



The great British brain drain

An analysis of migration to and from Leeds

February 2017

Introduction

The economic performance of UK cities is increasingly dependent on the skills of their workforce. Cities across the UK face the challenge of both attracting and retaining high-skilled talent. The Great British Brain Drain¹ investigates migration within the UK, specifically between cities. It finds that many university cities lose their graduates to London, with this movement especially strong for the highest performing graduates with 2.1 or 1st class degrees from Russell Group universities. Despite this, most university cities experience a ‘graduate gain’: they gain more graduates than they lose. This is because the majority of movements to and from cities consist of students moving to a new city for university, and then moving again for work, with over half of all graduates following this pattern.

This briefing is a complementary piece of analysis to the main report, in which we look in detail at the nature of migration and graduate mobility into and out of Leeds. First, it looks at overall migration patterns to and from Leeds. Second, it looks specifically at the movements of students and new graduates, and finally it looks at the graduate labour market in the city.

The briefing shows that Leeds successfully attracts young people to move to the city to study. Although many of these leave on graduation, some do remain in Leeds. These graduates, combined with the new graduates attracted into Leeds for work by its strong economy, mean that overall the city experiences a brain gain. A different pattern occurs for older graduates, who tend to leave the city but remain within a commutable distance.

Centre for Cities uses the Primary Urban Area (PUA) definition of cities. For Leeds this comprises of Leeds Local Authority, reflecting the built-up area, i.e. physical footprint, of the city. As a result the PUA does not include the other local authorities which make up Leeds city region and Leeds Combined Authority. For more information visit: www.centreforcities.org/puas.

¹ Swinney P and Williams M, The Great British Brain Drain: where graduates move and why, London: Centre for Cities

The nature of migration between Leeds and the rest of England and Wales

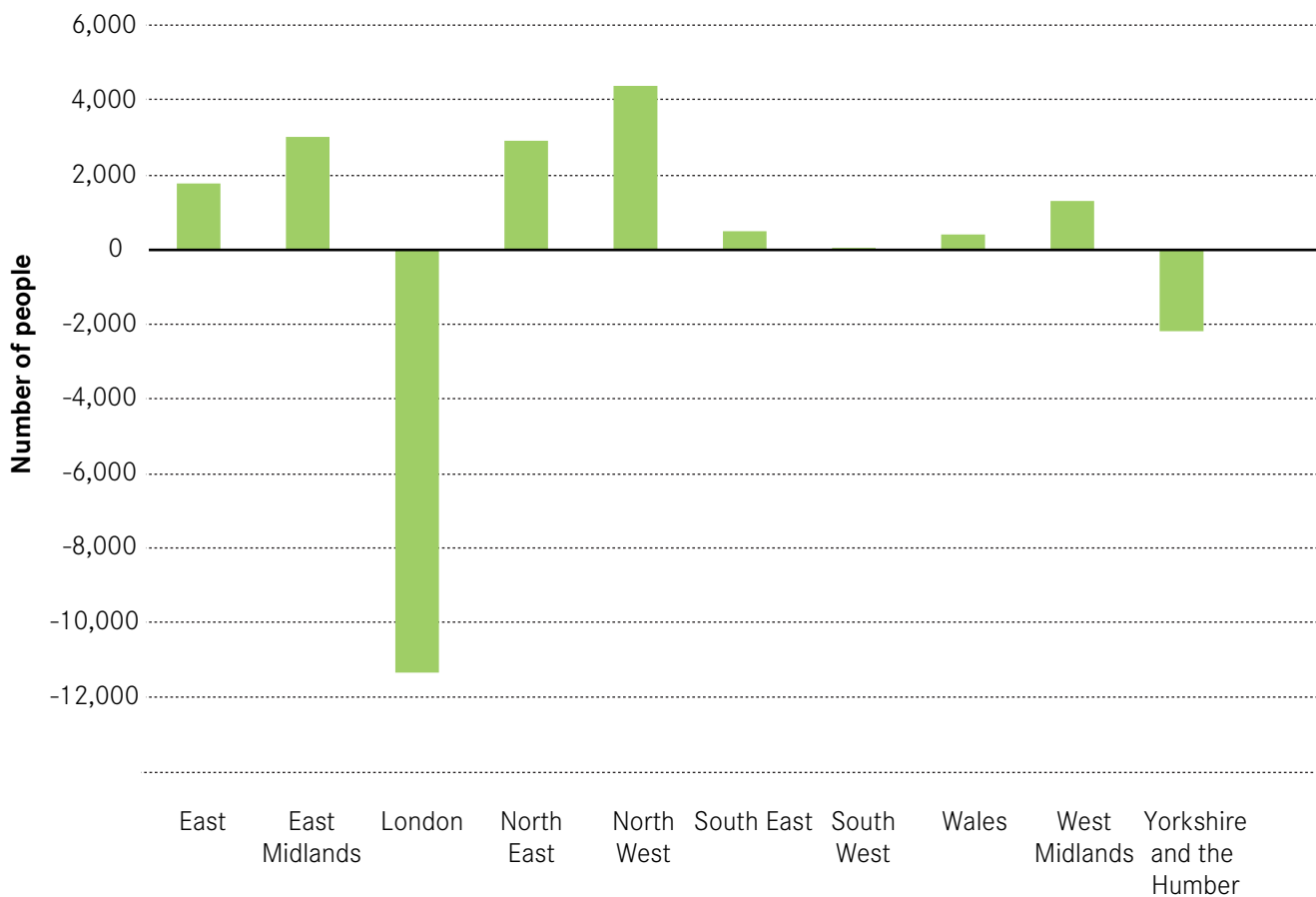
This section combines migration data from the ONS and the Census to look at migration to and from Leeds by age and qualification.

Most migration is between Leeds and the rest of Yorkshire and the Humber

Between 2009 and 2015 250,500 people moved into Leeds from England and Wales and 249,600 moved out. The resulting net inflow to the city was just 900 people, which is small compared with the net flows seen by other UK cities. Bournemouth experienced the largest net inflow of 15,100 people and London the largest net outflow of 340,300 people.

Most migration was between Leeds and the rest of Yorkshire. Between 2009 and 2015, 38 per cent of inward migration was from Yorkshire and the Humber and 39 per cent of outward migration was to Yorkshire and the Humber. However, overall there was a small net outflow to the region, as shown in Figure 1. To all other regions except London there were net inflows, the largest of which was from the North West; Leeds gained 4,400 people from this region.

Figure 1: Net regional migration into Leeds, 2009-2015

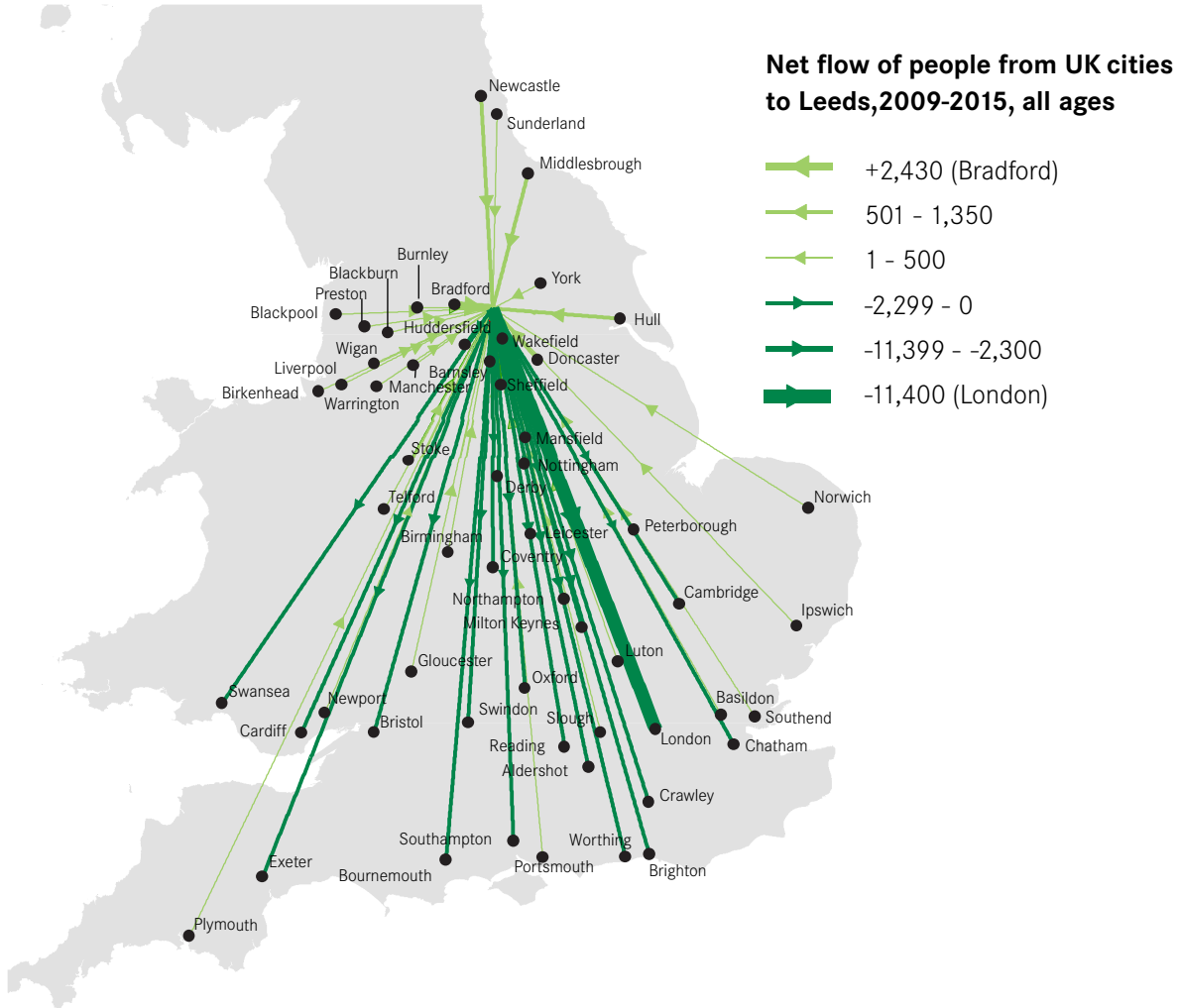


Source: ONS internal migration data

There was also significant migration between Leeds and London. There was a large net outflow to London, equal to 11,400 between 2009 and 2015. The capital was the most popular city destination of those leaving Leeds with 34,900 moving there, as shown in Figure 2. It was also the most popular city origin of those moving to Leeds, with 23,500 people arriving from London over the period.

In addition, there was a considerable amount of local migration between Leeds and Bradford: 21,900 moved into Leeds from Bradford, and 19,400 moved to Bradford from Leeds. Given their proximity to each other many of these migrants may live in one city and work in the other.

