

Research Report



Quantifying Perceptions of a Career in Retail - 2008

Prepared for: Skillsmart Retail



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1 Executive Summary

1.1.1 Introduction

BMG Research has been commissioned by Skillsmart Retail to undertake a measure of attitudes of the retail sector amongst careers influencers who work with young people, in order to gauge any changes in perception following similar studies undertaken in 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2007. The aim of the research is:

To benchmark educational influencers' attitudes towards retail careers, by undertaking a CATI survey of Connexions staff in England, Careers Wales, Careers Scotland and equivalent in Northern Ireland and Heads of Careers from schools, HE and FE establishments.

BMG research has undertaken a quantitative survey of 406 career 'influencers'. The survey has been designed to cover a range of sources of careers advice for young people in the UK, including both formal careers advice and guidance provided by careers guidance professionals based with Connexions Services and HE and the 'friendly advice' provided by teachers to their pupils.

1.1.2 Perceptions of working in the retail, hospitality and finance and banking sectors

As was the case in 2007 the retail sector is rated most favourably in developing skills useful within the workplace, and in offering a wide range of opportunities for people of all ages.

There is also a significant drop in the view that the finance and banking sector generally has competent and effective managers since 2007, although this is still the sector which people are most likely to feel have competent and effective managers.

As was the case in previous years, the hospitality sector is considered to have long and unsociable hours by the majority of respondents, while only a quarter feel that this sector offers competitive salaries. There has been a significant rise in respondents with the view that the retail sector offers competitive salaries (35% from 27% in 2007).

There has been a significant drop from previous years in the perception of the finance and banking sector as the best to work in (37% from 46% in 2007). This drop is most likely due to the global economic troubles that have worsened and been widely reported during the autumn of 2008.

Perceptions in the hospitality and retail sectors have remained consistent with the previous year, and the proportion that feel that none of these sectors are good to work in, or did not give an answer have risen to a third (32%) from a fifth (20%) one year ago.

The amount of respondents reporting that they would not want their child working in each sector has risen significantly. The largest rise has been in the retail sector, where last year one in ten respondents said that they would not want their children working in this sector (7%), which has risen to 17%.

Long/unsocial hours and poor career prospects are the main reasons cited by those who would still not want their son/daughter to work in retail, although long/unsocial hours is still more of an issue in the hospitality sector.

1.1.3 Awareness of retail job roles

As in previous years, careers advisors have mentioned a wide range of jobs in the retail sector. Sales assistant / salesperson and store manager are the two most likely to be mentioned (69% and 54% respectively), which again is the same result as in all previous years of the survey. However, the amount of respondents mentioning a store manager has decreased significantly since 2007, from 69% to 54%.

1.1.4 Sources of information and influence for careers advisers

The majority of careers advisors, nearly two-thirds, say that there are particular times of year when sector-specific careers information is needed (63%). The months that respondents are most likely to think that specific careers information is needed is from September to November, where a third feel that this is the case. Around a quarter of respondents think that this information is needed from December through to April, and less than one fifth from May to August.

The information that careers advisors find most useful when researching a sector or giving advice is the career path available, the qualifications needed and information on specific job roles, all of which were mentioned by four in ten respondents (40%, 39% and 39% respectively).

As in previous years, the internet continues to be the source of information most used by careers advisors when researching an unfamiliar sector. Careers specific websites continues to be more popular than the internet in general (56% compared with 49% respectively). The only other source of information mentioned by more than one in ten respondents was reference books and directories (13%). There have been no significant changes since 2007.

As in previous years, career influencers still believe that specific careers advice websites are the most useful source of careers information. Booklets and leaflets aimed at young people and advisors are all considered useful sources of information by around four in five respondents. Of all the sources of information booklets aimed at young people has shown the largest rise in the proportion of advisors that consider it useful (77% from 70% in 2007).

Connexions are the most mentioned organisation by all respondents as who they would approach for information (39%). Just over half of respondents from Wales mention Careers Wales (52%), which is a significant drop from 2007 (61%). In contrast respondents from Scotland are significantly more likely to mention Careers Scotland as they were last year, rising from 51% in 2007 to 68% in 2008.

The views on the quality of careers information provided by retail employers continues to fluctuate year on year. Just over two in five (42%) respondents are of the opinion that the information is comprehensive, a drop from over half last year (51%) to a level similar to 2006 (40%). 6% of respondents in 2008 considered the information very comprehensive, the same amount as last year.

1.1.5 Career prospects in the retail sector

From 2005 until last year there had been a steady increase in the proportion of career influencers who were positive about the short term career prospects in the retail sector, but this has dropped significantly in 2008. Two in five (41%) respondents are positive about short term career prospects in retail, which is a drop from the high of three in five (69%) which was seen last year. Those who are negative about prospects in the retail have increased significantly from less than one in ten (7%) to one in five (19%).

Having increased from 2006 to 2007, the proportion of careers advisors who agree that the growth of online retailing will offer more retail opportunities in the retail sector has grown again in 2008. Almost half (48%) agree with this statement compared to one in five (22%) who disagree. This compares to 2007 where two in five (40%) agreed and a similar proportion (23%) disagreed.

1.1.6 Advice on setting up new businesses

Two-thirds of all careers advisors say that young people have asked them for advice about setting up their own business (66%), the same proportion as in 2007. This proportion varies among careers advisors, with advisors in school less likely to have been asked about setting up their own business than others.

When young people asked careers advisors about setting up their own business half of them were asking about setting up their own shop (50%).

1.1.7 Apprenticeships

Two in five (39%) agree that there are more young people seeking apprenticeships in retail than employers are offering them, and three in ten (31%) disagree. This represents a slight but not significant increase from 2007, where one third (34%) agreed that there are not enough apprentices for young people..

1.1.8 Whether retailing has become a better or worse place for young people to work in

Overall respondents are positive about changes in the retail sector over the last five years. Just over half of respondents (51%) had the opinion that retailing has become a better sector for young people to work in over the past five years, and a quarter (25%) feel that it has stayed the same. A minority of one in ten (11%) think that it has got worse and a similar proportion (12%) are not sure.

Connexions careers advisors are less positive than others about retailing as a place to work, with one in five (20%) with the belief that the sector has got worse in the last five years. HE careers advisors are most positive, with two thirds reporting that they feel the sector has become a better place to work in.

1.1.9 Awareness of Skillsmart Retail

As was the case in the previous three years, Construction Skills is the SSC that careers advisors were most likely to have heard of, with almost four in five (78%) reported knowing of them. This represents a continued year on year growth in the awareness of Construction Skills since 2004.

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Over a third of respondents are aware of Skillsmart Retail, a slight increase from last year.

Awareness of Skillsmart Retail differs according to the type of respondent surveyed, with FE and 'other' careers advisers being most aware (52%) and schools head of year / departments (30%).

Respondents who are aware of Skillsmart Retail were also asked if they have read *Retail Therapy*. There has also been an increase in this area as over two in five (42%) report having read the magazine, compared to a third (32%) last year, 28% in 2006, 42% in 2005, and 19% of respondents in 2004.

The top three ways in which careers advisors would like Skillsmart Retail to help them are to raise awareness of the sector, help them to access up to date information and for them to advertise/increase awareness of the Skillsmart Retail service.

2 Introduction

2.1 Study context

Skillsmart Retail Ltd is licensed, and largely funded by, the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills to work with retailers of all sizes to understand their skills issues and to develop solutions that meet their needs. An objective for Skillsmart Retail is to promote and raise the profile of the significant employment and career opportunities that exist within the industry.

As part of this, and as a contractual performance measure, Skillsmart Retail needs to provide an annual measure of attitudes towards the sector. A baseline of attitudes to retail careers was established in September 2004 by means of a telephone survey carried out by NOP World among 400 careers advisers throughout the UK. BMG Research was commissioned by Skillsmart Retail to repeat this research exercise in September 2005, 2006, 2007 and again in 2008 in order to gauge any changes in perception. The aim of the research is therefore:

To benchmark educational influencers' attitudes towards retail careers, by undertaking a CATI survey of Connexions staff in England, Careers Wales, Careers Scotland and equivalent in Northern Ireland and Heads of Careers from schools, HE and FE establishments.

Retailing is the largest private sector employer in the UK, accounting for one in ten of the workforce. It is also of major economic importance to the economy (retail sales were worth £236 billion in 2004). Nevertheless, it has been described by some as a "Cinderella" industry in terms of its status and its ability to attract the best talents. While the industry does encounter some recruitment and retention problems in filling lower paid and part-time positions, its full-time workforce is generally of high quality. UK retailing is widely regarded as being world class in this respect by many overseas competitors. It is therefore essential that Skillsmart Retail understands, on behalf of the industry, what more it can do to attract the next generation of leaders and managers. However, due to the economic climate many industries (including retail) are currently suffering and the results of the 2008 survey reflect this.

Young peoples' attitudes to retailing come from a wide variety of sources: social, educational and experience of retail work itself. Aside from the impact of social trends (which are difficult to control), it is believed that educational influencers such as careers advisers, teachers, further and higher education lecturers exert a major influence on young peoples' choices.

2.2 Overview of sources of careers advice and guidance for young people in the UK

Careers guidance is available to young people from a number of different sources in the UK. The majority of career guidance practitioners work within publicly-funded agencies, including Careers Scotland, Careers Wales, the Northern Ireland Careers Service, and Connexions Services.

Careers guidance practitioners also work in commercial companies, Further Education Colleges, private practice, recruitment agencies and Universities.

A brief description of the services provided by these organisations is detailed below¹, along with an overview of careers activities within schools.

2.2.1 Connexions

Connexions was introduced in England in April 2001 and provides a support service for young people aged 13-19. The service brings together the work of the Careers Service, Youth Service, Education Welfare Service and some aspects of health through local Connexions Partnerships. A new role of Personal Adviser has been developed within the Connexions Service to act as a single point of contact for young people. Personal advisers work in a range of settings including Connexions centres, schools, colleges and community venues.

It should be noted that the range of services provided by Connexions is considerably broader than careers guidance. It is intended to provide the full range of support services needed by young people in the transition from school. These could include, in addition to career guidance, help with issues as diverse as teenage pregnancy, financial advice and housing.

2.2.2 Careers Scotland

Careers Scotland was established in April 2002 and provides services, information and support to individuals at all ages and stages of career planning, and to employers wanting to recruit and maintain a productive workforce. Careers Scotland provides free careers information, advice and guidance to the people of Scotland - whatever their age, background or circumstances. The service is part of Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise. As well as individuals, Careers Scotland also works to support employers and the learning and guidance sector.

2.2.3 Careers Wales

Careers Wales is the national brand for all age information, advice and guidance services to individuals and employers. It was established in April 2001. Careers Wales is responsible for delivering statutory careers service, adult guidance, the learndirect call centre network, The Youth Gateway (a short intensive transition skills course for 16-17 year olds at risk in the transition from school), and education-business links.

2.2.4 Careers Service in Northern Ireland

The Careers Service in Northern Ireland provides a careers service to young people and adults, as well as an employment service. It is part of Northern Ireland's Department for Employment and Learning.

¹ Information about the provision of careers advice has been sourced from the following websites: www.icg-uk.org, www.connexions.gov.uk, and www.nacgt.org.uk

2.2.5 Careers education and guidance in schools across the UK

The 1997 Education Act made it a requirement that all schools should provide a minimum programme of careers education and ensure that all young people from the age of 13 have access to impartial careers guidance. A significant aspect of the provision of careers education and guidance in the UK is that all schools are required to have an accessible careers library that contains up-to-date information on career opportunities and on post-16 opportunities for further learning such as colleges and training providers.

Whilst there is a legislative requirement for careers education to be provided the exact nature of this has not been specified, other than guidelines issued to schools. As a result there is a diverse approach to the delivery of careers education programmes and the management of such programmes, and most teaching staff are involved in providing careers education and guidance to pupils and students.

Many schools have a 'Careers Co-ordinator' in place, who has designated responsibility for leading and managing this aspect of the school's work. Some of this time may be spent teaching careers education and/or providing initial guidance, but much of the time will be spent planning and supporting the work of other teachers. Careers co-ordinators are required to work with a range of teaching and non-teaching staff within the school and a range of external partners including Connexions and Careers Services, employers, training providers and representatives from FE and HE.

