

# Loyals, Stayers, Returners and Incomers: Graduate migration patterns

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February 2015



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## Introduction

Examining the first degree graduates from 2012/13 who were in employment in the UK six months after graduation, this report analyses the patterns of graduate movement by region in terms of graduates' locations of domicile<sup>1</sup>, study and employment.

The data used in this study comes from the Higher Education Statistics Agency's (HESA) Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey from 2012/13, which surveyed graduates leaving university in 2013, and examined what they were doing six months after graduation. We have split the population of employed first degree graduates into four groups:

### Regional Loyals

These are graduates who are domiciled in a region, went to study in the region, and remained to work in that region. Nearly half of employed graduates (45.9%) from 2012/13 working in the UK six months after graduating fell into this category – not a significant change from before the recession. Loyals tend to be slightly older, were more likely to be women and more likely to have studied part-time than other groups. They were more likely to be from a background with lower participation in higher education (HE), and to have a job in education.

### Regional Returners

These are graduates domiciled in a region, who go elsewhere to study, and then return to their home region for employment. Just under a quarter (24.7%) of employed graduates fell into this category, again not a significant change from before the recession, and 40.5% of graduates working in the East of England were from this group. They were the most likely group to be in non-professional<sup>2</sup> employment after six months, except in London, where it is the Loyals.

### Regional Stayers

These are graduates who travel away from their home region to study, and then stay in that region to work. Of the first degree graduates who were in employment in the UK, 11.5% of working graduates were in this category, nearly one in six of whom (16.3%) were working as health professionals. They were also more likely than other graduates to work in the arts and media professions. This group were the most likely to be young (21-24) on graduation, to be white and to have studied full time.

### Regional Incomers

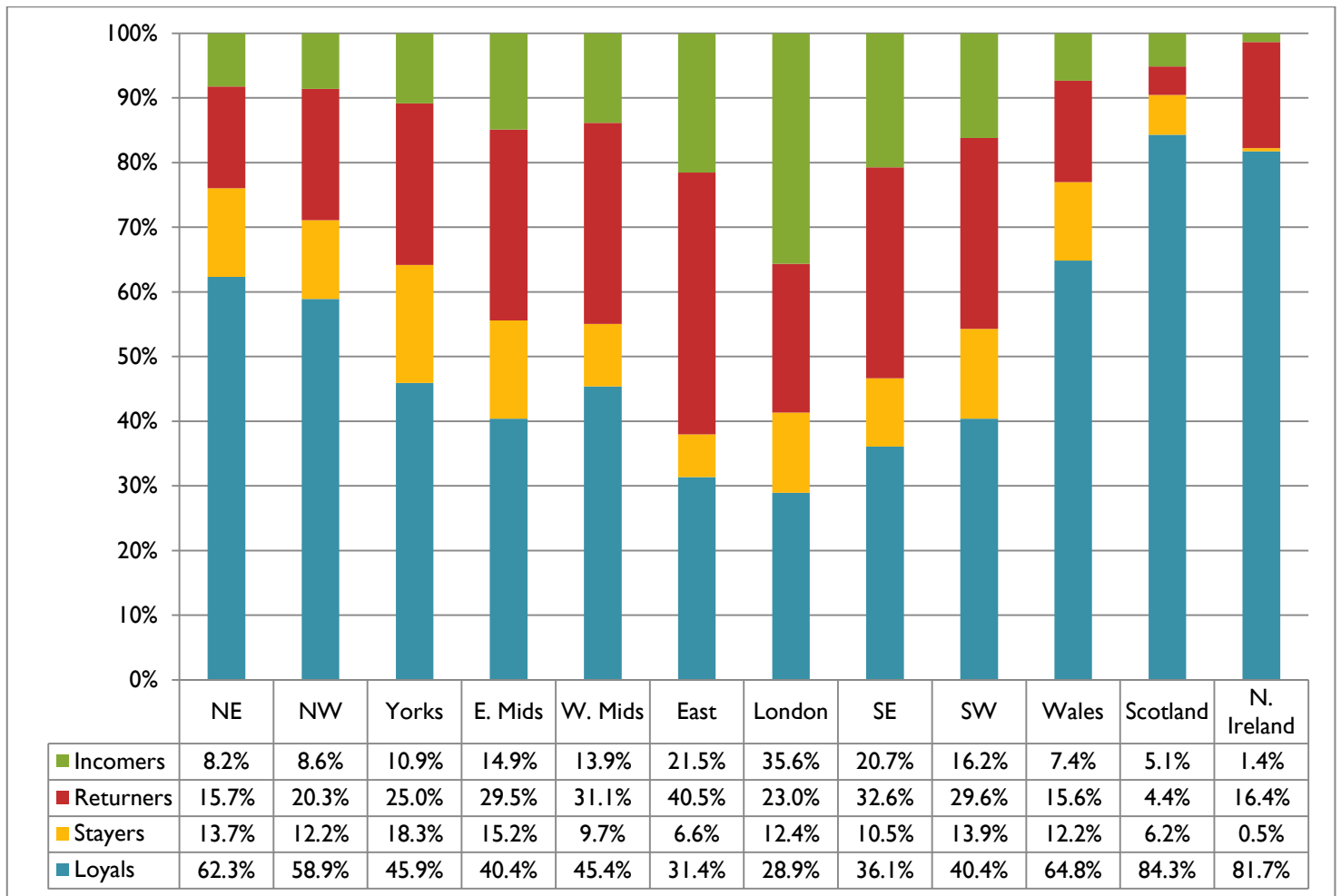
These are graduates who go to work in a region in which they neither studied nor were domiciled, and made up 18% of the population of employed graduates from 2012/13. They often come to a region for jobs which may be higher paid, in management, engineering, or business. This group were the most likely to be male and from the backgrounds with the highest participation in HE. They were the least likely (17%) to be in a non-professional job. Business, HR and finance professionals were the destinations for 15.1% of Incomers, and 11.9% were in marketing or PR professions. More than a third (34%) of graduates working in engineering and 30.6% of those working in the sciences were in this category.

