



progressive

A report for Skills Development Scotland
& Scottish Government by Progressive Partnership

Parents and Carers Research

Research findings – Final report

January 2018



Acknowledgements



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Executive summary



Background & objectives



Method & sample



Research findings

- Advising children on learning and careers options
- Sources of information
- Careers education



Summary and conclusions

Executive summary



- **Introduction**

- This research focused on parents and carers' views, role and influence on their child's education, employment and training, including the types of information they use or need to help them support their child to make informed choices about their post-school options. The research combined qualitative and quantitative methods to explore parents and carers' understanding in this area and to gauge their information needs.

- **Awareness, understanding and aspirations**

- Understanding of the range of post-school options was fairly limited: parents were generally aware of the options available, but had very little understanding of the detail of these. University and college were the most well understood, and most likely to be the preferred route for their child.
- Despite this lack of detailed understanding of alternatives such as Modern Apprenticeships, Graduate Apprenticeships and Foundation Apprenticeships, parents generally felt confident that they could help advise their children about careers and education choices.
- The key factors affecting the advice and guidance provided included:
 - Encouraging children to choose a career that they will be good at and enjoy
 - Making sure they keep their options open for as long as possible
 - Concerns about pressurising children
 - Difficulties in advising children when they had no ideas about what they want to do
 - Concerns about a lack of knowledge about the changing nature of the labour market / new jobs that did not exist when they were young
- Aspirations did not vary significantly by gender. Parents generally felt that an increase in equality and changing social attitudes meant that gender stereotypes in relation to career aspirations were less prevalent nowadays.

Executive summary



- **Sources of information and support**

- Parents were generally aware that they could get information about learning and careers options from school careers advisers, teachers, university prospectuses and UCAS. Awareness of My World of Work, other websites and parents' leaflets etc. was lower.
- However, even among those who were aware of any information sources, use was fairly limited – four in ten had not used any information sources.
- Qualitative findings also suggest that while parents felt they would be able to access information if they needed to, very few had actively searched for information and there was an expectation that schools will also be providing children with this guidance.
- Parents found it difficult to say what information they needed or how it should be delivered: the main issue is a lack of awareness of information sources and services. For example, parents who attended focus groups liked the My World of Work website but wished they had seen it sooner.
- Consequently, parents need to be engaged directly: most preferred to receive information directly from school, using a variety of methods such as email, text, school websites, leaflets and face-to-face support.
- While the preferred format of information varies based on individual preference, making parents and carers aware of the availability of information and support is the key challenge in helping them support children in their post-school choices.

Background



Background: Developing the Young Workforce

- The Scottish Government developed its **national youth employment strategy** in response to the recommendations made by the Commission for Developing the Young Workforce (DYW).
- The Commission's recommendations focus on five DYW **Change Themes**:
 - Broad General Education (age 3 to the end of S3)
 - Senior Phase Curriculum (S4-S6)
 - College provision
 - Training and apprenticeships (including Modern Apprenticeships)
 - Engagement with employers.
- The DYW programme also contains a cross cutting theme of **equality**, including recommendations to embed Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects within the DYW programme and to design Senior Phase Vocational Pathways to encourage a greater gender balance across occupations.

The need for research

- The DYW Evaluation Steering Group identified areas requiring further research, including **a need to understand parents/carers and their views, roles and influences on their children's education.**
- Previous research exists about the role and influence that parents or carers have in the choices their children make around education, employment and training, e.g. parents and carers are a widely used source of information and advice on careers and career choice and there is a strong link between parental involvement in education and a child's achievement.
- However, there is limited research on **how parents and carers help their child make informed choices** and about which **sources of information and support they both require and utilise in doing this.** Reflecting the focus on equality noted above, there was also a need to explore whether the advice provided by parents and carers is gender biased.

Aims & objectives



- The research focused on parents and carers' views, role and influence on their child's education, employment and training, including what they think of the products and services available to them to help them to support their child to make informed choices.
- The broad aims of the research were to obtain the views of parents/carers in the following areas:
 - Awareness/understanding of the range of options open to young people
 - Confidence in helping children make informed choices
 - Areas they are asked to provide advice and guidance about
 - Aspirations for their child and whether this varies depending on gender
 - Sources of information to support and inform their child
 - Awareness and perceptions of products and services available around education, employment and training
 - Views on the value/benefits of these services
 - How partner services (including DYW partner organisations) could:
 - Better engage parents/carers, and how they would like to be contacted
 - Better help parents/carers support their children's career choices
 - Help parents/carers increase their knowledge and awareness of where and how they can access advice and support around education, employment and training.

Method



Research method – quantitative

- Semi-structured telephone survey using CATI interviewing.
- Sample provided by the Scottish Government – Scottish Household Survey respondents who had agreed to re-contact for further research.
- No quotas were set due to the limited sample available.
- Fieldwork was conducted between 4th and 26th October 2017.
- 327 interviews achieved – sample provides a dataset with a margin of error of between $\pm 1.08\%$ and $\pm 5.42\%$, calculated at the 95% confidence level (market research industry standard).

Research method – qualitative



- 6 focus groups conducted with parents
- Glasgow, Edinburgh and Aberdeen
- All were parents of children in S4~S6 (mix of girls and boys)
- Mix of gender, socio-economic group and age
- 3 groups with each of the following 2 group profiles:
 - Academic (child expected to go to university/college to get a degree)
 - Vocational (child expected to go to college, complete an apprenticeship or go straight into employment).



- All fieldwork undertaken in accordance with the requirements of ISO 20252 and the MRS Code of Conduct.

Quantitative analysis & reporting

Sub-group analysis

- Results were analysed looking at the following sub-groups:
 - Stage of child (S1~S3, S4~S6, left school)
 - Gender of child
 - Urban/rural classification
 - SIMD (20% most deprived vs 80% least deprived data zones)
 - Whether child has any Additional Support Needs (ASN)/ health issue or not
 - Educational qualifications of parents
- Any differences noted are statistically significant at the 95% level.

Reporting

- 1% and 2% labels have been left off some charts for ease of reading
- Some results should be treated as indicative only due to small base sizes – these are highlighted with a caution symbol.



Patterns between/within sub-groups

- It is worth noting some patterns within the sample which should be borne in mind when interpreting the sub-group analysis. For example:
 - Respondents living in the **least deprived** areas were more likely to be:
 - Degree/professionally educated (49% vs 22% in the most deprived areas)
 - Living in rural areas (31% vs 6%).



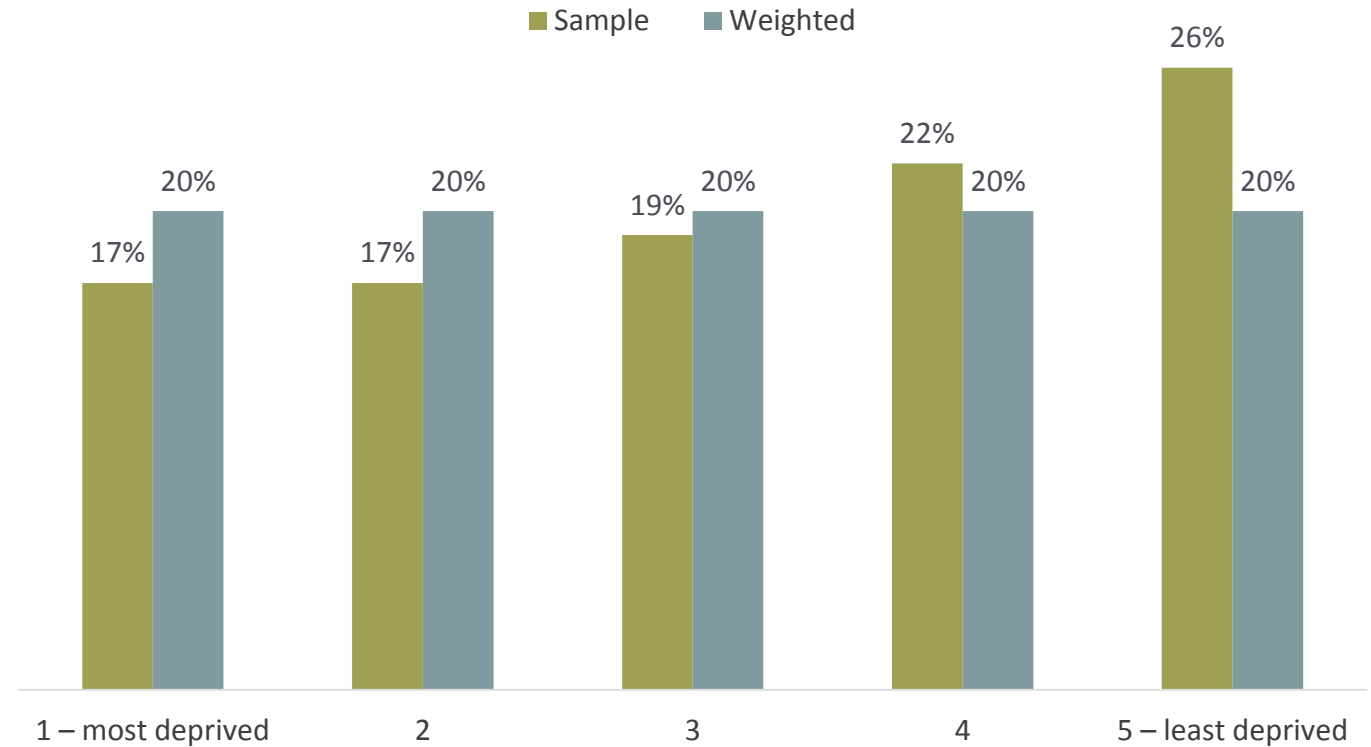
- Conversely, those living in the **most deprived** areas were more likely to:
 - Have lower/no qualifications (74% vs 39% in the least deprived areas)
 - Live in large urban areas (48% vs 24%).



Data weighting

- Data was weighted by SIMD to make the overall sample representative of the Scottish population.
- All the following figures presented in this report are the weighted figures; unweighted bases are also detailed for each chart.

Scottish Indices of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)



Sample profile



Sample profile

Respondents (parents/carers)

- Respondents were most likely to be living in urban areas (33% other urban, 29% large urban areas). A quarter (26%) were living in rural areas.

Urban/rural areas



Urban / rural areas (6-fold classification)	%
Large urban areas	29%
Other urban areas	33%
Accessible small towns	7%
Remote small towns	5%
Accessible rural areas	10%
Remote rural areas	16%
Base (all)	327

Urban / rural areas (derived variable for analysis)	%
Large urban areas	29%
Other urban areas	33%
Small towns	12%
Rural areas	26%
Base (all)	327

Sample profile

Respondents (parents/carers)

- Respondents were spread across all 32 Scottish local authorities, broadly in proportion to the Scottish population.
- The following authorities were slightly over-represented in the sample:
 - Eilean Siar
 - Orkney Islands
 - Shetland Islands
- The following authorities were slightly under-represented in the sample:
 - North Lanarkshire
 - Aberdeen City
 - Fife
 - Aberdeenshire

Local authority



Local authority	Sample	Scotland
Aberdeen City	1%	4%
Aberdeenshire	2%	5%
Angus	1%	2%
Argyll and Bute	3%	2%
Clackmannanshire	2%	1%
Dumfries and Galloway	3%	3%
Dundee City	3%	3%
East Ayrshire	1%	2%
East Dunbartonshire	2%	2%
East Lothian	4%	2%
East Renfrewshire	2%	2%
City of Edinburgh	9%	9%
Eilean Siar	4%	1%
Falkirk	1%	3%
Fife	4%	7%
Glasgow City	9%	11%

Local authority	Sample	Scotland
Highland	5%	4%
Inverclyde	4%	2%
Midlothian	1%	2%
Moray	1%	2%
North Ayrshire	2%	3%
North Lanarkshire	2%	6%
Orkney Islands	3%	<1%
Perth and Kinross	4%	3%
Renfrewshire	2%	3%
Scottish Borders	4%	2%
Shetland Islands	3%	<1%
South Ayrshire	3%	2%
South Lanarkshire	5%	6%
Stirling	4%	2%
West Dunbartonshire	3%	2%
West Lothian	4%	3%

Sample profile

Respondents (parents/carers)

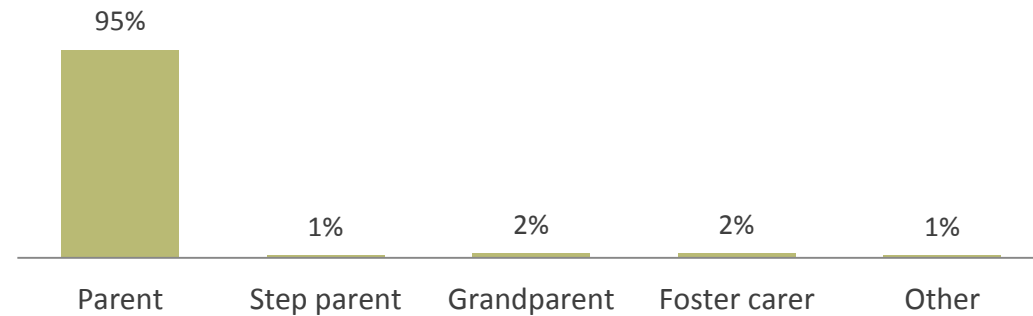
Relationship to the child

- The vast majority of respondents (95%) were the parent of the child in question.

Educational qualifications

- The sample was well educated: 37% of respondents had a degree level qualification (Scottish average is 26% based on the 2011 Census)
- Respondents were grouped for analysis into those with degree/professional qualifications compared to those with lower/no qualifications.

Relationship & educational qualifications



Base (all): 327

Highest educational qualification of respondents	%
O Grade, Standard grade, GCSE, CSE, Senior Certificate or equivalent	16%
Higher, Advanced Higher, A Level, AS Level or equivalent	9%
GSVQ Foundation or Intermediate, SVQ level 1 or 2, SCOTVEC Module, City and Guilds Craft or equivalent	2%
College HND / HNC / SVQ Level 4 or equivalent	19%
National Certificate / Access Level	2%
SVQ Level 1-3 / Modern Apprenticeship	1%
Degree, Postgraduate qualifications, Masters, PhD, SVQ level 5 or equivalent	37%
Professional qualifications (e.g. teaching, nursing, accountancy)	7%
Other	2%
Do not have any formal qualifications	3%
Prefer not to say	2%
Base (all)	327

Derived variable for analysis	%
Degree / professional qualification	44%
Lower / no qualifications	54%
Prefer not to say	2%
Base (all)	327

Sample profile Children

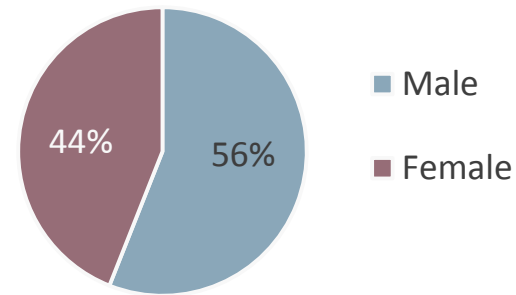
Profile of children

- 56% of respondents answered the survey in relation to a male child; 44% in relation to a female child.
- A broad spread of ages was represented, with most being aged between 14 and 17 years old.
- A wide range of year groups was also represented, with the larger proportions in S5 (18%) or S4 (17%), while 10% had left school within the last year.
- Excluding those who were home schooled, 96% attended state schools and 4% attended an independent/private school. This is in line with national figures (roughly 5% across Scotland attend private schools).

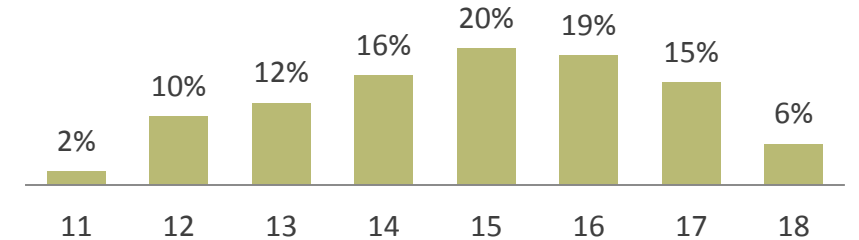
Gender, age, year group & school



Gender of child

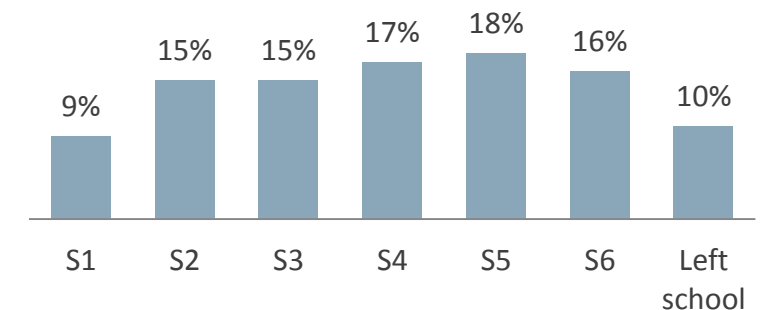


Age of child



Schooling information	%
At secondary school	89%
Of school age, home schooled	1%
Finished school within the last year	10%
Base (all)	327
Attends/attended	
State school	96%
Independent / private school	4%
Base (all excluding home schooled)	325

Year group of child



Base (all): 327

Sample profile Children

Profile of children

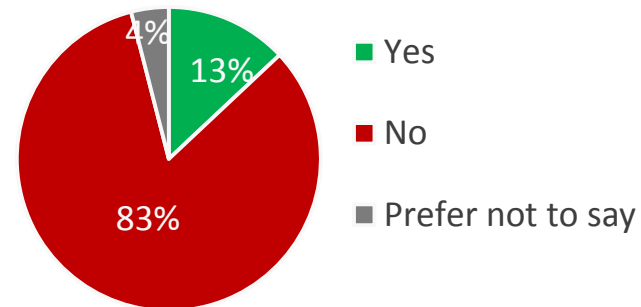
- The majority of children were white Scottish / white British (89%) and 5% were from another white background. Very few were from other ethnic groups.
- 13% said their child had a disability or long-term health problem; 18% said their child had additional support need. Taken together, 24% of children had some kind of ASN or health issue.

