Nationa Service Percep

Year 14 Annual R August 2025

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Executive Summary

Introduction and methodology

The National Careers Service ("the Service") is delivered via a multi-channel approach: face-to-face, telephone, 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 access 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 14 (April 2024 to March 2025) of the Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement study. The fieldwork was undertaken from April 2024 to March 2025 and consisted of monthly satisfaction and progression multi-mode (telephone and online) surveys. This report frequently references results from last year of this study, which is referred to as Year 13 (fieldwork undertaken between April 2023 to March 2024).

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 the Service face-to-face or by telephone remains largely consistent with previous years.

Males (50%) continue to use the service more than women (47%) at a total level. Similarly, in line with Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024), the proportion of customers accessing the Service who self reported a long-term disability remained the same (28%).

Around two thirds of customers taking part in the telephone and face-to-face survey identified themselves as white (61%) and 38% identified as BAME. Female customers were significantly more likely to be from a BAME background (42%) compared to their male counterparts (34%) whilst those in the 25-49 age cohort are also more likely to identify as BAME (46%) than the average (38%).

There has been a small, but significant decrease in the proportion of customers who were in work at the time of contacting the Service (21%) compared to Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) (22%). This proportion varied between contact mode: in Year 14 (April 2024 to March 2025) a significantly

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higher proportion of those accessing the Service via the telephone (24%) were 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%). This represents a significant increase from Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) where 60% of customers reported this channel. Customers who were single parents (77%), 50+ and at risk of unemployment (76%), had been unemployed for more than 12 months (74%), those with below a L3 qualification (73%), those self-reporting a disability (71%) and those aged 18-24 and NEET (68%) were all more likely than average to have heard about the Service through a Jobcentre Plus.

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 (38% and 36% 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. There has been an increase in the proportion of customers reporting this as the main reason for contact, increasing from 30% in Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) to 36%.

The proportion of customers contacting the Service for specific information about jobs and careers was significantly lower in Year 14 (April 2024 to March 2025) than Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024). This included the proportion contacting the Service for information about courses related to a current or future job (11% in Year 14 (April 2024 to March 2025) compared to13% in Year 13 (April 2024 to March 2024)), information about how to get a job in a specific career or industry similarly decreased from 12% to 10% and information about changing careers or deciding on a career decreased from 10% to 8%.

Experiences of using the National Careers Service

Seven in ten telephone customers had their enquiry handled in one call (71%), which is broadly in line with the proportion seen in Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) (69%). Over three quarters of telephone customers (87%) dealt with the same adviser, which is consistent with Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) (86%).

Eight in ten face-to-face customers (79%) had just one meeting with an adviser, which is a significant increase from Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) (77%), and just under a fifth (18%) had more than one meeting, which has decreased from 20% in Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024). Customers who were 50+ and at risk of unemployment (23%) and those who had self-reported a disability (21%) were most likely to have had more than one face-to-face meeting.

The National Careers Service provides various digital tools to support its customers across multiple platforms, such as Discover your Skills and Careers, Explore Careers, Find A Course, a Webchat, and Careers Guidance content on the National Careers Service website. Customers

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report finding these tools useful, but a minority of customers use them. This suggests that increasing the proportion of customers who use a tool could be beneficial.

One way this could be done is by increasing the proportion of customers who are recommended a tool by their adviser, as currently most of the available tools were recommended to around half or fewer customers (23% to 54%).

Three quarters (75%) of all customers were referred to the National Careers Service website by their adviser during their advisory meeting. Of those who had used the website, 92% found this useful.

Around four in ten face-to-face and telephone customers reported that they had been followed up by the National Careers Service after their initial contact (42%). These findings are consistent with previous waves.

Customer satisfaction with the National Careers Service

The overall quality of service provided by the National Careers Service continues to be highly rated by telephone and face-to-face customers, with 93% agreeing that it was good. When satisfaction is measured by the proportion of those who "strongly agree" that the Service is good, the proportion is highest in Quarter 4 when it reached 55%. This proportion fell significantly in Quarters 1 and 3 when it fell to 51%.

In line with the positive evaluation of service quality, the majority of face-to-face and telephone customers were satisfied with the National Careers Service overall (86%). This remains unchanged from Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) and Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) when 86% of customers were satisfied.

As previously seen in Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024), those most engaged with the Service and who recall creating and agreeing to a Skills Action Plan (96%) were most likely to report 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 adviser's performance and the information and advice they received. The highest satisfaction rating was given to the professionalism of the adviser (95%) and the lowest satisfaction rating was given to the adviser's knowledge of local job or learning opportunities (79%). This is consistent with Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024).

An important metric when assessing levels of customer satisfaction is the likelihood of customers to recommend a service. Overall, a majority of face-to-face and telephone customers (86%) had reported they would or had already recommended the National Careers Service. This is

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significantly higher than in Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) where 84% of customers had recommended the Service.

Customer progression six months after contact with the National Careers Service

Almost all face-to-face and telephone customers (97%) experienced some form of positive outcome in the six months since their call or meeting, including job or learning outcomes and positive added value.

Almost half of customers (45%) achieved employment progression, significantly lower than 50% in Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) and Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023). Customers more likely to have reported employment progression than average were customers who had been unemployed for less than six months (61%), customers without a disability (49%), and customers aged 18-24 (54%), including those aged 18-24 and not in employment, education or training (NEET) (53%).

Overall, Year 14 (April 2024 to March 2025) has seen lower levels of learning progression than Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) (69% compared to 71%). However, the level of learning progression at Year 14 (April 2024 to March 2025) is similar to Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) (67%), suggesting this may not be a long-term decrease in the proportion of customers experiencing a learning outcome after their interaction with the Service.

The majority (94%) of face-to-face and telephone customers indicated that they had gained some form of Personal Added Value since their contact with the National Careers Service, which is consistent with Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) (94%). Personal added value includes outcomes such as increased confidence, motivation, and understanding of next steps. This was highest amongst younger customers (18-24, 97%).

How do key results vary across National Careers Service regions?

Across regions, customers expressed consistently positive views on the service they received. There were some key differences between regions, with some reporting higher or lower satisfaction than the average. The main distinctions were:

- Satisfaction with the quality of service received and with the National Careers Service overall was significantly higher than average in Yorkshire and the Humber (90%), North East (91%), and South East (91%). On both measures the figure for London was significantly lower than average.
- People accessing the Service in North East (91%) were significantly more likely than average (86%) to report they had recommended the National Careers Service or would do so in the future. Similar to the overall satisfaction ratings, recommendation levels in London were significantly lower than the national average (83% compared to 86%).

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- The return to high levels of satisfaction with logistical aspects of face-to-face meetings seen in Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) has been consolidated in Year 14 (April 2024 to March 2025). London and the West Midlands were the only regions where satisfaction with the location and venue for their meeting was below average (both 88% compared to the 90% average). In the North East (95%), the North West (94%) and Yorkshire and the Humber (93%) it was higher than average. Only in East Midlands (92%) were satisfaction with the time and date of the customers' meeting below average (94%). In North East (96%) it was above average.

- Satisfaction with specific aspects of advisers' people skills, knowledge and helpfulness remains very high. In Year 14 (April 2024 to March 2025) however, there were some differences by region with those in North East, Yorkshire and Humber and South East consistently demonstrating the highest level of satisfaction with advisers' performance and characteristics. Compared to other regions, satisfaction with these characteristics tended to be lower in London than elsewhere. These regions also respectively reported the highest and lowest levels of satisfaction with the Service overall, suggesting overall satisfaction and satisfaction with advisers is associated.

  In Year 14 (April 2024 to March 2025) nearly all customers (97%) experienced some form of positive outcome in the six months following their intervention. Employment progression dropped significantly from Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) (45%). Customers in the North West and North East were significantly more likely than average to experience employment progression (49% and 51% respectively, compared to 45% average). In contrast, employment progression was significantly lower in West Midlands (40%).

- Despite lower levels of satisfaction, customers from London were more likely than average to report learning progression (74% compared to 69% average) and personal added value (96% compared to 94% average).

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1 Introduction and Methodology

1.1 Background

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

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

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

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

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

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as the National Careers Helpline. From 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.

In 2023 there was a further change to the Prime Contractors because of a re-procurement 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 1 October 2023. Therefore, in Year 13 of this research contract, 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 initial contact.
- Assess customer progression by interviewing face-to-face and telephone customers six months after their last adviser session.

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

This report is based on fieldwork conducted between April 2024 and March 2025. For face-to-face and telephone customers, this means the satisfaction survey covers customers who had sessions with an adviser between March 2024 and February 2025.

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 customers who had sessions with an Adviser six months before the research (i.e., from October 2023 to September 2024).

The overall aims of this research are to:

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- 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 to provide useful feedback to help the National Careers Service to identify areas for improvement and to inform its service development.
- Identify and understand any demographic differences in how customers experience and rate the Service, in particular among priority groups, including NEET customers aged 18 to 24, single parents, customers who self-reported a disability, those aged 50 plus who are unemployed or at risk of redundancy, customers who have been unemployed for more than 12 months, and customers with below Level 3 qualifications.
- Measure variations in performance among the community-based contractors delivering the Service.
- Monitor changes over time by comparing the results for Year 14, (April 2024 to March 2025) to the data from Year 13, (April 2023 to March 2024).

It should be noted that the progression measures reported here are not designed to provide an impact evaluation of the National Careers Service as they are self-reported outcomes.

1.3 Methodology

This report presents the results from Year 14 (fieldwork conducted between April 2024 to March 2025) of the customer satisfaction and progression study. The satisfaction survey measures responses from participants who contacted the Service between March 2024 and February 2025. The progression survey measures responses who originally contacted the Service six months prior (between October 2023 and September 2024).

The website survey ceased in July 2024. At this time edits were made to the satisfaction questionnaire to include specific questions on the website to enable some measurements with this element of the service to be collected. There is no website trend data presented in this report.

1.4 Multimode surveys

Ipsos interviewers conducted 8,813 customer interviews for the satisfaction survey and 6,045 interviews for the progression survey amongst both face-to face and telephone customers. 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.

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

			Satisfaction survey		Progression survey	
		Fieldwork month	**Month of adviser session**	**No. of interviews**	**Month of adviser session**	**No. of interviews**
Y11 (May 2021 to April 2022)	**Quarter 1**	May-Jul 2021	Apr-Jun 2021	1,830	Nov 20-Jan 2021	1,391
	Quarter 2	Aug-Oct 2021	Jul-Sept 2021	1,823	Feb-Apr 2021	1,399
	Quarter 3	Nov 21-Jan 2022	Oct-Dec 2021	1,824	May-Jul 2021	1,394
	Quarter 4	Feb-Apr 2022	Jan-Mar 2022	1,808	Aug-Oct 2021	1,402
	Year 11 Total			**7,285**		**5,586**
Y12 (May 2022 to April 2023)	**Quarter 1**	May-Jul 2022	Apr-Jun 2022	1,835	Nov 21-Jan 2022	1,384
	Quarter 2	Aug-Oct 2022	Jul-Sept 2022	1,802	Feb-Apr 2022	1,380
	Quarter 3	Nov 22-Jan 2023	Oct-Dec 2022	1,802	May-Jul 2022	1,387
	Quarter 4	Feb-Apr 2023	Jan-Mar 2023	1,807	Aug-Oct 2022	1,421
	Year 12 Total			**7,246**		**5,572**
Y13 (April 2023 to March 2024)	**Quarter 1**	Apr-Jun 2023	Mar-May 2023	1,809	Nov 21-Jan 2023	1,419
	Quarter 2	Jul-Sep 2023	Jun-Aug 2023	2,235	Feb-Apr 2023	1,515
	Quarter 3	Oct 23-Dec 2023	Sep-Nov 2023	2,211	May-Jul 2023	1,513
	Quarter 4	Jan-Mar 2024	Dec 2023-Feb 2024	2,240	Aug-Oct 2023	1,507
	Year 13 Total			**8,495**		**5,954**
Y14 (April 2024 to March 2025)	**Quarter 1**	Apr-Jun 2024	Mar-May 2024	2,199	Nov 21-Jan 2024	1,516
	Quarter 2	Jul-Sep 2024	Jun-Aug 2024	2,196	Feb-Apr 2024	1,508
	Quarter 3	Oct-Dec 2024	Sep-Nov 2024	2,213	May-Jul 2024	1,509
	Quarter 4	Jan-Mar 2025	Dec 2024-Feb 2025	2,205	Aug-Oct 2024	1,512
	Year 14 Total			**8,813**		**6,045**

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All survey interviews among face-to-face or telephone customers were conducted by either telephone using Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) or online. 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.

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 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 waves 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.

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1.6 The structure of this report

The rest of this report presents the results of Year 14 (April 2024 to March 2025) 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 its main channels and assesses customer satisfaction with the Service, and willingness to recommend it to other people, including relevant National Careers Service Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).
- Chapter 5 explores customer progression six months on from their interaction with the Service, including relevant KPIs.
- Chapter 6 looks at customers' experiences across the different contracting regions, identifying any variations in performance.

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2 Customer Profile

This chapter examines the profile of customers accessing the Service in Year 14 (April 2024 to March 2025). It looks at demographic characteristics such as gender, age, ethnicity, work status, and highest qualification at the time of accessing the Service.

The customer profile of those accessing services via telephone, face-to-face or online remains, for the most part, unchanged from previous years. Males continue to be slightly more prevalent than females to use the Service at a total level, with females more likely to identify as BAME than their male counterparts.

2.1 Customer characteristics

Table 2.1 shows the age, gender and ethnicity profiles of National Careers Service face-to-face and telephone customers surveyed during Year 14 (April 2024 to March 2025). The figures presented for face-to-face and telephone customers are based on weighted data. Overall, the customer base varied by service channel, but still had a similar profile to that found in previous years.

Table 2.1: Demographic profile of National Careers Service customers[1]

Base:	Face-to-face (5,879)	Telephone (2,934)
Male	50%	50%
Female	47%	48%
18 to 24	22%	24%
25 to 49	47%	47%
50 or older	22%	21%
White (any)	57%	70%
Black, Asian, or Middle Eastern (BAME)	41%	29%
English not first language	30%	20%
Long-term illness/disability	27%	29%

[1] Not all categories will add up to 100% as a result of the 'Prefer not to say' response option. Gender also had an 'other' response option as well as prefer not to say option.

