

Fair Start Scotland Evaluation Report 5 - Phone Survey with Service Participants - Years 4 & 5 (November 2023)



ECONOMY AND LABOUR MARKET

Contents

Summary	4
1. Introduction	11
2. Methodology	12
2.1 Research aims.....	12
2.2 Survey methodology	12
3. Profile of participants	15
3.1 Participant characteristics.....	15
3.1.1 Age and gender	15
3.1.2 Qualification level.....	15
3.1.3 Ethnicity	17
3.2 Priority families	17
3.3 Re-joiners	18
3.3 Differences in profile of participants between the 2021-22 cohort and previous cohorts	19
4. Health of participants	20
4.1 Impact of health conditions	22
4.2 Differences in health of participants between the 2021-22 cohort and previous cohorts	24
5. Working status & quality of work	25
5.1 Employment status of the 2021-22 cohort at the time of the survey	25
5.2 Differences in employment status between the 2021-22 cohort and previous cohorts	28
5.3 Quality of work.....	30
5.3.1 Occupation.....	30
5.3.2 Differences in occupation between the 2021-22 cohort and previous cohorts	31
5.3.3 Income	33
5.3.4 Differences in income between the 2021-22 cohort and previous cohorts	35
5.3.5 Type of employment contract	36
5.3.6 Types of employment contract for participants in 2021-22 cohort compared with previous cohorts	37
5.3.7 Employment history	37
6. Service experiences	42
6.1 Experience of joining the service	42

6.1.1 Experience of the sign-up process and awareness of the voluntary nature of the service	42
6.1.2 Differences in sign up experiences between the 2021-22 cohort and previous cohorts	43
6.1.3 Experiences of re-joining the service.....	43
6.2 Support received and usefulness	44
6.2.1 Pre-employment support	44
6.2.2 Meeting with a key worker or employability advisor	50
6.2.3 Differences in pre-employment support received between the 2021-22 cohort and previous cohorts	51
6.2.4 In-work support.....	52
6.3 Overall views of support	54
6.4 Views on further support participants would have liked to receive.....	55
6.5 Problems or concerns with FSS	56
6.6 Reasons for ending engagement with FSS	57
6.7 Reasons for leaving the service for the 2021-22 cohort and the previous cohorts	61
6.8 Whether FSS helped participants to find a job	62
7. Outcomes & motivation to return to work.....	64
7.1 Views on returning to work	64
7.2 Impact of FSS on motivation	65
7.3 Barriers to work.....	65
7.4 The impact of FSS support on overcoming barriers to work	67
7.5 Job search skills	69
7.6 Progression & job satisfaction	70
7.7 The impact of FSS on wellbeing.....	74
8. 2020 cohort: Outcomes over time.....	76
8.1 Employment status of the 2020 cohort	76
8.2 Quality of work.....	81
8.3 Outcomes and motivation to return to work.....	90
8.3.1 Views on returning to work	90
8.3.2 Impact of FSS on motivation.....	92
8.3.3 The impact of FSS support on overcoming barriers to work	92
8.3.4 Job search skills	94
8.3.5 Wellbeing	95
8.3.6 Awareness of future FSS support.....	96
Technical Appendix.....	97

Summary

This report presents detailed findings from the fourth wave of a phone survey conducted to capture the experiences of Fair Start Scotland (FSS) participants. The phone survey is one element of an ongoing evaluation programme of FSS and focuses on evaluating Year 4 (April 2021 – March 2022) and Year 5 (April 2022 – March 2023) of FSS delivery.

Background

FSS is the devolved employability service responsible for providing employment support for disabled people and those at risk of long-term unemployment throughout Scotland. The service launched in April 2018, initially for three years, but has since been extended to accept referrals until 31st of March 2024. Evaluation of the service has been conducted throughout its lifetime, in order to understand the experiences and outcomes for participants, and to contribute to continuous improvement of the service. The following report forms part of the evaluation of the service extension phase, which will contribute to future provision of employability support in Scotland, including the [No One Left Behind](#) approach.

Methodology

Between 2018 and 2023 there have been four survey “waves” with FSS participants. In this report, FSS participants who took part in this phone survey research are referred to according to the calendar year they joined FSS including: the 2018 cohort (individuals first interviewed as part of Wave 1 survey), 2019 cohort (individuals first interviewed as part of Wave 2 survey), 2020 cohort (individuals first interviewed as part of Wave 3 survey) and 2021-22 cohort (individuals first interviewed as part of Wave 4 survey). From the Wave 2 survey onwards the survey had a longitudinal element, meaning that a proportion of the earlier cohorts were recontacted in the subsequent wave(s). Figure 1 provides further details which individuals were surveyed over the four survey waves.

This iteration of the survey was carried out between December 2022 and January 2023 and was completed by 1,000 participants, 250 of whom had been interviewed previously. Out of the 1,000 participants surveyed, 750 had joined FSS between July 2021 and June 2022 and 250 had joined the programme in 2020.

Figure 1: Cohorts surveyed across four survey waves

2018 cohort	1,005 respondents	400 respondents	159 respondents	N/A
2019 cohort		607 respondents	205 respondents	N/A
2020 cohort			663 respondents	250 respondents
2021-22 cohort				750 respondents
	Wave 1 (June 2019)	Wave 2 (May 2020)	Wave 3 (May 2021)	Wave 4 (December 2022 -January 2023)
	■ New participants		■ Longitudinal participants	

To analyse results from the phone survey, differences between waves, cohorts and participant sub-groups were tested for statistical significance. Only significant differences are reported. Participant sub-groups include gender, age, ethnicity, presence of a health condition, education level, whether participants are in a priority family group, parents, stage of support, early leavers from the service, and employment status/activity before participating in FSS and at the time of the interview. Some of the participants interviewed had participated in the FSS service more than once. The experiences of re-joiners were compared against those of non-rejoiners and of all participants on average to identify any differences.

Comparisons between geographical contract area (Lots) are also included, in order to indicate any differences related to geography. Differences between Lots should not be interpreted as indicative of the performance of local service providers.

With the aim of assessing longitudinal outcomes, 250 of the 2020 cohort interviewed at Wave 3 were interviewed for a second time at Wave 4. In order to address the risk of non-response bias¹ weighting was applied to longitudinal data on geographical Lot, gender and age based on the population proportions of 2020 FSS starters and on employment status based on the employment status of the 2020 cohort at Wave 3.

Demographic data was collected as part of the phone survey to ensure the sample is broadly representative of all FSS participants. A table detailing key demographics

¹ A non-response bias refers to the phenomenon in which the sample of participants is systematically different from the population it was drawn from because participants with certain characteristics are less likely accept invitation to take part in a study.

of the survey sample can be found in the [technical appendix](#). [Detailed statistics](#), including demographics data, for FSS are published by the Scottish Government quarterly.

Overview of results

Overall, findings show that in Year 4 and Year 5 of its delivery, the service has continued to deliver positive results for participants, with members of the 2021-22 cohort expressing high levels of satisfaction with their experience of FSS (for instance, 93 per cent of the 2021-22 cohort agreed that they were treated with dignity and respect when receiving support from FSS), and members of the 2020 cohort showing signs that difficulties entering employment at the time they were first surveyed have since been overcome (these individuals were significantly more likely to be working for an employer in a paid role at Wave 4 compared to Wave 3 (59 per cent compared to 36 per cent).

However, there are indications of differences in experiences of services across demographic groups, and in the extent of high satisfaction scores across demographic groups, for example minority ethnic participants and those with a limiting health condition. For example, white participants were more likely to find a dedicated key worker useful than ethnic minority participants (79 per cent compared to 69 per cent). Furthermore, those who had a health condition which limits their day to day activities were less likely to agree that FSS offered support to improve their general quality of life and wellbeing compared to those whose day to day was not affected by their health condition (79 per cent compared to 90 per cent). However, the differences identified in the reported experiences across demographic groups do not necessarily translate into differences in outcomes from participating in FSS services.

Profile of participants

The below details the profile of participants across several characteristics of interest²:

- 62 per cent were male and 37 per cent were female
- 13 per cent were from a minority ethnic background
- 23 per cent were parents and 21 per cent belonged to a priority family³
- 26 per cent of the 2021-22 cohort were 're-joiners', in that they had previously received support from the service.
- 48 per cent had a health condition which limits their day-to-day activities, 14 per cent had a health condition but no limitations and 33 per cent had no health condition

² These are the proportions after weighting was applied. See the [technical appendix](#) for a detailed breakdown of both unweighted and weighted responses.

³ Just sixteen survey participants were parents but did not belong to a priority family.

Working Status & Quality of Work

At the time the survey was conducted, 39 per cent of the latest 2021-22 cohort were either working for an employer or self-employed⁴ while just under half were out of work and claiming an out of work benefit (48 per cent). A small proportion were not working and not claiming an out of work benefit (7 per cent).

FSS participants who were employed, self-employed or who had done paid work in the last week prior to the survey were asked what their usual pay was including overtime, bonuses or tips but before tax and other deductions are taken out. This information on gross (i.e. pay before tax or any other deductions) earnings reported by survey participants was then benchmarked against the [National Living Wage](#) and [Real Living Wage](#) rates at the time of the survey. The National Living Wage is set each year by the [Low Pay Commission](#) and is the legal minimum employers must pay workers if they are aged 23 or above. The Real Living Wage is a voluntary wage rate set by the [Living Wage Foundation](#) each year and is a rate that employers sign up to pay (i.e. it is not a legal minimum wage rate).

The earning levels reported by participants indicated that around one in eight (12 per cent) of the 2021-22 cohort in-work were earning below the National Living Wage rate for those aged 23 or or above⁵. The majority (74 per cent) of the working cohort reported earnings that indicated they were earning at least the National Living Wage rate, with 30 per cent reporting earnings that indicated that they were earning at least the level of the Real Living Wage. It should be noted that age played a role here; among those aged 25 and above, 9% reported earnings that would be below the National Living Wage rate and 76% reported earnings that would be at the National Living Wage rate or above. Among those aged between 16 and 24 years old, 24 per cent reported earnings that would be below the National Living Wage rate and 65 per cent reported earnings that would be at the National Living Wage rate or above.

⁴ Please note that, for those who were in-work at the time of the survey, the survey did not ask how participants obtained these jobs. It is therefore not possible to ascertain based on the findings from the survey, whether those who were in-work at the time the survey took place were placed in those jobs through FSS providers or obtained the jobs by themselves (including after having left the service).

⁵ The hourly rate for the minimum wage (including the National Minimum Wage and National Living Wage) depends on age and whether the person is an apprentice ([a separate legal requirements on minimum wage apply to apprenticeships](#)). The National Living Wage applies for those aged 23 or above and the National Minimum Wage applies for workers ages 22 and under. We do not have a breakdown of income by individual age, only for age bands 16-24 and 25 or above. We cannot therefore be certain if or how many of those aged 16 - 24 who reported being paid less than the National Living Wage were legally entitled to it. However, everyone aged 25 or above who reported earning less than the National Living Wage were legally entitled to it. Further, as the survey did not collect data on whether the person was an apprentice we cannot state whether the apprenticeship status impacted on earnings.

Almost three in five (57 per cent) of participants in the 2021-22 cohort who had worked within the last week had a permanent employment contract, while less than one in five (18 per cent) had a temporary contract. Those employed on a zero hours contract made up 12 per cent of the working 2021-22 cohort and 5 per cent were self-employed.

Service experience and changes over time

Overall satisfaction with the support received from FSS has remained consistently high across all waves. Of the 2021-22 cohort, 93 per cent felt they were treated with dignity and respect, in line with 95 per cent of the 2020 cohort at Wave 3, 91 per cent of the 2019 cohort at Wave 2 and 92 per cent of the 2018 cohort at Wave 1. Over four-fifths (81 per cent) of the 2021-22 cohort agreed that they were offered support to improve their general quality of life and wellbeing, in line with previous waves (84 per cent at Wave 3, 81 per cent at Wave 2, and 78 per cent at Wave 1). Most participants in the 2021-22 cohort (87 per cent) were aware that signing up for the service was voluntary, while 10 per cent thought that they had to take part and 3 per cent did not know.

Take up of pre-employment support has remained consistent over the last five years of the service, and generally participants who accessed the various types of support were very likely to find them useful (for example, for 2021-2023 cohort at Wave 4, 88 per cent of participants recalled being offered a dedicated key worker or advisor and of these 94 per cent took up the offer. 77 per cent of those who took up the offer reported they had found this form of support useful).

Take up of in-work support had increased since Wave 3 (54 per cent at Wave 4 compared with 43 per cent at Wave 3) but remains lower than the levels seen at the launch of the FSS service, (67 per cent of the 2018 cohort at Wave 1). However, in all four cohorts, those who accessed in-work support were highly likely to find the various types of support helpful.

Awareness of the possibility to re-join the service was relatively high, at 75 per cent amongst those who were taking part for the first time.

Outcomes and Motivation to Return to Work

FSS support helped build participants' motivation to find work. The majority of the 2021-22 cohort who were not working (or working less than 16 hours per week) at the time of the survey wanted to return to work (86 per cent) and almost two-thirds (64 per cent) reported that their motivation to find work had increased since receiving FSS support.

Some new measures of job quality were collected at Wave 4 compared with previous waves of the survey. Through this we found that on the whole, participants from the 2021-22 cohort who were in work at the time of the survey indicated high levels of satisfaction with their job (83 per cent), as well as agreement that their job offered the flexibility to manage family and household responsibilities (86 per cent). Participant satisfaction among the 2021-22 cohort was lower for other aspects of their job such as income, with two-thirds (68 per cent) agreeing that their job pays

enough to support themselves/their families, and with the extent to which their job reflects their career aspirations (61 per cent).

There were also early indications that the 2021-22 cohort were moving towards higher quality employment since taking part in FSS. For example, over half of those in work (59 per cent) had undertaken training or development opportunities in their job, whilst over a third (37 per cent) had received an increase in pay rate, salary or income. Over one in ten had received a performance-related bonus (14 per cent), had moved to another job with increased pay (14 per cent), or had received a promotion (11 per cent).

Long term outcomes for the 2020 cohort

The long term outcomes for participants who joined the service in 2020 suggest that those who had found employment through the FSS service at Wave 3 were likely to be able to sustain it at the point of Wave 4 and a substantial proportion of those who were not in work at the point of the Wave 3 survey had since moved into work at Wave 4.

As described above, we first contacted the 2020 cohort (663 individuals) in May 2021 (Wave 3), up to 16 months after they joined the service. We then surveyed a selected sample of 250 individuals from 2020 cohort again between December 2022 and January 2023 (Wave 4), circa 18 months after they took part in Wave 3 survey. We then analysed longitudinal data for the 250 individuals who took part in both Wave 3 and Wave 4 surveys. The overall proportion of this longitudinal cohort who were in work had considerably increased (63 per cent compared with 41 per cent at Wave 3). Among the longitudinal respondents in the 2020 cohort at Wave 4, three in ten (29 per cent) moved into work during their second or third year after joining the service (at Wave 4), while only 3 per cent moved out of work. At Wave 4, the 2020 cohort that were in work were most commonly working in labour intensive jobs (36 per cent). This was followed by 22 per cent in service intensive roles, 22 per cent in high skilled jobs, and 19 per cent in middle skilled roles.

Measures of improvement in job quality between Waves 3 and 4 were mixed. There were no significant changes in the types of occupation undertaken by the 2020 cohort between waves, however, a greater proportion of the longitudinal cohort who were in work at Wave 4 held a permanent employment contact (75 per cent) compared to at Wave 3 (43 per cent).

The new measures of job quality introduced this year found high levels of satisfaction in the 2020 cohort who were in work at the time of the survey. Participants reported high levels of satisfaction with their job (88 per cent) and the work they do day-to-day (85 per cent). Participant satisfaction among the 2020 cohort was lower for other aspects of their job such as income, with only two-thirds (66 per cent) agreeing that their job pays enough to support themselves/their families, and with the extent to which their job reflects their career aspirations (54 per cent).

Despite this, many participants from the 2020 cohort reported experiences of work that would suggest movement towards higher quality employment. For example, almost three-quarters (73 per cent) had undertaken training or development opportunities in their job, two-thirds (66 per cent) had received an increase in pay rate, salary or income, and almost a quarter (24 per cent) had obtained a promotion.

1. Introduction

The Scotland Act 2016 devolved responsibility for contracted employment support for disabled people and those at risk of long-term unemployment. Fair Start Scotland (FSS) launched in April 2018 and is now in its sixth year of service provision.

FSS is underpinned by the following principles:

- delivery of a flexible ‘whole person’ approach
- services that are responsive to those with high needs
- a drive towards real jobs
- services designed and delivered in partnership
- services designed nationally but adapted and delivered locally
- contracts that combine payment by job outcome and progression towards work

Delivery of FSS has been contracted out by the Scottish Government to five different service providers⁶, over nine geographical Lots across Scotland. In years 1-4 of provision, between April 2018 and March 2022, there were 45,039 starts on the service. During the time period covered by the Wave 4 survey (July 2021 to June 2022), there were 12,194 starts.

Since the start of Year 4 (April 2021 – March 2022) of FSS, and in order to drive service improvement, a number of changes to delivery were introduced, including allowing those who had previously taken part to re-join the service. Other changes starting from April 2022 included allowing those undertaking a part-time education course (including ESOL - English for Speakers of Other Languages) to take part in the service, and a move to a hybrid delivery model, enabling a mix of online and in-person support (following the use of remote delivery of the service during the Covid-19 related restrictions).

As part of the ongoing evaluation of FSS, IFF Research was commissioned to conduct three annual waves of telephone survey research with FSS participants, over the period 2019 to 2021. IFF was then commissioned for this current Wave 4 in 2022.

The aim of the survey is to provide a representative picture of how participants are experiencing FSS and the outcomes they achieve. The research was designed to enhance the Scottish Government’s current understanding of what works in employment support for individuals and ultimately to promote the continuous improvement of policy and service delivery. This includes a particular focus on the views of individuals who face multiple and complex barriers to employment, and the views of those from families at highest risk of being affected by child poverty.

⁶ Please note that up until Summer 2020 the service was delivered by six service providers.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research aims

A telephone survey was carried out with FSS participants, in a continuation from the methodology of previous waves of research. This quantitative research aims to broadly explore the experiences and associated outcomes for Year 4 and Year 5 FSS service participants. This research incorporated a particular focus on previously identified groups who have significant barriers to employment and are further from the labour market. This includes participants from families at highest risk of child poverty, participants from minority ethnic background and disabled participants.

2.2 Survey methodology

Participants were sent an advance letter two weeks prior to fieldwork to notify them of the research and offer them the opportunity to decline to take part. 3,000 participants belonging to the 2021-22 cohort (i.e. those who started between July 2021 and June 2022) were identified to be contacted. An additional 663 participants belonging to the 2020 cohort (i.e. those who took part in Wave 3 survey) were identified for the purpose of the longitudinal part of the survey. 2,956 of the 2021-22 cohort were contacted, while 632 of the 2020 cohort were contacted. Telephone fieldwork was conducted between 15th December 2022 and 27th January 2023, with a break for Christmas and New Year from 24th December 2022 to 2nd January. Among the 2021-22 cohort, 305 participants declined to participate (10 per cent of the starting sample). 57 of the 2020 cohort declined to participate (9 per cent of the starting sample). The average survey length for the 2021-22 cohort respondents was 23 minutes 18 seconds while for the 2020 respondents was 11 minutes 6 seconds. An 'assisted' interview was offered in the most common minority languages spoken in the UK (e.g. French, German, Spanish, Polish, Bengali, Gujarati, Punjabi, Urdu, Yoruba and Hindi). In an assisted interview, the interviewer administers the questionnaire in English, but provides assistance in the respondent's first language where necessary to aid understanding.

In this report, FSS participants who took part in the surveys are referred to as the 2018 cohort (individuals first interviewed as part of Wave 1 survey), 2019 cohort (individuals first interviewed as part of Wave 2 survey), 2020 cohort (individuals first interviewed as part of Wave 3 survey) and 2021-22 cohort (individuals first interviewed as part of Wave 4 survey), according to the calendar year they joined FSS. From Wave 2 survey onwards the survey had a longitudinal element, meaning that a proportion of the earlier cohorts were recontacted in the subsequent wave(s). Figure 2 shows which respondents were surveyed over the four survey waves.

Figure 2: Cohorts surveyed across four survey waves

2018 cohort	1,005 respondents	400 respondents	159 respondents	N/A
2019 cohort		607 respondents	205 respondents	N/A
2020 cohort			663 respondents	250 respondents
2021-22 cohort				750 respondents
	Wave 1 (June 2019)	Wave 2 (May 2020)	Wave 3 (May 2021)	Wave 4 (December 2022 -January 2023)
	■ New participants		■ Longitudinal participants	

This report details findings from Wave 4 of the survey that was carried out in December 2022 and January 2023. The first seven chapters focus predominantly on participants from the 2021-22 cohort, and within each chapter comparisons are made between the current 2021-22 cohort and past cohorts (i.e. the 2018, 2019 and 2020 cohorts) where relevant. The final chapter focuses mainly on the experiences over time of the 2020 cohort who were first surveyed in May 2021 as part of Wave 3 survey and were then surveyed again in December 2022 – January 2023 as part of this current Wave 4 survey. It should be noted that the base size for the 2020 cohort (250 participants) is low, so sub-group comparisons should be treated with caution.

Differences between the different year groups, survey waves and sub-groups within them have been tested and only those that are significant are reported on. Generally, questions where the base size was lower than 30 were not used⁷. For a full explanation of the significance testing undertaken, and a full list of sub-groups tested, please refer to the [technical appendix](#) at the end of this report.

Longitudinal sample

All new FSS participants from the Wave 3 cohort were recontacted in Wave 4 (except those who had opted out and declined further contact), with the aim of conducting 250 interviews in total within this group. These participants had joined the FSS service between January and December 2020. The [final chapter](#) examines this group in detail and compares their answers from the Wave 3 survey and the

⁷ Where findings are reported as “more/less likely than average” the test is between the figure reported and the average of the other categories in that sub-group.

Wave 4 survey for the 250 individuals who took part in both Waves. This allows a comparison on key measures over time and examine longitudinal outcomes. For the 250 individuals who took part in both waves, a RIM weight was applied to the data collected at Wave 3 and at Wave 4. The RIM weight was based on gender, age and geographical Lot from the full population proportions of 2020 FSS starters. The purpose of this was to bring the data back in line with the original population proportions of the 2020 FSS starters and to correct for any non-response bias⁸. In addition a RIM weight was also applied to Wave 4 longitudinal data based on the employment status of the 2020 cohort at Wave 3, to further account for any non-response bias between Wave 3 and Wave 4 of the survey.

A note on differences between geographical Lots

One of the sub-groups tested to explore any statistically significant differences was geographical Lot. This was undertaken in order indicate any differences related to geography, but we do not have insight into the underlying reasons behind any differences. Differences between Lots should not be interpreted as indicative of the performance of local service providers, simply that a difference exists between the geographical areas. Any interpretation of results for geographical Lots should be undertaken with extreme caution.

A note on eligibility for participation in Fair Start Scotland during 2021-22

In response to the labour market context during 2021/22, and participant feedback collected during the Year 3 Evaluation, some changes were made to the participation and eligibility criteria for 2021-22:

- reduction of the criteria for “length of time unemployed” from 24 months to 12 months
- allowing a “right of return” to previous participants; we have termed this group “re-joiners” in this report
- continuing to allow participants to “pause” their engagement with the service

As a result, the profile of individuals surveyed as part of the 2021-22 cohort reflects these changes. For example, just over a quarter (26%) of the 2021-22 cohort were re-joiners, having received support from the service perviously. More information on re-joiners can be found in the following “Profile of Respondents” section.

⁸ A non-response bias refers to the phenomenon in which the sample of participants is systematically different from the population it was drawn from because participants with certain characteristics are less likely accept invitation to take part in a study.

3. Profile of participants

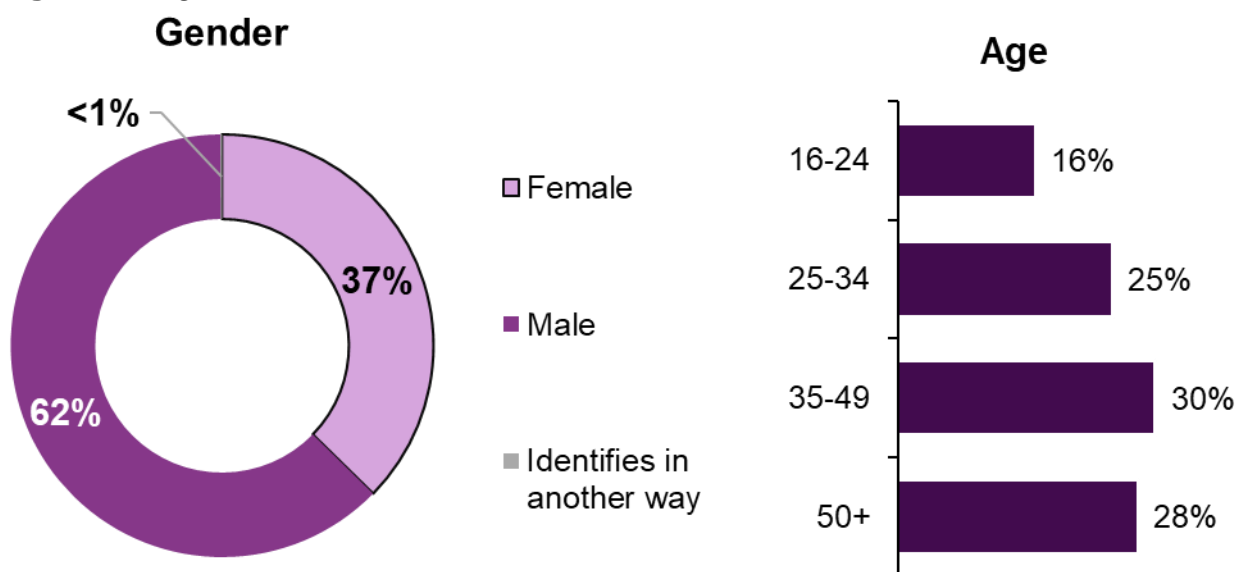
This section provides an overview of the participants who joined the service between July 2021 and June 2022 and who took part in the survey at Wave 4. It sets out the profile of participants by age, gender and qualification level, any health conditions or disabilities they experience, and their employment history prior to entering support. The proportion of participants who were classified as being in 'priority family groups' is also presented. Analysis has been undertaken to identify any notable differences between the Wave 4 fresh sample and those from previous years.

3.1 Participant characteristics

3.1.1 Age and gender

Just over three-fifths (62 per cent) of the 2021-22 cohort identified as male, and just under two-fifths identified as female (37 per cent), as shown in Figure 3. Less than 1 per cent of participants identified in another way.

Figure 3: Age and Gender of the 2021-22 cohort



Source: IFF Research telephone survey of FSS customers, sample information: H1_W4 Do you identify as...? H2_W4. Which of the following age bands do you fall into? Base: All 2021-22 cohort (750)

The majority of participants were aged 35 or above, 30 per cent were aged 35 to 49 and 28 per cent were aged 50 or above. A quarter (25 per cent) were aged 25 to 34 and the remaining 16 per cent were aged 16 to 24.

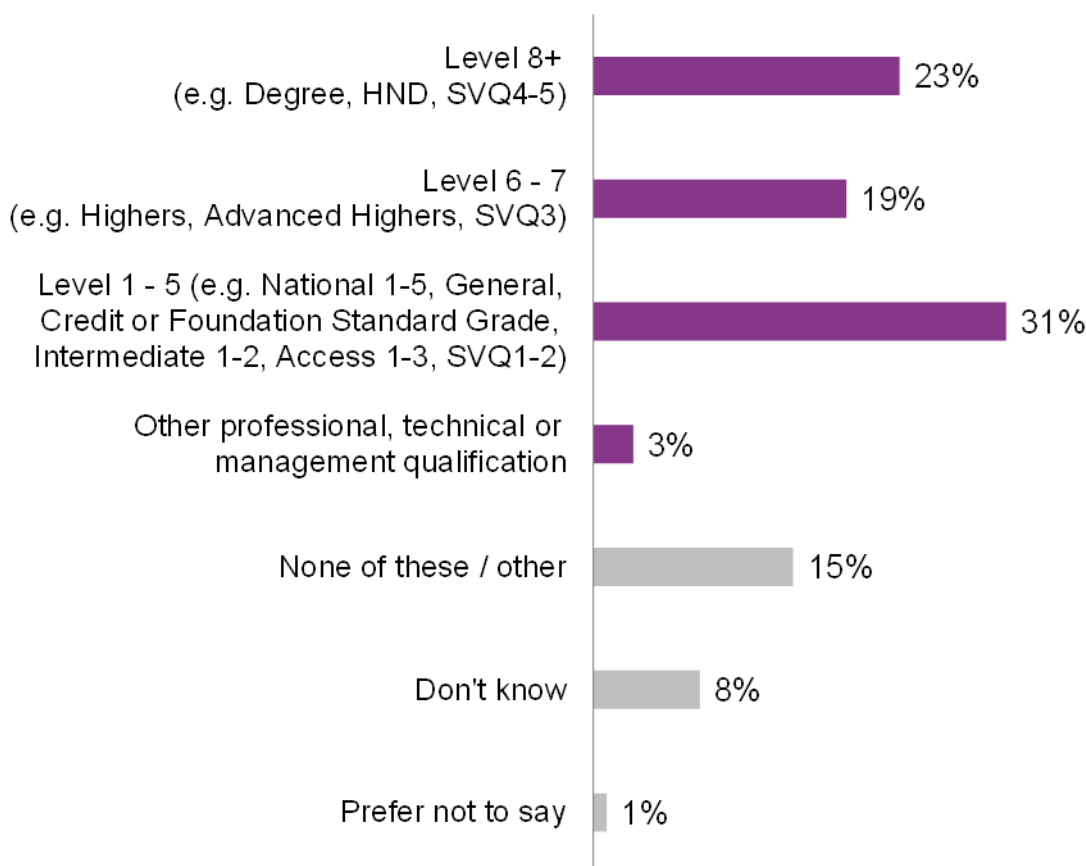
3.1.2 Qualification level

Just under a quarter (23 per cent) of the 2021-22 cohort held qualifications at [Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework](#) (SCQF) Level 8 or above (e.g. a Degree). The highest qualification held by a fifth (19 per cent) of participants was

SCQF Level 6 to 7 (e.g. Highers), but for almost a third (31 per cent) were qualified no higher than SCQF Level 5.

Of those remaining, 15 per cent of participants held no academic, professional, technical or management qualifications, 8 per cent were unsure what qualifications they held, 3 per cent had an other professional, technical or management qualification and 1 per cent were unwilling to report them.

Figure 4: Highest qualification level achieved by the 2021-22 cohort



Source: IFF Research telephone survey of FSS customers: H3_W4. What is the highest level of qualification that you have achieved? Base: All 2021-22 cohort (750)

Male participants were more likely to be qualified only to SCQF Level 1 to 5 (34 per cent versus 26 per cent of female participants). Younger participants were also more likely to be qualified only to SCQF Level 1 to 5 (52 per cent of those under 25 compared to 27 per cent of those 25 or older) whilst the older participants were more likely to hold no qualifications (21 per cent of those aged 50 or above versus 8 per cent of those aged under 35).

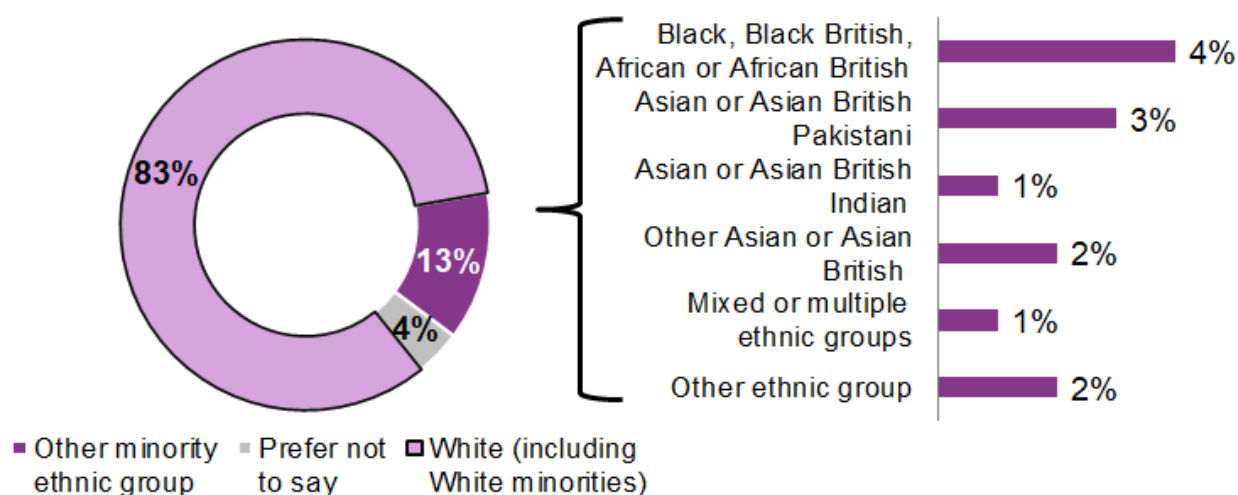
Participants aged 25 or above were twice as likely to have SCQF Level 8+ qualifications (25 per cent versus 12 per cent of younger participants).

3.1.3 Ethnicity

Over four-fifths (83 per cent) of the 2021-22 cohort described their ethnic background as white, as shown in Figure 5. This includes those who described their background as white Scottish (65 per cent), white other British (15 per cent) and other white minority groups (white Polish 1 per cent, white Irish less than 1 per cent and other white ethnic groups 2 per cent). Among those who described their ethnic background as white, 63 per cent identified as male and 37 per cent identified as female.

Around one-in-seven participants (13 per cent) were from an other minority ethnic group. Participants from Asian or Asian British backgrounds accounted for 6 per cent of the cohort, half of whom were from an Asian or Asian British Pakistani background (3 per cent). Four per cent of participants were from Black, Black British, African or African British backgrounds (the majority of these, three per cent, were from African or African British backgrounds). Among those who were from a minority ethnic group, 60 per cent identified as male and 40 per cent identified as female, a similar split to those who described their ethnic background as white.

Figure 5: Ethnic background of the 2021-22 cohort



Source: IFF Research telephone survey of FSS customers: H4_W4. Which of the following best describes your ethnic background? Base: All 2021-22 cohort (750). Participants from a minority ethnic background were more likely to be aged 25 to 49 (18 per cent of those aged 25 to 49 were from a minority ethnic background versus 7 per cent of those under 25 and 5 per cent of those aged 50 or above). Participants from a minority ethnic background were also more likely to be qualified to SCQF Level 8+ (52 per cent versus 17 per cent of white participants)⁹.

