

CHALLENGES OF INTEGRATING A HIGH POTENTIAL WORKFORCE

**SURVEY REPORT ON WORK AND EMPLOYMENT FOR
RECENTLY ARRIVED HONGKONGERS IN THE UK**

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The Public Affairs Section
Hongkongers in Britain



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Link to Full Questionnaire Survey: <https://www.hongkongers.org.uk/employment-survey>

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About Hongkongers in Britain

Hongkongers in Britain (HKB) is a civil-society organisation established in July 2020, and is a registered Company Limited by Guarantee in the UK. It is the first Hongkonger expat/diaspora & community-building group set up in the UK since the UK announced the introduction of a Welcome Programme for Hongkongers. HKB's primary objectives are to provide assistance, advice and support for the Hongkonger community coming to/arrived in the UK; enabling them to settle, integrate, and contribute towards the UK society. In brief, HKB is:

- A medium between Hongkongers and local communities in the UK
- A forum to allow people to create connections
- A platform to inspire activities socially, culturally and economically
- A British community for Hongkongers

With a network of over 20,000 followers on Facebook, dedicated Telegram Channel and Twitter page, combined with a well-established network from a large number of partner organisations, HKB is able to reach out to a large audience that may be otherwise difficult to reach via public/official means, and to collect data, information, and suggestions from Hongkongers considering to move to or have arrived in the UK, supporting their settling and integration into the UK.

Disclaimer: This report, whether to be quoted in name, in part or in full by any individual or organisation, must state clearly that it has been written by Hongkongers in Britain (HKB).

1. Introduction

Background

According to the UK Home Office's statistics, there have been a total of 64,900 applications for the British National (Overseas) route since its introduction on 31st January up to 30th June 2021.¹ This follows the introduction of the BN(O) Visa scheme for BN(O) holders to apply for a pathway to settlement and full British Citizenship in July 2020, including 5.4 million eligible Hongkongers BN(O) holders and their families, consisting of 2.9 million main BN(O) holders, 2.3 million dependents, and 187,000 18-23-year olds².

Hongkongers in Britain (HKB) conducted the first policy study on BN(O)s in December 2020. It was found that "finding a job" was the third largest concern amongst Hongkongers (48%) where they expect to face difficulties, following "finding accommodation" and "living costs".³ In this context, HKB joined forces with Dr. Fuk Ying Tse, Lecturer in Work and Employment at the University of Leicester to design an in-depth survey to find out about the work and employment situation of recent Hongkonger arrivals in the UK.

Objectives

The project sets out the following objectives:

1. To develop a questionnaire survey to collect anonymised data and information regarding Hongkongers who have arrived in the UK within the last 24 months; their status and experience concerning finding work and employment in the UK.
2. To identify and report on the questions in the following categories:
 - a. Overall demographics of the recently arrived Hongkongers
 - b. Skills-level and work experience
 - c. Intention for employment and/or maintaining labour market mobility
 - d. Sources of information about the labour market
 - e. Perceived employment prospect and obstacles
 - f. Actual obstacles experienced during job search (Including NINO and DBS checks)
3. To understand from the data collected:
 - a. The needs, challenges, skills of Hongkongers in accessing the UK labour market;
 - b. The gaps in labour/employment related policies, measures and support; and
 - c. Potential solutions and policy suggestions/proposals.
4. To analyse the data and information collected, and write a research report that aims to inform and recommend policies in the UK for the benefit of recent and prospective Hong Kong arrivals, working with relevant actors to provide adequate support for them, allowing them to more smoothly integrate into the UK society and labour market, and actively contribute towards the UK economy.

¹ National Statistics How many people come to the UK each year (including visitors)?, Gov.UK, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-year-ending-june-2021/how-many-people-come-to-the-uk-each-year-including-visitors>

² Impact Assessment for the Hong Kong British National (Overseas) Visa, Home Office, Oct 2020 https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukia/2020/70/pdfs/ukia_20200070_en.pdf

³ "Coming for Hope": HKB Policy Study on Hong Kong British National (Overseas) Holders Intending to come to the UK, Dec 2020 - <https://www.hongkongers.org.uk/policy-study-coming-for-hope>

2. Methodology

To obtain a more comprehensive picture of employment opportunities and obstacles that recent arrivals from Hong Kong face in the UK, we conducted an online questionnaire survey from mid-August to end-August 2021. Targeting at individuals above the age of 18 who recently moved to the UK from Hong Kong in the past 24 months, the questionnaire consisted of 48 questions (excluding one for informed consent) covering the following themes –

- Demographic characteristics of individuals;
- Current residential and financial status;
- Sources of information about the UK labour market;
- Career development trajectories in Hong Kong and the UK; and
- Their prospect of career transition.

In addition, respondents were asked to provide recommendations for resources and policy change which would be helpful. They were also invited to leave their contact voluntarily for future research. This last question was not compulsory and respondents remained anonymous.

The questionnaire was hosted online on Qualtrics. It was disseminated as an anonymous link via personal networks of the research team members, social media platforms of Hongkongers in Britain and other Hong Kong diaspora groups, and online discussion groups. In the end, 609 valid responses to the survey were recorded. Since not all respondents answered every question, the base number of respondents of each question, where appropriate, is specified in the report findings.

3. Overall Analysis and Recommendations

The majority of our respondents (83.9%) have started looking for a job in the UK within 6 months after arrival. The fact that only around a third of the respondents are working full-time or part-time in the UK, and almost half are unemployed and looking for work despite long job seeking efforts, is not desirable. Based on the survey results, we analyse the opportunities and challenges of Hongkongers in UK's employment market, and then recommend interventions for government policy makers, employers and civil society groups that are concerned with employment support and migration issues.

A high potential workforce

On the one hand, the recent Hong Kong arrivals, being the earlier batch under the BN(O) Visa scheme, are in general **a mature and agile workforce that is ready to potentially add/bring high value to the UK labour market and economy**. They are

- Well educated: 69.2% are university degree holders and above (Q11);
- Highly experienced in the labour market: 66.8% have 11+ years of working experience (Q10);
- Relatively financially well prepared during the settlement period: 54.8% earning an annual income; of £36,000 when they were in Hong Kong and 69.4% perceiving their financial security as somewhat secure/secure/very secure (Q16, 39);
- Somewhat/very ready to find jobs whether full-time (65.1%) or part-time (69.9%), with only 9.2% somewhat/very ready to retire (Q7);
- Somewhat/very ready (35.4%) to relocate for jobs (Q7);
- An agile workforce that is quite ready to fill in job vacancies not from their original work sectors (Table 1 below); and
- A workforce that is highly familiarised with an online-driven employment market in the UK, as 71.7% use online means for obtaining job information and seeking jobs (Q19)

The profile of the respondents in this survey, who have already arrived in the UK, are either in line with or superior to those of the respondents in our first BN(O) survey nine months ago, which included both who intended to or have already come. The finding implies that the early arrivals under the BN(O) Visa scheme are from a more mature, highly skilled and more experienced workforce. The reason behind the phenomenon is probably that many of the early arrivals are middle-class parents with children. They saw the greatest need to leave Hong Kong as soon as possible (due to the political suppression on freedoms and education) for the future of their children, and wanted to settle them in schools in the UK in September.

Challenges in employment

On the other hand, our employment survey identifies a number of challenges facing the new workforce.

Some challenges are common to what any new diaspora would have faced in employment in a new home.

- **Language barrier** is both a perceived (50%) and actual (16.3%, ranked first) obstacle. (Q18, Q34)
- 53.9% find the **workplace culture in the UK** different to that in Hong Kong. (Q40)
- Many who are in UK employment are sometimes/often/always **thinking to move to another industry** (80.9%) **or look for other opportunities** (53.3%) (Q42, Q40). This phenomenon is reasonable among any new immigrants who settle firstly in any job available, and then try to move to other more desirable opportunities. Such a mismatch is, however, quite likely to be also related to the specific profile of the early arrivals of BN(O)s of being more mature with longer years of experience. (see elaboration below)

Some are quite unique to the specific situations of Hongkongers who hastily moved from a different culture due to political suppression during a historic pandemic.

- There are **problems with proving the right to work** (often due to the employment market's inadequate knowledge about LOTR (10.2%) in contrast to Europeans before Brexit whose right to work is better known in the UK) and the absence of NINO. The situation is particularly acute among the youngest age group of 18-24 (66.7%, cross-tabulation of Q34 against Q45).
- 78.5% do **not have a NINO**, particularly due to the long NINO application process time during the pandemic. (Q28) In particular, although 67.8% of the respondents received their NINOs within the 16 weeks stated in UK Gov's website⁴, almost a third (32.3%) have waited for the maximum length of time or longer.
- **Lack of relevant skills/qualifications/qualification conversion** from Hong Kong is both a perceived (44.5%) and actual obstacle (18.2%, together ranked first). It is worth noting that many professional qualifications in Hong Kong originated from the British system and were recognised in the UK before 1997. Although much of the training and assessment of many professions could still be rather similar as before, qualification conversion has changed much over time after the political handover from Britain to China.
- While the new workforce generally has long years of working experience, our data analysis shows that more respondents in middle-age groups of 45-54 and 55-64 (86.3%, 84.2%) as compared to younger age groups (around 60-70%) have not started any UK-based paid work since arrival. This could indicate a current **mismatch of experience and job market's expectations** (cross tabulation of Q35 against Q45)
- Such a mismatch between the respondents' competences/experience and their current UK jobs can be a contributing factor to the phenomenon that many in UK-based employment **are thinking to move to another industry** (80.9%, Q42).
- Potentially owing to the hurry of moving from a very different work culture to the UK, not only most (53.9%) found the workplace culture different from Hong Kong, quite a few (37.6%) of the respondents **have met difficulties at work which they have never anticipated**. (Q40)

Joint efforts to fill the gaps

From our analysis of the survey findings, there are some obvious and implied **gaps in the current employment-related government policies/practices and job market practices**. We would recommend interventions to fill the gaps in the employment process for Hong Kong arrivals with a view to **facilitating**:

- a. A smooth job-seeking and matching process;**
- b. A good match between the competences/experiences and job market needs;**
- c. Better cultural transition in workplace; and**
- d. Promoting employment stability/sustainability in the longer run.**

These are achievable and realistic targets of integration of Hongkongers into UK's labour market. This will help contribute towards the UK economy and eventually bring about levelling up of the UK, by ensuring fair and inclusive access in work/employment.

Consideration and implementation of the recommended interventions would **require joint efforts from the relevant government agencies, the employment market** (including employers and recruiters) **and civil society groups** that are concerned with employment and/or migration. All of the interventions above should be carried out across national, regional and local levels. (See H1)

⁴ Applying for a UK National Insurance Number, Gov.UK, <https://www.gov.uk/apply-national-insurance-number>

Recommendations:

I. Reduce administrative hurdles

First and foremost, we recommend the government to place priorities to address the administrative hurdles on the BN(O)s in the job seeking process as follows.

- a. To **expedite NINO application** processing.
- b. To provide not only **clear guidance, but also knowledge and adequate training on the BN(O)s' right to work** to UK employers, labour unions, chambers of commerce, employment/recruitment agencies for handling documentation of LOTR and BN(O) Visa Holders, including providing samples of passport stamps, stickers, BRP cards etc.
- c. To provide a functional system of **recognising/assessing/converting Hong Kong qualifications and work experiences (by working more closely with industries and academic/training institutions)**, and then provide the employment market with clear information about the recognised/converted qualifications.

II. Build language confidence

Despite overall high educational qualifications from Hong Kong education system that focuses primarily on English, many respondents identify language as a major barrier to their job search. This lack of language confidence is probably due to an emphasis on reading and writing English in Hong Kong education, but insufficient opportunities to practise speaking and listening to British style English, meaning a general lack of confidence in practical use of language. We recommend that the government and relevant VCSEs should join forces to make **employment-targeted English language support/training** more readily available and affordable to Hong Kong arrivals, for example by designing initiatives/programmes linking ESOL support with work/employment.

III. Reduce information asymmetry

Two top factors affecting the respondents' current locations of settlement are "impression from online research" and "availability of job opportunities". Despite the existence of many online information websites, there is often information asymmetry, especially at local level. We recommend that **the government and market can join forces to reduce information asymmetry**.

- a. To **provide reliable, accurate online information of job opportunities by locations** is important. (See D1)
- b. To **continue targeting and improving websites, blogs and social media with reliable and comprehensive information on UK labour markets and workplace culture**, because online information is the most used channel by Hongkongers to learn about the UK's labour market.

IV. Align competences/experience with employment or business opportunities

The foregoing analysis points to a possible mismatch of competences/experience for quite a number of Hongkongers who are currently in UK employment. In order to reduce misallocation of manpower resources and bring about more stability and sustainability in employment, the following interventions are recommended for potential joint implementation by the government and related VCSEs.

- a. To provide **upskilling and skills-matching support/services**;
- b. To provide **credible career advice and coaching** (from both public and voluntary sectors) to increase overall confidence of Hongkongers searching for employment in the UK;
- c. To improve **job relevance to Hongkongers' skills and understanding their skills**, and align them better to job opportunities/openings
- d. To provide more **employment support for Hongkongers working in sectors of human health and social activities and education** in finding relevant jobs in the UK. Many such sectors are actually experiencing labour shortage in the UK.

The survey did not cover questions on respondents' views on entrepreneurship. Despite this, our findings of the respondents' profile: relative long years of work experience, experience in service sectors, and relative financial security, point to a **potential of entrepreneurship such as in small- and medium-sized businesses**. This is an area that the government and VCSEs may further explore, in terms of how to **facilitate the new diaspora to develop businesses**, that can bring significant added value to the UK economy.

V. Cultural orientation

In the previous analysis, cultural adaptation in workplace is a challenge to many Hongkongers especially due to the haste in their migration to the UK. We recommend that employers, recruiters and relevant VCSEs provide **information, orientation and training to Hongkongers to adapt and settle more quickly into workplace culture in the UK** in order to speed up and facilitate workplace integration and improve employment sustainability.

4. Executive Summary of Findings

A workforce ready for job opportunities in different sector

The following table indicates that recent Hong Kong arrivals have been willing and flexible to fill in job vacancies in the UK in the sectors where they were not in Hong Kong before.

Table 1: Job Sectors of the Respondents

| Top 10: | | | | | |
|---|-------|---|-------|--|-------|
| Sectors before moving to the UK | | Sectors searched for | | Sectors currently working in, for those who found jobs in UK | |
| Financial and insurance activities | 11.5% | Wholesale and retail trade | 11.0% | Transportation and storage | 11.0% |
| Information and communication | 10.6% | Administrative and support service activities | 9.7% | Professional, scientific and technical activities | 11.0% |
| Education | 9.2% | Transportation and storage | 8.4% | Accommodation and food service activities | 9.6% |
| Professional, scientific and technical activities | 8.8% | Information and communication | 7.7% | Wholesale and retail trade | 8.8% |
| Other service activities | 8.3% | Accommodation and food service activities | 7.3% | Information and communication | 8.8% |
| Administrative and support service activities | 8.1% | Financial and insurance activities | 6.2% | Other service activities | 8.1% |
| Human health and social work activities | 7.2% | Education | 6.1% | Financial and insurance activities | 7.4% |
| Wholesale and retail trade | 6.1% | Other service activities | 5.9% | Manufacturing | 6.6% |
| Construction | 5.8% | Professional, scientific and technical activities | 5.6% | Construction | 5.9% |
| Manufacturing | 5.0% | Manufacturing | 5.5% | Administrative and support service activities | 5.1% |

Skills-level and work experience

- 32.2% of all respondents to the question have 21 or above years of **work experience**, 19.2% have 11-15 years, 17% have 6-10 years, 16.1% have 0-5 years, and 15.4% have 16-20 years.
- Regarding the **highest education level**, over two-thirds (69.2%) have Undergraduate degrees or above. This includes 44.4% with an Undergraduate degree, 23.6% with a Master's degree, and 1.2% with a PhD degree.
- In terms of **rank and file**, 39.7% are in line-management, 36.2% are in rank-and-file, 13.8% are in senior management, 8% are self-employed, and 2.3% are company owners.
- For **income before moving to the UK**, over three-quarters (75.6%) earn above HK\$20,000/~£2,000 per month, and well over a half (54.8%) earn above HK\$30,000/~£3,000 per month.

Intention for employment and/or maintaining labour market mobility

5. Nearly half (46.1%) of all respondents to the question are **unemployed or looking for work**, just over a third (35.2%) are **working full-time or part-time, or are self-employed**.
6. 69.2% have **not started any UK-based paid work since living in the UK**, only 30.8% are in **UK-based paid job**.
7. 94.4% have **officially left their jobs in Hong Kong**, 5.6% have not.
8. **Readiness for employment in the UK:**
 - a. 35.2% are very ready to work full time; 42% are very ready to work part-time
 - b. 65.1% are somewhat or very ready to work full-time
 - c. 69.9% are somewhat or very ready to work part-time
 - d. 35.4% are somewhat or very ready to relocate; 42.1% are somewhat not ready or not ready at all to relocate
 - e. 78.8% are somewhat not ready or not ready at all to retire
9. “Impression from online research” drove 22.2% **to set foot where they are now**, while 18.4% moved to where they are now because of “availability of job opportunities”.
10. **Financial security:** 69.4% say they are somewhat secure/secure/very secure in the next 6-12 months; 30% say they are somewhat insecure/insecure/very insecure.
11. 83.9% have **started looking for a job in the UK within 6 months after arrival**, or even before arrival.
12. “Economic needs” is **most important factor which made respondents look for a job in the UK** (48.4%), followed by “gateway to integrate into local life” (32%).
13. 52.3% **applied for full-time work**, 28.9% for **part-time work**, 12.9% for **freelance work**.
14. 26.2% **polished CVs and cover letters**; 8.4% **sought advice from career coaches**; 5.5% had **mock interviews**.
15. 49.3% think it is **easy to fit into the working environment** on the job.
16. 53.9% find the **workplace culture in the UK** different to that in Hong Kong.
17. 44% manage to **negotiate their working conditions** (e.g. working hours, flexible working mode) in their favour, twice the amount of those who do not manage.
18. 55.3% **know who to go to when they have issues with their employer**, almost three times than those who do not know.
19. 54.3% have not been **challenged for their competency at work**, three times the amount who have.
20. 49% can see themselves **staying in their current job in the coming 12 months**, more than twice the amount who say they are cannot.
21. 53.3% are **constantly looking for other opportunities**, more than twice the amount who say they are not.

22. **80.9% are at least sometimes thinking about moving to another industry than the one they are currently working in.**
23. **When making a career move, pay is the most chosen most important factor (34.8%), location is the second chosen most important factor (32.2%).**

Sources of information about the labour market

24. **Main source of information about the labour market: websites/blogs (27.2%), social media (26.8%), online forums/discussion groups (17.7%).** Online means in total account for 71.7% of all channels.
25. **Just over half (50.1%) rely on recruitment websites for job openings,** far outweighing other means.
26. **Indeed, LinkedIn, Reed and Totaljobs** are the most popular recruitment websites for job-searching.
27. **For those successful in finding a job, 48.6% located them from recruitment websites, 20.8% from personal networks.**
28. **The use of personal networks and recruitment agencies proved better chance of success among other channels for job search.**

Perceived employment prospect and obstacles

29. **Half (50%) are concerned/very concerned about language barriers** when seeking employment in the UK; 49.4% are concerned/very concerned about **prospect of career progression**; 44.5% are concerned/very concerned about **recognition of qualification**; 40.8% are concerned/very concerned about **pay levels**; 32.9% are concerned/very concerned about **cultural difference**.

Actual obstacles experienced during job search

30. **Language barrier** was the most mentioned obstacle when finding a job (16.3%), **lack of (relevant) skills or qualifications was the second (11%), problems with proving the right to work** (e.g. LOTR, issues with NINO) was the third (10.2%).
31. **In order to secure their first paid jobs in the UK, almost half (48.7%) applied for ≤10 jobs, over two-thirds (66.8%) applied for ≤20 jobs, and over four-fifths (81.9%) have applied for ≤50 jobs.**
32. **77.1% took ≤3 months between starting job-searching and starting their first paid-job in the UK, 92.4% took ≤6 months, and 99.3% took ≤12 months.**

National Insurance Number (NINO)

33. **78.5% do not have a NINO.**
34. **36.1% have waited for ≤one month for their NINOs, 31.5% have waited 2-3 months, 26.4% have waited for 3-5 months, and 6% have waited for 6 months or above.**

35. 72.4% are still waiting for the outcome of their NINO application, while only 17.3% received their NINO. 1.3% were refused their NINO.

