

Skills  
Development  
Scotland

# How Skills Development Scotland (SDS) uses our young people research to inform and shape careers services

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# Understanding the voice of young people



## S1-S3

### “Pupil Voice: S1-S3”

- Explores the choices, influences and motivations of young people in school between S1 and S3.
- Launches in Spring 2025.



## S4-S6

### “Pupil Voice: S4-S6”

- Views of young people between S4 and S6.
- Explores their experiences of accessing CIAG support and how this has influenced their career pathways.
- **11,000** responses in 2024



## School Leavers

### “Young People’s Career Ambitions” (YPCA)

- Views of recent school leavers.
- Explores their choices, influences and motivations one year after they leave school.
- **3,000** responses in 2024.

# Collaborative approach to research

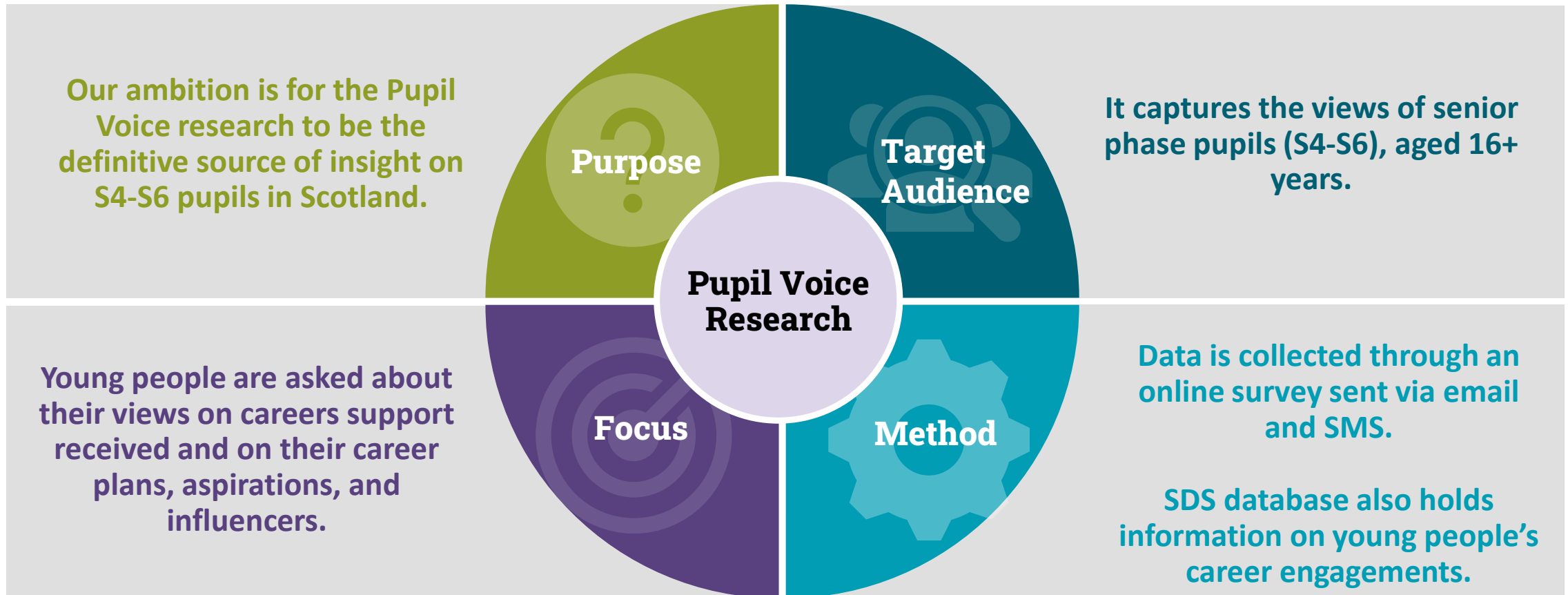
## CIAG



## External partners

Scottish Government	Youthlink	Education Scotland
SQA	Developing Young Workforce	Scottish Funding Council
Open University	MCR Pathways	Edinburgh Napier University
Young Scot	College Development Network	ADES

