

THE FUTURE TALENT WINDOW

When and how to engage youth audiences

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CAREERS & EMPLOYABILITY RESEARCH 2025

- Bespoke survey with 16-19-year-olds, registered with UCAS, looking to start university in September 2026
- 1,692 respondents
- UK (88%) and International (12%)
- Majority of respondents aged 16-17
- Fieldwork 24 April -15 May 2025



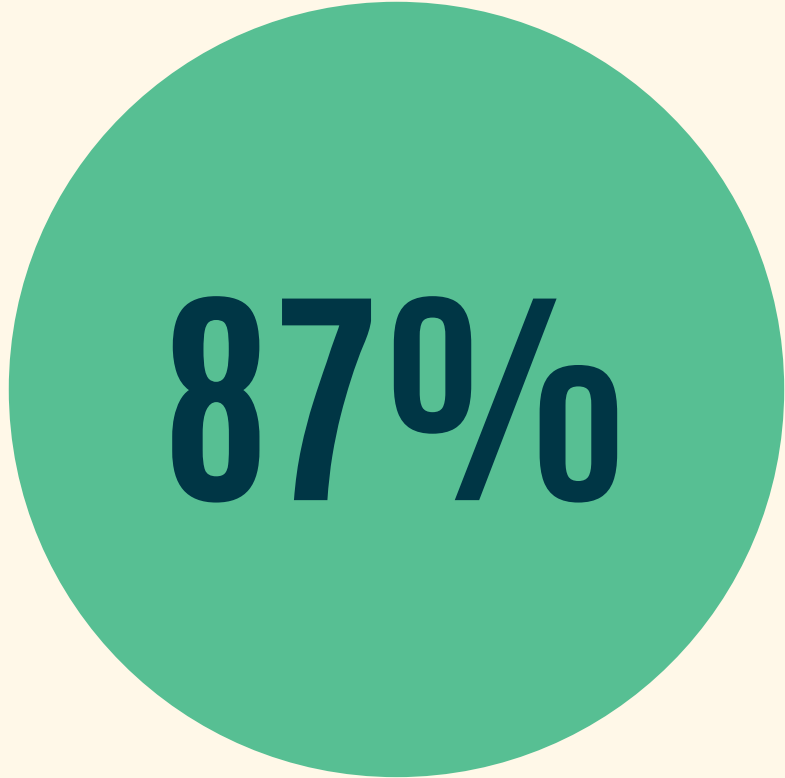
EMPLOYABILITY IS A CORE DECISION DRIVER

Young people today are more career focused than ever. They want certainty of having a job after graduating and they're making their education choices with that front of mind.



