



Research Report



Quantifying Perceptions of a Career in Retail - 2007

Prepared for: Skillsmart Retail



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Prepared for: Skillsmart Retail

Prepared by: Julie Harrington, BMG Research

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www.bmgresearch.co.uk

Project:

Registered in England No. 2841970

Registered office:

7 Holt Court North
Heneage Street West
Aston Science Park
Birmingham
B7 4AX
UK

Tel: +44 (0) 121 3336006

UK VAT Registration No. 580 6606 32

Birmingham Chamber of Commerce Member No. B4626

Market Research Society Company Partner

ESOMAR Member (The World Association of Research Professionals)

British Quality Foundation Member

Market Research Quality Standards Association (British Standards Institute) BS7911 for Market Research -
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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 and 2006. 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

The retail sector is still rated most favourably for developing skills useful in any workplace and for offering a wide range of opportunities for people of all ages. Retail is also the sector that the highest proportion of respondents say gives individuals responsibility at an early stage.

The retail sector has seen a considerable improvement this year in terms of fewer respondents associating the sector with not being very challenging, although despite this the sector does still receive the highest level of association for this factor, relative to the other two sectors.

The perception of unfavourable working hours in retail has increased this year, with just over half of respondents now saying that retail involves long and unsociable hours.

Retail still has the lowest proportion of respondents who think it is the best sector to work in, (13%, compared with 8% in 2006, 9% in 2005 and 13% in 2004), although following the 5% point improvement for retail since last year, the gap has narrowed slightly when compared with hospitality (20%) and finance and banking (46%).

The proportion of careers advisors who would not want their child/children working in the retail sector has fallen considerably, down to just 7%, from 18% in 2006. This improvement means that retail is now in a more favourable position than the hospitality sector on this measure (13%) and closer to finance and banking in first place (3%).

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

In line with previous findings, respondents are most aware of 'frontline' job roles in the retail sector, with the highest proportion mentioning sales assistants (75%) and store managers (69%). Awareness of the store manager role has increased in each year of the study. Mention of 'shopkeeper' as a role has dropped significantly compared with 2006 and 2005, while awareness of departmental managers has also increased.

1.1.4 Sources of information and influence for careers advisers

There have been a number of significant changes in terms of the main influences on careers advisors' perceptions since 2006, which has generally meant that the pattern of responses has returned to 2005 levels for the retail sector.

Feedback from clients is once again the top influence over respondents' perceptions, followed by careers influencers' own experience of shopping in stores, which was in first place last year.

For a number of factors there has been a drop in the proportion that say the influences on their perceptions are either positive or negative, and an increase in the proportion that believe the influences are mixed. For all factors the proportion that say the influence is positive, is greater than the proportion that believe it is negative. However for a number of factors now the highest proportions say the influence is mixed.

Nearly two-thirds of careers advisors say there are particular times of year when sector-specific careers information is needed (64%). However, when asked at what time of year sector specific careers information is needed, the responses are quite spread throughout the year. The most popular periods are from September through to November, as well as December, March and April. August is the time sector-specific careers information is least likely to be needed.

Qualifications needed is the main type of information that careers influencers think they need when either researching a sector or giving advice. This is followed by salary levels, career paths available and information on specific job roles.

The Internet continues to be the main source of information accessed by careers advisors when trying to find out about careers opportunities in a sector they are not familiar with. Career specific websites continue to be more popular than the use of the Internet generally, although there has been a significant increase this year in people using the Internet.

Schools careers advisors and schools head of year/department are considerably less likely than other careers advisors to use careers specific websites.

Careers influencers still believe careers specific websites are the most useful source of careers information, and by quite a margin. The next most useful source of information, according to careers advisors, is leaflets aimed at young people.

In terms of the organisations that careers advisers would turn to for information, Connexions and Careers Services remain the most frequently approached. However there has been a significant decrease in the proportion of careers advisors mentioning Connexions, down from around half of all respondents, to below two-fifths. At the same time there has been a significant increase in the proportion of careers influencers saying they would turn to employers, relevant Sector Skills Council and educational institutions.

Views on the quality of careers information provided by retail employers have more or less returned to 2005 levels, following an apparent deterioration in scores last year. Half of all careers advisors now consider information provided by retail employers to be comprehensive, up from around two-fifths in 2006.

1.1.5 Career prospects in the retail sector

There has been a further increase this year in the proportion of careers advisors that think the short term career prospects for the retail sector are either positive or very positive. Following the significant improvement last year, there has been a further improvement of 2 percentage points, with 59% now believing the prospects are positive.

The proportion of careers advisors that agree that online retailing offers more careers opportunities (41%) is higher than the proportion that disagree (23%). However there is a significant (and increased) proportion compared with last year that neither agree nor disagree (32%), which suggests a certain amount of uncertainty.

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 (67%). The likelihood of this is more common amongst Connexions advisors, HE careers advisors, and FE careers advisors, and less likely amongst school careers advisors and schools head of year.

Where young people have sought advice about setting up their own business in nearly half of cases the young people have been interested in setting up their own shop. Clothes and fashion retailing was by far the most popular choice, followed by hairdressing/beauty salons and computer/IT repairs.

1.1.7 Apprenticeships

Feelings are still divided as to whether there are more young people seeking Apprenticeships in retail than there are employers offering them. While 34% agree this is the case, almost the same proportion disagrees. Amongst Connexions advisors agreement is significantly higher at 52%.

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

A significant improvement in the proportion of careers advisors that think retailing has become a better sector for young people to work in over the past five years has meant scores for this question have returned to 2005 levels (up 7 percentage points to 62% since 2006). Just over 1 in 10 careers advisors believe the sector has got worse in the past five years (12%), while over a quarter are not sure (27%).

Of the different types of careers advisors surveyed, Connexions advisors are least positive about the retail sector, with just 46% believing the sector to have got better.

The main reasons given for why respondents feel the sector has got better are:-

- more opportunities available/more career structure
- better pay/introduction of the minimum wage
- training/qualifications are more widely available
- better working conditions.

The main reasons given by those who believe the sector has got worse are:-

- Long/unsociable hours
- poor pay
- limited opportunities

1.1.9 Awareness of Skillsmart Retail

Awareness of all SSCs is on the increase, with the greatest improvements being for E-Skills UK, Go Skills and then Skillsmart Retail.

Just over a third of careers advisors are now aware of Skillsmart Retail (34%) which is a significant improvement on last year (up 10 percentage points).

FE and 'other' careers advisors are most aware of Skillsmart Retail (45%) and school career advisors are least aware (20%).

Use of Skillsmart Retail's website (amongst those aware of the SSC) is just one percentage point higher than in 2006 and 2005 (31%).

Readership of *Retail Therapy* has grown slightly since last year, up to 32% among those aware of Skillsmart Retail, compared with 28% in 2006, 42% in 2005, and 19% of respondents in 2004.¹

When those aware of Skillsmart Retail were asked how the SSC could help them do their job better a wide variety of suggestions were given. The top three were to:-

- raise awareness of the sector
- help them access up to date information
- advertise/increase awareness of the Skillsmart Retail service

¹ 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.

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 and again in 2007 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 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 below², 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.

² 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 2007. 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 2007, compared with 2006, 2005 and 2004.

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

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

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

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

Throughout this report comparisons have been made with the findings generated from the 2004, 2005 and 2006 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 four 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			
	'07	'06	'05	'04	'07	'06	'05	'04	'07	'06	'05	'04
Develops skills useful in any workplace	86*	78	73	80	90*	81	85	84	89*	79	85	81
Offers a wide range of opportunities for people of all ages	59	58	50	61	85	82	79	87	85*	77	78	82
Individuals are given responsibility at an early stage	54*	47	44	52	72	71	66	71	65	64	67	70
Generally has competent and effective managers	78*	70	77	84	63*	53	62	61	59*	50	56	57
Offers top quality training and career development	85*	78	79	90	63	58	57	56	64	59	61	54
An employee friendly sector where employees are treated with respect	73	70	78	75	52	54	50	51	47	53	48	48
It involves long and unsociable hours	20	16	15	17	52*	42	42	53	94	92	92	94
Offers competitive salaries	92	91	90	94	27	29	31	29	20	23	20	21
Working in this sector is not very challenging	7	8	8	8	27*	36	29	31	17	22	17	16
You need a degree to have any real career prospects in this sector	60	59	55	60	18	14	14	18	13	14	12	15
Sample base 2004: 400 Sample base 2005: 410 Sample base 2006: 406 Sample base 2007: 406 *+/- 7% Difference FROM 2006												

The retail sector is still rated most favourably for developing skills useful in any workplace (90%) and for offering a wide range of opportunities for people of all ages (85%). Retail is also the sector that the highest proportion of respondents say gives individuals responsibility at an early stage (72%). The proportion associating retail with developing skills useful in any workplace has in fact increased significantly since last year.

Finance and banking is still perceived to be the best sector in terms of offering competitive salaries (92% of respondents), and by a large margin, when compared with the retail sector (27%) and the hospitality sector (20%). The finance and banking sector is also still much more likely, than the retail or hospitality sector, to be associated with top quality training and career development (85%).

