



General Optical Council Registrant Survey 2021

Additional analysis of workforce questions:
job satisfaction and future plans

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Executive summary

Introduction

This report presents detailed analysis of two questions asked in the 2021 registrant survey which relate to the future of the optical workforce in the UK:

- Thinking about the last 12 months, to what extent are you satisfied or dissatisfied with your role/job?
- Have you considered making any of the following changes to your career over the next 12-24 months? (e.g. gain additional qualifications/skills, switch to locum work, leave the profession)

Analysis has been conducted to highlight any interesting differences in the results between key subgroups, including registration type, workplace setting, involvement in enhanced eye care services, working status, location, gender, and age group.

This analysis has been scaled up to offer an approximation of the number of registrants who may have answered in a particular way, to provide the GOC with insight to inform future workforce planning.

Job satisfaction

- 58% (approximately 17,000 registrants) said they were satisfied with their role or job over the last 12 months
- 20% (approximately 5,900 registrants) were dissatisfied
- 22% (approximately 6,500 registrants) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- The following subgroups were more likely to answer that they were satisfied with their role or job over the last 12 months:
 - Dispensing opticians and student dispensing opticians
 - Those who worked for an independent optician, in a hospital, or in education/academia
 - Those who were involved in the delivery of enhanced eye care services
 - Those who worked full-time
- The following subgroups were more likely to answer that they were dissatisfied with their role or job over the last 12 months:
 - Optometrists
 - Those who worked for a multiple optician or in domiciliary care
 - Those who worked as locums
 - Those who worked in London

Plans to gain additional qualifications

- 43% (approximately 12,600 registrants) said they plan to gain additional qualifications/skills over the next 12-24 months
- The following subgroups were more likely to plan to gain additional qualifications/skills over the next 12-24 months:
 - Optometrists, student optometrists, and student dispensing opticians
 - Those who worked for a multiple optician, in a hospital, or in education/academia
 - Those who were involved in the delivery of enhanced eye care services
 - Those who worked full-time
 - Female registrants
 - Those aged 18-34 and 35-54
 - Those who were satisfied with their role/job

Plans to reduce hours

- 36% (approximately 10,600 registrants) said they plan to reduce their hours over the next 12-24 months
- The following subgroups were more likely to plan to reduce their hours:
 - Optometrists
 - Those who were involved in the delivery of enhanced eye care services
 - Those who worked full-time or as locums
 - Those aged 55+
 - Those who were dissatisfied with their role/job

Plans to leave the profession

- 26% (approximately 7,600 registrants) said they plan to leave the profession over the next 12-24 months
- The following subgroups were more likely to plan to leave the profession:
 - Dispensing opticians
 - Those who worked in domiciliary care
 - Those who worked as locums, or who were not currently working
 - Those who worked in London
 - Those aged 35-54
 - Those who were dissatisfied with their role/job

Plans to retire

- 13% (approximately 3,800 registrants) said they plan to retire over the next 12-24 months
- The following subgroups were more likely to plan to retire:
 - Those who worked for an independent optician
 - Those who worked part-time
 - Male registrants
 - Those aged 55+

Plans to switch to locum work

- 12% (approximately 3,500 registrants) said they plan to switch to locum work over the next 12-24 months
- The following subgroups were more likely to plan to switch to locum:
 - Those who worked for a multiple optician
 - Those who were currently not working
 - Those who worked in London
 - Those aged 18-34
 - Those who were dissatisfied with their role/job

Plans to take a career break

- 11% (approximately 3,200 registrants) said they plan to take a career break over the next 12-24 months
- The following subgroups were more likely to plan to take a career break:
 - Those who worked for a multiple optician
 - Those who were currently not working
 - Those who worked in London
 - Those aged 18-34
 - Those who were dissatisfied with their role/job

The Research Programme

Introduction

To help track registrants' views and perceptions of the GOC, and their experiences of working in clinical practice, a registrant survey was delivered in early 2021. A [research report](#) was produced in August 2021 which includes detailed analysis of all survey results.

This report concentrates on the analysis of two survey questions which relate to the optical workforce:

- Thinking about the last 12 months, to what extent are you satisfied or dissatisfied with your role/job?
 - Very satisfied / quite satisfied
 - Neither satisfied not dissatisfied
 - Quite dissatisfied / very dissatisfied
- Have you considered making any of the following changes to your career over the next 12-24 months?
 - Gain additional qualifications/skills
 - Switch to locum work
 - Reduce your hours
 - Leave the profession
 - Take a career break
 - Retire

Analysis for both questions is presented in this report to show any interesting differences in the results between key subgroups, such as different registration types, workplace settings, location in the UK, age group, and gender.

As part of this analysis, the survey results have been scaled up to offer an approximation of the number of GOC registrants who may have answered in a particular way, in order to provide the GOC with insight to inform future workforce planning.

Methodology

A questionnaire was designed by the GOC and Enventure Research. The survey promoted online via direct email to all GOC registrants followed by targeted reminders, as well as via email newsletters and social media. Between 9 March and 12 April 2021, 4,880 responses were received, representing a 17% response rate. More detail about the methodology can be found in the main [research report](#).

Survey respondent profile

A breakdown of the weighted profile of survey respondents, including their role, workplace setting, working status, involvement in the delivery of enhanced eye care services, length of time on the GOC register, location, and demographics can be found in **Appendix A** of this report.

Interpretation of the findings

Weighting

As the survey was completed by a sample of GOC registrants, and not the entire population of registered optical professionals, the data has been weighted to ensure that certain subgroups are not over or under represented and that the data is as close to the GOC registrant profile as possible.

Weighting adjusts the proportions of certain groups within a sample to match more closely to the proportions in the target population. The sample has been weighted by registrant type (optometrist, dispensing optician, student optometrist, student dispensing optician), based on an up to date version of the GOC register. All survey results presented within this report are based on the weighted data.

Interpretation of survey data

This report contains various tables and charts. In some instances, the responses may not add up to 100%. There are several reasons why this might happen:

- The question may have allowed each respondent to give more than one answer
- Only the most common responses may be shown in the table or chart
- Individual percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number so the total may come to 99% or 101%
- A response of between 0% and 0.4% will be shown as 0%

For the analysis of certain questions, response options have been grouped together to provide an overall level. For example, in some instances 'very satisfied' and 'quite satisfied' have been grouped and shown as 'total satisfied'. Where these combined percentages do not equal the overall level reported (being 1% higher or lower), this is due to percentages being rounded to the nearest whole number.

Subgroup analysis has been undertaken to explore the results provided by different groups, such as registrant type, role, length of registration, workplace setting, location, and key demographics. This analysis has only been carried out where the sample size is seen to be sufficient for comment. Where sample sizes were not large enough, subgroups have been combined to create larger groups.

Throughout this report, those who took part in the survey are referred to as 'respondents'.

Sampling confidence interval

As the online survey was completed by a sample of GOC registrants and not the entire registrant population, all results are subject to sampling tolerances. However, as a large number of responses were received, the confidence interval for analysis (also known as the margin of error) is narrow.

Based on a total population of approximately 29,345 registrants and 4,880 survey responses, when interpreting the results to a question which all respondents answered, with a response of 50% there is a 95% chance that this result would not vary by more than +/- 1.3 percentage points (48.7% to 51.3%) had the result been obtained from the entire registrant population.

For questions where a smaller subset provided an answer to a question, or where subgroup analysis has been undertaken, the confidence interval will increase, meaning that the accuracy of the results will decrease.

Scaling up survey results to provide approximate registrant numbers

To provide the GOC with insight to inform future workforce planning, survey results have been scaled up to the number of optical professionals currently on the GOC's register, converting the results into approximate registrant numbers.

Please note that the numbers presented in this report are only approximate, and are subject to sampling confidence intervals, as explained above. The scaled up numbers calculated for results at an overall level are more likely to be accurate when compared to those calculated for subgroups, such as workplace setting or location. These are shown to provide a general idea of the number of GOC registrants who may have answered in a particular way, if everyone on the register had responded to the survey.

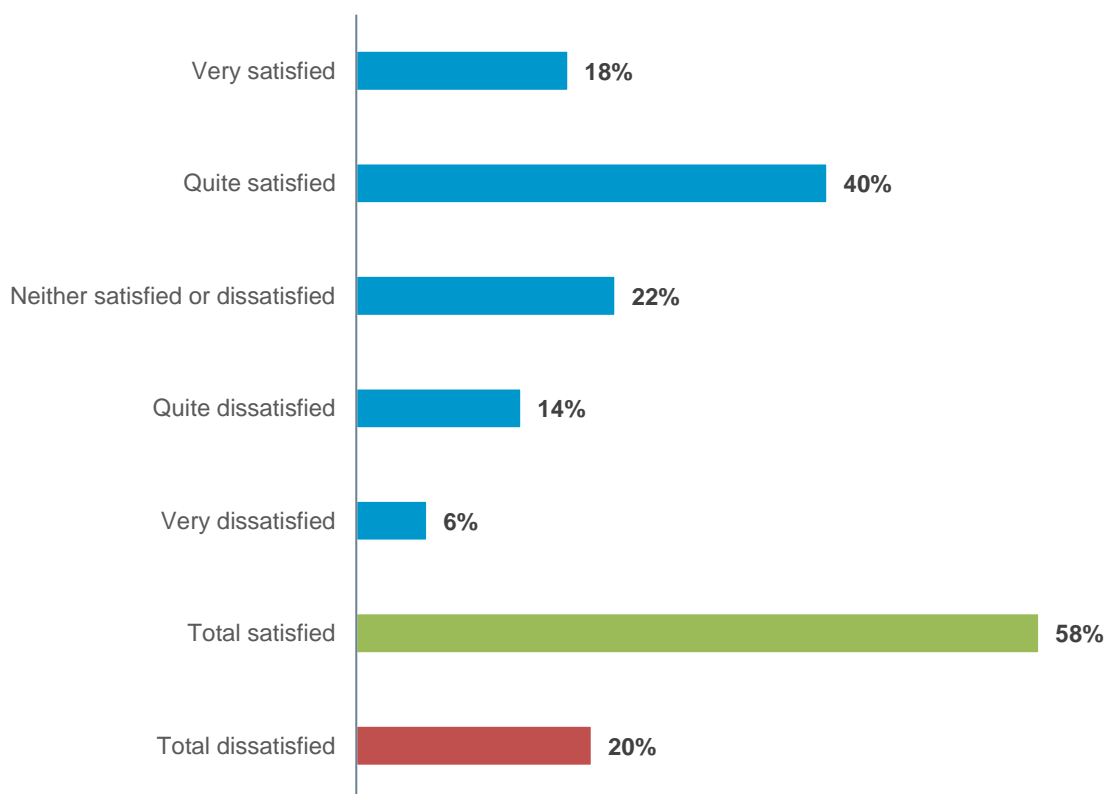
Research Findings

Job satisfaction

In total, 58% indicated that they were satisfied with their role or job over the last 12 months, including 40% who were *quite satisfied* and 18% who were *very satisfied*. One in five respondents, however, were dissatisfied (20%), and a further 22% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

Figure 1 – Thinking about the last 12 months, to what extent are you satisfied or dissatisfied with your role/job?

Base: All respondents excluding those fully retired and ‘not applicable’ responses (4,378)



When scaling these results up to the total number of registrants, this shows that approximately 17,000 registrants felt satisfied with their role or job over the last 12 months, and almost 6,000 felt dissatisfied.