# Pupil Voice S4-S6



# What Pupil Voice covers

**Finding out  
about services**

**Views on  
careers  
support**

**Career  
Management  
Skills**

**Foundation  
Apprenticeships**

**Reasons  
for non-  
engagement**

**Reasons for  
leaving or  
staying at school**

**Ideal  
job/career**

**Plans after  
school**

**Preferred  
sector**

**Skills required  
for future  
career**

**Employability  
activities**

**Key  
influencers**

**Extracurricular  
activities**



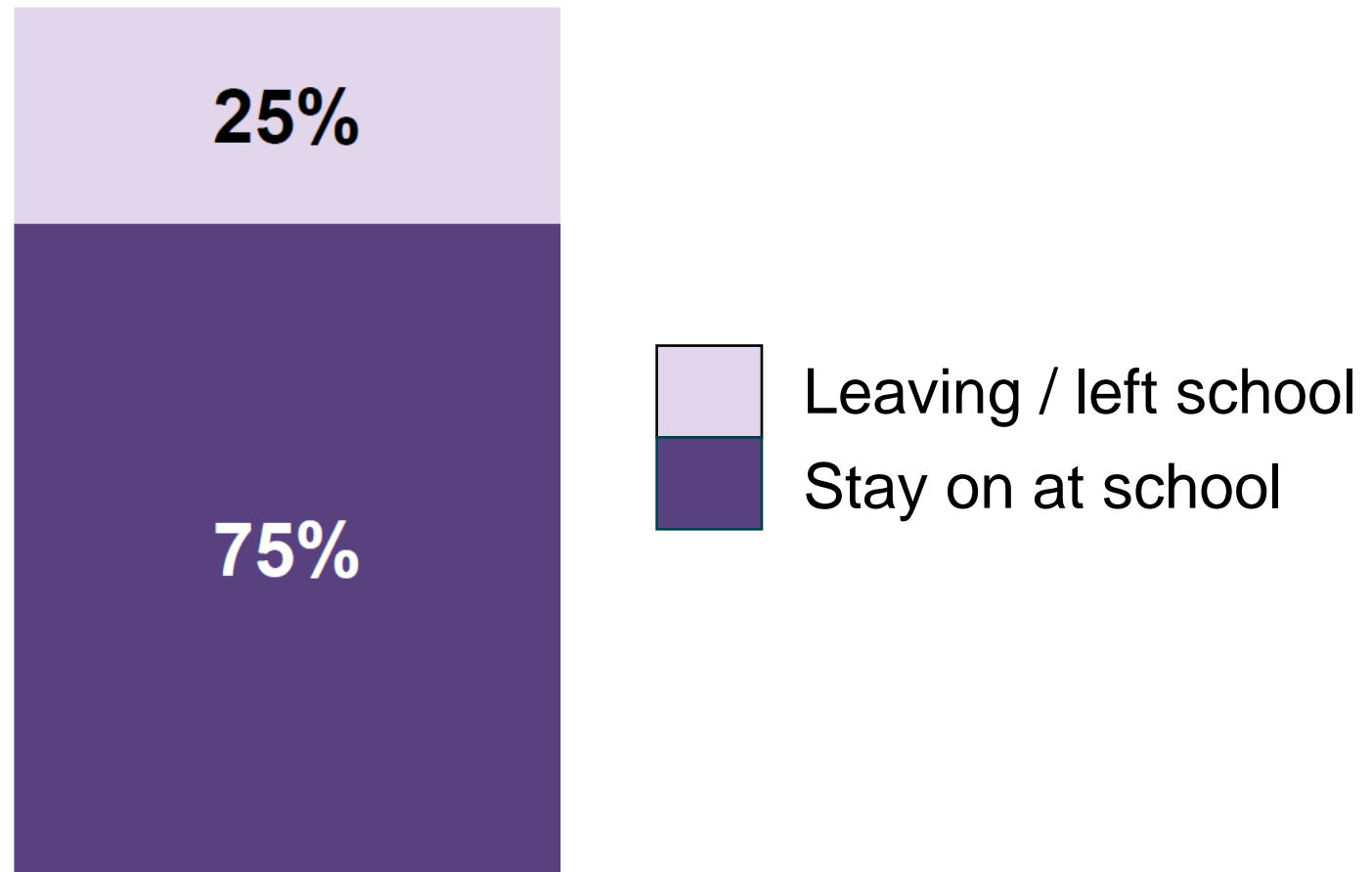
**Equality  
&  
Diversity**



# Young people's post-school plans

# Most S4/S5 pupils plan to stay on at school

Are you planning to stay on at school? (S4/S5 only)



# Pupils stay on at school to gain more qualifications

Reasons for staying until S6	All %
To gain more qualifications	87
To get as much out of school as possible	61
To stay with friends	40
I don't feel ready to leave school	38
I enjoy school	29
I don't know what I want to do after school	22
To participate in extra-curricular activities	20



