



Department for
Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THOSE IN THE GIG ECONOMY

Final report



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Executive summary

This report presents the findings from research conducted into the gig economy for the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS).

The research had three key aims:

- To develop a working definition of the gig economy;
- To provide a robust estimate of the number of individuals who have found work via the gig economy; and
- To provide detailed information on the characteristics of those who work in the gig economy.

There is no single, agreed definition of the gig economy. Based on inclusion and exclusion criteria, a working definition of the gig economy was created in consultation with BEIS and the Institute for Employment Studies. For this research, the working definition is:

“The gig economy involves the exchange of labour for money between individuals or companies via digital platforms that actively facilitate matching between providers and customers, on a short-term and payment by task basis.”

A quantitative research design was used to estimate the scale of the gig economy and the characteristics of those working in the gig economy. NatCen used two survey vehicles: the NatCen Panel and YouGov Omnibus survey.

The NatCen Panel, a probability-based online survey of 2,184 individuals in Britain, was used to provide a prevalence estimate of the number of people involved in the gig economy. The NatCen Panel is based on a random probability sample of respondents in Britain, (which does not include Northern Ireland). Panel members were recruited through the British Social Attitudes survey whose participants were selected at random. Unlike most online panels, the NatCen Panel is not based on an opt-in approach, which means it is a better reflection of the population. Panel members are first invited to participate online, and those who have not taken part are then contacted by telephone. In this way, the Panel is also inclusive of groups who typically suffer from digital exclusion.

While the Panel provides the best possible indication of the scale of the gig economy, the relatively small size of the panel and proportion of people in the gig economy limits the amount of sub-group analysis possible. Therefore, to understand the characteristics and work practices of those involved in the gig economy in more detail the YouGov Omnibus, a non-probability online panel survey (conducted over five waves) of 11,354 people was used.

This quantitative research focused on individuals in Great Britain. The fieldwork was carried out between July and August 2017 and therefore represents a one-off estimate of the scale of the gig economy in that period of time.

Scale of the gig economy and characteristics

The NatCen Panel found that **4.4 per cent of the population in Great Britain had worked in the gig economy in the last 12 months.**¹ This is roughly 2.8 million people. This figure is based on a one off study with a relatively small sample but provides a robust guide to the number of gig economy workers.

Those involved in the gig economy were **generally younger** than the rest of the population. Over half of those involved in the gig economy (56 per cent) were aged 18 to 34 compared to 27 per cent of the whole sample.

The levels of **educational attainment** were similar between the general population and those involved in the gig economy.

Those involved in the gig economy most commonly **lived in the London area**. While just 13 per cent of the general sample lived in London, 24 per cent of those involved in the gig economy were based there.

Nature of gig economy work

Providing courier services was the **most common type of gig economy activity**. Forty-two per cent of those involved in the gig economy had carried out courier services in the last 12 months. Performing other jobs found through websites or apps² was almost as common, mentioned by 37 per cent of those involved in gig work. Provision of transport services (28 per cent) and food delivery services (21 per cent) were slightly less common in comparison.

Uber was the most **commonly mentioned platform** used. In total, 18 per cent of those who had been involved in the gig economy work said they had provided services through the app. Freelancing platform PeoplePerHour and delivery service Deliveroo were both mentioned by 12 per cent. A wide range of other platforms were also being used.

¹ It can be stated with 95 per cent confidence that the corresponding value in the wider population lies between 3.2 per cent and 6.0 per cent.

² Throughout the report those gig economy jobs which do not relate directly to delivery or transport services are described as 'other' gig economy tasks for expediency. This category covers a wide range of tasks from low-skilled jobs such as removal services to high skilled work such as web development.

Length of involvement in the gig economy varied, but those involved tended to have started providing services through apps and websites fairly recently. Thirty-eight per cent said that they first got involved in the gig economy in the last six months. Nearly a quarter (24 per cent) had been working in the gig economy for between six months and two years. Just 14 per cent had been involved in the gig economy for more than two years.

For over half (55 per cent) of those working in gig economy **involvement was relatively frequent**, happening at least once a month. For nine per cent, involvement in the gig economy took place on a daily basis. For others, involvement took place less frequently with 14 per cent saying they only carried out their activity between once and three times a year. In addition, 14 per cent said that their involvement in the gig economy had been 'one-off'.

Gig economy income

One in four respondents (25 per cent) reported that they earned **an hourly income** of less than £7.50 per hour.³ Hourly wages **varied depending on the type of gig work** the respondent was engaged in. Those performing other types of jobs found through websites and apps were significantly more likely to earn less than £7.50 per hour (45 per cent). In comparison, only 10 per cent of those providing courier services reported the same level of hourly pay. Overall, those providing courier services earned the highest levels of hourly income from their work with a third (32 per cent) earning £13 per hour and above.

The level of **annual earnings from the gig economy** was relatively low. In the last 12 months, two in five of those in the gig economy (41 per cent) said that they had typically earned less than £250 through their services offered on websites and apps. In addition, 87 per cent of everyone involved in gig economy said they had earned less than £10,000 in the last 12 months.

Based on the method of calculation used in this research, the **estimated mean income** from the gig economy was £5,634. However, this is skewed by a relatively small proportion of high earners. The median gig economy income is £375.⁴ The findings suggest that income earned in the gig economy forms **a small proportion of most gig workers' total annual income**. Approximately two-thirds (65 per cent) of respondents earned less than five per cent of their total income in the gig economy in the last 12 months. Just one in

³ £7.50 was the national minimum wage for those aged 25 and over at the time of the survey (2017). The self-employed are not entitled to the national minimum wage.

⁴ Please note that annual income was collected by asking respondents to select the band in which their earnings fall. Average measures were calculated by taking a mid-point in these bands, whereas, in reality, income can fall anywhere within that band. This inevitably reduces the precision of income estimates. These figures do not vary significantly if those who have been involved in the gig economy for less than a year are excluded.

eleven (nine per cent) respondents earned a large majority of their income (greater than 90 per cent of their total income) in the gig economy.

Most commonly, respondents saw the income from the gig economy **as an extra source of income on top of their regular income** (32 per cent). Fewer than one in ten respondents (eight per cent) saw the money earned in the gig economy as their main source of income.

Opinions were split in terms of the **importance of the gig economy income in maintaining current standard of living**. While 42 per cent saw this source of income as important, a similar proportion (45 per cent) saw it as not so important.

Attitudes towards gig economy

Overall, more than half of those involved in the gig economy were either very or fairly **satisfied with their experience of providing services on websites and apps** (53 per cent).

Independence and flexibility were the two aspects that those working in the gig economy were most often **satisfied** with. Over half of all gig economy providers were satisfied with these two aspects of their work (58 per cent and 56 per cent respectively). Those in the gig economy were **less satisfied** with their **work-related benefits** and **level of income** with one in four (25 per cent) saying they were very or fairly dissatisfied with those aspects of their work.

Those who deemed the income from the gig economy to be important to their standard of living were likely to be **more satisfied with all aspects of their work** providing services through websites and apps. For example, the majority (74 per cent) of those to whom the income from the gig economy was important were satisfied with their overall experience compared to 48 per cent of those to whom this source of income was not important

Those to whom the **gig work was their main source of income** and those who treated their work in the **gig economy as a source of income while they focus on something else** were particularly **satisfied overall** with their experience: 90 per cent of those to whom the gig work was their main source of income and 71 per cent of those to whom the work provided a source of income while they focus on something else said they were 'fairly' or 'very' satisfied with their experience of working in the gig economy.

When those involved in the gig economy were asked whether they plan to continue providing services in the next 12 months, 41 per cent said they are **going to continue in this type of work** while 39 per cent said they will not. In addition, one in five (20 per cent) were unsure.

Those in the gig economy were often **positive about their level of income and overall financial situation** in the coming 12 months although a significant minority were not. Just over a third (34 per cent) thought that their level of income would definitely or probably get better. The same proportion (34 per cent) thought their level of income would stay about the same, while 16 per cent thought that it would probably or definitely get worse.

Introduction

Background to the research

The so-called ‘gig’ economy is a new and relatively unexplored area of work. For many it is still a rather imprecise term that is little understood.

While short-term, flexible and independent work are not new to the economy, it is the digital revolution of recent years – characterised by the use of online applications and digital platforms – that has provided a virtual marketplace for on-demand peer-to-peer buying and selling of short-term, flexible work.

However, little empirical research has been conducted into this area which means that its full scale is not understood and little is known about the characteristics of the individuals engaged in the gig economy. In light of this, BEIS commissioned NatCen to conduct a robust quantitative exploration of the gig economy.

For this research the ‘gig economy’ has been defined as *“involving exchange of labour for money between individuals or companies via digital platforms that actively facilitate matching between providers and customers, on a short-term and payment by task basis.”*

Research aims and objectives

The research had three key aims:

- To develop a working definition of the gig economy;
- To provide a robust estimate of the number of individuals who have found work via the gig economy; and
- To provide detailed information on the characteristics of those who work in the gig economy.

Research methodology

To meet these objectives NatCen designed a three-stage research project.

Firstly, in order to define the gig economy, NatCen developed an inclusion and exclusion criteria to determine who should be considered to be part of gig economy.

Secondly, the NatCen Panel, a probability-based online survey sampled from the British Social Attitudes survey, was used to provide a robust prevalence estimate of the size of

the gig economy. A total of 2,184 interviews were conducted between 6 July and 6 August 2017.

Thirdly, an additional survey was conducted with YouGov panellists. The YouGov Omnibus was used to understand the characteristics of those involved in gig economy, the nature of their work and their attitudes towards gig work. The research was carried out across five waves of the YouGov online Omnibus. In total, 11,825 people were surveyed of which 343 were deemed at being part of the gig economy. Fieldwork was conducted between 14 and 20 July 2017.

The surveys used in this research covered Great Britain only (i.e. excluding Northern Ireland). The findings from this research, particularly the prevalence estimates for the size and value of the gig economy, therefore cannot be generalised to the whole of the UK, which includes Northern Ireland.

A detailed description of the methodology is included as a separate technical appendix.

Reporting conventions

The percentages in the tables and figures of this report generally sum to 100 unless survey questions allowed the selection of more than one answer, or due to rounding.

Some questions were not answered by everyone. As a result, the unweighted sample size for tables and figures that refer to all those involved in gig economy may be smaller than the total sample size.

Frequencies based on fewer than 50 cases are not robust and have not been included in the report. Bases with fewer than 50 cases have been marked with square brackets (e.g. [30]).

Where comparative statements have been made in the text, these have been significance tested to a 95 per cent confidence level. This means we are 95 per cent confident that the statements we are making are true of the population.

However, the test on statistical significance is based on the assumption that a sample is a simple random sample with no design effects. It is therefore important to note that the findings from the YouGov Omnibus survey are based on a non-probability quota sample which does not give all individuals in the population equal chances of being selected. While the results are weighted to be representative of the whole population and are a good reflection of it, drawing conclusions from the statistical tests should be done with caution and awareness of these limitations. In particular, while an omnibus sample is nationally representative based on specified demographic variables, they may not be representative in other characteristics or attitudes. Online surveys using access panels are drawn from

self-selecting samples which may differ attitudinally or behaviourally to the population as a whole.

Scale of the gig economy and characteristics of those involved in it

This chapter provides a definition and an estimate of the size of the gig economy. It then profiles the demographic characteristics of those involved in gig economy.

