



Department
for Education

Young people's experiences of careers information, advice and guidance

Evidence from the second Longitudinal
Study of Young People in England

Research brief

September 2021

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Government
Social Research

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Executive summary

Information, advice and guidance (IAG) aims to raise the aspirations of young people, giving them the skills and knowledge needed for a successful transition into adult life. This research brief explores a cohort of young people's experiences and perceptions of IAG, and variation across demographic and socioeconomic characteristics.

The analysis uses data from the second Longitudinal Study of Young People in England (LSYPE2), which has surveyed a cohort of young people since they were aged 13-14 (in 2013) through to 18-19 years old (in 2018). The analysis also draws on data from the first Longitudinal Study of Young People in England (LSYPE1) for comparison, which took place 9 years earlier.

The main findings of the analysis are:

- Young people aged 18-19 years old were, on the whole, satisfied with the IAG they received. Of those who identified a source of formal provision (such as from teachers or government provided careers guidance) as the most useful IAG they received, a large majority said that the amount of IAG given was about right (86%), that it was given at about the right time (84%), and that it was suitable for their needs (95%).
- Satisfaction with the amount, timing and suitability of IAG were all higher in the cohort aged 18-19 in 2018, compared to the cohort of the same age in 2009.
- In 2018, 93% of young people aged 18-19 reported that they had received IAG in the last 12 months. The young people more likely to be missed by post-16 IAG were those eligible for free school meals while at school, those who went to state schools (compared to independent schools), those with special educational needs (SEN), those who had been in care while at school, those who had a long-term disability, and those who entered paid work post-16.
- Of those who identified a source of formal provision as the most useful IAG they received, degrees were the most frequently raised possibility at age 18-19 (reported by 78% of this group, in 2018). The possibility of doing an apprenticeship was reported by 64% of this group in 2018, up from 43% in 2009.
- During school, at age 13-14 (year 9), young people found the IAG received from their family to be more useful than the IAG they received from teachers (22% finding IAG from parents 'very useful' versus 10% from teachers).
- The most accessed sources of IAG when the cohort was aged 18-19 years old, were friend and relatives (90%), followed by teachers (53%), and trained careers advisors (32%).

- Young people of different characteristics accessed IAG from different places. For example, at age 18-19, young people were more likely to seek out IAG from government sources (such as Universal Jobmatch) if they had been eligible for free school meals while at school (compared to those not eligible), attended a state school (compared to an independent school), or were NEET (not in education, employment or training, compared to not being NEET).

Introduction

Aims

The influence of information, advice, and guidance (IAG) given to young people is difficult to measure: the effects of IAG and careers guidance can be long-term, making it difficult to establish direct pathways between IAG and educational and employment outcomes.

This report examines pupils' responses to survey questions designed to capture attitudes towards IAG given both in a school environment and elsewhere. The purpose of this is to identify trends over time to further the existing evidence base that is available to policy makers.

Background

LSYPE2 is a large study of young people, managed by the Department for Education (DfE). It is also known as the 'Our Future' study. LSYPE2 started in 2013 and is following young people from the age of 13-14 (year 9) into adulthood.

This report is predominantly based on questions asked during the sixth wave of the study in 2018. 6,922 young people were interviewed at age 18-19, a period in which the pathways of the young people were beginning to diverge more substantially.

The general aims of LSYPE2 are:

- To provide a strategic evidence base about the lives and experiences of young people by following a cohort through the final years of compulsory education.
- To follow their transition from compulsory education to other forms of training, employment, and other activities.
- To collect information about their career paths and the factors affecting them.

Information, advice, and guidance

High-quality careers information, advice and guidance should widen the horizons of young people, challenge stereotypes, and raise aspirations. It should equip young people to make informed career and learning decisions to enable them to gain the knowledge and skills required for making a successful transition into adult life.

There is a clear definition of what good careers guidance looks like in the form of the Gatsby Benchmarks. Updated statutory guidance, published in October 2018, includes

an expectation that schools and colleges will use the Gatsby Benchmarks to develop and improve their careers programme. The eight Gatsby Benchmarks are:

1. A stable career programme
2. Learning from career and labour market information
3. Addressing the needs of each student
4. Linking curriculum learning to careers
5. Encounters with employers and employees
6. Experiences of workplaces
7. Encounters with further and higher education
8. Personal guidance

Although the timing of the fieldwork preceded the publication of the updated statutory guidance, the Gatsby Benchmarks were already in wide circulation, and will have influenced many of the careers programmes experienced by young people in these waves.

Methodology

Sampling

The young people in LSYPE2 were sampled through a two-stage process. Schools were sampled first, followed by pupils within those schools. The sample includes young people in local authority (LA) maintained schools, academies, and independent schools, but for practical reasons excludes very small schools and overseas students. It includes special schools as well as mainstream provision. This sample was designed to ensure the widest feasible perspective on young people's experiences.

Attrition and weighting

The response rate for LSYPE2 at wave 6 was 53% (6,922) of the wave 1 sample. The data analysed for this report are weighted to compensate for the effect of sample attrition between waves, as well as the complex survey design.

