



# Research Report



## Quantifying Perceptions of a Career in Retail - 2009

Prepared for: Skillsmart Retail

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**Prepared for: Skillsmart Retail**

**Prepared by: BMG Research**

**February 2010**

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## Table of Contents

1	Executive Summary .....	1
1.1	Introduction .....	1
1.2	Perceptions of working in the retail, hospitality and finance and banking sectors ....	1
1.3	Awareness of retail job roles .....	2
1.4	Sources of information and influence for careers advisors .....	2
1.5	Career prospects in the retail sector .....	3
1.6	Advice on setting up new businesses.....	3
1.7	Whether retailing has become a better or worse place for young people to work in	3
1.8	Awareness of Skillsmart Retail.....	4
1.9	Use of website and <i>Retail Therapy</i> magazine .....	4
1.10	How Skillsmart Retail can help advisors do their job better .....	4
1.11	Diploma in Retail Business .....	5
2	Introduction .....	6
2.1	Study context .....	6
2.2	Overview of sources of careers advice and guidance for young people in the UK... 6	
2.2.1	Connexions.....	7
2.2.2	Careers Scotland .....	7
2.2.3	Careers Wales .....	7
2.2.4	Careers Service in Northern Ireland.....	7
2.2.5	Careers education and guidance in schools across the UK.....	8
2.2.6	Careers guidance in Further Education Colleges .....	8
2.2.7	Higher Education Institutions .....	8
2.2.8	The voluntary sector .....	9
2.2.9	Career development consultancies .....	9
2.3	The 2009 UK retail market context.....	9
3	Method of study and profile of sample.....	11
4	Perceptions of the retail sector .....	13
4.1	Perceptions of working in the retail, hospitality and finance and banking sectors ..	13
4.1.1	Differences in perceptions between respondent types .....	14
4.2	Best sector to work in.....	15
4.2.1	Reasons for perceptions .....	17

5	Awareness of retail job roles .....	19
6	Sources of information for careers advisors .....	21
6.1	General sources of careers information .....	21
6.1.1	Sector-specific careers information required .....	21
6.1.2	Organisations that respondents would approach for careers information .....	23
6.1.3	Quality of information provided by retail employers .....	24
7	Career prospects in the retail sector.....	25
7.1	Views on employment prospects in the retail sector .....	25
7.2	Advice on setting up new businesses.....	25
7.3	Whether retailing has become a better or worse place for young people to work in 27	
8	Awareness of Skillsmart Retail.....	29
8.1	Awareness of selected Sector Skills Councils .....	29
8.2	Diploma in Retail Business .....	30
9	Awareness of Skillsmart Retail.....	35
9.1	Awareness of selected Sector Skills Councils .....	35
9.2	Use of website and <i>Retail Therapy</i> magazine .....	36
9.3	How Skillsmart Retail can help advisors do their job better .....	36
10	Conclusions and Recommendations .....	38
11	Appendix 1: Sampling errors .....	39

## Table of Figures

Figure 1: Sector that advisors think is best to work in (All respondents) .....	16
Figure 2: Type of information that respondents find most useful when researching a.....	21
Figure 3: Careers advisors rating of the quality of information provided by retail employers (All respondents).....	24
Figure 4: Extent to which careers advisors are positive/negative about the short-term career prospects in the retail sector (All respondents).....	25
Figure 5: Items that young people wish to sell in the shops they want to set up .....	26
Figure 6: Whether respondents think retailing has become a better or worse sector .....	27
Figure 7: Prompted awareness of Sector Skills Councils (All respondents).....	29
Figure 8: Whether respondents have had enquiries from young people about the Diploma in Retail Business (All respondents in England) .....	30

Figure 9: Reasons why respondents think they have not had enquiries from young people about the Diploma in Retail Business (Where have not had young people asking about the Diploma) .....	31
Figure 10: Respondent awareness of the Diploma in Retail Business (All respondents in England) .....	32
Figure 11: Sources of information about Diploma in Retail Business (All respondents in England) .....	33
Figure 12: Sources likely to approach/visit to get to know more about the Diploma in Retail Business (Where respondents have not very much knowledge or know nothing about the Diploma in Retail Business) .....	34
Figure 13: Awareness of Skillsmart Retail – by job role.....	35
Figure 14: Ways in which Skillsmart Retail can help careers advisors do their jobs .....	37

## Table of Tables

Table 1: Sample profile – by job title (All respondents).....	11
Table 2: National profile of interviews achieved (All respondents).....	12
Table 3: Respondents’ perceptions of how job aspects relate to different sectors (%) .....	13
Table 4: Respondents’ perceptions of how job aspects relate to the retail sector by .....	15
Table 5: Sector that respondents think is best to work in by job role (%).....	17
Table 6: Top five reasons for sector being best to work in (respondents who said each given sector would be better).....	17
Table 7: Retail sector jobs identified by respondents (All respondents).....	19
Table 8: Type of information that respondents find most useful when researching a sector or giving advice – by job role .....	22
Table 9: Organisations that respondents would approach for information (All Respondents) .....	23



## 1 Executive Summary

### 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, 2007 and 2008. 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 402 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.

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

As was the case in 2008, 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. It is also the sector rated most favourably for individuals being given responsibility at an early stage. However, the retail sector was rated lowest of the three sectors for offering top quality training and career development.

The finance and banking sector is rated most favourably in offering competitive salaries, offering top quality training and career development and being an employee-friendly sector where employees are treated with respect. It is also the sector considered most likely to have competent and effective managers. As was the case in previous years, the majority of respondents believe that long and unsociable hours are most typical of the hospitality sector.

Since last year, there has been a significant rise in the rating of retail as an employee-friendly sector where employees are treated with respect (54% in 2008, 66% in 2009). However, there has also been a significant rise in the perception that working in retail is not very challenging (29% in 2008, 40% in 2009).

The perception of the finance and banking sector as the best to work in has remained at 37% in 2009, the same as in 2008, after having dropped from 46% in 2007. This drop is most likely due to the global economic troubles which were widely reported during the autumn of 2008 and throughout 2009.

One quarter of respondents believe that hospitality is the best sector to work in, compared with just over one in five who feel retail is the best sector. Both of these figures represent a marked increase on last year's; in 2008, 19% considered that

hospitality was the best sector to work in and just 12% felt that retail was the best sector in which to be employed.

Finance and banking is still considered to be the best sector (or joint-best sector) to work in by every type of careers advisor. Hospitality is also widely considered to be a better sector to work in than retail, with the exception of HE careers advisors and school heads of year/department.

The proportion of respondents who consider retail to be the best sector to work in varies widely by job role. School career advisors are less likely to name the retail sector as best to work in, whilst HE careers advisors are most likely to hold this view.

### 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 were the two roles most likely to be mentioned, which again is the same result as in all previous years of the survey.

Since last year, the proportion of respondents mentioning a range of retail jobs has increased significantly. Mentions of cashier/till/check out operator have increased from 17% to 39%, whilst mentions of sales assistant/salesperson have increased from 69% to 80%. Mentions of shop fitters have increased from 9% to 26% and mentions of departmental managers/supervisors have increased from 26% to 35%. The proportion mentioning stock controllers has increased from 9% to 16%.

The 'backroom' staff that respondents are most aware of continues to be buyers and personnel managers/staff. Notable proportions also mention roles in marketing, finance, and merchandising. Awareness of all of these job roles has increased slightly since 2008.

### 1.4 Sources of information and influence for careers advisors

The information that careers advisors find most useful when researching a sector or giving advice is the career path available, the qualifications needed, information on specific job roles and training opportunities.

When researching a new sector, nearly three in ten respondents mention salary levels/starting salaries, whilst approaching one in five mention the number of vacancies and the number employed/employment trends/prospects. Again there has been a significant rise in the proportion of respondents who mention the career path available (47% in 2009, 40% in 2008 and 31% in 2007).

Connexions are the most mentioned organisation by all respondents as that they would approach for information. Just over half of respondents from Wales mention Careers Wales, which is the same proportion as in 2008. Careers Scotland was mentioned by almost seven in ten of Scottish respondents, again the same as last year.

The proportion of respondents who said that they would approach retail employers for information has increased significantly this year, from approaching one fifth in 2008 to one quarter in 2009.

The views on the quality of careers information provided by retail employers continues to fluctuate year on year. In 2009 an additional 10% rate the quality of the information as comprehensive (46% in 2009, compared with 36% in 2008).

## 1.5 Career prospects in the retail sector

From 2005 until 2007 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 dropped significantly in 2008 and has dropped further in 2009. One third of respondents are now positive or very positive about short term career prospects in retail, compared with the peak of almost six in ten in 2007. The proportion of those who are negative or very negative about prospects in the retail sector has increased significantly from less than one in ten in 2006 and 2007 (7%) to 16% in 2009. However, those who feel neutral about prospects in retail now account for one half of respondents, the highest proportion ever seen.

As last year, despite the drop in optimism about short term career prospects in the retail sector, all career advisor types are more positive than negative. FE and HE careers advisors are most positive, with 40% and 36% respectively being either positive or very positive. Schools-based advisors are least positive, with 29% of schools careers advisors and 30% of school head of year/department being either positive or very positive.

## 1.6 Advice on setting up new businesses

Approaching two-thirds of all careers advisors say that young people have asked them for advice about setting up their own business, 3% less than in 2008. As last year, 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, approaching half of them were asking about setting up their own shop. This is 5% fewer than last year.

## 1.7 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. More than six in ten have the opinion that retailing has become a better sector for young people to work in over the past five years; more than one in ten feel that it has stayed the same. Approaching three in ten think that it has got worse and more than one in ten are not sure.

The proportion of those considering that retail has become a better sector for young people to work in has increased significantly since last year (from 51% in 2008 to 61% in 2009). However, the proportion of those feeling that the sector has become a worse prospect for young people has *also* more than doubled, from 11% in 2008 to 27% in 2009.

Connexions careers advisors are more positive than others about retailing as a place to work, with almost seven in ten with the belief that the sector has got better in the

last five years. With one half considering that the sector has improved, school careers advisors are least positive.

When asked to explain their reasons for why they think the retail sector has got better in the past five years the main issues mentioned are that there are more opportunities available/more career structure; training/qualifications are more widely available and better pay/introduction of the minimum wage. These were also the top three reasons given last year. More than one in ten also mentioned more jobs/growth in the sector.

When the 27% of respondents who feel that the retail sector has become a worse place to work in were asked their reasons for this, the main reasons given were: the credit crunch/economic slow-down, that it is difficult to get a job, poor pay, businesses/shops closing down and long/unsociable hours.

