



**Parents and Carers Voice Research 2022/23**

**Key Findings Briefing Paper**

**SDS Evaluation and Research Team**

## Background

Skills Development Scotland (SDS) is the national skills agency. As the provider of Scotland's Career Service, SDS supports customers to develop the skills and habits they need to make decisions about learning and work.

SDS's strategic plan (2022-27) sets out our goal of ensuring that young people have improved participation in the labour market, smoother post-school transitions and are equipped with the skills they need, at every stage of their lives, to have rewarding careers<sup>1</sup>. We know from our previous research with young people<sup>23</sup> that parents and carers are a key influencer on the decisions and choices young people make about their education and career.

It is therefore essential for SDS to fully understand the experiences of parents and carers when supporting their children in making decisions about their future careers. The findings of the research are used to inform the Parents Strategy and continuous improvement of Careers Information, Advice and Guidance (CIAG) services for parents and carers across Scotland.

## Parents and Carers Voice 2022/23 Research

Parents and carers are a key influencer of young people's career and education choices. As such, SDS seeks feedback from this important group on SDS services, perceptions and attitudes towards work based learning and other routes, and knowledge of careers and career conversations with their child through the SDS Parents Voice Research. The research support SDS to:

- inform the way SDS communicates with parents to inform them of service offers;
- be used to develop resources/information to enable parents to support young people in their career choices;

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<sup>1</sup> [Skills Development Scotland Strategic Plan 2022-27 – Skills for a Changing World, 2022](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Skills Development Scotland – Young People in Scotland Research 2022/23](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Skills Development Scotland – Young People's Career Ambitions Research 2022](#)

- increase SDS understanding of parents' awareness and confidence in understanding the full range of post school pathways and options open to young people.

## **Approach**

An online questionnaire was designed in-house by the SDS Evaluation & Research and National CIAG teams. SDS Careers Advisers used their connections with secondary schools to encourage them to distribute the survey to parents by email, text, school social media and school apps. This was the most successful route to recruiting parents and carers to take part in the research. Other methods of distribution were also used, such as placing the survey link on SDS websites such as My World of Work and Apprenticeships.scot, sharing the survey link on SDS social media channels, and sending the survey link directly to parents and carers following SDS webinars.

The fieldwork was carried out between November 2022 and May 2023, during which time 2053 responses were received.

## **Areas covered**

The research questions were developed by SDS in collaboration with a project steering and reference group. The research covered the following areas:

- Awareness and use of SDS services (including SDS web services MyWoW and Apprenticeships.scot)
- Awareness and perception of apprenticeships
- Confidence in having careers conversations
- Sources of information used on careers and learning options
- Preferred communication channels

