

PAVING THE WAY

Careers guidance in secondary schools

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About the Sutton Trust

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Foreword

Giving young people from all backgrounds the information and experiences to make choices about their future has been at the heart of the Sutton Trust's work over the past 25 years.

Young people make important decisions about their education and careers throughout their schooling. From GCSE and A Level subject choices, to post-16 options and apprenticeships, to which university and course to apply to. These choices have a big impact on their future education and career.

But not everyone receives the same level of support. Young people in families with highly educated parents and better networks are more likely to receive the support they need to navigate their way through competitive pathways. Independent schools and some sixth forms devote substantial resources to supporting university applications.

Over 25 years, our programmes have given over 50,000 young people from low and moderate income backgrounds the opportunity to change their lives and experience a leading university environment, as well as providing invaluable support for their applications. But to ensure a more level playing field, we need to ensure that every school and college – especially those serving the most disadvantaged pupils – is geared up to delivering high quality, independent advice and guidance for vital decisions on university, apprenticeships and jobs.

Careers guidance in England has seen a total overhaul over the last decade. After years of neglect, a new structure is being built by the Careers and Enterprise Company to help schools deliver high quality support – but there is more that needs to be done. Today's research gives a comprehensive picture on how guidance is working on the ground and how we can improve it further.

I'd like to thank the Sutton Trust team, in particular lead author Erica Holt-White, for this vital research.

Sir Peter Lampl

Founder and Executive Chairman of the Sutton Trust, Chairman of the Education Endowment Foundation

“Giving young people from all backgrounds the information and experiences to make choices about their future has been at the heart of the Sutton Trust's work over the past 25 years.”

Key Findings

Overview

When the Sutton Trust last looked at careers provision back in 2014, our research found a major decline in the quality and quantity of careers provision happening in schools, with a 'postcode lottery' of provision.

Our findings here suggest there have been improvements since then, but there is still too often variability in careers provision, with differences between state and private schools and between state schools with more and less deprived intakes.

Existing careers provision

- A wide range of career related activities are available in schools. The most common activities reported as taking place by senior leaders in English state schools include sessions with a Careers Adviser (85%), careers fairs or events (84%), and links to possible careers within curriculum lessons (80%).
- Classroom teachers in English state schools are less likely than senior leaders to say links to possible careers are being made within curriculum lessons, at 59% vs 80%, perhaps reflecting some ambitions for careers guidance not filtering down into classroom practice.
- Almost all state schools now have a Careers Leader, a role responsible for a school's careers programme, with 95% of state school senior leaders reporting their school has such a role.
- 73% of state school headteachers said their school works with the government funded Career and Enterprise Company (CEC). However, just 48% of headteachers said their school was part of a CEC Careers Hub - designed to bring together schools, colleges, employers and apprenticeship providers in a local area.
- The majority (94%) of state school senior leaders are aware of the Gatsby benchmarks, the current framework for careers guidance. However, awareness is much lower among classroom teachers in state schools (40%), again showing some elements of guidance are not necessarily making it into day to day practice.
- Alongside differences in the range of activities available in schools reported by teachers, there are also differences in students' self-reported access. Overall, 36% of students in the UK said they had not taken part in any careers related activities. State school pupils are more likely to report not having taken part (38%) compared to pupils at private schools (23%).
- Students' self-reporting of career activities is higher for those in later year groups. For example, while only 7% of those in years 8-9 report learning about apprenticeships, this was 26% for year 13s. Similarly, while only 2% of those in years 8-9 had visited a university, 42% of year 13s have done so. But even for year 13s, figures for many of these activities remain low, with for example just 17% having learnt about career opportunities in their local area, and just 30% having done work experience.
- Nearly half (46%) of 17- and 18-year olds (year 13) say they have received a large amount of information on university routes during their education, compared to just 10% who say the same for apprenticeships.

- Less than a third (30%) of students in year 13 have completed work experience.
- Around a third (36%) of secondary school students do not feel confident in their next steps in education and training, with only just over half (56%) feeling confident. The proportion not feeling confident is lower, but still sizable, for students in year 13 (22%).
- More pupils in state secondary schools report not being confident in their next steps in education and training than in private schools (39% vs 29%).

Barriers to good quality provision

- Over three quarters of state school teachers (88%) felt that their teacher training didn't prepare them to deliver careers information and guidance to students.
- Over a third (37%) of senior leaders think their school does not have adequate funding and resources to deliver careers advice and guidance.
- Just under a third (32%) of teachers in state schools report they don't have enough funding to deliver good quality careers education and guidance, compared to just 6% saying the same in private schools. Just over half (51%) of teachers in state schools think there isn't enough staff time to do so, compared to just 34% saying the same in private schools.
- Schools in more deprived areas are less likely to have access to a specialist Careers Adviser, with 21% of teachers in the most deprived areas reporting non-specialists delivered personal guidance, compared to 14% in more affluent areas.
- 72% of teachers think the pandemic has negatively impacted their school's ability to deliver careers education and guidance. This figure was 16 percentage points higher for teachers in state schools, at 75%, vs 59% in private schools.

Teachers' views on improving careers guidance

- Almost half (47%) of state school teachers want to see additional funding for careers guidance, more than four times as many as in private schools (11%). State schools want to use additional funding to allow a member of staff to fully focus on careers guidance, with teachers also wanting to see better pay and recognition for the Careers Leader role in schools.
- Many senior leaders in English state schools also want to see additional visits from employers (47%) and more visits from apprenticeship providers (39%).

Recommendations

For government

- 1. The government should develop a new national strategy on careers education.** Provision would benefit from a clear overarching strategy now that the government's 2017 careers strategy has lapsed. The strategy should sit primarily in the Department for Education, but with strong cross-departmental links, to join up what are currently disparate elements in the system. The strategy should look at the very start of a child's education, all the way through to the workplace. It should be formed in partnership with employers, with a view to help prepare young people for future labour market trends, and link clearly into the government's levelling up strategy.
- 2. At the centre of this strategy should be a core 'careers structure' outlining a minimum underlying structure for careers provision in all schools.** There is too much variation in the careers provision available to students. This underlying architecture, with adequate funding behind it, would help tackle this inconsistency, by putting in place the same standard underlying set up in all schools, to aid them to deliver guidance as set out in the Gatsby benchmarks.
This offer should guarantee that all schools:
 - Have a Careers Leader with the time, recognition, and resources to properly fulfil their role
 - Are part of a Careers Hub
 - Have access to a professional career adviser for their students (qualified to at least Level 6)
- 3. Greater time should be earmarked and integrated within the overall curriculum, and within subject curricula, to deliver careers education and guidance, to reflect its centrality to students' future prospects.** With competing demands on the school day, setting clearer requirements on the time schools should be spending on careers education, both on overall careers guidance (for example in PSHE lessons or as a scheduled careers week for pupils), and for subject specific careers guidance within lessons, would help give the topic the required priority within schools. This should be accompanied by better training for teachers on careers education within initial teacher training.
- 4. All pupils should have access to work experience between the ages of 14 and 16.** Experience in the workplace can be extremely impactful for students, allowing them to gain important insights into the world of work and develop essential skills, with support given to help them find relevant placements. This should also be accompanied by additional funding for schools, to allow them to pay for the staff time needed to support students to organise good quality placements.
- 5. Better support and guidance should be made available for schools and colleges on apprenticeships, with better enforcement of statutory requirements.** More investment should be made in national information sources and programmes on technical education routes to improve the advice available. Evidence suggests that too many schools are not meeting their statutory requirements under the 'Baker Clause'. Better enforcement should be introduced, for example looking at incentives such as limiting Ofsted grades in schools who do not comply with the clause.

For the Career and Enterprise Company (CEC)

1. **All secondary schools should be part of a Careers Hub, with schools serving the most deprived intakes prioritised.** Plans for the Careers Hub network to be expanded are to be welcomed, but now is the time to expand the network to reach all schools. Given the disparities in careers provision identified here, it is vital that the most deprived schools are prioritised in this expansion plan. Evaluation of the programme should continue to ensure that expansion is impactful.
2. **The CEC should continue to roll out pilot programmes of promising interventions based on evidence, again where possible with a focus on the most deprived schools.** We welcome recent pilot programmes, including partnerships with businesses, to help to give young people greater insights into the world of work. Further such work should continue, with programmes likely to benefit the most deprived schools prioritised.

For schools, colleges and their governing boards

1. **Additional support for employability and career education should be seen as a key part of catch-up plans for education post pandemic.** Many students have missed out on important aspects of career education and guidance during school closures, when core learning had to be prioritised. School catch-up plans should include a strategy on how students will be supported to make up for the opportunities to learn about careers which they have missed during the pandemic. This should be accompanied by additional catch-up funds from government to support schools to do this work.
2. **There should be clear responsibility for careers guidance within a school's senior leadership team.** How this is done may differ between schools, for example by having a Careers Leader themselves sit within a school's senior leadership team (SLT), or if this role is held by a middle leader, by having a member of SLT who is clearly responsible for the school's strategy on careers. The member of SLT with responsibility for careers should work with the school's Pupil Premium Lead to ensure the school's career strategy takes into account the needs of this group of students.
3. **Every school should have at least one governor who oversees careers provision.** This governor role should engage with a school's Careers Leader to give strategic oversight of a school's careers programme, as well as potentially helping to link their school up with local employers through any contacts on the governing board. It should also work together with a school's pupil premium governor, again to ensure the school's strategy is successfully catering to this group of students.

Introduction

High quality careers education, information, advice and guidance is vital to ensure young people can access jobs that suit their talents and aspirations. For those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, this advice is particularly important, as they are less likely to have access to support from family and friends, or to have networks which provide an insight into a wide range of career options. Accessing independent and impartial advice on education, training and career paths is therefore a central plank of social mobility, empowering young people to make informed decisions about their future pathways.

In this report, the term careers guidance is used to cover all careers-related activities delivered in schools and colleges, including under the Gatsby benchmarks. Careers guidance is delivered in a variety of forms, from in-class workshops to visits from an employer. That advice, when done well, introduces a variety of potential career paths, and helps to facilitate the transition from secondary education to further education and employment.¹

When we last published research on careers guidance in our report *Advancing Ambitions* in 2014,² guidance was seen too often as a postcode lottery, with significant variability between schools. The coalition government had made significant changes to provision in 2011, scrapping the Connexions service (which held the main responsibilities for careers guidance from 2000 until 2011) and giving responsibilities to schools, but without the necessary funding and guidance to support delivery. This left behind a fragmented system, with the most disadvantaged students losing out on services that were cut by their local authority at a time of austerity.

In response to the changes made by the coalition government, our report called for improvements to statutory guidance, more funding for Careers Advisers in schools and greater recognition of careers guidance in Ofsted assessments. Since then, the policy landscape has changed considerably, with the government publishing statutory guidance for schools and colleges in England in 2015,³ built around the Gatsby Foundation's benchmarks for good careers guidance.⁴ These were designed to bring the varied elements of guidance that cover education, training and employment into a coherent whole. The Careers and Enterprise Company was also founded in 2015 to support schools in achieving the benchmarks, and to create better networks for schools and colleges to work with employers and share effective strategies. However, relatively little is known about how well those changes are being implemented on the ground, and research has continued to find inequalities in access.

Furthermore, since our last report, significant changes have happened in the further education space, such as the introduction of T-Levels and degree apprenticeships. But evidence so far suggests these routes have not been treated equally to more academic routes, with technical and vocational pathways too often given less prominence in careers education. To tackle this issue, the government made it a statutory requirement in 2015 for education providers to offer a range of education and training providers the opportunity to inform students in years 8 to 13 about technical and further education routes.⁵ But previous research has found this requirement is not being implemented consistently - two in five students believe more information and advice would have led to them making better choices, and almost a third

¹ Cedefop, European Commission, ETF, ILO, OECD, UNESCO (2021) Investing in career guidance. European Training Foundation. Available at: <https://www.etf.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/investing-career-guidance>

² A. G. Watts, J. Matheson and T. Hooley (2014) *Advancing Ambitions*. The Sutton Trust. Available at: <https://www.suttontrust.com/our-research/advancing-ambitions/>

³ Department for Education (2015) *Careers guidance and access for education and training providers*. Gov.uk. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/careers-guidance-provision-for-young-people-in-schools>

⁴ J. Holman (2014) *Good careers guidance*. The Gatsby Charitable Foundation. Available at: <https://www.gatsby.org.uk/uploads/education/reports/pdf/gatsby-sir-john-holman-good-career-guidance-2014.pdf>

⁵ Department for Education (2015) *Careers guidance and access for education and training providers*. Gov.uk. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/careers-guidance-provision-for-young-people-in-schools>

of students had not received any information about apprenticeships from their school.⁶ As there have been many recent changes in the technical education landscape, it is more important than ever for a range of post-16 options to be covered in the advice given to young people.

Ensuring equal access to careers guidance is particularly vital as we continue to move through the economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, during which many young people's opportunities to take part in work experience and other workplace learning were impacted. Our research in July 2020 found a reduction in work experience opportunities during the pandemic, with 61% of the employers surveyed saying that they had cancelled work placements for the summer of 2020.⁷ Additionally, in more recent research from the Institute for Employment Studies, interviews with young people revealed that school-age pupils are concerned about the lack of preparation for the world of work after missing out on work experience opportunities as well as the increased pool of competition for entry level roles.⁸

Against this context particularly, it is essential that from a young age all children and young people can access high quality careers guidance, regardless of background, so that they can make informed decisions about their next steps. This should cover a wide range of pathways and take into account up to date information on changes in the labour market. The Trust's own programme work - with around 8,000 young people each year – helps young people with high potential from lower income homes to make choices about their futures that are well informed, and supports them to realise those aspirations. But a system-wide, well-funded, high quality and impartial careers and advice function is a prerequisite of a fair and effective education system.

This report looks in detail at the advice now available to young people, engagement with related opportunities and any barriers to improving provision in schools and colleges, including polling of both secondary school pupils and teachers.

⁶ UCAS (2021) Where Next? What influences the choices school leavers make? Available at: <https://www.ucas.com/file/435551/download?token=VUdIDVFh>

⁷ E. Holt-White & R. Montacute (2020) Covid-19 and social mobility impact brief #5: Graduate recruitment and access to the workplace. The Sutton Trust. Available at: <https://www.suttontrust.com/our-research/coronavirus-workplace-access-and-graduate-recruitment/>

⁸ C. Orlando (2021) Not just any job, good jobs! Youth voices from across the UK. The Health Foundation. Available at: <https://www.employment-studies.co.uk/system/files/resources/files/Not%20just%20any%20job%2C%20good%20jobs%21.pdf>

The policy landscape

Careers provision across the UK

The current careers education and guidance system in England is mainly delivered in schools and colleges, who follow statutory guidance written by the Department for Education, with significant involvement from external arms-length organisations like the Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) and National Careers Service (NCS).

Policies in the devolved nations are outlined in the box below.

Careers guidance in other UK nations

Wales - Careers guidance in Wales is offered by schools and the Careers Wales Service. Established in 2012, the service delivers external support which is funded by government. Young people can interact with the service's Careers Advisers online and over the phone.

[Careers Wales](#) promote partnerships between schools and local employers to ensure young people are experiencing the world of work. They also work with schools to train teachers in using their resources and show how to incorporate guidance into the curriculum. These activities are co-ordinated by a team of Careers Advisers, with advisers acting as 'account executives' for individual schools.

There is no statutory guidance currently in place for careers guidance in Wales, but guidance is [currently being developed](#) by the government and a team of Careers and the World of Work (CWOW) co-ordinators who sit within Careers Wales.

Scotland - The key universal careers service for young people in Scotland is [Skills Development Scotland](#). All state schools partner with the organisation, who can access a team of qualified careers staff to deliver drop-in services, one to one meetings and group activities as well as a range of online resources for teachers to use in the classroom. The service also works with employers to deliver targeted outreach activities related to particular industries.

[Various services](#) are funded by the UK and Scottish governments as well as the European Union, including Skills Development Scotland and Jobcentre Plus, but provision and engagement in careers guidance activities are significantly variable between regions. A [2020 strategy](#) from the Scottish government sets out plans to create "a national model for career education, information, advice and guidance services with shared principles adopted across education, training and employability services".

Northern Ireland - All Northern Irish schools have a partnership agreement with the country's [careers service](#). Schools and parents are advised to encourage students to use this service, particularly in years 10 and 12.

In 2015, a [5-year strategy](#) was set jointly by the Department for Education and the Department for the Economy for the whole population. Policy commitments in the strategy include re-introducing the statutory duty of delivering careers education, improving work experience offered to young people and providing additional support for disadvantaged groups.

The following section outlines the current legislation in place for careers guidance in England, and summarises the role of key organisations in this space.

The Gatsby benchmarks

In 2013, the Gatsby Foundation, led by Sir John Holman, put together a report outlining the requirements for high quality careers guidance.⁹ The report reviewed existing literature in the field and visited independent schools to gather information about good practice. The authors also visited 6 other countries (the Netherlands, Germany, Hong Kong, Finland, Canada and Ireland) who had been identified as having both good career guidance offers in schools and strong educational results. The organisation formulated a set of 8 criteria known as the Gatsby benchmarks (shown in Figure 1).

Figure 1: The Gatsby benchmarks



The benchmarks are designed to bring the varied elements of guidance that cover education, training and employment into a coherent whole. This involves ‘push’ factors (such as individualised guidance and discussing careers in the classroom) that are based in schools, and ‘pull’ factors (such as offering visits to the workplace and running group workshops) that come from employers. Each benchmark has associated indicators which can be used to measure progress. They have formed the core of the most recent statutory guidance on careers guidance from the Department for Education.

A recent evaluation of the Gatsby benchmarks found that, when integrated into a school’s careers provision, achieving the benchmarks can contribute to a significant improvement in students’ career readiness.¹⁰ On a wider level, a positive relationship was also seen with classroom engagement, as

⁹ J. Holman (2014) Good careers guidance. The Gatsby Charitable Foundation. Available at: <https://www.gatsby.org.uk/uploads/education/reports/pdf/gatsby-sir-john-holman-good-career-guidance-2014.pdf>

¹⁰ J. Hanson *et al.* (2021) An evaluation of the North East of England pilot of the Gatsby Benchmarks of good careers guidance. The University of Deby and the International Centre for Guidance Studies. Available at: <https://www.gatsby.org.uk/uploads/education/ne-pilot-evaluation-full-report.pdf>

students were more aware of why they were learning particular topics and how the skills developed from lessons link to future careers.

Statutory guidance

In 2015, the government published statutory guidance for schools and colleges for delivering careers guidance, with an updated version published in 2021.¹¹ This followed a review led by CooperGibson which highlighted that whilst a wide range of careers activities were taking place in most schools, the most common forms of guidance were led by in-school staff during lesson time rather than qualified careers staff.¹² The review also found that around half of respondents' schools did not have formal links with employers, 13% did not offer workplace visits and 8% did not offer work experience opportunities. The review suggested more work considering students' experiences with careers provision in schools, targeted provision for individual needs and improved relationships between schools and employers.

The statutory guidance sets out the duty for all local-authority maintained schools to secure access to impartial guidance for pupils from years 8 to 13 (ages 12 to 18), with securing independent guidance for pupils a funding requirement for all further education (FE) and sixth form colleges. Most academies and free schools also have duties regarding careers guidance in their funding agreements; if they do not, they are still encouraged to follow government guidance as a sign of good practice.

Only two areas are legal requirements: offering impartial guidance and meeting the Baker Clause (discussed below). Points preceded with 'should' are policies schools should follow unless there is a good reason not to. One of these points is a recommendation for all schools to work towards a Quality in Careers Standard award, which is awarded by the [Quality in Careers consortium](#) (partly funded by the DfE). To gain the award, schools must meet a set of assessment criteria that align to the Gatsby benchmarks. In their statutory guidance, the DfE recommend that schools work towards achieving this award. 32% of state secondary schools and 30% of colleges currently hold an award.¹³

The work of the Career Development Institute (CDI) is also highlighted in the statutory guidance; a professional body for all organisations working in the careers guidance field and also offer postgraduate-level qualifications on careers.¹⁴ Schools and colleges are encouraged to use the organisation's Career Development Framework (which clarifies the skills, knowledge and attitudes that individuals should achieve from careers guidance) to shape their careers programme.¹⁵ The guidance also states that schools should follow the CDI's recommendation of Careers Advisers being qualified to at least Level 6.

The guidance sets out suggestions for achieving all 8 of the Gatsby benchmarks and highlights government policies that will help to facilitate this. The guidance also highlights the importance of a Careers Leader and the benefits of being part of a Careers Hub; managed by the Careers and Enterprise Company.