Gender and age

In previous years, there has been a trend of more males than females using the Service, either through face-to-face meetings or via telephone. Year 14 (April 2024 to March 2025) is no exception, with 50% male and 47% female customers this year. However, the gap was significantly smaller this year as the proportion of female customers using the Service is significantly higher and the proportion of male customers is significantly lower than in Year 13 (May 2023 to April 2024), when customers were 53% male and 45% female.

Looking at the key priority groups, the largest disparity between gender is for single parents, who continue to be predominantly female (89%) rather than male (10%) and compared to the average (47%). However, NEET customers aged 18 to 24 (60%) and customers aged 50+ and at risk of unemployment (60%) were more likely to be male, when compared to the average.

As seen in previous years, the highest proportion of telephone and face-to-face customers were aged between 25 and 49 (47%). However, despite still being the most popular age range, in Year 14 (April 2024 to March 2025) there has been a significantly lower proportion of customers in this age group compared to Year 13 (May 2023 to April 2024) 52% and also compare to Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023), when 50% of customers were this age range.

There was little difference in age groups between mode of contacting the Service. For example, 47% of face-to-face customers and 47% of telephone customers were aged between 25 and 49, and 22% of face-to-face and 21% of telephone customers were aged 50 or over.

Similar to Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024), customers who self-report a disability are significantly more likely to be aged 50 plus (37%) than younger age groups (24% for 19 or under, 25% for 20-24) and the average (28%). Single parents remain more likely to be aged 25 to 49 (10%) compared to the average (6%), which is intuitive as this is the usual age range for people living with dependent children.

Ethnicity and English as a first language

Around six in ten customers taking part in the telephone and face-to-face survey identified themselves as white (61%) and 38% identified as BAME. These proportions are consistent with Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024). Female customers were significantly more likely to be from a BAME background (42%) compared to male (34%), whilst those in the 25 to 49 age cohort are also significantly more likely to identify as BAME (46%) than the average (38%).

Almost four in five customers reported that English was their first language (72%), which is slightly but significantly higher than Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) (71%). BAME customers were more likely to report that English was not their first language (50%) than the average (27%) and than customers who identified as white (13%).

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Year 14 (April 2024 to March 2025) shows that female customers are not only more likely to be from a BAME background, they are also more likely to not have English as a first language (35%) than the average (27%) and than male customers (21%).

Face-to-face customers were significantly more likely to not have English as their first language (30%) than telephone customers (20%).

Disability

There was no change in the proportion of customers reporting a disability or long-term health condition between Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) and Year 14 (April 2024 to March 2025), with the proportion remaining at 28% in both years.

Both years saw significantly higher proportions of customers reporting a disability than Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023), when 20% reported a disability, suggesting the beginning of a long-term trend. Those aged above 50 have the highest proportion of people self-reporting a disability (37%). All other age groups have around 25% of customers self-reporting a disability.

In Year 14 (April 2024 to March 2025), the proportion of customers self-reporting a disability or long-term limiting health condition using the Service is significantly higher amongst telephone customers (29%) than face-to-face customers (27%).

Customers self-reporting a disability were more likely to identify as White versus BAME customers (34% White compared with 19% BAME) and were more likely to be claiming benefits (82%) than those without a disability (67%) and the average (71%).

2.2 Employment status

In Year 14 (April 2024 to March 2025), six in ten telephone or face-to-face customers (59%) were unemployed and looking for work. This is a similar proportion to Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2025) (58%) but is a significant decrease from Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023), when 61% were unemployed and looking for work.

The following customer groups were more likely to be unemployed and looking for work[2]:

- men (65% compared with 52% of women)
- white (62% compared with 53% who identify as BAME)
- customers aged 18 to 24 and receiving benefits (72% compared with the average of 59%)

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

- customers aged 18 to 24 NEET (88% compared with the average of 59%)
- customers with below L3 qualifications (62% compared with the average of 59%)

In both Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) and Year 14 (April 2024 to March 2025) a higher proportion of customers who accessed the service by phone were employed compared to those who used it face-to-face. In Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024), 26% of telephone users were in work versus 21% of face-to-face users. This trend continued in Year 14 (April 2024 to March 2025) when a significantly higher proportion of those accessing the service via telephone were likely to be in work (24%) than those accessing the service face-to-face (19%).

Overall, 6% of face-to-face and telephone customers accessing the Service were in education, either part-time or full-time, at the time of their session, which breaks away from the marginal upward trend seen since Year 10 (May 2020 to April 2021) (5%) to Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) (8%). Face-to-face customers continue to be more likely than telephone customers to be in education (7% compared to 5%).

The face-to-face and telephone customers who were unemployed at the time of their call or meeting had been unemployed for a variety of time periods. The most common length of time they had been unemployed was at least 12 months (29%). Just under a fifth had been unemployed for between 3 and 6 months (19%) and 14% had been unemployed for between 6 and 12 months (14%). The proportion of those unemployed for more than 12 months is significantly higher than seen in Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) (26%) and in line with Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) (29%).

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

Table 2.2 below provides an overview of customers' employment status at the time of their first adviser session.

Table 2.2: Economic activity of customers

Base:	Face-to-face (5,879)	Telephone (2,934)
In work	19%	24%
Full-time employee	6%	10%
Part-time employee	10%	11%
Self-employed	3%	3%
In learning	7%	5%

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Full-time learning	4%	3%
Part-time learning	3%	2%
School	N/A	N/A
Unemployed and looking for work	60%	55%
Unable to work due to health	5%	8%
Looking after home/family	4%	5%
Retired	<1%	<1%
Other	1%	1%

2.3 Highest qualification

A key customer group is adults with qualifications below Level 3. This group holds qualifications at Entry Level, Level 1, or Level 2, and is distinct from those with no qualifications at all.

Just over a quarter of customers had a qualification below Level 3 (26%) and only 1% had no qualifications. Just over half of customers (51%) already had qualifications at or above Level 3. These figures were similar between telephone and face-to-face customers. The proportions of customers from each channel with each type of qualification is shown in Table 2.3 below.

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

Base:	Face-to-face (5,002)	Telephone (2,523)
Level 4 or higher	33%	32%
Level 3 or higher	51%	51%
Level 2, Level 1, or entry level	26%	28%
Level 4 (e.g. Certificate of Higher Education; NVQs at Level 4)	4%	3%
Level 3 (e.g. A-levels)	21%	22%
Level 2 (5 GCSEs A*-C)	19%	21%
Level 1	8%	9%
Entry level	4%	3%
No qualifications	1%	1%

Three in ten (32%) face-to-face and telephone customers had a Level 4 or higher qualification. This level is significantly lower than in Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) when 35% of face and telephone customer held a Level 4 or higher qualification.

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

Having established who the customers are, this chapter explores how they engage with the Service and their motivations for doing so, 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?

Telephone and Face-to-Face Customers

In Year 14 (April 2024 to March 2025), over six out of ten customers reported that they found out about the Service through Jobcentre Plus (64%). This represents an increase since Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) (60%) and the same as in Year 12 (April 2022 to March 2023) (64%). Face-to-face customers were significantly more likely to find out about the Service through Jobcentre Plus than telephone customers (65% compared to 62%).

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

As shown on the chart below, more face-to-face customers had heard about the Service through a careers service or job fair (5%) than telephone customers (3%).

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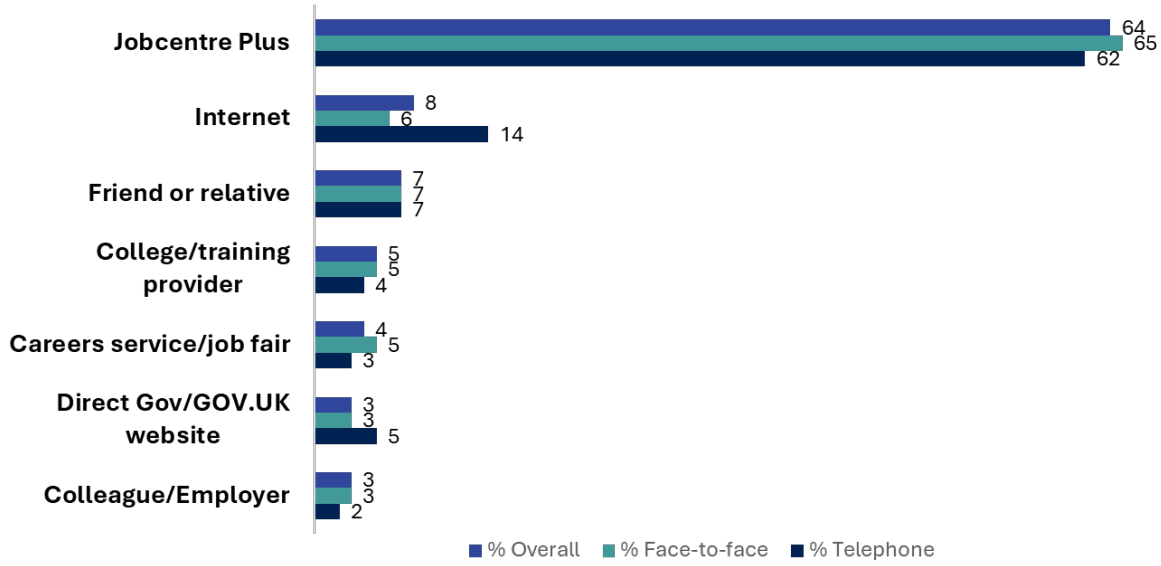
Figure 3.1 Where customers first found out about the National Careers Service



Bases: Overall (8,813), Face-to-face (5,879), Telephone (2,934)

Telephone customers seeking information and advice were more likely to have heard about the Service through the internet (27%) than telephone customers seeking information, advice, and guidance (10%) and face-to-face customers (6%).

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 the average all other age groups (70% compared 64% average). 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 (71% compared to 48% and 44% respectively).

All priority groups were more likely to have heard about the Service through Jobcentre Plus than the average (64%). The figures for each priority group are: single parents (77%), aged 50 or more and at risk of unemployment (76%), unemployed for more than 12 months (74%), who have below level 3 qualifications (73%), have a disability (71%), aged 18 to 24 NEETs (68%). Customers aged 18 to 24 and receiving benefits were also more likely than average to have heard of the Service through Jobcentre Plus (75%).

Non-priority group customers were less likely than average to have heard about the Service through Jobcentre Plus (50%). Figure 3.2 shows how key groups varied in how they first found out about the National Careers Service.

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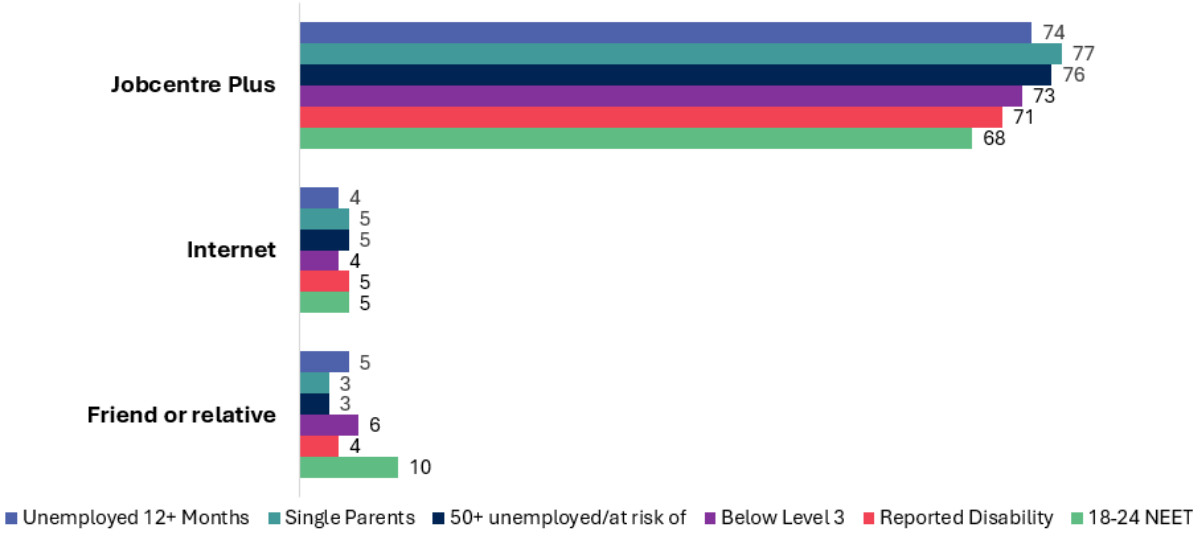
Figure 3.2 Where customers first found out about the National Careers Service by key group



Bases: Unemployed 12+ months (1,421), Single Parents (581), 50+ unemployed/at risk of(1,294), Below Level 3 (2,404), Reported Disability (2,505), 18-24 NEET (1,503)

3.2 Previous use of the National Careers Service

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

Over one in ten customers (15%) had previously met with a National Careers Service adviser face-to-face, which is a significant increase compared with Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) (13%) and Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) (10%).

Those who had been unemployed for more than 12 months and those with below level 3 qualifications were more likely to have spoken to an adviser previously (both 17%). Face-to-face customers were more than twice as likely to have previously met with an adviser face-to-face, compared with telephone customers (18% and 7% respectively).

One in five (22%) customers had previously spoken to an adviser over the telephone, which is consistent (21%) with Year 13.

Specific groups of customers that were more likely to have previously spoken to an adviser via the telephone were BAME customers (27%), as was the case in Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024).

Nearly three in ten customers (28%) had accessed the website before they used the Service which is broadly in line with Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) (27%)

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Those who were younger were more likely to have previously visited the website (31% of those aged 19 or younger compared to 23% of those aged 50 or older), and BAME customers (33%) were more likely to have visited the website than white customers (25%). In terms of key groups, those that were 18 to 24 and NEET (31%) or had Level 4 or higher qualifications (32%) were more likely to have visited the website in the 3 months prior to their contact. Non-priority groups were also more likely than average to have visited the website (31% compared to 28% average).

