Department for Employment and Learning
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MillwardBrown Ulster

THE PRIVATE RECRUITMENT SECTOR IN NORTHERN IRELAND

DEPARTMENT FOR EMPLOYMENT AND LEARNING

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Contents

1. Project Structure

DEL wished to measure the size and nature of the private recruitment sector in Northern Ireland and wished to conduct a research project which would inform the development of policy and legislation in this area in respect of DEL's enforcement role.

Millward Brown conducted a multi-faceted research programme. It encompassed the following elements:-

- Literature Review
- Face to face Depth interviews with Stakeholders
- Telephone and on-line Survey with recruitment agencies and businesses
- On street survey with users of recruitment agency services
- Inclusion in Millward Brown general public catibus survey

The detailed findings and conclusions for each of these elements are contained in later sections of this report.

2. Overall Project Conclusions

2.1 Market Size

After in-depth data cleaning and updating of current databases it emerged there were 270 companies operating in this sector (this included individual counting of multiple sites/ branches of a parent company and agencies currently involved in DEL investigations but excluded fully merged companies and non response telephone numbers) in September 2009.

Companies tended to be small in terms of number of employees. 58% had fewer than 5 employees and 92% were independently owned. 65% had offices in Belfast.

Health & social work, public administration & defence, and education were the only sector, experiencing net growth in the last year in the temporary sector. In the permanent sector, only public administration experienced a period of net growth within the past 12 months.

From the catibus survey it is estimated that more than 84,951 individuals were currently registered with an employment agency or business. At the time of the survey, it is also estimated that more than 22,000 individuals were currently employed on a temporary basis through an employment agency.

2.2 Proposed Change in Legislation

Around a third of the private recruitment sector believed there would be no impact as a result of proposed changes in legislation. Although increased cost and associated impact on demand were mentioned as a concern by some.

In the qualitative phase of our research most of our sample concluded that Temporary Agency Workers Directive may make companies less likely to use agency workers, although a sizable proportion acknowledged that Temporary Agency Workers Directive might ensure more equitable treatment of Northern Ireland’s temporary agency workforce. A perception pervaded that the law, as it stood, had been rather unclear on this issue to date.

2.3 Attitudes to Temporary Agency Workers

Our stakeholder research pointed to a general perception of temporary agency workers as being beneficial to industry and commerce. By and large key stakeholders had a positive view of the function and purpose of the temporary agency workforce as a resource to industry, whilst acknowledging the potential for exploitation of workers under current employment law in Northern Ireland.

2.4 Why Organisations use Temporary Agency Workers

Our qualitative respondents focused on two main themes; flexibility (i.e. the flexibility to 'hire and dismiss' as demand increases and decreases) and responsibility (i.e. that using a temporary agency workforce alleviates the legal responsibility to the employee given that they are employed by the agency and not the 'hirer'[1]).

2.5 Why Temporary Agency Workers use Recruitment Agencies

The majority of temporary workers stated that the reason they used an employment agency to help secure a temporary position was because they couldn't find employment on their own.

2.6 Effect of Temporary Agency Workers on the Economy

The majority of those interviewed in our stakeholder survey were of the opinion that the use of temporary agency workers helped the economy. The main benefits centred on the creation of flexible workforces / working patterns, benefits to the exchequer through taxation and the reduction of economic inactivity.

[1] The word 'hirer' is defined as meaning a person to whom an agency or employment business introduces or supplies a work-seeker.

2.7 Importance of Temporary Agency Workers

Our qualitative respondents suggested that the industry sector most closely associated with the use of temporary agency workers was ‘manufacturing / processing / production line’, but it was a commonly held view that any non-professional industry relied on temporary workers.

2.8 Temporary Agency Work and the Migrant Population

A majority of stakeholders amongst the sample were of the opinion that the experience of temporary agency work amongst the migrant population was different to that of indigenous workers, with issues relating to language and discrimination being the obvious differentiators mentioned.

The on-street survey with Temporary Agency Workers also illustrated that the experience of the migrant population was quite different to that of indigenous workers, especially their ability to find employment on their own.

2.9 Temporary Agency Worker Profile

The catibus survey found that males were much more likely than females to be currently registered with an employment agency. This was supported by the evidence in the face-to-face survey of temporary agency workers, where a disproportionate number of the random sample were male. The face-to-face survey of temporary agency workers also revealed disproportionate levels of non-nationals and those from a lower socio-economic background being employed via recruitment agencies.

Temporary agency workers were also most commonly employed in cleaning, manufacturing/ processing/ production line and construction.

2.10 Temporary Agency Worker Satisfaction

The majority of temporary agency workers were satisfied with their employment agency, never experienced any problems regarding payment and were placed in temporary employment within a few weeks of registering with a recruitment agency.

3. Literature Review

3.1 Temporary Agency Recruitment Market; Size and Scope

According to the Recruitment & Employment Confederation (REC) Recruitment Industry Census published in 2006[2] there were in excess of 10,000 employment agencies and businesses in the UK operating from almost 16,000 sites across the country. This study suggested that Northern Ireland, at that time, accounted for around 1% of these businesses (107 businesses operating from 208 sites).

The 2008 Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) database records 221 businesses working out of 339 sites across the province[3].

Using our Belfast Telephone Centre and face to face interviewer panel we have sought to validate the aforementioned calculations for the Northern Ireland market size figures by making contact with each recruitment business site in the DEL database. The feedback from this initial exercise suggests that a substantial proportion of the recruitment business sites in the database were no longer operational. We estimate that approximately 270 recruitment businesses are operating in Northern Ireland[4].

3.2 Regulation of Recruitment Businesses in Northern Ireland

The Northern Ireland legislation pertaining to the regulation of employment agencies and businesses is as follows;

- The Employment (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Northern Ireland) Order 1981 (as amended by the Employment (Miscellaneous Provisions) (NI) Order 2005);
- The Conduct of Employment Agencies and Employment Businesses Regulations (NI) 2005 (as amended by the Conduct of Employment Agencies and Employment Businesses (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2008)

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[2] *Recruitment Industry Census*; Industry Research Unit, Recruitment & Employment Confederation (BMG Research) - 2006.

[3] DEL Employment Agency Address Database Dec 2008.

[4] We sought to confirm the operational status of all the agencies in the DEL databases by contacting each by email, letter and telephone. Moreover, using our interviewer panel and by conducting a desk research exercise we sought to augment the DEL list with any companies operating as recruitment businesses that were not already included.

Broadly speaking the Regulations place minimum standards on NI-based employment agencies, for example, agreeing terms and conditions with work-seekers and hirers; confirming and providing certain information to and about work-seekers and hirers; specifying the information to be included in advertisements, etc.

The 2005 Regulations introduced powers of entry and inspection to ensure effective enforcement of the Regulations and to act as a deterrent to unscrupulous organisations seeking to exploit work-seekers.

The 2008 Regulations amend the 2005 Regulations by increasing protection for work-seekers and reducing the regulatory burden on employment businesses. Key amendments include; protection for work-seekers who use additional services provided by employment agencies or businesses; a reduction in the requirement for agencies to provide detailed information to work-seekers for short-term, repeat assignments; and the introduction of a 7-day cooling-off period for work-seekers who sign up with an entertainment/modelling agent (which in certain circumstances are entitled to charge a fee).

Apart from the specific legislation cited above, recruitment businesses are also bound to adherence to certain legal requirements including;

- The Gender Recognition Act 2004 making unlawful differential treatment of individuals who had, or are in the process of having their gender reassigned.
- The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (NI) 2003 making unlawful differential treatment on the grounds of sexual orientation.
- Working Time Regulations (NI) 1998 protecting workers from imposition of excessive working hours.
- National Minimum Wage Act 1998 guaranteeing minimum level of hourly pay for various categories of workers.
- The Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order 1998 making unlawful differential treatment on the grounds of religious belief or political opinion.
- Race Relations (NI) Order 1997 making unlawful differential treatment on the grounds of colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin.
- The Employment Rights (NI) Order 1996 making unlawful differential treatment on the grounds of union membership.
- The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 making unlawful differential treatment on the grounds of disability and requiring employers, including employment agencies and

businesses, to make reasonable adjustments to employment arrangements (including terms and conditions) and the workplace.

- Sex Discrimination (NI) Order 1976 (as amended) making unlawful differential treatment on the grounds of sex or marital status.

In addition the Gangmasters (Licensing) Act 2004 requires labour providers to the agriculture, horticulture, shell-fishing and food processing sectors to be licensed. It is also an offence for hirers to use an unlicensed ‘gangmaster’.

A number of bodies and agencies can be seen as having a role in making, influencing, implementing, or enforcing employment law with regard to the private recruitment sector:-

Department for Employment and Learning [NI]

DEL has been active in this area in recent years. Developments have included:

- Introducing regulations in 2005 to regulate the conduct of employment agencies and employment businesses in NI;
- An amendment to primary legislation in 2005 which granted the Department powers to enter and inspect employment agencies and businesses to ensure compliance with Regulations;
- The commencement of routine inspections in 2006;
- The making of amending Regulations to provide additional protections for vulnerable work-seekers; and
- Progress on an Employment Bill which is intended to enhance the Department’s powers of investigation and prosecution.

Gangmaster Licensing Authority [GLA]

Labour providers in the agriculture, horticulture, shellfish gathering and food processing sectors are subject to licensing by the Gangmasters Licensing Authority (GLA). The GLA commenced operations in April 2006, and it has been a criminal offence to operate as a gangmaster without a licence from 1 October 2006 and to use an unlicensed gangmaster from 1 December 2006.

The Regulatory and Quality Improvement Authority [RQIA]

RQIA is the independent body responsible for monitoring and inspecting the availability and quality of health and social care services in Northern Ireland, and encouraging improvements in the quality of those services. Its main functions are to:-

- Inspect the quality of services provided by Health and Social Care Services (HSC) bodies in Northern Ireland through reviews of clinical and social care governance arrangements within these bodies;
- Regulate (register and inspect) a wide range of services delivered by HSC bodies and by the independent sector. The regulation of services is based on new minimum care standards to ensure that service users know what quality of services they can expect to receive, and service providers have a benchmark against which to measure their quality;
- Have responsibility for people with a mental illness and those with a learning disability, including preventing ill treatment; remedying any deficiency in care or treatment; terminating improper detention in a hospital or guardianship; and preventing or redressing loss or damage to a patient's property.

3.3 Temporary Agency Workers Directive

European Directive 2008/104/EC was agreed in November 2008 and seeks to provide agency workers with equal treatment (with comparable directly-employed workers) in relation to pay and certain basic working conditions, for example, working hours, but not unfair dismissal or statutory redundancy rights. It is the third piece of legislation in the European Union's employment law package to protect atypical working (the others being for part-time workers and fixed-term workers). The default position in the Directive is that equal treatment applies from day one of an agency worker’s employment. However, the Directive allows member states, subject to agreement with social partners, to put in place a qualifying period for agency workers to serve before receiving equal treatment.

3.4 Best practice in the Regulation of Recruitment Businesses

Northern Ireland

Department for Employment and Learning (NI) Consultation on changes to recruitment industry law & related guidance, and departmental response; Between July and September 2007, DEL consulted on proposals aimed at offering protections to the most vulnerable of agency workers. The proposals were set out in the consultation document on Changes to Recruitment Industry Law and Related Guidance. The intention of these proposals was to address the bad practices that can affect the most vulnerable agency workers, without placing burdens on the majority of agencies who do not use such practices, yet are undercut unfairly by those that do.

A proposed Employment Bill, which would strengthen powers of investigation and prosecution of unscrupulous employment agencies, was introduced by Employment Minister, Sir Reg Empey, to enable the Department for Employment and Learning to pursue serious offences under employment agency law in the Crown Court, with the potential for unlimited fines. In addition, the Department would be able to demand financial information from banks about agencies under investigation. The Bill also contains measures to allow the Department's Agency Inspectors to exchange National Minimum Wage information with HM Revenue and Customs and other minor and technical amendments. It is intended that the Bill will complete remaining Assembly stages during 2010.

Migrant Workers Thematic Sub-Group is chaired by the Department for Employment and Learning and consists of almost 50 members. It includes most NI Departments, relevant UK departments, statutory and non-governmental organisations, which seek to represent the interests of migrant workers, by ensuring that the employment related needs of migrant workers and those who employ and advise them are met effectively through provision of appropriate information and advice, and by ensuring that associated state and non-state services and systems are effective, complementary and fit for purpose.

Great Britain

The Employment Agency Standards Inspectorate, part of the Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS), is responsible for investigating complaints made regarding the conduct employment agencies / businesses in Great Britain. The Inspectorate carries out routine inspections of agencies and investigates complaints. They operate an enquiry line and published Summary Guidance on the Employment Agencies Legislation.

The then Department of Trade and Industry (now BIS) in association with the Recruitment and Employment Confederation (REC) and Equity produced Guidance on the Conduct of Employment Agencies and Employment Businesses Regulations in 2003. REC is the main professional body for the UK industry, with over 6,000 recruitment agency offices and 5,000 consultants in membership. Equity is the trade union representing 37,000 performers and creative personnel working across the arts and entertainment sectors.

In many instances hirers can assist with the regulation of recruiters through taking a number of steps to ensure that quality is maintained in recruitment. Quality has become one of the most commonly discussed topics in the social care industry in recent years. Organisations such as the General Social Care Council were set up in Great Britain to ensure that social care workers are trained to an appropriate level (i.e. are professional and sufficiently skilled). Its efforts can be subverted by the activities of recruitment agencies that are prepared to compromise safety in pursuit of profits. Susan Cranie, Director of social care agency Careplan, acknowledges: "It's a high-risk business. As an agency you're very vulnerable. All you need is one mistake and you could be closed down."[5] She has suggested the following steps that organisations can follow to assist in the regulation of agencies:-

- Asking for at least two references.
- Asking for a full history, including any disciplinary matters, even if incomplete.
- Asking for copies of all documents, including a Criminal Records Bureau check.

Republic of Ireland

Employment agencies in the Republic of Ireland are licensed by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment under the Employment Agency Act 1971. The main thrust of the act is to outlaw exploitation of jobseekers by recruitment businesses. The Protection of Employees (Agency Workers) (No.2) Bill 2008 sought to develop existing protections for agency workers. This was defeated at second stage in the Irish Senate in 2008.

The Employment Agency Act 1971 regulates the operation of employment agencies in Ireland but does not regulate the actual employment conditions of agency workers. Under

[5] Susan Cranie, Director, Careplan – c.f. www. communitycare.co.uk/Articles

section 13 of the Unfair Dismissals (Amendment) Act 1993, an agency worker is deemed to be an employee of the third party (the user employer) whether or not the third party is a party to the contract and whether or not the third party pays the wages of the worker in respect of the work or service. This extended protection under the unfair dismissals legislation to agency workers. There is also an indication that the Labour Court may be taking this change into account in its dealings with the dismissal of agency workers outside the terms of the Unfair Dismissals Act.

Employment law in Ireland provides strong protection for employees who feel their rights have been breached. Complaints, disputes and grievances are heard before a Rights Commissioner who will listen to both sides before completing an investigation of the complaint and issuing a recommendation. Recommendations issued by the Rights Commissioner can be binding or non-binding, depending on the type of law under which the case is heard. Claims under equality legislation are brought to the Equality Tribunal.

Other E.U.

Swedish general labour and social security legislation (1993) applies to temporary employees in the same way as other employees. It is the temporary work firm that is considered to be the employer, even during periods when the temporary employee works at a user company. The temporary work agency has all employers' rights and responsibilities, except for working conditions at a user company, where the user has responsibility.

The Act of Employing Temporary Workers (2003) regulates temporary agency work in Poland. The parliamentary draftsmen of the Act used many of the EU's proposals (2002) on the conditions of temporary agency workers. Some provisions of the Polish Act even exceed the EU's proposal, e.g. the possibility of using civil law contracts.

In Bulgaria relations between employers and chosen recruitment agency are regulated by service contracts. The relations between the agency worker and the agency are regulated by a contract of employment concluded under the labour code. Agency workers enjoy complete protection granted to them by the labour code, the only difference being that they work not for their formal employer but for a third party.

3.5 Research into Temporary Agency Work

A number of recent pieces of research into the size, scope and nature of the temporary agency recruitment market exist for the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland:-

Agency working in the UK: A review of the evidence; Employment Relations Directorate of the then Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (Employment Relations Series No.93), 2008.

Agency working in the UK summarises information from the main preceding surveys of agency working in the UK.

Main findings;

- REC ‘Recruitment Industry Census’ and Survey of Recruitment Agencies (SORA) business surveys of the agency sector made best estimates on the number of temporary workers in the UK. These figures showed there were between 1.1 and 1.5 million agency workers though given the high turnover, the seasonality and the flexibility of agency work it is difficult to come to a definitive figure.
- Again from the sources above, there were an estimated 16,000 recruitment sites (branches and offices). A number of large well-known agency businesses operated in this sector but there were also significant proportions (just under 60 per cent) of small single site agency businesses with between one and five employees who matched agency workers with assignments.
- Agency workers were more likely to work in the manufacturing, transport, and financial services sectors and less likely to work in distribution, hotels, restaurants and the public sector compared with all employees.
- Agency working was concentrated in larger organisations of 50+ employees.
- These business surveys also estimated that the duration of assignment was less than three months for around 55 per cent of agency workers who knew the length of time they had been on their current assignment.
- As agency workers were likely to be less experienced, permanent employees with shorter job tenure were a more appropriate comparator for the earnings differential. On this basis the Labour Force Survey (LFS) showed overall hourly earnings of agency workers were 94 per cent of the level for all employees with less than two years in their company (median wage comparison of £7.00 versus £7.48) in the fourth quarter of 2007.

Temporary Agency Workers in the UK: Understanding their role and expectations; REC with BIS, 2008.

Temporary Agency Workers in the UK sought to investigate the extent to which employers rely on temporary agency workers and pervading perceptions of temporary agency work by temporary workers. The research was mainly inspired by the debate over the European Agency Workers Directive.

Main findings;

- Agency workers worked on a temporary basis for a variety of reasons. For most, it was a positive choice.
- Two fifths of agency workers were not seeking a permanent position and suitable permanent work was not as easy to find as suitable temporary work.
- Agencies were largely meeting workers' expectations and requirements. They prioritised regular, suitable assignments, offered training or career development advice and generally satisfied workers' needs.
- The changes workers would have liked most from agency organisations were 'better/more communication' (11%) and 'increased wages' (9%) although nearly a third (32%) were unable to think of an improvement.
- Overall, satisfaction with temporary agency work was high and satisfaction with pay was good.
- Employer organisations were broadly satisfied with the agencies they used and recognised the value of agency workers to their business.
- More regular use did not necessarily lead to greater satisfaction however; greater usage did appear to lead to greater dependency on agency workers and a wider appreciation of the business benefits they bring.
- The Manufacturing sector appeared to depend on agency workers more heavily than the Service sector but both said agency workers allow organisations to be more flexible and responsive.

Employment trends survey; Confederation of British Industry (CBI) / Pertemps, 2008.

The 11th Employment Trends Survey commissioned by CBI summarised the current state of the employment market in 2008 – it outlines how labour market flexibility is a competitive strength that is under threat.

Main findings;

- More than a quarter of firms said that finding employees with the right skills and managing people effectively were the key factors in business success in the current environment. In future, skills will remain top of the business agenda – although investing in new products was increasingly important
- More than half of businesses saw effective management skills as being the major HR factor in their success, although making good use of employees' skills, involving staff and flexible working were also significant

Survey of Recruitment Agencies (SORA); BIS, 2007

The Survey of Recruitment Agencies (SORA 2007) was conducted in the autumn of 2007 to assess the nature and extent of temporary agency working in the UK. It was a follow up to the first Survey of Recruitment Agencies, which was conducted in 1999 to measure the industry and provide the then Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) with the evidence needed to assess the impact of changes in employment agency legislation. At the time information about the sector was limited and the results of the survey highlighted the widely differing estimates of the extent of temporary working in the labour market.

Recruitment Industry 'Census'; REC, 2006.

The REC Recruitment Industry Census was carried out in January 2006. The sampling frame was based on the Yellow Pages Business database and 13,000 businesses were contacted. Around 4,500 interviews were completed by CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing). The REC also carries out small monthly surveys to track trends in the number of agency workers and also tracks qualitative trends as well.

Main findings;

- The survey showed that 21% of agencies with people out on assignment had between 1 and 10 temporary workers out on an assignment, 37% of agencies had between 11 and 40 temporary workers and 17% of agencies had between 101 and 500 temporary workers. In some sectors (construction, technical/engineering, industrial/blue collar and driving) agencies tend to have much higher numbers of temporary workers than is the case for agencies operating in other sectors.
- The number of permanent placements that agencies make in a year varied enormously according to size, sector and even region. On average 51% of agencies had made between 1 and 40 placements in the previous year. Some agencies

reported a much higher level of placements; 25% have made between 41 and 100 placements in the previous year, while 22% made over 100 placements. In the sales/retail sector 40% of agencies were making over 100 permanent placements, whilst the figure for accounting/financial sector was 39%. In the nursing sector the percentage was low (14%) whilst the figures for social work and personal care work are both 15%. It is clear that the type of contract agencies offered varied widely according to the business sector they are in. In some sectors agencies tend to offer a relatively high percentage of temporary work positions, while in others they were more likely to offer permanent placements. The majority of agencies tended to provide both types of opportunities. This was especially true in the secretarial/clerical sector where 85% of agencies recruited for both temporary and permanent jobs, but it was less the case in the nursing or agriculture sector where only 50% and 46% respectively of agencies operated in both the temporary and permanent part of the job market.

- Looking at the industry from a regional perspective there were a multiplicity of differences. In London, for example, agencies tended to have larger than average volumes of registered workers, and they tended to focus on fewer business sectors. In the Midlands there was a higher than average number of agencies recruiting for drivers and for industrial/blue collar staff. In the North there were fewer single site agencies than elsewhere in the UK, and they also tended to be fairly new compared with agencies in the rest of the UK. One feature of agencies in the South is that they were more likely to be recruiting for computing/IT professionals or sales/retail staff than was the case elsewhere.

Ireland: Temporary Agency Work and Collective Bargaining in the EU; Tony Dobbins, IRN Publishing 2009.

This contribution examines the issue of temporary agency work (TAW) and collective bargaining in Ireland as of May 2008. It is clear that trade unions and employers in Ireland hold contrasting views on the extent and outcomes of TAW. Unions are seeking equal treatment rights for agency workers with permanent comparators, in line with the stalled EU Directive. Employer organisations are opposed to agency regulations that, from their perspective, would place an undue burden on business.

Detailed synopses of the market in mainland Europe also exist:-

- *Temporary agency work in an enlarged European Union*; James Arrrowsmith, University of Warwick (2006). This report, commissioned by the sectoral social dialogue committee on temporary agency work, was based on an EIRO comparative study of temporary agency work in the enlarged EU. The questionnaire survey gathered responses across 28 countries – the 25 EU Member States, as well as Norway and the acceding countries Bulgaria and Romania. The report explores a range of topics including the definition and extent of TAW, its regulation in the different countries, both by law and collective agreement, and the views of the social partners on developments in the sector. The findings have been supplemented by further data and detailed comments received from the social partners at both national and confederal levels (Eurociett and UNI-Europa), which were closely involved in the production of both the national and the overview reports from the very outset.
- *The EU Temp Trade: Temporary Agency Work across the European Union*; Trades Union Conference, 2005. The report outlines how many EU Member States, both old and new, have already introduced measures giving agency workers equal treatment rights. Whilst in some of those countries temporary agency work is still very much in its infancy, there is no evidence that this has had any adverse impact on the flexibility of their labour markets, or that employers have been deterred from hiring agency workers as a direct result.
- *Labour and employment law in the new EU member and candidate states*; Anders Etgen Reitz, American Bar Association, 2006. This book outlines an introduction to EU legislation, EU directives, and the enlargement of the European Union. Each chapter provides an overview of labour law, hiring, terms and conditions, termination, discrimination, and business transfers in the following countries: Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Turkey.

3.6 Summary and Conclusions

DEL considers that much of what is necessary for a modern employment law framework is in place in Northern Ireland. However it is considered that there are certain workers who, due to different factors, may be more at risk of being denied their employment rights and less able to protect themselves and DEL has proposed a package of targeted measures offering further protections to the most vulnerable agency workers. The current body of legislation places minimum standards on NI-based employment agencies and recent changes to the regulations pertaining to temporary agency work have sought to provide additional protections for vulnerable work-seekers.

In many instances the most vulnerable work-seekers have been amongst the migrant communities. Employment and Learning Minister, Sir Reg Empey, has been vocal in recent years on the value of migrant workers to the Northern Ireland economy. In 2007 he stated the Department's clear intention to outwardly display its position that migrant workers are a valued part of Northern Ireland's labour market, saying that "Migrant workers play an important part in shaping our local communities and in contributing to a more robust Northern Ireland economy. This economy remains dynamic despite the threat of potential labour shortages which migrant workers help to overcome. I am therefore particularly encouraged by the significant level of recognition, that migrant workers are making a valuable input to local businesses and industry … It remains a priority for my Department to ensure we have a modern and effective employment rights infrastructure that will afford suitable protection for all Northern Ireland workers, not least for those who may be more vulnerable, such as migrant workers."

The Department has since been proactive in ensuring that migrant populations are informed of their employment rights and has provided guidance documents in a number of languages.

Moreover, the 2008 amendment to the Conduct of Employment Agencies and Employment Businesses Regulations (NI) has increased protection for work-seekers and reduced the regulatory burden on employment businesses ensuring that exploitation of temporary agency workers is appropriately prohibited by Northern Ireland law.

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4. Stakeholder Interviews

4.1 Background & Methodology

The stakeholder survey comprised a series of semi-structured in-depth interviews with representatives of trade unions, trade / business associations, large employers, local district councils, advice / rights organisations and migrant worker support groups. The purpose of this phase of the research was to ascertain a more qualitative understanding of attitudes towards the use of temporary agency workers from a number of different industrial viewpoints. The sample was recruited in agreement with the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) and the fieldwork took place during April-June 2009. We contacted 34 contacts approved by DEL and subsequently interviewed 29 respondents and received 5 refusals.

The sample composition was as follows:-

Respondent Type	Number of Respondents
Representatives of Trade Unions	2
Business Organisations/ Trade Associations	11
Large Employers	3
Local District Councils	2
Advice / Rights Groups	7
Migrant Worker Support Groups	1
Representatives of the Recruitment Industry	3
Total	29

Motivations to organisations using temporary agency workers

We found that the main motivations for business organisations to use temporary agency workers fell into a number of key themes as can be seen in the following chart:

Fig 4.1

Having coded and charted the verbatim responses (see Fig 4.2) regarding why organisations use temporary agency workers we see that the perceived main motivations were to deal with peaks and troughs in demand, to have a flexible workforce and to reduce employers' responsibility to staff / legislative burden (in that temporary agency workers are employed by the agency and not the hirer, legal responsibility to the employee with the former). For the large employers we spoke to, issues pertaining to demand and flexibility were the sole motivations mentioned for using temporary agency workers.

Fig. 4.2

Other frequent reasons why organisations choose to utilise an agency workforce were to fill temporary positions, cost effectiveness, speed of recruitment and covering absence due to maternity or illness.

4.2 General attitudes to temporary agency workers

Most of the sample did acknowledge the need for temporary agency workers and viewed them as a useful resource that was helpful both to businesses and the economy in general. Nevertheless there were some comments voicing concern over the potential for exploitation of workers. The advice sector, in particular, had experienced serious migrant worker issues relating to exploitation. Representatives of the recruitment industry, businesses or associations representing businesses were least likely to share this concern. When probed about issues faced by migrant temporary agency workers, only one respondent representing this sector made any reference to a potential for exploitation. The remainder felt quite adamant that the issues experienced by migrants have been the same as those experienced by other temporary agency workers, and that most migrant workers largely knew their employment rights.

Some of the spontaneous (unprompted) comments on the use of temporary agency workers are as overleaf:-

Positives

"They are a useful source of labour at times of shortage".

"For business it's a good thing. It allows them to meet demands in an economical way. It probably helps businesses to be more competitive because agency workers tend to be cheaper".

"It's good for the employer and the person (placed with the employer) … it's a good thing".

"Our members regard it as a useful tool … no redundancy implications for employers".

"It's convenient to be able to forward all relevant requests to agency – no advertising".

"Very good. A very positive thing. Allows us to be competitive and respond to customer needs immediately".

"We don't rely on agency staff to complement our established posts. It's a matter of short term work, filling gaps".

"It suits a lot of lifestyles as they support flexible working".

