



PROJECT NEXT GENERATION

EARLY CAREERS & APPRENTICESHIPS REPORT

UCAS

INTRODUCTION

Welcome back to Project Next Generation. This is the second follow up to our Themes Report, focusing this time on the young people who are considering apprenticeships and employment as their next steps. This report also builds on the insights from our [‘Where Next?’](#) report series, including [‘What influences the choices of would-be apprentices?’](#), published in partnership with the Sutton Trust, and [‘Improving the journey to becoming an apprentice.’](#)

Through our research, a clear theme and story is emerging; apprenticeships are increasingly recognised as an attractive pathway for young people, but there is urgent requirement for more support. We can see clearly where this interest varies by background and where the support needs to be targeted.

Throughout the report we start to explore what the next generation of talent need to inspire them through their discovery journey. This generation is well defined in what they seek; they want happiness and satisfaction in their job, to work with an employer that aligns to their own personal vision and values. We share with you how these insights can be used to attract and engage with the best new talent for your organisation.

This insight comes at a point where there is the biggest economic opportunity in more than a generation. With a growing 18-year-old population, that continues through until the end of the decade, and increasing recognition, employers have the opportunity to tackle talent shortages and only UCAS can enable all these opportunities to be presented side-by-side on one platform.

It is my hope you find this report to be one of those key documents that shapes your strategy and goes beyond just being an interesting read, instead driving real action.

The findings of this report, which took place with more than 1,000 participants aged 13 – 17, will help universities, colleges, independent apprenticeship providers and employers to inspire, educate, upskill, and improve the decision making of young people across the UK.

Lindsay Conroy

Head of Apprenticeships, UCAS



CONTENTS

The Research	Methodology 4
Chapter One	Inspiration & Discovery 5
Chapter Two	Feelings & Happiness 9
Chapter Three	Experience 12
Chapter Four	Confidence 15
Chapter Five	Independence & Empowerment 18
Chapter Six	Control 23



THE RESEARCH: METHODOLOGY

We worked with an independent youth specialist market research agency to ensure we reached a wide pool of young people considering all routes.



Fieldwork date

May – July 2023



Objectives

- Understand longer-term plans and driving factors for choice, attitudes towards futures (subject, higher education, careers)
- Explore values, marketing landscape, and drivers of the next generation of students



Target Audiences

- UK Years 9 to 12 (ages 13-17)
- Parents and carers of ages 13-17
- Geographical coverage: All UK regions
- Sample size: 1,000



Methodology:

- Quantitative research (survey*) across all age groups
- Targeted qualitative research for deeper insights (online forum over a week with 24 young people in years 9-12)
- Respondents screened to obtain a nationally representative sample for region, gender, social grade and ethnicity

*The appropriate terminology for each year group was used in the survey (Y9/ S10/ Y10) but for simplicity the report refers to the English equivalent.



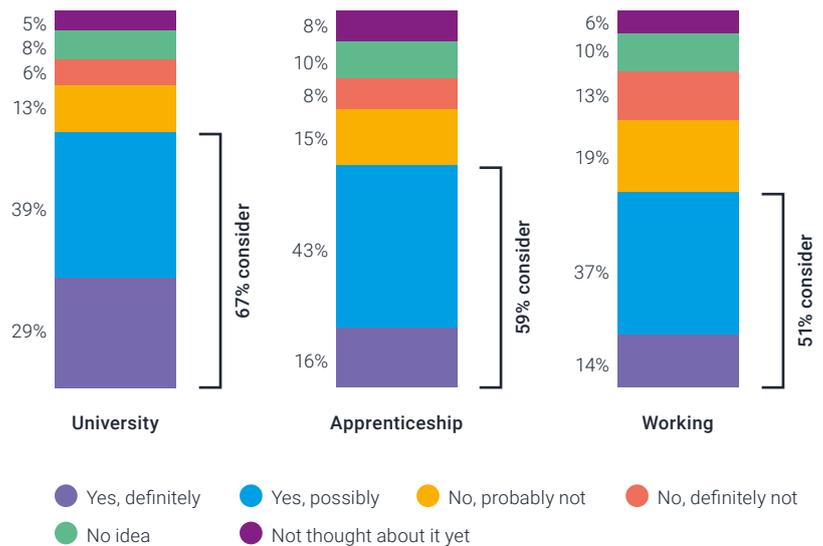
CHAPTER ONE: INSPIRATION & DISCOVERY

Students need engaging discovery early, so they don't limit their post-18 options later on.

THE VITALITY OF EARLY AWARENESS IN DECISION-MAKING.

CONSIDERATION DOES NOT EQUAL CONVERSION.

When it comes to post-secondary options, young people are open-minded. At least for a while. On the whole, many of them are considering many options – very few are a ‘firm no’ to any of the three main pathways. But the picture changes quite quickly as they make their way through school.

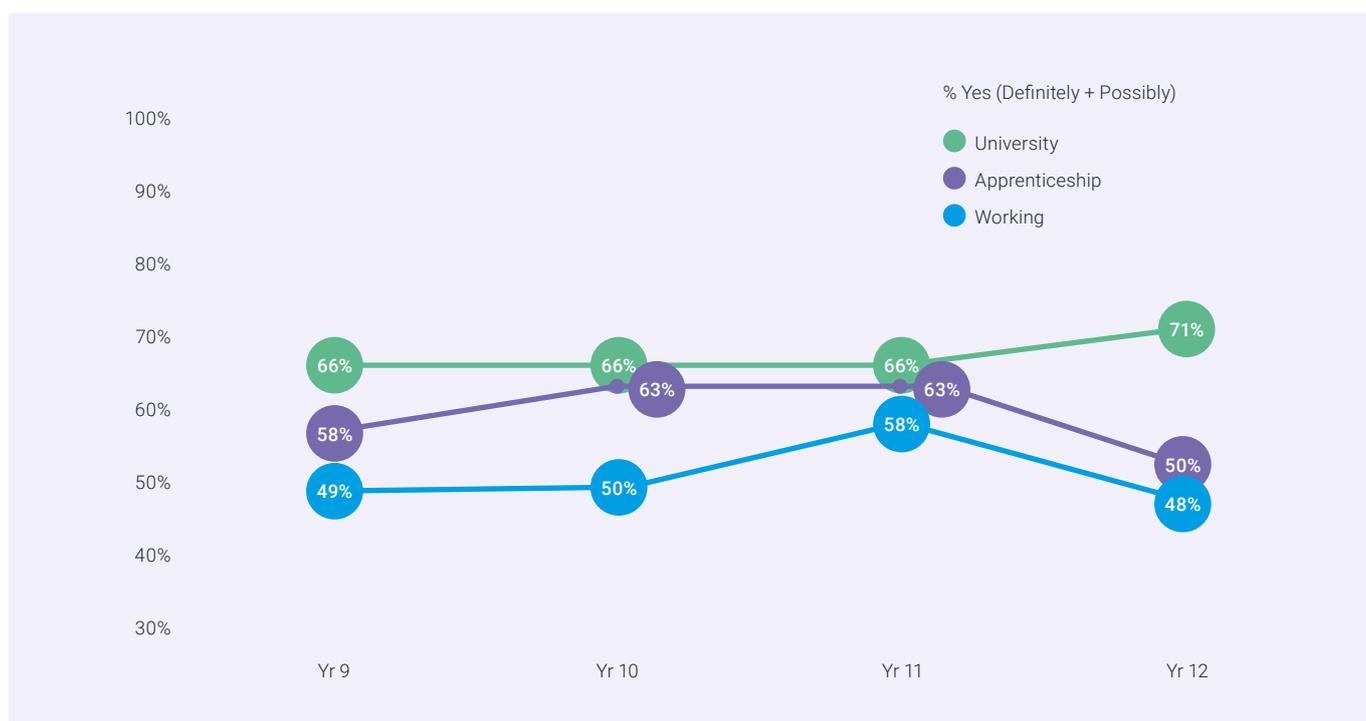


Q: And is.... going to University / applying for an Apprenticeship / leaving education at 18 and looking for work instead....something that you might consider? BASE: All Respondents 1000