DBS check

36. 23.4% have been requested for a DBS check record by potential employers.
37. Amongst them, 54.3% have got one successfully, 33.3% have their request in process, 12.4% were not successful.

Demographics

38. Largest age group: 35-44 (36%), also the median age group.
39. 93.3% have arrived in the UK for less than a year.
40. 21% have 1 financial dependent, 21.5% have 2, and 12.9% have 3.
41. 87.1% are BN(O) visa holders, 4.7% are LOTR status holders.
42. 64.2% are renting privately, 16.3% are renting temporary accommodation, 10.3% are staying with family/friends, 9.2% have own property.

Respondents' policy recommendations

43. Top priorities from respondents are as follows: (See H5)
- a. Employment support services (32.2%)
 - b. Improve NINO application process (13.4%)
 - c. Overcome language barrier (13.0%)
 - d. Increase employers' awareness (12.3%)
 - e. Recognise qualifications (8%)

5. Questionnaire Results Findings

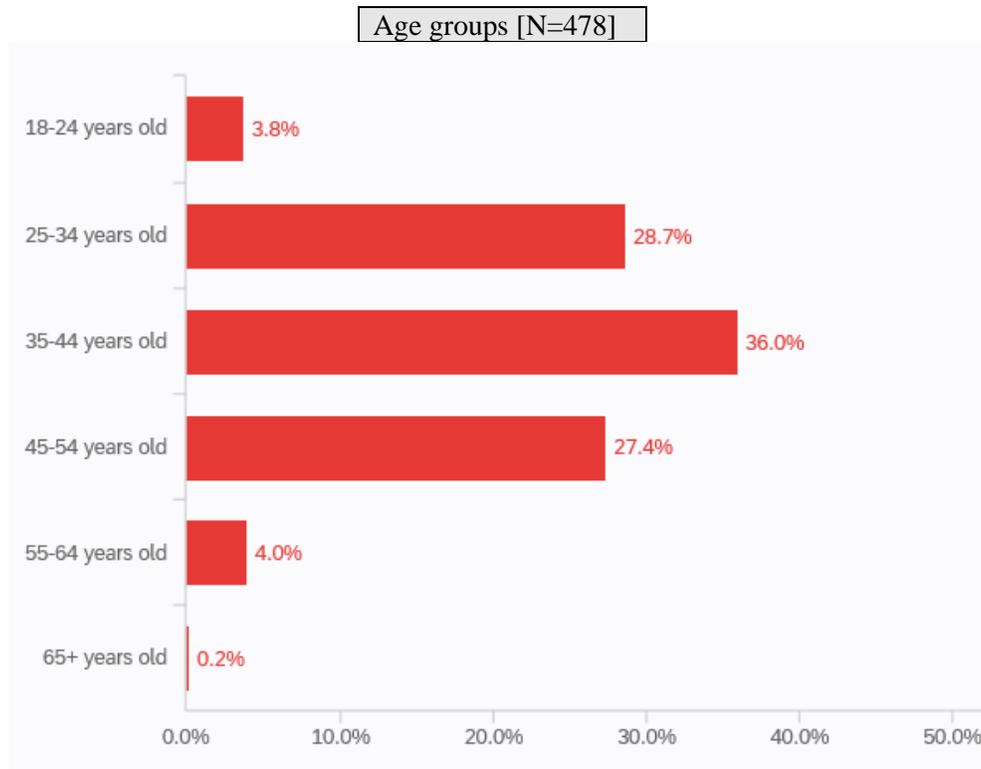
Link to Full Questionnaire Survey: <https://www.hongkongers.org.uk/employment-survey>

The results in this chapter present the detailed findings of the questionnaire categorised into nine parts (A-I), with a summary including policy implications, key data analysis of trends and observations, relevant tables and charts in each part. The base number [N] in the result of each question may differ as not all respondents answered every question. Questions which allow multiple choices are presented with the number of mentions, rather than number of respondents. The results are presented in percentages rounded to the nearest one decimal.

Part A: Respondents’ Profile/Basic Demographics

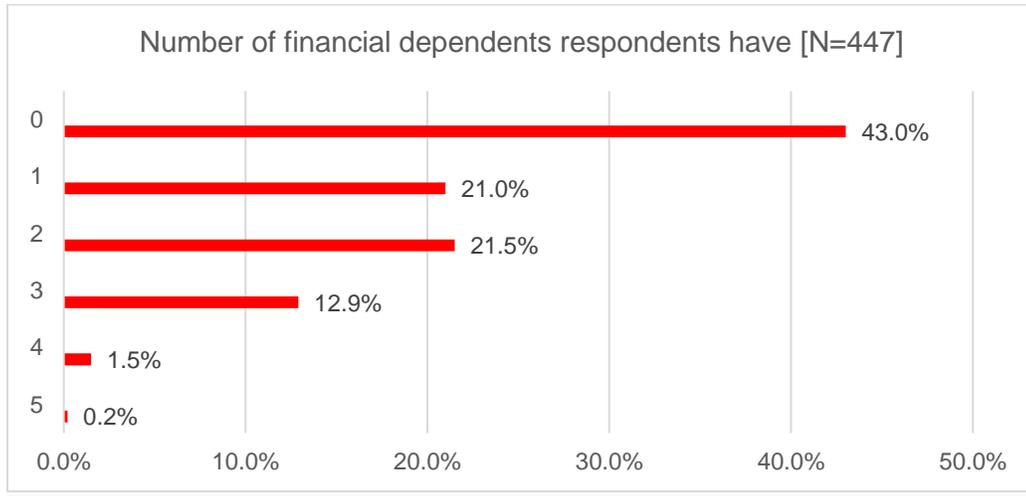
1. The largest age group of our respondents is 35-44, making up 36% of the 478 respondents. The next largest representation is those aged 25-34 (28.7%), followed by 45-54 (27.4%), and then significantly fewer in age groups 55-64 (4%), 18-24 (3.8%), 65+ (0.2%). This age group distribution also reflects similar findings from HKB’s two previous publication results.⁵ [Q45]

Median age group range: 35-44



2. 50.5% of 478 respondents are male, 47.8% are female, and 1.7% prefer not to say. [Q46]
3. In terms of the number of financial dependents (both children under-18, and adults) the 447 respondents have, 43% do not have any, while 57% have one or more.

⁵ “Coming for Hope”: HKB Policy Study on Hong Kong British National (Overseas) Holders Intending to come to the UK, Dec 2020 - <https://www.hongkongers.org.uk/policy-study-coming-for-hope>



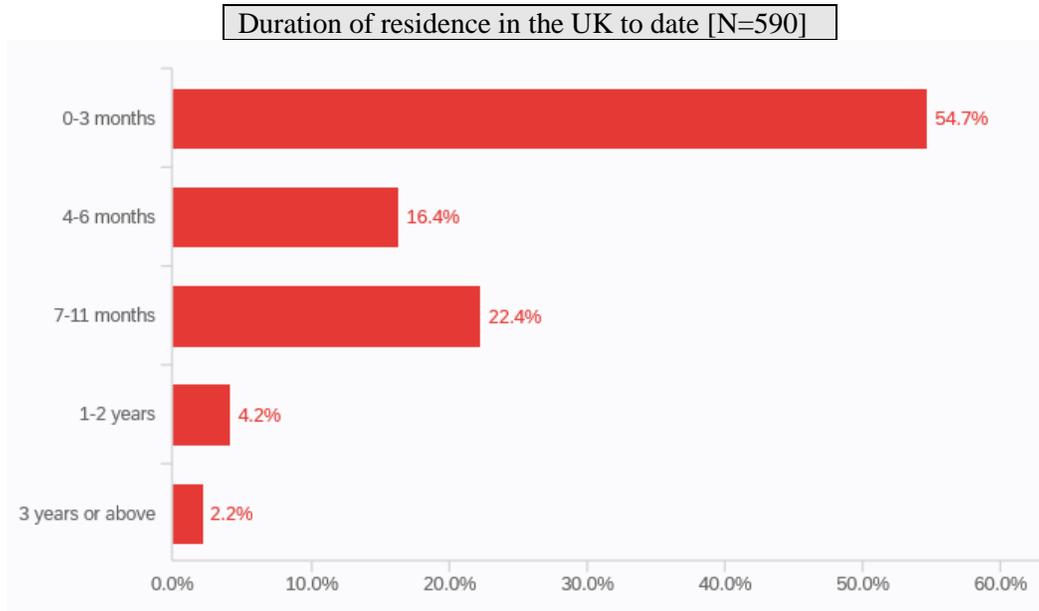
A further breakdown of the financial dependents data shows that over a tenth (10.3%) of the respondents have one adult dependent, and another tenth (10.7%) have one child dependent. Almost a tenth (9.8%) have one child and one adult dependent, and another 9.8% have two children and one adult dependent. It should be noted that adult dependents include both children over 18 and (elderly) parents who need financial support.

[Q48]

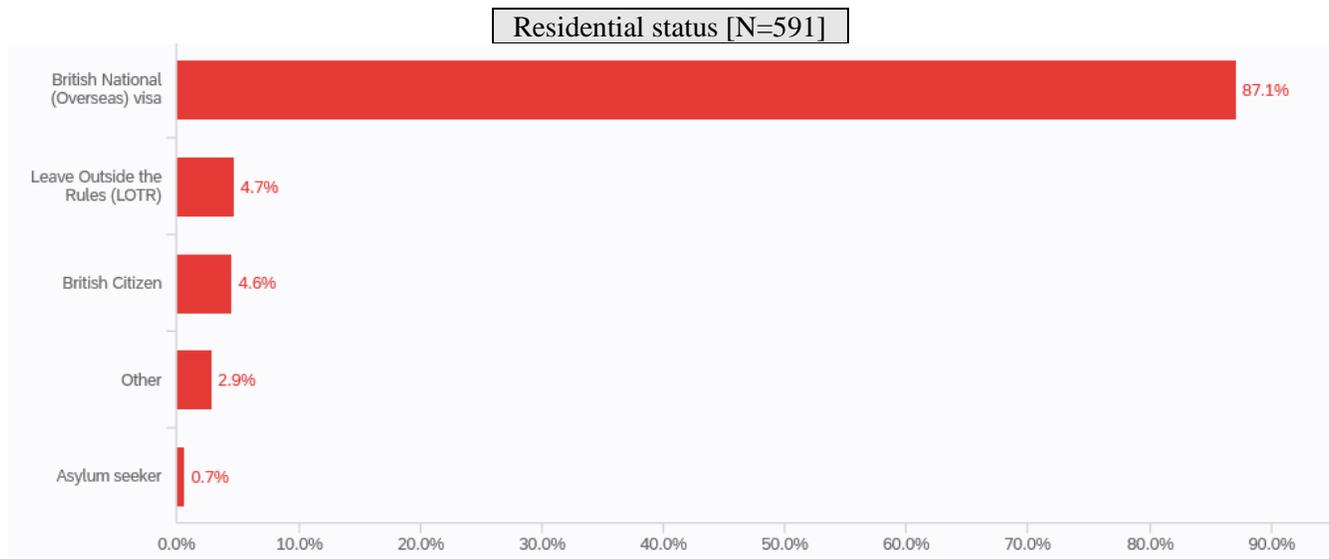
| Number of children dependents | Number of adult dependents | % |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|-------|
| 0 | 0 | 43% |
| 0 | 1 | 10.3% |
| 0 | 2 | 4.3% |
| 0 | 3 | 0.7% |
| 1 | 0 | 10.7% |
| 2 | 0 | 7.4% |
| 3 | 0 | 0.4% |
| 1 | 1 | 9.8% |
| 2 | 1 | 9.8% |
| 3 | 1 | 0.4% |
| 1 | 2 | 2% |
| 2 | 2 | 1.1% |
| 3 | 2 | 0.2% |

Part B: Current Residential Status in the UK

1. Amongst 590 respondents, over half of them have been in the UK for 0-3 months (54.8%), whilst 22.4% of them have been in the UK for 7-11 months, and 16.4% have been in the UK for 4-6 months. This means that in total, 93.3% of 590 respondents have arrived in the UK for less than a year. Another 4.2% have been in UK for 1-2 years. Although the questionnaire survey aimed for individuals who arrived within the past 24 months, 2.2% of them declared that they have been in the UK for 3 years or above. [Q2]



2. In terms of residential status, the vast majority (87.2%) of our 591 respondents hold a BN(O) visa. 4.6% of them are British Citizens, 4.7% of them have “Leave Outside of the Rules” (LOTR) status, while 0.7% of them are asylum-seekers. [Q3]



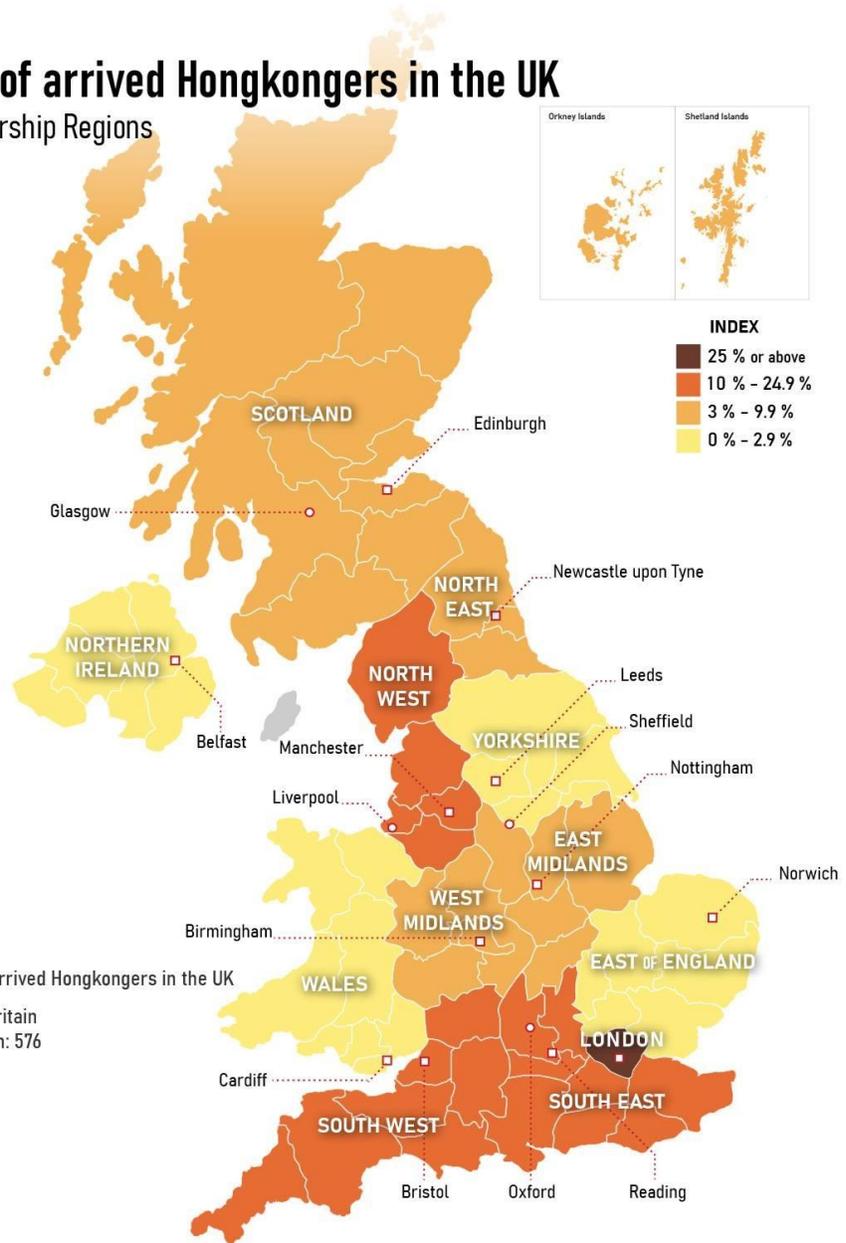
3. Respondents were asked to indicate the region where they had settled in, according to the geographical demarcation of 12 strategic migration partnerships (the 12 virtual welcoming hubs for Hongkongers). Amongst 576 respondents, over a third (33.5%) of them are in London, making up the largest group. This is followed by just over a fifth (20.1%) in Northwest England. This corresponds with the findings of HKB’s survey report on BN(O)s’ preferred destinations in the UK (June 2021).⁶ The rest of regional location distribution are listed in the table as follows, from the biggest to the smallest: [Q4]

⁶ “Where will Hongkongers stay in Britain?” HKB Survey Report on Hong Kong BN(O) Arrivals’ Preferred Destinations, Jun 2021 - <https://www.hongkongers.org.uk/bno-destinations>

Location distribution of arrived Hongkongers in the UK

In 12 Strategic Migration Partnership Regions

| | |
|-------------------|--------|
| London | 33.5 % |
| Northwest England | 20.1 % |
| Southwest England | 12.7 % |
| Southeast England | 11.8 % |
| West Midlands | 4.7 % |
| Scotland | 3.8 % |
| Northeast England | 3.5 % |
| East Midlands | 3.3 % |
| East of England | 2.8 % |
| Yorkshire | 2.3 % |
| Wales | 1.2 % |
| Northern Ireland | 0.4 % |



Survey Report on Work and Employment of Arrived Hongkongers in the UK

The Public Affairs Section, Hongkongers in Britain
Total number of respondents for this question: 576



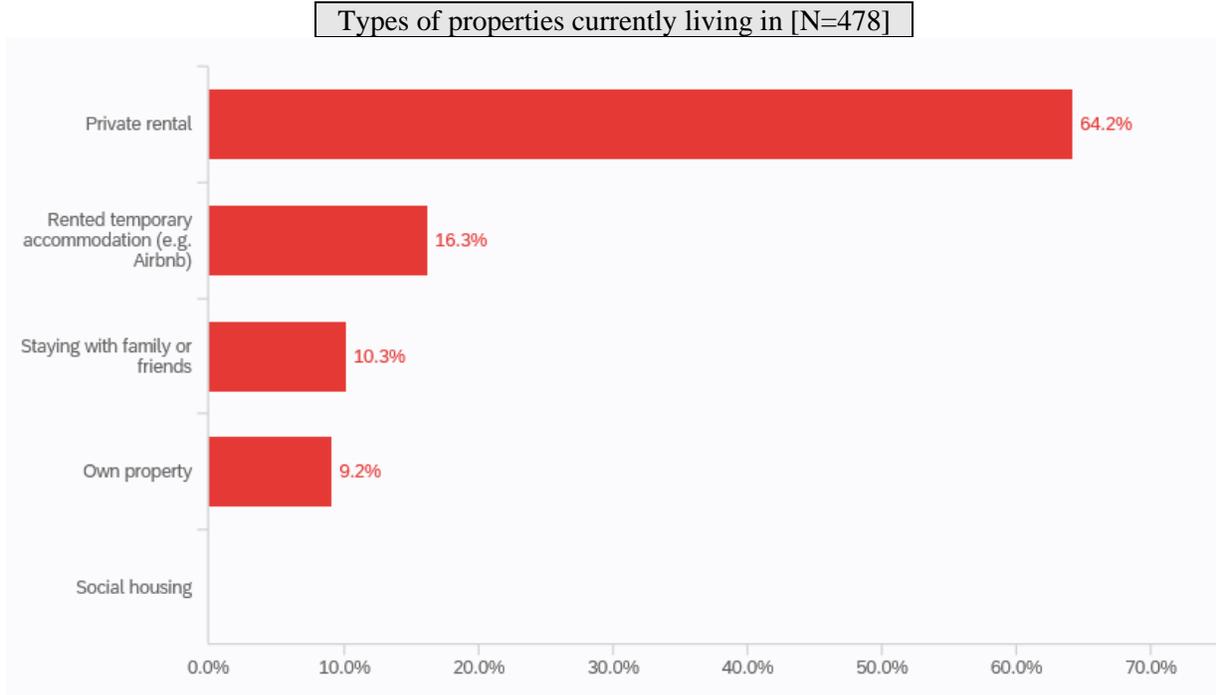
英國港僑協會
HONGKONGERS IN BRITAIN

(Note: the data/map above may be particularly useful for SMPs' reference, as no current data about arrived Hongkongers distributed in 12 SMP regions is available yet. However, it should be also noted that this survey may have a larger proportion of respondents who are active in (looking for) employment, rather than reflective of overall patterns of Hongkongers' preferred arrival locations in the UK. For that, please see HKB's June 2021 publication⁷)

