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**NEXT STEP SATISFACTION AND
PROGRESSION SURVEYS: ANNUAL
REPORT (SEPTEMBER 2011- MARCH
2012 FIELDWORK)**

SEPTEMBER 2012

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The views expressed in this report are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

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Contents

Contents	2
Executive Summary	6
The customer profile	6
Overall Customer Satisfaction.....	7
Service delivery.....	7
Prime Contractor.....	8
Progression.....	9
Recommendations	10
Introduction and Methodology	12
Overview and Research Aims.....	12
Methodology.....	13
Customer Profile and their reasons for contact	16
The demographic profile of learners	16
Employment Status.....	19
Reasons for contact	22
Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).....	25
Satisfaction.....	25
Agreement that the overall quality of the service was good.....	25
Overall satisfaction.....	26
Recommending the service.....	27
Progression KPIs	27
Learning Progression	28
Employment Progression	29

Personal Added Value	29
Operational aspects of Adviser sessions, and satisfaction with how handled	30
Telephone sessions	30
Face-to-face sessions	31
Skills Health Check	32
Action Plans	32
Lifelong Learning Accounts	33
Satisfaction with adviser sessions.....	34
Key drivers of satisfaction	38
Correlation analysis.....	38
Regression analysis	41
Customer progression following their dealings	43
Situation at the time of the session	43
Progression after 1 month.....	44
Progression after 6 months	46
Progression over the 6 month period – summary	47
Employment progression	48
Positive changes at work	51
Changing role or employer.....	52
Moving into work	53
Skills and personal development	54
Learning progression	58
Results by Prime Contractor	61
The profile of different Prime Contractors	61
Satisfaction KPIs.....	62

Operational aspects of the meeting	63
Satisfaction with various aspects of the meeting	64
Progression KPIs	66

Executive Summary

This report presents the findings of survey research conducted among Next Step¹ customers receiving the telephone and face-to-face advice service examining their satisfaction with the service and their progression subsequent to their call or meeting with an adviser. The survey was conducted by telephone, with fieldwork undertaken from September 2011 to March 2012, and involving two distinct elements:

- The Satisfaction survey: conducted in the month after the adviser session (hence covering adviser sessions taking place from August 2011 to February 2012). A total of 6,610 interviews were undertaken for this part of the study.
- The Progression survey: conducted six months after the adviser session (hence covering adviser sessions taking place from March 2011 to September 2011). A total of 4,838 interviews were undertaken for this element of the research.

The customer profile

From August 2011 to February 2012 around 390,000 customers spoke with a Next Step Adviser. Many more customers received the face-to-face service (82%) than the telephone service (18%), hence overall results are very dominated by the findings among recipients of the former. It is worth noting the two groups are very different in their employment status at the time of the session with the adviser and have a very different emphasis on their reasons for having the call/ meeting. Face-to-face customers are far less likely than telephone customers to be in work at the time of the session (17% v 43% respectively), much more likely unemployed and looking for work (71% v 37%), and much more likely to be mainly seeking advice or guidance about job-related issues than learning-related issues.

Most customers are aged 25-49 (58%), a slight majority are male (55%, though among telephone customers a slight majority (52%) were female) and most are White British (76%). Around two in five had prior qualifications below Level 2 (39%) – this was much higher among recipients of the face-to-face service (42%) than the telephone service (21%). Around one in six had a long term illness, health problem or disability limiting their daily activities (17%), and for one in nine English was not their first language (11%).

Most customers were unemployed and looking for work when they had their adviser session (65%) and relatively few were in work (22%), but as discussed telephone customers were much more likely than average to be in work (43%).

¹ Next Step was replaced by the National Careers Service on 5th April 2012

Customers usually have multiple reasons for wanting an adviser session, with common reasons including: wanting help to find a job; careers general advice; information or advice relating to a specific career or industry of interest; wanting help with their CV; and information about courses to help with employment (each were mentioned, once prompted by more than half of customers). The reasons for calling varied widely between face-to-face and telephone customers: face-to-face customers had an employment and careers focus (the single most common main reason for contact, mentioned by a third, was to get help with their CV), whereas for telephone customers the main reasons tended to be about courses (for a third it was about wanting information on funding of courses).

Overall Customer Satisfaction

Customers rate the service highly. As many as 93% agree that the service was good, and 84% were very satisfied (41%) or fairly satisfied (43%), compared with 6% dissatisfied. Reflecting the extra resources involved in delivering the face-to-face and the telephone Advice service, results among recipients of these two services were somewhat more positive about the service than customers receiving the telephone Information service (among the latter, for example, 89% agreed the service was good, and 79% were satisfied overall).

Given that satisfaction levels were very similar between face-to-face and telephone Advice customers, trialling migrating face-to-face customers to the less resource intensive telephone Advice service after their initial face-to-face session could be considered (to assess if such a change has noticeable effects on satisfaction or progression).

Service delivery

For the telephone service:

- The vast majority of customers were satisfied with the time taken for the call to be answered (85% v 3% dissatisfied)
- Most were handled in a single call (73%). Those handled in a single call were more likely to be very satisfied (43% v 32% among other callers), hence clearly everything should be done to try and deal with callers there and then.
- Where more than one call was required, customers were more likely to be dealt with by different advisers (57%) than the same adviser (38%). Those dealt with by a single adviser were somewhat more likely to be very satisfied (37% v 31%) suggesting that best practice where feasible is to try and have the customer talk to the same adviser.
- Around half (47%) were told information would be sent. Although most said they had received this information, 15% said it had not (yet) arrived. Customers expecting information which had not arrived were far less often very satisfied (26%) than those receiving information (53%). We suggest effort is made to call customers flagged as due to receive information in order to check if it arrived, if so whether it was appropriate/as expected, and if not to check their details and to re-send it.

For the face-to-face service:

- Two-thirds of customers had a single meeting with an adviser. In a reverse of the situation with the telephone service, those having multiple meetings were more satisfied overall (51% very satisfied) than those having a single meeting (36%), hence in no way should effort be made to shoehorn the sessions into a single meeting.
- Most having multiple meetings saw the same adviser (76%). These customers tended to be more likely to be very satisfied overall than those seeing different advisers, hence seeing the same adviser should be considered best practice.
- A third of customers (33%) recalled going through the Skills Health Check and three-fifths (59%) recalled an Action Plan being developed. Customers experiencing each of these were more likely to be very satisfied than average, indicating that wider use of these should be encouraged.
- A small proportion opened a Lifelong Learning Account during a session (6%), and while some had opened one since (4%), already had one (2%) or were offered one (8%) most said it had not been discussed (70%). (As a note, results were similar for users of the telephone service).

It is worth noting that, as discussed in a later section of this Executive Summary, for a number of these measures results varied quite widely by prime Contractor.

Across both telephone and face-to-face customers, satisfaction with the adviser for their professionalism, helpfulness, knowledge and understanding of the client's needs was high (c 90% satisfied on each, with 55% to 65% very satisfied, compared with 5% or fewer dissatisfied). Telephone Information customers were less likely to be very satisfied than telephone advice customers reflecting the less intensive sessions. Rating of the information and advice being clear and easy to understand, useful, and helping them make an informed choice about what to do next were also very positive: on the latter two measures just under half were very satisfied.

Statistical analysis examining the extent to which ratings on individual measures influences overall satisfaction indicate that two measures of high importance and relatively low satisfaction, (hence areas for consideration as to how satisfaction can be improved) are: the usefulness of the information, advice and guidance, and getting IAG to help make an informed choice about what to do next.

Prime Contractor

The face-to-face service is provided by a number of Prime Contractors operating regionally across England, though with some regions having more than one Prime Contractor. On measures relating to overall satisfaction, agreeing that the service was good, and willingness to recommend the service, customers in London were less satisfied than average (though still the vast majority are satisfied) and those in the East of England more positive. Some caution is needed in interpretation of the London results as in part they are due to the atypical profile of London customers: in particular, London had more non-white

British, higher qualified and mid-age band (25-49) customers than other Prime Contractors, and all three of these groups were slightly less satisfied than average. However, differences on some specific measures were quite large: for example 49% of London customers were very satisfied with the knowledge of their adviser whereas in the South East the figure was as high as 65%, and for the adviser understanding their needs 47% were very satisfied in London compared with 67% in the North West that were seen by GMCP Merseyside.

There were quite wide differences by Prime Contractor in how the service is delivered. For example customers in London, the North East, the South West and in the North West where seen by GMCP, were more likely than average to have one session only with their adviser (70%-72% of customers of these Prime Contractors had only one session), whereas customers in the West Midlands and those in the North West dealt with by Economic Solutions were much more likely than average to have multiple sessions (44% and 46% respectively).

Similarly there was quite wide variation in how often customers reported the Skills Health Check was used, or an Action Plan drawn up (this is discussed in detail in chapter 8). Typically if contractors were less likely to use one they were less likely to be using the other.

- Those more likely to use both were Tribal in the South West, CSW in the South West, West Midlands, Economic Solutions in the North West and GMCP Cumbria in the North West.
- Those less likely to use both were London, North East, GMCP in Merseyside, and Yorkshire and Humberside.

Clearly the National Careers Service needs to consider the extent to which variation is acceptable, and potentially reflecting local needs, compared against a more uniform service being delivered nationwide.

Progression

In terms of progression achieved 6 months after the advice session, results are very positive:

- *Just under half (46%) had progressed in employment*, through changing jobs / getting a job (27%), taking up voluntary work (19%), changing career (14%) or achieving a pay rise or promotion (11%) – these categories are not mutually exclusive. Encouragingly the figure was a little higher than average among those unemployed at the time of the advice session (49%) and among young NEET (56%).
 - Around half of the customers experiencing an employment progression said the adviser played a big part (17%) or some part (36%) in helping them achieve the progression. The impact made by the adviser generally related to improving the customer's CV or job search skills, helping the respondent's

confidence and motivation, and making them take stock of their skills and their plans for the future.

- *Nearly two-thirds (63%) had progressed in learning*, through undertaking formal or informal learning since the advice session.
 - *Three-fifths of these said the adviser played a big part (26%) or some part (35%) in the helping them achieve the progression.* Those receiving the telephone Information service were the most likely to achieve progression in learning (76%), but were the least likely to attribute the progression to the adviser (50%), reflecting the fact that many already have learning in mind when they call the helpline.
- *Most (87%) had achieved personal added value in the six months since the session*, by developing skills, improving their confidence, and increasing their ability to make decisions about their future. More than half felt their self-confidence had improved since the advice session (56%) and felt their CV writing or job search skills had improved (55%).
- *Most of these customers feel the adviser played a part in achieving this progress (71%)*
- Overall 93% had progressed in at least one of these areas.

Around one in six of those not progressing in learning (17%) or progressing in employment (15%) felt the adviser could have done more to help them achieve progress in that area. In both cases this was higher among London customers (24% in each case, it was also at this level regarding learning for those seen by GMCP in the North West, and similarly high among telephone customers (23%). For learning, customers mentioned getting more or better information about training courses, being made more aware of learning options, more information about funding, and more follow-up (such as a call back). For employment, customers tended to mention better or more information on courses, more advice about specific jobs and what they require, and more follow-up.

Recommendations

The survey results suggest a number of elements of best practice, which should be adopted or encouraged:

- For the telephone service, those handled in a single call were more likely to be very satisfied overall (43% v 32% among other callers), hence clearly every effort should be made to try and deal with callers in a single conversation. Where more than one call is required, effort should be made to attempt to let the customer speak to the same adviser where feasible (results show that where this happens customers are more satisfied overall).
- In the telephone service, if information has been promised to customers then calls to check that this information has arrived and was appropriate, and whether any

further information is required, should be undertaken. (This is simply because where information is received it is widely praised, and those receiving the information were twice as likely to be very satisfied overall as those still waiting (53% v. 26%), but 15% of those expecting information to be sent had not received it by the time of the Satisfaction survey interview.).

- For the face-to-face service, where multiple meetings are required, best practice is for customers to see the same adviser as for their initial session.
- A third of face-to-face customers (33%) recalled going through the Skills Health Check and three-fifths (59%) recalled an Action Plan being developed. Customers experiencing each of these were more likely to be very satisfied than average, indicating that wider use of these should be encouraged.
- Given that statistical analysis shows that two areas of high importance for overall satisfaction but where satisfaction is relatively low are the perceived usefulness of information, advice and guidance and it helping customers to make informed decisions about what to do next, we suggest that it would be useful to have a check question at the end of each call asking customers if they feel they have everything they need and if what has been discussed has been useful (similarly, if calls are made to check if information has been received, then a question should be asked about the perceived usefulness of that information, and what further information might be useful).

Given that overall measures of satisfaction were similar between face-to-face customers and Telephone Advice customers, it may be worth trialling channel migrating from face-to-face to the telephone service after the initial face-to-face service has taken place.

While still very positive, ratings are consistently lower than average in London. Although the London customer profile is somewhat different to the average, assessing how the service is being delivered across the capital, and how well this meets the needs of its customers, should be considered.

In terms of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for satisfaction, these currently look at the percentage agreeing the service was good, and the percentage very or quite satisfied overall. Both are very high and hence tend to differ little by customer type, by the type of service received or by Prime Contractor. There is far more discrimination between the percentage agreeing strongly that the service was good and in the percentage very satisfied, and using these as KPIs may be more useful. Similarly KPIs for progression are high currently, and hence show little discrimination between customer type, but these KPIs show the proportion of customers experiencing some gain/progression rather than the proportion saying this gain was at least in part a result of the assistance received. Changing the progression KPI to the latter measure may be more meaningful.

Introduction and Methodology

Overview and Research Aims

The Skills Funding Agency is responsible for the commissioning, contracting and performance management of the National Careers Service (formerly, pre-April 2012, Next Step) which provides information, advice and guidance to help individuals make decisions on learning, training and work opportunities. The service offers confidential, helpful and impartial advice, supported by qualified careers advisers.

National Careers Service services are delivered via three integrated channels: face-to-face, telephone and online (the latter provides information and the facility to e-mail advisers). Around 3,500 advisers deliver a monthly average of around 52,000 face-to-face interventions and 23,500 by telephone (as well as responding to e-mails and online forum posts).

An extensive programme of research has been developed to understand customer views of the service and to help develop actions for improvement. This involves monthly research to:

- Measure **satisfaction**, with individuals called the month after their intervention;
- Assess customer **progression**, with individuals called 6 months after their last intervention.

This annual report covers research conducted in September 2011 to March 2012 face-to-face and telephone services. Customers interviewed for the Satisfaction Survey had a call/meeting with an adviser in the previous calendar month (i.e. August 2011 to February 2012), while customers interviewed for the Progression Survey had a call/meeting six months previously (i.e. March 2011 to September 2012) and not since.

As a note throughout the remainder of the report we refer to the Next Step service, rather than the National Careers Service, as this was the name of the organisation at the time the individuals interviewed spoke to an adviser.

The overall aims of the research are:

- to provide full analysis of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the National Careers Service, which look mainly at how satisfied customers are with the service and the progression that customers experience following their contact with an adviser;
- to understand customer views of the service, for example what are the overall levels of satisfaction, how does this differ by customer type, what are the key service factors which drive to satisfaction, and what are the causes of dissatisfaction) to thereby provide actionable feedback to help identify areas for improvement;

- to measure variation in performance among the Prime Contractors that deliver the service of behalf of the National Careers Service;
- to track changes over time.

Methodology

This report covers fieldwork conducted from September 2011 to March 2012 and involving a total of 6,610 interviews for the Satisfaction Survey and 4,838 interviews for the Progression Survey. The interviews were split evenly over each month other than the first month where the target for a full quarter was condensed into a single month of fieldwork:

Table 2.1: Achieved interviews by month

	Satisfaction survey			Progression survey	
	Survey month	Month of Adviser session	Number of interviews	Month of Adviser session	Number of interviews
Quarter 1	September 2011	August 2011	2,217	March 2011	1,601
Quarter 2	October 2011	September 2011	729	April 2011	533
	November 2011	October 2011	733	May 2011	533
	December 2011	November 2011	733	June 2011	533
			2,195		1,599
Quarter 3	January 2012	December 2011	733	July 2011	533
	February 2012	January 2012	733	August 2011	559
	March 2012	February 2012	732	September 2011	546
			2,198		1,638
Total			6,610		4,838

All interviews were conducted by telephone using Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI), with these undertaken from IFF's telephone centre in London.

Sample from the Next Step database was supplied by the Skills Funding Agency.

Quotas for each month's fieldwork were set on the following demographic factors in strict proportion to the profile of those having contact with advisers in the corresponding month:

- Employment status at the time of the call: employed; unemployed; neither (economically inactive or retired)
- Age: 19 or under; 20 to 24; 25 to 59 and 60+
- Gender

Targets were also set each month based on the type of service they received, namely:

- Face-to-face Next Step customers
- Telephone customers who received the 'Information' service - referred to as 'Telephone Information' customers
- Telephone customers who received the 'Advice' service (an enriched offer that builds on the Information service for customers who have more complex needs or require skills assessment activity) - referred to as 'Telephone Advice' customers

The targets on the type of service received involved oversampling telephone customers in order to ensure sufficient numbers for reliable analysis each month.

At the analysis stage data was weighted by type of service received to match the monthly customer profile in August 2011 to February 2012 for the Satisfaction Survey, and March to September 2011 for the Progression Survey. The profile of unweighted and weighted responses is shown in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2: Weighted and unweighted customer profile

	Satisfaction survey			Progression survey		
	n	Unweighted %	Weighted %	n	Unweighted %	Weighted %
Total	6,610	100	100	4,838	100	100
Face-to-face	4,195	63	82	3,032	63	80
Telephone	2,415	37	18	1,806	37	20
Telephone Advice	917	14	4	673	14	4
Telephone Information	1,498	23	14	1,133	23	16

Wherever differences between respondent sub-groups are described in the report, differences between the percentage or mean figures are statistically significant at the 95 per cent confidence level, unless otherwise stated.²

² 95% confidence means that statistically we can be 95% confident that the difference is a real difference, not one resulting from the fact that we spoke to a sample of those having dealings with the service.

Customer Profile and their reasons for contact

This chapter outlines the profile of customers who used the Next Step service from August 2011 to February 2012, hence matching the cohort interviewed for the Satisfaction Survey, and examines the gender, age, ethnicity of customers, their situation at the time of the call / meeting and their reasons for contacting Next Step.

The demographic profile of learners

Table 3.1 below shows the age, gender and ethnicity profiles of Next Step customers from August 2011 to February 2012. Figures are based on weighted data from the Satisfaction Survey element of the study.

Table 3.1: Demographic profile of Next Step customers August 2011 to February 2012

	Type of service				
	All	Face-to-face	Telephone	Telephone Advice	Telephone Information
Base: All	6,610 %	4,195 %	2,415 %	917 %	1,498 %
Gender					
Male	56	57	48	43	50
Female	44	43	52	57	50
Age					
19 or younger	7	8	3	3	3
20-24	19	18	25	20	27
25-49	56	55	62	66	61
50 or over	18	20	10	11	9
Ethnicity					
White British	76	78	64	64	64
White Other	6	5	7	5	8

	Type of service				
	All	Face-to-face	Telephone	Telephone Advice	Telephone Information
Black/Black British	8	7	12	14	11
Asian/Asian British	6	5	10	9	10
Mixed / Other	4	3	6	6	6
Prefer not to say	1	1	1	2	1
Non-white British	24	22	36	36	36

Overall most customers are male (56%), though this is heavily influenced by the gender profile of the face-to-face service, and among those using the telephone service a slight majority are female (52%, rising to 57% receiving the telephone advice service).

Most customers are in the 25-49 age range (56%), with slightly more of the remainder younger (26%) than aged 50 plus (18%). Relatively few are aged 19 or under (7%).

In terms of ethnicity, three-quarters of customers are White British (76%). Non-White British customers split relatively evenly between Black/Black British (8% of all customers), Asian/Asian/British (6%), White Other (6%) and Mixed / Other (4%). The telephone service deals with a more ethnically diverse group of respondents than the face-to-face service: among telephone customers just over a third are non-White British (36%), compared to just over a fifth seeing an adviser face-to-face (22%).

We have commented that telephone customers are less likely to be 50 or over, are more evenly split in their gender profile, and more likely to be non-White British than face-to-face customers. There are also differences in the age and gender profile within telephone customers, with those receiving the Advice service more likely to be female and aged 25-49 than Information customers.

Table 3.2 shows more characteristics of August 2011 to February 2012 Next Step customers. Figures are based on weighted data from the Satisfaction Survey element of the study.

Table 3.2: Demographic profile of Next Step customers August 2011 to February 2012 at the time of their call

	Type of service				
	All	Face-to-face	Telephone	Telephone Advice	Telephone Information
Base: All	6,610 %	4,195 %	2,415 %	917 %	1,498 %
Have a long term illness, health problem or disability limiting their daily activities	17	18	12	14	12
English NOT their first language	11	10	15	16	15
Highest qualification level:					
Level 4 plus (degree etc)	24	20	44	40	47
Level 3 (A levels)	17	16	19	22	8
Level 2 (5 GCSEs A*-C)	14	15	9	11	8
Level 1 / entry level	22	24	13	15	12
No qualifications	16	18	8	7	8
Level unclear	7	7	6	7	5
Below Level 2	39	42	21	23	21
Level 2 plus	55	51	73	71	74
NEET					
18-24 NEET	19	20	11	10	11
18-24 Jobseekers Allowance	15	17	6	5	6
18-24 Jobseekers Allowance / Incapacity Benefit / Income Support	16	19	7	7	7

Around one in six customers (17%) had a disability or long term illness that affects their daily activities. This was higher face-to-face customers than telephone (18% v. 12% respectively). This in part reflects the higher proportion of face-to-face customers aged 50 plus: among these older customers one quarter had a disability or long term illness that affects their daily activities (25%).