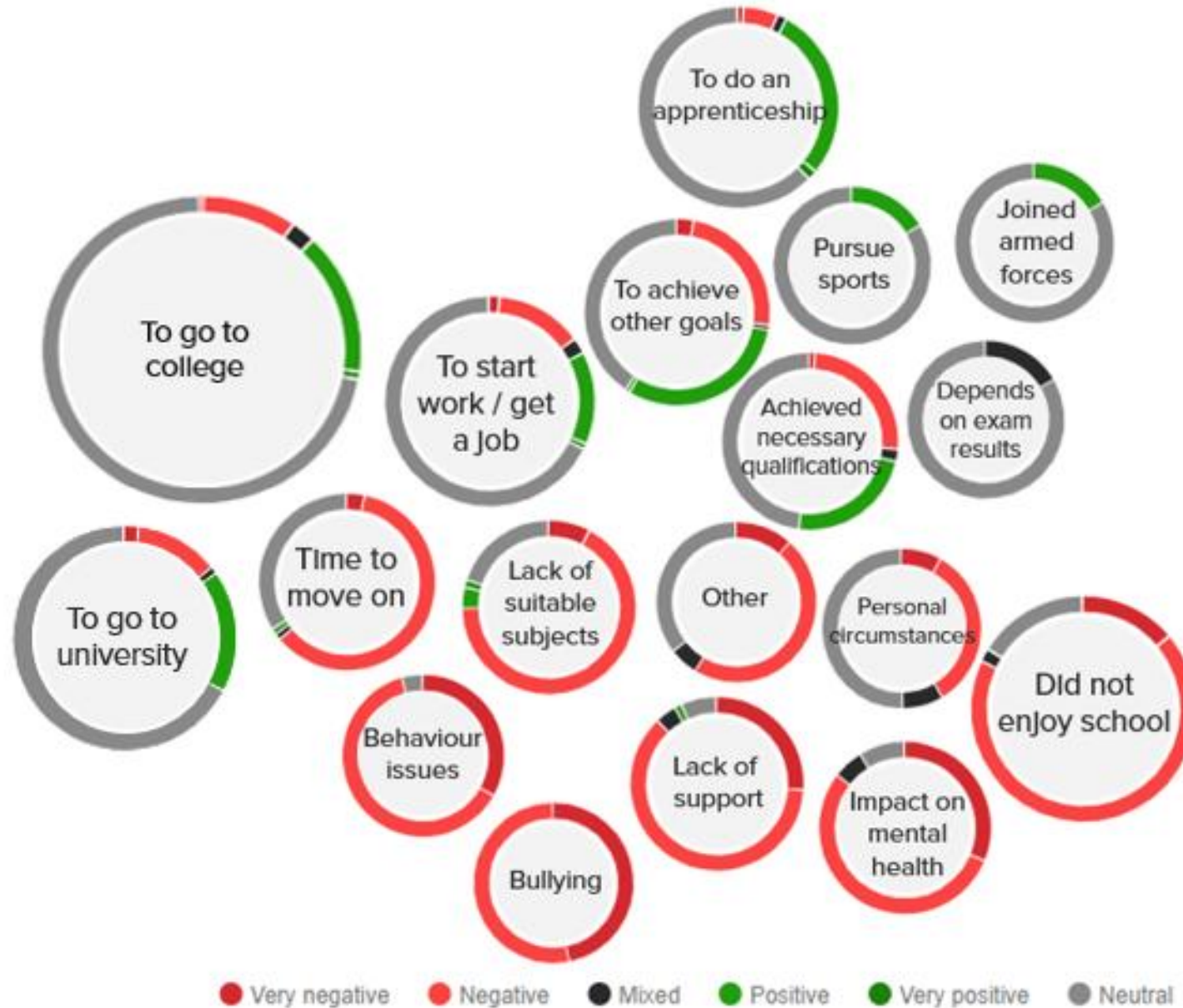
# Majority of pupils **intending to stay on at school** plan to go to university

Destination (stayers)	All %
University course	57
College course	12
Don't know yet	8
Modern Apprenticeship	5
Full-time employment	4

# Pupils who intend to leave school in S4/S5 plan to go to college

Destination (leavers)	All %
College course	54
Modern Apprenticeship	13
Full-time employment	11
Part-time employment	5
University course	5

# Why do pupils intend to leave before S6?





# **Who and what influences young people's career decisions?**

# Young people’s career decisions are influenced by their interests, qualifications, and the need to earn money

Key Career Influencers - Factors	All %	SIMD 1 %	SIMD 5 %
My interests / hobbies	86	85	85
The qualifications I achieved at school	80	80	82
The need to earn money	79	81	78
Education / training opportunities available to me	71	73	71
Job / career opportunities available to me	67	66	66
Work experience in school or part-time job	49	50	45
Social media (including Facebook, Instagram, X, etc.)	48	53	44
Opportunities available within my local area	47	47	44

SIMD 1 = Most deprived 20% areas  
 SIMD 5 = Least deprived 20% areas

# Parents & Carers, Teachers, and Careers Advisers most influential

Key Career Influencers - People	All %	SIMD 1 %	SIMD 5 %
Parent(s) / Carer(s)	79	76	80
Teacher(s)	63	66	58
Careers Adviser	59	69	49
Friend(s)	57	60	53
Other family member	55	58	56
Guidance teacher	52	58	46

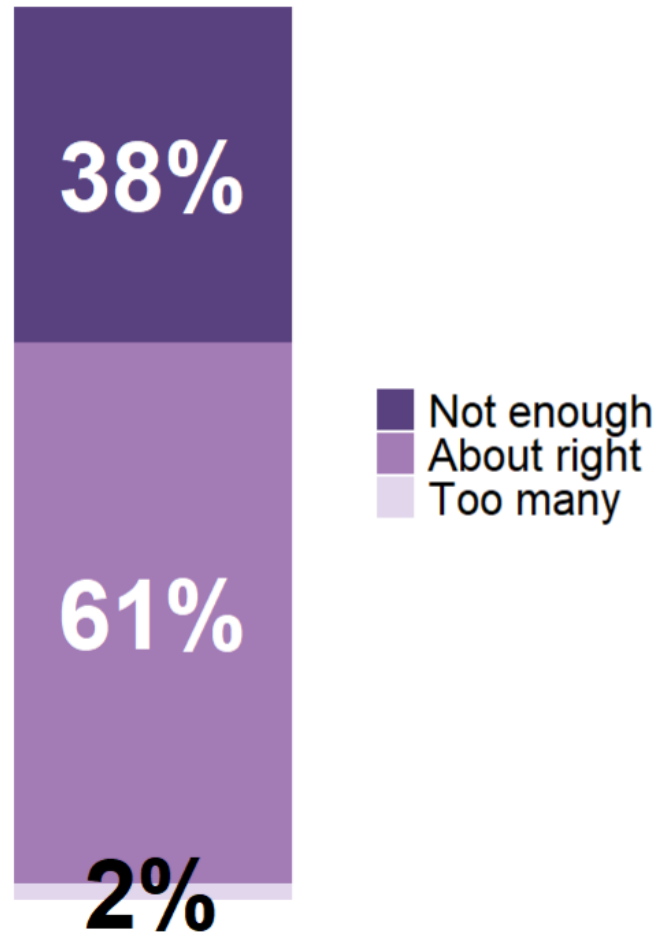
SIMD 1 = Most deprived 20% areas  
 SIMD 5 = Least deprived 20% areas