Figure 2 – Job satisfaction scaled up to approximate registrant numbers

Base: Survey result - All respondents excluding those fully retired and ‘not applicable’ responses (4,378); Registrant database (29,345)

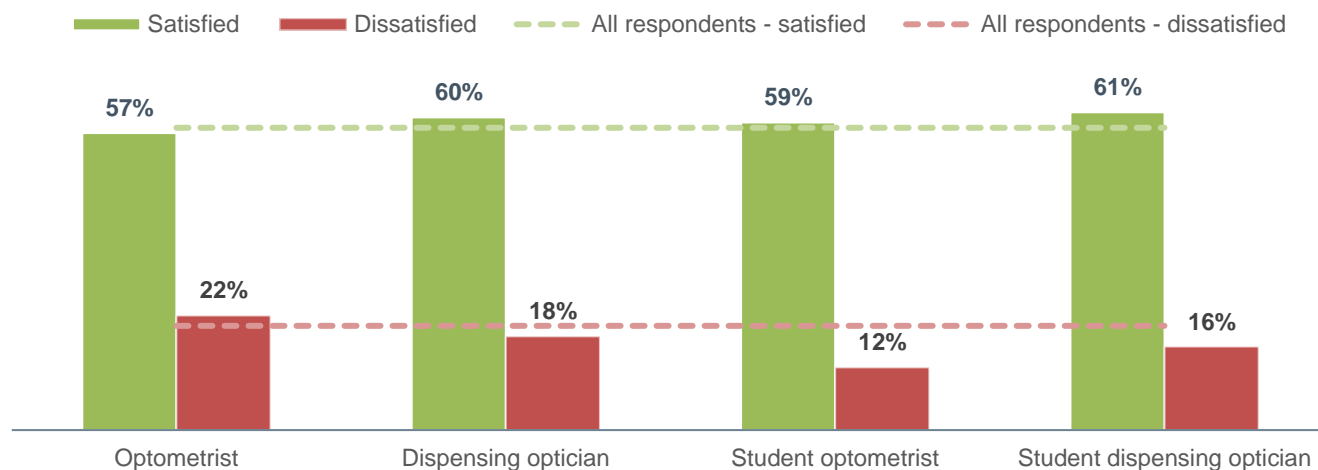
Level of satisfaction with role/job over last 12 months	Survey result	Scaled up number of registrants (approx.)
Total satisfied	58%	17,020
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	22%	6,456
Total dissatisfied	20%	5,869

Analysis by registration type

Analysis by registration type shows that optometrists were more likely to answer that they were dissatisfied with their job or role over the last 12 months (22%) when compared with dispensing opticians (18%), student optometrists (12%) and student dispensing opticians (16%).

Figure 3 – Job satisfaction by registration type

Base: Optometrist (2,637); dispensing optician (1,156); student optometrist (422); student dispensing optician (210)



The table below presents the approximate figures generated when scaling up these results to the total number of registrants by registration type.

Figure 4 – Job satisfaction by registration type scaled up to approximate registrant numbers

Base: Survey result / registrant database (shown in table)

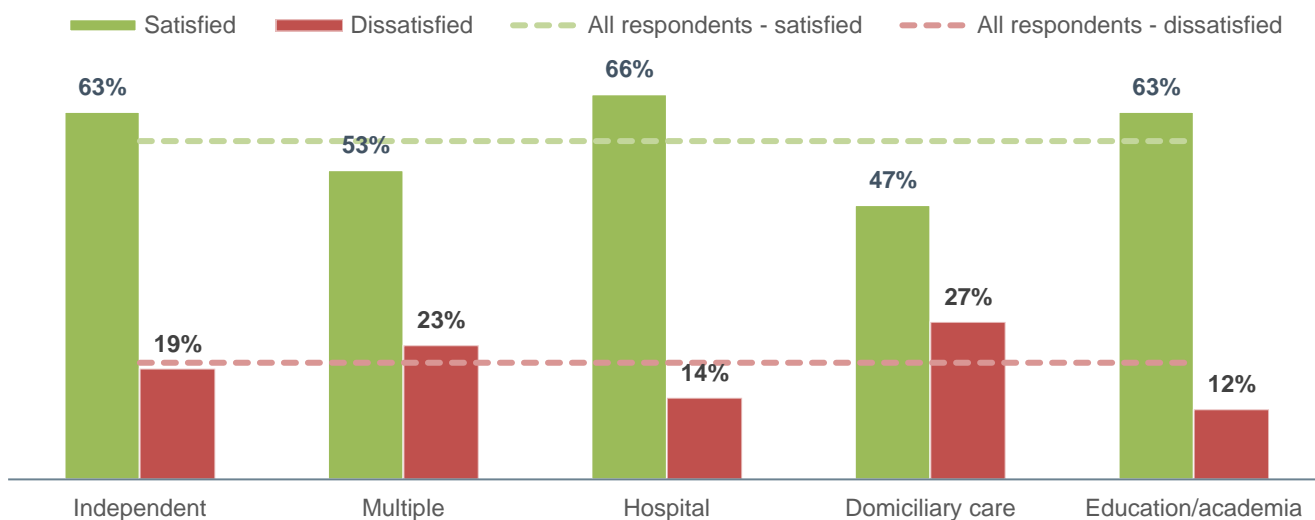
Level of satisfaction with role/job over last 12 months	Survey result	Scaled up number of registrants (approx.)
Optometrist (2,637 / 16,232)		
Total satisfied	57%	9,252
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	20%	3,571
Total dissatisfied	22%	3,246
Dispensing optician (1,156 / 7,034)		
Total satisfied	60%	4,220
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	22%	1,547
Total dissatisfied	18%	1,266
Student optometrist (422 / 4,675)		
Total satisfied	59%	2,758
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	30%	1,403
Total dissatisfied	12%	561
Student dispensing optician (210 / 1,404)		
Total satisfied	61%	856
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	23%	323
Total dissatisfied	16%	225

Analysis by workplace setting

Analysis by workplace setting highlights that those who worked for an independent optician (63%), hospital (66%) or in education/academia (63%) were more likely to be satisfied with their role or job when compared with those working for a multiple optician (53%) or in domiciliary care (47%). The highest levels of dissatisfaction were recorded for those working for a multiple optician (23%) or in domiciliary care (27%).

Figure 5 – Job satisfaction by workplace setting

Base: Independent (1,807); multiple (2,292); hospital (335); domiciliary care (86); education/academia (251)



The table below presents the approximate figures generated when scaling up these results to the total number of registrants by workplace setting. These numbers have been calculated by applying the survey result for workplace setting to the total number of GOC registrants (29,345), and splitting the results accordingly. As workplace setting was a multiple choice question in the survey, with some registrants working across more than one setting, please note that the scaled up numbers will exceed the total number of registrants, and are therefore indicative only.

Figure 6 – Job satisfaction by workplace setting scaled up to approximate registrant numbers

Base: Survey result / registrant database (shown in table)

Level of satisfaction with role/job over last 12 months	Survey result	Scaled up number of registrants (approx.)
Independent (1,807 / 12,618)		
Total satisfied	63%	7,949
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	18%	2,271
Total dissatisfied	19%	2,397
Multiple (2,292 / 15,846)		
Total satisfied	53%	8,398
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	24%	3,803
Total dissatisfied	23%	3,645
Hospital (335 / 2,348)		
Total satisfied	66%	1,550
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	20%	470
Total dissatisfied	14%	329

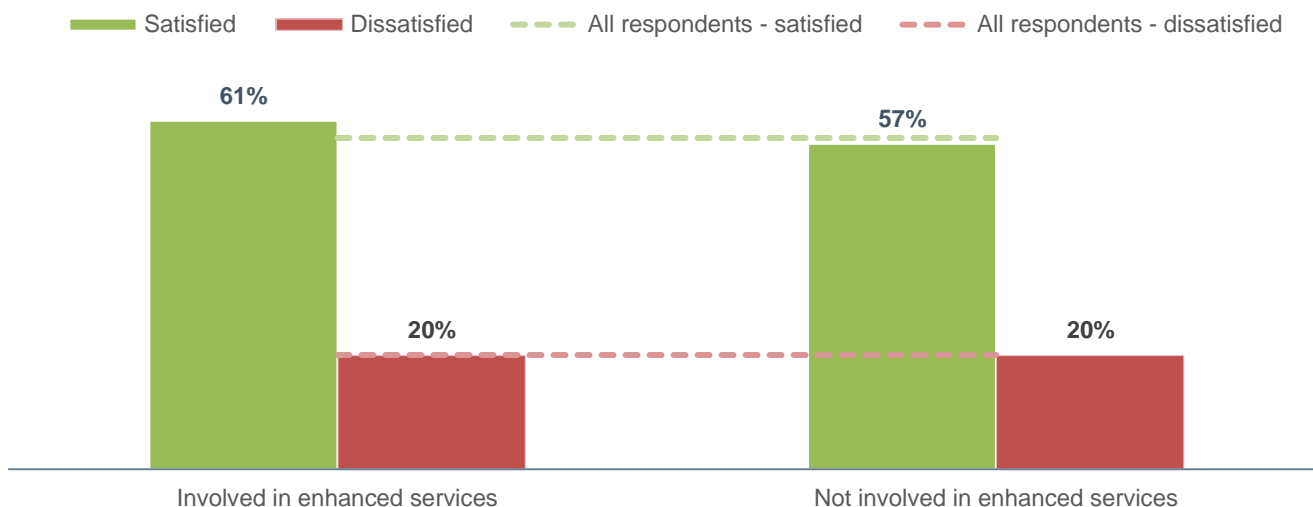
Level of satisfaction with role/job over last 12 months	Survey result	Scaled up number of registrants (approx.)
Domiciliary care (86 / 587)		
Total satisfied	47%	276
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	25%	147
Total dissatisfied	27%	158
Education/academia (251 / 1,761)		
Total satisfied	63%	1,109
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	24%	423
Total dissatisfied	12%	211

Analysis by involvement in enhanced eye care services

Respondents who were involved in the delivery of enhanced eye care services were more likely to be satisfied with their role or job (61%) when compared with those who were not (57%). However, the same proportion answered that they were dissatisfied (20%), highlighting that those who were not involved in the delivery of enhanced eye care services were more likely to answer that they were ‘neither satisfied nor dissatisfied’ (23%) when compared with those who were involved (19%).

Figure 7 – Job satisfaction by involvement in enhanced eye care services

Base: Involved in enhanced eye care services (2,022); not involved (2,175)



The table overleaf presents the approximate figures generated when scaling up these results to the total number of registrants by involvement in enhanced eye care services. These approximate numbers have been calculated by applying the survey result for involvement in enhanced eye care services to the total number of GOC registrants (29,345), and splitting the results accordingly.

Figure 8 – Job satisfaction by involvement in enhanced eye care services scaled up to approximate registrant numbers

Base: Survey result / registrant database (shown in table)

Level of satisfaction with role/job over last 12 months	Survey result	Scaled up number of registrants (approx.)
Involved in the delivery of enhanced eye care services (2,022 / 14,086)		
Total satisfied	61%	8,592
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	19%	2,676
Total dissatisfied	20%	2,817
Not involved in the delivery of enhanced eye care services (2,175 / 15,259)		
Total satisfied	57%	8,698
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	23%	3,510
Total dissatisfied	20%	3,052

Analysis by working status

Analysis by working status shows that those who worked full-time were more likely to be satisfied (64%) when compared with those working part-time (55%), as locums (47%), or who were not currently working (35%). Those working as locums and those not currently working were more likely to be dissatisfied (28% and 32% respectively).

Figure 9 – Job satisfaction by working status

Base: Full-time (2,496); part-time (1,325); locum (690); not working/unemployed/retired (129)



The table overleaf presents the approximate figures generated when scaling up these results to the total number of registrants by working status. These numbers have been calculated by applying the survey result for working status to the total number of GOC registrants (29,345), and splitting the results accordingly. As survey respondents were able to select both full/part-time and locum, the scaled up numbers exceed the total number of registrants.

Figure 10 – Job satisfaction by workplace setting scaled up to approximate registrant numbers
 Base: Survey result / registrant database (shown in table)

Level of satisfaction with role/job over last 12 months	Survey result	Scaled up number of registrants (approx.)
Full-time (2,496 / 15,259)		
Total satisfied	64%	9,766
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	19%	2,899
Total dissatisfied	17%	2,594
Part-time (1,325 / 8,217)		
Total satisfied	55%	4,519
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	24%	1,972
Total dissatisfied	22%	1,808
Locum (690 / 4,402)		
Total satisfied	47%	2,069
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	25%	1,101
Total dissatisfied	28%	1,233
Not working/unemployed/retired (129 / 3,521)		
Total satisfied	35%	1,232
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	33%	1,162
Total dissatisfied	32%	1,127

Analysis by location

Analysis by location shows higher levels of satisfaction in certain areas of the UK when compared with others. Higher levels of satisfaction were recorded in Wales (65%) and Northern Ireland (63%), but the lower base sizes for these subgroups should be noted. Dissatisfaction was highest amongst those who worked in London (23%).

Figure 11 – Job satisfaction by location

Base: North (932); Midlands and East (877); London (514); South (1,045); England (3,368); Wales (204); Scotland (388); Northern Ireland (120)



The table below presents the approximate figures generated when scaling up these results to the total number of registrants by location. These numbers have been calculated by applying the survey result for working status to the total number of GOC registrants (29,345), and splitting the results accordingly.