Ethnicity, health & ASN

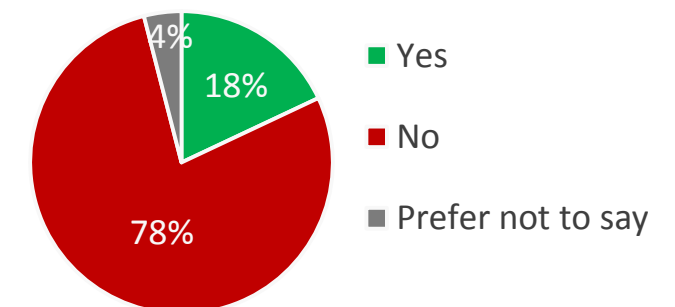


Ethnicity	%
White Scottish or White British	89%
Other white background	5%
Asian, Asian Scottish, or Asian British	1%
African, African Scottish or African British	-
Caribbean or Black, Caribbean or Black Scottish, or Caribbean or Black British	<1%
Any mixed or multiple ethnic background	1%
Prefer not to say	4%
Base (all)	327

Physical disability or long-term health problem



Additional support needs



Base (all): 327

Advising children on learning and career options



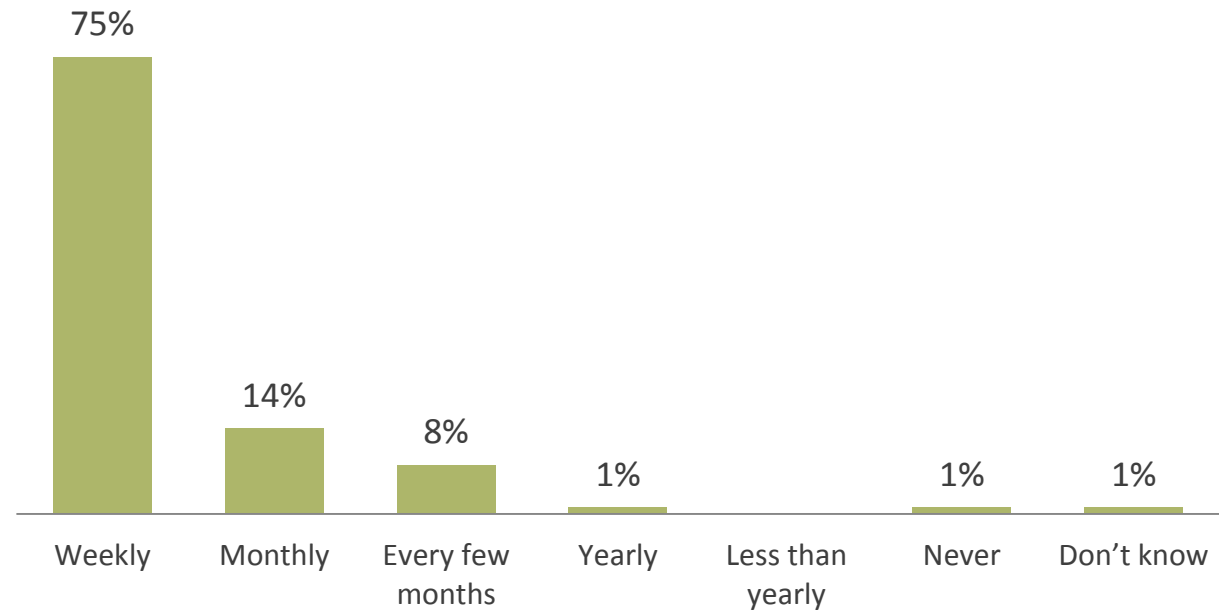
Talking about aspirations

- Three quarters of respondents (75%) said they talked to their child about their training, education and career aspirations weekly. A further 14% said they did so monthly and 8% every few months.

Parents of older children were more likely to do this weekly: 82% of those whose child had left school; 83% where the child was in S4~S6 – vs 62% of parents of S1~S3s, who were more likely to discuss this monthly (20%).

Those living in the most deprived areas were more likely to discuss aspirations weekly (91% v 71% – although note the relatively small base size of 65).

Frequency of discussing aspirations



Talking about aspirations – qualitative findings



- All parents in the focus groups had spoken to their children to some extent about their aspirations and choices after school.
- Some children had a clear idea of post-school choices, but the majority were not yet sure or were considering various options – several respondents also highlighted that their children frequently change their minds about what they want to do.
- Discussions with children tended to be based on informal chats rather than structured conversations. Conversations were generally initiated by the parents, although a small number mentioned that their children brought questions to them.
- For most, the focus was on keeping options open, ensuring that different routes would not be closed off based on decisions children were making at school – some felt that children should concentrate on getting some qualifications to keep options open and then think about specific career plans later.
- Most parents had started these discussions when their children had to make subject choices at school – although several felt that these choices are made too early on.
- A strong theme to emerge across all groups was the amount of pressure experienced by young people: parents did not want to add to this by pressurising children to make decisions about their career path, and/or to achieve academically.

My daughter is swinging between health and beauty, nursing and aeronautical engineering. She's all over the place. I think she is still just trying to hedge her bets as she has seen my two oldest drop out of uni. I just think they are far too young, and have always just said to do your best and get as many qualifications as you can to give you options. Perhaps it's me that's made her not very focused.

Sometimes I get more out of them from sitting in the car... sometimes he's chatty when he's sitting having his tea. Sometimes you get nothing... Like most things, to say, 'Right we're going to sit there and talk about it' doesn't really work.

We have a couple of times sat down and tried to talk to him but he just shrugs and says he doesn't know.

Pass your exams and get your Highers and then after that you can try and sort out what you want to do. You just have to get them. Dropping out or not getting your qualifications means you won't have a choice of what you can do. It's going to be much more difficult.

It's a fine line though isn't it – you don't want to put too much pressure on them... It's kind of casual. It's important, but if they fail you don't want them to feel like they have let you down.

Talking about aspirations – qualitative findings



My son seems to know what he wants to do. He wants to study physics... Never discussed it with me or anybody else. Came home and said he wants to do this.

Sometimes he's interested and he'll say to me 'what do you think about this mum' and I ask him to sit down and talk to me about it, but then the next week it's going into something else. Next was being a pilot. So we do have a lot of discussions, but we aren't getting anywhere.

What we discovered was that we kind of encouraged them in 1st and 2nd year to take the subjects they enjoyed and were good at and they did, they performed quite well, and they went into things they liked.

We chat quite regularly like when she's doing her homework... we chat with my daughter about what she wants to do after school, and stuff like that. Or when she goes out on her mountain bike, we stop and talk – it's good to talk to her when she's happy.



My son seems to want to go to university and follow what his sister is doing but I don't think he's grasped what's actually involved in business studies. It changes from day to day, the other day he wanted to be a barber.

It started off kind of informal... Getting towards the sixth year, we were getting a bit more like, 'Okay, let's sit down and talk about this'. But that kind of freaked him out, because he is quite an anxious guy, and was getting anxious for his exams. We have basically turned now to a lot of these open days for work experience and modern apprenticeships... I just want him to keep all his options open and just keep reminding him that you can always go back to college.

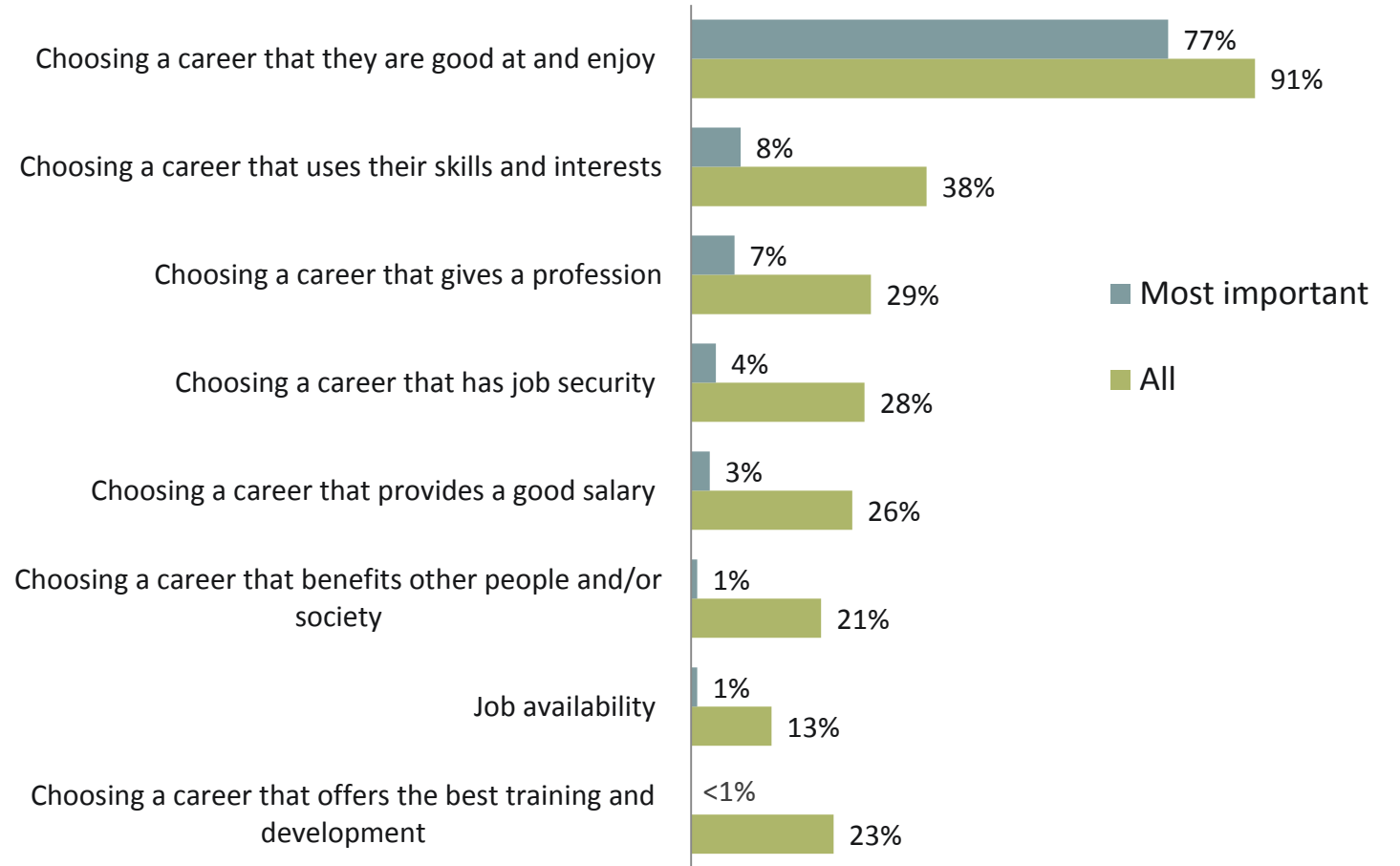
I try and mention it every time we are in town and we pass a shop or anything I ask if they might want to do that. Trying to just get him thinking about it.

Important factors

- The most important factors that parents mentioned in relation to advising their child about careers were choosing a career that:
 - they are good at and enjoy (91%)
 - uses their skills and interests (38%)
 - gives a profession (29%)
 - has job security (28%).
- However, when asked to select only **one** most important factor, choosing a career they are good at and enjoy was the most frequently mentioned aspect (by 77%) – all other factors were mentioned by less than 10%.

Job availability was more likely to be mentioned by those in other urban areas (18%) than those in large urban areas (6%).

Important factors when advising children on careers



Q7: When giving advice or trying to talk about your child's choice of career, which of the following factors are important to you? / Q8: Which of the following is the single most important factor to you when thinking about your child's career?

Base (all excl never talk to child re aspirations): 324

Important factors – qualitative findings



- Echoing the quantitative findings, finding something they are good at and enjoy was the key theme to emerge from the focus groups.
- Salary and lifestyle were also mentioned frequently, i.e. being able to have a comfortable life doing something they enjoy – some encouraged their children to consider the long-term and think about earning potential.
- Parents often emphasised the importance of being able to reach the end goal through a variety of routes, saying that success at an early stage was not the be all and end all – children should learn from their mistakes but not worry too much about making the right choice very early on.
- They also highlighted the fact that no post-school route guarantees a job and that a lot can change – again, focusing on the need to keep options open where possible. Parents tended to feel that children should be able to make mistakes and change their mind.

Get a job at the end of university. Pick a career that you'll get a job in.

Money is obviously good but I've always worked for quality of life, basically I'd rather have a happy life rather than a rich life.

I think for me it's to try and get them to see that they might want to look for something that leads to a good job progression or a job that they can get a reasonable wage, not long hours for minimum wage.

I work as a dispenser in a pharmacist and am on minimum wage, I tell the kids that they can have £7.50 an hour like me or £24 an hour like the pharmacist, and you see them on Google looking up jobs and thinking okay, that's more than other jobs. I am trying to show them moneywise what the difference is.

I have said to them to do the absolute best you can, if that means your grades are good enough for a doctor, lawyer... or the top professions then that's great, if not then that's fine, you will be okay and you will be able to do something else.

I just want him to choose something that he enjoys and sticks with. I don't care as long as he does something that makes him happy.

I would say four or five years is a long time, things can change. And the job market can change. Probably will. It's hard to think that far ahead, especially when you're 17, 18... You don't want to restrict yourself too much I think right? So that's advice I give as well.

I think we should let them find their own way, make their own mistakes. If they don't like the job that they wanted, then they can leave... I think it's more important to be flexible... there's no real jobs for life out there.

Important factors

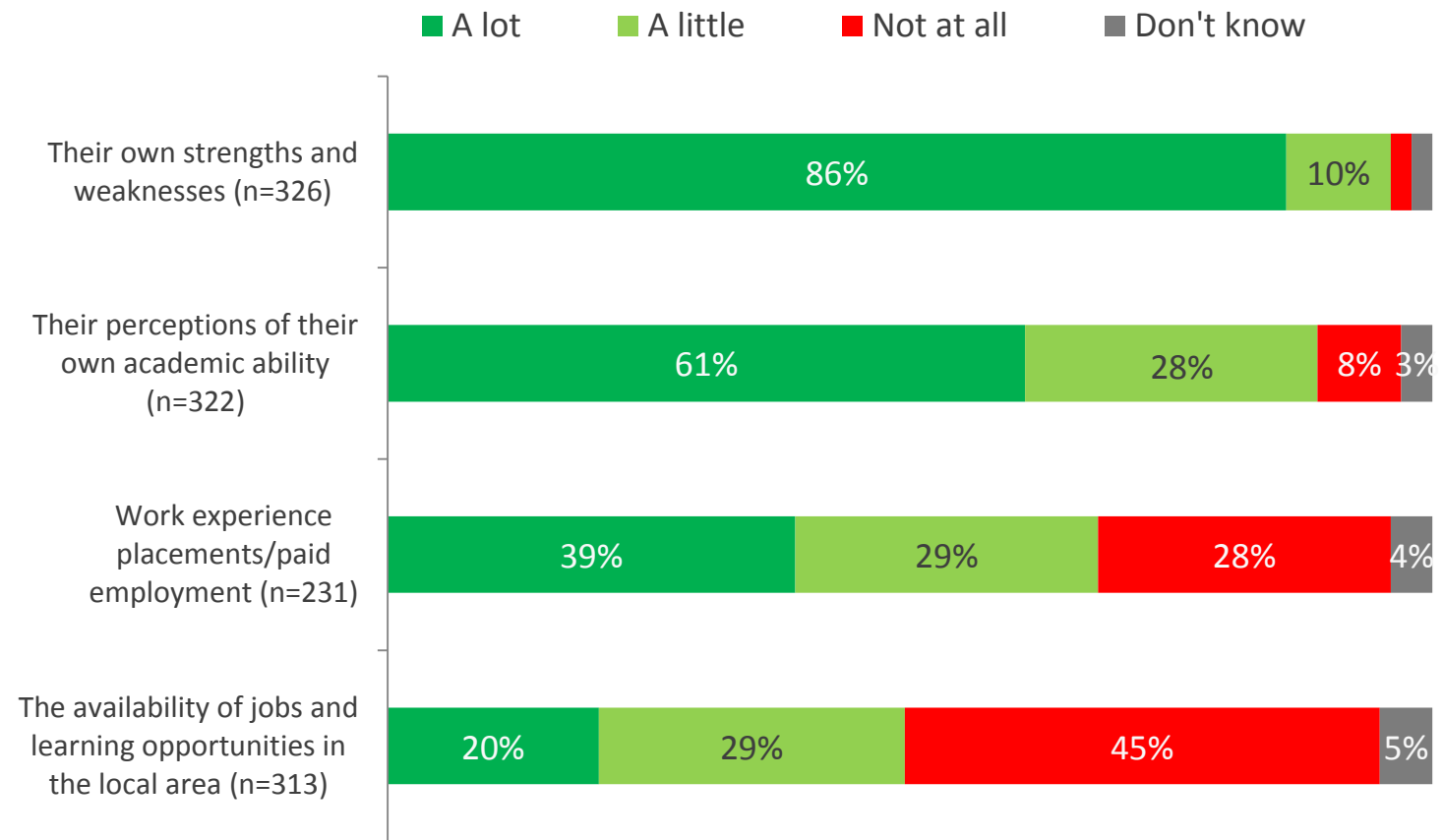
- Parents felt that the biggest influence on their child's decisions about learning and careers options were their own strengths and weaknesses (86% said this influenced decisions a lot and 10% said a little), followed by perceptions of their own academic ability (61%; 28%).
- External factors such as work experience/employment and availability of jobs in the local area were less likely to be deemed influential – just under half (45%) said jobs and learning opportunities in the local area did not have any influence at all.

Work experience/paid employment was more often judged to have 'a lot' of influence for parents of older children (53% left school; 43% S4~S6, vs 23% S1~S3)

Work experience was also more likely to be seen as having 'a lot' of influence by parents of children with any kind of health/ASN issue (52% vs 35% - although note the small base size of 50).

Parents of girls were more likely than parents of boys to say that the availability of jobs and learning opportunities in the local area had no influence at all (55% v 38%).

Influence of factors on child's decisions



Q10: To what extent do you think the following factors influence your child's decisions about their learning and career options?

