

Skills  
Development  
Scotland

# Capturing the Voice of Young People & Apprentices

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SDS Evaluation & Research Team  
March 2025



# Skills Development Scotland (SDS) is the national skills agency for Scotland

Goals

## Industry-focused Skills

People develop skills and competencies that drive productive businesses and regions, and help create a fairer, more equal society



## Inclusive Talent Pool

Talent is diverse and resilient, with people who can all adapt and thrive in the changing world of work



## Invested Employers

Employers invest in Scotland's workforce through job opportunities, skills development, and fair work



## Intelligence-led System

An agile, responsive, resilient, and inclusive skills ecosystem consistently delivers the skills the Scottish economy needs



## Impactful Organisation

Team SDS maximises return on investment, collaborating to deliver better outcomes and experiences for our customers, colleagues, and the economy



### Careers Information, Advice & Guidance (CIAG)



### Apprenticeships



### Employers

## Evaluation & Research



SDS Evaluation & Research gather insight from young people through a series of research programmes:

## Our research with young people



### JUNIOR PHASE

Pupil Voice  
(S1-S3)

### SENIOR PHASE

Pupil Voice  
(S4-S6)

### SCHOOL LEAVERS

Young People's Career Ambitions (YPCA)

## Our research with apprentices



### IN TRAINING

Six months after they start

### LEAVERS

Three months after they leave

### SHORT TERM OUTCOMES

Fifteen months after they leave



**Understanding the Voice of Young People:**  
SDS Young People Research Programme



# 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.

# What the young people research programme covers

**Service recall**

**Finding out about services**

**Career Management Skills**

**Foundation Apprenticeships**

**Views on SDS service offer**

**Plans to leave or stay on at school**

**KPIs**

**Skills for future career**

**Views on services received**

**Reasons for leaving or staying at school**

**Ideal job and sector**

**Employability activities**

**Reasons for non-engagement**

**Plans after school**

**Key influencers**

**Extracurricular activities**



**Equality analysis & Change over time**

# Collaborative approach to young people 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



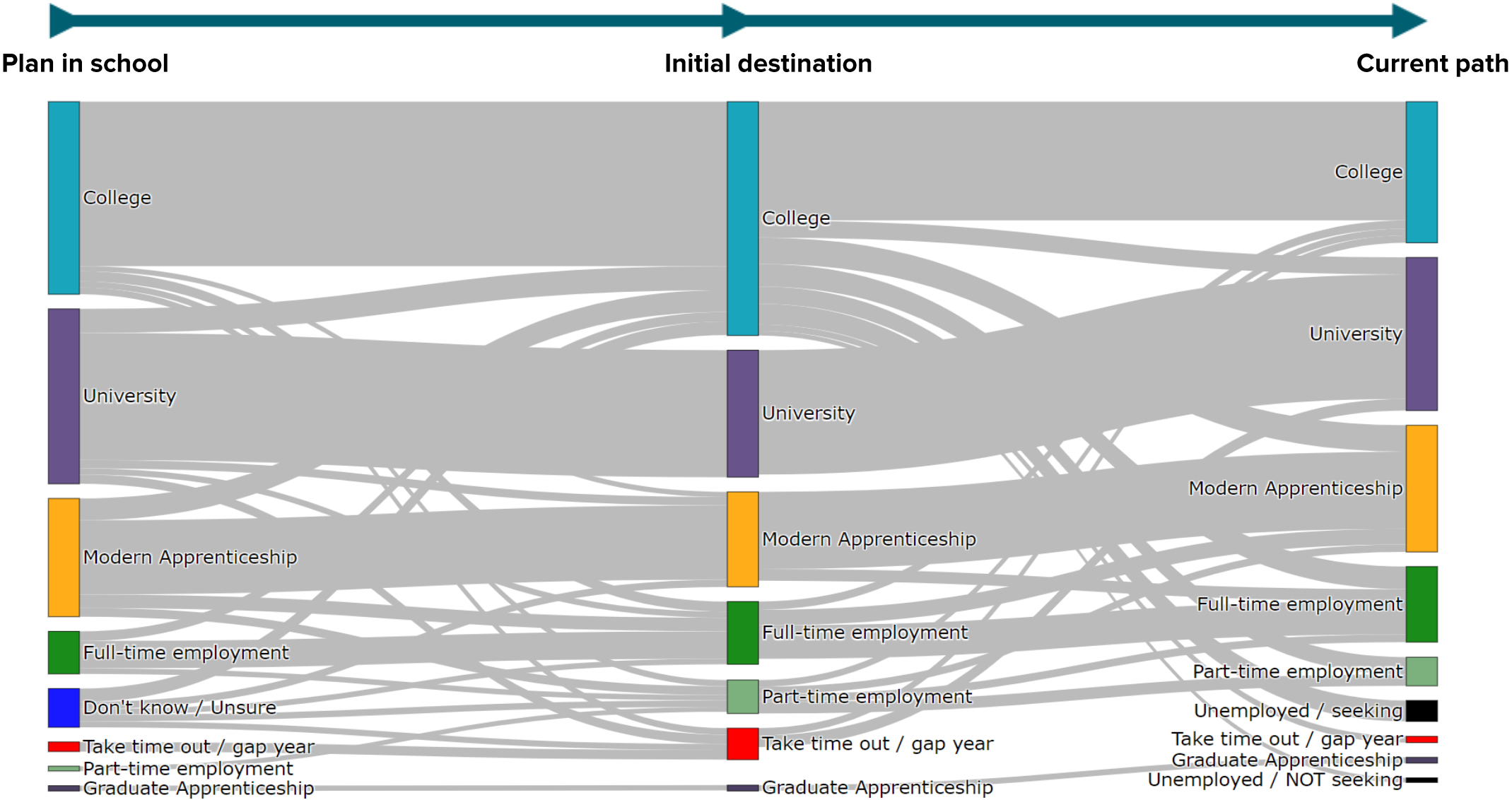
**Key findings from our Young People  
research**



# Mapping post-school trajectories of young people



# Mapping post-school trajectories of young people



Source: Young People's Career Ambitions Research 2024

# Medical, Creative, STEM and Teaching sectors are popular

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

Source: Pupil Voice 2024 Research

# 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

Source: Pupil Voice 2024 Research

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

Key Influencers - Factors	All %
The need to earn money	76
My interests / hobbies	75
The qualifications i achieved in school	66
Education / training opportunities available to me	61
Job / career opportunities available to me	61
The subject choice available to me in school	55
Opportunities available within my local area	44
Work experience in school or part-time job	41
Social media (tiktok, instagram, etc)	35
Online careers websites (for example: my world of work)	31