Figure 2: Net flow of people from UK cities into Leeds, 2009-2015



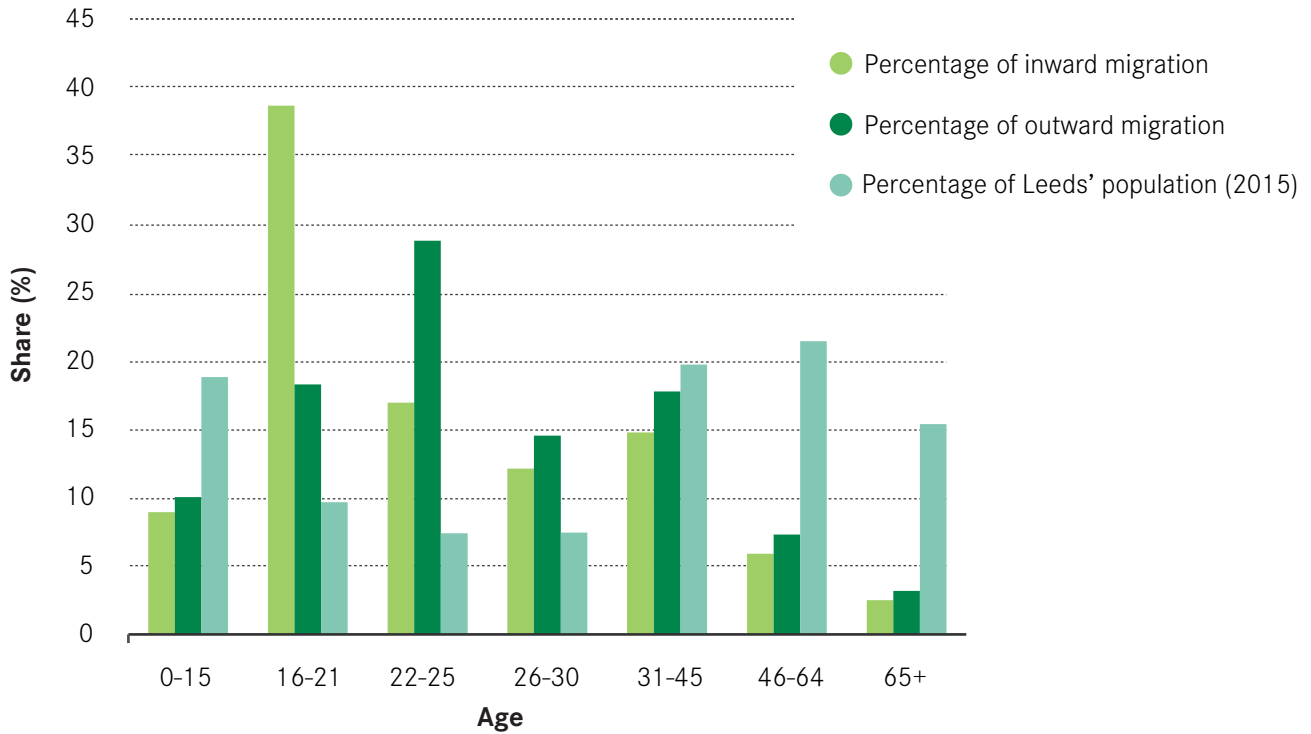
Source: ONS internal migration data

Leeds gains young people and loses older people

The city’s migration patterns varied greatly by age. Figure 3 shows how the movement of young people dominates the city’s migration patterns. Despite only accounting for 10 per cent of the population, 16 to 21 year olds accounted for 39 per cent of inward migration. Similarly, 22 to 25 year olds accounted for 7 per cent of the population but 29 per cent of outward migration.

Outward migration became more common than inward migration for older age groups. Those aged 26 to 30 accounted for 15 per cent of outward migration and only 7 per cent of the population. The scale of migration reduced with age: for all age groups 31+ their share of the city’s population outweighed their share of either form of migration.

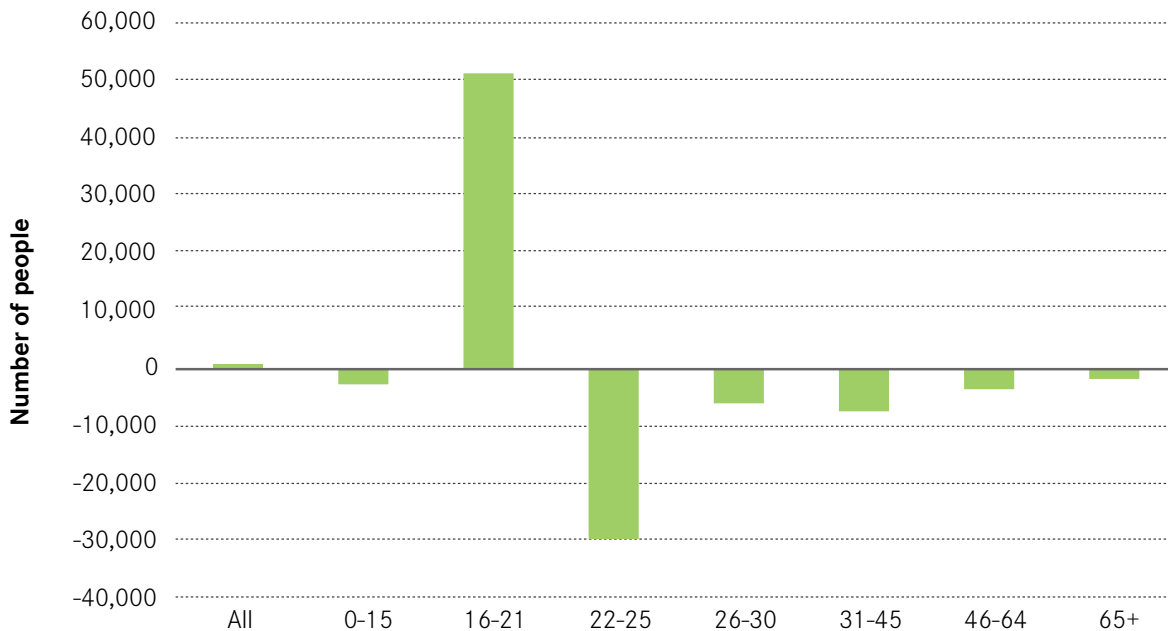
Figure 3: Contribution of each age group to migration and to the city’s population, 2009-2015



Source: ONS internal migration data

Overall, all age groups experienced a net outflow from Leeds, as shown in Figure 4, except for 16 to 21 year olds. This net inflow was equal to 51,300 young people entering the city.

Figure 4: Net inflow of people to Leeds by age, 2009-2015



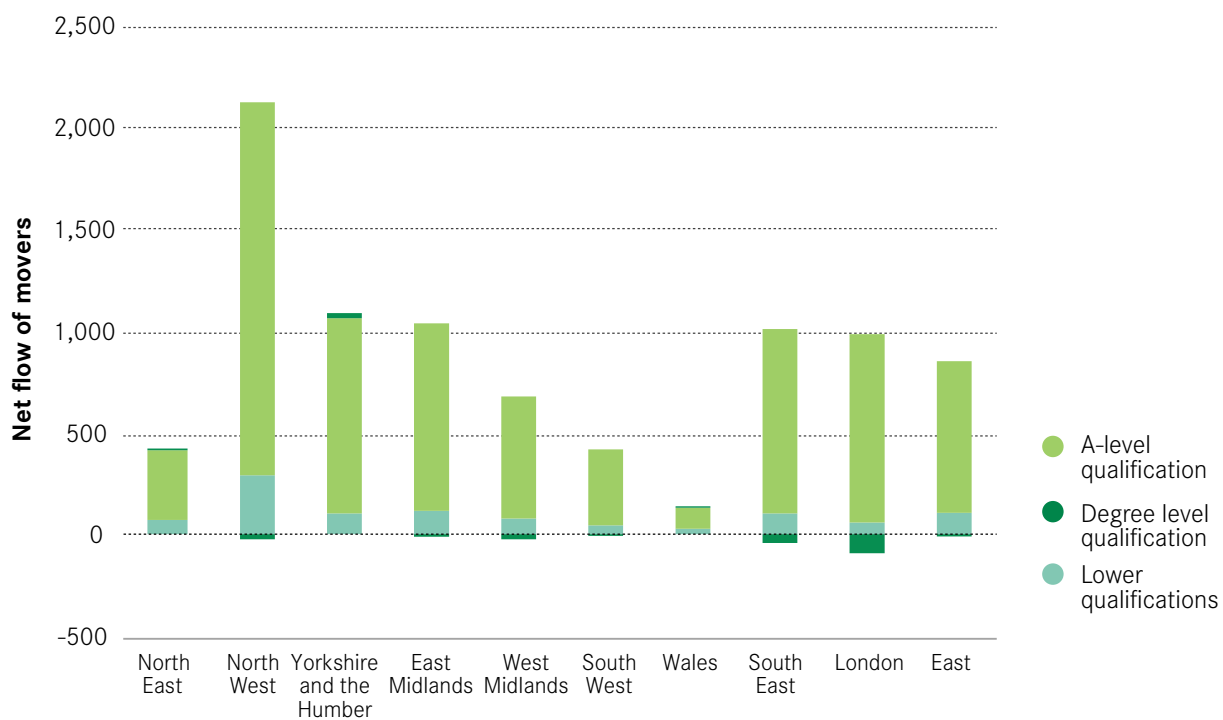
Source: ONS internal migration data

Leeds loses degree holders, first to the southern regions and second to the rest of Yorkshire

While the qualifications of migrants are not available in the ONS data, the 2011 Census provides us with this information for movers between 2010 and 2011. When the data is split into three age groups: 16 to 21, 22 to 30, and 31 to 45 year olds, three distinct trends emerge.

There was a net inflow of 16 to 21 year olds to Leeds from all regions, the largest of which were from the North West and Yorkshire, as shown in Figure 5. These migrants predominantly had A-Level qualifications or equivalent, pointing to the pull of the city’s universities, which will be discussed in greater detail in the next section. Of the 16 to 21 year olds moving into Leeds, 78 per cent had A-Level qualifications, compared with 59 per cent of those leaving the city.

Figure 5: Net flows of 16 to 21 year olds by region and qualification, 2010/2011



Source: Census 2011

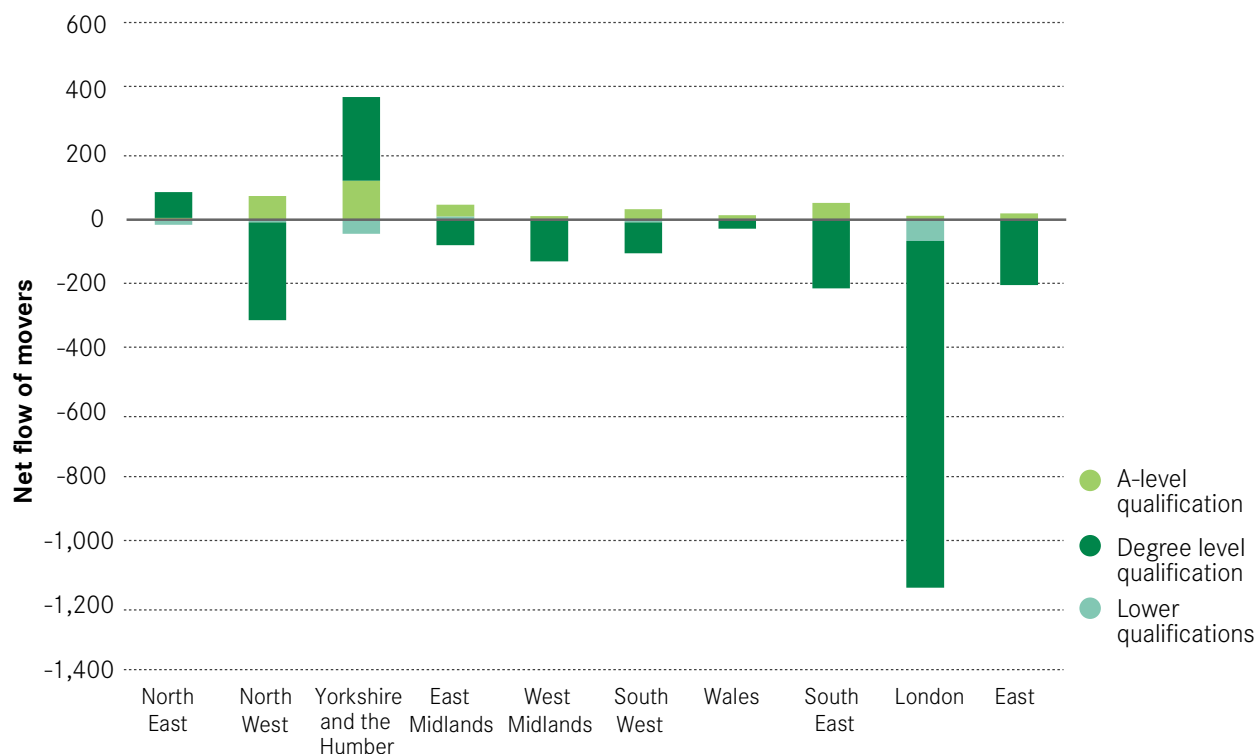
The net outflow of 22 to 30 year olds was dominated by degree holders. The majority of this age group who decided to leave Leeds had a degree, 67 per cent, compared with 59 per cent of 22 to 30 year olds moving into the city.

