

**Curriculum and
Assessment
Review**

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**Polling of key stage 4 and 16 to 19
learners and parents: summer 2024**

March 2025

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Introduction

The Department for Education (DfE) commissioned polling of young people who received results from their key stage 4 (KS4) or 16 to 19 studies in summer 2024, and the parents of young people who received their results in this period, on behalf of the Curriculum and Assessment Review. This polling was designed to gather young people's and parents' views on a range of topics related to the phase of education they/their children had just completed, including subject choice; other areas they would have liked (or liked their child) to spend more time on; exams and assessments; and the impact of education on preparation for further study or work.

Additional data tables of the polling, which includes detail breakdown by gender, age, region, ethnicity, social grade, work status (parents only), annual household income (parents only), special education needs and disability (SEND) status, result type, education setting and school type, are included in Annex: Polling of key stage 4 and 16 to 19 learners and parents – detailed results¹.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/curriculum-and-assessment-review-interim-report>

Main findings

Information and guidance on subject choice

Table 1 shows the learner and parent responses on whether they or their child had enough information and guidance to make informed subject choices in the phase of study they or their child just completed.

- The majority of learners who received their key stage 4 results (75%) or results from their 16 to 19 studies (67%) agreed that there was enough information and guidance to make informed subject choices in the phase of education they just completed. However, 12% of key stage 4 learners and around a fifth of 16 to 19 learners (19%) did not think they had enough information and guidance to make informed subject choices.
- Similarly, a majority of parents of learners who received their key stage 4 results (81%) or 16 to 19 results (79%) also agreed that they had enough information and guidance to help their child make informed subject choices in the phase of education their child just completed. 9% of parents of key stage 4 learners and 16 to 19 learners did not think they had enough information and guidance to help their child make informed subject choices.

**Table 1. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement:
I had enough information and guidance to make informed choices about/to
help my child choose which subjects to take?**

	Key stage 4 learners	16 to 19 learners	Parents of key stage 4 learners	Parents of 16 to 19 learners
Strongly disagree	4%	6%	2%	2%
Disagree	8%	13%	7%	7%
Neither agree nor disagree	12%	13%	10%	11%
Agree	54%	47%	54%	57%
Strongly agree	21%	20%	27%	22%
Don't know	*2	*	*	*
Disagree (all)	12%	19%	9%	9%
Agree (all)	75%	67%	81%	79%
Net	+63ppt	+48ppt	+72ppt	+70ppt

² Data has been suppressed where the unweighted sample size is below 10

Whether learners could take all subjects they wanted to

Table 2 shows the learner and parent responses on whether they or their child was able to take all the subjects they or their child wanted to.

- For key stage 4 learners, 76% agreed that they were able to take all the subjects they wanted to, compared with 16% who disagreed
- For 16 to 19 learners, 74% agreed that they were able to take all the subjects they wanted to, compared with 16% who disagreed
- For parents of key stage 4 learners, 84% agreed that their child was able to take all the subjects their child wanted to, compared with 10% who disagreed
- For parents of 16 to 19 learners, 81% agreed that their child was able to take all the subjects their child wanted to, compared with 10% who disagreed

**Table 2. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement:
I/ my child was able to take all the subjects I/they wanted to?**

	Key stage 4 learners	16 to 19 learners	Parents of key stage 4 learners	Parents of 16 to 19 learners
Strongly disagree	3%	4%	2%	2%
Disagree	13%	12%	8%	8%
Neither agree nor disagree	8%	10%	6%	9%
Agree	45%	46%	50%	49%
Strongly agree	31%	28%	34%	32%
Don't know	*	*	*	*
Disagree (all)	16%	16%	10%	10%
Agree (all)	76%	74%	84%	81%
Net	+60ppt	+58ppt	+74ppt	+71ppt

Table 3 shows learners' and parents' explanations on the extent to which they or their child was able to take their desired mixed of subjects:

- For key stage 4 learners who were not able to take all of the subjects they wanted to, 41% were not able to take all the subjects they wanted due to them not being available at the school, compared with 24% due to timetable clashes, 8% due to preferring other subjects, 19% due to teacher discouragement and 27% due to lack of choice after compulsory subjects.
- For 16 to 19 learners who were not able to take all of the subjects they wanted to, 40% were not able to take all the subjects they wanted due to them not being available at the school, compared with 25% due to timetable clashes, 19% due to preferring other subjects, 31% due to teacher discouragement.

