

National Careers Service Customer Satisfaction and Progression Annual Report

**Report based on findings from May 2022 –
April 2023**

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Contents

Executive Summary	4
1 Introduction and Methodology	9
1.1 Background.....	9
1.2 Research aims	10
1.3 Methodology	11
1.4 Telephone surveys	11
1.5 Online surveys	13
1.6 Interpretation of the data.....	13
1.7 The structure of this report.....	14
2 Customer Profile	15
2.1 Customer characteristics.....	15
2.2 Employment status.....	18
2.3 Highest qualification.....	19
3 How and why do customers contact the National Careers Service?	21
3.1 How did customers first find out about the National Careers Service?.....	21
3.2 Previous use of the National Careers Service	24
3.3 Reasons for contacting the National Careers Service	26
4 Experiences of using the Service	30
4.1 Making contact with the National Careers Service by phone	30
4.2 Face-to-face contact with the National Careers Service	31
4.3 Using the National Careers Service website.....	32
4.4 Use and usefulness of common National Careers Service tools	33
4.5 Follow-up actions	37
5 Customer Satisfaction	40
5.1 Overall perceptions about the quality of the service	40
5.2 Overall satisfaction with the National Careers Service.....	42
5.3 Satisfaction with different aspects of the adviser sessions	46
5.4 Satisfaction with the different aspects of the website	48
5.5 Recommending the National Careers Service.....	50
5.6 Improvements to the National Careers Service.....	51
6 Customer Progression	52
6.1 Overview of the extent of progression.....	52
6.2 Learning progression among face-to-face and telephone customers	53
6.3 Employment progression among face-to-face and telephone customers.....	55
6.4 Personal Added Value among face-to-face and telephone customers	60
6.5 Career management skills.....	63
7 How do key results vary across National Careers Service contracting areas?	65
7.1 Customer profile in different areas.....	66

7.2	Satisfaction	67
7.3	Progression and career management skills	72
8	Conclusions	73

List of Figures

Figure 3.1:	Where customers first found out about the National Careers Service.....	22
Figure 3.2:	Where customers first found out about the National Careers Service by key group	23
Figure 3.3:	How customers accessed the National Careers Service website	24
Figure 3.4:	Reasons for contacting the National Careers Service (top mentions).....	27
Figure 3.5:	Top reasons for customers visiting the National Careers Service website.....	28
Figure 4.1:	Online customers' planned next steps after visiting the National Careers Service website (top mentions)	39
Figure 5.1:	Agreement overall quality of service was good, by survey quarter	41
Figure 5.2:	Ratings of satisfaction and dissatisfaction amongst face-to-face and telephone customers	42
Figure 5.4:	Ratings of satisfaction and dissatisfaction amongst online customers.....	45
Figure 5.5:	Customer satisfaction with logistical arrangements.....	47
Figure 5.6:	Satisfaction with information and advice from the service	48
Figure 5.7:	Ratings on various aspects of the website.....	49
Figure 6.1:	Trends in progression among face-to-face and telephone customers, by survey quarter.....	53
Figure 6.2:	Forms of learning/training undertaken since the call/meeting with National Careers Service	54
Figure 6.3:	Employment progression among face-to-face and telephone customers (%)	56
Figure 6.4:	Employment status at the time of the call/meeting and six months later.....	57
Figure 6.5:	Skills and personal development outcomes	61
Figure 6.6:	Positive changes at work.....	62
Figure 7.1:	Satisfaction, perceived service quality and willingness to recommend the National Careers Service by area	68
Figure 7.2:	Satisfaction with logistical/operational elements of the service by area	69

List of Tables

Table 1.1:	Achieved interviews by quarter (face-to-face and telephone customers)	12
Table 2.1:	Demographic profile of National Careers Service customers.....	15
Table 2.2:	Economic activity of customers.....	18
Table 2.3:	Highest qualification and NEET status among National Careers Service customers.....	19
Table 3.1:	Website visitor referral.....	23
Table 3.2:	Specific course-related information sought by website visitors	28
Table 4.1:	Proportion rating each feature as 'very useful' or 'quite useful'	32
Table 4.2:	Different types of follow-up customers have received by region.....	38
Table 6.1:	Changes in employment status among key customer groups.....	58
Table 7.1:	Profile of customers by area.....	67
Table 7.2:	Satisfaction with the adviser by area	70
Table 7.3:	Satisfaction with the advice/information provided by area	71
Table 7.4:	Key progression measures and career management skills by area (%)	72

Executive Summary

Introduction and methodology

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

This report presents the results from Year 12 of the customer satisfaction and progression study. This fieldwork was undertaken from May 2022 to April 2023 and consisted of monthly satisfaction and progression telephone surveys, as well as a continuous online satisfaction survey. This report frequently references the Year 11 results (fieldwork undertaken between May 2021 to April 2022).

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

Customer profile

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

Males (54%) continue to be more prevalent than females (44%) to use the service at a total level. In a shift to what has been seen in Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022), customers self-declaring a long term disability accessing the service dropped from 33% down to 20% in Year 12 – May 2022 to April 2023).

Online customers continue to be more likely to have higher qualifications, and more likely to be in work, when compared to face-to-face and telephone customers. In Year 12 (May 2022 – April 2023) there has been an increase in those customers who are 19 or younger accessing the National Careers Service website, as well as those aged 50+.

Around two thirds of customers taking part in the telephone and face-to-face survey identified themselves as white (67%) whilst 32% identified as BAME. Female customers were significantly more likely to be from a BAME background (37%) compared to their male counterparts (29%)

whilst those in the 25-49 age cohort are also more likely to identify as BAME (41%) than the average (32%).

There has been a small, but significant increase in the proportion of customers in work. In Year 12 (May 2022 – April 2023) a significantly higher proportion of those accessing the service via the telephone (21%) are likely to be in work than those accessing face-to-face (19%).

Why do customers contact the National Careers Service?

Three in five customers first heard about the National Careers Service through Jobcentre Plus (64%). However, this represents a significant fall from Year 12 (May 2022 – April 2023) where 67% of customers reported this channel. Customers who had been unemployed for more than 12 months (71%), single parents (71%), 50+ and at risk of unemployment (77%) and those with below a L3 qualification (71%) were all more likely than average to have heard about the service through a Jobcentre Plus.

Among website users the most common channel for first hearing about the National Careers Service was also via Jobcentre Plus (21%), as it was in Year 11 (May 2021 – April 2022). This was followed by through searches online (21%), through social media (17%), from a teacher (12%) or from a National Careers Service adviser (10%). Online sources have become more common since Year 11 (May 2021 – April 2022), with the proportion first hearing about the service via online searches and social media both increasing (from 16% and 12% respectively).

Reasons for contacting the National Careers Service were primarily focused on progressing into employment. Help with CV writing remains a key reason for using the telephone and face-to-face services (36% and 32% respectively).-Therefore, providing support for CV writing is often the starting point for the National Careers Service to provide independent and impartial advice to customers. However, there has been a decline (although not significant) in the proportion of customers reporting this as the main reason for contact and increase in those reporting they contacted the service to obtain information to help them find a job (increasing from 14% to 17%).

Website use continues to be largely for obtaining information and advice about jobs, careers, or apprenticeships (41%).

Experiences of using the National Careers Service

Seven in ten telephone customers had their enquiry handled in one call (71%), which is a significant increase compared with Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) (67%). Amongst those who had multiple calls, 70% dealt with the same adviser which is consistent with Year 11 (69%).

Seven in ten face-to-face customers (75%) had just one meeting with an adviser, which is also a significant increase since Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) (70%), and one in five (22%) had more than one which has decreased (from 26% in Year 11 – April 2021 to May 2022).

Customers who had been unemployed for between six and 12 months (27%) or for longer than 12 months (25%), and customers aged 50 or over and at risk of unemployment (25%) were more likely to have had more than one meeting.

The National Careers Service provides various digital tools to support its customers across multiple platforms, including Explore Careers, the Skills Health Check, and Find A Course. For all tools excluding webchat, around four to five in ten (38% - 52%) of those that had been referred to the tool had used it, and the vast majority of customers that had used them (around 90%) found each tool useful. Around half of online customers got all or most of the information they wanted on their first visit to the website (52%). Around four in ten face-to-face and telephone customers reported that they had been followed-up by the National Careers Service since their initial contact (41%). These findings are consistent with previous waves.

Customer satisfaction with the National Careers Service

The overall quality of service provided by the National Careers Service continues to be highly rated by telephone and face-to-face customers, with 93% agreeing that it was good. However, measured by those who “strongly agree” that the service is good there was a drop between Year 12 Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 (56% and 55%) and Quarter 3 and Quarter 4 (both 51%). In line with the positive evaluation of service levels, the vast majority of face-to-face and telephone customers were satisfied with the National Careers Service overall (86%). This represents a decline from Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) when 88% of customers were satisfied.

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

Among telephone and face-to-face customers, satisfaction with individual aspects of the service remains high. With one exception (adviser’s knowledge of jobs and training opportunities in the local area) approximately nine in ten customers were satisfied with each element of the information and advice they received. As In Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) the highest satisfaction rating was given to the professionalism of the customer’s adviser (95%).

An important metric when assessing levels of customer satisfaction is the likelihood of customers to recommend a service, and on this measure the National Careers Service continues to score highly. Although it is two percentage points lower than in Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022), almost nine in ten face-to-face or telephone customers had either already recommended or said they would recommend the National Careers Service (86%).

Satisfaction with the National Careers Service website has increased since Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) (58%). Now almost two-thirds (63%) are satisfied to at least some degree. Over four in ten online customers (43%) said they had already recommended the National Careers Service, and a further four in ten (40%) of those who are yet to do so said they would. In total 62% of online customers either have or would recommend the Service and this is higher than the 57% recorded in Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022).

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

Overall, Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) has seen a slight decrease in employment progression compared to Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022), while learning progression has been consistent. Almost all face-to-face and telephone customers (96%) experienced some form of positive outcome in the six months since their call/meeting. Learning progression averaged 67% in Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023), broadly in line with Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) (69%).

Around half of customers (49%) achieved employment progression, down from 56% in Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022). Those with higher qualifications, younger customers, white customers, customers who had been unemployed for less than six months and those without a disability were more likely to achieve employment progression than average. Ninety-three percent of face-to-face and telephone customers indicated that they had gained some form of Personal Added Value since their contact with the National Careers Service. This was highest amongst younger customers (18-24, 98%).

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

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

- Satisfaction with the quality of service and the Service overall were significantly higher than average in Yorkshire and Humber, North-East and Cumbria and the South East. On both measures the figure for London was below average.
- People accessing the service in Yorkshire and Humber (90%), North-East and Cumbria (89%) and the South East (89%) were significantly more likely than average (86%) to say they had recommended the National Careers Service or would do so in the future. As with ratings of the Service itself, recommendation levels in London were significantly below the national average (82% compared to 86%).
- The return to high levels of satisfaction with logistical aspects of face-to-face meetings seen in Year 11 (May 2022 to April 2022) has been consolidated in Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023). London was the only contracting area where satisfaction with the location and venue for their meeting was below average (86% against 89%). In South East and North-East and Cumbria (both 93%) it was higher than average. Only in South West and Oxfordshire (92%) was satisfaction with the time and date of the customers' meeting below average (94%). In Yorkshire and Humber (96%) it was above average.
- Satisfaction with specific aspects of advisers' people skills, knowledge and helpfulness remains very high. In Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) there were some differences by region with those in North-East and Cumbria, Yorkshire and Humber and South East consistently demonstrating the highest level of satisfaction. Compared to other regions, satisfaction tended to be lower in London than elsewhere

- Customers across all contracting areas were overwhelmingly positive about the information, advice and guidance (IAG) received. As with advisers' skills and knowledge, ratings of IAG were consistently above average in North-East and Cumbria, Yorkshire and Humber and the South East. Customers in London were significantly less satisfied than average with each aspect of the IAG they received.
- In Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) approximately 19 in every 20 customers (96%) experienced some form of positive outcome in the six months following their intervention. However, employment progression is significantly lower than it was in Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) (49% compared to 54%).
- Customers in South West and Oxfordshire and the South East were significantly more likely than average to demonstrate employment progression (56% and 53% respectively, compared to 49% average) and it was relatively high in North-East (53%). In contrast, employment progression was relatively low in North West (44%) and London (45%)

1 Introduction and Methodology

1.1 Background

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

The National Careers Service is delivered via a multi-channel approach: face-to-face, telephone, webchat, and online. Adults living or working in England, aged 19 or over (or aged 18 for those who are not in education employment or training) are eligible for face-to-face advice. Young people aged between 13 and 18 may also use the National Careers Service through its website or digital channels, or through the telephone service. Schools and colleges are responsible for the delivery of careers advice (either directly or through their own contracted provision). It does promote its online and telephone services via schools, colleges and other training providers, as well as providing labour market information and supporting materials to their career's services. The National Careers Service is actively engaged in building partnerships between schools, colleges, and employers.

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

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

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

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

During the period that this report covers, there was a further change to the Prime Contractors as a result of a reprocurement exercise. As a result of this, the South West region (formerly managed by Adviza) and the North West region (formerly managed by The Growth Company), were transitioned over to management by SEETEC on the 1st October 2022. Of the yearly period covered by this research, Quarters 1 and 2 were undertaken with the old contractors in place, whilst Quarters 3 and 4 were undertaken with SEETEC overseeing the contracts.

1.2 Research aims

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

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

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

This report is based on fieldwork conducted between May 2022 and April 2023. For face-to-face and telephone customers, this means the satisfaction survey covers sessions with an adviser between April 2022 and March 2023.

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

For face-to-face and telephone customers, the progression survey covers the period six months beforehand, for example (i.e., from November 2021 to October 2022).

The research among web visitors covers those accessing the National Careers Service website between May 2022 and April 2023 for the online satisfaction survey.

The overall aims of this research are to:

- provide full analysis of the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the National Careers Service, which incorporate specific measures on customer satisfaction and progression following their contact with an adviser.
- understand customer views of the service at different points in their journey in order to provide actionable feedback to help the National Careers Service to identify areas for improvement and to inform its service development.
- identify and understand any demographic differences in how customers experience and rate the service, in particular among priority groups, including NEET customers aged 18 to 24, single parents, customers who self-declared a disability, those aged 50 plus who are unemployed or at risk of redundancy, customers who have been unemployed for more than 12 months, and customers with below Level 3 qualifications.
- measure variations in performance among the community-based contractors delivering the service.
- monitor changes over time by comparing the results for Year 12, (May 2022 to April 2023) to the data from Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022).

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. In other words, there is no way of knowing whether that impact would have occurred anyway, without the intervention of the National Careers Service).

1.3 Methodology

This report presents the results from Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) of the customer satisfaction and progression study, covering fieldwork between May 2022 to April 2023.

1.4 Telephone surveys

For face-to-face and telephone customers this involved a total of 7,246 interviews for the satisfaction survey and 5,572 interviews for the progression survey. The number of achieved interviews by quarter is shown in Table 1.1, including comparative sample sizes and fieldwork dates for the previous years of the survey.

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

		Fieldwork month	Satisfaction survey		Progression survey	
			Month of adviser session	No. of interviews	Month of adviser session	No. of interviews
Y10 (May 2020 to April 2021)	Quarter 1	May-Jul 2020	Apr-Jun 2020	816	Nov 19-Jan 2020	1,759
	Quarter 2	Aug-Oct 2020	Jul-Sept 2020	812	Feb-Apr 2020	1,392
	Quarter 3	Nov 20-Jan 2021	Oct-Dec 2020	2,242	May-Jul 2020	632
	Quarter 4	Feb-Apr 2021	Jan-Mar 2021	2,275	Aug-Oct 2020	632
	Year 10 Total				6,145	
Y11 (May 2021 to April 2022)	Quarter 1	May-Jul 2021	Apr-Jun 2021	1,830	Nov 20-Jan 2021	1,391
	Quarter 2	Aug-Oct 2021	Jul-Sept 2021	1,823	Feb-Apr 2021	1,399
	Quarter 3	Nov 21-Jan 2022	Oct-Dec 2021	1,824	May-Jul 2021	1,394
	Quarter 4	Feb-Apr 2022	Jan-Mar 2022	1,808	Aug-Oct 2021	1,402
	Year 11 Total				7,285	
Y12 (May 2022 to April 2023)	Quarter 1	May-Jul 2022	Apr-Jun 2022	1,835	Nov 21-Jan 2022	1,384
	Quarter 2	Aug-Oct 2022	Jul-Sept 2022	1,802	Feb-Apr 2022	1,380
	Quarter 3	Nov 22-Jan 2023	Oct-Dec 2022	1,802	May-Jul 2022	1,387
	Quarter 4	Feb-Apr 2023	Jan-Mar 2023	1,807	Aug-Oct 2022	1,421
	Year 12 Total				7,246	

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

- Face-to-face National Careers Service customers.
- Telephone customers can either be offered Information and Advice (IA) or Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) from the service. Those who are offered IAG will receive a Skills Action Plan. Both customer types have been included in the survey, however, the volume of IAG sample provided throughout the year was significantly higher than the amount of IA sample.

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

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

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

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

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

1.5 Online surveys

In total, 492 website users took part in the website satisfaction survey. Use of cookies means that someone accessing the site from the same computer will only be asked to participate once. As in previous years, no weighting has been applied to the web satisfaction survey because the demographic profile of the population of website users is unknown.

Typically, an online progression survey would also take place throughout the year. This progression survey for website users is longitudinal and conducted online, with respondents sent an email with a link to the online questionnaire three months after they took part in the online satisfaction survey. The email is only sent to individuals who accessed the site seeking information on their own behalf, were willing to be re-contacted, and supplied a valid email address for this purpose. It was not sent to employers or careers advisers. In total, 34 online progression interviews were conducted. Due to the small volume of interviews, this data has been excluded from this report.

1.6 Interpretation of the data

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

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

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

1.7 The structure of this report

The rest of this report presents the results of Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) of the National Careers Service customer satisfaction and progression surveys, as follows:

- Chapter 2 details the profile of customers accessing the National Careers Service
- Chapter 3 explores customers’ reasons for contacting the service, how they found out about it, and what they wanted from it.
- Chapter 4 examines the customer journey in detail, looking at their experiences of using specific aspects of the service across all of its main channels.
- Chapter 5 assesses customer satisfaction with the service, and willingness to recommend it to other people, including relevant National Careers Service Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)
- Chapter 6 explores customer progression six months on from their interaction with the service, including relevant KPIs.
- Chapter 7 looks at customers’ experiences across the different contracting regions, identifying any variations in performance.