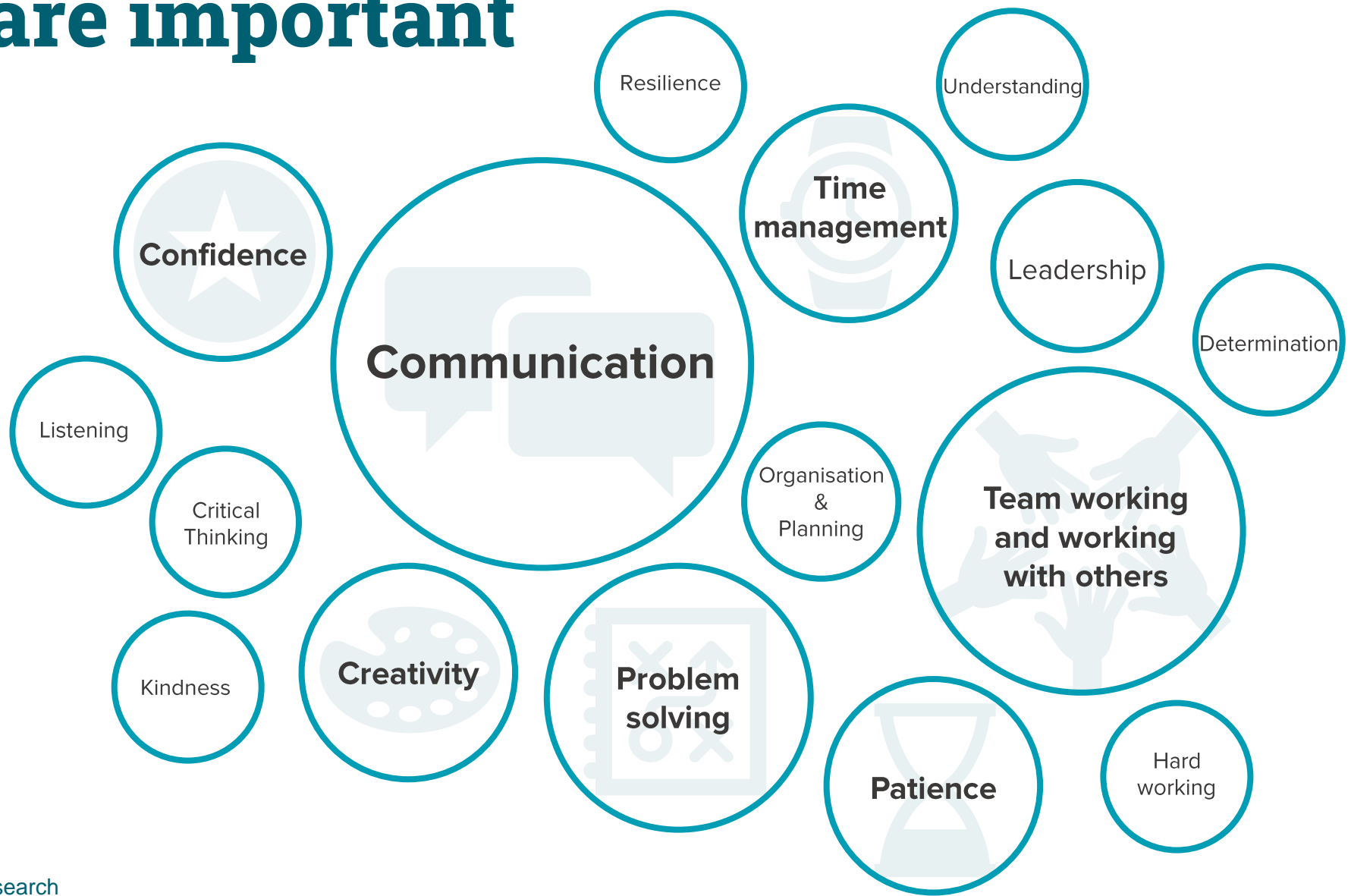
# Parents & Carers most influential on career decisions

Key Influencers - People	All %
Parent(s) / carer(s)	79
Careers adviser	53
Other family member	52
Friend(s)	50
Teacher(s)	49
Guidance teacher	44
An employer or training provider coming in to my school to talk about careers	31
A university or college representative coming in to my school to talk about careers	28
Youth worker / community worker	16

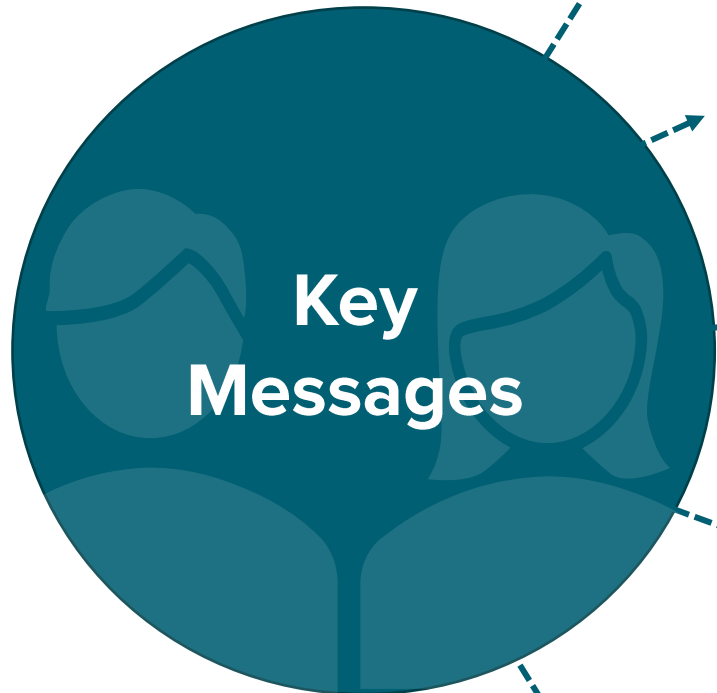
# Parents & Carers most influential on career decisions

Key Influencers - People	All %	20% most deprived areas (%)	20% least deprived areas (%)
Parent(s) / carer(s)	79	75	80
Careers adviser	53	63	42
Other family member	52	53	54
Friend(s)	50	50	46
Teacher(s)	49	49	52
Guidance teacher	44	48	42
An employer or training provider coming in to my school to talk about careers	31	34	29
A university or college representative coming in to my school to talk about careers	28	34	30
Youth worker / community worker	16	24	12

# Pupils say communication and team working skills are important







# Key Messages



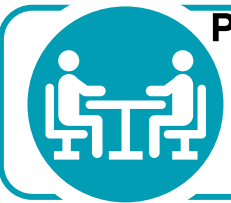
SDS gathers insight on a range of topics from young people through a **suite of projects** in the young people research programme. **Collaboration is a key element** of this to ensure its use and impact across a range of policy contexts.



Young people's post school trajectories can be mapped through SDS research and differ **depending on young people's initial plans**.



**Medical, Creative, STEM and teaching careers** are popular career choices for young people.



**Parents and Carers and Careers Advisers are most influential** on young people's career decisions. Young people also consider factors such as the **need to earn money, their interests and qualifications**.



Young people think a range of skills are important for their future career, but particularly **communication and team working skills**.