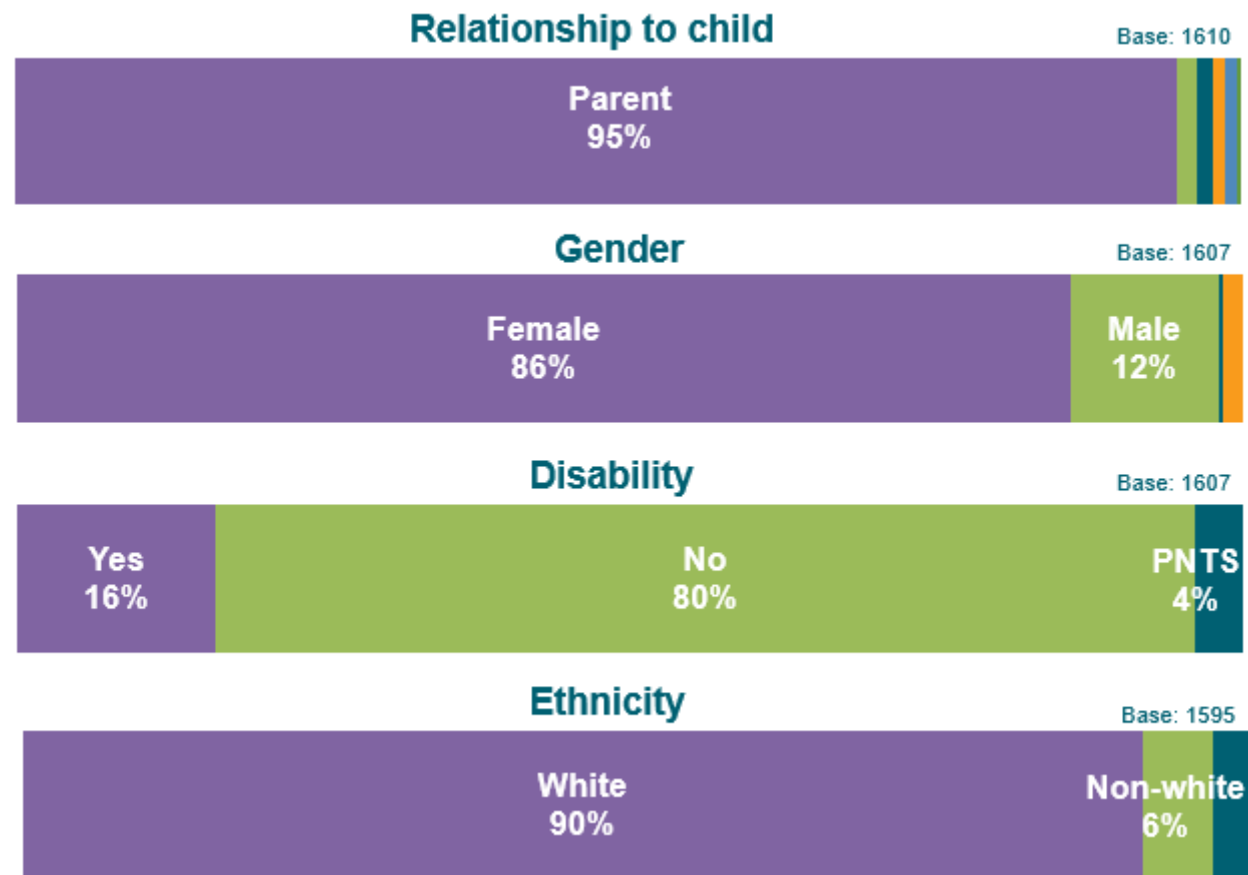
## **About this report**

This report summarises the key findings from the Parents and Carers Voice Research 2022/23. The term 'parents' may be used interchangeably with 'parents and carers' throughout this report to refer to all parents, carers and guardians who participated in the research. If you have any queries about this research, please contact SDS's Evaluation and Research Team at [evaluation&research@sds.co.uk](mailto:evaluation&research@sds.co.uk)

## Profile of parents and carers

Most (96%) respondents who took part in the survey were a 'parent' of a child. 2% of respondents were grandparents, 1% were carers, and 1% were guardians. The sample for both ethnicity and disability is similar to the profile of Scotland as a whole.

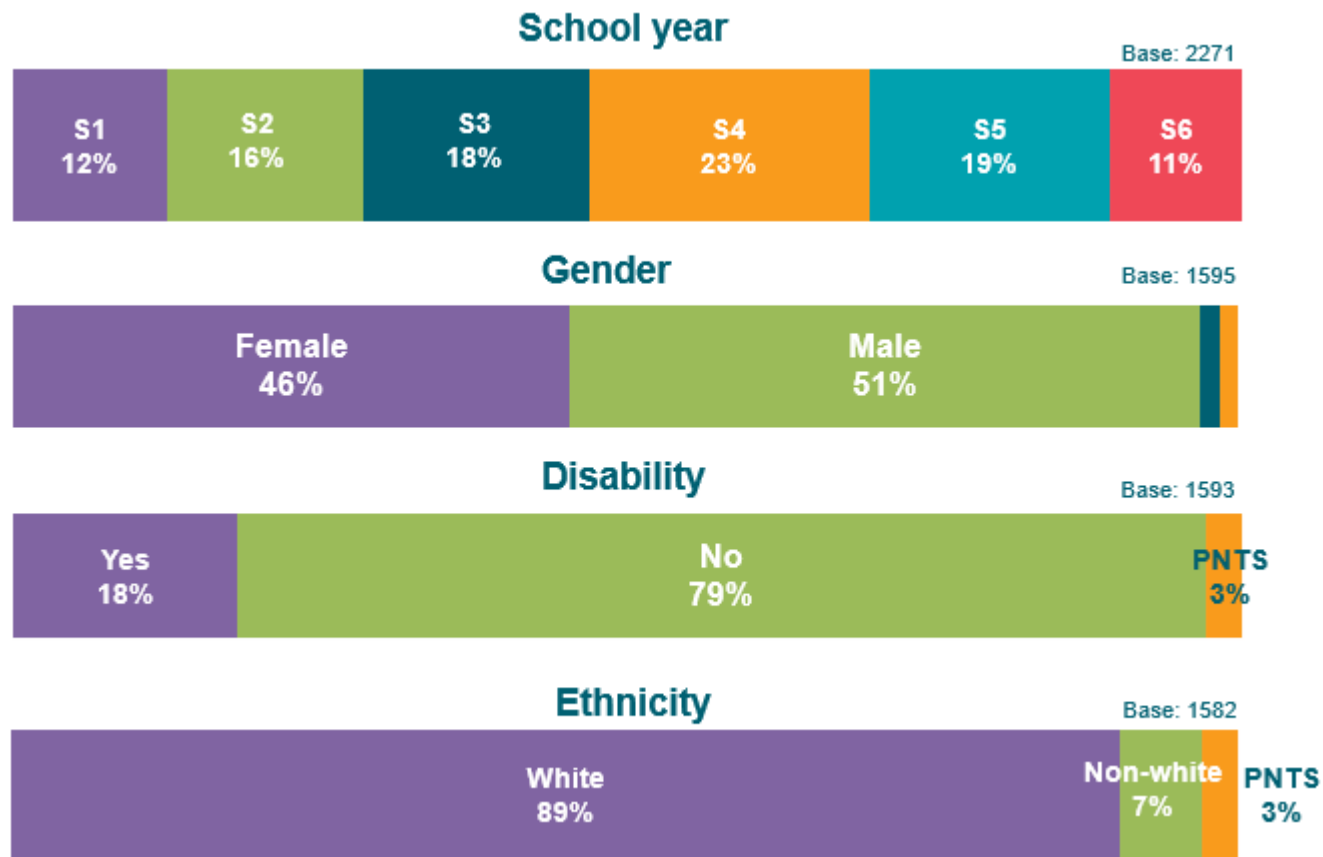
Figure 1: Profile of parents and carers



## Profile of child

Parents and carers who responded to the survey had children across a range of secondary school years. There was an even distribution of parents and carers of male and female children. Children from minority ethnic backgrounds and with a disability were also represented.

