

CDI Student Conference Presentation

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Where to next? Post-school transitions and career decision-making among young people in Scotland – insights from the Growing Up in Scotland study.

The logo for Skills Development Scotland, consisting of a teal circle with the text "Skills Development Scotland" in white.

Skills
Development
Scotland

Why did I aspire to go to university after secondary school?

- I can make guesses based on my own experiences:
 - My parents valued education as a means of social mobility
 - Supportive and encouraging teachers in high school
 - I enjoyed the educational aspect of high school, and was good at it
 - Aptitude and interest in STEM subject; earnings potential
 - Ultimately, a combination of my support networks and interests helped me shape my decisions as I was leaving secondary school

But what about post-school aspirations for young people generally?

This is a vast question – one that will definitely take a full PhD thesis to even begin answering! – so here I will focus on one aspect of it.



Parent-child relationships
and career aspirations

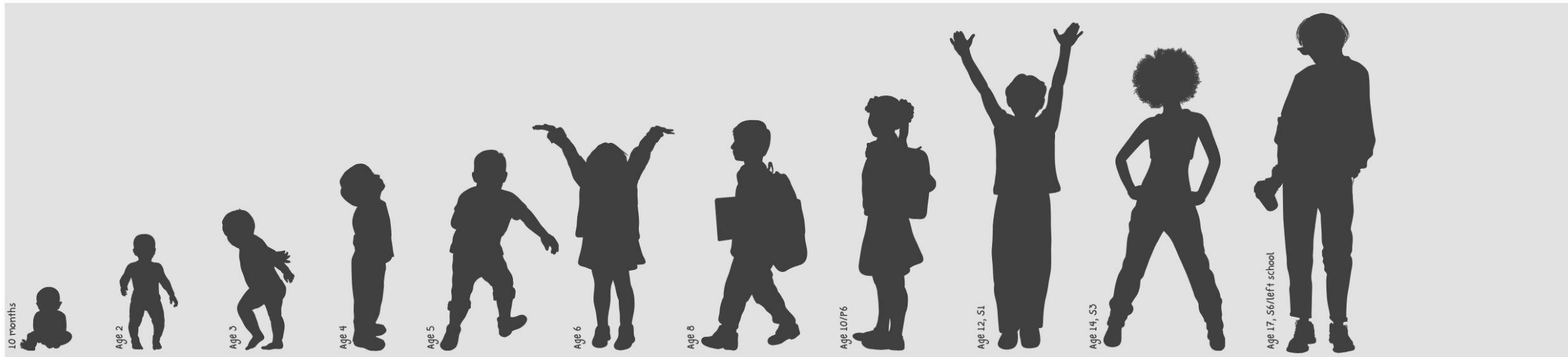
Positionality



Research questions

- What is the relationship between parental and child aspirations for young people's futures?
- What is the relationship between parental social class and young people's career aspirations?

Growing Up in Scotland



BC1
N=5217



CC
N=2859



BC2
N=6127



Limitations

- GUS is only representative of children born in Scotland in 2004/05
 - Misses migrant experiences
 - Some of the sample's S3 interviews were conducted after March 2020
- Aspirations only captured at one point in time (so far)
- Lack of nuance in aspiration categories
- Could not control for grade estimations

