Skills Development Scotland

Pupil Voice S4-S6 Research 2026

Briefing Paper

October 2026



Contents

Background	**2**
The Pupil Voice (S4-S6) research	4
Key areas covered	5
Study approach	5
Respondent profile	5
About this report	6
Recall of SDS careers services	**7**
Support provided in one-to-one sessions	**8**
Engaging in one-to-one conversations	**9**
Timing and number of one-to-one sessions	**10**
Awareness of one-to-one sessions	**11**
Engagement with one-to-one sessions	**12**
Group sessions	**13**
Key Service Performance Indicators	**14**
How careers support helps young people make decisions	**15**
Key Performance Indicators	**16**
Preparedness to leave school	**17**
What could improve preparedness to leave school	**18**
My World of Work – exploring options	**19**

Career management skills (CMS)	20
Perception of employer skills demand	21
Participation in employability / extracurricular activities	22
Sources of career information and support	23
Usefulness of sources of information	24
Use of artificial intelligence (AI)	25
Use of social media	26
When young people plan to leave school	27
Reasons for leaving school in S4 and S5	28
Reasons for staying on at school until S6	29
Post-school destinations	30
Key factors that influence career decisions	31
Key people that influence career decisions	32
Preferred Industries	33
Preferred job areas	34
Preferred job roles	35
Opportunities in local area	36
Plans to leave or stay in local area	37
Appendix 1: Profile of respondents (unweighted)	38
Appendix 2: Base counts (unweighted)	40

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 career[1].

Careers advisers are central to supporting individuals of all ages as they explore and make decisions about education, training, and employment. Using their expertise in labour market trends, learning and training routes, apprenticeships, further and higher education, and job opportunities, they offer personalised guidance that reflects each person's needs, goals, and circumstances.

SDS delivers career information, advice, and guidance services across Scotland through schools, community settings, partner organisations, telephone support, and online channels. This flexible approach allows SDS to provide a consistent national service while adapting how support is delivered to meet the needs of different people and locations.

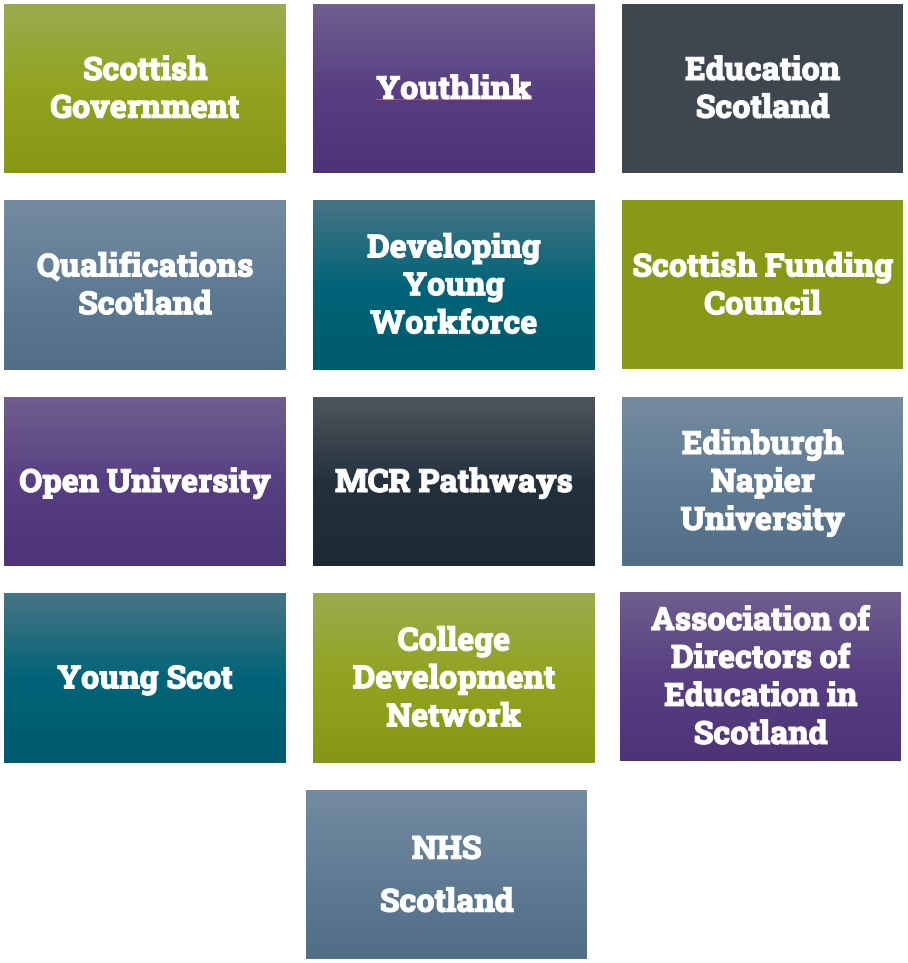
To ensure that young people receive high-quality career services that support them in developing their Career Management Skills (CMS), it is essential to evaluate the services that SDS provides to identify what works well and what needs improvement. This helps us to adapt our services to evolving needs 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 CIAG[2] planning and performance colleagues and other departments across SDS, the research programme seeks to understand career aspirations of young people in Scotland. Our research is designed 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.



[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 research[3]. 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 focuses specifically on young people in the senior phase of secondary school, gathering feedback during a crucial phase when young people 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 young people's 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.

An additional element of the research is to view the findings from an equality perspective and to capture the views of young people from different backgrounds. This includes ethnicity, indicators of deprivation (SIMD)[4], additional support needs (ASN), care experience, and sexual orientation.

The Pupil Voice S4-S6 research 2026 captured the views of almost 9,000 young people in Scotland, and to our knowledge is the largest repeated cross-sectional sample of senior phase school pupils in Scotland.

The results from this research are shared across SDS and with partners and stakeholders working in Careers Information, Advice and Guidance (CIAG), careers education, policy and employability to help shape and improve service delivery. The results also feed into our annual CIAG report.

[3] CIAG Research - Skills Development Scotland
[4] 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)).

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
- Career management skills
- Sources of information
- Post-school plans
- Preferred jobs and industries
- Key influencers on career decisions
- Preparedness for leaving school
- Reasons for staying on or leaving school
- Awareness and perceptions of local opportunities
- Plans to leave or stay in local area post-school
- Perceptions of skills employers are looking for
- Participation in extra-curricular activities

Study approach

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

The fieldwork was carried out over a four-week period between June and July 2026. 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, 8,956 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 S4-S6 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 by the project team.

Please note that not all respondents answered every question, therefore base counts vary across questions. Base counts are presented as the unweighted counts and can be found for each question in **Appendix 2**. Missing, non-response, 'don't know', and 'prefer not to say' responses have been excluded from the analysis.

A series of infographics focused on protected characteristics have also been produced. Additional reports on our research with young people can also be found on the SDS website[5]. Please consider reading our further guidance on **interpreting disaggregated data responsibly** if using data from this report. 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 (2026) 'Pupil Voice S4-S6 Research 2026 Briefing Paper'. Skills Development Scotland.

[5] 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 **most 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 group session/workshop.

Recall was higher in 2026 than in 2025 across the services measured, with an overall positive trend since 2021.

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

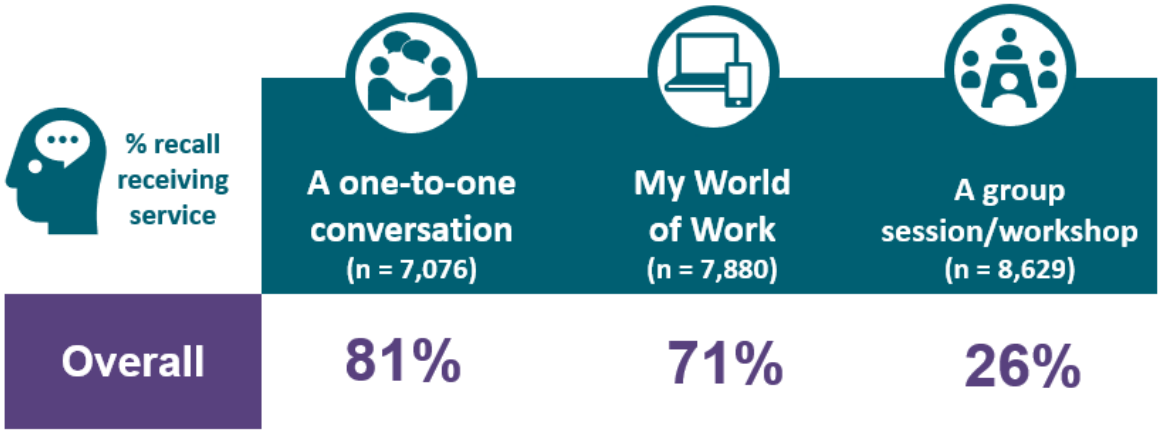
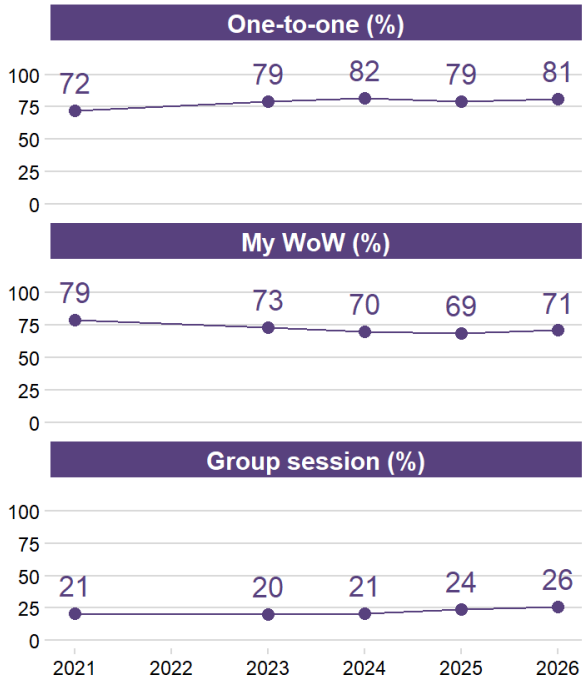


Figure 3: Change over time - Percentage of young people who recall accessing SDS careers services (%).



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 careers 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 directed them to other sources of information.

Young people's views on the support they have received from careers advisers have **become more positive over time**, with scores for these measures peaking in 2026.

Figure 4: Young people's views on the support they received from their careers adviser (mean point score).

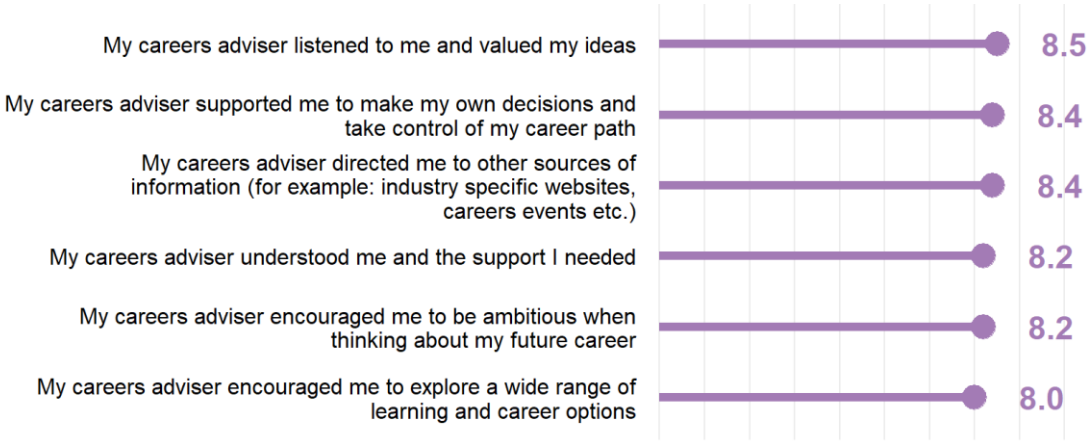
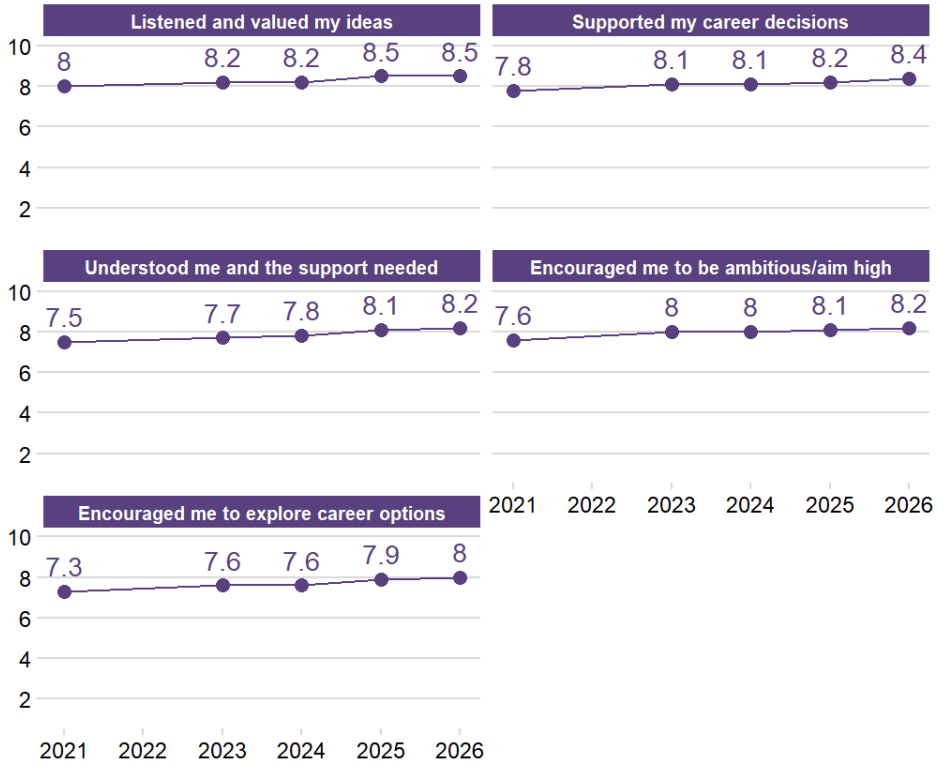


Figure 5: Change over time - Young people's views on the support they received from their careers adviser (mean point score).



Engaging in one-to-one conversations

Young people were 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's views on the support they received have become **increasingly positive** over time, with scores peaking in 2026.

Figure 6: Young people's views on their one-to-one conversations with their careers adviser (mean point score).

