

The Careers Adviser Workforce 2024

A report for the Gatsby Charitable Foundation

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Institute for Employment Studies

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Disclaimer

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1 Introduction

The Gatsby Foundation (Gatsby) is a charitable foundation that was set up in 1967. It provides funding, commissions research, and supports interventions across six key areas. One of these key areas is education, with a focus on good career guidance, especially in secondary schools and colleges. Gatsby recognises the need for young people to have high-quality career guidance to make informed decisions about their future, and the importance of good career guidance in achieving social justice. In 2013 Gatsby commissioned Sir John Holman to research actions to improve career guidance in England which led to the development of the Good Career Guidance Benchmarks (Holman, 2014) which were adopted from 2018 as part of the Government's Careers Strategy for schools and colleges to guide provision in schools and colleges. To support implementation of the benchmarks requires an appropriate infrastructure including a strong workforce of professional careers advisers.

This current report provides an update and added insights to the IES report commissioned and published in 2021 '[The professional careers adviser workforce](#)'. It provides details of the size and profile of the careers adviser workforce currently working in England, with a focus on the settings they work in and how this has changed over time. This will help Gatsby to understand the challenges in ensuring all young people have access to high quality personal guidance (Gatsby Benchmark 8) but also the issues in providing career guidance for adults as Gatsby interest broadens to include adults.

This report follows the method tested and adopted in the earlier study and draws on national data sources that proved most useful:

- The Census of Population (2021), updating the analysis in the previous report that used the 2011 Census data, to explore the demographic characteristics and employment situation of careers advisers.
- Ofqual qualifications data, to investigate the number of career guidance and advice qualifications obtained.
- The Labour Force Survey (LFS), drawing on the spring quarter datasets to allow for analysis of movement of careers advisers into and out of employment and between occupations and sectors from one year to the next.

2 Census results

This chapter presents initial results from the 2021 Census of Population for careers advisers.

2.1 Introduction

In addition to presenting the latest data, comparisons are made with the 2011 Census results to show changes over the last 10 years. However, the 2021 results should be treated with a degree of caution due to the impact of Covid lockdowns on individuals' work status at the time of the Census. The census date for those in England, Wales and Northern Ireland was March 21st, 2021, which occurred during the pandemic - whilst a stay at home order was in force and in the period in which the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (or furlough) applied.

The Census questions ask individuals 'in the last seven days, were you doing any of the following' with answer categories: working as an employee; self-employed or freelance; temporarily away from work ill, on holiday, or temporarily laid off (this category was expected to include those off work because they had been furloughed, in quarantine or in self-isolation); on maternity or paternity leave; doing any other kind of paid work; or none of the above. The follow up employment questions ask all respondents (excluding those who selected none of the above) to answer about their main job, or if not working, their last main job. Main job is described as the job in which they usually work (worked) the most hours. These follow up questions ask about employment status, number of hours worked, job title and activities and detail of employer. The aim of the census was to gather data about what people were doing on the census date and the week before, rather than what they might have been doing had the pandemic not occurred. The exception was where individuals were temporarily away from work last week, and were asked how many hours a week they usually worked in their main job, how they usually travel to work, and where they mainly work. The online guidance provided further instructions¹:

How to answer if the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has affected your working hours

If you're currently employed or self-employed and the coronavirus pandemic has changed the hours that you work, select the answer that best describes your current circumstances. If you're away from work on furlough, in quarantine or self-isolating, answer about the hours you were working before being away from work.

¹ <https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa/20210321074548/https://census.gov.uk/help/how-to-answer-questions/online-questions-help/in-your-main-job-how-many-hours-a-week-do-you-usually-work>

The data are for the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) unit group SOC 3572 - Careers Advisers and Vocational Guidance Specialists. It should be noted that the occupational classification has changed between the two Censuses – from SOC 2010 for the 2011 Census (when the unit group was SOC 3564) to SOC 2020 for the 2021 Census. However, the title for the relevant 4-digit SOC code has stayed the same and so it is thought that any changes in how occupations of people in roles that involve careers information, advice and guidance have been coded would be minimal.

2.2 Analysis of published national statistics

As explored later in section 2.7, there are grounds to believe that the data on HE-based careers advisers were severely distorted by the effects of the pandemic. Therefore, this section considers careers adviser numbers separately between all other sectors, and the HE sector.

In light of the above caveat, there were 13,692 individuals in England aged 16 and over working as careers advisers or vocational guidance specialists outside of HE in the week before the census date in 2021. They represented 0.05% of all those of working age who were working in the reference week. In 2011, there were 15,379 people in England working as careers advisers or vocational guidance specialists outside of HE, who made up 0.06% of all workers.

The Census uses the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC, 2007) to identify where careers advisers and guidance specialists work. The highest level is known as Section, and this is broken down into Division, then Group and the most disaggregated level is Sub-class which uses 4-digits. It is at the level of Sub-class in the SIC hierarchy where work in schools and colleges can be identified.

Table 2.1 shows the breakdown by industrial Section (i.e. the most aggregated level) of careers advisers who were working in England, along with the sectoral distribution in 2011 for England and Wales (2011 data were not available for England only). The largest Section was education, as it was in 2011; there were 8,100 careers advisers working in the education sector (covering all ages including HE), who accounted for 50% of all careers advisers, higher than the proportion in 2011 of 42%.

Careers advisers working with adults are found in three SIC Sections – human health and social work activities (particularly other social work activities without accommodation), public administration, defence and compulsory social security (particularly compulsory social security activities), and administrative and support service activities (particularly employment activities). Together, these three Sections accounted for 37% of all careers advisers (6,100 workers), lower than the proportion in 2011 of 49%. Of these, human health and social work activities was the largest (3,000 careers advisers, 18% of the total), followed by public administration, defence and compulsory social security (2,300 careers advisers, 14% of the total), while the administrative and support service activities sector is the smallest of those involving work with adults (700 careers advisers, 5% of the total).

The remaining 2,000 careers advisers work across the full range of other sectors, accounting for 12% of the total workforce, with the largest sectors being professional services, and manufacturing (each accounting for 2% of the total workforce).