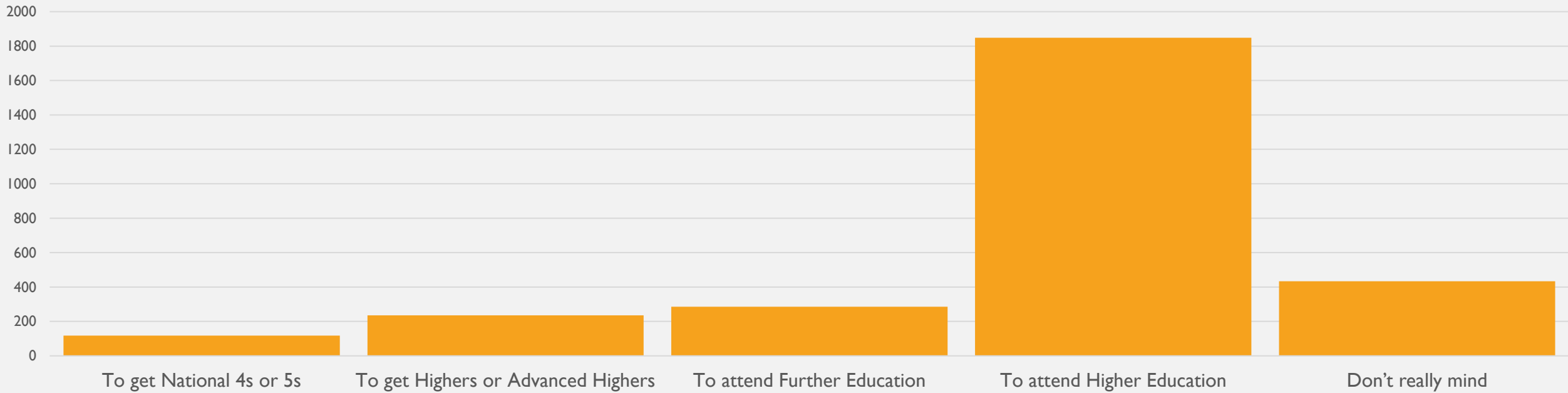
Methods

- Two measures of child aspiration, one measure of parental aspiration
- Conceptualising parental social class
 - Should use multiple indicators (Friedman and Laurison, 2019)
 - Highest NS-SEC in household, highest education level in household, number of parents with university degrees, and income quintile
 - All taken from sweep 9, or 10 if not available there
- Other variables controlled for
 - Carer status, ethnicity, immigrant parent, language(s) spoken at home, sex, SIMD quintile, rurality, disability, age of mother at birth of child, whether mother's first-born, household composition, how much likes subjects at school, number of subjects taken at school.

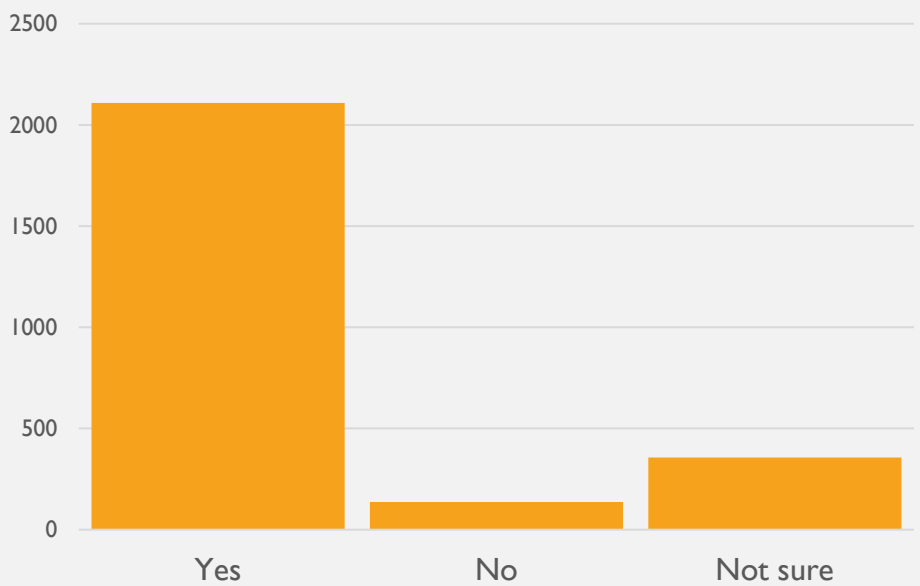
Methods

- Complete case analysis
 - Only used respondents present in sweep 10 (n=2943) as my key outcome variables were only asked then
- Two multinomial logistic regression models:
 - Model 1 predicting whether the young person aspires to remain in secondary education post-compulsory schooling
 - Model 2 predicting what the young person aspires to do upon leaving secondary education