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<sup>1</sup> Domicile refers to the region in which a graduate lived before they began studying at university.

<sup>2</sup> Professional and managerial employment is derived from the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) 2010 codes used by HESA in DHLE. SOC codes which begin with 1, 2 or 3 are classed as professional and managerial jobs. Non-professional employment includes the Standard Occupational Classification codes which begin with a number higher than 4.

**Figure 1: Breakdown of graduates from 2012/13 employed in each region after six months by migration category**



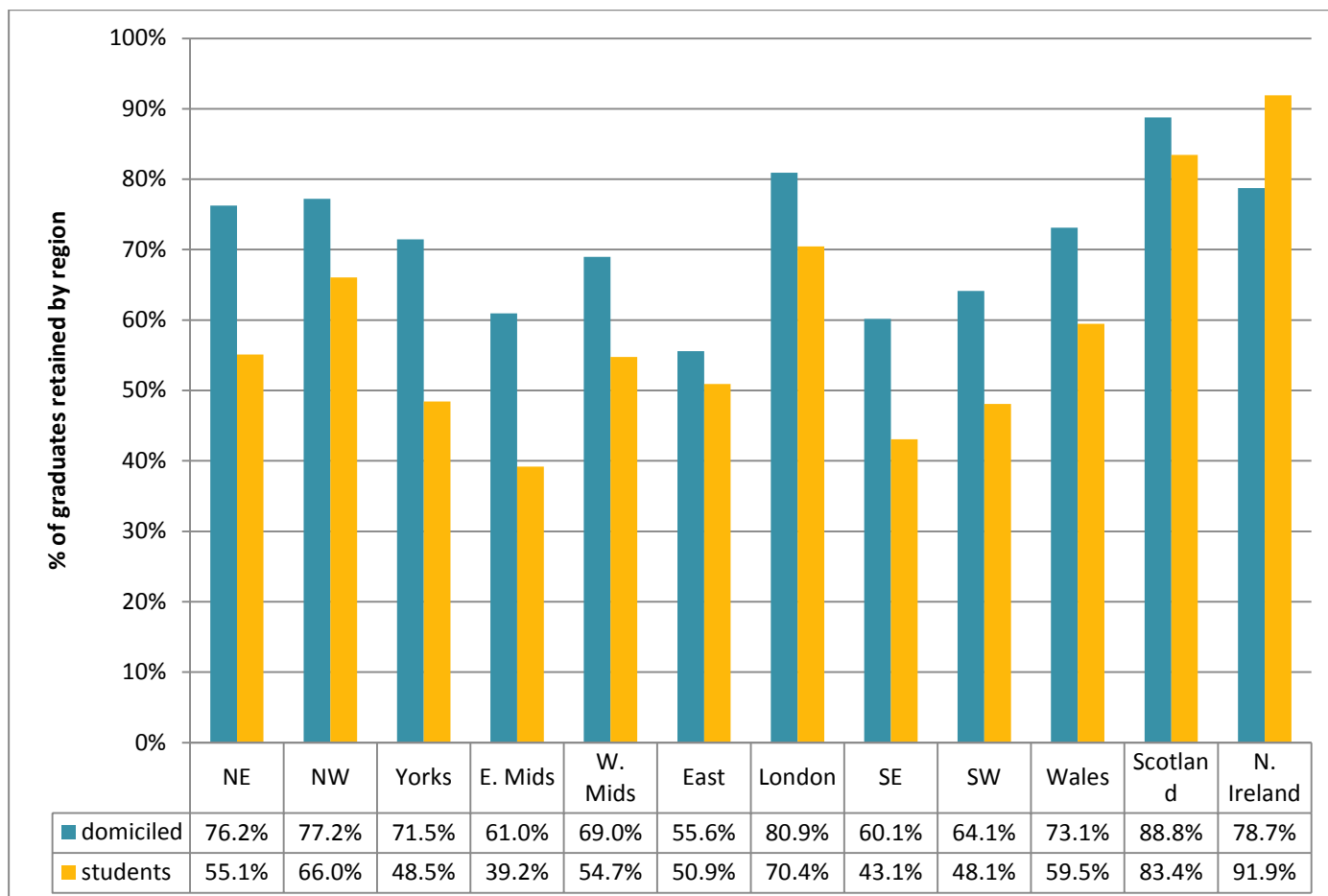
*Source of data: HESA's Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education 2012/13*