95%

say employability
shapes their
course choice



87%

say employability
shapes their
university choice

MAJOR LIFE DECISIONS WITH LIMITED KNOWLEDGE

The route from education to work isn't clear for everyone

36%

I know what I want to be, and I have a clear plan on how to get there

38%

I know what field, but I wouldn't say I have a plan

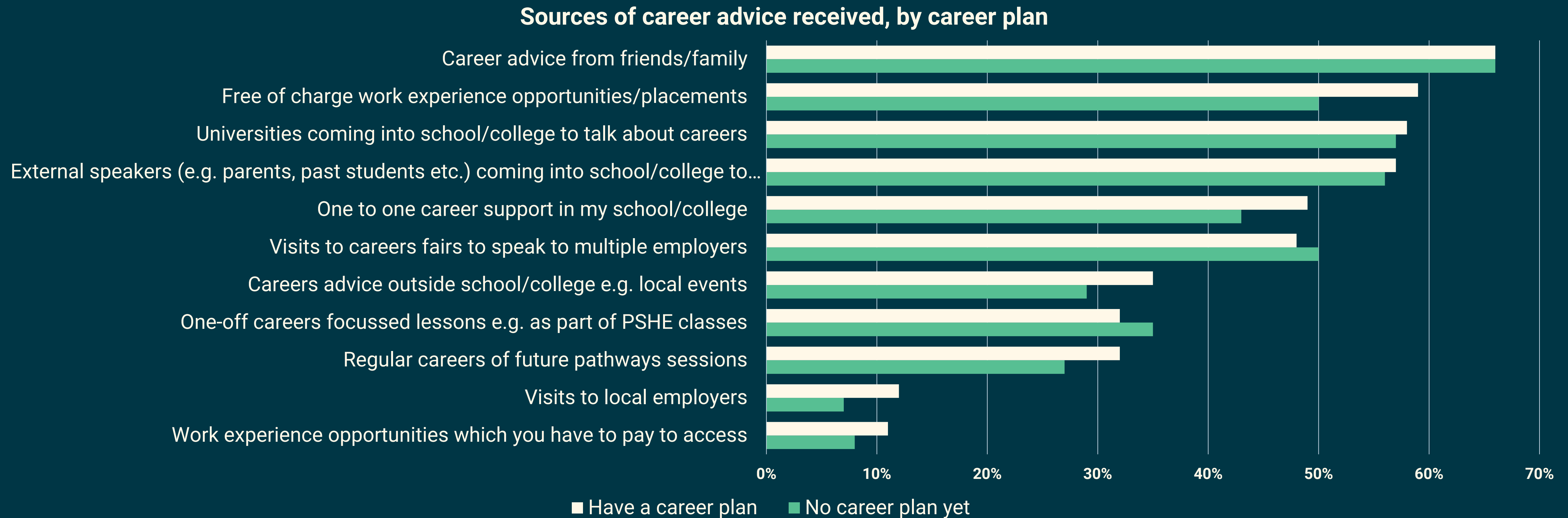
21%

I know what subjects I'm interested in and I'm going to see where it takes me

4%

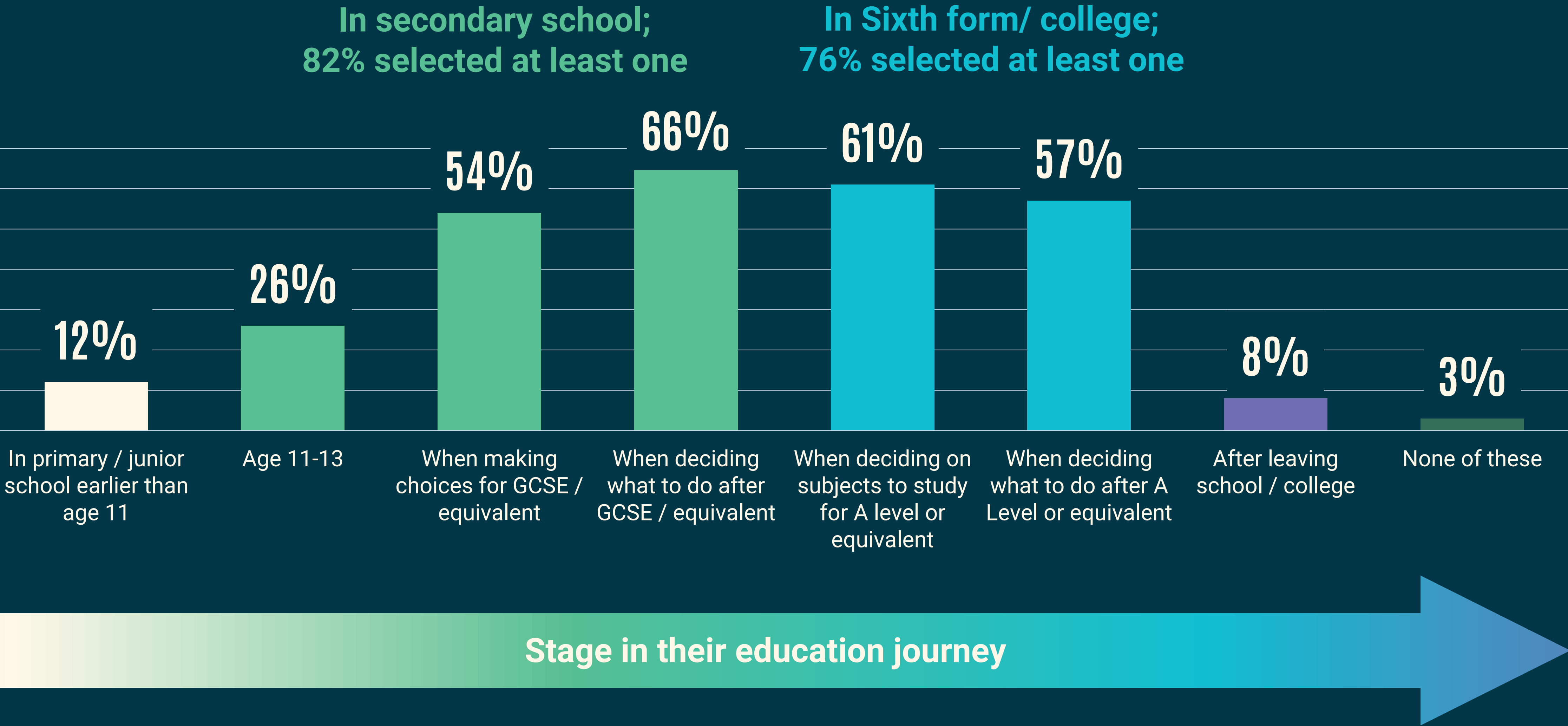
I'm still not sure

ACCESS TO CAREER ADVICE IS THERE, IMPACT VARIES



Q: Which if any, of the following have you had access to? Select all that apply. Have a career plan 608, No career plan 1,076.

