Analysis of enquiries to the LEP Growth Service in 2017/18

1.0 Analysis of Gateway and SME Growth Managers in 2017/18

1.1 Performance data continues to be monitored on a weekly, monthly and quarterly basis. The following information presents more detail on the performance of the service (gateway and SME Growth Managers) from April 2017 to date. It also provides comparisons to previous years in order to assess progress over time.

1.2 In 2017/18, the service worked towards a target of supporting 625 businesses per quarter in order to achieve the 2017/18 target of supporting 2,500 individual businesses. A total of 1,998 SMEs (orange line below) have been supported since the start of April 2017, averaging 600 businesses per quarter. Those businesses have interacted with the service 2,841 times (blue line below), indicating confidence by many businesses in returning to the service for additional support.

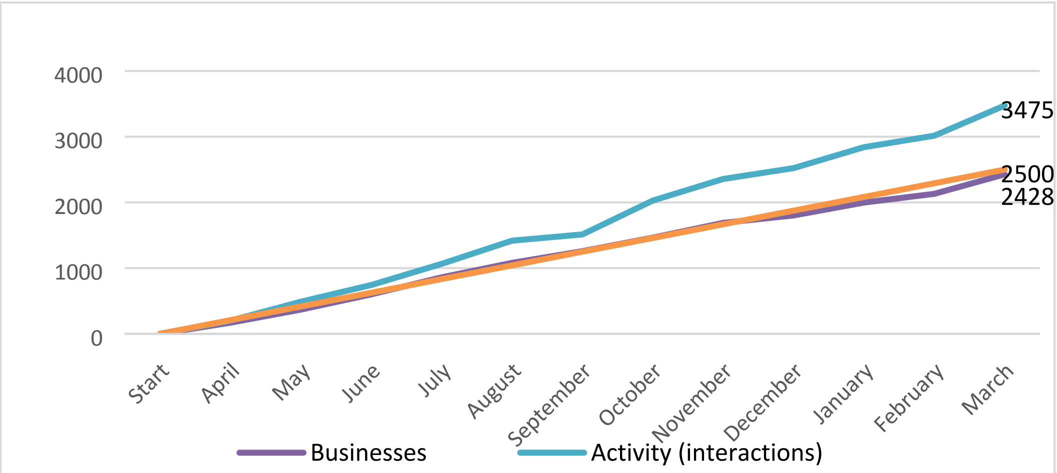

Figure 1: Actual/projected performance against the target of supporting 2500 businesses in 2017/18

1.3 Level 1 (light-touch support) and Level 2 (more intensive support) enquiries represent the service's target client group. The below chart shows a surge in the number of enquiries into the Gateway in early 2017/18 due to the launch of several new products. This then evened out over the middle part of the year, with a dip in early 2018, partly attributable to the severe weather and low number of working days. The figures for March 2018 were closer to the annual monthly average.