Figure 1 shows the breakdown of regional employment into these groups. Incomers become more important the closer a region is to the employment hotspots of London and the South East, and it is notable that the Scottish labour market now sees more Loyals than Northern Ireland, most likely as a result of the different fees regime there.

## Graduate retention

There are a number of different potential forms of graduate retention. This report examines two, retention of graduates originally domiciled in a region, and retention of graduates who went to university in a region. Figure 2 examines the differences.

**Figure 2: Proportion of graduates from 2012/13 originally domiciled, and proportion of graduates who went to university in each region, working in the region six months after graduation.**



Source of data: HESA's Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education 2012/13

With the exception of Northern Ireland, each region is more likely to retain those originally from the region than those who studied there – not surprising, as there are more Returners than Stayers. This does demonstrate the differences between different forms of 'retention' and the challenges in thinking of graduate retention, and what that might actually mean.

## Graduate retention by region

### North East

Of the graduates from 2012/13 who were in employment in the North East after six months 62.3% were Loyals, working particularly in retail, health and education, with nursing the most popular job. A quarter (24.5%) of Loyals working in this region were from the quintile with the lower participation in HE. The region has quite a lot of Stayers (13.7%), with doctors by far the most popular role among them. Returners made up 15.7% of 2012/13 employed graduates, and although much the most likely to be in non-graduate employment, particularly in retail, nevertheless saw a majority (53.6%) in

professional and managerial level work. Incomers accounted for 8.2% of those in employment in the region and were much more likely than the other groups to be in STEM occupations.

### **North West**

The North West retains more domiciled graduates and more students who studied locally than any other English region outside London.

Over half (58.9%) of graduates from 2012/13 employed in the region were Loyals. Nursing was the most popular profession for this group, but there were significant numbers of teachers, doctors, social workers, pharmacists, midwives, youth workers, marketing and PR professionals, business, HR and finance professionals, legal workers and IT professionals in the group. A fifth (20.3%) of graduates working in the North West were Returners, who were both the most likely group to be from a background of highest participation in HE, but also the most likely to be in a non-professional job six months after graduation, albeit often in office work. Returners were also the most likely group in the region to have a job in the law, and as likely as the Incomers to be in management. Other important roles for this group included medicine, pharmacy, welfare professions, finance, accountancy, HR and marketing. Two thirds (67.6%) of Stayers were in professional and managerial employment six months after graduation, and were the most likely group to be in marketing or PR professions. Of the Incomers, 80.8% had professional and managerial roles, and were the most likely group to be working in STEM, the finance industry or the arts.

