



SELECT COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL MOBILITY

Survey for 14–24 year olds

Background

On 28 July 2015, the House of Lords Select Committee on Social Mobility launched an online survey to understand young people's experiences of moving from school to work. The survey was open to people aged 14–24 year olds and ran until 16 October 2015. The survey was part of the Committee's inquiry into the transition from school to work. The inquiry focused on those not intending to go to university, or doing A-Levels (or Highers in Scotland). The survey enquired about the support and advice available, the guidance received and what people felt was needed for success. In total 672 people completed the survey.

Overview of findings

- **Overall, most people were largely neutral, or positive, in response to the questions.** Not many people expressed 'strong' opinions either to strongly agree or disagree with statements. This pattern is typical of survey research more generally.
- **However, a sizeable minority of people did express strong opinions in response to some questions.** For example, 11 per cent of people felt strongly that they were not in control of what they did at 16.
- While overall responses were largely neutral or positive, differences emerged when responses were analysed by respondent characteristic. For example:
 - Older people (those aged 19–24) tended to be more negative in their responses than younger respondents.
 - Females were more hesitant and more likely to be neutral compared to males who were more likely to express an opinion.
 - White and Asian/Asian British ethnic groups were similar in their responses.
 - Responses differed for people with disabilities, special educational needs (SEN), those in care, those who have been in trouble with the law, and those with caring responsibilities.

As well as the multiple choice questions above, the survey included a number of 'free text' questions that allowed respondents to answer in their own words. Responses to these questions revealed a number of interesting findings:

- **Options open at 16.** Despite people saying that they were aware of lots of options at 16, when describing the options open to them nearly all respondents talked about courses.
 - A wide range of courses were mentioned that varied by topic (from more vocational courses like plumbing and construction to 'traditionally' academic courses like English and maths), qualification type (for example, many respondents referred to BTECs and the different levels at which this qualification can be taken).
 - Most respondents connected courses to going to university. There was little mention of employment on the whole.
- **Support available to help decide what to do at age 16.** The biggest source of support for people in helping to decide what to do was their parents (86 per cent), followed by teachers/tutors (62 per cent).
- **Guidance available at age 16.** Despite saying that parents were the biggest source of support, people mostly talked about guidance they received from teachers/tutors. Respondents raised a number of key issues regarding the guidance they received including:
 - Implied hierarchies between options at 16, with A-Levels seen as the best and sixth form as the preferred location.
 - Limited guidance about options aside from A-Levels and staying on at the same institution.

- Pressure put on achieving grades with many people feeling that options were not available should grades not be achieved.
- The difficult circumstances and issues being faced by people at this age ranging from homelessness, mental health, pressure from parents/guardians, illness, geographical limitations.
- **Barriers and obstacles to overcome.** Lack of confidence was one of the three most highly selected barrier for survey respondents. The other most cited barriers were achieving grades and finance.

What do the survey findings suggest for the type of support that should be offered for people aged 16?

- Parents should be made aware of the range of options open to people aged 16 because this is where most young people receive advice about their options.
- Support available to young people should be broader and include advice about the full range of different options that are available and what is realistic in terms of where different options can take you.
- Support should not just focus on careers but also include more ‘holistic’ support/pastoral that can assist people with difficult or challenging circumstances.

Document structure

This document is divided into two sections.

[Section 1](#) provides an overview of the characteristics of respondents according to ten variables. For comparative purposes, this section also provides information on these variables for the people that responded to the survey but did not meet the eligibility criteria. However, this does not include those people that **were outside the age range**.

[Section 2](#) outlines the responses given by eligible respondents to the survey questions. **Responses are shown at two levels. First, figures are given for the percentage of all people selecting each option and, second, responses given to each option by the variables of age, gender and other demographic information.**

[Annex 1](#) provides more details information about the responses to each question according to these different variables.

[Annex 2](#) details the survey.

Section 1: Characteristics of survey respondents

This section outlines the characteristics of the people who responded to the survey. In total 954 people completed the survey. Of these, 672 (70 per cent) met the eligibility criteria regarding:

- Age: They were aged between 14 and 24 years old.
- Qualifications: They had not completed 2 or more A-Levels or, were not currently awaiting results for 2 or more A level examinations that they had already taken or were about to take.

For comparative purposes, this section provides information for people that both met the eligibility criteria and those that did not, and analyses them according to ten variables:

- Age
- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Type of educational institution attending/ed
- Geographical area
- Whether they have a disability
- Whether they have special educational needs
- Whether they are, or have ever been in the care of a local authority
- Whether they have been in trouble with the law
- Whether they have, or ever have had responsibility for caring for someone else.

Age

Table 1 shows the proportion of people that completed the survey by age. Of those that met the eligibility criteria, over half of respondents were aged between 16–18 years old, compared to nearly 30 per cent that were aged 14–16 and less than 15 per cent that were aged 19–24.

191 people were removed from the analysis because they were either aged under 14 (23 people), or over 25 years old (168 people). 91 people that fell within the age range were removed because they did not meet the qualifications criteria.

Table 1: Survey respondents by age

| | Non-eligible respondents total | Eligible respondents total |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Under 14 | 23 (2.41%) | 0 |
| 14–16 (or in Years 10 and 11) | 198 (20.76%) | 197 (29.27%) |
| 16–18 | 410 (42.98%) | 379 (56.46%) |
| 19–24 | 155 (16.25%) | 96 (14.26%) |
| Over 25 | 168 (17.61%) | 0 |
| TOTAL | 954 | 672 |

Gender

Figure 1 shows the proportion of eligible respondent by gender while Figure 2 shows the gender breakdown of respondents for both eligible and non-eligible respondents. This is broken down by age in Table 2.

Of eligible respondents, 55 per cent of respondents were male. In contrast 39 per cent were female with the remaining 6 per cent preferring not to say. **The proportion of males to females in the survey responses is higher than that in the UK population as a whole where women outnumber men according to** Office for National Statistics figures from the 2011 census¹.

¹ ONS, 2011 Census: Population Estimates for the United Kingdom, (27 March 2011): http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20160105160709/http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171778_292378.pdf

Figure 1: Eligible survey respondents by gender (in percentages)

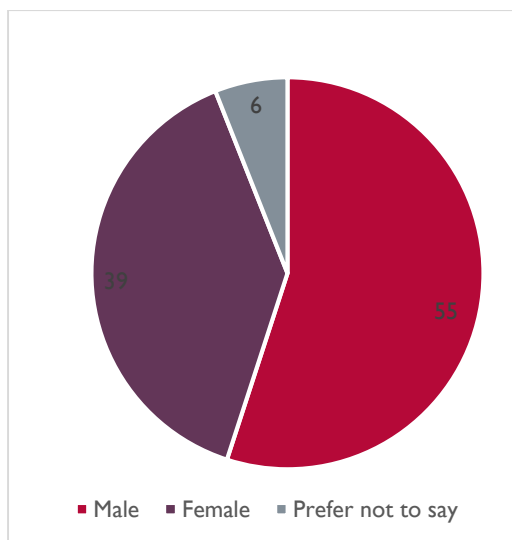


Figure 2: All survey respondents by gender including non-eligible respondents (in percentages)

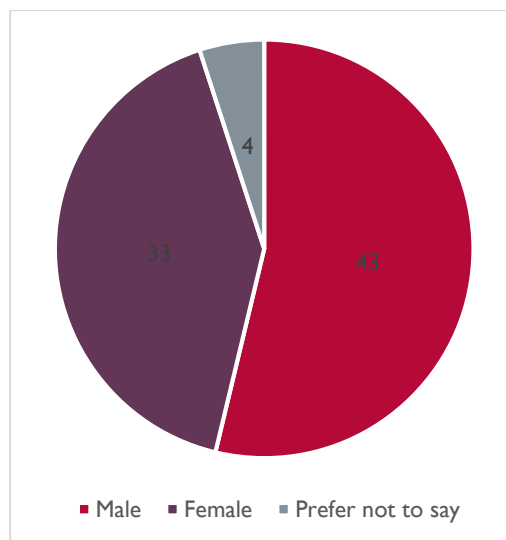


Table 2: Survey respondents by age and gender

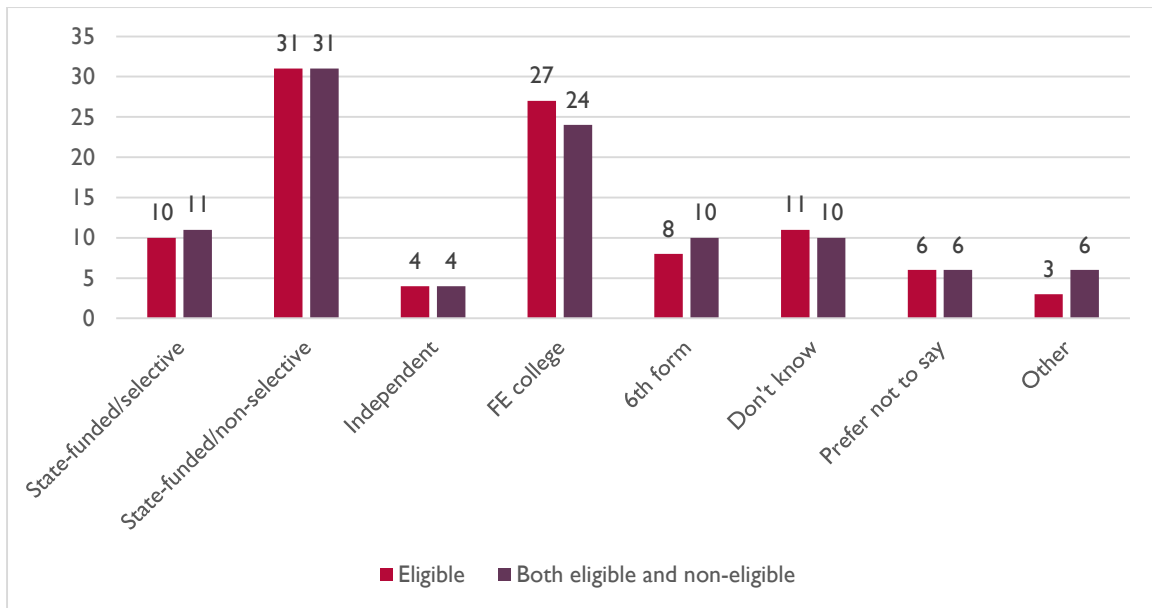
| | 14–16 | | 16–18 | | 19–24 | |
|--------------------------|----------|--------------|-----------|--------------|----------|--------------|
| | Eligible | Non-eligible | Eligible | Non-eligible | Eligible | Non-eligible |
| Male | 91 (46%) | 92 (10%) | 232 (61%) | 248 (26%) | 47 (49%) | 71 (7%) |
| Female | 94 (48%) | 94 (10%) | 125 (33%) | 139 (15%) | 44 (46%) | 79 (8%) |
| Prefer not to say | 12 (6%) | 13 (1%) | 22 (6%) | 22 (2%) | 5 (5%) | 5 (0.5%) |

Demographics

Figure 3 shows the proportion of respondents attending different types of education institution. Of eligible respondents, nearly a third of survey respondents attend or previously attended, a state-funded non-selective school (31 per cent equal to 211 people). Just over a quarter of people attend, or previously attended a further education college (27 per cent or 178 people). The most common type of education institution in the United Kingdom is state-funded or state-run schools that are non-selective, which comprise 87 per cent of primary schools and 40 per cent of secondary schools.²

Figure 3: Survey responses by education institution (in percentages)

² Data from Edubase (September 2014)



Geographical areas

48 per cent of all respondents lived in the East of England. The largest majority lived in Cambridge.

Figure 4: Survey respondents by geographical location



Ethnicity

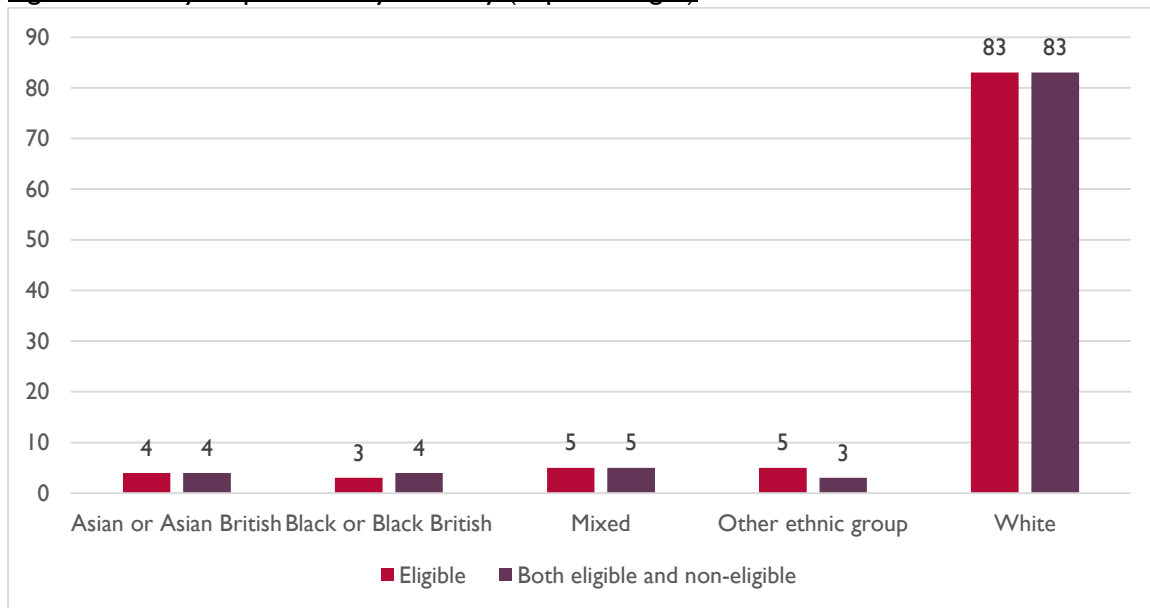
Respondents were asked their ethnicity. These were grouped into four main categories of:

- Asian or Asian British (including Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and any other Asian background)
- Black or black British (including Caribbean, African and any black background)
- Mixed (including white and black Caribbean, white and black African, white and Asian, and any other mixed background)

- Other ethnic group (including Chinese, any other ethnic group and I do not wish to disclose my ethnic origin)
- White (including British, Irish and other)

Figure 5 shows the proportion of respondents from the four main ethnicity categories. Over three-quarters of respondents (78 per cent or 516 people) identified as White British. This is lower than the proportion of people aged between 10-24 years old identifying as White (including Irish, Gypsy or Irish Traveller or other white) in England and Wales, which is 85 per cent.³

Figure 5: Survey respondents by ethnicity (in percentages)



Disability

Respondents were asked to advise whether they had a disability. Disability in the survey was defined as “a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities”.

The majority of respondents reported that they did not have a disability (80 per cent equating to 525 people). Data from the Department for Work and Pensions and Office for Disability Issues⁴ suggests that this is comparable to statistics for the UK population as a whole, where around 6 per cent of children are disabled, compared to 16 per cent of working age adults and 45 per cent of adults over State Pension age.

Table 3: Survey respondents by disability

| | Non-eligible respondents total | Eligible respondents total |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Yes | 97 (12.97%) | 84 (12.5%) |
| No | 594 (79.41%) | 525 (78.27%) |
| Prefer not to say | 71 (9.3%) | 62 (9.22%) |

³ Data from NOMIS Table DC2101EW, which classifies the usual resident population of England and Wales as at census day, 27 March 2011, by ethnic group and age. Specific data for ages 14–24 years only could not be extracted: <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/census/2011/dc2101ew> [date accessed 22 March 2016]

⁴ HM Government, ‘Disability facts and figures’: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/disability-facts-and-figures/disability-facts-and-figures#fn:3><https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/disability-facts-and-figures/disability-facts-and-figures> [date accessed 22 March 2016]

Special educational needs

In January 2015, the Department for Education and Department of Health published statutory guidance⁵ for organisations that work with and support children and young people with special educational needs (SEN) or disabilities. This guidance defines SEN as:

- A child or young person has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her.
- A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she:
 - has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or
 - has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions
- For children aged two or more, special educational provision is educational or training provision that is additional to or different from that made generally for other children or young people of the same age by mainstream schools, maintained nursery schools, mainstream post-16 institutions or by relevant early years providers. For a child under two years of age, special educational provision means educational provision of any kind.
- A child under compulsory school age has special educational needs if he or she is likely to fall within the definition above when they reach compulsory school age or would do so if special educational provision was not made for them (Section 20 Children and Families Act 2014).
- Post-16 institutions often use the term learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD). The term SEN is used in this Code across the 0-25 age range but includes LDD.

76 per cent of respondents (508 people) said that they did not have special educational needs (SEN) compared to 15 per cent (101 people) who said that they did have SEN. This is equal to figures at national level for England where data from the Department for Education⁶ states that 15.4 per cent of pupils in schools in England have identified special educational needs (equivalent to 1,301,445 pupils).

Table 4: Survey respondents by special educational needs (SEN)

| | Non-eligible respondents total | Eligible respondents total |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Yes | 106 (14.29%) | 101 (15%) |
| No | 591 (79.65%) | 508 (76%) |
| Prefer not to say | 66 (8.65%) | 63 (9.34%) |

Care of local authority

25 people (4 per cent) reported that they are, or have been, in the care of a local authority. This is compared to 90 per cent (607 people) that did not (the remaining survey respondents either

⁵ HM Government, 'SEND Code of Practice': https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/398815/SEND_Code_of_Practice_January_2015.pdf []

⁶ Department for Education, *Statistical First Release: Special educational needs in England* (January 2015): https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/447917/SFR25-2015_Text.pdf

skipped this question or preferred not to say). In 2014, the National Audit Office reported that there were 68,110 children in care on 31 March 2013⁷. This meant that 0.6 per cent of all children aged up to 18 years were in care. This figure represents an increase of 2 per cent compared with March 2012 and an 18 per cent increase compared with March 2000 with the number of children in care at its highest level for 20 years.

Table 5: Survey respondents by whether they are, or have been, in the care of a local authority

| | Non-eligible respondents total | Eligible respondents total |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Yes | 31 (4.16%) | 25 (3.72%) |
| No | 689 (92.36%) | 607 (90.33%) |
| Prefer not to say | 42 (5.51%) | 40 (5.96%) |

Trouble with the law

84 per cent of survey respondents have not been in trouble with the law (561 people). 57 people (9 per cent of respondents) advised that they have been in trouble with the law. 2015 data from the Youth Justice Board and Ministry of Justice⁸ show that in 2012/13 (the latest available arrests data) there were 1.07 million arrests for notifiable offences in England and Wales, of which 126,809 were of people aged 10-17 years. These 10-17 year olds arrested accounted for 11.8 per cent of all the arrests, whereas all 10-17 year olds make up 10.5 per cent of the total population of England and Wales of offending age.

In 2013/14, 25,625 youth cautions were issued by the Police. There were also 400 Penalty Notices for Disorder (PNDs) given to 16-17 year olds in 2013/14 and in 2013 there were 277 Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) given to young people. Overall there were 90,769 proven offences committed by young people that resulted in a caution or conviction in 2013/14. In 2013/14, there were 22,393 first time entrants (FTEs) to the Youth Justice System. In 2013/14, 30 per cent of FTEs to the Youth Justice System were young people aged 10-14.

Table 6: Survey respondents according to whether they have ever been in trouble with the law

| | Non-eligible respondents total | Eligible respondents total |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Yes | 60 (8.03%) | 57 (8.48%) |
| No | 646 (86.48%) | 561 (83.48%) |
| Prefer not to say | 56 (7.34%) | 9 (1.34%) |

Caring responsibilities

The NHS defines a young carer, as someone aged 18 or under who helps look after a relative who has a condition, such as a disability, illness, mental health condition, or a drug or alcohol problem⁹. 103 people (15 per cent) advised that they have caring responsibilities compared to 79 per cent that do not (515 people). Figures from the ONS suggest 244,000 people under 19 are carers¹⁰. There are 149,000 young carers aged between 15 and 19; twice as many as in the 10-to-14 age range. The

⁷ NAO, 'Children in care': <http://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Children-in-care1.pdf>

⁸ Ministry of Justice and Youth Justice Board, *Youth Justice Statistics 2013/14*: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/399380/youth-justice-stats-exec-summary-2.pdf

⁹ NHS, 'Being a young carer – your rights': <http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/Pages/young-carers-rights.aspx>

¹⁰ ONS, *2011 Census: Detailed Characteristics for England and Wales*, (March 2011): <http://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/bulletins/2011census/2013-05-16>

ONS also reports that girls are slightly more likely to be carers than boys. Among 15-to-19-year-olds, about 5 per cent of girls are carers compared to about 4 per cent of boys.

Table 7: Survey respondents by whether they have, or have ever, had caring responsibilities

| | Non-eligible respondents total | Eligible respondents total |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Yes | 121 (16.29%) | 103 (15.33%) |
| No | 586 (78.87%) | 516 (76.79%) |
| Prefer not to say | 55 (7.21%) | 53 (7.89%) |

Multiple 'risk factors'

64 people (14 per cent of respondents) reported having more than one 'risk factor' for example disability and caring responsibilities.

Section 2: Responses to survey questions

This section presents answers to each of the questions in the survey. Survey responses were analysed in two ways. First, responses were analysed to look at the ‘overall picture’, for example, the response/s that most people selected in response to the question. Second, the responses were categorised in terms of ten variables:

- Age
- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Type of educational institution attended
- Geographical area
- Whether they have a disability
- Whether they have special educational needs
- Whether they are/or have been in the care of a local authority
- Whether they have ever been in trouble with the law
- Whether they have/have had responsibility for caring for someone else.

1. How do survey respondents perceive the options at age 16?

a) *The options were exciting and/or they were excited to be making a decision*

Figures 6 and 7 show the extent that people from all age groups agree with the statements that (a) the options open, or that were open, to them at age 16 were exciting, and (b) they are, or were, excited about making a decision at 16.

Overall most respondents felt that the options were exciting and they were excited at making a decision (39 per cent agreed/strongly agreed with this statement). 38 per cent of respondents were neutral. When asked whether they were excited about making a decision at 16, most respondents (46 per cent) either agreed or strongly agreed.

