%) compared with those customers who self-reported a disability (41%).
- White customers (51%) compared with BAME customers (48%).

As was the case in Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023), it is noticeable that those who have been unemployed for a shorter period of time are far more likely to have experienced employment progression, again highlighting the difficulty of getting back into employment for the long-term unemployed. Two-thirds (66%) of those unemployed for less than 6 months experienced employment progression, compared to 54% of those unemployed for between 6 and 12 months and less than half (37%) of those unemployed for more than 12 months.

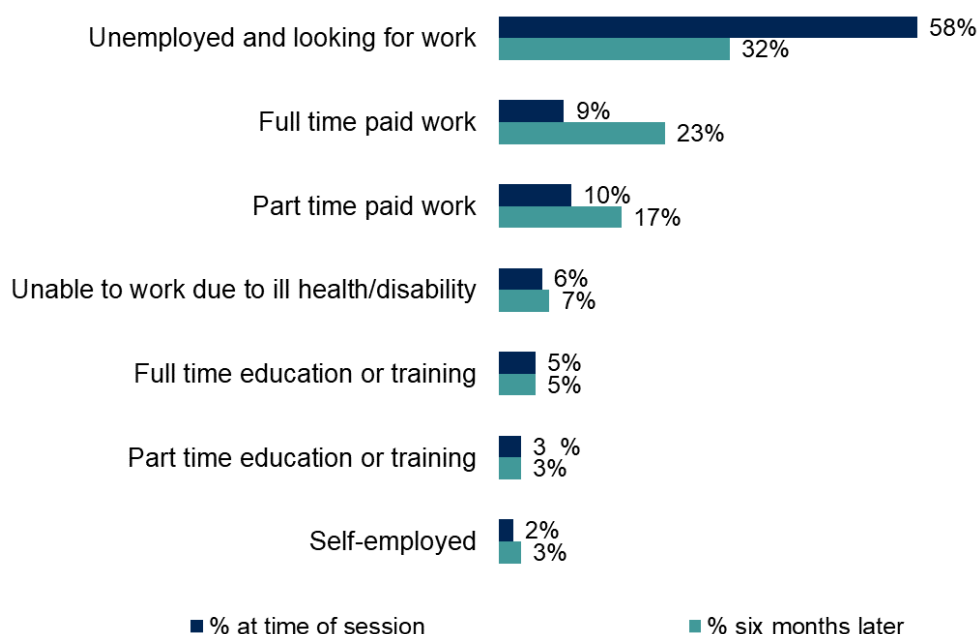
Customers who had achieved any employment progression were asked to what extent their interaction with the National Careers Service adviser had contributed to this. Half agreed the adviser had an impact (51%). Those with qualifications below Level 3 (56%) were more likely to think this compared to those with higher qualifications (47%). Customers without a self-reported disability (52%) were more likely to think this than those with a self-reported disability (48%). Female customers (54%), customers from London (56%), and customers whose first language is not English (58%) were also more likely to attribute their employment progression partly to the support offered by advisers than average.

5.3.2 Change in employment status

The majority of customers interviewed for the progression survey had been unemployed and looking for work at the time of their adviser session six months previously (58%). This is a fall from Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) when the figure stood at 60%. Only 9% were in full time work and 10% in part time work. The remainder were in education (5%) or doing something else, including those unable to work due to ill health, with home or family responsibilities, or retired. The proportion unable to work because of ill health fell from 8% in Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) to 6%.

Figure 6.4 shows that, six months on, the proportion of customers who were unemployed and seeking work has dropped to 32%. The proportion of customers who were in full time or part time paid work increased 6 months on to 23% and 17% respectively.

Figure 5.4: Employment status at the time of the call/meeting and six months later



Base: All respondents (5,954), 6 Months Later, Working (2,558); Learning (507); Unemployed and looking for work (1,919); Other (691).

There were large increases in employment among the different customer groups (Table 6.1). For example, six times as many customers who were aged 50 plus and unemployed or at risk of redundancy at the time of their adviser session were in work after six months (37%, compared to 6% at the time of their session). There was also a substantial increase in employment (an increase of 35 percentage points) among 18 to 24 who were NEET¹³ at the time of their initial interaction with the Service.

The number of customers with Level 3 or below qualifications in work nearly doubled six months on (37%, compared with 19% at the time of their adviser session). A similar pattern was seen amongst customers aged 20 to 24, where three times as many were in work after 6 months compared with at the time of their adviser sessions (44%, compared with 13%).

Customers who have been unemployed for more than 12 months were all unemployed and looking for work at the time of meeting their adviser, but this dropped significantly (61%) six months on.

Table 6.1 illustrates that the proportion who have gone into work within six is generally lower across all customer groups in comparison with Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023).