Consideration of apprenticeship starts high, and climbs even higher, but things change dramatically as time passes. In Year 9, there's a healthy interest, with 58% of young people on board. As they move through Years 10 and 11, and more time and energy is given to their post-18 choices steps, it climbs even higher to 63%. But by the time they reach sixth form, in Year 12, it drops sharply – to just 50% – lower even than in Year 9.

Given their research increases as they move closer towards 18 years old, it may seem strange to see so rapid a drop when it comes time to start making decisions? But in reality, some will have done enough research to confirm their interest, and subsequently leave school to pursue the apprenticeship – whilst others have done enough research to identify that it's not for them. The remainder, and therefore logically smaller number, are those still undecided and therefore still researching.

We can dig a little deeper by comparing employment, too. It follows broadly the same path, starting low in Year 9 (49%) before rising to 58% in Year 11 and then rapidly falling to 48% in Year 12. Both are quicker routes to wages, both are further away from debt. Meanwhile, university follows a somewhat opposite path – a stable high throughout, before a spike.



Q: And is.... going to University / applying for an Apprenticeship / leaving education at 18 and looking for work instead....something that you might consider? BASE: All Respondents (250/250/251/249)

Does university interest grow in Year 12 because it's the path most are familiar with and it's time to make a decision? Do apprenticeships and employment suffer simply because they started as a minority, or is it because there isn't enough awareness or education in the system to continually promote its benefits?

There are demographic differences to factor in too. Boys are significantly more likely than girls to consider apprenticeships in Year 9, but if we look at what they think they're most likely to be doing at 18 – the overall drop off may actually be male-driven. Girls' interest in apprenticeships remains pretty stable from Year 10. Boys' interest is much higher throughout, but falls to the point where it's identical to the girls by Year 12. Equally, [research from UCAS](#) also shows that students from disadvantaged backgrounds are more interested in apprenticeship opportunities - but this doesn't convert to starts at higher levels.

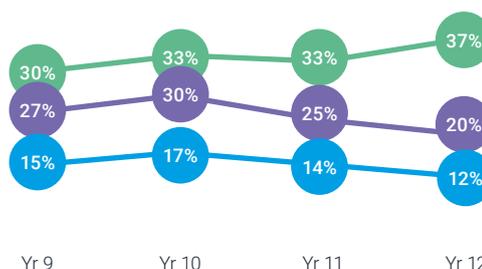
Most likely to do at 18?

- University
- Apprenticeship
- Working

Girls



Boys



Q: What do you think you are most likely to do at 18? BASE: Girls (121/130/133/128) Boys (125/115/118/114)

This points to the fact that when push comes to shove – for this data set, apprenticeships track behind as time goes by. And whilst that isn't surprising overall, the concern lies in the drop-off. There is, for both boys and girls, a genuine and healthy consideration at a younger age, before petering off.

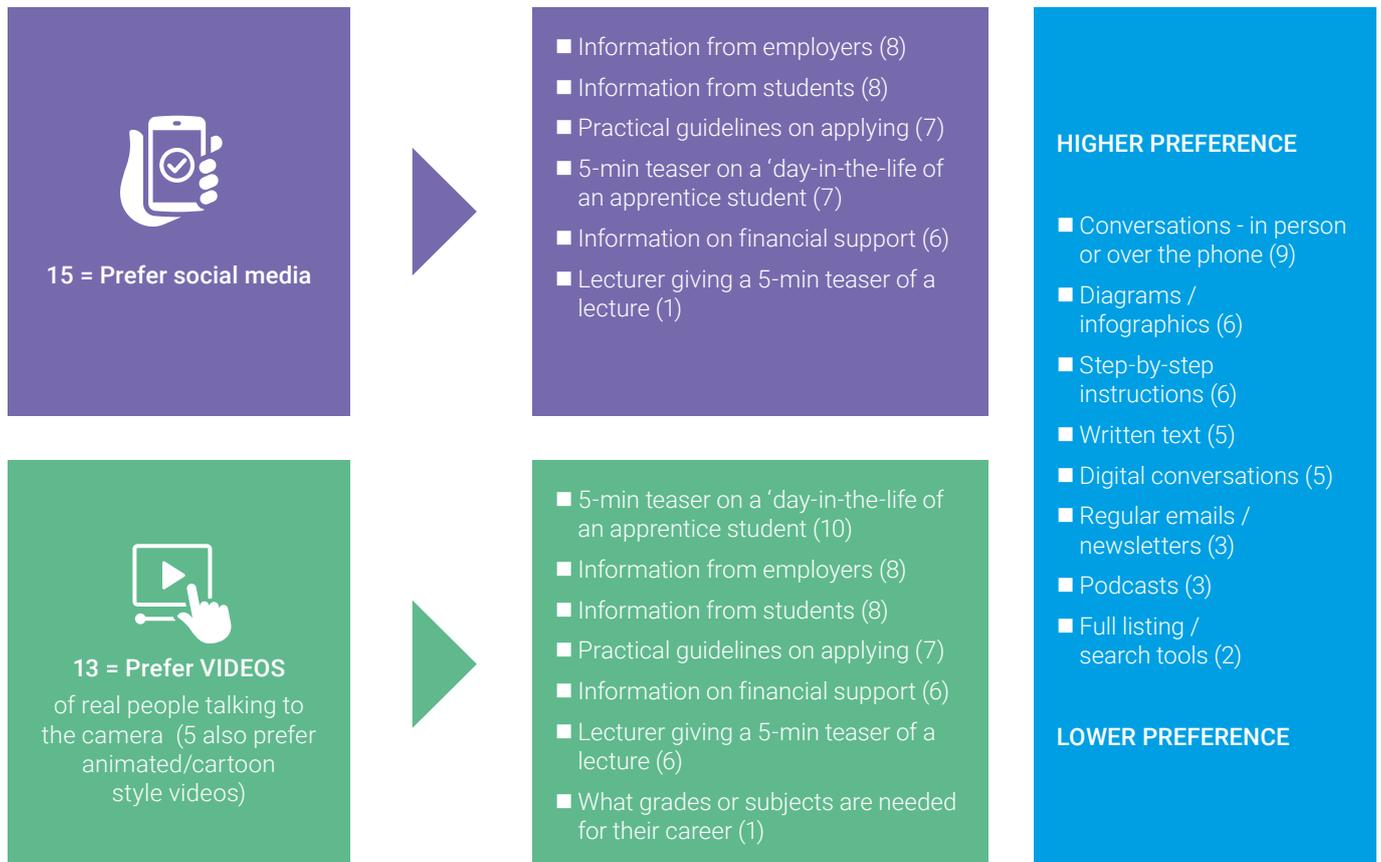
For apprenticeship training providers, the battle for influence and persuasion therefore comes a long time before the decision-making process. If that drop off doesn't change, then consideration needs to be much higher in Year 9 as we don't want young people closing themselves off to apprenticeships, if it's a choice that's right for them. A more effective tactic is likely to be continued campaigning through Years 10 and 11 – where something is currently swinging the pendulum away from apprenticeships (and employment) and towards university. [Previous UCAS research](#) suggests one of the key reasons people don't pursue an apprenticeship is due to availability - or awareness - of opportunities in their location, in a pathway of interest.