- Out of 591 respondents, 54.5% describe themselves living in cities, 26.9% in towns, 16.2% in suburbs, and 2.4% in villages. [Q5]

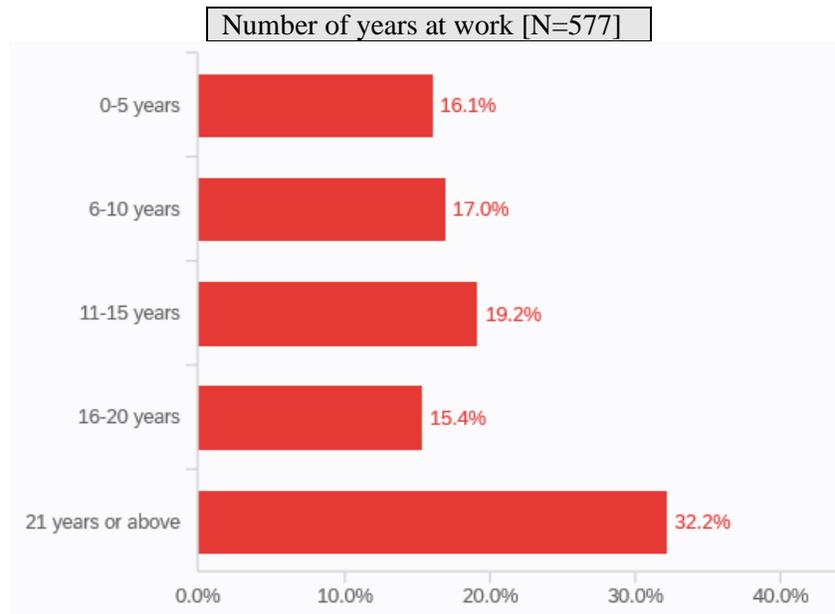
⁷ Ibid

5. Regarding the types of properties our 478 respondents currently live in, a majority of them live in private rentals (64.2%), followed by 16.3% in rented temporary accommodation (e.g. AirBnB). A minority of them (10.3%) either stay with friends or family, or in their own property (9.2%). [Q47]



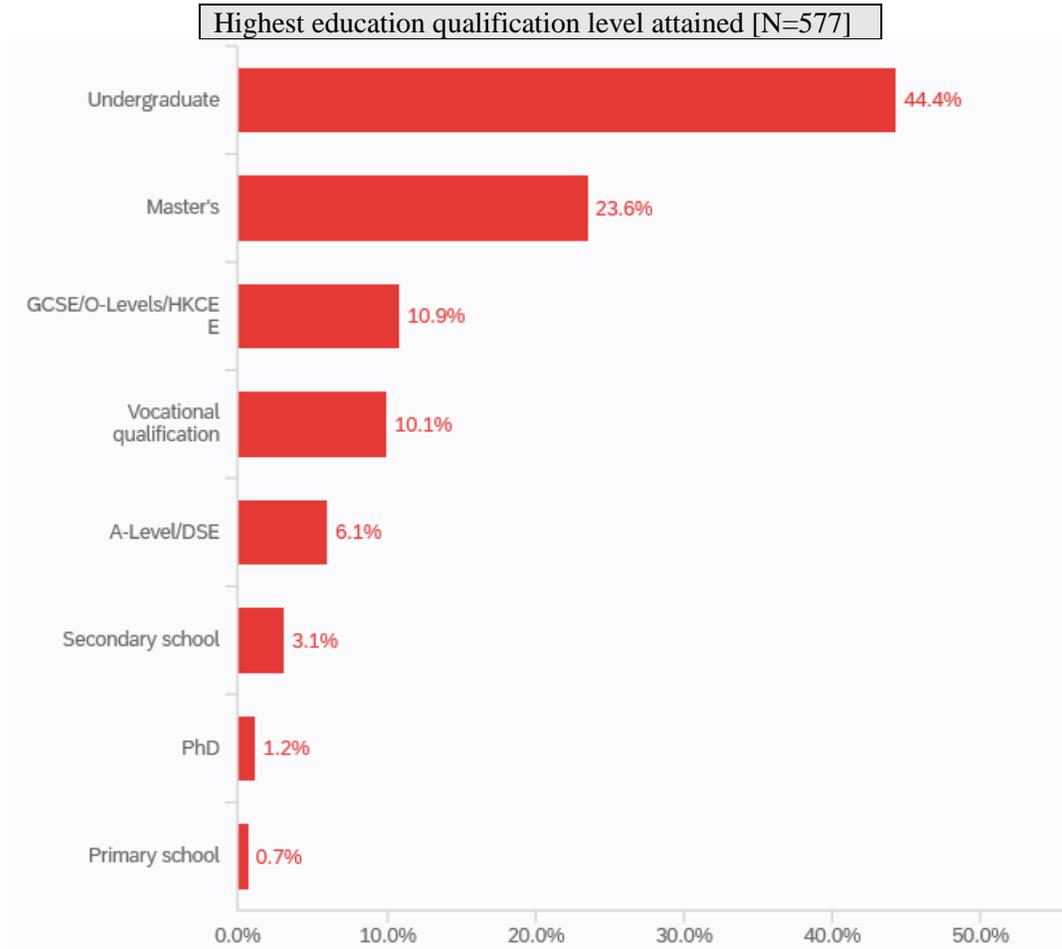
Part C: Skill levels and work experience

1. Almost a third (32.2%) of 577 respondents have 21 or above years of work experience, making up the largest group in this question. 19.2% of them have 11-15 years of work experience, 17% have 6-10 years, 16.1% have 0-5 years, and 15.4% have 16-20 years of work experience. [Q10] This corresponds to our finding above (A1), which shows that most respondents fall in the age group of 35-44.



2. In terms of highest education qualification levels attained, over two-thirds (69.2%) of the 577 respondents hold a higher education qualification. This includes 44.4% who have an Undergraduate degree, 23.6% who have a Master’s degree, and 1.2% who have a PhD degree. This fully aligns with HKB’s Policy Study findings in Dec 2020, highlighting the high education level of potential workforce from Hong Kong.⁸ In addition, another 10.1% have vocational qualifications, 6.1% have A-levels/HKDSE, 11% have GCSE/O-levels/HKCEE, 3.1% have secondary school-level education, and 0.7% have primary school-level education.

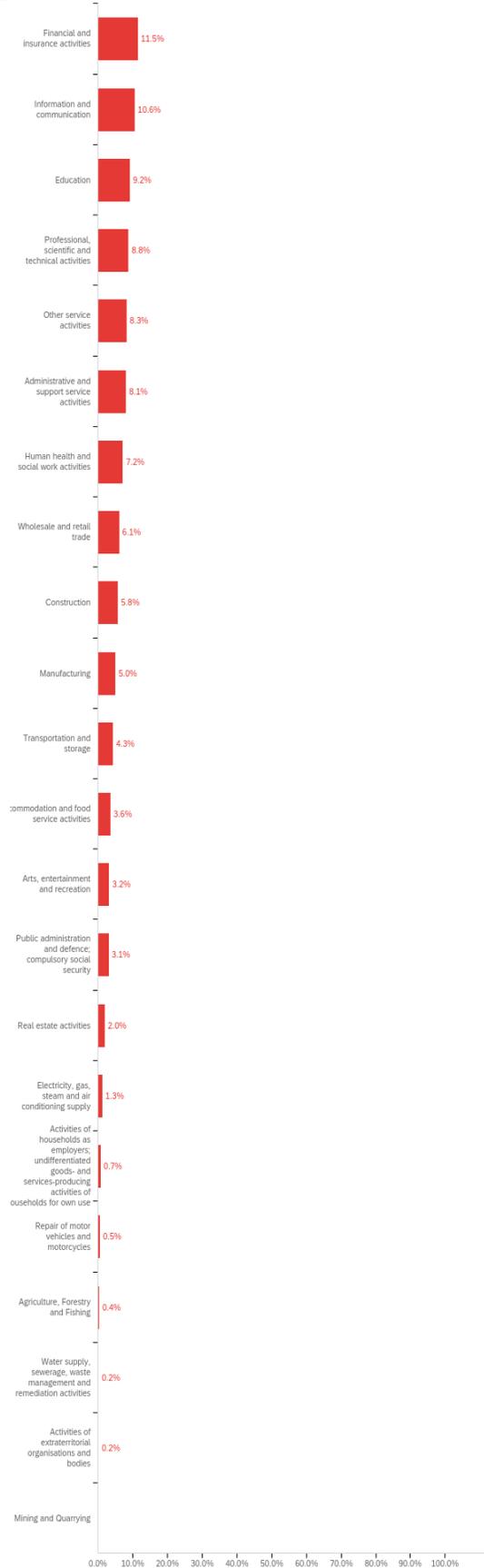
[Q11]



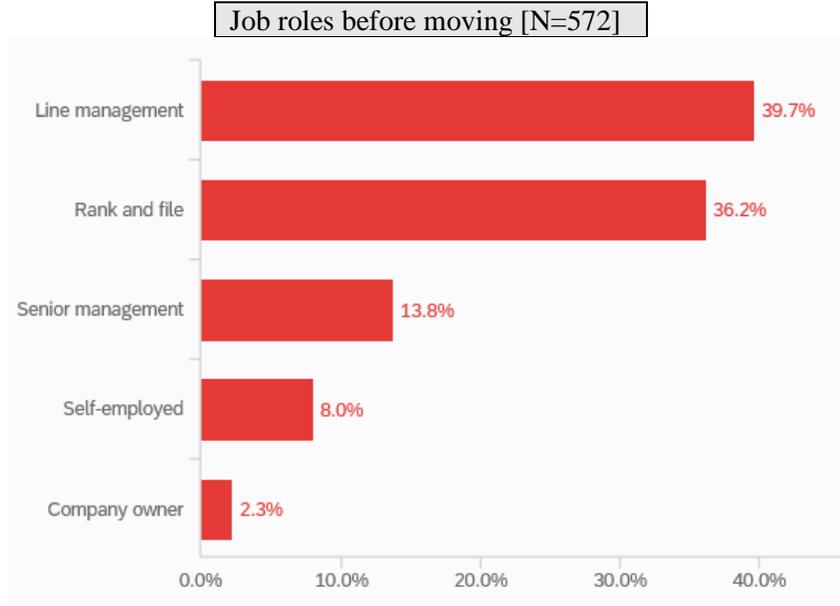
3. In terms of the occupational sectors of which 556 respondents have worked before moving to the UK, the top five include: financial & insurance activities (11.5%), information and communication (10.6%), education (9.2%), professional, scientific and technical activities (8.8%), and other service activities (8.3%). [Q12] A full table of results from most to least mentioned can be found below:

⁸ “Coming for Hope”: HKB Policy Study on Hong Kong British National (Overseas) Holders Intending to come to the UK, Dec 2020 - <https://www.hongkongers.org.uk/policy-study-coming-for-hope>

Work sectors before moving to the UK [N=556]



4. Amongst 572 respondents describing their job roles before moving to the UK, 39.7% of them say they were in line-management, 36.2% of them were rank-and-file staff, 13.8% were in senior management, 8% were self-employed, and 2.3% were company owners. [Q13]



5. Amongst 573 respondents, over three-quarters (75.6%) earned above HK\$20,000/~£2,000 per month, and well over a half (54.8%) earned above HK\$30,000/~£3,000 per month. [Q16]

This finding can be read in parallel with HKB’s Dec 2020 Policy Study, in which only 36% of respondents, including both considering moving to the UK and having already arrived at the UK, were found as higher earners with an earning level of £3,000 or above per month. It can thus be deduced that those who have actually moved to the UK from Hong Kong might be in a better financial position than previously speculated.



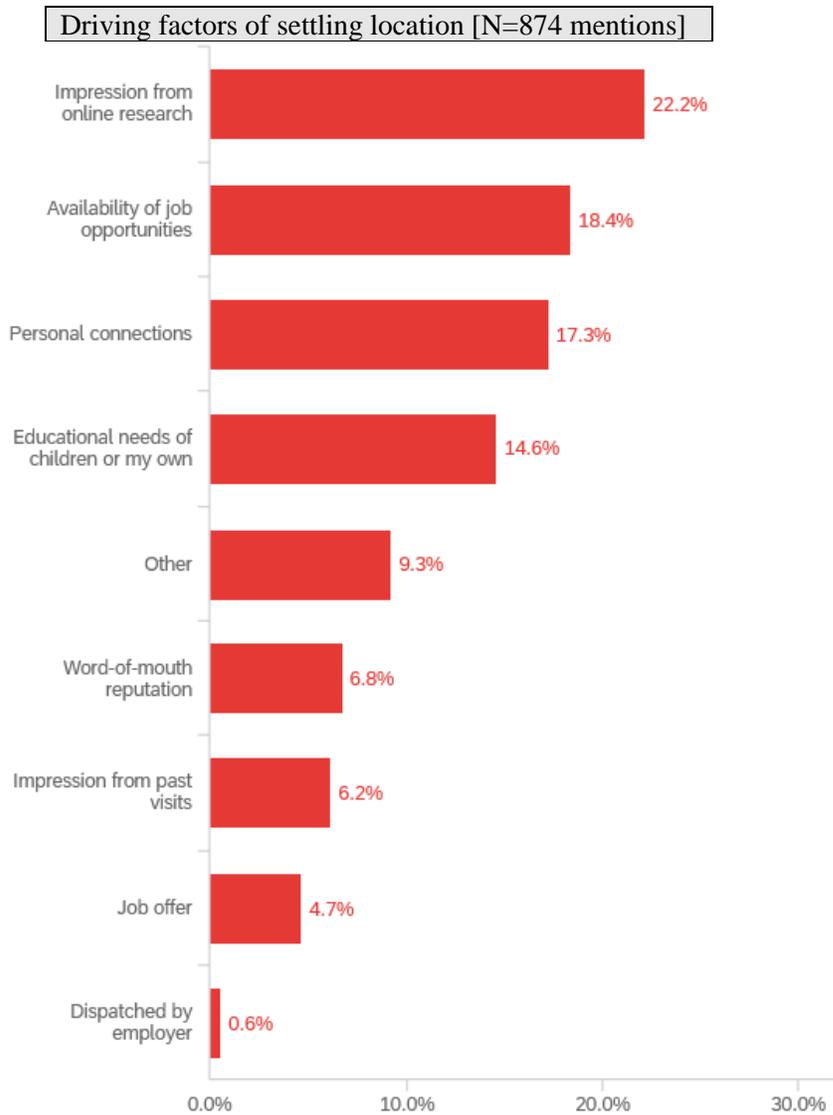
**Exchange rate is assumed to be £1=HK\$10*

Comparison with HKB’s Dec 2020 Policy Study findings:

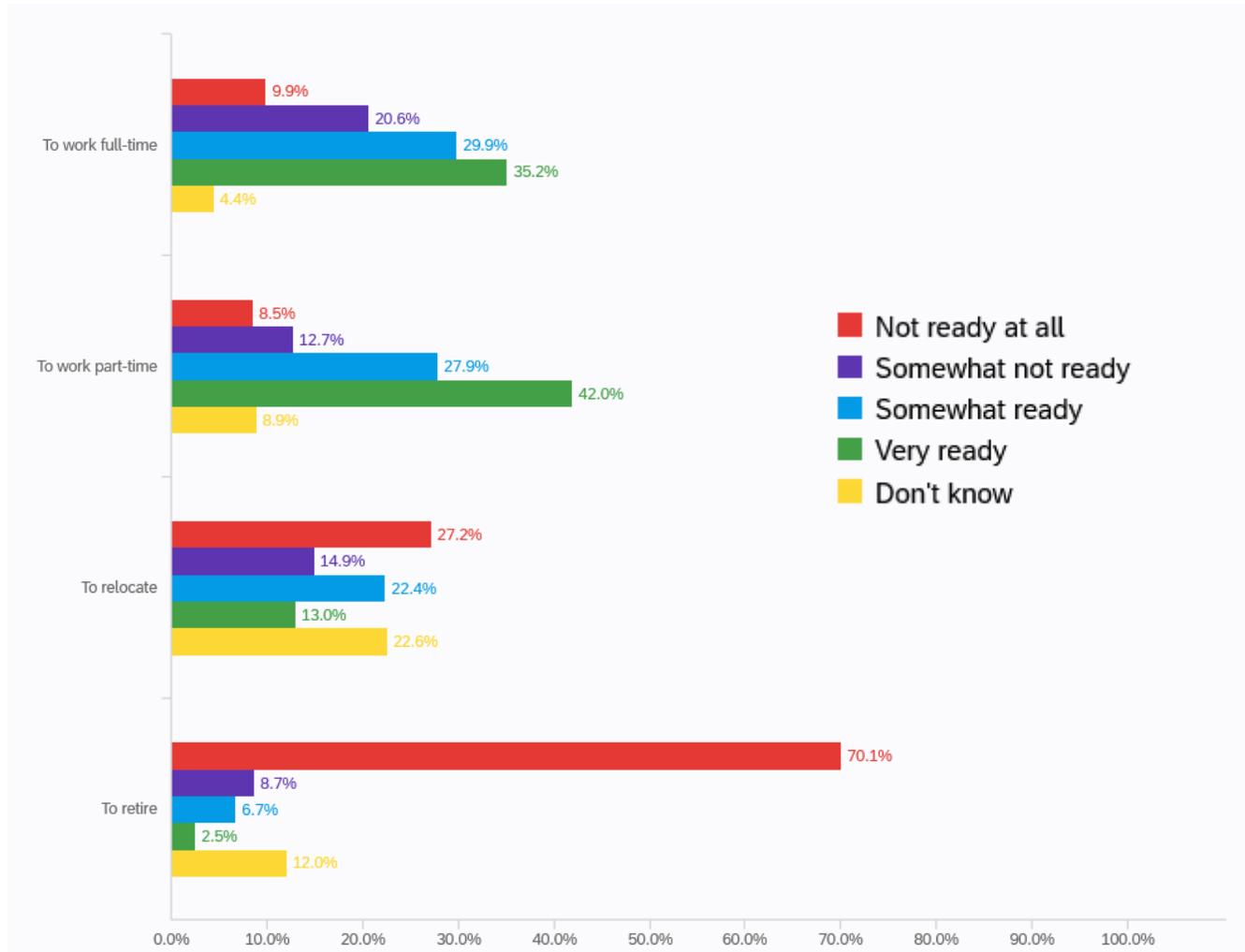
| | Dec 2020 Findings | Sep 2021 Findings |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Total % earning over HK\$20,000 | 62% | 75.6% |
| Total % earning over HK\$30,000 | 36% | 54.8% |
| Total % earning over HK\$40,000 | 21% | 34.5% |
| Total % earning over HK\$50,000 | 14% | 19.1% |

Part D: Intention for employment and/or maintaining labour market mobility

1. Respondents were asked about factor(s) which drove them to settle down in their locations by the time the survey was conducted. Among the list of possible factors provided (multiple choices allowed), “impression from online research” accounted for 22.2% of the 874 mentions, as the most common factor which drove respondents to set foot where they were now. “Availability of job opportunities” came second, with 18.4% of mentions, while “personal connections” saw 17.3%. [Q6]



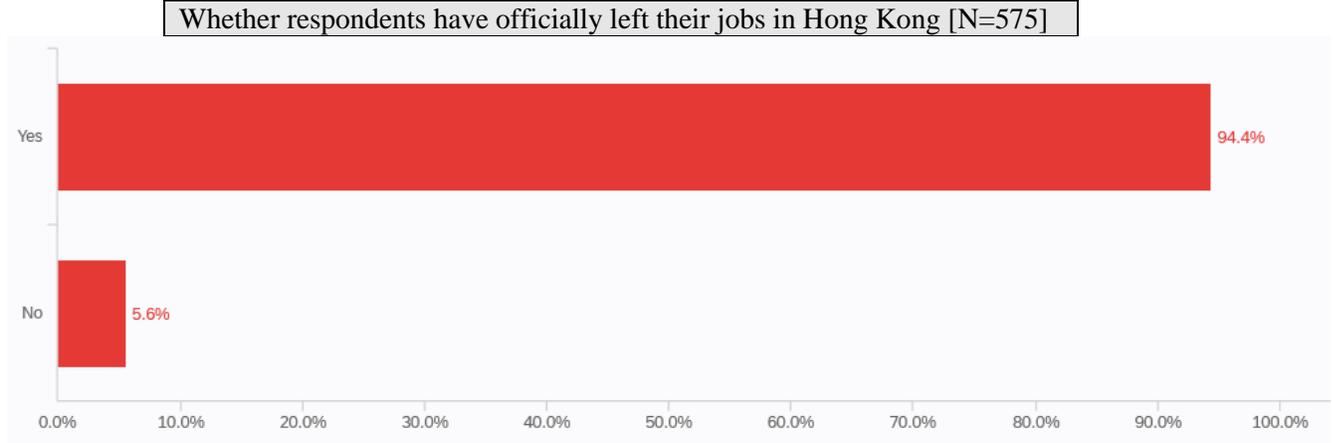
2. [Q7] In terms of the readiness to enter or remain in the job market, 35.2% and 42% out of 586 respondents said that they are ‘very ready’ to work full-time and part-time respectively, while 29.9% and 27.9% are ‘somewhat ready’ to work full-time and part-time respectively. A vast majority (70.1%) said that they are ‘not ready at all’ to retire, which implies that they might still be keen to enter the job market in the future even if they do not necessarily feel prepared at the moment. However, their geographical mobility might be a constraint, as 27.2% of them said that they are ‘not ready at all’ to relocate from where they are.