Figure 6: Options at 16 were exciting (in percentages)

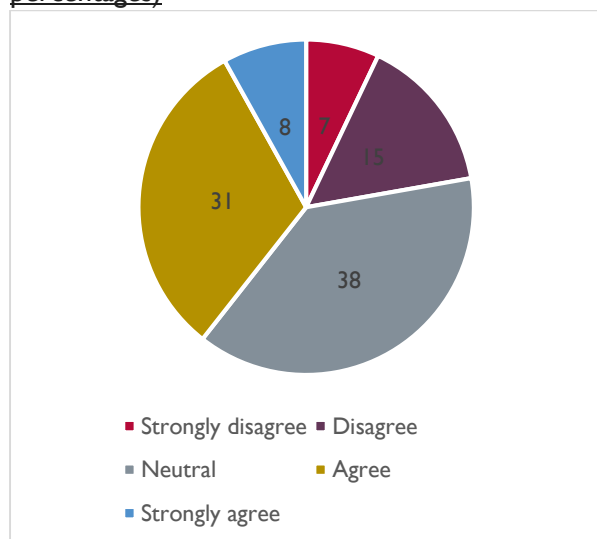
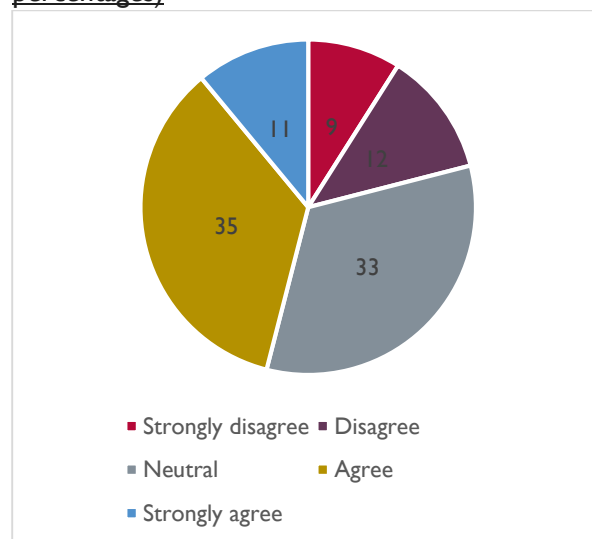


Figure 7: Excited about making a decision (in percentages)



Differences by age group (see [figures A1 and A2 in the Annex](#))

- The same proportion (36 per cent) of respondents aged 16–18 said they were excited when making a decision at 16 as those who said they were neutral.
- Most people aged 19–24 (33 per cent) did not agree that the options at 16 were exciting. However, they were largely neutral (31 per cent of respondents) about whether they were excited when they made a decision at this age.

Differences by gender ([see figures A3 and A4 in the Annex](#))

- Males were more positive about this question with 45 per cent of males agreeing or strongly agreeing that options at 16 were exciting and 52 per cent saying that they were excited at making a decision at 16, compared to 34 per cent and 44 per cent of females respectively.

Differences by ethnicity ([see figures A5 and A6 in the Annex](#))

- With the exception of respondents in the 'other ethnic group' category, all ethnic groups were positive about the options open at age 16, with most people agreeing or strongly agreeing that the options were exciting.
- All ethnic groups either agreed or strongly agreed that they were excited about making a decision at age 16.

Differences by other characteristics

Type of school:

- A higher proportion of people from state-run or state-funded non-selective schools felt that the options at 16 were exciting (45 per cent agreed or strongly agreed with this statement compared to 22 per cent that disagreed or strongly disagreed).
- More people from further education colleges were positive about the options (44 per cent agreeing or strongly agreeing compared to 19 per cent).
- Most people agreed or strongly agreed that they were excited at making a decision at 16, regardless of the type of school they attended.

Regions:

- With the exception of the East Midlands and Yorkshire & Humber, more people felt that the options at 16 were exciting compared to those that did not.
- When it came to whether they were excited to be making a decision at 16, the same number of people in East Midlands were excited as those that were not (3 people). This was also the case for respondents from the North West where a similar number of people agreed or strongly agreed (13 people) that they were excited as those that disagreed or strongly disagreed (12 people).

Other characteristics:

- 41 per cent of people with a disability did not feel that the options were exciting. This is comparison to 30 per cent of people with a disability that agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.
- A similar number of people with caring responsibilities agreed or strongly agreed that the options were exciting (35 respondents) as those that disagreed or strongly disagreed (36 people).
- When asked whether they were excited when making a decision at 16, the majority of people with a disability, SEN, in care, who had been in trouble with the law or with caring responsibilities agreed or strongly agreed.

b) They were in control of their decisions and/or other people were in control

When asked whether they felt in control of what to do at 16, most people were neutral. However, they disagreed that other people were in control of these decisions (see Figures 8 and 9).

Figure 8: Felt in control of what to do at 16 (in percentages)

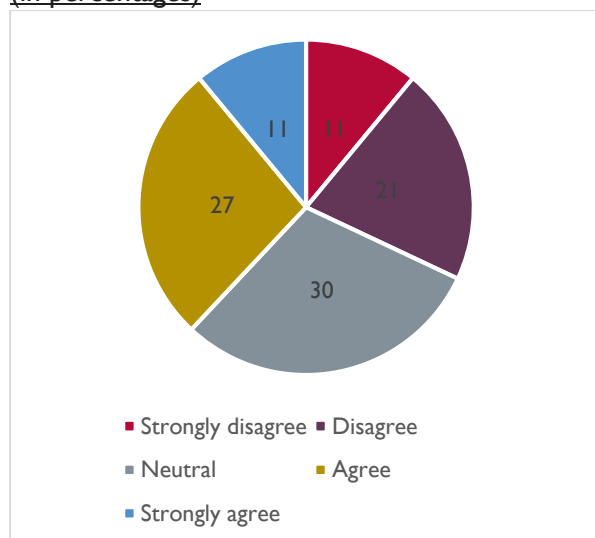
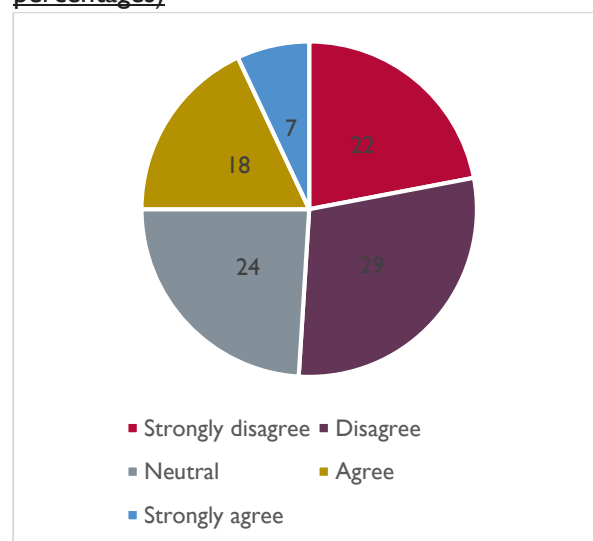


Figure 9: Other people in control (in percentages)



Differences by age group (see figures A7 and A8 in Annex)

- Most people aged 14–16 were neutral when asked whether they felt, or that others were, in control of the decisions they would be making at 16 (32 per cent and 26 per cent). A similar proportion of people in this age category did not agree that others were in control of their decisions (25 per cent).
- When asked whether they felt in control of what they did at 16, the same proportion of people (30 per cent) in the 16–18 age group were neutral as agreed. Regarding whether they felt that other people were in control, most 16–18 year olds disagreed (33 per cent).
- Most people aged 19–24 did not feel in control over their choices at 16 (34 per cent) and also felt that others had control over these decisions (31 per cent).

Differences by gender (see figures A9 and A10 in Annex)

- More males felt in control of their decisions at 16. In contrast, most females were neutral about this.
- Both male and female respondents did not feel that other people were in control of these decisions.

Differences by ethnicity (see figures A11 and A12 in Annex)

- Most respondents from white or Asian/Asian British ethnic groups felt in control of their decisions at age 16. In contrast, the majority of respondents from mixed ethnic groups did not feel in control at 16. Most black/black British respondents and those from other ethnic groups were neutral about this.
- In relation to the question about whether people thought that other people had control over their decisions at 16, the majority of respondents from all ethnic groups disagreed. As with the previous question, the majority of respondents from black/black British ethnic groups were neutral about this.

Differences by other characteristics

Type of school:

- Responses about whether people felt in control of what they did at 16 varied by type of school. Most people attending state-funded, state-run that are selective, further education colleges did feel in control. In contrast, people attending non-selective state schools (although this was a marginal number: 79 people compared to 75) and sixth forms did not feel in control. The same

number of people from independent and other educational institutions felt in control as those who did not.

- More people disagreed that other people were in control of what they did at 16 than agreed with this statement, regardless of types of school attended (268 people compared to 128). The exceptions to this were respondents at independent schools and other types of educational institution where more people agreed/strongly agreed than disagreed/strongly disagreed (16 people compared to 11).

Regions:

- A larger proportion of people from the East Midlands, Greater London (small difference e.g. 25 people versus 21), the North West (again a small difference 15 versus 13 people) and Yorkshire & Humber did not feel in control over their decisions at 16.
- In the East Midlands, Scotland, South West and Wales, more people agreed or strongly agreed that other people had control of their decisions at 16 than disagreed/strongly disagreed (21 people compared to 6).

Other characteristics:

- Most people with a disability, SEN, who had been in care, in trouble with the law or with caring responsibilities did not feel in control of their decisions at 16 (169 people compared to 112).

c) There was a range of options and/or there was not much choice

Most people felt that there were lots of options to choose from at age 16 and disagreed that there was not much choice (figures 10 and 11).

Figure 10: Lots of options to choose at 16 (in percentages)

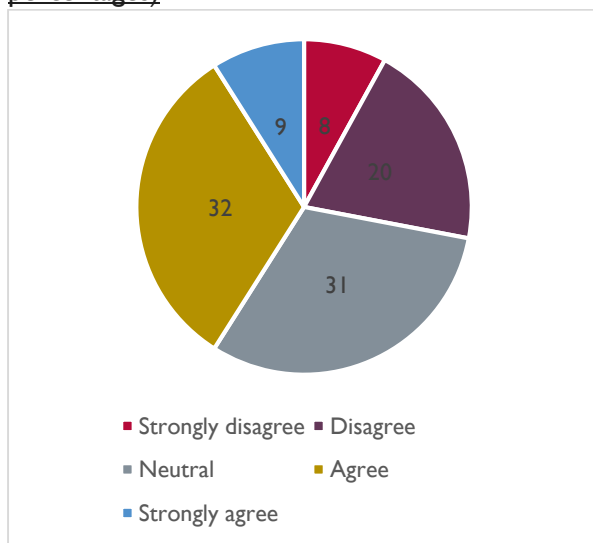
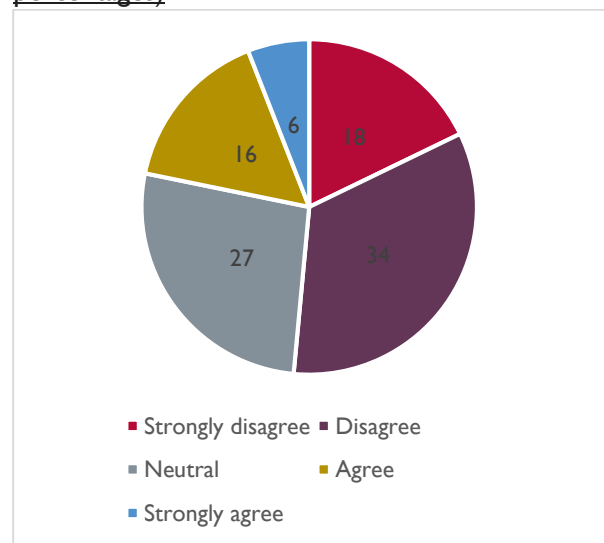


Figure 11: Not much choice at 16 (in percentages)



Differences by age group (see figures A13 and A14 in Annex)

- Most people aged 14–16 and 16–18 felt that there were lots of options to choose at 16 and did not that agree that there was little choices open to them.
- In contrast, most 19–24 respondents did not agree that there was lots of options open to them when they were 16 and felt that was not much choice at this age.

Differences by gender (see figures A15 and A16 in Annex)

- Most males agreed that there were lots of options open to them at 16 (37 per cent), although a significant proportion (30 per cent) strongly disagreed with this. Most males (34 per cent) disagreed that there was not much choice at this age.

- Most females (30 per cent) were neutral about whether there was lots of options at I6. A slightly smaller proportion (28 per cent) did agree however. As with male respondents, most females (35 per cent) disagreed with the statement that there was not much choice at I6.

Differences by ethnicity (see figures A17 and A18 in Annex)

- Most respondents from all ethnic groups agreed that there were lots of options to choose from at I6. The exception to this is those from other ethnic groups, where the largest proportion of people were neutral about this statement.
- Most people from each ethnic group disagreed that there was not much choice. People from mixed and other ethnic groups were largely neutral about this statement.

Differences by other characteristics

Type of school:

- A higher number of respondents from all types of schools agreed that there were lots of options at I6 compared to those who disagreed (243 compared to 158), and disagreed that there was not much choice compared to those who agreed (290 compared to 130).
- The same number of people from independent schools disagreed as agreed with the statement that there was not much choice at I6.

Regions:

- A higher number of respondents from six regions (East Midlands, Greater London, North east, North West, Scotland and the South West) did not feel that there were a lot of options compared to those who did (55 versus 33 people).
- Regarding the statement that there was not much choice at I6, more respondents from four regions (East Midlands, Scotland, South West and Wales) agreed than disagreed with this (15 compared to 10 people). The same number of people from Yorkshire & Humber agreed as disagreed with this statement (3 people).

Other characteristics:

- There were only two categories in which a higher number of people did not feel that there was much choice than did so. These were respondents with SEN (38 compared to 34 people) and those who had been in care (9 compared to 8 people).
- More people disagreed that there was not much choice than agreed with this statement regardless of whether they had a disability, SEN, had been in care, been in trouble with the law or had caring responsibilities (160 compared to 100 people).

d) Wanted to choose options and/or options were uninspiring

Most respondents disagreed with the statement that they did not want to choose any of the options open to them at I6 (37 per cent). When asked whether they agreed that the options open to them at I6 were uninspiring, most respondents were either neutral (32 per cent) or disagreed (31 per cent).

Figure 12: Did not want to choose any of options open at 16 (in percentages)

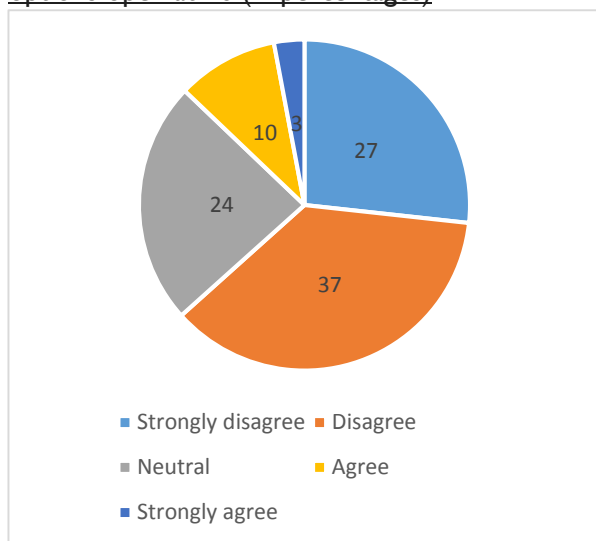
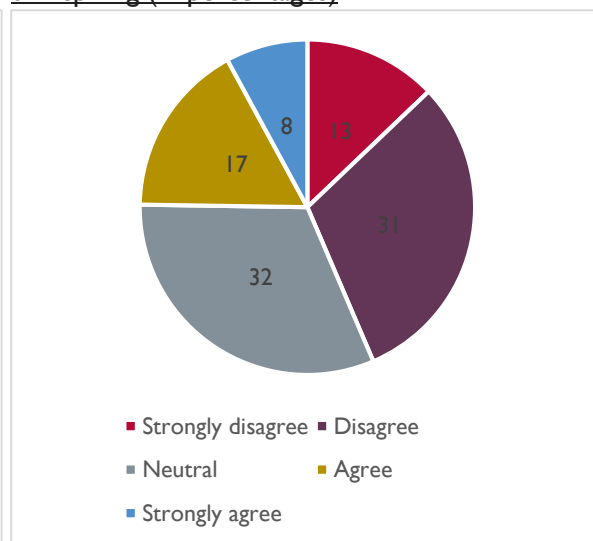


Figure 13: Options open at 16 are/were uninspiring (in percentages)



Differences by age group (see figures A19 and A20 in Annex)

- Across all age groups, most people disagreed with the statement that they did not want to choose any options open to them at 16.
- Regarding the statement that the options at 16 were uninspiring, most people aged 14–16 (39 per cent) were neutral, most 16–18 (33 per cent) disagreed, and most (32 per cent) 19–24 agreed.

Differences by gender (see figures A21 and A22 in Annex)

- A majority of both male and female respondents (36 per cent and 41 per cent respectively) disagreed that they did not want to choose the options open to them at 16.
- A similar proportion of males and females (59 per cent and 66 per cent) were neutral about whether the options were uninspiring as those that disagreed with this statement.

Differences by ethnicity (see figures A23 and A24 in Annex)

- More respondents from white (38 per cent and 31 per cent) and Asian/Asian British (31 per cent and 45 per cent) ethnicities disagreed that they did not want to choose the options open to them at 16 and that the options were uninspiring than any other response.
- Most people from mixed ethnic (49 per cent and 46 per cent) and other ethnic backgrounds were neutral (34 per cent and 47 per cent) about whether they did not want to choose the options at 16.

Differences by other characteristics

Type of school:

- Regardless of type of school, more people disagreed that they did not want to choose any of the options open to them at 16 than those who agreed with this statement (361 compared to 72 people).

Regions:

- With the exception of people in Wales and the West Midlands where the same number of people disagreed as agreed (4 and 2 people respectively), most people across the various regions disagreed that they did not want to choose any of the options at 16 (324 compared to 67 people).

Other characteristics:

- A higher number of people disagreed with the statement that they did not want to choose any of the options at 16 than agreed, regardless of whether they had a disability, SEN, had been in care, trouble with the law or had caring responsibilities (205 compared to 69 people).

e) Awareness of options other than university of apprenticeships

Most people reported that they were aware of options other than university of apprenticeship (39 per cent) and disagreed that their only options were to go to university or undertake an apprenticeship (29 per cent).

Figure 14: Aware of options other than university or apprenticeships (in percentages)

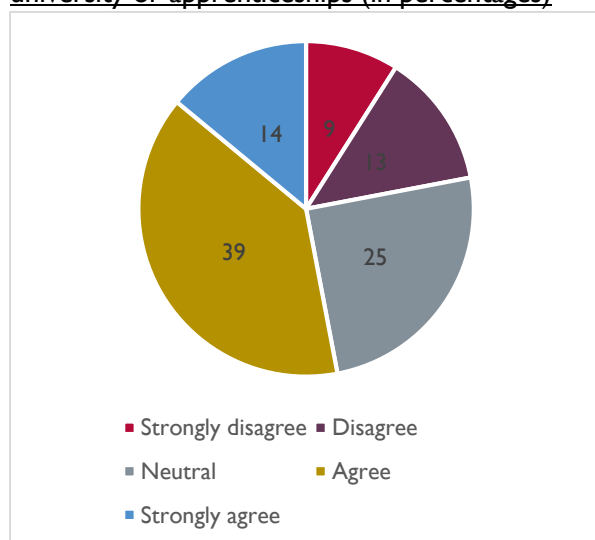
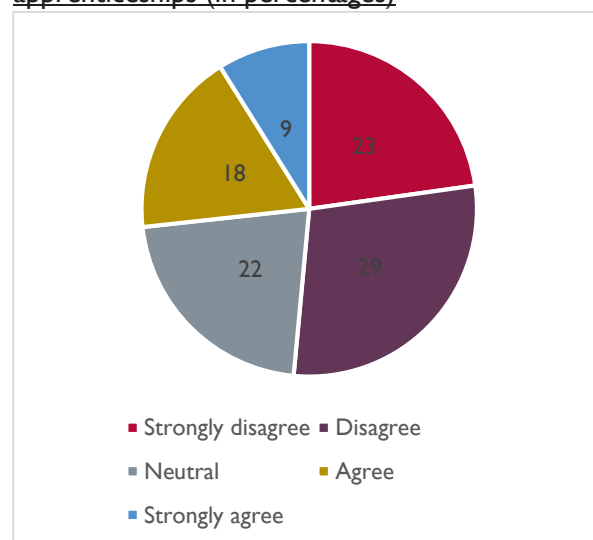


Figure 15: Only options university or apprenticeships (in percentages)



Differences by age group (see figures A25 and A26 in Annex)

- Most people in all age groups agreed that they were aware of other options that university or apprenticeships. While most people aged 14–16 and 16–18 also disagreed that their only options were university or apprenticeships, the largest majority of people aged 19–24 (27 per cent) agreed that these were their only options.

Differences by gender (see figures A27 and A28 in Annex)

- Most males and females agreed that they were aware of options other than university of apprenticeships (44 per cent and 36 per cent) and disagreed that these were their only options (29 per cent).

Differences by ethnicity (see figures A29 and A30 in Annex)

- The largest proportion of respondents in the white (40 per cent), Asian/Asian British (38 per cent) and mixed (39 per cent) ethnic groups agreed with the statement that they were aware of options other than going to university or undertaking an apprenticeship. Similarly, the biggest proportion of respondents of white (30 per cent) and Asian/Asian British (38 per cent) ethnicities disagreed that their only options were to go to university or to do an apprenticeship.
- Respondents categorised as Black/black British (35 per cent) were largely neutral about whether they were aware of options other than university or apprenticeships. 30 per cent of people in this ethnic group did agree however that these were their only options; the largest response of this question.
- Regarding whether they were aware of other options, the same proportion of people from other ethnic group (34 per cent) were neutral as agreed with the statement. They were also

largely neutral about whether university and/or apprenticeships were their only option (34 per cent).