Figure 2: Profile of children



## Awareness and use of SDS services

Parents and carers have low awareness of the SDS services available to them. They are most aware of the My World of Work website and an appointment with a Careers Adviser at a school. However, awareness has increased across all services since previous waves of the survey were carried out – particularly for Parents and Carers webinars, accompanying a child to a careers appointment, the Results Helpline and Apprenticeships.scot.

**Figure 3:** Awareness and use of SDS services

SDS service	% Aware and have used	% Aware but have not used	% Not aware
My World of Work website	33	27	41
An appointment with a Careers Adviser at a school parents/carers event	20	39	41
Apprenticeships.scot website	17	35	48
SDS social media channels (e.g. Facebook, Twitter or Instagram)	15	27	58
Parent and carer webinar	15	37	48
Accompany my child to a careers appointment	11	31	57
Parent and Carers Guide to Digital Careers	6	19	75
Skills Development Scotland exam results helpline	5	32	63

**Figure 4:** Tracking of awareness of SDS services

SDS service	2021/22 - % Aware	2022/23 - % Aware
My World of Work website	56	60
An appointment with a careers adviser at a school parents/carers event	51	59
Apprenticeships.scot website	41	52
Parents and carers webinars	33	52
SDS Social Media Channels	33	42
Accompany my child to a careers appointment	31	42
Skills Development Scotland results helpline	26	37

## Satisfaction with SDS services used

Although Parents and Carers awareness of SDS services is low, Parents and Carers who use SDS services rate them highly. The mean point scores for overall satisfaction with different SDS services is presented below.

Figure 5: Satisfaction with SDS services used



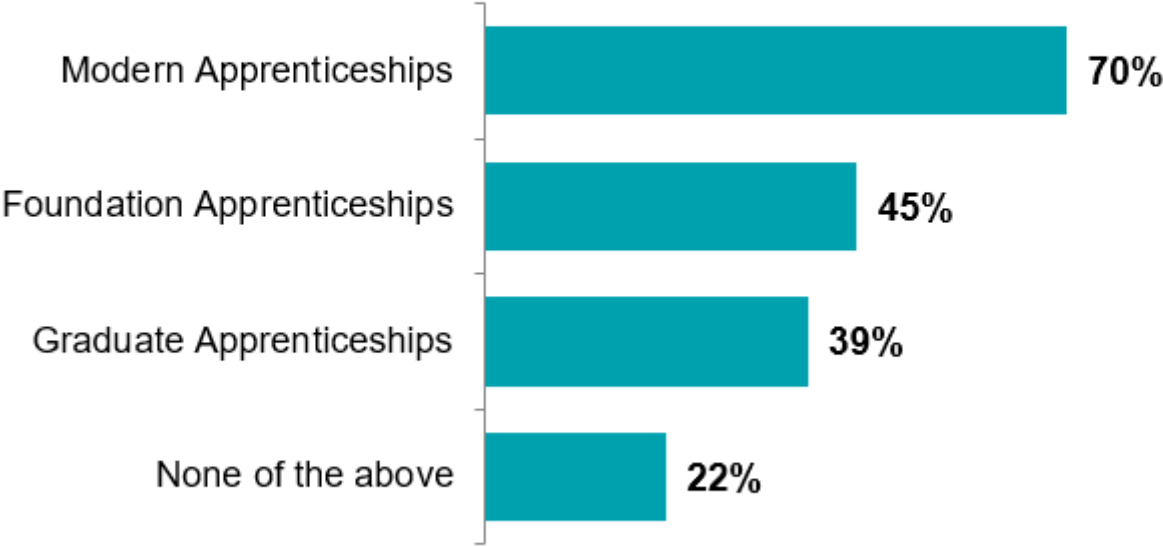


# Awareness and perceptions of apprenticeships

Parents and carers are most aware of modern apprenticeships. They are less aware of foundation and graduate apprenticeships. Around a fifth have no awareness of modern, foundation or graduate apprenticeships.