All sectors have improved their position quite considerably this year in terms of being seen to have competent and effective managers.

The retail sector has also seen a positive improvement in terms of fewer respondents associating the sector with not being very challenging (down from 36% to 27%), although the sector does still receive the highest level of association for this factor, relative to the other two sectors.

Retail is perceived as being less favourable than finance and banking in terms of the working hours, and increasingly so compared with last year, with just over half of respondents (52%) now saying that retail involves long and unsociable hours (compared with just 20% for finance and banking). However retail is still seen more favourably than hospitality in this respect, with 94% of respondents saying that hospitality involves long and unsociable hours.

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	93%	94%	85%	98%	86%	91%
Offers a wide range of opportunities for people of all ages	80%	88%	87%	90%	86%	83%
Individuals are given responsibility at an early stage	82%	76%	72%	78%	64%	65%
Generally has competent and effective managers	52%	67%	59%	64%	68%	66%
Offers top quality training and career development	54%	67%	56%	66%	76%	63%
An employee friendly sector where employees are treated with respect	48%	67%	47%	50%	58%	51%
It involves long and unsociable hours	52%	47%	62%	48%	48%	47%
Offers competitive salaries	18%	22%	22%	42%	40%	25%
Working in this sector is not very challenging	29%	27%	27%	14%	34%	29%
You need a degree to have any real career prospects in this sector	20%	10%	14%	28%	10%	23%
SAMPLE BASE	56	49	101	50	50	100

The perception that in retail individuals are given responsibility at an early stage is particularly high amongst Connexions advisors (82% compared with 72% on average).

Schools careers advisors/coordinators are most likely to think that retail offers top quality training and career development (76%), while Connexions advisors are least likely to think so (54%).

FE careers advisors stand out for the high proportion that think retail involves long and unsociable hours (62%), while other careers advisors are most likely to think that retail is an employee friendly sector where employees are treated with respect (67%).

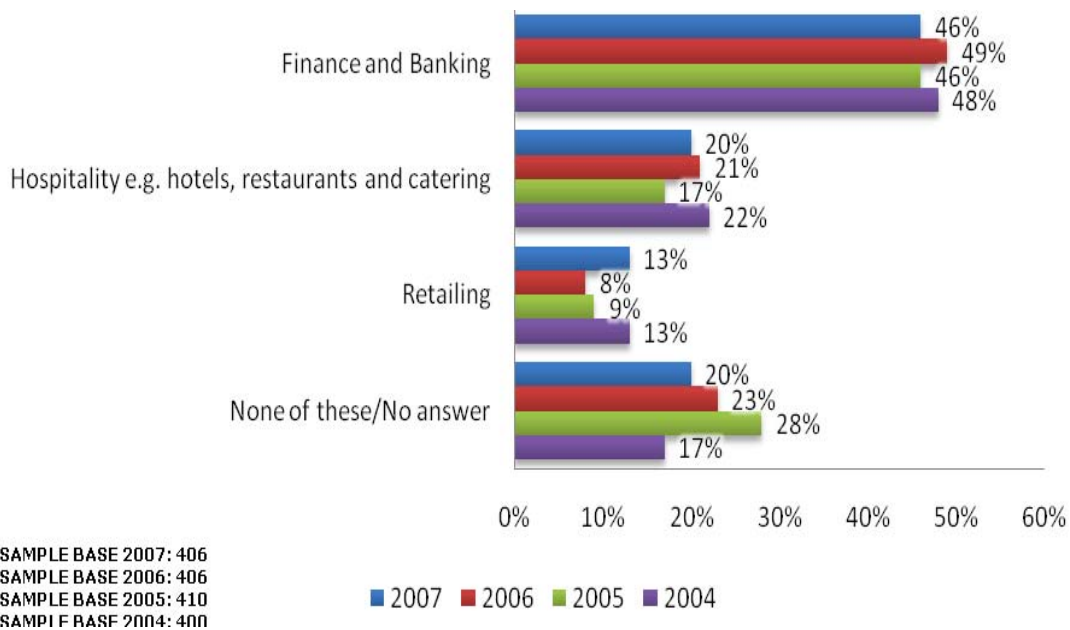
HE careers advisors (42%), closely followed by schools careers advisors/coordinators (40%) are most likely to associate the retail sector with offering competitive salaries, while Connexions advisors are least likely to think this is the case (18%).

HE careers advisors are also most positive in terms of retail not being very challenging sector to work in, just 14% of HE careers advisor think so, compared with 27% on average.

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, highlighting the 5 percentage point improvement for the retail sector this year.

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



The proportion of respondents that think retailing is the best sector to work in has increased to 13%, up from 8% in 2006. At the same time the proportion citing finance and banking has fallen 3 percentage points and the proportion citing hospitality has fallen just marginally.

The banking sector is still ahead of both retail and hospitality by some margin in terms of the proportion of careers influencers that think this is the best sector to work in, with nearly half opting for this sector (46%).

Perceptions vary according to the job role of careers influencers, with the proportion thinking that retail is the best sector to work in ranging from just 7% amongst Connexions advisers, up to 20% amongst schools head of year/department, as the following table summarises.

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	45	45	59	34	36	45
Retail	7	10	11	12	16	20
Hospitality	21	22	11	24	32	20
SAMPLE BASE	56	49	101	50	50	100

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	36%	Enjoyment of social interaction	19%	Enjoyment of social interaction	31%
Salary/pay	36%	Career prospects	19%	Range of different jobs within sector	21%
Working hours	20%	Interesting/enjoyable type of work	15%	Interesting/enjoyable type of work	17%
Sector is most suited to personal skills/qualifications	11%	Range of different jobs within sector	9%	Career prospects	13%
Industry/Sector Status/Image	9%	Working hours	7%	Having the opportunity to travel/work abroad	9%
SAMPLE BASES	187		54		82

Career prospects and salary/pay are still clearly the main reasons why careers advisors think finance and banking is the best sector to work in. This sector is associated with these two positive aspects much more so than the retail or hospitality sectors.

The top reasons given for the retail sector being best to work in are the enjoyment of the social interaction and the enjoyment of the work itself, as well as the career prospects.

Social interaction is an even stronger attraction/motivator in the hospitality sector, nearly a third see this as the main reason why they think hospitality is a good sector to work in.

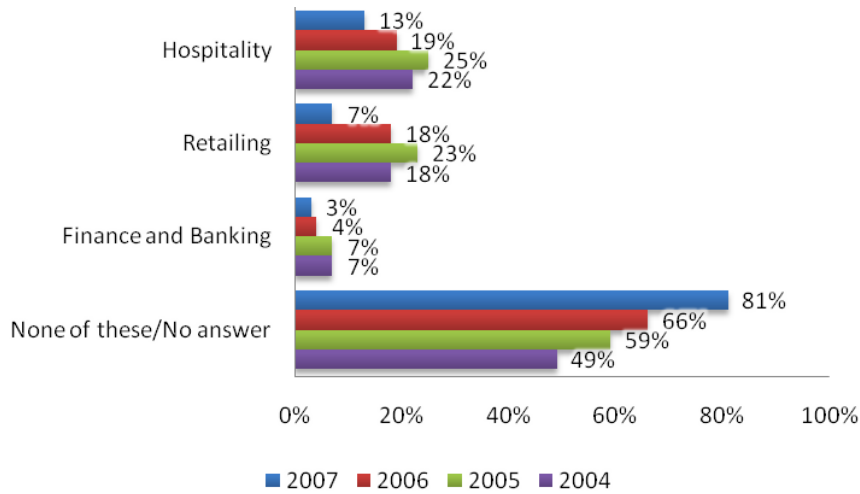
4.3 Sector respondents would not want their child to work in

Respondents were also asked which of the three sectors they would not want their children to work in. Perceptions of finance and banking as being the best sector to work in are again reflected here, with just 3% saying that they would not want their child/children working in this sector. This proportion remains lower than the proportion of respondents saying that they would not want their children working in the retail (7%) and hospitality (13%) sectors.

Encouragingly, the proportion indicating they would not want their child working in the retail sector has reduced for the second year in a row, and the improvement this year has been significant, down 11 percentage points (see Figure 3).

There has also been a further improvement on this measure for the hospitality sector, and an increase in the proportion of respondents saying that there are none of these sectors that they wouldn't want their children to work in.

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



SAMPLE BASE 2007: 106
 SAMPLE BASE 2006: 106
 SAMPLE BASE 2005: 110
 SAMPLE BASE 2004: 100

By advisor type, the proportion not wanting their child to work in the retail sector ranges from 13% amongst Connexions advisors, down to just 3% amongst schools head of year/department.

4.3.1 Reasons for perceptions

Respondents were asked to give reasons why they would not want their child to work in a sector, and 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. Responses for finance and banking are shown with the number of respondents that gave each, due to the particularly low base size, while for retail and hospitality the percentages are given.

