

Pupil Voice (S4-S6) Briefing Paper

Evaluation & Research Team

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Background

Skills Development Scotland (SDS) is Scotland's national skills agency. As the provider of Scotland's careers services, SDS supports individuals to develop the skills and mindset they need to make decisions about their learning and career paths. SDS's strategic plan (2022-27) sets out our goal of ensuring that young people are equipped with the skills they need, at every stage of their lives, to have a rewarding career¹.

Scotland has an internationally recognised, multi-channel careers service. 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, SDS targets 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 SDS (2022) [Skills Development Scotland Strategic Plan 2022-27 – Skills for a Changing World](#)

Through a comprehensive programme of research, led by the SDS Evaluation and Research team in partnership with CIAG² planning and performance colleagues and other departments across SDS, we aim to understand and support the development and career aspirations of young people in Scotland. Our research aims to inform policy, enhance careers services, and support young people to acquire the skills, guidance, and opportunities needed to achieve their career goals.

SDS works in collaboration with various partners within Scotland’s careers ecosystem to deliver this programme of research. The list of external partners is shown in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1: List of external partners collaborating on this research.

Scottish Government	Youthlink	Education Scotland
Scottish Qualifications Authority	Developing Young Workforce	Scottish Funding Council
Open University	MCR Pathways	Edinburgh Napier University
Young Scot	College Development Network	Association of Directors of Education in Scotland

² Careers Information, Advice and Guidance

The Pupil Voice (S4-S6) research

The Pupil Voice (S4-S6) research is one of three main projects within SDS's programme of young people research³. 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. The research focusses specifically on young people in the senior phase of high school, gathering feedback during a crucial phase when young people in school are actively exploring and considering their post-school career paths.

The research explores young people's views on the various elements of SDS services, including their experiences of one-to-one sessions with their careers adviser. It also gathers the views on a range of skills related topics, such as their ideal future jobs and preferred industries, perceptions of skills needed for their future career, and participation in extracurricular and employability activities. A key focus of the research is to capture the experiences and outcomes of young people receiving targeted or universal services from SDS⁴.

An additional element of the research is to view the findings from an equality perspective, and to capture the views of young people with protected characteristics. Protected characteristics include ethnicity, indicators of deprivation/poverty (SIMD)⁵, additional support needs, care experience, and sexual orientation.

The previous iteration of the Pupil Voice research (2023/24) captured the views of almost 11,000 young people in Scotland, and to our knowledge is the largest repeated cross-sectional sample of senior phase school pupils in Scotland⁶.

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. Additionally, the research is shared with the Scottish Government to support policy development. Our ambition is for the Pupil Voice research to be the definitive source of insight on S4-S6 school pupils in Scotland.

³ CIAG Research - Skills Development Scotland

⁴ 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.

⁵ SIMD (The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation) is a tool used to identify areas in Scotland experiencing the highest levels of deprivation. SIMD 1 represents young people from the 20% most deprived areas in Scotland, and SIMD 5 represents those from the least 20% deprived areas in Scotland (Scottish Government (2020) [Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation](#))).

⁶ SDS (2024) [Pupil Voice 2024 Briefing Paper](#)

Key areas covered

The Pupil Voice research collects views from young people on the following areas:

- SDS services accessed
- Support provided by careers adviser
- Reasons for non-engagement with SDS services
- My World of Work
- Foundation Apprenticeships
- Career Management Skills
- Post-school plans
- Preferred jobs and industries
- Key influencers
- Reasons for staying on or leaving school
- Participation in extra-curricular activities

Study approach

The target cohort for participation in the Pupil Voice research was all senior phase pupils (S4-S6) aged 16+ years in Scotland. All pupils who met the criteria, and who SDS held a valid email address or mobile phone number, were included in the research.

The fieldwork was carried out over a four-week period between June and July 2025. The results were weighted to ensure the results were representative of the Scottish S4-S6 pupil population.

The questionnaire was designed by the SDS Evaluation and Research team in collaboration with SDS colleagues working in CIAG and other departments, as well as our key external partners outlined in **Figure 1**.

Respondent profile

In total, 8,714 young people responded to the research. Responses were received across all 32 local authorities in Scotland. More detailed information on the respondent profile is provided in **Appendix 1**.

About this report

This report summarises the key findings from the Pupil Voice research. The questions young people were asked 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 specific statements on a 1-10 scale for some questions. These are presented as mean point (average) scores.

Young people were also asked open-ended questions where they were free to answer in their own words. Comments that young people provided were thematically analysed with the assistance of proprietary artificial intelligence software, and the sentiment of each theme (i.e. whether the theme was positive, neutral, or negative, etc.) is provided where applicable.

Please note that not all respondents answered every question, therefore base counts vary across questions. Base counts are presented as the unweighted counts. Missing, non-response, 'don't know', and 'prefer not to say' responses have been excluded from the analysis.

A series of infographics focusing on protected characteristics have also been produced. Additional reports on our research with young people can also be found on the SDS website⁷. If you have any queries about this research, please contact SDS's Evaluation and Research team at evaluation&research@sds.co.uk.

If using material from this report, please cite this paper and reference as below:

SDS (2025) 'Pupil Voice S4-S6 Research 2025 Briefing Paper'. Skills Development Scotland.

⁷ <https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/what-we-do/evaluation-and-research/ciag-research>

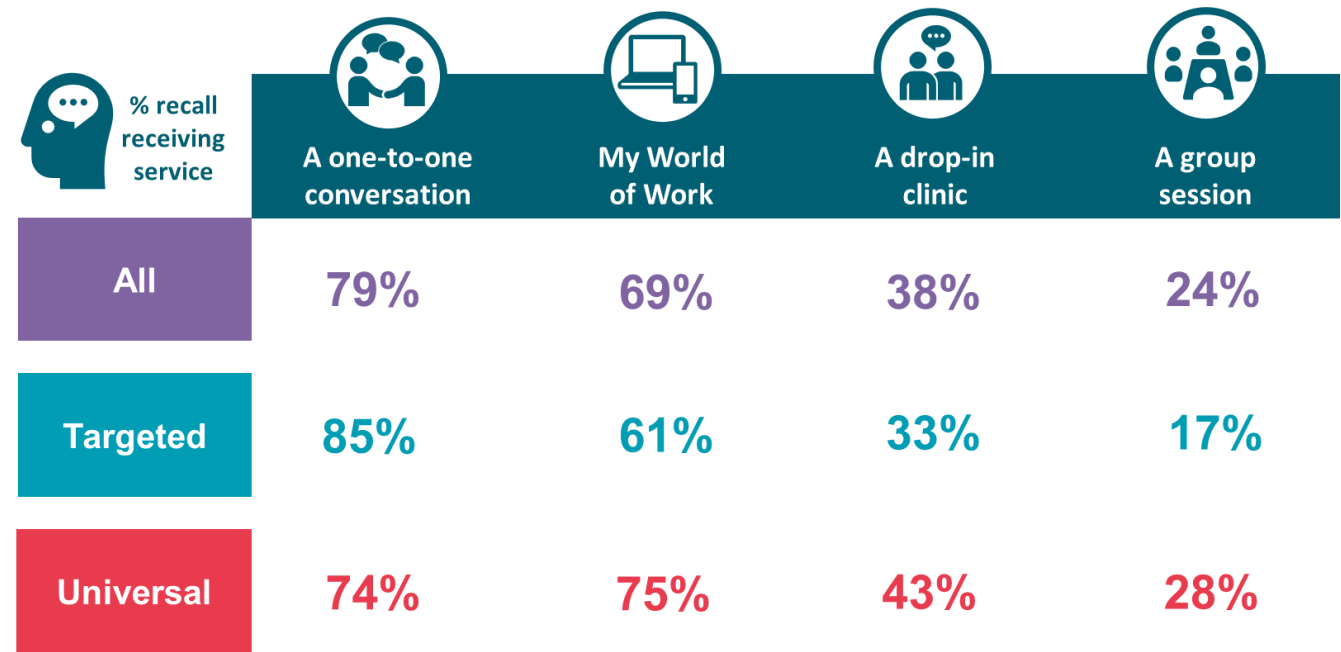
Recall of SDS careers services

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

Young people were **likely to recall attending one-to-one conversations 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.

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

Figure 2: Percentage of young people who recall accessing SDS careers services, by service offer (%).



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, directed them to other sources of information, and supported them to make their own decisions.

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

Figure 3: Young people’s views on the support they received from their careers adviser (mean point score).