Table 2.1: Careers Adviser and Vocational Guidance Specialists by industry, workplace in England, 2011 and 2021

Industry Section	2021		2011*	
	N	%	%	
A Agriculture, forestry and fishing	23	0.1	0.2	
B Mining and quarrying	4	0.0	0.0	
C Manufacturing	297	1.8	0.6	
D Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	24	0.1	0.1	
E Water supply, sewerage, waste management	17	0.1	0.0	
F Construction	108	0.7	0.5	
G Wholesale, retail trade, repair of motor vehicles/motorcycles	182	1.1	0.6	
H Transportation and storage	49	0.3	0.2	
I Accommodation and food service activities	203	1.3	0.3	
J Information and communication	149	0.9	0.8	
K Financial and insurance activities	156	1.0	0.4	
L Real estate activities	158	1.0	0.3	
M Professional, scientific and technical activities	322	2.0	2.1	
N Administrative and support service activities	741	4.6	10	
O Public administration and defence, compulsory social security	2,326	14.4	9.8	
P Education	8,133	50.3	41.8	
	<i>Education excluding Higher Education</i>	<i>5,626</i>	<i>34.8</i>	<i>19.5</i>
	<i>Higher Education</i>	<i>2,507</i>	<i>15.5</i>	<i>22.3</i>
Q Human health and social work activities	2,984	18.4	29.2	
R Arts, entertainment and recreation	128	0.8	0.4	
S Other service activities	167	1.0	2.6	
T Activities of households as employers,	3	0.0	0.0	
U Activities of extraterritorial organisations and bodies	3	0.0	0.0	
TOTAL (all careers advisers)	16,177	100.0	100.0	

* **Note:** Data for 2011 cover careers advisers working in England and Wales combined, as data are not available for England only; however, 94% of advisers in England and Wales in 2011 were working in England and so the distribution for England was likely to be very close to that for England and Wales.

Source: NOMIS 2011 Census of population, and Census 2021 bespoke table CT21_0331

2.3 Bespoke sector analysis

The IES team requested bespoke census tables focusing on careers advisers to obtain detailed results for their profile in England only. The requests used eight industry classifications reflecting the main sectors in which careers advisers work; these were the

same industries as used in the earlier research using the 2011 Census data to allow for comparisons over time.

Whereas the data in Table 2.1 were those careers advisers working in England, the data in the rest of this chapter are for those who were resident in England regardless of where they worked, and so may include a small number who work outside of England.

The bespoke industries are as follows:

Bespoke category	Sub-class included
Secondary education	85.31 General secondary education
Technical education	85.32 Technical and vocational secondary education 85.41 Post-secondary non-tertiary education ²
Tertiary education	85.42 Tertiary education, first degree and post graduate level higher education
Other education	85.00 Education not otherwise specified 85.10 Pre-primary education 85.20 Primary education 85.51 Sports and recreation education 85.52 Cultural education 85.53 Driving school activities 85.59 Other education n.e.c 85.60 Educational support activities
Public sector	84.11 General public administration activities 84.12 Regulation of the activities of providing health care, education, cultural services and other social services, excluding social security 84.13 Regulation of and contribution to more efficient operation of businesses 84.21 Foreign affairs 84.22 Defence activities 84.23 Justice and judicial activities 84.24 Public order and safety activities 84.25 Fire service activities 84.30 Compulsory social security activities
Employment activities	78.00 Employment activities
Other social work activities without accommodation	88.90 Other social work activities without accommodation
Other	All other industries with careers advisers

Table 2.2 shows the change in numbers of careers advisers working in the bespoke sectors used for the Census request. There have been increases in some of the major sectors in which careers advisers work, mainly secondary education at school and colleges, and decreases in other sectors, including those that work predominantly with adults such as the employment activities and social work without accommodation.

² Post-secondary non-tertiary education is grouped with technical and vocational secondary education as it is likely that these individuals have incorrectly specified their industry. There are no programmes categorised as post-secondary non-tertiary education in England (see https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/post-secondary-non-tertiary-education-29_en).

Table 2.2 Careers advisers & vocational guidance specialists by sector, England, 2011 and 2021

	2011	2021	change	% change
General secondary education	810	1,585	775	95.7
Technical education and post-secondary education	832	1,600	768	92.3
Secondary education total	1,642	3,185	1,543	94.0
Public sector	1,972	2,329	357	18.1
Employment activities	1,651	590	-1,061	-64.3
Other social work activities without accommodation	5,153	2,362	-2,791	-54.2
Working outside of education incl. with adults total	8,776	5,281	-3,495	-39.8
Tertiary education	4,580	2,507	-2,073	-45.3
Other education	2,324	2,439	115	4.9
Other sectors	2,637	2,787	150	5.7
Total	19,959	16,199	-3,760	-18.8

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Careers advisers working in secondary education

The number of careers advisers working in secondary education or technical education (colleges) has nearly doubled between 2011 and 2021, from around 1,600 across both sectors in 2011 to 3,200 in 2021. It is perhaps worth noting the difference between these two classifications as outlined by ONS³.

General secondary education ‘includes provision of the type of education that lays the foundation for lifelong learning and human development and is capable of furthering education opportunities. Such units provide programmes that are usually on a more subject-oriented pattern using more specialised teachers, and more often employ several teachers conducting classes in their field of specialisation. Subject specialisation at this level often begins to have some influence even on the educational experience of those pursuing a general programme. Such programmes are designed to qualify students either for technical and vocational education or for entrance to higher education without any special subject prerequisite.

This class includes:

- lower general secondary education corresponding more or less to the period of compulsory school attendance
- upper general secondary education giving, in principle, access to higher education’

³ UK Standard Industrial Classification of Economic Activities 2007 (SIC 2007): Structure and Explanatory Notes, Office for National Statistics
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/file?uri=/methodology/classificationsandstandards/ukstandardindustrialclassificationofeconomicactivities/uksic2007/uksic2007web.pdf>

Technical and vocational secondary education ‘This class includes provision of education typically emphasising subject matter specialisation and instruction in both theoretical background and practical skills generally associated with present or prospective employment. The aim of a programme can vary from preparation for a general field of employment to a very specific job. This class includes: technical and vocational education below the level of higher education.’

Further details about the careers adviser workforce in secondary education are presented in section 2.4 (general secondary education) and section 2.5 (technical education) below.

Careers advisers working outside of education including with adults

The number of careers advisers working outside of education including with adults – that is, in the public sector, in employment activities, and in social work – has fallen between 2011 and 2021, by around 3,500 workers, or 40%.

