



Department  
for Education



# **Informed Choice: how data and tools are used to make career decisions**

**Research report**

**December 2017**

**CooperGibson Research**

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## Executive summary

The Department for Education's Post-16 [Skills Plan](#)<sup>1</sup> and wider strategy for careers aims to support learners, from all backgrounds, and those who advise them – from primary school through to adulthood – to enable them to make effective decisions about the next steps in their education, as well as future careers.

Concerns were raised by the Education, Skills and the Economy Sub-Committee's inquiry into careers advice, information and guidance (2016), about the number of careers information websites available and the ease of navigation of such websites. Furthermore, the *Moments of Choice* report (Careers and Enterprise Company, 2016) found that the range of information available is fragmented, diverse and lacks personalisation, leading young people to feel overloaded and disengaged.

This research aimed to explore the current use of careers information, data, sources and tools by learners, parents and carers, teachers and careers guidance professionals in making informed choices. It was commissioned by the Department for Education to understand how best to support and target information provision to ensure everyone has sufficient access.

The scope of this research was learners from primary school up to post-16 education (up to 19 years), their parents/carers and the people who advise them. This includes next steps in education as well as future careers and professions.

## Methodology

The research was conducted as an exploratory piece of work that aimed to understand the use of careers information data and tools. It was not designed as a scoping exercise or audit of careers information data or tools and feedback on the tools used is based on the recall and perceptions of the key audiences.

The research utilised a qualitative approach, including a brief literature review and visits to 22 institutions to speak to a wide range of stakeholders.

Fieldwork was undertaken between May and July 2017 and involved four primary schools, six secondary schools without sixth forms, five secondary schools with sixth

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/post-16-skills-plan-and-independent-report-on-technical-education>

forms, one all-through school and six general further education (FE) colleges. The interviews and focus groups gathered feedback from 15 senior leaders, 34 teachers, tutors and support staff, 37 internal careers and careers-related professionals, 12 careers professionals externally contracted, 23 parents and 183 learners. In addition, an online survey of parents was administered via the 22 case study institutions, receiving 289 responses. Although numbers from this are quoted through the report, the sample is not representative. Fifty-one learners were also observed during careers advice and guidance sessions.

## **Key findings**

### **Engagement with careers provision**

#### **Primary schools**

The focus of careers education in primary schools was on increasing learners' knowledge and raising aspirations. Delivery of careers education was incorporated into Personal, Social, Citizenship and Health Education (PSCHE) schemes of work and more broadly across learning in an informal way. It was common for primary schools to invite people in from different job roles into school to speak about their careers. Teaching staff also had ongoing informal discussions with learners about jobs/careers as they arose when covering certain curriculum topics.

#### **Secondary schools and colleges**

Most secondary schools and colleges embedded careers into the wider curriculum. They generally had dedicated careers areas and careers staff or staff with some proportion of their role with responsibility for careers provision. Learners in secondary schools and colleges were encouraged to engage with careers information in a range of ways including enterprise challenges, mock employment activities, work experience, research projects and visits from employers and careers advisors.

### **Careers information and tools**

#### **Primary schools**

Primary schools focused on increasing learners' knowledge of jobs and careers through 'real person' experiences, or specialist programmes, therefore primary age learners learnt about jobs and careers from a range of sources, rather than through the use of 'tools' in the more traditional sense.



## Secondary schools and colleges

In contrast, secondary schools and colleges used a range of careers tools and information with learners, across age-groups and at critical decision-points making decisions based on the needs of their learners whilst considering age, stage of decision-making and pathway. Tools were mainly used in partnership with careers staff (e.g. through group sessions or one-to-one discussions), rather than learners accessing them independently in their own time, although this was encouraged by secondary schools and colleges.

The range of tools used varied, although there were some secondary schools and colleges that were using the same mix. Tools were used across a wide age range, but different functions were utilised at different stages. Secondary schools were less likely to have invested in more than one paid tool, due to budget constraints, although four secondary schools had invested in two paid tools. There was more variability amongst colleges as to whether they had paid for tools - most had paid for one or more tools, although two colleges had no paid-for tools.

Using tools that effectively interested and engaged learners was a major consideration and a challenge for some institutions. Cost was important and achieving value for money and maximising use when investing in commercial tools was critical. Institutions valued tools that were accessible, user-friendly, held a wide range of information and had content that maintained learner interest.

## Learners

Learners in secondary schools mentioned a range of sources of information about careers. Discussions with family about careers remained important, but there was more focus on formal careers advice, information and use of tools as they progressed through school. However, awareness and recall of career tools was mixed.

College learners' use of tools depended on the pathway they were considering. Those considering a university pathway were more likely to use higher-education specific tools. Learners exploring alternative routes or were still unsure were more likely to use tools that were wider in their focus.

Usability and accessibility was important for learners when using tools. Learners were frustrated when tools were not intuitive, difficult to navigate or generated results that were irrelevant to their existing interests or thoughts about careers choices and pathways. Careers staff emphasised the importance of not overloading learners with information.

Trust was also important; secondary learners were wary of using tools that asked them to register or sign-up to use them.

## **Parents**

Parents lacked knowledge about key careers websites and their approach to information seeking was ad-hoc and often reliant on the results of internet searches. Most parents of primary aged and younger secondary children thought accessing information online was unnecessary. Others had concerns about being able to source age-appropriate information, and overwhelming younger children with information.

Parents with older secondary children (Year 9 upwards) were more proactively seeking information to support their children with key decisions; particularly those that were considering post-16 options and university. However, this was not evident across all parents. Nearly half (48%, n=128) of survey respondent parents, of secondary and college age young people, had not used any tools to help their children with their decision-making. Common sources of information used by parents included college and university websites to find out about courses and qualifications. Attendance at school-based careers events or visits to colleges and universities was also cited.

## **Challenges and future potential**

Respondents did not see a need for additional tools and information, but thought that improved signposting, accessibility and relevance would increase take-up of the resources currently available.

Encouraging learners to engage in the use of tools independently was an ongoing challenge for secondary schools and colleges. All careers staff felt there was a need for face-to-face support for learners in using careers data and tools and that the majority of learners are unlikely to use them in their own time. When left to use tools on their own, some learners become overwhelmed with the amount of information available and struggle to interpret or navigate it. Those with special educational needs and/or disability (SEND) and disadvantaged learners in particular need tailored one-to-one support in using and interpreting careers tools.

Support was generally provided within allocated timetabled provision, often helping them to understand the purpose of use, navigating and interpreting information from the tool. Careers professionals also played a role in filtering information for learners, to ensure they were not missing out on important information within the tools. For some secondary schools in deprived areas, using careers tools with younger year groups helped them to

start to think about careers and pathways earlier, ensuring a strong focus on raising aspirations.

Schools and colleges faced challenges in engaging hard-to-reach and SEND learners in the use of the tools, due to a lack of differentiation. They often had to adapt their use of the tools with these learners, by providing additional support in the interpretation and navigation of tools. They would also select tools that were easier to navigate or read, more attractive and engaging and used shorter exercises or quizzes to maintain interest of those less engaged. However, there was a general consensus that more differentiation within existing tools for different abilities and proficiency in literacy would be beneficial.

## **Destination data**

### **Secondary schools and colleges**

Both secondary schools and colleges are mandated to collect destination data.

The use of destination data in careers education within secondary schools was ad-hoc and unstructured, mainly occurring in informal discussions between individual learners and careers professionals. Where it had been used this had been mainly to give learners examples of where previous students had progressed on to as a way of providing inspiration and raising aspirations. Secondary school careers staff felt it lacked significance in learners' decision-making; a view reflected by learners and their parents.

Secondary schools with sixth forms were more likely to use destination data to support their strategic and curriculum planning post-16. It enabled them to understand the post-16 pathways learners were commonly progressing to, which informed their curriculum offer to ensure they were attracting and retaining learners. A small number of secondary schools used destination data to compare their learner destinations to other local or similar schools.

Colleges used destination data strategically and in careers delivery. They generally used it in a more structured and proactive way with learners; either in career discussions with staff or with learners being encouraged to independently access destination data for pathways/courses they were considering. Most colleges were also using destination data to inform their curriculum offer and to support learner retention.

### **Learners and parents**

Learners' and parents' knowledge of the term 'destination data' was minimal, although both could recall seeing or accessing different types of destination data when prompted. Most secondary and college learners were able to discuss examples of destination data

they had seen or been shown by careers professionals. Generally, secondary learners expressed greater interest in how previous cohorts had progressed (e.g. options taken and the types of support that they found helpful), rather than generic data on where and what they progressed to.

However, there was limited evidence that most learners and parents were using destination data to inform decisions' about education and career pathways although, those that had used it had found it to be useful. For example, all but three parents surveyed who had used destination data at a key decision point felt that it was important in helping their child decide their pathway. This indicates that destination data does feature in some parents' decision-making, but this is more likely to be at critical decision points.

### **Challenges and future potential**

Improving the tracking and sharing of learner destination data was a key request of both secondary schools and colleges. It was felt the collection of destination data could be improved to support its value and usability. Suggestions included improving information sharing between secondary schools and colleges; dealing with perceived inaccuracies in post-16 destination data; improved tracking for apprenticeship pathways and improved awareness of longer-term destination data on university graduates.

The development of a central resource which collated the destinations of learners through all education pathways, and provided longer-term data on learners' destinations beyond education, was felt by careers professionals to be a useful tool for raising learners' aspirations and assisting in strategic planning.

## **Labour Market Information (LMI)**

### **Primary schools**

Primary schools were mostly unfamiliar with the term LMI, but understood the concept and could provide examples of how they used LMI in their teaching, for example, talking about job roles and the range of jobs in different sectors. Most believed that detailed LMI beyond job roles was not relevant for this age group.

### **Secondary schools and colleges**

Secondary schools' use of LMI was ad-hoc and informal. There was little evidence that careers professionals were using detailed LMI in careers education; other than LMI covered in the online tools they were using. Use of specific LMI websites was minimal

with careers professionals instead relying on their own research to find appropriate information.

Colleges' use of LMI was more embedded within careers education and they were more likely to have invested in specific LMI software or used existing LMI websites. College careers staff placed higher value on its use, believing it was critical in allowing learners to make informed decisions. There was evidence of it being used strategically in most colleges, informing course offer, curriculum design and employer engagement strategies.

Presenting LMI in an accessible, simple way for learners was important according to secondary and college staff. Careers staff, particularly at secondary level believed that learners needed guidance to access and interpret LMI in order to aid understanding.

### **Learners and parents**

Parents and learners did not recognise the term LMI, but were very aware of different types of LMI, even without knowing the term itself. LMI was of interest for learners and parents, particularly those in college. Learners were interested in the types of jobs they could progress to and what was involved in different job roles, including responsibilities and pay scales.

However, both parents and learners generally lacked knowledge about where to access LMI, both finding it difficult to name specific websites or tools where they could find this information. Some parents felt that LMI would be useful but would need signposting to this information and felt that schools or colleges playing a role in promoting LMI sources would be useful.

### **Challenges and future potential**

A lack of accessible, central, relevant, local and up to date LMI was reported. Careers professionals mentioned accessing LMI through government (national and local) sources as they felt this could be trusted, although sometimes the available data could be two or three years old. LMI for All was perceived to be a useful source of information by careers professionals; however, awareness amongst other audiences appeared limited.

The main challenge for secondary schools was the accessibility of LMI information for their learners. Difficulties in knowing where to access LMI and the lack of user-friendliness of the information creates a challenge for careers professionals in being able to use this information within careers education and guidance.

# 1. Introduction

The Department for Education's Post-16 [Skills Plan](#)<sup>2</sup> and wider strategy for careers aims to support learners, from all backgrounds, and those who advise them – from primary school through to adulthood – to enable them to make effective decisions about the next steps in their education, as well as future careers. Research has suggested that some groups, such as those with low attainment or from disadvantaged backgrounds, are often the most in need of careers information, yet the least likely to receive it (Archer and Moote 2016).

The Education, Skills and the Economy Sub-Committee's inquiry into careers advice, information and guidance (2016), raised concerns around the number of careers information websites available and the ease of navigation of such websites. This view was also supported by *Moments of Choice* (Careers and Enterprise Company, 2016), which found that the range of information available is fragmented, diverse and lacks personalisation, leading young people to feel overloaded and disengaged. The report also noted that few services were designed to support those who influence young people making careers decisions.

Research has also identified that there could be better use of labour market information (LMI) and destination data in careers advice and guidance and business development activity (e.g. Gatsby 2014, Ofsted 2013, Futures Advice, Skills and Employment 2015, CEC 2016).

This research explores the information, data and tools used by groups of learners, parents and carers, teachers and careers professionals in making informed choices. It considers the user groups' awareness of the data and tools available, how they can support making careers and education choices and whether they are suitable for user needs. It was commissioned by the Department for Education to understand how best to support and target information provision to ensure everyone has sufficient access.

The scope of this research was learners from primary school up to post-16 education (up to 19 years), their parents/carers and the people who advise them. This includes next steps in education as well as future careers and professions.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/post-16-skills-plan-and-independent-report-on-technical-education>

## 1.1 Research aims

To explore the current use of careers information, sources and tools by learners (including disadvantaged learners), parents and carers, teachers and careers guidance professionals.

## 1.2 Research objectives

- Identify which data, including destinations data, and tools are available and used by learners when making educational and career choices
- Identify what information is used by parents and carers, teachers and careers guidance professionals in careers advice and decision-making and what they would like to have available
- Explore, how learners, parents/carers, and teachers/careers guidance professionals use the different types of data and tools
- Ascertain if there are any differences between learners, parents/carers, and teachers/careers guidance professionals' use of the data and tools, and if there are any differences between sub-groups
- Understand the reasons for each user group using the tools in the way they do
- Identify which decisions are informed and supported through the use of data and decision-making tools
- Explore how user groups, not aware of the data or tools, make careers and education decisions

## 1.3 Reading this report

First the methodological approach and number and type of participants are presented in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 provides a general introduction and contextual background to careers education and guidance and presents the range of ways that different user groups engage with provision. Use of careers information, sources and tools is explored in Chapter 4 which addresses use by different groups and how this informs decision-making at different stages. Chapter 5 specifically looks at awareness, perceptions and use of destination data and Chapter 6 explores how labour market information is understood and used within careers advice and guidance. Any challenges and suggested improvements relating to use of data and tools, mentioned by research participants, are presented in Chapter 7. The final Chapter provides a summary of findings and concluding comments.

## 2. Methodology

As an exploratory piece of work, in order to understand the use of careers information data and tools, a qualitative methodology was employed using a phased approach. The research was not intended to be a scoping exercise or audit of careers information data or tools. Feedback on various tools from user groups therefore, is based on the recall and perceptions of the key audiences.

### 2.1 Desk review

Approximately 20 documents were included in a brief literature review. These comprised government reports and guidance documents, academic papers, and research publications from a range of local government, third-sector organisations and industry bodies that included some reference to the use of tools and data within careers information, advice and guidance, and the views of young people and their parents on engaging with careers provision.

Searches were undertaken using a combination of key words and phrases such as: 'using destinations measures'; 'tools careers guidance'; 'young people views careers'. These were conducted using academic databases such as JSTOR<sup>3</sup> and broader online search engines. Sources were filtered to include only those published from 2012 onwards; therefore, taking into consideration the change in statutory duty for the provision of careers information, advice and guidance in schools and colleges from this date.

This literature review exercise informed the research questions, and identified example tools to be used as stimulus. The results of the literature review can be found in Appendix 1 as contextual background to this report.

### 2.2 Qualitative fieldwork

A total of 22 institutions (including two pilot visits) were included in the research, 19 via school/college visits and three via telephone interviews, across a range of primary and secondary schools, and colleges. Fieldwork was undertaken between May and July 2017.

Introductory telephone calls and emails were conducted, targeting a member of the senior leadership team or the careers lead if there was a clear individual/team responsible for careers provision. The introductory call introduced the research team, the

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<sup>3</sup> Digital library of academic journals, books, and primary sources



project and requested the institution's participation. Follow up emails and telephone calls were made as necessary to schedule the research at a convenient time for the institution.

The research comprised a mix of:

- Face-to-face interviews/focus groups discussions with senior leadership teams, careers staff/teachers and parents
- Focus group discussions with learners
- Observations of learners in careers sessions
- Follow up telephone interviews where staff (including external careers advisors), were unable to participate on the day of the visit
- Telephone interviews with parents (or face-to-face interviews if they were available at the time of the visit)
- Online surveys with parents
- A short online/paper questionnaire was completed by learners in some cases where access to learners was not possible during visits, e.g. where learners had already finished for the end of term

The interviews and focus groups broadly covered issues around use of different careers information and tools, their value and usefulness, engaging different user groups and supporting use of careers tools and data, use of destinations data and labour market information (LMI) and decisions that tools and data can help to inform. Topic guides used during the visits are provided in Appendix 3.

### **2.2.1 Sample**

Research locations were chosen to ensure a broad spread across England and a sample of institutions in those locations was extracted at random from Edubase. The sample for colleges was also sourced from the Association of Colleges and the Sixth Form Colleges Association lists of members.

Across the sample we aimed to achieve a mix of institutions representing differences in:

- Institution type: e.g. LA maintained schools, academies
- Size of institution
- Proportion of learners entitled to free school meals
- Locations (urban, rural, areas of deprivation)
- Performance figures and Ofsted rating

The overall sample breakdown by institution and participant type is provided in Tables 1 and 2.

**Table 1: Overall sample by institution type**

<b>Institution Type</b>	<b>Number of institutions</b>
Primary schools	4
Secondary schools (without sixth forms)	6
Secondary schools (with sixth forms)	5
FE college	6
5-16 all-through school	1

**Table 2: Sample by type of institution and participant type**

<b>Respondent Type</b>	<b>Number of respondents</b>			
	<b>Primary schools</b>	<b>Secondary schools no sixth form (incl all - through 5-16)</b>	<b>Secondary schools with sixth form</b>	<b>Colleges</b>
Senior leaders	4	5	2	4
Teaching and learning support staff	4	19	5	6
Internal careers staff (including careers leaders/managers, progression managers, personal coaches, learner engagement/mentoring staff)	2	8	7	20
External careers staff, personal coaches	-	8	2	2
Learners	27	77	38	41
Learners observed	-	12	10	29
Parents/parent governors	3	10	9	1

Geographically, visits took place across all regions – North East, North West, Yorkshire and Humber, East Midlands, West Midlands, East of England, London, South East and the South West.

## 2.3 Parent survey

In addition to the site visits, an online survey of parents was made available and distributed by the institutions taking part in the visits. This received 289 responses. The survey routed parents through questions relevant to their child’s stage in education. Questions were framed around how parents engage with their children about careers information and guidance and how they might use tools or data to support this process. The survey questions are provided in Appendix 3.

### 2.3.1 Sample breakdown: parent survey

The majority of parents that responded said the eldest child they are responding about was in a secondary school. Small proportions responded with children in a sixth form or general further education college or in a primary school.

**Table 3: Sample breakdown - parent survey**

	<b>Number of responses</b>	<b>Per cent of total responses</b>
Primary school	15	5.0%
Secondary school	230	79.6%
Sixth form at a secondary school	34	11.8%
Sixth form college/further education college	10	3.5%
Total	289	100%

## 2.4 Parent interviews

In total, 23 telephone interviews were also carried out with parents. These were accessed via the case study schools and colleges and responses to the online survey of parents. The survey was conducted to obtain a sense of the nature and range of responses but is not representative.

## **2.5 Challenges and limitations**

### **2.5.1 Timing for the research**

The timings for the research were challenging for both engaging schools in the research and in conducting the fieldwork. Fieldwork was conducted from May to July 2017 over a period of thirteen weeks. During this time schools were affected by a number of school holidays and examination periods.

For both primary and secondary schools, the school calendar in May - July was felt to be particularly busy, including exam preparation and SATs, GCSEs and A levels. A number of schools contacted expressed that they would be willing to take part in the research in September, but were not able to commit to this within the timescales.

Furthermore, at many schools, learners in Year 11 and Year 13 leave school early in the final term to go on study leave ahead of exams. These learners tend not to return to school/college until after their exams have finished and this caused difficulties in finding institutions who were able to take part. In particular, many sixth form colleges finish much earlier than usual and as a result it was not possible to include sixth form colleges in the sample. Similarly, gaining access to all-through schools also proved particularly difficult due to time constraints and one school was replaced with a school without sixth form.

### **2.5.2 Accessing parents**

As part of this research, the remit involved conducting 20 interviews with parents and conducting an online parent survey. To achieve this target, considerable liaison was required with schools and colleges. Access to parents was hampered by the limited communications that secondary schools and colleges have with parents. However, through building relationships with careers leads within each case study site and continued negotiation and liaison, the research team were able to oversample the parent interviews and reach the survey target. A small number of follow-up interviews were also conducted after parents had completed the online survey.

### 3. Engagement with careers provision

This chapter provides an overview of careers advice and guidance delivery and approaches across schools and colleges involved in this research. It is not a comprehensive review of careers provision since that was not the remit of the research. The chapter serves to provide a broad context to the use of tools and data in careers provision, as discussed in following chapters.

#### 3.1 Approaches to careers engagement: primary education

Primary schools felt that the focus of careers in primary should be on increasing knowledge and raising aspirations. Teachers aimed to increase learners' knowledge of the range of potential careers and job roles to encourage more realistic expectations, whilst still being careful not to discourage them. Increasing aspirations was particularly a concern for schools in areas with high levels of deprivation.

“We have a high pupil premium<sup>4</sup> intake, we have lots of parents that haven't been in higher education, we don't have a big group of parents to invite in about their role, so it's letting the children know what options are available when home can seem quite limited”. (Head of Year 6, primary school)

“We ask them what they want to be, a lot want to be footballers and singers. It's talking to them and being realistic about what the possibilities are without deflating their dreams”. (Year 5/6 Teacher, primary school)

##### 3.1.1 Delivery approaches

In the four primary schools involved in this research, 'careers' was incorporated into Personal, Social, Citizenship and Health Education (PSCHE) schemes of work and more broadly across learning in an informal way. This often took the form of exploring different job roles within topic work and general discussions about jobs and progression to secondary school during learning sessions as and when the opportunities arose. Examples were topics like 'People who help us' (early years and key stage 1) in which young people learn about different key workers (e.g. doctors, nurses) and the types of role that they have. Young learners were encouraged to role play about jobs and careers, while older learners were engaged with different roles through activities such as solving a crime.

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<sup>4</sup> The pupil premium is additional funding for publicly funded schools in England to raise the attainment of disadvantaged learners of all abilities and to close the gaps between them and their peers.

“For the space topic, they did a space station role play where they were astronauts and also analysts and programmers. We talked about who might work there and they had different roles – someone planning the space mission, someone had a map and someone would be in control of the rocket. For the toys topic, we talked about toy manufacture, about being a designer, we talked about hand-made toys versus factory-made and working in a factory”. (Teacher, Year 1, primary school)

“Year 6 have just spent a term looking at law, solicitors, and barristers. Learners have played the roles, investigated the crime and found the culprit”. (Assistant Head, primary school)

Primary schools invited people from different job roles to visit and speak to young learners, giving them the opportunity to find out more about those roles and ask questions. Whilst schools made a conscious effort to provide exposure to a range of different roles, the type of visitor was ultimately driven by who the school had links with or could access, such as parents of learners at the schools, or through links the schools established with local organisations. Visits were often scheduled to link to current topics, or organised for specific events, for example, one school organised a ‘Careers Day’ where they invited people from a range of different industries and roles into the school to talk about their careers and pathways. In two primary schools, older year groups had visited different workplaces.

All of the primary schools were having ongoing informal discussions with learners about jobs/careers that arose when they were covering certain curriculum topics and they placed great importance on linking learning back to real-life contexts.

“It comes up all the time when you are doing anything, for example we have been doing about dinosaurs and now a lot of learners want to be palaeontologists and scientists”. (Teacher, Year 3/4, primary school)

## **3.2 Approaches to careers engagement: secondary and tertiary education**

Most secondary and tertiary institutions involved in this research embedded careers into the wider curriculum (including into PSICHE lessons). They generally had dedicated careers areas and careers staff, or staff with some proportion of their role with responsibility for careers provision.