¹¹ Department for Education (2021) Careers guidance and access for education and training providers. Gov.uk. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/748474/181008_schools_statutory_guidance_final.pdf and Department for Education (2015) Careers guidance and access for education and training providers. Available at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/749151/Careers_guidance-Guide_for_colleges.pdf

¹² S. Gibson *et al.* (2015) Mapping careers provision in schools and colleges in England. Department for Education. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/447134/Mapping_careers_provision_in_schools_and_colleges_in_England.pdf

¹³ Award Holders. Quality in Careers. Accessed March 2022. Available at: <https://www.qualityincareers.org.uk/what-is-the-quality-in-careers-standard/award-holders/>

¹⁴ About us. The Career Development Institute. Accessed March 2022. Available from: <https://www.thecdi.net/About>

¹⁵ T. Hooley (2021) Career Development Framework. The Career Development Institute. Available at: https://www.thecdi.net/write/CDI_90-Framework-Career_Development_skills-web.pdf

Careers and Enterprise Company

The DfE set up the Careers and Enterprise Company in 2015 in order to link secondary education providers and employers to deliver high quality careers guidance. Investment from the Department of Education has increased since the organisation's inception, when £6million was awarded, up to an allocation of nearly £28million for 2021/22 (Table 1).¹⁶

Table 1: Funding allocated by the Department for Education to the Careers and Enterprise Company (2015/16 – 2021/22)

2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22 (allocated)
£6m	£16m	£18.8m	£30.2m	£20.6m	£25.9m	£28m

The CEC offer a range of resources and tools to be used by Careers Leaders, as well as wider advice to schools. The organisation suggest that a Careers Leader should ideally be a senior role within a school, who oversees a school's careers programme, ensuring progress is made towards the Gatsby benchmarks and connecting the school to external partners.¹⁷ The CEC also says that Careers Leaders should manage or commission a Careers Adviser, who is responsible for delivering personal guidance either to individuals or groups of pupils. A Careers Leader should also work with all staff and partners that are involved in a school's programme; for instance, they should collaborate with an enterprise adviser, who is a volunteer from a business who can use their external expertise to shape a school's careers programme.¹⁸ This voluntary opportunity is managed by a network of enterprise co-ordinators led by the CEC, who connect business volunteers with schools.

Tools available to Careers Leaders include Compass, which allows a school to evaluate their careers programme against the Gatsby benchmarks, and Compass+, which can be used to manage, track and report on careers provision at an individual student level. Training for Careers Leaders is also offered by CEC, where leaders can develop the skills and knowledge required to lead an extensive careers programme. Ensuring all schools had a named Careers Leader by the end of 2020 was set as a key target in the government's most recent careers strategy, published in 2017 (discussed in more detail below).

Careers Hubs are also managed by the CEC. These are groups of 20 to 40 neighbouring secondary schools who are joined together to work towards the Gatsby benchmarks; each Hub has a Lead to co-ordinate activities, access to training bursaries and a central fund of around £1,000 per school or college.¹⁹ They are designed to connect education providers to employers, working locally to test, trial and evaluate interventions that can be shared within the wider network of Hubs. As of December 2019, there were 32 Hubs that reached 1,300 schools, with further expansions of the programme announced in 2020 reaching almost half of state schools in England.²⁰

Being part of a Hub has been associated with a higher likelihood of working with employers; in a review of the programme one year after its inception, 66% of schools in a Hub run regular encounters with

¹⁶ Department for Education Freedom of Information request. Responses received 2nd and 8th of November 2021.

¹⁷ The Careers and Enterprise Company. Understanding the role of the Careers Leader. Available at: <https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/media/uhtkww5h/understanding-careers-leader-role-careers-enterprise.pdf>

¹⁸ The Careers and Enterprise Company. Become an Enterprise Adviser. Accessed March 2022. Available at: <https://enterpriseadviser.careersandenterprise.co.uk/>

¹⁹ The Careers and Enterprise Company. Careers Hubs. Accessed March 2022. Available at: <https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/about-us/our-network/careers-hubs>

²⁰ LEP Network (2020) LEPs drive Careers Hubs extension to boost recovery. LEP network, 24 June. Available at: <https://lepnetwork.net/news-and-events/2020/june/leps-drive-careers-hubs-extension-to-boost-recovery/>

employers compared to 33% of schools and colleges that are not in a Hub.²¹ Research has also shown that being part of a Hub increases the likelihood of a school holding a Quality in Careers Standard award.²² It is therefore encouraging that the rollout of Careers Hubs has been supported in the government's recent 'Skills for Jobs' white paper,²³ and funding has been awarded to the Careers and Enterprise Company for a third rollout of the scheme, which will reach nearly half of all state schools.²⁴

Programme pilots in the primary education space have also been led by the Careers and Enterprise Company. Working with the Centre for Education and Youth (CFEY), the CEC launched the Primary Careers Resources Platform, which provides information and resources to help put career-related learning into the curriculum and engage parents as well as external stakeholders in the area.²⁵ It also conducts activities that can be run in primary classes. The CEC feature several reports in this area on their website, showing that high quality careers guidance from a young age helps pupils to understand the relevance of what they are learning and broadens pupil's knowledge of career sectors that they would not typically gain elsewhere at such an age.²⁶ In their 2020 review, the organisation highlighted that schools, colleges and businesses across the country are starting to work together in this area, building good foundations for economic recovery, but continued investment in the sector focusing on national rollout through Careers Hubs is vital.²⁷

The Careers and Enterprise Company release a 'State of the Nation' report each year, which typically looks at progress towards the Gatsby benchmarks and analyses key trends in the careers landscape over the past year. The most recent report, published at end of 2021, reflected on the past 2 years and how the Covid-19 pandemic affected careers provision.²⁸ Progress was seen in terms of coverage of careers during lesson time and delivery of personal guidance – for example, around 80% of secondary schools reported providing most students with a qualified Careers Adviser interview by the end of year 11 (up from 74% in 2019). However, progress towards some benchmarks had receded – 39% of schools reported that most of their students had access to a workplace experience by the end of year 11, compared to 57% in 2019, although this is likely at least in part due to impacts of the pandemic. It is also notable that progress over time is not reported for all benchmarks.

National Careers Service

Outside of provision in schools and colleges, the DfE also funds the National Careers Service (NCS). Since 2012, the NCS has provided impartial online and over-the-phone advice on career options.²⁹ Whilst young people can use this service, the NCS is an information source for anyone of working age, so is not specifically tailored to an audience of students or school aged children.

²¹ Hutchinson, J. *et al.* (2019) Careers Hubs: One year on. The Careers and Enterprise Company. Available at: <https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/media/ku0akyn2/careers-hubs-one-year-on.pdf>

²² The Careers and Enterprise Company. Compass results for the secondary schools and colleges in England with the Quality in Careers Standard 2021. Accessed March 2022. Available at: <https://www.qualityincareers.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Compass-results-and-Quality-in-Careers-Standard-7.1.2022.pdf>

²³ Department for Education (2021) Skills for jobs: lifelong learning for opportunity and growth. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/957856/Skills_for_jobs_lifelong_learning_for_opportunity_and_growth_web_version_.pdf

²⁴ LEP Network (2020) LEPs drive Careers Hubs extension to boost recovery. LEP network, 24 June. Accessed March 2022. Available at: <https://lepnetwork.net/news-and-events/2020/june/leps-drive-careers-hubs-extension-to-boost-recovery/>

²⁵ The Careers and Enterprise Company. Primary Careers Resources. Accessed March 2022. Available at: <https://primary-careers.careersandenterprise.co.uk/>

²⁶ Research. The Careers and Enterprise Company Primary Careers Resources. Accessed February 2022. Available at: <https://primary-careers.careersandenterprise.co.uk/practice/research>

²⁷ The Careers and Enterprise Company (2020) Careers Education in England's schools and colleges 2020. Careers and Enterprise Company. Available at: <https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/our-research/careers-education-englands-schools-and-colleges-2020>

²⁸ The Careers and Enterprise Company (2021) 2021: Trends in careers education. Careers and Enterprise Company. Available at: <https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/media/xadnk1hb/cec-trends-in-careers-education-2021.pdf>

²⁹ National Careers Service. Accessed March 2022. Available at: <https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/>

The NCS budget was allocated by the department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) (previously the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills; BIS) until 2017. Funding from the DfE has been variable; £74.5 million was awarded in the 2017/18 financial year, with £70.4 million allocated for 2021/22.³⁰ Funding ranged between £57 million and £64 million in the years between.

The skills assessment feature, consisting of an online test that suggests potential careers to users based on their responses, has been a particularly hot topic in recent months due to job losses during the Covid-19 pandemic. Those who had lost roles were encouraged to re-skill and re-train, with funding announced in the government's Plan For Jobs and a significant revamp of the platform set out in the Skills white paper.³¹ However, a previous government-commissioned review found no evidence of using the service leading to a higher likelihood of employment (albeit there were more positive associations when considering education and training pathways).³² Indeed, after an additional £32 million was allocated to the NCS in 2020, there have been several concerns around the current funding arrangements, highlighted in an open letter to Gillian Keegan from over 90 signatories, including Careers England and the Career Development Institute.³³

As set out in the Skills white paper, the government plans to improve the alignment between the NCS and the CEC to create a more comprehensive system. However, commentators have flagged that this will require bringing together two differing ways of working, which could be challenging, - currently, the NCS works with subcontractors to target provision to specific cohorts of adults, such as NEETs, with the only part of the service for young people being the website and phone service, whereas the CEC work more closely with government departments.³⁴

The service has recently been updated to offer more content for young people – a hub was added in January 2022 to provide a single hub of information on all post-16 pathways. A recent life skills campaign, *Get The Jump*, has been launched to attract young people to the website.³⁵

Policy on technical education and apprenticeships

In January 2018, the Baker Clause was introduced to ensure all schools and colleges are offering information on apprenticeships and other further education pathways, to recognise the importance of technical educational routes.³⁶ The law states that schools should be ensuring pupils from year 8 to year 13 are receiving information advice on technical education and apprenticeships from a range of employers and providers. This policy statement must be published on a school's website.

³⁰ Department for Education Freedom of Information request. Responses received 2nd and 8th of November 2021.

³¹ Department for Education (2021) Skills for Jobs: Lifelong Learning for Opportunity and Growth. Gov.uk. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/957856/Skills_for_jobs_lifelong_learning_for_opportunity_and_growth_web_version_.pdf

³² M. Lane *et al.* (2017) An economic evaluation of the National Careers Service. Department for Education, gov.uk. Available at: https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/28677/1/National_Careers_Service_economic_evaluation.pdf or for a summary see: FE News (2017) An economic evaluation of the National Careers Service. FE News. Available at: <https://www.fenews.co.uk/fevoices/13607-an-economic-evaluation-of-the-national-careers-service>

³³ Careers England, Careers Development Institute, Careers Research Advisory Centre (CRAC), University of Derby and International Centre for Guidance Studies (2020) An open letter to the secretary of state for Apprenticeships and Skills. Available at: <https://www.careersengland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Dear-Gillian-Keegan-Open-lettter-final-2-page.pdf> and Careers England (2020) Risks to Rishi Sunak's Extra Investment in Careers Advice in the 'Plan For Jobs'. FE News, September 30. Available at: www.fenews.co.uk/featured-article/55658-risks-to-rishi-sunak-s-extra-investment-in-careers-advice-in-the-plan-for-jobs

³⁴ J. Staufenberg (2021) Can the government fix the 'confusing' careers landscape? FE Week. Available at: <https://feweek.co.uk/can-the-government-fix-the-confusing-careers-landscape/>

³⁵ Explore your choices. National Careers Service. Accessed March 2022. Available at: <https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/explore-your-education-and-training-choices>

³⁶ J. Burke (2017) Baker clause: Schools obliged to let FE providers talk to pupils from January. FE Week. Available at: <https://feweek.co.uk/2017/11/23/baker-clause-schools-will-have-to-open-doors-to-fe-providers-from-january/>

The Baker Clause also features in the House of Lord's Skills and Post-16 Education Bill, whereby an amendment from the government states that pupils should expect two mandatory visits from providers of technical education and apprenticeships over the course of their secondary education.³⁷ However, the plans have been criticised by the creator of the clause, Lord Baker, who has said the fact that the government have reserved the right to specify further details in secondary legislation weakens the intent of the proposals. A stronger clause was proposed by Lord Baker to make it obligatory for schools to arrange three mandatory encounters with technical education and training providers over the course of their secondary education,³⁸ however this amendment was scrapped by the government.³⁹

Information on apprenticeships and other technical education routes is available from the government's apprenticeships website, which offers online guidance for prospective apprentices as well as employers.⁴⁰ The DfE has also funded the Apprenticeship Support and Knowledge for Schools and Colleges (ASK) programme; a source of support in delivering information about apprenticeships, traineeships and T-Levels for education providers.⁴¹ Additionally in this space, organisations like Amazing Apprenticeships offer online support, resources for education providers and conduct outreach activities.⁴² The OfS also has an online guide for degree apprenticeships,⁴³ and UCAS have a range of information and resources available on their website.⁴⁴ The Sutton Trust itself has also launched its first ever Apprenticeship Summer School to highlight the benefits and routes into degree level apprenticeships.

The Gatsby benchmarks also cover guidance on further technical education. Benchmark 7 states that all pupils should understand all academic and vocational routes that are available to them, with the expectation that by age 16 all pupils should have had at least one meaningful encounter with a provider associated with each option. The Gatsby Foundation have argued that the embedding of their benchmarks across different levels of education before post-16 is vital in order for young people to be able to be prepared and informed to take up roles that arise as technical education as well as UK industry grow.⁴⁵ Without this, young people will not be equipped for the large number of technical jobs that are part of the government's industrial strategy.⁴⁶

Reviews and regulation

In 2017, the DfE published a careers strategy, aiming to improve social mobility, as part of the government's long term industrial strategy aiming to raise earning power and productivity.⁴⁷ The document introduces a set of key milestones involving the expansion of programmes supported by the CEC (notably including a new round of the CEC's Investment Fund to target support at the most disadvantaged groups), improvements to the NCS and offering at least one opportunity per year for all

³⁷ Skills and Post-16 Education Bill. Paliamentary Bills, UK Parliament. Accessed March 2022. Available at: <https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2868>

³⁸ S. Chowen (2021) Baker to take on government over 'inadequate' careers guidance laws. FE Week. Available at: <https://feweek.co.uk/baker-to-take-on-government-over-inadequate-careers-guidance-laws/>

³⁹ S. Chowen (2021) Government strips popular Lords amendments from Skills Bill. FE Week. Available at: <https://feweek.co.uk/government-strips-popular-lords-amendments-from-skills-bill/>

⁴⁰ HM Government. Connecting people with ambition to businesses with vision. Accessed March 2022. Available at: <https://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk/>

⁴¹ HM Government. Influencers – the ASK programme. Accessed March 2022. Available at: <https://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk/influencers/ask-programme-resources>

⁴² Amazing Apprenticeships. Accessed March 2022. Available at: <https://amazingapprenticeships.com/about-us/>

⁴³ Office for Students. Degree apprenticeships – guide for apprentices. Accessed March 2022. Available at: <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/for-students/degree-apprenticeships-guide-for-apprentices/>

⁴⁴ UCAS. Apprenticeships. Interested in apprenticeships? Find out everything you need to know. Accessed March 2022. Available at: <https://www.ucas.com/understanding-apprenticeships>

⁴⁵ The Gatsby Charitable Foundation. Good careers guidance. Accessed March 2022. Available at: <https://www.gatsby.org.uk/education/focus-areas/good-career-guidance>

⁴⁶ Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy. (2017) Industrial Strategy: the 5 foundations. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/industrial-strategy-the-foundations/industrial-strategy-the-5-foundations>

⁴⁷ Department for Education (2017) Careers strategy: making the most of everyone's skills and talents. Gov.uk. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/careers-strategy-making-the-most-of-everyones-skills-and-talents>

students to interact with employers. All milestones in the strategy were set out to be achieved by the end of 2020 – although no evaluation has yet been published to indicate whether the aims of the strategy have been met.

There has not yet been an updated careers strategy published by the government. However there have been some significant policy changes outlined in other documents. As part of the government's recent Skills for Jobs white paper, careers guidance in schools is set to become compulsory for year 7s upwards, with updated statutory guidance due to be published.⁴⁸ There are also calls for careers guidance to become mandatory for even younger age groups; for instance, the House of Lords Youth Unemployment Committee want to see careers education compulsory from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 4.⁴⁹ This call comes alongside a recommendation for the government to ensure that the curriculum covers the knowledge and skills that are relevant to both emerging and existing sectors in the economy which are currently experiencing skills gaps and shortages.

The Skills white paper also stated that the Careers Hub rollout would continue and more investment would be made in Careers Leaders through the CEC, with the work of the CEC becoming more closely aligned with that of the National Careers Service. Although these new policies have been welcomed, some MPs want to see better links between the CEC and schools so that pupils can access knowledge of other careers that their teachers may not know about.⁵⁰ Concerns over a lack of clear timelines for improvements to the CEC in the white paper as well as the level of influence the organisation has over schools were also flagged in a House of Lords debate in 2021.⁵¹

Careers guidance was also mentioned in a section of the Augar Review, published in 2019 focusing on post-18 education and funding.⁵² Although the review's main focus is higher education, one of the recommendations is for the government's careers strategy to be rolled out nationwide across all secondary schools, with funding increased to a level which allows all schools to be part of a Careers Hub and all Careers Leaders to receive further training, so that young people can be well informed about the post-18 options available. The review also calls for schools to be held to account for their provision, ensuring that the requirement of apprenticeship and technical education providers to visit all schools is being met. Moreover, the Labour Party have pledged to give all schools access to a professional Careers Adviser at least one day per week and introduce two weeks of compulsory work experience.⁵³

Careers guidance is also mentioned briefly in the government's levelling up strategy document, published in February 2021.⁵⁴ Unifying local delivery partners from the Department for Work and Pensions and the

⁴⁸ Department for Education (2021) Skills for jobs: lifelong learning for opportunity and growth. Gov.uk. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/957856/Skills_for_jobs_lifelong_learning_for_opportunity_and_growth_web_version_.pdf

⁴⁹ House of Lords, Youth Unemployment Committee (2021) Skills for every young person. Report of sessions 2021-22. Available at: <https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/506/youth-unemployment-committee/news/159184/urgent-action-needed-to-tackle-and-prevent-youth-unemployment/>

⁵⁰ Esther McVey- Hansard Extract (Careers Guidance in Schools) Bill. Commons Chamber. Available at: [https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2021-09-10/debates/B2372DF6-9B7A-4534-A07D-3649824F7901/Education\(CareersGuidanceInSchools\)Bill?highlight=careers#contribution-29F26518-54AC-4831-A016-C5F06D5DB207](https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2021-09-10/debates/B2372DF6-9B7A-4534-A07D-3649824F7901/Education(CareersGuidanceInSchools)Bill?highlight=careers#contribution-29F26518-54AC-4831-A016-C5F06D5DB207)

⁵¹ Lord Patel – Hansard extract. House of Lords. Available at: [https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/2021-07-19/debates/AEC59D02-6B02-425C-B795-10908C197C83/SkillsAndPost-16EducationBill\(HL\)?highlight=cec#contribution-ADA2B02D-F2F6-463E-94E0-52580B648BCE](https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/2021-07-19/debates/AEC59D02-6B02-425C-B795-10908C197C83/SkillsAndPost-16EducationBill(HL)?highlight=cec#contribution-ADA2B02D-F2F6-463E-94E0-52580B648BCE)

⁵² Department for Education (2019) Post-18 review of education and funding: independent panel report. Gov.uk. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/post-18-review-of-education-and-funding-independent-panel-report>

⁵³ Labour Party (2021) Labour would make sure every child leaves school job-ready and life-ready. Available at: <https://labour.org.uk/press/labour-would-make-sure-every-child-leaves-school-job-ready-and-life-ready/>

⁵⁴ HM Government (2022) Levelling up the United Kingdom. Gov.uk. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1052706/Levelling_Up_WP_HRES.pdf

DfE, including careers services, is pledged in order to support people into jobs that fulfil local skills needs.