**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	
Too much pressure/ high demands (2 respondents)		Poor career prospects	40%	Long/unsocial hours	61%
Moral/ethical issues (2 respondents)		Long/unsocial hours	40%	Low salary/ pay	35%
It depends on the organisation (1 respondent)		Low salary/pay	23%	Poor career prospects	13%
Not suited to it (1 respondent)		Lack of care/appreciation from employers	10%	Too much hard work	9%
Difficult sector with lots of problems (1 respondent)		Little training available / Need more qualifications than they have / Not suited to it	7% each	Low status/image of sector	9%
SAMPLE BASES	11		30		54

Amongst the few advisors that would not want their child to work in finance/banking, the main reasons given are that there is too much pressure put on workers in this sector and because of moral/ethical issues.

For the retail sector, the perception of poor career prospects and long/unsocial hours are the top two reasons why careers advisors do not think this is a suitable sector for their child to work in. A number of careers advisors are also put off by the low salary/pay in retailing.

Long/unsocial hours is still by far the greatest concern for the hospitality sector, and much more so than in the retail sector, with approaching two-thirds of careers advisors giving this factor as the reason why they would not want their child to work in hospitality. A high proportion of careers advisors are also put off this sector due to the low salaries/pay they believe workers in the hospitality sector receive.

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

Career advisors have again demonstrated that they are aware of a wide range of job roles available within the retail sector. In line with previous findings, respondents are most aware of 'frontline' job roles in the retail sector, with the highest proportions mentioning sales assistants (75%) and store managers (69%). Awareness of the store manager role has increased in each year of the study, from 52% in 2004, up to 69% in the latest survey.

Mention of 'shopkeeper' as a role has dropped significantly compared with 2006 and 2005. Awareness of departmental managers has generally increased since 2005.

Of the 'backroom' roles, buyers are still the most recognised, with a third of respondents (33%) identifying the role of buyers. Personnel managers are the next most mentioned role (17%), although to a lesser extent than in previous years. These roles are followed by Marketing, Finance and Merchandising (each mentioned by 13%).

Awareness of other backroom positions, such as window dressers and warehousing, as well as support functions such as IT and Admin., still remains relatively low amongst careers influencers.

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
- Quality Control
- Distribution
- Area/Regional Manager
- Trainers
- Credit Control
- Company Directors
- Trainee Managers

6 Sources of information for careers advisers

6.1 Influences on perceptions of the retail sector

6.1.1 Sources of influence

Respondents were asked to identify from a list the factors that have influenced their perceptions of the retail sector. These influences are profiled in Figure 4 alongside findings from 2006, 2005 and 2004.

Figure 3: Proportion of respondents that say each factor influences their perception of the retail sector (All respondents)



There have been a number of significant changes in perception scores since 2006, which has generally meant that the pattern of responses has returned to 2005 levels for the retail sector.

Feedback from clients is once again the top influence over respondents' perceptions, following a 7percentage point increase in the proportion that say this influences their views on the retail sector.

The second main influence over perceptions is careers influencers' own experience of shopping in stores (mentioned by 72%), which was in first place last year.

The other main movements since 2006 have been a significant increase in the proportion mentioning the experience of family/friends working in the sector (up 8

percentage points), media coverage of the industry generally (up 8 percentage points) and media coverage of industry leaders/personalities (up 11 percentage points).

6.1.2 Assessing the impact of sources of influence

For each of the sources mentioned as an influence over their perception of the retail sector, respondents were asked to state whether the influence is positive, negative or mixed. This is illustrated in Table 9, alongside findings for 2006, 2005 and 2004.

Table 9: Whether each factor has had a positive, negative or mixed influence on respondents' perception of the retail sector (%)

	Positive				Mixed				Negative			
	'07	'06	'05	'04	'07	'06	'05	'04	'07	'06	'05	'04
Own experience shopping in stores	33	38	40	23	63	44	44	66	4	18	16	10
Own employment in sector	45	43	47	43	39	37	36	36	16	20	18	21
Experience of family/friends working in sector	35	37	37	28	48	38	39	46	17	25	24	26
Feedback from clients	28	35	32	26	58	40	49	57	14	25	19	17
Experience of working with retail employers	65	61	64	60	31	29	30	34	4	10	6	7
Media coverage of industry generally	36	43	37	29	52	38	44	56	11	20	19	15
Media coverage of industry leaders/personalities	47	51	49	35	50	34	41	50	3	15	10	15
Sample bases vary												

For a number of factors there has been a drop in the proportion that say the influences are either positive or negative, and an increase in the proportion that believe the influences are mixed. Generally, the drop in negative scores is greater than the drop in positive scores, so overall the movement in perceptions has been from negative towards mixed.

In terms of the influence from respondents' own experiences of shopping in stores there has been a 5 percentage point drop in the proportion saying this is a positive influence, and a 14 percentage point drop in the proportion that say it is negative, while the proportion that say the influence is mixed has increased by 19 percentage points.

For feedback from clients there has been an 8 percentage point drop in the proportion saying this is a positive influence, and an 11 percentage point drop in the proportion that say it is negative, while the proportion that say the influence is mixed has increased by 18 percentage points.

Similarly for media coverage of the industry generally, the proportion saying this is a positive influence has dropped by 7 percentage points and the proportion that say it

is negative has dropped by 9 percentage points, while there has been a 14 percentage point increase in the proportion that say the influence of this is mixed.

There has also been a 16 percentage point increase in the proportion that say media coverage of industry leaders/personalities is a mixed influence (from 34% up to 50%), caused mainly by the 12 percentage point drop in the proportion that say this is a negative influence.

For all factors the proportion that say the influence is positive, is greater than the proportion that believe it is negative. However for a number of factors now the highest proportions say the influence is mixed.

6.2 General sources of careers information

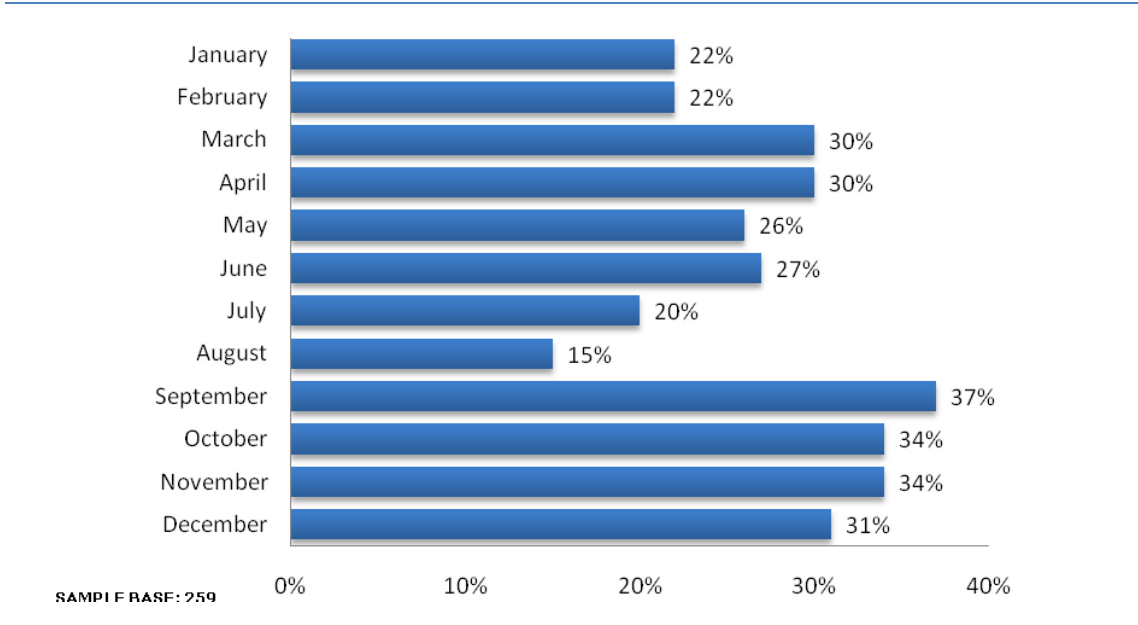
6.2.1 Timing of information needed

A new question this year asked careers influencers if there are any particular times of year when they need sector-specific careers information.

The majority of careers advisors, and nearly two-thirds, say there are particular times of year when sector-specific careers information is needed (64%).

However, when asked at what time of year the information is needed the responses were quite spread throughout the year, as the following chart illustrates.

