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Young people's experiences of precarious and flexible work - A report by Progressive Partnership for the Scottish Government - Main Report



ECONOMY AND LABOUR MARKET



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Executive Summary

Introduction and research objectives

This report presents findings on young people's experiences of precarious and flexible work. These work conditions included where young people had for example zero hours contracts (ZHCs), low wages, lack of progression opportunities, dissatisfaction with current employment, varying hours and salary, or seasonal work etc. The study population was 16-24 year olds who were currently employed or had held a job previously in Scotland within a certain timeframe. The research included an evidence review, as well as primary research in the form of focus groups and a large Scotland-wide face-to-face survey. The research was conducted and analysed between July 2019 and January 2020 (that is, prior to the Covid 19 pandemic).

The Scottish Government acknowledged that existing information, knowledge and data on young people's precarious and flexible working conditions is limited. The evidence review was undertaken to identify and understand the existing information and research available on this topic, both within Scotland and more widely across the rest of the UK and other relevant areas. This stage identified information specific to young people and in the context of Scotland. This is contained in Appendix A. Primary research was then carried out to gain a better understanding of the topic across 16-24 year olds in Scotland.

The Scottish Government set out nine research questions (RQ) that the research was to address. Different stages of the research project addressed different RQs. The research questions set by the Scottish Government are shown in Table E1.

Table E1: Research questions

Research question	Sub-research question
RQ1 - What is the range of potentially precarious or flexible working conditions experienced by young people in Scotland?	Which of these are the most important / critical (e.g. in terms of their prevalence)?
RQ2 - To what extent are young people aware of their contractual status (e.g. whether they are on a ZHC)?	What factors (if any) determine levels of awareness (e.g. sector of employment, demographic characteristics)?
RQ3 - What are the circumstances whereby young people find themselves in precarious work / contractual conditions (e.g. ZHCs)?	Do they choose them voluntarily or have no option?
RQ4 - What are the experiences (e.g. positive, negative, mixed) of young people in a range of potentially precarious or flexible working conditions (e.g. ZHCs, low wages, lack of progression opportunities)?	What factors (if any) determine these experiences (e.g. sector of employment, demographic characteristics)?

RQ5 - Are there any particular disadvantages, challenges, advantages, opportunities etc. of different potentially precarious or flexible working conditions?	NA
RQ6 - What is it about the terms of employment that cause specific disadvantages? What type of contracts appear to be the most problematic and to who?	NA
RQ7 - To what extent can different potentially precarious or flexible working conditions be considered as 'positive destinations' for young people (e.g. do they offer opportunities for progression, fit in around lifestyle / caring responsibilities, etc.)?	Which young people are benefitting? What are their specific working conditions?
RQ8 - What are the barriers that prevent young people who want to change jobs from doing so?	Does this differ by contractual status (e.g. ZHC) or other potentially precarious or flexible (depending on perspective) working conditions (e.g. low wages, lack of progression opportunities)?
RQ9 - What (if any) type of information, advice and guidance do young people who want to change jobs require and what are their preferences for accessing this support (e.g. digital, online, face-to-face)?	Does this differ by contractual status (e.g. ZHC) or other potentially precarious or flexible (depending on perspective) working conditions (e.g. low wages, lack of progression opportunities)?

Approach

Qualitative research

Ten qualitative focus groups were conducted across various locations in Scotland with 16-24 year olds currently employed or who had held a job in the last 6 months. As this stage involved very in-depth discussions around their employment and experiences there was a need to ensure that they had recent employment experience to comment on, whilst also allowing those on temporary, ad hoc contracts to be included in the sample. These were conducted between 22nd August and 3rd September 2019. The focus groups took place in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee, Peterhead and Galashiels. The overall sample size was 66.

Quantitative research

In total, 1,043 quantitative survey interviews were conducted with 16-24 year olds who were currently employed or had been employed in Scotland within the last 24 months. The time period used (24 months) during the quantitative study was longer than the qualitative stage as, in addition to ensuring the sample included seasonal and ad-hoc workers, the survey was predominantly closed questions, therefore there was less need for them to recall in-depth information about their most recent employment type. The fieldwork took place between 23rd September and the 16th October 2019. The survey was conducted face-to-face, in-street by Progressive's interviewers using Computer-Aided Personal Interviewing (CAPI). The final sample was representative of employed 16-24 year olds across Scotland in terms of age and gender, and reflected 16-24 year olds across Scotland in general by location and ethnicity.

Defining precarious and flexible work

To address the RQs it was important to distinguish the research participants that were potentially in precarious or flexible work from those that were not. The evidence review reported that there is no universally accepted definition of precarious or flexible working with many reports defining or identifying this audience in slightly different ways.

Although the Scottish Government's ongoing policy position is to firmly oppose inappropriate use of ZHCs and other types of work that offer workers minimum job or financial security, this research aimed, as far as possible, to take a 'value-free' position (or at least a pluralistic one) by exploring the *range* of experiences of young people in these working conditions.

The starting position was that precarious and flexible working conditions could be seen as having negative connotations (e.g. low wages, lacking in progression opportunities) and / or positive connotations (e.g. variable hours, seasonal work), and that this would depend on the perspective and specific circumstances of the young person.

The respondents were therefore not asked directly if they worked in a precarious or flexible job. A combination of questions were used to determine if the respondents' recent employment could be categorised as precarious or flexible. The questions used were:

- Q5: Do you have a contract that is written and agreed with your employer?
- Q1a: Thinking about your most recent employment, which of the following best applies to you? (permanent, fixed term, temporary, casual, etc.)
- Q6a: Which of the following describes your most recent employment contract/employment? (full time, part time, zero hours, etc.)

If the respondent did not have a written, agreed contract in their current or most recent employment (Q5) they were categorised as working in a precarious or flexible position. The response to this question has been prioritised over the other questions used.

If the respondent did have a written, agreed contract then they have only been categorised as working in a precarious or flexible position if they stated they were working in a temporary, casual, seasonal, or a short term role (Q1a).

If the respondent did have a written contract but was in a permanent or fixed-term position over a year then they have only been categorised in this sub-group if they stated they were on a zero hours or varying hours contract or just turned up for work (Q6a). A full overview of the approach used to define those respondents who are / are not in some form of precarious / flexible work is set out in Box E1.

Box E1: Definition of precarious / flexible work overview

For the purposes of this report and analysis the precarious / flexible and non-precarious / flexible sub-groups have been categorised in the following way:

Precarious or flexible working positions:

- No written agreed contract
or
- Written agreed contract **but** in a temporary, casual, seasonal position
or
- Written agreed contract in a permanent or fixed term position **but** on a zero hours or varying hours contract or just turned up for work

Not precarious or/ flexible working positions:

- Written agreed contract and permanent or fixed term (over 1 year) position and full or part time contract
or
- Self-employed, running own business
or
- Written agreed contract and on an Apprenticeship

Once categorised, as per the definition in Box E1, 55% of the total sample were classified as working in a precarious or flexible working position and 45% were not.

Research findings

Young people's circumstances

The main reasons people were attracted to their job were financial security (31% of the sample) and to top-up their income (20%). Those in precarious or flexible work were much more likely than others to be working to top-up their income (24% compared with 16% of those not in precarious or flexible work), and this rises to 30% for the younger group (those aged 16-19) in precarious or flexible work.

Practicality was also important for those in precarious or flexible work, with location (22%) and flexibility of shifts and hours (19%) given as reasons for working in their most recent job.

Almost all (94%) of those currently in precarious or flexible work had one job. This may be a reflection of the age group of the study population with around half of them being in education and therefore having limited time to work.

Those in precarious or flexible work were typically working just a few hours each week. A third (34%) worked 14 hours or less, and this rose to nearly half (46%) for the younger age group (aged 16-19). Notably a quarter (26%) of the older age group (aged 20-24) were working 31-40 hours a week.

Awareness of contractual status

Two thirds (66%) of the total sample had a written, agreed contract with their employer. However, a substantial minority (27%) of the sample did not, and this rose to nearly half (49%) for those defined as being in precarious or flexible work. Most (74%) of those without a written contract were informed of their employment conditions verbally.

Young people in precarious or flexible work were less likely than others to be paid at least the minimum wage; be assured of a minimum number of hours work each week; receive holiday pay and sick pay, or have paid public holidays. Those not in precarious or flexible work were significantly more likely to have almost all of the employment rights that were evaluated compared to those in precarious or flexible work.

Types of precarious or flexible working conditions

Well under half (42%) of the overall sample were in a permanent job. Significant minorities of young people were in temporary work (14%) and casual work (14%), while a further 10% were in short term or seasonal work.

A full-time contract was the main type of employment contract: 35% of the sample had a full-time job. Many (14%) had zero hours contracts or said they “just turned up for work” (13%).

More than half of young people (55%) were defined as working in precarious or flexible employment: for example lacking a formal contract, in temporary, casual or seasonal work, or on a zero hours or varying hours contract.

- Around half of those in precarious/flexible work were in temporary (26%) or casual (25%) work; and
- Only 14% had a full time contract; most had flexible/no contract, such as zero hours contracts (25%), “just turned up for work” (24%) and varying hours contracts (13%).

Most young people across the total sample worked in Hotels and Restaurants (23%) and in Wholesale and Retail (21%). Those in precarious or flexible work were particularly likely to work in Hotels and Restaurants (30%) compared with those who were not in precarious or flexible work (15%).

Experience of young people in precarious and flexible working conditions

Half of the people in precarious or flexible work were satisfied with their terms of employment overall. This compares with three-quarters of those not in precarious or flexible work.

For people in precarious or flexible work, the main positive characteristic of their employment was their colleagues (mentioned by 45%). Also important were they enjoyed the work, the location, level of pay, gaining experience and flexibility. The qualitative findings provided further insight into why respondents were satisfied with aspects of their employment citing the flexibility of shifts and hours benefitting their

current lifestyle, and viewing their current job as a stepping stone to gain experience before progressing to a more permanent job.

Notably those in precarious or flexible work were significantly less likely than others to say they enjoy their work (33% compared with 40%), with the younger group (16-19 year olds) of precarious or flexible workers less likely to enjoy their work (26%). Seven per cent of those in precarious or flexible work said their most recent employment had no positive characteristics.

The biggest issues for people in precarious or flexible work were unsociable hours, low pay, lack of benefits, irregular hours and long hours. This was further supported by findings from the focus groups with respondents stating they were dissatisfied due to not having a written contract, feeling pressured to accept shifts, and uncertainty about working hours / times.

A substantial minority of those in precarious or flexible work felt that their employment was having adverse impacts on their lives. For example around a fifth felt it impacted negatively on their mental health (21%) or on their relationships (17%); while nearly a third felt it impacted negatively on their social lives.

Changing working circumstances

Half (49%) of those in precarious or flexible work would like to change their working situation in the next year. Most (64%) would like to move to another company.

- The main reasons for wanting to change job were to get better pay (45%), increase hours (42%) and better prospects (41%). Also important was a change in the type of contract (22%). Notably those who were not in precarious or flexible work were much less likely to give increased hours as a reason for changing job (17%).
- The main barriers for those in precarious or flexible work face getting another job were lack of jobs (33%), lack of experience (26%) and lack of qualifications (24%). Those not in education faced acute barriers, with 40% citing a lack of jobs and 33% lack of qualifications.

Those in precarious or flexible work had typically found their most recent job using an informal approach, with more than half (55%) getting their job through word of mouth, while others used social media, speculative CVs and responded to ads posted at the premises.

The information, help and guidance that would most help people in precarious or flexible work to change jobs were work experience or placement opportunities; advice on CV writing; guidance on job searches; and advice on local job opportunities. Those not in education were especially interested in work experience opportunities.

Around half of those in precarious or flexible work would like to receive this information online, with around a third saying they would like this information on social media and a third saying face-to-face.

Key differences were reported by those in education and those not in education who were wanting to change their circumstances. Those not in education were working longer hours, were the least satisfied across all groups and also had a lack of qualifications and confidence. They wanted to improve their prospects and change their shift patterns. Their main reasons for working in their current position was due to a struggle to find a job, the location and the financial security. This differed from those in education.

Conclusions

The findings suggest a “progression” as the audience gets older and circumstances change, e.g. move from school to university or college. The incidence of precarious or flexible working was highest in the youngest age-group, and declined as the audience grew older. Those who were categorised as in precarious or flexible work and were younger (16-19 years old), in education or financially dependent were more likely to be at the higher end of precariousness as they were more likely to not have a written contract and just turn up for work when asked; therefore having very limited security or formal procedures to follow.

While only half (50%) of those who were older (20-24 years old) had a written contract with their employer, the proportion was even lower (36%) for the younger age group. However, some of the younger age group were content with this situation: e.g. flexibility works for their current circumstances as most were still at school, and as suggested by the qualitative findings they expressed a lot of trust in their employer to not exploit them. These findings suggest that some may not be aware of their rights or that, as a minimum, a written statement outlining terms and conditions should still be provided even if working flexible hours.

The findings also highlighted that there are specific sub-groups not content with their current position: they have lower levels of satisfaction and were keen to change their working situation in the next 12 months. The research found that half (49%) of those in precarious or flexible work would like to change their working situation in the next year compared to only a quarter of those not in precarious or flexible positions (24%), suggesting that the precarious/flexible nature of the job contributes towards this.

In conclusion there were four distinct groups, some who require more support than others:

1. Those in a precarious/flexible position, not in education and wanting to change working circumstances;
2. Those in a precarious/flexible position, in education and wanting to change working circumstances;

3. Those in a precarious/flexible position and who don't want to change working circumstances; and
4. Those not precarious/flexible position.

Those not in precarious/flexible positions are not the focus for this study as their employment is considered more secure. Those who are in precarious or flexible work but don't want to change their working circumstances are more content with their employment terms overall, and their current employment works well for their circumstances.

There are two groups looking to change jobs, and who may require support. The results have shown that those not in education who have found themselves in this position are the most dissatisfied and disenfranchised with their current employment and require the most support. They are working longer hours, are the least satisfied across all groups and have a lack of qualifications and confidence.

The information and advice that would be most helpful for this group would be help finding work experience or placement opportunities, as well as help on changing career. Practical advice on how to progress out of insecure, zero hours or short term contracts would benefit this group.

1. Introduction and research objectives

Progressive Partnership was commissioned by the Scottish Government to undertake research to better understand young people’s experiences of precarious and flexible work. The research included a secondary evidence review, as well as primary research in the form of focus groups and a large Scotland-wide face-to-face survey. The remainder of this chapter outlines the research aims and objectives (section 1.1), describes the background and context to the research (section 1.2) and explains how the report is structured (section 1.3).

1.1 Research aims and objectives

The overall aim of this research project was to explore the experiences of young people (16-24 year olds) in precarious and flexible working conditions. These conditions included where young people had, for example, zero hours contracts (ZHCs), low wages, lack of progression opportunities, dissatisfaction with current employment, varying hours and salary, or seasonal work etc. An overview of the different forms of precarious and flexible working conditions considered in this research is provided at Table 1.1. Further details on how respondents were categorised into these two sub-groups is explained at section 2.5.

Table 1.1: Precarious and flexible working conditions addressed in this research

Precarious and flexible working conditions	Not precarious or flexible working conditions
No written agreed contract with employer	Full time / Part time contract in a permanent or fixed term (over 1 year) position
Temporary, casual or seasonal position	Self-employed – running own business
Zero hours contract / varying hours contract	Apprenticeship with a written agreed contract
Short-term position - only up to 12 months	

The research also explored what an in-work service offer and / or support for young people in such working conditions could include (e.g. to help them progress to more secure employment).

Full details of the research questions (RQs) investigated in this research are provided at Table 1.2 below, which also indicates where each RQ is addressed in this report.

Although the Scottish Government’s ongoing policy position is to firmly oppose inappropriate use of ZHCs and other types of work that offer workers minimum job or financial security (see section 1.2), this research aimed, as far as possible, to

take a ‘value-free’ position (or at least a pluralistic one) by exploring the *range* of experiences of young people in these working conditions.

The starting position was that these working conditions could be seen as precarious/flexible with negative connotations (e.g. low wages, lacking in progression opportunities) or precarious/flexible with positive connotations (e.g. variable hours, seasonal work), though this would depend on the perspective and specific circumstances of the young person. This is why throughout this report, reference is made to precarious and flexible work, recognising the desired ‘value free’ approach to the research.

This ‘value free’ approach was operationalised in the research by: (a) objectively defining a sub-population of young people in Scotland in precarious and flexible working conditions (Table 1.1); and then (b) exploring the full range of their experiences of this. Full details of the method are included at Chapter 2. The results from this research provide an indication of where the balance between precarity and flexibility may be for these forms of work, for young people in Scotland.

Table 1.2: Research questions (RQs) and where they are addressed in the report

Research Question	Sub-research question (where relevant)	Reported in chapter
RQ1 - What is the range of potentially precarious or flexible working conditions experienced by young people in Scotland?	Which of these are the most important / critical (e.g. in terms of their prevalence)?	Chapter 3
RQ2 - To what extent are young people aware of their contractual status (e.g. whether they are on a ZHC)?	What factors (if any) determine levels of awareness (e.g. sector of employment, demographic characteristics)?	Chapter 4
RQ3 - What are the circumstances whereby young people find themselves in precarious work / contractual conditions (e.g. ZHCs)?	Do they choose them voluntarily or have no option?	Chapter 5
RQ4 - What are the experiences (e.g. positive, negative, mixed) of young people in a range of potentially precarious or flexible working conditions (e.g. ZHCs, low wages, lack of progression opportunities)?	What factors (if any) determine these experiences (e.g. sector of employment, demographic characteristics)?	Chapter 6
RQ5 - Are there any particular disadvantages, challenges, advantages, opportunities etc. of different potentially precarious or flexible working conditions?	NA	Chapter 6
RQ6 - What is it about the terms of employment that cause specific	NA	Chapter 6

disadvantages? What type of contracts appear to be the most problematic and to who?		
RQ7 - To what extent can different potentially precarious or flexible working conditions be considered as 'positive destinations' for young people (e.g. do they offer opportunities for progression, fit in around lifestyle / caring responsibilities, etc.)?	Which young people are benefitting? What are their specific working conditions?	Chapter 6
RQ8 - What are the barriers that prevent young people who want to change jobs from doing so?	Does this differ by contractual status (e.g. ZHC) or other potentially precarious or flexible (depending on perspective) working conditions (e.g. low wages, lack of progression opportunities)?	Chapter 7
RQ9 - What (if any) type of information, advice and guidance do young people who want to change jobs require and what are their preferences for accessing this support (e.g. digital, online, face-to-face)?	Does this differ by contractual status (e.g. ZHC) or other potentially precarious or flexible (depending on perspective) working conditions (e.g. low wages, lack of progression opportunities)?	Chapter 7

1.2 Background and policy context

The school leaver destination and annual participation measure statistics in Scotland record young people going on to employment, among other destinations. However, some of these employment destinations will include young people in precarious and flexible working conditions and arrangements, including ZHCs. This has attracted some wider interest, with a range of perspectives being expressed on the positive nature (or otherwise) of these types of destination.

However the use of positive and negative destinations within the statistics is to indicate whether the activity means the individual is engaged and doing something that will help them fulfil their potential. The statistics are not intended to provide information on whether school leavers are having a positive experience within any of these destinations and the data on which the statistics are based would not allow such a judgement to be made.

As a result, the Scottish Government committed to working with partners, including Skills Development Scotland (SDS), to better understand the prevalence and experience of young people in precarious and flexible working conditions, with a view to providing an in-work service offer and support for those wishing to progress to more secure employment.

Prior to this research being undertaken, there was a lack of robust, Scotland specific evidence on the working conditions and arrangements of young people and their experiences of these. The intention was for this gap to be addressed through this research project.

The Scottish Government's ongoing policy position on ZHCs is that the inappropriate use of ZHCs and other non-standard types of employment that offer workers minimum job or financial security is firmly opposed. This is stated in the criteria for Fair Work First¹ and the relaunched Scottish Business Pledge².

While there is no legal definition of a zero hours contract, in the context of Fair Work such a contract is one which does not guarantee any work to the individual and does not set out a minimum number of hours (whether ongoing or for a set period). Examples of inappropriate use of ZHCs by an employer are set out in Box 1.1 below.

Box 1.1:

Fair Work - Examples of appropriate and inappropriate use of ZHCs

An employer is likely to be using a ZHC **inappropriately** if:

- They offer a worker a regular pattern of work or regular number of hours but offer only a casual / zero-hours contract;
- A worker has had no say in the ZHC and wants a contract of employment guaranteeing a minimum number of hours;
- They put pressure on a worker to accept the terms of a ZHC in order to keep their job; and / or
- They offer a contract which affords the person 'worker' status when they should have 'employee' status.

An **appropriate** use of ZHCs would involve the following:

- They are mutually and explicitly agreed with staff;
- Staff have the option to request guaranteed hours;
- They are linked to seasonal work, resilience or other functions where workloads are highly variable; and
- Any employees on ZHCs have comparable employment rights to other staff.

The Scottish Government supports a number of initiatives which promote and encourage flexible working such as:

¹ <https://economicactionplan.mygov.scot/fair-work/fair-work-first/>

² <https://scottishbusinesspledge.scot/>

- Working with employers to encourage flexible, agile and inclusive workplaces that benefit all employees;
- Providing £159,000 for 2019-20 to the Family Friendly Working Scotland Partnership to support and promote the development of flexible and family friendly workplaces; and
- Funding Timewise to conduct a feasibility study for a 'What Works Centre for Flexible Work' in Scotland. This aims to design, test, scale and embed new approaches to increasing the availability of flexible working.

In addition, the Scottish Government are also seeking to improve both business practice and young people's understanding of employment rights through:

- The relaunched Scottish Business Pledge which has no inappropriate use of zero hours contracts as one of its core elements;
- The implementation of Fair Work First which is committed to promoting best practice to businesses in Scotland with regard to extending Fair Work criteria to every type of grant, funding stream, and business support budget open to us;
- The implementation of the Developing the Young Workforce strategy within the school curriculum, where learning about the world of work and employment rights are a key part of career education for young people in their senior phase at school; and
- Supporting the STUC's "Union into Schools" programme, which involves union representatives visiting schools to raise awareness and understanding amongst young people about the importance of citizens' and workers' rights and the role played by trade unions in the modern workplace.
- The Young Person's Guarantee, which aims to ensure that every young person aged between 16 and 24 in Scotland has the opportunity of going to university or college, participating in an apprenticeship programme, training, fair employment including work experience, or participating in a formal volunteering programme.

1.3 Structure of this report

This research report is structured as follows:

- Chapter 1 describes the background and context to the research and sets out the research aim and objectives;
- Chapter 2 outlines the methodology adopted in the research project including a summary description of the qualitative and quantitative elements;
- Chapters 3 to 7 report on the main research findings, including an overview of key points from each chapter;

- Chapter 8 details the conclusions.

2. Approach to research

2.1 Approach

The primary research comprised two elements: (i) qualitative focus groups; and (ii) a quantitative survey. Ten qualitative focus groups were conducted across various locations in Scotland (see section 2.2) with 16-24 year olds currently employed or who had held a job in the last 6 months. As this stage involved very in-depth discussions around their employment and experiences there was a need to ensure that they had recent employment experience to comment on, whilst also allowing those on temporary, ad hoc contracts to be included in the sample. These were conducted between 22nd August and 3rd September 2019. The focus groups lasted up to 75 minutes and the respondents received a monetary incentive as a thank you for participating. A copy of the focus group topic guide is included in Appendix B. This stage was used to inform the questionnaire development for the quantitative research (survey) and to contextualise and triangulate the quantitative results.

In total, 1,043 quantitative survey interviews were conducted with 16-24 year olds who were currently employed or had been employed in Scotland within the last 24 months. This was to ensure that those working seasonally or on temporary contracts could be included in the sample. The time period used (24 months) during the quantitative study was longer than the qualitative stage as, in addition to ensuring the sample included seasonal and ad-hoc workers, the survey was predominantly closed questions, therefore there was less need for them to recall in-depth information about their most recent employment type. The fieldwork took place between 23rd September and the 16th October 2019. The survey was conducted face-to-face, in-street by Progressive's interviewers using Computer-Aided Personal Interviewing (CAPI). A copy of the questionnaire is included in Appendix C.