### **3.2.1 Delivery approaches**

In eight secondary schools, careers provision was led by a senior member of school staff such as the Deputy Head teacher, Head of Key Stage 4 or 5 or Head of Years 11, 12 or

13 and in four of these schools with support in the form of a careers manager, co-ordinator or administrator. In two secondary schools (one with a sixth form and one without) there was a dedicated careers service lead whose sole role was co-ordinating careers advice and guidance.

School staff involved in careers provision varied from level 6 qualified careers advisors and coordinators of provision, to teachers who deliver careers within PSICHE lessons as part of their day-to-day teaching role with some direction from the careers coordinator but no formal careers training. External careers providers were employed by seven schools for additional support. These tended to provide one-to-one interviews and in some cases also group sessions.

Colleges tended to have a member of the senior leadership team with strategic responsibility for careers advice and guidance. All the colleges visited had dedicated careers departments with dedicated careers staff, with larger colleges having up to six staff including a careers lead and in-house careers advisers. Smaller colleges tended to have one or two careers staff, in some cases supported by external careers advisers. Most colleges also used tutors or internal 'progression advisors'/'career coaches' to deliver some of the advice and guidance.

In secondary schools and colleges, careers education tended to be incorporated into the PSICHE or equivalent curriculum or tutorial time, with scheduled lessons across the year or concentrated in blocks or topics. In addition, careers provision could be handled on a less regular basis through special events such as careers fairs, or drop down/personal development days, where the normal curriculum was suspended and learners concentrated on careers related topics for the day.

## **Secondary school (Academy) – Approach to careers education and guidance**

Careers and employability are high on the agenda and important to the academy CEO.

Within each faculty there is a link to local business, for example, food technology has a business link to a large hotel chain. Geography has a link with a local airport. These links are useful for learners who have an interest in careers in that area. For example, the schools link with the airport has resulted in a specific pilot project whereby learners spend time at the airport and learn about different role. The learners bring back project work to complete at school. They also have a mentor at the airport and are guaranteed a work experience placement.

Making and retaining these links are part of the performance management criteria for each head of department. Through these links with business, there has been a drive to increase employability skills to make every child in the school employable.

The school holds careers evenings where businesses, colleges and apprenticeship providers come to the school. The school run a series of 'Bright Days' throughout the year where each year group takes it in turns on five occasions through the year to attend each bright session. There are, e.g. Bright Futures, Bright Bodies, Bright Sparks and Bright Minds. Other careers activities that the school runs with learners include:

- National careers week event – this year it covered gender bias in certain job roles
- 'Women in construction' course with local housing association for girls in Key Stage 4
- Ambition days at the local university for Pupil Premium learners who have the potential to progress to university

The school has also been successful in achieving the Careers Mark and secured a regional Chamber of Commerce award.

Careers staff in secondary schools and colleges highlighted a range of ways in which learners were encouraged to engage with careers information:

- **Research projects** - for example, asking learners to research and write up a report on a chosen career and identify other related roles or developing job profiles that match to skills and interests



- **Visits** - from external careers advisors (e.g. weekly appointments), information evenings, visits to workplaces to introduce apprenticeships, visiting universities (gifted and talented<sup>5</sup> learners visit Universities of Oxford and Cambridge)
- **Connections and partnerships** - e.g. schools connecting with local colleges so that learners can attend to try taster sessions of various subjects, links with employers for workplace visits or speaker events
- **Work experience** - eight of the secondary schools gave learners the opportunity to undertake one or two-week work placements; as did five of the colleges in the sample
- **Careers library** - a few secondary schools had a small careers section within their school library or in the careers office where learners could access university prospectuses, careers books and leaflets, apprenticeship information etc. Colleges tended to have a dedicated careers space with access to careers books, prospectuses, jobs (e.g. Jobpoint machines)
- **Mock employment activities** - secondary schools conducted a programme of employment activities which included a range of 'real life' employment scenarios such as CV writing, responding to job applications and mock interviews
- **Enterprise challenges** - a few schools and colleges invited a select group of learners to take part in business enterprise tasks such as designing, marketing and selling a new product or creating a new business idea and financial plan
- **Events** - such as careers weeks, careers information evenings, open days, HE Fairs, volunteering fairs, workshops
- **One-to-one interviews** - with careers advisors and tutors to discuss progression in detail
- **University partnerships** - visits to local universities and access to HE careers advice and guidance

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<sup>5</sup> Children and young people with one or more abilities developed to a level significantly ahead of their year group (or with the potential to develop those abilities).

### **Further education college – Approach to careers education and guidance**

The college has developed their careers strategy around the Gatsby Benchmarks. The key focus of their strategy is for careers education to be embedded within the study programme, rather than it being an add-on service for learners.

The college have developed a system whereby tutors can select a tutorial from Moodle and deliver it themselves or have a careers advisor do it for them. The focus is on building the confidence of curriculum staff to deliver careers education, but with adequate and well-researched support and resources being available.

Other career activities that the college runs include:

- Career inductions
- Running the Universities and Colleges Admission Service (UCAS) process through careers coach for each department
- Progression tutorials
- LMI tutorials – general or bespoke for the curriculum area
- Tutorials on social media – networking, how to use social media to help learners get ahead in their career

## **3.3 Parents' role in careers engagement**

Parents with learners across primary, secondary and tertiary education were talking to them fairly regularly about jobs or careers:

- Of the 15 parents of primary age children who responded to the survey, eight reported speaking to their child 'regularly' and seven spoke to them 'sometimes' about jobs and careers
- Over half (55%, n=150) of parents with children in secondary or tertiary education were talking to them 'regularly' about jobs and careers; a further 38% (n=104) 'sometimes' did this. Regular discussion about jobs and careers was highest amongst parents of children in tertiary education (70% tertiary vs. 52% secondary)

Three-fifths of parents of secondary and college learners (61%, n=166) had been spoken to about jobs or careers by their child's school or college.

### **3.3.1 Focus of career discussions**

For primary parents surveyed (as shown in Table 4) the main focus of discussions with their child was about what they wanted to do when they grew up (14 parents).

Discussions about different jobs and careers and how to achieve a certain job role was also common (9 parents). Careers discussions amongst parents with children in secondary and college education was more varied and comprehensive with over four-fifths reporting that they had spoken to their child about things they enjoy at school, what they want to do as an adult, different job roles and careers and what they need to do to achieve a certain job role.

**Table 4: Focus of career discussions between parents and learners**

Primary parents	Secondary/college parents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What they want to do when they grow up (14 parents)</li> <li>• Discussions about different job roles and careers (9 parents)</li> <li>• How to achieve a certain job role (9 parents)</li> <li>• Things they enjoyed at school that they might want to do in the future (8 parents)</li> <li>• Salaries (6 parents)</li> <li>• Different sectors (6 parents)</li> <li>• Different pathways (6 parents)</li> <li>• Plans for job/career after education (5 parents)</li> <li>• Reasons they might want to think about certain careers/jobs over another (4 parents)</li> </ul> <p>(Base = 15 primary parents)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Things they enjoyed at school that they might want to do in the future (86%; n=235)</li> <li>• What they want to do as an adult (85%, n=234)</li> <li>• Discussions about different job roles and careers (82%, n=225)</li> <li>• What they need to do in the future to achieve a certain job role (81%, n=221)</li> <li>• What they are planning on doing when they leave school/college (78%, n=213)</li> <li>• Plans for job/career after education (72%, n=197)</li> <li>• Different pathways (73%, n=201)</li> <li>• Different sectors (60%, n=163)</li> <li>• Salaries (58%, n=158)</li> <li>• Reasons they might want to think about certain careers/jobs over another (55%, n=151)</li> </ul> <p>(Base = 274 secondary school and tertiary parents)</p>

### 3.3.2 Role of parents/carers in decision-making

In the interviews, whilst the level of parental involvement varied, most parents felt that they had an active role in both discussing careers and education pathways with their children, and in supporting them in decisions around subject options and post-16 pathways.

“We are very involved in these choices and have all been to colleges to visit, all decided together, but it has all come pretty naturally, less hassle than I thought it would be, a lot of that has come from my son”. (Parent of Year 11 boy)

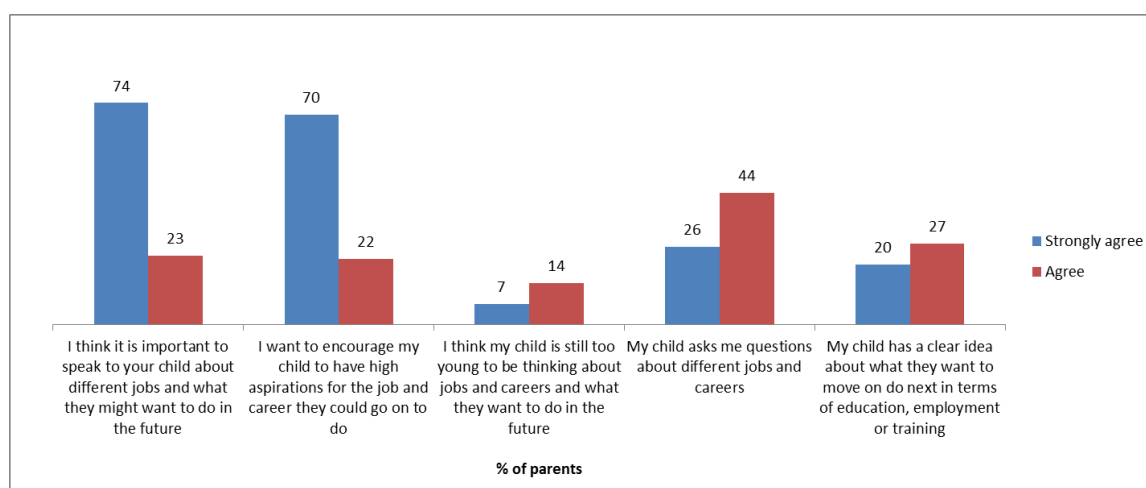
Parents of secondary school and college learners also reported positively in the online survey about the value of speaking to their child about future education and careers choices and their role. As shown in Figure 1, nearly all parents agreed:

- That it was important to speak to their child about different jobs and what they might want to do in the future (97%, n=266 agreed; 74%, n=203 strongly agreed)
- That they wanted to encourage their child to have high aspirations for the job and career they could go on to do (92%, n=252 agreed; 70%, n=192 strongly agreed)

Nearly three-quarters of parents (70%, n=186) agreed (26%, n=69 strongly agreed) that their child asked them questions about different jobs and careers.

Parents of children aged 16+ (73%, n=45) were more likely to believe their child had a clear idea about what they wanted to move on to next in terms of education, employment or training than those of younger children (56%, n=51 of parents of 14-15 year olds and 28%, n=32 of parents of 11-13 year olds).

**Figure 1: Parents’ attitudes towards careers education and guidance (secondary and college)**



Q31 - Please tell us how much you agree or disagree with the following statements ...Base =274

Some parents felt that their child was too young to be thinking about jobs and careers and what they want to do in the future (22%, n=58); this view was highest amongst

parents of 11-16 year olds (23%, n=55) and lowest amongst parents of 17 and 18 year olds (11%, n=4). A few parents who were interviewed also reflected this view.

“I don’t want him to be worried about the future yet, I would rather he is able to settle in to school and in Year 8 and 9 think about careers”. (Parent, Year 7 learner)

Similar views were reflected in the survey by the parents of primary learners, although they were more likely to feel that their child was too young to be thinking about jobs and careers:

- All parents agreed that it was important to speak to their child about different jobs and what they might want to do in the future
- Most parents agreed that that their child asked them questions about different jobs and careers and that they wanted to encourage their child to have high aspirations for the job and career they could go on to do
- Although some parents agreed that their child was still too young to be thinking about jobs and careers and what they want to do in the future, others disagreed, and some felt that they would like to know more about what they could be talking to their child about in relation to jobs and careers

Through interviews/focus groups, parents of primary aged children reported that they were having general discussions with their children about their ideas about future jobs or careers and things they might enjoy at school that they may want to do in the future.

## 4. Careers information and tools

This chapter presents examples of different tools and information sources being utilised in schools and colleges, how they are used and why and the points at which they are accessed to help with informing key decisions.

### 4.1 Careers tools in use

A range of tools were cited by careers leads/professionals, teachers, tutors, senior leaders, support staff and learners. Examples of the kinds of tools used in schools and colleges are provided in Appendix 2.

### 4.2 Use of careers tools in primary schools

The use of specific tools or programmes was more limited in primary schools than in secondary schools or colleges. Teachers most often described using their own experience or prior knowledge when discussing careers with learners and they did not feel the need to seek out specific careers information or tools.

Two of the four primary schools visited used specialist programmes designed for primary schools which incorporated activities or lesson-time projects designed to develop key skills, prepare children for the 'real world' and build confidence and motivation. One school mentioned using an online curriculum based educational resource which incorporated jobs and careers related elements.

#### **A primary schools' use of an online curriculum support tool**

Education City is a curriculum based classroom software educational resource for children aged three to 12 and their teachers.

A primary school had purchased the Education City tool which was used across the school to support their curriculum based learning. In addition to specific curriculum based activities and games, the tool offered useful and engaging careers information and resources such as videos of people going to work. The school used these aspects to encourage learners to think about careers and to increase aspirations.

'Real person' experiences were noted as being the 'most powerful' tools for engaging learners with careers at young ages, through people from different careers visiting the school or through learners visiting workplaces. Videos or video link connections were also described as useful for engaging primary learners. With this in mind, primary age

learners tended to learn about jobs and careers from a range of sources, rather than use of 'tools' in the more traditional sense. Sources of information included:

- Parents – mentioned by all learners
- School/teachers – including informal discussions during lessons, workplace visits and visits to school from people in different roles, e.g. policemen, nurses, firemen, astronauts, palaeontologists, or from local colleges
- Sports clubs or during other extra-curricular activities, e.g. seeing tutors and trainers and wanting to take on their role
- Television “I use television because I watch the programmes where they make buildings” (Learner, Year 6)
- Day-to-day experiences, such as going to the doctor or dentist, “When I went to doctors I asked my Mum if there was a specific name for them. Mum said ‘GP’, then my dad told me what they do and I wanted to be GP. My sister is going into pharmacy...I talk to them and they tell me to study medicine and I will need to have chemistry and science and maths and study them” (Learner, Year 6)
- Books and magazines
- Internet – a number of learners had looked on the internet for information about jobs/careers, but were not able to name any specific tools or sites

### **A Primary schools' use of an enterprise programme**

Enabling Enterprise is a stand-alone package that a school can purchase. The focus of the programme is on enterprise and introducing learners to a wide range of businesses and employers.

A primary school had bought-in the Enabling Enterprise programme that it used with learners across the school years. For example, Year 6 spent a term looking at law. Learners have had the opportunity to play the role of certain jobs within the sector. The programme also involves visits to employers for the older learners. For example, the school had visited the local Chamber of Commerce and had the opportunity to find out more about the different job roles available and what the jobs entailed. The school commented that the programme provides very high-quality, interactive resources. All of the cross-curricular links are provided and teaching staff are trained in delivery.

“The overall aim is to inform children and make them aware of the wide variety of jobs that they could go into”. (Careers Lead, primary school)

## 4.2.1 Primary learner perspectives

All of the Year 5 and Year 6 learners said that they enjoyed the careers-related activities, particularly role play, seeing visitors and generally learning about different jobs. They were able to discuss a range of different jobs and careers and many had ideas about what they wanted to do in the future. Several learners had quite clear ideas about their future career, whereas many were unsure.

Most of the potential careers mentioned by primary learners were fairly traditional, for example, doctor, vet, mechanic, footballer, actor/singer or working within organisations such as the police or army. Some young learners mentioned that they would like to work in generic sectors but had not decided upon a specific role, for example, medicine, engineering, cycling and athletics. There was little evidence of primary learners mentioning roles beyond the more traditional or generic. Where more unusual roles were mentioned this was typically driven by the specific interests of the young learners, such as one Year 6 girl who wanted to be a jockey or showjumper as she is passionate about horses and another Year 5 boy wanted to be an archaeologist as he enjoys history and had learned about the role as part of a school topic.

Parents/carers and siblings appeared to be key influencers on the careers that primary learners considered, and several young learners wanted to follow career paths similar to their family members. For example, one Year 5 boy wanted to work in the local steel works because his dad works there; one Year 5 girl wanted to be a vet because her grandfather used to be a vet; another Year 5 boy wanted to go into the army because his brother had followed that career path.

“I haven’t really thought about what career I want to do when I’m older but if I had to choose I’d say it’s something in-between football and medical. My brother wants to be a dentist and I wouldn’t mind becoming a doctor, or football because I always play it”. (Boy, Year 6)

“I’m thinking about becoming a lawyer because my mum says I read books a lot and my mum said that I’d be really good at it. At home I used to write stories and my mum and dad would check them. My dad said I would be an author one day, but I think my mum wants me to be a lawyer and I kind of like that idea”. (Girl, Year 6)

As might be expected, at this age, overall, there appeared to be a lack of understanding of career pathways and what is required to achieve the careers discussed. Some primary learners could talk about progression beyond secondary school and knew that they wanted to go to college or university. These learners could identify potential subjects of study and could talk in very general terms about careers pathways, such as needing to go to university to study medicine and a few had knowledge of some of the subjects they



would need to study either at secondary school or university. Most of the learners talked more broadly about needing to work hard at school and a few mentioned taking part in activities outside of school which would help them later in life (e.g. cadets, work experience). Even though some had ideas of what kind of job they would like, all of the young learners recognised that their goals might change and that they needed to keep their options open.

### **4.3 Use of careers tools in secondary and tertiary education**

Secondary schools and colleges used a range of tools and sources of careers information with learners (see Appendix 2 for examples), although the type and number of different tools and sources varied. Colleges were more likely to have a wider variety of tools available and were more likely to pay for multiple resources. Of all the institutions included in the research, just two colleges used no paid-for tools. In contrast, schools tended to opt for fewer tools - typically one or two and would generally purchase just one commercial tool and supplement it with those that are freely available.

Online resources tended to be used to introduce learners to career options, provide inspiration, improve and widen aspirations, encourage motivation and to learn about and plan progression pathways.

Tools tended to be used in group sessions or in one-to-one discussions with a career advisor or tutor, rather than learners accessing them individually in their own time (see sections 4.4 and 4.5). Very few learners who participated in the research recalled using the tools themselves in their own time. Some of the more pro-active and able learners were more likely to do so. Those less able or less engaged were unlikely to access tools themselves although a few had looked on individual college or employer websites or had conducted searches via Google. Most (including higher and lower ability learners) said that they appreciate having a careers advisor or teacher/tutor available to support them when using the tools.

## **Observation of a group of Year 8 learners in a careers session called “Growing Aspirations: This is the year 2030”**

### **Purpose of session**

The learners are given a task to think about things they are interested in doing when they are 26 years old. For example, where they will live, who with, family, holidays, whether they will have a car/house. They then have to calculate how much such a lifestyle would cost.

The learners then have to imagine that they are in Year 11 and judge how much effort they have put into certain aspects of their school life using a quiz. They then decide how well they will do in exams, their preferred route after school and how much effort they will have made to plan a career. Points are scored against each choice and this provides suggestions of the kinds of careers they might like, with a suggested salary.

Learners can then compare their lifestyle costs against the suggested salary and are asked at the end ‘Can you afford your life? What would you rather change: what you spend your money on, or what route you took, or what careers you do?’

### **Learner feedback**

Some of the learners found the questions posed through the session difficult to answer. For example, when they are asked in the quiz how well they will do in their exams, the possible response options do not allow for the scenario whereby the learner may do well in some subjects, but less well in others.

Also, when they are given a list of prospective jobs/careers at the end of the quiz depending on their score, it works well for some learners, but not for others. For example, some learners are interested in other careers or cannot decide if what they are interested in falls under one of the careers categories provided.

Overall however, they were engaged with the task. Some found it useful in that it reflected thoughts or aspirations they already held in terms of their future goals. Others said it has made them think about other options they hadn’t considered. All were interested to see the predicted career and salary at the end of the exercise.

## **4.4 Differentiating use of tools by different groups**

Use of the tools was varied and discerning any particular patterns or preferences is therefore challenging. However, some notable broad preferences have been identified

below. Use of tools in primary schools is limited and therefore is covered in the previous section.

#### **4.4.1 Learners' awareness and use of tools**

##### **Secondary school learners**

Learners in secondary schools mentioned a range of sources of information about careers, and although they still discussed careers and progression with their family, there was a greater focus on formal careers advice, information and use of tools which increased and became more focused as they progressed through education.

Awareness and recall of careers tools used was mixed. Some secondary learners could recall tools they had used, particularly if used in school or with the careers adviser. Other learners could recall having used a tool and could describe its functions or what they had used it for, but could not recall the name until prompted.

Sources of information mentioned by secondary learners include:

- Family members – in particular parents and older siblings
- School – formal and informal discussions with subject teachers, key stage/year Heads, tutors and careers advisers
- Local colleges – from college websites, prospectuses, open days and visits to the school
- Local employers – via open days and employers visiting school for careers fairs and talks
- Internet – general searches on careers they may be interested in, apprenticeships and specific searches of certain industries/employers
- Careers tools - such as Unifrog, Kudos, Prospects, National Careers Service (NCS), Fast Tomato, UCAS Progress
- University websites – tended to be used more by Year 12 and 13 learners to research potential courses

Once prompted, learners from secondary schools recalled that they had heard of several tools, however the level at which they engaged with them seemed to vary and they generally reported that there was 'not enough time spent on careers'. In particular, some learners in Years 7 to 9 felt that they did not receive enough careers information and that schools should talk about careers much earlier.

### **Observation of Year 9 learners using a tool that matches learners' skills and interests with potential careers, work styles and work places**

After spending time using the careers tool for the first time, the learners gave feedback on how they had found the process.

The learners felt that the tool was easy to use and that the information it provided was useful. The potential jobs that it suggested felt relevant and in most cases the tool suggested things they had already considered/thought about which gave them confidence in it. The learners also commented that the tool had brought up jobs they had not considered/heard of before. They particularly found it useful to be able to look at the descriptions of the jobs and to see what qualifications they need to achieve to get there. That was described as the best feature of the tool by a few learners.

Some learners commented that the questions did not seem to build on previous answers, so they felt that some questions they were asked were not relevant. They felt if the tool considered their previous answers it would be an improvement.

Some also thought it was a bit vague or didn't give enough detail.

One learner mentioned that the careers they were considering didn't come up, which made the exercise feel like it was not relevant or specific to them.

Secondary school learners reported that they were wary of tools that asked them to register/sign-up to use them, information provided solely online and knowing which sources that they could trust. They preferred receiving information and guidance in a one-to-one setting. One suggested that a careers/progression 'buddy' would be useful – connecting with peers who were following a similar pathway so that they could share experiences and information.

"I don't need more resources or computer websites/books. I like talks from people doing the job. I like to ask them questions about things I want to know". (Year 10 learner)

### **College learners**

Further education college learners (Years 12 and 13) were focused on career choices and accessing information about specific roles and were also interested in choosing a university course or route into an apprenticeship or vocational learning. If they were interested in attending university, they would then look at what careers could lead on from the university course. The tools accessed by these learners varied depending on whether they were considering a university pathway or were looking for an alternative

career pathway. Those considering a university pathway were more likely to use higher education specific tools that allowed them to explore potential university course (e.g. UCAS, Which? University). Others exploring alternative routes or those that were still unsure about their routes were more likely to use tools that were wider in their focus.

Some college learners reported that they were unlikely to use careers tools outside of careers sessions and preferred to conduct online searches for information instead. They felt that specific tools were 'more useful' at secondary school prior to making subject choices for A levels.