2 Customer Profile

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

This chapter examines the profile of customers accessing the service in Year 12 from May 2022 to April 2023, and also those accessing the National Careers Service website from May 2022 to April 2023. It looks at demographic characteristics such as gender, age, 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 Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023). The figures presented for face-to-face and telephone customers are based on weighted data, whilst online figures are based on unweighted data¹. Overall the customer base varied by service channel, but still had a similar profile to that found in previous years.

Table 2.1: Demographic profile of National Careers Service customers²

	Channel used as main way of accessing the service (%)		
Base:	Face-to-face (3,944)	Telephone (3,302)	Online (492)
Gender			
Male	55	53	44
Female	43	45	50
Age group			
19 or younger ³	8	10	17
20 to 24	16	17	9
25 to 49	51	49	42
50 or older	26	24	29
Ethnicity			

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

² Not all categories will add up to 100% as a result of the 'Prefer not to say' code.

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

White	63	73	57
Black/Black British	14	9	12
Asian/Asian British	13	11	12
Chinese	1	*	1
Mixed/other	7	6	11
Prefer not to say	1	1	5
English not first language	29	21	25
Long term illness/disability	19	21	27

2.1.2 Gender and age

In previous years, the trend has shown that more males than females use the service either through face-to-face meetings or via telephone. Year 12 (May 2022 – April 2023) is no exception, with 44% female and 54% male. These results are on a par with Year 11 (May 2021 – April 2022, which was 45% female and 53% male.

Looking at the key priority groups, the largest disparity between gender is for single parents who continue to be predominantly female (77%) versus the average (44%). Those with below Level 3 qualifications (57%), NEET customers aged 18 to 24 (61%) and customers aged 50+ and at risk of unemployment (61%) were more likely to be male, when compared to the average (54%).

As seen in previous years, the highest proportion of telephone and face-to-face customers were aged between 25 and 49 at 50%, a figure in line with results seen in Year 11 (May 2021 – April 2022) at 47% and Year 10 (May 2020 to April 2021) at 52%.

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

Similar to Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022), customers who self-declare a disability are significantly more likely to be aged 50 plus (36%, compared to the average, 25%), and single parents remain more likely to be aged 25 to 49 (73%, compared to the average, which is 50%).

Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) shows a halt to the decline in females taking part in the online web survey as seen in previous years of the study. Females now represent half the online sample (50%), a figure still lower than seen in Year 10 (May 2020 to April 2021) (55%) but directionally higher than in Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022 at 47%).

2.1.3 Ethnicity and English as a first language

Around two thirds of customers taking part in the telephone and face-to-face survey identified themselves as white (67%) whilst 32% identified as BAME. Female customers were significantly more likely to be from a BAME background (37%) compared to their male counterparts (29%), whilst⁴ those in the 25 to 49 age cohort are also more likely to identify as BAME (41%) than the average (32%).

Four in five customers say that English is their first language (74%). BAME customers were more likely to suggest that English is not their first language (52%, compared to average, 26%).

For a quarter (26%) of customers, both face-to-face and telephone, English is not their first language. This figure rises to half (52%) among customers who identify as BAME. Year 12 (May 2022 – April 2023) also shows that as well as female customers are more likely to be from a BAME background, they are also more likely to not have English as a first language (35%) than the average (26%).

Face-to-face customers were significantly more likely at 29% to not have English as their first language than telephone customers at 21%. A quarter (25%) of online customers did not have English as their first language.

2.1.4 Disability

Versus Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) where customers who self-declared a disability or long-term limiting health condition represented a third (33%) of customers, Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) shows a significant decline down to one in five (20%) customers. Among those accessing the service who self-declared a disability, the largest proportion (43%) are likely to be aged 25 to 49. Those aged 50+ make up a third (36%) of those with a disability with those aged 20-24 representing 14% and those in the youngest cohort of 19 or younger just 7%.

In Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2021), the proportion of customers self-declaring a disability or long-term limiting health condition using the service is significantly higher amongst telephone customers (21%) than face-to-face customers (19%).

Customers self-declaring a disability were more likely to identify as White versus the average (80% compared with 67%), to have been referred by Job Centre Plus (69% compared with an average of 64%) and were more likely to be claiming benefits (81% compared to the average of 70%).

2.1.5 Region

Website users who participated in the survey were asked where they lived; this provides a picture of the regional spread of website users. In total, 72% of online customers said they lived in England, with the remainder living in Scotland (1%), Wales (1%), Northern Ireland (1%) or UK Forces overseas (1%).

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

Those online customers residing in England were predominantly made up of the regions of London (17%), the rest of the Southeast (12%), the North-West (9%), West Midlands (8%), and the South-West (7%).

2.2 Employment status

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

Table 2.2: Economic activity of customers

	Channel used as main way of accessing the service (%)		
	Face-to-face (3,944)	Telephone (3,302)	Online (492)
Base:			
In work	19	21	41
Full-time employee	7	9	22
Part-time employee	9	8	11
Self-employed	3	3	7
In learning	8	6	16
Full-time learning	5	4	5
Part-time learning	2	2	2
School	*	*	9
Unemployed and looking for work	62	59	27
Unable to work due to health	6	8	6
Looking after home/family	3	4	3
Retired	*	1	3
Other	1	1	2

In Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023), the proportion of those unemployed and looking for work represented six in ten telephone or face-to-face customers (61%), a decline versus Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) from 62%. For those completing the web survey online this was closer to three-in-ten (27%) customers using the service.

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

- men (64% compared with 56% of women)

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

- white (63% compared with 55% who identify as BAME)
- customers aged 18 to 24 and receiving benefits (73% compared with an average of 61%)
- customers aged 18 to 24 NEET (89% compared with an average of 61%)

Whilst Year 11 (May 2021 – April 2022) showed the same proportion of face-to-face and telephone customers being in work (18%), in Year 12 (May 2022 – April 2023) a significantly higher proportion of those accessing the service via the telephone (21%) are likely to be in work than those accessing face-to-face (19%).

Overall (face-to-face and telephone), 7% of customers accessing the service were in education which is a continuation of the upward trend witnessed since Year 10 (May 2020 – April 2021) where it was 5%. Face-to-face customers continue to be more likely than telephone customers to be in education (8% compared to 6%) though both customers have seen an upward shift versus Year 11 (May 2021 – April 2022) which is significantly so for telephone customers from 4% in Year 11 (May 2021 – April 2022) to 6% in Year 12 (May 2022 – April 2023).

Among face-to-face and telephone customers who were unemployed at the time of their call or meeting, more than half had been unemployed for less than 6 months (57%), one in ten had been unemployed for between 6 and 12 months (11%), and three in ten had been unemployed for more than 12 months (29%). The proportion of those unemployed for more than 12 months is significantly lower than seen in Year 11 (May 2020 to April 2021) (29% vs 43%) and back to similar levels seen in Year 10 levels (May 2020 to April 2021) (29% vs 23%).

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 qualifications below Level 3, defined as adults without a Level 3 qualification (equivalent to A-Levels), this does not include 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.

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

	Channel used as main way of accessing the service (%)		
Base:	Face-to-face (3,944)	Telephone (3,302)	Online (492)

Highest qualification			
Level 4 or higher (e.g., degree or equivalent)	32	32	42
Level 3 (e.g., A-levels)	21	21	8
Level 2 (5 GCSEs A*-C)	19	20	12
Level 1	10	10	9
Entry level	3	2	8
Other	4	4	n/a
Level 2 or higher	66	68	62
Below Level 2	11	10	27
18 to 24 NEET	17	20	7

Almost a third (32%) of face-to-face and telephone customers had a Level 4 or higher qualification. These levels are comparable to Year 10 (May 2020 to April 2021), when it was 34% and 33% respectively, but significantly higher than in Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) when a quarter of face-to-face and telephone customer (26%) held a Level 4 or higher qualification.

As seen in Year 11 (May 2020 to April 2021), online customers had the highest proportion of customers with a Level 4 or higher qualification (42%).

Less than one in ten online customers were 18 to 24 and NEET at the time of their meeting (7%), which is a smaller proportion than face-to-face and telephone customers (17% and 20% respectively). Being 18 to 24 and NEET was more common among face-to-face or telephone customers who were male (21%, compared to 15% of females).

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

Two thirds of customers heard about the service through Jobcentre Plus (64%), which is a decrease from Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) (67%) but remains by far the most common source. This was followed by internet searches (8%) and hearing about it from a friend or relative (7%), both of which were in line with Year 11 (7% and 6% respectively).

Online customers often heard about the National Careers Service through Jobcentre Plus (21%), through searches online (21%), through social media (17%), from a teacher (12%) or from a National Careers Service adviser (10%). The customer groups most likely to have been signposted to the service by Jobcentre Plus were those aged 50 plus who were unemployed or at risk of redundancy (46%) and customers with no qualifications (33%).

A third of customers reported that their main reason for contacting the National Careers Service was for help with CV writing (34%). This is a decrease of two percentage points compared to Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) (36%); however, it remains the most common reason for using the service. Telephone customers were again more likely to contact the Service for help with CVs (36% vs 32% of face-to-face customers), however this difference was smaller than in Year 11 (40% vs 32%). As was the case in Year 11, the main reason for using the website was obtaining information and advice about jobs, careers or apprenticeships (41%).

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

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

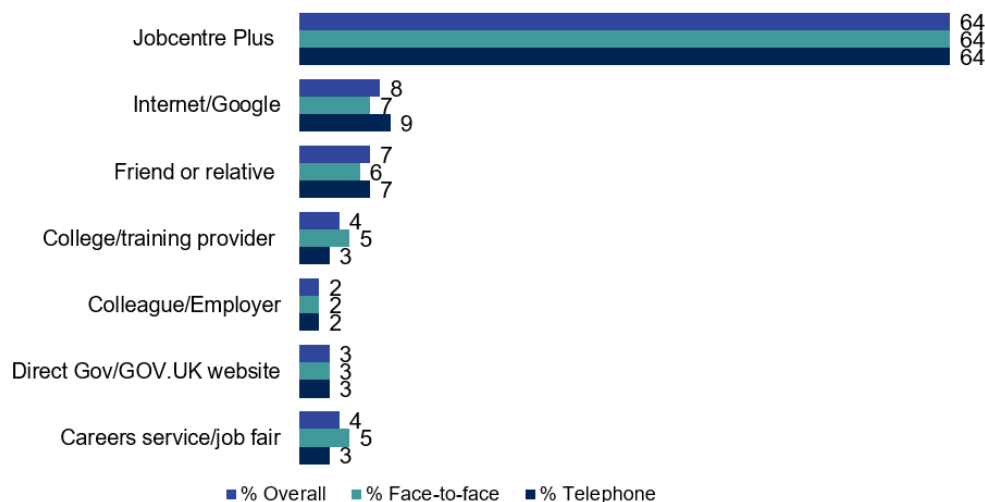
3.1.1 Telephone and Face-to-Face Customers

In Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023), two-thirds of customers reported that they found out about the service through Jobcentre Plus (64%). This represents a decrease since the peak in Year 11 (67%) but remains above the proportion of customers referred by Jobcentre Plus in Years 9 and 10 (59%). For face-to-face customers, there has been no change in how many customers were referred in this way (64%, as it was in Year 11 from May 2021 to April 2022), however the proportion of telephone customers being referred by Jobcentre Plus has decreased from 69% in Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) to 64% in Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023), meaning there is now no difference in this regard between the service types.

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

Telephone customers seeking information and advice were again more likely to have heard about the service through the internet (9%), compared to face-to-face customers (7%) and telephone customers seeking information, advice, and guidance (8%). More face-to-face customers had heard about the service through a careers service or job fair (5%, compared to 3% of telephone customers) or by a college or training provider (5%, compared to 3% of telephone customers).

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



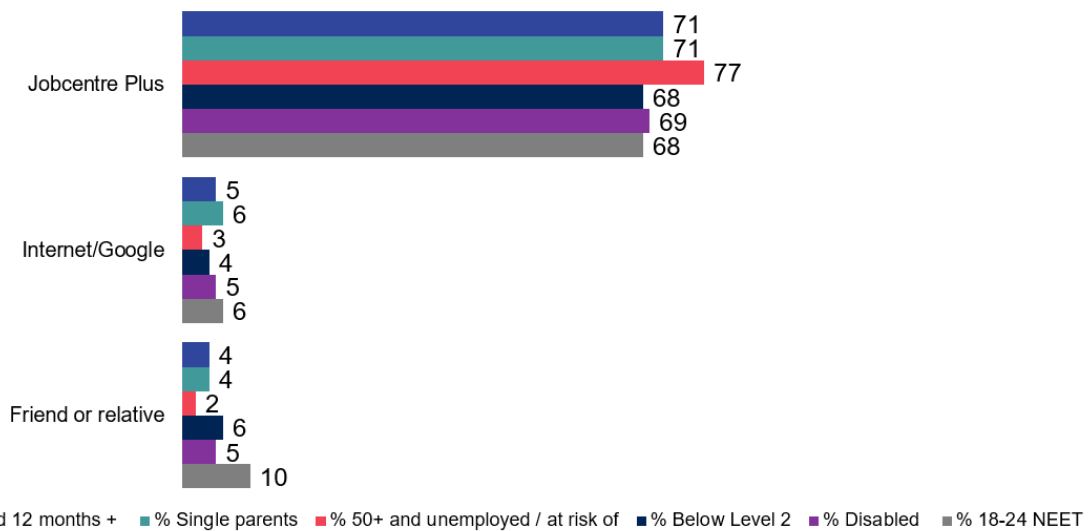
Base: Overall (7,246), Face-to-face customers (3,944), Telephone (3,302)

As was the case in previous years, customers aged 50+ were significantly more likely to have heard about the service for the first time through the Jobcentre Plus than younger customers (73% vs 64% aged 19 or younger). Moreover, those who were unemployed and looking for work were also more likely to have heard about the service through Jobcentre Plus than those in work or learning (72% compared to 46% and 39% respectively), although this difference had narrowed since Year 10 (70%, 37% and 34% respectively).

In terms of key priority groups, at least seven in ten customers unemployed for less than 6 months (73%) or between 6 and 12 months or more than 12 months (both 71%), single parents (71%), those aged 50 or more and at risk of unemployment (77%) or aged 18 to 24 and receiving benefits (74%) reported that they first heard about the National Careers Service through Jobcentre Plus.

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

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



Base: Unemployed 12 months+ (1,248), Single parents (1,207), 50+ and unemployed / at risk of (1,224), Below Level 3 (1968), Disabled (1,424), 18-24 NEET (1,376)

Among website users the most common channel for first hearing about the National Careers Service was also via Jobcentre Plus (21%), as it was in Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022). This was followed by through searches online (21%), through social media (17%), from a teacher (12%) or from a National Careers Service adviser (10%). Online sources have become more common since Year 11, with the proportion first hearing about the service via searches and social media both increasing (from 16% and 12% respectively).

In terms of key priority groups, customers aged 50 plus and unemployed or at risk of redundancy were more than twice as likely than the average to have been signposted to the service by Jobcentre Plus (46% compared to 21% overall), was the case in Year 11. Those who are 50+ and at risk of unemployment were much more likely than average to have heard about the service via Jobcentre Plus (46%).

Table 3.1: Website visitor referral⁶

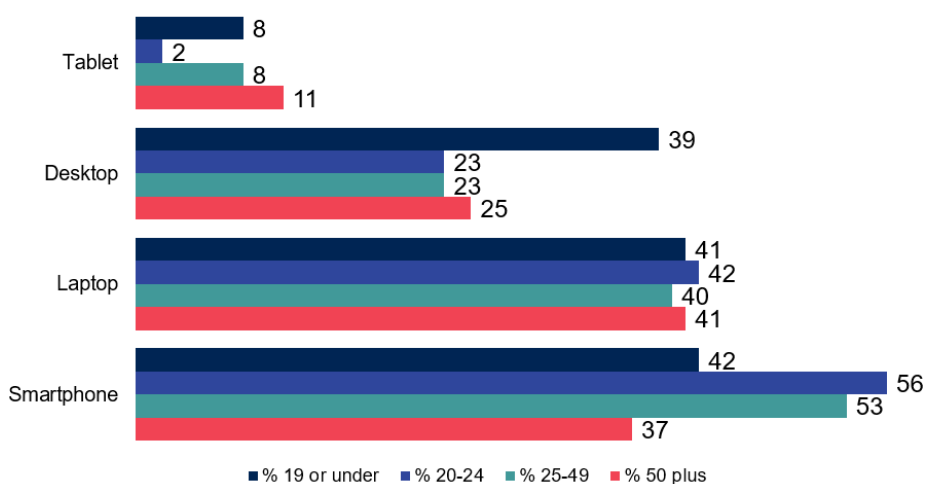
Base:	Overall (492)	Disabled (132)	50 plus and unemployed (56)	Under L3 (144)	L3 plus (245)	Unemployed for 12 months + (41)
Jobcentre Plus adviser	21%	30%	46%	19%	19%	29%
Online	21%	20%	13%	14%	28%	20%
Through social media	17%	17%	13%	17%	17%	7%

Around three quarters of customers (74%) accessed the website at home. This remained far more common than other places but has decreased since Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) (79%), continuing the downward trend Year 10 (May 2020 to April 2021) when it was 88%. However, this is likely a result of more face-to-face delivery of education rather than a continuing trend of return to the workplace after the pandemic. More customers still accessed the website at work (12%) than at school, college, or university (11%). However, the proportion accessing it at work remained in line with Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) (11%) whereas more customers now accessed it from their place of education (7%). Just four per cent of customers accessed the service from a library or other public facility.

Customers most commonly accessed the website with a smartphone (46%) followed by a laptop computer (40%) and desktop computer (26%). These results are consistent with Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022).

Smartphone use was lower among website users aged 50 and over (37%) than those aged 25 to 49 (53%), and laptop use (41%) was higher than smartphone use (37%) for these older users, the only age group to which this was the case. Smartphone use was particularly high among BAME customers (55% compared to 40% of white customers), as it was in Year 11.

Figure 3.3: How customers accessed the National Careers Service website



Base: Under 19 (85), 20-24 (43), 25-49 (209), 50+ (144)

3.2 Previous use of the National Careers Service

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

One in ten customers (10%) had previously met with a National Careers Service adviser face-to-face, which is an increase compared with Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) (7%) and has doubled since Year 10 (May 2020 to April 2021) (5%).