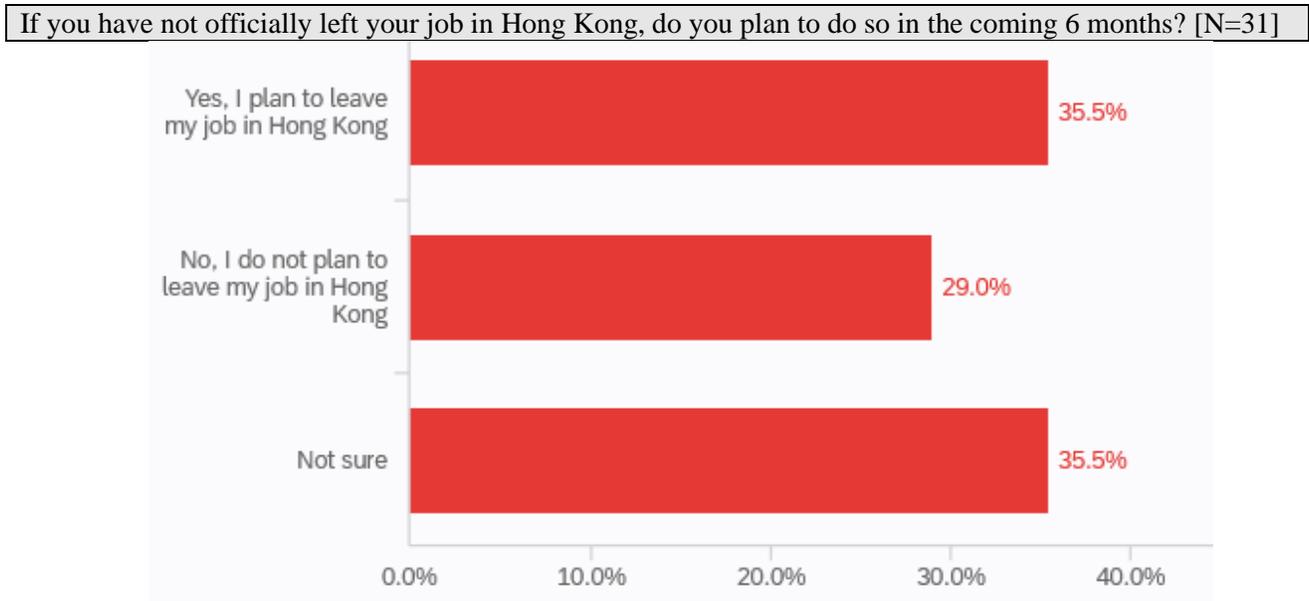
Cumulative data analysis:

- a. 65.1% are somewhat or very ready to work full-time, while 30.5% are somewhat not ready or not ready at all to work full-time.
- b. 69.9% are somewhat or very ready to work part-time, while 21.2% are somewhat no ready or not ready at all to work part-time.
- c. 35.4% are somewhat or very ready to relocate, whilst 42.1% are somewhat not ready or not ready at all to relocate.
- d. 78.8% are somewhat not ready or not ready at all to retire, whilst only 9.2% are somewhat ready or very ready to retire.

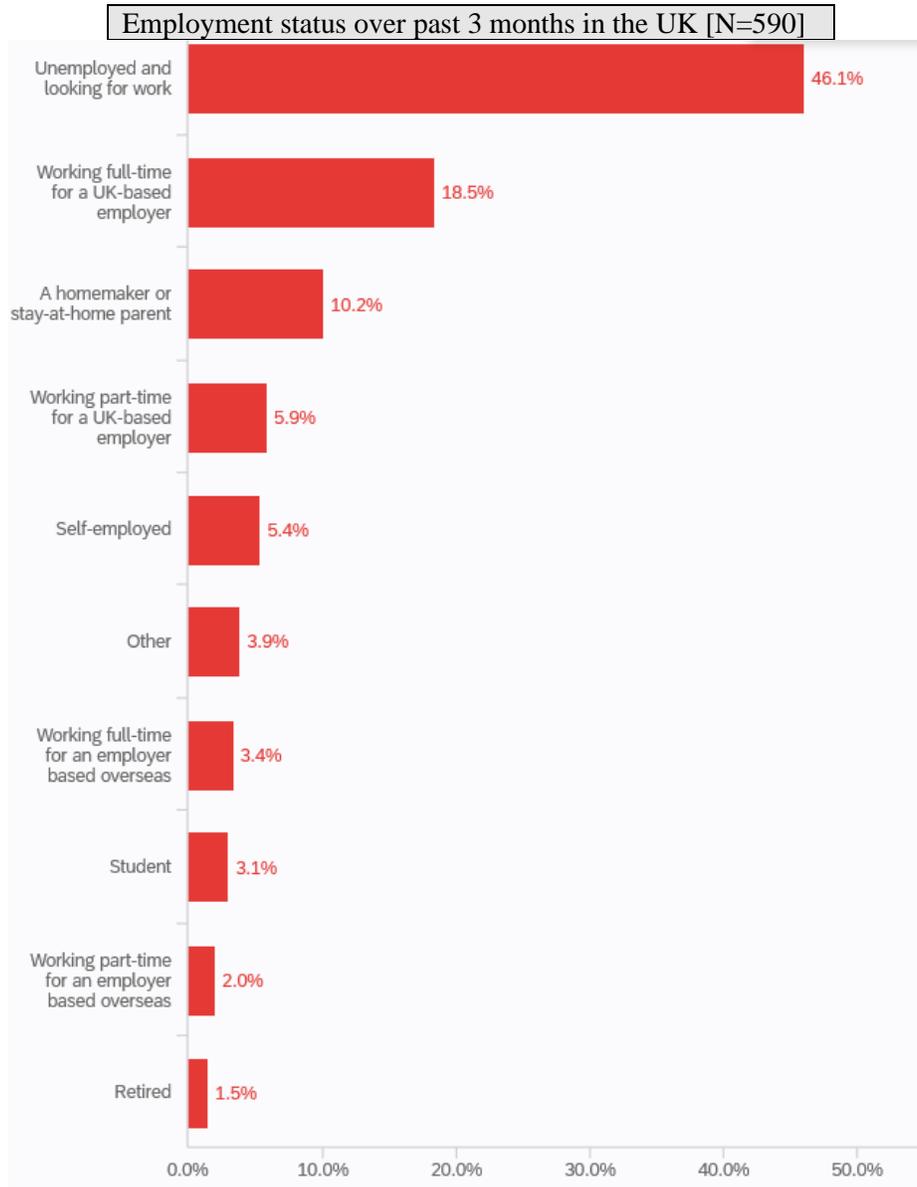
3. A vast majority (94.4%) of 575 respondents have officially left their jobs in Hong Kong, while 5.6% said they have not. [Q14]



4. Amongst 31 respondents who are in the UK already but have not officially left their jobs in Hong Kong, and asked whether they plan to do so in the coming 6 months, 35.5% said “Yes, I plan to leave my job in Hong Kong”, 35.5% said “Not sure”, and 29% said “No, I do not plan to leave my job in Hong Kong” [Q15]



5. When asked about what best describes their employment status over the past 3 months in the UK, the most selected option amongst 590 respondents is “unemployed and are looking for work” (46.1%). Just over a third (35.2%) of the respondents are working full-time or part-time, or are self-employed, among which 18.5% of them are working full-time with a UK-based employer. 10.2% of them describe themselves as “a home-maker or stay-at-home parent”. [Q8]



6. In terms of the perception of their own financial security in the coming 6-12 months, 69.4% out of 592 respondents find themselves feeling either ‘somewhat secure’, ‘secure’ or ‘very secure’. 30% of them say they are either ‘somewhat insecure’, ‘insecure’ or ‘very insecure’. It is worth noting that 6.6% of them find themselves ‘very insecure’. [Q9]

Note 1: The respondents’ assurance to their own financial security might be due to the requirement for BN(O) visa applicants to show they enough money to pay for their housing and to support themselves and their family for 6 months⁹, in addition to the condition of “No Recourse to Public Funds” (NRPF) for BN(O) visas. Therefore, BN(O) Visa Holders might have secured a certain degree of financial stability for the first six months in the UK. Additionally, there may be a need to find out reasons for the 12% of respondents who feel financially “insecure” or “very insecure” and provide necessary interventions.

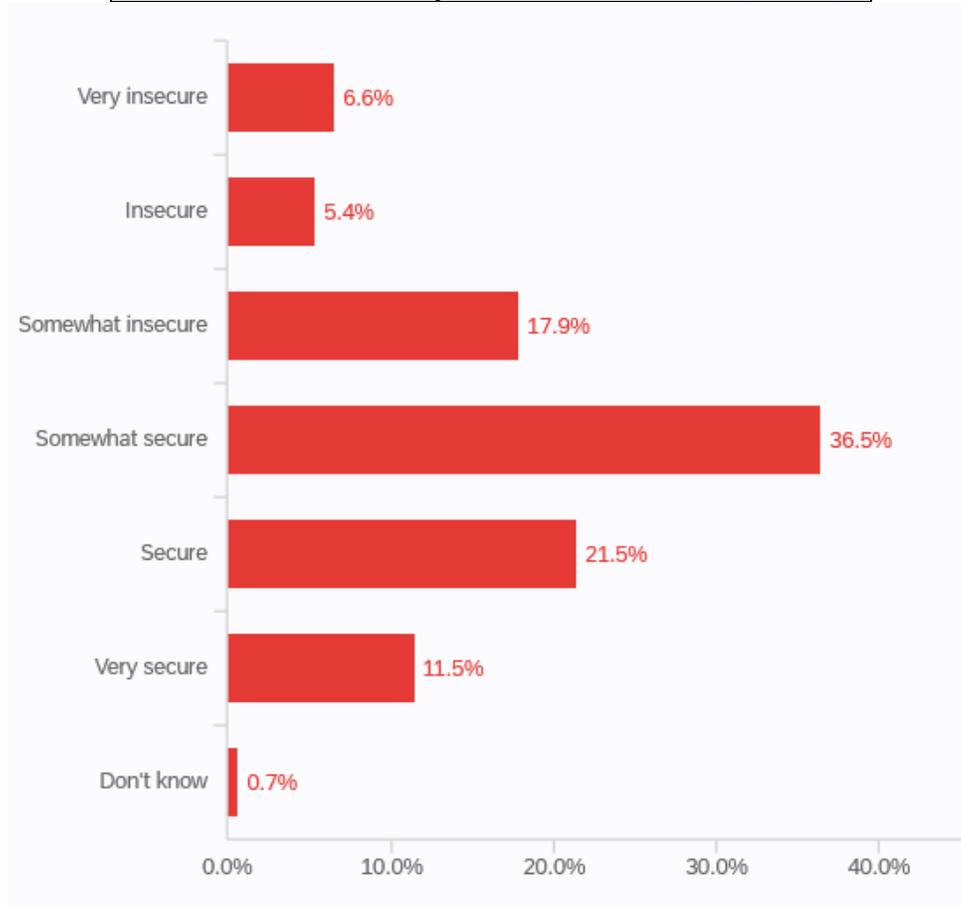
⁹ British National (Overseas) visa, Gov.UK <https://www.gov.uk/british-national-overseas-bno-visa/how-much-it-costs>
 Hongkongers in Britain

Note 2: According to UK immigration rules, BN(O) Visa Holders can apply for the NRPF condition to be lifted if they can demonstrate that they:

- are destitute or at imminent risk of destitution,
- can provide evidence that there are particularly compelling reasons relating to the welfare of a child of a parent in receipt of a very low income, or
- are facing exceptional financial circumstances relating to a very low income¹⁰

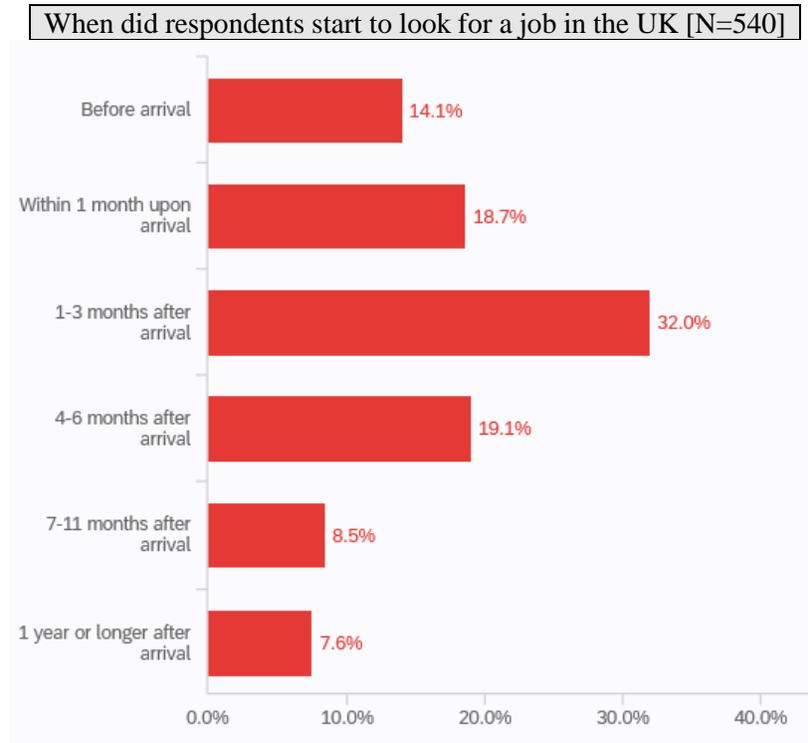
Further information can be found on [gov.uk website](https://www.gov.uk) and nrpfnetwork.org.uk

Perceived financial security in the next 6-12 months [N=592]



7. Regarding when the 540 respondents who have started looking for a job in the UK, over four-fifths (83.9%) of 540 respondents have started looking for a job in the UK within 6 months after arrival, or even before arrival. Amongst them, 32% started 1-3 months after arrival, 19% 4-6 months after arrival, 18.7% within 1 month upon arrival, and 14.1% before arrival. [Q21]

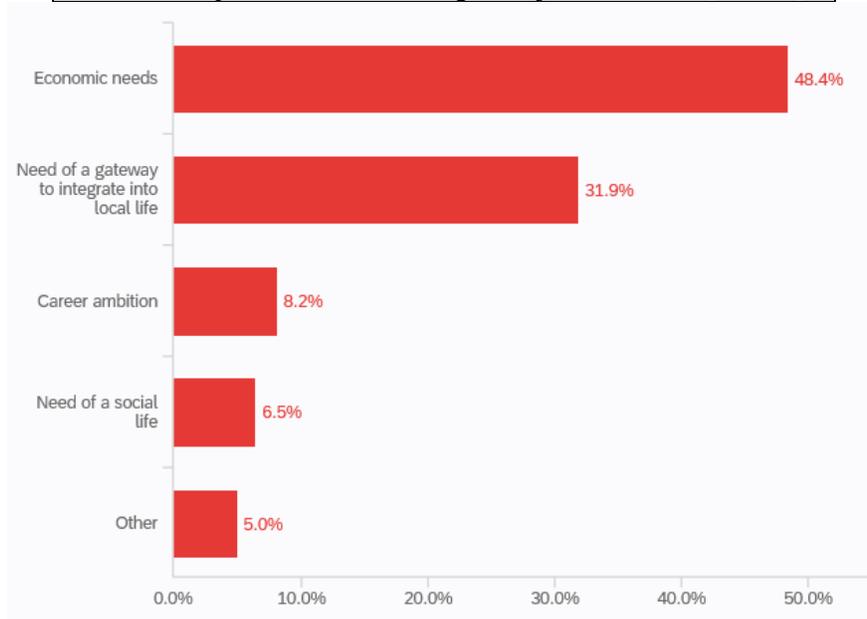
¹⁰ Immigration Rules, Gov.UK <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules>



8. When asked about the most important factor which made respondents look for a job in the UK within their selected timeframe, 48.4% of them say that it is out of economic needs, while 32% said that they need a gateway to integrate into local life. A minority of the respondents started looking for a job within that timeframe out of career ambition (8.2%) and need of a social life (6.5%). [Q22]

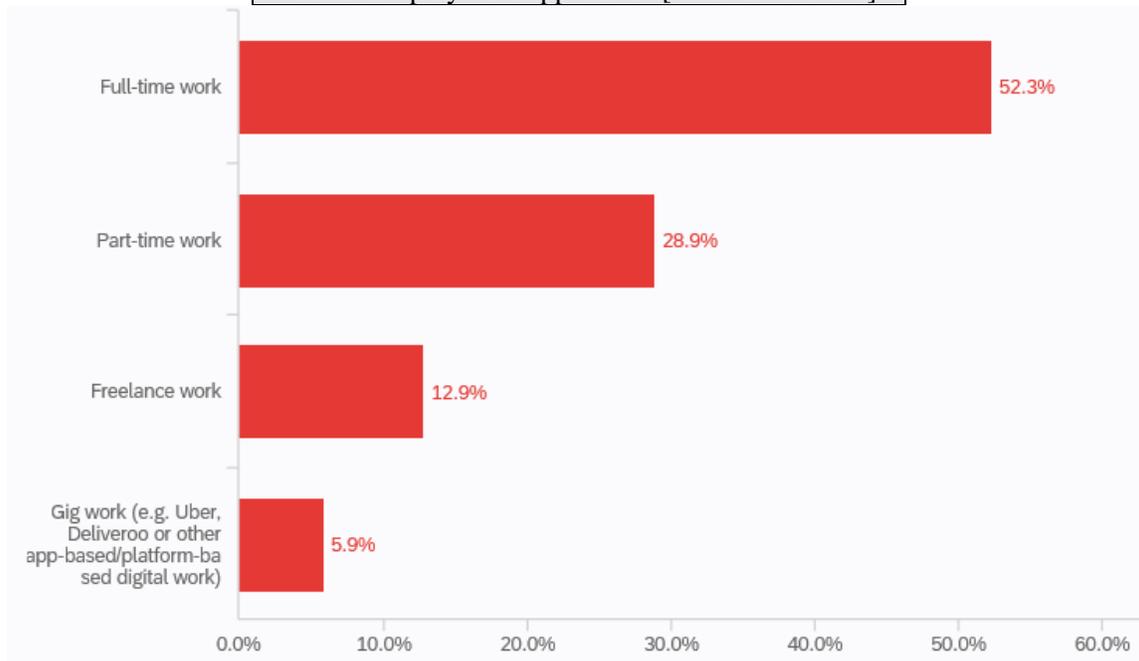
The emphasis of integration into local life over career ambition as a driving force behind job searching demonstrates that the social function of employment might be more valued than its economic function from the perspective of recent arrivals from Hong Kong. In other words, this suggests that **some Hongkongers may be keen to integrate into local life through finding work**. This mindset may be quite different from the situation in Hong Kong where generally economic needs would far outweigh local/social life when finding a job.