Item non-response

All young people who decide not to answer a question or said that they did not know the answer were excluded from the analyses. However, these data accounted for a small minority of the overall sample (less than 5% of responses to these questions were missing).

Statistical testing

All differences that are reported below are statistically significant at the 5% significance level. To see results in table format, including confidence intervals, please see the data tables published alongside this report. The analysis explores statistical associations and makes no attempt to establish causal pathways. This analysis was completed using IBM SPSS Statistics.

Findings

In the sections below, we look at how young people perceive the IAG they received, before comparing whether different groups of young people perceive their IAG differently.

How often, and how useful, was information about future studies received from parents and teachers?

Between ages 13-14 and 15-16, the proportion of young people who reported talking with teachers about plans for studying in the future 'quite a lot' or 'a lot' increased, from 19% to 31%. This is perhaps unsurprising, as young people got closer to the age in which they could make individual choices, for example about the possibility of studying A-levels, or other academic courses, in the future.

Between ages 13-14 and 15-16, the frequency with which young people talked to family about plans for studying in the future also increased: the proportion who said they talked with family 'quite a lot' or 'a lot' increased, from 51% to 68%. Broadly, young people found the IAG received from their family to be more useful than the IAG they received from teachers. When aged 13-14 (in 2013), 22% of young people found the IAG received from family to be 'very useful', compared to 10% for IAG from teachers.

The frequency with which young people spoke to teachers and family about their plans was associated with the pathways they had chosen later, when they were 18-19. Those who would go on to attend Further Education (FE) or paid work were more likely than those in Higher Education (HE) to have said that they had not spoken to family about plans for the future 'at all', at ages 13-14 and 14-15. Nonetheless, these proportions were very small: 4% of those who would go on to FE had said that they didn't talk to family about future plans 'at all' at ages 13-14, versus just 2% of those going on to attend HE, 4% of those going on to paid work, and 3% of those doing something else, such as travel or looking after family.

Who has the young person contacted in the last 12 months for information, advice, and guidance over their future decisions?

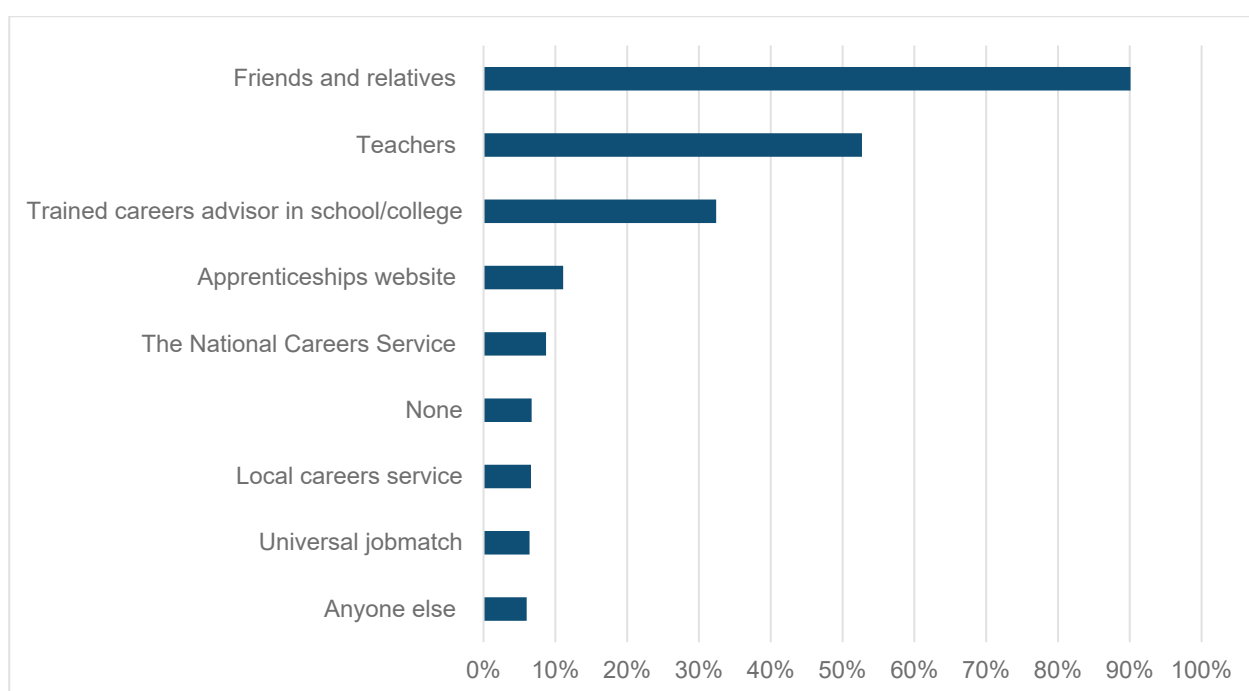
As the cohort got older, the sources of IAG they had accessible to them changed. Diverging pathways meant that young people reported accessing IAG from friends and relatives, teachers in their colleges and universities, careers advisors, and more. The findings below compare the most recent cohort at age 18-19 in 2018 (from LSYPE2) with the earlier cohort at the same age in 2009 (from LSYPE1).