In terms of regulation, the schools inspectorate Ofsted report on personal development, which is where career information and guidance sits.⁵⁵ Schools should be providing an effective careers programme in line with the government's statutory guidance on careers guidance that offers pupils information on a variety of career options and what is needed to succeed in them.⁵⁶

The House of Lords Youth Unemployment Committee, the House of Commons Education Select Committee and the think tank IPPR have all suggested that Ofsted should assess compliance with the Clause, with suggestions also made that local authorities should work with local employers and directly contact parents with wide ranging advice not just focussed on technical education. This year, Ofsted penalised a school for the first time for failing the Baker Clause, indicating that the body may have listened to the calls for the clause to be a consideration in the inspection process.⁵⁷ Indeed, in the recent Skills white paper, the DfE pledged they will be tougher on schools not complying with the clause.⁵⁸

The Covid-19 pandemic has also shaped recent policy developments in the careers guidance field, as have immigration specific labour market issues following both Brexit and the pandemic. As the country's economy recovers from the pandemic, adapts to Brexit, and the government works towards its 'Levelling Up' strategy, the importance of careers guidance has also come to the forefront, with increased funding for careers guidance being part of the chancellor's Plan For Jobs. An extra £32 million was announced for the National Careers Service as part of the Covid-19 recovery package, which came with a pledge to reach over 250,000 more young people (although, the way that this funding was allocated made it difficult for the service to actually spend it).⁵⁹ New Youth Hubs have also been set up for young people to find training and job opportunities.⁶⁰ These changes are vital to ensure young people have the right information and advice for an ever-changing job market.

Gaining an insight into the current state of play in the careers guidance space is key to understanding the feasibility of achieving the aims set out in these documents. It is clear that there has been a large amount of change since the Sutton Trust last looked at this policy area, including the creation of the Careers and Enterprise Company and the introduction of new statutory guidance for schools and colleges. While many of these individual strands of careers guidance are positive, as it stands, there is not a clear careers strategy that brings all of the important aspects of careers advice and guidance together, and how these changes are translating into the provision available within schools is less clear.

⁵⁵ Ofsted (2018) Ofsted: schools, early years, further education and skills. Building confidence, encouraging aspiration. Available at: <https://educationinspection.blog.gov.uk/2018/06/12/building-confidence-encouraging-aspiration/>

⁵⁶ Ofsted (2019) School inspection handbook. Gov.uk. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-inspection-handbook-eif>

⁵⁷ B. Camden (2020). Ofsted raps first school over Baker Clause. FE Week. Available at: <https://feweek.co.uk/2020/05/15/school-slammed-by-ofsted-after-failing-baker-clause/> and F. Whieldon (2021) Pressure mounts on Ofsted to limit grades by Baker Clause compliance. FE Week. Available at: <https://feweek.co.uk/pressure-mounts-on-ofsted-to-limit-grades-by-baker-clause-compliance/>

⁵⁸ F. Whittaker. (2021) DfE to toughen up Baker Clause and extend careers requirement to year 7s. Schools Week. Available at: <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/dfe-to-toughen-up-baker-clause-and-extend-careers-requirement-to-year-7s/>

⁵⁹ T. Hooley. (2020) Gillian Keegan needs to free the National Careers Service to do its job. FE Week. Available at: <https://www.fenews.co.uk/exclusive/gillian-keegan-needs-to-free-the-national-careers-service-to-do-its-job/>

⁶⁰ Department for Work and Pensions (2021) Over 110 new Youth Hubs offer job help. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/over-110-new-youth-hubs-offer-job-help>

Existing evidence on careers education

The following section looks at what is known in the research literature on what makes for good quality careers guidance, existing issues with provision and potential barriers, with a focus on guidance in schools.

For disadvantaged young people, a significant barrier to their desired career is having access to information about what a particular path involves and the best subjects to study in order to access it. Those from poorer backgrounds are also less likely to know about the range of career choices on offer in the first place. Knowledge of particular careers or subject choices can often come from sources both inside and outside of the classroom, such as friends and family, but it is those from the poorest backgrounds who are least likely to receive such insights. As a result, they may have lower aspirations for their future career that do not reflect their potential.

High quality careers guidance from a school or college can open the door to a post-16 pathway that a young person from a lower socioeconomic background would not have otherwise known about. Alternatively, when it comes to the most competitive careers such as law, politics or medicine, they may be aware of the roles but not be sure of the pathway to reach them. Indeed, previous research has found that careers guidance in schools is the main source of guidance for students who grew up in families where the top earners were in low-skilled roles and-or had not gone to university,⁶¹ and advice received can overcome barriers that are created by socioeconomic background. But currently, access to such provision appears to be a postcode lottery.⁶²

The value of careers guidance

Receiving high quality careers guidance can have an effect not just on the years following education but also much further into the life course. In a comprehensive, international literature review by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF), 67% of the papers reviewed provided robust evidence that activities like work-related learning positively impacted economic outcomes and 62% found a positive association with social outcomes such as career maturity (the level of preparedness for making career-related decisions) and career identity (the ability to link interests and skills to particular careers).⁶³ Furthermore, the review concluded that disadvantaged students were more likely to be unsure regarding choosing the correct qualifications to match their ideal career. The research makes it clear that careers guidance provided in education settings has the potential to reach all students and, when tailored to individual needs, can meet the needs of students looking for guidance regarding their next steps.

The OECD have also produced a wealth of research in this space. A recent report on teenagers' career expectations, analysing data from 41 countries, has found that there is a misalignment with young people's aspirations and the qualifications they think are required to access them.⁶⁴ It also finds that high attaining disadvantaged young people are less likely to hold 'ambitious' aspirations compared to high attainers from privileged backgrounds. The report highlights the need for careers guidance to cover the qualifications required for particular pathways, as well as opportunities to experience encounters

⁶¹ G. Haynes *et al.* (2012) Young people's decision making; the importance of high quality school-based careers education, information, advice and guidance. Research Papers in Education. Available at: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/02671522.2012.727099>

⁶² A. G. Watts, J. Matheson and T. Hooley (2014) Advancing Ambitions. The Sutton Trust. Available at: <https://www.suttontrust.com/our-research/advancing-ambitions/>

⁶³ D. Hughes *et al.* (2016) Careers education: international literature review. The Education Endowment Foundation. Available at: https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Presentations/Publications/Careers_review.pdf

⁶⁴ A. Mann *et al.* (2020) Dream Jobs? Teenagers career aspirations and the future of work. The OECD. Available at: <https://www.oecd.org/education/dream-jobs-teenagers-career-aspirations-and-the-future-of-work.htm>

with employers. Additionally, the OECD highlighted the importance of covering the labour market changes associated with the Covid-19 pandemic in the guidance delivered in schools, and recommended that individual guidance should be tailored to account for this.⁶⁵ They have warned that in previous times of economic turbulence it was disadvantaged students who were more likely to experience poor levels of career readiness.

The importance of starting early

The evidence review from the OECD concluded that careers guidance is most successful when advice is personalised to individuals and is accessed from an early age, before starting secondary school. The value of careers guidance activities from an early stage is also made clear in a large-scale, global study by the charity Education and Employers, which found that the patterns in ideal jobs of 7 year-olds are often reflected in the choices made by 17 year olds.⁶⁶ The study identified that nearly 2 in 5 (36%) of primary school children under the age of 7 base their aspirations on people they know, with a significant proportion on the remaining children (45%) saying they were influenced by the media, such as TV and film. Less than 1% of children said that visitors to their school had told them about a career. In the UK specifically, whilst career aspirations were similar across levels of deprivation overall, several high-earning professions (such as engineers, lawyers and vets) are more likely to be aspired to by students in more affluent schools.

These findings are particularly concerning, given that disadvantaged young children are less likely to have friends and family from a wide range of careers (particularly those that are paid highly) to influence their aspirations at a young age and, as the Education and Employers report discusses, this could negatively impact their labour market choices later on in life. By educating children about careers from a young age, connections between the classroom and careers as an adult can be established, and any stereotypes associated with gender, ethnicity and class can be broken down.⁶⁷

Guidance on options for the future is important not only in primary school, but also in the early years of secondary school. Based on analysis of a survey of 18 to 20 year-olds in the UK, UCAS found that 1 in 3 students begin to think about higher education when in primary school, with disadvantaged students 1.4 times less likely to do so compared to more affluent peers.⁶⁸ The report also highlighted the importance of individual guidance when it comes to deciding which subjects to study at school - two in five students felt more information and advice would have led to them making better subject choices to match their degree, with these students almost three times as likely to report not being able to study a degree course that might have interested them at university or college due to not holding the necessary subjects (30% of students vs. 11% of students). Based on their findings, UCAS have called for broader, personalised guidance to be available from a young age, with more targeted outreach activities taking place in primary schools and the lower years of secondary school.

⁶⁵ A. Mann, V. Denis and C. Percy (2020) Career Ready? How schools can better prepare young people for working life in the era of COVID-19. Available at: https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/career-ready_e1503534-en

⁶⁶ N. Chambers *et al.* (2018) Drawing the future. Education and Employers. Available at: <https://www.educationandemployers.org/drawing-the-future-report-published/>

⁶⁷ P. Musset and L. Mytna Kurekova (2018) Working it out: Career Guidance and Employer Engagement, OECD Education Working Papers, No. 175, OECD. Available at: https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/working-it-out_51c9d18d-en;jsessionid=cHcPcm6vhEE-YBCs9kJx_G5y.ip-10-240-5-92

⁶⁸ UCAS (2011) Where next? What influences the choices school leavers make? UCAS. Available at: <https://www.ucas.com/file/435551/download?token=VUdIDVFh>

Regional inequalities

The fragmented nature of careers guidance, across not just England but the whole of the UK, often appears in the literature, with regional patterns of careers provision often mirroring patterns of social class, which could be exacerbating inequalities.⁶⁹ Regional variation has also been seen in previous research looking at engagement with employers, with levels of recalled engagements by those under the age of 25 who have left school 22% higher in the South East of England than in Scotland and North East England.⁷⁰

There are also sector specific challenges. For example, in a report on innovation and invention, NESTA found that less than 1.5% of schools are currently involved in schemes aimed to attract students to inventing, with those in the South twice as likely to have taken part compared to students in the Midlands.⁷¹ It was also found that schools with better-off pupil populations were more likely to be involved and are six times as likely to send pupils to invention competitions and then reach the final. Although this research only considers one particular area, it provides insight into the regional inequalities in STEM-related provision, and highlights important improvements. The organisation has called for better co-ordination between schools and providers; one way of doing this could be for businesses to create long-term relationships with local schools. Similarly, the Local Government Association (LGA) have called for funding and control of employment schemes to go back to local authorities to bring the 'patchwork' of careers activities to an end (they previously held responsibility before the implementation of the 2011 Education Act and the dissolution of the Connexions service).⁷²

Previous research has also identified a link between Ofsted ratings and Gatsby benchmark performance, with higher-rated schools performing better,⁷³ further emphasising the view that careers guidance is a postcode lottery. But it may be wrong to assume that lower-rated schools do not have any careers education provision in place; it is common to see that careers services have self-referral systems, which could disadvantage those who are less aware of the value of careers guidance and the variety of advice available.⁷⁴ Guidance can also be affected by biases of both schools and careers staff, such as encouraging children to choose post-16 options at the school they are currently at,⁷⁵ or unconscious bias leading to lower-ability pathways being suggested for students that are in fact capable of more.⁷⁶

Insight to the workplace

A key part of careers guidance is young people getting to speak to employers and visit workplaces to find out what particular careers are like. This is particularly important for those interested in an apprenticeship, as they will be entering a workplace whilst also studying. Previous research has shown

⁶⁹ J. Moote and L. Archer (2018) Failing to deliver? Exploring the current status of career education provision in England, *Research Papers in Education*, 33:2, 187-215. Available at:

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/02671522.2016.1271005>

⁷⁰ A. Mann *et al.* (2016) Contemporary transitions: Young Britons reflect on life after secondary school and college. *Education and Employers*. Available at: <https://www.educationandemployers.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Contemporary-Transitions-30-1-2017.pdf>

⁷¹ M. Gabriel *et al.* (2018) Opportunity Lost: How inventive potential is squandered and what to do about it. NESTA. Available at: <https://www.nesta.org.uk/report/opportunity-lost-how-inventive-potential-squandered-and-what-do-about-it/>

⁷² LGA (2019) Thousands of young people missing out on vital careers support, Councils warn. *Policy Mogul*, 29 October. Available at: <https://policymogul.com/key-updates/5441/thousands-of-young-people-missing-out-on-vital-careers-support-councils-warn>

⁷³ R. Long and S. Hubble (2018) Careers guidance in schools, colleges and universities. House of Commons Library, Briefing Paper 07236. House of Commons. Available at: <https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/30886/1/CBP-7236%20.pdf>

⁷⁴ J. Moote and L. Archer (2018) Failing to deliver? Exploring the current status of career education provision in England, *Research Papers in Education*, 33:2, 187-215. Available at: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/02671522.2016.1271005>

⁷⁵ N. Foskett *et al.* (2008) The influence of the school in the decision to participate in learning post-16. *British Educational Research Journal* 34, no. 1: 37-61. Available at: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/01411920701491961>

⁷⁶ G. Haynes *et al.* (2005) Equality and pathfinders, Occupational Segregation Working Paper Series No. 36. Manchester, NH. Equal Opportunities Commission. Available at: <https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/7285/1/RW37.pdf>

that significant interaction with employers whilst at school is associated with higher likelihood of optimism surrounding job prospects after leaving school;⁷⁷ notably, careers talks at ages 14 and 15 have been particularly associated with improved wage outcomes in later life.⁷⁸ When education providers and employers work collaboratively, these interactions are particularly impactful.⁷⁹ Furthermore, engagement with employers between ages 14 and 19 has been found to add 4.1% to a young person's salary, with those who had at least four occasions of engagement seeing a 16.4% boost to their income as young adults.⁸⁰ With fewer young people gaining labour market experience and interaction with employers through paid work (in 1997 42% of 16-17 years olds had a part time job whilst in education compared to only 18% in 2014),⁸¹ schools and colleges have an increasingly important role, so that young people do not miss out on the opportunities interactions with employers can provide.

Completing work experience is another great way to gain an insight into the workplace, and to develop the skills required to succeed at work. Indeed, the importance of work experience was previously highlighted in a government social mobility strategy.⁸² A piece by the organisation Education and Employers found that completing work experience can also help students to make decisions about particular careers; experiencing a workplace environment can help to break down stereotypes and perceptions of a particular industry and may also highlight to someone whether a particular career is for them, allowing them (if the placement is undertaken early) to change their education plans.⁸³ It also highlights the value that competing a placement can have to young people in terms of skill development, including communication and teamwork.

Furthermore, careers guidance can help young people understand the labour market and the kinds of jobs they can access. As part of their research on young children's career aspirations (discussed previously), Education and Employers raised concerns that aspirations of children in the UK did not mirror projected workforce needs, which could have economic consequences particularly for engineering and nursing.⁸⁴ Additionally, a survey of over 7,000 14 to 18 year olds in the UK found that the careers many young people aspire to do not match the opportunities available in the labour market; for example, the number of respondents who aspire to work in the arts sector is five times higher than the average number of roles available.⁸⁵ The research also finds association between participating in a range of careers-related activities and having career aspirations that are better connected to the labour market. It is highly important that careers guidance efficiently covers a range of labour market sectors, particularly those where there is likely to be a wide range of available roles in the coming years.

⁷⁷ Deloitte UK & Education and Employers Taskforce (2010) Helping Young People Succeed: How Employers Can Support Careers Education. Education and Employers. Available at: <https://www.educationandemployers.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/deloitte-eet-young-people-succeed-report-final.pdf>

⁷⁸ E.T. Kashefpakdel and C. Percy (2017) Career education that works: an economic analysis using the British Cohort Study. *Journal of Education and Work*, 30:3, 217-234 Available at: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13639080.2016.1177636>

⁷⁹ M. Kuijpers (2019) Career guidance in collaboration between schools and work organisations. *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, 47:4, 487-497. Available at: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/03069885.2018.1548007>

⁸⁰ A Mann *et al.* (2017) Contemporary transitions: Young Britons reflect on life after secondary school and college. Education and employers research. Available at: <https://www.educationandemployers.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Contemporary-Transitions-30-1-2017-1.pdf>

⁸¹ DR D. Hughes OBE *et al.* (2016) Careers education: International Literature Review. Education Endowment Foundation. Available at: https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Presentations/Publications/Careers_review.pdf

⁸² Cabinet Office and Deputy Prime Minister's Office (2011) Opening doors, breaking barriers: a strategy for social mobility. HM Government. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/opening-doors-breaking-barriers-a-strategy-for-social-mobility>

⁸³ A. Mann (2012) Work Experience: Impact and Delivery – Insights from the Evidence. Education and Employers Taskforce. Available at: <https://www.preparingforadulthood.org.uk/downloads/employment/work-experience-impact-and-delivery--insights-from-the-evidence.htm>

⁸⁴ N. Chambers *et al.* (2018) Drawing the future. Education and Employers. Available at: <https://www.educationandemployers.org/drawing-the-future-report-published/>

⁸⁵ N. Chambers *et al.* (2020) Disconnected: Career aspirations and jobs in the UK. Education and Employers. Available at: <https://www.educationandemployers.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Disconnected-Career-aspirations-and-jobs-in-the-UK.pdf>

The Sutton Trust has previously published a guide for employers to improve social mobility in their workforce,⁸⁶ covering how best to work with schools and colleges to offer work placements and insight opportunities. The guide advises employers to look beyond their local area, working with both teachers and organisations already working with young people where possible to ensure disadvantaged students are targeted appropriately.

Further and technical education

High quality careers guidance should cover a range of pathways through education, including T-Levels and apprenticeships, and should demonstrate the potential value of taking such paths. However, current evidence suggests that young people are not receiving sufficient information about these different qualification routes. Our recent report on apprenticeship outreach found that 1 in 4 apprentices aged between 16 and 24 thought the application process was difficult to navigate, 14% had received no information before starting their apprenticeship.⁸⁷ Furthermore, our previous research in 2018 found that 64% of teachers would rarely or never advise a high performing student to opt for an apprenticeship, and 37% of these teachers stated that this was because of lack of information.⁸⁸ The most recent review of the Baker Clause from the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) in 2019 additionally found that only 2 in 5 schools were complying by the clause's requirements.⁸⁹ In their report, the organisation called for an online toolkit to be created for technical education advice.

Aside from apprenticeships, a study looking at careers guidance 14–19 Diploma (offered from 2008 to 2013 in England (designed to offer a more applied learning style) found that only 26% were aware of the careers that were accessible by completing the diploma and 19% knew the courses that graduates could do.⁹⁰ Furthermore, only 46% of a sample of 477 students believed they made the correct qualification choices in year 9 by the time they had finished their diploma studies, and a strong correlation was also found between the quality of careers guidance and levels of satisfaction with the diploma. Although students can no longer take this qualification, the context applies to other vocational qualifications, such as an apprenticeship. Without the appropriate advice, students may lack understanding of a particular qualification, which could negatively impact both engagement and take up.

Wider support

Outside of education, social and cultural capital, such as parental influence, also shapes young people's aspirations and awareness of career pathways. This influence can work both ways, with potential for young people to be exposed to careers they may not have heard of before whilst alternatively being persuaded to choose another path, which could be a positive or negative influence. A paper from the Cabinet Office, drawing on data from the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England (LSYPE), concluded that household and extended family members have a significant influence on a child's career aspirations, with low aspirations associated with growing up in a deprived environment.⁹¹ Indeed, analysis

⁸⁶ The Sutton Trust (2020) Social mobility in the workplace: an employer's guide. Sutton Trust. Available at: <https://www.suttontrust.com/our-research/social-mobility-in-the-workplace-an-employers-guide/>

⁸⁷ K. Doherty and E. Holt-White (2021) Apprenticeship outreach. Sutton Trust. Available at: <https://www.suttontrust.com/our-research/apprenticeship-outreach/>

⁸⁸ The Sutton Trust (2018) Apprenticeship polling 2018. Sutton Trust. Available at: <https://www.suttontrust.com/ourresearch/apprenticeship-polling-2018/>

⁸⁹ D. Hochlaf and J. Dromey (2019) The Baker Clause: One Year One. IPPR. Available at: <https://www.ippr.org/files/2019-01/the-baker-clause-one-year-on-january19.pdf>

⁹⁰ G. Haynes *et al.* (2013) Young people's decision-making: the importance of high quality school-based careers education, information, advice and guidance. *Research Papers in Education*, 28:4, 459-482. Available at: <https://www.tandfonline.com/action/showCitFormats?doi=10.1080%2F02671522.2012.727099>

⁹¹ Cabinet Office (2008) Aspiration and attainment amongst young people in deprived communities. Communities and Local Government. Available at: <https://lx.iriss.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Aspiration%20and%20attainment.pdf>

of PISA data found that children from more advantaged backgrounds are more like to aspire to professional roles, whilst disadvantaged students are more likely to want to be technicians.⁹²

Activities outside of school can also have an influence on the decisions young people make regarding their education. For instance, in a study using data from the Understanding Society cohort study on pupils aged 10-16, below average participation in cultural activities was associated with a 14% increase in the odds of not wanting to go to university and a 20% increase in perceiving GCSEs to be unimportant.⁹³ Above average participation in cultural activities was associated with a 23% decrease in the odds of choosing a non-education post-16 pathway, such as employment or training. However, participation in these cultural activities, like visiting a museum, were more likely in wealthier families, an issue which has also been explored in previous Sutton Trust research.⁹⁴

Guidance should also be tailored to support students from different socioeconomic backgrounds. Sometimes young people from poorer families can regard the views of their family and other connections more highly than the views of other sources, which may be challenging if their families' information sources are limited.⁹⁵ Indeed, it has been argued that whilst careers provision in schools can act as a proxy for the guidance more advantaged students may receive from their family and friends, social capital from families often has a stronger influence, particularly in disadvantaged families where there may be more pressure on securing earnings or to go into a certain career.⁹⁶ Guidance that bridges between what is offered during education and the social capital offered by family, friends and others is seen to be the most impactful for disadvantaged students.⁹⁷ It is therefore important to not only investigate the quality of careers services in education providers but also to consider other sources of guidance, such as family and friends, to truly understand the differences in careers advice and guidance between students of different social classes.