Those who had been unemployed for more than 12 months were more likely to have spoken to an adviser previously (14%). Face-to-face customers were twice as likely to have previously met with an adviser face-to-face, compared with telephone customers (12% and 7% respectively).

One in five (21%) customers had previously spoken to an adviser over the telephone, which is a decrease from one in four (25%) in Year 11.

Other groups that were more likely to have previously spoken to an adviser via the telephone were BAME customers (27%) and those with lower than Level 3 qualification (23%), as was the case in Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022), as well as those unemployed for more than 12 months (24%).

A quarter of customers (23%) had accessed the website before they used the service, which has also decreased since Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) (26%) and continues the downward trend from Year 10 (May 2020 to April 2021) (30%). Those who were younger were more likely to have previously visited the website (28% of those aged 24 or younger compared to 17% of those aged 50 or older), and BAME customers (28%) were more likely to have visited the website than white customers (21%). In terms of key groups, those that were 18 to 24 and NEET (27%) or had Level 4 or higher qualifications (29%) were more likely to have visited the website in the 3 months prior to their contact.

Around half of online customers (52%) were 'new' service users, visiting the site for the first time, which is a decrease compared to Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) (59%) and returns to similar levels to Year 10 (May 2020 to April 2021) (50%) and previous years.

Around one in six online customers (17%) reported they had previously had a face-to-face meeting with the National Careers service, which is in line with Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) (14%). A similar proportion (14%) said they had previously spoken to an adviser on the telephone helpline, which is a decrease compared with Year 11 (19%). In terms of key priority groups, customers who were 50 or over and unemployed or at risk of redundancy were more likely to report having had previous contact with the National Careers Service via face-to-face meetings (38%) or to have spoken to an adviser via the telephone helpline previously (27%), as were customers that had been unemployed for 12 months or more (29% for both face-to-face and telephone).

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 were looking to explore career options, learning or training options, or both.

More wanted to explore career options (79%) than learning or training options (63%). Both of these are unchanged since Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022).

Among the key groups, the results exhibited the same differences as in Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022): customers aged 50 plus and unemployed or at risk of unemployment and customers self-declaring a disability were less likely than average to be exploring career options (74% and 76%). By contrast, customers aged 18 to 24 and receiving benefits (82%), NEET customers aged 18 to 24 (83%), BAME customers (84%), and customers with qualifications Level 3 and above (84%) were more likely to be exploring career options.

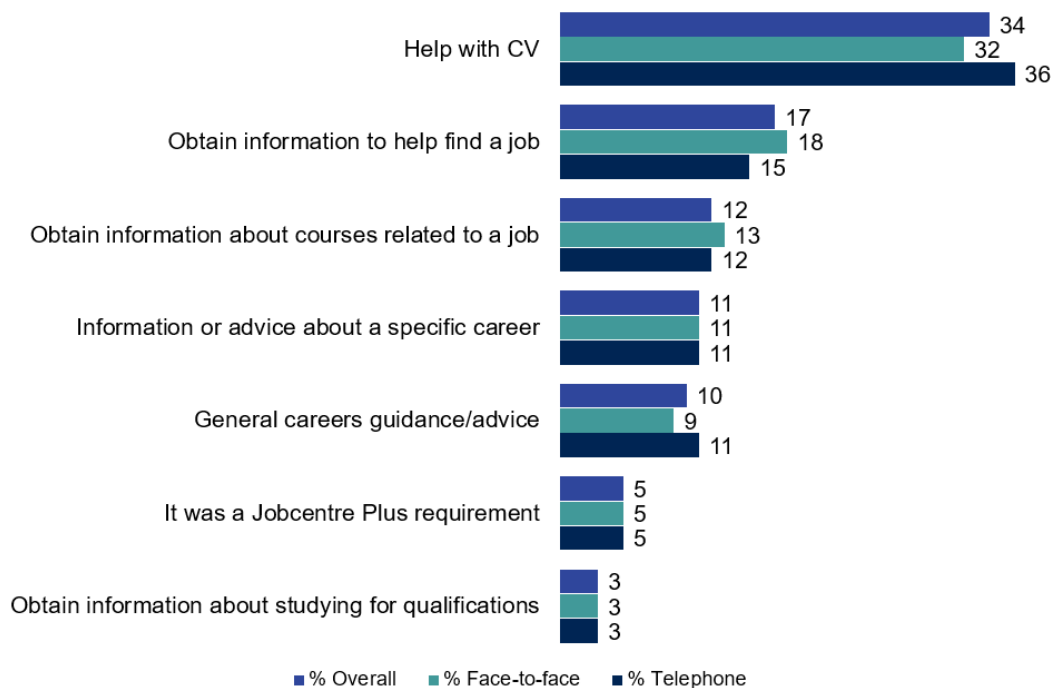
As was the case in Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022), seeking advice on learning or training options was more common among female customers (65%, compared to 61% of male customers), BAME customers (71%), single parents (70%) and customers aged 25 to 49 (68%). NEET customers aged 18 to 24 (57%), customers unemployed for less than six months (59%) and those aged 50+ and at risk of unemployment (55%) were least likely to have sought this advice.

Specific service needs

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

As was the case in Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022), for telephone and face-to-face customers, the most common reason for contacting the service was to get help in writing or developing a CV (34%), although this has declined slightly (from 36%). Telephone customers were again more likely to call the service for this reason than face-to-face customers (38% compared to 32%), and BAME customers were less likely to have used the service for this reason than white customers (24% compared to 38%). Customers who were 16-24 and NEET (38%), have been unemployed for less than 6 months (40%) or more than 12 months (37%), customers aged 50 plus and unemployed or at risk of redundancy (40%) and single parents (38%) were more likely to contact the National Careers Service to get help with writing or developing their CV than customers overall (34%).

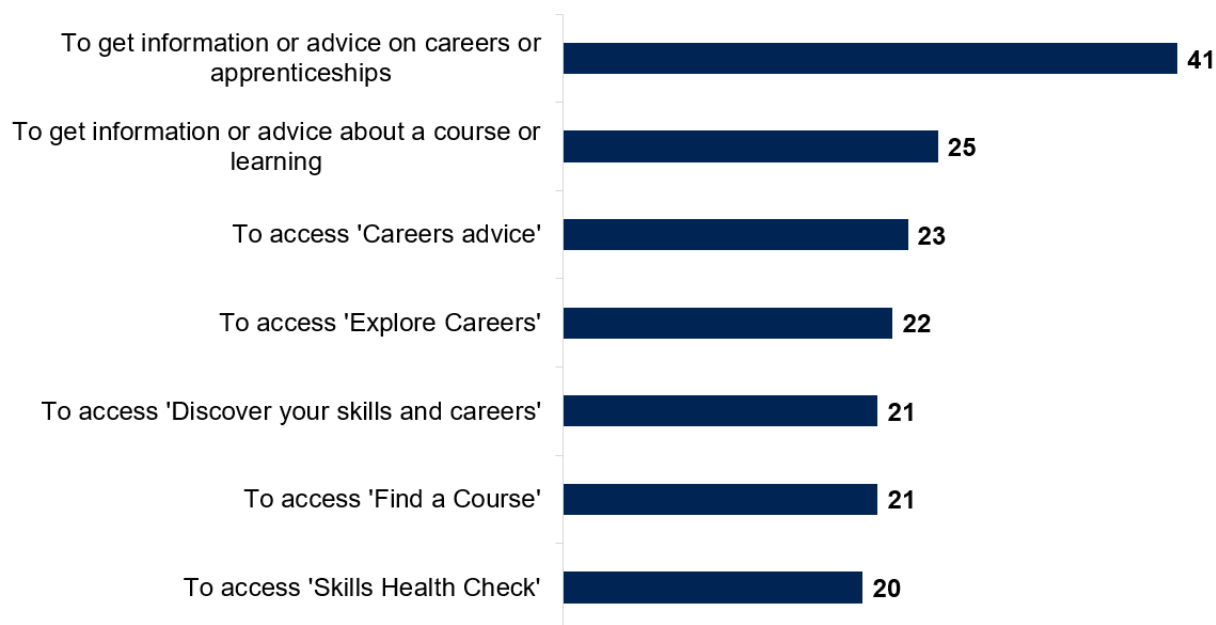
Figure 3.4: Reasons for contacting the National Careers Service (top mentions)



Base: Overall (7,246), Face-to-face customers (3,944), Telephone customers (3,302)

3.3.2 Website users

Consistent with Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022), the main reason website visitors used the site was to find information or advice on jobs, careers, or apprenticeships (41%). A quarter of website visitors were looking to get information or advice about a course or learning (25%), and around one in five used it to access various tools, namely ‘Explore Careers’ (22%), ‘Discover your skills and careers’ (21%), ‘Find a course’ (21%) and ‘Skills Health Check’ (20%). These results were generally consistent with Year 11, however the proportion using the website to access ‘Skills Health Check’ had decreased (from 25%). This information is displayed in Figure 3.5 below.

Figure 3.5: Top reasons for customers visiting the National Careers Service website

Base: All online satisfaction survey customers (492), top answers shown

Customers using the website for information on learning were asked what sort of information they wanted. Table 3.3 below outlines the learning-related information that was sought by online customers. Customers were most commonly looking for information on a specific course (54%), followed by different ways of learning (42%) and how to get back into learning (38%).

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

Base (<i>all those looking for information/advice about a course or learning on the National Careers Service website</i>):	Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) 2022/23 (121)	Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2021) 2021/22 (151)	Year 10 (May 2020 to April 2021) 2020/21 (231)
A specific course	56%	54%	46%
Different ways of learning	42%	48%	45%
How to get back into learning	38%	35%	34%
Apprenticeships	n/a	n/a	n/a
Paying for a course	25%	19%	20%

Other caring responsibilities	17%	13%	5%
Childcare	15%	12%	3%
Other	2%	9%	7%

4 Experiences of using the Service

Seven in ten telephone customers had their enquiry handled in one call (71%), which is an increase compared with Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) (67%). Amongst those who had multiple calls, 70% dealt with the same adviser, which is consistent with Year 11 (69%).

Seven in ten face-to-face customers (75%) had just one meeting with an adviser, which is an increase since Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) (70%), and one in five (22%) had more than one, which has decreased (from 26%). Customers who had been unemployed for between six and 12 months (27%) or for longer than 12 months (25%), and customers 50 or over and at risk of unemployment (25%) were more likely to have had more than one meeting.

Three fifths (57%) of customers who had more than one meeting saw the same adviser each time. A similar proportion (61%) of customers had a meeting at a Jobcentre Plus office, which shows a large increase from 35% in Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) which in turn had increased from 10% in Year 10 (May 2020 to April 2021) as service delivery returned to normal following the Covid-19 outbreak. However, this is below the pre-pandemic figures in Year 9 (May 2019 to April 2020) when 75% of customers had a meeting at a Jobcentre Plus office.

The National Careers Service provides various tools to support its customers across multiple platforms. For all tools except the webchat, around four to five in ten (38% to 52%) of those that had been referred to the tool had used it, and the vast majority of customers that had used them (around 90%) found each tool useful. Around half of online customers got all or most of the information they wanted on their first visit to the website (52%). Around four in ten face-to-face and telephone customers reported that they had been followed-up by the National Careers Service since their initial contact (41%). These findings are consistent with previous waves.

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

4.1 Making contact with the National Careers Service by phone

Seven in ten telephone customer queries were handled in a single call in Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) (71%), which is an increase compared to Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) (67%). Consistent with Year 11, customers who were aged 18 to 24 and receiving benefits (75%) and those aged 18 to 24 and NEET (75%) were among those most likely to have their query dealt with in one call, as were female customers (75%, compared with 67% of male customers). In contrast BAME customers (67%) were the least likely to have their call resolved in one query. Amongst those who had multiple calls, seven in ten (70%) dealt with the same adviser which is consistent with Year 11 (69%).

On average, customers spent 35 minutes speaking with their adviser during their first call, which is in line with Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) (36 minutes).

Eight in ten telephone customers reported that their adviser said they would send information outlining the conversation and what to do next (79%), as was the case in Year 11 (79%). However, among those with lower than Level 3 qualification (75%), those self-declaring a disability (75%), those aged 50 or over and at risk of unemployment (75%) and those unemployed for more than 12 months (72%), this proportion was lower, which is in line with the findings with respect to key groups in Year 11.

Overall, around nine in ten (86%) recall receiving this information, which is consistent with Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) (87%). Female customers (89%) and those with Level 3 or higher qualifications (92%) were particularly likely to report they received the information, whereas those with qualifications below Level 3 (82%) were least likely to recall receiving it.

The vast majority of telephone customers found the information they received useful (93%), and six in ten found it very useful (57%). Six per cent of customers found the information not very or not at all useful. These results are in line with Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) (93%, 59% and 5% respectively), demonstrating the continued value of the information provided to telephone customers, with very few not finding it useful. Female customers were more likely to find the information very useful (62%, compared to 53% of male customers) as were customers aged 25 to 49 (61%) and single parents (63%). In terms of key groups, those aged 18 to 24 and either receiving benefits (95%) or NEET (96%) were most likely to find the information useful.

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

Three quarters of customers (75%) had just one face-to-face meeting with a National Careers Service adviser, which has increased since Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) (72%). Around one in five (22%) had two or more meetings which has correspondingly decreased (25%). Customers who had been unemployed for 6 to 12 months (27%) or for longer than 12 months (25%), and customers 50 or over and at risk of unemployment (25%) were the most likely to have had at least two meetings. Male customers (24%) were more likely to have had multiple meetings than female customers (19%).

Customers from the East of England and Buckinghamshire were more likely to have had one meeting (81% versus 75% average), and customers in London were more likely to have had two or more meetings (25%, compared with 22% overall).

On average, customers spent 39 minutes speaking to their adviser, which is in line with Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) (38 minutes). Those who only had one meeting reported it took 40 minutes on average, compared to 33 minutes for the first meeting among those who required more than one. Meetings with younger customers aged 18 to 24 were shorter on average (36 minutes, compared with 40 minutes for those aged 50 and over). Meetings with customers with Level 4 or higher qualifications took longer (40 minutes on average), as did meetings with those who have used the Skills Health Check (42 minutes), customers of EDT (41 minutes) and with customers in the North-East and Cumbria (43 minutes).

The two main reasons for attending more than one meeting were that the adviser was reviewing or amending their CV (20%) or that the adviser could not answer all the questions during the first meeting and needed to provide more information (20%). These were also the two main reasons in Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) (26% and 24% respectively). However, almost as many (19%) said they had more than one meeting because the adviser suggested they come back in, which was less commonly cited in Year 11 (12%).

Six in ten customers (57%) who had more than one meeting saw the same adviser each time, whereas four in ten (39%) saw different advisers. The majority (71%) of customers did not mind this, as was the case previously. The proportion who saw the same adviser each time is therefore 18 percentage points higher; this difference has decreased since Year 11 (27%).

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

4.3 Using the National Careers Service website

Customers who used the National Careers Service website were asked which tools or features they had accessed. The most commonly used feature was Explore Careers (33%), which has increased since Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) (25%) when it was the third most commonly used feature. This was followed by Skills Health Check (29%), Discover your Skills and Careers (29%) and Find a Course (27%), all of which were consistent with Year 11. There was limited variation among key groups on the features they had used; those with below Level 3 qualifications were more likely to have used Careers Advice (31%, compared with 23% overall) and 18-24 NEET customers (26%) were more likely to have used the Skills Toolkit (26%, compared with 12% overall). Customers self-declaring a disability were particularly likely to have used Skills Health Check (37% compared to 25% of those with no disability), as was the case in Year 11, but they were less likely to have used Explore Careers (26% compared with 36% of those with no disability).

The majority of customers who used the various tools and features found them useful, as shown in Table 4.1. The Careers Advice tool was found the most useful with nine in ten (90%) rating it as useful, an increase since Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) (78%), and around seven in ten (68%) rated it as 'very' useful.

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

	Careers advice	The Skills Toolkit	Explore Careers	Skills Health Check	Discover your Skills	Find a course	Contact the service

					and Careers		
Base: All who used feature	111	61	162	142	142	134	58
Very/quite useful	90%	89%	81%	77%	77%	71%	67%
Not very/at all useful	7%	8%	14%	20%	18%	23%	28%

Around half of website visitors got all or most of the information they wanted on their first visit to the website (52%), which was also the case in Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) (48%). Overall, over a third either got some (17%) or none of the information they required (19%). The remaining 12% were just browsing.⁷

4.4 Use and usefulness of common National Careers Service tools

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

- face-to-face customers were asked if they went through the Skills Health Check tool and the Discover your Skills and Careers tool with their adviser in their meeting.
- all customers were asked if their adviser referred them to the Skills Health Check tool and the Discover your Skills and Careers tool (excluding those who had been through these tools with their adviser in a face-to-face meeting)
- all customers were asked if their adviser referred them to the following tools: Explore Careers, Find a Course and webchat⁸

4.4.1 Skills Health Check

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

Of the face-to-face customers, half (51%) went through the Skills Health Check diagnostic tool in a meeting, consistent with Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022). Face-to-face customers who had the same adviser if they had more than one meeting were more likely to have gone through the tool (56% compared to 47% who had different advisers), as were female customers (54%, compared with 49% of male customers). In terms of key groups, customers aged 50 or above and at risk of unemployment (55%) and single parents (55%) were most likely to have gone through the Skills Health Check. By region, those in London were most likely to report that they went through the Skills Health Check (54%) and customers in the East Midlands and

⁷ The percentages do not add up to 100 due to rounding.

⁸ Respondents were only asked about Webchat from Q3 onwards.

Northamptonshire were least likely (41%). Those who are satisfied with the service were also more likely to have used the tool (54% compared to 35% who were dissatisfied).

Nine in ten (90%) customers that had gone through the Skills Health Check said this it was useful, which represents a decrease since Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) (93%), and around half (47%) said it was 'very' useful. Fewer than one in ten customers (8%) found the Skills Health Check to be not very or not all useful. Single parents (56%), BAME customers (55%) and customers aged 25 to 49 (55%) were more likely to say that it was very useful, whereas more of those aged 50 and above at risk of unemployment or who had been unemployed for between six and 12 months said the Skills Health Check was not very or not all useful (both 12%, compared with 8% overall).

