



Ipsos MORI
Social Research Institute

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National Careers Service: Customer Satisfaction and Progression Annual Report

**Report based on headlines from May 2018 – October
2018 with detailed analysis based on November 2018 –
April 2019**

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Executive Summary

Introduction and methodology

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

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

This research consists of the National Careers Service customer satisfaction and progression surveys that are based on regular monthly surveys undertaken by telephone or online. This report is based on the 6 months after changes were made to the service, Q3 and Q4 of Year 8. These changes were introduced in October 2018 and the fieldwork was undertaken from November 2018 to April 2019 by monthly telephone interviews, a continuous online survey, and a quarterly email survey.

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

Customer profile

- The customer profile of those accessing the face-to-face, telephone or online services remained largely consistent with previous years. Online users were predominantly female.
- Face-to-face customers were more likely to be male, over 50 years of age and have a long-term illness or disability than telephone and online customers.
- Online and telephone customers were more likely to be in work or learning than face-to-face customers.

Why do customers contact the National Careers Service?

In the six months following the changes made to the service (Year 8, Q3 and Q4), there was a higher proportion of customers reporting that they found out about the service through Jobcentre Plus (59%), when compared to the same period prior to the changes (55%). Also, the proportion of telephone customers being referred to the service through Jobcentre Plus has increased among telephone customers (23% in Q3/Q4 compared to 11% in Q1/Q2).

For those using the National Careers Helpline service, internet/google searches are also key points of entry for using the service.

Online customers most often heard about the National Careers Service through Jobcentre Plus, friends and family, or a colleague or employer. However, the main channel was, as expected, from online searches. National Careers Service advisers, and in particular Jobcentre Plus advisers, continue to be an important source of referral particularly for key groups (customers over the age of 50 and unemployed / at risk of, those who have been unemployed for more than 12 months, and disabled customers).

Reasons for contacting the National Careers Service were focussed on progressing into employment. Help with CV writing is the most common reason for using the face-to-face service, whilst the telephone service is often used to obtain information about courses to do with a current job or with a potential job in the future. Website use is largely for obtaining information and advice about jobs or careers.

Experiences of using the National Careers Service

Seven in ten telephone customers had their enquiry handled in one call (70%), similar to previous years.

One in four face-to-face customers (23%) had two or more meetings with the National Careers Service adviser, which is below previous years. NEET customers aged 18-24 and those who had been unemployed for more than 12 months, were more likely to have multiple meetings (both 27%). Over two-thirds of customers who had more than one meeting saw the same adviser each time (69%). Around one-third of face-to-face and telephone customers reported that they had been followed-up by the National Careers Service since their initial contact (35%), again similar to previous waves.

There has been a substantial increase in the number of customers being offered information (58%), when compared with the six months prior to the service changes (59%) and Year 7 (40%). A lower proportion of customers rated the information as very or fairly useful (85%, compared to 94% in the six months prior to the service changes), and a higher proportion said it was not very or at all useful than previously (11% compared to 4% in Q1/Q2).

The National Careers Service provides three key tools to support its customers across multiple platforms: the Skills Action Plan, the Skills Health Check and an Account which enables customers to access a range of tools. The majority of customers found these tools useful. Six in ten customers who had opened an Account had progressed as far as activating it (60%, significantly lower than 68% in the six months before the new service was introduced.)

Just under half of online customers got all or most of the information they wanted on their first visit to the website (46%). Customers aged 19 or under were more likely than those aged 50 or over to find all or most of the information they wanted, consistent with previous waves.

Customer satisfaction with the National Careers Service

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

In line with this, the vast majority of face-to-face and telephone customers were satisfied with the National Careers Service overall (84%), consistent with previous years. Overall, satisfaction with the National Careers Service website has climbed to 69%, closing in on the levels seen before the redesign (Year 6, before redesign, 80%, Year 6, after redesign, 48%, Year 7, 64% and Q1 and Q2 in Year 8, 65%).

There are numerous customer groups that have been consistently satisfied with the service year on year. This includes the following regions/areas: National Careers Helpline, East Midlands, Yorkshire and Humber and North East and Cumbria. In addition, the following groups are also consistently satisfied: those engaged in their action plan and / or skills health check, those who are not disabled, younger customers (18-24), customers who had the same adviser (if they had multiple appointments).

Among telephone and face-to-face customers, satisfaction with individual aspects of the Service was also high, especially the professionalism and the convenience of the time and date of the meeting.

Almost nine in ten face-to-face or telephone customers either had already recommended or would recommend the National Careers Service (87%). Seven in ten online customers said they would recommend the National Careers Service website to friends, family or colleagues (72%), again in line with previous waves.

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

Almost all face-to-face and telephone customers (97%) experienced some form of positive outcome in the six months since their call/meeting.

Just over half (56%) of customers achieved employment progression, an increase from 52% in Q1 and Q2 in Year 8. Of these, two-thirds (64%) said that their adviser had an impact on this progression.

Around two-thirds of customers experienced learning progression (72%), up from 68% in Q1 and Q2 in Year 8.

Overall, 93% of face-to-face and telephone customers indicated that they had gained some form of Personal Added Value since their contact with the National Careers Service, similar to Q1 and Q2 in Year 8.

Nine in ten face-to-face and telephone customers reported developing career management skills during the six months since their contact with the National Careers Service (90%).

1 Introduction and Methodology

1.1 Background

The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) is responsible for the commissioning, contracting and performance management of the National Careers Service (before April 2012, known as Next Step) which provides information, advice and guidance to help individuals make decisions on learning, training and work. The service offers confidential and impartial advice, provided by qualified careers advisers.

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

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

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

From October 2018, the service was again re-configured; this meant that some area-based contractors were replaced, again, either by new providers or by providers who were already delivering the service in other regions. For this reason, no regional comparisons have been made to the previous quarters, instead comparisons are made on an overall level and between sub-groups. The new regions are as follows: East of England and Buckinghamshire, East Midlands and Northamptonshire, South West and Oxfordshire, North East and Cumbria, Yorkshire and Humber, London, West Midlands and Staffordshire, South East and the North West. Changes were also made the National Contact Centre, which is now referred to as the National Careers Helpline. Following, October 2018, National Careers Helpline customers were offered advice and guidance, as well as information.

During Spring 2019, the positioning of the online satisfaction survey link which is present on the National Careers Service website was altered. As a result the number of completes that we saw following this declined.

1.2 Research aims

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

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

This report is based on fieldwork conducted between November 2018 and April 2019. For face-to-face and telephone customers, this means the satisfaction survey covers sessions with an adviser between October 2018 and March 2019. For face-to-face and telephone customers, the progression survey covers the period six months beforehand (i.e. from May to October 2018). This means that five months of the progression data is made up of customers who used the service prior to the changes made at the start of Q3 (i.e. October 2018). As a result, the Q3 and Q4 progression data does not represent progression as a result of those changes. The customers that took part in the telephone progression survey were able to be allocated to their corresponding 'new region', meaning that both the telephone satisfaction and progression data is referred to according to the new regions.

The research among web visitors covers those accessing the National Careers Service website between October 2018 and March 2019 (for the online satisfaction survey) and between July and December 2018 (for the progression survey which is conducted three months after they participated in the online satisfaction research).

The overall aims of this research are to:

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

- Monitor changes over time by comparing the results for Q3 and Q4 of Year 8 (after the changes to the service) with those for Q1 and Q2 of Year 8, as well as previous years.

1.3 Methodology

This report presents the results from Q3 and Q4 of Year 8 of the customer satisfaction and progression study, covering fieldwork between November 2018 to April 2019. This report does not include combined findings from all of Year 8 as changes were made to the service at the start of Q3.

1.3.1 Telephone surveys

For face-to-face and telephone customers this involved a total of 6,111 interviews for the satisfaction survey and 6,543 interviews for the progression survey. The achieved interviews by quarter is shown in Table 1.1, including comparative sample sizes and fieldwork dates for the previous years of the survey.

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

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

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

Year 3			8,795		6,392
Quarter 1	Apr-Jun 14	Mar-May 14	2,100	Oct-Dec 13	1,603
Quarter 2	Jul-Sept 14	Jun-Aug 14	2,210	Jan-Mar 14	1,602
	Oct 14	Sept 14	747		
Quarter 3	Nov 14-Jan 15 (sat) Oct-Dec 14 (prog)	Oct-Dec 14	2,222	Apr-Jun 14	1,064
Quarter 4	Feb-Apr 15 (sat) Jan-Mar 15 (prog)	Jan-Mar 15	2,197	Jul-Sept 14	797
Year 4			9,576		5,066
Quarter 1	May-Jul 15	Apr-Jun 15	2,200	Nov 14-Jan 15	1,599
Quarter 2	Aug-Oct 15	Jul-Sept 15	2,210	Feb-Apr 15	1,601
Quarter 3	Nov 15-Jan 16	Oct-Dec 15	2,200	May-Jul 15	1,600
Quarter 4	Feb-Apr 16	Jan-Mar 16	2,202	Aug-Oct 15	1,611
Year 5			8,812		6,411
Quarter 1	May-Jul 2016	Apr-Jun 16	2,201	Nov 15-Jan 16	1,600
Quarter 2	Aug-Oct 2016	Jul-Sept 16	2,207	Feb-Apr 16	1,605
Quarter 3	Nov 16-Jan 17	Oct-Dec 16	2,209	May-Jul 16	1,606
Quarter 4	Feb-Apr 17	Jan-Mar 17	2,204	Aug-Oct 16	1,602
Year 6			8,821		6,413
Quarter 1	May-Jul 2017	Apr-Jun 17	2,055	Nov 16-Jan 17	1,604
Quarter 2	Aug-Oct 2017	Jul-Sept 17	2,051	Feb-Apr 17	1,605
Quarter 3	Nov 17-Jan 18	Oct-Dec 17	2,061	May-Jul 17	1,613
Quarter 4	Feb-Apr 18	Jan-Mar 18	2,061	Aug-Oct 17	1,616
Year 7			8,228		6,438
Quarter 1	May-Jul 2018	Apr-Jun 18	2,054	Nov 17-Jan 18	1,633
Quarter 2	Aug-Oct 2018	Jul-Sept 18	2,052	Feb-Apr 18	1,614
Year 8 (Q1&Q2)			4,106		3,247
Quarter 3	Nov 18-Jan 19	Oct-Dec 18	2,927	May-July 18	3,148
Quarter 4	Feb-Apr 19	Jan-Mar 19	3,184	Aug-Oct 18	3,395
Year 8 (Q3&Q4)			6,111		6,543

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

- Face-to-face National Careers Service customers;
- Telephone customers who received the information, advice and guidance services from the National Careers Helpline; and
- Telephone customers who received the advice service (typically for customers who have more complex needs or require skills assessment) directly from area-based contractors alongside their face-to-face service provision – these are referred to as ‘telephone advice’ customers.

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

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

At the analysis stage, the telephone satisfaction data was weighted by contracting region to match the customer profile. As the same number of interviews was conducted each month regardless of changes in the volume of customers, the Q3 and Q4 data was also weighted to the number of customer contacts by quarter.

Usually, the telephone progression data is weighted using the demographic profile of the population that used the service 6 months prior. However, given that there have been regional changes since that point, the profile that was used to weight the Q3 and Q4 satisfaction data is also used to weight the progression data. It is also important to note that North East and Yorkshire and Humber customers only took part in one wave across Q3 and Q4, the April fieldwork. This means that data for both these regions is ‘upweighted’ to represent the six waves.

1.4 Online surveys

In total 661 website users took part in the website satisfaction survey. Use of cookies means that someone accessing the site from the same computer will only be asked to participate once. As in previous years, no weighting has been applied to the web satisfaction survey because the demographic profile of the population of website users is unknown.

The progression survey for website users is entirely longitudinal and conducted online, with respondents sent an email with a link to the online questionnaire three months after they took part in the online satisfaction survey. The email is only sent to individuals (rather than employers or careers advisers) who accessed the site seeking information on their own behalf, were willing to be re-contacted, and supplied a valid email address for this purpose. In the 6 months covered by this year’s survey period, 51 online customers took part in the progression survey. Data for the online progression survey is usually weighted to reflect the age, gender and employment profile of people who participated in the online satisfaction survey, however, due to the small number of completes that were achieved for online progression, the data has remained unweighted.

1.5 Interpretation of the data

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

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

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

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

1.6 The structure of this report

The rest of this report presents the results of Q3 and Q4 of Year 8 of the National Careers Service customer satisfaction and progression surveys, as follows:

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

2 Customer Profile

- The customer profile of those accessing the face-to-face, telephone or online services remained largely consistent with previous years.
- As seen in previous years, online users were predominantly female.
- Face-to-face customers were more likely to be male, over 50 years of age and have a long-term illness or disability than telephone and online customers.
- Online and telephone customers were more likely to be in work or learning than face-to-face customers.

This chapter examines the profile of customers accessing the service in Q3 and Q4 of Year 8, from October 2018 to March 2019, and those accessing the National Careers Service website from November 2018 to April 2019. It looks at demographic characteristics such as gender, age and ethnicity, work status, and highest qualification at the time of accessing the service.

2.1 Customer characteristics

Table 2.1 shows the age, gender and ethnicity profiles of National Careers Service face-to-face, telephone and online customers surveyed during Q3 and Q4 of Year 8. The figures presented for face-to-face and telephone customers are based on weighted data, whilst online figures are based on unweighted data. Overall the customer base varied by service channel, but still had a similar profile to that found in previous years.

Table 2.1: Demographic profile of National Careers Service customers¹

	Channel used as main way of accessing the service				
	Face-to-face (4,966)	Telephone all (1,145)	Telephone advice (267)	National Careers Helpline (878)	Online (1,201)
Base:	%	%	%	%	%
Gender					
Male	57	48	52	47	37
Female	43	52	48	53	58

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

Age group					
19 or younger²	5	7	5	5	23
20-24	14	18	16	16	10
25-49	46	57	53	53	42
50 or older	35	18	26	26	21
Ethnicity					
White British	73	59	68	56	63
White other	6	7	3	8	12
Black/Black British	8	12	10	13	5
Asian/Asian British	9	13	13	13	9
Mixed/other	4	8	7	9	7
Prefer not to say	*	1	*	1	4
English not first language	15	19	18	20	16
Long term illness/disability	32	25	30	23	22

2.1.1 Gender and age

In line with previous waves, the majority of face-to-face customers were men (56%). There was an even gender split among telephone customers (48% men and 52% women).

Over half of telephone customers were aged 25-49 (57%), with under half of face-to-face customers being in this age bracket (46%). The face-to-face channel had an older age profile than telephone and online channels; one-third of face-to-face customers were aged 50 or over (35%), compared with 18% of telephone customers and 21% of online customers.

Web users who completed the survey were predominantly women (58%) and aged 25-49 (42%). The National Careers Service does not collect any management information on the demographic profile of its website users, so it is not possible to ascertain how representative the survey profile is (and the data is therefore unweighted). However, up to now the demographic characteristics have largely been consistent year on year.

2.1.2 Ethnicity and English as a first language

Just over seven in ten face-to-face customers were white British (73%), while the profile of telephone users was more ethnically diverse (59% were white British).

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

Most website users who participated in the survey were White British (63%), the same proportion as in the previous six months. The proportion of Black/Black British customers using the online service (5%) was somewhat lower than those using the telephone advice (10%) and information services (13%).