Careers resources and tools used by Further Education (FE) college learners included:

- Resources more specifically focused on higher education (HE) choices, such as the UCAS website, Unistats, Complete University Guide, Which? University, individual university websites and open days. They appreciated being able to make comparisons between universities down to course and module level. These sources were perceived as 'trustworthy and well known'
- Resources incorporating alternative education and training options, such as the National Apprenticeship Service, National Careers Service, Prospects and college websites
- Internet – general searches on careers they may be interested in, apprenticeships and specific searches of certain industries/employers
- Council/jobs websites and apprenticeships, e.g. Indeed

Further detail on use of tools to inform choices and key decisions stages at different ages are covered in sections 4.4.2, 4.4.3 and 4.5.

## **4.4.2 Parents' awareness and use of tools**

### **Accessing and sourcing careers tools and information**

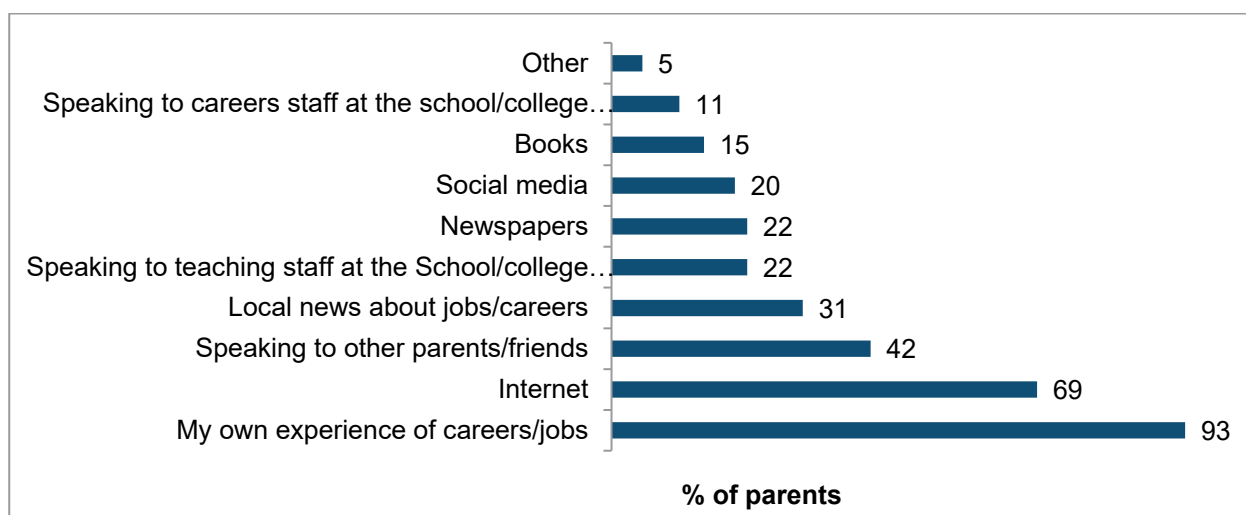
Most parents lacked knowledge about where to find appropriate information and tools to assist them in decision-making with their children. Generally, information seeking was ad-hoc and often reliant on the results of internet searches, rather than parental knowledge about key careers websites. There was limited evidence of schools or colleges providing detailed careers information to parents. Where provided it typically comprised emails or letters which informed them of the presence of the careers service in school/college (where relevant) and signposted parents to self-serve sources of information such as websites and careers sections of their school or college website. Parental access to careers tools was limited due to the logistics of providing logins for parents.

As shown in Figure 2, when responding to the survey, the majority of parents of secondary aged-learners stated that they were using their own experience of careers and

jobs to help their children with key decisions (93%, n=255). The internet was also a key source of information with over two-thirds (69%; n=199) of parents having used the internet. Other sources included other parents/friends (42%, n=114); local news about jobs/careers (31%, n=84), and newspapers (22%, n=61).

Parents of those in secondary and tertiary education said that direct contact with school or college about their child’s future career or education choices was minimal. Over a fifth of parents (22%, n=56) reported speaking to teaching staff and only 11% (n=29) reported speaking to careers staff.

**Figure 2: Information sources used by parents**



Q8. Where do you go to find the information you need to help you have conversations with your child about future careers and jobs?  
Please tick all that apply Base=274 (all parents of secondary and college aged learners)

Most parents of primary children and younger secondary children who were not at key decision-points felt that looking for information online was not relevant because of the age of their child. For those that did feel it could be useful, there were concerns about being able to source age-appropriate information. A number of parents were worried about overwhelming younger children with information, not wanting to risk deterring them from particular careers or aspirations.

Those with older secondary children (Year 9 upwards) were more proactively seeking information to help their children with key decisions, particularly those that were at an age where they were considering post-16 options and university. Parents looked for information online about courses and qualifications on college and university websites. Some parents had also attended or had plans to attend school-based careers events or undertake visits to colleges and universities.

Challenges identified by parents included: not knowing where to find careers information, information being spread out across a variety of different websites and a lack of promotion by schools and other providers about careers events and careers information coming through children and therefore not always reaching parents.

“It’s not that easy unless you know where to look and you have the motivation. Through the open evening I hope to get more information about career paths – you have to have your eyes and ears open to find out the dates of them; even at the school you have to chase to find out the dates of them”. (Parent of Year 10 pupil)

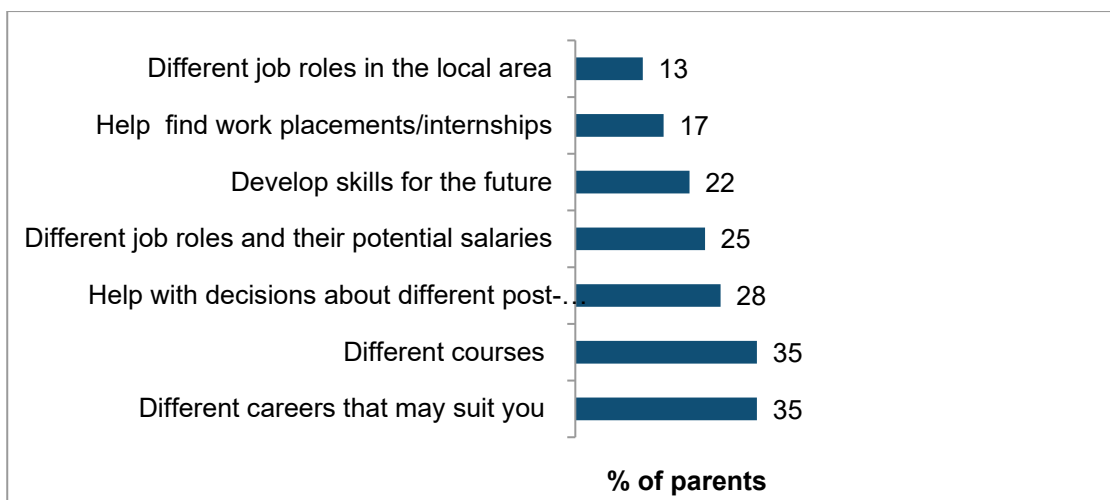
“It all seems quite spread out; there isn’t a particular website that covers everything”. (Parent of Year 7 learner)

### Using careers tools and information

The use of tools and information by parents to help their children make decisions about their future education and career choices was limited. Nearly half (48%, n=128) of survey respondent parents of secondary and college age young people had not used any tools to help their child make these decisions. As shown in Figure 3 where parents had used tools this had been mainly to find out about different careers that may suit their child (35%, n=93) or to find out about different courses (35%, n=93). Around a quarter of parents had used tools to help with decisions about different post-16 pathways (28%, n=74) or tools to help them find out about different job roles and salaries (25%, n=68).

Around a fifth (22%, n=60) had used tools to help their child develop skills for the future (e.g. interview and CV tips). Only 17% (n=45) had used tools to find work placements or internships.

**Figure 3: Function of careers tools used by parents**



Q9. Have you used any of the following tools to help you when you’re speaking to your child about future careers/jobs. *Tick all that apply*. Base=268 (all parents of secondary and college aged learners)

Parents found it difficult to name specific careers or information websites that they had used, suggesting a general lack of awareness of potential tools or sites they could access. Information seeking was infrequent and often search-engine based. A parent

mentioned a Government website that she regularly used to find out information about jobs/careers for her child but was not able to name the website.

“If I wanted to find out something about a job I’d just type in ‘how to become a...’ into Google and see what came up” (Parent of Year 9 learner)

Parents were keen to know more about what they could be talking to their child about in relation to jobs and careers; 62% (n=166) of parents agreed with this statement.

#### **4.4.3 Provider awareness and use of careers tools**

Generally, careers staff tend to use a range of tools (as with learners, this is more limited in schools than in colleges) to source information when providing advice and guidance. Teachers, tutors and related teaching staff were much less likely to make use of such resources. They often gave advice and guidance using past experiences of their own education and careers development, alongside to their subject knowledge, although some teachers acknowledged that their experiences could be somewhat out of date. Where they were unable to answer questions from their own experiences or knowledge, or in order to deliver a lesson where careers/jobs formed part of the learning objectives they would ‘look things up’ themselves or in some cases refer learners to school or college careers advisors. Most would use search-engine based research if they required information. In a small number of schools however, timetabling had been organised so that tutorial or PSCHE sessions could take place in computer labs where groups of learners could use tools with tutor support.

All schools and colleges also use tools to centrally collate student data such as attendance and progress. A Head of Careers in a large further education college described how they used the student data recorded by teaching staff in such a system (ProMonitor) to ‘understand a student’s needs’, thereby enabling careers staff to tailor advice to that individual learner. Whilst the careers service did not use this software to record careers discussions (due to confidentiality issues), they found that the information about learners that it holds was helpful. This example is unlikely to be unique, although the use of school or college monitoring systems was not mentioned elsewhere.

#### **4.5 Differentiating use of tools for learners and decision stages**

Decisions about the tools used with learners by both secondary schools and colleges were driven by careers professionals’ views on their suitability for learners. Colleges emphasised the importance of careers tools being effectively matched to learners, dependent on their level of study, ability and stage of decision-making.



“Because we have students on so many levels of studying it’s about picking and choosing tools for different groups. We have to consider who we’re delivering to”.  
(Careers Lead, FE college)

The range of tools used by secondary schools and colleges for different stages of learners’ decision-making and at different ages was extremely varied. Although there were no universal tools, there were some similarities in the types of tools that providers were using. Common paid-for tools used across secondary schools and colleges were Kudos, Fast Tomato, UCAS Progress, Job Explorer Database (JED) and Unifrog. Common free tools mentioned were National Careers Service (NCS), National Apprenticeship Service (NAS), UCAS, iCould/Buzz Quiz, Plotr<sup>6</sup> and U-Explore (a minority of institutions paid for an upgraded service for U-Explore). In some cases, tools were used across a wide age range, but with the functions used within the tools being different at different stages and depending on the learner’s individual needs. A brief description of the most common tools mentioned is detailed in Table 5.

**Table 5: Description of common tools used**

<b>Tool name</b>	<b>Description</b>
Fast Tomato	Interest based careers guidance and education for teenagers using psychometric questionnaires to provide an individual profile, career, course and subject information, coupled with independent adviser support
iCould	Provides career inspiration and information for young people, offering free access to over 1000 personal video stories, detailed job information, practical tips, insight and advice. Buzz Quiz
iCould Buzz Quiz	A short online questionnaire to identify the types of jobs that may be suitable for young people through exploring their personality type, temperament, learning styles, relationships and stress management
Job Explorer Database (JED)	Provides information about hundreds of careers, accessible to a wide variety of users of all ages, including some special needs (First Jed)

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<sup>6</sup> Plotr has now been incorporated into a new careers platform, [startprofile.com](https://www.startprofile.com)

**Table 5 (cont.): Description of common tools used**

Tool name	Description
Kudos	Resource for delivering personalised careers guidance to 13-19 year olds based on their interests and educational aspirations, suggests suitable careers and provides career ideas and information on hundreds of jobs.
National Apprenticeship Service (NAS)	Government agency that supports, funds and co-ordinates the delivery of Apprenticeships throughout England. The website is the official website for general information about apprenticeships and apprenticeship vacancies in England
National Careers Service (NCS)	The publicly funded careers service for adults and young people in England, providing careers information, advice and guidance.
Plotr	A game designed to help young people discover their future career through a series of questions and looks at what the world of work is really like. Matches jobs to personality, interests and skills and helps to find courses, work experience, apprenticeships and jobs in the local area. Plotr has now been incorporated into a new careers platform, <a href="http://startprofile.com">startprofile.com</a>
UCAS/ UCAS Progress	Operates the application process for British universities, providing online application portals, search tools and free information and advice directed at young people making choices after their GCSEs, as well as those applying for undergraduate and postgraduate courses. Provides information and advice to students, parents and teachers about different opportunities for post-GCSE education and training.
U-Explore	Provides a whole-school approach to careers and employability support for learners aged 11-19 for all progression routes, delivers comprehensive and impartial careers information, advice and guidance with written and video job profiles, virtual tours of real businesses and links to education and training providers across the UK.
Unifrog	Helps students find and apply for university courses, apprenticeships, college courses and school leaver programmes, and allows teachers to track their progress and manage the careers and UCAS process.

The following examples are illustrative of how providers were using certain tools with their learners.

### **Years 7-8**

The main use of career tools in Year 7 and 8 was for learners to explore potential interest in jobs and careers, widen their frame of reference and raise aspirations. Some schools used quiz-based tools that encouraged learners to explore how their personality and likes may suit particular careers or jobs, although in others online tools were not used with this age group. Tools like Buzz-Quiz and Fast Tomato were mentioned on several occasions. Schools gave examples of JED being used with Year 8 learners for careers activities and quizzes, videos and job descriptions, to give learners inspiration and ideas on what job roles they may be suited to. Kudos was also mentioned and was used with Year 7 and 8 learners as a reflective tool, to encourage learners to see what they are good at, and what skills and attributes they have.

### **Years 9-11**

The use of careers tools by Year 9 to 11 learners was extremely varied across schools. In some schools, tools were introduced in Year 9 to assist learners in thinking about their option choices. In other schools, the introduction of tools was delayed until later years, where the focus turned to learners considering their post-16 subjects and pathway options. Examples are:

- JED is used in Year 9 by a secondary school to give learners an idea of the job that might suit them. This was also used in a more focused way by Year 10 and Year 11 learners to allow them to focus on longer-term career options
- A secondary school used Kudos in Year 10 so that learners could explore different careers pathways, job roles and to widen knowledge around careers they are not aware of. Another secondary school used Kudos for Year 9 learners for career matching
- A secondary school introduced Unifrog to Year 10 learners as the portal to use for post-16 and post-18 pathways
- A secondary school used UCAS Progress for Year 10 and Year 11 learners as a tool for searching and applying for education courses and providers, and for planning pathways. The learners use the tool to build their profile of education and qualifications and suggest careers and courses they may be interested in. Staff (careers staff and tutors) can log in and see the progress learners have made

- A secondary school felt that U-Explore would be useful starting from Year 9, as it introduces them to a range of careers and tells them what they need to achieve the career. Another secondary school was using U-Explore primarily with Year 10 learners for work-experience preparation
- A college used the National Careers Service (NCS) and National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) websites to help learners identify potential job roles and pathways, establish what courses and apprenticeships are available in the local area and make apprenticeship applications

### **Secondary school's use of vocational course in Year 9 to introduce careers education and tools**

The secondary school have started to run a vocational course for all Year 9 learners. One of the modules is 'careers', and the course has been developed to help guide learners through the options process. The vocational lessons start with the bigger picture, identifying where they 'want to be' when they are older and then identifying routes to those jobs (e.g. college, apprenticeships). Working backwards from the goals, they are encouraged to think about their options and how the options might affect later decisions. The learners are introduced to 'U-Explore' to help challenge some of the stereotypes e.g. if they are interested in science, there are many medical and science careers rather than being a doctor. U-Explore is used to 'open their eyes' to wider career opportunities.

### **Years 12-13**

Use of tools was much more focused at this stage on specific pathways, choosing universities or finding apprenticeships or appropriate higher-level study. Tools were also used for diagnostic purposes for those that were still unsure about career pathways. For example, the use of tools that matched learners' skills and qualifications with further study or employment. Examples of how tools were used were:

- A secondary school which used Kudos for Year 9 learners for career matching used it again for Year 12 learners for when they are choosing their post-18 options
- Unifrog was used to take learners through higher education options where they had the option to enter predicted grades to find out what universities they could consider
- A college had recently subscribed to Unifrog as it is a Labour Market Information (LMI) based site for university and HE courses but also brings in voluntary work and apprenticeships. It includes what you need to get to a role, but wider than that, helps provide CVs and application letters etc.

- A college was using START which allowed learners to build a profile through answering sets of questions relating to the like/dislikes, strengths. The tool then gives learners information about possible jobs that they could consider
- A college had been using Careers Coach which provides learners with potential career options by answering six questions. It also provides CV building support and allows for searching of jobs and courses

**Observation of A level learners using a tool that helps learners match their qualifications and skills with potential jobs, careers and post-18 courses.**

**College context**

The college offers a range of level two and level three academic and vocational qualifications as well as A levels. The college delivers all careers provision internally with a team of two full-time posts, qualified to level four. They also have a higher education advisor and a careers assistant and five personal coaches. Two careers sessions were observed in which learners were using some online tools (involving 19 learners in total). All of the learners were studying Advanced Subsidiary (AS) levels across a range of subjects.

**Example of using a tool focused on matching interests with potential careers**

The learners were asked to independently use the tool as they wished. Feedback about the use of the tool at the stage of decision-making was:

- Those that knew what they wanted to do felt the tool would have been more useful to them earlier, at secondary school, before decisions had been made about A - Level choices
- Those that didn't know what they wanted to do found the information provided overwhelming, as there were too many options

Specific feedback was given by learners around the navigation of the online tool and the outputs it produced. Learners found issues around:

- Needing more filters: learners found it frustrating that there weren't enough filters to allow better narrowing down of searches or results by subjects or qualifications
- Relevance of results – examples of learners getting careers results that had no relevance to their interests. For example, a learner searched for careers with Spanish and Care Home Manager came up on the search
- Limited detail in results: the results given were too broad, with not enough detail

- Narrow career suggestions: too few careers suggestions given when using terms such as 'maths careers'; learners felt that there must be more alternatives

### **Example of using a tool to find a suitable university**

A learner independently used a university specific tool to help him narrow down which university to apply to. He did this by looking at:

- Ranking of the universities
- The cities he would like to live in
- What the courses involve

He tried looking at various university websites, if he found them not to be user friendly, he discounted the university.

## **4.6 Engaging hard-to-reach learners**

There were commonalities in how secondary schools and colleges were engaging harder to reach learners in careers information and tools. Many would continue to use the same tools that they used with other learners, but would tailor the use of these tools differently with learners who needed more support. This included:

- Use of more video-based information, rather than text-based
- Use of easy-to-read versions of tools, or staff support being provided to read out content from the tool to learners who needed literacy support
- More sessions using tools and tutoring learners, encouraging independent research

A Careers Lead in a college felt that tools such as Buzz Quiz were 'a bit more bespoke and interactive' and enabled staff to create some 'inspiration' among learners that are less engaged. Buzz Quiz was described as quick and easy to complete and therefore more suitable for less engaged learners who would lose interest part way through longer quizzes on other tools. One careers advisor commented that JED was perceived to be better suited to those who were 'serious about job searching' although it was considered for other learners for motivational purposes.

Most of the tools were felt to lack differentiation and the options provided could be unsuitable for SEND learners. Similarly, it was felt that tools assumed a particular level of literacy and language ability – this meant that tutors needed to be available in order to interpret results and explain what a tool meant.

Increased one-to-one support for hard to reach learners was felt to be important, such as those re-sitting General Certificate of Secondary Education qualifications (GCSEs) at college or those who were generally less engaged: “there is no one type of software or tool that the tutor can use – the careers advisor needs to talk individually to students as their situations are individual” (Personal Coach, FE college). Specialist support for SEND learners included one-to-one provision away from group settings.

#### **Secondary school supporting SEND learners with use of online careers tool**

A secondary school used its careers tools with all learners, but just ensured that SEND learners were given more sessions on the tool with ongoing communication occurring between the SENCO and Heads of Year. The school use a Red, Amber, Green (RAG) system to prioritise learners in terms of their risk of becoming ‘Not in Education, Employment, or Training’ (NEET), to ensure that appropriate support is put in place.

## **4.7 Provider perspectives on tools**

Secondary school and college providers were mindful of the cost of careers tools and value for the money was important. Providers were investing in a range of tools dependent on the needs of their learners, their age and the stage of decision-making. The specific features of careers tools that careers advisors/teachers perceived to be most valuable were:

- Information on a wide range of courses and careers with equal value given to educational and alternative pathways
- Advanced filtering options (e.g. by cost, accommodation, social factors, subjects, course requirements, location)
- User-friendliness – clear interface and functions, text kept to a minimum and sectioned into ‘bit sized’ chunks, clear sectioning
- Games/quiz-led software that is short and maintains interest

Overall, careers professionals appreciated being able to access more than one tool or source of information, as there was not likely to be one single tool or approach that would be suitable or effective with every learner. However, it was less common for secondary schools to invest in more than one paid tool, due to budget constraints. By contrast, some colleges had invested in a range of different paid-for tools, likely to be reflective of having a larger and more diverse learner cohort; although these were generally supplemented by the use of multiple free online tools.

Careers professionals’ use of tools and information in both secondary schools and colleges was evolving over time. There were considerable differences in institutions

experience and use of tools, dependent on the size of the learner cohort, learners' needs and priorities for careers information. Whereas some institutions had historical experience of using a range of tools, for others (particularly in secondary schools) the use of tools was sometimes newer.

Maximising the use of tools was an important consideration for providers, particularly those that were paid for. Secondary schools and colleges were considering how they could use the tools they had available to best engage learners, to have the greatest influence on their decision-making. Examples from two colleges include:

- A provider looking at learners being able to access tools at home or via mobile phone Apps to encourage more independent use
- Streamlining access to careers tools and information through the provider's intranet, 'Moodle'. Information on all useful tools will be provided on Moodle, with learners being signposted to appropriate tools dependent on their needs and stage of decision making. The college are also exploring expanding the licence they hold on 'U-Explore' to maximise functionality and reduce the need for multiple tools

## 4.8 Supporting engagement with tools and data

Motivating learners to engage with tools can be challenging for careers professionals. Across the different institution types, there was a sense that although learners can access tools and software independently, many will not do so: "having someone who knows how to talk to the [students] is key – just having the tools isn't enough" (Careers Advisor, external)

Learners also echoed this view:

"I like seeing and hearing real people. I wouldn't want the information on a tablet or on a mobile instead for home. I liked the website personality questionnaire but it's better to get more information about the jobs it suggested from a person".  
(Secondary learner)

"I just use these when I'm told to. It is not something I specifically use when looking for information, I just Google everything". (Year 12/13 learner, FE college)

Most secondary schools and colleges were using tools with learners within a timetabled slot. Secondary schools in particular felt that embedding the use of careers tools with learners, with the support of careers professionals, was important in securing engagement. Many of the secondary schools were using tools within PSCE or form/tutor time, and were encouraged to use the tools regularly. This was particularly important for schools with less engaged learner cohorts, allowing them to focus on embedding the use of tools and encouraging learners' focus on progression and careers.



“Our students, they get a lot out of careers sessions, the one-to-one and group careers sessions, because the information is given to them on a plate. If it is not handed to them directly, quite a few may not make the effort to find out what they need to know...Having personal input works best – we do not say ‘go and have a look at websites’”. (Careers Lead, secondary school)

Subsequently, teachers and careers professionals stated that they work through websites with learners or reported printing off online documents for them to have in hard copy. This was felt to aid engagement and was more likely to encourage learners to go on to use the tools in their own time. A college had invested in tablets that they were able to take to open events and careers events to encourage learners to complete careers interest questionnaires.

“We have invested lots in a portal system, Unifrog, to use during tutor time. We track students and do early intervention and show pathways of where the students are going. This is introduced to students in year 10 in an assembly as ‘this is your portal to apprenticeship or to University’. We book computer space and time in tutor periods to emphasise the importance of its use. We want Unifrog to be used. We want it to be habitual, for CV’s and jobs etc.”. (Senior Leader, secondary school)

Secondary schools and colleges generally acknowledged that assuming learners would access the tools independently was unrealistic, with perhaps the exception of higher-performing learners and those with high levels of self-motivation. For some secondary schools in deprived areas, using the tools with the younger year groups was perceived to be beneficial in starting to get young learners to think about careers and pathways earlier and in starting them using careers tools at a younger age.

