



Skills
Development
Scotland

Careers
Adviser

myworldofwork.co.uk

Pupil Voice Research 2023

Key Findings Briefing Paper

Background

Skills Development Scotland (SDS) is the national skills agency. As the provider of Scotland's careers services, 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 we provide engaging and relevant career intelligence, education, and experiences that help to inform individual learning and career choices¹.

Scotland has an internationally recognised, multi-channel careers service and every individual in Scotland is entitled to access careers support. For young people, there is at least one dedicated Careers Adviser from a team of careers professionals working in every maintained secondary school in Scotland.

SDS careers professionals take a person-centred approach to the delivery of career services, tailoring the provision of support to the unique needs of each customer. However, some individuals may require more support than others to make a successful transition from school into employment, education, or training. Therefore, to ensure equality of opportunity for all, we target our resources at those customers who require the most support.

To ensure that young people receive high-quality career services that supports them in developing their Career Management Skills (CMS), it is essential to evaluate the services that SDS provides to identify what works well and what needs improvement. This helps us to adapt our services to evolving needs and leads to more tailored and impactful services for young people.

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

The Pupil Voice research

The Pupil Voice research collects feedback from young people on their experiences of the services they receive from SDS, and on the outcomes and benefits gained from accessing these services. Young people provide feedback on various elements of SDS services, including their experiences of (i) one-to-one sessions with their Careers Adviser, (ii) group sessions, (iii) drop-in sessions, and (iv) SDS's web service, My World of Work.

A key focus of the research is to capture the experiences and outcomes of young people receiving targeted or universal services from SDS². A further important element is to view the findings from an equality perspective and to capture the views of young people with protected characteristics, including ethnicity, indicators of deprivation, additional support needs, care experience, and sexual orientation.

The results from this research are shared with senior leadership in SDS to help shape and improve service delivery. The results also feed into our annual CIAG report which is published externally. Our ambition is for the Pupil Voice research to be the definitive source of insight on S4-S6 school pupils in Scotland.

Approach

All senior phase pupils (S4-S6, aged 16+ years) in Scotland with a valid email address or mobile phone number are sent a link to the questionnaire. The questionnaire is tailored to each young person based on the services they have accessed in school. Distributing the questionnaire by email and text resulted in a total of **8,699 young people responding to the research in 2023**. To our knowledge, this is the **largest repeated cross-sectional sample of senior phase school pupils in Scotland**.

² Young people receive either a 'targeted' or 'universal' service based on their level of need. Targeted support is tailored to individuals who may require specific assistance due to their unique circumstances or goals. Young people receiving targeted services are therefore more likely to have one-to-one engagements with a Careers Adviser. Universal support is designed to benefit everyone, regardless of their situation or background. Young people receiving universal services are provided with general guidance and resources for career development. They can request one-to-one engagements with a Careers Adviser, but are less likely to have as many engagements as targeted users. It is also important to note that it is not mandatory for young people to use the careers services in school, and attendance at one-to-one sessions is completely optional.

The fieldwork was carried out between June and July 2023. The results were weighted by gender, year group, and service offer³ to ensure the results were representative of the Scottish school senior phase (S4-S6) pupil population.

Areas covered

The research collected the views from young people on:

- **The support provided by their Careers Adviser**
- **Drop-in sessions**
- **Group sessions**
- **My World of Work**
- **Foundation Apprenticeships**
- **Career Management Skills**
- **Receiving communications about careers services**
- **Post-school plans**

About this report

This report summarises the key findings from the Pupil Voice research. The questions young people were asked to answer in the research included a variety of 'select one option only' or 'select multiple option' questions. These are reported as percentages where relevant. Young people were also asked to rate statements on a 1-10 scale for some questions. These are presented as mean point scores where relevant. The total unweighted responses to each question can be found in the appendix. A series of infographics focusing on protected characteristics have also been produced. If you have any queries about this research, please contact SDS's Evaluation and Research team at evaluation&research@sds.co.uk.

³ Service offer refers to the number of young people receiving either 'targeted' or 'universal' services.