Heads of year are also often involved in providing young people with careers information and guidance, especially at key transition points such as supporting subject option decisions in Year 9, post-16 decisions at Year 11 and HE decisions at Year 13.

Heads of year and Careers Co-ordinators are sometimes involved in supporting students with their work experience plans, although the actual organisation and administration of work experience is normally led by a dedicated Work Experience Co-ordinator.

2.2.6 Careers guidance in Further Education Colleges

Within further education, there may be a range of guidance provision depending on the nature of the college and the client group. A careers adviser from Connexions or the local Careers Service is likely to be available to offer guidance interviews and there may also be a careers guidance practitioner appointed by the college itself. Many FE institutions have student services departments which offer a range of information, advice and guidance activities to students.

2.2.7 Higher Education Institutions

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) across the UK have no statutory responsibility to provide careers advice and guidance. However, such provision is viewed as an increasingly important role for institutions in this sector. Almost all HEIs have established their own dedicated Careers Service. The function of HE careers services is to help the institution support students and recent graduates, to plan and manage their own learning, and develop their long term career management skills.

2.2.8 The voluntary sector

Organisations within the voluntary sector may provide support and guidance as part of their work in supporting a wide range of target groups. This provision offered will vary depending on the organisation and its specific target groups but could include life skills and vocational training as well as counselling, advice and practical assistance, e.g. in undertaking interview practice and applying for jobs.

2.2.9 Career development consultancies

Independent career development consultancies are mainly based in the larger cities, especially in London and the South. These organisations mainly offer a one-off in depth service to clients that includes psychometric testing and an interview and provides the client with a report. They are also sometimes commissioned by large employers to provide support to staff who are about to be made redundant. They do not generally provide placement services and they may charge considerable fees depending on the service provided. These consultancies are usually used by adults rather than young people, so have not featured in this study.

3 Method of study and profile of sample

BMG Research has undertaken a quantitative survey of 406 career 'influencers'. The survey has been designed to cover a range of intermediaries who are involved in the delivery of careers advice for young people in the UK, including both formal careers advice and guidance provided by careers guidance professionals based with Connexions Services and HE and the 'friendly advice' provided by teachers to their pupils.

Respondents were interviewed by telephone over a two week period in November 2008. Interviews lasted approximately 15 minutes with Skillsmart Retail's identity as the client not being disclosed until the end of the interview.

The sample achieved is in line with the numbers of interviews achieved in the previous three surveys. Table 1 details the actual sample profile achieved in 2008, compared with 2007, 2006, 2005 and 2004.

Table 1: Sample profile – by job title (All respondents)

Respondent type	Number interviewed 2008	Number interviewed 2007	Number interviewed 2006	Number interviewed 2005	Number interviewed 2004
Connexions Personal Adviser/Connexions Assistant Careers Adviser	54	56	56	59	54
Careers adviser Other service/provider	46	49	48	49	46
FE careers Adviser	102	101	100	102	100
HE Careers Adviser	50	50	51	50	50
School Careers Advisers	53	50	51	50	50
School Head of Years/Department	101	100	100	100	100
Total achieved	406	406	406	410	400

Table 2 provides a profile of the national distribution of careers influencers interviewed, and also details the interviews achieved on a national basis in 2007, 2006, 2005 and 2004. In 2008, the number of interviews achieved in Northern Ireland was intentionally increased.

Table 2: National profile of interviews achieved (All respondents)

Country	Number interviewed 2008	Number interviewed 2007	Number interviewed 2006	Number interviewed 2005	Number interviewed 2004
England	303	316	315	318	313
Scotland	40	39	39	39	37
Wales	31	38	37	39	37
Northern Ireland	32	13	15	14	13
Total achieved	406	406	406	410	400

Throughout this report comparisons have been made with the findings generated from the 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2007 surveys. The sample sizes generated for all three surveys (c. 400) are subject to a maximum standard error of +/-5% at the 95% confidence level.

Since this survey is a comparison of five matched samples of 400 respondents, a difference of +/-7% would need to be seen year on year to be statistically significant. Figures have been marked with an asterisk throughout the report (*) where this is the case.

A more detailed summary of sampling errors is included in an Appendix to this report.

4 Perceptions of the retail sector

4.1 Perceptions of working in the retail, hospitality and finance and banking sectors

Respondents were read out a series of statements relating to different aspects of jobs, and were asked to state which sectors each statement applied to. Table 3 provides an overview of respondents' perceptions about the different aspects of each sector, and compares this year's findings with the results from the previous three years.

Table 3: Respondents' perceptions of how job aspects relate to different sectors (%)
(All respondents)

Which sector/sectors does the following statement apply to...	Finance and banking					Retail					Hospitality				
	'08	'07	'06	'05	'04	'08	'07	'06	'05	'04	'08	'07	'06	'05	'04
Develops skills useful in any workplace	77*	86	78	73	80	88	90	81	85	84	85	89	79	85	81
Offers a wide range of opportunities for people of all ages	63	59	58	50	61	87	85	82	79	87	83	85	77	78	82
Individuals are given responsibility at an early stage	47*	54	47	44	52	67	72	71	66	71	68	65	64	67	70
Generally has competent and effective managers	69*	78	70	77	84	59	63	53	62	61	55	59	50	56	57
Offers top quality training and career development	81	85	78	79	90	59	63	58	57	56	59	64	59	61	54
An employee friendly sector where employees are treated with respect	71	73	70	78	75	54	52	54	50	51	53	47	53	48	48
It involves long and unsociable hours	21	20	16	15	17	50	52	42	42	53	88	94	92	92	94
Offers competitive salaries	89	92	91	90	94	35*	27	29	31	29	24	20	23	20	21
Working in this sector is not very challenging	7	7	8	8	8	29	27	36	29	31	17	17	22	17	16
You need a degree to have any real career prospects in this sector	54	60	59	55	60	17	18	14	14	18	17	13	14	12	15

Sample base: 406 (2008), 406 (2007), 406 (2006), 410 (2005), 400 (2004)

*+/- 7% Difference FROM 2007

As was the case in 2007 the retail sector is rated most favourably in developing skills useful within the workplace (88%), and in offering a wide range of opportunities for people of all ages (87%). Respondents are notably less likely to have the view that the financing and banking sector offers opportunities for people of all ages in comparison to the retail and hospitality sectors (63% in finance, compared with 83% in hospitality).

The retail and hospitality sectors are considered to give individuals responsibility at an early age (67% and 68% respectively) more so than the finance and banking sector, where less than half (47%) feel that this is the case, which also represents a significant drop in perception since 2007 (54%).

There is also a significant drop since 2007 in the view that the finance and banking sector generally has competent and effective managers (69% from 78%), although this is still higher than both the retail and hospitality sectors, which have also dropped slightly but not significant since 2007 (59% and 55% respectively). Four in five respondents (81%) consider the finance and banking sector to offer top quality training and career development, compared to three in five in retail and hospitality (both 59%). There has been a slight but not significant drop in all sectors for this statement.

As was the case in previous years, the hospitality sector is considered to have long and unsociable hours by the majority of respondents (88%), while only a quarter (24%) feel that this sector offers competitive salaries. There has been a significant rise in respondents with the view that the retail sector offers competitive salaries (35% from 27% in 2007).

4.1.1 Differences in perceptions between respondent types

The following table highlights how perceptions differ according to the type of advisor. Due to the small base sizes involved many differences are too small to be significant, but the greatest differences have been highlighted in bold.

Table 4: Respondents' perceptions of how job aspects relate to the retail sector by job title (All respondents)

	Connexions adviser	Careers adviser - other	FE careers adviser	HE careers adviser	Schools careers advisor/ co-ordinator	Schools head of year / dept
Develops skills useful in any workplace	85	89	91	84	85	91
Offers a wide range of opportunities for people of all ages	78	89	83	86	92	91
Individuals are given responsibility at an early stage	59	67	69	74	68	64
Generally has competent and effective managers	57	54	57	66	58	59
Offers top quality training and career development	43	65	61	60	60	60
An employee friendly sector where employees are treated with respect	59	48	47	58	58	55
It involves long and unsociable hours	43	61	54	46	34	54
Offers competitive salaries	22	30	32	42	42	40
Working in this sector is not very challenging	37	24	29	18	30	30
You need a degree to have any real career prospects in this sector	20	15	10	10	30	19
SAMPLE BASE	54	46	102	50	53	101

School careers advisors and head of year or departments are particularly likely to agree that the retail sector offered a wide range of opportunities to people of all ages, especially in comparison to Connexions Advisors (92% and 91% respectively compared to 78%).

Connexions Advisors are also less positive than others with regard to the retail sector offering top quality training and career development and offering competitive salaries.

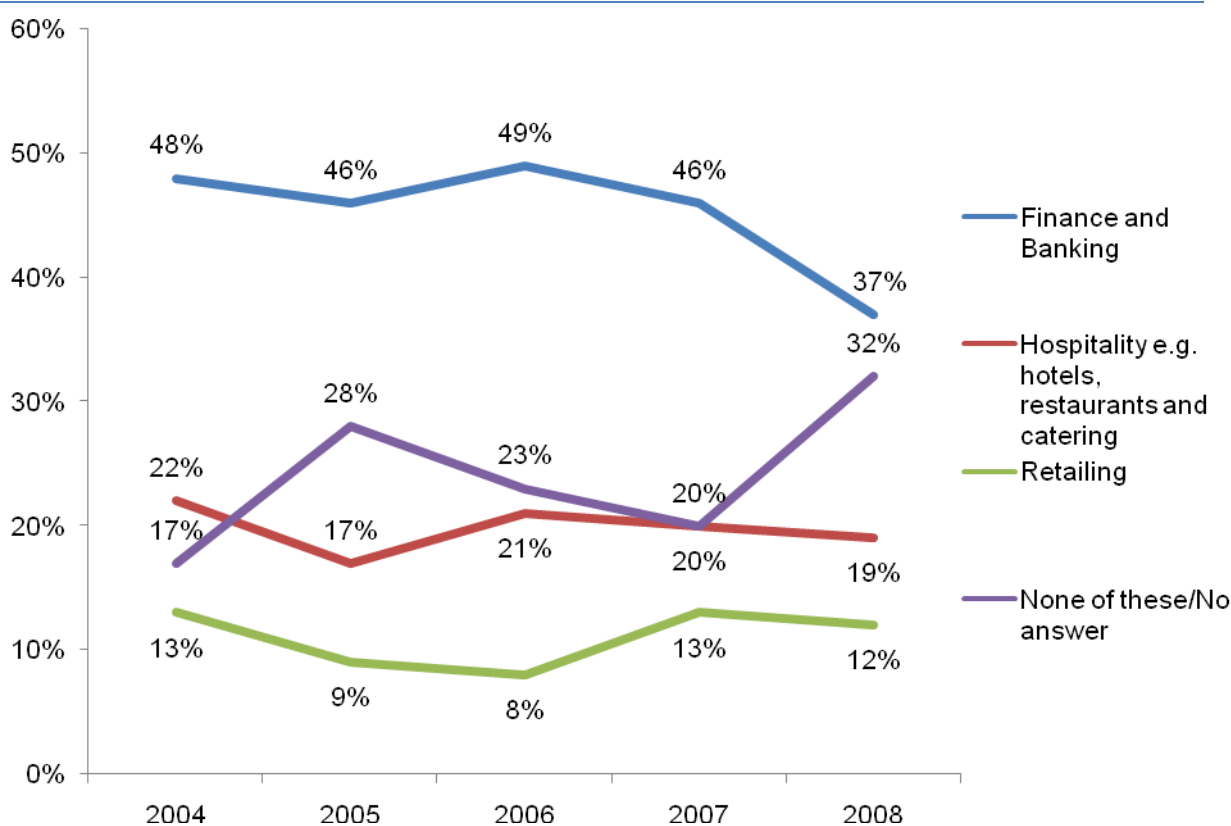
HE careers advisors, school careers advisors and school heads of years or departments were all more positive about the competitiveness of salaries in the retail sector.

Other careers advisors and FE careers advisor are less positive than other groups that the retail sector was one that is employee friendly.

4.2 Best sector to work in

Respondents were next asked to state which of the sectors they think would be the best to work in. The following chart shows this year's results compared with previous years.