2.2 Sample

Qualitative research – recruitment

Each focus group consisted of between four and eight participants. The focus groups took place in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee, Peterhead and Galashiels. Two groups were held at each location: one with 16-19 year olds and one with 20-24 year olds. The overall sample size was 66.

All participants were 16-24 year olds, currently employed or had held a job in the previous 6 months. They were recruited on the basis that they were not in permanent employment or in a fixed term position of over a year or on a full time contract. They also had to state that three out of four employment conditions didn't

apply to them. These included: (1) paid above the national minimum wage; (2) eligible for employer pension contributions; (3) in receipt of employment benefits; and (4) offered training opportunities. This was in an attempt to ensure only those who were considered to be in the more insecure, precarious working positions were recruited for the focus groups.

Qualitative research – profile of respondents

A good mix of age, gender, urban/rural locations and types of employment was achieved across the sample. Job types included a wide range of occupations. SIMD quintiles were used to identify and monitor the proportion of respondents that lived in the 20% most deprived areas and those that didn't. Full details of the qualitative sample profile is reported in Appendix E

Quantitative research – recruitment

All quantitative respondents were 16-24 years old and either currently employed in Scotland or had been employed in Scotland during the previous 24 months. No restrictions were placed on the type of employment for this stage of the research, therefore the sample consists of young people in a range of employment types from permanent, full time positions to temporary, casual and zero hours contracts. A representative sample of 16-24 year olds in employment, across Scotland was needed.

Published data was used to set quotas. There was limited published data on employed 16-24 year olds therefore for demographics, where this wasn't available, quotas were set using profile data on 16-24 year olds in general. Data sources used to set quotas were the NRS Mid-year population statistics 2018 and the Labour Force Survey (ONS, 2018). A full breakdown of the quotas applied is shown in Appendix E.

Interviewers approached potential respondents in the street and asked them to participate. The screener questionnaire ensured respondents were within the appropriate age range, met all other selection criteria, and were within the quotas that had been set for gender and location.

As quota controls guided the sample selection, precise margins of error or significance testing are not appropriate, as the sampling type is non-probability. The margins of error outlined below are therefore indicative, based on an equivalent probability sample.

The final sample size was 1,043 which provides a data set with an approximate margin of error of between $\pm 0.6\%$ and $\pm 3.0\%$, calculated at the 95% confidence level (market research industry standard). The sub samples used provide a dataset with the following approximate margins of error:

- Precarious/flexible, sample size of 569 = $\pm 0.8\%$ and $\pm 4.1\%$
- Not precarious/flexible, sample size of 443 = $\pm 0.9\%$ and $\pm 4.7\%$

An example of this for the total sample of 1,043 is if the survey found that 50% of respondents agreed with a statement, we can be confident in most cases the actual value would be between 47% and 53%. Any increase or decrease reported of more than this is not due to chance or sampling error, but reflects a real difference between sub-groups. Full details on how these sub-groups have been identified is reported in section 2.5.

Quantitative research – profile of respondents

Full details of the quantitative sample profile is reported in Appendix E. Quota sampling was used to ensure that a representative sample of 16-24 year olds across Scotland was achieved. Quotas were set against age, gender and location. There were limited published data on 16-24 year olds in Scotland who are employed, therefore different sources were used to determine the proportion of interviews needed across each of the different variables. Full details are shown in Appendix E. Ethnicity, education status and whether they were financially independent or not fell out naturally.

2.3 Analysis and reporting

Throughout this report, any reported significant differences (between sub-groups of the sample) were statistically significant at the 95% confidence level. No differences are reported unless they were statistically significant. Sub-group analysis has not been carried out on any sub-group that has a sample size of less than 50. Sub-group analysis has been conducted on the following: (1) if in a precarious/flexible role; (2) age; (3) education status; (4) financial dependence; and (5) if the desire to change working conditions. The margin of errors for these sub-groups are shown in Appendix E.

All findings are based on the responses that the respondents gave or the respondents' own perception.

Standard notation is used in tables with '**' used to indicate results of less than 1% and '-' used to indicate no respondents gave a particular answer. For ease of reading the results, '1%' and '2%' notations have been left off some of the figures.

Where percentages in figures and tables do not total the figures quoted in the text, this is due to rounding.

2.4 Limitations to the research

Qualitative research

Due to the smaller sample size, it was not feasible to reflect all types of precarious, flexible and insecure work in the qualitative sample. The age range of 16-24 year olds had an impact on the types of work that the respondents undertook; for

example, none of the respondents had a job in the gig economy such as working for courier or delivery companies.

Recruiting the focus groups was challenging because of the target audience required. Recruitment commenced two weeks prior to each focus group taking place. This was to ensure it was close enough to the focus group date that participants remembered to attend, but also gave enough time to recruit the required number of participants. It did pose problems for the potential participants: a number had to decline because they didn't know if they would be working or not; others who were keen to participate were not able to commit until last minute as they only find out their shifts a few days in advance. Procedures were put in place to contact all participants a couple of days prior to the focus group to ensure they could still attend. There was still a low turn-out to the first focus group due to last minute cancellations; therefore all other focus groups were over-recruited to compensate for this. This did not have any effect on the final results, however it is important to note that the impact these positions have on their day-to-day lives and planning was evident as part of the research recruitment process.

Quantitative research

There were very few limitations to the quantitative research, as many potential limitations had been addressed at the research design stage. A face-to-face approach was adopted over an online approach to ensure that a robust sample of employed 16-24 year olds could be achieved. It also allowed for control over quotas to ensure a representative sample of 16-24 year olds in Scotland was achieved.

It is more accurate to adopt a probability sampling approach whereby everyone in the desired population has a known and equal chance of being selected for the survey; however with such a large population this would be very expensive and time-consuming. Quota sampling, which is a non-probability sampling method, was carried out. Not all members of the desired population had a chance of participating in the study as the interviewers had set quotas e.g. age, gender, that they worked towards. This approach was adopted to ensure a representative sample could still be achieved in a timely and cost-effective way. The overall sample size of 1,043 is a robust sample.

As there is no standard definition of precarious work, a working definition had to be developed for this study as previously stated in Chapter 1. The definition adopted, "precarious and flexible work", draws on the evidence review, the qualitative findings and discussion with the project team, and is clearly explained in section 2.5 below and Chapter 5. The final categorisation used has allowed for robust analysis of those working in jobs that are less secure. The analysis conducted suggests that the categorisation used is appropriate as explained further in section 2.5.

2.5 Defining precarious and flexible work

To address the RQs it was important to identify the research participants that were potentially in precarious or flexible work and those that were not. The evidence review reported that there is no universally accepted definition of precarious or flexible working, with many reports defining or identifying this audience in slightly different ways.

As stated previously, the definition adopted, “precarious and flexible work”, for this research draws on the evidence review, the qualitative findings and discussion with the project team (see Chapter 1). The respondents were not asked directly if they worked in a precarious or flexible job. A combination of questions was used to determine if the respondents’ recent employment could be categorised as precarious or flexible.

The questions used were:

- Q5: Do you have a contract that is written and agreed with your employer?
- Q1a: Thinking about your most recent employment, which of the following best applies to you? (permanent, fixed term, temporary, casual, etc.)
- Q6a: Which of the following describes your most recent employment contract/employment? (full time, part time, zero hours, etc.)

These questions were identified as the most relevant based on findings from the evidence review. In particular, Benach et al. (2016) stated the three approaches to defining precarious working common in existing research are:

- defining it as referring to any non-standard work type such as zero hours (i.e. any employment that is not through a permanent, full-time contract);
- defining it in relation to the attributes of a job, taking into account various aspects of the employment context (e.g. low wages, limited rights, powerlessness to exercise legally granted workplace rights); and / or
- defining precariousness as relating to certain sectors of the labour market.

If the respondent did not have a written, agreed contract in their current or most recent employment (Q5) they were categorised as working in a precarious or flexible position. The response to this question has been prioritised over the other questions used.

If the respondent did have a written, agreed contract then they have only been categorised as working in a precarious or flexible position if they stated they were working in a temporary, casual, seasonal, or a short term position (Q1a).

If the respondent did have a written, agreed contract but was in a permanent or fixed-term position over a year then they have only been categorised as working in a precarious or flexible position if they stated they were on a zero hours or varying hours contract or just turned up for work (Q6a). A small number of respondents

identified themselves as self-employed/freelance and were included in the precarious or flexible sub-group because they stated that they were on a ZHC or varying hours contract. Anyone who specifically stated that they were running their own business was categorised as not in a precarious or flexible position.

A full overview of the approach used to define those respondents who are / are not in some form of precarious / flexible work is set out in Box 2.1. The variables and calculation used is shown in full in Appendix D.

Box 2.1: Definition of precarious / flexible work overview

For the purposes of this report and analysis the precarious / flexible and non-precarious / flexible sub-groups have been categorised in the following way:

Precarious or flexible working positions:

- No written agreed contract
or
- Written agreed contract **but** in a temporary, casual, seasonal position
or
- Written agreed contract in a permanent or fixed term position **but** on a zero hours or varying hours contract or just turned up for work

Not precarious or/ flexible working positions:

- Written agreed contract and permanent or fixed term (over 1 year) position and full or part time contract
or
- Self-employed, running own business
or
- Written agreed contract and on an Apprenticeship

Once categorised, as per the definition in Box 2.1, 55% of the total sample were classified as working in a precarious or flexible working position and 45% were not. Analysis has been carried out on those who have been categorised as working in a precarious or flexible position and those who have not throughout the report. When the report refers to “precarious or flexible work” it is using the definition as set out above. The sub-group analysis reflects findings reviewed as part of the evidence report and supports the qualitative findings suggesting that the categorisation used is robust.

Research findings

3. Young people's circumstances

This chapter addresses RQ3: What are the circumstances whereby young people find themselves in precarious work / contractual conditions, as shown in Table 1.2 in Chapter 1. This chapter reports on what attracted them to their job, their circumstances in general as well as the number of jobs they have and hours they work.

Chapter 3 – Key points

The main reasons people were attracted to their job were financial security (31% of the sample) and to top-up their income (20%). Those in precarious or flexible work were much more likely than others to be working to top-up their income (24% compared with 16% of those not in precarious or flexible work), and this rises to 30% for the younger group (those aged 16-19).

Practicality was also important for those in precarious or flexible work, with location (22%) and flexibility of shifts and hours (19%) given as reasons for working in their most recent job.

Almost all (94%) of those currently in precarious or flexible work had one job.

Those in precarious or flexible work were typically working just a few hours each week. A third (34%) worked 14 hours or less, and this rose to nearly half (46%) for the younger age group. Notably a quarter (26%) of the older age group were working 31-40 hours a week.

3.1 Reason for working

The quantitative results showed there were a number of different reasons why young people were attracted to their job. Table 3.1 shows the main reason for working was financial security; however those not in precarious or flexible work were significantly more likely to give this reason for working (39%) than those in precarious or flexible work (25%).

Conversely, those in precarious or flexible work were significantly more likely to say that they wanted the job to top-up their income (24% compared to 16% not precarious / flexible) and for the flexibility of shifts (19% compared to 13% not precarious / flexible). They were significantly less likely to have been attracted to the job because they wanted experience in the sector or role, the number of working hours, opportunity to progress, the reputation of the company and the good benefits package.

Table 3.1: Attraction to most recent jobQ9. *What attracted you to the main job you currently do/recently held?*

	Total Sample	Not precarious / flexible	Precarious / flexible
Financial security / Good pay	31%	39%	25%
To top-up my income	20%	16%	24%
Location	24%	26%	22%
Flexibility of shifts/hours	17%	13%	19%
Wanted experience in the sector/role/ stepping stone to other jobs	18%	21%	15%
Was struggling to find a job	17%	16%	17%
The number of working hours	13%	16%	11%
My friends/family members work there	9%	7%	11%
Opportunity to develop/progress	13%	19%	8%
Reputation of the company	10%	13%	7%
Good benefits/rewards/pension	9%	15%	4%
Felt pressured by parents/partner/family to get a job	3%	3%	3%
Felt pressured by the job centre/ benefits agency to get a job	2%	1%	2%
Opportunity to travel	2%	2%	1%
Other	5%	4%	6%
Unsure/Don't know	2%	2%	1%

Amongst the precarious / flexible workers, the younger age group (30%), those financially dependent on someone else (27%) and those in full time education (31%) were more likely to be attracted to the job as they wanted to top-up their income; whereas the older group were more likely to be attracted to the flexibility of shifts or hours (23%). Those financially dependent on someone else were more likely to be attracted to the job because of the location (25%). The qualitative findings suggest that in some circumstances this is due to them still living at home with their parents.

The evidence reviewed supported the quantitative results. Research from the CIPD (2017) found that one of the biggest attractions of working specifically in the gig economy amongst 18-29 year olds was to provide back-up income (29%) so they

didn't have to worry about the security of a regular income. This research was carried out online, specifically with the gig economy only and therefore caution should be applied when comparing results.

The qualitative findings supported the quantitative results. For most of the qualitative respondents it was their first experience of working and it therefore provided them with some independence and experience.

"I quite like it and it's good just now because I just left school and it's getting me used to working and things and dealing with the public" (Galashiels focus group participant)

"Yeah, I mean I wanted to take up some spare time and get experience, stuff to write down on my CV." (Dundee focus group participant)

"I did have a job at school and that helped me a lot with my interview because they could see that I've worked before. But I do think it's quite hard to go from being at school every day with your friends to actually having to work with the public." (Galashiels focus group participants)

The majority of the younger group (16-19 year olds) wanted to earn money to be able to afford to socialise with friends or buy things for themselves. Some of the qualitative respondents had more responsibilities that they needed to earn money for, such as mobile phone bills, paying for their car and/or petrol. A small minority of the qualitative sample (mainly 20-24 years old) were financially independent and had to pay for rent and household bills.

"I got my National Insurance number and I handed my CV away to everywhere because I was desperate for money. That was the first one that came back and I got it." (Glasgow focus group participant)

"I was last out of my friends to turn 16 so they had been working for like over a year before me and all of them would work at Ibrox, Parkhead, Hampden and it's really easy to get a job so I just went for that." (Glasgow focus group participant)

"To be honest it was just I needed a job, because trying to afford stuff for college and save up for other things and that, so, I was just looking through Indeed." (Dundee focus group participant)

Those who were planning to or were currently at university or college felt that having employment experience on their CV would benefit them at a later date during university or after graduating. A couple of respondents wanted to gain experience in the actual sector that they were interested in as they felt it would reflect well on their CV.

"It makes you more employable after uni. If you've had a job throughout, otherwise you've not had a job in four years and you're trying to find one now." (Dundee focus group participant)

“I live with my mum as well and I also get EMA so it’s obviously not exactly like I need the money because I’m already getting money, it’s more for getting that experience for my CV.” (Glasgow focus group participant)

Other younger respondents (16-19 year olds) felt that a casual job / job with a zero hours contract was easier to get and would allow them to gain useful work experience, and so enable them to move on to a better part time job in the future.

“I had obviously applied for retail jobs in the past and they never let you in because you never have any experience. But if you have done work like this [temporary food kiosk] you can work retail, as it gives you experience working with people.” (Glasgow focus group participant)

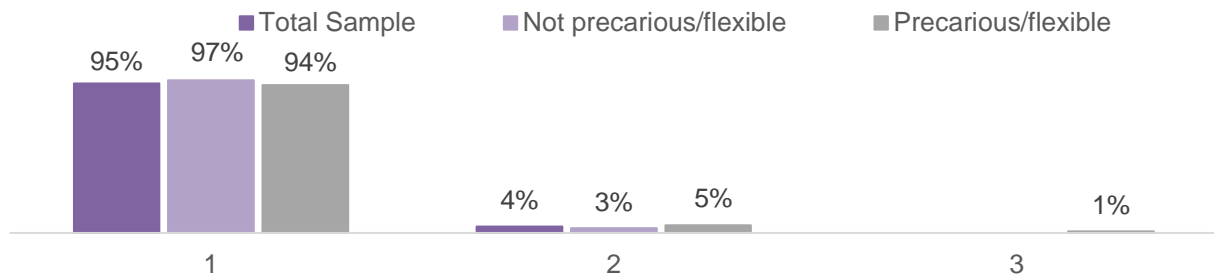
For most of the qualitative respondents, the type of job they had was more due to choice than necessity. They wanted to earn money, but only had limited time available due to other commitments such as school, college, university, studying, sports associations, etc. Therefore a job that provided them with flexible hours, short term contracts and reasonable pay worked for them at this stage in their life. For those trying to decide on the type of employment / career they want to pursue; short-term, rolling contracts helped them gain experience in difference areas and can contribute towards their decision-making. They did comment that there were disadvantages associated with the type of work and ‘contracts’ they have; but they needed the money or the flexibility and therefore traded this off for some of the less appealing aspects of the job. This is reported in more detail in Chapter 6 on ‘experiences of young people in precarious or flexible work’.

3.2 Number of jobs and hours worked

The evidence review alluded to some people in these precarious or flexible working positions, in particular those in the gig economy, taking on a number of jobs to enable them to earn enough to live a decent life or top–up their main income (CIPD, To gig or not to gig? Stories from a modern economy, 2017). However, this was not the case for participants in this study. Almost all of the quantitative respondents who were currently employed only had one job (Figure 3.1). The age of this audience and their circumstances may have impacted on this, with some being in education or only having time for one job.

Figure 3.1: Number of jobs currently held

Q3. How many jobs do you currently have?

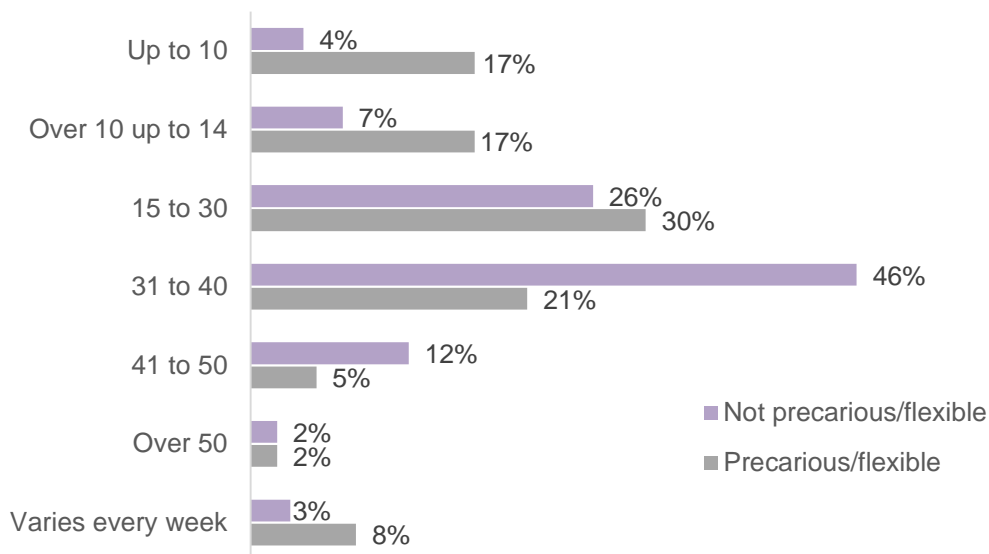


Base (all who are currently working): 879
 Precarious/flexible 428
 Not precarious/flexible 450

Figure 3.2 shows that there were differences in the number of hours worked by the two key sub-groups. Those in precarious or flexible work worked a range of hours; however they were significantly more likely to work 14 hours a week or less (34%) compared to only 11% of those not in precarious or flexible work. Those not in precarious or flexible work were more likely to work 31 to 50 hours a week (58%).

Figure 3.2: Hours worked each week

Q2. How many hours do you work each week?



Base (all):
 Precarious/flexible 569
 Not precarious/flexible 473

Again, there were reported differences by age, financial dependency and education status among those in precarious or flexible work. The younger group were more likely to work up to 14 hours a week (46%) than the older group (25%); whereas the older group were more likely to work 31 to 40 hours a week (26%) compared to the younger group (14%). Similar differences are noted across education status and financial responsibility. Those in education were more likely to work shorter hours,

possibly due to their commitment to school and studying, whereas those not in education were more likely to work 31-40 hours. Those working longer hours were more likely to be financially independent and therefore probably need the larger income to support themselves financially.

The qualitative research findings showed that some of the respondents were happy to have a job and to be earning money but there was a lack of opportunities to increase the hours that they work, especially on their terms (e.g. retain flexibility). This is further supported by the proportion in the quantitative study that stated they wanted to increase their working hours. This is reported in full under Chapter 7, Changing working circumstances.

4. Awareness of contractual status

This chapter addresses RQ2: To what extent are young people aware of their contractual status and what factors, if any, determine levels of awareness, as shown in Table 1.2 in Chapter 1. This chapter reports the proportion that have a written, agreed contract as well as other employment rights. It also establishes the proportion that have a guaranteed minimum number of hours per week. Differences between sub-groups have also been reported.

Chapter 4 – Key points

Two thirds (66%) of the total sample have a written, agreed contract with their employer. However, a substantial minority (27%) of the sample did not, and this rises to nearly half (49%) for those in precarious or flexible work.

Most (74%) of those without a written contract were informed of their employment conditions verbally.

Young people in precarious or flexible work were less likely than others to be paid at least the minimum wage; be assured of a minimum number of hours work each week; receive holiday pay and sick pay, or have paid public holidays. Those not in precarious or flexible work were significantly more likely to have almost all of the employment rights that were evaluated compared to those in precarious or flexible work.

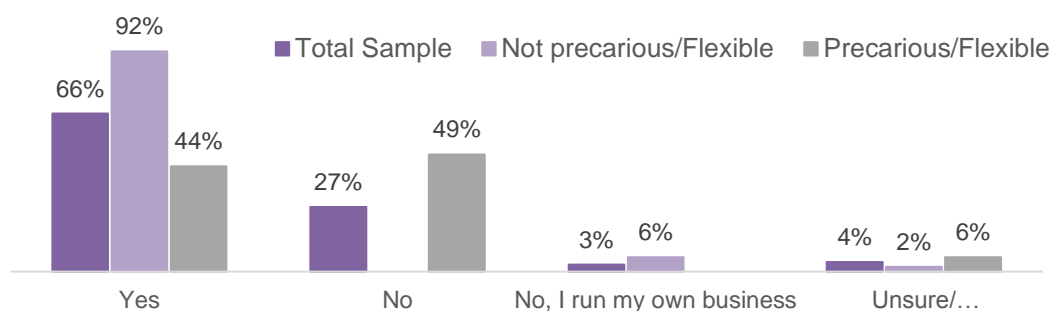
4.1 Contractual status

Figure 4.1 shows that two thirds (66%) of the total sample had a written contract with their employer. Just over a quarter (27%) didn't have a written agreed contract.

As explained above (see section 2.5 and Box 2.1), this is a key question used to determine if respondents were working in precarious or flexible positions or not: employees who said they didn't have a contract have been classified as being in precarious or flexible work, whereas those with a written agreed contract are mainly those not in precarious or flexible work.

Figure 4.1: Have a written contract

Q5. Do you/did you have a contract that is/was written and agreed with your employer?



Base (all): 1,043

Amongst those categorised as in precarious or flexible work, the older group (20-24 year olds) were more likely to state they had a written agreed contract (50%) than the younger group (16-19 year olds: 36%).

The qualitative findings provided further insight into what young people view as a contract and how much they know about them. Overall, around a third of the qualitative respondents had a written, agreed contract. For some this was simply a written agreement that they were on a zero hours contract, for others it was a more formalised contract that detailed working hours, pay, etc. In some cases the contract had been sent to them as an email attachment, (some had not opened / read the attachment). Others either had a verbal agreement or no contract at all.

The majority of the qualitative respondents did not recall seeing or signing a written contract. When asked, some stated they consider themselves to be on a 'zero hours' contract. For some this was something that was presumed rather than confirmed by a manager.