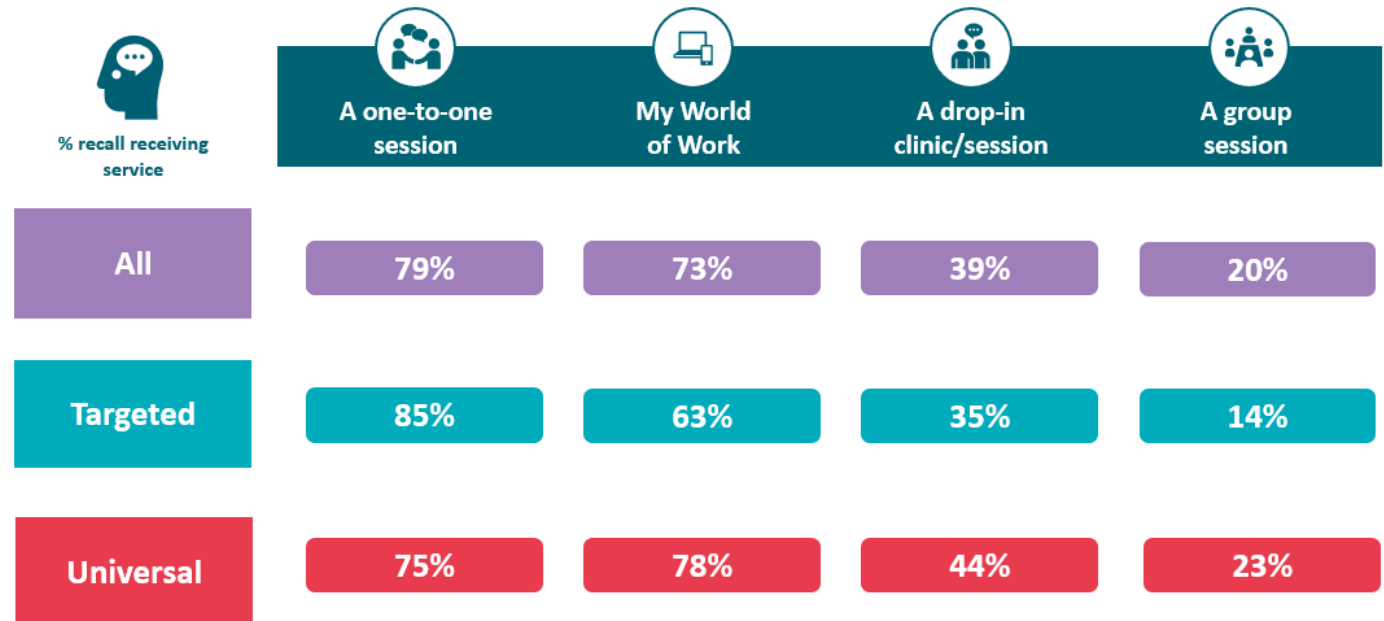
Recall of SDS Careers Services

Young people were asked if they recalled receiving the services that SDS records show they have accessed throughout school.

Young people were highly likely to recall attending one-to-one sessions with a Careers Adviser and using My World of Work. However, they were much less likely to remember attending a drop-in clinic/session or a group session.

Targeted young people were more likely to recall one-to-one sessions, whereas universal young people had higher recall for using My World of Work, attending drop-in clinics/sessions, and attending group sessions.

Figure 1: Percentage of young people recalling SDS careers services



Support provided in one-to-one sessions

Young people who had accessed one-to-one sessions with a Careers Adviser were asked about the support they received.

Overall, young people rated the support provided by Career Advisers at one-to-one sessions highly. Young people felt the Careers Adviser listened to them and valued their ideas, supported them to make their own decisions, and encouraged them to aim high for their future career.

Those receiving a targeted service rated the support more positively than universal customers, but both groups were positive about their engagements.

Figure 2: Views on the support provided at one-to-one sessions (average score out of ten)

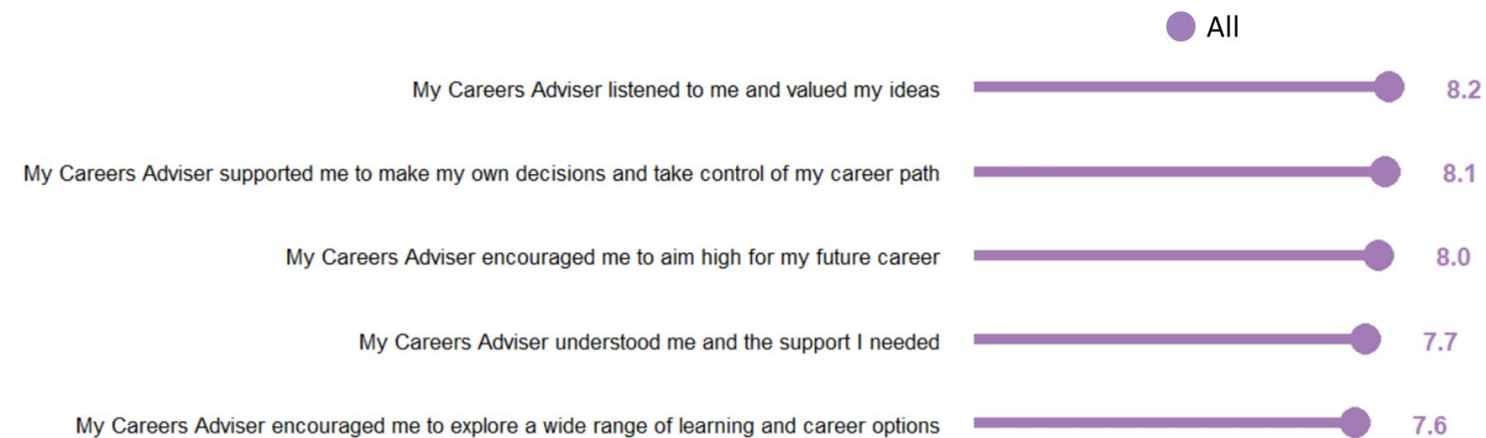
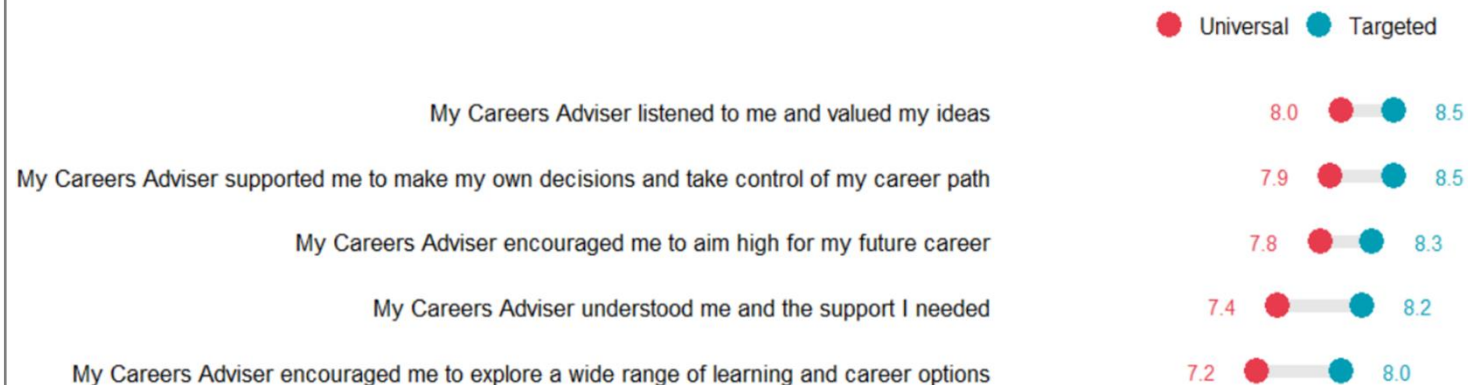


Figure 3: Views on the support provided at one-to-one sessions, by service offer (average score out of ten)



Process of one-to-one sessions

Young people were also asked about the process of their one-to-ones sessions.