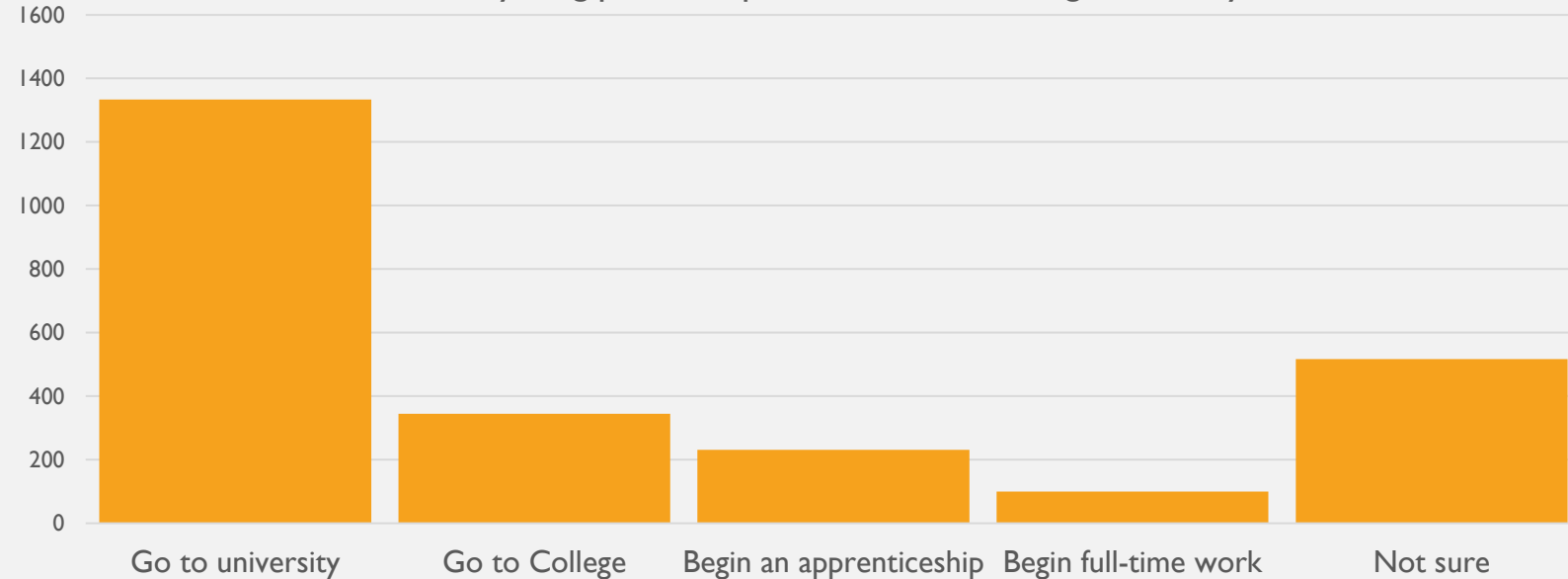
Parental educational aspiration for child



Does young person aspire to remain in secondary education post-compulsory schooling?



What does young person aspire to do after leaving secondary school?



Parental and child aspirations for young people's futures are inextricably linked...

...both in terms of remaining in school...

- Compared to young people whose parents want them to obtain qualifications at Higher level or above, young people whose parents don't really mind how far they go in education are about 3 times more likely to want to leave school and 2 times more likely to be unsure about staying in school than want to stay in school post-compulsory schooling.
- Conversely, young people without 'ambivalent' parents are not statistically significantly more or less likely to want to stay in, leave, or be unsure about remaining in secondary school.

...and in terms of post-school aspirations.

Child's aspiration (compared to 'Go to university')

Coefficients of parental aspiration for child in Model 2

Parent's (Highest) Aspiration for child

	Go to college	Apprenticeship or Vocational Training	Full-time work	Unsure
National 4s or 5s	5.99	6.20	9.21	2.52
Highers/Advanced Highers	2.14	3.56	6.70	1.74
Attend Further Education	4.59	3.97	2.79	3.73
Attend Higher Education	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Don't Mind	2.89	3.76	3.07	2.27

Key:

Reference Group
p<0.001
p<0.01
p<0.05
Not significant at p<0.05 level

The relationship between parental social class and young people's aspirations is, however, weak.