Fifteen percent said that English was not their first language, slightly lower than the proportion of telephone customers (19%); both figures were again in line with Year 8, Q1 and Q2. One in seven online customers said that English was not their first language (16%, similar to Year 8, Q1 and Q2).

2.1.3 Disability

Almost a third of face-to-face customers had a disability or long-term limiting health condition (32%), the same as Year 8, Q1 and Q2. This was higher than the proportion of telephone customers (25%) and online customers (22%).

As with previous years, the difference among face-to-face customers partly reflects the relatively high proportion of these customers who have been referred for advice by Jobcentre Plus. This will include people who are claiming the work-related component of Employment and Support Allowance (ESA). For example, among disabled customers who replied to our survey, 64% first heard about the National Careers Service from Jobcentre Plus compared with 57% of non-disabled customers.

2.1.4 Region

Website users who participated in the survey were asked where they lived; this provides a picture of the regional spread of website users. In total, 87% of online customers said they lived in England, with the remainder living in Scotland (2%), Wales (2%), or outside of the UK (4%); a further 5% preferred not to say where they lived.

At least five per cent of online customers lived in each of the English regions. The highest proportions were in London (19%), the rest of the South East (13%) and the South West (10%).

2.2 Employment status

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

Table 2.2: Economic activity of customers

	Channel used as main way of accessing the service				
	Face-to-face (4,966)	Telephone (1,145)	Telephone advice (267)	National Careers Helpline (878)	Online (1,201)
Base:					
	%	%	%	%	%
In work	16	42	33	45	35
Full-time employee	7	25	18	27	23
Part-time employee	7	12	10	12	8

Self-employed	2	6	6	5	4
In learning	4	10	7	11	24
Full-time learning	2	8	3	10	9
Part-time learning	2	2	3	2	2
Unemployed and looking for work	67	36	48	32	27
Other not working	11	9	9	8	9
Unable to work due to health	7	5	6	4	4
Looking after home/family	3	4	2	4	3
Retired	1	*	*	1	1
Other	2	3	3	3	5

As in previous years, face-to-face customers had a very different employment profile to other channels, with the majority being unemployed and looking for work (67%) compared with a quarter of online customers (27%) and a third of telephone customers (36%). Looking more closely at telephone services, those using the telephone advice service were more likely to be unemployed and looking for work (48%), compared with those using the National Careers Helpline service (32%). This is the same pattern as seen in the previous waves.

The same customer groups were more likely to be unemployed and looking for work as in previous years³.

- men (67% vs 55% of women); and
- customers with qualifications below Level 2(64%)

The data from these six months shows that those aged 19 and under and those aged 20-24 are more likely to be unemployed and looking for work (70% and 67% respectively, compared to 62% on average).

Less than one in five face-to-face customers were in work (16%), compared with around four in ten telephone customers (42%) and online users (35%). This is the same pattern as seen in previous years. Among face-to-face and telephone customers, disabled customers were less likely than non-disabled customers to be in work (14% compared with 23%).

Online users were the most likely to be in learning (24%, including 11% who were at school), followed by users of the National Careers Helpline service (11%). Just 4% of face-to-face customers and 7% of telephone advice users were in learning at the time of their first contact.

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

The overall profile of website users by employment status continues to be very stable, and the most diverse of all the channels. Online customers are more likely than other customers to be in learning, or to have recent experience of learning. In addition to the 24% of online customers currently in learning, six in ten (60%) said they had done some form of learning in the previous three years.

Among face-to-face and telephone customers who were not working at the time of their call/meeting, 16% last worked within a month before their contact with the National Careers Service, and 24% had worked within the past six months. More than one third had not worked for more than a year (37%).

In addition, one in ten customers overall had never had paid work (9%), which is similar to the proportion of those who responded to the survey in previous years. This rises to a third of 18-19 year olds using the face-to-face or telephone service (32%) and one-fifth of 20-24 year olds (19%). Altogether, a fifth of 18-24 year-old customers who were Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET) had never had a paid job (22%). The proportion who had never had paid work was higher among ASIST⁴ customers (25%).

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

2.3 Highest qualification

A key customer group for the National Careers Service is those with low qualifications, defined as adults without a Level 2 qualification (i.e. equivalent to five GCSEs at grade A* to C), this includes people with no qualifications. The majority of customers already had qualifications at or above this level, regardless of which channel they used to access the service, as shown in Table 2.3. Telephone customers were more likely to have a qualification at Level 2 or above (86%), compared with face-to-face customers (58%).

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

		Channel used as main way of accessing the service				
		Face-to-face (2,960)	Telephone (501)	Telephone advice (109)	National Careers Helpline (392)	Online (1,201)
Base:						
	%	%	%	%	%	
Highest qualification						

⁴ 'ASIST customers' (Apprenticeship Specialist Intervention and Support Team) customers have been identified via the Find an Apprenticeship database and are offered multi-channel national and local, impartial in-depth support to adult customers who have failed to secure an apprenticeship or who are seeking help to apply for an apprenticeship. Support to the customers is provided by either the National Careers Helpline (for customer aged between 16 and 24) or the Area Based Contractors (for customers aged 19 or over).

Level 5	23	36	29	38	30
Level 4 or higher (e.g. degree or equivalent)	4	5	5	5	6
Level 3 (e.g. A-levels)	29	22	24	21	14
Level 2 (5 GCSEs A*-C)	26	19	19	19	21
Level 1	12	8	9	7	7
Entry level	4	2	4	1	5
No qualifications	1	*	1	*	7
Other	8	8	8	4	n/a
Level 1 / entry level	13	8	12	7	12
Level 2 or higher	58	74	71	75	72
Below Level 2	32	17	21	16	18
Key groups					
18-24 NEET	15	11	10	12	4
50+ and unemployed / at risk of	25	7	14	5	9

One in seven face-to-face customers were aged 18-24 and Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) at the time of their meeting (15%), as were 11% of telephone customers and just 4% of online customers. Being NEET was more common among customers who were male (17% vs 12% of females), and more than half of ASIST customers were NEET (61%). These findings are similar to the previous 6 months.

One in four face-to-face customers were over the age of 50 and unemployed / at risk of (25%), compared to only 7% of telephone customers.

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

In the six months following the changes made to the service (Year 8, Q3 and Q4), there was a higher proportion of customers reporting that they found out about the service through Jobcentre Plus (59%), when compared to the same period prior to the changes (55%). Also, the proportion of telephone customers being referred to the service through Jobcentre Plus has increased among telephone customers (23% in Q3/Q4 compared to 11% in Q1/Q2).

For those using the National Careers Helpline service, internet/google searches are also key points of entry for using the service.

Online customers most often heard about the National Careers Service through Jobcentre Plus, friends and family, or a colleague or employer. However, the main channel was, as expected, from online searches. National Careers Service advisers, and in particular Jobcentre Plus advisers, continue to be an important source of referral particularly for key groups (customers over the age of 50 and unemployed / at risk of, those who have been unemployed for more than 12 months, and disabled customers).

Reasons for contacting the National Careers Service were focussed on progressing into employment. Help with CV writing is the most common reason for using the face-to-face service, whilst the telephone service is often used to obtain information about courses to do with a current job or with a potential job in the future. Website use is largely for obtaining information and advice about jobs or careers.

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

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

3.1.1 Telephone and Face-to-Face Customers

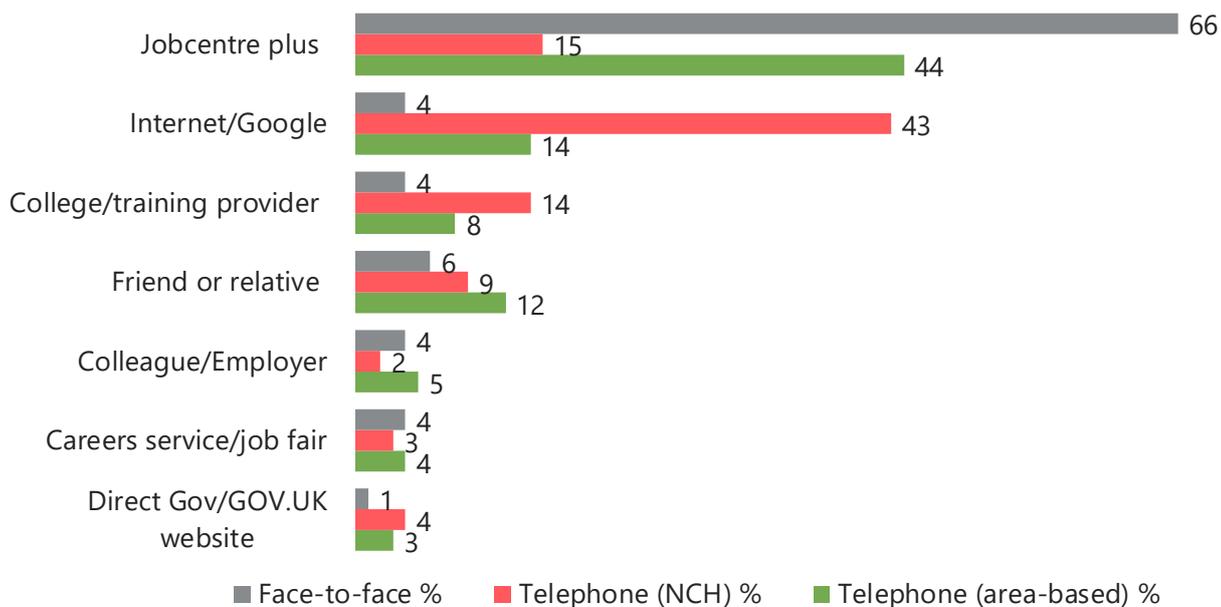
In the six months following the changes made to the service (Year 8, Q3 and Q4), there was a higher proportion of customers reporting that they found out about the service through Jobcentre Plus (59%), when compared to the same period prior to the changes (55%). The proportion of face-to-face customers being referred to the service through Jobcentre Plus remains the same as in Year 7 (66%), but has increased among telephone customers (23% in Q3/Q4 compared to 11% in Q1/Q2). The prominence of Jobcentre Plus reflects the longstanding referral and co-location arrangements between Jobcentre plus and National Careers Service (formerly Next Step) as part of a continued commitment for a more integrated approach to the provision of employment and skills advice to unemployed people.

As with last year, customers who called the National Careers Helpline (NCH) were much more likely to have heard about the service through the internet (43%) than area-based telephone advice (14%) or face-to-face (4%) customers. These customers were also more likely to have found the service through their college or training provider.

Whilst four per cent of National Careers Helpline customers first heard about the service through the direct.gov website, only one per cent of face-to-face customers reported finding out about the service in this way.

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

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



Base: Face-to-face customers (4,966), NCH customers (878), Area-based telephone customers (267)

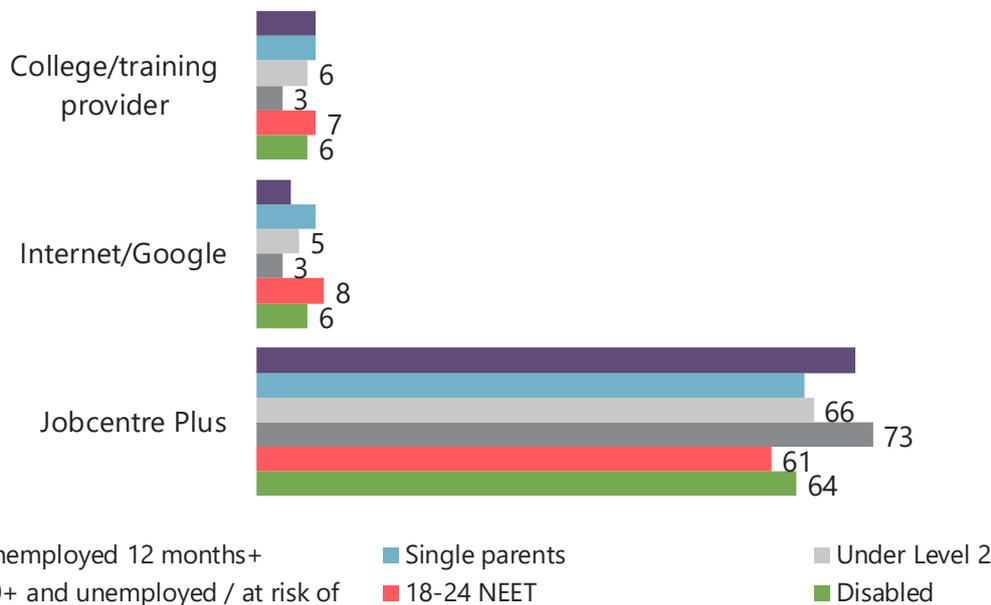
The survey shows that whilst Jobcentre Plus was the main way in which customers heard about the service (59%), men were significantly more likely than women to have heard about the service for the first time through this

channel (61% vs 56%). This is the same pattern as seen in previous years and reflects that more men than women are unemployed when they first contact the service.

Older customers aged 50 plus were more likely to have first heard about the National Careers Service via Jobcentre Plus (67%), especially compared with younger customers aged 18-19 (48%). Other groups more likely than average to have first found out about the service via Jobcentre Plus were those over the age of 50 and unemployed / at risk of (73%), customers with a disability (64%), those who have been unemployed for over 12 months (71%), those with qualifications under Level 2 (66%) and those aged 18-24 who are receiving benefits (69%).

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

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



Base: Unemployed 12 months+ (1,366), Singleparents (891), UnderLevel 2 (1,782), 50+ and unemployed / at risk of (1,343), 18-24 NEET (901), Disabled (1,888)

3.1.2 Online customers

The most common ways for website users to have first heard about the National Careers Service was through an internet search (35%), via Jobcentre Plus (22%), through a friend or relative (10%), through a National Careers Service adviser or a colleague / employer (both 9%).

Those who were unemployed were far more likely to have been signposted to the service by Jobcentre Plus (46%) or by a National Careers Service adviser (16%).

In line with this, customers aged 50 plus (who were more likely to be unemployed) and those with a disability (who were more likely to be unemployed) were also more likely to have been signposted to the website by Jobcentre Plus (34% and 36% respectively).

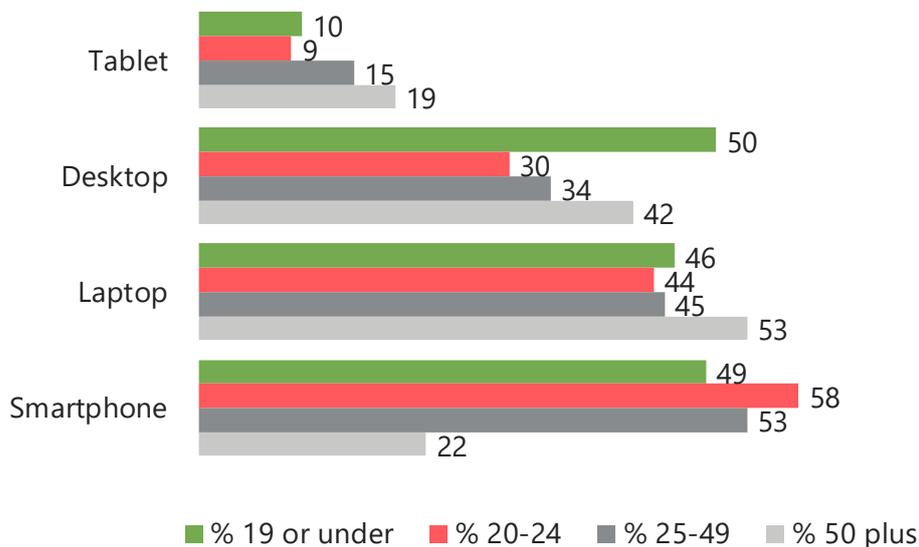
Table 3.1: Website visitor referral

	Overall	Disabled (145)	50+ and unemployed (62)
Jobcentre Plus adviser	22%	36%	44%
National Careers Service adviser	9%	12%	18%

Base: All online satisfaction survey customers (661)

One in ten customers (10%) found the website through recommendation from a friend or relative.