"Well, are you not just on a zero-hour contract, if you're not on one [a contract]?" (Galashiels focus group participant)

For others who did not have a contract, did not consider themselves to be on a zero hours contract. They aren't guaranteed a minimum number of hours, they just turn up for work when asked and are paid the national minimum wage based on their age.

"No I don't [have a contract], it's incredibly casual sort of thing it's really just a phone-call, turn up sort of idea. I really have no power over what hours or any control." (Edinburgh focus group participant)

"No I don't have a contract, it is very badly structured. I get a text, it can be like 4 days before they want you to come in or like half an hour before they want you to come in." (Galashiels focus group participant)

"I haven't really seen or signed anything, if I'm honest" (Glasgow focus group participant)

A couple of qualitative respondents referred to a 'verbal agreement'. They know what their hourly rate is and how many hours a week they have worked and it was just agreed verbally. This supports the quantitative results reported at Figure 4.2.

"Verbally they've told me they will give me twenty hours a week if I will accept that and I can do more on top of that." (Edinburgh focus group participant)

The qualitative research findings also suggested that those working in smaller, more family-run businesses, were less likely to have a written contract, agreed hours or structured breaks etc., typically to allow the company to offer flexible services and respond to the changing demand for services.

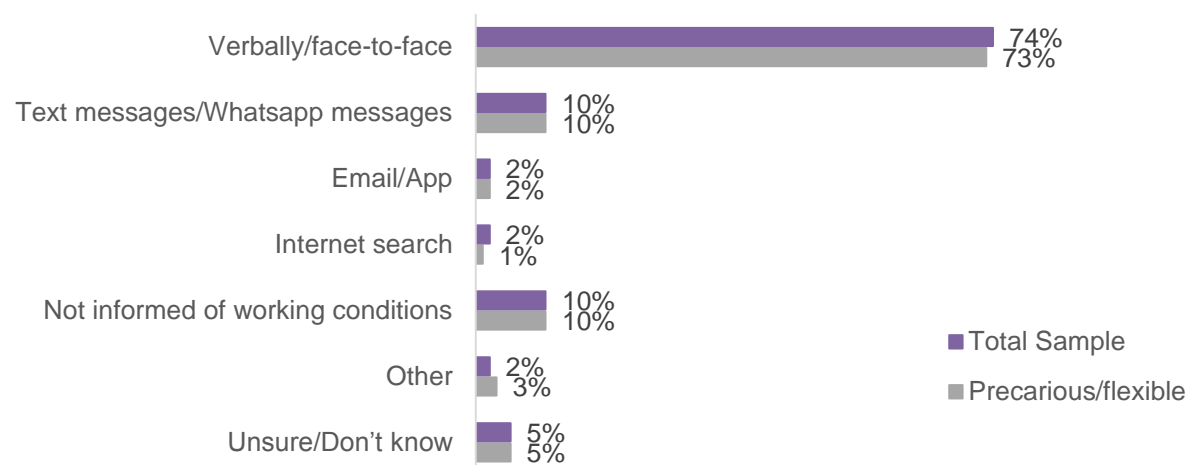
The TUC's Living in the Edge report (2016), as reported in the evidence review, found that a lack of a contract or written agreement, or even a payslip, were noted as potential contributing factors in making workers feel vulnerable and workers expressed a sense of worthlessness because of levels of insecurity experienced.

For the quantitative respondents who did not have a contract, the majority tend to find out about their working conditions such as contracted hours, benefits, etc. verbally from their employer (Figure 4.2).

For those in precarious or flexible work 10% found out via text messages or Whatsapp. There was also 10% of the respondents in precarious or flexible work who stated they were not informed of their working conditions.

Figure 4.2: Communication from employer regarding working conditions (Those without a contract)

Q8. How do you find out about the conditions of your employment such as contracted hours, entitlement to benefits?



Base (all without a written contract): 326
 Precarious/flexible 315
 Not precarious/flexible not included: n=10

4.2 Employment rights and conditions

When asked about employment rights, those in precarious or flexible work were significantly less likely to state they had the employment rights and conditions than those not in precarious or flexible work as shown in Figure 4.3. The only condition where no difference was reported between the sub-groups was flexibility in the hours they work. Around two thirds (not precarious / flexible 68%, precarious / flexible 64%) of both sub-groups stated they received this.

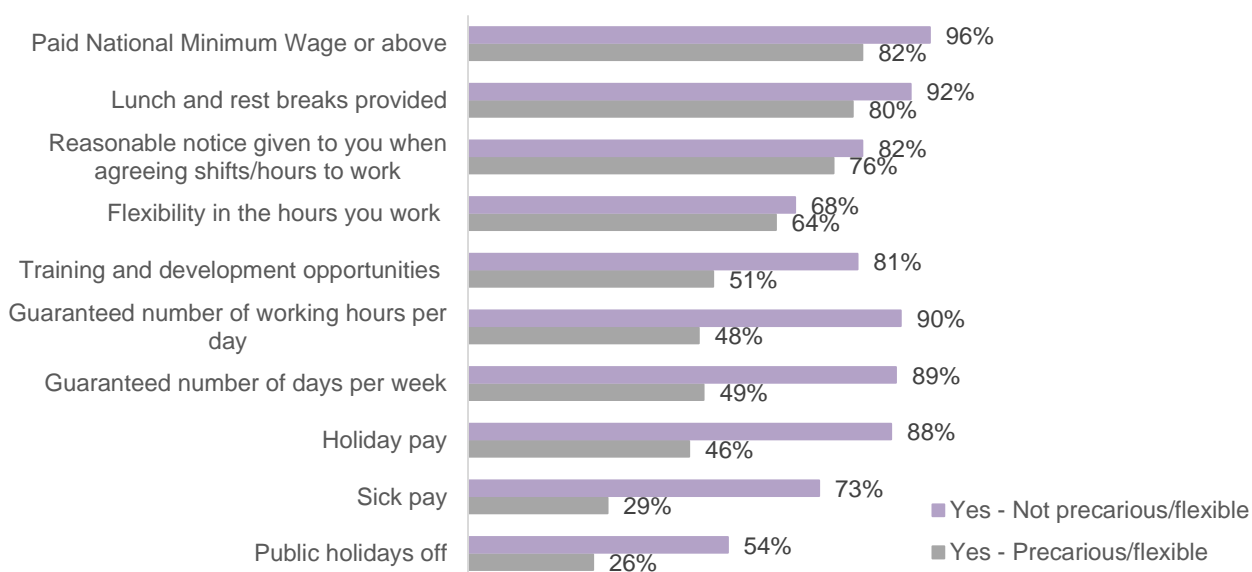
The two main conditions that over 80% of those in precarious or flexible work reported as having were being paid above the national minimum wage (82%) and being provided with lunch and rest breaks (80%). However, these results were still lower than those not in precarious or flexible work.

The majority also stated that they were given reasonable notice when agreeing shifts, with 82% of those not working in precarious or flexible work and 76% of those who were working in precarious or flexible work stating this.

Less than half of those working in precarious or flexible positions stated that they: (a) were guaranteed a minimum number of days work per week (49%); (b) had a minimum number of hours per day (48%); and (c) were given holiday pay (46%). This is in comparison to those not in precarious or flexible positions, where almost all had these employment conditions. Just over a quarter (29%) of those in precarious or flexible positions were paid sick pay compared to almost three quarters (73%) of those not in precarious or flexible work.

Figure 4.3: Employment rights and conditions (% Yes)

Q10. Which of the following rights at work do/did you have in the job most recently held? % who stated yes



Base: Precarious/flexible 569
Not precarious/flexible 473

Amongst those in precarious or flexible work, the older group (20-24 year olds) were more likely to be paid the national minimum wage or above (87%) than the younger group (74%).

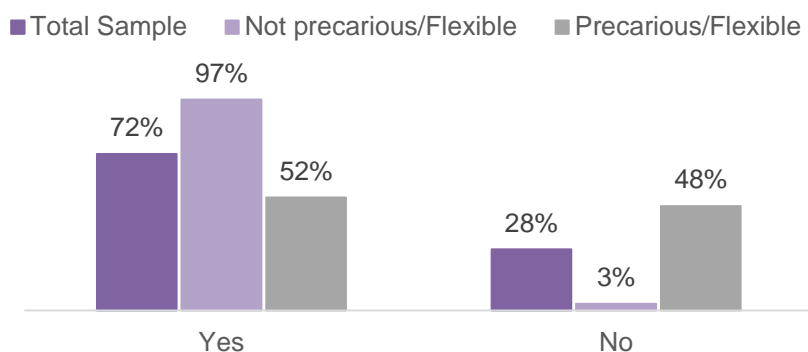
The evidence review further supports the quantitative findings reporting that due to an erosion of workers rights and protections and the increasing numbers of people in potentially precarious employment, positive innovations have been put in place in the UK in an attempt to eradicate this. One of which resulted in Uber and CitySprint workers being awarded better workers rights such as holiday and sick pay (Conaty et al, 2018). The evidence review indicated that, across almost all the potentially precarious types of employment, the main risk of precariousness was lack of workers rights and protection.

The following survey question was not used to define the key sub-groups and therefore these results have fallen out naturally. Figure 4.4 shows that almost all

those not in a precarious or flexible working position (97%) are guaranteed a minimum number of hours a week. Those in precarious or flexible work are split evenly between being guaranteed hours on a weekly basis (52%) and not (48%).

Figure 4.4: Guaranteed minimum number of hours a week

Q7. Does your employer/contract guarantee you a minimum number of hours work a week?



Base (all except those who run their own business): 1013

Again, amongst those in precarious or flexible work, the younger group of 16-19 year olds (45%), those who are financially dependent (48%) and those in education (50%) were least likely to be given guaranteed minimum hours a week.

The qualitative findings were similar to the quantitative results. Experiences were very similar across all focus groups. Those with a contract were aware of certain conditions such as working hours, pay, whether they were entitled to sick pay or holiday pay; however very few were aware of the specific details, such as the number of days sick pay they could receive, or how many holidays they were entitled to. A few of those with a written contract said they often worked outside the agreed terms of the contract (e.g. longer hours, took on additional responsibilities).

“I know I’m entitled to holiday pay and I’m allowed to cancel a shift 24 hours before. Anything more than that then I don’t actually know what would happen in that case” (Glasgow focus group participant)

“I couldn’t really tell you what was in it I just signed it.” (Glasgow focus group participant)

Across all focus groups, very few knew what their notice period was. Those that didn’t have a contract assumed they wouldn’t need to or were unsure if they needed to give a notice period.

“I have no contract and have no idea if I need to give notice or not” (Galashiels focus group participant)

Although many respondents knew very little about their contracts, they were not too concerned about it. This was particularly the case for those very young participants who were 16 and 17 year olds. Most expressed trust in their employer stating that

their employer would give them the (number of) hours expected and would pay the agreed hourly rate.

There were different preferences regarding flexibility in hours worked and the contract as a whole. This was very dependent on personal circumstances. Some felt that a lack of a contract actually benefits them as they are not committed to set hours; they can work as many hours as they need to, at times that suit them. They were keen to have the flexibility of hours to work around other commitments, and worked well in areas where there was a good choice of jobs available. This was mainly reported by the younger age group as they had school or studying commitments that they needed to work around. For others they felt restricted because they couldn't plan social events etc. as they didn't know what they would be working and when.

"I see it as a bonus though. I can say yes and no to shifts to work around my Uni timetable and other things I am doing at Uni." (Dundee focus group participant)

This was further supported by the evidence review as the employment types included in the study all have the common characteristic of flexibility which was considered a strength of the UK labour market report (Taylor, 2017). It was reported however, that it becomes precarious when, rather than being a desired characteristic of employment there is the potential that the balance of power transfers away from the employee/worker, where the hours they work are more likely to be dictated by necessity than suitability.

Findings suggest that some respondents were not aware that a contract doesn't just have to be for fixed-hours or a fixed-term and therefore they may be sacrificing this security for flexibility unnecessarily. The Citizens Advice Scotland website outlines the law in Scotland in reference to employment contracts stating that the agreement to work for your employer and your employer's agreement to pay you for your work forms a contract. Your employer has to give you a written statement within 2 months of you starting work. This includes certain terms and conditions such as the hours of work³.

For others on short-term fixed contracts, they were looking for security and even though they assumed they could just get another fixed-term contract fairly easily, the lack of security was concerning. A couple of respondents on fixed-term contracts were not informed about the renewal of their contract until the day before it was due to end, which left them feeling very anxious.

³ <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/scotland/work/rights-at-work/basic-rights-and-contracts/contracts-of-employment/>

5. Types of precarious or flexible working conditions

This chapter addresses RQ1: What are the range of potentially precarious or flexible working conditions experienced by young people in Scotland, as shown in Table 1.2 in Chapter 1. This chapter identifies the type of employment and contract the respondents had and how these were used to determine if they were working in potentially precarious or flexible positions. It also established the sector and size of respondents' workplaces.

Chapter 5 – Key points

Well under half (42%) of the sample were in a permanent job. Significant minorities of young people were in temporary work (14%) and casual work (14%), while a further 10% were in short term or seasonal work.

A full-time contract was the main type of employment contract: 35% of the sample had a full-time job. Many (14%) had zero hours contracts or said they “just turned up for work” (13%).

More than half of young people (55%) were defined as working in precarious or flexible employment: for example lacking a formal contract, in temporary or casual work, or on a zero hours contract.

- Around half those in precarious/flexible work were in temporary (26%) or casual (25%) work; and
- Only 14% had a full time contract; most had flexible/no contract, such as zero hours contracts (25%), “just turned up for work” (24%) and varying hours contracts (13%).

Most young people worked in Hotels and Restaurants (23%) and in Wholesale and Retail (21%). Those in precarious or flexible work were particularly likely to work in Hotels and Restaurants (30%) compared with those who were not in precarious or flexible work (15%).

Most young people worked in SMEs (62%); with those in precarious or flexible work more likely than others to work in small organisations (51% compared with 33%).

5.1 Type of employment

The evidence review reported that there is no universally accepted definition of precarious or flexible working, with many reports defining or identifying it in different ways. The European Parliament's 2017 resolution on working conditions and precarious employment (noting that the scope of this resolution does not include the concept of 'flexible work') defines it as 'employment which does not comply with

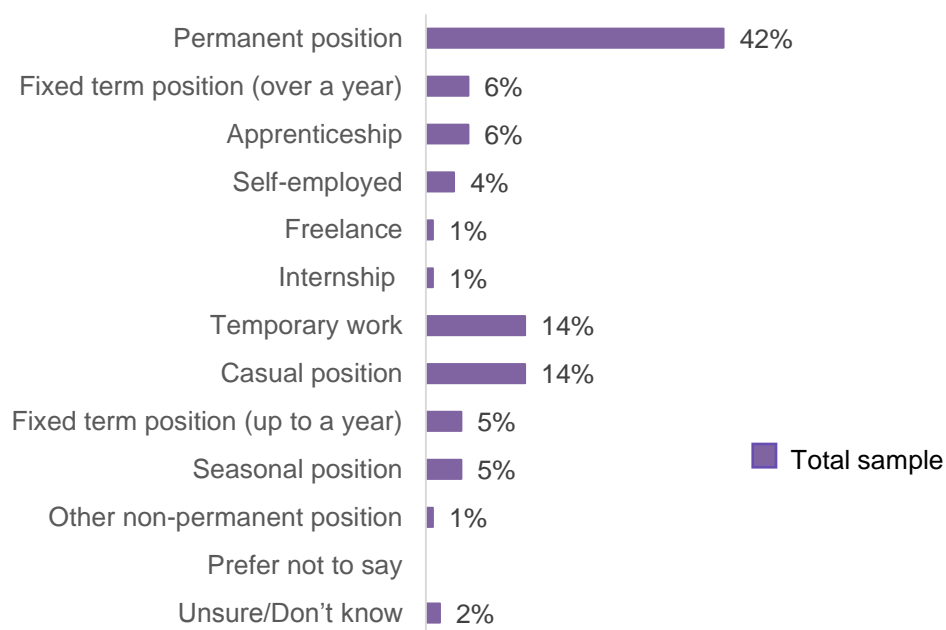
EU, international or national standards and laws and/or does not provide sufficient resources for a decent life or adequate social protection' (Eurofound, 2018). Whereas Benach et al. (2016) described three approaches to defining precarious and flexible working common in existing research: relating it to certain sectors of employment; any employment which is not through a permanent, full-time contract; and relating it to certain attributes of a job such as low wages, limited rights and unequal power balance between employers and individuals. It also stated, however, that flexible employment does not always have to be precarious. These are just two examples of how it can be defined.

The following questions are used to determine the type of employment they held and whether it could potentially be considered precarious or flexible (see section 2.5 for full definition). The results from the questions used are shown in Figure 5.1 and 5.2.

Of the total sample, 42% had a permanent position and a further 6% had a fixed term position over a year. Apprenticeships and those on an internship made up 7% of the sample, with a further 5% who were self-employed or freelancing. Over a quarter (28%) stated they were working in a temporary or casual position and a further 10% were in shorter fixed term or seasonal positions.

Figure 5.1: Most recent employment position

Q1a. Thinking about your most recent employment, which of the following best applies to you?



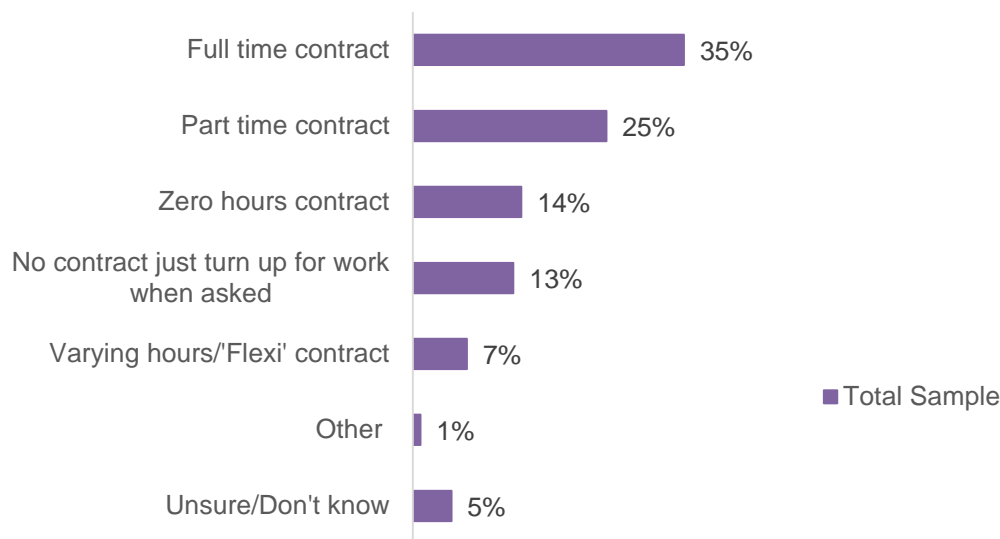
Base (all): 1,043

As shown in Figure 5.2, over a third of the sample were on a full time contract with a further quarter on a part time contract. 14% reported being on a zero hours contract, while 13% said they just turn up for work when asked and 7% were on a varying hours contract. Interestingly, 5% were unsure as to what type of contract or employment they had. The qualitative findings support this, as a small number of participants either presumed they were on a zero hour contract or were unsure if

they were. This was discussed above in Section 4.2 Employment rights and conditions.

Figure 5.2: Type of employment

Q6a. Which of the following describes your most recent employment contract/employment?

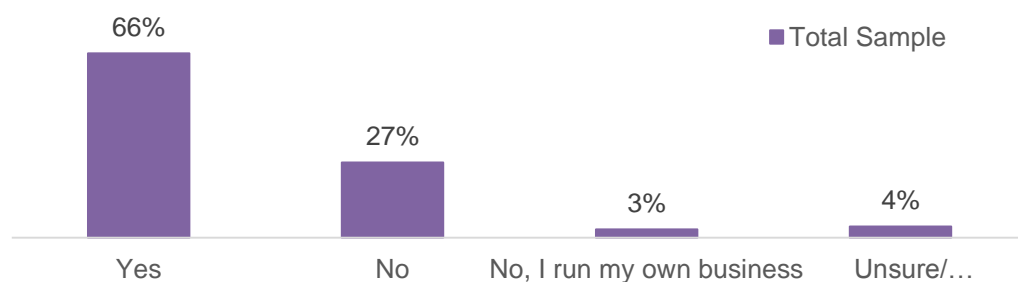


Base (all except those who run their own business): 1,013

Figure 5.3 shows that two thirds (66%) of the total sample had a written, agreed contract with their employer. Just over a quarter (27%) didn't have a written, agreed contract. The full analysis on contracts is reported above in Chapter 4 'Awareness of contractual status'.

Figure 5.3: Have a written contract

Q5. Do you/did you have a contract that is/was written and agreed with your employer?

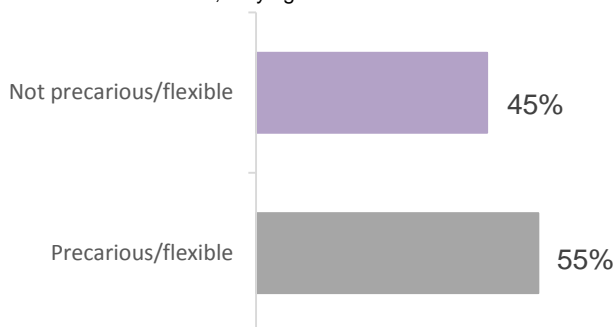


Base (all): 1,043

Once categorised as working in a precarious/flexible position or not, as per the definition in Box 2.1, 55% of the total sample were classified as working in a precarious or flexible working position and 45% were not. (see Figure 5.4).

Figure 5.4: Identifying sub-groups of in precarious / flexible working position and not in precarious / flexible working

Grouped: Q5, Q6a and Q1a. – All without a written contract or has written contract but in a temporary, casual, seasonal position or written contract but Zero hours, varying/flexi hours contracts

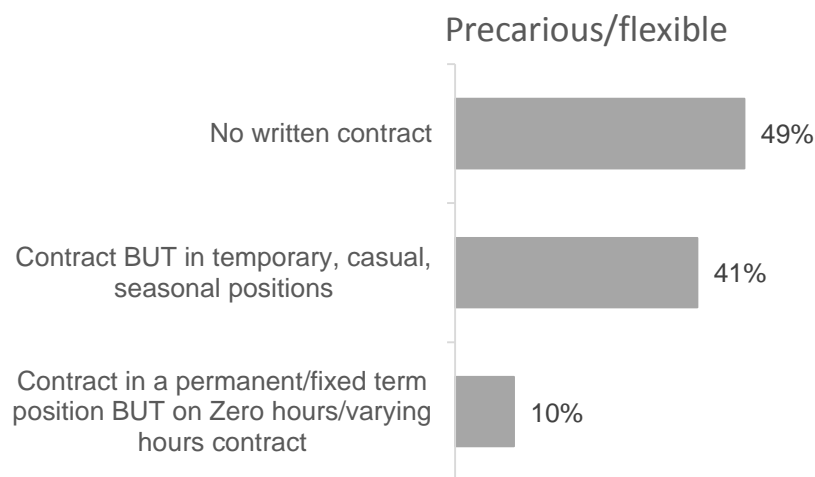


Base (all): 1043

Figure 5.5 shows the breakdown of those identified as working in precarious or flexible positions. Half (49%) of the precarious / flexible sample did not have a written contract and the other half did have a written contract but were either in temporary, casual or seasonal positions (41%) or were in a permanent or fixed-term position of over a year but stated they had a zero hours or varying hours contract (10%). Across all three of these groups, shown in Figure 5.5, 25% stated they were on a zero hours contract (see Figure 5.7 below).