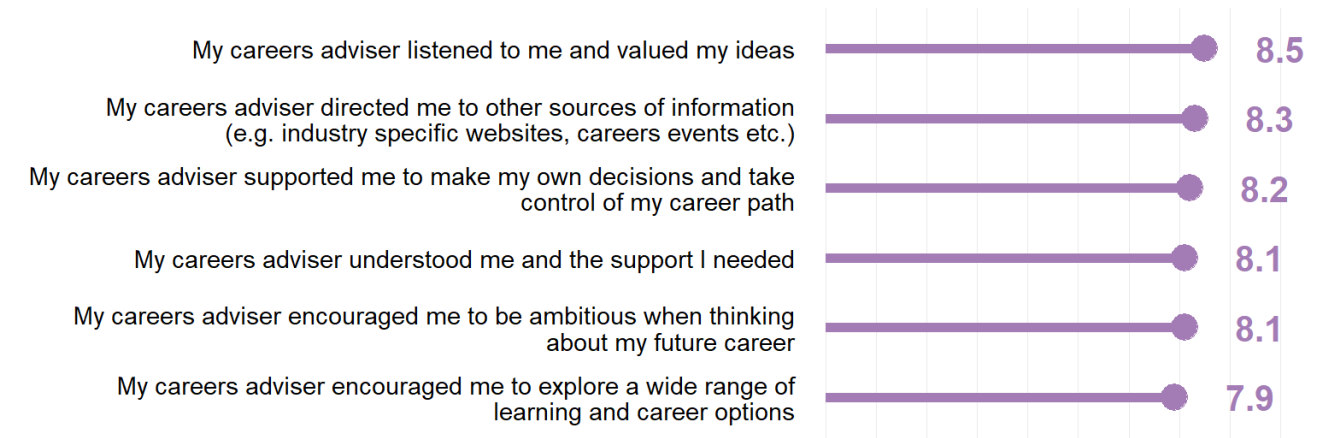
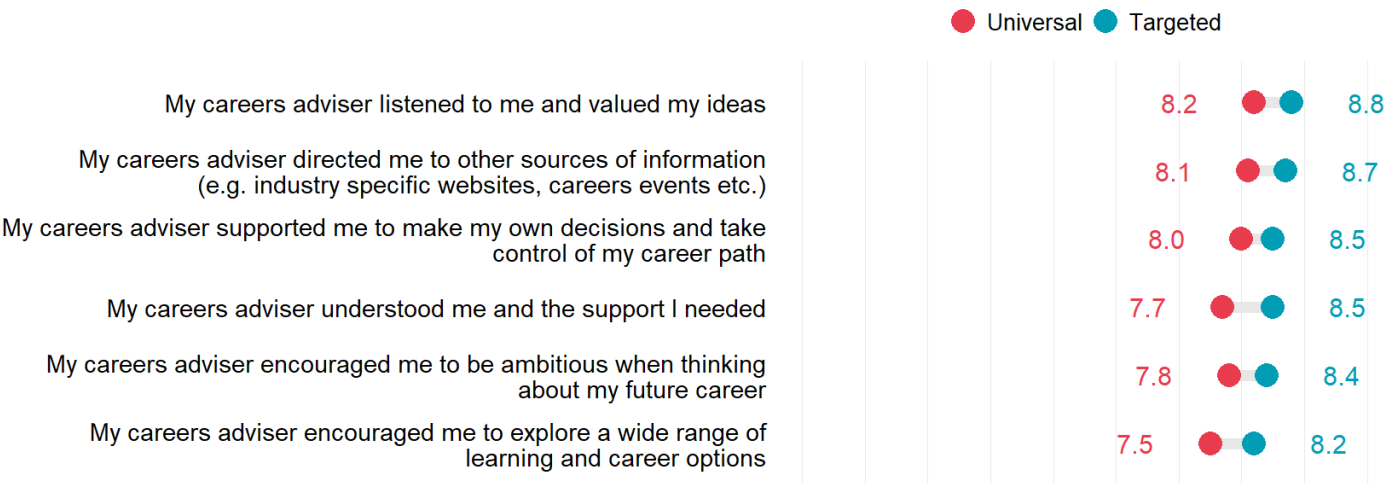


Figure 4: Young people’s views on the support they received from their careers adviser (mean point score), by service offer.



Engaging in one-to-one conversations

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

Young people were most positive about how they **would benefit from working with their careers adviser**, and were generally positive about the process overall.

Young people receiving a targeted service were more likely to be positive about the process of their one-to-one sessions than young people receiving a universal service.

Figure 5: Young people’s views on their one-to-one conversations with their careers adviser (mean point score).

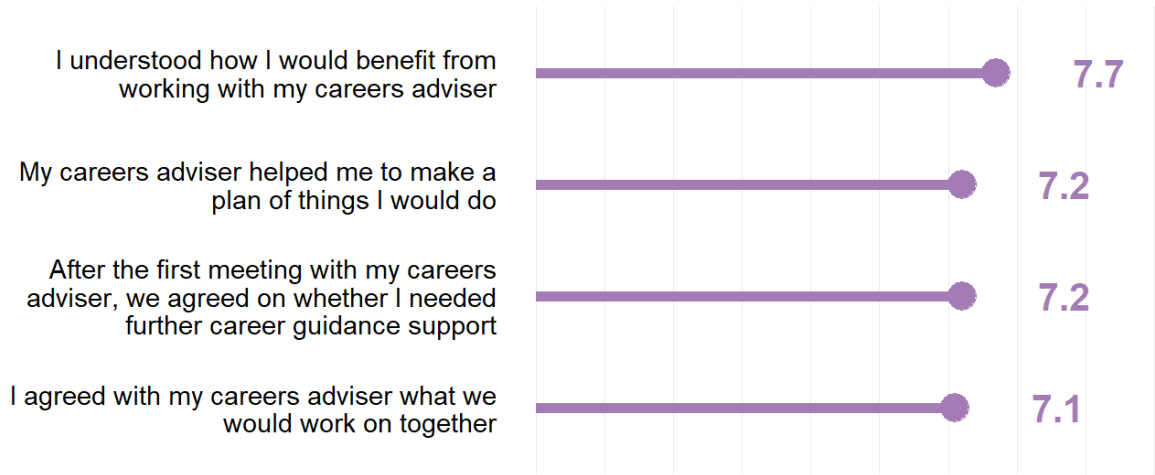
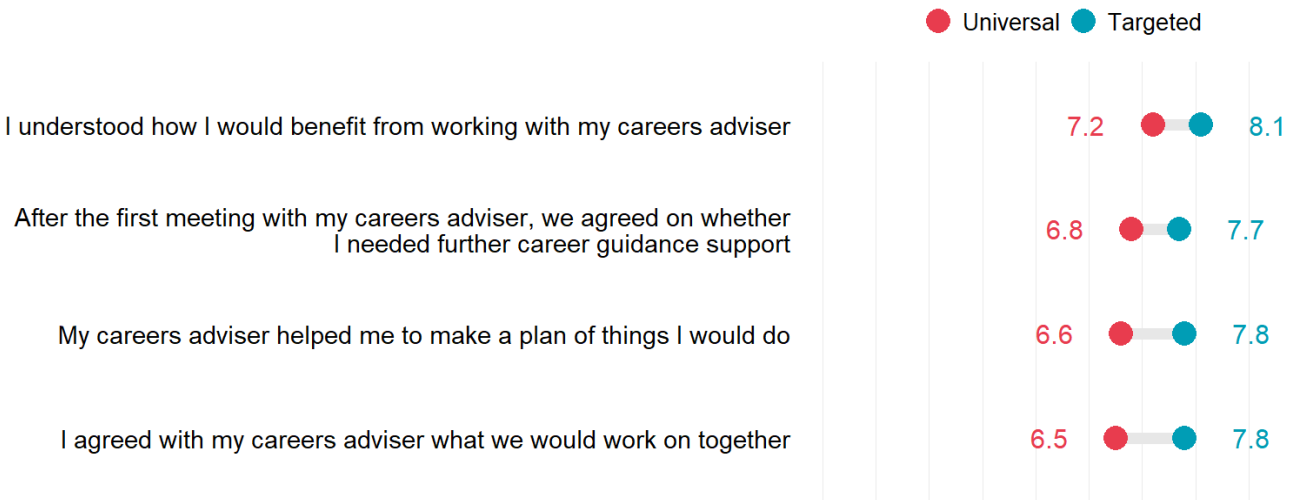


Figure 6: Young people’s views on their one-to-one conversations with their careers adviser (mean point score), by service offer.



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.

Three-quarters of young people receiving a targeted service thought that the **number of one-to-one sessions they received was ‘about right’**. Around two in five young people receiving a **universal service 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 young people receiving a targeted service.

Figure 7: Young people’s views on the number of conversations/interviews they had with their careers adviser, by service offer.

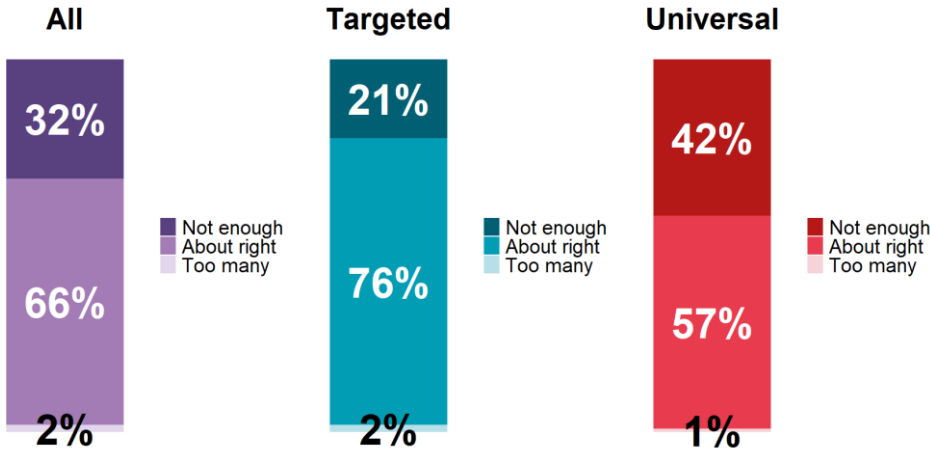
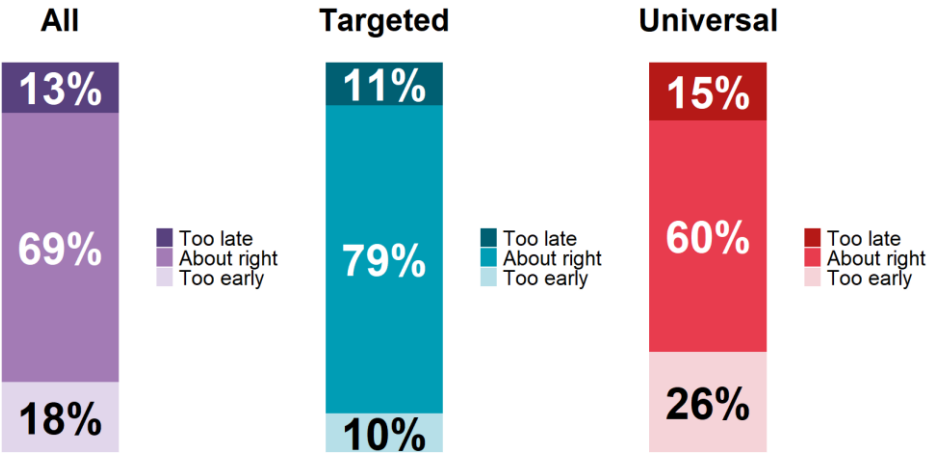


Figure 8: Young people’s response to the question “*Did your conversation(s)/interview(s) happen at a time in your career journey that was right for you, too early or too late?*”, by service offer.