Table 5.1: Changes in employment status among key customer groups

Customer group	ULW = Unemployed and looking for work	Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024)			Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023)		
		Status at point of contact with National Careers Service	Status 6 months after contact	Change (ppts) ¹⁴	Status at point of contact with National Careers Service	Status 6 months after contact	Change (ppts)
18-19 year olds (461)	ULW	65%	42%	-23	71%	39%	-32
	In work	12%	32%	+20	10%	35%	+25
	In education	15%	14%	-1	11%	12%	+1
20-24 year olds (955)	ULW	65%	35%	-30	64%	33%	-31
	In work	13%	40%	+27	14%	44%	+30
	In education	13%	14%	+1	11%	11%	-
Aged 50 plus (1,541)	ULW	61%	33%	-28	63%	35%	-35
	In work	19%	40%	+21	16%	38%	+22
	In education	3%	3%	-	2%	3%	+1
Aged 50 plus and unemployed or at risk of	ULW	94%	44%	-50	97%	46%	-51
	In work	6%	37%	+31	3%	36%	+33
	In education	0%	2%	+2	0%	2%	+2

¹³ NEET customers are those Not in Employment, Education or Training (at the point at which they had a meeting with their adviser).

¹⁴ Where percentage point changes do not appear to match the given status figures, this is due to the rounding of the two status figures.

redundancy (993)							
Customers self-reporting a disability (1294)	ULW	55%	32%	-23	55%	33%	-22
	In work	16%	32%	+16	15%	29%	+14
	In education	5%	6%	+1	4%	6%	+2
Below Level 3 quals (1,548)	ULW	60%	36%	-24	62%	35%	-27
	In work	19%	37%	+18	16%	37%	+21
	In education	7%	8%	+1	6%	7%	+1
Unemployed for more than 12 months (971)	ULW	100%	61%	-39	100%	53%	-47
	In work	0%	18%	+18	0%	26%	+26
	In education	0%	6%	+6	0%	4%	+4
18 to 24 NEET (1039)	ULW	89%	45%	-44	87%	39%	-48
	In work	0%	34%	+34	0%	37%	+37
	In education	0%	8%	+8	0%	7%	+7
Single parents (407)	ULW	49%	26%	-23	51%	30%	-30
	In work	29%	45%	+16	21%	42%	-25
	In education	6%	8%	+2	6%	6%	+1

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 60% to 34%
- the proportion in work (including self-employment) more than doubled, up from 19% at the time of their session to 42% six months later
- just under half of telephone customers were in work six months after their first interaction (45%), more than doubling from 23% at the time of contact
- there was a corresponding fall in the proportion that was unemployed, from 56% to 28%

Amongst those whose employment status had changed since their initial appointment, half (50%) said that their adviser played a role in this. This was more common among single parents (57%) those with qualifications lower than Level 3 (56%), customers aged 18 to 24 (50%), 25-49 (52%) and BAME customers (57%).

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

5.4.1 Overall Personal Added Value

As in Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023), almost all customers said that they had gained some form of Personal Added Value since their contact with the National Careers Service (94%). Similar to the learning and employment progression, younger customers were more likely to say they had gained Personal Added Value, with 97% of those aged 18 to 24 doing so, compared to 88% of those aged 50 or above.

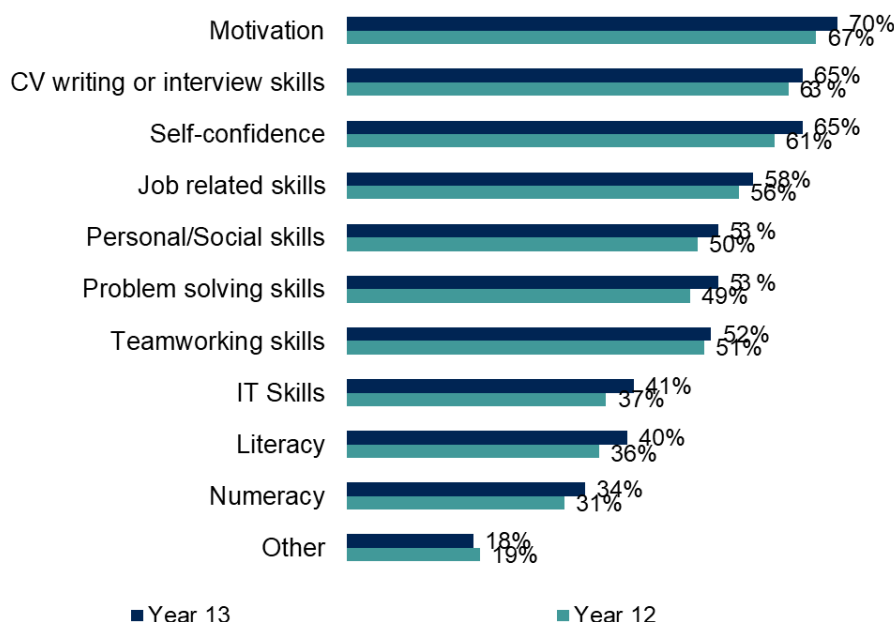
BAME customers were more likely to have gained Personal Added Value than white customers (95% versus 92%), as were customers who did not self-report a disability compared to customers who self-reported a disability (96% versus 89%).