Base (all excluding those who said 'not applicable' for each option): Noted in chart

Perceived influence

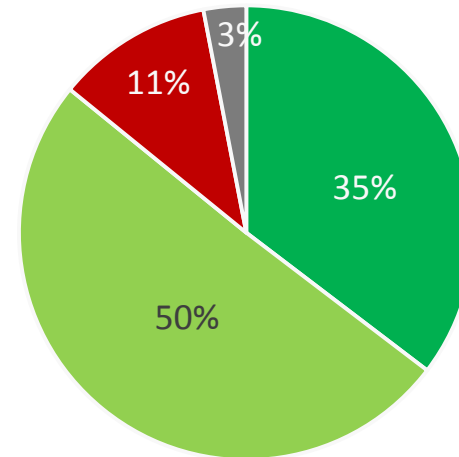
- Most parents thought they had at least some influence on their child's choices about learning and careers. However, this was more likely to be 'a little' influence (50%) than 'a lot' (35%).
- One in ten (11%) felt they didn't have any influence at all.

Parents living in rural areas were less likely than any other group to say they influence their children 'a lot' – 20% said this, compared to 39%-44% of parents in other areas.

Perceived influence on children's choices



Influence on children's choices



- I think I influence them a lot
- I think I influence them a little
- I don't think I have any influence at all
- Don't know / not sure

Perceived influence – qualitative findings



- Parents gave mixed views about their influence on their children.
- Most felt that they had at least some influence, although this was recognised as being part of lots of influences on their children's lives. A wide range of other influences were identified, including teachers, peers and older siblings.
- Parents were also wary of trying to exert too much influence or dictate decisions – some felt this could push their children the other way, while a commonly held view was that parents specifically did not **want** to influence their child's decision, since it is their life to live and their decision to make.
- Some felt that teenagers were simply unlikely to want to listen to their parents and were more influenced by their peers.
- However, some parents did identify instances where their input had affected their child's decision – e.g. in picking subject choices.
- A small number mentioned that their own jobs/career decisions had an influence on their children's choices. For example, they had used their own experience to advise children not to do the same job they did, or recommended their child should go to university rather than going straight into a job.
- Respondents also highlighted the indirect influence they had, simply through their children observing their lifestyle and behaviours.

I think it's your job, it's your duty as a parent. And having to accept, as well, that friends will have an influence, and his teachers will have an influence in this. And their external hobbies and interests... You're always a bit part of that.

I think it's true that they value our opinion, they will always deny it, but I think they do.

I think they look to us more for reassurance, I kind of want them to make their own way, but to look to me to guide them a bit and just help them. More supportive.

My children's older siblings seem to influence them, I am old to them but their siblings are close enough in age that they trust them.

I would hate to be a negative influence, and say, 'I don't want you doing that'. I wouldn't lay down the law.

We're talking to them when they're teenagers, but actually you're talking to them all your life. And they're seeing things about your life and your situation. They pick up on all these things, so it all starts early.

Perceived influence – qualitative findings



[I want them to] do something that they're not pushed into. And something that has some potential hopefully as well. I guess they're the ones making the choices at the moment. Just try to be able to support that too.

If you start shouting at them they just dig their heels in, sometimes you have to use other sources to say the same things you are, so they listen.

I have found that my lot have erred towards teachers they like and subjects taught by those teachers, as opposed to having a focus. Or ones that their pals liked. It's a bit of a scattergun approach. If you left it to them it would be PE, RI and Graph Comm.

My daughter is particularly fond of the modern studies teacher, she's young and quite cool and she often comes home talking about what she has said, I have said the same thing, but got a different response.

I think for us it's cousins who've been there and done it.

I don't know if we have any more influence on them as school and peers, and the wider world. This sounds terrible, kids don't see parents as role models I don't think really. I think they get more from their peers.



I think if your child is smart enough to look around and see the lifestyle that your profession has provided... If you were living in a hovel they aren't going to think, "You know what? That's the kind of job that I want to do." They might not say that to your face, but... I think that that plays a bit part in it.

You do have to let them go, and just so they make their own choices and mistakes along the way, that's how you learn, isn't it?

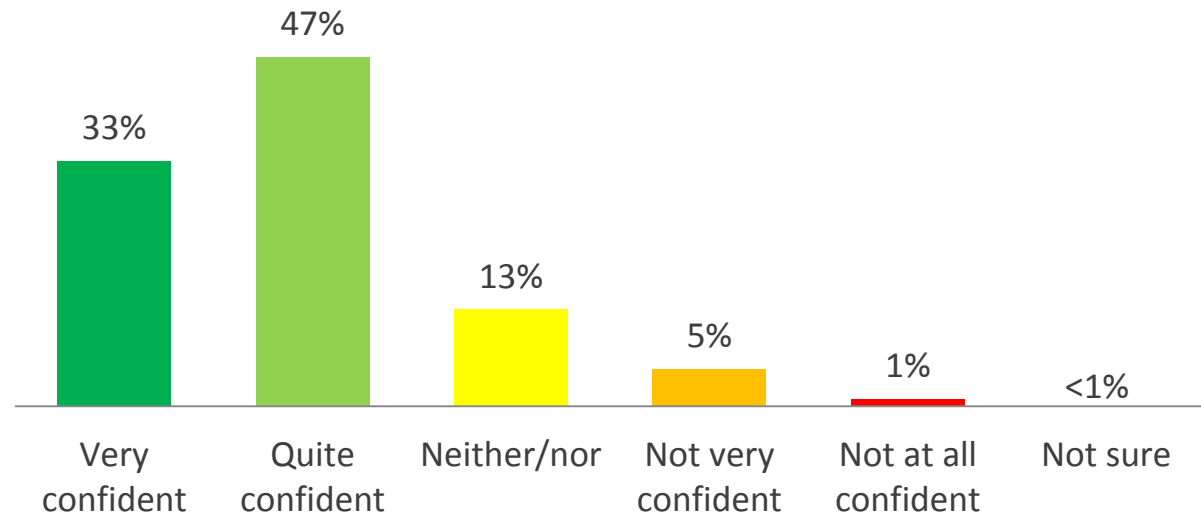
I don't want to get to the point where I push her away or that she ignores my advice. So I try and be supportive... I think that sometimes is if you keep that support at a certain level, and it is backed up by something she hears externally. I think that's when a parent's advice comes a little bit more to the top... I think if you try and trump what her friends are saying, or try and trump a teacher that she likes is saying, you're not going to win that fight. So I think it's just pitching it at the right level, keeping as a conversation topic. And that's probably the best I can do.

I think a good teacher does a lot. If you've got a good teacher you respect, and they also guide you... I know right now there's one teacher I think [my son] listens to, I don't know why. But I think there are people like that, they will take note.

Confidence

- Most parents felt confident about giving advice on learning and careers, although this was more likely to be 'quite' (47%) than 'very' confident (33%).
- Just 5% said they felt 'not very' confident and 1% were 'not at all' confident in this area.

Confidence in giving advice on learning and careers options



Confidence

- When asked why they had given their particular answer in relation to levels of confidence in advising their children about learning and careers options, the most common reasons for being confident included having relevant experience that made them able to provide advice, the fact they had good relationships with their children or that they felt knowledgeable having researched the options.
- Reflecting the responses to the previous question, fewer respondents mentioned reasons for low confidence – the most common was just a lack of knowledge or information.
- Reasons for being neither confident nor unconfident included ‘too young/early to advise’ (3%), ‘depends on advice’ (1%), ‘difference of opinion/personality’ (1%).

Reasons for level of confidence



	%
Reasons for confidence	
Experience of life/older sibling/professions	49%
Good connection/relations/communication	15%
Knowledgeable/researched	13%
Child enjoys/knows what they want	8%
Child values opinions	4%
Ultimately the child's choice	4%
Reasons for low confidence	
Lack of knowledge/info	7%
Things/people change over time	4%
Kids may not listen/take in	3%
Lack of education/experience	2%
Uncertain of child's wants/needs	1%
Wary of poor advice/personal confidence	1%
Base (all)	327

Confidence – qualitative findings



- Most parents were fairly confident in giving their children advice about choices and careers, although some expressed some doubts, particularly when their child had no idea what they wanted to do.
- Parents who also had older children tended to be slightly more confident because they had been through the process before.
- Respondents also mentioned getting advice from other parents / via word of mouth to hear about what their children were doing and why.
- Most were quite happy that if their children asked a question they didn't know how to answer, they would be able to help them find the information needed.
- However, a common theme mentioned in all of the focus groups was that both the world of work and the range of post-school options had changed since they were making careers choices, sometimes making it difficult to advise their children.

I feel okay about it. I think that, that's perhaps because I've got two older boys and one who went straight from sixth year into university and the other one that went to college for a couple of years, and has now gone to university. So I feel as though I kind of know my way around about it.

I think back in our day you didn't have internet... Nowadays [you can get] information within seconds, so it's just a case of just working out where to go find the ... if you know the right sites to look at great, if not you spend hours and hours trying to find the information you need.

The problem is, of course, is that when we were growing up people were doctors, lawyers, firemen. Whereas now, there are a million different jobs, there's web designers, software engineers, there's just a whole load of jobs that I don't even know what the people do. And that's difficult, because I'm not able to give the kids advice on jobs that I don't really know.

Confidence – qualitative findings



I think as well it's word of mouth, you learn about other things, from other parents... I've got a friend whose son is doing a two plus two to do business management... so you hear stories of 'well this is why my child's doing this'.

As a parent I have no idea how to go about it, so he has had to do some research himself... We keep asking him what he's good at and what he enjoys doing, trying to get a steer. It's all a bit stressful.

A number of times my son has asked me about the benefit of different jobs, but again it's quite random, it's been along the lines of earnings and it's stuff I don't know.



When I was a kid I started working at 15 in an office job, but there doesn't seem to be the same jobs available for the kids now. They need to be 16, but we also just don't take children straight out of school. You thought you were so grown up because you were working, but I can't imagine my son doing that now.

But you can work with them to find the answers... And you can get information from teachers. And then there's websites, and then you're on the university websites, and that tells you what your entry requirements are.

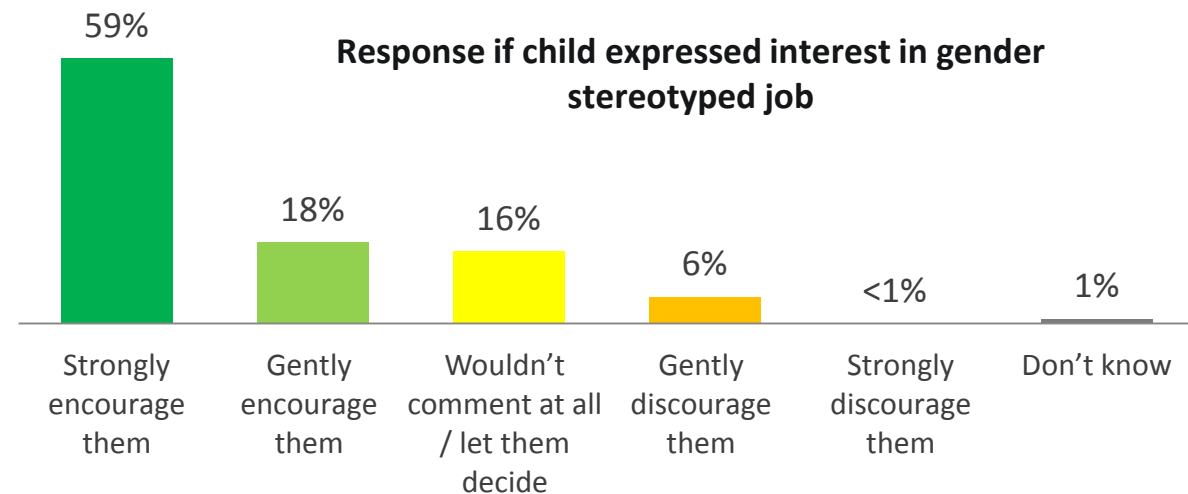
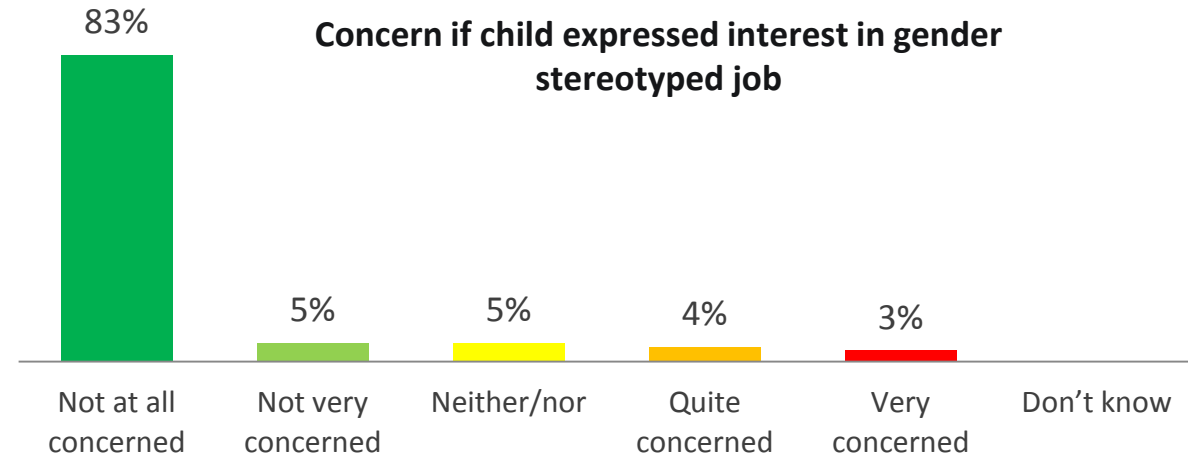
I ask the graduates at work and they've given me a lot of the information things I wouldn't be thinking about... just the different universities, and what the different entry levels are, and what they're looking for.

Yeah but be proactive, if they have a question you can't answer be proactive to find the answer for them or assist them in finding the answers... [and] sit and have a look at it.

Gender stereotypes

- Respondents expressed very low levels of concern about their child being interested in a career that is commonly stereotyped – 83% said they would not be at all concerned and 5% not very concerned. Fewer than one in ten said they would be quite or very concerned.
- Consequently, most said they would encourage their child in this situation (59% strongly and 18% gently). A substantial minority (16%) wouldn't comment but would let their child decide for themselves, while just 6% would gently discourage them and less than 1% would strongly discourage them.

Levels of concern and responses to children's interest in stereotyped jobs



Q14: If your child was interested in a career which is commonly stereotyped (e.g. a girl wanting to be a construction worker or a boy wanting to be a nursery nurse), how concerned, if at all, would you be?
Q15: And which of the following would you do in this situation?

Gender stereotypes

- Reasons given for encouraging their child's interest in a traditionally gender stereotyped job mainly focused on parents' wishes to support their child's choice and their ambitions. Parents also commonly mentioned they would encourage this as long as the child is happy, and that they were aware of equality issues so supported this as a matter of principle.
- Fewer respondents said they would not comment either way, and mainly this was because they felt it was their child's decision.
- Even fewer said they would actually discourage their child – those who would do so tended to highlight alternative routes and would focus on their child's potential to do better in other areas.

Reasons for encouraging / discouraging



Reasons for encouraging/discouraging	%
Reasons for encouraging	
Support their choice/wants/ability	50%
As long as they're happy/satisfied	16%
Awareness of gender/quality issues	12%
Based on prospects/enjoyment	4%
Advise on pros and cons	1%
Reasons for not commenting	
It's their decision	11%
Don't want to influence them	2%
Not forcing them either way	2%
Irrelevant/makes no difference	1%
Reasons for discouraging	
Focus on potential/salary/other opportunities	4%
Creating obstacles, life is hard/risky	2%
Wary of poor advice	1%
Base (all)	327

Gender stereotypes – qualitative findings



- Qualitative findings reflected the quantitative findings in that parents generally said they would not worry about their child choosing a traditionally gender stereotyped career.
- Some focused on societal change and a perceived increase in equality generally, while others commented specifically on their own children's attitudes and ambitions.
- Some respondents referred to recent activity within their child's school, although this tended to focus on girls considering traditionally male careers, e.g. girls being encouraged to consider engineering.
- The only issue that was raised (by a minority) was a slight concern about the working environment and not being in the workplace with people with the same interests.
- Some also mentioned not wanting their daughters to join the army, although this tended to be in relation to conversations about safety in general (and some said they would not want their boys to join the forces either).

Those days are gone.

I think this generation are under so much pressure, from all sources, especially as girls, but I think... they should try to do anything they want to do.

I think it's widely accepted anyone can do any job now... you can't even call them boys and girls anymore!

I think you try and teach them to be all that they can be and nobody's any different, whether there's autism or a physical disability or a mental health, whatever it is, nobody is different.

There is a big push at the minute around equality – especially in engineering etc. for girls. I think they are getting good options.