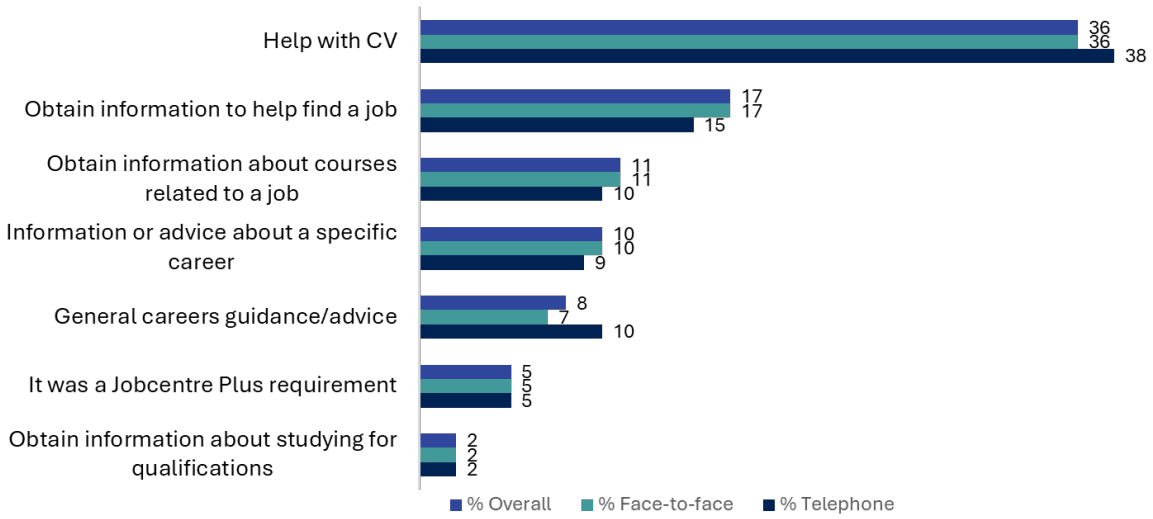
3.3 Reasons for contacting the National Careers Service

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 13 (April 2023 to March 2024), for telephone and face-to-face customers, the most common reason for contacting the Service this year was to get help in writing or developing a CV (36%). This is a statistically significant increase from Year 13 (30%) and Year 12 (34%). Telephone customers were again more likely to call the Service for this reason than face-to-face customers (38% compared to 36%), and BAME customers were less likely to have used the Service for this reason than white customers (28% compared to 42%). Customers more likely to contact the National Careers Service to get help with writing or developing their CV than customers overall (36%) were single parents (44%), qualified below Level 3 (43%), 18-24 and NEET (40%) aged 50 and over and unemployed or at risk of redundancy (42%), those who self-reported a disability (38%), and unemployed for more than 12 months (39%).

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



Bases: Overall (8,813), Face-to-face (5,879), Telephone (2,934)

4 Experiences of using the Service

This chapter examines customer experiences contacting the National Careers Service over the phone and face-to-face. 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, Careers Advice, the National Careers Service website and actions plans which they can return to as their career develops.

Seven in ten telephone customers had their enquiry handled in one call (71%), which is comparable with Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) (69%). Amongst those who had multiple calls, 87% dealt with the same adviser, which is consistent with Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) (86%).

Eight in ten face-to-face customers (79%) had just one meeting with an adviser, which is in line with Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) (77%), and one in five (18%) had more than one meeting, which has been consistent with Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) (20%). Customers who declared a disability (21%) and were aged over 50 and at risk of unemployment (23%) were more likely to have had more than one meeting. Of those who had a face- to- face meeting, three fifths (57%) of those who had more than one meeting saw the same adviser each time.

The National Careers Service provides various tools to support its customers across multiple platforms. For all tools except the webchat, around four to six in ten (42% to 65%) of those that had been referred to the tool had used it, and the majority of customers that had used them (around 90%) found each tool useful.

Around four in ten face-to-face and telephone customers reported that they had been followed up by the National Careers Service since their initial contact (42%). These findings are consistent with previous waves.

This chapter also 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.

The overall quality of service provided by the National Careers Service continues to be highly rated by telephone and face-to-face customers, with over nine in ten agreeing or strongly agreeing that the quality of service was good (93%). This remains in line with Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024). In line with the positive evaluation of service levels, the majority of face-to-face and telephone customers remain satisfied with the National Careers Service overall (86%).

Those who had a Skills Action Plan are more engaged with the Service with 91% satisfied and 96% rating the quality of service good, compared to those without a Skills Action Plan (77% and 88% respectively).

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Among telephone and face-to-face customers, satisfaction with individual aspects of the Service remains high. With one exception (adviser's knowledge of jobs and training opportunities in the local area) eight to nine in ten customers were satisfied with each element of the information and advice they received. The professionalism of the adviser (95%), convenience of date and time of meeting (94%), and clarity of information (93%) remain the highest rated metrics.

An important metric when assessing levels of customer satisfaction is the likelihood of customers to recommend a service, and this measure for the National Careers Service continues to score highly. Consistent with Year 13 (April 2023 to March 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%).

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 14 (April 2024 to March 2025) (71%), which is comparable to Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) (69%). Consistent with Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024), customers who were aged 18 to 24 and receiving benefits (76%) 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 (74%, compared with 67% of male customers). Amongst those who had multiple calls, nearly nine in ten (87%) dealt with the same adviser which is a similar proportion to Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) (86%).

On average, customers spent 33 minutes speaking with their adviser during their first call, which is in line with the Year 13 average (April 2023 to March 2024) (34 minutes).

Eight in ten telephone customers reported that their adviser said they would send information outlining the conversation and what to do next (82%), as was the case in Year 13 (82%). However, among those with who declared a disability (77%) and those over 50 and at risk of unemployment (77%) this proportion was lower.

Overall, around nine in ten (89%) recall receiving this information, which is on par with Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) (88%). Female customers (91%) and those with Level 3 or higher qualifications (91%) were particularly likely to report they received the information, whereas male identifying customers (87%) BAME customers (86%) and those aged 19 or younger (82%) were least likely to recall receiving it.

The majority of telephone customers found the information they received useful (94%), and six in ten found it very useful (58%). These results represent a significant increase from Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) (92% and 56% respectively). Six per cent of customers found the information not very or not at all useful down from 7% in Year 13). These results demonstrate the continued value of the information provided to telephone customers. Single parents were more likely to find the information very useful (75%), as were female customers (65% compared to 52% of male customers), and customers aged 25 to 49 (63%).

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

Nearly eight in ten customers (79%) had just one face-to-face meeting with a National Careers Service adviser, which has increased since Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) (77%). Around one in five (18%) had two or more meetings which is a significant decrease from the findings for Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) (20%). Customers who declared a disability (21%) and were aged over 50 and risking unemployment (23%) were the most likely to have had at least two meetings. Male customers (19%) were more likely to have had multiple meetings than female customers (17%).

Face-to-face customers from the North West (86%), the East of England and Buckinghamshire (83%) and from the South West and Oxfordshire (82%) were more likely to have had one meeting (versus 79% average).

On average, customers spent 39 minutes speaking to their adviser, which is in line with Year 13 (April 2023 and March 2024) (39 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 (35 minutes, compared with 41 minutes for those aged 50 and over). Meetings with customers who were single parents (43 minutes on average), aged over 50 and risking unemployment (41 minutes) with Level 4 or higher qualifications took longer (40 minutes), customers who had declared a disability (40 minutes), as did meetings with those who have used the Skills Health Check (42 minutes), and with customers in the North East and Cumbria (43 minutes) and South East (41 minutes).

The two main reasons for attending more than one meeting were that the adviser was reviewing or amending their CV (30%) or that the adviser could not answer all the questions during the first meeting and needed to provide more information (17%). These were also the two main reasons reported in Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) (23% and 18% respectively). However, as a close third reason, customers (15%) said they had more than one meeting because the adviser suggested they come back in.

Nearly six in ten customers (57%) who had more than one meeting saw the same adviser each time, whereas four in ten (40%) saw different advisers. The majority (74%) of customers did not mind this, as was the case previously.

4.3 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 Heath Check tool and the Discover your Skills and Careers tool with their adviser in their meeting.

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- 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, Careers Advice, National Careers Service website and webchat.

Skills Health Check

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

Of the face-to-face customers, half (50%) went through the Skills Health Check diagnostic tool in a meeting, consistent with Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) (50%). Face-to-face customers who had the same adviser (if they had more than one meeting) were more likely to have gone through the tool (57% compared to 50% who had different advisers). In terms of key groups, those aged over 50 and risking unemployment (54%) and those unemployed for less than 6 months (53%) were most likely to have gone through the Skills Health Check. By region, those in the East Midlands and Northamptonshire were least likely to report that they had gone through the Skills Health Check (46%). Those who are satisfied with the Service were also more likely to have used the tool (54% compared to 28% who were dissatisfied with the Service).

Nine in ten (92%) customers that had gone through the Skills Health Check said this it was useful, which is comparable to Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) (91%), and half (51%) said it was 'very useful'. Fewer than one in ten customers (6%) did not find the Skills Health Check to be useful and those aged over 50 and risking unemployment (7%) were more likely to say that the Skills Health Check was not very useful.

The main reasons given by customers for not rating the Skills Health Check as useful were that it told them things they already knew and that the questions weren't relevant (both 27%).[3]

Overall, nearly three in ten (28%) customers said their adviser referred them to the Skills Health Check digital tool, which has increased significantly from Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) (25%). There were few differences among key groups, although BAME customers (25%) 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 (36% compared to 16% of those with no action plan).

[3] Small base size (174) should be treated with caution.

Of those who had been referred to Skills Health Check, four in ten said that they had used it (42%), which is consistent with in Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) (42%). Customers with an action plan were more likely to used Skills Health Check (43%, compared to 29% of those without an action plan). Among key groups, customers with Level 3 or higher qualifications (46%) and customers unemployed for between 6 and 12 months (52%) were more likely to have used it and those with below Level 3 qualifications (39%), single parents (37%) and unemployed for longer than 12 months (35%) were less likely to have used the tool.

Nine in ten customers who were referred to and used this tool found it useful (88%), which is in line with Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) (89%) and includes 47% who found it 'very useful'. Only ten percent did not find this tool useful.

Discover your Skills and Careers

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

Among face-to-face customers, four in ten (39%) went through the Discover your Skills and Careers tool in their meeting, comparable to Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) (39%). Those who had more than one face-to-face meeting (45%) and who had the same adviser (48%) were more likely to have gone through the diagnostic tool, as were single parents (45%), those with below Level 3 qualifications (42%) and those without a disability (40%). As was the case previously, almost all of these face-to-face customers found the tool useful (93%) and around half (55%) said it was very useful, compared with just five percent who did not find the tool useful. 18-24 year olds, both those receiving benefits and those NEET (both 96%), along with single parents (98%), those with below Level 3 qualifications (96%), those without a disability (95%) were more likely to find it useful.

Overall, three in ten customers were referred to the Discover you Skills and Careers tool (31%) the same proportion as Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024). There was also variation among key groups, with those unemployed for over 12 months (28%) or aged 50 and above and at risk of unemployment (26%) less likely to have been referred. However, those with an action plan were also more likely to have been referred (40% compared to 18% with no action plan).

Under half of customers (46%) that were referred to Discover your Skills and Careers said that they had used it, significantly higher than in Year 13 (43%). Usage of the tool was higher among customers aged 18 to 24 (46%) and those with higher levels of qualifications (50% level 3 or higher).

The vast majority of customers who used this tool found it useful (91%), and nearly half (49%) found it 'very useful'. Only 7% did not find it useful. These results are consistent with Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024). Customers who were unemployed for over 12 months were more likely to find the Discover Your Skills and Career Tool useful (96%), however, those who had declared a disability (10%) were more likely than average (7%) to say they did not find it useful.

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Explore Careers

This is a tool that helps people find out what a job involves and if it's right for them.

Over four in ten customers (44%) were referred to Explore Careers by their adviser. This was more common among face-to-face customers than telephone customers (46%, compared with 41% of telephone customers). Of the key groups, those who had Level 4 or above qualifications (47%), identified as BAME (46%), those unemployed for less than 6 months (46%) and those without a disability (45%) were more likely to be referred, whereas customers self-reporting a disability (42%), those unemployed for longer than 12 months (40%) or those aged 50 and above and at risk of unemployment (38%) were less likely to have been referred to Explore Careers.

Amongst those who have been referred, just under half (48%) have gone on to use the tool. Those with qualifications above Level 3 and Level 4 (54% and 56%, compared with 43% of those with qualifications below Level 3) or that had been unemployed for less than 6 months (50%) were more likely to have used it. Customers declaring a disability were less likely to have used the tool (44%). Overall, the majority of these customers found the tool useful (92%) and nearly half found it very useful (47%). All of these results are in line with Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024).

Find a Course

This is a search tool to help you look for different types of courses and learning opportunities.

Nearly half (48%) of customers were referred to Find a Course by their adviser. This was more likely to be the case amongst customers aged 25 to 49 (52%), and BAME customers (51%). Those who were unemployed for more than 12 months (45%), 18-24 and NEET (44%) and aged over 50 and risking unemployment (44%) were less likely to have been referred.

Amongst those who have been referred, just over half (53%) have gone on to use the tool. BAME customers were more likely to have used the tool (56%, compared with 51% of white identifying customers), and as with other diagnostic tools, usage was also higher among those with qualifications at Level 3 or Level 4 or higher (57% or 59% respectively), as well as those who had been unemployed for under 6 months (56%) and those with an action plan (56%, compared with 40% of those without an action plan).

Most of these customers found the tool useful (89%), and half (50%) found it very useful, whereas just nine percent said it was not useful. There were few differences among the key groups, those aged 18-24 and receiving benefits (92%) and those without a declared disability (90%) were more likely to say that the tool was useful. In comparison, those aged over 50 and at risk of unemployment (13%) were more likely to say they didn't find it useful.

The results for this tool are all consistent with Year 13 (April 2023 and March 2024).

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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 (62%) which is in line with Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) (62%). Those with Level 3 or Level 4 qualifications or higher (67% and 69% respectively) were more likely to recall drawing up an action plan, as were female customers (65%, compared to 60% for male customers). In contrast, those aged over 50 and risking unemployment (31%) were more likely than average (28%) to say they did not have an action plan drawn up.

Furthermore, among face-to-face customers, those who had multiple meetings (65%, compared with 61% who only had one) and who had the same adviser (68%, compared with 62% who had different advisers) were more likely to recall a Skills Action Plan being drawn up. Similarly, telephone customer who had multiple calls (70%) were slightly more likely to recall a Skills Action Plan being drawn up than those who had one call (66%), though this was still significantly higher than the average (62%). This suggests that having a more intensive level of interaction may relate to recalling having a Skills Action Plan.