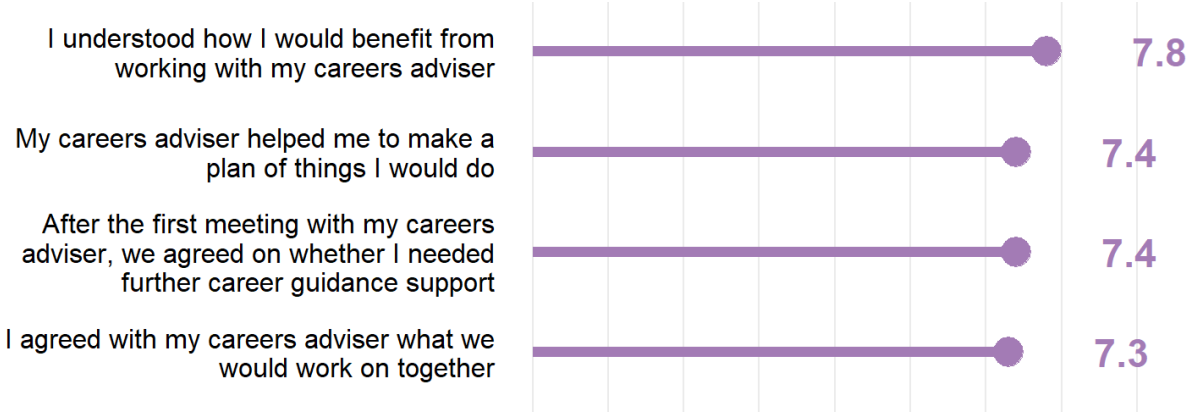
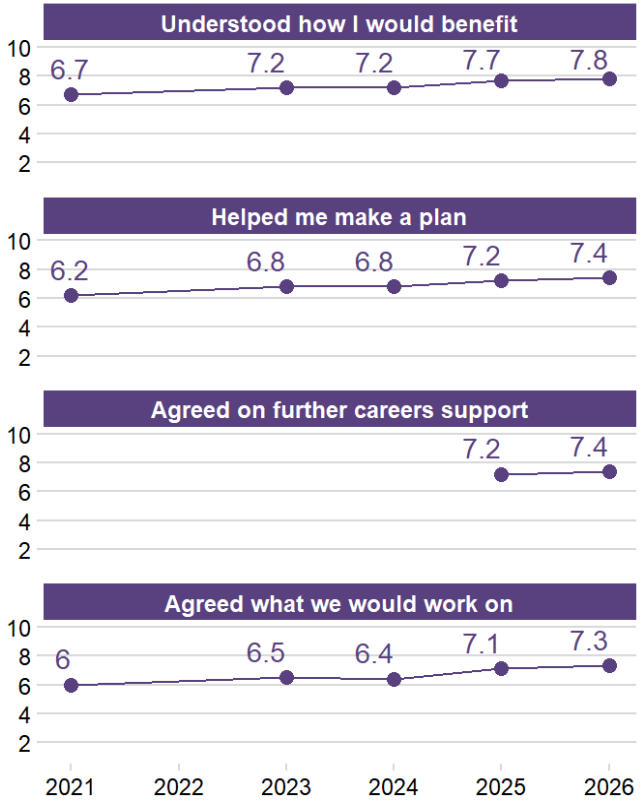


Figure 7: Change over time - Young people's views on their one-to-one conversations with their careers adviser (mean point score).



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.

The majority of young people felt that the number and timing of conversations with careers advisers were **about right**.

Very few thought that they had too many one-to-one conversations, but over a quarter felt that they **didn't have enough**. The percentage of young people stating that they felt the number and timing of conversations were 'about right' has increased over, time indicating that young people are **increasingly satisfied** with the frequency and timing of career conversations.

Figure 8: Young people's response to the question *"What are your views on the number of conversations/interviews you had with your careers adviser?"* (%) and change over time.

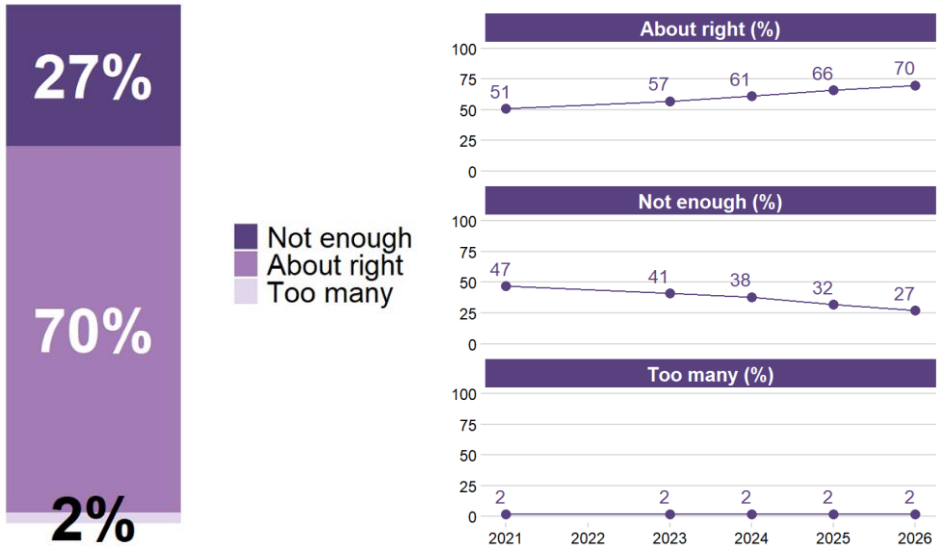
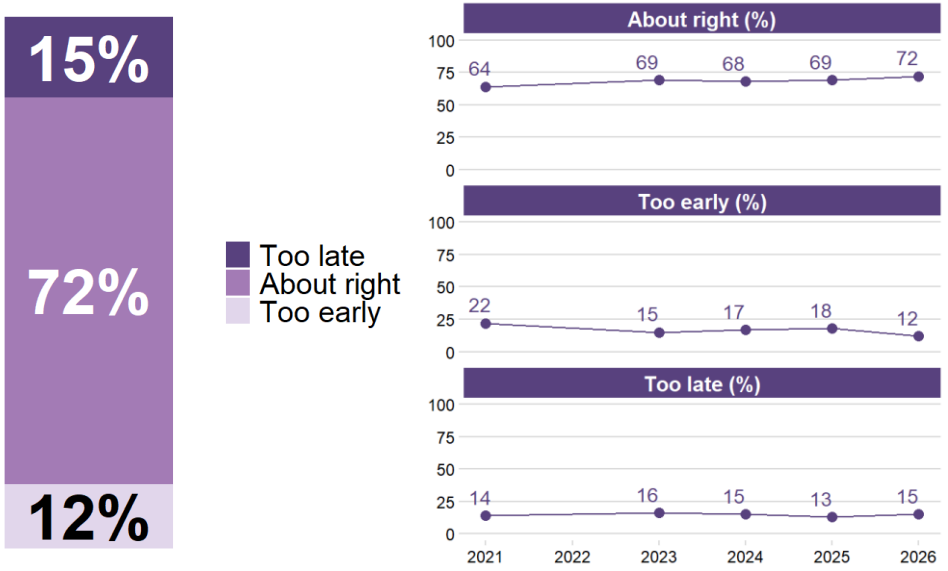


Figure 9: Young people's response to the question "*Did your conversation(s)/interview(s) happen at a time in your career journey that was right for you, too early or too late?"* (%) and change over time.

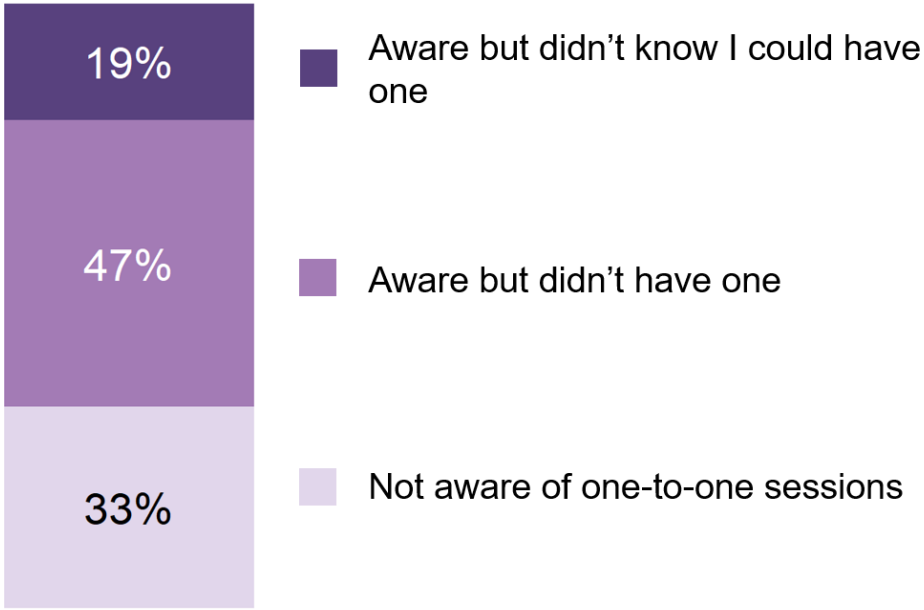


Awareness of one-to-one sessions

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*.

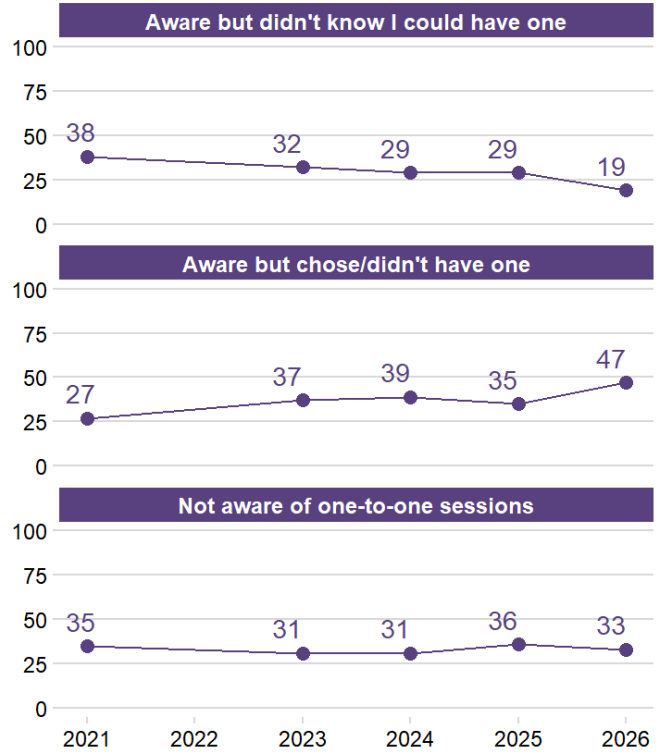
Almost half (47%) of young people were aware of one-to-one sessions but didn't have one. Around a third (33%) were not aware of the one-to-one sessions at all, and 19% were aware of the sessions but didn't know they could have one. **This equates to over half (52%) being unaware that they could access a one-to-one session.**

Figure 10: 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*?".



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

Figure 11: Change over time - 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*?".

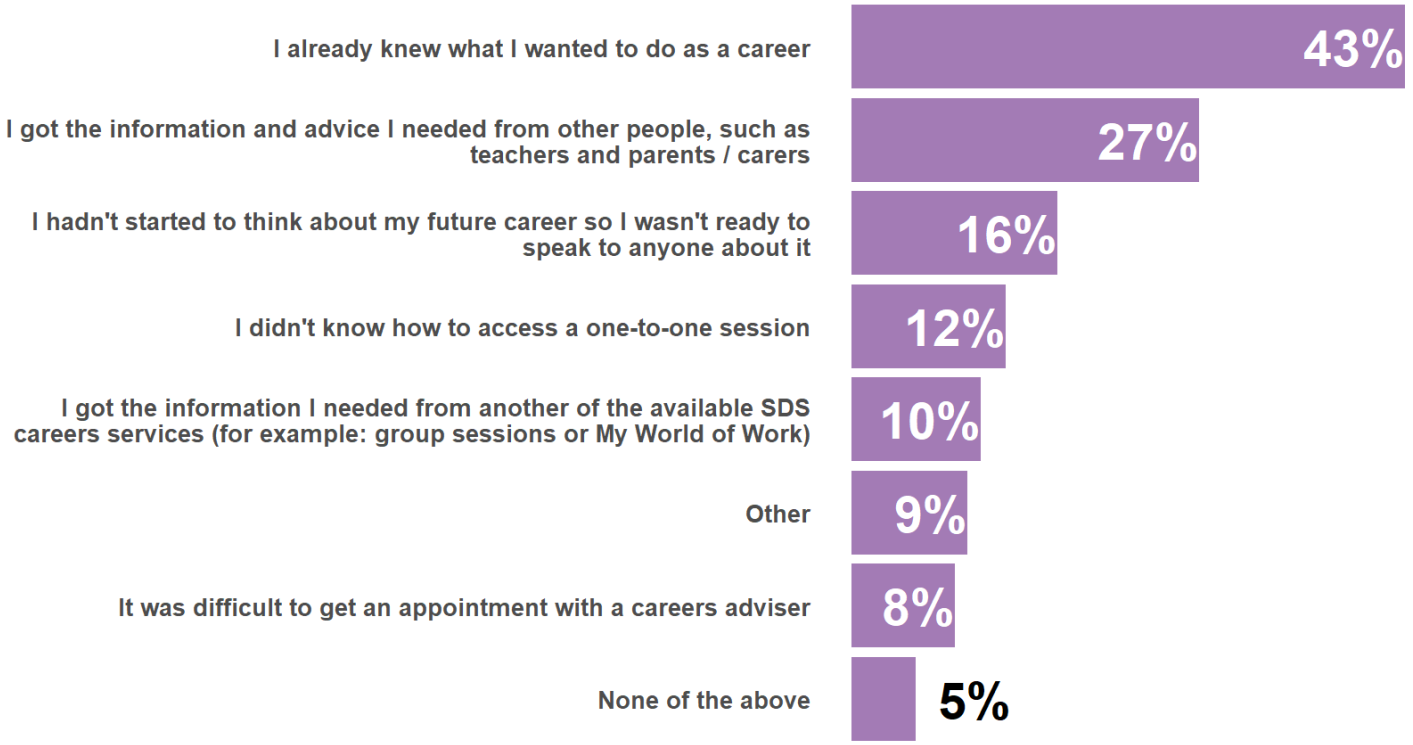


Engagement with one-to-one sessions

Young people who were aware of the one-to-one sessions but didn't have one were asked why they didn't have one.

The main reasons given were that they **already knew what they wanted to do as a career** (43%), or that they **got the information and advice they needed from other people** (27%).

Figure 12: Young people's reasons for not having a one-to-one session (if they were aware they could have one, but chose not to, %).



Group sessions

Group sessions/workshops delivered by SDS were not well remembered by young people - only 26% of those who attended a group session/workshop recalled them.

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 13: Young people's views on the group sessions/workshops they received (mean point score).

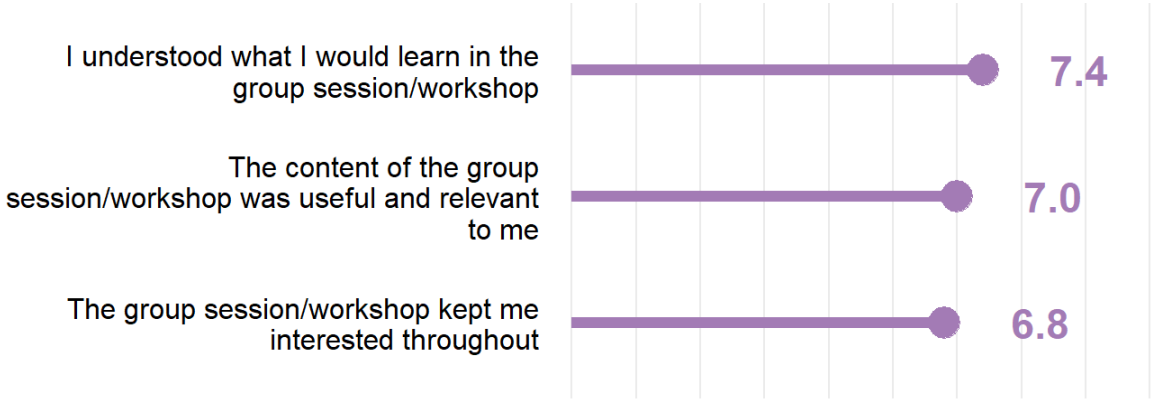
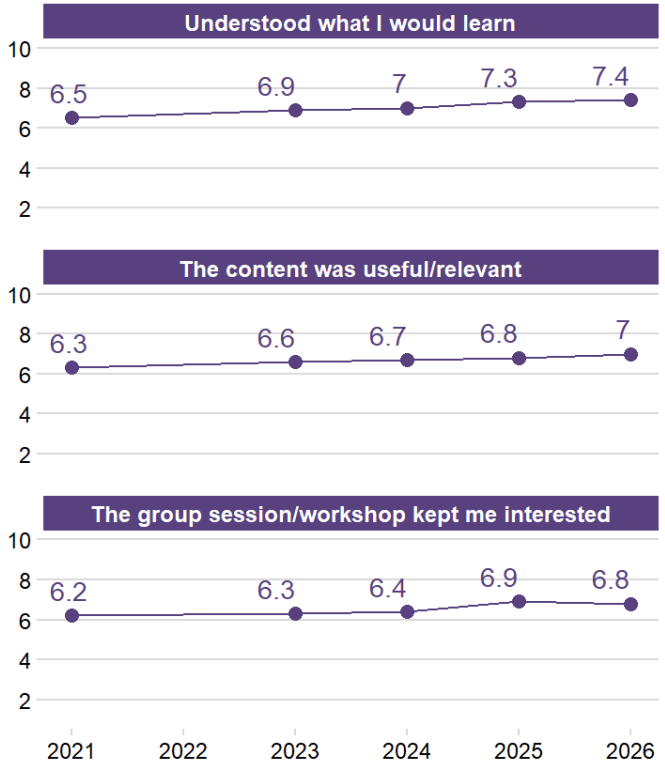


Figure 14: Change over time in young people's views on the group sessions/workshops they received (mean point score).