Likewise, careers professionals in colleges felt that learners still need ‘help to break [the information/data] down’. This is mainly due to the amount of information available to them – “they lose interest very quickly as the information is not specific enough or filtered well” (Careers Advisor, FE college). Others felt that supporting learners through the use of tools also ensured that they were not missing out on important information within the tools – “They sometimes pick up on the information that I perceive as the most negligible bit, so you need to discuss it with them to make sure they are thinking through the right things” (Careers Lead, FE college).

### **College with a wide range of tools available to learners**

The Head of Careers in an FE college felt 'very lucky' to have access to a wide range of sources. This included tools for staff to track progress, as well as tools for learners to develop their own progression plans. However, they observed, "students need to be shown how to use them and guide them along the journey – what's next and what it means". This often meant having multiple sessions/appointments with one learner.

They were concerned that even if learners engaged with the tools, they did not know 'how to read, interpret and take action on the information'; "...they don't read it properly from screens...or know what to do about it". For the careers staff in this college, there is a difference between learners reading data, and being readily confident to act on those data. Subsequently, this necessitates taking a range of approaches.

"You have to present data in different formats to get it through to [learners]. For example, presentations and lectures as well as on screen and one-to-one."

They also added that information included in careers guidance was not just related to progression routes, destination data or labour market information, but also practical issues related to being fit for the world of work (dress, language, behaviour, responsibility).

## 5. Destination data

This chapter focuses specifically on the awareness, use, perceptions of and challenges of using destinations data. For the purpose of this research, destination data was defined to participants as ‘information telling you where learners or students have gone after leaving Years 11 or 13, for example, if they have gone to college or university, or employment, or an apprenticeship’. Destinations data is not collected at primary school.

### 5.1 Collection of destination data

#### 5.1.1 Secondary schools

The term destination data was generally understood by secondary school staff. They were primarily aware of it due to having some responsibility for providing relevant information or collecting it for their own institution. For teachers, the term was often associated with the September Guarantee<sup>7</sup> and the need to track learners that were Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET).

Careers professionals and staff in secondary schools without sixth forms tended to view the collection of destinations data as an obligation they had to meet, rather than informative for their own practice and they tended not to make use of the data collected. Instead destination data tended to be held on internal staff or learner systems (e.g. SIMS<sup>8</sup>, school intranet) and used for monitoring those who are NEET and for local authority reporting requirements. One secondary school mentioned that they had low NEET figures and therefore did not see the value in considering using destination data further.

Secondary schools with sixth forms tended to view the collection of destinations data as cumbersome, but there was evidence that they were more likely to be using this strategically (see 5.2.1).

External careers advisers were also aware of destination data and most had access to the data for the institutions they were working with and used it to varying degrees.

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<sup>7</sup> The September Guarantee is an offer, by the end of September, of a suitable place in learning to young people completing compulsory education (e.g. full or part-time education, apprenticeship, work-based learning programme or employment with training). The Guarantee was implemented nationally in 2007 for 16 year olds and extended to 17 year olds in 2008.

<sup>8</sup> SIMS is a school management information system developed by Capita, used widely in primary and secondary schools.

## 5.1.2 Colleges

Most colleges were using existing internal systems to collect and collate destination data; others had bought in specific software to support this collection. It was common for colleges to have allocated resources to support the tracking of learners' destinations. For example, a college had employed students in the business team to contact and survey all college alumni to obtain their destination information. Other colleges had sought external support for the collection of destination data, including using other companies to undertake destination surveys. The use of UCAS Progress by colleges was particularly common.

“We get information about the destination of our students from a package we buy in called J2Profit. They do lots of work ringing around and give us destination data. We've got UCAS destination data from UCAS Progress reports that we pay for; it's very expensive but gives a great rundown of what they've done after uni”.  
(Careers Lead, FE college)

The colleges placed great importance on the collection of destination data and most were doing this at timely points throughout the year both to obtain expected and actual destination.

“We are compiling those at the moment for this year just gone. We have a guarantee, if we have a student who has attended and studied, if they are not offered a next step we pay them £1,000, so that's a lot of pressure to make sure that info is correct”. (Careers Lead, FE college)

### **Collection of and updating destination data (college)**

In this college, all learners are provided with a destination form in late January which captures whether they intend to stay at college or their planned next steps. In October, the college then contacts them to find out their actual destination.

“We contact them for their actual destinations - we know who is enrolled in college, we get a university report for where they went, and we do a phone and email campaign and do that to get the answer of where people are. There are only 6% outstanding unknown or who we are not able to contact, which is good. It is also updated throughout year” (Careers Lead, FE college).

## 5.2 Strategic use of destination data

The use of destination data strategically by secondary schools and colleges varied. There was no evidence that primary schools were using destination data strategically.

## 5.2.1 Secondary schools

The strategic use of destination data by secondary schools varied. Secondary schools with sixth forms were more likely to use their own destination data to support their strategic and curriculum planning post-16. Those using it reported that the data enabled them to understand the post-16 pathways learners were commonly progressing to, allowing them to adapt or design their curriculum offer to ensure that they were attracting and retaining learners and meeting their needs. There was no evidence from the sample of schools involved that secondary schools without sixth forms were using their own destination data to inform curriculum planning or providing destination data to parents of prospective students.

A small number of secondary schools were using destination data to compare their learner destinations to other local or similar schools, or for monitoring the destinations of cohorts to compare college targeting performance year on year.

## 5.2.2 Colleges

Destination data was particularly important for FE colleges in shaping their curriculum offer and in supporting the retention and progression pathways of their learners. Colleges felt that it was important to understand trends in learner take up and drop-out and if this related to common subjects or qualifications, allowing this information to directly inform decisions about curriculum planning. The use of destination data in marketing materials (e.g. examples of alumni stories) was also common.

### **Strategic use of destination data (college)**

The college have used destinations data to identify where there are gaps in their provision at college. They have approached various companies including a digital company, a large hotel company and one large childcare provider who have all worked in partnership with the college to co-create, co-produce and co-deliver courses. The college also has engaged an awarding body and the companies help to write the course and deliver master classes to the students alongside teaching by curriculum staff.

Another college discussed the importance of providing destination data on progression pathways to curriculum tutors to ensure that they were helping the learners to make realistic choices about their career pathways.

“It informs curriculum and who we invite in to speak to them. Some students have unrealistic expectations of the courses they could get an offer from, so it would help students with decision making about course and uni choices, for them to be more realistic. We are now working with level 2 and level 3 tutors so they can work

with students on this about realistic destinations for them”. (Careers Lead, FE college)

Other colleges were using destination data at a curriculum level as a proxy for understanding how well certain curriculum areas were performing at moving learners on. One college reported that using destination data at a curriculum level was more meaningful than at a college level because of the varying progression routes for learners, dependent on their level and type of study.

#### **Using destinations data (college)**

An FE college collects destinations data twice per year (January and October) to gather intended and actual destinations data. The resulting data are used for:

- **Informing curriculum change:** this has included adding more employability skills and supported internships for those with supported learning needs; changing the level two travel and tourism course to a practical course for cabin crew in response to local market trends (e.g. decline in use of travel agencies); reviewing national and local job markets to identify priorities – this has led to an expansion in nursing and access to social care courses
- **University partnerships:** having identified which universities learners progress to, the college is changing its relationships with higher education (HE) providers alongside expanding its own HE provision: “there has been a doubling of figures of people who have taken up HE here”, due to fewer people moving away from home to study. Key growth areas are in art and design and theatrical makeup
- **SLT area review:** use of destinations data to review specific postcodes, journey routes to college (to produce maps for learners), and match learner data to local market intelligence – “we are always looking for niche markets to offer and what other colleges locally offer”

Destinations data are not however used formally with current learners. They are more prevalent in marketing materials for prospective cohorts - e.g. case studies of where people progress to and destination of learners on HE programmes: “For each school we send case studies of their successful students. It is used as a promotion tool”. (Director of Student Support)

### **5.3 Introducing destination data to learners**

The understanding and use of destination data by learners varied across the different phases of education.

### 5.3.1 Primary schools

Staff in primary schools were typically unaware of the term ‘destination data’ although once defined to them, most said they were familiar with it. Most primary school staff believed that secondary school destination data was not shared with them but that it would be useful if provided as evidence of the performance and progression of secondary learners.

A few primary staff believed destination data would be useful for parents to help them with choosing a secondary school, however this notion was not consistent. Teachers believed that primary learners and their parents only consider their ‘next step’ and, whilst there is a heavy focus in Years 5 and 6 on the smooth transition of learners to secondary school, teachers believed that parents and learners would not consider progression pathways beyond secondary school at this stage. This was described as being ‘too far away’ in the future and that the focus at this time was on SATs and that other factors such as reputation, results/performance, parental knowledge, where friends/siblings are/have been and travelling distance are more important when choosing a secondary school.

“They do not speak about destinations after school or college, it’s too far away. Talking about next steps comes up a lot. They presume they will do GCSEs and then are not sure what they will do afterwards”. (Head Teacher, primary school).

Learners of primary age suggested similar. They felt that they and their parents were interested in how good a secondary school was (in terms of performance rather than destination data), whether it was nearby and whether their siblings or friends were attending the school. They said that they do not look that far ahead, they were only thinking about what secondary school they would like to attend, not where students progress to after that. Some learners felt they had not had a choice themselves in their secondary school and so could not comment.

Parents of primary age children also made similar comments during the interviews. Most were unclear as to what destination data was until it was explained to them and they generally did not use it – other factors, such as those mentioned above, were seen as more important in decision-making at key points.

“I’m more interested in the emotional fit and how my son would fit within a school”.  
(Parent of Year 4 learner)

### 5.3.2 Secondary schools

Around half of secondary schools in the study were introducing learners to destination data, but this tended to be in an ad-hoc way. For example, this commonly occurred in informal discussions between individual learners and careers professionals, rather than

in a more structured way within careers education. There were examples of Year 10 and Year 11 learners being given information by some schools about the pathways of past learners, for example; ‘last year this many of our learners went on to X college’ or provided with case-study examples of the pathways and destinations of previous learners.

“We have a bank of quotes from ex-students and we follow the alumni. We have students who have become doctors, accountants, lawyers, a very famous musician and a BBC actor. These are aspirational achievers and are motivational to the learners”. (Careers Lead, secondary school)

One secondary school with a sixth form displayed a destinations poster which mapped out the location of universities that previous learners had gone to. A minority of secondary schools made their destination data accessible to parents.

For the remaining secondary schools, destination data was not perceived to be useful for, or accessed by learners or their parents.

“Students need to go along and experience the college. I don’t think parents use destination data - decisions are primarily made based on where siblings went, the parent’s knowledge of the college and travelling distance”. (Progression Manager, secondary school)

Overall, it was more common for secondary school learners to be introduced to destination data during their contact with colleges and other FE providers. For example, one secondary school invited local colleges to present in assembly, where destination data on success rates and the progression of the learners was used as a marketing tool. That said, it was felt that most learners and parents would only look at ‘headline figures’ and would not delve into destination data more deeply, such as by subject or department.

### **5.3.3 Colleges**

Colleges appeared to be much more proactive in using destinations data within careers education and learners were more likely to access destination data within the careers tools used by the colleges. Careers staff played a role in talking learners through destinations data or would encourage them to independently research destination data for the institution or pathway they were considering next. For example, data were used to develop case studies for current cohorts to review – e.g. the outcomes, progression route and choices made by previous learners; “this means something to students as it’s a real case study from their college, not just numbers”. (Personal Coach/Tutor, FE college)

Destination data were also used by colleges to advise hard-to-reach and low-performing learners on course choices, or to raise aspirations where there was little family support.



Most colleges discussed the role of destination data in helping to raise aspirations and encourage learners to be open about potential future career pathways:

“Destination data and LMI is useful as a form of encouragement. We use them to make case studies”. (Curriculum Manager, FE college)

A college discussed the role of destination data in removing pre-conceptions for learners – for example data on apprenticeships can include the proportion of learners aged over 19 progressing from college into an apprenticeship. This was regarded as a ‘reassurance’ for a college, who could correct assumptions that older learners could not progress to an apprenticeship, or to challenge misconceptions among those who may think that progression to higher education is not possible from a BTEC<sup>9</sup> qualification.

One careers advisor reported that they used destination data to steer learners away from particular sectors or pathways if they felt that the learner would find it difficult to get a place or job: “for instance, if an apprenticeship is competitive and the person is fixated on it, it is useful to have destinations data to help them see that it’s not a viable possibility” (Careers Advisor, FE college).

Destination data was seen as particularly valuable for informing university choices and the data provided by universities was seen as reliable and up to date. A Head of Careers in a college specifically noted that UCAS data is “brilliant...we use it to map out what learners have done and where they have gone...it’s a powerful tool for tutors to inspire learners and also to check what our competitors are doing”.

A careers professional in a college commented that staff were more conscious of the cost associated with university education and therefore were interested in their destination data.

“Students are more aware now that they are paying a lot of money for courses, so students are thinking about sandwich placements and getting links to industry, what links does this uni have, what employers do they link with?”. (Careers Advisor, FE college)

However, it was suggested that the ability to filter destinations data was not available for apprenticeships. Whereas UCAS data is supplied in spreadsheet format and stating the specific courses/subjects enrolled onto, the equivalent for this is not supplied for apprenticeship sectors: “we know how many have gone onto apprenticeships, but not which ones...it is not as clear as UCAS data”. (Careers Advisor, FE college)

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<sup>9</sup> Business and Technology Education Council

## 5.4 Learner perspectives on destination data

Learners across secondary and tertiary education were not fully aware of the term destination data, however, some were able to roughly deduce what it meant. Older learners (Years 11 to 13 particularly) were familiar with the concept. Most secondary school learners were able to discuss examples of destination data they had seen (e.g. posters of past learners' destinations), or been shown by their school careers professionals (e.g. case study examples). Once described, around half of the college learners could recall seeing or using destination data, although the format varied.

Only a minority of school learners had seen destination data presented in statistical form, they gave examples of the percentage of learners who had achieved a job in a specific career after finishing a university course (identified by a group of Year 12 learners). Some college learners, however, mentioned accessing websites such as Unistats or Which? University where they could compare universities and courses based on learner satisfaction ratings, proportion of graduates moving into employment and average salary per year following the completion of a course. College learners had also seen destination data on some university and college websites and recalled discussing the destinations of former learners with their tutor or careers adviser.

“I've gone to the Prospects website to see what I can do with the degree I'd like to do. I will look at labour market information and destination data to decide which university is the best one for me to go to. I also want to go to the open days to help me choose”. (Level 2 learner, FE college)

There were mixed views as to how useful learners think they would find destination data. Older secondary learners and college learners were more interested in it and could see its potential value in informing their decision-making of which college or university to go to and which course to choose, or for choosing an apprenticeship.

“It is useful to know which course to do to increase your chance of getting into university. If I'm spending money and years going to university, I want to choose one to go to that will get me a really good qualification at the end of it, so I'm most likely to get a job.” (Secondary learner)

Generally, learners expressed greater interest in how previous cohorts had progressed (e.g. options taken and the types of support that they found helpful), rather than generic data on where and what they progressed to.

“It is a case of being aware of it. I could look at people who have done textiles GCSE and it would be interesting to see where they went and I can look at that college”. (Year 10 learner, secondary school)

It was also noted that destination data could provide ‘encouragement, inspiration and motivation’ by showing learners what is possible. However, whilst destination data was seen as potentially useful, it was of secondary importance to other factors such as the institution or course itself. Some young people did not make the link between the typical outcomes of others and themselves. As one college learner reported, he was more interested in hearing about the opportunities available to *him*, rather than about the achievements/destinations of learners in previous years “It is myself going somewhere, not other people”. (Learner, college)

## 5.5 Parent perspectives on destination data

Few parents across secondary and tertiary education were aware of the term destination data. However, once explained, most parents were familiar with the concept.

The survey of parents obtained views of parents with children in secondary or tertiary education on their awareness and use of destination data. These views, alongside the views obtained from the parent interviews are discussed below.

### 5.5.1 Accessing destinations data

Parents’ generally lacked awareness about destination data and knowledge of where to access it. The survey of parents found that amongst parents of children at a key decision point<sup>10</sup> (n=83), almost two out of three (63%; n=52) had not used destinations data to help their child make decisions about their future education or career choices. Of these parents, nearly three-quarters did not know it was available (71%; n=36) and two-fifths (41%, n=21) did not know where to find it.

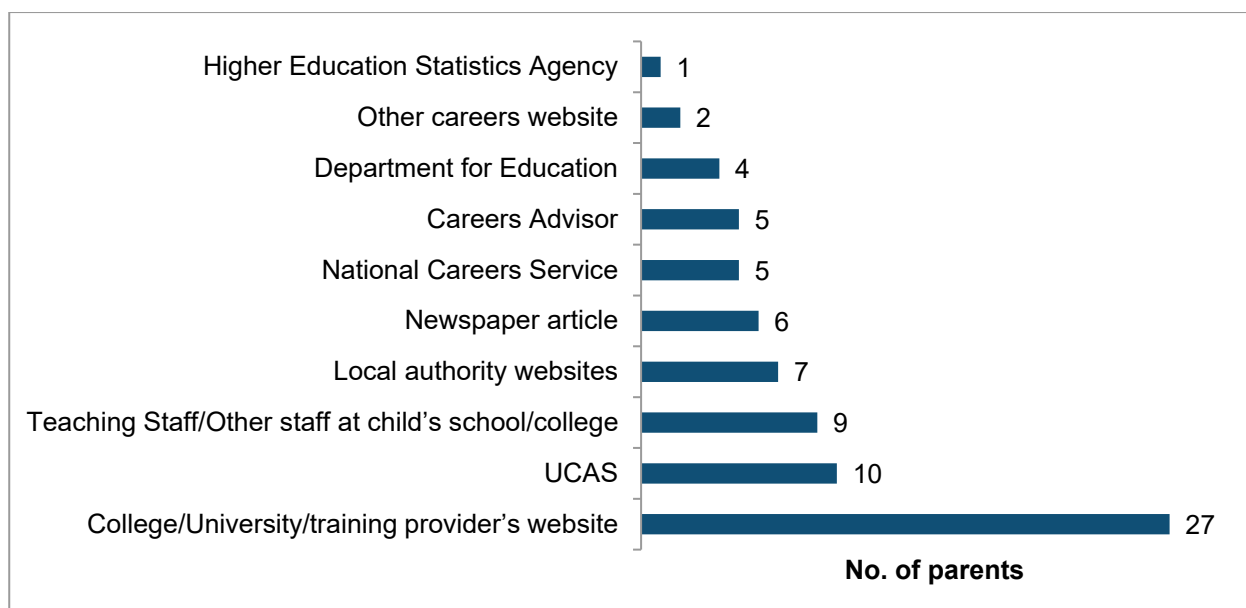
Those parents who had used destinations data (n=31), as shown in Figure 4, were mainly going directly to providers’ (schools, colleges, etc) websites to access destination data (87%, n=27). Note that responses are low so this can only be indicative of sources of destination data that are used:

- A third (32%; n=10) had used the UCAS website
- Over a quarter (29%; n=9) had obtained destination data from staff at their child’s school
- Less than a quarter (23%, n=7) had accessed destination data from local authority websites

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<sup>10</sup> Parents of children aged 14, 16 and 18

**Figure 4: Source of destinations data**



Q22. Where do you get this destination data from? Base=31 (all parents who have used destinations data)

### 5.5.2 Use of destinations data

Amongst those parents who had children at a key decision point<sup>11</sup> and had used destinations data (n=31):

- 71% (n=22) had used information on learners' academic achievements at the sixth form/college/university/training provider
- 68% (n=21) had used information on what types of jobs current learners at the sixth form/college/university/training provider go on to do
- 48% (n=15) had used information about how many learners go on to different pathways

Through discussion, parents were able to give examples of where they had been presented with destination data by schools and colleges. This was mainly at events such as open evenings and presentation evenings. Others recalled seeing destination data on school/college websites.

“When you choose secondary school they all do amazing presentation evenings and say come to our school. They provide information in prospectuses and in the parents evening they are saying where students have gone on to, it is part of promotion of schools. They say how many A levels students get; how many have

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<sup>11</sup> Parents of children aged 14, 16 and 18

gone to colleges or universities. You get lots of this when you are thinking about joining a school but you don't hear much after that." (Parent of Year 7 and 10 learners)

Although, a few parents recalled being presented with or seeing destination data through schools or colleges there was limited qualitative evidence that parents used it significantly in decision-making with their children. However, there were examples of parents having sought out specific destination data to help their children.

"I'm aware of it, I didn't bother using it. But I did look at it for [college], it's quite clear and prominent, there were overviews on the parents evening, it was quite general though, what was given was success rates by subject, they looked acceptable. That's as much as I needed. It was really simple success rate by subject. You can get detracted by too much information of that type and it can skew your views. As long as it is broadly acceptable then that's ok". (Parent of Year 11 learner)

This in contrast to the parent online survey, where all but three parents who had used destination data at a key decision point felt that it was important in helping their child decide their pathway; 45% (n=14) stated that it was 'very important' and 45% (n=14) stated that it was 'quite important'. This indicates that destination data does feature in some parents' decision-making, but this is more likely to be at critical decision points, rather than featuring in ongoing discussions between parents and children about careers and pathways.

Parents who had used destination data were positive about its use and the ease of finding it. Nearly all (93%; n=29) parents from the survey who had used destination data had found it useful (16% found it 'very useful' and 77% found it 'quite useful'). Around two-thirds (65%, n=20) of parents had found it easy to find. This was reflected qualitatively with most parents feeling that destination data could be useful in the decision-making process, if they knew how and where to access this data. Furthermore, 29% (n=15) of parents that had not used destination data said that they may use it in the future.

Most parents who stated in the survey that they were using destination data were doing so in partnership with their child (51%, n=16). It was less common for children to be using the destinations data independently of their parents (29%; n=9) or for parents to be using the destination data themselves, without getting their child involved (19%, n=6).

## 6. Labour Market Information

This chapter focuses specially on the awareness, use, perceptions and challenges of using labour market information (LMI). For the purposes of this research, LMI was defined as ‘information about job availability, employment rates, job roles and what is involved, rates of pay and qualification requirements’.

### 6.1 Strategic use of labour market information (LMI)

There was some evidence of LMI being used strategically by colleges. There was no evidence that this was occurring in primary or secondary schools.

A few colleges were using LMI to inform curriculum planning and inform course strategy. Two colleges had bought in Emsi<sup>12</sup> labour market intelligence software that senior leadership teams could use to ‘drive course strategy’, help understand business and employer data, and also provide access to the software for learners. They tended to draw on LMI with learners during apprenticeships month, with presentations related to different sectors and LMI used ‘to inspire students’ (Head of Careers, FE College). This included live vacancy information, summaries of market data, number of jobs in a region plus some European and global data also.

Another college emphasised the importance of LMI in informing their apprenticeship provision.

“We get local market intelligence. There is a big driver to work with employers, we have shifted our provision particularly Apprenticeships. Employers are realising they are having to spend money on training so they are talking to us directly on what they want us to put on, the higher skills they want – L4 and 5 and 6 Apprenticeships in HR and different industries. We are shifting our curriculum offer – to respond to labour market requirements”. (Strategic Careers Lead, FE college)

The same college had conducted an area review which had looked at local LMI alongside journey routes to college to explore potential ways of expanding their course offer.