There have been differences in trends across these three sectors that mostly involve working with adults:

- The number of careers advisers working in the public sector has increased between the two Census years, by 360 or 18%. The majority of careers advisers in the public sector (SIC section O) work in the SIC sub-sectors of compulsory social security activities (SIC 85.42, e.g. JobCentre Plus/DWP), and in general public administration activities (SIC 84.11, e.g. central and local government) – in 2011, around one third of careers advisers working in the public sector worked in each of these sub-sectors; however data on sub-sector for 2021 are not available so it is not possible (yet) to see how sub-sectoral trends have turned out.
- The number of careers advisers working in the employment activities sector has fallen by just over 1,000, or 64%. This sector covers: activities of listing employment vacancies and referring or placing applicants for employment, where the individuals referred or placed are not employees of the employment agencies; supplying workers to clients’ businesses for limited periods of time to supplement the workforce of the client; and the activities of providing other human resources. It is possible that careers advisers working in Connexions/National Careers Service for providers who were not local authorities (i.e. private Prime providers) would be classified as in the employment activities sector, and the large fall is likely to reflect the closing down of most Connexions services since 2012.
- The number of careers advisers working in the other social work without accommodation sector also fell substantially, by 2,800 workers or 54%. This sector covers social, counselling, welfare, refugee, referral and similar services which are delivered to individuals and families in their homes or elsewhere and carried out by government offices or by private organisations, disaster relief organisations and national or local self-help organisations and by specialists providing counselling services. In particular, it covers welfare and guidance activities for children and adolescents, and vocational rehabilitation and habilitation activities for unemployed

persons provided that the education component is limited, which are the areas most likely to involve careers advice and guidance. Similar to the employment activities sector, it is possible that careers advisers working in Connexions/National Careers Service for providers who were not local authorities (i.e. charitable/third sector Prime providers) would be classified as in this sector, and the large fall is likely to reflect the closing down of most Connexions services since 2012.

Further details about careers advisers working outside of education including with adults are presented in section 2.6 below.

Careers advisers working in other sectors

The number of careers advisers working in tertiary education fell substantially between 2011 and 2021, by just over 2,000 workers, or 45%. Further details about careers advisers in tertiary education, including explanation for the large fall in numbers between 2011 and 2021, are presented in section 2.7 below.

There have been small increases in careers advisers in other education settings (including primary schools), and in those working across the range of sectors outside of education and support for adults.

Sectoral profile of careers advisers

Table 2.3 shows the proportion of careers advisers across the bespoke sectors in the two years. In 2021, 20% of careers advisers were working in secondary schools and in colleges, compared with 8% in 2011. However, the proportion working outside of education including with adults fell from 44% in 2011 to 33% in 2021.

Table 2.3 Careers advisers & vocational guidance specialists by sector, England, 2011 and 2021 (%)

	2011 %	2021 %
General secondary education	4.1	9.8
Technical education and post-secondary education	4.2	9.9
Secondary education total	8.2	19.7
Public sector	9.9	14.4
Employment activities	8.3	3.6
Other social work activities without accommodation	25.8	14.6
Working outside of education incl. with adults total	44.0	32.6
Tertiary education	22.9	15.5
Other education	11.6	15.1
Other	13.2	17.2

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2.4 Focus on the general secondary education sector

This section focuses on the careers adviser workforce in the general secondary education sector, looking at the geographical distribution, and personal, employment and qualification characteristics.

2.4.1 Geographic distribution of the secondary education workforce

Table 2.4 shows the changes in careers advisers in the secondary education sector, by region. The number of careers advisers in schools has more than doubled in the North West, Yorkshire and The Humber, and in the Midlands, while the smallest increase was in London (46%).

Table 2.4 Careers advisers & vocational guidance specialists in general secondary education by region, England, 2011 and 2021

	2011	2021	change	% change
North East	32	59	27	84.4
North West	95	208	113	118.9
Yorkshire & The Humber	77	186	109	141.6
East Midlands	59	142	83	140.7
West Midlands	57	186	129	226.3
East of England	100	193	93	93.0
London	135	197	62	45.9
South East	169	274	105	62.1
South West	86	146	60	69.8
Total	810	1,585	775	95.7

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2.4.2 Personal characteristics of the secondary education workforce

Almost nine in ten (88%) careers advisers working in secondary education in 2021 were female, and the proportion had increased from 84% in 2011.

Table 2.5 shows the change in the age profile of careers advisers in secondary education. The age profile has got somewhat older, with a small fall in the number aged under 30, and large increases in those aged 50 and over. In 2021, 44% were aged 50 and over compared with 35% in 2011.

Table 2.5 Careers advisers & vocational guidance specialists in secondary education by age, England, 2011 and 2021

	2011	2021	change	% change	2011 %	2021 %
16 to 29	151	139	-12	-7.9	18.6	8.8
30 to 39	121	293	172	142.1	14.9	18.5
40 to 49	257	449	192	74.7	31.7	28.3
50 to 59	224	522	298	133.0	27.7	32.9
60+	57	182	125	219.3	7.0	11.5
Total	810	1,585	775	95.7	100.0	100.0

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Table 2.8 shows the change in the ethnicity profile of careers advisers in secondary education. There were increases in those from ethnic minority backgrounds, particularly those from Asian/Asian British and Mixed/multiple ethnic backgrounds, with these groups representing 9% of careers advisers in secondary schools in 2021 (up from 4%). Conversely, the proportion of careers advisers working in secondary schools from Black, African, Caribbean and Black British backgrounds has fallen to 2% (from 5%).

Table 2.6 Careers advisers & vocational guidance specialists in secondary education by ethnicity, England, 2011 and 2021

	2011	2021	change	% change	2011 %	2021 %
White	730	1,404	674	92.3	90.1	88.4
Mixed/multiple ethnic groups	13	74	61	469.2	1.6	4.7
Asian/Asian British	21	64	43	204.8	2.6	4.0
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	43	33	-10	-23.3	5.3	2.1
Other ethnic group	3	13	10	333.3	0.4	0.8
Total	810	1,588	778	96.0	100.0	100.0

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Table 2.9 shows the change in the disability profile. This indicates that whilst the vast majority of careers advisers in secondary settings are not classified as disabled (under the Equality Act), there has been an increase in the proportion who are classed as disabled, from 7% in 2011 to 10% in 2021.

Table 2.7 Careers advisers & vocational guidance specialists in secondary education by disability, England, 2011 and 2021

	2011	2021	change	% change	2011 %	2021 %
Disabled Eq Act: activities limited a lot	9	23	14	155.6	1.1	1.4
Disabled Eq Act: activities limited a little	47	139	92	195.7	5.8	8.8
Not disabled under the Equality Act	754	1,425	671	89.0	93.1	89.8
Total	810	1,587	777	95.9	100.0	100.0

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2.4.3 Working hours of the secondary education workforce

Table 2.10 shows working hours and how these have changed. This indicates that most commonly careers advisers working in secondary schools worked full-time, with 58% working between 31 and 48 hours per week (up slightly from 54% in 2011), and the small proportion working very long hours of 49 or more per week has doubled. However, the number and proportion who work short part-time hours (under 16 hours per week) has fallen, from 17% to 7%.