Negatives

"Not everyone uses it for short term use. Some use it permanently to supply them with staff – in that way they can exploit the agency workers".

"There are too many instances where unscrupulous employers are utilising agency workers as a source of driving down terms and conditions of employment … It is understandable in some sectors that there is justification for having agency workers at peak times but we would maintain that it needs to be stringently policed".

"(Temporary workers) have advantages but can be abused … can be used to ensure that staff have no employment rights".

"It's a disaster from the perspective of temporary workers … from the perspective of a business it's obviously good as someone else carries the can".

"There is a perception out there that it's cheap labour but that's certainly not the case".

"The main point is exploitation – especially of migrant populations".

"Who is their employer – the end user or the agency"?

"Their terms and conditions are fairly poor – for holidays etc. they're not on the same footing".

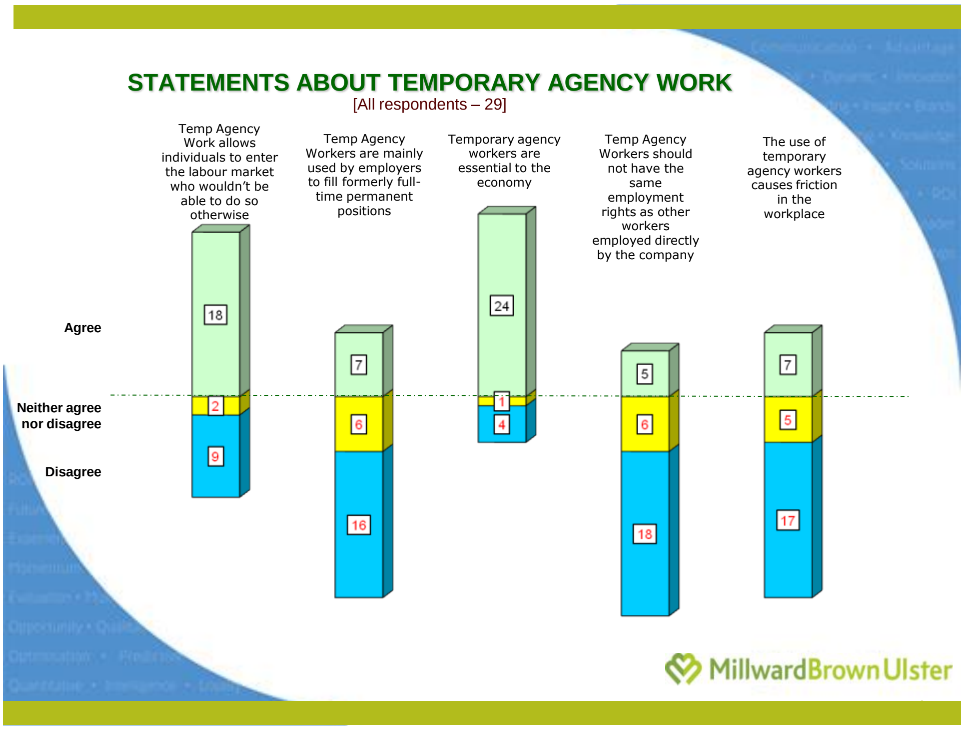
"We have some concerns that migrant workers may have greater problems when going through employment agencies".

“Employment law in this country is weak. Even for full time employees, if employment law’s breached, to seek redress is a stressful, difficult and uncertain process”.

As well as asking for spontaneous comment on the pervading attitudes to temporary workers, we read out a number of statements to respondents asking whether they agreed or disagreed with a number of statements on the subject (see Fig 4.3).

We found that 18 out of 29 respondents agreed that ‘temporary agency positions allow individuals to enter the labour market who wouldn’t be able to do so otherwise’, whilst 24 out of 29 agreed that ‘temporary agency workers are essential to the economy’.

Fig. 4.3



Almost a quarter of the sample agreed either that ‘temporary agency workers are mainly used by employers to fill formerly full-time permanent positions’ (7 out of 29), that ‘temporary agency workers should not have the same employment rights as other workers employed directly by the company’ (5 out of 29) or that ‘the use of temporary agency workers causes friction in the workplace’ (7 out of 29).

The majority of the sample expressed that they view the use of temporary agency workers as a positive, as it allows businesses to speedily increase and decrease their workforces according to changes in their respective markets and as levels of demand dictate.

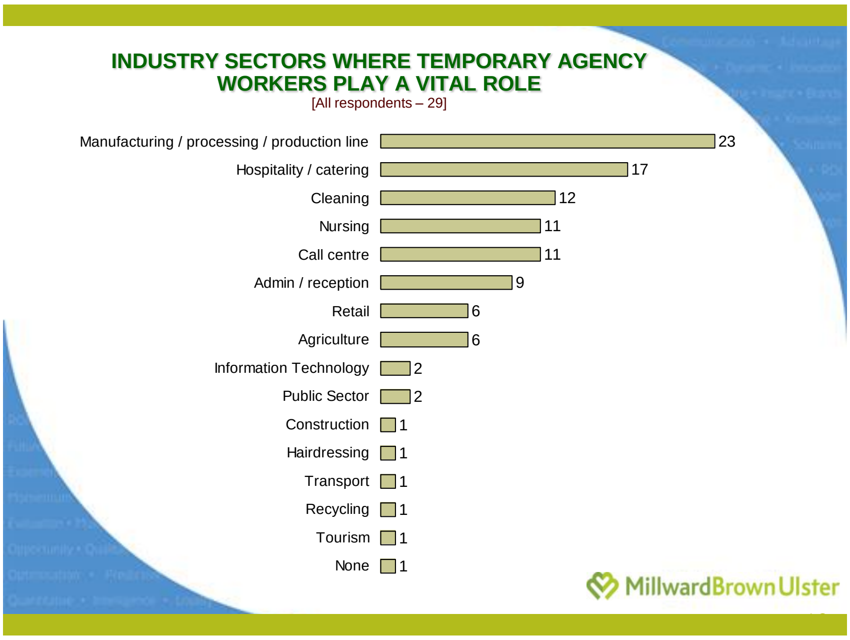
Nonetheless, there were some concerns expressed amongst a proportion of the sample that the system can be abused to the detriment of the temporary worker. These sentiments were expressed by some of the trade associations, but primarily by advice / rights organisations.

Importance of temporary agency workers

As can be seen in Fig 4.4, according to our sample the industry where temporary agency workers play the most vital role was manufacturing / processing / production line, mentioned by 23 out of 29 respondents.

Other sectors where respondents felt temporary agency workers play a vital role included hospitality / catering (by 17 out of 29 respondents) and cleaning (by 12 out of 29 respondents).

Fig. 4.4



Only one respondent stated that they felt there are no industry sectors where temporary agency workers play a vital role. The general consensus amongst the sample was that any non-professional industry would rely on a presence of temporary workers given perceived high turnovers of staff. With regard to industry specific issues pertaining to temporary agency workers, a number of different concerns were mentioned:-

- Exploitation of farm workers – poorly housed in isolated areas.
- Health & safety issues in construction.
- Exploitation of the migrant population in restaurant and fishing industries.

- Getting staff with appropriate level of language skills for admin / reception work
- Inequality in pay between permanent and temporary staffing in nursing sector.
- Quality of temporary staff in health care – inappropriate levels of vetting.
- Quality of staff / level of training in cleaning / hospitality sectors.
- Turnover of staff / commitment to host company by temporary agency workers in administrative, food processing and hospitality sectors.
- Exploitation of temporary workers in manufacturing / processing / production related industries.
- Difficulty making transition from temporary agency work to permanent work within their host company in service industries.
- Quality and standards of recruitment agencies – e.g. gang masters in agri-business related work.

4.3 Effect of Temporary Agency Workers on the Economy

The majority of those interviewed (19 out of 29) were of the opinion that the use of temporary agency workers helped the economy (see Fig 4.5). Of these 19 participants, 8 were business / trade associations, 2 were large employers, 1 was a local authority, 5 were advice / rights groups and 3 were representatives of the recruitment industry. Only two respondents out of the sample expressed that they felt that the use of temporary agency workers hindered the economy. 8 out of 29 respondents stated 'can do either', 'makes no difference' or 'don't know' in relation to the effect of temporary workers on the economy.

Fig. 4.5

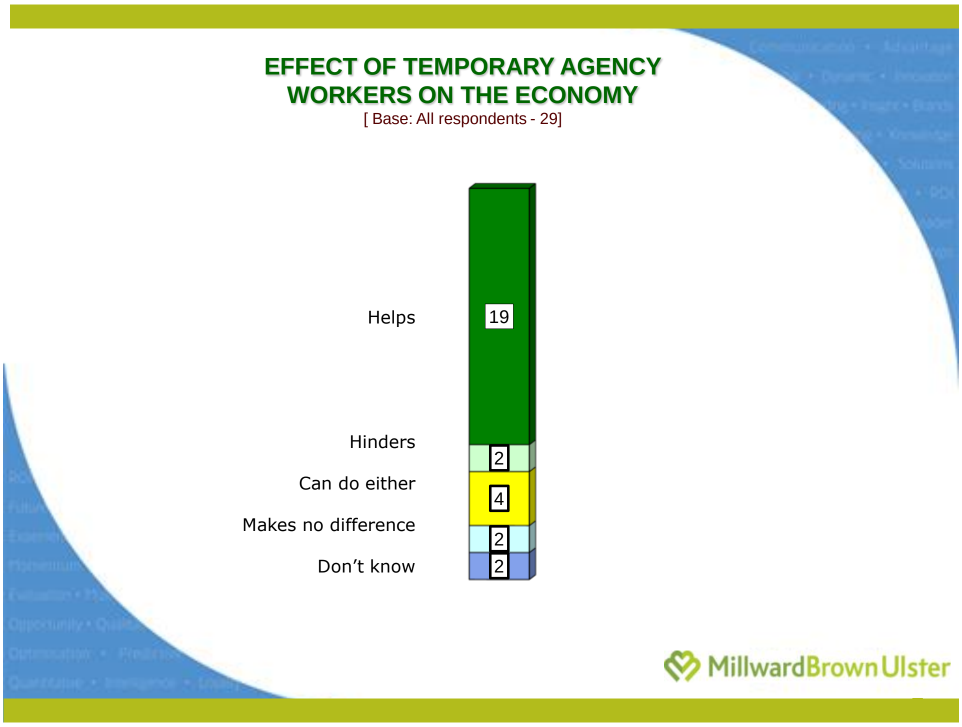
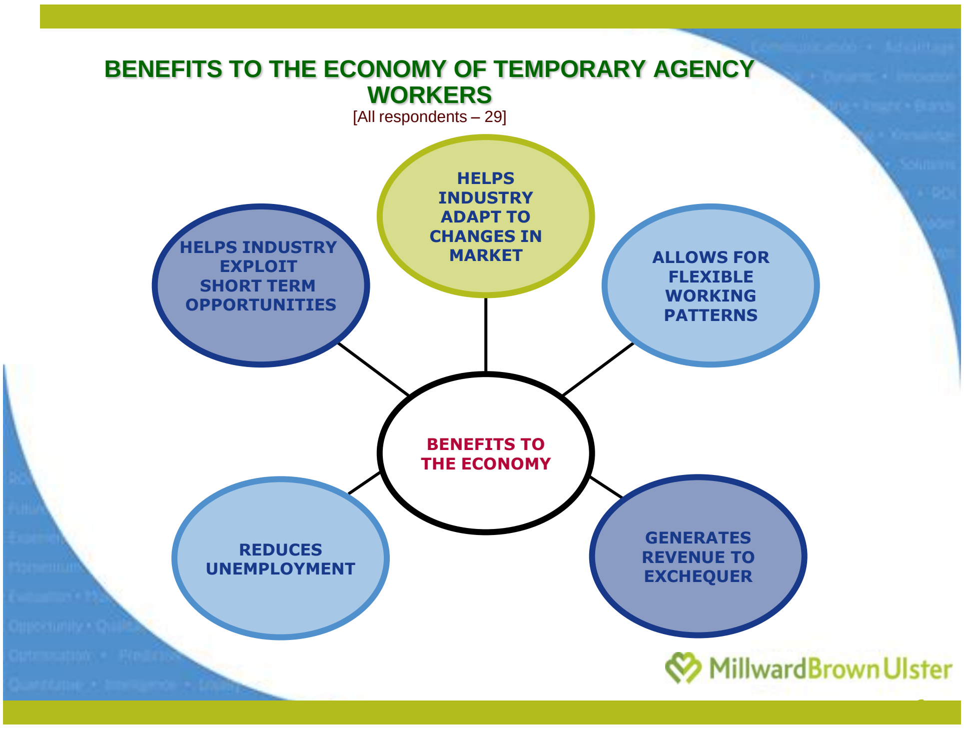


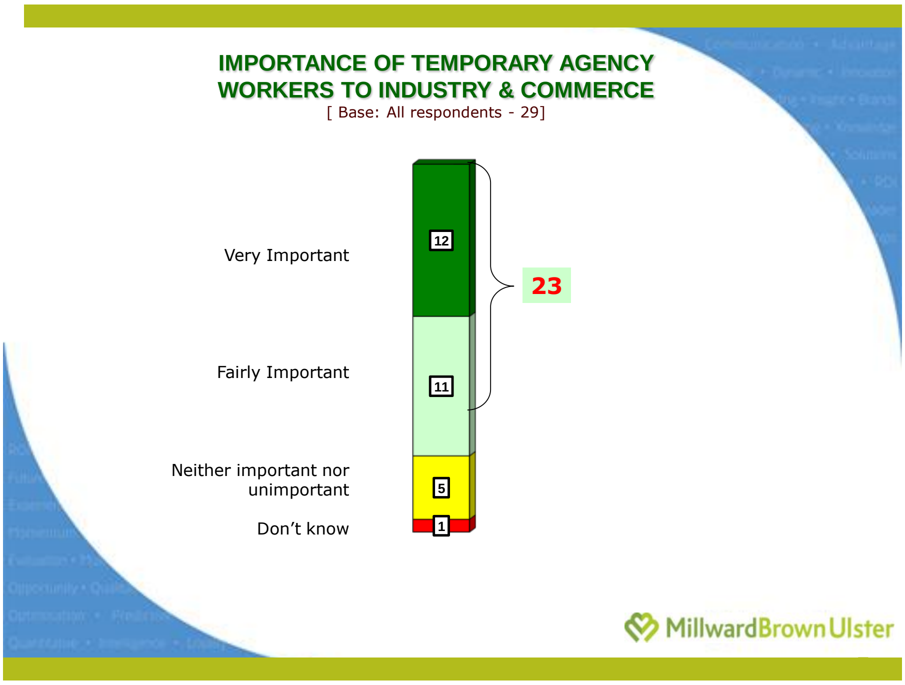
Fig. 4.6



With regard to the perceived benefits of the use of temporary agency workers to the economy, most comments centred on how they contribute to flexible workforces in industry and more flexible working patterns amongst workers as can be seen in Fig 4.6.

Benefits to the Exchequer through taxation and their contribution to reducing unemployment were also mentioned as benefits to the economy.

Fig.4.7



As can be seen in Fig 4.7, 23 out 29 respondents stated that temporary agency workers were important to the economy. No respondent felt that temporary workers were unimportant to industry and commerce, with six respondents remaining undecided answering either 'neither important nor unimportant' or 'don't know' when asked.

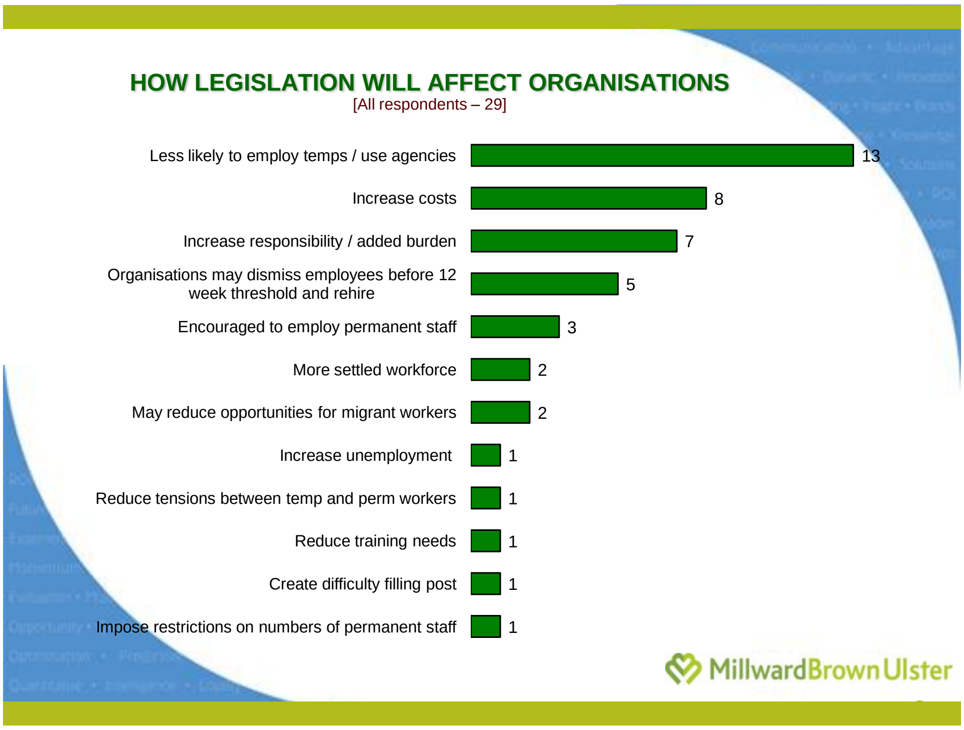
4.4 Attitudes to Legislation Governing use of Temporary Agency Workers

After assessing the effect of temporary agency workers on both organisations and on the economy in general we explained the proposed changes to legislation pertaining to agency workers' rights i.e. the EU Temporary Agency Workers Directive ("the Directive"). In the UK it is proposed that after 12 weeks temporary agency workers would be entitled to the same basic working and employment conditions as those workers employed directly by the company.

We found general awareness of the Directive to be fairly poor amongst most of the business organisations and trade associations in the sample. We also found some confusion amongst respondents over the issue of employment rights and temporary agency workers, with a perception that the law in this respect is somewhat of a grey area.

There were some varied perceptions of how this change in legislation will affect organisations and how they operate as can be seen in Fig 4.8.

Fig.4.8



The most common response amongst the sample on how the legislation will affect organisations was that it will make companies less likely to use temporary agency workers. Other frequently cited effects included increasing costs and increasing responsibility / legislative burden for organisations.

Fig. 4.9

BENEFITS & DRAWBACKS OF GIVING TEMPORARY AGENCY WORKERS SAME BASIC RIGHTS AS PERMANENT STAFF

[All respondents – 29]

Benefits

	No of mentions
More equitable treatment of workers	10
Reduce tensions	3
Settled workforce / better morale	2
Companies more inclined to employ permanent staff	1
Protects good employers / up-skills workforce	1
Attract more people into work	1

Drawbacks

	No of mentions
Makes labour market less flexible	10
Decreased revenue for Exchequer	5
Legislative burden	3
Increased number of industrial tribunals	3
Less attractive for inward investors	1
Reduces competitiveness	2

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In relation to the effect of the change in legislation on the economy, a number of benefits and drawbacks were expressed (see Fig 4.9). As can be seen, the overriding benefit according to the sample was more equitable treatment of staff (mentioned by 10 respondents). It is worth noting though that 8 respondents expressed that they saw no benefit to the legislation change at all – these were primarily business organisations and trade associations. The chief drawback expressed was the reduced flexibility within the labour market.

After discussing the pros and cons of the Directive, we asked respondents “What other improvements or changes in the law would you like to see?” Other potential developments, as suggested by respondents, included the following:-

- Greater regulation of recruitment agencies
- Simplification / clarification of employment law to organisations
- Increase flexibility of temporary workers moving from temporary to permanent work within organisations
- More enforcement of existing non EU legislation pertaining to the use of temporary agency workers.
- Review of EU Directive; some respondents (amongst trade unions and the advice sector) felt that temporary agency workers should have the same basic rights as permanent staff as soon as employed by organisation, whilst others amongst the business organisations felt that a 16 week or 6 month threshold should be considered.

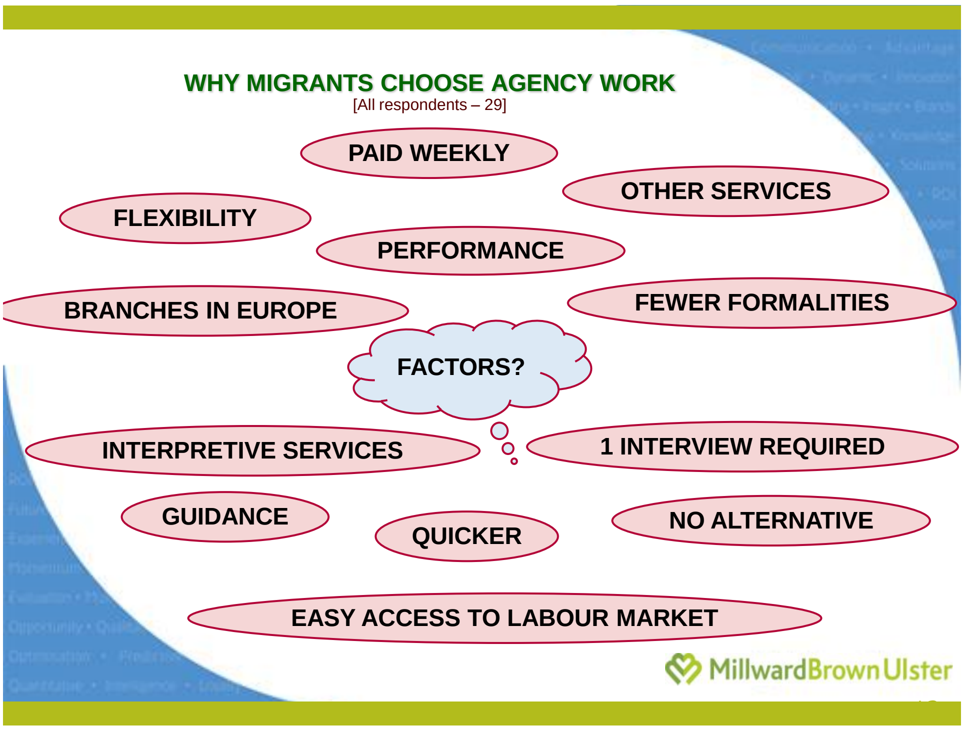
- More protection from exploitation for casual workers
- Clearer HMRC guidelines on rent limits for migrants
- More protection of employers' flexibility to employ as required
- Mandatory teaching of employment rights in schools
- Regulation of training in organisations in employment law
- Requirement for host employer to have responsibility for employment rights
- Review of dispute resolution / industrial tribunals

5 out of 29 respondents stated that they did not want any other improvements or changes to the law pertaining to the rights of temporary agency workers, with a further 4 respondents stating that they don't know what changes might be required. The most frequently mentioned suggestion was for greater regulation of the recruitment industry through the enforcement of current legislation, and development of law to ensure that agencies uphold the employment rights of work-seekers.

4.5 Migrant Workers & Temporary Agency Work

Respondents suggested a number of reasons why migrants choose agency working, as can be seen in Fig 4.10. The overriding suggestion, made by 12 out of 29 respondents, was that it represents an easy method of gaining employment / getting access to labour market.

Fig. 4.10



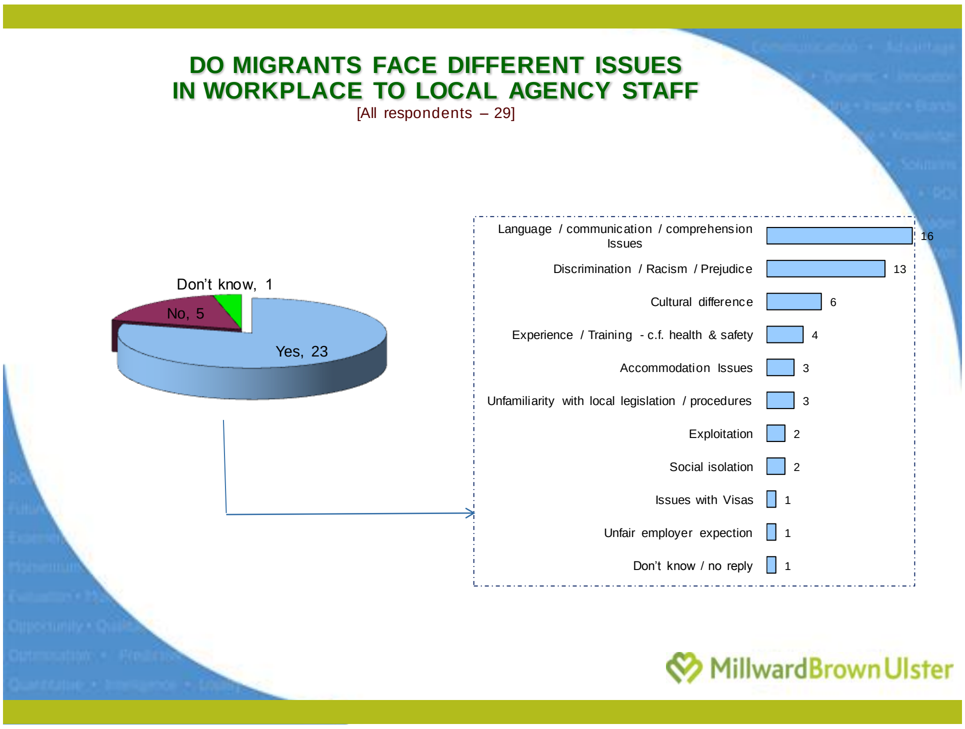
Two respondents out of the sample stated that they didn't believe that the migrant population was particularly inclined towards temporary work.

6 out of 21 respondents stated that migrants choose agency work as a default choice in that they have no alternative, whilst 5 of 29 felt that it presents a quicker route into work than a direct application.

The majority of the sample we interviewed (23 out of 29) stated that they feel migrant workers experience different issues in the workplace to local agency staff, whilst a minority (5 out of 29) respondents were of the opinion that workers from migrant communities don't have a tangibly different experience than the indigenous temporary workforce (the majority of whom were business organisation / trade associations). The remaining respondent had no comment.

Of the 23 respondents who stated that migrants face different issues in the workplace 16 suggested that migrants experienced language / communication / comprehension issues (Fig 4.11), whilst 13 stated that migrants experienced discrimination / racism / prejudice. Only two respondents out of the sample went as far as citing that migrant workers were exploited either by recruitment agencies or host companies. Evidence of discrimination cited by representatives of the advice sector include problems with statutory sick pay, statutory maternity pay, zero hours contracts, national minimum wage, access to benefits (Job-seekers allowance, working tax credit) and issuing of P60s.

Fig. 4.11



When asked regarding the advantages to the migrant population of working through an agency only one respondent stated that they saw no benefit to temporary agency workers (see Fig 4.12). This was an organisation close to migrant worker issues. The most frequently stated perceived advantage to the migrant population of working through an agency was 'easy access to work' mentioned by 18 out of 29 respondents.

Fig. 4.12

ADVANTAGES & DISADVANTAGES OF TEMPORARY AGENCY WORK TO THE MIGRANT POPULATION

[All respondents – 29]

Advantages

	No of mentions
Easy access to jobs / income	18
Guidance from agency	8
Flexibility	6
Get work quickly	5
Helps to get experience	3
Helps integration	2
Improve language skills	2
Utilising their skills	1
Assistance with getting accommodation	1
None	**1**

Disadvantages

	No of mentions
Lack of protection / security	11
Exploitation	6
Few employee rights	5
Usually low paid jobs	3
Discrimination	3
Info online in different languages	1
Not having same rights as permanent staff	1
Being pigeonholed in certain roles	1
Language barrier	1
Precludes integration	1
None	**3**
Don't know	**2**

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On the subject of the perceived disadvantages of temporary agency work to migrant workers, 3 out of 29 respondents stated that they didn't see any. Two other respondents felt that they didn't have enough knowledge to be in a position to make an informed comment on the drawbacks.

Views on the extent to which migrant workers were aware of their rights varied across the sample. Some felt that they were acutely aware of their rights; others felt that migrants were naïve about what they are entitled to; whilst still others contended that awareness varied depending on the situation and the individual (the extent to which they had been exposed to initiatives aimed at informing them, language abilities etc). Most acknowledge that the awareness level was gradually improving. A number of suggestions on improving guidance on employment rights were made, including:-

- Provision of a single helpline for employment rights, rather than different lines for various issues – health & safety, minimum wage etc.
- Having relevant information available online in different languages / through job centres.
- Provision of information at National Insurance Number interview (booklet on employment rights, national minimum wage etc).
- Provision of good access to translation services.
- Information provided through foreign embassies.
- Support for advice sector to employ specialist linguists.
- Local advertising & PR regarding services of local community groups like Chinese Welfare Society and Polish Community Association.
- Welcome pack for all migrant workers outlining legal rights.
- Multi-lingual seminars for migrant workers.
- Better communication to organisations on their responsibilities to migrant employees.