The most accessed sources of IAG when the cohort was aged 18-19 (in 2018) were friends and relatives (90%, up from 85% in 2009), teachers (53%, up from 41% in 2009),

and trained careers advisors (32%) (see Figure 1 for the proportions of young people who reported accessing various sources of IAG in 2018).

At age 18-19, 7% of respondents said that they had received no IAG from any source in the last 12 months. While this is a small minority, there are some groups which have higher proportions of young people not receiving IAG. These include FSM eligible young people (10% versus 6% non-FSM eligible), those who attended state schools (7% versus <1% of those who attended independent schools), young people with a statement of SEN¹ (14% versus 6% of young people without SEN), and young people who had been in care before the age of 14 (14% versus 6%).

Figure 1: Percentage of cohort consulting each IAG source in the last 12 months (aged 18-19)



Source: Longitudinal Study of Young People in England cohort 2 (2018). Unweighted base = 6922.

The characteristics of young people were associated with who they contacted in the last 12 months for IAG.

¹ The data on SEN status for this report was collected and categorised prior to legislative changes in 2014. Previously there were three recognised categories of support in England. 1. School action - for pupils with relatively low-level needs who can be supported with additional support provided within school. 2. School action plus - for pupils who need additional support, usually from an external support service. 3. SEN statement-for pupils with more complex needs. The currently recognised levels of support for SEN are detailed in the [Children and Families Act 2014](#) and are also specified [here](#).

Those young people who were ever FSM eligible were more likely, in the last 12 months, to have contacted Universal Jobmatch (10% versus 5%), Local Careers Services (8% versus 6%), and National Careers Services (11% versus 8%), than those who were not FSM eligible. They were also less likely to have contacted teachers (44% versus 54%) and friends and relatives (85% versus 91%).

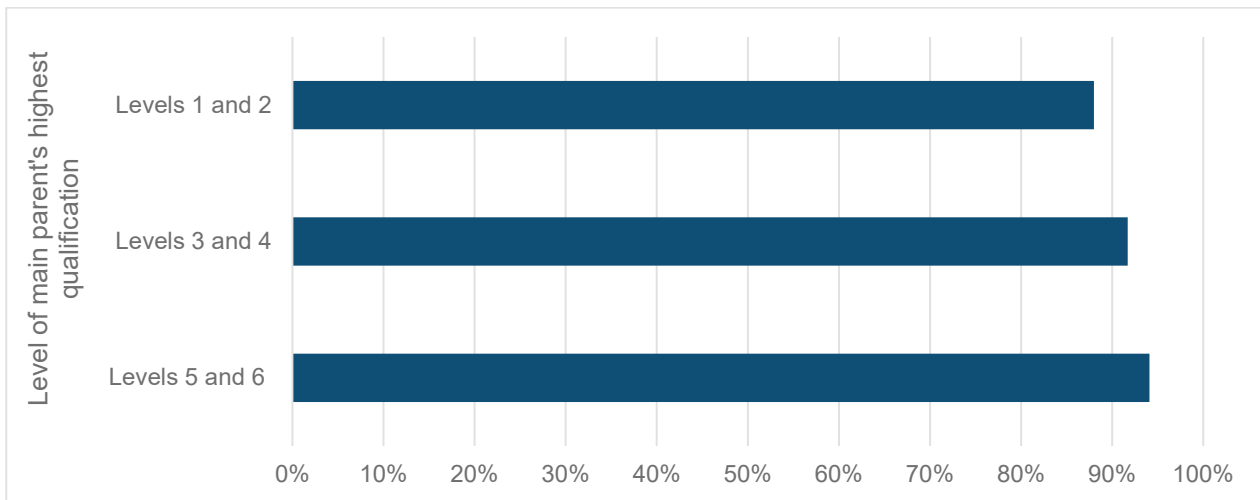
Who young people contacted for IAG at age 18-19 also depended on the type of school they attended when they were 13-14. For example, those who attended independent schools were more likely than their peers in state schools to contact teachers (75% had versus 51%), family and friends (98% versus 90%) and trained careers advisors at school/college (53% versus 31%) and were less likely to contact The National Careers Service (4% versus 9%), Universal Jobmatch (3% versus 7%) and Local Careers Services (5% versus 7%).

Boys were more likely than girls to have contacted external organisations such as apprenticeships websites (12% versus 10%) and local careers services (8% versus 5%). Though the differences are not large, the pattern suggests that boys may be more likely to seek guidance on non-academic career pathways than girls.

Other pupil characteristics also influenced who young people contacted for IAG at ages 18-19. Those who lived in households where English was not the main language were less likely than English-only speaking households to go to their friends and relatives for IAG (85% versus 90%). This is also true of those young people who had been in care before the ages of 13-14, 80% of which had contacted friends and relatives, versus 91% of those who had not been in care.