Among those who recalled having a Skills Action Plan, half of customers felt they had a great deal of involvement in drawing up their plan (48%), which is significantly lower than Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) (48%). A further four in ten (39%) reported that they had some involvement, which is with a significant increase from year 13. Single parents (57%), female customers (52%), those aged 25 to 49 (52%) and those with Level 3 or Level 4 or higher qualifications (50% and 51% respectively) 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 (91%), consistent with Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) (90%), and half (50%) rated it as 'very useful' (again consistent with 50% in Year 13). Single parents (62%) and BAME customers (54%) were more likely to find the Action Plan very useful. Just seven percent found the Skills Action Plan 'not very' or 'not at all' useful, and this was more common among those with Level 3 or Level 4 or higher qualifications (9% and 10%). As was the case in Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024, the main reasons were that it was too general/not related to my situation (22%), they already knew the information (20%), or did not think it was relevant to their situation (18%)

Webchat

Around one in four customers (23%) were referred to webchat by their adviser, consistent with Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) (23%).

Amongst those who have been referred, a quarter (25%) have gone on to use the tool. Those in learning were more likely to have used it (37%) as were BAME customers (33%). Usage of this tool

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was lower among customers declaring a disability (22%) and those unemployed for less than 6 months (21%).

As with other tools, nine in ten of those that had used webchat said it was useful (91%). Six in ten (60%) rated it as 'very useful', whereas less than one in ten (7%) said it was not useful. Those with an action plan were more likely to rate the tool as useful (93%

National Careers Service website

Three quarters (75%) of all customers were referred to the National Careers Service website by their adviser during their advisory meeting. Of those who had used the website, 92% found this useful.

4.4 Follow-up actions

Reported follow-up by the National Careers Service

Four in ten face-to-face and telephone customers said that the National Careers Service had been in touch with them again after their initial contact (42%), consistent with Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) (42%).

Single parents (48%), those with Level 3 or Level 4 or Higher qualifications (44% and 46%), and Unemployed for less than 6 months (45%) and without a self-reported disability (43%) were more likely than average to have received follow-up. In contrast, those aged 18 to 24 and receiving benefits or NEET (both 61%), those with qualifications below level 3 (57%) and those self-reporting a disability (57%) were more likely than average (55%) to have not had any contact since their initial contact. In terms of region, Yorkshire and the Humber (50%), and the East Midlands and Northamptonshire (46%) were most likely to have received a follow-up as shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Proportion of customers who have had follow-up contact from the Service

	Total	London	East of England & Bucks.	East Midlands & North.	Yorkshire & Humber	West Midlands & Staff.	South West & Ox.	South East	North West	North East & Cumbria
Base:	*8,813*	*1,096*	*803*	*787*	*1,186*	*1,103*	*885*	*1,003*	*1,077*	*873*
No	55%	53%	55%	51%	47%	56%	62%	56%	64%	51%
Yes	42%	44%	42%	46%	50%	41%	35%	40%	33%	45%

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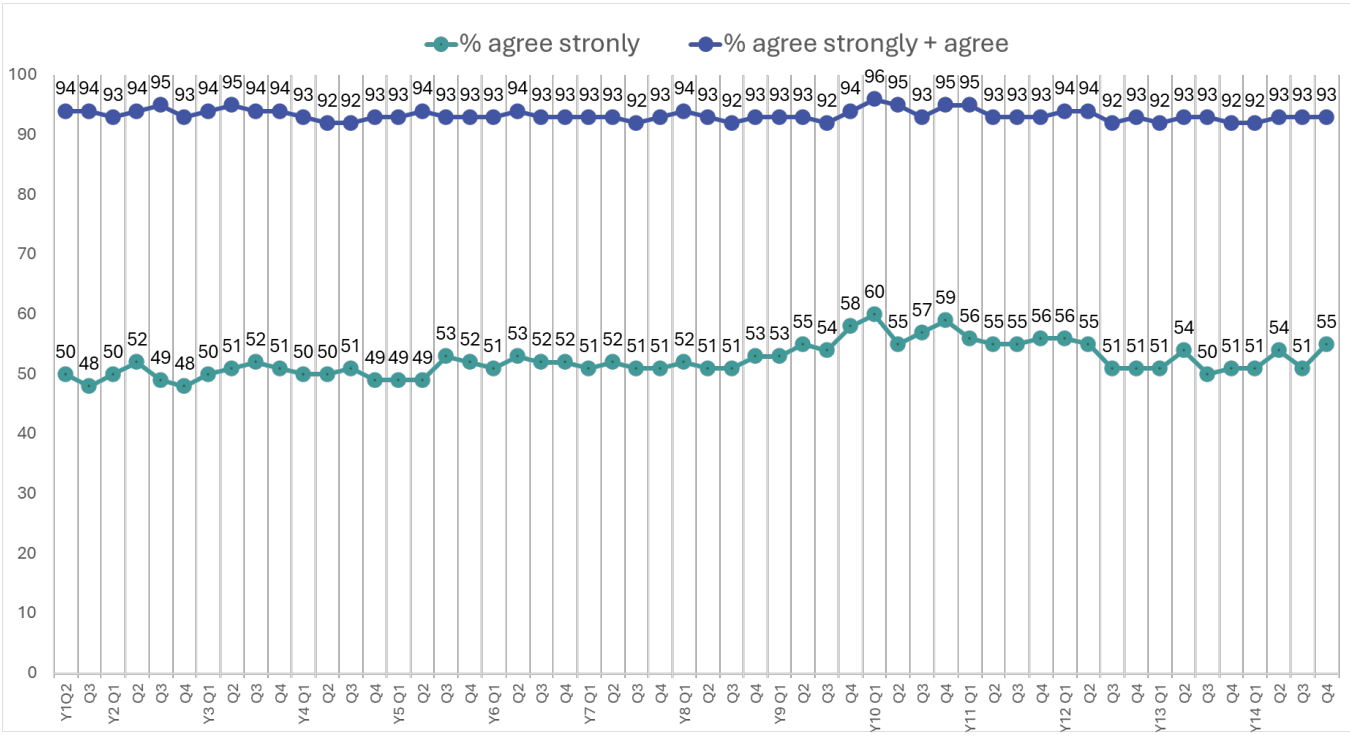
4.5 Overall perceptions about the quality of the Service

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 14 (April 2024 to March 2025) customers agreed that the quality of service was good (93%), while only a small minority disagreed (6%).

Ratings have been consistently high over time but the proportions of those who strongly agree that the Service is good has increased to 55% in Q4 of Year 14 (April 2024 to March 2025).

Figure 4.1: 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:

- 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).
- Agreement that the quality of the Service was good was also relatively high among those single parents (96%), those with below level 3 qualifications (95%) and those who did not declare a disability (94%).
- In each region at least 90% of customers agreed that the Service was good. It was highest in North East and Cumbria (96%), Yorkshire & Humber (95%), and the South East (95%). These figures are significantly higher than in London (90%).

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- 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 (93%). As in Year 13, those who had a Skills Action Plan (96%) were more likely than those who did not (90%) to agree that the quality of the Service was good.
- Among customers who had multiple calls, those who only spoke to one adviser were significantly more likely than customers who spoke to multiple advisers to regard the Service as good (93% compared to 86%). This reflects little change from Year 13.

4.6 Overall satisfaction with the National Careers Service

Face-to-face and telephone customers

Overall, the majority of face-to-face and telephone customers were satisfied with the National Careers Service (86%). This is consistent with Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024). Only 5% of customers were dissatisfied, with little change seen over time. as shown in Figure 4.2 below.

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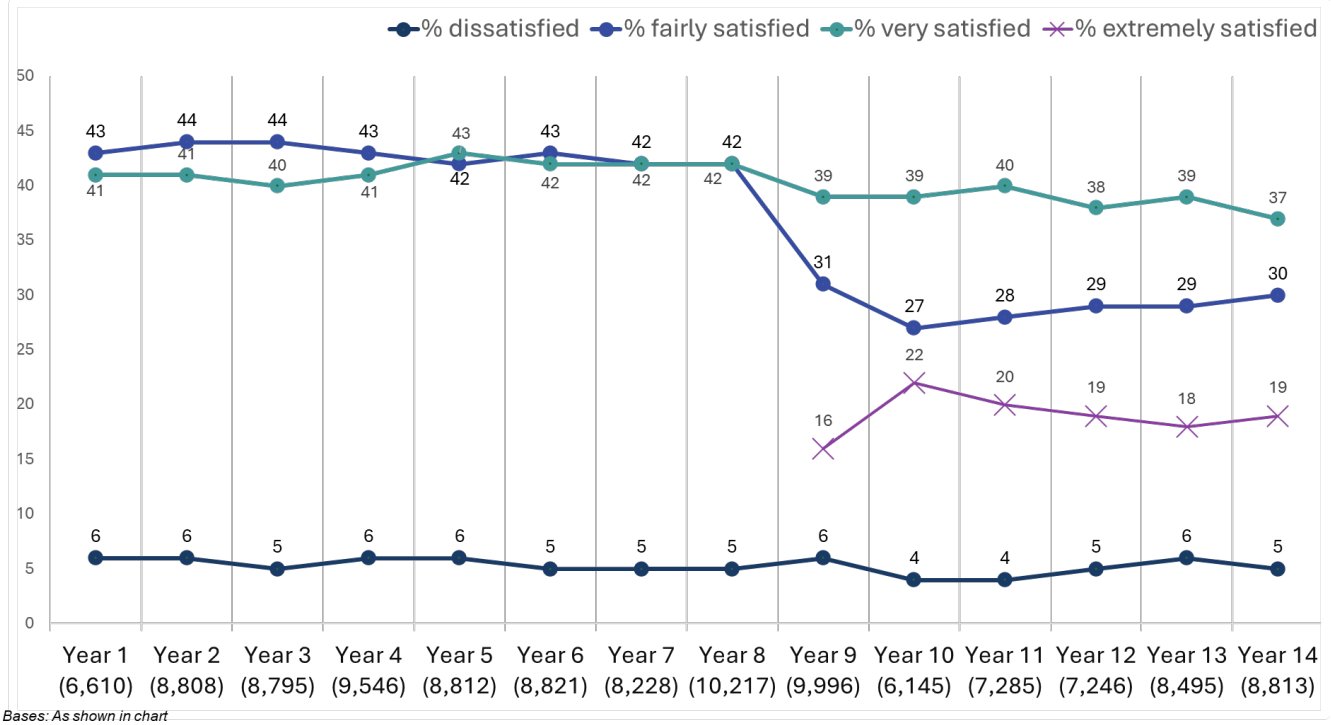
Figure 4.2: Ratings of satisfaction and dissatisfaction amongst face-to-face and telephone customers[4]



Bases: As shown in chart

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

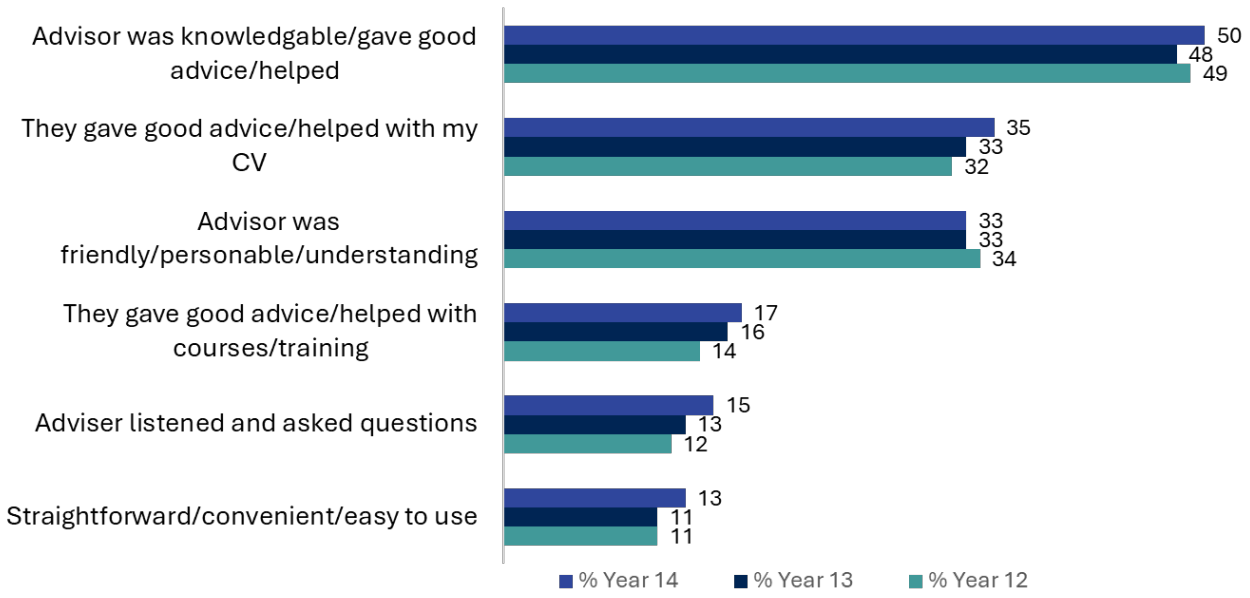
- Female customers were more likely to be satisfied (87% compared with 85% male customers).
- Customers aged 18 to 24 and receiving benefits (88%) were more likely to be satisfied than average. This figure is similar to that recorded in Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024). (89%)
- Customers aged 50 or above and at risk of unemployment (85%) were in line with average satisfaction levels.
- Single parents (91%) and customers with below Level 3 qualifications (88%) were more likely to be satisfied than average (86%).
- Customers who self-reported a disability were less likely to be satisfied than customers who did not self-report a disability (84% compared to 87%).

[4] 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.

- Telephone customers who had multiple calls were more likely to be satisfied if they spoke to the same adviser rather than multiple people (87% compared to 80%).
- By region, customers in the South East (91%), the North East & Cumbria (91%) and Yorkshire and Humber (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 (91%, compared to 81% of those who did not) or agreeing a Skills Action Plan (91% compared to 77% who did not).

Customers who were satisfied with the Service were asked for the reasons why they were satisfied. The main reasons for satisfaction relate to the individual advisers that customers dealt with. Most frequently, customers said that the adviser was knowledgeable or gave good advice (50%), the adviser gave good advice about CVs or generally helped with their CV (35%), was friendly, personable or understanding (33%), or gave good advice relating to courses or training (17%). As shown in Figure 4.3 below, these responses were very similar to those seen in Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) reflecting consistent delivery of quality over time.