Figure 12 – Job satisfaction by workplace setting scaled up to approximate registrant numbers
Base: Survey result / registrant database (shown in table)

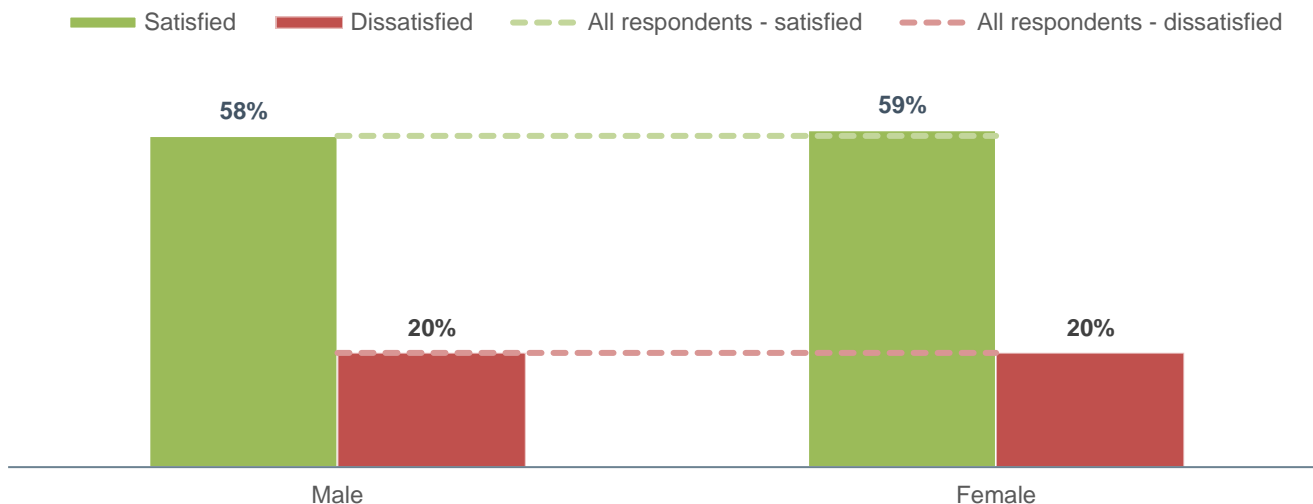
Level of satisfaction with role/job over last 12 months	Survey result	Scaled up number of registrants (approx.)
North (932 / 6,749)		
Total satisfied	57%	3,847
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	23%	1,552
Total dissatisfied	20%	1,350
Midlands and East (877 / 6,162)		
Total satisfied	61%	3,759
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	20%	1,232
Total dissatisfied	19%	1,171
London (514 / 3,521)		
Total satisfied	50%	1,761
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	27%	951
Total dissatisfied	23%	810
South (1,045 / 7,043)		
Total satisfied	60%	4,226
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	20%	1,409
Total dissatisfied	19%	1,338
England (3,368 / 23,769)		
Total satisfied	58%	13,786
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	22%	5,229
Total dissatisfied	20%	4,754
Wales (204 / 1,467)		
Total satisfied	65%	954
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	14%	205
Total dissatisfied	21%	308
Scotland (388 / 2,641)		
Total satisfied	59%	1,558
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	19%	502
Total dissatisfied	22%	581
Northern Ireland (120 / 880)		
Total satisfied	63%	555
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	22%	194
Total dissatisfied	14%	123

Analysis by gender

No differences in job satisfaction were recorded by gender.

Figure 13 – Job satisfaction by gender

Base: Male (1,586); Female (2,633)



The table below presents the approximate figures generated when scaling up these results to the total number of registrants by gender. These approximate numbers have been calculated by applying the survey result for gender to the total number of GOC registrants (29,345), and splitting the results accordingly.

Figure 14 – Job satisfaction by gender scaled up to approximate registrant numbers

Base: Survey result / registrant database (shown in table)

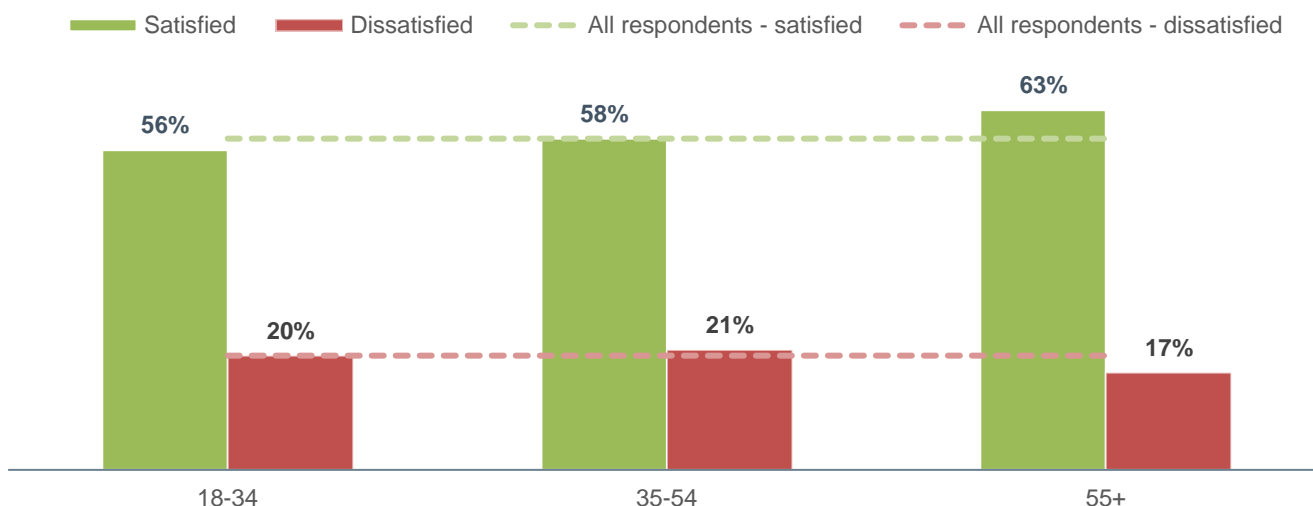
Level of satisfaction with role/job over last 12 months	Survey result	Scaled up number of registrants (approx.)
Male (1,586 / 10,858)		
Total satisfied	58%	6,298
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	22%	2,389
Total dissatisfied	20%	2,172
Female (2,633 / 18,487)		
Total satisfied	59%	10,907
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	22%	4,067
Total dissatisfied	20%	3,697

Analysis by age group

Analysis by age group shows higher levels of satisfaction amongst older registrants aged 55+ (63%), particularly when compared with younger registrants aged 18-34 (56%).

Figure 15 – Job satisfaction by age group

Base: 18-34 (1,313); 35-54 (1,955); 55+ (1,022)



The table below presents the approximate figures generated when scaling up these results to the total number of registrants by age group. These approximate numbers have been calculated by applying the survey result for gender to the total number of GOC registrants (29,345), and splitting the results accordingly.

Figure 16 – Job satisfaction by age group scaled up to approximate registrant numbers

Base: Survey result / registrant database (shown in table)

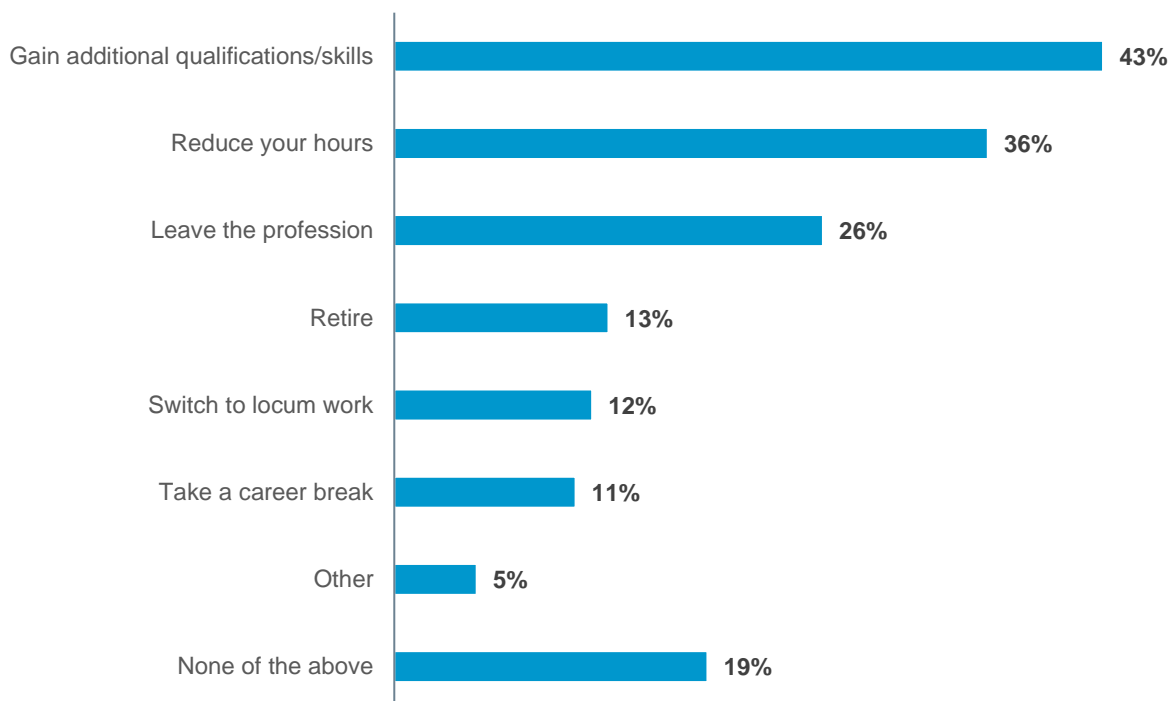
Level of satisfaction with role/job over last 12 months	Survey result	Scaled up number of registrants (approx.)
18-34 (1,313 / 10,271)		
Total satisfied	56%	5,752
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	24%	2,465
Total dissatisfied	20%	2,054
35-54 (1,955 / 12,325)		
Total satisfied	58%	7,149
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	21%	2,588
Total dissatisfied	21%	2,588
55+ (1,022 / 6,749)		
Total satisfied	63%	4,252
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	20%	1,350
Total dissatisfied	17%	1,147

The future

When asked to consider making changes to their career over the next 12 to 24 months, the largest proportion said that they planned to gain additional qualifications or skills (43%), followed by 36% who planned to reduce their hours (36%). A quarter said that they planned to leave the profession (26%).

Figure 17 – Have you considered making any of the following changes to your career over the next 12-24 months?

Base: All respondents excluding those fully retired (4,479)



The table below presents this result scaled up to the total approximate number of registrants, based on a total population of 29,345. This shows that approximately over 12,500 registrants planned to gain additional qualifications or skills over the next 12 to 24 months. However, it also highlights that approximately 7,500 registrants plan to leave the profession. Please note that, as this survey question was multiple choice, the total number of registrants will exceed 29,345.