Figure 1: Sector that advisors think is best to work in (All respondents)



Sample Base: 406 (2008), 406 (2007), 406 (2006), 410 (2005), 400 (2004)

There has been a significant drop from previous years in the perception of the finance and banking sector as the best to work in (37% from 46% in 2007). This drop is most likely due to the global economic troubles that have worsened and been widely reported during the autumn of 2008.

Perceptions in the hospitality and retail sectors have remained consistent with the previous year, with the proportion that feel that none of these sectors are good to work in, or did not give an answer, rising to a third (32%) from a fifth (20%) one year ago.

Even though the proportion has dropped in 2008, financing and banking is still considered to be the best sector to work in by every job role. Hospitality is also

considered to be a better sector to work in than retail with the exception of FE careers advisors.

The proportion of respondents who consider retail to be the best sector to work in varies widely by job role. Connexions and school career advisors are less likely to name the retail sector (9% and 8% respectively) in comparison to other careers advisors and FE careers advisors (17% and 15% respectively).

Table 5: Sector that respondents think is best to work in by job role (%)

	Connexions adviser	Careers adviser - other	FE careers adviser	HE careers adviser	Schools careers advisor/ co-ordinator	Schools head of year / dept
Finance & Banking	31	33	37	38	42	40
Retail	9	17	15	12	8	12
Hospitality	22	20	14	24	17	20
SAMPLE BASE	54	46	102	50	53	101

4.2.1 Reasons for perceptions

Respondents were asked to say why they thought that one particular sector is best to work in. This was an open-ended question and a code frame was developed to quantify the responses given. Table 6 provides a profile of the top five reasons identified for each sector.

Table 6: Top five reasons for sector being best to work in (respondents who said each given sector would be better)

Finance and banking		Retail		Hospitality	
Salary / Pay	38%	Career Prospects	36%	Career Prospects	24%
Career prospects	30%	Number of jobs that are available / growth sector / job security	20%	Due to the poor economic climate / 'credit crunch'	22%
Working hours	18%	Due to the poor economic climate / 'credit crunch'	20%	Enjoyment of social interaction / meeting with public	14%
Number of jobs that are available / growth sector / job security	16%	Interesting / exciting / enjoyable type of work	10%	Number of jobs that are available / growth sector / job security	13%
From previous experience	7%	Range of different jobs within sector	8%	Interesting / exciting / enjoyable type of work	13%
SAMPLE BASES	151		50		76

As in previous years salary / pay is the reason most likely to be mentioned as why the finance and banking sector is the best to work in. This is followed by career

prospects and working hours, the proportion mentioning career prospect having dropped since last year (from 36% to 30%).

Last year, enjoyment of social interaction was the reason most likely to be given as a reason for the retail and hospitality sectors being the best to work in. However this has changed significantly this year, with career prospects now considered to be the reason that these sectors are the best to work in. This is a rise from 19% to 36% in the retail sector, and from 13% to 24% in the hospitality sector.

A notable proportion mention that the poor economic climate (the 'Credit Crunch') is a reason for the retail and hospitality sectors being the best to work in (20% and 22% respectively), a reason only mentioned by a minority of those who think that the finance and banking sector is the best to work in.

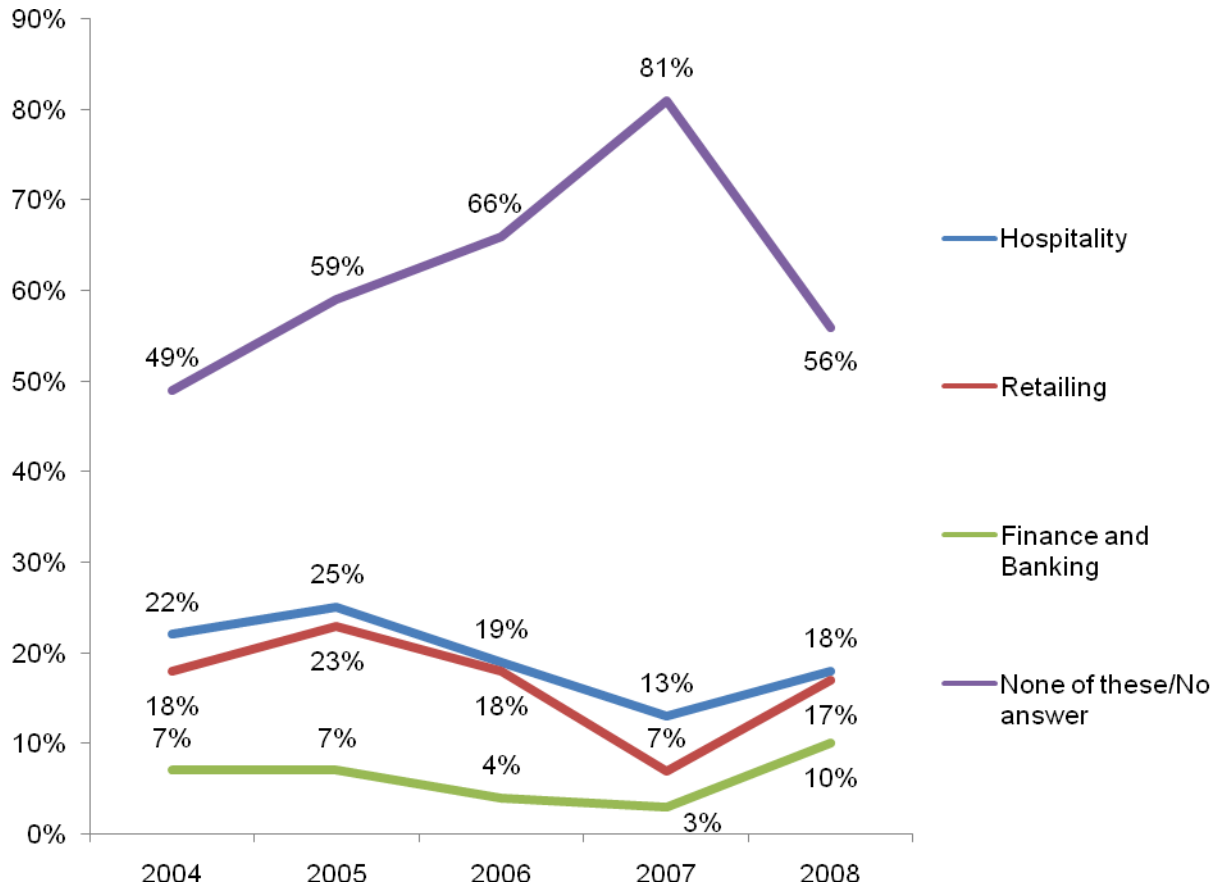
4.3 Sector respondents would not want their child to work in

Respondents were also asked which of the three sectors they would not want their children to work in. Changes in the economic climate seem to be reflected in the results of this question.

The proportion of respondents reporting that they would not want their child working in each sector has risen significantly. Last year a small minority (3%) said that they would not want their child working in the finance and banking sector, and this has risen to one in ten this year (10%). The rise in the hospitality sector was from 13% to 18%.

Last year one in ten respondents said that they would not want their children working in the retail sector (7%), and this has risen to 17% this year.

Figure 2: Proportion of respondents that would not want their son/daughter to work in each sector (All respondents)



Sample Base: 406 (2008), 406 (2007), 406 (2006), 410 (2005), 400 (2004)

4.3.1 Reasons for perceptions

Respondents were asked to give reasons why they would not want their child to work in a sector, the top five reasons for each sector are shown in Table 7. These figures need to be treated with some caution due to the very low base sizes involved.

Table 7: Top 5 reasons for not wanting child/children to work in sector (respondents who would not want their son/daughter to work in a given sector)

Finance and banking		Retail		Hospitality	
Due to the poor economic climate / 'credit crunch'	54%	Long / unsocial working hours	32%	Long / unsocial working hours	68%
Poor job security	21%	Poor career prospects	26%	Low salary / pay	25%
Poor career prospects	8%	Low salary / pay	23%	Poor career prospects	11%
Too much pressure / high demand placed on workers	8%	Poor job security	10%	Poor job security	8%
Moral / ethical issues	8%	Too much hard work / challenging type of work	9%	Lack of care / respect / appreciation from employer	7%
SAMPLE BASES	39		69		72

Of the increased numbers who said that they would not want their children working in the finance and banking sector, over half (54%) gave the poor economic conditions as the reason for it. This is also reflected in the one in five (21%) of respondents who cited poor job security, and one in ten (8%) who mentioned poor career prospects. None of these three reasons were cited by any respondent last year.

Of the respondents who would not want their children to work in the retail sector, the reasons most likely to be given are the long / unsociable working hours (mentioned by 32%), poor career prospects (26%) and low salary / pay (23%).

Reasons given in the hospitality sector are similar to those given last year. Long / unsocial working hours is mentioned by two thirds (68%) of respondents, low salary / pay by one quarter (25%) and poor career prospects by one in ten (11%).

5 Awareness of retail job roles

Respondents were asked to name all the job roles that they could think of within the retail sector, in order to establish their level of awareness of the range of opportunities that are available within the sector. Table 8 shows all of the job roles that respondents were able to identify.

Table 8: Retail sector jobs identified by respondents (All respondents)

Job role	% of respondents aware 2008	% of respondents aware 2007	% of respondents aware 2006	% of respondents aware 2005	% of respondents aware 2004
Sales assistant / salesperson	69	75	70	75	70
Store manager	54*	69	63	54	52
Cashier / till / check-out operator	17*	26	37	24	25
Buyer	29	33	33	35	32
Departmental managers / supervisors	26*	33	27	31	41
Personnel managers / staff	22	17	23	21	20
Shelf-filler	9	13	16	15	18
Shopkeeper	9	4	15	17	1
Stock controller	9	12	13	12	9
Marketing	16	13	12	13	17
Finance	13	13	11	11	16
Merchandiser	10	13	11	8	9
Window dresser	9	9	11	8	8
Logistics Head Office	4	9	7	5	5
Delivery driver	2	4	6	4	5
Visual merchandising	7	4	5	4	4
Personal shopper	2	2	4	**	**
IT	3	3	4	3	4
Customer service staff	4	5	3	3	**
Warehouse Manager/ Staff	0	5	1	**	**
Cleaning staff	0	3	**	**	**
Office/administration	1	2	**	**	**
Catering staff	1	2	**	**	**
Management (unspecified)	5	**	**	**	**
Sample base: 406 (2008), 406 (2007), 406 (2006), 410 (2005), 400 (2004)					
* +/-7% DIFFERENCE FROM 2007 ** Classification not available					
(New codes of 1% or less omitted)					

Quantifying perceptions of a career in retail - 2008

As in previous years, careers advisors have mentioned a wide range of jobs in the retail sector. Sales assistant / salesperson and store manager were the two most likely to be mentioned (69% and 54% respectively), which again is the same result as in all previous years of the survey. However the amounts of respondents mentioning a store manager have decreased significantly since 2007, from 69% to 54%.

The amount of respondents mentioning cashier / till / check out office and departmental managers / supervisors have both dropped since last year's survey.

The 'backroom' staff that respondents are most aware of continues to be buyers (29%) and personnel managers / staff (22%). Notable proportions also mention roles in marketing (16%), finance (13%), and merchandising (10%).

There have been no other notable movements in the awareness of job roles in retail since 2007.