The main reasons given by customers for not rating the Skills Health Check as useful were that it told them things they already knew (35%) and that the questions weren't relevant (18%).⁹

Overall, one in four (25%) customers said their adviser referred them to the Skills Health Check, which has decreased from Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) (28%). As was the case in Year 11, telephone customers (30%) were more likely than face-to-face customers (20%) to say they had been referred to this tool. There were few differences among key groups, although customers aged 50 and above at risk of unemployment (22%) were less likely to have been referred. Customers with an action plan were again much more likely to report their adviser referred them to the Skills Health Check (33% compared to 14% of those with no action plan).

Of those who had been referred to Skills Health Check, four in ten said that they had used it (38%), which is fewer than had used it in Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) (42%) and continues a downward trend since Year 10 (May 2020 to April 2021, when it was 47%). Telephone customers were more likely than face-to-face customers to have used the diagnostic tool (41% compared to 31%), as were those with an action plan (42%, compared to 25% of those without). Among key groups, customers with Level 3 or higher qualifications (44%) were more likely to have used it and those aged 18 to 24 and receiving benefits (32%) or unemployed for more than 12 months (30%) were less likely.

Nine in ten customers who used this tool found it useful (89%), which is in line with Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) (92%) and includes 47% who found it 'very useful'. Only eight percent did not find this tool useful. Those with action plan were more likely than those without to find it useful (91% compared to 81%).

4.4.2 Discover your Skills and Careers

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

Three in ten customers (29%) recalled going through Discover your Skills and Careers with their adviser in their meeting, slightly fewer than in Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) (31%) whilst half (56%) stated they had not (compared with 53% in Year 11). As was the case previously,

⁹ Small base size (69) should be treated with caution.

telephone customers (34%) were more likely than face-to-face customers (24%) to recall being referred to this service by their adviser. There was also variation among key groups, with those aged 18 to 24 and receiving benefits (34%) or NEET (33%), and with Level 4 or higher qualifications (31%) more likely to say they had been referred, whereas those self-declaring a disability (24%) or aged 50 and above and at risk of unemployment (22%) less likely. Those with an action plan were also more likely to have been referred (41% compared to 18% with no action plan).

Overall, four in ten customers (42%) that were referred to Discover your Skills and Careers said that they had used it, in line with previous results. Usage of the tool was higher among telephone customers (47% compared to 34% of face-to-face customers), customers aged 18 to 24 (both overall (48%) and NEET (48%)), those with higher levels of qualifications (48% level 3 or higher) and those unemployed for less than six months (46%). As seen with the other tools in this chapter, those with an action plan were also more likely to report that they had used the tool (38% compared to 30% with no plan).

The vast majority of customers who used this tool found it useful (90%), and nearly half (46%) found it 'very useful'. Only 7% did not find it useful. These results are consistent with Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022). Younger customers aged 18 to 24 were less likely to find the tool very useful (39%) and those with Level 4 or higher qualifications were more likely to say it was not useful (10%). Those with an action plan were more likely than those without to find it useful (92% compared to 84%), as were those who were satisfied with the service (92% compared to 56% of those who were dissatisfied).

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

Among face-to-face customers, four in ten (38%) went through the Discover your Skills and Careers tool in their meeting, a decrease from Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) (42%). Those who had more than one face-to-face meeting (42%) and who had the same adviser (45%) were more likely to have gone through the diagnostic tool, as were single parents (43%) and female customers (41%, compared to 37% of male customers). As was the case previously, almost all of these face-to-face customers found the tool useful (93%) and around half (52%) said it was very useful, compared with just six percent who did not find the tool useful. As well as being more likely to have gone through the tool in their meeting, single parents were more likely to find it useful (97%).

4.4.3 Explore Careers

Four in ten customers (42%) were referred to Explore Careers by their adviser. This was more common among face-to-face customers (44%, compared with 38% of telephone customers). Of the key groups, those aged 18 to 24 and receiving benefits (44%) or NEET (45%), with qualifications above Level 3 (45%) or that had been unemployed for less than six months (45%)

were more likely to have been referred to Explore Careers, whereas customers self-declaring a disability (35%) or aged 50 and above and at risk of unemployment (35%) were less likely.

Amongst those who have been referred, just under half (44%) have gone on to use the tool. Those with qualifications above Level 3 (50%, compared with 36% of those with qualifications below Level 3) or that had been unemployed for less than 6 months (47%) were more likely to have used it, and customers over 50 and at risk of unemployment were less likely (38%). The majority of these customers found the tool useful (92%) and nearly half found it very useful (45%).

All of these results are in line with Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022)

4.4.4 Find a Course

Four in ten (41%) customers were referred to Find a Course by their adviser. This was more likely to be the case amongst female customers (45%), customers aged 25 to 49 (44%), and BAME customers (44%). Those aged 50 or above and at risk of unemployment (36%) and those that had been unemployed for more than 12 months (37%) were least likely to recall being referred.

Amongst those who have been referred, less than half (45%) have gone on to use the tool. Female customers were more likely to have used the tool (49%, compared with 42% of male customers), and as with other diagnostic tools, usage was also higher among those with qualifications at Level 3 or higher (51%) and those with an action plan (49%, compared with 35% of those without) or who were satisfied with the service (46%, compared with 31% who were dissatisfied).

Most of these customers found the tool useful (88%), and half (49%) found it very useful, whereas just 9% said it was not useful. There were few differences among the key groups, however those unemployed for less than 6 months were more likely to say it was not useful (12%), and again those with an action plan or satisfied with the service were more likely to say the tool was useful.

The results for this tool are all consistent with Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022).

4.4.5 Webchat

Around one in four customers (23%) were referred to webchat by their adviser, similar to Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022). Those more likely to be referred to the service were those aged 25 to 49 (25%) and those in learning (29%), whereas customers aged 18 to 24 and receiving benefits (19%) or NEET (19%), with a self-declaring disability (19%) or unemployed for more than six months (19%) were less likely to have been referred.

Amongst those who have been referred, a quarter (24%) have gone on to use the tool. Those in learning were more likely to have used it (36%) as were BAME customers (30%). Usage of this tool was lower among customers aged 50 and above (18%) and those with a self-declaring disability (15% compared to 26% with no disability).

As with other tools, nine in ten of those that had used webchat said it was useful (88%). Six in ten (60%) rated it as 'very useful', whereas less than one in ten (9%) said it was not useful. Female customers were more likely to rate the tool as useful (92%, compared to 84% of male customers), as were those with an action plan (91%, compared with 79% of those without).

4.4.6 Skills Action Plan

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

Six in ten telephone and face-to-face customers recalled having a Skills Action Plan drawn up (59%) which is consistent with Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) (60%). Female customers (61%) were more likely than male customers (57%) to recall having a Skills Action Plan drawn up for them, as were those aged 18 to 24 (60%), those in work (64%) and those qualified at Level 3 or higher (64%). In contrast, those aged 50 and above (34%), with qualifications below Level 3 (32%) and those with a self-declaring disability (33%) were more likely than average (30%) to say they did not have an action plan drawn up.

Furthermore, among face-to-face customers, those who had multiple meetings (64%, compared with 57% who had one) and who had the same adviser (66%, compared with 60% who had different advisers) were more likely to recall a Skills Action Plan being drawn up. Similarly, telephone customer who had multiple calls (68%) were more likely to recall a Skills Action Plan being drawn up than those who had one call (60%). This suggests that having a more intensive level of interaction may relate to recalling having a Skills Action Plan.

Among those with a Skills Action Plan, half of customers had a great deal of involvement in drawing up their plan (50%), while a further four in ten (39%) reported that they had some involvement, which is in line with previous years. Female customers (52%), those aged 25 to 49 (53%) and single parents (56%) were more likely to report having a great deal of involvement.

Nine in ten customers who recalled having a Skills Action Plan found it useful (90%), a decrease since Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) (92%), and half (50%) rated it as 'very useful' (compared with 54% in Year 11). BAME customers (54%) and single parents (57%) were more likely to find the Action Plan very useful. Just eight percent found the Skills Action Plan 'not very' or 'not at all' useful, and this was more common among those aged 50 and above and at risk of unemployment (11%); as was the case in Year 11, the main reasons were that it was too general/insufficiently tailored (24%), they did not think it was relevant to their situation (20%), or they already knew the information (15%).

4.5 Follow-up actions

4.5.1 Reported follow-up by the National Careers Service

Four in ten face-to-face and telephone customers said that the National Careers Service had been in touch with them again after their initial contact (41%), an increase since Year 11 (May

2021 to April 2022) (39%). Email (26%) and telephone (13%) were again the most common communication channels used for follow-up.

Single parents (46%), customers in work (44%), those with Level 3 and above qualifications (45%), those unemployed for less than six months (43%) and those not self-declaring a disability (44%) were more likely than average to have received follow-up. In contrast, those aged 18 to 24 and receiving benefits (60%) or NEET (60%), those with qualifications below level 3 (60%), those unemployed for more than 12 months (60%) and those with a disability (59%) were more likely than average (56%) to have not had any contact since their initial contact. In terms of region, those in East of England and Buckinghamshire (50%), Yorkshire and the Humber (49%), the North-East and Cumbria (48%) and the East Midlands and Northamptonshire (47%) were most likely to have received a follow-up as shown in Table 4.2.

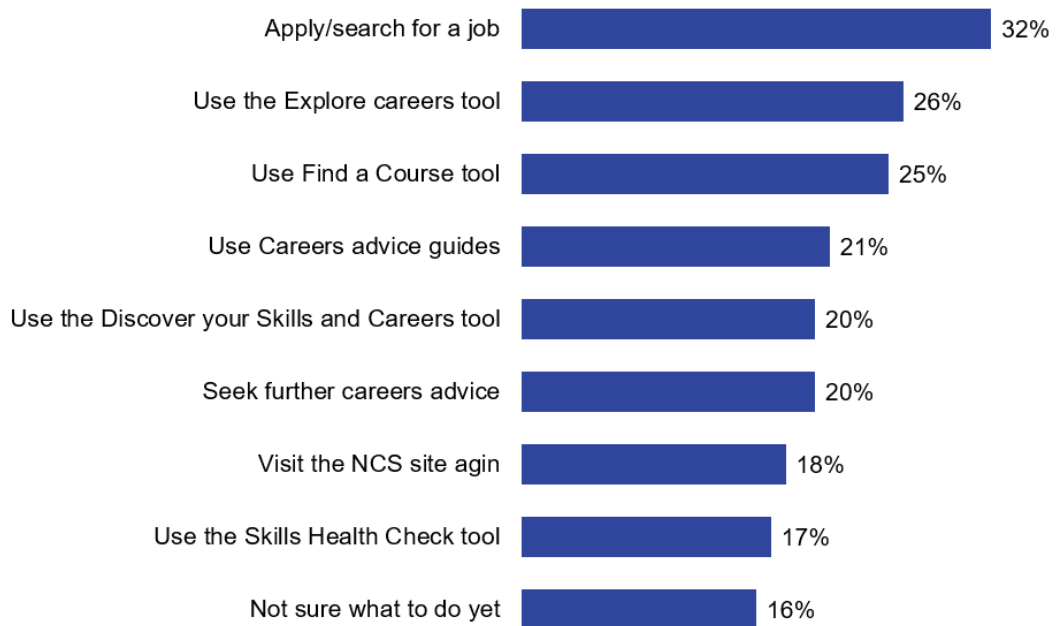
Table 4.2: Different types of follow-up customers have received by region

	Total	London	East of England & Bucks.	East Midlands & North.	Yorkshire & Humber	West Midlands & Staff.	South-West & Ox.	South-East	North-West	North-East & Cumbria
Base:	7,246	875	716	675	1086	848	509	882	848	807
No	56%	56%	47%	50%	47%	59%	60%	59%	65%	49%
Net: Yes	41%	41%	50%	47%	49%	38%	37%	39%	32%	48%
Yes – phone	13%	18%	12%	12%	15%	13%	8%	12%	12%	12%
Yes – email	26%	23%	40%	35%	29%	23%	26%	23%	22%	30%
Yes – face-to-face	3%	4%	2%	3%	2%	2%	4%	4%	3%	3%
Yes – text	6%	4%	3%	6%	15%	4%	3%	8%	2%	10%

4.5.2 Follow up actions carried out by online customers

Online customers were asked what they were likely to do as a result of visiting the National Careers Service website (Figure 4.1). The most common response was applying or searching for a job (32%), followed by using the Explore Careers (26%) and Find a Course (25%) tools. These findings are consistent with Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022).

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



Base: All online satisfaction customers looking for advice (419)

5 Customer Satisfaction

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

The overall quality of service provided by the National Careers Service continues to be highly rated by telephone and face-to-face customers, with over nine in ten agreeing that it was good (93%). However, measured by those who strongly agree that the service is good there was a drop between Year 12 Q1 and Q2 (56% and 55%) and Q3 and Q4 (both 51%). In line with the positive evaluation of service levels, the majority of face-to-face and telephone customers were satisfied with the National Careers Service overall (86%).

Once again those most engaged with the service and who recall using the Skills Health Check (95%) or had a Skills Action Plan (96%) were most likely to say the quality of the service was good. This is also true with respect to ratings of the National Careers Service as a whole.

Among telephone and face-to-face customers, satisfaction with individual aspects of the service remains high. With one exception (adviser's knowledge of jobs and training opportunities in the local area) approximately nine in ten customers were satisfied with each element of the information and advice they received. As in Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022), the highest satisfaction rating was given to the professionalism of the customer's adviser (95%).

An important metric when assessing levels of customer satisfaction is the likelihood of customers to recommend a service, and on this measure the National Careers Service continues to score highly. Although it is two percentage points lower than in Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022), almost nine in ten face-to-face or telephone customers had either already recommended or said they would recommend the National Careers Service (86%).

Satisfaction with the National Careers Service website has increased since Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) (58%). Now almost two-thirds (63%) are satisfied to at least some degree. Over four in ten online customers (43%) said they had already recommended the National Careers Service, and a further four in ten (40%) of those who are yet to do so said they would. In total, 62% of online customers either have or would recommend the Service and this is higher than the 57% recorded in Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022).

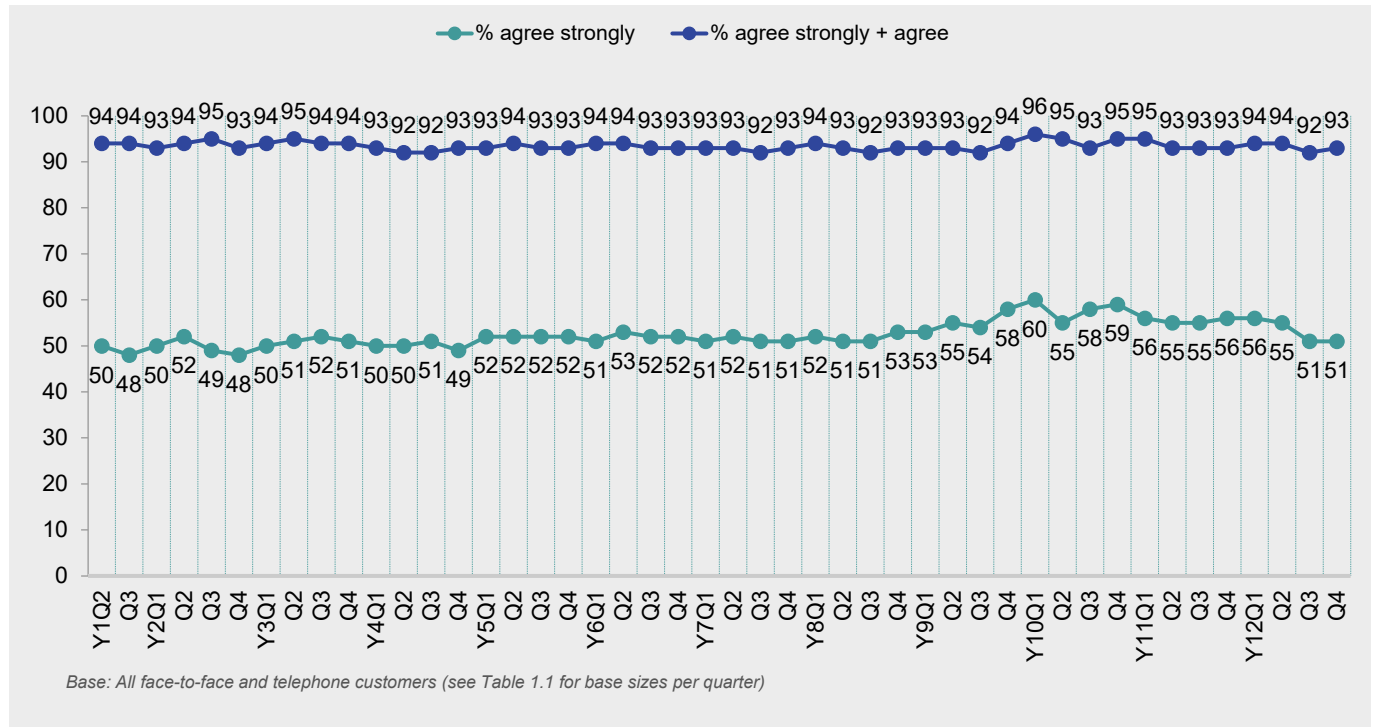
5.1 Overall perceptions about the quality of the service

5.1.1 Face-to-face and telephone customers

The overall quality of the service continues to be rated highly by telephone and face-to-face customers. Most Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) customers agreed that it was good (93%), while only a small minority disagreed (6%).

Ratings have been consistently high over time but measured by those who strongly agree that the service is good, there has been a slight drop since Year 11 (Figure 5.1). The fall from 56% to 53% is statistically significant and is due to fewer participants in Year 12 Q3 and Q4 (both 51%) than in Q1 and Q2 (56% and 55%).