Differences by other characteristics

Type of school:

- With the exception of respondents attending independent schools, a larger number of people agreed that they were aware of options other than going to university or doing an apprenticeship. The difference between respondents in independent schools was small. One third (33 per cent) of people disagreed compared to 27 per cent that agreed.
- When asked whether universities or apprenticeships were their only option, it was only respondents from one type of educational institution (state-funded or state-run selective schools) that more people agreed rather than disagreed, although the differences were small (30 people compared to 27).

Regions:

- In Greater London, a slightly greater number of people disagreed that they were aware of options other university or apprenticeships than agreed with this statement however, the difference between them was small (23 people compared to 21). In Wales and the East Midlands, the same number of people (2 and 5 people respectively) agreed as disagreed that they were aware of other options than university or apprenticeship.
- A higher number of people from four regions (East, Scotland, South East and West Midlands) disagreed that university or apprenticeships were their only option (226 people compared to 89). In six regions (East Midlands, Greater London, North West, Northern Ireland, South West and Wales), more people agreed that university and apprenticeships were their only options (55 people versus 41). The same number of people in the North East (2) and Yorkshire & Humber (2) agreed as disagreed with this statement.

Other characteristics:

- Across all other characteristics (disability, SEN, those who had been in care or in trouble with the law, and those with caring responsibilities), more people said they were aware of other options than university or apprenticeships and disagreed that these were their only options.

f) Options compared to friends and others

Most people were neutral when asked how much they agreed that (i) they had more options open to them than their friends or peers; (ii) they have the same options at age 16 as other people their age; and (iii) that other people their age had more options open to them at age 16.

Figure 16: More options open than friends or peers (in percentages)

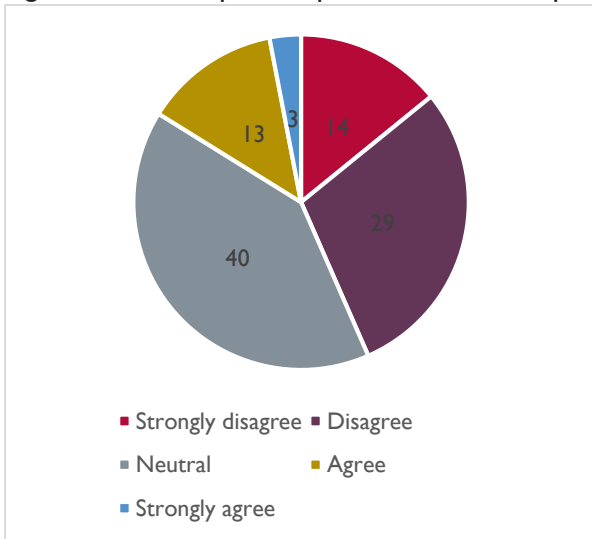


Figure 17: Same options as other people my age (in percentages)

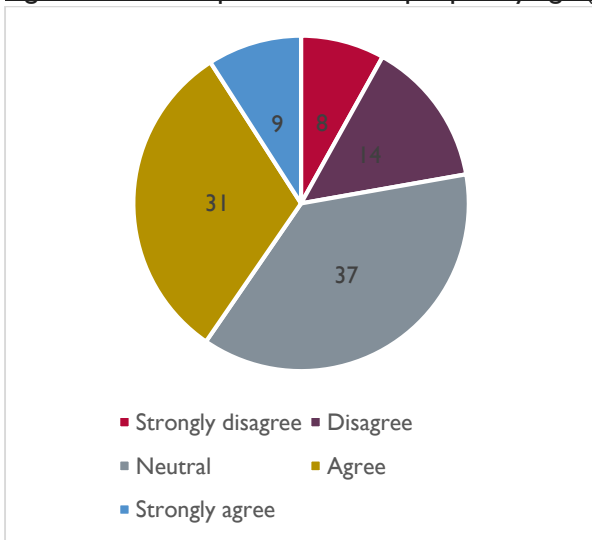
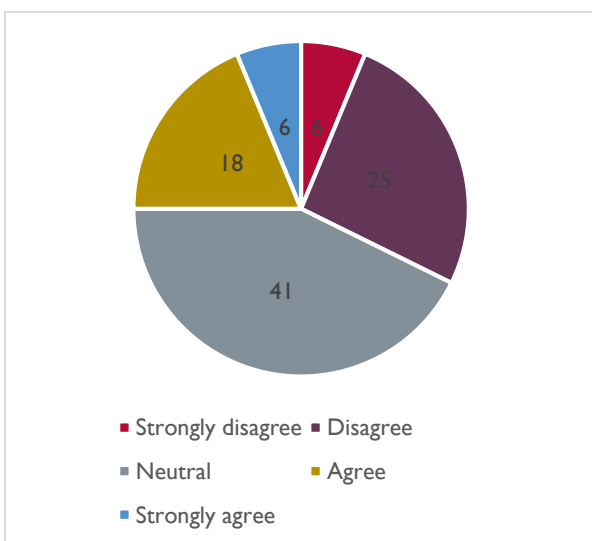


Figure 18: Other people my age have/had more options open to them at 16 (in percentages)



Differences by age group ([see figures A31, A32 and A33 in Annex](#))

- Most people aged 14–16 and 16–18 were neutral regarding whether they had more options open to them than friends or peers. In contrast, a majority of people aged 19–24 disagreed with this statement.
- When asked the extent that they had the same options as other people their age and, whether other people of the same age have more options open to them, across all age groups most people were neutral.

Differences by gender ([see figures A34, A35 and A36 in Annex](#))

- Most males were neutral about whether they had more options open to them than their friends or peers, whether they had the same options as other people their age, and whether other people their age had more options open to them at 16 than them.
- In comparison, most female disagreed that they had more options open to them than their friends or peers. In line with this, most female agreed that they had the same options as other people their age (although there was only a 2 per cent difference in the proportion of females that were neutral about this statement). Regarding whether other people their age had more options open to them at 16 than them, most females were neutral.

Differences by ethnicity ([see figures A37, A38 and A39 in Annex](#))

- A majority of respondents from all ethnic groups were neutral when asked whether they had more options open to them than their friends or peers.
- With the exception of those of mixed ethnic backgrounds, most respondents were also neutral about whether had the same options as other people their age and whether other people their age had more options open to them at 16 than them, most females were neutral.
- Respondents from mixed ethnicity were equally neutral as agreed that they had more options open to them and disagreed that other people their age had more options open to them at 16 than them.

Differences by other characteristics

Type of school:

- Across all types of educational institution, a higher proportion of respondents disagreed that they had more options open to the than friends or peers rather than agreed (251 people compared to 97). They agreed that they had the same options as other people their age, and disagreed that other people their age had more options open to them (248 compared to 122 people), and disagreed that other people had more options open to them than they did (200 people versus 139).

Regions:

- More people disagreed that they had more options open to them than friends or peers across all regions (237 people compared to 87) and agreed that they had the same options as others of the same age (221 compared to 117 people). With the exception of Wales and Yorkshire & Humber, more people also disagreed that other people had more options than them (186 compared to 135 people).

Other characteristics:

- When asked to what extent they agreed that they had more options as friends and peers, more people disagreed than agreed (170 people compared to 56).
- Responses were more mixed to the statement about whether they had the same options as others and differences between the number of people who agreed and disagreed were minor. A slightly higher number of respondents with a disability disagreed (29 people compared to 27), while people with a SEN (32 people compared to 30), those people who had been in trouble with the law (18 compared to 11), and those with caring responsibilities (40 compared to 24

- Law (1 person)
- Maths (6 people)
- media (7 people)
- medical science (1 person)
- motor mechanics (6 people)
- Music (4 people)
- PE (1 person)
- Performing Arts including Dance and drama (8 people)
- Photography (5 people)
- Politics (1 person)
- Psychology (2 people)
- Public services (2 people)
- Retail (2 people)
- Science including biology and chemistry (5 people)
- social care (1 person)
- Social science (1 person)
- social work (1 person)
- sociology (1 person)
- sport (6 people)
- travel and tourism (7 people)
- uniformed and public services (4 people)

These included a number of different qualifications from A level, BTEC (level 2 and 3), apprenticeship and in many different settings such as sixth forms or colleges. In talking about the different qualifications and levels that were available, a few people expressed a hierarchy between them:

“Because of 'Academic Status' I was "advised" to go to Sixth Form which would enable me to go to university. No options other than a BTEC college and Army were given to my peers and myself during year 11. I attended a local Sixth form and was told to choose 5 A/S levels because of my GCSE results.”

White British female respondent aged 19–24, attended non-selective state school in Blackpool, with caring responsibilities.

“When I was finishing school I found it extremely difficult to choose options on what I should pursue in life. The options my school gave me strongly encouraged going to university and saw going into the workplace a negative option. I felt during secondary school only one tutor helped me choose the path that made me happy. At times during coursework and lessons I felt like I was learning nothing and the classes I were put in didn't push me enough. Especially maths, I feel like if I had been in a different class I could have been pushed to my greatest potential but I feel the class was of people that didn't want to learn, and I did but I ended up giving up because of that.”

White British female respondent aged 19–24, attended further education college in Cambridge, with caring responsibilities.

“They glorified going to college and then university afterwards rather than informing you of all your choices.”

White British male respondent aged 19–24, attended non-selective state school in Blackpool in Cambridge, with SEN.

“I went to a grammar school and my only choice was literally just sixth form. No education on apprenticeships or anything like that as these weren't 'beneficial' to people 'like us'.”

White British female aged 16–18 attending selective state school in Gloucester.

“I got told that I wasn't smart enough to do sixth form. So my only option was to go to college.”

White British male 16–18 attending further education college in Huntingdon.

Here, respondents spoke about the lack of options they felt they had, or the limited guidance they received at this time:

“I dropped out of school halfway through the first year of A-Levels. I had always been told that I had to do A-Levels and then go to university. I decided that that wasn't what I wanted to do, but had no idea what to do when I left school. I fulfilled the big cliché and got a part time job at McDonald's. I had no information of other routes so I fell straight into employment. I now work full time in a supermarket and am planning to climb the ladder into management within the company. I still know next to nothing about apprenticeships but the ones I have seen have been for a ridiculously low wage and I live alone so that is certainly not sustainable for me. It looks like a legal slave labour most of the time.”

White British female aged 16–18, attended selective school in Caerdydd with disabilities, SEN and caring responsibilities.

“My teachers only seemed interested in those going through to "A" level and seemed to know nothing about other options or even working life outside of education environment. I guess that is all they have experienced - school, sixth form, university degree, PGCE, back to school, so they can't be expected to advise on anything else they don't know about. We need more teachers who have worked outside of education if they are to give better careers advice. I think that other providers of qualifications and training should have been allowed to come into school to tell us about alternatives, e.g. apprenticeships, but the school see them as competition - trying to take away their best pupils at 16! I eventually got an apprenticeship, after good advice from a private training provider and did a technician apprenticeship at Level 3. This was linked into a full time job alongside. I got good enough grades on the BTEC associated with it to go to university, which I am to do in September.”

White British male, 19–24 attended non-selective state school in Leicester.

“My school didn't really help me make my choice, and even though most of the courses are the same now, I didn't get the chance to explore them. I could [have] been doing the course I am now a year earlier if I'd known it existed, which my school didn't help me discover. Instead, I spent 6 months doing a course I didn't like because I felt like it was my only option, dropping out and missing 6 months of possible education.”

White British female, 16–18, attending further education college in Cambridge.

“I had no input as far as careers so I was not guided through it, I made some mistakes which led to stress, anxiety. I went straight from school into 6th form as this was seen what you needed to do, the school aim was to get people into further education. I left three months before the end of my A-Levels due to stress, pressure and anxiety of me wrongly choosing the career stream I thought I would wanted. This has snow balled onto me missing University which is what I wanted but not now sure why I did apart from this is seemingly what is expected from school. I was not prepared for any other options, I did not know about apprenticeships or prepared properly for the jobs market. I found my own way into employment through contacts, I feel I am fortunate to have a job now in a Pharmacy with many training options and support available.”

White British female aged 19–24, attended sixth form in Fleetwood.

“No one helped me to choose what I could do, so my choices were to do construction related study which I enjoy. After I left year 11 on summer holidays I worked in a factory by agency.”

White other 16–18 year old male attending further education college.

“During my time at secondary school, it was drummed into me that I should continue onto the school's sixth form, which I did not want to do. I was not given any advice on what options I had outside of A-Levels. The message was "do your A-Levels, then progress onto University", as though that was the only route! I did my own research and attended college open days off my own back, which is why I went to college and studied for a BTEC National Diploma. In hindsight, if I had been given impartial careers advice I would not have gone on to study Performing Arts, as I made that choice on a whim and did think about how it would impact my future. Thankfully my BTEC in Performing Arts did not hinder my chances at university and I successfully went on to study Journalism. I just feel that my time at college could have been spent better if I had been given clear careers guidance.”

White British female aged 19–24, attended further education college in Peterborough.

Some respondents highlighted the particular difficulties faced by those with low or minimum qualifications:

“There was not much guidance when I was leaving School especially with the grades I received at GCSE the only thing it seemed I could do was go to college (only one accepted my application) and do an entry level and resit my GCSEs. I found this very hard and therefore didn't stay the full length of the course and didn't get my GCSEs. I then struggled to find a job due to this however after a while I managed to get an apprenticeship but didn't do my maths or English through that and am only just redoing them through my current job at the age of 22.”

White British female aged 19–24 attended non-selective state school in Preston. Had been in local authority care.

“I left school without the academic level needed to be offered the full range of choices. My only option was to stay at school or go to college to study at level 1. I have had some support during the past 5 years but my maths and English progress has been slow. I believe this is due to me being labelled with learning difficulties but not having a focussed learning plan or knowing what my specific needs are. I have recently discovered some tools which are helping me with my studies and want to know why they were not available or identified by the college during the last 5 years. I have been told this is due to funding.”

White British female aged 19–24 attended non-selective state school in London, with disabilities and SEN.

Several respondents referred to the challenging circumstances they faced at this age and/or when making these decisions. These included having “no fixed home address” disability, illness, limited options due to geographical location and pressure from parents of guardians:

“Because of what school I go to, my friends and I feel a lot of pressure to go on to sixth form and do A-Levels, there is literally no other choice for me. I don't mind studying if I get good grades. I think college and

apprenticeships are good but they're not right for me. Also it seems to me as the only way you can get on in life and have a good quality of living in the future is to go to university, and even at university it depends what you study because some courses lead to no job and loads of debt.”

Mixed ethnicity female aged 14–16 attending selective state school in Cheadle.

“I wanted to join the British Army at the age of 16 because that is where my heart lied. The Army careers Sergeant told me my best option was to go to college so I enrolled onto an engineering course at Canterbury college and studied there for 2 years. I then went back to the Army careers office and had an interview date arranged, after passing the interview I was shortlisted onto an army insight course with the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers. I was told the week after the course that I had secured a place on a selection weekend and prepared for it. Just before the weekend I went for a medical at my doctor’s surgery and something was flagged up, after many tests I was diagnosed with a kidney condition that stopped me from progressing into the job of my dreams. After that I just gave up, I didn't try anymore, didn't care about anything else but the fact I will never be able to do the job I wanted to do since I was a young child. It was then my friend mentioned Middleton Murray traineeship so thought I would give it a go as things couldn't get [any] worse than they already were. From a 16 year old's perspective, it's hard to find a job because no one wants anyone with no experience, some companies don't understand that the people they're looking for already have a job and won't get the right individual until they learn to give someone like a 16 year old the experience so that they can progress.”

White British male aged 19–24 attended further education college in Kent.

“I was never told about any other route [than to do A-Levels and go to University] I could go down. We were given careers advice but the gentleman I saw said the same thing and said to do my A-Levels and go to University. I was also told that I was too academic to do just 3 A-Levels and I was required to do 4. At one point I was actually doing 5. As a result of this, I left halfway through year 12 and got a full time job. To this day, I am still not aware of the routes I could have gone down. It is only since starting work at the local council that I have been able to see a possible future career path which involves going to university for a degree which I feel is worth the £9000 per year tuition fees.”

White British female aged 19–24 attended selective state school in Keighley, West Yorkshire.

“I come from Kings Lynn, and the only realistic option I had was to either do a BTEC course at College or go to a sixth form. It was a very difficult decision, as at 16, people always expect you to know what job you want when you're older, and have your life planned out, when in fact it is and was the total opposite for me! I ended up just going along with what my friends did, because I had no idea what to do! There are plenty of weekend jobs available for people our age, yet some pay a very low amount, and do take advantage, the one I have pays quite well.”

White British female aged 16–18 attending non-selective state school in King's Lynn.

“I am looking to go into a job focused on history, however history is constantly being abused by politicians today. We are forced to study

specific time periods, especially the 20th Century which to me is as boring as it is pointless, and the learning is focused on specific events and (give me strength) source work. While I would like to be studying the medieval period, especially military history between around 400AD and 1500AD, I cannot, and so instead I have to look at America in the 1920s. Oh joy. I am certain I will simply have to go into sixth form and then University, as I have no idea where to look for a history-based apprenticeship. This is partly due to the fact that I am less and less sure about where I could get a job that could make use of my skills.”

White British male aged 14–16 attending selective state school in Peterborough.

“At 16 the only real options for most people are further education, an apprenticeship or employment (without any help with job seeking from government bodies). When I left mainstream education, which was actually age 14, I had zero control over my next few years regarding both education and life choices which would shape my future up until the present day. I attended a community organisation meeting with tutors 2-3 times per week for a few hours. I was 15 by this time as it took around 6 months before any intervention was made in relation to my non-attendance at school. I had only 4-5 months to prepare for exams and was only scheduled to sit 4, despite government targets of every pupil leaving with at least 5 at grade C/3. Needless to say I did not come close to this, receiving 3 at grade D/4 and one A. This one A grade allowed me to study a related subject at NC level. Full time courses are 2.5 days per week. This was after 3 years of applying for various other college courses and either receiving a "no" based on my lack of qualifications or failing to acquire funding due to the ridiculously complicated process. I studied the NC course up until late January when my mum became ill and was hospitalised. When discharged she required help with everyday tasks (such as walking, gripping objects such as door handles and turning keys) while she waited 4 months for physiotherapy. My travel allowance was not enough to cover my travel expenses and so I made up the difference (about two thirds of the total cost) with my maintenance bursary. However, due to staying at home to help my mum on occasion, I was stripped of my bursary and so unable to travel to college. It was the only college to offer the course I was on. I wasn't allowed to sit the end of unit assessments and as such, unable to progress to the next level course. I am now in the situation where I cannot get non-SAAS funding due to studying a different course... With regards to apprenticeships, I am now too old for most (being over 19), but was never able to apply for any as most ask for qualifications requiring at least 2 years study, or that the applicant be over 18. It is merely a way to receive labour whilst paying a third of NMW. Until apprentices receive the adult minimum wage, or preferably a living wage, AND have any costs relating to education as part of the apprenticeship reimbursed, the whole scheme will continue to be tax payer funded slave labour.”

White British female aged 19–24 with regular caring responsibilities who attended a non-selective state school.

“Because I have autism and not many GCSEs each college I looked at said that I should do life skills. I was mad when I was turned down just because I struggle with English and maths. I went to a sixth form and am doing 15 hours a week studying doing a level 3 diploma in public service. No apprenticeship and no jobs available because of my autism.”

White British female aged 16–18, attending sixth form in Preston with disabilities and SEN.

“I am filling in this form on behalf of my son with severe autism. He has not got the capacity to take part in this survey. My son stayed on at school until 19 years as there was little choice for him. He has now finished school and still no choices for him. The local authority feel it’s okay to invest money in one of their colleges to take people 18 plus with special educational needs. A one size fits all approach. No choices. No real support or future planning. Just what they feel my son needs without understanding what he needs. Just their idea of courses he needs which are not appropriate. Just to tick their boxes. I have created a services myself to accommodate young people like my son to give them choices. Life choices, education choices and when ready employment but certain people within the local authority are not happy with this idea. The college courses are not even full time! No real choices. No choices for employment. Lack of capacity to understand what is expected. No real training to help an autistic person into work. Just because a person with autism is 18 doesn't mean they are at that age mentally. It's like sending a 5 year old out to work! No one is listening to the needs of people with autism and their families. No real investment in SEN people. Look beyond the big charitable organisations who still are not meeting the needs of people with SEN. Everyone is different. People do not need a one size fits all approach.”

White British male, 19–24 attended independent or fee-paying school in Peterborough

“I know I can go to college and then university, or go into work, or get an apprenticeship. I want to do an academic job, so I think my only option is college or sixth form. I have been led to believe that apprenticeships are only for people wanting to do hands on jobs like plumbing, mechanics etc. I have no idea if this is true or not. I know what jobs are available in my chosen field, and what I need to do to get them. However, this is from my own research. I feel highly uneducated in my options, and feel like schools do not work hard enough to educate people my age about our options aside from college and university. I have no idea, for example, how many hours a college student will study for. I have about 8 months before I should have college applications in and school is not helping me sufficiently.”

White British female aged 14–16, attending non-selective school in Swanwick, Alfreton.

“When I was 16 and completed my GCSEs, I found myself in a position where no A level courses suited to me and I was very unaware of how many options there were to do in college at the time. School was too busy pressuring me into staying on to do A-Levels when I did not want to, rather than helping me explore other options. The only thing I knew I wanted when I was 16 was that I wanted to leave school. Nobody had fully explained apprenticeships to me and this made them seem unappealing. I ended up securing a part time job in retail.”