Young people were positive about how they would benefit from working with their Careers Adviser, but other aspects were not as well received as the support itself. In particular, young people said that they did not know how often they would meet with their Careers Adviser.

Targeted young people were more likely to be positive about the process of their one-to-one sessions than universal young people.

Figure 4: Views on the process of accessing a one-to-one sessions (average score out of ten)

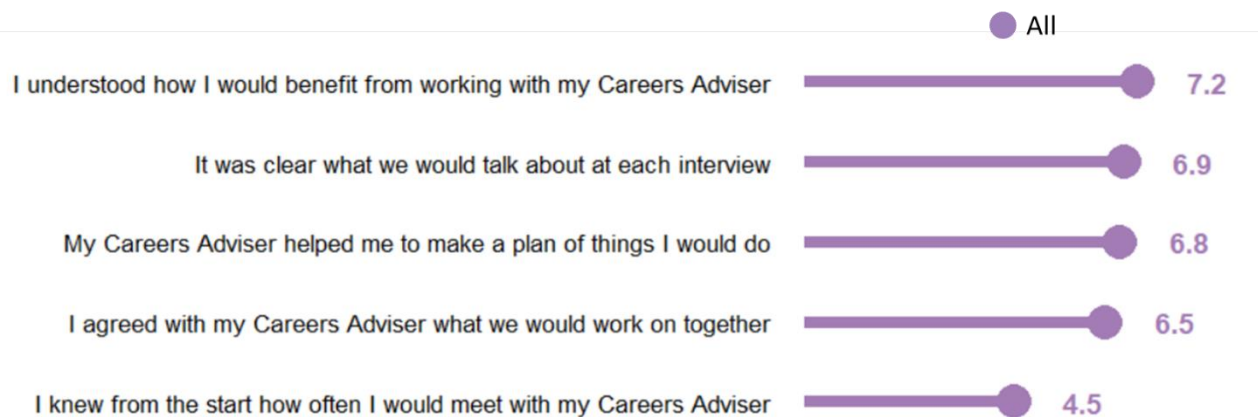
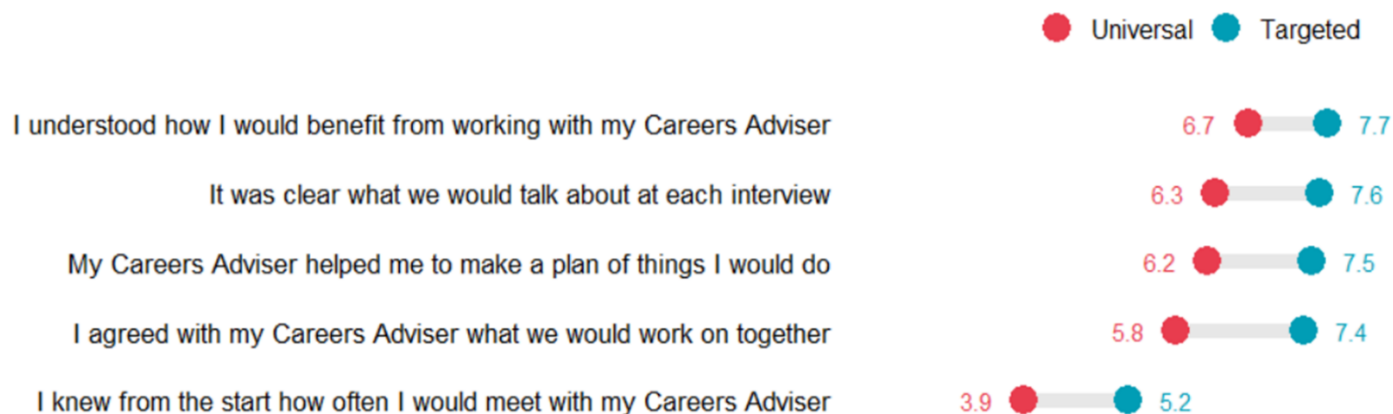


Figure 5: Views on the process of accessing a one-to-one session, by service offer (average score out of ten)