Figure 18 – Future career changes over the next 12-24 months scaled up to approximate registrant numbers

Base: Survey result - All respondents excluding those fully retired and 'not applicable' responses (4,479); Registrant database (29,345)

Future career change over next 12-24 months	Survey result	Scaled up number of registrants (approx.)
Gain additional qualifications/skills	43%	12,618
Reduce your hours	36%	10,564
Leave the profession	26%	7,630
Retire	13%	3,815
Switch to locum work	12%	3,521
Take a career break	11%	3,228
Other	5%	1,467
None of the above	19%	5,576

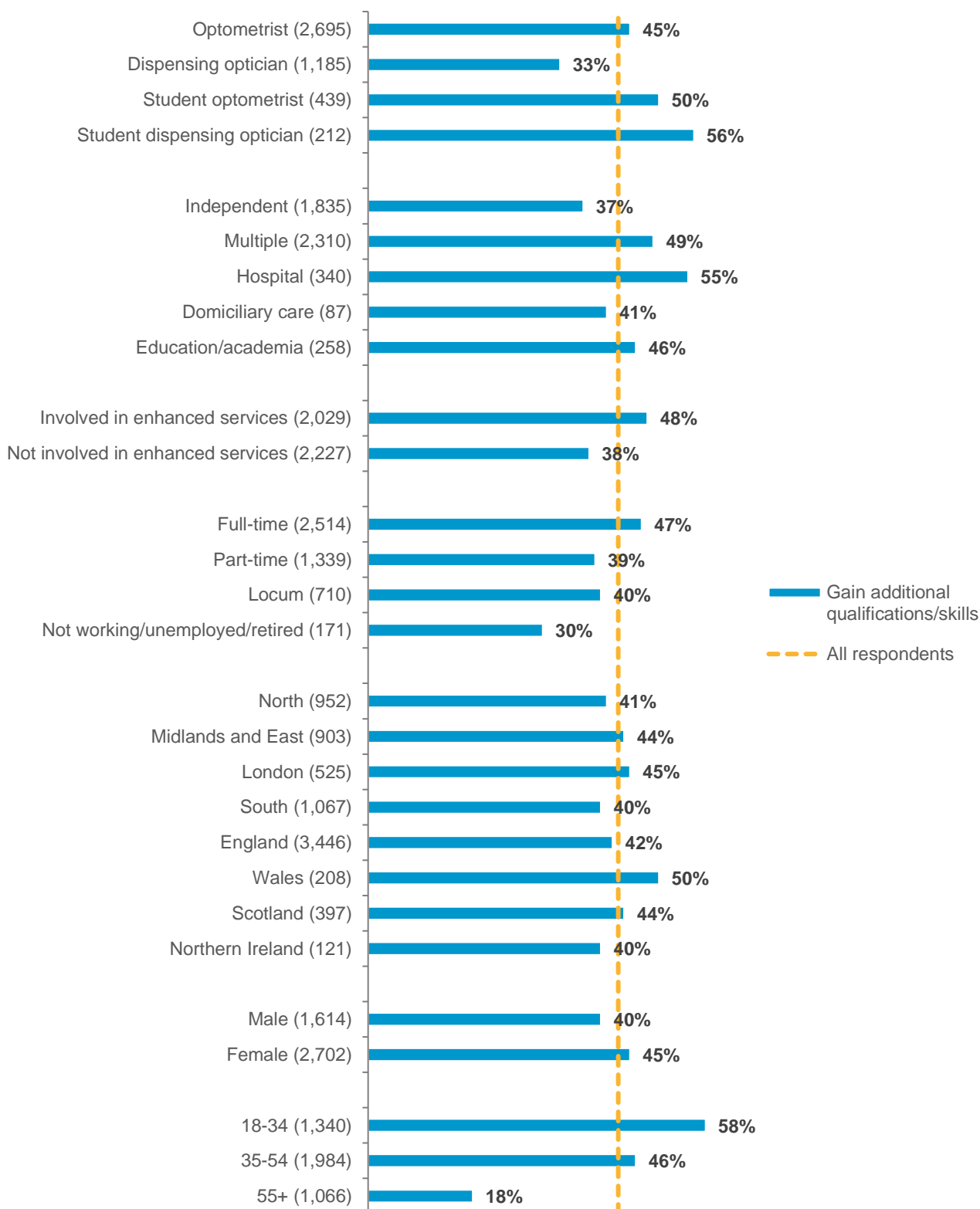
Plans to gain additional qualifications/skills

Subgroup analysis

The chart below presents subgroup analysis for those who planned to gain additional qualifications or skills over the next 12 to 24 months by registration type, workplace setting, involvement in enhanced services, working status, location, gender, and age.

Figure 19 – Plans to gain additional qualifications/skills by registration type, workplace setting, involvement in enhanced services, working status, location, gender, and age

Base: shown in chart



Larger proportions of student optometrists (50%) and student dispensing opticians (56%) indicated that they planned to gain additional qualifications or skills when compared with dispensing opticians (33%).

In relation to workplace setting, those who worked in a hospital (55%), for a multiple optician (49%), or in education/academia (46%) were more likely to plan to gain additional qualifications or skills when compared with those who worked for an independent optician (37%) or in domiciliary care (41%).

Those involved in the delivery of enhanced eye care services were more likely to plan to gain additional qualifications or skills (48%) when compared with those who were not (38%).

In relation to working status, those who worked full-time were more likely to plan to gain additional qualifications or skills (47%) when compared with those in other situations.

Respondents living in certain areas of the UK were more likely to plan to gain additional qualifications or skills, in particular those in Wales (50%) and London (45%) when compared with other areas.

Female respondents (45%) and those aged 18-34 (58%) were also more likely to plan to gain additional qualifications or skills when compared with male respondents (40%) and those aged 55+ (18%).

Scaled up approximate figures

The table below and overleaf presents the approximate figures for those who plan to gain additional qualifications and skills over the next 12 to 24 months, generated when scaling up these results to the total number of registrants by registration type, workplace setting, involvement in enhanced eye care services, working status, location, gender, and age group. These numbers have been calculated by applying the survey results to the total number of GOC registrants (29,345), and splitting the results accordingly.

Figure 20 – Plans to gain additional qualifications/skills scaled up to approximate registrant numbers

Base: Survey result / registrant database (shown in table)

Plans to gain additional qualifications/skills	Survey result	Scaled up number of registrants (approx.)
Registration type		
Optometrist (2,695 / 16,433)	45%	7,395
Dispensing optician (1,185 / 7,336)	33%	2,421
Student optometrist (439 / 4,695)	50%	2,348
Student dispensing optician (212 / 1,467)	56%	822
Workplace setting		
Independent (1,835 / 12,618)	37%	4,669
Multiple (2,310 / 15,846)	49%	7,765
Hospital (340 / 2,348)	55%	1,291
Domiciliary care (87 / 587)	41%	241
Education/academia (258 / 1,761)	46%	810
Involvement in enhanced eye care services		
Involved (2,029 / 14,086)	59%	8,311
Not involved (2,227 / 15,259)	30%	4,578
Working status		
Full-time (2,514 / 15,259)	47%	7,172

Plans to gain additional qualifications/skills	Survey result	Scaled up number of registrants (approx.)
Part-time (1,339 / 8,217)	39%	3,204
Locum (710 / 4,402)	40%	1,761
Not working/unemployed/retired (171 / 3,521)	30%	1,056
Location		
North (952 / 6,749)	41%	2,767
Midlands and East (903 / 6,162)	44%	2,711
London (525 / 3,521)	45%	1,585
South (1,067 / 7,043)	40%	2,817
England (3,446 / 23,769)	42%	9,983
Wales (208 / 1,467)	50%	734
Scotland (397 / 2,641)	44%	1,162
Northern Ireland (121 / 880)	40%	352
Gender		
Male (1,614 / 10,858)	40%	10858
Female (2,702 / 18,487)	45%	18487
Age group		
18-34 (1,340 / 10,271)	58%	5,957
35-54 (1,849 / 12,325)	46%	5,669
55+ (1,066 / 6,749)	18%	1,215

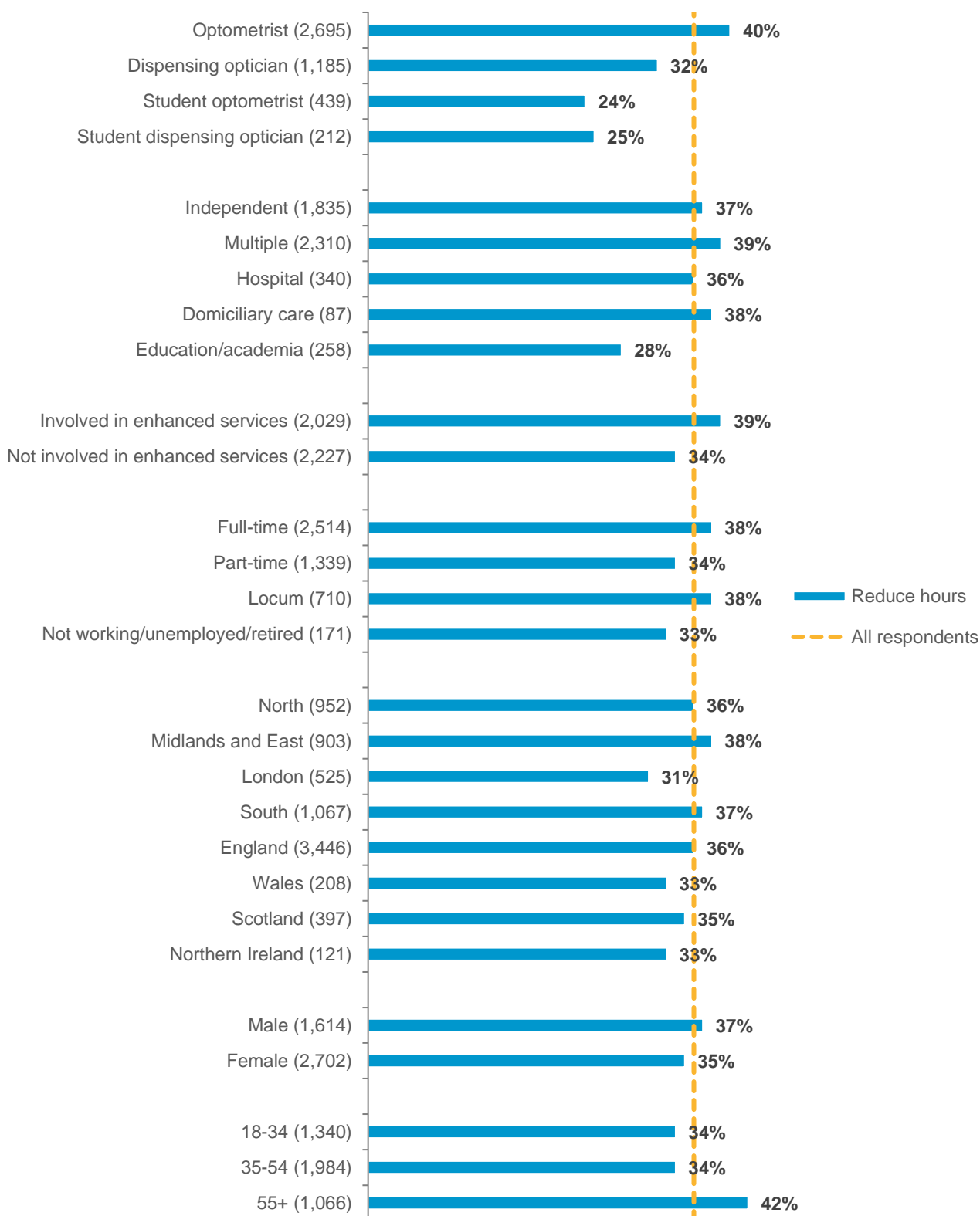
Plans to reduce hours

Subgroup analysis

The chart below presents subgroup analysis of those who planned to reduce their hours over the next 12 to 24 months by registration type, workplace setting, involvement in enhanced services, working status, location, gender, and age group.

Figure 21 – Plans to reduce hours by registration type, workplace setting, involvement in enhanced services, working status, location, gender, and age group

Base: shown in chart



Optometrists were more likely to answer that they planned to reduce their hours (40%) when compared with other registration types, in particular dispensing opticians (32%).

In relation to workplace setting, those who worked in education or academia were less likely to suggest they planned to reduce their hours (28%) when compared with all other settings.

Those involved in the delivery of enhanced eye care services were more likely to plan to reduce their hours (39%) when compared with those who were not (34%).

In relation to working status, those who worked full-time were more likely to plan to reduce their hours (38%) when compared with those who worked part-time (34%).

A smaller proportion of those living in London said they planned to reduce their hours (31%) when compared with other areas of the UK.

Those aged 55+ were also more likely to plan to reduce their hours (42%) when compared with younger registrants aged 18-54 (34%).

Scaled up approximate figures

The table below presents the approximate figures generated when scaling up these results to the total number of registrants by registration type, workplace setting, involvement in enhanced eye care services, working status, location, gender, and age group. These numbers have been calculated by applying the survey results to the total number of GOC registrants (29,345), and splitting the results accordingly.