Key Service Performance Indicators

Young people were asked about a range of measures about the SDS service they accessed and their satisfaction with each aspect of the service. Young people are generally satisfied with each aspect of the service, but particularly the **ability to access support in a format that suited them** and **when needed**. Respondents living in SIMD 1 areas reported particularly high satisfaction with support access

Young people have shown increasing satisfaction over time with the ability to access support when needed, the range and amount of support available and the information provided to them.

Figure 15: Young people's satisfaction with aspects of the SDS service overall (mean point scores), including SIMD 1 and 5 comparators.

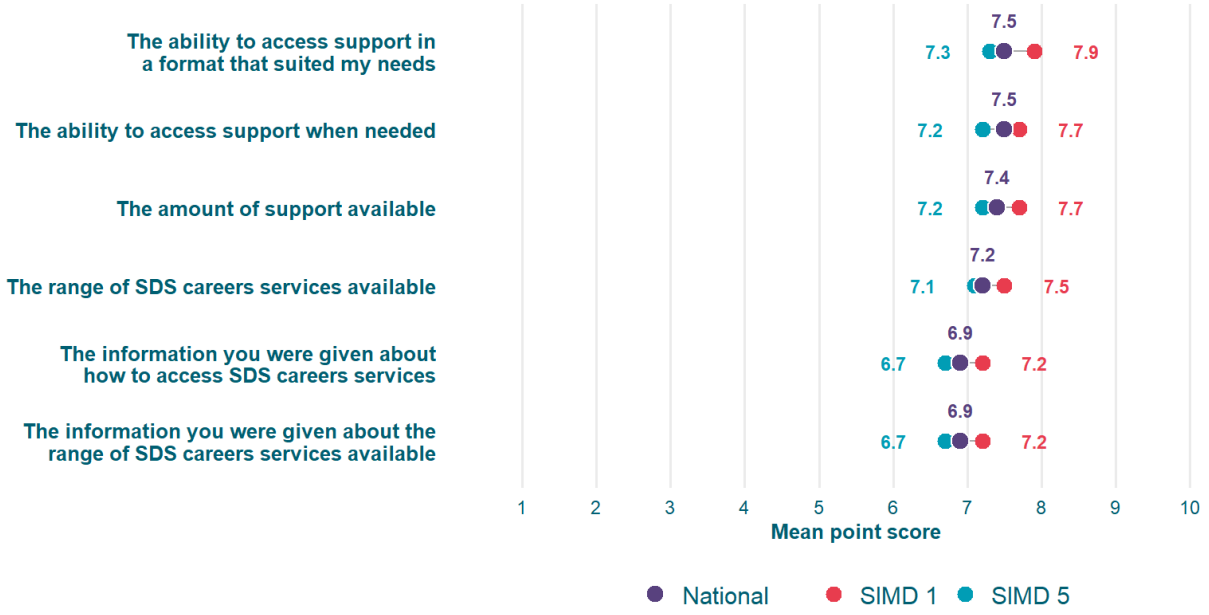
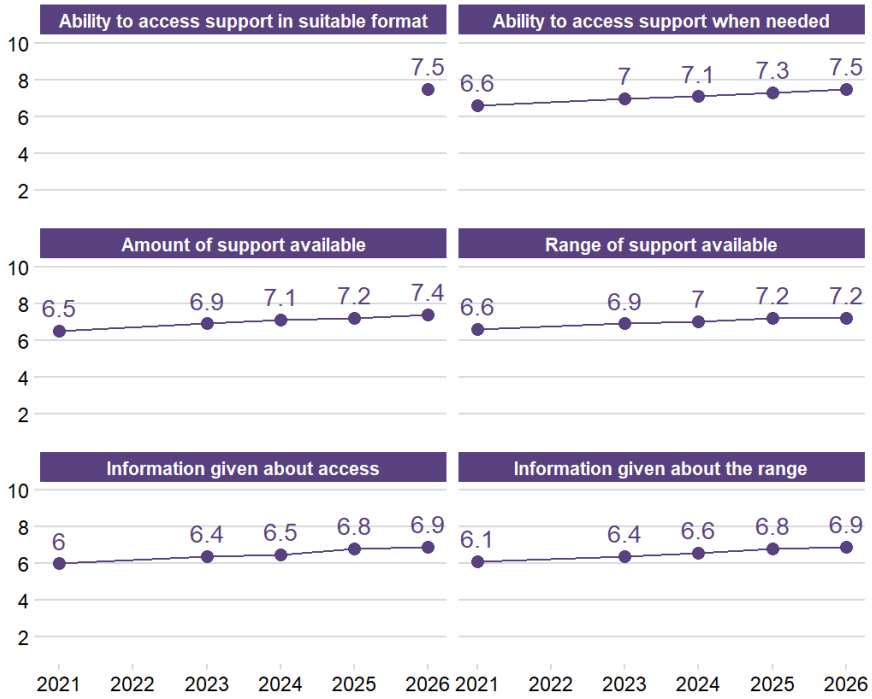


Figure 16: Change over time - Young people's views on the SDS service overall (mean point scores)



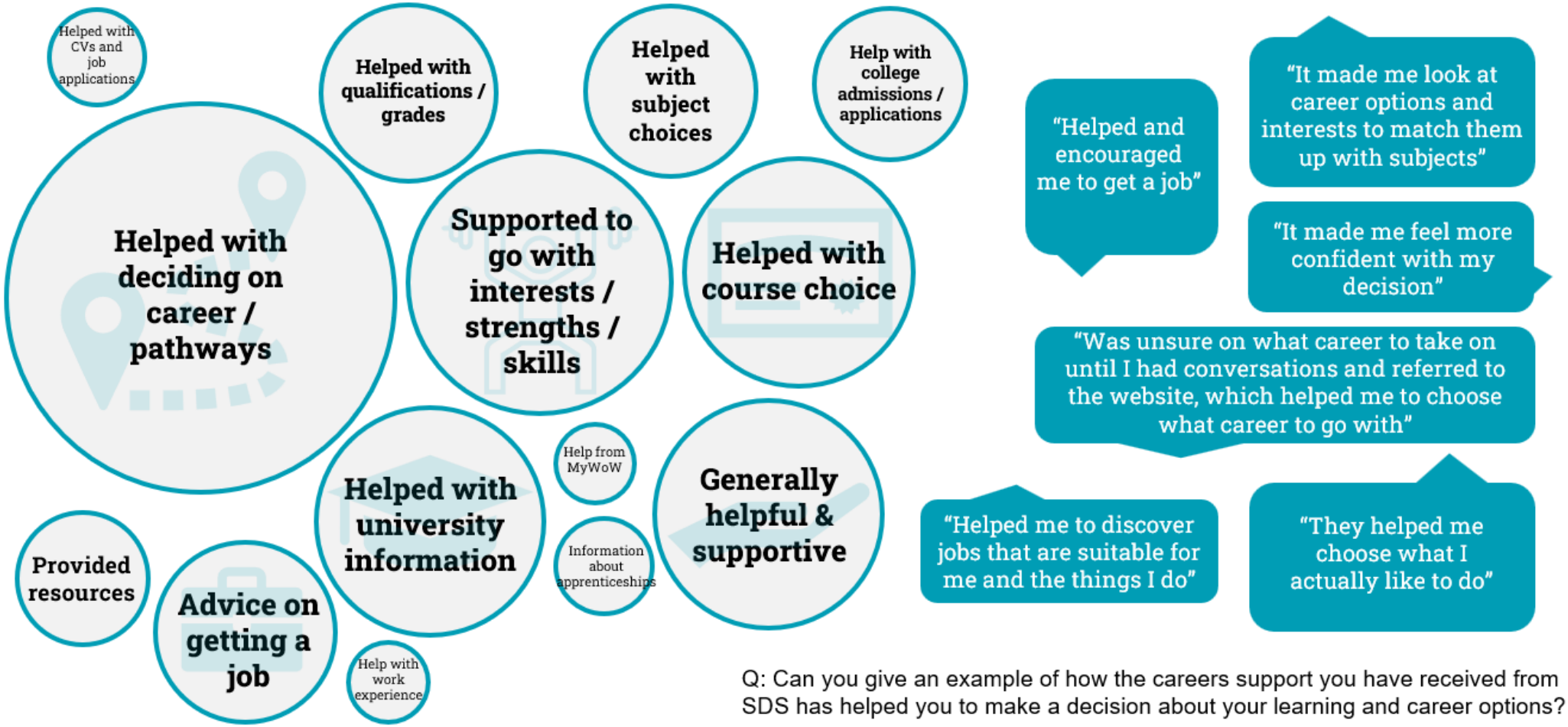
*'Ability to access support in a suitable format' was a new question in 2026.

How careers support helps young people make decisions

Young people were asked to give an example of how the careers support they received from SDS helped them to **make a decision about their learning and career options**. Nearly 2,000 young people provided a comment.

Young people were most likely to share examples about how the service had helped them to **decide on a career or pathway into a career**, that they felt supported to follow their interests, strengths and skills or had received useful information about universities and courses.

Figure 17: Thematic analysis* and quoted examples of how SDS supported young people to make decisions about their learning or career.



*The larger the circle, the more prominent the theme was.

Key Performance Indicators

Young people were asked to rate their overall satisfaction with the service they received from SDS, the likelihood that they would recommend the service to others and the effectiveness of the service in helping them to decide what to do when they leave school. Young people were most likely to **score highest for overall satisfaction**, with those living in SIMD 1 areas more likely to be satisfied.

The KPI scores have **steadily increased over time**.

Figure 18: Young people's overall satisfaction with service, likelihood to recommend and overall effectiveness (mean point scores), including SIMD 1 and 5 comparators.

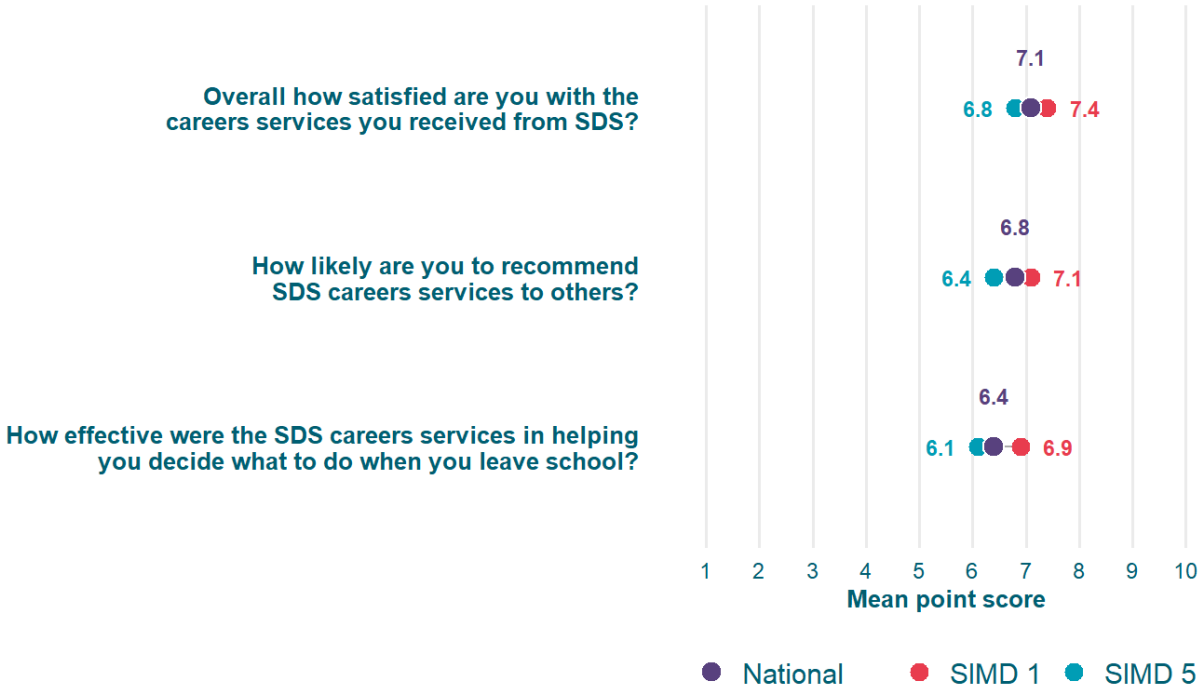
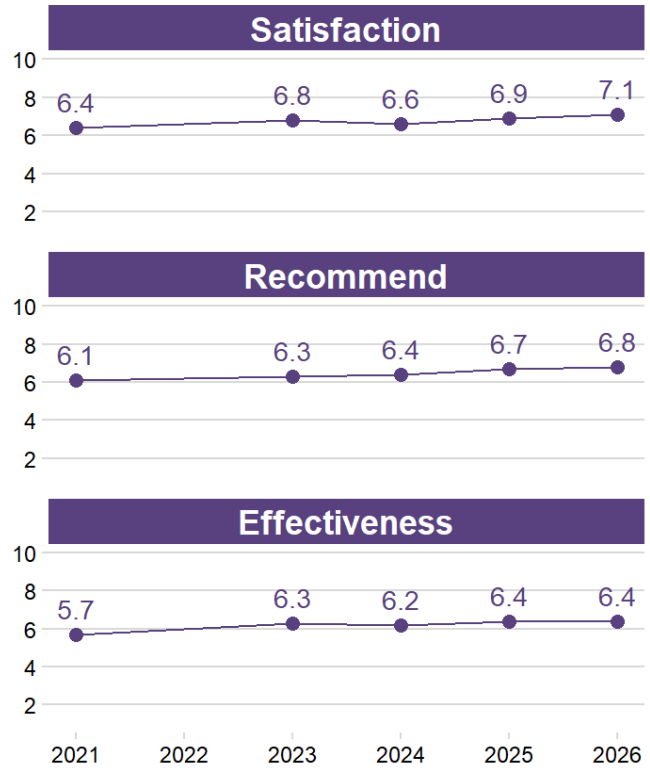


Figure 19: Change over time - Young people's overall satisfaction with service, likelihood to recommend and overall effectiveness (mean point scores).



Preparedness to leave school

Young people were asked to rate on a scale of 1-10 (where 1 was ‘not at all prepared’ and 10 was ‘totally prepared’) how prepared they felt to leave school. Young people on average gave a score of **6.7**. Young people’s preparedness tends to increase as they progress through the senior phase of secondary school.

Figure 20: Young people’s average preparedness score (mean point score) and distribution of scores (%) across the 1-10 scale.