**Outputs and impact of our Young People  
research**

# SDS Research Outputs

Skills Development Scotland

## Young People's Career Ambitions (YPCA) 2022/23

### Key Findings Briefing Paper

SDS Evaluation and Research Team

Skills Development Scotland

## Young People's Career Ambitions (YPCA) 2022/23

### Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)

SDS Evaluation and Research Team

**Summary of findings:**

- Young people (YP) from the most deprived areas are more likely to be influenced by the need to earn money.
- YP from the most deprived areas were more likely to report that they were encouraged to explore a wide range of options.
- YP from most deprived areas are more likely to report that not having enough confidence in themselves is a career barrier.

	SIMD 5 - 2022/23 (least deprived)	262	✓ responded to the survey
	SIMD 1 - 2022/23 (most deprived)	324	✓

#### Key influences on career aspirations

A fair amount / a great deal (%)

Parent(s) / carer(s)	82%
My interests / hobbies	76%
The need to earn money	70%
The qualifications I achieved in school	76%

#### Views on CIAG support

Agree / strongly agree (%)

I was supported to make my own decisions and take control of my career path	80%
I was encouraged to aim high for my future career	74%
I was encouraged to explore a wide range of learning and career options	63%
The careers adviser understood me and the support I needed	54%

#### Career Management Skills

Agree / strongly agree (%)

I am able to manage change in my life and career	85%
I can make informed career decisions	84%
I am able to use my initiative to work things out myself	96%
I understand how my experiences and learning can help me make career choices	92%

#### Preferred sector

Select all that apply (%)

	SIMD 1	SIMD 5
Arts, culture, entertainment and sport	20%	19%
Health, social care, social work	19%	19%
Legal, professional, scientific, and technical	16%	19%
Construction and engineering	17%	13%
Education	12%	13%

#### Perceived barriers to career

Select up to 5 (%)

	SIMD 1	SIMD 5
Not enough work experience	43%	51%
Not having enough confidence in myself	48%	39%
Not having contacts / knowing the right people	39%	38%
Too much competition	28%	43%
Not earning enough money to live on	35%	32%

#### Desired job attributes

Select up to 5 (%)

	SIMD 1	SIMD 5
Good pay	60%	55%
Job satisfaction	47%	58%
Learning new skills	42%	36%
Helping others	37%	38%

Skills Development Scotland

## Pupil Voice 2024: Senior Phase Research

### Briefing Paper

Evaluation & Research Team  
November 2024

Skills Development Scotland

## 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
...understood me and the support I needed	7.7	8.0
...listened to me and valued my ideas	8.1	8.4
...supported me to make my own decisions and take control of my career path	8.1	8.3
...encouraged me to aim high for my future career	7.9	8.2

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

	Female	Male
...understand and build on your skills, strengths, and achievements	76%	79%
...to find and use career information easily	79%	82%
...consider new things you may not have thought of when it comes to your career journey	74%	78%
...to make better informed career decisions	73%	79%

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

	Female	Male
The ability to access support when needed	6.9	7.4
The amount of support available	6.9	7.3
The range of SDS careers services available	6.9	7.1
Overall satisfaction with the careers services you received from SDS	6.5	6.7

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

	Female	Male
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%

# Sharing and dissemination

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



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



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





**Understanding the Voice of Apprentices:**  
SDS Apprentice Voice Research

# Apprentice Voice

## Previous approach



- Individual anonymous surveys sent to specific cohorts
- Different questions by stage/ programme
- Snapshots only
- Inconsistent measures

## New approach



- Using existing Management Information System (FIPS)
- Survey links sent automatically by email based on triggers
- Unique FIPS ID embedded in the survey link

## Young people focus



- Incentives, streamlined emails & question wording
- Smartphone friendly access/ layout
- No need to ask Questions on personal characteristics/ training details

# Apprentice Voice

All apprentices on SDS' Management system (FIPS) are automatically given the opportunity to provide feedback on their apprenticeship at three key stages:



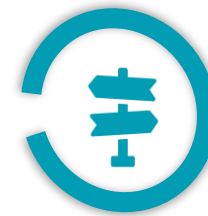
## IN TRAINING

Six months after they start their apprenticeship



## LEAVERS

Three months after they leave (whether they complete or not)



## SHORT TERM OUTCOMES

Fifteen months after they leave (whether they complete or not)

Since the system went live in 2022, nearly **35,000 responses** from apprentices have been received. This puts apprentice voice at the heart of the Scottish system.

# Apprentice Voice



**Putting the apprentice voice at the heart of the system.** An improved evidence base, in real time, to inform decision making.

**Using new data tools and techniques** to accelerate analysis and sharing of insight, including **PowerBI, Reproducible Analytical Pipelines and AI.**



**An inclusive approach coordinated** across the apprenticeship family. Efficiently providing **consistent and comparable** measures of outcomes, and benefits.

**Developing a longitudinal dataset** to support tracking individuals over time and through different apprenticeships.



Making better use of management information to complement feedback. **Providing richer data to support deeper insight.**

**Generating actionable insight** through deep-dive analyses and more qualitative research across key customer groups.





# Apprentice Voice

The following results are based on responses received in the 2024 calendar year. They represent the views of:



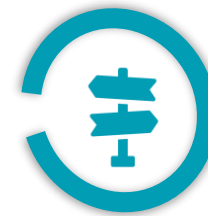
**IN TRAINING**

**Almost 6,000 MAs**



**LEAVERS**

**Over 4,000 MAs**

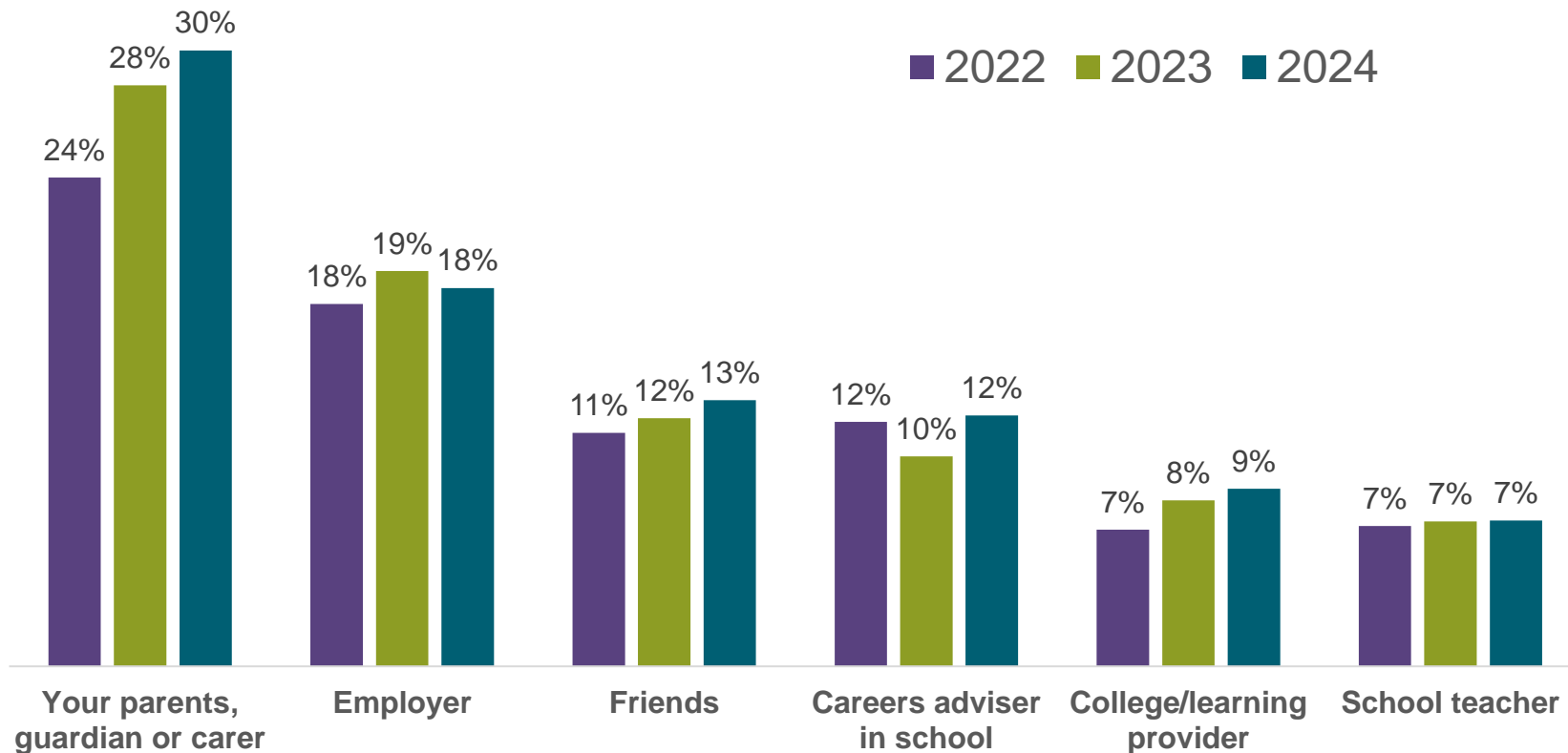


**SHORT TERM  
OUTCOMES**

**Over 2,500 MAs**

# Apprentice Voice: Influences

## How new Modern Apprentices found out about their apprenticeship



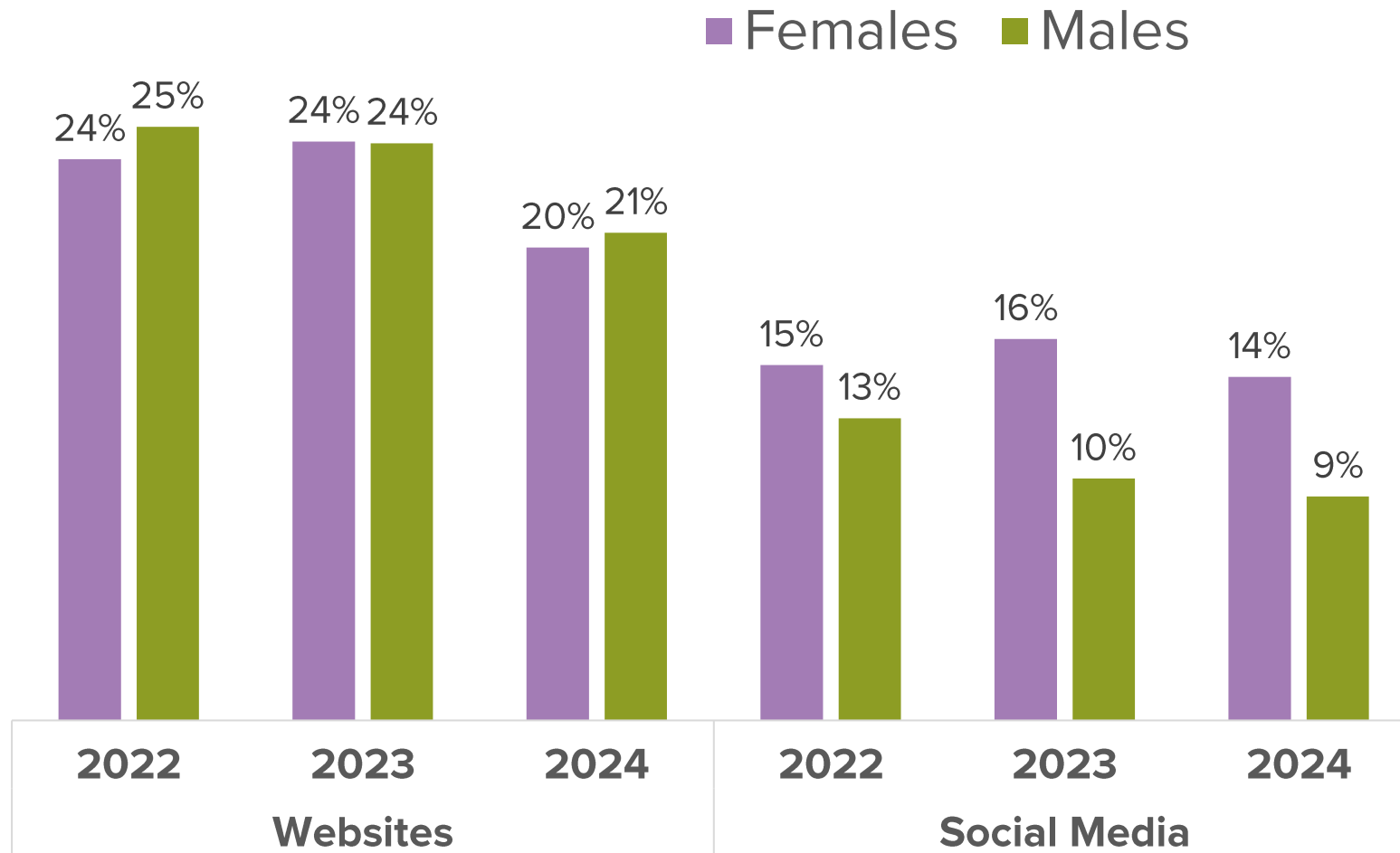
Parents & carers are the main route for MAs finding out

Individual contacts are growing in importance

Source:  
*Apprentice Voice: In Training Survey*  
Direct MA recruits aged 16 to 19