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



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

- by age group, younger customers were most likely to agree the service was good (97% of those aged 19 or younger) while those aged 50 plus were the least likely to agree (90%)
- there was stronger agreement among women (95%) than men (92%) that the service was good. The figure was also relatively high among those who have been unemployed for six to 12 months and among single parents (both 9%)
- in each region at least 90% of customers agreed that the service was good. It was highest in Yorkshire & Humber (96%), North-East & Cumbria (95%) and the South-East (95%). These figures are significantly higher than in East Midlands & Northamptonshire (91%), and London (90%)
- NEET customers aged 18 to 24 and customers aged 18 to 24 receiving benefits were more likely than average to agree that the service was good (95% and 96% respectively)
- customers self-declaring a disability were less likely to agree the service was good (91% compared to 94% who did not self-declare a disability), as were those aged 50 or over and at risk of unemployment (91%)

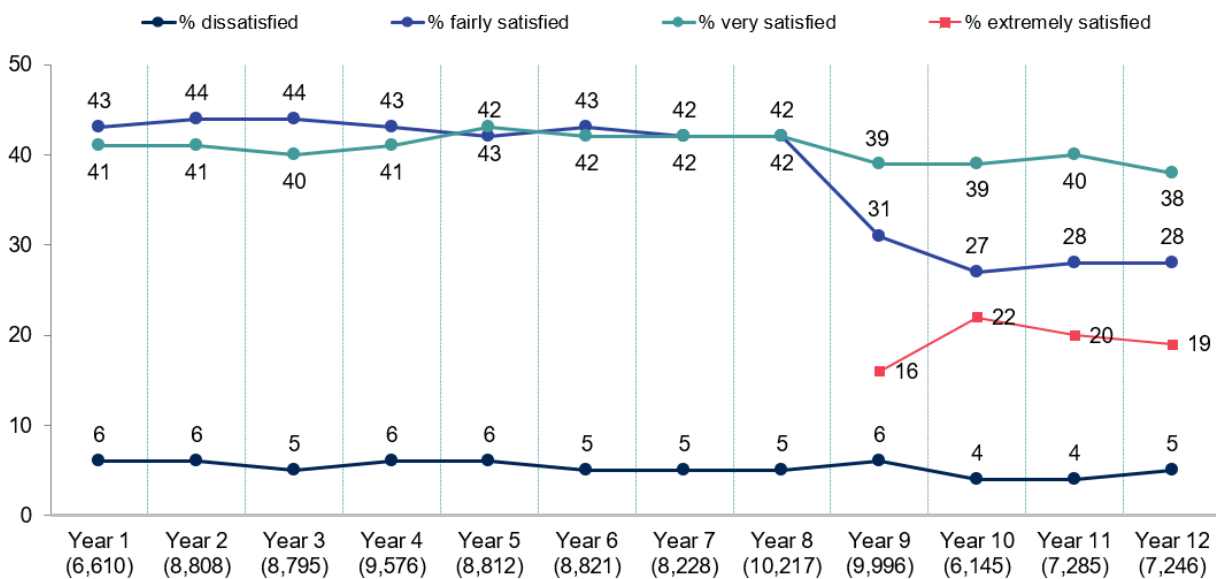
- customers who had a deeper level of engagement with the service overall were more likely to agree that the quality of the service was good. For example, levels of agreement were higher among those who recalled using the Skills Health Check (95%). As in Year 11, those who had a Skills Action Plan (96%) were more likely than those who did not (89%) to agree that the quality of the service was good.
- among customers who had multiple calls, those who only spoke to one adviser were significantly more likely than customers who spoke to multiple advisers to regard the service as good (94% compared to 88%). This is a larger difference than in Year 11 (94% compared to 92%)

5.2 Overall satisfaction with the National Careers Service

5.2.1 Face-to-face and telephone customers

Most face-to-face and telephone customers were satisfied with the National Careers Service as a whole (86%). This is consistent with Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022). Only 5% of customers were dissatisfied, with all figures similar to previous years, as shown in Figure 5.2 below.

Figure 5.2: Ratings of satisfaction and dissatisfaction amongst face-to-face and telephone customers¹⁰



Base: As shown in chart

¹⁰ In Year 9, the scale used to measure satisfaction was changed to a 7-point scale: Extremely satisfied, Very satisfied, Fairly satisfied, Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, Fairly dissatisfied, Very dissatisfied, Extremely dissatisfied.

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

- young customers were more likely to be satisfied than older customers, with 88% of 18 to 24-year-olds being satisfied compared to 83% of customers aged 50 plus. Among those aged 19 or younger the figure rises to 91 percent
- female customers were more likely to be satisfied (88% compared with 85% male customers). Among single parents, satisfaction stands at 89%
- NEET customers aged 18 to 24 were more likely to be satisfied with the service (88%) as were customers aged 18 to 24 and receiving benefits (88%). However, both figures are lower than those recorded in Year 11 (92% and 91% respectively)
- customers aged 50 or above and at risk of unemployment (83%) were less likely than average (86%) to be satisfied.
- customers with qualifications of Level 4 or above, or with no qualifications, were less likely to be satisfied (both 83%)
- customers who self-declared a disability were less likely to be satisfied than customers who did self-declare a disability (84% compared to 86%).
- telephone customers who had one call were more likely to be satisfied with the service (89%), compared to those who had multiple calls (85%)
- telephone customers who had multiple calls were more likely to be satisfied if they spoke to the same adviser rather than multiple people (88% compared to 81%)
- where meetings were held at Jobcentre Plus (87%), this led to higher satisfaction than when they were held elsewhere (83%)
- by region, customers in the South-East and Yorkshire & Humber (both 90%) were the most likely to be satisfied. Satisfaction was lower in London (81%) and East Midlands & Northamptonshire (82%)
- as was the case for the rating of overall service quality, satisfaction levels were higher among customers who recalled using the Skills Health Check (90%, compared to 84% those who did not) or agreeing a Skills Action Plan (91% compared to 78% who did not)

Respondents who were satisfied with the service were asked why this was the case. The main reasons for satisfaction relate to the individual advisers that customers dealt with. Most frequently, customers said that the adviser was knowledgeable, helpful or gave good advice (49%), while the other main reasons were that the adviser was friendly, personable, or understanding (34%), gave good advice or helped with their CV (32%), or gave good advice relating to courses or training (14%). As shown in Figure 5.3 below, these responses were very similar to those seen in Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022).

Figure 5.3: Top reasons for satisfaction with service, Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) and 12



Among the small proportion of dissatisfied customers (5%), the main reasons for dissatisfaction were also consistent with previous findings, and are summarised below:

- The most common reason for criticism, as stated by a majority of those dissatisfied with the service, was they did not feel they received the help or information they wanted and/or needed (55%).

“I was expecting advice on courses, training and open days, as well as stuff like career opportunities but we did not have enough time because we just did the CV. As a result, I was expecting a follow up session to see what we could do beyond the CV.”

- Almost three in ten dissatisfied customers reported a lack of follow-up from advisers (29%).

“When I went, the appointment was cancelled. It was unprofessional.”

Some customers wanted help with their CV and felt the support they received was insufficient (16%).

“I was given the wrong advice on the CV.”

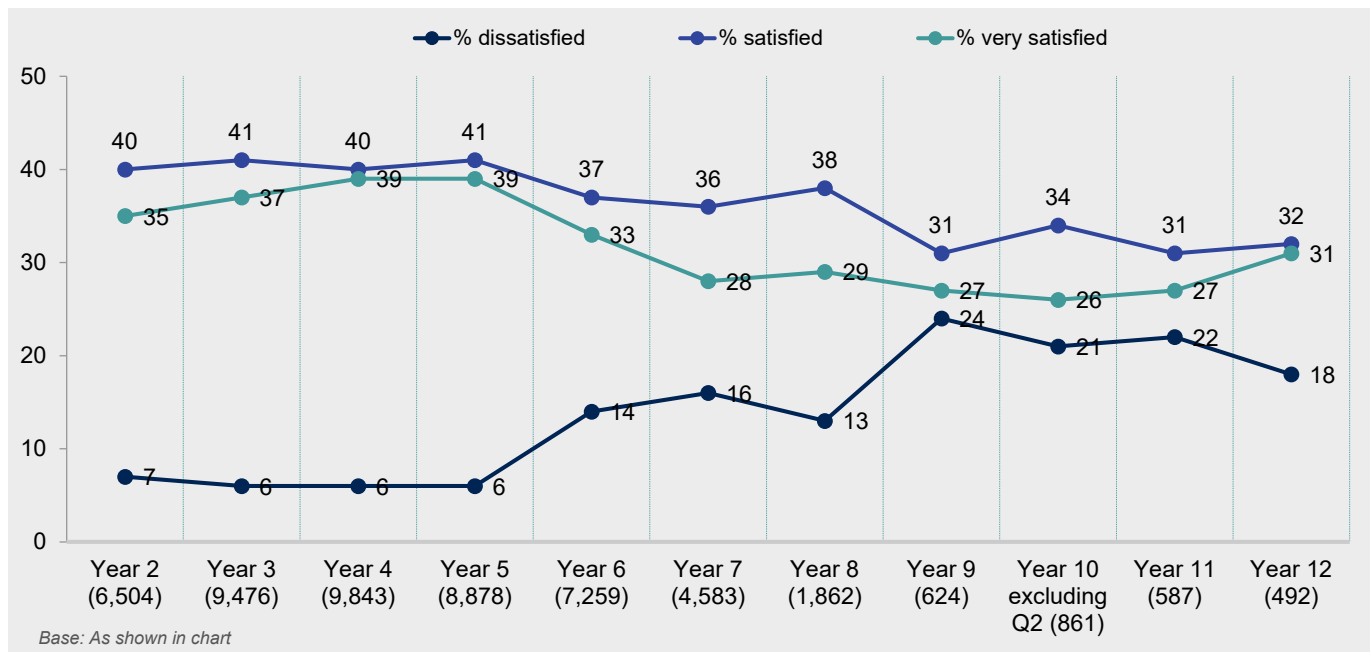
- There was some criticism of not being helped to get a relevant course or training (12%).

“The guy told me he would send me a list of different jobs and apprenticeships. I was supposed to get one email but did not get one at all.”

Other criticisms focussed on skills and knowledge of advisers. One in twenty of those dissatisfied with the service said their adviser(s) was ‘unprofessional’ (5%), lacked knowledge about job or training opportunities (5%) or did not help the customer to get a job (5%)

Following the website’s redesign in Year 6, approximately two-thirds of customers were satisfied with the service. In Year 7, satisfaction reached 67%. However, in Years 9, 10 and 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) there was a significant decline and satisfaction levels were between 58% and 59%. However, this trend may have started to be reversed and in this Year 12 survey (May 2022 to April 2023), satisfaction has increased to stand at 63%, while fewer than one in five online customers (18%) are currently dissatisfied (Figure 5.4).

Figure 5.4: Ratings of satisfaction and dissatisfaction amongst online customers



There were some notable differences among online customers:

- satisfaction was much higher among BAME than white customers (75%, compared to 57%). Four in ten (40%) BAME customers were ‘very satisfied’. Overall satisfaction was also higher among those for whom English is a second rather than their first language (73% compared to 60%)
- customers with qualifications at or below Level 3 (74%) were more likely to be satisfied with the website than those with qualifications at Level 3 and above or Level 4 and above (both 52%)
- single parents were one of the key groups most likely to be satisfied (74%), with a relatively high degree of satisfaction also observed among people aged 20-24 (72%) and those accessing Universal Credit since March 2020 (70%)
- over four in ten (44%) of those who have been unemployed for 12 months or more were ‘very satisfied’ with the online service. This is the highest level recorded within any key group.

Slightly less than a fifth of customers (18%) were dissatisfied with the website. In Year 11 the most common reason for dissatisfaction was the website's instability (28%). In particular, customers experienced issues with the website crashing, with error messages saying the service was not working or issues with the webchat. The situation has improved in Year 12 and the proportion of dissatisfied customers mentioning the website's stability has fallen to 11%.

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

- Some customers could not find what they were looking for, sometimes linked to the perceived poor layout (22%). Others complained of a general lack of information (15%)

"Can't find any courses through search engines on the national careers website."

- Some customers felt the information was not specific enough, too generic or lacked relevance (16%), while one in ten of those dissatisfied with the website said the information was poor, unclear or difficult to understand (10%)

"I was left feeling that the advice I had received was overly simplistic and generic."

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

"I was talking to someone on live chat and once I finished typing my query, they disappeared."

A fifth of customers who were satisfied with the service (19%) said that they liked the website because it was easy to use (the difference is not significant, but this compares to 26% in Year 11). A further 18% considered the website to have helpful and relevant information, while 16% described it as being clear with a good layout that made it easy to find what was being looked for. One in ten (9%) said they liked the volume or range of information that the website contained. Except for being "easy to use," the proportion of customers who gave these responses is broadly in line with Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022).

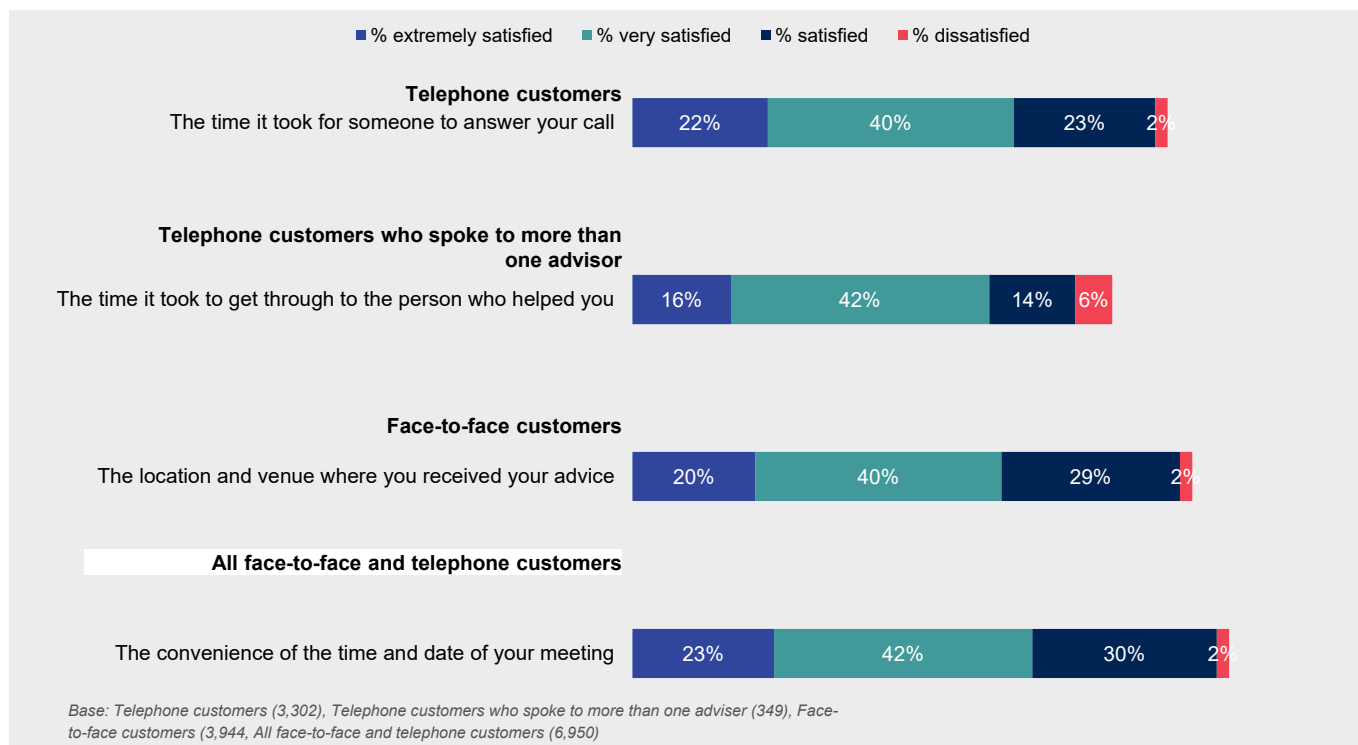
"The website is easy to use, and everything is reasonably legible and intuitive."

"It's flawless design and the amount of information that is available."

5.3 Satisfaction with different aspects of the adviser sessions

Face-to-face and telephone customers of the National Careers Service were highly satisfied with specific aspects of their session(s). This maintains the trend seen in previous years (Figure 5.5).

Figure 5.5: Customer satisfaction with logistical arrangements



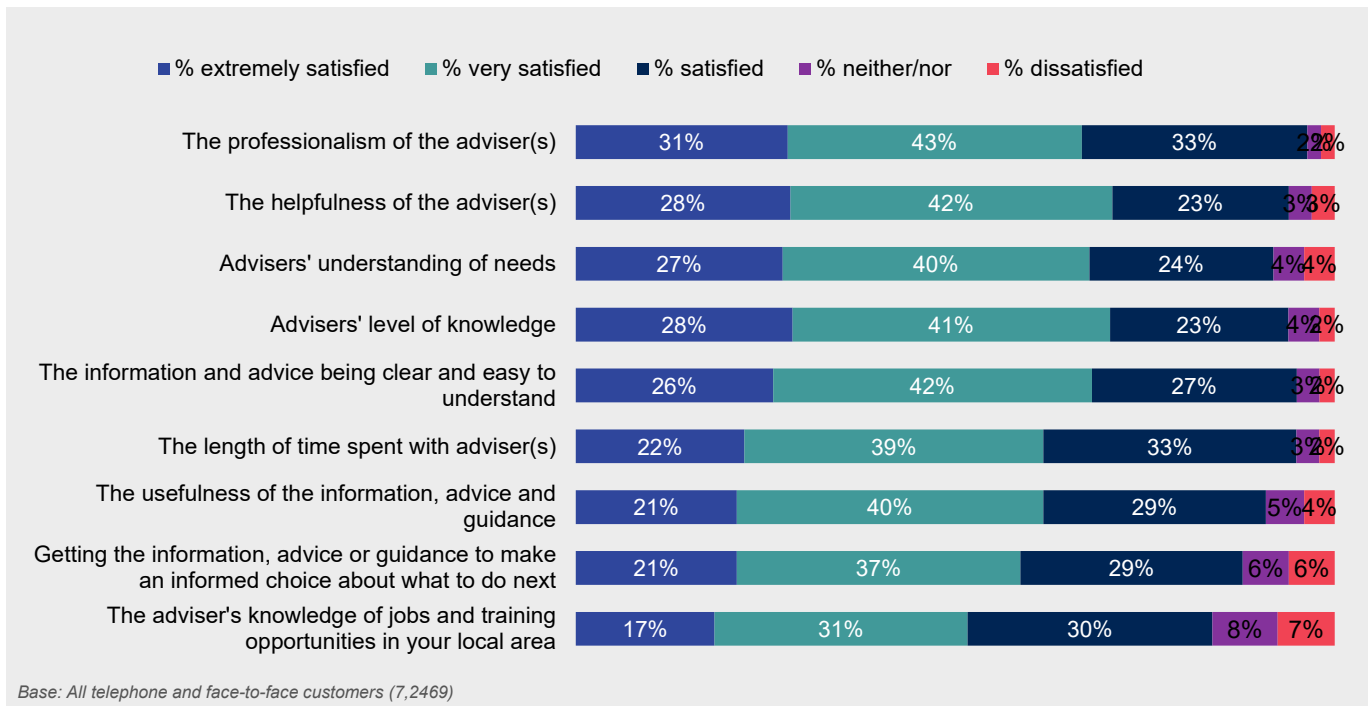
Over eight in ten (85%) telephone customers were satisfied with the time it took for someone to answer their call. Amongst telephone customers who spoke to more than one adviser, 88% were satisfied with the time it took to get through to the person who helped them. Both figures are within one percentage point of Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022).