5.4.2 Skills and personal development outcomes

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

All skills and personal development has increased from levels in Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023). Motivation is again the skill most commonly improved at 70%, up from 67% in Year 12. The next most common skills to be improved are CV writing or interview skills (65%), self-confidence (65%) and job-related skills (58%).

Figure 5.5: Skills and personal development outcomes



Base: All respondents (5,954)

Face-to-face customers had slightly higher levels of skills and personal development than telephone customers. For example, improving team-work skills (face-to-face 54% vs telephone

50%), literacy skills (face-to-face 41% vs telephone 38%), numeracy skills (face-to-face 36% vs telephone 32%) and CV writing or interview skills (face-to-face 66% vs telephone 61%).

The following groups of customers are consistently more likely to report having developed skills:

- Younger customers, particularly those aged 19 or younger. For example, 68% said they had improved their personal or social skills, compared to 37% aged 50 or above.
- Customers with no disability. For instance, 57% of customers who did not self-report a disability reported improved teamworking skills, compared to 43% of customers who self-reported a disability.
- Customers who do not speak English as their first language. For example, 55% said they had improved their literacy, compared to 34% of those whose first language is English.
- BAME customers. For example, 75% of BAME customers reported improved self-confidence compared to 59% of white customers.

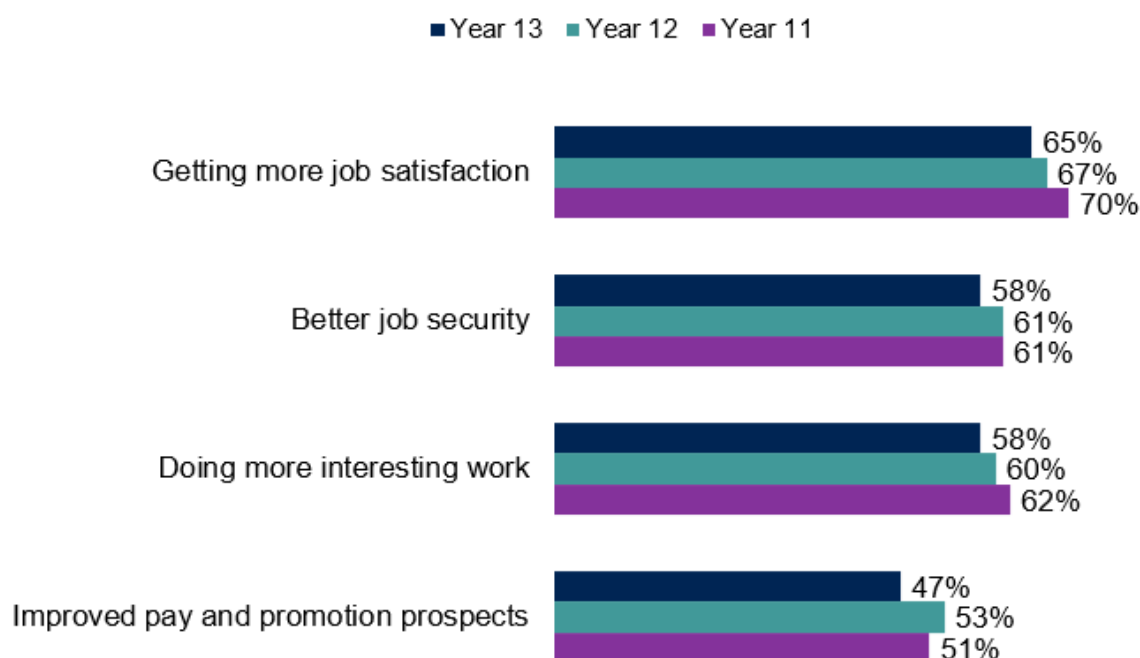
In addition, women were more likely than men to say they have improved their literacy (42% versus 39%).

Amongst those who had developed their skills in some way, over half (54%) said that their adviser helped them to do this, a slight increase from Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) (53%). Female customers (58%), BAME customers (58%), those with lower than Level 3 qualifications (58%), those whose first language is not English (61%), and single parents (61%) were all more likely to say that their adviser helped them.

