Pupil Voice Research 2026
Sex

SDS Evaluation & Research Team

The 2026 Pupil Voice research gathered the views of S4-S6 pupils (aged 16+) on the careers information, advice and guidance (CIAG) services they received. The research also gathered data on key influencers on career plans and aspirations. Results were similar for males and females across SDS support and satisfaction with services. Minor differences were observed, with careers advisers having slightly more influence on males' career plans and aspirations, while females were slightly more likely to want to pursue something they believe in.

Responses received

Female	5419
Male	3353

Views on one-to-one support. My careers adviser… (average agreement score out of 10)

	Female	Male
…understood me and the support I needed	8.2	8.3
…listened to me and valued my ideas	8.6	8.6
…supported me to make my own decisions and take control of my career path	8.4	8.4
…encouraged me to be ambitious when thinking about my future career	8.2	8.3

Support received from SDS has helped you to… (% agree / strongly agree)

	Female	Male
…understand and build on your skills, strengths, and achievements	84%	85%
…find and use career information easily	88%	88%
…consider new things you may not have thought of when it comes to your career journey	82%	84%
…make informed career decisions	85%	86%

Satisfaction with SDS career services (average satisfaction score out of ten)

	Female	Male
The ability to access support when needed	7.4	7.5
The amount of support available	7.4	7.5
The range of SDS careers services available	7.3	7.3
Overall satisfaction with the careers services you received from SDS	7.1	7.2

Key Influences on career plans / aspirations
(% a fair amount / a great deal)

Top 3 people influencers

Female	Parent(s) / carer(s)	79%
	Careers adviser	62%
	Teacher(s)	61%
Male	Parent(s) / carer(s)	80%
	Careers adviser	71%
	Teacher(s)	58%

Top 3 influencing factors

Female	Doing something I believe in	89%
	Learning new skills/ being good at something	88%
	My interests / hobbies	83%
Male	Learning new skills/ being good at something	86%
	Doing something I believe in	82%
	My interests / hobbies	82%

Average scores are based on questions asked on a 1-10 scale. Results are weighted to represent the population as a whole. SDS's Evaluation & Research Team conducted fieldwork over a 4-week period in June/July 2026. A total of 8,956 young people responded to the research. Equality groups are derived from survey responses and supplemented by administrative data where available. Missing and "Prefer not to say" responses are excluded.

Pupil Voice Research 2026
Care Experienced

Skills Development Scotland

SDS Evaluation & Research Team

The 2026 Pupil Voice research gathered the views of S4-S6 pupils (aged 16+) on the careers information, advice and guidance (CIAG) services they received. The research also gathered data on key influencers on career plans and aspirations. Careers advisers play the most influential role in shaping the career plans of care-experienced (CE) young people. CE young people also report slightly higher satisfaction with SDS support and tend to score more positively across a range of measures than their non-care-experienced peers.

Responses received

CE	447
Not CE	8352

Views on one-to-one support. My careers adviser… (average agreement score out of 10)

	CE	Not CE
…understood me and the support I needed	8.5	8.2
…listened to me and valued my ideas	8.6	8.6
…supported me to make my own decisions and take control of my career path	8.5	8.4
…encouraged me to be ambitious when thinking about my future career	8.4	8.2

Support received from SDS has helped you to… (% agree / strongly agree)

	CE	Not CE
…understand and build on your skills, strengths, and achievements	91%	84%
…find and use career information easily	88%	88%
…consider new things you may not have thought of when it comes to your career journey	90%	82%
…make informed career decisions	90%	85%

Satisfaction with SDS career services (average satisfaction score out of ten)

	CE	Not CE
The ability to access support when needed	7.9	7.4
The amount of support available	7.8	7.4
The range of SDS careers services available	7.5	7.2
Overall satisfaction with the careers services you received from SDS	7.6	7.1

Key Influences on career plans / aspirations (% a fair amount / a great deal)

Top 3 people influencers

CE	Careers adviser	75%
	Parent(s) / carer(s)	72%
	Teacher(s)	67%
Not CE	Parent(s) / carer(s)	79%
	Careers adviser	65%
	Teacher(s)	58%

Top 3 influencing factors

CE	Learning new skills/ being good at something	88%
	Doing something I believe in	87%
	Wanting to be independent	83%
Not CE	Learning new skills/ being good at something	87%
	Doing something I believe in	86%
	My interests / hobbies	83%

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Pupil Voice Research 2026
Additional Support Needs

Skills Development Scotland

SDS Evaluation & Research Team

The 2026 Pupil Voice research gathered the views of S4-S6 pupils (aged 16+) on the careers information, advice and guidance (CIAG) services they received. The research also gathered data on key influencers on career plans and aspirations. Young people with additional support needs (ASN) and young people without ASN report broadly similar levels of SDS support, with little difference in the people and factors influencing their career decisions.