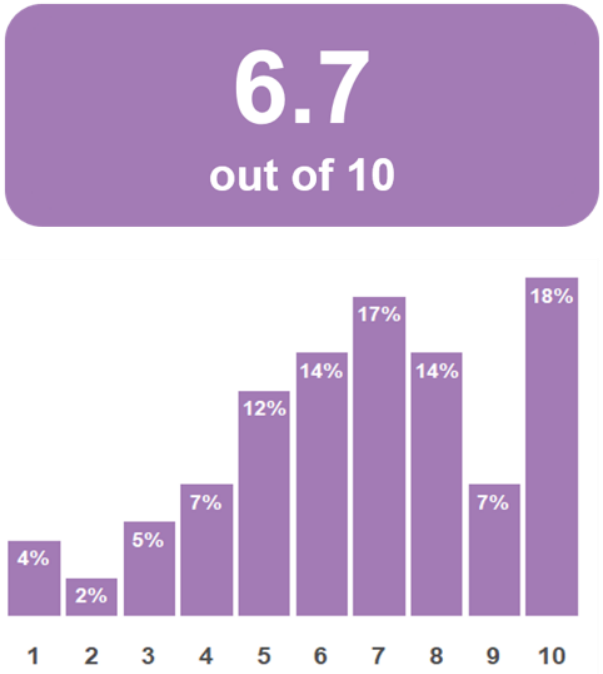
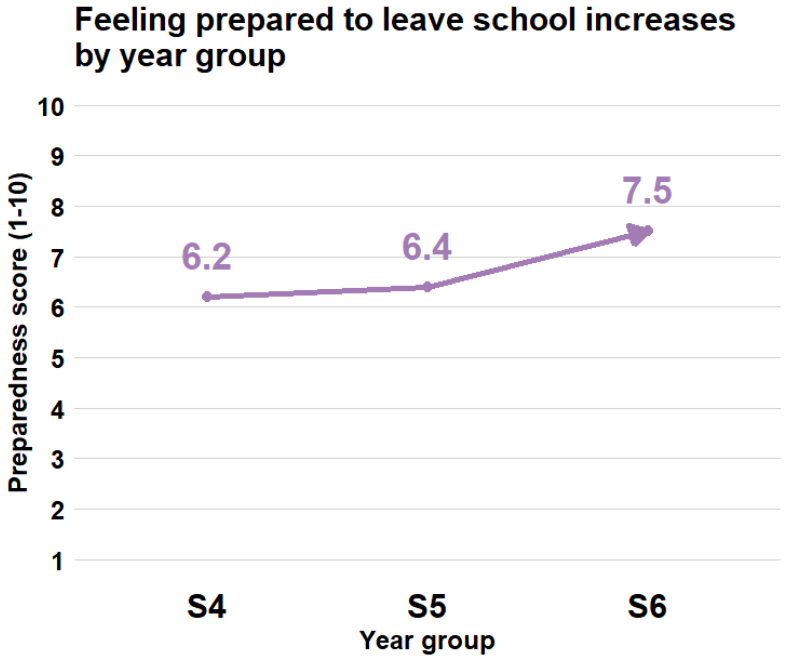


Figure 21: Young people’s average score (mean point score) by year group.



What could improve preparedness to leave school

Young people who scored 5 or less on the preparedness scale were asked what would help them to feel more prepared to leave school. The majority of young people stated that having **more information about their next steps** would be beneficial, as well as having a **clear plan and direction**. Some also said that gaining more qualifications or work experience would be helpful, as would receiving more one-to-one guidance.

Figure 22: Thematic analysis* and quoted examples of what would help young people to feel more prepared for leaving school.



Q: What would help you to feel more prepared to leave school?

*The larger the circle, the more prominent the theme was.

My World of Work - exploring options

Young people were asked to rate how useful the My World of Work website is in helping them to explore their career options and next steps. Young people on average gave a score of **6.5 out of 10**.

Ratings were generally positive, with over half of young people (54%) giving a score of 7 or above. However, views were mixed, with one-third of young people (33%) giving a score of 5 or below. Average usefulness scores were broadly similar across year groups, although there was a slight decrease through the senior phase, from **6.6** among S4 pupils to **6.2** among S6 pupils.

Figure 23: Young people's average usefulness score (mean point score) and distribution of scores (%) across the 1-10 scale.

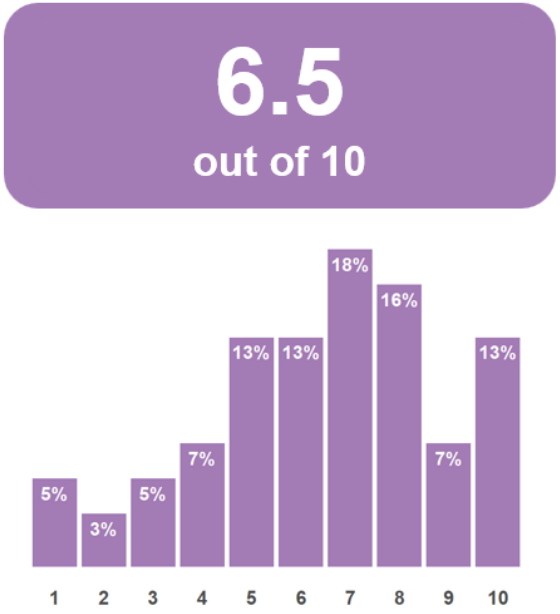
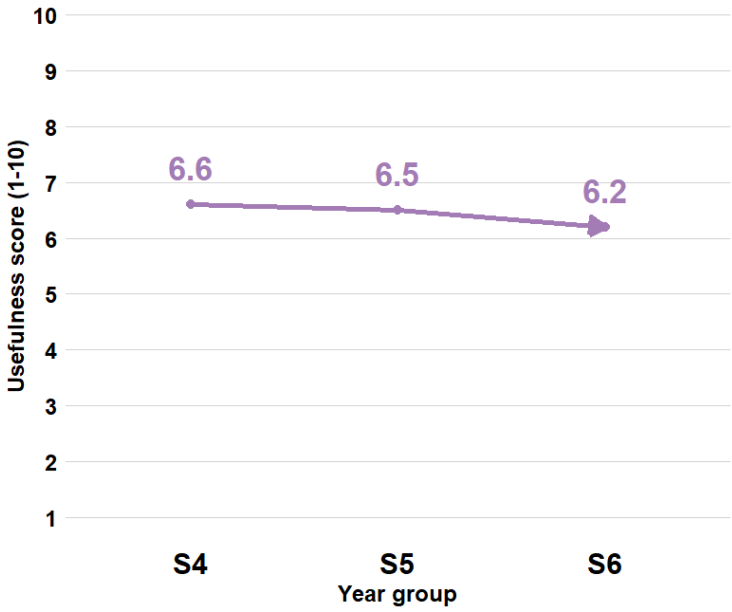


Figure 24: Young people's average score (mean point score) by year group.

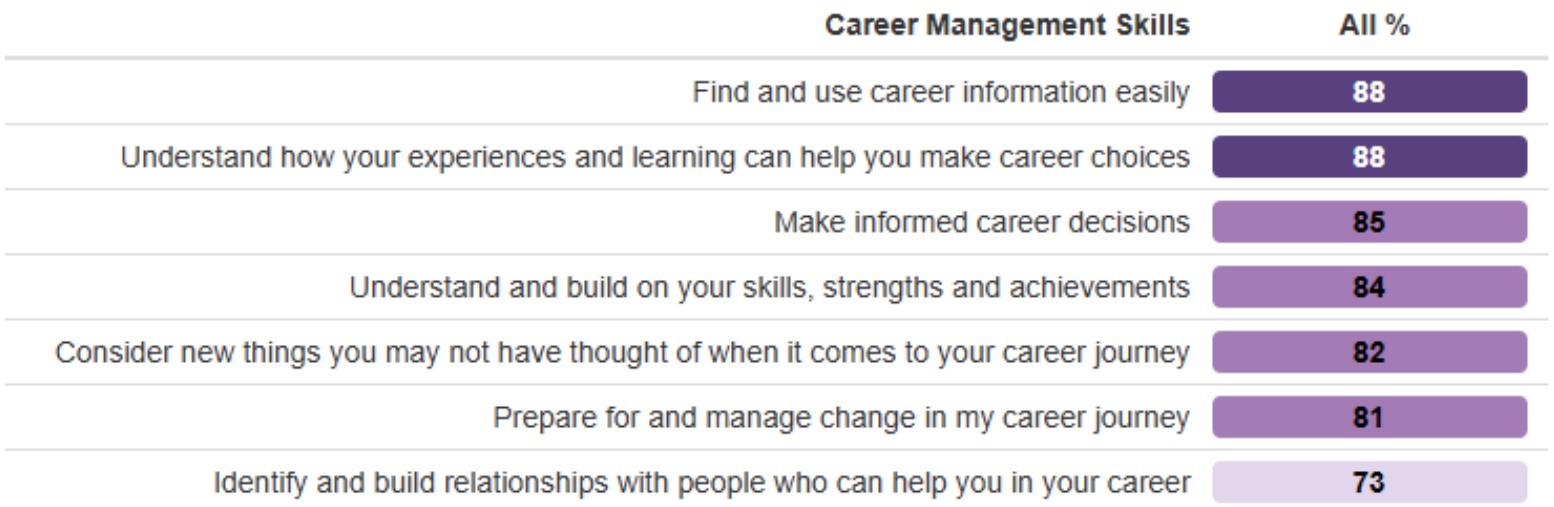


Career management skills (CMS)

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

A high proportion of young people agreed **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**. Young people most commonly reported 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 25: Young people's views on the effectiveness of SDS careers services in helping to develop Career Management Skills (CMS), (% agree).



Perception of employer skills demand

Young people were asked what skills/attributes employers are most looking for in their employees. **Communication skills** were by far the most important skill perceived by young people, followed by having a **good work ethic** and **being reliable**.

Young people were also asked to rate how confident they felt that they were developing these skills and attributes. Young people are generally confident that they are developing most of these skills and attributes, but are **least confident that they are developing work experience, the right qualifications and communication skills.**

Figure 26: Young people's response to '*What skills/attributes do you think are employers most looking for in their employees? (select up to 5)'*, (% selected).

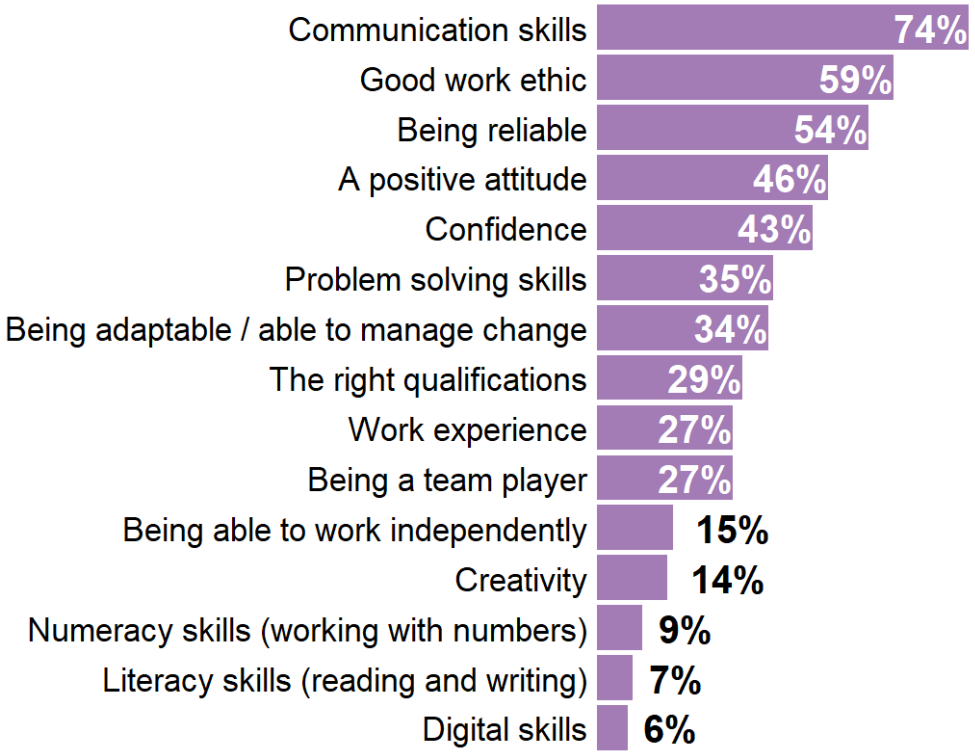
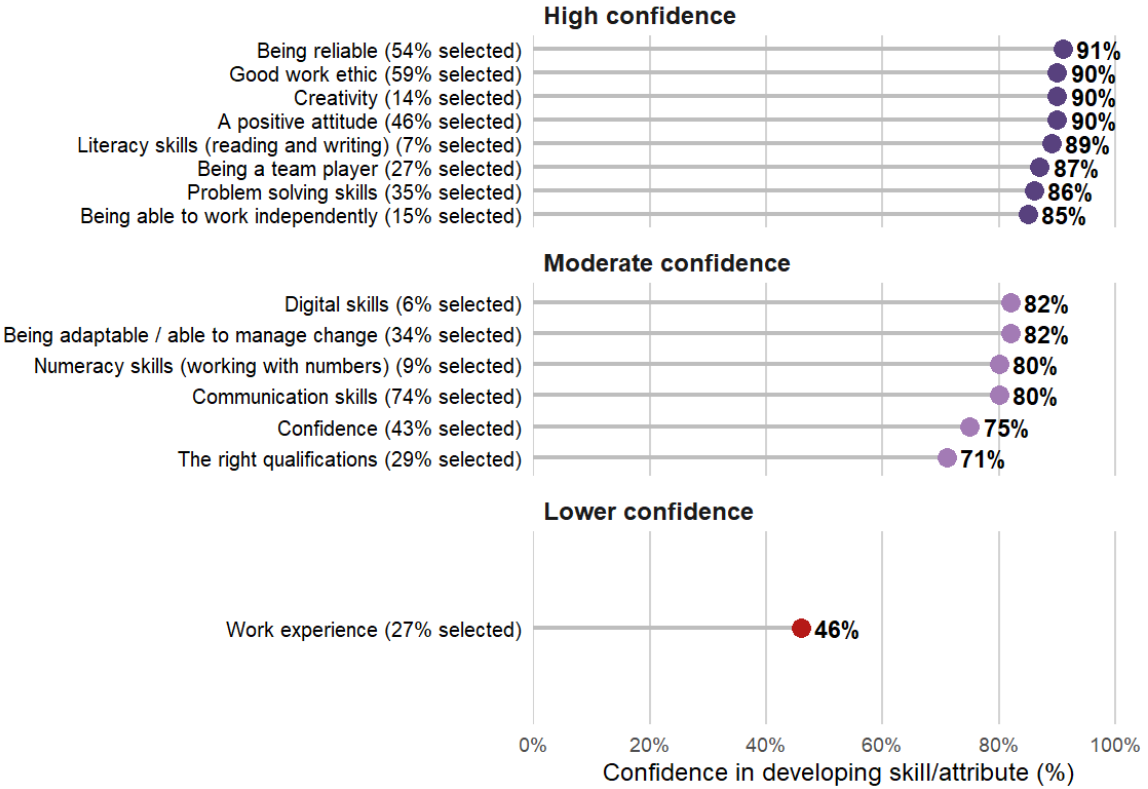


Figure 27: Young people's response to 'How confident are you that you are developing these skills/attributes?' (% confident / very confident).