### 1.8 Awareness of Skillsmart Retail

Construction Skills is still the SSC that careers advisors are most likely to have heard of, followed by the Financial Services Skills Council and People 1<sup>st</sup>. Next most well know is E-Skills UK and Skillsmart Retail. Least well known are GoSkills, SEMTA and Skills for Logistics.

In 2009, awareness of Skillsmart Retail has increased to 39% from 33% in 2008. Awareness of the other SSCs is also generally increasing over time, with the exception of Skills for Logistics, which has fallen 10% in the last year.

Awareness of Skillsmart Retail differs according to the type of respondent surveyed, with FE advisors most aware and school heads of year/department least aware.

### 1.9 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 one third say that they have, which is 13% fewer than last year.

Respondents who are aware of Skillsmart Retail were also asked if they have read *Retail Therapy*. There has also been a decrease in this area this year as almost one in three report having read the magazine, compared with more than four in ten last year.

### 1.10 How Skillsmart Retail can help advisors do their job better

As in 2008, all careers advisors aware of Skillsmart Retail were asked, as the Sector Skills Council for retail, how Skillsmart Retail can help them to do their job better. The top two ways in which careers advisors would like Skillsmart Retail to help them are to provide more detailed information and to make more use of guest talks/school visits/open days. Around one in ten would like Skillsmart Retail to provide access to up-to-date information and make more use of the internet.

## 1.11 Diploma in Retail Business

In 2009, careers advisors (in England only) were asked for the first time about the Diploma in Retail Business, which will be offered to 14-19 year olds from September 2010. More than eight in ten respondents said they had not had any young people asking them about the Diploma. 12% said they have had enquiries about it.

FE career advisors were those most likely to have had enquires, whilst HE and school careers advisors were least likely to have had enquiries. Enquires were most likely to include general information about the Diploma, information about what it can lead to/qualification obtained and information on educational/career options.

Top answers from those who have not had enquiries about the Diploma, as to why this may be the case, include: because students are unaware of the Diploma, because the course is not offered/available, because there is no/limited course information available and because students are asking after other subject areas/not interested in the retail sector.

Respondents were also asked how much they personally know/understand about the Diploma in Retail Business. Four in ten have some knowledge, while a similar proportion feel they do not know very much about it. Approaching one in five say they know nothing at all and 5% consider that they know a great deal.

Those who feel they have some knowledge or a great deal of knowledge about the Diploma were asked where they obtained this information. Approaching one half got their information from Connexions. Other popular sources of information include: a local authority, Diploma Consortia websites and Education Business Partnership.

Those who said they have not very much knowledge or know nothing about the Diploma in Retail Business were asked which source of information they would be most likely to approach/visit. Connexions were again the most popular source, with more than seven in ten respondents mentioning it. Other popular sources were the Diploma in Retail Business website, Diploma Consortia websites, a local authority and Education Business Partnership.

## 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 advisors throughout the UK. BMG Research was commissioned by Skillsmart Retail to repeat this research exercise in September 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008 and again in 2009 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.

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 advisors, 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 below<sup>1</sup>, 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 Advisor has been developed within the Connexions Service to act as a single point of contact for young people. Personal advisors 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.

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<sup>1</sup> Information about the provision of careers advice has been sourced from the following websites: [www.icg-uk.org](http://www.icg-uk.org), [www.connexions.gov.uk](http://www.connexions.gov.uk), and [www.nacgt.org.uk](http://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 advisor 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.

## 2.3 The 2009 UK retail market context

The retail industry is a significant contributor to the UK economy, generating 8% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the UK. As of the end of June 2009, the retail industry employed over 2.8 million people, equating to 11% of the total UK workforce.

Like many other sectors, the retail sector has been hit hard by the recession due to drastic changes in spending behaviour consumers have been forced to make. In 2007, retail's share of consumer spending was 34.4%, the forecast for this share shows long-term decline as consumers rein in spending on non-essential items due to the increasing need to spend more in other areas. Such areas include utilities; the increasing cost of gas and electric means consumers have less disposable income, other categories eating away at what was once 'spare cash' are the increased cost of petrol and insurance, alongside more money being spent on public transport.

To date, 2009 has undoubtedly been the toughest year for the retail sector, with the full impact of the 'credit crunch' beginning to be felt, 2010 is set to be no better. Increasing rates of unemployment, pay freezes and pay cuts have resulted in low levels of consumer confidence, alongside this, credit will be more difficult to acquire making consumers more reluctant to spend beyond their means. Consumers will evolve to become more prudent shoppers, changing their spending behaviour for the long term.

Consumers will be more demanding and more knowledgeable in how to spot competitively priced products, making price or at least good value for money is pivotal for retailers to gain a competitive advantage in the hope of surviving the downturn. Housing-related and big ticket purchases are likely to suffer the most due to falling house prices, whilst food and grocery, and to a lesser extent health and beauty look set to emerge from the downturn relatively unscathed<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Retail Futures 2013: UK Retailing Forecasts. A Datamonitor report.

Although the recession is predicted to last until 2011, the UK appears to be over the worst but it will be a long time yet before consumers allow themselves to spend excess cash in the retail sector, instead choosing to save and re-build their financial security. The forecast for retail spending over the next five years looks bleak, with retail's share of consumer spending estimated to decline to around 31.3% by 2012<sup>3</sup>.

Nonetheless, there is some positive news for the retail sector, in the form of internet retailing. Internet retailing is predicted to grow significantly over the next five years taking a greater share from the high street. The internet is an attractive option for consumers due to the ability to make price comparisons with ease, the simplicity and reliability of websites along with the extensive ranges offered. Many high-street stores will begin to work alongside their online counterpart in order to adapt to the changing landscape of this sector.

With regards to employment in the retail sector, levels of employment have remained fairly static over the past few years. The majority of employees (53%) do not believe there is scope for career progression within their organisation, this finding adds to the feelings of uncertainty within this sector and fuels the perception of the retail sector having a high staff turnover due to staff moving from employer to employer to increase their experience in an attempt to move up the career ladder and improve their pay<sup>4</sup>.

Between September 2008 and March 2009, around 48,000 jobs were lost, representing 1.6% of the total retail workforce. Conversely, in this same period approximately 41,000 new jobs were promised by thriving budget retailers such as Lidl and Poundland, alongside the leading supermarkets; Asda, Sainsbury's and Tesco<sup>5</sup>, giving light to the fact that employment prospects in the retail sector have not been totally hampered by the recession.

Therefore, despite current opinions of the retail sector and the difficult few years ahead, there is positive news in terms of career prospects in this sector. It is important to communicate that the retail sector not only offers a diverse range of career opportunities, it also has an expanding range due to the changing landscape of the sector and the increasing demand for businesses to move online, alongside their high-street presence.

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<sup>3</sup> UK retail futures 2012: A Datamonitor report.

<sup>4</sup> The Hays Retail Salary Survey (2008)

<sup>5</sup> Skillsmart Retail Analysis. Current and future trends in UK retailing 2008-09

### 3 Method of study and profile of sample

BMG Research has undertaken a quantitative survey of 402 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 2009. 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 2009, compared with 2008, 2007, 2006 and 2005. Please note that in this table (and other subsequent tables) data from 2004 are not shown due to lack of space.

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

Respondent type	Number Interviewed 2009	Number interviewed 2008	Number interviewed 2007	Number interviewed 2006	Number interviewed 2005
<b>Connexions Personal Advisor/Connexions Assistant Careers Advisor</b>	54	54	56	56	59
<b>Careers advisor Other service/provider</b>	46	46	49	48	49
<b>FE careers Advisor</b>	100	102	101	100	102
<b>HE Careers Advisor</b>	50	50	50	51	50
<b>School Careers Advisors</b>	52	53	50	51	50
<b>School Head of Years/Department</b>	100	101	100	100	100
<b>Total achieved</b>	402	406	406	406	410

Table 2 provides a profile of the national distribution of careers influencers interviewed, and also details the interviews achieved on a national basis in 2008, 2007, 2006, and 2005. 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 2009	Number interviewed 2008	Number interviewed 2007	Number interviewed 2006	Number interviewed 2005
<b>England</b>	306	303	316	315	318
<b>Scotland</b>	37	40	39	39	39
<b>Wales</b>	31	31	38	37	39
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	28	32	13	15	14
<b>Total achieved</b>	402	406	406	406	410

Throughout this report comparisons have been made with the findings generated from the 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008 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 four 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				
	'09	'08	'07	'06	'05	'09	'08	'07	'06	'05	'09	'08	'07	'06	'05
Develops skills useful in any workplace	78	77	86	78	73	88	88	90	81	85	83	85	89	79	85
Offers a wide range of opportunities for people of all ages	60	63	59	58	50	84	87	85	82	79	80	83	85	77	78
Individuals are given responsibility at an early stage	48	47	54	47	44	73	67	72	71	66	71	68	65	64	67
Generally has competent and effective managers	74	69	78	70	77	64	59	63	53	62	61	55	59	50	56
Offers top quality training and career development	76	81	85	78	79	63	59	63	58	57	67*	59	64	59	61
An employee friendly sector where employees are treated with respect	76	71	73	70	78	66*	54	52	54	50	62*	53	47	53	48
It involves long and unsociable hours	18	21	20	16	15	56	50	52	42	42	94	88	94	92	92
Offers competitive salaries	90	89	92	91	90	36	35	27	29	31	29	24	20	23	20
Working in this sector is not very challenging	13	7	7	8	8	40*	29	27	36	29	25*	17	17	22	17
You need a degree to have any real career prospects in this sector	60	54	60	59	55	22	17	18	14	14	21	17	13	14	12

Sample base: 402 (2009), 406 (2008), 406 (2007), 406 (2006), 410 (2005), \*+/- 7% Difference FROM 2008

As was the case in 2008, the retail sector is rated most favourably developing skills useful in any workplace (88%) and in offering a wide range of opportunities for people of all ages (84%). It is also the sector rated most favourably for individuals being given responsibility at an early stage (73%). However, the retail sector was rated lowest of the three sectors for offering top quality training and career development.

The finance and banking sector is rated most favourably in offering competitive salaries (90%), offering top quality training and career development (76%) and being an employee-friendly sector where employees are treated with respect (76%). It is also the sector considered most likely to have competent and effective managers (74%). As was the case in previous years, the majority of respondents believe that long and unsociable hours are most typical of the hospitality sector (94%).