Table 2.8 Careers advisers & vocational guidance specialists in secondary education by working hours, England, 2011 and 2021

	2011	2021	change	% change	2011 %	2021 %
Part-time: 15 hours or less worked	140	109	-31	-22.1	17.3	6.9
Part-time: 16 to 30 hours worked	219	506	287	131.1	27.0	31.9
Full-time: 31 to 48 hours worked	438	920	482	110.0	54.1	58.0
Full-time: 49 or more hours worked	13	52	39	300.0	1.6	3.3
Total	810	1,587	777	95.9	100.0	100.0

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2.4.4 Qualification levels of the secondary education workforce

Table 2.11 shows the change in the qualifications profile. Most careers advisers have at least Level 4 qualifications, and this proportion has increased to 83% in 2021 from 63% in 2011.

Table 2.9 Careers advisers & vocational guidance specialists in secondary education by highest qualification level, England, 2011 and 2021

	2011	2021	change	% change	2011 %	2021 %
No qualifications	6	3	-3	-50.0	0.7	0.2
Level 1 and entry level qualifications	35	30	-5	-14.3	4.3	1.9
Level 2 qualifications	93	73	-20	-21.5	11.5	4.6
Apprenticeship*	1	7	6	600.0	0.1	0.4
Level 3 qualifications	158	165	7	4.4	19.5	10.4
Level 4 qualifications or above	511	1,309	798	156.2	63.1	82.5
Other	6	0	-6	-100.0	0.7	0.0
Total	810	1,587	777	95.9	100.0	100.0

* Note: level of apprenticeship is not asked for in the 2021 Census, and so this could cover any type or level of apprenticeship, for example, trade, advance, foundation or modern.

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2.5 Focus on the technical education sector

This section focuses on the careers adviser workforce in the technical education and post-secondary education (technical education sector).

2.5.1 Geographic distribution of the technical education workforce

Table 2.10 shows that the number of careers advisers in post secondary/technical education more than trebled in the East Midlands (210% increase), and more than doubled in the East of England and the North West (increases of 135% and 113% respectively). The smallest increase was in the North East, at 39%.

Table 2.10 Careers advisers & vocational guidance specialists in technical education by region, England, 2021

	2011	2021	change	% change
North East	56	78	22	39.3
North West	112	238	126	112.5
Yorkshire & The Humber	106	193	87	82.1
East Midlands	62	192	130	209.7
West Midlands	94	163	69	73.4
East of England	82	193	111	135.4
London	83	144	61	73.5
South East	110	193	83	75.5
South West	127	215	88	69.3
Total	832	1,600	768	92.3

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2.5.2 Personal characteristics of the technical education workforce

Four fifths (81%) of careers advisers in the technical education sector in 2021 were female, a similar proportion to 2011 (82%).

Table 2.15 shows the change in the age profile of careers advisers in technical education. The age profile has become older, with a fall in the number aged under 30 coupled with an increase in those aged 50 and over. In 2021, 39% were aged 50 and over compared with 31% in 2011.

Table 2.11 Careers advisers & vocational guidance specialists in technical education by age, England, 2011 and 2021

	2011	2021	change	% change	2011 %	2021 %
16 to 29	159	198	39	24.5	19.1	12.4
30 to 39	211	372	161	76.3	25.4	23.3
40 to 49	204	414	210	102.9	24.5	25.9
50 to 59	206	446	240	116.5	24.8	27.9
60+	52	170	118	226.9	6.3	10.6
Total	832	1,600	768	92.3	100.0	100.0

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Table 2.16 shows the change in the ethnicity profile of careers advisers in technical education. The proportion from white backgrounds remains virtually unchanged, whereas the portion from mixed/multiple ethnic groups has increased whilst the proportions from Asian/Asian British and from Black, African, Caribbean and Black British backgrounds have fallen.

Table 2.12 Careers advisers & vocational guidance specialists in technical education by ethnicity, England, 2011 and 2021

	2011	2021	change	% change	2011 %	2021 %
White	725	1,404	679	93.7	87.1	87.5
Mixed/multiple ethnic groups	17	92	75	441.2	2.0	5.7
Asian/Asian British	48	62	14	29.2	5.8	3.9
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	39	39	0	0.0	4.7	2.4
Other ethnic group	3	8	5	166.7	0.4	0.5
Total	832	1,605	773	92.9	100.0	100.0

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Table 2.13 shows the change in the disability profile of careers advisers in technical education. There was a small increase in the proportion reported as disabled (with activities limited a little) up to 12% from 8% in 2011.

Table 2.13 Careers advisers & vocational guidance specialists in technical education by disability, England, 2011 and 2021

	2011	2021	change	% change	2011 %	2021 %
Disabled Eq Act: activities limited a lot	15	31	16	106.7	1.8	1.9
Disabled Eq Act: activities limited a little	67	197	130	194.0	8.1	12.3
Not disabled under the Equality Act	750	1376	626	83.5	90.1	85.8
Total	832	1,604	772	92.8	100.0	100.0

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2.5.3 Working hours of the technical education workforce

Table 2.18 shows working hours and how these have changed. This indicates that most commonly careers advisers working in technical education worked full-time 68% (up slightly from 64% in 2011). The number and proportion who work very part-time hours has fallen, from 10% to 3%.

Table 2.14 Careers advisers & vocational guidance specialists in technical education by working hours, England, 2011 and 2021

	2011	2021	change	% change	2011 %	2021 %
Part-time: 15 hours or less worked	79	47	-32	-40.5	9.5	2.9
Part-time: 16 to 30 hours worked	214	462	248	115.9	25.7	28.8
Full-time: 31 to 48 hours worked	531	1084	553	104.1	63.8	67.6
Full-time: 49 or more hours worked	8	11	3	37.5	1.0	0.7
Total	832	1,604	772	92.8	100.0	100.0

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2.5.4 Qualification levels of the technical education workforce

Table 2.19 shows that qualifications profile is largely the same in 2021 as in 2011. Most careers advisers have at least Level 4 qualifications, 72% in 2021 and 71% in 2011.

Table 2.15 Careers advisers & vocational guidance specialists in technical education by highest qualification level, England, 2011 and 2021

	2011	2021	change	% change	2011 %	2021 %
No qualifications	2	7	5	250.0	0.2	0.4
Level 1 and entry level qualifications	22	31	9	40.9	2.6	1.9
Level 2 qualifications	55	90	35	63.6	6.6	5.6
Apprenticeship*	5	7	2	40.0	0.6	0.4
Level 3 qualifications	150	307	157	104.7	18.0	19.2
Level 4 qualifications or above	592	1,157	565	95.4	71.2	72.2
Other	6	4	-2	-33.3	0.7	0.2
Total	832	1,603	771	92.7	100.0	100.0

* Note: level of apprenticeship is not asked for in the 2021 Census, and so this could cover any type or level of apprenticeship, for example, trade, advance, foundation or modern.