# What do young people think of careers services?

# Careers interviews are in demand

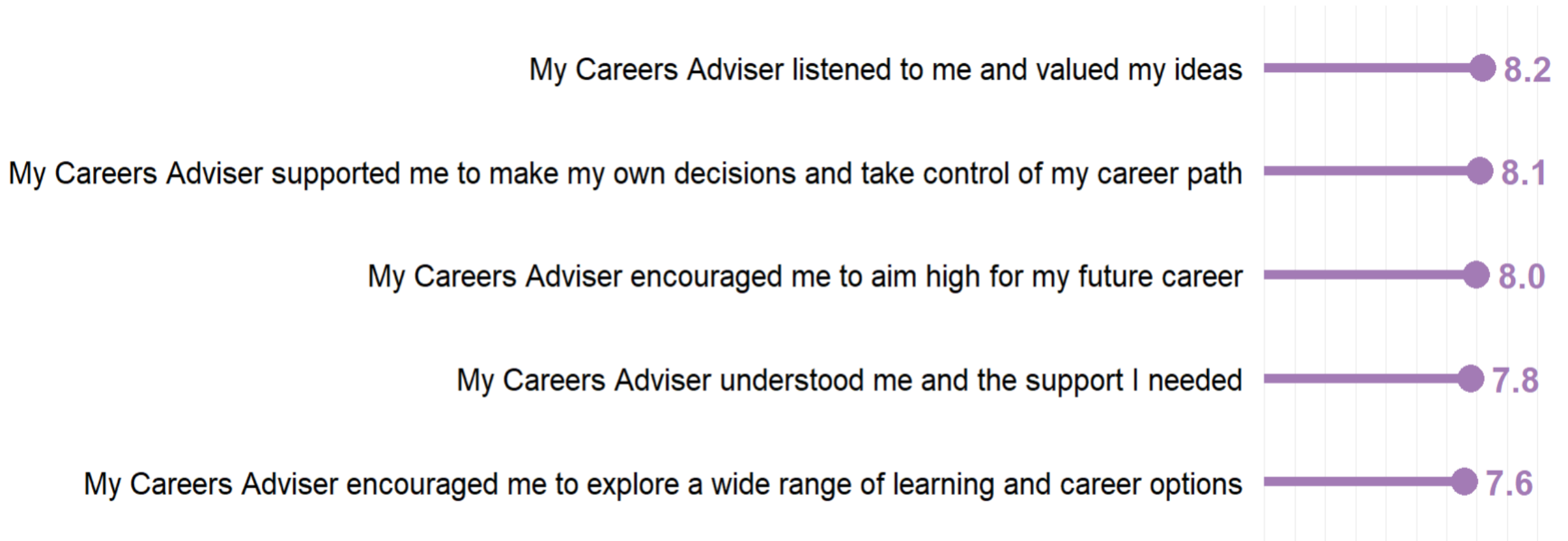
What are your views on the number of interviews you had with your Careers Adviser?





# Support provided in one-to-one interviews was highly valued

Average score out of 10



# Careers services help pupils to develop a range of Careers Management Skills

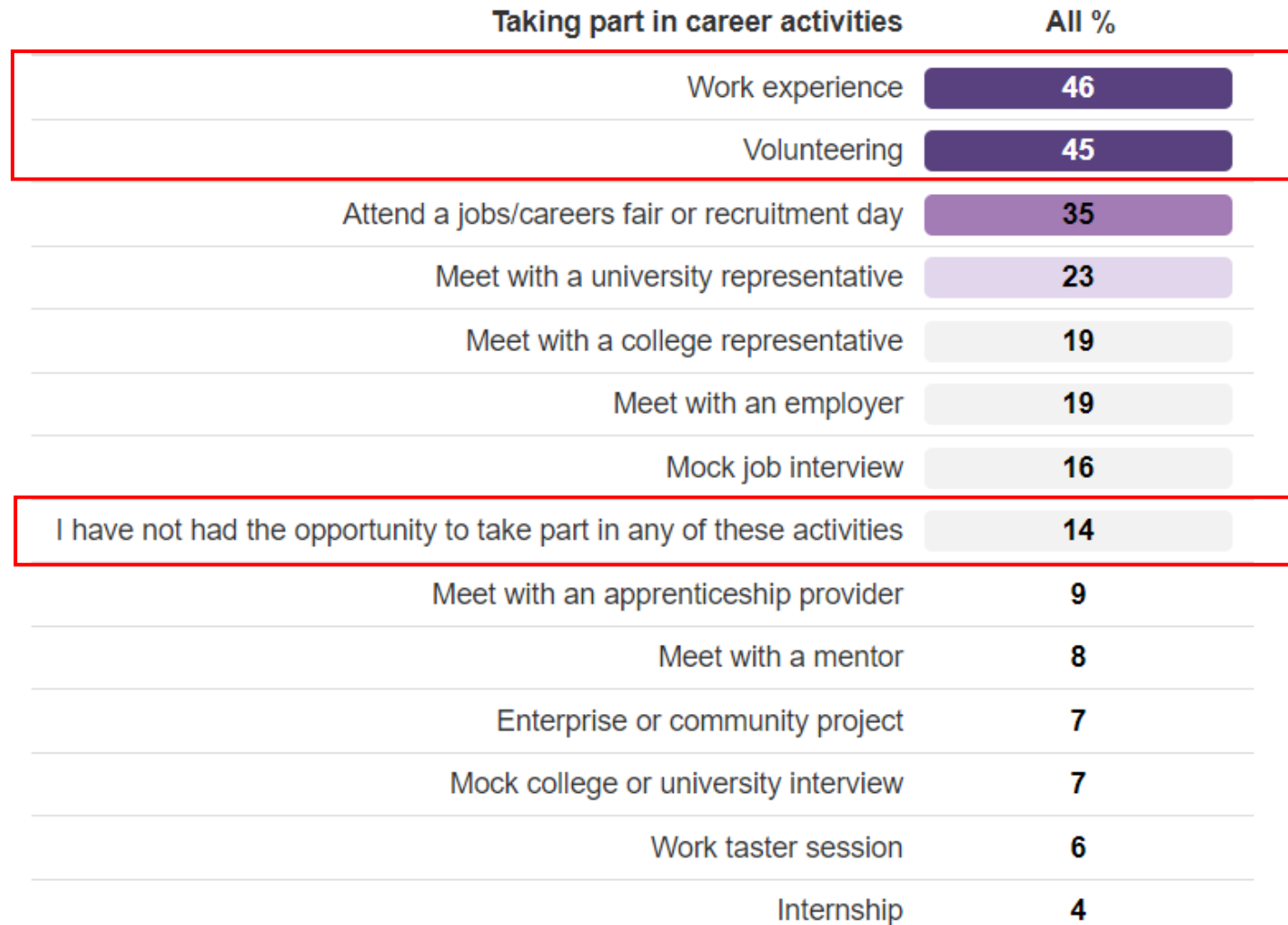
To what extent do you agree or disagree that the support you received from SDS has helped you to do the following?