Timing and number of one-to-one sessions

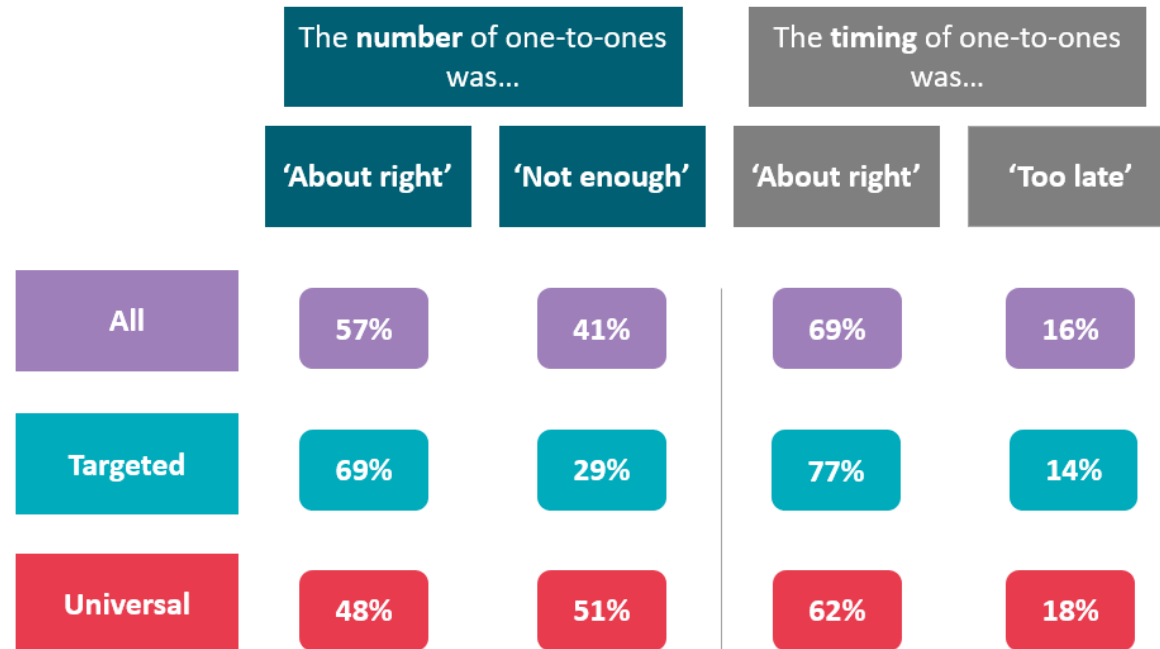
Young people were asked about their views on the **number** and **timing** of one-to-one sessions with their Careers Adviser.

Targeted young people were highly likely to say that the **number** of one-to-one sessions they received was 'about right'. However, just over half of universal young people said that they did not have enough one-to-one sessions.

Almost no one thought that they had too many one-to-one sessions.

Most young people felt that the **timing** of their one-to-one session was also 'about right'. This was particularly true for targeted young people, where over three quarters agreed.

Figure 6: Views on the *number* and *timing* of one-to-one sessions, by service offer



"I liked that the meetings were dated for the appropriate time of year. For example, before course choice or after exam results have been given, to discuss what my next steps may be. I liked how my interests and decisions were listened to"

Female, S5, Targeted

"I liked the one-to-one interview with my school's Careers Adviser. I found it beneficial, but would have liked to have more than one meeting"

Female, S5, Universal

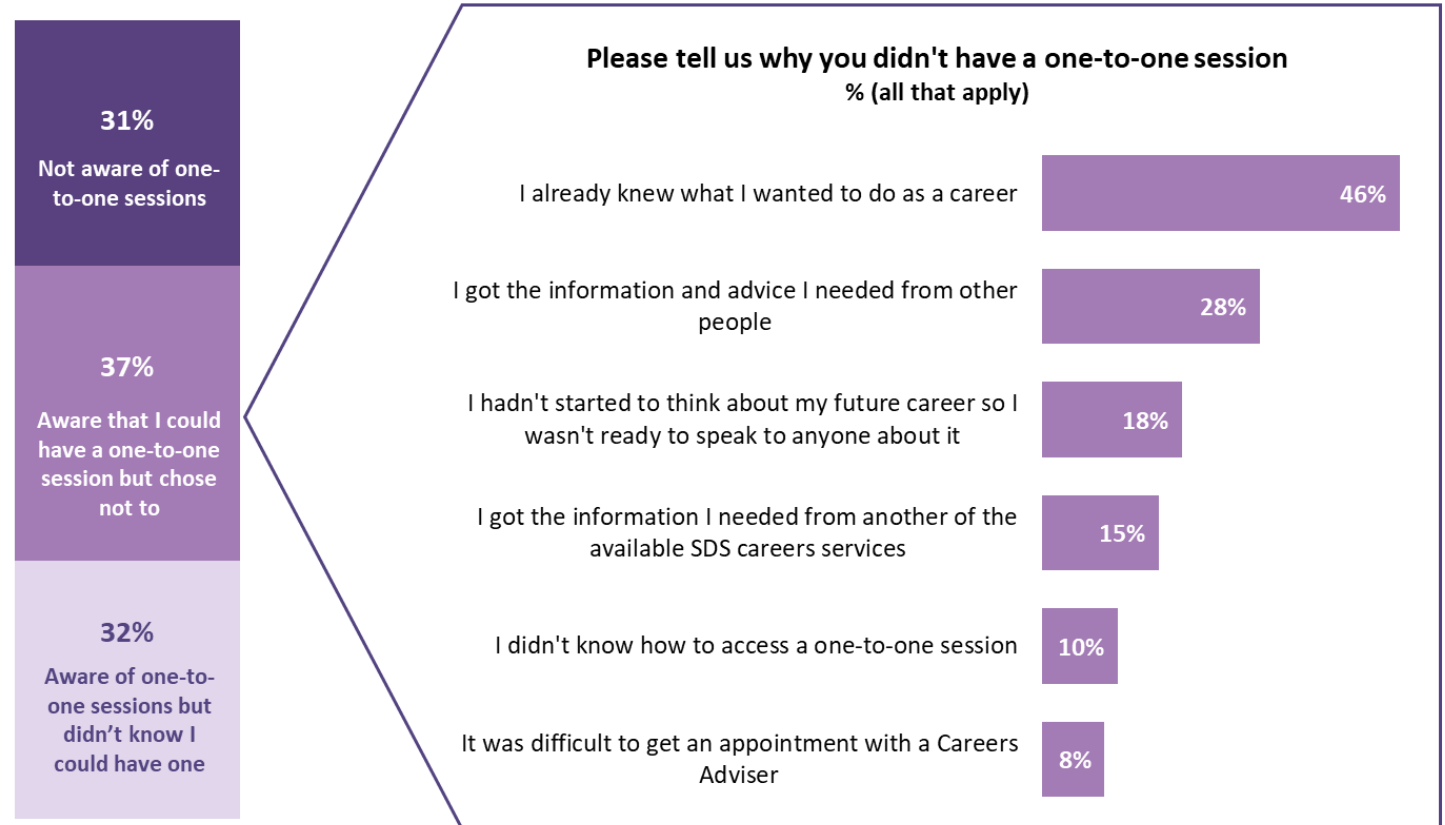
Reasons for not having a one-to-one session

Young people who did not have a one-to-one session were asked if they were aware that one-to-one sessions were available to them and that they could have one*.