- NS-SEC not significant in either model.
- Some significance for highest household educational level, number of parents with a degree, and income quintile, though not much significance and a lack of identifiable, explainable patterns.
- This is in line with more contemporary literature (e.g. Kettley and Whitehead, 2012; Powell et al., 2024) and in contrast to historic evidence (e.g. Furlong and Cartmel, 1995; Lynch and O'Riordan, 1998).

Neither model predicts aspirational determinants well; something might be missing, or I might have to do a bit more work to achieve model parsimony.

R-Squared Test Type	Model 1	Model 2
R ²	0.819	0.587
Adjusted R ²	0.010	0.085
McFadden R ²	0.146	0.157
Adjusted McFadden R ²	0.074	0.085
Cox-Snell R ²	0.156	0.323
Nagelkerke R ²	0.227	0.352

Potential policy implications

- Parents matter! To fully support young people in forming aspirations and undergoing post-school transitions, we must maintain an open dialogue with their parents. Find the 'goldilocks zone'.
- Problematic aspiration-realisation gap within the working class that does not exist for the middle and upper classes (Powell et al., 2024).



The rest of my PhD beyond parental influence...

- Sweep II is newly available and has information on sources of careers advice that young people used and found influential.
- Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA) linked admin data incoming.
- Particularly keen on investigating geographical influences and the extent to which place might constrain aspiration.

Thanks for listening!

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	Multinomial Logistic Regression: Does cohort child aspire to remain in secondary education post-compulsory schooling? (Reference Group: Yes)					
	No			Not sure		
	Relative Risk Ratio	95% Confidence Interval	Confidence Interval	Relative Risk Ratio	95% Confidence Interval	Confidence Interval
Parental aspiration for child						
To get National 4s or 5s	1.39	[0.35,5.59]		1.32	[0.60,2.86]	
To get Highers or Advanced Highers, or to attend Further or Higher Education	1.00	[1.00,1.00]		1.00	[1.00,1.00]	
Don't really mind	3.40***	[1.77,6.53]		1.93**	[1.28,2.90]	
Highest NS-SEC in household						
1 - Managerial and professional occupations	1.00	[1.00,1.00]		1.00	[1.00,1.00]	
2 - Intermediate occupations	0.70	[0.29,1.69]		1.21	[0.74,1.99]	
3 - Small employers and own account workers	1.97	[0.86,4.52]		1.23	[0.67,2.28]	
4 - Lower supervisory and technical occupations	2.54	[0.87,7.42]		1.81	[0.87,3.78]	
5 - Semi-routine and routine occupations	0.99	[0.34,2.89]		1.71	[0.97,3.04]	
6 - Never worked	2.33	[0.30,17.99]		4.80	[0.70,32.92]	
Number of parents with a degree						
0	0.18	[0.03,1.02]		0.78	[0.25,2.41]	
1	1.96	[0.81,4.74]		1.69*	[1.04,2.73]	
2	1.00	[1.00,1.00]		1.00	[1.00,1.00]	
Highest educational level in household						
No qualifications	16.60**	[2.83,97.42]		1.90	[0.45,8.03]	
<u>Lower level</u> Standard Grades and Vocational qualifications	4.32	[0.33,56.19]		4.16*	[1.17,14.86]	
<u>Upper level</u> Standard Grades and Intermediate Vocational qualifications	12.98***	[2.88,58.60]		1.88	[0.64,5.55]	
Higher grades and <u>Upper Level</u> Vocational qualifications	10.73**	[2.43,47.47]		2.21	[0.79,6.18]	
Degree level academic and vocational qualifications	1.00	[1.00,1.00]		1.00	[1.00,1.00]	
Income quintile						
1 – bottom quintile	0.52	[0.16,1.68]		1.25	[0.60,2.59]	
2	1.09	[0.41,2.94]		1.20	[0.70,2.08]	
3	1.37	[0.60,3.10]		1.33	[0.82,2.14]	
4	0.81	[0.35,1.83]		0.51*	[0.30,0.86]	
5 – top quintile	1.00	[1.00,1.00]		1.00	[1.00,1.00]	
Carer status of child						
Not a carer	1.00	[1.00,1.00]		1.00	[1.00,1.00]	
Carer	1.29	[0.69,2.45]		0.74	[0.49,1.14]	
Whether child has at least one parent who immigrated to the UK						
No	1.00	[1.00,1.00]		1.00	[1.00,1.00]	
Yes	0.33	[0.06,1.67]		0.67	[0.30,1.47]	
Ethnicity of child						
White	1.00	[1.00,1.00]		1.00	[1.00,1.00]	
Ethnic minority	0.20	[0.01,3.09]		2.19	[0.72,6.63]	