Seven in ten customers accessed the website at home (70% compared with 13% who accessed it from work), similar to previous years. Overall 13% accessed the site at a school, college or university (rising to 43% of those still currently in learning and among young people aged under 19). Only 6% accessed the service from a library or other public place, although this was more common among those who were unemployed and those with L1 or under qualifications (12% and 15% respectively) reflecting the fact these customers are less likely to have internet access at home. Customers most commonly access the website with the use of a laptop (47%) or a smartphone (45%), with the use of desktops at 39%.

Figure 3.3: How customers accessed the National Careers Service website

Base: Under 19 (155), 20-24 (66), 25-49 (280), 50+ (137)

3.2 Previous use of the National Careers Service

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

Over one in ten customers (14%) had previously met with a National Careers Service adviser face-to-face. Those who were unemployed (15%) or with qualifications below Level 2 (17%) were more likely to have spoken to an adviser face-to-face beforehand. Face-to-face customers were twice as likely to have previously met with an adviser face-to-face, compared with telephone customers (16% and 8% respectively).

One-fifth (22%) of telephone customers had previously spoken to an adviser via the telephone helpline. Those who were in work and / or learning were more likely than average to have previously spoken to an adviser via the telephone helpline (14% and 22% respectively, compared to 12%).

One quarter (24%) customers had accessed the website before they used the service. As seen in previous years, the proportion of telephone customers who used the website before accessing the service was significantly higher than for face-to-face customers (45% vs 20%). Those that were working (30%) or in learning (35%) were also more likely to have used the website prior to their contact with the service, as were those that had qualifications of Level 4 or above (29%) and NEET customers aged 18-24 (33%).

Almost five in ten online customers (46%) were 'new' service users, visiting the site for the first time, in line with previous years. Those with qualifications below Level 1 were more likely to be first time customers compared to the average (63% vs. 46%). Only one in five web customers had previous dealings with the National Careers Service via face-to-face (21%) or phone (10%), similar to previous years.

Consistent with previous years, unemployed web customers were significantly more likely to have had prior contact with the National Careers Service than those in employment, particularly through a face-to-face meeting (40%) rather than speaking to an adviser on the telephone helpline (10%).

3.3 Reasons for contacting the National Careers Service

3.3.1 Telephone and face-to-face customers

General service needs

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

More wanted to explore career options (77%, similar to previous years) than learning or training options (61%, also similar to Q1/Q2, 62%). The youngest customers were the most likely to be seeking advice on careers options, with 85% of under 19 year olds and the same proportion of NEET customers aged 18-24 contacting the service for this reason.

As seen in previous years, customers already in work and those in learning were also more likely than average to be seeking advice on learning or training options (64% and 69% respectively), as were those aged 25-49 (64%). However, those over the age of 50 who are unemployed / at risk of, were less likely to be seeking this advice (54%).

As in previous years, telephone customers (87%) were more likely to be looking to explore career options than face-to-face (75%) customers.

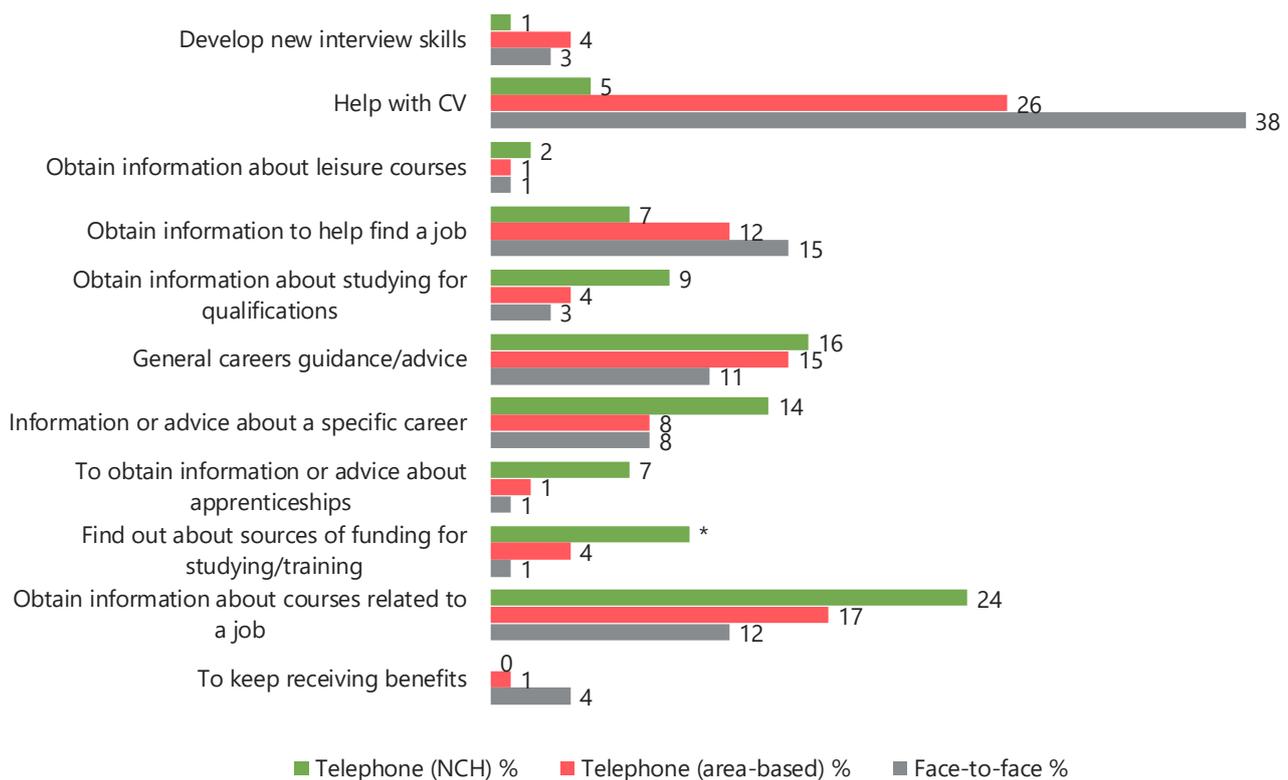
National Careers Helpline (NCH) customers were most likely to be planning on doing some type of learning or training (80% compared with 61% of area-based telephone advice and 58% of face-to-face customers).

Specific service needs

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

The most common reason was to get help in writing or developing a CV via face-to-face service and obtaining information about courses related to a current or future job via telephone. Customers who were unemployed or over the age of 50 and unemployed / at risk of (38% and 40% respectively) were more likely to contact the National Careers Service to get help with writing or developing their CV (33%).

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



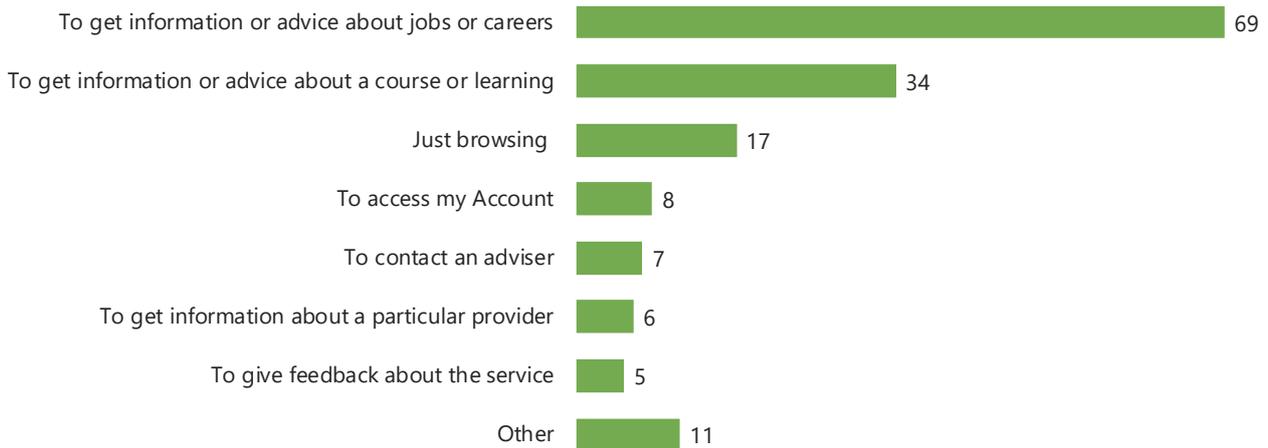
Base: Face-to-face customers (4,966), NCH customers (878), Area-based telephone customers (267)

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

3.3.2 Website users

Figure 3.5 shows that the majority of website visitors were looking for information or advice on jobs or careers (69%), similar to previous years. This increases to 82% of website visitors who were currently in learning and 81% of those aged 19 or under).

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



Base: All online satisfaction survey customers (661)

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

The most common form of employment-related information that customers were looking for was information about different careers (65%), followed by advice on applying for jobs (37%) and information about progressing in a career (36%).

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

	Q3/Q4 Year 8 2018/19 (453)	Q1/Q2 Year 8 2018 (807)	Year 7 2017/18 (3,121)	Year 6 2016/17 (4,381)	Year 5 2015/16 (5,793)	Year 4 2014/15 (6,129)	Year 3 2013/14 (5,606)	Year 2 2012/13 (3,649)
Information about different careers	65%	68%	66%	64%	61%	61%	61%	61%
Information about progressing in a career	36%	36%	35%	32%	30%	29%	28%	29%
Applying for jobs	37%	36%	33%	34%	37%	36%	37%	37%
Information about the jobs market	29%	23%	24%	27%	25%	25%	26%	27%
CVs	27%	22%	21%	27%	30%	34%	37%	39%
How to get back into work	19%	18%	17%	17%	17%	20%	26%	26%
Interview skills	21%	20%	16%	19%	19%	21%	21%	21%
Voluntary work	10%	12%	9%	11%	11%	11%	11%	11%
Issues around redundancy	3%	3%	3%	4%	3%	4%	5%	5%
Other	7%	8%	9%	8%	8%	7%	5%	5%

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

There were some notable differences among the key sub-groups:

- Men were more likely to be looking for information on applying for jobs (43% vs 33% of women).
- Customers over the age of 50 and unemployed / at risk of were more likely to be seeking information about the jobs market and help with how to get back into work (both 45%).
- BAME customers were more likely than non-BAME customers to be seeking information about progressing within a career (49% vs 32%).

Table 3.3 below outlines the learning related information that was sought by online customers. Almost half of customers were looking for information on a specific course (45%).

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

	Q3/Q4 Year 8 2018/19 (222)	Q1/Q2 Year 8 2018(373)	Year 7 2017/18 (1,244)	Year 6 2016/17 (1,647)	Year 5 2015/16 (2,345)	Year 4 2014/15 (2,406)	Year 3 2013/14 (2,459)	Year 2 2012/13 (1,754)
A specific course	45%	52%	49%	48%	47%	47%	43%	43%
Different ways of learning	40%	37%	34%	36%	38%	39%	41%	38%
How to get back into learning	25%	28%	26%	26%	26%	29%	35%	35%
Apprenticeships	32%	31%	27%	24%	22%	19%	20%	15%
Paying for a course	20%	24%	22%	22%	21%	25%	29%	28%
Other caring responsibilities	6%	7%	9%	10%	10%	9%	8%	7%
Childcare	5%	6%	6%	9%	8%	7%	8%	7%
Other	10%	13%	15%	14%	13%	12%	10%	10%

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

Customers across all age ranges were consistently interested in finding out about different ways of learning. However, information on apprenticeships was more commonly sought by males (44%).

4 Experiences of using the Service

Seven in ten telephone customers had their enquiry handled in one call (70%), similar to previous years.

One in four face-to-face customers (23%) had two or more meetings with the National Careers Service adviser, which is below previous years. NEET customers aged 18-24 and those who had been unemployed for more than 12 months, were more likely to have multiple meetings (both 27%). Over two-thirds of customers who had more than one meeting saw the same adviser each time (69%). Around one-third of face-to-face and telephone customers reported that they had been followed-up by the National Careers Service since their initial contact (35%), again similar to previous waves.

There has been a substantial increase in the number of customers being offered information (58%), when compared with the six months prior to the service changes (59%) and Year 7 (40%). A lower proportion of customers rated the information as very or fairly useful (85%, compared to 94% in the six months prior to the service changes), and a higher proportion said it was not very or at all useful than previously (11% compared to 4% in Q1/Q2).

The National Careers Service provides three key tools to support its customers across multiple platforms: the Skills Action Plan, the Skills Health Check and an Account which enables customers to access a range of tools. The majority of customers found these tools useful. Six in ten customers who had opened an Account had progressed as far as activating it (60%, significantly lower than 68% in the six months before the new service was introduced.)

Just under half of online customers got all or most of the information they wanted on their first visit to the website (46%). Customers aged 19 or under were more likely than those aged 50 or over to find all or most of the information they wanted, consistent with previous waves.

This chapter examines customer experience of contacting the National Careers Service over the phone and face-to-face, and among those using the website. It also looks at the specific tools and features that customers across all

channels used, including the Skills Health Check, the Action Plan and an Account which enables customers to access a range of tools such as updating and storing their CV and actions plans which they can return to as their career develops.

4.1 Making contact with the National Careers Service by phone

Seven in ten telephone customer queries were handled in a single call in Q3/Q4 (70%), in line with previous years. Telephone advice customers were more likely than average to have multiple calls (46% compared with the average, 28%).

During the phone call with the National Careers Service, seven in ten customers were told that their adviser would send them further information (68%). Of these, around nine in ten (91%) recall receiving this information.

Telephone advice customers were more likely than National Careers Helpline customers to have been offered further information reflecting the more complex needs of this group (82% compared with 63%).

There has been a substantial increase in the number of customers being offered information (58%), when compared with the six months prior to the service changes (59%) and Year 7 (40%).

The vast majority of telephone customers found the information they received useful (85%), and almost half found it very useful (49%). Eleven per cent of customers found the information not very or not at all useful. These findings are mostly in line with previous years, however, a lower proportion of customers rated the information as very or fairly useful (85%, compared to 94% in the six months prior to the service changes), and a higher proportion said it was not very or at all useful than previously (11% compared to 4% in Q1/Q2).

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

Three-quarters of face-to-face customers had just one meeting with a National Careers Service adviser (75%), while 23% had two or more meetings. Customers who were unemployed for more than 12 months and NEET customers aged 18-24 were more likely to have multiple meetings with their adviser (both 27%).

The four main reasons for attending more than one meeting were that: the adviser was reviewing or amending their CV (27%); the adviser recommended they come back (26%); there wasn't time to go through everything in the first meeting (15%); or because the adviser could not answer all the questions during the first meeting and needed to provide more information (14%).