Figure 4: 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)



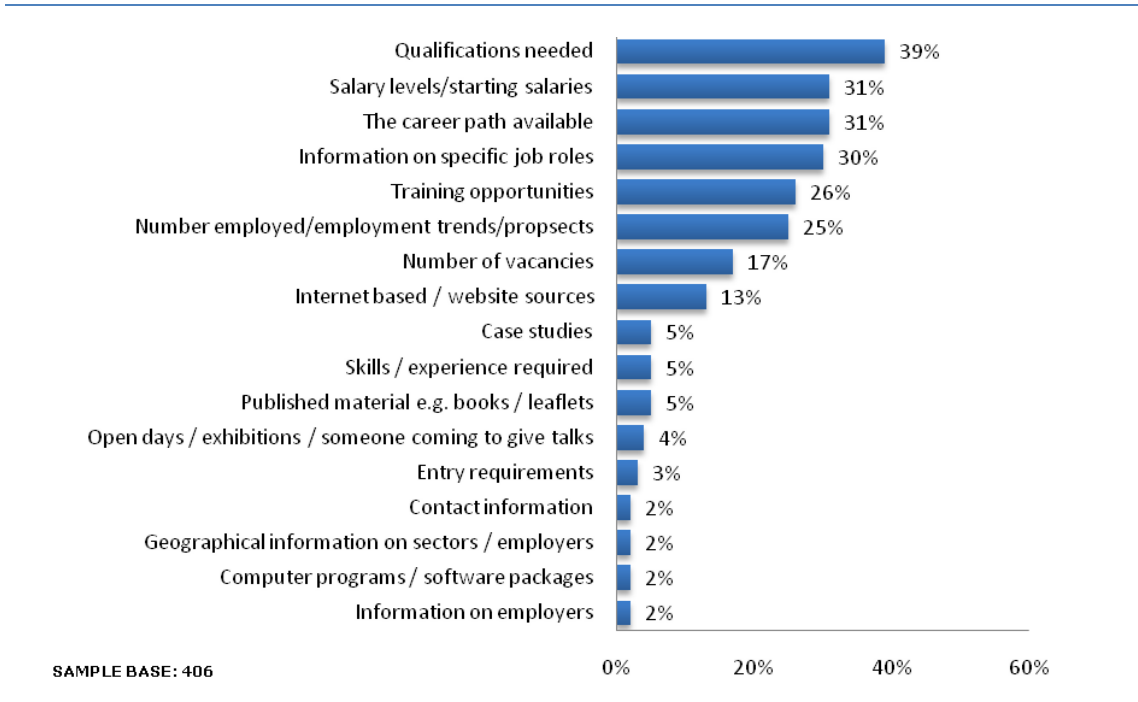
September through to November are the times when sector-specific careers information is most thought to be needed, although December, March and April are also popular months. August is the time of year when sector-specific careers information is least likely to be needed.

6.2.2 Sector-specific careers information required

Another new question this year asked all careers influencers 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 5: Type of information that respondents find most useful when researching a sector or giving advice (All respondents)



The qualifications needed is the main type of information that careers influencers think they need when researching a sector or giving advice. This is followed by salary levels, career paths available and information on specific job roles.

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 10: 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
Qualifications needed	34	39	43	32	32	45
Salary levels/starting salaries	38	27	30	28	28	32
The career path available	29	35	33	34	34	25
Information on specific job roles	34	31	28	38	24	29
Training opportunities	27	24	30	26	16	26
Number employed/ employment trends/prospects	18	31	28	38	18	19
Number of vacancies	16	14	19	30	16	10
Internet based / website sources	14	12	12	14	24	8
Case studies	4	8	2	10	6	3
Published material e.g. books / leaflets	4	6	0	0	10	10
Entry requirements	4	2	5	4	2	3
Skills / experience required	5	4	5	4	6	4
Geographical information on sectors / employers	2	0	1	8	0	2
Computer programs / software packages	5	2	2	0	2	2
Open days / exhibitions / someone coming to give talks	0	2	3	2	6	7
Information on job opportunities	2	0	1	0	6	0
Information on employers	2	4	1	2	4	3
Contact information	0	0	2	2	6	1
SAMPLE BASE	56	49	101	50	50	100

6.2.3 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 11 summarises responses to this question and compares results with those from 2006, 2005 and 2004.

Table 11: Sources of careers information accessed by respondents to find out about an unfamiliar sector

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

The Internet continues to be the main source of information accessed by careers advisors when trying to find out about careers opportunities in a sector they are not familiar with. Careers specific websites continue to be more popular than the use of the Internet generally, although there has been a significant increase this year in people using the Internet generally, at the same time as a drop in use of careers specific websites.

Schools careers advisors and schools head of year/department are least likely to use careers specific websites (50% each), while HE careers advisors are most likely to do so (72%). Greater promotion of relevant websites within schools may be beneficial.

There has also been a significant drop this year in the use of the library for researching sectors careers influencers are unfamiliar with. This continues the downward trend in use of this source since 2004. Use of reference books/directories has also levelled off at 16%, down from 40% in 2004.

6.2.4 Usefulness of information sources accessed

Respondents were asked to state which sources of information they have found useful from those they have accessed. Table 12 summarises the views of careers advisors this year and compares them with perceptions in 2006, 2005 and 2004.

Table 12: Sources of careers information accessed by respondents that they have found useful (%)

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

Careers influencers still believe careers specific websites are the most useful source of careers information, and by quite a margin.

The next most useful source of information, according to careers advisors, is leaflets aimed at young people, considered useful by 81% of respondents. Scores for leaflets aimed at young people and leaflets aimed at advisors have been gradually improving since 2004.

CD ROMS have seen a significant improvement in terms of the proportion of respondents that consider them to be a useful source of information, up to 69%, from 58% in 2006. Despite the improvement, this source remains to have the lowest proportion considering it to be useful of all the sources discussed, although the gap between CD ROMS and booklets aimed at young people is only marginal now.

6.2.5 Organisations that respondents would approach for careers information

Respondents were asked to identify which organisations and people they would approach for information. Table 13 shows the range of organisations that respondents may seek information from, and compares results for this year to 2004 2005 and 2006.

Table 13: Organisations that respondents would approach for information (All respondents)

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

There have been a number of significant changes since 2006 in the organisations that careers advisors prefer to approach for information.

Connexions/Careers Wales/Scotland remain the most mentioned, but there has been a significant decrease in the proportion of careers advisors stating they would approach Connexions, down from around half of all respondents, to below two-fifths. The drop in popularity of Connexions has coincided with a significant increase in the proportions of careers influencers saying they would turn to employers (28%), relevant Sector Skills Council (18%) and educational institutions (10%).

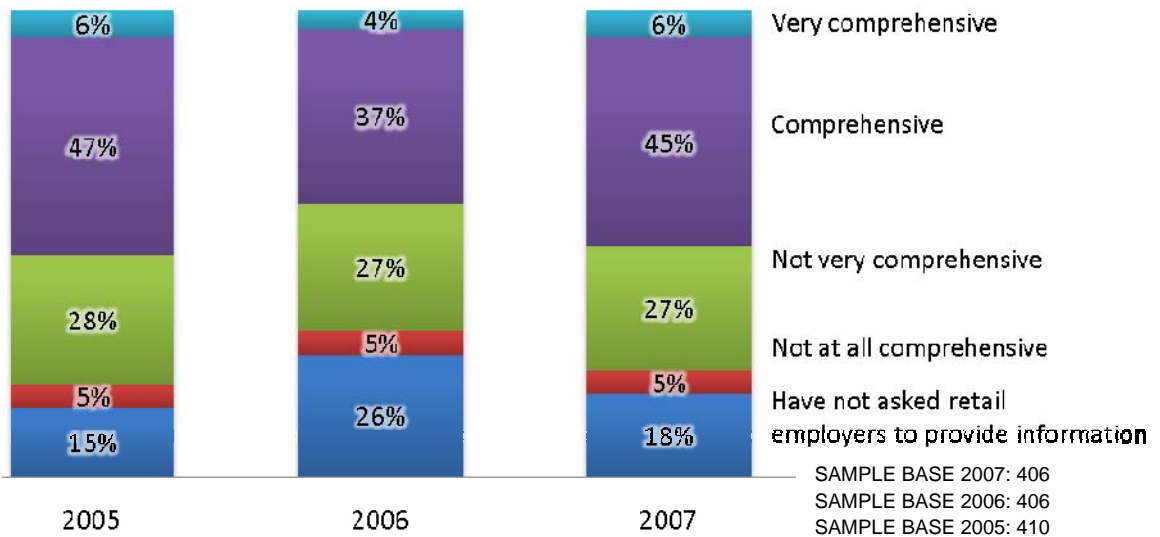
Mention of Connexions is particularly low amongst HE careers advisors (26%) and 'other' careers advisors (22%).

Only a small proportion of all respondents would think to contact either learndirect or a local Learning and Skills Council.

6.2.6 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 6: Careers advisors rating of the quality of information provided by retail employers (All respondents)



Views on the quality of careers information provided by retail employers have more or less returned to 2005 levels, following an apparent deterioration in scores last year.

Half of all careers advisors now consider information provided by retail employers to be comprehensive, up from around two-fifths in 2006.

Just less than a third of all respondents now consider the information to be not very or not at all comprehensive (32%), which is the same proportion as in the previous two years of the study.

Nearly a fifth of respondents were not able to give a rating due to them not requesting information from retailers (18%). This proportion has dropped from around a quarter last year.