Young people whose parents had no, or low-level, qualifications (levels 1 and 2) were 6 percentage points less likely to contact friends and family for IAG (88%) than young people whose parents had a degree level or higher qualification (94%) (based on 'main' parent in the survey response) (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Proportion of young people contacting friends and relatives for IAG by their parent's highest qualification level



Source: Longitudinal Study of Young People in England cohort 2 (2018). Unweighted base = 6861.

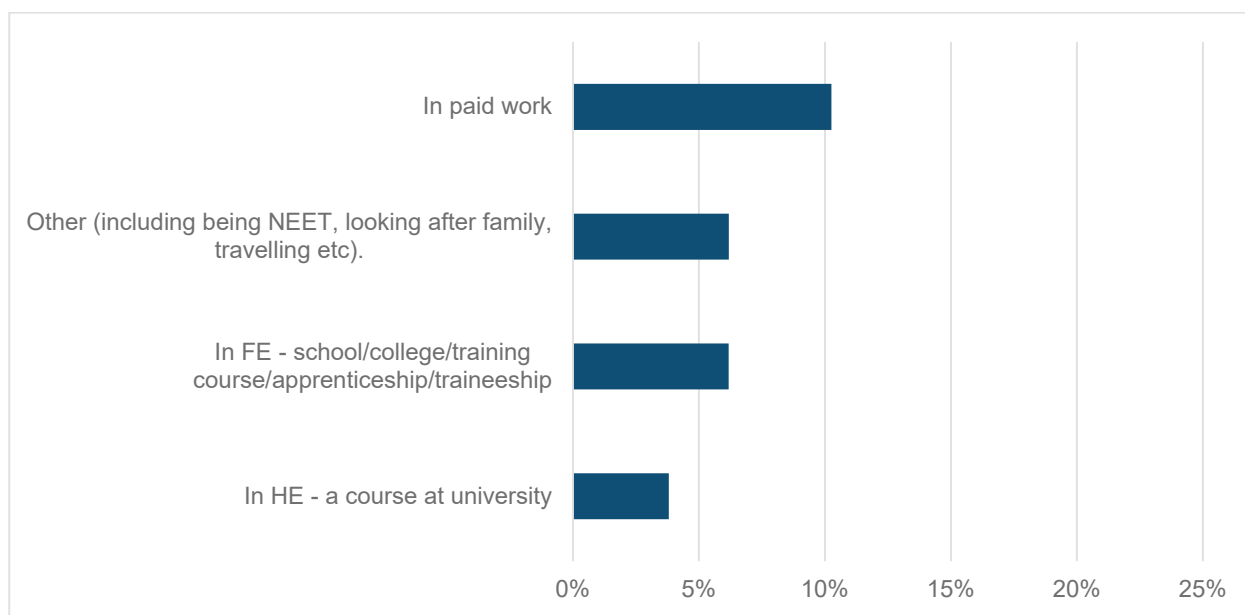
Furthermore, young people whose parents had lower-level qualifications were more likely to report receiving no IAG in the last 12 months than those whose parents had higher levels of education (9% versus 4% who had a degree or higher).

There also existed a difference between those who were NEET and those who were not. Young people who were NEET were more likely to report contacting Local Careers Services (16% versus 6%), Universal Jobmatch (26% versus 5%) and Apprenticeship Websites (23% versus 11%), whereas those who were not NEET were more likely to contact friends and relatives (91% versus 83%).

There were disparities between young people in FE and HE. For example, those who were in HE were more likely to report contacting friends and relatives for IAG than those in FE or paid work in the last 12 months (94%, versus 89% and 87% respectively).

Finally, a young person's main activity influenced whether they had received *any* IAG in the last 12 months (as shown in Figure 3). Only 4% of those in HE had received no IAG, versus 6% in FE, and 10% in paid work.

Figure 3: Proportion of young people who have received no IAG in the last 12 months by their current activity