Figure 22 – Plans to reduce hours scaled up to approximate registrant numbers

Base: Survey result / registrant database (shown in table)

Plans to reduce hours	Survey result	Scaled up number of registrants (approx.)
Registration type		
Optometrist (2,695 / 16,433)	40%	6,573
Dispensing optician (1,185 / 7,336)	32%	2,348
Student optometrist (439 / 4,695)	24%	1,127
Student dispensing optician (212 / 1,467)	25%	367
Workplace setting		
Independent (1,835 / 12,618)	37%	4,669
Multiple (2,310 / 15,846)	39%	6,180
Hospital (340 / 2,348)	36%	845
Domiciliary care (87 / 587)	38%	223
Education/academia (258 / 1,761)	28%	493
Involvement in enhanced eye care services		
Involved (2,029 / 14,086)	39%	5,493
Not involved (2,227 / 15,259)	34%	5,188
Working status		
Full-time (2,514 / 15,259)	38%	5,799
Part-time (1,339 / 8,217)	34%	2,794
Locum (710 / 4,402)	38%	1,673
Not working/unemployed/retired (171 / 3,521)	33%	1,162

Plans to reduce hours	Survey result	Scaled up number of registrants (approx.)
Location		
North (952 / 6,749)	36%	2,430
Midlands and East (903 / 6,162)	38%	2,342
London (525 / 3,521)	31%	1,092
South (1,067 / 7,043)	37%	2,606
England (3,446 / 23,769)	36%	8,557
Wales (208 / 1,467)	33%	484
Scotland (397 / 2,641)	35%	924
Northern Ireland (121 / 880)	33%	291
Gender		
Male (1,614 / 10,858)	37%	4,017
Female (2,702 / 18,487)	35%	6,471
Age group		
18-34 (1,340 / 10,271)	34%	3,492
35-54 (1,849 / 12,325)	34%	4,190
55+ (1,066 / 6,749)	42%	2,835

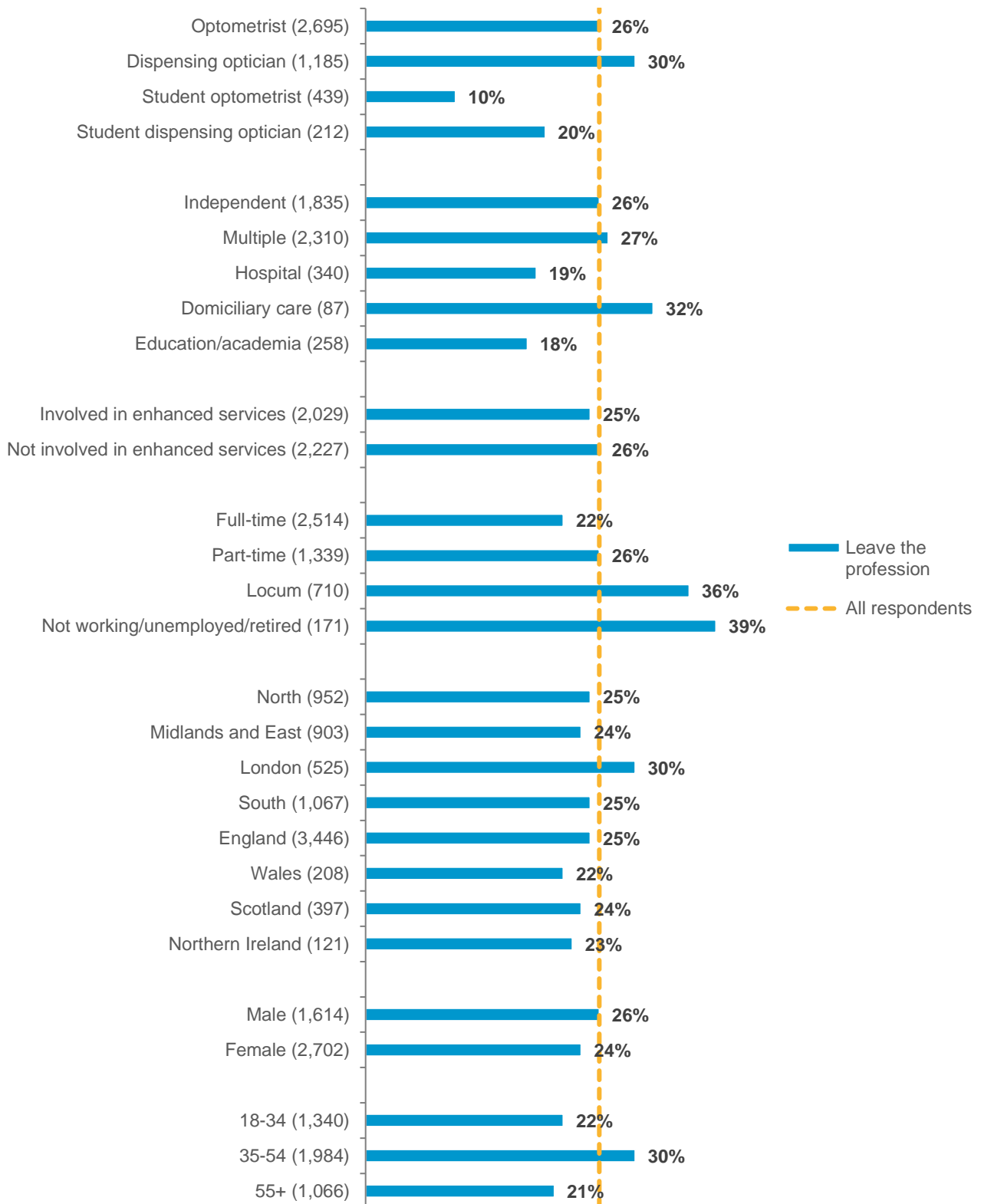
Plans to leave the profession

Subgroup analysis

The chart below presents subgroup analysis of those who planned to leave the profession during the next 12 to 24 months by registration type, workplace setting, involvement in enhanced services, working status, location, gender, and age group.

Figure 23 – Plans to leave the profession by registration type, workplace setting, involvement in enhanced services, working status, location, gender, and age group

Base: shown in chart



Larger proportions of dispensing opticians indicated that they planned to leave the profession (30%) when compared with optometrists (26%).

Planning to leave the profession was also more common amongst those who worked in domiciliary care (32%) when compared with other workplace settings, particularly hospital (19%) and education/academia (18%). Those who worked as locums were also more likely to suggest they planned to leave the profession (36%) when compared with those who worked full (22%) or part-time (26%).

Respondents living in London were more likely to answer that they planned to leave the profession (30%) when compared with other areas of the UK.

Those aged 35-54 were more likely to state that they planned to leave the profession (30%) when compared with those aged 18-34 (22%) and 55+ (21%).

Scaled up approximate figures

The table below presents the approximate figures generated when scaling up these results to the total number of registrants by registration type, workplace setting, involvement in enhanced eye care services, working status, location, gender, and age group. These numbers have been calculated by applying the survey results to the total number of GOC registrants (29,345), and splitting the results accordingly.

Figure 24 – Plans to leave the profession scaled up to approximate registrant numbers

Base: Survey result / registrant database (shown in table)

Plans to leave the profession	Survey result	Scaled up number of registrants (approx.)
Registration type		
Optometrist (2,695 / 16,433)	26%	4,273
Dispensing optician (1,185 / 7,336)	30%	2,201
Student optometrist (439 / 4,695)	10%	470
Student dispensing optician (212 / 1,467)	20%	293
Workplace setting		
Independent (1,835 / 12,618)	26%	3,281
Multiple (2,310 / 15,846)	27%	4,279
Hospital (340 / 2,348)	19%	446
Domiciliary care (87 / 587)	32%	188
Education/academia (258 / 1,761)	18%	317
Involvement in enhanced eye care services		
Involved (2,029 / 14,086)	25%	3,521
Not involved (2,227 / 15,259)	26%	3,967
Working status		
Full-time (2,514 / 15,259)	22%	3,357
Part-time (1,339 / 8,217)	26%	2,136
Locum (710 / 4,402)	36%	1,585
Not working/unemployed/retired (171 / 3,521)	39%	1,373
Location		
North (952 / 6,749)	25%	1,687

Plans to leave the profession	Survey result	Scaled up number of registrants (approx.)
Midlands and East (903 / 6,162)	24%	1,479
London (525 / 3,521)	30%	1,056
South (1,067 / 7,043)	25%	1,761
England (3,446 / 23,769)	25%	5,942
Wales (208 / 1,467)	22%	323
Scotland (397 / 2,641)	24%	634
Northern Ireland (121 / 880)	23%	202
Gender		
Male (1,614 / 10,858)	26%	2,823
Female (2,702 / 18,487)	24%	4,437
Age group		
18-34 (1,340 / 10,271)	22%	2,260
35-54 (1,849 / 12,325)	30%	3,697
55+ (1,066 / 6,749)	21%	1,417

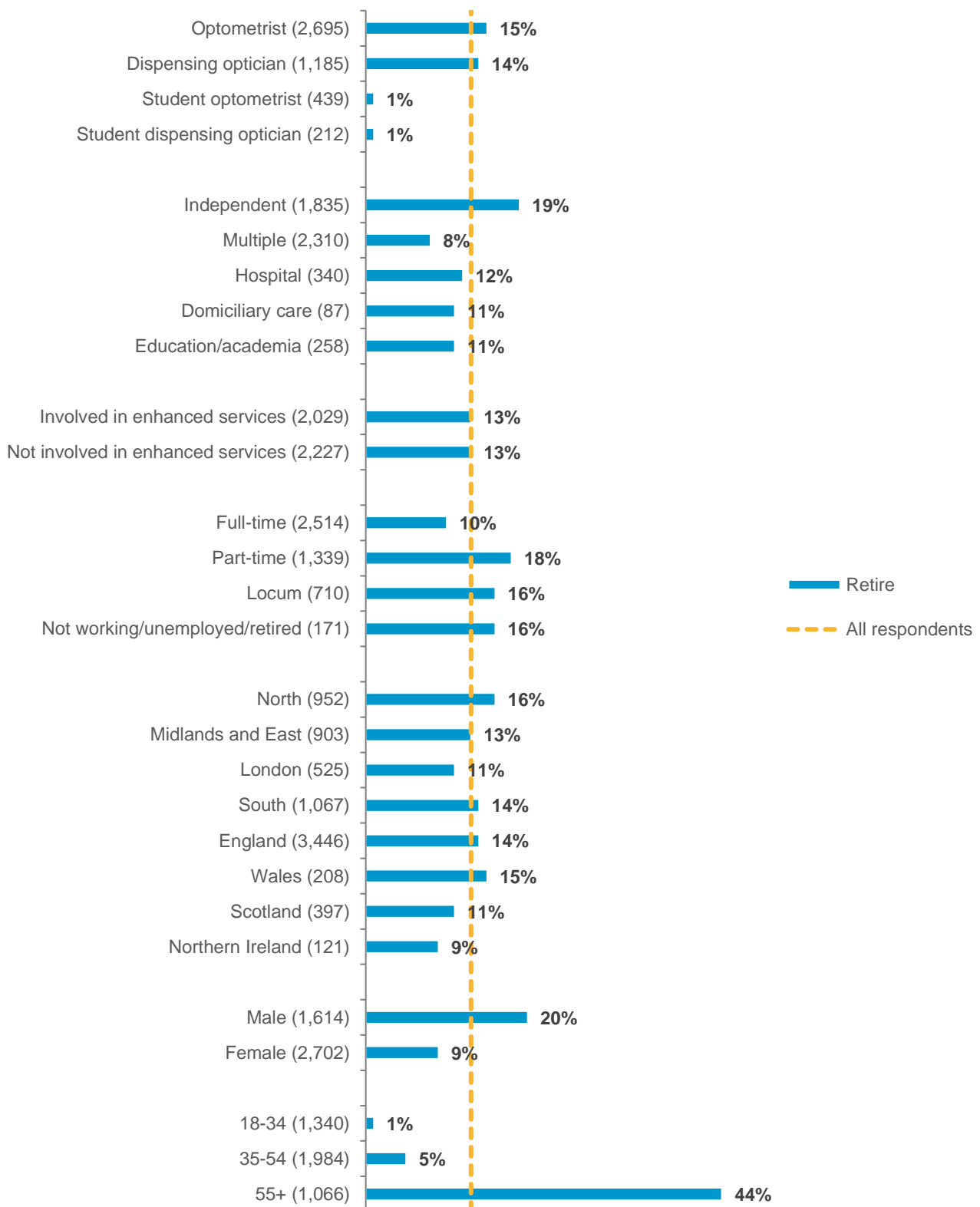
Plans to retire

Subgroup analysis

The chart below presents subgroup analysis of those who planned to retire during the next 12 to 24 months by registration type, workplace setting, involvement in enhanced services, working status, location, gender, and age group.

Figure 25 – Plans to retire by registration type, workplace setting, involvement in enhanced services, working status, location, gender, and age group

Base: shown in chart



Those who worked for an independent optician were more likely to suggest they planned to retire (19%) when compared with those who worked in other settings, particularly for multiple opticians (8%).

Respondents who worked part-time (18%), as locums (16%), or who were not currently working (16%) were also more likely to indicate that they planned to retire when compared with those who worked full-time (10%).

Respondents living in the North were more likely to answer that they planned to retire (16%) when compared with those who lived in London (11%).

A larger proportion of male respondents planned to retire (20%) when compared with female respondents (9%). As could be expected, those aged 55+ were far more likely to plan to retire (44%) when compared with younger age groups.