Approximately nine in ten face-to-face customers were satisfied with the convenience of their appointment time (94%) and the location and venue where they received their advice (89%). These figures are also within one percentage point of Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) and perhaps represents the ‘norm’ now that those who prefer face-to-face meetings have this option following the easing of pandemic-related restrictions.

Customers also remained positive about both the assistance their advisers provided and the content and outcome of the National Careers Service intervention. As illustrated in Figure 5.6, with one exception, approximately nine in ten customers were satisfied with each element of the information and advice they received. The exception was the adviser’s knowledge of jobs and training opportunities in the local area for which satisfaction stands at 78%. As In Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) the highest satisfaction rating was given to the professionalism of the customer’s adviser (95%).

Only the ratings for usefulness of advice (down from 91% to 89%) and having the information needed for taking next steps (down from 88% to 86%) were more than one percentage point different to Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022).

Figure 5.6: Satisfaction with information and advice from the service



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

- customers who had a deeper level of engagement with the service overall were more likely to be satisfied with the various aspects of the information and advice received. For example, those who recalled using the Skills Health Check were more likely to be satisfied with the helpfulness of the adviser (96% compared to the average, 93%)
- customers aged 19 or younger were more likely to be satisfied with the professionalism of the adviser than those aged 50 and above (97% compared to 95%)
- customers who self-declared a disability were less likely to say that they were satisfied with the adviser’s level of knowledge (94% compared to 92%)
- customers who were 18 to 24 NEETs were more likely to have higher levels of satisfaction on several measures. They were significantly more likely to say they were satisfied with the following measures: the helpfulness of the adviser, the advisers’ level of knowledge, the adviser understood their needs, the information and guidance provided was clear and easy to understand, the information, advice and guidance was useful, the information, advice, and guidance allowed them to make informed choices, and the adviser’s knowledge of local job opportunities.

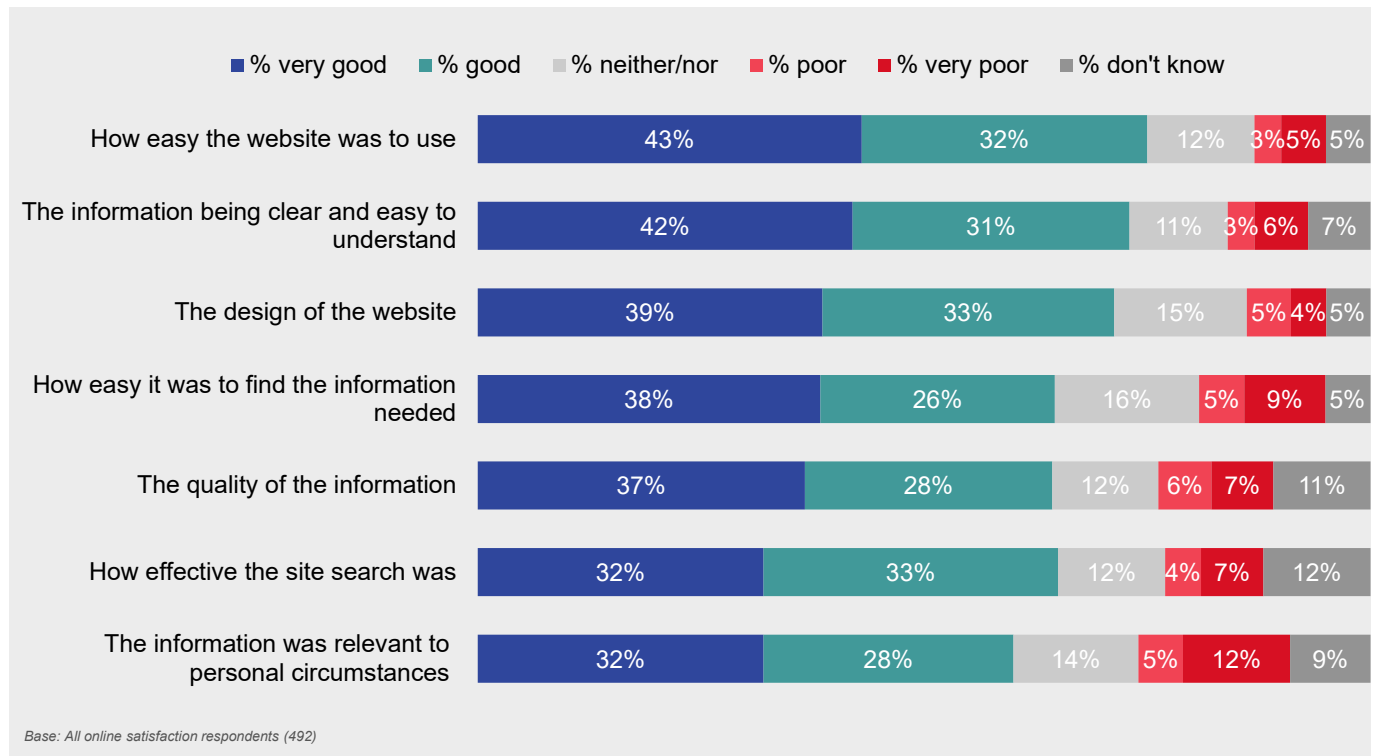
5.4 Satisfaction with the different aspects of the website

Visitors to the National Careers Service website rated seven elements of its content and usability using a five-point scale of ‘very good’ to ‘very poor’. The most highly regarded aspect of the website was its ease of use, about which three-quarters (76%) said it was ‘good’ or ‘very

good.’ At least seven in ten also said the website was clear and easy to understand (73%) and had a ‘good’ design (71%). The lowest level of ‘satisfaction’ was seen with respect to the website’s information being relevant to customers’ personal circumstances (60%).

In general, the ratings are in line with those recorded in Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) and are higher with respect to the effectiveness of the search facility (65% compared to 58%).

Figure 5.7 Ratings on various aspects of the website



The key variations between customer groups are detailed below and are similar to the differences in Year 11:

- customers whose first language is not English were more positive about most parts of the website. For example, 75% said it was easy to find the information you need, compared to 61% of those whose first language is English. Similarly, 78% rated the quality of the information as good compared to 61% of customers whose first language is English.
- BAME customers were more likely than white customers to rate as good the ease of finding information (76% compared to 58%), the quality of information (77% compared to 58%), how effective the search was (76% compared to 58%), and that the information available was relevant to my personal circumstances (74% compared to 52%).
- customers aged 16 to 24 were more positive about most aspects of the website compared to those aged 50 and above. For instance, 69% rated the relevance of the information to their personal circumstances as good, compared to 55% of customers aged 50 and above, and 70% said the quality of information was good, compared to 58% of customers aged 50 and above.

- those with qualifications under Level 3 were more likely to say that the website was easy to use (78%) than those with Level 3 or above qualifications (54%).

5.5 Recommending the National Careers Service

5.5.1 Face-to-face and telephone customers

Just under nine in ten customers had either recommended the National Careers Service or said they would recommend it to a friend, relative or colleague (86%). This is a slight decrease compared to Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) when it was 88% and is five percentage points lower than in Year 10 (91%).

The following groups were more likely than average (86%) to say they had either recommended or would recommend the Service:

- single parents (90%), women (88% compared to 85% of men) and people of white ethnicity (88% compared to 84% among BAME)
- younger customers (90% of people aged 19 or younger, compared to 83% of those 50 plus)
- those who are aged 18 to 24 and NEET, those who are 18 to 24 and receiving benefits (both 89%) and people who have claimed Universal Credit since March 2020 (88%)
- people accessing the service in Yorkshire & Humber (90%), North-East & Cumbria (89%) or the South East (89%)
- those who experienced relatively straightforward access. For example, those who accessed the Service with one call (89%) or only had one adviser across multiple telephone calls (88%)
- those who had engaged with National Careers Service tools such as the Skills Action Plan (91%) and the Skills Health Check (90%)
- those who were satisfied with the service overall (92%).

5.5.2 Online customers

Over four in ten online customers have already recommended the National Careers Service website (43%). This represents a significant increase since Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) when the figure was 34%. Additionally, four in ten (40%) of those who had not yet done so said they would recommend the National Careers Service website to friends, family, or colleagues in the future. This is below the figure in Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) (43%). Four in ten (38%) said they would not and 22% were unsure.

In total 62% of online customers either have or would recommend the Service. This is higher than the 57% recorded in Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022).

The groups significantly more likely than average (40%) to say that they have recommended the National Careers Service are those aged 25 to 49 (50%), BAME customers (58% compared to 36% of white customers), or those who do not have English as a first language (64% compared to 38% where it is the customer's first language).

5.6 Improvements to the National Careers Service

5.6.1 Face-to-face and telephone customers

The majority of face-to-face and telephone customers could not think of any improvements that the National Careers Service needed to make (64%), in line with Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022). The two main suggestions for improvements remain consistent with Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022), with customers desiring more follow-up after initial meetings (8%) and for help to be more specific or better tailored (6%). No more than 3% of respondents gave any other suggestions.

Younger customers aged 19 or younger (84%) were most likely to be content with the service and suggest no improvements. The figure among the overlapping 18 to 24 segment is 74%. In terms of key groups, those 18 to 24 and receiving benefits (78%), 18 to 24 and NEET (77%), with qualifications under Level 3 (73%) or have been unemployed for more than 12 months (70%) were the most likely to say they could not think of any improvements. A similar figure was seen among those who have claimed Universal Credit since March 2020 (69%), while three quarters of those accessing the Service in Yorkshire & Humber and North-East & Cumbria (both 74%) said no improvements came to mind or were required.

5.6.2 Online customers

When asked how the website could be improved, over four in ten (44%) of website visitors felt that the website was fine as it is, which is an increase compared to Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) (38%). A fifth (22%) said they were not sure how it could be improved. As in Year 11, the most common suggestions for improvements included improving the layout and making it easier to navigate (7%), improve the skills test tool (3%), and have more information on training courses and qualifications (3%). These suggested improvements are further illustrated by the verbatim comments below:

“Some videos for interview technique, explaining star method, skills tool kit, would be helpful.”

“It would be good to add some example cover letters and CVs.”

“It could be more visually appealing such as using images.”

6 Customer Progression

Overall, Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) has seen a slight dip in employment progression compared to Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022), while learning progression has been consistent. Almost all face-to-face and telephone customers (96%) experienced some form of positive outcome in the six months since their call or meeting. Learning progression averaged 67% in Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023), broadly in line with Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) (69%).

Over half of customers (49%) achieved employment progression, down from 56% in Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022). Those with higher qualifications, younger customers, white customers, customers who had been unemployed for less than six months and those who did not self-declare a disability were more likely to achieve employment progression than average. Ninety-three percent of face-to-face and telephone customers indicated that they had gained some form of Personal Added Value since their contact with the National Careers Service. This was highest amongst younger customers aged 18 to 24 (98%).

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

6.1 Overview of the extent of progression

6.1.1 Defining progression

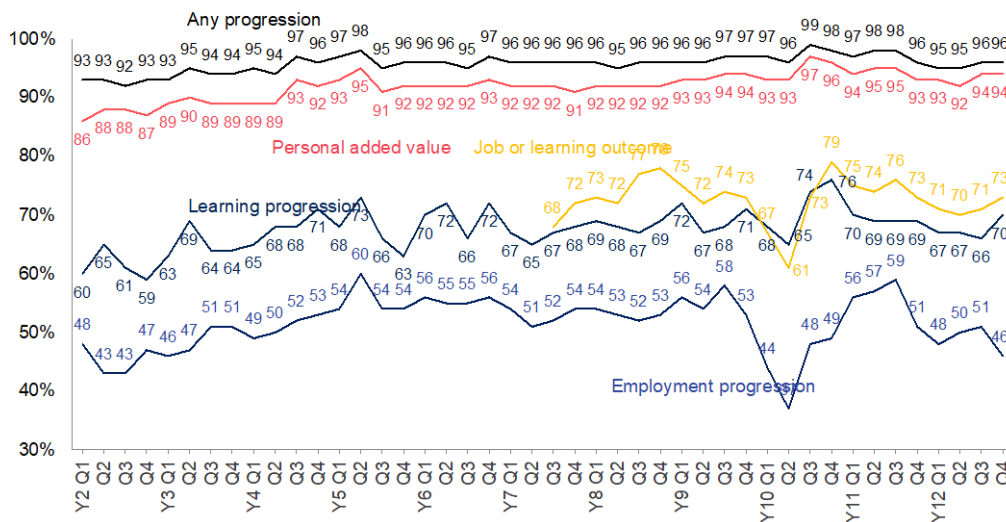
Three core Key Performance Indicators are used to determine progression levels of National Careers Service customers six months after their intervention with the service:

1. Learning progression: whether customers have undertaken formal or informal learning or training in the six months since the call/meeting.
2. Employment progression: 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 or increased job satisfaction.

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

Almost all face-to-face and telephone customers (96%) experienced some form of positive outcome in the six months since their call or meeting. The various measures are shown in Figure 6.1. Key Performance Indicators have remained broadly consistent since Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022). The exceptions to this are falls in the proportion reporting job or learning outcomes, down to 71% from 74% in Year 11 and in employment progression (which we discuss in Section 6.3).

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



Base: All progression telephone and face-to-face customers (5,572)

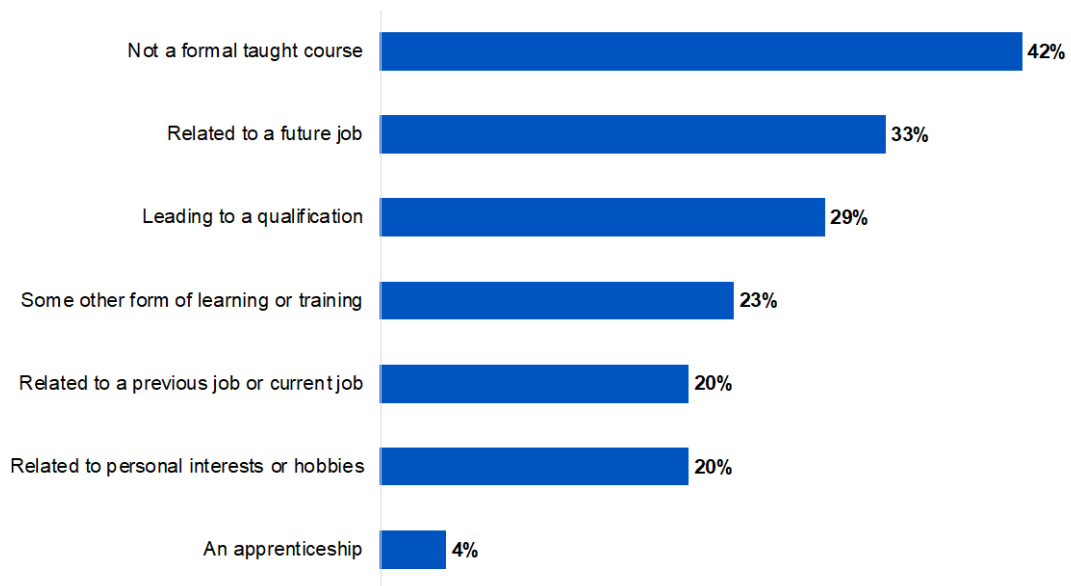
6.2 Learning progression among face-to-face and telephone customers

In total, 67% of face-to-face or telephone customers achieved some form of learning progression, which is consistent with Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) (69%). Figure 6.2 details the different forms of learning and training customers have undertaken since their contact with the service.

Customers had taken part in various types of training or learning, most commonly learning that was not part of a formal, taught course (42%, a decrease compared to Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022), 46%), followed by training related to a future job (33%). Customers undertaking any other learning has decreased slightly to 23% from 26% in Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022).

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

Figure 6.2: Forms of learning/training undertaken since the call/meeting with National Careers Service



Base: All progression telephone and face-to-face customers (5,572)

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

- those with higher qualifications: 75% of those qualified to Level 3 or above, compared with 64% of those with qualifications below Level 3
- younger customers (76% of those aged 18 to 24, compared to 68% of those aged 25 to 49 and 60% of those aged 50 plus)
- customers who did not self-declare a disability (70%) compared with customers who did self-declared a disability (64%)
- BAME customers (72%) compared to white customers (65%)
- customers whose first language is not English (70%, compared to 67% of those whose is English)
- customers in the South-West and Oxfordshire (73%)

All forms of learning were generally lower among customers who were aged 50 or above, white customers, customers self-declaring a disability, those who had been unemployed for 12 months or more, or who had qualifications below Level 3.

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

- to progress in a current job or career (89% said this was very or fairly important)
- to develop or improve job-related skills (88%)

- to raise qualification level (87%)
- to help get a job or change job (85%)
- to obtain a qualification (78%).
- to help change career (73%).

Among customers who had done any learning or training in the intervening six months, a fifth (21%) obtained a qualification, the same figure as Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022). A further 8% received credits towards a qualification. Almost two thirds (63%) did neither of these and 5% said they did not finish their qualification, which is also consistent with Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022).

Over half (56%) considered that their National Careers Service adviser had contributed to their decision to do the learning or training, the same proportion as Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022). This view was more prevalent among customers aged under 19 (58%) and 25 to 49 (59%), female customers (58%), customers who do not speak English as a first language (66%), customers in London (66%), customers with a qualification below Level 3 (61%) and customers who had been unemployed for more than 12 months (59%).