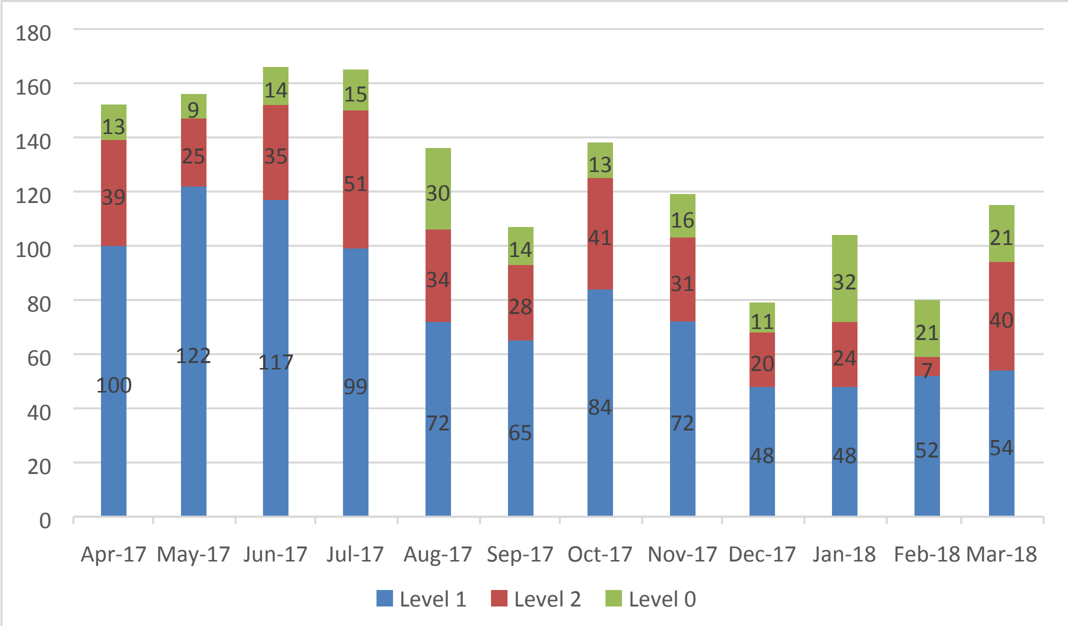

Figure 2: LEP Growth Service enquiries to the Gateway by client group (Apr 16 – March 18)

1.4 The table below shows the increase in enquiries to the Gateway from target clients over the last three years (i.e. those with plans to grow, classified as Levels 1 and 2). It continues to show a decrease in enquiries from non-target clients, such as pre-start firms.

Table 1: Number of enquiries into the Gateway (June 15 – March 18)

Enquiry Type	Total July 15 - Mar 16	Total April 16 - Mar 17	Total April 17 - Mar 18
Level 0 – Non Target Client Group	410	252	210
Level 1 – Light Touch Referral	427	911	933
Level 2 – In depth Referrals	235	390	375
Total Gateway Interactions	1072	1553	1518

1.5 There has been little change to the most popular ways in which businesses have contacted the service since its launch in July 2015. Despite some minor in-year fluctuations, the most common route continues to be via the telephone helpline (49%). This percentage increased by 4% over 2017/18, whilst email enquiries decreased by 4% in the same period.

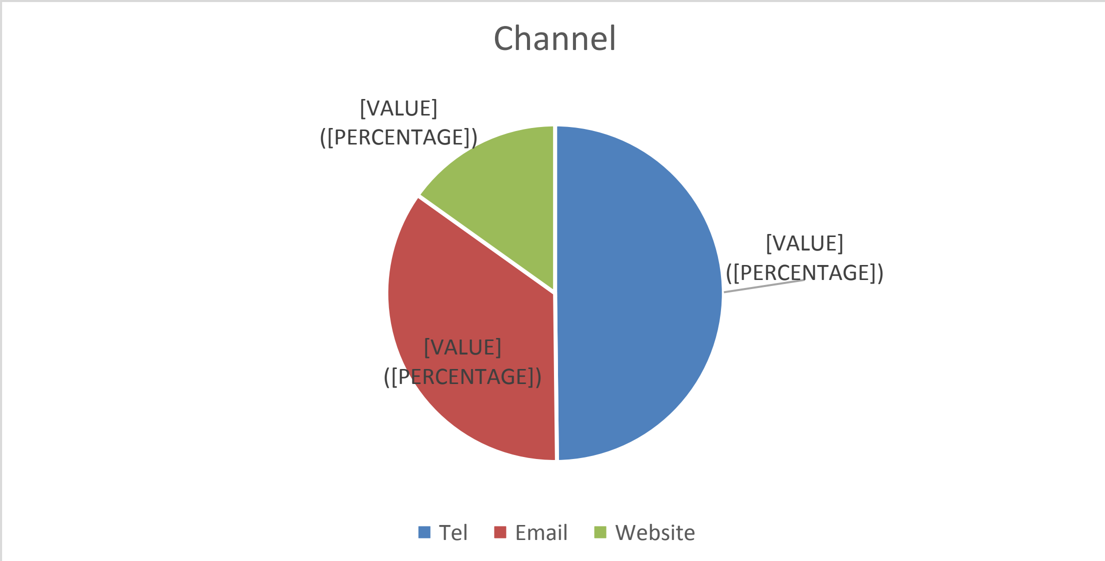

Figure 3: Gateway channels of enquiry (Apr 17 – March 18)