Figure 6: Awareness of apprenticeships

**Which of the following apprenticeships are you aware of?**  
(Please select all that apply)

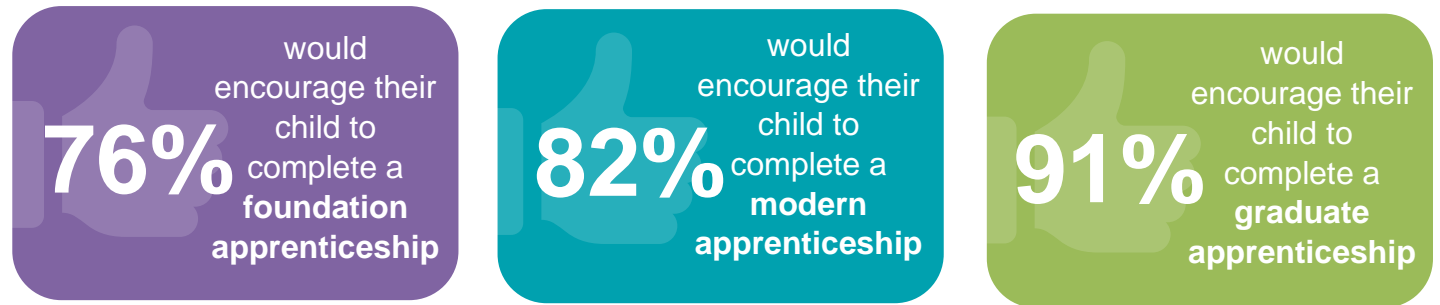


2022/23 base: 1915

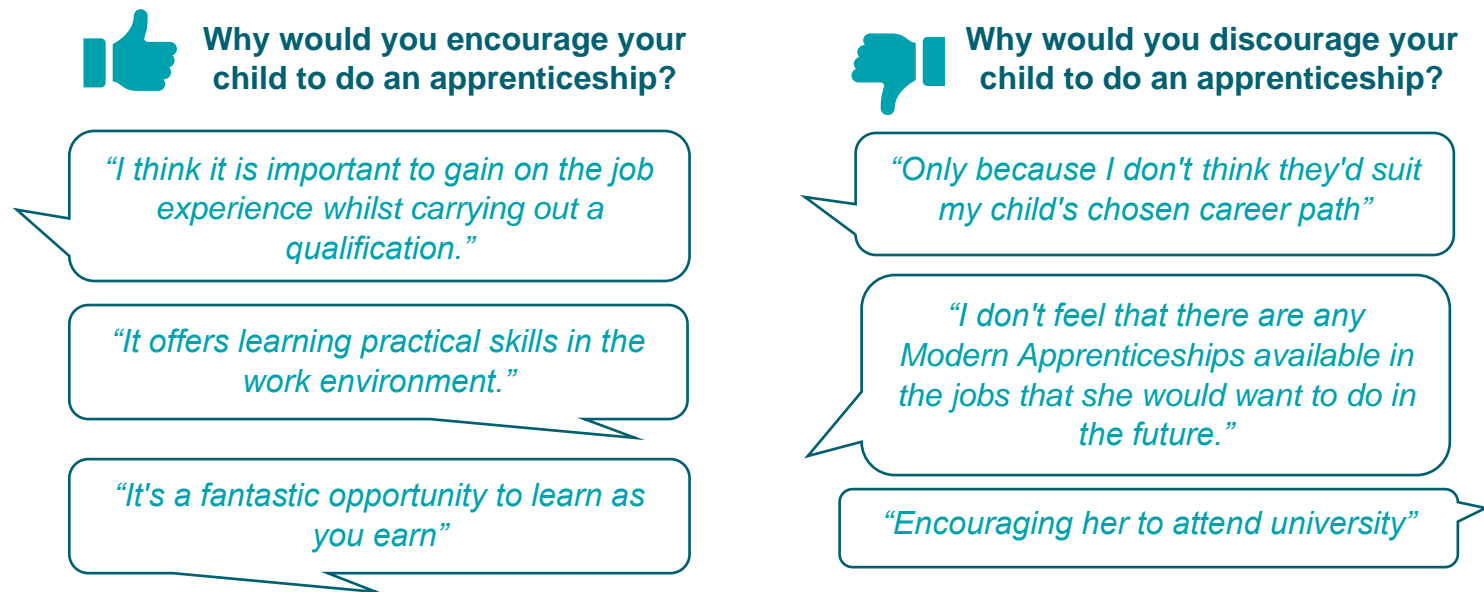
Parents and carers aware were asked if they would encourage or discourage foundation, modern or graduate apprenticeships to their child.

**Most parents and carers would encourage the different types of apprenticeships, especially graduate apprenticeships, if it suited their child's plans. Parents encourage apprenticeships to their children because they help to develop **learning, skills and experience**. Parents who discourage apprenticeships usually do so because an apprenticeship **does not suit their child's career plans**.**

**Figure 7:** % of parents who would encourage the different types of apprenticeships



**Figure 8:** Reasons for encouragement/discouragement of apprenticeships



## Confidence in career discussions

Parents are confident in having career discussions with their child, with 60% of parents selecting a score between 8-10 on the 10-point scale. Parents and carers who selected between 1-5 on the scale (who are less confident) say that **improving their knowledge on different learning routes and pathways** and knowing where to find information would improve their confidence.

Figure 9: Mean point score for confidence



Figure 10: Distribution of confidence scores

How confident do you feel discussing future careers and learning options with your child?