Model 1: Multinomial logistic regression predicting whether young person wants to remain in secondary education post-compulsory schooling (continued overleaf)

Note: Exponentiated coefficients; 95% confidence intervals in brackets.
 * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

		Multinomial Logistic Regression: Does cohort child aspire to remain in secondary education post-compulsory schooling? (Reference Group: Yes)				
		No			Not sure	
		Relative Risk Ratio	95% Confidence Interval	Confidence Interval	Relative Risk Ratio	95% Confidence Interval
Language(s) spoken at home						
	English and other language(s)/other language(s) only	1.01	[0.24,4.28]		0.42	[0.15,1.13]
	Only English	1.00	[1.00,1.00]		1.00	[1.00,1.00]
Sex of child						
	Male	4.15***	[2.23,7.73]		2.41***	[1.76,3.30]
	Female	1.00	[1.00,1.00]		1.00	[1.00,1.00]
2016 SIMD quintiles						
	1 – least deprived	1.00	[1.00,1.00]		1.00	[1.00,1.00]
	2	2.14	[0.92,4.99]		1.04	[0.67,1.61]
	3	1.52	[0.58,3.99]		0.91	[0.56,1.49]
	4	1.06	[0.39,2.89]		0.87	[0.51,1.48]
	5 – most deprived	1.34	[0.48,3.71]		0.69	[0.38,1.26]
Rurality						
	Rural	0.60	[0.31,1.19]		1.10	[0.76,1.57]
	Not rural	1.00	[1.00,1.00]		1.00	[1.00,1.00]
Child disability status						
	Neither cognitive disabilities nor physical disabilities	1.00	[1.00,1.00]		1.00	[1.00,1.00]
	No cognitive disabilities and one or more physical disabilities	1.89	[0.32,11.32]		2.67	[0.89,8.02]
	One or more cognitive disabilities and no physical disabilities	1.49	[0.80,2.80]		1.58*	[1.06,2.37]
	Both one or more cognitive disabilities and one or more physical disabilities	1.94	[0.23,16.20]		1.03	[0.39,2.76]
Age of natural mother at birth of cohort child						
	Under 20	2.13	[0.74,6.16]		0.42	[0.15,1.17]
	20 to 29	0.57	[0.31,1.06]		1.00	[0.70,1.43]
	30 to 39	1.00	[1.00,1.00]		1.00	[1.00,1.00]
	40 or older	.	.		0.57	[0.21,1.50]
Whether child was mother's first-born						
	Not first born	1.00	[1.00,1.00]		1.00	[1.00,1.00]
	First born	1.01	[0.55,1.86]		0.90	[0.65,1.23]
Household type						
	Couple family	1.00	[1.00,1.00]		1.00	[1.00,1.00]
	Single parent	2.01	[0.92,4.36]		0.85	[0.50,1.44]
How much child likes English						
	A lot	1.00	[1.00,1.00]		1.00	[1.00,1.00]
	A little	1.94	[0.95,3.98]		1.02	[0.72,1.44]
	Not at all	4.20***	[1.86,9.46]		0.93	[0.55,1.58]

Model I: Multinomial logistic regression predicting whether young person wants to remain in secondary education post-compulsory schooling (continued overleaf)

Note: Exponentiated coefficients; 95% confidence intervals in brackets.
 * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

Multinomial Logistic Regression: Does cohort child aspire to remain in secondary education post-compulsory schooling? (Reference Group: Yes)

No Not sure

Relative Risk Ratio 95% Confidence Relative Risk Ratio 95% Confidence
Interval Interval