### **Yorkshire and the Humber**

Just under half (45.9%) of employed graduates in Yorkshire and the Humber were Loyals and were the most likely group to be employed in health, education or welfare roles (nursing, medicine, teaching and youth and community work were particularly important for this group, along with marketing). Loyals were much more likely to be female or from a background of lower participation in HE than other groups of graduates working in the region. A quarter (25.0%) of graduates working in Yorkshire and the Humber after six months were Returners, the most likely group to be working in non-professional jobs (42.8%). Important professional roles for Returners included medicine, nursing, social work, teaching, marketing, HR, financial advice, graphic design, accountancy, pharmacy, IT and retail management. Almost a fifth (18.3%) of those working in the region were Stayers. This group were the most likely to be young (21-24), male, to have studied full-time and from a background of highest HE participation. They were the most likely group to be in marketing, sales or PR, and other roles included medicine, IT, dentistry, nursing, teaching, community work, events management, physiotherapy and HR. Incomers accounted for 10.9% of graduates working in Yorkshire and the Humber, the large majority (79.4%) of whom were in professional and managerial jobs, and were the group most likely to find a job in STEM, management, the arts or in business and finance. A quarter (25.6%) of all graduates from 2012/13 in employment in engineering professions in Yorkshire and the Humber were Incomers.

### **East Midlands**

The East Midlands has the lowest retention of students of any UK region, according to Figure 2 39.2% of those who studied in the region were in employment in the region six months after graduation.

Of those in employment in the region, 40.4% were Loyals and were much more likely to be female or from a background of lower participation in HE than other groups of graduates working in the region. A fifth (20%) were over the age of 30 on graduation and were the most likely group to be in legal, social and welfare professions. Almost a third (29.5%) were Returners, which were the most likely

group to be working in education, journalism or physiotherapy six months after graduation, but also the most likely to be in clerical roles and in non-professional jobs in general. Stayers accounted for 15.2% of graduates in employment in the region. Stayers were most likely to be aged 21-24 on graduation and to have studied full-time. They were the most likely group to be working in IT, finance or the arts. Of the graduates in employment in the region, 14.9% were Incomers and were the most likely group (83.3%) to be in professional and managerial jobs. Just less than a quarter (23%) of Incomers were in employment in health professions, with medicine the most common role, whilst 16.3% were in engineering professions. Half of all 2012/13 graduates working as mechanical engineers, and 43% of design and development engineers in the region were Incomers.

### **West Midlands**

Nearly half (45.4%) of 2012/13 graduates in employment in the West Midlands six months after graduation were Loyals. This group made up the majority of graduates working in health, education and social care in the region. Nearly a third (31.1%) of 2012/13 graduates working in the region were Returners. Graduates working in business and finance roles, marketing and the arts were most likely to be Returners. The region had a relatively small proportion of Stayers, at 9.7%, with one in seven Stayers working in medicine after six months. Other professions attracted good numbers of Stayers including, mechanical engineering, nursing, primary teaching, marketing and finance. Incomers accounted for 13.9% of graduates working in the region, with 82.8% in professional and managerial jobs. More than 40% of graduates working in the region as engineers were Incomers.

### **East of England**

The region's geography, demographics and institutions means that it is the only region that has more Returners than Loyals. Returners accounted for 40.5% of graduates employed in the region and this group were more likely than others to be in non-professional jobs (44.1%). However, graduates employed in business, finance, marketing and arts professions in the region were also more likely to be Returners than any other group. Loyals made up almost a third (31.4%) of the graduates working in the region. They were more likely than other groups to be mature students, to be female, and to have come from a background of lower participation in HE. Over 40% of graduates entering health or education roles, and 45% of those entering social or welfare roles in the region were Loyals, conversely only 16% of graduates entering science or engineering were from this group.

The East of England has the smallest proportion of Stayers in England. Stayers were the most likely of the groups to be working in science in the region six months after graduation, and were also well-represented in health, IT and marketing jobs. The region has the largest proportion of Incomers outside London, and the majority of 2012/13 graduates working in the region as civil engineers, mechanical engineers, medical practitioners and dentists, and over a third of those working as design engineers, business analysts, programmers, pharmacists, opticians, vets, occupational therapists, management consultants, PR professionals, and buyers or procurement officers were Incomers.

### **South East**

The region is large, populous, has a strong economy and is close to London, and so attracts a lot of students and graduates. Many come to the region for employment having studied elsewhere, with only 43% (figure 2) of graduates who studied in the region staying for work.