As well as the roles listed in the table (mentioned by at least 2% of respondents) a number of other roles were mentioned by around 1% of respondents, these include:-

- Fashion designer
- Security
- Office / admin staff
- Area / regional manager
- Catering staff
- Credit control
- Company directors
- Backroom staff
- Packers
- Department store (unspecified)
- Clothes shops (unspecified)
- Trainees / apprentices

6 Sources of information for careers advisers

6.1 General sources of careers information

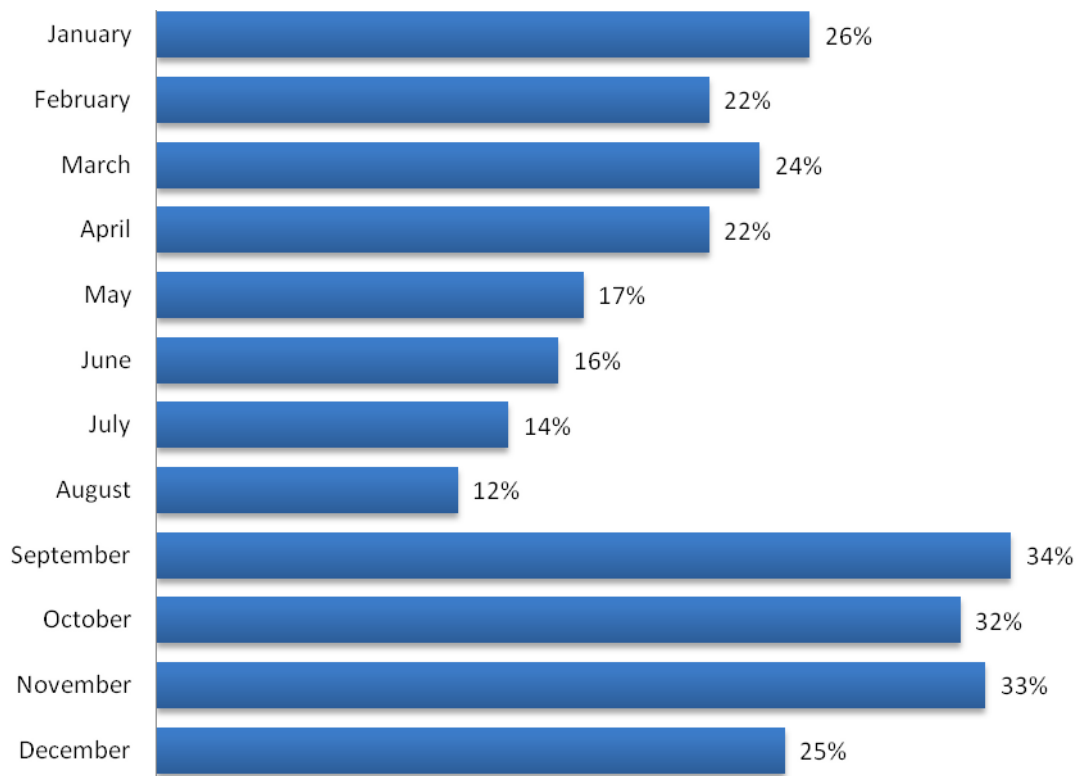
6.1.1 Timing of information needed

Careers influencers were asked if there are any particular times of year when they need sector-specific careers information.

The majority of careers advisors, nearly two-thirds, say that there are particular times of year when sector-specific careers information is needed (63%), the same proportion as in 2007.

The months that respondents are most likely think that specific careers information is needed is from September to November, where a third feel that this is the case. Around a quarter of respondents think that this information is needed from December through to April, and less than one fifth from May to August.

Figure 3: Time of year when sector-specific careers information is particularly needed (Careers influencers who think there are particular times of year when sector-specific careers information is needed)



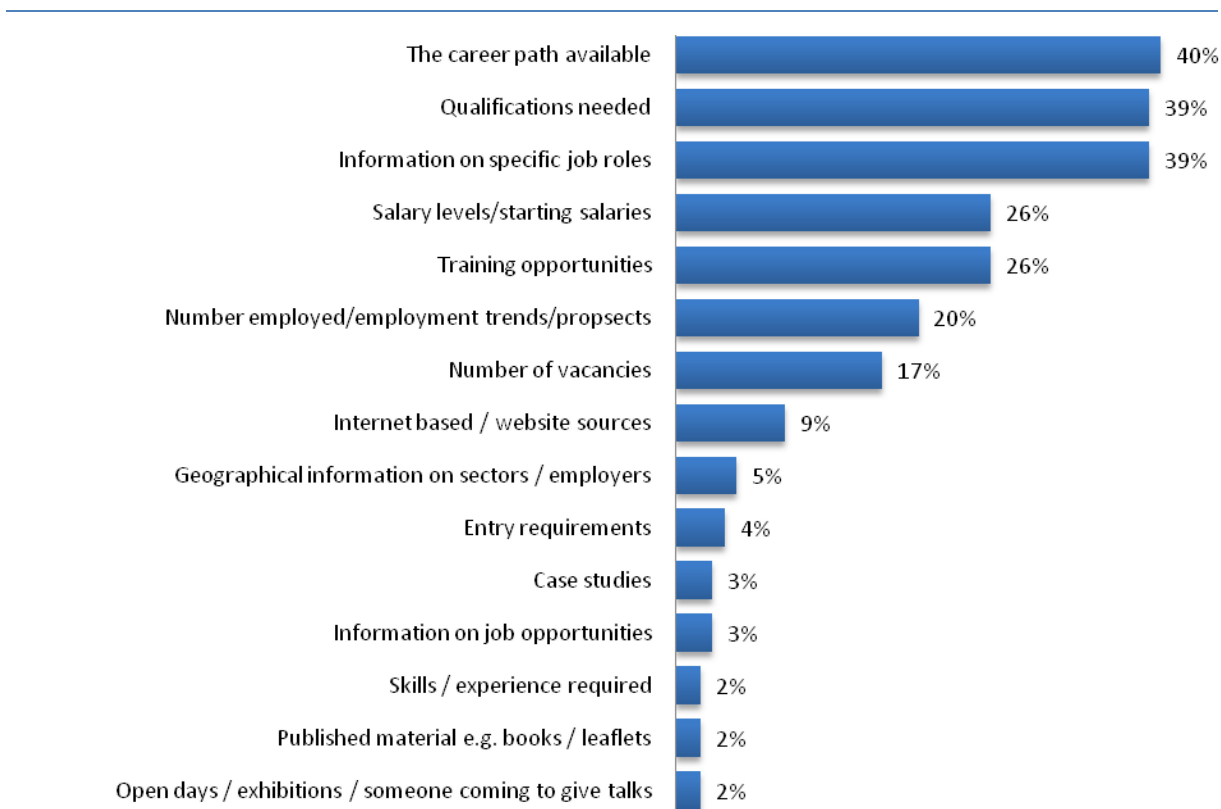
Sample Base: 256

6.1.2 Sector-specific careers information required

All careers influencers were asked what particular information they find most useful when researching a sector or giving advice.

A wide range of information types is mentioned by respondents, the main ones, mentioned by at least 2% of respondents, are summarised in the chart below.

Figure 4: Type of information that respondents find most useful when researching a sector or giving advice (All respondents)



Sample Base: 406

The information that careers advisors find most useful is the career path available, the qualifications needed and information on specific job roles, all of which were mentioned by four in ten respondents (40%, 39% and 39% respectively).

One quarter mention salary levels / starting salaries and training opportunities (both 26%), and one in five mention the situation surrounding employment, such as the amount of employees, trends and prospects (20%).

In comparison to last year there has been a significant rise in the amount of respondents who mention the career path available (31% in 2007), and information on specific job roles (30% in 2007).

As the table that follows illustrates, the type of information required appears to differ according to the particular role of careers influencers. The base sizes for each role are quite small so many differences will not be significant, however the main ones that stand out are highlighted in bold.

Table 9: Type of information that respondents find most useful when researching a sector or giving advice – by job role

	Connexions adviser	Careers adviser - other	FE careers adviser	HE careers adviser	Schools careers advisor/ co-ordinator	Schools head of year / dept
The career path available	43	24	36	38	49	48
Qualifications needed	35	35	41	28	42	44
Information on specific job roles	31	22	46	44	40	41
Salary levels/starting salaries	28	15	30	14	26	31
Training opportunities	30	20	32	12	28	27
Number employed/employment trends/propsects	26	22	23	22	11	19
Number of vacancies	20	15	12	16	15	23
Internet based / website sources	6	17	8	14	8	8
Geographical information on sectors / employers	9	11	5	2	6	1
Entry requirements	6	7	6	2	0	2
Case studies	6	7	0	8	0	1
Information on job opportunities	2	4	5	2	2	3
Skills / experience required	2	0	2	2	6	3
Published material e.g. books / leaflets	2	0	2	2	2	2
Open days / exhibitions / someone coming to give talks	2	0	1	2	2	3
SAMPLE BASE	54	46	102	50	53	101

6.1.3 Sources of information accessed

Respondents were asked to state where they would look for information if they wanted to find out about career opportunities in a sector/ occupation that they were unfamiliar with. Table 10 summarises responses to this question and compares results with those since 2004.

Table 10: Sources of careers information accessed by respondents to find out about an unfamiliar sector

Base: All respondents	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004
Look on the internet – careers specific website	56	61	67	53	49
Look on the internet – general	49	47	38	52	52
Look in the library	8	9	16	26	27
Look at reference books/directories	13	16	16	22	40
Look at leaflets	3	4	4	6	7
Careers databases e.g. Kudos, Odessa	2	5	1	5	**
Look at journals	6	1	4	4	9
CD-ROMS/DVDs/Downloads***	3	5	5	3	12
Colleagues at Connexions	9	5	6	**	**
Go through organisations/companies themselves	2	3	**	**	**
Career Scape	1	3	**	**	**
Sector skills council	3	**	**	**	**
SAMPLE BASE	406	406	406	410	400
* +/-7% DIFFERENCE FROM 2006					
** Classification not available					
*** Question changed to included DVDs and downloads from 2007					
New codes of less than 1% excluded					

As in previous years, the internet continues to be the source of information most used by careers advisors when researching an unfamiliar sector. Careers specific websites continues to be more popular than the internet in general (56% compared with 49% respectively). The only other source of information mentioned by more than one in ten respondents is reference books and directories (13%). There have been no significant changes since 2007.

Connexions careers advisors are more likely to look in the library or at journals in comparison to other career advisors, and less likely to look at the internet in general.

6.1.4 Usefulness of information sources accessed

Respondents were asked to state which sources of information they have found useful from those they have accessed. Table 11 summarises the views of careers advisers this year and compares them with perceptions in previous years.

Table 11: Sources of careers information accessed by respondents that they have found useful (%)

	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004
Specific careers advice website	93	94	96	93	82
Booklets and more detailed printed material aimed at advisors	81	78	74	78	77
Booklets and more detailed printed material aimed at young people	77	70	71	77	74
Leaflets aimed at young people	80	81	78	76	77
Leaflets aimed at advisors	79	75	69	72	70
CD ROMS / DVDs / Downloads	68	69	58	57	61
Sample bases vary					

As in previous years, career influencers still believe that specific careers advice websites are the most useful source of careers information.

Booklets and leaflets aimed at young people and advisors are all considered useful sources of information by around four in five respondents. Of all the sources of information booklets aimed at young people has shown the largest rise in the proportion of advisors that consider it useful (77% from 70% in 2007).

CD ROMS / DVDs / Downloads have maintained the improvement that was seen from 2006 to 2007, with just over two thirds of respondents reporting that they found this resource useful. The proportion of respondents who see this resource as useful however is still notably lower than the other resources.

6.1.5 Organisations that respondents would approach for careers information

Respondents were asked to identify which organisations and people they would approach for information. Table 12 shows the range of organisations that respondents may seek information from, and compares results for this year to 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2007.