3.2 Priority families

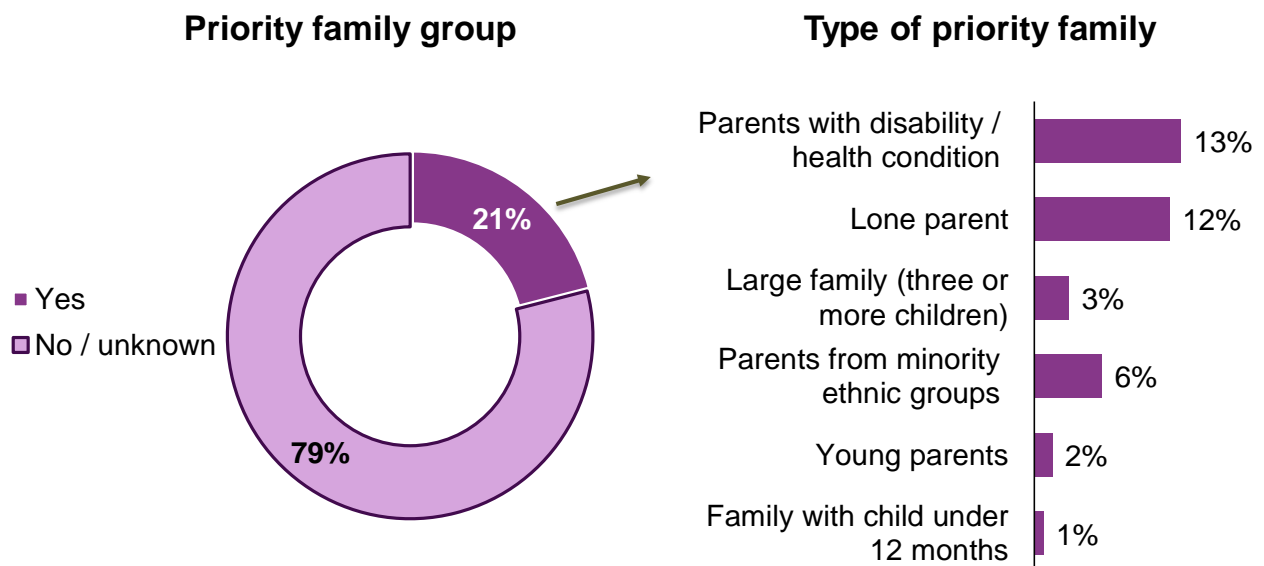
The Scottish Government has identified a number of [priority family groups](#). These are family types that have a higher-than-average risk of child poverty. These

⁹ This is a trend consistent with data from the [2011 Scotland Census](#), where people from a minority ethnic background were more likely to be qualified to degree level or above than white people.

include lone parents, young parents (under 25 years old), parents from minority ethnic groups, parents with a disability / health condition, families with three or more children, and families with a child under 12 months of age. There is a desire to further understand the impact of employability support on tackling child poverty, so it is key that FSS reaches these parents.

23 per cent of the 2021-22 cohort were parents. Just sixteen participants were parents but did not belong to a priority family. As shown in Figure 6 21 per cent of the 2021-22 cohort belonged to a priority family group. Most commonly this was because they were parents with a disability or health condition (13 per cent) and / or were lone parents (12 per cent). Of those who were members of a priority family, over half (57 per cent) met two or more qualifying criteria, and 13 per cent met three or more criteria.

Figure 6: Priority groups as a proportion of the 2021-22 cohort



Source: IFF Research telephone survey of FSS customers, W4. Base: 2021-22 cohort (750)

3.3 Re-joiners

Of the 2021-22 cohort, just over a quarter (26 per cent) were 're-joiners', of which 16 per cent had received support once before their latest engagement, and 11 per cent had received support twice or more. Two thirds (66 per cent) had not previously participated in FSS but a further 8 per cent could not recall if they had. Within the 2021-22 cohort, the following groups were more likely to be re-joiners:

- participants who were not from a priority family (28 per cent) compared to those belonging to a priority family (18 per cent)
- non-parents (29%) compared to parents (19 per cent)
- participants who did not report a health condition were less likely to be a re-joiner (22 per cent) compared to average (26 per cent)

3.4 Differences in profile of participants between the 2021-22 cohort and previous cohorts

The proportion of the 2021-22 cohort who were female (37 per cent) was similar to the 2020 cohort (40 per cent), and the first two cohorts in 2018 and 2019 (36 per cent, 36 per cent).

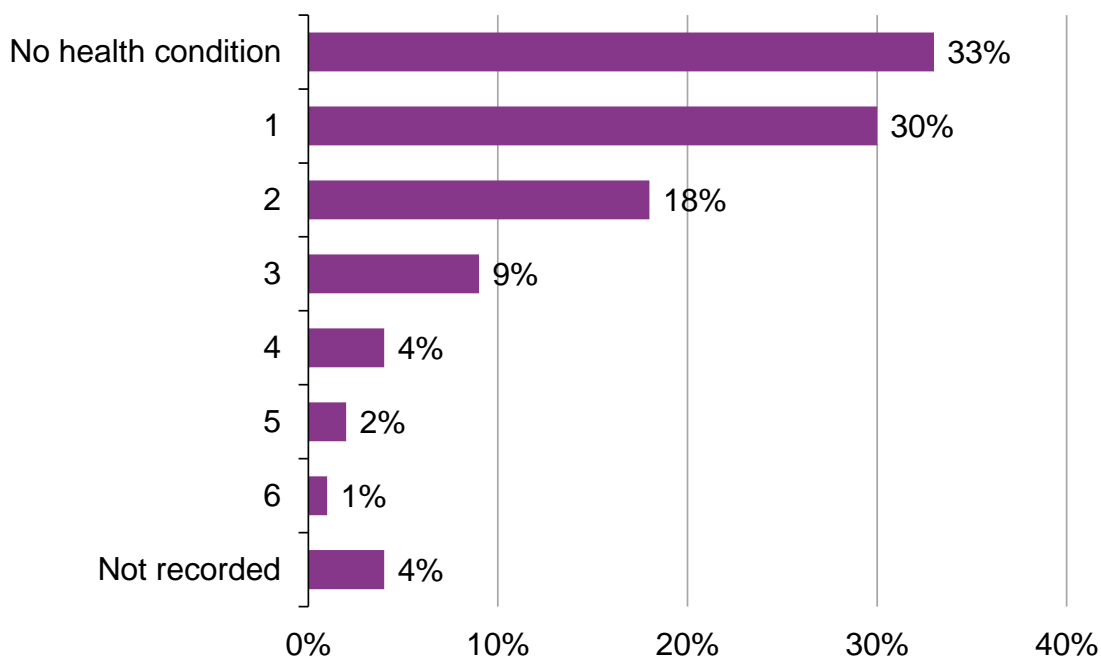
The 2021-22 cohort tended to be older than in the 2020 cohort: 28 per cent of the 2021-22 cohort were aged 50 or older (compared with only 21 per cent in 2020). Only 16 per cent in 2021-22 were under 25 (compared with 25 per cent in 2020), a return to the 16 per cent they accounted for in the first 2018 wave.

Overall, the proportion of participants who were in priority family groups in the 2021-22 cohort (21 per cent) was similar to previous cohorts (19 per cent in 2020, 21 per cent in 2019). However, there were more parents from ethnic minority groups in the 2021-22 cohort (6 per cent compared to 3 per cent in 2020).

4. Health of participants

More than three in five participants (62 per cent) reported at least one long term health condition. As shown in Figure 7, three in ten reported one health condition (30 per cent) and 18 per cent reported two conditions. A third (34 per cent) reported two or more health conditions.

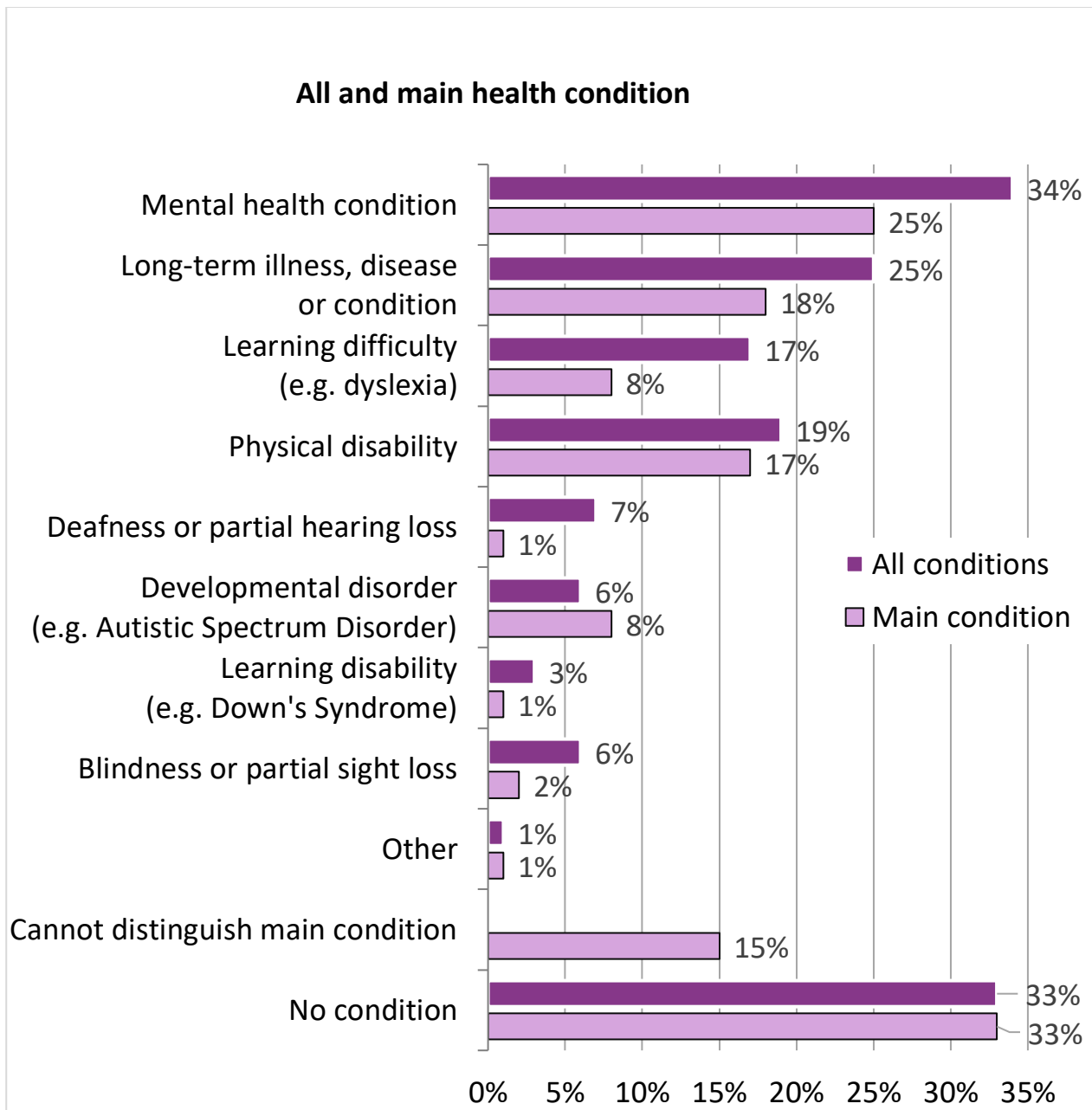
Figure 7: Number of health conditions reported by the 2021-22 cohort



Source: IFF Research telephone survey of FSS customers, Sample information. H4i: Do you have any of the following conditions which have lasted, or are expected to last, at least 12 months? Base: 2021-22 Cohort (750)

As shown in Figure 8, the most common condition reported among the 2021-22 cohort was a mental health condition, reported by a third (34 per cent) of participants. Long-term illnesses were the second most common (25 per cent), followed by a physical disability (19 per cent) or a learning difficulty (17 per cent). Participants who reported multiple conditions were also asked which was their main health condition, this is combined with those who only reported one condition to show which was the main condition or disability in Figure 8. Mental health conditions (20 per cent) and long-term illness (15 per cent) were the most commonly reported form of main condition. Learning difficulties and physical disabilities were common reported conditions but were less likely to be the main condition.

Figure 8: Health conditions and main health condition reported by the 2021-22 cohort



Source: IFF Research telephone survey of FSS customers, Sample information combined with H4I: Do you have any of the following conditions which have lasted, or are expected to last, at least 12 months? H4m: And which of those would you consider to be your main health condition or disability? Base: 2021-22 Cohort, (750)

There were some differences by demographic groups:

- female participants were more likely than male participants to report mental health conditions (44 per cent versus 28 per cent)
- younger participants aged 16 to 34 were more likely to report learning difficulties, developmental disorders or mental health conditions whilst older participants aged or 50 or above were more likely to report

conditions related to hearing or sight, physical disabilities or long-term illness

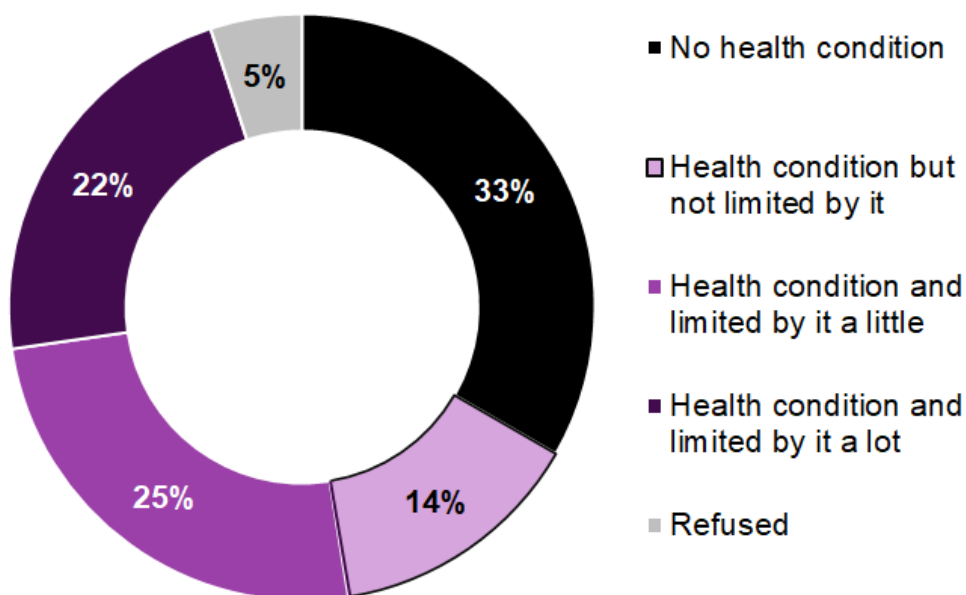
- participants with a white ethnic background were more likely than those from an ethnic minority background to have report mental health conditions (38 per cent versus 13 per cent), physical disabilities (22 per cent versus 4 per cent) and learning difficulties (19 per cent versus 7 per cent)
- participants who were not working at the time of the survey were more likely than those who were working to report a number of conditions including mental health conditions (39 per cent versus 27 per cent), long-term illness (29 per cent versus 21 per cent), physical disabilities (25 per cent versus 12 per cent) and learning difficulties (20 per cent versus 12 per cent)

There were no other notable differences between demographic groups regarding the health conditions or disabilities reported by participants.

4.1 Impact of health conditions

To gauge the impact that health conditions had on FSS participants, all who had a health condition or disability were asked about the extent to which it limited their ability to carry out day-to-day activities, either whether they were not limited by it at all, limited a little or limited a lot. Figure 9 shows the impact of health conditions for the 2021-22 cohort. Nearly half of all participants (48 per cent) said they were impacted by a health condition either a little or a lot.

Figure 9: Extent to which health conditions / disabilities limit participants' ability to carry out day-to-day tasks, for the 2021-22 cohort



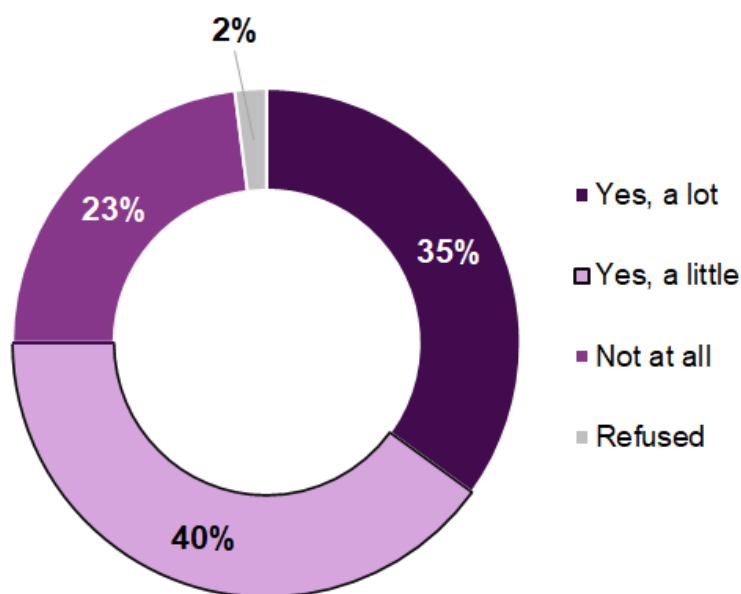
Source: IFF Research telephone survey of FSS customers, H4N_W4. Does your health or disability limit your ability to carry out day-to-day activities? Base: 2021-22 cohort (750)

Participants who were more likely than all other participants combined to report a health condition which limited their activities were:

- younger participants aged 16 to 24 (58 per cent versus 48 per cent overall)
- participants from a white ethnic background (53 per cent versus 22 per cent of those from an ethnic minority background)
- those who were not working (55 per cent versus 37 per cent of those working)

Focusing on only those who reported a health condition or disability, Figure 10 shows that three-quarters (75 per cent) of participants were limited in their ability to carry out day-to-day activities. Two-fifths (40 per cent) of those who reported a health condition were limited 'a little' and 35 per cent 'a lot'. Less than a quarter (23 per cent) reported a health condition that did not limit their activities.

Figure 10: Extent to which health conditions / disabilities limit participants' ability to carry out day-to-day tasks, for the 2021-22 cohort with a health condition



Source: IFF Research telephone survey of FSS customers, H4N_W3. Does your health or disability limit your ability to carry out day-to-day activities? Base: 2021-22 cohort with health condition who agree to give data (478)

4.2 Differences in health of participants between the 2021-22 cohort and previous cohorts

Overall the proportion of participants in the 2021-22 cohort reporting long term health conditions was slightly higher than in the 2020 cohort at Wave 3 (63% and 57% respectively). The 2021-22 cohort was more likely to report multiple long-term health conditions (34 per cent versus 27 per cent in the 2020 cohort at Wave 3) and physical disabilities (19 per cent versus 15 per cent in the 2020 cohort at Wave 3). This might reflect the higher proportion of older participants in 2021-22.

Overall, the 2021-22 cohort were more likely to report that they had a health condition that impacted their daily activities (48 per cent versus 39 per cent in the 2020 cohort at Wave 3). Those with health conditions were also more likely to report being limited a lot (35 per cent in the 2021-22 cohort versus 25 per cent in the 2020 cohort, 27 per cent in the 2019 cohort and 29 per cent in the 2018 cohort), and less likely to report having conditions which did not impact them at all (23 per cent versus 32 per cent in the 2020 cohort).

5. Working status & quality of work

5.1 Employment status of the 2021-22 cohort at the time of the survey

This chapter will look at the working status of the 2021-22 cohort at the point of survey and the quality of work that they undertake. This is therefore a snapshot of participants' activities in December 2022 and January 2023 when the survey was conducted and does not represent FSS employment outcomes¹⁰. A person joining FSS can expect to receive up to 12-18 months of pre-employment support, so for example a person that joined in March 2022 could have been due to receive pre-employment support up until March 2023 or in some cases September 2023. Statistics for employment outcomes for FSS can be found in [Scotland's Devolved Employment Services statistics](#) published quarterly.

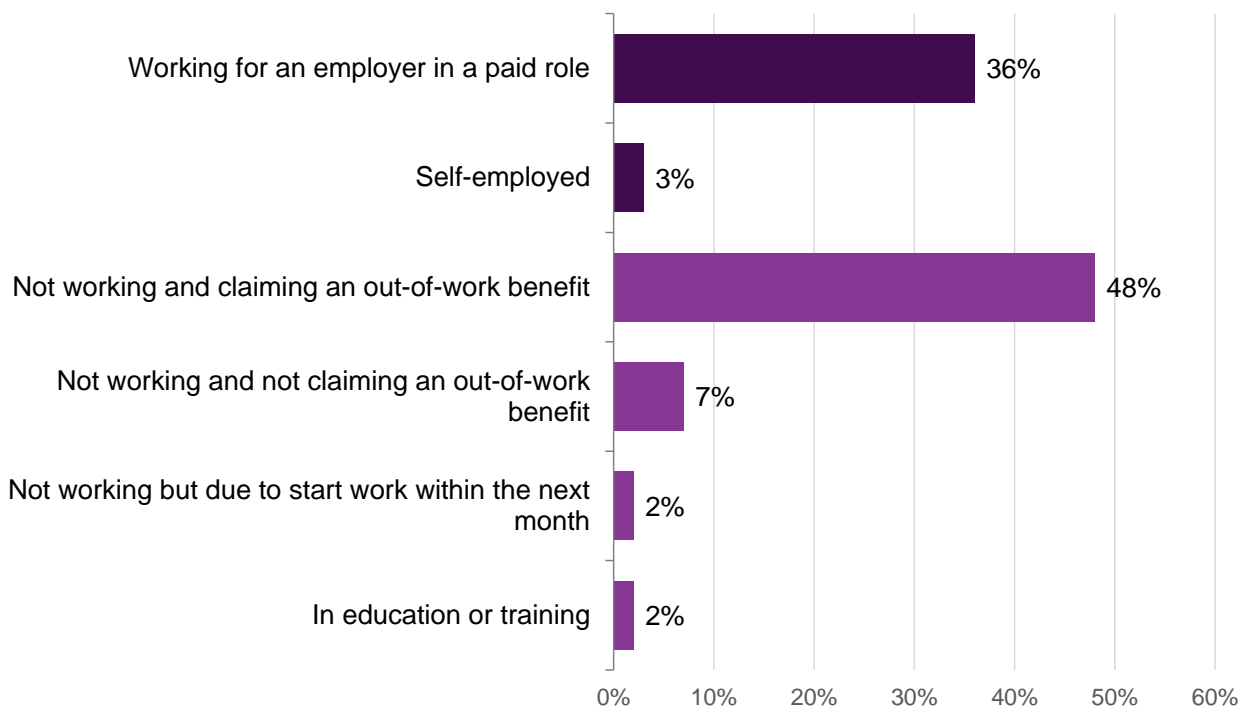
Throughout the chapter comparisons will be made to previous cohorts to assess how the working status and quality of work for new participants has changed over the four waves of this survey. It should be noted that on average, more time had passed between the point at which participants joined FSS and the point at which they completed the survey for the 2021-22 cohort compared to the 2020 cohort. As a result, participants from the 2021-22 cohort may have benefited from more support from FSS, but the difference to the 2020 cohort is minimal¹¹.

At the time of the Wave 4 survey 39 per cent of the 2021-22 cohort were either working for an employer or were self-employed (see Figure 11). A further 2 per cent had done some paid work in the week leading up to the interview. This was similar to the proportion of the 2020 cohort participants that were in work at the point of the Wave 3 survey (in April 2021) - 36 per cent and higher than Waves 1 and 2 (27 per cent and 31 per cent respectively). More than half of the 2021-22 cohort were not working and either claiming an out of work benefit (48 per cent) or not working and not claiming and out of work benefit (7 per cent). A small number of participants were in education or training (2 per cent) or were not working but due to start work within the next month (2 per cent).

¹⁰ Please note that, for those who were in work at the time of the survey, the survey did not ask how participants obtained these jobs. It is therefore not possible to ascertain based on the findings from the survey, whether those who were in-work at the time the survey took place were placed in those jobs through FSS providers or obtained the jobs by themselves (including after having left the service).

¹¹ For the 2021-22 cohort, the maximum time between starting on FSS and being interviewed is 18 months, compared with 16 months for Wave 2 and 3, and 14 months for Wave 1.

Figure 11: Employment status for the 2021-22 cohort



Source: IFF Research telephone survey of FSS customers, A1 Which of the following best describes what you are doing at the moment? Base: 2021-22 cohort (750)

There were numerous factors linked to participants' likelihood of having done some paid work in the week previous to the interview:

- female participants were more likely than male participants to be working (45 per cent, compared to 37 per cent)
- participants who had achieved a degree or higher were more likely than average to be in employment (55 percent compared to 40 per cent) whereas those without qualifications were less likely than average to be in employment (23%)
- older participants (aged 50 and over) were less likely to be in work than younger participants (29 per cent compared with 40 per cent on average)
- participants from a minority ethnic group were more likely to be in work (56 per cent) than white participants (38 per cent)
- participants who had not worked in the last 5 years prior to joining FSS were far less likely to be working than those who had worked in the last 5 years (19 per cent compared to 51 per cent)
- participants who reported no health conditions were more likely to be working than participants who reported a health condition that limits their day-to-day activity (50 per cent versus 31 per cent)
- members of priority families were more likely to be in work (50 per cent) than those not from a priority family (38 per cent). Parents were

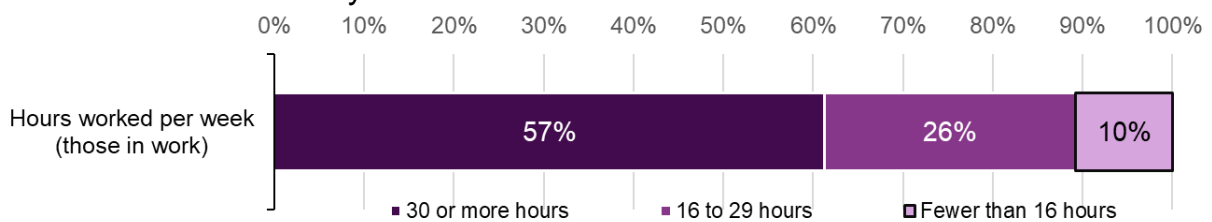
more likely than non-parents to be working (52 per cent compared to 37 per cent)

- whether or not participants left the service early was also a contributing factor, with those leaving early less likely to be in employment than those who did not (26 per cent, compared to 44 per cent)
- participants in Lot 1 (Glasgow) were more likely to be working than on average (49 per cent compared to 40 per cent)¹²
- no differences were found between those who had re-joined the programme and those who were new joiners

Regarding benefits, white participants were more likely than participants belonging to a minority ethnic group to be not working and claiming an out-of-work benefit (51 per cent compared to 24 per cent). White participants were also more likely to have left the programme early compared with participants from minority ethnic groups (56 per cent vs 46 per cent).

Figure 12 shows that, among the 2021-22 cohort who had worked in the last week, one in ten (10 per cent) were working fewer than 16 hours, around a quarter (26 per cent) were working between 16 and 29 hours per week and nearly six in ten (57 per cent) were working 30 or more hours per week.

Figure 12: Hours worked by the 2021-22 cohort



Source: IFF Research telephone survey of FSS customers. A3 How many hours per week do you usually work, or spend in education? Base: 2021-22 cohort in work (313)

Regarding number of hours usually spent working per week:

- male participants were more likely than female participants to spend thirty or more hours working per week (64 per cent compared to 47 per cent). Ethnicity appeared to be a factor with participants who were white more likely than those from a minority ethnic background to be working 30 hours or more per week (60 per cent, compared to 46 per cent)
- those who had worked in the last 5 years were more likely to be working 30 hours or more per week than those who had not (62 per cent compared to 36 per cent)

¹² Please note that the findings should be interpreted with extreme caution as we do not know the underlying factors responsible for this difference between geographical Lots.

- members of a priority family were less likely than those not from a priority family to be working 30 hours or more per week (41 per cent compared to 63 per cent)
- just over three quarters (76 per cent) of participants in Lot 2 (Lanarkshire) were working 30 hours or more per week, significantly higher than the overall average (57 per cent)¹³
- age, qualification level, health limitations, whether or not participants were early leavers, and whether participants had re-joined or were new joiners were not significant factors in a participants likelihood to be working 30 hours or more per week

There was no significant difference between the amount of hours usually worked per week in Wave 3 and Wave 4.

Participants who had done some paid work in the week prior to the interview were asked when they began their job. Six in ten participants (62 per cent) said they had started working in the current job less than 6 months ago. Around one quarter (26 per cent) said they had started between six months and a year ago and one in ten (10 per cent) said they had started more than one year ago.

The vast majority of FSS participants who were employed, self-employed or who had worked in the last week at the time of the interview had one job (97 per cent), with only 2 per cent saying they had two jobs and 1 per cent saying they had three jobs or more. Participants belonging to a minority ethnic group were more likely than white participants to have two jobs (9 per cent compared to 1 per cent).

5.2 Differences in employment status between the 2021-22 cohort and previous cohorts

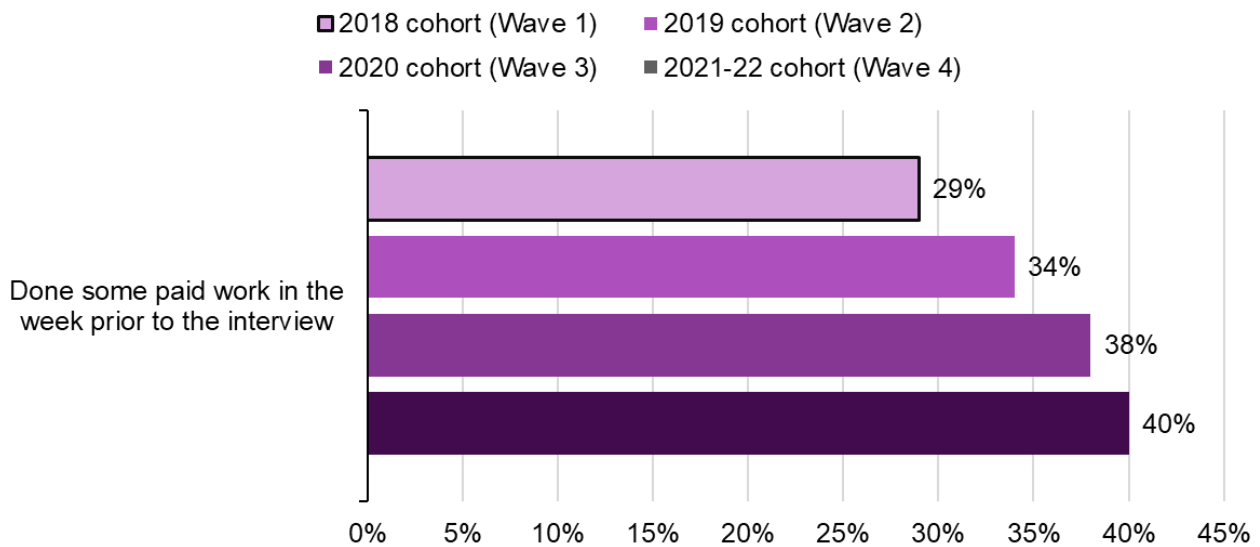
The employment status of the 2021-22 cohort has been compared to the 2018, 2019 and 2020 cohort, to assess differences between the cohorts in employment status¹⁴.

The proportion of the 2021-22 cohort to have done some work in the last week (40 per cent) was similar to the proportion of the 2020 cohort (38 per cent), as can be seen in Figure 13. However, there was a difference between the 2021-22 cohort and the 2018 and 2019 cohorts in the proportion that had done some paid work in the last week (40 per cent compared to 29 per cent and 34 per cent respectively).

¹³ Please note that the findings should be interpreted with extreme caution as we do not know the underlying factors responsible for this difference between geographical Lots.

¹⁴ Changes over time within the 2020 cohort is provided in a later chapter.

Figure 13: Proportion of new participants at each cohort to have done some paid work in the week prior to the interview



Source: IFF Research telephone survey of FSS customers. A1 Which of the following best describes what you are doing at the moment? Base: 2021-22 cohort (750) 2020 cohort (663) 2019 cohort (607) 2018 cohort (1005) A1A Did you do any paid work in the seven days prior to the interview? Base: all other than employed and self-employed 2021-22 cohort, Wave 4 (460) 2020 cohort, Wave 3 (427), 2019 cohort, Wave 2 (427), 2018 cohort, Wave 1 (733)

There was a considerable difference between Wave 4 and Wave 1 (the 2021-22 and 2018 cohorts). The difference can be attributed to:

- more participants working for an employer in a paid role (36 per cent of the 2021-22 cohort compared to 26 per cent of the 2018 cohort)
- more participants who are self-employed (3 per cent of the 2021-22 cohort compared to 1 per cent of the 2018 cohort)

It also appears the 2021-22 cohort were working in more full-time roles than the 2018 cohort. More new participants at Wave 4 were working thirty or more hours per week than were at Wave 1 (57 per cent, compared to 49 per cent).

5.3 Quality of work

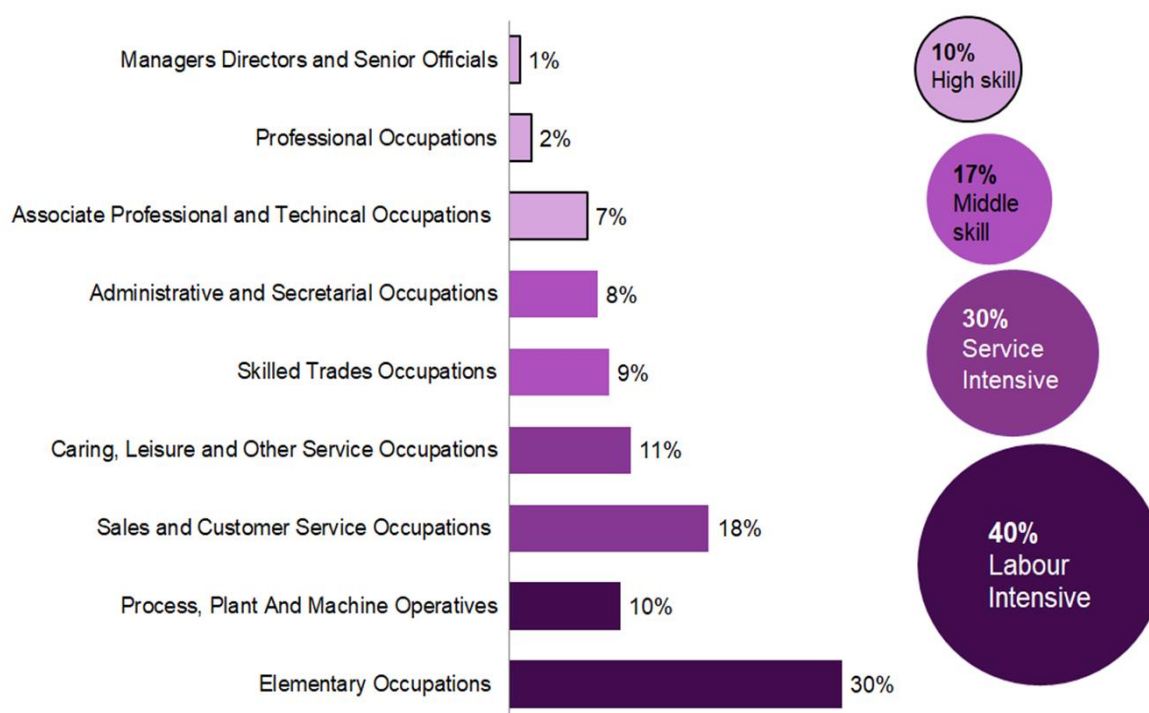
The Wave 4 survey asked participants about their job roles, how much they earned and the type of contract they were employed on. These questions were asked of all participants who were employed at the time of the survey.