⁹² P. Musset and L. Mytna Kurekova (2018) Working it out: Career Guidance and Employer Engagement. OECD Education Working Papers, No. 175. OECD. Available at: <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/51c9d18d-en.pdf?expires=1612542190&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=F6215D4D8ED4C34D8B8BA9399D832D68>

⁹³ D. Hartas (2016) Young people's educational aspirations : psychosocial factors and the home environment. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 19 (9). pp. 1145-1163. Available at: <http://wrap.warwick.ac.uk/77073/>

⁹⁴ C. Cullinane and R. Montacute (2017) Life Lessons. Sutton Trust. Available at: <https://www.suttontrust.com/our-research/life-lessons-workplace-skills/>

⁹⁵ A. Houghton *et al.* (2020) Delivering careers guidance in English secondary schools: Policy versus practice. *British Journal of Educational Studies*. Available at: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00071005.2020.1734533?src=recsys>

⁹⁶ A. Mann *et al.* (2018) "Socialised social capital? The capacity of schools to use careers provision to compensate for social capital deficiencies among teenagers." In *Essays on Employer Engagement in Education*. Eds, A. Mann *et al.* (pp. 68–83). London: Routledge. Available at: <https://www.educationandemployers.org/research/socialised-social-capital/>

⁹⁷ A. Mann *et al.* (2018) Socialised social capital? The capacity of schools to use careers provision to compensate for social capital deficiencies among teenagers (summary page). *Education and Employers*. Available at: <https://www.educationandemployers.org/research/socialised-social-capital/>

Methodology

The data section of this report examines current provision in secondary schools. Primary data has been collected from teachers (with breakdowns here for sub-groups of teachers including senior leaders and Careers Leaders) and secondary school students from the sources outlined below.

Teachers

Teachers in England were polled between the 22nd and 26th of October 2021 using the platform Teacher Tapp. The sample is made up of 3,140 teachers; out of those where the relevant information is available, 2,884 work at state secondary schools and 249 work at private secondary schools. Overall figures apply to state schools only, unless otherwise stated. The sample is weighted to represent the teaching population of England.

School affluence is determined by the proportion of the school's pupils who are eligible for free school meals, with schools being divided into quartiles.

Questions for teachers on resources for giving guidance and advice were taken from a wider set of questions that were part of a National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) survey. NFER surveyed teachers across England in March 2021 as part of the Teacher Voice Omnibus Surveys run three times a year, in the autumn, spring and summer terms. The panel is representative of teachers from the full range of roles in primary and secondary schools, from head teachers to newly qualified class teachers. A panel of 1,535 practicing teachers from 1,349 schools in the publicly funded sector in England completed the survey.

Teachers completed the survey online between the 12th and the 17th of March 2021. 719 were secondary school teachers whilst the remainder worked at primary schools, which were excluded from the sample. 524 respondents were classroom teachers and 195 were members of senior leadership. Here, free school meal eligibility data was used to divide schools into quintiles.

Careers Leaders

The views of Careers Leaders were gathered in two ways; through an online survey, and as a sub-group from the Teacher Tapp data outlined above. Both methods resulted in small sample sizes, so conclusions from this data should be treated with caution.

59 self-identifying Careers Leaders working in a secondary school or college completed a voluntary survey on the platform Form Assembly between the 3rd and 23rd of November 2021. The survey was advertised on the Careers and Enterprise Company's newsletter as well as the company's social media platform. Respondents had to self-confirm their Careers Leader status to be able to complete the survey, which consisted of a combination of both open and closed questions. 31 worked in a secondary school and 7 worked in a college or sixth form, with the remainder of the sample working in both. Findings were exported into Excel, and open questions were then analysed to identify common themes. For closed questions, percentages were calculated to identify the most common responses.

Additionally, results from the polling carried out by Teacher Tapp were filtered to only include teachers who had identified themselves as Careers Leaders. This reduced the sample to 65 responses.

Findings from both the Careers and Enterprise Company survey and the Teacher Tapp polling were compared to ensure that any themes identified were similar across both datasets. The questions used were largely consistent across the two surveys, but the following additional topics were a part of the Careers and Enterprise Company survey only: the strength of provision in particular areas (GCSE options;

A level options; apprenticeships and technical qualifications; higher education; STEM subject specific guidance for future careers and key employment sectors in the local area) and how careers guidance could be improved nationally.

Students

In order to investigate careers guidance across secondary education, we surveyed school and college pupils from years 7 to 13 and the equivalent year groups in the devolved UK nations.

The polling sample was made up of 1,083 pupils aged between 11 and 18, surveyed between the 4th of November 2021 and the 10th of November 2021. The sample was selected from the YouGov panel, with questions answered online. Questions covered the careers guidance activities participants had previously taken part in, the school years during which they received guidance and how useful participants thought the guidance was in relation to particular topics, such as choosing school subjects and future career paths. The data has been weighted to be representative of 11- to 18-year-olds as a whole.

In order to calculate breakdowns by socio-economic background, those taking part in the survey were asked about the occupation of the main earner in their household when they were 16 years old. The responses were then used to determine a social grade, a classification based on occupation, developed for the National Readership Survey. Social grade is one of the most common ways to determine socioeconomic status based on occupation, splitting responses into two groups; ABC1 and C2DE. ABC1 represents 'middle' class (here also referred to as higher socio-economic class, or as individuals from better-off backgrounds), and C2DE - 'working' class (also referred to here as those from lower socio-economic or poorer backgrounds). When interpreting results from these groups, it should be noted that as these are two broad groups; it is likely they underestimate the diversity within them.

For one question, where respondents were asked if particular sources of guidance had been helpful when deciding which subjects and qualifications to choose, the sample was re-contacted in order to have the correct base of just those in years 10 to 13. The recontact sample was again made up of 1083 students, 422 of which were in years 10 to 13.

Current provision

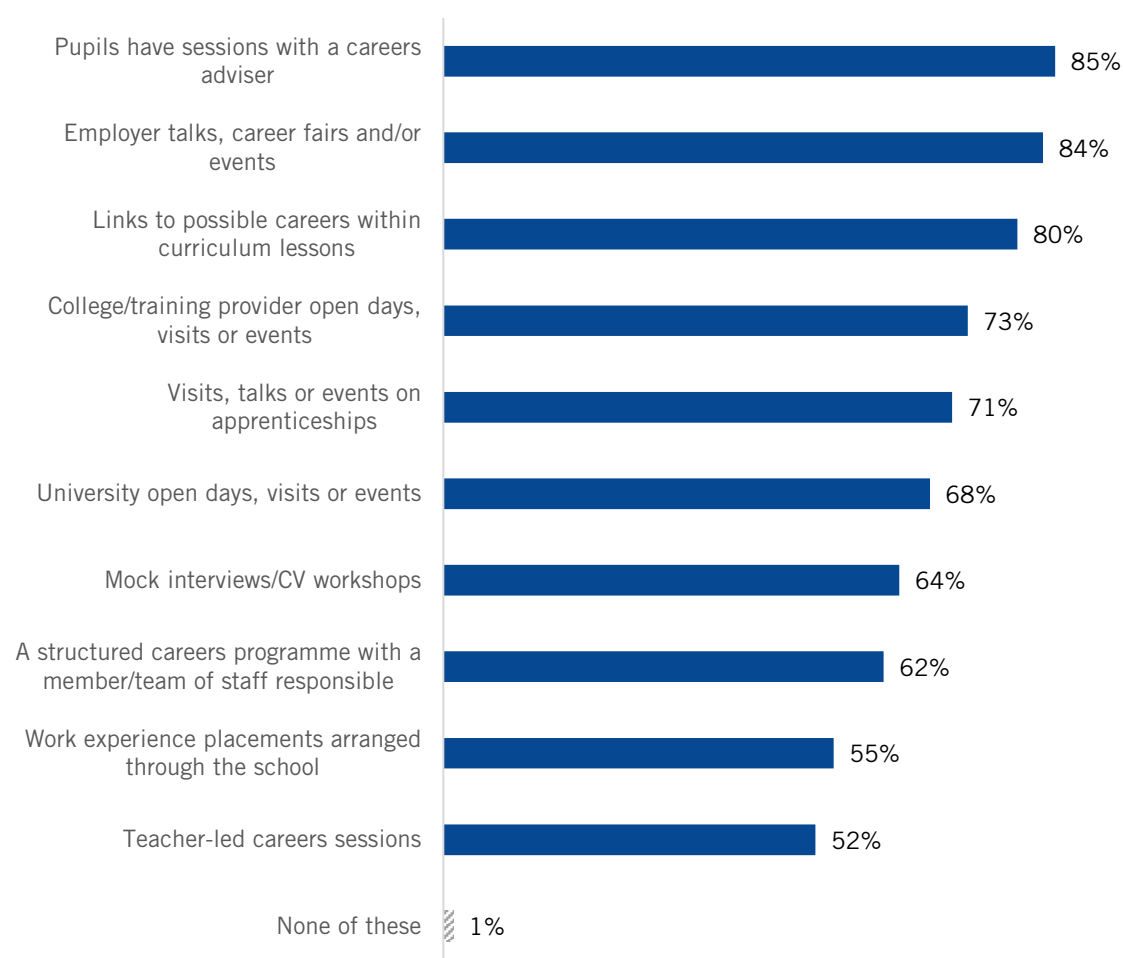
Activities on offer

Senior leaders

Teachers were asked to state whether a set of 10 key activities, that align largely with the Gatsby benchmarks, currently take place at their school. We focus first on senior leaders (SLT), as the teachers likely to have the best view of activities across a school.

As shown in Figure 2, at least two thirds of state school senior leaders said that the majority of the careers activities listed took place in their school or college, with the most common being sessions with a Careers Adviser (85%) and the least common being teacher-led careers sessions (52%).

Figure 2: Senior leaders on the career activities available within their school



Only 14% of senior leaders said that all 10 of the activities listed took place in their school or college; 47% said at least 8, 36% said 5 to 7 and 16% said that only 1 to 4 of these activities took place.

Variation also appeared when looking between regions. Most notably, college/training provider open days, visits or events were 29 percentage points less likely to be reported in London (45%) compared to the North West (74%). Whilst 57% of teachers working in the South West said work experience placements were arranged for pupils through the school, 46% said the same in the South East.

Careers Leaders

Looking only at responses from Careers Leaders (in both the Teacher Tapp and the self-selecting survey delivered via the Career and Enterprise Company), responses were broadly similar to those seen for senior leaders, although reporting of some activities were higher amongst Careers Leaders.

For example, while 77% of senior leaders said links to potential careers were occurring within curriculum lessons, this was higher, at over 85% for Careers Leaders. Similarly, while 69% of senior leaders said talks or events on apprenticeships were taking place, again this was over 85% for the group of Careers Leaders surveyed.

These differences may be due to the self-selected sample of Careers Leaders used in the Careers and Enterprise Company survey, and the fact that Careers Leaders may have greater awareness of activities taking place in their school.

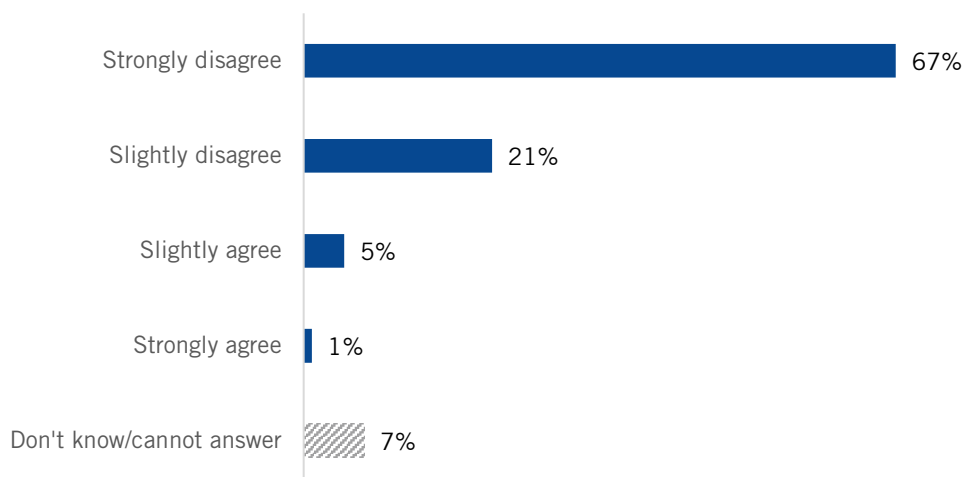
Careers Leaders in the Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) delivered survey were also able to report other activities which weren't listed in our polling questions. Other activities they reported to be taking place included alumni talks, destination tracking of alums, sessions for parents and work shadowing.

Teachers

Looking at all teachers (excluding senior leaders), the proportions reporting each activity were lower overall, most likely because not all teachers have the same level of insight on what is happening across the school as those in senior roles. However, for some activities where classroom teachers would be expected to have better insight than senior leaders or Careers Leaders, reported levels were also lower. For example, while 80% of senior leaders and over 85% of Careers Leaders said links to possible careers were made within curriculum lessons, this was just 59% for classroom teachers. Similarly, only 38% of classroom teachers said that their school delivered teacher-led careers sessions. This is lower than the figure reported by members of SLT – it may be that SLT expect teachers to be delivering guidance in their lessons, but that not all teachers in a school feel prepared to do so or have adequate time.

Indeed, as shown by Figure 3, around two thirds of all teachers (including senior leaders) surveyed (67%) strongly disagreed that their teacher training prepared them to deliver careers information and guidance to students, with responses on this question similar across school type and level of deprivation in the school.

Figure 3: The proportion of all state teachers (senior leaders and classroom teachers) who feel their teacher training has prepared them to deliver career information and guidance to students

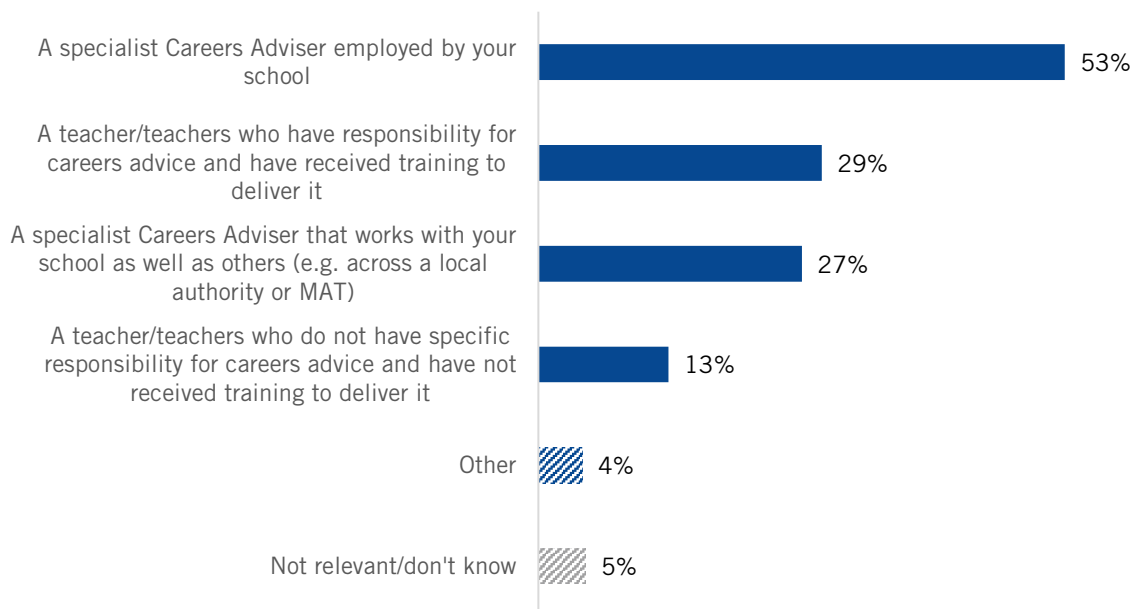


Staff delivery of careers education

Nearly all members of SLT surveyed (95%) said that their school has a Careers Leader, though classroom teachers were slightly less likely to be aware of one.

When asked who delivers *personal* guidance at their school, just over half (53%) of SLT said a specialist Careers Adviser employed by their school did so (Figure 4). 29% said that *personal* guidance was delivered by teachers who have responsibility for careers advice and have received training to deliver it, 27% said a specialist Careers Adviser that works with multiple schools and 13% said teachers who did not have specific responsibility for careers advice and have not received training to deliver it were doing so. Schools in more deprived areas were less likely to have access to a specialist Careers Adviser, with 21% of teachers in the most deprived areas reporting non-specialists delivered personal guidance, compared to 14% in more affluent areas.

Figure 4: Who delivers personal guidance in schools (Senior leader responses)



In the Careers Leader survey, the proportion of respondents saying a specialist adviser employed by their school or shared across schools delivered advice was even higher than the figure reported by SLT, and nearly half said they themselves deliver personal guidance.

The Career and Enterprise Company

Careers Leaders

Over two thirds of Careers Leaders surveyed via the Career and Enterprise Company (CEC) said that they work with the CEC in at least one of the following ways: part of a Careers Hub, by using their Compass tool to measure progress towards the Gatsby benchmarks, as a connection to employers (such as through the Enterprise Adviser Network), or by using both their provider and resource directories.

Other common ways Careers Leaders worked with the CEC include using the Compass+ tool (just under half), which allows for planning, tracking and measuring of careers interventions at a student level; and being part of the CEC Community of Practice (around 2 in 5), which is a group of individuals and delivery providers offering careers education, information, advice and guidance to schools and colleges. These

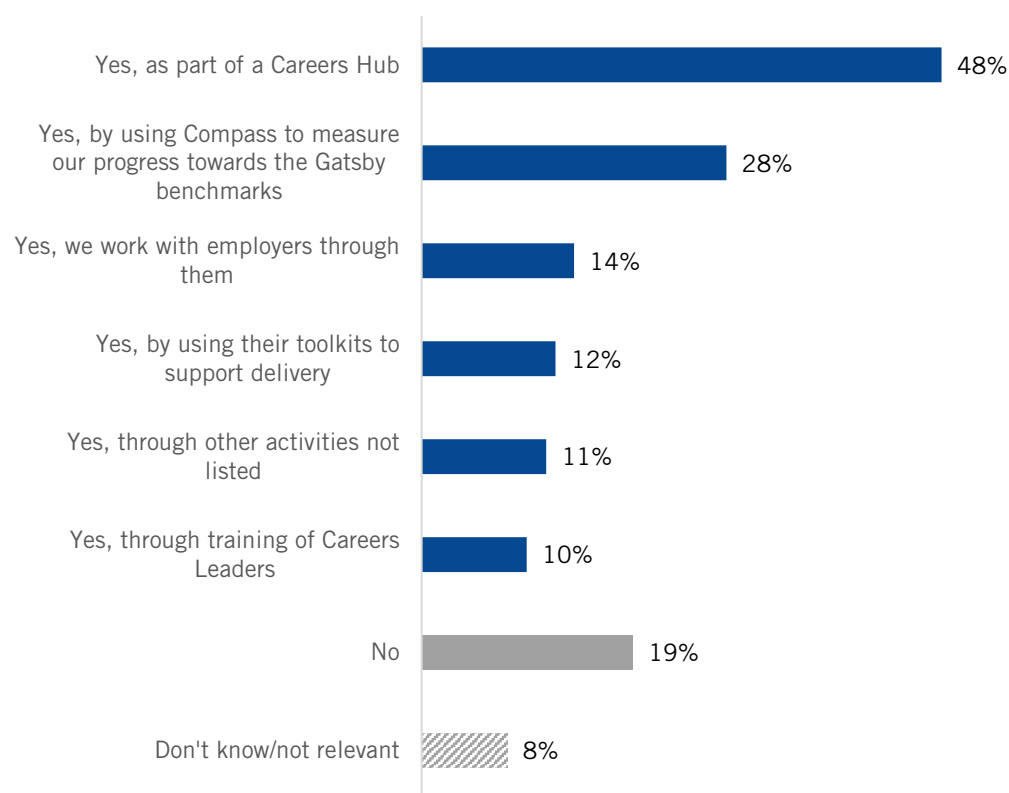
figures were lower when looking at Careers Leaders surveyed via Teacher Tapp, likely because this survey is self-selecting via the CEC, and so likely to over represent more engaged Careers Leaders.