# Apprentice Voice: Influences

## How new Modern Apprentices found out about their apprenticeship



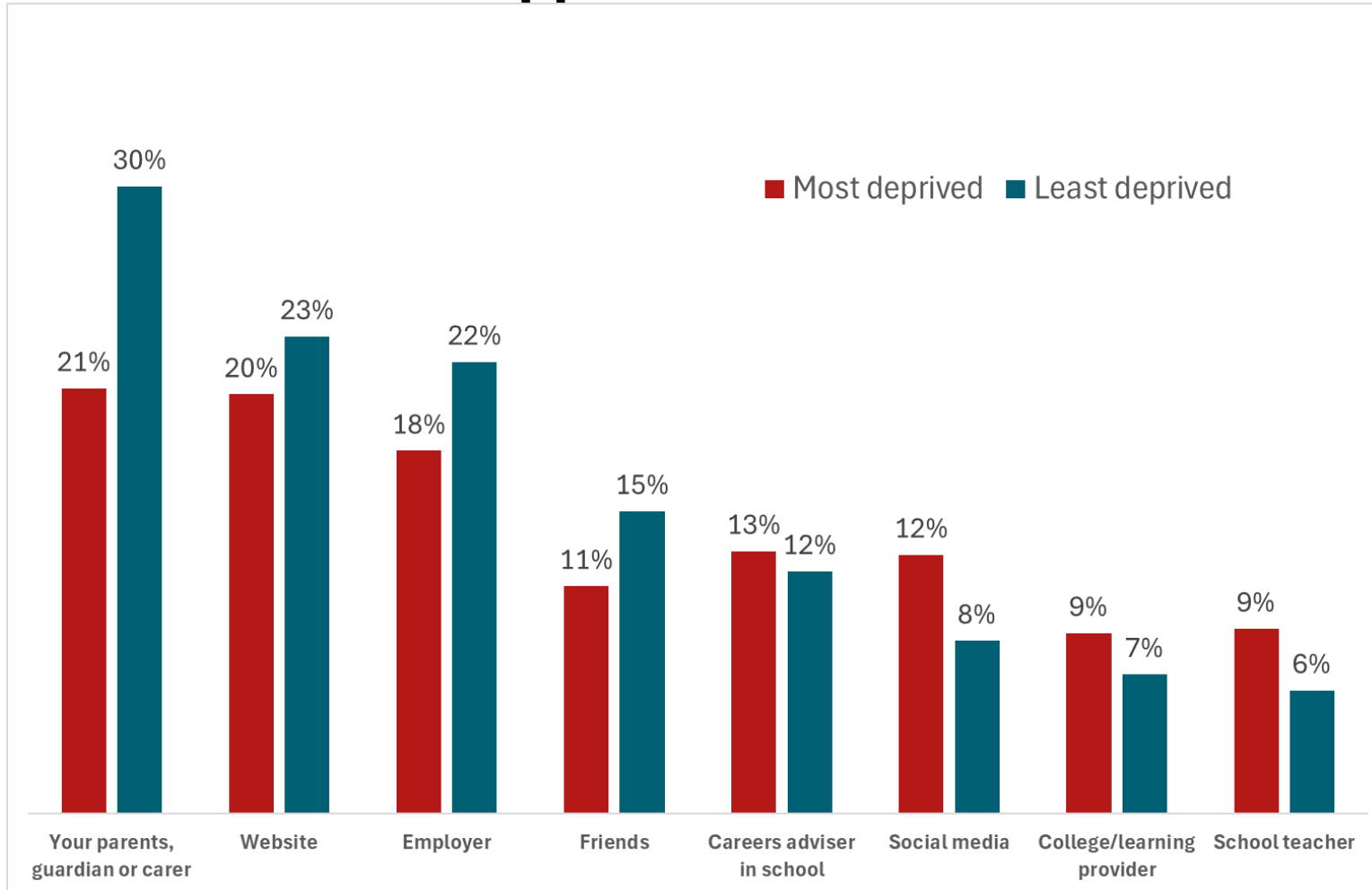
Online sources and social media have decreased in importance as a source of information

Social media is used more by females

Source:  
Apprentice Voice: In Training Survey  
Direct MA recruits aged 16 to 19

# Apprentice Voice: Influences

## How new Modern Apprentices found out about their apprenticeship

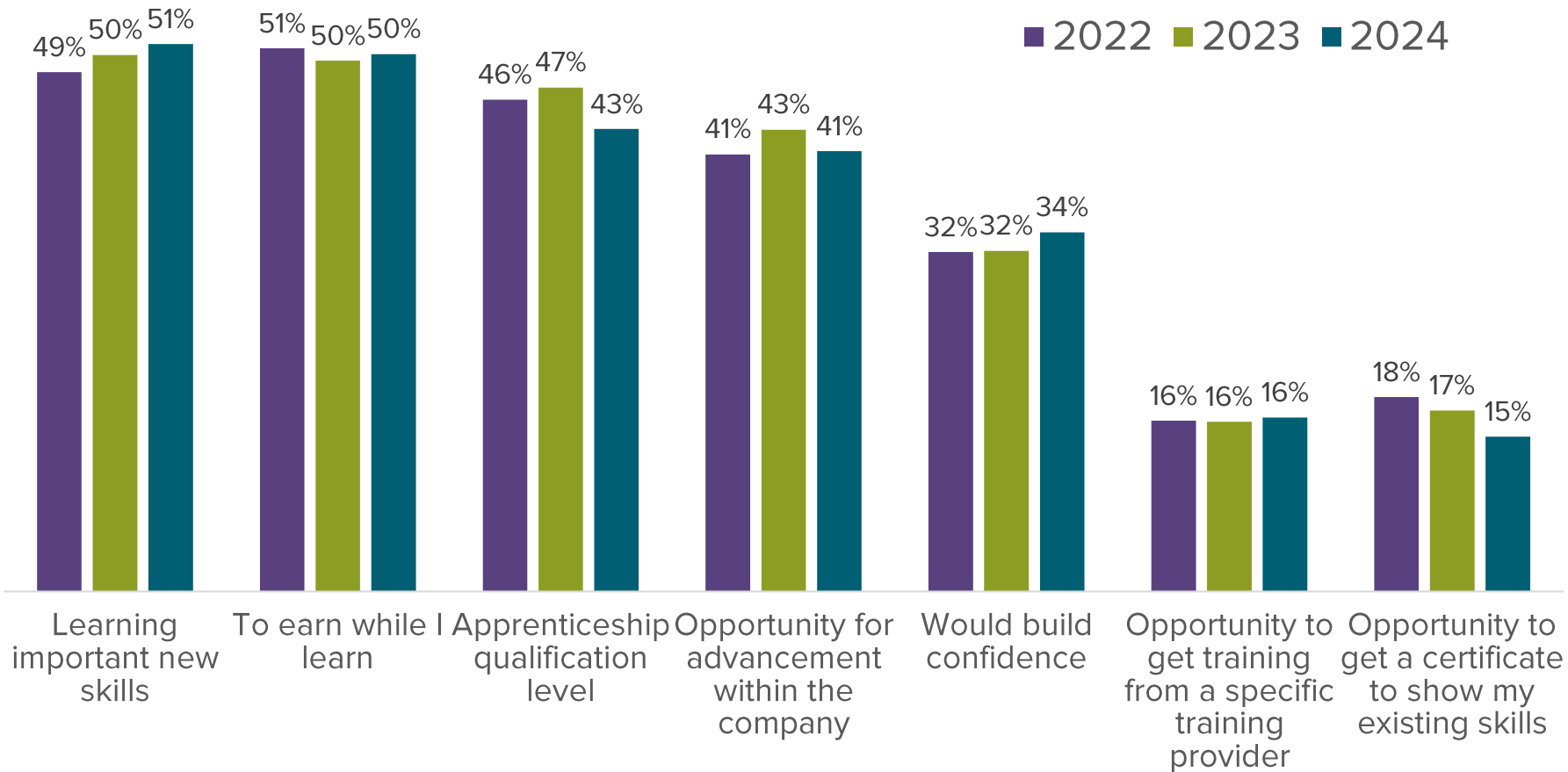


Young people from disadvantaged areas are more likely to find out from Careers Advisers, Learning Providers & Teachers