The Personal Added Value Key Performance Indicator also includes those who, in the past 6 months, have increased their ability to make decisions about the future in terms of career, training or learning over the past six months. Almost eight in ten (79%) said this has increased, including 43% who said it has increased 'a lot'. Female customers (46%), customers aged 18 to 24 (47%) and 25 to 49 (45%), customers whose first language is not English (50%), BAME customers (51%), and those who did not self-report a disability (48%) were all more likely to say that their decision-making ability has increased 'a lot' than average.

5.4.3 Positive changes at work

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

Figure 5.6: Positive changes at work

Base: All progression telephone and face-to-face customers who are in work (Year 13 – 2,606; Year 12 – 2,437)

There were significant decreases in positive changes at work in Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) from Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) and Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022). For instance, the proportion of customers who felt they had better job security this year was 58%, which is significantly lower than the 61% in Year 12 and Year 11. Following the same pattern, the proportion of customers who felt their pay or promotion prospects had increased since contact this year was 47%, significantly lower than the 53% in Year 12 and the 51% in Year 11.

Year 13 figures for other positive work changes were similar to Year 12 figures, but were significantly lower than Year 11 figures, still conforming to the overall downward trend in the last three years. These were the figures for the proportion who reported they were doing more interesting work (58% in Year 13 and 60% in Year 12, compared to 62% in Year 11), and getting more job satisfaction (65% in Year 13 and 67% in year 12, compared to 70% in Year 11).

As with other outcome areas, younger customers were more likely to benefit from positive changes, with those aged 18 to 24 typically scoring between 10 and 20 percentage points higher than average.

Other customer groups more likely to report positive changes at work are as follows:

- Customers whose first language is English were more likely than those whose first language is not English to report increased job satisfaction (67% compared to 59%), greater job security (60% compared to 54%), and improved pay and promotion prospects (50% compared to 40%).

- White customers were more likely than BAME customers to say that their pay and promotion prospects had improved (51% compared to 41%) and their job satisfaction had increased (67% versus 62%).
- Customers with qualifications above Level 3 were more likely to say they were doing more interesting work (60% compared to 56% of those with lower qualifications).
- Customers who did not self-report a disability were more likely to be doing more interesting work (60%) compared to those who did self-report a disability (52%)

Half of customers who had benefitted from positive changes at work attributed these at least in part to the information, advice or support they received from the National Careers Service (50%), a similar proportion as Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023). This was more common among female customers than male customers (53% compared to 46%), those for whom English is not their first language (58% compared to 46% of first language English speakers) and BAME customers (53% compared to 47% of white customers).

5.5 Career management skills

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

- 81% who reported that their awareness of work or career opportunities had increased over the past six months
- 80% who reported that their motivation to find work or change career had improved.
- 80% said that their interest in learning had increased
- 79% said their ability to make decisions about their future career, training or learning had increased
- 78% who said that their awareness of learning or training opportunities had increased

Customers who were 18 to 24 and NEET were more likely to report improvements in all these career management skills. For instance, 85% said their awareness of work opportunities had increased. This is also the case for BAME customers in comparison to white customers. For example, 86% reported an increased interest in learning, compared to 76% of white customers. Customers aged 50 and over who are an employment risk and customers self-reporting a disability were less likely to report improvements in any of the four areas.

Single parents were more likely to say their awareness of learning opportunities increased (83%) and their motivation to find work had improved (82%). Women were more likely than men to have become interested in learning (83% versus 77%), and the same was true of customers whose first language is not English (88%, compared to 76% of first language English speakers).

6 How do key results vary across National Careers Service regions?

Across all regions, customers expressed consistently positive views of the service they received from the National Careers Service. Satisfaction with the quality of service received and with the National Careers Service overall were significantly higher than average in Yorkshire and Humber, North East and Cumbria and the South East. On both measures the figure for London was below average.

People accessing the Service in North East and Cumbria (89%), Yorkshire and Humber (87%) and the South East (87%) were significantly more likely than average (84%) to say they had recommended the National Careers Service or would do so in the future.

As with ratings of the Service itself, recommendation levels in London were significantly below the national average (81% compared to 84%).

The return to high levels of satisfaction with logistical aspects of face-to-face meetings seen in Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) has been consolidated in Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024). London was the only region where satisfaction with the location and venue for their meeting was significantly below average (both 87% against 89%). In South East (94%), Yorkshire and Humber (94%), North East and Cumbria (93%), and East of England and Buckinghamshire (93%) it was significantly higher than average. Only in the West Midlands and Staffordshire (93%) and South West and Oxfordshire (92%) was satisfaction with the time and date of the customers' meeting below average (94%). In Yorkshire and Humber (96%) it was above average.