The most important factor looking for a job in the UK [N=539]



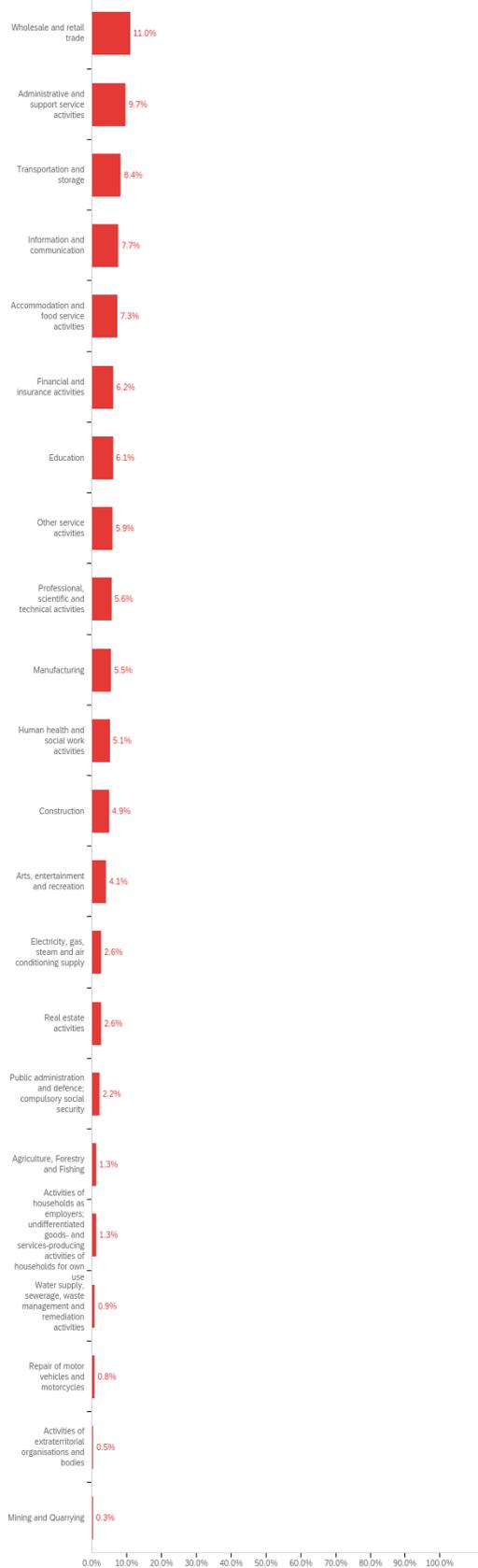
9. In terms of the mode of employment respondents applied for, multiple choices allowed, there were 52.3% mentions for full-time work, 28.9% for part-time work, 12.9% for freelance work, and 5.9% for gig work. (Out of a total of 816 mentions). **Full-time work still seems to be the most preferred type of work.** [Q23]

Mode of employment applied for [N=816 mentions]

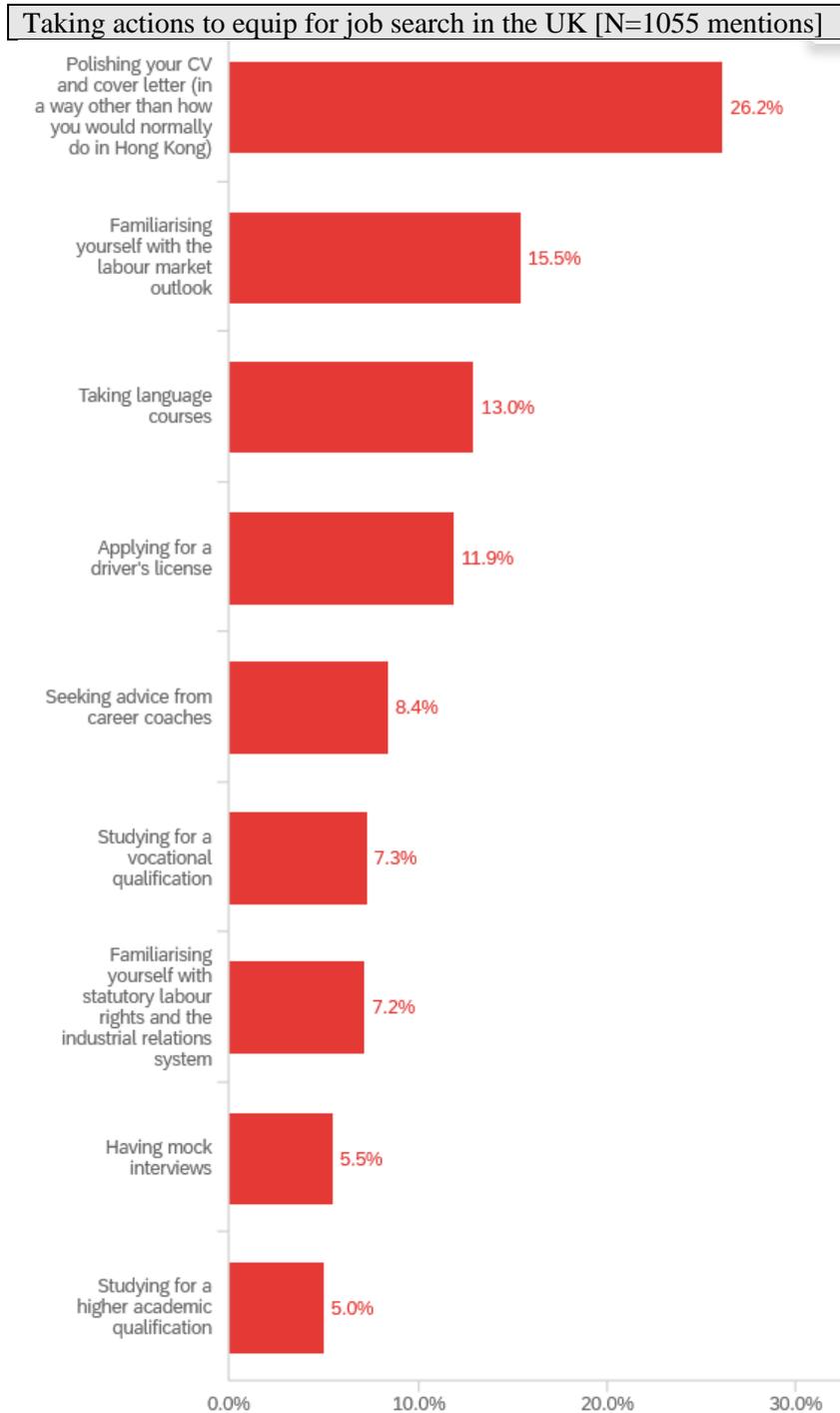


10. Amongst the sectors our respondents have tried searching jobs in (multiple choices allowed), top mentions include wholesale & retail trade (11%), followed by administrative and support service activities (9.7%), transportation & storage (8.4%), information and communication (7.7%), accommodation and food service activities (7.3%). [Q24]

Tried searching in following sectors [N=874 mentions]



11. When it comes to taking actions to equip themselves to facilitate job search in the UK (multiple choices allowed), 26.2% of the 1055 mentions were “Polishing CV and cover letter (in a way other than how respondents would normally do in Hong Kong)”, while 15.5% mentions were on “Familiarising with the labour market outlook”. 13% of the mentions were on “taking language courses”, 12% were on “applying for driver’s licence”, and 8.4% were on “seeking advice from career coaches”. Longer-term investment in human capital, such as obtaining higher academic or vocational qualifications is less common. [Q27]

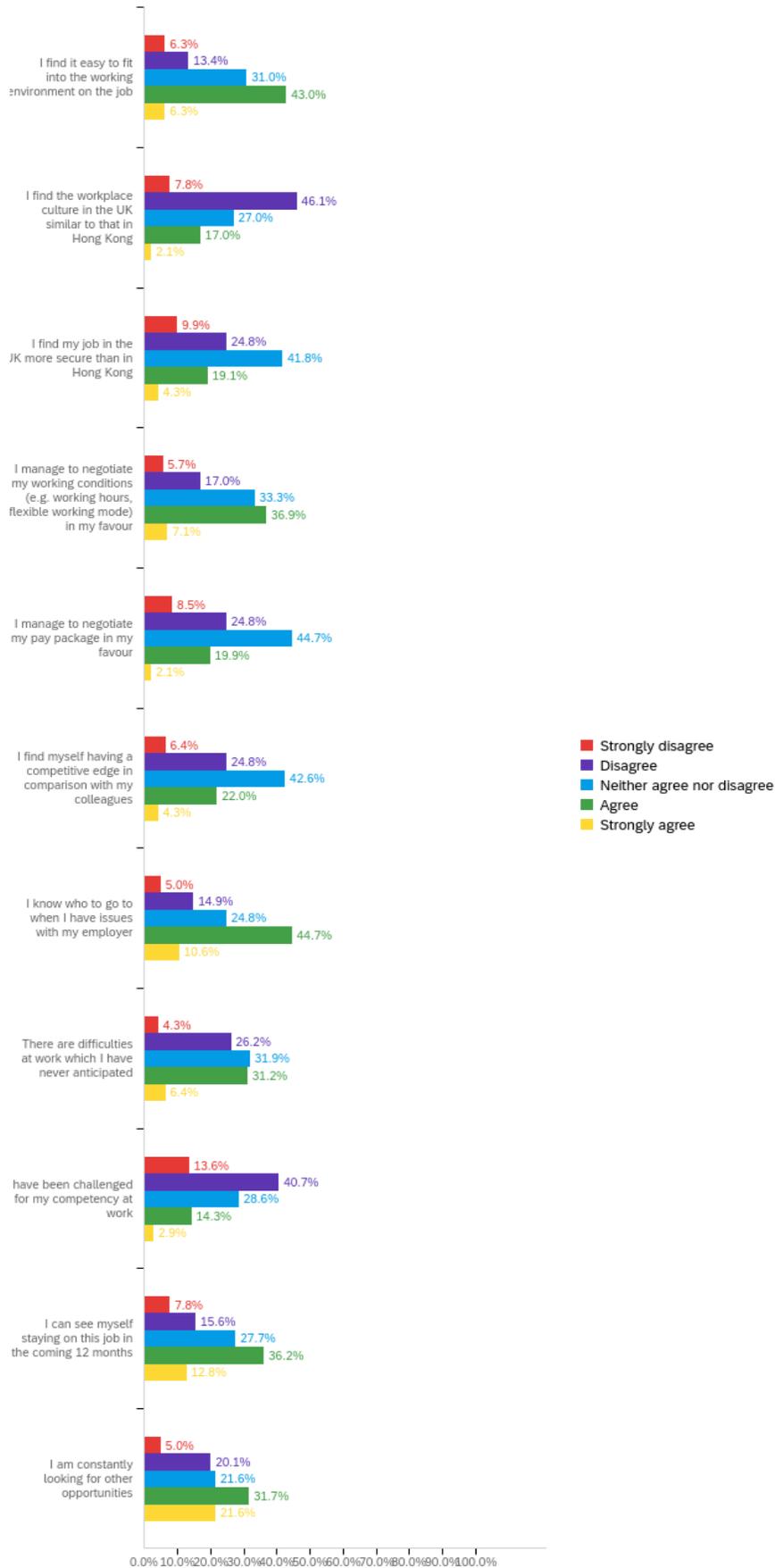


12. [Q40]

| “Do you agree with the following statements about your current job in the UK?” [N=142] | Strongly disagree/ Disagree | Agree/ Strongly Agree |
|--|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| I find it easy to fit into the working environment on the job | 19.7% | 49.3% |
| I find the workplace culture in the UK similar to that in Hong Kong | 53.9% | 19.1% |
| I find my job in the UK more secure than in Hong Kong | 34.7% | 23.4% |
| I manage to negotiate my working conditions (e.g. working hours, flexible working mode) in my favour | 22.7% | 44% |
| I manage to negotiate my pay package in my favour | 33.3% | 22% |
| I find myself having a competitive edge in comparison with my colleagues | 31.2% | 26.3% |
| I know who to go to when I have issues with my employer | 19.9% | 55.3% |
| There are difficulties at work which I have never anticipated | 30.5% | 37.6% |
| I have been challenged for my competency at work | 54.3% | 17.2% |
| I can see myself staying on this job in the coming 12 months | 23.4% | 49% |
| I am constantly looking for other opportunities | 25.1% | 53.3% |

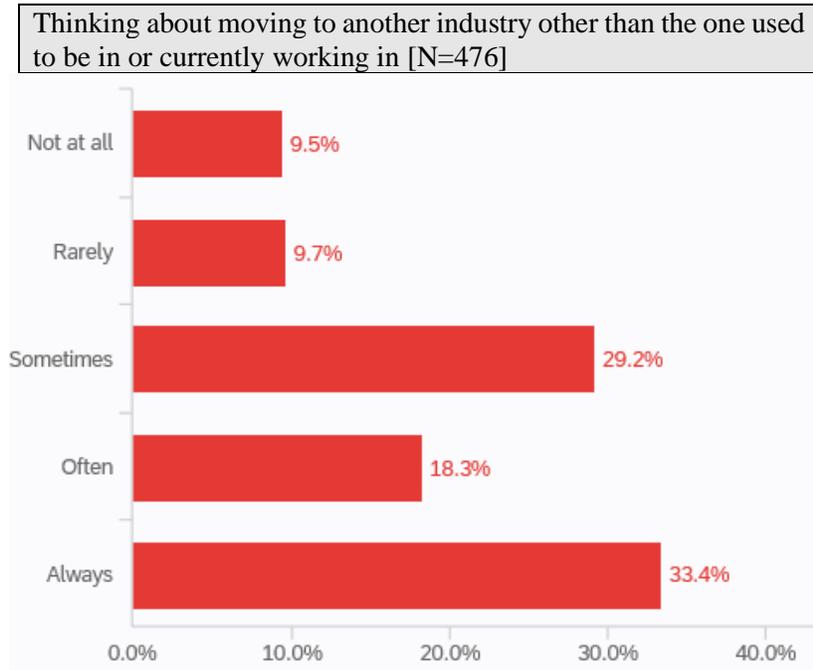
Summaries:

- a. There is relative ease fitting into working environment on the job
- b. Many more find workplace culture in UK different than in Hong Kong
- c. More regard their job in UK being less secure than in Hong Kong
- d. Twice as many think they can manage to negotiate their working conditions in their favour than those who think they cannot
- e. More think they are able to manage to negotiate their pay package in their favour
- f. Slightly more do not think they have a more competitive edge in comparison with their colleagues
- g. Over half regard that they know who to go when they have issues with their employer
- h. Slightly more think there are difficulties at work which they have never anticipated
- i. Three times the amount of those who say they have not been challenged for their competency at work, than those who say they have
- j. More than twice see themselves staying on their jobs in the coming 12 months, than those who do not
- k. More than half are constantly looking for other opportunities, more than twice the amount who say they are not

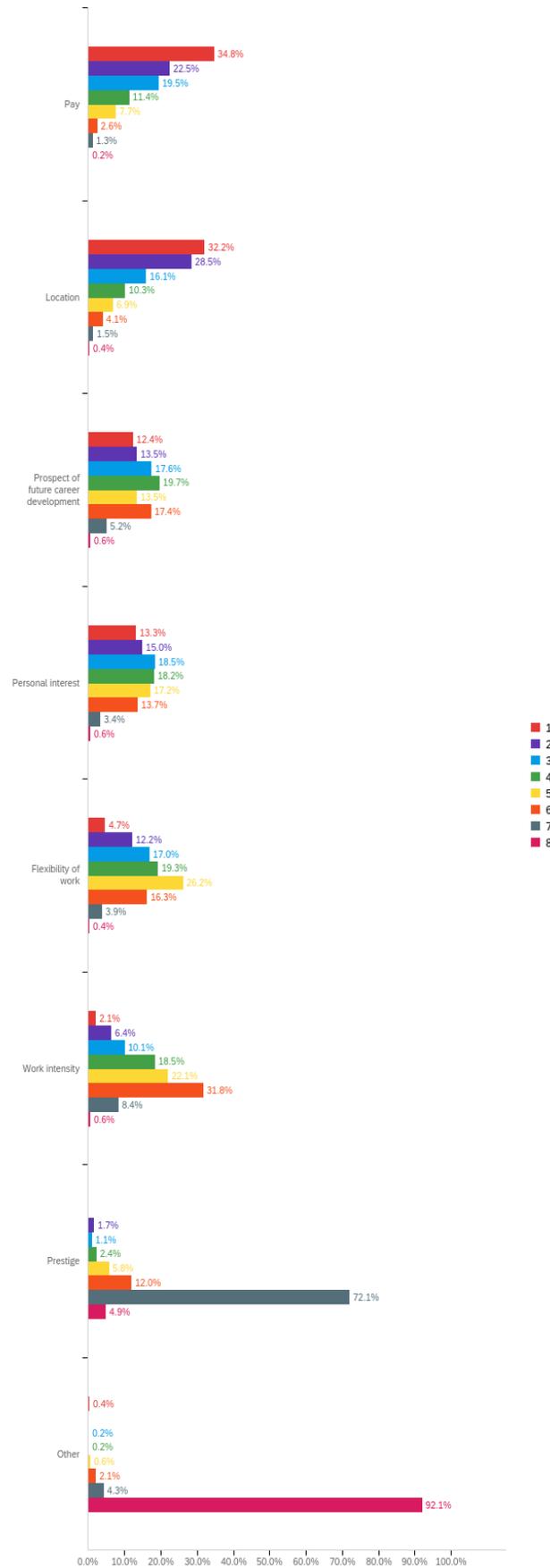


13. Asking respondents whether they are thinking about moving to another industry other than the one that they are used to be in or currently working in, just over a third (33.4%) say they always are, 29.2% say sometimes, 18.3% say often, 9.7% say rarely, and 9.5% say not at all. [Q42]

In total, those who say always/sometimes/often = 80.9%, meaning **four-fifths are at least sometimes thinking about moving to another industry than the one they are currently working in, and they may need advice and/or support to do so.**



14. We asked respondents to rank factors which they take into consideration while making a career move by importance. In terms of the factor that is most important taken into consideration for the 549 respondents when they make a career move, **34.8% selected pay as the no.1 most important factor, followed by 32.2% selecting location as the no.1 most important factor. Conversely, the least important is prestige.** [Q44]