One in nine customers (11%) did not have English as their first language. Reflecting the greater ethnic diversity of telephone customers, customers accessing the telephone service were more likely not to have English as their first language (15% v 10% among face-to-face customers).

A key client group for the National Careers Service is those with low level qualifications, defined as those having their highest qualification below Level 2 (Level 2 being equivalent to 5 GCSEs grade A*-C). Overall more than half of customers already had qualifications at Level 2 or higher (55%), indeed a quarter had degree level qualifications (24%). Two-fifths (39%) had qualifications below Level 2 (a further 7% were unable to give information on their qualifications to assign a level). There is a very marked difference in the qualification levels of face-to-face and telephone customers, with the latter much higher qualified. Only a fifth of telephone customers were qualified at below Level 2 (21%) compared to around two-fifths of face-to-face customers (42%).

A number of demographic groups were more likely than average to be qualified to below Level 2:

- Those with a disability (49%)
- Those aged 50 plus (48%)
- Men (42% v. 34% among women)
- White British (42% v 27% among other groups)

One in five of all customers (19%) were aged 18-24 and not in employment, education or training (NEET) at the time of their call. Most of these were on Jobseekers Allowance (15% of all customers were 18-24 year olds on this Allowance). Face-to-face customers were almost twice as likely as telephone customers to be NEET aged 18-24 (20% v 11%). The following section looks in more detail at the employment status of customers.

Employment Status

Table 3.3 provides an overview of the employment status of the customers at the time of their adviser session.

Table 3.3: Economic activity of the customers at the time of the call / meeting with the Next Step adviser

	Type of service				
	All	Face-to-face	Telephone	Telephone Advice	Telephone Information
Base: All	6,610 %	4,195 %	2,415 %	917 %	1,498 %
In work	22	17	43	43	42
Full time employment	12	9	25	27	24
Part time employment	8	6	13	12	14
Self-employed	2	1	4	4	4
In learning	5	3	11	7	12
Full time learning	3	1	9	5	10
Part time learning	2	2	2	2	2
Neither working nor in learning	74	80	47	50	46
Unemployed and looking for work	65	71	37	39	36
Unable to work due to health	4	4	4	4	4
Looking after home or family	3	3	4	6	4
Retired	1	1	1	*	1
Other	1	1	1	1	1

*= <0.5% but >0%

Most customers (65%) were unemployed and looking for work at the time of their adviser session. This was significantly higher among:

- Under 19s (76%)
- Men (71% v 57% among women)
- Those with highest qualifications below Level 2 (72% v. 60% with higher qualifications)

- White British (66% v 61% among other ethnic groups)

Just over a fifth (22%) were in work at the time of their call, with 12% overall in full-time work. Those groups less likely to be unemployed and looking for work were more likely to be employed, for example 26% of those with qualifications and Level 2 or higher were in work compared with 15% that had lower level or no qualifications.

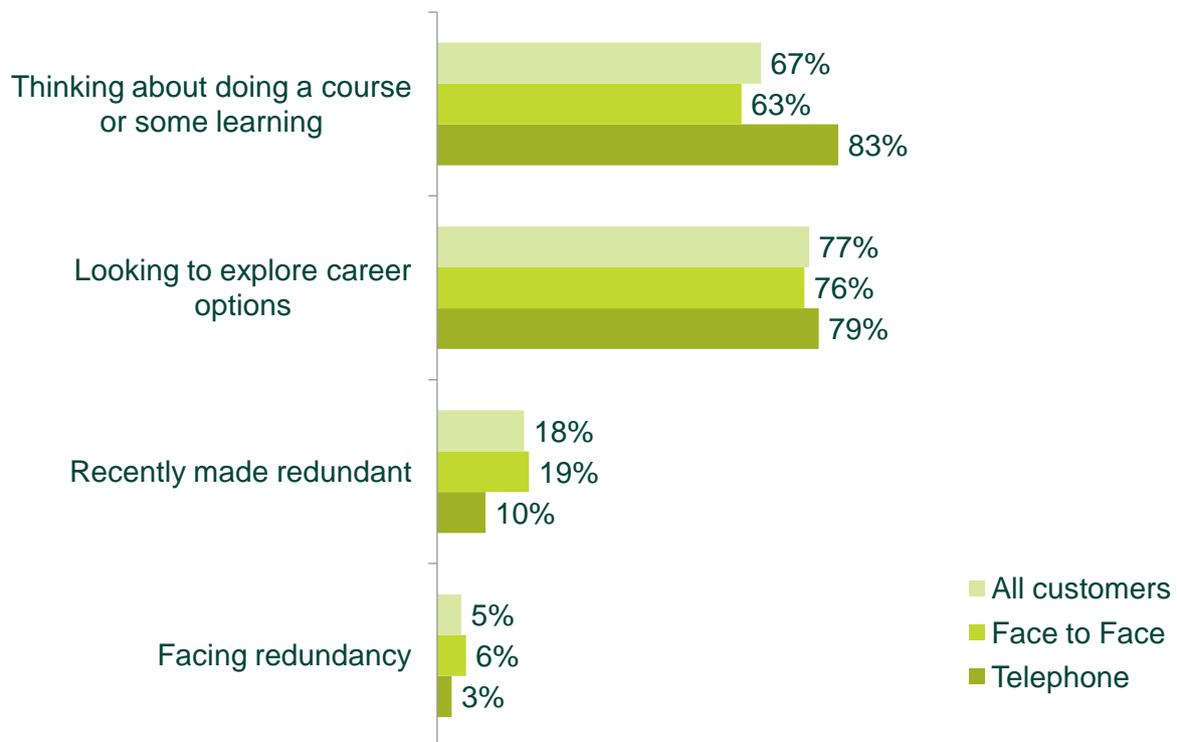
One in twenty customers (5%) were in learning when they had their session with the adviser. This was higher among those aged under 19 (10%) or 19-24 (9%).

As with many of the demographic details described to date, employment status differed very widely by the type of service accessed. As can be seen in Table 2.12 those using the face-to-face service were particularly likely to be unemployed and looking for work (71%) whereas among telephone customers more were in work (43%) than were unemployed and looking for work (37%). Indeed a quarter of telephone customers were working full-time.

Among customers not in employment at the time of their call/ meeting, there was a great deal of variation in the length of time out of work: 15% had worked in the last 3 months and 43% (cumulatively) in the last six months, compared against 40% that had not worked for at least 12 months. On a similar theme approaching one in five customers (18%) said they had recently been made redundant (and one in twenty (5%) felt they were under threat of redundancy).

Figure 3.1 shows the situation of customers at the time of the call / meeting (options were read out to respondents). Customers were more likely to have been thinking about career options.

Figure 3.1: Situation at the time of the call / meeting with the Next Step adviser (prompted)



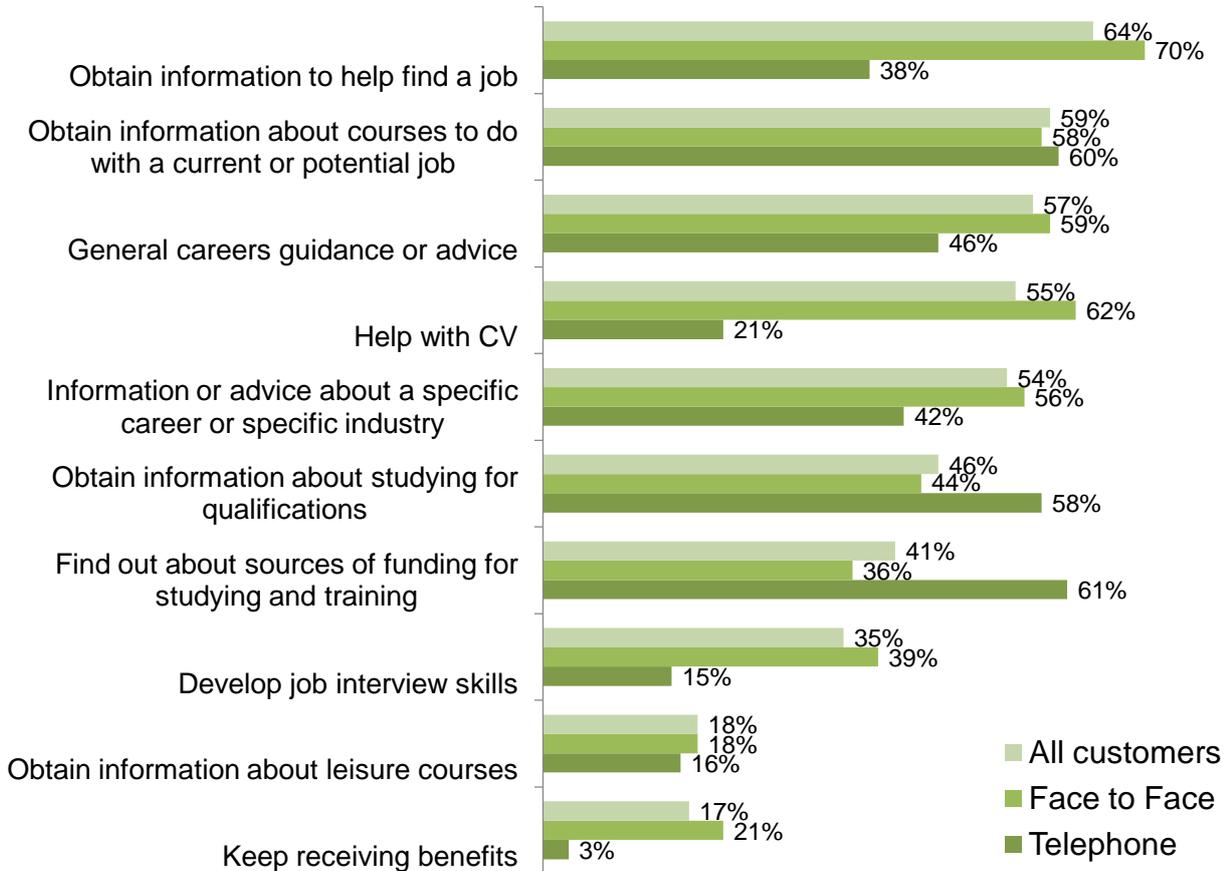
Base: all customers – Satisfaction survey (6,610)

Reasons for contact

Before asking respondents for their detailed reasons for contacting the Next Step service, respondents were asked if they had wanted to discuss career options, learning, or both. Slightly more were seeing an adviser to explore career options (77%) than about a course or some learning (67%) – clearly many wanted to look at both options. Telephone customers (83%) were more likely to be thinking about doing a course or some learning than face-to-face customers (63%). Results differed little between telephone advice and telephone information customers.

Respondents were read a long list of potential reasons for contacting Next Steps. Figure 3.2 shows the ten most common responses on this prompted question. Results are shown for all customers, those using the face-to-face service, and, the bottom bar of each group of three, those speaking to the adviser over the phone.

Figure 3.2: Reasons for customers contacting Next Step (prompted)



Base: all customers – Satisfaction survey (6,610)

The most common reason for contacting Next Step was to obtain information to help find a job (64%). Also frequently mentioned were to get information about courses to do with a current or future job (59%), to get general careers advice (57%), for help with writing a CV (55%), and to get information or advice about a specific career or specific industry (54%). Clearly there is quite a range of reasons for contacting Next Step covering both careers/jobs and learning, and from the quite general (advice about careers or help to find a job), to more specific information and advice (e.g. in regard to a specific career or information about how to fund courses), to practical support (help with their CV or with job interview skills).

There were wide differences by the type of service accessed. Face-to-face customers tended to be much more focussed on seeking employment outcomes, such as obtaining information to help find a job (70% vs. 38% of telephone customers), getting help for C.V (62% vs. 21%), getting general careers guidance or advice (59% vs. 46%), getting information or advice about a specific career or specific industry (56% vs. 42%) and developing job interview skills (39% vs. 15%). Telephone customers, on the other hand, were more focussed on learning outcomes such as finding out about sources of funding for studying and training (61% vs. 36% of face-to-face customers) and obtaining information about studying for qualifications (58% vs. 44%).

The difference in focus between telephone and face-to-face customers was also apparent when customers were asked for their single main reason for contacting Next Step. Among face-to-face customers the top four main reasons had an employment focus: help with their CV (33%), information to help find a job (16%), getting information about courses to do with a current or future job (12%) and general careers advice (11%). On the other hand, the top four main reasons telephone customers cited were learning focussed: getting information on funding courses (33%), getting information about courses to do with a current or future job (17%) general careers advice (11%) and information about studying to a qualification (10%).

Telephone Advice customers were more likely to have employment related reasons for calling than Telephone Information customers. For example, Telephone Advice customers were very likely to want to get general careers guidance (67% vs. 40% of Telephone Information), and/or to get information or advice on how to get a job in a specific career (62% vs. 35%), whereas Telephone Information customers were more learning focussed in their reasons for contacting Next Step. In particular, 66% of Information customers were exploring sources of funding for training and studying and 40% cited this as their main reason for contact (compared with 47% and 11% respectively among Telephone Advice customers).

Although Telephone Advice customers were similar to face-to-face customers in that they commonly cited employment reasons for contacting Next Step, their reasons were of a slightly different focus. Telephone Advice customers were somewhat more likely to have been looking for general careers advice ((67% vs. 59% of face-to-face customers), or advice about getting into a specific career ((62% vs. 56%). Face-to-face customers, on the other hand, were more likely to be after practical help such as information on how to find a job (70% vs. 53% of Telephone Advice) and help with their CV (62% vs. 24%).

Predictably reasons for contact varied by employment status. Customers who were unemployed at the time of their call/meeting were more likely than other customers to have contacted Next Step for a employment-related reasons such as to obtain information to help find a job (70%), to get help in writing a CV (61%). Those in work were significantly more likely than average to have sought information or advice about: studying for a qualification (52%), funding learning (49%), to understand how to use existing skills in another job (39%) and to help them progress and succeed at work (32%).

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

This chapter looks at the KPI results measuring satisfaction with the Next Step service among August 2011 to February 2012 customers, and progression following their dealings with the Next Step service among March to September 2011 customers.

Satisfaction

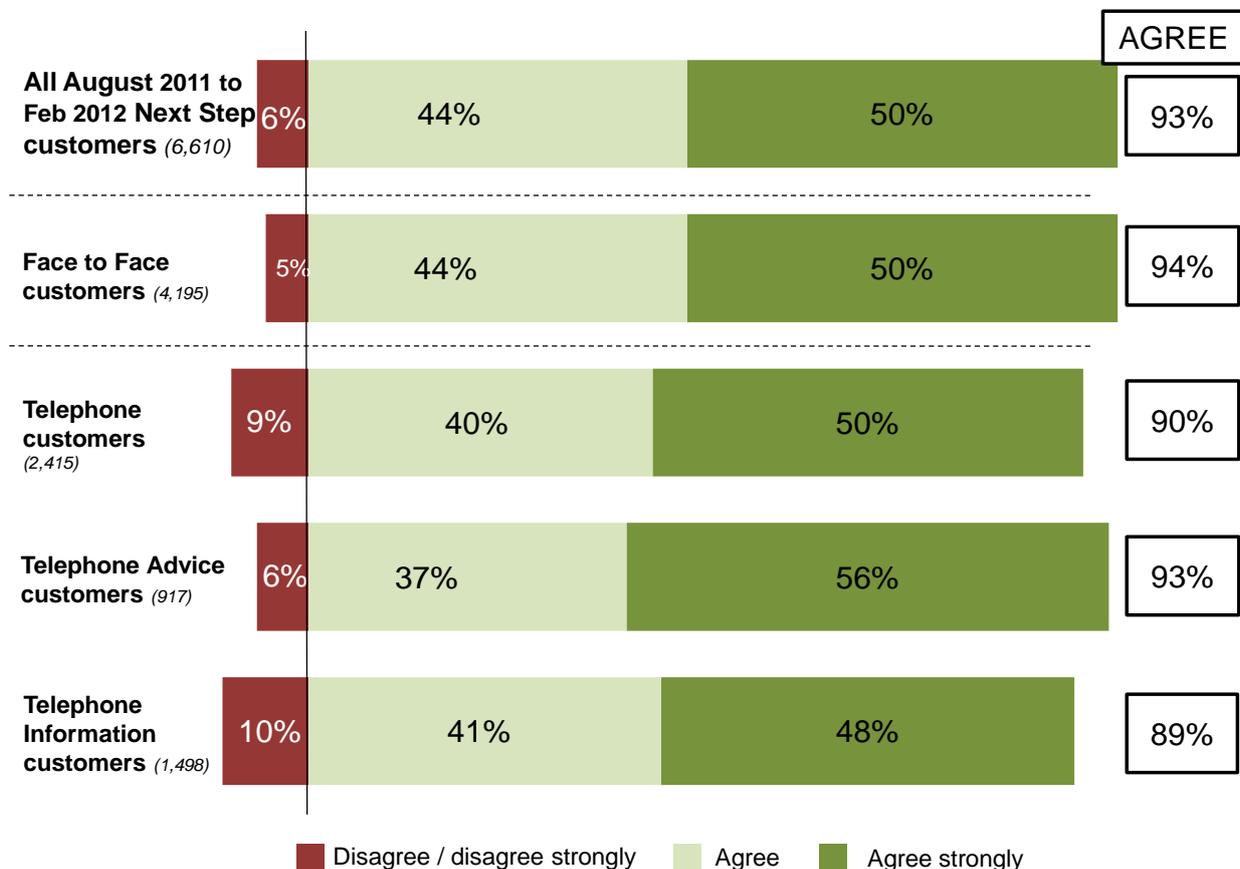
The Satisfaction Survey KPIs focus on customers' opinions of the service they received in the previous month in terms of three key elements:

- Overall quality of the service
- Satisfaction with the service overall and with specific elements of the call/meeting
- Advocacy (whether have already or would recommend Next Step).

Agreement that the overall quality of the service was good

Next Step customers have an extremely positive opinion of the service they received. More than nine in ten (93%) customers agreed that the overall quality of the service was good, with half (50%) agreeing strongly.

Figure 4.1 Agreement that the overall quality was good by type of service received



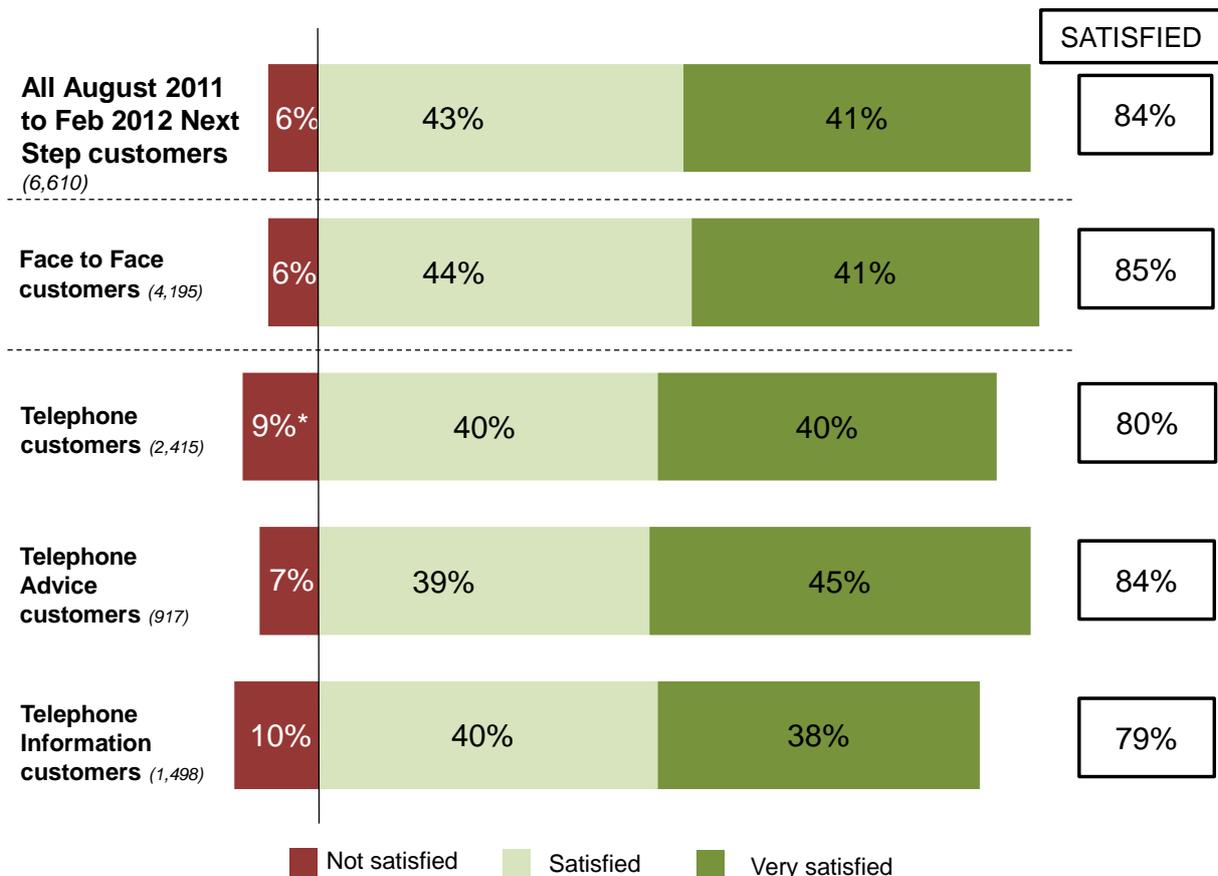
Face-to-face customers were significantly more likely than telephone customers to think that the overall quality was good (94% vs. 90%), and among telephone customers those receiving Advice were more positive than Information customers (10% of Information customers felt that the service had been poor).