Awareness and non-engagement with one-to-one sessions

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*.

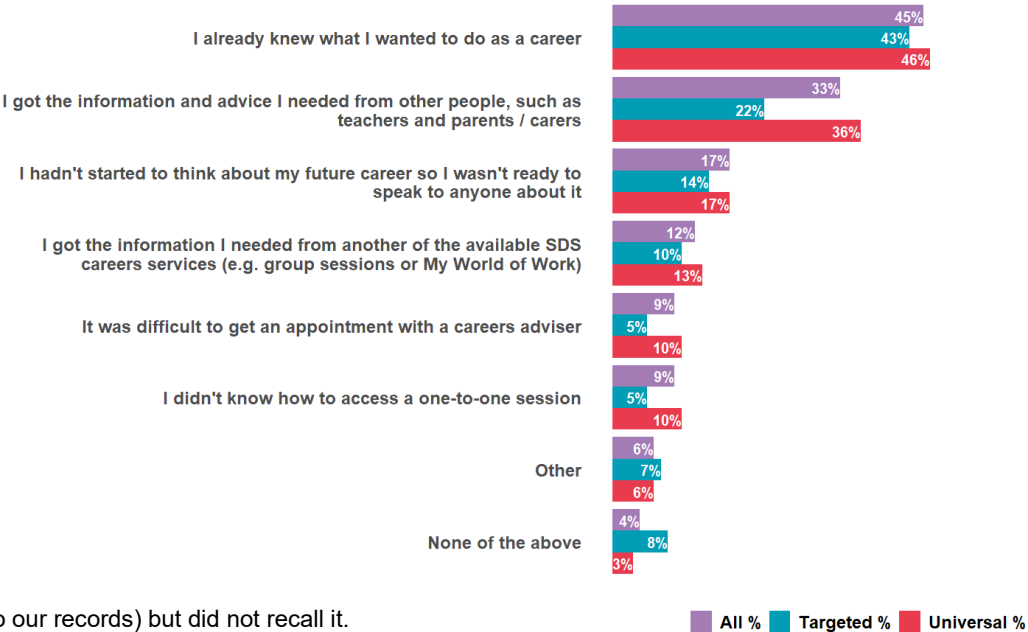
Just over a third (35%) of young people were aware of the one-to-one sessions but chose not to have one. Over a third (36%) were not aware of the one-to-one sessions at all, and 29% were aware of the sessions but didn't know they could have one. **This equates to two thirds (65%) being unaware that they could access a one-to-one session.**

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 (45%)**, or that they **got the information and advice they needed from other people (33%)**.

Figure 9: Young people's response to the question "Are you aware that SDS offer one-to-one sessions with a SDS careers adviser and that you could have one?" (n=1,937).



Figure 10: Young people's reasons for not having a one-to-one session (if they were aware they could have one, but chose not to, %)



*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 24% of those who attended a group session recalled them. A potential reason for this is that young people attend many group sessions in school delivered by a range of external organisations which could make it difficult to remember specific sessions they attended 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 11: Young people’s views on the group sessions they received (mean point score), by service offer.

Group sessions	All	Targeted	Universal
I understood what I would learn in the group session	7.3	7.5	7.3
The content of the group session was useful and relevant to me	6.8	7.2	6.6
The group session kept me interested throughout	6.5	6.9	6.4

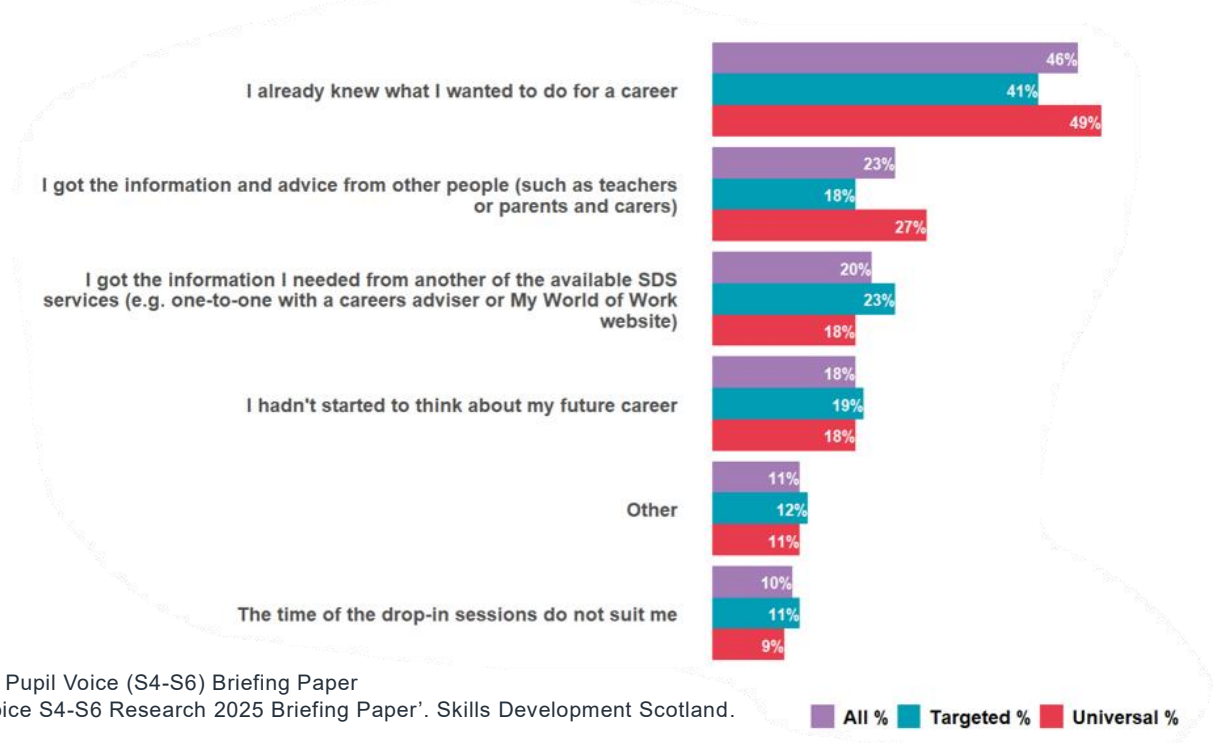
Drop-in sessions

Only around a third (38%) of young people who have had a drop-in session remember them. However, those who do remember them **view them positively**. This is especially true for young people receiving a targeted service who score over **9 out of 10 on average**. Young people who have not attended a drop-in session cite reasons such as already knowing what they wanted to do for a career and getting the information they needed from other sources.

Figure 12: Young people’s views on the drop-in session(s) they attended (mean point score), by service offer.

Drop-in sessions	All	Targeted	Universal
I liked the option of a drop-in session with the careers adviser	8.8	9.3	8.4
The drop-in sessions happened at a time and place that suited me	8.7	9.1	8.4
The information and advice I received at the drop-in session was useful to me	8.4	9.0	8.0

Figure 13: Young people’s reasons for not attending a drop-in session (%)



My World of Work - Awareness and Use

Awareness of My World of Work amongst young people who had not used it was **high (85%)**.

Young people who had used My World of Work were asked to rate various aspects of the service on a scale of 1-10.

Young people are especially positive about My World of Work's **ease of use**.

Young people receiving the targeted service found My World of Work more useful in **helping them think about their future career and learning options**.

Figure 14: Young people’s awareness of My World of Work. (if they have not used it before, % aware)

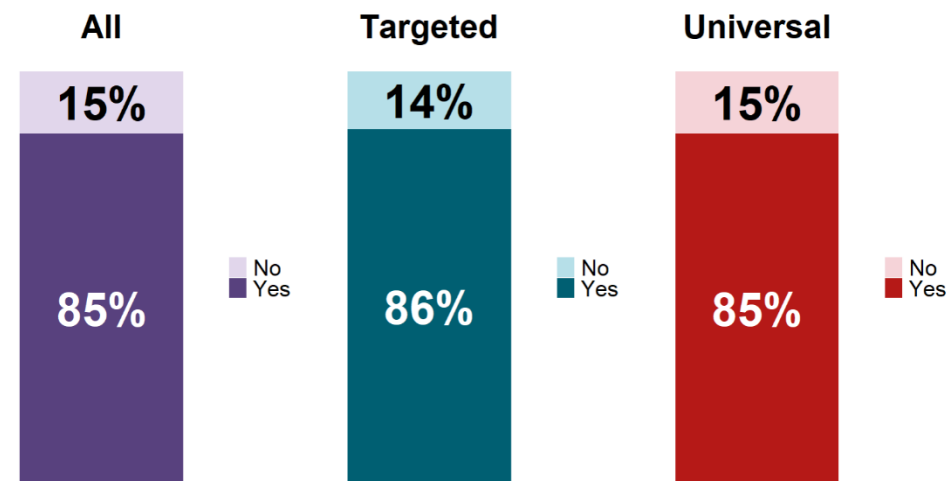


Figure 15: Young people’s views on SDS’s My World of Work website (mean point score), by service offer.



My World of Work - Features

Young people who had used the My World of Work website were asked to rate the various features of the service.

Young people score the majority of features **positively**, and particularly value the **course search, job search, salary information and CV builder**. Young people receiving a targeted service are generally more positive about all of the features on the website.

Figure 16: Young people's views on the features of SDS's My World of Work website (mean point score), by service offer.