1.6 The chart below shows how businesses that contacted the Gateway in 2017/18 heard about the service. Referrals from 'another LEP product/service' increased throughout this financial year and accounted for 32% of responses, almost the same as 'internet/website', which was previously the most common source. Again, this trend reinforces confidence in the service from businesses that return for additional support. An independent evaluation of the service is currently underway and will be complete in June 2018. It will include customer satisfaction, as well as qualitative and quantitative impact data on the businesses supported.

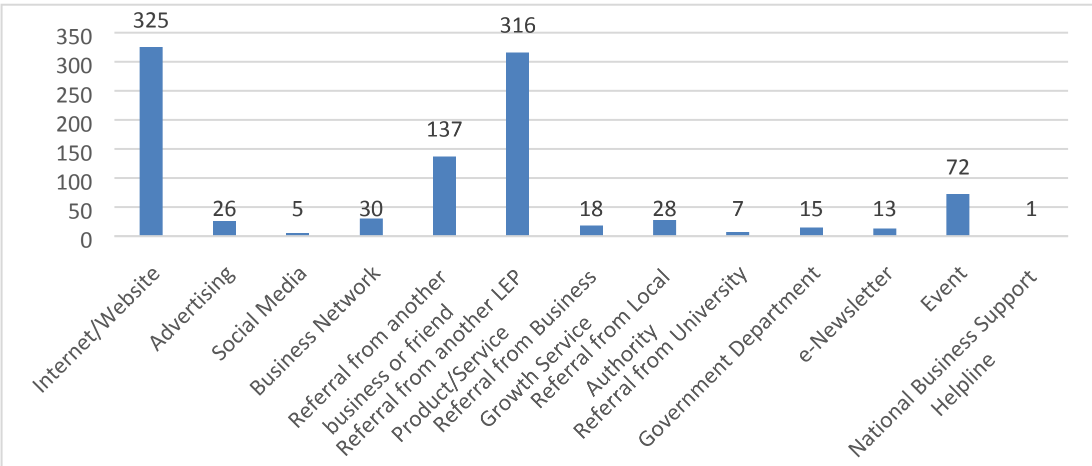

Figure 4: How businesses heard about the service (Apr 17 – March 18)

1.7 As the table below shows, collectively the team of SME Growth Managers supported 828 businesses during 2017/18, with 633 receiving ongoing intensive support. The table provides a breakdown of the number of clients supported in each district by the Growth Managers.

Table 2: SME Growth Manager clients by district (Apr 17 – March 18)

SME Growth Manager	Total Clients	Intensively Supported
Bradford & Craven (x2 FTE)	138	134
Calderdale (x1 FTE)	122	61
Harrogate (x1 FTE)	103	81
Kirklees (x1.5 FTE)	88	78
Leeds (x2.5 FTE)	182	126
Wakefield (x1 FTE)	80	76
York (x1 FTE)	79	54
Selby (x0.5 FTE)	36	23
Total	**828**	**633**

1.8 Figure 5 below shows the spread of enquiries to the Gateway from across the City Region compared to the percentage of the City Region's business stock per district. Leeds, Bradford, Calderdale and Kirklees generated more enquiries than their proportion of overall business stock in 2017/18. Harrogate remains the North Yorkshire district with the narrowest gap between proportion of business stock and proportion of overall enquiries.