Definition of gig economy

Based on discussions with the Institute for Employment Studies and BEIS, an analysis of existing literature and a review of NatCen's experience on past research to similar topics, a working definition of the gig economy was formed:

“The gig economy involves exchange of labour for money between individuals or companies via digital platforms that actively facilitate matching between providers and customers, on a short-term and payment by task basis.”

It was defined to **include**:

- Individuals completing tasks using platforms which play an active role in facilitating work and take a proportion of the pay or charge providers fees for using the platform (for example via Uber, TaskRabbit, PeoplePerHour).
- The provision of labour to either individuals or businesses.
- People providing services who are either freelancers or may have set up a one-person business to offer their services.
- People for whom gig economy is the main source of income and those who use it to top up their income from other sources.

It **excludes**:

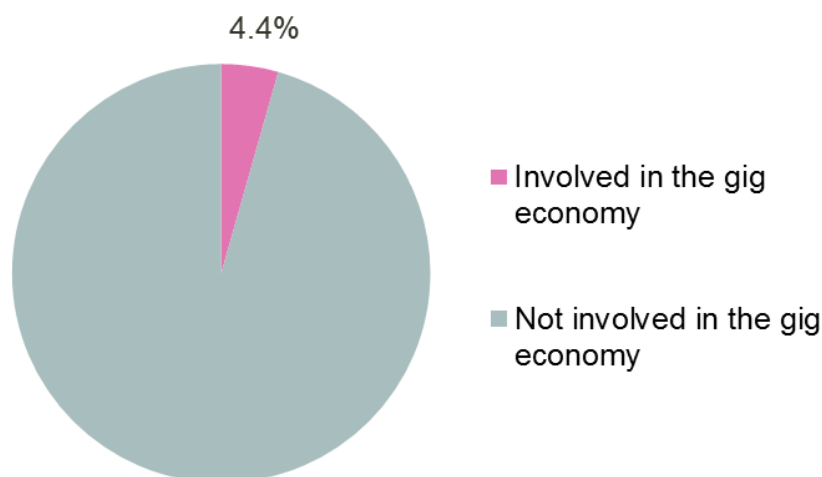
- People who find permanent or short-term employment via an agency, matching service or platforms like LinkedIn or Jobs.ac.uk.
- People who use digital platforms to provide goods (e.g. eBay, Etsy etc), or types of services/utilise assets that are not directly labour-related (e.g. Airbnb).
- Self-employed people who find tasks via advertising on classifieds websites, such as Gumtree.
- Employees who interact with their employer or customers via online platforms.

Prevalence of gig economy work

A key aim of this study was to estimate the proportion of the general population in Great Britain (GB) who are involved in the gig economy. The NatCen Panel found that **4.4 per cent of the population had worked in the gig economy in the last 12 months** ([Figure 1](#)).

Confidence intervals show the range within which a population estimate lies. In this case a 95 per cent confidence interval has been used. This means that it can be stated with 95 per cent confidence that the corresponding value in the wider population lies between 3.2 per cent and 6.0 per cent.

Figure 1: Prevalence of gig economy



Unweighted base (NatCen Panel): All GB adults (aged 18+) (n=2,185)

Demographic profile of those involved in gig economy

This section describes the characteristics of those involved in gig economy. Key demographic characteristics of the overall responding population and those involved in the gig economy, such as income, age and working status of those involved in the gig economy are presented below.

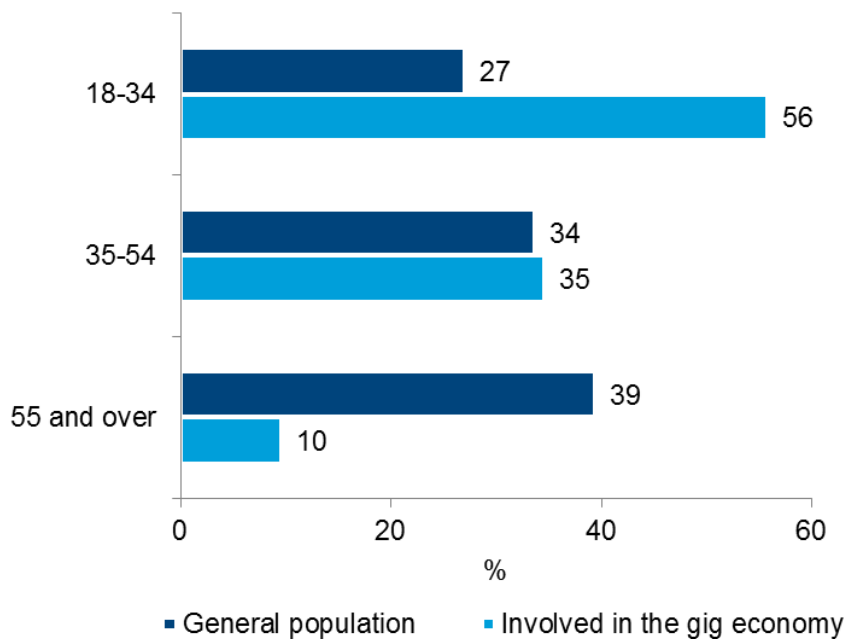
Gender

The gender profile of those involved in the gig economy was similar to the overall population. Among those involved in gig economy 54 per cent were men and 46 per cent women compared to 49 per cent and 51 per cent respectively in the population as a whole ([Appendix table 1](#)).

Age

Overall, the age composition of those involved in the gig economy was skewed towards those aged 34 and under. Over half of those involved in the gig economy (56 per cent) were aged 18 to 34 while in the general population the same age group made up 27 per cent of the sample. Conversely, the proportion of those aged 55 or over was higher among those in the general population: 39 per cent belonged to this age group while only ten per cent of those involved in the gig economy were aged 55 or over ([Figure 2](#)). To some extent, this reflects the fact that those in the gig economy are generally of working age, while the national population includes those above the standard working age. However, even if we exclude those who are not working, it is clear that those in the gig economy are younger than normal. For example, while 29 per cent of those in full-time or part-time work are aged 18-34, this compares to 56 per cent of those in the gig economy ([Appendix table 2](#)).

Figure 2: Age profile of general sample and gig economy

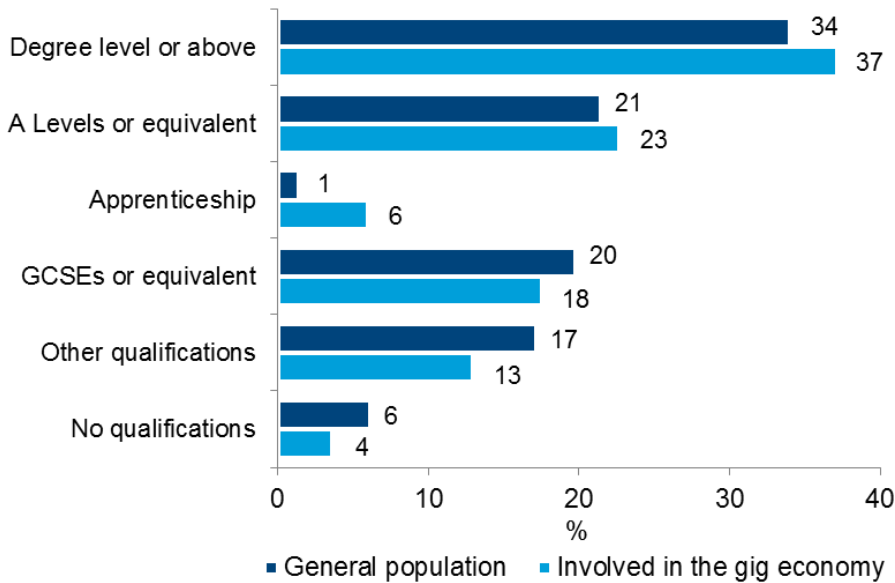


Unweighted base (YouGov Omnibus): All GB adults (aged 18+) (n=11,825) and those involved in gig economy (n=343)

Education

Levels of educational attainment were similar between the general population and those involved in the gig economy. Among those involved in the gig economy a slightly higher proportion (37 per cent) had obtained degree-level education or higher qualifications compared with those in the general sample (34 per cent). The full details on levels of education can be seen in [Figure 3](#).

Figure 3: Level of education

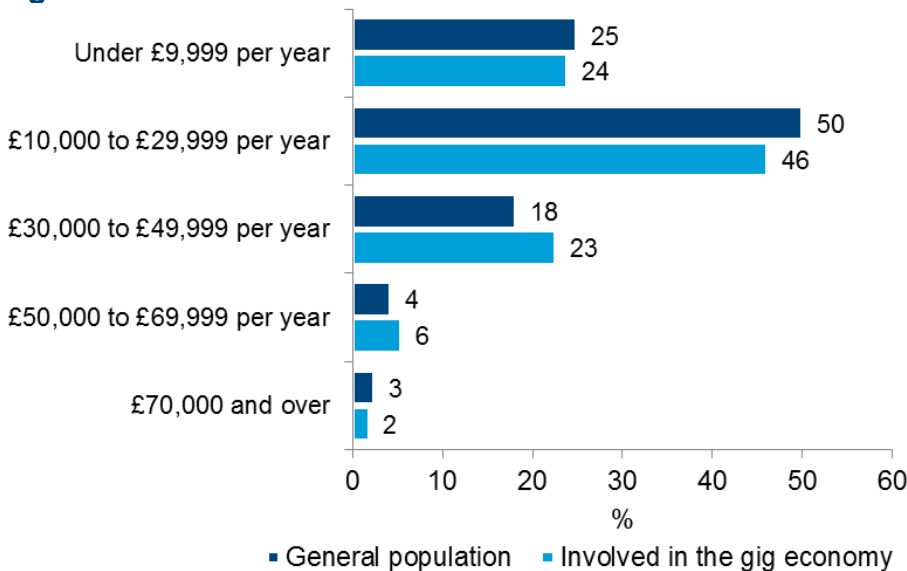


Unweighted base (YouGov Omnibus): All GB adults (aged 18+) (n=11,825) and those involved in gig economy (n=343)
 NB. Don't know and prefer not to answer are excluded from the bases.

Personal annual and household income

As Figure 4 suggests, total personal annual income levels (including all income, not just that from the gig economy) tended to be similar between those involved in the gig economy and the general population. Similarly to personal income, the levels of annual household income were comparable without substantial differences (Appendix table 3).

Figure 4: Personal annual income



Unweighted base (YouGov Omnibus): All GB adults (aged 18+) (n=9,379) and those involved in gig economy (n=297)
 NB. Don't know and prefer not to answer are excluded from the bases.

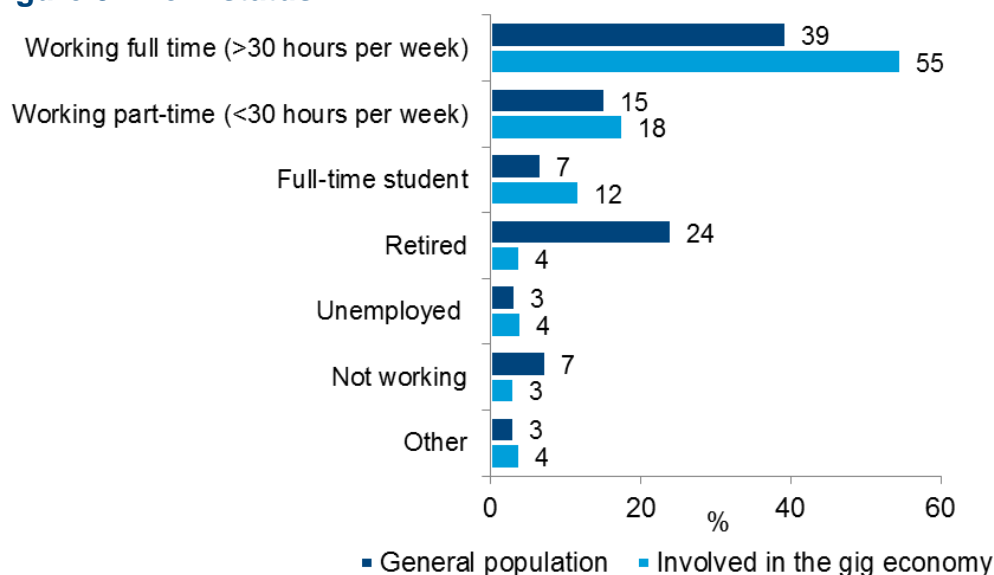
Work status

The entire sample was asked to self-classify their main work status based on their primary activity.⁵ A full-time student, for example, might do part-time work on the side of their studies but may still primarily categorise themselves as full-time student.