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2.6 Focus on careers advisers working outside education including with adults

This section provides information on careers advisers working outside education including with adults, providing details for this group as a whole, and some breakdowns by the three sub-sectors – public sector, employment activities, and social work.

2.6.1 Geographic distribution of careers advisers outside education

Table 2.16 shows the change in employment levels by region between 2011 and 2021 for careers advisers working outside education including with adults. There were decreases in numbers across all regions, with the largest falls in the East Midlands (59%) and Yorkshire and The Humber (53%), and the smallest falls in the East of England (26%) and the South East (28%).

The table also shows the changes in each of the three sectors in which careers advisers work with adults. In the public sector, although there was an increase in England as a whole, in two regions there were falls in the number of careers advisers in the public sector – a 6% fall in numbers in the East Midlands, and a 1% fall in numbers in the South West. By contrast, numbers in the North East increased by 56%, and numbers in the North West and South East increased by 36%.

There were falls in the numbers of careers advisers in the employment activities and social work sectors across all regions, with a general north-south divide – regions in the south experienced below average decreases in numbers of careers advisers, and regions in the midlands and the north, with the exception of the North West, experienced above average decreases.

Table 2.16 Careers advisers & vocational guidance specialists working outside education by region, England, 2011 and 2021

	2011	2021	change	% change	% change in		
					Public sector	Emp. activities	Social work
North East	577	336	-241	-41.8	56.1	-87.5	-65.2
North West	1,377	825	-552	-40.1	35.7	-46.5	-60.0
Yorkshire & The Humber	1,028	479	-549	-53.4	5.1	-78.0	-61.4
East Midlands	913	372	-541	-59.3	-6.0	-76.5	-68.1
West Midlands	1,023	623	-400	-39.1	24.6	-73.6	-51.5
East of England	757	559	-198	-26.2	18.1	-53.3	-43.4
London	1,125	745	-380	-33.8	1.8	-68.8	-40.8
South East	1,118	808	-310	-27.7	36.0	-54.4	-45.2
South West	858	526	-332	-38.7	-1.4	-52.1	-50.4
Total	8,776	5,273	-3,503	-39.9	18.0	-64.6	-54.2

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2.6.2 Personal characteristics of careers advisers outside education

There is a higher proportion of male workers among careers advisers working outside education in comparison with the workforce as a whole – 28% and 24% respectively – and the proportion of male advisers has increased slightly since 2011 when they made up

26% of the workforce. The proportion of male careers advisers in 2021 was highest in the employment activities sector (34%) followed by the public sector (31%).

Table 2.17 shows the change in the age profile of careers advisers working outside education. The age profile has become older, with the proportion of advisers aged between 30 and 49 falling from 55% in 2011 to 46% in 2021, and the proportion aged 50 and over increasing from 30% in 2011 to 39% in 2021.

Table 2.17 Careers advisers & vocational guidance specialists outside education by age, England, 2011 and 2021

	2011	2021	change	% change	2011 %	2021 %
16 to 29	1,344	821	-523	-38.9	15.3	15.5
30 to 39	2,409	1,112	-1,297	-53.8	27.4	21.1
40 to 49	2,410	1,314	-1,096	-45.5	27.5	24.9
50 to 59	2,101	1,411	-690	-32.8	23.9	26.7
60+	512	623	111	21.7	5.8	11.8
Total	8,776	5,281	-3,495	-39.8	100.0	100.0

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Careers advisers in the employment activities sector are on average much younger than those in the other sectors outside education – 52% of advisers in employment activities are aged under 40, compared with 35% of those in the public sector, and 34% of those in social work.

Table 2.18 shows the change in the ethnicity profile of careers advisers working outside education. The proportion from white backgrounds fell substantially between 2011 and 2021, from 86% to 80%, while there increases in the proportions among ethnic minority groups, and particularly those of Asian/Asian British ethnicity (from 6% to 9%). The employment activities sector had the most ethnically diverse workforce, with advisers from ethnic minority groups comprising 23% of the total workforce (compared with 22% in the public sector, and 19% in social work).

Table 2.18 Careers advisers & vocational guidance specialists outside education by ethnicity, England, 2011 and 2021

	2011	2021	change	% change	2011 %	2021 %
White	7,514	4,196	-3,318	-44.2	85.6	79.5
Mixed/multiple ethnic groups	152	140	-12	-7.9	1.7	2.7
Asian/Asian British	517	465	-52	-10.1	5.9	8.8
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	546	412	-134	-24.5	6.2	7.8
Other ethnic group	47	66	19	40.4	0.5	1.3
Total	8,776	5,279	-3,497	-39.8	100.0	100.0

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Table 2.19 shows the change in the disability profile of careers advisers working outside education. There was a large increase in the proportion reported as disabled, up from 9% in 2011 to 15% in 2021, with the increase mainly among those whose day-to-day activities are limited a little. The proportion of workers with a disability was slightly higher in the employment activities sector (16%) than in the public sector or in social work (both 15%).

Table 2.19 Careers advisers & vocational guidance specialists outside education by disability, England, 2011 and 2021

	2011	2021	change	% change	2011 %	2021 %
Disabled Eq Act: activities limited a lot	186	134	-52	-28.0	2.1	2.5
Disabled Eq Act: activities limited a little	606	657	51	8.4	6.9	12.4
Not disabled under the Equality Act	7,984	4,489	-3,495	-43.8	91.0	85.0
Total	8,776	5,280	-3,496	-39.8	100.0	100.0

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2.6.3 Working hours of careers advisers outside education

Table 2.20 shows working hours of careers advisers working outside education and how these have changed since 2011. There has been relatively little change in working patterns between the two Census years – the proportion working between 16 and 30 hours per week has fallen very slightly (24% to 23%), while there has been a small increase in the proportion working standard full-time hours of 31 to 48 hours per week (69% to 70%). Part-time working is most common in the social work sector (38% working part-time, compared with 20% in the public sector and 21% in employment activities), and the proportion of part-time workers in social work increased between 2011 and 2021, while in the other two sectors outside education the proportions working part-time decreased.

