

# CELEBRATING APPRENTICESHIPS

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# HOW DO YOUNG PEOPLE MAKE DECISIONS ABOUT APPRENTICESHIPS AND EARLY CAREERS?

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CELEBRATING APPRENTICESHIPS



UCAS

Project **Next Generation** aimed to understand **what** students are planning for their future and **how** they choose subjects of interest and career pathways, carried out across May-July 2023.

### Stage 1: Quantitative study

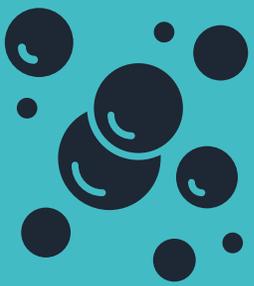
- Online survey with 1000 young people from across the UK in Years 9-12 (aged 13-17)

### Stage 2: Qualitative study

- Online forum with 24 young people and their parents across years 9-12

## 6 key themes were identified

- 1 Inspiration/Discovery
- 2 Feelings/Happiness
- 3 Experience
- 4 Confidence
- 5 Independence/Empowerment
- 6 Control



# Inspiration / Discovery

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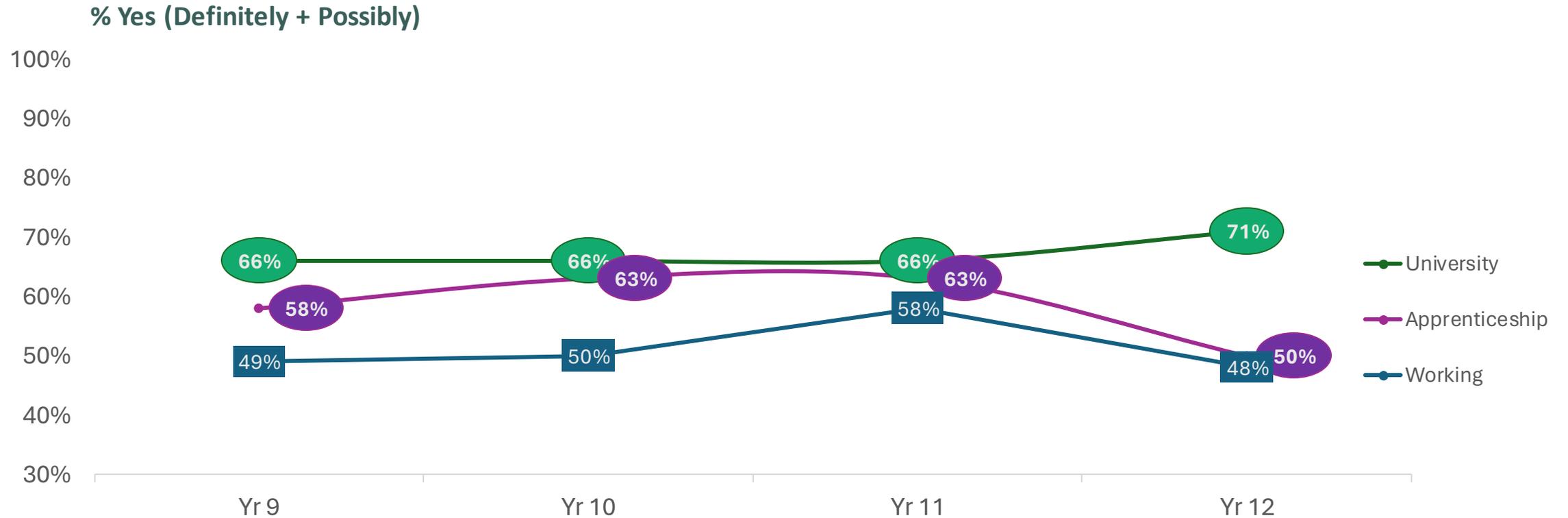
Defined as 'discovering options for their future and the need to be inspired'.

*Don't leave aspiration up to the imagination*

Inspiration/Discovery is at the forefront of their decision-making.