Figure 5.5: Composition of those in precarious / flexible working positions

Grouped: Q5, Q6a and Q1a. – All without a written contract or has written contract but in a temporary, casual, seasonal position or written contract but Zero hours, varying/flexi hours contracts

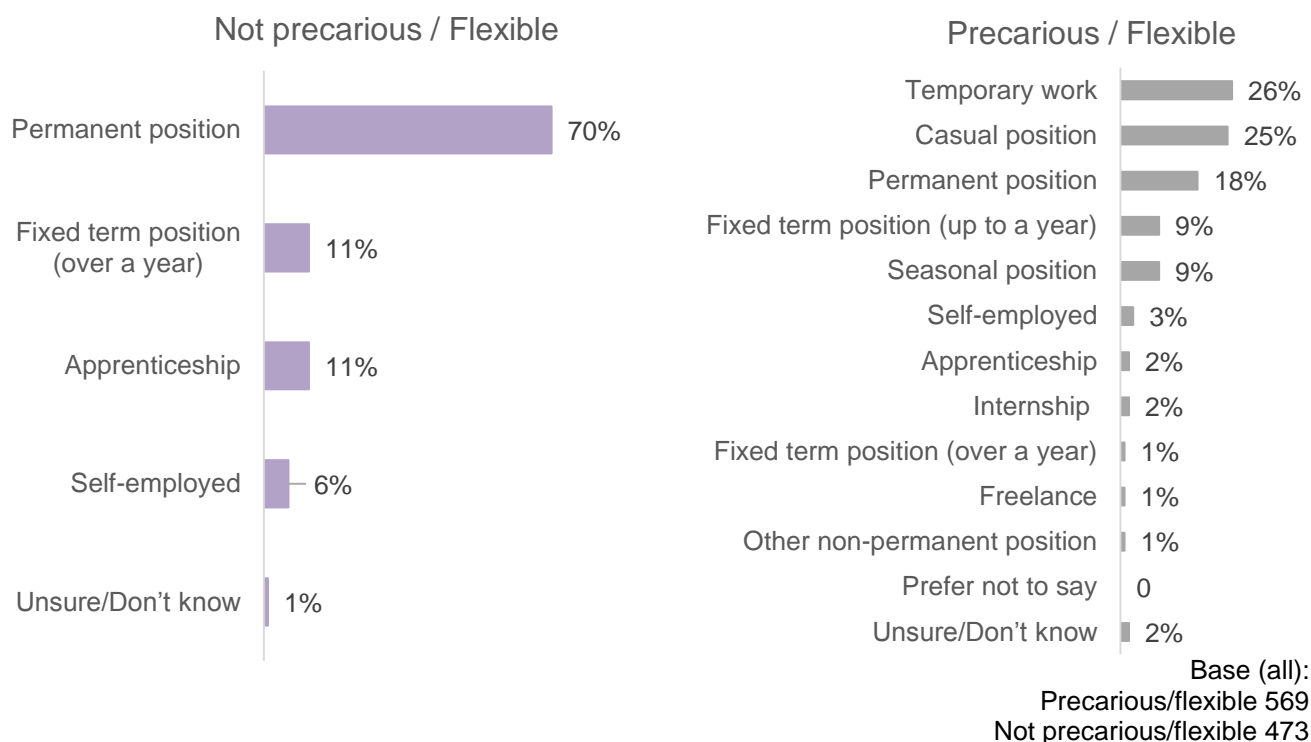


Base (Precarious/flexible): 569

Figure 5.6 shows the proportion of each sub-group that have or recently held each of the different employment types. Those categorised as not precarious or flexible are skewed heavily towards people in permanent positions (70%), with a further 11% in fixed term positions of over a year or an apprenticeship and 6% self-employed. Around half of those in precarious or flexible positions were in temporary (26%) or casual positions (25%) and a further 9% in shorter fixed-term positions up to a year or seasonal positions (9%). There were also 18% of those in precarious / flexible work who were in a permanent position.

Figure 5.6: Most recent employment position, by sub-groups

Q1a. Thinking about your most recent employment, which of the following best applies to you?



When reporting on those who are categorised as in precarious or flexible work, there were differences by age and by education status. The younger group (16-19 year olds) were more likely to be in temporary (34%) or casual (31%) positions compared to the older group (temporary 22%, casual 21%). A UK study (Broughton et al., 2016) supports this as it was found that those undertaking seasonal/casual work include a higher incidence of 16-19 year olds (42%) compared to 20-24 years old (24%).

The older group were more likely to be in a permanent or fixed term position (23%) than the younger group (13%). It is clear that there is some overlap across age and education status as 80% of those in education were more likely to be in temporary, casual or seasonal positions compared to 62% who were not in education. Over a quarter (28%) of those not in education were in a permanent or fixed term position, whereas only 12% of those in education were working in one of these positions.

5.2 Types of employment contracts

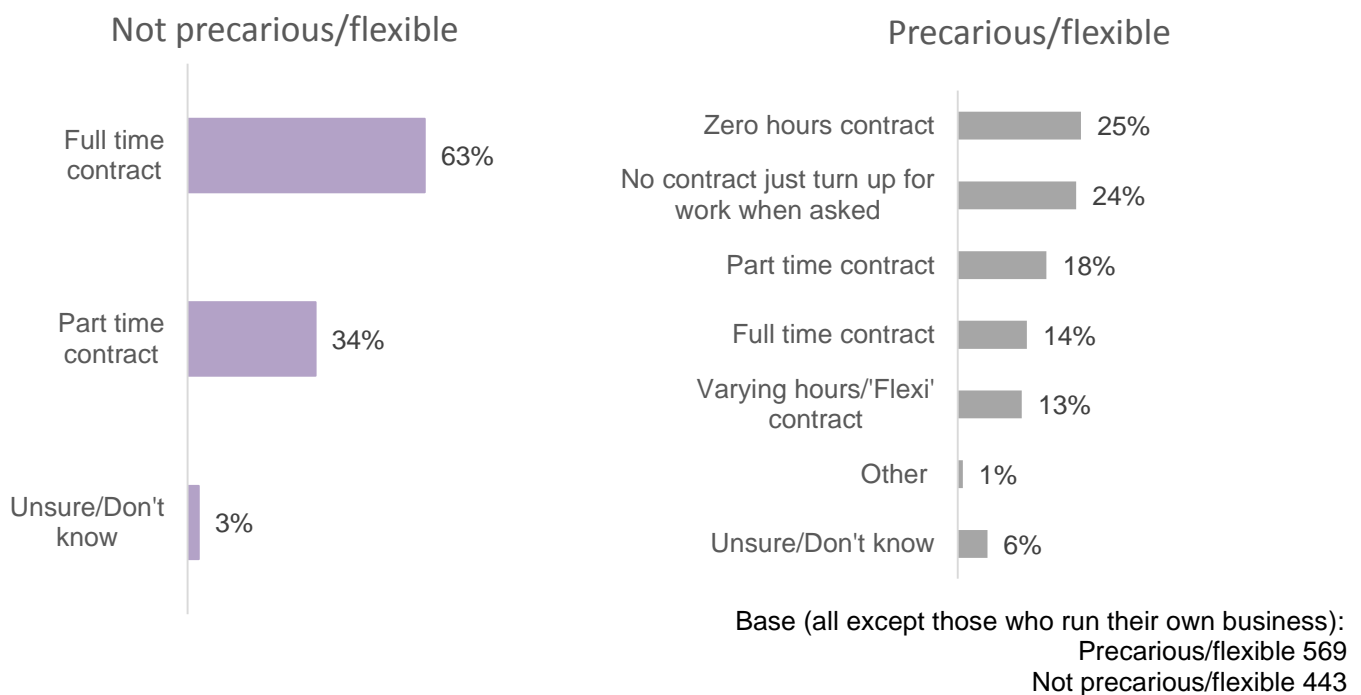
Figure 5.7 overleaf shows the type of employment or employment contract the respondents had by the two sub-groups. It is important to note that this question was also used to define those in a precarious or flexible working position and those who were not, therefore all of those who do not work in precarious or flexible positions were either on a full time or part time contract as defined earlier. The figure shows the majority of those not in precarious or flexible positions were on a

full time contract (63%), with around a third (34%) stating they were on a part time contract.

The type of employment for those who were in precarious or flexible positions varied with a quarter (25%) stating they were on a zero hours contract, a further quarter (24%) stating they just turn up for work when asked and 13% stating they have a varying hours or flexi-contract. Interestingly, there was also 14% of precarious or flexible workers who state they are in a full time position and 18% in a part time position. Despite being in part or full time positions these workers were categorised as in precarious or flexible work due to not having a contract or their role not being permanent.

Figure 5.7: Type of employment

Q6a. Which of the following describes your most recent employment contract/employment?



For the precarious or flexible sub-group, differences exist in the type of employment held across the age groups, education status, and whether respondents were financially dependent or not. The older group was more likely to hold a full time contract (17%) or a zero hours contract (28%); while the younger group was more likely to have no contract and just turn up for work (29%) or a part time contract (27%). A similar pattern exists for those in education: those in education were more likely to hold a part time contract (24%) compared to those not in education (10%) and those not in education were more likely to hold a full time contract (20%) compared to those in education (9%). Those who were financially independent were also more likely to have a full time contract (21%) than those who were financially dependent on someone else (9%).

The evidence reviewed does not break the age group down to this level but Taylor (2017) does report that zero hours contracts are often held by young people aged

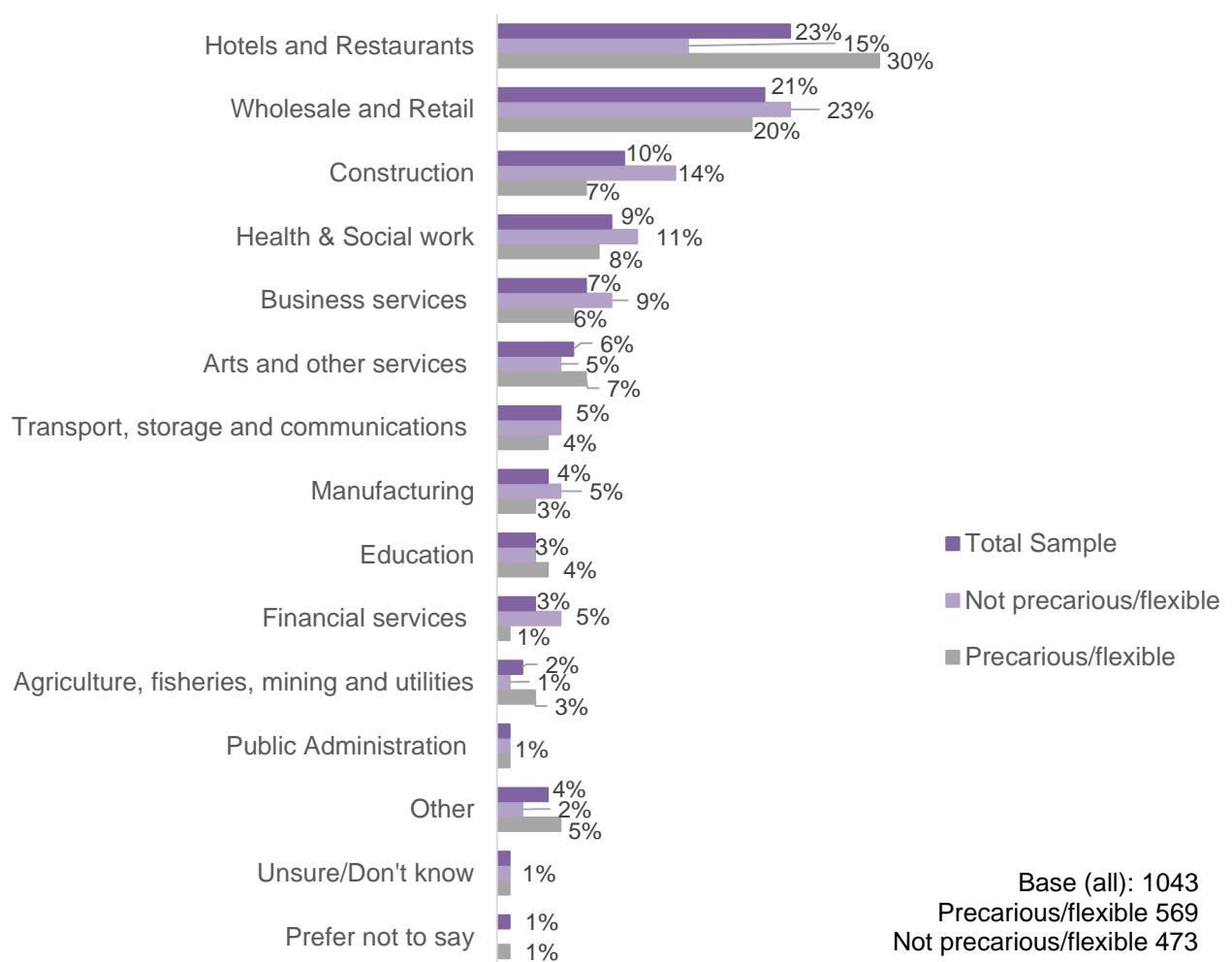
16-24 years old and are considered high risk for 'precariousness'. The report also states that risk increases if the employees need a regular income as they may feel that they cannot refuse work.

5.3 Sector and size of place of work

The evidence review identified how precarious work can be more prevalent in certain sectors. The TUC's Living on the Edge report cited hospitality, catering and retail as sectors that had higher levels of potentially precarious working positions (TUC, 2016). The quantitative analysis in this study uses a different sector categorisation, nonetheless similar findings have been reported. The results below show that a statistically significantly higher proportion of those categorised as working in a precarious or flexible position worked in the Hotel and restaurant sector compared to those who were not in a precarious / flexible position. There were relatively fewer precarious / flexible workers in Construction, Financial services and Business services (Figure 5.8).

Figure 5.8: Sector of work

Q25. Which sector do you work in?



The largest proportion of precarious or flexible workers worked in the Hotel and restaurant sector. This was skewed by the younger group with 36% of 16-19 year

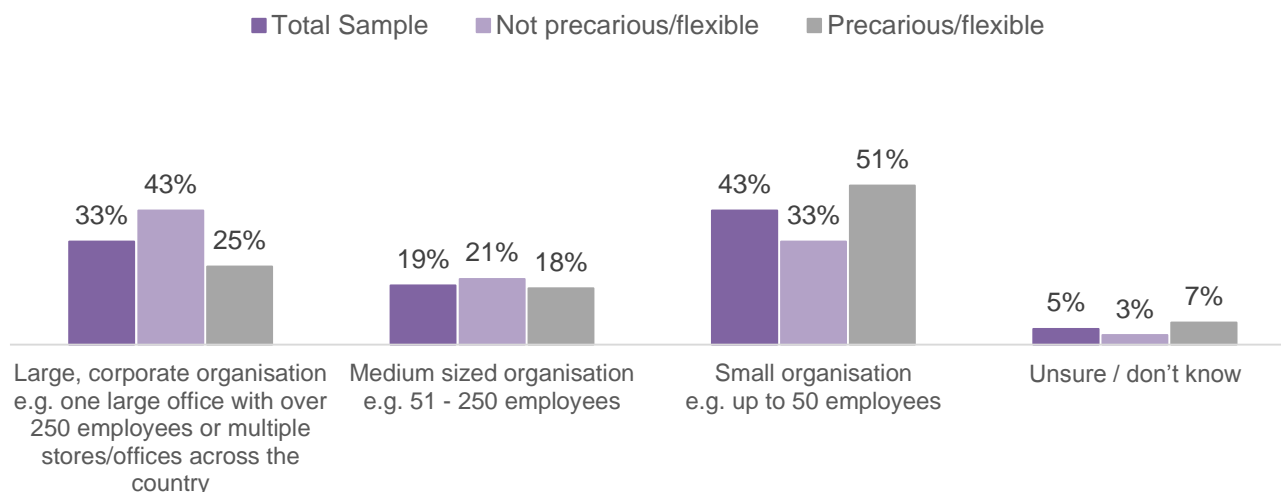
olds in precarious or flexible work in this sector compared to 26% of 20-24 year olds. However, there was a higher proportion of 16-19 year olds working in this sector (30%) across the total sample compared to the older age group (20%) which may impact on these findings. Those who were financially dependent on someone else were also more likely to work in this sector (33%) than those who are financially independent (24%).

Those not in education were more likely to work in Manufacturing (5%), Construction (12%) or Transport (7%) than those in education (Manufacturing 1%, Construction 3%, Transport 2%).

Figure 5.9, from the quantitative research, shows that there was a higher proportion (51%) of precarious or flexible workers working in small organisations, and fewer (25%) working for large, corporate organisations compared to those not in a precarious or flexible position (small: 33%, large: 43%).

Figure 5.9: Size of organisation

Q26. What size of organisation do you work for?



Base (all): 1043
Precarious/flexible 569
Not precarious/flexible 473

Similar to other findings, there were differences within the group of precarious or flexible workers: 20-24 year olds more likely to work in larger organisations (28%) than the 16-19 year olds (19%); while the younger group were more likely to work in smaller organisations than the older group (57% compared with 47%).

6. Experience of young people in precarious and flexible working conditions

Chapter 6 addresses a number of RQs. The findings reported on young people's experiences of precarious or flexible working conditions addressed RQ4: What are the experiences of young people in a range of potentially precarious or flexible working conditions? RQ5: Are there any particular disadvantages, challenges, advantages or opportunities of different potentially precarious or flexible working conditions? RQ6: What is it about the terms of employment that cause specific disadvantages? And RQ7: To what extent can different potentially precarious or flexible working conditions be considered as positive experiences for young people? These questions are all shown in more detail in Table 1.2 in Chapter 1.

This chapter reports on the most positive characteristics of employment, biggest issues with their employment, impact it has on various aspects of life, satisfaction with employment and reasons for this. As reported throughout, there were many differences in experiences, views and behaviours between those in precarious or flexible work and those who were not. This chapter clearly identifies these differences as well as differences by age, education status and financial dependence amongst those who were in precarious or flexible work.

Chapter 6 – Key points

Half of the people in precarious or flexible work were satisfied with their terms of employment overall (this compares with three-quarters of those not in precarious or flexible work). The focus groups shed light on why people were dissatisfied: not having a written contract, feeling pressured to accept shifts, and uncertainty about working hours / times.

For people in precarious or flexible work, the main positive characteristic of their employment was their colleagues (mentioned by 45%). Also important were they enjoyed the work, the location, level of pay, gaining experience and flexibility. Notably those in precarious or flexible work were significantly less likely than others to say they enjoy the work (33% compared with 40%), with the younger group of precarious or flexible workers less likely to enjoy their work (26%). 7% of those in precarious or flexible work said their most recent employment had no positive characteristics.

The biggest issues for people in precarious or flexible work were unsociable hours, low pay, lack of benefits & irregular hours, and long hours.

A substantial minority of those in precarious or flexible work felt that their employment was having adverse impacts on their lives. For example around a fifth felt it impacted negatively on their mental health (21%) or on their relationships (17%); while nearly a third felt it impacted negatively on their social lives.

6.1 Advantages of employment

The quantitative research found the top two positive characteristics of employment for both sub-groups were the “people I work with” and “enjoy the work” (Table 6.1). However, those in precarious or flexible work were significantly less likely to state that they enjoy the work (33%) compared to those not working in these positions (40%). The third most positive aspect for those in precarious or flexible positions was the location. They were less likely to state the variety of work, development opportunities, and benefits than those not in precarious / flexible positions. They were more likely to state the flexibility of shifts and the fact they have no commitments. 7% of this sub-group also stated there were no positive aspects of their employment.

Table 6.1: Most positive characteristics of employment

Q14. What are the top three most positive characteristics of your recent employment?

	Total Sample	Not precarious/ flexible	Precarious/ flexible
People I work with	43%	41%	45%
Enjoy the work	37%	40%	33%
Location	29%	26%	31%
Level of pay	29%	30%	28%
Experience I am gaining	29%	30%	27%
Flexibility of shifts/hours	17%	13%	20%
Type/quality of work	15%	17%	13%
Variety of work	13%	16%	10%
The number of working hours	12%	13%	11%
Opportunities given to develop/promotion	10%	15%	7%
Benefits e.g. sick pay, holiday pay	7%	12%	4%
Reputation of the company	7%	9%	6%
No commitment/contract	4%	0%	7%
Opportunities given to travel	2%	3%	2%
The number/length of breaks	2%	3%	1%
Something else	1%	1%	1%
Nothing	5%	2%	7%
Base: all	1,043	473	569

Among the precarious and flexible workers, the older age group was more likely to state that they enjoyed the work (38%) than the younger age group (26%). Those in full time education were more likely to give the level of pay (34%) as a positive aspect of their job compared to those in part-time education (15%). They were also more likely to be positive about the location (36%) and flexibility of shifts (27%) compared to those not in education (26%, 13%).

This was further supported by the qualitative findings as the two of the top three positive characteristics that were mentioned most by those in precarious or flexible work were: the people they work with and the location.

“I think it’s important that you get on with the people you work with, because then you want to go.” (Galashiels focus group participant)

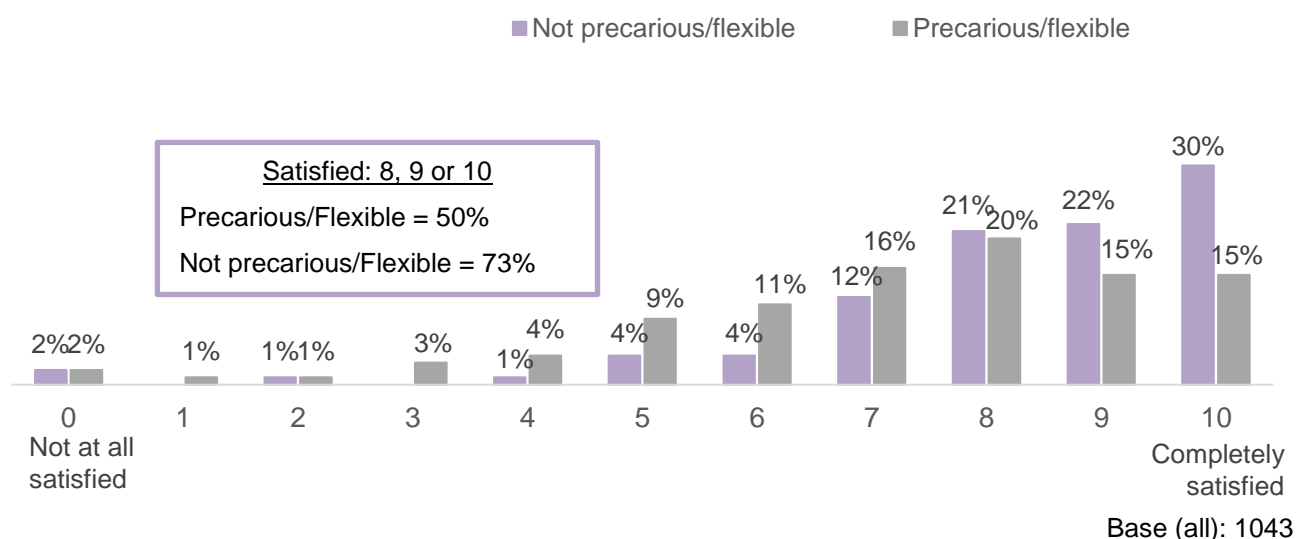
6.2 Satisfaction with employment

Figure 6.1 reports the extent to which the quantitative respondents were satisfied with the terms of their employment overall. Those in a precarious or flexible position were less likely to rate their satisfaction an 8, 9 or 10 out of 10 (50%) compared to those not in a precarious or flexible position (73%). This was supported by TUC research (TUC 2016) which reports workers in more casual employment or with no regular hours of work were less likely to experience job satisfaction than those who have regular hours or were in permanent positions.

There were no differences reported by age or education status amongst those in precarious or flexible work. The TUC report, reviewed as part of the evidence review, also found that there was no correlation between job satisfaction and age or gender.

Figure 6.1: Satisfaction with terms of employment overall

Q11. Thinking about your terms of employment overall, how satisfied are you/were you with it?



6.3 Reasons for satisfaction

Respondents were asked to state why they gave the satisfaction rating they did. The comments provided were grouped in to key themes. Table 6.2 below shows the key themes that were mentioned the most by those who rated satisfaction with their employment a 9 or 10 out of 10. These are similar to the positive characteristics given about their employment shown in Table 6.1. A similar order of reasons were given across both sub-groups; however those in precarious or flexible work were more likely to state it suited their circumstances than those not in precarious or flexible work.