Table 12: Organisations that respondents would approach for information (All Respondents)

	2008 (%)	2007 (%)	2006 (%)	2005 (%)	2004 (%)
Careers Wales (Wales only)	52*	61	51	51	49
Connexions	39	38	49	51	36
Careers Scotland (Scotland only)	68*	51	62	49	41
Employers	17*	28	16	16	33
Colleagues (Career specialist)	13	10	13	15	20
Relevant Sector Skills Council	15	18	10	11	6
Colleagues (Not a career specialist)	8	3	5	9	5
JobCentre Plus	4	2	4	6	8
Trade organisations and professional bodies	1	9	5	6	**
Local colleges/universities/educational institutions	6	10	*	3	**
National Learning and Skills Council	3	3	3	2	1
Training organisations	3	4	*	2	**
Prospects (Graduate information provider)	4	3	2	2	**
Learndirect (by phone)	1	2	1	1	3
Local Learning and Skills Council	3	1	3	1	2
Learndirect (on internet)	3	5	2	1	1
Internet/website (unspecified)	6	3	3	**	**
SAMPLE BASES	406	406	406	410	400
* +/-7% difference from 2007 (based on total sample)					
** Classification not available					

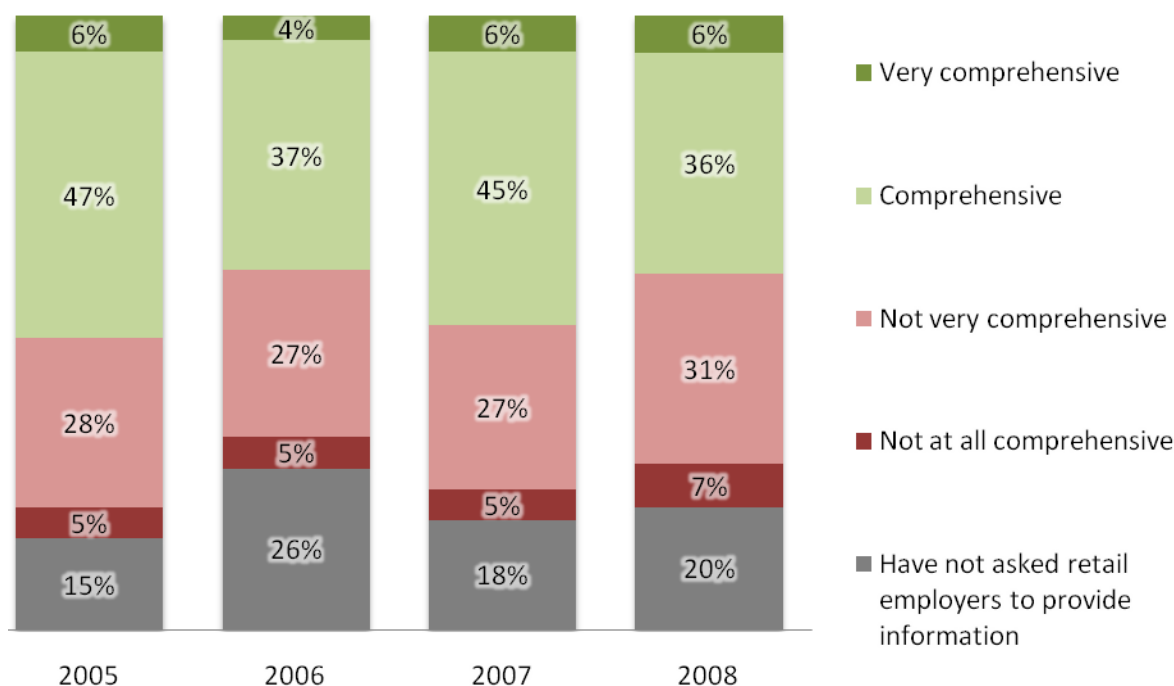
Connexions are the most mentioned organisation by all respondents as who they would approach for information (39%). Just over half of respondents from Wales mention Careers Wales (52%), which is a significant drop from 2007 (61%). In contrast respondents from Scotland are significantly more likely to mention Careers Scotland as they were last year, rising from 51% in 2007 to 68% in 2008.

The proportion of respondents who said that they would approach employers for information has dropped since 2007 to just under one in five (17%), from almost three in ten (28%), which is at a level similar to two years ago (16% in 2006).

6.1.6 Quality of information provided by retail employers

Respondents were asked to rate the quality of careers information provided by retail employers on a scale of 1 to 4, where 1 is very comprehensive and 4 is not at all comprehensive.

Figure 5: Careers advisors rating of the quality of information provided by retail employers (All respondents)



Sample Base: 406 (2008), 406 (2007), 406 (2006), 410 (2005), 400 (2004)

The views on the quality of careers information provided by retail employers continues to fluctuate year on year.

Just over two in five (42%) respondents are of the opinion that the information is comprehensive, a drop from over half last year (51%) to a level similar to 2006 (40%). Six percent of respondents in 2008 considered the information very comprehensive, the same amount as last year.

Almost two in five (38%) are of the opinion that the information is not comprehensive, a higher proportion seen than any other year (32% in 2006 and 2007, and 33% in 2005).

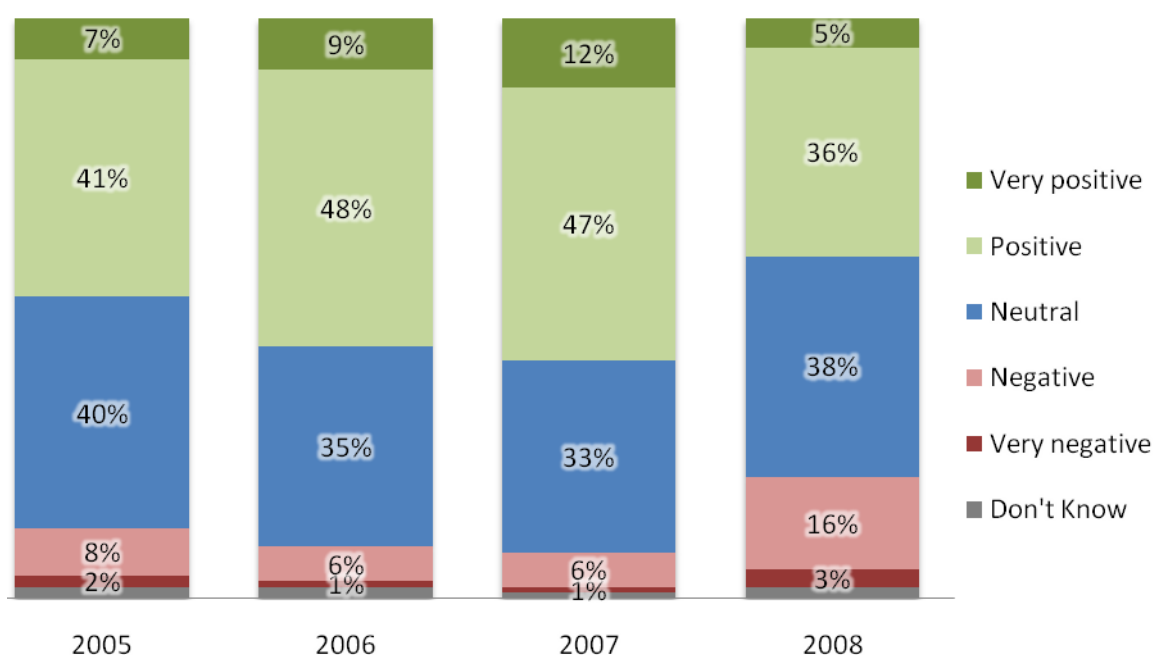
Information from retail employers is most likely to be considered comprehensive by HE careers advisers (58%). Respondents related to schools are less likely to consider information as comprehensive, with schools careers advisers and heads of departments or schools more likely to consider it not comprehensive (45% and 43% respectively).

7 Career prospects in the retail sector

7.1 Views on employment prospects in the retail sector

Respondents were asked to rate to what extent they feel positive about the short-term employment and career prospects in the retail sector, on a scale of 1-5, where 1 is very negative and 5 is very positive.

Figure 6: Extent to which careers advisors are positive/negative about the short-term career prospects in the retail sector (All respondents)



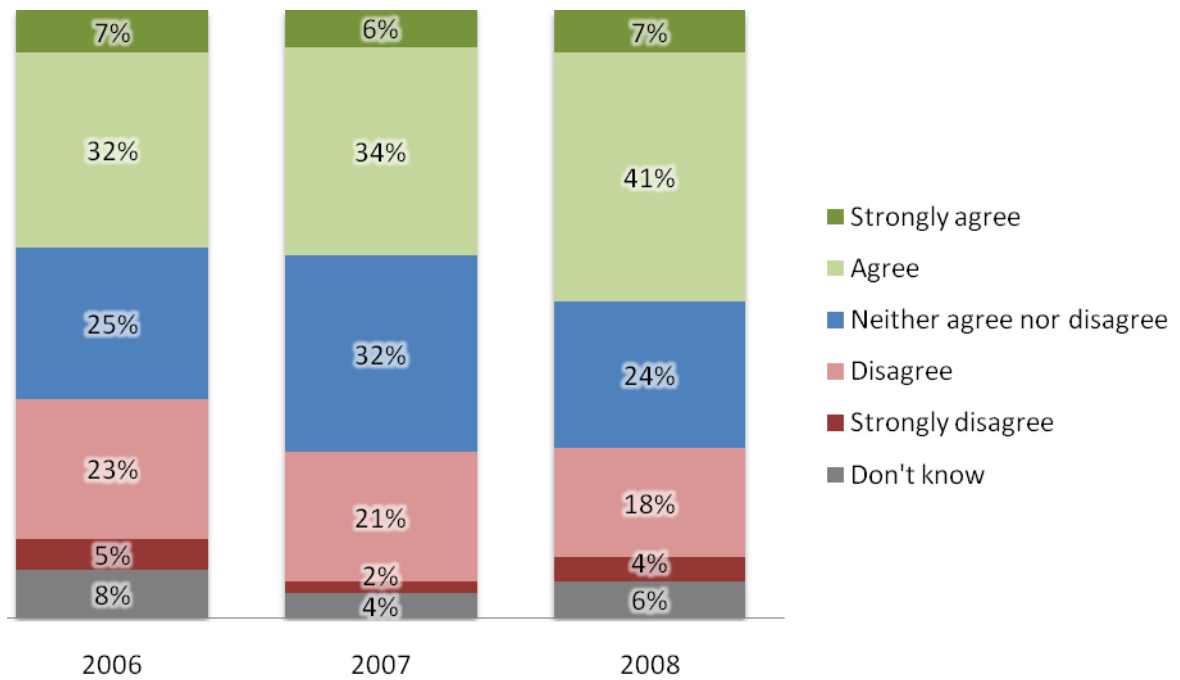
Sample Base: 406 (2008), 406 (2007), 406 (2006), 410 (2005), 400 (2004)

From 2005 until last year there had been a steady increase in the proportion of career influencers who were positive about the short term career prospects in the retail sector, but this has dropped significantly in 2008. Two in five (41%) respondents are positive about short term career prospects in retail, which is a drop from the high of three in five (69%) which was seen last year. Those who are negative about prospects in the retail have increased significantly from less than one in ten (7%) to one in five (19%).

Despite the drop in optimism about the short term career prospect in the retail sector, all career advisor types are more positive than negative. Connexions career advisors are least positive, with three in ten (30%) being negative about short term prospects in retail, and two in five (41%) being positive. FE careers advisors and heads of school years or departments are more likely to feel neutral (45% and 42% respectively) than positive or negative about prospects in the sector, and all other careers advisors are most likely to report feeling positive.

To investigate careers advisors views on the career prospects within the retail sector further, a new question was added to the survey in 2006 which asked respondents about the extent to which they agree or disagree that retailing will offer more career opportunities in future, with the growth of online retailing, home shopping via the Internet etc, using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree.

Figure 7: Extent to which respondents agree/disagree that the retail sector will offer more career opportunities with the growth of online retailing (All respondents)



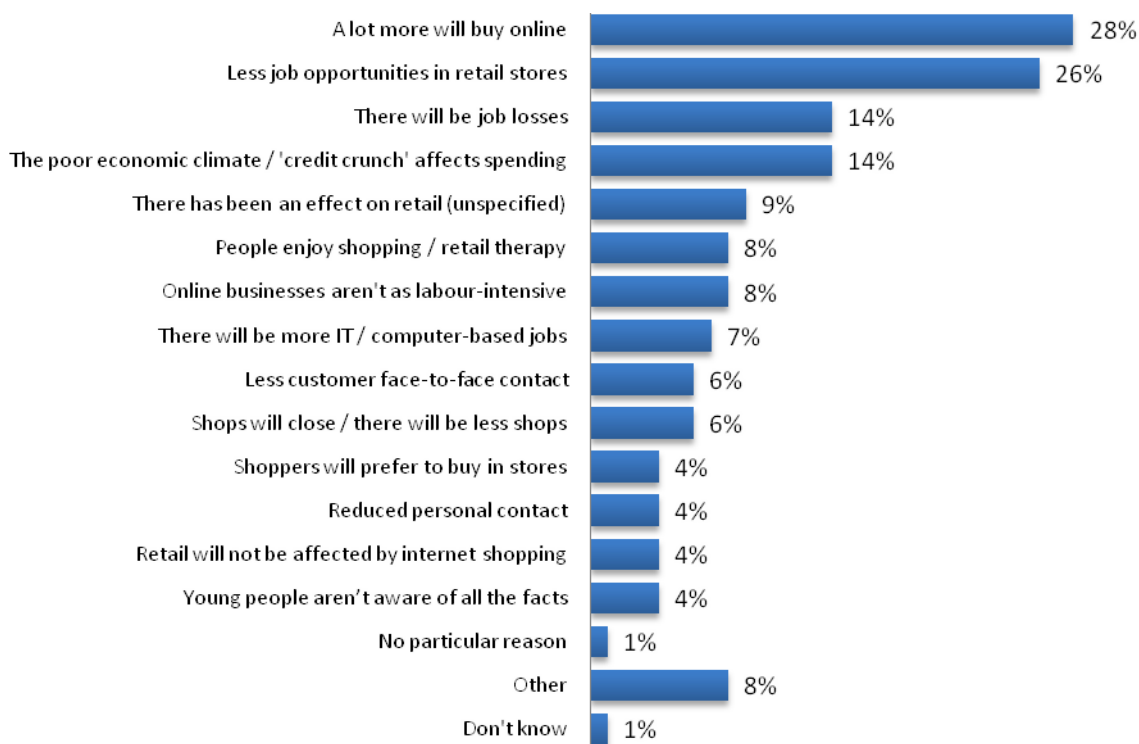
Sample Base: 406 (2008), 406 (2007), 406 (2006)

Having increased slightly from 2006 to 2007, the proportion of careers advisors who agree that the growth of online retailing will offer more retail opportunities in the retail sector has grown again in 2008. Almost half (48%) agree with this statement compared to one in five (22%) who disagree. This compares to 2007 where two in five (40%) agreed and a similar proportion (23%) disagreed.