# High consideration of apprenticeships at all age groups until Yr 12



Q3.10 / 14 / 18 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)

# Great deal of uncertainty amongst this age group about future careers

57%

**Know 'a little'**  
when it comes to  
post- 18 options

47%

Agree they have  
**no idea** what  
career they want  
to do in the future

42%

Say family/ friends  
**do a similar job**  
and that's  
influenced their  
choices

*We haven't been offered much support/advice, but we were given a booklet which contained some useful advice about post-career options by our head of year. We were also given a few PowerPoints (also from our head of year) but it contained limited information. In addition, our school offered a careers meeting with a careers advisor, but spaces were limited so not everyone could receive this information*

# Visual information useful for students at this age



15 = Prefer **SOCIAL MEDIA**



- ✓ Information from employers (8)
- ✓ Information from students (8)
- ✓ Practical guidelines on applying (7)
- ✓ 5-min teaser on a 'day-in-the-life of an apprentice student' (7)
- ✓ Information on financial support (6)
- ✓ Lecturer giving a 5-min teaser of a lecture (1)



13 = Prefer **VIDEOS** of real people talking to the camera  
(5 also prefer animated/ cartoon style videos)



- ✓ 5-min teaser on a 'day-in-the-life of an apprentice student' (10)
- ✓ Information from employers (8)
- ✓ Information from students (8)
- ✓ Practical guidelines on applying (7)
- ✓ Information on financial support (6)
- ✓ Lecturer giving a 5-min teaser of a lecture (6)
- ✓ What grades or subjects are needed for their career (1)

**Young people need inspiration and encouragement to discover available options, and to help them have more certainty about the future**

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# Feelings / Happiness

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Defined as 'current enjoyment and future happiness'.

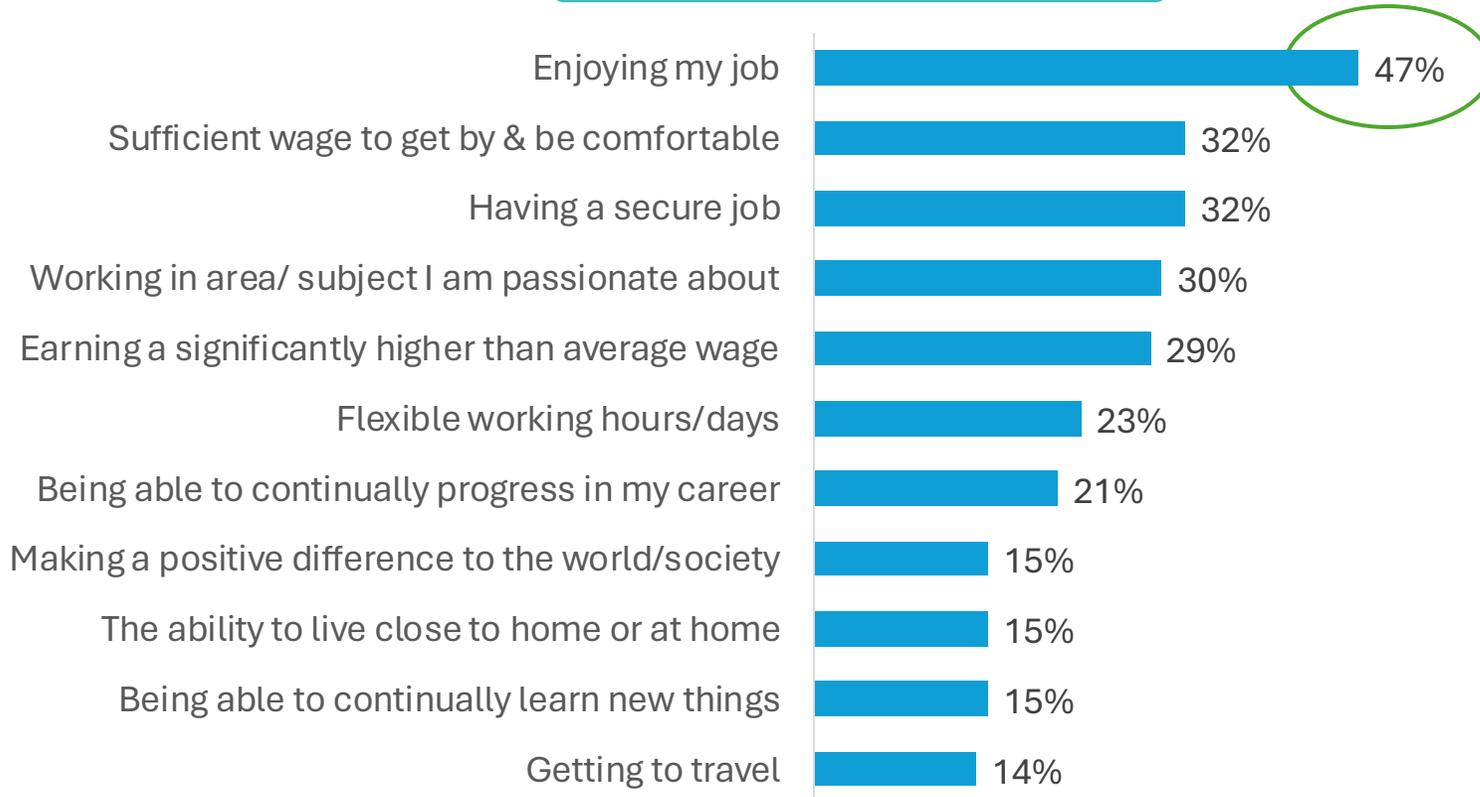
*Living in the moment and planning for the future*