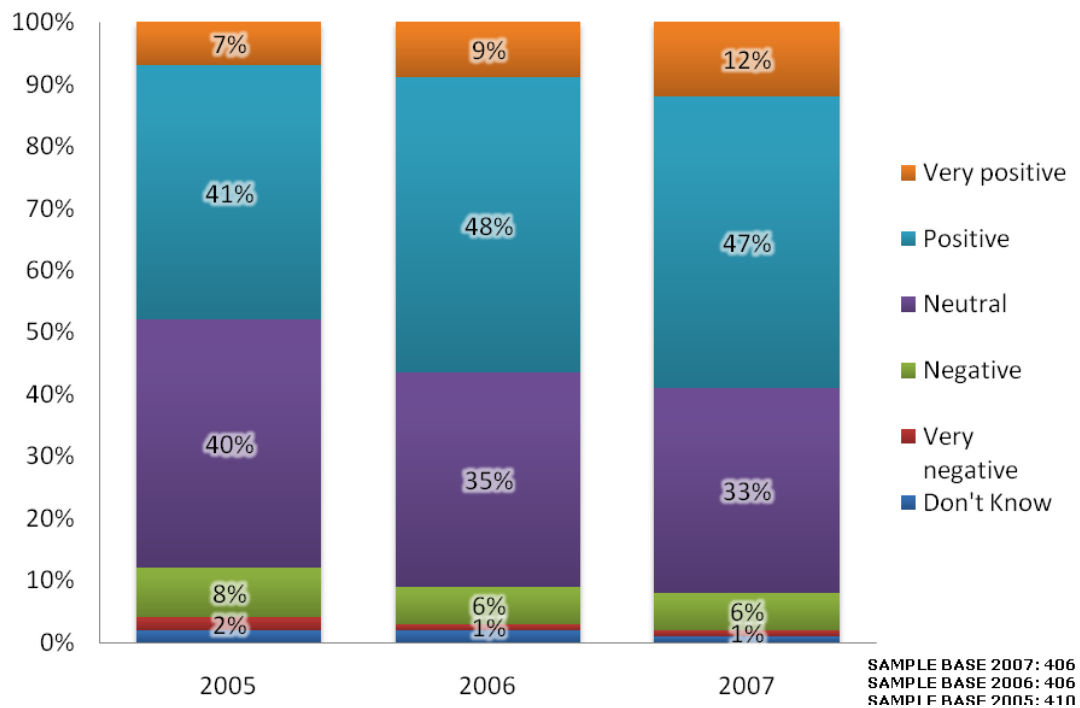
Information from retail employers scores noticeably higher amongst HE careers advisors and other careers advisors with 72% and 63% respectively considering the information to be comprehensive. This compares with the lowest proportion of 38% amongst Connexions advisors.

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



There has been a further increase this year in the proportion of careers advisors that think the short-term career prospects for the retail sector are either positive or very positive. Following the significant improvement last year, there has been a further improvement of 2 percentage points, with 59% now believing the prospects are positive.

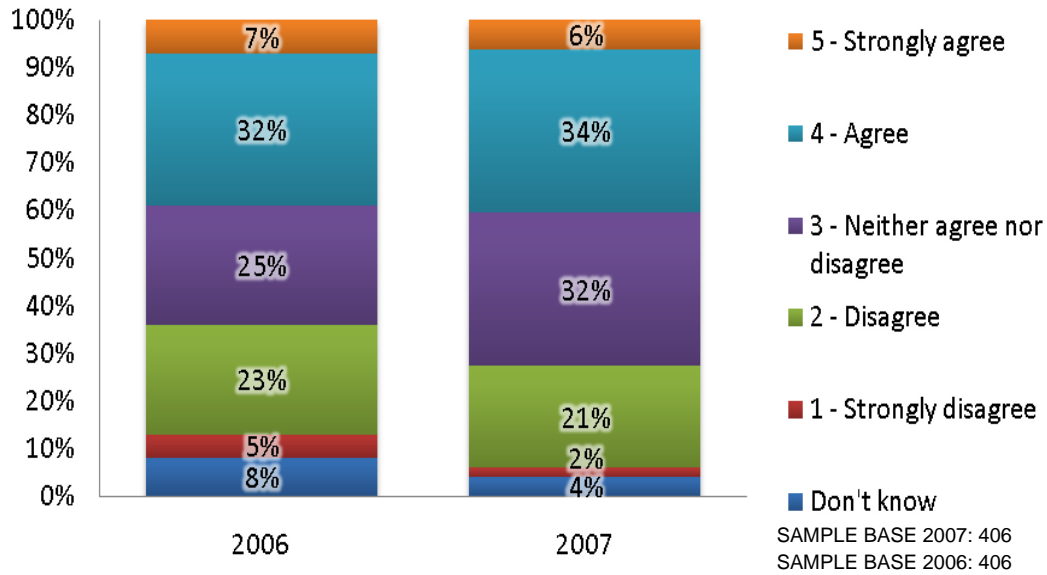
Just 7% of careers advisors are negative about the career prospects for the retail industry.

Analysis by type of careers advisor reveals that as in 2006, Connexions advisors and HE careers advisors (both 66%) are more likely than others to think career prospects in retailing are positive in the short term.

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.

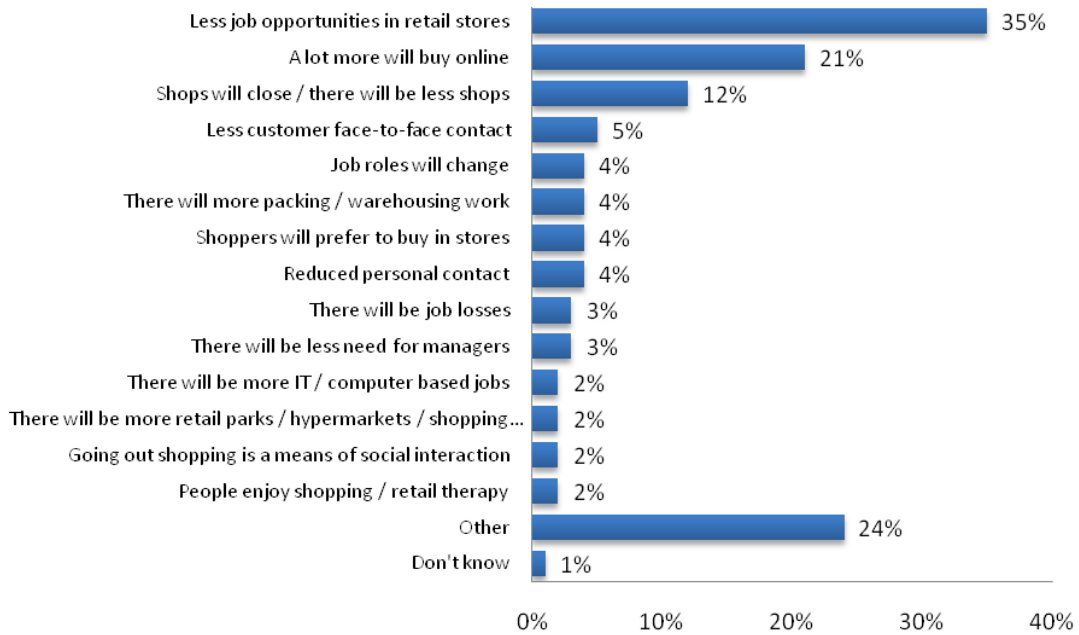
Figure 8: Extent to which respondents agree/disagree that the retail sector will offer more career opportunities with the growth of online retailing (All respondents)



The proportion of careers advisors that agree that online retailing offers more careers opportunities (41%) is higher than the proportion that disagree (23%). However there is a significant and an increased proportion compared with last year that neither agree nor disagree (32%) which suggests a certain amount of uncertainty.

When asked their reasons for disagreeing the highest proportion say there will be fewer job opportunities in retail stores (35%), while a large proportion say a lot more will buy online (21%).