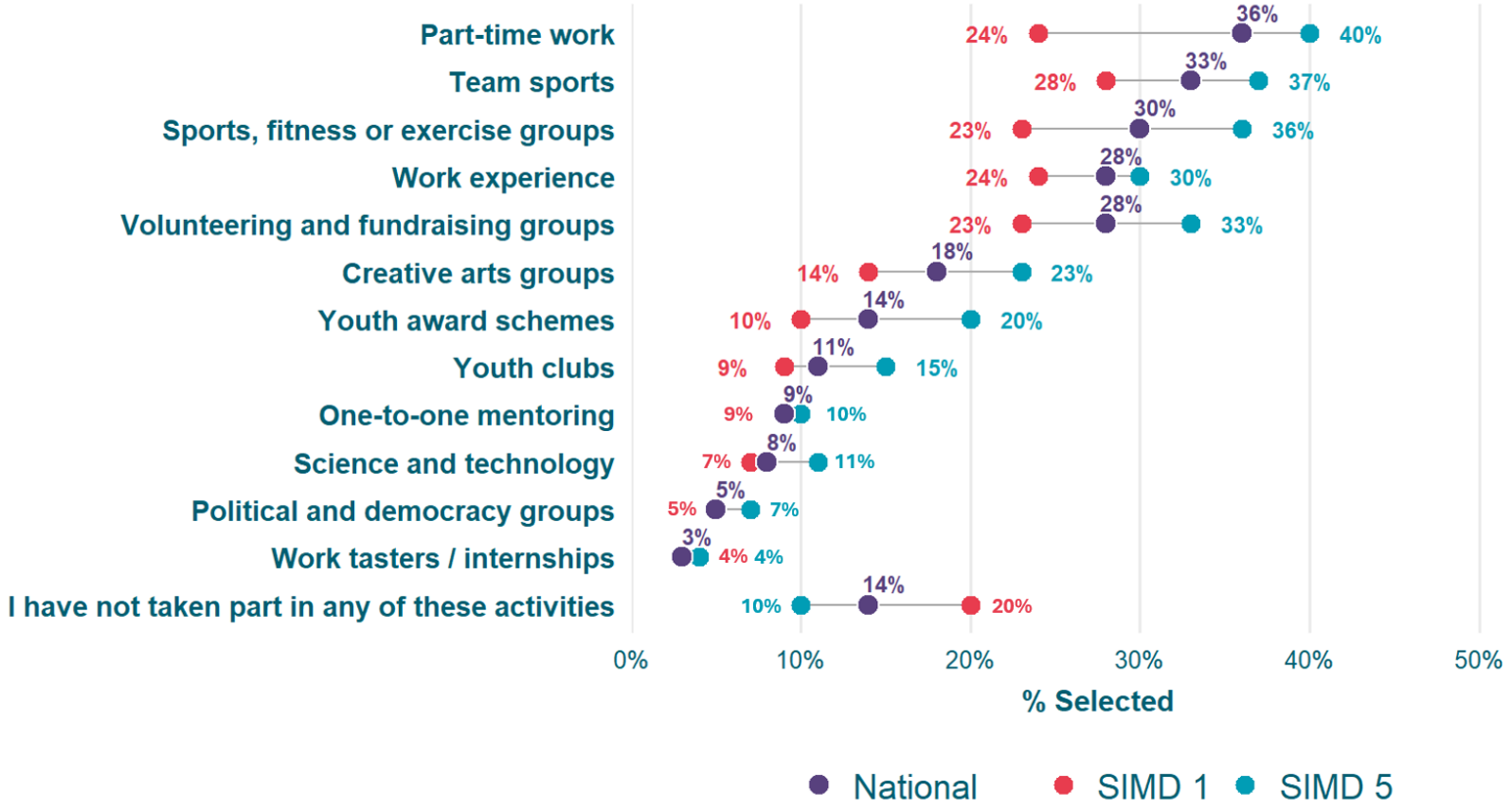


Participation in employability / extracurricular activities

Young people were asked if they had taken part in any employability or extracurricular activities in the last 12 months. Around **1 in 6** young people had not taken part in any activities, which rises to **1 in 5** for those living in the most deprived areas.

Among those who had participated in activities, **part-time work, team sports, sports and fitness groups, work experience** and **volunteering** were the most popular.

Figure 28: Young people's participation in employability/extracurricular activities (% selected), with SIMD 1 and 5 comparators.



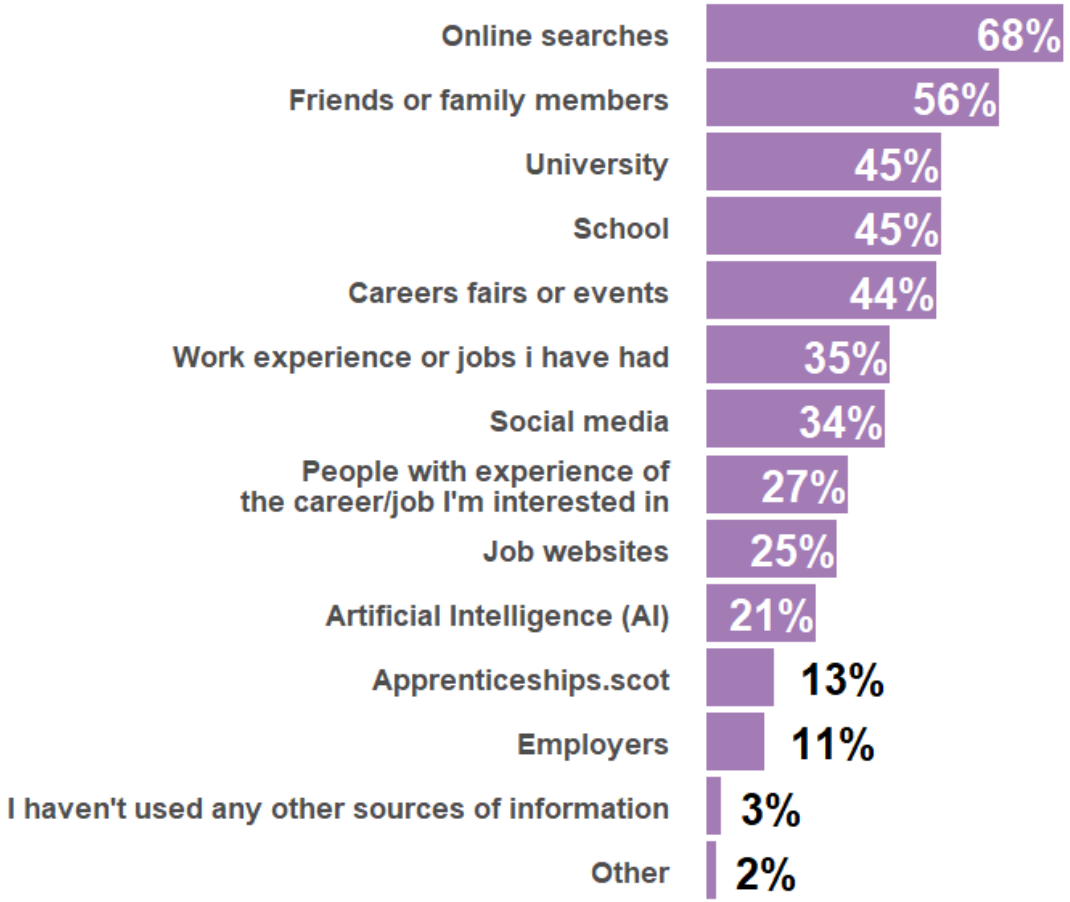
Sources of career information and support

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. They were also likely to say that **friends or family** members were sources of information.

Educational institutions such as universities and schools were also likely sources, as were careers fairs or work experience.

Figure 29: Sources of careers and learning information other than SDS services (% selected, select all that apply).



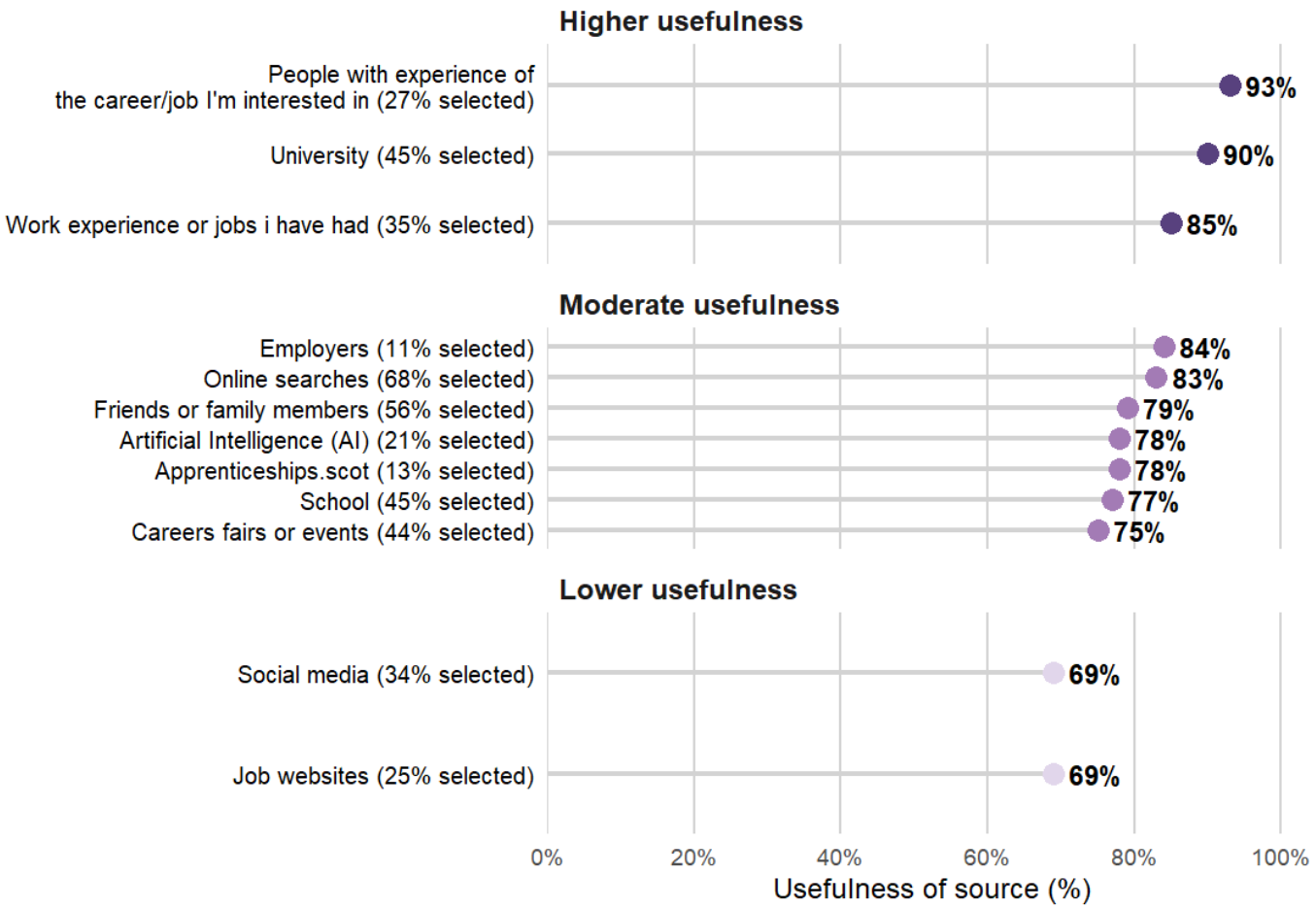
Usefulness of sources of information

Young people were asked how useful they found each source of information they had used.

Young people were most likely to find information from **people with experience of the career they are interested in** useful, as well as **university** and **work experience** opportunities.

Most sources were found to be moderately useful, but young people are least likely to think job websites and social media are useful sources of information.

Figure 30: Usefulness of sources of careers and learning information used by young people, other than SDS services (% selected somewhat useful/very useful).

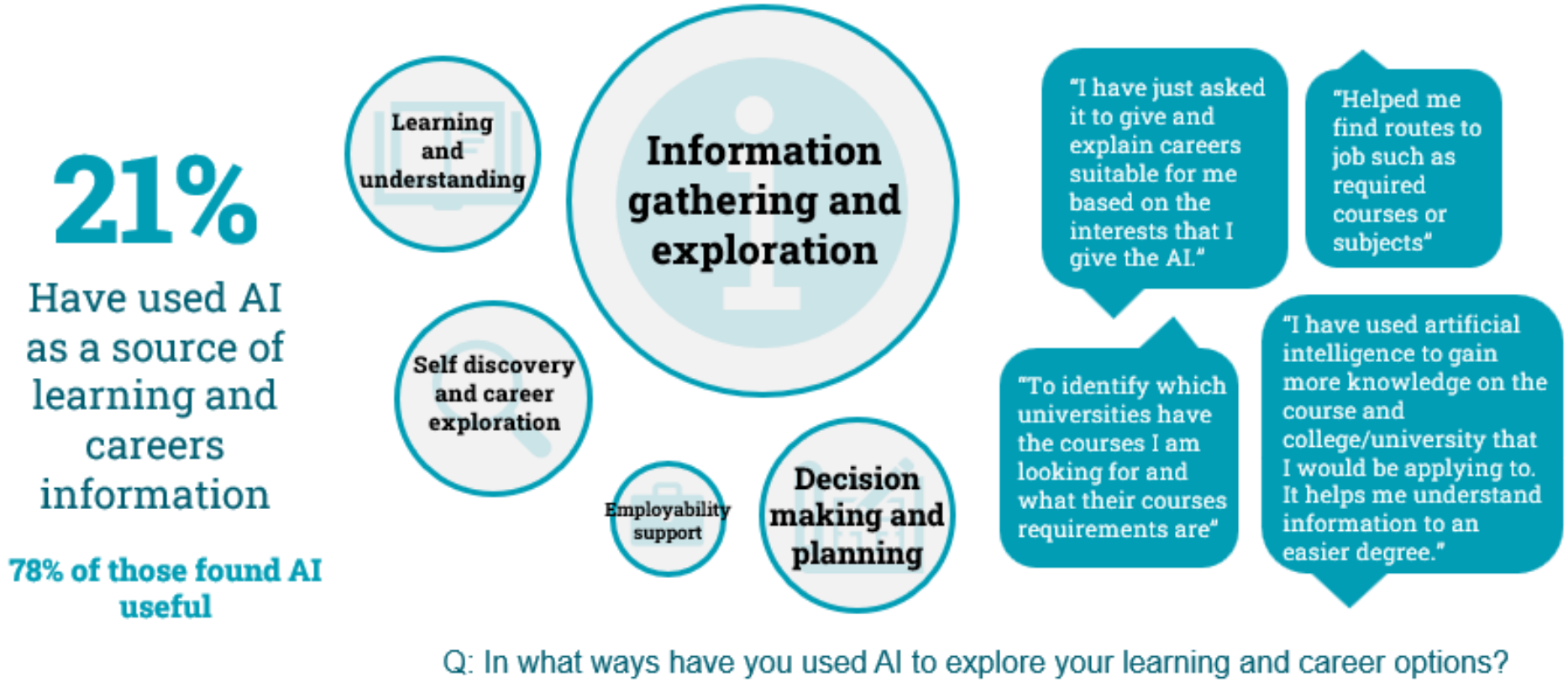


Use of artificial intelligence (AI)

One fifth of young people said that they had used AI as a source of information about their learning and career options. Those that had used AI were asked in what ways they used it to explore their learning and career options.

The majority of young people said that they used AI to **gather information** about and explore their options, which included both education and career options. Young people also used AI to help them **learn about and understand** their options, as well as using AI as a **planning tool and for decision making**.

Figure 31: Thematic analysis* and quotes of young people's use of AI for exploring learning and career options.