HE career advisors are most likely to be positive about the growth of online retailing, (62% agree to some extent), in contrast to Connexions and schools career advisors who are most likely to be negative (32% and 30% respectively disagree to some extent).

When asked their reasons for disagreeing that the retail sector will offer more career opportunities with the growth of online retailing, a similar proportion mentioned more people buying online (28%), and less opportunity in retail stores (26%).

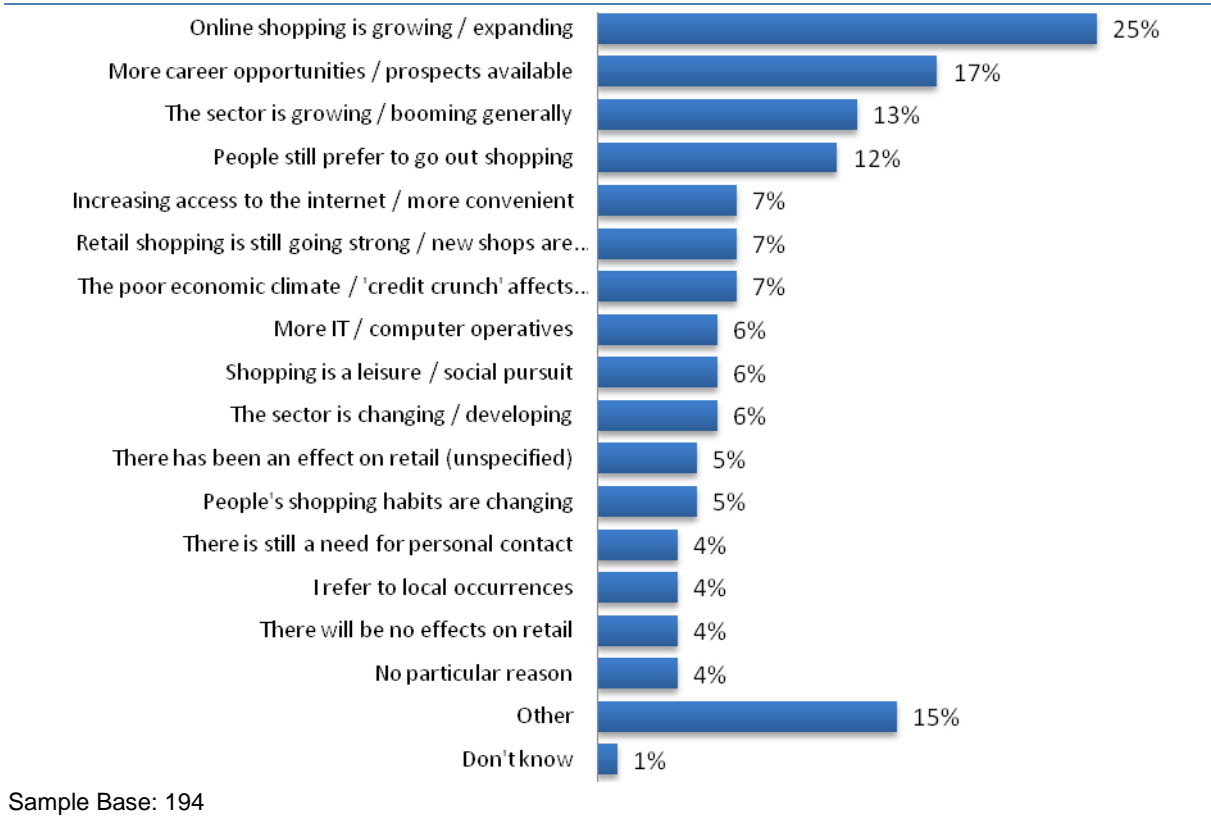
Figure 8: Reasons there will not be more career opportunities in retail, with the growth of online retailing (Respondents who disagree there will be more opportunities)



Sample Base: 90 (no answers above 3% shown)

As in previous years, the growth and expansion of online shopping is the reason most likely to be mentioned as to why there will be more career opportunities in retail in the future (25%).

Figure 9: Reasons there will be more career opportunities in retail, with the growth of online retailing (Respondents who agree there will be more opportunities)



Some 'other' comments include those listed below:

'Everything on-line means fewer jobs'

'My children are constantly buying off the internet'

'Many companies set up their business in the countryside and they just need an internet connection'

'The cost of keeping retail outlets open will increase'

'There's no need for high street shops any more'

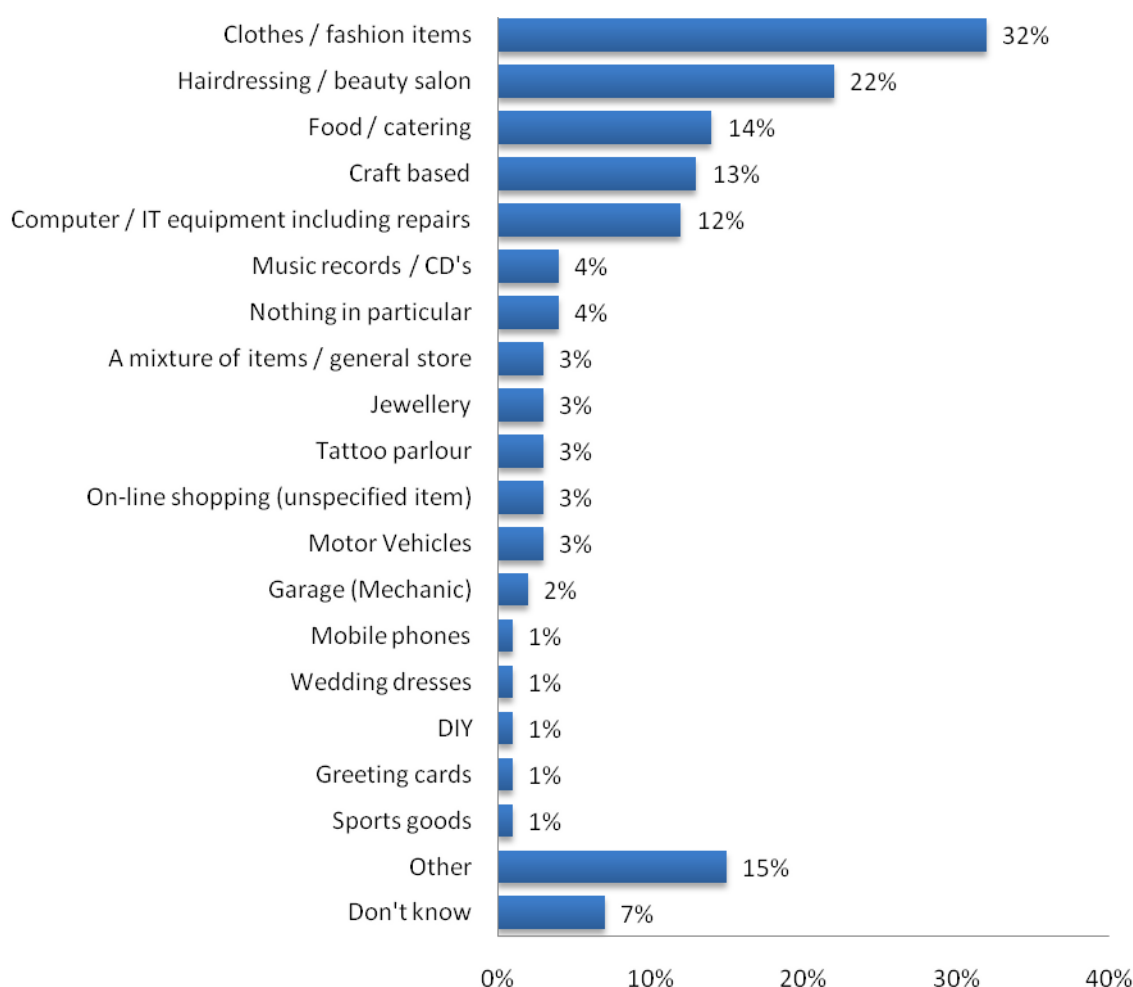
7.2 Advice on setting up new businesses

Two-thirds of all careers advisors say that young people have asked them for advice about setting up their own business (66%), the same proportion as in 2007. This proportion varies among careers advisors, with advisors in school less likely to have been asked about setting up their own business than others.

When young people asked careers advisors about setting up their own business half of them were asking about setting up their own shop (50%).

The following chart summarises the types of items that young people wish to sell in the shops they want to set up.

Figure 10: Items that young people wish to sell in the shops they want to set up (Where young people have asked for advice about setting up their own shop)



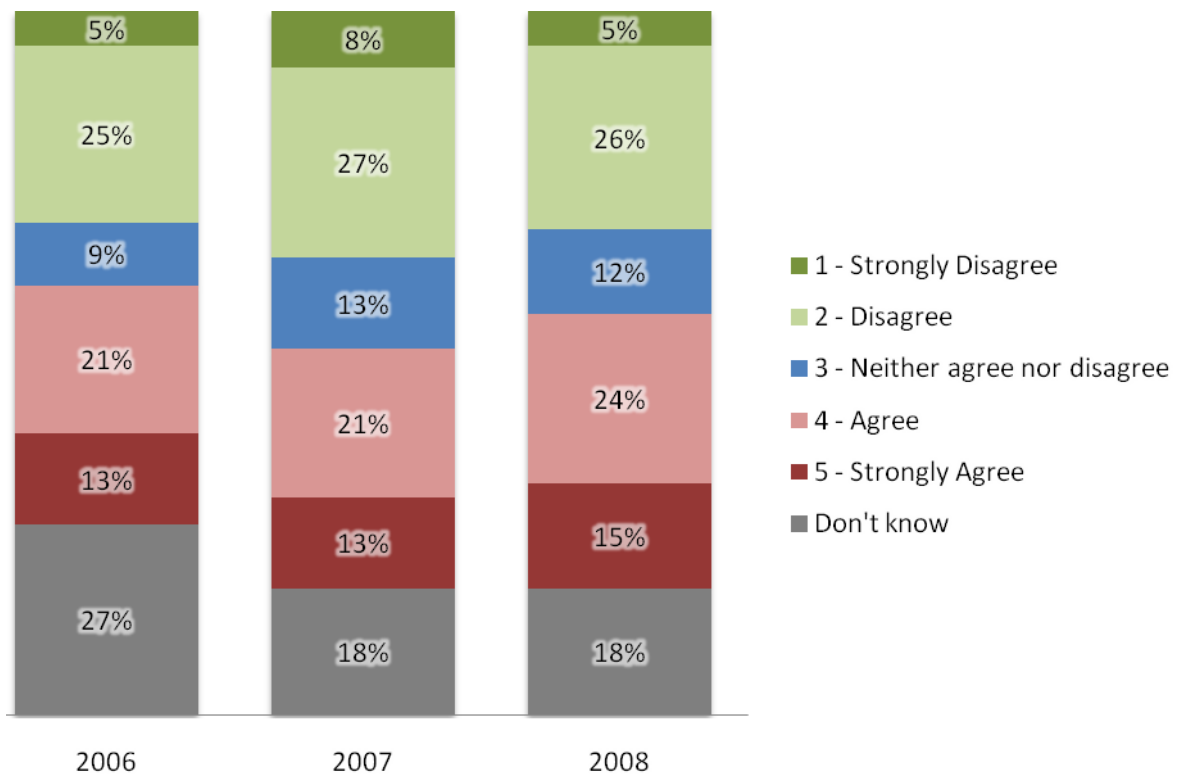
Sample Base: 135

Young people mentioned a wide range of products that they would wish to sell in their own shop. As was the case in previous years, clothes and fashion items are by far the most popular type of items that young people are looking to sell, followed setting up a hairdressing / beauty salon. Food / catering, craft based products and Computer / IT equipment were also mentioned by notable proportions.