Table 2.20 Careers advisers & vocational guidance specialists outside education by working hours, England, 2011 and 2021

	2011	2021	change	% change	2011 %	2021 %
Part-time: 15 hours or less worked	464	291	-173	-37.3	5.3	5.5
Part-time: 16 to 30 hours worked	2,092	1,204	-888	-42.4	23.8	22.8
Full-time: 31 to 48 hours worked	6,066	3,683	-2,383	-39.3	69.1	69.7
Full-time: 49 or more hours worked	154	103	-51	-33.1	1.8	2.0
Total	8,776	5,281	-3,495	-39.8	100.0	100.0

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2.6.4 Qualification levels of careers advisers outside education

Table 2.21 shows that the proportion of careers advisers working outside education with qualifications at Level 4 or above has fallen, from 75% in 2011 to 70% in 2021, while there has been an increase in the proportion with Level 3 qualifications or apprenticeships, up from 13% in 2011 to 20% in 2021; the proportion with qualifications at Level 2 or below, or with 'other' qualifications, has fallen slightly (12% in 2011 to 11% in 2021).

Table 2.21 Careers advisers & vocational guidance specialists outside education by highest qualification level, England, 2011 and 2021

	2011	2021	change	% change	2011 %	2021 %
No qualifications	74	80	6	8.1	0.8	1.5
Level 1 and entry level qualifications	336	145	-191	-56.8	3.8	2.7
Level 2 qualifications	579	328	-251	-43.4	6.6	6.2
Apprenticeship*	25	75	50	200.0	0.3	1.4
Level 3 qualifications	1,100	955	-145	-13.2	12.5	18.1
Level 4 qualifications or above	6,558	3,667	-2,891	-44.1	74.7	69.5
Other	104	30	-74	-71.2	1.2	0.6
Total	8,776	5,280	-3,496	-39.8	100.0	100.0

* Note: level of apprenticeship is not asked for in the 2021 Census, and so this could cover any type or level of apprenticeship, for example, trade, advance, foundation or modern.

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2.7 Focus on the tertiary education sector

In section 2.3 above, it was shown that the number of careers advisers in the tertiary education sector – universities and other post-secondary education – fell substantially between 2011 and 2021, by 45%. This is in contrast to the large increases in the secondary and technical education sectors.

The key change in the tertiary education sector was a large fall in the number of young (16-29) careers advisers, working short part-time hours, and with Level 3 as their highest qualification level – these are likely to be student careers advisers working in university careers services. It may have been the case that at the time of the 2021 Census, university careers services were operating online only or in a hybrid manner and so demand for student careers advisers was much less than in 2011. This section focuses on each of these three characteristics – age, working hours and qualification levels – in turn.

Table 2.22 shows the changing age profile of careers advisers in tertiary education. The number of advisers aged under 30 fell by 85% between 2011 and 2021, a fall of 2,700 advisers. This is in stark contrast to the other age groups, where there were large increases in the numbers of advisers, by at least 43% (50-59 year olds), and an overall increase of 49% among those aged 30 and over. The number of careers advisers in tertiary education would be expected to have increased between 2011 and 2021 as total student numbers increased by nearly 20% over this time.

In 2011, advisers aged under 30 made up 70% of all careers advisers in tertiary education, while in 2021 this proportion was only 20%.

Table 2.22 Careers advisers & vocational guidance specialists in tertiary education by age, England, 2011 and 2021

	2011	2021	change	% change	2011 %	2021 %
16 to 29	3,226	493	-2,733	-84.7	70.4	19.7
30 to 39	460	686	226	49.1	10.0	27.4
40 to 49	417	622	205	49.2	9.1	24.8
50 to 59	370	529	159	43.0	8.1	21.1
60+	107	177	70	65.4	2.3	7.1
Total	4,580	2,507	-2,073	-45.3	100.0	100.0

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Table 2.23 shows the changes in careers advisers in tertiary education by working hours. The number of advisers working short part-time hours of up to 15 per week fell by 95% between 2011 and 2021, or 2,900 advisers; this resulted in advisers working up to 15 hours per week making up just 7% of the total in 2021, compared with 67% in 2011. The number of advisers working 16 hours or more per week increased by 54% over this period.

Table 2.23 Careers advisers & vocational guidance specialists in tertiary education by working hours, England, 2011 and 2021

	2011	2021	change	% change	2011 %	2021 %
Part-time: 15 hours or less worked	3,066	168	-2,898	-94.5	66.9	6.7
Part-time: 16 to 30 hours worked	476	597	121	25.4	10.4	23.8
Full-time: 31 to 48 hours worked	1,011	1,692	681	67.4	22.1	67.5
Full-time: 49 or more hours worked	27	50	23	85.2	0.6	2.0
Total	4,580	2,507	-2,073	-45.3	100.0	100.0

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Table 2.24 shows the changes in careers advisers in tertiary education by their highest qualification level. The number of advisers with qualifications at Level 3 fell by 92% between 2011 and 2021, with nearly 2,200 fewer advisers, and the proportion of the total they comprised fell from 52% in 2011 to 8% in 2021. The number of advisers with qualifications at Level 4 or above increased by 30% between the two Census years, and as a proportion of the total this group increased from 37% in 2011 to 89% in 2021.

Table 2.24 Careers advisers & vocational guidance specialists in tertiary education by highest qualification level, England, 2011 and 2021

	2011	2021	change	% change	2011 %	2021 %
No qualifications	23	8	-15	-65.2	0.5	0.3
Level 1 and entry level qualifications	77	16	-61	-79.2	1.7	0.6
Level 2 qualifications	256	51	-205	-80.1	5.6	2.0
Apprenticeship*	5	7	2	40.0	0.1	0.3
Level 3 qualifications	2,365	191	-2,174	-91.9	51.6	7.6
Level 4 qualifications or above	1,713	2,227	514	30.0	37.4	88.9
Other	141	4	-137	-97.2	3.1	0.2
Total	4,580	2,504	-2,076	-45.3	100.0	100.0

* Note: level of apprenticeship is not asked for in the 2021 Census, and so this could cover any type or level of apprenticeship, for example, trade, advance, foundation or modern.

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To summarise the changing picture regarding student advisers in university careers services between 2011 and 2021:

- The number of careers advisers working short part-time hours of up to 15 per week fell by 2,900;
- The number of careers advisers aged 16 to 29 fell by 2,700, a slightly smaller fall than the numbers working short part-time hours, as some (postgraduate) student advisers may be aged 30 and over; and

- The number of careers advisers with qualifications at Level 3 fell by nearly 2,200, again a smaller fall than the numbers working short part-time hours, as some (postgraduate) student advisers may have Level 4+ qualifications while working as a student adviser.

3 Analysis of entry and exit flows

This chapter explores flows into and out of the careers adviser workforce, using data from Ofqual on new qualifications in careers advice and guidance, and from the Labour Force Survey on movements into and out of the occupational group over time.