The most popular destination of this age group was London; 20 per cent of those who left Leeds went to the capital. The second most popular city destination was Bradford, with 7 per cent of 22 to 30 year olds leaving the city moving there. Figure 6 shows that there was a net outflow of these graduates to every region, except Yorkshire and the North East. Therefore, whilst Leeds lost graduates to regions further south, it saw a brain gain from these two areas.

To look in more detail at this brain gain, the wider migration data for 2009 to 2015 allows us to look at movements between local authorities and so track movements within Yorkshire. There were net inflows into the

city of 22 to 30 year olds from both York and Bradford local authorities. In contrast, there were net outflows to Wakefield, Selby, Harrogate and Huddersfield, but these were not large enough to outweigh the net inflows from the region.

Figure 6: Net flows of 22 to 30 year olds by region and qualification, 2010-2011

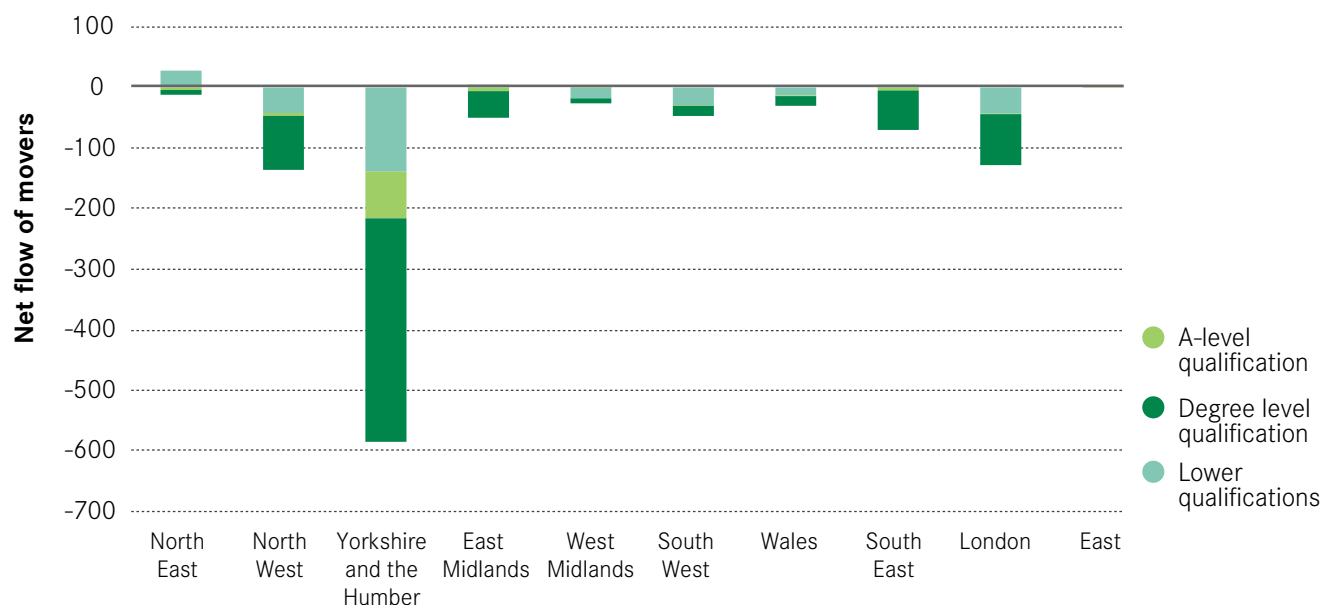


Source: Census 2011

The second wave of degree holders leaving Leeds was of those aged 31 to 45; however the geography of this net outflow was different. The majority of movers stayed within the region instead of moving further afield, as Figure 7 shows. As well as moving elsewhere within Yorkshire, there was also a net outflow of these graduates to the North West.

Looking again at the wider migration data for 2009 to 2015 allows us to look at movements between local authorities and so track movements within Yorkshire. This shows that most of these older leavers remained close to the city. Harrogate and Wakefield gained, on a net basis, the largest number of those leaving Leeds (970 and 740 respectively) and the next most popular destinations were Selby (650) and Huddersfield (510). These movers therefore remained within a commutable distance of Leeds, even if they no longer lived there, and many will still contribute to the high-skilled workforce of the city. Meanwhile, there was also a net inflow of 31 to 45 year olds to the city from a few neighbouring local authorities: 330 from Bradford and 180 from Hull.

Figure 7 also shows that the city lost older graduates to London and the South East; the outflow to the capital described above for young graduates continued as they aged. Once again, looking at the local authority level data gives a more nuanced picture. Whilst Leeds saw a net outflow of 31 to 45 year olds, some other local authorities in Yorkshire saw a net inflow of this age group from London. There was a net inflow of 430 to Harrogate, 100 to Huddersfield, and 60 to Wakefield. Therefore, older people do return to Yorkshire but move straight to smaller towns and the surrounding areas rather than to the city of Leeds.

Figure 7: Net flows of 31 to 45 year olds by region and qualification, 2010-2011

Source: Census 2011

This trend is common to many UK cities who find that their older high-skilled workers move out for a change of lifestyle, but don't move far and often still commute into the city for work. Those aged between 35 and 55 tend to place more value on the size and type of their house and access to local schools, leading many to prefer living outside the city centres.²

Summary

- Overall Leeds experienced a small net inflow to the city between 2009 and 2015.
- This net inflow was driven by those aged 16 to 21. Many of these are likely to have been students going to university, which is explored in the next section.
- The city experienced a net outflow of older people with degrees. First, there was a net outflow of graduates aged between 22 and 30 moving predominantly to London. Second, there was a net outflow of graduates aged 31 to 45. Although some of these older graduates moved to London, most chose instead to remain within the Yorkshire region.

A more detailed look at the movement of students and graduates

The data above suggests that universities play a large role in the movements of people to and from Leeds. This section explores the migration patterns of students and graduates into and out of the city using two data sets from the Higher Education Statistics Authority (HESA). The first looks at admissions (for all students at university in 2014/15), and the second is based on a survey of graduates six months after graduation (for leavers in 2013/14 and 2014/15). Unlike the ONS data used above, it covers the whole of the UK and includes students who came from abroad.

2 Elli Thomas, Ilona Serwicka & Paul Swinney, Urban Demographics: why people live where they do (November 2015)

Movements to university

Leeds welcomes more students to its universities, on a net basis, than any other UK city

Box 1: Higher education institutions in Leeds

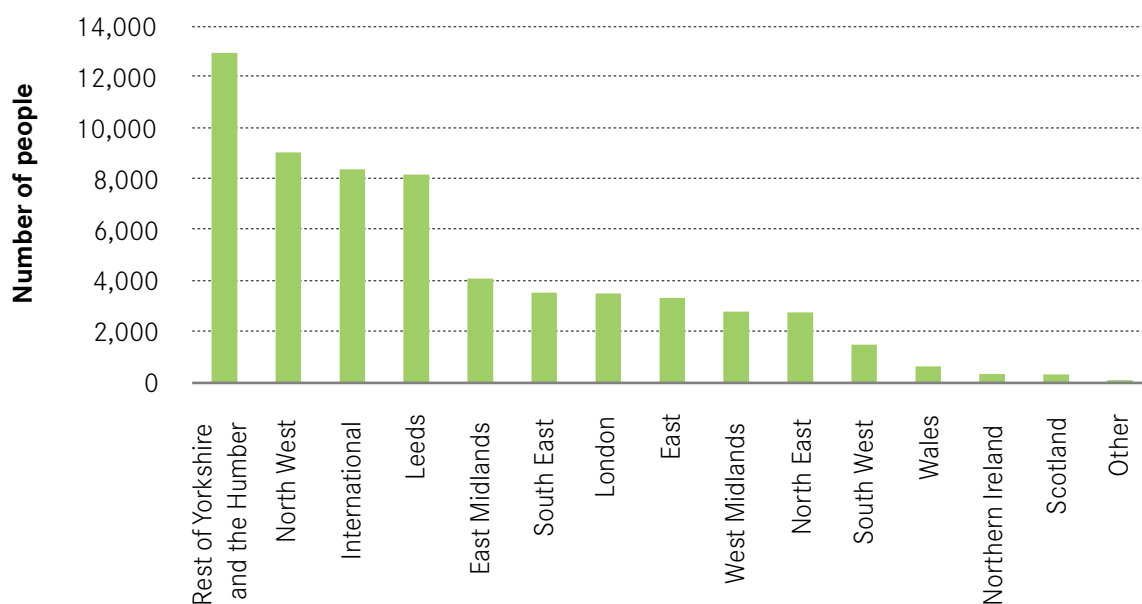
This analysis covers Leeds’ five universities: University of Leeds, Leeds Trinity University, Leeds Beckett University, Leeds College of Art and the Northern School of Contemporary Dance (NSCD). In the academic year 2014/15 there were 61,900 students enrolled at these universities, 50 per cent at University of Leeds, 6 per cent at Leeds Trinity, 42 per cent at Leeds Beckett, 2 per cent at the College of Art and 0.2 per cent at the NSCD.

Unsurprisingly, the inflow of young people into Leeds from other parts of the UK was driven by the pull of its universities. In the academic year 2014/15, 32,800 more domestic students moved into Leeds to study than left Leeds to study elsewhere. This was the largest net inflow of domestic students of all UK cities.

A significant pull of the city’s universities was regional: 34 per cent of all students at university in Leeds in 2014/15 were from the Yorkshire, with 13 per cent from Leeds itself and 21 per cent from elsewhere in the region. The next most popular origin was the North West, as Figure 8 shows, with 15 per cent of students coming from this region.

The universities also attracted many international students. 14 per cent of all students were from abroad, more than from the city itself, and 20 per cent of these international students were from the EU.