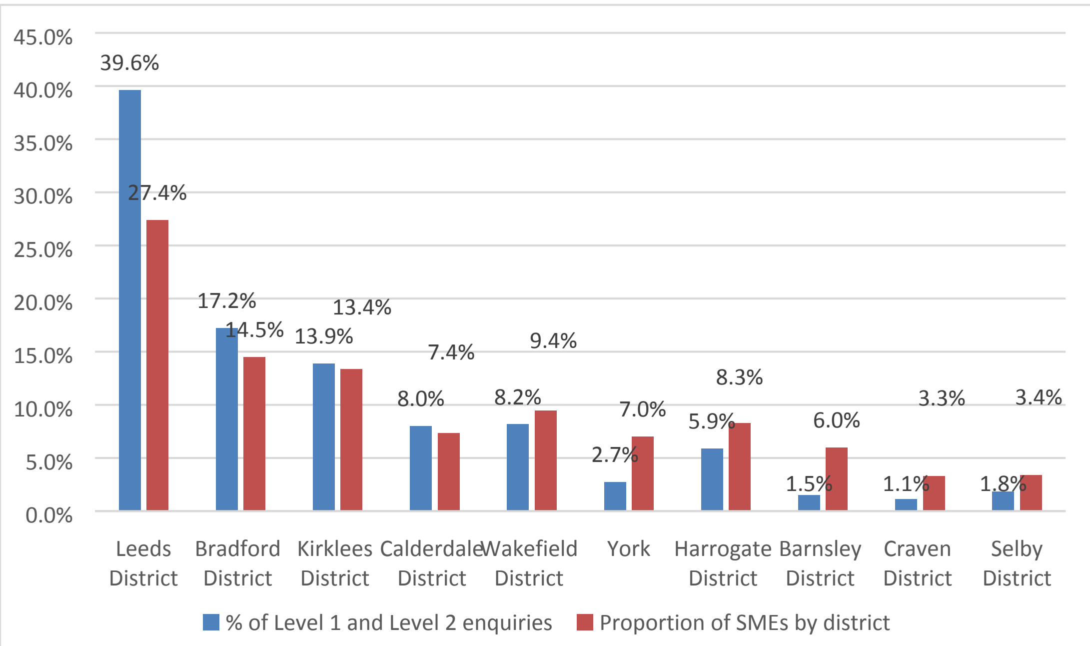

Figure 5: Proportion of enquiries per district compared to City Region business stock per district (Apr 17 – March 18)

1.9 The graph below shows that ‘Access to Finance’ was the most popular topic for support in 2017/18 for both enquiries to the Gateway, and for the clients of the SME Growth Managers. ‘Business Planning’ and ‘Skills/Recruitment’ are the next most common topics for Gateway-enquiries, whereas ‘Skills/Recruitment’ and ‘Premises’ are the areas that most Growth Manager-clients want support with, after ‘Access to Finance’.