Over two-thirds of customers who had more than one meeting saw the same adviser each time (69%). Three in ten (30%) saw different advisers, although the majority (75%) did not mind this.

Around three-quarters of customers had the meeting with an adviser in a Jobcentre Plus office (74%); as might be expected, this was higher among customers who are unemployed (80%). NEET customers aged 18-24 were also more likely to see an adviser in a Jobcentre Plus office (84%).

These findings are in line with previous years.

4.3 Using the National Careers Service website

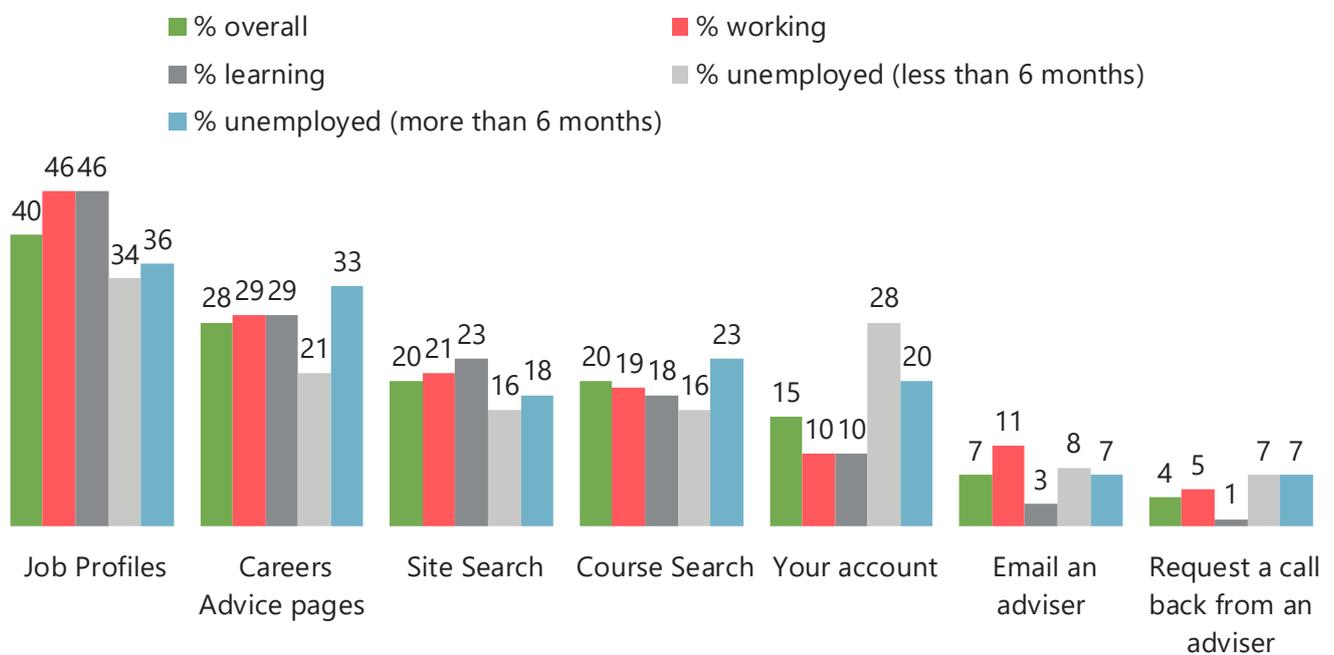
Customers who used the National Careers Service website were asked which tools or features they had accessed. Usage of all these tools and features varied by employment status (shown in Figure 4.1).

The most commonly used feature was Job Profiles (40%). Careers advisers were more likely to use this feature compared with the general public (82% compared with 38%).

Careers Advice pages were the second most commonly used feature, with around three in ten customers using it (28%).

One in five online customers used Site Search and Course Search (both 20% in line with earlier waves).

Figure 4.1: Customer usage of website features by status



Base: All online satisfaction survey customers (661), Working (234), Learning (157), Unemployed (more than 6 months (90), Unemployed (less than 6 months) (87)

The majority of customers who used the various tools and features found them useful: Job Profiles (90%), Careers Advice pages (88%), Site Search (84%) and Course Search (74%).

Only seven per cent of website visitors had emailed an adviser and four per cent had requested a call back from the adviser.

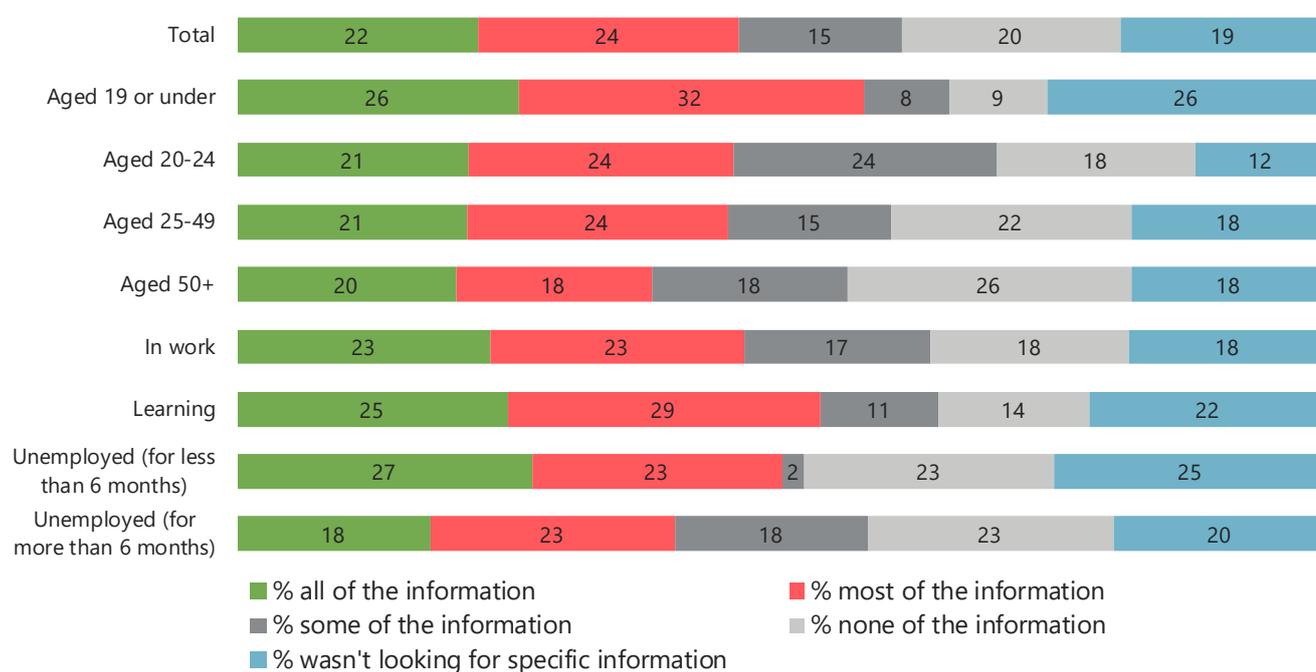
Table 4.1 illustrates the usefulness of each website feature for this year compared to the six months before the changes to the service.

Table 4.1: Proportion rating each feature as useful

	Job Profiles		Careers Advice pages		Site Search		Course Search		Email an adviser		Request a call back	
	Q3/Q4 Year 8	Q1/Q2 Year 8	Q3/Q4 Year 8	Q1/Q2 Year 8	Q3/Q4 Year 8	Q1/Q2 Year 8	Q3/Q4 Year 8	Q1/Q2 Year 8	Q3/Q4 Year 8	Q1/Q2 Year 8	Q3/Q4 Year 8	Q1/Q2 Year 8
All who used feature	263	490	184	282	133	237	129	230	46 ⁶	72 ⁶	25 ⁶	36 ⁶
	90%	90%	88%	86%	84%	86%	74%	73%	74%	79%	68%	83%

Customers under the age of 19 were generally more likely to find the Job Profiles feature useful than those aged 50 years or older (97%, compared to 85%).

Just under half of website visitors got all or most of the information they wanted on their first visit to the website (46%). Around a third either got some (15%) or none of the information they required (20%). The remaining 19% were just browsing. Those aged under 19 were more likely to get all or most of the information they wanted than customers aged 50 plus were less likely than average to say this (58%, compared to 38%) (Figure 4.2).

Figure 4.2: Information obtained by first-time visitors by age and employment status

Base: All customers who visited the National Careers Service website once (304), Under 19 (66), 20-24 (33), 25-49 (130), 50+ (66), In work (109), Learning (65), Unemployed (less than 6 months) (44), Unemployed (more than 6 months) (40)

⁶ These findings are indicative only due to the small base sizes.

4.4 Use and usefulness of common National Careers Service tools

4.4.1 Skills Health Check

The Skills Health Check (SHC) is a diagnostic computer programme that assesses skills, interests, personal working style and motivations. Four in ten face-to-face customers used this tool (42%, an increase on the 33% before the new service was introduced), while almost half did not (47%) and the remaining eleven per cent could not remember. Customers who had more than one face-to-face meeting were more likely to use this tool (48% compared with 40% of those who only had one session), as were those who recalled having an action plan (52% compared with 26% of customers who did not recall an action plan) and those who had visited the NCS website in the previous three months (49%, compared to 40% among customers who had not visited the website).

The majority of face-to-face customers who used this tool found it useful (87%), similar to previous years. This includes 46% who found it 'very useful' and 41% who said it was 'fairly useful'. Only eleven per cent did not find it useful. Customers aged 20-24 were most likely to find the SHC useful (92%), particularly those who were aged 18-24 and seeking benefits and 18-24 NEET customers (both 92%). Those who had an action plan were also more likely than average to find it useful (90%).

The main reasons why customers did not find the SHC useful were that they thought it told them things they already knew (30%) and that they did not find the questions relevant (27%). Customers with Level 2 or above qualifications were more likely than average to say that the SHC told them things they already knew (37%).

Around one in four online customers (25%) used the SHC tool, similar to previous waves. Among website visitors, the tool was more commonly used by careers advisers (42%) than the general public (24%). Those who were unemployed (35%) were also more likely to use the Skills Health Check tool, as were disabled customers (32%).

The majority of online customers found the SHC useful (74%), while 14% said that it was not useful. Again these findings were in line with previous waves.

4.4.2 Skills Action Plan

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

Just over half of telephone and face-to-face customers recalled having a Skills Action Plan (56%), similar to previous waves. Younger customers aged under 19 (63%) and 20-24 (66%) and 18-24 year old NEET customers (65%) were most likely to recall a Skills Action Plan. Furthermore, among face-to-face customers, those who had multiple meetings (64%) and those who had the same adviser (66%) were more likely to recall a Skills Action Plan being drawn up. This suggests that having a more intensive level of interaction may relate to having a Skills Action Plan. However, overall, telephone advice customers were more likely than face-to-face customers to recall having a Plan (68% compared with 56%).

Among those with a Skills Action Plan, half of customers had a great deal of involvement in drawing up their plan (51%), while a further 36% reported that they had some involvement, again, in line with previous years.

The majority of telephone and face-to-face customers who recalled having a Skills Action Plan found it useful (87%), consistent with previous years. One in ten (10%) found the Skills Action Plan 'not very' or 'not at all' useful; the main reasons were that they did not think it was relevant to their situation (29%), it was too general/insufficiently tailored (20%) or it did not contain any new information (16%).

4.4.3 Accounts (formerly known as Lifelong Learning Accounts)

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

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

Table 4.2: Use of Accounts⁷

	Q3/Q4 Year 8 2018/19	Q1/Q2 Year 8 2018	Year 7 2017/18	Year 6 2016/17	Year 5 2015/16	Year 4 2014/15	Year 3 2013/14	Year 2 2012/13	Year 1 2011/12
Base:	(6,111)	(2,954)	(8,228)	(8,821)	(8,812)	(9,576)	(8,795)	(8,808)	(6,610)
Already had an account						6%	4%	3%	2%
Opened an account during the session	6%	6%	6%	7%	10%	8%	8%	7%	6%
Opened an account after the session						8%	8%	6%	4%
Was offered during session but not interested	14%	14%	13%	14%	13%	10%	11%	11%	8%
It was not discussed	65%	67%	69%	68%	66%	55%	58%	64%	70%
Can't remember	12%	11%	10%	10%	9%	10%	10%	8%	8%

Base: All customers

Customers more likely to have opened an Account were:

- Customers who had an action plan (8% vs 4% of customers who did not have an action plan).
- Customers in learning or training (10%).
- Customers who had visited the website in the previous 3 months (10%).

⁷ The question was altered in Year 5 to merge 'already had an account', 'opened an account during the session' and 'opened an account after the session' into one code 'you have opened a Lifelong Learning Account'. In Year 7, this code was altered to 'You have opened an Account'.

Six in ten customers who had opened an Account had progressed as far as activating it (60%, significantly lower than 68% in the six months before the new service was introduced.)

4.5 Follow up actions

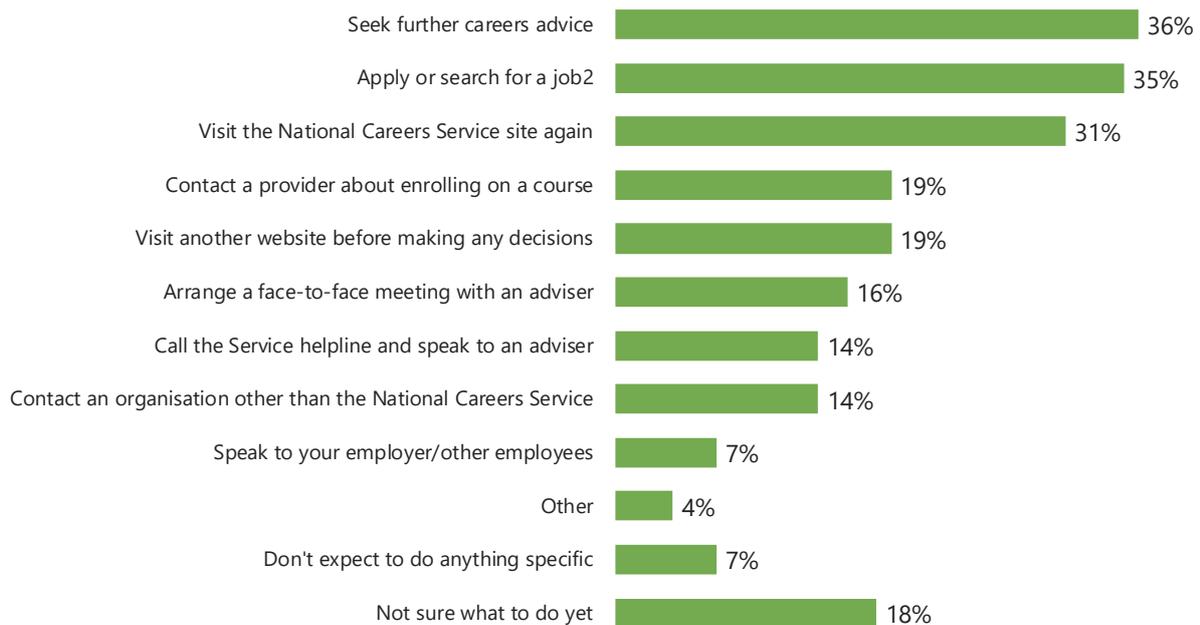
4.5.1 Reported follow-up by the National Careers Service

A third of face-to-face and telephone customers said that the National Careers Service had been in touch with them again after their initial contact (35%). Email (19%) and telephone (13%) were the most common communication channels used for follow-up.