Since last year, there has been a significant rise in the rating of retail as an employee-friendly sector where employees are treated with respect (54% in 2008, 66% in 2009). However, there has also been a significant rise in the perception that working in retail is not very challenging (29% in 2008, 40% in 2009).

### **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 highest percentages have been highlighted in bold.

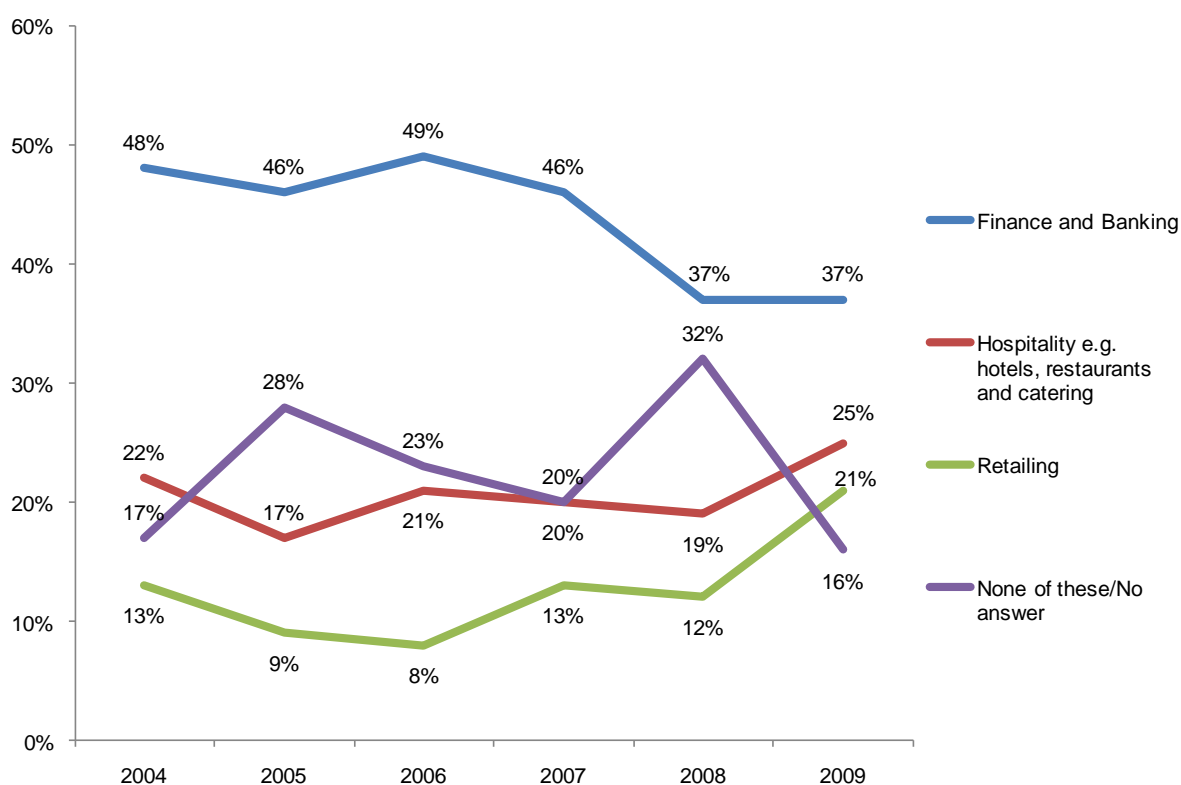
**Table 4: Respondents' perceptions of how job aspects relate to the retail sector by job title (All respondents)**

	Connexions advisor	Careers advisor - other	FE careers advisor	HE careers advisor	Schools careers advisor/ co-ordinator	Schools head of year / dept
Develops skills useful in any workplace	87	91	<b>93</b>	84	77	90
Offers a wide range of opportunities for people of all ages	<b>91</b>	85	85	80	81	83
Individuals are given responsibility at an early stage	85	63	68	68	75	<b>79</b>
Generally has competent and effective managers	65	63	<b>69</b>	66	56	64
Offers top quality training and career development	63	67	57	<b>68</b>	63	63
An employee friendly sector where employees are treated with respect	67	<b>76</b>	63	60	63	67
It involves long and unsociable hours	96	93	96	80	<b>98</b>	96
Offers competitive salaries	37	37	30	<b>42</b>	35	39
Working in this sector is not very challenging	37	30	36	32	48	<b>49</b>
You need a degree to have any real career prospects in this sector	22	17	24	24	17	24
<b>SAMPLE BASE</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>100</b>

## 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: 402 (2009), 406 (2008), 406 (2007), 406 (2006), 410 (2005), 400 (2004)

The perception of the finance and banking sector as the best to work in has remained at 37% in 2009, the same as in 2008, after having dropped from 46% in 2007. This drop is most likely due to the global economic troubles which were widely reported during the autumn of 2008 and throughout 2009.

One quarter of respondents (25%) believe that hospitality is the best sector to work in, compared with just over one in five who feel retail is the best sector (21%). Both of these figures represent a marked increase on last year's; in 2008, 19% considered that hospitality was the best sector to work in and just 12% felt that retail was the best sector in which to be employed.

The proportion of those saying that none of the three sectors is best to work in (or gave no answer) is half that of last year, falling from 32% in 2008 to 16% in 2009.

The proportion of respondents who consider retail to be the best sector to work in varies widely by job role. School career advisors are less likely to name the retail sector as best to work in (10%), whilst at 28%, HE careers advisors are most likely to hold this view.

Finance and banking is still considered to be the best sector (or joint-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 HE careers advisors and school heads of year/department.

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

	Connexions advisor	Careers advisor - other	FE careers advisor	HE careers advisor	Schools careers advisor/ co-ordinator	Schools head of year / dept
<b>Finance &amp; Banking</b>	33	30	31	32	54	43
<b>Retail</b>	13	24	23	28	10	24
<b>Hospitality</b>	24	30	31	20	27	20
<b>SAMPLE BASE</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>100</b>

#### 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	
Career prospects	50%	Career Prospects	52%	Career Prospects	36%
Salary/pay	42%	Industry/sector image/status	39%	Training/development available	27%
Training/development available	29%	Training/development available	24%	Working conditions/ skills developed working in industry/sector	25%
Working conditions	19%	Working conditions/ skills developed working in industry/sector	20%	Industry/sector status/image	24%
Industry/sector image/status	15%	Salary/pay	15%	Salary/pay	11%
<b>SAMPLE BASES</b>	<b>150</b>		<b>84</b>		<b>102</b>

This year, in all three sectors, career prospects are most likely to be given as the reason for that sector being best to work in. For retail, the proportion giving this reason has increased considerably from 36% in 2008 to 52% in 2009.

For finance and banking other top reasons for that sector being best to work in were given as salary/pay (42%) and the training/development available (29%). For retail they were given as industry/sector image/status (39%) and training/development available (24%). For hospitality, other top reasons given were training/development available (27%) and working conditions/skills developed working in industry/sector (25%).

## Quantifying perceptions of a career in retail - 2009

Last year a notable proportion mentioned that the poor economic climate (the 'Credit Crunch') as a reason for the retail and hospitality sectors being the best to work in (20% and 22% respectively). In the 2009 survey this answer was given by just 1% of those who feel retail is the best sector and by 2% of those who feel hospitality is the best sector to work in.

## 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 7 shows all of the job roles that respondents were able to identify.

**Table 7: Retail sector jobs identified by respondents (All respondents)**

Job role	% of respondents aware 2009	% of respondents aware 2008	% of respondents aware 2007	% of respondents aware 2006	% of respondents aware 2005
Sales assistant / salesperson	80*	69	75	70	75
Store manager	56	54	69	63	54
Cashier / till / check-out operator	39*	17	26	37	24
Buyer	32	29	33	33	35
Departmental managers / supervisors	35*	26	33	27	31
Personnel managers / staff	28	22	17	23	21
Shelf-filler	26*	9	13	16	15
Shopkeeper	19*	9	4	15	17
Stock controller	16*	9	12	13	12
Marketing	21	16	13	12	13
Finance	17	13	13	11	11
Merchandiser	13	10	13	11	8
Window dresser	12	9	9	11	8
Logistics Head Office	9	4	9	7	5
Delivery driver	9	2	4	6	4
Visual merchandising	5	7	4	5	4
Personal shopper	8	2	2	4	**
IT	7	3	3	4	3
Customer service staff	4	4	5	3	3
Warehouse Manager/ Staff	1	0	5	1	**
Cleaning staff	1	0	3	**	**
Office/administration	2	1	2	**	**
Catering staff	*	1	2	**	**
Management (unspecified)	3	5	**	**	**
Sample base: 402 (2009), 406 (2008), 406 (2007), 406 (2006), 410 (2005), * +/-7% DIFFERENCE FROM 2008					
** Classification not available					
(New codes of 1% or less omitted)					

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 roles most likely to be mentioned (80% and 56% respectively), which again is the same result as in all previous years of the survey.

Since last year, the proportion of respondents mentioning a range of retail jobs has increased significantly. Mentions of cashier/till/check out operator have increased from 17% to 39%, whilst mentions of sales assistant/salesperson have increased from 69% to 80%. Mentions of shop fitters have increased from 9% to 26% and mentions of departmental managers/supervisors have increased from 26% to 35%. The proportion mentioning stock controllers has increased from 9% to 16%.

The 'backroom' staff that respondents are most aware of continues to be buyers (32%) and personnel managers / staff (28%). Notable proportions also mention roles in marketing (21%), finance (17%), and merchandising (13%). Awareness of all of these job roles has increased slightly since 2008.