- For parents of key stage 4 learners who stated their child was not able to take all of the subjects they wanted to, 28% were not able to take all the subjects they wanted due to them not being available at the school, compared with 33% due to timetable clashes, 6% due to preferring other subjects, 11% due to teacher discouragement and 19% due to lack of choice after compulsory subjects.
- For parents of 16 to 19 learners who stated their child was not able to take all of the subjects they wanted to, 35% were not able to take all the subjects they wanted due to them not being available at the school, compared with 38% due to timetable clashes, 38% due to preferring other subjects, 19% due to teacher discouragement and 19% due to lack of choice after compulsory subjects.

Table 3. For those who were/ whose child was not able to take all of the subjects they wanted to - Why were you/ was your child not able to take all of the subjects you/they wanted to?

	Key stage 4 learners	16 to 19 Learners	Parents of key stage 4 learners	Parents of 16 to 19 learners
<i>Base: those who were [whose child was] not able to take all of the subjects they wanted to</i>	79	79	50	48
The subject(s) were not available at my [child's] school	41%	40%	28%	35%
Timetabling clashes with other subjects	24%	25%	33%	38%
I [/they] decided other subjects were more important	8%	19%	6%	38%
My [child's] school or teacher(s) discouraged me [/them] from taking certain subjects	19%	31%	11%	19%
I [/my child] didn't have much choice left after my [/their] compulsory subjects	27%	- ³	19%	-
Other	9%	3%	20%	*
Don't know	2%	2%	5%	4%

³ Question is not applicable

Factors influencing subject choices

Table 4 shows parent responses on why they prefer their child to take useful or enjoyable subjects. Participants were asked to provide an answer on a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 is 'much more important to choose useful subjects', 5 is 'much more important to choose enjoyable subjects', and 3 is 'both are equally important.'

- For parents of key stage 4 learners, 18% said it was more important to choose useful subjects; 29% said it was more important to choose enjoyable subjects and 53% said both were equally important
- For parents of 16 to 19 learners, 16% said it was more important to choose useful subjects; 27% said it was more important to choose enjoyable; and 57% said that both were equally important.

Table 4. Thinking about your child's choice of subjects for Year 10 and 11, do you think it is more important for them to choose subjects that will be useful to them, or to choose subjects that they enjoy?

	Parents of Key Stage 4 learners	Parents of 16 to 19 learners
1 – much more important to choose useful subjects	12%	8%
2	6%	8%
3 – both are equally important	53%	57%
4	12%	14%
5 – much more important to choose enjoyable subjects	17%	13%
Don't know	*	*
More important to choose useful subjects (all)	18%	16%
More important to choose enjoyable subjects (all)	29%	27%
Net	+11ppt	+11ppt

Table 5 shows the learner and parent responses on why they or their child choose their or their child's subjects.

- For key stage 4 learners, 71% considered what they enjoyed; 70% considered whether they were good at it; 60% said they considered what would be useful in later life, 23% considered what their teacher encouraged them to do; 23% considered what their parents encouraged them to do; 16% considered the number of exams compared to other forms of assessment; and 11% considered how many facts would need to be memorised.
- For 16-19 learners, 63% considered what they enjoyed; 57% considered whether they were good at it; 54% said they considered what would be useful

in later life; 19% considered what their teacher encouraged them to do; 19% considered what their parents encouraged them to do; 19% considered the number of exams compared to other forms of assessment; and 12% considered how many facts would need to be memorised.

Table 5. Which, if any, of the following factors did you consider when making your subjects for Year 10 and 11/ post-16 education or training?

	Key stage 4 learners	16 to 19 learners
What would be useful for my future life or career aspirations	60%	54%
What I enjoyed	71%	63%
Whether I would need to memorise lots of facts	11%	12%
What I was good at	70%	57%
What my school or teacher(s) encouraged me to do	23%	19%
What my parent(s) encouraged me to do	23%	19%
The number of exams (compared to coursework or other assessment methods)	16%	19%
Other	*	*
Don't know	1%	*

Arts and vocational subjects

Table 6 and Table 7 shows the key stage 4 learners' and parent of key stage 4 learners' responses on whether the learner studied an arts subject; whether the parent encouraged their child to do so; and reasons why they did or did not do so.