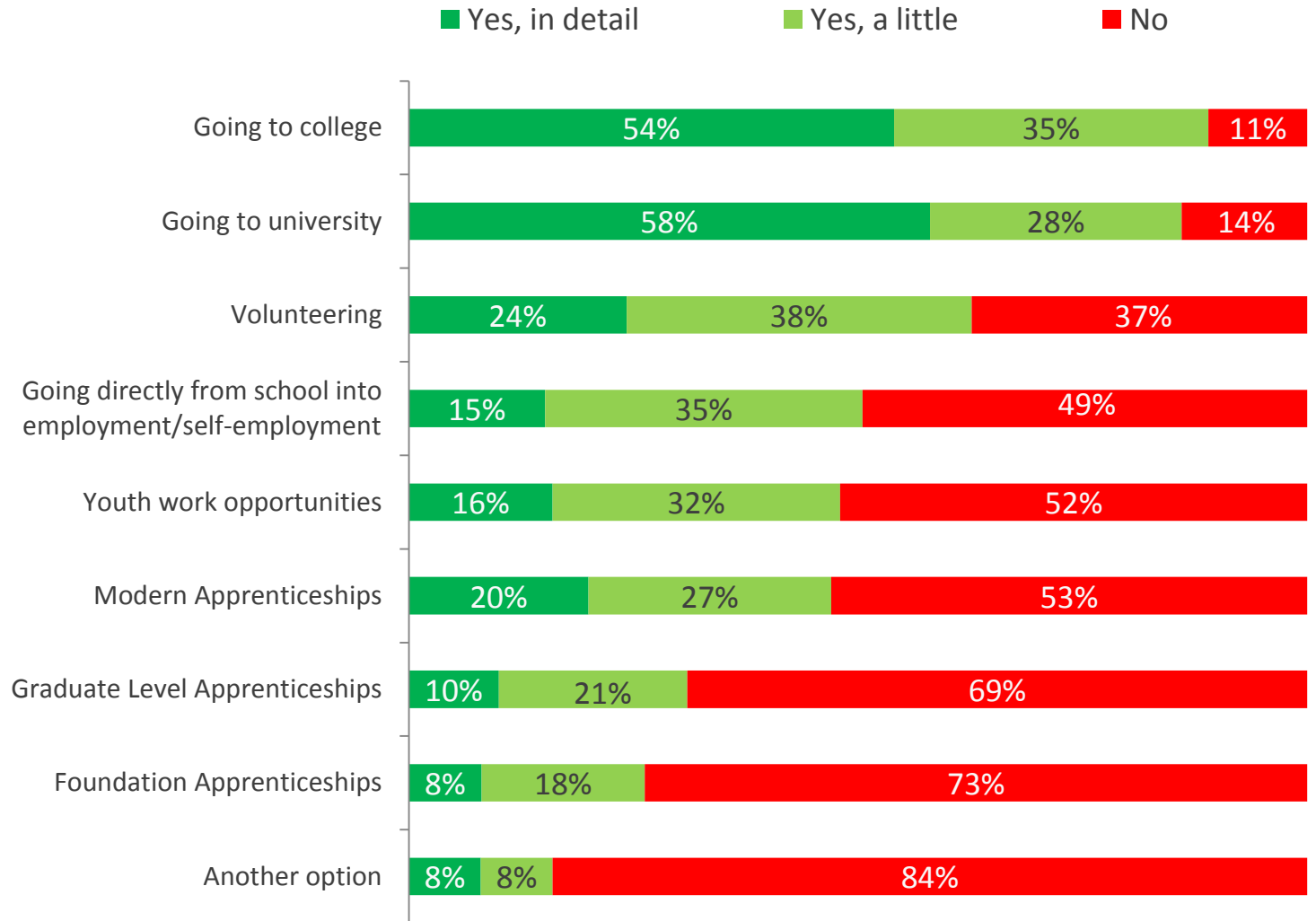
Maybe I am old fashioned but I still don't want my daughter to join the army.

I have said to both my girls and boys that they can do anything but they have to think about whether there are lots of boys and girls around them and how they might feel about, say being the only girl in a group of soldiers or the only boy in a ward of female nurses. It's what makes them comfortable. If you are a guy and you want to be a midwife, you need to know you will be in the minority, they won't be talking about football, it will be ladies issue and once you are in that occupation, it might be hard to get out of.

Options discussed

- Respondents were most likely to have talked about going to college or university with their child – over half had talked about these two options in detail (university 58%, college 54%) and very few had not discussed these options at all (university 14%, college 11%).
- The other options were less likely to have been discussed, although at least half had discussed volunteering and going straight into employment a little or in detail.
- Apprenticeships were further down the list of considerations, although 47% had discussed Modern Apprenticeships. Graduate Level and Foundation Apprenticeships were least likely to have been discussed.
- The ‘other’ options discussed (by 47 respondents) included: having a gap year (6 respondents), armed forces (4), part time work (4) and going abroad / working overseas (4).

Learning and career options discussed



Options discussed – sub-group differences



Parents of older children were more likely to have discussed a range of options, including:

- College (64% S4~S6 **in detail** vs 40% S1~S3; 17% S1~S3 hadn't discussed this at all, v 6% S4~S6)
- University (65% vs 50%)
- Modern Apprenticeships (24% v 14%; 63% S1~S3 hadn't discussed this at all, v 46% S4~S6)
- Graduate Level Apprenticeships (76% S1~S3 hadn't discussed this at all, v 64% S4~S6)
- Going straight into employment (22% S4~S6 **in detail** vs 7% S1~S3; 58% S1~S3 hadn't discussed this at all, v 43% S4~S6)
- Volunteering (32% S4~S6 **in detail** vs 14% S1~S3; 47% S1~S3 hadn't discussed this at all, v 30% S4~S6).

Parents of girls were more likely than parents of boys to say they had **not** discussed Modern Apprenticeships (48% had not discussed this with boys, 61% had not discussed this with girls) or going straight into employment (42%; 58%).

Those living in rural areas were more likely to have discussed college in detail (61%) than those in large urban areas (43%), while those in other urban areas (30%) or small towns (36%) were more likely to have discussed volunteering in detail than those in large urban areas (14%).

University was more likely to have been discussed in detail by parents in the least deprived areas (62% vs 42%), and with higher qualifications (71% v 49%).

Those with children that had health/ASN issues were more likely to say they had not discussed university (23% vs 11%).

Foundation Apprenticeships were more likely to have been discussed by those living in the most deprived areas (29% discussed it a little, vs 16% in the least deprived areas).

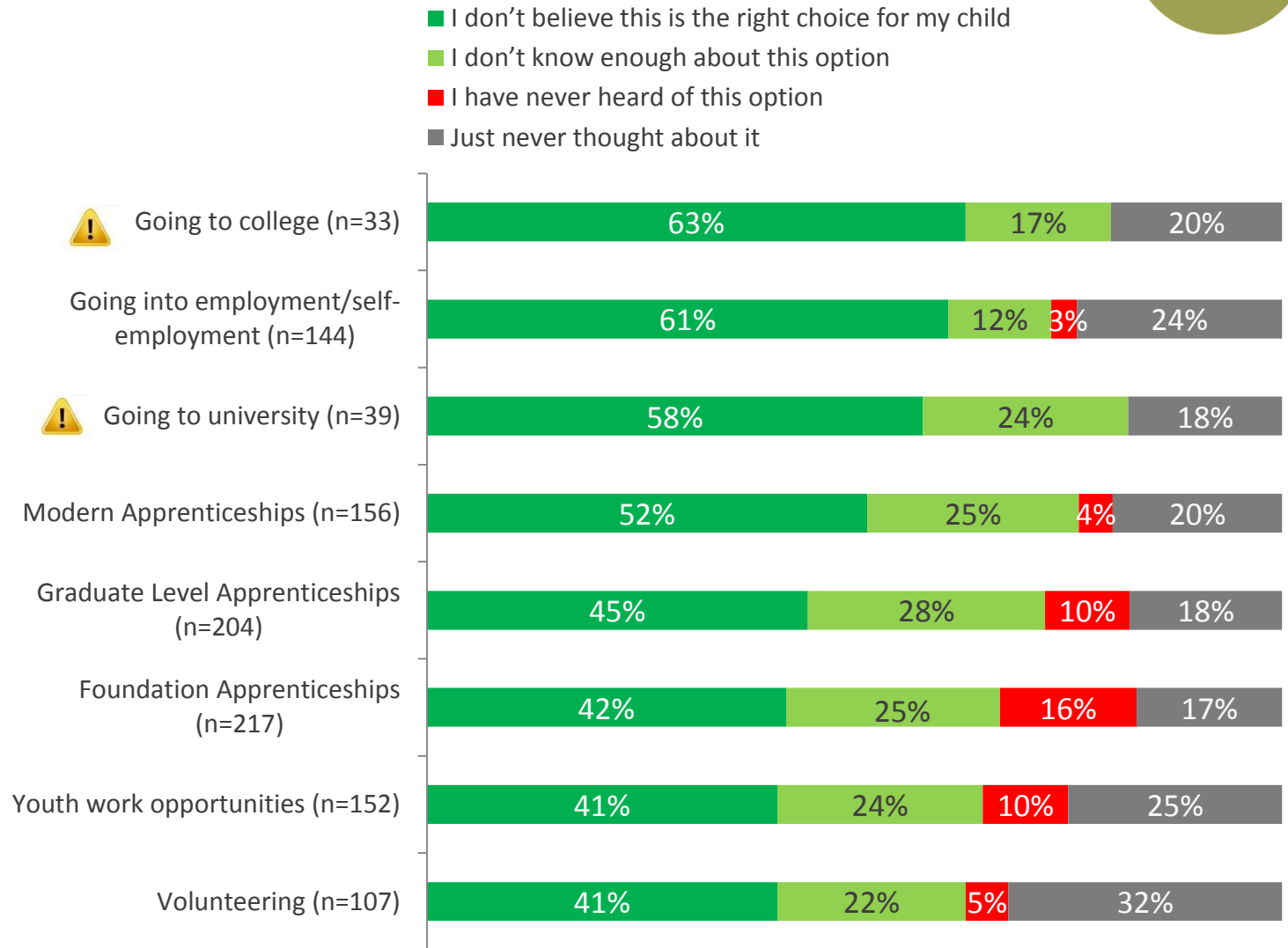
Reasons for not discussing options

- Where options had not been discussed, this was most likely to be because parents did not believe this option was the right choice for their child.
- A substantial minority for each option stated that they don't know enough about this option – and the least well known option was Foundation Apprenticeships, with 16% saying they had never heard of this option.
- However, for some pathways respondents said they simply hadn't thought about it – this was most likely to be mentioned for volunteering (32%), youth work (25%) and going straight into employment (24%).

Parents of S1~S3 were more likely to have never thought about Graduate Level Apprenticeships (26% v 11% S4~S6) while parents of S4~S6 were more likely to have never heard of this option (14% v 4%).

S4~S6 parents were also more likely to say they had never heard of Foundation Apprenticeships (23% v 8% S1~S3).

Reasons for NOT discussing each option



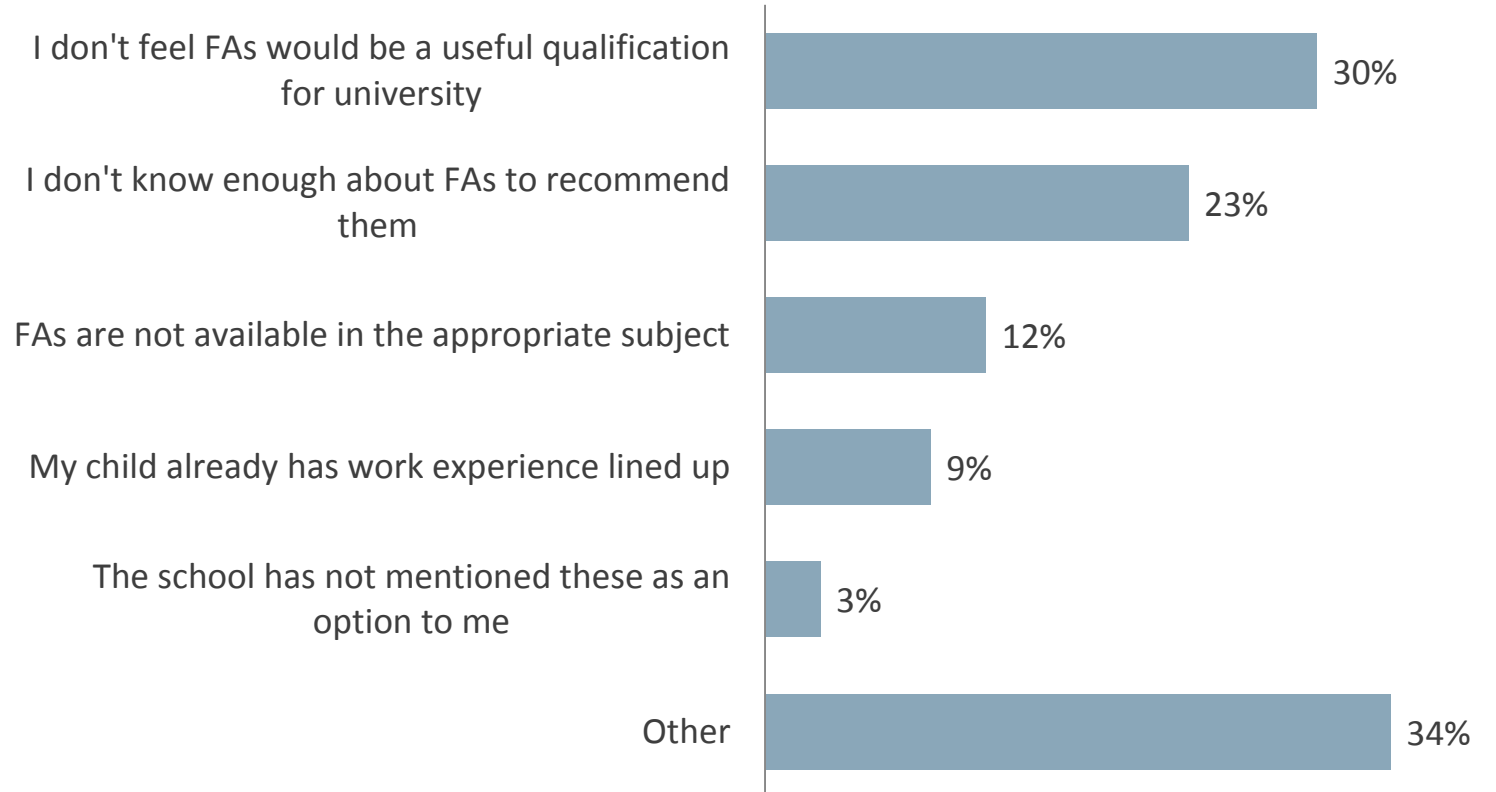
Q18: Why have you not talked to your child about....?

Base (all who had not discussed each option): Noted in chart

Foundation Apprenticeships

- Respondents who stated they did not think a Foundation Apprenticeship was the right choice for their child were asked why they thought this.
- Respondents tended to say they didn't think FAs were a useful qualification for university (30%), or that they didn't know enough about FAs to recommend them (23%).
- However, a third (30 people) gave an 'other' response. These tended to focus on their child already knowing what they want to do (11 respondents) or being too young (9). Two people mentioned their child having additional support needs making an apprenticeship inappropriate for them.

Reasons Foundation Apprenticeship not a good choice



Options discussed – qualitative findings



- Focus group respondents generally had a broad understanding of the options available post-school, although those in the vocational groups were generally more aware of the full range of available options, while the academic groups focused more on university and were also aware of college (and to a lesser extent apprenticeships). Several parents also mentioned alternative routes to a degree such as '2+2' (2 years at college then 2 years at university).
- Understanding of Modern Apprenticeships was fairly limited – most had a general perception that they were similar to traditional apprenticeships (which were associated with trades) but were 'more office based'.
- Most said they would be happy for their child to do a Modern Apprenticeship – the benefits identified included learning life skills / managing money, etc. and getting work experience and some responsibility, as well as academic qualifications. However, some were wary about apprenticeships as an option, saying there was no guarantee of a job at the end of it.
- Awareness and understanding of Graduate Apprenticeships was limited, and from discussion in the groups it was clear that there was quite a lot of confusion about how they would work.
- Awareness of Foundation Apprenticeships was also very low, so detailed discussion was limited. Some parents thought it sounded like a reasonable idea but others suggested that it 'sounds really basic'.
- A couple of respondents mentioned volunteering; these tended to be parents of children with some kind of additional support needs.

And I've been very careful to not feel as if he doesn't go to any university course that it doesn't matter. If he doesn't go to college, it doesn't matter. At the end of the day, if he can earn an honest wage, not be in debt, and whatever else then that's fine. But now the courses that they get are so good they can do two plus two, they can do a year's course, they can do day release and these type of courses and work apprenticeships. There's so much more offered now than even a few years ago.

We had a girl at my work did a modern apprenticeship, she's 20. She got to go into the company and learn lots about kind of the different sections within it but also I mean she can honestly type and do the admin part but the whole learning of office things and the way that all works – before, it was predominantly manual work, passing on a trade.

Who's in charge of the graduate apprenticeships? I don't understand that, is it the company or the university... It's obviously not advertised well as none of us really know how it works?

I haven't heard of the foundation apprenticeships – is that where they learn but don't get a qualification?

Options discussed – qualitative findings



I thought the modern apprenticeships covered from practical to management.

I don't think they get, even with the brighter kids, I don't think they necessarily say to them, "Do you know that you could become self-employed?" [or] "You could be a modern apprentice, you could go work in these companies." I just think you're smart, you can do an academic route. I certainly think that with my daughter who's second-year university. And she was the kind of A all the way through school. But she never once mentioned any of these options. I don't think it was put in her ear.

Some of the modern apprenticeships talk about having the opportunity to go uni after the 4 years apprenticeship, well that's not what I want to recommend, 4 years work and then back to school again, no job at the end of it.

I even remember doing the paper run and all the boys doing the milk run, there isn't anything like that, even a Saturday job. It's hard for them to even learn to make proper money.

It's often along the lines of them thinking they would leave in 6th year, get a modern apprenticeship and its £100 a week. They are impressed by any money. It's hard for them to see the bigger picture. Having a bigger sister, she can tell him that you could earn a lot more than that after a degree, so that helps.



I think just your different options. And the college lady she was just amazing. She was really selling it to you even though your kids want to go to uni, it's an option there for you. Say they didn't do well in their exams, there's an option there. It's not just 'I can't do that', 'yes you can you just go a different route... [you can] always get there in the end. It's not the end of the world if you can't go to uni right away'.