Satisfaction with specific aspects of advisers' people skills, knowledge and helpfulness remains very high. In Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) there were some differences by region with those in North East and Cumbria, Yorkshire and Humber, East of England and Buckinghamshire and South East consistently demonstrating the highest level of satisfaction. Compared to other regions, satisfaction tended to be lower in London than elsewhere.

Customers across all regions were overwhelmingly positive about the information, advice and guidance (IAG) received. As with advisers' skills and knowledge, ratings of IAG were consistently above average in North East and Cumbria, Yorkshire and Humber and the South East. Customers in London and the North West were significantly less satisfied than average with each aspect of the IAG they received. For example, customers in the North East and Cumbria (93%), South East (92%), Yorkshire and Humber (92%), and East of England and Buckinghamshire (91%) were significantly more likely to say that the information, advice and guidance was useful, and customers in London (85%) and the North West (86%) were less likely to say that it was useful.

In Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) approximately 19 in every 20 customers (97%) experienced some form of positive outcome in the six months following their intervention. Furthermore, Learning progression is significantly higher than it was in Year 12 (May 2022 to

April 2023) (71% compared to 67%). All regions were in line with the average in relation to Learning Progression, apart from Yorkshire and Humber which was significantly lower (68%).

Customers in North East and Cumbria were significantly more likely than average to demonstrate employment progression (52% compared to 49%). In contrast, employment progression was relatively low in London (43%).

Across the country, the face-to-face elements of the National Careers Service are delivered via multiple, community-based contractors. This chapter begins by looking at demographic differences in customer profile by regions then focuses on regional differences in Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and other relevant results. In this section any reference to ‘customers’ is exclusively in connection to face-to-face and telephone customers.

6.1 Customer profile in different areas

Table 7.1 shows how the demographic profile of face-to-face customers of the Service varies by region. The key demographics shown are age, gender, level of qualification and working status (specifically whether in work or unemployed and looking for work) when contacting an adviser. Results are shown as row percentages in the table below. The key findings were:

- The East of England and Buckinghamshire (22%), the South West and Oxfordshire (21%), and London (20%) had lower proportions of customers aged 18 to 24 years than average (25%). It was highest in Yorkshire and Humber (32%), the North East and Cumbria (30%) and the West Midlands and Staffordshire (28%)
- The East of England and Buckinghamshire (29%), the South West and Oxfordshire (28%), the East Midlands and Northamptonshire (27%) and the South East (27%) had the highest proportion of customers aged 50 or over. The West Midlands and Staffordshire had the lowest at (18%)
- The North East and Cumbria (58%) had a relatively high proportion of male customers. Fewer than half of the Service’s London customers identified as male (48%) meaning it is the only region where the majority are female (50%).
- Customers in the South East (66%) were more likely than the average (58%) to be unemployed and looking for work at the time of their initial contact. Those from the South West and Oxfordshire (29%) were significantly more likely than average (22%) to currently be working.

Table 6.1: Profile of customers by area

	All	London	East of England and Buckinghamshire	East Midlands and Northamptonshire	Yorkshire and Humber	West Midlands and Staffordshire	South West and Oxfordshire	South East	North West	North East and Cumbria
Base:	8,495	1,734	862	765	1,283	1,172	496	904	975	966
18 to 24	25%	20%	22%	24%	32%	28%	21%	24%	24%	30%
25 to 49	52%	59%	49%	49%	45%	55%	51%	49%	56%	47%
50+	23%	21%	29%	27%	23%	18%	28%	27%	21%	23%
Female	45%	50%	44%	43%	44%	46%	42%	44%	44%	40%
Male	53%	48%	54%	54%	54%	52%	56%	53%	54%	58%
Below Level 3	26%	23%	28%	27%	30%	26%	25%	26%	23%	32%
Level 3 and above	53%	57%	52%	51%	48%	50%	58%	52%	57%	50%
In work	22%	22%	23%	25%	23%	24%	29%	17%	22%	21%
Unemployed and looking for work	58%	60%	60%	55%	58%	54%	54%	66%	57%	57%