Figure 4.3: Top reasons for satisfaction with service in Year 14, Year 13 and Year 12



Bases: All telephone and face-to-face satisfaction customers who were satisfied (Year 12: 6,263, Year 13: 7,342, Year 14: 7,600)

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

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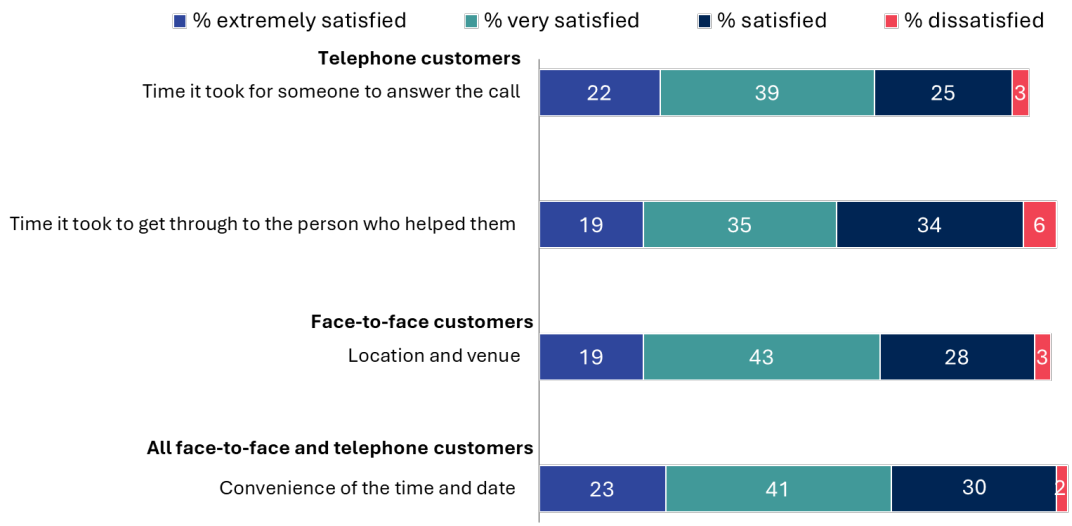
- The most common criticism, as stated by a majority of those dissatisfied with the Service, was they did not feel they received the help or information they wanted and/or needed (48%). Almost three in ten dissatisfied customers reported a lack of follow-up from advisers (27%).
- There was some criticism of not being helped to get a relevant course or training (16%).
- Some customers wanted help with their CV and felt the support they received was insufficient (13%).

4.7 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 remains in line with previous years.

Figure 4.4: Customer satisfaction with logistical arrangements



Base: Year 14 Telephone customers (2,934), Telephone customers who spoke to more than one adviser (333); Face-to-face customers (5,879), all face-to-face and telephone customers (8,212)

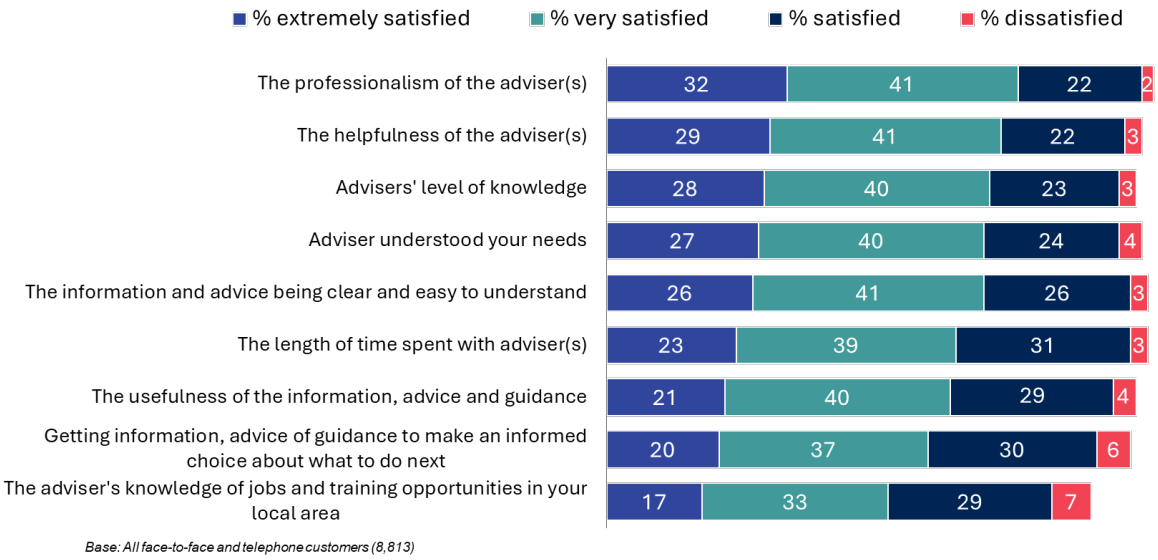
Over eight in ten (86%) telephone customers were satisfied with the time it took for someone to answer their call. Amongst telephone customers who spoke to one adviser, 88% were satisfied with the time it took to get through to the person who helped them. Both figures are similar to Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) (85% and 86%, respectively).

Approximately nine in ten face-to-face customers were satisfied with the convenience of their appointment time (94%) and the location and venue where they received their advice (90%). These figures remain in line with Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024).

Customers also remained positive about both the assistance their advisers provided and the content and outcome of the National Careers Service intervention. As shown in Figure 4.5, 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 79%. As in Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) the highest satisfaction rating was given to the professionalism of the customer's adviser (95%).

Figure 4.5: Satisfaction with information and advice from the Service



Base: All face-to-face and telephone customers (8,813)

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

- Customers who had a deeper level of engagement with the Service overall were more likely than those who did not to be satisfied with the various aspects of the information and advice received. For example, those who recalled using the Skills Health Check were more likely to be satisfied with the helpfulness of the adviser (96% compared to those who had not recalled using the Skills Health Check, 90%).

- Customers who were 18 to 24 NEETs were more likely than average to say they were satisfied with the following measures: the information, advice, and guidance allowed them to make informed choices (89% compared to the average 87%), and the adviser's knowledge of local job opportunities (83% compared to the average 79%).

4.8 Recommending the National Careers Service

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 significant increase compared to Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) when it was 84%.

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

- Single parents (90%) and people of white ethnicity (87% compared to 85% among BAME customers)
- Younger customers (89% of people aged 18-24, compared to 83% of those 50 and over).
- Those who are aged 18 to 24 and NEET, and those who are 18 to 24 and receiving benefits (90% and 89% respectively).
- People accessing the Service in the North East & Cumbria (91%)
- Those who had engaged with National Careers Service tools such as the Skills Action Plan (92%) and the Skills Health Check (91%).
- Those who were satisfied with the Service overall (92%).

4.9 Improvements to the National Careers Service

Face-to-face and telephone customers

The majority of face-to-face and telephone customers could not think of any improvements that the National Careers Service needed to make (58%), consistent with Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) when it was also 58%. However, the two main suggestions for improvements also remain consistent with Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024), which are suggestions for more follow-up after initial meetings (10%) and for help to be more specific or better tailored (9%). No more than eight percent of respondents gave any other type of suggestion.

Customers with L3 or higher qualifications and those 50+ and at risk of unemployment were more likely than average to suggest more follow-ups after initial meeting (13% and 12% compared to the average of 10%). They were also more likely than average to suggest more specific or tailored support (11% and 12%) compared to the 9% average.

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5 Customer Progression

Beyond initial experiences, it is important to understand the longer-term impact of the service on customers' employment and learning outcomes.

Overall, Year 14 (April 2024 to March 2025) employment progression has significantly decreased from Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024).

Almost all face-to-face and telephone customers (97%) experienced some form of positive outcome in the six months since their call or meeting. Learning progression averaged 69% in Year 14 (April 2024 to March 2025), which is in line with Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) (71%).

Nearly half of customers (45%) achieved employment progression, a significant decrease from 49% in Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024). Those with Level 3 or 4 or higher qualifications (51 & 52%, respectively), 18–24-year-olds (52%), those working (68%), or unemployed for less than 6 months (50%), those who did not self-report a disability (49%) and those not in priority groups (49%) were more likely to achieve employment progression than average. Ninety-five percent of face-to-face and 93% of telephone customers indicated that they had gained some form of Personal Added Value since their contact with the National Careers Service. This was highest amongst younger customers aged 18-24 (97%).

This chapter analyses the progress of National Careers Service customers in the six months following their consultation. It focuses on three key performance indicators (KPIs): employment progression, learning progression, and a measure of personal added value. This last measure includes the development of both job-specific abilities and soft skills, such as teamwork and social skills. This chapter also investigates the degree to which customers credit their achievements to the guidance they received from the National Careers Service.

5.1 Overview of the extent of progression

Defining progression

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

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

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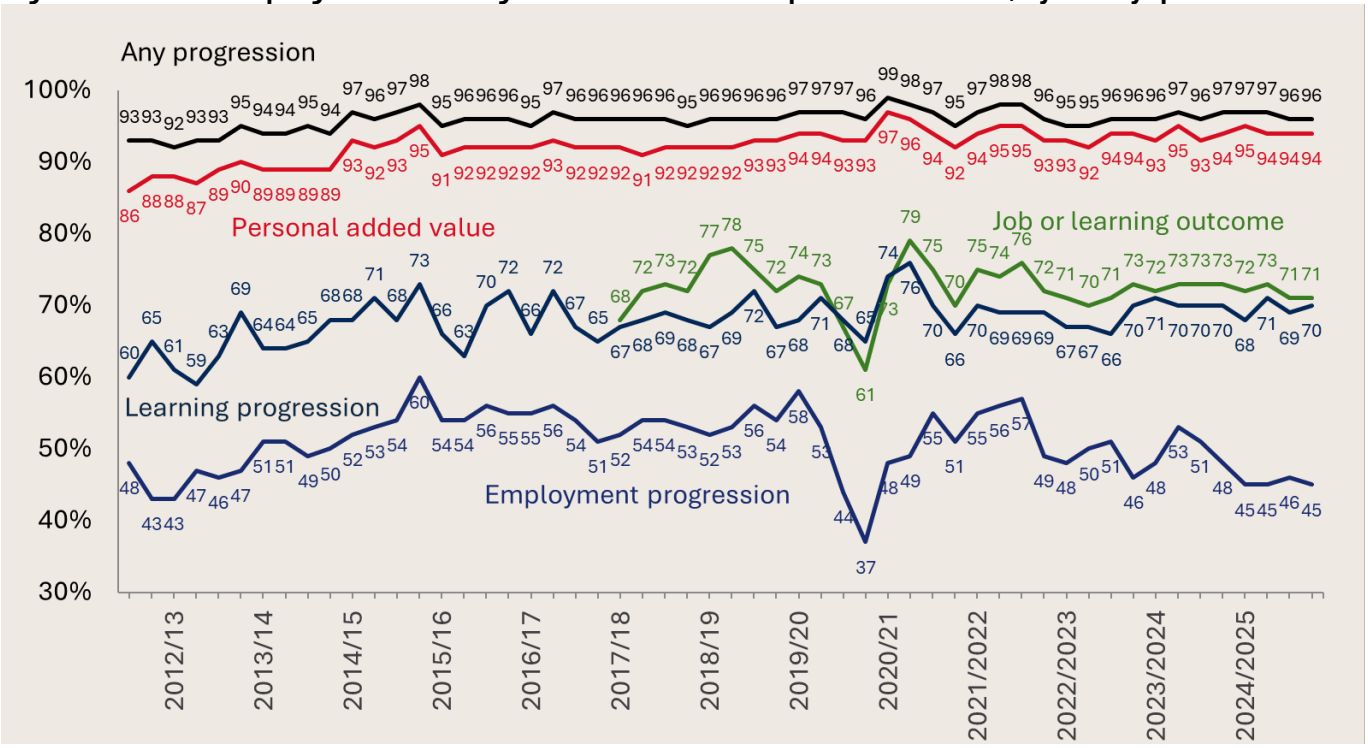
- Employment progression: whether customers have entered new employment, changed career, were promoted, started an apprenticeship[5] or improved their salary, and/or have taken up voluntary work.
- Personal Added Value: whether customers have achieved one or more of a range of 'softer' outcomes, such as improved work-related or more personal skills (IT skills, 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.[6]

Almost all face-to-face and telephone customers (97%) experienced some form of positive outcome in the six months since their call or meeting. The various measures are shown in Figure 5.1. Key Performance Indicators have remained consistent since Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024).

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



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

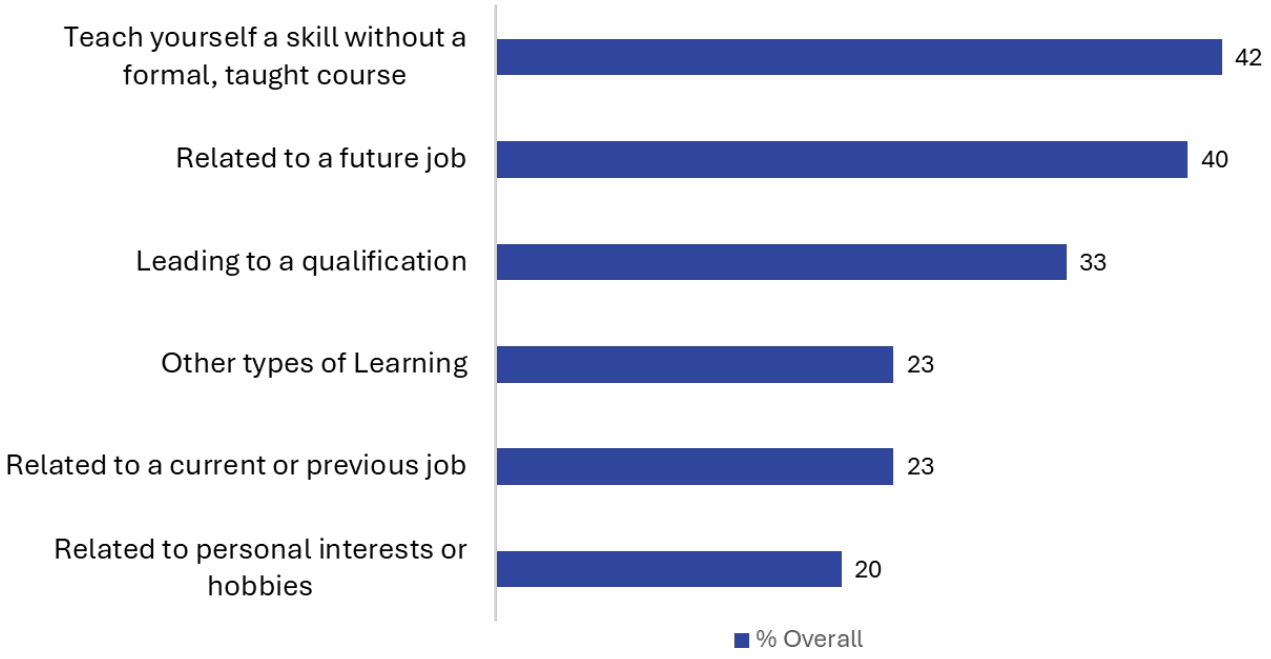
[6] The scale used to measure 'adviser played a part' was updated to a 7-point scale at the start of Year 9. This replaced the previous 3-point scale: 'a lot', 'a little' and 'not at all'.