4.5.2 Follow up actions carried out by online customers

Online customers were asked what they were likely to do as a result of visiting the National Careers Service website (Figure 4.3). The most common response was applying or searching for a job (35%), seeking further careers advice (36%) and visiting the site again before making any further decisions (31%).

Figure 4.3: Online customers planned next steps after visiting the National Careers Service website



Base: All online customers looking for advice for themselves or someone else (581)

Online customers who were looking for advice for themselves were asked whether various outcomes were likely as a result of visiting the National Careers Service website. Customers reported that it was more likely that they would start a course or enter learning (37%), get a job having been unemployed (28%), or undertake some training (26%). Over one in ten online customers said it was more likely they would start an apprenticeship (17%), start voluntary work (16%), or progress at work e.g. get a promotion (14%).

Customers with English as a second language were more likely than other customers to say that their visit to the website had increased their likelihood to enter a course or start training (51%) or progress at work, i.e. get a promotion (24%). Customers aged 50 or over who were also unemployed, and those with a disability, were more

likely than other customers to say that their visit to the website had increased the likelihood to get a job (46% and 38% respectively).

5 Customer Satisfaction

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

In line with this, the vast majority of face-to-face and telephone customers were satisfied with the National Careers Service overall (84%), consistent with previous years. Overall, satisfaction with the National Careers Service website has climbed to 69%, closing in on the levels seen before the redesign (Year 6, before redesign, 80%, Year 6, after redesign, 48%, Year 7, 64% and Q1 and Q2 in Year 8, 65%).

There are numerous customer groups that have been consistently satisfied with the service year on year. This includes the following regions/areas: National Careers Helpline, East Midlands, Yorkshire and Humber and North East and Cumbria. In addition, the following groups are also consistently satisfied: those engaged in their action plan and / or skills health check, those who are not disabled, younger customers (18-24), customers who had the same adviser (if they had multiple appointments).

Among telephone and face-to-face customers, satisfaction with individual aspects of the Service was also high, especially the professionalism and the convenience of the time and date of the meeting.

Almost nine in ten face-to-face or telephone customers either had already recommended or would recommend the National Careers Service (87%). Seven in ten online customers said they would recommend the National Careers Service website to friends, family or colleagues (72%), again in line with previous waves.

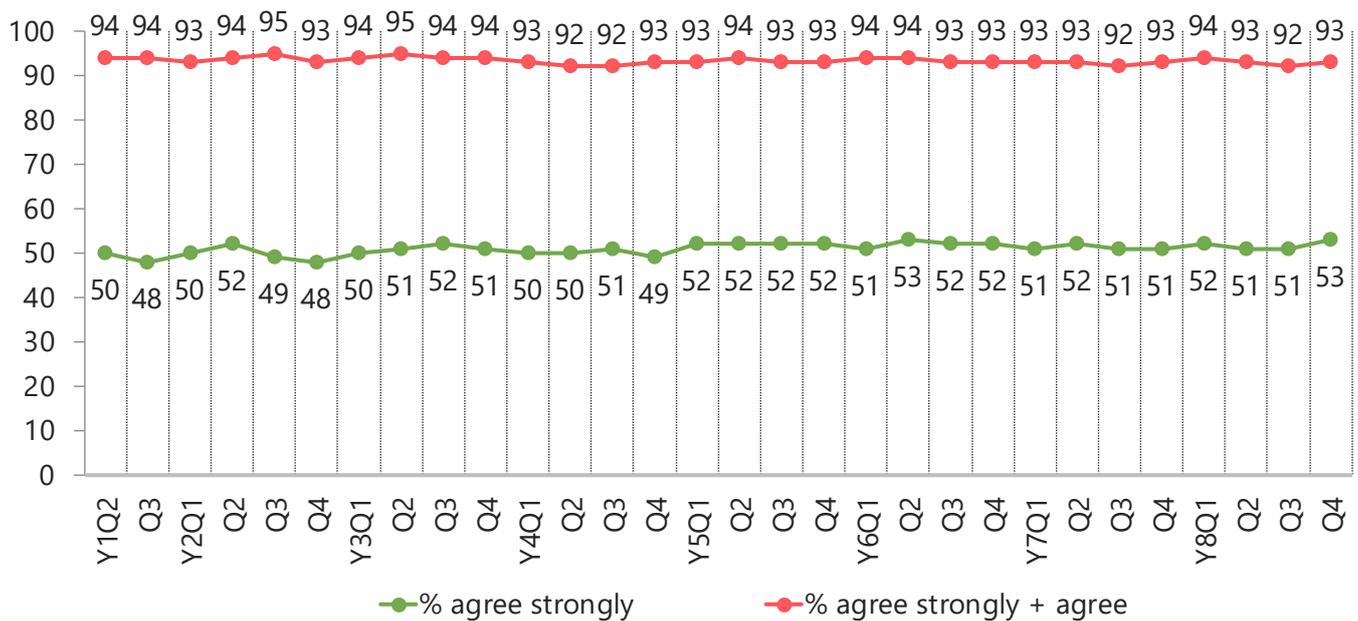
This chapter examines customer satisfaction with the National Careers Service. As well as overall satisfaction, it explores satisfaction with more specific aspects of the service ranging from logistical issues, such as the timing of appointments, to views on the quality of the advice received and on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

5.1 Overall perceptions about the quality of the service

5.1.1 Face-to-face and telephone customers

The overall quality of the service was rated highly by telephone and face-to-face customers. The vast majority in Q3 and Q4 in Year 8, after the changes to the service, agreed that it was good (93%), while only a small minority disagreed (6%). Ratings have been consistently high over time (Figure 5.1).

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



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

There were some variations by customer group, as follows:

- By age group, customers aged 18-19 and 20-24 were the most likely to agree that the overall quality of the service was good (98% and 95% respectively), while those aged 50 plus were the least likely to agree (90%).
- Customers with qualifications of Level 4 or above were less likely to agree the service was good (90%) than customers with qualifications below Level 2 (93%) or Level 2 qualifications or above (93%).
- Disabled customers were slightly less likely to rate the services as good than non-disabled customers (91% compared with 93%).
- Customers who had a deeper level of engagement with the service overall were more likely to agree that the quality of the service was good. For example, levels of agreement were higher among those who recalled using the Skills Health Check (95%) or agreeing an Action Plan (96% compared to 88% who had not).

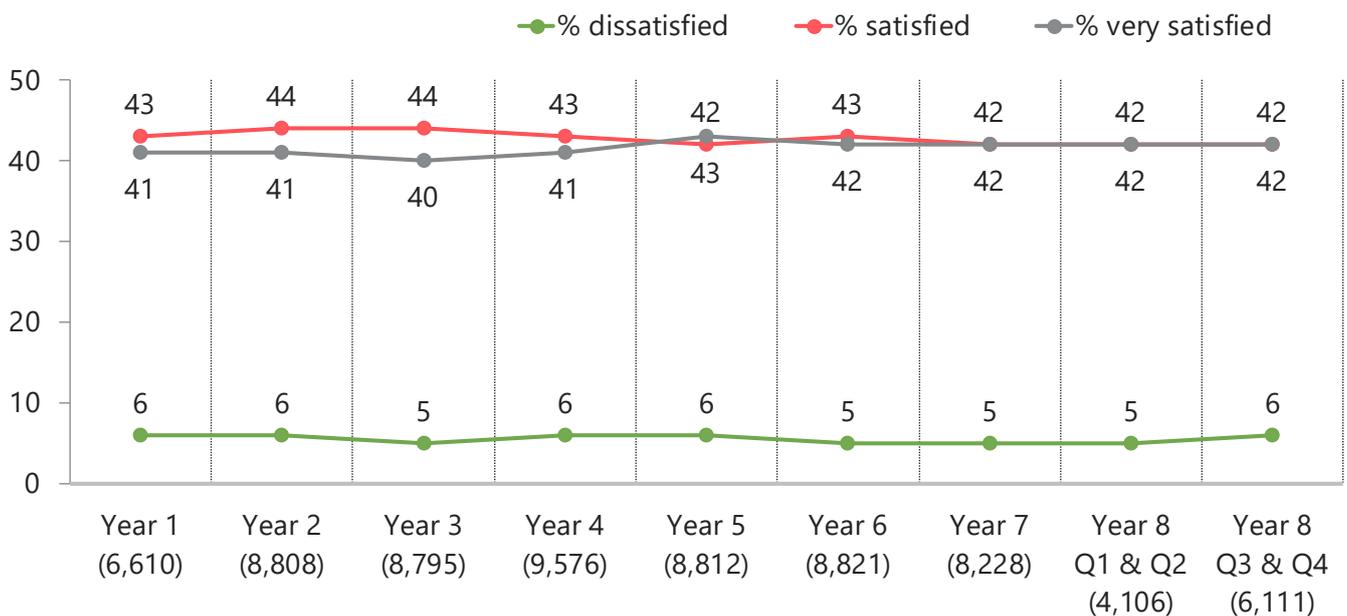
- Overall levels of agreement were consistent across the different contact channels. However, telephone customers were more likely than face-to-face customers to agree strongly that the service was good (56% compared with 51%).
- Customers who only had one telephone call with an adviser (93%) were more likely than those who had more than one call (88%) to agree the quality of the service was good. Among customers who had multiple calls, those who only spoke to one adviser were more likely to regard the service as good compared to customers who spoke to more than one adviser (94% versus 82%).
- North East and Cumbria customers were more likely than average to strongly agree or agree that the overall quality of the service was good (96% compared with the average, 93%).

5.2 Overall satisfaction with the National Careers Service

5.2.1 Face-to-face and telephone customers

The vast majority of face-to-face and telephone customers were satisfied with the National Careers Service overall (84%), and only 6% of customers were dissatisfied, largely unchanged from previous years (Figure 5.2).

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



Base: As shown in chart

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

- Younger customers were more likely to be satisfied than older customers, with 90% of 18-19 year olds satisfied compared to 84% of 25-49 year olds and 81% of customers aged 50 plus.
- Customers with qualifications of Level 4 or above were less likely to be satisfied (79%) and more likely to be dissatisfied (8%).

- Customers with a disability were less likely to be satisfied than customers without a disability (81% versus 85%) and were more likely to be dissatisfied (8% versus 5%).
- Dissatisfaction levels were higher among telephone customers who have called more than once (10%) or who have spoken to more than one adviser where they have had multiple calls (12%).
- As was the case for the rating of overall service quality, satisfaction levels are higher among customers who recalled using the Skills Health Check (89%) or agreeing an Action Plan (88% compared to 77% who did not).
- Face-to-face customers who had a meeting at a Jobcentre Plus were more satisfied than face-to-face customers who did not (85% compared to 81%).
- Yorkshire and Humber and North East and Cumbria customers were more likely to be satisfied with the service (88% and 87% respectively).

The main reasons for satisfaction relate to the individual advisers that customers dealt with. Most frequently, customers said that the adviser was knowledgeable, helpful or gave good advice (50%), while the other main reasons were that the adviser was friendly, personable or understanding (37%), gave good advice or helped with their CV (33%), or gave good advice relating to courses or training (17%). These responses were very similar to those seen in previous waves.

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

- Some customers felt that they did not receive the help or information that they wanted and/or needed (62%). This was by far the most common reason for dissatisfaction.

"I didn't get any help finding a job, the jobs that were mentioned were nowhere near my location."

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

"No one got back to me. I had to find it my own way via the library."

- There was criticism of not being helped to get a relevant course or training (14%).

"I didn't get help on funding, career options, short courses or help to find out how to get onto a course."

- Some customers wanted help with their CV, and felt the support they received was insufficient (14%).

"The adviser didn't understand my job or how to put it down on a CV."

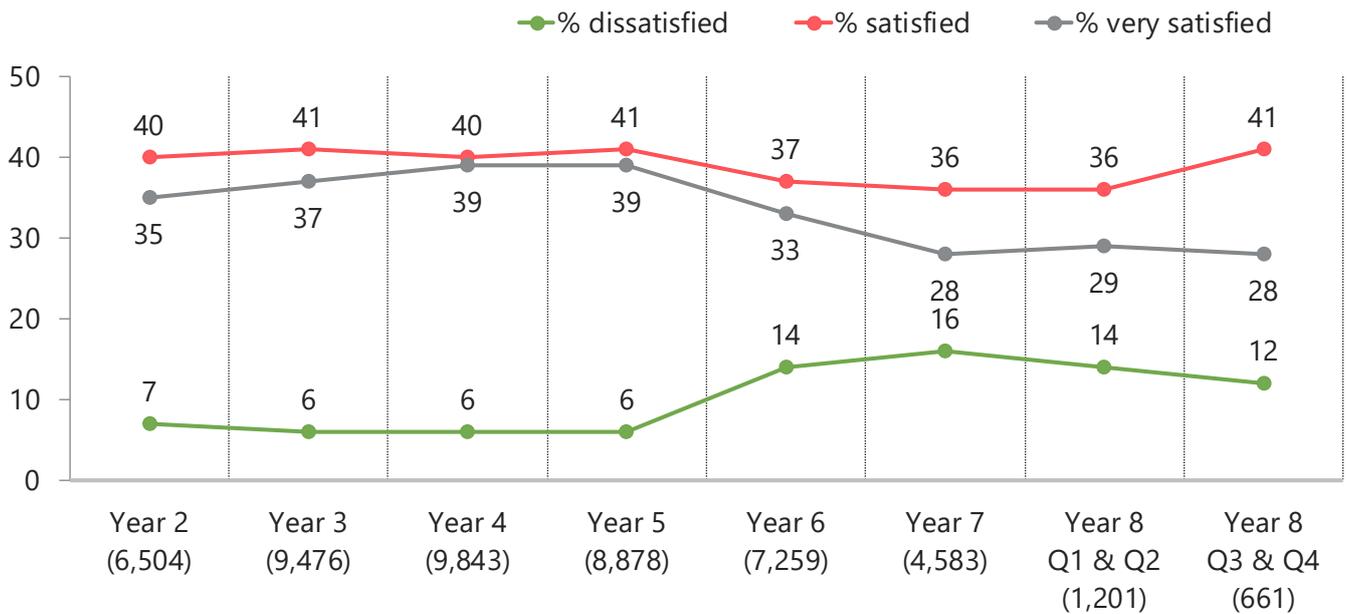
- Some felt advisers were rude or unprofessional (12%).

"I am looking for security work, but she didn't add that to my CV. She was aggressive and laughed at me because of my English. She wasted my time."

5.2.2 Online customers

Following the redesign of the website in Year 6, customers were much less positive about the website, with satisfaction falling from 80% in Year 6, before the redesign to 48% after the redesign. However, since then, there has been an uplift in satisfaction to 64% in Year 7, 65% in Q1 and Q2 of Year 8 and now 69% in Q3 and Q4 of Year 8 (Figure 5.3).