Figure 9: 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: 94

Some of the 'other' comments include the following:

Well I think that it will shift because people are doing more online shopping so the stores may get smaller

I think jobs will be lost. They will need less on the floor. Less people will have people skills

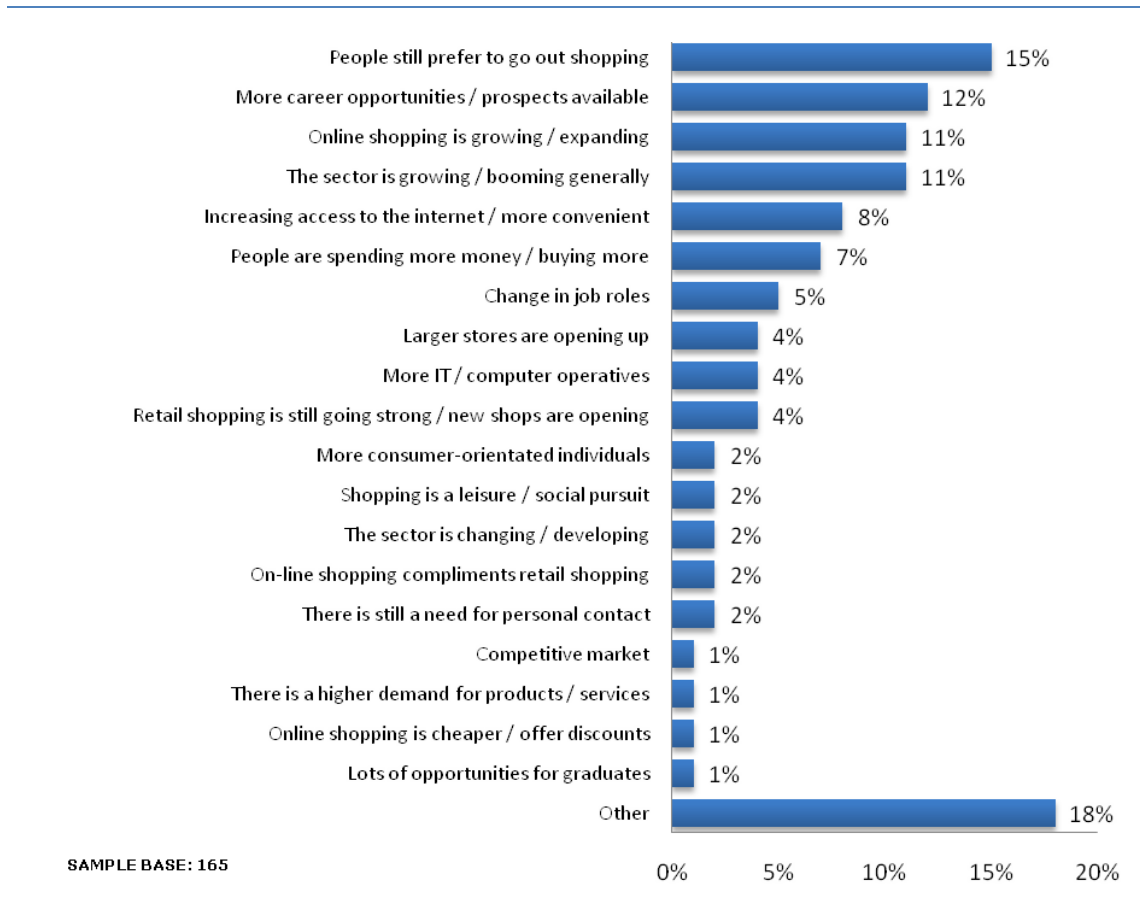
I think that the amount of people you get in shops will decrease as shops will close down and you will need less people for online

It is de-skilling. Putting it all in one area

Won't be more opportunities, they don't expand much compared to online shopping and there will be only certain roles.

The main reasons given for agreeing that the retailing sector will offer more opportunities in future with the growth of online retailing are that 'people still prefer to go shopping' (15% of those who agree), 'there are more career opportunities/prospects available (12%), 'online shopping is growing/expanding' (11%) and the sector is growing/booming generally (11%).

Figure 10: 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:

People will always want to shop. Internet fraud is growing and I think this would put people off

Not full-time, but there will be a growth in part-time employment

There will be a growth in specialised retail outlets and still people would always need to buy things

I think people no longer think that working in retail is for people with no qualifications .It has a higher profile now

There is still the sort of spend culture. So people will still need the goods. The profile of the jobs has changed with the increase of online. Also, the smaller shops are also growing.

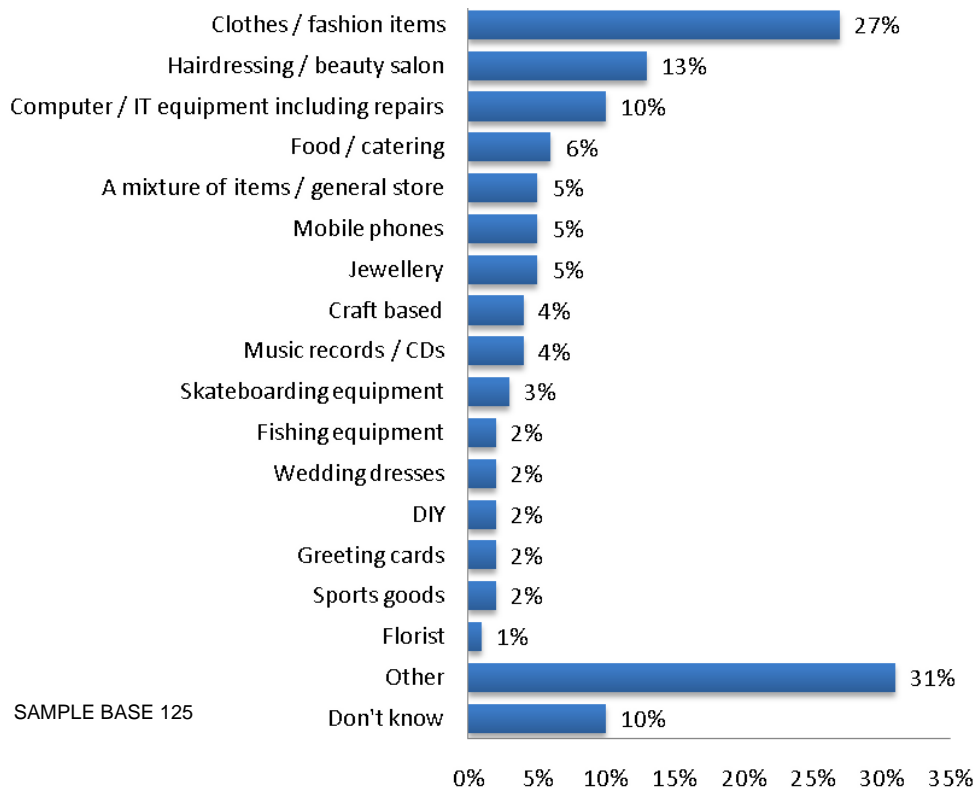
7.2 Advice on setting up new businesses

Two-thirds of all careers advisors say that young people have asked them for advice about setting up their own business (67%). The likelihood of this is more common amongst Connexions advisors (82%), HE careers advisors (82%), and FE careers advisors (76%), and less likely amongst schools careers advisors (48%) and schools head of year (47%).

Where young people have sought advice about setting up their own business in nearly half of cases the young people have been interested in setting up their own shop (46%).

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

Figure 11: 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)



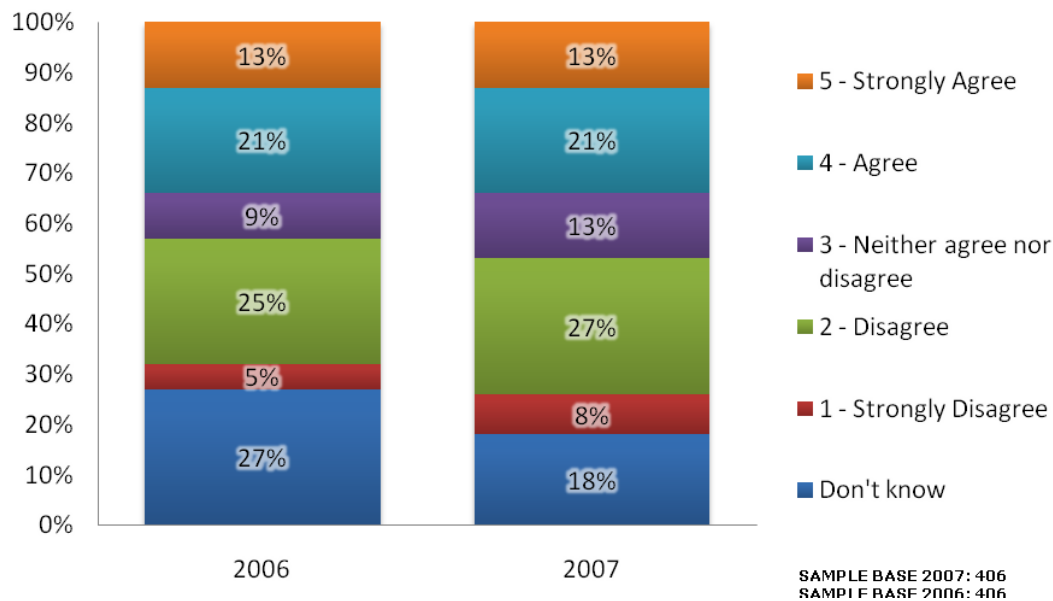
Clothes and fashion items are by far the most popular type of items that young people are looking to sell, followed by hairdressing/beauty salons and computer/IT repairs.

A wide range of other items were also mentioned with those in 'others' including tattoos, body piercing, horse accessories, baby clothes, art, ethical products, and office supplies.

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



Although a higher proportion of respondents have given an opinion for this question this year (18% saying don't know, compared with 27% in 2006), overall the level of agreement with the statement is the same, with a third agreeing that there are more young people seeking Apprenticeships in retail than there are employers offering them (34%). As in 2006, the proportion that agrees is almost the same as the proportion that disagrees that this is the case (35%).

Once again, agreement that there are more young people seeking Apprenticeships in retail than there are employers offering them is considerably higher than average amongst Connexions advisors (52%, compared with 34% on average).