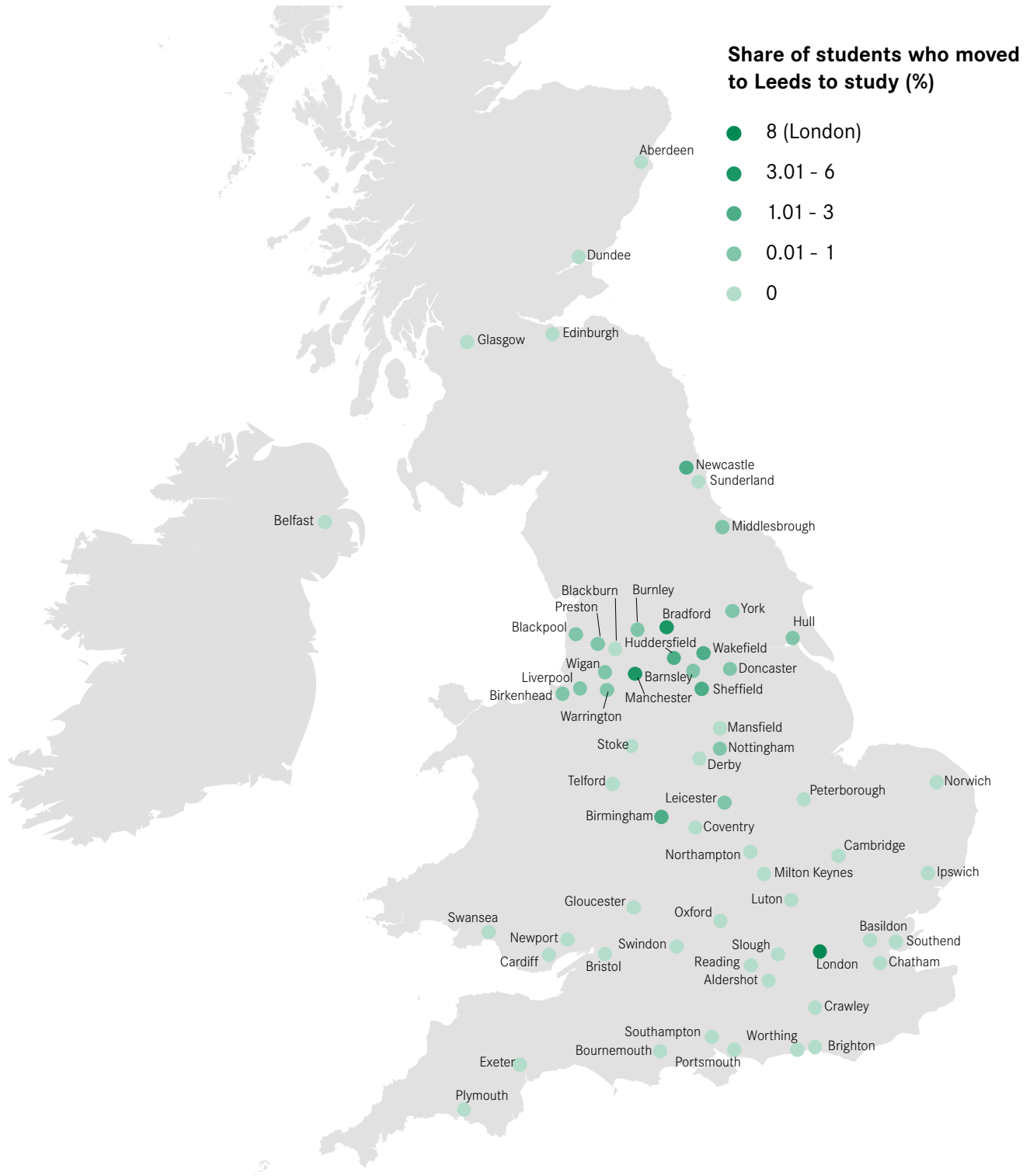
Figure 8: Origins of Leeds’ university students, 2014/15



Source: HESA admissions data

Looking specifically at cities, Figure 9 shows which UK cities students moving to Leeds for university came from. London was the most popular urban origin, with 8 per cent of those moving to Leeds coming from the capital. Manchester and Bradford followed, with 6 per cent and 5 per cent respectively, of students moving to Leeds coming from these cities.

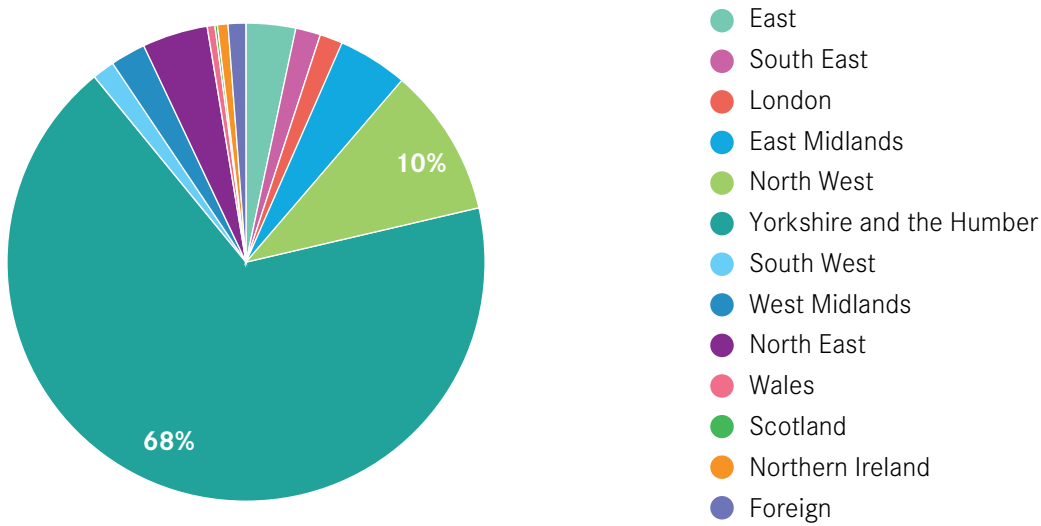
Figure 9: Origin cities of those students who moved to Leeds for university, 2014/15



Source: HESA admissions data

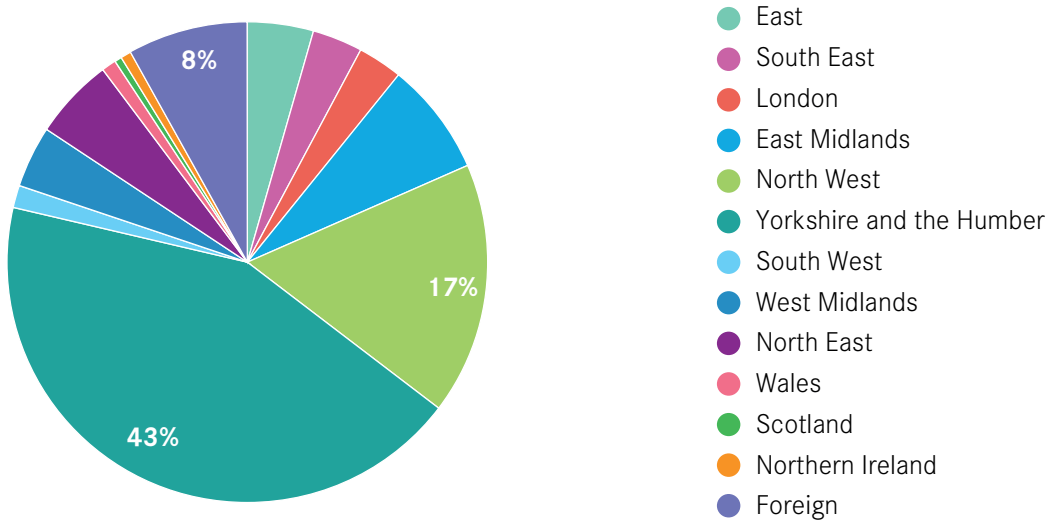
However, the pull of the universities differed from institution to institution. At Leeds Trinity 68 per cent of students were from Yorkshire, with 26 per cent from Leeds itself. The proportion of Yorkshire students at Leeds Beckett was smaller, but still substantial, at 43 per cent. At the College of Art, 35 per cent of students were from the region.

Figure 10: Origin of students at Leeds Trinity University, 2014/15



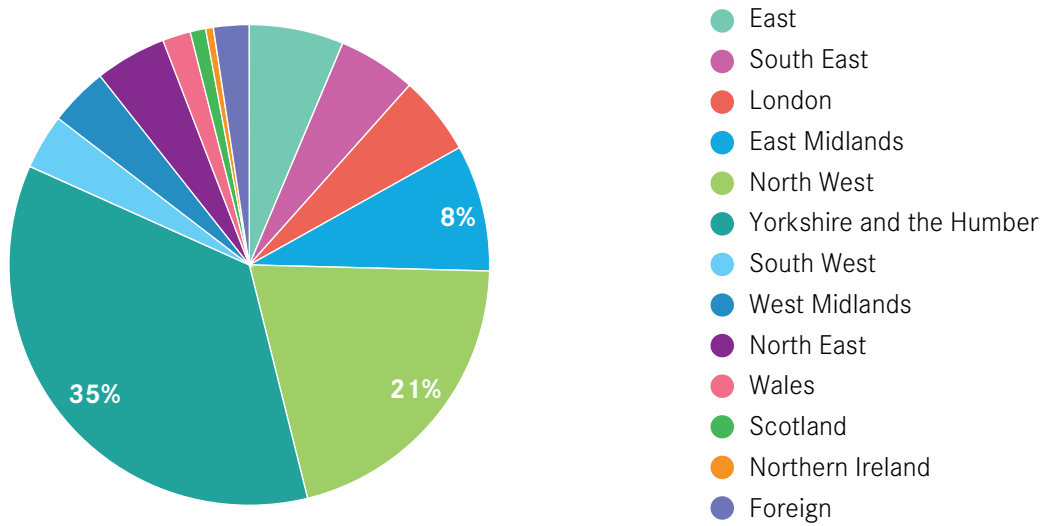
Source: HESA admissions

Figure 11: Origin of students at Leeds Beckett University, 2014/15



Source: HESA admissions

Figure 12: Origin of students at the Leeds College of Art, 2014/15

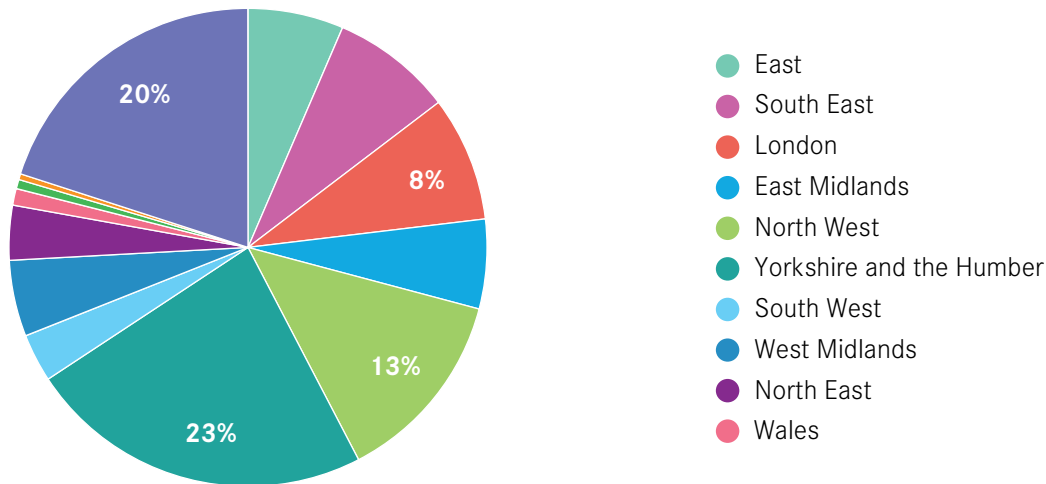


Source: HESA admissions

In contrast the University of Leeds and NSCD had a much broader pull, with 23 per cent and 4 per cent of students coming from Yorkshire respectively. Instead, both institutions had a much higher share of international students. At the University of Leeds 20 per cent of students were international, whilst 31 per cent of NSCD students were from outside the UK.