Figure 5.3: Ratings of satisfaction and dissatisfaction amongst online customers



Base: As shown in chart

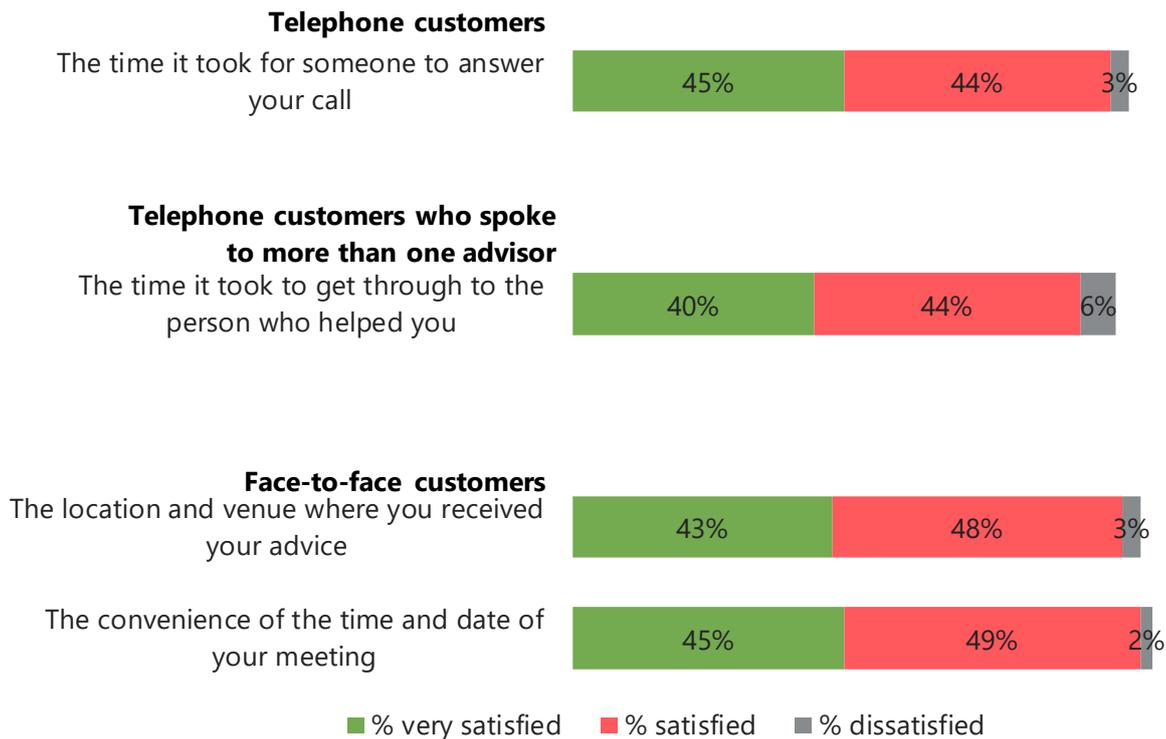
There were some notable differences among online customers:

- Satisfaction was highest among young people aged 19 or under (79%) and lower among other age groups, particularly those aged 50 plus (56%, with 25% of this group of customers dissatisfied).
- Satisfaction was higher among customers with qualifications below Level 2 (77%) compared to those with qualifications above Level 2 (64%).
- In relation to employment status, satisfaction was higher among those in learning (80%) than those who were unemployed (64%) or in work (67%).
- Although only 33 careers advisers participated in the survey so findings are indicative and should be treated with caution, this group was more likely to be dissatisfied (24% compared with the average, 12%) and less likely to be satisfied (55% versus 70%) than the general public (a pattern also identified in earlier waves).

5.3 Satisfaction with different aspects of the adviser sessions

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

Figure 5.4: Customer satisfaction with logistical arrangements

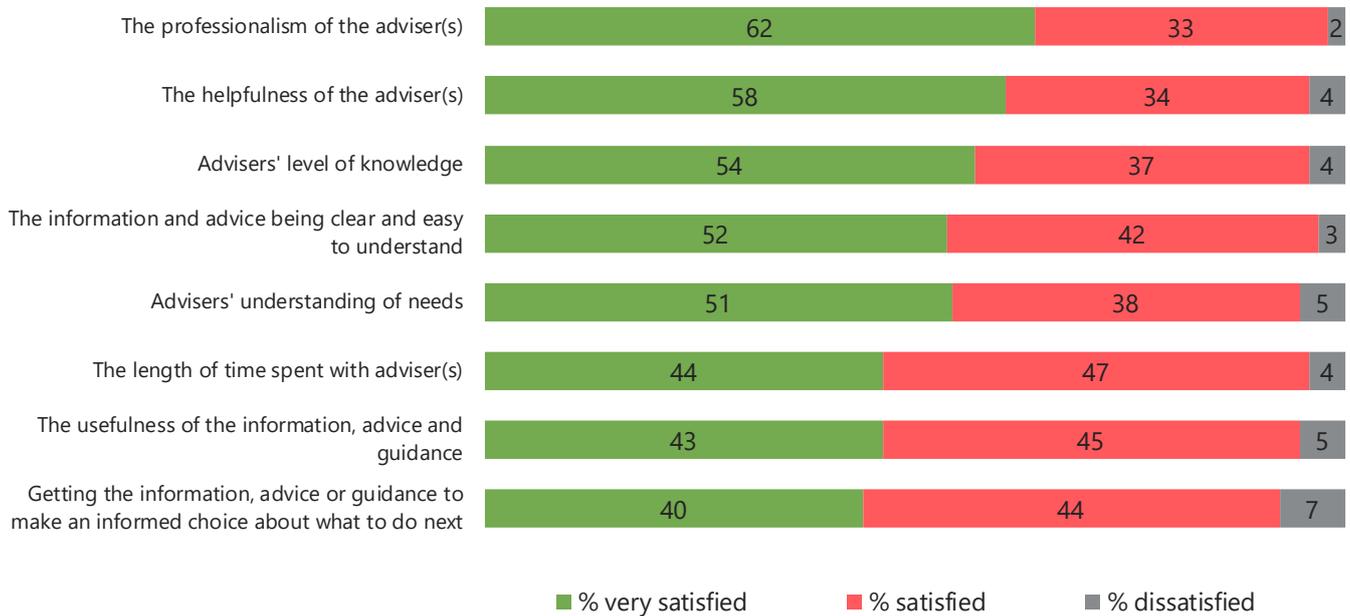


Base: Telephone customers who spoke to more than one advisor (142); all face-to-face customers (4,966)

Nine in ten telephone customers were satisfied with the time it took for someone to answer their call (89%).

More than nine in ten face-to-face customers were satisfied with the convenience of their appointment time (94%) and with the location and venue where they received their advice (92%). These findings were generally consistent across customer groups.

Customers were also positive about both the assistance of their advisers and with the content and outcome of the National Careers Service intervention, as demonstrated by Figure 5.5. On the various aspects asked about, around 90% of customers were satisfied, with at least two-fifths 'very satisfied'. The two areas that customers were particularly satisfied with were the professionalism and helpfulness of the advisers where around three-fifths were 'very satisfied'. This mirrors earlier findings in section 5.2.1 on the reasons for overall satisfaction, which focused on positive impressions of advisers' helpfulness and their ability to give good advice.

Figure 5.5: Satisfaction with information and advice from the Service

Base: All telephone and face-to-face customers (6,111)

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

- Customers who had a deeper level of engagement with the service overall were more likely to be satisfied with the various aspects of the information and advice received. For example, among those who recalled using the Skills Health Check or agreeing an Action Plan, 93% were satisfied with the advisers' understanding of their needs.
- Customers with qualifications of Level 4 or above had lower satisfaction levels on several measures (although still the majority were satisfied). For instance, 82% were satisfied with usefulness of the information, advice and guidance, compared to 90% of customers with qualifications below Level 2.
- 18-19 year olds were more likely to be satisfied on several measures. For instance almost all (95%) were satisfied that the adviser understood their needs, compared to 88% of customers aged 50 or over.
- Customers with a disability were less likely to be satisfied with many elements of the service, including the information and advice provided being clear and easy to understand (91% compared to 94% of customers without a disability), the usefulness of the information, advice and guidance (86% versus 89%) and getting the information, advice or guidance to make an informed choice about what to do next (83% versus 86%).
- Customers seeing an adviser face-to-face were more likely to be satisfied than telephone customers on several measures, for instance the advisers' level of knowledge (92% versus 87%). Customers who had a meeting at a Jobcentre Plus were more satisfied on most measures; 86% were satisfied with getting the

information, advice or guidance to make an informed choice about what to do next, compared to 82% who had their meeting at another location.

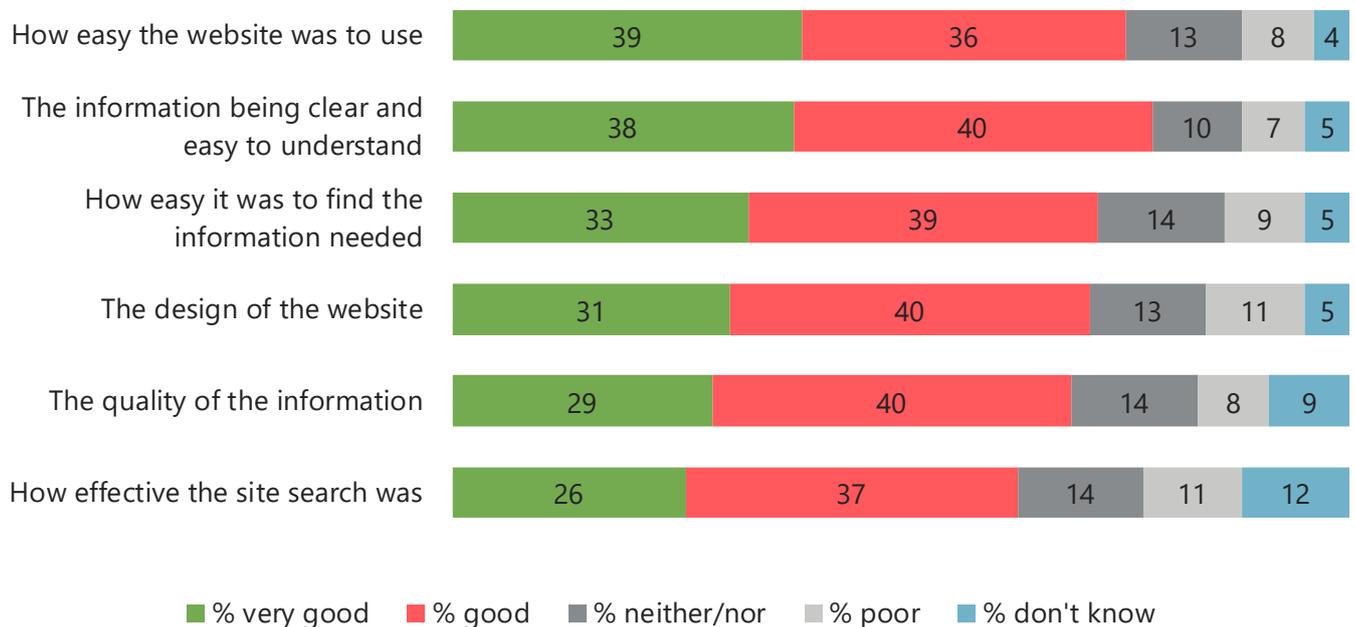
- Telephone customers who had just one call were more satisfied on several measures. For example, 87% were satisfied with the usefulness of the information, advice and guidance, compared to 81% of customers who had more than one call.
- The opposite pattern is seen among face-to-face customers for some measures with customers who had more than one meeting having higher levels of satisfaction (although both groups were still overwhelmingly positive). For instance, 91% were satisfied with the usefulness of the information, advice and guidance, compared to 88% of customers who only had one meeting.
- Customers who saw the same adviser if they had multiple face-to-face meetings were more satisfied on every measure, for instance 96% were satisfied with the information and advice provided being clear and easy to understand compared to 91% of customers who had had different advisers. The same pattern is seen on several measures for telephone customers. For instance, customers who had one adviser for multiple calls were more likely to be satisfied with advisers' level of knowledge (88%) compared to those who spoke to more than one adviser (78%).
- North East and Cumbria customers were likely to be more satisfied compared with the average across several measures. For example, 95% were satisfied with the location and venue of their meeting (compared with the average, 92%), 97% were satisfied with the professionalism of their adviser and 95% with the helpfulness of their adviser (compared with 95% and 93% on average respectively).
- East Midlands and Northamptonshire, Yorkshire and Humber and North East and Cumbria customers were more likely than average to be satisfied with the adviser's level of knowledge (93%, 94% and 95% respectively compared to the average, 91%).

Levels of satisfaction have remained consistently high and ratings are in line with previous findings. Variations between customer groups are also similar to those seen previously, although more differences between sub-groups have been found this wave with the larger base size providing more sensitivity to sub-group variations.

5.4 Satisfaction with the different aspects of the website

Visitors to the National Careers Service website were asked to rate a number of different features of the website, on a scale from 'very good' to 'very poor'. Around two-thirds to three-quarters of customers rated the individual aspects of the website as 'good' or 'very good'. Customers were most positive towards information being clear and easy to understand (78% rated this as good or very good) and the website being easy to use (75%). Customers were least positive in relation to the effectiveness of the site search (63%).

Ratings for the information being clear and easy to understand have risen from 73% to 78% in the six months before the changes were made to the service. The proportion that rated the design of the website as good or very good continues to increase (from 65% in Year 7 to 68% in Q1 and Q2 in Year 8 and now up to 71%).

Figure 5.6: Ratings on various aspects of the website

Base: All online satisfaction survey customers (661)

Customers whose first language is not English were more positive about the design (81% rated it good compared to 70% of customers whose first language is English), ease of finding information (83% versus 71%) and how effective the site search is (74% versus 62%).

Customers aged 19 or under were more positive about most aspects of the website, particularly in comparison with customers aged 50 or over. For instance, 83% rated the ease of being able to find information as good, compared to 61% of customers aged 50 or over, while 81% said the quality of information was good, compared to 57% of customers aged 50 or above.

Related to this, ratings were more positive among customers who were in learning, compared with those in work or who were unemployed. For instance, 85% of those in learning said that the website was good or very good in terms of ease of use, compared with 72% of both unemployed customers and of those in work.

As was the case last year, ratings were less positive among disabled customers: for example, 70% rated the website as good or very good for ease of use, compared with 79% of non-disabled customers.

Women give higher ratings than men for the information being clear and easy to understand (83% versus 74%) and the quality of the information (75% versus 65%).

Although findings are indicative only because of the small base size (33), careers advisers were less positive than general public customers about the various aspects of the website (and reflecting previous waves since the redesign). The largest difference was in relation to the design of the website (42% of careers advisers rated this as good or very good, compared with 73% of general public customers).

5.5 Recommending the National Careers Service

5.5.1 Face-to-face and telephone customers

Around a quarter of face-to-face or telephone customers said they had already recommended the National Careers Service to someone else (24%). Of the remainder, the majority said that they would recommend the Service (84%). In total, this means that almost nine in ten customers either had recommended the Service or said that they would recommend it (87%). This is in line with previous years.