Given the vast demographic, lifestyle, and cultural differences between young people – and the vastly different experience of higher education, apprenticeships, and employment – it seems unlikely that one has such a universal preference over the others. It looks more like this decision is being played out as a binary argument – “what's better?” rather than “what's right for me?”

And, finally, when you consider the earlier earning potential of apprenticeships and employment, in a cost of living crisis where so many young people are telling us that they're concerned about finances, it also seems unlikely that these factors wouldn't drive more young people towards the quicker money of apprenticeships and employment. However, we know from [previous research](#) that earning to learn is a key benefit, but perceived levels of lower pay is also a barrier for some (particularly those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds).

So if it's an awareness issue or a knowledge gap, what can be done about it?

We know that there needs to be earlier and more consistent awareness, so we asked young people exactly what they want to hear and how they want to hear it:



Q: KEY information students are looking for. Base: Qualitative research

It's digital, it's practical, and much of it is user generated content (UGC) style. They're looking for the realities of apprenticeships, perhaps because for many of them with limited exposure, it's a reality that's difficult to imagine.

Action points

1. Capitalise that early spike of interest in Year 9 and consolidate its high in Year 11, to prevent the Year 12 drop off. Mythbusting and fact finding campaigns, as well as inspirational content with the reality of apprenticeship life, will help maintain momentum and answer objection before it becomes disinterest.
2. Display your information in a visual way. Both in terms of content which paints a picture of what apprenticeships actually look and feel like, and in terms of prioritising social media and video content over long form text.
3. Partner with organisations that already have a relationship with this demographic.



CHAPTER TWO: FEELINGS & HAPPINESS

Living in the moment and planning for the future: young people want to be happy.

**HAPPINESS IS A
CHIEF DRIVER FOR
ALL PATHWAYS.**

**CONSIDERATION
DOES NOT EQUAL
CONVERSION.**

Today's generation of young people is the most mental health conscious of any we've seen with over 40,000 UCAS applicants sharing information about mental health in their application. They're intimately and innately aware of how their mindsets can affect their outcomes, and are keen seekers of positive experiences. So regardless of the route they're taking post-18, they're united by one key factor when thinking about their future career: happiness.

When we asked them what's most important to them, 'enjoying my job' held a commanding lead (47%) over the more practical aspects – like a sufficient wage (32%), job security (32%), and earning more than average (29%).

And of the top 10 factors, 7 were practical or job-related. Given that personal factors are the distinct minority, it's even more important that we pay close attention (in marketing the pathways and in careers advice) to the fact that 'enjoying my job' came out so far ahead.

Q: Which of these factors are in your TOP 5 MOST IMPORTANT FACTORS when thinking about



THE JOB YOU WANT TO GET IN THE FUTURE?
 BASE: All Respondents (1000)

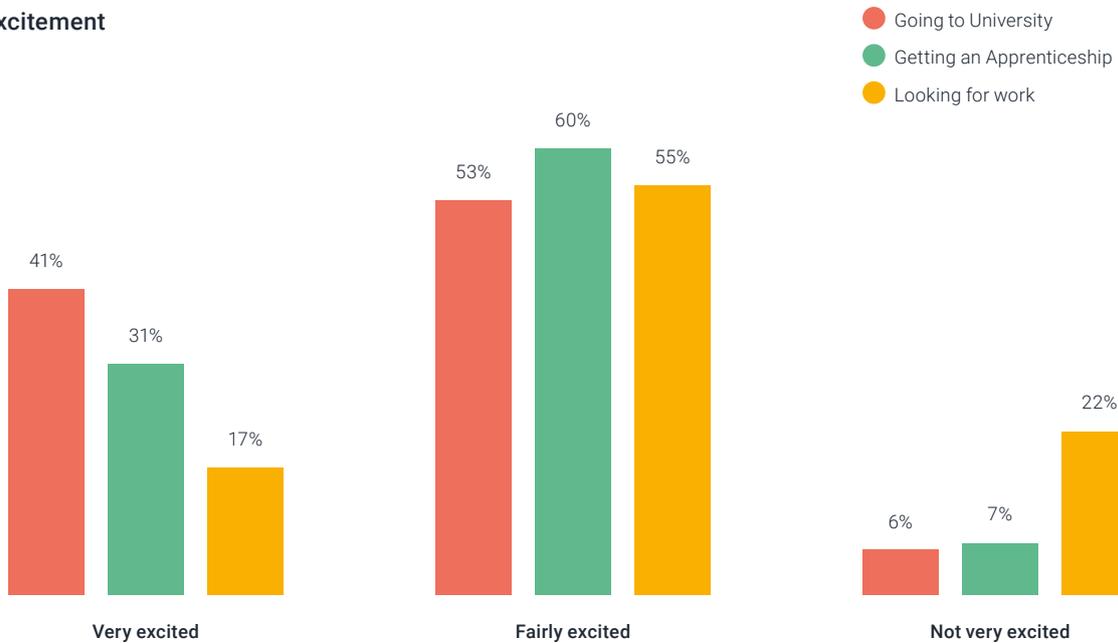
However, when we divide the group and ask about what’s important in the route – not the eventual job – we can see that passion and progression are most favoured by university-goers. For apprentices and workers, it’s the desire to earn money.



Q: What are the MAIN reasons that you have decided to apply to University / apply for an Apprenticeship / leave education and look for work / do something different at 18)? PLEASE PICK UP TO FIVE. Base: University 382 / Apprenticeship 217 / Work 134

There’s an interesting story when we look at excitement too, rather than importance.

Level of excitement



Q. And how EXCITED are you by the idea of doing that? Base: Going to University (382), Getting Apprenticeship (217), Looking for work (134) Base: 856

Excitement is lowest for those heading to work, which may be driven by the fact that they **need** to work, rather than **want** to work. University, which can be seen as an investment and is certainly more on the **want** side of the scale, enjoys far more excitement. And apprenticeships, which sits somewhere between them and is perhaps the most nebulous of the three, occupies a perhaps expected middle ground.

Employment is the only route of the three that has a distinct lack of excitement, with 22% being 'not very excited' compared to just 7% and 6% for apprenticeships and university respectively.