What happiness looks like for young people



# Enjoying what you do is No 1 when it comes to jobs/careers

## Job – what's most important

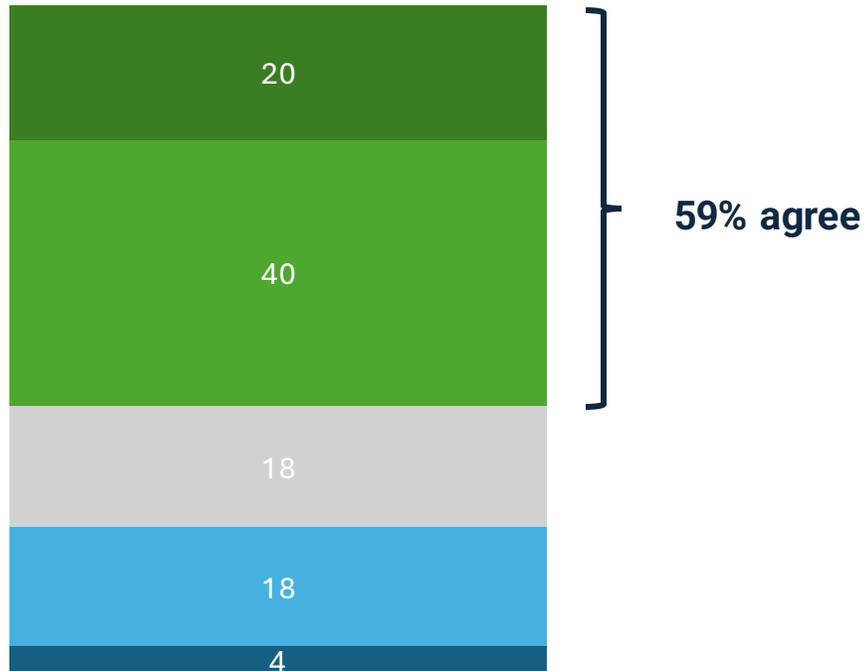


*I want to have a job that I can really enjoy and earn good money from, so I can have fun and be happy at work – 15*

Q4.1 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)

# A key strategy is focussing on what they enjoy and trust that good things will follow



I'm not trying to map out my future – I'm sticking to what I enjoy / what I am good at and the rest will take care of itself



## CURRENT ENJOYMENT

Passions & interests  
Subject/course/career enjoyment



## FUTURE HAPPINESS

Stable career & financial situation  
Career progression  
Opportunities to explore/travel/independence

# The reasons for taking different routes are fairly distinctive- finance and enjoyment are key for would be apprentices

Main reasons for being most likely to...

## University

- 60% Best for career long-term
- 52% Follow passions/dreams
- 37% Will enjoy more
- 29% Advice - parents
- 23% Advice - teachers

## Apprenticeship

- 57% Want to earn some money 
- 35% Will enjoy more
- 29% Follow passions/dreams
- 28% I can live at home
- 26% Best for career long-term
- 25% To save money 

## Out to Work

- 52% Want to earn some money 
- 30% To save money 
- 29% Won't have to study
- 27% Don't like studying
- 25% Will enjoy more

Q3.23 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

**Make happiness, enjoyment and contentment the emotional drivers of your campaigns**

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# Experience

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Defined as direct, indirect, and past experiences that shape choices