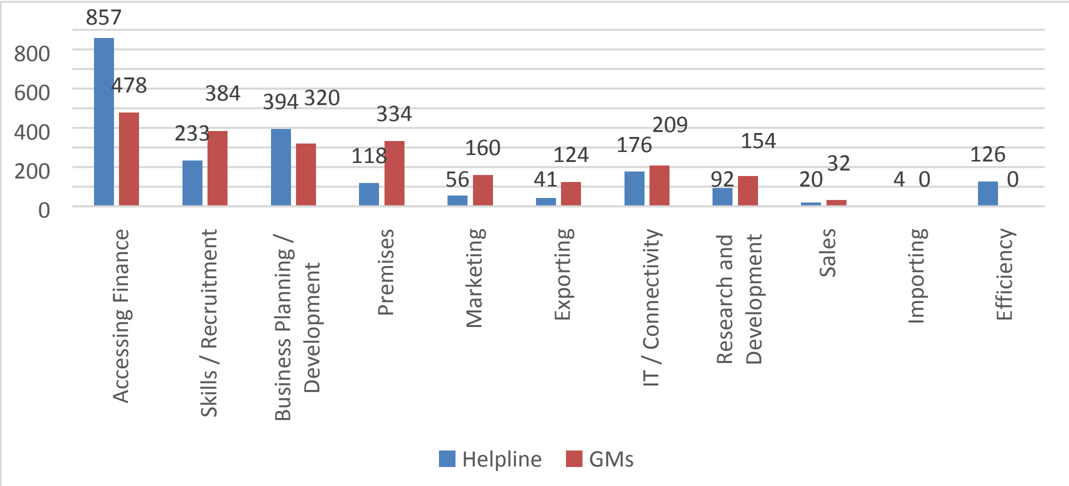

Figure 6: Topics for business support (Apr 17 – March 18)

1.10 Businesses from the manufacturing sector generated the highest number of enquiries within 2017/18 as highlighted in the chart below. The Growth Managers’ clients in the year were more likely to be in the LEP’s priority sectors, particularly Advanced Manufacturing and Creative and Digital, than those firms that first enquired to the Gateway. This is attributable to the nature of the current support offer which lends itself to these two sectors, and the prominence of growing SMEs in the priority sectors across the City Region’s largest districts.

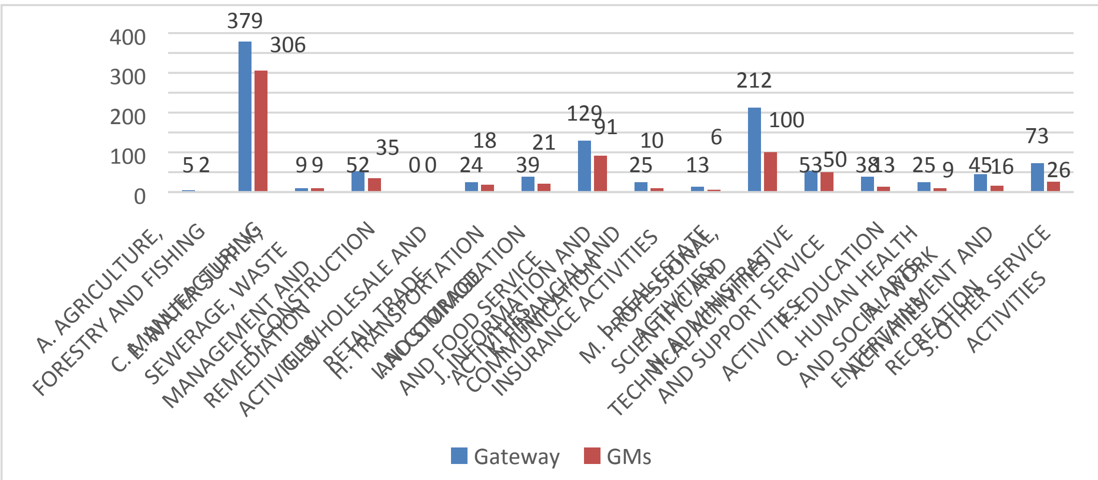

Figure 7: Percentage of Growth Service clients (Gateway and Growth Manager) by sector (Apr 17 – March 18)

1.11 Figure 8 below illustrates the breadth of referrals to business support products and organisations from both the Gateway and the SME Growth Managers during 2017/18. The highest number of referrals in the year were to the LEP Capital Grants programme, Digital Enterprise, Resource Efficiency Fund, Skills Service and Ad:Venture. There was also an increase in the number of referrals to Access Innovation in the latter part of 2017/18, which is as a result of the programme becoming more embedded within the business and innovation support community.