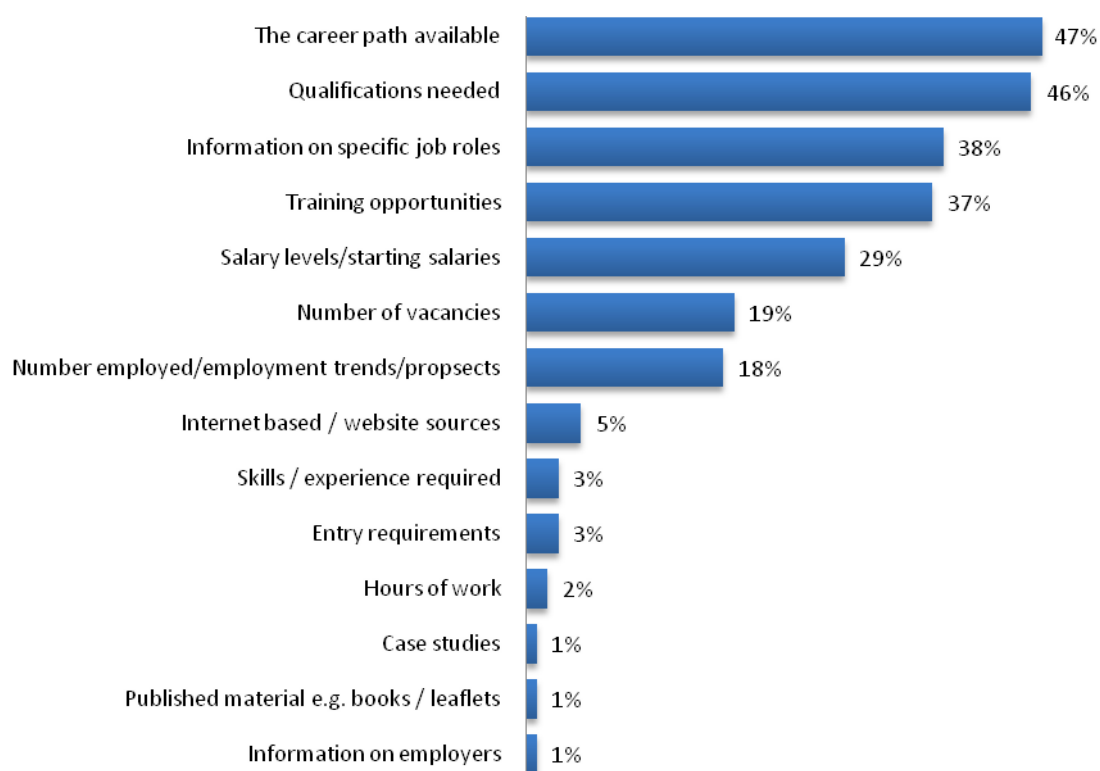
## 6 Sources of information for careers advisors

### 6.1 General sources of careers information

#### 6.1.1 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, are summarised in the chart below.

**Figure 2: 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 (47%), the qualifications needed (46%), information on specific job roles (38%) and training opportunities (37%)

Nearly three in ten mention salary levels / starting salaries (29%), whilst approaching one in five mention the number of vacancies (19%) and the number employed/employment trends/prospects (18%).

Once again there has been a significant rise in the proportion of respondents who mention the career path available (47% in 2009, 40% in 2008 and 31% 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 8: Type of information that respondents find most useful when researching a sector or giving advice – by job role**

	Connexions advisor	Careers advisor - other	FE careers advisor	HE careers advisor	Schools careers advisor/ co-ordinator	Schools head of year / dept
The career path available	33	43	51	<b>54</b>	27	58
Qualifications needed	44	41	49	36	44	<b>53</b>
Information on specific job roles	35	<b>52</b>	35	30	48	36
Salary levels/starting salaries	13	15	23	40	33	<b>43</b>
Training opportunities	33	41	36	38	31	<b>42</b>
Number employed/employment trends/prospects	19	20	<b>26</b>	8	12	17
Number of vacancies	19	<b>28</b>	17	16	13	20
Internet based / website sources	9	2	5	6	<b>10</b>	3
Geographical information on sectors / employers	2	0	0	0	0	1
Entry requirements	7	0	4	0	0	6
Case studies						
Information on job opportunities	0	0	0	0	0	0
Skills / experience required	6	0	1	0	2	7
Published material e.g. books / leaflets	2	2	0	2	2	2
Open days / exhibitions / someone coming to give talks	0	0	0	0	2	1
<b>SAMPLE BASE</b>	54	46	100	50	52	100

### 6.1.2 Organisations that respondents would approach for careers information

Respondents were asked to identify which organisations and people they would approach for information. Table 7 shows the range of organisations that respondents may seek information from, and compares results for this year to 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008.

**Table 9: Organisations that respondents would approach for information (All Respondents)**

	2009 (%)	2008 (%)	2007 (%)	2006 (%)	2005 (%)
Careers Wales (Wales only)	52	52	61	51	51
Connexions	53*	39	38	49	51
Careers Scotland (Scotland only)	68	68	51	62	49
Employers	25*	17	28	16	16
Colleagues (Career specialist)	14	13	10	13	15
Relevant Sector Skills Council	23*	15	18	10	11
Colleagues (Not a career specialist)	8	8	3	5	9
JobCentre Plus	13*	4	2	4	6
Trade organisations and professional bodies	2	1	9	5	6
Local colleges/universities/educational institutions	*	6	10	*	3
National Learning and Skills Council	6	3	3	3	2
Training organisations	3	3	4	*	2
Prospects (Graduate information provider)	1	4	3	2	2
Learndirect (by phone)	9*	1	2	1	1
Local Learning and Skills Council	11*	3	1	3	1
Learndirect (on internet)	19*	3	5	2	1
Internet/website (unspecified)	13*	6	3	3	**
<b>SAMPLE BASES</b>	402	406	406	406	410
* +/-7% difference from 2008 (based on total sample)					
** Classification not available					

Connexions are the most mentioned organisation by all respondents as who they would approach for information (53%). Just over half of respondents from Wales mention Careers Wales (52%), which is the same proportion as in 2008. Careers Scotland was mentioned by 68% of Scottish respondents, again the same as last year.

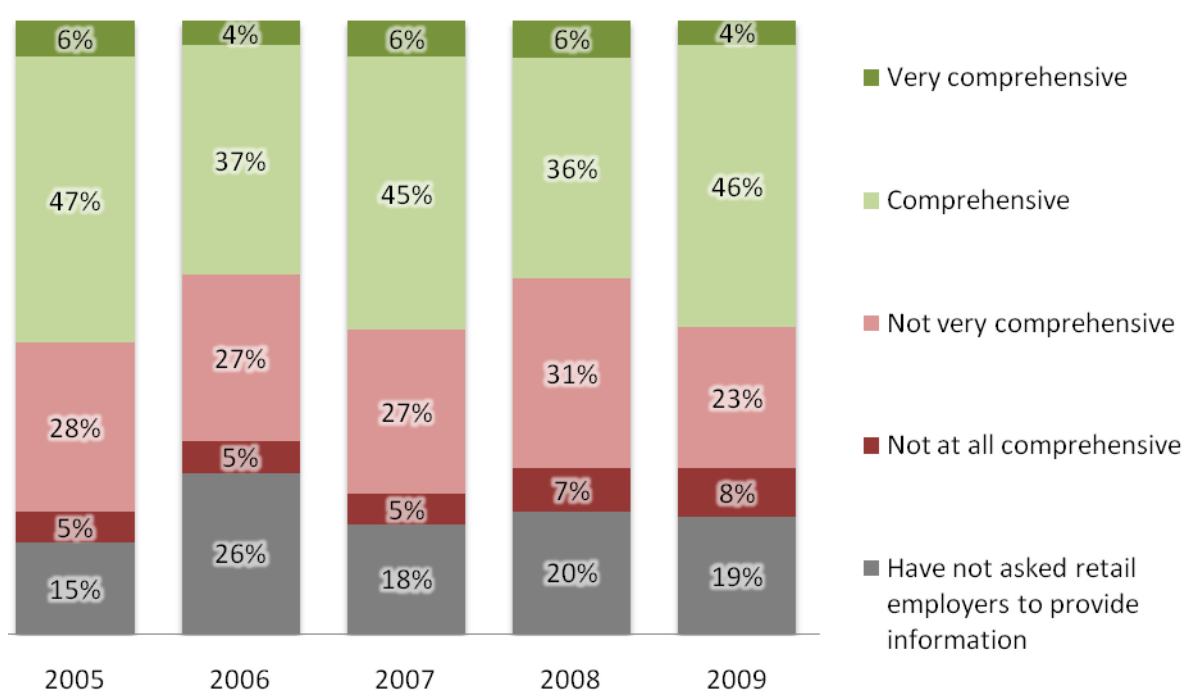
The proportion of respondents who said that they would approach employers for information has increased significantly, from 17% in 2008 to one quarter (25%) in 2009.

Mentions of a range of other sources including Sector Skills Councils, the local Learning and Skills Council, learndirect and the Internet have also increased significantly.

### 6.1.3 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 3: Careers advisors rating of the quality of information provided by retail employers (All respondents)**



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

The views on the quality of careers information provided by retail employers continues to fluctuate year on year. This year, an additional 10% rate the quality of the information as comprehensive (46% in 2009, compared with 36% in 2008). In total 50% rate the quality of information as either very comprehensive or comprehensive, compared with 42% in 2008.

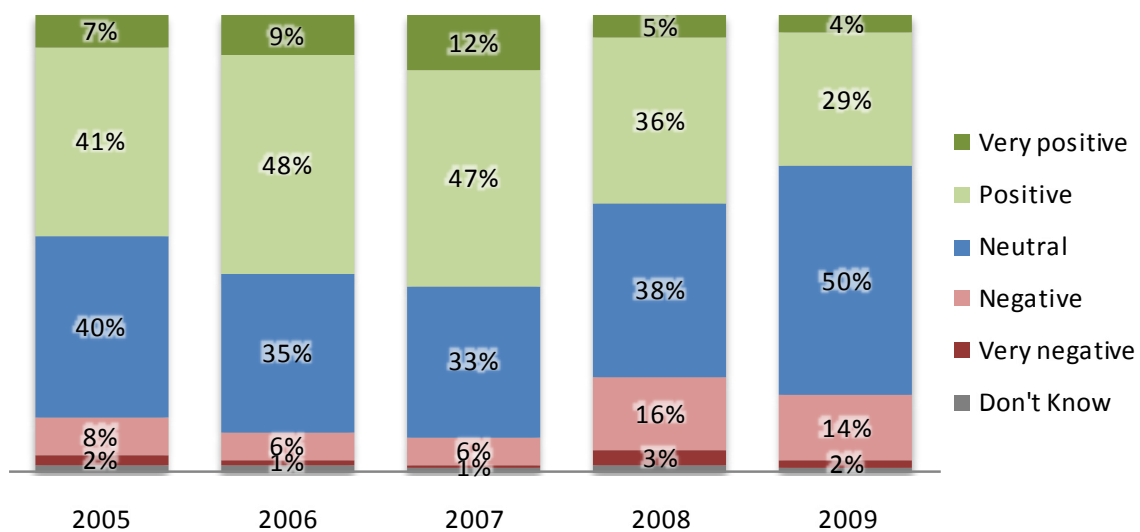
More than three in ten (31%) are of the opinion that the information is not comprehensive, this is markedly fewer than last year (38%), but similar to the figures of previous years (32% in 2006 and 2007, and 33% in 2005).