4.6 Summary

Broadly speaking, the respondents, from a number of different industrial viewpoints, viewed the use of temporary agency workers as beneficial. By and large key stakeholders had a positive view of the function and purpose of the temporary agency workforce as a resource to industry, whilst acknowledging the potential for exploitation of workers under current employment law in Northern Ireland.

The main drivers behind organisations using temporary agency workers, identified by our sample, related to two main themes; flexibility (i.e. the flexibility to 'hire and dismiss' as demand increases and decreases) and responsibility (i.e. that using a temporary agency workforce alleviates the legal responsibility to the employee given that they are employed by the agency and not the hirer).

The pervading perception of employment law relating to the use of temporary agency workers amongst our sample was that it is somewhat vague and something of a 'grey area', whilst awareness levels of the Temporary Agency Workers Directive was poor. Once the implications of the Directive had been explained to them, most of our sample concluded that it may make companies less likely to use agency workers, although a sizable proportion acknowledged that it might ensure more equitable treatment of Northern Ireland's temporary agency workforce.

The majority of our sample suggested that the industry sector most closely associated with the use of temporary agency workers was 'manufacturing / processing / production line', but it was a commonly held view that any non-professional industry relied on temporary workers.

A majority of stakeholders amongst the sample were of the opinion that the experience of temporary agency work amongst the migrant population was different to that of indigenous workers, with issues relating to language and discrimination being the obvious differentiators mentioned.

5. Recruitment Agencies & Businesses

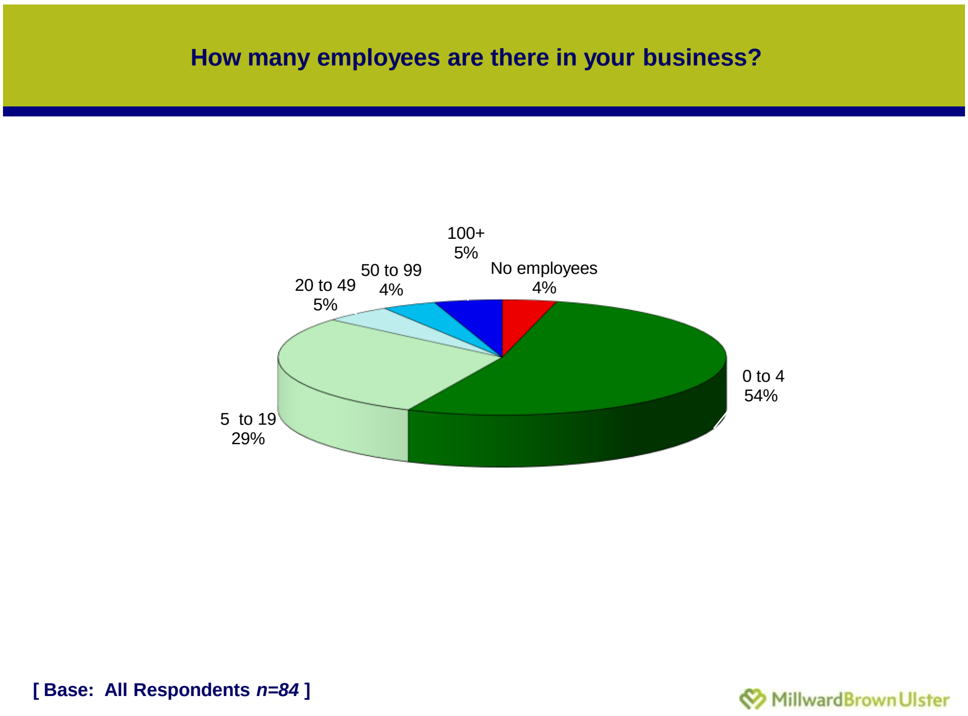
5.1 Background and Methodology

As part of the overall project Millward Brown were asked to provide a robust assessment of the size and nature of the private recruitment sector in NI. This assessment was based largely on this phone survey of employment agencies and businesses. The Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) provided approximately 350 employment agency and employment business contacts. As a result of data cleaning (through a variety of processes including initial contact letter and telephone contact which eliminated non-recognised telephone numbers, numbers from which there was a non-response after numerous contacts, companies which had ceased trading, companies which had subsequently merged and organisations with multiple locations), 182 employment agencies and employment businesses were contacted initially by e-mail and 61 were sent a hard copy questionnaire by post. Response rates were particularly low and Millward Brown followed up unreturned contacts by telephone from their dedicated Tele-lab. In total, using all these methodologies, 84 interviews were completed. Therefore, assuming all these initial contacts were bona fide, the response rate was 35%.

A full calculation of market size including companies excluded from this database is contained in the Summary and Conclusions section.

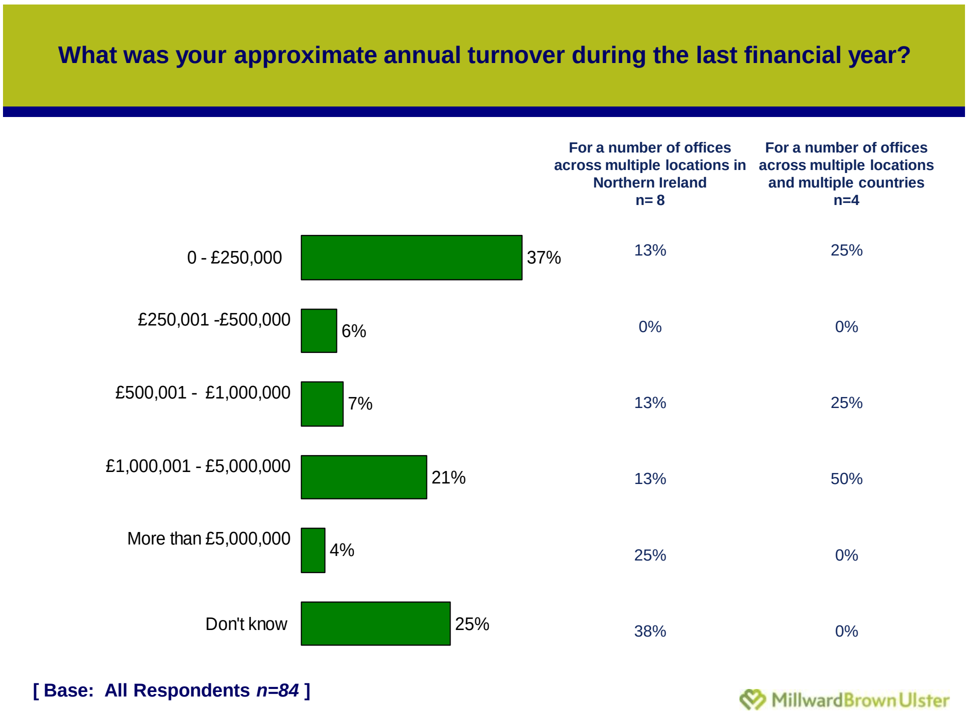
5.2 Information on the Sector

Fig. 5.1



Almost two thirds (58%) of respondents were staffed by less than 5 employees. Nearly one-third (29%) operated with between 5 and 19 employees and 14% had more than 20 employees.

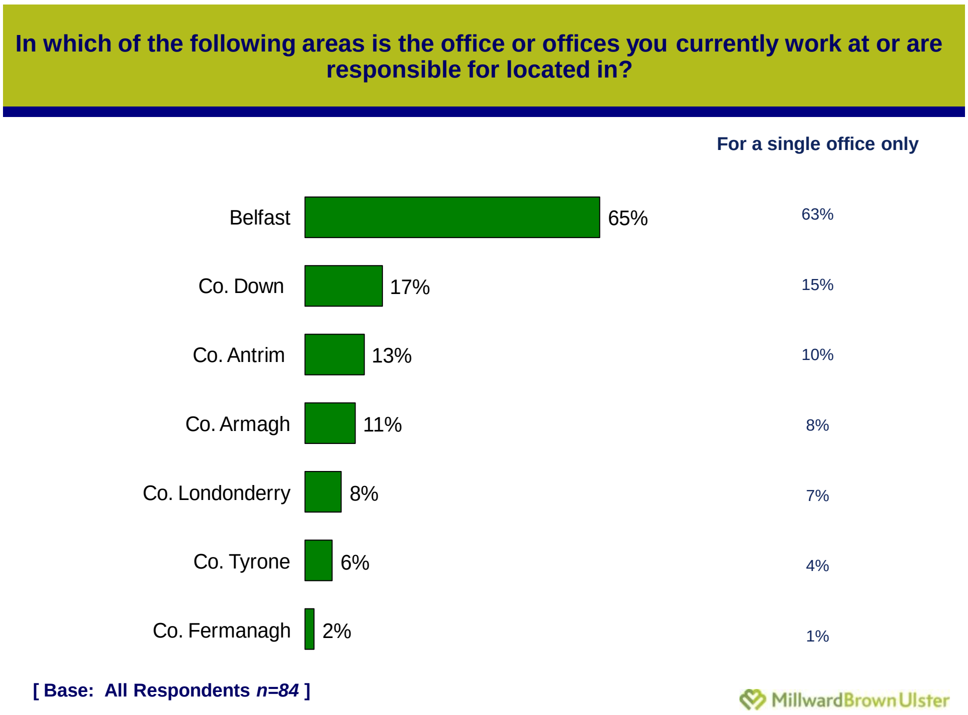
Fig. 5.2



(Please note small bases for sub-analysis)

Over a third (37%) had an annual turn-over of less than £250,001. 13% operated with an annual turn-over between £250,001 and £1 million. One-fifth of respondents (21%) had turn-over in the range of £1 to 5 million annually. Not surprisingly, higher turnovers tended to correlate with the higher number of offices with multiple locations in NI. However 25% of employment businesses didn't know what their approximate annual turnover during the financial year was.

Fig. 5.3

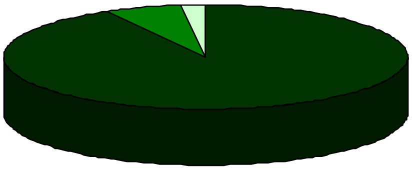


(Please note – respondents could give more than one answer to this question)

Belfast was the most popular location of employment business premises (65%), followed by the surrounding Counties of Down (17%) and Antrim (13%). Only 8% were situated in Co. Londonderry and 2% in Co. Fermanagh.

Fig. 5.4

Is your company independently owned, part of a chain or a franchise?



[Base: All Respondents *n=84*]

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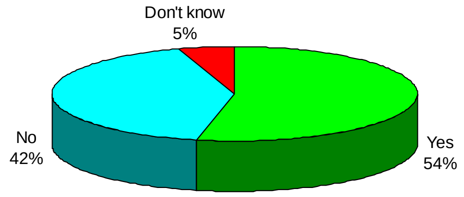
The sector was predominantly comprised of independently owned establishments (92%), with only 8% claiming to be either part of a chain or a franchise.

Fig. 5.5

Is your company a member of the Recruitment and Employment Confederation (REC)?



[Base: All Respondents *n=84*]

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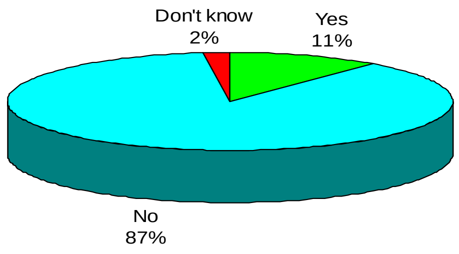
54% of respondents were members of the Recruitment and Employment Confederation whilst 42% were not. 5% did not know whether they were or not.

Fig. 5.6

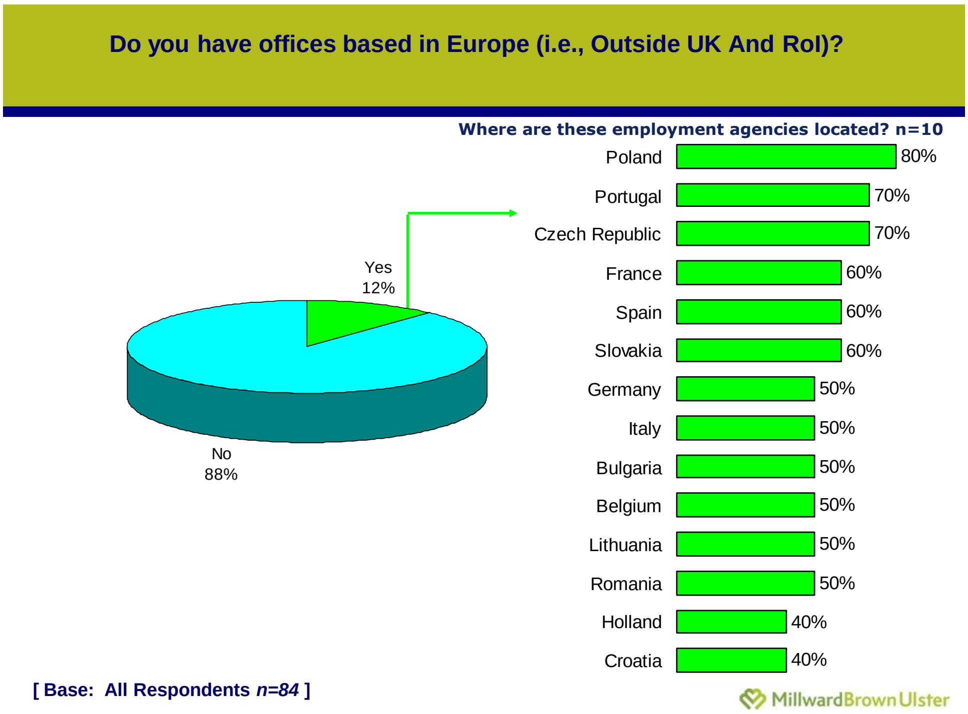
Does your company supply workers to the Gangmasters sector? [i.e. agriculture, forestry, horticulture, shellfish gathering and food processing and packaging]



[Base: All Respondents *n=84*]

Only 11% of respondents were involved in the Gangmasters sector.

Fig. 5.7

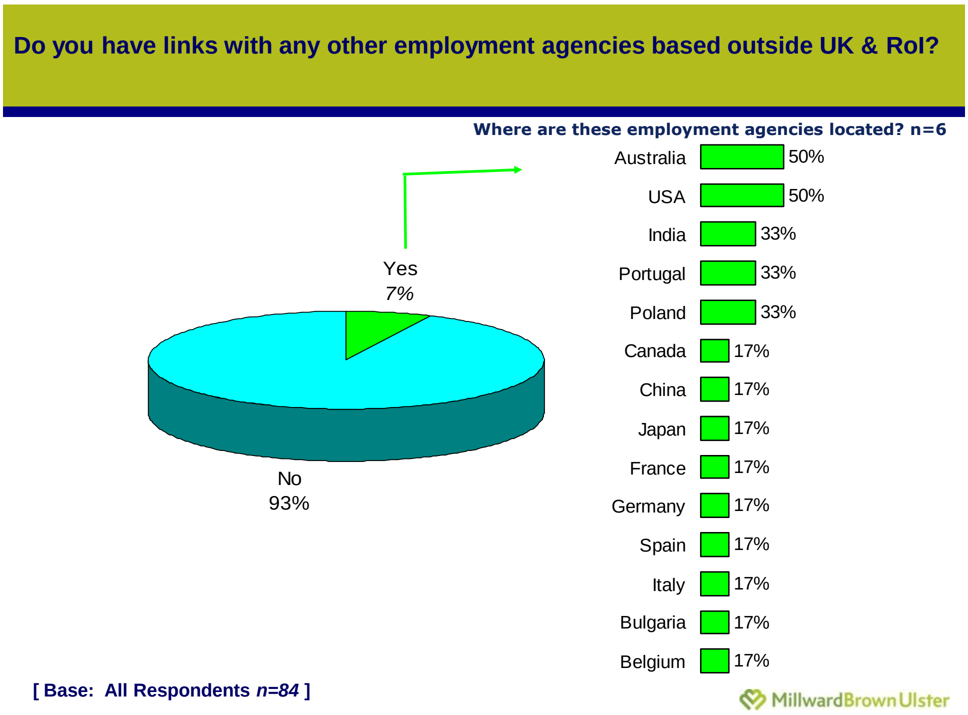


(Please note respondents could give more than 1 answer to location of other offices.)

The vast majority of respondents did not have offices based outside UK and RoI (88%).

Those respondents which had offices based in Europe were most likely to have them in Poland, the Czech Republic and the western European economies of Portugal, France, Spain, Germany, Belgium and Italy. Other Eastern European and Balkan countries such as Slovakia, Bulgaria, Lithuania and Romania were also mentioned frequently. It was apparent that those who operated on a multi-national level tended to do so in numerous other locations (hence the totals adding in excess of 100%).

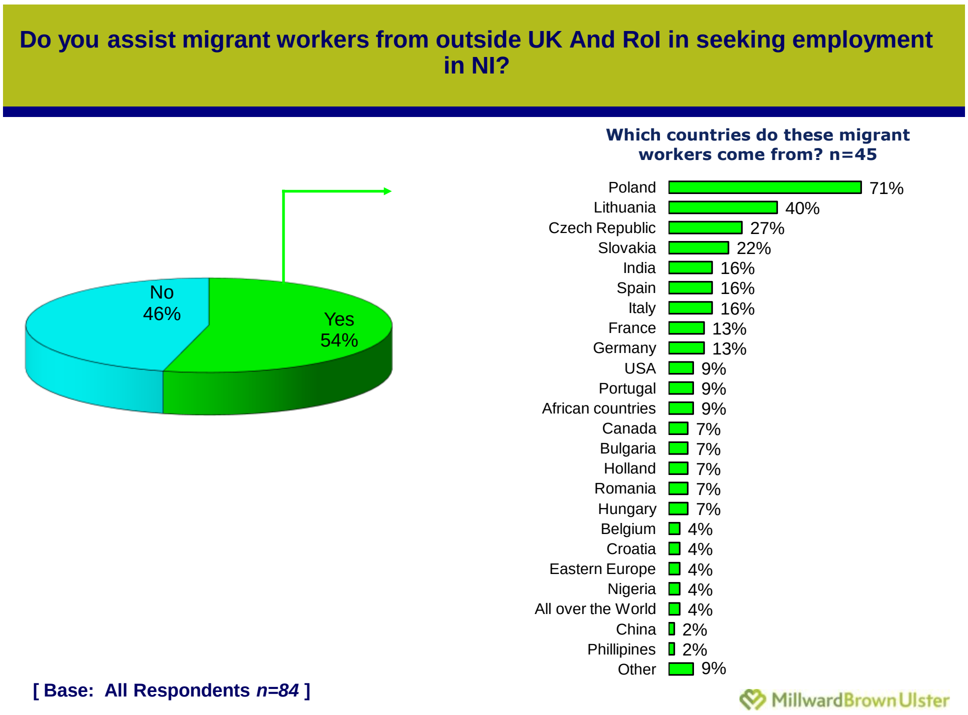
Fig. 5.8



(Please note respondents could give more than 1 answer to location.)

Only a small minority of respondents (7%) had links with other employment agencies outside the UK and RoI. These links were primarily with Australia (50%) and USA (50%).

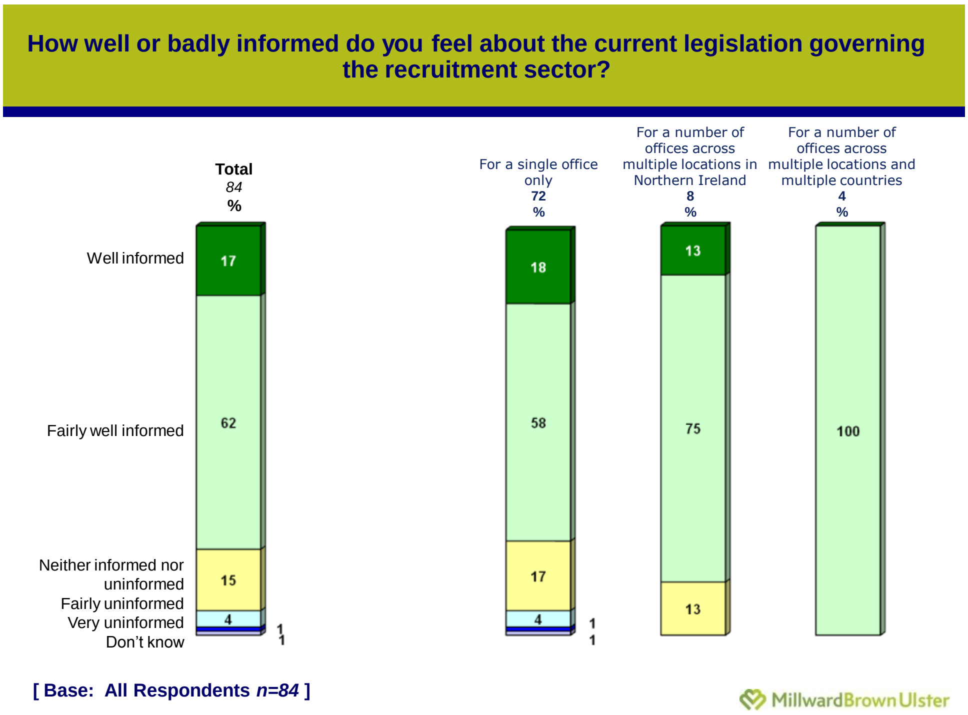
Fig. 5.9



Despite many respondents not having offices located outside the UK and RoI (88%), over half of employment businesses (54%) assisted migrant workers from outside the UK and RoI in seeking employment in NI.

Poland was the native country for the majority of these workers (71%), followed by Lithuania (40%), Czech Republic (27%), and Slovakia (22%). (Respondents could provide multiple responses).

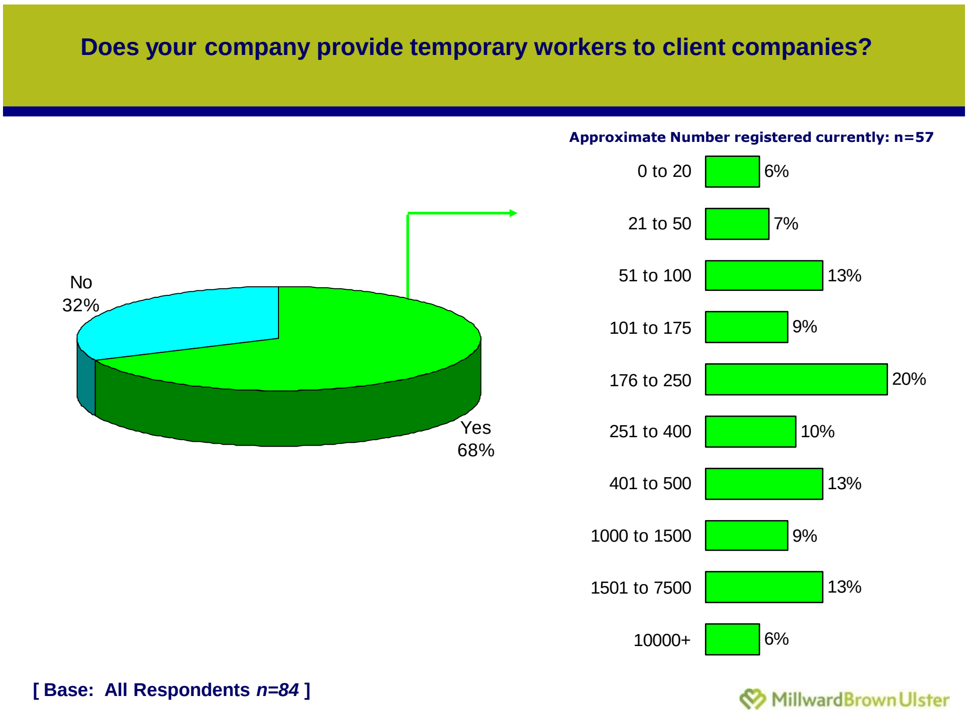
Fig. 5.10



Generally, most respondents (79%) believed they were well informed or fairly well informed regarding current government legislation. 17% suggested they were well-informed. Only 5% stated that they were not well–informed.

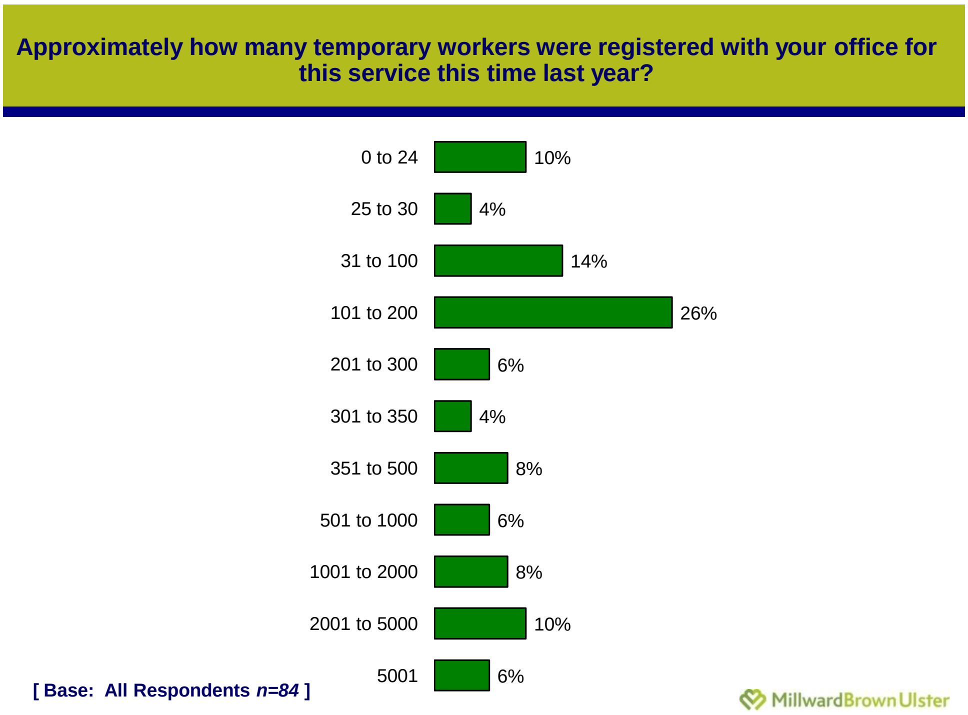
5.3. Employment Businesses (Temporary)

Fig.5.11



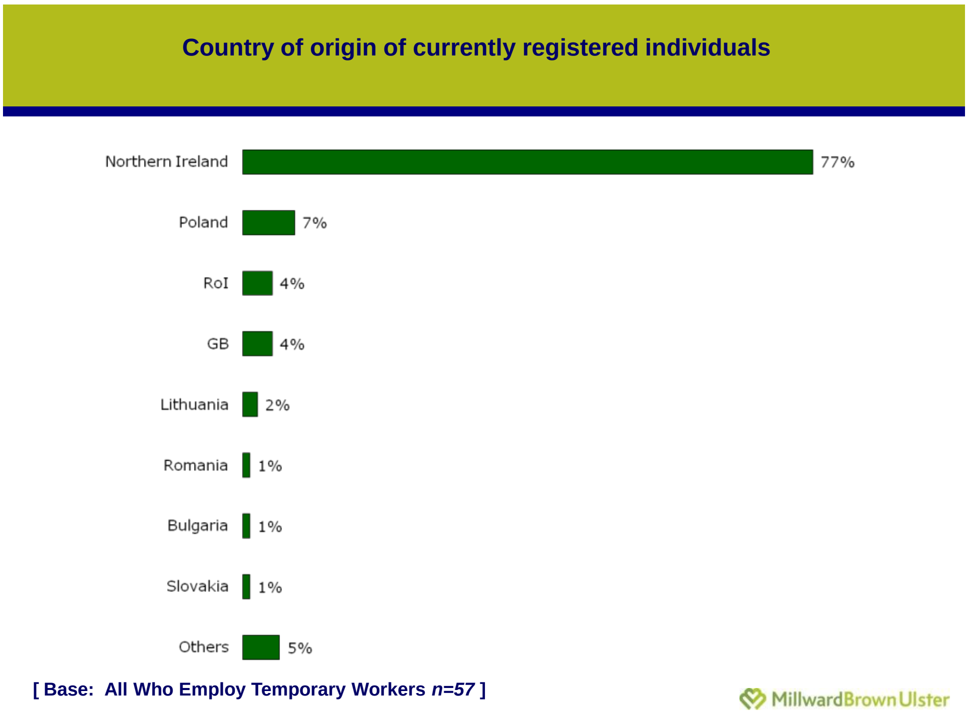
Nearly 7 in 10 (68%) of all respondents interviewed, provided temporary workers.