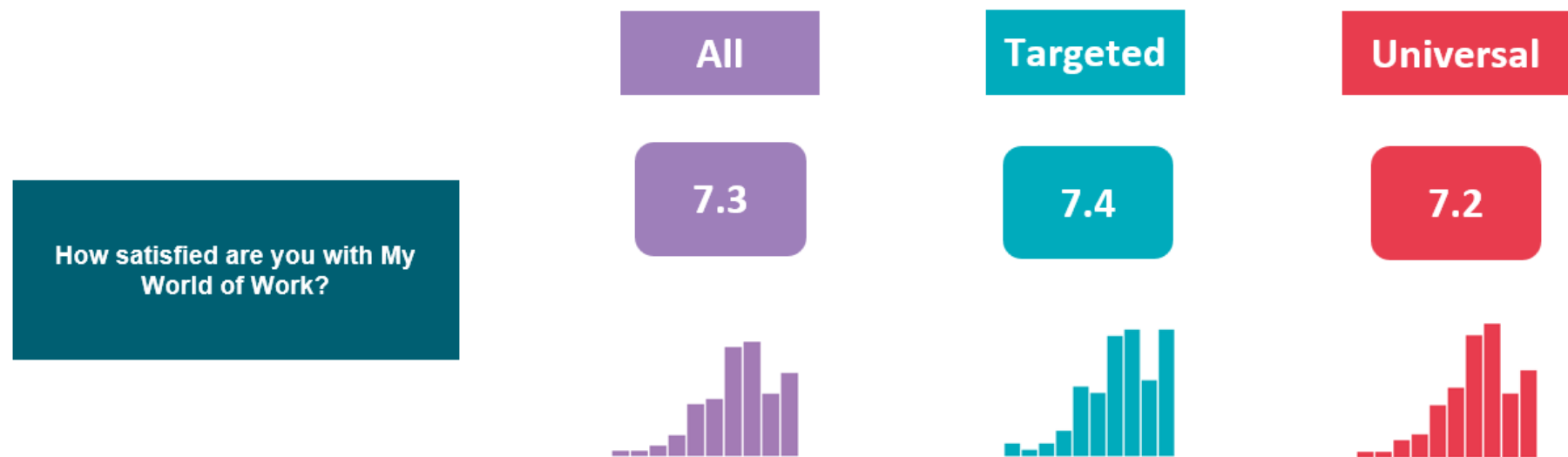
My WoW - Features	All	Targeted	Universal
Course search	7.8	7.9	7.8
Job search	7.8	7.9	7.7
Salary information	7.8	7.8	7.7
CV builder	7.7	7.9	7.6
Job profiles (job descriptions and videos)	7.5	7.6	7.4
Option choices	7.5	7.7	7.4
Course matching function (matches courses to job profiles)	7.3	7.4	7.2
All about your skills (meta skills) content	7.2	7.4	7.1
Strengths tool	7.2	7.3	7.1
Real people stories	6.8	7.0	6.7
My achievements	6.7	7.1	6.5
Animal me	5.8	6.1	5.6

My World of Work - Satisfaction

Young people who had used My World of Work were asked to rate their overall satisfaction with the service.

Overall, young people who use My World of Work are satisfied with the website. Young people receiving a **targeted service are more likely to be satisfied with the website.**

Figure 17: Young people’s satisfaction with SDS’s My World of Work website (mean point score), by service offer.

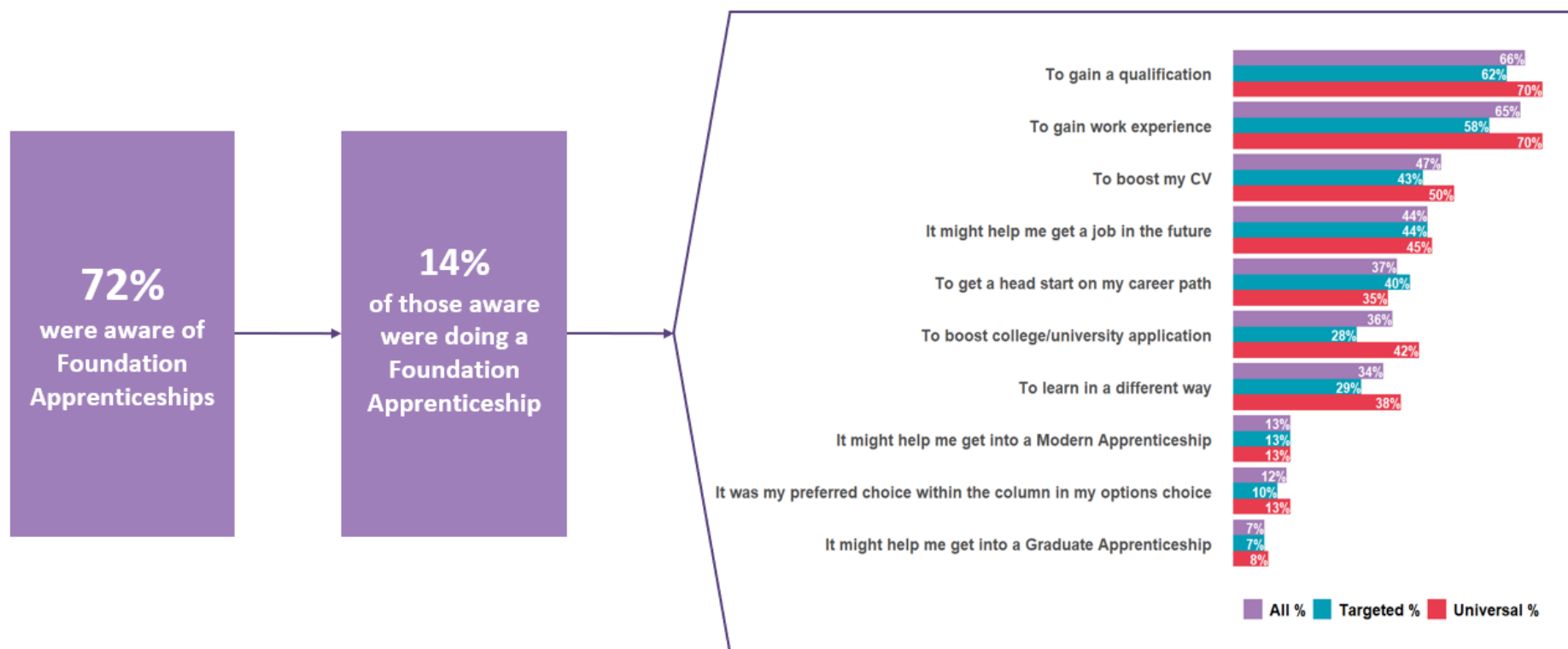


Foundation Apprenticeships (FAs) - Awareness and reasons for choosing a FA

Young people were asked about their awareness of Foundation Apprenticeships (FA). Almost three quarters of young people were aware of FAs, with 14% of those having completed or currently undertaking a FA.

Young people who had participated in a Foundation Apprenticeship (FA) did so for a variety of reasons, mainly **to gain a qualification and work experience**. Young people in the universal group are more likely to recognise multiple benefits of doing an FA.

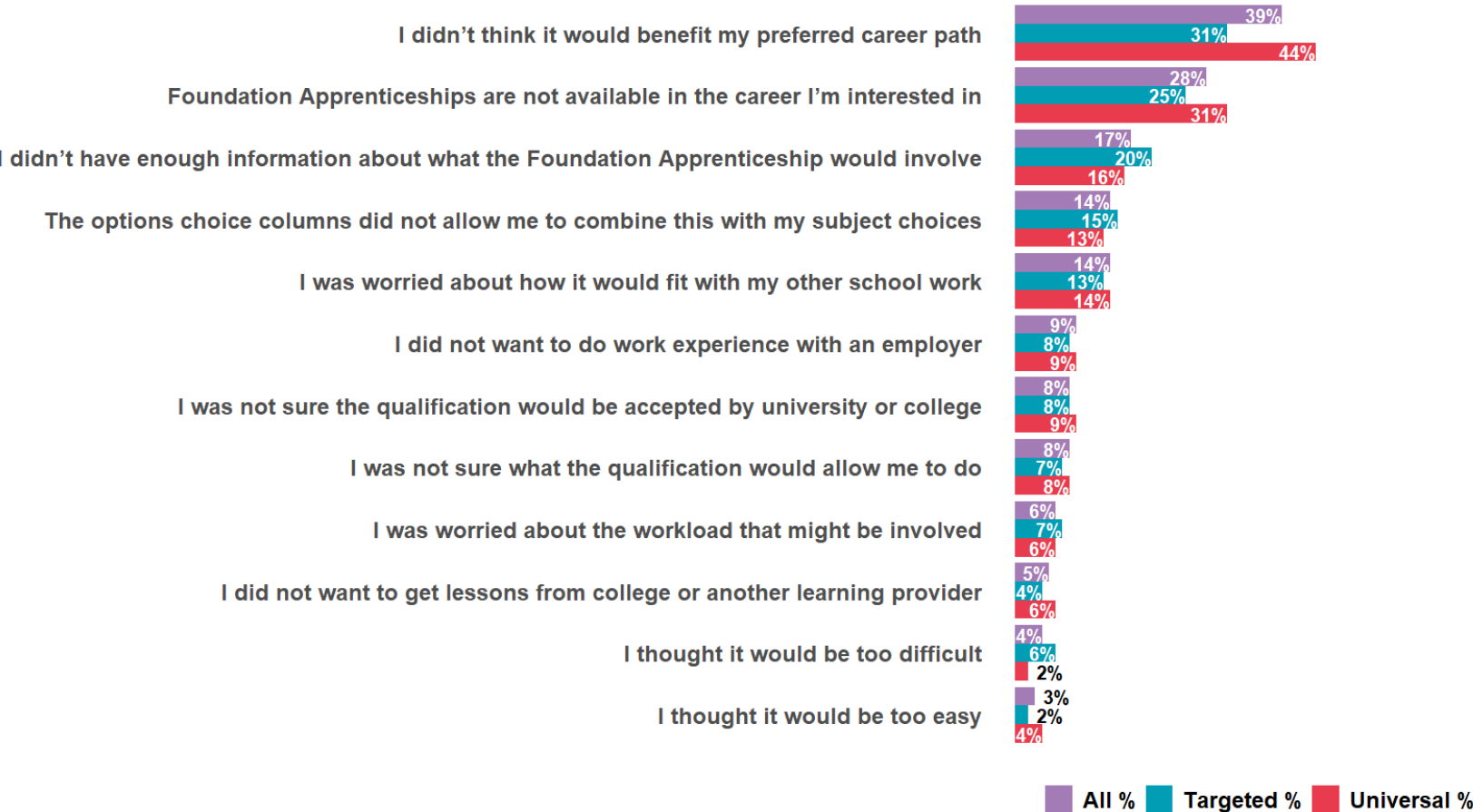
Figure 18: Young people's awareness and uptake of Foundation Apprenticeships, and reasons for choosing to do a Foundation Apprenticeship, by service offer.