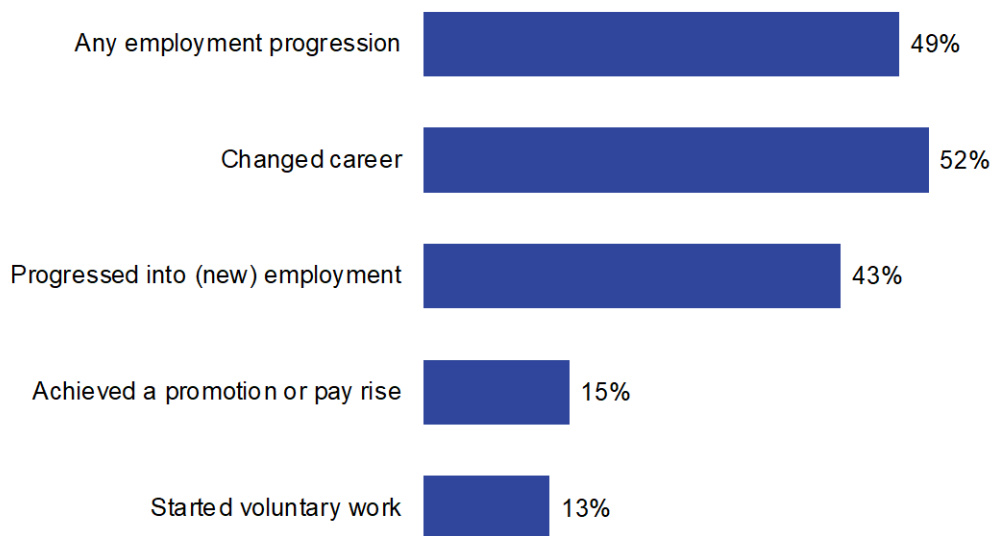
6.3 Employment progression among face-to-face and telephone customers

6.3.1 Overall employment progression

In total, 49% of face-to-face or telephone customers achieved some form of employment progression. This is down from 56% in Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) and is closer to the figure of 45% reported in Year 10 (May 2020 to April 2021). Figure 6.3 shows the types of employment progression achieved.¹²

Around two in five (43%) face-to-face and telephone customers had found a new job or role in those six months, a fall compared to Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) (49%). However, this is still higher than Year 10 (May 2020 to April 2021) (37%). Amongst those who found a new job or role, half (52%) changed their career, which is a slight increase from 49% in Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022). One in eight took up voluntary work (13%) and 15% achieved a pay rise or promotion.

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

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

Base: All progression telephone and face-to-face customers (5,572)

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

- those with higher qualifications: 55% of those qualified to Level 3 or above, compared with 44% of those with qualifications below Level 3
- younger customers (56% of 18 to 24-year-olds, compared with 43% of those aged 50 plus)
- people who had been unemployed for less than 6 months (66%)
- customers who did not self-declare a disability (55%) compared with those customers who self-declared a disability (38%)
- white customers (50%) compared with BAME customers (47%)
- customers in the South West and Oxfordshire (56%), the South East (53%) and the North-East and Cumbria (53%)
- NEET customers aged 18 to 24 (59%, compared to the average, 49%)

As was the case in Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022), it is noticeable that those who have been unemployed for a shorter period of time are far more likely to have experienced employment progression, again highlighting the difficulty of getting back into employment for the long-term unemployed. Two-thirds (66%) of those unemployed for less than 6 months experienced employment progression, compared to 54% of those unemployed for between 6 and 12 months and less than half (43%) of those unemployed for more than 12 months.

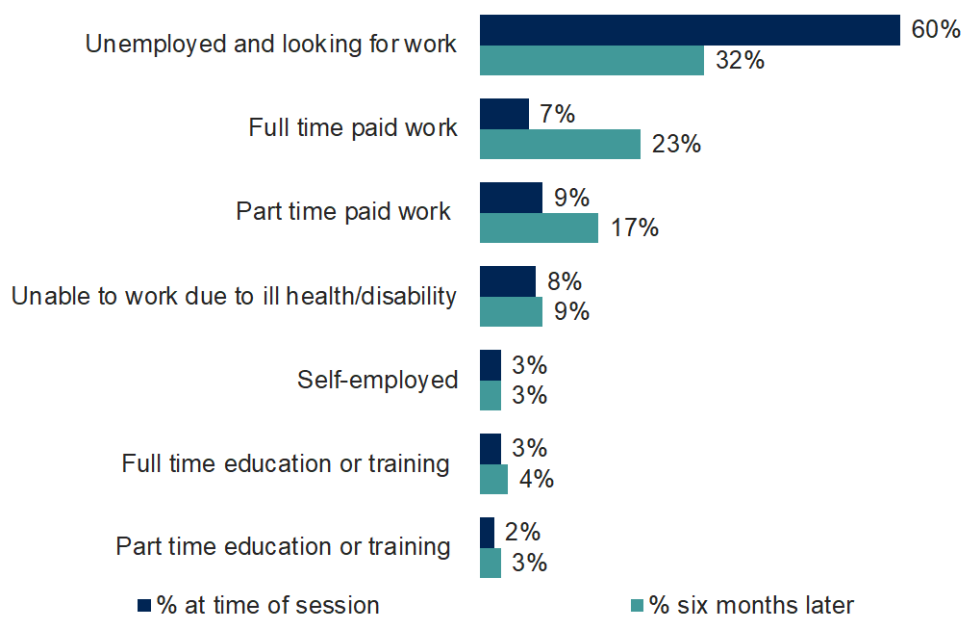
Customers who had achieved any employment progression were asked to what extent their interaction with the National Careers Service adviser had contributed to this. Half agreed the adviser had an impact (49%). Those with qualifications below Level 3 (54%) were more likely to think this compared to those with higher qualifications (45%). Female customers (52%), those aged 25 to 49 (52%), and customers whose first language is not English (54%) were also more likely to attribute their employment progression partly to the support offered by advisers.

6.3.2 Change in employment status

The majority of customers interviewed for the progression survey had been unemployed and looking for work at the time of their adviser session six months previously (60%). This is a fall from Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) when the figure stood at 67%. Only 7% were in full time work and 9% in part time work. The remainder were in education (6%) or doing something else, including those unable to work due to ill health, with home or family responsibilities, or retired. The proportion unable to work because of ill health rose from 5% in Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) to 8%.

Figure 6.4 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. In comparison to Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022), there has been a decrease in the number of people who are in work six months on (43%, compared to 48% in Year 11). This year’s figure is closer to Year 10 (May 2020 to April 2021) (41%). One reason may be increased ill health, as the proportion of customers unable to work because of this six months after their appointment has risen from 6% in Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) to 9% now.

Figure 6.4: Employment status at the time of the call/meeting and six months later



Base: All progression telephone and face-to-face customers (5,572)

There were large increases in employment among the different customer groups (Table 6.1). For example, twelve times as many customers who were aged 50 plus and unemployed or at risk of redundancy at the time of their adviser session were in work after six months (36%, compared to 3% at the time of their session). There was also a substantial increase in employment (an increase of 37 percentage points) among 18 to 24 who were NEET¹³ at the time of their initial interaction with the service.

The number of customers with Level 3 or below qualifications in work more than doubled six months on (37%, compared with 16% at the time of their adviser session). A similar pattern was seen amongst customers aged 20 to 24, where three times as many were in work after 6 months compared with at the time of their adviser sessions (44%, compared with 14%).

Customers who have been unemployed for more than 12 months were all unemployed and looking for work at the time of meeting their adviser, but this had almost halved (53%) six months on.

Table 6.1 illustrates that the proportion who have gone into work within six is generally lower across all customer groups in comparison with Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022).

Table 6.1: Changes in employment status among key customer groups

Customer group	ULW = <i>Unemployed and looking for work</i>	Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023)			Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022)		
		Status at point of contact with National Careers Service	Status 6 months after contact	Change (ppts) ¹⁴	Status at point of contact with National Careers Service	Status 6 months after contact	Change (ppts)
18–19-year-olds (378)	ULW	71%	39%	-32	72%	31%	-41
	In work	10%	35%	+25	11%	50%	+39
	In education	11%	12%	+1	10%	9%	-1
20–24-year-olds (897)	ULW	64%	33%	-31	71%	25%	-46
	In work	14%	44%	+30	15%	59%	+44
	In education	11%	11%	-	7%	8%	+1

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

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

Aged 50 plus (1,540)	ULW	63%	35%	-35	70%	38%	-32
	In work	16%	38%	+22	16%	41%	+25
	In education	2%	3%	+1	2%	2%	-
Aged 50 plus and unemployed or at risk of redundancy (994)	ULW	97%	46%	-51	95%	45%	-50
	In work	3%	36%	+33	5%	38%	+33
	In education	0%	2%	+2	0%	2%	+2
Customers self-declaring a disability (2,020)	ULW	55%	33%	-22	63%	36%	-27
	In work	15%	29%	+14	13%	33%	+20
	In education	4%	6%	+2	3%	5%	+2
Below Level 3 quals (1,531)	ULW	62%	35%	-27	70%	37%	-33
	In work	16%	37%	+21	12%	43%	+31
	In education	6%	7%	+1	6%	6%	-
Unemployed for more than 12 months (1,173)	ULW	100%	53%	-47	100%	51%	-49
	In work	0%	26%	+26	0%	32%	+32
	In education	0%	4%	+4	0%	4%	+4
18 to 24 NEET (974)	ULW	87%	39%	-48	91%	31%	-60
	In work	0%	37%	+37	0%	54%	+54
	In education	0%	7%	+7	0%	5%	+5
Single parents (878)	ULW	51%	30%	-30	60%	30%	-30
	In work	21%	42%	-25	17%	42%	-25
	In education	6%	6%	+1	5%	6%	+1

Both face-to-face and telephone customers showed significant movements into employment and learning over the six months since their contact. The key changes are:

- among face-to-face customers, the proportion who were unemployed and seeking work almost halved over the six-month period, from 63% to 36%
- the proportion in work (including self-employment) more than doubled, up from 16% at the time of their session to 40% six months later.
- just under half of telephone customers were in work six months after their first interaction (47%), more than doubling from 22% at the time of contact.
- there was a corresponding fall in the proportion that was unemployed, from 57% to 28%

Amongst those whose employment status had changed since their initial appointment, half (50%) said that their adviser played a role in this. This was more common among those with qualifications lower than Level 3 (56%), younger customers aged 18 to 24 (54%), and BAME customers (55%).

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

6.4.1 Overall Personal Added Value

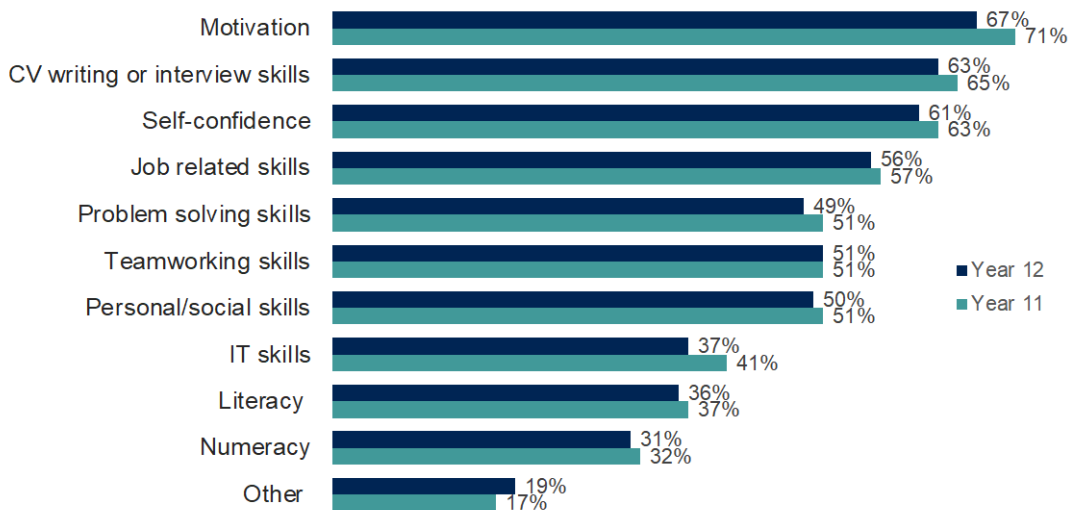
As in Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022), almost all customers said that they had gained some form of Personal Added Value since their contact with the National Careers Service (94%). Similar to the learning and employment progression, younger customers were more likely to say they had gained Personal Added Value, with 98% of those aged 18 to 24 doing so, compared to 93% of those aged 50 or above.

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

6.4.2 Skills and personal development outcomes

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

The most common developments remain consistent with Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022), although the proportion of customers reporting improvements has dipped in a couple of cases. Motivation is again the skill most commonly improved at 67%, but this is down from 71% in Year 11. The next most common skills to be improved are CV writing or interview skills (63%), self-confidence (61%) and job-related skills (56%). The proportion reporting improvement in IT skills is down to 37% from 41% in Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022).

Figure 6.5: Skills and personal development outcomes

Base: All progression telephone and face-to-face customers (Year 12 5,572; Year 11, 5,586)

In Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022), the proportion of telephone and face-to-face customers who had developed skills was similar. This was in contrast to Year 10 (May 2020 to April 2021), where telephone customers were more likely than face-to-face customers to report having developed their skills. This year, face-to-face customers are more likely to have improved self-confidence (63% compared to 59% of telephone customers), literacy (38% versus 34%) and numeracy (32% versus 29%).

Similar to Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022), these groups of customers are consistently more likely to report having developed skills:

- younger customers, particularly those aged 19 or younger. For example, 69% said they had improved their personal or social skills, compared to 34% aged 50 or above.
- customers with no disability. For instance, 55% of customers who did not self-declare a disability reported improved teamworking skills, compared to 42% of customers who self-declared a disability.
- customers who do not speak English as their first language. For example, 54% said they had improved their literacy, compared to 31% of those whose first language is English.
- BAME customers. For example, 70% of BAME customers reported improved self-confidence compared to 57% of white customers.

In addition, women were more likely than men to say they have improved their literacy (40% versus 34%) and numeracy (33% versus 29%).

Amongst those who had developed their skills in some way, over half (53%) said that their adviser helped them to do this, a slight decrease from Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) (55%). Female customers (57%), BAME customers (57%), those with lower than Level 3 qualifications

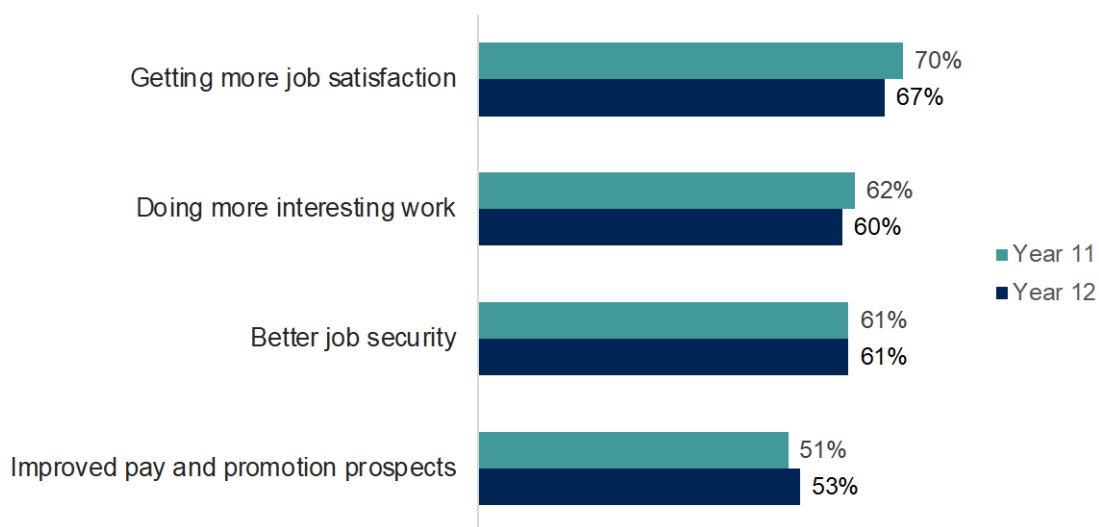
(53%), those whose first language is not English (59%), and single parents (57%) were all more likely to say that their adviser helped them.

The Personal Added Value Key Performance Indicator also includes those who, in the past 6 months, have increased their ability to make decisions about the future in terms of career, training or learning over the past six months. Almost eight in ten (77%) said this has increased, including 41% who said it has increased 'a lot'. Female customers (44%), single parents (47%), customers aged 18 to 24 (44%) and 25 to 49 (45%), customers whose first language is not English (49%), BAME customers (49%), and those who did not self-declare a disability (46%) were all more likely to say that their decision-making ability has increased 'a lot'.

6.4.3 Positive changes at work

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

Figure 6.6: Positive changes at work



Base: All progression telephone and face-to-face customers who are in work (Year 12 – 2,437; Year 11 = 2,712)

There were significant increases in the proportion of customers who identified these positive changes at work between Year 10 (May 2020 to April 2021) and Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022). This year the picture is more stable. 'More job satisfaction' is down and there has been a small dip in 'doing interesting work'. However there has been a small increase in improved pay and promotion prospects. This may be linked to pay increases because of inflation.

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

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

- customers whose first language is English were more likely than those whose first language is not English to report increased job satisfaction (69% compared to 60%), greater job security (63% compared to 57%), and improved pay and promotion prospects (56% compared to 44%)
- white customers were more likely than BAME customers to say that their pay and promotion prospects had improved (54% compared to 50%) and their job satisfaction had increased (68% versus 63%)
- customers with qualifications above Level 3 were more likely to say they were doing more interesting work (62% compared to 58% of those with lower qualifications)
- customers who did not self-declare a disability were more likely to be doing more interesting work (62%) compared to those who did self-declare a disability (54%)

Almost half of customers who had benefitted from positive changes at work attributed these at least in part to the information, advice or support they received from the National Careers Service (49%), the same proportion as Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022). This was more common among female customers than male customers (53% compared to 45%), those for whom English is not their first language (57% compared to 46% of first language English speakers), customers with qualifications below Level 3 (54% compared with 45% of those with Level 3 qualifications or above) and BAME customers (54% compared to 47% of white customers).

6.5 Career management skills

Altogether, over 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 (95%). This included:

- 79% who reported that their motivation to find work or change career had improved.
- 78% who reported that their awareness of work or career opportunities had increased over the past six months.
- 78% said that their interest in learning had increased.
- 76% who said that their awareness of learning or training opportunities had increased.

Customers who were 18 to 24 and NEET were more likely to report improvements in all these career management skills. For instance, 85% said their awareness of work opportunities had increased. This is also the case for BAME customers in comparison to white customers. For example, 83% reported an increased interest in learning, compared to 73% of white customers. Customers aged 50 and over who are an employment risk and customers self-declaring a disability were less likely to report improvements in any of the four areas.

Single parents were more likely to say their awareness of learning opportunities increased (81%) and their motivation to find work had improved (80%). Women were more likely than men to have become interested in learning (80% versus 74%), and the same was true of customers whose first language is not English (85%, compared to 74% of first language English speakers).