But if decision-making were as empowered and informed as we hoped, and young people are making the decisions that are right for them, should we expect those choosing work to be more excited? Or is it a sign of the times, and that many of those choosing work as a necessity? Is there an opportunity for brands and employers to run campaigns that appeal to the heart, as well as the head? In an ideal world, entering work should hold just as much excitement, opportunity, and potential as its more learning-focussed alternatives.

Action points

1. Make happiness, enjoyment, and contentment the emotional drivers of your post-18 campaigns. Practical facts are important, but inspiration is going to come from seeing the positivity. Equally, research of each route and how each one's benefits will appeal to different preferences.
2. Challenge the stereotypes. Highlight apprenticeships and employment as a way to also follow passions and achieve long term career success.
3. Use case studies and first-hand experience to generate excitement and inspiration.



CHAPTER THREE: EXPERIENCE

Direct, indirect, and past experiences from others shape choices.

**EMPOWERMENT
COMES FROM
EXPERIENCE.**

**BUT YOUNG
PEOPLE
DON'T HAVE
ENOUGH OF IT.**

For most young people, work experience is the silver bullet. It's what breeds confidence, preparedness, and assuredness – whichever path they're on.

81%

consider it
important for
getting their
university place

85%

consider it
important for
getting their
apprenticeship

95%

consider it
important for
their future
job or career

This universal acknowledgement can be divided into two main types. Direct experience, the hands-on and first-hand knowledge like careers skills sessions and mentoring, and indirect experience, exposure to those with direct experience who can share their lessons. But on both sides of the fence, a large proportion of young people still think they need more of it:



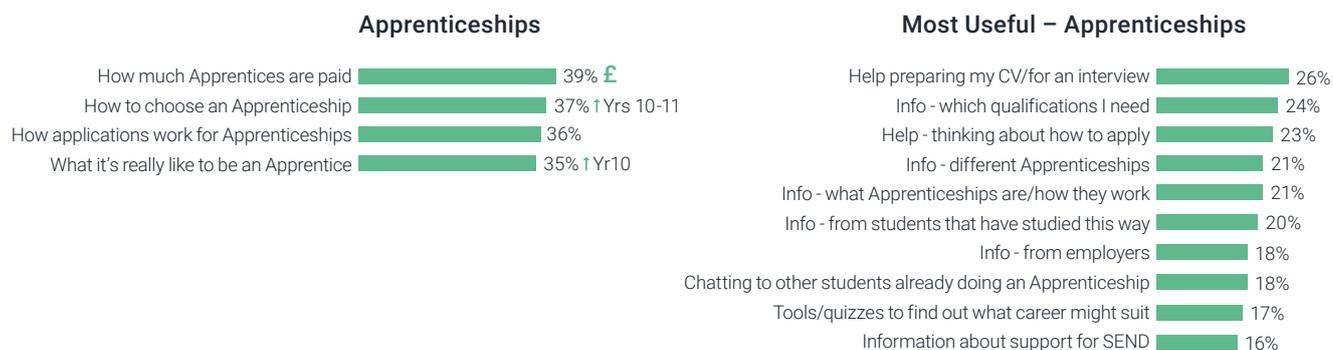
Q. Which, if any, would you ideally like more of to help you consider your options after school/college? BASE: All Respondents 1000

“There are lots of people out there and not many good jobs about, it’s harder to find one. Most companies are looking for people with experience or certain qualifications.”
- 16 years old

“Teacher’s advice has been not so helpful, it doesn’t always answer the questions I have. The advice is basic, and I feel as if when I reach out to the teacher, I receive a standard response.”
- 15 years old

When it comes to apprenticeships specifically, it’s as much about information as it is about experience. We’ve already seen the tapering off of apprenticeship interest, as young people move from Year 9 to 12, and this raft of missing information may be the reason why. Faced with uncertainty and the lack of key facts, young people may be gravitating to the richer resources more readily available in the university-hunt.

It is important to note what we know from previous research - whilst Year 12 and 13 students are increasingly interested in apprenticeships, they find it hard to get information about them. Our Where Next? [Improving the journey to becoming an apprentice](#) report sets out how whilst almost a third of students tell us it was “very easy” to access information about higher education, just 6% say the same about apprenticeships.

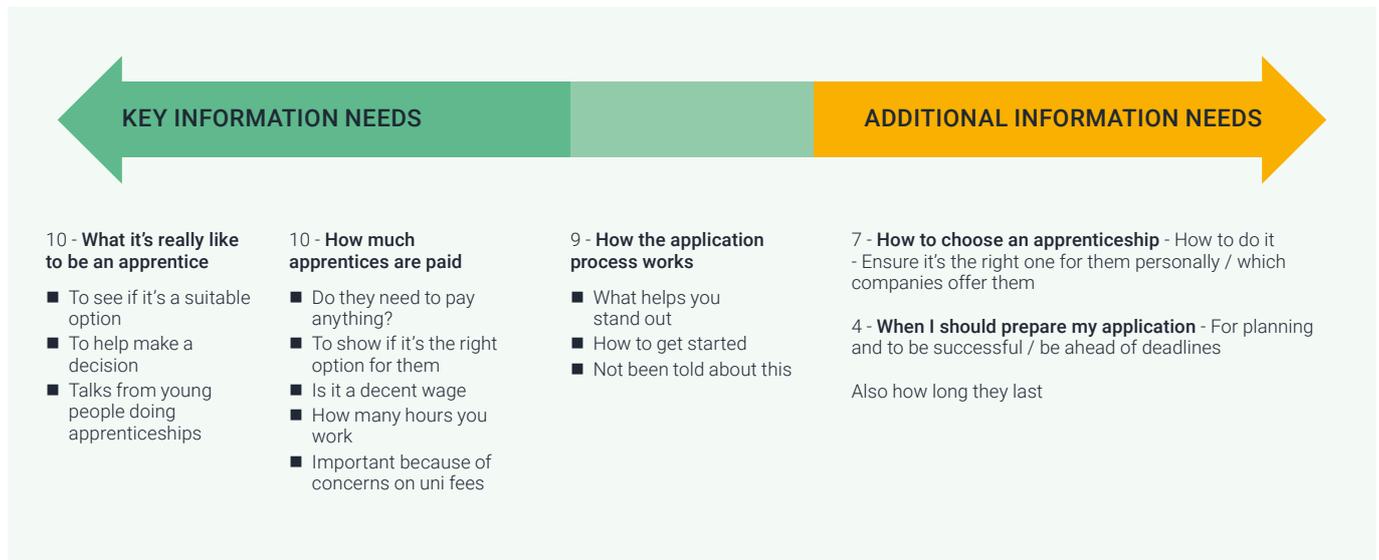


Q: Which of these, if any, would you like more information about, when it comes APPRENTICESHIPS? Base: All Respondents 1000

Q: Which features did you find most useful across the different websites/platforms that you have looked at when it comes to APPRENTICESHIPS? Base: All looking at least one 528

Given that one of the chief benefits of apprenticeships is their ‘earn while you learn’ potential, the fact that 39% of young people don’t know how much they can earn is a worrying mismatch.