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

- Younger customers (94% of 18-19 year olds and 91% of 20-24 year olds, falling to 83% of those aged 50 plus).
- Customers who were working at the time of their first contact with the National Careers Service (89%) compared to those who were unemployed and looking for work (though still the large majority at 86%).
- Customers who have visited the National Careers Service website in the past three months (89% compared to 86% of customers who have not).
- Non-disabled customers (88% compared with 84% of disabled customers).
- Those who had engaged with National Careers Service tools such as the Action Plan (91%) and the Skills Health Check (90%).
- Telephone customers (90% compared with 86% of face-to-face customers).
- National Careers Helpline and North East and Cumbria customers (both 90%).

5.5.2 Online customers

Seven in ten customers said they would recommend the National Careers Service website to friends, family or colleagues (72%), while 10% said they would not recommend it and 18% were unsure. These figures are very similar to previous waves.

Customers were more likely to say they would recommend the website if they were younger (82% of those aged 19 or under, falling to 64% of those aged 50 plus) or in learning (79%).

5.6 Improvements to the National Careers Service

5.6.1 Face-to-face and telephone customers

Around three-fifths of face-to-face and telephone customers could not think of any improvements that the National Careers Service needed to make (61%). Suggestions for improvement focused on more tailored help (8%), more follow-up (7%) and more publicity (6%) and more help or information on training (5%). The findings are very similar to previous waves.

"It needs to be for older people as at the moment it seems to be geared up for younger people. They kept saying things that don't really apply."

"The interview is a bit too long for people with learning difficulties."

"They should have a team, not just one person and they should give support from start to finish. And please print things out for people where English is their second language."

"When it comes to dealing with ex-professionals, they need to have more support geared towards different levels and expertise of the applicant."

Younger customers aged 18-19 (71%) and 20-24 (69%) were most likely to be happy with the service and suggest no improvements. This pattern is also seen with customers with qualifications below Level 2 (70%) in comparison to customers with Level 4 or above qualifications (45%); men (62%) compared to women (59%) and customers who recall having completed an Action Plan (64%) or Skills Health Check (65%).

Telephone customers were more likely than face-to-face customers to say that more tailored help was required (12% compared to 8%) and that there should be more follow-up (9% compared to 7%). More tailored help was also more likely to be suggested by customers with Level 4 qualifications or above (16%), who were more likely to suggest many of the most frequently mentioned improvements.

Telephone customers who had multiple calls and spoke to more than one adviser were more likely to suggest more tailored help, compared with those who spoke to just one adviser over multiple calls (17% compared with 9%), more follow-up (12% versus 8%) and more knowledgeable advisers (9% compared with 6%).

6 Customer Progression

Almost all face-to-face and telephone customers (97%) experienced some form of positive outcome in the six months since their call/meeting.

Almost six in ten customers (56%) achieved employment progression, an increase from the 52% in Q1 and Q2 in Year 8. Of these, two-thirds (64%) said that their adviser had an impact on this progression.

Around two-thirds of customers experienced learning progression (72%), also up from Q1 and Q2 in Year 8 (68%).

Overall, 93% of face-to-face and telephone customers indicated that they had gained some form of Personal Added Value since their contact with the National Careers Service, similar to previous waves.

Nine in ten face-to-face and telephone customers reported developing career management skills during the six months since their contact with the National Careers Service (90%).

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

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

6.1 Overview of the extent of progression

6.1.1 Defining progression

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

1. Learning progression – whether customers have undertaken formal or informal learning or training in the six months since the call/meeting.

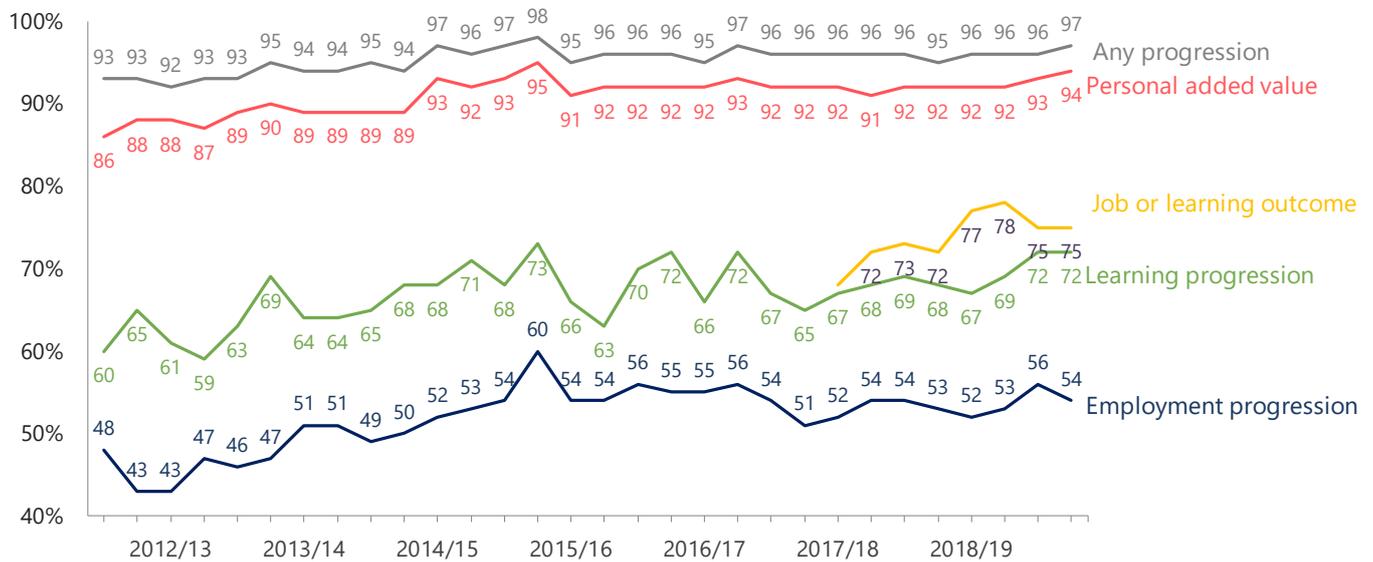
2. Employment progression – examining whether customers have entered new employment, changed career, were promoted or improved their salary, and/or have taken up voluntary work.

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

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

Almost all face-to-face and telephone customers (97%) experienced some form of positive outcome in the six months since their call/meeting. The various measures are shown in Figure 5.1. In Year 8 (Q3 and Q4), the figures for the three types of progression were: 72% for learning progression (up from 68% in Q1 and Q2 in Year 8), 56% for employment progression (an increase from 52% in Q1 and Q2 in Year 8), 93% for Personal Added Value (similar to Q1 and Q2 in Year 8) and 76% for job or learning outcome (similar to Q1 and Q2 in Year 8, 78%).

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



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

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

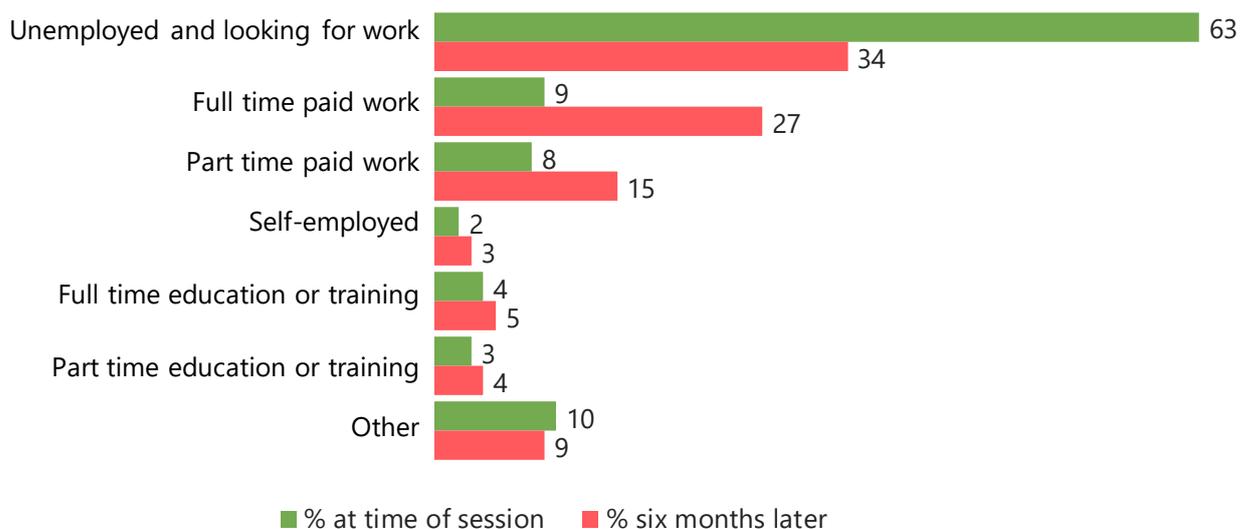
6.2.1 Change in employment status

The majority of customers interviewed for the progression survey had been unemployed and looking for work at the time of their adviser session six months previously (63%). Just under one in five customers were in work (19%),

with the remainder in learning (6%) or doing something else (10%), including those unable to work due to ill health, with home or family responsibilities, or retired.

Figure 6.2 shows that, six months on, there was a large fall in the proportion of customers who were unemployed and seeking work and a large increase in the proportion who were in any form of work. Overall, these changes are similar to Q1 and Q2 in Year 8, although there has been an increase in the number of customers now in full time paid work, up from 27% from 24%.

Figure 6.2: Employment status at the time of the call/meeting and six months later



Base: All progression survey customers (6,543)

Looking more closely at customers who were unemployed at the time of their adviser session, just under half of these customers moved into either work (41%) or learning (5%) six months later, while 47% remained unemployed (a fall of four percentage points since Q1 and Q2 in Year 8). There was a clear difference in relation to unemployment duration: those who had been unemployed for less than six months were much more likely to move into work (56%) than those who had been unemployed for more than twelve months (22%).

6.2.2 Changing job role or employer

Customers who were in work at both points (i.e. at the time of the meeting/call and at the time of their progression interview six months later) were asked whether they were still in the same job at the same organisation. Around half said they were (52%), whereas a quarter were doing a different job in a new organisation (24%). Fewer were doing the same type of job with a new employer (14%) or working for the same organisation in a different job (9%). The proportion working for the same organisation in a different job has increased from 5% in Q1 and Q2 in Year 8, while the other figures are similar to the previous wave.

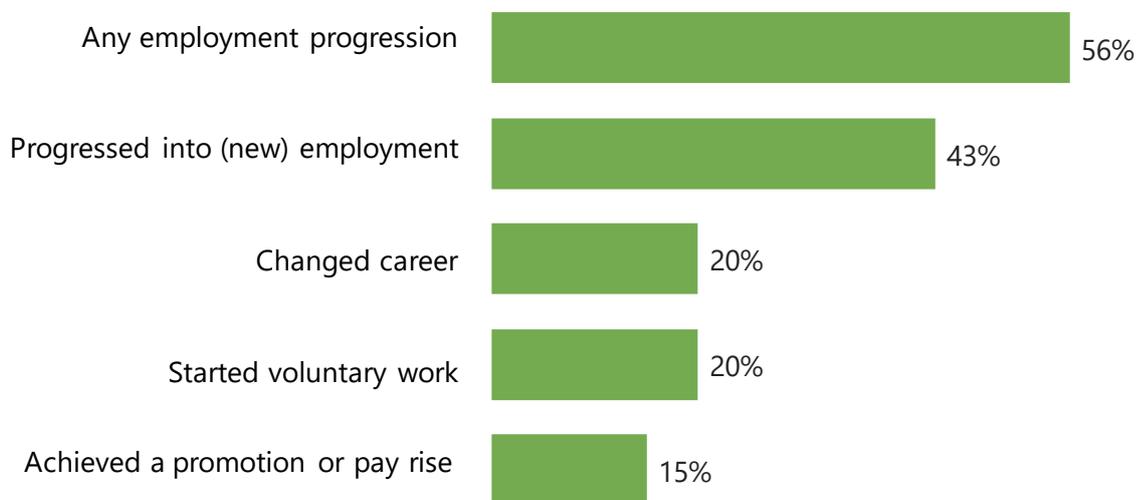
6.2.3 Employment progression among face-to-face and telephone customers

In total, 56% of face-to-face or telephone customers achieved some form of employment progression, an increase from 52% in Q1 and Q2 in Year 8. Figure 6.3 shows the types of employment progression achieved. It is important

to note that this includes those who got a job and then left it within the six-month period since their interaction with the service.

Almost half of face-to-face or telephone customers had progressed into new employment in those six months (43%), either from having been out of work, or moving into a new job, up from 39% in Q1 and Q2 in Year 8. One in five had a career change or took up voluntary work (both 20%), while 15% had achieved a promotion or pay increase, in line with Q1 and Q2 in Year 8 figures.

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



Base: All progression survey customers (6,543)

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

- Those with higher qualifications: 62% of those qualified to Level 2 or above, compared with 45% of those with qualifications below Level 2.
- Younger customers (72% of those aged 18-19, 66% of 20-24 year olds, compared with 56% of 25-49 year olds and 50% of those aged 50 plus).
- People who were unemployed and looking for work at the point they first had contact with the service (62%). However, this was much higher among those who had been unemployed for less than six months (70%), compared to customers who had been employed for more than twelve months (47%).
- Non-disabled customers (60%) compared with disabled customers (49%, although this is an improvement on the figure of 40% from Q1 and Q2 in Year 8).
- Yorkshire and Humber and North East and Cumbria customers were more likely than average to experience employment progression (67% and 65% respectively compared with the average, 56%).

There was no difference by channel in relation to overall employment progression.

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

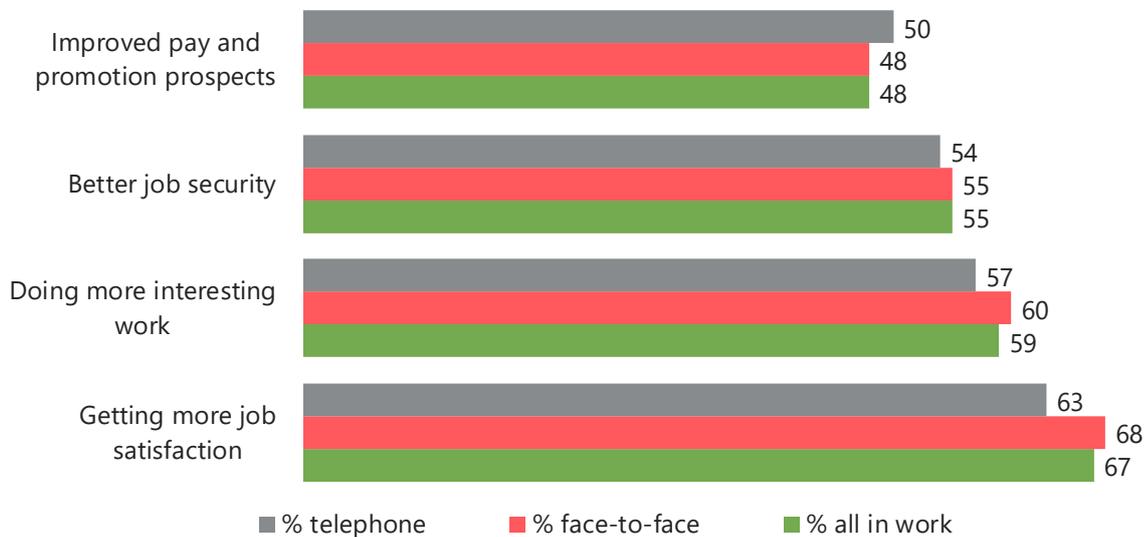
Customers who had achieved any employment progression were asked to what extent their interaction with the National Careers Service adviser had contributed to this. Almost two-thirds agreed the adviser had an impact (64%), the same figure as in Q1 and Q2 Year 8. In particular, 22% said the adviser played 'a big part' in their employment progression (also similar to previous waves). Face-to-face customers were more likely than telephone customers to say that the adviser had an impact (65% compared with 57%), as were 18-24 year old NEET customers (69%) and customers in the South East customers (68%, compared to the average, 64%).