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

In total, 69% of face-to-face or telephone customers achieved some form of learning progression, which is consistent with Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) (70%). Figure 5.2 details the different forms of learning and training customers have undertaken since their contact with the Service.

Customers participated in a variety of training or learning types. The most common of these was learning not associated with a formal, taught course (42%), which is a slight decrease from 44% in Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024). This was followed by training connected to a future job at 40%. The proportion of customers engaging in any other form of learning has also seen a slight decrease, moving to 23% from 25% in Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024).

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



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

- Those with higher qualifications: 76% of those qualified to Level 3 or above and 79% qualified to Level 4 or above, compared with 64% of those with qualifications below Level 3.
- Younger customers: 75% of those aged 20 to 24, compared to 70% of those aged 25 to 49 and 62% of those aged 50 plus).
- Younger customers who were not in education, employment or training (73%)

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- Customers who did not self-report a disability (71%) compared with customers who did self-report a disability (65%).
- BAME customers (74%) compared to white customers (67%).
- Customers whose first language is not English (74%), compared to 68% of those whose is English).

Those who have been unemployed longer than 12 months (66%), self-reported a disability (65%), have below level 3 qualifications (64%), are aged 50+ and at risk of unemployment (63%), and are single parents (63%) were least likely to have experienced most types of training or learning progression.

Most people who decided to do more learning or training did so for reasons connected to their job or career:

- to progress in a current job or career (90% said this was very or fairly important).
- to develop or improve job-related skills (90%).
- to raise qualification level (88%).
- to help get a job or change job (88%).
- to obtain a qualification (82%).
- to help change career (78%).

For customers who engaged in learning or training in the intervening six months, a quarter (25%) gained a qualification, a significant increase from 22% in Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024). A further 8% earned credits towards a qualification. However, almost six in ten (57%) did not achieve either outcome, which is down from 62% in Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024). Additionally, 7% stated they did not complete their qualification, marking a significant increase from 5% in Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024).

More than half of customers (59%) believed their National Careers Service adviser influenced their decision to undertake learning or training, an increase from 57% in Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024). This perspective was more prevalent among individuals with a qualification below Level 3 (62%), those for whom English is not a first language (68%), and customers without a self-reported disability (61%).

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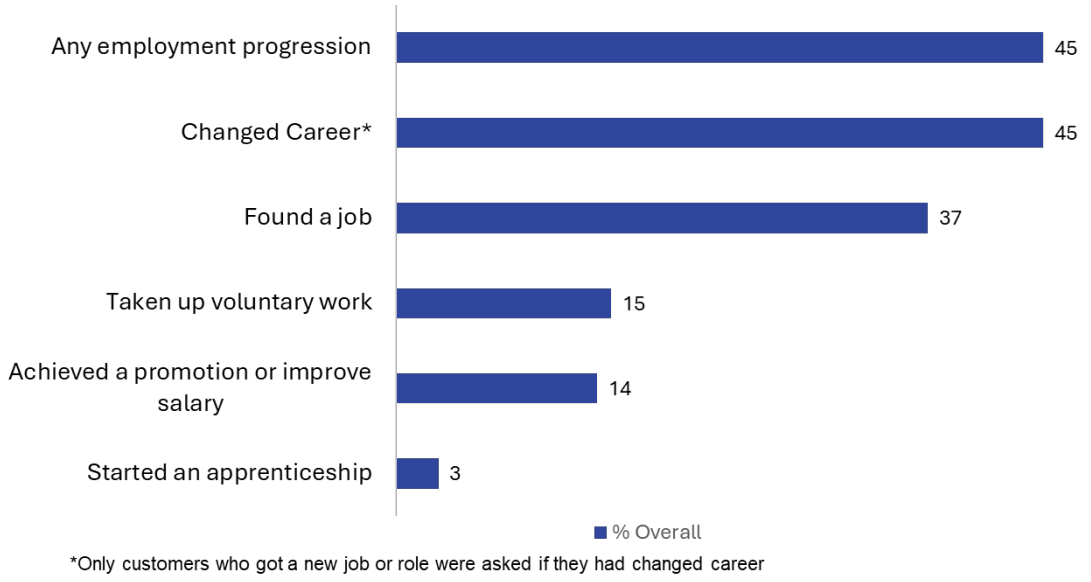
5.3 Employment progression among face-to-face and telephone customers

Overall employment progression

In total, 45% of face-to-face or telephone customers achieved some form of employment progression. This is a significant decrease from Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) (50%) and Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) (50%). Figure 5.3 shows the types of employment progression achieved.[7]

Within six months, 37% of face-to-face or telephone customers had secured a new job or role, a significant decrease from 41% in Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) and 43% in Year 12 (May 2022 to March 2023). Among those who found new employment, almost half (45%) switched careers. This is also a significant fall from 49% in Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) and an even steeper decline from the 52% recorded in Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023). Additionally, one in six (14%) obtained a pay rise or promotion, and a slightly higher percentage (15%) began voluntary work.

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



[7] 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.

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

- Those with higher qualifications: 51% of those qualified to Level 3 or above, 52% of those qualified to Level 4 or above, compared with 41% of those with qualifications below Level 3.
- Younger customers:52% of 18 to 24-year-olds, compared with 41% of those aged 50 plus).
- Younger customers who were not in education, employment or training (53%).
- People who had been unemployed for less than 6 months (61%).
- Customers who did not self-report a disability (49%) compared with those customers who self-reported a disability (38%).

Consistent with the findings from Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024), it is apparent that individuals unemployed for a shorter duration are significantly more likely to have achieved employment progression, highlighting the challenge for the long-term unemployed people in re-entering the workforce. Six in ten (61%) of those unemployed for less than 6 months experienced employment progression, in comparison to 47% of those unemployed for 6 to 12 months, and less than half (35%) of those who had been unemployed for more than a year.

Of the customers who experienced employment progression, half (53%) credited their National Careers Service adviser with contributing to this success. Those with qualifications below Level 3 were more likely to feel this way (57%) than those with higher qualifications (49%). A similar pattern was seen between customers without a self-reported disability (54%) and those with one (50%). The tendency to attribute progression to adviser support was also higher than average for female customers (56%), customers in the North East and Cumbria (59%), and non-native English speakers (65%)

Change in employment status

Six months prior to the survey, most customers (58%) had been unemployed and looking for work when they met their adviser. This figure is unchanged from Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) but is a fall from 60% in Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023). Just 7% were in full-time employment, 11% in part-time roles and 3% were self-employed. The rest of the customers were either in education (7%) or doing something else (13%), such as being unable to work due to sickness, having family commitments, or being retired. At 6%, the proportion unable to work due to ill health was the same as in Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024).

Figure 5.4 shows that, six months on, the proportion of customers who were unemployed and seeking work has dropped to 35%. This is an increase from Y13 (April 2023 to March 2024), when the figure was 32. The proportion of customers who were in full time or part time paid work increased 6 months on to 20% and 17% respectively.

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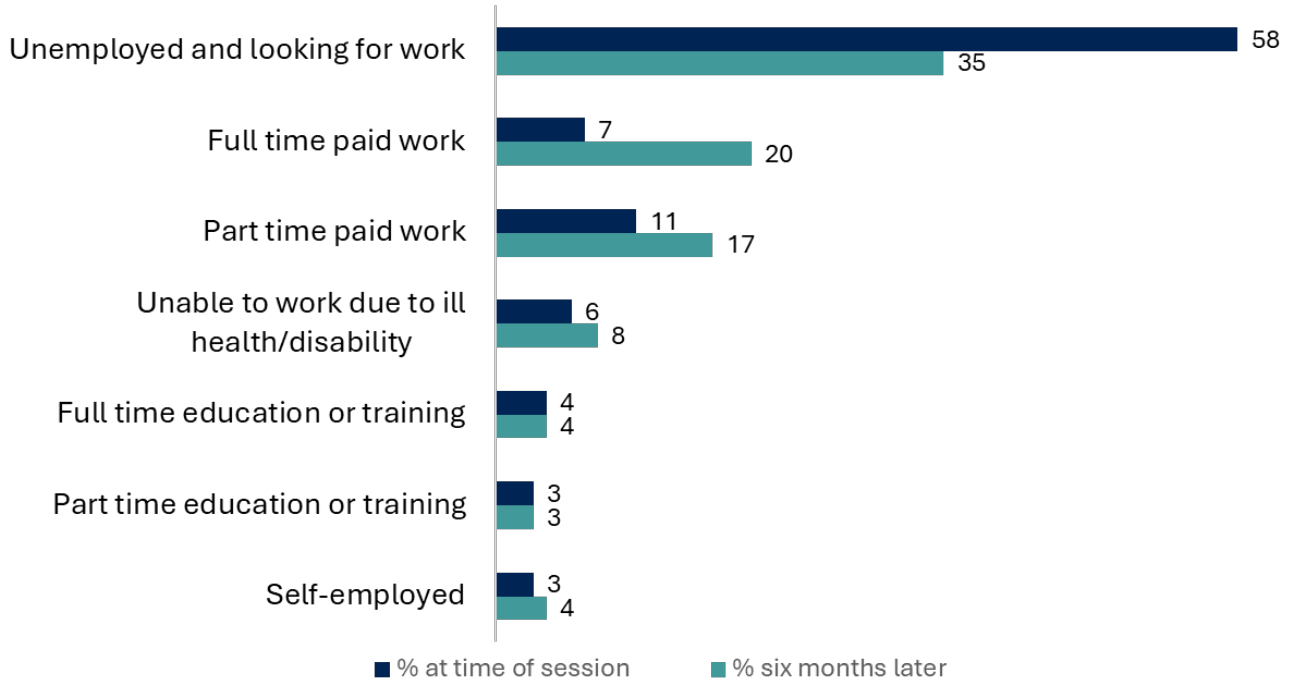
Figure 5.4: Employment status at the time of the call/meeting and six months later (%)



Base: All respondents (6,045), 6 months later, Working (2,469), Learning (434), Unemployed and looking for work (2,134), Other (714)

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

There were large increases in employment among the different customer groups (Table 5.1). For example, 32% of those aged 50 plus and unemployed or at risk of redundancy at the time of their adviser session were in work after six months, compared to 0% at the time of their session). However, this was a decrease from Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024), when the proportion was 37% six months after their session. There was also a substantial increase in employment (an increase of 31 percentage points) among 18 to 24 who were NEET[8] at the time of their initial interaction with the Service.

The number of customers in work with Level 3 or below qualifications nearly doubled after six months (34% vs. 18% at the time of their session). Customers who had been unemployed for more than 12 months were all unemployed and looking for work at the time of meeting their adviser, but this dropped significantly six months on to 64%.

Table 5.1 illustrates that the proportion who have gone into work within six months is marginally lower across most customer groups in comparison with Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024).

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

Table 5.1: Changes in employment status among key customer groups

		Year 14 (April 2024 to March 2025)			Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024)		
Customer group	*ULW = Unemployed and looking for work*	**Status at point of contact with National Careers Service**	**Status 6 months after contact**	**Change (ppts)[9]**	**Status at point of contact with National Careers Service**	**Status 6 months after contact**	**Change (ppts)**
18-19 year olds (395)	ULW	67%	43%	-24	65%	42%	-23
	In work	12%	34%	+24	12%	32%	+20
	In education	10%	12%	+2	15%	14%	-1
20-24 year olds (885)	ULW	68%	41%	-27	65%	35%	-30
	In work	15%	38%	+23	13%	40%	+27
	In education	10%	8%	-2	13%	14%	+1
Aged 50 plus (1,113)	ULW	61%	36%	-25	61%	33%	-28
	In work	21%	39%	+18	19%	40%	+21
	In education	1%	3%	+2	3%	3%	-
Aged 50 plus and unemployed or at risk of redundancy (690)	ULW	100%	50%	-50	94%	44%	-50
	In work	0%	32%	+32	6%	37%	+31
	In education	0%	2%	+2	0%	2%	+2
Customers self-reporting a disability (1,562)	ULW	55%	34%	-21	55%	32%	-23
	In work	17%	29%	+12	16%	32%	+16
	In education	4%	5%	+1	5%	6%	+1
Below Level 3 quals (1,359)	ULW	59%	38%	-21	60%	36%	-24
	In work	18%	34%	+16	19%	37%	+18
	In education	8%	6%	-2	7%	8%	+1

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

Unemployed for more than 12 months (925)	ULW	100%	64%	-36	100%	61%	-39
	In work	0%	18%	+18	0%	18%	+18
	In education	0%	5%	+5	0%	6%	+6
18 to 24 NEET (925)	ULW	89%	50%	-39	89%	45%	-44
	In work	0%	31%	+31	0%	34%	+34
	In education	0%	5%	+5	0%	8%	+8
Single parents (169)	ULW	52%	31%	-21	49%	26%	-23
	In work	22%	40%	+18	29%	45%	+16
	In education	6%	5%	-1	6%	8%	+2

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

- among face-to-face customers, the proportion who were unemployed and seeking work almost halved over the six-month period, from 60% to 35%
- the proportion of face-to-face and telephone customers in work (including self-employment) more than doubled, up from 22% at the time of their session to 41% six months later
- just under half of telephone customers were in work six months after their first interaction (45%), more than doubling from 26% at the time of contact
- there was a corresponding fall in the proportion of telephone customers who were unemployed, from 55% to 30%

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 customers whose first language wasn't English (59%) and BAME customers (55%).

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

Overall Personal Added Value

Consistent with Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024), a majority customers (94%) reported gaining some form of Personal Added Value following their contact with the National Careers Service. Mirroring the trend for learning and employment progression, younger customers were more likely to report this, with 97% of those aged 18 to 24 doing so, in comparison to 93% of those aged 50 and over.