But more important than the finances is the ability for them to visualise themselves in an apprenticeship role. It’s much easier for young people in school to naturally imagine university, an exploded continuation of a familiar academic environment. As the less familiar underdog, apprenticeship training providers and employers must paint a convincing and realistic picture in order for young people to truly understand the mechanics and reality – because knowing ‘what it’s really like’ comes out top in their information needs, alongside the money:



Q: What information are you looking for about apprenticeships? Qualitative research.

They're also on the lookout for application tips, how to choose between the different options, and when their deadlines are. Without this information and experience, it's too easy to follow the well-trodden path to university without fully assessing the routes on offer.

Action points

1. Build empowerment and confidence into your campaigns. Provide reassurance and confirmation that experience is an important piece of the puzzle, whilst also highlighting it in all its forms – not just direct hands on work time.
2. Provide work experience opportunities, not just for experience's sake, but as a way to test or confirm their interest in different careers – or even in apprenticeships themselves.
3. Focus your apprenticeship marketing on answering questions and providing information, giving the answers to common questions in your campaign material to avoid early objections and fading interest.
4. Showcase the reality of apprenticeships, via authentic videos that perform so well on channels like TikTok and Instagram Reels and can be hyper-targeted to your audience.



CHAPTER FOUR: CONFIDENCE

Where knowledge is, confidence follows.

KNOWLEDGE AND AWARENESS BREED CONFIDENCE.

WITH THE RIGHT ANSWERS, YOUNG PEOPLE CAN MAKE THE RIGHT CHOICES.

At this stage, it'll come as no surprise that young people are most knowledgeable about (and most comfortable about their level of understanding of) degrees. What may be surprising is that they also know more about eventual jobs and careers than they do about the possibility of getting an apprenticeship.

How much do you know about...			
	Continuing your studies	Getting an apprenticeship	Different jobs/ careers
A lot / reasonable amount	42%	38%	41%
Very little / nothing at all	24%	29%	22%
How comfortable are you with that level of knowledge...			
Extremely / very	31%	30%	30%
Not very / not at all	25%	24%	21%

Q. How much do you know about the various options that you will have at 18, after school/ college?
 Q. And how comfortable are you with that level of knowledge right now? Base: All Respondents 1000

With the growing popularity of Higher and Degree Apprenticeships, and a rapidly increasing portfolio of subjects, many traditionally degree-accessed careers are now more than readily available via the apprenticeship route. And with the added bonus of avoiding debt and earning wages earlier, we need to support young people so that they can look more closely at the options.

But when we look at our qualitative research, we know that those who are more likely to pursue an apprenticeship route have a good understanding of its benefits. In their words, they told us that an apprenticeship would enable them to:

- Start earning money quickly
- Not have to worry about debt
- Earn whilst they learn
- Get qualifications/experience.

"I gained lots of information going to an exhibition last year. I picked up lots of leaflets and places where I could get advice and support from. I went round to different companies to find out what qualifications you need and how easy it is to get onto the programme" - 16 years old

"I want an apprenticeship but not sure where or how to get one. Hopefully, my teachers or career advisors or parents would help me - I would want an apprenticeship in woodwork" - 14 years old

"I think not having to worry about debt is a positive but also earning whilst gaining qualifications and experience, will mean I'm more likely to get a permanent job at the end" - 15 years old

Four big points in favour of apprenticeship awareness, and proof that they **are** aware of the unique benefits. But they also feel that there's a 'LOT' of competition, and there's markedly less certainty among younger students on how to go about becoming an apprentice. Without knowledge, confidence can be difficult to come by. And without confidence, many young people will struggle to go against the grain and choose a path less well trodden – like apprenticeships.

Speaking to young people who are uncertain or unlikely to consider apprenticeships, there's an interesting dichotomy of objections:

For those who are uncertain:

- There's a lack of knowledge
- They'll make a decision based on their grades
- They want to go to university, and don't think they can get there via an apprenticeship.

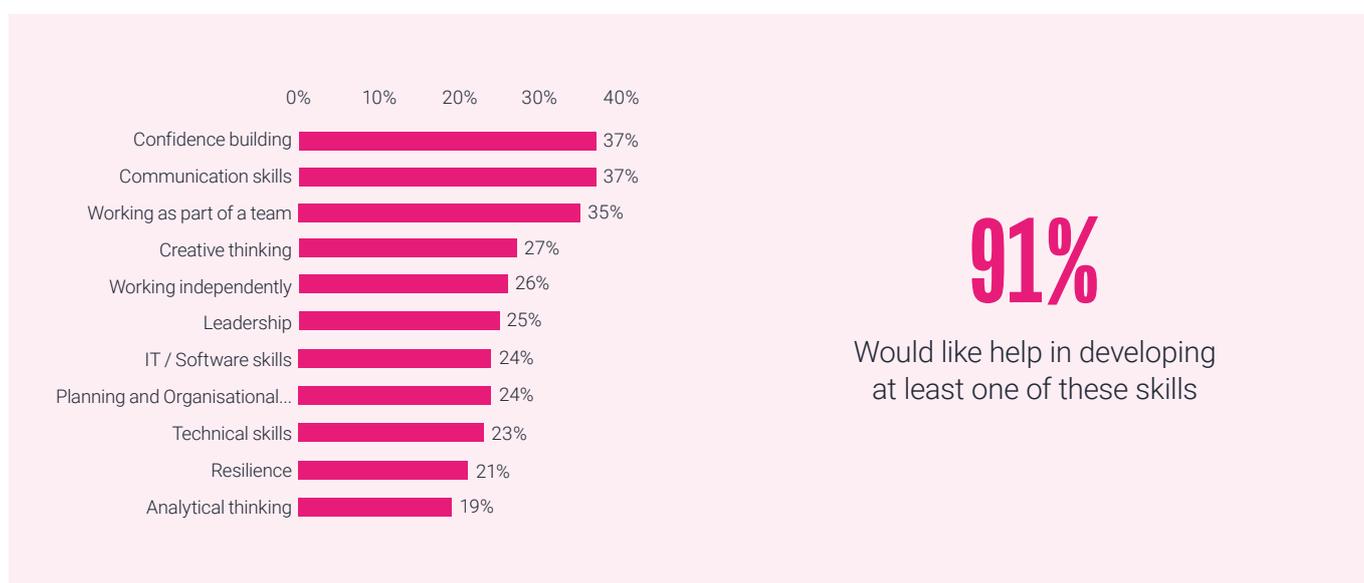
For those who are unlikely:

- They prefer the idea of college or university
- They're unfamiliar and uninformed about apprenticeships
- They think an apprenticeship could be stressful
- To change their mind, it would need to be a role they were passionate about and, without any work experience, it's a risk.

It seems clear that most of these objections are deeply rooted in uncertainty or, at least, a generalised lack of knowledge regarding the benefits of a non-university route. There's little opposition rooted in the realities of apprenticeships, highlighting the need for much, much greater awareness raising and education from schools and alternative pathway providers. [Previous UCAS research](#) stated that 1 in 3 apprentices said their apprenticeship wasn't what they expected which shows the need for enhanced information, advice and guidance for young people.