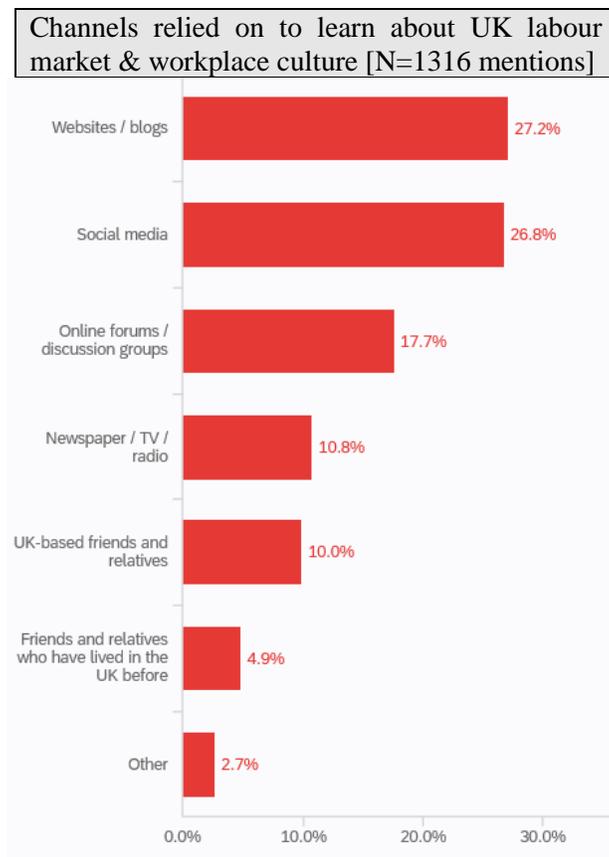


15. Please see A3 for analysis of the number of financial dependents amongst respondents [Q48]

Part E: Sources of information about the labour market

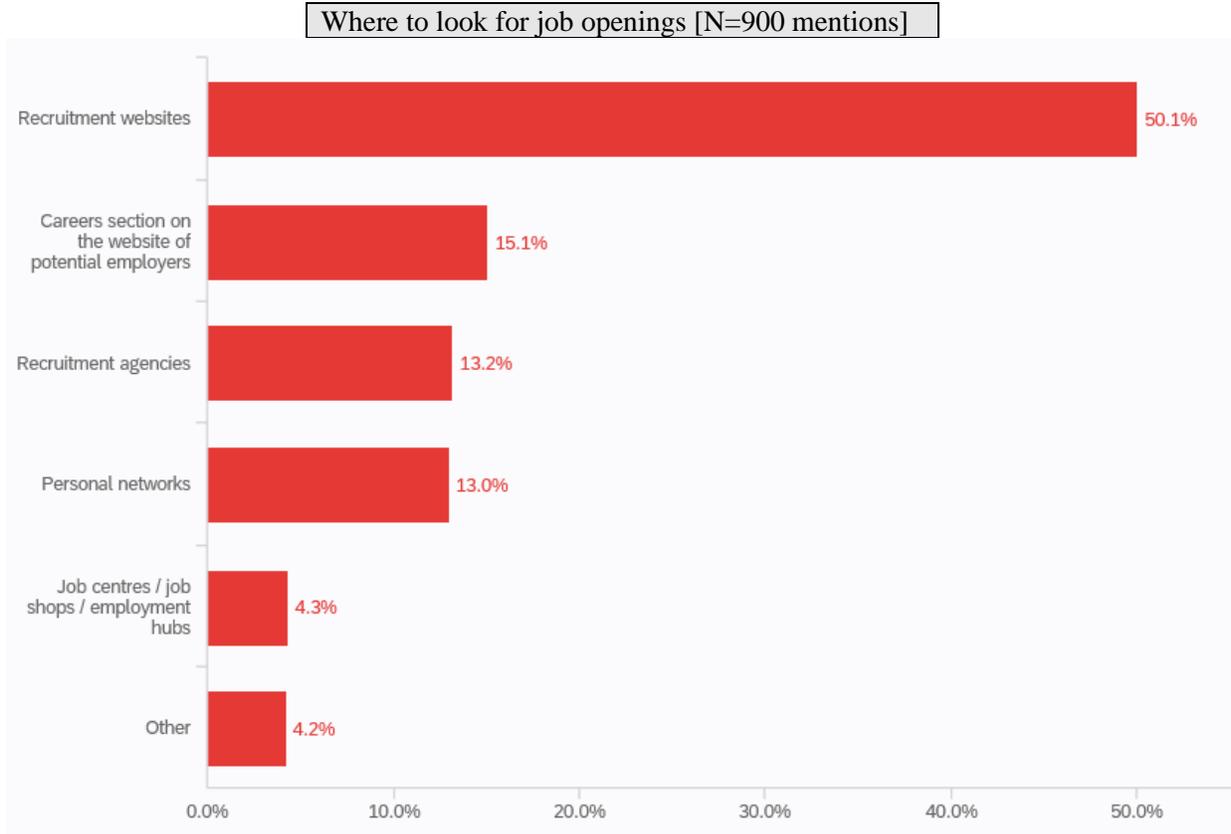
- We asked respondents what channels they relied on to learn about the UK labour market and workplace culture before moving to the UK (multiple choices allowed). Websites/blogs is the most commonly used source (27.2% of the 1316 mentions), followed by social media (26.8%), online forums/discussion groups (17.7%), while newspaper/TV/radio saw 10.8%. [Q19]

Therefore, online means (websites, blogs, social media, online forums and discussion groups) account for a total of 71.7% amongst the channels relied on for Hongkongers to learn about the UK labour market and workplace culture before moving to the UK. Reliance on personal relationships, such as friends and relatives who have experience in living and working in the UK is less significant (14.9%).



- In terms of where to look for job openings, out of 900 mentions (multiple choices allowed), just over half (50.1%) of the mentions selected “recruitment websites”, which far outweigh that of other choices, including careers section on the website of potential employers (15.1%), recruitment agencies (13.2%), or personal networks (13%). Job centres, job shops and employment hubs are less used, which could be partially explained by the fact that BN(O) visa holders do not have access to job seeking support from job centres as a condition of NRPF. [Q25]

This suggests recruitment websites may be the priority focus of target for UK employers in reaching out to Hongkongers.

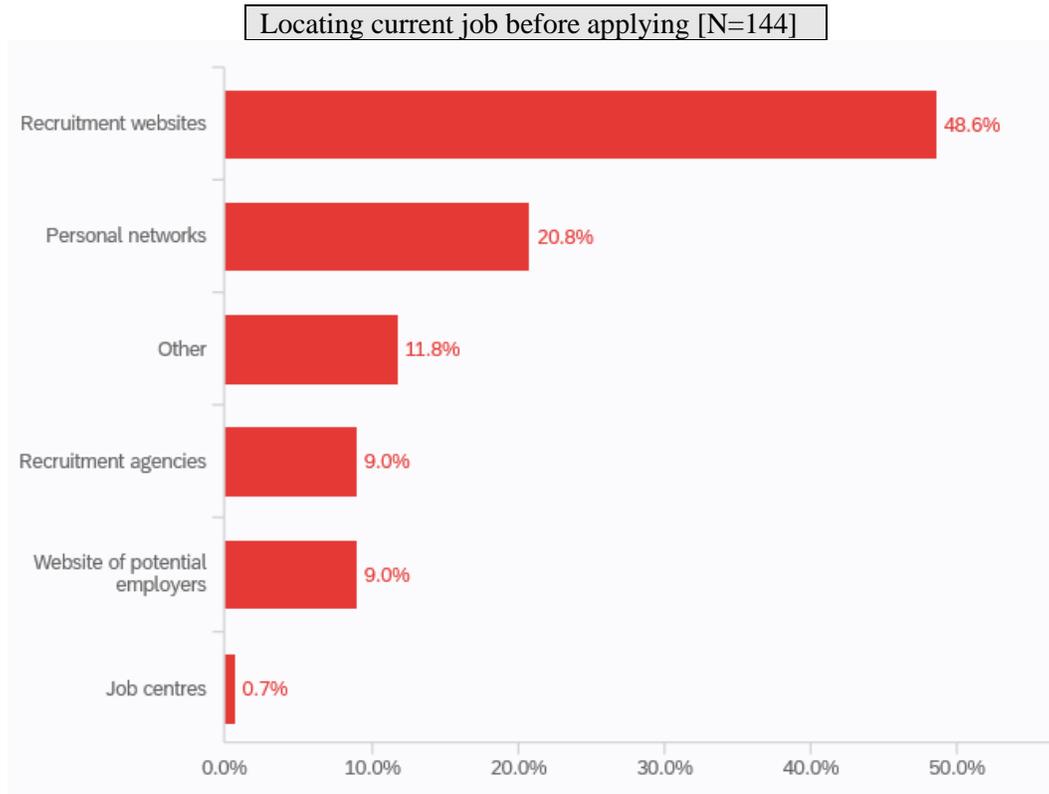


3. Amongst the respondents who say they have relied on recruitment websites for job searching, and were asked to provide examples of those which they have used, websites which were mentioned more than once are listed below, with Indeed in the first place, LinkedIn the second, Reed the third, and Totaljobs the fourth. These four sites cover job openings in a wide range of sectors. A minority of the respondents also mentioned making use of recruitment sites covering individual sectors. [Q26]

| Mentions of recruitment websites for job searching | |
|--|-----|
| Indeed | 220 |
| LinkedIn | 99 |
| Reed | 43 |
| Totaljobs | 40 |
| CV-Library | 18 |
| Glassdoor | 14 |
| Facebook | 7 |
| Gov.uk Find a Job | 5 |
| CW Jobs (for IT) | 4 |
| Monster | 4 |
| Guardian Jobs | 3 |
| NHS Jobs | 3 |
| Efinancialcareers (for finance) | 3 |
| Ybirds | 2 |
| Caterer.com (for hospitality) | 2 |
| Charity Jobs (for non-profit sector) | 2 |

4. Amongst those who were successful in finding a job, out of 144 respondents, 48.6% of them located their current jobs from a recruitment website, which also far outweigh other channels, second being personal networks (20.8%). Similar to E2 above, that job centres only account for 0.7%, potentially due to BN(O) Visa Holders do not have access to job centres as part of NRPF, meaning that it is likely the 0.7% consist of non-BN(O) Visa Holders, or BN(O) Visa Holders who have successfully lifted their NRPF condition. [Q38]

These results show that recruitment websites are still by far the go-to channel amongst Hongkongers who successfully found current jobs in the UK.



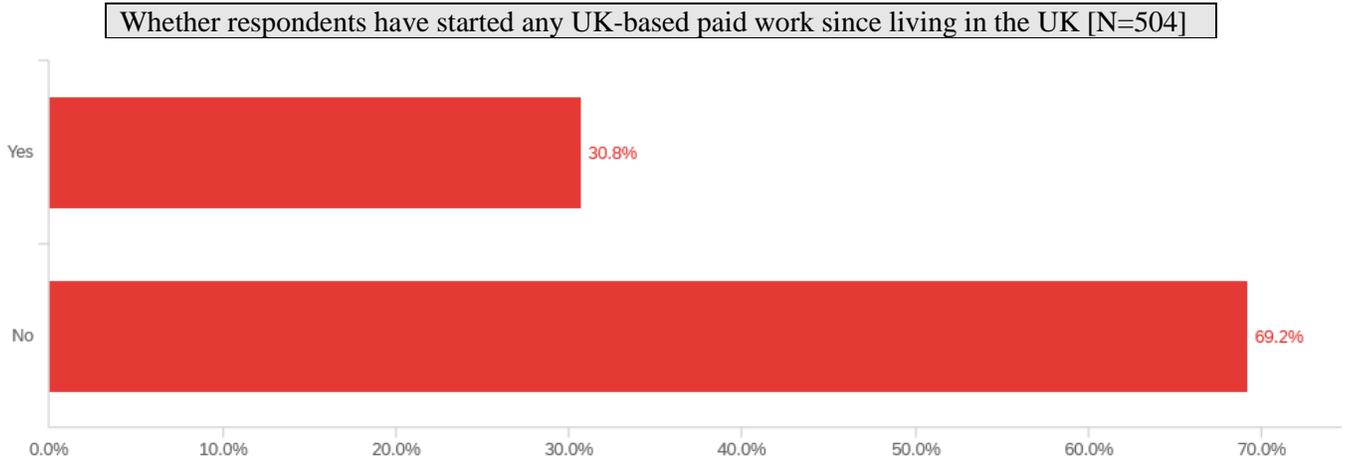
Comparison: where to look for job openings vs. locating current job before applying

| | Where to look for job openings [N=900 mentions] | Locating current job before applying [N=144] |
|---|---|--|
| Recruitment websites | 50.1% | 48.6% |
| Careers section on the website of potential employers | 15.1% | 11.8% |
| Recruitment agencies | 13.2% | 9% |
| Personal networks | 13% | 20.8% |
| Job centres / job shops / employment hubs | 4.3% | 0.7% |
| Other | 4.2% | 11.8% |

5. It is worth noting that in cross-tabulation analysis, getting a UK job is highly correlated with the use of personal networks and recruitment agencies. **The use of personal networks and recruitment agencies proved better chance of success among other channels for job search.**

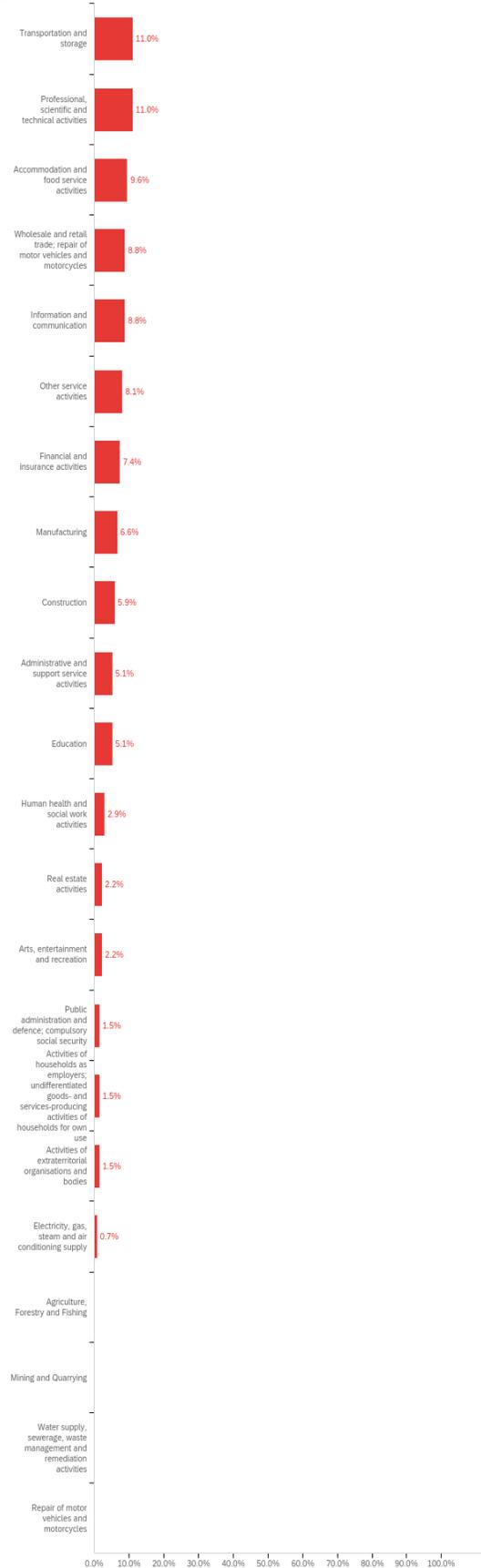
Part F: Current employment status

5. See D5 for [Q8] analysis on best description of respondents' employment status over the past 3 months in the UK
6. Asking respondents whether they have started any UK-based paid work since living in the UK, amongst 504 responses, over two-thirds (69.2%) said no, and under a third (30.8%) said yes. [Q35]



7. In terms of the sectors respondents who are in employment and are currently working in, amongst 136 of them, most of them concentrate in transportation and storage (11%) and professional, scientific and technical activities (11%), followed by accommodation and food service activities (9.6%), wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles (8.8%), and information and communication (8.8%). Other respondents are sporadically distributed in sectors such as manufacturing, construction, education, human health and social work activities, financial and insurance service activities, and other service sectors. [Q39]

Sectors currently working in, for those who found jobs in UK [N=136]



The Office for National Statistics (ONS)'s latest data on vacancies by industry published on 14 Sep 2021 shows the following industries with vacancies (from most to least) in the UK¹¹:

| Sector | Vacancies per 100 employee jobs | Vacancies | Rise on previous 3 months |
|---|---------------------------------|-----------|---------------------------|
| Accommodation and food services | 5.9 | 134,000 | ↑75.4% |
| Information and communication | 4.5 | 58,000 | ↑28.4% |
| Arts, entertainment and recreation | 4.3 | 30,000 | ↑54.1% |
| Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning | 4.2 | 6,000 | ↑1.8% |
| “Other” service activities (includes professional bodies, religious groups and political parties as well as hairdressers, computer repair, dry cleaning and funerals) | 4.2 | 26,000 | ↑93.3% |
| Health and social work | 4.1 | 167,000 | ↑16.8% |
| Professional scientific and technical activities | 3.7 | 98,000 | ↑28.2% |
| Finance and insurance | 3.5 | 37,000 | ↑21.2% |
| Water industry | 3.2 | 6,000 | ↑10.3% |
| Wholesale | 3.2 | 37,000 | ↑54.1% |
| Manufacturing | 3.1 | 75,000 | ↑30.6% |
| Transport and storage | 3.1 | 47,000 | ↑76.3% |
| Administrative and support services | 3 | 75,000 | ↑33% |
| Retail | 2.9 | 83,000 | ↑41% |
| Motor trades | 2.6 | 14,000 | ↑19% |
| Real estate | 2.6 | 15,000 | ↑7.4% |
| Construction | 2.4 | 37,000 | ↑12.3% |
| Mining and quarrying | 2.4 | 1,000 | ↑18.2% |
| Education | 2.2 | 58,000 | ↑29.8% |
| Public administration, defence, social security | 2.1 | 29,000 | ↑28.4% |

From the two tables above, we can draw the following comparisons:

| Top six sectors respondents are currently working in, for those who found jobs in UK | In relation to latest ONS figures on vacancies & rise in % in the previous 3 months |
|--|---|
| Transportation and storage | Second largest % rise in vacancies (76.3%) |
| Professional, scientific and technical activities | Seventh sector with the most vacancies, and % rise of 28.3% |
| Accommodation and food service activities | Third largest % rise in vacancies (75.4%) |
| Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles | Fourth largest % rise in vacancies (54.1%) |
| Information and communication | Second sector with the most vacancies |
| Other service activities | The largest % rise in vacancies (93.3%) |

¹¹ Office for National Statistics Dataset VACS02: Vacancies by industry, 14 Sep 2021,

<https://ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peoplenotinwork/unemployment/datasets/vacanciesbyindustryvacs02>

Further comparison of top 10 sectors:

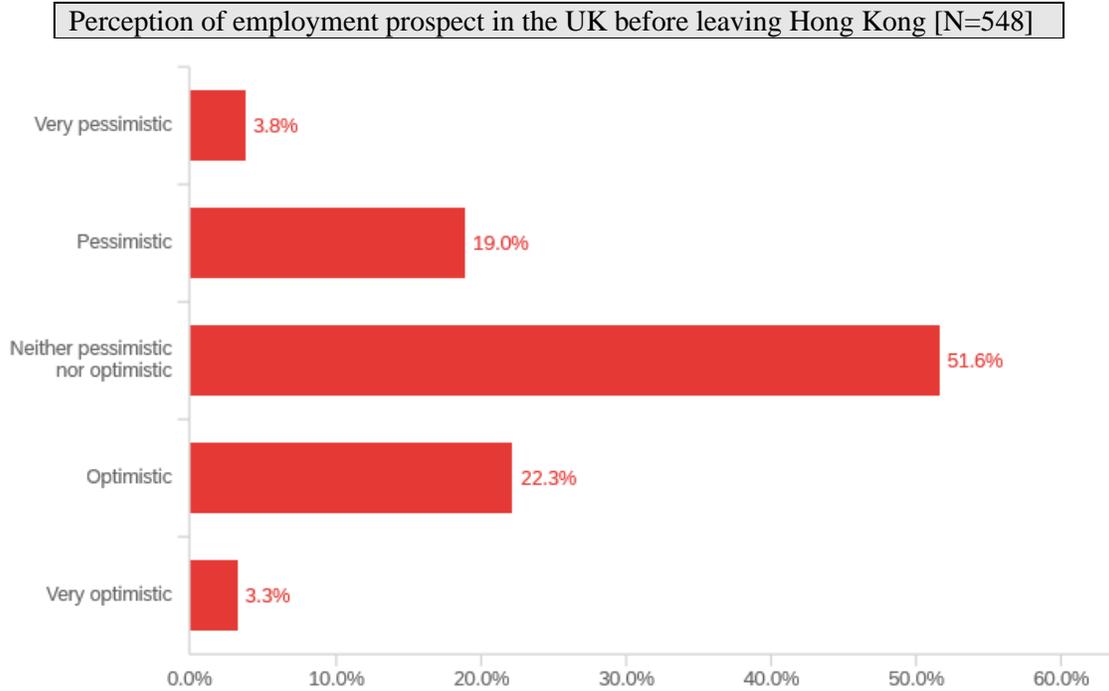
| Top 10: | | | | | |
|---|-------|---|-------|--|-------|
| Sectors before moving to the UK [N=556] | | Tried searching in the following sectors [N=874 mentions] | | Sectors currently working in, for those who found jobs in UK [N=126] | |
| Financial and insurance activities | 11.5% | Wholesale and retail trade | 11.0% | Transportation and storage | 11.0% |
| Information and communication | 10.6% | Administrative and support service activities | 9.7% | Professional, scientific and technical activities | 11.0% |
| Education | 9.2% | Transportation and storage | 8.4% | Accommodation and food service activities | 9.6% |
| Professional, scientific and technical activities | 8.8% | Information and communication | 7.7% | Wholesale and retail trade | 8.8% |
| Other service activities | 8.3% | Accommodation and food service activities | 7.3% | Information and communication | 8.8% |
| Administrative and support service activities | 8.1% | Financial and insurance activities | 6.2% | Other service activities | 8.1% |
| Human health and social work activities | 7.2% | Education | 6.1% | Financial and insurance activities | 7.4% |
| Wholesale and retail trade | 6.1% | Other service activities | 5.9% | Manufacturing | 6.6% |
| Construction | 5.8% | Professional, scientific and technical activities | 5.6% | Construction | 5.9% |
| Manufacturing | 5.0% | Manufacturing | 5.5% | Administrative and support service activities | 5.1% |

Analysis:

- Whilst **human health and social activities** is the seventh most popular working sector before moving to the UK, it did not come up in top 10 of sector search when finding a job in the UK, nor top 10 of sectors currently working in
- Education**, whilst the third most popular working sector before moving to the UK and also seventh most searched sector when finding a job in the UK, did not appear in top 10 sectors currently working in
- Transportation and storage, and accommodation and food service activities, were not amongst the top 10 most popular working sectors before moving to the UK, but are the third and fifth most popular sectors of search when finding a job in the UK, and even emerged as the top and third most popular sectors currently working in
- When reading the results in conjunction with D11 [Q42] about “whether respondents are thinking about moving to another industry other than the one that they are used to be in or currently working in”, it appears that indeed **Hongkongers are adaptive and willing to switch to other industries, especially in sectors with the highest rise in vacancies**
- There may be more support needed for Hongkongers working in sectors of human health and social activities, and education, in finding jobs in the UK**

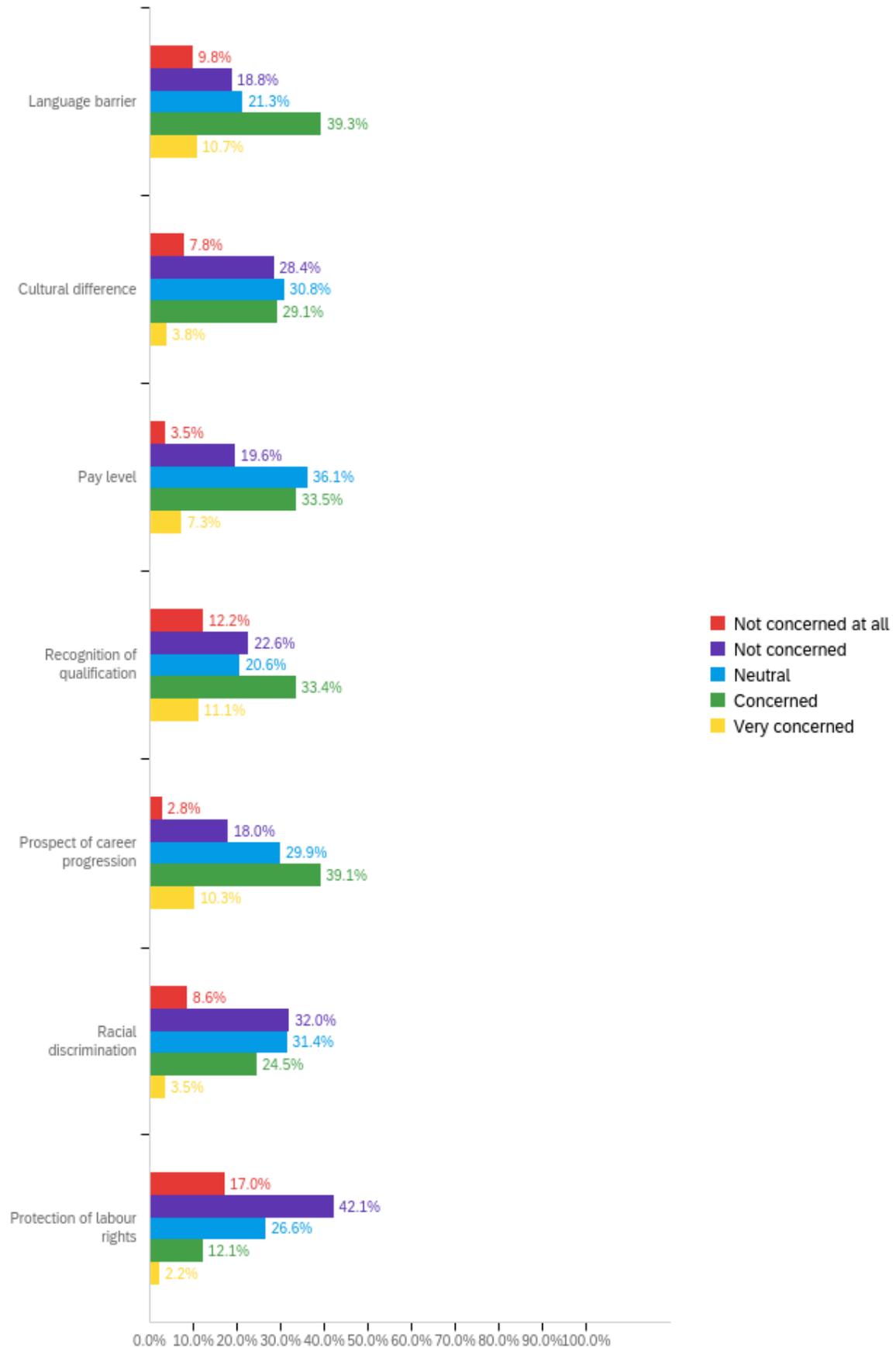
Part G: Perceived employment prospect and obstacles in the UK

- When respondents were asked about how they perceived their employment prospect in the UK before leaving Hong Kong, 51.6% of the 548 respondents felt neither pessimistic nor optimistic, 22.3% felt optimistic, 19% felt pessimistic, 3.8% felt very pessimistic, and 3.3% felt very optimistic. [Q17]



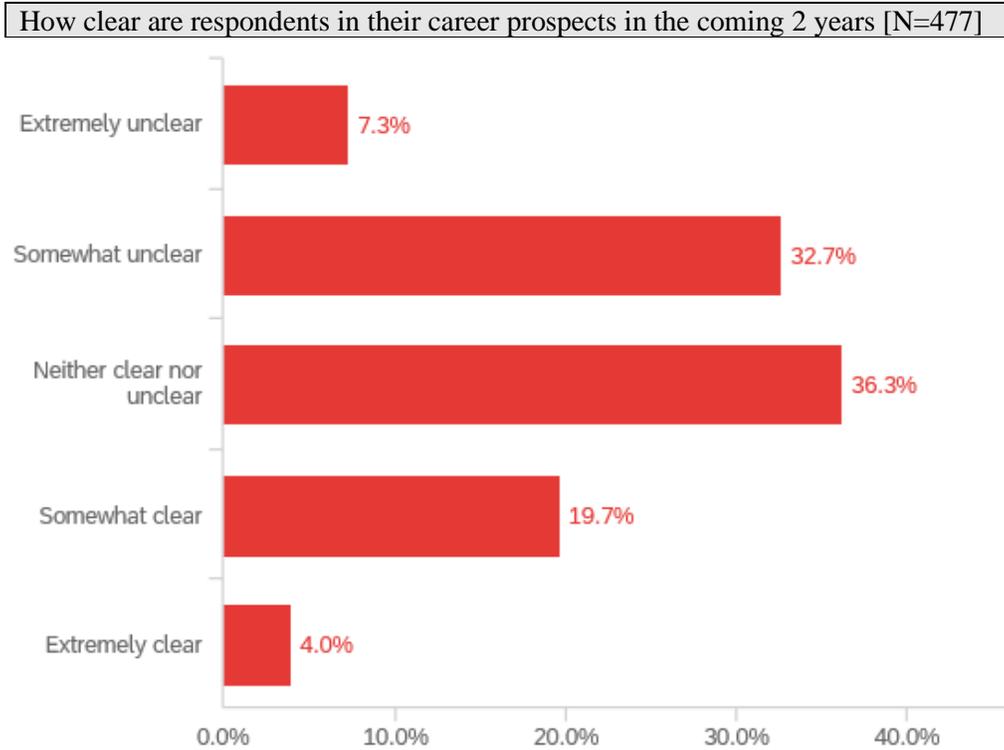
- In terms of the areas about employment prospect concerned by respondents before them moving to the UK, language barrier is the most concerned, where exactly half (50%) indicated they are either “concerned” or “very concerned” about. This is closely followed by the prospect of career progression (49.4%), then recognition of qualification (44.5%). The full results can be found in the table and chart below: [Q18]

| Total of “Concerned” & “Very concerned” [N=549] | |
|---|-------|
| Language barrier | 50% |
| Prospect of career progression | 49.4% |
| Recognition of qualification | 44.5% |
| Pay level | 40.8% |
| Cultural Difference | 32.9% |
| Racial discrimination | 28% |
| Protection of labour rights | 14.3% |



3. Channels relied on to learn about UK labour market & workplace culture: See E1 [Q19]

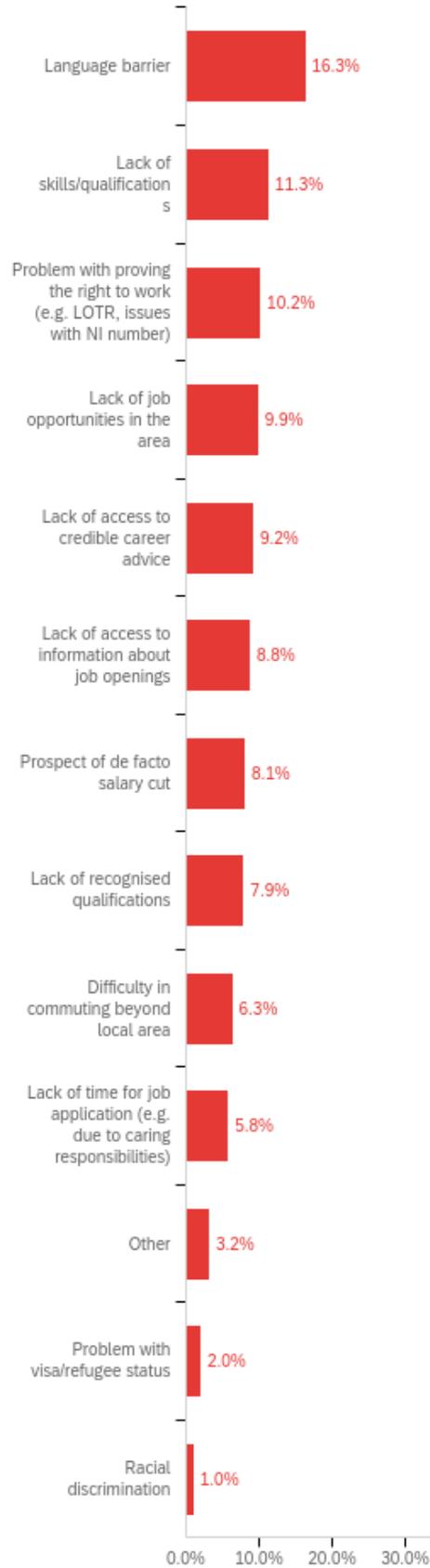
Respondents were asked about how clear they are in terms of their career prospect in the coming 2 years, given that they are already in the UK. The picture is worrying: only 23.7% who say they are clear or extremely clear. 40% say they are somewhat unclear or extremely unclear. [Q43]



Part H: Actual obstacles experienced during job search

- As new entrants of the UK labour market, recent arrivals from Hong Kong experienced difficulties in job searching in varying degrees. We asked whether respondents had experienced a number of obstacles during their job searching process in the UK. Language barrier was the most mentioned (16.3%) of 1451 mentions. Lack of (relevant) skills or qualifications was the second most mentioned (11.3%), and problems with proving the right to work (e.g. LOTR, issues with NINO) being the third (10.2%). [Q34]

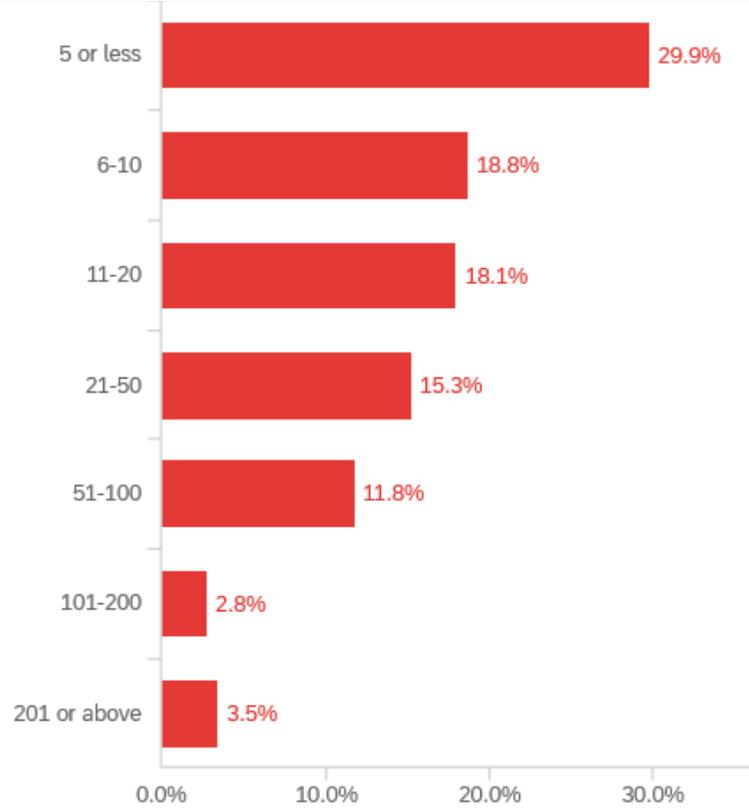
Obstacles experienced during respondents' job search so far [N=1451 mentions]



See also H5 [Q41] for further policy implications, changes or suggested social resources from respondents.

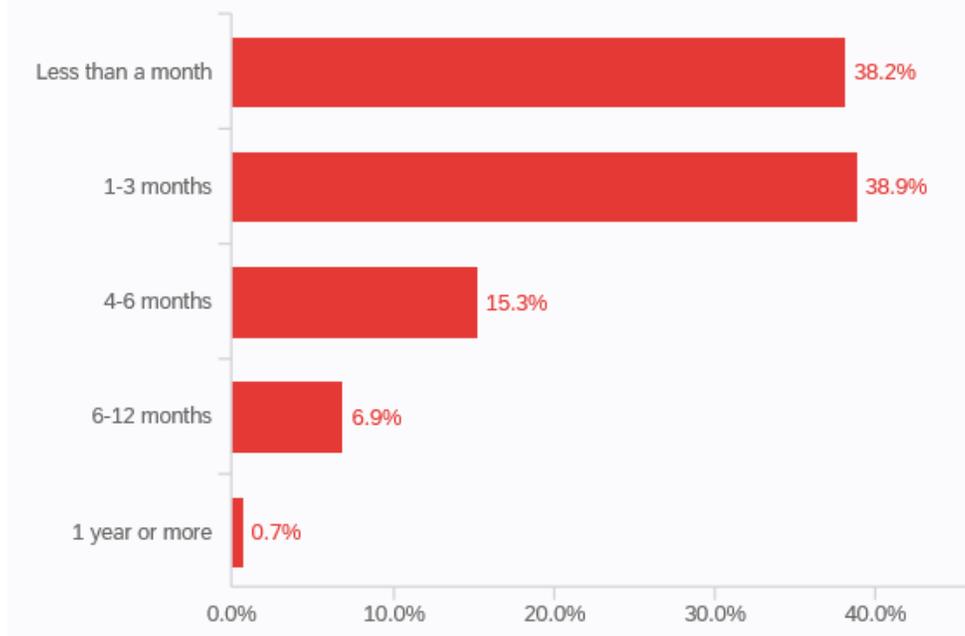
- As for the number of jobs respondents applied for before starting their first paid job in the UK, out of 144 respondents, in total almost half (48.7%) applied for 10 or less, over two-thirds (66.8%) applied for 20 or less, and over four-fifths (81.9%) have applied for 50 or less. [Q36]

Number of jobs applied for before starting first paid job in the UK [N=144]

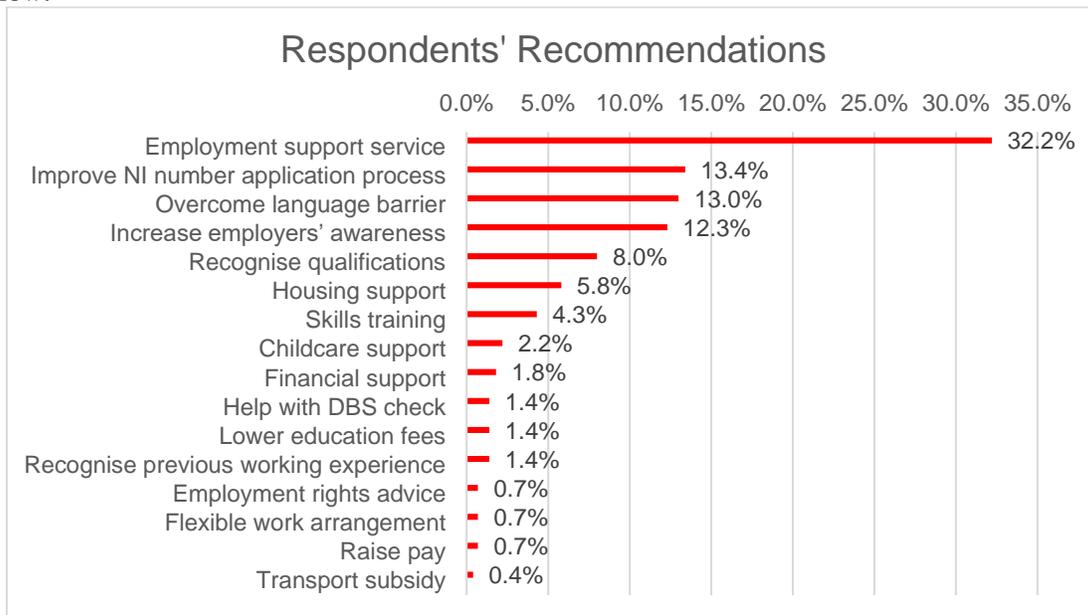


3. Regarding the time it took the 144 respondents between starting job-searching and starting their first paid-job in the UK, in total 77.1% took 3 months or shorter, 92.4% took 6 months or shorter, and 99.3% took 12 months or shorter. [Q37]

Time taken between starting job-searching and starting first paid-job in the UK [N=144]



4. See D12 for [Q40] on sentiments of respondents' current jobs in the UK
5. Respondents were asked share thoughts on what policy changes and social resources they would find helpful in light of their situation in job searching with an open-ended question. [Q41] Having analysed their responses, we found that employment support service is by far the most popular suggestion amongst the respondents, followed by improvement in NI number application process (also see points 6-9 below), support in overcoming language barrier (in the sense of employment-targeted English language support/training, see H1a above) and awareness raising among potential employers. A total of 276 mentions can be broadly categorised to the ones as below:



Recommendations listed in H1a above can therefore be read in conjunction with the level of mentions/concerns amongst respondents in this question, in order to determine and set priorities of interventions.

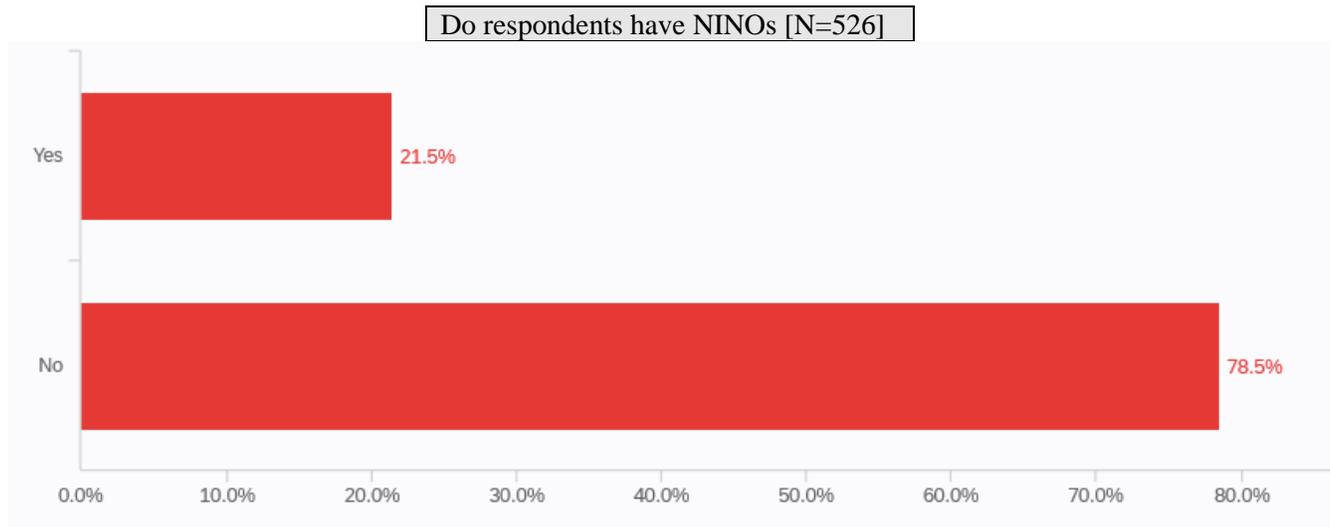
Additionally, an open-ended question was asked on HKB’s public Facebook page on 27 July 2021¹², asking the question “What are the greatest difficulties/concerns you have when finding work in the UK?” Amongst the 32 comments received, the number of mentions of issues (from most to least) can be categorised as follows:

| | |
|---------------------------------------|----|
| NI number | 14 |
| Language barrier | 5 |
| Increase employers' awareness | 4 |
| Recognise qualifications | 4 |
| Certificate of No Criminal Conviction | 2 |
| Recognise previous work experience | 2 |

The actual obstacles mentioned/identified correspond to the bar chart of respondents’ recommendations shown above.