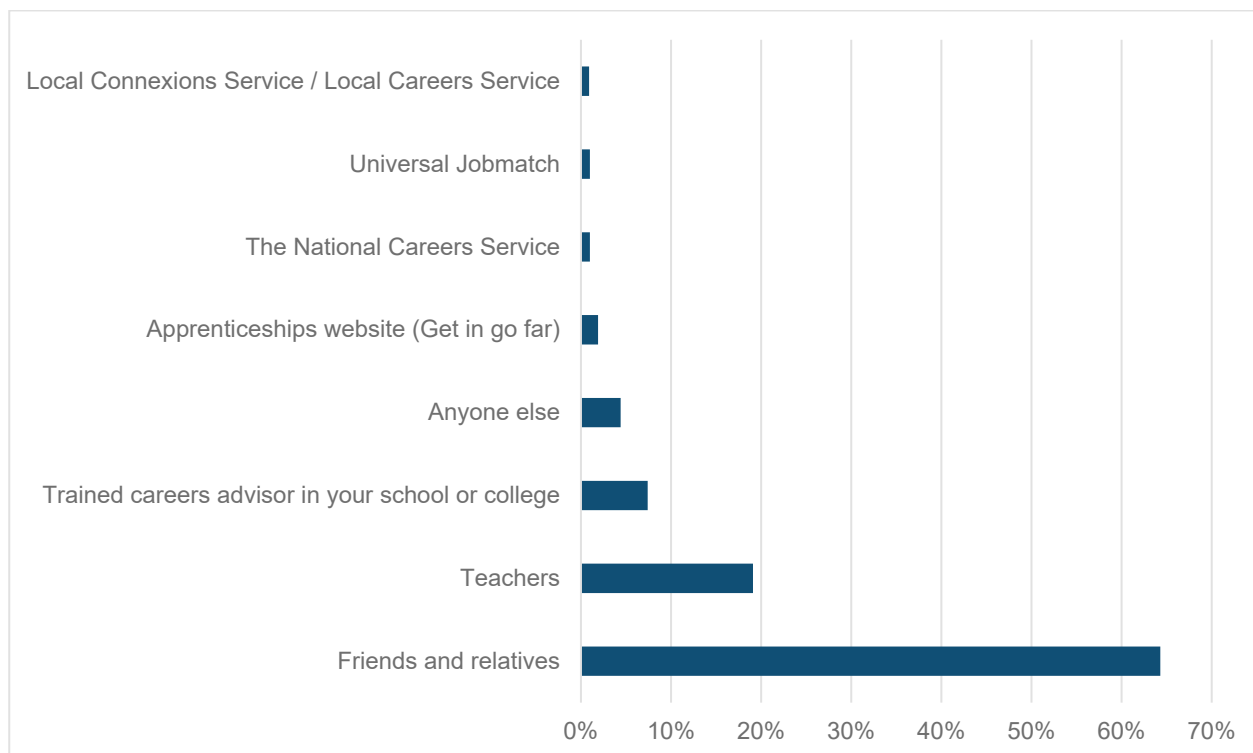


Source: Longitudinal Study of Young People in England cohort 2 (2018). Unweighted base = 6853.

Which was the most useful source of information advice and guidance for helping young people make decisions?

At age 18-19, respondents who had used more than one source of IAG were asked which was most useful. The majority said that the most useful source of information, advice and guidance over the last 12 months was friends and relatives (64%). The second most useful source of information was teachers (19%), followed by trained careers advisors in school and college (8%), as shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4: The source of IAG young people found to be the most useful



Source: Longitudinal Study of Young People in England cohort 2 (2018). Proportion of respondents who had used more than one source of IAG. Unweighted base = 4566.

The proportion of young people who said that their friends and relatives were their most useful source of IAG was lower for those who identified as being of Pakistani, African or Caribbean ethnicity (compared to white British), those who were eligible for free school meals, those with SEN (no statement), those who had English as an Additional Language (EAL), and those whose parents had lower-level qualifications.

A young person's activity status is also associated with what they saw as the most useful source of IAG in the last 12 months. Those in HE or paid work were more likely to say that friends and relatives were their most useful source (65% and 73% respectively) than those in FE (57%). Those in FE were more likely to name trained careers advisors as their most useful source (11%) when compared to those in paid work or doing something else (4% and 5% respectively).

Was the information, advice, and guidance received about future careers well timed, the right amount, and suitable for needs?

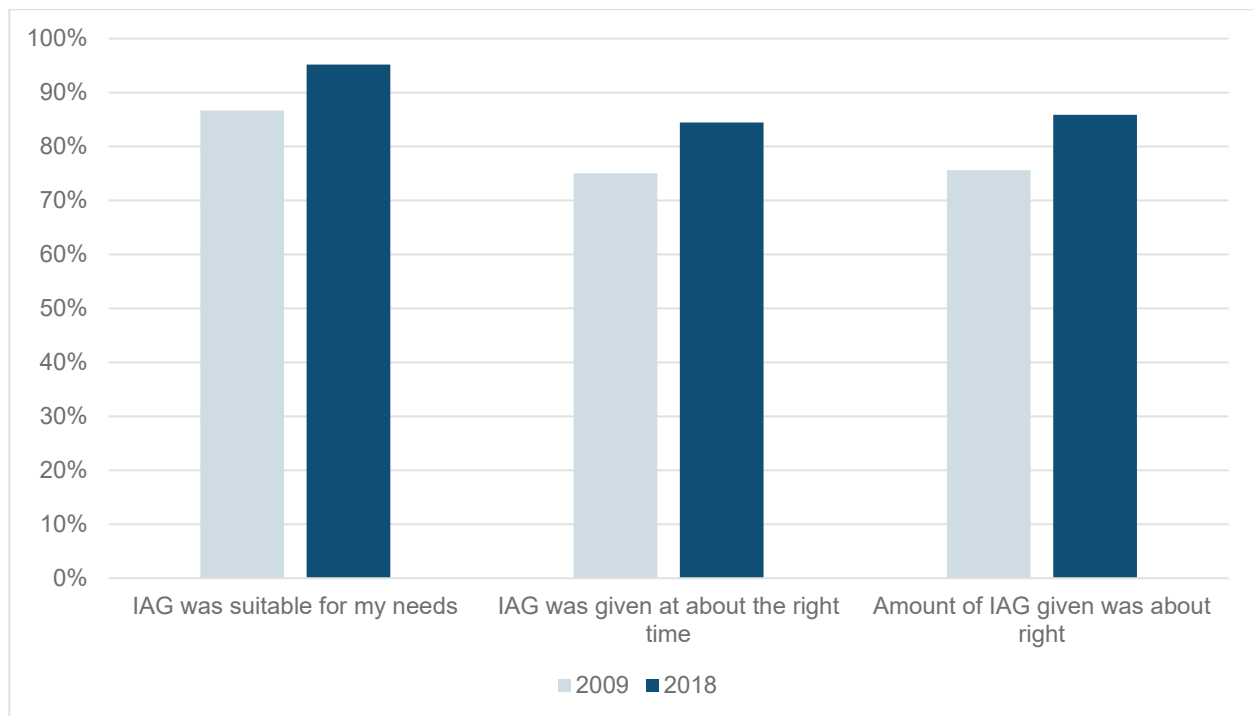
Young people were asked about the timing, amount, and suitability of the IAG source they identified as being most useful. These questions were restricted to young people