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



Sample Base: 402 (2009), 406 (2008), 406 (2007), 406 (2006), 410 (2005),

From 2005 until 2007 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 dropped significantly in 2008 and has dropped further in 2009. One third of respondents (33%) are now positive or very positive about short term career prospects in retail, compared with the peak of almost six in ten (59%) in 2007. The proportion of those who are negative or very negative about prospects in the retail sector has increased significantly from less than one in ten in 2006 and 2007 (7%) to 16% in 2009. However, those who feel neutral about prospects in retail now account for one half of respondents (50%), the highest proportion ever seen.

As last year, despite the drop in optimism about short term career prospects in the retail sector, all career advisor types are more positive than negative. FE and HE careers advisors are most positive, with 40% and 36% respectively being either positive or very positive. Schools-based advisors are least positive, with 29% of schools careers advisors and 30% of school head of year/department feeling either positive or very positive.

### 7.2 Advice on setting up new businesses

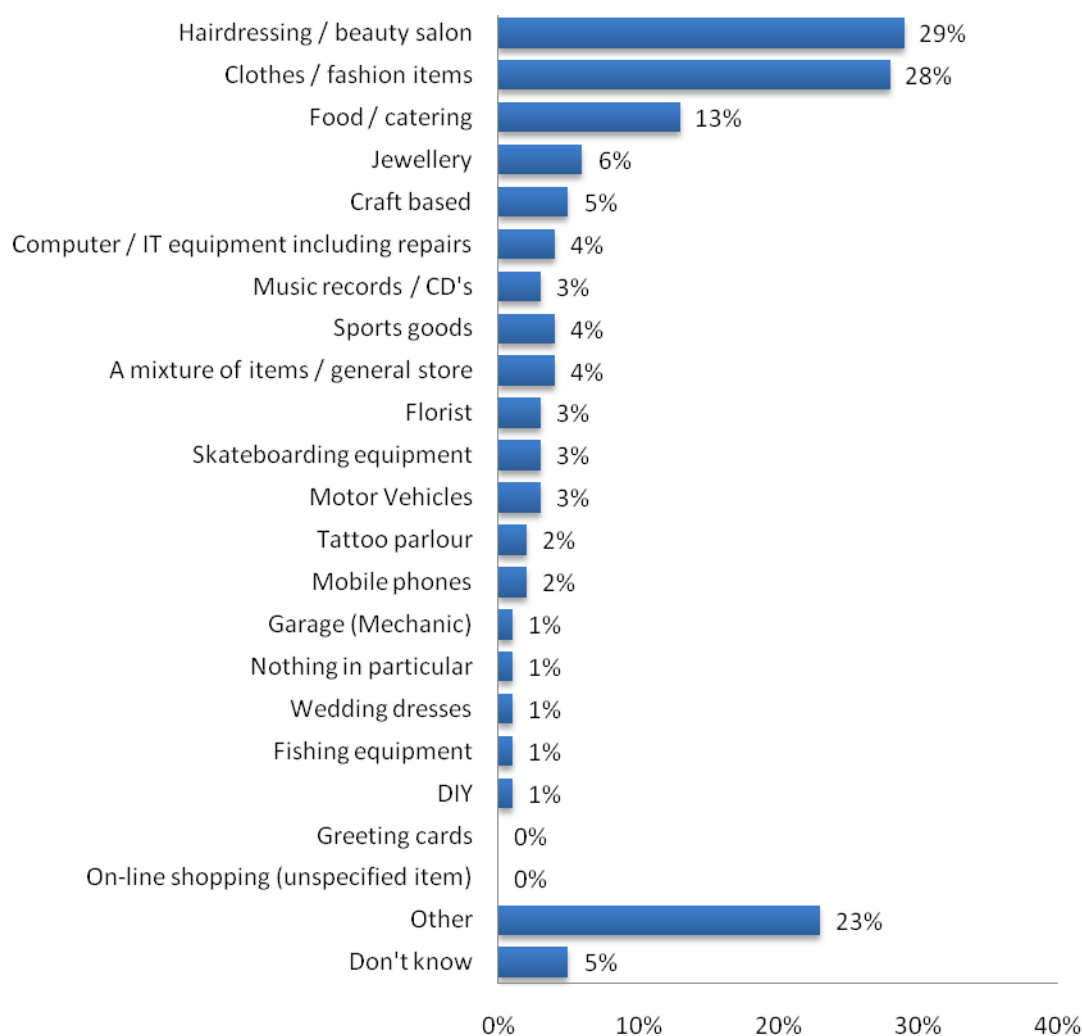
Approaching two-thirds of all careers advisors say that young people have asked them for advice about setting up their own business (63%), 3% fewer than in 2008.

As last year, this proportion varies among careers advisors, with advisors in schools 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, approaching half of them were asking about setting up their own shop (45%). This is 5% less than last year.

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

**Figure 5: 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)**



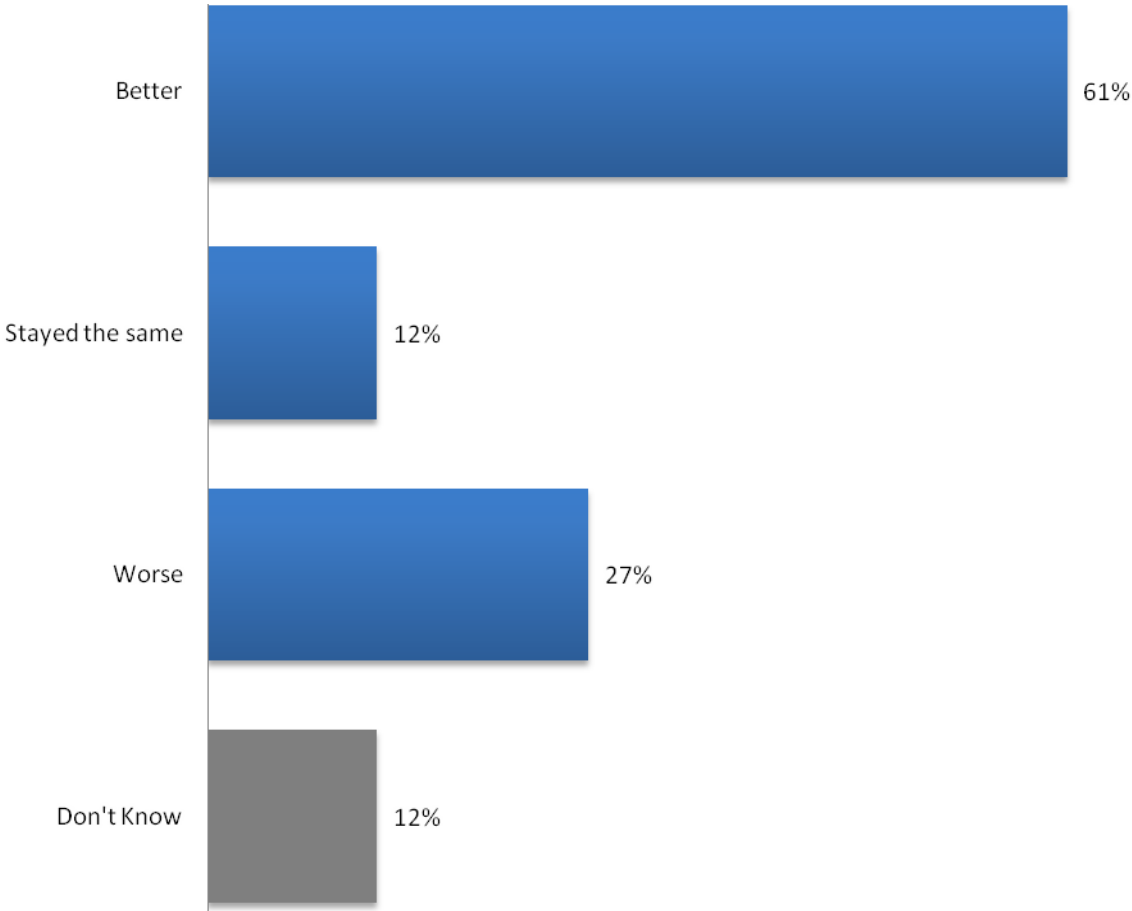
Sample Base: 135

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, hairdressing/beauty salon, clothes and fashion items are by far the most popular type of items that young people are looking to sell, followed food / catering, jewellery and craft based products. Examples of shop-types mentioned amongst the 23% that mentioned other types include pet grooming, t-shirt design, gadgets and gifts.

### 7.3 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 6: 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: 402 (2009)

Overall respondents are positive about changes in the retail sector over the last five years. More than six in ten (61%) have the opinion that retailing has become a better sector for young people to work in over the past five years; more than one in ten (12%) feel that it has stayed the same. Approaching three in ten (27%) think that it has got worse and 12% are not sure.

The proportion of those considering that retail has become a better sector for young people to work in has increased significantly since last year (from 51% in 2008 to 61% in 2009). However, the proportion of those feeling that the sector has become a worse prospect for young people has *also* more than doubled in the last year, from 11% in 2008 to 27% in 2009.

Connexions careers advisors are more positive than others about retailing as a place to work, with almost seven in ten (69%) with the belief that the sector has got better in the last five years. At 50% considering that the sector has improved, school careers advisors are least positive.

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 available/more career structure (32%); training / qualifications are more widely available (22%); better pay / introduction of the minimum wage (15%). These were also the top three reasons given last year. More than one in ten (13%) also mentioned more jobs/growth in the sector.

Individual comments made by these respondents include the following:

*More opportunities, prospects and promotions – a lot more stores*

*There is a large complex on our doorstep which is expanding*

*It's still growing in spite of the recession*

*Minimum wage has helped young people*

When the 27% 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 were: the credit crunch/economic slow-down (35%), that it is difficult to get a job (30%), poor pay (9%), businesses/shops closing down (9%) and long/unsociable hours (7%).