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

Across all contracting areas, customers expressed consistently positive views of the service they received. Where there were variations by contracting area, the most notable differences were:

- satisfaction with the quality of service and the Service overall were significantly higher than average in Yorkshire and Humber, North-East and Cumbria and the South East. On both measures the figure for London was below average
- people accessing the service in Yorkshire and Humber (90%), North-East and Cumbria (89%) and the South East (89%) were significantly more likely than average (86%) to say they had recommended the National Careers Service or would do so in the future.
- as with ratings of the Service itself, recommendation levels in London were significantly below the national average (82% compared to 86%)
- the return to high levels of satisfaction with logistical aspects of face-to-face meetings seen in Year 11 (May 2022 to April 2022) has been consolidated in Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023).
- London was the only contracting area where satisfaction with the location and venue for their meeting was below average (86% against 89%). In South East and North-East and Cumbria (both 93%) it was higher than average. Only in South West and Oxfordshire (92%) was satisfaction with the time and date of the customers' meeting below average (94%). In Yorkshire and Humber (96%) it was above average
- satisfaction with specific aspects of advisers' people skills, knowledge and helpfulness remains very high. In Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) there were some differences by region with those in North-East and Cumbria, Yorkshire and Humber and South East consistently demonstrating the highest level of satisfaction. Compared to other regions, satisfaction tended to be lower in London than elsewhere
- customers across all contracting areas were overwhelmingly positive about the information, advice and guidance (IAG) received. As with advisers' skills and knowledge, ratings of IAG were consistently above average in North-East and Cumbria, Yorkshire and Humber and the South East. Customers in London were significantly less satisfied than average with each aspect of the IAG they received.
- in Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) approximately 19 in every 20 customers (96%) experienced some form of positive outcome in the six months following their intervention.

However, employment progression is significantly lower than it was in Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) (49% compared to 54%)

- customers in South West and Oxfordshire were significantly more likely than average to demonstrate employment progression (56% compared to 49%) and it was relatively high in North-East and Cumbria and South East (both 53%). In contrast, employment progression was relatively low in North West (44%) and London (45%)

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

7.1 Customer profile in different areas

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

- London had the lowest proportion of customers aged 18 to 24 years (17% compared to the national average of 25%). The proportion was highest in Yorkshire and Humber (29%), West Midlands and Staffordshire and North-East and Cumbria (both 28%)
- almost a third of customers from East of England and Buckinghamshire (32%) were aged 50 or over. The proportion is also relatively high in the South-East (30%) and South-West and Oxfordshire (29%), but significantly lower in the North West and West Midlands and Staffordshire (both 21%)
- the North-East and Cumbria (58%) and the North-West (57%) had a relatively high proportion of male customers. Fewer than half of the service's London customers identified as male (47%) meaning it is the only region where the majority are female (51%)
- customers in the South-East (67%) and the North-East and Cumbria (64%) were more likely than the average service user to be unemployed and looking for work at the time of their initial contact. Those from the East of England and Buckinghamshire (26%) and East Midlands and Northamptonshire (24%) were significantly more likely than average (19%) to currently be working.

Table 7.1: Profile of customers by area

	All	London	East of England and Buckinghamshire	East Midlands and Northamptonshire	Yorkshire and Humber	West Midlands and Staffordshire	South West and Oxfordshire	South East	North West	North-East and Cumbria
Base:	7,246	875	716	675	1086	848	509	882	848	807
18 to 24	25%	17%	22%	24%	29%	28%	22%	27%	27%	28%
25 to 49	50%	61%	46%	50%	45%	51%	49%	43%	52%	45%
50+	25%	23%	32%	26%	26%	21%	29%	30%	21%	27%
Female	44%	51%	46%	45%	44%	43%	41%	43%	41%	40%
Male	54%	47%	52%	53%	54%	55%	56%	55%	57%	58%
Below Level 3	27%	22%	27%	27%	27%	30%	28%	26%	25%	32%
Level 3 and above	50%	55%	50%	53%	48%	47%	48%	52%	52%	48%
In work	19%	20%	26%	24%	18%	21%	19%	14%	19%	16%
Unemployed and looking for work	61%	62%	56%	54%	61%	59%	59%	67%	62%	64%

7.2 Satisfaction

7.2.1 Overall satisfaction

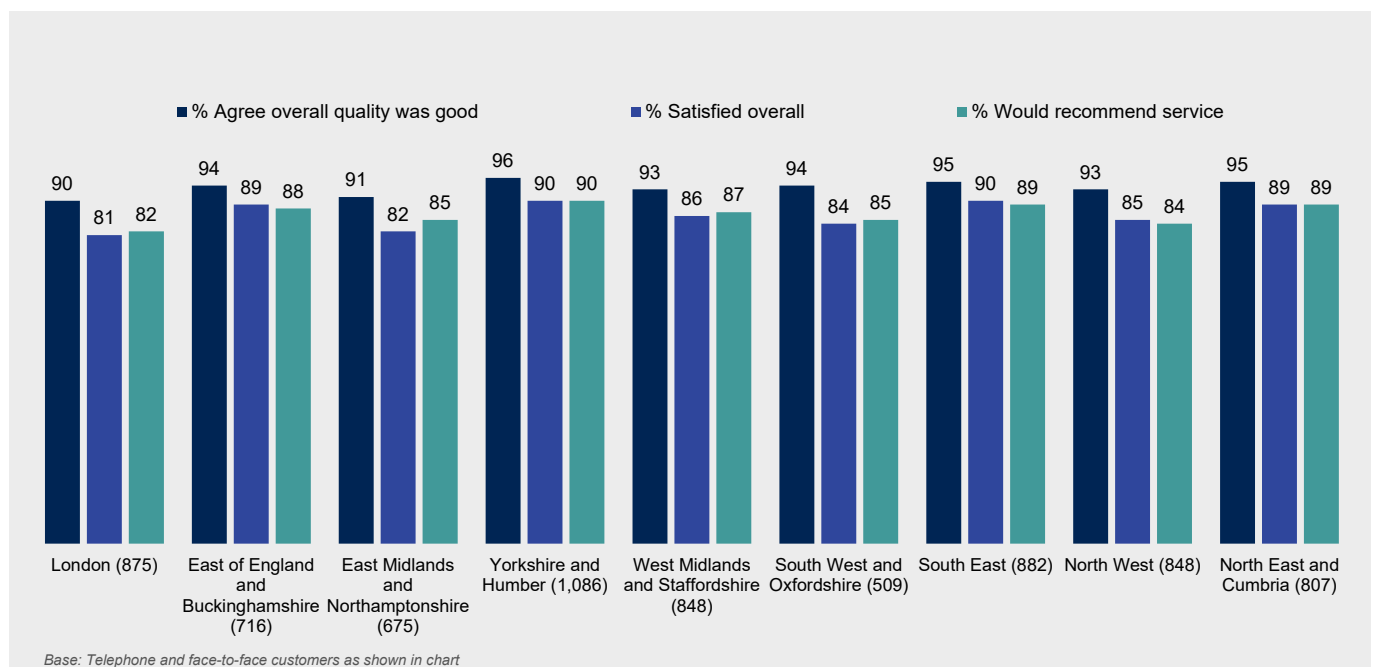
Perceptions of the quality of service delivered by the National Careers Service were consistently positive, with at least nine in ten in each contracting area saying they were satisfied. Between 81% and 90% said they were satisfied with Service as a whole, while at least 82% in each area had recommended the Service or said they would in the future.

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

- the proportion of customers agreeing the overall quality of service was good was significantly higher than average in Yorkshire and Humber (96%), North-East and Cumbria (95%) and the South East (95%).

- in London (90%), satisfaction was significantly lower than the national average.
- satisfaction with the Service overall was highest, and significantly above average, in the South East and Yorkshire and Humber (both 90%), East of England and Buckinghamshire and North-East and Cumbria (both 89%).
- satisfaction was significantly below average in London (81%) and East Midlands and Northamptonshire (82%)
- people accessing the Service in Yorkshire and Humber (90%), North-East and Cumbria (89%) or the South East (89%) were significantly more likely than average (86%) to say they had recommended the Service already or would do so in the future, whereas the figure in London (82%) was significantly below the national average.

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



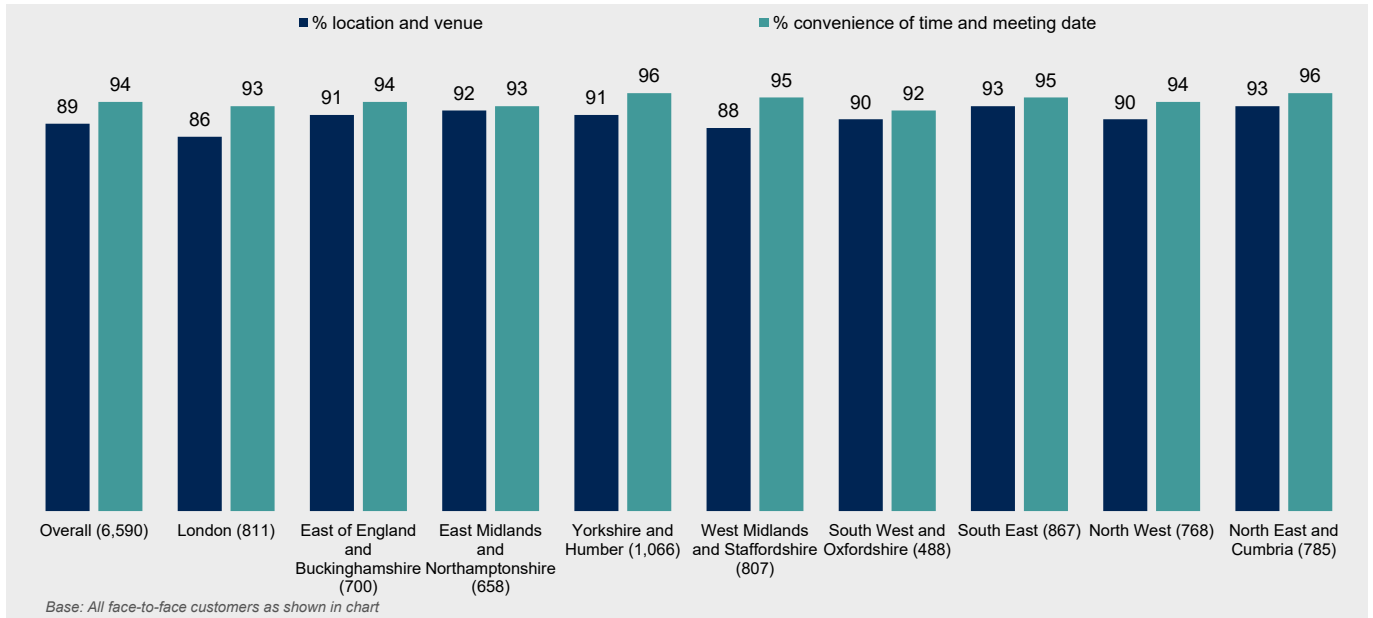
7.2.2 Satisfaction with operational aspects and the adviser

Following a drop in satisfaction with logistical elements of the service in Year 10 (May 2020 to April 2021), Year 11 saw a marked improvement in ratings. The drop was most probably linked to restrictions associated with the pandemic, and this hypothesis is supported by the Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) results. These show high levels of satisfaction with both the location and venue, and the time and date of face-to-face meetings.

Most regions had a very similar level of satisfaction although customers in the South-East and North-East and Cumbria (both 93%) expressed higher than average levels of satisfaction with the location and venue for their face-to-face meetings. Meanwhile and as in Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022), London was the only region with a lower-than-average level of satisfaction with the location and venue (86% against 89%).

Satisfaction with the time and date of the customers' meeting remained high, with only South-West and Oxfordshire (92%) below average (94%). In Yorkshire and Humber (96%) the level of satisfaction was above the national average.

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



Nationally, almost nine in ten (85%) of those contacting the Service by telephone were satisfied with the length of time it took to answer the call. Except for London (78%), where it was significantly lower than average, the figure ranged from 83% to 88% in each contracting area.

Satisfaction with specific aspects of advisers' people skills, knowledge and helpfulness remains very high. With the exception of the adviser's knowledge of jobs and training opportunities in the local area, in no region did fewer than 87% say they were satisfied with any aspect of the adviser they spoke to.

In Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) there were some differences by region with those in North-East and Cumbria, Yorkshire and Humber and South-East being consistently the most satisfied. Compared to other regions, satisfaction tended to be lower in London than elsewhere. In addition to these general patterns the following significant differences were observed:

- customers in South-West and Oxfordshire expressed lower levels of satisfaction with the length of time they spent with their advisers (91% compared to 94% overall)
- customers in East Midlands and South-West and Oxfordshire expressed lower levels of satisfaction regarding their adviser's professionalism (both 94% compared to 95% overall)
- those in North West (91%) are significantly less likely than average (93%) to be satisfied with the helpfulness of their adviser.

- while 89% of customers in East Midlands and Northamptonshire were satisfied that their adviser understood their needs, this was below the overall average of 91%

Table 7.2: Satisfaction with the adviser by area

	All	London	East of England and Buckinghamshire	East Midlands and Northamptonshire	Yorkshire and Humber	West Midlands and Staffordshire	South West and Oxfordshire	South East	North West	North-East and Cumbria
Base:	7,246	875	716	675	1,086	848	509	882	848	807
Length of time with adviser	94%	92%	95%	93%	95%	93%	91%	96%	93%	95%
Professionalism of adviser	95%	94%	96%	94%	97%	96%	94%	97%	94%	97%
Helpfulness of adviser	93%	91%	94%	91%	95%	93%	93%	95%	91%	96%
Adviser knowledge	92%	88%	93%	90%	95%	93%	92%	94%	91%	95%
Adviser understood needs	91%	87%	93%	89%	94%	91%	92%	94%	90%	93%
Adviser's knowledge of jobs / training opportunities in local area	78%	72%	79%	76%	81%	80%	75%	79%	80%	85%

7.2.3 Satisfaction with the information or advice received

Satisfaction with the information, advice and guidance (IAG) received by customers continues to be high, with over nine in ten (94%) satisfied with its clarity and ease of understanding. Almost nine in ten are satisfied with its usefulness (89%) and the extent to which it provides the information required to make informed choices about their next steps (86%).

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

Customers in London were significantly less satisfied than average with each aspect of the IAG they received. Satisfaction with clarity or ease of understanding was also relatively low in East Midlands (92% compared to 94% overall) while the usefulness of IAG was significantly lower than average in North-West (87% compared to 89%).

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

	All	London	East of England and Buckinghamshire	East Midlands and Northamptonshire	Yorkshire and Humber	West Midlands and Staffordshire	South West and Oxfordshire	South East	North West	North-East and Cumbria
Base:	7,246	875	716	675	1,086	848	509	882	848	807
IAG clear/easy to understand	94%	93%	96%	92%	96%	94%	94%	95%	94%	96%
IAG useful	89%	86%	90%	88%	93%	89%	89%	92%	87%	93%
Got the IAG to make informed choice	86%	82%	88%	84%	89%	87%	87%	89%	85%	90%

7.3 Progression and career management skills

In Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) approximately 19 in every 20 customers (96%) experienced some form of positive outcome in the six months following their intervention. This is almost identical to the figure recorded in Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) (97%). While almost half (49%) indicated Employment Progression, this is significantly lower than in Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) (54%). Progression indicators by contracting area are shown in Table 7.4, together with scores for development of career management skills (personal added value).

Table 7.4: Key progression measures and career management skills by area (%)

	All	London	East of England and	East Midlands and	Yorkshire and Humber	West Midlands and Staffordshire	South West and Oxfordshire	South East	North West	North-East and Cumbria
Base	5,572	646	548	551	851	645	355	719	645	612
Any positive outcome	96%	96%	97%	95%	95%	95%	98%	96%	96%	96%
Learning progression	67%	67%	64%	66%	63%	69%	73%	69%	67%	68%
Employment progression	49%	45%	52%	49%	50%	46%	56%	53%	44%	53%
Personal Added Value	93%	94%	95%	92%	92%	92%	95%	93%	94%	95%

Customers in South-West and Oxfordshire were significantly more likely than average to demonstrate any type of positive outcome (98% compared to 96%), with higher-than-average figures for both learning (73% compared to 67%) and employment progression (56% compared to 49%). There were also relatively high employment progression figures in North-East and Cumbria and South-East (both 53%)

As was seen in Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022), customers in the North-West were significantly less likely than average to experience employment progression (44% vs 49%). Employment progression was also relatively low in London (45%).

As in Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022), there was very little variation across regions in respect of personal added value. In Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) the figure ranged from 92% to 95%.

8 Conclusions

Customer satisfaction remains high (86%) and the overall rating of the quality of the service was high (93%), in line with Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) (94%). Additionally, whilst recommendation of the service also continues to remain high with nearly nine in ten customers saying that they had already or would recommend the National Careers Service (86%), this represents a continuation of the slight falls from each year, from Year 11 (May 2020 to April 2021) (88%).

The customer groups that have been consistently satisfied with the service year on year include telephone customers, 55% of who strongly agree the quality was good, and customers who recall using the Skills Health Check (95%) or had a Skills Action Plan (96%) were most likely to say the quality of the service was good. Among telephone and face-to-face customers, satisfaction with individual aspects of the service remains high with the exception of adviser's knowledge of jobs and training opportunities in the local area.

The majority of face-to-face and telephone customers could not think of any improvements that the National Careers Service needed to make (64%), in line with Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) (66%). The two main suggestions for improvements remain consistent with Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022), with customers desiring more tailored help (6%), and more follow-up after initial meetings (8%).

In Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) three fifths (63%) of website users were satisfied with the website, compared to one fifth who were not satisfied (19%). These levels of satisfaction are slightly higher than those of Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022), suggesting that the website has continued to remain useful for users. Of those customers who were dissatisfied with the website, information not being relevant was the most common reason (16%). There was a significant decrease in the number of customers being unsatisfied with the instability of the website at 11%, against 28% in Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022). This shows that improvements to the website's stability have been noted by customers. Overall, 62% of online customers either have or would recommend the Service and this is higher than the 57% recorded in Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022).

Overall, Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) has seen a slight dip in employment progression (49%) compared to Year 11 (May 2021 to April 2022) (54%), though almost all face-to-face and telephone customers (96%) experienced some form of positive outcome in the six months since their call or meeting. 18 to 24 NEETs (98%), those unemployed for less than 12 months (97%), and those with higher than Level 4 qualifications (98%) were more likely to have experienced any progression. 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, which was highest amongst younger customers (18 to 24, 98%).

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