National Insurance number (NINO)

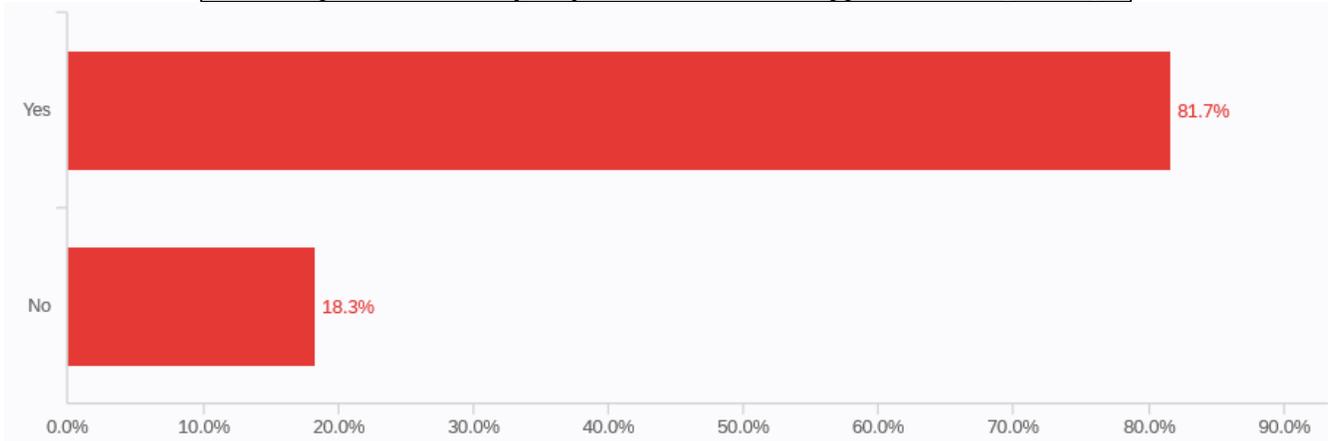
- In the questionnaire survey, we specifically looked into the process of applying for an NI number, which had reported been delayed by recent arrivals from Hong Kong which HKB had assisted. 78.5% out of 526 respondents said that they did not have an NI number by the time when the survey was conducted, while 21.5% did. [Q28]



- For 398 respondents who say they do not have a NINO, 81.7% have applied for one, while 18.3% have not. [Q29]

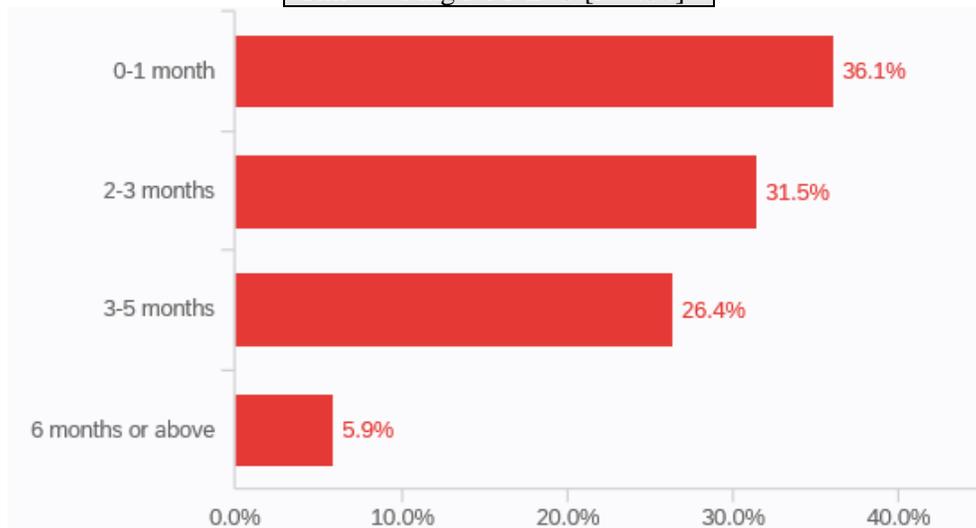
¹²HKB Facebook Page Question: “What are the greatest difficulties/concerns you have when finding work in the UK?”
<https://www.facebook.com/HongkongersUK/posts/340722441046378>

Have respondents who say they do not have NINO applied for one [N=398]



8. For 454 respondents who have been waiting for their NINO, 36.1% have waited for one month or less, 31.5% have waited 2-3 months, 26.4% have waited for 3-5 months, and 6% have waited for 6 months or above. [Q30]

Time waiting for NINO [N=454]

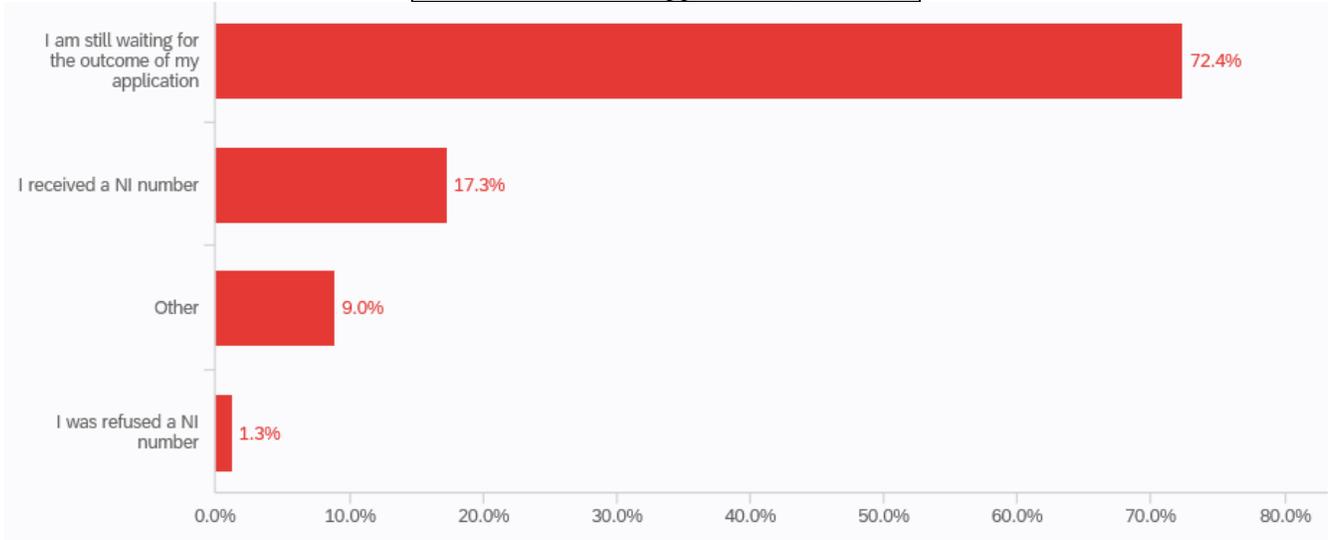


Whilst over two-thirds (67.8%) of respondents received their NINOs within the 16 weeks stated in UK Gov’s website¹³, almost a third (32.3%) have waited the maximum length of time or longer. The government website does not state that the 16 week-wait begins counting, in reality from the moment applications have been processed, rather than having been received. This is not ideal for applicants having to lose over four months whilst they could be in employment (particularly given the high number of vacancies as mentioned in F5) and receive income. The NI hotline is extremely difficult to reach through, often with hundreds of attempts made before any success, and it is unacceptable that some respondents have to wait for 6 months or above.

9. Almost three quarters (72.4%) of 479 respondents are still waiting for the outcome of their NINO application, while only 17.3% received their NINO. 1.3% were refused their NINO. [Q31]

¹³ Applying for a UK National Insurance Number, Gov.UK, <https://www.gov.uk/apply-national-insurance-number>
 Hongkongers in Britain

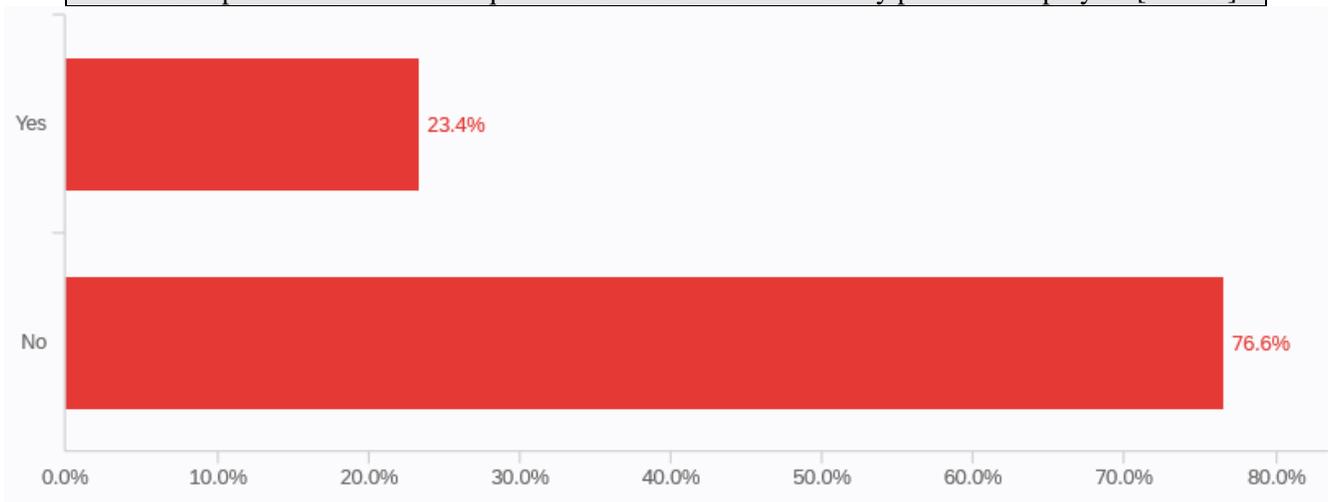
Outcome of NINO application [N=479]



DBS Check

10. 76.6% of 483 respondents have not been requested for a DBS check record by potential employers, whilst 23.4% have. [Q32]

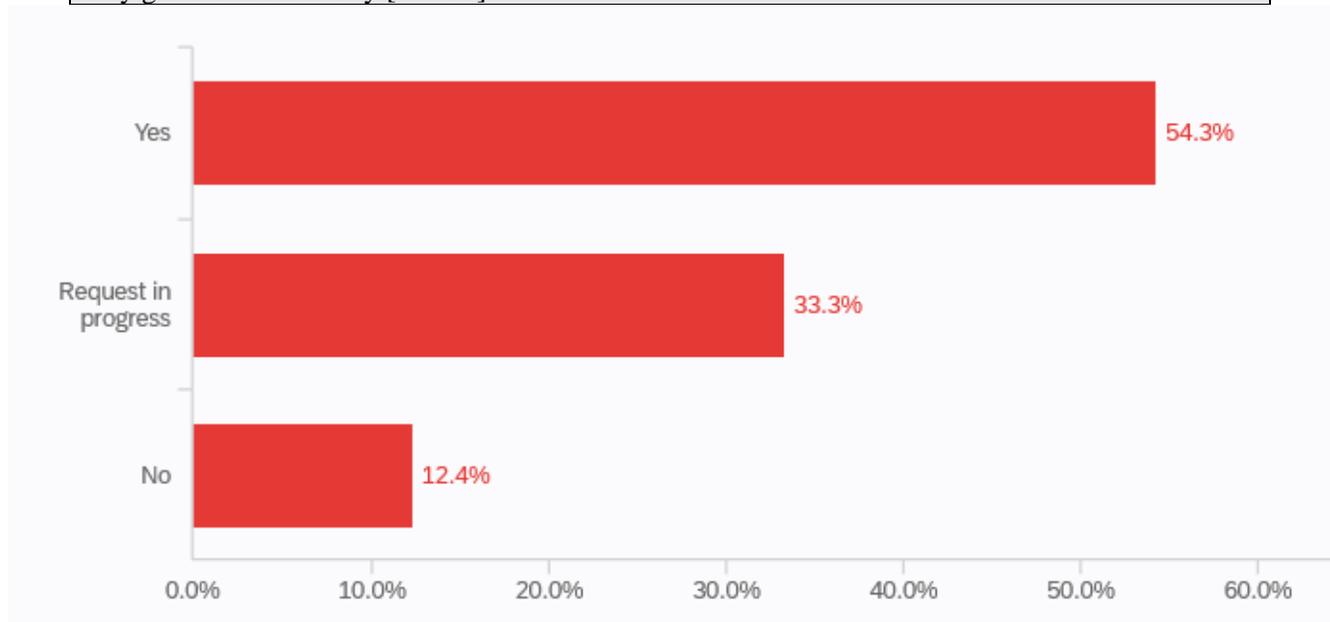
Whether respondents have been requested for a DBS check record by potential employers [N=483]



Note: Certificates of No Criminal Conviction are sometimes requested by UK employers for Hongkongers. However, some Hongkongers have difficulty requesting the Hong Kong Police for this certificate due to political reasons, and this can be an obstacle to the employment procedures.

11. Amongst 105 respondents who have been requested a DBS check record from potential employers, 54.3% have got one successfully, 33.3% have their request in process, while 12.4% were not successful. [Q33]

Amongst respondents who have been requested a DBS check record from potential employers, did they get one successfully [N=105]



Part I: Other Observations

In this report, we employed a data analysis technique known as cross tabulation to find out if and how respondents of different profiles give different results in the survey. From the cross-tabulation analysis, we have identified the following behavioural patterns between different profiles of respondents and certain answers to the questions in the survey; and such correlation is tested to be statistically significant (i.e. P-value <0.05).

Q19. What channels did you rely on to learn about the UK labour market and workplace culture before moving to the UK?

Respondents' choice of information channels to learn about the UK labour market is to some extent statistically correlated to their education level. This observation can probably be explained by both degree of IT literacy and social circles associated with higher education.

- More respondents with undergraduate (69.1%) or master (71.3%) degrees compared to respondents with other qualification (mainly lower qualifications (around 50-60% but also PhD (42.9%)) use websites /blogs.
- Relatively more respondents with GCSE/O-Levels/HKCEE (73.0%), A-Level/DSE (68.6%), vocational qualification (58.6%), undergraduate (68.0%) and master degrees (58.1%) compared to respondents with other qualification (mainly lower qualification (50%) but also PhD (28.6%) use social media.
- Meanwhile, relatively more respondents with PhD degree (57.1%) chose the channel of UK-based friends and relatives than all other respondents with lower qualifications (around 10%-30%) and they tend to use less of all other channels listed in this question. This observation may be explained by that PhD respondents probably have better social connections in the UK from their academic backgrounds, including in the UK.

Q35. Have you started any UK-based paid work since living in the UK?

From the cross-tabulation analysis, being at middle age is a factor of whether a respondent has already started UK-based paid work.

- More respondents in the middle age groups of 45-54 and 55-64 (86.3%, 84.2%) as compared to younger age groups (around 60-70%) have not started any UK-based paid work since arrival. There can be different possible explanations for this phenomenon. On the job seekers' side, possible factors can be (a) that it is more difficult for them to find middle or senior positions in the UK that are relevant to their former positions and professions in Hong Kong; (b) that they are more financially prepared and can afford to wait; and (c) that they are in caretaker roles for their children and families in the initial settlement period (see also the analysis of the next question). On the recruiters' side, however, it could be that age is a factor in their selection preferences and younger employees are preferred.
- Meanwhile, the following conditions that are conventionally considered important in job seeking do not show any statistical correlation to whether the respondent has already got a UK paid job.
 - Whether the respondents' CV and covering letter is polished to be different from what they normally they in Hong Kong;
 - Whether the respondents sought advice from career coaches;
 - Whether the respondents had mock interview; and
 - The respondents' education qualifications.

Q34. Have you experienced the following obstacles during your job search so far?

Q34 lists 12 obstacles for respondents to choose from. As reported in previous sections, the top three obstacles chosen by all the respondents are language barriers (16.3%), lack of skills/qualifications (11.3%) and problem with proving the right to work (10.2%). From our cross-tabulation analysis, more in-depth observations are noted.

- A very notable pattern is that a much higher proportion of the youngest age group faces the problem of proving their right to work. 66.7% of those aged 18-24 chose this problem as compared to all other age groups (21-28%).
- Another age group related pattern is that more from those aged 35-44 and 45-54 (20.4%, 24.2%) than all other age groups (around 6-17%) found themselves lacking time for job applications (due to caring responsibilities etc.)
- Another pattern identified is not too surprising. Among those respondents who feel financially in the next 6 to 12 months, more have chosen almost all of the 12 obstacles than the respondents who feel secure financially. Higher statistical correlation is found between those who feel financially "very insecure", "insecure" or "somewhat insecure" and the obstacles of "language barriers" (51.9%), "Lack of skills/qualifications" (37-41%), "problem with proving the right to work" (36-38%), "lack of job opportunities in the area" (30-40%), "lack of access to credible career advice" (31-39%), "lack of access to information about job openings" (25-35%), "lack of recognised qualifications" (22-36%), "difficulty in commuting beyond local area" (22-28%), "Prospect of de facto salary cut" (20-33%) and "racial discrimination" (4-13%).

Q40. Do you agree with the following statements about your current job in the UK?

Q40 presents 11 statements about respondents' current job in the UK. Among the same respondents who feel financially insecure in the next 6 to 12 months, more of them take a negative view on many of the statements in this question.

- “I find the workplace culture in the UK similar to that in Hong Kong”: Much higher proportion of those respondents feeling financially “insecure” or “somewhat insecure” (80%, 73.7%) disagreed to this statement as compared to much lower percentages of those who consider their financial position secure (33-43%)
- “I find my job in the UK more secure than in Hong Kong”: Much higher proportion of the respondents feeling financially “insecure” or “somewhat insecure” (80%, 25.6%) disagreed to this statement as compared to much lower percentages of those who consider their financial position secure (10-18%)
- “I manage to negotiate my working conditions (e.g. working hours, flexible working mode) in my favour”: Higher proportion of the respondents feeling financially “insecure” or “somewhat insecure” (40%, 31.6%) disagreed to this statement as compared to much lower percentages of those who consider their financial position secure (5-20%).
- “I manage to negotiate my pay package in my favour”: Higher proportion of the respondents feeling financially “very insecure” or “somewhat insecure” (44.4%, 52.6%) disagreed to this statement as compared to much lower percentages of those who consider their financial position secure (10-21%).
- “I can see myself staying on this job in the coming 12 months”: Higher proportion of the respondents feeling financially “very insecure” or “somewhat insecure” (22.2%, 42.1%) disagreed to this statement as compared to much lower percentages of those who consider their financial position secure (6-18%).
- “There are difficulties at work which I have never anticipated”: Higher proportion of the respondents feeling financially “very insecure” (55.6%) agreed to this statement as compared to much lower percentages of those who consider their financial position secure (10-37%).

Q42. Now that you are in the UK, are you thinking about moving to another industry other than the one that you used to be in or currently working in?

The cross-tabulation analysis identifies the following respondent profiles have a higher tendency to “always” think about moving another industry from the current job.

- **Current employment status:** More of those respondents who are “working part-time for a UK-based employer” (46.2%), “unemployed and looking for work” (40.4%), or “homemaker(s) or stay-at-home parent(s)” (40.4%) than in other employment status (12-30%) always think about the question.
- **Years of working experience:** More of those respondents who have more than 11 years of working experience (32-46%) than who worked for 10 years or less (15-27%) always think changing to another industry.
- **Middle age:** More of those respondents who are aged 45-54 (47.3%) than all other age groups (17-33%) always consider moving to another industry.