Scaled up approximate figures

The table below presents the approximate figures generated when scaling up these results to the total number of registrants by registration type, workplace setting, involvement in enhanced eye care services, working status, location, gender, and age group. These numbers have been calculated by applying the survey results to the total number of GOC registrants (29,345), and splitting the results accordingly.

Figure 26 – Plans to retire scaled up to approximate registrant numbers

Base: Survey result / registrant database (shown in table)

Plans to retire	Survey result	Scaled up number of registrants (approx.)
Registration type		
Optometrist (2,695 / 16,433)	15%	2,465
Dispensing optician (1,185 / 7,336)	14%	1,027
Student optometrist (439 / 4,695)	1%	47
Student dispensing optician (212 / 1,467)	1%	15
Workplace setting		
Independent (1,835 / 12,618)	19%	2,397
Multiple (2,310 / 15,846)	8%	1,268
Hospital (340 / 2,348)	12%	282
Domiciliary care (87 / 587)	11%	65
Education/academia (258 / 1,761)	11%	194
Involvement in enhanced eye care services		
Involved (2,029 / 14,086)	13%	1,831
Not involved (2,227 / 15,259)	13%	1,984
Working status		
Full-time (2,514 / 15,259)	10%	1,526
Part-time (1,339 / 8,217)	18%	1,479
Locum (710 / 4,402)	16%	704
Not working/unemployed/retired (171 / 3,521)	16%	563
Location		
North (952 / 6,749)	16%	1,080

Plans to retire	Survey result	Scaled up number of registrants (approx.)
Midlands and East (903 / 6,162)	13%	801
London (525 / 3,521)	11%	387
South (1,067 / 7,043)	14%	986
England (3,446 / 23,769)	14%	3,328
Wales (208 / 1,467)	15%	220
Scotland (397 / 2,641)	11%	291
Northern Ireland (121 / 880)	9%	79
Gender		
Male (1,614 / 10,858)	20%	2,172
Female (2,702 / 18,487)	9%	1,664
Age group		
18-34 (1,340 / 10,271)	1%	103
35-54 (1,849 / 12,325)	5%	616
55+ (1,066 / 6,749)	44%	2,970

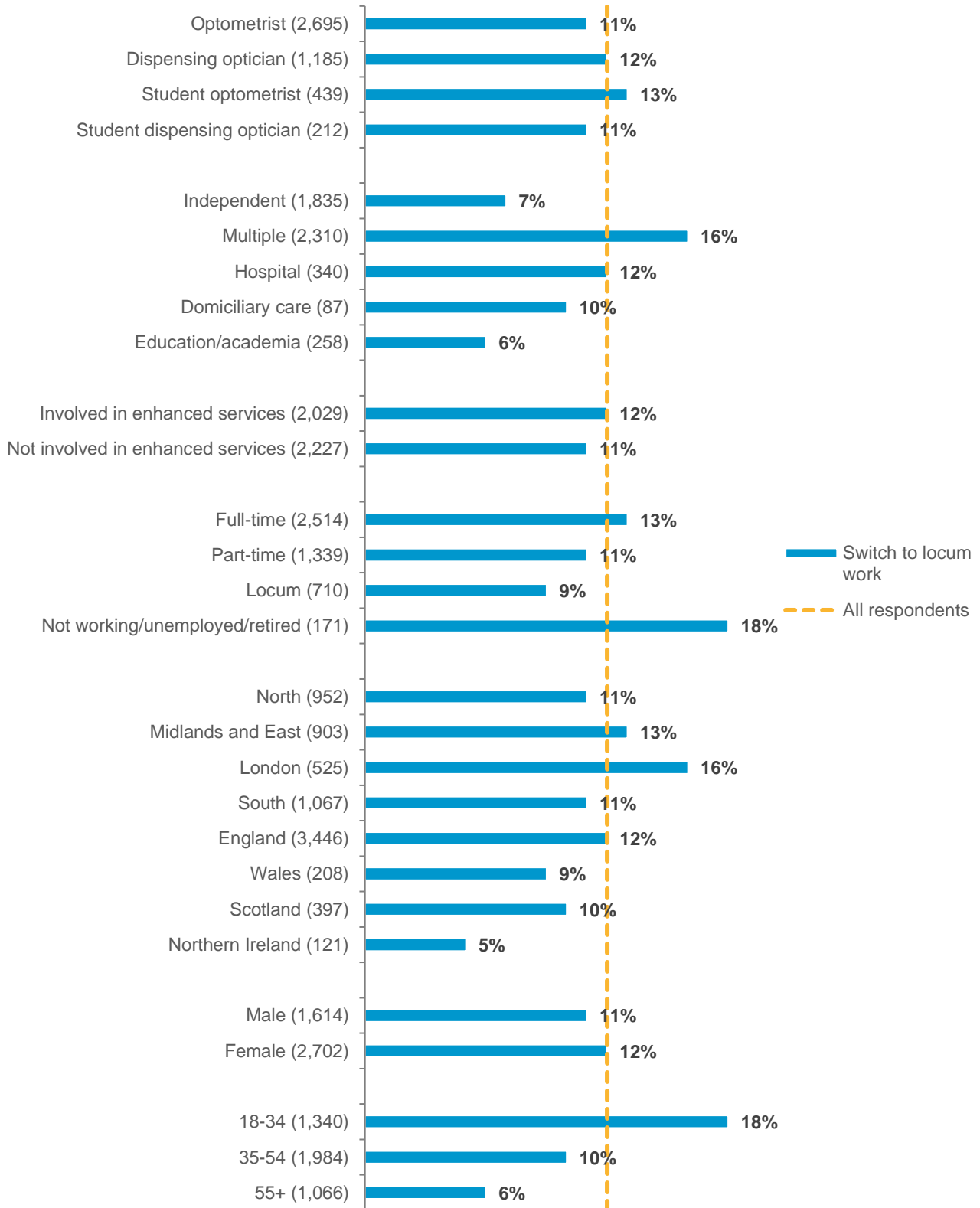
Plans to switch to locum work

Subgroup analysis

The chart below presents subgroup analysis of those who planned to switch to locum work during the next 12 to 24 months by registration type, workplace setting, involvement in enhanced services, working status, location, gender, and age group.

Figure 27 – Plans to switch to locum work by registration type, workplace setting, involvement in enhanced services, working status, location, gender, and age group

Base: shown in chart



Respondents who were not currently working, unemployed or retired were more likely to state that they planned to switch to locum work (18%) when compared with those in other working situations. Those who worked for a multiple optician were also more likely to plan to switch to locum work (16%) when compared with those who worked in other settings.

Analysis by location also highlights that those who lived in London were more likely to plan to switch to locum work (16%) when compared with other areas of the UK.

A larger proportion of younger respondents aged 18-34 said they planned to switch to locum work (18%) when compared with older respondents aged 35-54 (10%) and 55+ (6%).

Scaled up approximate figures

The table below presents the approximate figures generated when scaling up these results to the total number of registrants by registration type, workplace setting, involvement in enhanced eye care services, working status, location, gender, and age group. These numbers have been calculated by applying the survey results to the total number of GOC registrants (29,345), and splitting the results accordingly.

Figure 28 – Plans to switch to locum work scaled up to approximate registrant numbers

Base: Survey result / registrant database (shown in table)

Plans to switch to locum work	Survey result	Scaled up number of registrants (approx.)
Registration type		
Optometrist (2,695 / 16,433)	11%	1,808
Dispensing optician (1,185 / 7,336)	12%	880
Student optometrist (439 / 4,695)	13%	610
Student dispensing optician (212 / 1,467)	11%	161
Workplace setting		
Independent (1,835 / 12,618)	7%	883
Multiple (2,310 / 15,846)	16%	2,535
Hospital (340 / 2,348)	12%	282
Domiciliary care (87 / 587)	10%	59
Education/academia (258 / 1,761)	6%	106
Involvement in enhanced eye care services		
Involved (2,029 / 14,086)	12%	1,690
Not involved (2,227 / 15,259)	11%	1,831
Working status		
Full-time (2,514 / 15,259)	13%	1,984
Part-time (1,339 / 8,217)	11%	904
Locum (710 / 4,402)	9%	396
Not working/unemployed/retired (171 / 3,521)	18%	634
Location		
North (952 / 6,749)	11%	742
Midlands and East (903 / 6,162)	13%	801
London (525 / 3,521)	16%	563
South (1,067 / 7,043)	11%	775

Plans to switch to locum work	Survey result	Scaled up number of registrants (approx.)
England (3,446 / 23,769)	12%	2,852
Wales (208 / 1,467)	9%	132
Scotland (397 / 2,641)	10%	264
Northern Ireland (121 / 880)	5%	44
Gender		
Male (1,614 / 10,858)	11%	1,194
Female (2,702 / 18,487)	12%	2,218
Age group		
18-34 (1,340 / 10,271)	18%	1,849
35-54 (1,849 / 12,325)	10%	1,232
55+ (1,066 / 6,749)	6%	405

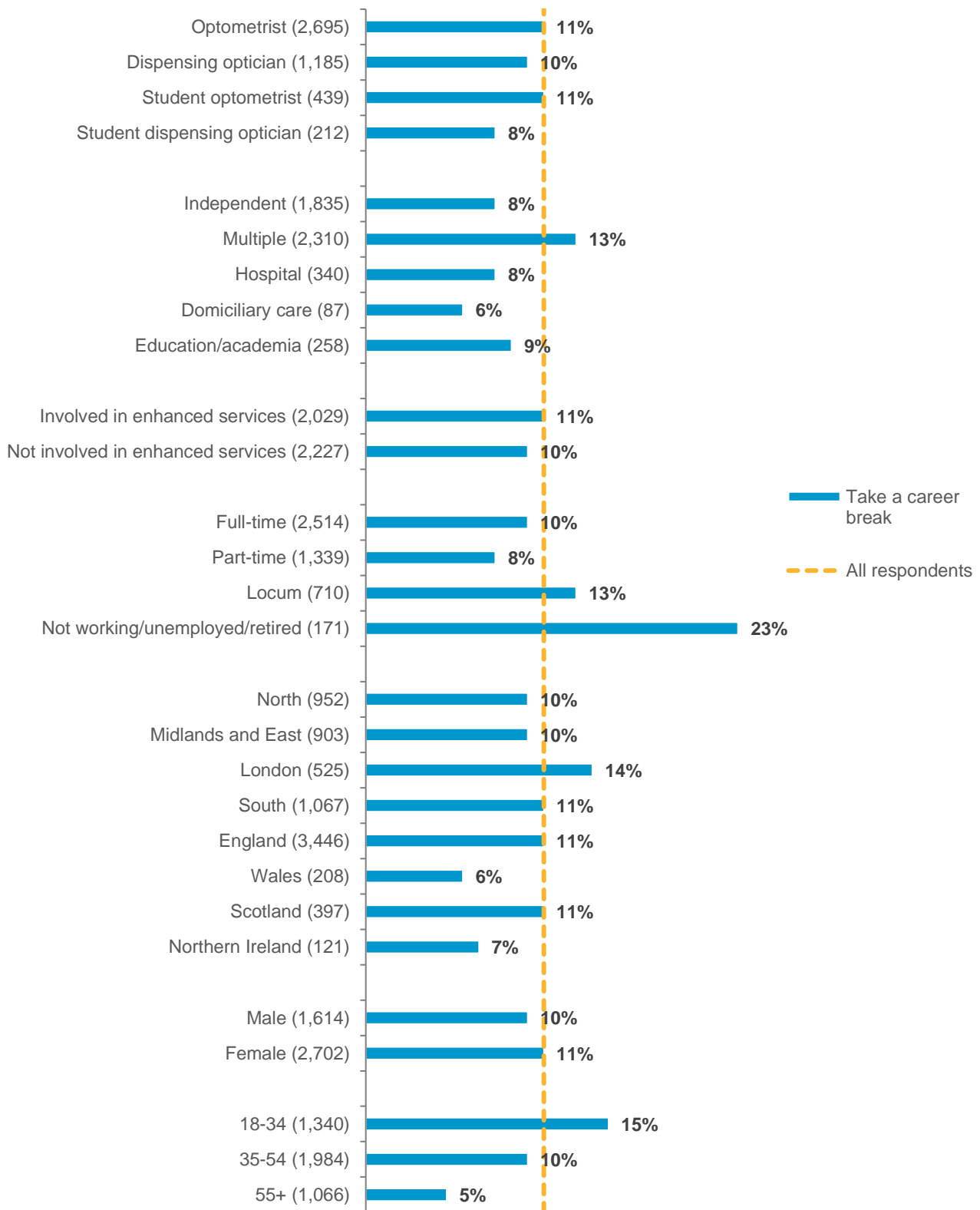
Plans to switch to take a career break

Subgroup analysis

The chart below presents subgroup analysis of those who planned to take a career break during the next 12 to 24 months by registration type, workplace setting, involvement in enhanced services, working status, location, gender, and age group.