5.3.1 Occupation

Figure 14 shows the profile of participants that were either employed, self-employed or had worked in the last week, by occupation. The occupations are colour-coded based on the broad occupational group they fall into¹⁵.

The most common occupational group of the 2021-22 cohort was labour intensive occupations (40 per cent) made up of elementary occupations (30 per cent) and process, plant, and machine operatives (10 per cent). A further three in ten (30 per cent) worked in service intensive occupations - sales and customer services (18 per cent) and caring, leisure and other services (11 per cent). Slightly more than one sixth (17 per cent) worked in middle skill occupations and one in ten (10 per cent) worked in high skill occupations.

Figure 14: Occupational groups for the 2021-22 cohort



Source: IFF Research telephone survey of FSS customers. Taken from collating and coding answers from A5: What is/was your job title? And A6: What do/did you mainly do in your job? Base: 2021-22 cohort that were employed, self-employed or had worked in the last week (298)

¹⁵ The job roles and descriptions were coded to using the [Office for National Statistics \(ONS\) standard Occupational Classification Hierarchy](#). The figures in the occupational groups have been rounded to the nearest whole percentage, as a result some of the occupation groups do not match the sum of the hierarchical groups.

Several factors had an impact on the type of occupations in which participants were working:

- female participants were more likely than males to work in service intensive occupations (43 per cent, compared to 20 per cent) and were less likely to work in labour intensive occupations (24 per cent, compared to 51 per cent)
- age also had an impact on occupation with participants aged 35 to 49 being less likely than average to work in labour intensive occupations (31 per cent compared to 40 per cent)
- qualification levels was also a factor and those with national level 1-5 or equivalent were more likely than average to work in labour intensive jobs (57 per cent, compared to 40 per cent) and less likely than average to work in high skilled jobs (4 per cent, compared to 10 per cent). Conversely, those with a degree or higher were more likely to work in high skilled occupations (22 per cent, compared to 10 per cent), and less likely than average to work in labour intensive occupations (24 per cent, compared to 40 per cent)
- there were no differences in type of occupation between regions or ethnic groups, between participants whose health limits their day-to-day activities and others, between participants who had worked or not worked in the last five years or between parents and non-parents
- whether or not participants were early leavers, whether or not they were from a priority family, and whether participants had re-joined or were new joiners were not significant factors in the types of occupations they held
- there were no significant differences in the occupations of participants between Wave 3 and Wave 4

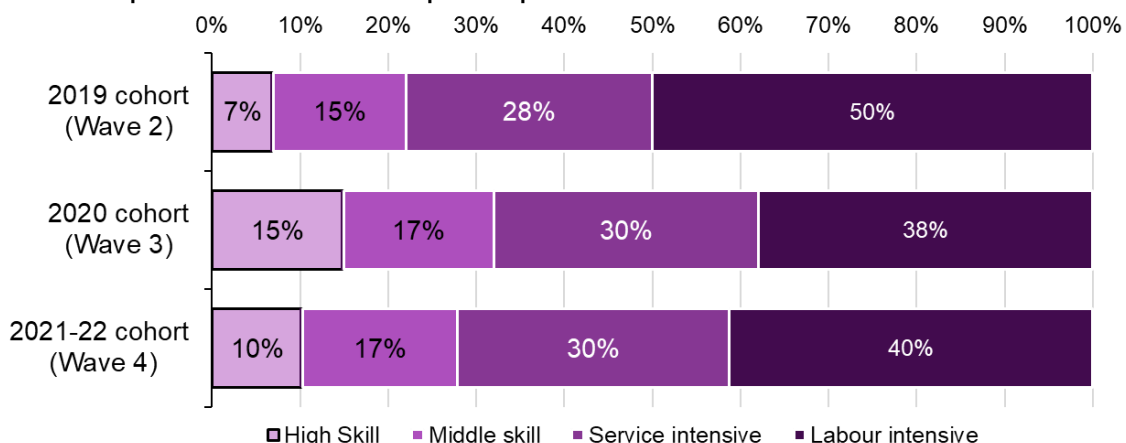
5.3.2 Differences in occupation between the 2021-22 cohort and previous cohorts

Occupations of the 2021-22 cohort (at Wave 4) have been compared to the 2020 cohort (at Wave 3), to assess any differences between the two cohorts' occupational levels¹⁶ after joining the service¹⁷. There are no differences between the types of occupations participants from the 2021-22 cohort were working in compared to participants from the 2020 cohort at the same point in their FSS journey.

¹⁶ Please note there was a slight difference in the window of time between joining FSS and completing the survey between the two waves, though because this is so slight, they remain comparable. The 2020 cohort was surveyed between 1 and 16 months after joining FSS, and the 2021-22 cohort was surveyed between 1 and 18 months after joining FSS.

¹⁷ Changes over time within the same cohorts (2018, 2019 and 2020) are provided in later chapters.

Figure 15: Occupation level of new participants in each cohort



Source: IFF Research telephone survey of FSS customers. Taken from collating and coding answers from A5: What is/was your job title? And A6: What do/did you mainly do in your job? Base: Participants that were employed, self-employed or had worked in the last week 2021-22 cohort (298), 2020 cohort (247), 2019 cohort (341). Please note that this question was not asked of the 2018 cohort (Wave 1)

However, a change noted at the Wave 3 survey has continued into Wave 4. Previously, a shift to more highly skilled occupations between the 2019 cohort at Wave 2 and the 2020 cohort at Wave 3 was noted. This has lasted to some extent, as fewer of the 2021-22 cohort at Wave 4 were working in labour intensive occupations than the 2019 cohort at Wave 2 at the time of the survey (40 per cent compared to 50 per cent). However, while there were more participants from the 2020 cohort at Wave 3 working in highly skilled occupations than the 2019 cohort at Wave 2 (15 per cent, compared to 7 per cent), this proportion is similar across the 2021-22 (Wave 4) and 2019 (Wave 2) cohorts (10 per cent compared to 7 per cent).

5.3.3 Income

FSS participants who were employed, self-employed or who had done paid work in the last week were asked what their usual pay was including overtime, bonuses or tips but before tax and other deductions are taken out. This information on their usual gross (i.e. pay before tax or any other deductions) earnings reported by survey participants was coded to a pay range band in the survey¹⁸. This data was then analysed to benchmark participants' usual pay against the thresholds for the [National Living Wage](#) and the [Real Living Wage](#) rates (see Figure 16)¹⁹.

At the time of the Wave 4 survey, individuals who were [classified as 'workers'](#) and who were aged between 16 and 22 were legally entitled to the National Minimum Wage, whilst individuals classed as 'workers' who were aged 23 or above were legally entitled to the National Living Wage²⁰. At the time of the survey, the National Living Wage was £9.50 per hour and the National Minimum Wage was between £4.81 and £9.18 (depending on the individual's age). The Real Living Wage is a wage rate based on the cost of living (£10.90 at the time of the survey). It is set annually by the [Living Wage Foundation](#) based on a basket of household goods and services. Employers are not legally required to pay their workers this wage.

As is shown in Figure 16, about one in eight (12 per cent)²¹ of the 2021-22 cohort in work (those who were employed, self-employed or who had done paid work in the last week) reported earnings that indicated that they earned below the National Living Wage rate for those aged 23 and over. Participants aged between 16 and 24 years old were more likely than those aged 25 and over to report earnings that would be below the National Living Wage rate (24 per cent compared to 9 per cent). The majority (74 per cent) of the working cohort reported earnings that were at least the National Living Wage rate, with 30 per cent reporting earnings would be at least the Real Living Wage rate.

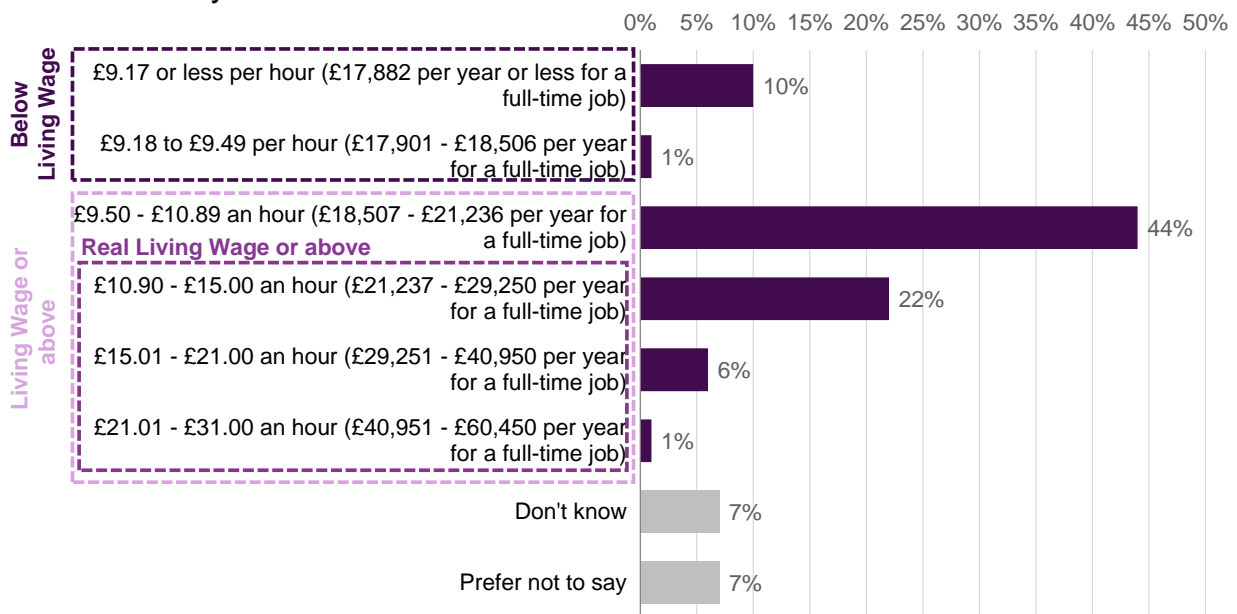
¹⁸ Pay range bands in the survey were asked as hourly rates, but annual rates were also provided so the interviewer could ask with these if the participant only knew their pay in annual terms.

¹⁹ To ensure Fair Start Scotland offers the most effective employability support possible to participants, a number of key features are integral to its delivery. The service provider must promote the [Scottish Government's ambitions around Fair Work](#), payment of the [Real Living Wage](#) and support the [Scottish Government's Diversity and Equality Policy](#) to supply chain / consortia partners and the employers that they work with. The Scottish Government were not able to mandate the Real Living Wage as a condition in the delivery of Fair Start Scotland. Employment policy is not devolved, and the National Minimum Wage is the legal requirement across the UK. It is worth noting that Fair Start Scotland contracts pre-date the Scottish Government's commitment to strengthening Fair Work policy in relation to promoting the Real Living Wage.

²⁰ Please note that a separate legal requirements on minimum wage apply to [apprenticeships](#).

²¹ Percentages might not exactly match due to rounding in individual figures on the charts.

Figure 16: Usual income of 2021-22 participants in work during the week of the Wave 4 survey*



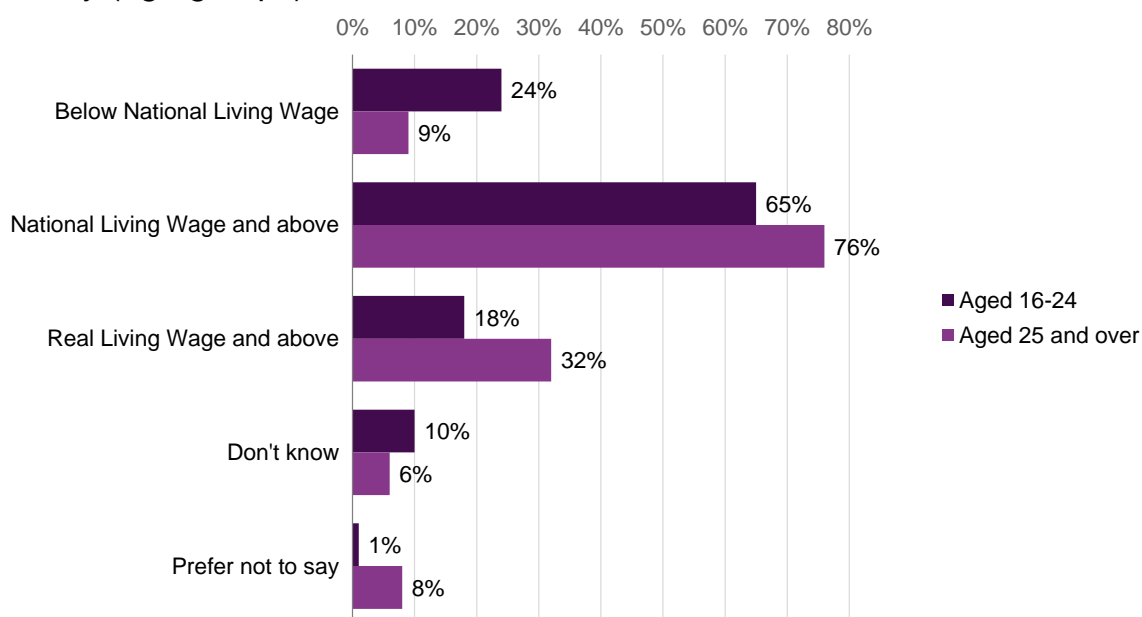
Source: IFF Research telephone survey of FSS customers, A7: Can you tell me your usual pay including overtime, bonuses, or tips (but before tax and other deductions are taken out)? Base: All employed self-employed or had worked in the last week (298)

* Please note that the National Living Wage is the legal minimum employers must pay workers if they are aged 23 or above. The Real Living Wage is a voluntary wage rate set by the Living Wage Foundation each year and is a rate that employers sign up to pay (i.e. it is not a legal minimum wage rate).

Unsurprisingly, as shown by Figure 17 below, age is a contributing factor to income with younger participants (aged 16 to 24) more likely to report earnings indicating that they were earning less than the National Living Wage rate for those aged 23 or above (24 per cent compared with 9 per cent for participants aged 25 and above). Furthermore those aged 25 and above were more likely to report earnings that were at least the Real Living Wage rate (32 per cent compared to 18 per cent for those aged 16 to 24).

We do not have a breakdown of income by individual age, only for age bands 16-24 and 25 or above. We cannot therefore be certain if or how many of those aged 16 - 24 who reported earnings that would be below the National Living Wage were legally entitled to it. However, everyone aged 25 or above who reported earning less than the National Living Wage was legally entitled to it. Further, as the survey did not collect data on whether the person was an apprentice we cannot state whether the apprenticeship status impacted on earnings.

Figure 17: Usual income of 2021-22 participants in work during the week of the Wave 4 survey (age groups)*



Source: IFF Research telephone survey of FSS customers, A7: Can you tell me your usual pay including overtime, bonuses, or tips (but before tax and other deductions are taken out)? Base: All employed self-employed or had worked in the last week (298)

*Please note that the National Living Wage is the legal minimum employers must pay workers if they are aged 23 or above. The Real Living Wage is a voluntary wage rate set by the Living Wage Foundation each year and is a rate that employers sign up to pay (i.e. it is not a legal minimum wage rate)

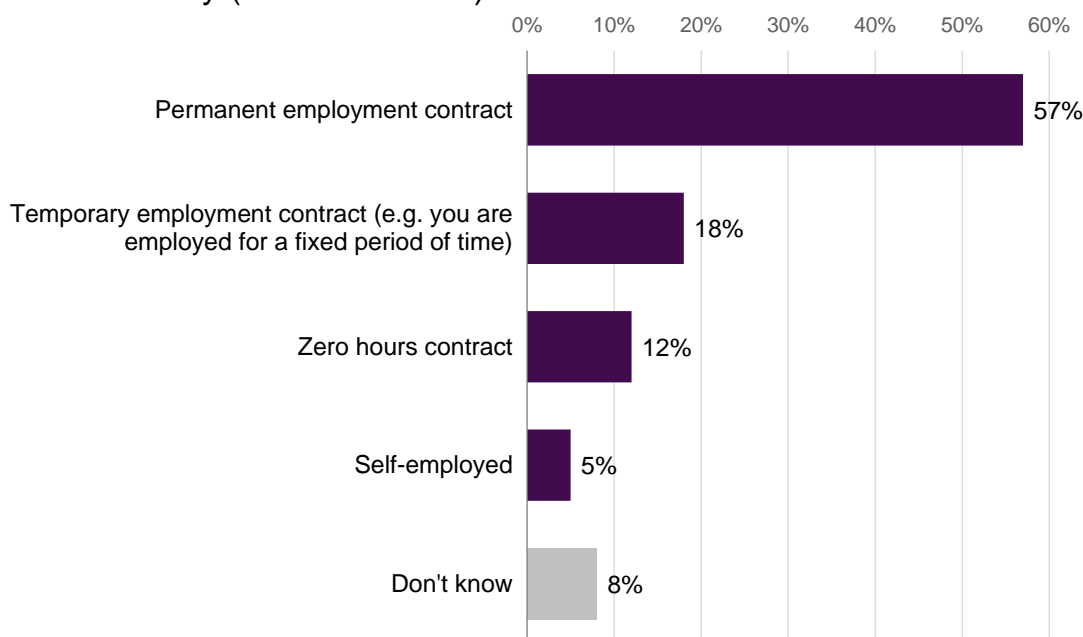
5.3.4 Differences in income between the 2021-22 cohort and previous cohorts

As discussed, fewer participants were working in labour intensive occupations amongst the 2021-22 and 2020 cohorts compared to the 2019 cohort. This has an implication for incomes. Compared to the 2019 cohort (at Wave 2), fewer participants from the 2021-22 (at Wave 4) reported earnings that were equivalent to or below the National Living Wage rate for those aged 23 or above (12 per cent compared to 31 per cent). Conversely, a considerably greater proportion of participants from the 2021-22 cohort reported earnings that indicated they were earning at least the National Living Wage rate, compared to the 2019 cohort (74 per cent compared to 60 per cent). Incomes across the 2020 (at Wave 3) and 2021-22 (at Wave 4) cohorts are similar in terms of the proportion of participants who reported earnings that were below the National Living Wage rate, at the National Living Wage rate and above, and at the Real Living Wage and above.

5.3.5 Type of employment contract

Participants in the 2021-22 cohort who had worked within the last week were asked what type of employment contract they had. The results can be seen in Figure 18. Almost three in five (57 per cent) had a permanent employment contract, while less than one in five (18 per cent) had a temporary contract. Those employed on a zero hour contract made up 12 per cent²² of the working 2021-22 cohort and 5 per cent were self-employed.

Figure 18: Type of employment contract for participants in work during the week of the Wave 4 survey (2021-22 cohort)



Source: IFF Research telephone survey of FSS customers, A8: Can you tell me what type of employment contract you have? Base: All employed, self-employed or have worked in the last week (298)

There were some sub-group differences between the types of contracts that participants held:

- those who were white were more likely than minority ethnic participants to be employed on a permanent contract (62 per cent, compared to 37 per cent)
- female participants were more likely to hold a permanent contract than male participants (64 per cent compared to 51 per cent)

²² FSS aims to support people into fair and sustainable work at the right time for them, avoiding exploitative employment practices, including for example no inappropriate use of zero hours contracts. [Employability in Scotland](#) provides more information on the aims of the FSS service. For comparison, the rate of people in employment who were employed on zero hours contract in Scotland as a whole in the comparable time period to when the survey took place was 3.4% for Oct-Dec 2022 and 3.9% for Jan-Mar 2023, as reported by the [Office for National Statistics](#).

- participants aged between 16 and 24 were more likely than average to be employed on a temporary employment contract (29 per cent compared to 18 per cent on average)
- participants from Lot 1: Glasgow were more likely than average to be employed on a zero hours contract (20 per cent compared to 12 per cent), while participants from Lot 6: South West were more likely to be employed on a permanent contract (76 per cent compared to 57 per cent on average)²³
- participants categorised as belonging to a 'priority family' were more likely to be self-employed than those not from a priority family (11 per cent vs 4 per cent)
- participants categorised as ethnic minority were more likely than average to be on a zero hours contract (21 per cent vs 12 per cent on average)
- the type of employment contract held by participants did not significantly differ by the level of the qualification they held, the extent to which their health limits their day-to-day activity, their Lot (region), whether or not they were an early leaver of the programme, and whether they were a new joiner or had re-joined the programme

5.3.6 Types of employment contract for participants in 2021-22 cohort compared with previous cohorts

As a reminder, comparisons between the 2020 and 2021-22 cohorts should be approached with caution because on average, more time passed between when participants joined the service and when the survey took place for 2021-2022 cohort than for 2020 cohort. There was a considerable increase in the proportion of participants who are employed on a permanent contract in the 2021-22 cohort compared to the 2020 cohort (57 per cent compared to 43 per cent). This is reflected in fewer participants being employed on a temporary employment contract (18 per cent vs 33 per cent). This decrease was also seen among minority ethnic participants (19% held a temporary employment contract in the 2021-22 cohort compared to 41% in the 2020 cohort), although among this group the proportion who were employed on a permanent contract did not increase. Types of employment across the 2021-22 cohort are similar to the 2019 cohort (e.g. those employed on a permanent contract, 57 per cent compared to 55 per cent amongst the 2019 cohort).

5.3.7 Employment history

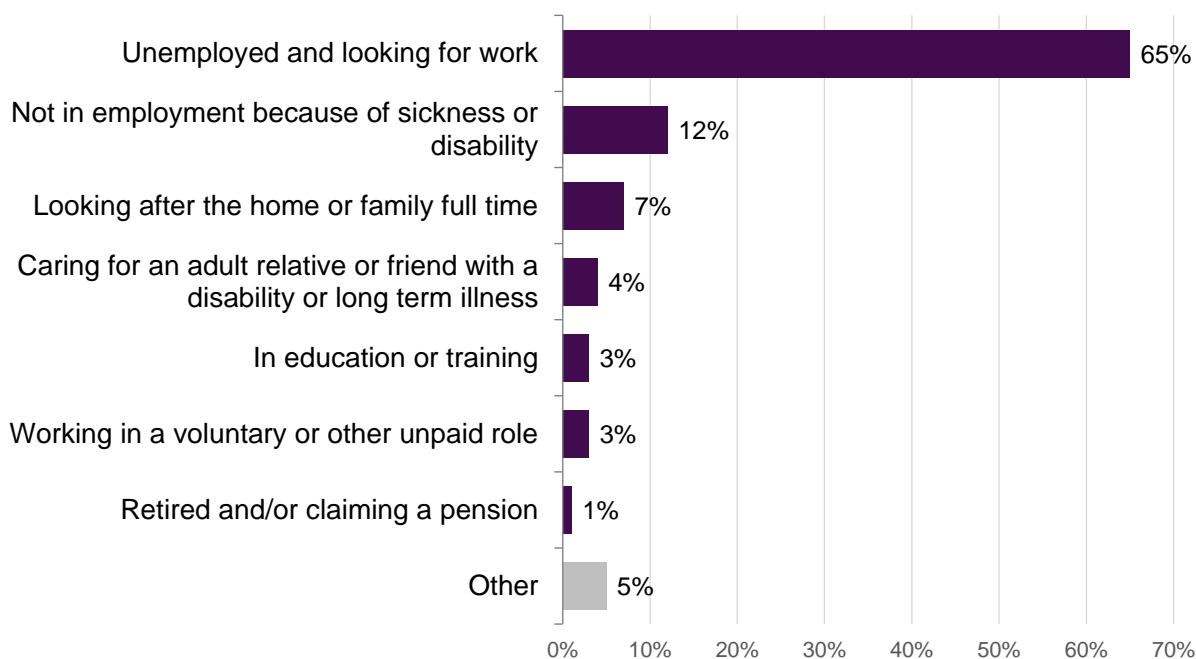
The 2021-22 cohort were asked what their main activity was before they started receiving support from FSS. As would be expected, most participants were unemployed and looking for work (65 per cent). As shown in

Figure 19, about one in eight participants indicated they were not in employment due to sickness or disability (12 per cent). Less than one in ten said they were

²³ Please note that the findings should be interpreted with extreme caution as we do not know the underlying factors responsible for this difference between geographical Lots.

looking after the home or family full time (7 per cent), while around half this number were caring for an adult relative or friend with a disability or long term illness (4 per cent). The remaining participants were working in a voluntary or unpaid role (3 per cent), in education or training (3 per cent), or retired and/or claiming a pension (1 per cent).

Figure 19: Main activity before receiving support amongst 2021-22 cohort (Wave 4)



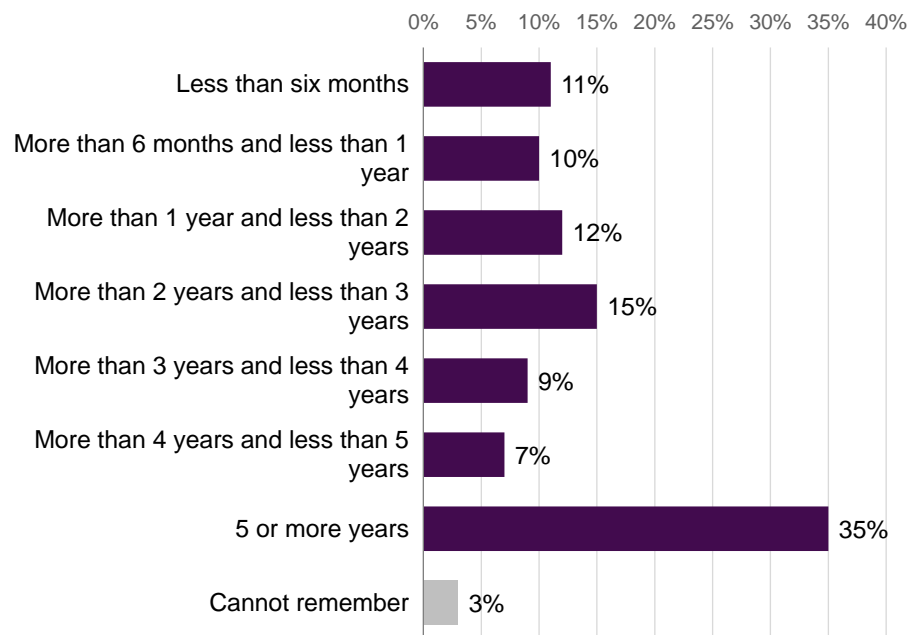
Source: IFF Research telephone survey of FSS customers, B1a: Can you tell me what your main activity was before you began receiving support? Were you [statement]? Base: All (750)

Participants who were not currently employed or self-employed were also asked if they had been in employment (either paid or unpaid) at any point in the last five years. A little over half (55 per cent) indicated they had been in employment at some point during that time. Participants with no qualifications were less likely to have been in employment in the last 5 years than the average for all participants (41 per cent compared to 55 per cent).

Participants from the 2021-22 cohort were less likely to have been in employment (either paid or unpaid) at some point in the last five years than participants from the 2020 cohort (55 per cent compared to 70 per cent). However, this proportion is in line with the 2019 cohort (58 per cent) and the 2018 cohort (53 per cent), suggesting the 2020 cohort is an outlier.

Participants in the 2021-22 cohort were also asked how long they had spent out of work in the past 5 years, prior to joining Fair Start Scotland. As shown in Figure 20 most participants had been out of work for the full time of five years, prior to joining FSS (35 per cent). One in five participants had spent less than one year out of work before joining the programme (21 per cent), with half of that number having spent less than six months out of work prior to joining FSS (11 per cent).

Figure 20: Length of time spent out of work in 5 years prior to FSS (2021-22 cohort)



Source: IFF Research telephone survey of FSS customers, B3 Prior to Fair Start Scotland, approximately how long have you spent out of work in the past 5 years?
Base: All (750)

There were some differences between groups regarding the length of time participants had been out of work in the last five years:

- female participants were more likely than male participants to have spent five or more years out of work prior to joining FSS (39 per cent compared to 32 per cent)
- younger participants (aged between 16 and 24) were more likely than average to have spent less than six months out of work prior to joining the programme (17 per cent compared to 11 per cent). Participants aged 50 and older were more likely than average to say they had stopped working in their most recent role five or more years ago (36 per cent compared to 29 per cent)
- participants who reported their health limits their day-to-day activities were less likely than average to have spent less than six months out of work in the last five years (8 per cent compared to 11 per cent)
- participants belonging to a minority ethnic group were more likely than white participants to have spent less than six months out of work within this period (19 per cent compared to 10 per cent)
- participants with a degree level qualification or higher were more likely to have only been out of work for less than six months than others (17 per cent compared to 11 per cent on average)

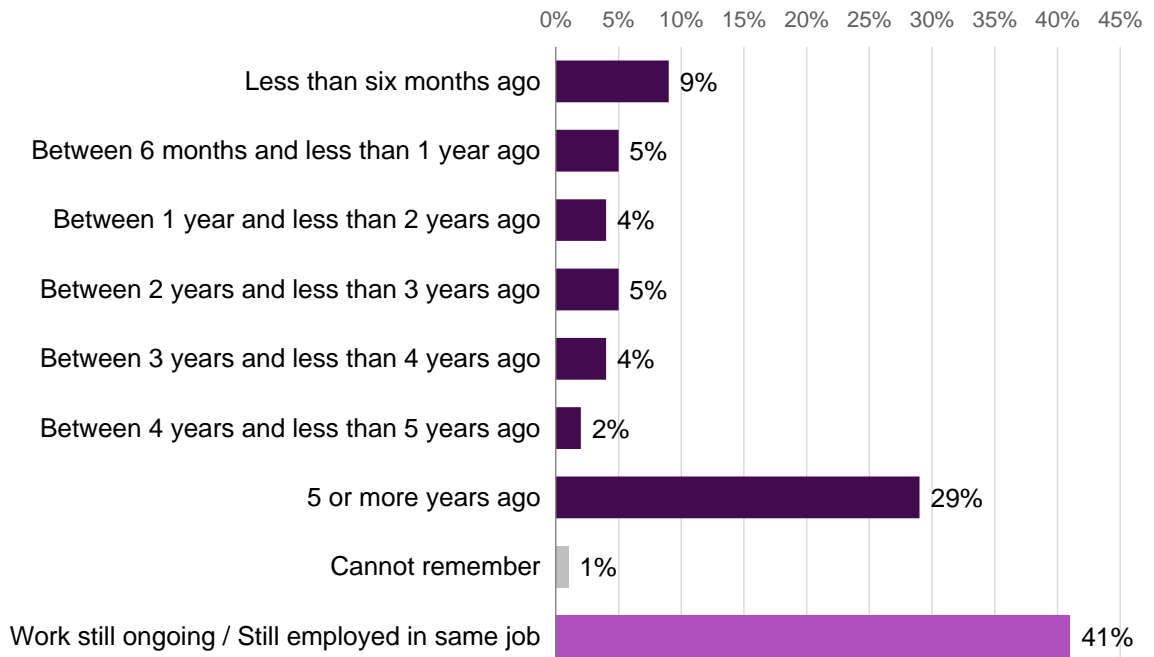
- early leavers of the programme were more likely to have been out of work for five or more years prior to joining FSS than those who did not leave early (45 per cent compared to 32 per cent)
- participants who were economically inactive prior to joining FSS²⁴ were more likely to have been out of work for five or more years than participants who were actively searching for work (19 per cent compared to 7 per cent)
- new joiners were slightly more likely than average to have spent between 6 months and a year out of work before joining FSS (12 per cent compared to 10 per cent)
- there were no significant differences in the duration of time spent out of work between participants from different Lots

Compared to the 2020 cohort, participants from the 2021-22 cohort were in general more likely to say they had not been in work for a longer period. Fewer said they had not been in work for less than six months (11 per cent compared to 18 per cent for the 2020 cohort) and more said they had not been in work for five years or more (35 per cent compared to 21 per cent).

Finally, participants from the 2021-22 cohort were asked how long ago they stopped working in their most recent role. As would be expected from the results of the previous question, a sizeable portion indicated that it had been five or more years since their most recent role (29 per cent). For around one in ten (9 per cent), it had been less than six months since they stopped working in their most recent role.

²⁴ Economically inactive is defined as: in education or training, not in employment because of a sickness or disability, looking after the home or family full time, caring for an adult relative or friend with a disability or long-term illness, working in a voluntary or other unpaid role or retired and/or claiming a pension.

Figure 21: Length of time since most recent role (2021-22 cohort)



Source: IFF Research telephone survey of FSS customers, B4 How long ago did you stop working in your most recent role? Base: All (750)

Participants from the 2021-22 cohort were more likely to have stopped working in their most recent role five or more years ago than participants from the 2020 cohort (29 per cent compared to 19 per cent). In line with this trend, they were less likely to have stopped working between six months and a year ago (5 per cent compared to 9 per cent amongst the 2020 cohort) and particularly between one and two years ago (4 per cent compared to 17 per cent).

6. Service experiences

This chapter looks at participants' experiences of signing-up for support, experiences of 're-joiners' (those who have accessed Fair Start Scotland (FSS) support more than once) and the different types of pre-employment and in-work support participants were offered and took up. It also looks at how useful participants found different types of support and reasons participants left the FSS service.

The chapter focuses on experiences of participants from the 2021-22 cohort. It also includes analysis of how these participants' experiences compared to those of the 2018 cohort (Wave 1 survey), the 2019 cohort (Wave 2 survey) and the 2020 cohort (Wave 3 survey) during the year after they first joined the service, in order to provide a comparison of experiences at the same point in their FSS journey.

6.1 Experience of joining the service

6.1.1 Experience of the sign-up process and awareness of the voluntary nature of the service

All 2021-22 cohort participants were asked whether they were aware that FSS was voluntary and what their experiences of signing up were like. The majority of participants (87 per cent) were aware that signing up for the service was voluntary, 10 per cent thought that they had to take part, and 3 per cent did not know. Minority ethnic participants were more likely than white participants to think signing up was mandatory (17 per cent, compared to 9 per cent), as were those aged between 25 and 34 (16 per cent, compared to 10 per cent on average).

The majority (74 per cent) of all 2021-22 cohort participants reported that it was 'very easy' to sign up for the service (a rating of one on a scale from one to five, where one meant 'very easy' and five meant 'very difficult'). Just 4 per cent found it 'difficult' (a rating of four or five).

There was some variation across different demographic groups in views on the ease of signing up:

- those who had worked in the last five years before joining the service were more likely to have considered the sign up process 'easy' (90 per cent provided a rating of one or two out of five compared with 84 per cent of those who had not worked in the five years prior)
- almost one in ten (9 per cent) minority ethnic participants rated the process as 'difficult' (a rating of four or five out of five) compared to only 3 per cent of white participants
- participants from Lot 1 (Glasgow) were more likely to rate the process as difficult than others (8 per cent compared to 4 per cent overall)²⁵

²⁵ Please note that the findings should be interpreted with extreme caution as we do not know the underlying factors responsible for this difference between geographical Lots.