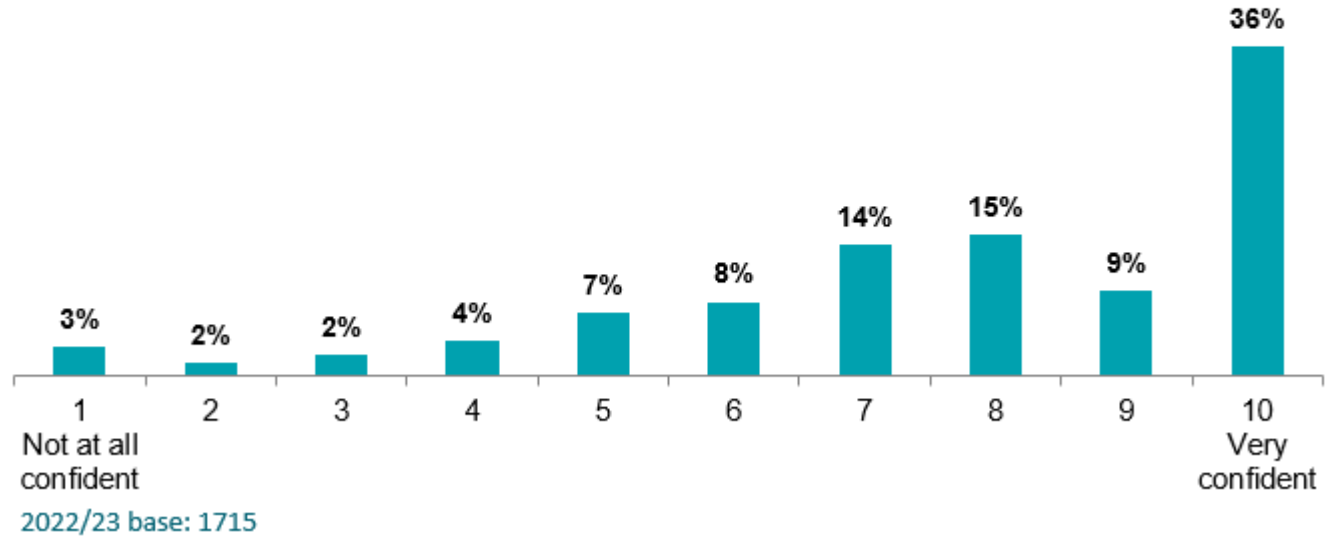
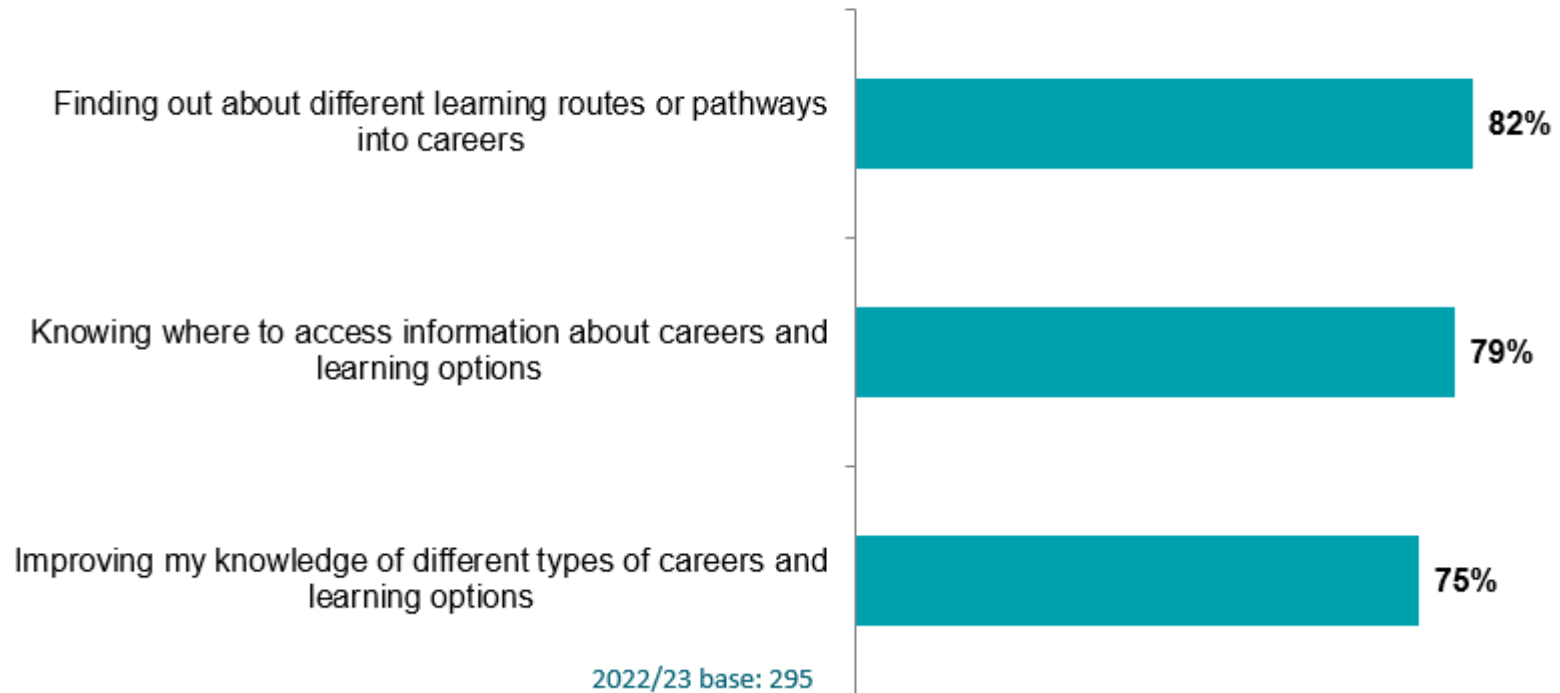


Figure 11: Improving confidence

**What would make you feel more confident when discussing future careers and learning options with your child?**  
(Please select all that apply)