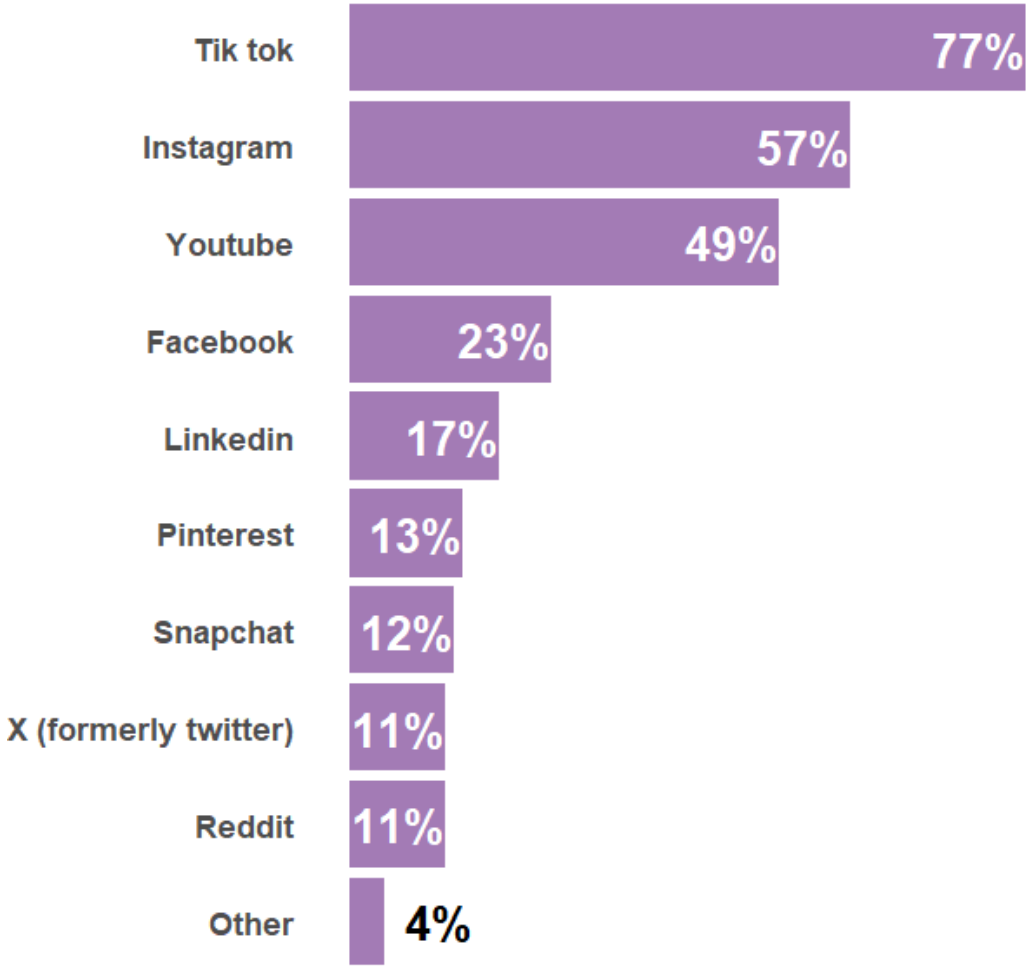
*The larger the circle, the more prominent the theme was.

Use of social media

Just over a third of young people said that they had used social media as a source of information about their learning and career options. Those that had used social media, were asked which social media channels they had used to explore their learning and career options.

The majority of young people said that they used **Tik-Tok**, which was the most popular social media channel. Over half said that they had used **Instagram** and 49% had used **YouTube**. Reddit, X and Snapchat were the least used social media channels by young people as a source of information about learning and careers.

Figure 32: Social media channels young people use to look for information about learning and career options (% selected).



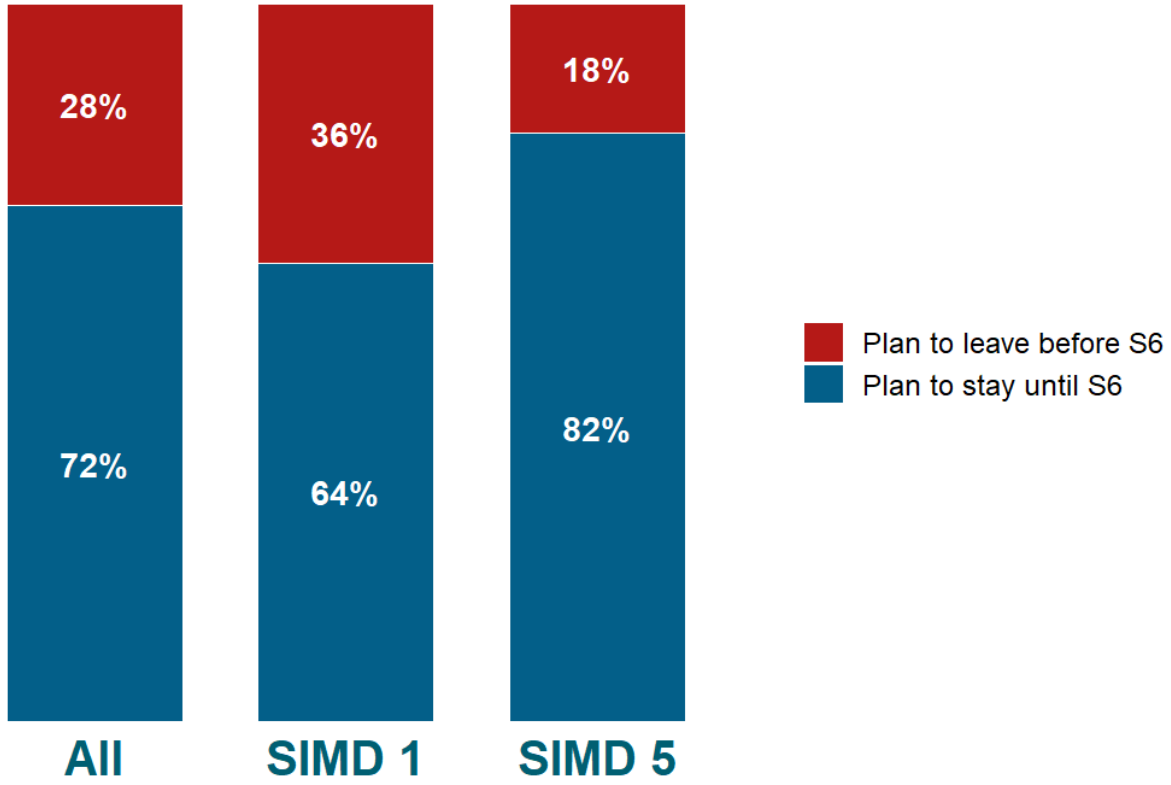
When young people plan to leave school

Young people in S4 or S5 were asked whether they plan to stay in school until S6 or leave before S6.

Overall, almost **three-quarters** of young people (72%) reported that they plan to **stay in school until S6**, while 28% reported that they plan to leave either in S4 or S5.

Intentions varied by level of deprivation. Young people in **SIMD 5 were more likely to report that they plan to stay until S6** (82%) than those in SIMD 1 (64%). Conversely, over a third of young people in SIMD 1 (36%) reported that they plan to leave before S6, compared with fewer than one in five (18%) in SIMD 5.

Figure 33: Young people's (S4 & S5) intentions to stay in school until S6 or leave before S6 (%) by SIMD.



Reasons for leaving school in S4 and S5

Young people who stated that they planned to leave school in S4 or S5 were asked what their reasons were. The majority of young people who plan to leave school in S4 or S5 plan to **pursue a positive next step** such as going to **college, getting a job or starting an apprenticeship**. However, some plan to leave school for more negative reasons such as **not enjoying school or not being suited to the school environment.**

Figure 34: Thematic analysis* of S4 and S5 leavers** reasons for leaving school



*The larger the circle, the more prominent the theme was.
**Results shown are for S4/S5 pupils who indicated they were leaving in S4 or S5.

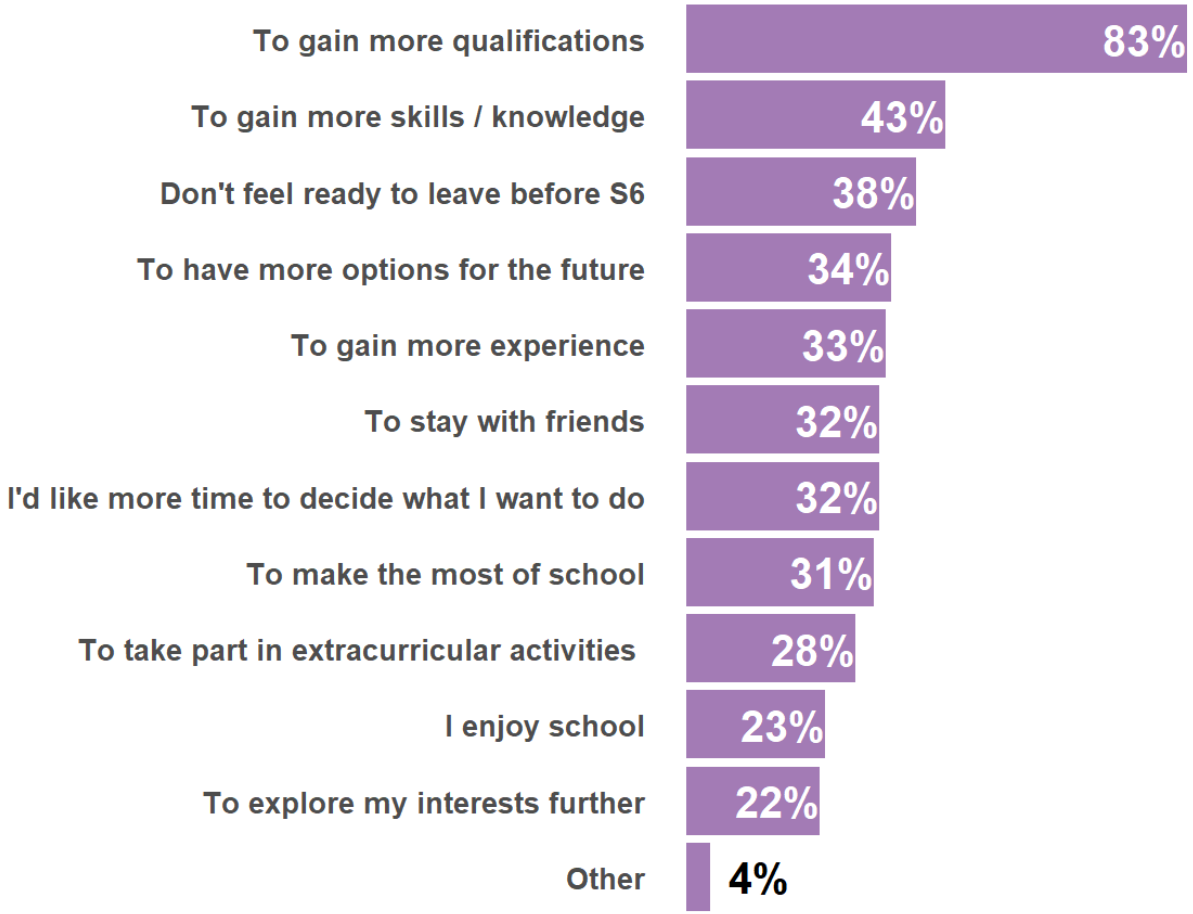
Reasons for staying on at school until S6

Young people in S4 or S5 who reported that they plan to stay in school until S6 were asked why they intended to do so.

The most common reason was to **gain more qualifications** (83%), followed by **gaining more skills and knowledge** (43%), and because they **did not feel ready to leave school** before S6 (38%).

Around one-third of young people reported staying in school to have more options for the future (34%), to gain more experience (33%), to stay with friends (32%), or because they would like more time to decide what they want to do (32%). Fewer young people reported staying in school because they enjoy school (23%) or to explore their interests further (22%).

Figure 35: Reasons young people plan to stay in school until S6 (% selected).



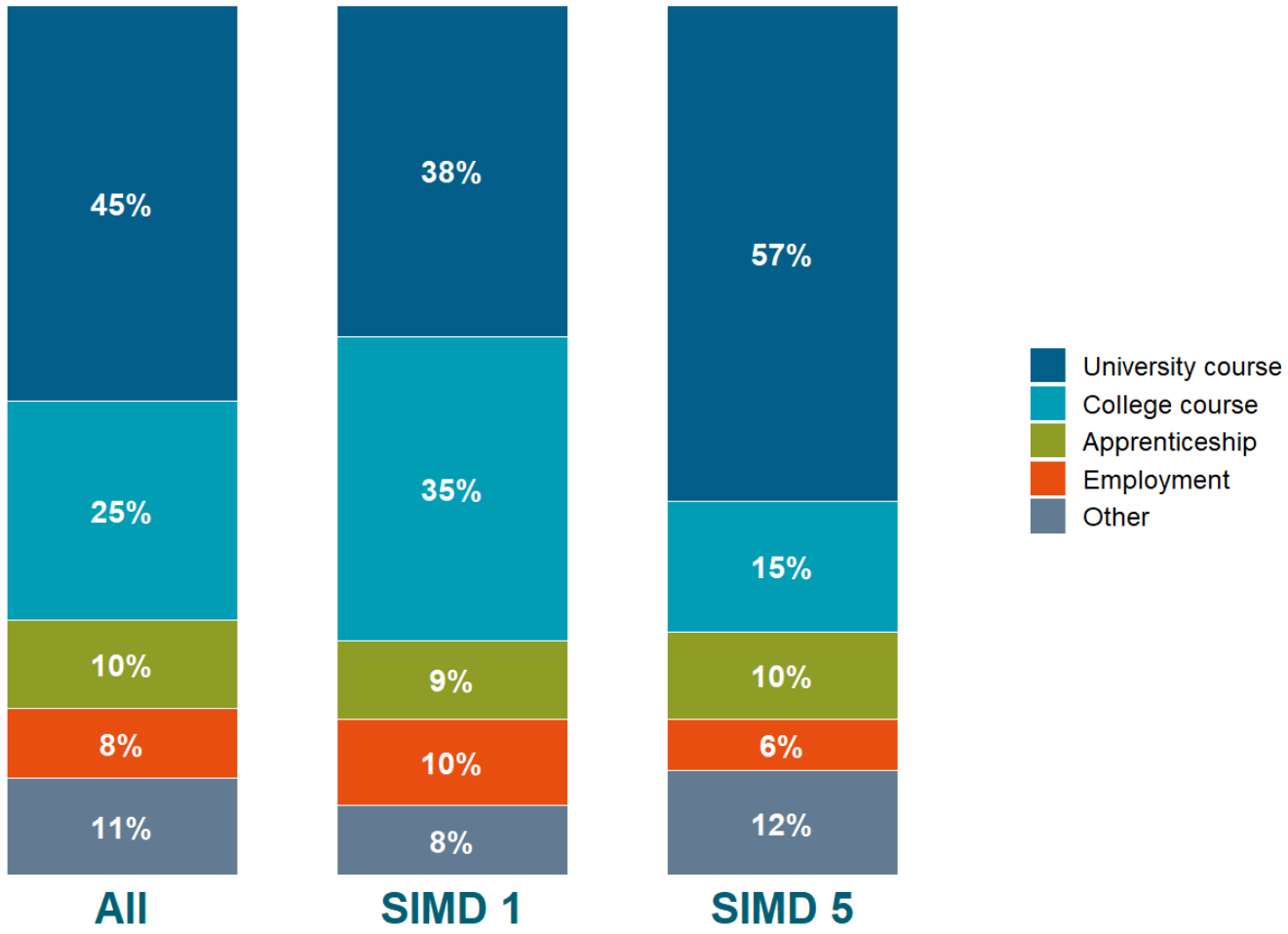
Post-school destinations

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 apprenticeships or employment.

There is a clear difference in educational pathways between young people who live in SIMD 1 areas and SIMD 5 areas. Although university is still the main pathway for young people from SIMD 1 areas, they are **more likely to plan to go to college** compared to those from SIMD 5 areas.

Figure 36: Young people's response to the question *"What are you planning to do when you leave school?"*, with SIMD 1 and 5 comparators (%).