- when looking at those who found the process ‘easy’ (a rating of one or two) or ‘difficult’ (a rating of four or five) there was no significant difference as a result of gender, qualification level, or health limitations. Whether or not a participant was a member of a priority family, an early leaver, or a re-joiner also had no significant effect on their overall rating of the ease the process
- there was no significant difference in views of participants on the ease of signing up between Wave 3 and Wave 4

6.1.2 Differences in sign up experiences between the 2021-22 cohort and previous cohorts

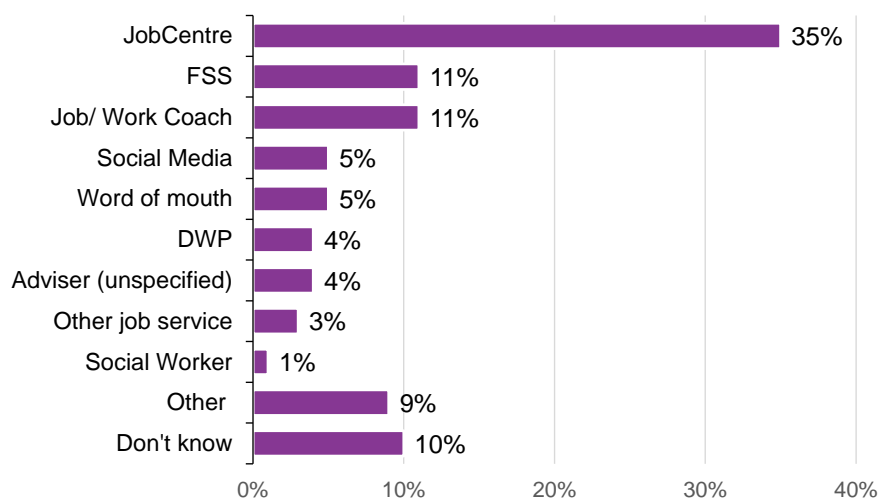
Although the proportion of participants who reported being aware that signing up to the service was voluntary at Wave 4 has remained relatively high, the proportion who thought that signing up was mandatory, was double that of Wave 3 (10 per cent compared with 5 per cent).

The proportion of participants who found the sign up process easy remained consistently high across all cohorts.

6.1.3 Experiences of re-joining the service

Those who had previously received support from FSS were asked how they found out they could access the service again. The most commonly mentioned sources were via the JobCentre (35 per cent), from a Work Coach (11 per cent). Around one in ten had heard directly from a FSS service provider that they were able to re-join (11 per cent). Other less frequently mentioned sources included social media or word of mouth (both 5 per cent), the DWP (4 per cent) or another, unspecified type of advisor (also 4 per cent). In all, half of those who had previously received support from FSS found out that they could re-join the programme from sources relating to Jobs and Skill Centres (JSC) (including the JobCentre, Work Coaches and the DWP).

Figure 22: How participants found out they could re-join FSS



Source: IFF Research telephone survey of FSS customers, C1g How did you find out you could join the service again? Base: Those who re-joined FSS (198)

There were some differences by demographic groups in how participants found out they could re-join the service:

- those aged 50 or over were more likely to have heard this information from the JobCentre (47 per cent compared to 35 per cent on average), while those aged between 25 and 34 were more likely to have heard from a FSS provider (22 per cent compared to 11 per cent on average)
- those who had not worked in the last five years were more likely to have found out about re-joining through the job centre than those who had worked (46 per cent compared to 30 per cent)
- the channel through which participants found out about re-joining did not significantly differ by their gender, their ethnicity, the level of the qualification they held, the extent to which their health limits their day-to-day activity, their Lot (region), or whether or not they were an early leaver of the programme, or from a priority family

Of those in the 2021-22 cohort who were receiving support from FSS for the first time, three quarters (75 per cent) were aware that they would be able to access the service again, should they need to. Participants in the Highlands and Islands area (87 per cent) were particularly likely to be aware of this possibility compared to participants in other service areas²⁶.

6.2 Support received and usefulness

This section details the different types of pre-employment and in-work support participants were offered and took up, and how useful they found this support. The support offered by FSS can be split into two categories: pre-employment and in work support.

6.2.1 Pre-employment support

All providers delivering employment support for the FSS service are required to offer participants with a minimum level of support and provide support where relevant to participants' individual needs, including specific elements detailed in the FSS Operational Guidance. These elements can be summarised as:

- one to one support from a dedicated key worker
- a formal monthly review with the key worker
- a quarterly distance travelled assessment and feedback with the key worker
- employability activities as detailed in the individual Employment Action Plan
- engagement with external, specialist or partner services as detailed in the individual Employment Action Plan
- access to work experience opportunities, mentoring and volunteering and appropriate monthly workplace reviews
- weekly job search activities as required by the individual

²⁶ Please note that the findings should be interpreted with extreme caution as we do not know the underlying factors responsible for this difference between geographical Lots.

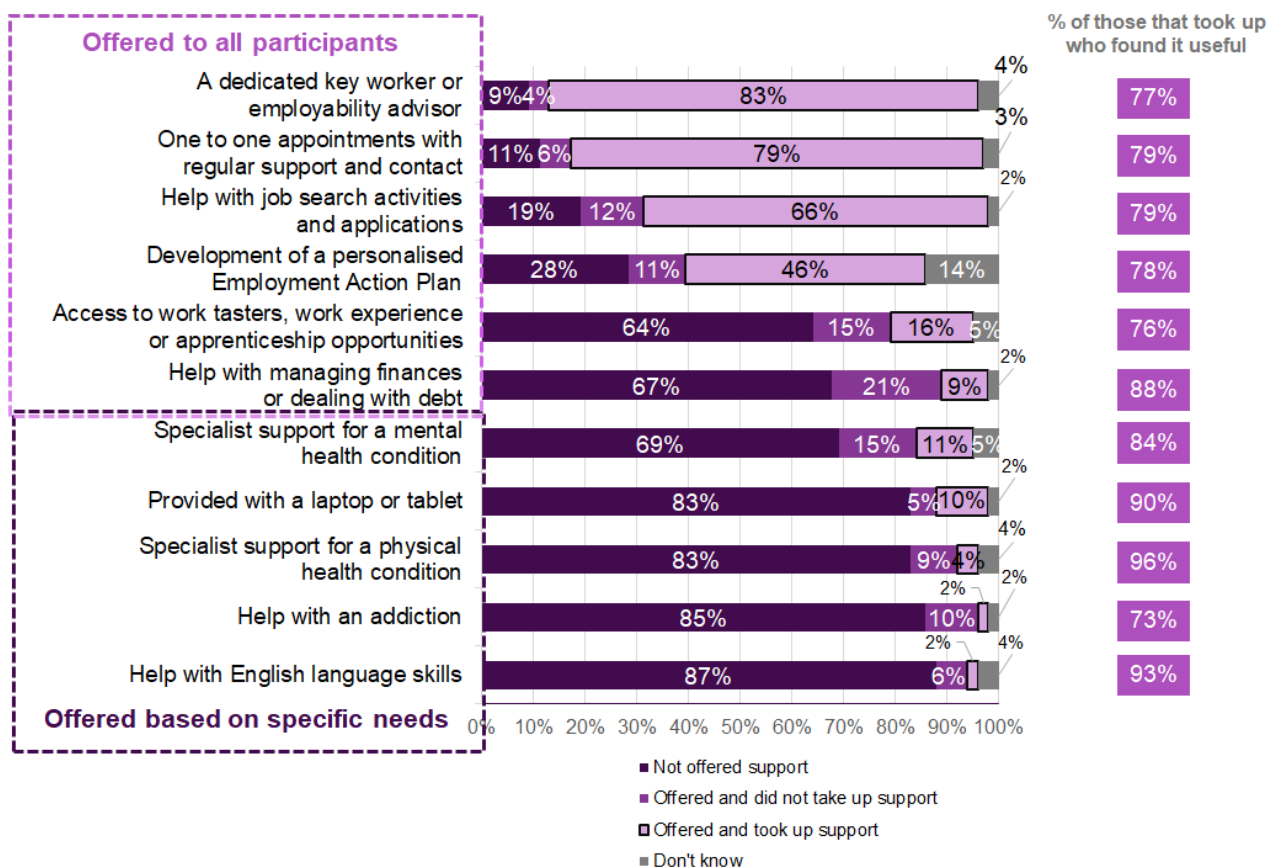
- employer engagement, including support for interviews and negotiations of reasonable adjustments
- financial guidance

In addition, if through engagement with a participant, a provider identifies that the participant requires specialist support to address a health problem, including professional help to manage mental or physical health conditions and wellbeing interventions, the service provider must contact the specialist supplier organisation on the day that the requirement is established to arrange interview assessment regarding access to specialist support.

For participants for whom the labour market is further away, providers are required to give additional support. This includes additional elements such as specialist support for specific physical or mental health conditions, or for those recovering from drug / alcohol / substance misuse. It also includes support addressing barriers due to records of previous convictions and explaining models such as the Supported Employment Model for Disabled People and the Individual Placement and Support (IPS). The IPS is a model of supported employment proven to work particularly well in offering assistance to people with additional support needs, especially those with severe and enduring mental ill health, to help them find or re-enter sustainable employment that fits their needs and interests. Figure 23 shows the different types of support that participants from the 2021-22 cohort reported that they were offered and how many went on to take up that support. It also shows the types of support that participants can expect to be offered as part of the service regardless of their personal circumstances, and the types of support that participants can expect to be offered depending on their specific needs and circumstances.

Of the 2021-22 cohort, 34 per cent reported they had a mental health condition and 38 per cent of those participants said they were offered specialist support for a mental health condition through the FSS service. By contrast, 19 per cent of 2021-22 participants reported a physical disability, and of those, 21 per cent reported that they were offered specialist support for their physical disability.

Figure 23: Offer, take-up, and usefulness of pre-employment support (2021-22 cohort)



Source: IFF Research telephone survey of FSS customers. D5d: Were you offered the following support to help you remain move into work as part of the Fair Start Scotland service? D5e: Did you take up this support? Base: All 2021-22 cohort receiving support (745). D6: On a scale of 1 extremely useful to 5 not at all useful, how useful would you say that each of the types of support your received were to you? Base: All who used the support type: key worker (617), one to one appointment (594), help with job search activities (501), Employment Action Plan (348), work tasters etc. (117), specialist support with mental health (82), specialist support with physical health (28), specialist support with an addiction (16), help managing finances (71), help with English language skills (15), provided with laptop/tablet (78)

The dark purple bars in Figure 23 show the proportion of 2021-22 cohort that did not recall being offered each support type, for example 28 per cent reported that they were not offered a personalised Employment Action Plan. Like participants in the 2020 cohort, participants in the 2021-22 cohort who were offered support most commonly took up more generic, widely applicable types of support:

- a dedicated key worker or employability advisor (94 per cent of those offered)

- one to one appointments with regular support and contact (91 per cent of those offered)
- help with job search activities and applications (85 per cent of those offered)
- development of a personalised Employment Action Plan (80 per cent of those offered)

Fewer participants reported being offered other types of support: help with managing finances (31 per cent were offered), access to work tasters, work experience or apprenticeship opportunities (31 per cent were offered), specialist support with a mental health (26 per cent) or physical health condition (13 per cent), and help with English language skills (9 per cent). This can be explained by more specialised support being relevant to fewer participants. Like the 2020 cohort, relatively few participants who were offered more specialised support went on to take it up (e.g. 18 per cent took up help with an addiction, 25 per cent help with English language skills), though 64 per cent of those offered a laptop or tablet accepted this.

Looking at the types of support which participants recall having been offered to them:

- those who had not worked in the last five years were less likely to have been offered a dedicated key worker compared to those who had worked in the last five years (84 per cent compared to 90 per cent) but more likely to have been offered help with English language skills than those who had worked in the last five years (11 per cent compared to 7 per cent)
- those who reported a health condition that limits their everyday activities were more likely to have been offered the development of a personalised Employment Action Plan than those with no condition (62 per cent compared to 54 per cent)
- white participants were more likely to have been offered the development of a personalised Employment Action Plan (61 per cent compared to 47 per cent) and help managing finances (33 per cent compared to 18 per cent) than participants belonging to an ethnic minority. Like the 2020 cohort, they were also more likely to have been offered specialist mental health support (28 per cent compared to 16 per cent) and specialist physical health support (14 per cent compared to 7 per cent)
- female participants were more likely to have been offered one to one appointments (92 per cent compared to 84 per cent for male participants) and specialist mental health support (31 per cent compared to 24 per cent)
- in line with the 2020 cohort, younger participants (aged 16 to 24) were more likely to recall being offered access to access to work tasters, work experience or apprenticeship opportunities (49 per cent compared to 31 per cent on average)

- participants aged 50 and above were more likely to have been offered a laptop or tablet (20 per cent compared to 15 per cent on average)
- in line with the 2020 cohort, participants from Lot 4, Forth Valley were more likely to recall being offered help with managing finances or dealing with debt (46 per cent compared to 31 per cent on average). They were also more likely to have been provided with a laptop or tablet (23 per cent compared to 15 per cent on average)²⁷

Looking now at the level of take up for various types of support, there were some differences across participant groups. Take up of support for a mental health condition was lower among 35 to 49 year olds than for 25 to 34 year olds (27 per cent compared to 45 per cent). Older participants (aged 50 and above) were more likely to take up specialist support for a physical health condition than younger participants (50 per cent compared to 29 per cent). Older participants were also more likely to accept help with finances than average (45 per cent compared to 30 per cent on average).

Similar to the 2020 cohort, participants for whom the the labour market is further away tended to be more likely to take up the offer of developing a personalised Employment Action Plan than others. For example, 84 per cent of those who had not worked in the five years prior to joining the service took this up, compared to 77 per cent for those who had worked in recent year. Those with degree level qualifications or higher were also less likely to take this up (71 per cent, compared to 80 per cent on average).

There were some differences in take up of support across the different Lots. Lot 1, Glasgow, saw a lower take up of one to one appointments (85 per cent compared to 91 per cent on average). Take up of the development of a personalised Employment Action Plan was particularly low in Lot 7, North East (66 per cent compared to 80 per cent on average)²⁸.

Those re-joining the FSS programme were more likely to accept a dedicated key worker than those taking part for the first time (98 per cent compared to 94 per cent).

In Figure 23, the column on the far right shows the proportion of participants who found the support useful out of those who took it up. Similar to the 2020 cohort, around three quarters or more of those who took up each type of support from the 2021-22 cohort found it useful. Specialist support for a physical health condition and help with English language skills emerged as particularly useful to participants. It should be noted that findings on the usefulness of specialist support like help with an addiction, help with a physical health condition or help with English language skills are based on small numbers of participants, given that relatively few took up

²⁷ Please note that the findings should be interpreted with extreme caution as we do not know the underlying factors responsible for this difference between geographical Lots.

²⁸ Please note that the findings should be interpreted with extreme caution as we do not know the underlying factors responsible for this difference between geographical Lots.

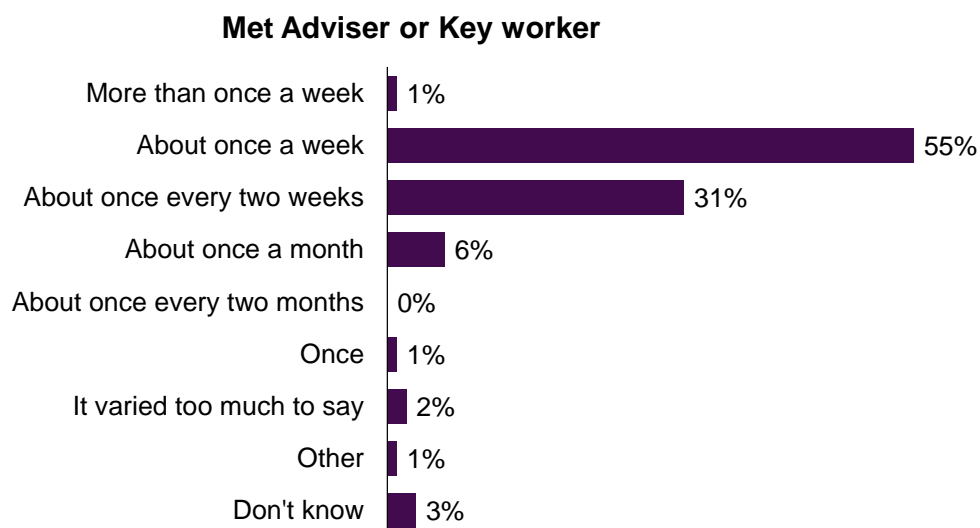
these types of support. There were some differences across groups regarding the usefulness of support:

- white participants were more likely to find a dedicated key worker useful than ethnic minority participants (79 per cent compared to 69 per cent), as well as one to one appointments (81 per cent compared to 70 per cent)
- early leavers of the programme were less likely than others to find a dedicated key worker useful (65 per cent compared to 77 per cent on average)
- participants with a qualification below degree level (National 1-5 level or equivalent) were more likely to find a dedicated key worker useful than participants with a degree level qualification or above (81 per cent compared to 72 per cent)
- older participants (aged 50 and above) were more likely to find the development of a personalised Employment Action Plan useful (86 per cent compared to 78 per cent on average)
- there was no significant difference between male and female participants, between participants with different levels of qualifications, or between participants who had re-joined the programme when it came to how useful they found these various support streams
- there was no significant difference between how useful participants found this support in Wave 3 and Wave 4

6.2.2 Meeting with a key worker or employability advisor

Participants were also asked how often they met with their key worker or employability adviser. Figure 24 shows that slightly more than half of participants met with their key worker about once a week and around a third met once a fortnight.

Figure 24: Frequency of meetings with key worker/adviser (2021-22 cohort)

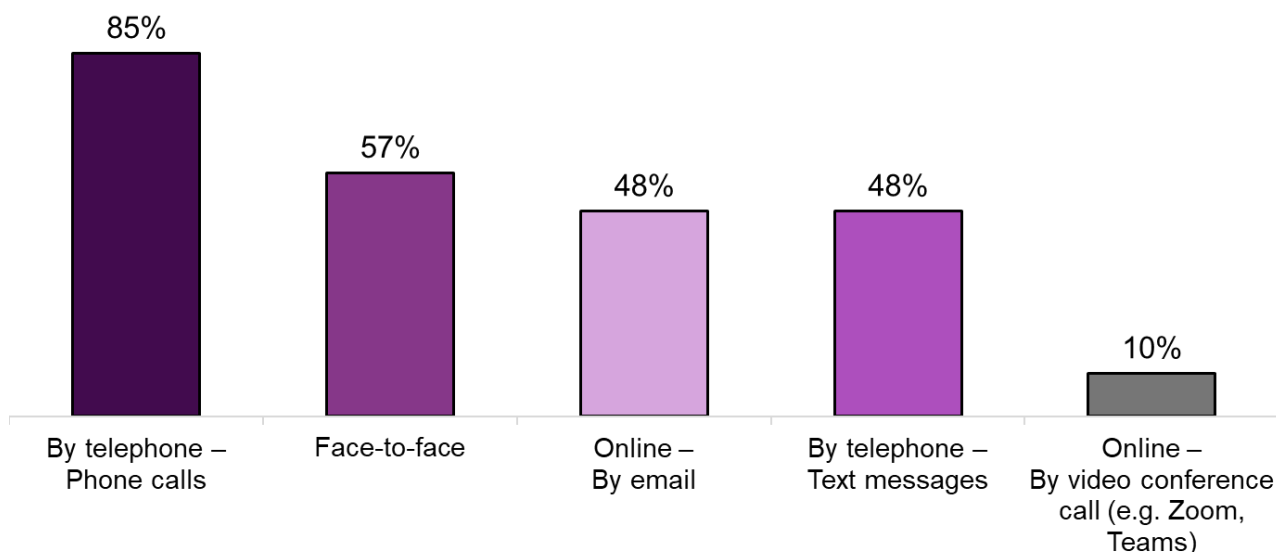


Source: IFF Research telephone survey of FSS customers. D7f: How often did you meet with your Adviser/ Key Worker? Base: All who received support from a dedicated adviser / key worker (617)

Only 4 per cent of all participants who were offered a key worker or advisor did not meet with one.

In Wave 4, participants were asked how they usually communicated with their key adviser to receive pre-employment support. Figure 25 shows communication over the phone was the most common method with nearly nine in ten participants (85 per cent) having communicated with their key adviser in this way. Face to face communication is the next most common method (57 per cent of participants spoke to their adviser face to face), followed by email and text messages which were used by half of participants. Only one in ten participants usually communicated with their key worker by video conference call (e.g. Zoom or Teams).

Figure 25: Communication method with Adviser / Key Worker (pre-employment support)



Source: IFF Research telephone survey of FSS customers. D7g: How do/did you usually communicate with your Adviser / Key Worker to receive pre-employment support? Base: All who received support from a dedicated adviser / key worker (617)

6.2.3 Differences in pre-employment support received between the 2021-22 cohort and previous cohorts

The various types of pre-employment support were received to a similar extent by the 2021-22 cohort, the 2020 cohort at Wave 3, the 2019 cohort at Wave 2 and the 2018 cohort at Wave 1²⁹. Take up of the development of a personalised Employment Action Plan is consistent with Wave 3 (80 per cent compared to 82 per cent in Wave 3). However, it is lower than in Waves 1 and 2 where 89 per cent of participants recalled taking up the development of an Employment Action Plan. Participants' views about the usefulness of the pre-employment support they received was similar across Waves - in Wave 4, 79 per cent of participants found help with job search activities and applications to be useful.

The proportion of participants saying they met with their key advisor once a week has not returned to the level reported by the 2018 and 2019 cohorts (65 and 63 per cent) and remains in line with the 2020 cohort (55 per cent for the 2021-22 cohort

²⁹ The following types of support were introduced in the Wave 2 survey for the 2019 cohort so comparisons cannot be made with the 2018 cohort: Specialist support for a mental health condition; specialist support for a physical health condition; help with managing finances or dealing with debt. The following types of support were introduced in the Wave 4 survey for the 2021-22 cohort so comparisons cannot be made with previous waves: Help with English language skills; provided with a laptop or tablet.

compared to 50 per cent for the 2020 cohort). The proportion of participants who met with their key worker about once a month decreased among the 2021-22 cohort compared to the 2020 cohort (6 per cent compared to 12 per cent).

The proportion of participants who recalled being offered a key worker or advisor but who did not meet with one is similar to the proportion among the 2020 cohort (4 per cent compared to 5 per cent).

6.2.4 In-work support

Once a participant has moved into employment, they are entitled to up to 12 months in-work support³⁰. The provider will work with the employer and participant, as appropriate and determined by the participant, to identify the support required for the participant to start and sustain employment. Thereafter the provider will provide a period of in-work support, which has the ambition of supporting job retention / progression in terms of skills and / or income. Participants have the choice as to whether they will access in-work support and may decide to take only certain elements of the support dependent on their individual needs. The following elements detail the range of support available:

- continued weekly contact with a dedicated key worker, reducing over time
- an In-work Support Action Plan detailing a timeline for workplace reviews with the employer and setting out future objectives
- support provided to the participant at their work induction
- financial guidance to the individual if necessary
- ensuring the participant is aware of changes to their benefit entitlement and that they are receiving all appropriate in-work benefit
- provide support to training at workplace (if necessary)
- giving information about travel options to and from work, taking into consideration the participants' needs
- an exit plan for leaving the FSS service

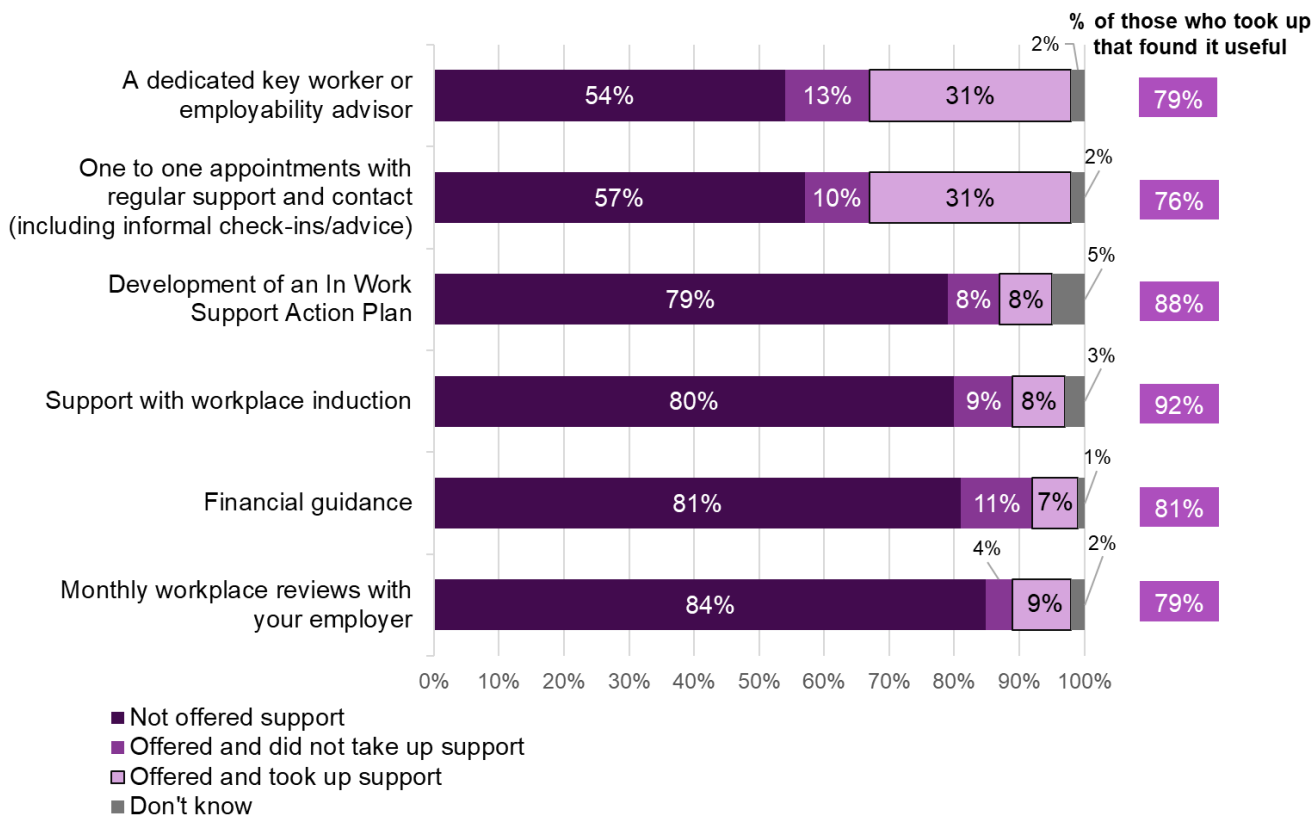
For participants who are further removed from the labour market, providers should also provide Job and Task Analysis and deliver tailored support to match participants' individual requirements. The Supported Employment Model and Individual Placement Support model should also be adhered to where applicable.

All FSS participants who are in work can expect to receive in-work support. However in order to gather the most relevant insights, the survey included questions pertaining to in-work support which were only asked of those who were working at least 16 hours per week. Within this group in the 2021-22 cohort, 54 per cent recalled being offered any type of in-work support. This is an increase compared to the 2020 cohort in Wave 3 (43 per cent) but is still lower than Wave 1 (67 per cent).

³⁰ However within FSS a job outcome is classed as 16 hours or more, therefore anyone moving into a job of fewer than 16 hours is still classed as not working and remains eligible for pre-employment support.

Figure 26 shows the proportion of the 2021-22 cohort who were working at least 16 hours per week at the time of the survey who were offered and took up the various forms of in-work support, and how useful they found it.

Figure 26: Offer, take-up, and usefulness of in-work support (2021-22 cohort)



Source: IFF Research telephone survey of FSS customers. D11h: Were you offered the following in-work support to help you remain in work as part of the Fair Start Scotland service? Base: All 2021-22 cohort who were in work 16 or more hours a week (269) D11i: Did you take up this support? Base: All 2021-22 cohort who were in work 16 or more hours a week (269). D11j: On a scale of 1 extremely useful to 5 not at all useful, how useful would you say that each of the types of support your received were to you? Base: All 2021-22 cohort who used the support type: key worker (83), one to one appointment (83), workplace inductions (22), In Work Support Action Plan (23), financial guidance (19), monthly reviews (26)

Similar to Wave 3, participants were most likely to take up support from a dedicated key worker (31 per cent of all participants and 70 per cent of those offered), followed by one to one appointments with regular support and contact (31 per cent of all participants and 75 per cent of those offered), and monthly workplace reviews with their employer (9 per cent of all participants and 70 per cent of those offered). Due to very small base sizes it is not possible to comment on differences between groups of participants or among different FSS Lots for those who were offered or took up in-work support. It is also not possible to compare findings across waves.

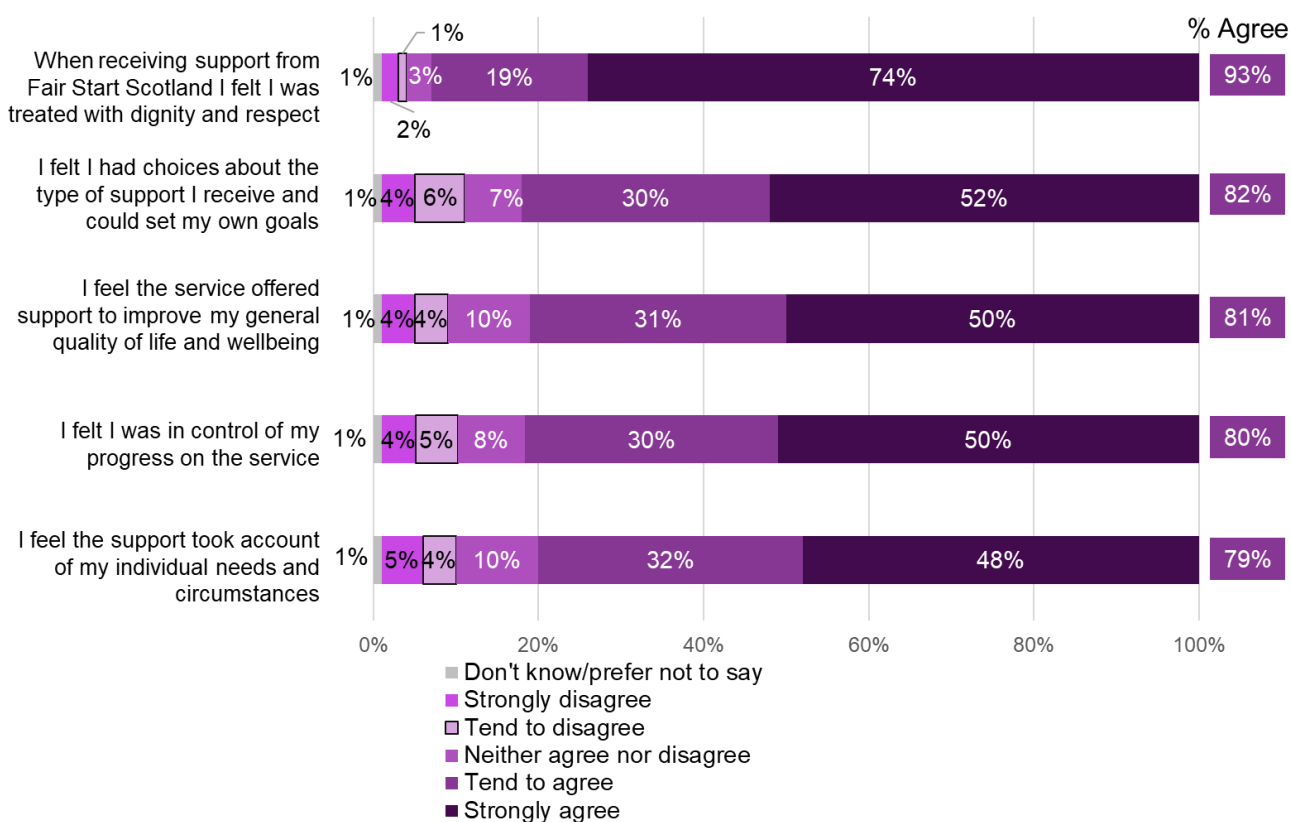
The proportion of participants who were offered and took up in-work support is generally lower than pre-employment support, in line with previous waves. Perceptions of the usefulness of in-work support are high, similar to those for pre-employment support. Support with workplace induction was felt to be most useful (92%) followed by the development of an In Work Support Action Plan (88%). It should be noted that results on the usefulness of support types have small base sizes and should therefore be interpreted cautiously.

6.3 Overall views of support

The 2021-22 cohort were asked about different aspects of the support they received. The Fair Start Scotland service is built upon the Scottish Government's [key values for public services](#): Dignity and respect; Fairness and equality; Continuous improvement. To gather participants' views about the support they received, the survey asks them to give their agreement with a list of statements based on these key values.

Figure 27 shows that most participants had a positive attitude towards the support they received from FSS. Between 79 and 93 per cent of participants agreed that the service provided was consistent with the Scottish Government's key values. In line with the 2020 cohort, participants were most likely to agree they were treated with dignity and respect (93 per cent).

Figure 27: Attitudes around support received (2021-22 cohort)



Source: IFF Research telephone survey of FSS customers. D13: To what extent do you agree with the following statements about the support you have received.
 Base: All 2021-22 cohort receiving support (745)

There were some differences in attitudes between demographic groups:

- those who had not worked in the last 5 years were less likely to agree that the service offered support to improve their general quality of life and wellbeing (77 per cent compared to 84 per cent among those who had worked in the last 5 years). They also felt less in control of their progress on the service (78 per cent compared to 83 per cent)
- those with a degree level qualification or higher were less likely than the average to agree with all but one of the statements (When receiving support from FSS I felt I was treated with dignity and respect)
- those who have a health condition which limits their day to day activities were less likely to agree that FSS offered support to improve their general quality of life and wellbeing compared to those whose day to day was not affected by their health condition (79 per cent compared to 90 per cent)
- minority ethnic participants were less likely than white participants to agree that the service they received took account of their individual needs and circumstances (71 per cent compared to 82 per cent). They also felt less in control of their progress on the service (68 per cent compared to 83 per cent). This difference is also seen in how much they feel they have choices about the type of support they receive and how much they feel they can set their own goals (71 per cent compared to 85 per cent). These differences are consistent with the 2020 cohort
- participants classified within 'priority family groups' were less likely to feel that FSS provided support that took account of their individual needs and circumstances compared to other participants (74 per cent compared to 81 per cent). This was similar for all parents compared to non-parents (73 per cent compared to 82 per cent)
- age and gender did not significantly influence participants likelihood to agree or disagree with the statements about the support they received from FSS
- overall, satisfaction with the FSS service has not changed over time and has remained high

6.4 Views on further support participants would have liked to receive

Participants were asked an open text question about whether there was any other type of support that they wished they could have received from FSS to help them move closer to work. Most participants (73 per cent) felt there was no other type of support they would have liked to receive. This has reduced slightly compared to Wave 3 (78 per cent). Of those that did wish they could have received another type of support, only a small proportion of participants mentioned specific support types, with no primary gap identified in the offer.