Examples of specific reasons given are shown below:

*The recession is having a damaging effect*

*A lot of the larger firms have gone bust due to the recession*

*Shops closing down – there is no job security*

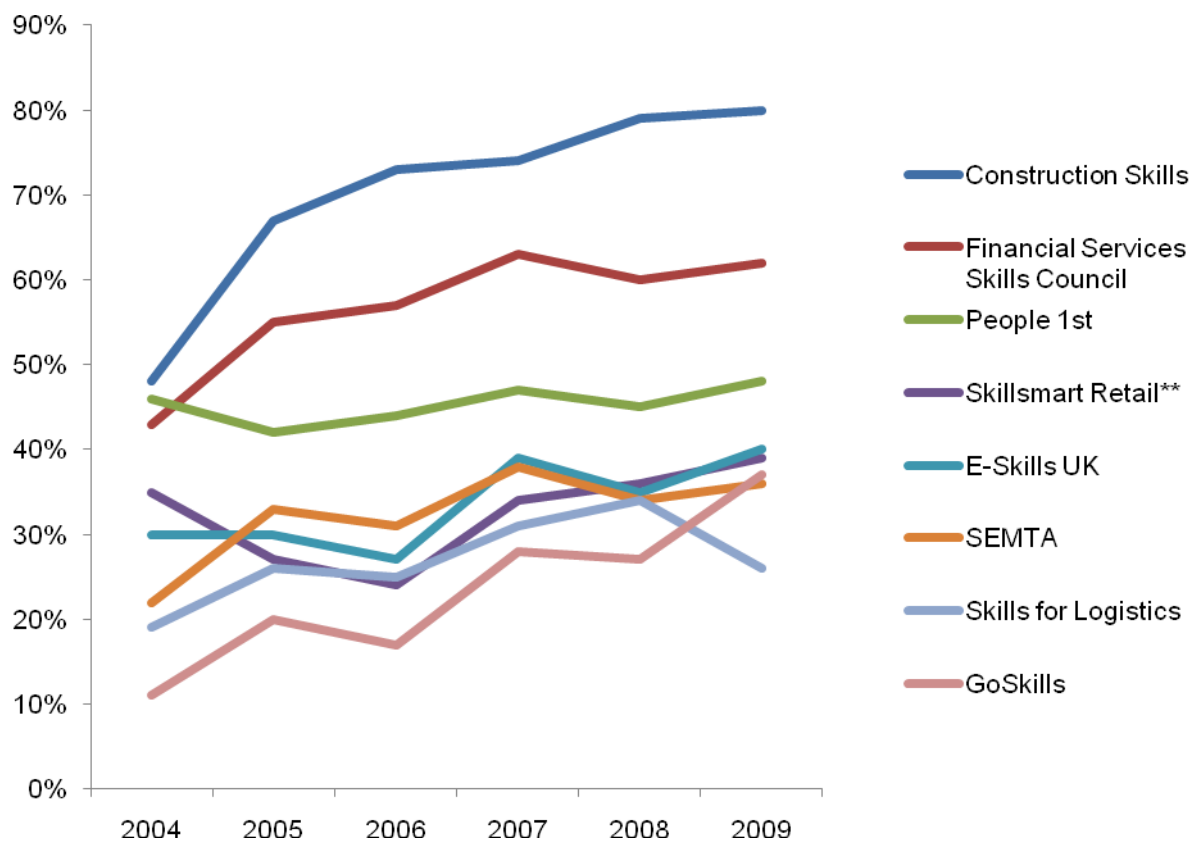
*The hours they are expected to work are longer than they should be*

## 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 five years and profiled in Figure 7.

**Figure 7: Prompted awareness of Sector Skills Councils (All respondents)**



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

Sample Base: 402 (2009), 406 (2008), 406 (2007), 406 (2006), 410 (2005), 400 (2004)

Construction Skills is still the SSC that careers advisors are most likely to have heard of (80%), followed by the Financial Services Skills Council (62%) and People 1<sup>st</sup> (48%). Next most well know is E-Skills UK (40%) and Skillsmart Retail (39%). Least well known are GoSkills (37%) SEMTA (36%), Skills for Logistics (26%).

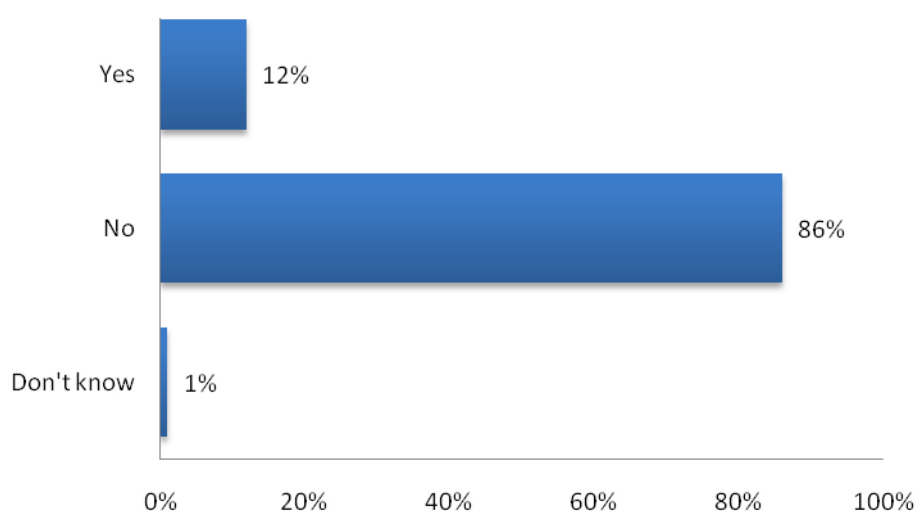
In 2009, awareness of Skillsmart Retail has increased to 39% from 33% in 2008. Awareness of the other SSCs is also generally increasing over time, with the exception of Skills for Logistics, which has fallen 10% in the last year from 36% to 26%.

Awareness of Skillsmart Retail differs according to the type of respondent surveyed, with FE advisors most aware (47%) and school heads of year/department least aware (29%).

## 8.2 Diploma in Retail Business

In 2009, careers advisors (in England only) were asked for the first time about the Diploma in Retail Business, which will be offered to 14-19 year olds from September 2010. More than eight in ten respondents (86%) said they had *not* had any young people asking them about the Diploma. 12% said they *have* had enquiries about it.

**Figure 8: Whether respondents have had enquiries from young people about the Diploma in Retail Business (All respondents in England)**



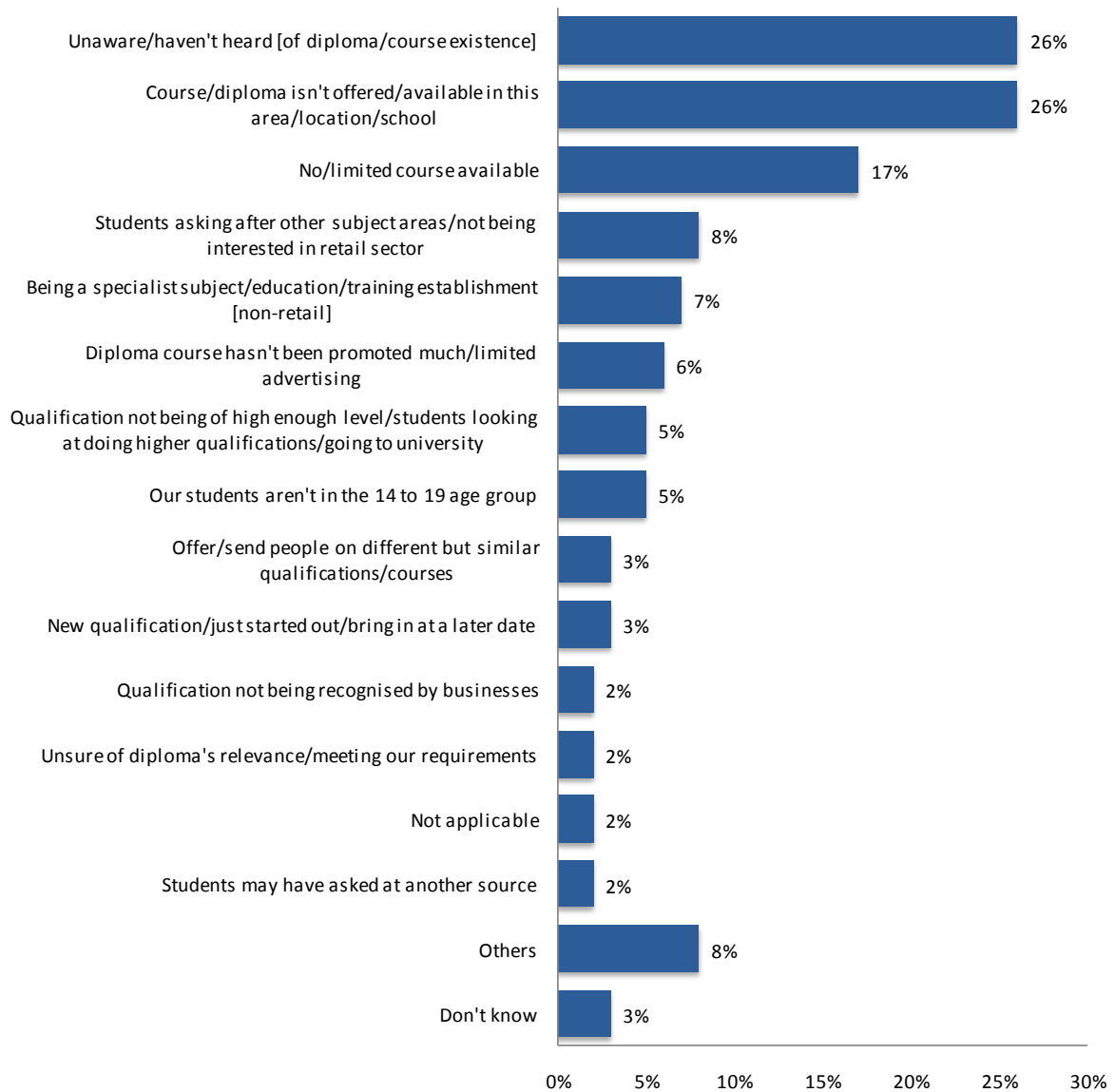
Sample Base: 306 (2009) All respondents in England

Other careers advisors (21%) and FE career advisors (17%) were those most likely to have had enquires, whilst HE (9%) and school careers advisors (8%) were least likely to have had enquiries.

Enquires to those who had been asked about the Diploma were most likely to include general information about the Diploma (26%), information about what it can lead to/qualification obtained (18%) and information on educational/career options (16%).

Top reasons from those who have not had enquiries about the Diploma, as to why this may be the case include: because students are unaware of the Diploma (26%), because the course is not offered/available locally (26%), because there is no/limited course information available (17%) and because students are asking after other subject areas/not interested in the retail sector (8%).