Career Management Skills	All %
Find and use career information easily	80
Understand how your experiences and learning can help you make career choices	80
Understand and build on your skills, strengths and achievements	77
Consider new things you may not have thought of when it comes to your career journey	75
Make informed career decisions	75
Identify and build relationships with people who can help you in your career	65

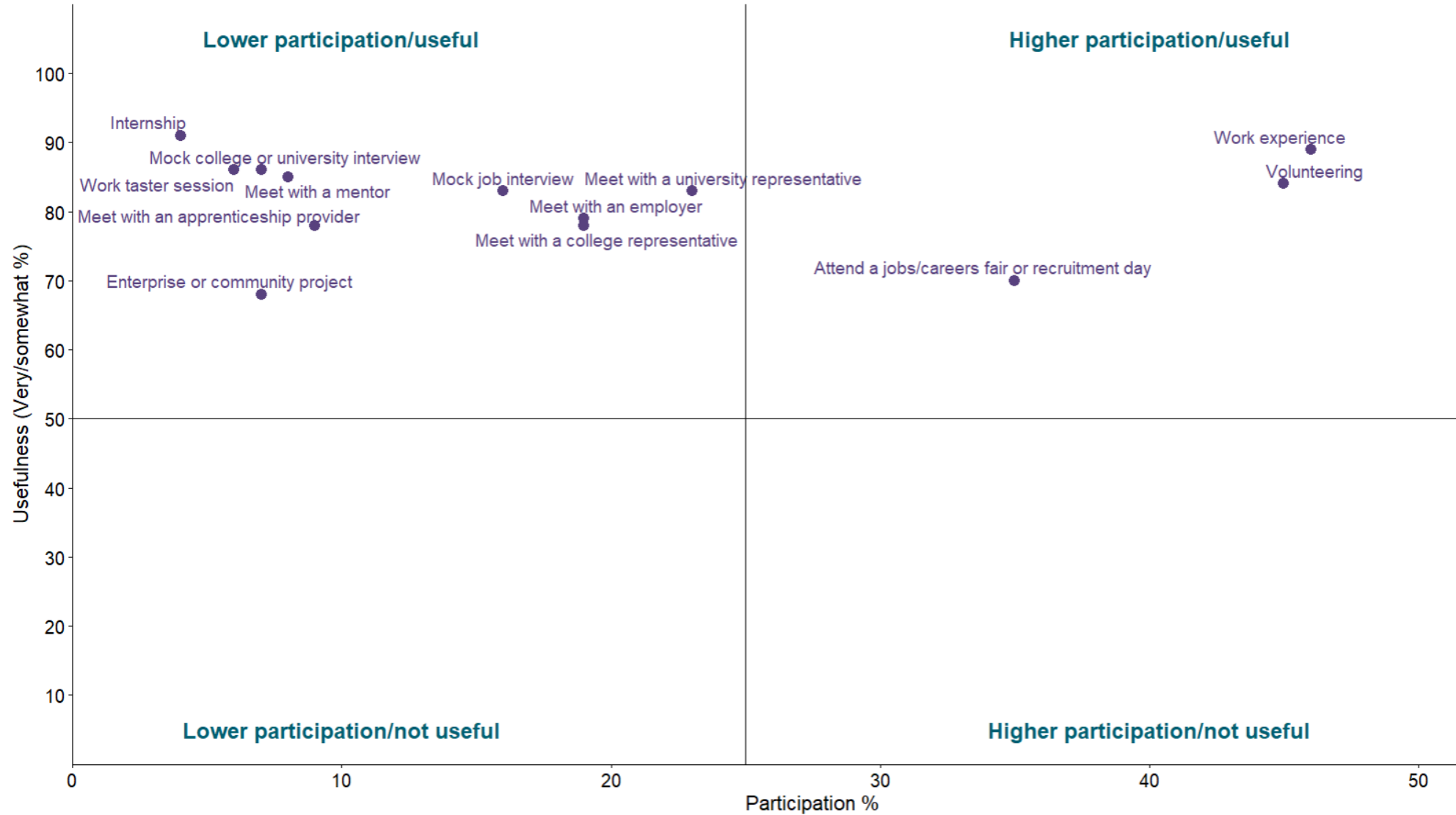


**What career-related activities do young people take part in?**

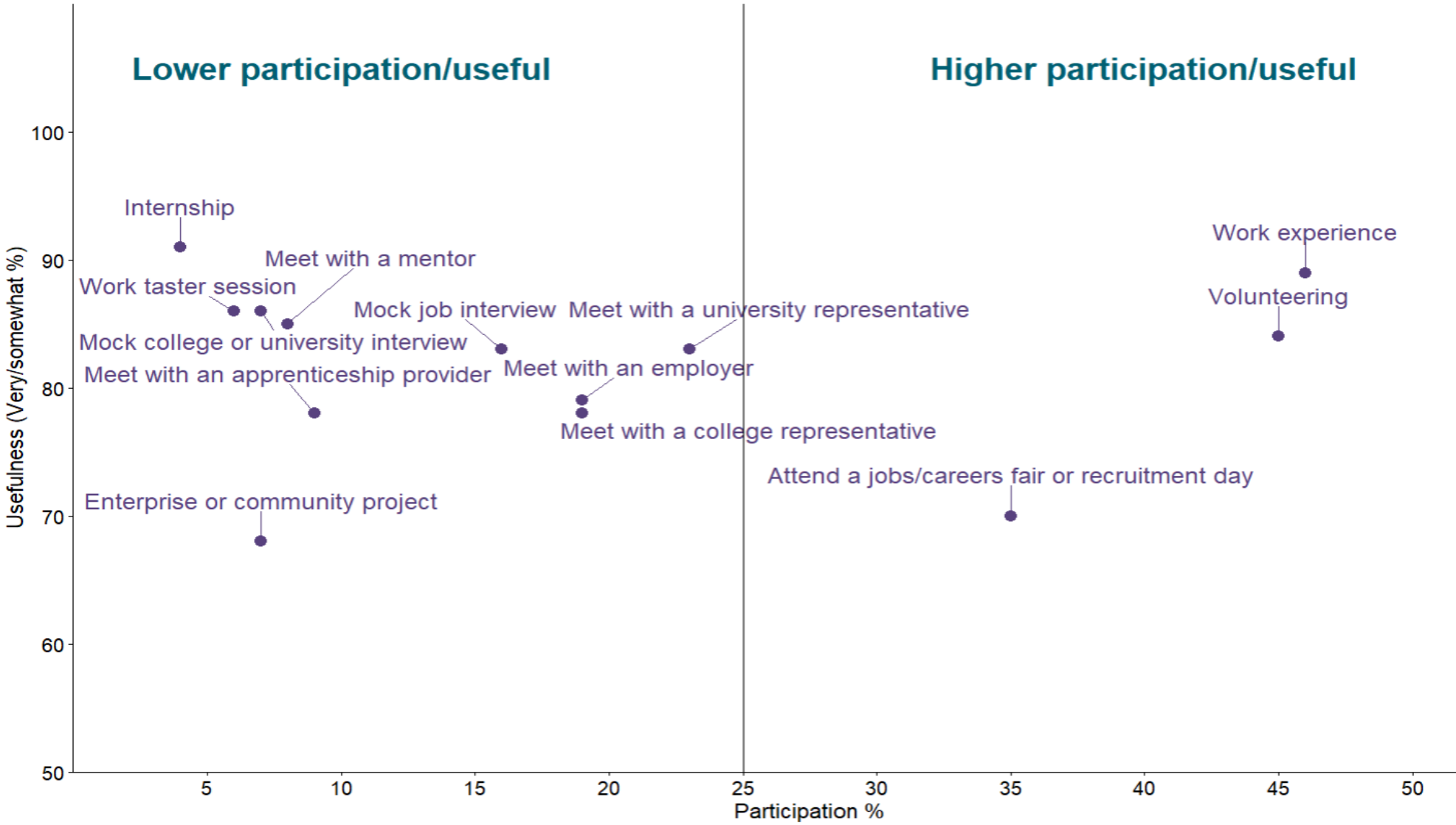
# Young people most likely to have taken part in work experience and volunteering



# Career-related activities – participation vs usefulness



# Career-related activities – participation vs usefulness





**What sectors and jobs are young people interested in?**

# Medical, Creative, STEM and Teaching sectors are popular

Sectors	All %	Female %	Male %
Medicine and Health	18	26	9
Creative Industries (e.g. Art & Design, Music, Acting)	17	18	13
Engineering	16	6	28
Science	12	13	10
Teaching	12	17	6
Computing and ICT	11	5	17
Sport	10	7	14
Armed Forces, Policing or Security	9	7	13
Caring (e.g. childcare, social care)	9	15	3
Banking and Finance	8	6	11
Construction	8	2	16
Law	8	10	6
Hospitality (e.g. working in hotels, bars, restaurants)	5	6	4
Tourism	5	6	3
Energy	3	1	5
Housing / Property	3	2	3