- For key stage 4 learners, 45% studied an arts subject and 54% did not. For those who did not choose to study an arts subject, 51% did not do so because they did not enjoy them; 45% because they were not very good at them; 38% because they did not think it would be useful to their future; 10% because they thought it would be too much work; 6% because their parents encouraged them not to; 4% because they were not available; and 2% because their school/teacher encouraged them not to.
- For parents of key stage 4 learners, 47% said they encouraged their child to study an arts subject and 51% said they did not. For those who did not encourage their child to study an arts subject, 58% did not do so because their child did not enjoy them; 24% because they did not think the subjects would be useful to their child's future, 21% because their child was not very good at them, 18% because they thought other subjects were more important for their child; 6% because they thought it would be too much work for their child; and 2% because they were not available at their child's school.

Table 6. Did you/ you encourage your child to study an arts subject? (for example, art, music, drama, media, film studies).

	Key stage 4 learners	Parents of key stage 4 learners
Yes	45%	47%
No	54%	51%
Don't know	1%	2%

Table 7. For those who didn't study/ didn't encourage their child to study any arts subjects - Why did you not study/ not encourage your child to study any arts subjects?

	Key stage 4 learners	Parents of key stage 4 learners
<i>Base: those who didn't [/didn't encourage their child to] study any arts subjects</i>	281	258
Not useful for my [child's] future life or career aspirations	38%	24%
I don't [/my child doesn't] enjoy them	51%	58%
Not available at my [child's] school	4%	2%
I am [/my child is] not good at them	45%	21%
My [child's] school or teacher(s) encouraged me [/them] not to	2%	*
My parent(s) encouraged me not to	6%	-
Other academic subjects are more important	-	18%
It would be too much work [for my child]	10%	6%
Other	1%	5%
Don't know	2%	3%

Table 8 and Table 9 show the key stage 4 learner' and parents of key stage 4 learners' responses on whether the learner studied, or whether the parent encouraged their child to study a vocational subject and reasons why they did not do so.

- For key stage 4 learners, 55% studied a vocational subject and 44% did not. For those who did not study a vocational subject, 38% did not do so because they did not enjoy them; 29% because they did not think these subjects would be useful to their future; 18% because they were not available; 20% because they were not very good at them; 5% because they thought it would be too much work; 4% because their school/teacher encouraged them not to and 4% because their parents encouraged them not to.
- For parents of Key stage 4 students, 63% said they encouraged their child to study a vocational subject and 34% said they did not. For those who did not

encouraged their child to study a vocational subject, 48% did so because they did not think their child enjoyed these subjects; 20% because they did not think these subjects would be useful to their child's future, 9% because they were not available in their child's school; 9% because they did not think their child was very good at these subjects; 4% because their child's school / teacher encouraged them not to; 12% because they thought other subjects were more important; and 6% because it would be too much work for their child.

Table 8. Did you study/ encourage your child to study a vocational subject? (for example, business, health and social care, sport).

	Key stage 4 learners	Parents of key stage 4 learners
Yes	55%	63%
No	44%	34%
Don't know	1%	3%

Table 9. For those who didn't study/ didn't encourage their child to study any vocational subjects - Why did you not study/ not encourage your child to study any vocational subjects?

	Key stage 4 learners	Parents of key stage 4 learners
<i>Base: those who didn't [didn't encourage their child to] study any vocational subjects</i>	228	173
Not useful for my [child's] future life or career aspirations	29%	20%
I don't [/my child doesn't] enjoy them	38%	48%
Not available at my [child's] school	18%	9%
I am [/my child is] not good at them	20%	9%
My [child's] school or teacher(s) encouraged me [/them] not to	4%	4%
My parent(s) encouraged me not to	4%	-
Academic (non-vocational) subjects are more important	-	12%
It would be too much work [for my child]	5%	6%
Other	3%	6%
Don't know	8%	7%

Other areas of focus in the curriculum

Table 10 shows the key stage 4 learners' and parents of key stage 4 learners' responses on which area they would have liked or would have liked their child to spend more time on between year 7 and 11.