Fig. 5.12



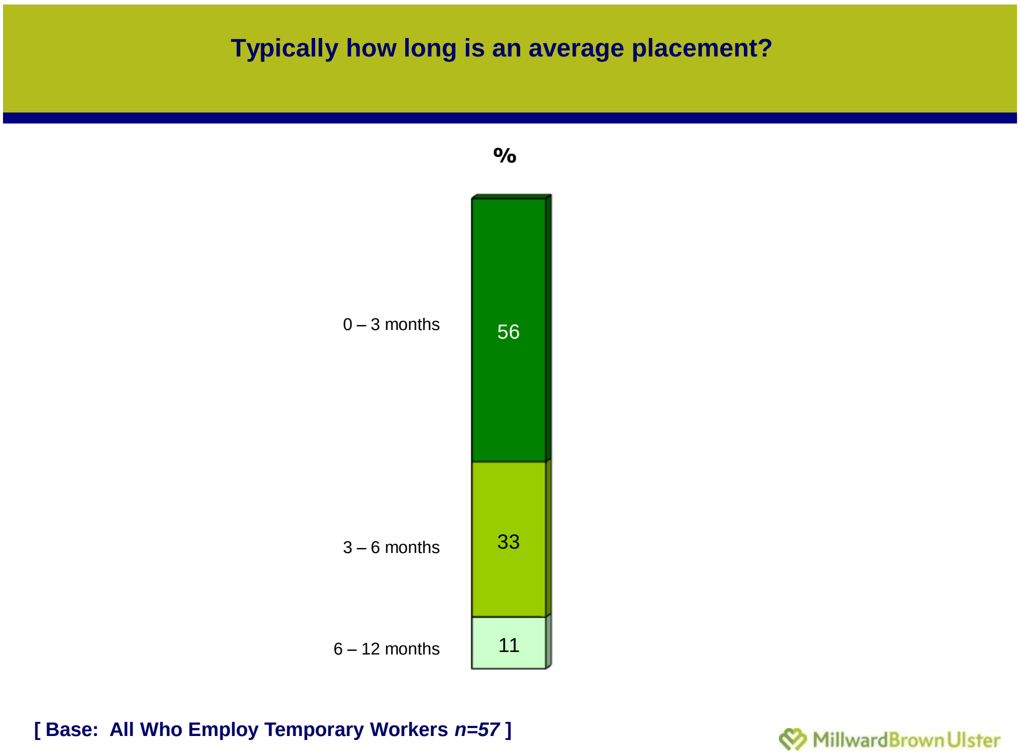
80% of respondents had over 100 individuals currently registered compared to only 74% of respondents last year.

Fig. 5.13



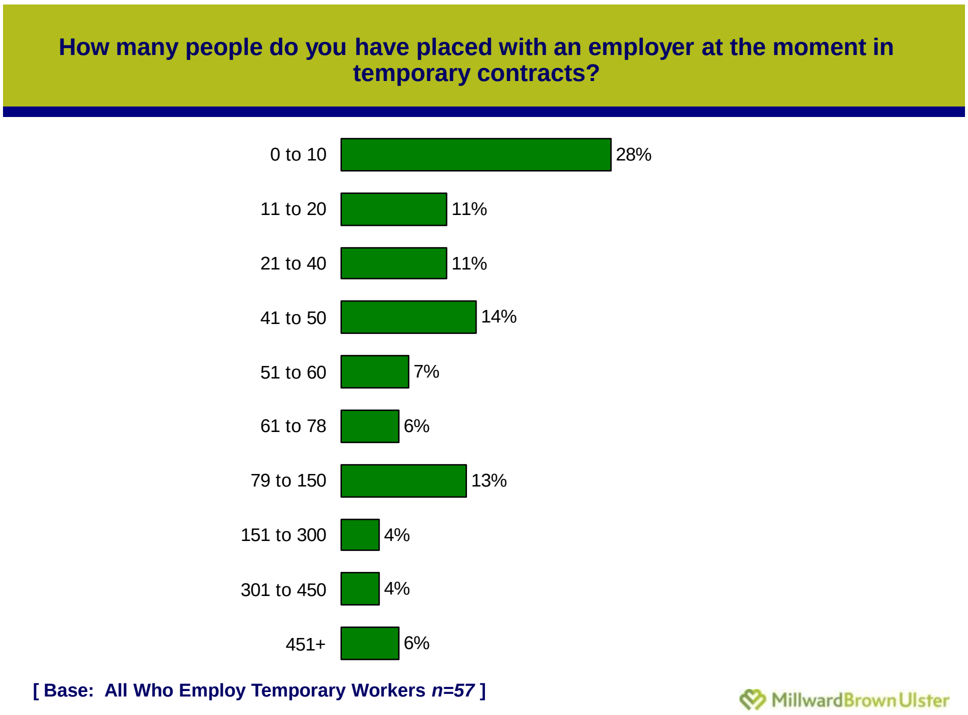
The majority of these individuals were from Northern Ireland (77%), 8% originated from GB or RoI and 17% from further afield. The majority of these non-nationals were of Polish descent.

Fig. 5.14



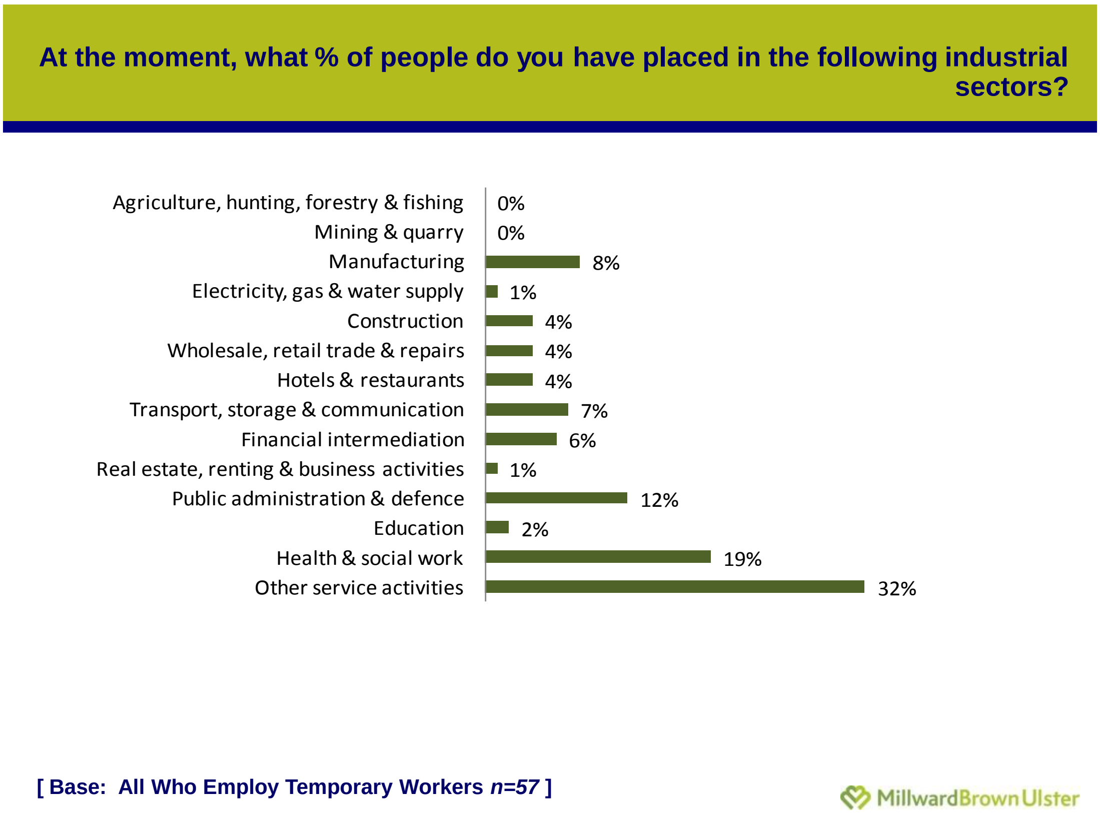
Typically, the average placement was less than 3 months (56%), with a third of placements lasting between 3 and 6 months (33%). 1 in 10 placements lasted up to a year (11%). No temporary contracts lasted in excess of 12 months.

Fig. 5.15



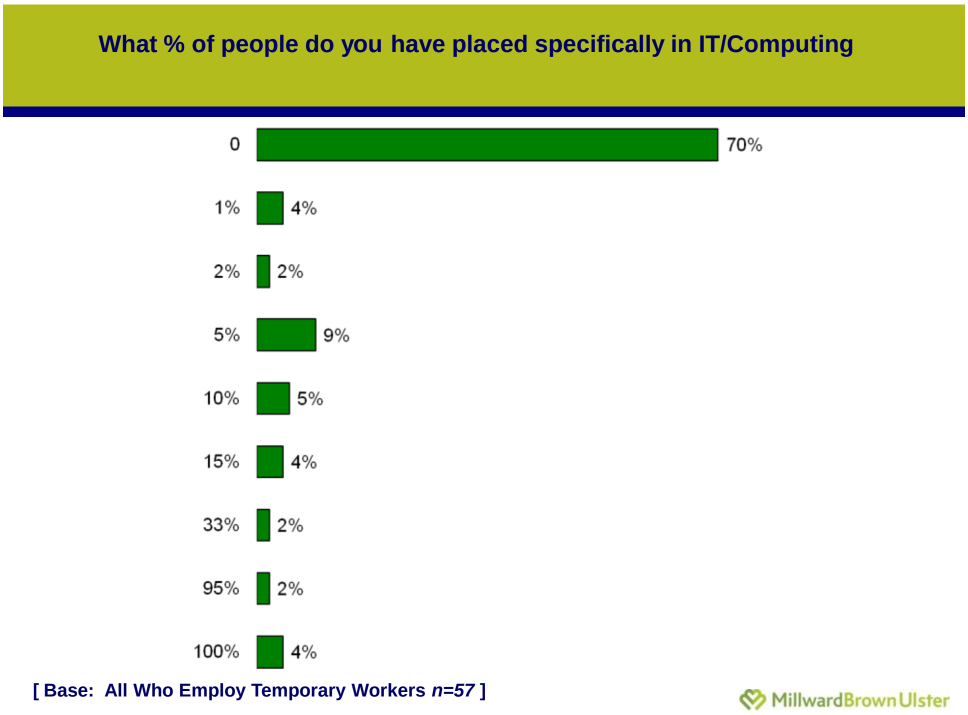
Nearly 3 in 10 employment businesses (28%) had up to 10 people currently placed. 64% had a maximum of 50 people placed. However, at the other extreme 6% had currently in excess of 450 people placed; this was mainly driven by 2 multi site offices who claimed to have 2000 and 3500 placements respectively.

Fig. 5.16



Health and social work was the largest sector, accounting for 19% of all current placements, followed by public administration and defence at 12%. Manufacturing accounted for 8%. (Others include a variety of options such as Government agencies, administration, recycling and modelling, IT shared services, engineering, merchandising, solicitors, accountants, advertising, call centre and supply chain).

Fig. 5.17

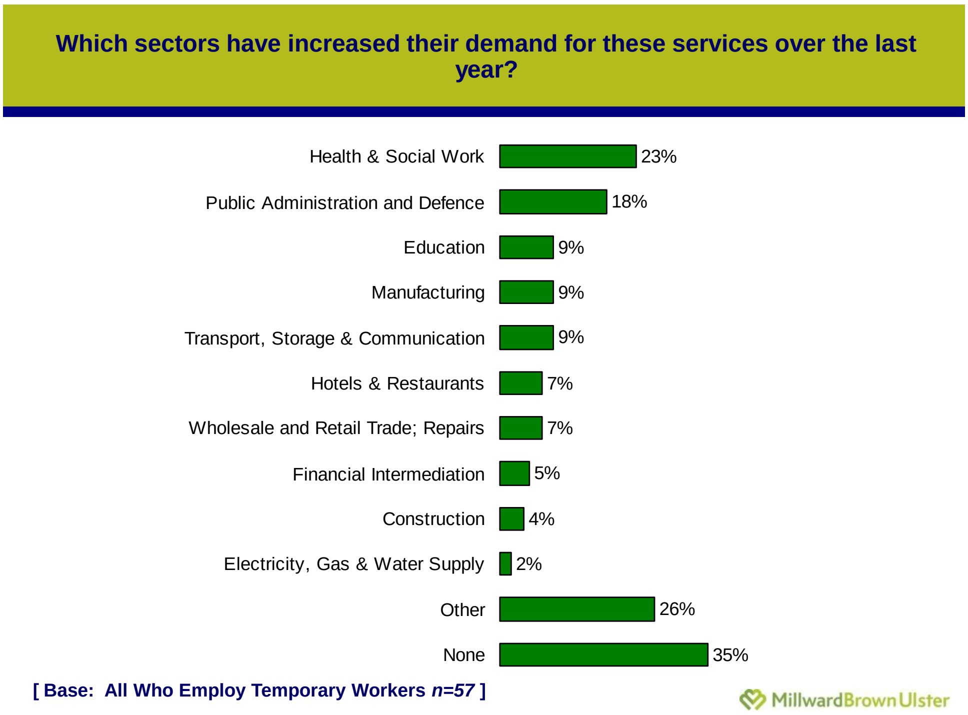


7 in 10 employment businesses (70%) had currently no individuals placed in an IT or computing role. 4% were completely specialised within this sector.

Fig. 5.18

At present, 28% of employment businesses are being used by 4 companies or fewer for their business. Over half (56%) are being used by less than 20 companies. However, at the other end of the scale 10% of the larger employment businesses are dealing with 76+ employers.

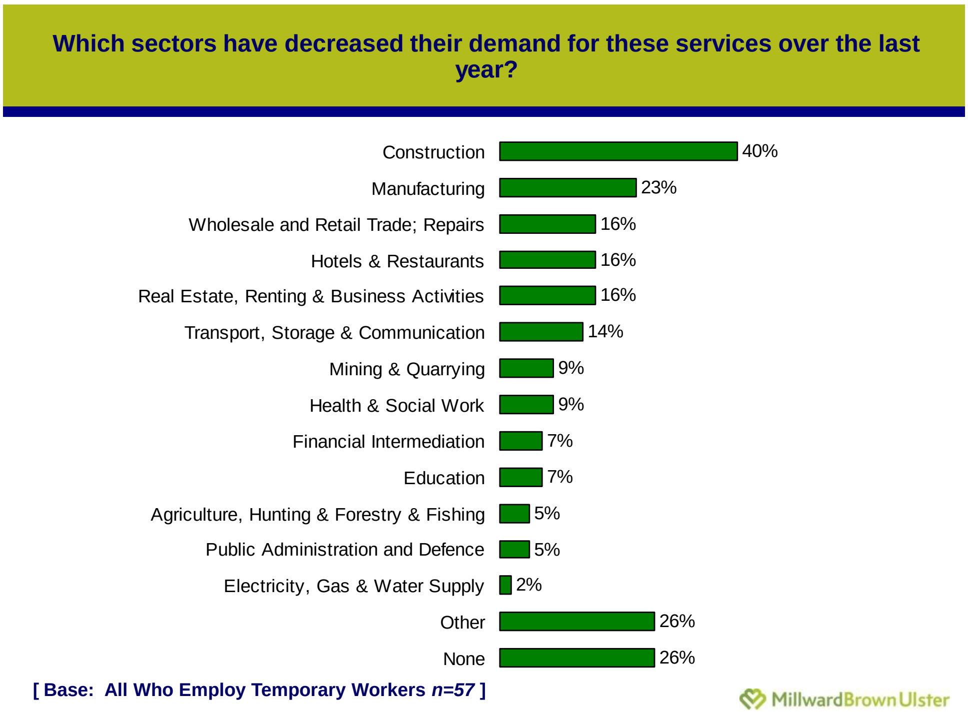
Fig. 5.19



(Please note respondents could give more than 1 answer.)

Health and social work (23%) and public administration and defence (18%) were the main areas of growth in the last 12 months. Other service activities also experienced growth (26%). (Other includes a variety of options such as Government agencies, administration, recycling and modelling IT shared services, engineering, merchandising, solicitors, and accountants). 35% of respondents suggested no increased demand in any sector.

Fig. 5.20



(Please note respondents could give more than 1 answer.)

The Construction (40%) and Manufacturing (23%) sectors experienced major decline, other service activities (merchandising, modelling, solicitors, accountancy, engineering, advertising, call centre supply chain and IT) also experienced loss (26%).

Table 5.1 - The net effect (increases- decreases) for each sector:

Net Effect for Each Sector

Sector	% Change
Health and Social Work	14
Public Administration and defence	13
Education	2
Electricity, gas and water supply	0
Other Service Activities	0
Financial Intermediation	-2
Agriculture and hunting and forestry and fishing	-5
Transport, storage and communication	-5
Mining and quarrying	-9
Wholesale and retail trade; repairs	-9
Hotels and Restaurants	-9
Manufacturing	-14
Real Estate, renting and business activities	-16
Construction	-36

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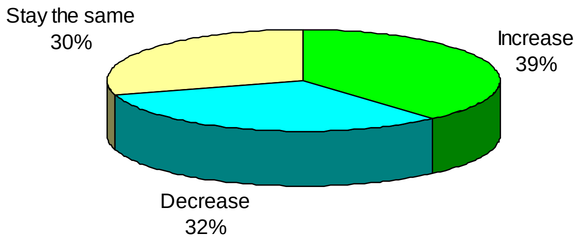
The net effect clearly indicates that most sectors had suffered a decline in the last 12 months, with the exception of the 3 sectors outlined in yellow. Public administration and defence (13% increase) and health and social work (14% increase) were sectors experiencing highest levels of growth in the last year. Education also experienced growth in the last year (2% increase).

Fig. 5.21

In your opinion will business in your office increase, decrease or stay the same in the next 12 months?



[Base: All Who Employ Temporary Workers *n=57*]

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Nearly 4 in 10 (39%) employment businesses believed their business would increase in the next 12 months, compared to just over 3 in 10 (32%) who believed their business would decline in the same period. 3 in 10 (30%) suggested business would remain static.

Fig. 5.22

Pushing business and having potential business (23%) was the main reason that respondents believed their business would increase. A turnaround in the economy, bringing about an increase in need for temporary and contract staff, was also mentioned (18%); this was followed by an increase in sectoral demand (14%).

Fig. 5.23

(Please note respondents could give more than 1 answer.)

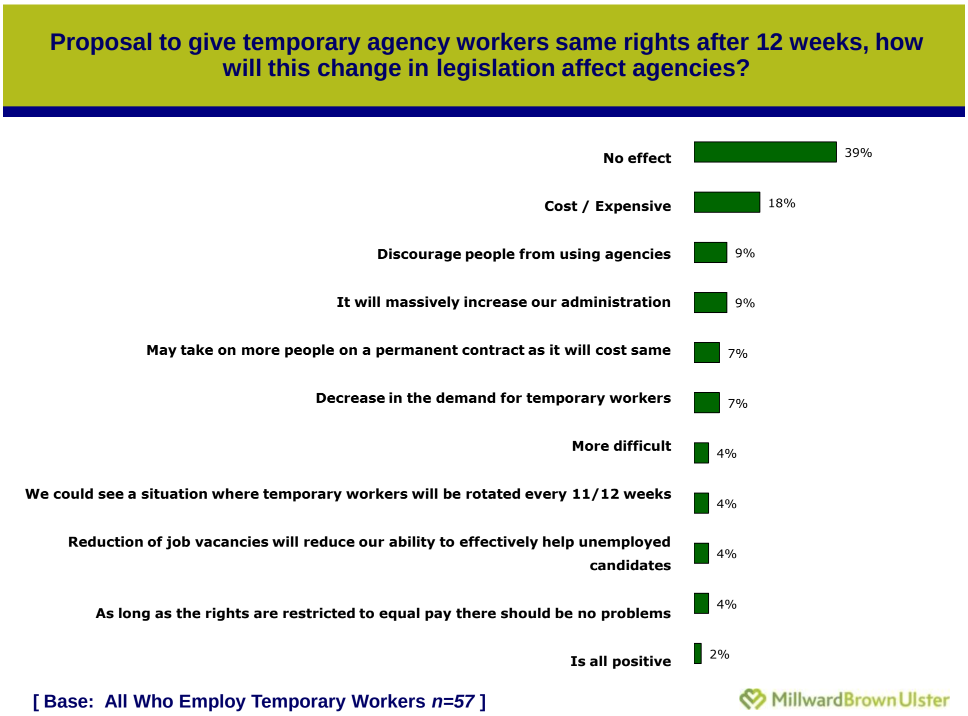
A decrease in job opportunities (28%) was the main reason respondents thought their business would decline, followed by the economic climate (22%), weakness of the construction sector (11%) and a general lack of market confidence were also mentioned (11%). A more pessimistic view of the economic climate and a decline in job opportunities generally influenced those who suggested overall business would decline in the next 12 months.

Fig. 5.24

(Please note respondents could give more than 1 answer.)

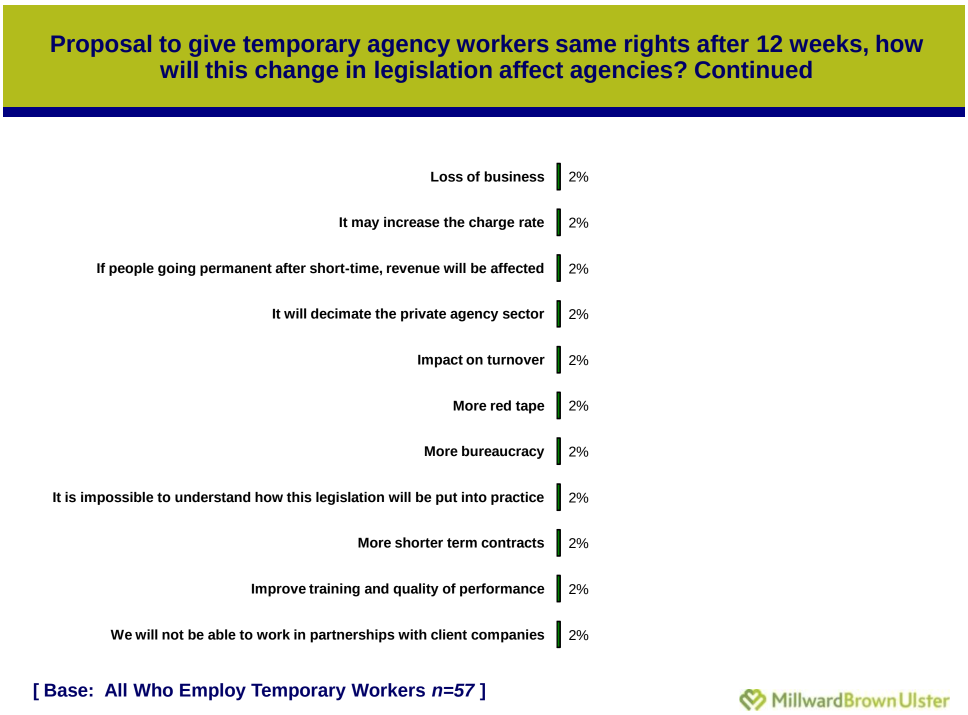
The proposed change in legislation was briefly outlined to respondents at this point and they were subsequently asked how they believed this would affect hirers. Nearly one third (32%) believed it would have no impact at all and 3 in 10 (30%) suggested it would increase the cost of employing temporary workers. There were also concerns expressed as to whether there would be a reduction in the number of temporary workers (18%) or indeed whether this option would disappear completely (16%). There was a suggestion that length of temporary contracts would reduce or more permanent contracts would increase (7%).

Fig. 5.25.1



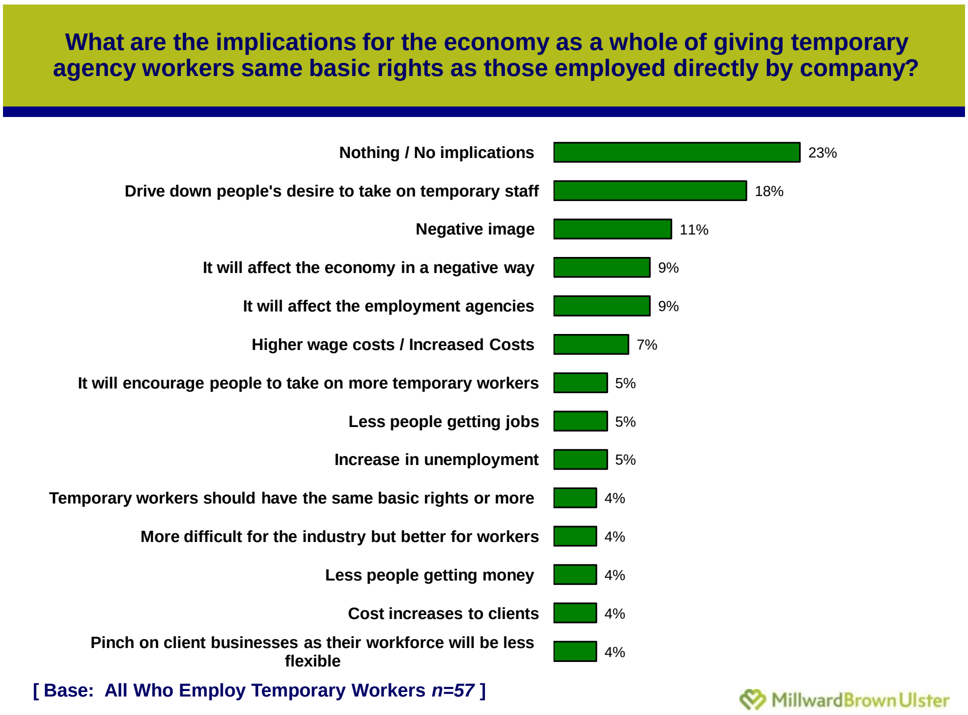
(Please note respondents could give more than 1 answer.)

Fig. 5.25.2



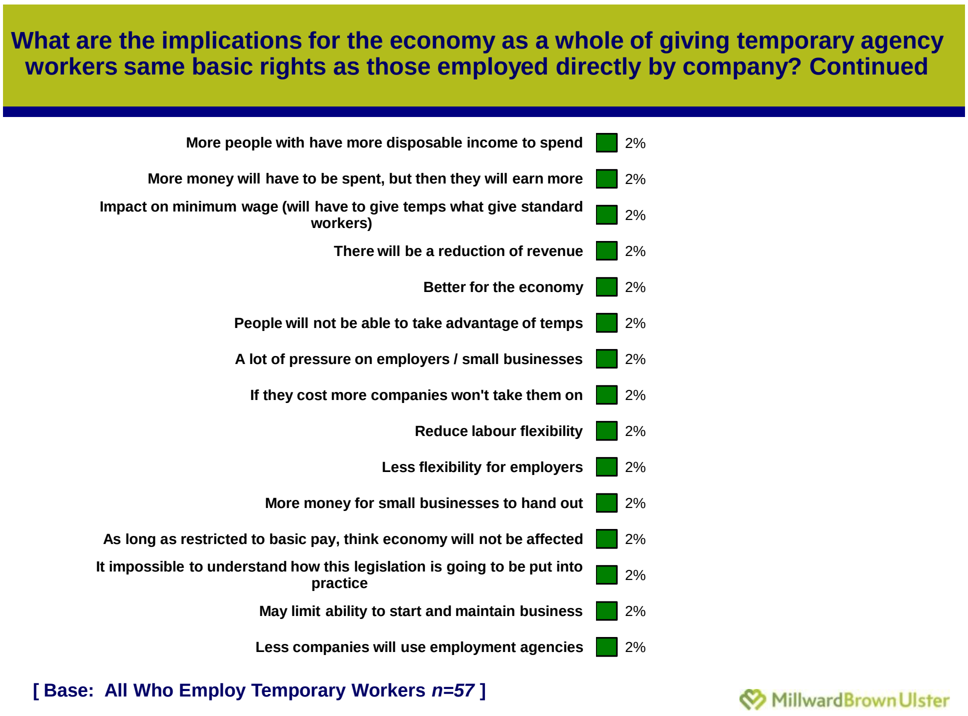
39% of employment businesses felt there would be no effect, whilst 9% felt it might discourage the use of temporary workers and 9% felt it would increase employment agencies' administration levels.