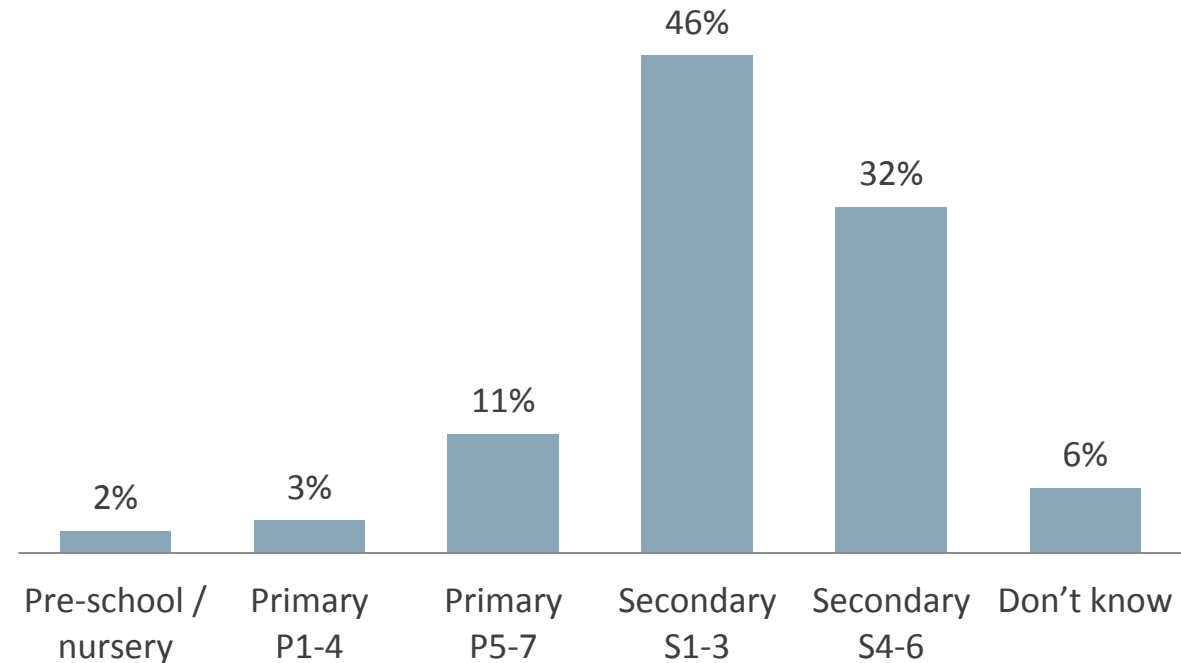
I have seen people do an apprenticeship for 4 years and go straight into employment so think that's a viable option. Some of them seem more like office juniors.

My idea of an apprenticeship was you did your four years. And then, the company that you had an apprentice for took you on there was a full-time job for you once you've had your apprenticeship. I thought modern apprenticeships, maybe misunderstood, is the company might take you in for a year, or however many years but there was no job at the end of it... I thought they gave you the experience. I thought it was kind of subsidised by the government, you're put in an office environment... but there's basically no guarantee at the end you'd get a job with them.

Considering options

- Parents tended to think that S1-S3 was the time that children should start thinking about careers and pathways needed to enter various careers (46%) or that S4-S6 was the right time to think about this (32%).
- However, a substantial minority (17% overall) thought they should start thinking about this in Primary school or younger.

When children should start thinking about careers and learning pathways



School leavers

- Those whose child had left school were asked what they were doing now. Base sizes were very small so absolute numbers are presented rather than percentages.
- Children were most commonly at college (18 respondents) or university (8) and for most parents (24 of the 34) this was the route they had wanted their child to take.

Destinations of those who had left school



What child is doing having left school	No.
At college	18
At university	8
Went directly from school into employment / self-employment	5
Doing a Modern Apprenticeship	1
Other	1
Base (all whose child had left school)	33

Was this the route you wanted them to take?	No.
Yes	24
No	5
No opinion / didn't mind	3
Don't know	1
Base (all whose child had left school)	33



Preferred routes

- Parents whose child was still at school were asked what their preferred route into a career was for their child. Around half (49%) said going to university and a further 15% said going to college.
- All other options were mentioned by much smaller proportions.
- Just under one in five (18%) stated that they didn't mind or that they would go with whatever their child decides/makes their child happy.

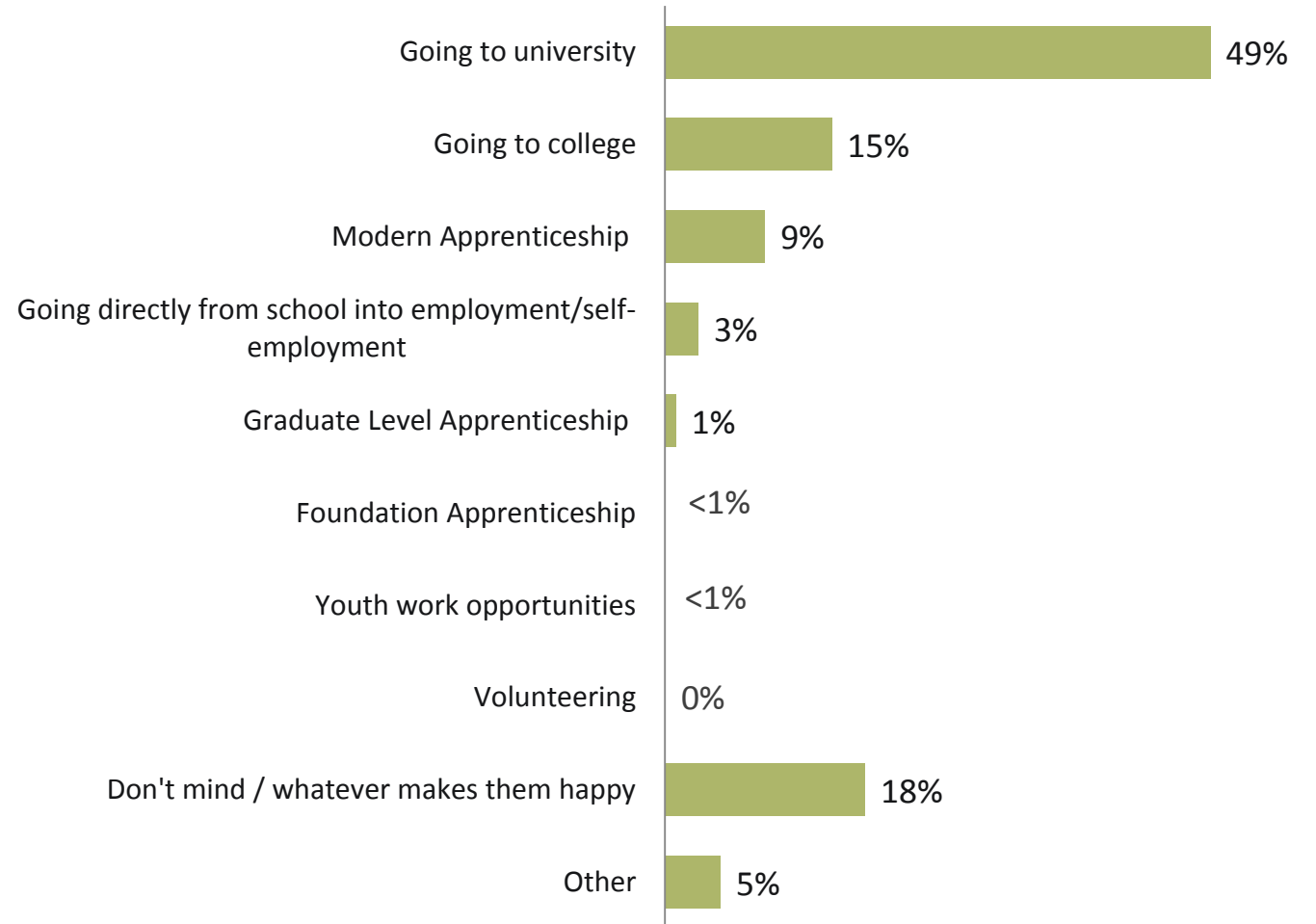
The most highly educated parents were more likely to want their child to go to university (59% vs 42% of those with lower qualifications), while those with lower/no qualifications were more likely to say college (19% vs 8% of those with a degree/professional qualification).

Those in large urban areas (61%) were also more likely than those in other urban areas (41%) to say university.

Parents of boys (13%) were more likely to say a Modern Apprenticeship was their preferred route than parents of girls (4%).

Respondents whose child had any kind of health issue/ASN were more likely to mention college (25% vs 12% of those without a health issue/ASN).

Preferred routes into a career



Preferred routes – qualitative findings



- Again, parents tended not to have a preferred route for their child unless the child had already decided what they wanted to do – their preferred route is whatever will lead their child to a job that they enjoy and are good at.
- While most parents in the academic groups were generally positive about university as a preferred route, some did raise concerns about this option and noted that a degree did not guarantee a job. Some were also concerned about children feeling pressured into university and then dropping out.
- Several parents, particularly in the vocational groups, also noted that there are lots of routes into specific careers and so it was not necessarily helpful to be too focused on only one ‘preferred’ route for their child.
- Most were generally open to the idea of apprenticeships, because they give a taste of the world of work and encourage financial independence.

There's different routes to market... two guys I went to school with, one went to university and the other worked his way up, but they both became engineers... The one with the degree came back... six months later the other one came back and was his boss... there's different ways to get there. Don't go to university just because society dictates that's what you've got to do.

I think the worst-case scenario is they go over there for a year or two and then they drop out... And they've racked up debt and you're thinking, 'Man alive, I'm in a bother now'.

I have seen children spend 4 to 5 years at uni and come out and not have a job, come out and not find anything.

I didn't go to university straight from school because I didn't want to have any more of that. I wanted to get out of school. And I actually had three career changes. I went to university as a mature student much later. And I think that is an option for kids. Neither of my boys have expressed an interest in that but I wouldn't force them to go to university. I think getting a job after school is maybe quite a good idea or an apprenticeship even.

I think if they can combine work with some form of study, then it's a good balance between getting a practical experience, getting the responsibility, maturing a bit, and also the financial side of it as well...

An apprenticeship is really a foot in the door. That's half the battle.

And I think they probably mature a bit quicker, I think, if they're out working and they'll learn to, I suppose, handle their money and stuff like that.

Sources of information



Information sources

- Parents were most aware of school based and university based sources of information, such as school careers advisers (82%), teachers (80%), university and college prospectuses (71%) and UCAS information (64%).
- Four in ten (39%) were aware of the My World of Work website and the SCQF (37%), while a third were aware of the apprenticeships.scot website (34%).
- Around a quarter (24%) were aware of parents' websites as a source of information to help them support their child thinking about their options.

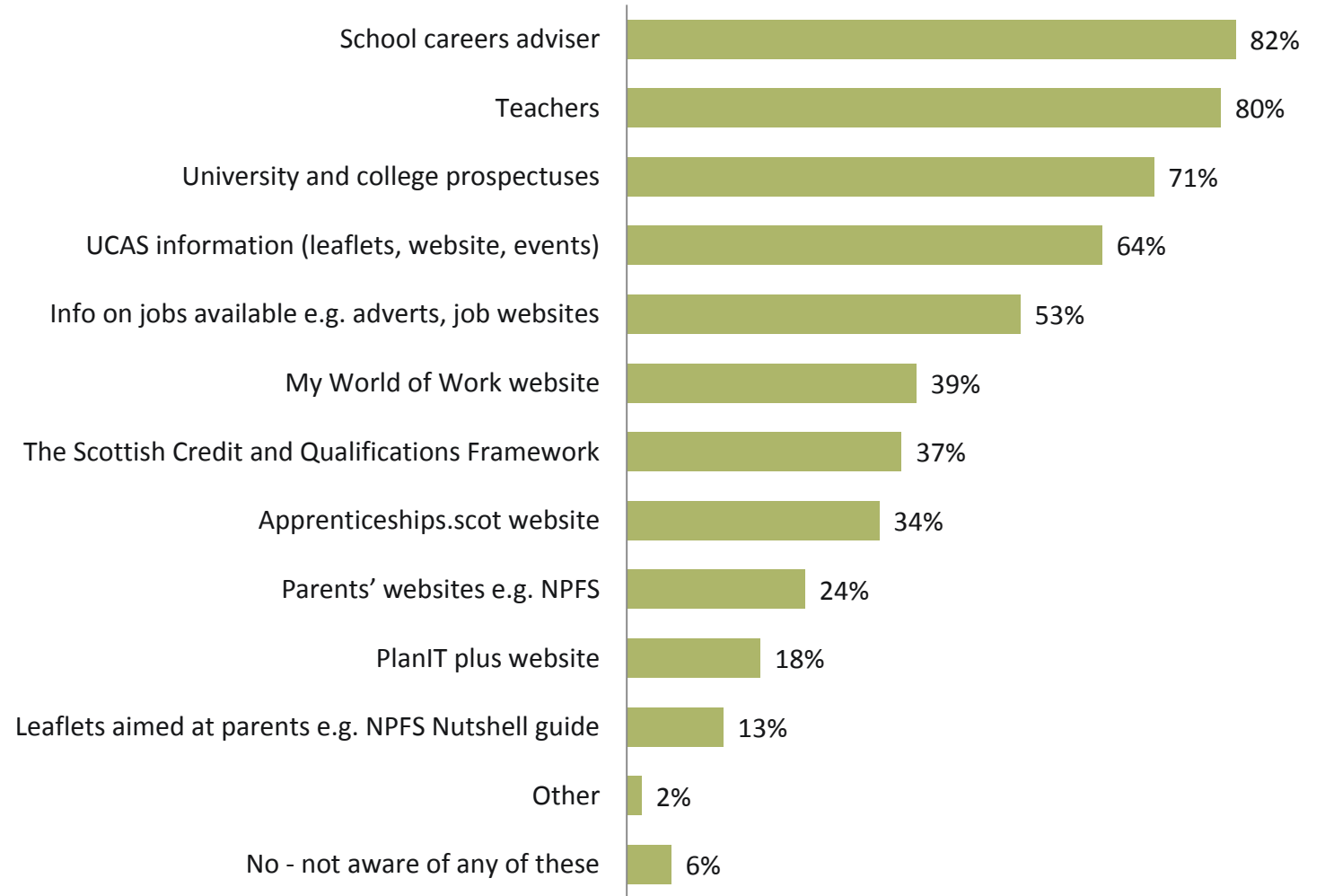
Parents of S4~S6 were more likely to have heard of the My World of Work website (46% vs 30% S1~S3) and parents websites such as NPFS (29% vs 17%).

Highly educated parents were more likely to be aware of My World of Work (50% vs 30%), UCAS information (78% vs 54%), university and college prospectuses (81% vs 64%) and parents websites (33% vs 17%).

Those in the least deprived areas were most likely to mention UCAS information (68% vs 48%).

Parents in rural areas were most likely to mention teachers (90%, vs 72%-80% among other respondents). Those in large urban areas were least likely to be aware of apprenticeships.scot (22%, vs 36%-41% in other areas).

Information sources respondents are aware of



Q26: Are you aware of the following sources of information and advice available to help you support your child to think about the learning and career options available to them?

Information sources

- When asked if they had used any of these sources of information, the most common response was that they had not used any (42%).
- Parents were most likely to have used schools and university based sources, including university/college prospectuses (28%), teachers (25%), UCAS information (21%) and school careers advisors (18%).
- Just under a fifth had received information via the My World of Work website.

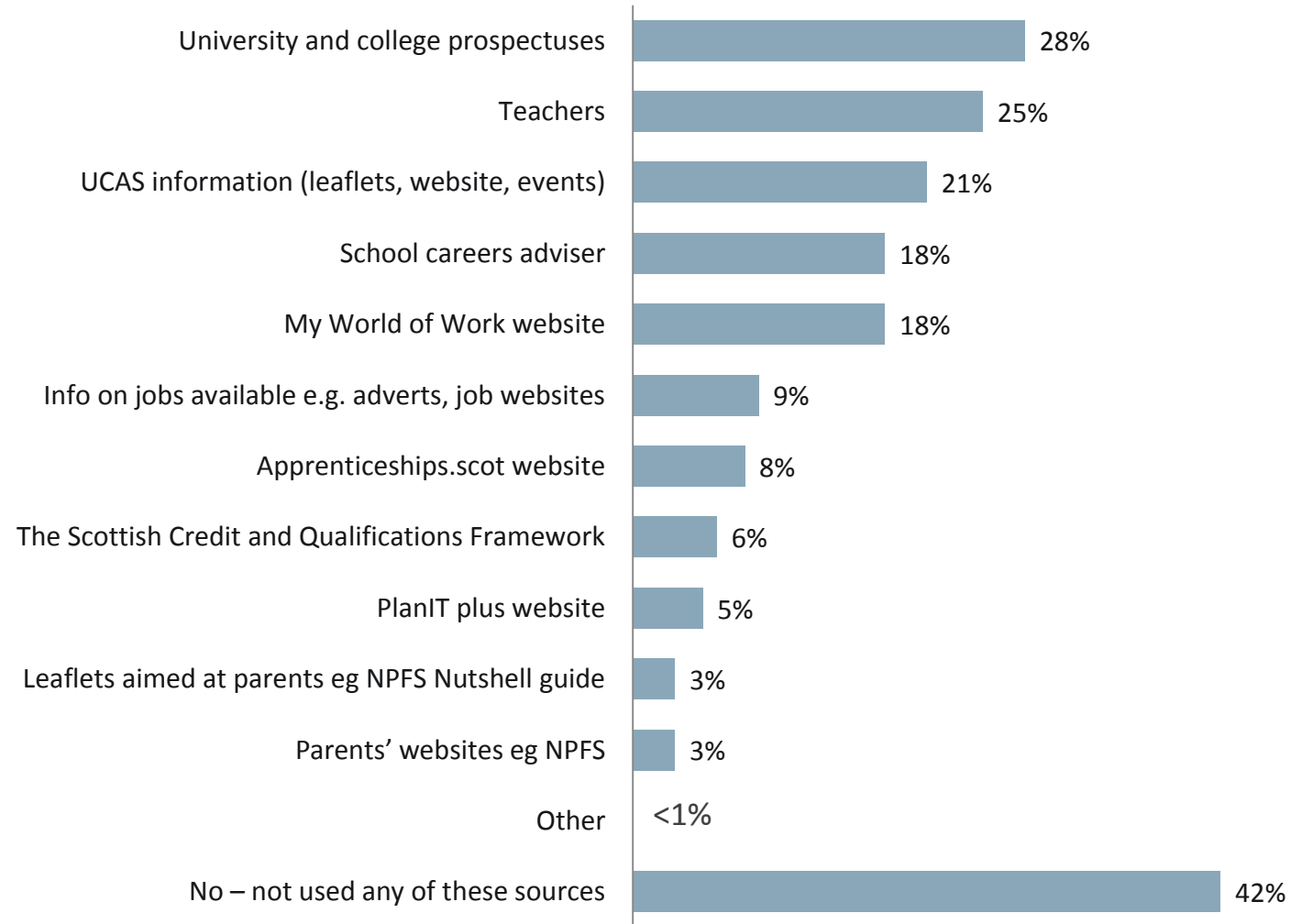
Parents of S4~S6 were more likely to have obtained information from teachers (31% vs 18% S1~S3) and university/college prospectuses (34% vs 18%), while parents of younger children were more likely to have used none of these (54% vs 34%).