- For key stage 4 learners, 34% of respondents suggested that they would have liked to spend more time on finance and budgeting; 32% on employment and interview skills; 27% on academic subjects; 26% on digital skills or computing; 26% on creative thinking and problem solving projects; 22% on Sports; 22% on communication; 19% on Technical subjects; 18% on volunteering and outdoor pursuits; and 15% on cultural activities.
- For parents of key stage 4 learners, 43% of respondent suggested that they would have liked their child to spend more time on finance and budgeting; 41% on digital skills or computing; 39% on creative thinking and problem solving projects; 36% on employment and interview skills; 33% on academic subjects; 32% on communication; 31% on Technical subjects; 22% on Sports; 21% on volunteering and outdoor pursuits; and 19% on cultural activities.

Table 10. Which, if any, of the following areas would you have liked/ liked your child to spend more time on between Year 7 and 11?

	Key stage 4 learners	Parents of key stage 4 learners
Cultural activities (for example, art, music, drama, media)	15%	19%
Sports	22%	22%
Academic subjects (for example, maths, science, history)	27%	33%
Technical subjects (for example, design and technology)	19%	31%
Volunteering and outdoor pursuits	18%	21%
Digital skills or computing	26%	41%
Creative thinking and problem-solving projects	26%	39%
Finance and budgeting	34%	43%
Employment and interview skills	32%	36%
Communication (for example, debating, public speaking)	22%	32%
Other	1%	*
None of the above	3%	3%
Don't know	3%	3%

Respondents can select multiple categories and therefore the total will exceed 100%.

16 to 19 learners' views on the key stage 4 and 16 to 19 subject choices and curriculum

Tables 11 to 13 shows 16 to 19 learners' views on their 16 to 19 studies.

- 66% thought the number of subjects they studied was about right; 14% would like to have liked to have studied more subjects; and 19% would like to have studied fewer subjects;

- 41% thought their subject choices in key stage 4 did not limit their post-16 choices but 35% believe that they did;
- 38% thought their 16 to 19 subject choices forced them to specialise too early, compared with 36% who did not think so.

Table 11. Thinking about the number of subjects you took during this time, which of the following statements comes closest to your own view?

	16 to 19 learners
I would have liked to study more subjects	14%
The number of subjects I studied was about right	66%
I would have liked to study fewer subjects	19%
Don't know	1%

Table 12. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: I feel that my subject choices in Year 10 and 11 limited my post-16 study options?

	16 to 19 learners
Strongly disagree	8%
Disagree	33%
Neither agree nor disagree	22%
Agree	27%
Strongly agree	8%
Don't know	1%
Disagree (all)	41%
Agree (all)	35%
Net	-6ppt

Table 13. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: I feel that my post-16 subject choices forced me to specialise too early?

	16 to 19 learners
Strongly disagree	5%
Disagree	31%
Neither agree nor disagree	24%
Agree	27%
Strongly agree	11%
Don't know	2%
Disagree (all)	36%
Agree (all)	38%
Net	+2ppt

Tables 14 and 15 shows 16 to 19 learners' views on whether they thought requiring everyone to study English and maths up to age 18 would be a good idea.

- 47% thought it would be a good idea to require everyone to study English up to age 18 and 34% thought it would be a bad idea;
- 45% thought it would be a good idea to require everyone to study maths up to age 18 and 40% thought it would be a bad idea.

Table 14. To what extent do you think each of the following would be a good or bad idea: Requiring everyone up to 18 years old to study some form of English?

	16 to 19 learners
A very good idea	19%
A fairly good idea	28%
Neither a good nor bad idea	19%
A fairly bad idea	21%
A very bad idea	13%
Don't know	1%
Good idea (all)	47%
Bad idea (all)	34%
Net	+13ppt

Table 15. To what extent do you think each of the following would be a good or bad idea: Requiring everyone up to 18 years old to study some form of maths?

	16 to 19 learners
A very good idea	18%
A fairly good idea	27%
Neither a good nor bad idea	16%
A fairly bad idea	21%
A very bad idea	19%
Don't know	1%
Good idea (all)	45%
Bad idea (all)	40%
Net	+5ppt

Exams and assessments: fairness, stress and impact on attitude to learning

Table 16 shows the learners' and parents' responses on whether the assessments they took over their/ their child's current course of study were a fair or unfair way of assessing what they/ their child learned.