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<sup>12</sup> Emsi provides labour market software and services to higher education, business and community development leaders <https://kb.economicmodelling.co.uk/ems-and-lmi-data/>

“We had an area review. We look at postcodes, journey routes to college and matched to local market intelligence, looking for niche markets to offer and what other colleges locally offer. Our HE provision was a development out of that – what they can’t offer, we can and we look at sharing staff”. (Strategic Careers Lead, FE college)

Another college had used the Vector Market Intelligence Tool for curriculum planning:

“This is a great tool for generating detailed LMI. It will provide nationally available workforce demographics, training provider offers, and current gaps in provision and the labour market for specific careers and sectors. This type of information is too complex for students to use but it helps to ensure that the most appropriate curriculum is offered to them...The tool shows where the specific skills and knowledge gaps are going to be and then we can tailor their curriculum so that we are turning out the right kind of students for the employment market. Senior Leaders love this tool as they can fit the curriculum to what students will need in the future and feel they are supporting students to progress”. (Head of Student Recruitment and Progression, FE college)

## **6.2 Introducing labour market information (LMI) to learners**

Similar to destination data, the use of LMI appears to be sporadic and often unstructured.

### **6.2.1 Primary schools**

In primary schools, most staff were unfamiliar with the term LMI, but all understood the concept and could relate examples of how they used LMI in their teaching. They gave examples of how they talked about job roles, what was involved in different jobs and the range of jobs in different sectors. Further details of how job-related discussions take place are covered in section 3.1.1).

Although primary staff did discuss with learners, the different types of jobs and what was involved in them and in some cases, pay levels, they generally did not discuss any other LMI such as employment rates. Most believed that detailed LMI beyond job roles was not relevant for this age group, although Year 6 staff at one school suggested that it could be used to raise aspirations and teachers could plan some interesting lessons on the topic if they were provided with relevant data.

Primary learners were talking to their parents, friends and teaching staff about jobs. However, discussions were more likely to focus on what different jobs involved, rather than any other LMI. For example, a group of Year 6 learners discussed talking to their parents about different job roles and also individuals from different professions that had

come into school to speak to them. Parents' views reflected this, stating that it was uncommon to discuss salaries or other LMI with their child because of their age.

“We got to ask questions about how long they'd had their career or what inspired them”. (Year 6 learner, primary school)

“We also asked questions about how many hours do you work a week, how much dedication it involves”. (Year 6 learner, primary school)

## 6.2.2 Secondary schools

All external careers advisers and all but one member of secondary school staff (a general office manager and careers co-ordinator) were aware of the term.

In secondary schools, careers professionals' approach to the use of LMI was generally ad-hoc and informal. Use of specific LMI websites was minimal and instead it was common for them to rely on their own research to find appropriate information. One careers adviser described receiving LMI from their local authority via emails around every two months.

Evidence of secondary school career professionals seeking out and using more detailed LMI information with learners as part of structured careers education was limited. One secondary school did mention the use of LMI in PSICHE through distinct projects where learners were introduced to job-related information and what it could be used for in terms of choosing a career and post-16 pathway.

In a small number of schools, careers professionals mentioned using LMI with learners on an individual basis. In those cases, careers professionals sought specific LMI to present to learners.

“We do use it - we talk to them about where there will be jobs in the future, growth areas locally – we tend to do this more on an individual basis – like for some interested in IT I can show them how the sector requirements change so quickly; and that jobs are more technical now and show that they need to be in some form of learning until they are 18”. (External Careers Adviser, secondary school)

“I use LMI when talking to students, I get it from UNISTATS. It's great for LMI and I use it a lot when talking about careers with students, it's up to date and accurate”. (Careers Advisor, secondary school)

Some LMI was covered in the online tools that schools were using. For example, tools such as U-Explore gave information on the salaries associated with particular jobs and eCLIPS allowed the user to look at employment rates by industry area. Advisers were



also aware that some websites such as Which? University provided some LMI such as the popularity of different jobs and employment rates.

An external careers advisor thought that eCLIPS provided useful LMI – for example by showing the number of people employed in a specific industry. However, they suggested that this also needed to include a more detailed breakdown of the types of work that people are doing within those industries.

### 6.2.3 Colleges

In FE colleges, the use of LMI was generally more embedded within careers education, with providers more likely to have invested in specific LMI software or use existing LMI websites that learners could access. Colleges were using a variety of LMI websites, examples cited by colleges included the National Careers Service website and Job Centre Guides. Other careers professionals in colleges said that they used LMI information, but found it challenging to name specific websites they used.

“We use live vacancy information, summaries of market data, how many jobs in the region. It’s usually local information as the students won’t travel too far”. (Head of Careers, FE college)

One college was more proactive, using LMI for ‘subject specific groups’:

“We do an LMI quiz and gather that data from the National Careers Service, like starting salaries for different jobs. It is to get people thinking...We can say this is what you can earn. We can talk about some routes being longer than others, some have higher rewards than others”. (Careers Advisor, FE college)

Another college mentioned that they had just started using the LMI for All website.

“It’s great, has small bite-sized info, the size of a mobile phone so it’s the perfect size for students, it’s all they can cope with. They show three related bits of info at a time, in the style of Amazon...” (Careers Lead, FE college)

Careers professionals in colleges placed high value on the use of the LMI, and felt that it was important that they were using it with learners in order to allow them to make informed choices about career and education pathways.

“It’s very important in the context of Careers Advisers. We have to be mindful of context and audience, understanding labour market issues. Some of it does drive curriculum offer at the college, it also informs what we suggest students do to get skills in certain areas if essential/ or valued in the labour market”. (Careers Advisor, FE college)

“If we are preparing them for jobs that don’t exist right now we need to know what is happening – e.g. magazines, looking at what is happening in industries. I try to bring this into information I share with learners”. (Tutor, FE college)

Careers staff suggested that the term ‘Labour Market Information’ was not used with learners or their parents. One college careers advisor said that they would say ‘job market’ or ‘this is what is happening in the world of work’, break the information down and show the characteristics of an industry, the future trends and types of job available.

A careers advisor for a college felt that LMI could be helpful in changing perceptions of specific career routes or pathways among parents and learners – in turn this might help ‘widen out’ the interests of young people and their aspirations in terms of career choices, and moving location for work or study. This was confirmed by another careers lead in a college who reported that one of their biggest challenges was to encourage learners to have the confidence to consider moving locality.

There was a sense from colleges that learners need guidance to access and interpret LMI as the terminology was not perceived to be appealing: “it is difficult to make [LMI] sound interesting, and what to label it as to get them to look at it”. (Careers Advisor, FE college)

### **6.3 Learner perspectives on LMI**

Secondary school and college learner focus group participants did not appear aware specifically of the term LMI, however most, particularly older learners, were able to talk about different types of LMI or recall instances of accessing and using it when looking for careers information.

Most secondary learners and college were interested in the job market and understanding more about the world of work. A few learners were actively thinking about the careers and education routes they needed to take to secure the best employment. There is evidence that learners were interested in the types of jobs they could get after different courses and what was involved in different job roles, including responsibilities and pay scales.

“I think LMI is useful. I want to know where I have to move to, to get on the best course that’s going to get me a well-paid job afterwards. I also want to know where the jobs I could get afterwards are. I could know then whether the course fits in with my plan about where I want to live”. (Secondary learner)

Other learners felt that LMI is information that would be useful, although a few had not used yet because of the stage they were at. A small number of learners did not feel that

LMI would be relevant to them until they had left university or were thinking about employment.

“What I thought was really good was we had a day when people came in to school and told us about jobs and you could see all this information about how much they earn, what types of grades and qualification you needed. What the hours would be and if they liked it and why”. (Year 10 boy, secondary school)

“I think this is something I’d look at next year (final year) of my course. We’ve not really looked at this in tutor sessions yet as we’re not at that stage”. (College learner)

Secondary school learners also gave examples of projects that they had undertaken at school that had increased their knowledge of different job roles and what they involved and also that built their own skills. One learner gave an example of an enterprise project they had been involved with, in which there had been a focus on the availability of jobs in the local area.

“We had to design a product and then explain why the product would be really big and sell lots. We had to go to an event with other schools and sell our idea to other businesses. We presented our ideas there and heard different business presentations from lots of other schools. One of the businesses told us about what jobs were available in [local city], I really enjoyed this.... There were people there who had jobs that I didn’t know women could get into and do so well”. (Secondary learner)

A few college learners were able to give examples of instances where they had looked at rates of pay, types of jobs and what they entail and where certain jobs were located. Learners found it difficult to name specific websites that they had used to access LMI, although one learner mentioned the NCS website.

Most learners generally felt that LMI would be useful to them in their decision-making.

“I’ve not heard of this information before but it would be brilliant if you had an overview of job and industry, extra stuff about pay rates and employment rates. It would help me decide how easy it could be to get employment and how long I could be employed”. (FE college learner)

In terms of the types of LMI they thought would be useful, learners across year groups suggested:

- The salary they might be able to achieve in certain jobs
- Future prospects – e.g. which job markets are declining/increasing

- Job security and competition
- Major companies in the different industries, and the type of roles they offer
- Jobs available in the area and more widely

Most learners would want LMI to be available online and information available at a local and national level was requested by a few.

## 6.4 Parent perspectives on LMI

### 6.4.1 Accessing Labour Market Information

Interviews with parents revealed they were generally not aware of the term ‘labour market information’. However, once explained, most parents were familiar with the concept.

“I have never heard of it before. This sounds as if it would be more useful, kids like to find out what they could earn. I wouldn’t know where to find it”. (Parent of Year 8 learner)

Some parents felt that this information would be useful in helping inform decisions about certain career pathways; but most would not know where to find this information and would need signposting. They said that schools or colleges playing a role in promoting LMI websites or a dedicated website with LMI information, would be a useful resource. Examples of information that parents would find useful included detail on salaries and which sectors were recruiting.

Parents’ who reported not using LMI in the survey lacked knowledge about its availability and knowing where to access it. Over two-fifths (42%, n=10) of parents surveyed who had not used LMI had not known that it was available. A further 17% (n=4) did not know where to find it. Half (50%, n=12) thought they may use it in the future. Just three parents thought that it would not be useful to them or their child.

In the survey, parents reported sourcing this LMI from their friends’ and families’ experience and knowledge (53%, n=28). Provider (school, college etc.) websites was also a common source, with 51% (n=27) of parents reporting that they had sourced LMI from there. Other common sources of LMI used by parents included:

- Parents own professional networks (42%, n=22)
- Newspaper articles (38%, n=20)
- Teaching staff/other staff at child’s school/college (30%, n=16)

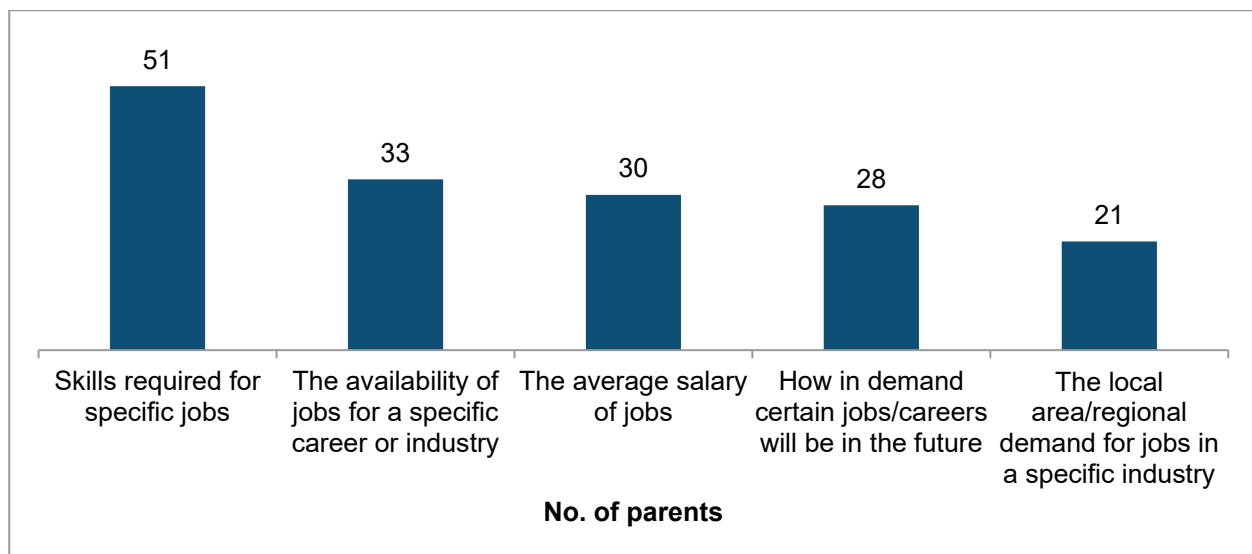
Less commonly used sources of LMI included UCAS (23%; n=12); careers advisors (19%, n=10); local authority websites (15%, n=8); National Careers Service (13%, n=7) and Job Centre Plus (9%, n=5). Only four parents stated that they had used the Higher Education Statistics Agency and just two parents had used LMI from the Office for National Statistics.

## 6.4.2 Using Labour Market Information

Parents responding to the survey and who had a child at a key decision point, such as moving to post-16 education, were using LMI. The majority of parents surveyed (70%, n=58) who had children at a key decision point<sup>13</sup> had used some type of LMI to help their child make decisions about their future education or career choices. It was less common for parents who did not have children at a key decision-point to have used LMI.

As shown in Figure 5 parents were most likely to have used LMI on the skills required for specific jobs (88%; n=51 of those parents who had used LMI). Other LMI most used by parents included the availability of jobs for a specific career or industry (57%; n=33) and the average salary of jobs (52%; n=30).

**Figure 5: Type of Labour Market Information used by parents**



Q24. Have you used any of the following information to help you in the conversations that you're having with your child about choosing where they want to move on next (e.g. college, school sixth form, college, university, apprenticeships, getting a job)? Base=58 (all parents who have used labour market information)

Where parents were using LMI this was mainly in partnership with their child; 55% (n=29) of parents surveyed who were using LMI talked about the LMI together with their child.

<sup>13</sup> Parents of children aged 14, 16 and 18

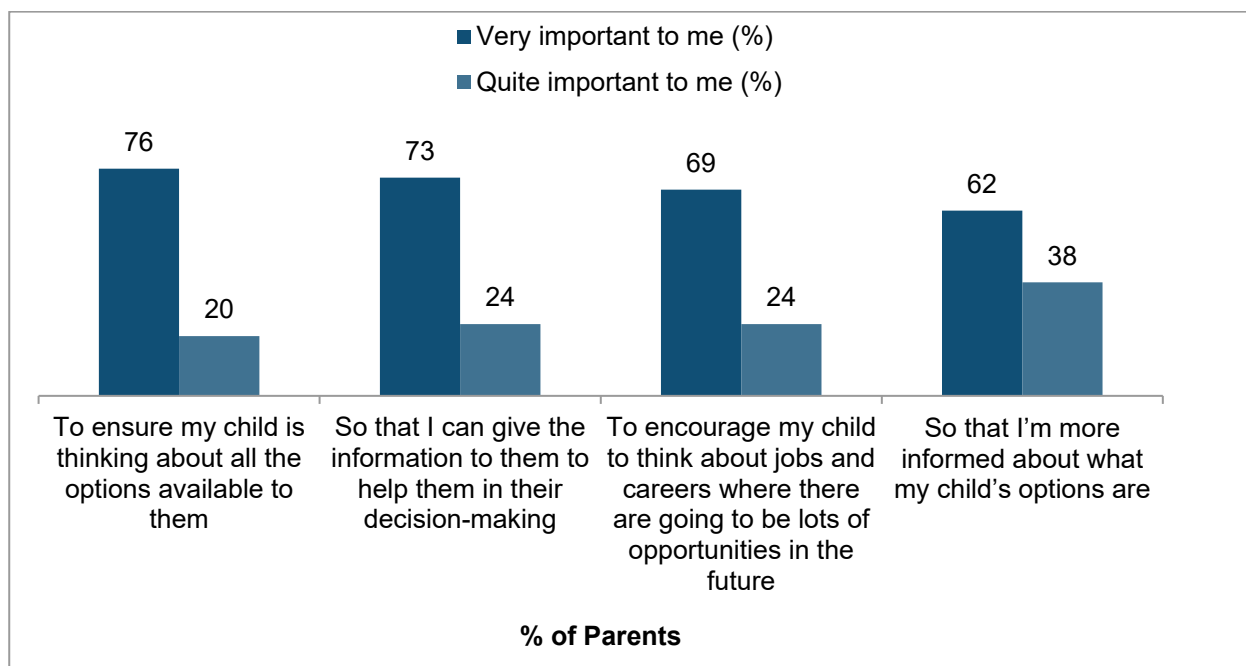
Over a quarter (26%, n=14) of parents used the LMI independently and nearly a fifth (19%, n=10) directed their child to the LMI for them to look at independently.

Parents who had used LMI generally found it useful and easy to find. Over four-fifths (82%, n=45) reported that it was useful (15% 'very useful', 67% 'quite useful') and over half (57%, n=30) reported that it was easy to find (17% 'very easy', 40% 'easy').

Parents' decision to use LMI was driven by an interest in ensuring that their children had all their necessary information to make informed decisions and to ensure that they were aware of all the options open to them. As shown in Figure 6:

- 76% (n=42) stated that LMI was 'very important' in ensuring their child was thinking about all the options open to them (20% 'quite important')
- 73% (n=40) stated that LMI was 'very important' in parents being able to give the information to them to help them in their decision-making (24% 'quite important')

**Figure 6: Parents' reasons for using Labour Market Information**



Q30. How important are the following in your decision to use labour market information to help your child make decisions about their future? Base=55 (all parents who have used labour market information)

Qualitative feedback was that few parents gave examples of using LMI. One parent had used the Office of National Statistics (ONS) and a local LMI website but had found it too statistical and difficult to understand. Another parent had used a Government website to find out information about the salaries associated with different careers. Parents spoke about the difficulty of knowing where to source LMI and navigating through search results.

“It is hard for families to source this information and it takes time. I’ve not heard of LMI either but it would be really useful especially for us as a university route might not be an option so knowing as much as possible about the different sectors is crucial”. (Parent of Year 10 learner)

## 7. Challenges to using career tools and data

This section details key challenges identified in engagement with careers education and specifically in the use of careers information and tools. Challenges in the use of destination data and labour market information are also explored as are improvements and solutions suggested by participants.

### 7.1. Challenges to engaging with careers information and tools

Staff in schools and colleges identified a number of challenges in engaging learners and parents in careers advice and guidance generally as well as specific challenges in engaging with tools.

- **Curriculum space:** some schools reported that there is no dedicated time for careers in the curriculum, it is covered as part of other subjects such as PSICHE or 'Global Studies', and this restricted the amount of support that could be made available to learners. In the primary curriculum, there was little time for activities which do not directly relate to the curriculum, so activities with cross-curricular links, e.g. with English and maths, were welcomed
- **Capacity of careers staff:** all staff felt that there were enough tools and resources available but that more personnel were required "to talk about the ideas [that students have] found through using the tools, so that they can understand them" (HE Advisor, FE college) and help learners to interpret careers information and make effective decisions. Careers advisers emphasised the importance of providing one-to-one guidance to learners rather than simply signposting them to several different places for information and this was particularly the case for SEN learners or those from disadvantaged backgrounds. However, all noted that staff numbers are not sufficient to do this for every student
- **The increased role of teaching staff in providing careers information:** it was felt that teaching/tutor staff needed to have the necessary skills and ability, supported by appropriate Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in order to have both career conversations with learners and in using careers tools and information. Careers professionals reported the need to improve knowledge and understanding of teachers, tutors and those providing advice and guidance more generally. They were keen for staff to have up-to-date knowledge on pathways and routes through education and training and training in tools available and how to make best use of them
- **Learner diversity:** colleges in particular noted challenges in engaging with the wide range of different learner types such as learners with English as an additional



language (EAL), asylum seekers, refugees, SEND and adult returners, and as a result they needed to be very flexible and adaptable in their approach; “You have to wear different hats, it’s not the same talking to a 16-year-old versus a mother of three children.” (Careers Lead, FE college). In particular, it can be challenging for learners with lower literacy levels, limited understanding of how to use the tools or with little knowledge of pathways, employment and job roles. This was noted as particularly problematic for those from deprived backgrounds. Careers information and tools need to be ‘pitched at the right level’ to ensure it is relevant, engaging and easy to understand

- **Ability for tools to engage and maintain the interest of learners:** particularly where quizzes or activities took 20 minutes or more and when encouraging learners to access the tools independently. Feedback was that tools need to be very simple to use and to look exciting and interesting. The National Apprenticeship Service and National Careers Services websites were identified as being bland and difficult to navigate, looking more like an official Government websites and therefore not attractive to learners – “The Apprenticeship page now looks like a jobcentre website – it is difficult to navigate. It’s made it more difficult for young people to access” (External Careers Advisor, secondary school)<sup>14</sup>. It was generally not thought to be a user-friendly too (although one Careers Lead did feel that the website was an excellent resource for vocational learners)
- **Information overload:** with the huge amount of information available it is very easy for learners to become overloaded. Learners at a college recalled careers information at secondary school as being ‘overwhelming’ with too many options to consider. Some tools lacked clear filtering functions to ensure information was adequately tailored to the user and information from different sources also caused confusion if it was perceived to be contradictory. One secondary school had decided to streamline the tools they used to just two as previously they had used more but found the variety to be ‘confusing’ for learners. This was corroborated by external careers advisors who tended most often to draw on a small range of resources with which they were familiar and trusted
- **Navigating resources:** many careers professionals talked about the many tools and resources available online and the difficulty in learners knowing where to access what they needed. Learners spoke of not knowing where to look, apart from using Google or provider websites and the need to have a central reference point to guide them to resources that would be useful

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<sup>14</sup> National Apprenticeship website is now ‘Get In Go Far’ which links to the gov.uk website for apprenticeship vacancies

### Finding out About Apprenticeship Routes

A learner in Year 12 is interested in pursuing a career in software design and cyber security. To do so he is keen to undertake a higher-level apprenticeship for practical industry-based experience. However, he reported that he felt confused about whether applications were made via universities or employers.

“I have been told that most degree apprenticeships come from speculative enquiries from students but to do this I would need to know company or contact names. I would like all this information to be in one place – I don’t know where to find details of companies to write to or how to go about doing it”. (Year 12 learner, FE College)

This learner had not found the NAS website user-friendly, particularly when searching for higher-level apprenticeships. The experience has made him re-consider the route, as the system does not seem clear and he may now consider the ‘traditional degree-based route’. This is despite preferring the idea of a more ‘hands-on’ approach to learning that an apprenticeship could offer.

- **SATs pressure:** primary learners experience heightened pressure in Year 6 due to the focus on SAT examinations, meaning teachers felt that discussing later pathways was too much
- **Raising aspirations:** some teachers and careers staff felt that parents were likely to suggest options and pathways to young people that were similar to their own, which effectively narrowed their aspirations. Raising aspirations was particularly an issue where family generational issues of worklessness meant that learners have limited exposure to different careers and pathways at home
- **Parental access and engagement:** whilst all schools and colleges communicated with parents about key events such as options choices, parents’ evenings, careers fairs etc., engagement with parents appears to decrease with the age of the learner. This was partly due to parents and schools trying to encourage increased ownership and independence in learners and was particularly evident at colleges as compared to schools. As a result, some schools and colleges had very little contact with parents outside of current subject/academic performance discussions
- **Funding for careers tools:** in a climate of reduced budgets, it was challenging for some secondary schools to secure the budget to invest in a paid careers tool; furthermore, some colleges disregarded certain tools because of the cost

A few providers had used and disregarded certain tools after finding that they were not fit for purpose, mainly due to reasons including cost, accessibility and comprehensiveness.

### College deciding to discontinue use of careers tool

The FE college had bought in a specific careers tool and had been using it for two years. From the package they had delivered a careers interest questionnaire, transferrable skills, employability, CV builder. They had found it challenging to use, as each learner had to be registered on it which had been resource intensive.

“It’s a dry system and not very user friendly. So, this is going to be discontinued”  
(Careers Lead, FE college).