Table 6.2: Reasons for being satisfied with employment

Q12 - Why did you give the rating you did for satisfaction?

	Total Sample	Not precarious/ flexible	Precarious/ flexible
Enjoy the work / tasks	36%	40%	31%
Good job / good conditions / no complaints	13%	11%	15%
Good management / company	11%	12%	10%
Good pay / happy with pay	9%	10%	8%
Like my colleagues	9%	7%	12%
Learning skills / gaining experience	8%	8%	9%
Suits my circumstances	8%	4%	13%
Given flexible hours	6%	5%	8%
Like the hours	6%	6%	5%
Base: all who rated satisfaction 9 or 10	413	244	169

*Only results 6% or over are shown in the tables

The qualitative findings also provided further insight into why many of the respondents were satisfied with their employment or aspects of it.

Flexibility of shifts and hours

Some felt the lack of a contract worked in the respondents' favour as it allowed for the flexibility of shifts enabling them to work around other commitments. A small minority felt there was some give and take from managers, they would work extra shifts last minute but their manager would give them an early finish if they had other commitments. This tended to be in smaller organisations. One respondent (who works in a family-run business) was always given a Saturday to work, however this was a trade-off for always having a Saturday evening off so he could watch the

football. He felt that he would struggle to find that degree of flexibility in a larger organisation.

“A lot of the time I wanted to go to the football. So, they were ok to do that, but it means that I would be working like a Saturday night, which is when it’s busy and when most people don’t want to work so I could get Saturday daytime off” (Glasgow focus group participant)

In support of this, the evidence review noted (Taylor, 2017) that flexibility is viewed as a positive characteristic for some. It can open up work to people with different needs and priorities and at different stages in life. The CIPD research (2017) also found that 46% of the gig economy workers were satisfied with their work over the last 12 months due to the flexibility that came with the job. This report solely looked at the gig economy and all age groups and findings were not broken down by age.

Automated approach

A small minority of the qualitative respondents had engaged with a recruitment agency to find their job and a couple of them also signed up to an online system. A lot of the engagement was done via an App, email or on a rare occasion by phone. Findings suggest that for some this less personal approach was found to be an advantage. They didn’t feel obliged to take on all work that was offered/available to them and as the personal element was removed they found it easier to turn down work, and just work when it suited them.

Stepping stone

Many qualitative respondents mentioned viewing these types of jobs as short-term and did not view them as a career, as something they would still be doing after completing their studies or when they were older. They were generally quite happy because of this.

“It was only for a summer term job. If it was a more long-term thing, I would have been a bit more put off by it.” (Dundee focus group participant)

“Everyone's got to start somewhere, but in terms of actually getting anywhere, it's like a stepping stone that you kind of just have to do to get started.” (Galashiels focus group participant)

As previously reported for many this was a stepping stone to gain experience, earn some money before getting a “proper job”.

6.4 Disadvantages of employment

The quantitative respondents were also asked what their top three biggest issues were in relation to their employment. Table 6.3 shows that, just under a half (49%) of those not in precarious work and just under a third (31%) of those in precarious work stated “nothing”. The top issues given by people in precarious or flexible work

were: unsociable hours, low pay, lack of benefits and irregular hours. This differed slightly for those not in precarious work as long hours was considered a top issue for them along with unsociable hours. Those in precarious or flexible positions were significantly more likely to state that each of the aspects below was an issue compared to those not in precarious or flexible work.

There were no differences amongst those in precarious or flexible work except that those who were financially independent were more likely to state that long hours was an issue (19%) compared to those who are not financially independent (10%).

Table 6.3: Biggest issues in relation to most recent employment

Q15. What are the top three biggest issues in relation to your most recent employment?

	Total Sample	Not precarious/ flexible	Precarious/ flexible
Nothing	39%	49%	31%
Unsociable hours	17%	15%	18%
Low pay/lack of financial security	14%	9%	18%
Lack of benefits e.g. sick pay, holiday pay / rewards / pension	10%	4%	15%
Irregularity of hours per week/month	10%	4%	15%
Long hours	15%	16%	13%
Too few hours given	9%	4%	12%
Expected to do more than other colleagues	8%	8%	9%
Lack of notice given when being informed of hours/changes to hours	7%	5%	9%
Location	7%	4%	9%
Lack of opportunities to develop / promotional opportunities	7%	5%	8%
The type of work given	7%	7%	7%
People I work with	7%	6%	8%
Limited/unstructured breaks	6%	5%	7%
Unfair allocation of hours e.g. first come first served	4%	3%	5%
Too many hours given	3%	3%	3%
Something else	4%	5%	3%
Base: all	1043	473	569

Again, the qualitative findings supported the quantitative results as the issues that were mentioned the most by those in precarious or flexible work were low pay, lack of job security, last minute changes to shifts and working unsociable hours or weekends.

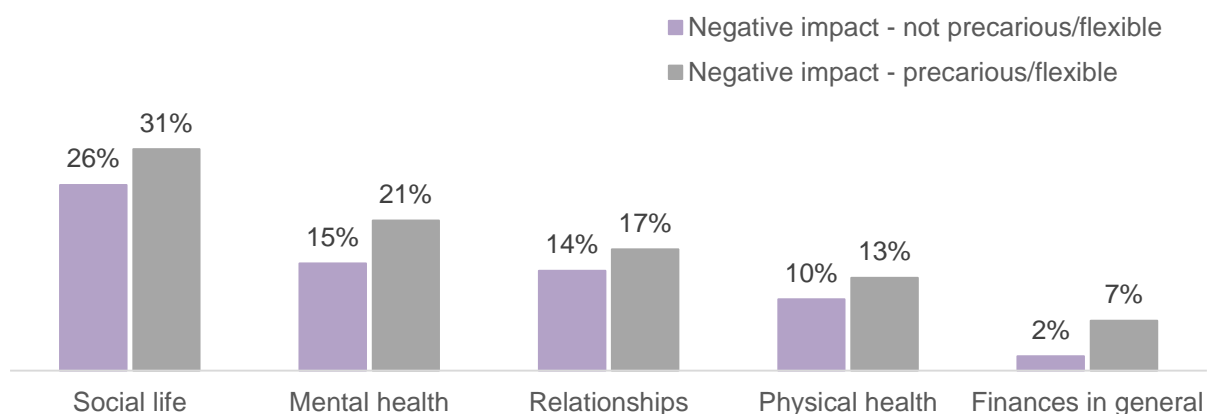
“It’s unsociable hours, I’m nursing so I’m going to have to do night shifts. But it’s whether you’re at uni, so on some days I’ve had to come up a night shift and go to a lecture at uni in the morning because you can’t miss it, but then I need the money and if you get put on that shift there’s not much you can do.” (Edinburgh focus group participant)

“The cost of living doesn’t change. Say I lived on my own, someone the age of thirty-six lived on their own, we’re next door neighbours, we work at the same place but yet I’m going to be more skint than what they are. I’m doing the same amount of work but the price of bread and milk doesn’t change, the price of electric doesn’t change. But yet, we’re doing the same amount of work and I’m getting less pay.” (Peterhead focus group participant)

Research reviewed in the evidence review (Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee, 2016 and TUC, 2016) suggested that many working conditions associated with potentially precarious employment can impact negatively on people’s lives in a number of ways, including deterioration of health, relationships, financial constraints, low levels of job satisfaction and limited social life. Figure 6.2 shows the proportion of quantitative respondents that stated their most recent employment impacts negatively on certain aspects of their life. The biggest impact reported is on their social life; this affects both audiences, with 26% of those not in precarious or flexible work and 31% of those in precarious or flexible work stating it (this difference is not statistically significant). A statistically significantly higher proportion (21%) of those in precarious or flexible work stated their employment has a negative impact on their mental health compared to those not in precarious or flexible work (15%). Fewer stated that their relationships and physical health is affected negatively. With regards to finances, 7% of those in precarious or flexible work stated their employment has a negative impact on their finances in general, this was significantly higher than those not in precarious / flexible work (2%).

Figure 6.2: Negative impact of job on aspects of life (negative Impact)

Q13. To what extent would you say your most recent employment impacts on each of the following aspects of your life? (% is those who stated negative impact)



Base: Precarious/flexible 569
Not precarious/flexible 473

Among precarious or flexible workers, the older group (20-24 year olds) were more likely to state that their employment has a positive impact on their physical health (55%) compared with the younger group (44%). The younger group were more likely to state that their employment has no impact on their physical health (45%) or their mental health (43%).

6.5 Reasons for dissatisfaction

Respondents were asked to state why they gave the satisfaction rating they did. The comments provided were grouped into key themes. Table 6.4 below shows the key themes that were mentioned most by those who rated satisfaction with their employment between 0 and 4. The main concerns were management issues, not liking the work and the unpredictable hours. Those in precarious or flexible positions also stated it was due to having an insecure position or poor pay. Findings for those not in precarious or flexible work is not included as the sample size was 22.

Table 6.4: Reasons for being dissatisfied with employment

Q12 - Why did you give the rating you did for satisfaction?

	Total Sample	Precarious/ flexible
Management problems	36%	25%
Don't enjoy work / tasks	13%	17%
Unpredictable hours	11%	27%

Poor pay	9%	17%
Insecure or temporary position	9%	19%
Poor conditions / not good place to work	8%	6%
Too few hours	8%	9%
Don't like my colleagues	6%	5%
Feel undervalued	6%	5%
Base: all who rated satisfaction 0 to 4	86	64

*Only results 6% of total sample or over are shown in table 6.4

The qualitative findings gave some further insight in to why those working in these precarious or flexible positions might be dissatisfied.

Lack of contract

Across all focus groups not having a written, agreed contract can cause issues for some, with one respondent stating he had an issue with being underpaid initially but didn't have any formal evidence of this.

Those that have a contract for a set number of hours also described issues such as the hours allocated being inconsistent depending on the time of year.

"Mine is a four hour contract but it can vary. On average just now my hours are 19 hours a week but next week they could drop down to four hours and there is nothing I can do about it. It is pretty crap because it's seasonal. You'll get all these paid hours, but then as soon as it's not busy you'll get dropped right down to your contract hours, which is four." (Peterhead focus group participant)

Allocation of shifts

Across all focus groups, some of the qualitative respondents described feeling a certain amount of pressure to accept shifts. This could be in the form of financial pressure due to their own personal circumstances as well as pressure from their manager to take on shifts. In both cases, the pressure is as a result of the uncertainty of other shifts being offered at a later date in the month or in general. This tended to be respondents who engaged directly with the owner or manager of the workplace rather than via an agency. A few also felt that shifts were unfairly allocated with managers using a 'first come , first served' approach. Some were also not given a lot of notice when allocated their shifts for the week.

"If you don't work like three shifts, even if you're on holiday or sick, you just get automatically fired and you can't work anymore." (Glasgow focus group participant)

"If they ask someone else to do it, and then they do it, they might just say to me 'well this person's going to do it more often now'. So there's a pressure if you don't

keep doing it when they ask, they will just find someone else in the future.” (Dundee focus group participant)

“My shifts are all put on a work group chat, my management and I have a group chat, and it’s basically whoever can get in for the shifts the fastest so it’s not very fair way really.” (Glasgow focus group participant)

The TUC’s Living on the Edge report (2016) reviewed as part of the evidence review mirrored the qualitative findings. It reported that there was pressure faced by workers to accept working hours that may not be suitable. Requirements to comply with short notice requests created challenges for some workers. Workers also felt that refusing to agree to shift changes could make them vulnerable and that they could be starved of hours in the future. This report covered a wide age range, England only and three sectors: retail, logistics/delivery and higher education.

Lack of jobs

There were some comments from those in the focus groups in Dundee that the availability of work was poor in the area because there was a lot of competition, particularly from students looking for the same type of work that is flexible and works in and around their studies.

“It is quite competitive with other students. They only pick one person, but obviously everyone applies for the same type of things” (Dundee focus group participant)

6.6 Positive Experiences

A number of the qualitative respondents commented they viewed the job they had as a stepping stone as it was in a sector or industry they were interested in working in or studying e.g. agriculture. One 16 year old didn’t know exactly what she wanted to do when she was older but had a passion for agriculture and animals. She currently worked at weekends in a large agricultural store and views it as a great stepping stone to her future studies and career.

“I work at an agricultural store and I quite enjoy it because it’s what I’m interested in, obviously with agriculture and animals and stuff. But I do feel like I’m not paid enough for what I do, but because I’m only sixteen I think that’s got a lot to do with my wage but I do just the same work as the other people. I am glad of the experience though.” (Galashiels focus group participant)

Another respondent currently had a ‘dream job’ as a beauty therapist at a popular hotel and spa resort. She had been offered this immediately after graduating and considered it a great way to gain experience and get a taste of working in the industry. The younger audience tended to view their jobs as a way to start earning their own money and get some general experience on their CV. One qualitative respondent had struggled to find a job in retail because she had no customer service experience so she managed to get a job via an agency working at food

kiosks at large events with the view of eventually using that experience to get a job in a fashion store.

The qualitative research findings suggest that getting on the job ladder can give young people a bit of independence, improve confidence, develop life skills, give them opportunities to work with the public, work with money etc. and start to teach them how to budget their own money. The job still needs to fit in with their lifestyle and other commitments, therefore flexibility of hours and shifts is needed, particularly for the youngest age group (16-19 year olds).

“I benefitted from it [flexible contract] loads in high school because I did lots of different sports and studying obviously. It was really good that I could balance working with school” (Galashiels focus group participant)

“I’d just say for people at uni or college or school, just studying, the zero-hour contracts are good for flexibility.” (Edinburgh focus group participant)

“I don’t have set hours because it’s a zero-hour contract. I just kind of get given the hours that I get. When I was at college, I asked for less hours because obviously I couldn’t make it due to college. When it was summer, when I was off, I just asked for as many hours as I could possibly get.” (Glasgow focus group participant)

The evidence review concluded that people value different facets of work and are prepared to sacrifice or trade one condition of employment for another that suits their circumstances. The CIPD research reported that some individuals may prefer to reduce their flexibility in return for greater job security or opt for maximum flexibility but find that pay suffers as a result (CIPD, 2017). Therefore, these types of contracts and employment types can work well and provide useful experience for some individuals.

7. Changing working circumstances

This chapter addresses RQ8: What are the barriers that prevent young people who want to change jobs from doing so? And RQ9: What, if any, type of information, advice and guidance do young people who want to change jobs require and what are their preferences for accessing this support?, as shown in Table 1.2 in Chapter 1. It was also of interest to understand barriers and information requirements of those who want to change their working circumstances in general, e.g. within their current place of work. This chapter reports on how young people currently source jobs, appetite for changing their working situation, in what way would they like to change, barriers to changing their working situation, information or advice required in relation to changing their working situation, as well as preferred mode of communication.

Chapter 7: Key points

Changing working circumstances: Half (49%) of those in precarious or flexible work would like to change their working situation in the next year. Most (64%) would like to move to another company.

- The main reasons for wanting to change job were to get better pay (45%), increase hours (42%) and better prospects (41%). Also important was a change in the type of contract (22%). Notably those who were not in precarious or flexible work were much less likely to give increased hours as a reason for changing job (17%).
- The main barriers those in precarious or flexible work face getting another job were lack of jobs (33%), lack of experience (26%) and lack of qualifications (24%). Those not in education faced acute barriers, with 40% citing a lack of jobs and 33% lack of qualifications.

Job search: Those in precarious or flexible work had typically found their most recent job using an informal approach, with more than half (55%) getting their job through word of mouth, while others used social media, speculative CVs and responded to ads posted at the premises.

Information and advice: The information, help and guidance that would most help people in precarious or flexible work to change jobs were work experience or placement opportunities; advice on CV writing; guidance on job search; and advice on local job opportunities. Those not in education were especially interested in work experience opportunities.

Around half of those in precarious or flexible work would like to receive this information online, with around a third saying they would like this information on social media and a third saying face-to-face.

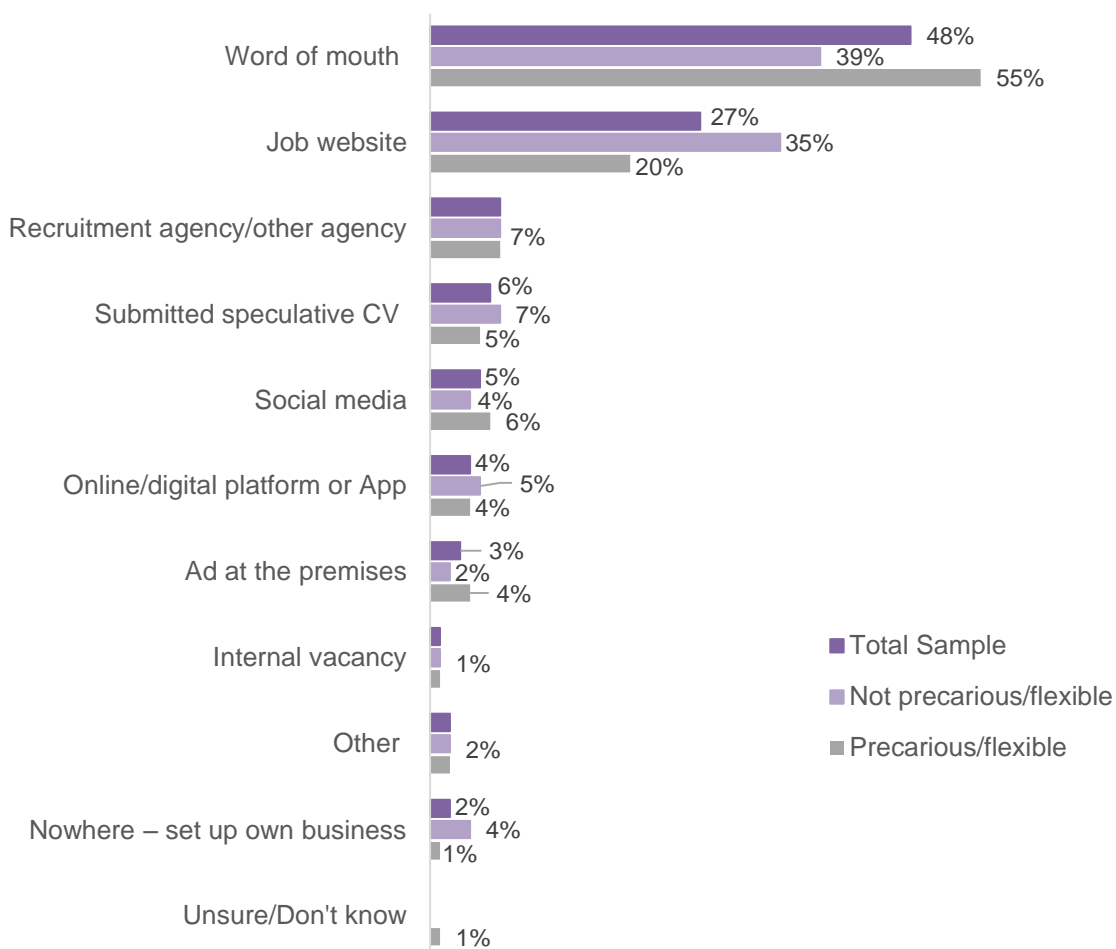
Key differences were reported by those in education and those not in education who were wanting to change their circumstances. Those not in education were working longer hours, the least satisfied across all groups and have a lack of qualifications and confidence. They want to improve their prospects and change their shift patterns. Their main reasons for working in their current position was due to a struggle to find a job, the location and the financial security. This differed from those in education.

7.1 Sourcing jobs

Interestingly over half (55%) of those in a precarious and flexible work found out about their most recent employment via word of mouth (Figure 7.1). Those not in precarious work were significantly more likely (35%) to have found their recent employment via a job website compared to those in precarious work (20%).

Figure 7.1: Sourcing jobs

Q1b. Where did you find out about your job?



Base (all): 1043,
Precarious/flexible 569
Not precarious/flexible 473

Qualitative respondents, who were all in precarious working positions, found out about their jobs through a number of different sources ranging from job websites, word of mouth and social media. Those at the younger end of the age range were more likely to have found out about their job via word of mouth, with quite a few of them relying on their parent’s friends and networks. This was particularly the case for those in more rural locations such as Galashiels and Peterhead. This further supports the fact that many of the younger sample (16-19 year olds) were not financially independent and may have been influenced by their parents to find a job in the first place.

“In Edinburgh if you’re wanting a job, you have to get on with it yourself, and talk to random people. But down here [Galashiels] my mum will tag me in a job in a wee café that she goes into. It’s people you know, you’re comfortable with them” (Galashiels focus group participant)

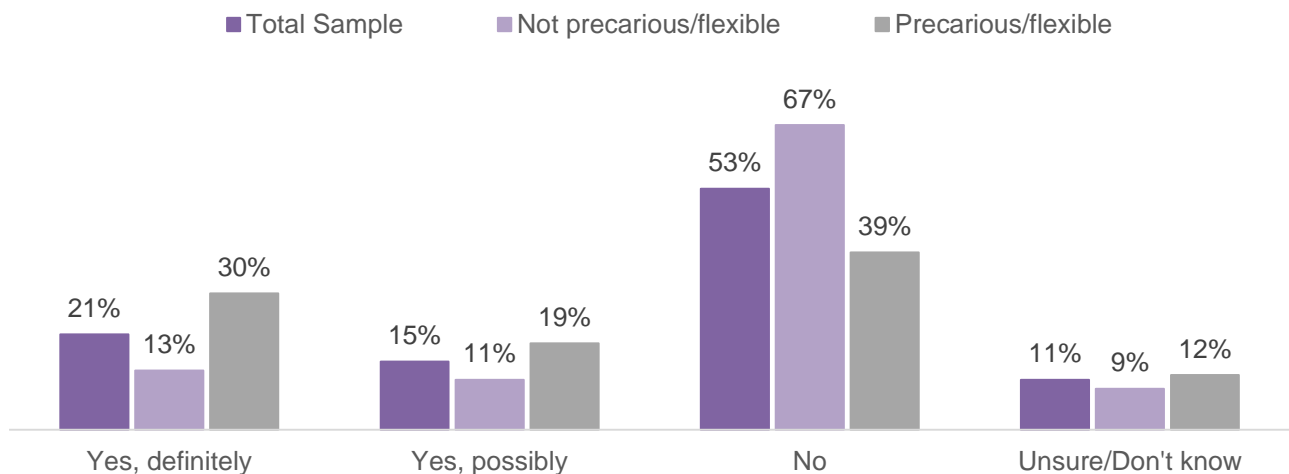
“Living in the Borders, if there’s a job going, someone talks about it and you’ll hear about it.” (Galashiels focus group participant)

7.2 Change working circumstances

Figure 7.2 shows that 49% of those in precarious or flexible work definitely (30%) or possibly (19%) wanted to change their working situation in the next 12 months. This was compared to only 24% of those not in precarious or flexible work.

Figure 7.2: Making a change to their working situation

Q16a. Do you want to change your working situation in the next 12 months?