- For key stage 4 learners, 59% thought the assessments they took were a fair way to assess what they had learnt at key stage 4 and 18% thought they were unfair;

- For 16 to 19 learners, 57% thought the assessments they took were a fair way of assessing what they had learnt in their 16 to 19 studies and 20% they were unfair;
- For parents of key stage 4 learners, 70% thought the assessments their child took were a fair way of assessing what their child had learnt at key stage 4 and 12% thought they were unfair;
- For parents of 16-19 learners, 72% thought the assessments their child took were a fair way of assessing what their child had learnt in their 16 to 19 studies and 11% thought they were unfair.

Table 16. Overall, do you think that the assessments (for example, coursework and exams) that you/ your child took over the course of Year 10 and 11 (for KS4 respondents)/ post-16 education/training (for 16-19 respondents) were a fair or unfair way of assessing what you/they had learned?

	Key stage 4 learners	16 to 19 learners	Parents of key stage 4 learners	Parents of 16 to 19 learners
Very fair	13%	12%	21%	18%
Quite fair	46%	45%	49%	54%
Neither fair nor unfair	21%	23%	17%	16%
Quite unfair	14%	15%	10%	10%
Very unfair	4%	5%	2%	1%
Don't know	2%	1%	1%	1%
Fair (all)	59%	57%	70%	72%
Unfair (all)	18%	20%	12%	11%
Net	+41ppt	+37ppt	+58ppt	+61ppt

Table 17 shows the learners' and parents' responses on whether it was easy or difficult for them/ their child to cope with stress during the exam period.

- For key stage 4 learners, 48% thought it was easy to cope with stress during the exam period and 51% thought it was difficult;
- For 16 to 19 learners, 44% thought it was easy to cope with stress during the exam period and 55% thought it was difficult;
- For parents of key stage 4 learners, 62% thought it was easy for their child to cope with stress during the exam period and 37% thought it was difficult for their child to cope;
- For parents of 16 to 19 students, 60% thought it was easy for their child to cope with stress during the exam period and 39% thought it was difficult for their child to cope.

Table 17. How easy or difficult did you/ your child find it to cope with stress during the exam period?

	Key stage 4 learners	16 to 19 learners	Parents of key stage 4 learners	Parents of 16 to 19 learners
I [/my child] found it very easy to cope	6%	7%	12%	9%
I [/my child] found it quite easy to cope	42%	37%	50%	51%
I [/my child] found it quite difficult to cope	41%	39%	31%	34%
I [/my child] found it very difficult to cope	10%	16%	6%	5%
Don't know	1%	1%	2%	2%
Easy to cope (all)	48%	44%	62%	60%
Difficult to cope (all)	51%	55%	37%	39%
Net	-3ppt	-11ppt	+25ppt	-21ppt

Tables 18 - 22 shows the learners' and parents' responses on the impact of exams on their/ their child's attitude to learning.

For key stage 4 learners:

- 70% thought exams encouraged them to work harder (23% did not);
- 58% thought exams gave them the opportunity to demonstrate all that they had learnt (30% did not);
- 51% thought exams stopped them from learning more widely because they had to focus on exam preparation (38% did not);
- 60% thought exams did not put them off from learning more in the future (30% did);
- 45% thought exams encouraged them to take subjects with fewer exams in the future (40% thought it did not).

For 16 to 19 learners:

- 67% thought exams encouraged them to work harder (25% did not);
- 51% thought exams gave them the opportunity to demonstrate all that they had learnt (40% did not);
- 54% thought exams stopped them from learning more widely because they had to focus on exam preparation (33% did not);
- 52% thought exams did not put them off from learning more in the future (37% did);
- 49% thought exams encouraged them to take subjects with fewer exams in the future (35% did not).

For parents of key stage 4 learners:

- 72% thought exams encouraged their child to work harder (23% did not);
- 70% thought exams gave their child the opportunity to demonstrate all that they had learnt (22% did not);
- 40% thought exams stopped their child from learning more widely because they had to focus on exam preparation (47% did not);
- 67% thought exams did not put their child off from learning more in the future (26% did);
- 39% thought exams encouraged them to take subjects with fewer exams in the future (46% did not).