Given the very high proportion thinking the service is good, results differ very little by customer demographics. It is encouraging though that customers aged 18-24 in receipt of out of work benefits (Jobseeker’s allowance, Employment and Support Allowance, Incapacity Benefit or Income Support) and those aged 18-24 NEET at the time of their call/meeting were slightly more likely to agree that the quality of service was good (97% and 98% respectively) than Next Step customers overall (93%).

Overall satisfaction

Customers were also asked about their overall satisfaction with the service. More than four-fifths (84%) were satisfied, with two-fifths very satisfied (41%), compared against 6% dissatisfied. Face-to-face customers were more satisfied with the service than telephone customers (85% v. 80%). Telephone Advice customers (84%) were more satisfied than Telephone Information customers (79%, one in ten Information customers were dissatisfied). Hence satisfaction with the service received reflects its ‘resource intensity’.

Figure 4.2 Overall Satisfaction by type of service received



Satisfaction was higher than average among customers with qualifications below Level 2 (87% v. 82% among customers who held qualifications at Level 2 or higher) and those aged 24 and under (88% v. 82% among those aged 50 plus).

Overall satisfaction levels were high across all Prime Contractors, though it was slightly (but statistically significantly) lower in London (82% satisfied compared with 85% among all face-to-face customers). The difference was most marked in Quarter 1 (customers seeing with their adviser in August 2011) – since then results in London have been similar to the average.

Recommending the service

Reflecting high levels of satisfaction, the vast majority of customers have or would recommend the service (87%, a quarter had actually made a recommendation). Willingness to recommend was highest among Telephone Advice customers (89%) and face-to-face customers (88%), and in relative terms lowest among those Telephone Information callers (84%). Those seeing an adviser face-to-face were very close to the average (88%).

Progression KPIs

This section details the extent to which customers having dealings with an adviser in the period March 2011 to September 2011 have progressed in the six months since their call/meeting. Next Step's success in terms of helping customers progress is measured by three core Key Performance Indicators:

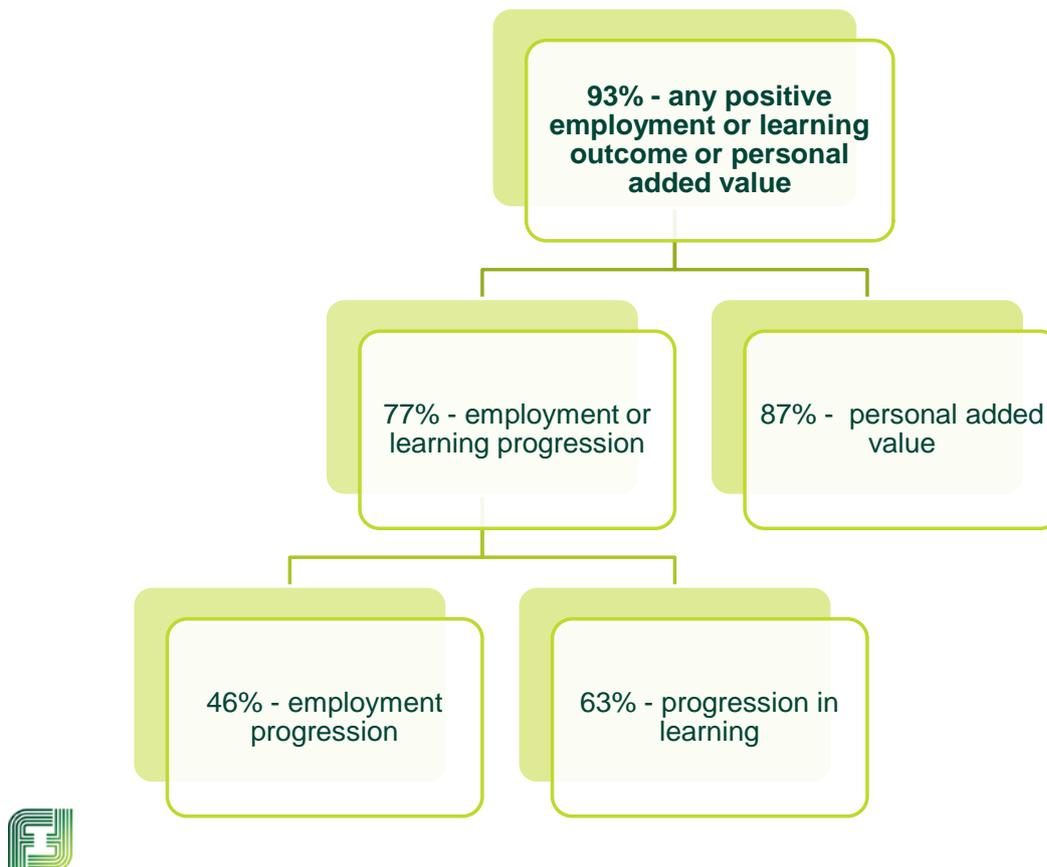
1. **Learning progression** – whether customers have undertaken formal or informal learning or training in the six months since the call/meeting
2. **Employment progression** – whether customers have entered new employment, changed career, were promoted or improved their salary, or have taken up voluntary work
3. **Personal added value** – whether customers have achieved one or more of a range of 'softer' outcomes; these could be improving work-related or more personal skills (IT skills, team working skills etc), improving their self-confidence, increasing their ability to make decisions for the future regarding work or learning, finding more satisfaction in their job, or achieving a new and higher level qualification.

The progression measures do not imply that these changes necessarily came about as a result of the contact with Next Step, and simply measure progression since the adviser session.

Nearly all customers who accessed the service between March 2011 and September 2011 (93%) had seen some positive outcome in the six months since their call/meeting. The proportion seeing any progression was identical for each of the three quarters covered in the research. Figure 3.3 shows results for component elements of progression: most common were developments in personal added value. There was relatively little change in the proportion mentioned each element in each of the three Quarters covered by the fieldwork except for those having their adviser sessions in the July to September 2011

period when employment progression was lower than average (43%) and learning progression was higher than average (65%). This may well tie in with an increase in dealings about learning prior to the start of the academic year.

Figure 4.3: Progression KPIs



The proportion of customers who had experienced any positive outcome was similar among telephone (94%) and face-to-face (93%) customers.

Learning Progression

Just over three-fifths of customers (63%) had progressed in learning by undertaking some learning or training since their intervention six months previously. Telephone customers were particularly likely to have progressed in learning (74% v. 60% among face-to-face customers, reflecting the fact discussed in the previous chapter that telephone callers main reasons for seeing an adviser are much more likely to focus on learning than was the case among face-to-face customers.

Customers of the South East Prime Contractor were more likely to have progressed in learning (60%) than other Prime Contractors, whilst customers of the North East and North West Economic Solutions Prime Contractor were less likely to have done so (52% and 51% respectively).

Customers with prior qualifications of Level 2 or above were more likely to have progressed in learning in the six months since the session (67%) than customers with lower level qualifications (54%), as were those aged under 25 (69% v. 56% among those aged 50 plus), and Non-White British customers (68% vs. 60% among White British customers).

Employment Progression

Just under half of customers (46%) had progressed in employment in the six months following the intervention. This varied little by the type of service accessed. As with learning progression, customers with a Level 2 or higher qualification and those aged under 25 were more likely to have experienced employment progression (50% and 55% respectively).

It is particularly encouraging that customers aged 18-24 in receipt of JSA/IB/IS and those NEET were more likely than average to have progressed in employment (54% and 56% respectively).

Customers of the South East Prime Contractor were more likely to have progressed in employment than customers of other Prime Contractors (53% vs. 46%) whilst customers of the West Midlands Prime Contractor were less likely to have done so (40%).

Personal Added Value

Customers were asked if they had achieved one or more of a range of 'softer' outcomes since their call/meeting with a Next Step adviser (known as 'Personal Added Value'); these could be improving work-related or more personal skills (IT skills, team working skills etc), improving their self-confidence, increasing their ability to make decisions for the future regarding work or learning, finding more satisfaction in their job, or achieving a new and higher qualification.

Almost nine in ten March - September 2011 customers (87%) had added personal value in the six months since their adviser session. Telephone customers had similar levels of Personal Added Value to face-to-face customers.

Customers aged 20-24 years (93%) were more likely than any other age group to have experienced any personal added value, and customers aged 18-24 on workless benefits (JSA/IB/IS) (91%) and those aged 18-24 classified as NEET (92%) were more likely to have added personal value since the Next Step consultation than Next Step customers overall.

Operational aspects of Adviser sessions, and satisfaction with how handled

In this chapter issues are explored which examine how the telephone and face-to-face sessions were handled, and customer satisfaction with elements of the adviser sessions. This includes such issues as:

- For telephone customers, how quickly calls are answered, how often multiple calls were required and views on this, and how often information is promised and received, and the usefulness of any information sent
- For face-to-face customers, how often multiple meetings are required and why, and how often these customers see the same adviser, and whether this matters
- How often the Skills Health Check diagnostic tool is used, Action Plans are drawn up and Lifelong Learning Accounts are opened and activated, and views on the usefulness of each
- Satisfaction with a whole range of aspects in relation to the adviser (their professionalism, helpfulness etc) and the advice (it being clear and easy to understand, useful etc.)
- A discussion of the key drivers of overall satisfaction

Results are based on customers answering the Satisfaction Survey.

Telephone sessions

The vast majority of callers were satisfied with the time taken to answer the call (85%) and just 3% were dissatisfied, indicating that a typical call centre complaint of being held in a queue, is not a significant issue for the National Careers Service.

More of an issue is, for customers who spoke to more than one person when they called, the time it took to get through to the person who actually helped them, although still a relatively small proportion of telephone customers were dissatisfied with this (11% v. 78% satisfied). Satisfaction was significantly higher among Advice customers (87%) than Information customers (74%) suggesting that those looking for what they might see as relatively straightforward information are less tolerant of being passed around.

For around three-quarters of telephone customers (73%), their query was handled during the course of a single call. The propensity for queries to require more than one call has increased slightly over the three Quarters covered in the Satisfaction survey: from 22% of customers having more than one call in Quarter 1, rising to 26%/27% in Quarter 2 and

Quarter 3. Unsurprisingly, customers seeking information only were more likely to have their query dealt with during a single call (75%) than those seeking advice (66%).

The results suggest that whether multiple calls are required has an impact on overall satisfaction with the service: 43% of those who required only one call were very satisfied overall, compared with 32% of those who made more than one call. This clearly indicates that best practice is for telephone enquiries to be handled where possible in a single call.

Most customers needing more than one call ended up speaking to more than one adviser (57%). Again, best practice is to for customers to be able to speak to the same adviser where possible: among those making multiple calls, 37% of those who spoke to a single adviser were very satisfied overall, compared with 31% among those who spoke to multiple advisers.

Around half (47%) of telephone customers were told by the adviser that they would be sent information by post or email, outlining the conversation and potential next steps. This has decreased over the year, from 53% in Quarter 1 (August 2011) compared with only 43% in Quarter 2 (September – November 2011) and Quarter 3 (December 2011 to February 2012). Those seeking advice were somewhat more likely to be told they would be sent information than those seeking information only (53% vs. 46%). The figure was much higher among those in learning (62%) than was the case for unemployed customers (42%).

Among those who were told that they would be sent information by post or email, the vast majority (83%) had received it, but still 15% said that they had not yet received the information. Unsurprisingly, whether the promised information was received has an impact on overall satisfaction, and those receiving the information were twice as likely to be very satisfied as those still waiting (53% v. 26%). Hence we recommend that where resources allow follow-up calls or e-mails are made to customers where a commitment has been made to send information to check that it has been received, and if not to check address details and if the information is still desired.

Where customers received the information, it was found to be useful in the vast majority (91%) of cases, with only 6% saying that it was not useful.

Face-to-face sessions

Around two-thirds (65%) of face-to-face customers had a single meeting with a Next Step adviser, with around a quarter (23%) reporting two meetings, and one in eight (12%) having three or more. Customers with no or low qualifications (below level 2) were more likely to report multiple meetings (37%), as were older customers aged 50 plus (39%).

There was significant variation by Prime Contractor, with North East, North West GMCP, London and South West all considerably more likely to deliver via a single meeting (70% to 72%). By contrast, only just over half reported a single meeting at North West Economic Solutions (53%) and West Midlands (55%). This suggests quite varied practices by Contractor.

Where customers had more than once meeting, this was likely to be at the suggestion of the adviser (31%) or in order to review or amend their CV (30%), though others reported

that it was because there was insufficient time to discuss everything they wanted to at the first meeting (24%) or that the adviser needed information which they did not have to hand at the initial meeting (23%).

Where multiple meetings took place, this had a positive effect on overall satisfaction: half (51%) who had more than one meeting were very satisfied overall, compared with only a third (36%) of those who had only one meeting.

In three-quarters (76%) of cases where customers had more than one meeting, they saw the same adviser on each occasion. The majority of those who saw more than one adviser said this was not a problem (74%), but a quarter stated that they would have preferred to see the same adviser each time. Customers who did see the same adviser were more satisfied overall than those who saw multiple advisers (54% very satisfied compared with 45%). Hence again best practice is that where multiple meetings are required every effort should be made to have customers see the same adviser.

Skills Health Check

A third of face-to-face customers recalled going through the Skills Health Check diagnostic tool during the course of their meeting (33%). This was significantly more likely at South West Tribal (42%) and North West Economic Solutions (40%). By contrast, only a quarter of customers in the North East (25%), London (28%) and Yorkshire (28%) recalled going through this process. There were few variations by demographic group.

The vast majority of customers who went through the Skills Health Check found it useful (88%), with young people aged 19 or under (94%), those without Level 2 qualifications (91%), and 18-24 year old NEETs (94%) particularly positive. In the small minority of cases where the Skills Health Check was not considered useful, this was likely to be because it told the customer what they already knew (42%), or they did not find the questions relevant (35%). Customers who went through the Skills Health Check were more likely to be very satisfied overall (45%) than those who did not receive this service (39%), suggesting that use of the Skills Health Check should be encouraged.

Action Plans

Both face-to-face and telephone advice customers were asked if, as part of their interaction with Next Step, an Action Plan had been drawn up for achieving their goals and targets. Among both groups, more than half recalled doing so (59% of face-to-face customers and 53% of telephone customers). The likelihood of an Action Plan being utilised decreases with age: two-thirds (66%) of under 19s developed an Action Plan, compared with only half of over 50s.

For face-to-face customers, there was significant variation by Prime Contractor: 70% using South West Tribal, 67% at North West Economic Solutions and 66% at North West GMCP Cumbria recalled drawing up an Action Plan, compared with only 44% in the North East and 45% in Yorkshire (two regions where use of the Skills Health Check was lower than average). Again this suggests wide variation in the practices across different contractors.

Clearly an Action Plan is most likely to be effective where there is buy-in from the individual, rather than it being 'imposed' on them. This approach is being adopted in the

vast majority of cases: where an Action Plan was created, more than nine in ten reported that they had a great deal (57%) or some (34%) involvement in drawing it up.

The content and focus of Action Plans varied according to different groups within the sample. For face-to-face customers, Action Plans were likely to be based around development and improvement of CVs (36%) or exploring course options (22%). Telephone advice customers were more likely to report that their plan included exploring course options (29%), and much less likely to mention CV development (18%). This reflects the different needs and focuses of the two customer groups as discussed in Chapter 3; face-to-face customers are more likely to be seeking practical assistance with employment, whereas telephone customers are more focused on learning. There were also some variations by age: customers aged 50 plus were significantly more likely to have CV development included in their plan (42% compared with only 27% of the youngest group).

The vast majority (87%) found the Action Plan useful, indeed almost half (46%) found it very useful. The perceived usefulness differed little by demographic group or by the type of service received, though the reasons why they were considered helpful varied somewhat between face-to-face and telephone customers: the latter were more likely to say that the plan helped them decide what to do next (69% v. 58% of face-to-face customers) whereas face-to-face customers were more likely to mention it helping with their CV (16% vs. 5% of telephone customers).

Customers where an Action Plan was drawn up were more likely to be very satisfied with the Next Step service overall (46%) than those who did not receive this service (35%). Again this is strong evidence that use of Action Plans should be encouraged.

Lifelong Learning Accounts

The majority of customers did not discuss Lifelong Learning Accounts during their interaction with Next Step (70%, and 8% could not remember if it was discussed or not). Overall 6% opened an account during the meeting or call, and a further 4% opened one subsequently.

Table 5.1: Lifelong Learning Accounts

Base: All	6,610 %
Already had one	2
Opened one during the session	6
Opened one since	4
Offered but not interested	8
Not discussed	70
Can't remember	8

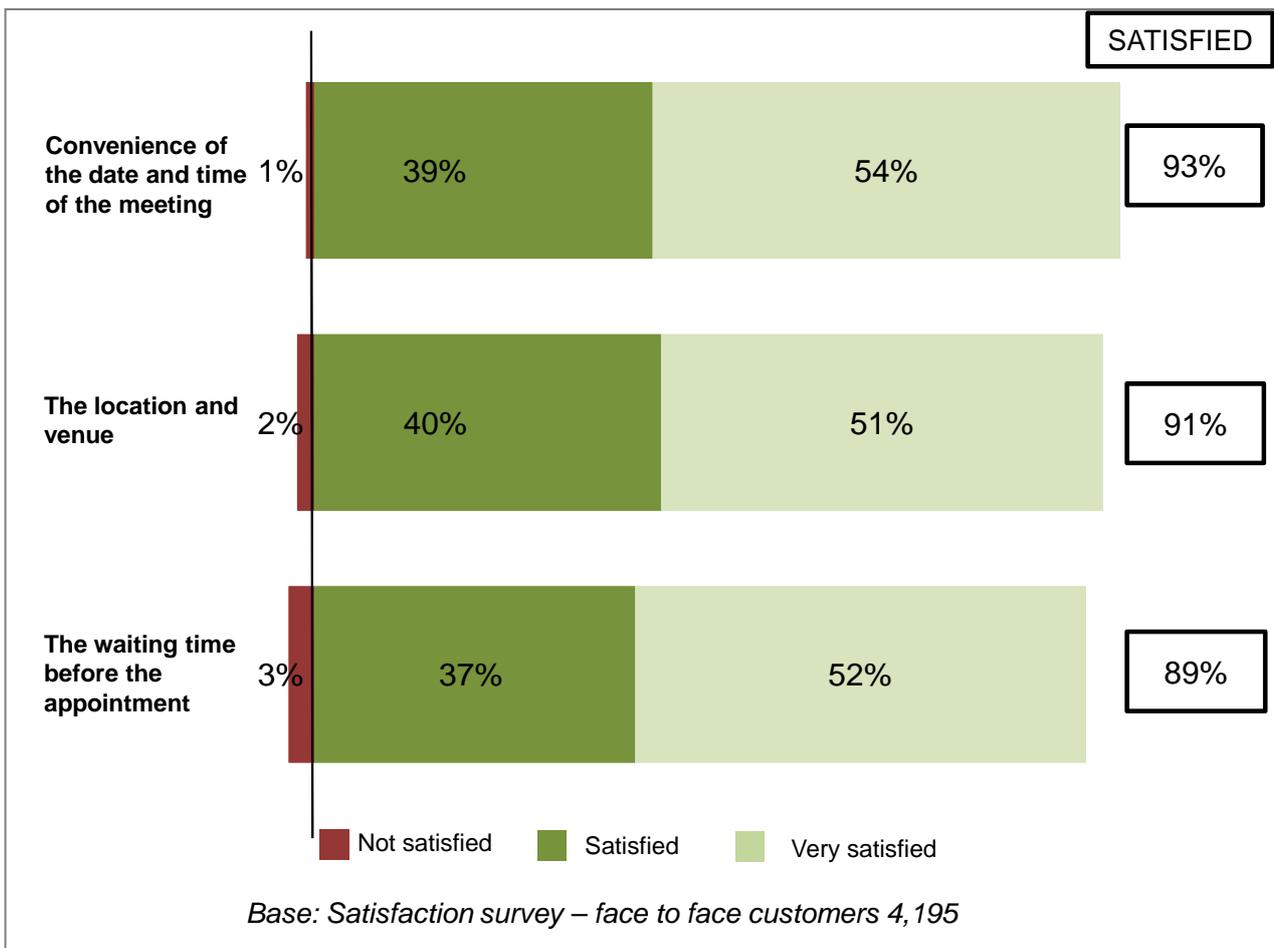
The pattern was the same across telephone and face-to-face customers, Prime Contractors and different demographic groups.