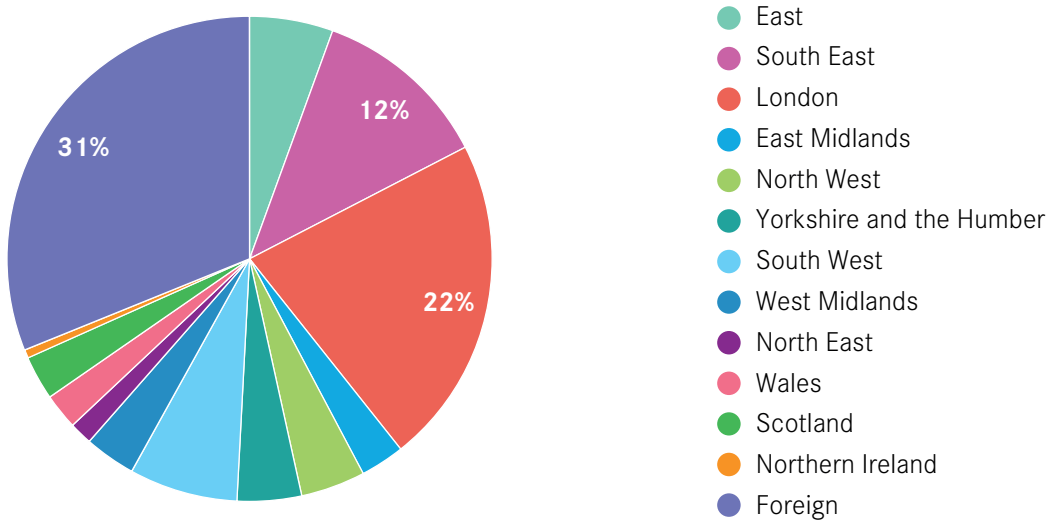
In addition a significant number of students were from London: 8 per cent of students at the University of Leeds and 22 per cent of those at the NSCD.

Figure 13: Origin of students at University of Leeds, 2014/15



Source: HESA admissions

Figure 14: Origin of students at the Northern School of Contemporary Dance, 2014/15

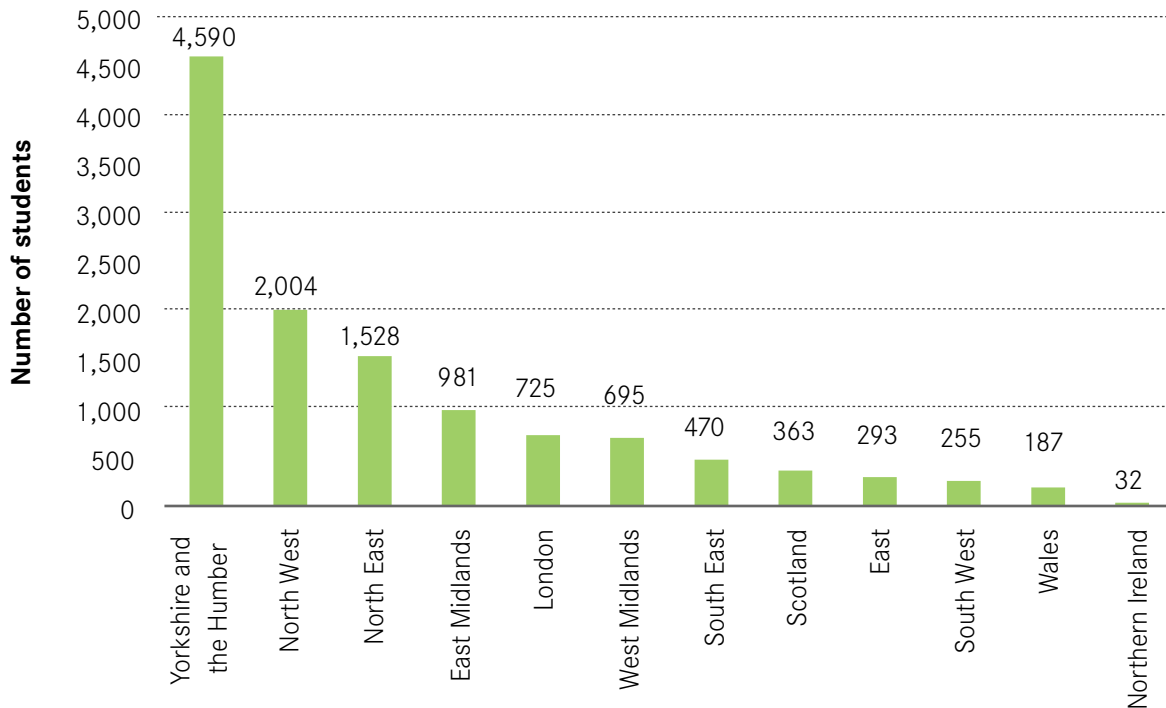


Source: HESA admissions

Two thirds of all students who grew up in Leeds left the city for university

Of all young people in Leeds who decided to go to a UK university, 40 per cent stayed and studied in the city. This was only the 21st highest proportion of all UK cities and a lower proportion than most large cities. Of those who moved away many did not move far, choosing instead to study elsewhere in Yorkshire. For example, 12 per cent studied in Huddersfield and 9 per cent moved to Bradford. Outside of Yorkshire, Newcastle was the most popular destination, with 9 per cent of students moving there.

Figure 15: Destination regions of those moving away from Leeds for university, 2014/15



Source: HESA admissions

Figure 16: Destination cities of Leeds students moving away for university, 2014/15



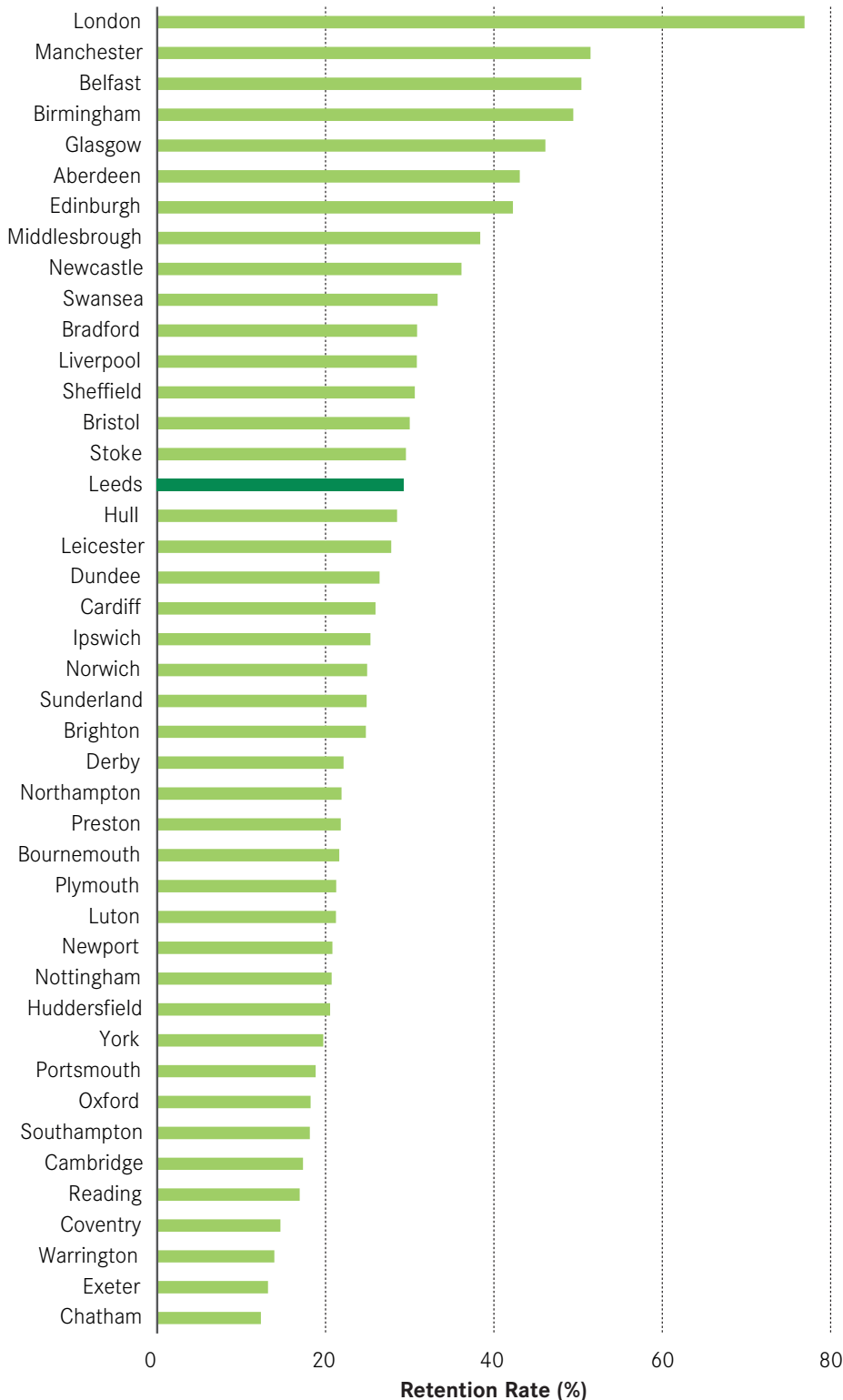
Source: HESA admissions data

Movements of new graduates after university

Leeds retains almost 30 per cent of its students on graduation

As a city, Leeds retained 29 per cent of its graduates in 2014 and 2015; the 16th highest rate of UK cities as shown in Figure 17. The cities with the highest retention rates were London and Manchester: 77 per cent and 51 per cent of their graduates respectively were working in their university city six months later.

Figure 17: Retention rates of each UK city, 2013/14 – 2014/15



Source: HESA destination of leavers survey

However, as Figure 18 shows, the rate of retention varied across the city's universities. The proportion of graduates who stayed to work in Leeds after graduation was highest for Leeds Trinity and Leeds College of Art, followed closely by the NSCD. The University of Leeds had the lowest retention rate.