6.2 Satisfaction

6.2.1 Overall satisfaction

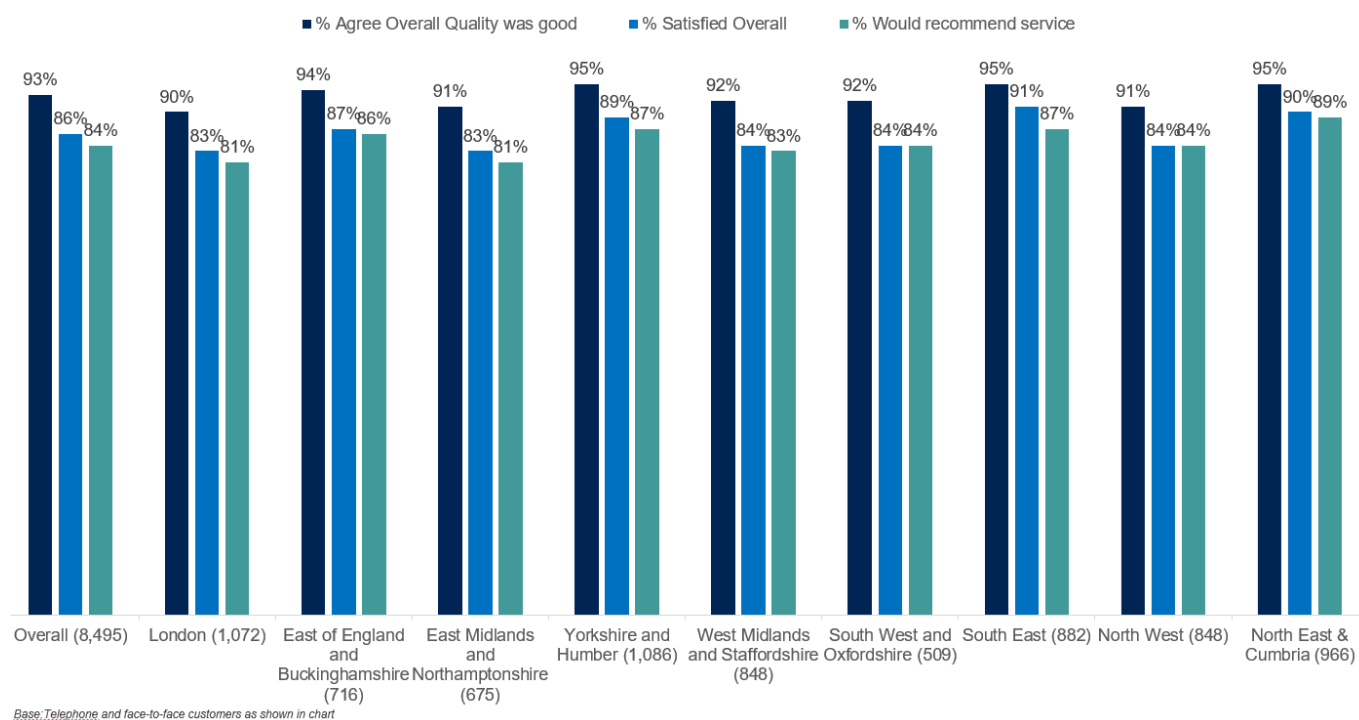
Perceptions of the quality of service delivered by the National Careers Service were consistently positive, with at least eight to nine in ten in each region saying they were satisfied. Between 83% and 91% said they were satisfied with the Service as a whole, while at least 81% in each area had recommended the Service or said they would in the future.

There were only a few statistically significant differences with regard to perceived quality of service, overall satisfaction or recommendation (Figure 7.1). The notable differences are:

- The proportion of customers agreeing the overall quality of service was good was significantly higher than average in Yorkshire and Humber (95%), North East and Cumbria (95%) and the South East (95%).
- In London (90%) agreement was significantly lower than the national average.

- Satisfaction with the Service overall was highest, and significantly above average, in the South East (91%), North East and Cumbria (90%), and Yorkshire and Humber (89%).
- Satisfaction was significantly below average in London and East Midlands and Northamptonshire (both 83%).
- People accessing the Service in the North East and Cumbria (89%), Yorkshire and Humber (87%), or the South East (87%) were significantly more likely than average (84%) to say they had recommended the Service already or would do so in the future, whereas the figure in London and the East Midlands and Northamptonshire (both 81%) was significantly below the national average.

Figure 6.1: Satisfaction, perceived service quality and willingness to recommend the National Careers Service by area

