



Cordant

Contact Centre

Recruitment Specialists

Profile of the Contact Centre Sector Workforce

Content

Profile of the UK workforce

Status of the workforce

Gender

Age

Ethnicity

Disability

Salary Level

About Us

Introduction

In December 2012 there were estimated to be 5,650 contact centres in the UK with 650,500 agents (seats). This compares with July 2008 when they reported the existence of 5,180 contact centres with 638,250 seats.

In 2013, large contact centres (with over 250 seats) employed 51 per cent of staff, an almost identical proportion to the 52 per cent of 2011. The mean contact centre size is 115 seats with outsourcers, utilities, communications and finance contact centres having a larger than average mean number of seats. There are some 4,200 contact centres employing 100 agents or fewer representing 75 per cent of the sites but employing just 27 per cent of all agents.

A further issue arises in the measurement of employment levels in the sector. The National Occupational Standards (NOS) relating to contact centres cover many occupational roles in the organisation other than that of contact centre agent. However, the industry standard for gauging the size of an operation is to measure simply the number of agents/seats in the centre.

This number does not take any account of management, resourcing, quality control and support roles that every contact centre has to cover. The structure and balance of employment within contact centres naturally varies but it is possible to trace certain patterns.

Employment of contact centre staff by job role, 2012

Job Role	% of contact centre workers
Sales advisor- inexperienced	10%
Customer service advisor- inexperienced	17%
Sales advisor- experienced	19%
Customer service advisor- experienced	36%
Sales team leader	3%
Customer service team leader	5%
Product specialist	2%
Coach	2%
Resource scheduling manager	1%
Contact centre manager	2%
New entrant (pre-training)	2%

Profile of the UK contact centre workforce

It can be seen in this study that the ratio of agents to managers is something over 2:1. This ratio varies with the size of contact centre and sector and it is impossible to generalise.

It is likely that the ratio has increased with the number of management and support staff reducing proportionally as technology and contact centre procedures have developed.

Nevertheless, this ratio indicates that the 650,500 reported seats do not represent the full employment position for the sector. It is suggested that a total of 1,071,125 jobs existed in the sector in 2012 forecast to rise to 1,178,600 jobs in 2015.



Contact centre by vertical market, end- 2012

Vertical Market	Contact centres	% of contact centres
Retail and distribution	910	16.1%
Finance	680	12%
Public services	670	11.9%
Services	640	11.3%
Manufacturing	540	9.6%
IT	430	7.6%
Outsourcing and telemarketing	425	7.5%
Transport and travel	390	6.9%
Communications	260	4.6%
Printing and publishing	170	3.0%
Food and drink	160	2.8%
Medical	105	1.9%
Motoring	95	1.7%
Utilities	95	1.7%
Engineering and construction	80	1.4%
TOTAL	5,650	100.0%

Agent positions by vertical market, end- 2012

Vertical Market	Agent positions	% of agent positions
Finance	120,500	15.5%
Retail and distribution	92,000	14.1%
Communications	79,500	12.2%
Outsourcing and telemarketing	66,750	10.3%
Public services	63,750	9.8%
Services	57,500	8.8%
IT	40,500	6.2%
Utilities	32,500	6.0%
Transport and travel	29,500	4.5%
Manufacturing	24,750	2.8%
Motoring	10,250	1.6%
Printing and publishing	10,250	1.6%
Medical	9,950	1.5%
Food and drink	9,000	1.4%
Engineering and construction	2,800	0.6%
TOTAL	650,500	100.0%

Profile of the UK Workforce

The main importance of this data in an occupational profile is that contact centre operations take on different levels of significance in different economic sectors. Finance, retail/distribution and communications have the largest number of employees although the average size of a contact centre in each sector varies.

This distribution is important as the size of a contact centre combined with the profitability profile of a given sector is bound to influence attitudes to staff training and development. This is further influenced by the employment attrition/staff turnover rate which was particularly high in the early days of contact centres.

There is much anecdotal evidence that this rate has fallen but hard data is difficult to find. It is generally believed that the fall in turnover rate is due to both economic downturn in recent years and the generally rising expectation of the skill levels and job interest relating to the agent role since many of the more routine aspects of the job has become more automated.

Status of the UK Contact Centre Workforce

The status of the workforce refers to the proportion of those employed who work full time or part time.