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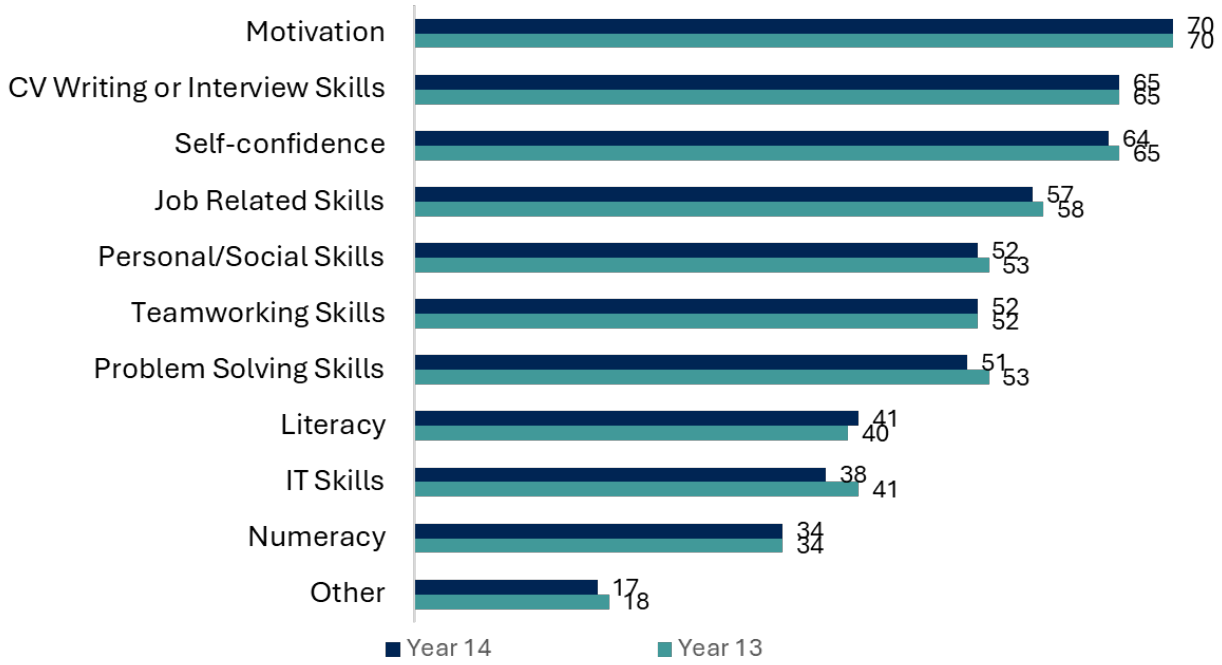
BAME customers were more likely to have gained Personal Added Value than white customers (96% versus 93%), as were customers who did not self-report a disability compared to customers who self-reported a disability (96% versus 91%).

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 5.5.

Skills and personal development have largely remained consistent with levels in Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024). Motivation remains the skill most commonly improved at 70%, consistent with last year. The next most common skills to be improved are CV writing or interview skills (65%), self-confidence (64%) and job-related skills (57%), all of which are in line with the Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) results. The only notable fall in improvement is in IT skills, which has fallen to 38%, from 41% in Y13 (April 2023 to March 2024).

Figure 5.5: Skills and personal development outcomes (%)



Base: All respondents (6,045)

Customers who received face-to-face guidance reported slightly higher levels of skills and personal development compared to telephone customers. For instance, there were differences in improving team-work skills (54% for face-to-face vs. 49% for telephone), literacy skills (42% vs.

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37%), numeracy skills (34% vs. 32%), and CV writing or interview skills (66% vs. 61%). The following groups of customers are consistently more likely to report having developed skills:

- Younger customers, particularly those aged 19 or younger. For example, 67% said they had improved their personal or social skills, compared to 37% aged 50 or above.
- Customers with no disability. For instance, 57% of customers who did not self-report a disability reported improved teamworking skills, compared to 43% of customers who self-reported a disability.
- Customers who do not speak English as their first language. For example, 55% said they had improved their literacy, compared to 35% of those whose first language is English.
- BAME customers. For example, 72% of BAME customers reported improved self-confidence compared to 58% of white customers.

Among customers who had developed their skills, more than half (56%) said their adviser helped them achieve this, which is a slight increase from 54% in Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024). Several customer groups were more likely than average to say that their adviser had helped them: female customers (58%), BAME customers (59%), those with sub-Level 3 qualifications (60%), and single parents (67%). Another component of the Personal Added Value KPI is an improved ability to make future decisions on careers, training, or learning. In the last six months, eight in ten (80%) of customers said this ability has increased, including 41% who felt it increased 'a lot'. The proportion of customers who reported their ability to make future decisions had increased a lot was higher than average across several key customer groups: female customers (43%), those aged 18 to 24 (43%) and 25 to 49 (43%), non-native English speakers (49%), BAME customers (47%), and those without a self-reported disability (45%).

Positive changes at work

Customers who were employed at the time of their interview were asked about a range of other benefits they might have experienced in their job or career in the six months after their interaction with the National Careers Service. Figure 5.6 lists these benefits. It is important to understand that only 'getting more job satisfaction' is included in the main Personal Added Value key performance indicator.

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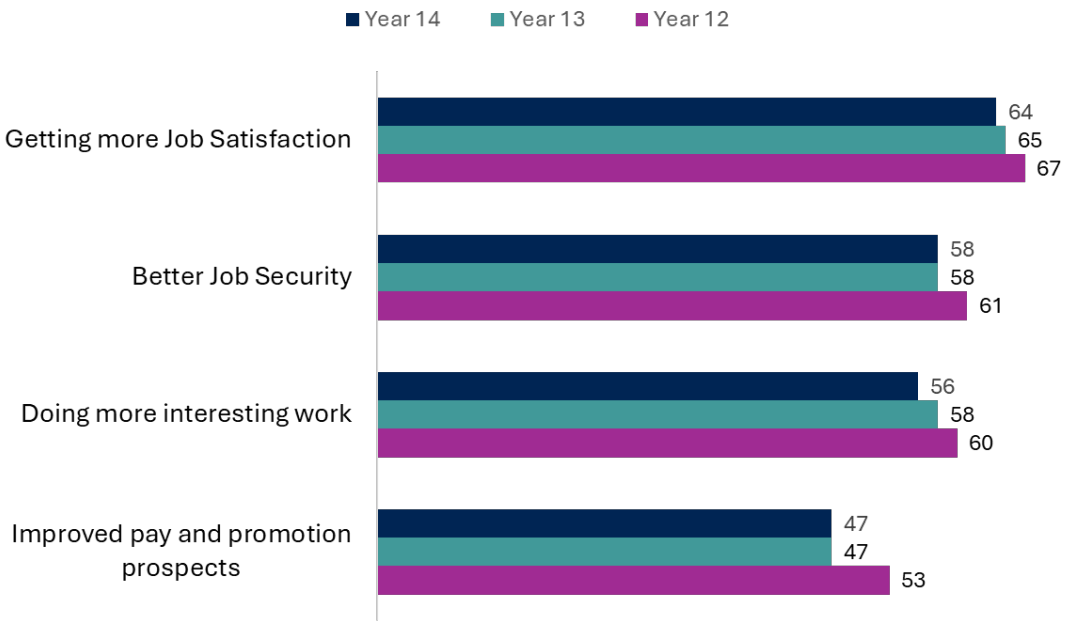
Figure 5.6: Positive changes at work (%)



Base: All progression telephone and face-to-face customers who are in work (Year 14 – 2,538, Year 13 – 2,606, Year 12 – 2,437)

Positive changes in the workplace for Year 14 (April 2024 to March 2025) remained broadly consistent with Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024). However, these figures still represent a significant decrease from Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023), conforming to the overall downward trend in the last three years. For example, 64% of customers in work report they were getting more job satisfaction, a rate significantly lower than the 67% in Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023). Following this pattern, 47% of customers felt their pay or promotion prospects had increased since contact this year, significantly lower than the 53% recorded in Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023). The number of customer who reported they were doing more interesting work also fell (56% in Year 14 (April 2024 to March 2025) and 58% in Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024), compared to 60% in Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023)), as did the number who felt they had better job security (58% in Year 14 (April 2024 to March 2025), compared to 61% in Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023)).

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

- Younger customers (18 – 24 year olds) are more likely than average to report improved pay and promotion prospects (60% compared to 47%), job security (75% compared to 58%), job satisfaction (76% compared to 64%) and doing more interesting work (63% compared to 56%).
- Customers whose first language is English were more likely than those whose first language is not English to report increased job satisfaction (66% compared to 58%), greater job security (60% compared to 54%), and improved pay and promotion prospects (50% compared to 40%).

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- White customers were more likely than BAME customers to say that their pay and promotion prospects had improved (50% compared to 42%) and their job satisfaction had increased (67% compared to 62%).
- Customers who did not self-report a disability were more likely to be doing more interesting work (57%).

Among customers who benefitted from positive changes at work, half (52%) credited the National Careers Service adviser for at least part of that success. This is significantly lower than the 55% reported in Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024). This view was more common for female customers compared to male customers (56% versus 49%), non-native English speakers over native speakers (59% versus 49%), and BAME customers over white customers (55% versus 50%).

5.5 Career management skills

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

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

Younger customers (aged 18 to 24) who were NEET were more likely to report improvements in all these career management skills. For example, 88% said their awareness of work opportunities had grown. The same was true for BAME customers when compared to white customers; for example, 87% reported an increased interest in learning, compared to 76% of white customers. In contrast, customers aged 50 or over who are an employment risk and those with a self-reported disability were less likely to report improvements. Women were more likely than men to have become interested in learning (82% versus 79%), and the same was true of customers whose first language is not English (89%, compared to 77% of first language English speakers).

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

While overall progression trends are informative, regional differences offer further insight into service effectiveness across the county. This chapter examines key regional variations. Customers across all regions have consistently expressed positive views of the National Careers Service. However, satisfaction with both the quality of service received and with the National Career Service overall was significantly higher than average in Yorkshire and the Humber, the North East and Cumbria, and the South East. In contrast, London and East Midlands and Northamptonshire reported below average satisfaction on both measures.

People accessing the Service in North East and Cumbria (91%) 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 (83% compared to 86%).

High levels of customer satisfaction with the logistical aspects of face-to-face meetings have been sustained and built upon from Year 12 (May 2022 - April 2023) through to Year 14 (April 2024 - March 2025). When it comes to the location and venue of meetings, some regions significantly outperform the national average of 90%. These include the North East and Cumbria (95%), the North West (94%), and Yorkshire and Humber (93%). In contrast, London and the West Midlands and Staffordshire were the only regions to fall significantly below this average, both at 88%. For satisfaction with the time and date of meetings, the national average is 94%. The only region to dip below this was the East Midlands and Northamptonshire (92%). The North East and Cumbria stood out with an above average satisfaction score of 96%

Satisfaction with specific aspects of advisers' skills, knowledge and helpfulness remains very high. In Year 14 (April 2024 to March 2025) there were some differences by region reported 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 with aspects of the adviser's service tended to be lower in London than other regions.

Customers across all regions were positive about the information, advice and guidance they received. Mirroring the feedback on adviser skills and knowledge, satisfaction with the usefulness of the information, advice and guidance was above average in the North East and Cumbria (94%), South East (92%) and Yorkshire and Humber (92%). However, customers in London were less likely to report being satisfied with the usefulness of the information, with a rating of 85%.

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In Year 14 (April 2024 to March 2025) the majority of customers (97%) experienced some form of positive outcome in the six months following their meeting with the Service. This includes job and learning outcomes as well as personal added value such as increased confidence or motivation. The proportion experiencing any positive outcome was higher than average in London (98%), despite being the region with the lowest satisfaction.

Learning progression is in line with Year 13 (April 2022 to March 2023) (71%) compared to 69% in Year 14 (April 2024 to March 2025). All regions were in line with the average for Learning Progression, apart from London, which was significantly higher (74%), and Yorkshire and Humber, which was significantly lower (61%).

Customers in North East and Cumbria (51%) and North West (49%) were significantly more likely than average (45%) to report employment progression. In contrast, employment progression was significantly lower in West Midlands and Staffordshire (40%).

Across the country, the face-to-face elements of the National Careers Service are delivered via multiple, community-based contractors. This chapter examines regional variations in the National Careers Service's service delivery. It begins by analysing the demographic profiles of customers across different regions and then focuses on regional differences in Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and other significant outcomes. In this section, the term 'customers' refers specifically to customers who have engaged with the service through face-to-face or telephone support.

6.1 Customer profile in different areas

Table 6.1 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 (16%) had lower proportions of customers aged 18 to 24 years than average (22%). It was highest in the North East and Cumbria (27%), West Midlands and Staffordshire (27%) and in Yorkshire and Humber (26%).
- The East of England and Buckinghamshire (27%), the South West and Oxfordshire (26%), and the South East (28%) had the highest proportion of customers aged 50 or over. The North West (19%) and West Midlands and Staffordshire had the lowest at (18%).
- The North East and Cumbria (60%) and East Midlands and Northamptonshire (55%) had a significantly higher proportion of male customers than average (50%). Fewer than half of the Service's London customers identified as male (44%), making it the only region where the majority are female (53%).
- Customers in the South East (64%) were more likely than the average (59%) to be unemployed and looking for work at the time of their initial contact. Customers from the

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South West and Oxfordshire (25%), East of England and Buckinghamshire (24%), East Midlands and Northamptonshire (24%) and the North West (23%) were more likely than average to be in work at the time of contacting the Service.