Fig. 5.26.1



(Please note respondents could give more than 1 answer.)

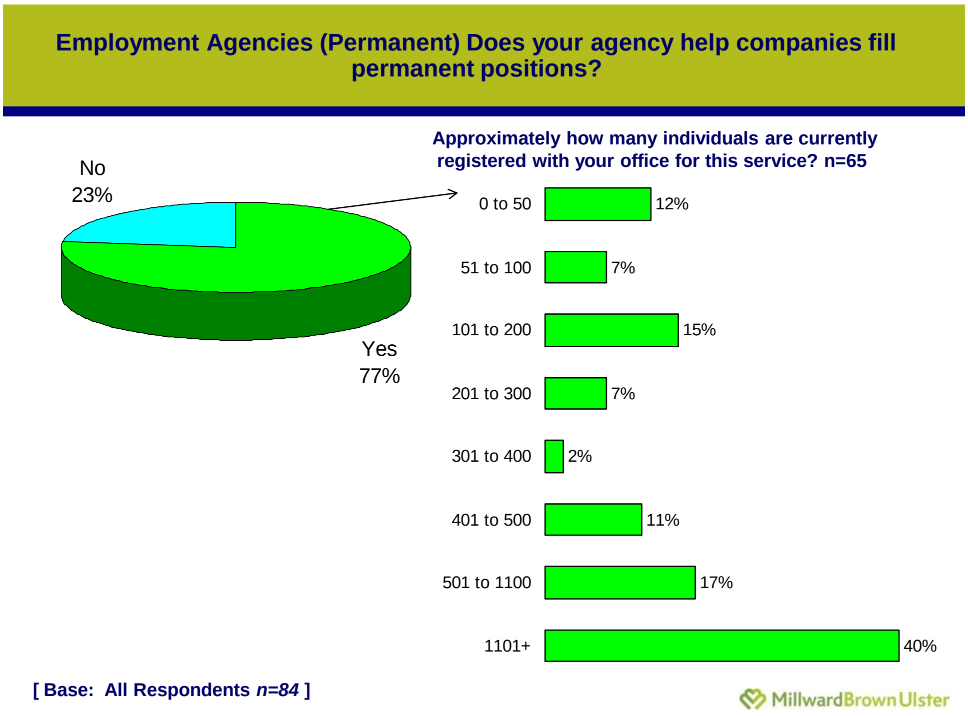
Fig. 5.26.2



23% of employment businesses suggested there would be no impact on the economy as a whole as a result of this new legislation, but a significant minority also suggested that it would decrease the desire to take on temporary staff (18%) and 11% felt it would have a negative impact on the economy as a whole.

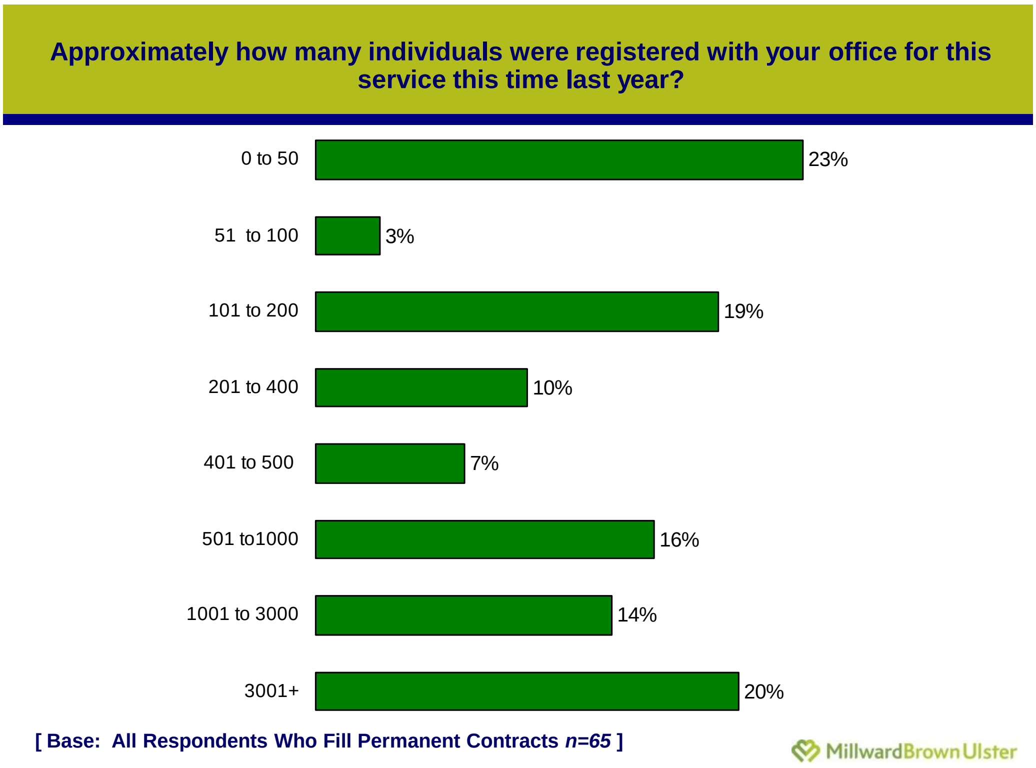
5.4. Employment Agencies (Permanent)

Fig.5.27



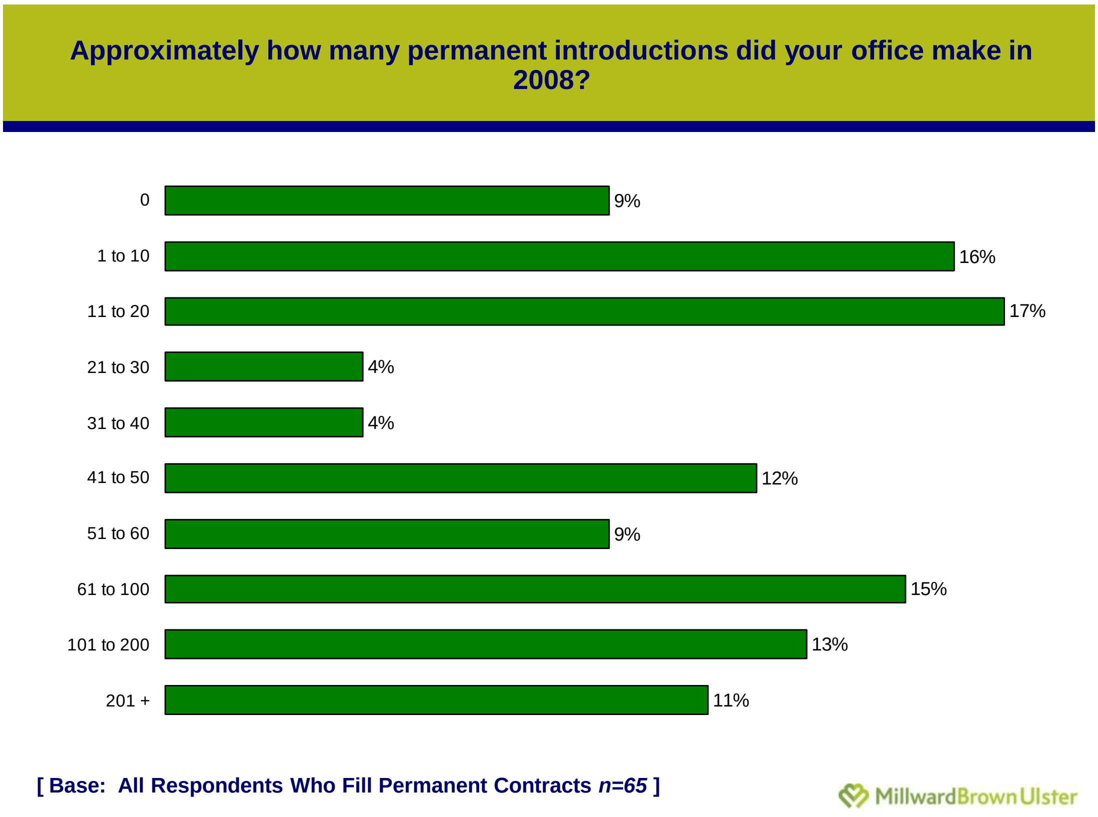
Nearly 8 in 10 employment agencies (77%) helped fill permanent positions. 12% of those companies had up to 50 individuals registered for this service. At the other extreme, 4 in 10 (40%) claimed to have over 1100 registered individuals.

Fig. 5.28



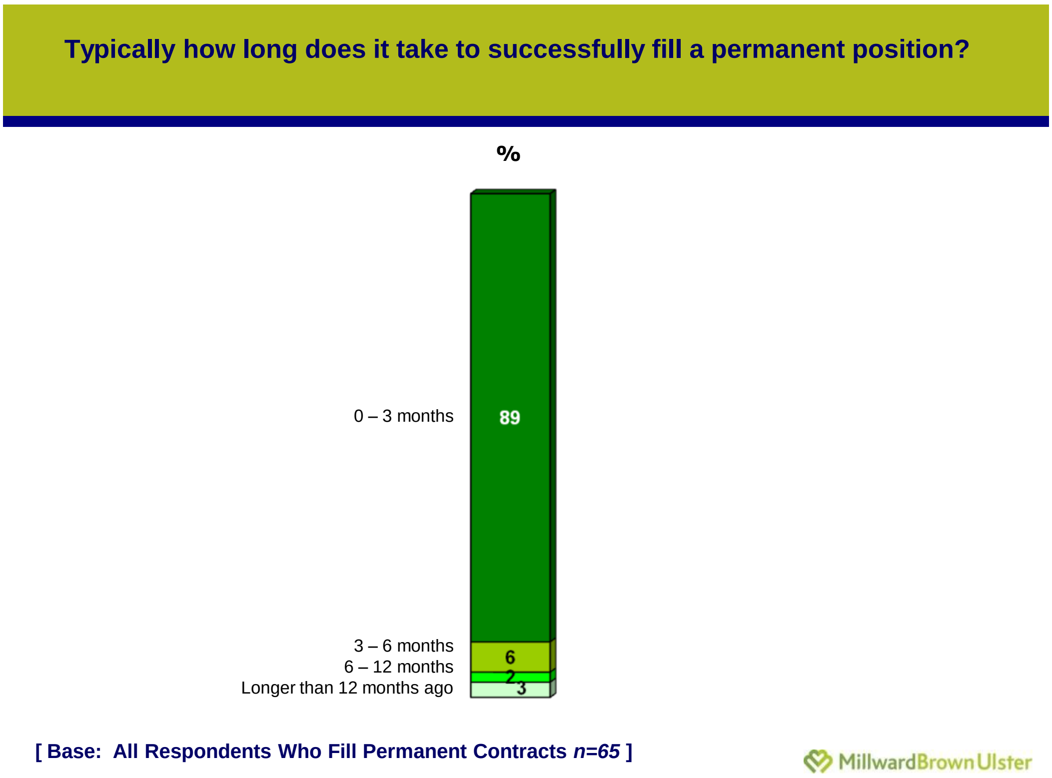
This year 34% of businesses had up to 200 individuals registered compared to 45% last year.

Fig. 5.29



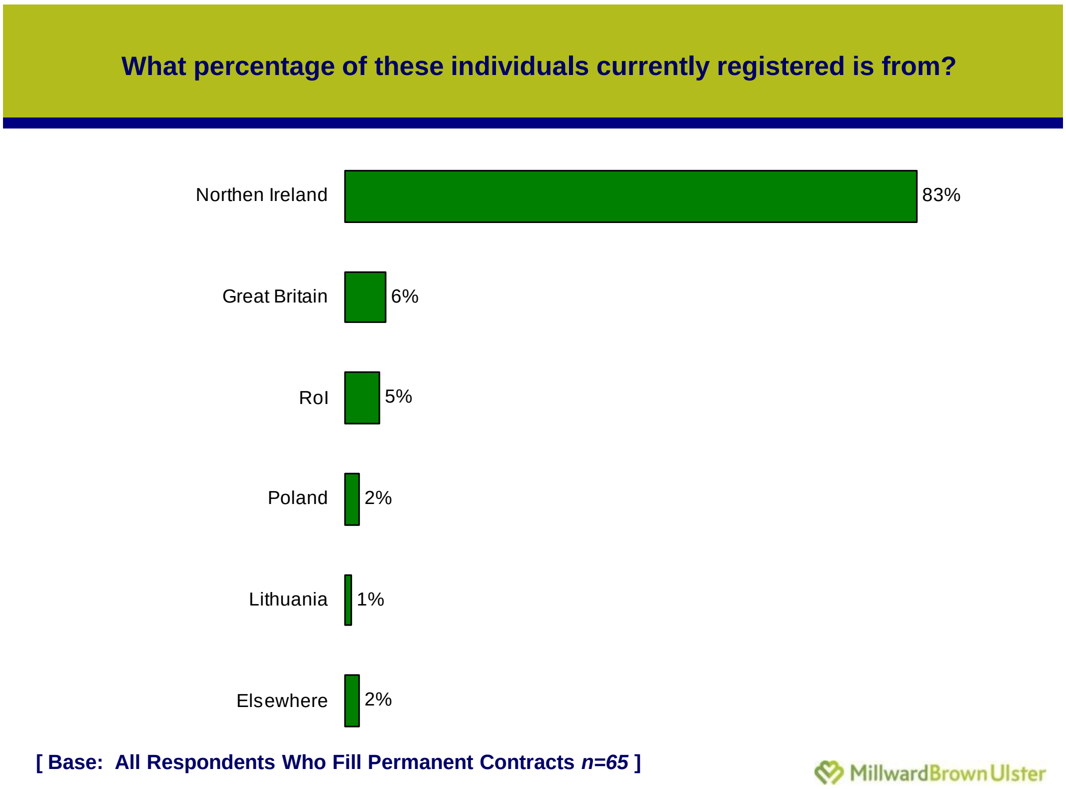
9% of respondents who fill permanent positions had not made any permanent introductions in 2008. 42% had made less than 20 introductions. However, 24% had secured more than 100 introductions in this period. This was mainly driven by 2 multinational companies citing 1200 and 2428 introductions respectively.

Fig. 5.30



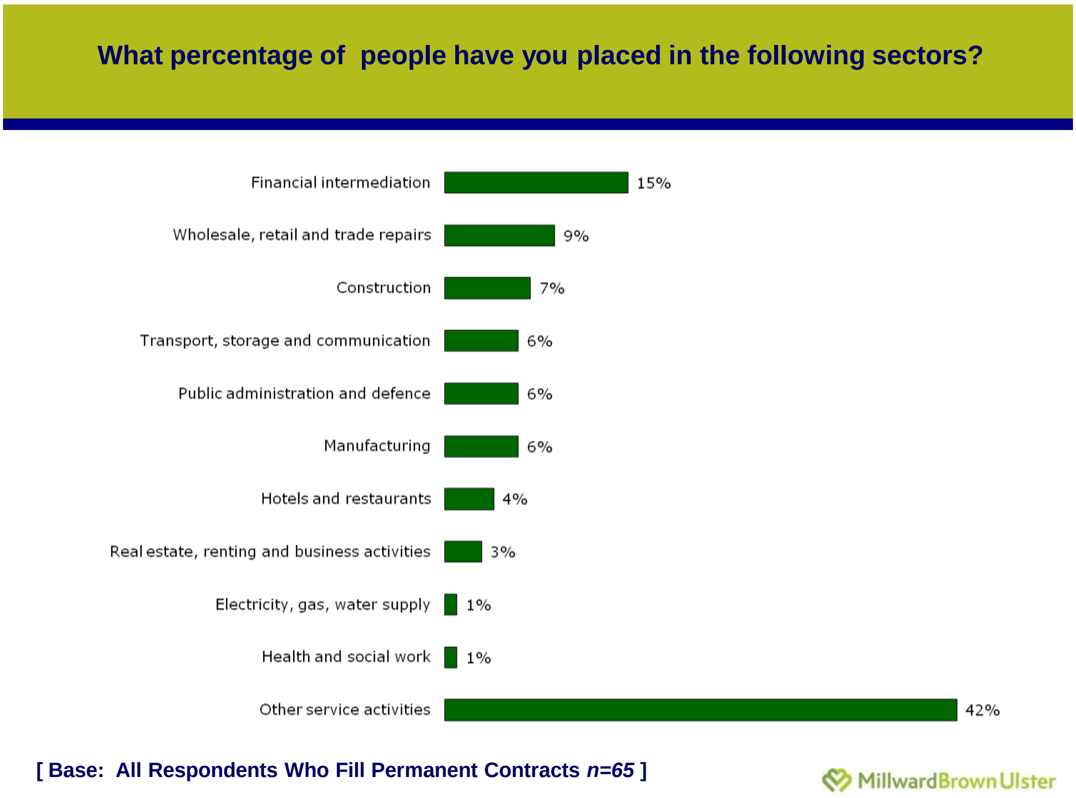
89% of permanent positions were filled within 3 months, 8% were filled between 3 months and a year and only 3% required more than year to fill.

Fig. 5.31



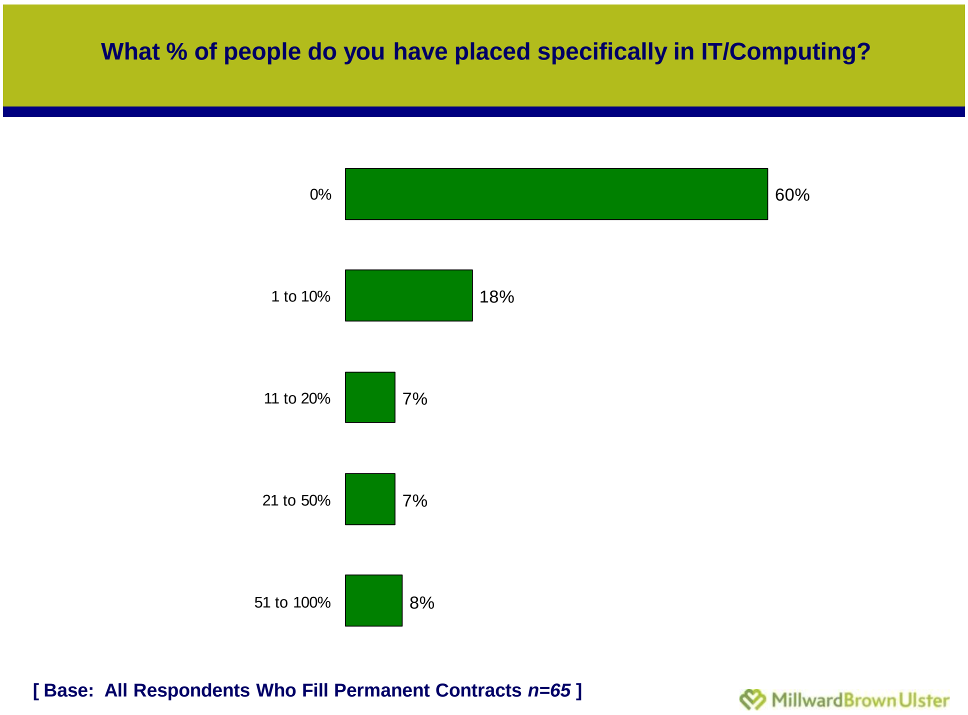
83% of these individuals were based in Northern Ireland, 11% originated from Great Britain and RoI and the remaining 5% from further afield. The majority of these non-nationals were of Polish descent.

Fig. 5.32



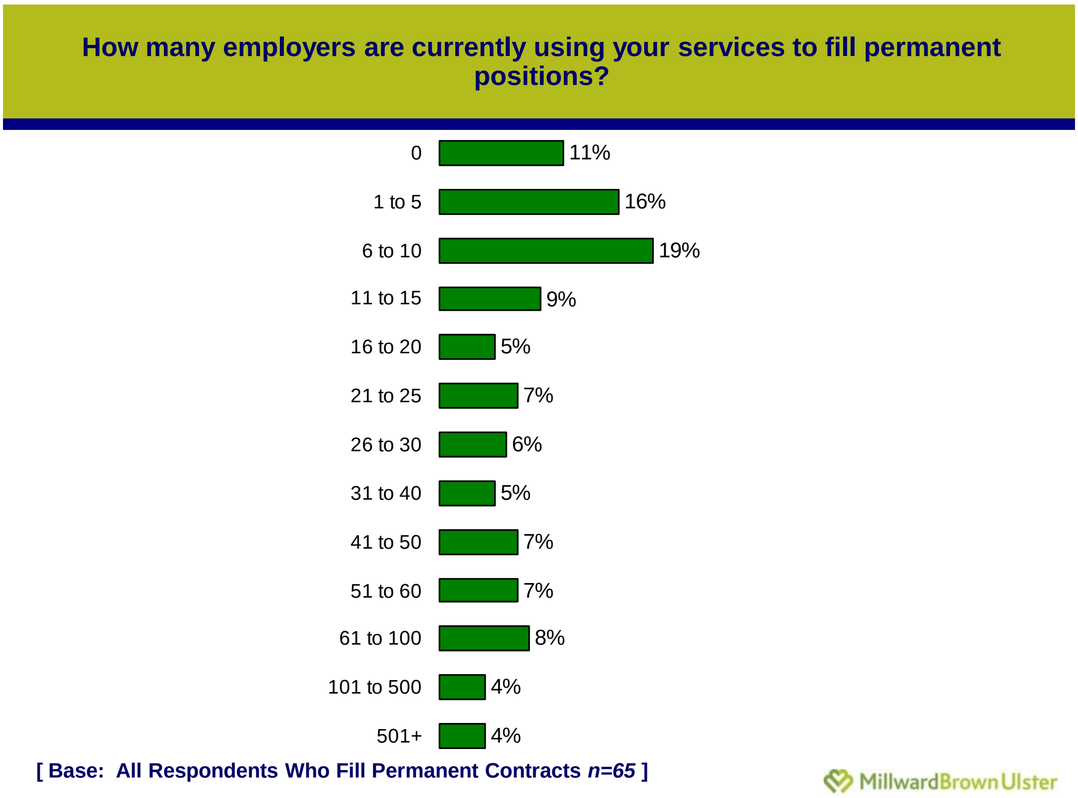
For 42% of employment agencies, the other service activities sector (advertising, food and catering, call centres, beauty industry IT, legal services, engineering sales and marketing and fashion) was the largest sector for placements. Financial intermediation had 15% of placements and wholesale retail and trade; repairs sector had 9% of placements.

Fig. 5.33



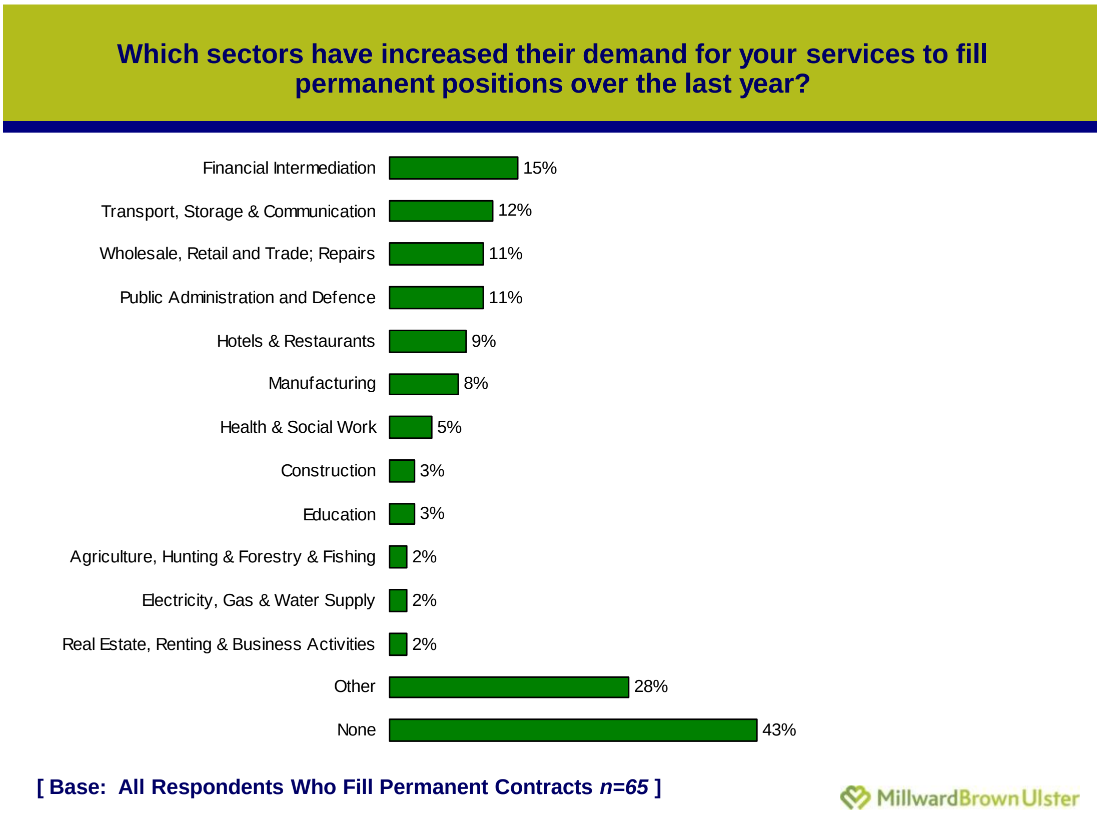
6 in 10 employment agencies (60%) didn't have anyone placed in IT positions.

Fig. 5.34



11% of respondents who fill permanent positions had no employers using their services to fill permanent positions, whilst 16% had between 1 and 5 employers using their services. 4% of employment agencies had more than 500 companies using their services.

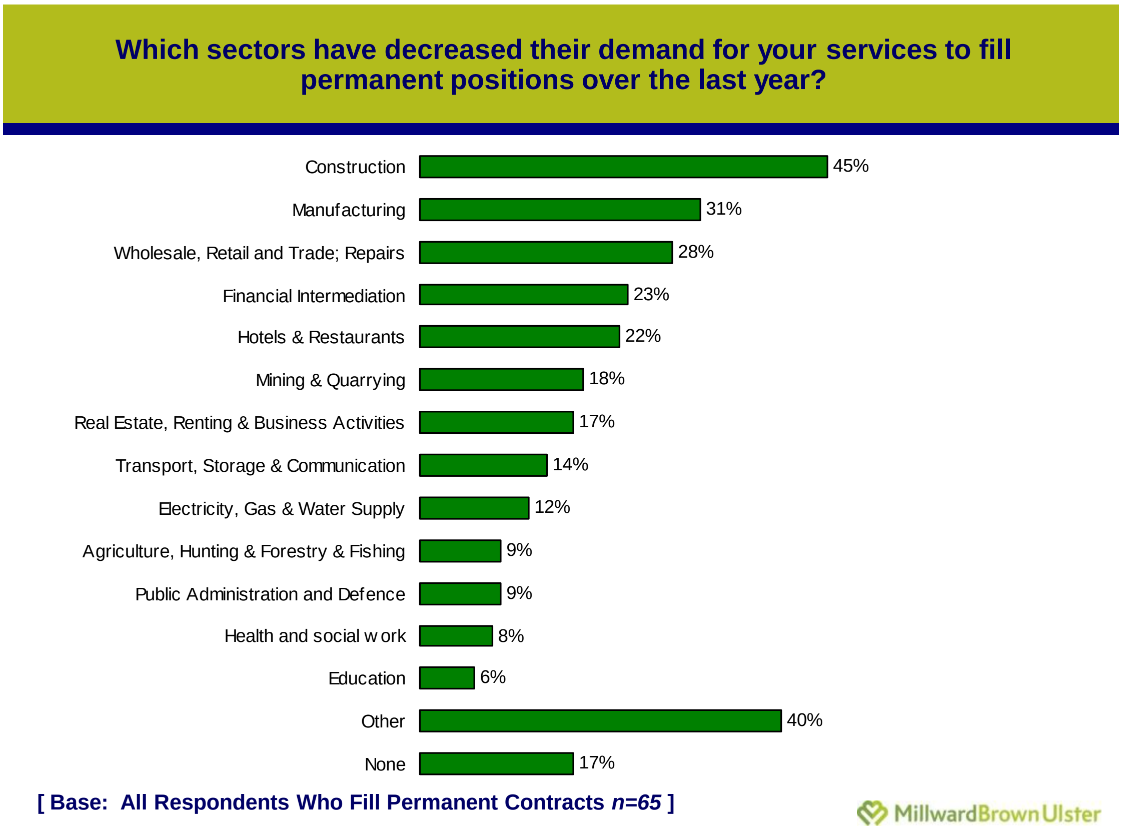
Fig. 5.35



(Please note respondents could give more than 1 answer.)