Among those who had opened an account during their meeting or call, around half (55%) had since activated it. This was lower among over 50s (46%) than other age groups. Customers with Level 2 or higher qualifications were more likely to have activated their account than those without such qualifications (59% vs. 48%).

Satisfaction with adviser sessions

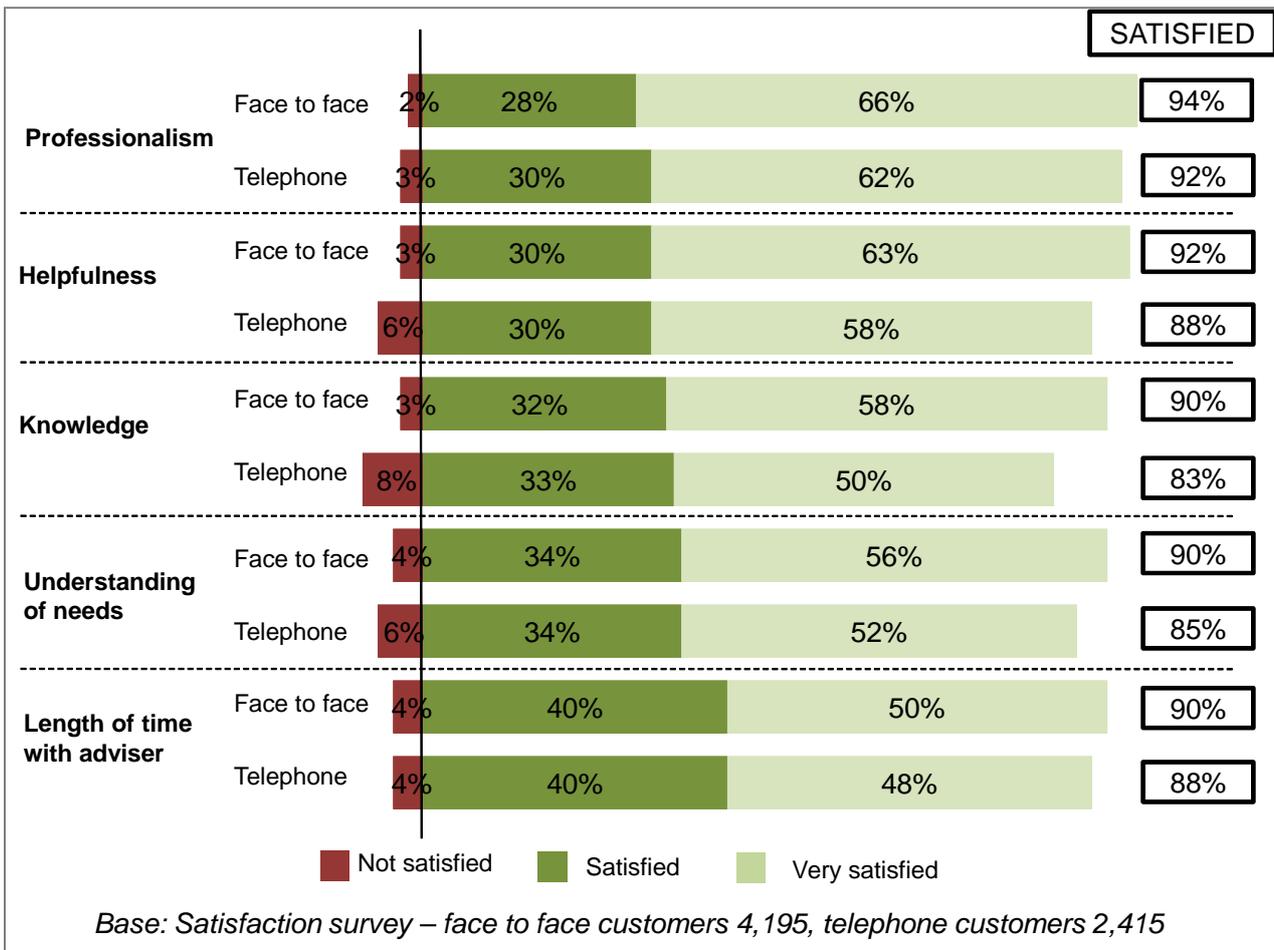
Customers were asked for their views on a number of specific aspects of their call or meeting with the Next Step adviser. Figure 5.1 shows that face-to-face customers were highly satisfied with the situational and logistical aspects of their meeting including the time and date of the meeting, the waiting time before being seen, and the location and venue. For each around nine in ten were satisfied (and just over half very satisfied) and 3% or fewer dissatisfied. With such high levels of satisfaction there was little variation by demographic sub-group or by Prime Contractor.

Figure 5.1: Satisfaction with situational and logistical aspects of face-to-face meeting



Customers were highly satisfied overall with their experience of Next Step advisers. The results shown in Figure 5.2 suggest that Next Step advisers are representing the service well and delivering a positive customer experience. On each measure around nine in ten were satisfied, a half to two thirds very satisfied, and typically just 2 to 4% were dissatisfied.

Figure 5.2: Satisfaction with the adviser

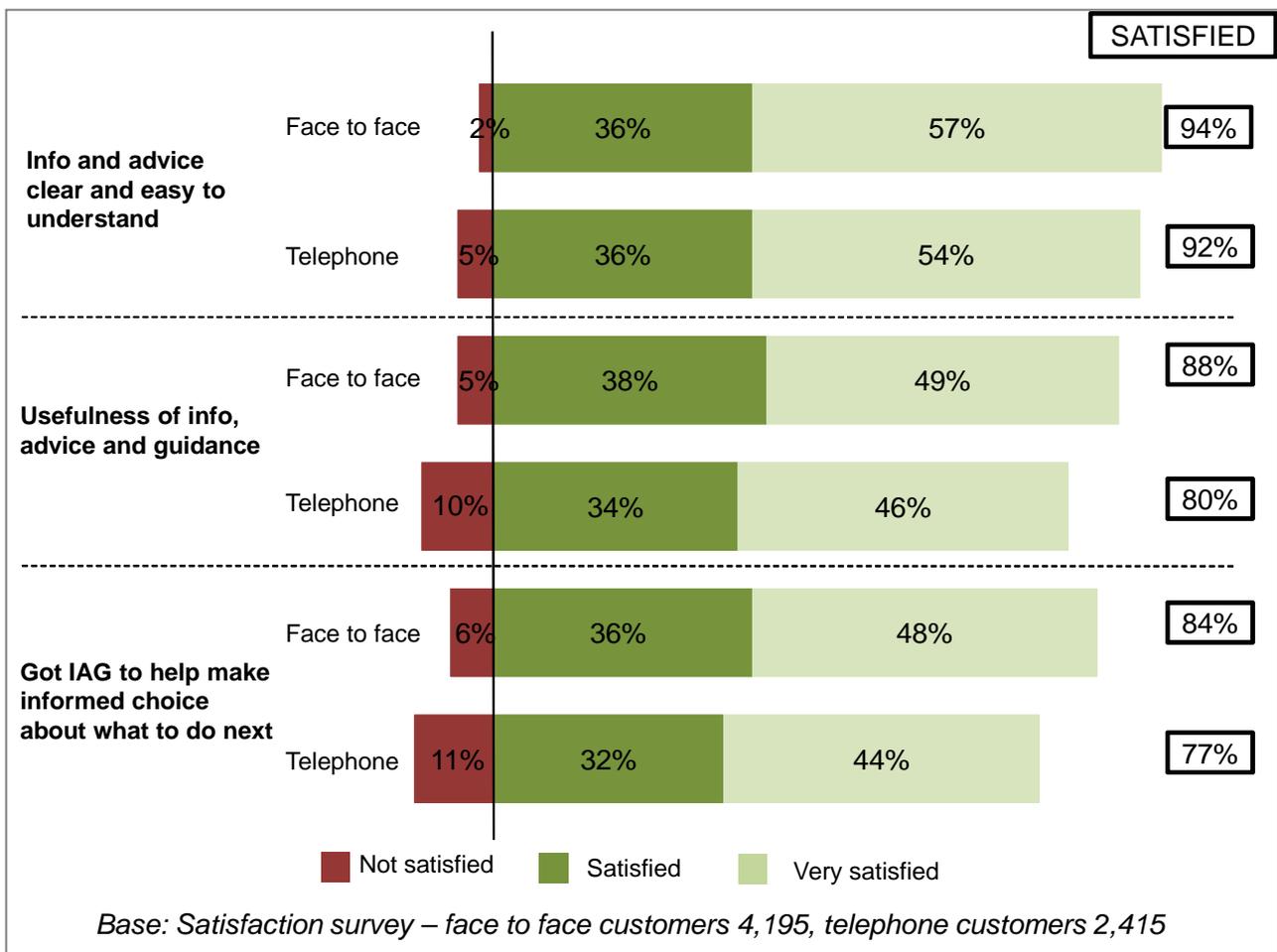


On each measure face-to-face customers were more positive than telephone customers, reflecting the more intense nature of the interaction. The difference was most noticeable for the adviser's knowledge (90% of face-to-face customer satisfied vs. 83% telephone), and their understanding of the customer's needs (90% vs. 85%). However, despite these differences, telephone customers still expressed very positive views overall.

Again reflecting the more intensive interaction, telephone Advice customers tended to have more positive views than telephone Information customers: the differences were not particularly large for the percentage satisfied (c. 3 percentage points) but were larger when looking at the percentage very satisfied. This was particularly the case regarding 'professionalism' (69% of telephone Advice customers very satisfied v. 59% of Information customers), 'helpfulness' (65% of Advice customers very satisfied v. 56% of Information customers) and 'the length of time they spent speaking to the adviser' (59% of Advice customers v. 44% among Information customers).

Customer satisfaction with the advice they received showed a similar pattern to views regarding advisers, with around nine in ten customers satisfied with each aspect of advice, and with face-to-face customers more positive than telephone customers, and telephone Advice customers more positive than telephone Information customers. Results are particularly positive in relation to information and advice being clear and easy to understand.

Figure 5.3: Satisfaction with the information and advice provided



As shown on the chart, for the usefulness of the information and advice and it enabling them to make informed choices about what to do next, relatively high levels of telephone customers were dissatisfied (10% and 11% respectively). Dissatisfaction was slightly higher among telephone information customers (12%) than telephone advice customers (9%).

Older customers aged 50 plus were relatively less positive than average about the usefulness of the information and advice (83% were satisfied v. 91% of customers aged 19 and under) and about the advice enabling them to make an informed choice about what to do next (79% satisfied v. 86% of under 25s).

Encouragingly customers with lower level qualifications (below Level 2) were more likely to find the information and advice useful than those who had qualifications at Level 2 or higher (89% compared with 84%) and more likely to consider that the advice helped them make an informed choice about what to do next (86% compared with 80%).

Key drivers of satisfaction

The previous chapter examined levels of customer satisfaction with specific aspects of their call / meeting, and revealed broadly high levels of satisfaction. This chapter examines customer satisfaction with these aspects of the call / meeting further and aims, through the use of statistical analysis techniques (correlation and regression analysis), to identify key priorities for improvement.

The specific aspects of the call / meeting tested were:

- The location and venue of the meeting (face-to-face customers only)
- The waiting time before the appointment (face-to-face customers only)
- The convenience of the time and date of the meeting (face-to-face customers only)
- The time it took for someone to answer the call (telephone customers only)
- The time taken to get through to the person who helped (telephone customers only)
- The length of time spoken with the adviser
- The professionalism of the adviser
- The helpfulness of the adviser
- The adviser's level of knowledge
- The adviser understanding the customer's needs
- The information and advice being clear and easy to understand
- The usefulness of the information, advice or guidance
- That the customer got the information, advice or guidance to make an informed decision about what to do next.

Correlation analysis

Correlation analysis investigates the level of association between different variables and gives an indication of each variable's relative importance. Here we test the correlation between satisfaction with each individual aspect of the Next Step service and overall satisfaction with the service. This gives an indication of the importance of each aspect of a call / meeting in driving overall satisfaction.

Results of this analysis for face-to-face customers are shown in Figure 6.1. The x-axis shows the mean satisfaction score for each aspect of service: the further right on the chart a factor appears, the higher the level of customer satisfaction. As can be seen, face-to-face customers were most satisfied with the professionalism of the adviser and least satisfied with getting the information, advice or guidance to make an informed decision about what to do next.

The vertical, y-axis shows the correlation of an individual factor with overall satisfaction with the service. The higher a factor appears the more closely correlated it is with overall satisfaction. Therefore, the waiting time before the meeting was shown to correlate the least with overall satisfaction and the usefulness of the information, advice or guidance was shown to correlate the most with overall satisfaction.

Figure 6.1: Correlation with overall satisfaction: face-to-face



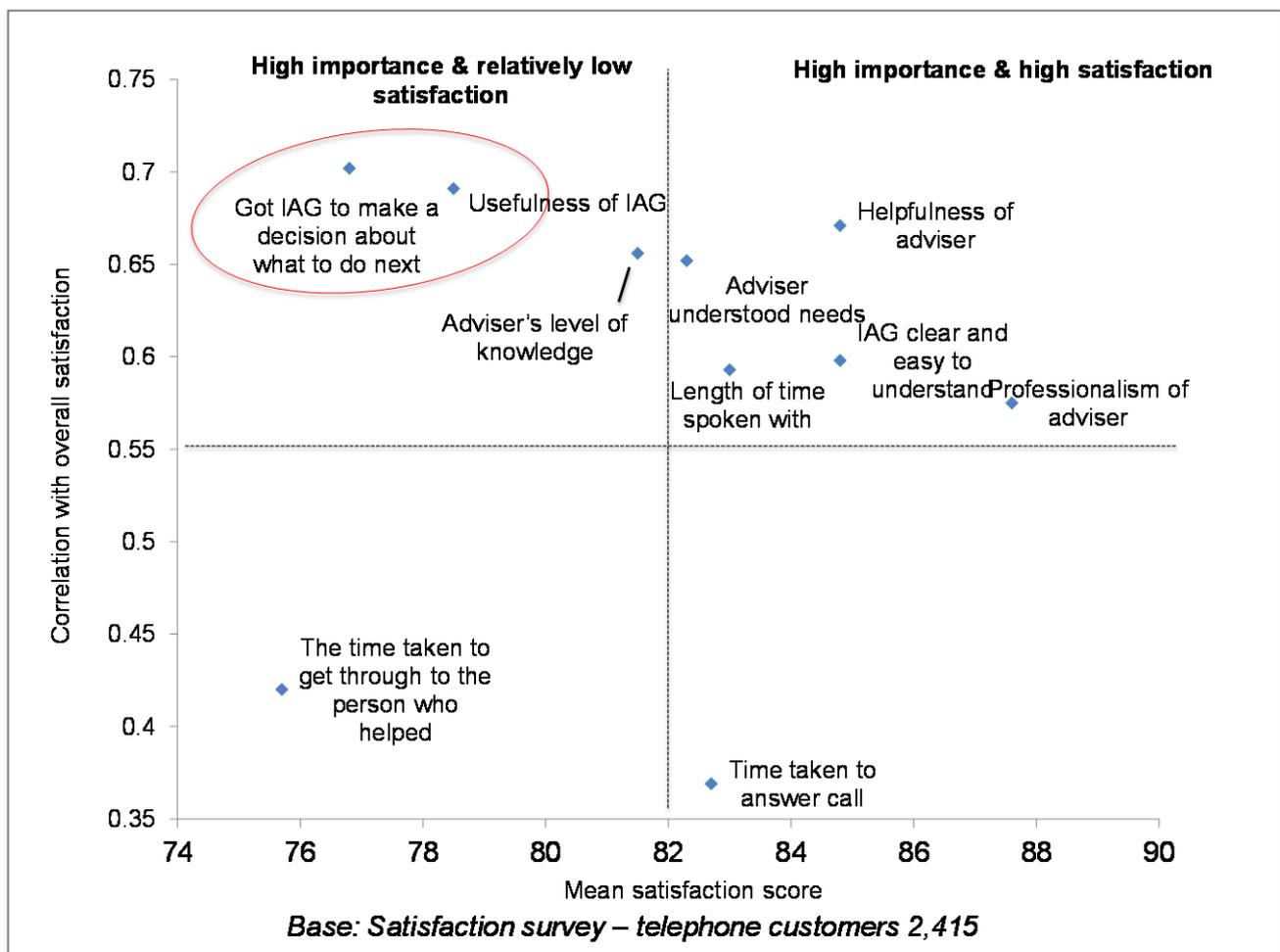
The lower half of the chart shows that logistical / operational aspects of face-to-face meetings (waiting time, the location and venue, and the convenience of the date and time of the session) tend to have a **very weak correlation** with overall satisfaction. This suggests that any improvement in these aspects would not necessarily bring about an increase in overall satisfaction. As levels of satisfaction with these aspects of the meeting are fairly average in comparison with other aspects, there is no need for concern over

these aspects (although this could change if satisfaction levels were to drop significantly for any reason).

The top right quadrant of the chart shows factors that are **highly correlated** with overall satisfaction and have comparatively **high satisfaction** scores. These include several aspects relating to the adviser (helpfulness, professionalism and level of knowledge), as well as the information and guidance being clear and easy to understand. These aspects of the meeting may not require improvement, but it will be important to maintain satisfaction levels in these areas in order to maintain overall satisfaction.

The top left quadrant shows factors that are **highly correlated** with overall satisfaction and have comparatively **low satisfaction** scores. Of particular note are the usefulness of the information and guidance and whether the information and guidance helped customers to make an informed choice about what to do next. Because satisfaction with these aspects of the meeting is comparatively low, these aspects offer the most potential for increasing overall satisfaction and should be a key focus of attention.

Figure 6.2 shows the same analysis for telephone customers.



The results of the correlation analysis for telephone customers are very similar to the results for face-to-face customers. Operational aspects (time taken to answer the call, time taken to get through to the person who helped), shown in the bottom half of the chart, **correlate very weakly** with overall satisfaction. Increasing satisfaction with these aspects is therefore not likely to improve overall satisfaction, although a significant decrease in satisfaction with these factors could have a negative effect overall.

As with face-to-face customers, aspects relating to the adviser (helpfulness, professionalism and understanding of customer needs) are **highly correlated** with overall satisfaction and have **high satisfaction** ratings. The length of the call and the advice being clear and easy to understand are also in this quadrant (high correlation, high satisfaction). These results suggest that these aspects of the telephone service may not need improvement, but efforts should be made to maintain customer satisfaction with each aspect in order to maintain the high levels of overall satisfaction with the service.

And just as among face-to-face customers, the usefulness of the information and guidance and whether the information and guidance helped to make an informed choice about what to do next were shown to **correlate highly** with overall satisfaction and have comparatively **low satisfaction** ratings. As satisfaction with these aspects of the meeting is comparatively low these aspects offer the most potential for increasing overall satisfaction and should be a key focus of attention.

Regression analysis

Correlation analysis gives an indication of which aspects of customers' call / meeting are related to overall satisfaction (i.e. those which tend to increase as overall satisfaction increases). However, correlation does not imply causation - it does not tell us which aspects of the call / meeting actually drive overall satisfaction.

Regression analysis can inform what factors drive overall satisfaction. Therefore regression analysis was conducted to investigate the causal relationship between overall satisfaction and satisfaction with individual aspects of the service.

The results of the regression analysis corroborate and support the results of the correlation analysis. Regression analysis suggests that overall satisfaction with the service is driven by four key aspects of the call / meeting, shown in order of importance below:

1. Getting the information, advice or guidance to make an informed decision about what to do next
2. The usefulness of the information, advice or guidance
3. The helpfulness of the adviser
4. The length of time spoken with the adviser (among telephone customers)

Overall satisfaction is therefore linked most closely to customers feeling that they have received all the relevant information and advice available to them (shown by the first two of these key drivers) and that the adviser has done all they can to help (shown by the third and fourth of these key drivers).

Since the helpfulness of the adviser and the length of time spoken with the adviser (among telephone customers) receive comparatively high satisfaction ratings, based on the results of the regression analysis as well as the correlation analysis detailed earlier in the chapter, we can conclude that there is scope to increase overall satisfaction with the service by increasing customers' sense that they have been provided with all the information and advice they need. One simple element may be, as standard, closing off the session by checking whether customers feel they have the information they need for the moment (and for those being sent information we have suggested follow-up calls checking whether the information was received and met their needs).