Base (all who are currently working): 879
 Precarious/flexible 428
 Not precarious/flexible 450

Among the precarious or flexible workers there were differences between those who wanted to change their work circumstances and those who didn’t. The following exist across all those in precarious or flexible work but they are more

prevalent amongst those wanting to change their working situation. They were more likely to:

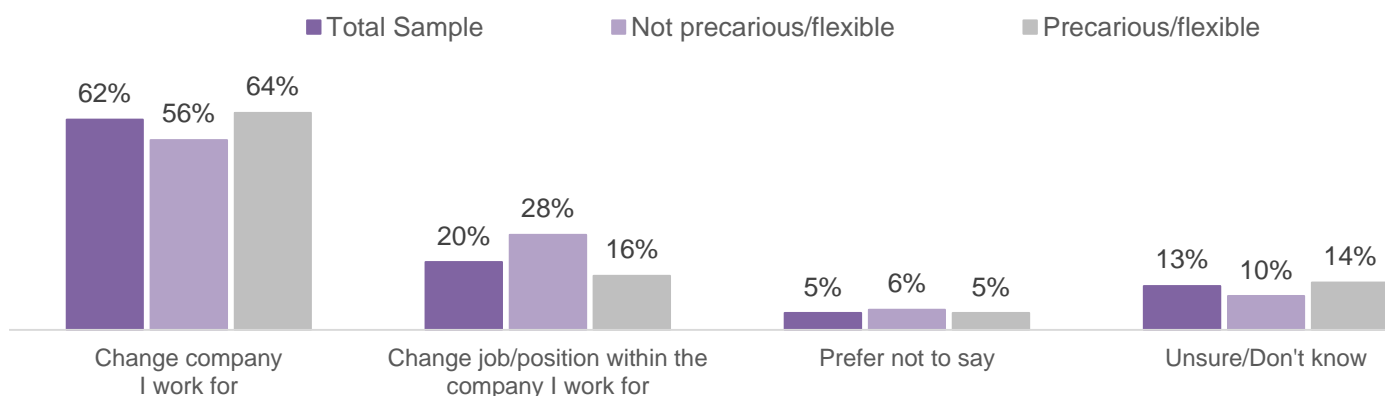
- Be in temporary (27%) or casual work (29%)
- Be on a zero hours contract (34%)
- Not get guaranteed minimum hours (53%)
- Not have any of the employment rights stated such as guaranteed number of working days, holiday pay, sick pay etc.
- State that their employment impacts negatively on their mental health (25%), physical health (17%) and social life (36%).

In addition, those who wanted to change job, who were in a precarious or flexible position, were more likely to have an issue with low pay (24%), a lack of benefits (25%), given too few hours (17%) or irregular hours (18%) and lack of notice given when providing shifts (12%) than those who didn't want to change jobs.

The majority of the total sample who wanted to change their working situation wanted to change the company they worked for rather than just their position within their current company (Figure 7.3). This was the case for both audiences. Those in precarious work were significantly less likely to state that they wanted to change their position within their current company (16%) compared to those not in precarious work (28%).

Figure 7.3: Changing company vs. changing position

Q16b. How you would like to change your working situation?



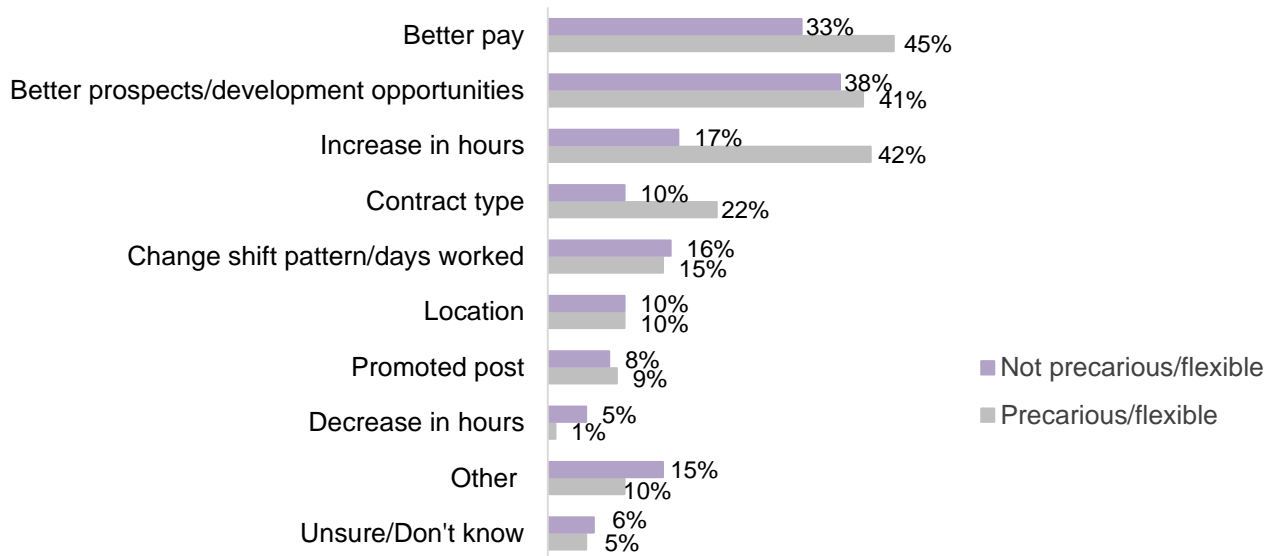
Base (all who want to change working situation): 317
 Precarious/flexible 208
 Not precarious/flexible 108

For those in precarious or flexible work who wanted to change their working situation, they tended to want better pay, better prospects or an increase in hours (Figure 7.4). In support of this, a number of reports reviewed in the evidence review make reference to people living day-to-day within financial constraints, including a report for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation which concluded that while pay was not the be-all and end-all, for most low-paid workers it was the element of their jobs they liked the least, and the one they would most like to change to feel happier at work (JRF, 2015).

There was a significantly higher proportion of those in precarious work who stated they wanted to increase their hours (42%) compared to those not in precarious work (17%). Almost a quarter (22%) of this audience also stated they wanted to change their contract type which was significantly higher than those not in precarious / flexible work.

Figure 7.4: Type of change

Q16c. In what way would you like to change your working situation?



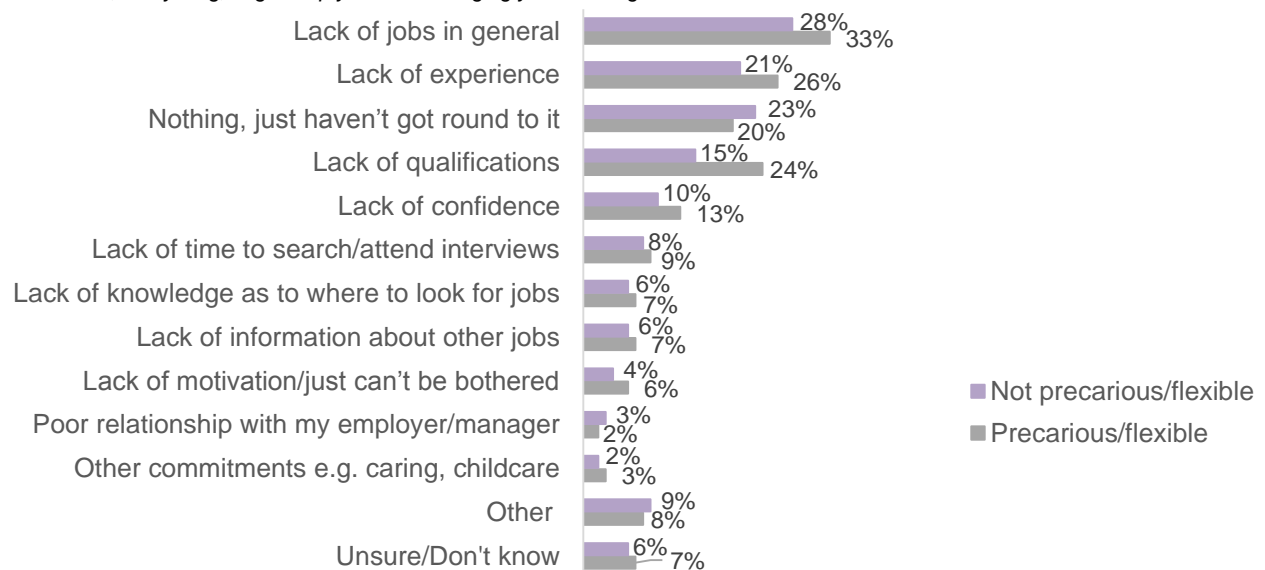
Base (all who want to change working situation):
 Precarious/flexible 208
 Not precarious/flexible 108

7.3 Barriers to changing working circumstances

The barriers to changing their working situation included the lack of jobs in general, lack of experience or qualifications or they just have not got round to doing it. These were similar across both sub-groups as shown in Figure 7.5.

Figure 7.5: Barriers to changing working situation

Q17. What, if anything, might stop you from changing your working situation?



Amongst those who were in precarious or flexible work, those not in education were more likely to give lack of jobs (40%), lack of qualifications (33%) and lack of confidence (19%) as barriers to changing their working situation compared to those in full time education (25%, 13%, 6% respectively). Other differences between those in education and not in education are reported throughout this chapter. This suggests that those in these positions, not in education, who want to change their circumstances is a key group in need of support. Further analysis has been carried out on this sub group in section 7.5.

This was further supported by the qualitative findings where the barriers to changing jobs were the lack of availability of jobs, the fear that other jobs they can apply for will just be of a similar nature, as well as the lack of experience.

“Yeah, it always seems to me that once you're at the level of job that's more casual, it's all zero-hours. If you want to progress anywhere in that, you can't, you're blocked into zero-hours and that's all you're ever going to get.” (Edinburgh focus group participant)

“If I wanted to go to like Tesco, all I've got is the customer experience. Like, I've not got restocking shelves or anything like that. And then everywhere wants you to have experience, but no one wants to give you the job experience.” (Glasgow focus group participant).

7.4 Information, advice and guidance

Table 7.1 shows the information, help and guidance that would help those wanting to change their working situation. The top three mentions by both audiences were work experience or placement opportunities, advice on CV writing and guidance on the best place or websites to seek jobs. There were no significant differences reported across the two sub-groups.

Table 7.1: Information, help and guidance for those wanting to change their working situation

Q18. If wanting to change your working situation in the future, what information, advice or guidance would help you to do so?

	Total Sample	Not precarious/ flexible	Precarious/ flexible
Work experience/placement opportunities	25%	21%	27%
Advice/guidance on CV writing	23%	24%	23%
Guidance on where to seek jobs/best websites to use	21%	26%	19%

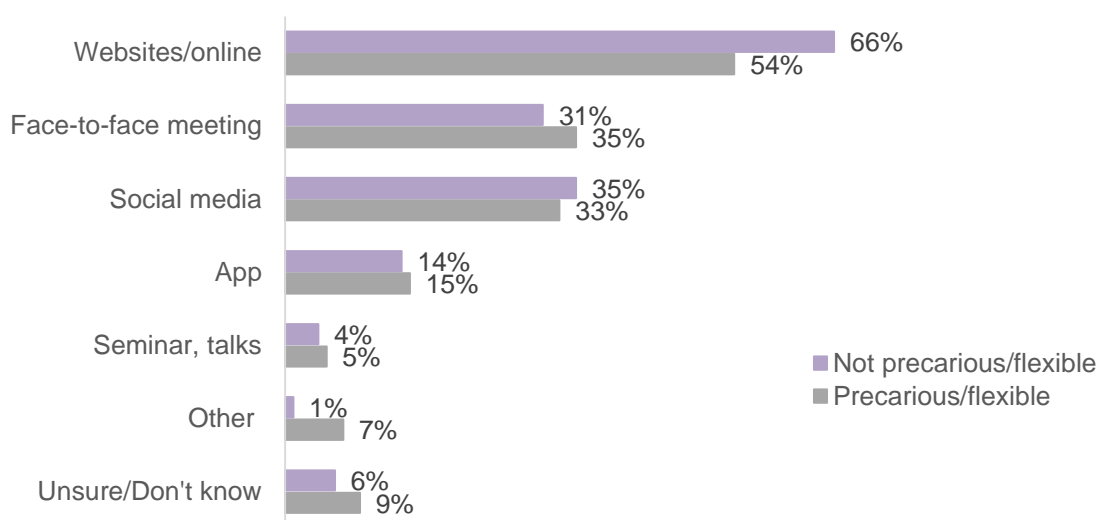
Advice on current local job opportunities	16%	11%	19%
Advice/guidance on changing career	16%	17%	15%
Unsure/Don't know	14%	15%	14%
Apprenticeship opportunities	13%	14%	12%
Advice/guidance on preparing for and attending interviews	11%	11%	11%
Access to/better entry routes to specific jobs/industries	9%	10%	9%
Information on basic employment rights	7%	6%	8%
Support to engage/communicate with employer	5%	2%	6%
Awareness of/access to support groups	3%	4%	2%
Awareness of/access to online communities	2%	2%	2%
Other	6%	5%	7%
Nothing	12%	14%	12%
Base: all who want to change working situation	317	108	208

Those who were not in education who were in precarious or flexible work were more likely to want work experience or placement opportunities (34%) compared to those in education who were in precarious or flexible work (20%).

The majority of those wanting to change their working situation would prefer to receive the information, advice and guidance online with 66% of those not in precarious / flexible work and 54% in precarious / flexible work stating this. This was followed by around a third stating both social media and face-to-face meetings (Figure 7.6).

Figure 7.6: Mode of communication

Q19. How would you prefer to receive this information, advice and guidance?



Base (all who want to change working situation excl. those who did not want information):
Precarious/flexible 184
Not precarious/flexible 93

The older group in precarious or flexible work were more likely to want information and advice online (61%) compared to the younger group (40%).

The qualitative findings reported that schools could be used more as a source of information for finding work. They were praised for helping with subject choices and applying for university and college but very little advice was given about finding part-time work to support university life, job seeking in general, understanding contracts or employment rights. All things that the respondents stated would be useful. Respondents were also interested in finding out more about CV writing, answering questions in an interview and what questions are acceptable to ask at an interview. The following quote illustrates the frustrations and a lack of support from schools that a few of the young people faced when applying for college or job seeking.

“I left school in fifth year and went to college. I was told before I leave school to speak to them [the school] about getting your application into college but also about a part time job. They were useless. My brother’s had the same experience, he left school at sixteen, went through them [the school] to try and get an apprenticeship, nothing. It feels like, from his experience as well, you need to go and do it yourself because going through the school, he never got any support at all.” (Edinburgh focus group participant)

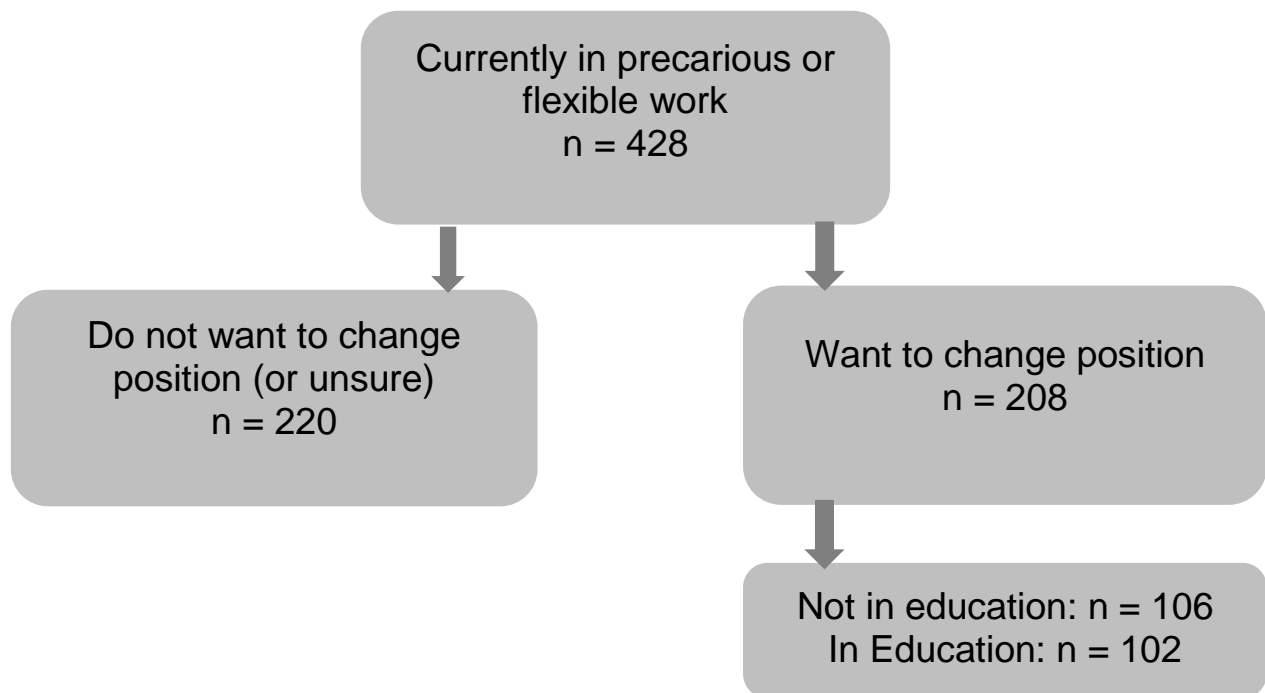
7.5 People in precarious or flexible employment but not in education

Further analysis was undertaken on the sub-group of young people in precarious or flexible employment who were hoping to change their working position, to determine whether there were differences in their circumstances, views or

experiences. In particular, this section focuses on whether there are differences between those who were not in education and those who were in education. The support requirements of young people who wished to change jobs was of particular interest: the types of support required and the channels for delivery.

The flow chart below quantifies the target sample for this section of the report. It shows that 428 of the precarious or flexible respondents are currently in work and, of these, around half are not looking to change their job. The 208 who would like to move to a new position are split almost equally between people who are in education and those who are not.

Figure 7.7: Sub-sample breakdown



The following results show the differences of those in precarious or flexible positions who want to change their working circumstances and are not in education with those who want to change but are in education.

Profile: The profile of those in precarious or flexible work and looking to change position differs by their education status. A full breakdown of the profile of those not in education wanting to change their working situation and those in education wanting to change their working situation is shown at Appendix F. It shows that those not in education looking to change position are typically older, disproportionately from lower social groups, from disadvantaged areas, and are more likely to have responsibility for a dependent. They are more likely to come from lower social groups, indeed they are especially likely to come from social group D (accounting for 42% of those not in education compared with 19% of those in education).

Number of hours worked each week: As might be expected, those in education tend to work fewer hours per week than those not in education: around half (51%) of those in education work fewer than 15 hours per week compared with just 15% of those not in education; whereas around two-thirds (65%) of those not in education work between 15 and 40 hours per week compared with 37% of those in education.

Reasons for working: Section 3.1 above identified 'financial security' and to 'top-up income' as the main reasons attracting people to work in precarious or flexible positions (mentioned by 25% and 24% of respondents respectively). For those not in education and looking to change jobs, a somewhat different profile is evident, with the main reasons for choosing their current job given as: 'struggling to find a job' (39%), 'location' (26%) and 'financial security' (24%).

Type of contract: Those wanting to move to a new job – both those in and not in education - were more likely to be on a zero hours contract than those who did not want to change jobs (58% vs 40%), and much less likely to be on full time contract (8% vs 22%).

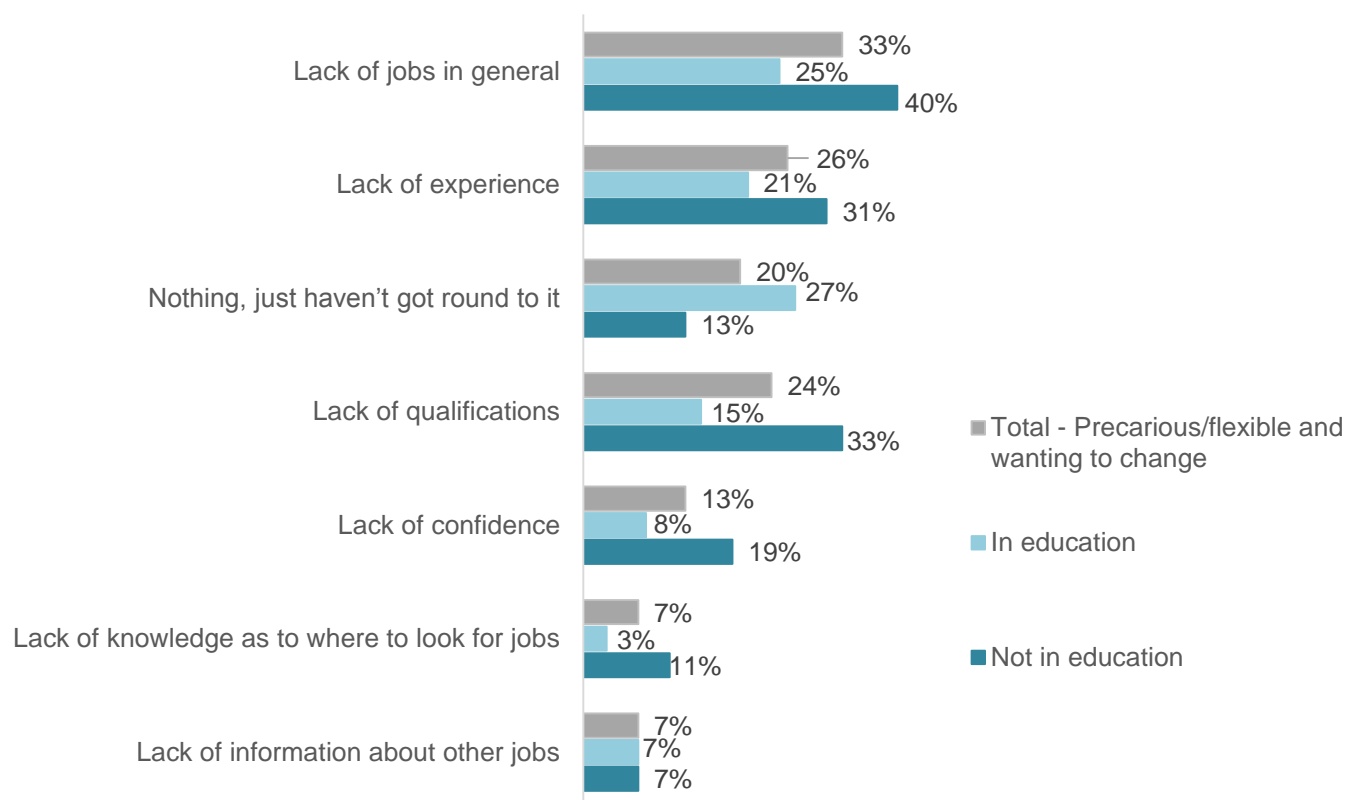
Satisfaction with employment: Section 6.2 above shows that overall half (50%) of the respondents in a precarious or flexible position rated their overall satisfaction with their employment at an 8, 9 or 10 out of 10. There is a marked difference in the overall satisfaction when we focus on the views of respondents currently in work. Three-quarters (75%) of those who do not want to change job rated their overall satisfaction with their current employment at an 8, 9 or 10 out of 10; this compares with two-fifths (39%) of those in education who do want to change job, and just a quarter (26%) of those not in education.

Changing job: The main reasons given by those in precarious or flexible work for wanting to change job were to get to better pay (45%), to increase hours (42%), and to improve their prospects (41%). There were some differences by education status, with those not in education more likely to want to improve their prospects (48% vs 33% of students) and to want to change their shift patterns (23% vs 7% of students).

The main barriers to changing jobs were a lack of jobs in general, a lack of qualifications and a lack of experience. Those not in education were more likely to cite a lack of jobs (40%), lack of qualifications (33%), a lack of confidence (19%) and lack of knowledge of where to look for a job (11%). They were less likely to cite 'nothing' (13%) as shown in Figure 7.8.

Figure 7.8: Barriers to changing working situation: Precarious and in employment

Q17. What, if anything, might stop you from changing your working situation?



Base (Precarious, in employment and wanting to change), Total: 208
 In Education: 102
 Not in education: 106

Sourcing employment: The most common way respondents in this sub-group sourced jobs was through word of mouth (used by 54%). Those not in education were less likely than students to use word of mouth (42% vs 61%); and more likely to use job websites (30% vs 18%) and recruitment agencies (15% vs 1%).

Job search: The main types of support that this sub-group of respondents would find useful in changing their working situation were work experience or placement opportunities, advice on CV writing, guidance on the best place or websites to seek jobs, and advice on local job opportunities.

Those not in education were particularly likely to say they would find work experience or placement opportunities (34% mentioned this, compared with just 20% of students) and advice/guidance on changing career helpful (22% mentioned this compared with just 9% of students).

The preferred method of receiving advice and support was online (54%), with no difference between those in and not in education (Table 7.2). Just over a third (35%) indicated a preference for face-to-face; notably this rises to 44% for those not in education (compared to 26% of students). A further third indicated social media (with no differences between those in and not in education).