The types of support participants would have wanted to receive include:

- more training courses (25 participants)
- more personalised help (21 participants)
- for FSS to display greater consideration of participants' health issues when offering support (20 participants)
- financial advice or support (15 participants)
- for FSS to be easier to get in contact with (12 participants)
- for FSS to provide more relevant employment opportunities (11 participants)
- face to face meetings (12 participants)

Views on types of support participants would have wanted to receive varied slightly between demographic groups. Female participants were more likely to have wanted face to face meetings (3 per cent compared to 1 per cent for male participants). Participants with a degree or above would have wanted more personalised help (7 per cent compared to 3 per cent on average) and relevant employment opportunities (4 per cent compared to 2 per cent on average).

Participants belonging to an ethnic minority group were more likely to say they would have wanted other types of support from FSS than white participants. For example, they were more likely to mention training courses (8 per cent compared to 3 per cent) and more personalised help (7 per cent compared to 2 per cent) than white participants. This trend is consistent with Wave 3.

6.5 Problems or concerns with FSS

Participants were asked whether their provider had explained to them what to do if they have a problem or a concern about the service. Just over half of participants (53 per cent) said they did recall receiving this information, however over a third (36 per cent) said they did not recall receiving this (11 per cent did not know).

Participants aged 16 to 24 were more likely than average not to recall being told what to do if they had a problem or concern (45 per cent compared to 36 per cent). Participants from an ethnic minority were also less likely to recall this than average (47 per cent compared to 36 per cent).

Participants were also asked about whether they did experience any problems or concerns about the service during the time when they were receiving support. Just over one in ten (11 per cent) said they did have some type of problem or concern.

Groups who were more likely than on average to report that they experienced problem or concern about the service included:

- those with a degree level qualification or higher (16 per cent)
- those in Lot 5 (East) (17 per cent)³¹
- early leavers (18 per cent)

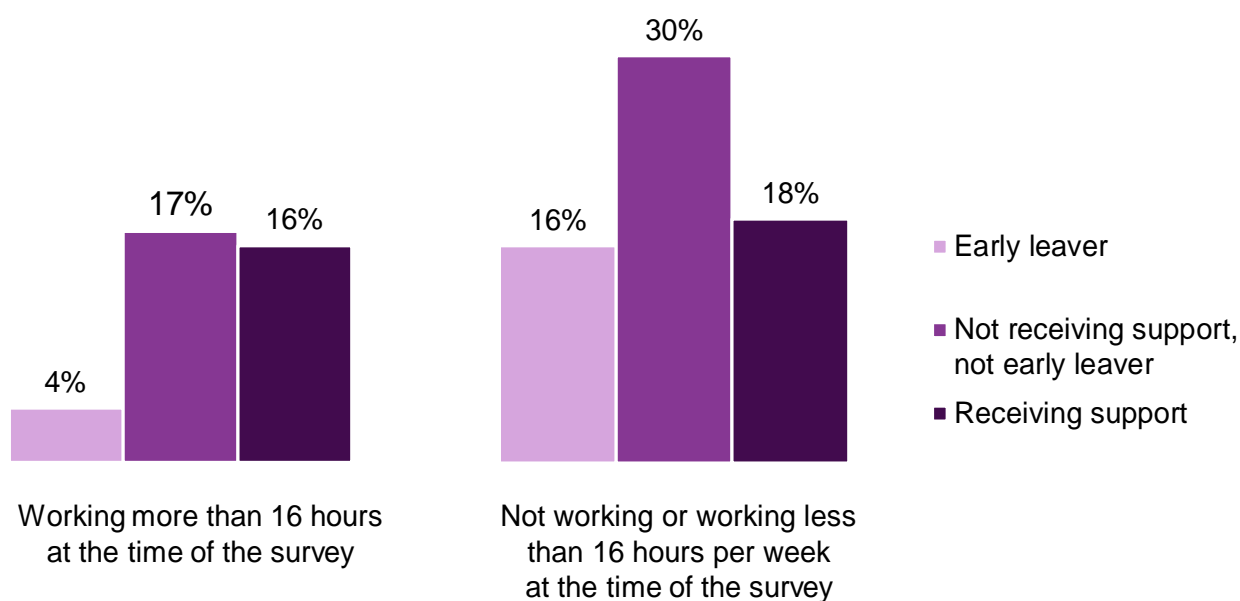
³¹ Please note that the findings should be interpreted with extreme caution as we do not know the underlying factors responsible for this difference between geographical Lots.

There were no differences in the likelihood of reporting a problem or concern by gender, age, employment status, health status, ethnicity, parental status or re-joiner status.

6.6 Reasons for ending engagement with FSS

Figure 28 below shows the proportion of 2021-2022 cohort participants who were still receiving support and those who were not, including a breakdown of those who were registered on FSS database as having left the support early. This shows that one in five participants were recorded as leaving the service early, and most of these (16 per cent) were not working more than 16 hours per week at the time of the survey. The proportion of early leavers has increased compared to the 2020 cohort (20 per cent compared to 13 per cent). According to the [Fair Start Scotland annual report for Year 4](#) of service provision, the early leaver rate for those joining the service from April 2018 to September 2021 is 52 per cent, so the early leaver group is underrepresented in this research. This could be linked to difficulties in engaging with early leavers. That said, the number of early leavers surveyed (143 participants) is large enough to allow comparisons against other FSS participants.

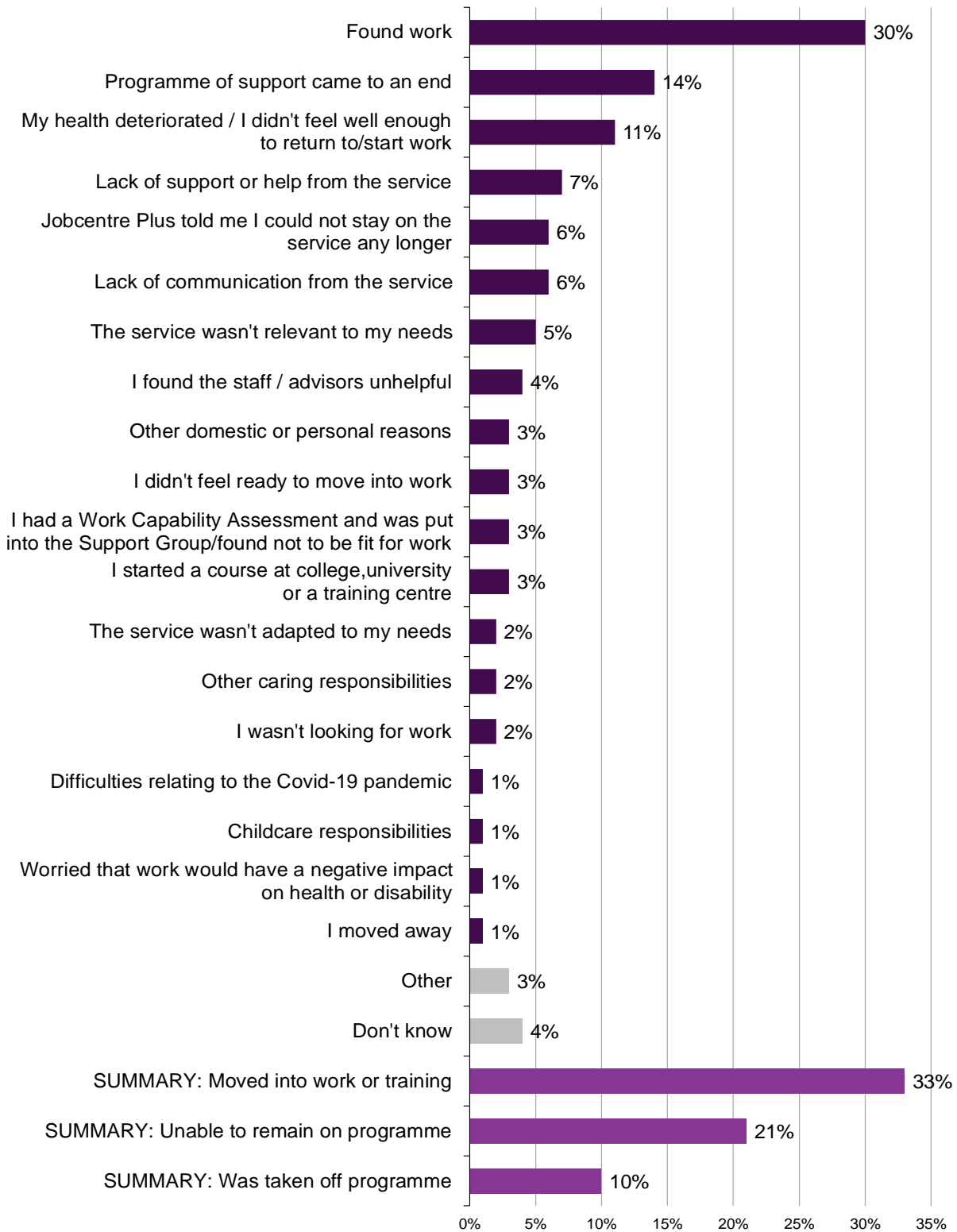
Figure 28: Support status including early leavers (2021-22)



Source: IFF Research telephone survey of FSS customers. D1: Are you currently receiving support from Fair Start Scotland? and management information data on early leavers collected by FSS. Base: All participants for whom early leaver data was available (715)

All participants who had stopped receiving support from FSS were asked about why they left the service. Figure 29 shows that the most common reasons for participants having ceased engagement with the service were that they found work (30 per cent) and that the programme of support came to an end (14 per cent), in line with the previous wave.

Figure 29: Reasons for leaving the service (2021-22 cohort)



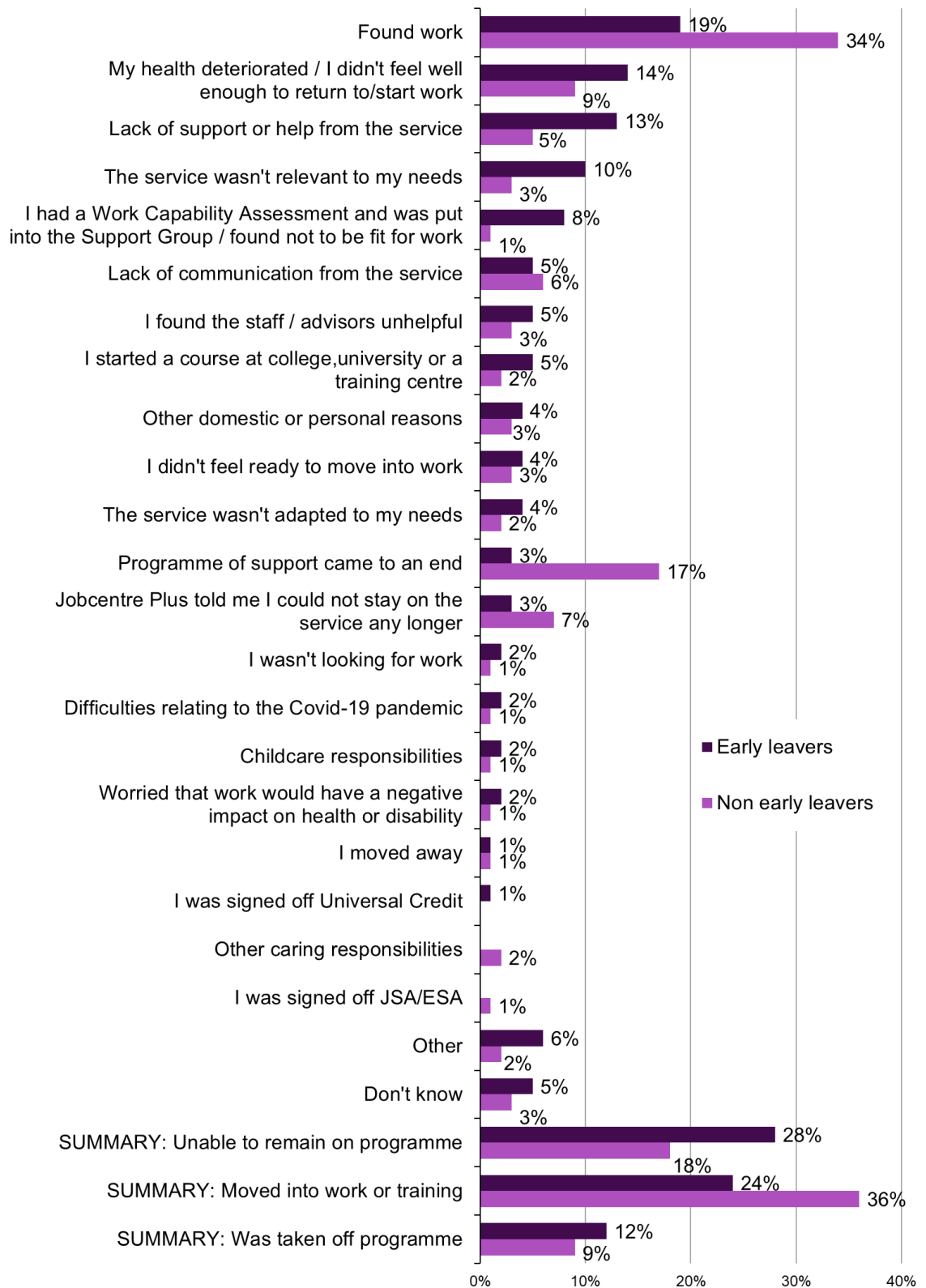
Source: IFF Research telephone survey of FSS customers. D4: Why did you leave the support service?³² Base: All 2021-2022 cohort no longer receiving support (455)

³² 'SUMMARY: Was taken off the programme' includes the following answers: I had a Work Capability Assessment and was put into the Support Group / found not to be fit for work; I was signed off JSA/ESA; Jobcentre Plus told me I could not stay on the service any longer; I was signed off Universal Credit.

Figure 29 represents responses from both participants who were recorded on FSS's database as having left the service early and those who were recorded as having completed the support program. Like in Wave 3, those who were recorded as 'early leavers' were less likely to say they left the service because they found work, than those who were recorded as completing the program (19 per cent, compared to 34 per cent).

As shown in Figure 29, there were some differences between 'early leavers' and other participants in this wave: early leavers were more likely to say they left because of a lack of support or help from the service (13 per cent compared to 5 per cent), because the service wasn't relevant to their needs (10 per cent compared to 3 per cent), because they were found to be unfit for work (8 per cent compared to 1 per cent) and because they started a course at college, university or a training centre (5 per cent compared to 2 per cent).

Figure 30: Reasons for leaving the service among early leavers and non-early leavers (2021-22 cohort)



Source: IFF Research telephone survey of FSS customers. D4: Why did you leave the support service? Base: Early leavers from the 2021-2022 cohort no longer receiving support (123) Non-early leavers from the 2021-2022 cohort no longer receiving support (332)

Participants aged 50 and above were less likely to have left the service because they found work (16 per cent compared to 30 per cent on average) and more likely to have left because their health deteriorated (17 per cent compared to 11 per cent on average). Fewer older participants said they had left the service as a result of being found unfit for work in a Work Capability Assessment, compared to feeling their health had deteriorated (only 4 per cent compared to 17 per cent for the latter). Of all those who left early, participants with a qualification at degree level or higher were more likely to have left because they felt the service wasn't relevant to their needs (12 per cent compared to 5 per cent on average).

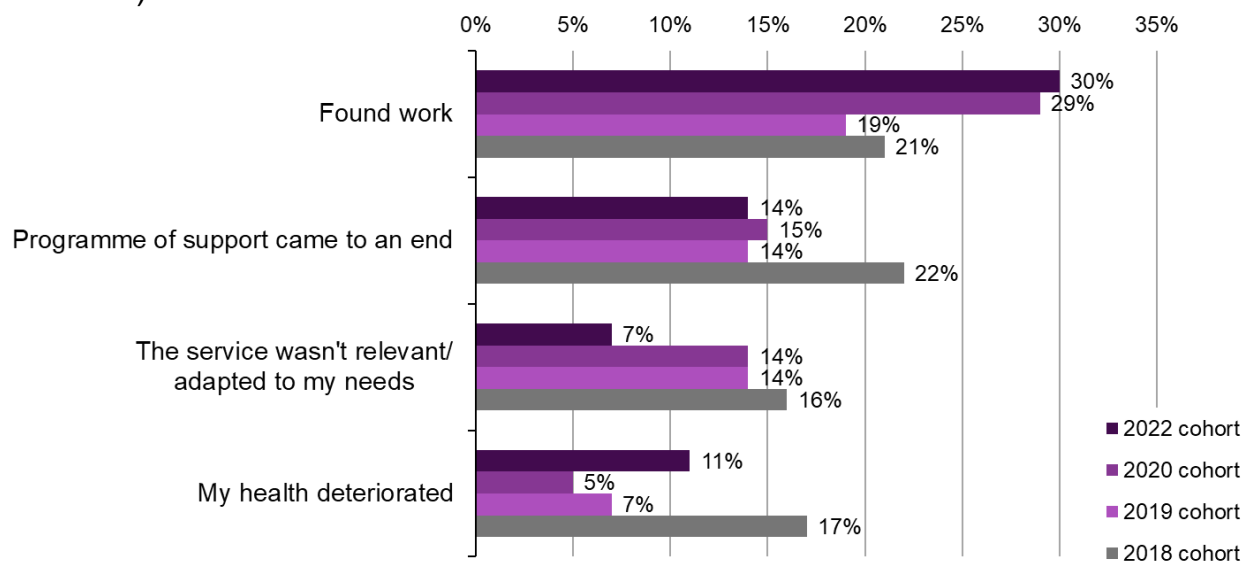
Similar to Wave 3, participants with a limiting health condition were less likely to have left the service because they found work than those whose condition did not limit their day to day activities (17 per cent compared to 49 per cent) and were more likely to have left because their health deteriorated (19 per cent compared to 3 per cent).

6.7 Reasons for leaving the service for the 2021-22 cohort and the previous cohorts

Figure 31 shows the most common reasons why participants left the FSS service among the 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021-22 cohorts. Participants from the 2021-22 and 2020 cohorts were more likely to have left the service because they found work than participants from the 2019 or 2018 cohorts (30 and 29 per cent, compared to 19 per cent and 21 per cent respectively). It is worth noting that in the 2022 cohort, fewer participants were still receiving support at the time of the survey compared to previous waves (34 per cent compared to around 50 to 60 per cent in previous waves).

Similar to Wave 3, participants in the 2021-22 cohort were less likely to report that their programme of support had come to an end than those in the 2018 cohort (14 per cent compared to 22 per cent). Fewer participants indicated they left the service because the service wasn't relevant to their needs than previous waves (5 per cent in Wave 4 compared to around 15 per cent in previous waves). However, more participants indicated they left the service because their health deteriorated (11 per cent compared to 5 per cent in the last wave).

Figure 31: Most common reasons for leaving the service (2018, 2019, 2020, 2021-22 cohorts)

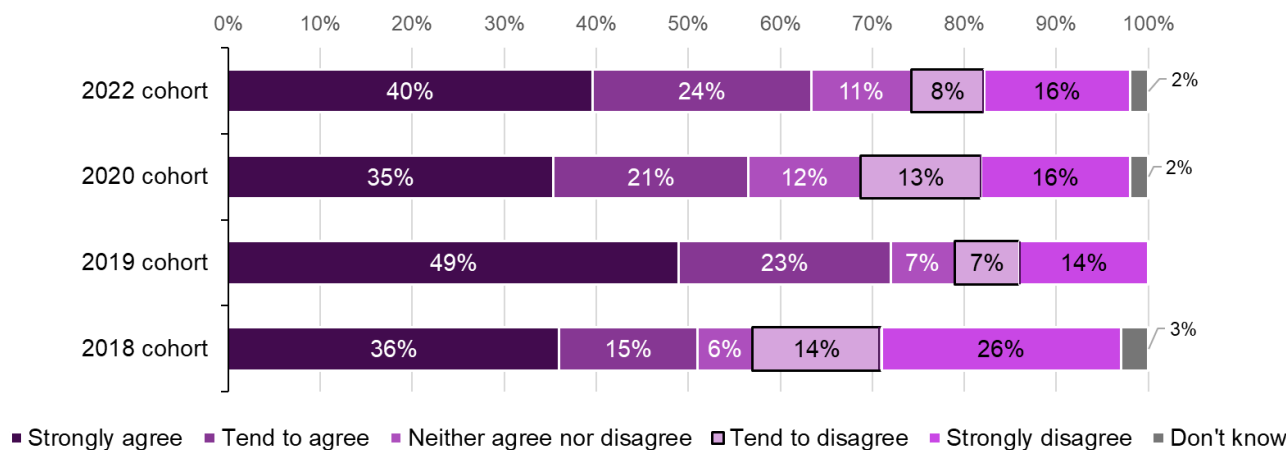


Source: IFF Research telephone survey of FSS customers. D4: Why did you leave the support service? Base: 2021-22 cohort no longer receiving support (455) 2020 cohort no longer receiving support (224) 2019 cohort no longer receiving support (233) 2018 cohort no longer receiving support (456)

6.8 Whether FSS helped participants to find a job

Participants in the 2021-22 cohort who were employed, self-employed, or had worked in the last week were asked whether the support they received from FSS helped them to get their job. Figure 32 shows that most participants (63 per cent) felt FSS had helped them to get their jobs, with a sizable proportion strongly agreeing (40 per cent). Agreement was the highest it has been across all waves except Wave 2 (72 per cent). One quarter (24 per cent) of participants in work or had worked in the last week disagreed that FSS helped them to get their job. Early leavers were less likely to agree that the support they had received had helped them get their job compared to those who had completed their programme of support (26 per cent compared to 69 per cent). There were no other notable differences between subgroups in the 2021-22 cohort.

Figure 32: Extent to which FSS helped participants get their jobs, asked at Wave 3 to the 2018, 2019 and 2020 cohort and at Wave 4 to the 2021-22 cohort



Source: IFF Research telephone survey of FSS customers. A9 To what extent would you agree that the support you received from Fair Start Scotland helped you to get your job? Base: All employed, self-employed or have worked in the last week 2018 cohort (47) 2019 cohort (64) 2020 cohort (247) 2021-22 cohort (298)

7. Outcomes & motivation to return to work

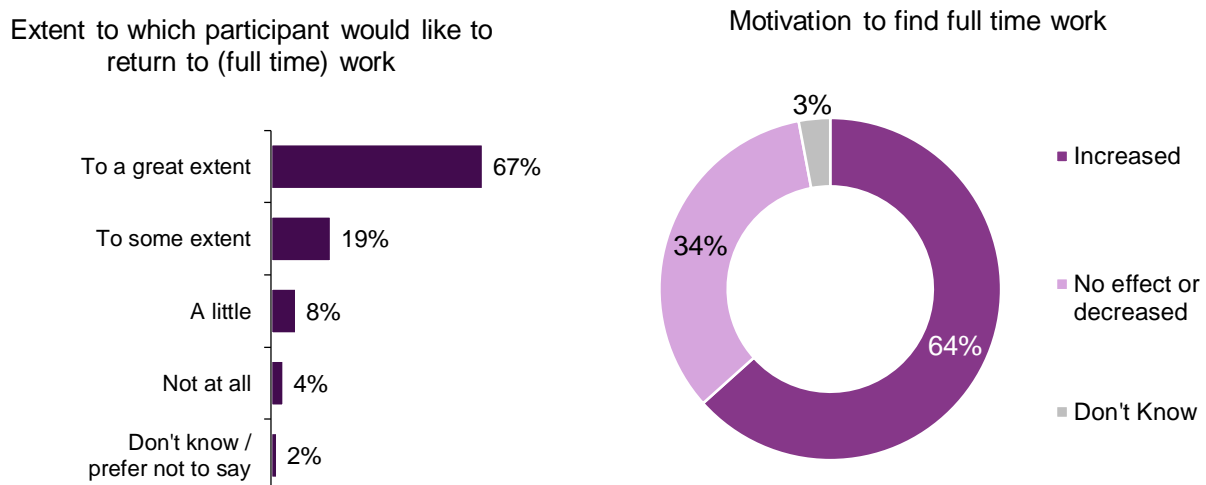
This chapter explores participants' motivation to return to work and any impact that FSS has had on their motivation. It also describes the barriers and issues preventing participants from working and the extent to which FSS support has helped them to overcome these barriers. This chapter then explores improvements to indicators relating to work performance and pay, before looking at participants' overall job search skills. Findings in this chapter focus on outcomes for the 2021-22 cohort.

7.1 Views on returning to work

At the time of the survey, 63 per cent of participants were not in work (or working for fewer than 16 hours per week). These participants were asked about their motivation to return to work. The questions were phrased as either 'returning to work' or 'returning to full time work' depending on whether they were not working or working less than 16 hours³³.

As shown in Figure 33, the majority of participants wanted to return to work (full time), with two thirds (67 per cent) saying they wanted to return 'to a great extent'. Only four per cent of participants said that they did not want to return at all.

Figure 33: Desire to return to work and change in motivation to find work over time (2021-22 cohort)



Source: IFF Research telephone survey of FSS customers. E2: To what extent would you like to return to (full time) work in the future? E8: To what extent would you say your motivation to find (full time) work has increased or decreased from when you began receiving support from the Fair Start Scotland service? Base: All 2021-22 cohort who work fewer than 16 hours per week (476) Note: Results are

³³ Within FSS a job outcome is classed as 16 hours or more, therefore anyone moving into a job of fewer than 16 hours is still classed as not working and remains eligible for pre-employment support.

presented with answers the following answers combined: (Increased a lot and Increased a little), (No effect, Decreased a little, Decreased a lot)

7.2 Impact of FSS on motivation

As shown on the right of Figure 33, the FSS service had a positive effect on motivation to find employment for the majority of participants who were not in work at the time of the survey or working less than 16 hours. Over six in ten participants (64 per cent) reported that their motivation to return to work (full time) had increased since they began receiving support from FSS, comprising around a third (36 per cent) who reported that their motivation had 'increased a lot', and over a quarter (27 per cent) whose motivation had increased 'a little'.

A quarter of participants (24 percent) reported that their motivation had not changed since receiving support from FSS, while a minority (10 per cent) said that their motivation had decreased since joining FSS.

Participants who were limited by their health condition were less likely to report an increase in motivation than those with no health condition (38 per cent limited by their health condition reported no/decreased effect on motivation, compared to 22 per cent of those with no health condition).

Early leavers were less likely to report an increase in motivation compared to those who reported not being an early leaver (46 per cent of early leavers reported no/decreased effect on motivation, compared to 30 per cent of those who were not early leavers).

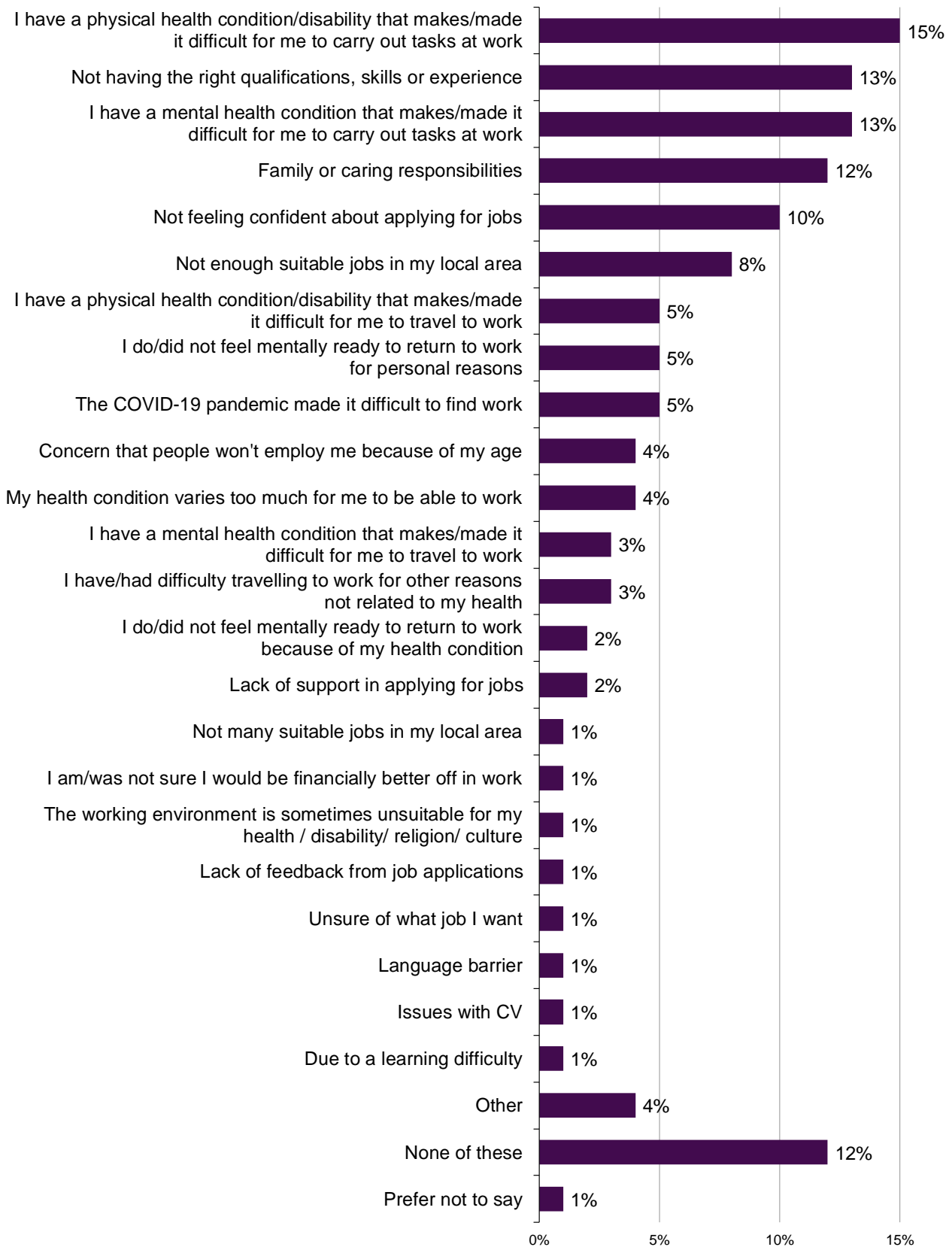
Overall change in motivation levels as a result of support did not differ significantly between male and female participants, between participants from different ethnic backgrounds, between participants of different ages, between participants with different qualification levels, between participants who had worked in the last five years and those who had not, or between new joiners and re-joiners.

There was no significant difference in the effect of FSS services on motivation to find work between Wave 3 and Wave 4.

7.3 Barriers to work

Participants were asked about the barriers they faced that prevented them from working, from the point when they first joined service, until they either found work, or until the point of the survey (whichever came first). A range of issues were reported that prevented participants from working, the most commonly mentioned of which was having a physical health condition/disability that makes/made it difficult for them to carry out tasks at work (reported by 15 per cent of participants). Other commonly mentioned barriers to work related to not having the right qualifications, skills or experience (13 percent), or having a mental health condition that made it difficult to carry out tasks at work (13 per cent). Participants also mentioned a range of other barriers that were not related to their health. Figure 34 shows the full list of issues or barriers experienced by participants.

Figure 34: Issues/barriers preventing working (full time) (2021-22 cohort)



Source: IFF Research telephone survey of FSS customers. F1A: What would you say are the main issues or barriers preventing you from working (full time)? Base: All 2021-22 cohort (745)

There were several differences in the barriers experienced by particular groups of participants.

Those who had worked in the last five years were more likely to report there not being enough suitable jobs in their area than those who had not worked (9 per cent compared to 5 per cent), as well as the COVID-19 pandemic making it difficult to find work (6 per cent compared to 2 per cent).

Not having the right qualifications was more likely to be reported by minority ethnic participants than white participants (21 per cent compared to 11 per cent), as well as those without health conditions (18 per cent, compared to 9 per cent of participants who were limited by their health condition).

Not feeling confident about applying to jobs was more likely to be reported by those who were not early leavers (11 per cent, compared to 4 per cent of early leavers), and those with no health condition (13 per cent, compared to 7 per cent of participants who were limited by their health condition).

Minority ethnic participants were more likely to report language barriers as one of the reasons that prevented them from working compared to white participants (4 per cent compared to less than 1 per cent), whereas white participants were more likely to report physical and mental health-related reasons making it difficult to carry out tasks at work as barriers compared to minority ethnic participants (17 per cent compared to 4 per cent for physical health conditions and 14 per cent compared to 4 per cent for mental health conditions).

Men were more likely than women to say that there were not enough jobs in their local area (nine per cent compared to five per cent), and that they didn't have the right qualifications skills or experience (16 per cent compared to 8 per cent). One in ten (11 per cent) of those aged 50 – 65+ were concerned that people wouldn't employ them because of their age, significantly more than the overall average (4 per cent).

Participants based in Lot 6 (South West) were more likely to say that difficulty travelling to work for non-health related reasons was a barrier than the average across all respondents (10 per cent compared to three per cent)³⁴.

Significantly less participants felt the lack of suitable jobs in their area was a barrier preventing them from working in Wave 4 than in Wave 3 (eight per cent compared to 14 per cent).

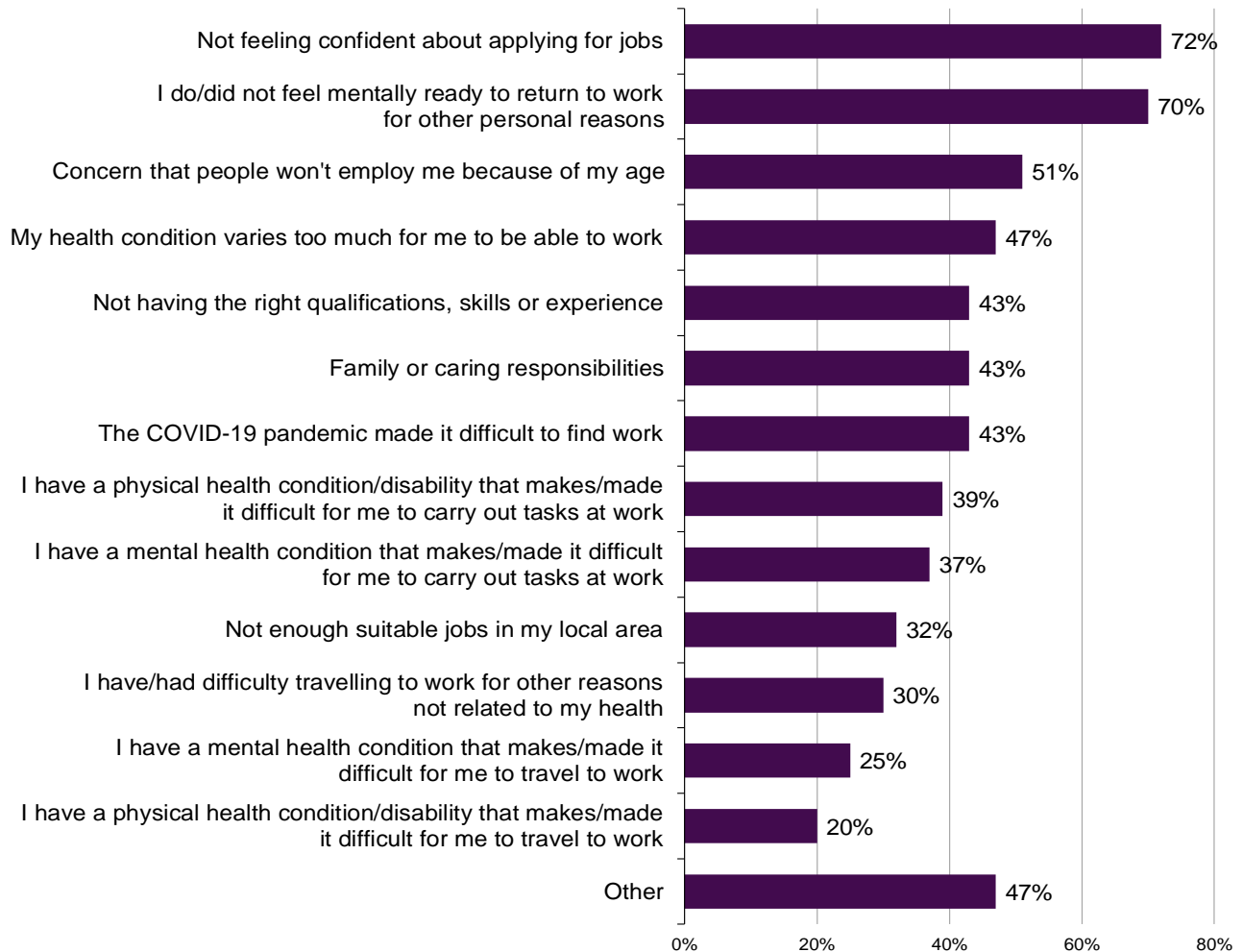
7.4 The impact of FSS support on overcoming barriers to work

Participants were asked the extent they thought the support received from FSS had helped them to overcome each of their reported barriers, on a scale of one 'had no

³⁴ Please note that the findings should be interpreted with extreme caution as we do not know the underlying factors responsible for this difference between geographical Lots.

impact' to five 'helped a lot'. The proportion of participants who said that the support had helped them to overcome their personal barriers (i.e. scored either a four or five) is shown in Figure 35³⁵.