*Using experience to empower choices*

Young people don't have enough of it



# Experience creates confidence and preparedness



81%

Consider it important for getting their university place



85%

Consider it important for getting their apprenticeship

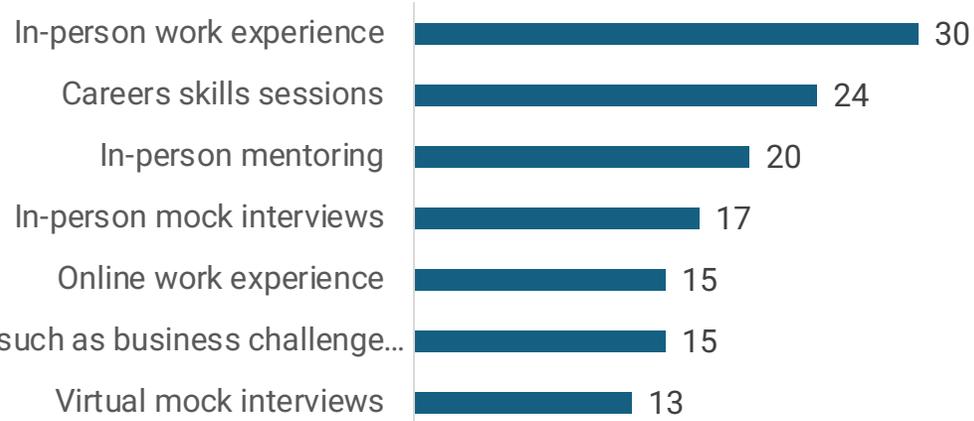


95%

Consider it important for their future job or career

# There is a need for more experience, whether direct or indirect

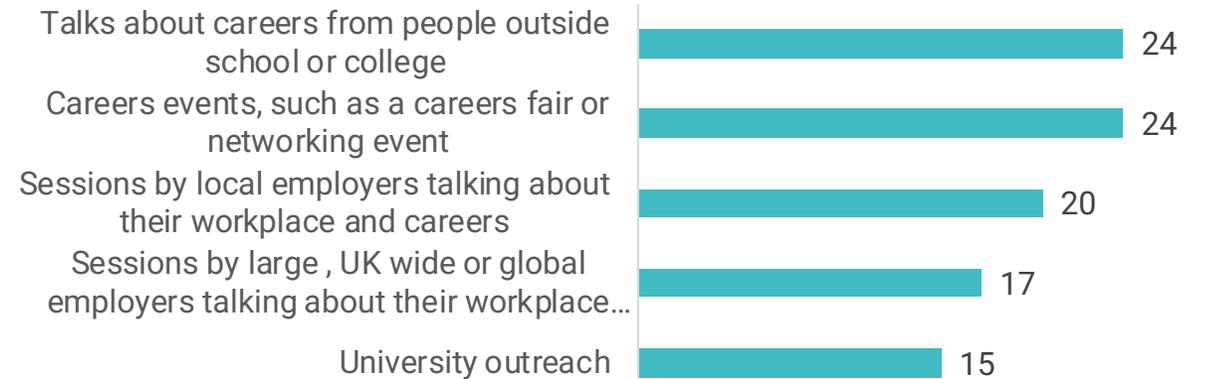
## Direct experience



■ % would like more of

*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*

## Indirect experience



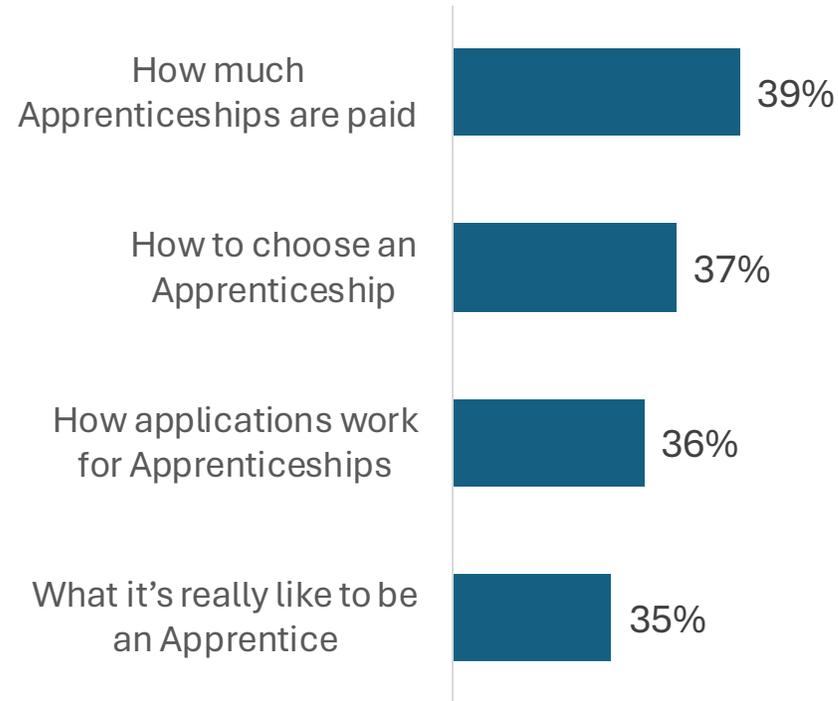
■ % would like more of

*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*

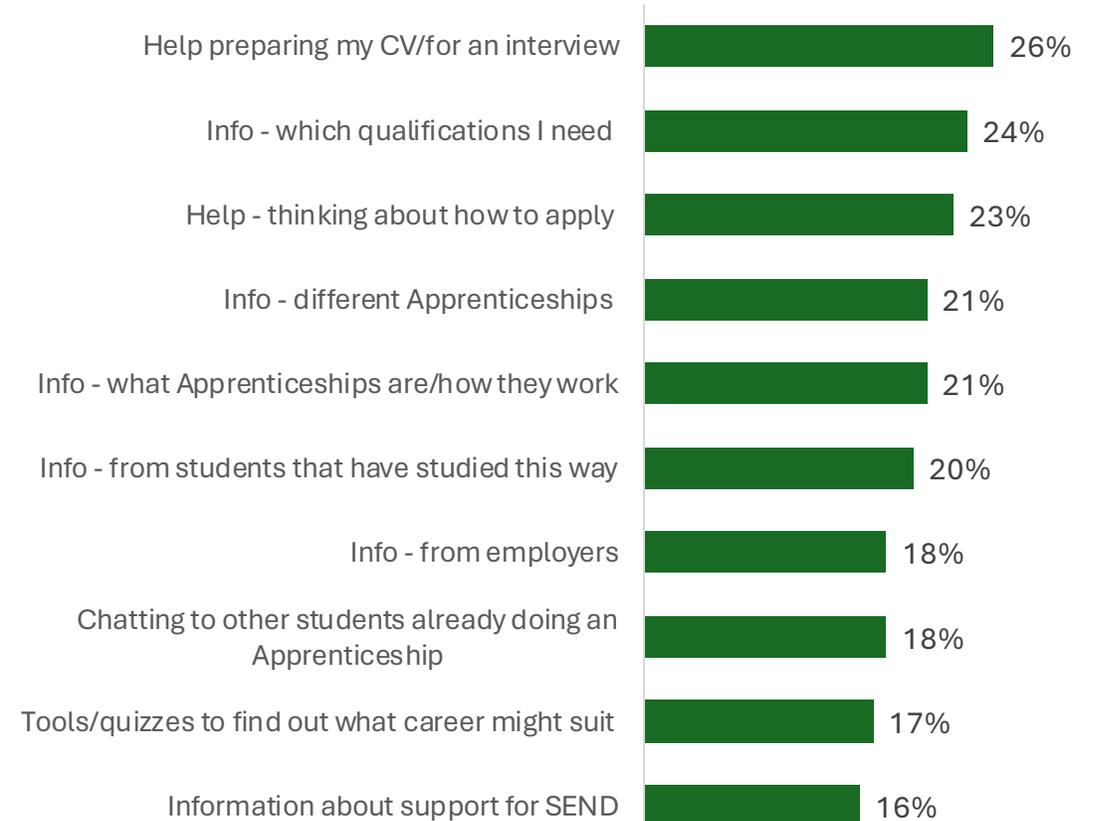
Q5.4 Which, if any, would you ideally like more of to help you consider your options after school/college?  
BASE: All Respondents 1000

# Information is as important as experience

## Apprenticeships



## Most Useful - APPRENTICESHIPS



Q5.14c Which of these, if any, would you like more information about, when it comes APPRENTICESHIPS? Base: All Respondents 1000 Q5.9 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 at least one 528

# Interest in finding out what its REALLY like to be an apprentice

## KEY INFORMATION NEEDS

### 10 – What it's really like to be an apprentice

- ✓ To see if it's a suitable option
- ✓ To help make a decision
- ✓ Talks from young people doing apprenticeships

### 10 – How much apprenticeships are paid

- ✓ Do they need to pay anything?
- ✓ To show if it's the right option for them
- ✓ Is it a decent wage
- ✓ How many hours you work
- ✓ Important because of concerns on uni fees

### 9 – How the application process works

- ✓ What helps you stand out
- ✓ How to get started
- ✓ Not been told about this

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION NEEDS

7 – **How to choose an apprenticeship** – How to do it – Ensure it's the right one for them personally / which companies offer them

4 – **When I should prepare my application** – For planning and to be successful / be ahead of deadlines

Also – how long they last

# Harness and showcase experiences



# Confidence

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Defined as 'knowledge/experience & level of support/reassurance received'.