who did not identify 'friends and relatives' as the most useful, or only, IAG source: leaving just under one quarter of the sample.

Broadly, most respondents answered that they were given the 'about right' amount of information regarding IAG; only 5% said that they received 'too much', and 9% said they received 'too little'. Similarly, the vast majority of respondents also answered that the timing of the IAG received was 'at about the right time' (84%), with only 6% regarding it as 'too early' and 10% regarding it as 'too late'. Regarding suitability, 95% of respondents said that their IAG was 'suitable for their needs'. This demonstrates a broad level of satisfaction with IAG in England for this cohort of young people. The relatively small proportion of young people who did not think the IAG they received was suitable, gave responses such as 'advice given was too general', 'advice was too focused on going to university', 'did not understand the advice given' or the 'advice was not helpful'.

Perceptions of formal IAG timing, amount and suitability have all improved since the earlier cohort of LSYPE1 (see Figure 5). In 2009, young people aged 18 were asked the same questions about their formal IAG. This cohort were more likely than those in 2018 to say they received 'too little' IAG (19% versus 9%), their IAG was 'too late' (19% versus 10%), and their IAG was not suitable for their needs (13% versus 5%). This suggests interim changes to IAG (which includes the Gatsby Benchmarks in 2014) may have improved young people's perceptions on these measures.

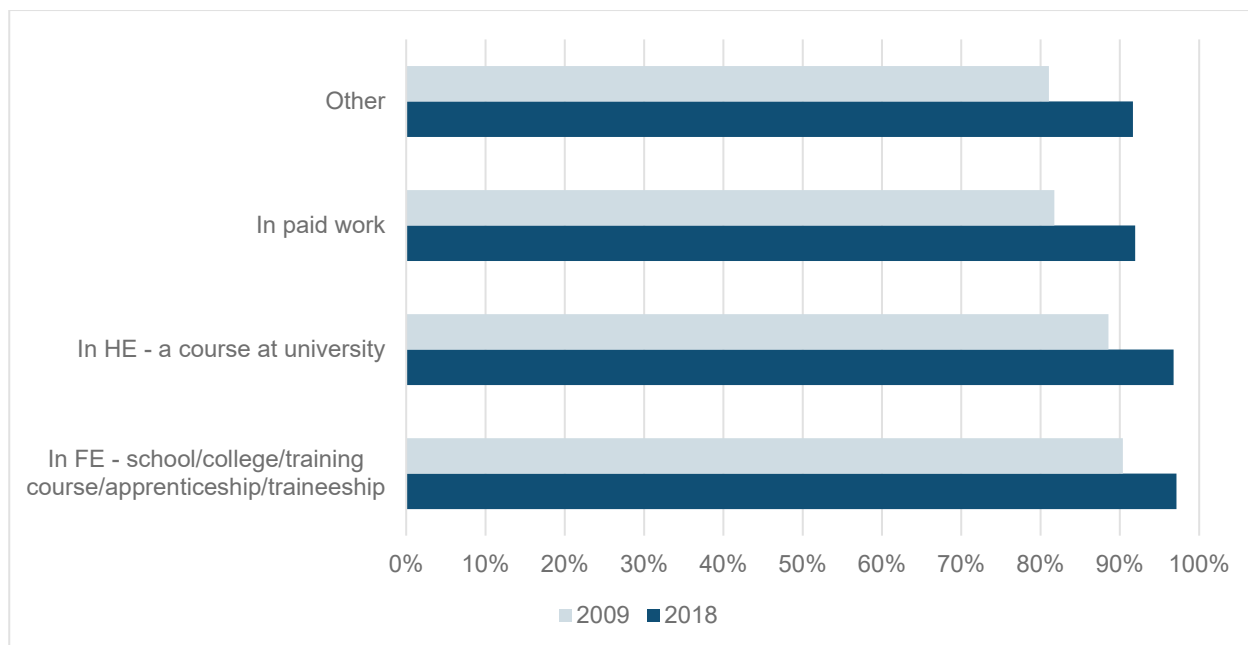
Figure 5: Changes in perceived suitability, timing, and amount of IAG between 2009 and 2018



Source: Longitudinal Study of Young People in England cohort 1 (2009) and 2 (2018). Proportion of respondents who did not identify 'friends and relatives' as the most useful, or only, IAG source. Unweighted base cohort 1 = 4911. Unweighted base cohort 2 = 1598.