Foundation Apprenticeships (FAs) - Reasons for not selecting a FA

Young people who did not participate in a Foundation Apprenticeship (FA) were asked why this was. Many young people, particularly those in the universal group, chose not to participate in an FA because they **did not think it would benefit their preferred career path or they were not available in their preferred career**. Around one in six young people also felt that they did not have enough information about what an FA would involve.

Figure 19: Young people’s reasons for not selecting a Foundation Apprenticeship in their options choice form, by service offer.



Foundation Apprenticeships (FAs) - Encouraging uptake of FAs

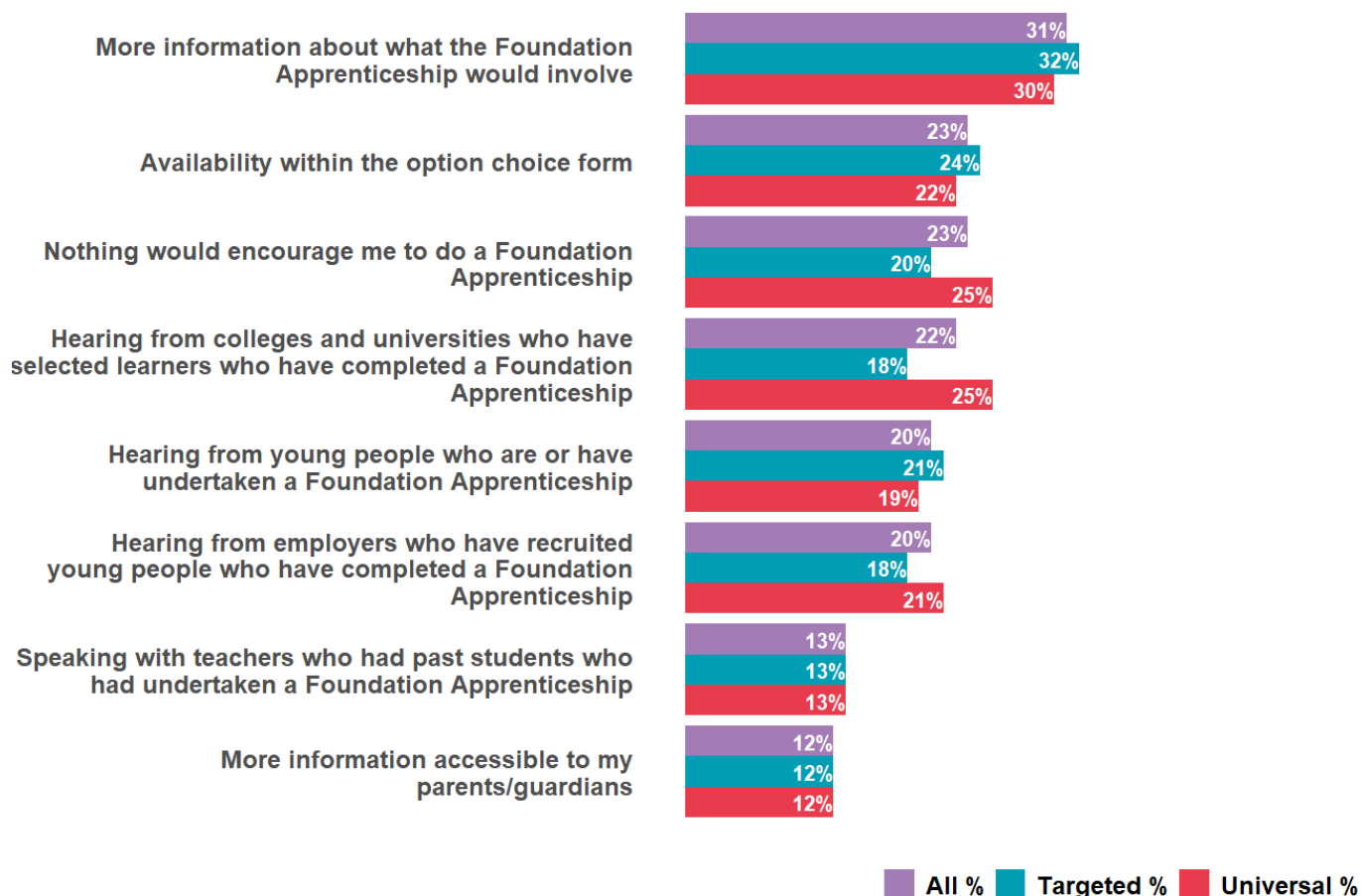
Young people who did not participate in a Foundation Apprenticeship (FA) were asked if there was anything that would have encouraged them to do so.

More information about FAs, particularly about what they would involve, and from colleges, universities, young people and employers who have experienced FAs, **would encourage more young people to consider FAs.**

Young people are also likely to have been encouraged to do an FA if there had been more availability within their **option choice form.**

However, almost a quarter (23%) said that nothing would have encouraged them to do an FA.

Figure 20: Young people's response to the question “*Would any of the following have encouraged you to do a Foundation Apprenticeship*”, by service offer.



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*.

Young people receiving a targeted service were much more likely to be positive about these aspects than young people receiving a universal service. **Young people receiving a universal service would like more information** on the range of careers services available to them and more information about how to access these services.

Figure 21: Young people’s satisfaction with accessing SDS careers services and the information they were provided on about SDS careers services (mean point score), by service offer.

Accessing careers support	All	Targeted	Universal
The ability to access support when needed	7.3	7.7	7.0
The amount of support available	7.2	7.7	6.9
The range of SDS careers services available	7.2	7.6	7.0
The information you were given about how to access SDS careers services	6.8	7.2	6.4
The information you were given about the range of SDS careers services available	6.8	7.3	6.5

Career Management Skills (CMS)

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

Overall, **young people are highly likely to agree that the careers services they have received have been effective in helping them to develop the skills needed to help them plan and navigate their careers.** In particular, young people say that the careers services have helped them to find and use career information, and understand how their experiences and learning can help them to make career choices.

Figure 22: Young people’s views on the effectiveness of SDS careers services in helping to develop Career Management Skills (CMS), by service offer (% agree).

Career Management Skills	All %	Targeted %	Universal %
Find and use career information easily	85	89	83
Understand how your experiences and learning can help you make career choices	85	89	82
Understand and build on your skills, strengths and achievements	82	86	78
Make informed career decisions	81	88	77
Consider new things you may not have thought of when it comes to your career journey	79	84	76
Prepare for and manage change in my career journey	77	84	72
Identify and build relationships with people who can help you in your career	69	77	63

Other sources of career information and support

Young people were asked about what sources of careers information they have used other than SDS careers services (including My World of Work and careers advisers).

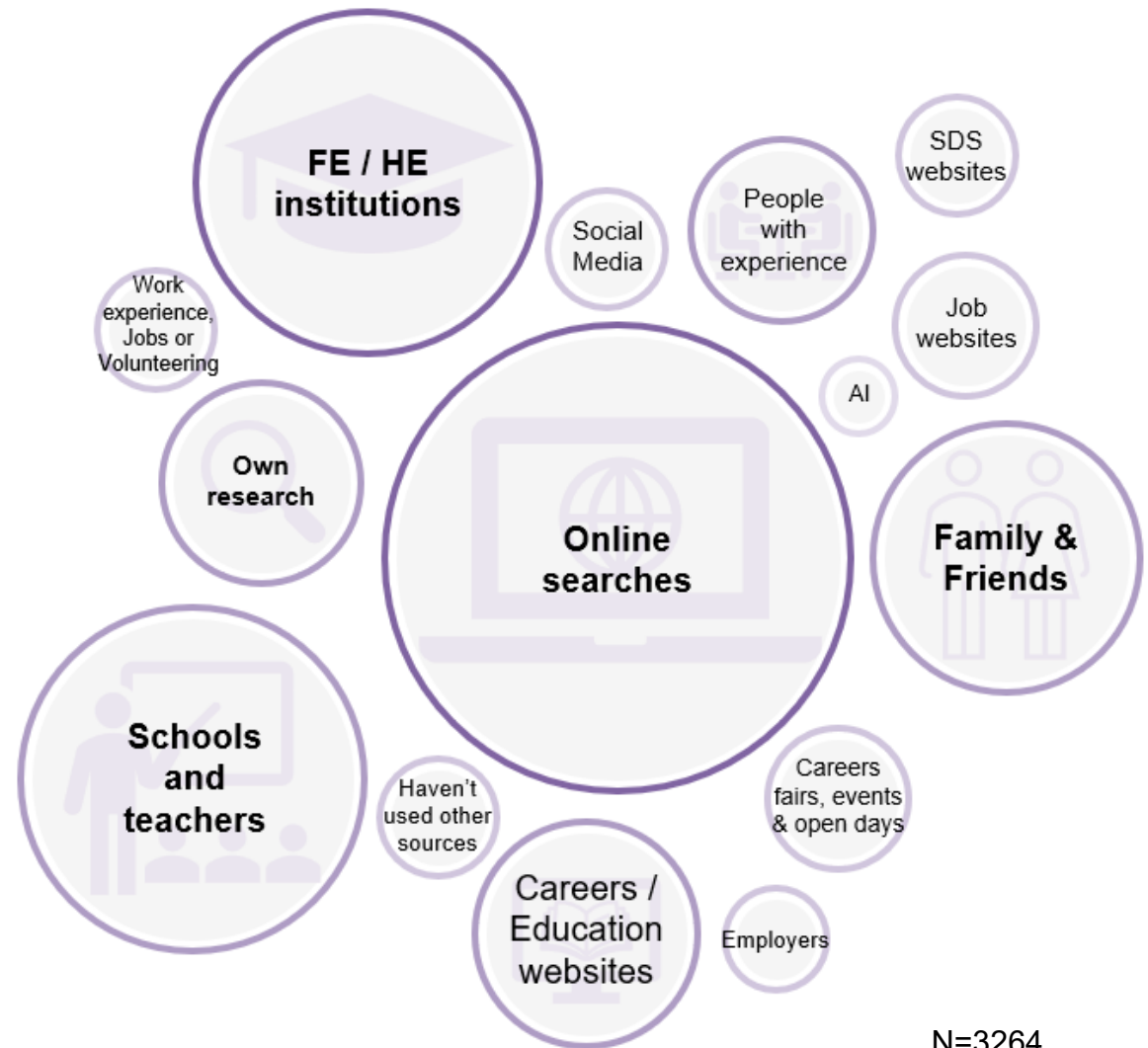
Young people were most likely to say that they had used **online searches** to look for information about jobs and careers, using search engines such as Google.