Those living in other urban areas were more likely to have used apprenticeships.scot (13%) than those in large urban areas (2%).

Respondents living in the least deprived areas (25%) and the most highly educated respondents (30%) were more likely than those in the most deprived areas (6%) and with lower/no qualifications (14%) to have used UCAS information.

Those living in the most deprived areas (55%) and large urban areas (52%) were more likely than others to report not using any sources of information.

Information sources used



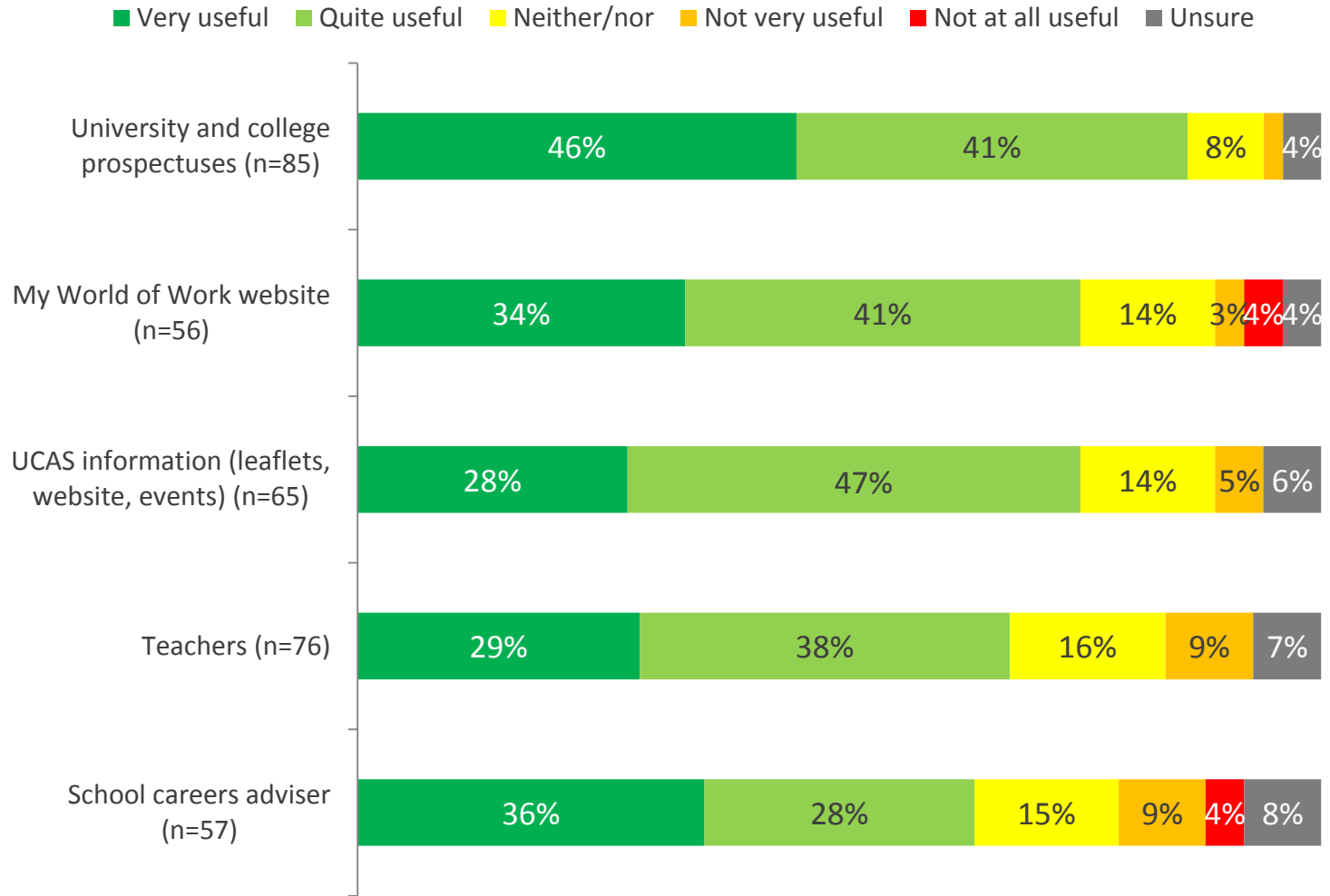
Q27: Have you used any of these sources of information and advice to help support your child to think about learning and career options available to them?

Base (all aware of any info sources): 308

Information sources

- Generally, information sources that had been used were judged to be useful – although this is based on some relatively small numbers.
- University and college prospectuses were reported to be the most useful (87% in total said they were useful, with 46% saying they were ‘very useful’).
- School careers advisers and teachers received slightly lower ratings, although 67% still reported that teachers had been very or quite useful (64% for careers advisers).

Usefulness of information sources (n=50+)



Q28: How useful have you found these?

Base (all who had used): Noted in chart – only for those used by 50+ people

Information sources – qualitative findings



- Focus group respondents had fairly low awareness/use of the full range of available information sources.
- University websites and prospectuses were quite often mentioned, as well as university open days.
- Only a few had heard of My World of Work before the focus groups, and awareness of other websites was also very low – although a few parents in the vocational groups had visited apprenticeships.scot.
- None were familiar with the SDS or Nutshell leaflets, although some were vaguely aware of having seen leaflets from local colleges etc. at parents' evenings at school.
- Awareness of SDS input generally was very low. One of the leaflets outlines input across the school year groups, but parents commented that they had not received these. A couple were more familiar with SDS as a careers service for adults.

My oldest daughter suggested that we just look through all the prospectuses for all the universities and go from there, to see what was most common. We have had to do that ourselves though.

I looked at the university pages. It took me ages to get to grips with national 4's and 5's and you need this and you need that, I wasn't able to really understand what it was asking them to get.

I haven't heard of half these places and only heard of the 'My World of Work' just before I came here.

[Apprenticeship.scot] is good really, you can just look up your area and it gives you stuff that's on the go and click to get more information, see what suits you to apply for it, so that's quite good.

If these [leaflets] had been given to me I would have read them, instead of the dependency being on me to go and log in online.

I've never seen any of these [leaflets]... I would have liked to see these.

Is this the kind of thing that we should be told we can get from the career adviser? Unless I guess the kids are being told and the message isn't filtering down.

Can we have some of them to take home?! How do they get distributed?

Information sources – qualitative findings



- Feedback about the My World of Work website was generally positive – several parents commented that they wish they had known about it before.
- Having a section specifically for parents was seen as useful and the type of content was judged to be right.
- Guidance about having conversations with children who do not know what they want to do was mentioned as being particularly useful.
- However, some thought there was almost too much content and it could be simplified.
- A small number also had concerns about having to sign up to / log into the site in order to use it.

I was a bit disappointed, to be honest, I didn't know about it beforehand. It's good that I know about it now.

I spent an hour and a half on it! It would be useful to anybody, not just parents.

I thought the world of work website was really good. Anxiety and stress, pressure on herself, it had information on how to deal with that, and how to deal with it as parents. [And] suggestions for careers.

I found [My World of Work] informative... If I'd known I could have had an informed discussion with him and helped him. He probably did it one Tuesday two years ago, never mentioned it and that was it.

[My World of Work] gave you the difference of all the different kinds of apprenticeships, Q&As and things. So there is a lot there.

Information sources – qualitative findings



Yeah, I thought it was really good. [There was] a link on Facebook so now I get notifications every so often pop up and it seems to be able to know what I am.. It pops up links in my area and then I can... relay it to him that this is coming up for that.

I just thought I really don't want to log into this. I just want to get the information. So hypothetically, because I was talking about it to my son. And he was looking at things on it. But I thought you immediately wanted their email addresses, and their addresses and stuff and I thought, no I don't want to do this I just wanted to get information.

[It] made me feel quite negligent of not being involved heavily enough. I mean, I just left it up to my daughter and school. I didn't really appreciate, to be honest because I didn't have that support when I was that age. I didn't appreciate that us as parents we should be giving them so much help.



[My World of Work] having a list of different careers that they could discuss, that is quite a useful thing. And being able to put your, the one you like and what your strengths are, the qualifications you've got, it guides you. I think that it's a quite useful conversation starter.

I didn't realise that you had to log in, but it would put me off. I don't like that, I know they put everything on Instagram and Snapchat they don't have to look very far for their details. But that would be a little of a concern I think.

I did use [My World of Work] before but I didn't use the parents' information first time round. It's a lot of information on there, perhaps too much. It's very long winded.

When you first log in, you can go to kids or parents. And you can try and ... yeah it just gives us ideas on how to steer your kids in the right direction, how you help them through the minefields of work and university... look at apprenticeships as well as. It's not just for universities, you can click if you want an apprenticeship... So I think it's quite broad.

Information sources at school

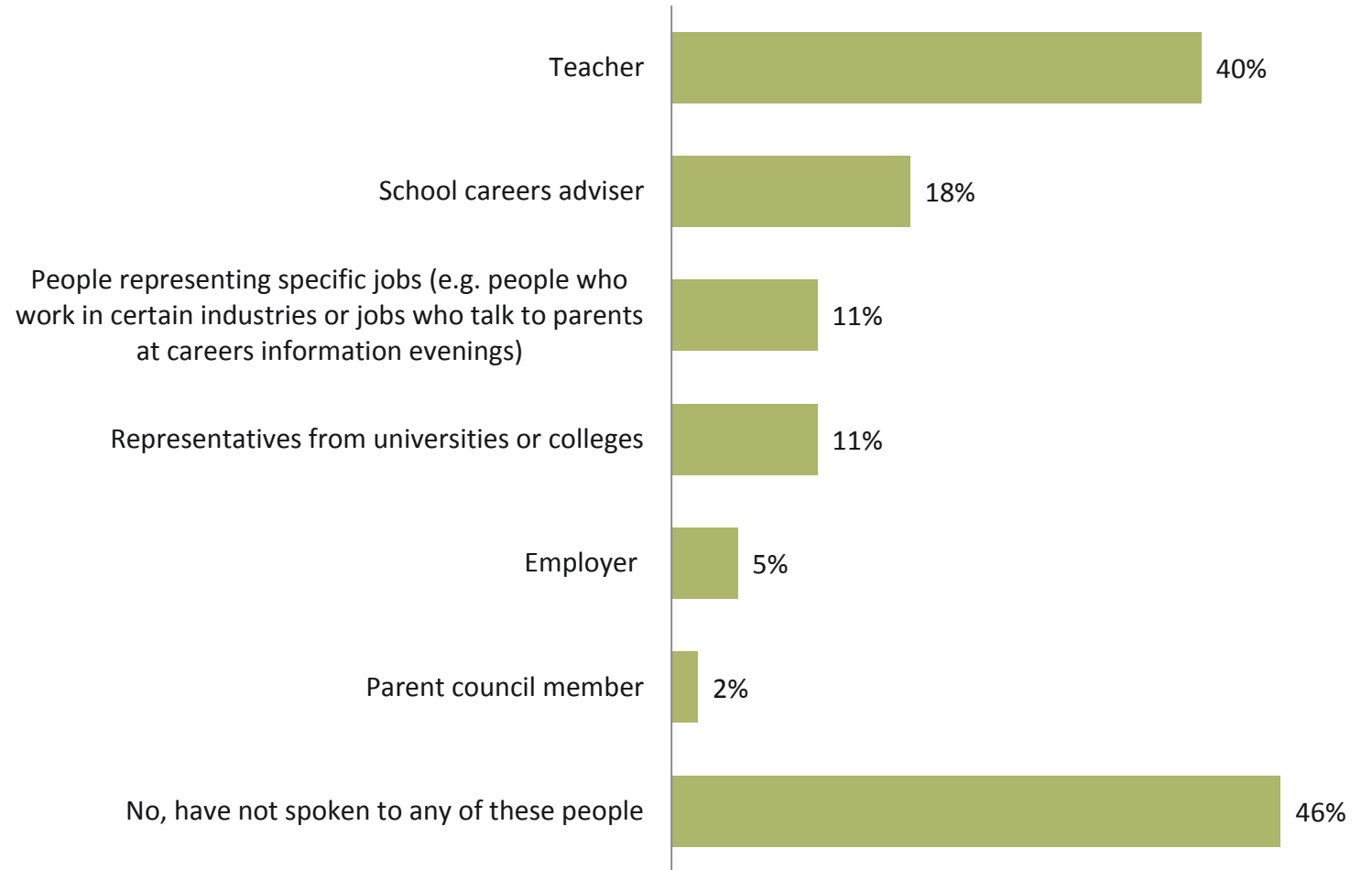
- Respondents were most likely to have spoken to a teacher (40%) and a fifth (18%) had spoken to a careers adviser.
- However, the most common response was that they had not spoken to any of these people at their child's school (46%).

Parents of S4~S6 were more likely to spoken to:

- School careers advisers (25% vs 10%)
- Teachers (49% vs 29%)
- Representatives from universities/colleges (16% vs 3%)
- People representing specific jobs (14% vs 5%)

Parents of S1~S3 were more likely to say they had not spoken to any of these people (64% vs 36%).

People parents have spoken to



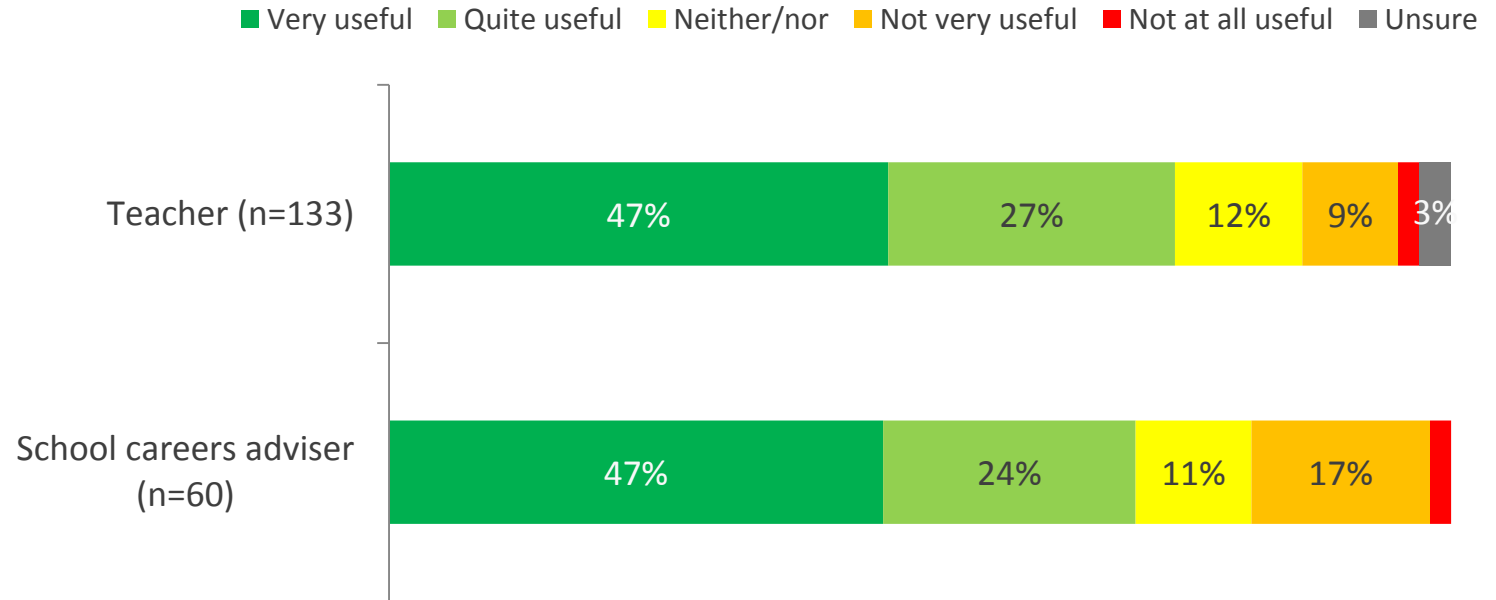
Q30: Have you spoken/did you speak directly to any of the following people at your child's school about their learning and career options (e.g. at a parents' evening/subject choice session)?

Base (all excluding home schooled): 325

Information sources at school

- Due to the small number of people accessing these sources of information, ratings are only presented for the most commonly used.
- As shown here, most respondents had found this information useful: 73% said they had found speaking to teachers about their child's learning and career options very or quite useful; 71% said the same in relation to careers advisers.

Usefulness of these discussions (n=50+)



Information sources at school – qualitative findings



- Experiences were quite varied in relation to information / input from schools – some parents reported that their school was very helpful, while others had not really had much contact in relation to careers or post-school options.
- Some parents mentioned speaking to teachers and/or careers advisers at their child's school, e.g. a few had been to careers evenings at school, or had been able to speak to a careers adviser during a normal parents' evening. A couple of people mentioned specific subject teachers and others mentioned Guidance teachers but there was no clear pattern in relation to which teachers parents had spoken to.
- Some respondents mentioned that their children were influenced by young or 'cool' teachers, or teachers they had a particular connection with. However, this tended to focus more on encouraging an interest in a certain subject and influencing their choice to take that subject to a higher level, rather than directly influencing careers choices or routes into different jobs. A couple of parents did mention subject teachers going out of their way to help their child find out specific information about career paths.
- However, some of the feedback on careers events at school was not particularly positive, for example it was felt some had not set very high aspirations for their children (e.g. encouraging them to find retail jobs in the nearby area).
- Most generally felt that there was a lack of information from school about specific options and how to access them. Several parents also noted that the approach and level of information appeared to differ between schools.
- Several commented that they were unaware of careers advisers in schools, and said they would like to be able to access them.

Our school did an information evening. It was like here's one from college, one from uni, one from just working, and someone that'd actually gone to uni. So we did an evening of it.

As parents I don't feel like there is enough knowledge... There are all these apprenticeships and modern apprenticeships but no practical advice on how to get them, use them.

She always wanted to do the education. And she clicked with one of her PE teachers who was saying, 'Well what about this?' And he was just really quite good at steering her and finding out some information for her.

I was at a parents evening and there was a talk on careers advice, I think it was crazy – they said that they were looking at the local area, the trades, jobs and business that are in that area... I stay in Paisley, Paisley is a dump. It shouldn't be assessed on area.