Teachers (including senior leaders)

73% of headteachers reported their school works with the Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) in some capacity, although this figure was much lower for senior leaders excluding the head (37%), and for classroom teachers (8%); again likely reflecting a lack of general awareness of careers activities.

Just 48% of heads said their school was part of a Careers Hub - designed to bring together schools, colleges, employers and apprenticeship providers in a local area. The other ways in which headteachers say they work with the CEC are shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Ways in which headteachers report that their school works with the Careers and Enterprise Company

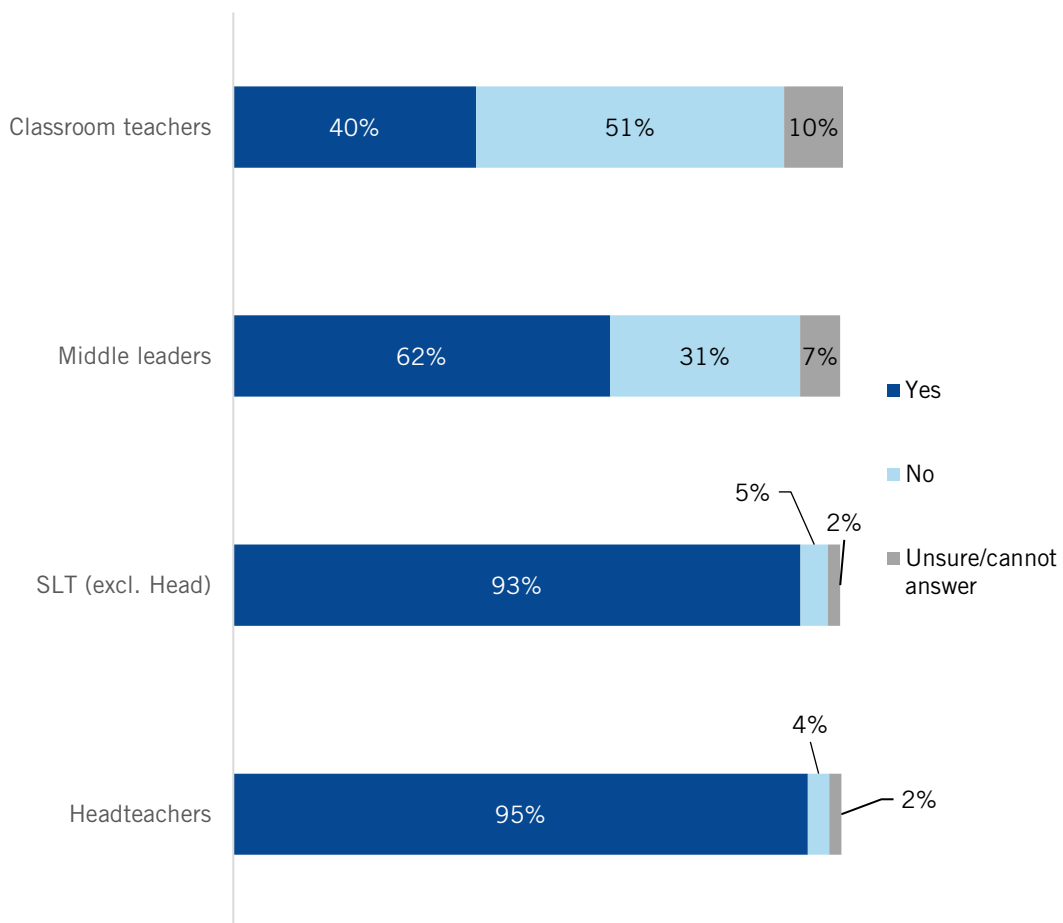


Gatsby benchmarks

Whilst a significant majority (95%) of headteachers and senior leaders (93%) in state schools said they were aware of the Gatsby benchmarks of good careers guidance, far fewer general teachers were aware of the benchmarks, with only 62% of middle leaders and 40% of classroom teachers aware (Figure 6).

This is to some extent to be expected, as many of the benchmarks apply to activities beyond the classroom. However, some are applicable to all teachers (particularly benchmark 4; linking curriculum learning to careers). Interestingly, those in private schools were less likely to say that they knew about the benchmarks. Nearly all Careers Leaders surveyed were aware of the Gatsby benchmarks.

Figure 6: Teacher awareness of the Gatsby benchmarks, by seniority

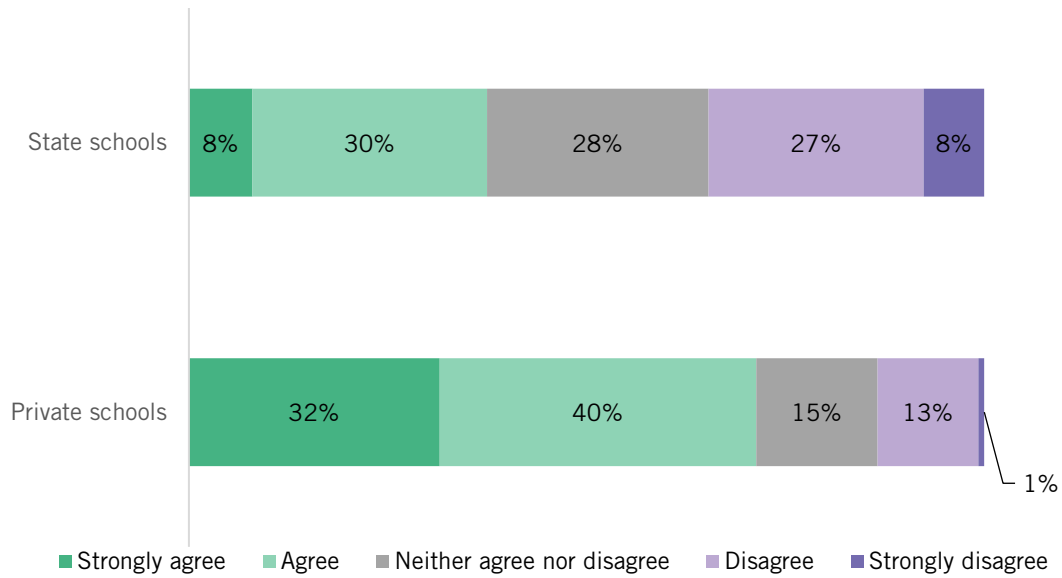


Funding and resources

(37%) of senior leaders working in state schools disagreed with the statement ‘Our school has adequate funding and resources to deliver careers education and guidance’. Around half of Careers Leaders surveyed disagreed with the statement, with a quarter saying they strongly disagree.

Whilst 38% of state school teachers agreed with the statement, over a quarter (35%) disagreed (Figure 7). This is more than twice the proportion of private school teachers who said the same (14%). In a separate NFER survey, SLT were less likely to say they had enough resources for apprenticeships (75%) and further education (81%) compared to university (88%).

Figure 7: Teacher views on whether their school has adequate funding and resources for careers guidance, by school type

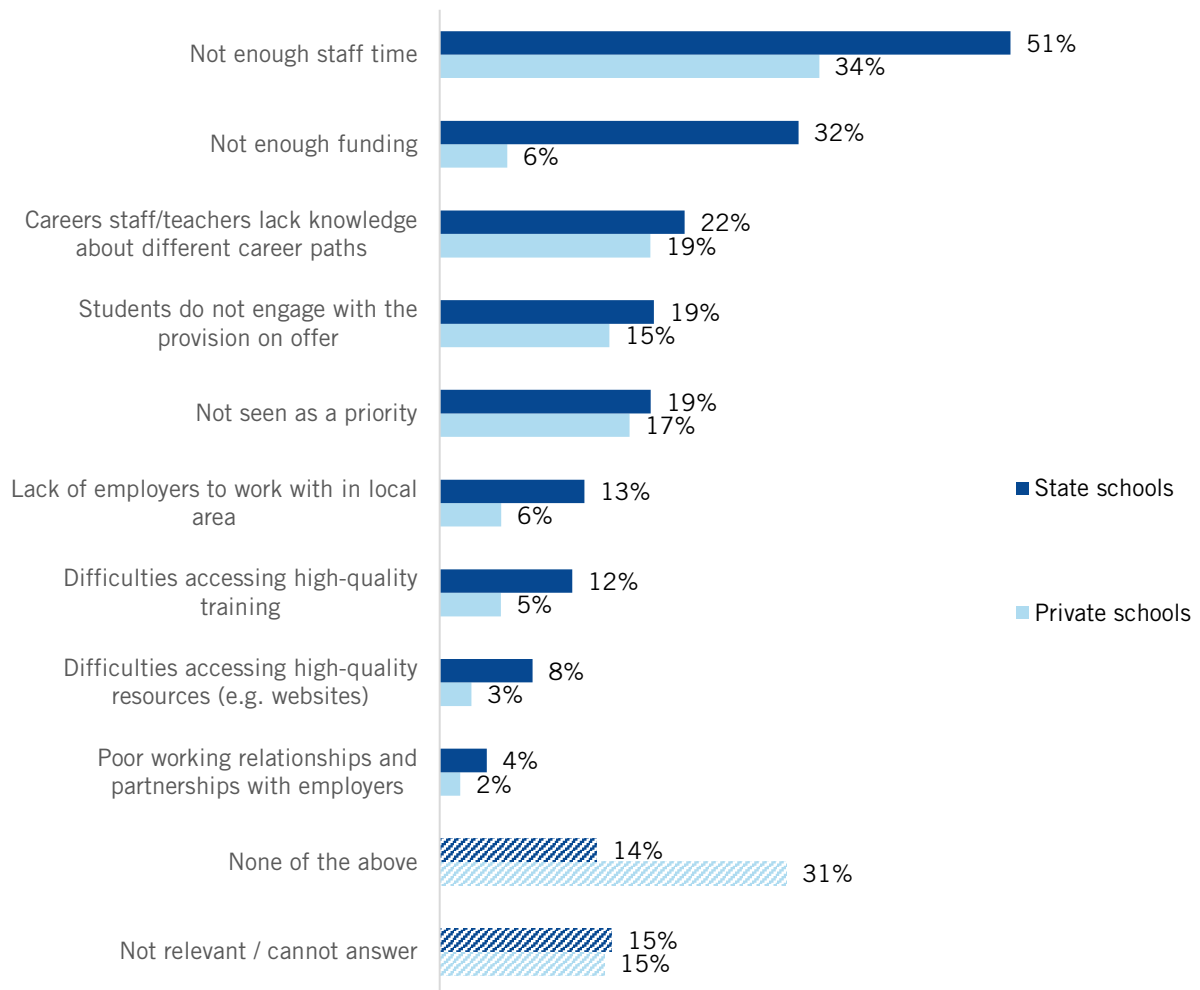


When asked about the barriers to delivering good quality careers education and guidance, around 3 in 4 of those surveyed said ‘not enough staff time’. Approximately half of the sample said ‘not enough funding’, and around a quarter said careers education was ‘not seen as a priority’. When asked for more details about the barriers those surveyed experience, particularly for disadvantaged students, respondents mentioned lack of funding for group trips and events as well as timing to fit activities into the school day.

Considering the whole sample of state school teachers, when asked about the barriers to delivering good quality careers education and guidance, 54% of SLT (including headteachers) said that there was not enough staff time compared to 47% of classroom teachers.

Those working at state schools were more likely to say that all barriers listed in the question were a problem for them; only 14% said that their school faced none of the issues listed compared to 31% of those working in private schools (Figure 8). Strikingly, teachers at state schools were five times more likely to say that funding was a barrier to delivering high quality guidance, at 32% compared to 6% of teachers at private schools.

Figure 8: Barriers to delivering careers education and guidance, by school type

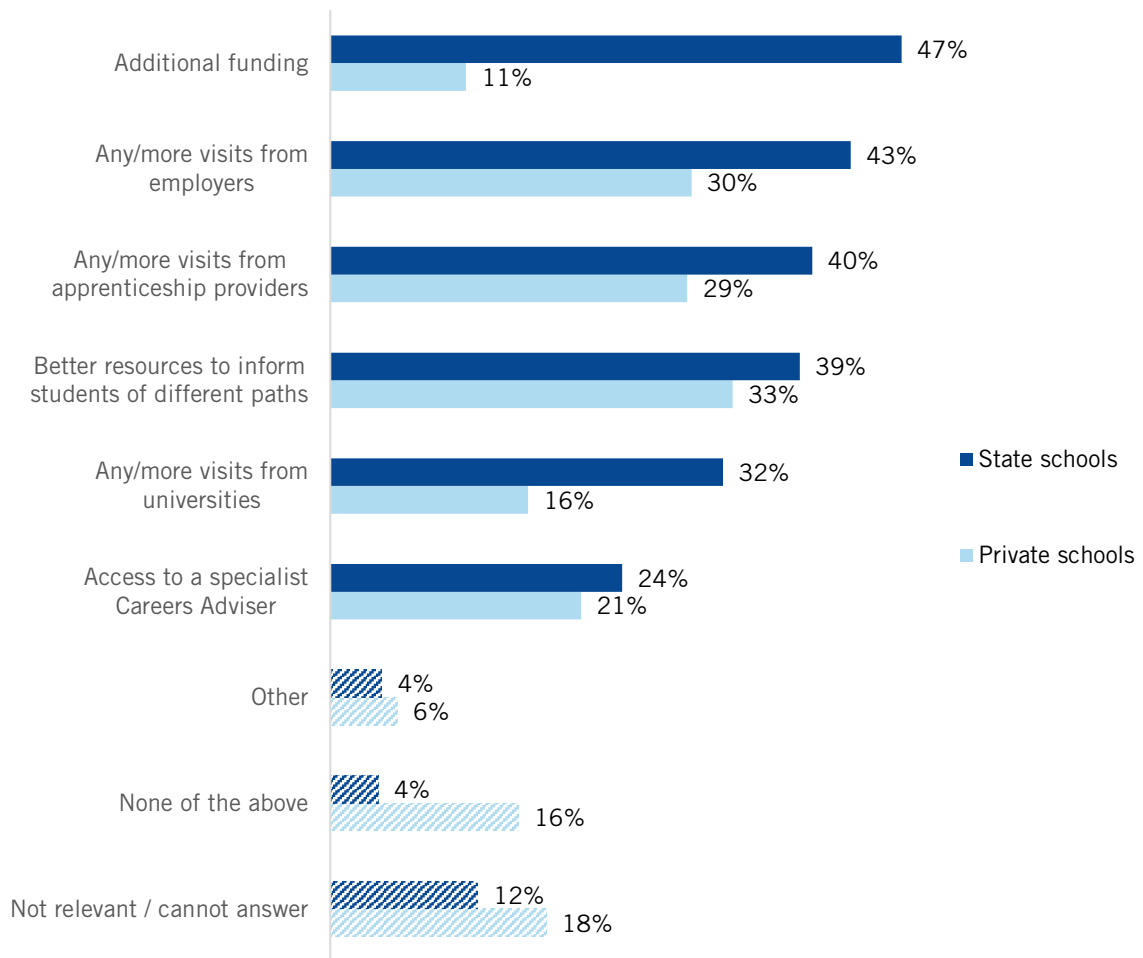


Improving provision

Teachers were asked what would most help to improve career education and guidance provision in their school or college, with each able to select up to three top priorities from a list. When looking at responses from members of SLT specifically, additional funding was again the most popular response, at 56%. 47% prioritised any or more visits from employers, 39% from apprenticeship providers, 33% from universities and 29% chose better resources to inform students of different paths.

Nearly half (47%) of state school teachers chose additional funding (Figure 9). This is more than 4 times higher than the percentage of private school teachers choosing more funding as a top priority (11%). Other common choices were any/more visits from employers (43%) and any/more visits from apprenticeship providers (40%).

Figure 9: Priorities of teachers for improving careers provision, by school type



An example of how an employer can provide a range of opportunities to connect with schools is discussed in the following case study.

CASE STUDY: PwC social mobility community programme

As part of their social mobility community programme, PwC work with disadvantaged pupils to help them develop confidence and employability skills relevant to their career of choice. To reach socioeconomically disadvantaged students, PwC work with several partner organisations including the Princes Trust, the Social Mobility Foundation and the Sutton Trust. They target schools with a higher than average proportion of students in receipt of free school meals and schools in local authority cold spots. All included activities have been matched to the Gatsby benchmarks and the [Skills Builder](#) essential skills framework.

The [New World. New Skills – Virtual Schools Series](#) covers topics to help students develop key employability skills such as teamwork and problem solving. The learning materials have been designed for use by teachers and Careers Leaders in the classroom, and include short pre-recorded videos as well as materials to assist with further learning on the topics covered. The programme is available for years 7 to 9 as well as years 10 to 13. Each programme consists of six sessions, designed to be delivered over a period of six weeks, with all videos available ‘on demand’ to give both Careers Leaders and teachers the flexibility to use the materials in a way that best suits them.

PwC also work with students in person. The *New World. New Skills - Schools Series* is a hybrid programme where students have a virtual introduction session and then can visit company offices to connect with employees and develop employable skills. Only schools who meet the organisation’s social mobility criteria can be involved in this programme - those with proportions of students eligible for free school meals above the regional average, or which are in social mobility cold spots. In the Autumn 2021 term this programme reached over 1300 students from 50 schools and took place in offices across the UK.

Furthermore, the *New World, New Skills work experience programme* offers a week of paid work experience for disadvantaged students. In their last cohort in August 2021 195 students took part, with 46% of the students involved being eligible for free school meals and 77% from ethnic minority groups.

A range of online resources have also been created by PwC for teachers and careers professionals. The [Employability Toolkit](#) contains a wide selection of lessons, suitable for students aged 13-18, that can be easily accessed online. Topics include technology, financial literacy and wellbeing as well as access to resources such as the Employability Hub. All sessions have easy-to-follow lesson plans, presentations and engaging activities.

The majority of Careers Leaders surveyed also selected ‘additional funding’ as their top priority. The other top priorities were better resources to inform students of different paths; visits from employers; and visits from universities.

When asked about how careers education and guidance could be improved nationally, as part of the Careers Leader survey, responses often referred to funding and investment. Several respondents thought this would allow a school or college to have one full time member of staff to fully focus on careers guidance, with some highlighting that this would need to involve both better pay and recognition of the Careers Leader role. Some comments were also made regarding making careers lessons mandatory and setting more specific requirements for the amount of time careers-related activities should occur. An example of how a careers team can be structured is mentioned in the case study overleaf.

CASE STUDY: Southmoor Academy, Sunderland

Southmoor Academy is a secondary school in Sunderland in the Northeast of England, with an above average proportion of students eligible for free school meals (28.3%, compared to the national average of 18.9% in state secondaries in England).

In 2018, the academy launched a 10-year aspirations programme, led by a full-time co-ordinator at the school. The programme is part of a careers strategy led by the school's Careers Leader, who is themselves a member of the school's senior leadership team. The school also has access to a Level 6 qualified Careers Adviser, who works full time between Southmoor and Sandhill View academies in Sunderland.

Southmoor have developed an approach to support students from KS2 through to KS5, working together with local primary schools in the area. The structural principle of the programme is to allow collaboration between multiple phases and across multiple institutions, with the long-term goal to raise achievement at GCSE level and A-level, and improve destinations once students have left school. The programme also aims to replicate the networks of advice and influence that more affluent children are able to access.

The scheme is divided into five programmes. The Aspirations and Insight programmes involve primary school pupils, with activities aiming to increase awareness of the range of careers available and particularly focusing on the skills and qualifications that are needed. The Connections programme, which is currently being planned, will offer students in years 5, 7 and 10 the opportunity to visit a local university with their parents to learn what university is like and which career paths are associated with particular courses.

Two aspects of the programme, Scholars and OxNet (a partnership with the university of Oxford's access programme), aim to raise aspirations to A-level and university study, particularly for high ability disadvantaged students in years 10 to 12. Activities involved include weekly guest lectures from a range of universities and an opportunity for selected year 12 students to attend a 5-day summer school at Oxford.

Sixth form students can learn about apprenticeships through workshops and events such as the UCAS Discover Apprenticeships fair. A careers fair is also run each year, which is attended by universities, apprenticeship providers and employers.