Young people were evenly split between (i) not being aware of one-to-one sessions at all, (ii) being aware of them but not knowing they could have one, and (iii) being aware they could have a one but choosing not to.

Of those that chose not to have a one-to-one session, the main reasons were that they already knew what they wanted to do as a career (46%), or that they got the information and advice they needed from other people (28%).

Figure 7: Reasons for not having a one-to-one session (% selected)



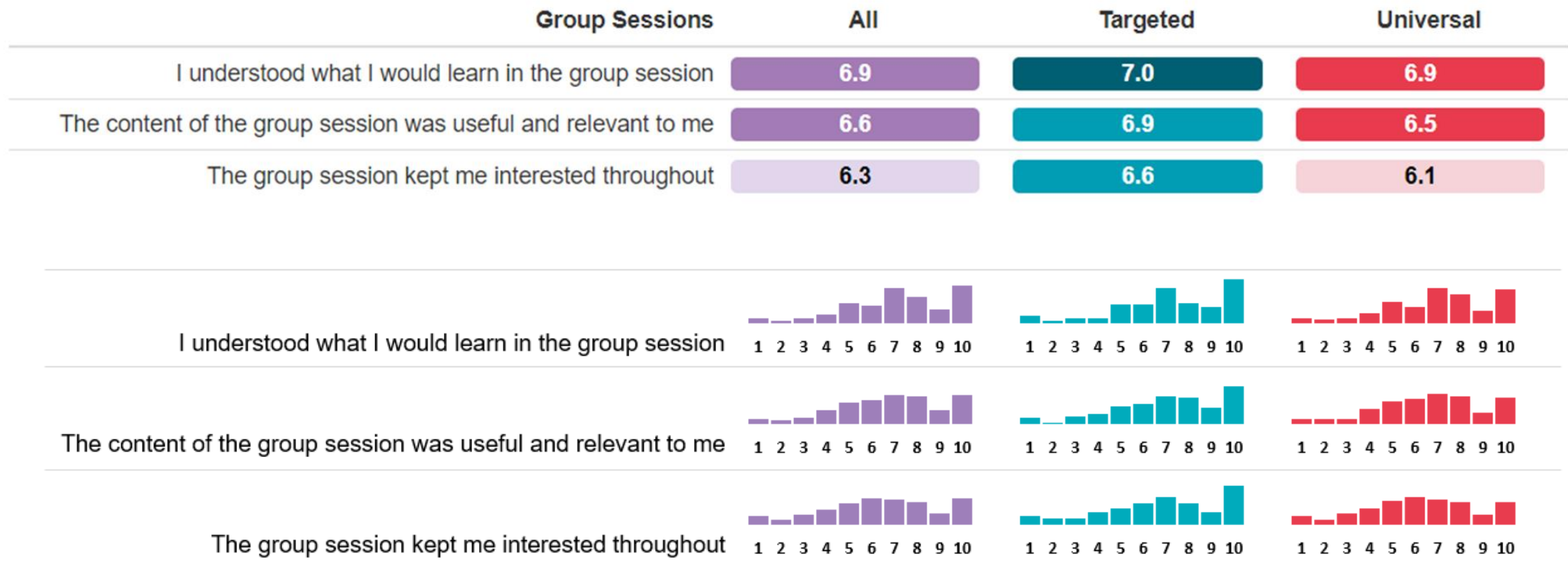
*This includes young people who had a one-to-one session according to our records but did not recall it.

Group sessions

Group sessions delivered by SDS were not well remembered by young people - only 20% of those who attended a group session recalled them. A potential reason for this is that young people receive many group sessions in school from various external organisations and may therefore struggle to recall specific sessions that they had received only once or twice.

Nevertheless, those who did recall group sessions viewed them positively. Young people understood what they would learn in the group session and found the content of the group session to be useful and relevant.

Figure 8: Views on groups sessions, by services offer (average score out of ten and score distributions)