I wasn't aware that all schools had a full time career adviser. I would like to be able to pick up the phone and make an appointment to sit with the career adviser and my child and make sure we are able to get all the information we need.

Information sources at school – qualitative findings



I got quite a lot of information from the guidance teacher. Not just at parent's evening, but just in a phone call, a couple of emails. I think they're just very keen to see these children that they've been nurturing get what they want at the end of the day. And they'll help in whatever way they can. I just find that the school are just very helpful I think.

[Careers advice about jobs in the local area] limits people to retail and not very much as it's all shops and coffee shops. It needs to be better than that. I said to my child not to listen to that, you can be an astronaut if you want. You are only in 1st year!

Our school encourages them to pick subjects they enjoy so they do well, but they should be including a list of occupations that these would be starter subjects for.



I think every school should have careers evening so that parents apprenticeship, and college, uni, what options are out there for you. I think that was good to have that.

Yeah there was [a careers adviser] at that parent's night. She gave her all the options, all the different directions she could go like university and college, or any other ideas. She gave her quite a list of different things to look up and different websites... Really just a list of websites, but if you were really stuck, you know that you could speak to her again.

They have had career days, they've had a couple of careers evenings, which was piggybacked on other things going on in the school. And that was quite useful because I got to go along as well.

Information needed

- When asked about the key areas they want to know about to help their child make decisions about their career, parents were most likely to say qualifications needed for specific careers (39%), the range of ways to get into specific careers or jobs (32%) and the range of learning opportunities available (26%). A further fifth (20%) want information about colleges and universities.
- However, 17% said they don't need any information to help their child make decisions about their career.
- The 'other' responses were quite varied, but included:
 - More info/involvement from schools/teachers in general (6 respondents)
 - Information about finances/cost of FE/HE (4)
 - Information for children with disabilities (3)
 - More information on apprenticeships (2)

Parents of children in S1~S3 were more likely than those in S4~S6 to want information about the range of learning opportunities available (35% vs 21%).

Those with children affected by health issues/ASN were more likely than others to want information on work based learning including apprenticeships (21% vs 8%).

Parents of girls were more likely to say they didn't need any information (23%, vs 12% of parents of boys).

Parents with lower/no qualifications were most likely to say 'don't know/not sure' in relation to this question (11% vs 3%).

Key areas parents want to know about



Q32: What are the key areas that you as a parent or carer want to know about to help your child in making decisions about their career?

Information needed – qualitative findings



- Qualitative respondents found it quite hard to identify specific information they needed to help advise their children – this varied based on their child’s individual situation and likely route, but also most parents were not actively searching out specific information.
- Some commented that they didn’t really know where to start: they were aware that there is lots of information out there, but finding what they need can be overwhelming – particularly if their child has no firm idea of what they want to do.
- Several felt that they should have heard about information sources for parents sooner – e.g. most had not heard of My World of Work but having looked at it would have liked to have seen it earlier on.
- There was a certain level of uncertainty among some parents about the amount of information available and how to find out about the wide range of options available to young people – this reflected earlier findings about the increase in options and pathways now available and the changing world of work.
- There was also some support for hearing about subject choice and post-school options earlier on in the child’s school career, so they can all start thinking about the options earlier on.

I'm not quite sure yet what I'm looking for, I didn't feel as if it was missing anything so maybe if there's a different type of person who's gone through that process... but I think [My World of Work is] a very good starting point.

It's easier when the children know what they are doing, then you can help them focus on it.

It's like everything else, you tend to need answers when there is a problem, if there was some sort of vague guideline on what you might be able to do, for example here's 25 different career paths and university choices with all the requirement grades and subjects, that would be not a bad thing.

I would have liked to have seen that website a couple of years ago... Because I'm sure my son would be going through, he's probably seen the leaflets, and he's probably took a look at these websites in school but it doesn't filter home. I ask him, 'What did you do today?' 'Nothing'. If I'd have known he was looking at those websites, I could have gone on and said, 'Did you go in?' and try to help him.

Be told about this earlier in the process, year 2 or 3. So they can choose earlier so they know the choices are in line with what lead to a career path.

Information needed – qualitative findings



I think it would be quite useful if the career adviser at the school had a careers day, just for parents. Where you can go along and have the services explained to you, not relying on the kids.

We don't know what we are looking at half the time.

The information is so generic, it's not always about the actual child's progress choices and path and I think it should be.

If my daughter didn't know what to do by this point I think I would need more help and support, but because she knows what she wants to do, we are okay.

I think something that's missing, for me, and it might be up there and I just don't just know it is, is what jobs... they'd be looking for people to do at the time when my daughter's ready to work? She might decide oh I want to be whatever, and goes off and changes this but there's actually not enough jobs in that field, or there's too many people qualified in that media. So, that, I think is the link that's missing.

It was only last night at the school that the school told us about the website on the leaflet, otherwise I wouldn't have had any idea. That's my daughter in 4th year, and that's the first I was made aware of it, I read most things that come from the school, but I don't think I have ever heard of it before. They should be getting that information in 2nd year so there is information on what to choose in 3rd year.

What's coming up this year, so dates for when apprenticeships are available, when things are coming up and you need to apply.

Starting from year one, we don't want to stress them out, but if the expectation is set from the start of year one, they know the choices are coming and it's not such a shock when they come. If they have some idea straight away of what they like and they can see some options, then its gets them thinking about it.

Sometimes I feel it's easier to ask them to look up the answer as they are so good at it and they have so many resources at school or through peers available to them. And then I have learnt through experience. It would never have happened if I had had to do all the research independently. It's just not available.



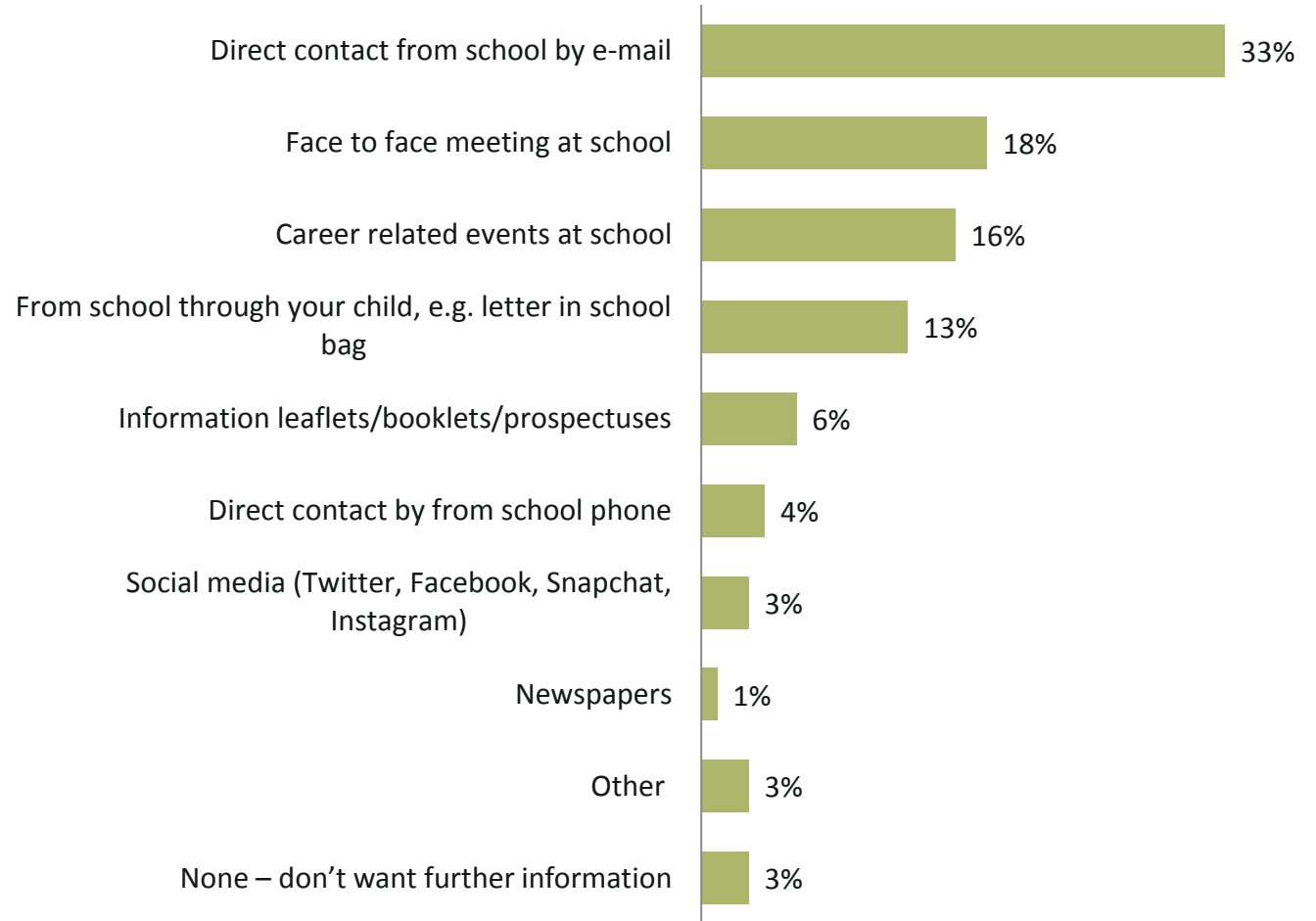
Information channels

- Parents were most likely to want direct contact from school by email to receive this kind of information (33%).
- Face to face meetings at school (18%) or career related events at school (16%) were also quite frequently mentioned, while 13% suggested sending letters in their child's school bag.

Parents living in the most deprived areas were more likely to want information to be sent via their child e.g. in a school bag letter (24% vs 10%).

Those with lower/no qualifications were most likely to request a direct phone call from school (6% vs 1%).

Preferred channels for receiving this information



Q33: Which of the following options would be best for you to receive information about the learning and career options available to your child?

Information channels – qualitative findings



- Direct contact from school was also preferred by qualitative respondents, who emphasised that information sent via children is unlikely to reach them.
- Email and text services were commonly mentioned, as well as school websites.
- Some would like access to careers advisers themselves (and/or along with their children) to have more detailed discussions about options.
- Face-to-face support/information was also valued, although what is currently offered was sometimes thought to be insufficient, e.g. parents' evenings are too busy to see all the advisors, experts, etc. they want to.
- Views were split in relation to preferred format of information, based on personal preferences – some like to be able to go online whereas others prefer to read a leaflet. There was a general consensus that a range of formats should be available.
- However, a key issue with all information sources was **awareness** – most parents were positive about the leaflets and the My World of Work website, but very few had been aware of them before taking part in the research. When asked about the ideal service / information they needed, several described something very similar to My World of Work – they just hadn't known about it previously.

There's a bit of a disconnect I think... schools could be doing more to prompt parents to keep that discussion going on.

The school texts us if there is more information available.

...in person and that way you could sit and discuss a list of options, email that information back to you to take home and you could then sit and discuss options with your child, with all the career and subjects mapped out.

I prefer an old school approach to leaflets, I like to take a cup of tea and sit down, make time for them and have a look through them all.

The problem is if you give it to the child to give to the parent, you're not going to get it. You're going to get it in letter format. So you would do it in various ways. Carpet everybody with emails, that's your first point. Then on parent's evening, it gets handed out to you on parent's evening. So you've got, maybe a three-pronged approach.

I think it's better online as it's up to date as well... because as soon as that's printed it could be an error. And it's cheaper.

Do you know what? I guess [it's] not [something] missing on the website, but getting the word out to parents because there's been very few people that have known about this website.

Information channels – qualitative findings



They could use Group Call... It's a text message service that the school send out to parents... and we have our Twitter page at my daughter's school, we have Facebook.

Generally we just want more information from the school and not through the kids!

My son's school website is great and it leads you to lots of other websites.

Front of the school webpage... [and] an email as soon as the children join the school showing you where to get information.

An email advising your child has had a letter. They go missing and then I can ask where the letter is.

The problem with having these things at the schools is it's too big and too busy. You can't get to who you want to talk to and people are queuing. Like careers fairs and things. It's too busy.

I think even if it was a bit more just like bullet-points. And then lead me towards some website, then, that you could then, perhaps, go and get more in-depth information. If that's what you're after. Rather than sometimes you get your leaflets and there's a lot within it and it just doesn't connect to what you're looking for. Whereas if you're looking at schools, if you want to go to apprenticeships, you want to go to college, you want to go to whatever. And then it should end in a direction on a website perhaps where you can get a more broad information, depending on how you want to.

Maybe you get that from the television adverts or read about it. It's just to raise the awareness. Once you know it, then you can go and look for it. But when you don't know it exists...

It's getting the information out there, there needs to be some more awareness raised for the general populous in some ways. I don't know, in the media, or TV or whatever as well, or something.

Have workshops, have flyers, have a few of these different things. Things that inform both the students and the parent. And in a not-in-your-face way... It's not a hard sell, it's we're here if you want us, to find out more.

I would like this all the way from 1st year, so you know what's coming, making us aware of it. One text at the end of each terms or start of a new term as a reminder.

I like both [leaflets and website], that would be a prompt to me to go online.



Careers education



Careers education

- Just under half of the sample (46%) said that their child had received careers education at school: 43% said they had not, but 10% did not know.
- Among those who said their child had received careers education, perceptions were relatively positive: 60% in total said it had been very or quite helpful. However, 26% said it had not been helpful and 14% were unsure.

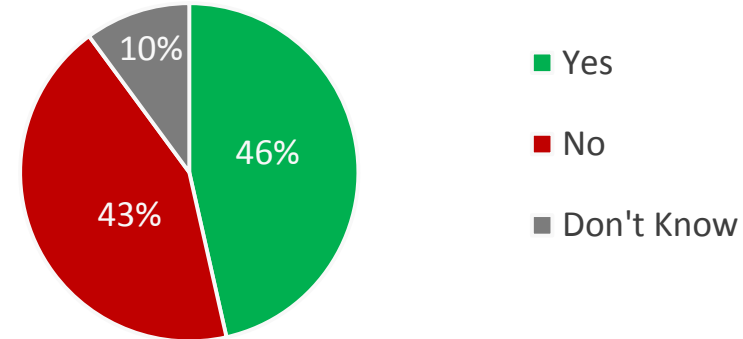
Parents of children in S1~S3 were least likely to say their child had received careers education (23% vs 59% of those in S4~S6 and 68% of those who had left school).

Those whose children had a health issues/ASN were more likely than others to say they did not know (19% vs 8%).

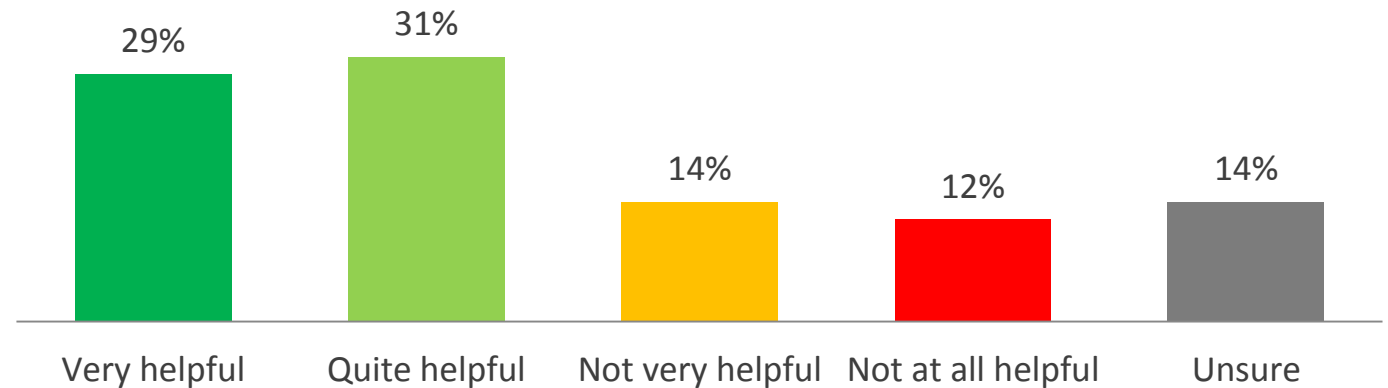
Careers education received



Has your child received careers education at school?



How helpful is careers education at school?



Q34: Has your child received careers education at school?

Q35: How helpful was their careers education / has their careers education been in preparing them for work?