Impact of the pandemic

The pandemic has had a considerable impact on children and young people's educations, an issue that has been explored in detail across several Sutton Trust reports throughout the pandemic.⁹⁸ Repeatedly, this research has found that disadvantaged children have faced the most severe impacts, as they have struggled to work remotely.

Teachers were asked how the pandemic had affected the careers guidance provision offered at their school or college. 83% of senior leaders working in state schools said that the pandemic has negatively impacted their school's ability to deliver careers education and guidance.

Findings were similar for Careers Leaders. When asked to explain their answer, thinking about disadvantaged students specifically, many respondents highlighted the negative impacts of losing out on face to face activities both inside and outside of the classroom; and poor engagement with online

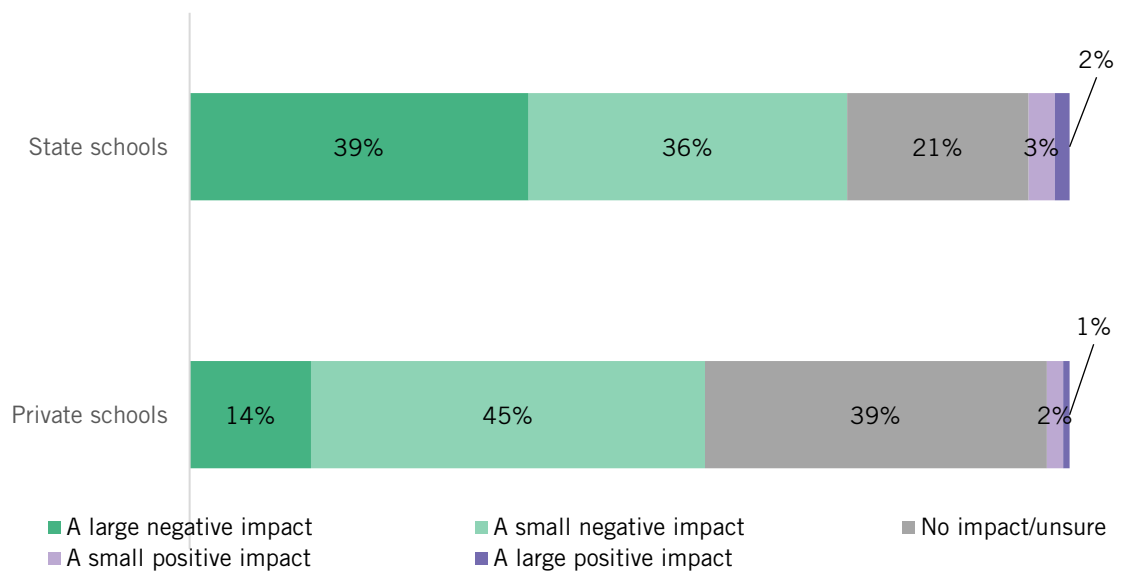
⁹⁸ Coronavirus response. The Sutton Trust. Accessed February 2022. Available at: <https://www.suttontrust.com/coronavirus/>

activities (often due to digital access issues). Other comments included a breakdown of relationships with employers during lockdowns and having less time due to curriculum catch-up activities.

Careers Leaders who saw positive impacts of the pandemic on delivery noted the successful move of 1:1 appointments online and the move to digital increasing the number of opportunities on offer to students (and improving reach to groups such as SEND students; although some respondents said being online was a barrier for some SEND pupils).

A considerable proportion, 72% of all teachers (in both state and private schools) also thought the pandemic had negatively impacted careers guidance activities in their school. This is likely to be related to the missed class time during school closure periods as well as cancellations of visits both to and from employers, apprenticeship providers and universities. The proportion of state school teachers who thought the pandemic had a negative impact on careers provision was 16 percentage points higher than in private school, at 75% compared to 59% respectively (Figure 10).

Figure 10: Teachers’ views on the impact of the pandemic on careers guidance, by school type



Young people’s experiences of careers education

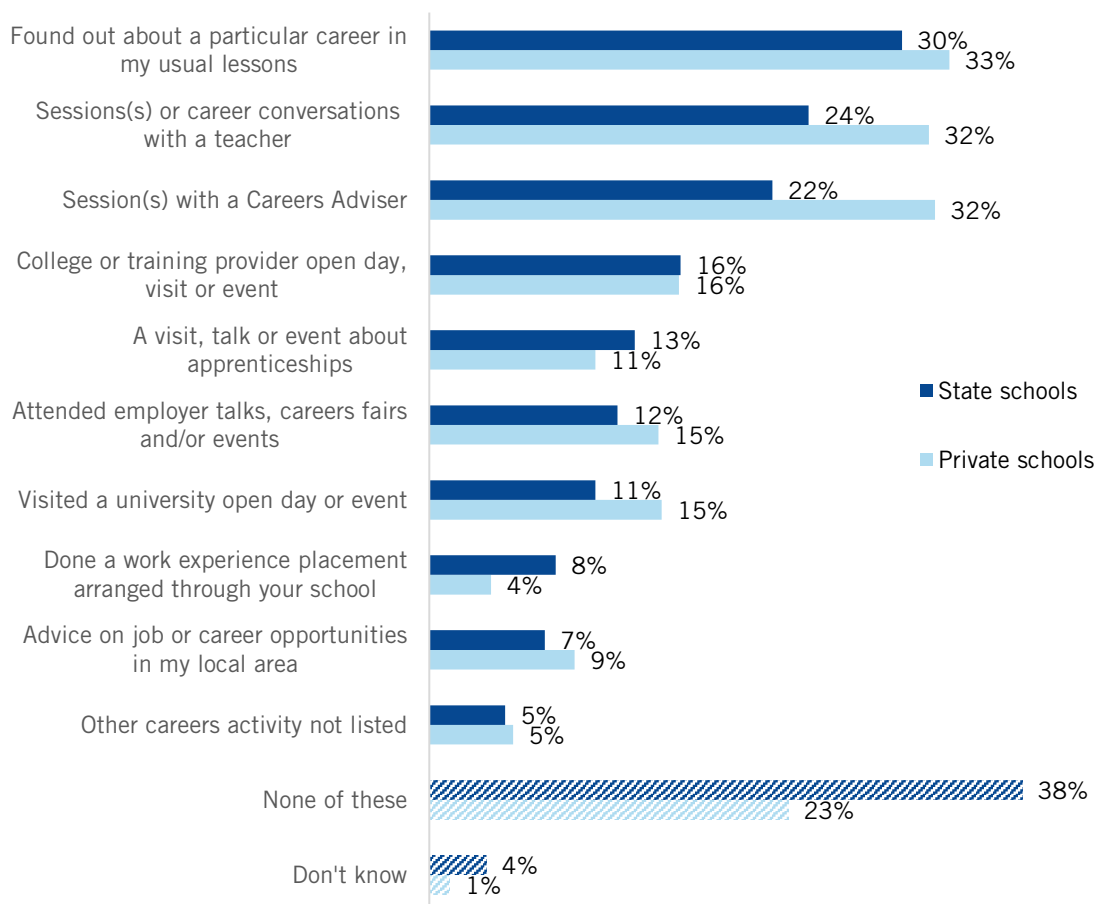
Whilst teachers may report that activities are available to students in schools, students’ actual experiences may differ. The following section looks at which careers activities young people at secondary school or college state they have taken part in and when; how useful young people have found the careers guidance that they have received; and whether careers guidance from sources both inside and outside of the classroom have influenced decisions about their future.

Activities students have taken part in

Pupils were asked if they had experienced any of a list of careers related activities during their education. 31% of pupils surveyed said that they had learnt about a particular career in their lessons, 25% said that they had spoken to a teacher about careers, and 23% reported having at least one session with a Careers Adviser.

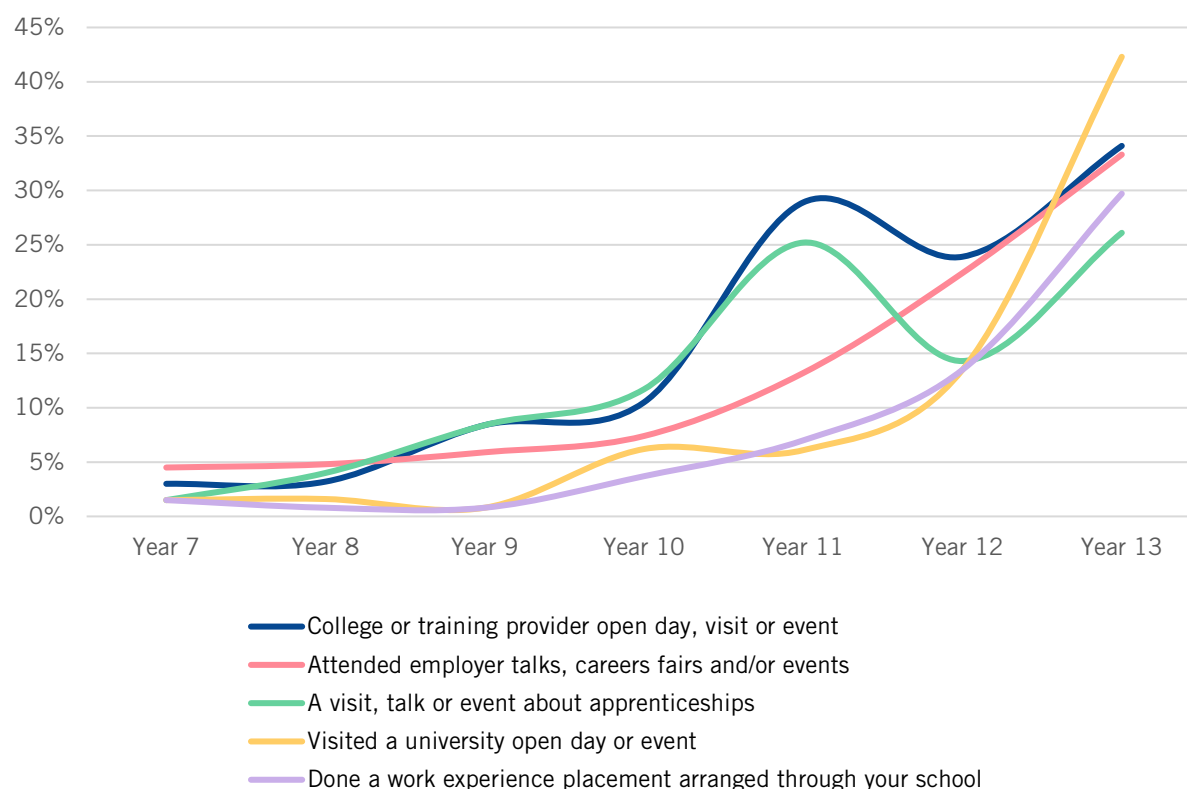
However, less than 1 in 5 reported experiencing the following activities: a college or training provider open day, visit or event (16%); employer talks, careers fairs and/or events (13%); a visit, talk or event about apprenticeships (13%); visiting a university open day or event (11%); a work experience placement arranged through their school (8%); advice on job or career opportunities in their local area (8%); and other careers activities not listed (5%). State school and college students were less likely to say that they had taken part in the majority of activities (Figure 11); most notably, sessions with a Careers Adviser (32% vs 22%) and sessions or career conversations with a teacher (24% vs 32%).

Figure 11: Activities students have taken part in, by school type



For all categories, older students were more likely to report that they had ever experienced each activity, with activities taking place throughout their time in school (more detail can be found in Appendix 1 Table 1). For example, while only 8% of those in year 9 reported attending a visit, talk or event about apprenticeships, 26% of year 13s said the same (Figure 12). Similarly, while only 1% of those in year 8-9 had visited a university, 42% of year 13s have done so.

Figure 12: Participation in careers activities, by year group



Note: Figures reflect whether a respondent had ever taken part in a particular activity

A sizeable proportion, 36% of students, said that they had not taken part in any of the activities listed. State school pupils were 15 percentage points more likely than those who attended a private school to say so, at 38% compared to 23%. Furthermore, those from working class backgrounds were more likely to report this, at 40%, compared to those from middle class backgrounds, at 34%. Those whose parents did not go to university were 8 percentage points more likely to report this compared to those who had at least one parent who attended university, at 41% compared to 33% for those whose parents had attended.

Less than a third, 30%, of year 13 students said that they had ever taken part in work experience arranged by their school. This was even lower, at 10% of students in Key Stage 4, which is notable given this is the age group who would have previously largely have completed work experience in England when different guidance was in place.

Work experience can also happen outside the school context, including through family networks and connections. Third sector organisations also play a major role in this space, offering work experience opportunities to students outside of school time, who may not otherwise find a placement.

An example of this, the Sutton Trust Pathways programme, is discussed in the following case study.

CASE STUDY: Sutton Trust Pathways programme

The Sutton Trust run a suite of [Pathways to the Professions](#) programmes which aim to support talented young people from less advantaged backgrounds to enter competitive careers such as law, banking & finance, medicine, engineering, and consulting. Students from state schools in the UK are eligible for the programme, with priority given to students meeting social mobility markers, such as being in receipt of free school meals, having attended schools with a lower than average progression to higher education, or a higher than average proportion of students who qualify for Free School Meals, or who would be the first generation of their family to attend university. More information on selection criteria are available [here](#). Pathways programmes are available both in person and online, with opportunities available for young people across the UK. Students apply directly to the Sutton Trust, with many hearing about the opportunity through their school.

Pathways programmes are made up of a range of activities to enable participants to gain the skills, knowledge, confidence and experience they need to better understand their chosen sector and make informed decisions about their futures. To deliver them, the Sutton Trust works closely with universities, employers and third sector partners. Students receive mentoring, networking opportunities, residentials and guaranteed work experience placements as part of the programme.

Students consistently highlight work experience as a core part of the programme, with a Pathways to Banking and Finance student saying that *“this experience has broadened my vision of the financial sector. I have learned more about my fellow pathways friends but most importantly the different variety of jobs in [the organisation]. I have gained skills such as being proactive and always keeping my options open. I am definitely more confident.”*

Similarly, a former Pathways to Law student commented that *“my favourite part of the experience was being able to improve my confidence by working alongside professionals that I admire and hearing all their different stories... This has given me the motivation to plan for my future and... it has helped me to broaden my views on how I would personally like to enter the profession.”*

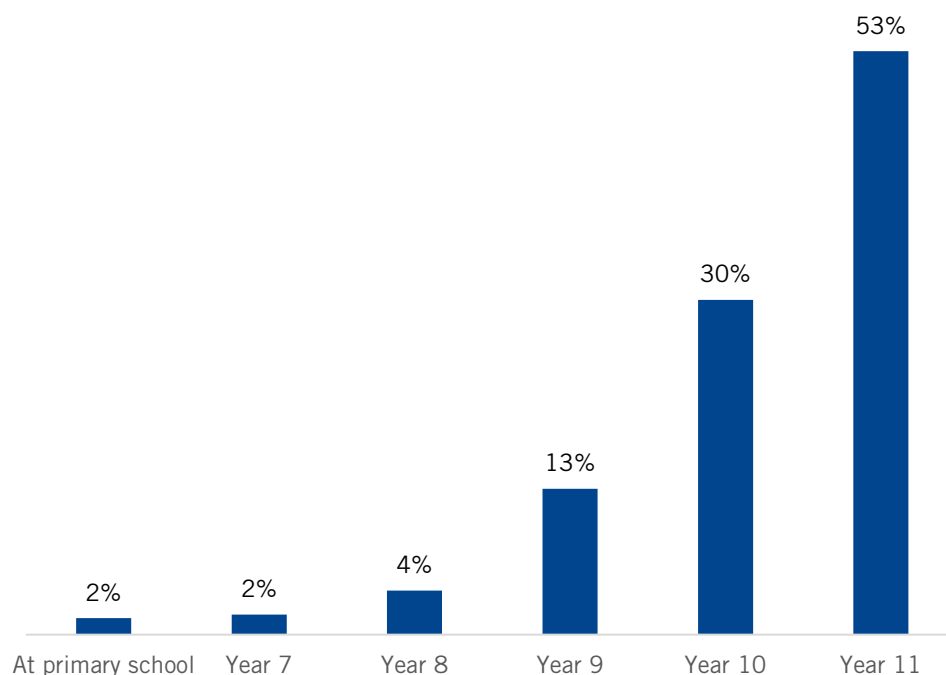
Programmes like Pathways are important for opening up access to work experience placements, as well as giving access to careers advice and guidance. Recent evaluation of the Pathways programmes by external evaluators, The Bridge Group, found that 95% of Pathways to Law students agreed that they now feel more motivated to achieve their career goals, and 96% of Pathways to Banking & Finance students agreed that following work experience, they have a better understanding of the different careers within the profession.

When support was received

Students were also asked which school years that they had received careers guidance whilst in education.

Considering only those in year 11 (or the equivalent year group) and above, only 2% of the said that they received guidance when at primary school, despite the reported benefit of starting early when it comes to careers education (Figure 13). Similarly, just 2% reported receiving advice in year 7. Greater increases are seen in years 10 and 11 in particular.

Figure 13: Whether guidance received in each school year



Note: Responses are only from those in years 11 to 13.

Considering only those in their final year of education (i.e. in year 13 or the equivalent year), 52% said they received guidance in year 12 and 51% said so for year 13.

Topics covered

When asked if they had received information and advice covering particular topics, 41% of pupils said they had not received any information about apprenticeships at all, with 32% saying the same about other further education routes. 31% said that they have not received any information about work options and 26% said the same about university-related information.

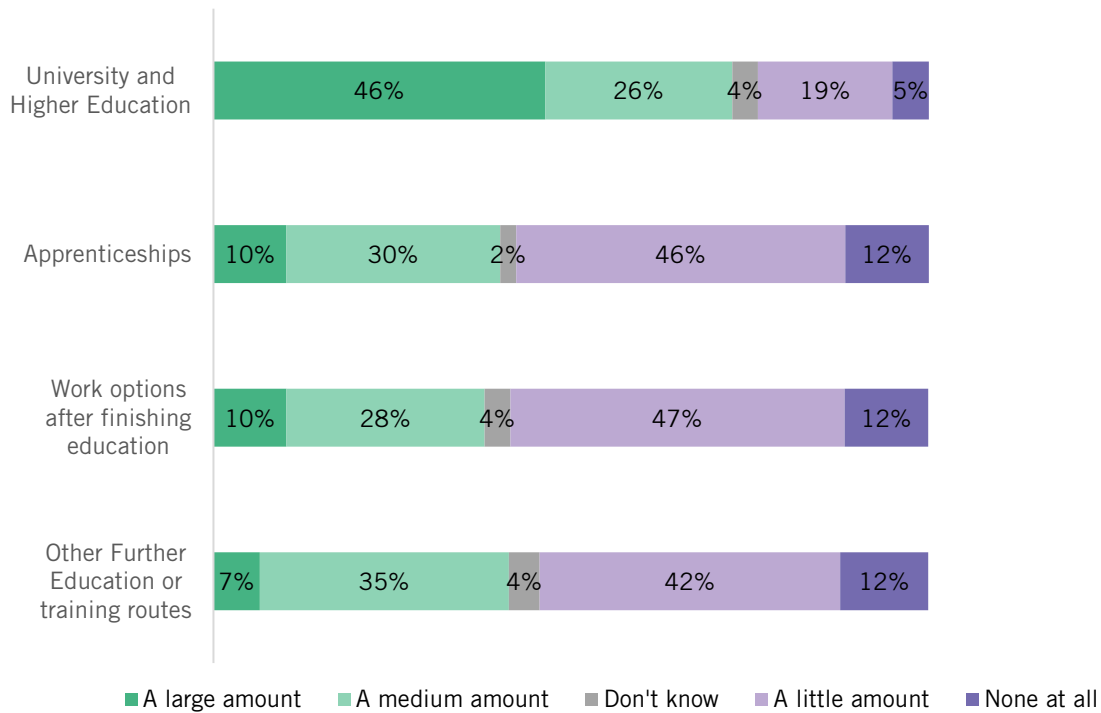
Those in younger year groups are far more likely to say that they haven't received information about these topics. For example, while nearly three quarters (72%) of respondents in year 7 said that they have not received any information about apprenticeships, the percentage is much smaller for those in year 11 (20%) and again even smaller (12%) for year 13s (more detail can be found in Appendix 1 Table 2). This is notable, considering the evidence discussed in this report highlighting the influence of guidance on particular routes received even at younger ages.

Only 9% of students in year 11 say that they have received a 'large' amount of information about university – this compares to 9% for further education, 4% for work options and 2% for apprenticeships. Provision was better for later age groups, but coverage of particular topics was varied. Looking at those in year 13, for work options, apprenticeships, and further education, the most common response from pupils was that they had received only 'a little amount' of information.

As shown by Figure 14, those in year 13 were more than 4 times more likely to say that they received a large amount of information about university during their education (46%) compared to a much lower

figure for apprenticeships (10%); work options after finishing education (10%); and other Further Education or training routes (7%).