# Influence

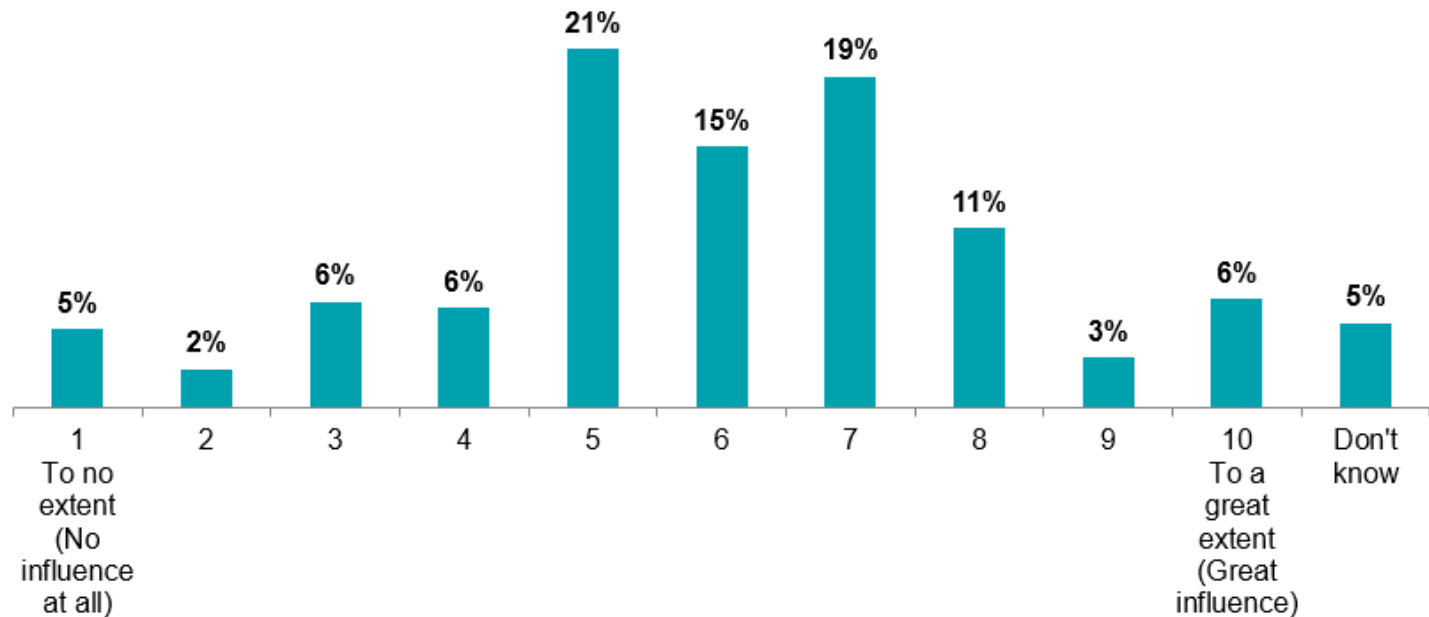
Parents do not see themselves as a key influencer on their child's career plans. However, this finding contrasts with findings of previous SDS research projects<sup>4,5</sup> where young people say that their parents are a key influencer on their plans.

Figure 12: Mean point score for influence



Figure 13: Distribution of influence scores

To what extent do you feel that you influence your child's choices about their career and learning options?



2022/23 base: 1653

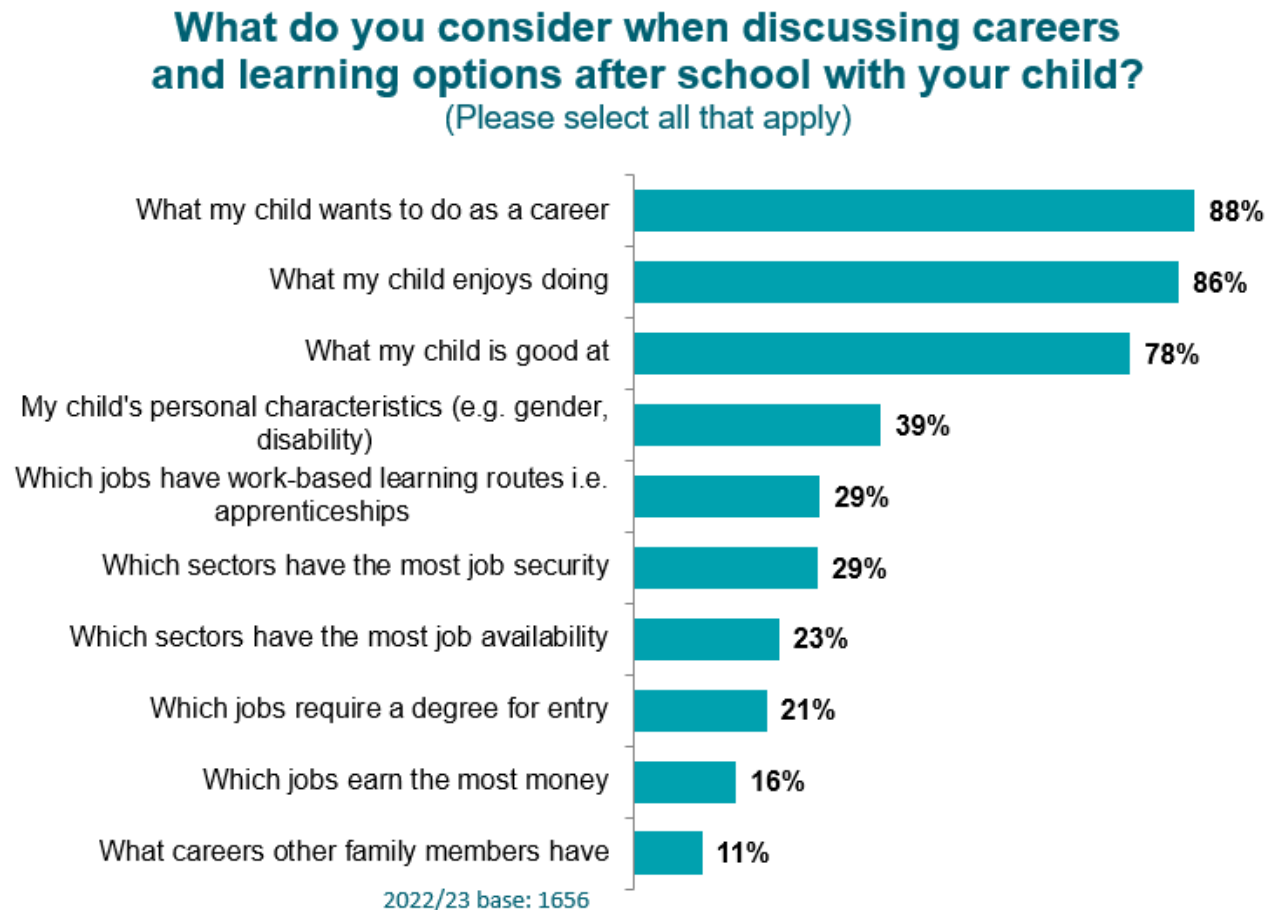
<sup>4</sup> Young Peoples Career Ambitions Research: <https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/news-events/2023/june/what-drives-young-people-s-career-ambitions/>