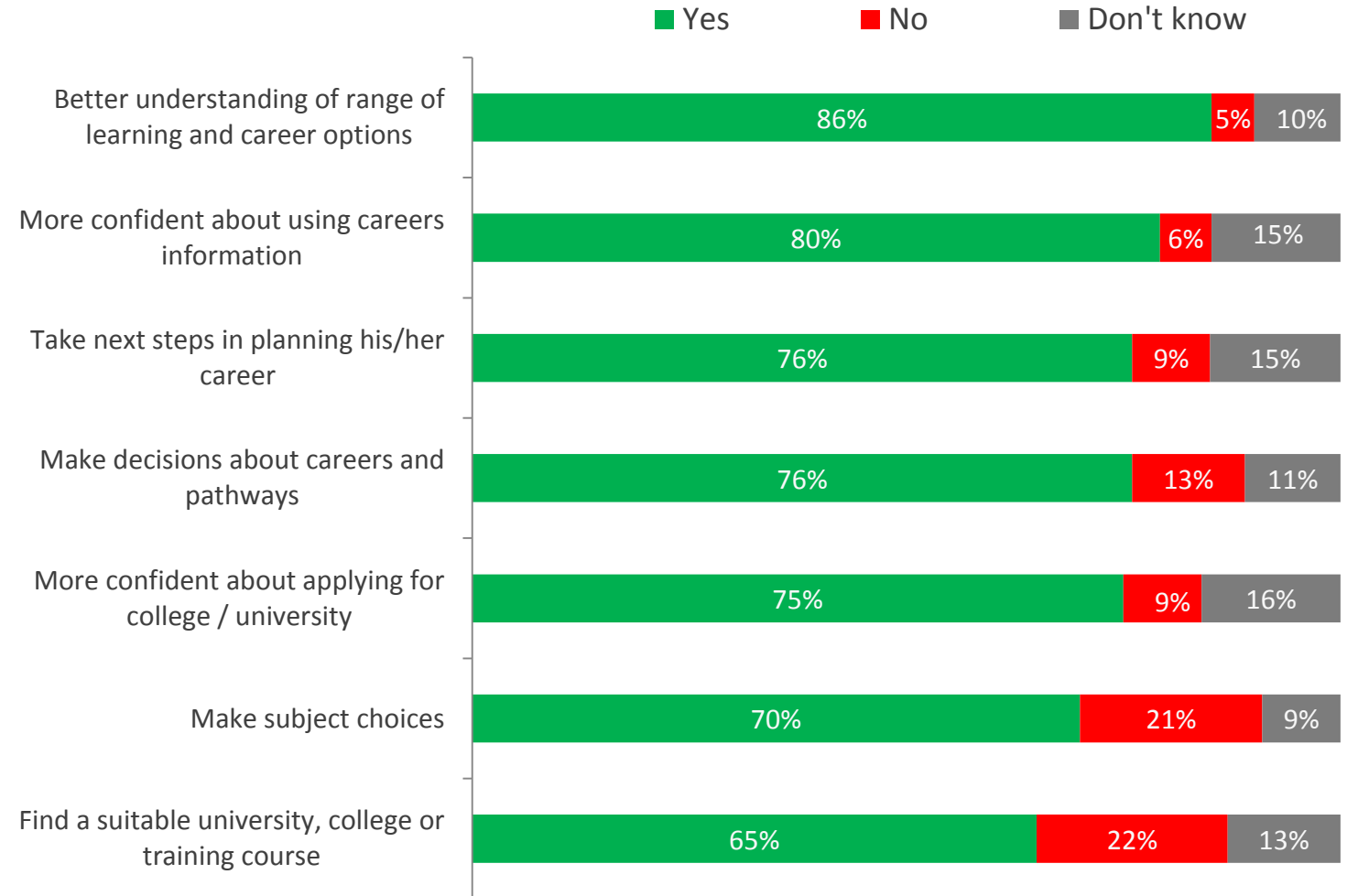
Base (all excl home schooled): 325
Base (all receiving careers education): 153

Careers education

- Respondents whose child had had careers education and who said it had been useful were asked a series of follow up questions about the ways in which it had helped their child.
- Parents reported a range in ways in which careers education had been helpful.
- They were most likely to report it had helped their child be more aware of/have a better understanding of the range of learning and career options (86%) and be more confident in using careers information (80%).

Those in deprived areas (94% vs 62%) and with lower/no qualifications (80% vs 56%) were most likely to say careers education helped their child make subject choices – although please note there were some small base sizes for these groups.

Has their careers education helped to...



Careers education

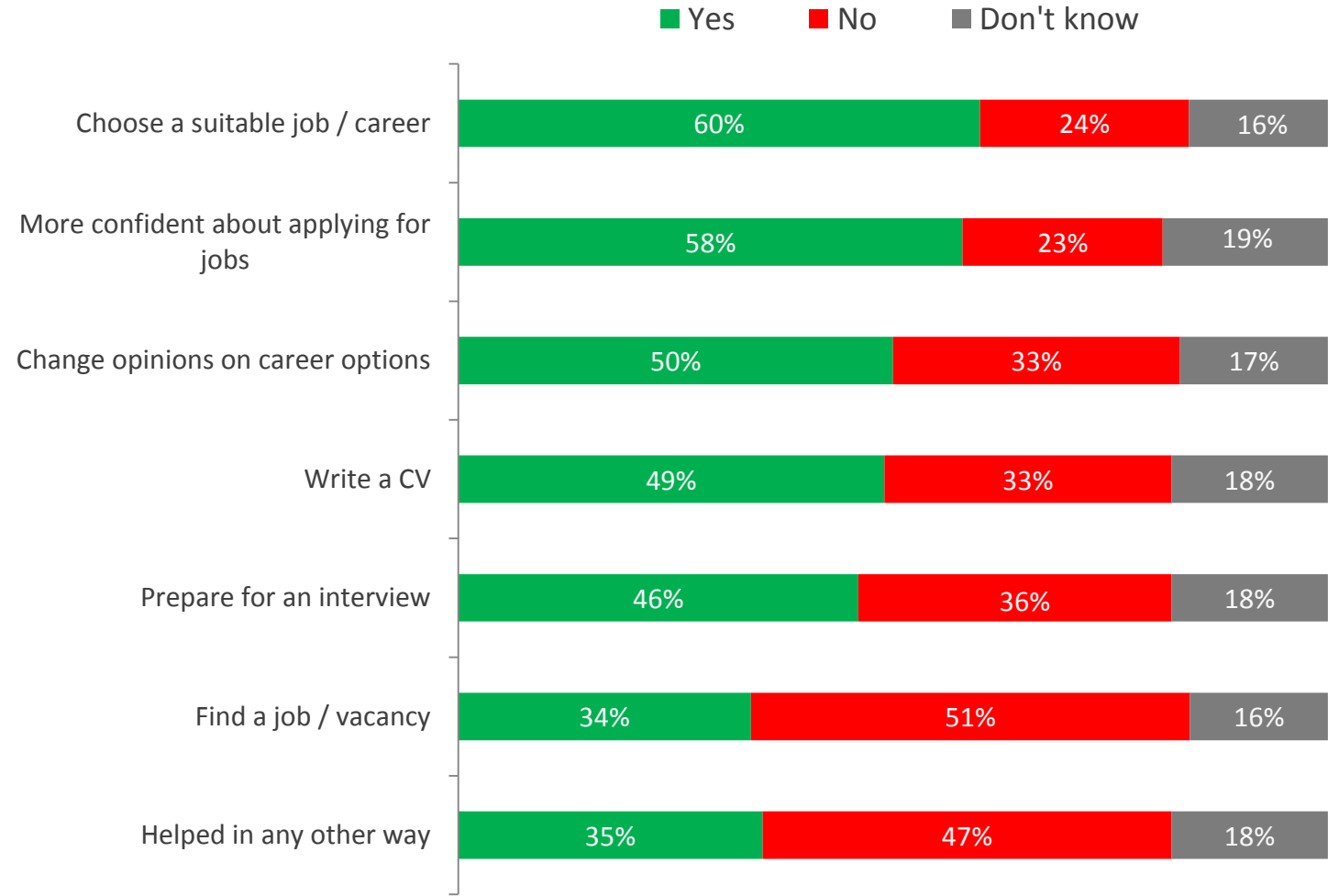
- Parents were least likely to say it had helped their child find a job (34%), prepare for an interview (46%), write a CV (49%) or change opinions on careers options (50%).
- 33 respondents mentioned 'other' ways it had helped their child, the most common of which was increasing their confidence in general (mentioned by 10 people).



Those with lower/no qualifications were also more likely to say it had helped their child write a CV (60% vs 34%) – although please note there were some small base sizes for these groups.



Has their careers education helped to...



Careers education – qualitative findings



- Very few qualitative respondents could comment on careers education their children received.
- Many noted that getting any information from their children about what they did at school was difficult.
- Parents generally trust that the school is providing something, but have very limited knowledge of exactly what form this takes or what information children are receiving in their careers education.
- A small number commented that the input they were aware of had been quite late on (S5).

I get the impression it's a bit hit and miss and there is no regularity to it. I have no idea how often the career adviser goes to the school or how often they have chats about it.

My daughter told me that they're doing stuff for her. It's all to do with your CV and things like that.

I have heard that sometimes the careers support in schools isn't that good, you have an initial appointment and then not much more after that. You can make further appointments but it's really down to the student.

I guess you assume that the schools are doing this and giving them the tools. They don't give us enough feedback as to what's happening at schools.

Invite parents to the schools to talk about their occupation, like they do in America – like a fireman talking about what he does. I don't really know what they do – I assume they have a careers adviser.

They actually have decent career days. But they wait until they're in fifth year for that, fifth and sixth year when they're leaving school there's a lot of information given.

I don't think I will be depending on the schools for career advice.

I would definitely hope they might do a bit more, to be honest, especially with 15 and 16 year olds.

Conclusions



Conclusions



- **Awareness/understanding of options open to young people**

- Parents had a broad understanding of the options available, although for most this tended to focus on going to university or college. Understanding of the **detail** of the options available was also limited.
- Just less than half had discussed Modern Apprenticeships, but few mentioned discussing Graduate or Foundation Apprenticeships with their child.
- The qualitative findings also suggest that understanding of Modern Apprenticeships, Graduate Apprenticeships and Foundation Apprenticeships is limited.
- Reasons for NOT discussing apprenticeships tended to be because of a perception that it wasn't right for their child – however, this perception may point to a lack of understanding of what these types of apprenticeship can offer.

- **Confidence in helping children make informed choices**

- Survey respondents were generally confident that they could help advise their children in relation to education, training and career choices – although around half said they were 'quite confident' and a third were 'very confident'.
- Focus group respondents tended to be more confident if they had older children who had already been through the process. However, they also highlighted that the changing nature of the labour market and new jobs that have emerged in recent years sometimes made it difficult for them to advise their children.

- **Considerations when providing advice and guidance**

- The most important factor to the majority of parents was encouraging their child to choose a career that they would be good at and enjoy.
- Qualitative research highlighted that parents had many factors to consider in discussions with their children, such as:
 - encouraging children to keep their options open for as long as possible;
 - setting their aspirations high, whilst being realistic about what they can achieve;
 - thinking about the long term and earning potential, without making it the only consideration.
- The key challenges for parents when advising/supporting their child were wanting to avoid pressurising their children, finding it difficult to advise children if they were not sure what they wanted to do and engaging children who were not keen to discuss their career options. Some also felt they did not know enough about all the options out there.

Conclusions



- **Aspirations for their child and whether this varies depending on gender**
 - The preferred route among survey respondents was going to university – although the profile of respondents (highly educated compared to the Scottish average) may have affected this finding. The second most mentioned answer was ‘don’t mind/whatever makes them happy’ and this was also reflected in the qualitative findings.
 - Aspirations did not vary significantly by gender. Parents generally felt that an increase in equality and changing social attitudes meant that gender stereotypes in relation to career aspirations were less prevalent nowadays.
- **Sources of information to support and inform their child**
 - Among survey respondents, awareness was highest in relation to school careers advisers, teachers, university prospectuses and UCAS – awareness of My World of Work and other websites, parents’ leaflets etc. was lower. Even among those who were aware of any information sources, use was fairly limited – four in ten had not used any information sources.
 - Parents in the focus groups generally felt that if they needed to find information they would be able to, but very few had actively searched for information and there was an expectation that schools will also be providing children with this guidance.
- **How partner services could better engage parents/carers and help them support their children’s choices**
 - It was difficult for parents to provide detailed feedback on how they would like to see services improved – very few had actually engaged with any services.
 - The main issue is a lack of awareness of information sources and services – e.g. parents who attended focus groups liked My World of Work but wished they had seen it sooner.
 - Parents need to be engaged directly – information via children / school bag drops etc. is not effective.
 - Preferred channels would be via school, using a variety of methods (email, text, school website, leaflets, face-to-face support).
 - Different methods of information provision suit different people – e.g. some prefer paper, other prefer online. However, making parents aware of the availability of information and support is the key – this should be provided as directly as possible, e.g. by text or email.

Conclusions – sub-group differences



- Analysis was conducted across a range of sub-groups, although responses tended to be broadly consistent across the sample. This section outlines key differences identified.
 - **Age of child**
 - Perhaps unsurprisingly, responses tended to vary by the age of child. For example, parents of children in S4~S6 were more likely to discuss aspirations weekly, and were more likely to have discussed most of the potential post-school routes with their child. They were also more likely to say that work experience/paid employment had a lot of influence on their child's decisions.
 - Parents of older children were generally more likely to be aware of, and have accessed, various sources of information. For example, they were more likely to have heard of the My World of Work website and to have spoken to people at their child's school, such as careers advisers, teachers, representatives from universities/colleges or people representing specific jobs.
 - **Gender of child**
 - There were very few differences in responses based on the child's gender.
 - Parents of boys were more likely to have discussed Modern Apprenticeships, and were also more likely to say that a Modern Apprenticeship was their preferred route for their child.
 - Parents of girls were more likely than parents of boys to say that the availability of jobs and learning opportunities in the local area had no influence at all on their child's decisions about learning and careers options, and were less likely to have discussed the option of going straight into employment after leaving school. Parents of girls were also more likely than parents of boys to say they did not need any information to help their child make decisions about their career.
 - **Health issues/Additional Support Needs**
 - Respondents whose child had any kind of health issue/ASN were more likely than others to say that college was their preferred route, and they were less likely than others to have discussed university as an option with their child. They were also more likely to report that work experience had a lot of influence on their child, and to say they would like more information on work based learning including apprenticeships.

Conclusions – sub-group differences



- **Scottish Indices of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)**
 - Respondents living in the most deprived areas were more likely than others to discuss aspirations weekly. They were more likely to have discussed Foundation Apprenticeships and less likely to have discussed University with their child compared to those living in the least deprived areas.
 - They were also most likely to say they had not used any sources of information to help support their child think about learning and career options available to them. When asked how they would prefer to receive information about learning and career options, they were more likely than those in the least deprived areas to want information to be sent via their child, e.g. in a school bag letter.
- **Education of parent**
 - Parents with higher qualifications (degree/professional qualification) were more likely to have discussed university as an option with their child; they were also more likely than parents with lower/no qualifications to want their child to go to university.
 - Parents with lower/no qualifications were more likely to say that college was their preferred route for their child. Highly educated parents were more likely than others to be aware of a range of information sources and to have used university-related information such as UCAS information.
- **Urban/rural classification**
 - There were some differences in response based on urban/rural classification although no clear pattern emerged across the survey as a whole. Differences included:
 - Parents living in rural areas were less likely than any other group to say they influence their children 'a lot'
 - Job availability was more likely to be mentioned as a factor influencing discussions with children by those in other urban areas than those in large urban areas
 - Parents living in rural areas were more likely to have discussed college in detail with their child than those in large urban areas, while those in other urban areas or small towns were more likely to have discussed volunteering in detail than those in large urban areas
 - Respondents in large urban areas were more likely than those in other urban areas to select university as their preferred route.

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Quantitative

- The data was collected by CATI interview (telephone survey).
- The target group for this research study was parents of secondary school aged children in Scotland.
- Sample was provided by the Scottish Government. The sample was drawn from respondents to the Scottish Household Survey who had agreed to be re-contacted for further research.
- The final achieved sample size was 327. No quotas were set due to the limited sample available.
- The overall sample size of 327 provides a dataset with a margin of error of between $\pm 1.08\%$ and $\pm 5.42\%$, calculated at the 95% confidence level (market research industry standard).
- Fieldwork was undertaken between 4th and 26th October 2017.
- Interviews lasted an average of 20 minutes.
- All telephone interviews were recorded and a minimum of 10% were listened to in full for validation purposes. All interviewers working on the study were subject to validation of their work. In addition, interviewers were constantly monitored by the Telephone Unit Manager to ensure quality was maintained throughout each interview.
- Our data processing department undertakes a number of quality checks on the data to ensure its validity and integrity.
- For CATI questionnaires these checks include:
 - All responses logged by the interviewers are checked for completeness and sense. Any errors or omissions detected at this stage are referred back to the field department, who are required to re-contact respondents to check and if necessary, correct the data.
 - Data is entered into our analysis package SNAP and data is stored on CATI booths until imported and stored in our secure workfiles.
- A computer edit of the data is carried out prior to analysis, involving both range and inter-field checks.
- Where 'other' type questions are used, the responses to these are checked against the parent question for possible up-coding.
- Responses to open-ended questions will normally be spell and sense checked. Where required these responses may be grouped using a code-frame which can be used in analysis.
- Our analysis package is used and a programme set up with the aim of providing the client with useable and comprehensive data.
- Cross breaks to be imposed on the data are discussed with the client in order to ensure that all information needs are being met.
- All research projects undertaken by Progressive comply fully with the requirements of ISO 20252.

Qualitative

- The data was collected by focus group discussions.
- The target group for this research study was parents of children in S4 to S6.
- In total, 6 group discussions were undertaken. Each group contained around 8 respondents.
- Fieldwork was undertaken between 15th and 22nd November 2017.
- Respondents were recruited face to face by Progressive's team of skilled qualitative recruiters. These recruiters worked to predetermined quota controls to ensure that the final sample reflected the requirements of the project. Recruitment criteria, which were determined using a recruitment questionnaire, were as follows:
 - Parents of pupils in S4~S6 (no specific quotas set, but aimed for a mix of year groups)
 - Have responsibility/role in advising their child about careers options and what they will do when they leave school
 - Mix of gender of child (half with girls, half with boys in each group)
 - No specific quotas were set in relation to socio-economic group, but aimed for a mix overall
 - Half of the groups were with parents who expected their child to take an academic route after school; half with parents who expected their child to take a vocational route.
- All respondents were screened to ensure that they had not participated in a group discussion or depth interview relating to a similar subject in the last 6 months prior to recruitment.
- An incentive of £35-£40 compensated respondents for their time and encouraged a positive response.
- In total, 3 moderators were involved in the fieldwork for this project.
- Stimulus materials were used during the group discussions. These included information leaflets designed for parents.
- Each recruiter's work is validated as per the requirements of the international standard ISO 20252. Therefore, all respondents were subject to validation, either between recruitment and the date of the group discussion/depth interview, or on the day of the group discussion/depth interview. Validation involved respondents completing a short questionnaire asking pertinent profile questions and checking that they have not participated in similar research in the past 6 months.
- It should be noted that, due to the small sample sizes involved and the methods of respondent selection, qualitative research findings do not provide statistically robust data. This type of research does however, facilitate valid and extremely valuable consumer insight and understanding.
- All research projects undertaken by Progressive comply fully with the requirements of ISO 20252.

Progressive's services



Core qualitative techniques
A full range of qualitative research methods



Language and behaviour
Gets communications right in tone and content



Mobile ethnography
Captures real consumer behaviour in real time



The View on Scotland
Glasgow city centre viewing facility provides comfort convenience and first class facilities



Brand mapping
Discovers core brand values, benchmarks and maps progress



Core quantitative techniques
A full range of quantitative research methods



Progressive Scottish Opinion
Offers fast and inexpensive access to over 1,000 Scottish consumers



Progressive Business Panel
Takes soundings from companies across Scotland quickly and efficiently



Field and tab
Bespoke stand alone field and tab services for qualitative and quantitative methods



Data services
We have a wide range of analytical services