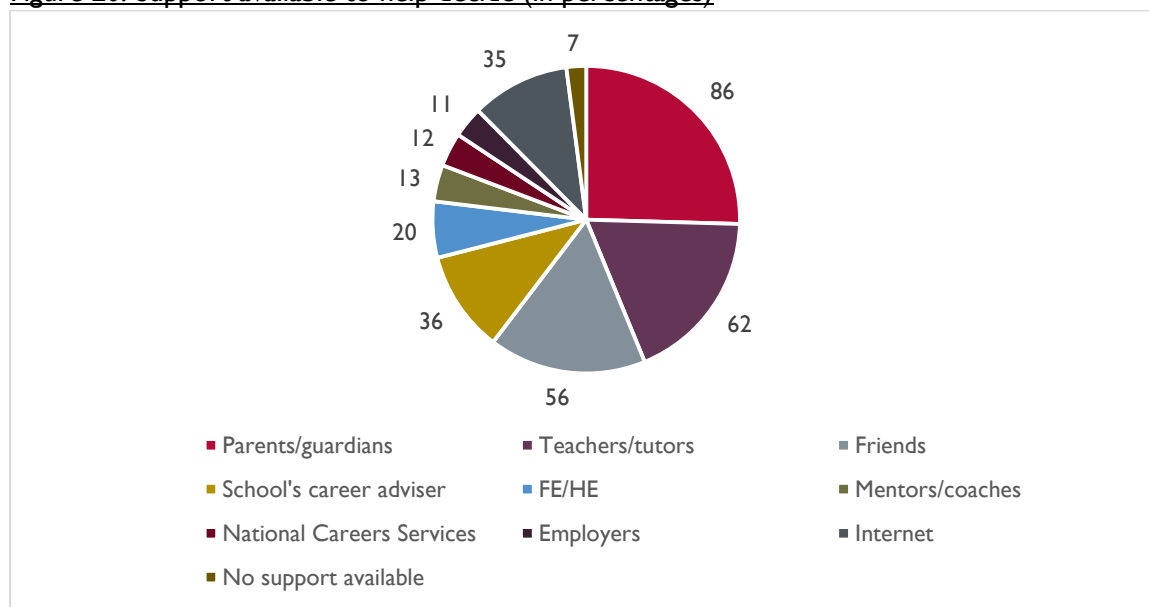
White British male 19–24, attended non-selective school in Wirral, Merseyside.

3. Support available

Respondents were asked to indicate the support that was available to them to help decide which options to choose at 16. Respondents were able to select all those that apply. Figure 20 shows the

proportion of respondents selecting each option. 86 per cent of respondents indicated that parents and/or guardians were a source of support for them in helping to decide the options to take. Teachers and/or tutors were also seen to be an important source of support with 62 per cent of respondents selecting this information. In comparison, 36 per cent of people indicated that their school's careers adviser was a source of support. [To see how responses to this question differed by age, gender and ethnicity, see figures A50 – A52 in Annex.](#)

Figure 20: Support available to help decide (in percentages)



Other support mentioned included youth support workers, private training providers, transition workers, care leavers and the former charity kids company.

Of the 14 respondents who said there was no support available, the following reasons were put forward:

“Advice I was given was not helpful and often not relevant to my situation.”
White British female aged 19–24 with regular caring responsibilities. Attended a non-selective state school in Cambridge.

“Although there was a Connexions adviser at school, I felt they did nothing to help in my next step in life. As they seemed to be external to the school, they knew nothing about me.”
White British female aged 19–24 with special educational needs and regular caring responsibilities. Attended a further education college in Cambridge.

“I feel I have wasted two years of my life because of the incompetent teachers at my school. [They] did not give me the guidance that I so desperately needed to leave school and find something that I enjoyed.”
White British female aged 19–24 with regular caring responsibilities in Colchester.

“The School I went to only cared if you were destined for university. When I found myself struggling with A-Levels I felt abandoned. There was no advice when picking A-Levels so I ended up choosing [subjects] that I had no hope of passing. Bexley youth advice only seemed to want to find you work in retail which was low paid and part time at best. They didn't

care for looking for trade jobs or apprenticeships in jobs where the UK is lacking a skill base in. It was pathetic and lazy on both fronts.”
White British male aged 19–24, attended a sixth form in Dartford, Greater London.

“In the past there were connexions workers to help and support you. Not all were good but at least they understood the limited choices available to you. Now with the education, health and care plan and the 0 to 25 transition pathway it’s all gone out the window. No choices, no real support, no real person centred planning. Just what certain people in the authority think should happen. No money available to invest in people with SEN. Not everyone in the authority is bad. It’s a real shame we do not listen to more people within the authority. Professionals that have a better understanding of what’s needed. Also start listening to what people want themselves however difficult that maybe. Don’t just listen to the minority few, or just the parent forums.”
White British male aged 19–24, attended an independent school in Peterborough.

“I was shunted from organisation to organisation, never being helped in any meaningful way, never being listened to, [or] asked what support I needed. I was only told what [was] going to happen.”
White British female aged 19–24 with regular caring responsibilities, attended a non-selective school.

“I had one rushed interview with the careers advice lady at the school and got nothing from it. No advice whatsoever as to my options available.”
White British female aged 19–24 with regular caring responsibilities who attended a non-selective state school in Rainham, Greater London.

“No support available [as] career advisor was fired due to cut backs. I had one meeting and the information provided was less than helpful.”
White British male aged 19–24 with a disability, special educational needs and regular caring responsibilities. Attended a non-selective state school in Rugby.

“Careers advice was poor at school, and local industry - was and still is dire due to a lack of planning and investment and training locally. There is no planned approach and has not been for two generations. This is a waste of talent.”
White British male aged 19–24 with special educational needs. Attended a sixth form college in Wolverhampton.

4. Resources available

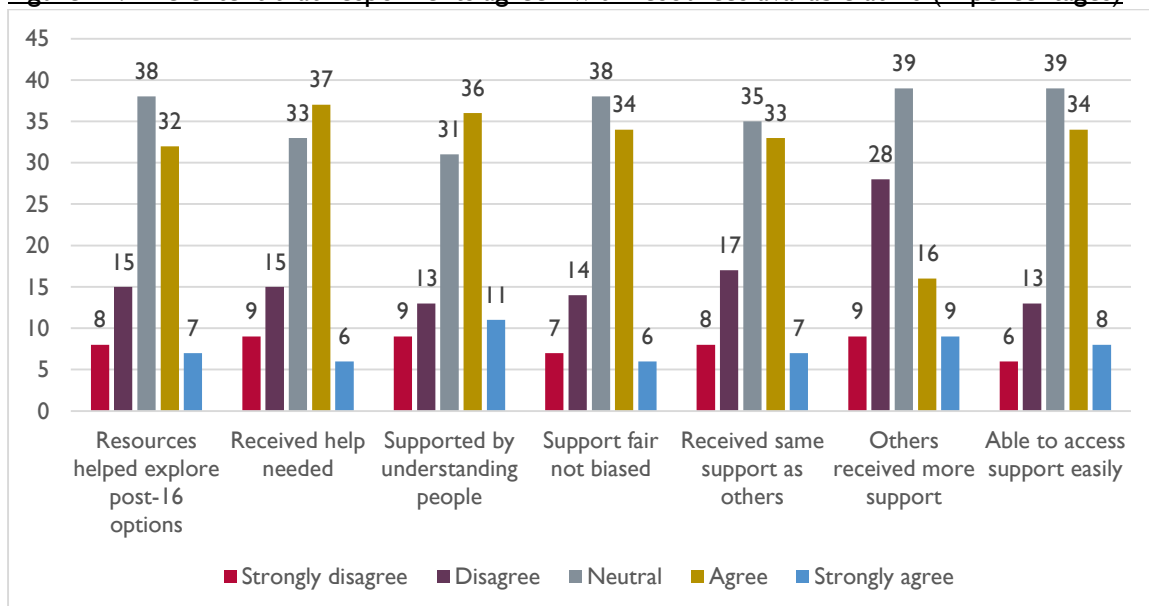
Overall, most respondents were positive (either agreeing or strongly agreeing) about whether:

- The resources available to them at 16 helped them to explore post-16 options (39 per cent)
- They received the help they needed (43 per cent)
- They were supported by understanding people (47 per cent)
- The support they received was fair not biased (40 per cent)
- They received the same support as others (40 per cent)
- That they were able to support easily (42 per cent).

The only statement where the majority of people either disagreed (including those who strongly disagreed) or were neutral was regarding whether others received more support (37 per cent

disagreed or strongly disagreed and 39 per cent were neutral). [For a breakdown of how responses differ by age, gender and ethnicity see tables A1 – A3 in Annex\).](#)

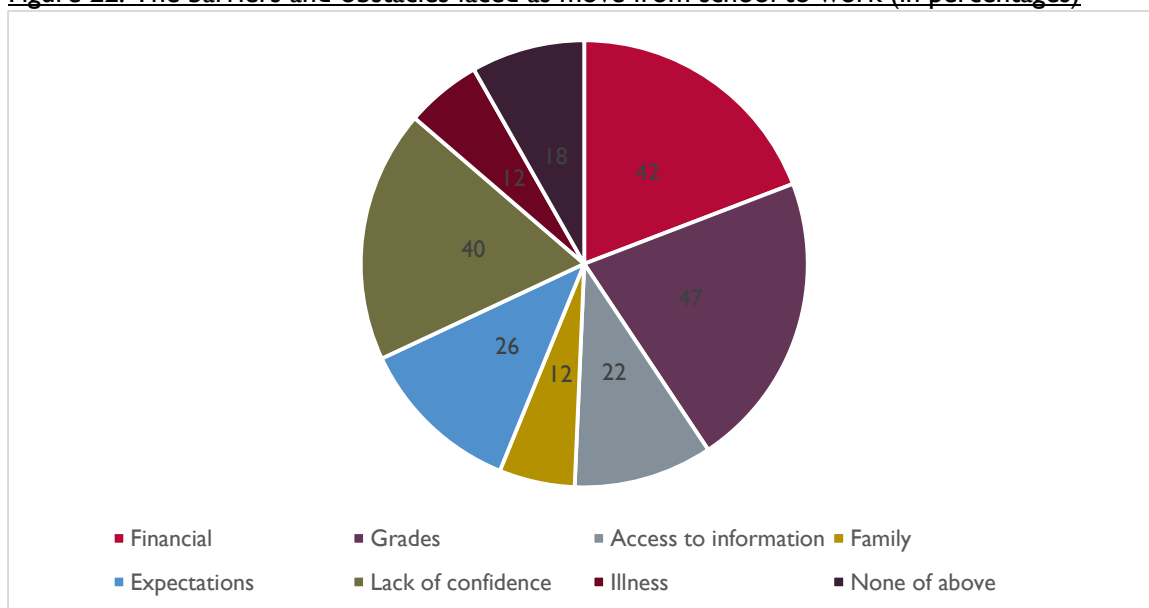
Figure 21: The extent that respondents agreed with resources available at 16 (in percentages)



5. Barriers and obstacles faced

Respondents were asked to indicate the barriers and obstacles that had to be addressed as they moved from school to work. Respondents were able to select all those that apply. Figure 22 shows the proportion of respondents selecting each option. The biggest barrier cited by respondents was achieving suitable grades – highlighted by 47 per cent of respondents. Financial barriers such as funding for study, books or travel, was the second most common barrier highlighted by 42 per cent of people. Lack of confidence, motivation or inspiration was selected by 40 per cent of people. [Figures A54 – A56 in the Annex outline responses to this question by age, gender and ethnicity.](#)

Figure 22: The barriers and obstacles faced as move from school to work (in percentages)



Other barriers highlighted

The survey provided space for respondents to add additional information about the barriers they faced at 16. When asked about other barriers, respondents highlighted issues to do with confidence, finance (including costs of courses and travel), mental and physical health (anxiety, depression, ME, ADHD, schizophrenia), educational needs including dyslexia, life skills such as budgeting, organisation, transport problems including limited local transport options and other issues such as caring responsibilities, drug problems and language barriers. A selection is provided below.

“Moving from school to the world of work I needed to overcome being shy and being worried of what others thought of me, I thought that I wouldn't be able to do anything that I wanted to do or was best at because of the grades I got. So I looked for help from my careers advisor in school and told her about it, she told me the best possible solution and I got into a course I wanted to do. Not knowing anyone from my course made it better for me to be more confident.”

White British female, 16–18, Prenton, North West.

“I was very shy I had no confidence so I was extremely scared to travel without a family member and when I thought about leaving home by myself I got panicky, also I had very low motivation so my mum had to push me to get motivated.”

White British female, 16–18, attending state school in Dagenham).

“The biggest barrier I had to overcome was my own self-doubt and lack of confidence which was exacerbated by teachers, career advisers and, of course, my parents; all telling me I had made a huge mistake by leaving school. I firmly believe it was the right thing for me and had I continued on to university, I would be starting out where I was 3-5 years ago but with a heap of debt... but not one person in the education system was able to recognise that of me. They saw me as a bright individual that was wasting his potential and throwing a good career away; I would love to say I knew better, but I didn't; I left the education system because it depressed me to the point of a clinical diagnosis, not because I knew better. And my early career was not a good one either, I had a terrible manager. It took 4 years of repetitive casework and a career break in Asia for me to realise I had to take responsibility for my own development, which I set out to do as soon as I got back. The advice and guidance given by my school and career advisers led me to believe that I needed an education to get on in life; while this is absolutely true in some specialised careers, it is not true - and perhaps even harmful - for those like myself that are not inspired by formal education. Business mentoring should be an option; help young people find an office job and then continue to mentor them through their career, helping them with problems and giving them the confidence to progress. Job centre plus is no place for young people, unless as an employee.”

White British male, 19–24, attended state run school, in Denny, Falkirk

“Travelling to and from college was costly. Applying for funding was a long and complex process and when the funding came through it was less than what was required. The same situation arises with my current work placement. Getting a car is costly, and public transport can be unreliable.”

White British male, 16–18, attending state run school in Worcester

“I had no qualifications when I left school and my parents were of no help supporting me in getting a job. I was a young carer to my dad who is a

heroin user and mum with disability. I have also been bullied in school so I had low confidence. I was self-harming which also stopped me doing anything.”

White British female, 16–18, in Reading. Special educational needs, has been in care of local authority and has caring responsibilities

“To get to the college I want to go to, it is about an hour’s journey on the bus, for a single journey. If I wasn’t so into the courses I want to do, I would feel I couldn’t do anything else. The bus costs in Hertfordshire are exceptionally high and the council has cut the bus timetables so I will have to leave the house a lot earlier in September to get to a college on the other side of the county.”

White British male, 16–18, attending state run school in Stevenage

6. Other issues raised

Other issues raised by respondents included mental health, family difficulties (such as illness), financial costs. [Further responses are provided in the Annex.](#)

“Because I plan to go to university I am worried about the amount of debt I will be in afterwards because it’s so hard to buy a house and just generally daily expenses, especially because I want to live in London when I’m older... I also think we need to try and improve education standards and help more people do better in there GCSEs because your GCSE results determine the rest of your life. I get encouraged to do well at my school and every student should be able to say that and also they should be proud of their academic achievements. I find it hard to understand why in developed country in the 21st century your postcode and your parents wealth still dramatically affects your standard of education which has a massive impact on how far you go in life.”

Mixed ethnicity female aged 14–16 attending selective state school in Cheadle.

“Some real options other than university. Some that don’t include exploiting young people would be nice. To be honest, the main thing that needs to be changed though is mind-set. Teachers live, breathe, eat education. Of course they think university is best. But sometimes - most of the time - I think they are wrong. It’s dangerous because pupils respect teachers and assume they are right. They haven’t seen the real world yet and are not being empowered to make the best decision for themselves. I also think that universities offering stupid courses that will never actually help someone get a job are just effectively robbing the vulnerable. It kind of sounds illegal to me.”

White British, Female, 16–18, attending a selective state-run school in Caerdydd. Has a disability, SEN, caring responsibilities.

“I didn’t want to attend college first of all, I just wanted to work. After a useless chat with the careers advisor at school, I was told that I needed to apply for college and at that point was forced to pick a college and apply (which I got into). After a year of studying, I realised that I should have followed my heart after my GCSEs and not gone to college as I ended up dropping out to take up full time employment which I am happily settled in now. I have always been pro-active in making decisions based on the outcomes for my future and haven’t done so badly so far. Although I did not finish college, I now work for a bank, volunteer with a youth group and happen to also be a trustee of a company... all at the age of 19!”

Black or Black British Caribbean, Female, 19–24, attended a sixth form in Kettering.

ANNEX I: BREAKDOWN OF RESPONSES

I. How do survey respondents perceive the options at 16?

a) *The options were exciting and/or they were excited to be making a decision*

Figure A1: Options at 16 were exciting by age (in percentages)

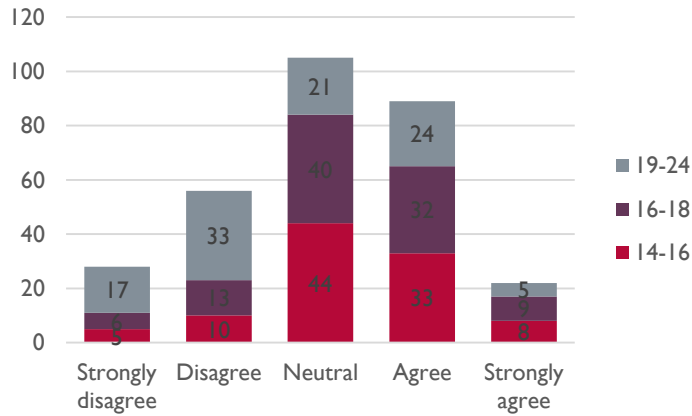


Figure A2: Excited about making a decision by age (in percentages)

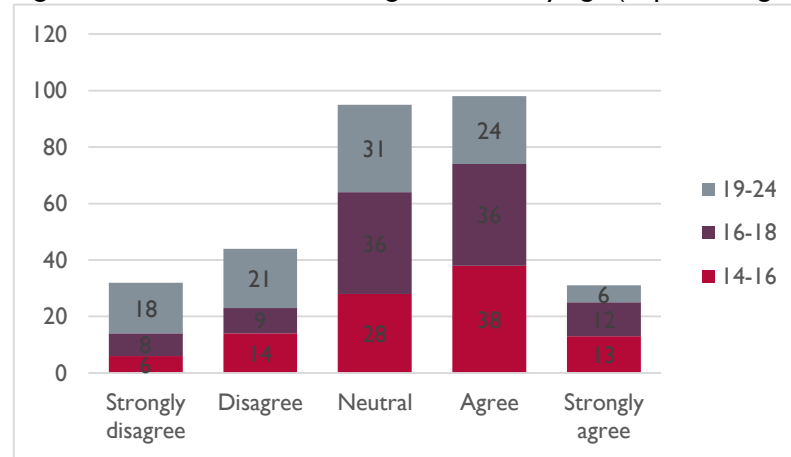


Figure A3: Options at 16 were exciting by gender (in percentages)

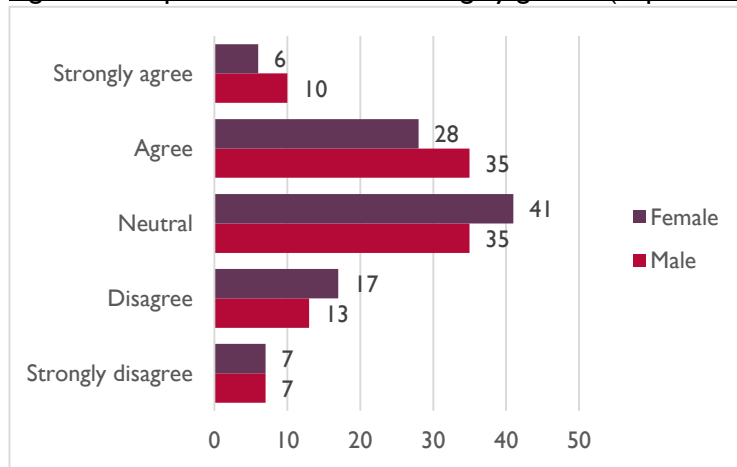


Figure A4: Excited about making a decision by gender (in percentages)

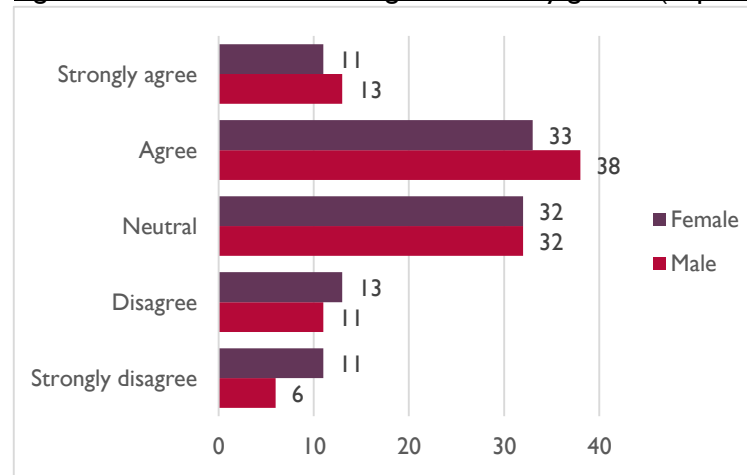


Figure A5: Options at I6 were exciting by ethnicity (in percentages)

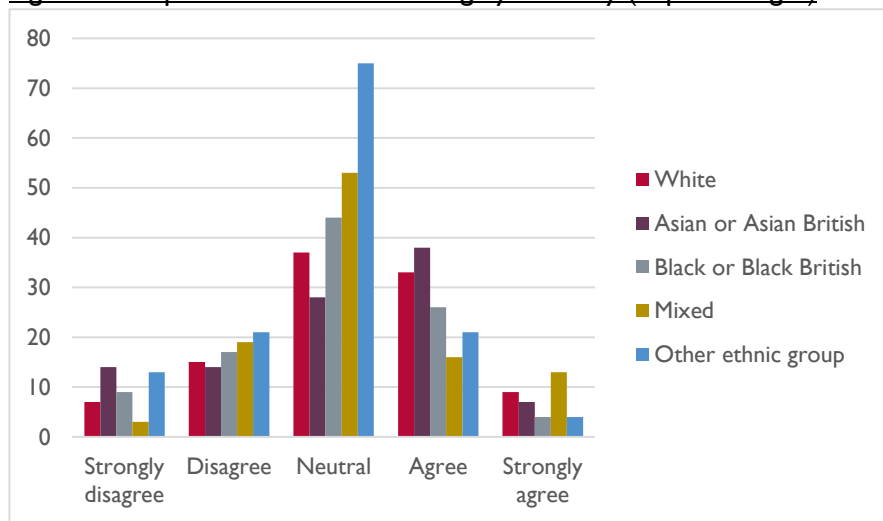
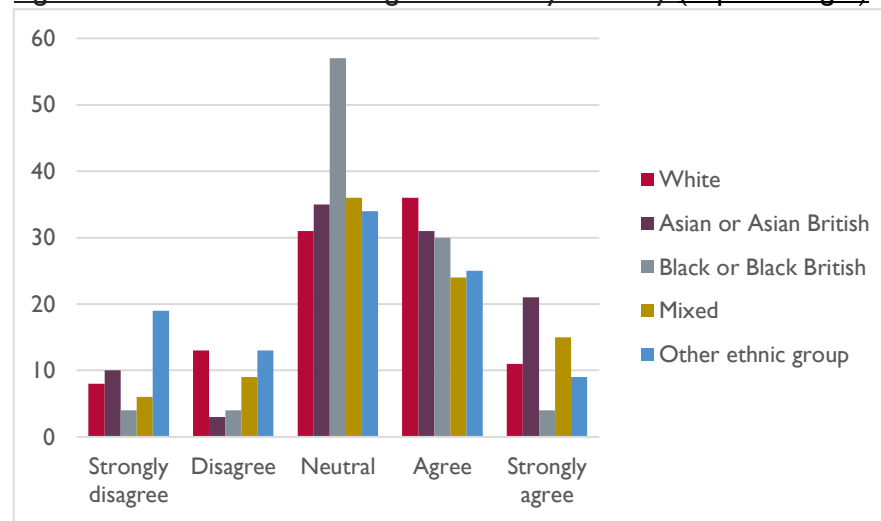