Source:  
*Apprentice Voice: In Training Survey*  
Direct MA recruits aged 16 to 19

# Apprentice Voice: Motivations

## What was important to you when selecting your Modern Apprenticeship?

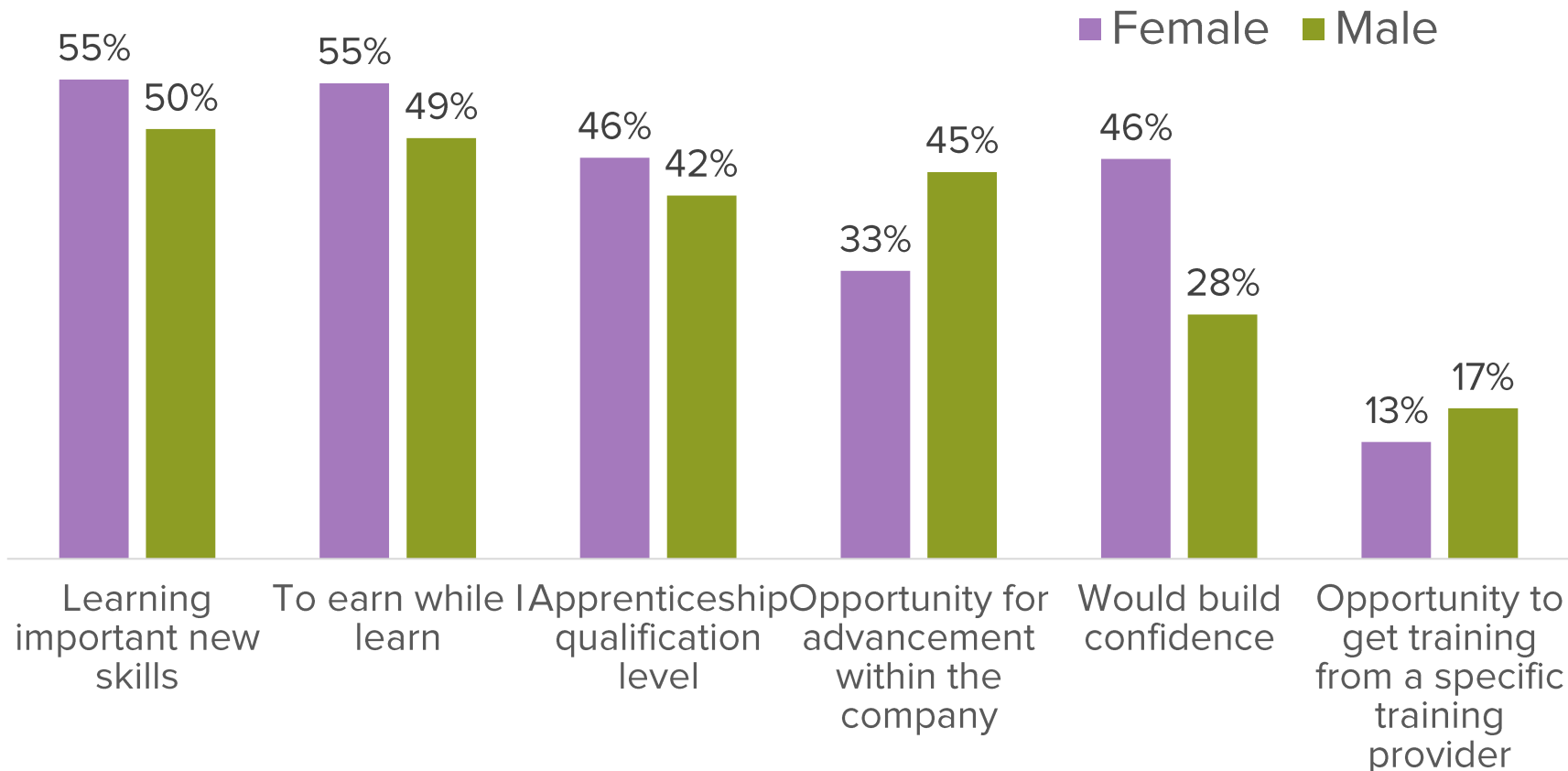


**Learning new skills** and **earning while learning** are the two most important reasons for choosing an MA

Source:  
*Apprentice Voice: In Training Survey*  
Direct MA recruits aged 16 to 19

# Apprentice Voice: Motivations

## What was important to you when selecting your Modern Apprenticeship?



**Learning new skills, earning while learning and Building confidence** were more important for females  
**Career advancement** was more important among males

Source:  
*Apprentice Voice: In Training Survey*  
Direct MA recruits aged 16 to 19

# Apprentice Voice: Experiences

## What respondents value most about their Modern Apprenticeship

Learning new skills



Qualifications & opportunities



People & Support



Learning while working



Earning while learning



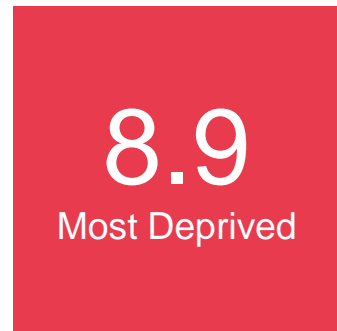
It's a good way to transition from school to work and it gives experience and skills as well as a qualification

The support and guidance I have been given has been exceptional. This has given me the confidence to develop my skills and knowledge further in relation to the job

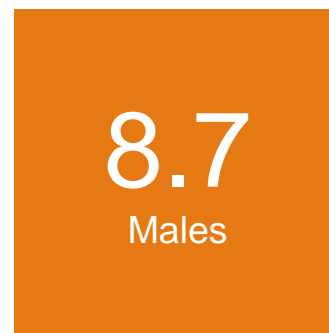
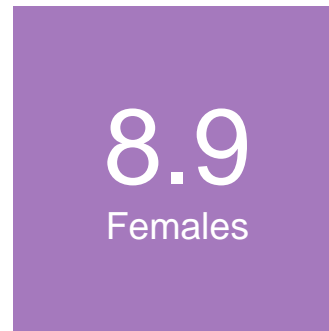
It is great to learn and work at the same time, I can have a stable living on a full-time wage and also learn and not have to worry about being short on money or student debt

# Apprentice Voice: Experiences

**Modern Apprentices are highly satisfied with their experience**



Overall, how satisfied are you with your Modern Apprenticeship?