Better informed, young people can make better decisions – it's about getting the right learner for the right programme. That knowledge will breed confidence in their ability to make the right choices, which ultimately leads to reducing drop-off and increasing successful completion rates. but whichever route they take and however certain they are of it, there remains one major missing piece of the confidence puzzle.

For employees, students, and apprentices – there is an overwhelming need for skills in order to reach their goals, wherever they may lie. Many may view apprenticeships like employment, where they feel the need to deliver like an employee from the outset. They still need skills development, but they also need reassurance that this isn't necessarily the case.:



Q. Thinking about the skills that you feel might be important to your future career/job plans, which if any of the following would you like help in developing?
Base: All Respondents 1000

Action points

1. Highlight the growing opportunities and increasing number of providers, options, and outcomes.
2. Tackle the concept that apprenticeships are disproportionately stressful compared to alternative paths and focus on the unique benefits of the path – earlier experience, debt-free learning, equivalent career outcomes. Apprentices are not expected to know how to perform the role of an employee from day one, it's on-the-job training and they are looked after.
3. Paint a clear picture of the route and steps toward an apprenticeship, to ward off the idea that the path is less clear or more convoluted than a traditional degree.



CHAPTER FIVE: INDEPENDENCE & EMPOWERMENT

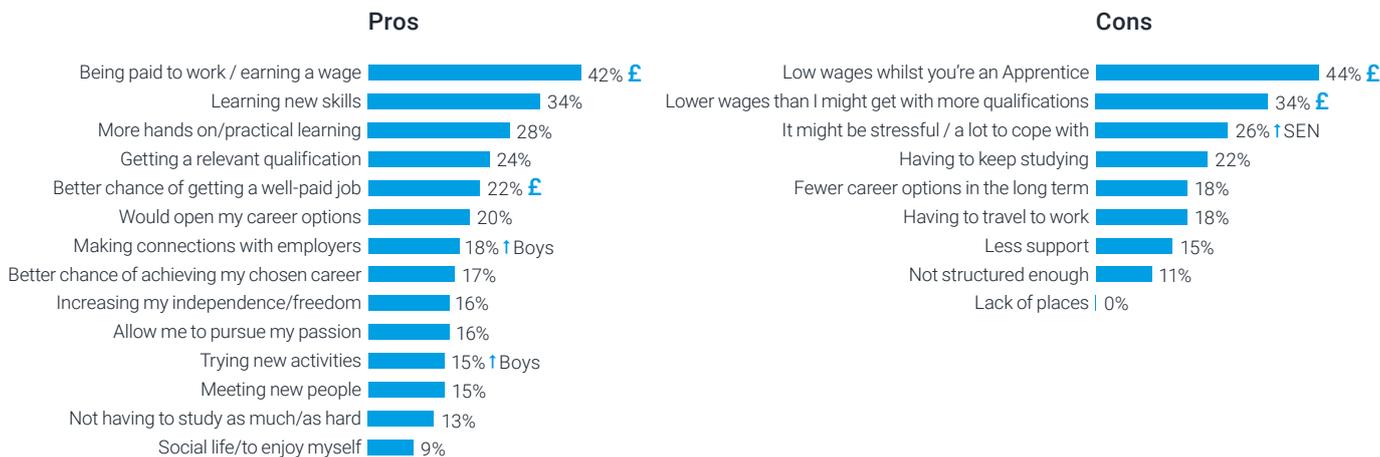
Stepping boldly into their own decisions – parents, carers, and finances.

THE DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD OF INDEPENDENCE.

APPRENTICESHIP PROS CAN ALSO BE APPRENTICESHIP CONS.

Independence is one of the greatest tools for apprenticeship training providers and employers. We know young people value it and crave it, and we know that these paths are some of the fastest tracks towards it.

Young people know it too, highlighting the earlier access to earnings as the biggest draw of these pathways. They also value the ability to learn new skills via hands-on learning, as well as still being able to attain their qualifications and still being able to get a well-paid job (which is a regular objection elsewhere, in favour of degrees).



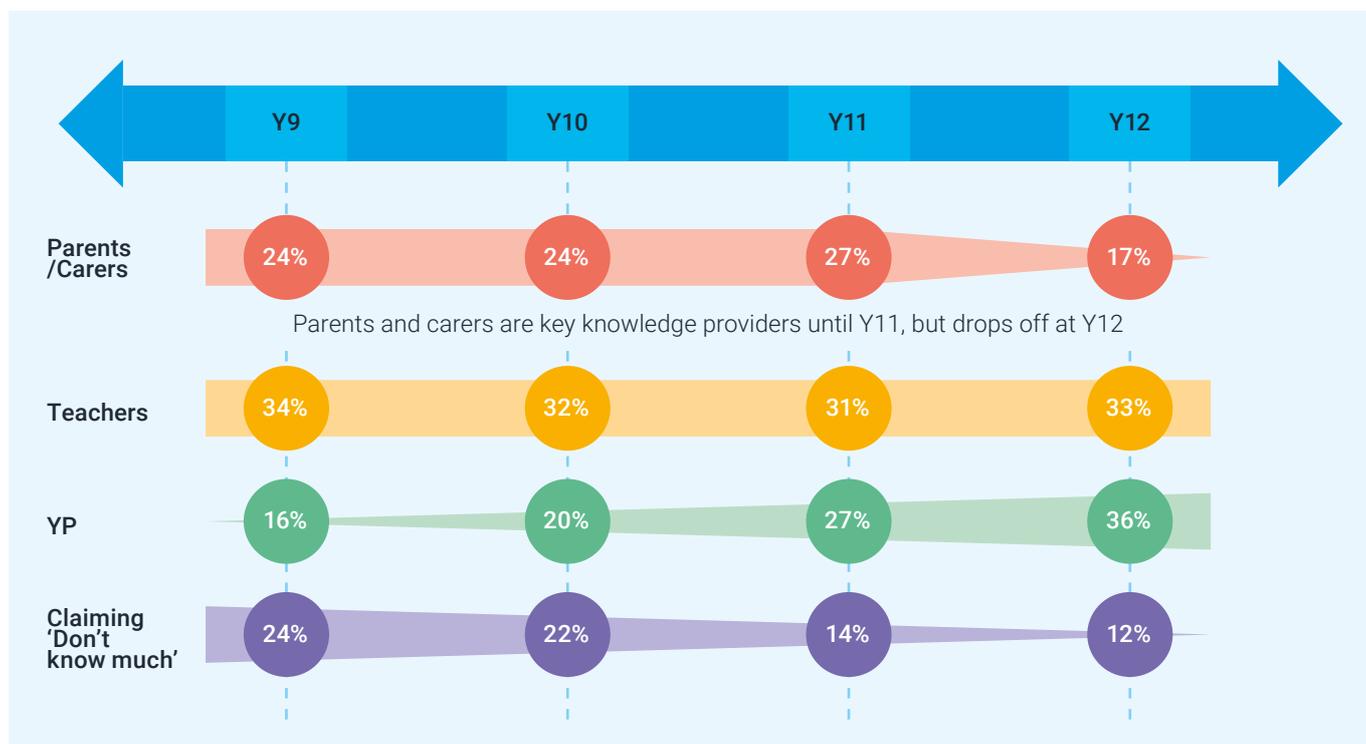
Q. In your opinion, what are the MAIN ADVANTAGES/POSITIVES of apprenticeships MAX 5 RESPONSES

Q. What are the MAIN DISADVANTAGES/NEGATIVES of apprenticeships MAX 5 RESPONSES. BASE: All Respondents (1000)

As we have found [previously](#), the crux is in the contradiction – as the same amount of young people who value the earlier wages also envisage those wages being low. In reality, salary for apprenticeships varies across levels and within levels – it can be lower than minimum wage or that which you would get via student finance as an undergraduate. But it can also be higher, and the avoidance of getting into debt is also a factor.