Figure 18: Retention rate of each university in Leeds, 2013/14 – 2014/15

Institution	Retention rate (%)
University of Leeds	17
Leeds Trinity University	33
Leeds Beckett University	23
Leeds College of Art	34
Northern School of Contemporary Dance	27

Source: HESA destination of leavers survey

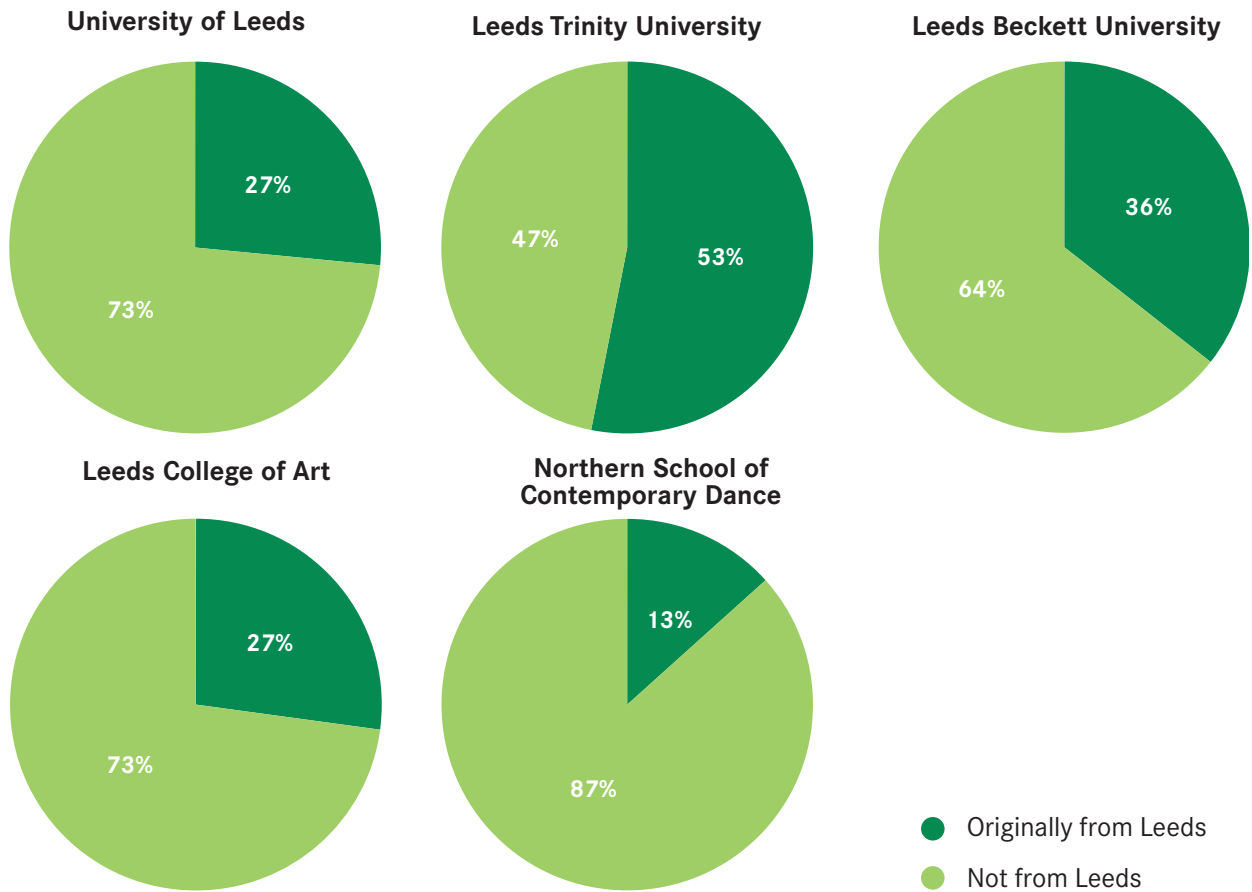
The students who stayed in Leeds can be split into two groups: those who grew up, studied and worked in Leeds, and those who came into the city to study and stayed for work. Looking again at retention rates with these two groups in mind shows that the rates are driven by the regional pull of an institution, which was shown in Figures 10-14 above.

For example, of the Leeds Trinity students who stayed in the city after graduation, half of them were originally from Leeds. In contrast, the University of Leeds' much greater national and international focus means that its retention rate is lower. Of those retained, just 27 per cent were originally from Leeds, reflecting the lower share of its students that grew up in the city.

This suggests retention rates are strongly linked to how many students the university attracts from the city itself, and the surrounding region.

Interestingly this pattern does not apply to the specialist universities (Leeds College of Art and NSCD). Both of these had high retention rates (34 per cent and 27 per cent) but a small proportion of those who stayed were home-grown.

Figure 19: Proportion of all retained students from Leeds and from elsewhere, 2013/14 - 2014/15



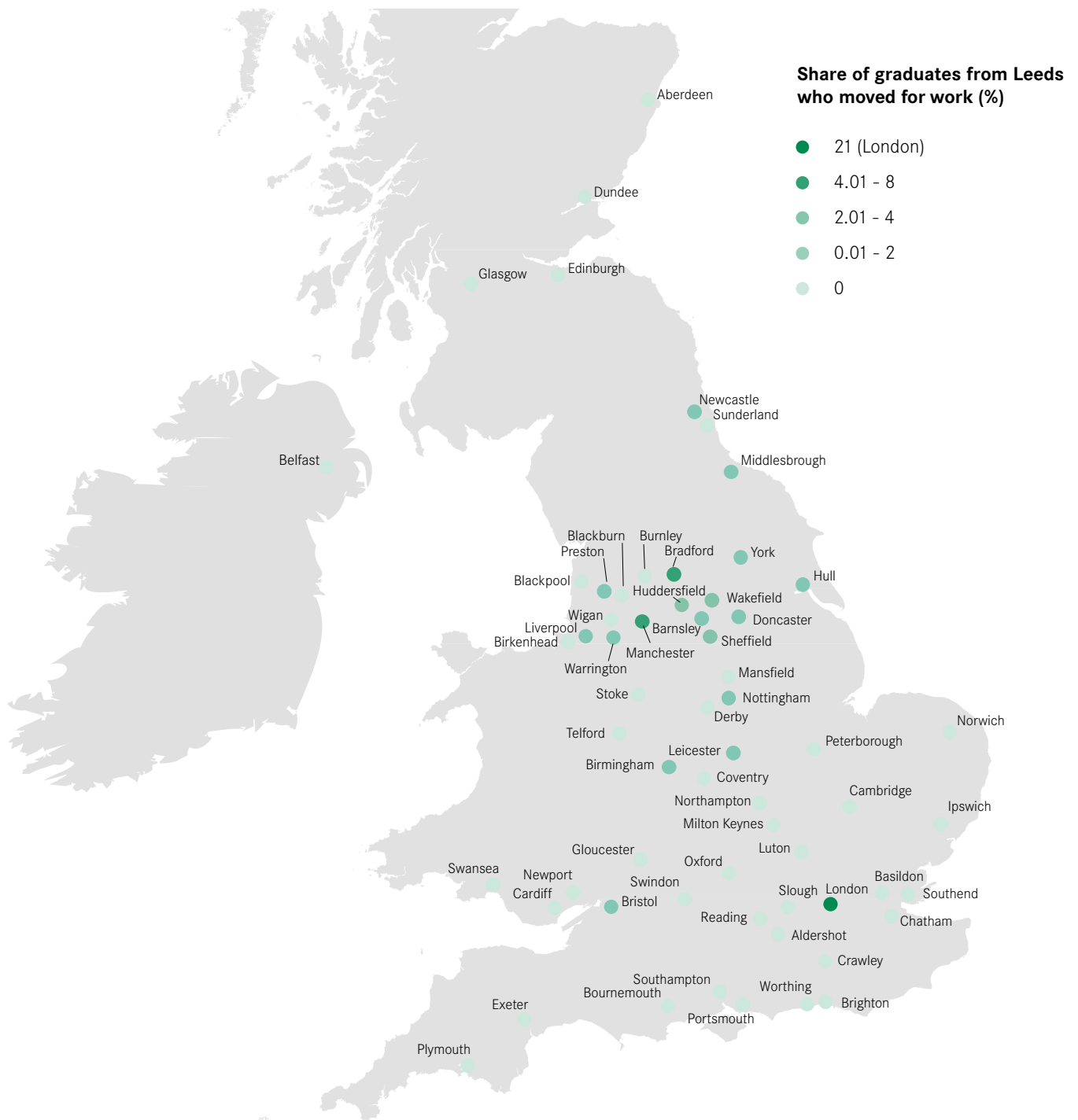
Source: HESA destination of leavers survey

Of those graduates who leave Leeds for work, 21 per cent move to London

The majority of Leeds’ university students moved away for work after graduation. The most popular city destination was London, with 21 per cent of Leeds university students who moved after university choosing to work in the capital. This highlights the strong pull of the capital, which employed 24 per cent of all new UK graduates in 2014-15. As Figure 20 shows, another common city to move to was Manchester, employing 8 per cent of those who moved.

A number of students who left Leeds remained very close to the city. Of those who moved away for work, 7 per cent went to Bradford, 4 per cent to Wakefield, 4 per cent to Huddersfield and 2 per cent to York. Therefore, though they were not retained by the city of Leeds itself they chose to work within the wider city region.

Figure 20: Destinations of Leeds' graduates who move to other cities for work, 2013/14 – 2014/15



Source: HESA destination of leavers survey

But Leeds successfully attracts in many graduates who have not studied in the city

Another component of graduate migration comprises of those attracted into Leeds after graduation for work. While graduate retention figures tend to get a lot of attention, the ability of a city to attract in new graduates from elsewhere is also important for ensuring its workforce is highly skilled.

Leeds attracts in a significant number of graduates for work: 60 per cent of those working in Leeds post-graduates did not study in the city. This cohort can be split into two groups: those who grew up in Leeds, moved away, and then returned for work, and those who moved into the city for the first time after graduation.

Looking first at the returners, 44 per cent of those who left Leeds for university returned for work. Although the majority did not return, this proportion is higher than the average for UK cities. In Leeds these returners make up almost a fifth of the graduate workforce.

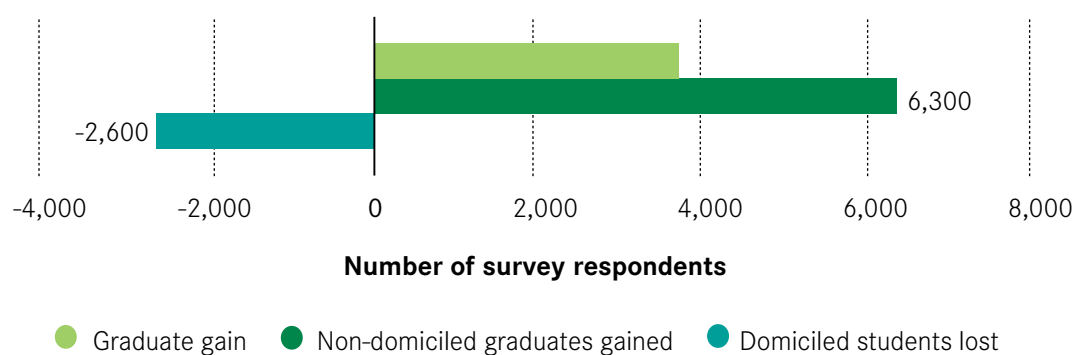
Turning to those who moved in for work, Leeds attracted a significant number of graduates to move into the city for the first time for work; 42 per cent of the workforce did not grow up or study in Leeds. This is the highest proportion of all large UK cities and shows Leeds is an attractive location for graduates.

Overall, Leeds experiences a graduate brain gain

Combining the data on student and new graduate moves shows that overall Leeds experienced a 'graduate gain'. Between 2013 and 2015, 2,600 of the graduates that responded to the survey had left Leeds to go to university elsewhere, whilst 6,300 of the respondents, who did not grow up in Leeds, were employed in the city after graduation. This overall gain of 3,700 graduates places Leeds as the 3rd highest gainer of graduates compared with other UK cities; London gained 42,100 of the graduates who responded and Manchester gained 4,700.

Once the size of the city is accounted for, Leeds' graduate gain is more significant than for both of these cities, and places it 7th of all UK cities. The city's graduate gain of 3,700³ is equivalent to 0.9 per cent of all jobs in Leeds. In comparison, London's graduate gain equates to 0.8 per cent of jobs in the capital, and Manchester's gain equates to 0.4 per cent of their jobs. The top performing cities were Cambridge and Oxford, whose graduate gain was equivalent to 2.1 per cent and 2.0 per cent, respectively, of the cities' jobs.