It just gave me a massive boost in confidence and a clear idea of what I want for my future in my role at work

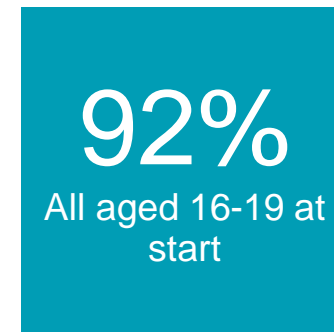
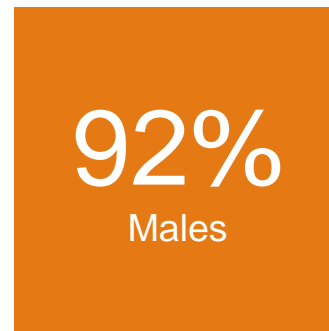
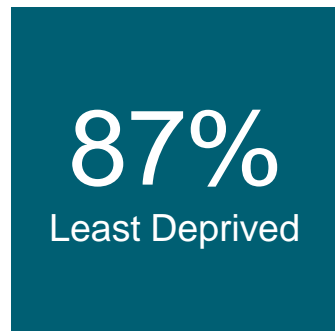
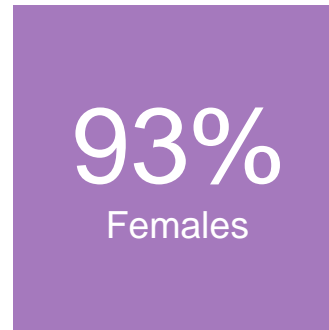


# Apprentice Voice: Outcomes

**Most Modern Apprentices are still working in the same sector, 3 months after completing**



Are you working in a job in the same sector as your Modern Apprenticeship?



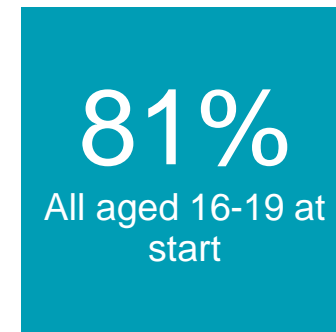
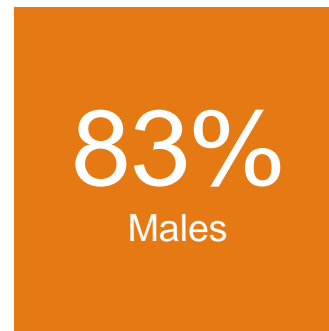
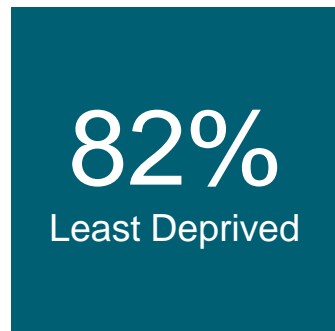
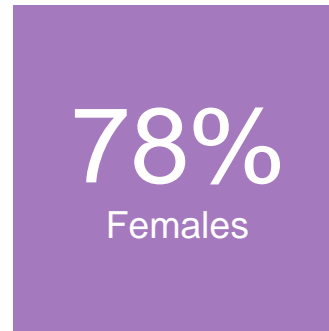
Source:  
*Apprentice Voice: Leavers' Survey*  
*Completers aged 16 to 19 at start*

# Apprentice Voice: Outcomes

**Most Modern Apprentices are still with the same employer, 3 months after completing**

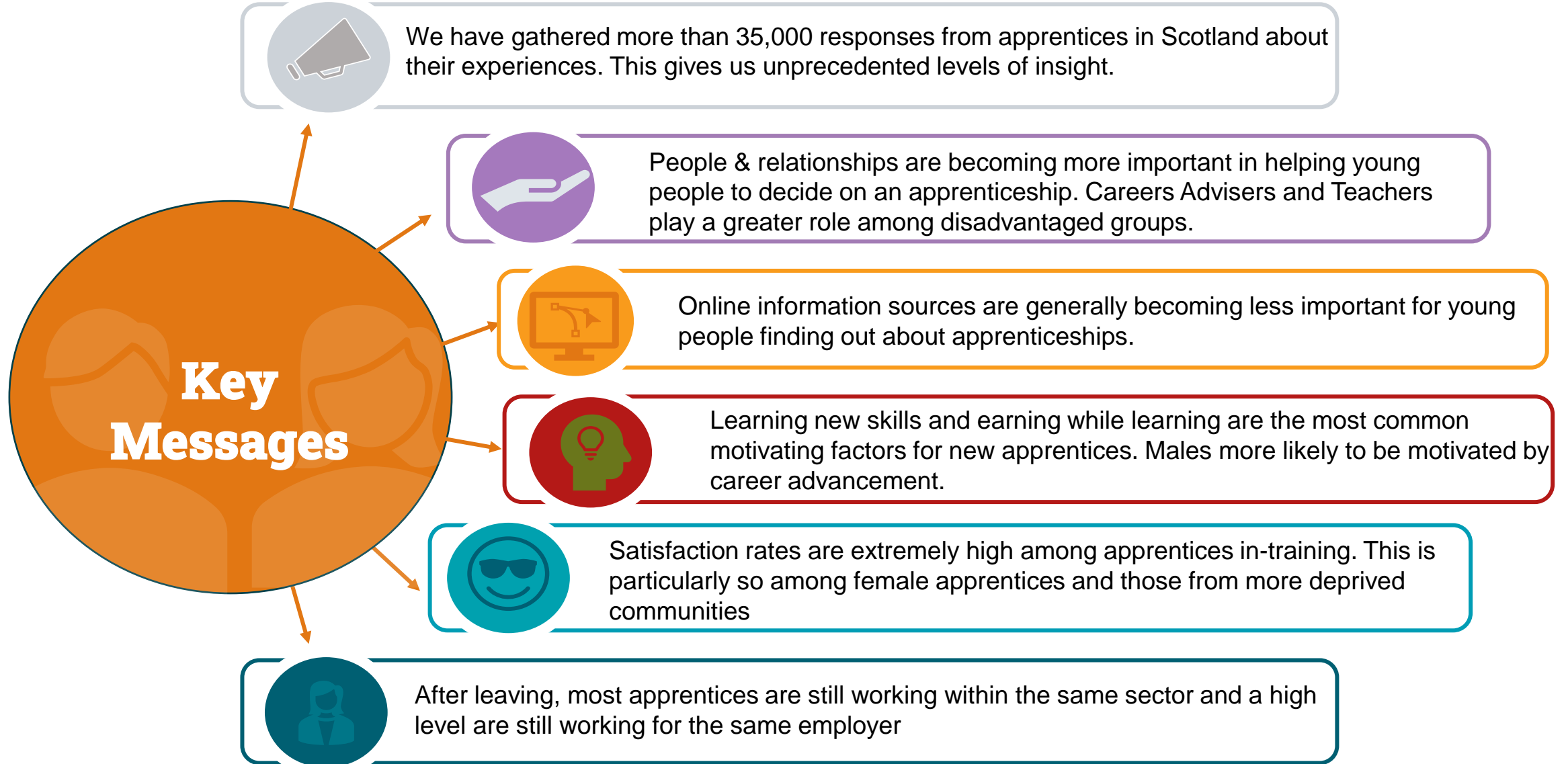


Are you still working with the same employer you started your Modern Apprenticeship with?