Figure 35: Participants for whom FSS support helped them to overcome the barrier to work (2021-22 cohort)



Source: IFF Research telephone survey of FSS customers. F1B. To what extent do you think the support you received from Fair Start Scotland helped you to overcome these barriers? Base: All 2021-22 Cohort who selected barrier: Not feeling confident about applying for jobs (65) I do not feel mentally ready to return to work for other personal reasons (22) Concern that people won't employ me because of my age (21) My health condition varies too much for me to be able to work (26) Not having the right qualifications, skills or experience (63) Family or caring responsibilities (80) The COVID-19 pandemic made it difficult to find work (31) I have a physical health condition/disability that makes/made it difficult for me to carry out tasks at work (104) I have a mental health condition that makes/made it difficult for me to carry out tasks at work (94) Not enough suitable jobs in my local area (55) I have/had difficulty travelling to work for other reasons not related to my health (16) I have a mental health condition that makes/made it difficult for me to

³⁵ Excluding barriers reported by ten or fewer participants.

travel to work (19) I have a physical health condition/disability that makes/made it difficult for me to travel to (34) Other (197)

Figure 35 shows that the support from FSS was most helpful to participants who did not feel confident applying to jobs, and for those who did not feel mentally ready to return to work. The support helped 72 per cent and 70 per cent of these participants to overcome these barriers, respectively.

The support also helped:

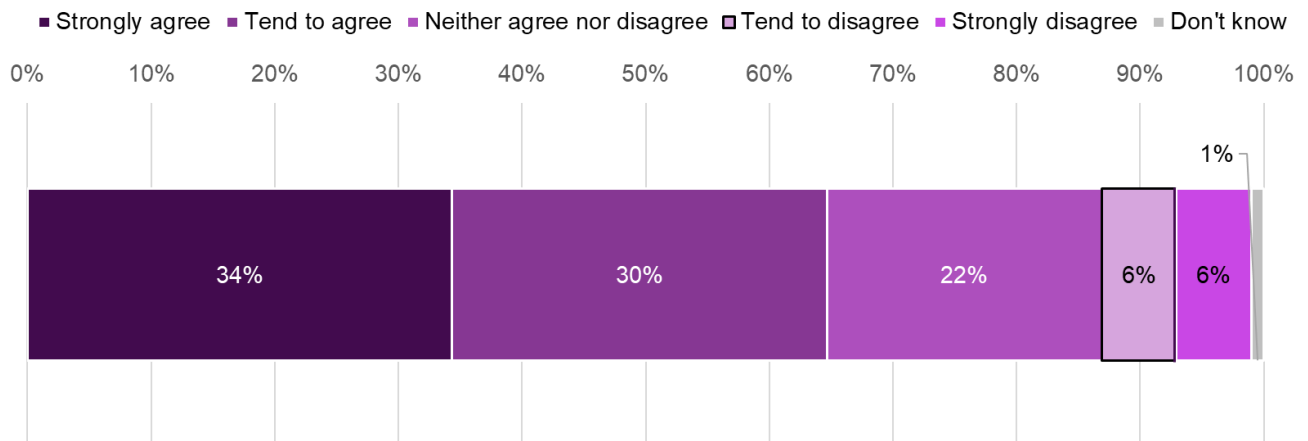
- 51 per cent of the participants who were concerned that people would not employ them because of their age
- 47 per cent of those who reported that their health condition varied too much for them to be able to work
- 43 per cent for participants who reported not having the right qualifications, skills or experience
- 43 per cent with family or caring responsibilities
- 43 per cent who found the COVID-19 pandemic made it difficult to find work
- 39 per cent of participants with a physical health condition and 37 percent with a mental health condition that made it difficult to carry out tasks at work
- 32 per cent who felt there were not enough suitable jobs in their local area
- 30 per cent who had difficult travelling to work due to reasons not related to their health

Participants were also asked an open text question about what part of the support they received made the most difference to them. The most commonly mentioned elements of support were one-to-one support (23 per cent), help with CVs and application forms (15 per cent), and confidence building exercises (12 per cent). Around one in ten participants also mentioned relevant/tailored support (9 per cent), friendly/understanding advisers (9 per cent), and help with job searches (9 per cent).

7.5 Job search skills

Participants were asked to rate the extent to which they felt that their overall job search skills had improved as a result of participating in FSS. Overall, 64 per cent of participants agreed that their job search skills had improved, whilst 12 per cent disagreed, as shown in Figure 36.

Figure 36: Agreement that overall job search skills have improved as a result of participating in FSS



Source: IFF Research telephone survey of FSS customers. F2k. To what extent do you agree or disagree that your overall job search skills have improved as a result of participating in Fair Start Scotland? Base: All 2021-22 cohort (745)

Those who had a health condition that was not limiting were more likely to agree than those who were limited by their health condition that FSS had improved their job search skills (73 per cent compared to 62 per cent). Younger participants, aged 16 to 24 were also more likely to agree with this statement (78 per cent compared to 64 per cent on average).

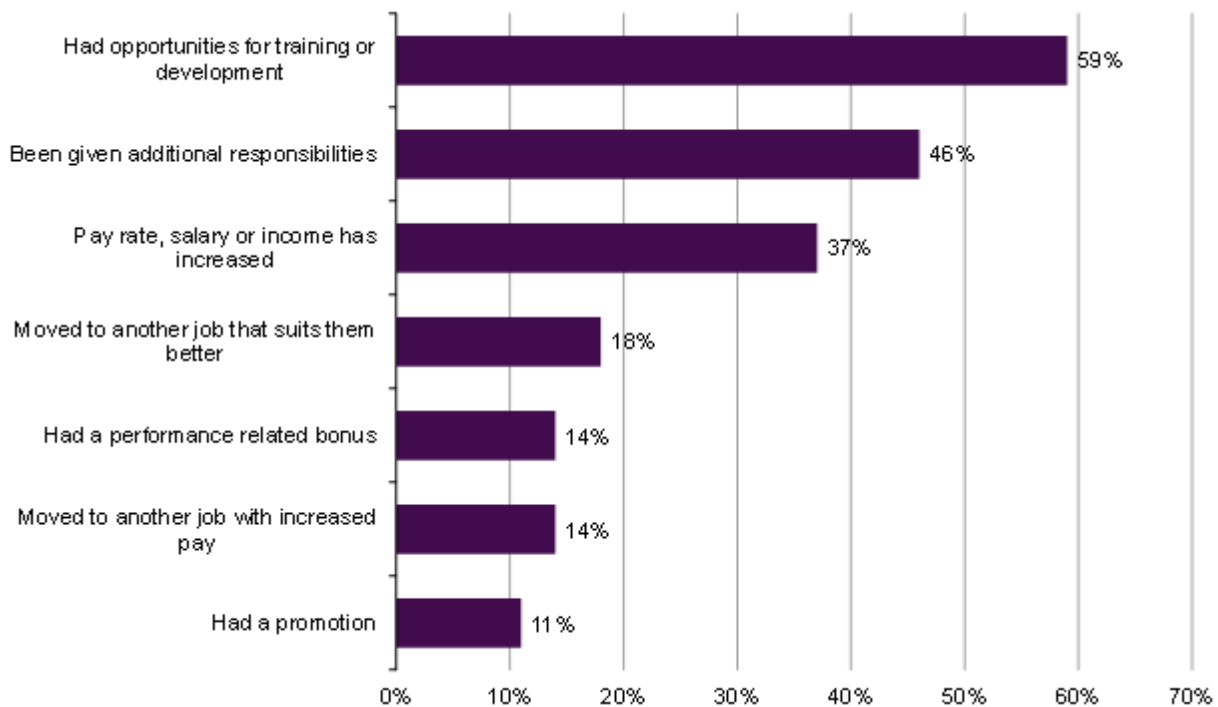
Early leavers were more likely to disagree with the statement (22 per cent compared to 9 percent of those who were not early leavers). On the other hand, those who had worked in the last five years were slightly less likely to disagree with the statement (10 per cent compared to 14 per cent of those who had not worked in the last five years), as were priority families (7 per cent compared to 13 per cent of those not from priority families).

There was no significant difference in agreement between participants with different levels of qualifications, between male and female participants, between participants from different ethnic backgrounds and between participants in different Lots.

7.6 Progression & job satisfaction

Participants who were in work were asked about their experience of employment and quality of their job(s) since receiving support from FSS. The majority of reported that they had been provided with opportunities for training or development (59 per cent), with just under half given additional responsibilities (46 percent). Over a third of participants reported an increase to their pay rate, salary or income (37 per cent). The full list of responses are shown in Figure 37.

Figure 37: Measures of progression in work for 2021-22 cohort participants that were in employment



Source: IFF Research telephone survey of FSS customers. F1D. Thinking about your work since receiving support from Fair Start Scotland, do any of the following apply? Base: All 2021-22 cohort currently in work (269), statements relating to promotions, bonuses and additional responsibilities asked to those in work excluding self-employment (251)

There were differences between participants with a limiting health condition compared to all participants. Participants with a limiting health condition were:

- less likely to report that they had received a promotion (5 per cent compared to 11 per cent on average)
- less likely to report an increase to their income (29 per cent compared to 37 per cent)
- less likely to have had opportunities for training or development (50 per cent compared to 59 per cent)

Participants aged 50 and over were less likely to report having been given additional responsibilities (31 per cent) compared to those aged between 25 and 34 (50 per cent) and 35 to 49 (51 per cent).

Those with a degree level qualification or higher were more likely than the average amongst all currently in work to report having been given additional responsibilities

(57 per cent compared to 46%) and having moved to another job with increased pay (22 per cent compared to 14 per cent).

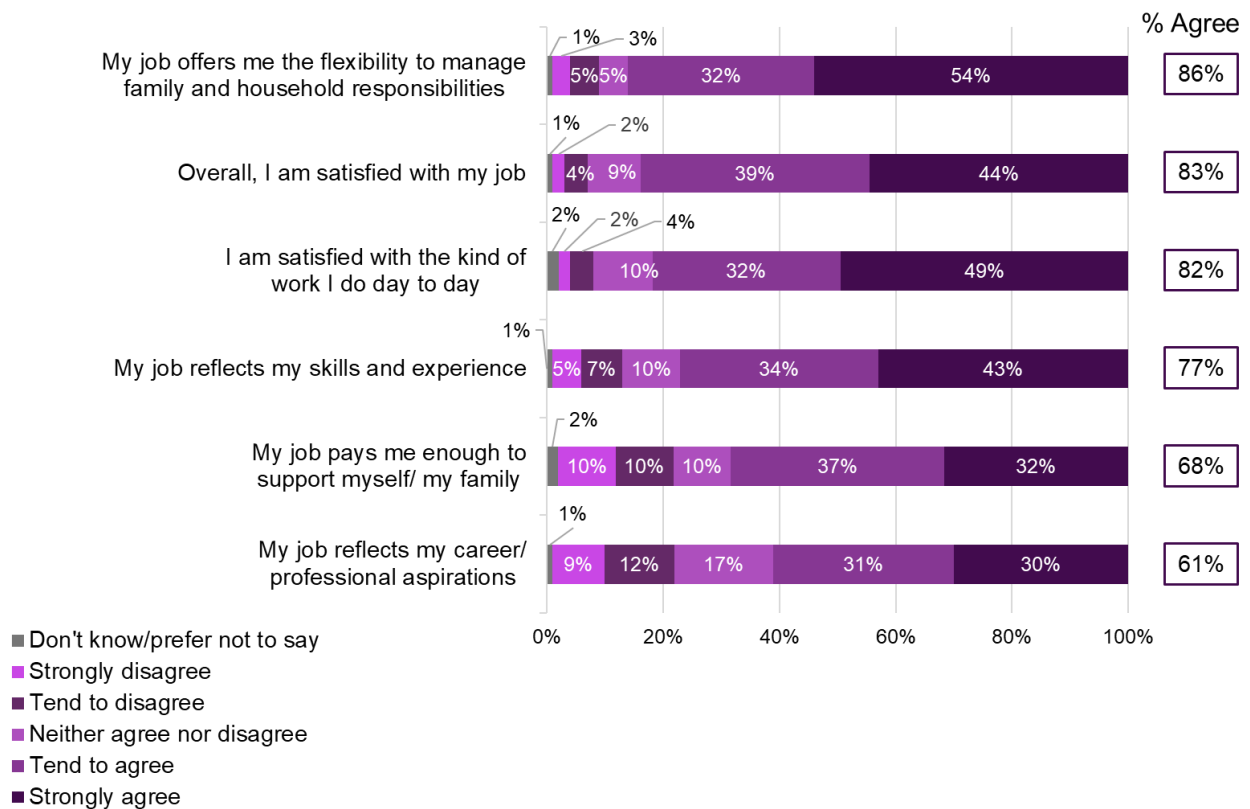
Participants from Lot 5 (East) were more likely to report having received a promotion (23 per cent compared to 11% per cent overall average) and having received a performance-related bonus (34 per cent compared to 14 per cent overall average)³⁶.

There were no significant differences in the level of agreement with these statements between male and female participants, priority families and others, or between those from different ethnic backgrounds.

In Wave 4, participants who were employed, self-employed or who had worked in the week prior to the interview were asked how much they agreed with a range of statements about their current job. As shown in Figure 38, the majority of participants are satisfied overall with their current job (83 per cent), with more than half that number feeling strongly about this (44 per cent). In addition, most participants agreed that their job offered them the flexibility to manage family and household responsibilities (86 per cent). Satisfaction was also strong around the kind of work participants do day to day (82 per cent). Fewer participants felt that their current job paid enough for them to support themselves and their family (68 per cent) and that their job reflects their professional aspirations (61 per cent).

³⁶ Please note that the findings should be interpreted with extreme caution as we do not know the underlying factors responsible for this difference between geographical Lots.

Figure 38: Attitudes towards current job amongst 2021-22 cohort (Wave 4)



Source: IFF Research telephone survey of FSS customers, A10 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your current job? Base: All employed, self-employed or have worked in the last week (298)

There were some differences amongst subgroups around participants' satisfaction with their current job:

- female participants were more likely to be satisfied overall than male participants (89 per cent compared to 79 per cent). Female participants were also more likely to feel their job reflected their skills and experience (83 per cent compared to 72 per cent for male participants)
- job satisfaction was particularly high amongst participants aged between 16 and 24 (95 compared to 83 per cent on average). They were also more likely to feel their current job pays enough to support themselves and/or their family than average (82 per cent compared to 68 per cent)
- Participants from priority families were more likely to agree that their job offered them the flexibility to manage family and household responsibilities (92 per cent), compared to those not from a priority family (83 per cent)
- participants aged between 25 and 34 were less likely to be satisfied with their current job than average (76 per cent compared to 83 per cent)
- minority ethnic participants were less satisfied with their current job than white participants (70 per cent compared to 86 per cent). A

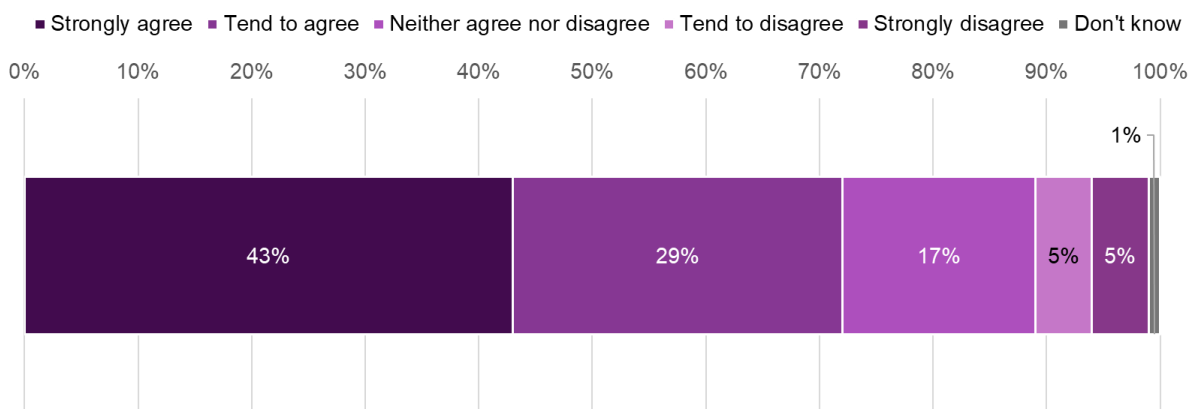
contributing factor to this could be that almost a third (31 per cent) of minority ethnic participants disagreed that that their job paid enough to support themselves and/or their family. This is significantly higher than white participants (17 per cent)

- just over one in ten (12 per cent) of those with a degree level qualification or higher disagreed that they are satisfied with their job, significantly higher than the overall average (7 per cent)
- job satisfaction did not differ significantly between participants from different Lots, and between new joiners and re-joiners

7.7 The impact of FSS on wellbeing

Participants were asked the extent to which they agreed that taking part in FSS had a positive impact on their general wellbeing. Overall, seven in ten (72 per cent) of participants agreed that it had a positive impact, and only one in ten (10 per cent) disagreed, as shown in Figure 39

Figure 39: Agreement that FSS had a positive impact on wellbeing



Source: IFF Research telephone survey of FSS customers. F3. To what extent do you agree or disagree that taking part in Fair Start Scotland has had a positive impact on your general wellbeing. Base: All 2021-22 cohort (745)

Participants with a health condition that was not limiting were more likely to agree that FSS had a positive impact on their wellbeing than both those who were limited by their health condition, and those without (86 per cent compared to 70 per cent and 71 per cent respectively).

Those who had not worked in the last five years before participating in FSS were more likely to disagree that it had a positive impact on their wellbeing (13 per cent, compared to 8 per cent of those who had worked in the last five years). Early

leavers were also more likely to disagree (20 per cent compared to only 8 per cent of those who were not early leavers).

Early leavers were twice as likely to disagree that taking part had a positive impact on their wellbeing than the overall average (20 per cent compared to 10 per cent).

Nearly nine in ten (87 per cent) of participants in Lot 4 (Forth Valley) agreed that participation had a positive impact on their wellbeing, significantly higher than the average across all participants (72 per cent)³⁷.

There was no significant difference in agreement between male and female participants, between participants of different ages, between participants of different ethnicities, between participants with different qualification levels, between members of priority families and others, or between new joiners and re-joiners.

³⁷ Please note that the findings should be interpreted with extreme caution as we do not know the underlying factors responsible for this difference between geographical Lots.

8. 2020 cohort: Outcomes over time

The 2020 cohort joined Fair Start Scotland (FSS) between January and December 2020, and was first surveyed at Wave 3 in March 2021, and then followed up in the Wave 4 survey in December 2022 – January 2023. At Wave 3, 663 participants were interviewed, 250 of whom were also interviewed at Wave 4.

On average, 2 and a half years (30.1 months) had passed between these participants joining the FSS service and taking part in the Wave 4 survey³⁸. The length of time between joining the service and completing the Wave 4 survey ranged from 25.5 months to 34.5 months, meaning it had been at least 2 years for all participants.

This chapter explores the experiences of the 250 participants who completed both survey waves, covering working status, quality of work and employment history. It then reports on the change in outcomes and motivation for this cohort. On some occasions sub-group base sizes were too low to conduct significance testing – where subgroups are not mentioned in analysis it is for this reason.

8.1 Employment status of the 2020 cohort

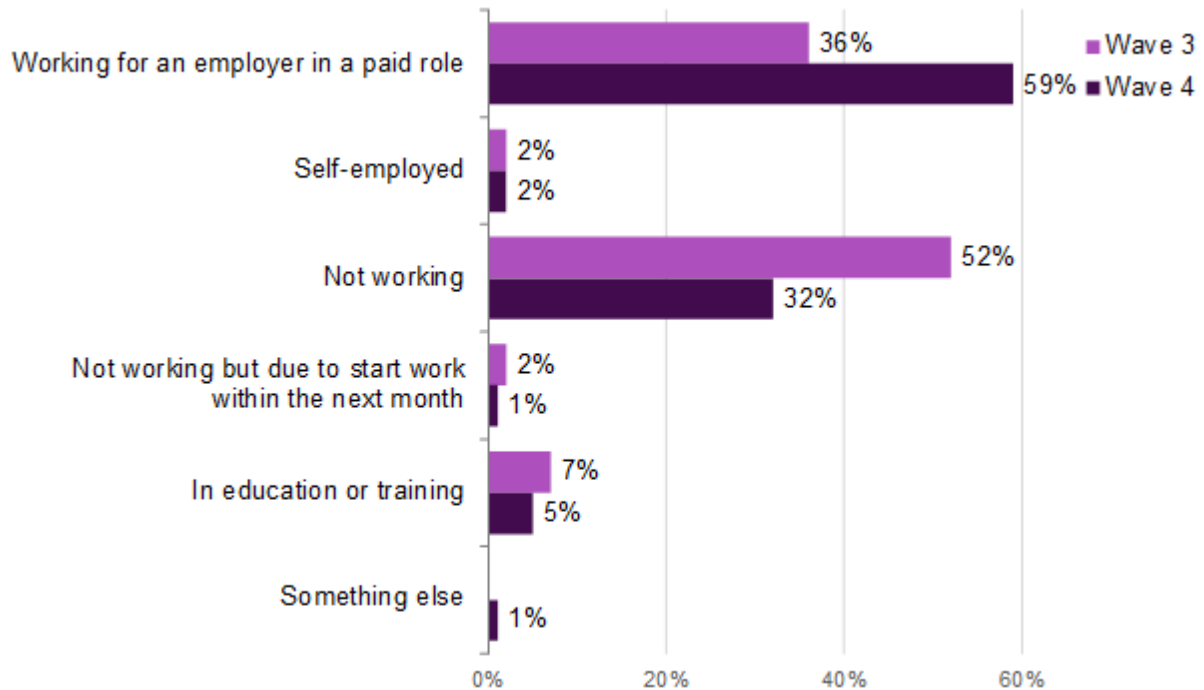
This section will look at the working status of the 2020 cohort at the point of the Wave 4 survey and the quality of work that they undertook, and compare this to their previous answers from the Wave 3 survey. The Wave 4 answers provide a snapshot of participants' activities in December 2022 and January 2023 when the survey was conducted and do not represent FSS employment outcomes³⁹.

The 2020 cohort saw an improvement in their working status between Waves 3 and 4, as shown in Figure 40. Survey participants were significantly more likely to be working for an employer in a paid role, and less likely to be out of work at Wave 4 compared to Wave 3. Whilst only a third (36 per cent) of this cohort were working for an employer at Wave 3, over half were at Wave 4 (59 per cent). This is in line with the drop in those not working from Wave 3 (52 per cent) to Wave 4 (32 per cent). The proportions of the cohort in education or training, in self-employment, and due to start work in the next month remained stable between waves.

³⁸ In order to calculate this average, the difference (in terms of number of months) between the month in which participants joined the FSS programme and the month in which they responded to the survey was calculated. Exact start dates were not available for participants in the longitudinal sample; only the quarter in which they joined the programme was available. A consistent approach was thereby adopted: the month in the middle of the relevant quarter (e.g. February in Quarter 1) was used for this calculation for all participants.

³⁹ Please note that, for those who were in-work at the time of the survey, the survey did not ask how participants obtained these jobs. It is therefore not possible to ascertain based on the findings from the survey, whether those who were in-work at the time the survey took place were placed in those jobs through FSS providers or obtained the jobs by themselves (including after having left the service).

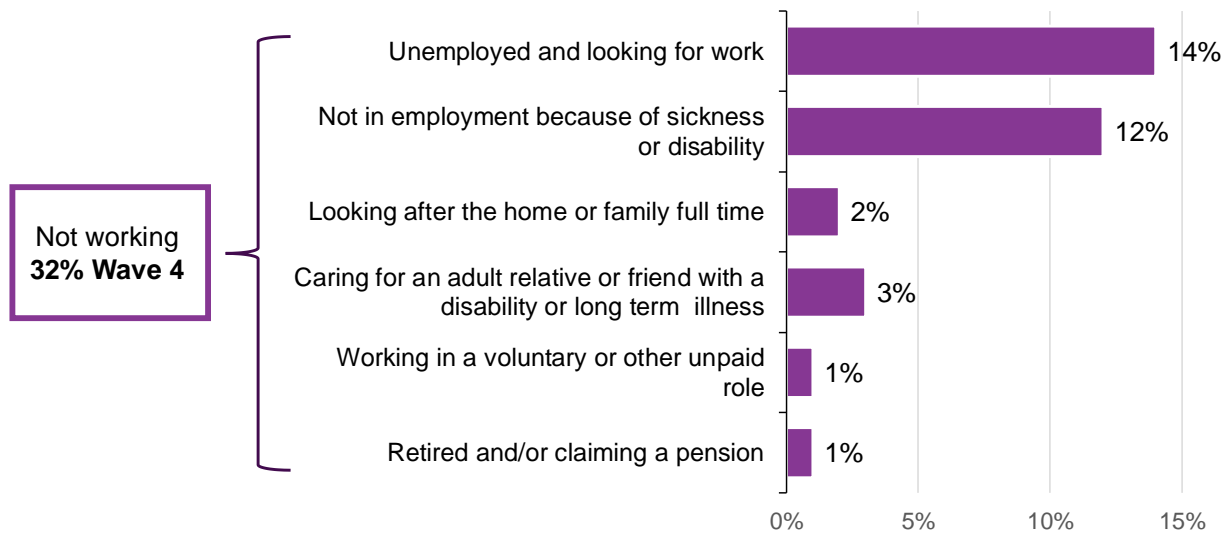
Figure 40: Working status of the 2020 cohort at Wave 3 and Wave 4



Source: IFF Research telephone survey of FSS customers. A1. Which of the following best describes what you are doing at the moment? Base: 2020 cohort Wave 3 (250) Wave 4 (250). 'Not working' combines 'Not working and claiming an out-of-work benefit' and 'Not working and not claiming an out-of-work benefit' at Wave 3, and the following at Wave 4: 'Unemployed and looking for work', 'Not in employment because of sickness or disability', 'Looking after the home or family full time', 'Caring for an adult relative or friend with a disability or long term illness', 'Working in a voluntary or other unpaid role', 'Retired and/or claiming a pension'

As shown in Figure 41, participants who were not working tended to be either unemployed and looking for work (14 per cent) or not in employment because of sickness or disability (12 per cent).

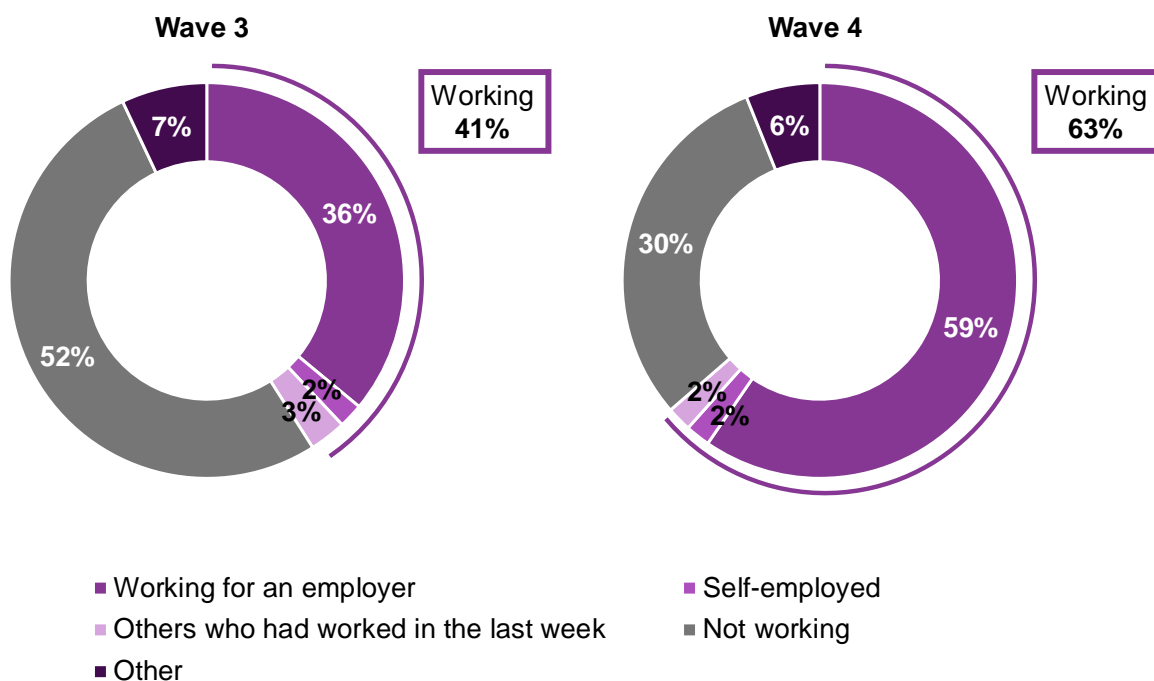
Figure 41: Current status of participants out of work at Wave 4



Source: IFF Research telephone survey of FSS customers. A1. Which of the following best describes what you are doing at the moment? Base: 2020 cohort Wave 4 (250)

Participants who selected an option other than working for an employer or self-employed, were asked if they had done any paid work in the last week, to capture those who might work part time or ad-hoc hours. As shown in Figure 42, by combining this with those working for an employer and in self-employment, a total of 63 per cent of participants had worked in the week prior to the survey at Wave 4. This compares to 41 per cent at Wave 3, a significant increase.

Figure 42: Total number of participants in any form of work in the week prior to the survey at Waves 3 & 4



Source: IFF Research telephone survey of FSS customers. A1. Which of the following best describes what you are doing at the moment? Base: 2020 cohort Wave 3 (250) Wave 4 (250). A1A. Did you do any paid work in the seven days prior to the interview? Base: 2020 cohort Wave 3 (157) Wave 4 (98)

Within the FSS service, participants working for 16 hours or more are classed as achieving an employment outcome, whilst those working fewer than 16 hours per week are still classed as not working and remain eligible for pre-employment support. For this reason, the survey asked participants how many hours they worked per week. However, participants who work fewer than 16 hours per week can still expect to receive elements of in-work support to help progression into sustainable employment. This distinction is therefore made for the purposes of assessing whether or not participants have achieved an employment outcome rather than restricting access to support. Taking this into account, around two fifths (42 per cent) of the 2020 cohort were at the 'pre-employment' stage (working less than 16 hours per week) at Wave 4, with over half (58 per cent) in-work (working 16 or more hours per week).

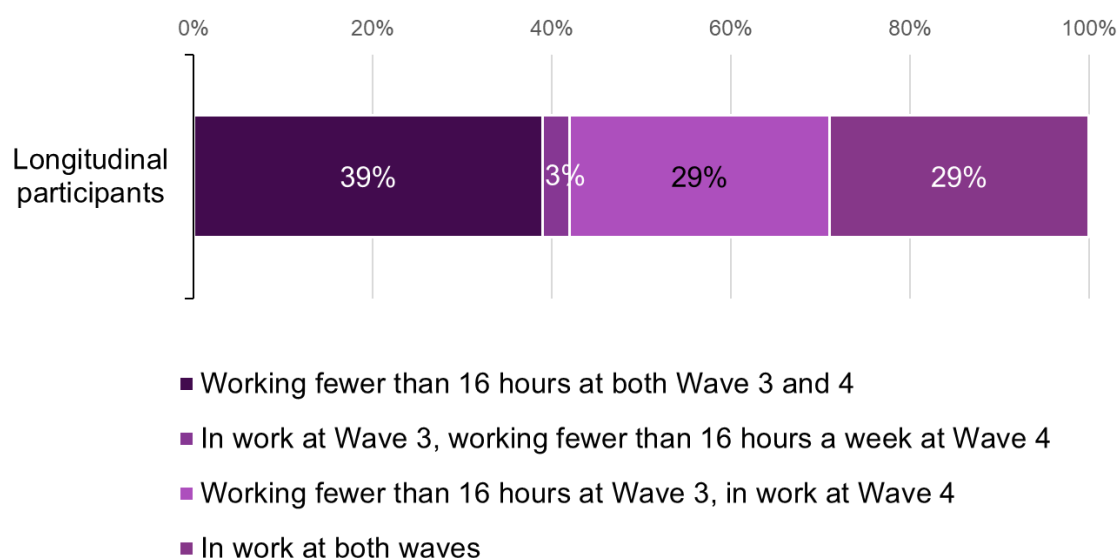
At Wave 4, the following groups were more likely to be in work:

- participants without health conditions (69 per cent), or where their health condition did not limit their day to day activity (69 per cent), compared to those whose health conditions limited their daily activity a little or a lot (46 per cent)
- participants with degree level education or above compared to those without a degree (75 per cent vs 53 per cent)

- there were no significant differences between male and female participants, between participants belonging to a priority family and those who don't, and between parents and non-parents. Subgroup sizes were not large enough to make comparisons beyond these

The 2020 cohort were asked about their employment situation at Wave 3 and Wave 4, meaning we can look at the overall movement of working status for these participants between Waves, as shown in Figure 43.