Figure A6: Excited about making a decision by ethnicity (in percentages)



b) They were in control of their decisions and/or other people were in control

Figure A7: Felt in control by age (in percentages)

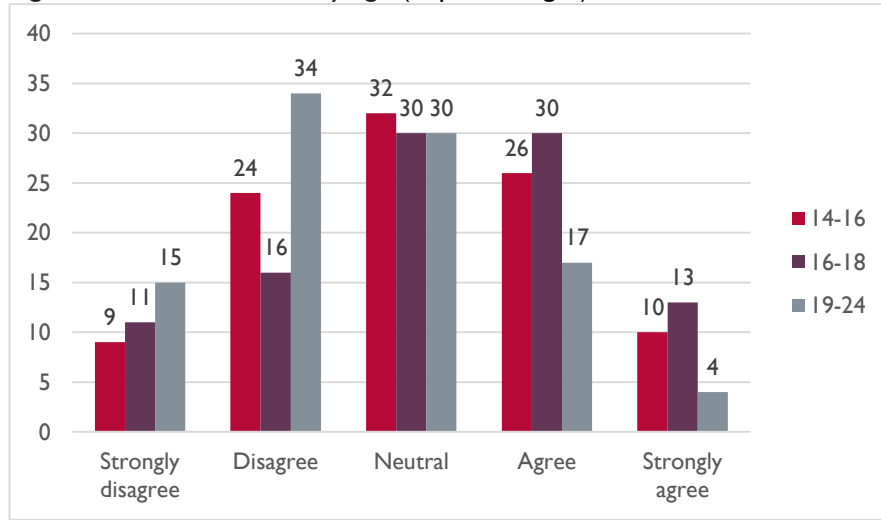


Figure A8: Other people in control by age (in percentages)

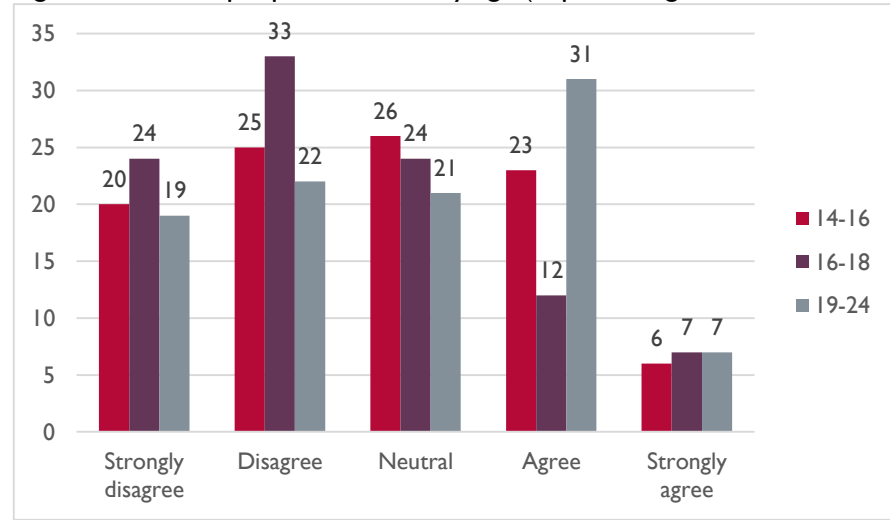


Figure A9: Felt in control by gender (in percentages)

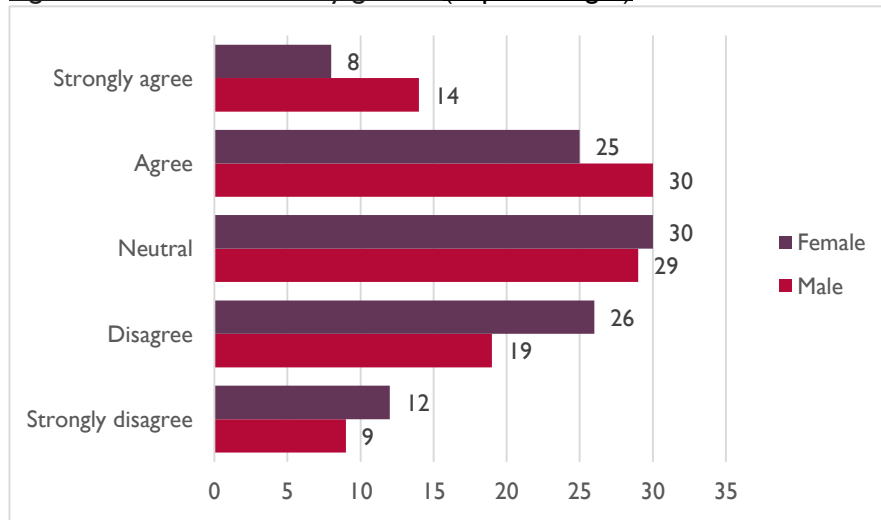


Figure A10: Other people in control by gender (in percentages)

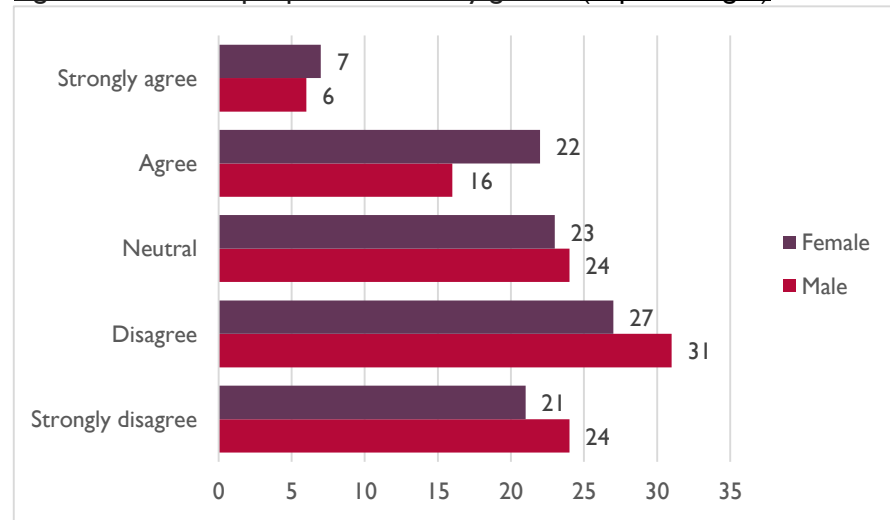


Figure A11: Felt in control of what to do by ethnicity (in percentages)

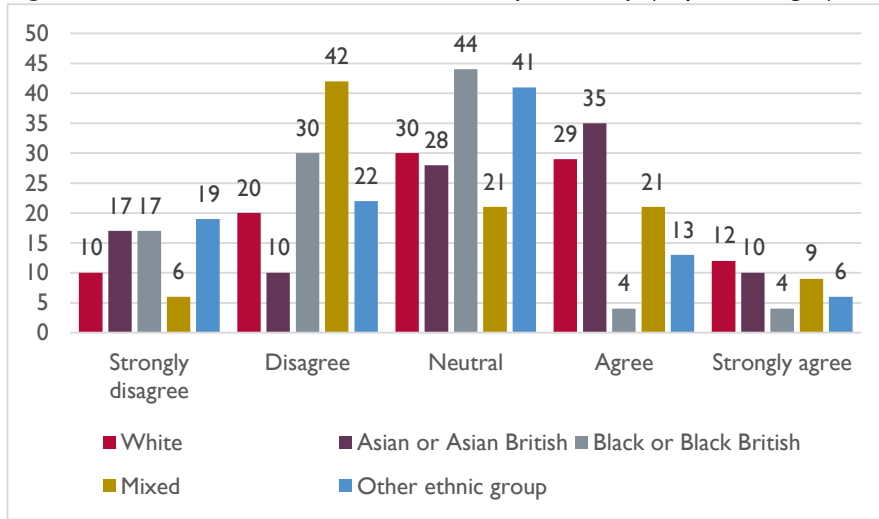
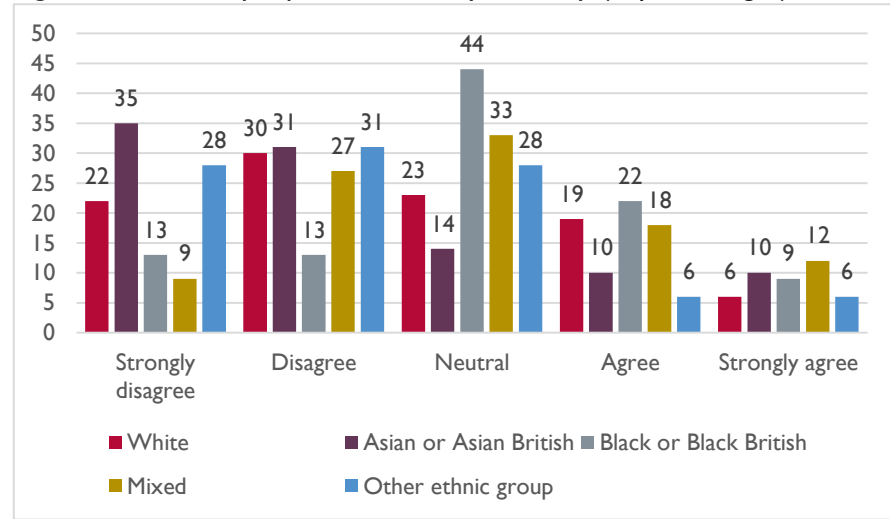


Figure A12: Other people in control by ethnicity (in percentages)



c) There was a range of options and/or there was not much choice

Figure A13: Lots of options by age (in percentages)

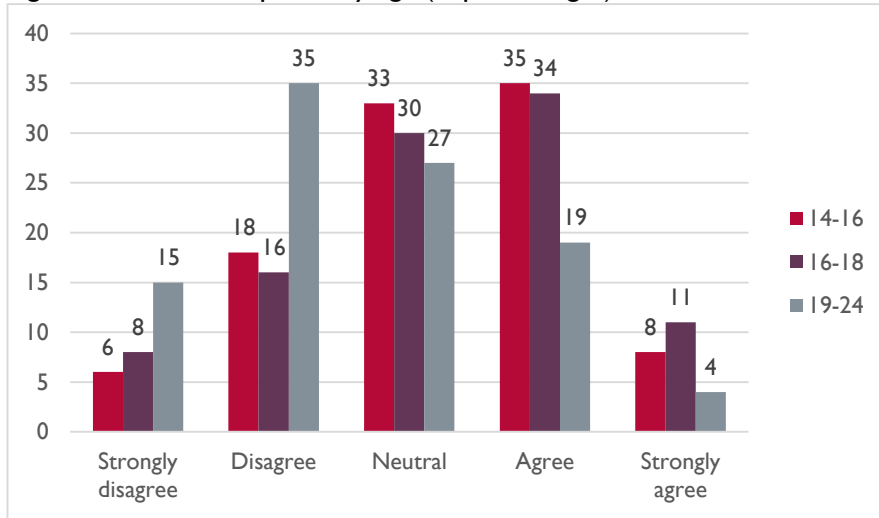


Figure A14: Not much choice by age (in percentages)

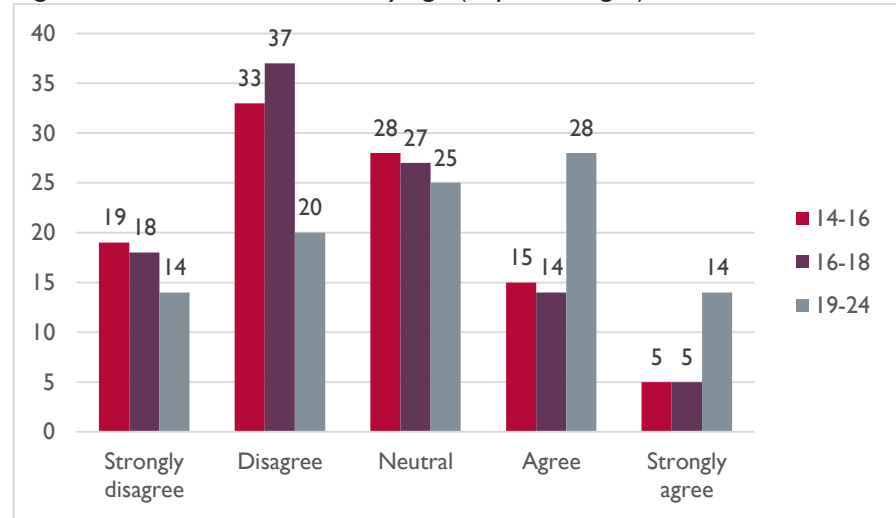


Figure A15: Lots of options by gender (in percentages)

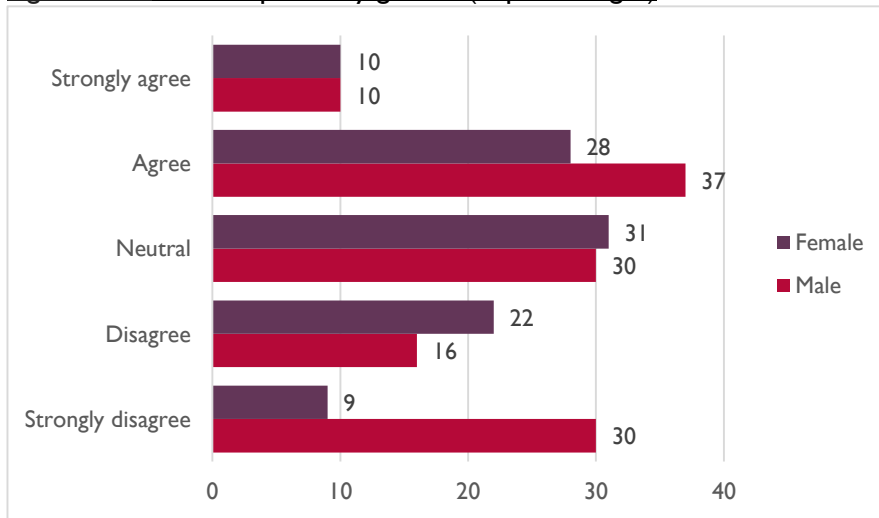


Figure A16: Not much choice by gender (in percentages)

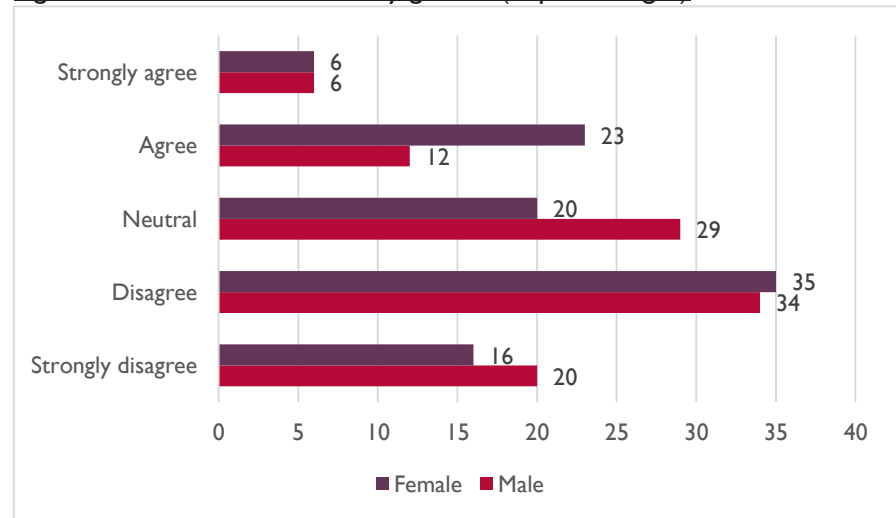


Figure A17: Lots of options by ethnicity (in percentages)

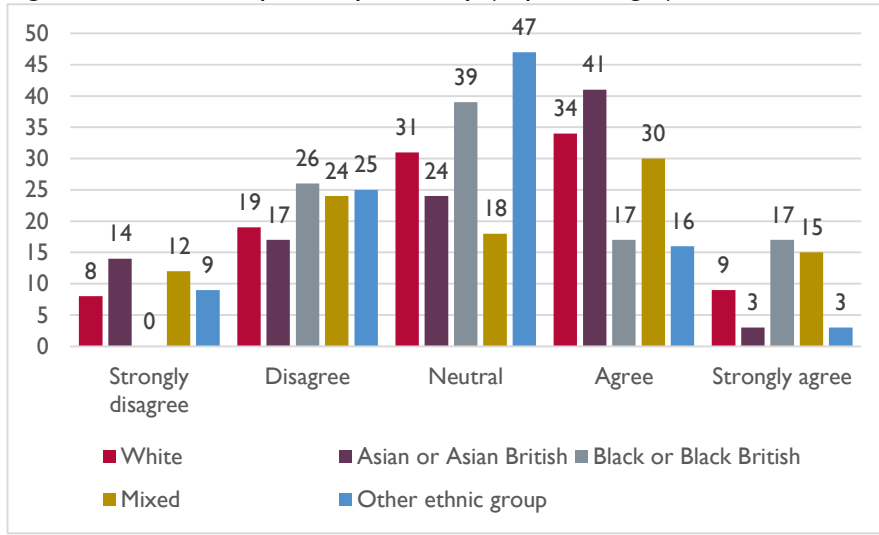
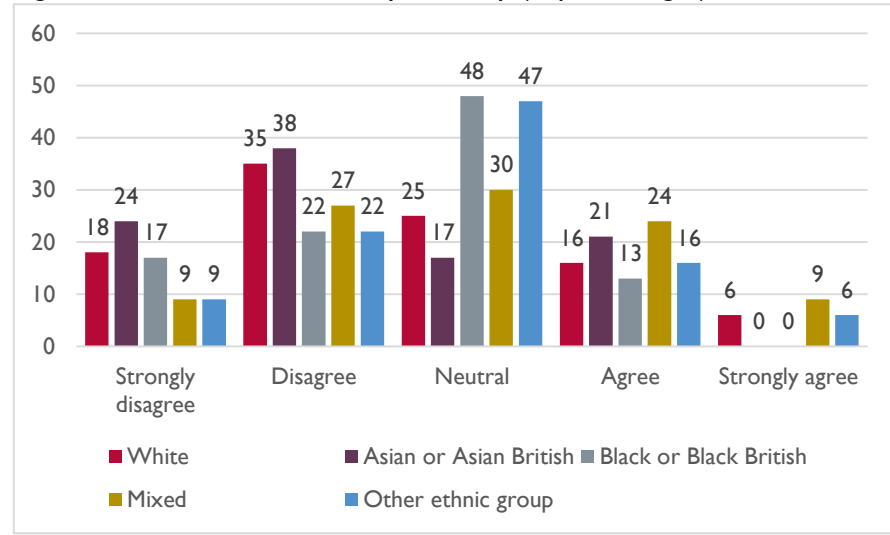


Figure A18: Not much choice by ethnicity (in percentages)



d) *Wanted to choose options and/or options were uninspiring*

Figure A19: Did not want to choose any options by age (in percentages)

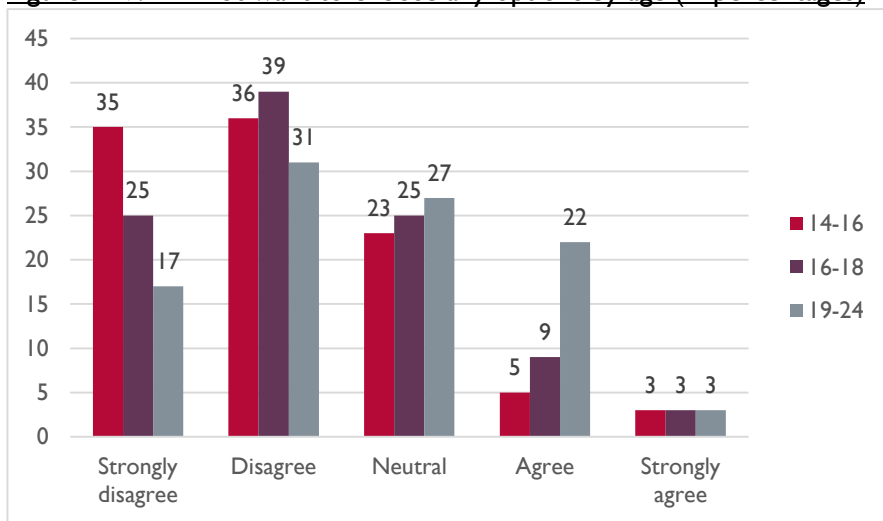


Figure A20: Options uninspiring by age (in percentages)