<sup>5</sup> Young People in Scotland Research: <https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/news-events/2023/september/what-influences-young-people-s-future-plans/>

## Considerations during career discussions

Parents and Carers are most likely to consider their child's **interests and strengths** when discussing careers with their child.

Figure 14: Considerations during career discussions

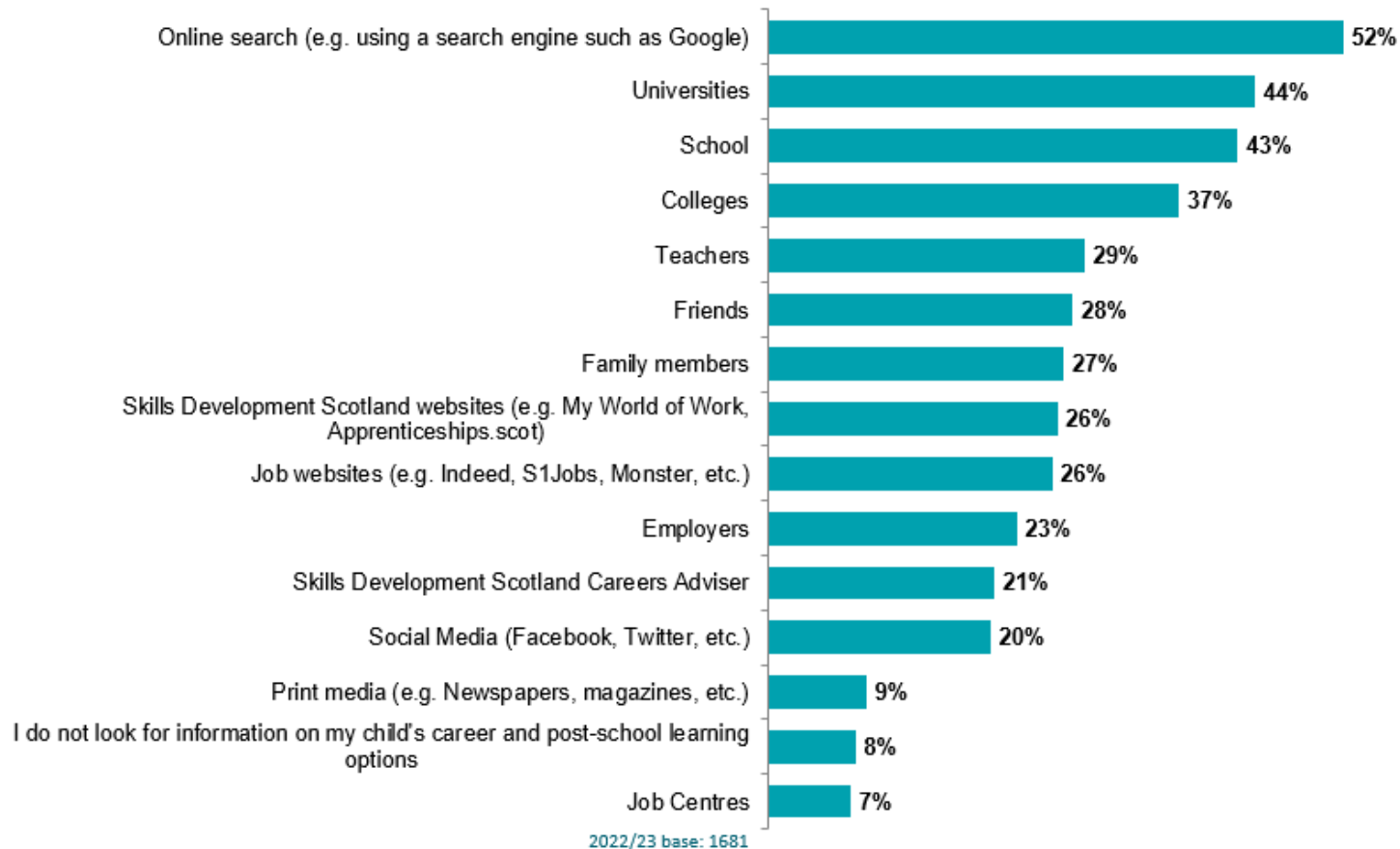


## Sources of information on careers

Parents use a **wide variety of sources** when looking for information on their child's career and learning options. They are most likely to use **online searches and educational establishments** such as universities, schools or colleges. Parents are least likely to use job centres or print media such as newspapers.