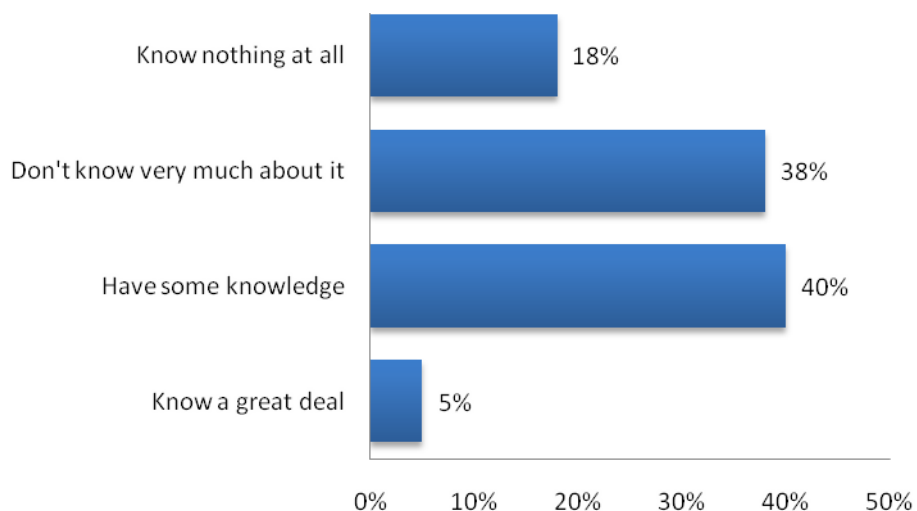
**Figure 9: Reasons why respondents think they have not had enquiries from young people about the Diploma in Retail Business (Where have not had young people asking about the Diploma)**



Sample Base: 264

Respondents were also asked how much they personally know/understand about the Diploma in Retail Business. Four in ten (40%) have some knowledge, while a similar proportion feel they do not know very much about it (38%). Approaching one in five say they know nothing at all (18%) and 5% consider that they know a great deal.

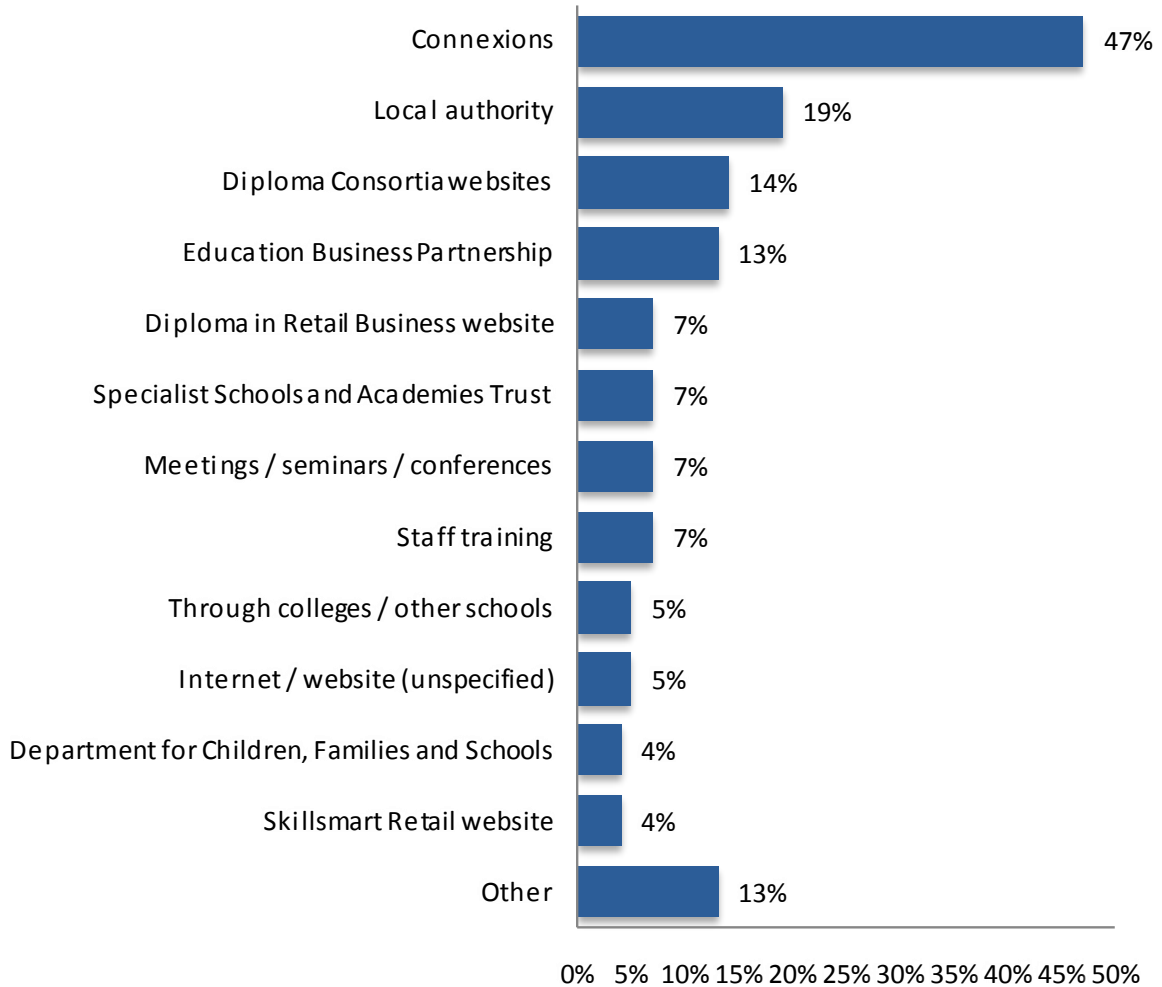
**Figure 10: Respondent awareness of the Diploma in Retail Business (All respondents in England)**



Sample Base: 306 (2009) All respondents in England

Those who feel they have some knowledge or a great deal of knowledge about the Diploma were asked where they obtained this information. Approaching one half (47%) got their information from Connexions. Other popular sources of information include: a local authority (19%), Diploma Consortia websites (14%) and Education Business Partnership (13%).

**Figure 11: Sources of information about Diploma in Retail Business (All respondents in England)**

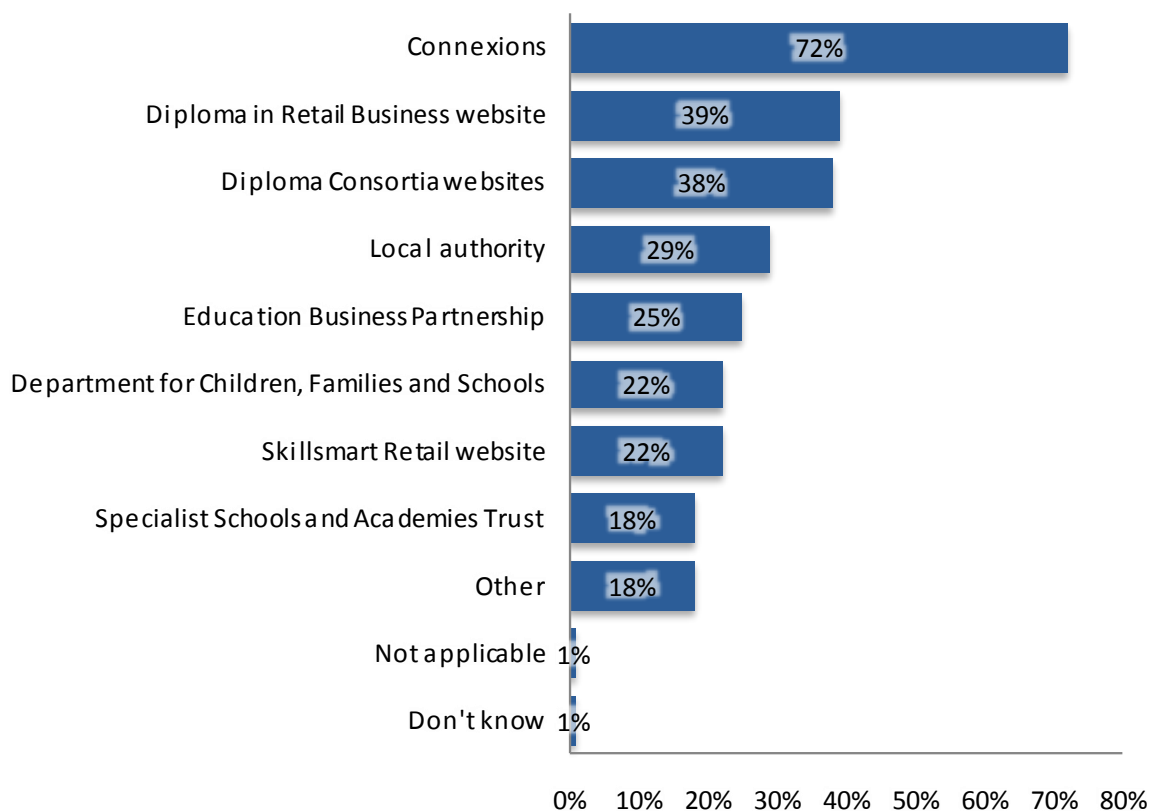


Sample Base: 306 (England only)

The 7% who say they have visited the Diploma in Retail Business website equates to just 9 respondents. When these respondents were asked to rate the user-friendliness of this website 6 out of 9 rated it as good or very good, 1 remained neutral, 1 said don't know and 1 said not very good.

Those who said they have not very much knowledge or know nothing about the Diploma in Retail Business were asked which source of information they would be most likely to approach/visit. Connexions was the most popular source, with more than seven in ten respondents mentioning it (72%). Other popular sources were the Diploma in Retail Business website (39%), Diploma Consortia websites (38%), a local authority (29%) and Education Business Partnership (25%).

**Figure 12: Sources likely to approach/visit to get to know more about the Diploma in Retail Business (Where respondents have not very much knowledge or know nothing about the Diploma in Retail Business)**



Sample base: 169

## 9 Awareness of Skillsmart Retail

### 9.1 Awareness of selected Sector Skills Councils

Construction Skills is the SSC that careers advisors were most likely to have heard of, with four in five (80%) reported knowing of them. This represents a continued year on year growth in the awareness of Construction Skills since 2004.