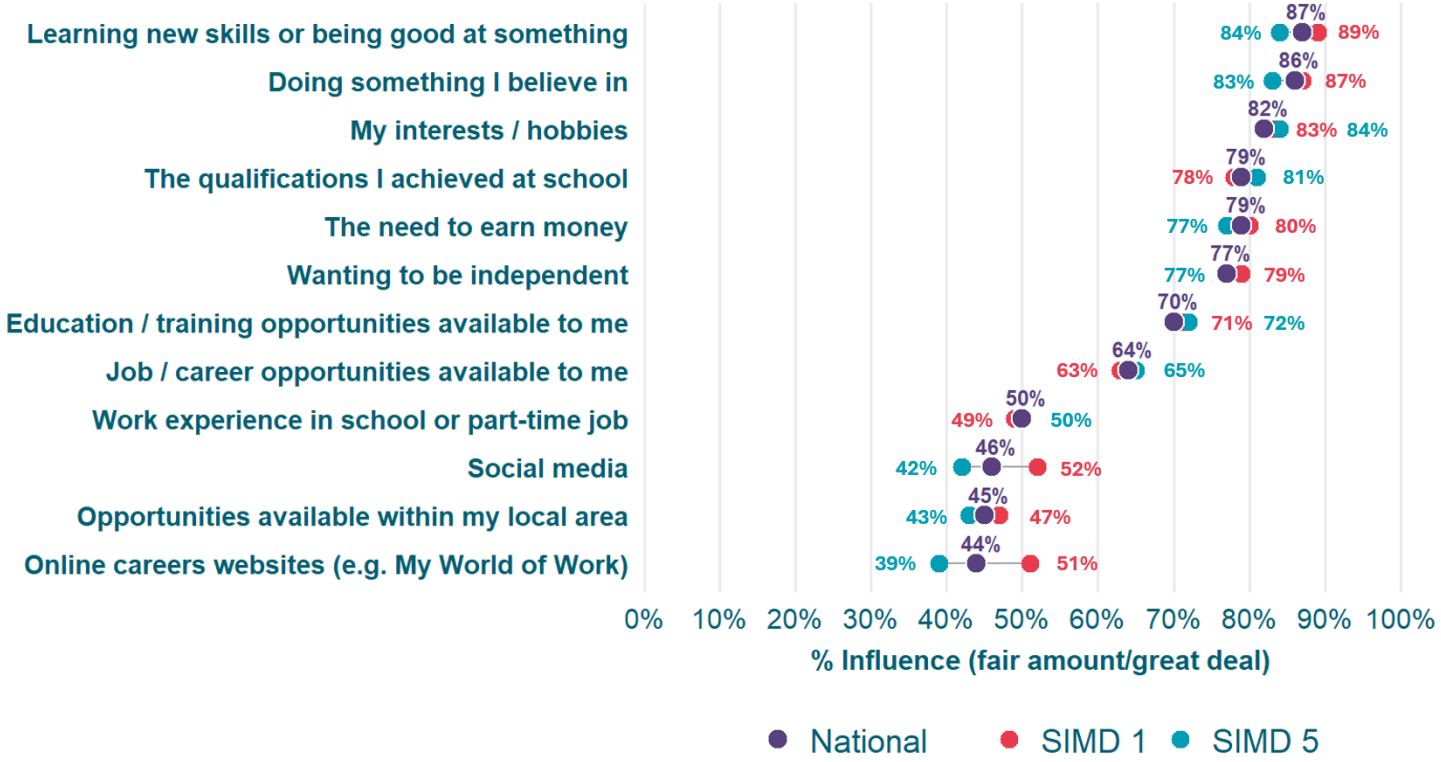


Key factors that influence career decisions

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 learning new skills or being good at something** and **wanting to do something they believe in.** 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 from both SIMD 1 and 5 areas, however pupils from SIMD 1 areas are more likely to be influenced by **social media** and **online careers websites**.

Figure 37: Young people's response to the question *"How much have the following factors influenced your post-school career plans / aspirations?"*, (% selected), with SIMD 1 and 5 comparators.

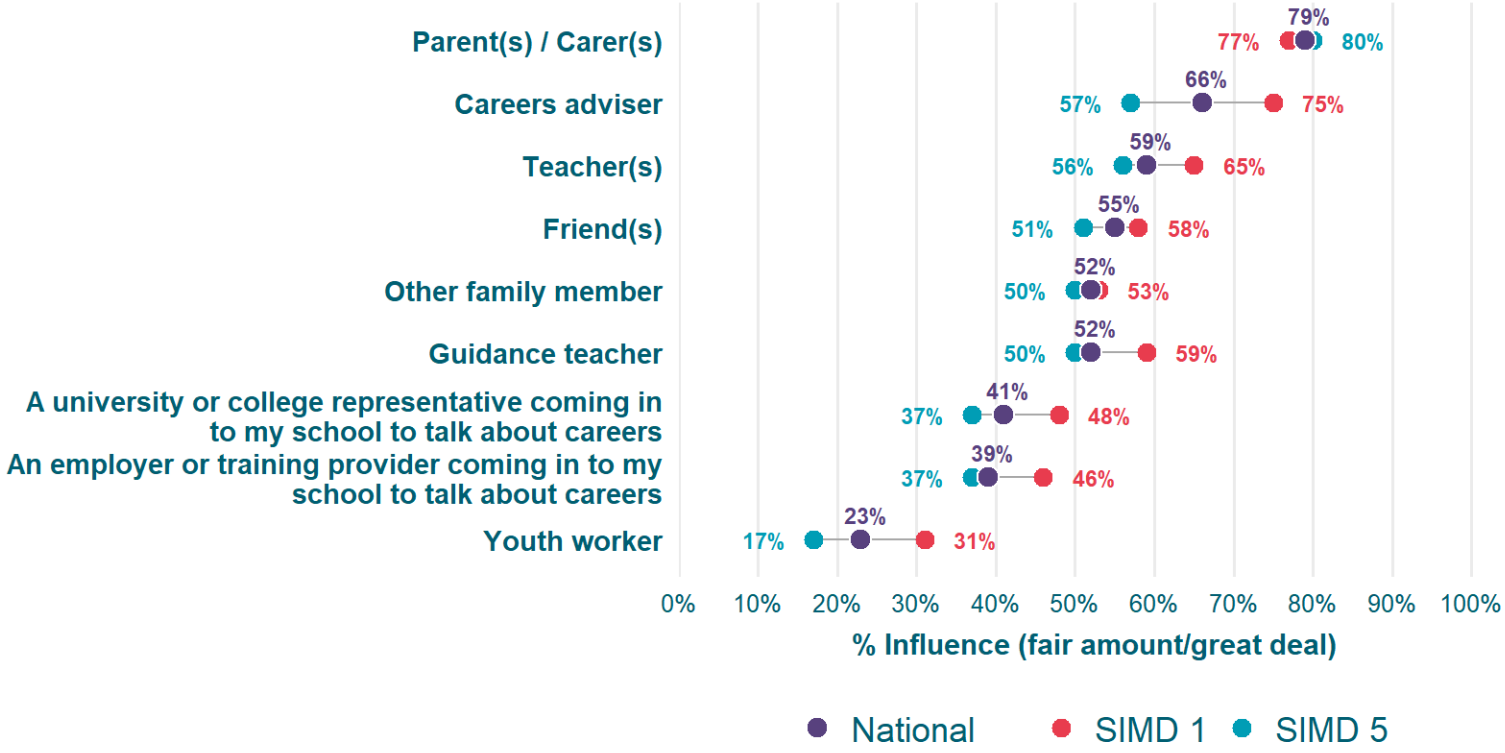


Key people that influence career decisions

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**. **Careers advisers are the second most influential.**

Careers advisers are almost as influential as parents and carers for young people from SIMD 1 areas. For young people from SIMD 5 areas, parents and carers are a much stronger influence than any other person.

Figure 38: Young people's response to the question *"How much have the following people influenced your post-school career plans / aspirations?"*, (% selected), with SIMD 1 and 5 comparators.



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 **Creative Industries, Engineering and Medicine and Health.** This aligns with young people's preferred job roles (see Figure 41).

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

Males are more likely to consider jobs in **Engineering, Construction, Computing and ICT**, **Sport** and the **Armed Forces, Policing and Security industries.**

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

Figure 39: Young people's response to the question *"What industries do you want to work in in your future career?"*, (% selected), with sex comparators.

	All	Sex	
	All	Female	Male
Creative Industries	17%	19%	14%
Engineering	17%	7%	27%
Medicine and Health	17%	25%	9%
Science	14%	14%	13%
Teaching	12%	16%	7%
Caring	10%	17%	3%
Computing and ICT	10%	5%	15%
Sport	10%	7%	14%
Armed Forces, Policing or Security	9%	6%	12%
Construction	9%	2%	17%
Law	9%	13%	6%
Banking and Finance	8%	7%	11%
Hospitality	6%	7%	6%
Housing / Property	5%	4%	6%
Tourism	5%	5%	4%
Energy	4%	2%	6%
Don't know	5%	5%	6%

Preferred job areas

Young people were asked what job they want to do in their future career. The most popular job roles mentioned were in **Medical and Health, Creative Industries and Construction and Engineering.** Aside from these, 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 5 senior phase pupils were unsure what job they wanted to do in their future career**.

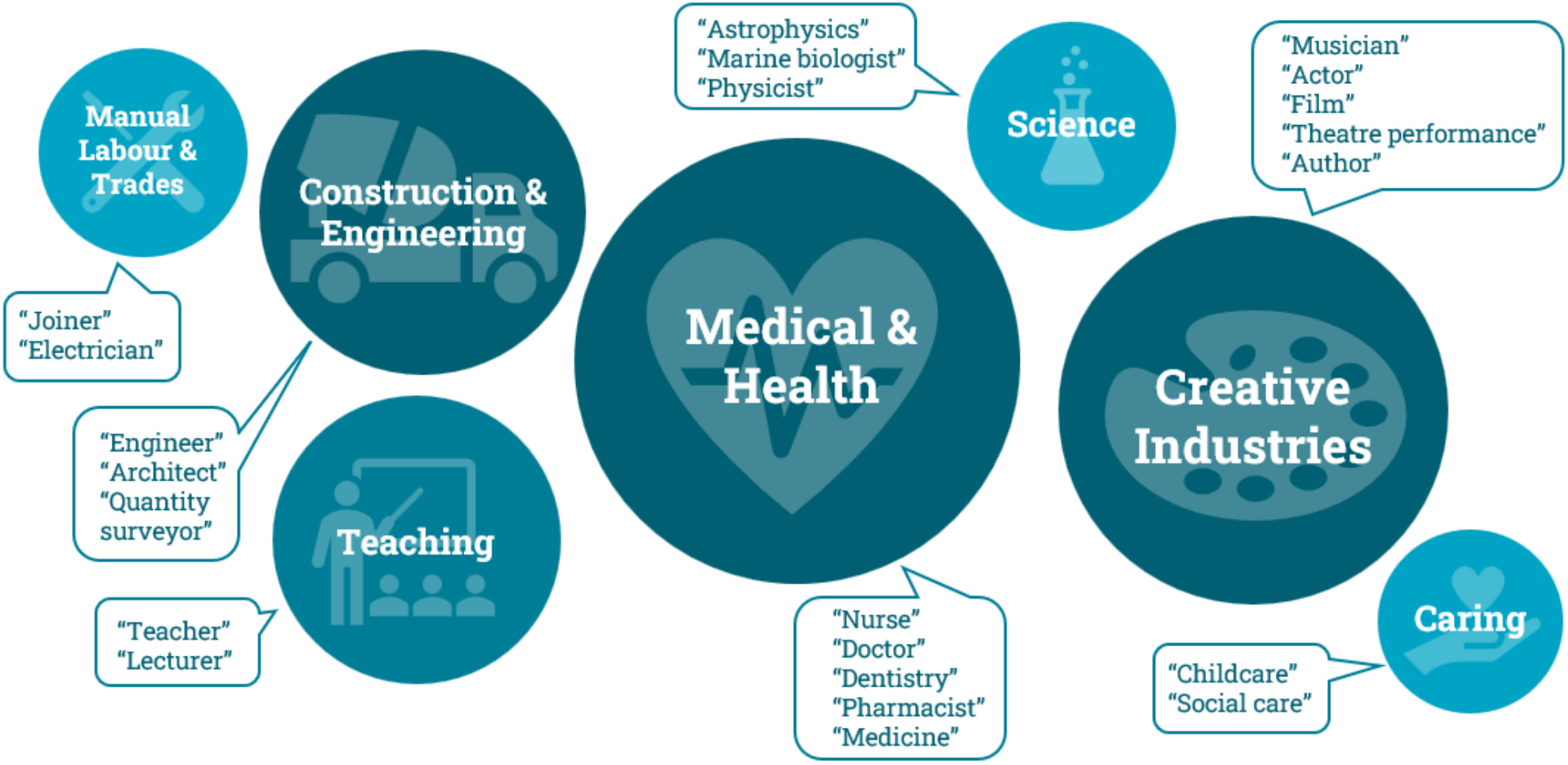
Figure 40: Thematic analysis* of comments from the question *"What job (or jobs) do you want to do in your future career?"*



*The larger the circle, the more prominent the theme was.

Preferred job roles

Figure 41: Examples of job roles given for most popular areas in response to the question *"What job (or jobs) do you want to do in your future career?"*

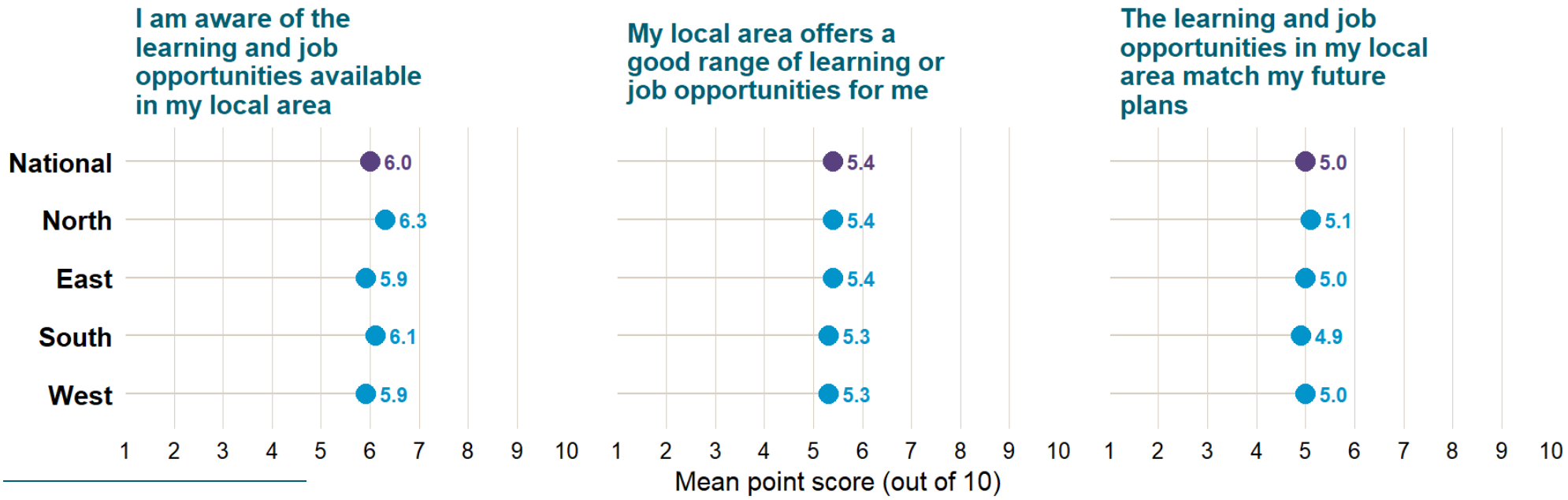


Opportunities in local area

Young people were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed with the following statements about the local learning and job opportunities (where 1 = totally disagree and 10 = totally agree).