Figure 21: Comparing students lost and graduates gained by Leeds, 2013/14 – 2014/15



Source: HESA destination of leavers survey

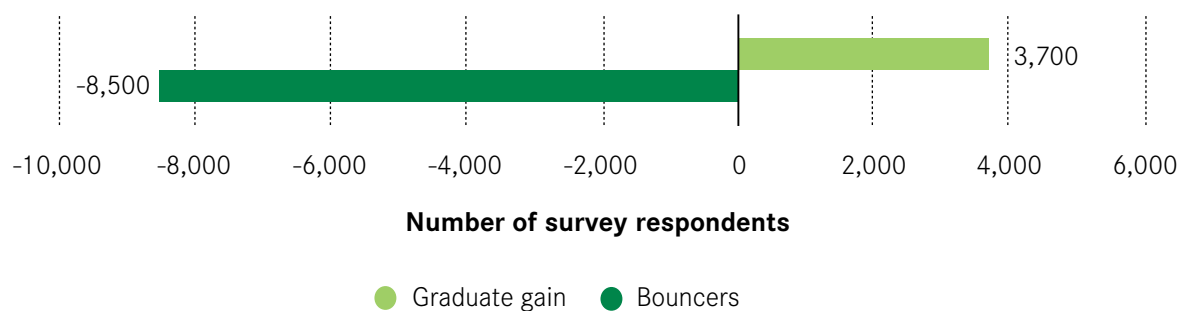
This may not appear to be in-line with the above finding that there is an outflow of young graduates from the city. This is because there is one additional cohort of students: the 'bouncers'. These students move into Leeds to study, and leave straight after graduation. Of all students who moved to Leeds for university, 77 per

³ As mentioned above, this refers to 3,700 survey respondents gained. The total number of graduates gained will be higher as the survey response rate was only 80 per cent overall. Unfortunately, the response rate for Leeds graduates specifically is not available so the 3,700 figure cannot be scaled up.

cent bounced. As Figure 22 shows, the size of the graduate gain is much smaller than the number of bouncers, hence the outflow of graduates described earlier. This shows that the main role of Leeds’ institutions, for those students not from the city, is to educate them for work elsewhere.

This cohort causes a lot of noise in the data. By excluding them and comparing the number of (would be) graduates in Leeds before university with the number of graduates in the city after graduation, the graduate gain figure can be calculated.

Figure 22: The bouncers and the graduate gain, 2013/14 – 2014/15



Source: HESA destination of leavers survey

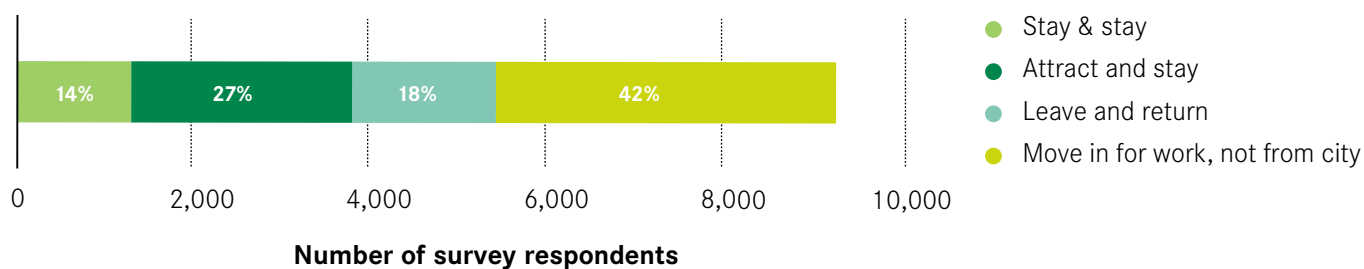
The nature of the new graduate workforce

The majority of Leeds graduate workforce did not study in the city

Figure 23 brings together all graduates who decided to work in Leeds on graduation to provide an overview of the nature of the graduate workforce in the city. 14 per cent were home-grown graduates and just over a quarter were retained by Leeds’ universities. A fifth of the workforce was made up of returning graduates, who had previously lived in Leeds but chosen to study elsewhere. Finally, a significant number of graduates moved into the city for the first time, accounting for 42 per cent of the graduate workforce. This shows Leeds’ ability to attract in talent from elsewhere and this inflow is an important contributor to the city’s high-skilled workforce.

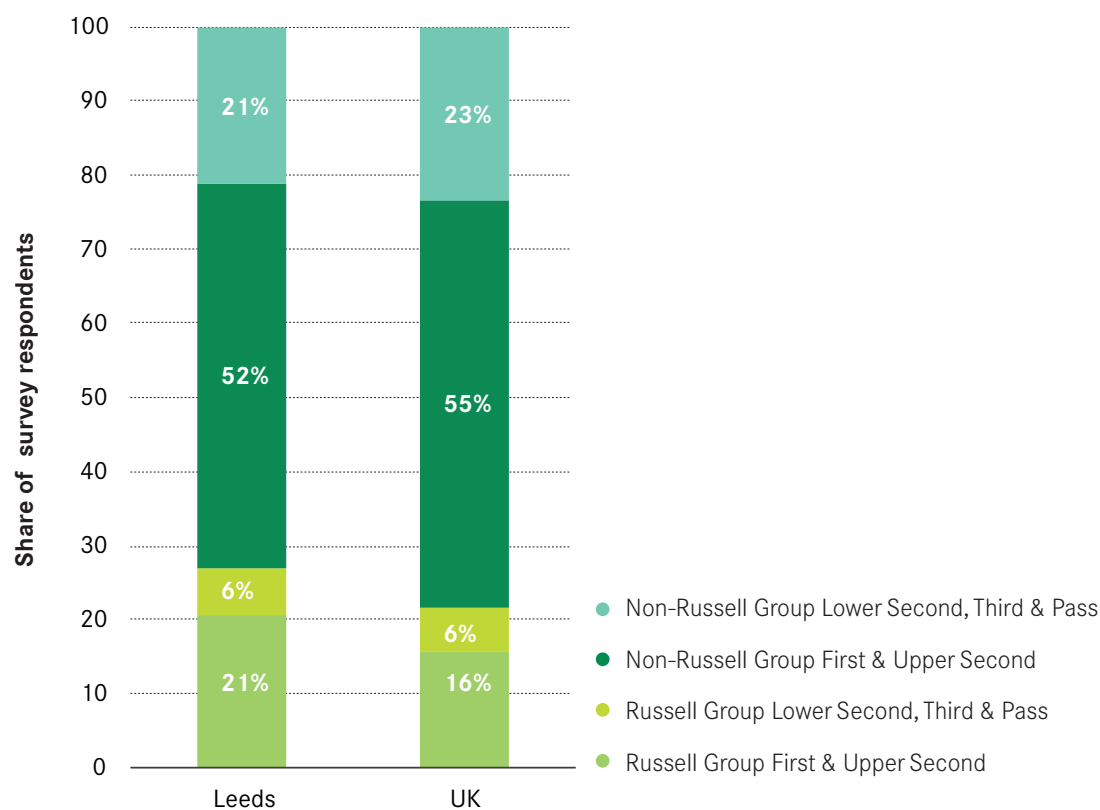
Of all new graduates who moved after university, 1.8 per cent were working in Leeds within 6 months of graduation. In comparison, the city accounted for 1.5 per cent of all UK jobs.

Figure 23: The components of the new graduate workforce, 2013/14 – 2014/15



Source: HESA destination of leavers survey

In terms of the class of degree achieved, a larger share of these workers had a first or upper second class degree from a Russell Group university than in the UK as a whole, as shown in Figure 24. The share of workers from a non-Russell Group university was therefore smaller than for the UK. Leeds’ share of these high-achieving Russell Group graduates was much higher than its share of all UK jobs: 2.6 per cent as opposed to 1.5 per cent. This was also the case for several large cities, such as Manchester and Liverpool.

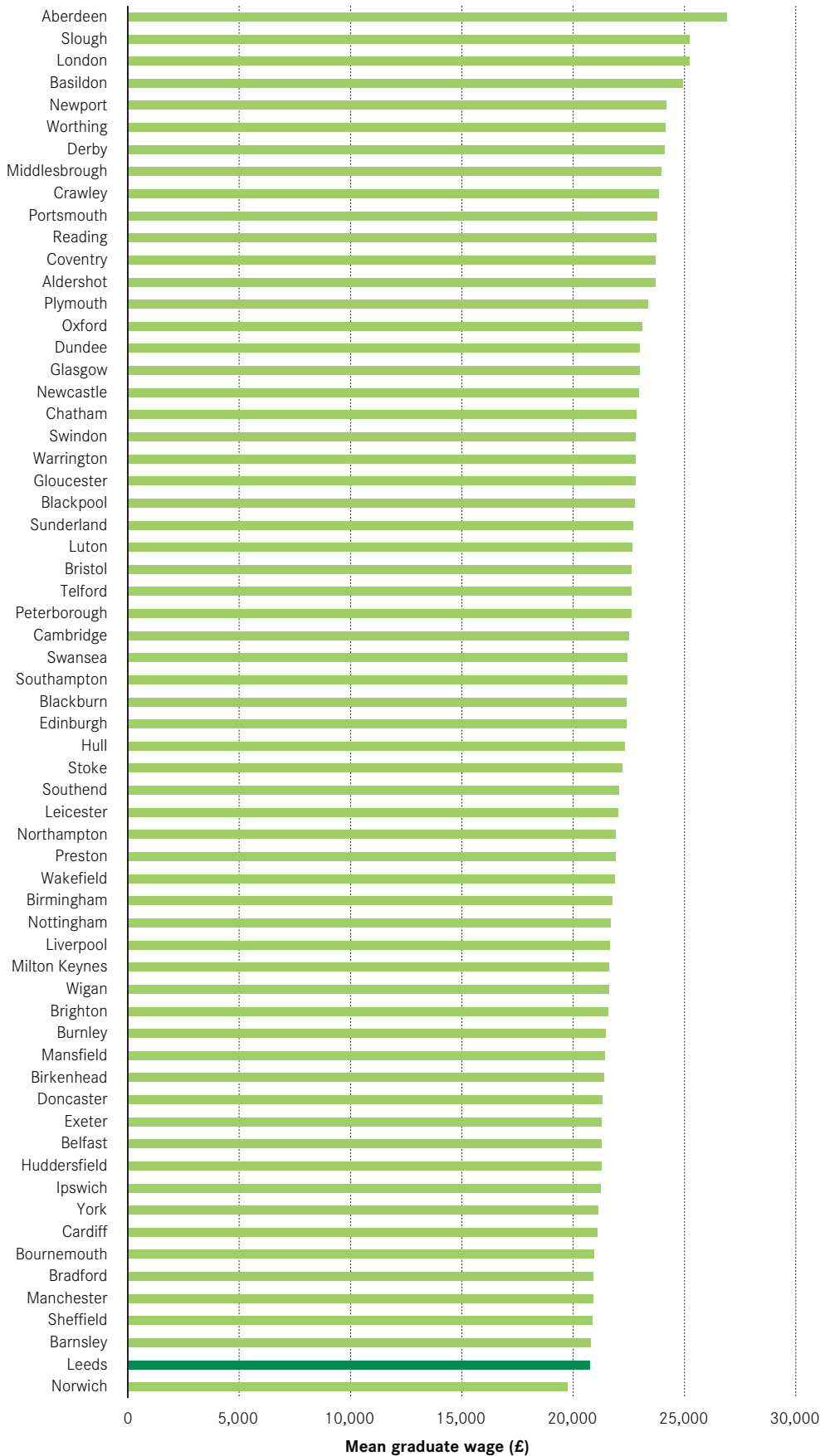
Figure 24: Share of working new graduates by class of degree

Source: HESA destination of leavers survey

The average salary of a graduate working in Leeds is the second lowest of all UK cities

Graduates working in Leeds earned on average £20,700, which was the second lowest salary after Norwich, as shown in Figure 25. Cities offering a similarly low wage were Barnsley, Sheffield and Manchester. Excluding London, whose high living costs are likely to have contributed to the high wage on offer, the highest graduate earners were in Aberdeen, Slough and Basildon. This is likely to be in order to compensate graduates for having fewer amenities than if they had moved to a large city.