Other service activities (28%) (administration, call centres, accounting, senior management, web design, IT, legal services, engineering sales and marketing and fashion) experienced the greatest increase in demand over the last 12 months, followed by financial intermediation (15%), transport/storage and communication (12%), wholesale and retail and trade; repairs (11%) and public administration and defence (11%).

Fig. 5.36



(Please note respondents could give more than 1 answer.)

Construction experienced the largest level of decline (45%) followed by other services (40%) (Call centres, sales and marketing, legal advisory, engineering, fashion, banking, IT, surveyors, beauticians and pharmaceutical industry), manufacturing (31%) and wholesale, retail and trade; repairs (28%).

Table 5.2 - The net effect table (increases-decreases) for each sector.

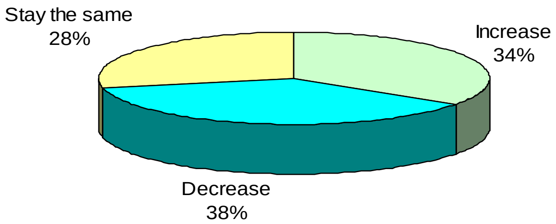
Net Effect for Each Sector
Permanent Sector

Sector	% Change
Public Administration and defence	2
Transport, storage and communication	-2
Education	-3
Health and Social Work	-3
Agriculture,hunting and forestry and fishing	-7
Financial Intermediation	-8
Electricity, gas and water supply	-10
Other Service Activities	-12
Hotels and Restaurants	-13
Real Estate, renting and business activities	-15
Wholesale, retail and trade; repairs	-17
Mining and quarrying	-18
Manufacturing	-23
Construction	-42

The net effect clearly indicates that almost all sectors had suffered a decline in the last 12 months with public administration and defence being the only sector to have a positive net effect (increase of 2%).

Fig. 5.37

In your opinion will business in your office increase, decrease or stay the same in the next 12 months?



[Base: All Respondents Who Fill Permanent Contracts *n=65*]

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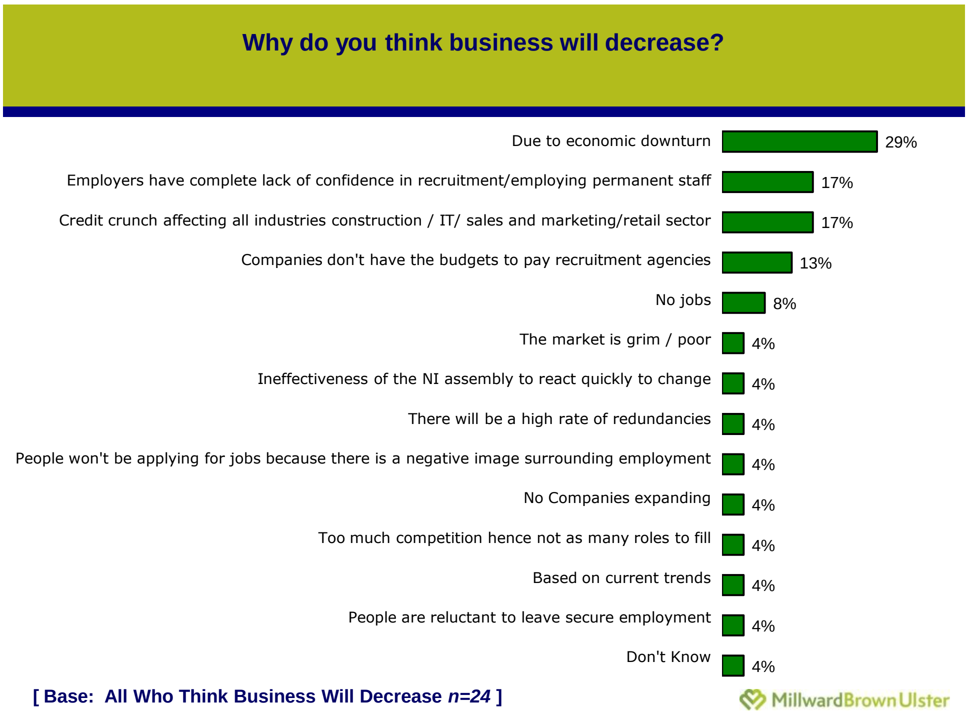
A third of employment agencies (34%) thought business in their offices would increase in the next 12 months, whilst 38% thought it would decrease. 28% of employment agencies thought business would stay the same.

Fig. 5.38

Half of those employment agencies (50%) who expected an increase in business still suggested that the overall market was poor. Individual circumstances of companies created higher levels of optimism rather than market conditions.

Fig. 5.39



Economic downturn (29%) and lack of confidence (17%) were the main reasons for employment agencies expecting a downturn in business.

5.5. Key Market Facts

Fig.5.40

Key facts

- **Total market**
  - Structure
    - > 92% independently owned
    - > 6% chain
    - > 2% franchise
  - 11% involved in gangmaster sector
  - 54% assist migrant workers
  - 54% REC membership
  - 12% have offices in Europe
  - Location:
    - > 65% Belfast
    - > 17% Co Down
    - > 13% Co Antrim
    - > 27% Rest of Northern Ireland

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Fig. 5.41

Key facts

- **Temporary sector**
  - 77% from Northern Ireland
  - Sectors of net increased demand
    - > Public administration and defence
    - > Health and social work
    - > Education

- **Permanent sector**
  - 83% from Northern Ireland
  - 89% of positions filled in 3 months
  - Sectors of net increased demand
    - > Public administration and defence

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5.6. Summary

The market appeared to be in constant fluctuation, with some businesses closing or non-operational. Therefore it was extremely difficult to accurately assess the size of the market; however, based on this survey from databases provided by DEL (which deliberately excluded some organisations such as those involved in investigations with DEL) it would appear that there were approximately 243 active businesses. Further subsequent data cleaning on the database (which included adding back in organisations which were purposely omitted to avoid surveying multiple branches within the same chain; adding back in agencies DEL had wished excluded from the contact sample due to investigation and agencies identified subsequent to the design of the initial contact list and agreed by DEL to be bona fide recruitment agencies), augmented this number to 270 for the entire industry.

68% provided temporary workers and 77% filled permanent positions. The majority (58%) of businesses employed less than 5 staff and only 25% had an annual turn-over in excess of £1 million. 65% were located in the Belfast area and only 8% were part of a franchise or chain. 88% did not have offices outside Europe. 54% helped migrant workers in their search for employment. 79% of respondents believed they felt well or fairly well informed about the current legislation governing the recruitment sector.

5.6.1 Temporary Sector

The majority of temporary workers were NI nationals (77%). 56% of all temporary placements were less than 3 months in duration. Health and social work (19%), public administration and defence (12%) and other activities (32%) were the key employment sectors. Health and Social work (14%), public administration and defence (13%) and education (2%) were the only areas of net growth.

With regard to the proposed change in legislation, around a third of respondents believed it would have no impact for hirers, agencies or the economy as a whole. However, there was also some concern as to the increased cost and associated impact on demand for employing temporary staff.

5.6.2 Permanent Sector

The majority (89%) of permanent positions took up to 3 months to fill. 83% were NI nationals. Financial intermediation (15%) and wholesale retail and trade; repairs (9%) were the main sectors of employment. Public administration and defence was the only area of net growth (2%) in the last 12 months.

6. Temporary Agency Workers

As part of the research project the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) wished to investigate the attitudes and opinions of temporary agency workers. A face-to-face interview methodology was adopted to access the attitudes and opinions of the temporary agency workers. The quantitative survey approach was considered the most advantageous as it would allow for a level of statistical robustness to be applied to the data. The respondents for this element of the research project were chosen randomly.

In order to supplement the findings from the temporary agency workers survey Millward Brown Ulster placed five questions on their monthly CATIBUS survey to provide some added value and further insight into the employment agency sector. The Millward Brown Ulster CATIBUS is a telephone survey of 500 respondents throughout Northern Ireland, fully representative of the general population in terms of age, gender, socio-economic grouping and region.

6.1 Methodology

Fieldwork was carried out between the 12th of June and the 28th of July 2009. The methodology consisted of the following elements:
107 face-to-face interviews with temporary agency workers conducted on-street (at pre-determined locations throughout Northern Ireland);
500 telephone interviews with the general Northern Ireland population.

Quantitative Research
The quantitative findings provided further insight and also provided some hard data which was informative in terms of setting benchmarks on which to judge further improvements or changes in attitudes in the medium to long term.

Face-to-face Survey
Millward Brown Ulster conducted a quantitative face-to-face survey to engage with temporary agency workers and to provide a more comprehensive and robust dataset on the current levels of understanding and knowledge.

A face-to-face survey was considered to be the most efficient method of accessing and conducting research amongst large numbers of temporary agency workers in Northern Ireland.

Interviewing was conducted on-street in the immediate vicinity of a number of pre-selected employment agencies. Nursing agencies were omitted as once registered with an agency the temporary worker is not required to call to the agency office[6].

All interviewing was conducted in compliance with the Market Research Society (MRS) Code of Conduct and by Millward Brown executive interviewers fully trained under the Interviewer Quality Control Scheme (IQCS). The fieldwork for this element of the project was carried out on the 12th and the 19th of June 2009. All respondents were assured that their opinions could be given anonymously to Millward Brown.

The target for the survey was 100 interviews, and all interviews were successfully completed during the fieldwork period.

Telephone Survey

Millward Brown Ulster also placed five questions on their monthly CATIBUS telephone survey to engage with a further 500 individuals of the general Northern Ireland population and to provide a more comprehensive and robust dataset on the current levels of registration and usage of employment agencies.

This methodology was considered to be the most economical and efficient method of accessing the usage levels of employment agencies amongst large numbers of the general Northern Ireland population.

All interviewing was conducted by Millward Brown executive interviewers using Millward Brown's in-house purpose built Computer-Aided Telephone Interviewing (CATI) suite. The fieldwork was carried out between the 21st and the 28th of July 2009. All respondents were assured that their opinions could be given anonymously to Millward Brown.

The target for the survey was 500 interviews, and all interviews were successfully completed during the fieldwork period.

[6] Despite this, and even though no interviewing was conducted in the vicinity of any nursing agencies as you will see in Figs. 1.2 and 1.3 a small proportion (2%) of temporary workers picked up by our interviewers were currently employed in nursing. It was agreed with DEL not to exclude any temporary workers from the survey.

Quantitative Findings (important information)

In total 107 face-to-face interviews and 500 telephone interviews were successfully completed and in some cases, where there are single response answers, results will add to marginally less or more than 100%. This is simply due to rounding.

A number of charts contained within this section of the report contain an overall (total) result and a breakdown by key variables such as gender, age, socio-economic grouping and nationality. In some instances the sum of the individual elements of the key variable used for cross-tabulating results will be marginally less than the total base. This is simply due a small number of respondents refusing to answer some of these key questions which were subsequently used for analysis proposes.

Finally, as a general guide sub-group analysis is only deemed to have any statistical reliability where there are at least 50 responses for each sub-group. In a number of instances throughout this section of the report the base for some of the sub-groups is less than 50. These results are not robust enough to scrutinise in any great detail and should be used for indicative purposes only.

6.2 Sample Structure

Face-to-face Survey

The sampling points for the recruitment of participants in the face-to-face survey element of the assignment were provided to Millward Brown Ulster by the Employment Relations Policy and Legislation Branch of DEL.

In total 25 sampling points were selected for this element of the project and indicative quotas were placed on the number of interviews to be carried out at each specific location.

Table 6.1 overleaf highlights the proposed quota against the actual number of interviews achieved and illustrates that the study followed the geographical spread required by DEL.

Table 6.1

Location	Number of sampling points	Quota (%)	Achieved (%)	Number of interviews achieved
Armagh	1	4%	5%	5
Belfast	15	60%	63%	67
Coleraine	3	12%	7%	8
Dungannon	1	4%	5%	5
Newry	1	4%	2%	2
Portadown	4	16%	19%	20
Total	**25**	**100%**	**100%***	**107**

*The sum of individual locations actually totals 101 – this is due to rounding.

Telephone Survey CATIBUS

The telephone survey sample source was purchased by Millward Brown Ulster from Experian, a company which offers general Northern Ireland population unique data sources matching specific criteria.

The sample frame used for the telephone element of the assignment was representative of the Northern Ireland population as a whole. As a result, direct quotas were placed on a number of key demographics including: gender, age group, region, and socio-economic grouping. Table 6.2 highlights the sample breakdown and the actual number of interviews achieved.

Table 6.2

Demographic	Quota (%)	Achieved (%)	Number of interviews achieved
Gender			
Male	48%	48%	239
Female	52%	52%	261
Total	100%	100%	500
Age			
16-24	16%	16%	80
25-34	19%	19%	95
35-54	35%	35%	175
55+	30%	30%	150
Total	100%	100%	500
SEG			
ABC1	46%	46%	230
C2DE	54%	54%	270
Total	100%	100%	500
Region			
Belfast City	26%	26%	130
North	15%	15%	75
South	33%	33%	165
West	26%	26%	130
Total	100%	100%	500

Table 6.2 illustrates that the telephone survey was fully representative of the Northern Ireland population in terms of age, gender, region and socio-economic grouping as per the latest Census data.

6.3 Socio-Economic Grouping (SEG)

Socio-economic grouping is a system of demographic classification widely used by organisations in the UK to segment consumers/citizens and have become a standard for social and market research.

Socio-economic groups are based on the head of household or chief income earner and are defined as follows:

Table 6.3

SEG	Occupation of Chief Income Earner
A	Higher managerial, administrative or professional
B	Intermediate managerial, administrative or professional
C1	Supervisory or clerical, and junior managerial, administrative or professional
C2	Skilled manual workers
D	Semi and unskilled manual workers
E	All those entirely dependent on the state long term, through sickness, unemployment, old age or other reasons

The grades are often grouped into ABC1 and C2DE and these are taken to equate to middle class and working class respectively. Only around 2% of the UK population identifies as upper class and this group is not included in the classification scheme.

Retired persons who have a company pension or private pension, or who have private means are graded on their previous occupation.

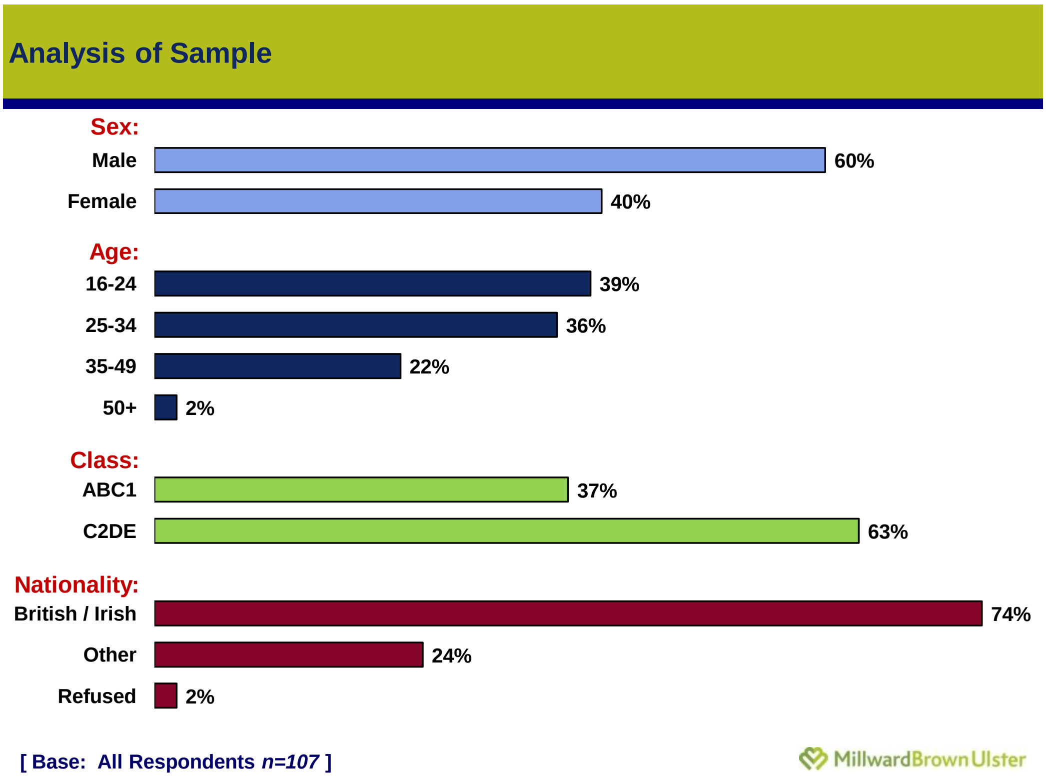
Students in higher education living at home are graded on the occupation of the head of the household. Students living away from home are graded C1 (no account is taken of casual or vacation jobs).

6.4 Temporary Agency Workers Face-to-Face Survey

In total 107 respondents were interviewed face-to-face, all of whom were currently employed on a temporary basis through an employment agency.

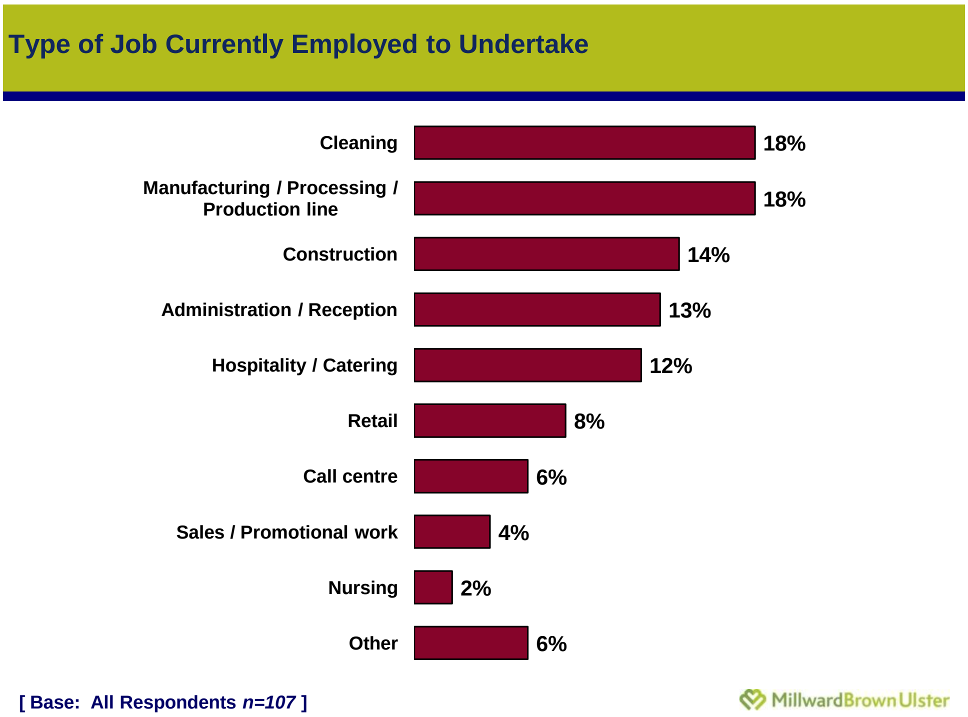
Fig. 6.1 below illustrates the breakdown of the final sample achieved.

Fig. 6.1



Interviews were conducted on a random basis and it is evident that a disproportionate number of temporary workers employed via recruitment agencies were males, non-nationals and those from the lower socio-economic grouping.

Fig.6.2



18% of the 107 temporary agency respondents were employed in cleaning, whilst 18% were employed in manufacturing/processing/production line and 14% were employed in construction.

Fig. 6.3

Type of Job Currently Employed to Undertake

	Total	Sex		Age			Class		Nationality	
		Male *(64)*	Female *(43)*	16-24 *(42)*	25-34 *(39)*	35-49 *(24)*	ABC1 *(40)*	C2DE *(67)*	National *(79)*	Migrant *(26)*
Cleaning	18%	6%	35%	19%	18%	17%	15%	19%	14%	31%
Manufacturing / Processing / Production line	18%	25%	7%	7%	33%	13%	3%	27%	9%	46%
Construction	14%	23%	0%	7%	3%	38%	3%	21%	18%	4%
Administration / Reception	13%	9%	19%	17%	15%	4%	25%	6%	16%	0%
Hospitality / Catering	12%	11%	14%	12%	15%	8%	8%	15%	11%	15%
Retail	8%	9%	7%	10%	8%	8%	15%	4%	10%	0%
Call centre	6%	9%	0%	12%	3%	0%	15%	0%	8%	0%
Sales / Promotional work	4%	0%	9%	10%	0%	0%	8%	1%	5%	0%
Nursing	2%	0%	5%	0%	3%	4%	5%	0%	3%	0%
Other	6%	8%	4%	6%	2%	8%	3%	7%	6%	4%

[Base: All Respondents *n=107*]

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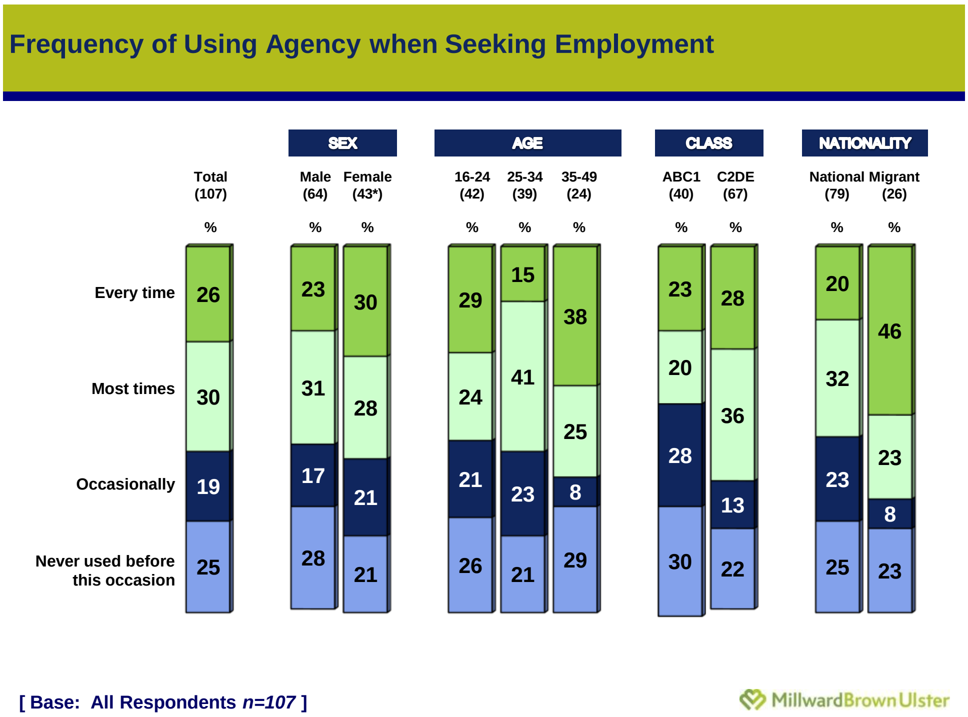
More than a quarter (27%) of those employed via a recruitment agency from a lower socio-economic background, were in a manufacturing / processing / production line type job. A further 21% from a C2DE background were temporarily placed in construction jobs.

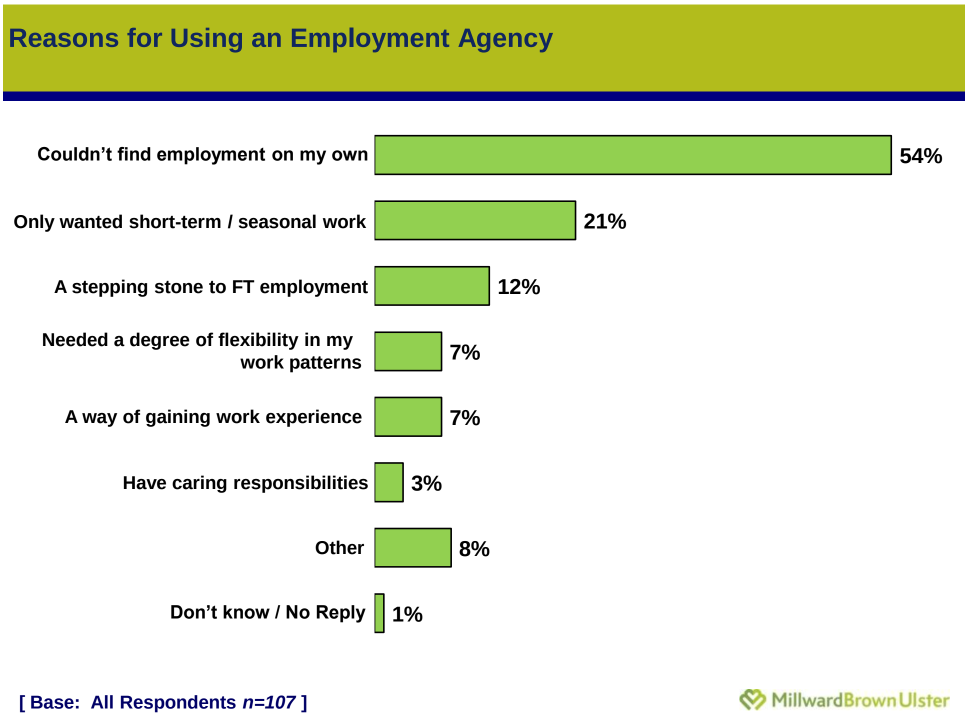
Males were much more likely to work in construction and females more likely to be temporarily placed in cleaning jobs. Although the base numbers are small, the indicative evidence suggests that migrant workers are more likely to be employed in the cleaning, manufacturing/processing/production line, and hospitality/catering sectors.

Fig. 6.4



More than half (56%) of all temporary agency workers stated that they used an employment agency every time (26%) or most of the time (30%) when seeking employment. Migrant workers were more likely to use an employment agency every time (46%).

Fig. 6.5



(Please note – respondents could give more than one answer to this question)

More than half (54%) of all temporary workers stated that the reason they used an employment agency to help secure a temporary position was because they couldn't find employment on their own.

Another key reason, cited by just over a fifth (21%) of all temporary agency workers was that they were only interested in short-term or seasonal work.

Fig. 6.6

Reasons for Using an Employment Agency

	Total	Sex		Age			Class		Nationality	
		Male	Female	16-24	25-34	35-49	ABC1	C2DE	National	Migrant
		(64)	(43)	(42)	(39)	(24)	(40)	(67)	(79)	(26)
Couldn't find employment on my own	54%	58%	49%	48%	56%	58%	33%	67%	46%	81%
Only wanted short-term / seasonal work	21%	17%	26%	36%	10%	13%	38%	10%	28%	0%
A stepping stone to full-time employment	12%	14%	9%	5%	18%	17%	13%	12%	11%	12%
Need degree of flexibility in work pattern	7%	6%	9%	5%	10%	8%	18%	1%	10%	0%
A way of gaining work experience	7%	5%	9%	10%	5%	4%	10%	4%	8%	0%
Have caring responsibilities	3%	2%	5%	0%	8%	0%	8%	0%	4%	0%
Other	8%	11%	5%	7%	10%	8%	5%	10%	6%	12%
Don't know / No reply	1%	2%	0%	2%	0%	0%	3%	0%	1%	0%

[Base: All Respondents *n=107*]

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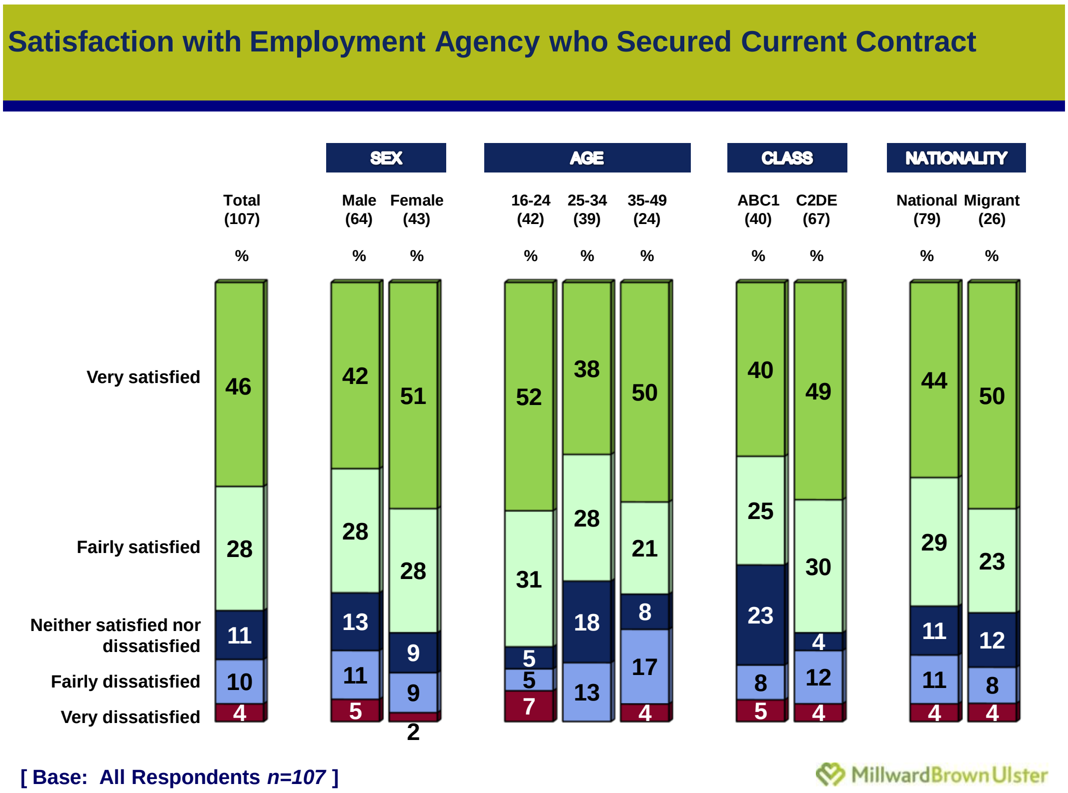
(Please note – respondents could give more than one answer to this question)

Migrant workers (81%) and those from a lower socio-economic background (67%) were much more likely to state that they couldn't find employment on their own.