7.3 Apprenticeships

In 2006 a question was added to the survey which asked careers advisors about the extent to which they agree or disagree that there are more young people seeking Apprenticeships in retail than there are employers offering them.

Figure 11: Extent to which respondents agree/disagree that there are more young people seeking apprenticeships in retail than there are employers offering them (All respondents)



Sample Base: 406 (2008), 406 (2007), 406 (2006)

Two in five (39%) agree that there are more young people seeking apprenticeships in retail than employers are offering them, and three in ten (31%) disagree. This represents a slight but not significant increase from 2007, where one third (34%) agreed that there are not enough apprentices for young people. Similar proportions to last year neither agreed nor disagreed (13% in 2007, 12% in 2008) or did not know (18% both years) whether there are enough apprenticeships for young people in retail.

Again, Connexions career advisors are less optimistic than others. Two thirds (65%) agree that there are more young people seeking apprenticeships in retail than employers are offering. All other careers advisors are also more likely to be in agreement with the exception of those careers advisors in schools. Half of schools careers advisors (50%) and just over one third (36%) of school heads of year or departments disagreed with this statement.

When respondents were asked why they disagree with this statement, the reason most likely to be given is that there are not enough people interested in a career in

the retail sector (42%). Other reasons mentioned include that retail is seen as a low level career (14%), and there are few or no apprenticeships available (13%).

'Because a lot of young people now are staying on at school to do further studying, where they will then go on to University or take up some academic career as opposed to getting a full time job in retail. They are more likely to have a part-time weekend job'

'Because they find their own opportunities with good networks between friends and family'

'Only 5% seek of our students actively seek employment in retail when we break down the figures'

Careers advisors who agree there are more young people seeking Apprenticeships in retail than there are employers offering them gave the following main reasons for this belief:- there are few/no retailers offering Apprenticeships (22%); that there is increased demand to go into apprenticeships (17%); we have a difficult time in locating placements (10%).

Examples of specific comments made by respondents who agree with this statement about Apprenticeships are shown below:

'There are more young people'

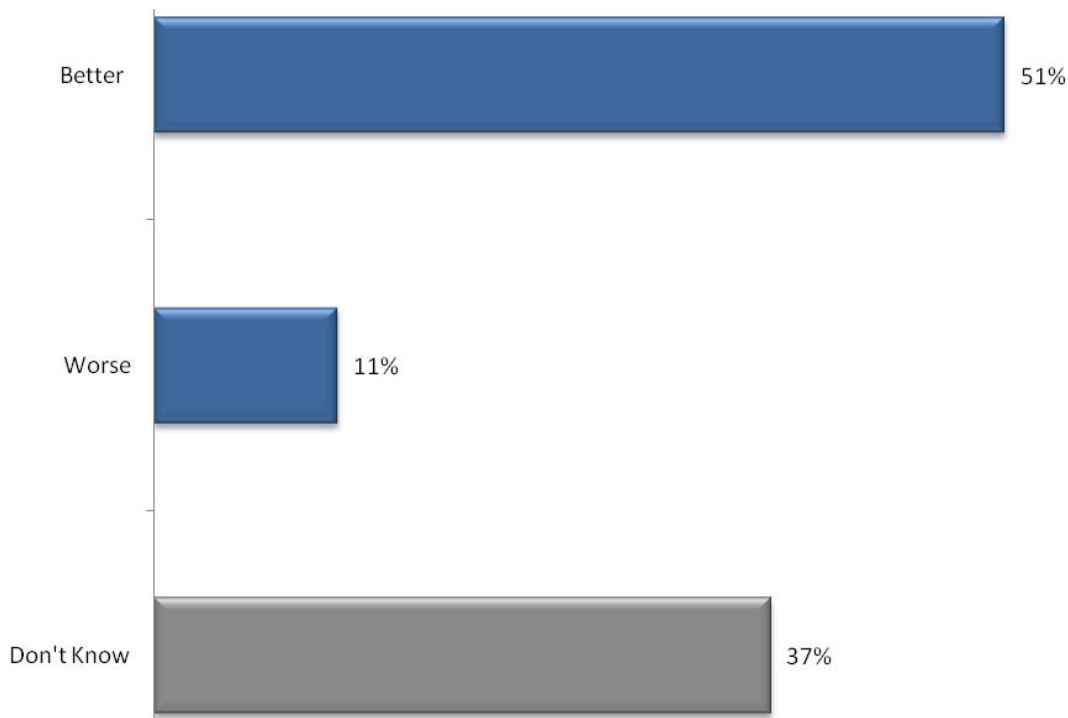
'There are more jobs available'

'We have a lot of people looking for work in retail and it is very difficult for us to find an employer who wants to takes people on'

7.4 Whether retailing has become a better or worse place for young people to work in

Respondents were asked whether they think retailing has become a better or worse place for young people to work in over the past five years, and to give their reasons for their answer.

Figure 12: Whether respondents think retailing has become a better or worse sector for young people to work in over the past five years (All respondents)



Sample Base: 406 (2008)

Overall respondents are positive about changes in the retail sector over the last five years. Just over half of respondents (51%) have the opinion that retailing has become a better sector for young people to work in over the past five years. A minority of one in ten (11%) think that it has got worse, while a relatively high proportion (37%) do not know.

Connexions careers advisors are less positive than others about retailing as a place to work, with one in five (20%) with the belief that the sector has got worse in the last five years. HE careers advisors are most positive, with two thirds reporting that they feel the sector has become a better place to work in.

When asked to explain their reasons for why they think the sector has got better in the past five years the main issues mentioned are that there are more opportunities

Quantifying perceptions of a career in retail - 2008

available/more career structure (38%); training / qualifications are more widely available (23%); better pay / introduction of the minimum wage (17%).

Individual comments made by these respondents include the following:

'Minimum wage is higher and there are more opportunities available now days'

'It's become more professional in that there is better support for graduate schemes giving you greater access, eg TESCO now have a broader sector graduate scheme and defined career pathways'

'Better conditions with the minimum wage etc, a lot more internal involvement in terms of work experience, they seem generally better places'

When the 11% of respondents who feel that the sector has become a worse place to work in were asked their reasons for this, the main reasons given include: limited opportunities (28%); long / unsociable hours (24%); full time contracts unavailable (22%); increase pressure put onto workers (17%).

Examples of specific reasons given are shown below:

'Turn over of staff very high and contracts are a problem as employers are only offering short term seasonal work'

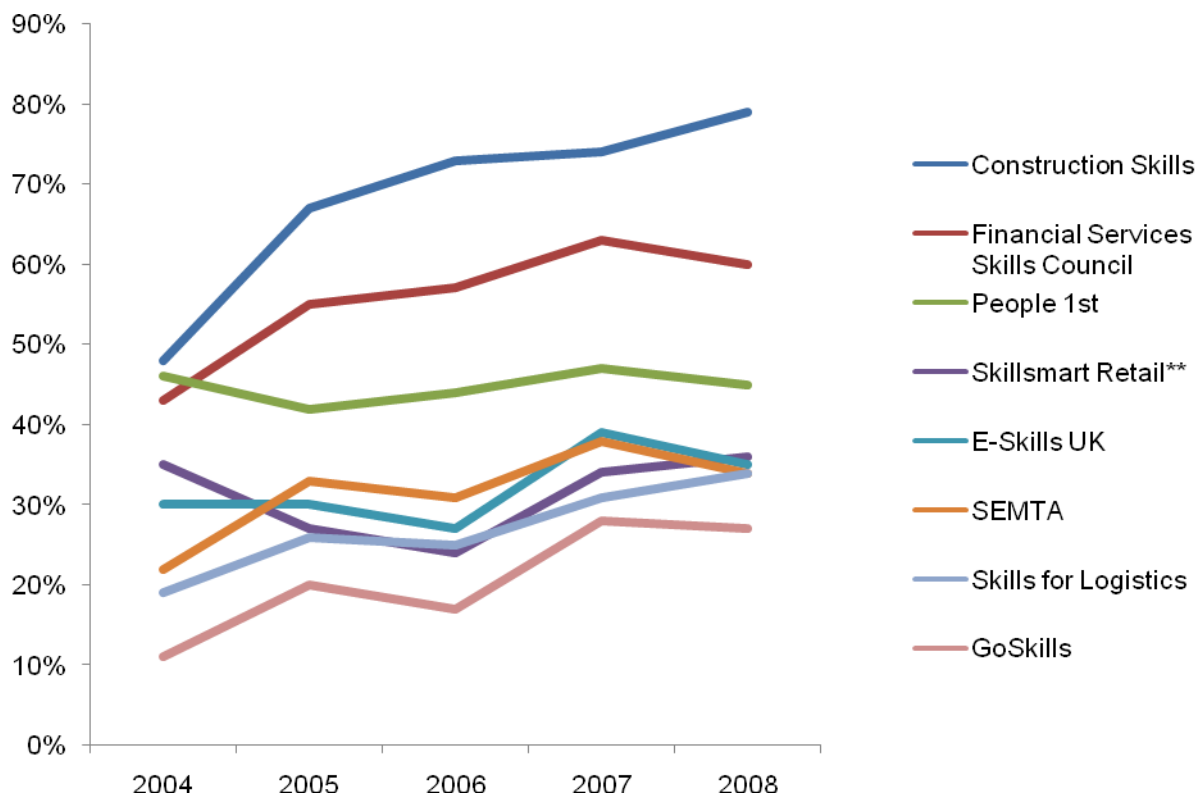
'No opportunities. There are no real permanent positions as it's always Christmas temp jobs.'

8 Awareness of Skillsmart Retail

8.1 Awareness of selected Sector Skills Councils

Respondents to the survey were given a list of selected Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) and asked which of these they had heard of. These results have been compared with the findings from the last four years and profiled in Figure 13.

Figure 13: Prompted awareness of Sector Skills Councils (All respondents)



** = Branded as 'Skillsmart' in the 2004 survey

Sample Base: 406 (2008), 406 (2007), 406 (2006), 410 (2005), 400 (2004)

As was the case in the previous three years, Construction Skills is the SSC that careers advisors were most likely to have heard of, with almost four in five (79%) reported knowing of them. This represents a continued year on year growth in the awareness of Construction Skills since 2004.

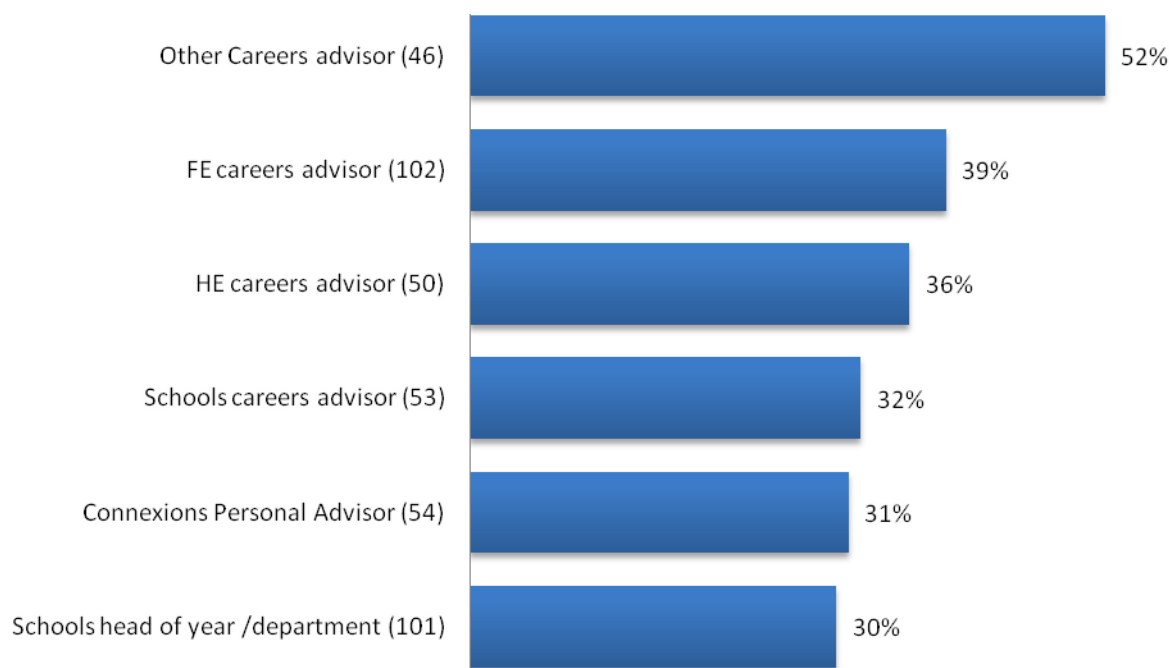
The Financial Services Skills Council also has a relatively high level of awareness with three in five (60%) of respondents being aware of this SSC, a level slightly lower than last year.