Responses received

ASN	4090
No ASN	4533

Views on one-to-one support. My careers adviser… (average agreement score out of 10)

	ASN	No ASN
…understood me and the support I needed	8.2	8.3
…listened to me and valued my ideas	8.5	8.6
…supported me to make my own decisions and take control of my career path	8.3	8.5
…encouraged me to be ambitious when thinking about my future career	8.2	8.3

Support received from SDS has helped you to… (% agree / strongly agree)

	ASN	No ASN
…understand and build on your skills, strengths, and achievements	84%	85%
…find and use career information easily	87%	89%
…consider new things you may not have thought of when it comes to your career journey	82%	83%
…make informed career decisions	85%	85%

Satisfaction with SDS career services (average satisfaction score out of ten)

	ASN	No ASN
The ability to access support when needed	7.4	7.5
The amount of support available	7.4	7.5
The range of SDS careers services available	7.2	7.3
Overall satisfaction with the careers services you received from SDS	7.2	7.1

Key Influences on career plans / aspirations
(% a fair amount / a great deal)

Top 3 people influencers

ASN	Parent(s) / carer(s)	77%
	Careers adviser	68%
	Teacher(s)	60%
No ASN	Parent(s) / carer(s)	81%
	Careers adviser	65%
	Teacher(s)	59%

Top 3 influencing factors

ASN	Doing something I believe in	86%
	Learning new skills/ being good at something	86%
	My interests / hobbies	83%
No ASN	Learning new skills/ being good at something	87%
	Doing something I believe in	85%
	My interests / hobbies	82%

Average scores are based on questions asked on a 1-10 scale. Results are weighted to represent the population as a whole. SDS's Evaluation & Research Team conducted fieldwork over a 4-week period in June/July 2026. A total of 8,956 young people responded to the research. Equality groups are derived from survey responses and supplemented by administrative data where available. Missing and "Prefer not to say" responses are excluded.

Pupil Voice Research 2026
Ethnicity

Skills Development Scotland

SDS Evaluation & Research Team

The 2026 Pupil Voice research gathered the views of S4-S6 pupils (aged 16+) on the careers information, advice and guidance (CIAG) services they received. The research also gathered data on key influencers on career plans and aspirations. Minor differences were observed between Minority Ethnic (ME) and White young people. ME young people reported slightly higher levels of satisfaction with SDS support, and careers advisers were slightly more influential on their career plans and aspirations.

Responses received

ME	2221
White	6500

Views on one-to-one support. My careers adviser… (average agreement score out of 10)

	ME	White
…understood me and the support I needed	8.4	8.2
…listened to me and valued my ideas	8.7	8.5
…supported me to make my own decisions and take control of my career path	8.4	8.4
…encouraged me to be ambitious when thinking about my future career	8.3	8.2

Support received from SDS has helped you to… (% agree / strongly agree)

	ME	White
…understand and build on your skills, strengths, and achievements	86%	84%
…find and use career information easily	90%	87%
…consider new things you may not have thought of when it comes to your career journey	84%	82%
…make informed career decisions	88%	84%

Satisfaction with SDS career services (average satisfaction score out of ten)

	ME	White
The ability to access support when needed	7.6	7.4
The amount of support available	7.5	7.4
The range of SDS careers services available	7.3	7.2
Overall satisfaction with the careers services you received from SDS	7.3	7.0

Key Influences on career plans / aspirations
(% a fair amount / a great deal)

Top 3 people influencers

ME	Parent(s) / carer(s)	77%
	Careers adviser	70%
	Teacher(s)	62%
White	Parent(s) / carer(s)	80%
	Careers adviser	64%
	Teacher(s)	58%

Top 3 influencing factors

ME	Learning new skills/ being good at something	88%
	Doing something I believe in	86%
	The qualifications I achieved at school	82%
White	Learning new skills/ being good at something	86%
	Doing something I believe in	86%
	My interests / hobbies	83%

Average scores are based on questions asked on a 1-10 scale. Results are weighted to represent the population as a whole. SDS's Evaluation & Research Team conducted fieldwork over a 4-week period in June/July 2026. A total of 8,956 young people responded to the research. Equality groups are derived from survey responses and supplemented by administrative data where available. Missing and "Prefer not to say" responses are excluded.