How much child likes <u>maths</u>					
A lot	1.00	[1.00,1.00]	1.00	[1.00,1.00]	
A little	0.99	[0.48,2.06]	1.06	[0.73,1.55]	
Not at all	1.54	[0.71,3.36]	1.37	[0.87,2.16]	
How much child likes science					
A lot	1.00	[1.00,1.00]	1.00	[1.00,1.00]	
A little	2.06*	[1.11,3.82]	1.87***	[1.32,2.66]	
Not at all	3.60***	[1.80,7.22]	2.23**	[1.36,3.67]	
How much child likes modern languages					
A lot	1.00	[1.00,1.00]	1.00	[1.00,1.00]	
A little	1.56	[0.68,3.62]	0.87	[0.58,1.31]	
Not at all	1.34	[0.54,3.34]	1.47	[0.96,2.26]	
Number of subjects taken in S4	0.67***	[0.56,0.80]	0.95	[0.86,1.05]	
N	1934				

Model I: Multinomial logistic regression predicting whether young person wants to remain in secondary education post-compulsory schooling

Note: Exponentiated coefficients; 95% confidence intervals in brackets.

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Multinomial Logistic Regression: What does cohort child aspire to do after leaving secondary school? (Reference Group: Go to university)

	Go to College		Begin an apprenticeship, or some other vocational training course			Begin full-time work		Not sure	
	Relative Risk Ratio	95% Confidence Interval	Relative Risk Ratio	95% Confidence Interval	Relative Risk Ratio	95% Confidence Interval	Relative Risk Ratio	95% Confidence Interval	
Parental aspiration for child									
To get National 4s or 5s	5.99***	[2.15,16.72]	6.20**	[2.02,19.03]	9.21***	[2.52,33.74]	2.52	[0.93,6.85]	
To get Highers or Advanced Highers	2.14*	[1.03,4.43]	3.56***	[1.75,7.21]	6.70***	[2.56,17.58]	1.74	[0.93,3.26]	
To attend Further Education	4.59***	[2.29,9.19]	3.97***	[1.85,8.49]	2.79*	[1.00,7.73]	3.73***	[2.15,6.45]	
To attend Higher Education	1.00	[1.00,1.00]	1.00	[1.00,1.00]	1.00	[1.00,1.00]	1.00	[1.00,1.00]	
Don't really mind	2.89***	[1.67,5.01]	3.76***	[2.10,6.74]	3.07**	[1.41,6.68]	2.27***	[1.42,3.62]	
Highest NS-SEC in household									
1 - Managerial and professional occupations	1.00	[1.00,1.00]	1.00	[1.00,1.00]	1.00	[1.00,1.00]	1.00	[1.00,1.00]	
2 - Intermediate occupations	1.36	[0.76,2.43]	1.19	[0.61,2.30]	1.22	[0.49,3.05]	1.49	[0.94,2.36]	
3 - Small employers and own account workers	1.40	[0.68,2.88]	1.84	[0.87,3.86]	1.66	[0.63,4.36]	1.33	[0.71,2.51]	
4 - Lower supervisory and technical occupations	0.56	[0.19,1.61]	1.52	[0.60,3.86]	1.49	[0.42,5.26]	1.17	[0.58,2.37]	
5 - Semi-routine and routine occupations	2.15*	[1.07,4.31]	1.64	[0.76,3.52]	0.85	[0.28,2.60]	1.51	[0.83,2.74]	
6 - Never worked	4.15	[0.58,29.58]	1.34	[0.15,11.58]	
Number of parents with a degree									
0	2.68	[0.70,10.22]	5.28**	[1.68,16.62]	2.71	[0.27,27.63]	2.94*	[1.29,6.72]	
1	2.68**	[1.43,5.01]	1.86	[0.95,3.64]	2.10	[0.79,5.59]	1.32	[0.88,1.98]	
2	1.00	[1.00,1.00]	1.00	[1.00,1.00]	1.00	[1.00,1.00]	1.00	[1.00,1.00]	
Highest educational level in household									
No qualifications	1.28	[0.24,6.92]	0.43	[0.06,3.03]	1.42	[0.09,22.04]	0.96	[0.26,3.57]	
<u>Lower level</u> Standard Grades and Vocational qualifications	0.60	[0.11,3.32]	0.22	[0.04,1.05]	0.30	[0.01,7.38]	0.74	[0.22,2.46]	
<u>Upper level</u> Standard Grades and Intermediate Vocational qualifications	0.86	[0.23,3.28]	0.44	[0.15,1.29]	1.68	[0.20,13.79]	0.60	[0.25,1.42]	
Higher grades and <u>Upper Level</u> Vocational qualifications	0.97	[0.27,3.44]	0.51	[0.19,1.39]	0.92	[0.11,7.43]	0.56	[0.26,1.23]	
Degree level academic and vocational qualifications	1.00	[1.00,1.00]	1.00	[1.00,1.00]	1.00	[1.00,1.00]	1.00	[1.00,1.00]	
Income quintile									
1 – bottom quintile	1.53	[0.74,3.15]	0.80	[0.33,1.93]	0.27*	[0.09,0.83]	0.85	[0.43,1.68]	
2	1.68	[0.88,3.23]	1.52	[0.73,3.13]	0.44	[0.16,1.25]	0.78	[0.45,1.35]	
3	1.67	[0.96,2.91]	1.26	[0.66,2.38]	0.32*	[0.12,0.88]	0.81	[0.52,1.25]	
4	0.92	[0.50,1.68]	1.38	[0.74,2.58]	0.74	[0.31,1.75]	0.73	[0.48,1.11]	
5 – top quintile	1.00	[1.00,1.00]	1.00	[1.00,1.00]	1.00	[1.00,1.00]	1.00	[1.00,1.00]	
Carer status of child									
Not a carer	1.00	[1.00,1.00]	1.00	[1.00,1.00]	1.00	[1.00,1.00]	1.00	[1.00,1.00]	
Carer	1.20	[0.73,1.98]	1.45	[0.84,2.49]	2.19*	[1.07,4.48]	0.79	[0.51,1.22]	