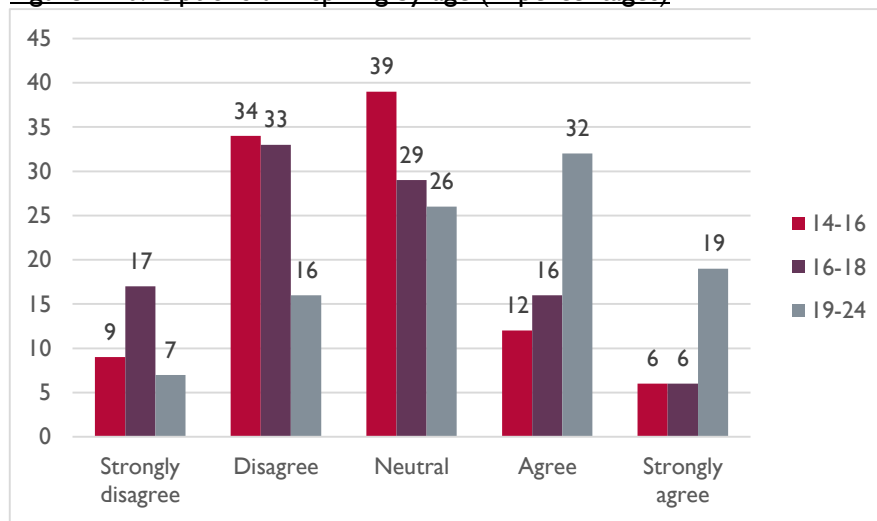


Figure A21: Did not want to choose any options by gender (in percentages)

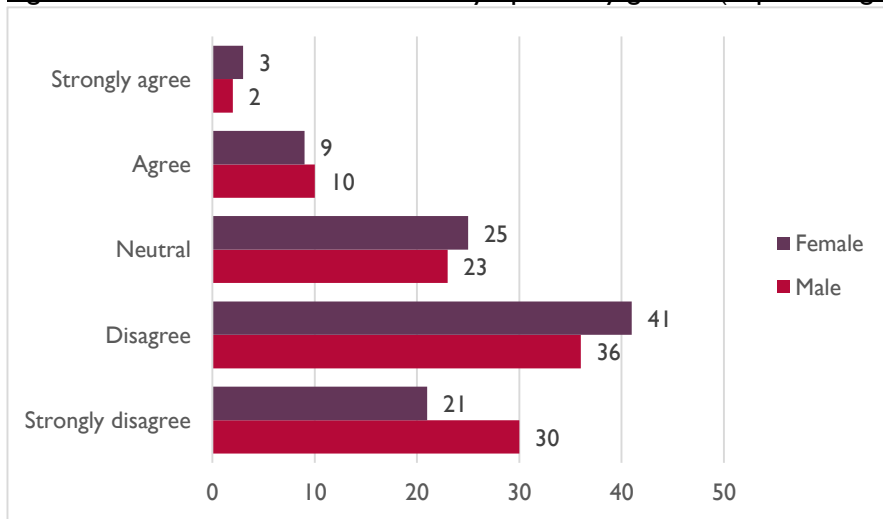


Figure A22: Options uninspiring by gender (in percentages)

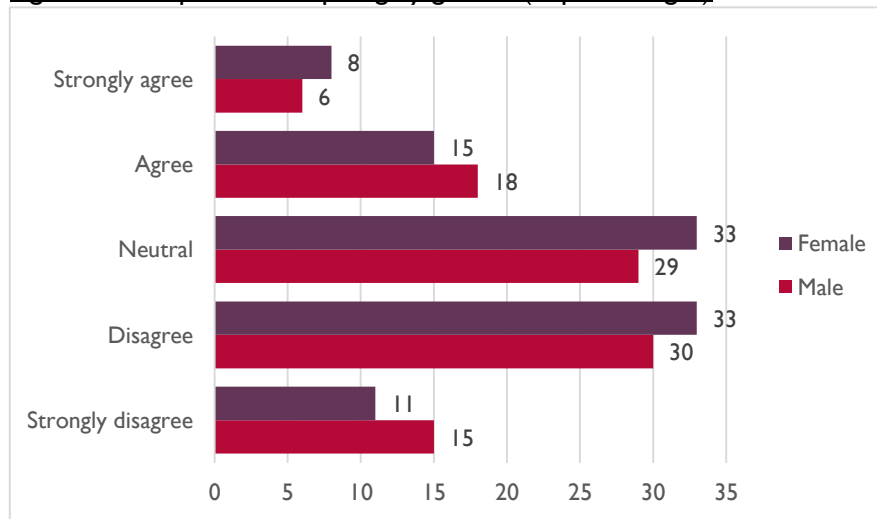


Figure A23: Did not want to choose options by ethnicity (in percentages)

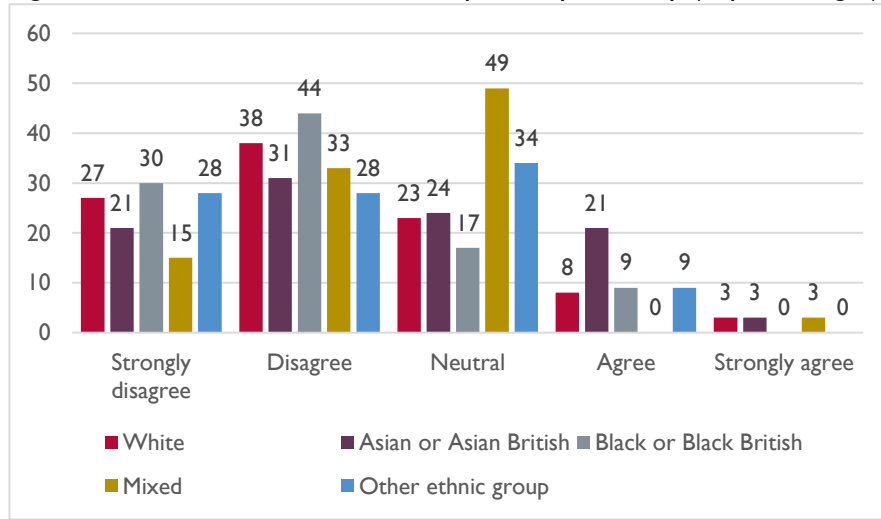
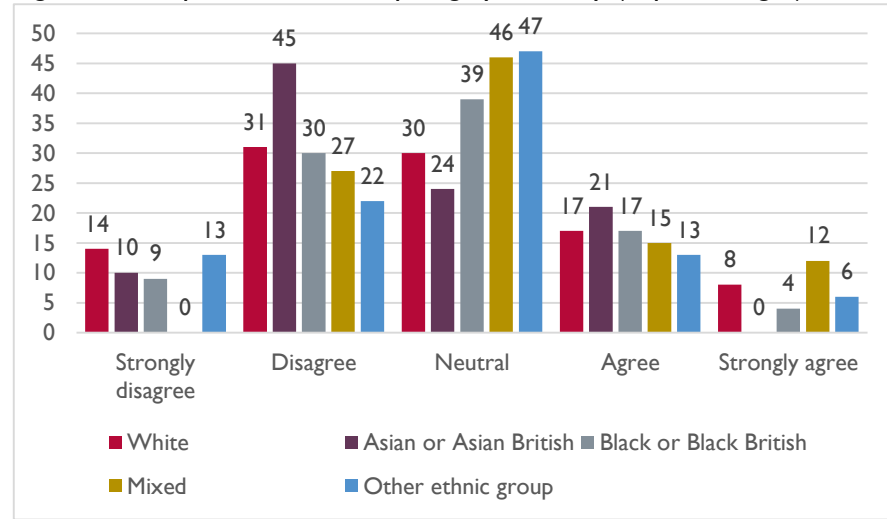


Figure A24: Options were uninspiring by ethnicity (in percentages)



e) *Awareness of options other than university of apprenticeships*

Figure A25: Aware of options other than university or apprenticeships by age (in percentages)

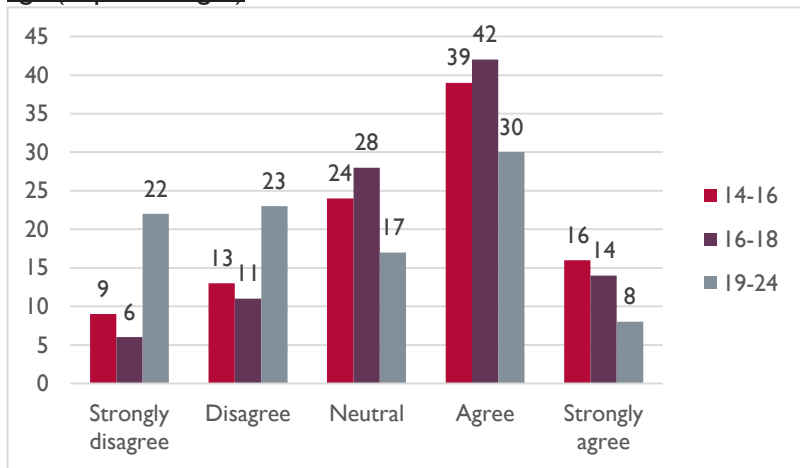


Figure A26: Only options was university or apprenticeships by age (in percentages)

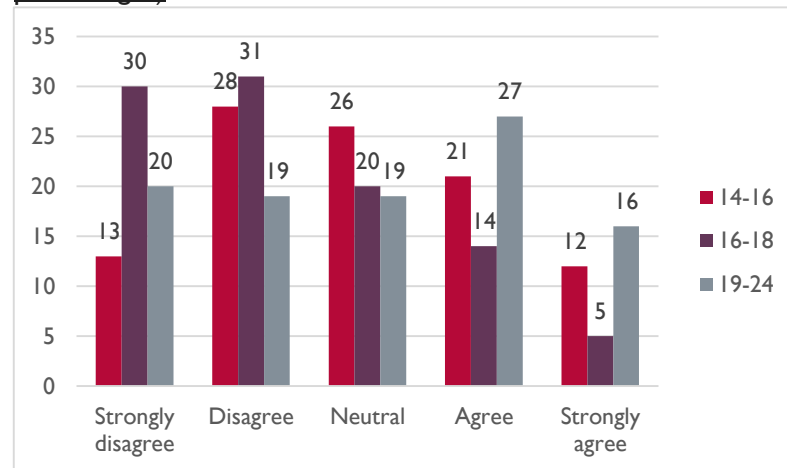


Figure A27: Aware of options other than university or apprenticeships by gender (in percentages)

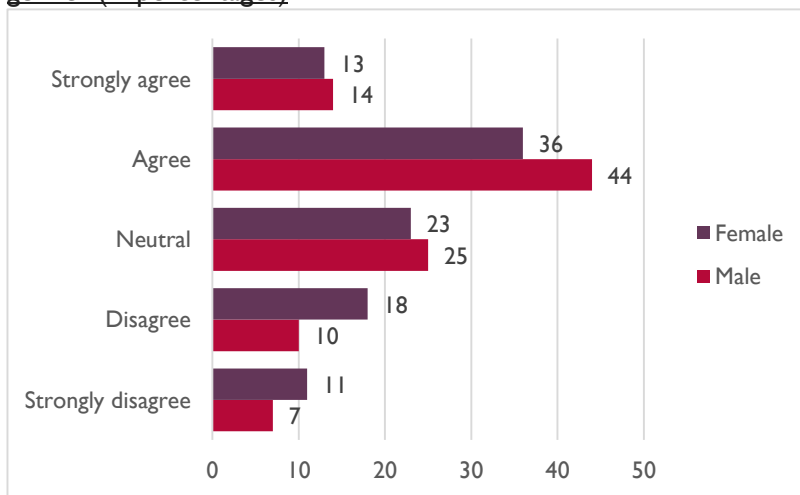


Figure A28: Only options was university or apprenticeships by gender (in percentages)

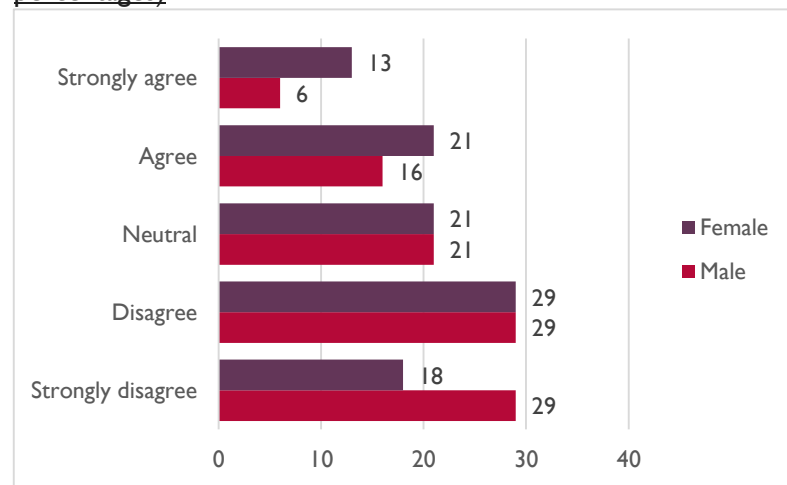


Figure A29: Aware of options other than university/apprenticeships by ethnicity (in percentages)

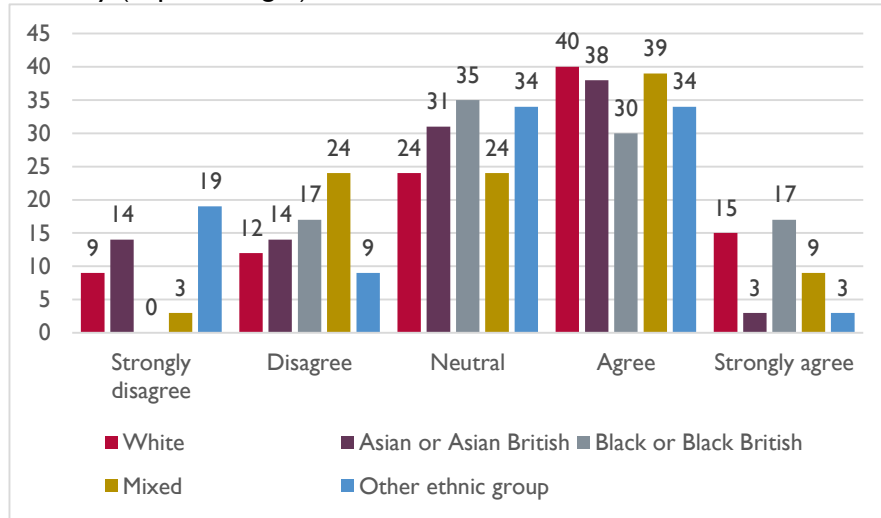
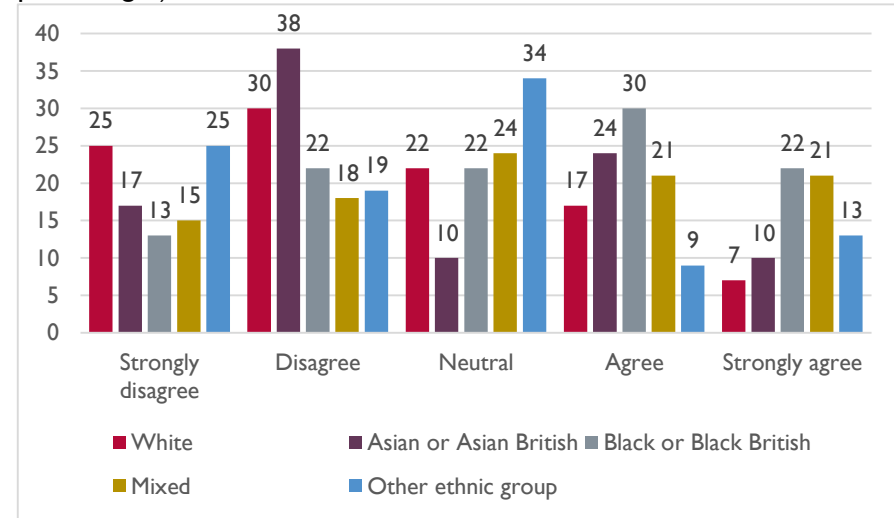


Figure A30: Only options university/apprenticeships by ethnicity (in percentages)



f) Options compared to friends and others

Figure A31: More options open than friends or peers by age (in percentages)

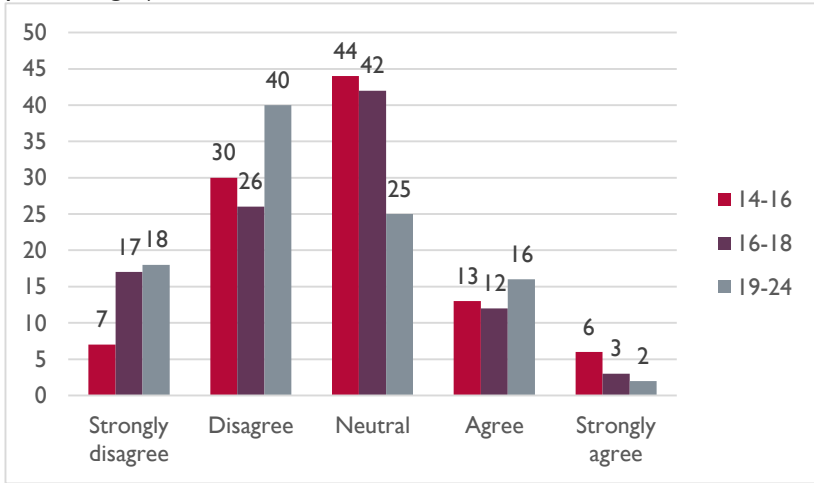


Figure A32: Same options 6 as other people my age by age (in percentages)

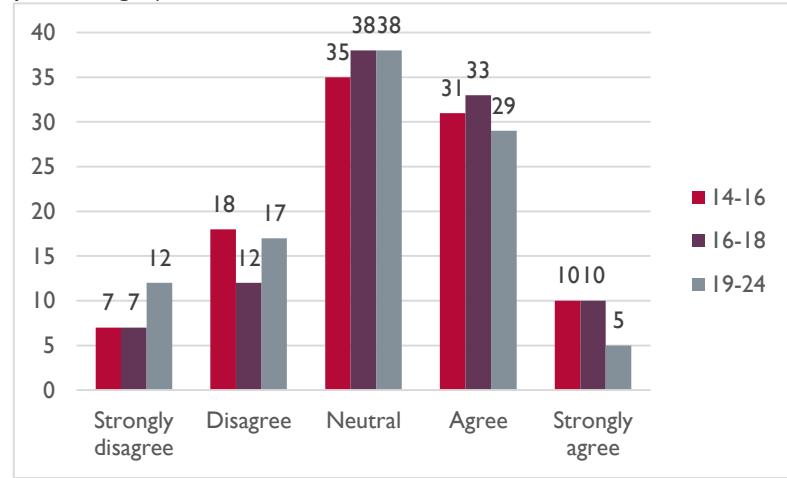


Figure A33: Other people my age have/had more options open to them by age (in percentages)

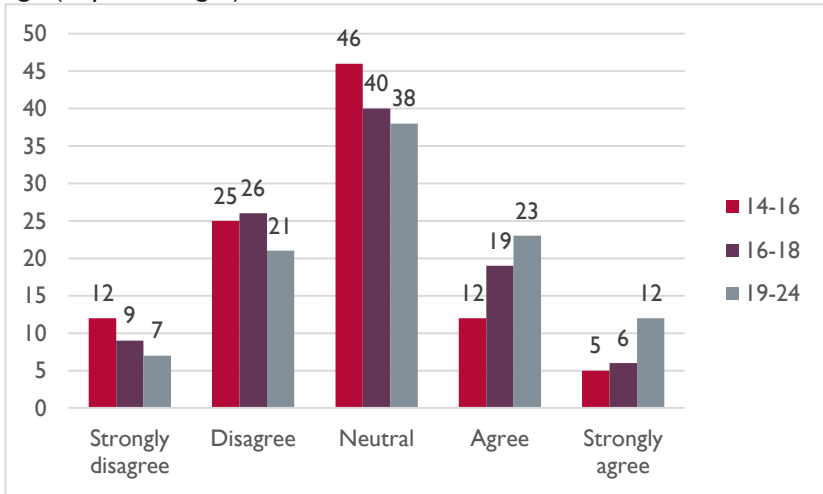


Figure A34: Other people my age have/had more options open to them at 16 by gender (in percentages)

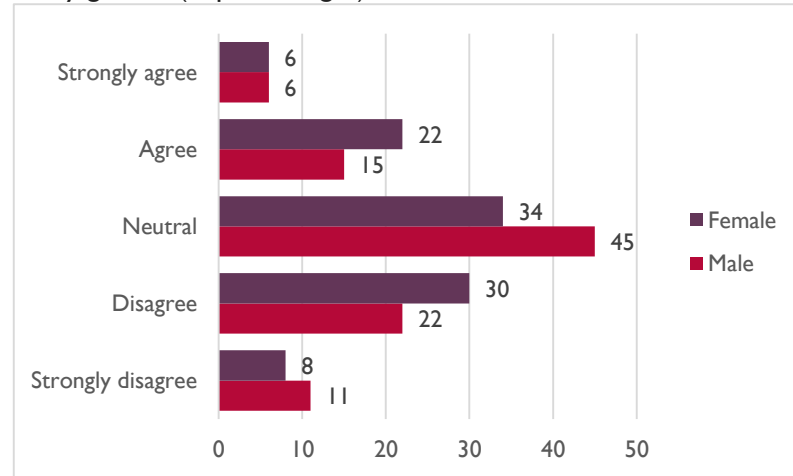


Figure A35: More options open than friends or peers by gender (in percentages)

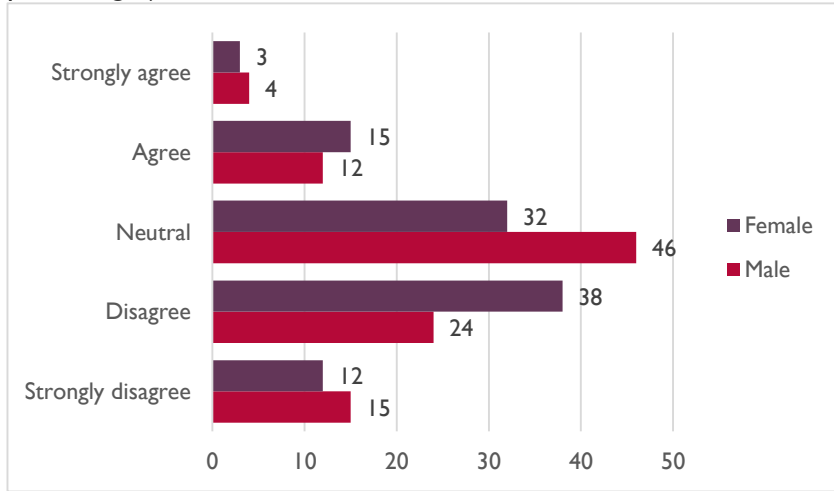


Figure A36: Same options as other people my age by gender (in percentages)