Customer progression following their dealings

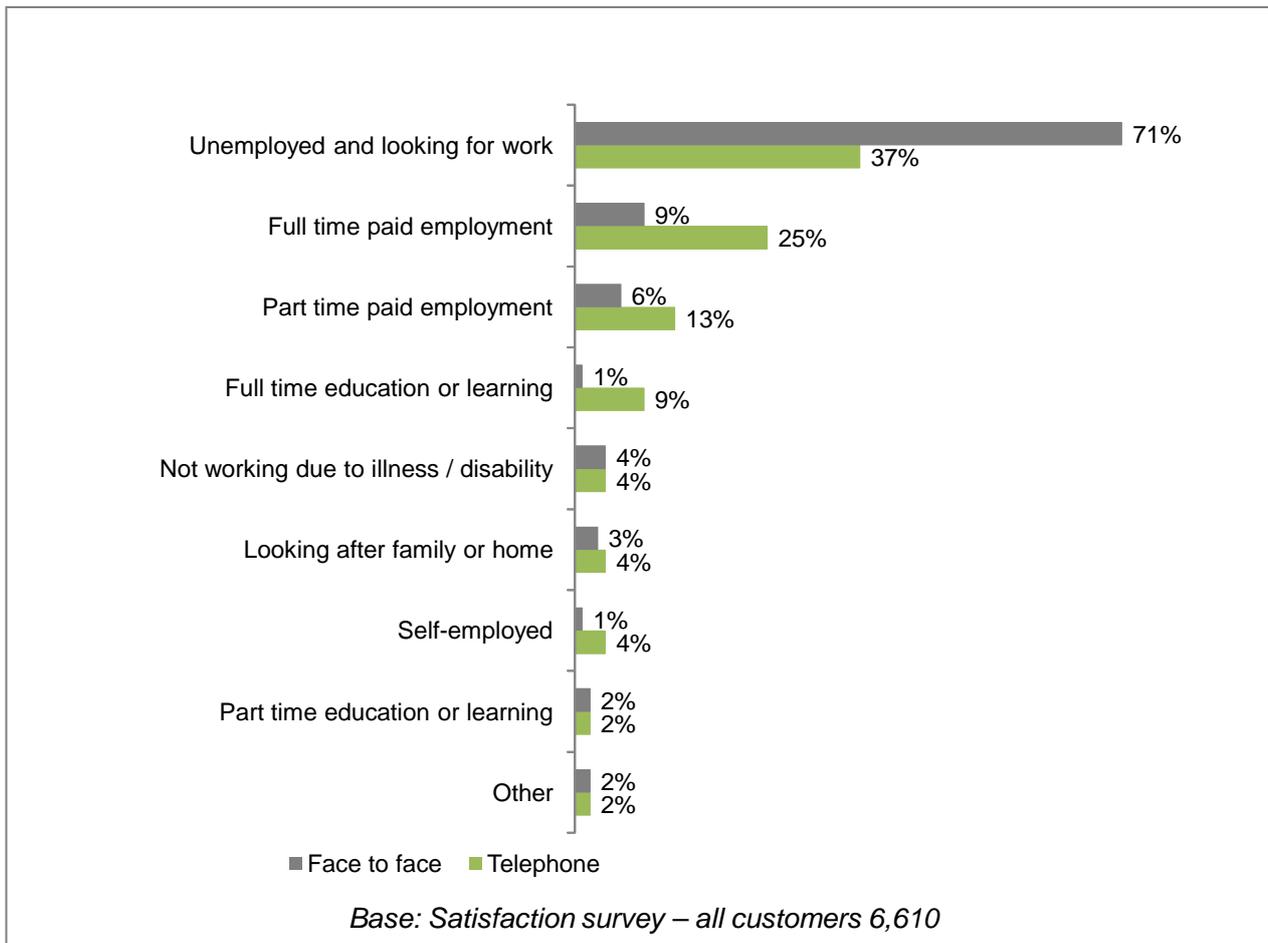
This chapter details the extent to which Next Step customers have progressed in the six months since their call/meeting.

As detailed in chapter 4, Next Step's success in terms of helping customers progress is measured by three core Key Performance Indicators: Employment progression, Learning progression and 'personal added value'. This chapter looks in more detail at the measures that make up these three KPIs.

Situation at the time of the session

Before assessing customers' progression in terms of employment progression, learning progression and personal added value, we first consider customers' employment situation at the time of their call / meeting and how this changed over time – specifically at one month and six months after the call / meeting with an adviser.

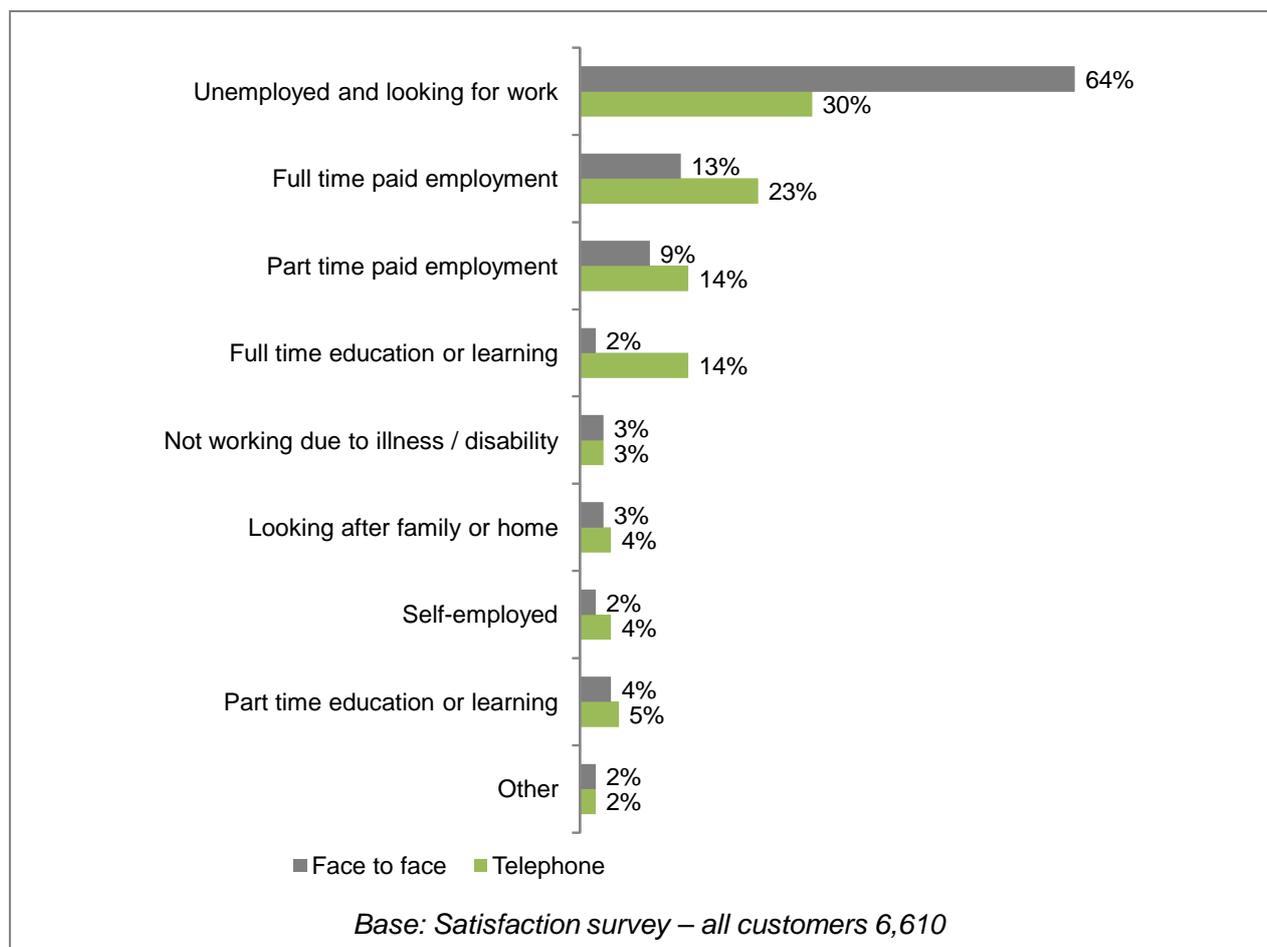
At the time of the Next Step call or meeting, customers were most likely to be unemployed and seeking work (65%) overall. However, as shown in Figure 7.1, there was a wide variation between face-to-face and telephone customers.

Figure 7.1: Employment status at the time of the call / meeting

Among face-to-face customers, the majority (71%) were unemployed and seeking work, while less than a fifth (17%) were in work, and only 3% were in education or learning. By contrast, only just over a third (37%) of telephone customers were unemployed and seeking work. These customers were significantly more likely to be in work (42%), as well as in education or learning (11%).

Progression after 1 month

The results show that, one month after the call or meeting, customers were slightly more likely to be in work or in education or learning. Overall, only 57% of customers were unemployed and seeking work after one month, compared with 65% at the time of the meeting.

Figure 7.2: Employment status one month after session

Among face-to-face customers the proportion unemployed had fallen from 71% to 64%. In this customer group, those who were previously unemployed were likely to have gone into full or part time work (24% compared with 16% at the time of the meeting).

Among telephone customers the proportion unemployed had dropped from 37% to 30%. As discussed earlier in Chapter 3, these customers were more likely to be seeking advice on learning options, and, while there was no significant change in the proportion working among this group, the proportion in education or learning had increased from 11% to 19%.

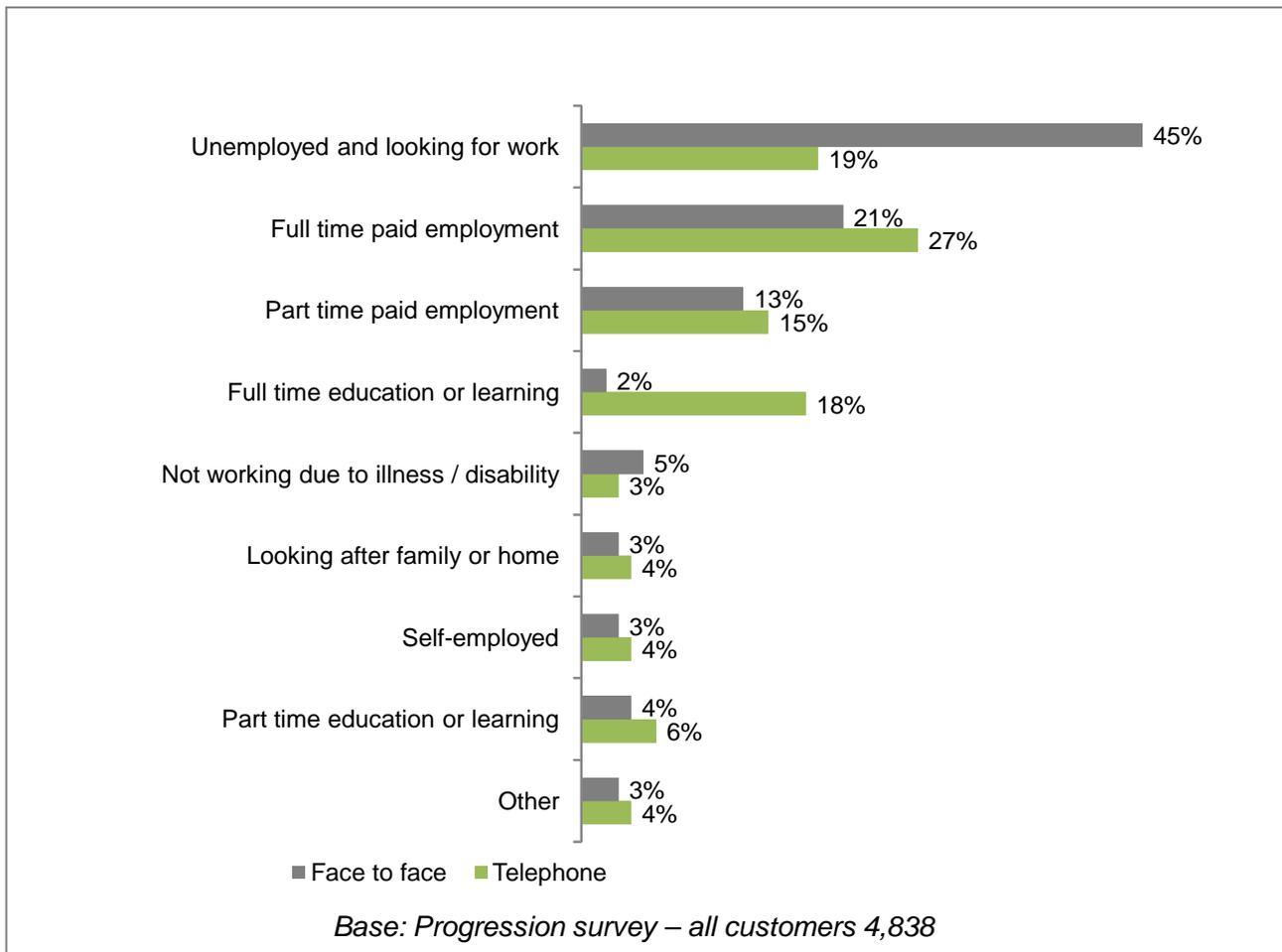
The results show some variation by age group. Progression from the unemployed category into work or learning was most likely to take place among younger age groups. For the 20-24 age groups there was a decrease of 12 percentage points in the proportion unemployed, while for those aged 19 and under this decrease was 10 percentage points. By contrast, the unemployed proportion decreased by only 6 points for 25-49s, and by only 5 points for over 50s.

In line with these decreases in the proportion unemployed, the proportion in work had increased by 9% for 20-24 year olds, and by 7% for those aged 19 and under. However, there was only a 4% increase among 25-49s, and no significant increase among over 50s.

Progression after 6 months

Six months after the call / meeting, the proportion of customers unemployed had fallen further. Only 39% of customers overall remained unemployed after six months, compared with 57% one month after the session, and 65% at the time of the session.

Figure 7.3: Employment status 6 months after call / meeting



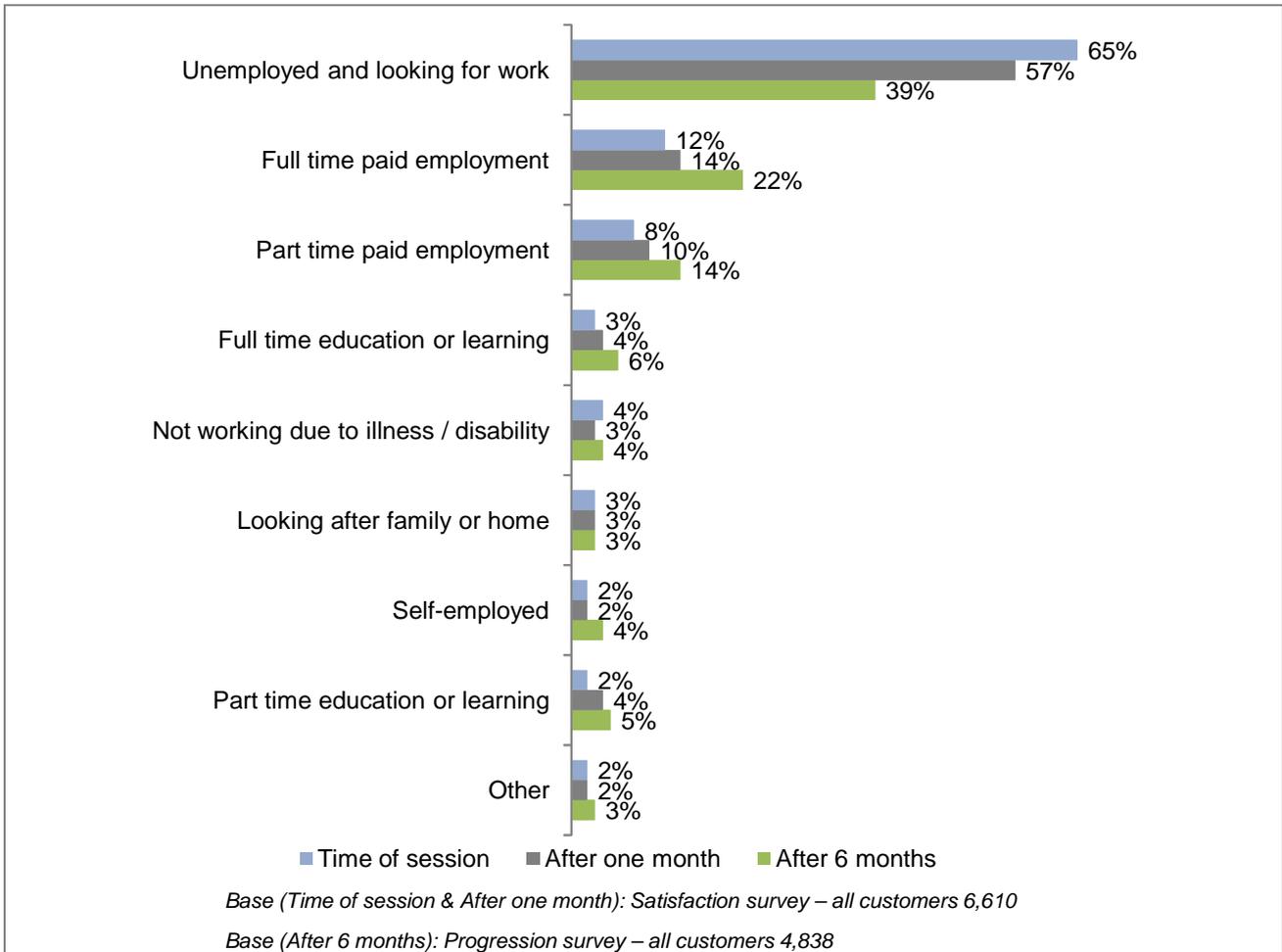
Among face-to-face customer, 45% were unemployed six months after their call / meeting, compared with 64% after one month and 71% at the outset. The proportion of these customers now in work was 37%, compared with 24% after one month and 16% at the time of the session. The proportion in education or learning had not changed significantly.

Only a fifth (19%) of telephone customers were unemployed six months after their call / meeting, compared with 30% after one month and 37% at the time of the session. The proportion of these customers now in education or learning was 24%, compared with 19% after one month and 11% initially. The proportion of this group who were in work remained relatively stable (46% after 6 months and 42% at the time of the session).

Progression over the 6 month period – summary

Figure 7.4 shows the customer progression from the point of the Next Step call or meeting, to one month later and then to six months later. The chart shows that the proportion that was unemployed and seeking work fell over the six month period, from 65% to 39%. The proportion in employment of any kind almost doubled, from 22% at the outset to 40% after six months.

Figure 7.4: Employment status – change over 6 months

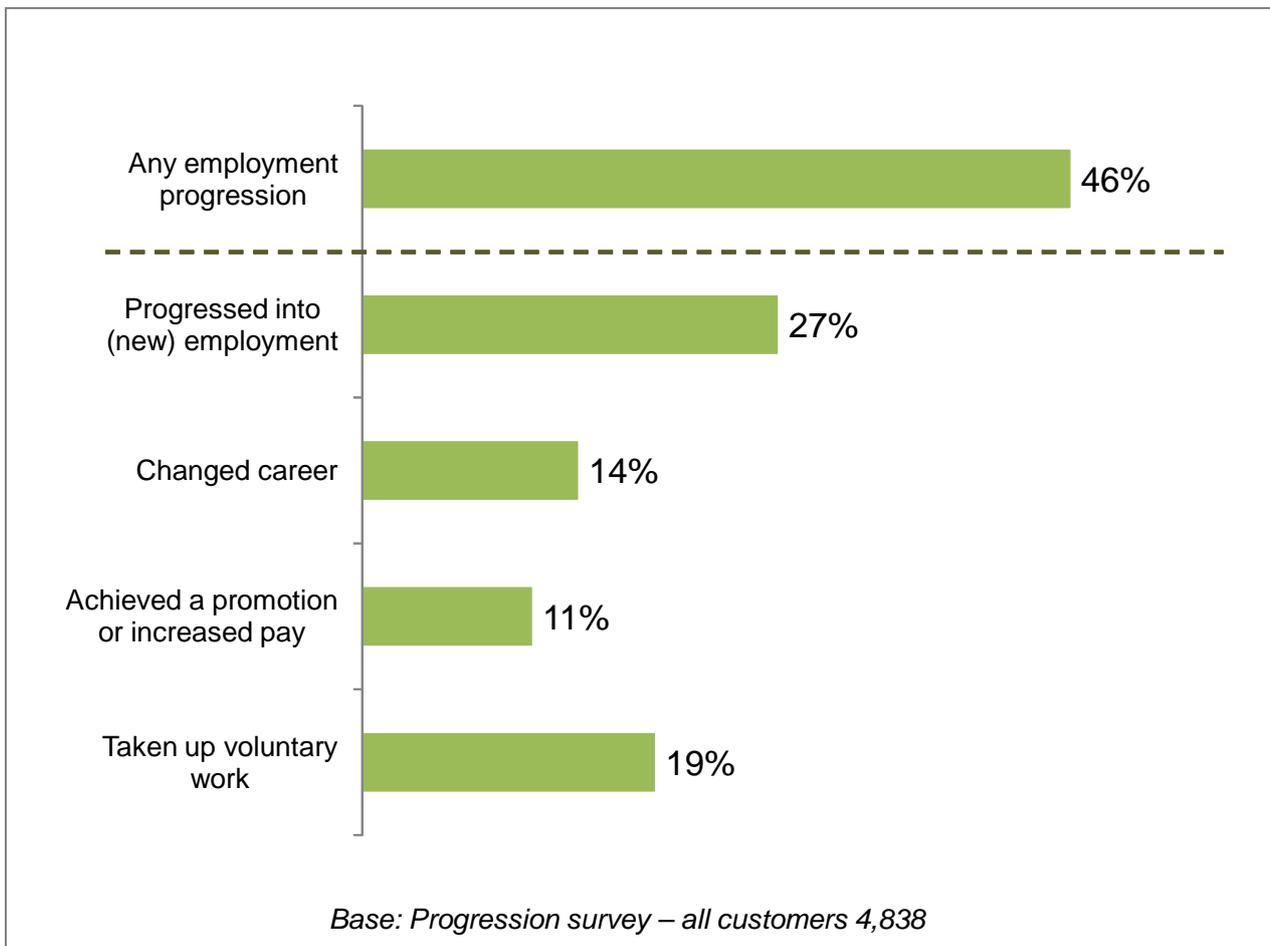


As discussed earlier in this chapter, younger customers were more likely to move from unemployment into work following the Next Step session than were older customers. The proportion of fewer than 19s that were unemployed almost halved, from 76% at the time of their call / meeting to only 42% after six months. The pattern for 20-24s was similar; 64% were unemployed at the outset and this almost halved to 36% after 6 months. By contrast, the proportion of over 55s that was unemployed reduced by only around a third, from 68% at the time of the call / meeting to 44% after six months.