Call centre agents and operators by full time and part time staff 2011-2012

Call centre agents and operators by full time and part time staff

April- June	Full Time		Part Time		Total
	000s	%	000s	%	000s
2005	70	75	23	25	93
2006	63	72	24	27	88
2007	80	71	31	28	112
2008	71	68	33	32	104
2009	68	71	28	29	96
2010	61	73	23	27	84
2011	64	64	35	35	100
2012	84	79	23	21	107

Status of the UK Contact Centre Workforce

The ONS data in the previous table shows a reasonably consistent picture of a 70:30 split of full and part time employment. There is no evidence to show whether this proportion is replicated across the whole industry and particularly within in-house contact centre operations.

However, it is reasonable to assume that the proportion does not vary significantly in different types of contact centre. The 2012 figures show a dramatic rise in the proportion of full time employees.

Any attempt to explain this would involve speculation. In that same year, a further report showed a 3 per cent increase in the total number of agent seats so it is reasonable to conclude that a number of part-time positions have been lost and that the growth relates largely to full time seats.

The distribution of full and part time jobs interacts with the proportion of jobs held by different genders and this is covered in the next section of this report.

Gender of the Workforce

As with the full time / part time split above, there is no reason to believe that the ONS data on gender is not representative of the industry as a whole. The table below shows that data from 2012 to 2012.

Call centre agents and operators by gender

April- June	Male		Female		Total
	000s	%	000s	%	000s
2005	31	33	62	67	93
2006	37	42	51	58	88
2007	44	39	67	60	112
2008	36	35	68	65	104
2009	37	39	59	61	96
2010	39	46	46	55	84
2011	42	41	58	58	100
2012	46	43	61	57	107

Gender of the Workforce

The data shows a higher proportion of female employees overall with little significant change other than a decline in that proportion over the ten year period.

These figures can be compared with the broader sub-major group of customer service occupations shown in the table below.

All customer service employment male / female analysis by UK countries- July 2010- June 2012

Customer service occupations	UK		England		Wales		Scotland		Northern Ireland	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
	All Employed	568,300		470,700		28,000		56,800		12,900
Male	229,100	40	188,700	40	12,300	44	21,800	38	6,300	49
Female	339,200	60	281,900	60	15,700	56	35,000	62	6,600	51

Gender of the Workforce

Across the United Kingdom there is a 60:40 split of female to male employment in customer service as a whole. Contact centre employment therefore mirrors those proportions.

The greatest gender variation within contact centres appears to relate to the split between males and females employed full time and part time. Analysis of this is shown in the table below.

All customer service employment full-time/ part time and male/ female April 2008- June 2012

	April- June 2009		April- June 2010		April-June 2011		April- June 2012	
	000s	%	000s	%	000s	%	000s	%
All Employed	97		84		100		107	
All employed full time	68	70%	61	73%	64	64%	84	79%
All employed part time	28	29%	23	27%	36	36%	23	21%
Males Full time	30	31%	28	33%	30	30%	42	39%
Males Part time	*	*	11	13%	12	12%	4	4%
Females Full time	38	39%	33	39%	34	34%	42	39%
Females Part time	22	34%	12	14%	24	24%	19	18%

Gender of the Workforce

It is worth noting that changes in employment patterns appeared to have caused significant changes in these proportions as part time employment in particular appears to have undergone many changes. A report from 2012 estimates that there are some 650,500 agent seats in 5,650 contact centres across the UK. These figures are not analysed by full / part time employment or by gender and are estimates extrapolated from the database containing details of some 64 per cent of centres in the UK.

Estimated UK contact centre agent employment figures- April 2010-Jun 2013

Contact centre employment	000s	%
All employed	650	100%
All employed full time	514	79%
All employed part time	137	21%
Males employed full time	254	39%
Males employed part time	26	4%
Females employed full time	254	39%
Females employed part time	117	18%

Age of the Workforce

The figure below illustrates that the percentage of young people aged 16 – 24 is significantly higher in sales and customer service than all other occupational groups at 39 per cent.

Estimated contact centre agent numbers by age group

Age Group	% in customer service occupations	Estimated agent numbers (000s)
16 - 24	39	249
25 – 34	17	108
35 - 44	18	115
45 – 59/64	20	128
60+/65+	6	38
Total	6	638

Ethnicity of the Workforce

The analysis from the Annual Population Survey shows that all occupations have disproportionately high number of white staff. In terms of sales and customer service staff 60.8 per cent of these are white.