For parents of 16 to 19 learners:

- 74% thought exams encouraged their child to work harder (20% did not);
- 76% thought exams gave them the opportunity to demonstrate all that they had learnt (16% did not);
- 33% thought exams stopped them from learning more widely because they had to focus on exam preparation (56% did not);
- 68% thought exams did not put their off from learning more in the future (24% did);
- 42% thought exams encouraged them to take subjects with fewer exams in the future (44% did not).

Table 18. Thinking about any impact of exams on your/ your child’s attitude to learning, do you think that exams did or did not: Encourage you/them to work harder?

	Key stage 4 learners	16 to 19 learners	Parents of key stage 4 learners	Parents of 16 to 19 learners
Did	70%	67%	72%	74%
Did not	23%	25%	23%	20%
Don’t know	7%	8%	5%	6%

Table 19. Thinking about any impact of exams on your/ your child’s attitude to learning, do you think that exams did or did not: Reassure you/them that you/they had the opportunity to demonstrate all that you/they had learnt?

	Key stage 4 learners	16 to 19 learners	Parents of key stage 4 learners	Parents of 16 to 19 learners
Did	58%	51%	70%	76%
Did not	30%	40%	22%	16%
Don’t know	12%	9%	9%	8%

Table 20. Thinking about any impact of exams on you/ your child’s attitude to learning, do you think that exams did or did not: Stop you/them from learning more widely because you/they had to focus on exam preparation?

	Key stage 4 learners	16 to 19 learners	Parents of key stage 4 learners	Parents of 16 to 19 learners
Did	51%	54%	40%	33%
Did not	38%	33%	47%	56%
Don’t know	11%	13%	13%	11%

Table 21. Thinking about any impact of exams on your/ your child’s attitude to learning, do you think that exams did or did not: Put you/them off learning more in the future?

	Key stage 4 learners	16 to 19 learners	Parents of key stage 4 learners	Parents of 16 to 19 learners
Did	30%	37%	26%	24%
Did not	60%	52%	67%	68%
Don’t know	10%	11%	7%	8%

Table 22. Thinking about any impact of exams on your/ your child’s attitude to learning, do you think that exams did or did not: Encourage you/ them to take subjects with fewer exams in future?

	Key stage 4 learners	16 to 19 learners	Parents of key stage 4 learners	Parents of 16 to 19 learners
Did	45%	49%	39%	42%
Did not	40%	35%	46%	44%
Don’t know	15%	16%	15%	14%

Table 23 shows the learner and parent responses on whether the number of exams give them/ their child the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and ability.

- For key stage 4 learners, 52% thought the number of exams allowed them to demonstrate their knowledge and ability; 37% thought they had too many exams to do so; and 5% thought they had too few;
- For 16 to 19 learners, 50% thought the number of exams allowed them to demonstrate their knowledge and ability; 35% did not thought they had too many exams to do so; and 10% thought they had too few;
- For parents of key stage 4 learners, 60% thought the number of exams their child took allowed their child to demonstrate their knowledge and ability; 30% thought their child had too many exams to do so; and 3% thought their child had too few;
- For parents of 16 to 19 learners, 64% thought the number of exams their child took allowed their child to demonstrate their knowledge and ability; 26%

thought their child had too many exams to do so; and thought 6% thought their child had too few.

Table 23. Do you think the number of exams you/ your child had allowed you/them to demonstrate your/their knowledge and ability?

	Key stage 4 learners	16 to 19 learners	Parents of key stage 4 learners	Parents of 16 to 19 learners
Yes	52%	50%	60%	64%
No – I [/they] had too many exams	37%	35%	30%	26%
No – I [/they] had too few exams	5%	10%	3%	6%
Don't know	6%	6%	6%	4%

Table 24 shows the learner and parent responses on whether they believe their / their child's grades were fair or unfair.

- For key stage 4 learners, 63% thought the grades they received were fair but 21% thought they were unfair;
- For 16 to 19 learners, 59% thought the grades they received were fair but 23% thought they were unfair;
- For parents of key stage 4 learners, 71% thought the grades their child received were fair but 14% thought they were unfair;
- For parents of 16 to 19 learners, 72% thought the grades their child received were fair but 11% thought they were unfair.