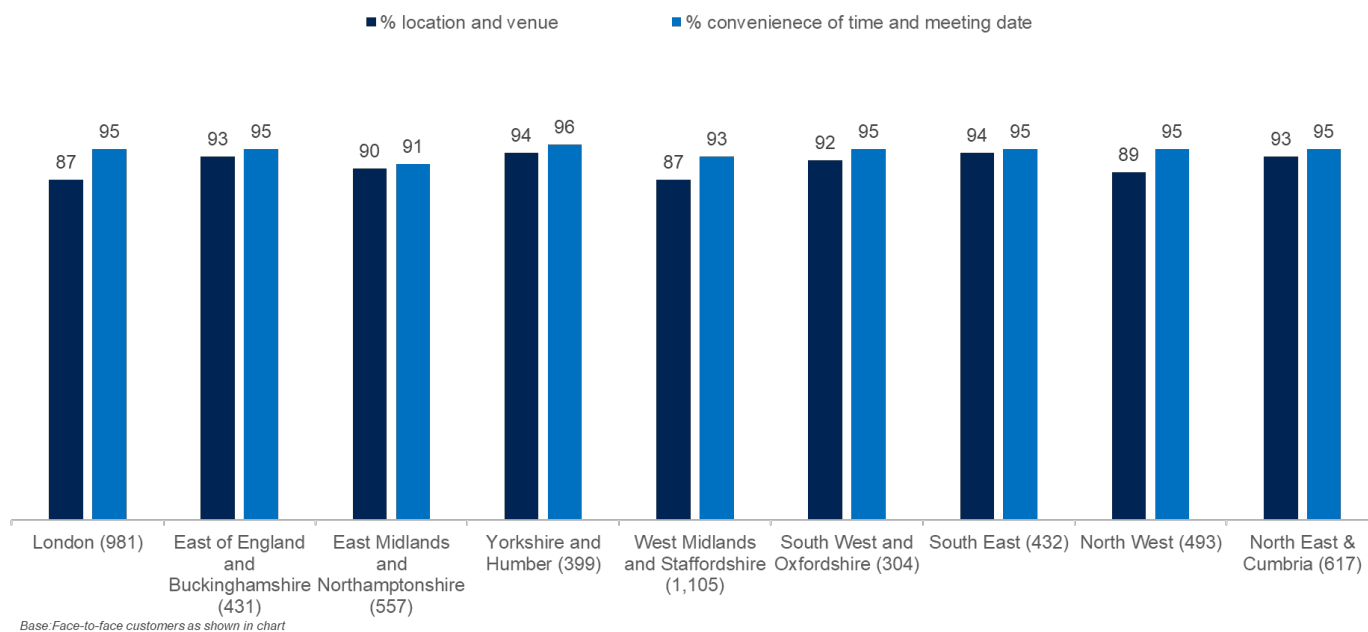


6.2.2 Satisfaction with operational aspects and the adviser

Most regions had a very similar level of satisfaction although customers in Yorkshire and Humber and the South East (both 94%) and in the North East and Cumbria and in the East of England and Buckinghamshire (both 93%) expressed higher than average levels of satisfaction with the location and venue for their face-to-face meetings. London and the West Midlands and Staffordshire were the only regions with a lower than average level of satisfaction with the location and venue (both 87% against 89%).

Satisfaction with the time and date of the customers' meeting remained high, with only the East Midlands and Northamptonshire (91%) and the West Midlands and Staffordshire (93%) below average (94%). In Yorkshire and Humber (96%) the level of satisfaction was above the national average.

Figure 6.2: Satisfaction with logistical/operational elements of the Service by area



Nationally, almost nine in ten (85%) of those contacting the Service by telephone were satisfied with the length of time it took to answer the call. Except for London (74%), where it was significantly lower than average, the figure ranged from 78% to 90% in each region.

Satisfaction with specific aspects of advisers' people skills, knowledge and helpfulness remains very high. With the exception of the adviser's knowledge of jobs and training opportunities in the local area, in no region did fewer than 86% say they were satisfied with any aspect of the adviser they spoke to.

In Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) there were some differences by region with those in North East and Cumbria, Yorkshire and Humber and South East being consistently the most satisfied. Compared to other regions, satisfaction tended to be lower in London than elsewhere. In addition to these general patterns the following significant differences were observed:

- Customers in East Midlands and Northamptonshire expressed lower levels of satisfaction with the length of time they spent with their advisers (89% compared to 92% overall).
- Customers in London and the East Midlands and Northamptonshire expressed lower levels of satisfaction regarding their adviser's professionalism (both 93% compared to 95% overall).

- While 87% of customers in London and East Midlands and Northamptonshire were satisfied that their adviser understood their needs, this was below the overall average of 90%.

Table 6.2: Satisfaction with the adviser by area

	All	London	East of England and Buckinghamshire	East Midlands and Northamptonshire	Yorkshire and Humber	West Midlands and Staffordshire	South West and Oxfordshire	South East	North West	North East and Cumbria
Base:	8,495	1,072	862	765	1,283	1,176	496	904	975	966
Length of time with adviser	92%	91%	94%	89%	95%	92%	92%	95%	92%	94%
Professional ism of adviser	95%	93%	96%	93%	97%	96%	95%	96%	94%	97%
Helpfulness of adviser	92%	89%	94%	91%	95%	91%	91%	95%	91%	95%
Adviser knowledge	92%	89%	94%	89%	94%	91%	91%	93%	91%	95%
Adviser understood needs	90%	87%	92%	87%	92%	89%	88%	93%	88%	94%
Adviser's knowledge of jobs / training opportunities in local area	78%	74%	79%	78%	80%	78%	76%	80%	75%	84%

6.2.3 Satisfaction with the information or advice received

Satisfaction with the information, advice and guidance (IAG) received by customers continues to be high, with over nine in ten (93%) satisfied with its clarity and ease of understanding. Almost nine in ten are satisfied with its usefulness (89%) and the extent to which it provides the information required to make informed choices about their next steps (86%).