Fewer than half of all respondents are aware of any of the other SSCs. People 1st have maintained a similar level of awareness as previous years (45%), as did SEMTA (34%) and Goskills (27%). Awareness of Skills for Logistics among career advisors increased again in the last year to 36% (31% in 2007, and 35% in 2006).

Skillsmart Retail is recognised by one third of all respondents (33%), as it was last year (34%). This maintains the rise in awareness of Skillsmart Retail since 2006 (24%).

Awareness of Skillsmart Retail differs according to the type of respondent surveyed (Figure 14), with FE and 'other' careers advisers being most aware (52%) and schools head of year / departments (30%).

Figure 14: Awareness of Skillsmart Retail – by job role



Sample Bases in Parenthesis

8.2 Use of website and *Retail Therapy* magazine

Respondents who have heard of Skillsmart Retail were asked whether they have visited Skillsmart Retail's website, and 46% say that they have, which is a significant rise from previous years.

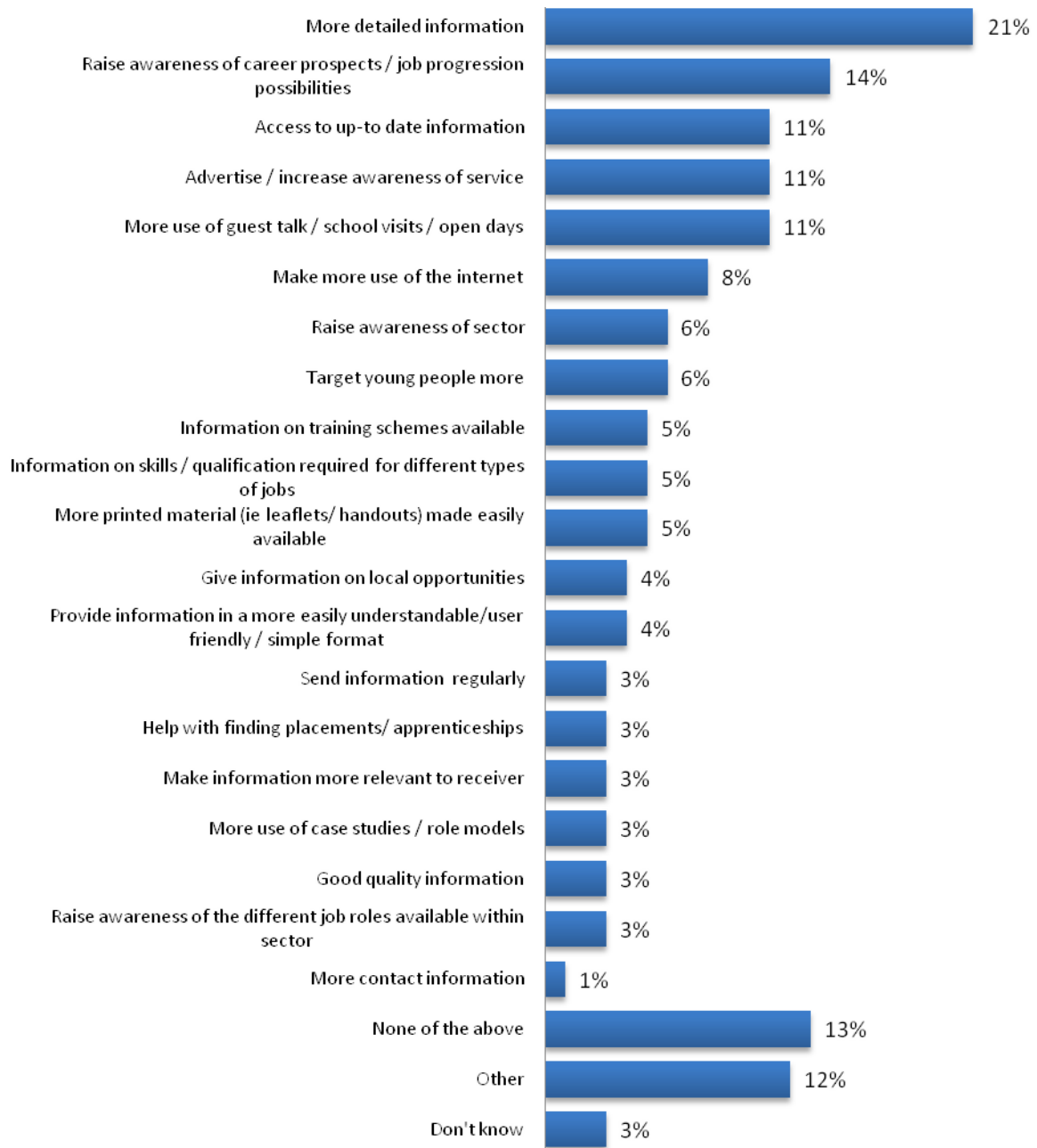
Respondents who are aware of Skillsmart Retail were also asked if they have read *Retail Therapy*. There has also been an increase in this area as over two in five (42%) report having read the magazine, compared to a third (32%) last year, 28% in 2006, 42% in 2005, and 19% of respondents in 2004.²

8.3 How Skillsmart Retail can help advisors do their job better

All careers advisor aware of Skillsmart Retail were for the first time this year asked, as the Sector Skills Council for retail, how Skillsmart Retail can help them to do their job better.

² The sample bases for this question are 139 for 2007, 97 for 2006, 109 for 2005 and 140 for 2004, so a difference of +/-13% is needed to record a significant change.

Figure 15: Ways in which Skillsmart Retail can help careers advisors do their jobs better (Careers Advisors aware of Skillsmart Retail)



Sample Base: 146

The top two ways in which careers advisors would like Skillsmart Retail to help them are to provide more detailed information, and to raise awareness of career prospects or job progression possibilities in the sector.

A variety of other suggestions are made including holding more school visits/open days, targeting young people and raising awareness of the different job roles within the sector.

Some specific comments included with 'others' include:

'To encourage employers to do more training and increase accessibility.'

'To encourage small retailers in taking up the concept of providing training for young people.'

'Employers should offer more work experience for younger students.'

'They need to promote the sector more strongly and ensure better working conditions. Highlight the better career opportunities and get a more comprehensive portrait of the specialism areas in retail.'

'Kids think it's something they end up in if they fail their GCSEs'

'They could ensure that young people doing part time jobs aren't getting ripped off or put under too much pressure'

9 Conclusions and Recommendations

Skillsmart Retail can be encouraged by a number of positive changes in perceptions for the retail sector this year:

- The proportion of respondents who see retail as the best sector to work in has remained the same in a year of economic difficulties.
- Career prospects is now the reason most likely to be given in explaining why respondents feel that the retail sector is best to work in.
- A drop in the view that long and unsocial working hours and poor career prospects as a reason that careers advisors would not want their child working in retail.
- Another year on year increase in the amount of respondents who agree that the growth of online retailing will offer more career opportunities in the sector.
- Over half of respondents feel that retail has become a better sector to work in over the last five years.

Despite these improvements there remains a number of challenges for Skillsmart Retail to improve or overcome.

Connexions career advisors are still the most negative of careers advisors with regard to the retail sector, as they are significantly less likely than other careers advisors to think that retail is the best sector to work in. They are also significantly less likely to think that the sector offers top quality training and career development and offers competitive salaries than other careers advisors.

Respondent's perceptions of how job aspects relate to the retail sector has remained consistent with previous years, in comparison to the finance and banking sector. There has been significant drops in perception in the view that finance and banking develops skills useful in any workplace and that individuals are given responsibility at an early age, whereas in the retail sector this is stable.

There has been a significant rise in the amount of careers advisors who would not want their child to work in the retail sector. Although there has been a rise in every sector over the last year, most likely due to the global economic troubles, the largest rise has been in the retail sector.

10 Appendix 1: Sampling errors

Table 13: Percentage Sampling Errors on a Single Sample

SAMPLE SIZE (n)	95% CONFIDENCE LEVEL			99% CONFIDENCE LEVEL		
	10/90%	25/75%	50/50%	10/90%	25/75%	50/50%
50	8.3	12.0	13.9	10.9	15.7	18.2
100	5.9	8.5	9.8	7.7	11.1	12.9
150	4.8	6.9	8.0	6.3	9.1	10.5
200	4.2	6.0	6.9	5.3	7.9	9.1
250	3.7	5.4	6.2	4.6	7.0	8.1
300	3.4	4.9	5.7	4.4	6.4	7.4
350	3.1	4.5	5.2	4.1	5.9	6.9
400	2.9	4.3	4.9	3.9	5.6	6.4
450	2.8	4.0	4.5	3.6	5.2	5.9
500	2.6	3.8	4.4	3.4	5.0	5.7
600	2.4	3.5	4.0	3.1	4.5	5.2
700	2.2	3.2	3.7	2.9	4.2	4.8
800	2.2	3.0	3.5	2.7	3.9	4.5
900	2.0	2.8	3.3	2.6	3.7	4.3
1,000	1.8	2.7	3.1	2.4	3.5	4.1
1,500	1.5	2.2	2.5	2.0	2.9	3.3
2,000	1.3	1.9	2.2	1.1	2.5	2.9
5,000	0.8	1.2	1.4	1.1	1.6	1.8
10,000	0.6	0.8	1.0	0.8	1.1	1.3

Table 14: Comparison of two matched samples or sub-samples at the 95% confidence level

50	19.6																	
100	17.0	13.9																
150	16.0	12.6	11.3															
200	15.5	12.0	10.6	9.8														
250	15.2	11.6	10.1	9.3	8.8													
300	15.0	11.3	9.8	8.9	8.4	8.0												
350	14.8	11.1	9.6	8.7	8.1	7.7	7.4											
400	14.7	11.0	9.5	8.5	7.9	7.5	7.2	6.9										
450	14.6	10.8	9.2	8.3	7.7	7.3	7.0	6.7	6.5									
500	14.5	10.7	9.1	8.2	7.6	7.1	6.8	6.6	6.4	6.2								
600	14.4	10.6	8.9	8.0	7.4	6.9	6.6	6.3	6.1	5.9	5.7							
700	14.3	10.5	8.8	7.9	7.2	6.8	6.4	6.1	5.9	5.7	5.5	5.2						
800	14.3	10.4	8.7	7.7	7.1	6.6	6.3	6.0	5.8	5.6	5.5	5.1	4.9					
900	14.2	10.3	8.6	7.7	7.0	6.6	6.2	5.9	5.7	5.5	5.2	4.9	4.8	4.6				
1,000	14.2	10.3	8.6	7.6	6.9	6.5	6.1	5.8	5.6	5.4	5.1	4.8	4.7	4.5	4.4			
1,500	14.1	10.1	8.4	7.4	6.7	6.2	5.8	5.5	5.3	5.1	4.7	4.5	4.3	4.1	4.0	3.6		
2,000	14.0	10.0	8.3	7.3	6.6	6.1	5.6	5.4	5.2	4.9	4.6	4.3	4.1	3.9	3.8	3.3	3.1	
	50	100	150	500	250	300	350	400	450	500	600	700	800	900	1,000	1,500	2,000	

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