Table 24. Thinking about your/your child's GCSE/A Level, T Level, or VTQ results this year, do you think the grades you/ they received were fair or unfair?

	Key stage 4 learners	16 to 19 learners	Parents of key stage 4 learners	Parents of 16 to 19 learners
Very fair	19%	18%	24%	24%
Quite fair	44%	41%	47%	48%
Neither fair nor unfair	14%	18%	14%	17%
Quite unfair	16%	17%	11%	8%
Very unfair	5%	6%	3%	3%
Don't know	2%	*	1%	1%
Fair (all)	63%	59%	71%	72%
Unfair (all)	21%	23%	14%	11%
Net	+42ppt	+36ppt	+57ppt	+61ppt

Preparation for further studies or work

Table 25 and table 26 shows learners' and parents' responses on whether the subjects they/ their child chose prepared them/ their child well for further studies or work and for those who thought their subject choices prepared them/ their child poorly, reasons why they thought their/ their child's subject choices prepared them/ their child poorly.

- For key stage 4 learners, 57% thought that the subjects they chose in years 10 and 11 prepared them well for further studies or work, with 14% who thought their subjects prepared them poorly. For those who thought their subject choices prepared them poorly, 52% thought they didn't learn the skills and/or knowledge that they need for post-16 study and/or work; 42% thought the subjects were not relevant to what they wanted to do next; and 18% thought they did not choose the right subjects;
- For 16 to 19 learners, 60% thought that the subjects they chose in years 10 and 11 prepared them well for what they wanted to do next, with 13% who thought their subjects prepared them poorly. For those who thought their subject choices prepared them poorly, 54% thought they didn't learn the skills and/or knowledge that they need for the future; 36% thought the subjects were not relevant to what they wanted to do next; and 22% thought they did not choose the right subjects;
- For parents of key stage 4 learners, 66% thought the subjects their child chose prepared their child well for further studies or work, with 11% who thought the subjects prepared their child poorly. For parents of key stage 4 learners who thought their child's subject choices prepared their child poorly,

59% thought their child didn't learn the skills and/or knowledge needed for post-16 study and/or work; 33% thought the subjects were not relevant to what their child wanted to do next; and 13% thought their child did not choose the right subjects;

- For parents of 16 to 19 learners, 74% thought the subjects their child chose prepared their child well for what they wanted to do next, with 8% who thought the subjects prepared their child poorly. For parents of 16 to 19 learners who thought their child's subject choices prepared their child poorly, 46% thought their child didn't learn the skills and/or knowledge that they need for the future; 40% thought the subjects were not relevant to what their child wanted to do next; and 27% thought their child did not choose the right subjects.

Table 25. When considering the subjects you/ your child chose in Years 10 and 11 (for KS4 respondents)/after Year 11 (for 16 to 19 respondents), how well or poorly do you feel these subjects prepared you/your child for further studies or work?

	Key stage 4 learners	16 to 19 learners	Parents of key stage 4 learners	Parents of 16 to 19 learners
Very poorly	3%	3%	3%	2%
Poorly	11%	10%	8%	6%
Neither poorly nor well	26%	25%	22%	17%
Well	42%	42%	44%	50%
Very well	15%	18%	22%	24%
Don't know	3%	1%	2%	1%
Poorly (all)	14%	13%	11%	8%
Well (all)	57%	60%	66%	74%
Net	+43ppt	+47ppt	+55ppt	+66ppt

Table 26. For those who feel their/ their child's subject choices prepared them poorly: Why do you feel that your/ your child's subject choices prepared you/ them poorly?

	Key stage 4 learners	16 to 19 learners	Parents of key stage 4 learners	Parents of 16 to 19 learners
<i>Base: those who feel their [child's] subject choices prepared them poorly</i>	73	66	55	39
I [/my child] didn't choose the right subjects	18%	22%	13%	27%

My [child's] subjects were not relevant to what I [/they] want to do next	42%	36%	33%	40%
I [/my child] didn't learn the skills and knowledge that I [/they] will need for post-16 study or work [/for the future]	52%	54%	59%	46%
Other	3%	2%	5%	2%
Don't know	3%	5%	6%	0%

Table 27 shows the learner and parent responses on whether they believe studying more subjects would have prepared them/ their child better for further studies / work.