Figure 25: Mean graduate wages of each UK city, 2013/14 – 2014/15



Source: HESA destination of leavers survey

The average salary of a graduate from one of Leeds' three largest universities was much higher than for a graduate of the College of Art or NSCD. However, this is not necessarily a surprise given that salaries in the arts sector are often lower. The average salary of a graduate of the University of Leeds was £21,100, as was the average salary for a graduate of Leeds Beckett. Leeds Trinity's graduates earned on average a slightly lower figure of £20,000.

Figure 26 investigates how average salaries differed for those who remained in Leeds and those who moved away. There does not seem to be a consistent pattern across the institutions. Whilst University of Leeds and Leeds Trinity graduates earned slightly more if they stayed in the city, for all other universities the salary was higher if they moved away. In addition, the differences in average salary were small.⁴

Figure 26: Mean graduate wages by institution and location of employment, 2013/14 – 2014/15

University	Average salary of graduate	Average salary of a graduate employed in Leeds	Average salary of a graduate employed elsewhere
The University of Leeds	£ 21,100	£ 21,500	£ 21,000
Leeds Trinity University	£ 20,000	£ 20,200	£ 19,900
Leeds Beckett University	£ 21,100	£ 20,700	£ 21,200
Leeds College of Art	£ 16,000	£ 15,700	£ 16,100
Northern School of Contemporary Dance	£ 14,000	£ 13,700	£ 14,200

Source: HESA destination of leavers survey

Of all graduates in Leeds, 76 per cent worked in high-skilled occupations, which are traditionally described as graduate-level jobs. While this may sound like a high proportion, it is below the UK average, suggesting that some graduates in Leeds are underemployed when they first start work. This is likely to be a contributing factor to the city's low wages.

However, analysis of UK graduates⁵ finds that graduate wages were not the main reason for graduates choosing their employment location. Other factors such as the type of jobs available in that city and the opportunities for career progression are more important, and Leeds performs much better on these measures.

Leeds has a strong graduate labour market in the KIBS and other private services sectors

The type of jobs available to graduates in each location is a major determinant of where they choose to work. Figure 27 shows that 20 per cent of graduates in Leeds worked in the knowledge intensive business services (KIBS) sector, the 6th highest proportion of all UK cities, and 30 per cent worked in other private services. For the UK as a whole, this proportion was lower for KIBS: 15 per cent of all graduates. Instead, Leeds had a lower proportion of graduate jobs in the publicly-funded services sector, 42 per cent of graduates compared with 46 per cent for the UK.

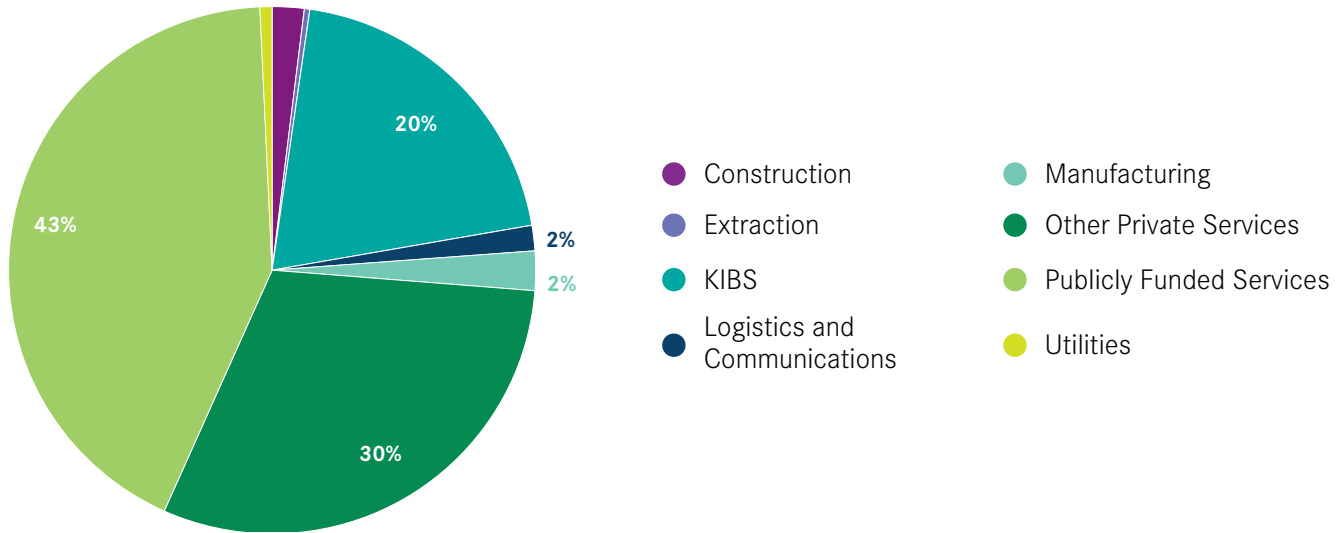
Of the graduate jobs in the KIBS sector, the most popular sub-sector was legal and accounting, which accounted for 7 per cent of all graduate jobs in Leeds. Other significant KIBS employers were financial services (4 per cent of graduate jobs) and computer programming (another 4 per cent). In the public sector the most prominent employers were health care and education, each accounting for 17 per cent of graduate jobs in Leeds.

Private sector graduate jobs tended to be located in the city centre: 33 per cent of all private sector graduate jobs in Leeds situated in LS1 postcodes. The importance of the city centre was even stronger for KIBS graduate jobs, 41 per cent of which were in LS1.

4 Salaries will be affected by the cost of living in each location. Unfortunately this data is not available at a city level so it was not possible for us to account for the cost of living when comparing salaries.

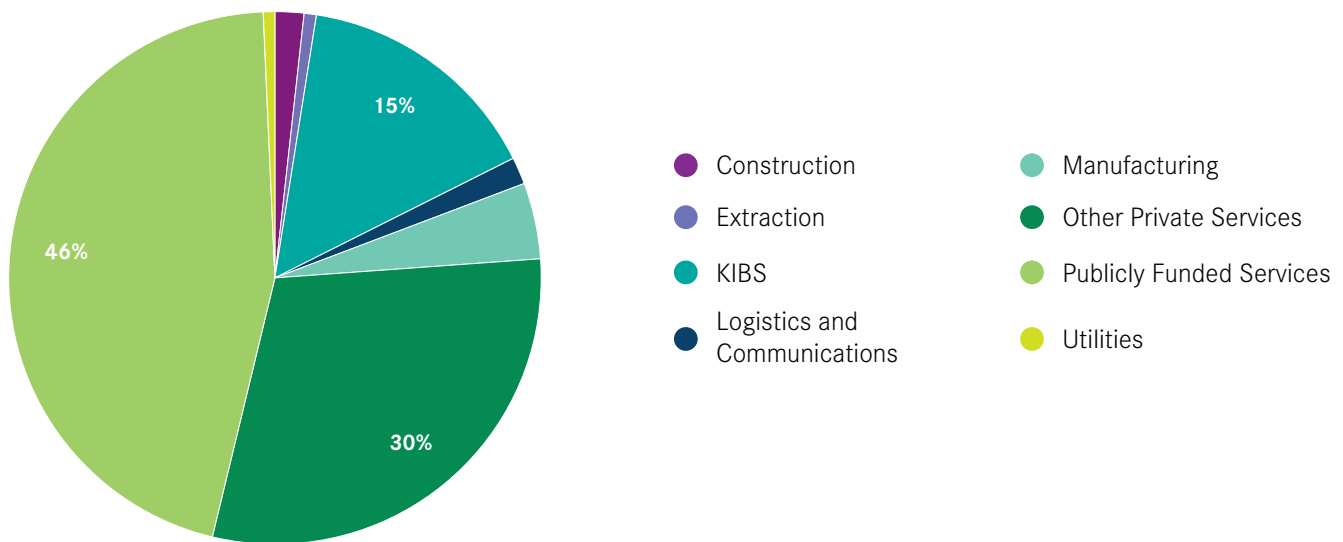
5 Swinney P and Williams M, The Great British Brain Drain: where graduates move and why, London: Centre for Cities

Figure 27: Share of graduates in Leeds working in each sector, 2013/14 – 2014/15



Source: HESA destination of leavers survey

Figure 28: Share of UK graduates working in each sector, 2013/14 – 2014/15



Source: HESA destination of leavers survey

Compared with the UK economy, Leeds has a higher proportion of its graduate jobs in the following sub-sectors: office administration (3 per cent of graduate jobs in Leeds), employment activities (4 per cent), and legal and accounting (7 per cent), advertising and market research (3 per cent).

Whilst the above analysis looks at the graduate workforce in Leeds, the sectors employing graduates from Leeds’ universities differed slightly. Of those who studied in Leeds, 16 per cent were employed in the KIBS sector within 6 months, 41 per cent in the public sector and 35 per cent in other private services. This is regardless of whether they chose to work in Leeds or elsewhere.

Our analysis in The Great British Brain Drain suggests that in other cities graduates move away from the city they studied in because certain sectors lack job opportunities. In contrast, our analysis suggests this is not the case for Leeds.

Conclusions

Like other large cities, Leeds' migration patterns are dominated by movements of university students and graduates. Between 2009 and 2015 there was a large net inflow of young people into the city for university, and the largest net outflow occurred as students left on graduation.

Overall Leeds experiences a graduate brain gain. A net inflow of 16 to 21 year olds is followed a net outflow of 22 to 30 year old graduates. However, many of those who enter the city between 16 and 21 study there and stay after graduation. Also, Leeds attracts in a significant number of new graduates for work who have not lived in the city before. Therefore, overall the city sees a net gain in graduates. Leeds' gain is the 3rd highest of all UK cities, behind only London and Manchester, but once the city's size is accounted for it ranks 7th, above both London and Manchester.

Leeds' universities play different roles. Leeds Trinity, Leeds Beckett and the College of Art have a much stronger regional pull than the University of Leeds and the NSCD. The latter universities attract a significant proportion of international students and students outside Yorkshire. Retention rates also differ between the institutions. The University of Leeds and Leeds Beckett retain a much lower proportion of graduates than the other three.

Any policies designed to increase retention should keep in mind these different roles. Universities with lower retention rates tend to have these because of their role in educating national and international students, not necessarily because they are less successful at retaining their students. Therefore, instead of focusing on increasing the retention rates of these universities, policy should instead focus on improving the economy. It is the jobs available to a graduate which determine whether or not they work in that city.

Leeds has a strong graduate labour market in the KIBS sector. A higher proportion of graduates work in the KIBS and other private services sectors in Leeds than in the UK as a whole, and therefore the proportion working in the public sector is smaller. This is likely to be a strong contributing factor to Leeds' success in attracting many graduates to work in the city.

To increase the number of graduates working in Leeds, be they from Leeds' universities or from elsewhere, the city should focus on expanding job opportunities, particularly in the KIBS sector. This should be complimented by improvements in transport, and where necessary, housing.

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