3.1 Ofqual data

Data on the numbers of individuals gaining qualifications for careers advisers were obtained from the Ofqual website. Investigation of the site identified relevant qualifications at Level 4 and Level 6:

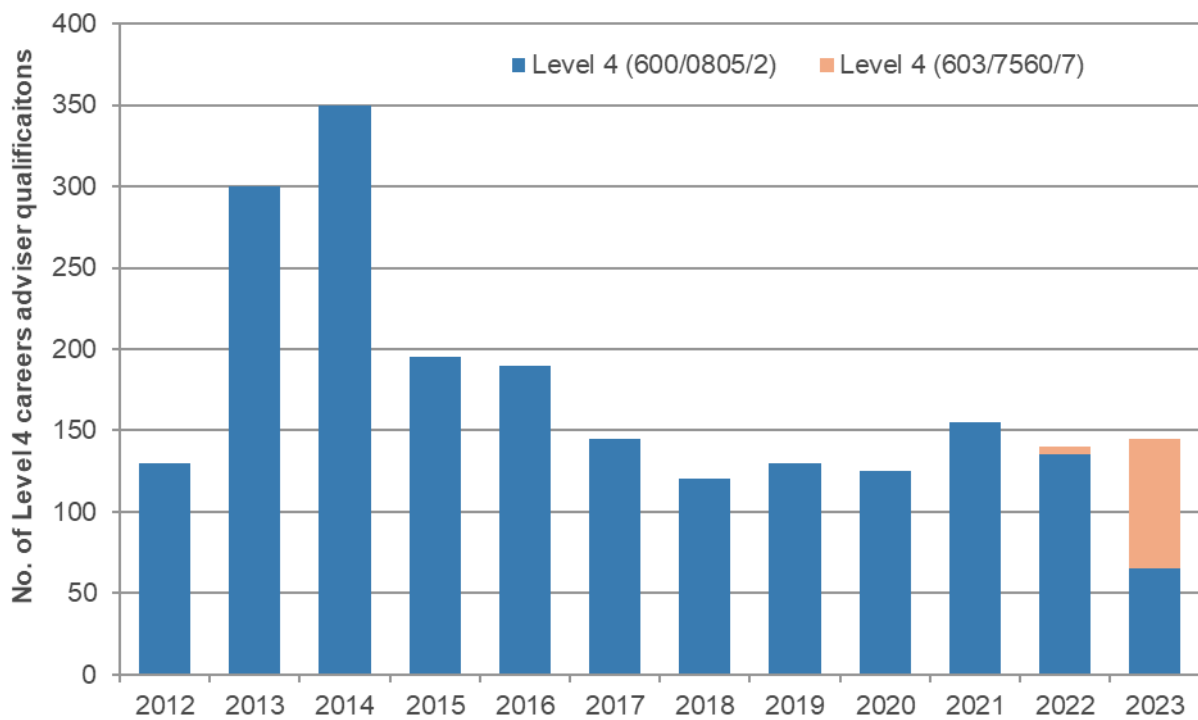
- OCR Level 4 Diploma in Career Information and Advice
- OCR Level 6 Diploma in Career Guidance and Development

For each level, there has been a change in the Ofqual reference for the qualification in 2022, with some qualifiers gaining qualifications under the old reference, and some under the new reference, in 2022 and 2023.

Figure 3.1 shows the number of people gaining qualifications at Level 4 from 2012 to 2023. The number was highest in 2014, at 350, and since then it has been much lower, averaging around 150 per year since then.

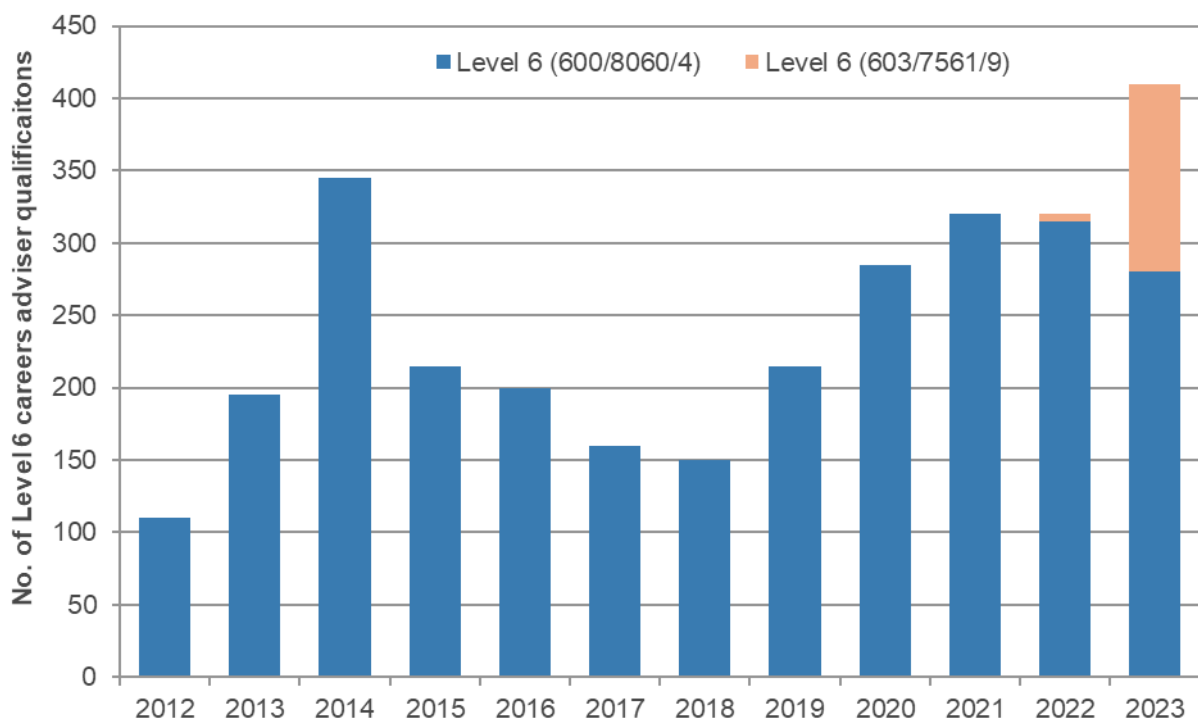
Figure 3.2 shows the number of people gaining qualifications at Level 6 from 2012 to 2023. As with Level 4 qualifications, there was a peak in 2014 after which numbers dropped off somewhat, although there has been an increase in numbers over the last few years, and the highest number was in 2023 at just over 400.