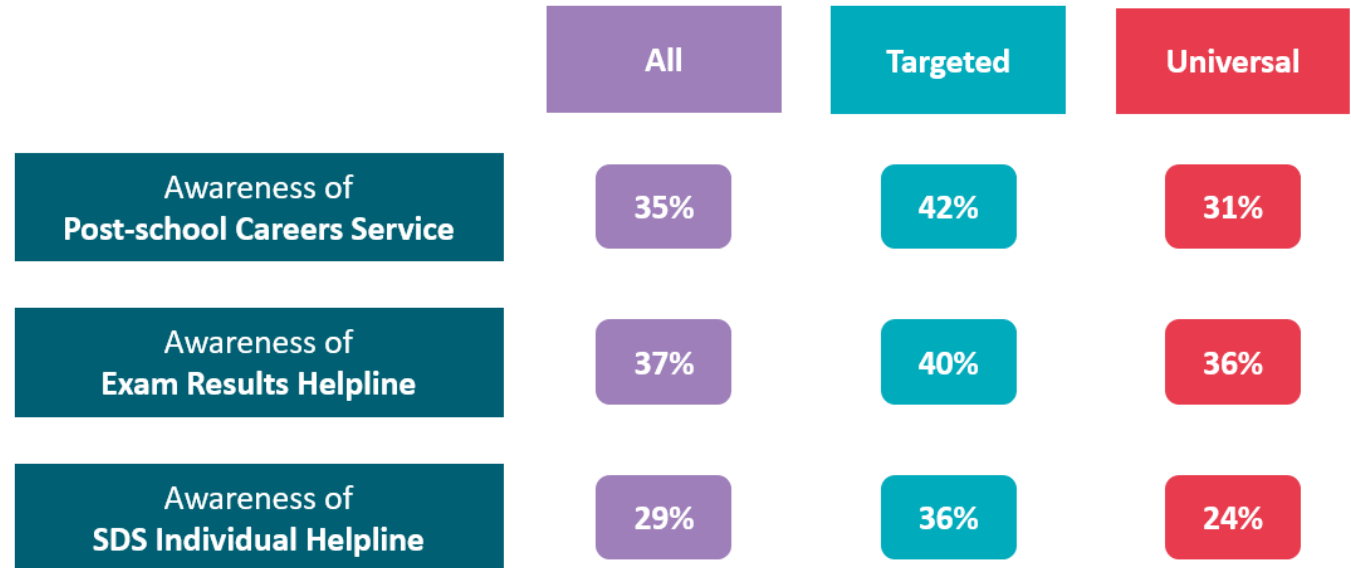
Awareness of other SDS services

Young people were asked about their awareness of three additional SDS services; the Post-school Careers Service, the Exam Results Helpline, and the SDS Individual Helpline.

Awareness was relatively low, with around two thirds of young people not knowing about these services.

Awareness was higher among targeted young people than universal young people for all three services.

Figure 9: Awareness of other SDS careers services, by service offer (%)



For more information about these services please visit <https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/what-we-do/scotlands-careers-services/>

Accessing SDS Careers Services

Young people were asked about their satisfaction with various aspects of SDS careers services.

Young people were generally positive about their *ability to access support when needed, the amount of support available to them, and the range of SDS careers services available.*

Targeted young people were much more likely to be positive about these aspects than universal young people. Universal young people would like more information on the range of careers services available to them and more information about how to access these services.

Figure 10: Satisfaction with aspects of SDS careers services, by service offer (average score out of ten)

Satisfaction with the Careers Service	All	Targeted	Universal
The ability to access support when needed	7.0	7.5	6.6
The amount of support available	6.9	7.4	6.5
The range of SDS careers services available	6.9	7.3	6.6
The information you were given about how to access SDS careers services	6.4	6.9	6.1
The information you were given about the range of SDS careers services available	6.4	6.9	6.1

“I liked how easy to access and how easy to set up an interview it was. It made it so you can always get an interview if you needed help deciding for your future”

Male, S6, Targeted

“Friendly, easy to get an appointment, and they were really knowledgeable and able to direct me to the next steps to take for me deciding on my career and what websites would help me”

Female, S5, Universal

“I haven't had the most interaction with SDS before so it was a very new and sudden thing, so maybe a bit more information and easing in would be great”

Female, S5, Universal

Overall satisfaction with SDS Career Services

Young people were asked about their *overall satisfaction*, *likelihood to recommend*, and their views on the *effectiveness of the careers services* they received.

Young people receiving targeted services were satisfied with the careers services overall. They are likely to recommend the careers services to others, and feel the services have been effective in helping them decide what to do following school.

Universal young people were generally satisfied with the careers services, but were less likely to recommend the services or feel they were effective. The distribution of scores across these scales indicates a wide range of views from young people receiving universal services.

Figure 11: Satisfaction, likelihood to recommend, and effectiveness (average score out of ten and score distributions)



“High school is such a stressful time and most people won’t choose after a long day at school to go home and research what happens after school. Having the SDS careers who know all the information and can help give you relevant advice based on your individual situation is very helpful”

Male, S6, Targeted

“The service helped me to cement my knowledge of what I hope to do in the future - where I can study, what I need to do in the meantime, and what qualifications are required of me. They very much listened to me and supported me in making my own decisions!”

Female, S5, Targeted

Career Management Skills

Young people were asked how effective the careers services were in helping them to develop their Career Management Skills (CMS).

Overall, young people generally do feel that the careers services have been effective in helping them to develop the skills needed to help them plan and navigate their careers.

However, these scores are mainly driven by targeted young people, who are more likely to score positively than universal young people. Given that targeted young people are much more likely to receive one-to-one engagements, it follows that they are also more likely to attribute the development of their career management skills from interactions from the Careers Adviser.

Figure 12: Views on the effectiveness of the careers service in developing Career Management Skills, by service offer (average score out ten)

Career Management Skills	All	Targeted	Universal
Able to use my initiative to work things out for myself	6.8	7.3	6.5
To find and use career information easily	6.8	7.3	6.5
Understand how your experiences and learning can help you make career choices	6.8	7.3	6.4
Know about all of the learning, work and career options open to you	6.7	7.2	6.3
Being creative and imaginative when it comes to my career development	6.5	7.1	6.1
Make informed career decisions	6.5	7.2	6.1
Understand and build on your skills, strengths and achievements	6.5	7.1	6.0
Able to manage change in your life and career	6.4	7.0	5.9
Challenge stereotypes, such as ideas of "traditional" male or female jobs	6.4	6.9	6.1
Identify and build relationships with the people who can help you in your career	6.2	6.9	5.8
Knowing how to maintain the right balance between my personal life, learning and work	6.1	6.8	5.7