## 7.2 Challenges in the use of destination data

Secondary schools identified a number of challenges in the use of destination data. Most associated destination data with their statutory obligation to collect this for the September Guarantee. Parents had some concerns about the reliability and limitations of the data and in particular, it being able to ‘tell the full picture’. Others felt that although they may look at destination data, it was unlikely to feature highly in decision-making. Other challenges identified by secondary schools and parents included:

- **Time:** some careers professionals felt there wasn’t the available time within careers provision to consider how destination data could better be used with learners or by the school themselves
- **Access to colleges/FE providers destination data:** some schools noted that they struggled to access college destination data and one school mentioned that their local colleges had refused to provide destination data. The collection of destinations data was difficult for a few schools. This was due to not receiving timely information from colleges – “some are better than others at giving the data”
- The perceived **lack of value or limited role** that destination data plays in secondary learners’ decision-making according to careers professionals meant that schools did not feel that there was the value in better considering how to use the destination data they had. Parents supported this view and suggested that other factors played a greater role in decision-making for example, choosing an appropriate course, “I use it for about 25% of the decision. It’s more important to choose right subjects and making sure the learning environment is appropriate” (Parent of Year 11 learner)
- **Stage of decision-making** – parents perceived it to be less relevant for those learners who were not at a key stage of decision-making or didn’t have a clear view on what they wanted to do – “I suppose it might help if you know what you want to do..., but it is not relevant as he doesn’t know what he wants to do.

Careers is not a lifetime thing, you don't have one career for life". (Parent of Year 11 learner)

- Concerns about the **reliability of some of the destination data**: produced by colleges, particularly around the speed with which it can become out of date and providers' ability to 'tweak' and present the data in a positive way so as to attract potential learners – "colleges are very good at tailoring what they present in statistics. Every college in the region says they have a 98.9% success rate, but they move learners from one course to another to avoid them failing" (Careers Lead, secondary school). Parents had particular concerns about how information could become out-of-date quickly
- **Interpretation of destinations data by learners**: it is sometimes difficult for them to understand and they may need support from careers professionals. "There are challenges with how any data is conveyed to students and what is missing. Taken in isolation the destination data information can mean something different to that intended. All data needs interpreting to students by an experienced member of staff. Students haven't yet developed the analytical skills or experience to do this for themselves" (External Careers Advisor, secondary school)

The main challenge identified by colleges in the use of destination data was in obtaining data for pathways other than university. Sourcing robust data that tracked all former learners was a challenge for all colleges, however colleges noted that access to destination data for apprenticeships was much more difficult to obtain. Careers staff in one college felt that this data would be 'valuable and inspiring... if it was reliable or accurate'.

"We track from UCAS – get their data in a spreadsheet which we can filter. We don't get that for apprenticeships. UCAS will tell us when they enrolled and what on. There is no equivalent for apprenticeships, so we know how many have gone to apprenticeships, but not which ones. We sometimes get this from students when they leave or phone them up, but it is not as clear cut as UCAS data".  
(Careers Lead, FE college)

For a few colleges, there were concerns about the interpretation of destination data and being able to fully understand the detail and context beneath the figures.

"The story behind the numbers can be missing. For example, if all the learners are employed but on zero hours contracts; whether its related to an area of study or not". (Careers Lead, FE college)

## 7.2.1 Future potential for destination data

A number of suggestions were made as to how destination data could be improved.

Improving the tracking of learners' destinations was a key request of both secondary schools and colleges. There was a general consensus that the collection of destination data could be improved to support its value and usability. Specific suggestions around this included:

- **Improving information sharing between secondary schools and colleges**, to assist with the tracking of learners. One college mentioned using learners' unique reference number (URN) to make the collation and tracking of data easier. Another college mentioned that having data from schools on destinations would be useful as a baseline in allowing them to show progress and measure impact
- **Dealing with inaccuracies around post-16 destination data particularly around NEET**. One secondary school said "our NEET data is not always accurate, it is 'unvalidated' by us and what they report can be incorrect. The year before last the data was so inaccurate that it changed our data by 11%" (External Careers Advisor)
- **Better tracking information for learners on apprenticeships**. Careers staff in a college requested more data on apprenticeships – for example in terms of the courses/sectors that are progressed onto: "knowing that certain courses are more successful than others [in terms of progression to apprenticeships] would be useful". (Careers Adviser, FE college)
- **Improved awareness of longer-term destination data on university graduates**. Longer-term destination data was requested by a secondary school – "It is only as good as what the university provides – graduates are contacted six months after leaving to see what they are doing. Three years down the line data would be useful but I think it's impossible to collect" (Senior Leader, secondary school). However, this data is provided on the Higher Education Statistic Agency (HESA) website, suggesting that awareness of long-term destination data could be improved

A few colleges and secondary schools mentioned that it would be helpful to have a central resource for destination data that was free and accessible to all. For example, one college discussed the development of a central database that could hold destination data on different establishments.

"In terms of destination data and LMI, it would be great if these could be held centrally and freely accessible for example covering different establishments, retention rates, pass rates and co-ordination of school leaver schemes (i.e. university, apprenticeships, work) that could easily be accessed by learners and

parents. We have restricted budgets and there's a limit to what information we are prepared to buy". (Careers Lead, secondary school)

Other suggestions made by individual schools or colleges included:

- Further destination data being available on the retention rates for college courses (requested by a secondary school without sixth form)
- A tracking service to track destinations for career ideas and show where learners have progressed to, to use as a promotional tool (requested by a college)

### **7.3 Challenges in the use of Labour Market Information (LMI)**

Careers professionals mentioned accessing LMI through government (national and local) sources only as they felt that this could be trusted, although sometimes the latest available data could be two or three years old.

"There are problems with some private national sites. They claim to have up to date, reliable local information. We are experts in our area and know the local information and often the private national sites are wrong. They misinform people using their resources" (Careers Advisor, FE college)

The main challenge for secondary schools was in the accessibility of LMI information for their learners. A number of schools mentioned challenges in both being able to know where to access LMI and the user-friendliness of the information. This creates a challenge for careers professionals in secondary schools having the time needed to find the required information and then re-interpreting and re-presenting the data in order for it be effectively understood by learners and parents.

"We don't tend to present LMI to the kids in our meetings. It's very dry information. The advisor knows the LMI and can relate it to the specific child's situation. This works really well and the student isn't bombarded with irrelevant information or masses of information to make sense of". (Careers Lead, secondary school)

"It is difficult even for careers professionals; finding information can be quite difficult, it isn't really student friendly... unfortunately it is aimed mainly at employers. I have seen an increase in LMI importance but it is too difficult for the students to interpret". (External Careers Adviser, secondary school)

Some secondary schools had concerns about using LMI data with its learners; particularly around the use of information around skills and jobs shortages and whether such data would still be accurate when learners were in a position to actually move to

employment. Others felt that learners placed a lack of importance on LMI in their decision-making.

“I absolutely think LMI does help students with making careers choices, showing where the opportunities are and then steers them on what courses they should study. But students are driven more by what they enjoy and their interests rather than the needs of the market and where the opportunities are. Students need to be made aware and trained to identify opportunities and make career decisions based on LMI as well as what they enjoy”. (Careers Lead, secondary school)

### 7.3.1 Future potential for Labour Market Information

Careers professionals in both FE colleges and secondary schools gave a number of suggestions around the type of labour market information that would be useful.

Simple, accessible LMI that could be easily used by learners and parents was the key request of secondary school and college careers professionals. Others requested regular LMI data on a local, regional and national basis for example including data on average salaries, job sectors, which are on rise/decline, cost of living, profile of working population, employers in the area, rent costs etc. Most have to spend time researching these for different sectors.

“It’s trying to make it simplistic enough that it makes sense, if there’s too many facts and figures then it’s hard, make it accessible. The old NCS website all this info was part of the job profiles, but not there anymore. Would be good to have it back together, it was also colourful, attractive”. (Careers Advisor, FE college)

“Really promoting what is available in local or regional areas, what kinds of careers and jobs are available in the area, this is quite difficult to find at the moment. There’s so much about the jobs market in London but it’s just one area of the UK there are lots of other areas, would be useful to access together in one place”. (Tutor, FE college)

A college reported that including LMI within a ‘one stop shop’ but in a simple way for example, ‘is your job popular?’, would be helpful for learners. The careers lead at the college felt that LMI was important as it helped learners to find out if they would be able to get a job – “students don’t do that much research themselves, they need to be told, it would be useful to have a reality check about how many actually get in and make money in careers”.

When asked what LMI they would find useful, a careers lead and a progression manager in a secondary school both said that they would like to access more information on current and future trends in the jobs market – “how it’s changing, it would make a useful assembly for the students”. Although they felt that this information existed, they reported

that there was no budget to purchase this form of resource. They suggested that the data would need to be presented in accessible, visual formats for students to understand.

“The most useful format [for LMI] is posters to put up around the school. It would be useful online as well, but it needs to be easy to display and poster format is good for that”. (External Careers Advisor, secondary school)

A careers advisor in a college felt that LMI should be ‘integrated’ so that job information could be linked back to progression route data – thereby making LMI “part and parcel of the information available” rather than being separate and distinct.

Other specific suggestions for improving LMI and access to it included:

- **Better publicising of LMI for All.** One college stated – “I’m not sure how widely publicised, tends to be careers advisers who are aware of it, should be parents and young people made more aware. We find this useful and good for students. Students often are making decisions in a vacuum, don’t know about LMI, have typical views – gaining and understanding of what’s really going on in the labour market is fundamentally important while they are here”. (Careers Advisor, FE college)
- **More training around LMI and what’s available.** A secondary school felt that it would be useful to have more training around LMI, with specific staff inset around LMI developments to help inform what they could use with learners
- **Developing a LMI resource for parents.** A college felt that developing a LMI resource for parents would be useful and particularly one that could be used with learners before they got to college – “It helps them with decisions before they get to college as much of the decision-making about careers or vocational pathways are made at family level in the context of traditional professions”. (Careers Lead, FE college)

## 7.4 Improving careers information, tools and data

### 7.4.1 Increasing learner engagement with careers

Careers staff in secondary schools and colleges highlighted a range of ways to increase learner engagement with careers information in general.

- **Timing:** the timing of careers events and talks needs to be carefully considered – for example, a school has found that after-school events (e.g. visiting speakers) do



not attract much attendance – “careers is at the bottom of the list after clubs and revision sessions”

- **Central resources:** a secondary school positioned all careers/progression staff in the same area to “make it easy for students to know where to go, and also keeps staff close so they keep up with what everyone is doing”
- **Focused events:** a progression advisor at a college had found that large-scale college-wide events were ‘too unfocused’ and could be less attractive to employers also. As a result, the college has changed to holding smaller events that are tailored to specific curriculum areas, with a narrower brief for speakers (e.g. to describe what their job entails, skills required and the pathway into it)
- **Working with parents:** inviting parents to careers events and one-to-one sessions; helping parents to understand the different types of qualifications, levels and grades to address confusion. Schools gave examples of using existing parents’ evenings and related events to gain access to parents already attending, to supply careers information, for example, by setting up stalls and inviting colleges and employers to present or be available for questions
- **Increased support:** secondary and tertiary learners with additional needs such as EAL, SEND or the less-engaged were given increased support through additional one-to-one meetings with careers staff, teachers and tutors and specialist support from SENCO staff/personal support staff, plus increased engagement with parents

A key suggestion by parents for improving careers education and guidance was having more information about different websites or sources they could use to help their children with their decision-making. It was important for parents that this considered the age of the child and the stage of decision-making. Specific suggestions made by parents’ included websites that detailed different careers and information on the associated qualifications and skills required. Other ideas suggested included:

- Information that was simpler and more child-friendly to support children’s engagement in the material
- Information/sources about education pathways/jobs and careers to be given to parents at timely points (i.e. at key decision-points) so that parents know what they should be discussing with their children, when and what information/sources they could use to help with these discussions
- More age-appropriate careers information for younger children (i.e. younger secondary learners)
- Earlier visits to colleges (Year 9) when they are thinking about subjects, to encourage children to start thinking about their options and how that relates to college

## 7.4.2 Increasing engagement with careers information, data and tools

Overall, it was felt there was no need to introduce more tools and resources but that refinements could be made to those already existing. A common response was that there were so many resources available online that signposting from a central hub would be particularly useful to help learners, parents and teaching staff navigate to what they need.

The following suggestions were made in relation to the types of new or additional careers resources or support that may be useful for learners:

### 7.4.2.1 Primary

- Resources focused at primary level e.g. quizzes to motivate learners about different subjects or about aspirations/careers, information on career pathways, LMI resources for teachers to use to plan lessons
- Workshop for parents on future pathways from an external provider
- A register of businesses willing to visit schools to talk about their jobs or provide opportunities to take learners on educational tours of workplaces
- Aspirational visits/talks that break down gender stereotypes (e.g. female computer programmers, male nurses)
- Support from a careers advisor or job centre to show learners and parents what jobs are available which would help raise aspirations
- Destination data shared from secondary schools

### 7.4.2.2 Secondary/colleges

- Greater differentiation within tools for different abilities/proficiency in literacy
- The ability to filter searches so that results are more relevant to learners as individuals
- More integrated information, such as LMI with progression routes rather than as separate sources of information/data
- More face-to-face discussions with individuals who already do the job that learners are interested in, with the ability to ask questions
- Clearer, less complex information formats for learners, e.g. the job, a clear outline of the subjects/qualifications required and the hours they would likely work
- Careers advice earlier in their pathway (e.g. prior to KS4 options) and earlier visits to college (Year 9) to encourage parents and children to start to think about subject options and pathways earlier
- More information on courses not yet experienced at KS4, such as sociology

- Reviews of courses from learners and tutors
- More information about different careers websites or sources that parents could use with their children that were age-appropriate and matched the decision-making stage their child was at
- Information/sources about education pathways/jobs and careers to be given to parents at key decision-points to stimulate relevant discussion with their child
- More information for parents on the different pathways and reasons for taking that pathway

Overall, there were common suggestions that all tools needed to be mobile compatible, incorporate more advanced filtering options for search results and integrate employment profiles with relevant course/progression routes.

## 8. Summary and concluding comments

The qualitative research with 22 case study schools and colleges has generated a wealth of data; providing an insight into how careers professionals and teaching staff, learners and parents use and view the tools and data available to inform careers and education pathways and decision points. A summary of findings is presented below.

### 8.1 Use of careers tools and information

Secondary schools and colleges used a range of careers tools and information with learners, across age-groups and at critical decision-points. Primary schools did not invest in specific career tools, instead focusing on increasing learners' knowledge of jobs and careers through 'real person' experiences, or specialist programmes.

Secondary schools and colleges made decisions about the use of careers tools and information based on what would best meet the needs of their learners; whilst considering age, stage of decision-making and pathway. The range of tools used varied. Tools were used across a wide age range, but different functions were used at different stages. It was less common for secondary schools to invest in more than one paid-for tool, due to budget constraints. Colleges were more likely to use a wider range of tools and some had invested in a number of different paid-for tools.

Using tools that effectively interested and engaged learners was a major consideration and challenge for some institutions. Cost was a key consideration and achieving value for money and maximising use when investing in commercial tools was critical. Institutions valued tools that were accessible, user-friendly, held a wide range of information and had content that maintained learner interest.

Introducing more tools and resources was felt to be unnecessary; however, some learners and parents lacked awareness and understanding of where to find information. Feedback from learners emphasised the importance of usability and accessibility when using tools. Learners were frustrated when tools were not intuitive, difficult to navigate or generated results that were irrelevant to their existing interests or thoughts about careers choices and pathways. Careers staff emphasised the importance of not overloading learners with information. Trust was also important; secondary learners were wary of using tools that asked them to register or sign-up to use them.

College learners' use of tools depended on the pathway they were considering. Those considering a university pathway were more likely to use higher-education specific tools. Learners exploring alternative routes or who were still unsure, were more likely to use tools that were wider in their focus.

Parents approach to information seeking was ad-hoc and they lacked knowledge about key careers websites. Many parents of primary aged children did not believe accessing information online was not needed or appropriate. Others had concerns about being able to source age-appropriate information, and overwhelming primary children and younger secondary children with information. Parents with older children (Year 9 upwards) more proactively sought information to help their children with key decisions, seeking information online on college and university websites about courses and qualifications. Attendance at school-based careers events or visits to colleges and universities was also common.

Encouraging learners to engage in the use of tools independently was an ongoing challenge for secondary schools and colleges. All careers staff felt there was a need for face-to-face support for learners in using careers data and tools and this was generally provided within allocated timetabled provision, often helping them to understand the purpose of use and navigating and interpreting information from the tool.

A lack of differentiation within available tools impacted on their relevance for harder to reach/SEND learners according to careers staff. Secondary schools and colleges had to adapt their use of the tools with learners who needed extra support, particularly those with lower literacy levels and/or SEND. Staff addressed this by providing additional support in the interpretation and navigation of tools. They would select tools that were easier to navigate or read, more attractive and engaging and used shorter exercises or quizzes to maintain interest of those less engaged. There was a general consensus however that more differentiation within existing tools for different abilities and proficiency in literacy would be beneficial.

## **8.2 Destination data**

Both secondary schools and colleges are mandated to collect destination data; however, secondary schools without sixth forms did not place importance on the use of destination data outside of statutory obligations. Secondary schools with sixth forms were more likely to be using destination data to support their strategic planning and for curriculum planning post-16. However, use in careers education was ad-hoc and unstructured. Many secondary careers staff felt it lacked significance in learners' decision-making; a view reflected by learners and their parents.

By contrast, colleges used destination data both strategically and in careers delivery. Most colleges were using destination data to inform their curriculum and course offer; employer engagement strategy and in marketing to potential learners. Colleges had often allocated resources to support in the destination tracking of learners. They used it in a more structured way with learners; either in career discussions with staff or with learners

being encouraged to access destination data for pathways/courses they were considering.

Improving the tracking and sharing of learner destination data across institutions would further support secondary schools and colleges use of this data both strategically and in careers education. Careers providers suggested a central resource which collated the destinations of learners through all education pathways, and provided longer-term data on learners' destinations beyond education, would be a useful tool for raising learners' aspirations and assisting in strategic planning. Whilst UCAS was considered to be a reliable, credible and valuable source of information about learners taking higher education pathways, there was felt to be no similar resource for alternative pathways.

Learners and parents knowledge of the term 'destination data' was minimal, although both could recall seeing or accessing different types of destination data when prompted. However, there was limited evidence that most learners and parents were using destination data to inform decisions' about education and career pathways. Those that had used it, had found it to be useful, suggesting that increasing learners' and parents' knowledge and awareness of where it can be accessed and how it could be used in decision-making may be beneficial.

Secondary schools faced wider challenges in the use of destination data. These included having sufficient time to consider how its use could be improved; reliability concerns about data and being able to access destination data from colleges or further education providers. Parents had similar concerns. The main challenge faced by colleges was being able to access destination data for routes other than university, particularly apprenticeships.

### **8.3 Labour market information (LMI)**

Primary schools were mostly unfamiliar with the term LMI, but understood the concept and could provide examples of how they used LMI in their teaching, for example, talking about job roles and the range of jobs in different sectors. Most believed that detailed LMI beyond job roles was not relevant for this age group.

Secondary schools' use of LMI was ad-hoc and informal with limited evidence that careers professionals were using detailed LMI in careers education; other than what was covered in the online tools that they were also using.

By contrast colleges' use of LMI was more embedded within careers education. College careers staff placed higher value on its use in careers education, believing it was critical in allowing learners to make informed decisions. Colleges also used LMI strategically, in most it informed course offer, curriculum design and employer engagement strategies.

LMI was of interest for learners and parents, particularly those in college. However, even at secondary school, learners had a strong interest in the job market, understanding the world of work and having information on pay scales. Understanding the routes to securing employment was important to them. Primary school learners were also keen to learn about different job roles and there were examples of how this learning was embedded into the curriculum. Parents lacked knowledge of the term 'labour market information', but most if those who had children at a key decision-point were using it.

Presenting LMI in accessible, simple way for learners was important according to secondary and college staff. There was general consensus, particularly at secondary level that LMI needed to be re-interpreted and presented differently for learners in order to aid understanding. Furthermore, parents and learners generally lacked knowledge about where to access LMI, both finding it difficult to name specific websites or tools where they could find this information.

Overall, there was perceived to be a lack of accessible, central, relevant, local and up to date LMI. LMI was felt to be relevant across all educational stages; however the type of information needed across different stages varied. LMI for All was perceived to be a useful source of information by careers professionals; however, awareness amongst other audiences appeared limited.

## Appendix 1: Literature review

In September 2012, schools and colleges became responsible for ensuring that young people (Years 8 – 13) have access to impartial and independent careers information, advice and guidance. To support institutions in meeting this duty, Ofsted introduced new guidance for careers information, advice and guidance in September 2013. In April 2014 DfE produced Statutory Guidance that set out a framework of clear principles to which schools and colleges should adhere in the provision of careers information, advice and guidance.

Relevant for this study, the Statutory Guidance included consideration of tools and data in the provision of careers information, advice and guidance for young people.

Specifically, it stated that:

- Although ‘online tools can offer imaginative and engaging ways’ in which to motivate young people to think about potential careers, ‘website access is not sufficient in itself’ for the requirements of the statutory duty
- ‘Schools should assess their success in supporting their learners to take up education or training which offers good long term prospects’ – and that one way of doing this was through the use of destinations measures data

### Perceptions of data and tools

The House of Commons Business, Innovation and Skills and Education Committees’ inquiry into careers advice, information and guidance (2016)<sup>15</sup> raised a number of issues around the provision of careers information.

The inquiry identified concerns about the number of careers information websites available. Specific concerns raised by the inquiry were that the design and focus of such websites meant that young people often had to have a clear idea of a career prior to accessing the website. There were also concerns that websites were difficult to navigate and for young people to know which ones to trust. The inquiry recommended potentially using a price-comparison style approach which could draw information down from different sources and would allow users to rate its usefulness.

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<sup>15</sup> House of Commons Business, Innovation and Skills and Education Committees, Sub-Committee on Education, Skills and the Economy (2016) *Careers education, information, advice and guidance*. First Joint Report of the Business, Innovation and Skills and Education Committees of Session 2016–17



This view was also supported by *Moments of Choice* (Careers and Enterprise Company, 2016)<sup>16</sup>, which found that there is a wealth of information available, but it is fragmented, diverse and lacks personalisation, leading young people to feel overloaded and disengaged. A lack of comparability, and variations in the quality and consistency of careers advice in schools were also highlighted as key issues and they noted that few services were designed to support those who influence young people making careers decisions.

‘Lack of information is not a problem – the problem is making sense of the range and diversity of the information available to them’.<sup>17</sup>

## Young peoples’ use of data and tools

In terms of online sources, local research by Oxfordshire County Council (2015)<sup>18</sup> found that although young people were using the internet to find careers information, they needed more guidance about which websites to use.

Other gaps in knowledge identified through the research included:

- **Job skills** – less than 50% felt confident applying for jobs, completing application forms, CVs and attending interviews
- **Knowledge of available routes** – 57% knew what career they wanted but only 37% knew what types of jobs/training were available

## Keeping young people and their parents informed

There is some evidence that web-based platforms are also key communication tools for schools to inform young people and their parents about careers-related activities taking place. Approximately half of 319 schools responding to the Career Development Institute’s (CDI) 2015 survey reported that they informed parents and carers of their careers activities and links with employers via the school website, newsletter or information evenings.<sup>19</sup>

The work of Barnado’s with young people at risk of not engaging with education, employment and training (NEET) identified that there were particular disadvantages to

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<sup>16</sup> Careers and Enterprise Company (2016), *Moments of Choice: How education outcomes data can support better informed career decisions*

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p.4

<sup>18</sup> Oxfordshire County Council (2015), *Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance Survey: Oxfordshire Results 2015*

<sup>19</sup> CDI 2015, p.4

websites and other forms of remote careers guidance when ‘young people are not as digitally competent as is often perceived’.<sup>20</sup> Based on a small sample of twenty-nine vulnerable young people, feedback about digital tools was:<sup>21</sup>

- They needed to be mobile compatible as many young people accessed the internet via smartphones
- Technology is viewed as a social and leisure tool (e.g. communication and gaming) and they could be proficient at these, but not be digitally literate enough to know how to research effectively online for information they needed
- Young people may not be proactive in obtaining careers advice, especially those at risk of NEET, persistently absent from school with poor previous experiences of careers information, advice and guidance, or low aspirations
- For hard-to-reach and vulnerable groups, a reliance on tools was difficult as some have limited access to the internet except through ‘crowded facilities’ in schools or other extra-curricular clubs
- There could be a lack of trust in online sources – ‘for careers guidance to be taken seriously by young people it needs to come from a trusted and authoritative source that they know’<sup>22</sup>

Learners making choices about progression to Higher Education have shown a slight increase in accessing personal blogs for information, but tend still to rely on a core of well-established sources.