More than a third of temporary workers in the 16 to 24 age bracket (36%) and 38% of those from the higher ABC1 socio-economic background stated that they used an employment agency because they only wanted short term or seasonal work, much higher than the overall figure of 21%.

Fig. 6.7

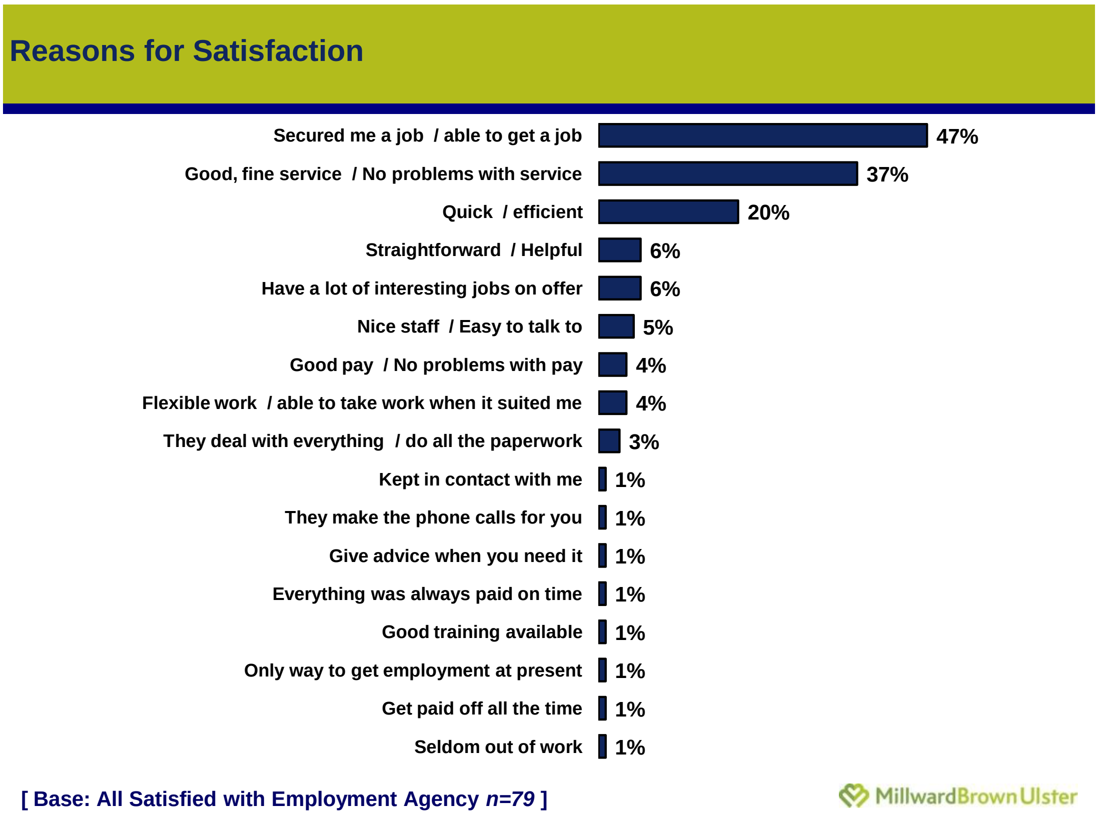


Almost three quarters (74%) of all temporary agency workers stated that they were satisfied with the employment agency who secured their current contract.

Satisfaction with the employment agency who secured their current contact was highest amongst younger temporary agency workers with more than 8 in 10 (83%) of all those in the 16 to 24 age bracket stating they were very or fairly satisfied.

Over a fifth (21%) of temporary agency workers in the 35 to 49 age group stated they were fairly or very dissatisfied, the highest levels of dissatisfaction stated by any group.

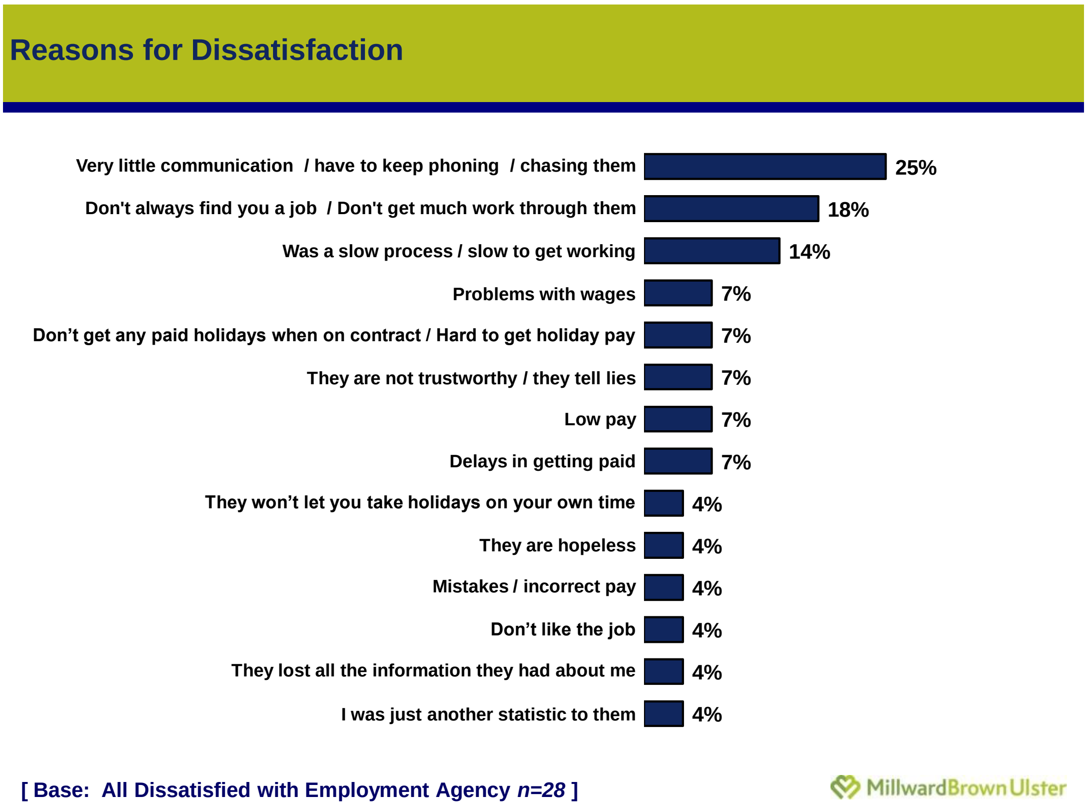
Fig. 6.8



(Please note – respondents could give more than one answer to this question)

Almost half (47%) of all temporary workers who were satisfied with the employment agency stated that the main reason for their satisfaction was the ability of agency to secure them a job. Other key reasons included good service provision (37%).

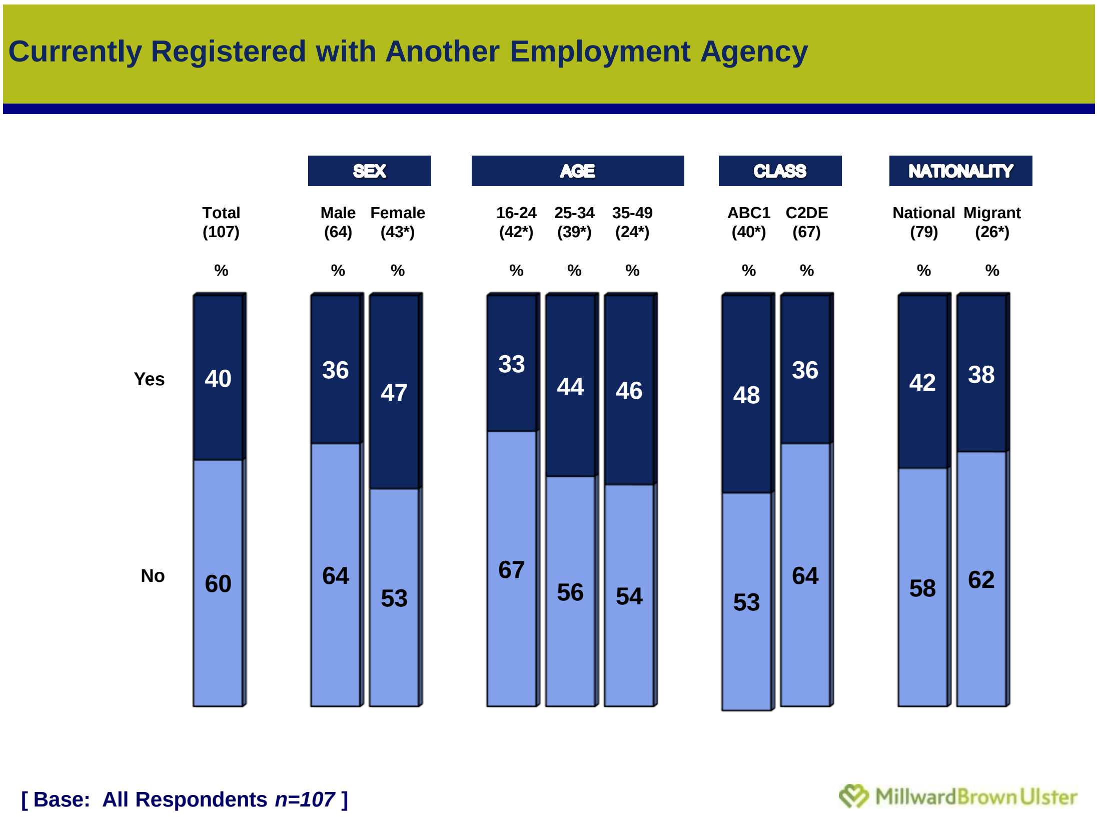
Fig. 6.9



(Please note – respondents could give more than one answer to this question).

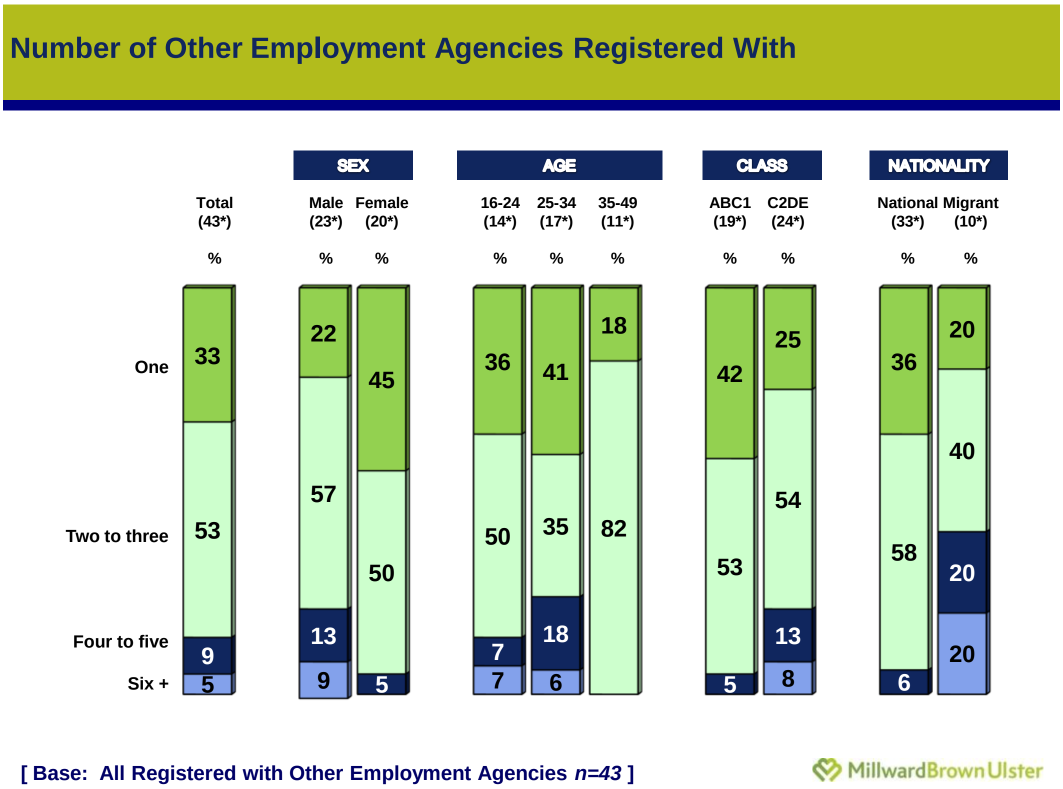
A quarter (25%) of all temporary workers who were dissatisfied with the employment agency stated that the main reason for their dissatisfaction was the lack of communication from the employment agency. Other key reasons related to the lack of job offers (18%) and the slow process of finding a job (14%).

Fig. 6.10



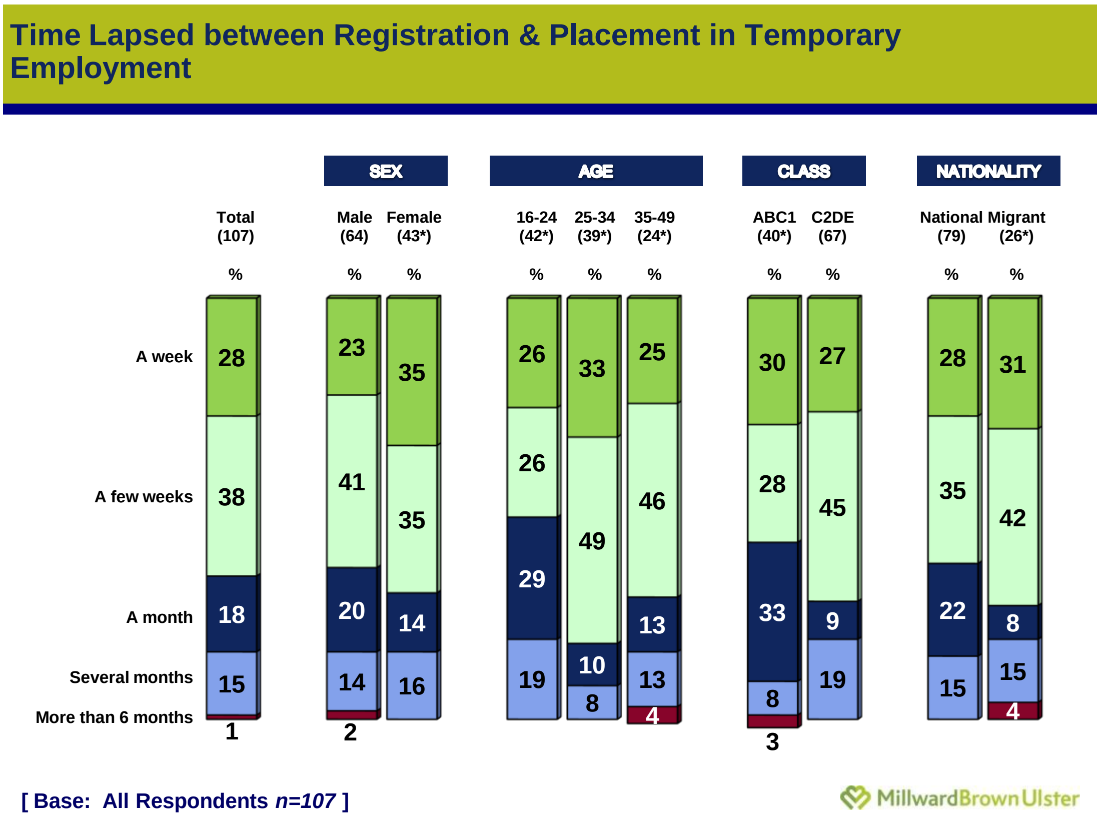
40% of temporary agency workers were registered with an agency other than the employment agency who secured their current contract.

Fig. 6.11



One third (33%) of temporary workers registered with another agency are signed-up with only one other employment agency, while more than half (53%) are registered with an additional two or three employment agencies. Very small proportions were registered with four or more additional employment agencies (14%).

Fig. 6.12

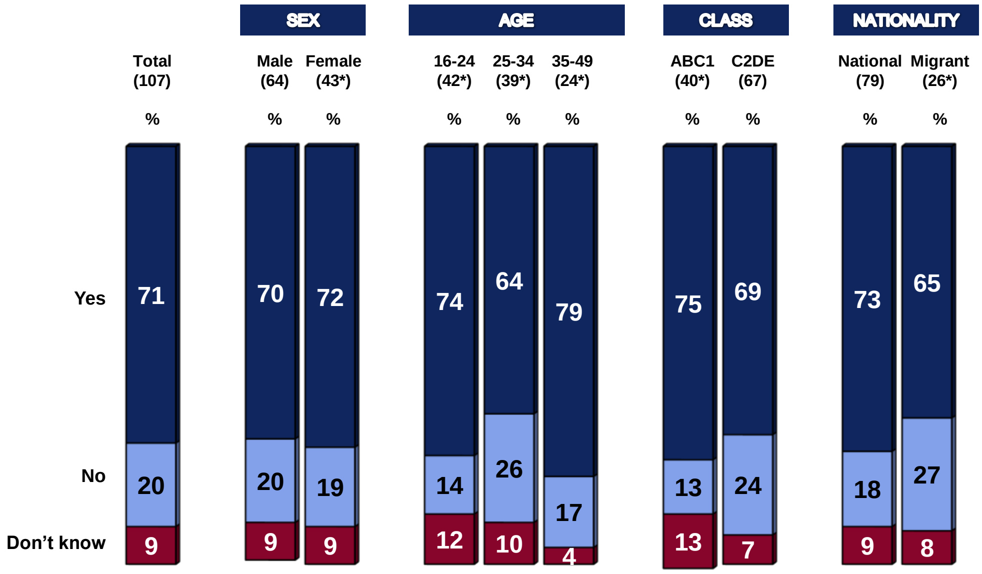


Almost two thirds (66%) of all temporary agency workers were placed in temporary employment within a few weeks.

82% of temporary agency workers in the 25 to 34 age group stated they were placed within a week or a few weeks, much higher than the 16 to 24 year olds, just over half (52%) of whom were placed within the same time period.

Fig.6.13

Asked to Agree Terms & Conditions by the Agency before the Agency would Help the Worker Find Employment



[Base: All Respondents *n=107*]

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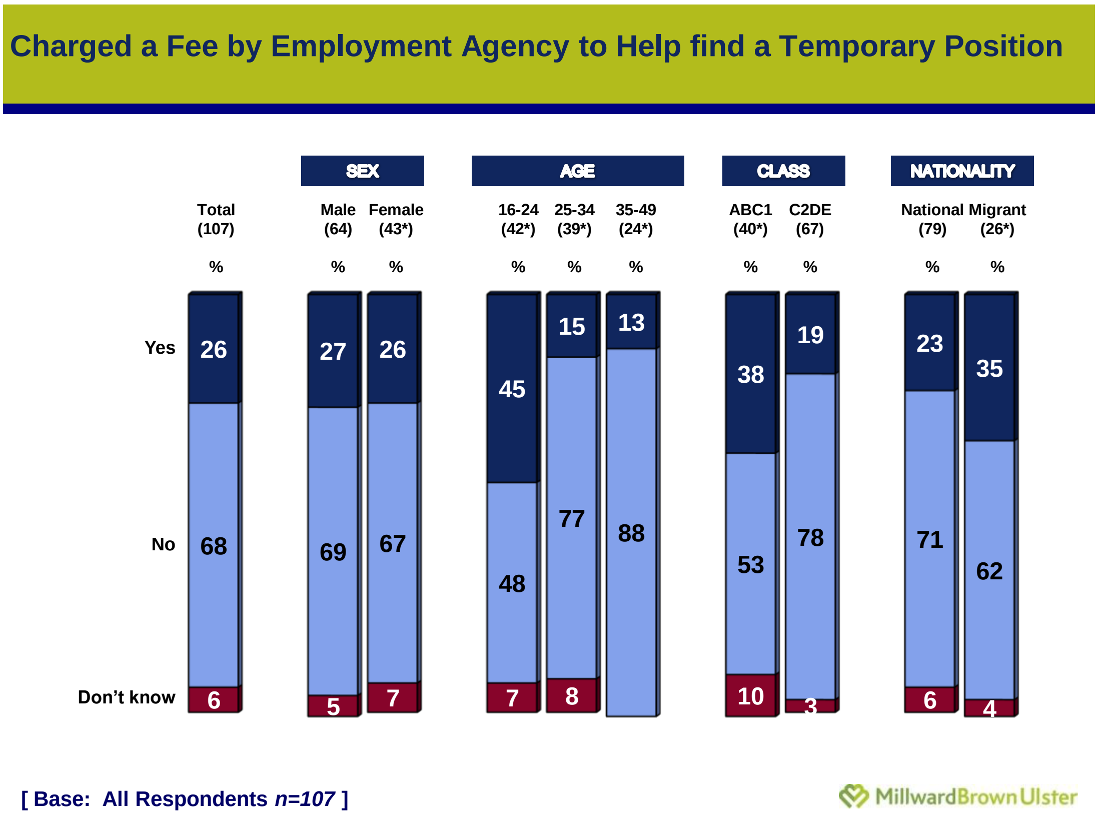
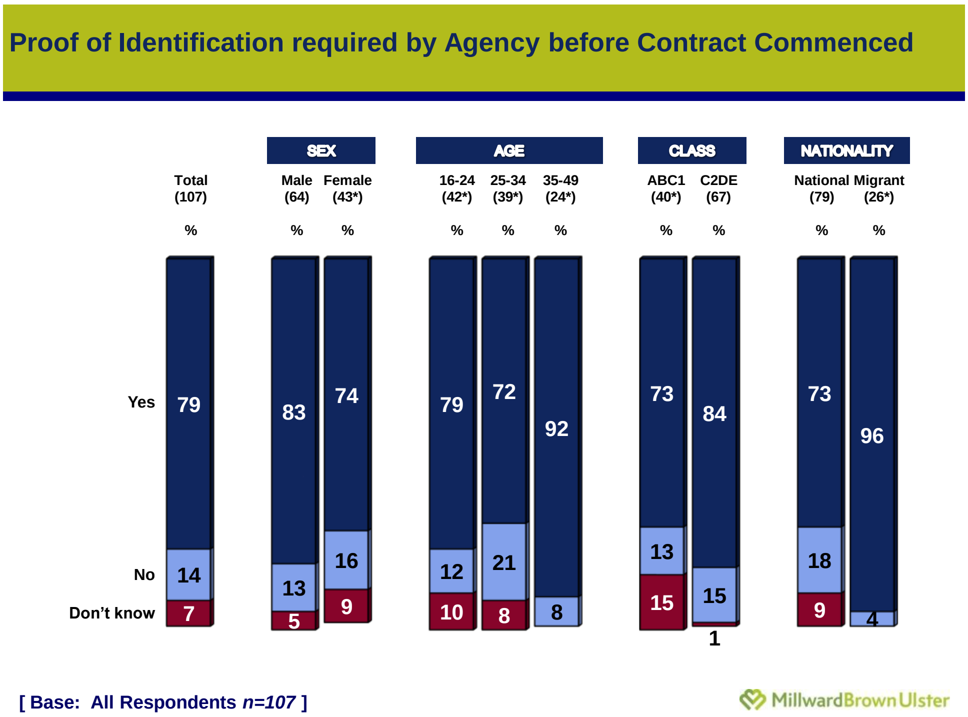
More than 7 in 10 (71%) of all temporary agency workers were asked to agree terms and conditions by the employment agency before they would help them find employment.

Fig. 6.14



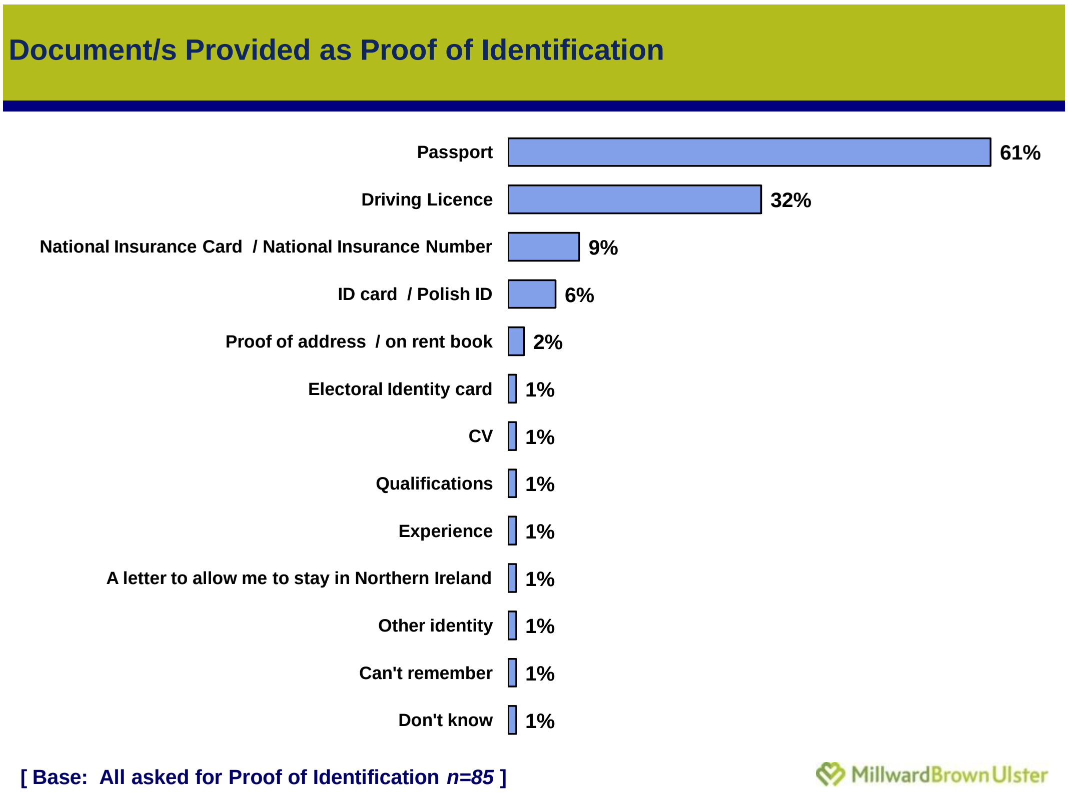
More than a quarter (26%) of temporary agency workers were charged a fee by the employment agency to help find them a temporary position. This practice was most prevalent amongst those from an ABC1 background (38%), 16 to 24 year olds (45%) and migrant workers (35%).

Fig. 6.15



More than three quarters (79%) of temporary agency workers were required by the employment agency to produce proof of identification before commencing their contract.