Pupil Voice Research 2026
Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)

Skills Development Scotland

SDS Evaluation & Research Team

The 2026 Pupil Voice research gathered the views of S4-S6 pupils (aged 16+) on the careers information, advice and guidance (CIAG) services they received. The research also gathered data on key influencers on career plans and aspirations. Young people living in the most deprived areas (SIMD 1) reported slightly higher satisfaction with SDS support than those in the least deprived areas (SIMD 5). Careers advisers were also considered to be more influential in shaping the career plans of young people in SIMD 1 areas.

Responses received

SIMD 1	2170
SIMD 5	1587

Views on one-to-one support. My careers adviser… (average agreement score out of 10)

	SIMD 1	SIMD 5
…understood me and the support I needed	8.5	8.0
…listened to me and valued my ideas	8.7	8.4
…supported me to make my own decisions and take control of my career path	8.6	8.1
…encouraged me to be ambitious when thinking about my future career	8.5	7.9

Support received from SDS has helped you to… (% agree / strongly agree)

	SIMD 1	SIMD 5
…understand and build on your skills, strengths, and achievements	89%	81%
…find and use career information easily	89%	87%
…consider new things you may not have thought of when it comes to your career journey	86%	79%
…make informed career decisions	89%	81%

Satisfaction with SDS career services (average satisfaction score out of ten)

	SIMD 1	SIMD 5
The ability to access support when needed	7.7	7.2
The amount of support available	7.7	7.2
The range of SDS careers services available	7.5	7.1
Overall satisfaction with the careers services you received from SDS	7.4	6.8

Key Influences on career plans / aspirations (% a fair amount / a great deal)

Top 3 people influencers

SIMD 1	Parent(s) / carer(s)	77%
	Careers adviser	75%
	Teacher(s)	65%
SIMD 5	Parent(s) / carer(s)	80%
	Careers adviser	57%
	Teacher(s)	56%

Top 3 influencing factors

SIMD 1	Learning new skills/ being good at something	89%
	Doing something I believe in	87%
	My interests / hobbies	83%
SIMD 5	Learning new skills/ being good at something	84%
	My interests / hobbies	84%
	Doing something I believe in	83%

Average scores are based on questions asked on a 1-10 scale. Results are weighted to represent the population as a whole. SDS's Evaluation & Research Team conducted fieldwork over a 4-week period in June/July 2026. A total of 8,956 young people responded to the research. Equality groups are derived from survey responses and supplemented by administrative data where available. Missing and "Prefer not to say" responses are excluded.

Pupil Voice Research 2026
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT)

Skills Development Scotland

SDS Evaluation & Research Team

The 2026 Pupil Voice research gathered the views of S4-S6 pupils (aged 16+) on the careers information, advice and guidance (CIAG) services they received. The research also gathered data on key influencers on career plans and aspirations. LGBT young people reported slightly lower scores across SDS support measures and were less likely to identify parents and carers, and careers advisers as influences on their career plans.

Responses received

LGBT	847
Non-LGBT	3646

Views on one-to-one support. My careers adviser… (average agreement score out of 10)

	LGBT	Non-LGBT
…understood me and the support I needed	8.1	8.4
…listened to me and valued my ideas	8.6	8.7
…supported me to make my own decisions and take control of my career path	8.4	8.6
…encouraged me to be ambitious when thinking about my future career	8.2	8.4

Support received from SDS has helped you to… (% agree / strongly agree)

	LGBT	Non-LGBT
…understand and build on your skills, strengths, and achievements	80%	85%
…find and use career information easily	86%	89%
…consider new things you may not have thought of when it comes to your career journey	77%	84%
…make informed career decisions	83%	86%

Satisfaction with SDS career services (average satisfaction score out of ten)

	LGBT	Non-LGBT
The ability to access support when needed	7.0	7.6
The amount of support available	7.1	7.6
The range of SDS careers services available	7.0	7.4
Overall satisfaction with the careers services you received from SDS	6.8	7.2

Key Influences on career plans / aspirations
(% a fair amount / a great deal)

Top 3 people influencers

LGBT	Parent(s) / carer(s)	71%
	Careers adviser	61%
	Teacher(s)	60%
Non-LGBT	Parent(s) / carer(s)	81%
	Careers adviser	67%
	Teacher(s)	58%

Top 3 influencing factors

LGBT	My interests / hobbies	87%
	Doing something I believe in	86%
	Learning new skills/ being good at something	84%
Non-LGBT	Learning new skills/ being good at something	88%
	Doing something I believe in	86%
	My interests / hobbies	82%

Average scores are based on questions asked on a 1-10 scale. Results are weighted to represent the population as a whole. SDS's Evaluation & Research Team conducted fieldwork over a 4-week period in June/July 2026. A total of 8,956 young people responded to the research. Equality groups are derived from survey responses and supplemented by administrative data where available. Missing and "Prefer not to say" responses are excluded.