Model 2: Multinomial logistic regression predicting young person's post-secondary school aspirations (continued overleaf)

Note: Exponentiated coefficients; 95% confidence intervals in brackets.
 * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

Multinomial Logistic Regression: What does cohort child aspire to do after leaving secondary school? (Reference Group: Go to university)										
Go to College			Begin an apprenticeship, or some other vocational training course			Begin full-time work			Not sure	
	Relative Risk Ratio	95% Confidence Interval	Relative Risk Ratio	95% Confidence Interval	Relative Risk Ratio	95% Confidence Interval	Relative Risk Ratio	95% Confidence Interval	Relative Risk Ratio	95% Confidence Interval
Household type										
Couple family	1.00	[1.00,1.00]	1.00	[1.00,1.00]	1.00	[1.00,1.00]	1.00	[1.00,1.00]	1.00	[1.00,1.00]
Single parent	0.89	[0.49,1.61]	1.30	[0.71,2.41]	2.36*	[1.06,5.25]	1.21	[0.77,1.91]		
How much child likes English										
A lot	1.00	[1.00,1.00]	1.00	[1.00,1.00]	1.00	[1.00,1.00]	1.00	[1.00,1.00]	1.00	[1.00,1.00]
A little	1.08	[0.70,1.66]	1.68	[1.00,2.82]	2.33*	[1.10,4.92]	0.98	[0.71,1.36]		
Not at all	0.94	[0.47,1.87]	2.43**	[1.25,4.72]	3.01*	[1.07,8.47]	1.39	[0.82,2.36]		
How much child likes <u>maths</u>										
A lot	1.00	[1.00,1.00]	1.00	[1.00,1.00]	1.00	[1.00,1.00]	1.00	[1.00,1.00]	1.00	[1.00,1.00]
A little	1.73*	[1.09,2.76]	1.10	[0.66,1.83]	1.35	[0.66,2.78]	1.77***	[1.27,2.47]		
Not at all	1.77*	[1.00,3.14]	1.28	[0.66,2.49]	1.44	[0.58,3.53]	1.70*	[1.11,2.60]		
How much child likes science										
A lot	1.00	[1.00,1.00]	1.00	[1.00,1.00]	1.00	[1.00,1.00]	1.00	[1.00,1.00]	1.00	[1.00,1.00]
A little	1.44	[0.93,2.22]	2.15**	[1.34,3.43]	1.28	[0.67,2.44]	1.32	[0.96,1.82]		
Not at all	2.15*	[1.19,3.88]	3.73***	[1.95,7.14]	1.18	[0.39,3.52]	1.85*	[1.13,3.03]		
How much child likes modern languages										
A lot	1.00	[1.00,1.00]	1.00	[1.00,1.00]	1.00	[1.00,1.00]	1.00	[1.00,1.00]	1.00	[1.00,1.00]
A little	1.88*	[1.12,3.18]	1.13	[0.64,2.01]	0.82	[0.34,1.99]	1.20	[0.83,1.72]		
Not at all	2.21**	[1.22,4.01]	1.19	[0.62,2.27]	1.19	[0.49,2.88]	1.34	[0.88,2.03]		
Number of subjects taken in S4	0.86*	[0.76,0.99]	0.89	[0.78,1.02]	0.73**	[0.60,0.90]	0.92	[0.83,1.03]		
N	1934									