# Medical, Creative, Teaching and STEM roles are popular

**Medical & Health**

- "Doctor"
- "Dentist"
- "Nurse"
- "Pharmacology"
- "Paramedic"
- "Midwife"
- "Medicine"
- "Physiotherapist"

**Creative Roles**

- "Musician"
- "Artist"
- "Interior Design"
- "Photographer"
- "Actor"
- "Film Director"

**Teaching**

- "Primary Teacher"
- "Nursery Teacher"
- "Teacher"

**Sciences**

- "Scientist"
- "Biologist"
- "Forensic Pathologist"

**Engineering**

- "Electrical Engineer"
- "Aerospace Engineer"
- "Mechanical Engineer"

**Law**

- "Lawyer"
- "Solicitor"

**IT**

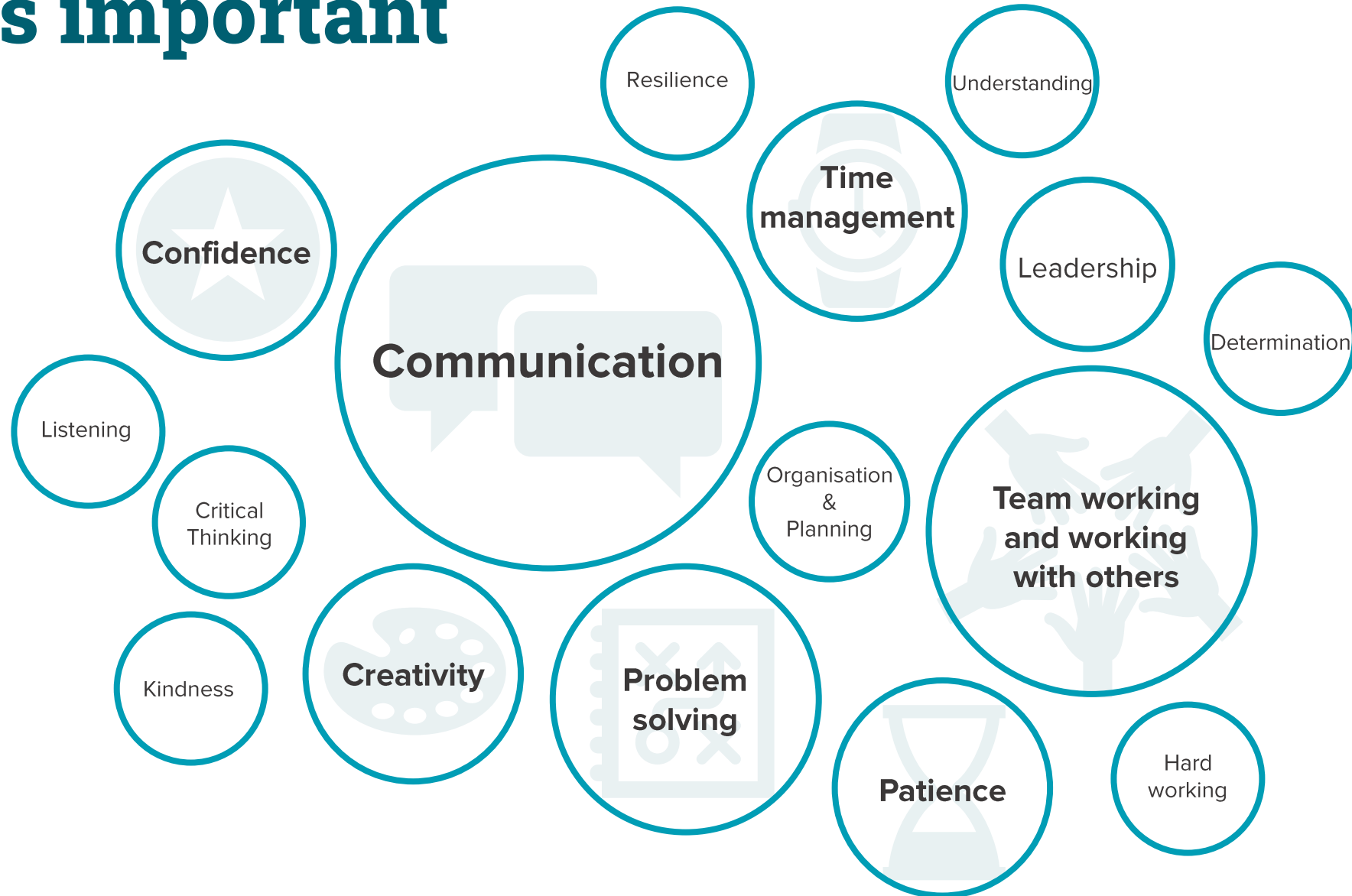
- "Cyber security"
- "Software developer"





**What skills do young people think are important for their future career?**

# Communication and team working skills are seen as important



# Young people identified a range of Meta-skills as important for their future career

<b>Self management</b>
Focussing
Integrity
Adapting
Initiative
<b>Social intelligence</b>
Communicating
Feeling
Collaborating
Leading
<b>Innovation</b>
Curiosity
Creativity
Sense making
Critical thinking