Post-school destinations

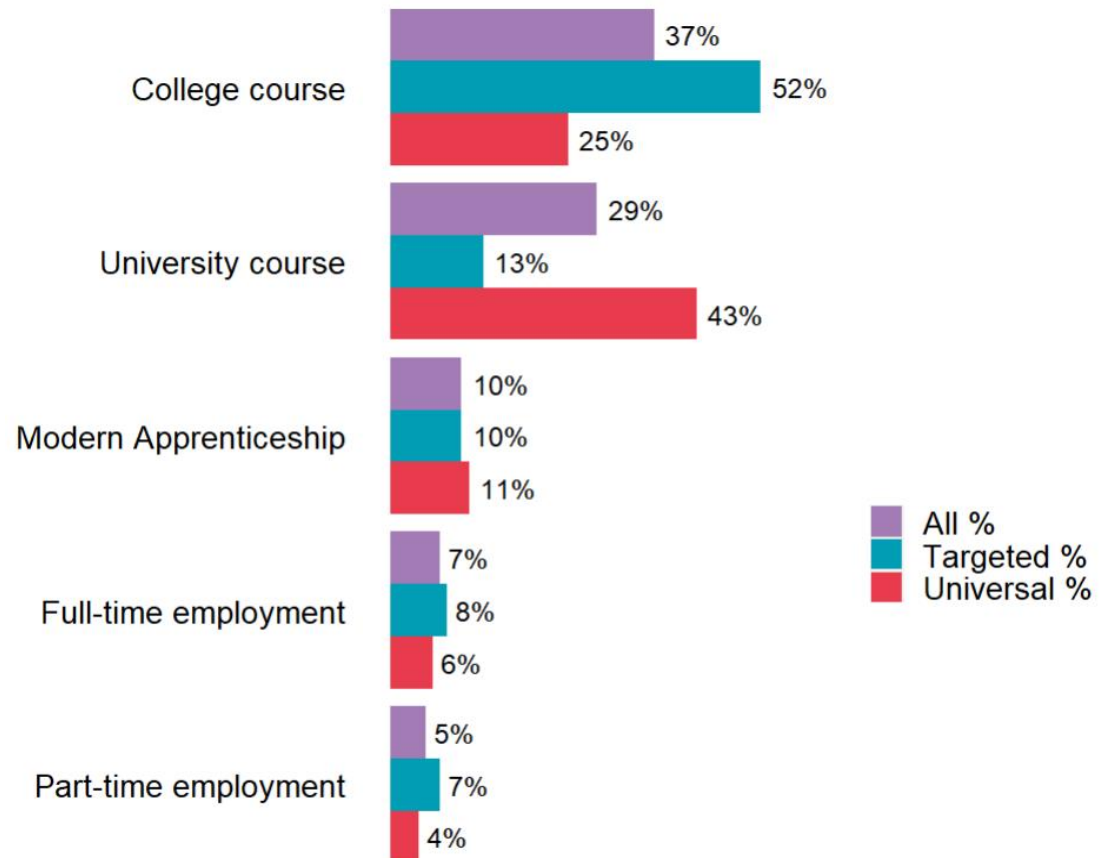
Young people were asked about their plans after leaving school*.

College and university were the most common destinations for young people. Around 1 in 10 were also planning to do a Modern Apprenticeship. Fewer young people were considering full-time or part-time employment.

There is a clear difference in educational pathways between targeted and universal young people. Targeted young people are much more likely to be planning to go to college, whereas university is the main pathway chosen by universal young people.

Figure 13: Planned post-school destinations, by service offer (%)

What are you doing, or planning to do, now that you have left school – select your main activity



*Only young people who said they were leaving school were asked this question.