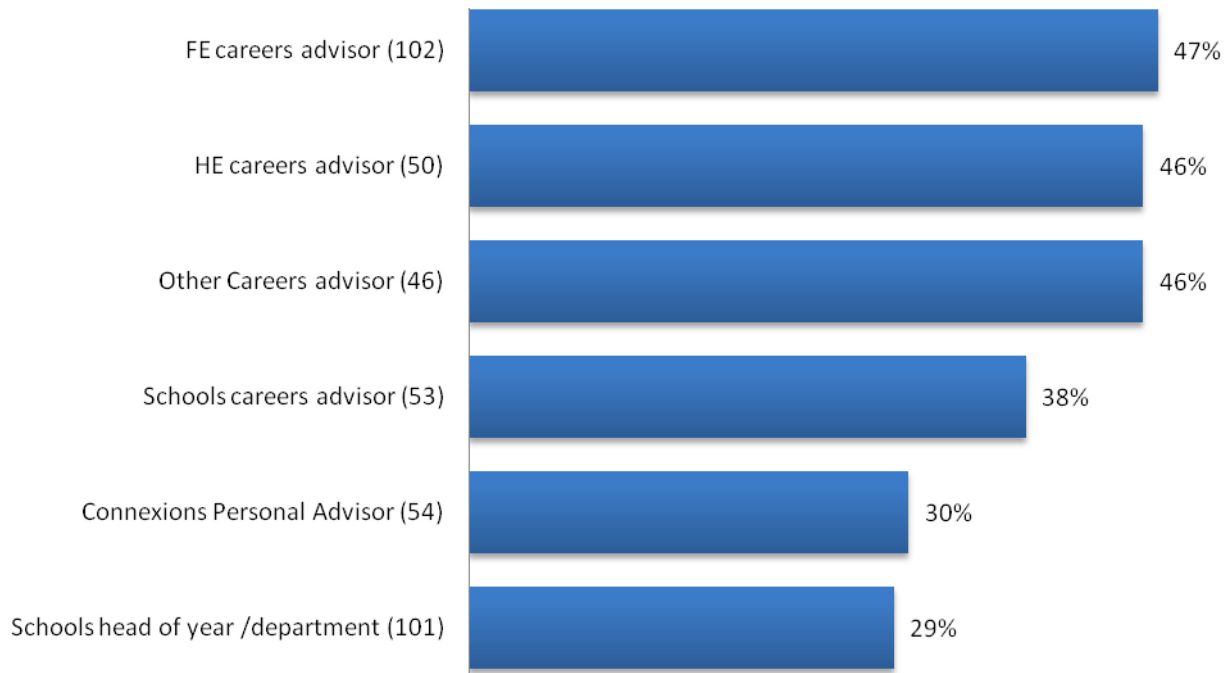
The Financial Services Skills Council also has a relatively high level of awareness with more than three in five (62%) of respondents being aware of this SSC, a level slightly higher than last year.

Fewer than half of all respondents are aware of any of the other SSCs. People 1<sup>st</sup> have maintained a similar level of awareness as previous years (48%), as did SEMTA (36%). Awareness of Goskills is 10% higher than in 2008 (37%). However, awareness of Skills for Logistics among career advisors is 10% lower than last year, at 26%.

Skillsmart Retail is recognised by almost four in ten of all respondents (39%), an increase of 6% on last year (33%). 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 careers advisors being most aware (47%) and schools head of year / departments (29%) least aware.

**Figure 13: Awareness of Skillsmart Retail – by job role**



Sample Bases in Parenthesis

## 9.2 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 33% say that they have, which is 13% fewer than last year.

Of the careers influencers who have visited Skillsmart Retail's website, 29% say they have downloaded research into the retail sector from the website, such as facts and figures, reports and trend data. Where this has been the case respondents have been largely satisfied with the quality of that research or labour market information, with 10 out of the 15 respondents that have downloaded such information saying they have been very or fairly satisfied. However the small base involved means that we cannot be confident statistically that this view is representative of the total population.

Respondents who are aware of Skillsmart Retail were also asked if they have read *Retail Therapy*. There has also been a decrease in this area this year as 28% report having read the magazine, compared with more than four in ten last year (42%), 32% in 2007, 28% in 2006, 42% in 2005, and 19% of respondents in 2004.<sup>6</sup>

## 9.3 How Skillsmart Retail can help advisors do their job better

In 2008, all careers advisors aware of Skillsmart Retail were for the first time asked, as the Sector Skills Council for retail, how Skillsmart Retail can help them to do their job better. This question was repeated in 2009 and their responses are summarised in the following chart.

The top two ways in which careers advisors would like Skillsmart Retail to help them are to provide more detailed information (15%), and to make more use of guest talks/school visits/open days. Around one in ten would like Skillsmart Retail to provide access to up-to-date information (11%) and make more use of the internet (10%).

Examples of specific answers to this question include:

*Send booklets with clear and varied information*

*Speakers and activities for schools*

*Make us aware that this sector is employing even in this hard time*

*By having more local information on the web site. Retailers to visit schools to give talks.*

*To come to talk to students face to face on opportunities in retail*

*I would like them to get more information from the employers and just more information about the different sectors.*

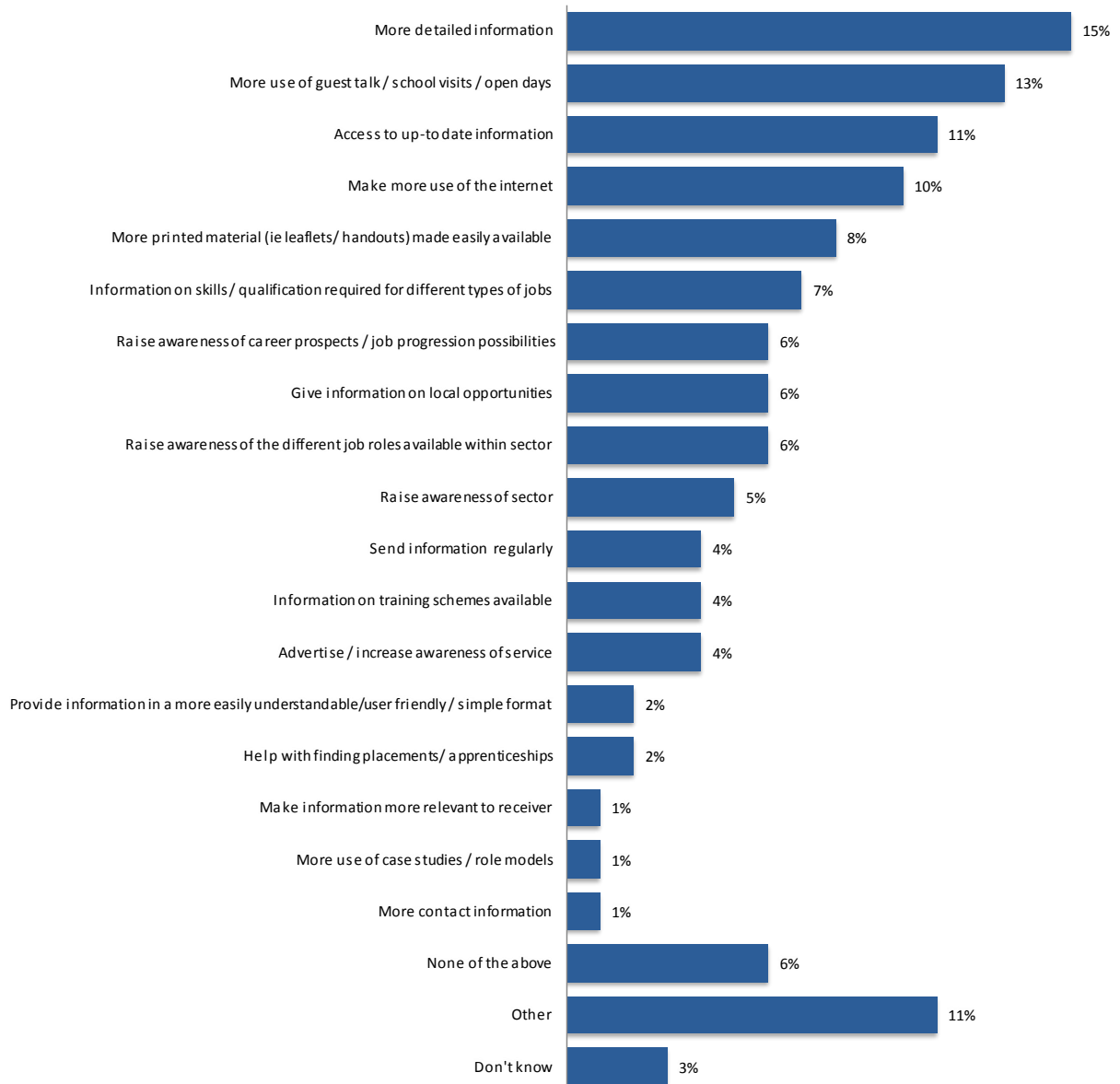
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<sup>6</sup> The sample bases for this question are 156 for 2009, 146 for 2008, 139 for 2007, 97 for 2006, 109 for 2005 and 140 for 2004, so a difference of +/-12% is needed to record a significant change.

*More communication with local businesses in the area and keeping the school informed about the retail industry and what's available*

*Provide current labour market information, updated entry route and regional information*

**Figure 14: Ways in which Skillsmart Retail can help careers advisors do their jobs better (Careers Advisors aware of Skillsmart Retail)**



Sample Base: 146 (All aware of Skillsmart Retail)

## 10 Conclusions and Recommendations

Skillsmart Retail can be encouraged by a number of positive perceptions of the retail sector this year, despite the recession:

- The proportion of careers advisors considering that retail has become a better sector for young people to work in has increased significantly since last year - and all career advisor types are more positive than negative about prospects for young people;
- The retail sector is still rated more favourably than the finance/banking sector and the hospitality sector for developing skills useful within the workplace and in offering a wide range of opportunities for people of all ages. It is also the sector rated most favourably for individuals being given responsibility at an early stage;
- The perception that the retail sector is the best sector to work in, compared with finance and banking, and hospitality has improved significantly since 2008, up from 12% to 21%. However perceptions have also improved for the hospitality sector, while finance and banking has maintained its top ranked position, resulting in the retail sector remaining in third position.
- Careers advisors seem to be more aware of job roles in the retail sector; since last year, the proportion of respondents mentioning a range of retail jobs have increased significantly.
- Skillsmart Retail can also be encouraged that awareness of the organisation continues to rise and that careers advisors are keen to receive from them more information about jobs in the sector. Advisors in England are also keen to find out about the new Diploma in Retail Business.

## 11 Appendix 1: Sampling errors

**Table 7: 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 8: 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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