6.2.5 Positive changes at work

Customers who were in work when interviewed were asked about a range of other benefits they may have experienced in their job or career in the six months following their interaction with the National Careers Service. Young people aged 18-24 who were NEET were particularly likely to cite the positive changes; for example, 89% of these customers said that their job satisfaction had increased. There were also differences by age of customer on all of the changes asked about, with 18-24 year olds being more likely to cite positive changes, while those aged 50 plus were less likely.

Some groups of customers were more likely to say that their pay and promotion prospects had improved: men (51%) compared to women (44%), White customers (50%) compared to BME customers (42%) and customers whose first language is English (50% compared to 38% of customers whose first language is not English). White customers were also more likely to report greater job satisfaction (69% in comparison to 64% of BME customers), while customers with qualifications below Level 2 were less likely to say they are doing more interesting work (54% compared with 62% of those with Level 2 qualifications or above).

Face-to-face customers were more likely than telephone customers to say that they were getting more job satisfaction (68% compared with 63%). This was also more likely to be reported among customers in Yorkshire and Humber and the South East (79% and 73% respectively, compared to the average, 67%).

Figure 6.4: Positive changes at work

Base: All customers in work at time of progression survey (2,890), Telephone customers (780), Face-to-face customers (2110)

Almost two-thirds of customers who had benefitted from positive changes at work attributed these at least in part to the information, advice or support they received from the National Careers Service (63%), with 22% saying it had played 'a big part'. This was more common among face-to-face customers (65%) than among telephone customers (56%), 18-24 year old NEET customers (70%) and customers whose first language is not English (70%).

6.2.6 Moving into work

Almost two thirds of all customers had been unemployed at the time of their interaction with the service (63%) but this dropped to only 34% being unemployed 6 months later.

The majority of customers considered that the information, advice or support from their adviser, and any actions taken directly as a result of their discussion, had played a part in them progressing in employment (64%). This included 24% who felt it had played a big part (similar to Q1 and Q2 in Year 8). 18-24 year old NEET customers were particularly likely to feel their adviser played a part (75%), as were face-to-face customers compared to telephone customers (65% versus 48%).

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

Learning progression has increased from 68% to 72%, back to levels last seen in Year 4.

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

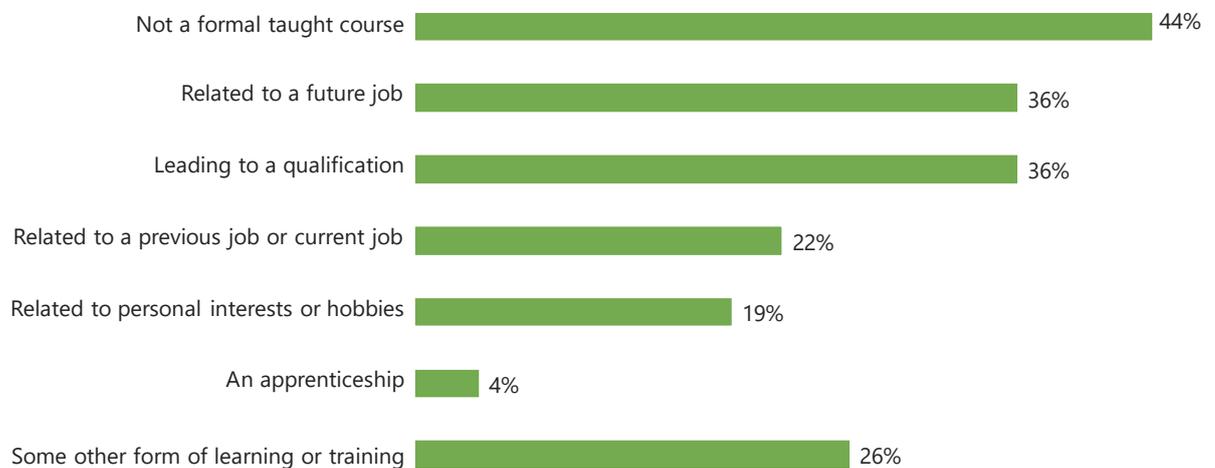
- Those with higher qualifications: 77% of those qualified to Level 2 or above, compared with 61% of those with qualifications below Level 2.
- Younger customers (82% of those aged 18-19, 78% of 20-24 year olds, falling to 67% of those aged 50 plus).

- Non-disabled customers (73%) compared with disabled customers (71%, although this is an increase from 62% in Q1 and Q2 in Year 8).
- BME customers (75%) compared to White customers (72%).
- Customers who were learning (83%) or working (78%) at their time of first contact with the National Careers Service.
- Telephone customers (83%) compared with face-to-face customers (71%).
- National Careers Helpline and North East and Cumbria customers were more likely than average to experience employment progression (83% and 80% respectively compared with the average, 72%).

Customers had taken part in various types of training or learning, most commonly learning that was not part of a formal, taught course (44%). The proportion of customers undertaking learning leading to a qualification increased from 31% in Q1 and Q2 in Year 8 to 36%. There was also an increase in learning related to a previous or current job from 19% to 22%. Women (38%) were more likely than men (34%) to have undertaken training relating to a future job, while single parents were more likely to have done training leading to a qualification (40%).

In total, 4% of customers had started on an Apprenticeship since their initial contact with the National Careers Service, and this figure was higher among 18-19 year olds (16%) and 20-24 year olds (10%).

Figure 6.5: Forms of learning/training undertaken since the call/meeting with National Careers Service



Base: All progression survey customers (6,543)

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

- To progress in a current job or career (90% said this was very or fairly important);
- To raise qualification level (87%);
- To develop or improve job-related skills (85%);
- To help get a job or change job (81%);

- To obtain a qualification (70%);
- To help change career (69%).

Among customers who had done any learning or training in the intervening six months, almost half had completed it (46%), while 7% left the course early and 47% were still doing it at the time they were surveyed. The majority were satisfied with the course they were doing (85%).

In total, 10% of National Careers Service customers gained a higher qualification than the one they had when they last had contact with the service – a similar proportion to Q1 and Q2 in Year 8 (9%).

Almost two-thirds considered that their National Careers Service adviser had contributed to their decision to do the learning or training (63%, up from 59% in Q1 and Q2 in Year 8), with just over a quarter saying that the adviser played 'a big part' (28%). This view was more prevalent among customers who speak English as a second language (67%) and customers with a disability (65%) in comparison with customers without a disability (62%). Customers with qualifications below Level 2 were also more likely to consider the adviser played a part in their learning progression (71% vs 59% of those with Level 2 or higher qualifications). This was also more common among North East and Cumbria customers (73%).

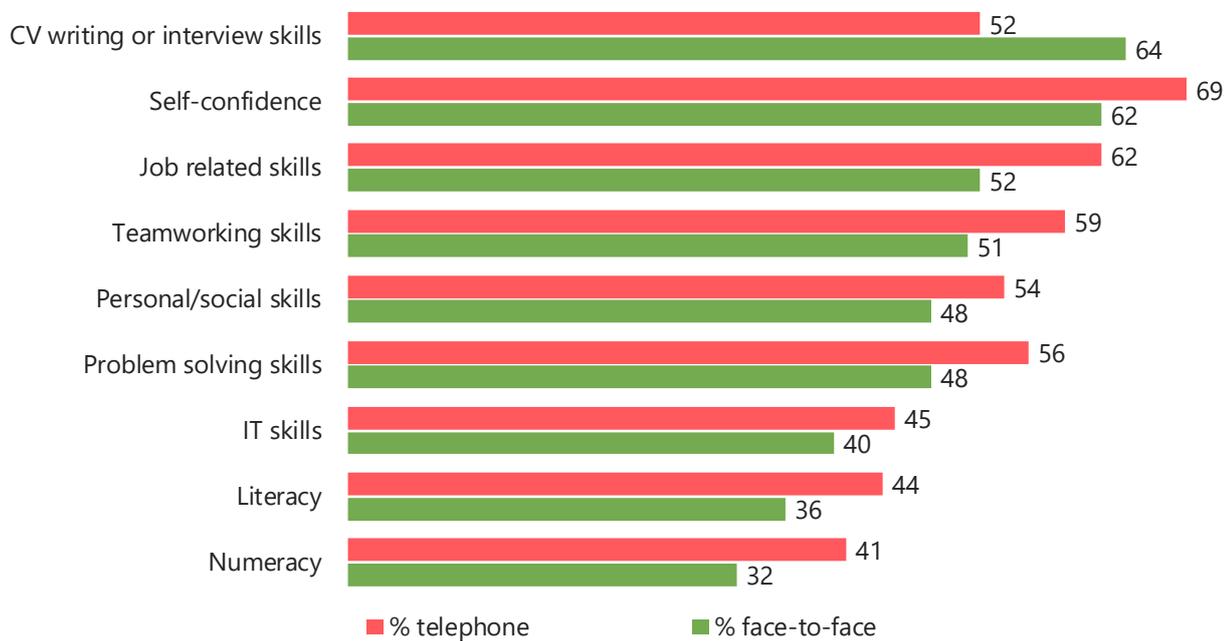
Six in ten customers considered that they were now more likely to participate in any learning in future as a result of the information or advice they got from the National Careers Service (61%).

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

Customers were asked if they had achieved one or more of the range of 'softer' outcomes known as 'Personal Added Value'. Overall 93% of face-to-face and telephone customers indicated that they had gained some form of Personal Added Value since their contact with the National Careers Service, consistent with last wave. The most common additions were increased self-confidence (63%), improvements in CV writing or interview skills (62%), developing skills related to a current or future job (54%) and team working skills (52%).

Virtually all young people aged 18-19 (97%) and 20-24 (98%) reported any personal development outcomes, in comparison to 91% of customers aged 50 plus. The proportion that gained some form of Personal Added Value was also higher among customers whose first language was not English (96%) but was lower among disabled customers (91% compared to 95% of customers without a disability). National Careers Helpline customers were also more likely than average to experience some form of Personal Added Value (95%, compared to the average, 93%). Customers with Level 2 or higher qualifications (94%) were more likely than customers with qualifications below Level 2 (91%) to have made Personal Added Value gains. Men (64%) were more likely than women (60%) to say their CV writing or interview skills had improved, while women were more likely than men to mention increased self-confidence (65% versus 62%).

Telephone customers were more likely than face-to-face customers to have gained some form of Personal Added Value (96% compared with 93%) and were more likely to report developing most of the specific skills listed. The exception was CV or interview skills, which face-to-face customers were more likely to say they had improved (64% compared with 52%). These differences are linked to the differing profiles of face-to-face and telephone service users.

Figure 6.6: Skills and personal development outcomes

Base: Telephone customers (1,429), Face-to-face customers (5,114)

Among customers who reported gaining Personal Added Value since their contact with the National Careers Service six months before, three-quarters (74% up from 71% in Q1 and Q2 in Year 8) said that the adviser played at least some part in this, including 24% who said that the adviser played 'a big part'. Young people aged 18-19 were most likely to say that these outcomes were at least partly the result of their adviser (82%). Consistent with previous years and with other progression measures, face-to-face customers were more likely than telephone customers to attribute some of this role to their adviser (76% compared with 61%). Yorkshire and Humber customers were also more likely to say that their adviser played a role (83%, compared to 74% on average).

6.5 Progression among online customers⁸

Progression is measured somewhat differently among online customers, at three months after they completed the website satisfaction survey. Customers are likely to have had varying levels of interaction with the National Careers Service during that time. For example, among those who completed the progression survey, one in five had face-to-face contact (20%) with an adviser after they had used the website, while 10% had telephone contact with an adviser.

The vast majority of all website visitors who completed the survey had achieved some form of progression three months on from their visit. This was most commonly learning progression (76%, in line with Q1 and Q2 in Year 8), although 55% had made progress in employment, either getting or improving a job (similar to the figure of 43% in Q1 and Q2 in Year 8).

⁸ Please note that online progression results are based on 51 interviews, therefore responses should be taken as indicative only.

6.5.1 Employment progression among website users

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

- 24% had progressed into new employment.
- 20% had changed career.
- 12% had achieved a promotion or pay increase.
- 24% had started voluntary work.

These figures are in line with Q1 and Q2 in Year 8.

Over two-fifths of customers who progressed in employment reported that the National Careers Service website had helped them to achieve this (43%), equivalent to 24% of all online customers who took part in the progression survey. This is higher than the corresponding figures for Q1 and Q2 in Year 8 (when 30% said they were helped by the website), however this is not statistically significant given the small base sizes.

6.5.2 Learning progression among website users

The most common type of learning or training started by online customers since visiting the website remains the same as in Q1 and Q2 of Year 8; self-teaching to try and improve knowledge or skills without taking part in a formal course (47%). However there has been an increase in the proportion of online customers who had undertaken a course leading to a qualification (45%). Significant minorities had undertaken a course, instruction or tuition related to their interests, hobbies or personal development (24%), course work that they completed in their own time, other than homework (31%) or some other type of learning or training (39%)⁹. Overall, 12% of customers who had visited the website had increased their highest qualification in the three months since they had used the website.

More than half of online customers felt that they were more likely to do learning in the future as a result of their visit to the website (55%), and two-thirds felt that they would be likely to start learning in the next 12 months (65%), including 43% who felt this was 'very likely'.

6.5.3 Soft outcomes and Personal Added Value among online customers

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

Almost three-quarters of online customers experienced some form of Personal Added Value in the three months following their visit to the website (73%), similar to the proportion in Q1 and Q2 of Year 8 (67%). Specifically, more than half said they felt more confident about applying for courses or training (59%), while just under half reported an increase in confidence about making decisions regarding their future (45%), applying for jobs (45%) or about planning their next career move (43%).

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

Website users were asked about other benefits they may have experienced since their visit to the site three months previously, with findings in line with Q1 and Q2 of Year 8:

- More aware of learning opportunities (69%).
- More interested in doing learning (57%).
- More aware of job and career opportunities (59%).
- More motivated to find work or to change their job (45%).
- Felt that their chances of finding a job had improved (42%).

Most of these customers felt that the National Careers Service website has contributed to their progression in these areas (63%), similar to Q1 and Q2 in Year 8 (68%).

6.6 Career management skills

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

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

Altogether, nine in ten face-to-face and telephone customers reported developing career management skills during the six months since their contact with the National Careers Service (90%), similar to Q1 and Q2 in Year 8. This included:

- 78% who reported that their awareness of work/career opportunities had increased over the past six months;
- 77% who said their ability to make decisions about the future in terms of career, training or learning had improved over the past six months;

- 76% who said that their awareness of learning or training opportunities had increased;
- 76% who reported that their motivation to find work or change career had improved;
- 76% said that their interest in learning had increased.

Of those who reported developing career management skills of some kind, around three-quarters (78%) said that the information, advice or support from the National Careers Service adviser helped in these areas, including a quarter (24%) who said it played 'a big part'.

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