*Where knowledge is, confidence follows*

What they need to be confident in decision making.  
The confidence they feel/what impacts their confidence.



# Confidence is informed by experience, knowledge and reassurance



## Need experience & knowledge of what they're going into

38% feel they have a lot/reasonable knowledge about apprenticeships, but only 30% feel comfortable with their level of knowledge



## Need reassurance that they're not expected to be perfect

37% want help with confidence building and communication skills

*"I have a lack in confidence, so I would like help developing my confidence as it would benefit many areas of my life and help with my future career plans..." (16)*

# Strong value proposition amongst young people

Those more likely to look into an apprenticeship...

- ✓ Start earning money quickly
- ✓ Earn whilst learning / getting qualifications
- ✓ Not having to worry about debt
- ✓ Gain work experience
- ✓ Interesting



*"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)*

*"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)*

# But also uncertainty...

## 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.
- Perception there's 'a lot' of competition

## Those who are unlikely:

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

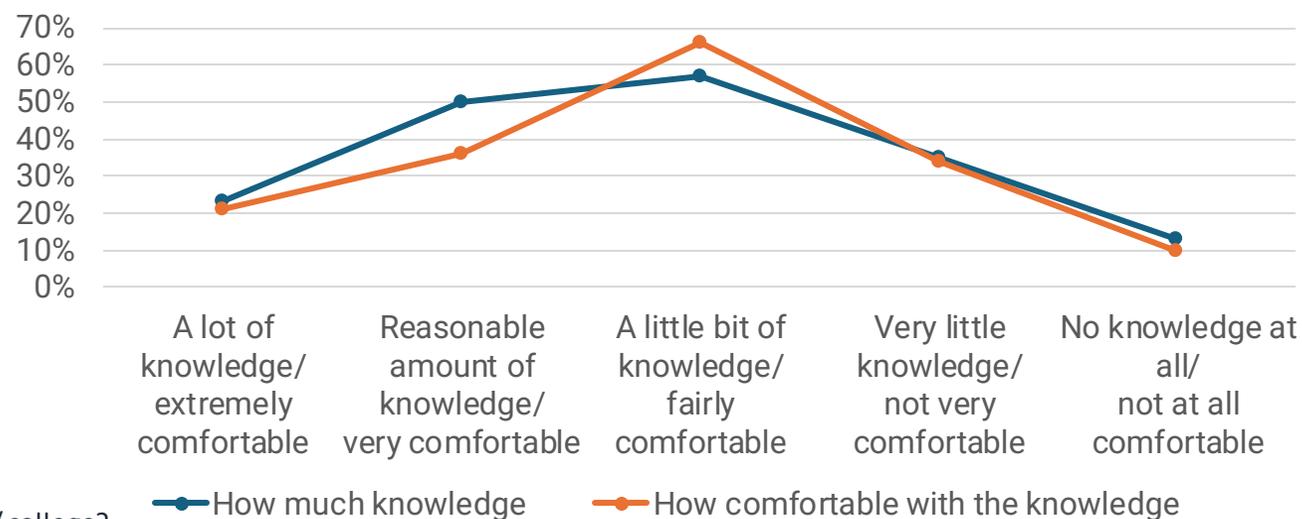
*"I want an apprenticeship but not sure where or how to get one. Hopefully, my teachers or career advisors or parents would help me " (14)*



# To maintain confidence throughout decision-making, knowledge about future options is needed

- The more they know they more comfortable they are
- This is especially the case for alternative to university options

Correlation between level of knowledge and comfort with level of knowledge



Q5. 1 How much do you know about the various options that you will have at 18, after school/ college?  
Q5. 2 And how comfortable are you with that level of knowledge right now?