Many young people also said that they got information about careers from their **teachers and schools, further or higher education institutions and family and friends**.

Some young people mentioned specific **careers and education based websites** such as UCAS, Planit Plus or Prospects.

Young people also said that they carried out their **own research**, **spoke to people who have experience of their preferred job**, and visited **job websites**.

Figure 23: Thematic analysis of comments from the question: “Other than meeting with an SDS careers adviser or using My World of Work, what other sources have you used for information and support with your career options?”



N=3264

Reasons for leaving school in S4

A small proportion of pupils said they planned to leave school in S4. Young people who planned to leave school in S4 were asked why this was.

The majority of S4 leavers decided to leave school in S4 for positive reasons. Just under **half of S4 leavers decided to leave school to go on to further or higher education.** The vast majority of these young people said that they were going to **college**, with a very small number planning on starting another form of training.

Some S4 leavers also planned on **getting a job, work experience** or starting an **apprenticeship**. A small proportion also said they were ready to **progress in life and start their future career**. Over a fifth of S4 leavers said that they were leaving because they **didn't enjoy school**, with smaller proportions mentioning that there was a **lack of suitable classes** available. A very small number mentioned issues such as **bullying** and **mental health issues**.

Figure 25: Thematic* and sentiment** analysis of S4 leavers*** reasons for leaving school



*The more young people who mentioned a particular reason, the larger the circle.

**The colour coding indicates whether the young person saw it as a positive or negative reason.

***Results shown are for S4 pupils who indicated they were leaving in S4.

Reasons for leaving school in S5

Young people who planned to leave school in S5 were asked why this was.

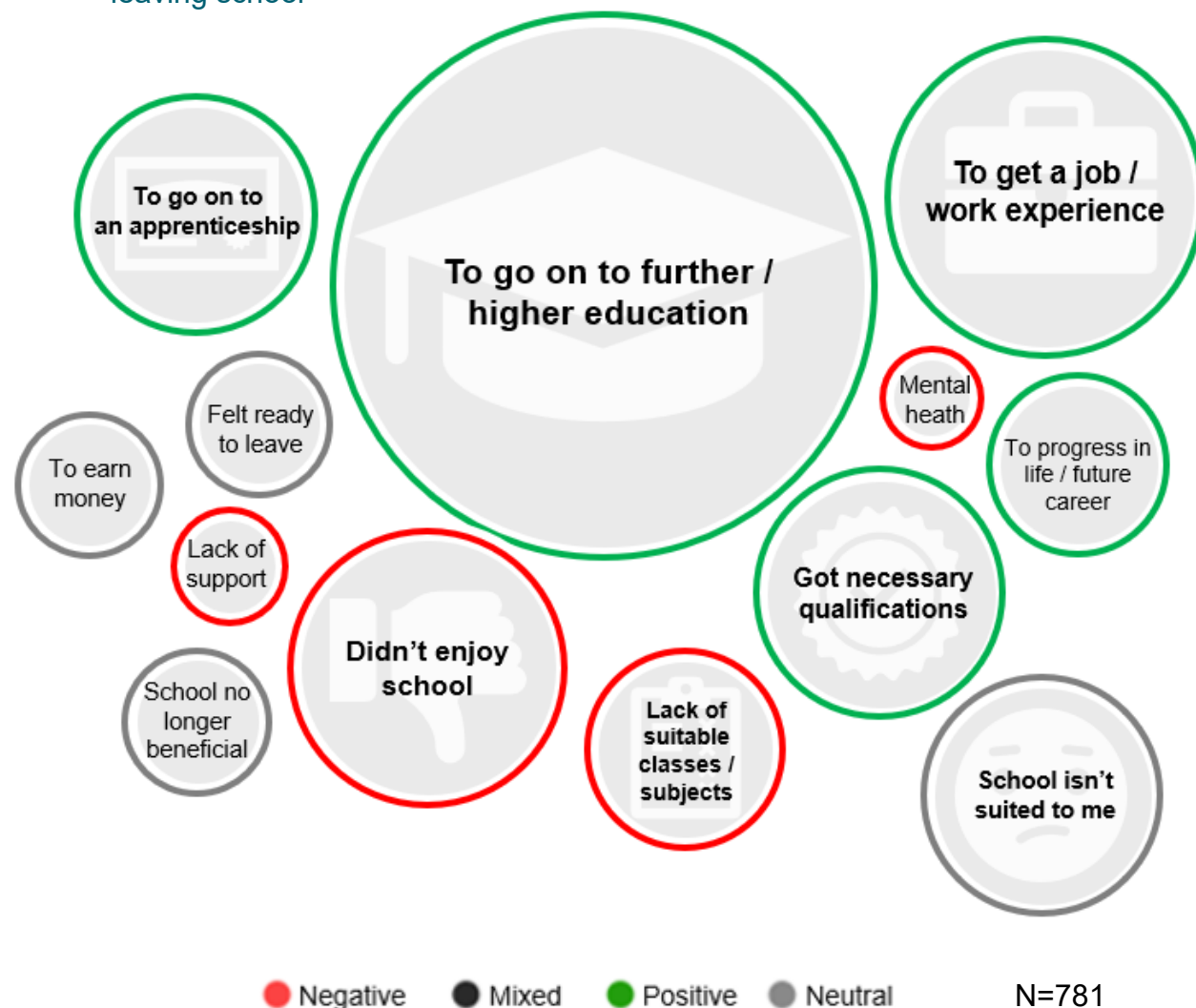
The majority of young people who plan to leave in S5 want to go on to FE/HE, a job or an apprenticeship.

Just under **half of young people who plan to leave in S5 say they plan to go on to further or higher education.** The majority of these young people said that they planned on going to **college**. Some S5 leavers also planned on **getting a job, work experience** or starting an **apprenticeship**.

Some young people said they wanted to leave in S5 because they **didn't enjoy school** or there was a **lack of suitable subjects or classes** available.

Some young people also stated that they wanted to leave in S5 because they had already **acquired the qualifications they needed** for their next step.

Figure 26: Thematic* and sentiment** analysis of S5 leavers*** reasons for leaving school



*The more young people who mentioned a particular reason, the larger the circle.

**The colour coding indicates whether the young person saw it as a positive or negative reason.

***Results shown are for S4/S5 pupils who indicated they were leaving in S5.

Reasons for staying on at school until S6

Around three quarters (73%) of senior phase pupils **plan to stay at school until S6**.

Young people who plan on staying on at school until S6, or were in S6 at the time of taking part in the research, were asked why they decided to stay on at school until S6.

The majority of young people said that they wanted to stay on at school until S6 to **gain more qualifications**, usually to be able to go on to university or a next step.

Young people gave a variety of other reasons for staying on until S6 such as **exploring their interests**, to **keep their options open** and to **gain more skills, knowledge and experience**.

Some young people also decide to stay on until S6 because they are **undecided about their next step** and would like more time to decide what they want to do.

Figure 24: Thematic* and sentiment** analysis of S4-S6 pupils*** reasons for deciding to stay on until S6.



*The more young people who mentioned a particular reason, the larger the circle.

**The colour coding indicates whether the young person saw it as a positive or negative reason.

***Results shown include S4-S5 pupils who indicated they were planning to leave school in S6, and current S6 pupils.

Post-school destinations

Young people were asked what their planned next step was when they leave school.

University and college were the most common destinations for young people. Fewer young people were considering modern apprenticeships, full-time or part-time employment.

There is a clear difference in educational pathways between young people who receive targeted and universal services. Young people receiving a targeted service are twice as likely as young people receiving a universal service to be planning to go to college, whereas university is the main pathway chosen by young people receiving a universal service.

Figure 27: Young people’s response to the question “What are you planning to do when you leave school?”, by service offer (%).

Destination	All %	Targeted %	Universal %
University course	49	32	61
College course	23	35	14
Modern Apprenticeship	7	9	5
Full-time employment	5	7	4
Take time out / gap year	5	4	5
Other	4	5	4
Graduate Apprenticeship	3	2	3
Part-time employment	2	3	2
Self-employed / started my own business	1	1	0
Training programme	1	1	1
Voluntary work	1	1	0
Working with a careers adviser at my local SDS centre to plan my next steps	0	1	0

Key factors that influence career decisions

Young people were asked about key influencing factors on their career decisions. A variety of factors influence young people's career decisions, but young people are **most likely to be influenced by wanting to do something they believe in and learning new skills or being good at something**. Young people's **interests and hobbies**, **qualifications** and the **need to earn money** are also key influencing factors.

These top factors are influential for pupils receiving a targeted or universal service, however pupils receiving a universal service are slightly more likely to be influenced by the qualifications they achieved at school and their Foundation Apprenticeship experience.

Figure 28: Young people's response to the question *"How much have the following factors influenced your post-school career plans / aspirations?"*, by service offer (%).