Figure 43: Change in working status between Waves for the 2020 cohort (in work defined as 16 hours or more per week)



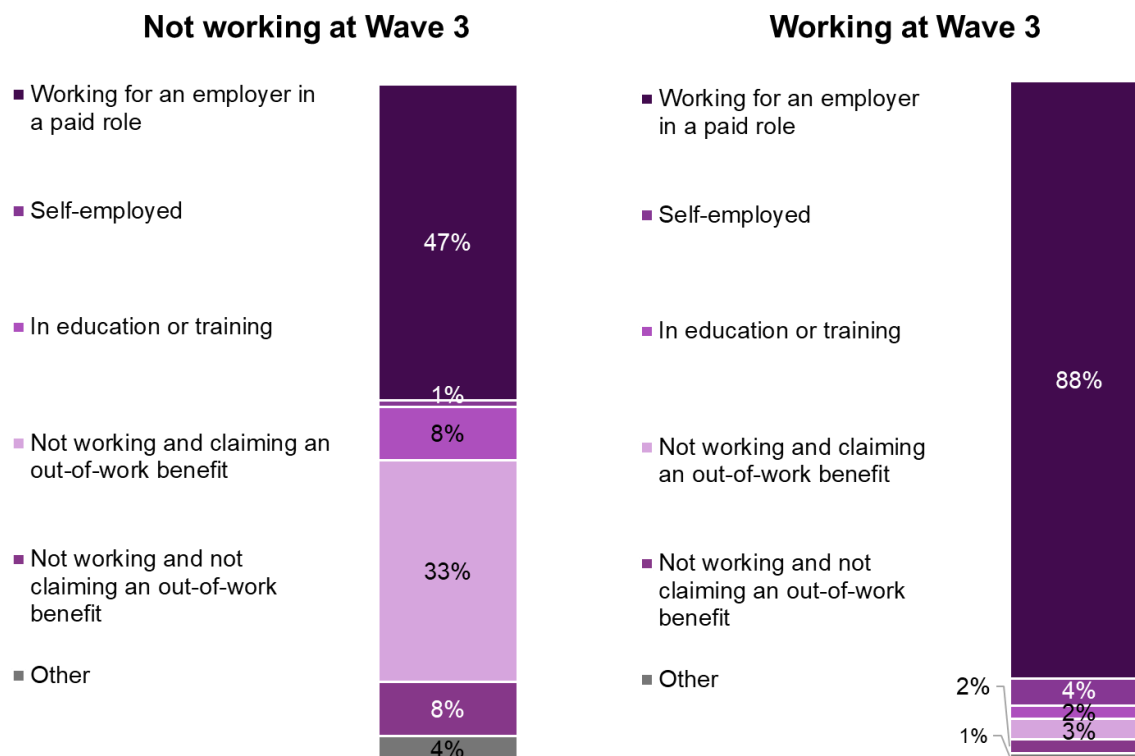
Source: IFF Research telephone survey of FSS customers. Combination of A1_W3/W4. Which of the following best describes what you are doing at the moment? And A3_W3/W4. How many hours per week do you usually work, or spend in education? Base: 2020 cohort (250)

Those aged 35 to 49 were less likely than average to have moved into work during this period (19 per cent), and more likely than average to have moved out of work (7 per cent). Participants whose health conditions affected their day to day activities were significantly more likely to have been out of work at both waves (49 per cent), and those without a health condition were more likely to have been in employment at both waves (46 per cent). Those with an education of degree level or above were more likely to be in employment at both stages (44 per cent).

The 2020 cohort were asked what they had mostly been doing since they were surveyed previously, as shown in Figure 44. Of participants who were not working at Wave 3, just under half remained in the same situation, with 33 per cent not working and claiming an out-of-work benefit, 8 per cent not working and not claiming an out-of-work benefit, and 8 per cent in education or training. However, almost half had moved into work, with 47 per cent now working for an employer, and 1 per cent in self-employment.

Of those who were working at Wave 3, the vast majority remained so at Wave 4, with 88 per cent working for an employer, and 4 per cent self-employed. Only 5 per cent were not in work, with a further 2 per cent in education or training.

Figure 44: Change in employment situation for the 2020 cohort at Wave 4, split by working status at Wave 3

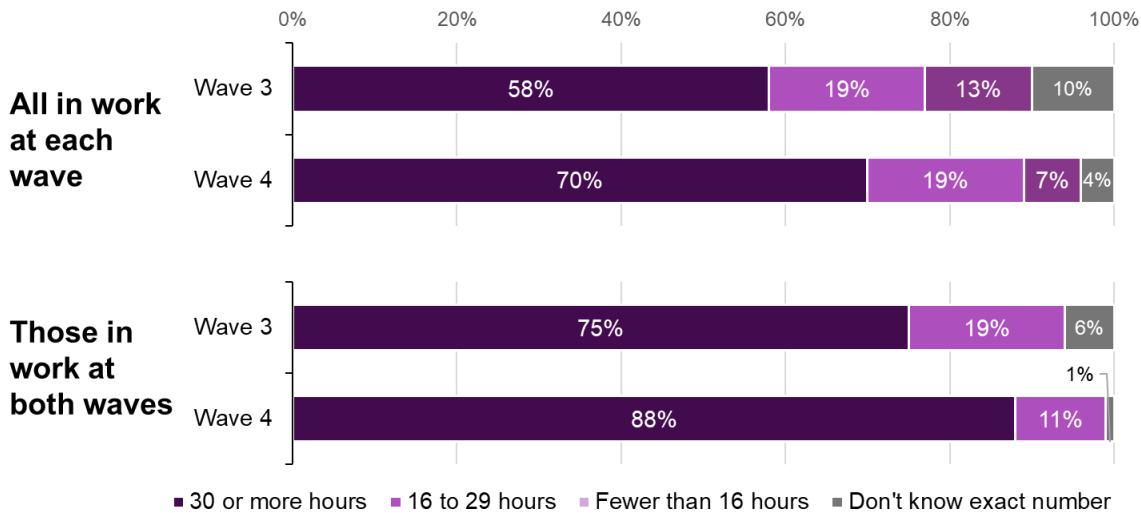


Source: IFF Research telephone survey of FSS customers. B1aX_W4 Which of the following best describes what you have been doing since the last survey? Base: Pre-employment at Wave 3 (169) In employment at Wave 3 (81). Note 'working' here refers to working more than 16 hours per week, and 'not working' refers to not working or working less than 16 hours per week

8.2 Quality of work

As well as working status, the Wave 3 and Wave 4 surveys covered working hours and other measures for quality of work. As shown in Figure 45, over two thirds (70 per cent) of those who were working at Wave 4 in the 2020 cohort were working 30 or more hours per week, a significant increase since Wave 3. The proportions working 16 to 29 hours and fewer than 16 hours remained consistent between Waves. Participants who were in work at both waves were also more likely to be working 30 hours or more at Wave 4 compared to Wave 3.

Figure 45: Hours worked per week for the 2020 cohort at Wave 3 and Wave 4⁴⁰

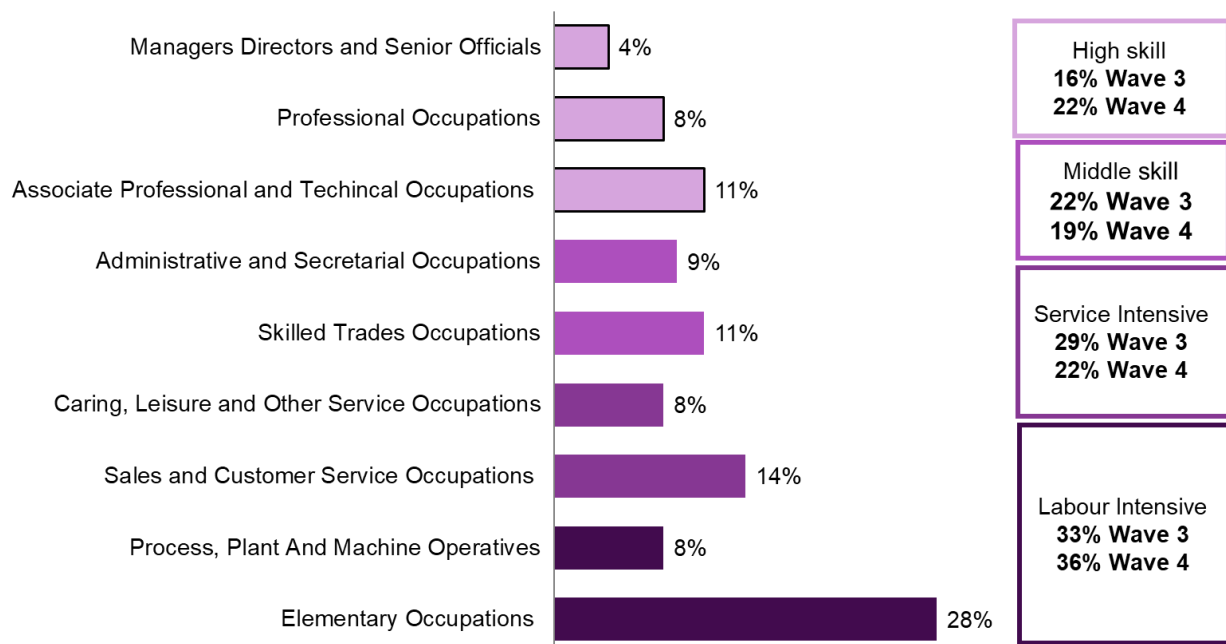


Source: IFF Research telephone survey of FSS customers A3_W3/W4. How many hours per week do you usually work, or spend in education? Base: All working: Wave 3 2020 cohort (109) Wave 4 2020 cohort (166); All in work at both waves (77)

Figure 46 below shows the occupational groups that participants from the 2020 cohort were in at the time of the survey. This is based on the 2010 [UK Standard Occupational Classification \(SOC\)](#). At Wave 4, the largest group of the 2020 cohort that were in work worked in labour intensive (36 per cent) jobs. This was followed by 22 per cent in service intensive roles, 22 per cent in high skilled jobs, and 19 per cent in middle skilled roles. There were no significant changes between waves in types of occupation.

⁴⁰ Additional explanation: please note that the first two bars in this figure show all participants in work at each wave, regardless of whether they were also in work in the other wave. The lower two bars show the 77 participants who were in work at both waves.

Figure 46: UK Standard Occupational classifications (SOC) for the 2020 cohort at Wave 4



Source: IFF Research telephone survey of FSS customers. Taken from collating and coding answers from A5: What is/was your job title? And A6: What do/did you mainly do in your job? Base: 2020 cohort that were employed, self-employed or had worked in the last week Wave 3 (247) Wave 4 (158). More information on how job information is coded to these categories please visit 2010 [UK Standard Occupational Classification \(SOC\)](#)

Participants were also asked about their usual gross pay (i.e. pay before tax or any other deductions) at both Wave 3 and Wave 4. This information reported by survey participants was coded to a pay range band in the survey⁴¹. This data was then analysed to benchmark participants' usual pay against the thresholds for the [National Living Wage](#) and the [Real Living Wage rates at the time of the survey](#). (see Figure 47)⁴².

⁴¹ Pay range bands in the survey were asked as hourly rates, but annual rates were also provided so the interviewer could ask with these if the participant only knew their pay in annual terms.

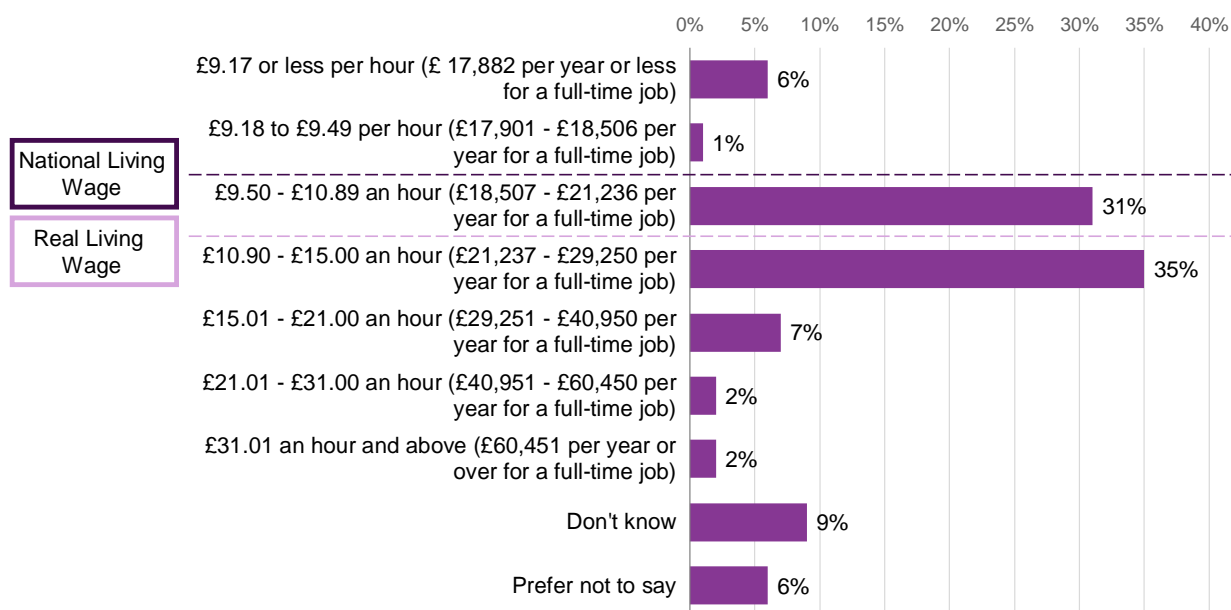
⁴² To ensure Fair Start Scotland offers the most effective employability support possible to participants, a number of key features are integral to its delivery. The service provider must promote the [Scottish Government's ambitions around Fair Work](#), payment of the [Real Living Wage](#) and support the [Scottish Government's Diversity and Equality Policy](#) to supply chain / consortia partners and the employers that they work with. The Scottish Government were not able to mandate the Real Living Wage as a condition in the delivery of Fair Start Scotland. Employment policy is not devolved, and the National Minimum Wage is the legal requirement across the UK. It is worth noting that Fair Start Scotland contracts pre-date the Scottish Government's commitment to strengthening Fair Work policy in relation to promoting the Real Living Wage.

At the time of the Wave 4 survey, individuals who were [classified as 'workers'](#) and who were aged between 16 and 22 were legally entitled to the National Minimum Wage, whilst individuals classed as 'workers' who were aged 23 or above were legally entitled to the National Living Wage⁴³. At the time of the Wave 4 survey, the National Living Wage was £9.50 per hour and the National Minimum Wage was between £4.81 and £9.18 (depending on the individual's age). The Real Living Wage is calculated annually by the [Living Wage Foundation](#), and is based on the cost of living. The Real Living Wage is a voluntary wage rate and is a rate that employers sign up to pay (i.e. it is not a legal minimum wage rate).

As shown in Figure 47, the majority of the 2020 cohort who were in work at Wave 4 reported being paid between £9.50 and £15.00 an hour (66 per cent). In total, 78 per cent of the 2020 cohort reported earnings that indicated they earned the National Living Wage of £9.50 or above at Wave 4, with 46 per cent reporting earnings indicating they earned the Real Living Wage of £10.90 or above. However, 7 per cent of those in work reported being paid less than £9.50 per hour at Wave 4, which was below the National Living Wage – the legal minimum for those aged 23 and over – at the time. This is similar to the number who reported being paid under the legal minimum at Wave 3 (11 per cent). The [legal minimum](#) at the time of the Wave 3 survey (March 2021) was the National Living wage of £8.72 per hour for those aged 25 and over. At Wave 4, 6 per cent of working participants aged 25 or over reported receiving earnings that indicated that they earned below the National Living Wage rate, despite this being the legal minimum for their age group. Meanwhile, 9 per cent of in-work participants aged 16-24 reported earnings below the National Living Wage rate for those aged 23 or above. The sample data for FSS participants classifies their age in bands, rather than an exact number. This means it is not possible to split the data to correspond to the National Living Wage threshold of 23 years old. We cannot therefore be certain if or how many of those aged 16 - 24 who reported earnings under the National Living Wage were legally entitled to it. Almost one in ten participants (9 per cent) were unsure of their wage. The proportion of participants reporting being paid more than £15 per hour remained consistent between the two Waves.

⁴³ Please note that a separate legal requirement on minimum wage apply to [apprenticeships](#).

Figure 47: Usual income of participants in work during the week of the Wave 4 survey*



Source: IFF Research telephone survey of FSS customers, A7: Can you tell me your usual pay including overtime, bonuses, or tips (but before tax and other deductions are taken out)⁴⁴? Base: All employed, self-employed or had worked in the last week (158)

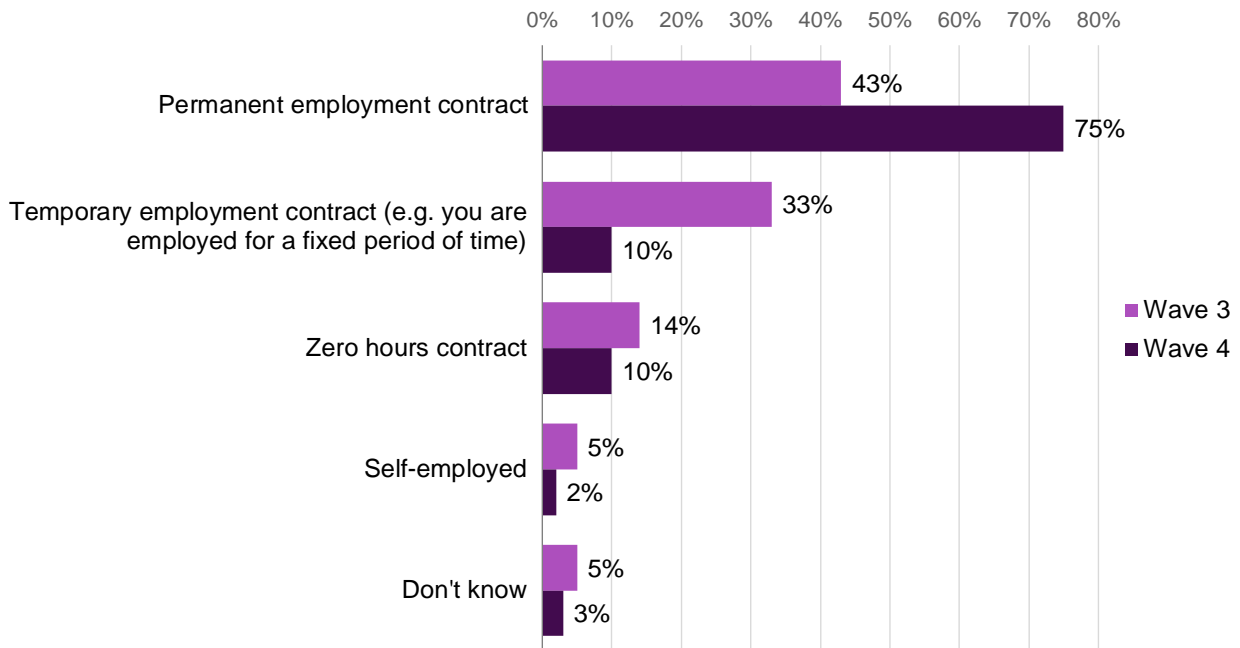
* The National Living Wage is the legal minimum employers must pay workers if they are aged 23 or above. The Real Living Wage is a voluntary wage rate set by the Living Wage Foundation each year and is a rate that employers sign up to pay (i.e. it is not a legal minimum wage rate)

Participants with a degree were more likely to report being paid at rates that would correspond to the Real Living Wage rate or above (66 per cent), compared to those without a degree (37 per cent). Participants aged 35 to 49 were more likely to report being paid at rates that would correspond to the Real Living Wage rate or above (67 per cent) than survey participants on average (46 per cent).

Participants were also asked about the types of contract they had at both Wave 3 and Wave 4. As shown in Figure 48, three quarters (75 per cent) of the 2020 cohort who were in work at Wave 4 had a permanent contract, an increase since Wave 3 (43 per cent). This was accompanied by a substantial decrease in the proportion of the 2020 cohort with a temporary employment contract, from a third (33 per cent) at Wave 3, to one in ten at Wave 4 (10 per cent). The proportion who were self-employed or had a zero hours contract remained consistent between Waves.

⁴⁴ Scales were changed for the Wave 4 survey to reflect updated rates of the legal national minimum and national living wages, as well as the Real Living Wage calculated by the Living Wage Foundation. This means the scale is not directly comparable to Wave 3 – however comparisons have been made with regard to the proportion of participants being paid above and below the legal minimums at the time of the surveys.

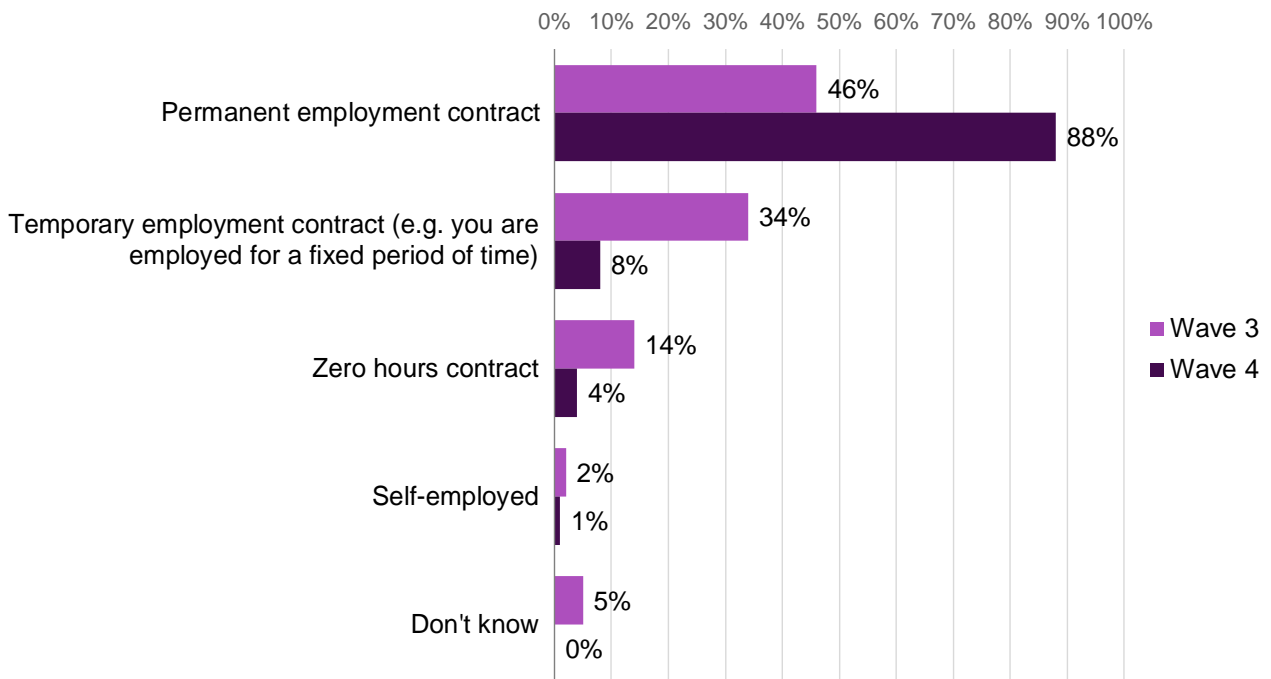
Figure 48: Contract types for the 2020 cohort at Wave 3 and Wave 4



Source: IFF Research telephone survey of FSS customers, A8: Can you tell me what type of employment contract you have? Wave 3 Base: All 2020 cohort employed, self-employed or have worked in the last week (100). Wave 4 Base: All 2020 cohort employed, self-employed or have worked in the last week (158)

Focusing on participants who were in work at both waves, the proportion with a permanent employment contract significantly increased, from 46 per cent at Wave 3 to 88 per cent at Wave 4. This was due to a significant decrease in participants with temporary or zero hours contracts, as shown in Figure 49.

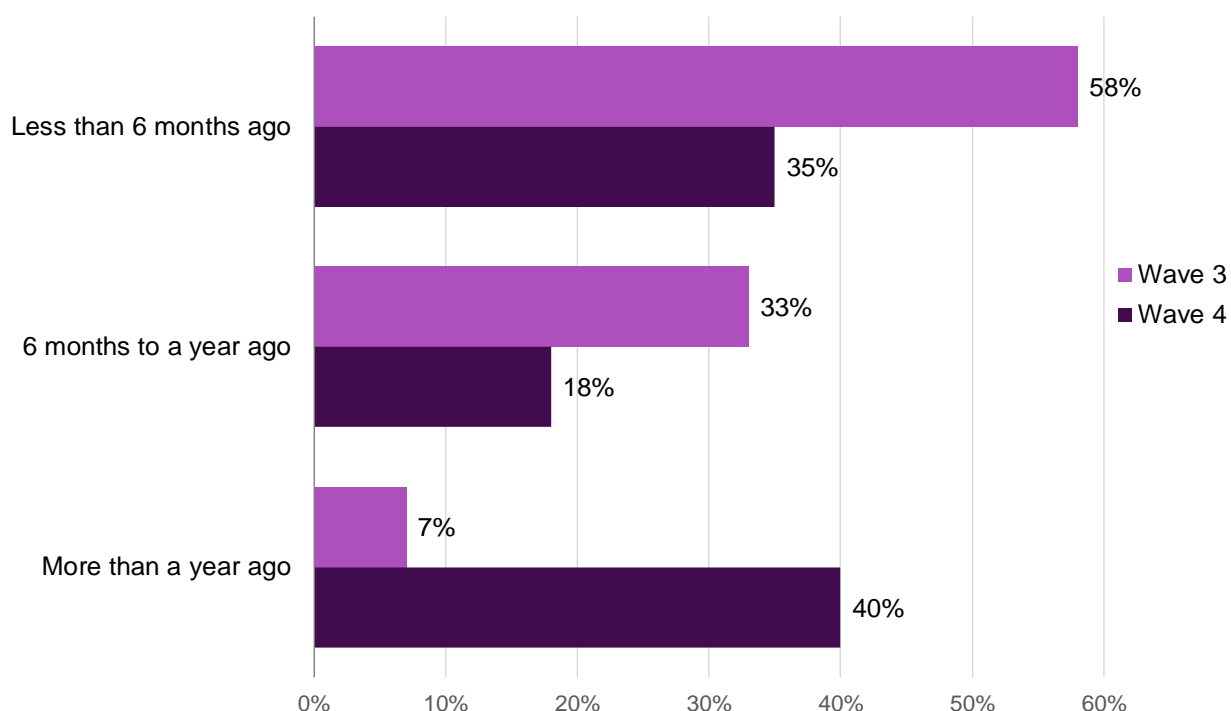
Figure 49: Contract types for those in work at both Wave 3 and Wave 4



IFF Research telephone survey of FSS customers, A8: Can you tell me what type of employment contract you have? Base: All employed, self-employed or have worked in the last week at both Wave 3 and Wave 4 (77)

As shown in Figure 50, two in five (40 per cent) of the 2020 cohort that were working (or had done some paid work in the week prior to the interview) had begun their job more than a year ago. There was a significant increase in the proportion who had started their job over a year ago at Wave 4 compared to Wave 3, suggesting those that find work were managing to sustain it.

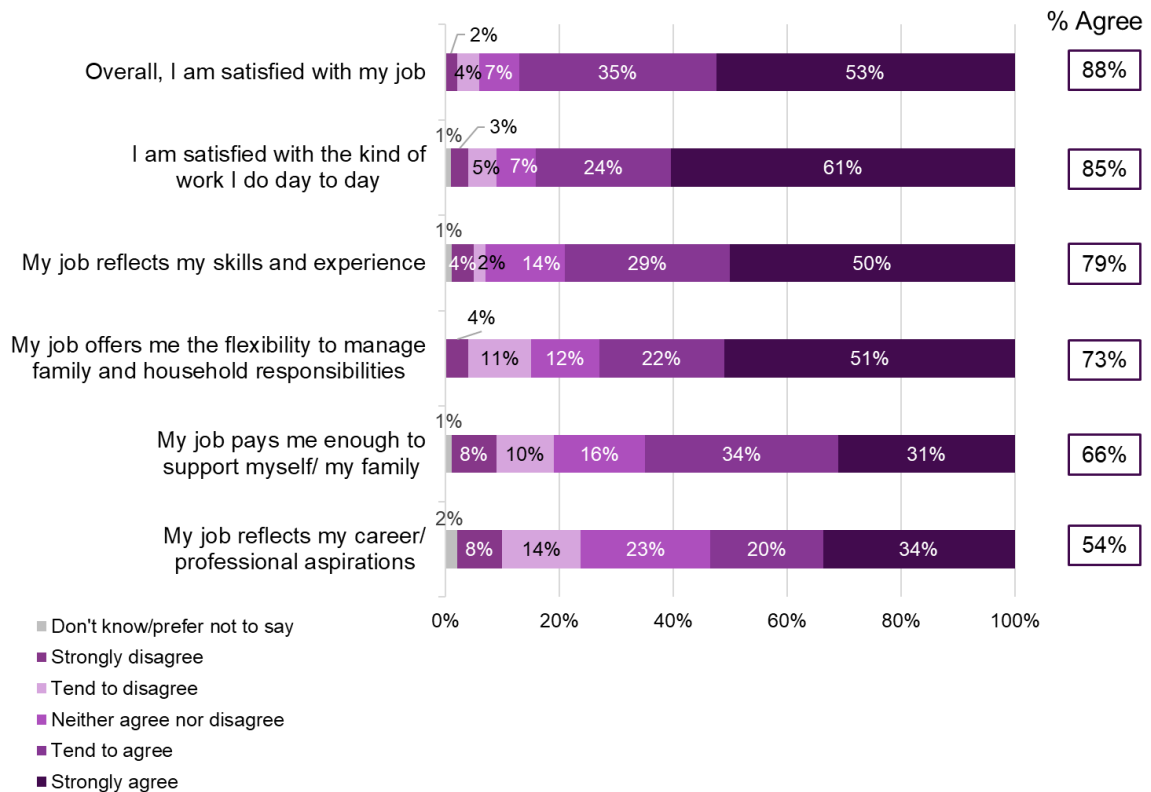
Figure 50: Time between starting job and taking the survey for 2020 cohort participants who were working at Wave 3 and Wave 4



Source: IFF Research telephone survey of FSS customers A3B. When did you start working in your current or most recent job? Base: All working (employed, self-employed, or worked within the last week). Wave 3 2020 cohort (100) Wave 4 2020 cohort (158)

Participants from the 2020 cohort who were in work at Wave 4 were asked about several aspects of their current job. The vast majority of participants were satisfied with their job overall (88 per cent), and with the kind of work they do day-to-day (85 per cent), as shown in Figure 51. A large proportion also agreed that their job reflected their skills and experience (79 per cent), and offered the flexibility to manage family and household responsibilities (73 per cent). Although still a majority, fewer participants agreed that their job paid enough to support them and their families (66 per cent) or reflected their career or professional aspirations (54 per cent).

Figure 51: Extent to which participants agree with statements about their job



Source: IFF Research telephone survey of FSS customers, A10_W4. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your current job? Base: All employed, self-employed or have worked in the last week. Wave 4 (158)

Compared to the average for all participants in work, there were several differences by sub-group:

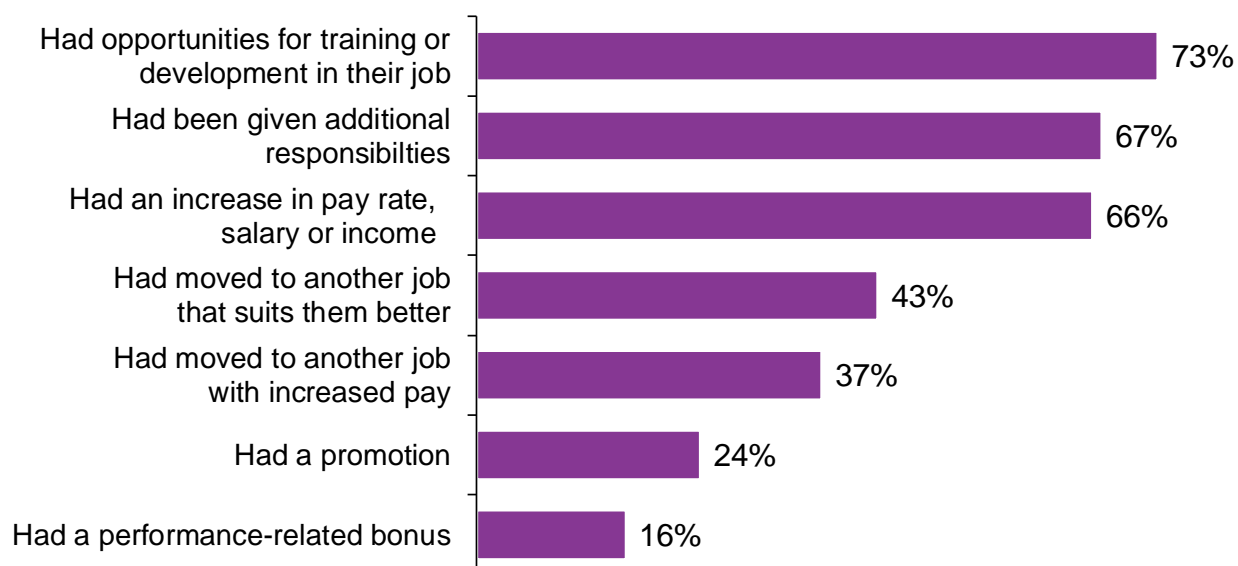
- participants aged 25 to 34 were more likely to be satisfied with their job overall (99 per cent), and more likely to say their job reflected their career/ professional ambitions (67 per cent)
- participants aged 50+ were less likely to be satisfied with their job (74 per cent) and less likely to be satisfied with the kind of work they do day to day (72 per cent). Participants over 50 were also less likely to say their job paid enough to support themselves or their family (49 per cent)
- white participants were more likely to say their job paid enough (70 per cent)
- participants without a health condition were less likely to say their job paid enough to support themselves or their family (56 per cent)
- the sample size amongst priority families, early leavers, and participants from different Lots were too small for differences to be statistically significant

Several sub groups were more likely to agree that their job reflected their career or professional aspirations, including:

- male participants (60 per cent) compared to female participants (44 per cent)
- parents (74 per cent) compared to those who did not have children (49 per cent)
- participants aged 25 to 34 (67 per cent) compared to average
- those with a National 1-5 level qualification or equivalent were less likely to agree compared to the average (35 per cent)
- subgroup sizes were not large enough to make comparisons between participants from different ethnic backgrounds or from different Lots, those who came from a priority family and those who didn't, and those who left early compared to those who didn't

The 2020 cohort who were in work were asked several questions about any changes to their working circumstances since receiving support from Fair Start Scotland. As shown in Figure 52, almost three quarters (73 per cent) had opportunities for training or development in their job, whilst two thirds had been given additional responsibilities (67 per cent) or an increase in pay (66 per cent). Meanwhile around four in ten had moved to another job that suited them better (43 per cent), or with increased pay (37 per cent). A quarter had received a promotion (24 per cent) and a small number had received a performance-related bonus (16 per cent).

Figure 52: Changes in participants working circumstances since receiving FSS support



Source: IFF Research telephone survey of FSS customers, F1d_W4. Thinking about your work since receiving support from Fair Start Scotland, do any of the following apply? Base: All working more than 16 hours per week. Wave 4 (144) (Had a promotion, Had a performance-related bonus, and Had been given additional responsibilities excluded self-employed (106))

Female participants were more likely to have had opportunities for training or development (82 per cent), or to have moved to another job that suited them better (53 per cent) compared to men (66 per cent; 35 per cent). Participants aged over 50 were less likely to have received opportunities for training and development (40 per cent), compared to average (73 per cent), whilst participants aged 35-49 were more likely to have had a promotion (38 per cent). Those with a degree were more likely to have received a performance-related bonus (26 per cent), and those with a health condition that doesn't limit their daily activities were less likely to have had opportunities for training and development (58 per cent).