Table 7.2: Information, help and guidance for those wanting to change their working situation

Q18. If wanting to change your working situation in the future, what information, advice or guidance would help you to do so?

	Total - Precarious	Not in education	In education
Work experience/placement opportunities	27%	34%	20%
Advice/guidance on CV writing	23%	25%	21%
Guidance on where to seek jobs/best websites to use	19%	21%	17%
Advice on current local job opportunities	19%	19%	20%
Advice/guidance on changing career	15%	22%	9%
Apprenticeship opportunities	12%	13%	11%
Advice/guidance on preparing for and attending interviews	11%	12%	9%
Access to/better entry routes to specific jobs/industries	9%	9%	9%
Information on basic employment rights	8%	7%	9%
Support to engage/communicate with employer	6%	2%	11%
Awareness of/access to support groups	2%	3%	1%
Awareness of/access to online communities	2%	3%	2%
Other	7%	5%	9%
Nothing	12%	12%	11%
Unsure/Don't know	14%	15%	13%
Base: all who want to change working situation	208	106	102

8. Conclusions

This study was conducted to increase knowledge about the prevalence and experience of precarious and flexible work amongst 16-24 year olds in Scotland. The research was conducted and analysed prior to the Covid-19 pandemic.

8.1 Defining the issue

The evidence review concluded that there are gaps in knowledge regarding precarious and flexible work amongst 16-24 year olds in Scotland: there are currently limited published statistics on Scotland's 16-24 year olds who are in precarious or flexible employment, and many of the research reports available focus solely on those on zero hours contracts. Consequently, one of the key research questions addressed was to determine the range of potentially precarious or flexible working conditions experienced by young people.

This research study covered numerous other types of employment and contracts, in addition to zero hours contracts. The research reported that over half of the sample of 16-24 year olds in Scotland (55%) were categorised as working in a precarious or flexible position (Figure 4.4). This was based on the definition in Box 2.1 above. This was mainly temporary (26%) or casual (25%) work, and most respondents had a zero hours contract (25%), just turned up for work when asked (24%) or had a varying hours contract (13%). Those in precarious or flexible positions were also more likely to work in the hotel and restaurant sector compared to those not in these positions.

The research clearly showed differences in experiences, perceptions and job characteristics between those who were categorised as in precarious or flexible work and those who were not. Those in a precarious or flexible position were less likely to rate their satisfaction with the terms of their employment an 8, 9 or 10 out of 10 (50%) compared to those not in a precarious or flexible position (73%). They were also significantly less likely to state that they enjoy the work (33%) compared to those not working in these positions (40%). It is important to note that not all of those categorised as being in precarious or flexible work viewed it as a negative experience. There were specific groups of people who were content with the position they were in e.g. saying that it suits their current circumstances, it is flexible; however there are also other groups that have concerns, and were keen to change their working situation.

8.2 The evidence

A robust quantitative sample of 16-24 year olds in employment was achieved. This allowed for robust analysis to be conducted on various sub-groups of interest. In addition the qualitative element added in-depth and valuable insights, supporting and providing context to the quantitative findings.

8.3 Key audience

There were many statistically significant differences reported across different facets of the respondents' work between those in precarious or flexible work and those who were not, demonstrating the level and nature of insecurity associated with precarious and flexible work (e.g. no written contract, limited employment rights, and no guaranteed hours). Interestingly, there were also differences in the experiences and views between different sub-groups within the precarious or flexible working category, such as between different age groups, those not in education and students, and those who were financially independent and those who weren't.

The findings suggest a "progression" as the audience gets older and circumstances change, e.g. move from school to university or college. Those who were categorised as in precarious or flexible work and were younger (16-19 years old), in education or financially dependent were more likely to be at the higher end of precariousness as they were more likely to not have a written contract and just turn up for work when asked; therefore having very limited security or follow formal procedures. While only half (50%) of those who were older (20-24 years old) had a written contract with their employer, the proportion was even lower (36%) for the younger age group. However, some of the younger age group were content with this situation: e.g. flexibility works for their current circumstances, such as still being at school, and as suggested by the qualitative findings they expressed a lot of trust in their employer to not exploit them. There is a proportion of the sample still in education or financially dependent and therefore the impact of precarious employment for these groups may be reduced by access to other sources of income or safety nets.

However, the findings highlighted that there are also specific sub-groups not content with their current position: they have lower levels of satisfaction and were keen to change their working situation in the next 12 months.

Findings suggested that some may not be aware of their rights or that as a minimum a written statement outlining terms and conditions should still be provided even if working flexible hours.

8.4 Satisfaction

The type of employment position people were in also impacted on their overall levels of satisfaction with their terms of employment. Those in precarious or flexible positions were less likely to be satisfied (50%) than those who weren't in those positions (73%).

Satisfaction generally was due to enjoying the work and the job, liking their colleagues, good company to work for in general, flexibility in shifts and for some the short-term aspect of it meant they were content because it suited their circumstances at that time. The other positive characteristic cited was location.

Many of the reasons cited for being dissatisfied were related to employment practices such as the unpredictability of hours, allocation of hours, the level of pay,

the lack of a contract which all contributes to a feeling of insecurity or a lack of control. Management issues were also cited. Other negative aspects of these types of positions reported were unsociable hours, the lack of benefits and the number of hours allocated not being suitable. Again these are all aspects that the employer is in control of and therefore the employee has very little autonomy over.

The qualitative findings suggest that people value different aspects of their work depending on their circumstances. There was an element of having to trade off one aspect of work for another. Some people were prepared to sacrifice the insecurity and lack of a contract for the ability to have flexibility in the hours that they worked or some were willing to accept low pay in order to gain experience in an industry they want to work in. Again, this suggests that some young people require further assistance to navigate the labour market, especially with contracts of employment, their rights and working conditions.

Those who were least satisfied were precarious or flexible workers who were not in education and wanted to change their working situation, thus suggesting that this may be a key group who require support.

8.5 What is needed

Changing working circumstances

The research found that half (49%) of those in precarious or flexible work would like to change their working situation in the next year compared to only a quarter of those not in precarious or flexible positions (24%) suggesting that the precarious/flexible nature of the job contributes towards this. The majority wanted to move to another company. Those in precarious or flexible positions who wanted to change their working circumstances were at the higher end of precariousness with a larger proportion being in temporary or casual work, on zero hours contracts and have no guaranteed hours than those not wanting to change their working situation.

Barriers exist for those wanting to change their working situation. Those who were in precarious or flexible positions and not in education lacked confidence, qualifications and felt that there was a lack of alternative jobs, more so than their counterparts who were in education. Qualitative findings also suggested that a small number felt trapped in the cycle of zero hours contracts because of these barriers.

In conclusion there were four distinct groups, some who require more support than others:

1. Those in a precarious/flexible position, not in education and wanting to change working circumstances;
2. Those in a precarious/flexible position, in education and wanting to change working circumstances;

3. Those in a precarious/flexible position and who don't want to change working circumstances; and
4. Those not precarious/flexible position.

Those not in precarious/flexible positions are not the focus for this study as their employment is considered more secure. Those who are in precarious or flexible work but don't want to change their working circumstances are more content with their employment terms overall, and their current employment works well for their circumstances.

There are two groups looking to change jobs, and who may require support. The results have shown that those not in education who have found themselves in this position are the most dissatisfied and disenfranchised with their current employment. They are working longer hours, the least satisfied across all groups and have a lack of qualifications and confidence. They want to improve their prospects and change their shift patterns. Their main reasons for working in their current position was due to a struggle to find a job, the location and the financial security. This differed from those in education. Further, the qualitative research indicated that those in education looking to change jobs were in some cases looking to move on to professional appointments (those drawing on their new academic qualifications) and would have support from their college/university in their job search.

If there is a need to prioritise, evidence suggests that support for the 'not-in-education' sub-group is where the most immediate support is required. The remainder of the conclusions focus on the support that would be helpful for this particular group.

Information, advice and guidance

Those not in education wishing to change their working circumstances tended to use word of mouth previously to find their current role but also were more likely than those in education to use job websites and recruitment agencies, suggesting that they tend to use more traditional forms of job seeking. Partnership activity with these more traditional forms of recruitment may help this group.

As mentioned, young people in this sub-group often lacked confidence and qualifications, so the information and advice that would be most helpful for this group would be: help finding work experience or placement opportunities; help on changing career; and practical advice on how to progress out of insecure, zero hours or short term contracts. Online and face-to-face were the preferred methods of communication with this audience. Social media was also cited as a useful channel.

In addition to information and advice on progressing to their next job, it is also important that all young people are well informed about their employment rights.

There is a need to ensure that all employers are complying with the law and uphold proper employment practices and that young people don't feel like they have to sacrifice one aspect of their job for another e.g. security (in the form of a contract) for flexible hours.

Future research

This report concludes that those in precarious or flexible positions, who are not in education and would like to change their working circumstances are the key sub-group for employment and support. The report identifies the main barriers faced by this sub-group in trying to change their working situation, their information and support needs, and their preferred channels of support. However, it also demonstrates that the sub-group is highly differentiated (by age, level of financial independence, and so on), and that there will be real value in accurately targeting resources within the sub-group. There would be value in conducting more in-depth qualitative research with this audience to develop a deeper understanding of this key sub-group's support needs.

This research was conducted prior to the Covid-19 pandemic. The likelihood is that the pandemic will have had an effect on the labour market landscape and on precarious and flexible work. Further research may be needed to determine how the pandemic has impacted these positions.

APPENDICES

Appendix A – Evidence Review

Separate volume

Appendix B – focus group topic guide

1. Introduction

- Introduction to moderator/Progressive, MRS Code of Conduct, GDPR etc.
- This research is being conducted on behalf of the Scottish Government who would like to understand your experience of different employment contracts and working conditions.
- Explanation of rules of engagement: take part; not a test; no right or wrong answers; relax! If you're not comfortable answering any particular questions, just let me know and we can move on – and you're free to withdraw at any time.
- Explain audio recording - permission should have been granted at recruitment stage

Timing: 5 Mins

Standard introduction
All GDPR information will have been provided at the recruitment stage but a reminder is given here

2. Warm up

- Name, where you live?
- Who lives at home with you?
- Are you currently in full time or part time education?
- What would be your ideal job?

3. Current Employment Status

- What do you currently do? Where do you work? What is your role?
- IF NOT CURRENTLY WORKING: What work have you undertaken in the last 6 months?
- Is this your main job? Do you have any other jobs?
- Talk to me about why you work where you do/did? What made you decide to work there? *[IF MULTIPLE JOBS ASK SPECIFICALLY ABOUT THE PRECARIOUS POSITION THROUGHOUT DISCUSSION]*

Job you wanted (e.g. in a desired sector / industry and willing to accept a trade-off in terms of working conditions)

Wanted the experience/sector interested in/stepping stone

Close to where I live – check if rural/urban?

Struggling to find work

- Probe fully, why do you think this is? Did you feel like you had no option?

Pressured in to accepting

- Probe fully, why did you feel like this? Who / what was pressuring you?

Financial pressures

- Probe fully if comfortable, why did you feel like this?

Fits in with study / childcare / partners work

Lack of qualifications / experience to apply for other positions

Flexible (in general)

- Probe fully, in what way

PROBE ON ANY DIFFERENCES/SIMILARITIES BETWEEN RESP. EXPERIENCES - Why do you think this might be?

Timing: 15 Mins

RQ3

a. What are the circumstances whereby young people find themselves in precarious work/contractual conditions?

b. Do they choose them voluntarily or have no option?

- How did you find out about the job?
 - (P) Job centre
 - (P) Friend/family member/WOM
 - (P) Recruitment agency
 - (P) Job website
 - (P) Speculative application/ approach themselves

4. Awareness of Contractual Status

Talk to me about your employment contracts? Do you have a contract? What types of things does it cover?

MODERATOR NOTE: IF RESP. IN SIMILAR SECTOR/ROLE/SIZE OF EMPLOYER DISCUSS DIFFERENCES AND SIMILARITIES IN RESPONSES

- Hours you work?
- Level of pay? **SHOWCARD WITH RANGES**
- Benefits you get? E.g. Sick pay, holiday pay
- Holidays?
- Days you work?
- Notice period?
- Notice given when changing hours from employer and to employer?

Do you have set contracted hours?

- IF YES: What are you contracted to work?
- IF YES: Do you tend to work more or less than your contracted hours?
- IF NO: Do they vary? How much do they vary?

How do you know what hours you are working every week?

How much notice are you given regarding the hours you are working?

Do you feel pressured to take extra hours?

What happens when hours are changed at short notice?

How do you know about other aspects of your employment?

- Written contract
- Verbal agreement
- Other?

5. Experience of precarious working

What do you think about your employment contract / working conditions?

- Happy with it?
- Don't like it?
- Put up with it?

IF HAPPY: Talk to me about why you are happy with it? What do you like about it? **WRITE ON FLIP CHART A IF POSSIBLE**

MODERATOR NOTE: DISCUSS ANY DIFFERENCES ACROSS GROUP – DO THEY AGREE/DISAGREE WITH EACH OTHER

- Flexibility / fits in around other responsibilities (e.g. childcare, study)
- Tops up main income
- No commitment

Timing: 10 Mins

RQ2: To what extent are young people aware of their contractual status (e.g. whether they are on a ZHC)?

PROBES: From desk research review as characteristics of insecure employment

Timing: 25 mins

RQ4. What are the experiences of young people in a range of potentially precarious or flexible working conditions?

RQ5. Are there any particular disadvantages, challenges, advantages, opportunities

IF HAPPY: Is there anything you don't like about your employment/working conditions? **WRITE ON FLIP CHART B IF POSSIBLE**

IF NOT HAPPY: Talk to me about why you are not happy with it? What do you not like about it? **WRITE ON FLIPCHART B IF POSSIBLE**

MODERATOR NOTE: DISCUSS ANY DIFFERENCES ACROSS GROUP – DO THEY AGREE/DISAGREE WITH EACH OTHER

- Low pay
- Lack of security/unstable
- Lack of protection i.e. grievances, dismissal
- Don't get paid for holidays or sickness?
- Shifts change last minute
- Feel pressured into taking on extra hours (probe: why do participants feel pressured – e.g. concern about loss of hours)
- Lack of training/development/progression
- Irregularity of hours per week/month
- Can be hard to plan financially / Income unpredictable

etc. of different potentially precarious or flexible working conditions?

PROBES: From desk research review on advantages and disadvantages

IF NOT HAPPY: Is there anything you do like about your employment/working conditions? **WRITE ON FLIP CHART A IF POSSIBLE**

IF PUT UP WITH IT: What is it about the role that makes you put up with it?

6. Best and worst aspects

ASK ALL: If you were changing jobs what is the one key aspect of your most recent employment/working conditions that you would want to keep? Why?

- Flexible hours / working from home
- Ability to work more than one job
- No commitment/ No contract
- Varying hour
- Anything else

Timing: 10 Mins

RQ6. What is it about the terms of employment that cause specific disadvantages? What type of contracts appear to be the most problematic and to whom?

REFER TO FLIPCHART B: A number of terms of employment/working conditions that you don't like have been mentioned. Across all of those mentioned which one causes the biggest issue:

RESPONDENTS TO USE 5 STICKY DOTS EACH AND PLACE THESE NEXT TO THEIR BIGGESTS ISSUES - USE HOWEVER THEY WANT

- Low pay
- Lack of security/unstable
- Lack of protection i.e. grievances, dismissal
- Don't get given adequate hours
- Don't get paid for holidays or sickness?
- Shifts change last minute
- Feel pressured into taking on extra hours
- Lack of training/development/progression
- Irregularity of hours per week/month
- ADD IN OTHERS MENTIONED

Why did you choose those issues?

The top 5 issues appear to be XXXXXX – Why do you think this is?

Does anyone disagree with these? Why?

Give me examples as to how this impacts on your daily life?

Planning

- Not being able to plan for social events / buy concert tickets / sports matches
- Can't plan financially / can't save
- Can't book holidays in advance
- Cancel appointments last minute

Financial impacts

- Not being able to get a mortgage
- Not being able to apply to a letting agent
- Not being able to buy what I want / go out for dinner / socialise

Other aspects

- Struggle with organising childcare / other caring responsibilities
- Struggle with studying

Anything else?

REFER TO FLIP CHART A: We have discussed a number of different characteristics and types of employment that you like about your employment/working conditions. Across everything mentioned which ones are the most positive/benefit from the most? **RESPONDENTS TO USE 5 STICKY DOTS EACH AND PLACE THESE NEXT TO THE MOST POSITIVE ASPECTS FOR THEM - USE HOWEVER THEY WISH**

Flexible hours / working from home

Ability to work more than one job

No commitment / No contract

ADD IN OTHERS MENTIONED

Why did you choose those as benefits?

The top 5 benefits appear to be XXXXXX – Why do you think this is?

Does anyone disagree with these? Why?

Thinking about young people, like yourselves, are there any particular groups of people that benefit from these types of precarious/flexible contracts?

Particular sector

Particular age

Lifestage

Lifestyle

Illness

Particular location / Where you live (e.g. in a city, town, in more rural areas)

What are the key things you would like improved in your most recent employment?

Pay / training / development opportunities / hours / given more or better notice of shifts

7. Future employment

Do you want to change job in the next 12 months?

Why?

Better (e.g. more regular) hours / more hours

More secure employment / permanent position

Why not?

Happy

Lack of skills

Timing: 15 minutes

RQ7

- a. To what extent can different potentially precarious or flexible working conditions be considered as 'positive destinations' for young people
- b. Which young people are benefitting? What are their specific working conditions?

Timing: 10 mins

RQ8

- a. What are the barriers that prevent young people who want to change jobs from doing so?

Lack of jobs
Feeling stuck / lack of development / progression

Are there any other challenges that you think young people, like yourself in similar working positions will face when wanting to change job?

If wanting to change job, is there any information, advice or guidance that would help you do so?

MODERATOR NOTE: Probe specifically on the information they want against the reasons why/why not change job

Development opportunities
Work experience
Where to seek jobs
Basic employment rights

How would you prefer to receive this information, advice or guidance?

Online – websites
App / social media
Face-to-face

Can you tell me which organisations might provide face-to-face information/support?

8. Summary

What words would you use to describe these positions we have discussed today e.g. contracts with no set hours, limited employment benefits etc.?

The types of contracts and working conditions we have been discussing today can be considered to be precarious, insecure, flexible working conditions. How do you view these precarious / flexible working conditions? Why?

Positive
Negative
Mixed opinion

Do you have any other comments about this type of employment contracts and working conditions that we have not covered off?

b. Does this differ by contractual status (e.g. ZHC) or other potentially precarious or flexible?

RQ9

a. What (if any) type of information, advice and guidance do young people who want to change jobs require and what are their preferences for accessing this support (e.g. digital, online, face-to-face)?

b. Does this differ by contractual status (e.g. ZHC) or other potentially precarious or flexible

Desk Research Review:
Possible types of information from this but too early to record these TBC

Appendix C – quantitative survey

Introduction

Good morning/afternoon, I am [NAME] from Progressive, an independent market research company which is carrying out a survey on behalf of the Scottish Government about different types of employment contracts and the employment conditions associated with these. The research will be used to help develop support for people who want to change their circumstances. The interview will take about 10 minutes to complete. Would you like to take part?

>GDPR and Informed consent section<

Screening/Quota Questions

SAMPLING POINTS – Interviewer to select sample point

SINGLE CODE

	Code
Central Scotland	
Coatbridge	1
Falkirk	2
Hamilton	3
Linlithgow	4
Shotts	5
Stirling	6
Glasgow	
Barrhead	7
Bishopbriggs	8
Glasgow City Centre	9
Greenock	10
Paisley	11
Renfrew	12
Rutherglen	13
Highlands & Islands	
Aviemore	14
Elgin?	15
Inverness	16
Shetland	17
Lothians	
Craigmillier / Niddrie	18
Dalkeith	19
Edinburgh City Centre	20
Edinburgh East	21
Edinburgh South	22
Edinburgh West	23
Livingston	24
Pilton / Muirhouse	25
Ratho / Kirkliston / Newbridge	26
Mid Scotland & Fife	
Dunfermline	27
Glenrothes	28
Kirkcaldy	29
Perth	30
Saline	31
North East Scotland	
Aberdeen City Centre	32
Arbroath	33

Dundee City Centre	34
Inverurie	35
Peterhead	36
South Scotland	
Biggar	37
Dumfries	38
Galashiels	39
Gretna	40
Hawick	41
Jedburgh / Selkirk / Kelso	42
Peebles	43
West Scotland	
Ayr	44
Irvine	45
Kilmarnock	46
Prestwick	47
Troon	48
- Other, specify	- 49

SQ2. Are you currently working in Scotland?

SINGLE CODE

	Code	Route
Yes	1	SQ4
No	2	SQ3
Prefer not to say	3	SQ3

ASK IF SQ2=2 OR 3

SQ3. Have you had any work at all in the last 24 months in Scotland? This includes any seasonal, temporary, casual work, or self-employment. SINGLE CODE

	Code	Route	SCREEN OUT PAGE
Yes	1	SQ4	
No	2	CLOSE	Thank you for your time. On this occasion we are only speaking to people who have been employed over the last 24 months in Scotland
Prefer not to say	3	CLOSE	

I would now like to ask you a few classification questions. This is to ensure that we speak to a broad range of people in your area.

SQ4. How old are you?

SINGLE CODE

	Code	Route	SCREEN OUT PAGE
Under 16 years old	1	CLOSE	
16 years old	2	SQ5	
17 years old	3		
18 years old	4		
19 years old	5		
20 years old	6		
21 years old	7		
22 years old	8		

23 years old	9		
24 years old	10		
25+ years old	11	CLOSE	Thank you for your time. On this occasion you do not fit the criteria
Prefer not to say	11	CLOSE	

SQ5. Are you.....?

SINGLE CODE

	Code
Male (including trans man)	1
Female (including trans woman)	2
Describe in another way, specify _____	3
- Prefer not to say	4 - CLOSE

SQ6. How would you describe your ethnic group?

SINGLE CODE, SPONTANEOUS

	Code
White	
Scottish	1
Other British	2
Irish	3
Gypsy, Roma, Traveller	4
Polish	5
Other White ethnic group, please specify	6
Mixed	
Any mixed or multiple ethnic background, please specify	7
Asian, Asian Scottish, or Asian British	
Indian, Indian Scottish or Indian British	8
Pakistani, Pakistani Scottish or Pakistani British	9
Bangladeshi, Bangladeshi Scottish or Bangladeshi British	10
Chinese, Chinese Scottish or Chinese British	11
Other, please specify	12
African	
African, African Scottish or African British	13
Other, please specify	14
Caribbean or Black	
Caribbean, Caribbean Scottish or Caribbean British	15
Black, Black Scottish or Black British	16
Other, please specify	17
Other Ethnic group	
Arab, Arab Scottish or Arab British	18
Other, please specify	19
Prefer not to say	20 - CLOSE

SQ8. What is the occupation of the chief income earner in the household?

Position: _____

Industry: _____

SINGLE CODE – INTERVIEWER CODE

	Code
AB	1
C1	2
C2	3
D	4
E	5
Prefer not to say	6 - CLOSE

Main Questions – Current Employment

Q1a. Thinking about your most recent employment, which of the following best applies to you? If you have more than one job please think about your main job. SHOW SCREEN, SINGLE CODE ONLY

Randomise list	Code
Permanent position	1
Fixed term position (over a year)	2
Fixed term position (up to a year)	3
Temporary work	4
Seasonal position	5
Casual position	6
Freelance	7
Self-employed	8
Internship	9
Apprenticeship	10
Other non-permanent position, specify _____	11
Unsure/Don't know	12
Prefer not say	13

Q1b. Where did you find out about your job? MULTICODE POSSIBLE, SPONTANEOUS

	Code
Job website	1
Word of mouth (friend, family, teacher etc.)	2
Social media	3
Recruitment Agency / other agency	4
Online / digital platform or App e.g. Uber, TaskRabbit, Deliveroo	5
Ad at the premises e.g. poster in window etc.	6
Submitted speculative CV into place of work	7
Internal vacancy (advertised by current employer)	8
Nowhere – set up own business	9

Other, specify	10
Unsure/Don't know	11

Q2. How many hours do you work each week at this job? SINGLE CODE

	Code
Up to 10	1
Over 10 up to 14	2
15 to 30	3
31 to 40	4
41 to 50	5
Over 50	6
Varies every week	7

ASK IF SQ2 = 1(YES)

Q3. How many jobs do you currently have? SINGLE CODE

	Code	ROUTE
1	1	Q5
2	2	Q4a
3	3	
4+	4	
Work at different places every week or so	5	
Cannot classify, please explain_____	6	Q5

ASK IF Q3 = 2, 3, 4 OR 5

Q4a. Which of the following best applies to the other jobs that you have?