‘Compared to earlier research, there appears to be some increase in the use of social media and blogs, i.e. sources that provided personal experiential information, and a decline in the use of physical prospectuses. Most common sources of information include family and friends, prospectuses and institutional websites, visits to particular HEIs, and information from teachers. Information gained from official sources of raw data tends to be less frequently mentioned’<sup>23</sup>

In terms of online sources, learners most commonly reported that they accessed rankings and league tables (e.g. newspapers) and were much less likely to access sites such as UCAS, the National Careers Service or Which Uni? for information.<sup>24</sup> The most popular source was The Student Room (current and prospective learners can ask/answer

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<sup>20</sup> Barnados (2013), *Helping the inbetweeners: Ensuring careers advice improves the options for all young people*, p.20

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p15 - 17

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p.3

<sup>23</sup> Institute of Warwick, p.10

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p.12

questions in online forums). Where information was sourced digitally, learners combined different data to compare and spot trends in results.

## Perceptions of data and tools

Ofsted (2013) received feedback from parents and young people about a range of aspects related to careers information, advice and guidance. In reference to data and tools specifically, it was highlighted by parents that the National Careers Service (NCS) website would be improved if it included information on 'employment opportunities in specific career pathways'.<sup>25</sup>

Young people reported to Ofsted<sup>26</sup> that they preferred one-to-one discussions with professional careers advisors, but that they appreciated being able to:

- Follow-up information that they had received through 'targeted online activities to explore some of the ideas presented'
- Record their ideas and research via a central system<sup>27</sup>

Young people also felt that careers information, advice and guidance could be improved with 'better guidance on how to use websites' that were connected to careers provision (i.e. being able to go through the information obtained through these sources with a trained professional).<sup>28</sup>

Research conducted with young people for The Careers and Enterprise Company work, *Moment of Choice* (2016) identified the need for data, providing 'moments of inspiration' rather than 'moments of choice', which could better reflect the career journey that young people go through and engage them in the process of idea formation.

The report identified a need to reduce the cognitive burden associated with careers information:

- Easy navigation and structure information around decision making, including pushing information to them
- Greater personalisation of information
- Consistent info across different career paths

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<sup>25</sup> Ofsted 2013, p.22

<sup>26</sup> Comprising feedback from 1082 students via focus group discussions.

<sup>27</sup> Ofsted 2013, p.23

<sup>28</sup> Ofsted 2013, p.24

The report also identified a number of needs of the growing data-driven careers advice services and online employment search industry, which has a common interest with government in improving the infrastructure of careers data:

- Consistent directories of courses and institutions
- Better ontologies for jobs, skills, employers and industries
- Data standards for certain types of information (e.g. jobs & qualifications)

## Destinations data

Destinations measures data: 'are produced and published by the Department for Education using existing data collections and are based on sustained participation. They show the percentage of a school's former learners who continued their education or training (including through an apprenticeship), went into employment, and those who were not in education, employment or training (NEET). The data are broken down by a range of pupil characteristics, including special educational needs, eligibility for free school meals in year 11 and, at key stage 4, disadvantaged learners who would have attracted the pupil premium'.<sup>29</sup>

DfE's Statutory Guidance for careers information, advice and guidance in schools sets out its aims for the use of destinations measures data to:

- Ensure that all learners receive the support needed to prepare for and take up education, employment or training which offers good long-term prospects
- Help schools to be held to account locally
- Feed into Ofsted judgements
- Encourage schools to work with their local authority to ensure that the information they collect is as complete as possible

The Gatsby Foundation report<sup>30</sup> recommended that every secondary school should be responsible for publishing the destination of learners for three years after their leaving date, the rationale for this being that it would provide a more comprehensive picture of progression to employment, apprenticeships, further and higher education.

In 2013, Ofsted's review of careers information, advice and guidance in a sample of 60 schools, found that approximately one quarter had started to use destinations data, and

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<sup>29</sup> DfE (2017), *Careers guidance and inspiration in schools: Statutory guidance for governing bodies, school leaders and school staff*, p.17

<sup>30</sup> The Gatsby Charitable Foundation (2014) *Good Career Guidance*

'too few' were using these data effectively 'to analyse the range of further and higher education and training opportunities taken up by their student'.<sup>31</sup> It therefore recommended that schools should use such data to track learners leaving school, progressing to Year 12 and monitor choices made in Years 11 and 13; the destinations of learners with SEN and/or disabilities were also recommended by Ofsted to be a primary focus for schools (in liaison with local authorities).<sup>32</sup> It was highlighted by Ofsted that analysis of destinations data could show whether learners transitioned to a broad range of post-16 provision, therefore, indicating that this range of options had been effectively communicated to, and considered with and by learners during the decision-making processes.<sup>33</sup>

Likewise, in 2015, Futures Advice, skills and employment<sup>34</sup> conducted research with education providers into tracking learner destinations. They found that whilst destination tracking is increasing in importance, providers face a number of issues which impact upon their ability to do so effectively, including lack of time and dedicated resources, inexperienced staff impacting upon the quality of information and analysis and hidden costs, such as overtime and multiple calls, which were not always accounted for. The report also identified that many providers were not utilising destinations data for continuous improvement or business development, resulting in missed opportunities.

The House of Commons sub-committee inquiry<sup>35</sup> also supported this recommendation; emphasising that the publication of destination data could encourage schools to give greater priority to careers information, advice and guidance, whilst recognising that the current time lag in the production of such data (after key stage 4 and 5 studies) needed addressing.

The Government's response to the sub-committee's inquiry identified a number of key plans which have implications for the provision of careers information:

- The development of a new digital service for the National Careers Service which will allow users to explore career paths, develop personal profiles and prepare action plans

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<sup>31</sup> Ofsted (2013), *Going in the right direction? Careers guidance in schools from September 2012*, p.5-6

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p8

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p.26

<sup>34</sup> Futures Advice, skills & employment (2015): *How to Maximise your return on learner destination tracking campaigns* (2015)

<sup>35</sup> House of Commons Business, Innovation and Skills and Education Committees, Sub-Committee on Education, Skills and the Economy (2016) *Careers education, information, advice and guidance*. First Joint Report of the Business, Innovation and Skills and Education Committees of Session 2016–17

- The introduction of an online post-16 course directory to cover all types of 16-18 courses
- Enhancement of available destination data i.e. through the addition of destination data to school performance tables and the expansion of the Key Stage 5 measures to account for more qualifications (less than level 3 qualifications)
- The continued availability of 'LMI for All' data even with the end of UK Commission for Employment and Skills

This brief review of literature suggests that Higher Education Institutions use destinations data more clearly in their promotional information and careers guidance. For example, destinations measures are widely disseminated via Key Information Set (KIS) data that is made available via individual institutions, the Unistats website, and the Association of Graduate and Advisory Services publications. Recent research for the Higher Education Statistics Agency, however, has identified that international learners are more likely to 'rely on online sources of information and advice' than UK-based learners. As with younger learners, those looking at university courses were also wary of digital tools.

'Students were much more likely than in previous years to use university rankings and online sources of information in their decisions about which course and which university to choose. However, there was some uncertainty about the reliability and validity of such online sources and students tended to consult various sources to gather as much information as possible'.<sup>36</sup>

A workshop led by the Local Government Association on the uses of destinations data identified that:<sup>37</sup>

- Local authorities use the data 'as a way of starting conversations with schools about NEETS and issues around the quality' of careers information, advice and guidance – moving from a focus on achievements to 'supporting young people for future success'
- Data needs to be presented in a range of formats, tailored to specific audiences
- Data can 'stimulate discussion between providers', particularly around the need for new provision for Apprenticeships and Employability across partnerships
- It is important to note the timeliness of destinations data – if there is a lag in collection, this may not capture issues such as NEETs

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<sup>36</sup> Warwick Institute for Employment Research (2016), *Richer Information on Student Views: Supporting the HESA Review of Destinations and Outcomes Data*, p., i

<sup>37</sup> Local Government Association (2014), *Write up from LGA Workshop on use of Destinations Data*

- Destinations data combined with labour market information has enabled some local authorities to tailor the careers information, advice and guidance support packages bought in from external suppliers so that it meets local activities, needs and markets

## Labour Market Information

As part of the reforms to careers provision, the previous government established the National Careers Council (NCC). The NCC published a report in 2013, *An Aspiration Nation*, setting out a range of key targets that schools would need to achieve in order to provide high quality, independent careers information, advice and guidance. Included in these was that schools would need ‘access to high-quality and up-to-date labour market intelligence (LMI) and information about all education and vocational education training routes pre- and post-16’.<sup>38</sup> In addition, it felt that careers professionals should be prepared to:<sup>39</sup>

- Design and develop labour market intelligence/information, including effective use of open data sets and massive open online courses (MOOCs) as career development resources
- Help people develop the necessary characteristics, attitudes and skills to navigate the plethora of on-line information

In 2015 the Career Development Institute (CDI) undertook a survey of careers leads in schools (e.g. careers advisors, senior or middle leaders with careers information, advice and guidance responsibilities). The research found that when asked about sources of LMI, the most common response was websites and apps (56%). The next most frequently mentioned source was the school’s career guidance provider (37%), followed by employers (28%), then local councils (25%) and, lastly, Chambers of Commerce and other business bodies (15%).<sup>40</sup>

In this survey, schools also frequently requested ‘readily accessible’ and to ‘up to date’ labour market information via the newly established Careers and Enterprise Company.<sup>41</sup> Indeed, Ofsted’s survey in 2013 had identified that ‘very few’ schools were aware that they could access local and national labour market information.<sup>42</sup> A case study of a

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<sup>38</sup> National Careers Council (2013), *An Aspiration Nation: Creating a culture change in careers provision*, p.22

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p.19

<sup>40</sup> CDI (2015), *Survey of Career Education and Guidance in Schools and Links with Employers*, p.4

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p.4, 8

<sup>42</sup> Ofsted (2013), p.6

school with effective careers information, advice and guidance provision as perceived by Ofsted was found to ‘make explicit use of analysis’ of local LMI, including:<sup>43</sup>

- Identifying the disparity between the number of vacancies and the most popular jobs – highlighting the challenges of pursuing careers in particular sectors
- Analysing employment opportunities in the local area, and identifying sectors not previously considered by learners – looking ‘beyond their initial impressions towards careers they had not considered previously’

The Careers and Enterprise Company’s 2016 report *Moments of Choice*<sup>44</sup> argued that personalised Longitudinal Education Outcomes (LEO) data can help young people when making choices about careers and jobs, helping them to better identify the choices that matter on any given educational route. The report identified a range of LEO data which could help young people with their careers choices:

- Comparable outcomes data, including measures of longer term earnings and employment rates for different career paths, e.g. university vs apprenticeships
- Analysis of ‘routes’, i.e. different journeys through education to employment, e.g. clustering typical journeys for institution type, subjects, qualification types and good versus bad outcomes defined in terms of earnings and employment, including volatility, educational routes information in line with needs of young people and the area of most interest to providers

A number of sources suggest that more could be done in terms of:

- Access to labour market information to help inform choice
- Increasing understanding and awareness amongst young people about how well their aspirations align with labour market opportunities

The sub-committee inquiry suggested that more should be done to help young people reflect on how their aspirations fitted within the opportunities available in the labour market. Citing previous research by City and Guilds (2015), the inquiry identified that there was currently a mismatch between young people’s aspirations and available opportunities reporting that the City and Guild’s research found that 26% of young people would like to work in professional, scientific roles, whereas forecasted numbers of people likely to be working in the sector in 2022 was just 9%. The inquiry recommended that there should be a role for careers information, advice and guidance to better align young people’s aspirations with the opportunities most likely to be available to them.

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., p.21

<sup>44</sup> Moments of Choice: How education outcomes data can support better informed career decisions (2016)



Young people's access to good quality LMI was highlighted through the inquiry, in particular young people being able to have direct access to LMI in order to allow them to make positive proactive choices. The continued availability of the LMI for All<sup>45</sup> data was perceived to be important in providing national level data. The inquiry also emphasised the importance of good LMI at a local level; recommending that LEPs should be supported and encouraged to provide up-to-date LMI information to schools, colleges and career professionals.

Further to the Inquiry, the Gatsby Foundation's 'Good Career Guidance' report published in 2014 identified eight benchmarks for providing good career guidance. One of these benchmarks was 'learning from career and labour market information' and states that 'every pupil, and their parents should have access to good quality information about future study options and labour market opportunities'. The key background and context for this benchmark is:

- The importance of up-to-date career and LMI information for social mobility allowing young people to make more informed choices about study and training
- Young people's understanding of what the labour market wants is often weak

Gatsby's report reiterated the importance of live labour market information being available to schools through the 'LMI for All' service; suggesting that it should be accessible through the NCS website and other outlets.

This has implications for how careers information and data could be presented to young people through websites/tools to ensure both greater transparency in future job prospects in certain sectors; but also in potentially highlighting/recommending sectors and job roles where demand is likely to be greatest.

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<sup>45</sup> <http://www.lmiforall.org.uk/>

## Appendix 2: Examples of tools used

A range of tools were cited by careers leads/professionals, teachers, tutors, senior leaders, support staff and learners. The list below provides examples and is based on feedback during interviews and focus groups and therefore cannot be viewed as an exhaustive list of tools utilised. Note that the sample included 4 primary schools, 12 secondary schools (including one all-through) and 6 colleges.

**Table 6: Examples of careers-related tools used by schools and colleges**

Primary	Secondary	FE Colleges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education City</li> <li>• Enabling Enterprise</li> <li>• iLEAD</li> <li>• Local library resources</li> <li>• Spotlight Days</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3AAA</li> <li>• Alps</li> <li>• Apprenticeships Guide</li> <li>• C&amp;K Careers Online</li> <li>• Career Companion</li> <li>• Career Pilot</li> <li>• Cascade</li> <li>• Cog</li> <li>• College/university websites &amp; prospectuses</li> <li>• eCLIPS</li> <li>• Employer websites</li> <li>• Fast Tomato</li> <li>• Forward Thinking</li> <li>• GCSE Pod</li> <li>• Get My First Job</li> <li>• Gordon Collins</li> <li>• Heap</li> <li>• iCould/Buzz Quiz</li> <li>• Job Explorer Database (JED)</li> <li>• Kudos</li> <li>• LORIC</li> <li>• Moodle</li> <li>• Myers Briggs</li> <li>• National Apprenticeship Service</li> <li>• National Careers Service</li> <li>• Not Going to Uni</li> <li>• PiXL Edge</li> <li>• Plotr</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unifrog</li> <li>• Notgoingtouni.co.uk</li> <li>• Bright Knowledge</li> <li>• Which? University</li> <li>• Sutton Trust OSCAR programme</li> <li>• Plotr</li> <li>• National Careers Service</li> <li>• Careers Coach</li> <li>• UCAS</li> <li>• Kudos</li> <li>• iCloud/Buzz Quiz</li> <li>• Adult Directions</li> <li>• ProMonitor</li> <li>• Morrisby</li> <li>• National Apprenticeship Service</li> <li>• NHS Careers</li> <li>• Indeed Path</li> <li>• College/university websites</li> <li>• Leaflets, books in library</li> <li>• Prospectuses, course leaflets</li> </ul>

**Table 6 (cont.): Examples of careers-related tools used by schools and colleges**

Primary	Secondary	FE Colleges
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prospects</li> <li>• Shape Your Future North Yorkshire</li> <li>• Solomon Productions</li> <li>• Target Careers</li> <li>• The Access Project</li> <li>• UCAS</li> <li>• UCAS Progress</li> <li>• U-Explore/Start</li> <li>• Unifrog</li> <li>• Unistats</li> <li>• What Uni</li> <li>• Which? University</li> <li>• YouTube</li> </ul>	

# Appendix 3: Topic guides and parent survey

## Primary school topic guide

**How do learners, parents/carers and teachers/careers guidance professionals use data and tools to make decisions?**

### Teacher focus group – Primary (30 minutes)

How is the topic of careers/jobs/progression through education covered with learners?

1. What are you doing in school?
  - a. E.g. dressing up/role play, books, special events/talks, subject ambassadors (e.g. STEM), workplace visits, etc.
2. What is the aim of covering careers/jobs/progression with learners?
  - a. Encouraging learners to think about/discuss careers/jobs, breaking down stereotypes, engaging girls with STEM, encouraging learners to think about subjects/qualifications, encouraging enterprise, etc.

Explore what information/data/tools are used

3. Do you use any information, tools or data to help you deliver careers/jobs/progression education to learners?
  - a. What information/tools do you use, where do you get the information/tools from (sources and format of information)?
  - b. How useful is the information/are the tools? What do you like/dislike about the information/tools you have used?
  - c. How easy is it to access and interpret (for children, teachers, parents)?
  - d. Do you have enough information? What is missing?
  - e. Why use/don't use sources of information/tools? Which, if any, are relevant to you as a primary school educator? Why, why not?

Improving careers education and guidance

4. What other information/data/tools would be helpful for delivering careers education?

- a. For your learners to help them think about their next stage and beyond (relating to key stage, SEND, hard to reach)?
  - b. For your learners to help them think about the kind of career they would like to have (relating to key stage, SEND, hard to reach)??
  - c. What format would that come in? How could it best be accessed (by children, teachers)?
  - d. What are the challenges to providing good careers education and guidance in primary schools? How can these be overcome?
  - e. Any other suggestions on how to improve careers education/guidance in primary schools?
5. To help learners understand about careers and pathways, have you used.....
- a. (Destination data) - Information telling you where learners/students have gone after leaving Year 11 or 13 (for example, if they have gone to university, or employment, or an apprenticeship)
  - b. Labour market information (e.g. information about jobs, employment rates, rates of pay etc)
  - c. If so, how have you used them, please give some examples

### **Pupil focus group – Primary (20 minutes)**

#### Explore pupil's knowledge and understanding of jobs/careers/progression

1. Can you tell me what job you would like to do when you are older?
  - a. Why would you like to be..... how did you decide on that job?
  - b. What do you think you need to do between now and becoming a (*insert profession*), e.g doctor, teacher, policeman/woman etc.?/How do you become a (*insert profession*)?
  - c. Awareness/understanding of secondary school, college, university, training/apprenticeships, on the job training, qualifications needed, etc
2. What other jobs have you heard about that you could do/would you like to do?
3. Are there any jobs that you think you couldn't do? Why not?

*Note any mentions of labour market information such as what the job involves, rates of pay, job security, career progression/opportunities, etc.*

Explore how learners find out about jobs/careers/progression

4. Who talks to you/where do you find out about the different jobs that you could do in the future?
  - a. Parents, friends, teachers, careers teacher, internet, TV, school computers, books, special talks, etc. (SORT CARDS)
  - b. Probe for each source: what have you talked about/what have you read/seen/looked at?
5. Have you done any activities or lessons in school to learn about future jobs or studying at college/university/apprenticeships etc.?
  - a. Has anyone come into school to talk to you about their job?
  - b. Dressing up/role play, read books, paper based activities/tools, online activities/tools, special events/talks, secondary school visits, workplace visits, theatre event, Enterprise challenge, etc.
6. What did you do/talk about in these activities/lessons?
  - a. Girls and science/STEM, how are careers/jobs made attractive to girls ('pinkness'/fashion/make-up)? What did you think about this?
7. Do you enjoy finding out about different jobs?
  - a. How useful were these things in helping you think about what job you would like to do in the future and how you might get there?
8. Was there anything they didn't tell you that you would like to know about?

**Parents focus group/interview – Primary (30 minutes)**

Improving careers education and guidance

1. How easy is it to find the information you need..
  - a. To make choices/plan beyond secondary school (college, university, Apprenticeship)
  - b. To advise your child about different careers/jobs

2. How easy is it to use/interpret the information/tools available regarding jobs/careers?
3. What are most useful and why?
4. What are least useful and why?
5. How trustworthy do you feel these sources of information/tools are? Why?
6. Why don't use sources of information/tools? What are the barriers to using different sources of information/tools?
7. What would make careers guidance information more useful/easier to access?
  - c. Tools/data type needed?
  - d. Format/accessibility
8. Is there anything different that your school, schools or universities, employers and other organisations that help with careers education and guidance could do to make it easier for you to make the right decisions for your child's future?

Destination data (this means information telling you where learners/students have gone after leaving Year 11 or 13, for example, if they have gone to college or university, or employment, or an apprenticeship).

9. What is your understanding of destination data?
10. Have you used destination data for looking at next steps in the decision process?
  - a. Where accessed it (word of mouth/other parents, performance tables, websites)?
  - b. Challenges?
11. How influential was it in the decision about secondary school choice? (supported transition decision)?
12. How far forward did you look (next school destination data, beyond that?)
13. Is destination data useful? Or could it be? How/why?
14. How would you like to access destination data (sources and format of data)?
15. How could it be improved – made more meaningful and useful?

- a. Access via app, text from school, school/college/university website, other website, other – what would prefer?

Labour Market Information (i.e. information about jobs, employment rates, rates of pay etc.)

16. What's your understanding of 'Labour Market Information'?
17. Do/have you used it? How/when?
18. Have you spoken to your child about it (e.g. what a different job involves, earnings for different job roles, availability of jobs locally, training/qualifications required)
19. To do the above, have you had to find things out? Is it easy to find/interpret? Is it useful at his (primary) stage?
20. How do you/would you like to access Labour Market Information (sources and format of data)?
21. How could Labour Market Information be made more useful/meaningful to you? How could it be improved?



## Secondary school/post-16 topic guide

**How do learners, parents/carers and teachers/careers guidance professionals use data and tools to make decisions?**

### Careers Lead/Adviser - Secondary/post-16 (45 minutes)

#### Use of careers information/tools

1. What careers/jobs/progression information, tools or data do you use?
  - a. What is used?
  - b. Sources of these information/tools/data
  - c. What decisions do they help to inform?
  - d. How does this vary by user and learner type and decision point? (Age/year group, hard to reach, SEND, low/high attainers)
2. How useful are the information/tools/data?
  - a. How easy are they to use and interpret?
  - b. What is useful/not useful?
  - c. What decisions do they help to inform?
3. Were they free/paid for?

#### Explore how teachers/students/parents are best engaged with careers information/data/tools

4. How do you engage with teachers/students/ about careers information/data/tools?
  - a. What have you done to engage them and how does this vary by audience/year group (include, SEND, hard to reach)?
  - b. What has worked well? What, if anything, didn't work well?
5. How do you best support students' use and interpretation of careers information/data/tools, esp. disadvantaged learners/SEN, high/low attainers, learners from different backgrounds (e.g. IT skills, accessibility, tool functionality etc.)?

6. How do hard to reach young people/parents (disengaged, SEND, no access to ICT) access information to make careers decisions?
7. How can they be better supported?
8. How can careers information/data/tools best support teachers/students/parents with making decisions about careers/jobs/progression?
9. Are there any other information/data/tools that would be helpful for improving careers education?
  - a. How does that vary by age/year group (KS3–KS5/HE/FE) and audience (teachers, students, parents, disadvantaged learners/SEN, high/low attainers etc.)?
  - b. What format would that come in? How would the different audiences like to access it?
10. Any other suggestions on how to improve careers education information/data/tools?

Destination data (this means information telling you where learners/students have gone after leaving Years 11 or 13, for example, if they have gone to college or university, or employment, or an apprenticeship).

11. How would you describe 'destination data' to students or parents?
12. Does the school/college produce its own destination data? Do you use it?
  - a. What aspects (certain stages/progression/leaver data)
  - b. In what way, what for?
  - c. Who else uses it? How is it made accessible (e.g. website), who is it aimed at?
  - d. Is the school/college's data used for any strategic planning (e.g. curriculum planning/offer, marketing, links to Alumni)?
13. Do you use other destination data? How/when do you use it?
14. How easy are they to use and interpret (for you, students, parents, teachers)?
15. What specifically is useful/not useful about it? What are the benefits of using destination data?