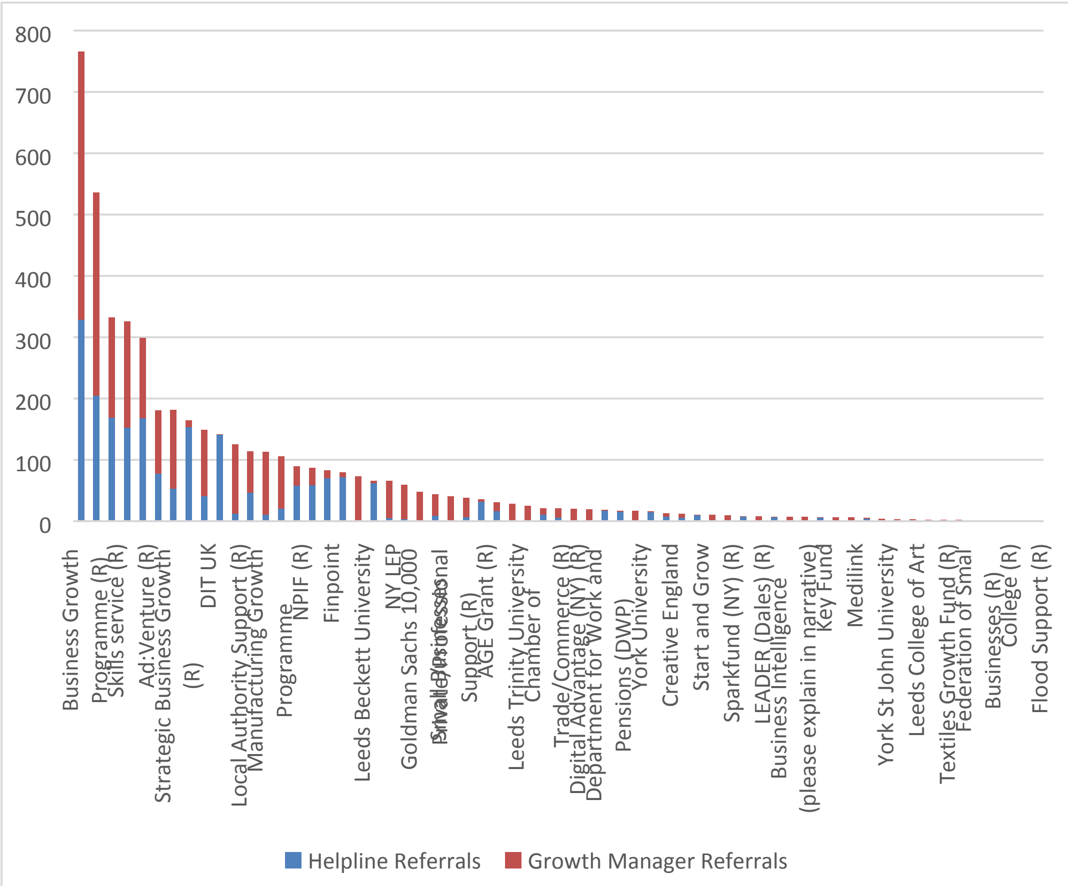

Figure 8: Number of business support referrals (Apr 17 – March 18)

1.12 The chart below highlights the source of the SME Growth Managers' clients during 2017/18, and that they surpassed the annual collective target of account-managing 630 growth-oriented SMEs (633 achieved). It also shows that the Growth Managers sourced their clients from an increasingly broad range of sources over the year, with 'Business Networks' being particularly effective in Harrogate, Bradford and Selby.