SHOW SCREEN, MULTICODE POSSIBLE

Randomise list	Code
Permanent position	1
Fixed term position (over a year)	2
Fixed term position (up to a year)	3
Temporary work	4
Seasonal position	5
Casual position	6
Freelance	7
Self-employed	8
Internship	9
Apprenticeship	10
Other non-permanent position, specify_____	11
Unsure/Don't know	12
Prefer not say	13

ASK IF Q3 = 2, 3, 4 OR 5

Q4b. How many hours do you work each week at your other job(s)? IF MORE THAN ONE OTHER JOB COMBINE THE NUMBER OF ADDITIONAL HOURS YOU WORK. SINGLE CODE

	Code
Up to 10	1
Over 10 up to 14	2
15 to 30	3
31 to 40	4
41 to 50	5
Over 50	6
Varies every week	7

Q5. Do you have a contract that is written and agreed with your employer? If you have more than one job please think about your main job. SINGLE CODE

	Code	ROUTE
Yes	1	Q6a
No	2	Q6a
No, I run my own business	3	Q9
Unsure/Don't know	4	Q6a
Prefer not say	5	Q6a

Q6a. Which of the following describes your most recent employment contract/employment? If you have more than one job please think about your main job. SHOW SCREEN, SINGLE CODE

Randomise list	Code
Full time contract	1
Part time contract	2
Zero hours contract	3
Varying hours / Flexi contract	4
No contract I just turn up for work when I am asked	5
Other, specify_____	6
Unsure/Don't know	7
Prefer not say	8

ASK IF Q3 = 2, 3, 4 OR 5

Q6b. Thinking about your other job(s) which of the following describes your employment contract/ employment for your other jobs? Please select all that apply. SHOW SCREEN, MULTICODE POSSIBLE

Randomise list	Code
Full time contract	1
Part time contract	2
Zero hours contract	3
Varying hours / Flexi contract	4
No contract I just turn up for work when I am asked	5
Other, specify_____	6
Unsure/Don't know	7
Prefer not say	8

Working Conditions

Q7. Does your employer/contract guarantee you a minimum number of hours work a week?
SINGLE CODE

	Code
Yes	1
No	2

ASK IF Q5=2 OR 4 (NO WRITTEN CONTRACT)

Q8. How do you find out about the conditions of your employment such as contracted hours, entitlement to benefits, protocols when ill etc? SPONTANEOUS, MULTICODE POSSIBLE

	Code
Verbally / face-to-face	1
Internet search	2
Email / App	3
Text messages / Whatsapp messages	4
I am not informed of my working conditions (Single code only)	5
Other, specify	6
Unsure/Don't know	7

Q9. What attracted you to the main job you currently do/recently held? SPONTANEOUS, MULTICODE POSSIBLE

	Code
Financial security / Good pay	1
To top-up my income	2
Good benefits / rewards / pension	3
Reputation of the company	4
The number of working hours	5
Flexibility of shifts/hours	6
Location	7
Wanted experience in the sector/role / stepping stone to other jobs	8
Opportunity to develop/progress	9
Opportunity to travel	10
Was struggling to find a job	11
Felt pressured by parents / partner / family to get a job	12
Felt pressured by the job centre / benefits agency to get a job	13
My friends/family members work there	14
Other, specify	15
Unsure / don't know	16

Q10. Which of the following rights at work do/did you have in the job most recently held?
SINGLE CODE PER STATEMENT

	Yes I have this	No I don't have this	Don't know	Not appropriate to me
Guaranteed number of working hours per day	1	2	3	-
Guaranteed number of days per week	1	2	3	-
Flexibility in the hours you work	1	2	3	-
Reasonable notice given to you when agreeing shifts/hours to work	1	2	3	-
Paid National Minimum Wage or above	1	2	3	-
Lunch and rest breaks provided	1	2	3	-
Holiday pay	1	2	3	-
Sick pay	1	2	3	-
Training and development opportunities	1	2	3	-
Public holidays off	1	2	3	-
Parental rights (such as maternity leave, parental leave, paid time to look after your child)	1	2	3	4

Overall experience

Q11. Thinking about your terms of employment overall, how satisfied are you/were you with it? Please use the following scale where zero is not at all satisfied and 10 is completely satisfied SINGLE CODE

0 - Not at all satisfied	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 - Completely satisfied	D/K
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12

Q12. Why did you give the rating you did for satisfaction? OPEN ENDED, PROBE FULLY

Q13. To what extent would you say your most recent employment impacts on each of the following aspects of your life? Please answer using the following slider scale: SHOW SCREEN, SINGLE CODE

	Impacts negatively					No impact	Impacts positively				
	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
Your mental health in general	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
Your physical health in general	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
Your finances in general	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
Your social life	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
Your relationship with partner, family, friends	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5

Advantages and Disadvantages

Q14. What are the top three most positive characteristics of your recent employment? Please select up to three responses. SHOW SCREEN

Randomise list	Code
Level of pay	1
Benefits e.g. sick pay, holiday pay / rewards / pension provided	2
Reputation of the company	3
The number of working hours	4
Flexibility of shifts/hours	5
Location	6
Experience I am gaining	7
Variety of work	8
Type/quality of work	9
Opportunities given to develop / promotional opportunities	10
Opportunities given to travel	11
Enjoy the work	12
The number/length of breaks	13
People I work with	14
No commitment/contract	15
Something else, specify_____	16
Nothing	17

Q15. What are the top three biggest issues in relation to your most recent employment? Please select up to three responses. SHOW SCREEN

Randomise list	Code
Low pay/lack of financial security	1
Lack of benefits e.g. sick pay, holiday pay / rewards / pension	2
Too few hours given	3

Too many hours given	4
Irregularity of hours per week/month	5
Long hours	6
Unsociable hours	7
Unfair allocation of hours e.g. first come first served	8
Lack of notice given when being informed of hours/changes to hours	9
Location	10
Lack of opportunities to develop / promotional opportunities	11
The type of work given	12
Limited/unstructured breaks	13
People I work with	14
Expected to do more than other colleagues	15
Something else, specify _____	16
Nothing	17

Future Employment

ASK IF YES AT SQ2 (CURRENTLY EMPLOYED)

Q16a. Do you want to change your working situation in the next 12 months? SINGLE CODE

	Code
Yes, definitely	1
Yes, possibly	2
No	3
Unsure/Don't know	4

ASK IF YES (CODE 1 OR 2) AT Q16a

Q16b. How you would like to change your working situation? SINGLE CODE

	Code
Change company I work for	1
Change job/position within the company I work for	2
Prefer not to say	3
Unsure / Don't know	4

ASK IF YES (CODE 1 OR 2) AT Q16a

Q16c. In what way would you like to change your working situation? SPONTANEOUS, MULTICODE POSSIBLE

	Code
Increase in hours	1
Decrease in hours	2
Change shift pattern/days worked	3
Better pay	4
Promoted post	5
Better prospects/development opportunities	6

Contract type	7
Location	8
Other, specify	9
Unsure/Don't know	10

ASK IF YES (CODE 1 OR 2) AT Q16a

Q17. What, if anything, might stop you from changing your working situation?
SPONTANEOUS MULTICODE POSSIBLE

	Code
Lack of experience	1
Lack of qualifications	2
Lack of jobs in general	3
Lack of confidence	4
Other commitments e.g. caring, childcare	5
Lack of information about other jobs	6
Lack of knowledge as to where to look for jobs	7
Lack of motivation / just can't be bothered	8
Lack of time to search/ attend interviews	9
Poor relationship with my employer/manager	10
Nothing, just haven't got round to it	11
Other, specify_____	12
Unsure/Don't know	13

ASK IF YES (CODE 1 OR 2) AT Q16a

Q18. If wanting to change your working situation in the future, what information, advice or guidance would help you to do so? SPONTANEOUS, MULTICODE POSSIBLE

	Code
Advice / guidance on CV writing	1
Advice / guidance on changing career	2
Advice / guidance on preparing for and attending interviews	3
Information on basic employment rights	4
Guidance on where to seek jobs / best websites to use	5
Work experience / placement opportunities	6
Apprenticeship opportunities	7
Advice on current local job opportunities	8
Access to / better entry routes to specific jobs/industries	9
Awareness of / access to support groups	10
Awareness of / access to online communities	11

Support to engage / communicate with employer	12
Other, specify [PROBE FULLY]	13
Nothing	14
Unsure/Don't know	15

ASK IF YES (CODE 1 OR 2) AT Q16a, EXCLUDE THOSE WHO CODE 14 AT Q18

Q19. How would you prefer to receive this information, advice and guidance?
SPONTANEOUS, MULTICODE POSSIBLE

	Code
Websites / online	1
Social media	2
App	3
Seminar, talks	4
Face-to-face meeting	5
Other, specify	6
Unsure/Don't know	7

Other classification / Protected Characteristics

Q20. Are you financially independent? By this we mean that you are responsible for, and currently pay your own living expenses such as rent or mortgage payments, bills, food etc.
SINGLE CODE

INTERVIEWER NOTE: RESPONDENT IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR PAYING OWN BILLS IF THEY ONLY PAY FOR PERSONAL ITEMS SUCH AS MOBILE PHONE, CAR ETC.

	Code
Yes I am responsible for my own living expenses, bills, food etc.	1
No I am dependent on family members/someone else to cover my living expenses, bills, food etc.	2
Prefer not to say	3

Q21. Do you have anyone who is financially dependent on you? SINGLE CODE

	Code
Yes	1
No	2
Prefer not to say	3

Q22. Are you currently in full-time or part-time education? SINGLE CODE

	Code
Full-time education	1
Part-time education	2
Not in education	3

Q23. Do you have a long-standing illness, disability or infirmity? Longstanding means anything that has troubled you or is likely to affect you over a period of time. SINGLE CODE

	Code
Yes	1
No	2
Prefer not to say	3

Q24. Could you please tell me your full postcode? Please note this is for analysis purposes only to ensure a broad geographical coverage of views are received. It will not be passed on to any third parties or the Scottish Government.

	Code
Postcode: _____	Type in
Don't know / unsure - Please tell me the name of the town/village/city you live in	1
Prefer not to say	2

SCRIPTING NOTE: DAILY LOOK-UP REQUIRED FOR URBAN/RURAL AND SIMD CLASSIFICATION

Classification – Place of work

The final questions are to allow us to classify your place of work for analysis purposes.

Q25. Which sector do you work in?

	Code
Agriculture, fisheries, mining and utilities	1
Manufacturing	2
Construction	3
Wholesale and Retail	4
Hotels and Restaurants	5
Transport, storage and communications e.g. Taxi, air or rail transport, warehousing activities, publishing, radio broadcasting, data processing, telecommunications	6
Financial services e.g. bank, building society, insurance etc.	7
Business services e.g. HR, call centres, cleaning services, landscaping, office support, professional services, bookkeeping, accounting, real estate etc.	8
Public Administration e.g. Foreign affairs, Justice and judicial activities, fire service etc.	9
Education	10
Health & Social work	11
Arts and other services e.g. Arts, museum activities, fitness, hairdressing, item repairs	12
Other, specify _____	13
Unsure / don't know	14
Prefer not to say	15

Q26. What size of organisation do you work for?

	Code
Large, corporate organisation e.g. one large office with over 250 employees or multiple stores, offices across the country	1
Medium sized organisation e.g. 51 - 250 employees	2
Small organisation e.g. up to 50 employees	3
Unsure / don't know	4

APPENDIX D – Questions and Variables for defining precarious or flexible work

Table A1: Variables used to define precarious/flexible work

VARIABLES USED TO DEFINE PRECARIOUS/FLEXIBLE WORK	
Question number and codes	Types of positions and criteria
Precarious = Q5=2 OR Q1a=3-9 OR Q6a=3-5	
Q5 = code 2 [Takes priority over all other questions]	No written contract
OR Q1a = codes 3-9	Written contract/Unsure if contract BUT in Fixed term position up to a year Temporary work Seasonal position Casual position Freelance Self-employed (<i>Excl. those who running own business at Q5</i>) Internship
OR Q6a = codes 3-5	Any respondents left who have not been allocated as above who have a Written contract/Unsure BUT have Zero hours contract Varying hours/flexi contract Just turn up for work
Not precarious = everyone else (excl. D/K and PNTS)	
Q5 = codes 1, 3	Has written contract/unsure OR Run own business AND.....
OR Q1a = codes 1, 2, 10	Permanent position Fixed term (over 1 year) position Apprenticeship
OR Q6a = codes 1, 2	Full time Part time
Don't Know OR Prefer not to say	Anyone who said don't know or prefer not to say to all questions at Q5, Q1a and Q6a

Appendix E – Profile of respondents

A1. Qualitative sample profile

Overall ten focus groups were conducted across Scotland with 16-24 year olds in employment. The locations and number of respondents included in the qualitative research is shown in Table A2.

Table A2: Locations and classifications of qualitative sample

Location	No. of focus groups	No. of respondents across both groups	Urban/Rural	SIMD Classification
Dundee	2	17	Urban = 16 Rural = 1	Top 20% SIMD area = 8 Not Top 20% SIMD = 9
Glasgow	2	15	Urban = 12 Rural = 3	Top 20% SIMD area = 3 Not Top 20% SIMD = 12
Edinburgh	2	12	Urban = 12 Rural = 0	Top 20% SIMD area = 2 Not Top 20% SIMD = 10
Peterhead	2	12	Urban = 9 Rural = 3	Top 20% SIMD area = 4 Not Top 20% SIMD = 8
Galashiels	2	10	Urban = 0 Rural = 10	Top 20% SIMD area = 0 Not Top 20% SIMD = 10
Total:	10	66		

The sample profile of each focus group is shown in the following tables.

Table A3: Dundee focus groups

Gender	Age	Industry Sector	Urban/Rural	SIMD Classification
Females = 8 Males = 9	16 yrs = 1 17 yrs = 4 18 yrs = 3 20 yrs = 1 22 yrs = 2 23 yrs = 2 24 yrs = 4	Hotels and restaurants = 5 Retail = 4 Healthcare = 3 Business services = 2 Construction = 2 Manufacturing = 1	Urban = 16 Rural = 1	Top 20% SIMD area = 8 Not Top 20% SIMD = 9
Total Respondents: 17				

Table A4: Glasgow focus groups

Gender	Age	Industry Sector	Urban/Rural	SIMD Classification
Females = 9	16 yrs = 3	Hotels and restaurants = 7	Urban = 12	Top 20% SIMD area = 3
Males = 6	17 yrs = 1	Retail = 1	Rural = 3	Not Top 20% SIMD = 12
	18 yrs = 1	Business services = 2		
	19 yrs = 2	Financial services = 1		
	20 yrs = 1	Arts and other services = 1		
	22 yrs = 3	Other = 3		
	23 yrs = 3			
	24 yrs = 1			
Total Respondents: 15				

Table A5: Edinburgh focus groups

Gender	Age	Industry Sector	Urban/Rural	SIMD Classification
Females = 6	16 yrs = 2	Hotels and restaurants = 4	Urban = 12	Top 20% SIMD area = 2
Males = 6	18 yrs = 2	Retail = 2	Rural = 0	Not Top 20% SIMD = 10
	19 yrs = 3	Healthcare = 3		
	20 yrs = 2	Business services = 1		
	21 yrs = 1	Construction = 1		
	22 yrs = 1	Other = 1		
	23 yrs = 1			
Total Respondents: 12				

Table A6: Peterhead focus groups

Gender	Age	Industry Sector	Urban/Rural	SIMD Classification
Females = 5	16 yrs = 1	Hotels and restaurants = 2	Urban = 9	Top 20% SIMD area = 4
Males = 7	17 yrs = 4	Retail = 5	Rural = 3	Not Top 20% SIMD = 8
	18 yrs = 1	Healthcare = 1		
	20 yrs = 4	Agriculture, fisheries, mining and utilities = 2		
	21 yrs = 2	Other = 2		
Total Respondents: 12				

Table A7: Galashiels focus groups

Gender	Age	Industry Sector	Urban/Rural	SIMD Classification
Females = 7	16 yrs = 1	Hotels and restaurants = 4	Urban = 0	Top 20% SIMD area = 0
Males = 3	17 yrs = 1	Retail = 2	Rural = 10	Not Top 20% SIMD = 10
	18 yrs = 2			

19 yrs = 3	Agriculture, fisheries,
21 yrs = 1	mining and utilities = 2
22 yrs = 1	Education = 1
24 yrs = 1	Manufacturing = 1

Total Respondents: 10

At each location one focus group was with 16-19 year olds and one focus group was with 20-24 year olds. A good mix of age, gender, urban/rural locations and types of employment was included in the sample. Job types included a wide range of occupations.

The 6-fold urban / rural classification was used to identify and monitor the type of area respondents lived in. This was then grouped into urban and rural (includes accessible/remote towns).

SIMD16 quintiles were used to identify and monitor the proportion of respondents that lived in the 20% most deprived areas and those that didn't.

A2. Quantitative Sample Profile

Tables A8 to A12 below show the survey respondents' demographic profile. Quota sampling was used to ensure that a representative sample of 16-24 year olds across Scotland was achieved. Quotas were set against age, gender and location. There was limited published data on 16-24 year olds in Scotland who are employed, therefore different sources were used to determine the proportion of interviews needed across each of the different variables.

Table A8 shows the proportion of interviews achieved across each location compared to the breakdown for the Scottish population. The proportion of interviews conducted in each area accurately reflects the Scottish population statistics for 16-24 year olds.

Table A8: Locations and classifications of quantitative sample

Location	Total Sample	Target – Based on % of Scottish population of 16-24 year olds ⁴
Central Scotland	9%	9%
Glasgow	14%	14%
Highlands & Islands	8%	8%
Lothians	19%	18%
Mid Scotland & Fife	13%	12%
North East Scotland	14%	14%
South Scotland	12%	13%
West Scotland	12%	12%
Base: All	1,043	100%

Labour Force Survey data (ONS, 2018) showed that there is a higher proportion of 20-24 year olds employed across Scotland than 16-19 year olds, therefore quotas were set to reflect this in the final sample. The final sample achieved had a slightly higher proportion of 16-19 year olds than the target; however a checking process was carried out on the data to ensure this difference did not impact on the overall findings. The checking process involved weighting the full data set by the target age split of 16-19 and 20-24 year olds, to show what the results would have been had the correct proportion of age groups been achieved. This weighted data was compared against the unweighted data and no difference in results was found, it

⁴ NRS Mid-year population statistics 2018

was concluded that this slight difference in age split has had no impact on the overall findings, and the unweighted data has been used in the report. The proportion of males and females in the sample reflect the profile of employed 16-24 year olds across Scotland; 52% of males and 48% of females (see Table A9).

Table A9: Age and gender of the study and sample populations

Age	Total Sample	Target – Based on % of employed 16-24 year olds in Scotland ⁵
16 – 19 years old	30%	26%
20 – 24 years old	70%	74%
Gender		
Male (Incl. trans man)	52%	53%
Female (Incl. trans woman)	48%	47%
Base: all	1,043	100%

The respondent's ethnicity was also captured and the overall sample included 4% from an ethnic minority group (see Table A10).

Table A10: Ethnicity of the study and sample populations

Ethnicity	Total Sample	Target – Based on % of Scottish population of 16-24 year olds ⁶
White	96%	94%
Other Ethnic group – Mixed, Asian, Asian Scottish, Asian British, African	4%	6%
Base: all	1,043	100%

It was also important to ensure that the final sample was reflective of the study population in terms of the area in which they live, however, achieving set quotas on this can be challenging alongside other criteria (e.g. gender, age, etc. as per the above). Therefore, whether respondents were living in an urban or rural location, or were identified as living in the 20% most deprived areas were left to fall out of the

⁵ ONS, 2018

⁶ Census, 2011

sampling naturally. The results were monitored throughout the fieldwork period to ensure the final data set was reflective of the Scottish population. The final data set is reflective of the Scottish population of 16-24 year olds (see Table A11).

Table A11: Urban, rural and SIMD classifications for the study and sample populations

Urban / Rural location	Total Sample (Excl. unclassified post codes)	Target Based on % of Scottish population of 16-24 year olds ⁷
Large / Other Urban areas	73%	75%
Accessible / Remote towns or rural areas	27%	25%
Base: all (excl. unclassified postcodes)	830	100%
Top 20% SIMD area Not Top 20% SIMD area	Total Sample (Excl. unclassified postcodes)	Target Based on % of Scottish population ⁸
Most deprived quintile	24%	20%
Other four quintiles	76%	80%
Base: all (excl. unclassified postcodes)	824	100%

All respondents included in the research were either currently employed or had been employed in the last 24 months. The majority of the sample (84%) were currently employed, with 16% not working at the time of the fieldwork but had worked in the previous 24 months.

Just under half (46%) of the sample were in either full time or part time education. Just over half (54%) were not financially independent and relied on family members or someone else to cover their living expenses (Table A12). This was much higher for the younger age-group, with 83% of 16-19 year olds not financially independent. The qualitative findings suggested that those in education and/or not financially independent were less concerned about their contract or working conditions than those who were not in education and/or financially responsible for their own living expenses.

⁷ NRS 2017, populations estimates

⁸ SIMD, 2016

A minority (12%) had someone who was financially dependent on them and this was skewed towards the 20-24 year olds.

Table A12: Employment, education status and financial dependence of the study population

Employment status	Total Sample
Currently working	84%
Not currently working but worked in the last 24 months	16%
Education status	
Full-time education	37%
Part-time education	9%
Not in education	55%
Financial dependence	
Yes I am responsible for my own living expenses, bills, food etc.	45%
No I am dependent on family members/someone else to cover my living expenses, bills, food etc.	54%
Base: all	1,043

As quota controls guided the sample selection, precise margins of error or significance testing are not appropriate, as the sampling type is non-probability. The margins of error outlined below for the sub-groups are therefore indicative, based on an equivalent probability sample.

Table A13: Margins of error for sub-groups

Sub-groups	Sample size	Margins of error 95% confidence level
Age		
16-19 year olds	313	±1.1% and ±5.5%
20-24 year olds	730	±0.7% and ±3.6%
Education		
In education	474	±0.9% and ±4.5%
Not in education	569	±0.8% and ±4.1%
Financial dependence		

Financially dependent	466	$\pm 0.9\%$ and $\pm 4.5\%$
Financially independent	566	$\pm 0.8\%$ and $\pm 4.1\%$

Appendix F – Summary profile of those in precarious/flexible work and looking to change position

Table A14: Profile of those looking to change position, by education status

	Total	Not in education	In education	Precarious and no change
Base	428	106	102	220
Age Group				
16 - 19 years old	35%	27%	43%	35%
20 – 24 years old	65%	73%	57%	65%
Gender				
Male	49%	45%	48%	51%
Female	51%	55%	52%	49%
Social group				
ABC1	46%	28%	53%	52%
C2DE	54%	72%	47%	48%
SIMD (excl not NF/refused)				
Deprived areas (20% SIMD most deprived)	20%	30%	11%	20%
Not deprived (Not in lowest 20% SIMD area)	80%	70%	89%	80%
Financially independent				
Responsible for own bills	37%	41%	30%	38%
Dependent on someone else	63%	59%	69%	61%
Prefer not to say	1%	-	1%	1%
Responsible for someone else				
Responsible for a dependent	9%	13%	4%	10%
Not responsible for a dependent	90%	87%	95%	90%
Prefer not to say	0%	-	1%	1%

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