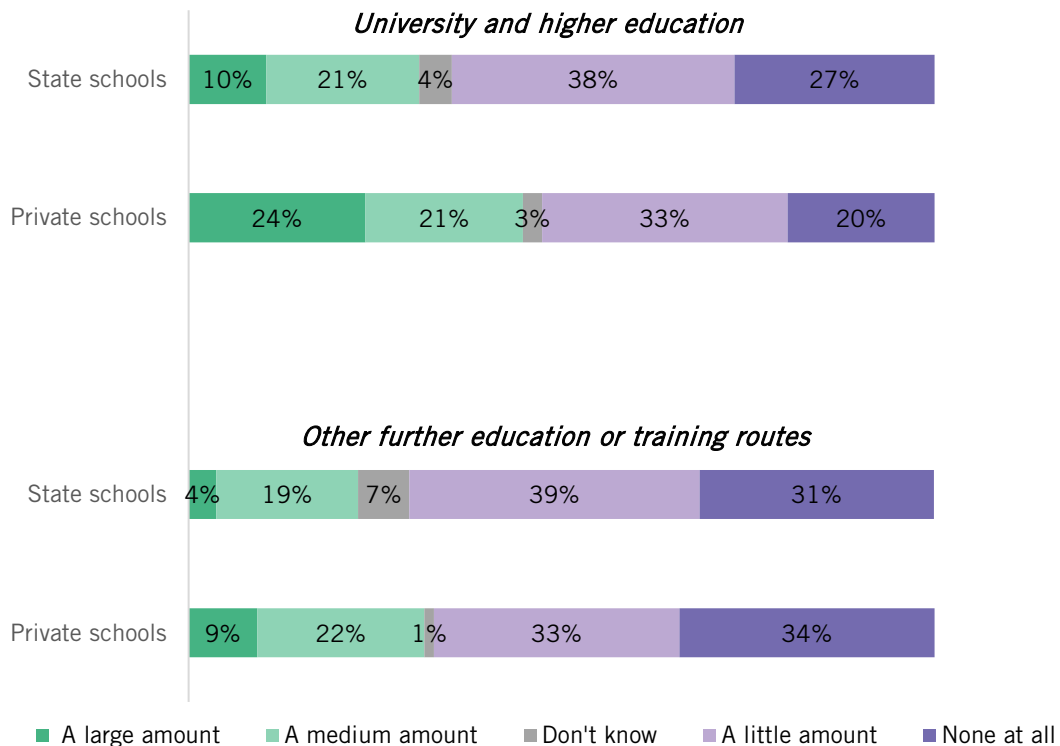
Figure 14: Proportion of year 13 students who had received guidance about particular routes during their education



There were some differences in the provision of advice in different areas of the country. 47% of pupils living in the East said that they had not received any information on apprenticeships, compared to 43% in the South, 40% in London, 40% in the North or Scotland, and 39% in the Midlands or Wales. Those living in rural areas were the most likely to say that they had never received information about apprenticeships (48% vs 39% in urban areas).

As shown by Figure 15, state school and college students were more likely than private school students to say that they had not received any information and advice regarding work options after education (32% v 24%) and university (28% v 16%).

Figure 15: Information received on different routes, by school type



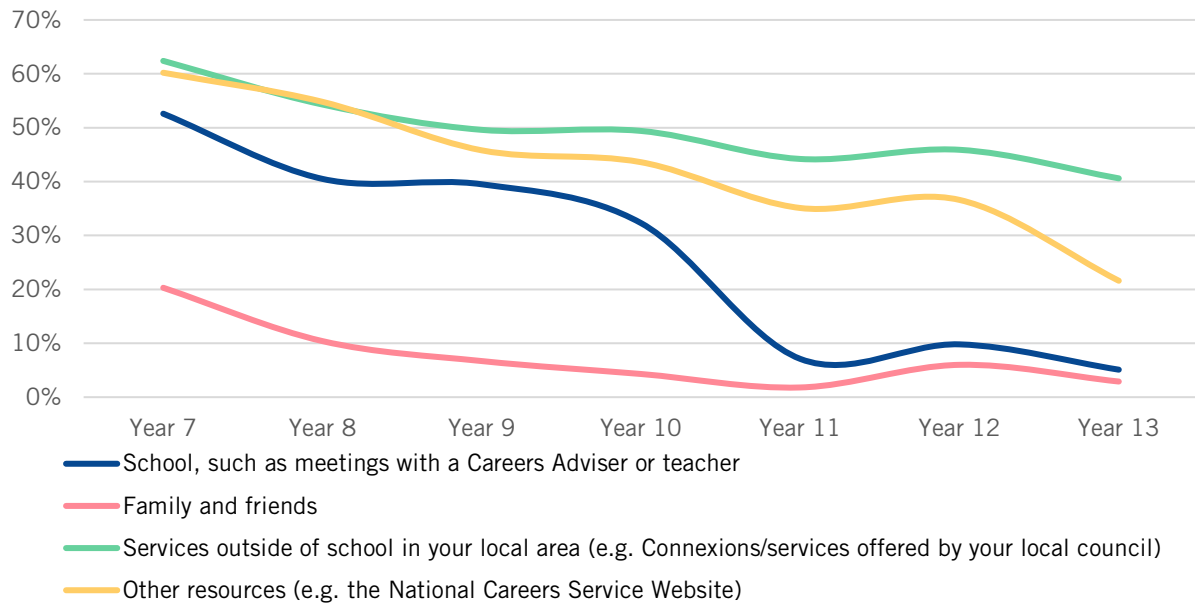
Access to advice from different sources

Pupils were asked whether they had received advice from particular sources, and if it had been helpful for making decisions about the future.

As shown in Figure 16, 27% of students said that they had not received any form of advice from their school, with substantial variation by school year. For example, 53% of year 7s had not received any advice, compared to 32% of year 10s, 10% of year 12s and an even smaller proportion, 5%, of year 13s. Those at state schools were slightly more likely to report not receiving guidance from their school, at 27% compared 20% of private school students.

Half (50%) of the young people surveyed said that they had not received any advice from services in their local area, such as their local council, and 43% said that they had not received advice from other sources, including the National Careers Service website, Unifrog, All About School Leavers, and Bitesize Careers. Advice from family and friends was far more common, with only 7% saying they had not received advice from this source.

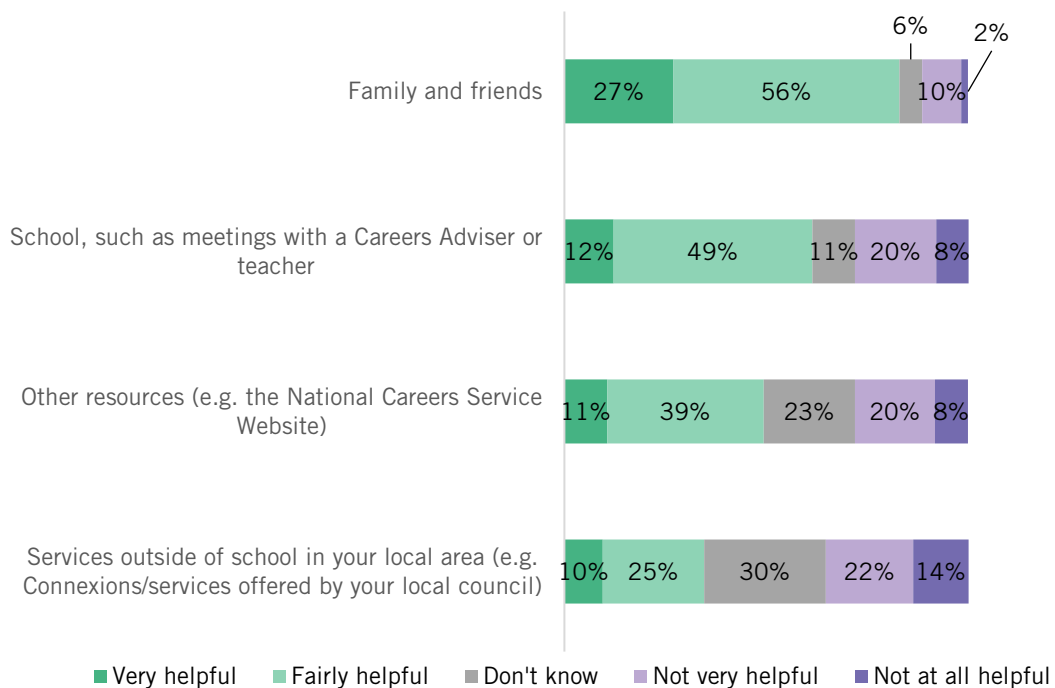
Figure 16: Proportion of students not receiving information from particular sources, by year group



Usefulness of advice

Out of those who said that they had received advice on the topic in question, students tended to find information from family and friends as the most useful, followed by the advice and guidance from school (Figure 17).

Figure 17: Views on helpfulness of advice and guidance for the future from different sources



There was variation in responses by region, ranging from 35% of those living in East England finding guidance from school unhelpful, compared to 18% of those in London.

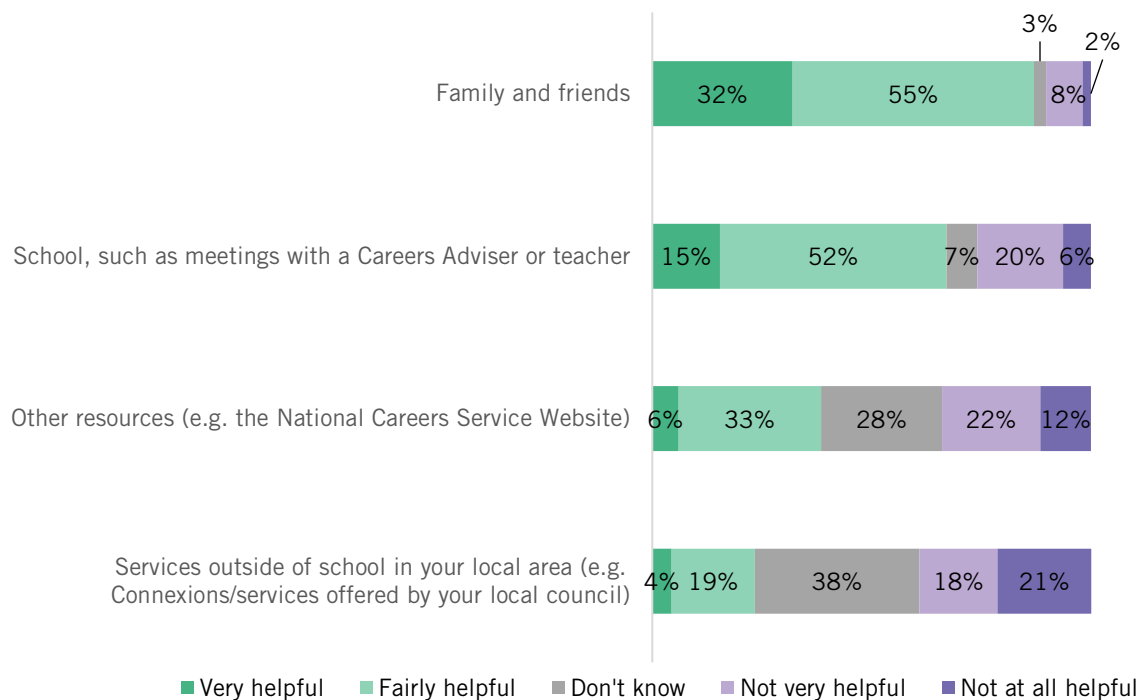
A smaller figure, 7%, of students surveyed said that they had not received any information from family and friends – again, those in younger age groups were more likely to say this.

Choosing qualifications

Students in years 10 to 13 were also asked if the guidance they had received from particular sources was helpful when deciding which qualifications and subjects to take. Again, advice from family and friends was the source that students were most likely to say was helpful (Figure 18).

A large proportion of students in London (84%) thought that the guidance from their school was helpful, but this was lower, at 60%, for those in the South, 64% of those in the Midlands or Wales, 65% of those in the East, 69% of those in the North or Scotland.

Figure 18: Views on helpfulness of advice and guidance from different sources, specifically for choosing qualifications and subjects



The majority of those surveyed (87%) said that the guidance they had received from family and friends was helpful when it came to choosing which subjects and qualifications to study. 67% found advice from their school helpful. Fewer students found guidance from services outside of school and resources like the NCS helpful, however it is worth noting that 38% and 28% of students surveyed said that they did not know how helpful each source was respectively.

Many businesses, not just careers organisations, have online resources which could be promoted to young people. An example from British Airways is presented below.

CASE STUDY: British Airways Inspire Programme

British Airways has a two-pronged approach to supporting careers development for young people, by offering programmes to students as well as teachers and parents.

For students, British Airways runs the 'Inspire Programme', which is designed to create and motivate the next generation, by giving students a taste of the world of work within the aviation industry. Their work experience programme acts as a stepping-stone between education and the workplace, aiming to introduce young people to workplace etiquette, help them to develop their soft skills, and show them how British Airways works to challenge perceptions and break down stereotypes.

A range of information is made available to those seeking work experience via their student website '[Speedbird-Z](#)', which is dedicated to providing pupils with detailed information on their programme offerings, as well as educational resources. Students can use the website to access several learning modules, covering British Airways, employability, and personal development, allowing them to learn in their own time. They can also directly speak to staff who currently work for British Airways in a range of roles – known as Mentors. Biographies are provided for Mentors so that students can find out more about them and they are encouraged to message them asking any question they want to know the answer to.

For teachers, British Airways has many resources and opportunities available to help them support their students and children. Teachers are invited to take part in one-day work experience sessions in various departments in British Airways known as 'Teacher Take Off Days'. These programmes allow teachers to find out more about what different departments and colleagues do at the airline, enabling them to bring their first-hand experience back to the classroom and apply real life working examples to the topics that students are learning about in class. Schools can also request for British Airways to deliver a virtual talk for their school. Colleagues can provide further information about student opportunities including apprenticeships and showcase aviation, sharing their insights on the industry, communicating vital information to students.

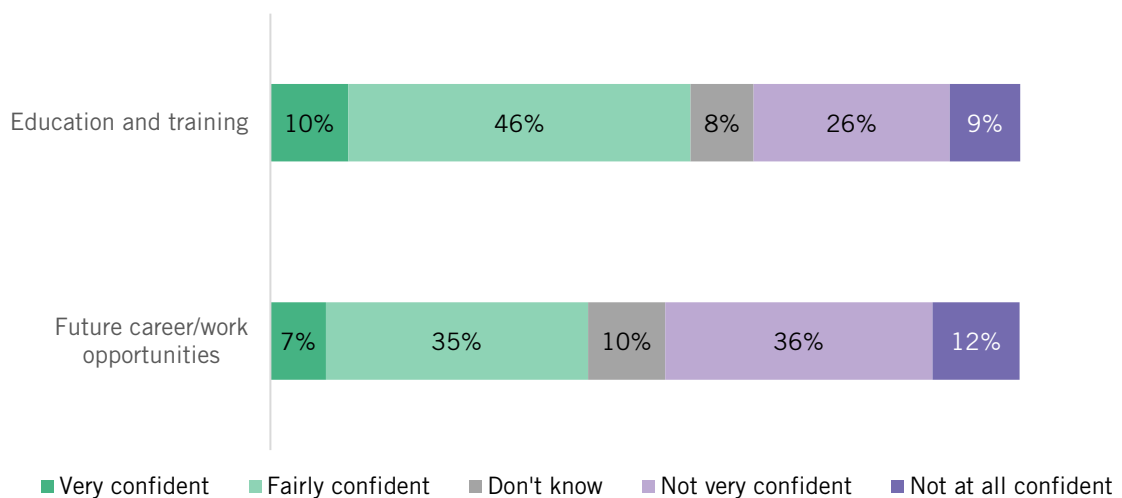
Plans for the future

Next steps in education and training

As discussed throughout, informative careers guidance is vital to allow young people to make well informed decisions about their future.

When asked how confident students currently feel about making their next steps in education and training, 56% said they feel 'very' or 'fairly' confident (Figure 19), but around a third (36%) feel unconfident in taking these next steps.

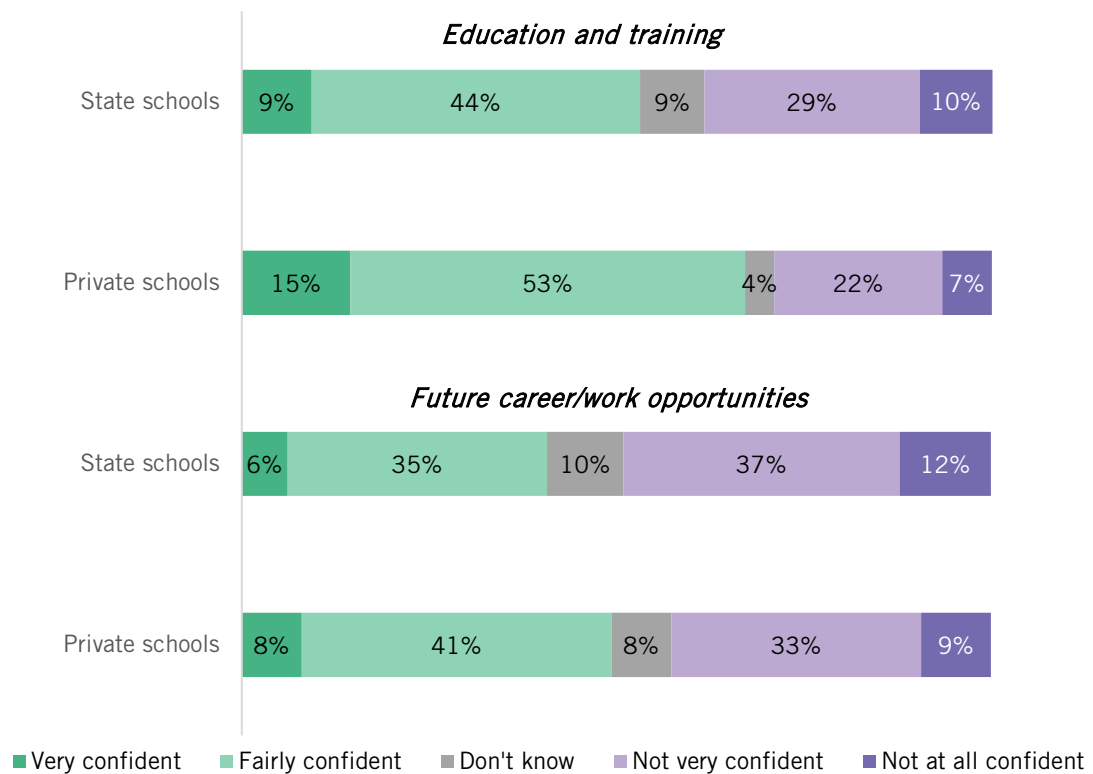
Figure 19: How confident students feel about making decisions on their next steps in education and training; and in their career and work



When comparing results by school year group, perhaps unsurprisingly, younger groups are more likely to feel unconfident. But sizable proportions of students still reported not feeling confident towards the end of their time in school, with 25% of those in year 12 and 22% of those in year 13 saying they feel unconfident.

Those at a state school or college were 10 percentage points more likely to say that they felt unconfident making their next steps in education than those at private schools, at 39% compared to 29% respectively (Figure 20).

Figure 20: How confident students feel about making decisions on their next steps in education and training; and in their career and work, by school type



Next steps in career and work

Looking at career or work opportunities, whilst 42% of students said that they felt confident about making their next steps, a sizable proportion, at 47%, said that they did not feel confident (also shown in Figure 20 above).

There were small differences by school type - just under half (49%) of state school pupils said that they felt unconfident about making their next steps into the world of work, 6 percentage points higher than the 43% of private school students that said the same.

Discussion

Having access to high quality, impartial careers guidance is vital for young people. Such guidance can give them vital insights into the pathways available to them and allow them to understand the range of roles on offer in a rapidly changing economy. For disadvantaged students particularly, who are less likely to have advice available through family or other connections, receiving guidance from school can open doors to a breadth of industries that otherwise would have been difficult to navigate, understand and access.

Back in 2014, the Sutton Trust's report '*Advancing Ambitions*' found a postcode lottery for careers provision, with at the time recent major reductions in the services available for guidance.⁹⁹ Since then, there has been a considerable amount of change, including the government setting targets for schools built on the Gatsby benchmarks for good careers guidance and the establishment of the Careers and Enterprise Company, the national body for careers education in England.

This report has found that progress has been made in the years since, with most schools now having a Careers Leader, and a wide range of career related activities taking place in schools. However, the report has highlighted that despite improvements, the careers guidance available to young people is not consistent across schools, with disadvantaged schools – where high quality provision can make the biggest difference – particularly in need of more support for their careers programme, and with state schools still facing larger barriers to good quality careers provision than those in the private sector.