Table 6.1: Profile of customers by area

	All	London	East of England and Buckinghamshire	East Midlands and Northamptonshire	Yorkshire and Humber	West Midlands and Staffordshire	South West and Oxfordshire	South East	North West	North East and Cumbria
Base:	*8,813*	*1,096*	*803*	*787*	*1,186*	*1,103*	*885*	*1,003*	*1,077*	*873*
18 to 24	22%	16%	21%	22%	26%	27%	20%	22%	22%	27%
25 to 49	47%	54%	44%	43%	44%	47%	45%	43%	50%	42%
50+	22%	22%	27%	24%	22%	18%	26%	28%	19%	22%
Female	47%	53%	48%	44%	46%	47%	46%	49%	47%	38%
Male	50%	44%	50%	55%	52%	51%	51%	49%	50%	60%
Below Level 3	27%	23%	28%	29%	33%	27%	23%	29%	25%	29%
Level 3 and above	51%	55%	52%	48%	42%	49%	58%	49%	54%	51%
In work	21%	18%	24%	24%	20%	21%	25%	17%	23%	19%
Unemployed and looking for work	59%	61%	56%	55%	59%	59%	56%	64%	56%	60%

6.2 Satisfaction

Overall satisfaction

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

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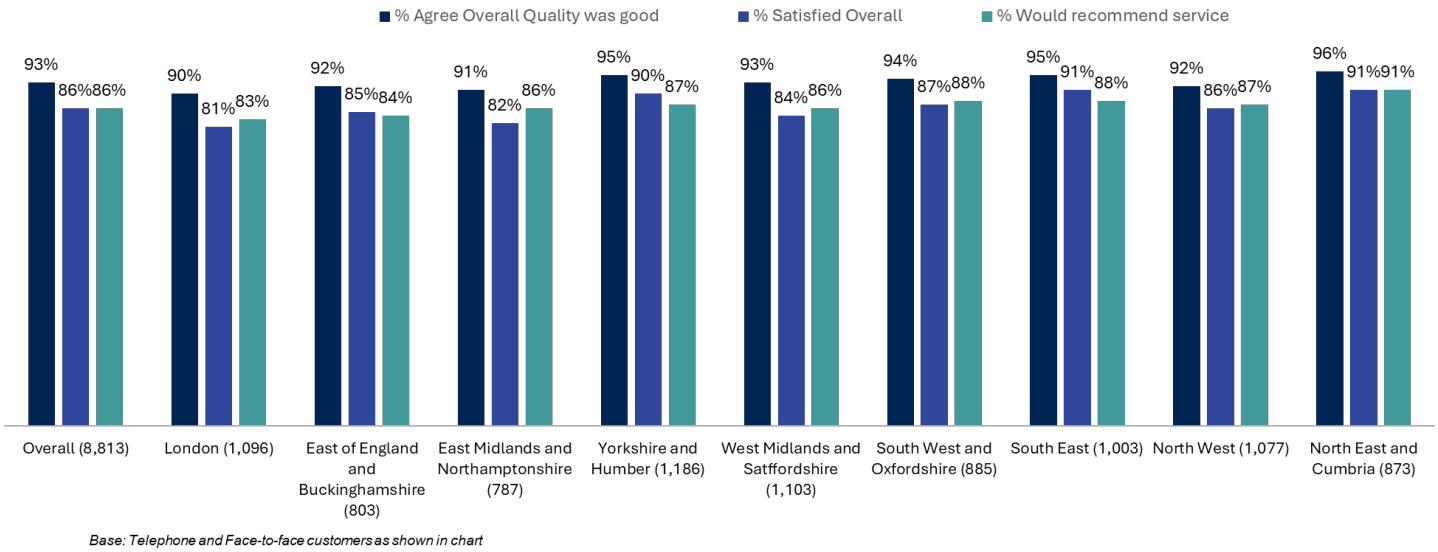
There were only a few statistically significant differences with regard to perceived quality of service, overall satisfaction or levels of recommendation (Figure 6.1). The notable differences are:

- The proportion of customers agreeing the overall quality of service was good was significantly higher than average in North East and Cumbria (96%), Yorkshire and Humber (95%) and the South East (95%).
- In East Midlands and Northamptonshire (91%) and London (90%) agreement was significantly lower than the national average.
- Satisfaction with the Service overall was highest, and significantly above average, in the South East (91%), North East and Cumbria (91%), and Yorkshire and Humber (90%).
- Satisfaction was significantly below average in London and East Midlands and Northamptonshire (81% and 82% respectively).
- People accessing the Service in the North East and Cumbria (91%) 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 (83%) was significantly below the national average.

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



Base: Telephone and Face-to-face customers as shown in chart

Satisfaction with operational aspects and the adviser

Most regions had a very similar level of satisfaction with the location and venue for their face-to-face meetings, although face-to-face customers in North East and Cumbria (95%), in the North

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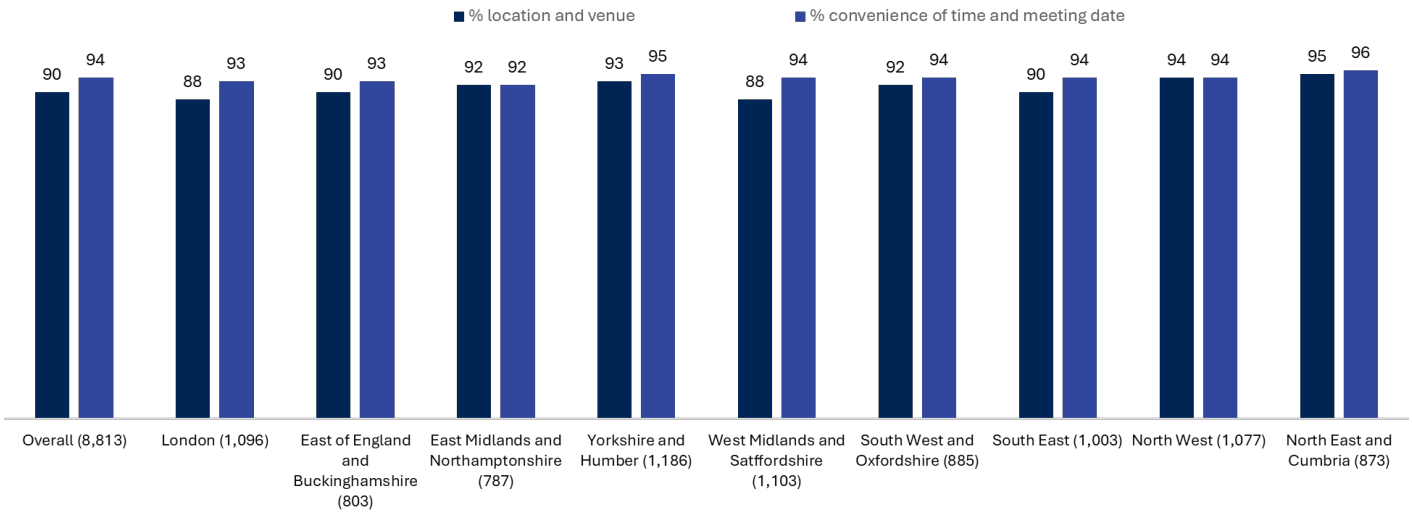
West (94%) and in Yorkshire and Humber (93%) were more likely than average to be satisfied with this. London and the West Midlands and Staffordshire were the only regions with a lower-than-average level of satisfaction with the location and venue (both 88% compared to 89% average).

Satisfaction with the time and date of the customers' meeting remained high, with only the East Midlands and Northamptonshire (92%) below average (94%). In North East and Cumbria (96%) the level of satisfaction was above the national average.

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



Base: Telephone and Face-to-face customers as shown in chart

Nationally, almost nine in ten (86%) of those contacting the Service by telephone were satisfied with the length of time it took to answer the call. Except for London (72%) and the West Midlands and Staffordshire (71%), where it was significantly lower than average.

Satisfaction with specific aspects of advisers' people skills, knowledge and helpfulness remains high. However, rating of the adviser's knowledge of jobs and training opportunities in the local area falls below all measures.

In Year 14 (April 2024 to March 2025) 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. These regions were also the most and least likely to be satisfied with the Service overall, suggesting satisfaction with adviser's characteristics is associated with overall satisfaction.

In addition to these general patterns, the following significant differences were observed:

- Customers in East Midlands and Northamptonshire (90%), London (89%) and the East of England and Buckinghamshire (89%) expressed lower levels of satisfaction with the length of time they spent with their advisers (compared to 92% overall).

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- Customers in Yorkshire and Humber (97%), South East (97%), and North East (97%) were more likely than average (95%) to be satisfied with their adviser's professionalism. Customers in London expressed significantly lower levels of satisfaction with their adviser's professionalism (93% compared to 95% overall).
- While the majority of customers in London (87%) and East Midlands and Northamptonshire (89%) were satisfied that their adviser understood their needs, this was significantly below the overall average of 91%.

Table 6.2: Satisfaction with the adviser by area

	All	London	East of England and Buckinghamshire	East Midlands and Northamptonshire	Yorkshire and Humber	West Midlands and Staffordshire	South West and Oxfordshire	South East	North West	North East and Cumbria
Base:	*8,813*	*1,096*	*803*	*787*	*1,186*	*1,103*	*885*	*1,003*	*1,077*	*873*
Length of time with adviser	92%	89%	89%	90%	94%	93%	92%	94%	94%	96%
Professionalism of adviser	95%	93%	94%	94%	97%	95%	95%	97%	95%	97%
Helpfulness of adviser	93%	90%	92%	91%	94%	92%	93%	95%	93%	97%
Adviser knowledge	92%	88%	90%	91%	94%	92%	92%	93%	92%	95%
Adviser understood needs	91%	87%	90%	89%	94%	90%	92%	93%	90%	95%
Adviser's knowledge of jobs / training opportunities in local area	79%	72%	76%	77%	81%	81%	79%	78%	79%	86%

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Satisfaction with the information and advice received

Satisfaction with the information, advice and guidance received by customers continues to be high, with nine in ten (93%) satisfied with its clarity and ease of understanding. Almost nine in ten are satisfied with its usefulness (90%) and the extent to which it provides the information required to make informed choices about their next steps (87%).

As shown in Table 6.3, customers across all regions were overwhelmingly positive about the information, advice and guidance received. As was the case with advisers' skills and knowledge, satisfaction with various metrics relating to the information, advice and guidance received 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 information, advice and guidance they received. Satisfaction with its clarity or how easy it was to understand was significantly lower in London (91% compared to 93% overall) as was the usefulness of the information, advice and guidance (86% compared to 89%).

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

	All	London	East of England and Buckinghamshire	East Midlands and Northamptonshire	Yorkshire and Humber	West Midlands and Staffordshire	South West and Oxfordshire	South East	North West	North East and Cumbria
Base:	*8,813*	*1,096*	*803*	*787*	*1,186*	*1,103*	*885*	*1,003*	*1,077*	*873*
IAG clear/ easy to understand	93%	91%	93%	93%	95%	93%	95%	95%	93%	96%
IAG useful	90%	86%	89%	88%	92%	90%	89%	92%	90%	94%
Got the IAG to make informed choice	87%	84%	86%	84%	90%	86%	88%	89%	86%	90%

6.3 Progression and career management skills

In Year 14 (April 2024 to March 2025) approximately 19 in every 20 customers (97%) experienced some form of positive outcome in the six months following their intervention. This includes a job or learning outcome as well as personal added value such as increased motivation or confidence. This is identical to the figure recorded in Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024).

Almost half (45%) reported achieving Employment Progression, which is significantly lower than Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024) and Year 12 (May 2022 to April 2023) (both 50%). Progression indicators by region are shown in Table 7.4, together with scores for development of career management skills (personal added value).

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

	All	London	East of England and 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	*6,045*	*745*	*616*	*585*	*841*	*768*	*468*	*689*	*778*	*555*
Any positive outcome	97%	98%	96%	95%	97%	97%	96%	94%	97%	96%
Learning progression	69%	74%	68%	68%	61%	69%	73%	71%	68%	69%
Employment progression	45%	44%	45%	47%	45%	40%	49%	48%	49%	51%
Personal Added Value	94%	96%	93%	92%	94%	95%	93%	92%	94%	93%

Employment progression was also significantly lower in West Midlands and Staffordshire (40%), compared to the average (45%).

There was little variation across regions regarding personal added value, such as increased motivation, confidence, a clear direction of what to do next. In Year 14 (April 2024 to March 2025) the figure ranged from 92% to 96% across regions. Customers from East Midlands (92%) and the South East (92%) were significantly less likely than average (94%) to report personal added value. Only customers from London were significantly more likely to report personal added value (96% compared to 94% average).

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Conclusions

This Year 14 (April 2024 to March 2025) report provides a comprehensive analysis of customer perceptions of the National Careers Service. The findings indicate and reaffirm that the Service continues to be a highly valued resource for individuals seeking to make decisions about learning, training, and work. Core metrics around service quality and customer satisfaction remain exceptionally high and stable, demonstrating the consistent professionalism and effectiveness of the Service's advisers.

The National Careers Service continues to perform very well in its direct interactions with customers. Overall satisfaction remains high and unchanged, with 86% of face-to-face and telephone customers satisfied with the Service. Furthermore, 93% of customers agreed that the quality of the service provided was good. These strong results are underpinned by very high satisfaction with individual aspects of the adviser sessions, including the professionalism of the adviser (95%) and the clarity of the information provided (93%). This positive sentiment translates into powerful advocacy, with 86% of customers having already recommended or saying they would recommend the Service, a significant increase from Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024).

The customer groups that have been consistently satisfied with the Service year on year include customers who had a Skills Action Plan (96%) or recall using the Skills Health Check (96%), and they were also most likely to say the quality of the Service was good.

Overall, Year 14 (April 2024 to March 2025) has seen a significant decline in employment progression (45%) compared with 49% in Year 13 (April 2023 to March 2024). While this may reflect broader economic conditions, it underscores the challenge faced by customers, particularly the long-term unemployed. However, almost all face-to-face and telephone customers (97%) experienced some form of positive outcome in the six months since their call or meeting. 18 to 24 NEETs (98%), those not self-reporting a disability (98%), and those unemployed for less than 6 months (98%) were more likely to have experienced any form of progression. Overall, 94% of face-to-face and telephone customers indicated that they had gained some form of Personal Added Value since their contact with the National Careers Service, which was highest amongst 18-24 customers (97%).

While overall performance is strong, there are notable regional variations. Satisfaction with the Service was significantly higher than the national average in the North East and Cumbria (91%), South East (91%), and Yorkshire and the Humber (90%). Conversely, satisfaction was lowest in London (81%). These regional leaders also scored highly on customers' willingness to recommend the Service. Employment progression also varied, with the North West (49%) and North East and Cumbria (51%) performing significantly above the national average (45%), while the West Midlands (40%) saw lower progression rates. Interestingly, despite lower satisfaction, customers in London reported higher-than-average learning progression (74%) and personal added value (96%).

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A clear opportunity for development lies in the promotion and integration of the Service's digital tools. While users of tools such as Discover your Skills and Careers and Find a Course report very high levels of usefulness (over 90%), only a minority of customers are being referred to or are using them. With most tools being recommended to half or fewer customers, there is a significant opportunity to increase the reach and impact of these valuable assets by encouraging advisers to integrate them more consistently into their guidance.

Finally, although satisfaction is high overall, a consistent area for improvement is the adviser's knowledge of local job or learning opportunities, which received the lowest satisfaction score (79%). Enhancing this specific knowledge area could help reverse the decline in employment progression and further improve overall customer satisfaction.

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