And even though 24% recognise the ability to attain a relevant qualification, more (34%) are concerned about a lower earning potential than they might get with ‘more’ qualifications via different pathways. There is clearly a level of confusion and conflict between the pros and cons of each choice.

In Chapter 1, we saw the tapering off of apprenticeship interest as young people move from Year 9 to Year 12. Now we can see a correlation emerging, as we ask them about who their main influences are as they get older.



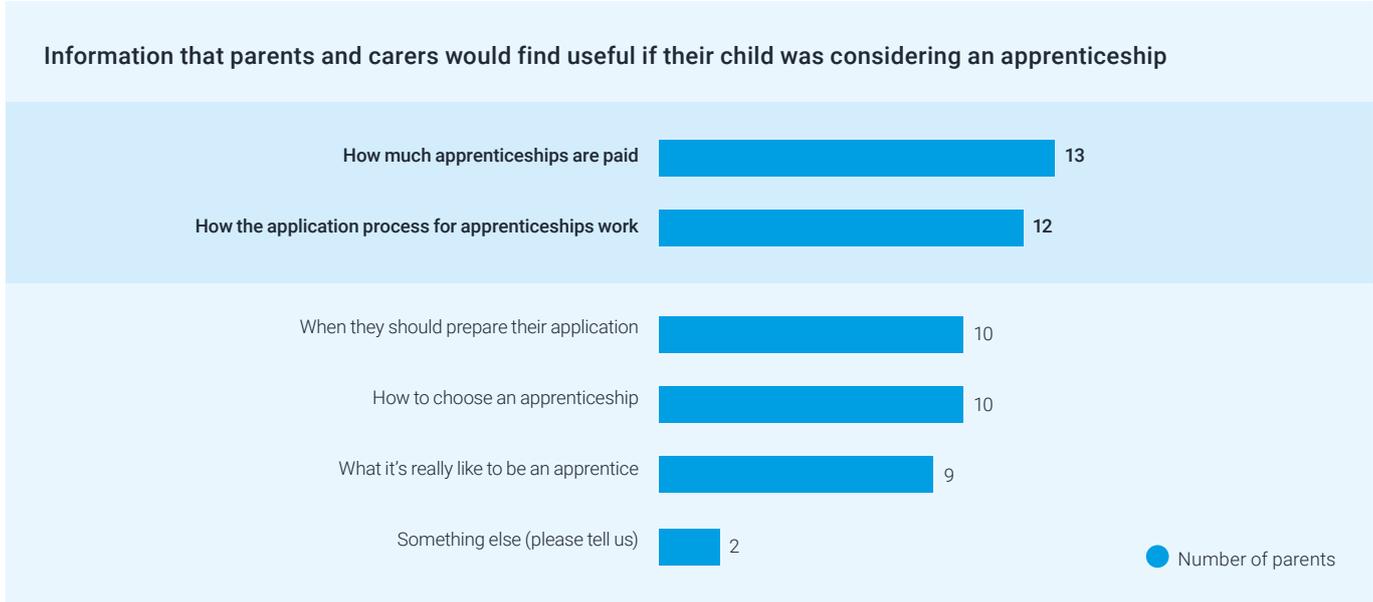
Q. Who would you say has done most of the work to improve your knowledge around your options at 18? Base: All Respondents 1000 (250/250/251/249)



Parental influence is strong in Year 9, when apprenticeship interest is also high, whereas their own influence is highest in Year 12, where apprenticeship interest is low. The connection may be logical, as those with a vested interest (parents and carers) may be more likely to push their children towards more pragmatic, outcome-focussed, and financially secure options like apprenticeships and employment. However we also know that some parents and carers who are unfamiliar with the pathway tend to guide their child towards university, which is a strong call for apprenticeship training providers to do more parental outreach and education.

For apprenticeship training providers, parents and carers are natural promotional allies. But many parents and carers have very little knowledge about key information like apprenticeship wages, which is one of the main questions their child asks. Without this information from a primary influencer, it can be easy to revert to default (i.e the degree route).

And for those young people without parental support, or living in unsupportive environments or care, the need for easily digestible information is even more important to support their decision making.



Base/source: Qualitative research

Parents and carers would like to know more about apprenticeships themselves, but also how to support their child if they change their mind. There is a passion from parents and carers for apprenticeships, and with their role as a key influencer in Year 9, a clear route to persuasion.

“How much apprenticeships are paid (true picture of how much), How to choose an apprenticeship (all routes on what would suit from GCSEs and keeping things real as to how many places there are)” - Parent of 14 year old

“Key questions my child asks are how much do they earn? How long does it take to train? What do I earn when I’m training?” - Parent of 14 year old

Most parents and carers are currently sourcing their information from:

- **Word of mouth** – family, friends, colleagues.
- **Online research** – via job ad sites for salary and apprenticeship sites for qualifications
- **Events** – open days, career exhibitions
- **Contacts** – asking colleagues or consulting LinkedIn for advice and suggestions
- **Previous experience** – their own experience, or having been through it with an older child.

"I feel very confident and informed because of careers events and word of mouth" - Parent of 14 year old

"LinkedIn has been a great help. I have used contacts to reach out for advice and support. Job advertising sites have been good to show the salary expectations, realistic ones. Apprenticeship sites have been good for advice and help with knowing what qualifications are required. And what the training is." - Parent of 14 year old

Those with children earlier in the journey (around Year 9) tend to do less active research, content with using their own knowledge and passive research through word of mouth. Given that this is the age where many young people are interested in apprenticeships, and one of the highest years of parental influence – there is a significant missed opportunity for nurturing that interest in alternative pathways.

Action points

1. Independence is inspirational and is one of the unique strengths of apprenticeship and employment pathways over traditional degrees - highlight its personal and professional benefits.
2. Do some mythbusting and help to detangle the pros from the cons, which overlap in several places when it comes to apprenticeships.
3. Dedicate resource to adviser/influencer marketing, focussing on upskilling parents and carers with the facts they need to speak confidently to young people about the strengths of apprenticeships. Many parents and carers are already on board with promoting this path, you just need to give them the tools to back it up.



CHAPTER SIX: CONTROL

Stepping boldly into their own decisions – parents, carers, and finances.

CONTROL AS A TONIC FOR CHOICE.