Key Influencers - Factors	All %	Targeted %	Universal %
Doing something I believe in	90	89	90
Learning new skills or being good at something	90	90	90
My interests / hobbies	87	85	89
The qualifications I achieved at school	83	80	86
The need to earn money	82	84	80
Wanting to be independent	82	83	81
My Foundation Apprenticeship experience	80	77	83
Education / training opportunities available to me	76	75	76
Job / career opportunities available to me	73	73	73
Social media (including Facebook, Instagram, X, TikTok etc.)	55	58	54
Work experience in school or part-time job	55	56	54
Online careers websites (for example: My World of Work)	54	59	51
Opportunities available within my local area	54	58	51

Key people that influence career decisions

Young people were also asked about key influencing people on their career decisions. Young people say that a variety of people have some influence on their career decisions, however, young people are **most likely to be influenced by their parents and carers**.

Teachers and careers advisers are also highly influential.

Careers advisers are as influential as parents and carers for young people who receive a targeted service. For young people receiving a universal service, parents and carers are a much stronger influence than any other person.

Figure 29: Young people's response to the question "How much have the following people influenced your post-school career plans / aspirations?", by service offer (%).

Key Influencers - People	All %	Targeted %	Universal %
Parent(s) / carer(s)	84	81	85
Teacher(s)	67	66	67
Careers adviser	66	80	56
Friend(s)	64	65	63
Other family member	61	61	61
Guidance teacher	59	62	56
A university or college representative coming in to my school to talk about careers	47	49	47
An employer or training provider coming in to my school to talk about careers	45	48	43
Youth worker	27	34	22

Preferred Industries

Young people were asked what industries they want to work in in their future career.

Young people are interested in a variety of industries, but were most likely to select Medicine and Health, Creative Industries and Engineering. This aligns with young people's preferred job roles (see Figure 31).

Females are particularly more likely to want to work in **Medicine and Health, Creative Industries, Teaching and Caring** industries.

Males are more likely to consider jobs in **Engineering, Computing and ICT, Sport and Construction.**

Young people overall are least likely to be interested in a career in Housing and Property, Energy, Tourism and Hospitality.

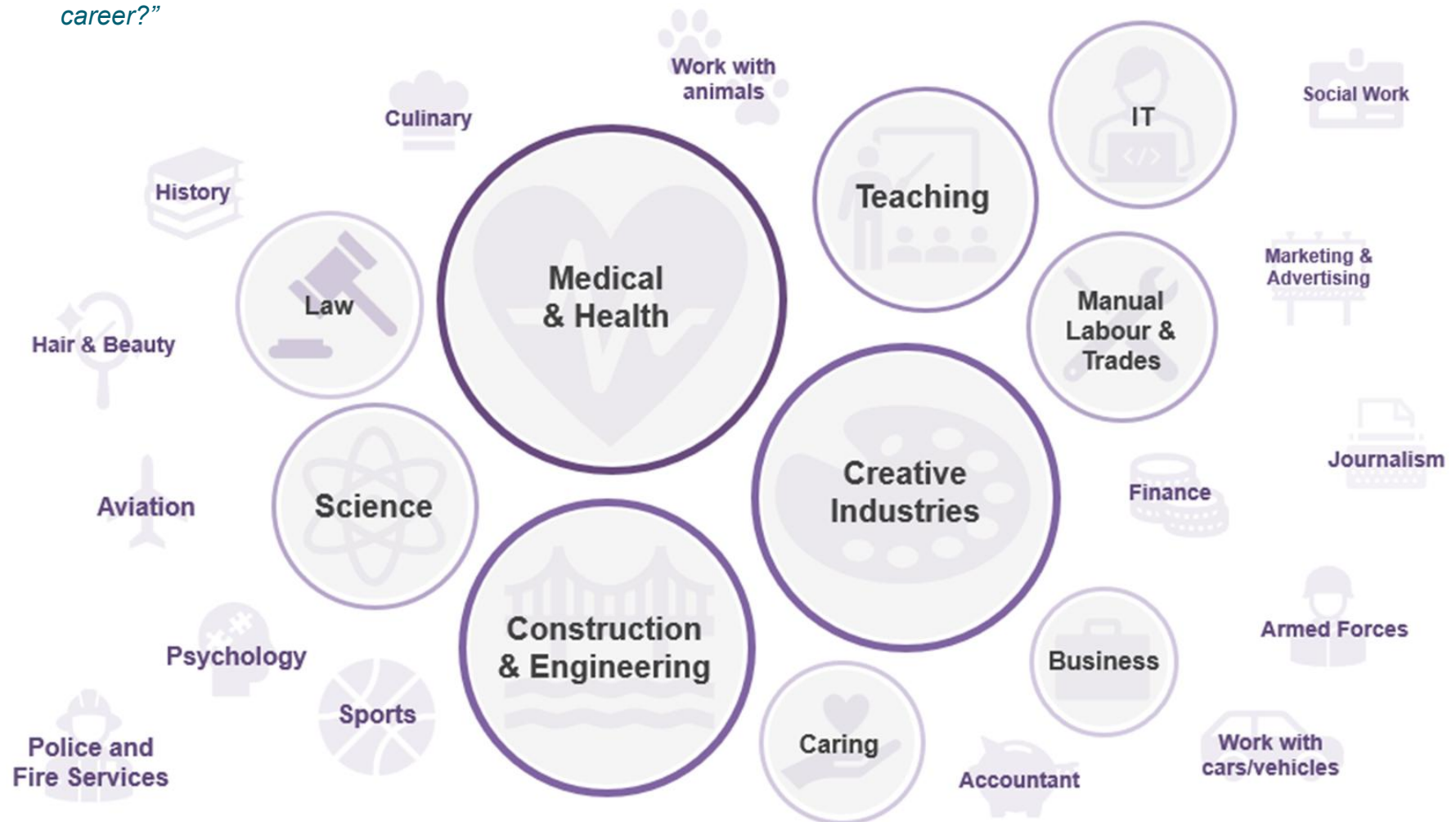
Figure 30: Young people's response to the question "What industries do you want to work in in your future career?", by sex (%).

Industries	All %	Female %	Male %
Medicine and Health	17	26	9
Creative Industries (e.g. Art & Design, Music, Acting)	16	18	11
Engineering	15	5	26
Science	12	13	11
Teaching	11	15	6
Computing and ICT	10	4	15
Sport	9	5	13
Armed Forces, Policing or Security	8	6	10
Banking and Finance	8	6	11
Caring (e.g. Childcare, Social Care)	8	14	3
Construction	8	2	15
Law	8	10	6
Don't know	6	6	6
Hospitality (e.g. working in hotels, bars, restaurants)	5	5	4
Tourism	4	4	3
Energy	3	1	5
Housing / Property	3	3	3

Preferred jobs

Young people were asked what job they want to do in their future career. Over **40% of the comments mentioned a job role in Medical and Health, Construction and Engineering or Creative Industries**. Aside from these more popular areas, a wide variety of other job roles were given in areas such as teaching, science, caring, law, IT and manual labour/trades. Although young people are considering a wide range of career options, around **1 in 6 senior phase pupils were unsure what job they wanted to do in their future career**.

Figure 31: Thematic analysis of comments from the question “What job (or jobs) do you want to do in your future career?”



Overall satisfaction with SDS careers 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 most 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. Those receiving the universal service 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 the universal service.

Figure 32: Young people’s views on the effectiveness, their satisfaction, and their likelihood to recommend SDS careers services (mean point score), by service offer.



Participation in groups, clubs, organisations, and activities

Young people were asked if they had taken part in any extracurricular activities in the last twelve months. **Around a third of young people have taken part in team sports, a sports or fitness group, or volunteering and fundraising groups.**

However, one in five senior phase pupils have **not taken part in extracurricular activities** in the last twelve months. Young people who received the universal service are more likely to have taken part in almost all extracurricular activities listed than those who received the targeted service.

Figure 33: Young people's response to the question *"In the last 12 months, have you taken part in any of these types of groups, clubs, organisations, or activities (including evening classes?"*, by service offer (%).

Groups, clubs, organisations, activities	All %	Targeted %	Universal %
Team sports (e.g. football, rugby, hockey, basketball etc.)	33	28	36
Volunteering and fundraising groups	32	26	36
Sports, fitness or exercise groups (e.g. dance, swimming, athletics, martial arts etc.)	31	25	36
I have not taken part in any of these activities	22	28	18
Creative arts groups (e.g. drama, art, music, photography etc.)	20	17	21
Youth award schemes (e.g. Duke of Edinburgh)	18	13	22
Youth clubs	11	12	10
Uniformed youth groups (e.g. Scouts, Girl Guides, Army Cadets etc.)	10	8	11
One-to-one mentoring	9	8	9
Science and technology (e.g. coding club, science club etc.)	8	5	10
Other	5	5	5
Political and democracy groups (e.g. Scottish Youth Parliament, political parties, representative on boards/youth panels etc.)	4	3	5

Appendix 1: Profile of respondents (unweighted)

Demographic	n	%
Age (n=8,714)		
16	5,431	62%
17	2,773	32%
18/19	510	6%
Sex (n=8,538)		
Male	3,573	42%
Female	4,965	58%
Prefer not to say	176	
Year group (n=8,714)		
S4	1,611	18%
S5	4,912	56%
S6	2,191	25%
Service offer (n=8,714)		
Targeted	4,377	50%
Universal	4,337	50%
Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) (n=8,696)		
SIMD 1 (most deprived 20% areas)	2,027	23%
SIMD 2	1,664	19%
SIMD 3	1,589	18%
SIMD 4	1,823	21%
SIMD 5 (least deprived 20% areas)	1,593	18%
SIMD NA	18	
Sexual orientation (n=4,775)		
Heterosexual/straight	3,857	81%
Bisexual	518	11%
Gay/lesbian	251	5%
Other sexual orientation	149	3%
Missing/Prefer not to say	3,939	
Do you consider yourself to be trans, or have a trans history (n=5,000)		
Yes	176	4%
No	4,824	96%
Missing/Prefer not to say	3,714	

Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding. Missing/prefer not to say/non-response cases have been excluded from totals.