16. How reliable and trustworthy is the destination data you use?
17. How do you access destination data (sources and format of data)? Is it free/paid for? How could access be improved?
18. How important is destination data for
  - a. informing choice of educational/training institutions? Why?
19. Is there anything missing/what destination information or tools would you like to see to help students and parents make decisions about careers/jobs/progression to further study?
20. What are the challenges to using destination data and how does this differ by audience (learners, young learners, parents, teachers, governors, employers etc.)?
21. How could the school/college make better use of destination measures – what is the potential? How could it be more useful?

Labour Market Information (i.e. information about jobs, employment rates, rates of pay etc.)

22. How would you describe 'Labour Market Information' to students/parents?
23. Do you use it? How/when do you use it?
24. Does it have a local/national perspective?
25. How easy are they to use and interpret?
26. What specifically is useful/not useful about it? What are the benefits of using Labour Market Information?
27. How reliable and trustworthy is the Labour Market Information you use?
28. How do you access Labour Market Information (sources and format of data)? Is it free/paid for? How could access be improved?
29. How important is Labour Market Information for
  - a. informing choice of educational/training institutions? Why?
  - b. Informing future career/job choice? Why?

30. Is there anything missing/what Labour Market Information or tools would you like to see to help students and parents make decisions about careers/jobs/progression to further study?
31. What are the challenges to using Labour Market Information and how does this differ by audience (learners, young learners, parents, teachers, governors, employers etc.)?

## **Teacher focus group – Secondary/post-16 (45 minutes)**

### Explore how careers is covered

1. What is your role in careers education and guidance?
  - a. What careers/jobs/progression advice do you provide/what help do students ask for? Subject specific/general? Types of students (age/KS/academic/vocational, low/high attainers)
  - b. Do you provide any careers information/guidance to parents? Detail on when, what, how.
2. Where do you get your information from to answer questions/provide careers information to students/parents?
  - a. What sources - how useful is this, gaps, ease of use

### Explore what information/data/tools are used

3. Do you use any careers/jobs/progression information, tools or data to help you deliver careers education and guidance to students (e.g. talking about progression, jobs)?
  - a. What types/specific examples (*ask separately about data/tools*)
  - b. Who for (decision stages/ages of students/parents)
  - c. How do you use them (integration into curriculum/class, informally)?
  - d. What are the sources of information, data, tools do

### Evaluating use of information, data, tools

4. What decisions do the information/tools you use help to inform? How does this vary by user and decision point?
5. Do you have enough information? What is missing?

6. What are the most/least important sources of information/tools and why?
7. Why use/don't use sources of information/tools? What are the challenges to using different sources of information/tools and how does this differ by audience (learners, parents, teachers, governors, employers etc.)?
8. How do you best support students' use and interpretation of careers information/data/tools (e.g. IT skills, accessibility, etc.)

#### Improving careers education and guidance

9. What other information/data/tools would be helpful for delivering good careers education?
  - a. How does that vary by age/year group (KS4/KS5/HE/FE) and audience (students, parents, disadvantaged learners/SEN, etc.)?
  - b. What information would be helpful for your students to help them think about the kind of career they would like to have?
  - c. What format would that come in? How would you like to access it? What would be the best way to engage them?
10. Any other suggestions on how to improve careers education in secondary/post-16 education (around use of destination measures, LMI/careers information and use of tools)?

Destination data (this means information telling you where learners/students have gone after leaving Years 11 or 13, for example, if they have gone to college or university, or employment, or an apprenticeship).

What's your understanding of 'destination data'?

11. Does the school/college produce its own destination data? Do you use it?
  - a. What aspects (certain stages/progression/leaver data)
  - b. In what way, what for?
  - c. Is the school/college's data used for any strategic planning (e.g. curriculum planning/offer, marketing work to attract new students)?
12. Do you use destination data of other education/training providers (schools, FE, WBL, HE)?
  - a. How/when do you use it? Why/why not?

- b. By key stage/year group, KS4, KS5, FE/HE, etc.
- c. Where do you look for destination data – sources/format?
- d. What do you look for?

13. What specifically is useful/not useful about destination data?

14. How could destination data be better used (e.g. strategic planning, careers information, advice and guidance) (*i.e. information on the destinations of leavers (e.g. information on students continuing their education, training through an apprenticeship, in paid employment, etc.)*)

Labour Market Information (i.e. information about jobs, employment rates, rates of pay etc.)

15. What's your understanding of 'Labour Market Information'?

16. Do you use it? How/when do you use it?

17. What specifically is useful/not useful about it?

18. Is there a local/national perspective?

19. How do you access Labour Market Information (sources and format of data)? How could it be improved?

20. Is there anything missing/what Labour Market Information or tools would you like to see?

## **Student focus group – Secondary/post-16 (30 minutes)**

### Thinking about options, careers and next steps

1. Background – current stage in decision process (yr 9 options/post-16 options/post-18 options), general discussion on how finding this process.
2. Have you thought about what your next steps will be (A levels/university/college/Apprenticeship – depending on year group)?
  - a. What are your plans for your next steps and after that?
  - b. Did/do you have the right information to help make a decision?
  - c. What sources of information did you use? Was this via portals/websites/other sources/specific tools? If yes, where?

- d. How easy was it to access the information you needed? How could this be improved?
  - e. If no, what would you like to see? What is missing?
3. Have you thought about what you would like to do in the future for a job or career? What are your thoughts on this? Do you have a career in mind?
- a. Did you receive any information that helped you to consider your career options? If so, from where, what format?

TASK – Tools/information mapping exercise

4. What careers/jobs/progression information/tools/activities are you aware of? (spontaneous and then prompted via sort cards)
- a. Which have you used?
5. When/how have you used them? Inside/outside school/college? Integrated into lessons? What decision points have you used them for?
6. Does your school/college offer any information, tools or activities to help you make decisions about your options/subjects or qualification choices and to think about your future? (e.g. internet access, career planning tools, careers department/library, careers videos, etc.)
7. What sources and tools do you use outside of school to help make choices about next steps/careers decisions?
8. Which do you think have been most useful so far – what decisions have they most influenced? Explain why.
9. How trustworthy do you feel these sources of information/tools are? Why?
10. Why don't use sources of information/tools? What are the challenges to using different sources of information/tools?
11. Do you have enough information? What is missing?
12. What would make careers guidance information more useful/easier to access?
13. What tools would be helpful to you when making decisions about your future options/career?
- a. What would the tools help you to do/know?

b. What format would they come in? How would you like to access them?

14. Is there anything different that your school/college or universities, employers and other organisations that help with careers education and guidance could do to make it easier for you to make the right decisions for your future?

Destination data (this means information telling you where learners/students have gone after leaving Years 11 or 13, for example, if they have gone to college or university, or employment, or an apprenticeship).

15. Have you heard of it before, what's your understanding of 'destination data'?

16. Do/have you used it? How/when? Why/why not?

17. Is it easy to find/interpret?

18. Did you look at the institution's (current) destination data before coming here (e.g. if college/sixth form)? Why, how did you access it, did it help you make a decision? Why?

19. What specifically is useful/not useful about destination data or would it be useful/why? What are the benefits of using destination data?

20. How do/would you like to access destination data (sources and format of data)? How could it be improved?

21. How important/valuable is destination data when choosing your next steps?

Labour Market Information (i.e. information about jobs, employment rates, rates of pay etc.)

22. Have you heard of it before, what's your understanding of 'Labour Market Information'?

23. Do/have you used it? How/when?

24. Is it easy to find/interpret?

25. What specifically is useful/not useful about it? What are the benefits of using Labour Market Information?

26. Is there a local or national perspective?

27. How do you access Labour Market Information (sources and format of data)? How could it be improved?



28. Is there anything missing/what Labour Market Information or tools would you like to see?

## **Parents focus group/interview – Secondary/post-16 (30 minutes)**

### Explore current situation and decisions made so far

1. Background – stage child is at in careers planning/decision process (yr 9 options/post-16 options/post-18 options), general discussion on how finding this process.
  - a. Have you/your child started to think about their next steps - choice/options/subject choices and career choices? If so, when did you first start?
  - b. How involved are/were you in making these decisions?
  - c. What kind of information are/were you/your child looking for to help you make these decisions?
  - d. What sources did you use?

### Accessing information/tools

2. As a parent, what information, tools or activities have you used to help you with making your child's education/careers choices?
  - a. How useful is it/has it been?
3. What decision points have you used them for?
  - a. Choice of secondary school, subjects/options, KS4/post-16, KS5/HE/FE, etc.
  - b. Decision points they are most useful for/most influential over?
4. How easy is it to find the information you need? How accessible is it/easy to use/interpret the information/tools?
5. What are the most/least important sources of information/tools and why? What do you like/dislike about them and why?
6. What are the challenges to using different sources of information/tools? Why don't use sources of information/tools?
7. Do you have enough information? What is missing?

8. What would make careers guidance information more useful/easier to access?

Improving careers education and guidance

9. What information/data (destination data/LMI) would be helpful to you when making decisions about future options/career for your child?

- a. What is most important in helping you make these decisions?
- b. What format would that come in? How would you like to access it?

10. What tools would be helpful to you when making decisions about future options/career for your child?

- a. What would the tools help you to do/know?
- b. What format would they come in? How would you like to access them?

Destination data (this means information telling you where learners/students have gone after leaving Years 11 or 13, for example, if they have gone to college or university, or employment, or an apprenticeship).

11. Have you heard of it before, what's your understanding of 'destination data'?

12. Do/have you used it? How/when?

13. Is it easy to find/interpret?

14. What specifically is useful/not useful about destination data or would it be useful/why? What are the benefits of using destination data?

15. How important/valuable is destination data when choosing next steps?

16. How could destination data be made more useful/meaningful to you, parents, educational establishments, employers, etc?

Labour Market Information (i.e. information about jobs, employment rates, rates of pay etc.)

17. Have you heard of it before, what's your understanding of 'Labour Market Information'?

18. Do/have you used it? How/when? Why/why not?

19. Is it easy to find/interpret?

20. What specifically is useful/not useful about it? What are the benefits of using Labour Market Information?
21. How important/valuable is Labour Market Information when choosing your child's next steps?
22. Is there anything missing/what Labour Market Information or tools would you like to see?
23. How could Labour Market Information be made more useful/meaningful to you, your child, etc? How could it be improved?

# Parent survey questionnaire

## Parent and carers survey

### About you and your child

For these first few questions we'd like you to think about the child who is attending the school that sent you this survey. If you have more than one child at this school please think about your oldest child.

#### S1. How old is your child? (SC) [\[drop down list\]](#)

- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10
- 11
- 12
- 13
- 14
- 15
- 16
- 17
- 18

#### S2. Are they? (SC)

- Male
- Female

#### S3. Are they at? (SC)

- Primary School – [ROUTE TO Q1](#)
- Secondary School (Years 7-11) - [ROUTE TO Q5](#)
- Sixth form at a Secondary School - [ROUTE TO Q5](#)
- Sixth form college/Further Education college - [ROUTE TO Q5](#)

### Talking to your children about careers and jobs

**FOR PARENTS OF PRIMARY AGED LEARNERS ONLY THOSE WHO ANSWERED 'PRIMARY' AT S3:**

**Q1. How often do you talk to your child about jobs or careers they could do in the future? (SC)**

Regularly

Sometimes

Rarely

Never

Don't know

**Q2. Have you spoken to them about any of the following...? (MC) Please tick all that apply**

- different job roles/careers and what they would involve e.g. what you do for job
- things that they enjoy doing now at school that they might want to do in the future
- different sectors they could work in (e.g. Science, Retail, Hospitality)
- what they want to do when they grow up
- how much you would get paid for different jobs
- what they need to do in the future to achieve a certain job role (e.g. Doctor; teacher) e.g. going on to college, university, the qualifications they'll need;
- different pathways they could choose after age 16 or when they finish their GCSEs/compulsory education e.g. school sixth form, college, university, apprenticeships, getting a job
- what they are planning on doing as a job or career when they have completed their education
- what they are planning on doing as a job or career when they have completed their education
- reasons that they might want to think about a certain career/job role over another e.g. salary, prospects, availability of jobs
- Other (please write in)
- None of these

**Q3. How easy is it to find the information about future jobs and careers for your child ? (SC)**

Very easy

Easy

Neutral

Difficult

Very difficult

Don't know

**Q4. Please tell us how much you agree or disagree with the following statements...?**

## **GRID**

*Strongly agree*

*Agree*

*Neither agree nor disagree*

*Disagree*

*Strongly disagree*

*Not applicable*

I think it is important to speak to your child about different jobs and what they might want to do in the future

I want to encourage my child to have high aspirations for the job and career they could go on to do

I think my child is still too young to be thinking about jobs and careers and what they want to do in the future

My child asks me questions about different jobs and careers

I would like to know more about what I could be talking to my child about in relation to jobs and careers

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

We are also undertaking some telephone interviews with parents/carers as part of the research. This would involve a 20-30 minutes interview over the phone at a time to suit you to find out more about how you are helping your child with decisions about their future.

If you would be willing to take part in a telephone interview, please provide your contact details below and a researcher will contact you. Your contact information will be used for this research study only and will not be shared with any other party. It will be destroyed upon completion of this research:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Contact number \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

**THANK AND CLOSE**

## **SECONDARY/POST-16 SECTION**

**ONLY TO BE COMPLETED BY THOSE WHO ANSWERED 'SECONDARY SCHOOL (YEARS 7-11)', 'SIXTH FORM AT A SECONDARY SCHOOL' OR 'SIXTH FORM COLLEGE/FURTHER EDUCATION COLLEGE' AT S3**

**Q5. Has your child's school or college spoken to them about jobs or careers they could do in the future? (SC)**

Yes  
No  
Don't know

**Q6. How often do you talk to your child about jobs or careers they could do in the future? (SC)**

Regularly  
Sometimes  
Rarely  
Never  
Don't know

**Q7. Have you spoken to your child about any of the following...? Please tick all that apply (MC)**

- different job roles/careers and what they would involve e.g. what you do for job
- things that they enjoy doing now at school that they might want to do in the future
- different sectors they could work in (e.g. Science, Retail, Hospitality)
- what they want to do as an adult
- how much you would get paid for different jobs
- what they need to do in the future to achieve a certain job role (e.g. Doctor; teacher) e.g. going on to college, university, the qualifications they'll need;
- different pathways they could choose after age 16 or when they finish their GCSEs/compulsory education e.g. school sixth form, college, university, apprenticeships, getting a job
- what they are planning on doing when they leave school/college i.e. whether they want to go on to school sixth form, college, university, apprenticeships, getting a job
- what they are planning on doing as a job or career when they have completed their education
- reasons that they might want to think about a certain career/job role over another e.g. salary, prospects, availability of jobs
- Other (please write in)
- None of these

## Use of information and tools

**Q8. Where do you go to find the information you need to help you have conversations with your child about future careers and jobs? Please tick all that apply (MC)**

- My own experience of careers/jobs
- Speaking to teaching staff at the School/college my child attends
- Speaking to careers staff at the school/college my child attends
- Internet
- Social media
- Newspapers
- Books
- Local news about jobs/careers
- Speaking to other parents/friends
- None of these
- Other (please write)

**Q9. Have you used any of the following tools to help you when you're speaking to your child about future careers/jobs. Tick all that apply (MC)**

- Tools that help you find out about what different careers may suit you (e.g. based on your qualifications, skills, personality)-**ROUTE TO Q10a**
- Tools that help you find out about different job roles and their potential salaries - **ROUTE TO Q10a**
- Tools that help you find out about different job roles in the local area - **ROUTE TO Q10a**
- Tools that help you find out about different courses (e.g. college courses, training courses, apprenticeships etc.) - **ROUTE TO Q10a**
- Tools that help you with decisions about different pathways after age 16 or when finishing GCSEs/compulsory education e.g. school sixth form, college, university, apprenticeships, getting a job - **ROUTE TO Q10a**
- Tools that help you develop your skills for the future e.g. interview and CV tips - **ROUTE TO Q10a**
- Tools that help you find work placements/internships **ROUTE TO Q10a**
- Other (please write in) - **ROUTE TO Q10a**
- None of these –**ROUTE TO Q11**

**IF RESPONDENT SELECTS ANY TOOL AT Q9 THEY ARE ROUTED ON TO ANSWER Q10a THEN Q10b and 10c. THOSE SELECTING 'NONE OF THESE' AT Q9 ARE ROUTED TO Q11.**



Q10a. Which of these statements describes how you use the tools...? *Tick all that apply* (MC)

- I use the tools myself
- I tell my child about the tools and then they use them
- My child and I use the tools together
- Other (please write in)

Q10b. How useful do you find these tools for finding the information you need? (SC)

- Very useful
- Quite useful
- Not very useful
- Not at all useful
- Don't know

Q10c. How easy is it to find the tools and information you need? (SC)

- Very easy
- Easy
- Neutral
- Difficult
- Very difficult

### **Use of destinations data (THIS SECTION ONLY FOR THOSE OF CHILDREN AGE 14, 16 AND 18)**

*By destination data we mean information telling you where learners/students have gone after leaving secondary school or college, for example, if they have gone to university, or employment, or an apprenticeship).*

**Q11. Have you used any of the following destinations data to help you in the conversations that you're having with your child about choosing where they want to move on next (e.g. college, school sixth form, college, university, apprenticeships, getting a job)? *Tick all that apply* (MC)**

Information on students' **academic achievements** at the sixth form/college/university/training provider (e.g. number of A'levels or vocational qualifications achieved; average point score; % who achieve first or second class degrees) - [ROUTE TO Q12b](#)

Information about how many students go on to **different pathways** (e.g. school sixth form, college, university, apprenticeships, getting a job - [ROUTE TO Q12b](#))

Information on what **types of jobs** current students at the sixth form/college/university/training provider go on to do - [ROUTE TO Q12b](#)

Information on what types of careers current students at the sixth form/college/university/training provider go on to do - [ROUTE TO Q12b](#)

I haven't used destinations data –[ROUTE TO Q12a](#)

Other (please write in) – [ROUTE TO Q12b](#)

**IF SELECTED 'I HAVEN'T USED DESTINATION DATA' AT Q11 ANSWER Q12a, THEN ROUTE TO SECTION ON LMI.**

**Q12a. You have said that you have not used destinations data. We are interested in understanding why you haven't used this data. Please select all that apply. (MC)**

I didn't know it was available

I don't know where to find it

It isn't easy to use

I don't think it would be useful to either myself or my child

I've not used it yet, but I may use it in the future

**IF USED DESTINATION DATA AT Q11 (ie SELECTING ANYTHING OTHER THAN 'I HAVE NOT USED DESTINATIONS DATA') – ROUTE TO 12b/13/14/15/16/17**

**Q12b. Which of these statements best describes how you use the destination data...? (SC)**

I use the destination data myself to inform decisions for my child

I tell my child about the destination data and then they go off and look at it themselves

My child and I use and talk about the destination data together

**IF USED DESTINATIONS DATA AT Q11**

**Q13. How useful do you find this destinations data? (SC)**

Very useful

Quite useful

Not very useful

Not at all useful

Don't know

### **IF USED DESTINATIONS DATA AT Q11**

**Q14. How easy is it to find this destination data? (SC)**

- Very easy
- Easy
- Neutral
- Difficult
- Very difficult
- Don't know

### **IF USED DESTINATIONS DATA AT Q11**

**Q15. Where do you get this destination data from? *Tick all that apply* (MC)**

- College/University/training provider's website
- Department for Education
- Local authority websites
- UCAS
- National Careers Service
- Higher Education Statistics Agency
- Teaching Staff/Other staff at child's school/college
- Careers Advisor
- Newspaper article
- Other careers website (please write in)
- Other Government website (please write in)
- Other (please write in)

**Q16. How important do you think destination data is in helping you and your child choose where they want to move on to next? (SC)**

- Very important
- Quite important
- Not very important
- Not at all important
- Don't know

### **Use of Labour Market Information (THIS SECTION ONLY FOR THOSE OF CHILDREN AGE 14, 16 AND 18)**

*By labour market information we mean information about work and employment such as salaries, the availability of jobs, skills gaps and demand for jobs in local areas.*

**Q17. Have you used any of the following information to help you in the conversations that you're having with your child about choosing where they want to move on next (e.g. college, school sixth form, college, university, apprenticeships, getting a job)? (MC)**

Skills required for specific jobs - [ROUTE TO Q18b](#)

The average salary of jobs - [ROUTE TO Q18b](#)

The availability of jobs for a specific career or industry - [ROUTE TO Q18b](#)

The local area/regional demand for jobs in a specific industry - [ROUTE TO Q18b](#)

How in demand certain jobs/careers will be in the future - [ROUTE TO Q18b](#)

I have not used any of this type of information - [ROUTE TO Q18a](#)

Other (please write in) - [ROUTE TO Q18b](#)

#### **IF CODED NOT USED AT Q17**

**Q18a. You have said that you have not used Labour Market Information. We are interested in understanding why you have not used this information. Please select all that apply (MC)**

I don't know where to find it

I didn't know it was available

I don't think it would be useful to either myself or my child

I've not used it yet, but I may use it in the future

I find it confusing

#### **IF USED LMI AT Q17. (ie SELECTING ANYTHING OTHER THAN 'I HAVE NOT USED THIS TYPE OF INFORMATION) – ROUTE TO 18b**

**Q18b. Which of these statements best describes how you use the labour market information...? (MC)**

I use the labour market information myself

I tell my child about the labour market information and then they go off and look at it themselves

My child and I use and talk about the labour market information together

#### **IF USED LMI AT Q17**

**Q19. How useful do you find this labour market information?**

Very useful

- Quite useful
- Not very useful
- Not at all useful
- Don't know

### IF USED LMI AT Q17

#### Q20. How easy is it to find this labour market information?

- Very easy
- Easy
- Neutral
- Difficult
- Very difficult

### IF USE LMI AT Q17

#### Q21. Where do you get this labour market information from? *Tick all that apply* (MC)

- Newspaper article
- College/University/training provider's website
- Office for National Statistics
- Job Centre Plus
- Higher Education Statistics Agency
- Local authority websites e.g. Local Labour Market Information Portal
- National Careers Service
- UCAS
- Friends/families experience/knowledge
- My own professional networks
- Teaching Staff/Other staff at child's school/college
- Careers Advisor
- Other careers website (please write in)
- Other Government website (please write in)
- Other (please write in)

#### Q22. How important are the following in your decision to use labour market information to help your child make decisions about their future?

### GRID

Very important to me  
Quite important to me  
Not very important to me  
Not at all important to me  
Don't know

So that I'm more informed about what my child's options are  
To ensure my child is thinking about all the options available to them  
To encourage my child to think about jobs and careers where there are going to be lots of opportunities in the future  
So that I can give the information to them to help them in their decision-making  
Other (please write in)

### **Attitudinal questions (ALL PARENTS)**

**Q23. Please tell us how much you agree or disagree with the following statements...?**

#### **GRID**

*Strongly agree*  
*Agree*  
*Neither agree nor disagree*  
*Disagree*  
*Strongly disagree*  
*Not applicable*

I think it is important to speak to your child about different jobs and what they might want to do in the future  
I want to encourage my child to have high aspirations for the job and career they could go on to do  
I think my child is still too young to be thinking about jobs and careers and what they want to do in the future  
My child asks me questions about different jobs and careers  
My child has a clear idea about what they want to move on do next in terms of education, employment or training  
I would like to know more about what I could be talking to my child about in relation to jobs and careers

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

We are also undertaking some telephone interviews with parents as part of the research. This would involve a 20-30 minutes interview over the phone at a time to suit you to find out more about how you are helping your child with decisions about their future.

If you would be willing to take part in a telephone interview, please provide your contact details below and a researcher will contact you. Your contact information will be used for this research study only and will not be shared with any other party. It will be destroyed upon completion of this research:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Contact number \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

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