If knowledge and awareness breed confidence, then confidence breeds control. A sense of control, for young people, comes when they can see the route to achieving their aspirations – and they have the tools in order to get there. Those aspirations come in two main forms:

KNOWING THE WAY LEADS TO AN EASIER JOURNEY.

1

Career driven

A clear path from studying to employment. Climbing the career ladder, buying a house or a car, having a family

"I want to be a basketballer or an engineer in life. I want to be selected in an NBA Round 1 1st pick by Miami Heat" – 13 year old

2

Experience driven

An experience and exploration of options. Travel, community work, teaching, vets, flight attendants

"I'm not sure what I want to do for a job but I like helping younger children. Maybe I might be a teacher." – 14 year old

And whichever path they're on, the journey follows the same linear path:

1. **Access:** Pass my exams and get the grades I need
2. **Develop:** Study and get my desired job, or get and finish my apprenticeship
3. **Achieve:** Buy a house or go travelling

Both career and experience driven young people can, objectively, pursue their goals via any pathway. But the reasons why so few, relatively, decide to follow the apprenticeship route is rooted in a lack of deep understanding.

They know, and like, the benefits of apprenticeships – but haven't done proper research into them. They have concerns about whether they'd make friends via that route, because the perception is that they'd be working with older colleagues. They also have concerns about 'being ready' for an apprenticeship – which speaks to the importance of work experience from the previous chapter. Going to university may be seen as a continuation of traditional education – more readily available friends on the same path, and a delay of entering the 'real world.' Apprenticeships put them square in the path of adulthood.

"An ideal apprenticeship experience is good practical experience, and training with good facilities and apprenticeship trainers. The benefits of this route are gaining practical experience, more chances of employment, and getting paid." - 14 year old

There is, however, more sense of being in control and gaining confidence compared to university. They know the financial and practical benefits, and they have hopes of getting an apprenticeship while still in school, getting the qualifications and experience to build a CV for a good job.

Action points

1. Highlight the overlaps of career vs experience driven pathways. All three pathways can offer the perceived benefits of both of those paths. There's no reason why a job-focussed young person can't also enjoy travel, as part of their journey – and there's no reason why exploration-focussed young people can't expect comparable career outcomes. It's not a this-or-that game.
2. Challenge the preconceptions and misconceptions of apprenticeships – particularly the social aspect and peer support. Organisations like the Association of Apprentices can provide this. Focus on dispelling the concept of an apprentice being the lone young person in an office of adults, promoting the variety of apprenticeships available across different sectors, workplaces, and environments.

WHAT NEXT?

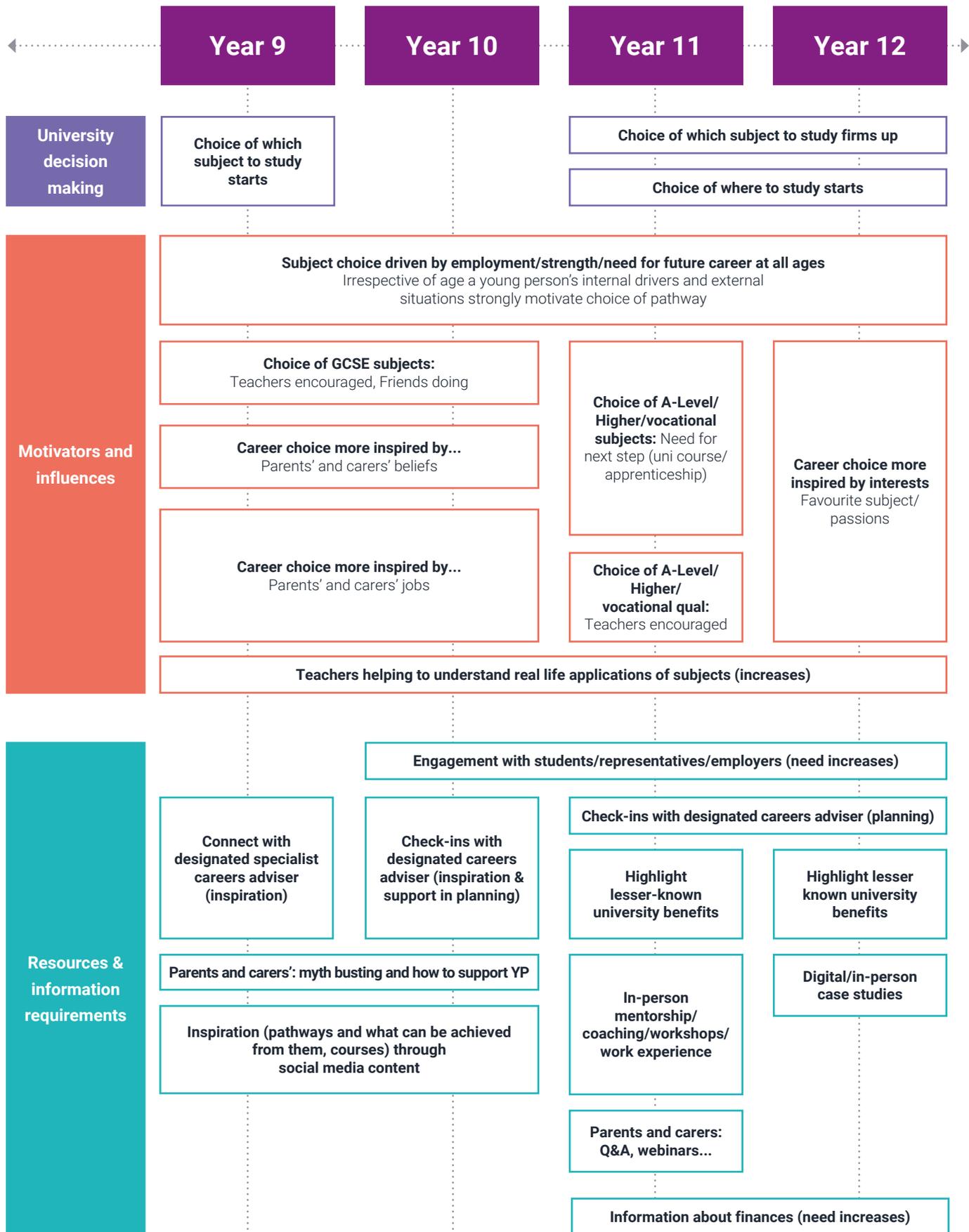
So far from Project Next Generation, we've published the Themes Report, the Needs & Motivators Report, and the Early Careers & Apprenticeships Report – giving you the insights you need to hone your marketing, education, and recruitment strategies. There's plenty more to come, including our Building Connections Report and Adviser Report, which will show you how to develop brand loyalty and relationships, as well as how to use the UCAS Hub to its full potential with those who are relying on you for support.

And this spring, UCAS will be publishing a policy report looking at how the future apprenticeship system can empower employers to create opportunities for all to meet the increasing demand.

Our research indicates that young people are looking for more information from independent training providers and employers. If you'd like to connect with them and build your brand recognition and raise awareness of your early careers and apprenticeship opportunities please [get in touch](#). With over 1.5m students registering with UCAS each year to explore their next steps, UCAS is uniquely placed to help you connect with the next generation.



Future Decision Making Timeline*



*Based on a standard secondary calendar



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