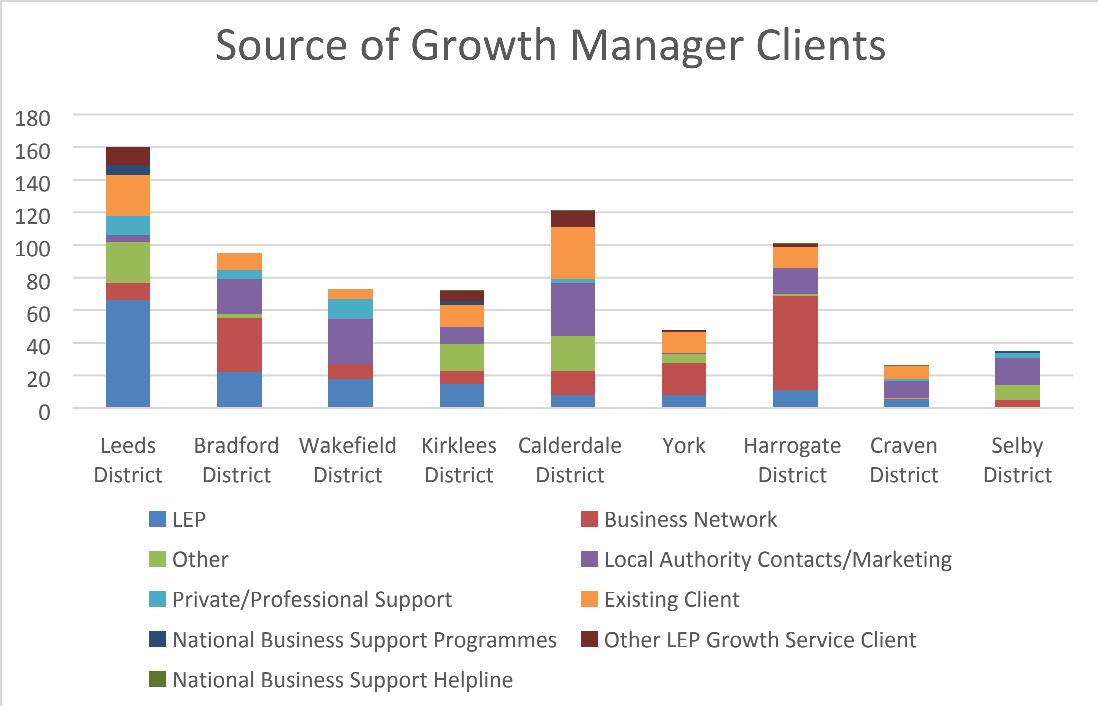

Figure 9: Source of Growth Managers' clients (Apr 17 - March 18)

1.13 The chart below presents customer satisfaction data related to the Gateway over the final four months of 2017/18. It shows that 92% of responses were positive in terms of recommending the Gateway service to a friend or colleague.