The majority (55 per cent) of those involved in gig economy reported to be engaged in full-time employment, compared to only 39 per cent in the general population.

As we would expect, the proportion of retired people among those involved in gig economy was particularly low in comparison. While a quarter (24 per cent) of respondents in the general population said they were retired, four per cent of those providing services in gig economy gave this as their work status. Again, this reflects the higher proportion of older people in a national sample.

Figure 5: Work status



Unweighted base (YouGov Omnibus): All GB adults (aged 18+) (n=11,825) and those involved in gig economy (n=343)

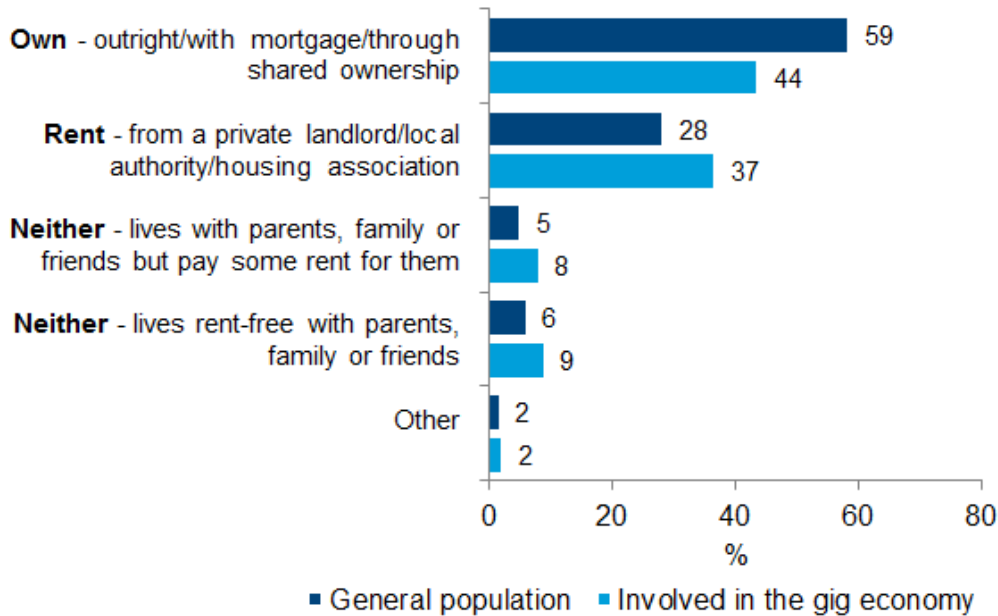
Tenure

Those involved in the gig economy were more likely than the population as a whole to rent their accommodation (37 per cent compared with 28 per cent in the general sample) or live with parents, family or friends either rent-free or paying some rent (17 per cent in the gig economy compared with 11 per cent). 56% of those in the gig economy were 18-34 which may explain some of these trends. It was more common for those in the general population to own their accommodation than it was for those working in the gig economy.

⁵ The general work status might include work in the gig economy or consist of other work such as full-time role elsewhere. That is, someone may be in full-time work and also provide services in the gig economy.

Fifty-nine per cent of those in the general sample owned their accommodation, compared to 44 per cent of those involved in gig economy ([Figure 6](#)).

Figure 6: Tenure



Unweighted base (YouGov Omnibus): All GB adults (aged 18+) (n=11,825) and those involved in gig economy (n=343)

Region

Those involved in the gig economy most commonly lived in the London area. While 13 per cent of general sample lived in London, 24 per cent of those involved in gig economy were based there ([Figure 7](#)).

Figure 7: Region



Unweighted base (YouGov Omnibus): All GB adults (aged 18+) (n=11,825) and those involved in gig economy (n=343)

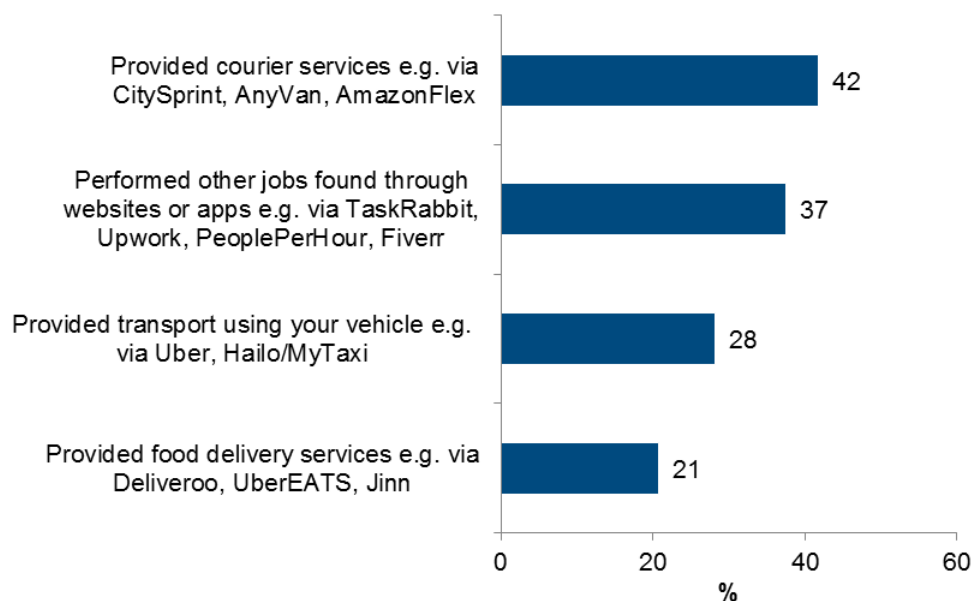
Nature of gig economy work

This chapter will explore the nature of gig economy work, including the type of work those involved in gig economy partake in, and the frequency and length of their participation.

Type of work

Figure 8 shows the proportion of those involved in the gig economy work by different types of activities. Providing courier services was the most common type of activity, mentioned by 42 per cent of those involved in the gig economy. Performing other jobs found through websites or apps⁶ was almost as common, mentioned by 37 per cent of those involved in gig work. Provision of transport services (28 per cent) and food delivery services (21 per cent) were slightly less common.

Figure 8: Type of gig economy work



Unweighted base (NatCen Panel): All GB adults (aged 18+) involved in gig economy (n=95)

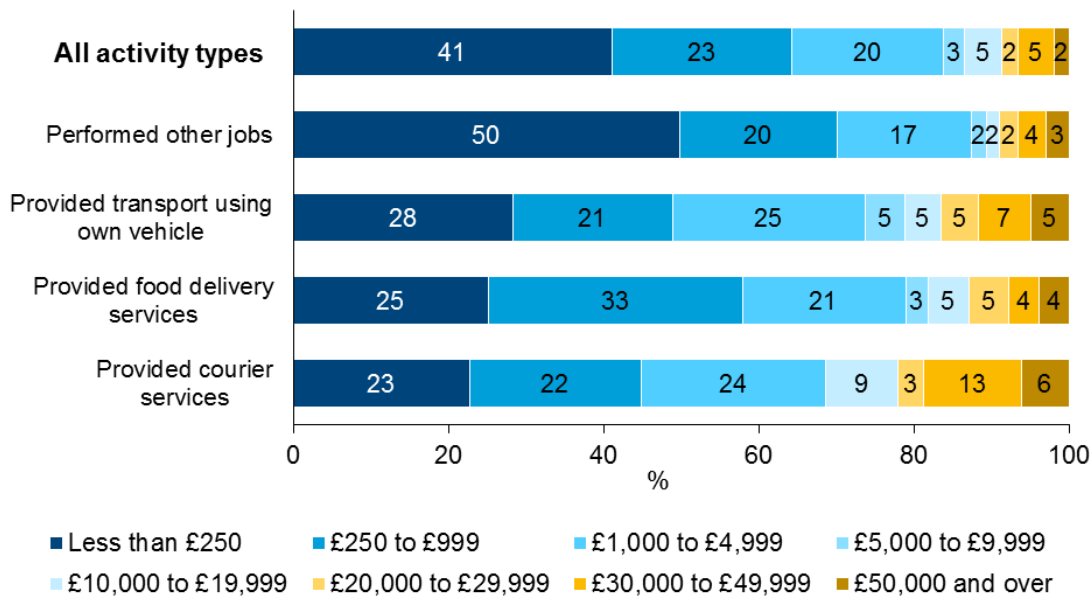
Note: Respondents were able to give more than one response to this question and therefore the sum of the percentages may be greater than 100

Those performing other jobs found through websites and apps tended to generate the smallest incomes from their gig economy work. Half of those carrying out other jobs (50

⁶ Throughout the report those gig economy jobs which do not relate directly to delivery or transport services are described as 'other' gig economy tasks for expediency. This category covers a wide range of tasks from low-skilled jobs such as removal services to high skilled work such as web development.

per cent) typically earned less than £250 from this activity per year compared to 41 per cent across all activities. Although it should be noted that this category also includes high skilled tasks such as creative media and technical skills. Meanwhile, those providing courier services were most likely to earn higher amounts from their gig economy work. One in five (22 per cent) of those providing delivery services reported an income of over £20,000 a year (Figure 9).

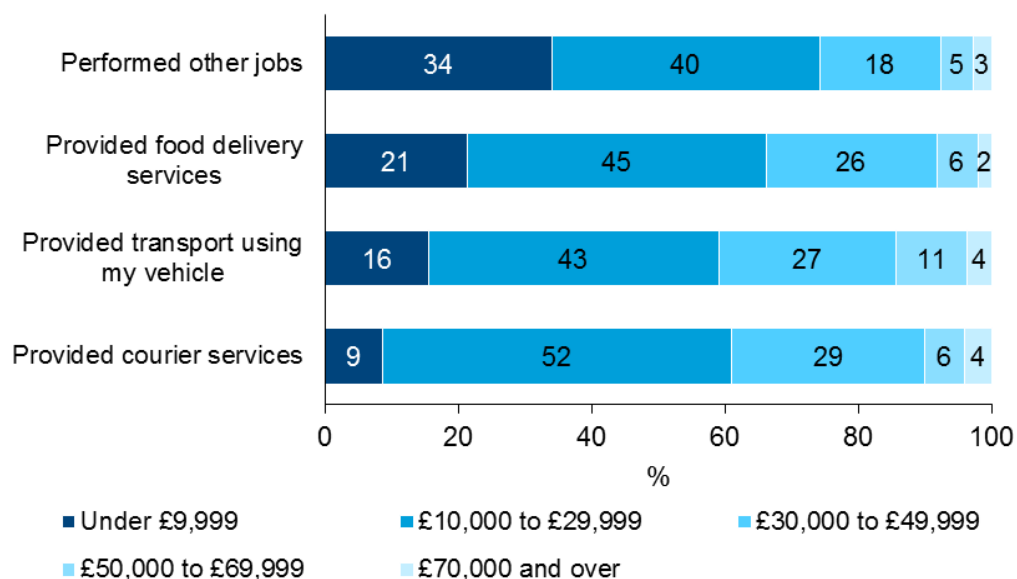
Figure 9: Type of gig economy work by income earned from gig economy in the past 12 months



*Unweighted base (YouGov Omnibus): All GB adults (aged 18+) involved in gig economy (n=253)
 NB. Don't know and prefer not to answer are excluded from the bases.*

As Figure 10 shows, those performing other jobs were most likely to earn the lowest income when looking at the total personal annual income from all sources. A third (34 per cent) of those carrying out other jobs reported a total annual income of under £9,999 per year. In contrast, 16 per cent of those providing transport and nine per cent of those providing courier services earned that amount.