- For key stage 4 learners, 36% thought studying more subjects would have made them more prepared for further study or work and 24% thought it would have made them less prepared;
- For 16 to 19 learners, 44% thought studying more subjects would have made them more prepared for what they want to do next and 24% thought it would have made them less prepared;
- For parents of key stage 4 learners, 38% thought their child studying more subjects would have made their child more prepared for further studies or work and 24% thought it would have made their child less prepared;
- For parents of 16 to 19 learners, 48% thought their child studying more subjects would have made their child more prepared for what they want to do next and 15% thought it would have made their child less prepared

Table 27. If you/ your child had to study more subjects in the phase of education they just completed, do you think you/ they would be more or less prepared for your/ their further studies or work/ for what you/they want to do next, or would it have made no difference?

	Key stage 4 learners	16 to 19 learners	Parents of key stage 4 learners	Parents of 16 to 19 learners
Much more prepared	9%	10%	14%	13%
Somewhat more prepared	27%	34%	24%	35%
No difference	36%	29%	34%	35%
Somewhat less prepared	16%	17%	18%	12%
Much less prepared	8%	7%	6%	3%
Don't know	3%	3%	4%	2%
More prepared (all)	36%	44%	38%	48%
Less prepared (all)	24%	24%	24%	15%
Net	+12ppt	+20ppt	+14ppt	+33ppt

Table 28 shows the learner and parent responses on whether they believe their / their child's experience of education has increased or decreased their / their child's appetite for further learning.

- For key stage 4 learners, 38% thought their experience of education had increased their appetite for further learning and 24% thought decreased it;
- For 16 to 19 learners, 44% thought their experience of education had increased their appetite for further learning and 28% thought decreased it;
- For parents of key stage 4 learners, 46% thought their child's experience of education had increased their child's appetite for learning and 23% thought decreased it;
- For parents of 16 to 19 learners, 52% thought their child's experience of education had increased their child's appetite for learning and 18% thought decreased it.

Table 28. Do you think that your/ your child's experience of education so far has increased your/ their appetite for further learning, decreased your/ their appetite for further learning, or has it made no difference?

	Key stage 4 learners	16 to 19 learners	Parents of key stage 4 learners	Parents of 16 to 19 learners
Increased your [/their] appetite for further learning a lot	13%	13%	16%	15%
Increased your [/their] appetite for further learning a little	25%	31%	30%	37%
Made no difference	35%	28%	29%	29%
Decreased your [/their] appetite for further learning a little	17%	22%	17%	12%
Decreased your [/their] appetite for further learning a lot	7%	6%	6%	6%
Don't know	3%	1%	3%	1%
Increased appetite for learning (all)	38%	44%	46%	52%
Decreased appetite for learning (all)	24%	28%	23%	18%
Net	+14ppt	+16ppt	+23ppt	+34ppt

Methodology

DfE commissioned Deltapoll to recruit and poll a sample of young people in England who received results from their key stage 4 or 16 to 19 studies in summer 2024, and the parents of young people who received their results in this period.

The polling took place between 27 August 2024 and 2 September 2024. The respondents were:

- 521 learners who received their key stage 4 results
- 508 learners who received results from their 16 to 19 studies
- 505 parents of young people who received their key stage 4 results
- 519 parents of young people who received results from their 16 to 19 studies

The data has been weighted to be representative of learners and parents in England across a range of variables:

- Results for young people have been weighted to the geographical distribution of young people in England and the distribution of young people across independent and state-funded schools or colleges in England.
- Results for parents have been weighted by gender and to the geographical distribution of parents in England.

All counts and percentages presented in this document are weighted.

Unless otherwise stated, when we refer to the 'average' we are reporting the arithmetic mean. Where results do not sum to 100%, this may be due to multiple responses, computer rounding or the exclusion of don't knows/ not stated.

Some questions were asked only in select surveys. Where a group is excluded from a results table, this indicates the survey for that group did not include that question.

Results are based on all respondents unless otherwise stated.

Curriculum and Assessment Review

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