The main reasons given for respondents disagreeing with this statement about Apprenticeships are that there aren't that many people interested in a career in the retail sector (42%), that retail is seems a low level career (20%), there seems to be enough opportunities available (18%), people prefer to enter full time education (10%), people entering retail tend to end up having part time jobs (10%) and that the sector is not promoted enough (10%). Some specific comments made by people that disagree include the following:

It's not seen as a glamorous job. It's long unsociable hours. One area that a young person can find an apprenticeship in is in retail

I think the apprentice route lacks credibility because of the government, employers and parents

There are retail jobs, young people find it easier to get a job and get money by going into it directly. They tend not to do apprenticeships as it is a low paid job.

Careers advisors that 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 (27%); there are not enough placements to cover demand (14%); that there is increased demand to go into apprenticeships (14%); a general shortage of apprenticeship placements within all sectors (12%); opportunities are limited (12%); and that they know from personal experience/from what's happening in their local area (9%).

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

It's proved to be a real struggle to have employers take apprenticeships seriously, which means it can be difficult for young people to find placements

I think there's less opportunities as students are doing part-time work, so that takes opportunities away for those who are doing full-time

Retail has become very much part-time and not enough full-time and no long term careers offered

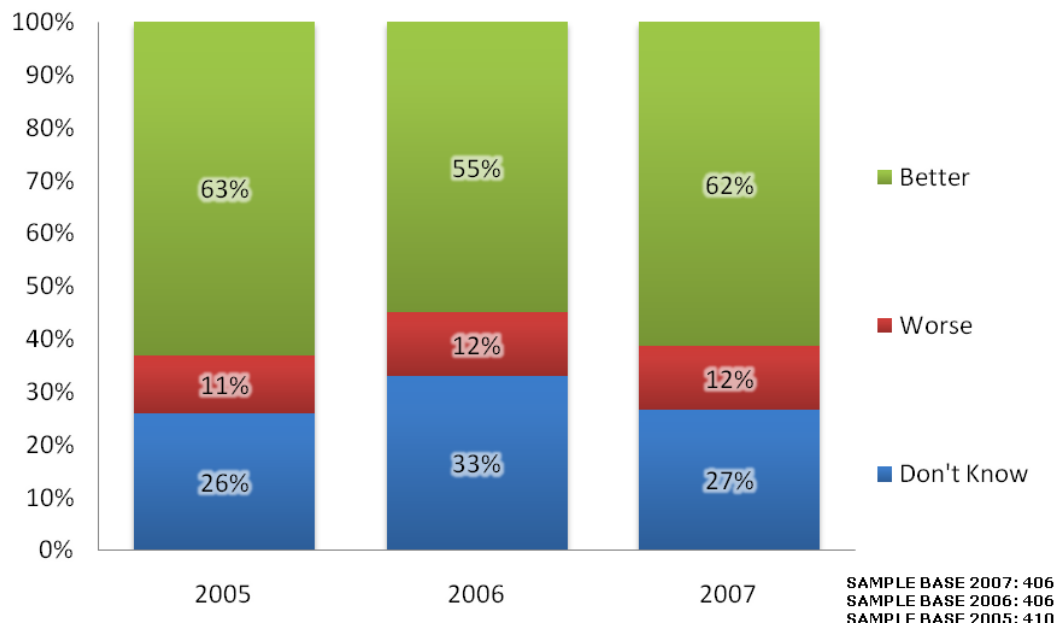
Well in terms of publications from Arcadia, the apprenticeships are few and far between

Local area employers don't have resources e.g. staff, the set-up and time to take people on apprenticeship, so we struggle to find apprenticeships.

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

Since the survey in 2005, respondents have been asked to state whether 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 13: Whether respondents think retailing has become a better or worse sector for young people to work in over the past five years (All respondents)



An improvement in scores since last year has meant that the profile of responses has more or less returned to the levels seen in 2005.

The highest proportion of all respondents, and approaching two thirds, think retailing has become a better sector for young people to work in over the past five years (62%). This 7 percentage point improvement is a significant change.

Just over 1 in 10 careers advisors believe the sector has got worse in the past five years (12%), while over a quarter are not sure (27%).

Of the different types of careers advisors surveyed, Connexions advisors are least positive about the retail sector, with just 46% believing the sector to have got better (compared with 62% on average) and 20% believing it to have got worse.

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 (35%); better pay/introduction of the minimum wage (20%); training/qualifications are more widely available (21%); better working conditions (14%); improvements to the image of retailing (6%) and flexible/better working hours (6%).

Individual comments made by these respondents include the following:

Because of the training opportunities and young people are encouraged to do vocational occupations and encouraged to move on

I do think there is better training and awareness. Young people want more than just stacking shelves

Probably the PR is better. All the best companies to work for. ASDA came back as one of the best. Staff development seems to be very popular course of action

The Fashion Retail Academy has opened up. That's probably helped

The opportunities got better, the training. They offer NVQs. Also, more young people working in the industry mostly in fashion

It is a more recognised career

You seem to hear more positive things.

When the 12% 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: long/unsociable hours (40%); poor pay (28%); limited opportunities (17%); poor working conditions (6%); increased pressure put on workers (6%); poor image/perception (6%); short-term/temporary work only (6%); its difficult to get a a job (6%) and it's become more competitive (6%).

Examples of specific reasons given are shown below:

Quite often retail only offers minimum hours and low pay, and as a result there is no real financial stability given to people who want to in that sector

The reduction in available apprenticeships and employers seem to prefer people aged 18 and over as opposed to 16

From what I've seen over the past five years the treatment of young people and quality of management and quality of contracts has got worse. Downhill in regards to management

A lot of deskilling – a lot of people doing manual tasks like tills, but here automated jobs are replacing these tasks

The hours are longer, conditions are not good and now there is Sunday working

There is no job satisfaction, no promotion or progression and it is very temporary

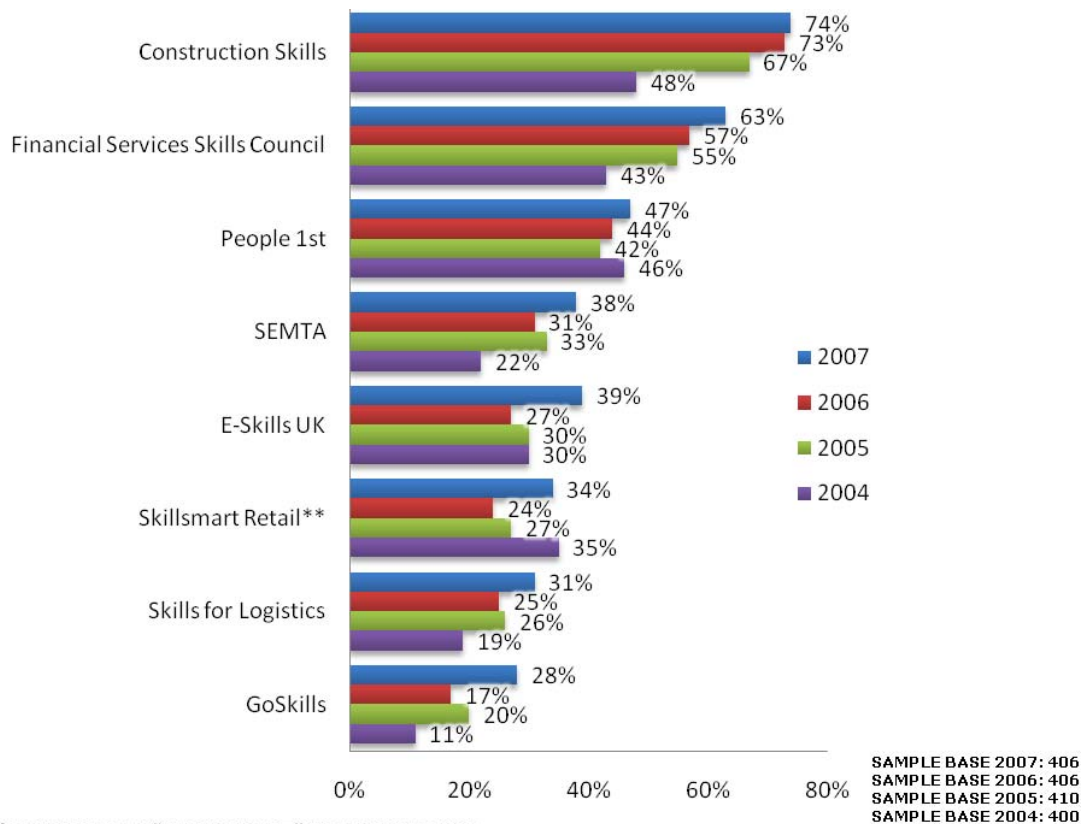
The perception, pays low, hours are long, there's not a service like America who are proud of giving a good service.

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 three years and profiled in Figure 14.

Figure 14: Prompted awareness of Sector Skills Councils (All respondents)



For the fourth year in a row Construction Skills remains the SSC that careers advisors are most familiar with. Nearly three-quarters of careers advisors say they have heard of Construction Skills (74%).