This lack of provision also appears to be having a detrimental impact on young people's decision making, with many saying they do not feel the advice they receive is helpful in making decisions about their career or future education.

Many of the issues identified in this report stem from a lack of joined up thinking on careers guidance. While there are many individually good elements in existing provision, there is no over-arching system to link them together. The government published its most up to date careers strategy in 2017, but it only ran until 2020, and there is currently no government strategy in place for careers.¹⁰⁰

The government should produce a new national strategy for careers guidance, which should make clear how the various elements, such as the CEC and the National Careers Service, fit together, and which should set out clearly the aims for the overall system. Such a strategy should sit primarily in the Department for Education, but should also have strong cross-departmental links, joining up thinking across different areas, for example by bringing in the important views and expertise of departments like the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

The strategy should cover the full lifecycle, from the very start of a child's education, all the way through to the workplace, and should be formed in partnership with employers, with a view to help prepare young people for future labour market trends. The strategy should also explicitly tie in to other key existing government strategies, particularly the Levelling Up agenda, with an aim to ensure that careers guidance is improved nationally, but with a particular focus on improvements in the most disadvantaged parts of the country.

At the centre of this strategy should be a core 'careers structure' which should be put in place across all secondary schools. At the moment there is too much inconsistency, with no standard expectation of what

⁹⁹ A. G. Watts, J. Matheson and T. Hooley (2014) *Advancing Ambitions*. The Sutton Trust. Available at: <https://www.suttontrust.com/our-research/advancing-ambitions/>

¹⁰⁰ Department for Education (2017) *Careers strategy: making the most of everyone's skills and talents*. Gov.uk. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/careers-strategy-making-the-most-of-everyones-skills-and-talents>

schools should have in place to equip them to successfully deliver the Gatsby benchmarks of good careers guidance. While most schools have a Careers Leader, this is not universal, and the role can vary considerably within schools, with many Careers Leaders not having the time or space needed to do their role successfully. Many schools are not in a Careers Hub, which bring schools and colleges together with local businesses, apprenticeship providers and in-work training providers. And not all schools have access to a Careers Adviser for their students, either full time or shared across schools. These three elements should be seen as a minimum careers structure for all schools, to improve the consistency of the offer across the country.

Whether fulfilled by one person or shared across multiple individuals, the Careers Leader should be established as a key role and be given equivalent time off-timetable to other similarly vital roles, such as a Head of Year. Careers Leaders need adequate time and resources to enact a clear strategy across their school, and many of the roles of a Careers Leader, for example going off site to develop relationships with local employers, or providing training to staff, require time to be done successfully. The role should also come with a Teaching and Learning Responsibility pay increase, to reflect the importance of this role within every school. Additional funding from government will be needed to ensure schools are able to offer this time off-timetable, and that they can provide the appropriate salary adjustment.

Careers Hubs play a key part in improving the way employers interact with schools, as well as allowing schools to connect with each other to share best practice; which is particularly important for schools looking to improve their provision. But only around half of schools are currently in a Careers Hub, with no further immediate plans for growth beyond this following a recent expansion.¹⁰¹ Every secondary school should have access to the benefits that being part of a Careers Hub brings.

Finally, this core careers structure should also include access to a professional Careers Adviser, qualified to at least Level 6 or higher - as is recommended by the Career Development Institute - ideally with a qualification specifically tied to careers guidance. Careers Advisers could work with individual schools, or be shared across schools, for example over a local authority or across a Multi Academy Trust. However this is done, the hours of advice provided should ensure enough time is available for at least two one-to-one meetings with a Careers Adviser during a student's time in secondary education (as recommended in Gatsby benchmark 8).¹⁰²

Currently there is no ring-fenced funding for Careers Advisers, and any already in place are paid for from school's general budgets. A move to directly funded universal provision would be challenging due to issues of dead-weight in new spending (giving money for Careers Advisers to schools who have already managed to prioritise and afford them within existing budgets). However there is a need both for fairness in the funding given to all schools, and to provide incentives to ensure greater coverage in provision. We suggest that any additional funding to ensure universal access to advisers in the short term is focused on schools without an adviser currently in post, with a particular focus on schools with the highest levels of deprivation, where there is the greatest need for high quality advice. But, with funding levels identified as a key barrier to better provision, in the longer term, to ensure fairness to all schools, the government should look to ensure there is enough funding for all secondary schools to provide this service.

Alongside these changes to the structure and core resources for careers guidance available to schools, there are other changes government could implement to improve existing provision. Findings here demonstrate that teachers do not feel enough time is available to deliver careers guidance. While there are always multiple competing demands on teaching time, the importance of careers guidance is such

¹⁰¹ LEP Network (2020) LEPs drive Careers Hubs extension to boost recovery. LEP network, 24 June. Accessed March 2022. Available at: <https://lepnetwork.net/news-and-events/2020/june/leps-drive-careers-hubs-extension-to-boost-recovery/>

¹⁰²The Gatsby Foundation (2014) Good career guidance. Gatsby Available at: <https://www.gatsby.org.uk/uploads/education/reports/pdf/gatsby-sir-john-holman-good-career-guidance-2014.pdf>

that a greater time for it should be built into the curriculum. Doing so would reflect its importance, and help teachers to prioritise it in the face of many competing demands. Content should be delivered both in careers-specific lessons, such as PSHE, as well as in individual subjects, where specific links can be made between course content and career paths.

This report has also found that many teachers do not feel prepared to deliver careers guidance from their existing training, which is concerning given the key role of classroom teachers as influencers on young people. To upskill teachers, additional CPD and NPQ opportunities should be available on careers content. Careers Leaders should deliver continuing professional development (CPD) on careers education to all teachers in their school, as well as monitoring availability of such training for staff in their setting. Delivering training in school will allow teachers to receive real-time knowledge of the current landscape which reflects the local context of resources and partnerships. This should also be accompanied by improved training for teachers on careers education within initial teacher training.

There are also changes which government could make to improve the delivery of specific elements of the Gatsby benchmarks and other statutory guidance related to careers. Research here has found most young people do not complete work experience, despite the known benefits of these important interactions with employers, and the need for these interactions being outlined within the benchmarks. Ideally, all pupils should have access to work experience between the ages of 14 and 16. This age range are old enough to likely have ideas on potential future careers but are still at a point where, if they gain experience and decide a specific career is not for them, that they can still alter their educational path accordingly, with students about to make key decisions about their steps post-16.

When work experience was previously more common (whilst it was never compulsory per se, there was a requirement for all schools to provide work-related learning,¹⁰³ which was largely met through work experience placements and made it in essence de facto compulsory), there were criticisms that too many placements were of a low quality. This was an issue for lower income students particularly, who if not given adequate support from school to arrange a placement, were less likely to have external contacts in a wide range of professional fields to draw on for potential placements. But good quality work experience, as outlined previously in this report, has the potential to be transformational for students. To allow secondary schools to provide work experience for all students, government funding for careers should take into account the staff time needed to support students to organise good quality placements. Careers Hubs could potentially play a key role in co-ordinating placements between schools and employers. It is also vital for employers to be supported in offering placements that are suitable and beneficial to students without creating logistical and insurance difficulties.

Additionally, research here has also shown that too many young people are still not getting enough information on apprenticeships, and that far more pupils are reporting they are receiving information on university than on these alternative routes. This is despite the Baker Clause requiring schools to allow colleges and training providers to access every student in years 8-13 to discuss non-academic routes that are available to them. Indeed, the Institute for Public Policy Research found that only 40% of schools were meeting the clause in 2019.¹⁰⁴ Research from the Careers and Enterprise Company found that schools who provide most or all of their students with apprenticeship information saw a 16% higher

¹⁰³ The statutory duty for work-related learning was removed by statutory instrument in the explanatory memorandum to the draft Education (Amendment of the Curriculum Requirements for Fourth Key Stage) (England) Order 2012

¹⁰⁴ D. Hochlaf and J. Dromey (2019) The Baker Clause: One Year One. IPPR. Available at: <https://www.ippr.org/files/2019-01/the-baker-clause-one-year-on-january19.pdf>

uptake of apprenticeships by their students compared to the schools providing guidance only to a small minority.¹⁰⁵

Better enforcement of the Baker Clause is vital to ensure that young people are receiving the same level of information about both technical and academic routes. This is also important for the government's existing goals - if the expansion of further education opportunities, as set out in the 'Skills for Jobs' white paper and their 'Levelling Up' agenda, is to be met. Enforcement could be improved by limiting Ofsted grades in schools who do not comply with the clause, a move which has previously been suggested by the Education Select Committee.¹⁰⁶

Schools must also be better supported in delivering the clause, through expansion of programmes like the Careers Hub network which connects schools with employers, and through coordination with Local Enterprise Partnerships. Schools should be given access to a wide range of information on apprenticeships and other technical routes – the government's ASK programme offers this information, but currently has no long-term funding,¹⁰⁷ which makes it difficult for the organisation to form strong partnerships with schools. Long-term investment in services like the ASK programme would make it easier for schools to find relevant information and training that they can build into their own strategies to increase awareness and take up of technical education pathways. Schools and colleges also should be encouraged to use tools like the CEC's Compass+, which provides information on available placements.

Looking to the work of the Career and Enterprise Company, given the success of the model, as previously discussed their Careers Hub programme should now be expanded to all secondary schools. Given the specific challenges facing schools in the most disadvantaged communities, it is vital that the most deprived schools are prioritised in this expansion plan. Evaluation of the Careers Hub programme should also continue, to ensure that any expansion remains to be impactful.

It is also important that the CEC continue to invest in programmes which target disadvantaged students specifically. The company already has a Provider Directory for schools and Careers Leaders to access, which highlights organisations who are running programmes specifically designed for disadvantaged young people.¹⁰⁸ This resource should be more actively promoted to increase uptake on the opportunities on offer, alongside promotion of the organisation's other tools like Compass+, which can allow careers professionals to identify and track disadvantaged students (use of this tool and others was not always reported by Careers Leaders in this report).

Furthermore, the organisation has identified a set of key principles to ensure that career support is impactful for disadvantaged young people, including connecting students with employers to improve their social capital, and holding recurring rather than one-off sessions to maintain influence.¹⁰⁹ Investment should be made into programmes which meet these principles – for instance, it is welcome that a pilot between the Careers and Enterprise Company and the company JP Morgan has recently been

¹⁰⁵ The Careers and Enterprise Company (2021) The benefits of Gatsby Benchmark achievement for post-16 destinations. Careers and Enterprise Company. Available at: <https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/our-evidence/evidence-and-reports/the-benefits-of-gatsby-benchmark-achievement-for-post-16-destinations/>

¹⁰⁶ F. Whieldon (2021) Pressure mounts on Ofsted to limit grades by Baker Clause compliance. FE Week, 21 June. Available at: <https://feweek.co.uk/pressure-mounts-on-ofsted-to-limit-grades-by-baker-clause-compliance/> and House of Commons Education Committee (2021) The forgotten: how White working-class pupils have been let down, and how to change it. House of Commons. Available at: <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5802/cmselect/cmeduc/85/8502.htm>

¹⁰⁷ The ASK Programme. Apprenticeships. Accessed March 2022. Available at: <https://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk/influencers/ask-programme-resources>

¹⁰⁸ Provider directory. The Careers and Enterprise Company. Accessed February 2022. Available at: <https://find-activity-provider.careersandenterprise.co.uk/search>

¹⁰⁹ J. Hunt *et al.* (2021) Effective Careers Interventions for Disadvantaged Young People. The Behavioural Insights Team and The Careers and Enterprise Company. Available at: https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/media/3ogdxqu1/bit67-cec-report_v3.pdf

announced, which involves £2 million of investment into 10 projects across the country, including a work experience programme in Lancashire and a business partnership in Leeds offering coaching and work experience opportunities to girls eligible for free school meals.¹¹⁰ However, guidance that truly delivers in these areas (particularly in STEM subjects) should be a key part of the careers guidance package on offer, not just through funded programmes, and it is telling that the current system relies on charitable donations from employers, rather than these efforts being funded by government. Increasing the number of pilots, ideally through government funding but through similar partnerships where this is not possible, could help to ensure that the most impactful interventions are identified, allowing them to be expanded so that high quality provision can reach all disadvantaged young people where it is needed most.

The National Careers Service is another important part of the country's career infrastructure, but it is concerning that findings here show that many students have not used the platform or other similar online services, and that a large proportion of those who have done so did not find the information helpful. We welcome the recent changes to the website that were outlined in the government's skills white paper, which provide more information on technical education routes.¹¹¹ But these changes must be closely evaluated to ensure that awareness and use of the platform improves, with content regularly updated to reflect available opportunities. The service must also be correctly resourced so that the service is appropriate and has content that is of value to young people specifically. Aligning the service to the work of the Careers and Enterprise Company should also ensure that there is a more coherent careers system overall, an issue which should be covered in any new careers strategy developed by government. Careers Hubs could play an important role in bringing the two services together.¹¹²

As outlined earlier in this report, good careers guidance starts early. But findings here show that students in younger year groups are much less likely to experience careers activities. Whilst it is reassuring to see that a large proportion of older students are receiving information, guidance from a young age is key, as this can play a key role in shaping decisions made later in life. This is particularly important for socioeconomically disadvantaged pupils, who are less likely to be receiving advice and guidance outside of the classroom. Current legislation is likely to change in the upcoming months, meaning that statutory guidance will apply from year 7 rather than the current start point in year 8.¹¹³ It is important that this new requirement is monitored, and for any future developments and programmes in careers guidance to recognise this change. Additionally, careers guidance in primary schools must continue to be evaluated and be a part of any future careers strategies – the Careers and Enterprise Company have a hub of research and evaluations in this field that will be useful to shape future proposals.¹¹⁴

Schools and colleges can also make changes to improve provision now, even without government action. For example, having clear responsibility for careers guidance within a school's senior leadership team (SLT). Depending on the exact needs and context of the school, this could include having a Careers Leader themselves sit within a school's SLT, or if this role is held by a middle leader, by having a member of SLT who is clearly responsible for the school's strategy on careers, overseeing the work of the school's

¹¹⁰ The Careers and Enterprise Company (2021) New £2m project to turbo-charge careers education for disadvantaged young people in England. Careers and Enterprise Company. Available at: <https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/news/jpmorgan-chase-and-the-careers-enterprise-company-launch-2m-project-to-turbo-charge-careers-education-for-disadvantaged-young-people-in-england/>

¹¹¹ Education & Skills Funding Agency (2022) Get the Jump' Skills for Life campaign: introduction and background. Gov.uk. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/get-the-jump-campaign-introduction-and-background/get-the-jump-skills-for-life-campaign-introduction-and-background>

¹¹² J. Staufenberg (2021) Can the government fix the 'confusing' careers landscape? FE Week. Available at: <https://feweek.co.uk/can-the-government-fix-the-confusing-careers-landscape/>

¹¹³ R. Wheeler (2022) MPs back law to guarantee careers advice to pupils from age of 11. The Evening Standard, 14 January. Available at: <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/mps-england-conservative-schools-david-lynch-b976745.html>

¹¹⁴ Research. The Careers and Enterprise Company Primary Careers Resources. Accessed February 2022. Available at: <https://primary-careers.careersandenterprise.co.uk/practice/research>

Careers Leader. The member of SLT with responsibility for careers should also work together with the school's Pupil Premium Lead, to ensure the school's career strategy is developed taking into account the specific needs of this group of students.

To be impactful for disadvantaged students particularly, parental involvement should be integrated into careers activities where possible. As this report has shown, the majority of students discuss their future choices with their family, but parents may not be as well informed about choices that were not an option when they were growing up, including T-Levels and degree apprenticeships, or those that they have not seen individuals in their social circle complete.¹¹⁵ Involving parents in activities can improve their knowledge, thus improve the guidance they are able to pass on as a trusted source to their child, whilst also bridging the gap between advice given inside and outside of the classroom.

Schools, colleges and their governing boards should also ensure there is clear strategic oversight for careers within the institution's governing board, by having at least one governor who oversees careers provision. Although there is no current requirement to have this, there is encouragement to do so in the Department for Education's governance handbook.¹¹⁶ This governor role should engage with a school's Careers Leader to give strategic oversight of a school's careers programme, as well as potentially helping to join their school up with local employers through any contacts on the governing board. It should also work together with a school's pupil premium governor, again to ensure the school's strategy is successfully catering to this group of students.

Finally for schools and colleges, the pandemic has had a considerable impact on careers provision, and should be considered as part of a school's catch-up efforts. While the CEC did find more teachers reported discussing careers in the classroom during the pandemic,¹¹⁷ as highlighted previously, many teachers feel like they have not been correctly prepared to deliver guidance in their training, so the advice is unlikely to have been as high quality as the advice that would usually be delivered by a professional. Furthermore, this report has outlined teacher's thoughts on how the pandemic has negatively impacted face to face interaction with employers and education providers. This is similar to Sutton Trust research from earlier in the pandemic, which found that employers were offering reduced work experience and internship opportunities in the first months of lockdown.¹¹⁸ As students have missed out on vital careers education and outreach activities during the pandemic, schools should ensure they include careers guidance as a part of their catch-up efforts. Schools may find resources published by the OECD designed to support teachers and careers staff deliver guidance that reflects the Covid-19 labour market useful in planning this catch-up work.¹¹⁹ However, for schools to be able to do these important catch-up efforts, it's vital that government provide funding to the scale of the challenge on catch-up. The Sutton Trust, alongside many others, have criticised the level of funding government has provided for covid recovery efforts. Given this, existing funding is likely to struggle to meet the need for core aspects of catch-up, and is therefore very unlikely to be able to cover wider but still important issues, such as catch-up efforts on careers.

¹¹⁵ J.Hutchinson *et al.* (2011) All things being equal? Equality and diversity in careers education, information, advice and guidance. University of Derby and National Institute of Economic and Social Research. Available at: https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/research-report-71-all_things-being-equal-equality-and-diversity-in-careers-education-information-and-advice.pdf

¹¹⁶ Department for Education (2020) Governance Handbook: Academy trusts and maintained schools. Department for Education. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/925104/Governance_Handbook_FINAL.pdf

¹¹⁷ The Careers and Enterprise Company (2021) 2021: Trends in careers education. Careers and Enterprise Company. Available at: <https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/media/xadnk1hb/cec-trends-in-careers-education-2021.pdf>

¹¹⁸ E. Holt-White and R. Montacute (2020) COVID-19 Impacts: Access to the workplace. Sutton Trust. Available at: <https://www.suttontrust.com/our-research/coronavirus-workplace-access-and-graduate-recruitment/>

¹¹⁹ Career readiness. OECD. Accessed March 2022. Available at: <https://www.oecd.org/education/career-readiness/>

Offering high quality careers guidance to all individuals in every school and college is vital for social mobility. The changes outlined here have the potential to improve provision, so that all students can make informed decisions about their future. For disadvantaged students specifically, high quality and impartial guidance whilst in education can provide an invaluable insight into career paths which they otherwise may not see and help them to successfully fulfil their potential.

Appendix 1

Table 1: Activities ever taken part in, by year group

	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12	Year 13	Total
Found out about a particular career in my usual lessons	20%	29%	24%	32%	34%	35%	39%	31%
Session(s) with a Careers Adviser	3%	3%	12%	14%	35%	47%	46%	23%
Sessions(s) or career conversations with a teacher	3%	11%	16%	22%	38%	40%	44%	25%
College or training provider open day, visit or event	3%	3%	8%	11%	29%	24%	34%	16%
Attended employer talks, careers fairs and/or events	5%	5%	6%	7%	13%	22%	33%	13%
Advice on job or career opportunities in my local area	1%	6%	3%	9%	8%	10%	17%	8%
A visit, talk or event about apprenticeships	2%	4%	8%	12%	25%	14%	26%	13%
Visited a university open day or event	2%	2%	1%	6%	6%	14%	42%	11%
Done a work experience placement arranged through your school	2%	1%	1%	4%	7%	14%	30%	8%
Other careers activity not listed	1%	6%	7%	6%	5%	6%	7%	5%
None of these	69%	56%	51%	35%	19%	14%	8%	36%
Don't know	8%	4%	3%	4%	2%	2%	1%	4%

Table 2: Reporting of having received no guidance on particular topics from school/college, by year group

	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12	Year 13	<i>Total</i>
Work options after finishing education	58%	38%	43%	29%	18%	20%	12%	31%
Apprenticeships	72%	58%	56%	43%	20%	26%	12%	41%
Other Further Education or training routes	70%	44%	38%	32%	10%	17%	12%	32%
University and Higher Education	54%	39%	38%	25%	14%	10%	5%	26%

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