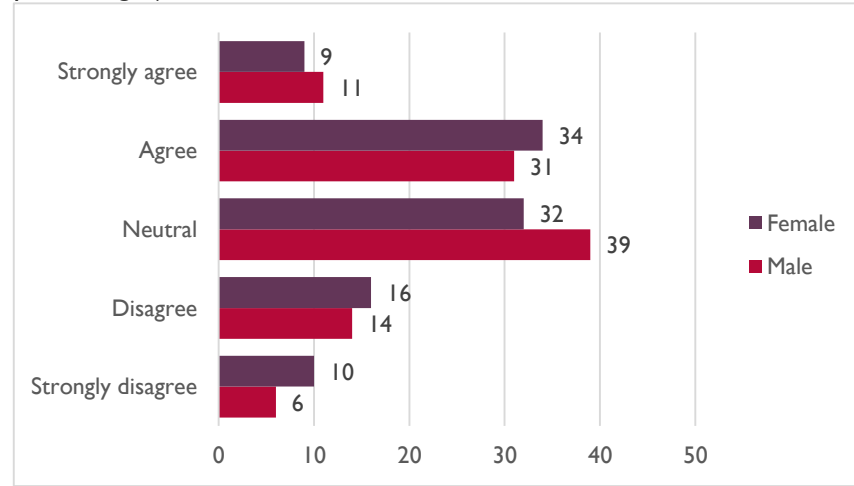


Figure A37: More options open than friends or peers by ethnicity (in percentages)

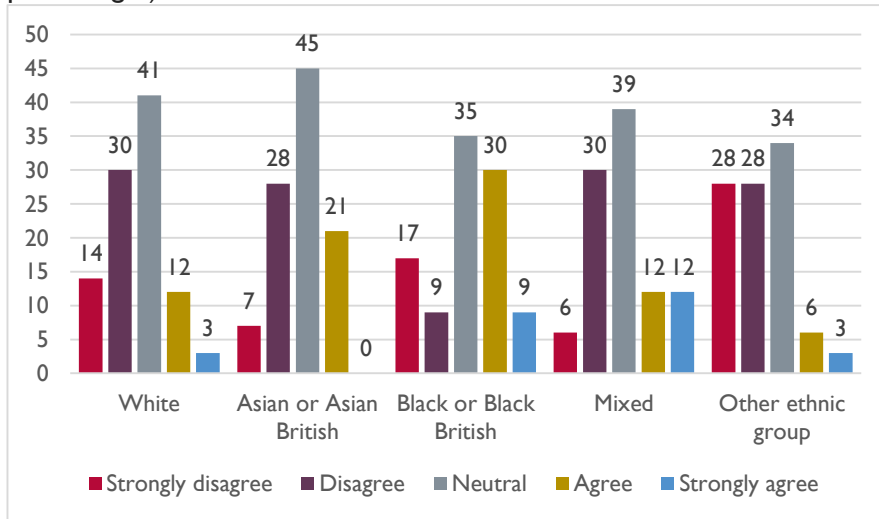


Figure A38: Same options open to me as friends or peers (in percentages)

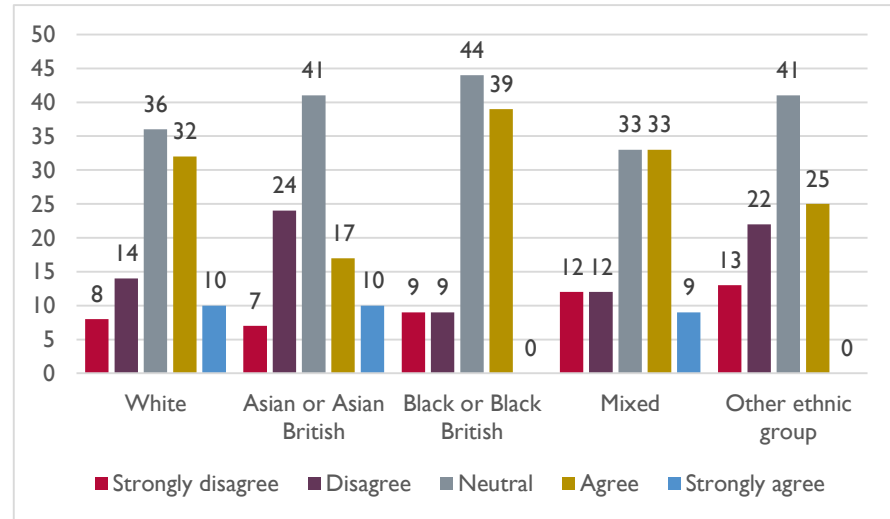
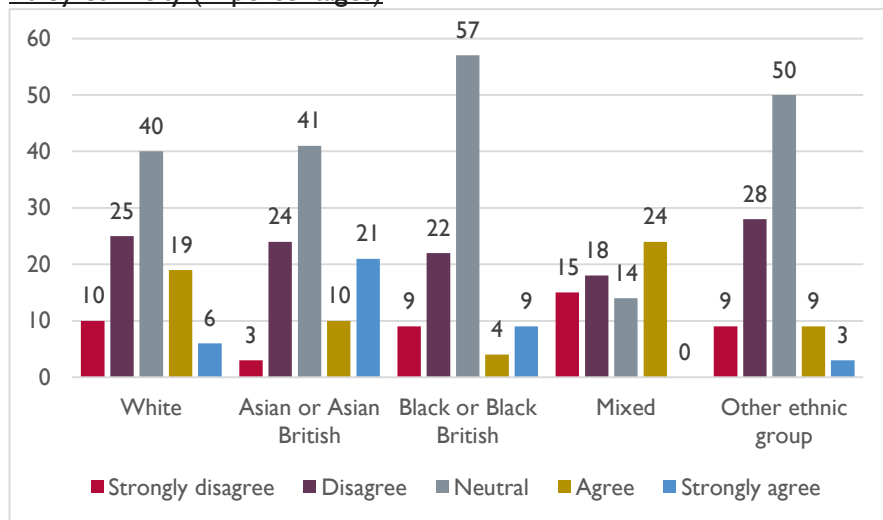


Figure A39: Other people my age have/had more options open to them at 16 by ethnicity (in percentages)





2. Description of choices when leaving school

Figure A40: Description of choices by age – 14–16 year olds



Figure A41: Description of choices by age – 16–18 year olds



Figure A42: Description of choices by age – 19–24 year olds



Figure A43: Description of choices by gender – male



Figure A44: Description of choices by gender – female



Figure A45: Description of choices by ethnicity – White or White British



3. Support available to help decide option to choose

Figure A50 Support available by age (in percentages)

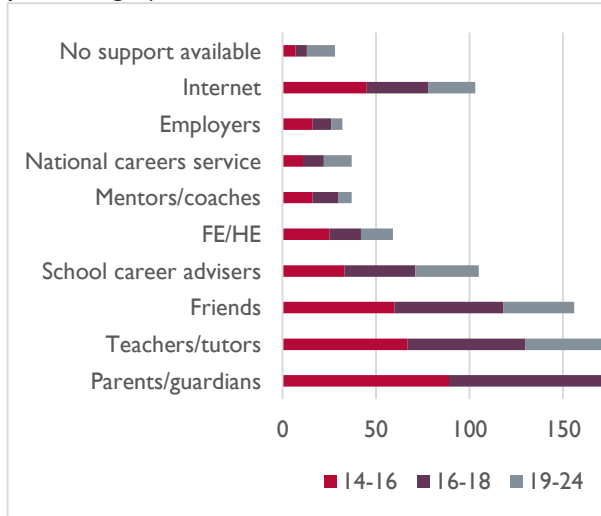


Figure A51: Support available by gender (in percentages)

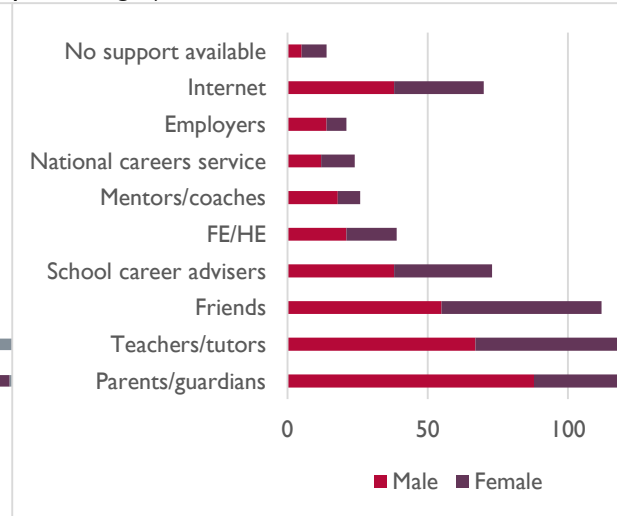
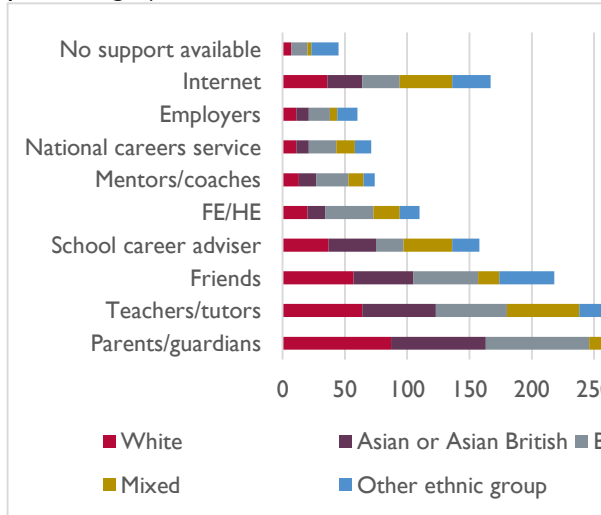


Figure A52: Support available by ethnicity (in percentages)



Free text responses: If you have ticked that you do not feel that there is any support available to you, please give more details.

Only quotes that did not feature in the main report are listed here.

“There was some support but because I was not choosing my career I did not worry that much and felt confident on what I wanted to do next.”
Male, aged 16–18, attending sixth-form college, Bexleyheath Greater London

“I go to a special school that has a 6th form after than I am on my own looking for a low paid job because I can't go to university. My mum has to fight the system to get me help, my teachers are very good because I am at a special school”
Male, 14–16, attending independent school, Brighton, South East

“I think support is the wrong word to use. Everyone around me had a very narrow minded view of suitable pathways and success - university was the only way. My parents cried every day for months when I left school. This is

not fair - I think it was the best thing I ever did. - - I would love an Education Secretary and Prime Minister who can stand and say that they are NOT sending everyone to university, just to keep them off their figures for a few years. So many people go to university when it really is just a time and money wasting activity. Taxpayers will have to pay off their student loans when they never earn enough money to pay it themselves. I work hard and pay tax, and I don't want to pay for their reckless lifestyle. STOP THE BRAINWASHING!"

Female, 16–18, attending selective state school, Caerdydd, Wales

"Schools and careers advisers could have been a lot more helpful - they all kept saying college and any other options were not worthwhile."

Male, 16–18, attending non-selective state school, Bootle, North West

"The school did not support me in any way!"

Female, 16–18, attending sixth form, Canterbury, South East

"I felt like I was pushed into going to a sixth form that I didn't like purely because it was closer to where I lived."

Female, 16–18, attending sixth form, Canterbury South East

"The schools didn't provide any one to help and friends and family didn't know enough to help me."

Female, 16–18, attending sixth form, Cheadle, North West

"They did not give me the guidance that I so desperately needed to leave school and find something that I enjoyed."

Female, 19–24, Colchester, East

"Just my parents no guidance from school at all."

Male, 14–16, state selective school, Eastchurch, Sheerness, South East

"No one wanted to give me any advice because I didn't want to go to college."

Male, 19–24, non-selective, Enfield, Greater London

"I thought that my teacher's in school did not give me the support in finding a job."

Female, 16–18, FE, Erith, Greater London

"We had very limited input on careers guidance as the service we had was finished for some reason, Young Peoples Service/Connexions was stopped in my year when I needed it. The school did not replace this."

Female, 19–24, sixth form, Fleetwood, North West

"I had to find out myself as no one would help me."

Male, 16–18, sixth form, Herne Bay, Kent South East

"No not really, my teacher told me that I had to arrange and sort out my own college/sixth form placements."

Male, 16–18, FE, Huntingdon, East

“If there was no support I would have never had of been in college and get a GCSEs and I would have never made it.”

Female, 16–18, Huntingdon East

“No one was willing to understand my choices, they kept using my ASN as a block.”

Female, 16–18, non-selective, Inverness, Scotland

“These were available to me but cannot say they were all able to fully support me.”

Female, 19–24, selective, Keighley, West Yorkshire

“Even though I had support around them I did not felt like there was enough as most support was determined for me to go the route everyone does 6th form or college then university and I didn't really learn about everything else out there, I had to research myself.”

Female, 16–18, White Irish, London

“Never really had much support.”

Male, 16–18, college, London

“Because if my behaviour no I was interested.”

Male, 19–24, FE college, Luton, East

“Insufficient advice unless you were going onto university.”

Female, 16–18, non-selective, Milton Keynes

“I didn't feel there was much help at school.”

Female, 16–18, non-selective, Peterborough

“We did get support but more people wanted to do different things when they left school we did not get a choice if we wanted to go to college or get a full time or part time jobs out there for us.”

Female, 16-8, FE, Peterborough

“Yes, we can faff around scrabbling around of the internet for apprenticeships and the like, but the easiest route for most is just to go to a sixth form or college.”

Male, 14–16, state-selective, Peterborough

“I didn't know which path to go down, I was too indecisive.”

19–24, state-non selective, Portsmouth

“I don't think my school did anything for me at all.”

Male, 16–18, sixth form

“No one particularly cares.”

Female, 14–16, state non-selective

“People say they can help me but it doesn't help me in any way.”

Female, 14–16

“I decided by my own with little help of friends and parents.”

Male, 16–18, FE

“There was support, but I feel that it was very limited and the focus was on how to get into university.”

Female, 16–18, state non-selective, Preston

“Due to the results I got at GCSE it felt like people (teachers and parents) gave up on me and didn’t think I would get very far.”

Female, 19–24, state non-selective, Preston

“As I didn’t like school I did not feel like going back to education.”

Female, 16–18, Reading

“I had a careers advisor but they were no help and wouldn’t listen to what I wanted to do. My school didn’t tell us when there were open days for colleges and were no help. They were only interested in people who wanted to stay on at sixth form.”

Female 16–18, FE, Royston, Hertfordshire

“Not enough support around what GCSE options to choose in the first place then mostly it is up to me and my parents to research options for after school. Some options are not open to me due to cost of transport as no free school bus after year 11 and parents can’t pick up drop off due to work commitments.”

Female, 14–16, state non-selective, Slough

“I am not informed very well leaving me to search for myself.”

Male, 14–16, state non-selective, Southend-on-Sea

“This is because I don’t have an idea of what is available to me after I finish school.”

Female, 14–16, Southend-on-Sea

“I feel that my parents are making me chose between what I want and aren’t giving me support for it. They say they want me to do what I want but end up deciding for me.”

Female, 14–16, Southend-on-Sea

“There is some support. But it isn’t good enough. It says university is my only option if I’m smart.”

Female, 14–16, state non-selective, Swanwick, Alfreton

“I know Connexions are available but I have found they are not very good they told a friend to do Health and social Care NVQ at college because they wanted to study Science even though they had A* in all Science and Maths areas- they ignored them and went to 6th form instead which they told them not to do as they would probably fail A-Levels.”

Male, 14–16, state non-selective, Washington, North East

“The careers service, in my opinion, is not given the credit it deserves.”

Female, 14–16, state non-selective, Wick, Scotland

“I am child in care and although I am very smart. I have no say in my life whatsoever.”

Female, 16–18, state non-selective, Herne Bay, Kent

“As shown above, I felt there was some support but not enough to help me make the right decision. I went to college because I thought that's what I had to do, I ended up hating every second of it.”

Female, 16–18, state non-selective, London

“I wasn't told enough about the options available to me and what they could branch out to.”

16–18, FE, Cambridge

4. Resources available

Table A1: The extent that respondents agreed with resources available at 16 by age (in percentages)

| | Strongly disagree | | | Disagree | | | Neutral | | | Agree | | | Strongly agree | | |
|---|-------------------|-------|-------|----------|-------|-------|---------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|----------------|-------|-------|
| | 14-16 | 16-18 | 19-24 | 14-16 | 16-18 | 19-24 | 14-16 | 16-18 | 19-24 | 14-16 | 16-18 | 19-24 | 14-16 | 16-18 | 19-24 |
| Resources helped explore post-16 options | 6 | 9 | 22 | 10 | 14 | 28 | 41 | 34 | 21 | 36 | 37 | 27 | 8 | 7 | 2 |
| Received help needed | 4 | 7 | 22 | 10 | 11 | 25 | 39 | 32 | 21 | 42 | 38 | 26 | 5 | 12 | 6 |
| Supported by understanding people | 4 | 7 | 14 | 10 | 13 | 20 | 36 | 37 | 33 | 39 | 37 | 29 | 11 | 7 | 4 |
| Support fair not biased | 5 | 7 | 9 | 14 | 15 | 23 | 43 | 35 | 30 | 32 | 36 | 32 | 7 | 7 | 5 |
| Received same support as others | 9 | 9 | 3 | 20 | 30 | 24 | 37 | 38 | 42 | 28 | 17 | 17 | 7 | 6 | 14 |
| Others received more support | 11 | 6 | 14 | 27 | 11 | 32 | 39 | 38 | 26 | 12 | 39 | 21 | 11 | 7 | 7 |
| Able to access support easily | 4 | 69 | 53 | 8 | | | 48 | | | 32 | | | 9 | 31 | 47 |

Table A2: The extent that respondents agreed with resources available at 16 by gender (in percentages)

| | Strongly disagree | | Disagree | | Neutral | | Agree | | Strongly agree | |
|---|-------------------|--------|----------|--------|---------|--------|-------|--------|----------------|--------|
| | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| Resources helped explore post-16 options | 9 | 11 | 12 | 19 | 34 | 31 | 35 | 36 | 10 | 3 |
| Received help needed | 7 | 10 | 10 | 17 | 33 | 30 | 38 | 37 | 11 | 7 |
| Supported by understanding people | 6 | 9 | 10 | 18 | 38 | 32 | 39 | 34 | 8 | 8 |
| Support fair not biased | 7 | 7 | 14 | 18 | 35 | 38 | 36 | 34 | 8 | 5 |
| Received same support as others | 8 | 8 | 28 | 25 | 37 | 38 | 19 | 22 | 8 | 7 |
| Others received more support | 7 | 10 | 18 | 22 | 37 | 34 | 29 | 30 | 10 | 7 |
| Able to access support easily | 52 | 40 | 2 | 3 | 11 | 19 | 8 | 11 | 27 | 27 |

Table A3: The extent that respondents agreed with resources available at I6 by ethnicity (in percentages)

| | | Resources helped explore post-16 options | Received help needed | Supported by understanding people | Support fair not biased | Received same support as others | Others received more support | Able to access support easily |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|--|----------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Strongly disagree | White | 10 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 49 |
| | Asian or Asian British | 17 | 14 | 14 | 14 | 17 | 14 | 59 |
| | Mixed | 12 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 9 | 6 | 24 |
| | Black or Black British | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 9 | 9 | 44 |
| | Other ethnic group | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 21 |
| Disagree | White | 15 | 12 | 13 | 15 | 27 | 20 | 3 |
| | Asian or Asian British | 14 | 14 | 3 | 10 | 24 | 7 | 0 |
| | Mixed | 18 | 21 | 9 | 18 | 18 | 21 | 0 |
| | Black or Black British | 9 | 13 | 22 | 17 | 26 | 13 | 4 |
| | Other ethnic group | 4 | 0 | 4 | 4 | 13 | 4 | 0 |
| Neutral | White | 32 | 32 | 36 | 37 | 37 | 35 | 13 |
| | Asian or Asian British | 35 | 24 | 35 | 28 | 38 | 35 | 14 |
| | Mixed | 42 | 30 | 39 | 42 | 49 | 42 | 33 |
| | Black or Black British | 61 | 39 | 44 | 39 | 44 | 57 | 22 |
| | Other ethnic group | 17 | 8 | 8 | 4 | 13 | 21 | 4 |
| Agree | White | 37 | 37 | 38 | 34 | 21 | 30 | 9 |
| | Asian or Asian British | 35 | 45 | 38 | 48 | 10 | 35 | 7 |
| | Mixed | 24 | 36 | 36 | 30 | 15 | 24 | 9 |

| | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| | Black or Black British | 26 | 45 | 17 | 35 | 9 | 9 | 9 |
| | Other ethnic group | 13 | 25 | 21 | 25 | 8 | 8 | 0 |
| Strongly agree | White | 7 | 11 | 7 | 0 | 7 | 9 | 27 |
| | Asian or Asian British | 0 | 3 | 10 | 0 | 10 | 10 | 21 |
| | Mixed | 3 | 6 | 9 | 0 | 9 | 18 | 33 |
| | Black or Black British | 4 | 0 | 13 | 0 | 13 | 13 | 22 |
| | Other ethnic group | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 13 |

5. Barriers and obstacles

Figure A54: The barriers and obstacles faced as move from school to work by age

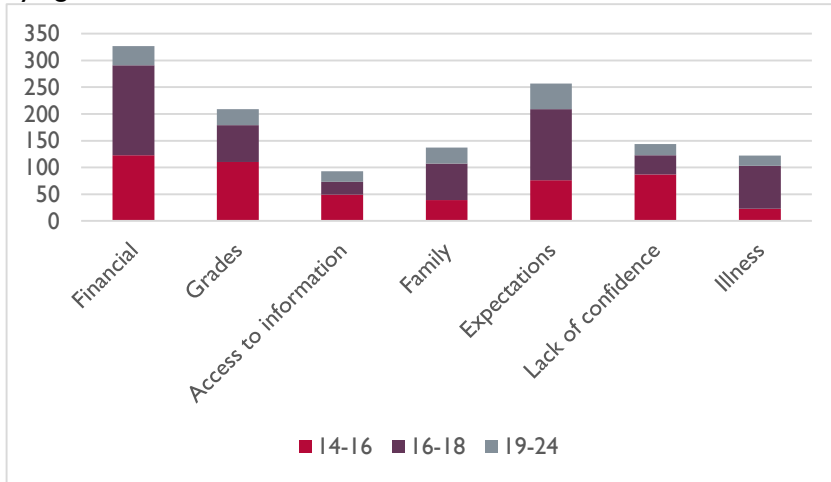


Figure A55: The barriers and obstacles faced as move from school to work by gender