Figure 10: Type of gig economy work by total annual income from all sources



*Unweighted base (YouGov Omnibus): All GB adults (aged 18+) involved in gig economy (n=297)
 NB. Provided food delivery services not statistically significant to 95% confidence level
 NB. Don't know and prefer not to answer are excluded from the bases.*

Other characteristics, such as age, education, gender or working status, were not found to be statistically significant to 95 per cent confidence level in relation to the type of gig economy work.

Platforms used

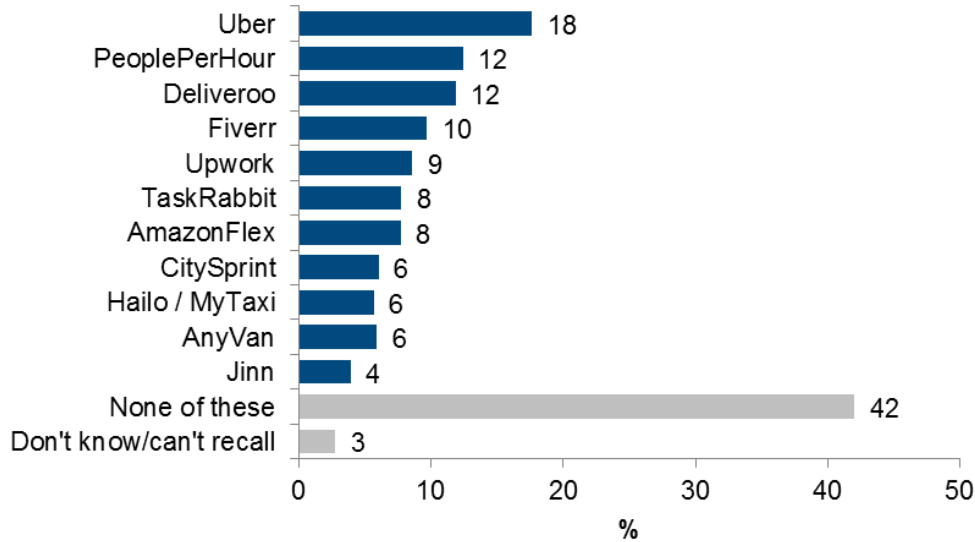
Respondents were presented with a list of the most commonly used websites and apps and asked to select any they had used.⁷ Of these, Uber was the most commonly used platform. In total, 18 per cent of those who had been involved in the gig economy work said they had provided services through Uber. Freelancing platform PeoplePerHour and delivery service Deliveroo were both mentioned by 12 per cent. Other freelancing platforms such as Fiverr (ten per cent), Upwork (nine per cent), TaskRabbit (eight per cent) and AmazonFlex (eight per cent) were mentioned too.

Two in five (42 per cent) said they had not used any of the listed platforms, suggesting that a wide range of platforms beyond those most widely known are used (Figure 11).

⁷ This type of digital portal would facilitate online exchanges between users and those providing services in the gig economy. These platforms host the various business functions specifically related to gig economy activity.

Figure 11: Most common platforms used

Q. Thinking about the past 12 months (since July 2016)... Which, if any, of the following have you done in order to make money, using a website or app?



Unweighted base (YouGov Omnibus): All GB adults (aged 18+) involved in gig economy (n=343)

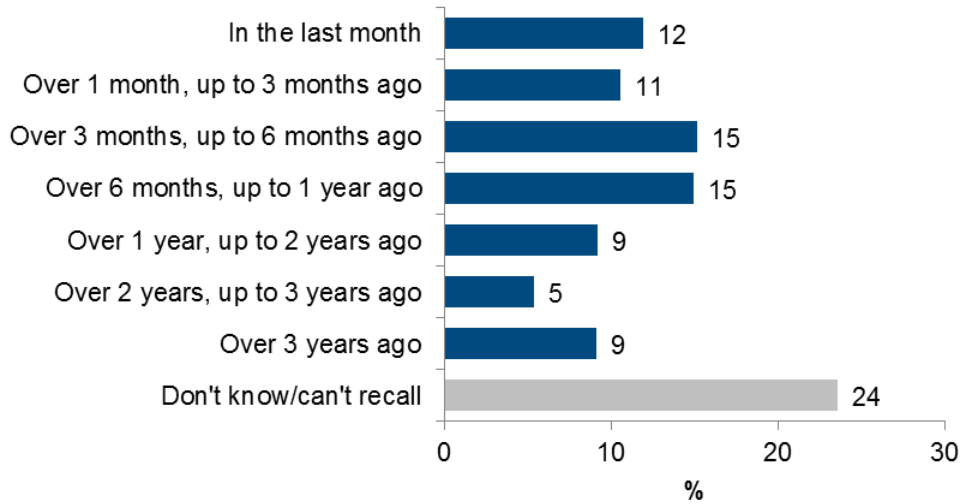
Note: Respondents were able to give more than one response to this question and therefore the sum of the percentages may be greater than 100

Length of involvement

Length of involvement in the gig economy varied, but those involved tended to have started providing services through apps and websites fairly recently. Thirty-eight per cent said that they first got involved in the gig economy in the last six months. A further 24 per cent had been working in the gig economy between six months and two years. Just fourteen per cent had first got involved over two years ago (Figure 12).

Figure 12: Length of involvement

Q. How long ago did you FIRST start making money from providing services on websites or apps?



Unweighted base (YouGov Omnibus): All GB adults (aged 18+) involved in gig economy (n=343)

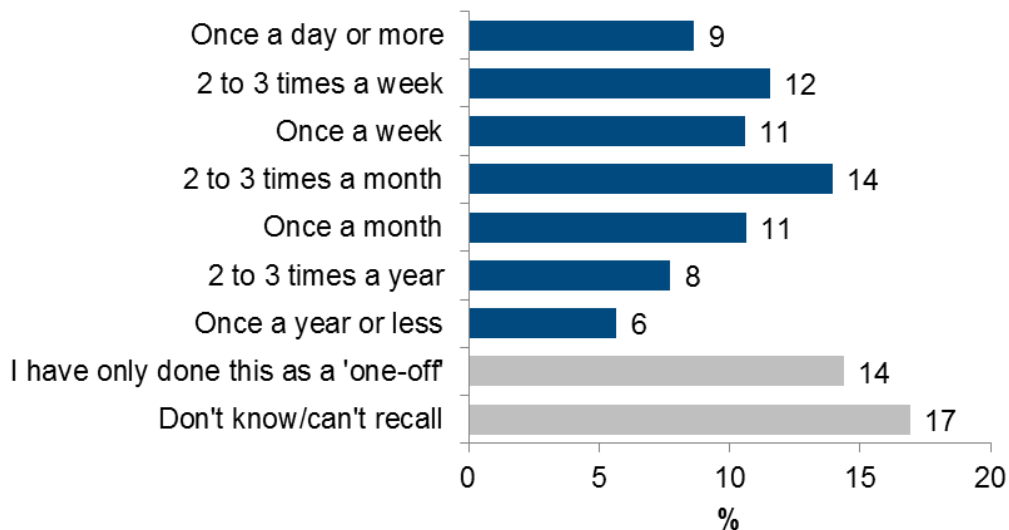
Frequency of involvement

For over half (55 per cent) of those working in the gig economy involvement was relatively frequent, happening at least once a month. For nine per cent, involvement in the gig economy took place on a daily basis, and 12 per cent said they provided goods and services in the gig economy two or three times a week. Just over a third (35 per cent) of those involved in gig economy offered goods and services through online platforms between once a week and once a month.

For others, involvement took place less frequently with 14 per cent saying they only carried out their activity two to three times a year or less. In addition, 14 per cent said that their involvement had been one-off. There was also a substantial minority (17 per cent) who were unable to give an estimate of the frequency of their involvement ([Figure 13](#)).

Figure 13: Frequency of involvement

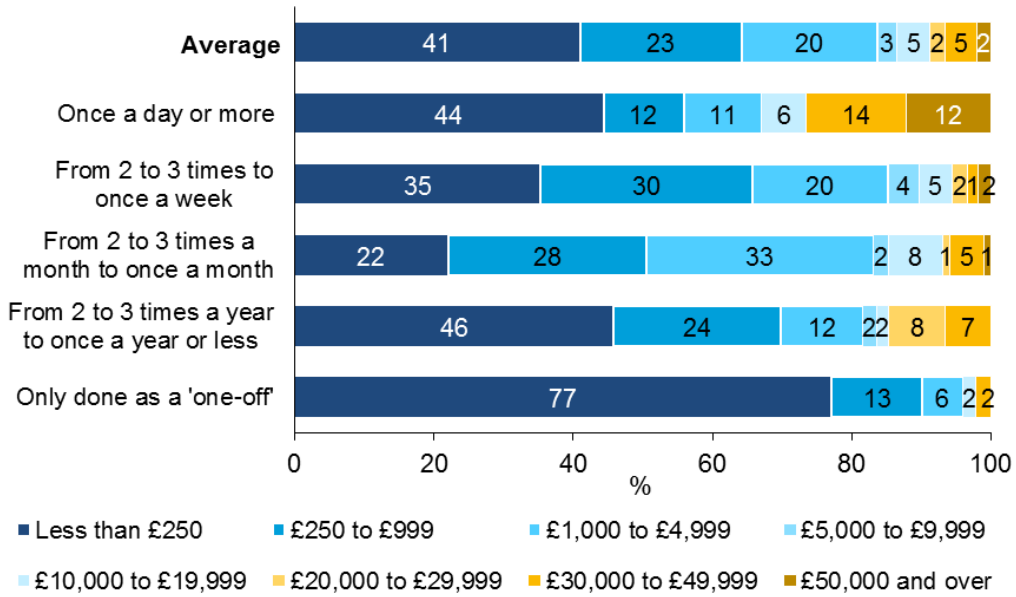
Q. On average, how often do you provide services on websites or apps?



Unweighted base (YouGov Omnibus): All GB adults (aged 18+) involved in gig economy (n=343)

As Figure 14 shows, those who provided their services most frequently (once a day or more) were also most likely to earn the highest annual incomes from the gig economy. Nearly one in four (27 per cent) earned over £30,000 a year, compared to just two per cent among those whose involvement had taken place 'one-off'. Indeed, perhaps unsurprisingly, the vast majority of those whose involvement had been 'one-off' had earned less than £250 from the gig economy in the last 12 months. Despite this, there was still a substantial proportion who provided their services regularly but still earned low-level income from their work. For example, 85 per cent of those who were involved from two to three times a week to once a week in the gig economy had earned less than £5,000 from their work in the last 12 months.