Base: All Respondents 1000

**Highlight opportunities**  
**Showcase support**  
**Make it easy**

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# Independence / Empowerment

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Defined as 'the ability to make own decisions & take responsibility for own future'

*Stepping boldly into their own decisions*



# Financial independence is a big concern

The main draw of apprenticeships is financial position, but the main drawbacks are also money related

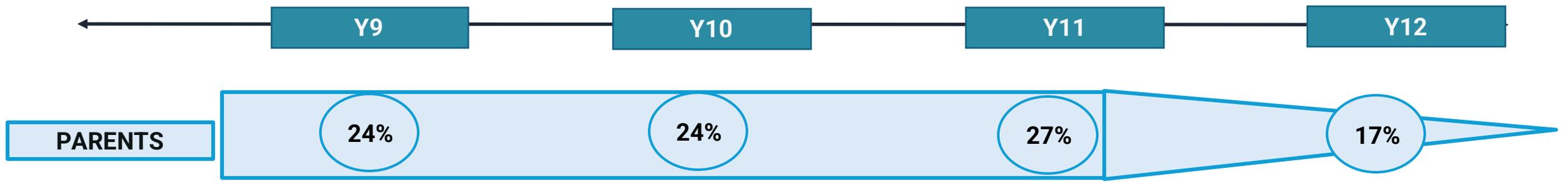


Provide resources about finances and likely longer term salaries to alleviate money concerns



Q3.8 Apprenticeship advantages  
Q3.9. Apprenticeship disadvantages  
Base: All Respondents 1000

# Young people need to feel confident in their independence by Y12



Parents are key knowledge providers until Y11 but drops off at Y12

Q5.13 Who would you say has done most of the work to improve your knowledge around your options at 18?  
Base: All Respondents 1000

# There is disparity in the levels of support young people receive from parents

Those with parents in 'careers' or who know how the system works have more support in general for entry into careers, as parents can act as career coaches.

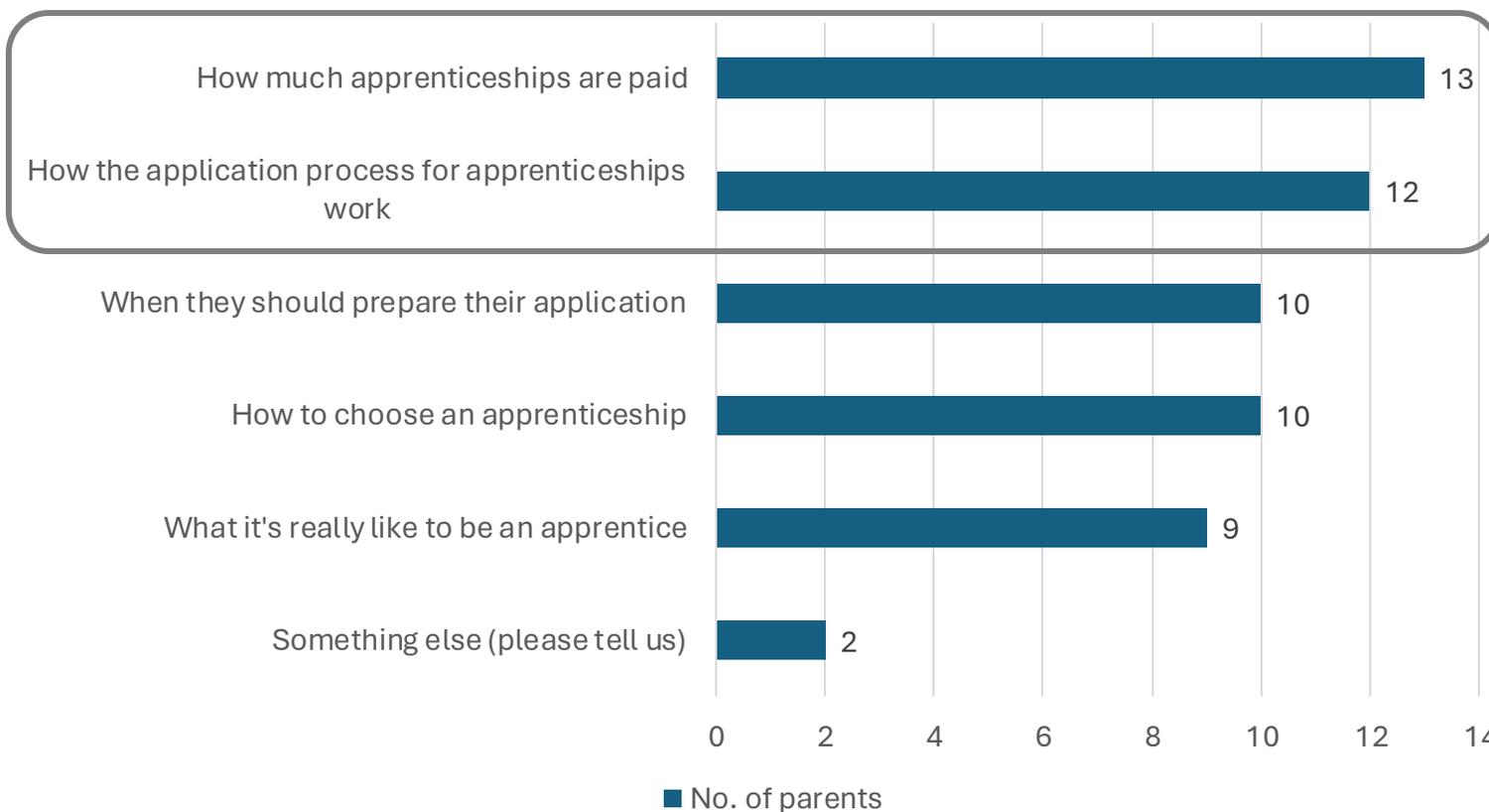
*"I helped with work experience on one path so he could try it. He loved it...All the questions he has I have been able to get people from the industry for him to speak to. So he can hear it from some one who's worked in the industry so it's good honest truth." – Parent (of 14 yrs)*