Figure 3.1 Number of qualifiers in Level 4 Diplomas in Career Information and Advice



Source: Ofqual

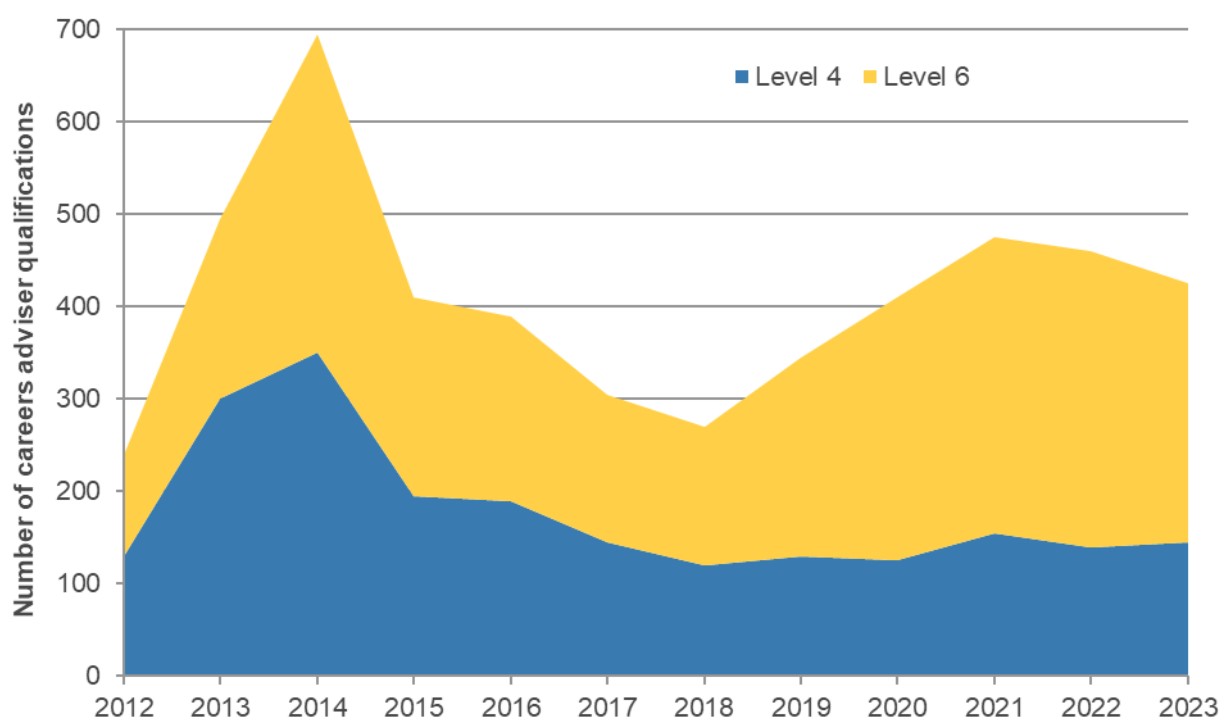
Figure 3.2 Number of qualifiers in Level 6 Diplomas in Career Guidance and Development



Source: Ofqual

Figure 3.3 shows the two levels combined, that is the total number of individuals gaining qualifications in careers guidance qualifications at either Level 4 or Level 6. This shows the large peak in 2014 at around 700, and then numbers tailing off to reach 270 in 2018, before rising again to over 400 from 2020 onwards. From 2016 onwards the average number of new qualifications per year has been 385.

Figure 3.3 Total number of Level 4/6 qualifiers in careers guidance qualifications



Source: Ofqual

3.2 Labour Force Survey data on labour market flows

The earlier report presented analysis of Labour Force Survey (LFS) data on the characteristics of the careers adviser workforce, as the 2011 Census data were almost a decade out of date at that point. The limitations of the LFS, in terms of it being a sample rather than a Census, were described in the earlier report.

As the 2021 Census data have only recently been released, there is less value in providing data on workforce characteristics from the LFS, given the limitations. However, the LFS also provides details of labour market changes, as the spring quarter each year asks respondents about their employment status, occupation and sector 12 months previously. Thus it is possible to identify people who move into and out of particular occupations over time.

Table 3.1 shows the average annual flows into the careers adviser workforce over the period 2016 to 2023. On average, 94% of careers advisers working in any one year had been working the previous year, while entrants from full-time education accounted for around 2.4%, or 540 – this is broadly similar to the figure from the Ofqual data. The other

main entry flows was from unemployment (1.8%), while those entering from inactivity (looking after family/home or other reasons for inactivity) accounted for 1.6% of the workforce each year.

Table 3.1 In-flows into careers adviser workforce by status one year ago, average across 2016-23

	Number	%
Working in paid job or business	21,380	94.2
Unemployed, actively seeking work	400	1.8
Full time student	540	2.4
Looking after family or home	90	0.4
None of these	280	1.2
Total	22,680	

Source: LFS spring quarters 2016-23 aggregated; numbers rounded to nearest 10

Table 3.2 shows the out-flow destinations of those who were working as careers advisers one year ago, and shows that 95% were still working, while 1.5% had retired (around 324 per year), 1.3% had become unemployed (around 272 per year), and 2.7% had become inactive, mostly looking after the family/home or to study.

This analysis shows that 19 out of 20 careers advisers are still working from year to year, with in-flows and out-flows accounting for around 5% of the workforce each year.

Table 3.2 Out-flows out of careers adviser workforce one year ago by current status, average across 2016-23

	Number	%
Working	20,020	94.5
Unemployed	270	1.3
Looking after family/home	290	1.3
Student	250	1.2
Inactive, other reason	50	0.2
Retired	320	1.5
Total	21,190	

Source: LFS spring quarters 2016-23 aggregated; numbers rounded to nearest 10

Inclusive Terminology

The terminology used to define ethnicity continues to evolve, and greater awareness has arisen about gender, cognitive differences as well as of disability. IES seeks to be a learning organisation; as such we are adapting our practice in line with these shifts. We aim to be specific when referring to each individual's ethnicity and use their own self-descriptor wherever possible. Where this is not feasible, we are aligned with Race Disparity Unit (RDU) which uses the term 'ethnic minorities' to refer to all ethnic groups except white British. RDU does not use the terms BAME (black, Asian, and minority ethnic) or BME (black and minority ethnic) as these terms emphasise certain ethnic groups and exclude others. It also recommends not capitalising ethnic groups, (such as 'black' or 'white') unless that group's name includes a geographic place. More broadly, we understand that while individuals may have impairments it is society that disables them, hence we refer to disabled people. Not all people identify with male or female and we reflect their self-descriptions in our work and use the term non-binary should abbreviation be necessary. We value neurodiversity. Where possible we always use people's self-descriptors rather than impose categories upon them.

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