Figure 14: Frequency of involvement by annual income from gig economy



Unweighted base (YouGov Omnibus): All GB adults (aged 18+) involved in gig economy (n=343)

Gig economy income

This section explores the income that people earn from working in the gig economy. It considers hourly wages, income from the gig economy in the last 12 months and the proportion of total personal income that is earned in the gig economy. As a comparison, at the time of the survey(s) the National Living Wage (for employees aged 25 and over) was £7.50 per hour.⁸ However it should be noted that the National Living Wage and minimum wage is only relevant to those in employment, not self-employment.

Income generated through gig economy

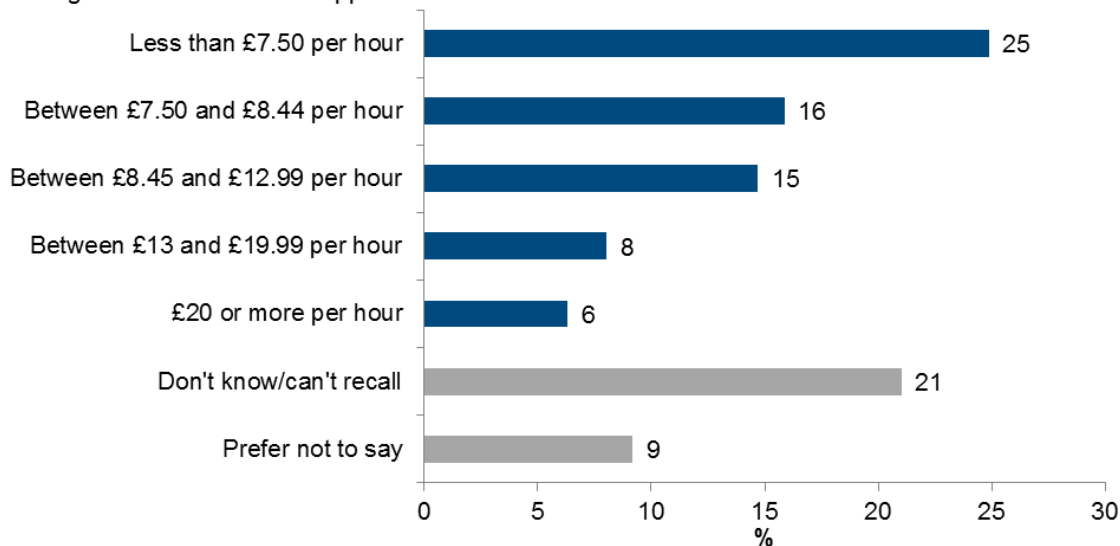
The self-reported levels of hourly pay were overall fairly low among those working in the gig economy with one in four respondents (25 per cent) reporting that they earned less than £7.50 per hour. For 16 per cent of respondents their hourly income fell between £7.50 and £8.44 per hour and 15 per cent earned more than that but less than £12.99 per hour.

On the higher end of the scale, just eight per cent reported earnings between £13 and £19.99 an hour and around one in twenty (six per cent) said their hourly income exceeded £20. In addition, substantial proportions of respondents did not know or could not remember how much they earn from their gig economy work (21 per cent) or preferred not to disclose the amount (nine per cent) ([Figure 15](#)). If we exclude those who were unable to disclose their earnings, the proportion earning under £7.50 per hour rises to 36 per cent.

⁸ The national minimum wage is the minimum pay per hour almost all workers are entitled to. The national living wage is higher than the national minimum wage - workers get it if they're over 25 years old. <https://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates> Accessed 16/08/2017

Figure 15: Hourly income from the gig economy

Q. On average, how much money do you typically earn PER HOUR from providing services using these websites and apps?

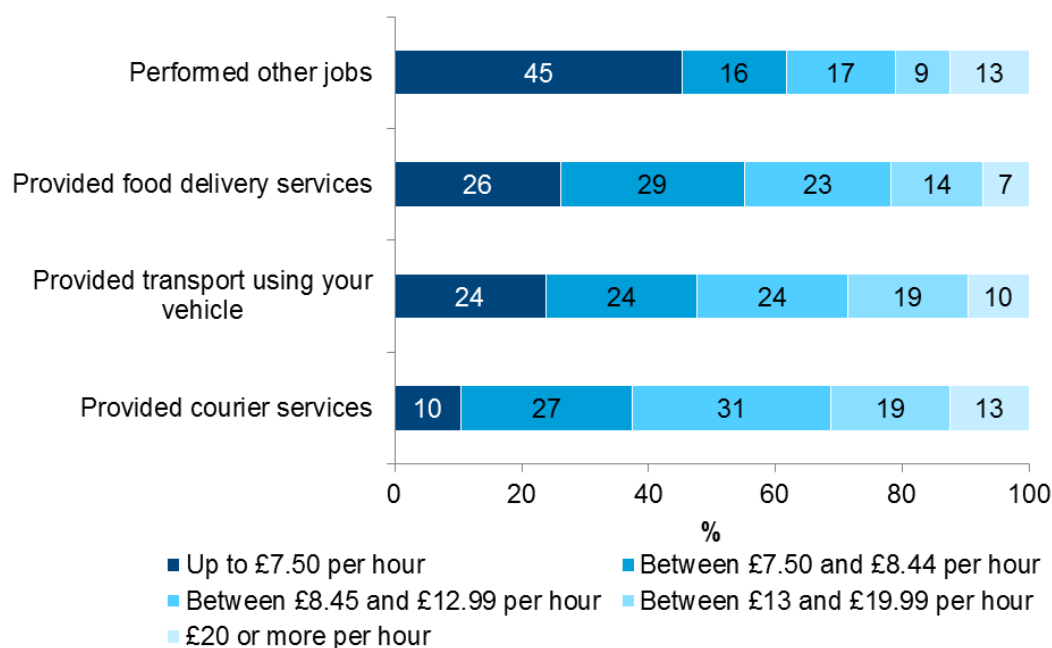


Unweighted base (YouGov Omnibus): All GB adults (aged 18+) involved in gig economy (n=343).

Overall, 24 per cent of those aged 25 and over said that their hourly income from gig economy work was less than £7.50 per hour. While the national minimum wage legislation does not apply to those self-employed, such as most of those involved in the gig economy, it offers an interesting comparison to those in traditional forms of employment ([Appendix table 4](#)).

Hourly income varied depending on the type of gig work the respondent was engaged in. In particular, just under half (45 per cent) of those performing other jobs were earning less than £7.50 per hour, a significantly larger proportion when compared with different types of work. In contrast, those providing courier services were significantly less likely to earn below £7.50 per hour (ten per cent of those providing courier services earned up to £7.50 an hour compared with 24 per cent and 26 per cent of those providing transport and food delivery services respectively). Indeed, couriers were also more likely to earn higher hourly wages than others involved in the gig economy, suggesting that pay in the gig economy may be closely related to the type of work being undertaken ([Figure 16](#)).

Figure 16: Hourly income earned from gig economy by type of work



Unweighted base (YouGov Omnibus): All GB adults (aged 18+) involved in gig economy (n=239). NB. Don't know and prefer not to answer are excluded from the bases.

The findings indicate that hourly wages in the gig economy also varied by age with younger people tending to earn less. For example, 27 per cent of those aged 18-34 earned less than £7.50 an hour compared to 16 per cent of those aged 55 and over. However, small base sizes mean that the relationship between age and hourly earnings from the gig economy was not statistically significant at the 95 per cent confidence level ().

Total income in the last 12 months

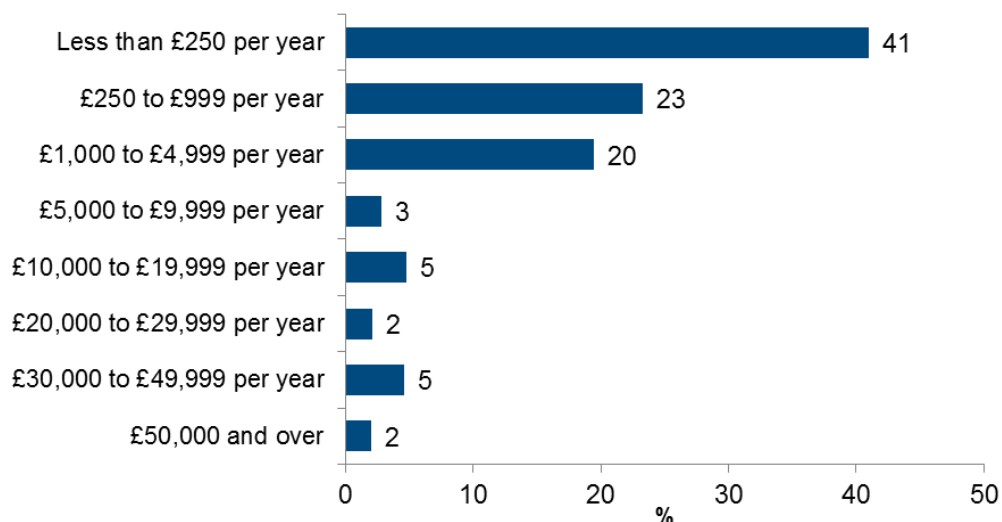
To understand the total annual income earned in the gig economy, respondents were asked how much money they had made in total from providing services on websites or apps in the last 12 months, with income bands ranging from less than £250 to £100,000 and over.

The level of earnings from the gig economy was relatively low. In the last 12 months, two in five of those in the gig economy (41 per cent) said that they had typically earned less than £250 through their services offered on websites and apps. Indeed, 87 per cent of everyone involved in gig economy said they had earned less than £10,000 in the last 12 months (Figure 17).

Women in the gig economy were significantly more likely than men to have earned less than £250 in the last 12 months (49 per cent and 35 per cent respectively) (Appendix table 6).

Figure 17: Total income earned from the gig economy in the last 12 months

Q. How much money, in TOTAL, have you made from providing services on websites or apps in the last 12 months?



Unweighted base (YouGov Omnibus): All GB adults (aged 18+) involved in gig economy (n=253). NB. Don't know and prefer not to answer are excluded from the bases.

As with hourly income, the levels of personal annual income earned in the gig economy varied substantially depending on the type of work being undertaken. Those providing courier services earned significantly more than other gig workers, while those performing other tasks earned the least (See [Figure 9](#) in the previous chapter).

Based on responses given, the estimated mean income earned in the last 12 months of those involved in gig economy was £5,634. However, this is skewed by a relatively small proportion declaring relatively high earnings. Indeed, the estimated median income from the gig economy in the last 12 months is much lower at £375.

Excluding those who have been in the gig economy for less than a year does not significantly impact on these estimates. Among those who had been involved in the gig economy for at least a year, the estimated mean income was, £5,967, while the median income was at £375.

However, it should be noted that these income estimates are based on an ordinal answer scale in which respondents were asked to select the income band which corresponded to their total income from the gig economy in the past 12 months. The use of an ordinal scale inevitably reduces the precision of income estimates because the responses can fall anywhere within the income band. In addition, rather than even intervals the income bands were narrower at the lower end of the answer scale. This makes the estimate on the lower end of the scale more precise than the upper end where the income bands were set with less frequent intervals.