As shown in Table 7.3, customers across all regions were overwhelmingly positive about the information, advice and guidance received. As was the case with advisers' skills and knowledge, ratings of IAG were consistently above average in North East and Cumbria, Yorkshire and Humber and South East.

Customers in London were significantly less satisfied than average with each aspect of the IAG they received. Satisfaction with clarity or ease of understanding was also relatively low in East Midlands (91% compared to 93% overall) while the usefulness of IAG was significantly lower than average in North West (86% compared to 89%).

Table 6.3: Satisfaction with the advice/information provided by area

	All	London	East of England and Buckinghamshire	East Midlands and Northamptonshire	Yorkshire and Humber	West Midlands and Staffordshire	South West and Oxfordshire	South East	North West	North East and Cumbria
Base:	8,495	1,072	862	765	1,283	1,176	496	904	975	966
IAG clear/ easy to understand	93%	92%	95%	91%	96%	92%	93%	96%	93%	96%
IAG useful	89%	85%	91%	87%	92%	89%	87%	92%	86%	93%
Got the IAG to make informed choice	86%	84%	88%	84%	90%	84%	85%	90%	84%	90%

6.3 Progression and career management skills

In Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) approximately 19 in every 20 customers (97%) experienced some form of positive outcome in the six months following their intervention. This is

identical to the figure recorded in Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023). Almost half (49%) indicated Employment Progression, in line with Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) (49%). Progression indicators by region are shown in Table 7.4, together with scores for development of career management skills (personal added value).

Table 6.4: Key progression measures and career management skills by area (%)

	All	London	East of England and	East Midlands and	Yorkshire and Humber	West Midlands and Staffordshire	South West and Oxfordshire	South East	North West	North East and Cumbria
Base	5,954	761	624	587	936	808	286	663	607	682
Any positive outcome	97%	97%	96%	96%	97%	97%	97%	96%	97%	96%
Learning progression	70%	72%	70%	70%	67%	69%	72%	69%	71%	73%
Employment progression	49%	45%	53%	53%	50%	49%	55%	50%	51%	53%
Personal Added Value	94%	94%	92%	93%	94%	94%	94%	93%	93%	94%

Employment progression was also relatively low in London (45%), compared to the average (49%).

As in Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023), there was very little variation across regions in respect of personal added value. In Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) the figure ranged from 92% to 95%.

7 Conclusions

Customer satisfaction remains high (86%) and the overall rating of the quality of the Service was high (93%), in line with Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) (93%). Additionally, whilst recommendation of the Service also continues to remain high with nearly nine in ten customers saying that they had already or would recommend the National Careers Service (84%), there has been a fall in the last two years from 88% in Year 11, and 86% in year 12.

The customer groups that have been consistently satisfied with the Service year on year include telephone customers, 56% who strongly agree the quality was good, and customers who had a Skills Action Plan (96%) or recall using the Skills Health Check (95%) were most likely to say the quality of the Service was good. Among telephone and face-to-face customers, satisfaction with individual aspects of the Service remains high with the exception of adviser's knowledge of jobs and training opportunities in the local area.

The majority of face-to-face and telephone customers could not think of any improvements that the National Careers Service needed to make (58%), although a significant decrease from Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) (64%). The two main suggestions for improvements remain consistent with Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023), with customers desiring more tailored help and more follow-up after initial meetings (both 9%).

In Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) over half (54%) of website users were satisfied with the website, compared to three in ten who were not satisfied (29%). These levels of satisfaction are significantly lower than those of Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) (63% satisfied), suggesting that the website has not remained as useful for users. Of those customers who were dissatisfied with the website, website instability was the top reason for dissatisfaction (18%). Overall, 50% of website users have recommended the Service and this is significantly higher than the 43% recorded in Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023).

Overall, Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) has seen consistency in employment progression (50%) with to Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) (50%), however employment progression has reduced since Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) (55%). Almost all face-to-face and telephone customers (97%) experienced some form of positive outcome in the six months since their call or meeting. 18 to 24 NEETs (98%), those not self-reporting a disability, and those unemployed for less than 12 months (97%) were more likely to have experienced any progression. Overall, 94% 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, which was highest amongst 18-24 customers (97%).

Regional differences show that areas such as the North East and Cumbria, and Yorkshire and Humber were more likely to recommend the National Careers Service, as well as have the highest levels of satisfaction. London was lower on a few metrics including levels of satisfaction, ratings of quality, and likelihood to recommend the National Careers Service. Regional and

profile differences can contribute to understanding the different needs across the country, where these are being met, and where they could be improved.

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