There were no significant differences across these measures for parents. The sample sizes for ethnicity, priority families, early leavers, and Lot were too small for differences to be statistically significant.

8.3 Outcomes and motivation to return to work

This section explores 2020 cohort participants' motivation to return to work and any impact that FSS has had on their motivation. It also describes the types of support participants found most useful and how confident participants feel in carrying out job search activities. Findings in this section focus on outcomes for the 2020 cohort and how they have changed between Wave 3 and Wave 4.

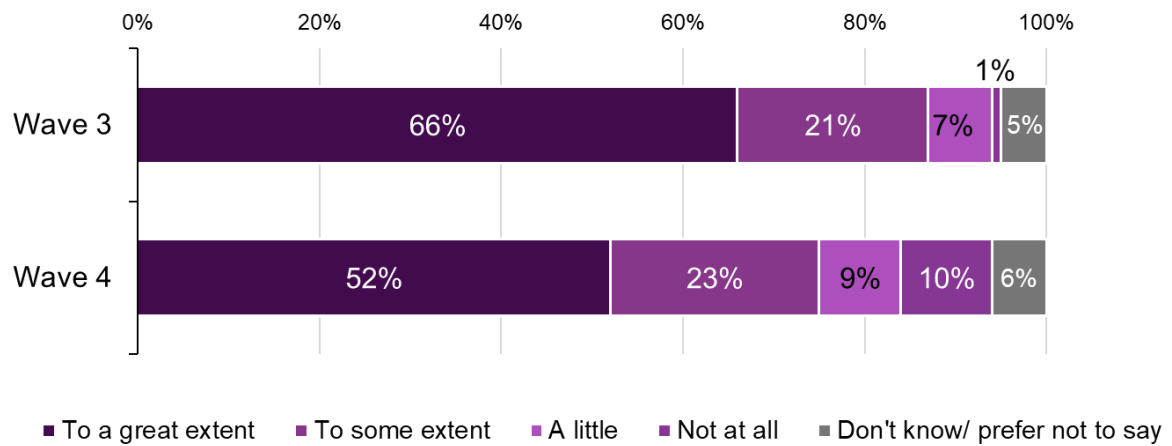
8.3.1 Views on returning to work

Participants who were not in work for more than 16 hours per week (42 per cent of the 2020 cohort) were asked about their motivation to return to work. The questions were phrased as either 'returning to work' or 'returning to full time work' depending on whether they were not working at all or working less than 16 hours⁴⁵.

Looking at participants who were not in employment at both waves, the proportion who felt motivated to return to work 'to a great extent' decreased slightly but not significantly. As shown in Figure 53 below, the proportion of participants feeling motivated to return to work 'to some extent' or 'a little' remained consistent between waves, however there was a significant increase in those who were 'not at all' motivated, from 1 per cent to ten per cent. Over half of those not in employment at both waves reported that their health limited their day-to-day activities.

⁴⁵ Within FSS a job outcome is classed as 16 hours or more, therefore anyone moving into a job of fewer than 16 hours is still classed as not working and remains eligible for pre-employment support.

Figure 53: Extent to which those not in employment at both waves would like to return to (full time) work



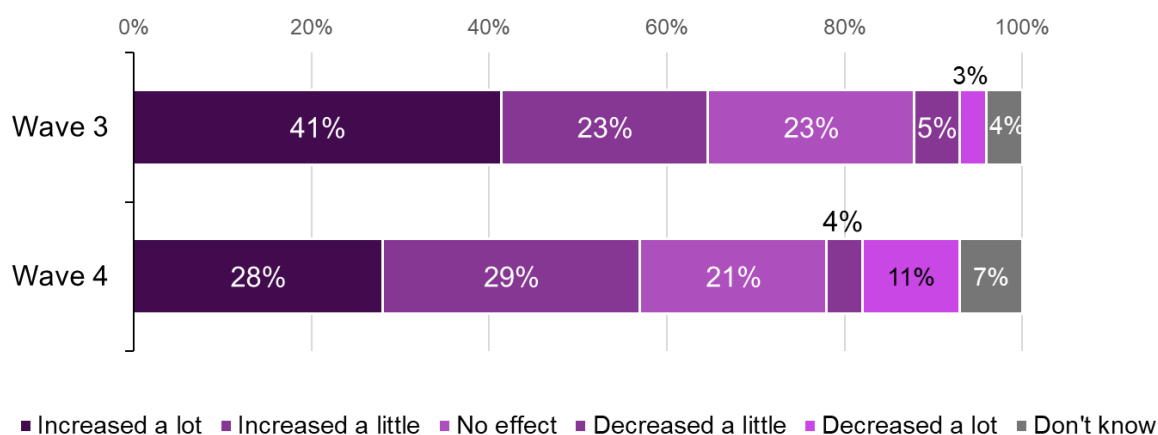
Source: IFF Research telephone survey of FSS customers, E2_W3/W4. To what extent would you like to return to (full time) work in the future? Base: All who work fewer than 16 hours per week at both waves (97)

In terms of differences by sub-group, those whose health condition limited their day-to-day activities were significantly less likely to want to return to work 'to a great extent' (42 per cent) than participants without a health condition (72 per cent).

8.3.2 Impact of FSS on motivation

As shown in Figure 54, at Wave 4, over half of the 2020 cohort (58 per cent) felt that the FSS service had increased their motivation. This is consistent with Wave 3, where 64 per cent said their motivation had increased due to FSS.

Figure 54: Effect on motivation of FSS support for 2020 cohort at Wave 3 and Wave 4



Source: IFF Research telephone survey of FSS customers, E8_W3/W4. To what extent would you say your motivation to find (full time) work has increased or decreased from when you began receiving support from the Fair Start Scotland service? Base: All who work fewer than 16 hours per week. Wave 3 (160) Wave 4 (106)

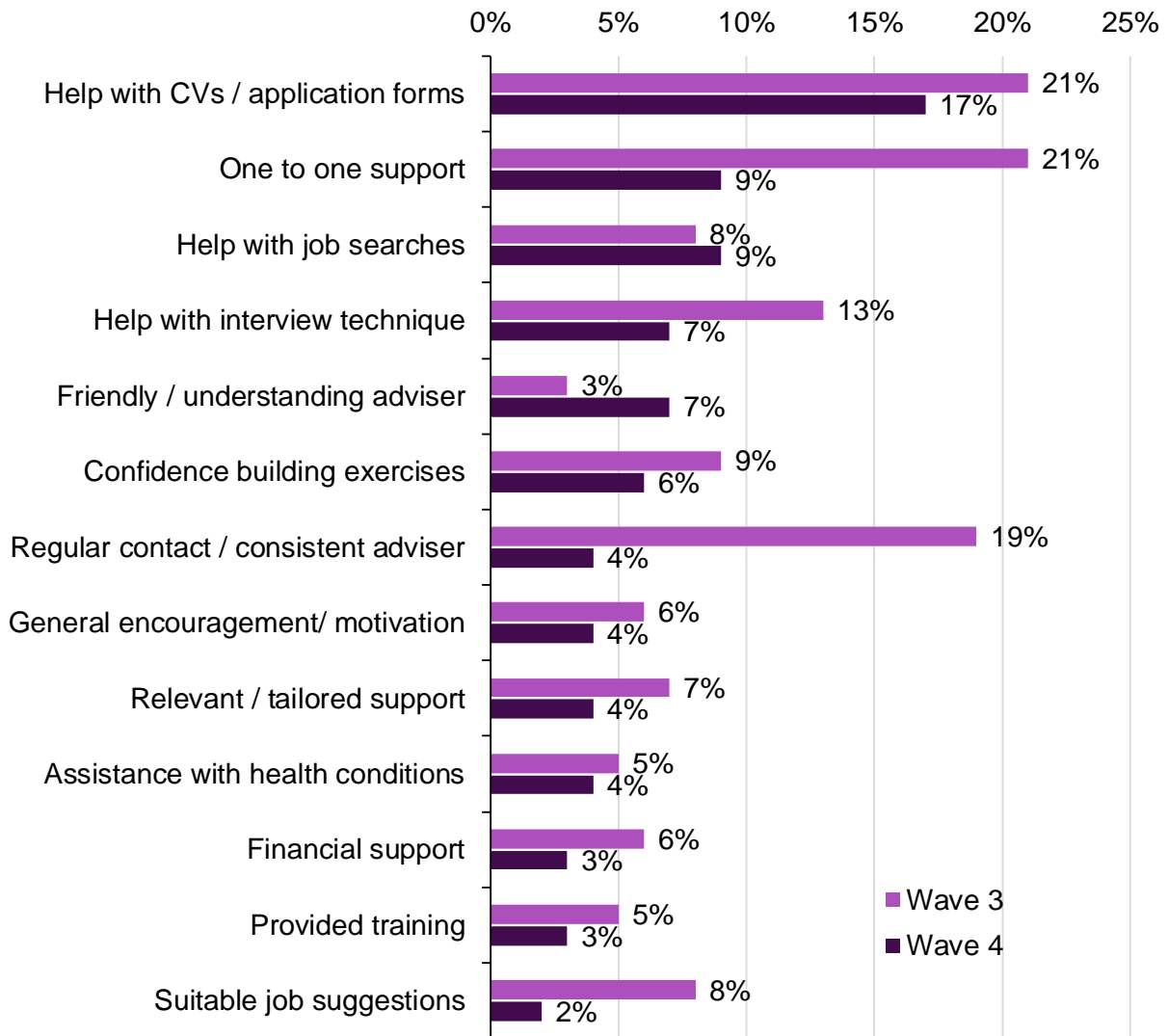
Participants whose health condition limited their day-to-day activities were significantly less likely to say they motivation had ‘increased a lot’ (21 per cent compared to 28 per cent on average).

8.3.3 The impact of FSS support on overcoming barriers to work

Participants were also asked at Wave 3 and Wave 4 about which parts of the support they felt made the most difference to them. The types of support mentioned at Wave 4 were broadly the same as at Wave 3, although some support types were mentioned more or less frequently at the different Waves, as shown in Figure 55. Help with CVs and application forms were cited by the most participants at both Wave 3 (21 per cent) and Wave 4 (17 per cent), with the proportion remaining consistent between Waves.

One to one support (21 per cent) and regular contact or consistent advisor (19 per cent) were frequently mentioned at Wave 3, but were significantly less likely to be mentioned at Wave 4, suggesting these methods of support may be more valuable earlier on in the support journey.

Figure 55: Types of support that the 2020 cohort found most useful, at Wave 3 and Wave 4

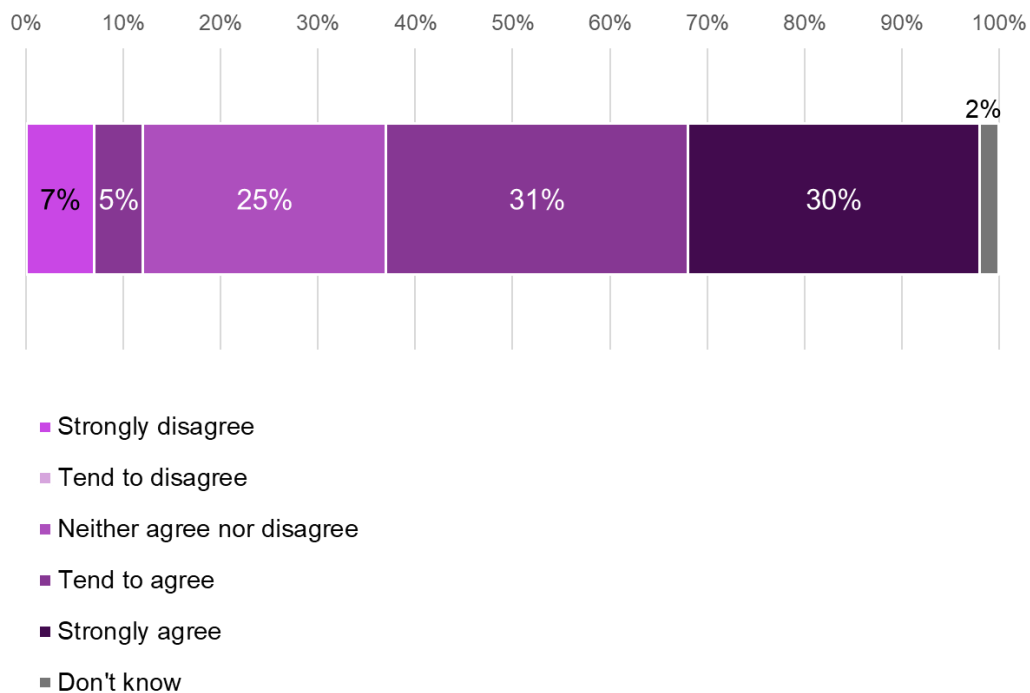


Source: IFF Research telephone survey of FSS customers. F1C_W3/ F1Cx_W4. Thinking back to the support you received from FSS, which parts do you think made the most difference to you? Base: All 2020 cohort who thought the support was helpful Wave 3 (127), All 2020 cohort Wave 4 (250) Options with under 5% at both waves not shown.

8.3.4 Job search skills

Participants in the 2020 cohort were asked at Wave 4 whether they felt their overall job search skills had improved as a result of taking part in FSS. Overall, almost two thirds (62 per cent) agreed that their job search skills had improved due to taking part in the programme, whilst a quarter (25 per cent) were neutral, and 11 per cent disagreed.

Figure 56: Extent to which participants felt overall job search skills improved as a result of participating in FSS



Source: IFF Research telephone survey of FSS customers. F2K. To what extent do you agree or disagree that your overall job search skills have improved as a result of participating in Fair Start Scotland? Base: All 2020 cohort Wave 4 (250)

There were several differences by subgroup, where the following were more likely to agree their job search skills had improved as a result of FSS:

- male participants (67 per cent) compared to female participants (54 per cent)
- participants aged 16 to 24 (75 per cent) and 25 to 34 (71 per cent), compared to those aged 35 to 49 (49 per cent) and those aged 50+ (51 per cent)

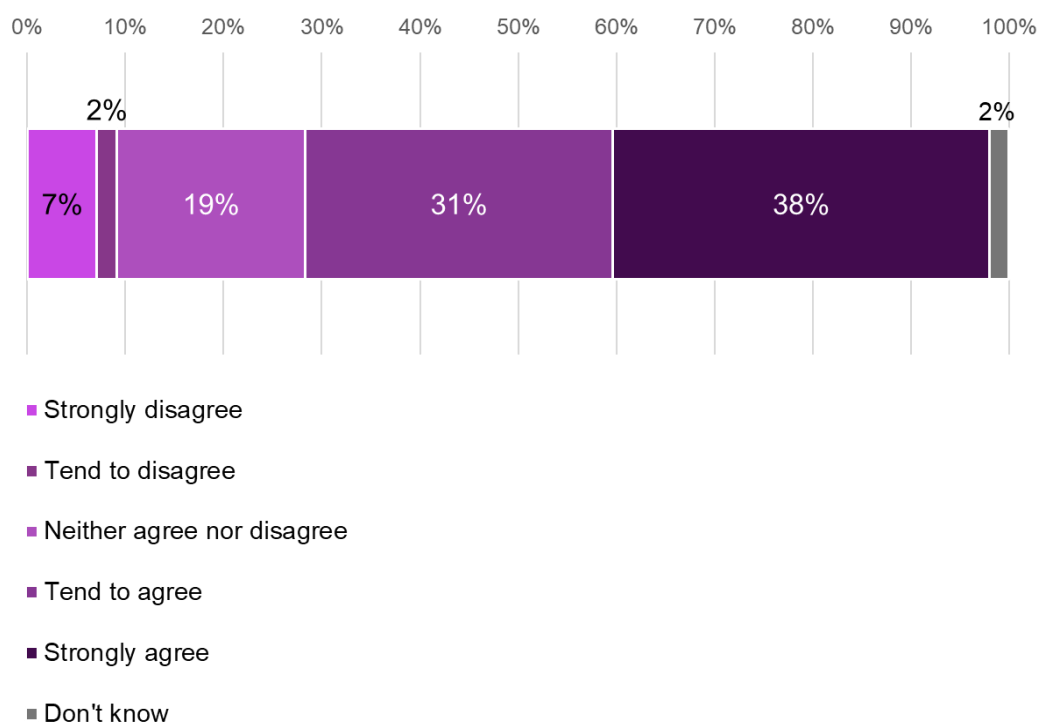
The following sub-groups were less likely to agree that their job search skills had improved due to the service:

- parents (49 per cent) compared to those without children (65 per cent)

8.3.5 Wellbeing

Participants in the 2020 cohort were also asked at Wave 4 about whether FSS had a positive impact on their general wellbeing. The majority (69 per cent) of participants agreed that the service had had a positive impact on their wellbeing, as shown in Figure 57. One in ten (10 per cent) disagreed that it had had a positive impact, and 19 per cent felt neutral.

Figure 57: Extent to which participants felt taking part in FSS had a positive impact on their general wellbeing



Source: IFF Research telephone survey of FSS customers. F3. To what extent do you agree or disagree that taking part in Fair Start Scotland has had a positive impact on your general wellbeing? Base: All 2020 cohort Wave 4 (250)

The following sub-groups had significant differences in their level of agreement that FSS had a positive impact on their wellbeing:

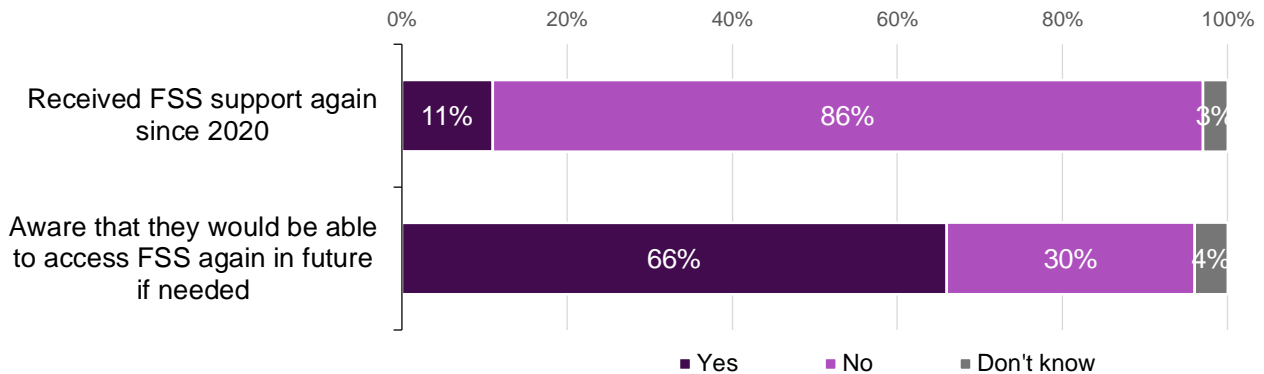
- participants who were in work (74 per cent) were more likely to agree, compared to those in pre-employment (61 per cent)
- those living in Lot 5, East were less likely to agree (54 per cent) than average⁴⁶
- those who felt FSS had led to an improvement in their job search skills were more likely to agree (87 per cent), than those who did not (24 per cent), or those who felt neutral (45 per cent)

⁴⁶ Please note that the findings should be interpreted with extreme caution as we do not know the underlying factors responsible for this difference between geographical Lots.

8.3.6 Awareness of future FSS support

Around one in ten (11 per cent) of the 2020 cohort had received support again, since 2020. Of those who had not re-joined the service, two thirds (66 per cent) were aware that they could re-join the service in future should they need to.

Figure 58: Proportion of re-joiners, and awareness of availability of further support



Source: IFF Research telephone survey of FSS customers. D5. Since receiving this support in 2020, have you received support from Fair Start Scotland again? Base: All 2020 cohort Wave 4 (250); D6. Were you aware that, should you need employment support in future, you would be able to access the Fair Start Scotland service again? All 2020 cohort who had not received further support after 2020 Wave 4 (218)

White participants (70 per cent) were more likely to be aware that they could access FSS support again in future if they needed to. Participants living in Lot 5 East were less likely to be aware of this (52 per cent)⁴⁷.

⁴⁷ Please note that the findings should be interpreted with extreme caution as we do not know the underlying factors responsible for this difference between geographical Lots.

Technical Appendix

Survey approach

The Fair Start Scotland (FSS) Wave 4 telephone survey was carried out in December 2022 and January 2023. This included new participants who had not previously been interviewed, as well as longitudinal participants who had previously been interviewed at Wave 3 in 2020.

Sampling

The sample was made up of two distinct groups:

1. **new sample of participants** who joined the FSS service in 2021-22 (between July 2021 and June 2022)
2. **longitudinal sample** who joined the FSS service in 2020 (between January and December 2020) and took part in the Wave 3 survey

For the **new sample**, IFF were provided with data consisting of all starts on the FSS service between July 2021 and June 2022, which totalled 12,194 participants. After sample records with no contact details or duplicate contact details were excluded, 3,000 records were drawn. The sample was drawn in proportion with the distribution of participants by Lot (the nine FSS contract areas across Scotland) across all starts between June 2021 and July 2022. Lots 4,7,8 and 9 slightly oversampled to ensure a minimum base for subgroup analysis of this region. After opt-outs and records matching longitudinal contact details were removed, 2,956 useable records remained, as shown in Table 1.

For the **longitudinal sample**, all participants from the 2020 cohort who had taken part in the Wave 3 survey were sampled for Wave 4. This totalled 663 respondents, as shown in Table 2. Once those who had declined further contact and opt-outs were removed, 632 useable records remained. Respondents from the 2018 and 2019 cohorts were not contacted due to the likelihood of gaining insufficient response rates from each cohort for robust analysis.

Fieldwork

Participants were sent an advance letter two weeks prior to the fieldwork to notify them of the research and offer them the opportunity to decline to take part. They were able to do this via email, or by calling a telephone voicemail service. Telephone fieldwork was conducted between 15th December 2022 and 27th January 2023, with a break for Christmas and New Year from 24th December 2022 to 2nd January. The survey was programmed into Unicom survey software, which interviewers used to call respondents and enter their survey responses.

The project aimed for, and achieved 1,000 completed interviews, made up of 750 from the new sample and 250 from the longitudinal sample. A full breakdown of sample outcomes are shown in Table 1 and Table 2.

The survey included fewer questions for the longitudinal sample (2020 cohort) than the 2021-22 new sample. One reason for this is that these respondents had previously completed a full survey at Wave 3, there was no need to ask duplicate questions in areas that were unlikely to have changed, such as their employment history prior to FSS or their demographic information.

The average survey length for the 2020 respondents was 11 minutes 6 seconds, and for the 2021-22 cohort respondents it was 23 minutes 18 seconds.

Table 1: Wave 4 new sample outcomes (2021-22 cohort)

	Number	Proportion of starting sample (per cent)
Total sample	3,000	100%
Opted out	30	1%
Matched contact details of Longitudinal records	14	0.5%
Total useable sample	2,956	98.5%
Unusable (for example, wrong number, participant moved away, participant deceased)	249	8%
Call attempted, no final outcome	1480	49%
Declined to participate	305	10%
Respondent does not recall participating in FSS	94	3%
Respondent stopped or disconnected during survey	78	7%
Total surveys completed	750	25%

Table 2: Wave 4 longitudinal sample outcomes (2020 cohort)

	Number	Proportion of starting sample (per cent)
Total sample (2020 cohort who completed Wave 3)	663	100%
No permission to recontact	29	4%
Opted out	2	0.3%
Total useable sample	632	95%
Unusable (for example, wrong number, participant moved away, participant deceased)	53	8%
Call attempted, no final outcome	258	41%
Declined to participate	57	9%
Respondent stopped or disconnected during survey	15	2%
Total surveys completed	250	39%

Analysis approach

The survey data was checked and processed using SPSS, verbatim responses were fully coded for analysis purposes, then combined and tabulated. The data was weighted, significance testing was undertaken, and differences between subgroups identified.

Weighting

A rim weight based on age, gender and Lot was applied to the 2021-22 cohort data to bring the oversampled Lots 4 and 8 back in line with population proportions of 2021-22 FSS starters, and to correct for any non-response bias.

A rim weight based on age, gender and Lot was also applied to the longitudinal 2020 cohort data to ensure the data was in line with the 2020 population

proportions. Furthermore, a rim weight based on the 2020 cohort's employment status at Wave 3 was applied to correct for any non-response bias.

In order to directly compare the 250 longitudinal respondents to their previous responses, a subset of the Wave 3 2020 cohort data was selected, including only these respondents who also participated in Wave 4 survey. A rim weight based on age, gender and Lot was applied to this data to ensure proportions were in line with the population proportions of 2020 FSS starters.

Table 3 and Table 4 below show the overall sample, the number of records drawn, the number of surveys achieved, and the weighted proportions from each Lot.

Table 3: 2021-22 cohort

Lot	All sample		Sample drawn		Unweighted responses		Weighted responses	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Lot 1 Glasgow	2641	22%	510	17%	134	18%	138	18%
Lot 2 Lanarkshire	630	5%	420	14%	86	11%	115	15%
Lot 3 Tayside	2237	18%	240	8%	57	8%	63	8%
Lot 4 Forth Valley	535	4%	210	7%	62	8%	39	5%
Lot 5 East	1871	15%	600	20%	155	21%	162	22%
Lot 6 South West	835	7%	360	12%	80	11%	87	12%
Lot 7 North East	1415	12%	210	7%	64	9%	51	7%
Lot 8 Highlands and Islands	1030	8%	210	7%	53	7%	33	4%
Lot 9 West	1000	8%	240	8%	59	8%	62	8%
Total	12,194	100%	3000	100%	750	100%	750	100%

Table 4: 2020 cohort

Lot	Sample		Unweighted responses		Weighted responses	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Lot 1 Glasgow	98	15%	39	16%	45	18 %
Lot 2 Lanarkshire	70	11%	26	10%	31	12 %
Lot 3 Tayside	46	7%	16	6%	20	8 %
Lot 4 Forth Valley	48	8%	23	9%	8	3 %
Lot 5 East	142	22%	55	22%	66	26 %
Lot 6 South West	81	13%	30	12%	38	15 %
Lot 7 North East	51	8%	24	10%	15	6 %
Lot 8 Highlands and Islands	49	8%	22	9%	11	4 %
Lot 9 West	49	8%	15	6%	17	7 %
Total	634	100%	250	100%	250	100 %

Effect of weighting

The data has been weighted to ensure that it is representative of the target population. As weighting should only ever lead to minor corrections in the data the impact of weighting on significance tests should be minimal.⁴⁸ Our tables therefore apply significance testing to *weighted* data.

⁴⁸ Sergey Dorofeev and Peter Grant, *Statistics for Real Life Sample Surveys* (Cambridge University Press, 2006) p.154; Dorofeev and Grant also make the point that the need for weighting means that the sample will not be a simple random sample with the implication that practical compromises need to be made in the application of statistical methods (Dorofeev and Grant, 2006:54).

For the fresh sample of the 2021-22 cohort, the *effective* sample size, following weighting, was 720 (from an unweighted sample of 750).

Significance testing

As part of our analysis processes, we created data tables which tabulate the data question by question against key measures of interest such as the subgroups listed below. Within these tables we have applied significance testing to make it easier to identify which relationships are significantly different from a null hypothesis (that there is no relationship between the data observed) and that we can therefore conclude that a relationship does exist; accepting a five percent chance of being wrong (the typical level of confidence applied when interpreting statistical significance).

The statistical significance tests used within our tables are two-tailed z-tests.

The z-test is a commonly used significance test for comparing differences where the data follows a normal distribution (approximately) and is particularly suited to comparisons where there are multiple categories e.g. age, gender and ethnicity. The z-test estimates the distance in standard deviations of each data point from the mean of the data. It is typically used where the sample size is large (over thirty observations). Where the sample size is greater than thirty the distribution of the standard deviation starts to resemble a normal distribution. The larger the sample size the closer the distribution of the standard deviation to a normal distribution. As one of the aims of this survey was to examine any differences between particular subgroups, for example reported health conditions and priority families, the z-test was the most appropriate for our data.

Margins of error

For statistics reported on the total base of 750 2021-22 cohort participants, the *maximum* standard error (at the 95% confidence interval) is +/- 3.6%.

Sub-group comparisons

The following subgroups were analysed across the data, and are shown in Table 5 for the 2021-22 cohort and Table 6 for the 2020 cohort:

- age
- gender
- education level
- employment status (at the time of the interview)
- activity before FSS: whether seeking work or economically inactive (note this was only asked of the 2021-22 cohort)
- support stage: Whether receiving pre-employment or in-work support
- health condition or disability
- ethnicity
- priority family status
- early leaver status
- support status (whether currently receiving or not)

- parental status
- whether a re-joiner (note that this was only done for the 2021-22 cohort as the ability to re-join the service was not offered prior to this)
- Lot

Table 5: 2021-22 cohort subgroups

Demographics	Subgroup*	Unweighted responses		Weighted responses	
		N	%	N	%
Age	16-24	122	16%	120	16 %
	25-34	190	25%	190	25 %
	35-49	225	30%	229	30 %
	50-65+	213	28%	211	28%
Gender	Male	471	63%	467	62 %
	Female	278	37%	281	37 %
Education level	None	109	17%	109	15%
	National 1-5 or equivalent	236	36%	236	31%
	Highers / Advanced Highers or equivalent	140	21%	142	19%
	Degree or above	167	26%	170	23%
Employment status (at the time of the interview)	Working	298	40%	302	40%
	Not working	408	55%	405	54%
	Other	39	5%	38	5%

Demographics	Subgroup*	Unweighted responses		Weighted responses	
Activity before FSS (whether seeing work or economically inactive)	Actively searching for work	484	65%	484	65%
	Economically inactive	227	30%	227	30%
	Other	39	5%	38	5%
Support stage	Pre-employment	481	64%	477	64%
	In work	269	36%	273	36%
Health condition / disability	Has a health condition which limits day-to-day activities	360	51%	357	48%
	Has a health condition, no limitations	109	15%	107	14%
	No health condition	239	34%	245	33%
Ethnicity**	White	623	83%	623	83%
	Summary: Ethnic Minority	95	13%	96	13%
Priority family status	Yes	158	21%	158	21%
	No/unknown	592	79%	592	79%
Early leaver status	Yes	146	19%	147	20%
	No	604	81%	603	80%

Demographics	Subgroup*	Unweighted responses		Weighted responses	
Support status (whether currently receiving or not)	In work, receiving support	111	16%	112	15%
	In work, left the service after completing pre-employment support	117	16%	120	16%
	In work, early leaver (left the service before the end of pre-employment support period)	31	4%	31	4%
	Not in work, receiving support (pre-employment support)	129	18%	127	17%
	Not in work, left the service after completing (pre-employment) support	215	30%	213	28%
	Not in work, early leaver (from pre-employment support)	112	16%	113	15%
Parental status	Yes	174	23%	174	23%
	No	571	77%	570	76%
Whether a re-joiner	Yes	198	29%	196	26%
	No	487	71%	489	65%
Lot	Lot 1: Glasgow	134	18%	138	18%
	Lot 2: Lanarkshire	86	11%	115	15%

Demographics	Subgroup*	Unweighted responses		Weighted responses	
	Lot 3: Tayside	57	8%	63	8%
	Lot 4: Forth Valley	62	8%	39	5%
	Lot 5: East	155	21%	162	22%
	Lot 6: South West	80	11%	87	12%
	Lot 7: North East	64	9%	51	7%
	Lot 8: Highlands & Islands	53	7%	33	4%
	Lot 9: West	59	8%	62	8%

*Please note that some subgroups may sum to 99% or 101% within the demographic category due to rounding of percentages

**The Ethnicity category does not sum to 100% of respondents because some preferred not to answer this question

Table 6: 2020 cohort subgroups

Demographics	Subgroup*	Unweighted responses		Weighted responses	
		N	%	N	%
Age	16-24	38	15%	63	25%
	25-34	58	23%	67	27%
	35-49	75	30%	67	27%
	50-65+	79	31%	53	21%
Gender	Male	143	57%	150	60%
	Female	107	43%	100	40%
Education level	None	28	11%	25	10%
	National 1-5 or equivalent	69	28%	71	28%
	Highers / Advanced Highers or equivalent	56	22%	57	23%
	Degree or above	68	27%	70	28%
Employment status (at the time of the interview)	Working	159	64%	157	63%
	Not working	77	31%	79	31%
	Other	14	6%	15	6%
Support stage	Pre-employment	106	42%	105	42%
	In work	144	58%	145	58%

Demographics	Subgroup*	Unweighted responses		Weighted responses	
Health condition	Has a health condition which limits day-to-day activities	109	44%	113	45%
	Has a health condition, no limitations	44	18%	48	19%
	No health condition	91	36%	85	34%
Ethnicity**	White	201	80%	202	81%
	Summary: Ethnic Minority	34	14%	33	13%
Priority family status	Yes	48	19%	45	18%
	No/unknown	202	81%	205	82%
Early leaver status	Yes	20	8%	21	8%
	No	230	92%	229	92%
Support status (whether currently receiving or not)	In work, receiving support	10	4%	7	3%
	In work, left the service after completing pre-employment support	126	50%	129	52%
	In work, early leaver (left the service before the end of pre-employment support period)	7	3%	9	4%

Demographics	Subgroup*	Unweighted responses		Weighted responses	
	Not in work, receiving support (pre-employment support)	13	5%	12	5%
	Not in work, left the service after completing (pre-employment) support	76	30%	76	30%
	Not in work, early leaver (from pre-employment support)	13	5%	12	5%
Parental status	Yes	55	22%	51	21%
	No	194	78%	196	79%
Lot	Lot 1: Glasgow	39	16%	45	18%
	Lot 2: Lanarkshire	26	10%	31	12%
	Lot 3: Tayside	16	6%	20	8%
	Lot 4: Forth Valley	23	9%	8	3%
	Lot 5: East	55	22%	66	26%
	Lot 6: South West	30	12%	38	15%
	Lot 7: North East	24	10%	15	6%
	Lot 8: Highlands & Islands	22	9%	11	4%
	Lot 9: West	15	6%	17	7%

*Please note that some subgroups may sum to 99% or 101% within the demographic category due to rounding of percentages

**The Ethnicity category does not sum to 100% of respondents because some preferred not to answer this question

How to access background or source data

The data collected for this social research publication:

- are available in more detail through Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics
- are available via an alternative route <specify or delete this text>
- may be made available on request, subject to consideration of legal and ethical factors. Please contact <marta.krasuska@gov.scot> for further information.
- cannot be made available by Scottish Government for further analysis as Scottish Government is not the data controller.



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This document is also available from our website at www.gov.scot.
ISBN: 978-1-83521-165-6

The Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

Produced for
the Scottish Government
by APS Group Scotland
PPDAS1331282 (11/23)
Published by
the Scottish Government,
November 2023



Social Research series
ISSN 2045-6964
ISBN 978-1-83521-165-6

Web Publication
www.gov.scot/socialresearch

PPDAS1331282 (11/23)