Young people report moderate awareness of local learning and job opportunities, but are **less positive about the range of opportunities available** and, in particular, **whether those opportunities match their future plans**. These perceptions are broadly consistent across Scottish regions[6].

Figure 42: Young people's perceptions of local opportunities, average (mean-point) scores, by region.



[6] **SDS regions comprise:** North – Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Argyll and Bute, Eilean Siar, Highland, Moray, Orkney Islands and Shetland Islands; East – Angus, Dundee City, City of Edinburgh, East Lothian, Fife, Midlothian, Perth and Kinross and West Lothian; South – East Ayrshire, North Ayrshire, South Ayrshire, Dumfries and Galloway, East Dunbartonshire, North Lanarkshire, Scottish Borders and South Lanarkshire; West – Clackmannanshire, East Renfrewshire, Falkirk, Glasgow City, Inverclyde, Renfrewshire, Stirling and West Dunbartonshire.

Plans to leave or stay in local area

Young people were also asked whether they plan to stay in or leave their local area when they leave school.

Around a third of young people plan to stay in their local area and just under a third plan to leave, while 37% are undecided.

However, this differs for young people in the **West of Scotland, where more are likely to stay** and less are likely to leave.

Young people living in the **most deprived areas of Scotland are more likely to stay in their local area**, wheras those living in the **least deprived areas are more likely to plan on leaving**.

Figure 43: Young people's indication of whether they plan to stay in or leave their local area after school (% selected), by Scottish region.

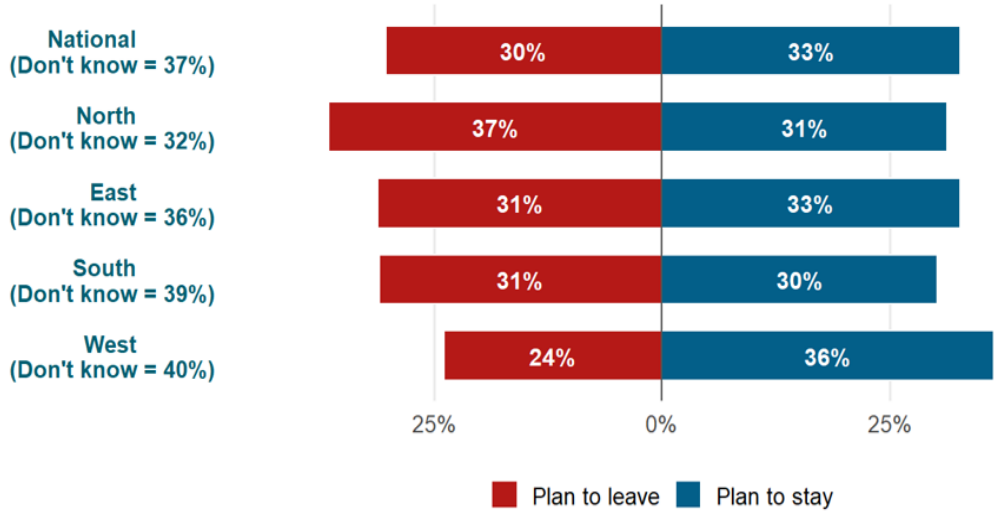
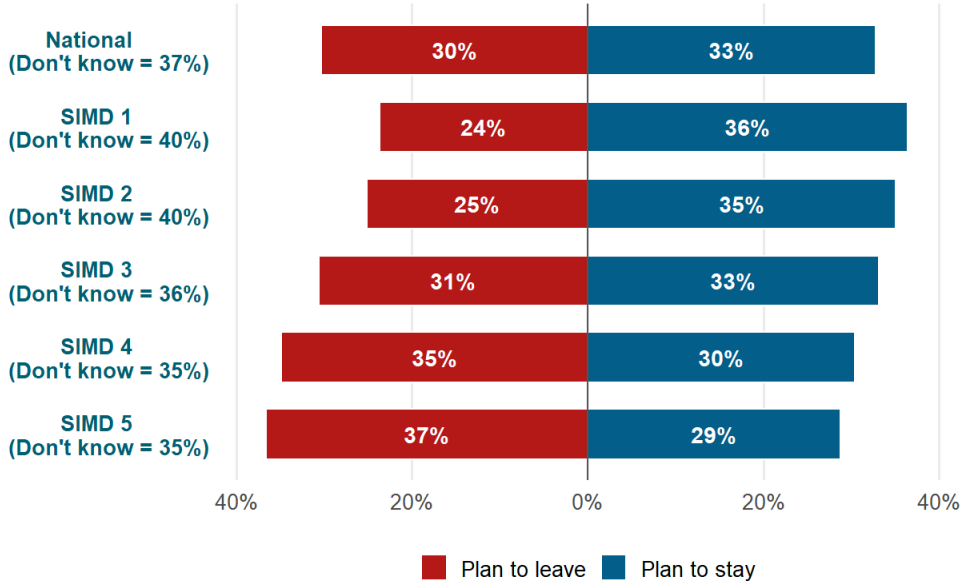


Figure 44: Young people's indication of whether they plan to stay in or leave their local area after school (% selected), by SIMD.



Appendix 1: Profile of respondents (unweighted)

Please note that demographic variables are derived using a combination of survey responses and administrative records. Where demographic information is provided in the survey, this is used in preference to administrative data; where survey responses are missing, administrative records are used to improve completeness where possible. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding. Missing/prefer not to say/non-response cases have been excluded from totals.

Demographic	n	%
Age (n=8,956)		
16	5,521	62%
17	2,889	32%
18/19	546	6%
Sex (n=8,772)		
Male	3,353	38%
Female	5,419	62%
Prefer not to say	184	
Year group (n=8,956)		
S4	1,428	16%
S5	5,199	58%
S6	2,329	26%
Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) (n=8,940)		
SIMD 1 (most deprived 20% areas)	2,170	24%
SIMD 2	1,686	19%
SIMD 3	1,655	19%
SIMD 4	1,842	21%
SIMD 5 (least deprived 20% areas)	1,587	18%
SIMD NA	16	
Sexual orientation (n=4,599)		
Heterosexual/straight	3,793	82%
Bisexual	448	10%
Gay/lesbian	202	4%
Other sexual orientation	156	3%
Missing/Prefer not to say	4,357	
Do you consider yourself to be trans, or have a trans history (n=4,793)		
Yes	150	3%
No	4,643	97%
Missing/Prefer not to say	4,163	

Demographic	n	%
Ethnicity (n=8,721)		
African/African Scottish/African British/African Other	440	5%
Asian/Asian Scottish/Asian British/Asian Other	616	7%
Black/Black Scottish/Black British	82	1%
Caribbean/Caribbean Scottish/Caribbean British/Caribbean Other	31	<1%
Gypsy/Traveller/Roma	11	<1%
Mixed or multiple ethnic group	183	2%
Other ethnic group	197	2%
White/White Scottish/White Irish/White Other British	6,500	75%
White Other	661	8%
Missing/Prefer not to say	235	
Additional Support Needed (n=8,623)		
Additional Support Needed	4,090	47%
No additional support needed	4,533	53%
Missing/Prefer not to say	333	
Care Experience (n=8,799)		
Care experienced	447	5%
Not care experienced	8,352	95%
Prefer not to say	157	

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
Recall of SDS careers services	
Recall of accessing a one-to-one conversation	7,076
Recall of accessing My World of Work	7,880
Recall of accessing a group session/workshop	8,629
Support provided in one-to-one sessions	
My careers adviser listened to me and valued my ideas	5,711
My careers adviser understood me and the support I needed	5,690
My careers adviser encouraged me to be ambitious when thinking about my future career	5,683
My careers adviser encouraged me to explore a wide range of learning and career options	5,680
My careers adviser supported me to make my own decisions and take control of my career path	5,681
My careers adviser directed me to other sources of information (e.g. industry specific websites, careers events etc.)	5,671
Engaging in one-to-one conversations	
After the first meeting with my careers adviser, we agreed on whether I needed further career guidance support	5,085
I agreed with my careers adviser what we would work on together	5,065
My careers adviser helped me to make a plan of things I would do	5,066
I understood how I would benefit from working with my careers adviser	5,062
Timing and number of one-to-one sessions	
What are your views on the number of conversations / interviews you had with your careers adviser?	5,037
Did your conversation(s) / interview(s) happen at a time in your career journey that was right for you, too early or too late?	4,969
Awareness and non-engagement with 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?	2,853
Please tell us why you didn't have a one-to-one session	1,268
Group sessions	
I understood what i would learn in the group session/workshop	1,893
The content of the group session/workshop was useful and relevant to me	1,879
The group session/workshop kept me interested throughout	1,873

Key Service Performance Indicators	All	SIMD 1	SIMD 5
The range of SDS careers services available	6,323	1,536	1,093
The information you were given about the range of SDS careers services available	6,285	1,528	1,087
The information you were given about how to access SDS careers services	6,279	1,521	1,088
The amount of support available	6,262	1,522	1,082
The ability to access support when needed	6,265	1,523	1,087
The ability to access support in a format that suited my needs	6,255	1,518	1,088

Sources of career information and support			
Other than meeting with an SDS careers adviser or using the My World of Work website, which of the following sources have you used for finding information about your learning or career options?	5,663		
How useful was the information you found at the following sources you used? - Online searches	3,777		
How useful was the information you found at the following sources you used? - Artificial Intelligence (AI)	1,123		
How useful was the information you found at the following sources you used? - Universities or colleges	2,539		
How useful was the information you found at the following sources you used? - Apprenticeships.scot	648		
How useful was the information you found at the following sources you used? - Job websites	1,398		
How useful was the information you found at the following sources you used? - School	2,503		
How useful was the information you found at the following sources you used? - Social media	1,938		
How useful was the information you found at the following sources you used? - Careers fairs or events	2,416		
How useful was the information you found at the following sources you used? - Work experience or jobs i have had	1,941		
How useful was the information you found at the following sources you used? - Employers	591		
How useful was the information you found at the following sources you used? - Friends or family members	3,077		
How useful was the information you found at the following sources you used? - People with experience of the career/job i'm interested	1,484		
How useful was the information you found at the following sources you used? - Other	62		
Use of social media			
What social media channels do you use to look for information about your learning and career options?	1,908		
Plans to stay on or leave school	**All**	**SIMD 1**	**SIMD 5**
Are you planning to stay on at school or leave?	4,055	1,009	689
Why have you decided to stay on at school until S6?	4,299		
Post-school (intended) destinations	**All**	**SIMD 1**	**SIMD 5**
What are you planning to do when you leave school?	4,055	1,351	938
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	5,346	1,317	933
An employer or training provider coming in to my school to talk about careers	5,325	1,312	930
Careers adviser	5,338	1,315	929
Friend(s)	5,321	1,312	923
Guidance teacher	5,315	1,305	928
Parent(s) / carer(s)	5,320	1,308	928
Other family member	5,310	1,307	925
Teacher(s)	5,304	1,299	925
Youth worker	5,262	1,292	916
Influencers - key factors (How much have the following factors influenced your post-school career plans / aspirations?)			
Education / training opportunities available to me	5,180	1,267	898
Job / career opportunities available to me	5,176	1,267	896
Opportunities available within my local area	5,171	1,265	899
Work experience in school or part-time job	5,167	1,266	896
The qualifications I achieved at school	5,169	1,270	895
The need to earn money	5,161	1,265	895
Online careers websites (for example: My World of Work)	5,164	1,263	896
Social media	5,163	1,264	892
My interests / hobbies	5,167	1,264	897
Wanting to be independent	5,150	1,260	892
Doing something I believe in	5,157	1,256	896
Learning new skills or being good at something	5,149	1,256	895

Key Performance Indicators	All	SIMD 1	SIMD 5	
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?	4,784	1,147	827	
On a scale from 1 to 10, overall how satisfied are you with the careers services you received from SDS?	4,775	1,142	826	
On a scale from 1 to 10, how likely are you to recommend the SDS careers services you received to others?	4,765	1,144	820	
Preparedness to leave school	**All**	**S4**	**S5**	**S6**
How prepared do you feel for leaving school? (Where 1 is not at all prepared and 10 is totally prepared)	5,469	887	3,142	1,440
My World of Work	**All**	**S4**	**S5**	**S6**
On a scale from 1 to 10, how useful is the My World of Work website in helping you to explore your options and next steps?	4,806	769	2,829	1,208
Career Management Skills (CMS)				
Make informed career decisions	5,455			
Find and use career information easily	5,530			
Understand how your experiences and learning can help you make career choices	5,528			
Understand and build on your skills, strengths and achievements	5,488			
Consider new things you may not have thought of when it comes to your career journey	5,463			
Identify and build relationships with people who can help you in your career	5,233			
Prepare for and manage change in my career journey	5,184			
Perception of employer skills demand				
What skills/attributes do you think are employers most looking for in their employees?	5,161			
How confident are you that you are developing these skills/attributes? - Communication skills	3,835			
How confident are you that you are developing these skills/attributes? - Confidence	2,169			
How confident are you that you are developing these skills/attributes? - A positive attitude	2,388			
How confident are you that you are developing these skills/attributes? - Good work ethic	2,984			
How confident are you that you are developing these skills/attributes? - Being reliable	2,798			
How confident are you that you are developing these skills/attributes? - Being adaptable / able to manage change	1,725			
How confident are you that you are developing these skills/attributes? - Being a team player	1,379			
How confident are you that you are developing these skills/attributes? - Work experience	1,370			
How confident are you that you are developing these skills/attributes? - Being able to work independently	757			
How confident are you that you are developing these skills/attributes? - Creativity	711			
How confident are you that you are developing these skills/attributes? - The right qualifications	1,464			
How confident are you that you are developing these skills/attributes? - Digital skills	295			
How confident are you that you are developing these skills/attributes? - Numeracy skills (working with numbers)	415			
How confident are you that you are developing these skills/attributes? - Literacy skills (reading and writing)	391			
How confident are you that you are developing these skills/attributes? - Problem solving skills	1,794			
Participation in employability / extracurricular activities	**All**	**SIMD 1**	**SIMD 5**	
In the last 12 months, have you actively taken part in any of these types of groups, clubs, organisations or work related activities (including evening classes)?	5,062	1,241	879	

Preferred Industries	All	Female	Male	SIMD 1	SIMD 5
What industries do you want to work in in your future career?	5,174	3,076	1,917	1,271	890
Opportunities in local area	**All**	**North**	**East**	**South**	**West**
I am aware of the learning and job opportunities available in my local area	5,103	968	1,479	1,309	1,347
My local area offers a good range of learning or job opportunities for me	5,075	967	1,474	1,296	1,338
The learning and job opportunities in my local area match my future plans	5,068	966	1,471	1,295	1,336
Plans to leave or stay in local area	**All**	**North**	**East**	**South**	**West**
Are you planning to stay in your local area to learn or find work after leaving school?	5,085	966	1,476	1,299	1,344
	SIMD 1	**SIMD 2**	**SIMD 3**	**SIMD 4**	**SIMD 5**
Are you planning to stay in your local area to learn or find work after leaving school?	1,239	958	944	1,055	880
Open-ended questions (number of comments)	**All**				
Can you give an example of how the careers support you have received from SDS has helped you to make a decision about your learning and career options?	1,848				
What would help you to feel more prepared to leave school?	1,177				
In what ways have you used AI to explore your learning and career options?	840				
Why have you decided to leave at the end of S4/during or at the end of S5?	977				
What job (or jobs) do you want to do in your future career?	4,038				

Skills Development Scotland

Skills Development Scotland
Monteith House
11 George Square
Glasgow G2 1DY

www.sds.co.uk