Working in this occupation, Indian people have the highest number of staff amongst the ethnic groups but this is still only 1.9 per cent followed by similarly low levels for Pakistani/Bangladeshi people at 1.5 per cent. The pattern across all the occupations is very similar.

Employment by occupation and ethnic group- June 2010- June 2012

%	Sales and customer services
All	100
White	60.8
Mixed	0.5
Indian	1.9
Pakistani/ Bangladeshi	1.6
Black	1.5
Other Ethic Group	2.1
Did not state ethnicity	31.6

Disability of the Workforce

20.6 per cent of disabled people work in the 'service workers and shop and market sales jobs' in the UK. The highest percentage of jobs for the disabled in the UK is found in 'elementary' (23.7 per cent) and 'plant and machine operators' positions (21 per cent).

The lowest is in 'management' (18.7 per cent) and 'professional' occupations (17.6 per cent). In terms of EU Countries, Finland has the highest percentage employment levels for disabled people across all jobs and occupations. In addition, the highest level of jobs for the disabled in service and sales employment can be found in Finland and Sweden; closely followed by France and England.

Types of jobs for disabled people

%	Service workers and shop and market sales
United Kingdom	20.6%

Salary level of the Workforce

The contact centre sector offers a wide range of jobs and labour costs are a very significant factor in the business equation of the industry. However, labour costs are the main driver of the off-shoring option that is chosen by many contact centres. Within the UK, the geographical location of contact centres is no doubt partly decided by regional labour costs.

The study also shows that benefits packages vary widely as with any sector employment. Typically, permanent employment packages in contact centres may include:

- Pension schemes
- Holidays
- Shares schemes
- Private healthcare
- Permanent health assurance
- Performance incentive plans
- Car benefits, free parking, travel season ticket, and travel loans etc
- Opportunity to gain skills and qualifications

Overall, the evidence of this study shows that many contact centre jobs offer competitive salaries and prospects with a benefits package to rival jobs in other sectors.

Salary level of the Workforce

Taking an average across the UK as a whole, a study by Search Recruitment in 2010 shows typical salary ranges for a number of different contact centre jobs as in the table below.

Typical salary ranges for Contact centre jobs

Job Title	Salary Range
Contact centre director	£50,000 - £60,000
Call centre manager	£35,000 - £50,000
Team manager	£25,000 - £30,000
Team leader	£19,000 - £26,000
Trainer	£20,000 - £25,000
Resource planner	£18,000 - £23,000
Telesales & telemarketing (Inbound)	£12,500 - £23,000
Telesales & telemarketing (Outbound)	£12,000 - £20,000
Up-selling & sales	£13,000 - £20,000
Call handler	£12,000 - £16,000
Back office	£12,000 - £16,000
Team manager (multilingual)	£24,000 - £30,000

About us

Cordant Contact Recruitment Ltd, part of a £550m recruitment business, is recognised nationally as one of the fastest growing recruitment agencies in the UK. Since our inception in 1992, we have become firmly established as a leading player in the market for permanent, contract and recruitment solutions.

Our specialist Contact division has a proven track record in supplying both permanent and temporary candidates. Our national coverage of 125 sites and local knowledge enables us to cover every facet of recruitment needs within the Contact Centre industry. We are recognised as the agency of choice for a wide range of candidates and clients nationwide.

Our Account Managers are supported by a team of experienced recruitment professionals specialising in sourcing, legislative compliance and health and safety regulations.

Sourcing

- Thorough assessment of client requirements
- Full resourcing campaign
- Access to over 300k candidate resource pool

Screening

- Tailored applicant vetting service
- In-depth assessment interviews
- Candidate skill and culture analysis

Fulfilment

- Defined on boarding process
- Ensuring positive applicant journey
- Ongoing process management and reporting

About us

Levels we recruit



- Inbound Sales Advisors
- Inbound Customer Service Advisors
- Inbound Retention Advisors
- Outbound Sales Advisors
- Outbound Customer Service Advisors
- Telesales Advisors
- Claims Advisors
- Helpdesk Advisors
- 1st, 2nd and 3rd Line Support
- Insurance Advisors
- Customer Care Advisors
- Team Managers
- Contact Centre Managers
- Customer Experience Managers
- Quality Control Analysts
- Call Compliance Officers
- Data Cleansing Agents
- Web Order Processors
- Complaint Advisors
- Correspondence Handlers
- E-Sales Executives