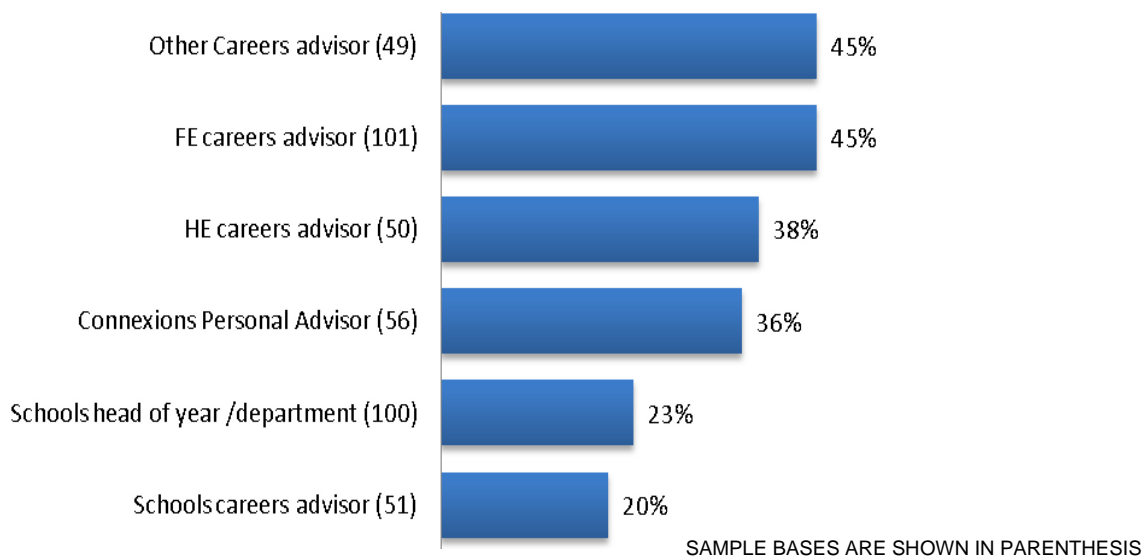
Financial Services Skills Council also has a relatively high level of awareness amongst careers advisors, which has increased year on year and now stands at nearly two-thirds of all careers advisors (63%).

Fewer than half of all respondents are aware of each of the other SSCs, although awareness of all SSCs is on the increase, with the greatest improvements being for E-Skills UK, Go Skills and then Skillsmart Retail.

Just over a third of careers advisors are now aware of Skillsmart Retail which is a significant improvement on last year (up 10% points).

Awareness of Skillsmart Retail differs according to the type of respondent surveyed (Figure 15), with FE and 'other' careers advisers being most aware (45%) and schools career advisors being least aware (20%).

Figure 15: Awareness of Skillsmart Retail – by job role



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 31% say that they have. This level of usage is just 1 percentage point higher than that recorded in 2006 and 2005.

Respondents who are aware of Skillsmart Retail were also asked if they have read *Retail Therapy*. A third (32%) say they have compared with 28% in 2006, 42% in 2005, and 19% of respondents in 2004.³

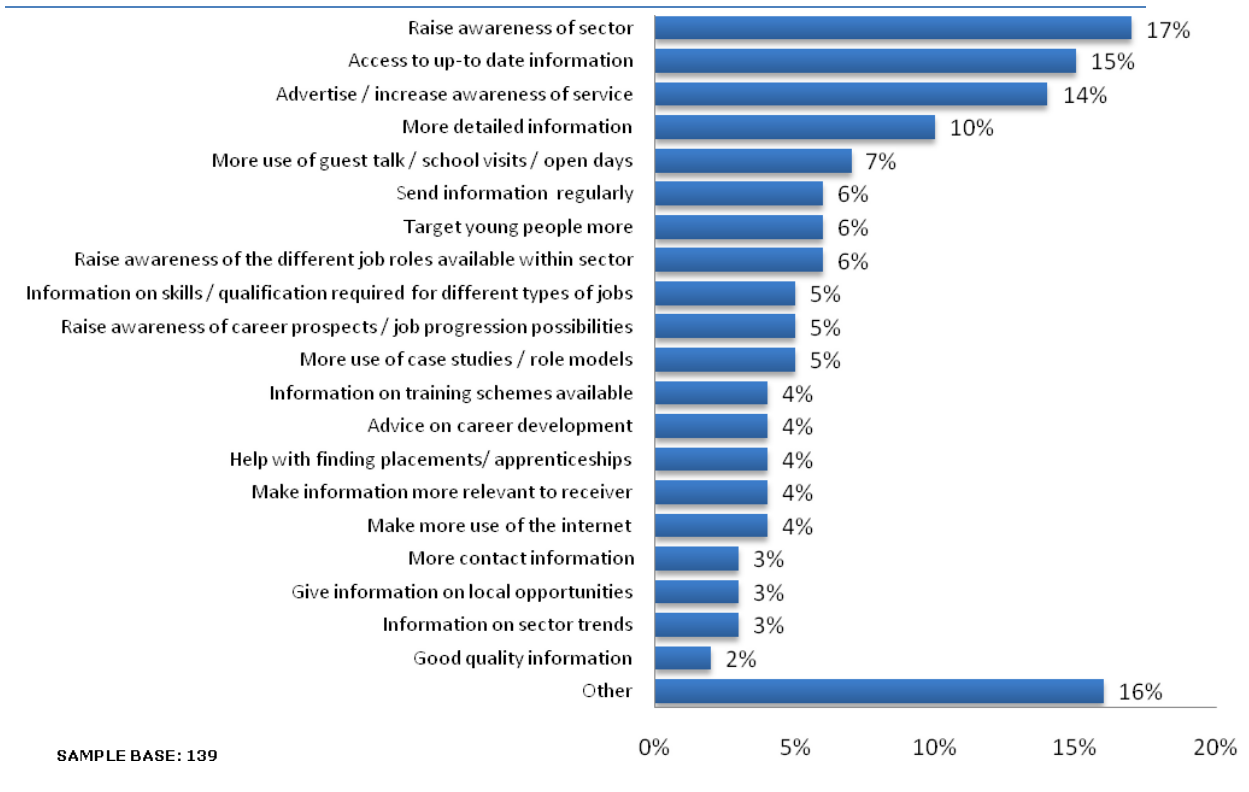
As these two questions are based just on those aware of Skillsmart Retail, analysis at sub-group level has very high error margins because of the small base sizes involved.

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.

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



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.

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:

By putting people like me on a mailing list on the Internet to receive up to date information about things like promotion, so I can use it for my day to day teaching

Well, I think information on the changes in the sector and the best way for young people to enter and to progress in the sector

Probably by selling retail better to young people. There's a lot of jobs in the area but young people don't see it as appealing because of the pay levels

By having clear profiles for graduate jobs, make retail sexy because most of the people I speak to have gone in to retail on the shop floor but don't find retail interesting

More information about the level young people are at in retail and how many are in apprenticeships. What position they are in and how many young people are just are on normal on the job training.

9 Conclusions and Recommendations

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

- A significant reduction in the proportion of careers advisors who would not want their child to work in retail
- A 5percentage point improvement in the proportion that think retail is the best of the three sectors to work in
- Significantly fewer respondents associating the sector with being not very challenging, and an increase in those that believe the sector helps develop skills useful in any workplace
- A significant improvement in the proportion of careers influencers that think the retail sector has become a better place to work in, in the past five years
- A significant increase in awareness of Skillsmart Retail.

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

The proportion of all advisors that associate retail with long/unsocial hours has increased significantly in the last year. Long/unsocial hours and poor career prospects are the main reasons why advisors would not want their child to work in retail, followed by poor pay. Clearly there remain more to be done to overcome these negative perceptions.

Targeting/educating Connexions advisors in particular, as to the opportunities available in retail may help to further improve perceptions of the sector. Of the different advisor types, Connexions advisors appear to hold the least positive views of the retail sector overall; they are least likely to think retail is the best sector to work in (7%), and most likely to say they would not want their child to work in the sector (13%).

While advisors remain aware of a number of job roles within retail, awareness of backroom occupations and support functions within retail is still limited. Skillsmart Retail needs to continue to educate careers influencers about the various, and perhaps less obvious, opportunities available.

Advisors are still uncertain about whether employers are offering sufficient Apprenticeships to meet demand.

Advisors are most likely to need information on qualifications needed, salary levels, career paths available and information on specific job roles when they are researching a sector or giving advice.

Use of Skillsmart Retail's website does seem to have progressed in recent years. Given the importance that careers influencers place on the Internet (virtually all say specific careers advice websites are their most useful source) the SSC may wish to look at what more could be done to promote awareness and use of the site, and increase its appeal.

Careers advisors' main requests are for Skillsmart Retail to raise awareness of the sector, help them access more up to date information and to advertise/increase awareness of the services on offer.

10 Appendix 1: Sampling errors

Table 14: 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 15: 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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