Employment progression

Customers were asked about a number of possible employment outcomes which they may have achieved over the six months since the Next Step call or meeting. Overall, almost half (46%) of customers had achieved any employment progression during this period. Around a quarter (27%) had progressed into new employment (i.e. from having been in learning, unemployment or another out-of-work situation), 14% had achieved a career change, and one in nine (11%) had achieved a promotion or pay rise. A fifth (19%) had taken up voluntary work since their call / meeting.

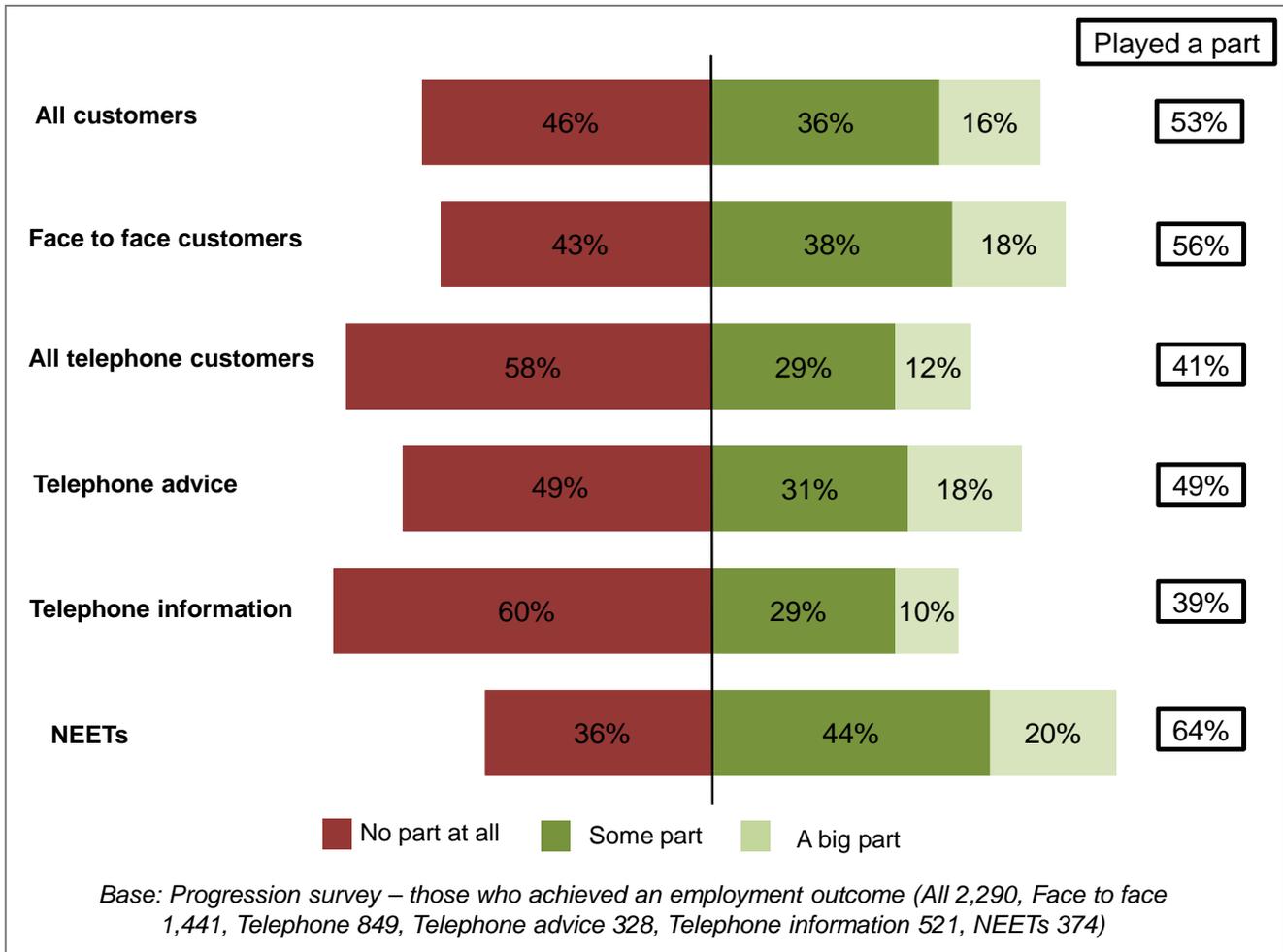
Figure 7.5: Employment progression



Levels of progression were generally similar across telephone and face-to-face customers. However, face-to-face customers were more likely to have moved into new employment since the session, reflecting the higher proportion of these customers that were out of work at the time of the session. Customers who were unemployed at the time of the session were slightly more likely to have achieved any employment progression (50% compared with 46% overall), while young NEETs aged 18-24 were considerably more likely to have done so (56%).

Among customers that had achieved an employment progression, around half felt that the information, advice or support they received from the Next Step adviser had played a part in bringing about this progression. As shown in Figure 7.6 below, the perceived role of the Next Step advice varied according to the service type.

Figure 7.6: Role of Next Step adviser in achieving employment progression

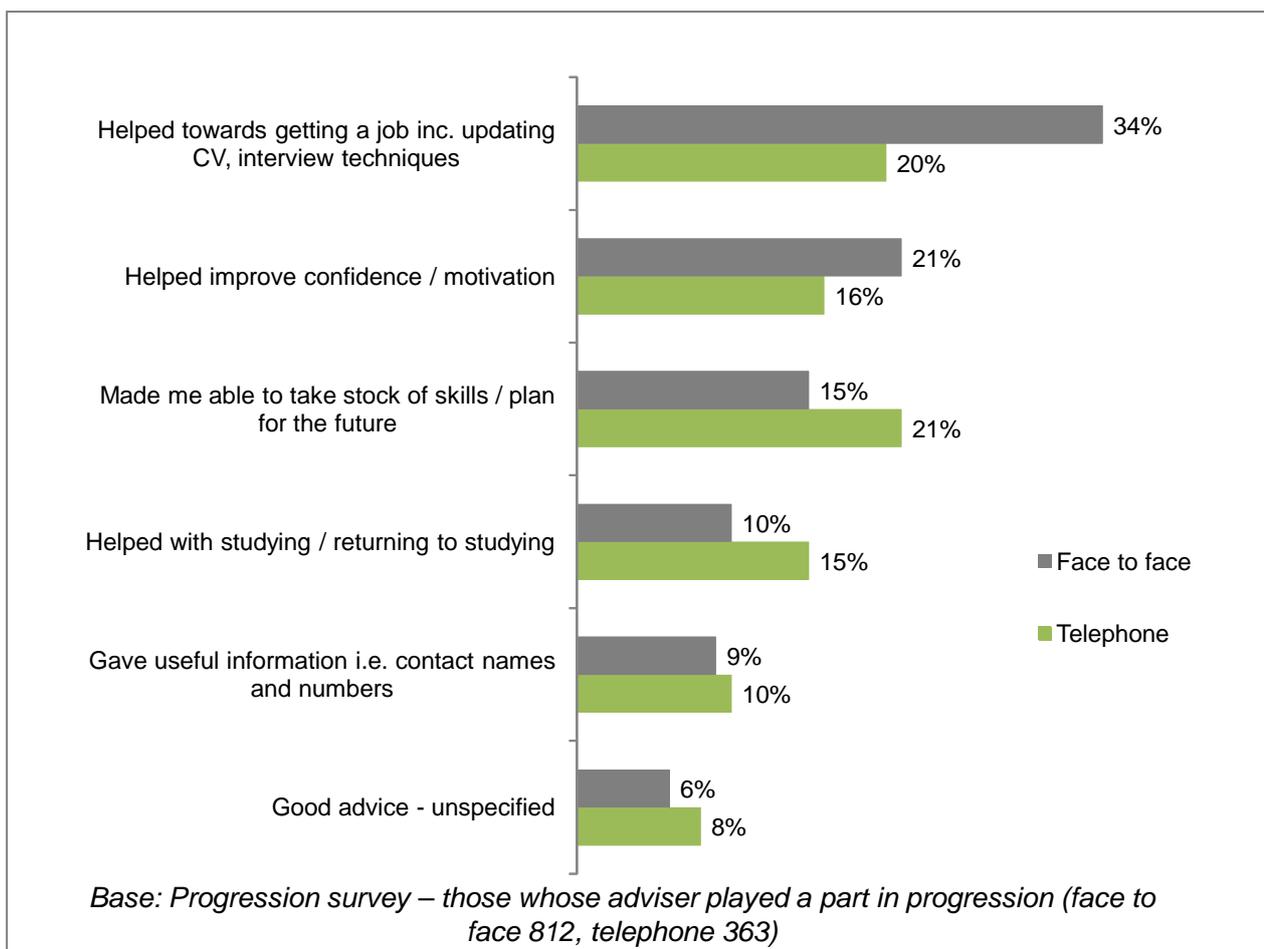


Face-to-face customers were considerably more likely to attribute their progression to the Next Step adviser than were telephone customer (56% compared with 41%). The lower levels of positivity about the role of the adviser among telephone customers is driven predominantly by customers who received the information service, among whom only two-fifths (39%) felt that Next Step had played a part in their progression. By contrast, half (49%) of telephone advice customers held this view.

The chart also shows that young NEETs were significantly more likely than other customers to attribute their progression to the advice they received from Next Step (64%). This suggests that the service is particularly effective for people in this demographic group. As discussed earlier in this chapter, young NEETs were more likely than other customers to achieve an employment progression following the session, and they are also more likely to report that the information, advice or support received played a part in achieving this outcome.

Where Next Step was seen to have contributed to the customer's progression, the main reasons given were that it helped with job-seeking skills such as CV updating and interview techniques (32%), it helped with confidence and motivation (20%) or it assisted with taking stock of skills or planning for the future (16%).

Figure 7.7: Impact of Next Step adviser where the adviser helped employment progression



There was a significant variation between face-to-face and telephone customers, with the former more likely to benefit from practical job-seeking support, while telephone customers were more likely to benefit from support with studying or future planning. However, telephone advice customers were fairly similar to face-to-face customers in their responses, with 27% citing job-seeking skills as a benefit, and 20% improved confidence or motivation.

Those customers who had not achieved employment progression were asked if there was anything else the Next Step adviser could have done to facilitate this. Around one in seven (15%) felt that the adviser could have done something further. This proportion was consistent across face-to-face and telephone customer and across most demographic groups. However, older customers were more likely to feel that the adviser could have done more (17% of 25-49s and 15% of over 50s, compared with only 8% of under 19s).

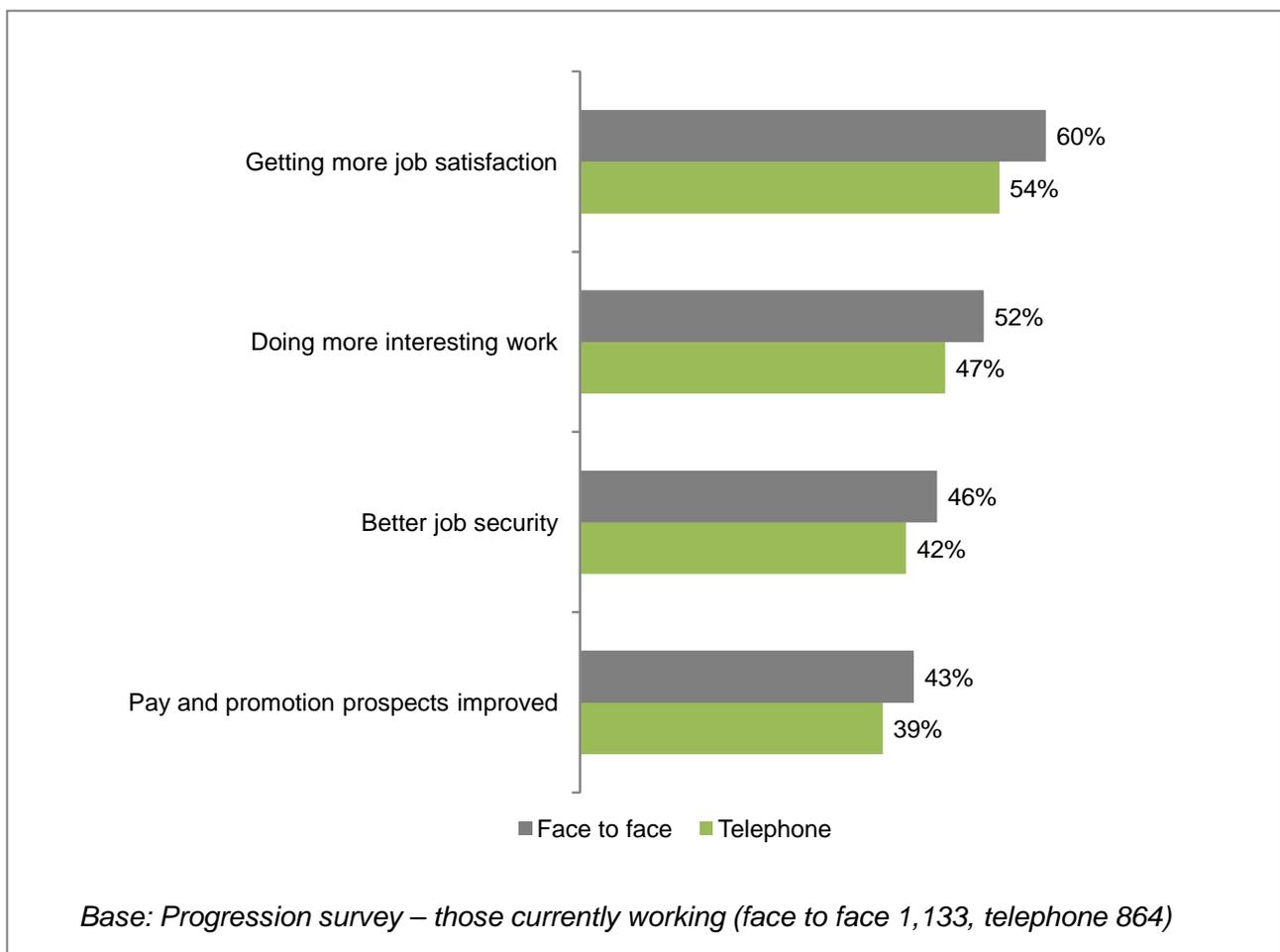
Non-white British customers were also more likely to feel that the adviser could have done more (20%, compared with only 13% of white British customers).

Customers who felt that their adviser could have done more were most likely to mention (better) advice or information on courses (15%), advice or information on specific jobs (14%), or that the adviser could have called back or followed up the session (13%).

Positive changes at work

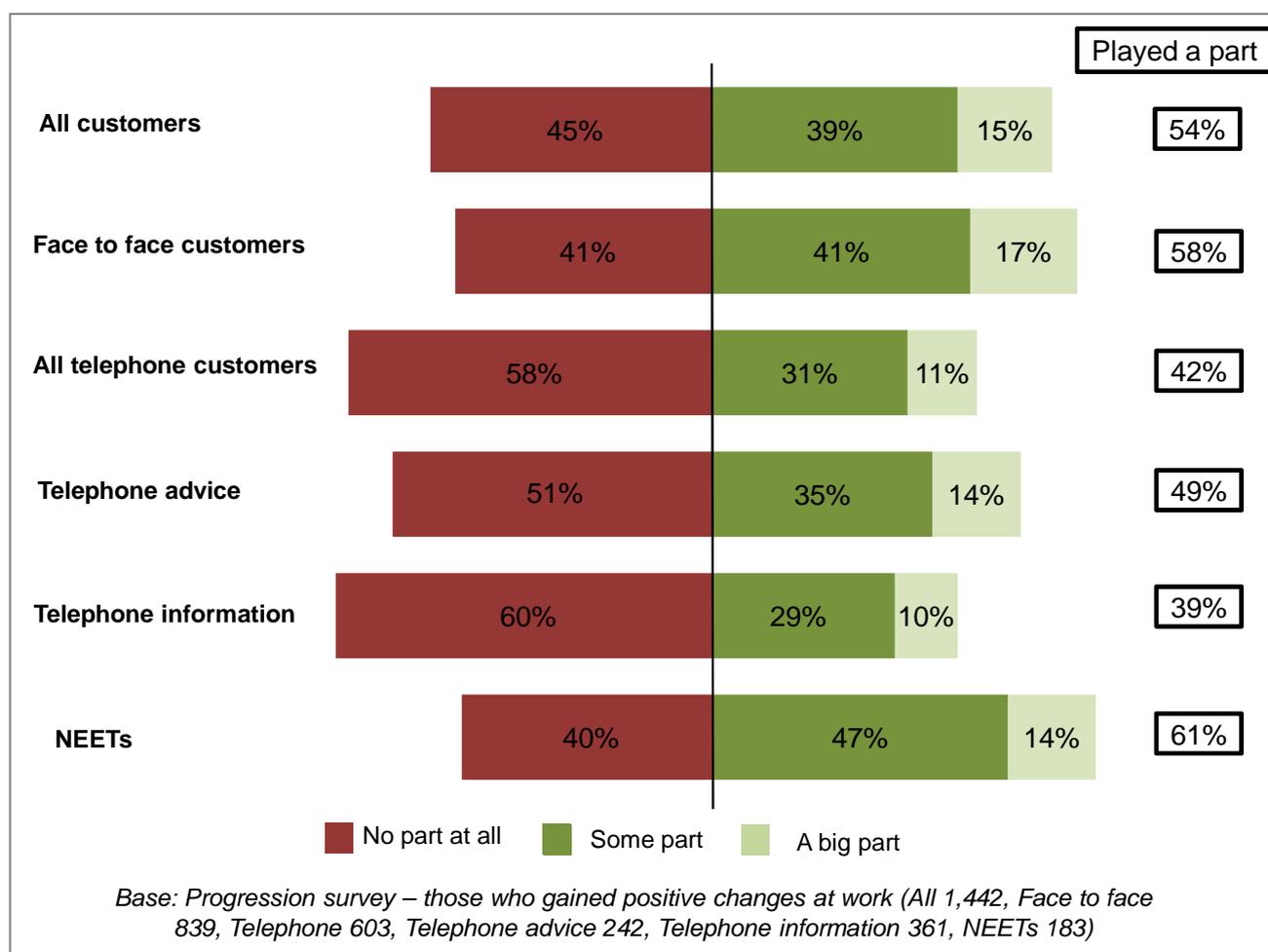
In addition to the harder employment outcomes discussed above, working customers were also asked about a range of other benefits they may have gained in their work following their call / meeting. Customer feedback in this area was also positive. Three-fifths (59%) of working customers felt that they were getting more job satisfaction, and half (51%) that they were now doing more interesting work. Around two-fifths felt that their job security had improved (45%) or that they now had better pay and promotion prospects (41%). Figure 7.8 shows that face-to-face customers were slightly more likely than telephone customers to perceive that they had benefited from each factor.