Figure 29 – Plans to take a career break by registration type, workplace setting, involvement in enhanced services, working status, location, gender, and age group

Base: shown in chart



Those who worked for a multiple optician were more likely to answer that they planned to take a career break (13%) when compared with those working in other settings. Respondents who were not currently working, unemployed or retired were more likely to state that they planned to take a career break (23%) when compared with those with other working statuses.

Analysis by location also highlights that those who lived in London were more likely to plan to take a career break (14%), particularly when compared with those who lived in the North (10%), Midlands and East (10%), and Wales (6%).

Younger respondents aged 18-34 were more likely to answer that they plan to take a career break (15%) when compared with those aged 34-54 (10%) and 55+ (5%).

Scaled up approximate figures

The table below presents the approximate figures generated when scaling up these results to the total number of registrants by registration type, workplace setting, involvement in enhanced eye care services, working status, location, gender, and age group. These numbers have been calculated by applying the survey results to the total number of GOC registrants (29,345), and splitting the results accordingly.

Figure 30 – Plans to take a career break scaled up to approximate registrant numbers

Base: Survey result / registrant database (shown in table)

Plans to take a career break	Survey result	Scaled up number of registrants (approx.)
Registration type		
Optometrist (2,695 / 16,433)	11%	1,808
Dispensing optician (1,185 / 7,336)	10%	734
Student optometrist (439 / 4,695)	11%	516
Student dispensing optician (212 / 1,467)	8%	117
Workplace setting		
Independent (1,835 / 12,618)	8%	1,009
Multiple (2,310 / 15,846)	13%	2,060
Hospital (340 / 2,348)	8%	188
Domiciliary care (87 / 587)	6%	35
Education/academia (258 / 1,761)	9%	158
Involvement in enhanced eye care services		
Involved (2,029 / 14,086)	11%	1,549
Not involved (2,227 / 15,259)	10%	1,526
Working status		
Full-time (2,514 / 15,259)	10%	1,526
Part-time (1,339 / 8,217)	8%	657
Locum (710 / 4,402)	13%	572
Not working/unemployed/retired (171 / 3,521)	23%	810
Location		
North (952 / 6,749)	10%	675
Midlands and East (903 / 6,162)	10%	616
London (525 / 3,521)	14%	493
South (1,067 / 7,043)	11%	775

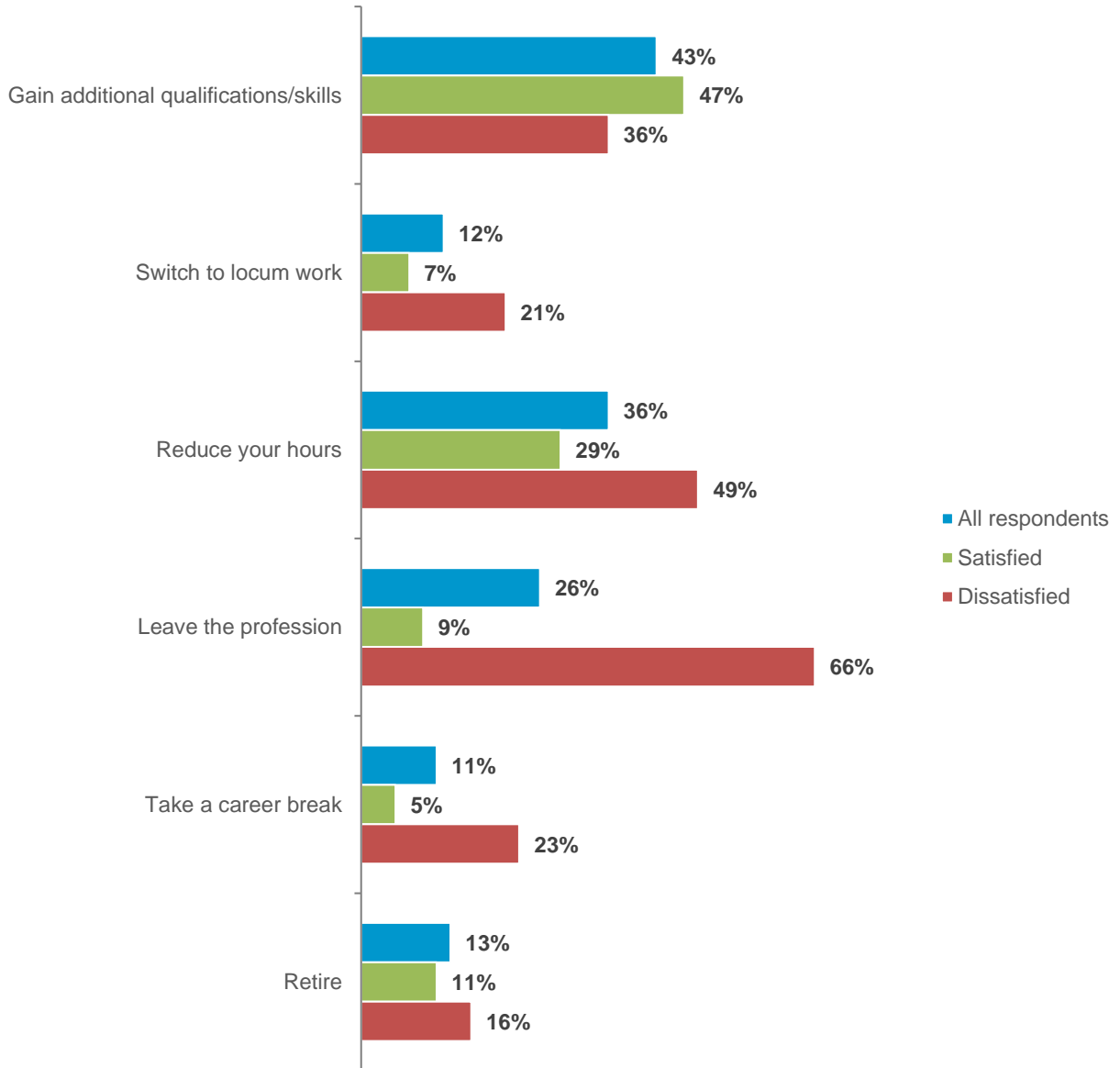
Plans to take a career break	Survey result	Scaled up number of registrants (approx.)
England (3,446 / 23,769)	11%	2,615
Wales (208 / 1,467)	6%	88
Scotland (397 / 2,641)	11%	291
Northern Ireland (121 / 880)	7%	62
Gender		
Male (1,614 / 10,858)	10%	1,086
Female (2,702 / 18,487)	11%	2,034
Age group		
18-34 (1,340 / 10,271)	15%	1,541
35-54 (1,849 / 12,325)	10%	1,232
55+ (1,066 / 6,749)	5%	337

Analysing future plans by job satisfaction

Respondents' satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their current role or job over the last 12 months has an impact on their future plans for the next 12-24 months. As shown in the chart below, those who were satisfied with their role/job were more likely to plan to gain additional qualifications/skills (47%) when compared with those who were dissatisfied (36%). Conversely, those who were dissatisfied were more likely to plan to switch to locum work (21%), reduce their hours (49%), take a career break (23%), and most significantly leave the profession (66%), when compared with those who were satisfied (7%, 29%, 5%, and 9% respectively).

Figure 31 – Future plans by role/job satisfaction

Base: All respondents excluding those fully retired (4,479); satisfied (2,551); dissatisfied (880)



Conclusion

This additional analysis has provided some interesting and useful insight for the GOC in relation to workforce planning, highlighting the current levels of job satisfaction amongst registrants and their short-term plans for the future over the next 12 to 24 months.

Although the majority of registrants are satisfied in their current role, a large proportion are dissatisfied, which appears to be driving them towards future plans including leaving the profession, reducing their hours, taking a career break, or switching to locum work.

The subgroup analysis of these results has highlighted which areas of the registrant population may be more or less likely to be satisfied and to plan for certain actions in the future. Although only indicative approximations, the scaled-up numbers provided alongside the survey results will help the GOC to better understand what the optimal workforce in the UK may look like in the near future.

It will be important to ask these questions in future registrant surveys (scheduled for 2022 and 2023) to track any changes in opinion and behaviour over time. It may also be useful to ask additional follow up question related to workforce planning, and explore the results in greater depth via qualitative research.

Appendix A – Respondent profile

The table below shows the demographic makeup of survey respondents, where the sample has been weighted by registration type to accurately reflect the overall GOC registrant population.

Demographic profile of survey respondents

Base: All respondents (4,880)

Demographic	Number	Percentage
Gender		
Male	1,741	36%
Female	2,970	61%
Intersex	4	0%
Non-Binary	5	0%
Prefer not to say	160	3%
Is your gender identity different from the gender that you were assigned at birth?		
Yes	641	13%
No	3,997	82%
Prefer not to say	242	5%
Age group		
Under 25	763	16%
25-34	906	19%
35-44	1,029	21%
45-54	967	20%
55-64	857	18%
65+	266	5%
Prefer not to say	92	2%
Ethnic group		
White British	2,653	54%
White other	373	8%
Black/Black British	95	2%
Mixed/Multiple	63	1%
Asian/Asian British	1,253	26%
Any other ethnic group	56	1%
Prefer not to say	388	8%
Sexuality		
Heterosexual/Straight	4,247	87%
Gay/Lesbian	100	2%
Bisexual	62	1%
Prefer not to say	470	10%
Marital status		
Civil partnership	125	3%
Divorced or civil partnership dissolved	217	4%
Married	2,507	51%
Separated	56	1%
Single	1,465	30%
Widowed	39	1%
Prefer not to say	470	10%
Religion or belief		
No religion or belief	1,373	28%
Buddhist	31	1%
Christian	1,718	35%
Hindu	360	7%
Jewish	65	1%

Demographic	Number	Percentage
Muslim	592	12%
Sikh	139	3%
Other	73	2%
Prefer not to say	528	11%
Do you consider yourself to have a disability?		
Yes	138	3%
No	4,459	91%
Prefer not to say	282	6%
Are you pregnant, on maternity leave, or returning from maternity leave?		
Yes	137	3%
No	4,528	93%
Prefer not to say	215	4%
Do you perform the role of a carer?		
Yes	469	10%
No	4,150	85%
Prefer not to say	260	5%

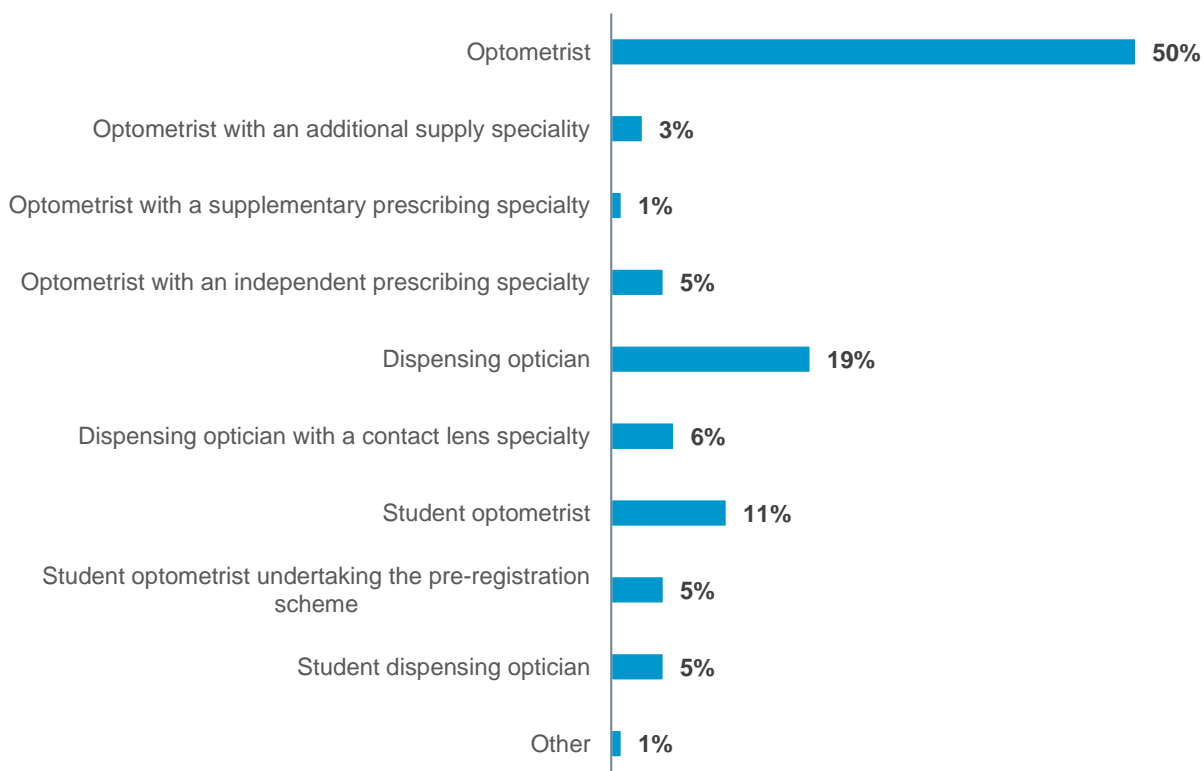
Registration

Respondents were able to select the role or roles that applied to them. A total of 56% were in optometrist roles, including optometrists (50%), optometrists with an additional supply specialty (3%), optometrists with a supplementary prescribing specialty (1%) and optometrists with an independent prescribing specialty (5%). A quarter of respondents were registered as dispensing opticians (25%), including 19% who selected dispensing optician and 6% who had a contact lens specialty.