Model 2: Multinomial logistic regression predicting young person's post-secondary school aspirations

Note: Exponentiated coefficients; 95% confidence intervals in brackets.
 * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

CIAG Questions in GUS Sweep 11

CkCrad {Ask all}

SHOWCARD I4

When you were deciding what to do **after S4**, did you get advice from any of the people or sources on this card?

INTERVIEWER: PROBE – Anything else?

CODE ALL THAT APPLY

1 Your friends

2 Your parents/carers

3 Other family members

4 Your Pupil Support/Guidance teacher/tutor at school

5 Other teachers at school

6 A Skills Development Scotland Careers Adviser

7 A careers website such as My World of Work or PlanIt

8 A university or college representative talking to you and your classmates

9 An employer or training provider talking to you and your classmates

10 Social media

11 Somewhere or someone else {please specify}

12 None of these {EXCLUSIVE}

CkCradMn {Ask If Crad= NE12, dk, prefer not to say and more th2an one code selected from Crad 1 to 11)}

And which of these would you say was the main source of advice when you were deciding to do after S4?

INTERVIEWER: ADD IF REQUIRED - If you are unsure, please select the one you feel had the most influence on what you decided to do.

CkCrim[...] *{Ask for main source selected at CradMn}*

Did the advice you received from ^advsource influence what you decided to do after S4?

INTERVIEWER: If 'Yes', probe – “Would say a lot or a little?”

- 1 Yes, a lot
- 2 Yes, a little
- 3 No

TEXTFILL: ^advsource

Text for ^advsource is taken from CradMn, i.e. IF CradMn = 1/Your friends, ^advsource = “your friends”

CkCrim *{Ask all}*

SHOWCARD I5

Looking at card I5, please tell me which of these things were most important when deciding what to do **after S4**? Please tell me the three most important ones.

You can just tell me the numbers on the card.

INTERVIEWER: PROBE AND CODE UP TO 3 ANSWERS

- 1 What I'm good at
- 2 What I enjoy doing
- 3 What my parents advised me to do
- 4 What my teachers advised me to do
- 5 What a careers adviser advised me to do
- 6 Which jobs earn the most money
- 7 Which jobs involve helping others
- 8 Which jobs have work-based learning routes i.e. apprenticeships
- 9 My personal characteristics (e.g. gender, disability)
- 10 Doing something that has a positive impact on society
- 11 Which jobs require a degree for entry
- 12 Something else

CkCrinot *{Ask if say something else at Crim, IF Crim=15}*

What other things have influenced your choice of career and learning?

INTERVIEWER: Please write in.

STRING{OPEN}

CkCrinot *{Ask if say something else at Crim, IF Crim=15}*

What other things have influenced your choice of career and learning?

INTERVIEWER: Please write in.

STRING{OPEN}

CkCasCh *{Ask all}*

Did your plans for staying on or leaving education after S4 change as a result of the coronavirus outbreak?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No