Figure 7.8: Positive changes at work



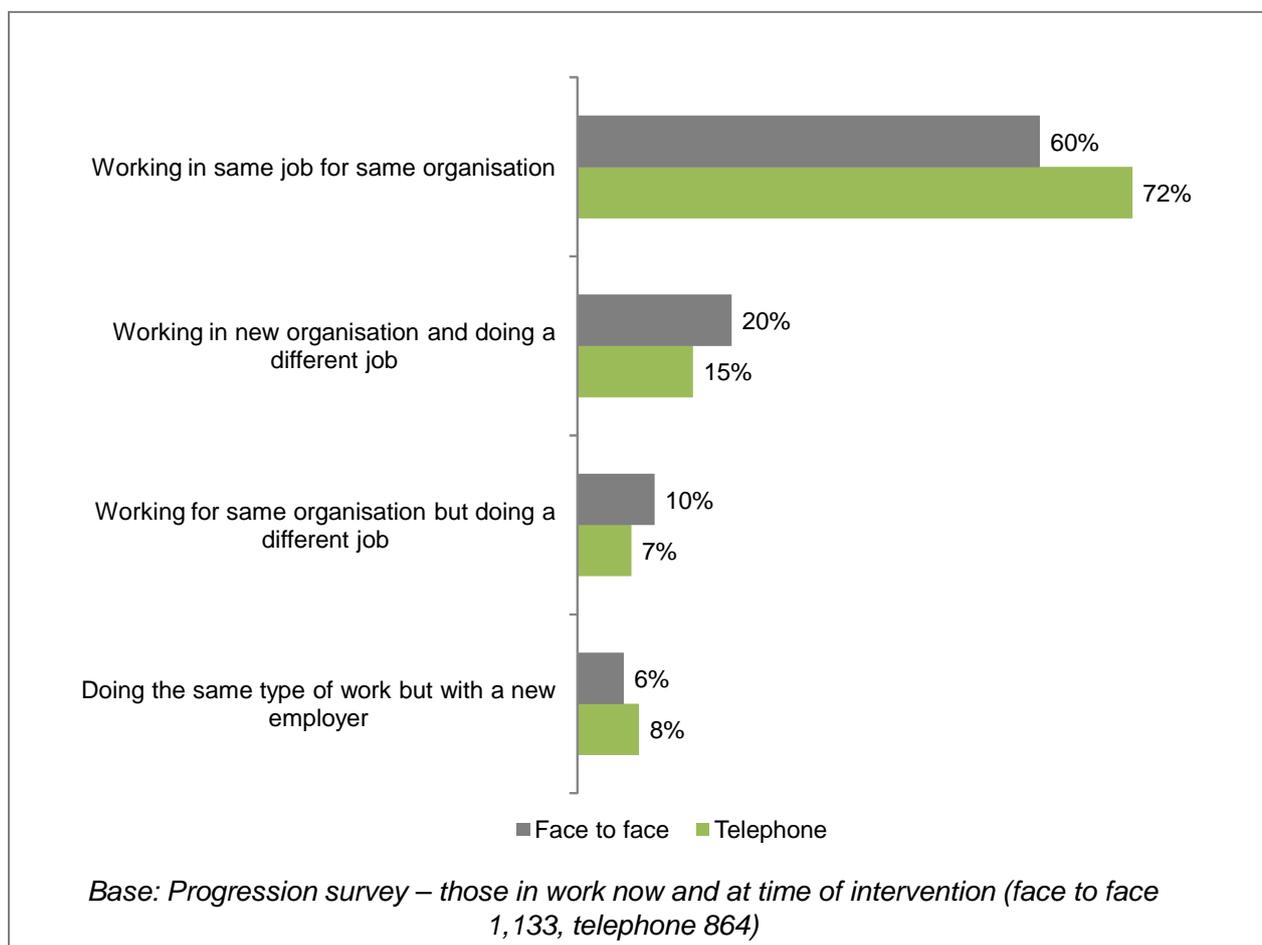
As with the specific employment outcomes discussed earlier in this chapter, around half (54%) of customers who benefitted from one or more positive changes at work attributed these changes to the advice received from Next Step. Again, levels of attribution were significantly higher among face-to-face customers than among telephone customers (58% compared with 42%). Telephone advice customers were more likely to report that the advice contributed to their positive development than telephone information customers (49% vs. 39%). NEETs were also significantly more likely than other customers to attribute positive developments to the advice received (61%).

Figure 7.9: Role of Next Step advice in achieving positive changes at work



Changing role or employer

Among customers that were in work at the time of the call / meeting and also in work at the time of the interview, the majority (64%) reported that they were still working in the same job and for the same organisation. However, this leaves a sizeable minority that had changed either job or employer over the 6 month period. Almost a fifth (18%) was in a different role and working for a different organisation. One in ten (9%) were working for in a different role within the same organisation, and 8% had moved employers while remaining in the same job role.

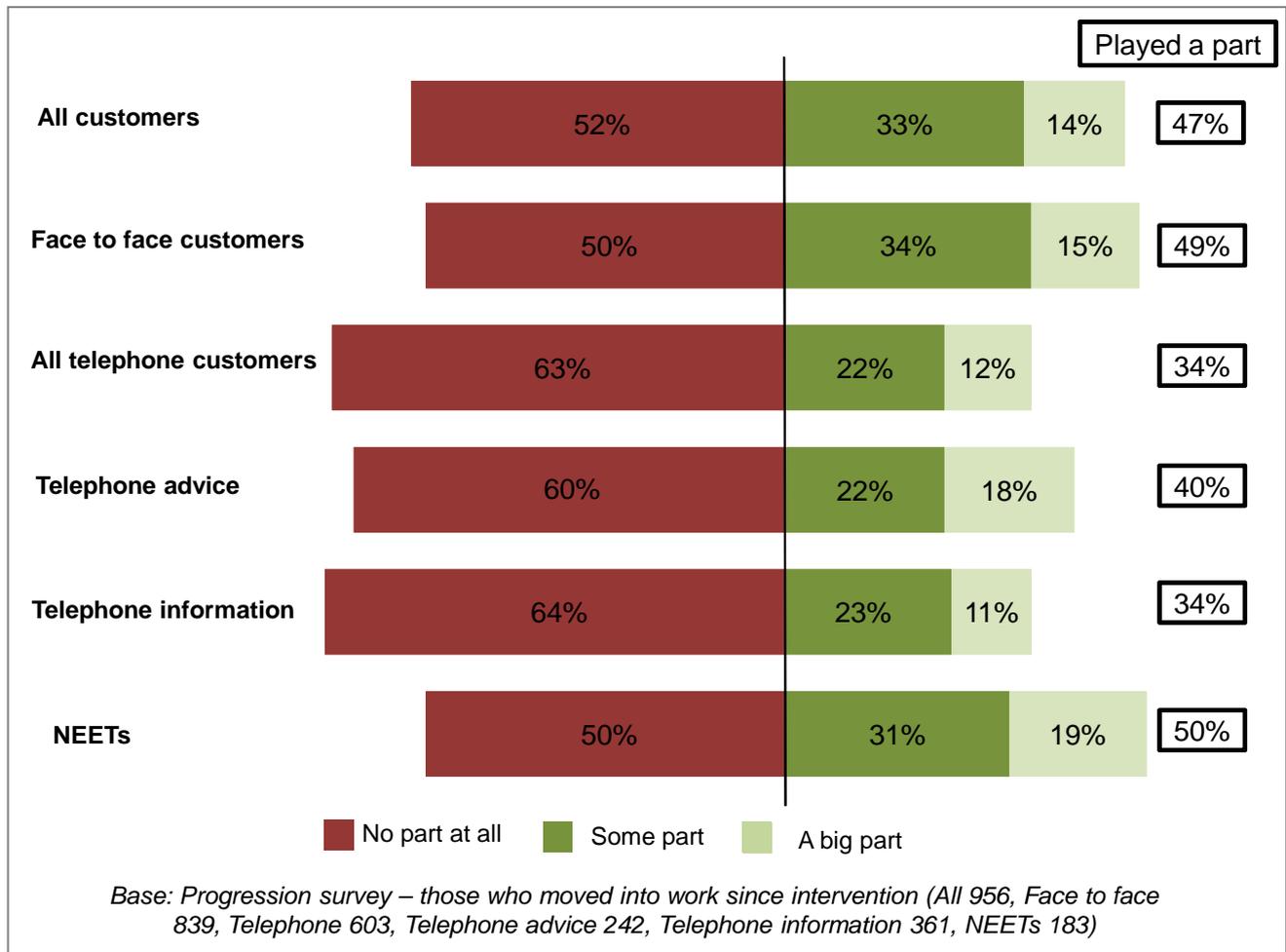
Figure 7.10: Changing role or employer

Face-to-face customers were more likely to have changed their job role or organisation than telephone customers. Around two fifths (40%) of face-to-face customers had made a change, compared with only 28% of telephone customers. Telephone advice customers were more likely to have made a change (33%) than telephone information customers (26%).

Moving into work

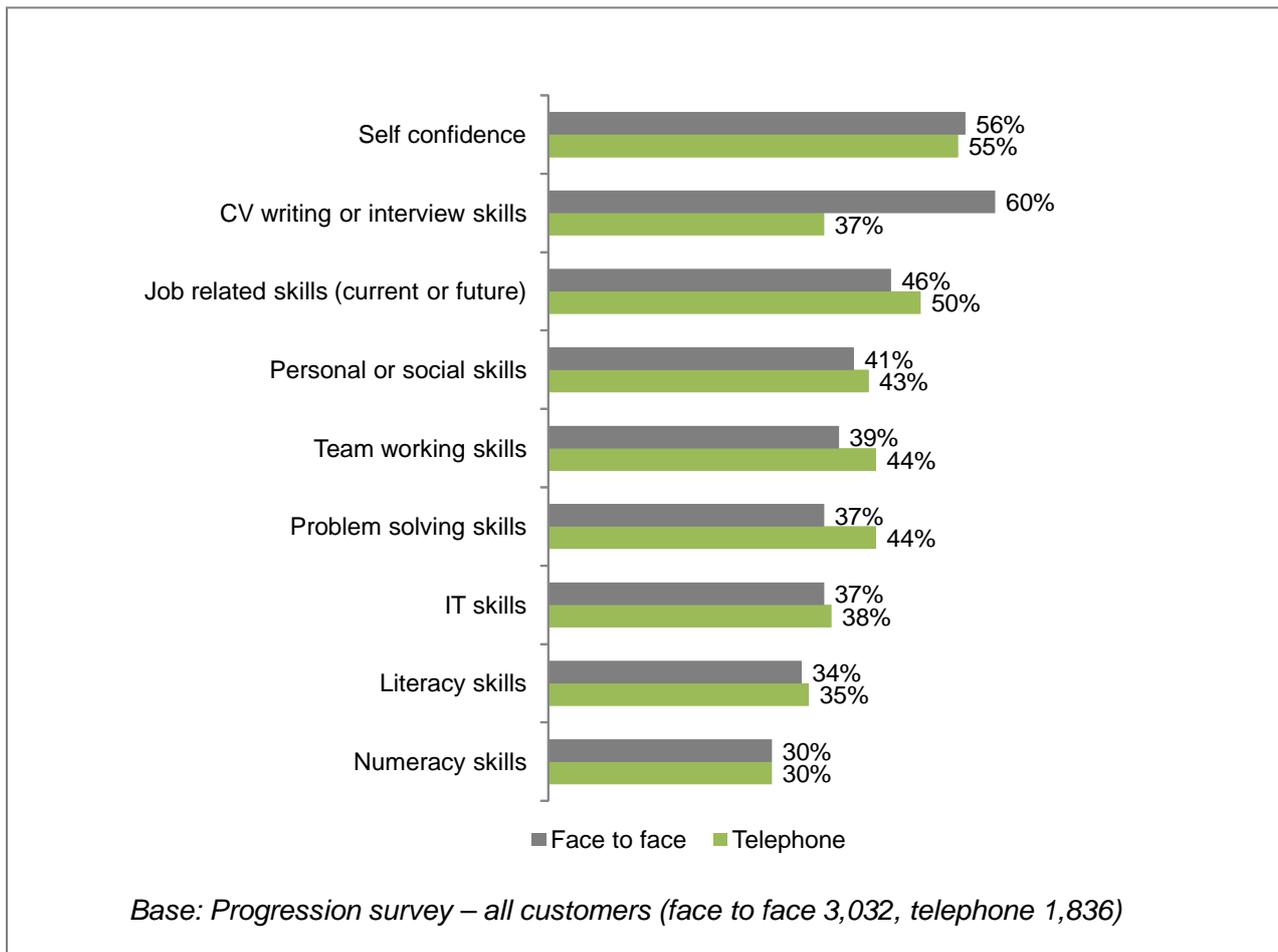
Customers who were not in work at the time of the intervention but who had since moved into work were asked about the role that the Next Step adviser had played in this progression. Overall, almost half (47%) of customers in this category reported that the advice they received played a part in getting the job. This was more likely to be the case among face-to-face customers (49%) than telephone customers (34%). The lower level of attribution among telephone customers was predominantly driven by telephone information customers; two-fifths (40%) of telephone advice customers thought that the advice had played a part in their progression into work compared with one-third (34%) of telephone information customers.

Figure 7.11: Role of Next Step adviser in customer moving into work



Skills and personal development

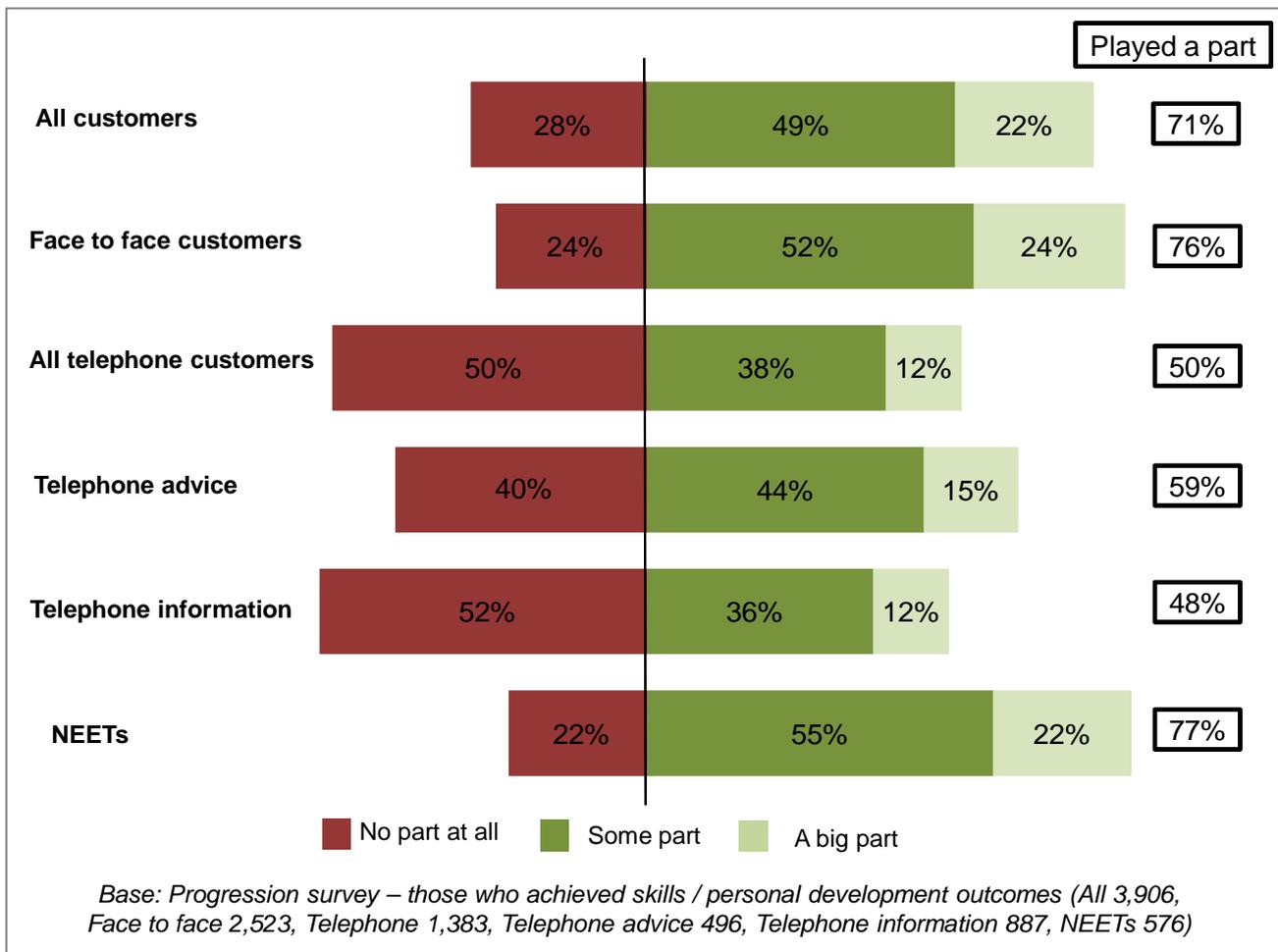
The vast majority (82%) of customers felt that they had improved in one or more skill area over the six month period since the Next Step call or meeting. Customers were most likely to feel that they had improved their self confidence (56%), CV writing or interview skills (55%) and/ or skills related to current or future employment (47%).

Figure 7.12: Skills and personal development outcomes

Results were generally fairly similar for face-to-face and telephone customers, with the exception of CV and interview skills, which face-to-face customers were considerably more likely to have improved (60% compared with 37%). NEETs were somewhat more likely than other customers to report an improvement in most skill areas.

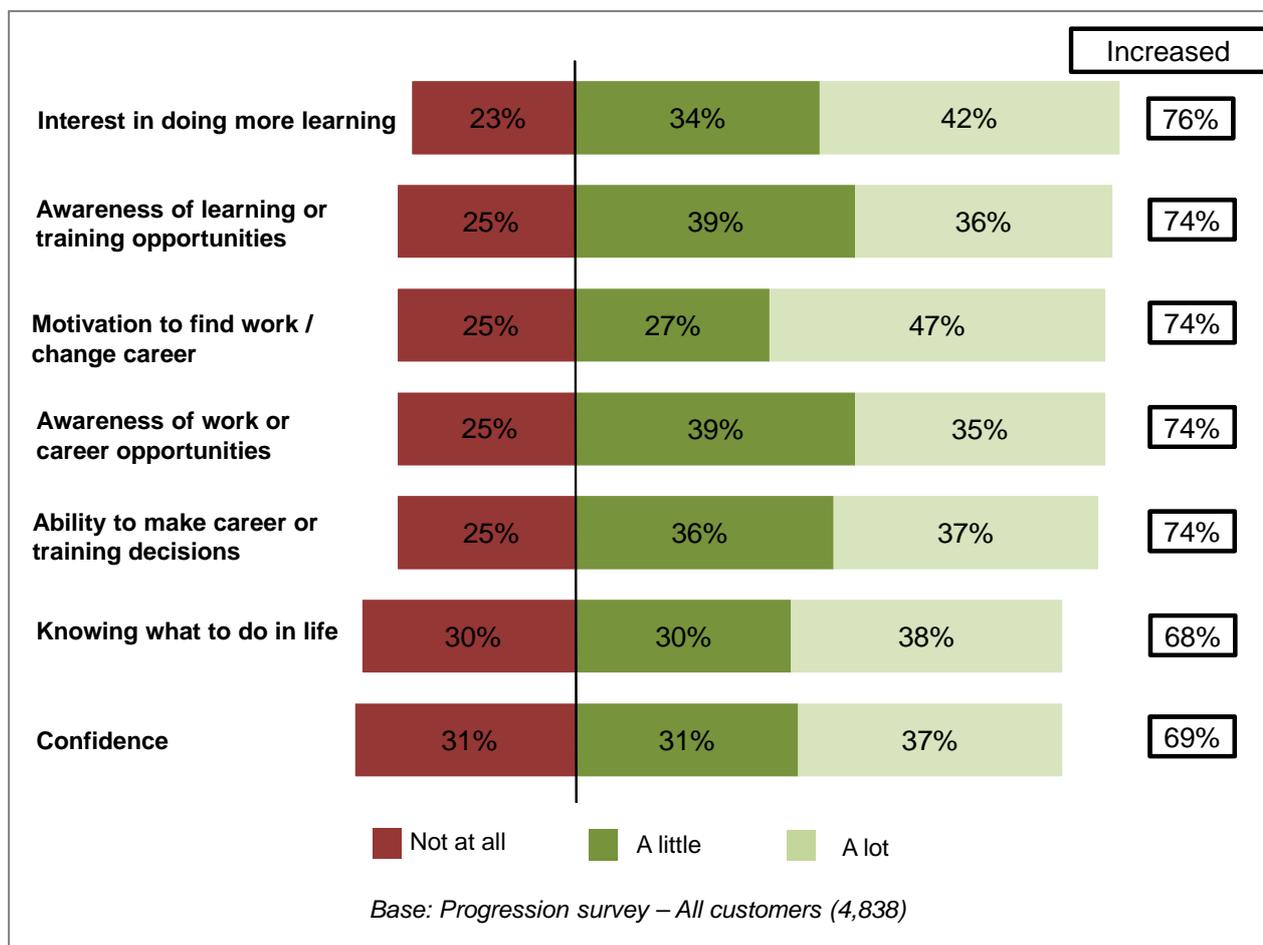
Where customers had developed such skills, the majority (71%) believed that the Next Step advice they had received had played a part in this development. This was considerably more likely to be the case among face-to-face customers (76%) than telephone customers (50%). In particular, face-to-face customers were twice as likely to think that the advice had played a large part in their development (24% vs. 12%).

Figure 7.13: Role of Next Step adviser in bringing about skills and personal development outcomes



Telephone advice customers were more likely to report that the advice assisted their personal development than Information customers (59% compared with 48%). 18-24 year old NEETs, who were more likely than other customers to have gained skills over the 6 month period, were also more likely to feel that the Next Step advice played a part in this development (77% compared with 71% overall).