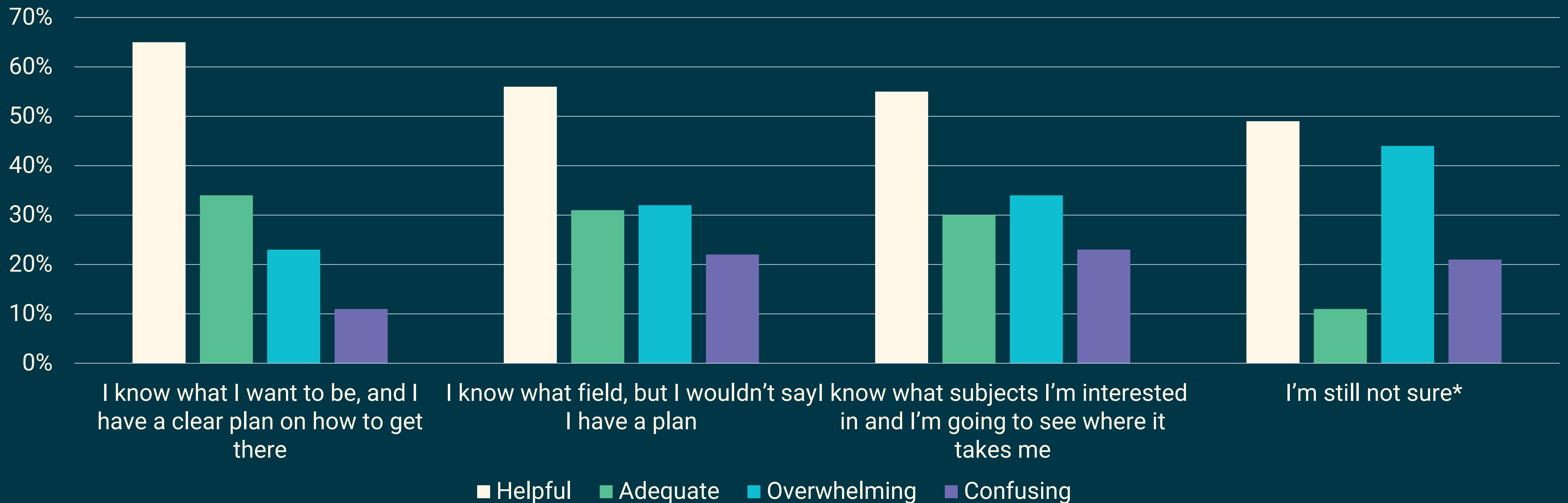
WHEN IS CAREER ADVICE RECEIVED?



Q: Which if any, of the following stages do you recall receiving information about careers? This could include formal careers advice tailored to you, visits to local employers or less formal sessions, for example adults (parents, past pupils etc.) coming into school talk about their jobs. Please select all that apply. Base 1,693.

QUALITY OF CAREER ADVICE AND IMPACT ON CAREER PLANS

Keywords describing career advice and support received so far, broken down by career-planning stage:



Q: Thinking about the career advice and support you have received so far, which of the following words would you use to describe your experience? * Low base.

WHAT DO THEY WANT FROM EMPLOYERS?

Practical help with career discovery:

58%

want to be introduced to the careers they haven't yet considered

53%

want talks from employers about potential roles

50%

are interested in virtual work experience opportunities

49%

wanted opportunity to speak to employers one to one, with real stories and 'day in the life' examples

Ongoing opportunities to build work experience:

91%

said work placements were important when choosing university

86%

want their university to have strong links with their chosen industry

85%

want direct employer engagement during their studies

SIX TYPES OF EMPLOYERS

1

**FAMILIAR SECTOR,
LIMITED EMPLOYER VIEW**

Accountancy (Big 4)
Law (Magic Circle)
Banking
Telecoms

2

**FAMILIAR NAME,
NARROW VIEW OF CAREERS**

NHS
BBC
Amazon
Government
Defence/MOD

3

**FAMILIAR SECTOR,
INVISIBLE EMPLOYERS**

Engineering
Science
Construction
Childcare
Food & Drink

SIX TYPES OF EMPLOYERS

4

**COMPELLING VOCATION,
UNCLEAR REALITY**

Social work
Journalism
Business
Sports
Psychology

5

**DISRUPTED SECTOR,
UNCERTAIN FUTURE**

IT & Programming
Publishing
Art, Design, Music
Architecture

6

**INVISIBLE SECTOR,
INVISIBLE EMPLOYERS**

Insurance
Logistics
Nuclear
Manufacturing
Hospitality

5 ACTIONS TO TAKE AWAY

Show up before career plans are fully formed and help their career discovery and decision-making.

1

Identify which employer type you are (be honest!)

2

Start earlier than feels comfortable

3

Demonstrate your culture early with real employees

4

Be consistent, not occasional

5

Meet young people where they are

LET'S HEAR FROM EY



HOW CAN UCAS HELP?

UCAS is uniquely placed to help employers reach the next generation of talent.
And their influencers.

1M+

register every
year

40%

are interested in
apprenticeships

4,500

schools and
colleges

350

universities
and colleges

30K+

parents and
advisers

16-19-year-olds proactively come to us to DISCOVER, DECIDE AND APPLY.

We can help employers reach and engage them at key moments in
their decision-making journey.

DOWNLOAD THE RESEARCH

Everything discussed today, and more