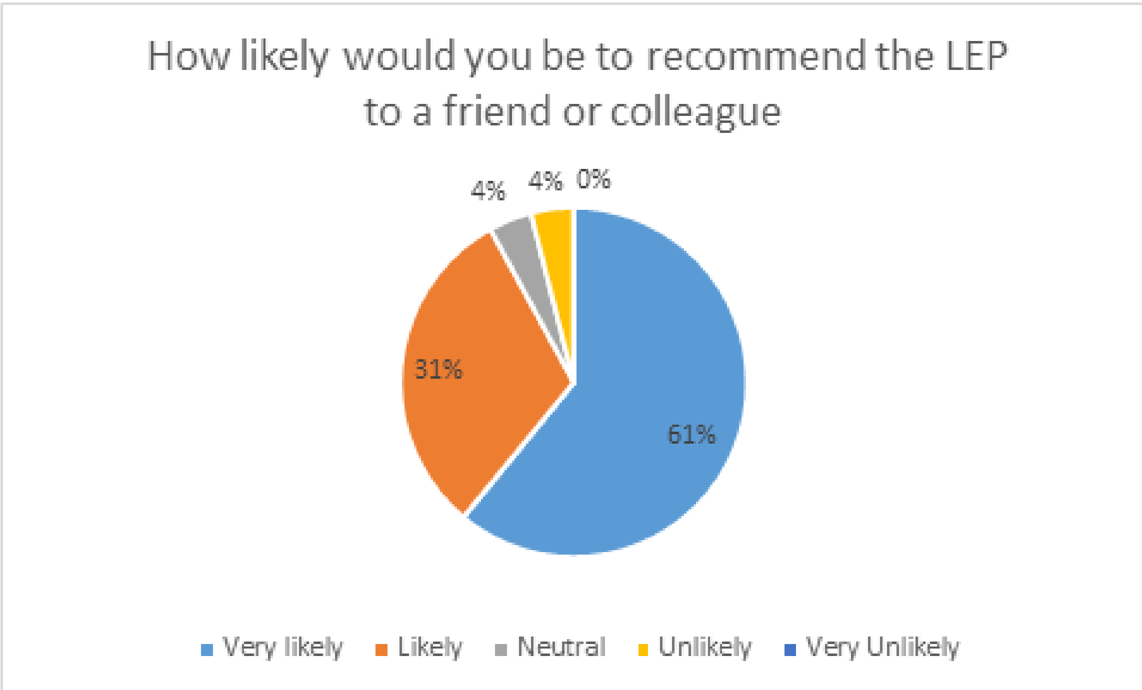

Figure 10: Customer satisfaction of the Gateway (Dec 17 – March 18)

1.14 The final chart below presents similarly positive results from the customer satisfaction questionnaires completed by businesses that contacted the Gateway between December 2017 and March 2018. It shows that over 90% of respondents rated the knowledge and experience of the advisors as excellent or good.

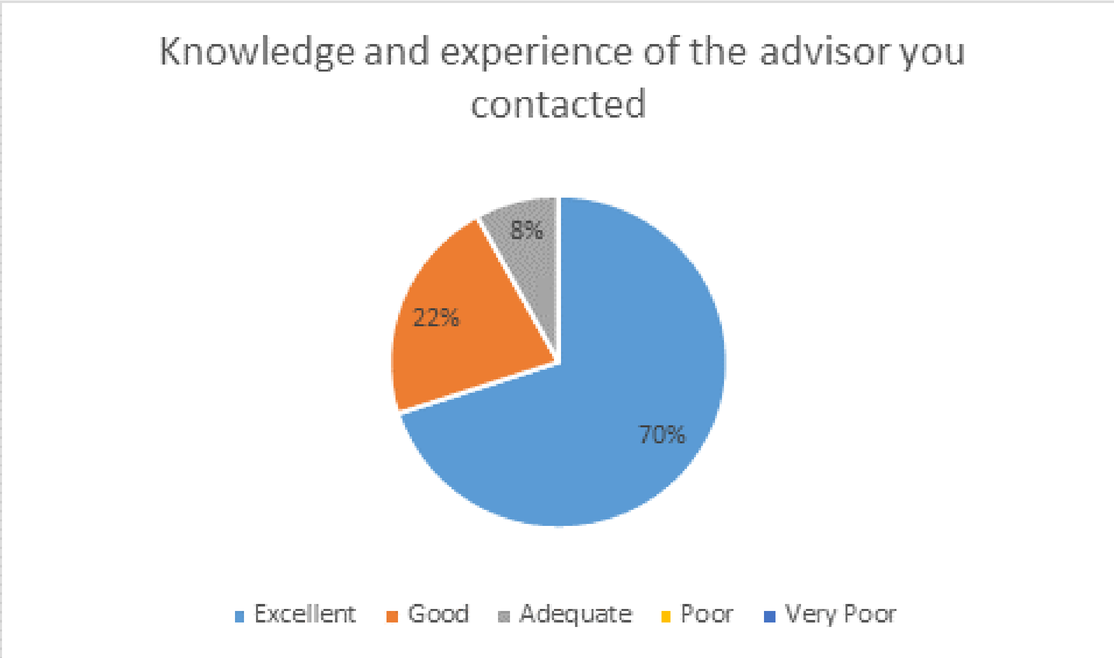

Figure 11: Knowledge and experience of Gateway advisors (Dec 17–March 18)