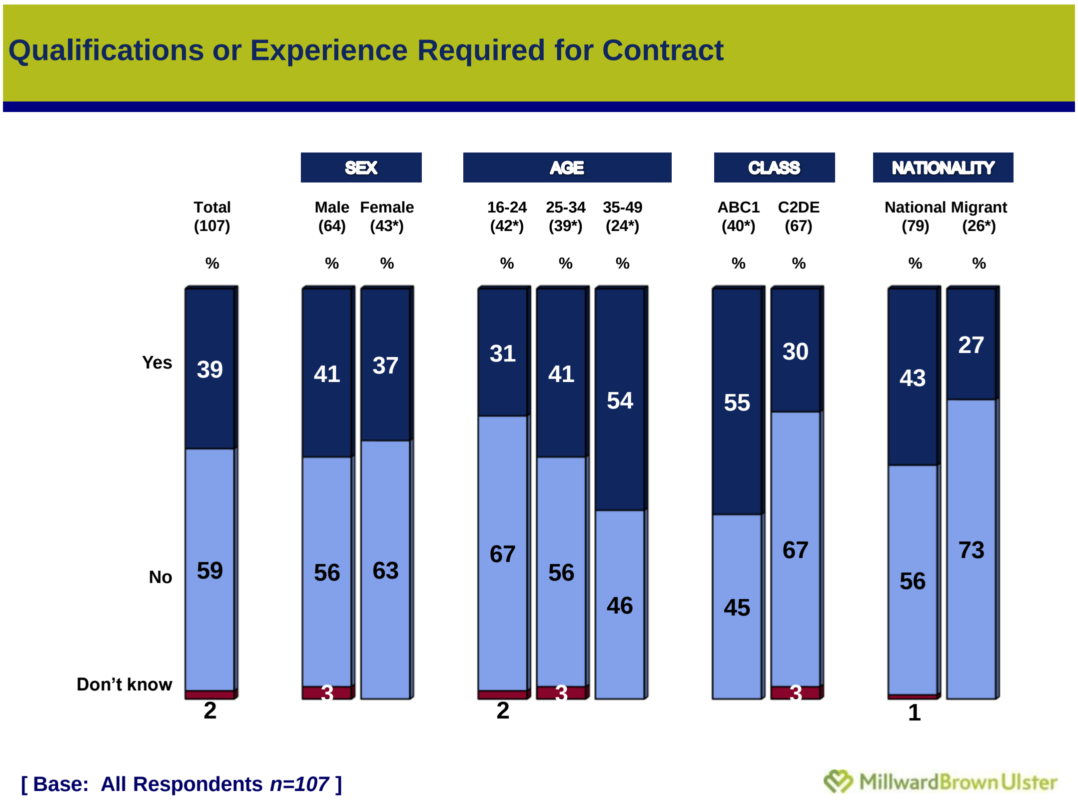
Fig. 6.16



(Please note – respondents could give more than one answer to this question)

61% of temporary workers who were asked to confirm their identities produced a passport and 32% produced a driving licence as proof of identification.

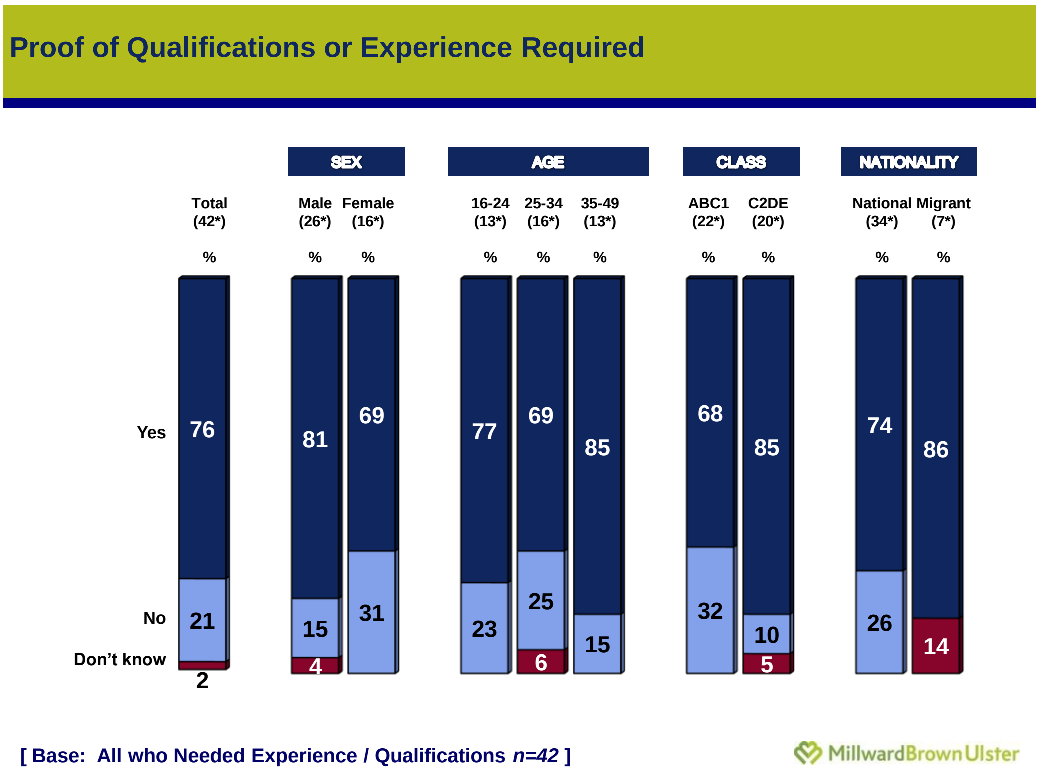
Fig. 6.17



Almost 6 in 10 (59%) of temporary agency workers did not require qualifications or experience for their current placement.

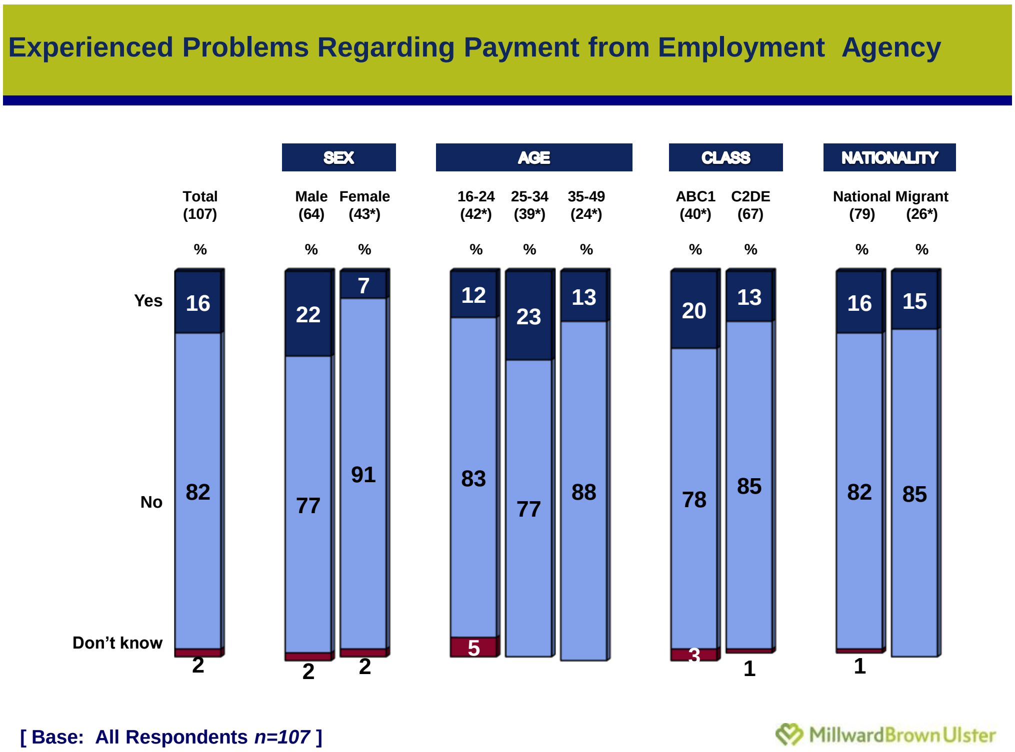
73% of migrant workers did not require qualifications or experience for their current temporary position, much higher than the overall figure of 59%.

Fig. 6.18



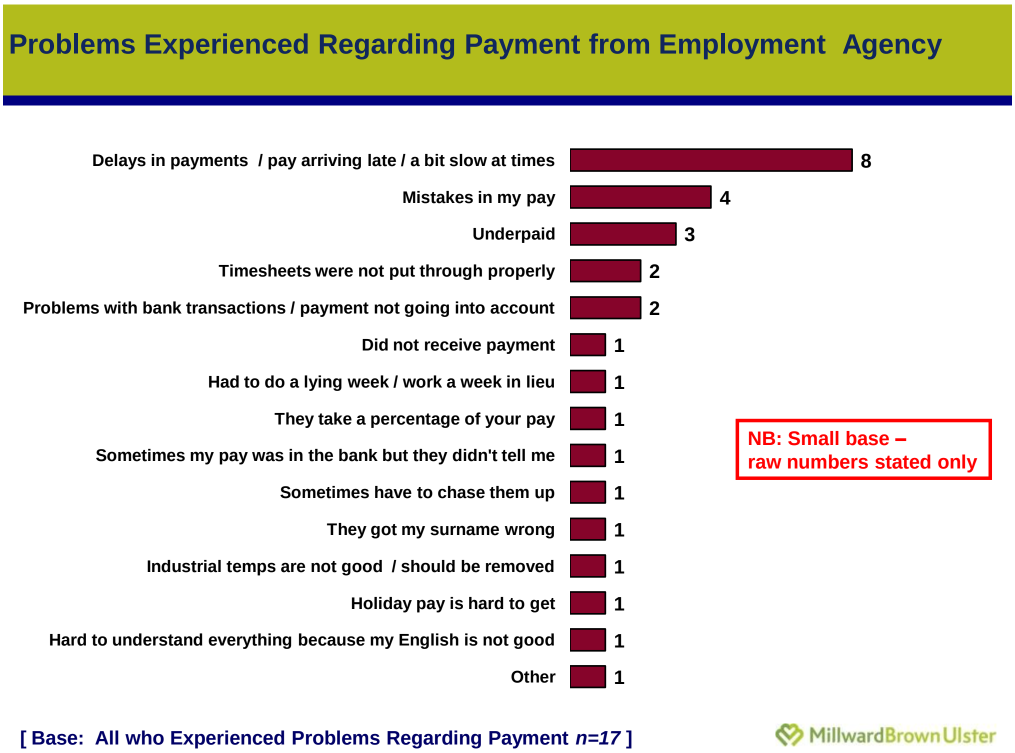
Where qualifications or experience were necessary for a position, more than a fifth (21%) of temporary workers were not asked to produce any proof of the required qualifications or experience.

Fig. 6.19



The majority of temporary agency workers (82%) have never experienced any problems regarding payment from an employment agency/business.

Fig. 6.20



(Please note – respondents could give more than one answer to this question)

Of the temporary agency workers surveyed who have experienced problems with payment (17 people in total) the most common complaints focused on delays in payment (8 people) and general mistakes with pay (4 people).

Fig. 6.21

Sources Used to find Temporary or Permanent Employment other than Agencies

	Total	Sex		Age			Class		Nationality	
		Male	Female	16-24	25-34	35-49	ABC1	C2DE	National	Migrant
		(64)	*(43)*	*(42)*	*(39)*	*(24)*	*(40)*	*(67)*	*(79)*	*(26)*
Newspapers	**58%**	50%	70%	52%	56%	71%	58%	58%	65%	38%
Internet / employment website	**49%**	50%	47%	50%	41%	58%	65%	39%	53%	35%
Job centres	**43%**	39%	49%	38%	46%	46%	43%	43%	42%	50%
Word of mouth	**43%**	42%	44%	36%	44%	50%	35%	48%	41%	54%
Company websites	**21%**	17%	26%	14%	13%	42%	28%	16%	24%	12%
Speculative applications	**17%**	14%	21%	19%	10%	25%	30%	9%	19%	12%
Other	**2%**	0%	5%	2%	3%	0%	0%	3%	3%	0%
Haven't used any other sources	**7%**	9%	5%	7%	5%	13%	8%	7%	5%	15%
Don't know / No reply	**3%**	5%	0%	2%	5%	0%	3%	3%	1%	4%

[Base: All Respondents *n=107*]

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(Please note – respondents could give more than one answer to this question)

More than half (58%) of all temporary agency workers cited also using newspapers as a source for finding temporary or permanent employment. The internet/employment website (49%), job centres (43%) and word of mouth (43%) were also frequently cited sources.

Newspapers were more likely to be used by females (70%) and the older temporary workers in the 35 to 49 age bracket (71%). Migrant workers were the least likely to find temporary or permanent employment through newspapers, only 38% of migrants used this source, much lower than the overall figure of 58%. Almost two-thirds (65%) of ABC1s used the internet/employment websites to seek temporary or permanent employment, the highest level stated by any group.

Migrants were much more likely to use word of mouth (54%) and were also the most likely to have not used any other source than the employment agency when seeking work (15%).

6.5 General Population Telephone Survey

In total 500 respondents were interviewed on the telephone. The survey was fully representative of the Northern Ireland population in terms of age, gender, region and socio-economic grouping as per the latest census data.

Fig. 6.22

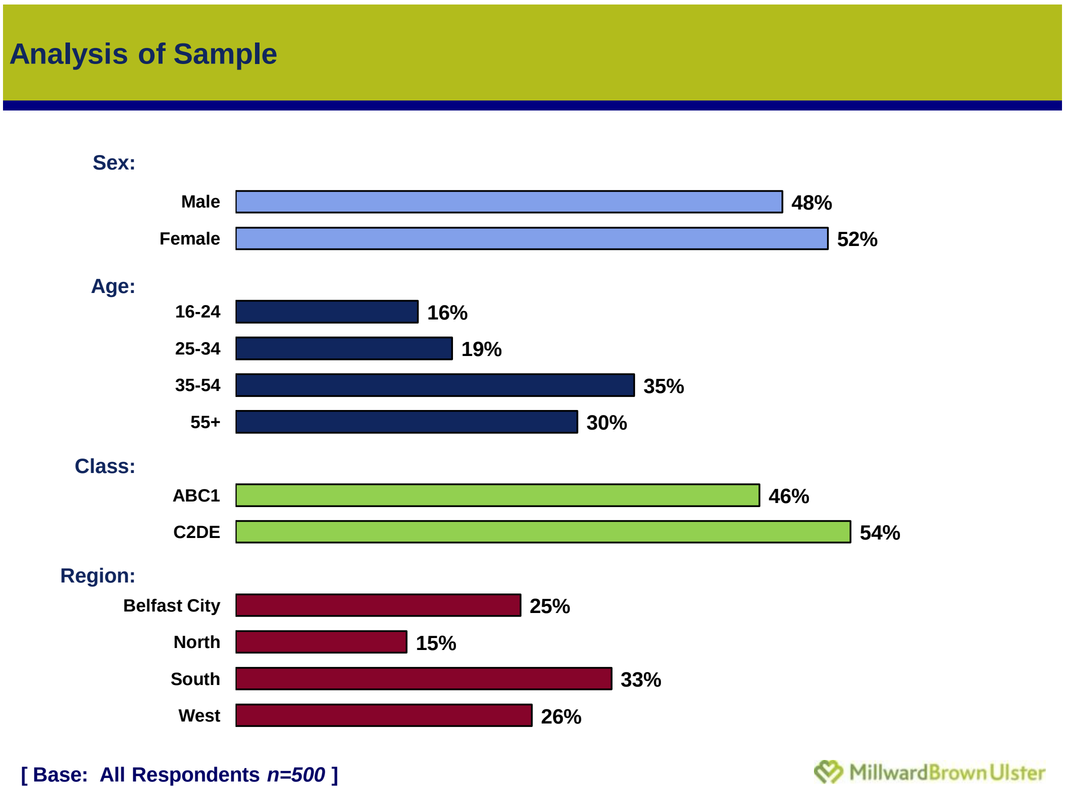
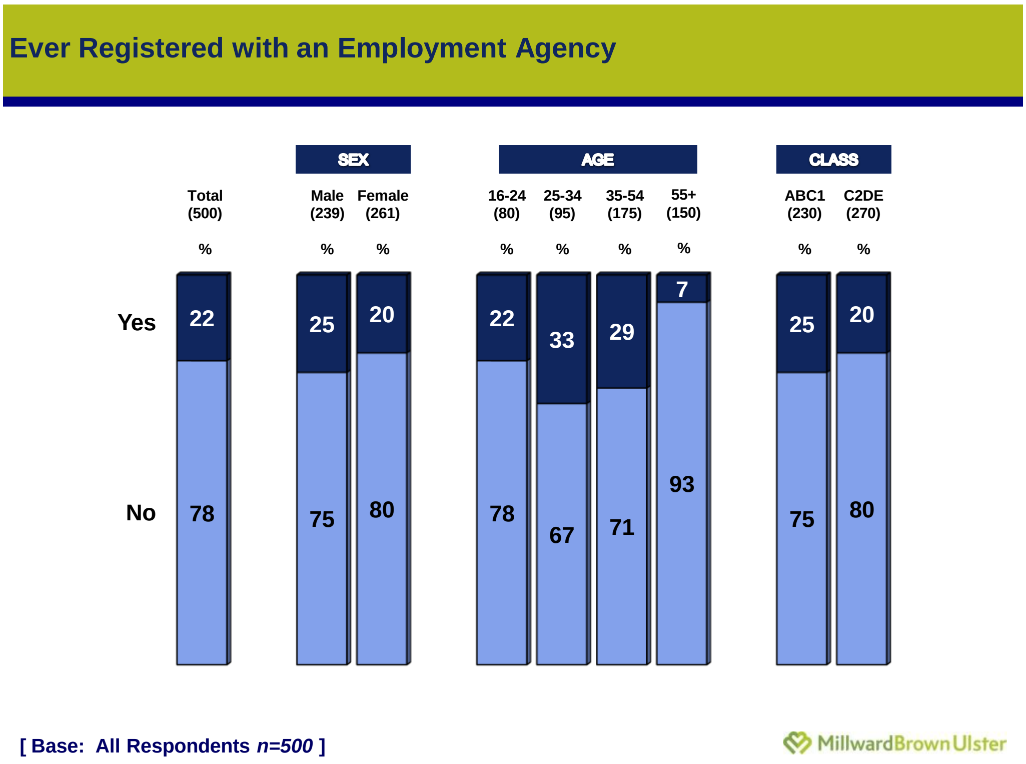
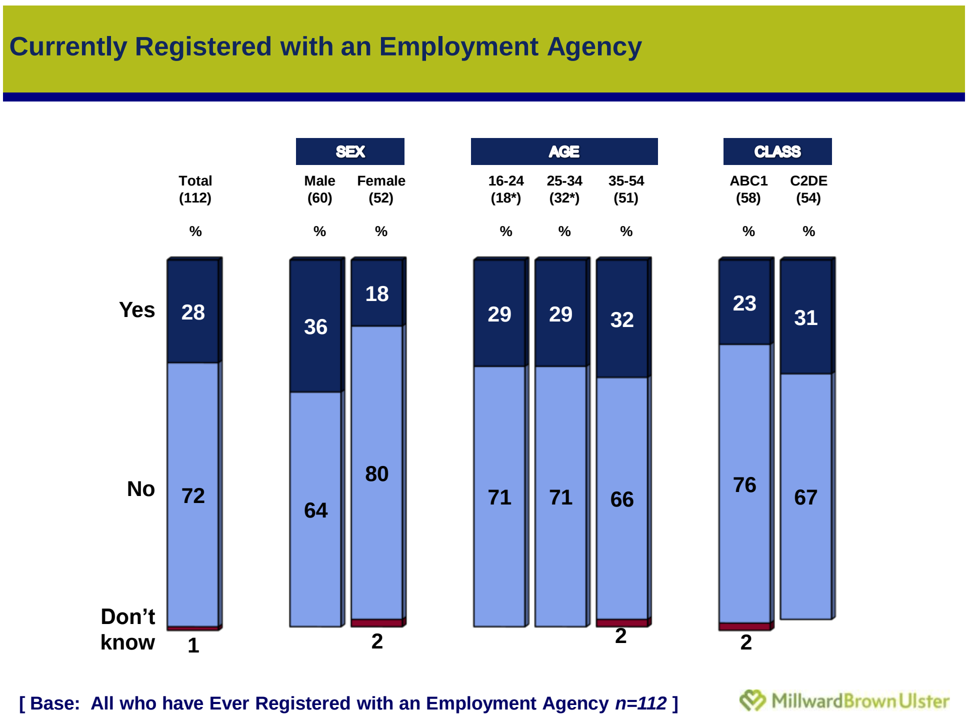


Fig. 6.23



More than a fifth (22%) of all respondents stated that they had registered with an employment agency at some time. Respondents over 55 years old were much less likely to have registered with an employment agency (7%).

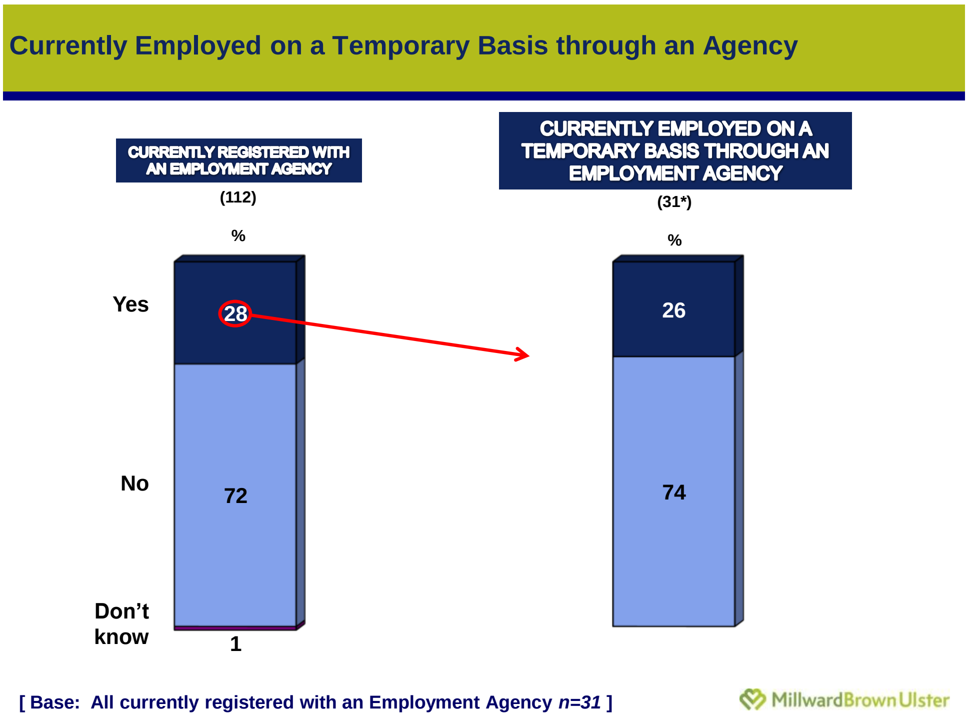
Fig. 6.24



More than a quarter (28%) of all respondents who had ever registered with an employment agency were currently still registered.

Male respondents were much more likely to be currently registered with an employment agency (36%). This is supported by the evidence in the face-to-face survey of temporary agency workers, a disproportionate number of the random sample were male.

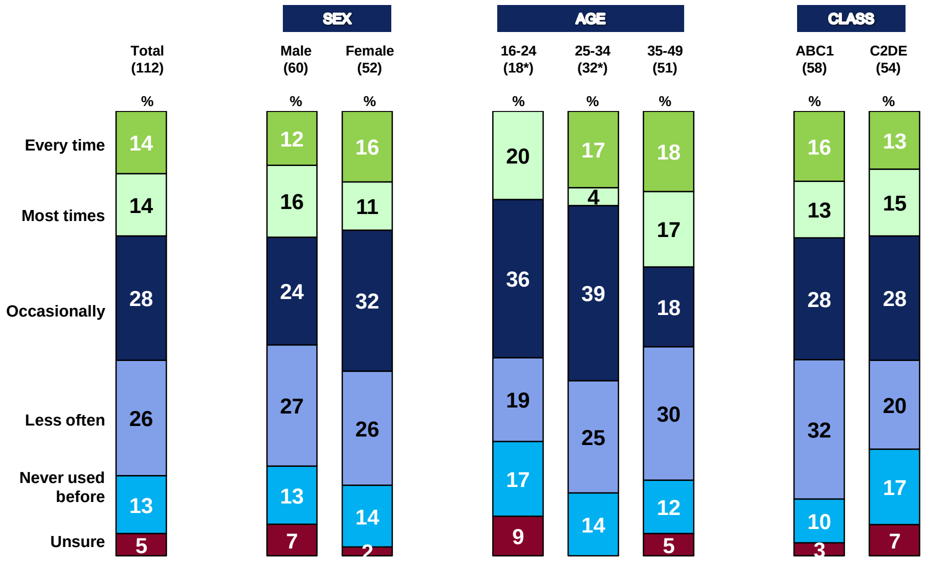
Fig. 6.25



More than a quarter of registered respondents were currently employed on a temporary basis through an employment agency (26%).

Fig. 6.26

Frequency of Using Agency when Seeking Employment

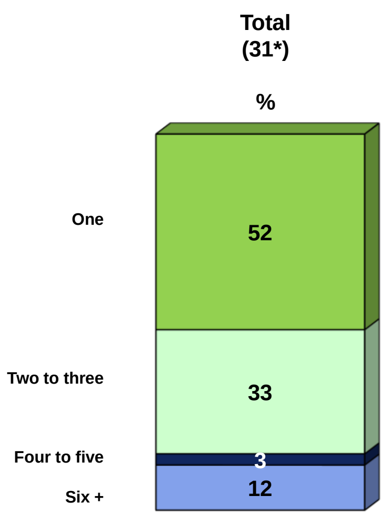


[Base: All who had Ever Registered with an Employment Agency *n=112*]

More than a quarter (28%) of all respondents who have ever registered with an agency stated that they used an employment agency every time (14%) or most of the time (14%) when seeking employment.

Fig. 6.27

Number of Employment Agencies with whom Workers are Registered



[Base: All currently registered with an Employment Agency *n=31*]

More than half (52%) of respondents currently registered with an employment agency were signed-up with only one agency. The face-to-face survey highlighted that 60% of temporary agency workers were currently registered with only one employment agency.

6.6 Summary

Temporary Agency Workers Face-to-Face Survey

A disproportionate number of temporary workers employed via recruitment agencies were males, non-nationals and those from the lower socio-economic grouping. Temporary agency workers were most commonly employed in cleaning, manufacturing/ processing/ production line and construction.

Essentially, the majority of temporary agency workers were satisfied with their employment agency, had never experienced any problems regarding payment and were placed in temporary employment within a few weeks.

Six in ten (60%) temporary agency workers were registered with only one employment agency. Furthermore, 56% of all temporary agency workers stated that they used an employment agency every time or most of the time when seeking employment.

More than half (54%) of all temporary workers stated that the reason they used an employment agency to help secure a temporary position was because they couldn't find employment on their own. Migrant workers (81%) and those from a lower socio-economic background (67%) were much more likely to state that they couldn't find employment on their own.

Another key reason for using an employment agency to find temporary employment, cited by just over a fifth (21%) of all temporary agency workers, was that they were only interested in short-term or seasonal work. More than a third of temporary workers in the 16 to 24 age bracket and those from the higher ABC1 socio-economic background stated that they used an employment agency because they only wanted short term or seasonal work, much higher than the overall figure of 21%.

More than 7 in 10 (71%) of all temporary agency workers were asked to agree terms and conditions by the employment agency before they would help them find employment. In addition, 26% of temporary agency workers were charged a fee by the employment agency to help find them a temporary position. This practice was most prevalent amongst those from an ABC1 background (38%), 16 to 24 year olds (45%) and migrant workers (35%).

More than half (58%) of all temporary agency workers cited also using newspapers as a source for finding temporary or permanent employment. The internet/employment website (49%), job centres (43%) and word of mouth (43%) were also frequently cited sources.

Migrant workers were much less likely to find temporary or permanent employment through newspapers and were much more likely to use word of mouth when seeking work.

General Population Telephone Survey
More than a fifth (22%) of the Northern Ireland population had registered with an employment agency at some point.

More than a quarter of those who had ever registered with an employment agency were currently still registered. This is the equivalent to 6.2% of the overall Northern Ireland population who are currently still registered with an employment agency.

Males were much more likely than females to be currently registered with an employment agency. This is supported by the evidence in the face-to-face survey of temporary agency workers, where a disproportionate number of the random sample were male.

At the time of the survey, more than a quarter (26%) of registered respondents were employed on a temporary basis through an employment agency. This equates to 1.6% of the overall Northern Ireland population currently being employed on a temporary basis through an employment agency.

More than a quarter of those who have ever registered with an employment agency stated that they used an agency every time or most of the time when seeking employment. This is equivalent to 6.2% of the overall Northern Ireland population who use an agency every time or most of the time when seeking employment.

More than half (52%) of those currently registered with an employment agency were signed-up with only one agency. The face-to-face survey highlighted that 60% of temporary agency workers were currently registered with only one employment agency.