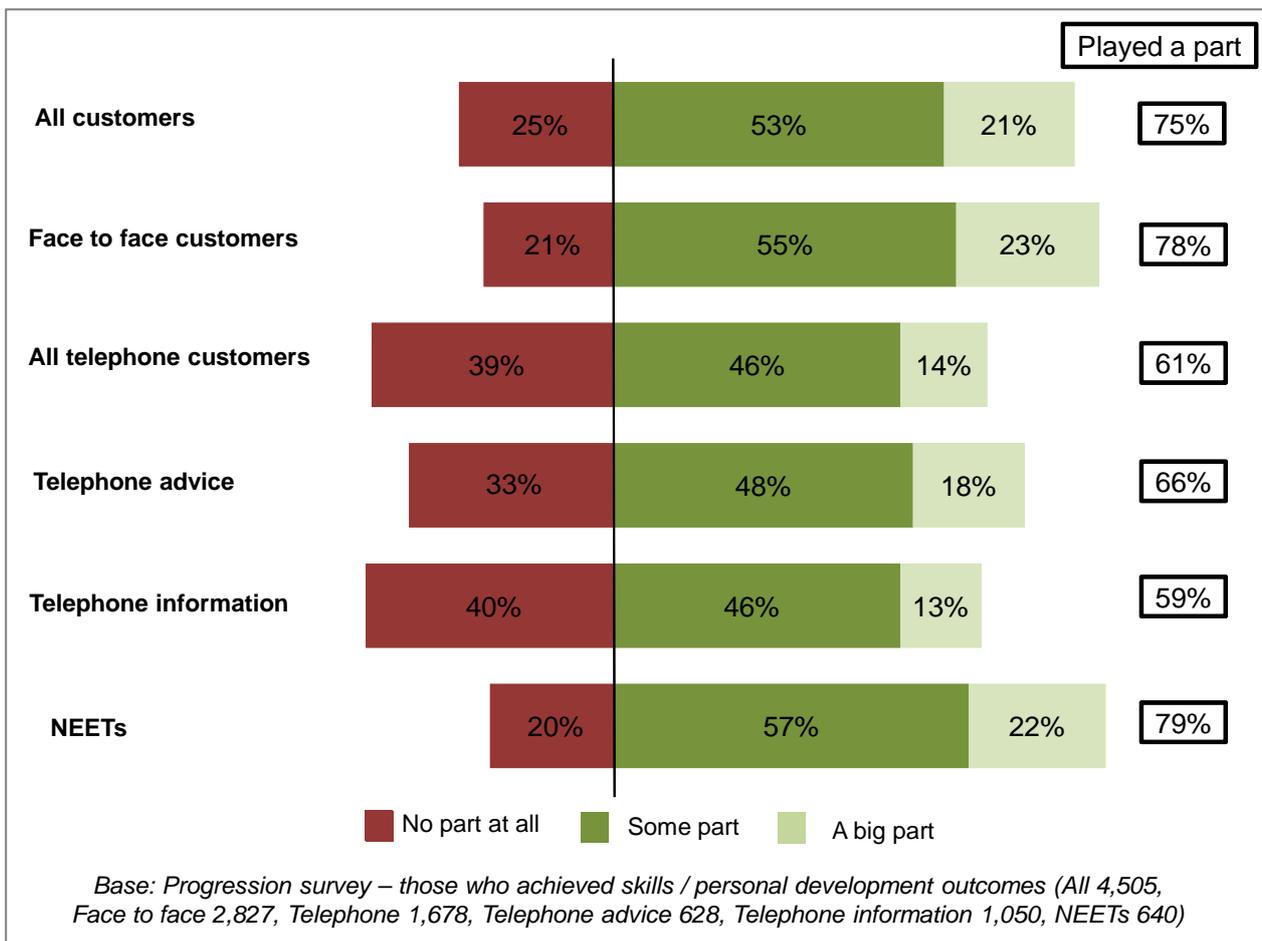
Aside from specific skill areas, customers were also asked about a range of other personal development outcomes such as awareness of options and ability to make decisions. Again, the vast majority (93%) of customers believed that they had seen an improvement in one or more of these areas over the last six months. The proportions reporting that each specific area had increased are shown in Figure 7.14.

Figure 7.14: Skills and personal development outcomes

Around three quarters stated that they now have an increased interest in doing more learning, awareness of learning opportunities, motivation to find work or change career, awareness of work and career opportunities, or ability to make career or training decisions. Slightly fewer, but still a sizeable majority, reported that they now had more knowledge of what they wanted to do in life (68%), or increased confidence (69%). There were few differences between face-to-face and telephone customers on these measures.

Among customers that had seen an improvement in one or more of these areas, the majority (75%) attributed this to the Next Step advice they received. There was a considerable variation between face-to-face (78%) and telephone customers (61%), and between telephone Advice (66%) and Information customers (59%). As seen with other measures, NEETs were particularly likely to feel that the advice received had played a part in their development (79%).

Figure 7.15: Role of Next Step adviser in bringing about skills and personal development outcomes

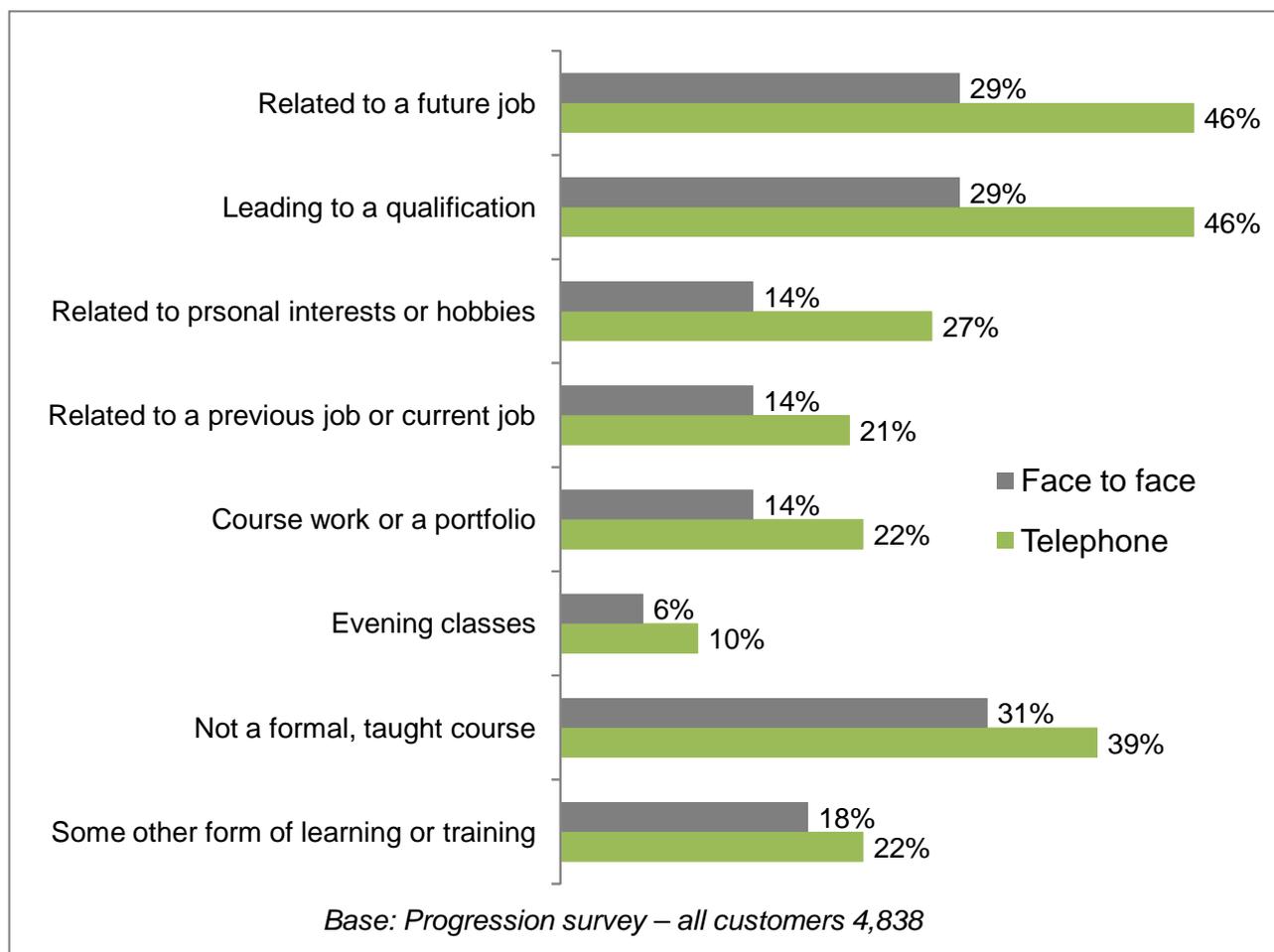


Learning progression

Just under two thirds (63%) of Next Step customers progressed in learning by taking a course or informal learning in the six months since their call / meeting.

Telephone customers were particularly likely to have progressed in learning (74% v. 60% among face-to-face customers, reflecting the fact discussed in chapter 3 that telephone callers main reasons for seeing an adviser are much more likely to focus on learning than was the case among face-to-face customers.

Figure 7.16 shows the nature of this learning progression. As can be seen, Telephone customers were much more likely than face-to-face customers to have undertaken various forms of learning or training.

Figure 7.16: Form of learning or training undertaken since the call / meeting

Customers with prior qualifications at Level 2 or higher were more likely to have undertaken each form of learning or training than customers with prior qualifications below level 2; non-White British customers were more likely than white British customers to have undertaken each form of learning or training.

Nearly a quarter of customers that had done some form of learning or training had achieved a qualification in the six months since their call / meeting (23% - 15% of all customers) – of these, two-fifths had achieved a new highest level qualification (40% - equivalent to 8% of all customers).

Customers that had progressed in learning by undertaking one or more forms of learning or training were asked the extent to which the Next Step adviser played a part in their deciding to do this learning or training. Just over three-fifths of these customers felt that the adviser had played some part (35% felt they had played some part, 26% a big part). Face-to-face customers were more likely to attribute their learning progress to the help they received – 65% felt the adviser had played a part compared with 51% of telephone customers.

Customers aged under 20 (70%) and those with prior qualifications below Level 2 (71%) were particularly likely to attribute their learning progress to the Next Step adviser.

Customers that had not progressed in learning in the six months since their call / meeting were asked what, if anything, the adviser could or should have done to help them progress. Around one in six of these customers (17%) felt that the adviser could have done more, higher among telephone customers (23% of those not progressing in learning).

The most commonly mentioned areas where further assistance would have helped include:

- Giving better / more information about training courses
- Making the customer aware of more training opportunities
- Giving more information about what funding is available
- Following up or calling back
- Being more encouraging

Three-fifths of all customers (58%) felt that the information or advice from the Next Step adviser has made it more likely that they will undertake learning in the future. Face-to-face customers were more likely to feel that this was the case than telephone customers (60% compared with 52%) as were customers with prior qualifications below Level 2 (64% compared with 57%) and non-White British customers (63% compared with 56%). NEETs were particularly likely to feel that the advice received has made it more likely that they will undertake learning in the future (66%).

Results by Prime Contractor

The National Careers Service offer is delivered by a number of Prime Contractors. The telephone service is delivered by BSS Limited nationally, and the face-to-face service by a number of contractors operating regionally (though some regions are covered by more than one contractor, such as the North West and South West). For simplicity, throughout the chapter we refer to the region rather than the contractor name except in regions covered by multiple contractors.

The profile of different Prime Contractors

This chapter looks at the differences by Prime Contractors delivering the face-to-face service on KPI and other results. First we discuss differences in the profile of customers served by the different Prime Contractors. Table 8.1 shows differences by age, gender, prior qualification level (specifically the proportion with qualifications below Level 2), ethnicity (specifically the proportion who were White British) and working status (specifically the proportion in work at the time of their contact with an adviser). Results are shown as row percentages.

Table 8.1: Profile of face-to-face customers by Prime Contractor

Row percentages	Unweighted base		<24	25-49	50+	Male	<L2	White British	In work
All face-to-face	4,195	%	25	55	20	57	42	78	17
East Midlands	485	%	27	50	23	57	44	74	19
East of England	382	%	24	53	23	53	47	81	17
London	403	%	19	66	15	46	35	35	12
North East	281	%	25	51	24	62	43	94	22
NW – Economic Solutions	355	%	28	54	18	63	46	78	13
NW – GMCP Merseyside	221	%	31	51	18	57	37	93	22
NW – GMCP Cumbria	191	%	32	51	17	61	45	89	20
South East	398	%	22	58	20	57	37	79	19
South West – CSW	260	%	24	58	18	60	48	89	14
South West – Tribal	384	%	21	57	22	58	40	83	23

Row percentages	Unweighted base		<24	25-49	50+	Male	<L2	White British	In work
West Midlands	450	%	27	54	19	54	43	80	15
Yorkshire & Humberside	385	%	27	53	20	66	46	88	11

The results show quite wide variation in the customer profile between different Prime Contractors. London stands out as most different from the norm, serving a customer base which is more middle aged (25-49), more female (it is the only region where a majority of customers was female), better qualified, less White British (only just over a third are White British), and less likely to be in work at the time of their session.

The proportion in work when they saw the adviser varied quite widely, and was almost twice as high among those seen by Tribal in the South West, by GMCP Merseyside, and in the North East (each 22%-23%) as in London, Yorkshire and Humberside and among those in the North West dealt with by Economic Solutions (11%-13%).

These differences need to be taken into consideration when comparing results between Prime Contractors.

Satisfaction KPIs

Table 8.2 shows how each of the satisfaction KPIs are split by Prime Contractor.

Table 8.2 Satisfaction KPIs by Prime Contractor

	All F2F	EM	E of E	London	NE	NW Econ Sol	NW GMCP Mersey	NW GMCP Cumbria	SE	SW CSW	SW Tribal	WM	Y&H
Unweighted base	4,195	485	382	403	281	355	221	191	398	260	384	450	385
Agree that the overall quality of the service was good	94%	94%	97%	91%	92%	94%	96%	96%	95%	94%	95%	93%	95%
% satisfied overall	85%	86%	87%	82%	83%	87%	89%	84%	84%	85%	85%	86%	86%
Have or would recommend Next Step	88%	88%	92%	81%	88%	86%	91%	88%	87%	87%	88%	88%	88%

Results are relatively consistent across the different Prime Contractors, although customers who accessed the service in London were significantly less positive about the service on all three measures. This is particularly marked when looking at the proportion agreeing strongly that the service was good (39% in London v. 50% generally among face-to-face customers) and those very satisfied overall (32% in London v. 41% generally among face-to-face customers)

However, some caution is needed in interpretation of the London results as in part they are due to the atypical profile of London customers discussed earlier in the chapter. In

particular, London had more non-white British, higher qualified and mid-age band (25-49) customers than other Prime Contractors, and all three of these groups were slightly less satisfied than average. Furthermore, it is worth noting that the lower London figures were particularly evident in Quarter 1 (seen in August 2011) and since then have been close to the average. Clearly results among London customers will be important to track over time.

Customers based in the East of England were the most positive: as many as 97% agreed that the service was good, and 92% have or would recommend the service.

Operational aspects of the meeting

We discussed in Chapter 5 that there were some differences between Prime Contractors in how they are delivering the service. Differences in terms of the number of meetings, use of the Skills Health Check, whether Action Plans were developed, and how often Lifelong Learning Accounts were opened during the adviser session are presented in the following table, which shows row percentages.

Table 8.3: Face-to-face meeting practices by Prime Contractor

Row percentages	Base	%	Number of meetings			Skills Health Check	Action Plan developed	Opened Lifelong Account during the meeting
			1	2+	2+ & saw the same adviser			
All face-to-face	4,195	%	65	34	26	33	59	6
East Midlands	485	%	62	35	24	31	61	5
East of England	382	%	66	34	25	33	61	6
London	403	%	71	28	22	28	56	4
North East	281	%	72	19	20	25	44	4
NW – Economic Solutions	355	%	53	46	38	40	67	8
NW – GMCP Merseyside	221	%	71	28	22	26	54	4
NW – GMCP Cumbria	191	%	72	26	15	38	66	4
South East	398	%	60	39	30	27	58	4
South West – CSW	260	%	70	29	22	37	63	8
South West – Tribal	384	%	70	30	25	42	70	4
West Midlands	450	%	55	44	33	38	62	11

Row percentages	Base	%	Number of meetings			Skills Health Check	Action Plan developed	Opened Lifelong Account during the meeting
			1	2+	2+ & saw the same adviser			
Yorkshire & Humberside	385	%	66	32	26	28	45	7

Earlier in the report (Chapter 5) it was noted that the minority (one third) of customers seeing their advisers on more than one occasion were more satisfied overall than those experiencing a single visit. The proportion of customers having single or multi face-to-face sessions varied widely by Prime Contractor:

- In London, North East, South West and in the North West where seen by GMCP, customers were more likely than average to have one session only with their adviser (in each the figure fell into the 70%-72% range)
- Customers in the West Midlands and those in the North West dealt with by Economic Solutions were much more likely than average to have multiple sessions (44% and 46% respectively).

Similarly there was quite wide variation in how often customers reported the Skills Health Check was used, or an Action Plan drawn up. Typically if contractors were less likely to use one they were less likely to be using the other.

- Those more likely to use both were Tribal in the South West, CSW in the South West, West Midlands, Economic Solutions in the North West and GMCP Cumbria in the North West.
- Those less likely to use both were London, North East, GMCP in Merseyside, and Yorkshire and Humberside.

Regarding Learning Accounts, advisers in the West Midlands appear to be making most use of these, with one in nine of its customers having opened an account during the session with their adviser. This is almost twice the level found across all Prime Contractors.

Satisfaction with various aspects of the meeting

Table 8.4 shows how customer satisfaction varies by Prime Contractor for aspects relating to the adviser meeting and the information and advice provided, covering such aspects as the location, the convenience of the meeting time, the adviser's professionalism and knowledge, and the usefulness of the support provided.

Data within the chart shows mean scores rather than percentages. These range from 0-100, where 0 represents very dissatisfied and 100 represents all respondents being very satisfied. A score of 50 is equivalent to all respondents being 'neither satisfied nor

dissatisfied, though of course it would be the mean score if half the sample was very satisfied and half very dissatisfied).

Results have been highlighted in red which are significantly lower than the average across all Prime Contractors and in green when they are significantly higher. Notwithstanding high scores for all Prime Contractors, clearly London performs a little below the average on most measures, while GMCP in Merseyside performs above average on quite a number of measures.

Again, the differences between the profile of customers in London and that of face-to-face customers overall may have influenced the results. As detailed in Chapter 5, the least satisfied groups were older customers (those aged over 50), customers with at least a Level 2 qualifications and non-white British customers - the prevalence of each of these customer groups was higher than average in London.

Table 8.4 Satisfaction with the meeting: content, adviser and outcomes by Prime Contractor

	All F2F	EM	E of E	London	NE	NW Econ Sol	NW GMCP Mersey	NW GMCP Cumbria	SE	SW CSW	SW Tribal	WM	Y&H
Unweighted base	4,195	485	382	403	281	355	221	191	398	260	384	450	385
The location and venue	85	86	86	83	86	84	88	83	86	84	83	84	85
The waiting time	85	85	86	82	86	84	86	86	86	86	85	85	84
Convenience of time and date	87	86	88	84	88	86	88	87	89	88	87	87	86
Length of time spoken with adviser	84	84	86	83	82	85	87	85	83	85	83	83	85
Professionalism of adviser	90	90	91	87	89	90	92	91	91	88	90	90	89
Helpfulness of adviser	88	88	89	85	87	87	91	89	89	87	88	88	88
Adviser's level of knowledge	87	86	88	83	86	86	88	88	88	86	87	86	86
Adviser understood needs	85	84	87	81	85	86	90	88	87	86	85	84	86
Info/ advice being clear & easy to understand	87	88	88	85	85	88	88	87	88	88	86	88	87
Usefulness of IAG	83	82	85	80	82	83	87	83	84	83	83	82	83
Got IAG to make informed decision	82	82	83	77	79	82	85	83	82	81	83	82	82

Progression KPIs

As mentioned in Chapter 3, nearly all face-to-face customers who accessed the service between March 2011 and September 2011 (93%) had seen some positive outcome in the six months since their meeting with a Next Step adviser. Table 8.5 shows the type of progression that customers had experienced (namely employment, learning and personal added value) split by Prime Contractor. Figures significantly higher than average are highlighted in green, those significantly lower in red.

Table 8.5 Progression outcomes by Prime Contractor

	All F2F	EM	E of E	London	NE	NW Econ Sol	NW GMCP Mersey	NW GMCP Cumbria	SE	SW CSW	SW Tribal	WM	Y&H
Unweighted base	3,032	356	247	279	176	287	143	136	329	190	238	326	324
Learning Progression	60%	64%	56%	60%	52%	51%	61%	62%	66%	66%	62%	60%	57%
Employment Progression	46%	48%	46%	43%	43%	41%	49%	43%	53%	49%	51%	40%	44%
Learning or Employment Progression	76%	80%	76%	77%	66%	69%	76%	76%	83%	78%	78%	74%	71%
Personal Added Value	87%	89%	86%	86%	90%	84%	85%	87%	90%	87%	87%	88%	86%
Any of these progression	93%	95%	92%	94%	92%	92%	94%	83%	94%	93%	94%	94%	91%

Customers in the South East were more likely to have progressed in employment or learning progression than customers of other Prime Contractors (83% vs. 76%) whilst customers in the North East (66%), of Economic Solutions in the North West (69%) and Yorkshire and Humberside (71%) were significantly less likely to have done so.

Employment progression was highest in the South East (53%; significantly higher than 46% of face-to-face customers overall) and significantly lower than average in the West Midlands (40%).

Given the high levels of personal added value being attained across all regions, it is not surprising that the proportion of customers achieving any progression (in learning, employment or personal added value) was high across all Prime Contractors: it ranged from 91% to 95%, and in no region was the figure significantly higher or lower than the average among face-to-face customers (93%).

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