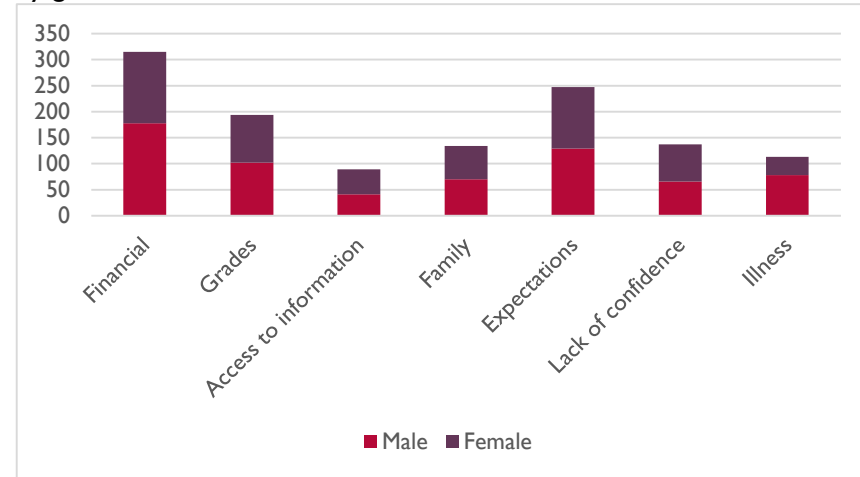
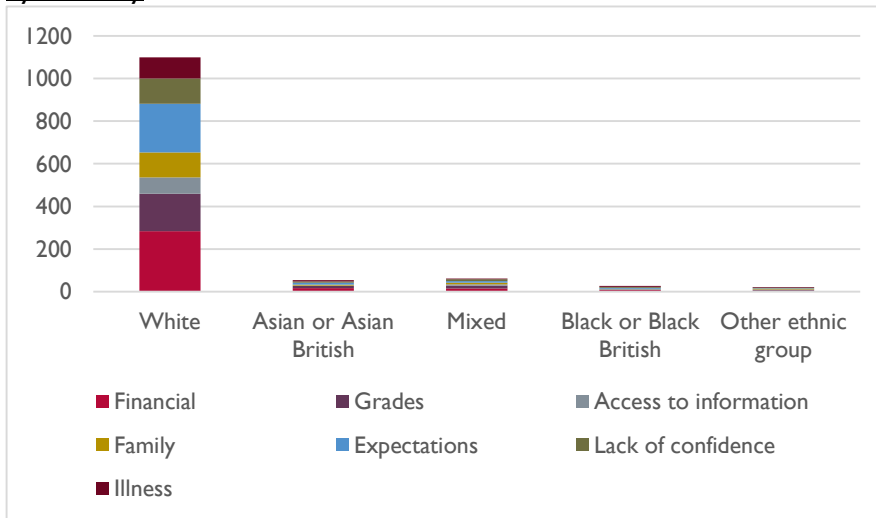


Figure A56: The barriers and obstacles faced as move from school to work by ethnicity



6. Other issues raised

“I feel that instead of being told to take the time to find something I was passionate about, I was being pushed quickly into deciding. Although I feel I made the right choice, many others I know feel that they did not. It seemed as though the actual act of doing something after school was more important to those supporting me than actually finding something I was passionate about.”

White British, Male, 16–18, attending a selective state-run school in Worcester.

“The national careers website needs to be drastically improved - their advice is not helpful at all. Teachers need to be educated more in offering advice. More financial support needs to be made available for people who want to start apprenticeships as the wage is low and they often do not get paid for the first month.”

White British, Male, 16–18, attending a non-selective state-run school in Bootle.

“I feel that secondary schools only care about their reputations and what looks good on them, instead of what looks good on the student and what they want to do. Secondary Schools hassle their pupils to go to THEIR sixth form. In some circumstances (like mine) sixth form is not an option. 5 days learning without ANY financial support or any connections to jobs afterwards. It's a fact that a large percentage of young people who decide to go onto sixth form, drop out after the first year (AS Levels). If you was to ask them why, I'm sure their response would be that they felt it was time wasting, not cost efficient and not ambitious enough.”

White British, Male, 16–18, attending a non-selective state-run school in Welling.

“Careers advisors and tutors didn't really know themselves what options were out there, in their minds it's just school or college. And once you choose to do something I felt I needed support to apply and get interviewed for it.”

White British, Female, 16–18, attending a further education college in Canterbury.

“I don't think there was enough information when I went to Hollingworth BEC and all the information was biased. For example; they would tell you about full time education but told us that it isn't a good option and we would be better to go to College. Which for a kinaesthetic learner like myself it was unjust. And I dropped out of college and was classed as NEET [Not in Education, Employment or Training] for almost a year.”

White British, Male, 16–18, attending a non-selective state-run school in Oldham. Has a disability, been in care of local authority, caring responsibilities.

“I think schools should give a wider range of options and not try to discourage students in to taking up other education or roles which may be beneficial to them.”

Black or Black British Caribbean, Male, 16–18, attending a non-selective state-run school in Liverpool.

“It was hard for me. People need to help 16 year olds more to make an informed decision.”

White British, Male, 16–18, attending a selective state-run school in Liverpool.

“Money was the biggest issue. There was a school that offered all the A level subjects that I wanted but we couldn't afford the bus fare to get there all I was forced to go to the local sixth form.”

White British, Female, 19–24, attending a non-selective state-run school in Bristol.

“I felt that university was pushed on me at the age of 16 and it put me off going. When the fees were tripled in price, I decided to leave because I didn't know for certain what I wanted to do and didn't want to waste the funding on a degree I didn't have a passion for.”

White British, Female, 19–24, attended a non-selective state-run school in Keighley, West Yorkshire.

“Treating everyone equally does not work. In the world of work, we are all taught that people have to be managed in different ways to get the right response, I believe this should be implemented more towards young people. If a young person knows what they want to do then they should be given as much support as necessary but if someone doesn't, then alternative methods of guidance and support should be made available. I understand that this is resource-heavy and can be costly but it was extremely frustrating at school to be offered the same advice/support/guidance again and again, knowing that you still felt the same as always.”

White British, Male, 19–24, attended a non-selective state-run school in London.

“I feel I made a big mistake going to college and studying the courses I did. I didn't enjoy college or the subjects and dropped out before the end of the academic year. I felt that college was my only option and not being able to do the courses I had initially been interested and having to do a course I didn't like didn't make me want to stay at the college. I felt there was no support at the college from the teachers at all. I would've liked to have had more resources about what I could've after school and advice from teachers/mentors.”

White British, Female, 19–24, attended a non-selective state-run school in Preston.

“No one in my family has been to university, we are one of the 'troubled families' as the government likes to term them - stuck in a perpetual cycle of underachievement in every aspect of modern life. The less you start off with, the less you are offered, the less you will end up with, the less you can pass on.”

White British, Female, 19–24, attended a non-selective state-run school. Has caring responsibilities.

“I need what all young people need. To be able to earn enough money to live a good life. I need to be occupied and have friends. I don't want to do nothing meaningful for the rest of my life.”

White British, Female, 19–24, attended a further education college in Sunderland. Has a disability, SEN.

“Looking back, if I could bestow one thing upon my 16-17 year old self it would be some basic workplace etiquette and acumen: How to use a MFD (multi-functional device, printer, fax, scanner etc.), what are meeting minutes?, business meeting guidance (agendas, papers etc.), how to open a meeting, how to chair a meeting, how to write good minutes, how to email in the workplace, how to raise concerns in the workplace, how to

communicate tactfully/strategically. Business Analysis skills; stakeholder management, process refinement, writing a business case. PDR - How to set up a personal development plan for yourself. Yes, some of these things are covered by current Business Studies courses - but in the main, the important ones that you need from day 1 in the office - such as attending meetings and taking minutes are huge gaps and can be intimidating.”

White British, Male, 19–24, attended a non-selective state-run school in Denny, Falkirk.

“Offer more support to 14+, from year 9 I feel that children should be considering what their next chapter of life would be due to my failed guidance I didn’t have the support structure that I needed to get me where I am today. I feel a regular 6 month chat with students would be beneficial as this gives them more time to decide what they want to do with their life, talks from businesses need to be implemented more to show students what they can also achieve from apprenticeships/different colleges etc.”

White British, Female, 19–24, based in Colchester. Has caring responsibilities.

“Financial independence is a key factor for myself and it's difficult to see myself as financially independent when I don't know about services that could help that don't come at a cost and work around me and my schedule. I would have appreciated that at school and university.”

Mixed ethnicity Female, 19–24, attended an independent school in London.

“I don’t see anything has changed at all at present and seems to be getting worse. The advice you get is limited, biased, not good enough or non-existent in my case. The people doing it at schools it is not their job, experience or expertise. It seems an add on to other duties they have.”

White British, female, 19–24, attended a sixth form in Fleetwood.

“I had no idea because the school system decides that core skills that include algebra are deemed more important than teaching us human rights or the laws of the country we live in or even anything that could benefit us in later life.”

White British, Male, 19–24, attended a non-selective state-run school in Cambridge.

ANNEX 2: THE SURVEY

HOUSE OF LORDS SOCIAL MOBILITY COMMITTEE

SURVEY FOR 14-16 YEAR OLDS

We are a Committee of Members of the House of Lords. The House of Lords is part of the UK Parliament. We want to hear your views on moving from school to work. Whether you have already made this change, or are doing so soon, we want to hear from you. Your answers will help us write a report to the Government looking at the experiences of young people when they leave school. This survey should take no longer than 15 minutes. You do not have to take part in this survey and if you do, you do not have to answer every question. Your answers will be completely anonymous, so no one will be able to match your answers to you.

The focus of our inquiry is on those who do not intend to go to university, or who have not done A-levels (or Highers in Scotland). Please only complete the survey if you are not taking A-levels (or Highers in Scotland), or have not taken them and are not planning to go on to Higher Education.

1. Thank you for taking part in this survey. By continuing, you confirm that you have obtained permission from a parent / guardian / responsible adult. How old are you?

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Under 14 | |
| 14-16 (or in years 10 and 11) | |
| 16-18 | |
| 19-24 | |
| 25+ | |

2. We'd like you to think about the options open to you when you reach 16 and are able to leave school. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| The options open to me when I reach 16 are exciting | | | | | |
| I have more options open to me than my friends and peers | | | | | |
| Other people have the control over what I do at 16 | | | | | |

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| I feel I am totally in control of what I do when I reach 16 | | | | | |
| I am excited about making a decision about what I do when I reach 16 | | | | | |
| There are lots of options I can choose when I reach 16 | | | | | |
| I am aware of options other than university or doing an apprenticeship to get qualifications and a job | | | | | |
| I do not want to choose any of the options open to me when I reach 16 | | | | | |
| I find the options I have when I reach 16 uninspiring | | | | | |
| I don't have much choice what I do when I turn 16 | | | | | |
| I have the same options when I reach 16 as other people my age | | | | | |
| My only options are to go to university or to do an apprenticeship to get qualifications and a job | | | | | |
| Other people my age have more options open to them at 16 than I have | | | | | |

3. Describe what choices you have when you leave school. For example, what courses could you take? How many hours a week can you study? Could you do an apprenticeship? If so in what and what level? What jobs are available?

4. What support is available to you to help you decide which option to choose once you reach 16? Please tick all that apply.

| | |
|--|--|
| Parents / guardians | |
| Teachers/tutors | |
| Your school's career adviser | |
| Further/higher education institutions | |
| Mentors/coaches | |
| National Careers Service | |
| Employers | |
| Internet websites | |
| I do not feel there is any support available to me | |
| Other (please specify) | |

If you have ticked that you do not feel that there is any support available to you, please give more details below:

5. Describe the support you have to help you decide what to do when you leave school and move towards a career.

6. Thinking about the resources available to you, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| Resources available to me will help me explore different post-16 options | | | | | |
| The help I receive will be what I need | | | | | |
| I will receive support from people who understand me | | | | | |
| The support I receive from others will be fair, and not biased | | | | | |
| I will receive the same support as everyone else | | | | | |
| Other people will get more support than I will | | | | | |
| I will be able to access resources easily | | | | | |

7. Think about the barriers and obstacles you will need to overcome as you move from school to the world of work over the next few years. What do you think these will be?
Please tick all that apply.

| | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| Financial barriers e.g. funding for study, books, travel | | Expectations of family and peers/pressure from others | |
| Achieving suitable grades/qualifications to be accepted on to post-16 courses | | Lack of confidence/motivation/inspiration | |
| Access to information, guidance and support | | Illness or disability | |
| Family circumstances and obligations e.g. being a carer/paying for childcare | | None of the above | |
| Other (please specify) | | | |

8. Is there anything else that you would like to tell us about your experiences in considering what you are going to do after you leave school?

Demographics

We are interested in hearing from a range of different people, from all different backgrounds and circumstances. To help us do this, we would like to know a bit more about you. The next part of the questionnaire will take no more than 2 minutes. Please remember that all of your answers will be anonymous and you don't have to answer any question you don't want to.

9. What is your gender?

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| Male | |
| Female | |
| Prefer not to say | |

10. What type of educational institution do (or did) you attend?

| | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| A state-run or state-funded school which is selective (on ability, religion/belief, or other) | | A state-run or state-funded school which is non-selective | |
| Independent or fee-paying school | | Further education college | |
| Sixth form | | I am in employment | |
| I do not know | | Prefer not to say | |
| Other (please specify) | | | |

11. What is the postcode of the main address where you live?

12. What is your ethnicity?

| | | |
|--|----------------------------|--|
| White | British | |
| | Irish | |
| | Other | |
| Asian or Asian British | Indian | |
| | Pakistani | |
| | Bangladeshi | |
| | Any other Asian background | |
| Mixed | White and Black Caribbean | |
| | White and black African | |
| | White and Asian | |
| | Any other mixed background | |
| Black or Black British | Caribbean | |
| | African | |
| | Any other black background | |
| Other ethnic group | Chinese | |
| | Any other ethnic group | |
| I do not wish to disclose my ethnic origin | | |

13. Do you have a disability?

A disability can be described as a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities.

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| Yes | |
| No | |
| Prefer not to say | |

14. Do you have Special Educational Needs (SEN)?

For example, you might have a learning difficulty or disability which makes it harder for you to learn than your peers. You may have special one-to-one support in school.

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| Yes | |
| No | |
| Prefer not to say | |

15. Are you, or have you ever been, in the care of a local authority?

This might mean you have lived with foster parents, or in a residential children's home.

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| Yes | |
| No | |
| Prefer not to say | |

16. Have you ever been in trouble with the law?

This might mean you have been arrested or cautioned by the Police or been punished for committing a crime.

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| Yes | |
| No | |
| Prefer not to say | |

17. Finally, do you have, or ever had, regular responsibility for caring for someone else?

For example, you might have a parent or brother/sister with an illness which means you regularly have to help them with jobs such as cooking, cleaning and getting dressed.

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| Yes | |
| No | |
| Prefer not to say | |

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Your answers will be really helpful to us when we write our report.

HOUSE OF LORDS SOCIAL MOBILITY COMMITTEE

SURVEY FOR 16–24 YEAR OLDS

We are a Committee of Members of the House of Lords. The House of Lords is part of the UK Parliament. We want to hear your views on moving from school to work. Whether you have already made this change, or are doing so soon, we want to hear from you. Your answers will help us write a report to the Government looking at the experiences of young people when they leave school. This survey should take no longer than 15 minutes. You do not have to take part in this survey and if you do, you do not have to answer every question. Your answers will be completely anonymous, so no one will be able to match your answers to you.

The focus of our inquiry is on those who do not intend to go to university, or who have not done A-levels (or Highers in Scotland). Please only complete the survey if you are not taking A-levels (or Highers in Scotland), or have not taken them and are not planning to go on to Higher Education.

1. Thank you for taking part in this survey. By continuing, you confirm that you have obtained permission from a parent / guardian / responsible adult.

How old are you?

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Under 14 | |
| 14-16 (or in years 10 and 11) | |
| 16-18 | |
| 19-24 | |
| 25+ | |

2. What types of qualification have you completed? Please provide any more details possible alongside each qualification, and note all that you have completed. If your qualifications are not listed, please write their nearest equivalents in the text box.

| | |
|--|--|
| GCSEs/Standard Grades (<i>please say how many of each grade</i>) | |
| Functional Skills | |
| Other level 2 qualification (<i>please specify</i>) | |
| AS/A Level/Highers (<i>please say how many</i>) | |
| Other level 3 qualification (<i>please specify</i>) | |
| International Baccalaureate | |

| | |
|--|--|
| NVQ (please say what level) | |
| BTEC (please say what level) | |
| University qualification (please say what level e.g. Foundation, Undergraduate, Graduate, PhD) | |
| Apprenticeship (please say what level) | |
| Professional qualifications (for example teaching, nursing, accountancy) (please say what level) | |
| Other (please specify) | |

3. We'd like you to think about the options that were open to you when you reached 16 and were able to leave school. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| I was excited about making a decision about what I did when I reached 16 | | | | | |
| I did not want to choose any of the options open to me when I reached 16 | | | | | |
| The options open to me when I reached 16 were exciting | | | | | |
| Other people had the control over what I did at 16 | | | | | |
| My only options were to go to university or to do an apprenticeship to get qualifications and a job | | | | | |
| I found the options I had when I reached 16 uninspiring | | | | | |

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| I had more options open to me than my friends and peers | | | | | |
| There were lots of options I could choose when I reached 16 | | | | | |
| I was aware of options other than going to university or doing an apprenticeship to get qualifications and a job | | | | | |
| Other people my age had more options open to them at 16 than I had | | | | | |
| I felt I was totally in control of what I did when I reached 16 | | | | | |
| I didn't have much choice what I did when I turned 16 | | | | | |
| I had the same options when I reached 16 as other people my age | | | | | |

4. Describe what choices you had when you left school at 16. For example, what courses could you take? How many hours a week did you study? Could you do an apprenticeship? If so in what and what level? What full or part time jobs were available?

5. What support was available to you to help you decide which option to choose once you reached 16? Please tick all that apply.

| | |
|--|--|
| Parents / guardians | |
| Teachers/tutors | |
| Your school's career adviser | |
| Further/higher education institutions | |
| Mentors/coaches | |
| National Careers Service/Connexions | |
| Employers | |
| Internet websites | |
| I do not feel there is any support available to me | |
| Other (please specify) | |

If you have ticked that you did not feel that there was any support available to you, please give more details below:

6. Thinking about the resources that were available to you, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| Resources available to me helped me explore different post-16 options | | | | | |
| The help I received was what I needed | | | | | |
| I received support from people who understood me | | | | | |
| The support I received from others was fair, and not biased | | | | | |
| I received the same support as everyone else | | | | | |
| Other people got more support than I did | | | | | |
| I was able to access resources easily | | | | | |

7. What barriers and obstacles did you need to overcome as you began to move from school to the world of work? *Please tick all that apply.*

| | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| Financial barriers e.g. funding for study, books, travel | | Expectations of family and peers/pressure from others | |
| Achieving suitable grades/qualifications to be accepted on to post-16 courses | | Lack of confidence/motivation/inspiration | |
| Access to information, guidance and support | | Illness or disability | |
| Family circumstances and obligations e.g. being a carer/paying for childcare | | None of the above | |
| Other (please specify) | | | |

8. Please tell us more about the barriers and obstacles you needed to overcome as you began to move from school to the world of work.

9. Is there anything else that you would like to tell us about your experiences in considering what you were going to do after you left school?

Demographics

We are interested in hearing from a range of different people, from all different backgrounds and circumstances. To help us do this, we would like to know a bit more about you. The next part of the questionnaire will take no more than 2 minutes. Please remember that all of your answers will be anonymous and you don't have to answer any question you don't want to.

9. What is your gender?

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| Male | |
| Female | |
| Prefer not to say | |

10. What type of educational institution do (or did) you attend?

| | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| A state-run or state-funded school which is selective (on ability, religion/belief, or other) | | A state-run or state-funded school which is non-selective | |
| Independent or fee-paying school | | Further education college | |
| Sixth form | | I am in employment | |
| I do not know | | Prefer not to say | |
| Other (please specify) | | | |

11. What is the postcode of the main address where you live?

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

12. What is your ethnicity?

| | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|--|
| White | British | |
| | Irish | |
| | Other | |
| Asian or Asian British | Indian | |
| | Pakistani | |
| | Bangladeshi | |
| | Any other Asian background | |
| Mixed | White and Black Caribbean | |
| | White and black African | |
| | White and Asian | |
| | Any other mixed background | |
| | Caribbean | |

| | | |
|--|----------------------------|--|
| Black or Black British | African | |
| | Any other black background | |
| Other ethnic group | Chinese | |
| | Any other ethnic group | |
| I do not wish to disclose my ethnic origin | | |

13. Do you have a disability?

A disability can be described as a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities.

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| Yes | |
| No | |
| Prefer not to say | |

14. Do you have Special Educational Needs (SEN)?

For example, you might have a learning difficulty or disability which makes it harder for you to learn than your peers. You may have special one-to-one support in school.

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| Yes | |
| No | |
| Prefer not to say | |

15. Are you, or have you ever been, in the care of a local authority?

This might mean you have lived with foster parents, or in a residential children's home.

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| Yes | |
| No | |
| Prefer not to say | |

16. Have you ever been in trouble with the law?

This might mean you have been arrested or cautioned by the Police or been punished for committing a crime.

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| Yes | |
| No | |
| Prefer not to say | |

17. Finally, do you have, or ever had, regular responsibility for caring for someone else?

For example, you might have a parent or brother/sister with an illness which means you regularly have to help them with jobs such as cooking, cleaning and getting dressed.

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| Yes | |
| No | |
| Prefer not to say | |

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Your answers will be really helpful to us when we write our report.