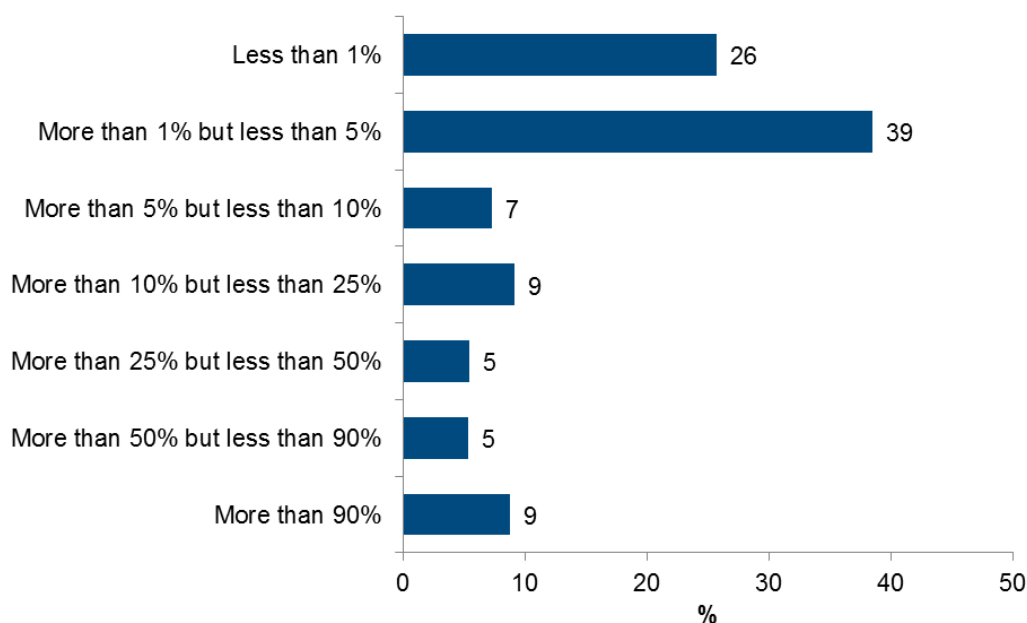
Given the limitations explained above, the estimates should be treated with a degree of caution and should be viewed in the context of the survey question and response options.

Income from gig economy as proportion of total income

In order to estimate the role that income from the gig economy plays in an individual's total income, the estimates of total gig economy income were compared with estimates of total personal income.⁹

The findings suggest that income earned in the gig economy forms a small proportion of most gig workers' total annual income. Approximately two-thirds (65 per cent) of respondents earned less than five per cent of their total annual income in the gig economy. Just one in eleven (nine per cent) respondents earned a large majority of their income (greater than 90 per cent of their total income) in the gig economy ([Figure 18](#)).

Figure 18: Proportion of total individual income earned in the gig economy



Unweighted base (YouGov Omnibus): All GB adults (aged 18+) involved in gig economy who provided their gross personal annual income (n=253).

NB. Don't know and prefer not to answer are excluded from the bases.

As with hourly earnings, it appears that the proportion of annual income earned in the gig economy varies by the type of gig work being undertaken. Almost a quarter (23 per cent)

⁹ Estimates for the proportion of annual income earned in the gig economy were obtained by taking the mid-points of the banded income categories for gross personal annual income and total income earned in the gig economy. As these estimated proportions are derived from mid-points rather than the true values, the proportion may be under/overestimated if there is a large skew of true incomes at either end of an income band. Consequently caution is advised when interpreting these results.

of those providing courier services earned more than 90 per cent of their total income in the gig economy (Appendix table 7), a significantly higher proportion than those undertaking different types of work. In contrast, seven in ten (70 per cent) gig workers who performed other tasks earned less than five per cent of their total income in the gig economy, indicating that they might be more likely to be using their gig work as an extra source of income on top of their regular work.

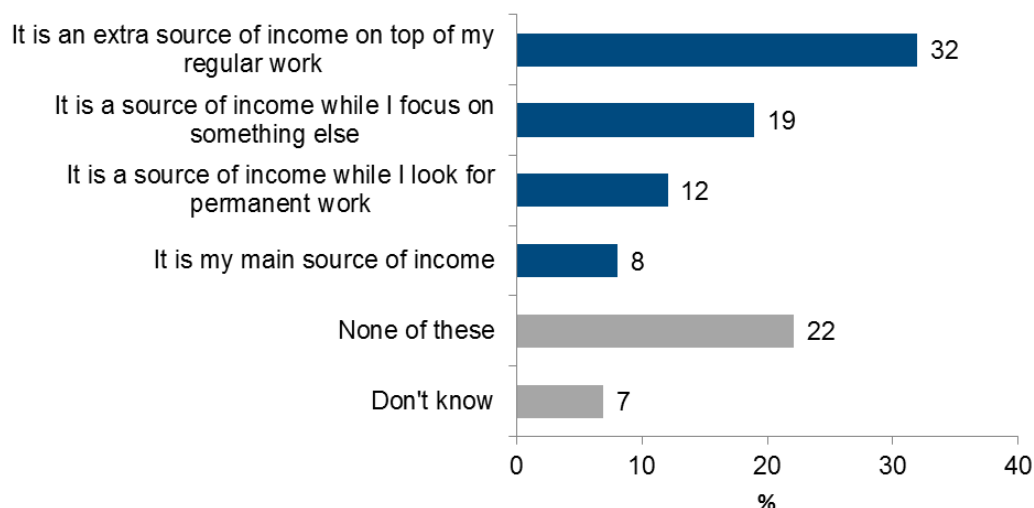
Role of gig economy income

Reflecting its relatively low contribution to total income, the income from the gig economy was most commonly seen as an extra source of income on top of respondents' regular income (32 per cent). Further to that, one in five (19 per cent) respondents saw the income from the gig economy as a source of money while they focused on other things such as study, children or caring for others.

Fewer than one in ten respondents (eight per cent) said the money earned in the gig economy was their main source of income, corresponding to the proportion of respondents who earned more than 90 per cent of their income in the gig economy mentioned previously. Twenty two per cent of respondents chose none of the options presented suggesting that income from the gig economy plays a variety of roles in their own circumstances (Figure 19).

Figure 19: Role of income earned in the gig economy

Q. Which ONE, if any, of the following statements BEST describes the income you earn from providing services through websites and/ or apps?



Unweighted base (YouGov Omnibus): All GB adults (aged 18+) involved in gig economy (n=343).

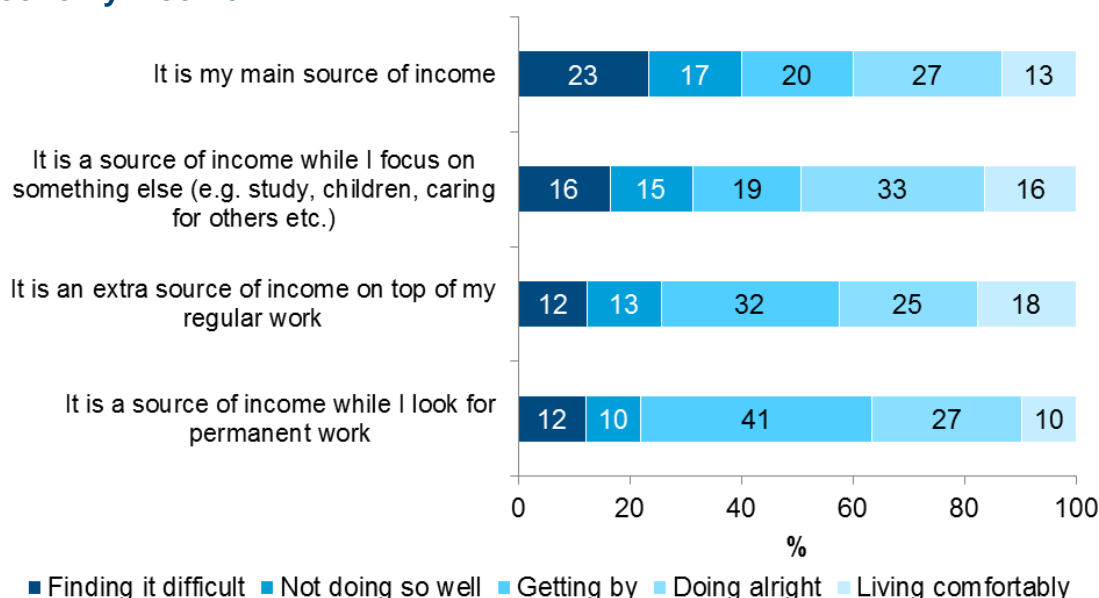
NB: Findings in relation to gig economy being the main source of income are based on a small unweighted base size of 27 respondents.

Those who considered the income they make from the gig economy to be their main source of income were finding it harder for their household to get on financially. Two in five

(40 per cent) of those who relied on the gig economy as their main source of income reported that they were not doing so well or were finding it difficult to get by financially, a higher proportion compared to those to whom the income from gig economy was not the main source of income.

At the same time, half of respondents (49 per cent) who were using the gig economy as a source of income while they focused on something else said that they were doing ‘alright’ financially or ‘living comfortably.’ Similarly, 43 per cent of those who used money earned in the gig economy as an extra source of income reported that they were doing ‘alright’ or living comfortably. This indicates that while the gig economy can comfortably be used to help top up finances, relying on it as the main source of income may present challenges (Figure 20).

Figure 20: Self-reported financial situation in household and the role of gig economy income



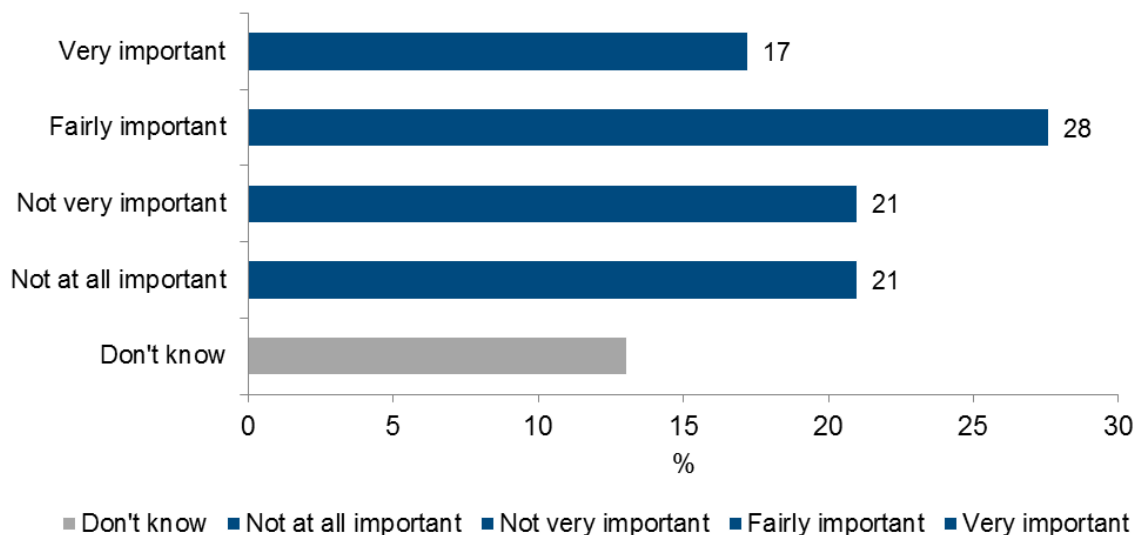
Unweighted base (YouGov Omnibus): All GB adults (aged 18+) involved in gig economy (n=319). NB. Don't know and prefer not to answer are excluded from the bases.