**Figure 15:** Sources of information on careers and learning options

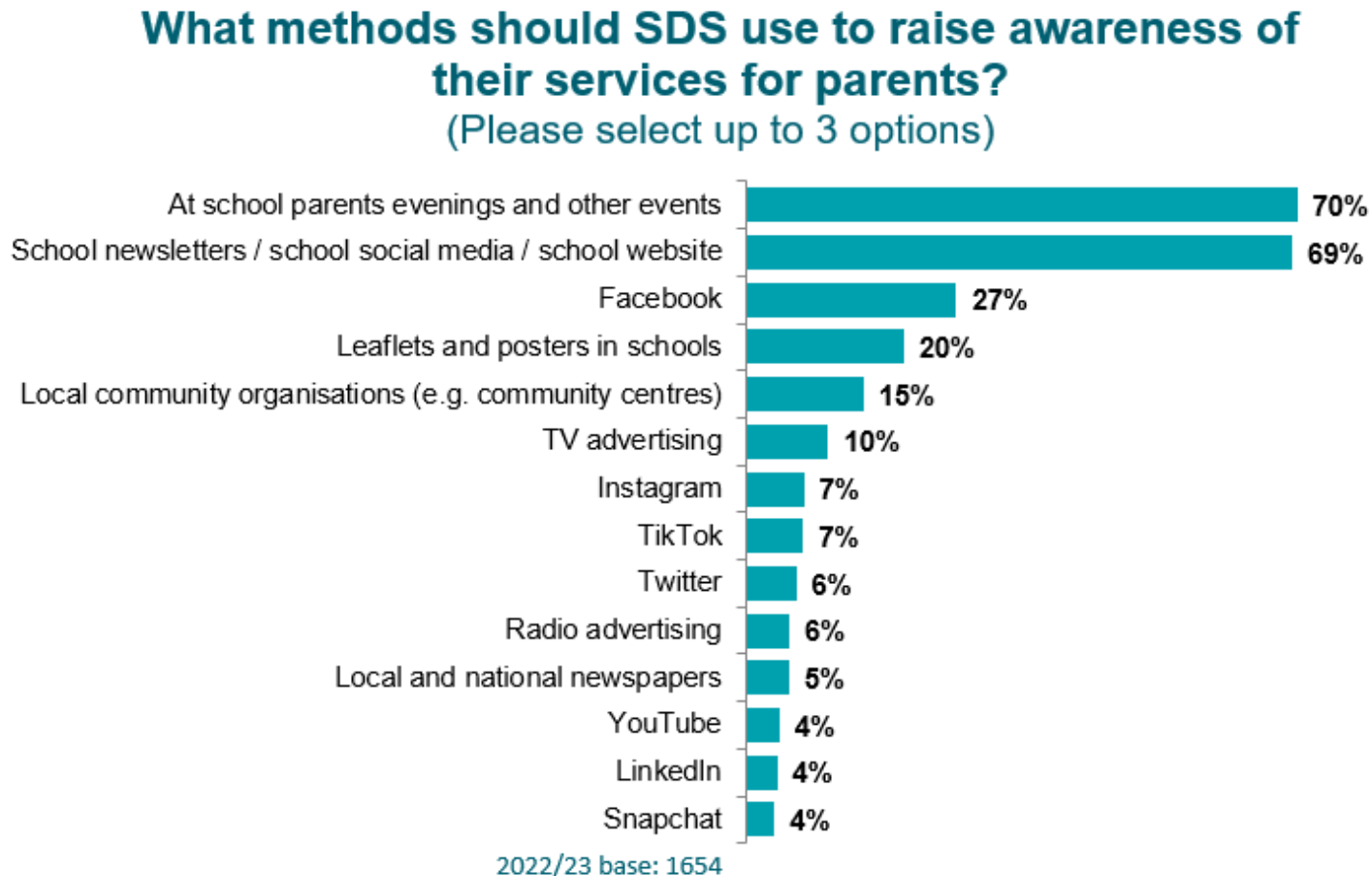
### Where do you look for information about your child's career and learning options for when they leave school? (Please select all that apply)



## Preferred communication channels

Parents want to hear about SDS service primarily through schools – at parents evenings and events, school newsletters, school websites and leaflets/posters in schools. Parents would also like to hear about SDS services through Facebook, however other social media channels are not as popular among parents.

Figure 16: Preferred methods of communication for raising awareness of SDS services





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