**For those without this support, there is a need to fill the gap**

# In terms of apprenticeships, parents want a realistic view of salary and what is involved in training

Information that parents would find useful if their child was considering an apprenticeship



*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 (daughter, 14 yrs)*

*[Key questions my child asks are] How much do they earn? How long to train What do I earn when I'm training? – Parent (son, 14 yrs)*

## Other useful information:

- How to find out about apprenticeships in the first place
- What do we do if they change their mind?

**Independence is a key benefit  
of apprenticeship route**

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# Control

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Defined as 'preparedness and certainty/confidence for the future'.

*Confidence is a fast track to control*

The importance of having control of their future and finances



# General future aspirations are both money and experience oriented- and start with exams

Young people's aspirations can be split into two key goals

1. Career driven/clear path from studying to employment/money focussed
  - Working way up, buying nice things/house/car, having a family, buying house/car
2. Experience driven/exploring options
  - Travel, community work, teaching, vet, flight attendant
  - Some aren't afraid to dream big as well

*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)*

*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)*

No matter the goal, their journey always begins with 'passing exams & getting the grades I need'

Study & get desired job / Get & finish apprenticeship

Buy house or car / Travel

Obstacles: finances (losing jobs), stress, bad grades

Support from parents, teachers, mentor

# For many, the apprenticeship route and going straight into employment are viewed in a similar way- are they ready?

Generally they haven't thought in depth about the apprenticeship journey..

Some concerns about making friends (working with older people) and being ready for one.

Less thought about life outside of the apprenticeship (enjoyment & lifestyle) and more focus on getting experience and qualifications.

*"An ideal apprenticeship experience is good practical experience, and training with good facilities and apprenticeship trainers...the benefits of this route is gaining practical experience, more chance of employment, and getting paid" (14)*

## Journey



- Research (online)
- Think about more when it's time to apply
- Apply -> get job

## Inspirations & Impact



- Financial benefits
- Practical experience & learning

## Hopes & Expectations



- Get an apprenticeship while still in school
- Get qualifications & experience to build CV for a good job
- Lead to future job roles

**Highlight the overlaps of career vs experience driven pathways, and showcase social and peer support**

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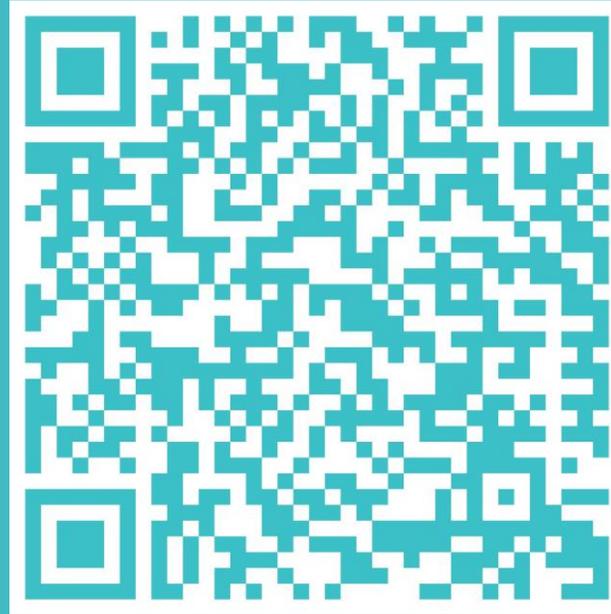


# 6 key themes when producing strategies for post-18 decisions

Understand how the themes influence each other, as well as the decisions of young people, to ensure they are well-equipped for making choices for their future



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