Importance of gig economy income

Those in the gig economy were split on how important the income it generates is for maintaining their current standard of living. For example, while 42 per cent deemed it to be important, a similar proportion (45 per cent) saw it as not important (Figure 21).

Figure 21: Importance of income earned in the gig economy

Q. Overall how important, if at all, is the income you earn from providing services through websites or apps to your current standard of living?



Unweighted base (YouGov Omnibus): All GB adults (aged 18+) involved in gig economy (n=343).

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the importance people attach to the income relates to the amount they earn from their gig economy activities. Income earned in the gig economy was much more important to people who earned a larger proportion of their total income in the gig economy than those who earned small amounts from it. Approximately half (between 50 per cent and 52 per cent) of respondents who earned between £10,000 and £49,999 said that income from the gig economy was important to their standard of living, while three in five of those (60 per cent) in households with income over £70,000 saw this income as unimportant ([Appendix table 8](#)).

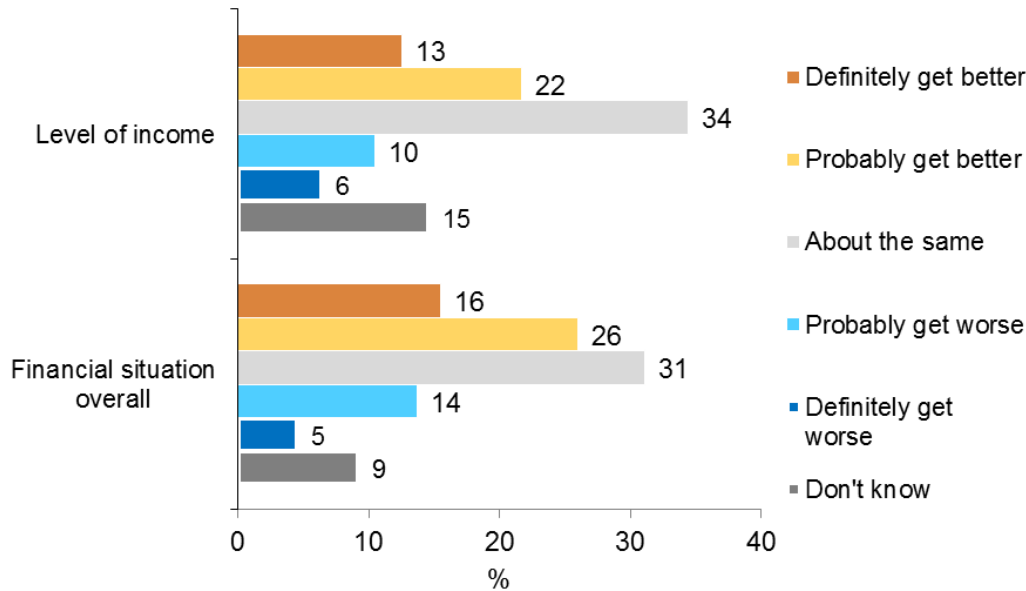
Financial situation

On balance, those in the gig economy were positive about their level of income and overall financial situation in the coming 12 months although a significant minority were not. Just over a third (34 per cent) thought that their level of income would definitely or probably get better in the next year. The same proportion (34 per cent) thought their level of income would stay about the same, while 16 per cent thought that it would probably or definitely get worse.

In terms of their financial situation overall, 42 per cent saw it definitely or probably improving in the coming 12 months, compared with 18 per cent who thought it would get worse. Just less than a third (31 per cent) envisaged no substantial change in their financial situation overall (Figure 22).

Figure 22: Whether thinks level of income and financial situation overall will get better or worse, or stay the same in the next 12 months

Q. Thinking about the next 12 months, do you think the following will get better or worse, or stay the same?

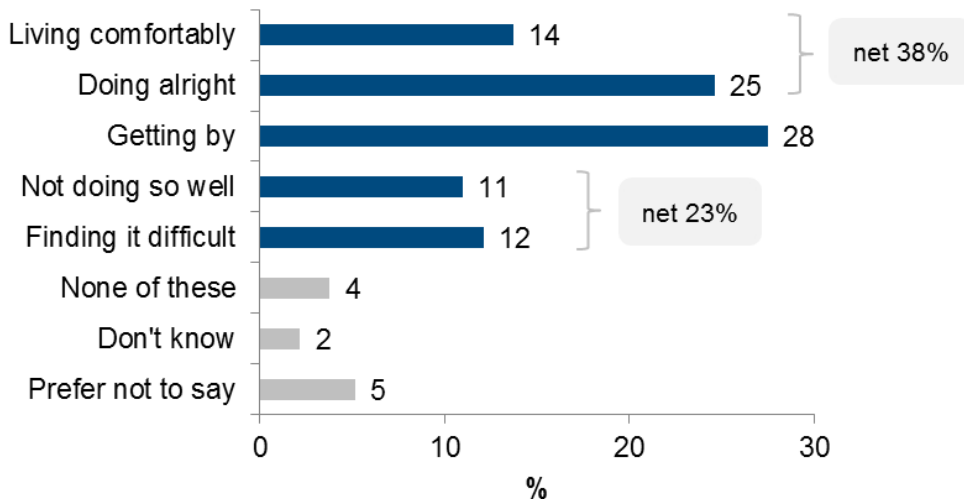


Unweighted base (YouGov Omnibus): All GB adults (aged 18+) involved in gig economy (n=343)

Finally, respondents were asked to assess how well their household was getting on financially. The responses varied with 14 per cent saying that they were living comfortably as opposed to 12 per cent who said they were finding it very difficult. One in four (25 per cent) said that they were doing alright, while 28 per cent thought they were getting by (Figure 23).

Figure 23: How well getting on financially at the moment

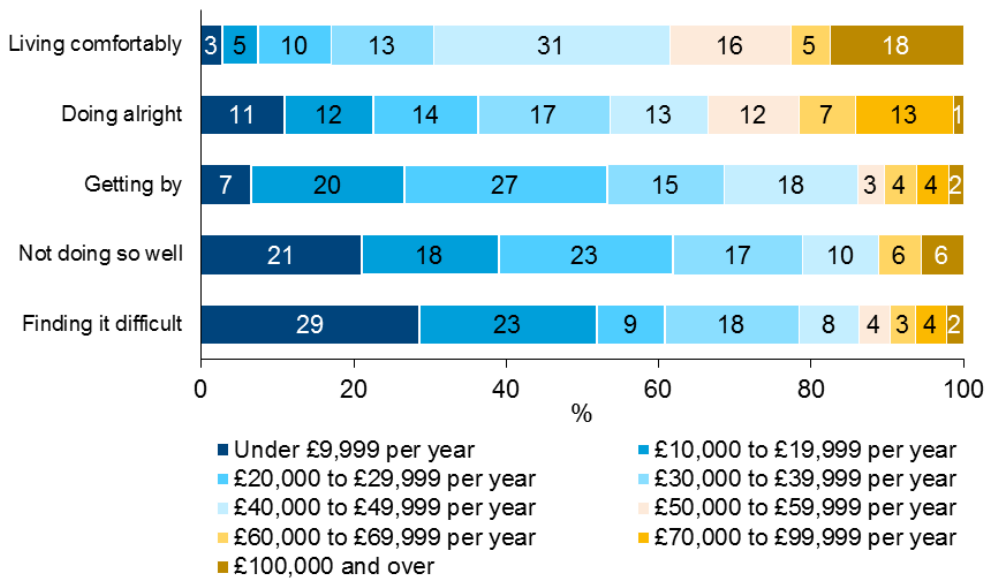
Q. Overall, how well are your household getting on financially at the moment? Would you say you are...



Unweighted base (YouGov Omnibus): All GB adults (aged 18+) involved in gig economy (n=343)

This perception of household's financial situation corresponded with the annual earnings respondents had reported. Those thinking that they were living comfortably were more likely to have higher annual household incomes. One in five (18 per cent) of those who said they lived comfortably earned £100,000 and over per year. In contrast, 29 per cent of those who said they were finding it difficult lived on a household income of under £9,999 per year (Figure 24).

Figure 24: Financial situation by total annual household income



*Unweighted base (YouGov Omnibus): All GB adults (aged 18+) involved in gig economy (n=343)
 NB. Don't know and prefer not to answer are excluded from the bases.*

Attitudes towards gig economy

This chapter will discuss attitudes towards working in the gig economy and satisfaction with various aspects of the work. It will also explore the future plans of involvement.

Satisfaction with gig economy work

Overall, more than half of those involved in the gig economy were either very or fairly satisfied with their experience of providing services on websites and apps (53 per cent).

Independence and flexibility were the two aspects that those working in the gig economy were most satisfied with. Over half of all gig economy providers were satisfied with these two aspects of their work (58 per cent and 56 per cent respectively). The number of hours worked was also an aspect those involved in gig economy were generally satisfied with: 47 per cent said they were either very or fairly happy.

However, those in the gig economy were less satisfied with their work-related benefits and level of income which one in four (25 per cent) were either fairly or very dissatisfied with. Further 23 per cent were dissatisfied with career development and training opportunities in the gig economy ([Figure 25](#)).

Figure 25: Level of satisfaction with different aspects of gig economy

Q. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with each of the following aspects of your work providing services through websites or apps?

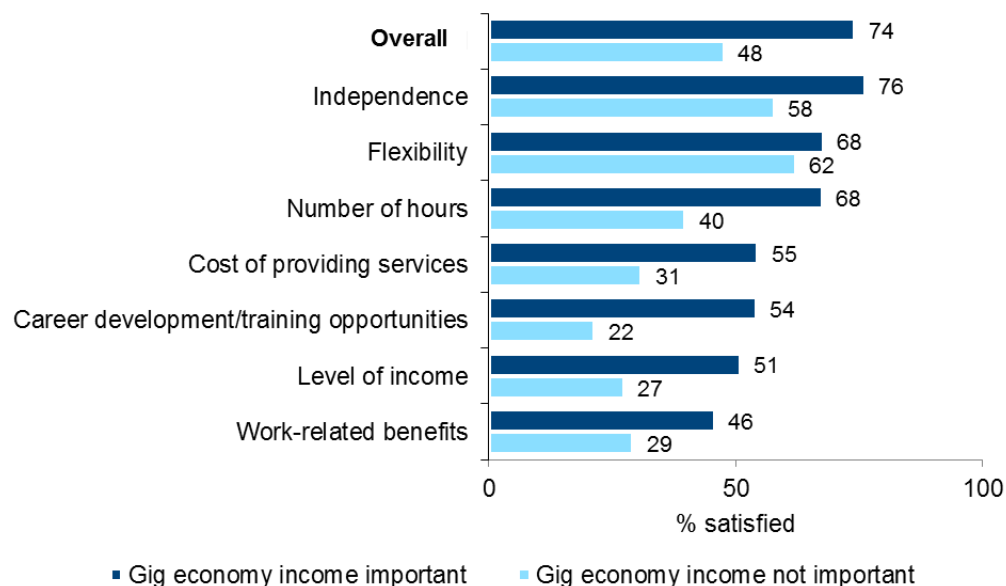


Unweighted base (YouGov Omnibus): All GB adults (aged 18+) involved in gig economy (n=343)

The importance that people attach to their gig economy work seems to influence their perceptions of their work and their conditions. Those who consider the income they earn from the gig economy to be important to their standard of livings are more likely to be satisfied with their overall experience (74 per cent of those to whom the income from the gig economy was important were satisfied with their overall experience compared to 48 per cent of those to whom this source of income was not important).

They were also more likely to be satisfied with various aspects of their work, such as independence, number of hours worked, level of income and career development (Figure 26).