# Sharing, impact and action



# Research Outputs 2024



**Parents and Carers Voice Research 2023/24**  
 Key Findings Briefing Paper  
 SDS Evaluation and Research Team



**Pupil Voice 2024: Senior Phase Research**  
 Briefing Paper  
 Evaluation & Research Team  
 November 2024



**Parents & Carers Voice Research 2023/24**  
 Key Messages  
 SDS Evaluation & Research Team

**Pupil Voice Research 2024 Gender**

SDS Evaluation & Research Team

The 2024 Pupil Voice research gathered the views of S4-S6 pupils (aged 16+) on the careers information, advice and guidance (CIAG) services they received. The research also gathered data on key influencers on career plans and aspirations. Males were slightly more positive than females about the careers services they received. Although key influences on career plans are similar for both males and females, females are slightly more likely to be influenced by the qualifications they achieved at school.

**Responses received**

Female	5994
Male	4478

**Views on one-to-one support. My Careers Adviser... (average agreement score out of 10)**

Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
7.7	8.0	8.1	8.4	8.1	8.3	7.9	8.2

...understood me and the support I needed    ...listened to me and valued my ideas    ...supported me to make my own decisions and take control of my career path    ...encouraged me to aim high for my future career

**Support received from SDS has helped you to... (% agree / strongly agree)**

Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
76%	79%	79%	82%	74%	78%	73%	79%

...understand and build on your skills, strengths, and achievements    ...to find and use career information easily    ...consider new things you may not have thought of when it comes to your career journey    ...to make better informed career decisions

**Satisfaction with SDS career services (average satisfaction score out of ten)**

Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
6.9	7.4	6.9	7.3	6.9	7.1	6.5	6.7

The ability to access support when needed    The amount of support available    The range of SDS career services available    Overall satisfaction with the careers services you received from SDS

**Key Influences on career plans / aspirations (% a fair amount / a great deal)**

Parent(s) / carer(s)	79%
Teacher(s)	64%
Parent(s) / carer(s)	80%
Teacher(s)	63%

**Top 2 people influencers**

**Top 2 influencing factors**

Interests / hobbies	86%
Qualifications I achieved in school	82%
Interests / hobbies	86%
The need to earn money	81%

Contact us: [Evaluation&Research@sds.co.uk](mailto:Evaluation&Research@sds.co.uk)

# Sharing and dissemination

Scottish Government	Youthlink	Education Scotland
SQA	Developing Young Workforce	Scottish Funding Council
Open University	MCR Pathways	Napier University
Young Scot	College Development Network	ADES



**Voice of young people**  
13 November, 3.45pm #ScotCareersWeek24

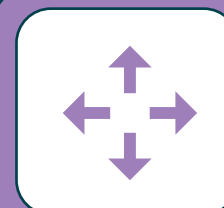


**NHS Education for Scotland**  
A skilled and sustainable workforce for a healthier Scotland





**Voice of young people**  
Strengthened the voice of young people in influencing service provision/the system



**Policy impact**  
Reform of school, post-school education and skills systems

**Impact and Influence**

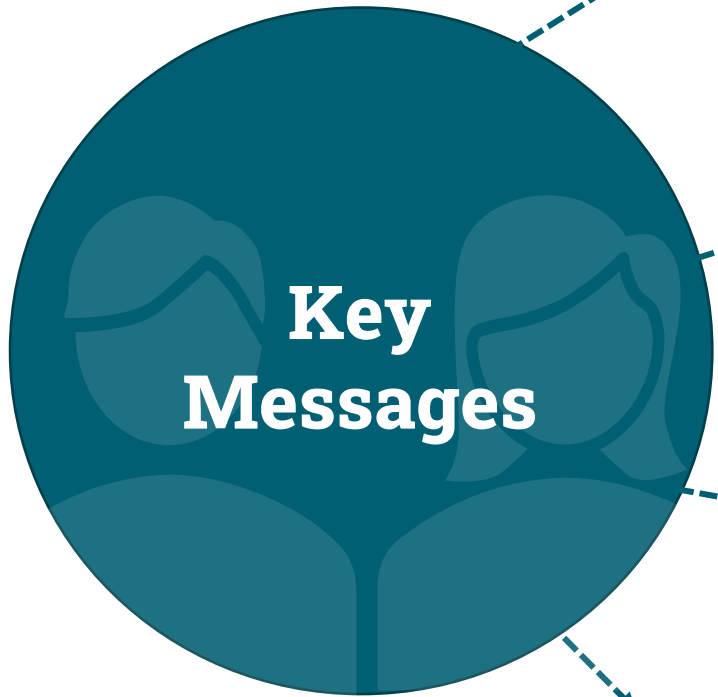
**Meaningful collaboration**  
Common evidence base & measurement framework  
Insights with mutual interest



**Change and improvement**  
Evidence based decision-making in-service design and delivery



# Summary



The voices of **11,000** young people are captured through Pupil Voice, providing **valuable evidence and insight on young people's career choices and influences.**



The data collected are of high quality and sourced from administrative databases and comprehensive surveys to ensure accuracy and representativeness.



The research approach is highly collaborative, involving both internal and external partners, combining expertise and resources to achieve shared goals.



By working collaboratively, we ensure our research is shared widely, driving continuous improvement, enhancing careers services, informing policies for greater action and impact.

# Questions & Discussion



**Contact us:** [Evaluation&Research@sds.co.uk](mailto:Evaluation&Research@sds.co.uk)