How useful young people perceived their IAG was associated with their main activity. Young people who were in FE or HE (in both 2009 and 2018) were more likely to say that their IAG was suitable for their needs than those who were in paid work or 'other' activities (see Figure 6).

Figure 6: The proportion of young people who said that their IAG was suitable for their needs, by main activity aged 18/19



Source: Longitudinal Study of Young People in England cohort 1 (2009) and 2 (2018). Proportion of respondents who did not identify 'friends and relatives' as the most useful, or only, IAG source. Unweighted base cohort 1 = 4911. Unweighted base cohort 2 = 1598.

Gender, FSM eligibility, ethnicity and disability did not have a significant association with perceived quality of IAG.

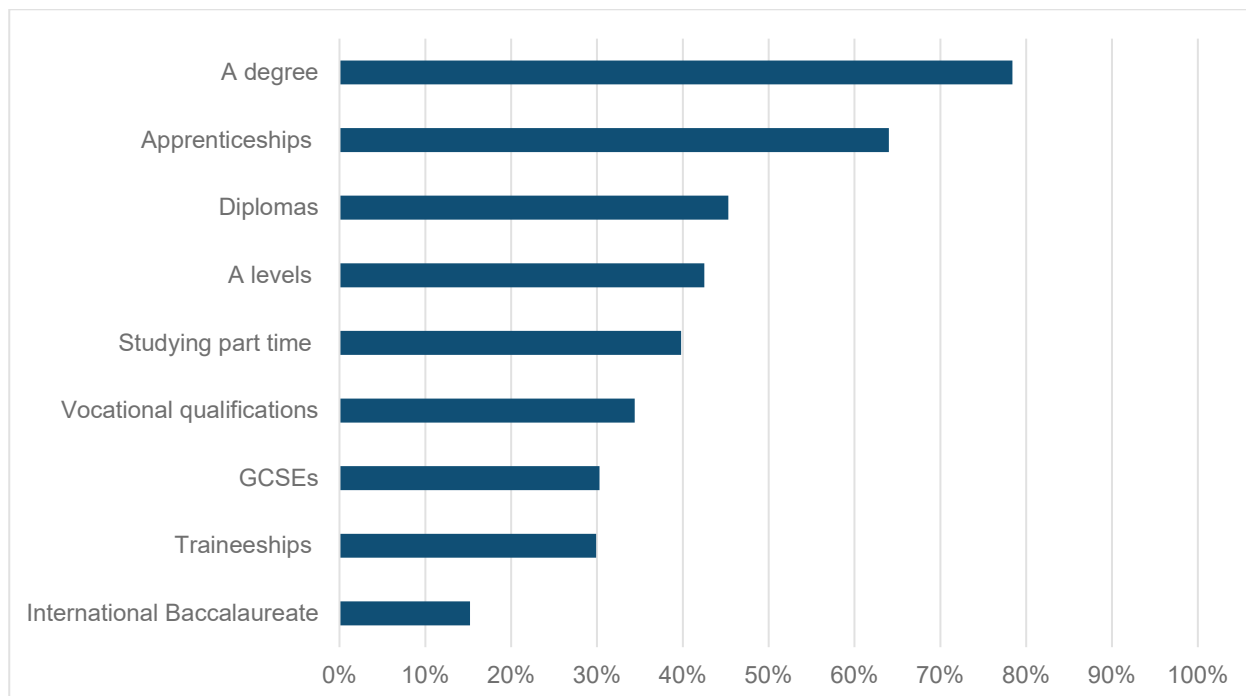
Which educational options were young people told about?

Young people were asked which educational options they were told about when receiving IAG. These questions were restricted to young people who did not identify 'friends and relatives' as the most useful, or only, IAG source (leaving just under one quarter of the sample).

Most young people at ages 18-19 were told about the possibility of doing a degree (78%) and doing an apprenticeship (64%). A smaller amount of people were told about the possibility of doing a diploma (45%), A-levels (43%), GCSEs (30%) and vocational

qualifications (34%), as shown in Figure 7. This advice comes at a time when almost all young people will have already undertaken some post-16 education or training.