More than a third (36.1%) of graduates in employment in the South East were Loyals, 14.6% of whom were over the age of 40 on graduation. The majority of graduates employed in the region in health or education were Loyals, and Loyals were also the most likely group to be working in management,

health or childcare, and as web designers, social workers, translators, PR professionals, architecture technicians, graphic designers, and youth workers. Almost a third (32.6%) of all graduates in employment in the region were Returners who were particularly likely to have been aged under 24 on graduating, and to be from a background of higher participation in HE. They were also the most likely group (39.8%) to be in a non-professional job. Returners were the most likely group to be working in the arts and as retail managers, pharmacists, physiotherapists, quantity surveyors, journalists, lab technicians, financial analysts, and in business sales and marketing six months after graduation. Stayers accounted for 10.5% of graduates working in South East, working in health, finance, marketing and education. A fifth (20.7%) of 2012/13 graduates working in the region were Incomers. Of graduates in employment as scientists in the region, 39.8% were Incomers as were 41.9% of those working as engineers.

### **South West**

Around two in five (40.4%) graduates who were employed in the region were Loyals. The Loyals were more likely to have been domiciled in Devon or Cornwall before they went to university than anywhere else in the region. Of Loyals domiciled in Devon 62% were employed in Devon after graduation, and 67.6% of Loyals domiciled in Cornwall were working in Cornwall. This demonstrates that even within this large region with a diverse jobs market, many graduates remain close to their home domicile to work. The majority of graduates from 2012/13 working in the South West six months after graduation and employed in education or social care were Loyals. Of graduates working in the region 29.6% were Returners, who were most likely to have been domiciled in Devon or Gloucestershire, and to be working in Devon, Gloucestershire or Bristol on graduating. Returners were most likely to have roles in retail, clerical and secretarial and health or finance roles. Stayers accounted for 13.9% of graduates employed in the region, of whom 38% were domiciled in the South East (particularly Hampshire) before studying at university. Stayers were particularly likely to be working in Bristol on graduation and were more likely than other graduates working in the South West to have a job in marketing or the arts. Finally, 16.2% of graduates working in the South West were Incomers, who were most likely to be working in Gloucestershire or Bristol. Incomers were particularly important for STEM employment in the region.

### **London**

London is a very atypical labour market. Of graduates from 2012/13 who were working in London six months after graduation 14,200 (35.6%) were Incomers. The majority (84.6%) of them were working in professional and managerial jobs, demonstrating the sheer size and dominance of London as a graduate employer in the UK. The majority of 2012/13 graduates working in London in science, engineering, marketing and finance were Incomers. Incomers do not come in similar numbers from all over the country, just over half (54%) were from the South East and the East of England. Due to the large number of Incomers in London, the proportion of graduates who were Loyals was the smallest in the country at 28.9%. Graduates working in health, education and social care in the capital were most likely to be Loyals. Stayers accounted for 12.4% and were particularly well-represented in the arts. Almost a quarter (23%) of graduates working in London were Returners who were particularly likely to be working in finance or marketing roles on graduation.

### **Scotland**

The majority (84.4%) of graduates working in Scotland six months after graduation were Loyals, the highest proportion of Loyals in any region in the country. Loyals dominate the Scottish graduate jobs market, and all graduate jobs in Scotland in 2012/13 had more Loyals working in them than any of



other group. Stayers were more likely than other groups to be working in health, whilst Returners were more likely than other groups to be in management or social care. Incomers were strongly represented in finance and engineering.

### **Wales**

Almost two thirds (64.8%) of graduates working in Wales six months after graduation were Loyals. Medical practitioners was the only major profession in Wales where Loyals were more common than graduates in the other groups. Stayers were more likely to be employed as medical practitioners than any other occupation. Returners were more likely than other groups to be working in management or welfare roles. Incomers accounted for 7.4% of those employed in the region (most commonly domiciled in the North West), and most usually working in Cardiff or Flintshire). Incomers to Wales were more likely than other groups to be working in health or STEM six months after graduation.

### **Northern Ireland**

The vast majority (98%) of 2012/13 graduates working in Northern Ireland six months after graduation were domiciled in the region and as such were either Loyals or Returners, so there is little data on Stayers and Incomers. The large majority had studied in Northern Ireland making them Loyals, and those who had studied elsewhere and were Returners to the region were more likely to be in welfare, management, marketing or the arts than Loyals.