Source:  
*Apprentice Voice: Leavers' Survey*  
*Completers aged 16 to 19 at start*

# Apprentice Voice: Key Messages

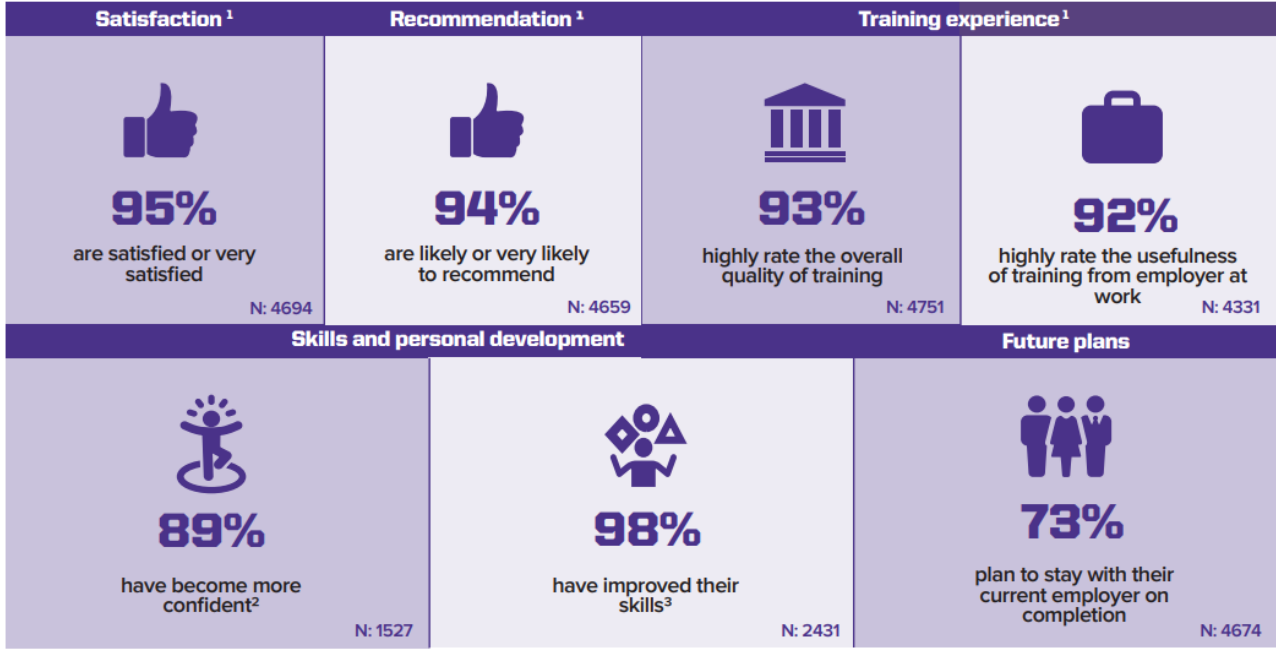


# SDS Research Outputs



## Apprentice Voice Modern Apprenticeships In Training 2024\*

Evaluation & Research Team  
**5,974** responses



**"I value the opportunities that are offered through my apprenticeship, the ability to learn useful skills, to heighten my confidence levels and the wide range of pathways that I can go down within the company. I value the support that I receive from my manager and my fellow colleagues."**

- Engineering apprentice, male, 18 years old

\* 6 months after start date | <sup>1</sup> Percent of those selecting 6 and above on a 10-point scale | <sup>2</sup> of those stating becoming more confident was important when selecting MA | <sup>3</sup> of those stating learning new skills was important when selecting MA

# Sharing and dissemination



**Apprentice Voice**

Evaluation & Research

Race Commission Briefing Note  
June 2024





**Corporate Parenting Plan**  
2024 – 2027




**Disability Focal Point Group**

Evidence from SDS's Equality Evidence Review, Young People Research, and Apprentice Voice

Evaluation and Research Team

SDS Confidential  
Evaluation and Research Team



## MA In-Training Dashboard

Evaluation and Research

Age Group: All | Gender: All | Date Survey Completed: 31/01/2022 - 17/02/2025 | Apprenticeship Start Date: 19/09/2019 - 23/08/2024 | Learning Provider: All | Framework: All

Dashboard displays unweighted data from surveys completed: 31/01/2022 to 17/02/2025

Overview | Respondent Profile | Selecting MA | Induction & Support | Skills, Personal Development & Future Plans | Quality of Experience & Overall Satisfaction

Number of Respondents  
**15,278**

**The in-training survey** is sent to FAs, MAs, and GAs about 6 months after their start date. The survey includes questions about how they found out about their apprenticeship, why they decided to start it, their perceptions of quality of training, and their satisfaction with training.

**OVERVIEW:** The Apprentice Voice (Real Time Apprenticeship Insights (RTAI)) live reporter Dashboard provides a visual summary of the unweighted findings from the In Training survey with those who are undertaking a Modern Apprenticeship (MA). The survey includes questions about how MAs found out about their apprenticeship, skills they have developed, their perceptions of quality and satisfaction with their training.

**DATA SOURCE:** The RTAI MA In-training survey is an online survey which is sent to apprentices approximately 6 months after their start date. The survey is issued automatically through our FIPS Management Information system. This live dashboard shows data for the MA programme that has not been weighted. The data in the live dashboard updates weekly.

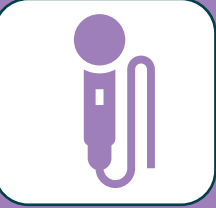
**LIMITATIONS & ASSUMPTIONS:** Any visuals displaying 5 or less responses have been suppressed from view. Please note some results may differ slightly from the published reports due to rounding.

**NAVIGATION:** The Dashboard can be navigated to the desired page by selecting the buttons adjacent to this text box. Once on the desired page, you can filter the data by clicking on the visible buttons.


**CONTACT:** If you have any queries regarding the Dashboard please contact the Evaluation and Research Team at [evaluationandresearch@sds.co.uk](mailto:evaluationandresearch@sds.co.uk)

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

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




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



**Impact and Influence**

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



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



# Summary & Next Steps

Together, the young people research programme and the Apprentice Voice programme at SDS

**capture the voice of the young person**

and ensure an

**evidence-based approach**

to policy and practice in CIAG and apprenticeship delivery.

 **Look out for:**

**Young People Research Outputs** on the SDS website - Young People's Career Ambitions Research 2024 results soon to be published.

**Apprentice Voice outputs** on the SDS website.

 **Contact us:**

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