Demographic	n	%
Ethnicity (n=8,575)		
African/African Scottish/African British/African Other	362	4%
Asian/Asian Scottish/Asian British/Asian Other	551	6%
Black/Black Scottish/Black British	61	1%
Caribbean/Caribbean Scottish/Caribbean British/Caribbean Other	20	<1%
Gypsy/Traveller/Roma	15	<1%
Mixed or multiple ethnic group	166	2%
Other ethnic group	188	2%
White/White Scottish/White Irish/White Other British/White Other	7,212	84%
Missing/Prefer not to say	139	
Do you require additional support at school for any of the following reasons? (select all that apply) (n=4,568)		
Autistic	447	10%
Being a refugee or asylum seeker	28	1%
Being a young carer	250	5
Being highly able	40	1%
Having a learning disability or condition such as Down's syndrome, Fragile X syndrome or Global Development Delay	34	1%
Having a mental health condition	468	10%
Having a physical health condition or long term illness	155	3%
Having a physical or motor impairment	43	1%
Having a specific learning difficulty (dyslexia, dyscalculia, dyspraxia or ADHD)	689	15%
Having social and emotional behavioural needs	109	2%
Having speech, language and communication needs	58	1%
Hearing loss or being d/deaf	50	1%
Missed schooling / interrupted learning	270	6%
Misusing substances, such as alcohol or drugs	32	1%
Other	175	4%
Sight loss / blind	36	1%
None of the above	2,818	62%
Missing/Prefer not to say	4,146	
Care Experience (n=8,567)		
Care experienced	390	5%
Not care experienced	8,177	95%
Prefer not to say	147	

Please note that individuals could select more than one type of additional support need option. Counts/percentages are based on the number of selections ("ticks") of each option rather than the count of individuals answering the question. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding. Missing/prefer not to say/non-response cases have been excluded from totals.

Appendix 2: Base counts (unweighted)

This appendix provides the base number of respondents (n) for each survey question. The base number refers to the total number of valid responses used in the analysis of each question. Variations in base numbers may occur due to skip logic, non-response, or filtering based on previous answers.

Statement	All - Base Number (n)	Targeted - Base Number (n)	Universal - Base Number (n)
Recall of services - Base			
Recall of accessing a one-to-one conversation	8,284	4,350	3,934
Recall of accessing My World of Work	7,849	3,807	4,042
Recall of accessing a group session	8,368	4,159	4,209
Recall of accessing a drop-in session	550	348	202
Support provided by careers adviser			
My careers adviser listened to me and valued my ideas	6,478	3,660	2,818
My careers adviser understood me and the support I needed	6,443	3,637	2,806
My careers adviser encouraged me to be ambitious when thinking about my future career	6,420	3,622	2,798
My careers adviser encouraged me to explore a wide range of learning and career options	6,395	3,608	2,787
My careers adviser supported me to make my own decisions and take control of my career path	6,418	3,609	2,809
My careers adviser directed me to other sources of information (e.g. industry specific websites, careers events etc.)	6,369	3,579	2,790
Support provided in one-to-one conversations			
After the first meeting with my careers adviser, we agreed on whether i needed further career guidance support	5,091	2,881	2,210
I agreed with my careers adviser what we would work on together	5,428	3,092	2,336
My careers adviser helped me to make a plan of things i would do	5,737	3,231	2,506
I understood how i would benefit from working with my careers adviser	5,806	3,267	2,539
Frequency and timing of one-to-one conversations			
What are your views on the number of conversations / interviews you had with your careers adviser?	5,119	2,862	2,257
Did your conversation(s) / interview(s) happen at a time in your career journey that was right for you, too early or too late?	5,113	2,860	2,253
Awareness of one-to-one sessions			
Are you aware that SDS offer one-to-one sessions with a SDS careers adviser and that you could have one?	1,937	NA	NA
Reasons for non-engagement with one-to-one sessions			
Please tell us why you didn't have a one-to-one session	642	183	459
Support provided in group sessions			
I understood what i would learn in the group session	1,490	535	955
The content of the group session was useful and relevant to me	1,496	527	969
The group session kept me interested throughout	1,477	523	954
Reasons for non-engagement with group sessions			
Please can you tell us why you haven't taken part in a group session?	5,002	NA	NA
Support provided in drop-in sessions			
The information and advice i received at the drop-in session was useful to me	156	88	68
I liked the option of a drop-in session with the careers adviser	157	88	69
The drop-in sessions happened at a time and place that suited me	155	88	67
Awareness and non-engagement with drop-in sessions			
Does your SDS school careers adviser offer a drop-in clinic/session	6,772	3,316	3,456
Please can you tell us why you haven't attended a drop-in session?	2,815	1,368	1,447

Statement	All - Base Number (n)	Targeted - Base Number (n)	Universal - Base Number (n)
My World of Work			
Are you aware of My World of Work	2,397	1,462	935
My World of Work is easy to use	4,154	1,765	2,389
My World of Work has helped me to think about my future career and learning options	4,144	1,755	2,389
Job profiles (job descriptions and videos)	3,782	1,597	2,185
Course matching function (matches courses to job profiles)	3,745	1,570	2,175
Salary information	3,773	1,578	2,195
Real people stories	3,346	1,418	1,928
My achievements (a personal space for you to note your in and out of school successes)	3,255	1,393	1,862
Option choices	3,376	1,445	1,931
Cv builder	3,160	1,368	1,792
Course search	3,586	1,518	2,068
Job search	3,511	1,486	2,025
Animal me	2,871	1,215	1,656
Strengths tool	3,543	1,478	2,065
All about your skills (meta skills) content	3,041	1,294	1,747
On a scale of 1 to 10, how satisfied are you with my world of work?	3,938	1,659	2,279
Foundation Apprenticeships			
Are you aware that a Foundation Apprenticeship was an option for you?	6,173	NA	NA
Are you doing or have you completed a Foundation Apprenticeship?	4,398	NA	NA
Why did you not select a Foundation Apprenticeship in your options choice?	3,692	1,727	1,965
Would any of the following have encouraged you to do a Foundation Apprenticeship?	3,549	1,648	1,901
Why did you select a Foundation Apprenticeship in your options choice?			
Range and information provided on SDS careers services			
The range of SDS careers services available	5,672	2,841	2,831
The information you were given about the range of SDS careers services available	5,634	2,815	2,819
The information you were given about how to access SDS careers services	5,634	2,814	2,820
The amount of support available	5,628	2,810	2,818
The ability to access support when needed	5,607	2,797	2,810
Career Management Skills (CMS)			
Make informed career decisions	4,981	2,508	2,473
Find and use career information easily	5,054	2,542	2,512
Understand how your experiences and learning can help you make career choices	5,028	2,537	2,491
Understand and build on your skills, strengths and achievements	4,998	2,511	2,487
Consider new things you may not have thought of when it comes to your career journey	4,998	2,525	2,473
Identify and build relationships with people who can help you in your career	4,829	2,426	2,403
Prepare for and manage change in my career journey	4,784	2,401	2,383
Plans to stay on or leave school			
Are you planning to stay on at school or leave? (select one)	4,217	2,067	2,150
Post-school (intended) destinations			
What are you planning to do when you leave school? Please select your main activity.	5,528	2,734	2,794

Statement	All - Base Number (n)	Targeted - Base Number (n)	Universal - Base Number (n)
Influencers - key people (How much have the following people influenced your post-school career plans / aspirations?)			
A university or college representative coming in to my school to talk about careers	5,002	2,484	2,518
An employer or training provider coming in to my school to talk about careers	5,022	2,496	2,526
Careers adviser	5,311	2,642	2,669
Friend(s)	5,315	2,615	2,700
Guidance teacher	5,288	2,604	2,684
Parent(s) / carer(s)	5,357	2,642	2,715
Other family member	5,209	2,574	2,635
Teacher(s)	5,334	2,628	2,706
Youth worker	4,286	2,160	2,126
Influencers - key factors (How much have the following factors influenced your post-school career plans / aspirations?)			
Education / training opportunities available to me	5,174	2,543	2,631
Job / career opportunities available to me	5,133	2,520	2,613
Opportunities available within my local area	5,132	2,530	2,602
Work experience in school or part-time job	4,972	2,463	2,509
My Foundation Apprenticeship experience	530	281	249
The qualifications i achieved at school	5,215	2,562	2,653
The need to earn money	5,206	2,556	2,650
Online careers websites (for example: My World of Work)	5,187	2,557	2,630
Social media (including Facebook, Instagram, X, TikTok etc.)	5,173	2,547	2,626
My interests / hobbies	5,220	2,570	2,650
Wanting to be independent	5,209	2,560	2,649
Doing something i believe in	5,214	2,562	2,652
Learning new skills or being good at something	5,189	2,548	2,641
"Ideal" job/career			
What job (or jobs) do you want to do in your future career?	4,918	NA	NA
Preferred Industry			
What industries do you want to work in in your future career?	5,283	2,606	2,677
What industries do you want to work in in your future career? (Male (n) = 2,112, Female (n) = 2,997)	-	-	-
Participating in groups, clubs, organisations, or activities			
In the last 12 months, have you actively taken part in any of these types of groups, clubs, organisations, or activities (including evening classes)?	5,208	2,554	2,654
Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)			
On a scale from 1 to 10, how effective were the SDS careers services you received in helping you to decide what you want to do when you leave school?	5,066	2,533	2,533
On a scale from 1 to 10, overall how satisfied are you with the careers services you received from SDS?	5,055	2,522	2,533
On a scale from 1 to 10, how likely are you to recommend the SDS careers services you received to others?	5,051	2,523	2,528
Gaelic language skills			
Do you have, or have you been developing Gaelic language skills?	5,253	NA	NA
Where did you learn your Gaelic language skills?	363	NA	NA
I know where to look for information about careers that use Gaelic language skills	363	NA	NA
I plan to use my Gaelic language skills in my future career	357	NA	NA
Gaelic language skills will be valuable for my future career	358	NA	NA
There are a broad range of career options for Gaelic language speakers	354	NA	NA
I would like more information about the career opportunities Gaelic language skills offer	354	NA	NA

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