Figure 26: Level of satisfaction by importance of gig economy income



Unweighted base (YouGov Omnibus): All GB adults (aged 18+) involved in gig economy (n=343)

NB: 'Don't know' responses are excluded

All results aside from those relating to flexibility are significant on 95% confidence level

Those to whom the gig work was their main source of income (90 per cent) and those who treated their work in the gig economy as a source of income while they focus on something else (71 per cent) were particularly satisfied overall with their experience ([Appendix table 9](#)).

Satisfaction with different aspects of work in the gig economy varied by the type of activity respondents were involved in. Some of the key findings which were found to be statistically significant have been summarised below.

Flexibility

- Those providing food delivery services were less likely to be satisfied with their ability to determine where and when they work. Sixteen per cent of those said they were dissatisfied with it compared with eight per cent in other groups.

- Respondents performing other jobs were more likely to feel satisfied with this aspect than other groups. The majority (75 per cent) performing other jobs said they were satisfied in comparison to 54 per cent of those in gig economy overall.

Independence

- Those providing transport were less likely than others to be satisfied with their ability to decide what type of work they do with 23 per cent saying they were very or fairly dissatisfied in comparison to eight per cent in other types of activities.
- Those performing other jobs were more likely than other groups to be satisfied with this aspect (74 per cent of those said they were satisfied in comparison to 61 per cent in other groups).

Number of hours

- Respondents who provided transport were more likely to be satisfied with how many hours they worked than those involved in other types of activities. Sixty-two per cent of those providing transport using their own vehicle were satisfied with this aspect in comparison to 48 per cent in other groups.

Work-related benefits

- Those providing food delivery services or transport were most likely of all four activity types to be satisfied with their work-related benefits with over half (54 per cent and 52 per cent respectively) saying this. Those performing other jobs were the least likely to be satisfied with this aspect of their gig work (Table 1).

The table below outlines satisfaction with various aspects of gig economy work by the type of gig economy activity.

Table 1. Proportion of satisfied with work-related benefits by type of gig economy activity

Aspect of work	Provided transport using my vehicle	Provided food delivery services	Provided courier services	Performed other jobs
	% satisfied	% satisfied	% satisfied	% satisfied
Overall	68	65	69	55
Flexibility	58	54	56	75
Independence	56	65	67	74
Number of hours	62	59	64	49
Work-related benefits	52	54	48	29
Level of income	48	50	48	34
Cost of providing services	52	52	44	42
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>90</i>	<i>84</i>	<i>49</i>	<i>139</i>

NB: The findings highlighted on light green or light red were found to be statistically significant to 95 per cent confidence level. Light green signifies that the level of satisfaction was higher compared with other groups while light red was lower. 'Don't know' responses are excluded from the proportions.

Respondents were also asked about which one aspect of work in gig economy they would most want to improve. Most commonly, those involved in gig economy were hoping for more regularity and predictability of work (mentioned by 18 per cent). Lower costs for providing services on websites and apps as well as less competition from others providing similar services were also cited by 11 and ten per cent of those involved in gig economy respectively. The aspects that were least often mentioned were to do with more contact with colleagues and flexibility around working schedules (mentioned by four and six per cent respectively). One in nine (11 per cent) were happy with their work as it was and did not think there was anything to improve (Figure 27).

Figure 27: One aspect of work for improvement

Q. If you could improve ONE aspect of the work you do providing services on the websites and apps, what would it be, if any?



Unweighted base (YouGov Omnibus): All GB adults (aged 18+) involved in gig economy (n=343)

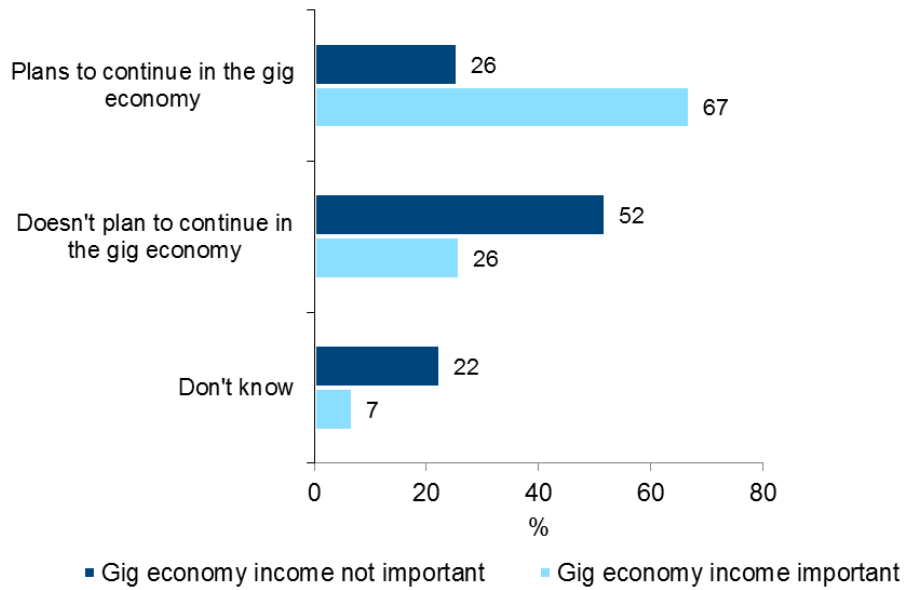
Note: Respondents were able to give more than one response to this question and therefore the sum of the percentages may be greater than 100.

Future in the gig economy

Those involved in the gig economy were also asked whether they intended to continue their work in gig economy in the next 12 months. In total, 41 per cent said they are going to continue in this type of work, while 39 per cent said they would not. In addition, one in five (20 per cent) were unsure ([Appendix table 10](#)).

As Figure 28 shows, those to whom the work in gig economy was an important source of income were significantly more likely to see themselves continuing to provide services through websites and apps in the next 12 months, perhaps also reflecting their greater levels of satisfaction with the work.

Figure 28: Whether plans to continue providing services by importance of gig economy income to current standard of living



Unweighted base (YouGov Omnibus): All GB adults (aged 18+) involved in gig economy (n=343)

Appendix tables

Scale of the gig economy and characteristics

Appendix table 1 Demographic profile: Gender		
<i>Base (YouGov Omnibus): All GB adults (aged 18+) and those involved in the gig economy</i>		
	General population	Gig economy
	%	%
Male	49	54
Female	51	46
<i>Unweighted base</i>	100	343

Appendix table 2 Demographic profile: Age profile of those working		
<i>Base (YouGov Omnibus): All GB adults (aged 18+) and those involved in the gig economy who are in work</i>		
	General population working full-time or part-time	Gig economy
	%	%
18-34	29	56
35-54	48	35
55+	22	10
<i>Unweighted base</i>	6,407	343

Appendix table 3 Demographic profile: Annual household income		
<i>Base (YouGov Omnibus): All GB adults (aged 18+) and those involved in the gig economy</i>		
	General population	Gig economy
	%	%
Under £9,999 per year	10	12
£10,000 to £19,999 per year	20	16
£20,000 to £29,999 per year	21	19
£30,000 to £39,999 per year	16	16
£40,000 to £49,999 per year	12	15
£50,000 to £59,999 per year	7	7
£60,000 to £69,999 per year	5	5
£70,000 to £99,999 per year	7	5
£100,000 and over	4	5
<i>Unweighted base</i>	9,310	295

Gig economy income

Appendix table 4 Hourly income earned in the gig economy	
<i>Base (YouGov Omnibus): All GB adults (aged 18+) involved in the gig economy aged 25 and over</i>	
	Aged 25 and over
	%
Up to £7.50 per hour	24
Between £7.50 and £8.44 per hour	14
Between £8.45 and £12.99 per hour	15
Between £13 and £19.99 per hour	7
£20 or more per hour	8
Don't know/can't recall	23
Prefer not to say	9
<i>Unweighted base</i>	258

Appendix table 5 Hourly income earned in the gig economy by age group

Base: All those involved in the gig economy who provided income information (Omnibus)

	18-34	35-54	55+
	%	%	%
Up to £7.50 per hour	27	23	16
Between £7.50 and £8.44 per hour	20	9	22
Between £8.45 and £12.99 per hour	14	17	11
Between £13 and £19.99 per hour	8	9	5
£20 or more per hour	4	8	16
Don't know/can't recall	19	24	22
Prefer not to say	8	11	8
<i>Unweighted Base</i>	<i>135</i>	<i>78</i>	<i>26</i>

Appendix table 6 Annual income earned in the gig economy

Base (YouGov Omnibus): All GB adults (aged 18+) and those involved in the gig economy

	Men	Women
	%	%
Less than £250 a year	35	49
£250 to £999 a year	23	21
£1,000 to £4,999 a year	23	16
£5,000 to £9,999 a year	n<5	n<5
£10,000 to £19,999 a year	5	4
£20,000 to £29,999 a year	n<5	n<5
£30,000 to £49,999 a year	8	n<5
£50,000 and over	n<5	n<5
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>129</i>	<i>124</i>

Appendix table 7 Proportion of total personal income earned in the gig economy

Base (YouGov Omnibus): All GB adults (aged 18+) involved in the gig economy who provided income information

	Provided transport	Provided food delivery Services	Provided courier services	Performed other jobs
	%	%	%	%
Less than 1%	18	13	21	30
More than 1% but less than 5%	34	43	25	40
More than 5% but less than 10%	11	12	n<5	5
More than 10% but less than 25%	9	n<5	10	9
More than 25% but less than 50%	6	9	n<5	4
More than 50% but less than 90%	12	n<5	n<5	6
More than 90%	11	13	23	7
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>74</i>	<i>67</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>135</i>

Note that proportions were estimated using the mid-points of banded categories for the total personal income and total annual income from the gig economy and as a result these figures should be interpreted with caution.

Appendix table 8 Importance of income from the gig economy by gross household income

Base: All those involved in the gig economy who provided income information (Omnibus)

	Important	Not important	Don't know
	%	%	%
Under £5,000 per year	89	11	0
£5,000 to £9,999 per year	41	36	23
£10,000 to £14,999 per year	67	25	8
£15,000 to £19,999 per year	50	38	12
£20,000 to £24,999 per year	45	52	3
£25,000 to £29,999 per year	54	38	8
£30,000 to £34,999 per year	55	38	7
£35,000 to £39,999 per year	32	63	5
£40,000 to £44,999 per year	73	20	7
£45,000 to £49,999 per year	21	50	29
£50,000 to £59,999 per year	33	57	10
£60,000 to £69,999 per year	41	47	12
£70,000 to £99,999 per year	29	53	18
£100,000 to £149,999 per year	18	73	9
£150,000 and over	40	40	20
Don't know	35	35	29
Prefer not to answer	23	48	29
<i>Unweighted base</i>	152	146	45

Attitudes towards gig economy

Appendix table 9 Satisfaction of overall experience in the gig economy by the role of gig income

Base (YouGov Omnibus): All GB adults (aged 18+) involved in the gig economy

	Main source of income	An extra source of income	A source of income while focusing on something else	A source of income while looking for permanent work
	%	%	%	%
Satisfied	90	65	71	46
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	4	22	18	35
Unsatisfied	6	13	11	18
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>27</i>	<i>111</i>	<i>60</i>	<i>43</i>

Appendix table 10 Whether plans to continue providing services in the next 12 months

Base (YouGov Omnibus): All GB adults (aged 18+) involved in the gig economy

	%
Yes, I do	41
No, I don't	39
Don't know	20
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>376</i>