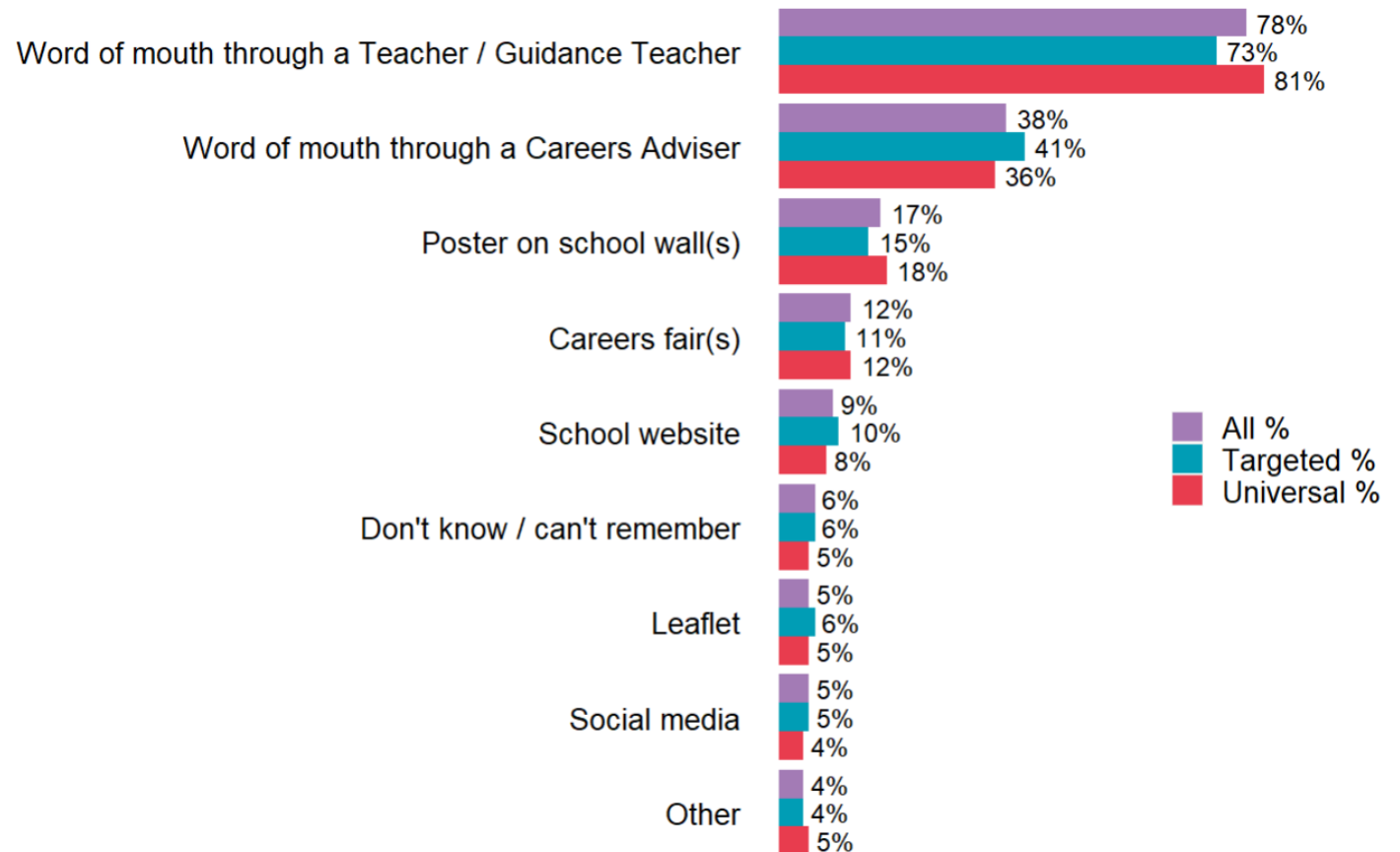
Finding out about careers services

Young people were asked how they found out about the careers service in their school.

'Warm' sources, such as word of mouth through a teacher or Careers Adviser were the most common channels where young people received information about careers services.

'Cold' sources, such as posters, school websites, social media, and leaflets, were much less likely to be channels where young people received information about careers.

Figure 14: Top channels for information on the careers service, by service offer (%)



Receiving communications about SDS careers services

Young people were asked about their preferred method to receive information about SDS careers services.

Email was the most preferred channel of communication, followed by a teacher, or information provided via text message.

Targeted young people are more likely to prefer information provided via text, whereas universal young people would like careers information provided to them by their teacher.

Young people did not rate social media highly as a preferred means of communication. However, among those that did, Instagram was the most popular platform (77%).

Figure 15: Preferred communication channels, by service offer (%)

Preferred communications channel	All %	Targeted %	Universal %
By email	41	43	40
From a Teacher / Guidance Teacher	33	27	37
By text	32	38	27
From a SDS Careers Adviser	18	20	17
Through school careers events	15	12	17
On My World of Work	14	12	16
Don't know / not sure	13	11	14
From social media channels (Facebook / Twitter / Snapchat / etc)	9	8	10
Through an App	9	8	10
From your Parent(s) / Carer(s)	8	7	8
By poster	7	6	8
By leaflet	6	6	6
By social media direct message	6	7	6

Appendix

Overall response (base) to each question, broken down by service offer.

Question	All (base)	Targeted (base)	Universal (base)
Recall of services (one-to-one sessions / My World of Work / drop in sessions / group sessions)	8,699	4,560	4,139
My Careers Adviser listened and valued my ideas	6,467	3,792	2,675
My Careers Adviser supported me to make my own decisions and take control of my career path	6,368	3,731	2,637
My Careers Adviser encouraged me to aim high for my future career	6,350	3,718	2,632
My Careers Adviser understood me and the support I needed	6,483	3,805	2,678
My Careers Adviser encouraged me to explore a wide range of learning and career options	6,428	3,760	2,688
I understood how I would benefit from working with my Careers Adviser	6,414	3,757	2,656
It was clear what we would talk about at each interview	6,291	3,710	2,581
My Careers Adviser helped me to make a plan of things I would do	6,369	3,730	2,639
I agreed with my Careers Adviser what we would work on together	6,174	3,634	2,540
I knew from the start how often I would meet with my Careers Adviser	6,253	3,649	2,604
Views on the number of one-to-ones received	6,397	3,736	2,661
Views on the timing of one-to-ones	6,397	3,738	2,659
Reasons for not having a one-to-one session	1,914	632	1,282
I understood what I would learn in the group session	1,282	527	755
The content of the group session was useful and relevant to me	1,295	525	770
The group session kept me interested throughout	1,285	526	759
Awareness of the post-school careers service	6,813	3,633	3,180
Awareness of the exam results helpline	6,741	3,584	3,157
Awareness of the SDS individual helpline	6,712	3,563	3,149

Question	All (base)	Targeted (base)	Universal (base)
Satisfaction with the ability to access support when needed	6,085	3,326	2,759
Satisfaction with the amount of support available	6,109	3,333	2,776
Satisfaction with the range of SDS careers services available	5,835	3,213	2,622
Satisfaction with the information you were given about how to access SDS careers services	6,034	3,258	2,776
Satisfaction with the information you were given about the range of SDS careers services available	5,982	3,242	2,740
Overall satisfaction with the careers services received from SDS	5,848	3,177	2,671
Likelihood to recommend SDS careers services to others	5,777	3,123	2,654
Effectiveness of SDS careers services in helping to decide what to do when leaving school	3,163	1,930	1,233
CMS - Able to use my initiative to work things out for myself	5,748	3,124	2,624
CMS - To find and use career information easily	5,857	3,177	2,680
CMS - Understand how your experiences and learning can help you make career choices	5,822	3,165	2,657
CMS - Know about all of the learning, work and career options open to you	5,916	3,218	2,698
CMS - Being creative and imaginative when it comes to my career development	5,770	3,137	2,633
CMS - Make informed career decisions	5,841	3,175	2,666
CMS - Understand and build on your skills, strengths and achievements	5,891	3,203	2,688
CMS - Able to manage change in your life and career	5,780	3,143	2,637
CMS - Challenge stereotypes, such as ideas of "traditional" male or "female" jobs	5,449	2,932	2,517
CMS - Identify and build relationships with the people who can help you in your career	5,795	3,146	2,649
CMS- Knowing how to maintain the right balance between my personal life, learning and work	5,763	3,126	2,637
Post school destinations - What are you doing, or planning to do, now that you have left school?	3,493	2,124	1,369
Finding out about careers services	6,902	3,683	3,219
Preferred communication channel	6,799	3,625	3,174

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