Figure 7: Which educational options the young person was told about through IAG (over the previous 12 months)

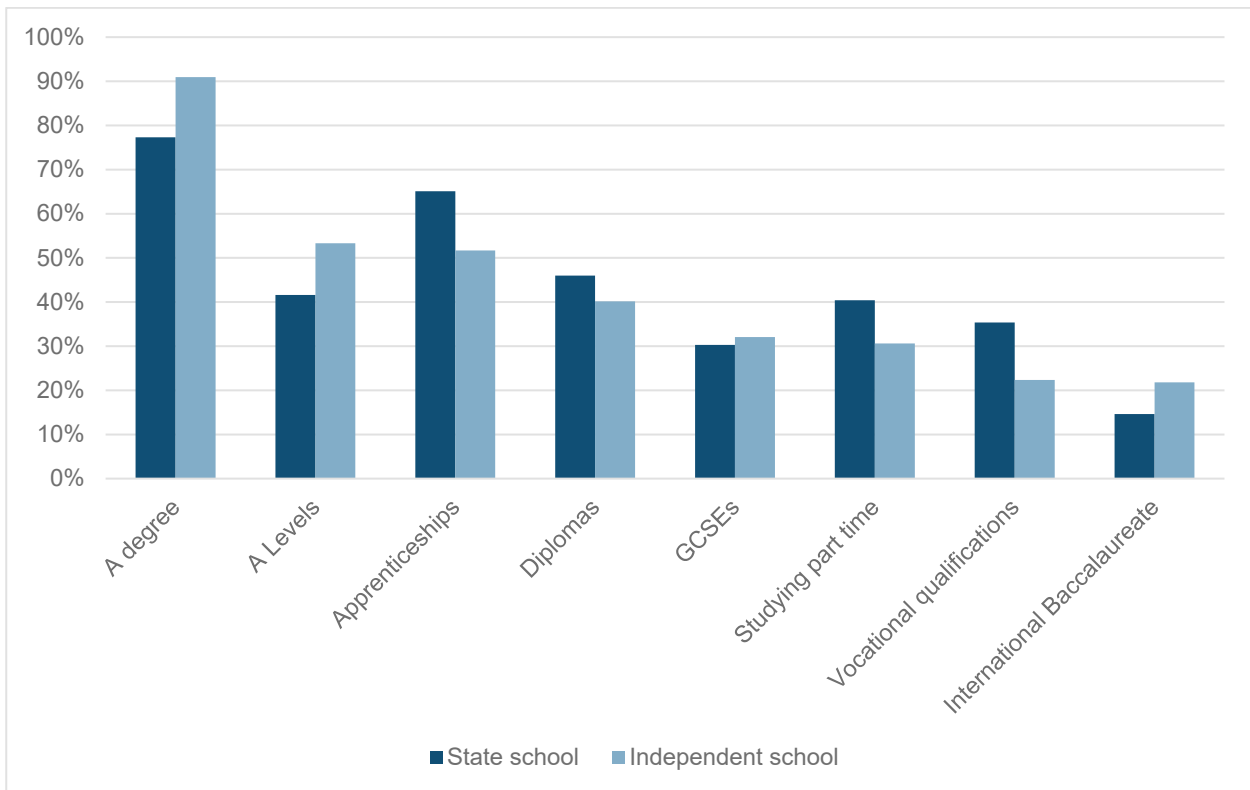


Source: Longitudinal Study of Young People in England cohort 2 (2018). Proportion of respondents who did not identify 'friends and relatives' as the most useful, or only, IAG source. Unweighted base = 1609

Whilst the most frequently discussed academic option was also a degree in the earlier LSYPE1 cohort (who were aged 18 in 2009), there has been some change. For example, apprenticeships moved from being the third most frequently discussed option in 2009 to the second by 2018, with other vocational qualifications also becoming more prominent.

There existed a disparity in the pathways young people were informed of in their IAG based on whether they attended a state-run school or an independent school. Those young people who attended independent schools were more likely than those in state schools to be told of their options in academic areas, such as degrees (91% versus 77%); whereas those in state schools were more likely than those in independent schools to be told about apprenticeships (65% versus 52%) vocational qualifications (35% versus 22%) and traineeships (31% versus 19%).

Figure 8: Which educational options the young person was told about through IAG (over the previous 12 months), by school type



Source: Longitudinal Study of Young People in England cohort 2 (2018). Proportion of respondents who did not identify 'friends and relatives' as the most useful, or only, IAG source. Unweighted base = 1606. School type as recorded in year 9.

The highest qualifications of a young person’s parents (based on ‘main’ parent in the survey response) also influenced the educational options they had been made aware of. For example, 87% of young people whose parents had a Level 6+ qualification had been made aware of degree opportunities, versus 72% of young people whose parents had a Level 2 qualification or below.

There also existed differences in what young people were likely to have been told about in their IAG associated with whether they were of NEET status. Those who were not NEET were more likely to be told about academic pathways, such as A-levels; whereas those who were NEET were more likely than non-NEET counterparts to be told about the possibility of doing apprenticeships (84% versus 63%) and traineeships (67% versus 28%).

Did IAG help young people to make career decisions?

Young people were asked whether IAG helped them in various aspects of their career pathway. These questions were restricted to young people who did not identify 'friends and relatives' as the most useful, or only, IAG source (leaving just under a quarter of the sample).

Most young people said that the IAG they had used had helped them to understand options about staying in education (89%), identify the qualifications needed for the sorts of job they are interested in (88%) and identify possible careers they would be interested in (86%). The skills young people were least likely to say their IAG had helped them with were understanding more about different jobs (65%) and feeling confident to approach an employer for work (70%).



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Reference: DFE- RB1151

ISBN: 978-1-83870-292-2

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