A total of 16% indicated that they were student optometrists and a further 5% were student dispensing opticians.

Role

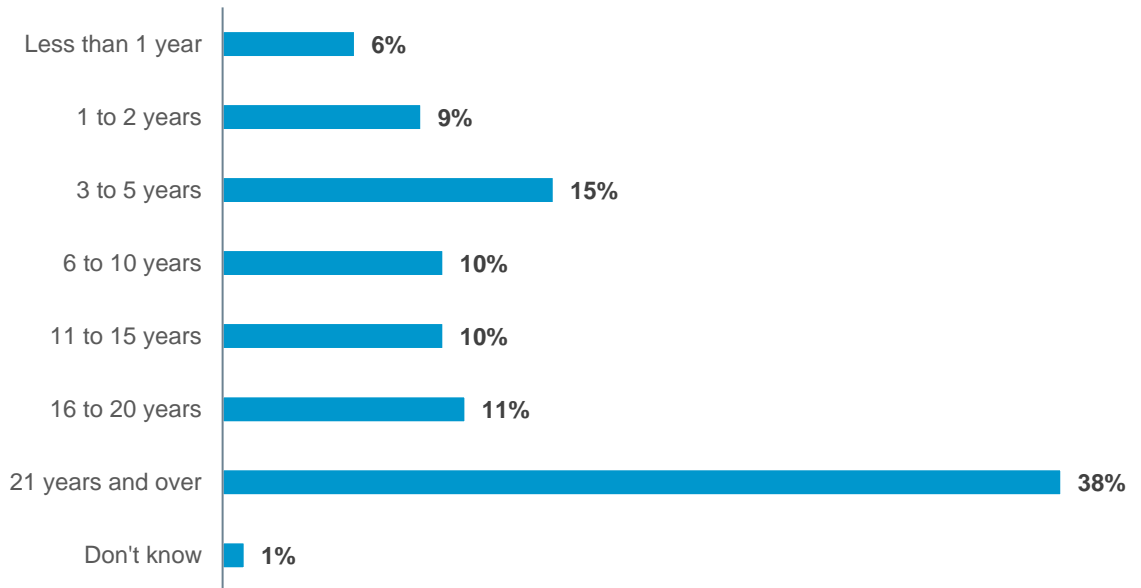
Base: All respondents (4,880)



Although a mix of length of time on the GOC register was represented across survey respondents, the largest proportion had been registered for 21 years and over (38%).

Approximately how long have you been on the GOC register?

Base: All respondents (4,880)

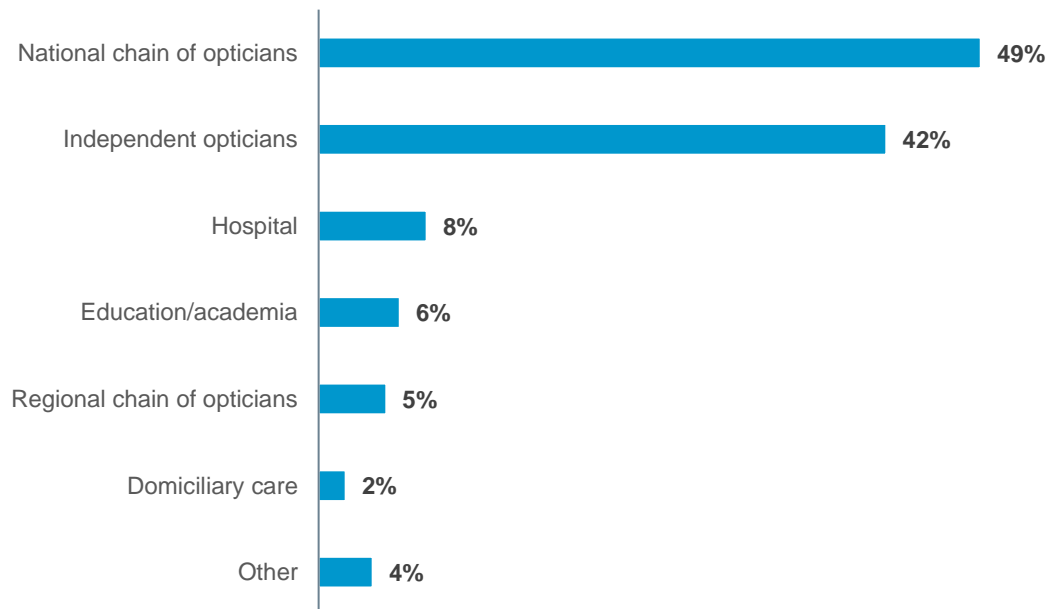


Workplace setting and working status

Almost half of working respondents worked for a national chain optician (49%), closely followed by 42% who worked for an independent optician.

Where do you currently work?

Base: Those currently working (4,363)

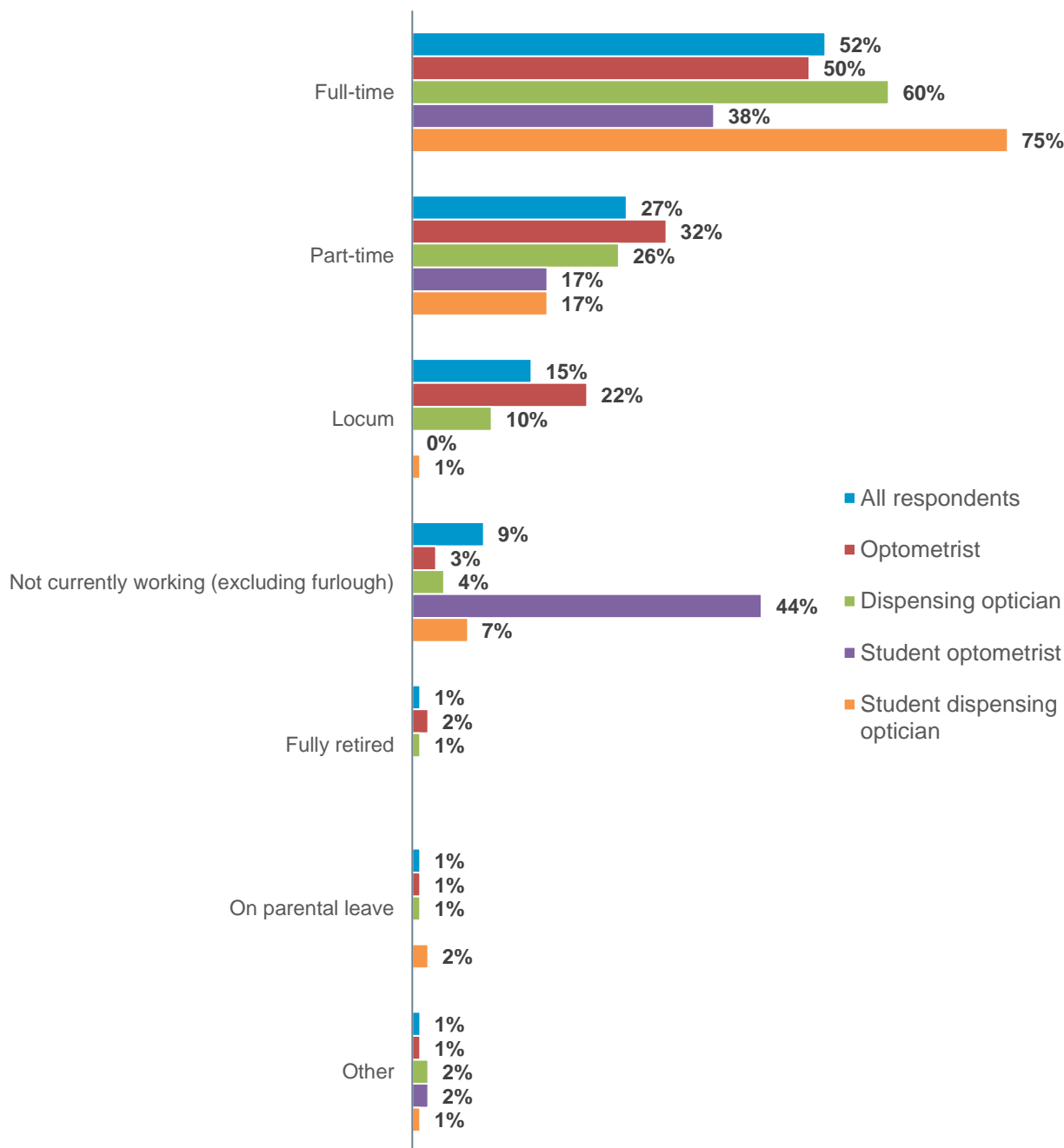


Half of respondents worked full-time (52%) and a further 27% part-time. Part-time work was more common amongst optometrists (32%), whereas dispensing opticians and student dispensing opticians were more likely to work full-time (60% and 75% respectively).

Overall, 15% of respondents described their current work as locum, which was more common amongst optometrists (22%) when compared with dispensing opticians (10%).

Which of these best describes your current work / practice?

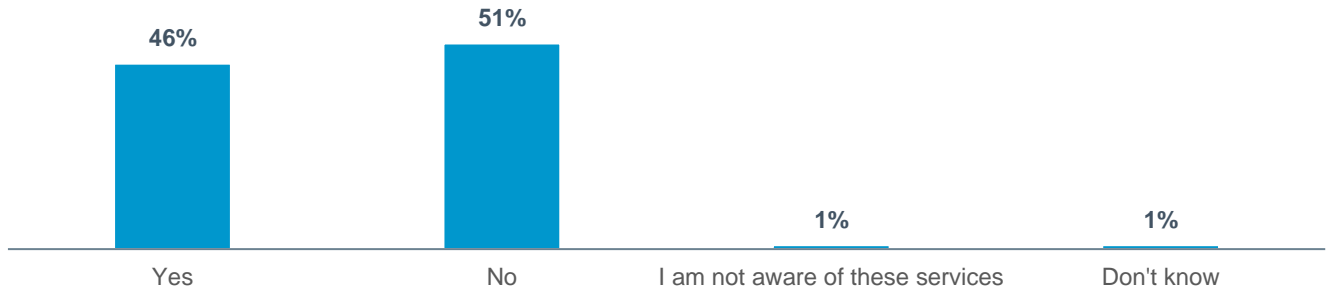
Base: All respondents (4,880); optometrists (2,736); dispensing opticians (1,200); student optometrists (767); student dispensing opticians (228)



Almost half of respondents were involved in delivering enhanced eye care services (46%). This was more common amongst optometrists (57%) when compared with dispensing opticians (31%).

Are you currently involved in delivering enhanced eye care services (e.g. providing patients with care beyond the remit of a routine sight test, such as Minor Eye Conditions Service (MECS) or Low Vision Service Wales (LVSU))?

Base: Those currently working (4,363)



Location

The map below shows where survey respondents were located across the UK. In total, 77% were in England, with 9% in Scotland, 5% in Wales and 3% in Northern Ireland. A further 2% indicated that they were based outside the UK.

Location by UK region

Base: All respondents (4,880)

