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Parent, pupil and learner panel: 22/23 February wave

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Executive summary

Introduction

The Department for Education (DfE) commissioned the Parent, Pupil and Learner Panel (PPLP) to collect robust and quick turnaround research to support policy development during recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond. The PPLP aims to help DfE make evidence-based policy decisions and see how views and experiences of parents, pupils and learners change over time. This is the second year of the PPLP. The [first year reports](#) have been published.

This report discusses the findings from the 2022/23 research wave 3 with parents and secondary pupils in years 7 to 11, together with the recruitment wave to recruit pupils and learners in years 12 and 13, conducted in February-March 2023. The headline findings are discussed below.

Moving to secondary school

Nearly all year 7 pupils (94%) said that they had moved to a new school between years 6 and 7. Slightly more than two in five (43%) said that they had received lots of support from their secondary school to make sure the transition from primary to secondary school went well. One in twenty (5%) said they had received no support.

Nine in ten year 7 pupils who moved to a new school said they settled in well (90%), with 45% reporting that they felt they had settled in 'very well' at secondary school.

Four in five year 7 pupils (80%) reported that they had found it easy to make and maintain friendships in secondary school.

Moving to college or sixth form

Half (50%) of pupils and learners in years 12 and 13 said that they had moved to a new college or sixth form in September 2022. Almost nine in ten of these pupils and learners said they had settled in well since starting college or their sixth form studies (88%), while 11% said they had not settled in well.

Where pupils and learners had settled in well, the most important factors were making new friends (70%), liking the course (66%) and being able to visit the college or sixth form beforehand (57%).

If pupils and learners had not settled in well to a new college or sixth form, the main challenges they experienced were difficulties making new friends (53%), not enjoying the course (47%) and difficulties with travelling to the college or sixth form (41%).

Pupil behaviour

Seven in ten parents of secondary school pupils (71%) and 87% of pupils in years 7-11 said that teachers in their (child's) school send pupils out of class for reasons related to behaviour.

One in six parents of secondary school pupils (17%) said that their child had been sent out of a classroom since September 2022 because a teacher was unhappy with their behaviour. A higher proportion of pupils in years 7-11 (24%) said they had been sent out of a classroom because a teacher was unhappy with their behaviour.

A range of answers was given when pupils were asked how long they had been sent out of the classroom for. Of those that had been sent out of a classroom, two in five said that they were sent out for up to five minutes (20%) or for the rest of the lesson (20%).

Digital skills

When asked what digital skills, if any, they were taught at school or college since the start of this academic year, pupils and learners were most likely to say they had been taught how to stay safe when talking to people online (51%) and how to use applications to create documents, spreadsheets and presentations (42%).

Nearly all pupils and learners said they felt confident using search engines to find information (97%), staying safe when talking to people online (96%) and using a laptop, PC or Mac (95%).

Around four in five pupils and learners said they were confident in identifying suspicious links in emails, websites and social media (83%), using applications to create documents, spreadsheets and presentations (82%) and organising digital content using files and folders (78%).

Careers

Three in ten pupils and learners in years 7-13 (30%) said they had a specific idea of the career or job that they want when they finish their education. Around half (48%) said that they had a general idea of the career or job that they want, and around a quarter (23%) said that they did not know what type of career or job they want.

Just under half of pupils in years 7-11 (46%) said that they had received information, advice, or guidance on their future career from their school or college in the current academic year. Just over a third (36%) said that they had not received any information, advice, or guidance.

Attitudes towards careers support were generally positive. Among pupils that had received information, advice, or guidance on their future career, eight in ten (78%) said

that they had found the support useful. One in six (18%) said the careers support had not been useful.

Post-16 plans

Almost nine in ten (87%) pupils and learners in year 13 said they had received information, advice or guidance from their school or college to help them prepare for their next steps (such as jobs, education and volunteering).

Where they had received support, the most common activity reported by pupils and learners was support with their CV, applications or writing their personal statement (76%). Other common activities were careers fairs (66%), work experience (58%) and speakers delivering talks (58%).

Higher education plans and sources of information

When asked about their plans for September 2023, around half (48%) of year 13 pupils and learners said they were planning to go to university or study for a HE qualification. One in seven (14%) planned to start an Apprenticeship and one in ten (10%) were planning to start paid work.

Three-quarters of pupils and learners in year 13 (75%) said they felt prepared to start their planned activity in September 2023. A quarter (24%) said they did not feel prepared.

Around nine in ten pupils and learners in year 13 (89%) said they were confident that their planned activity for September 2023 was the right choice for them. One in ten (10%) were not confident.

A quarter of pupils and learners in year 13 (25%) said that their plans for education or training had changed because of the rising cost of living. Two-thirds (68%) said their plans had not changed.

Year 13 pupils and learners who said they were planning to go to university or study for a HE qualification were asked which sources of information they used when they were deciding what and where they wanted to study. The most common source of information reported by pupils and learners was UCAS course pages (84%), followed by university prospectuses or websites (64%). In total, 8% of year 13 pupils and learners who were planning to go to university or study for a HE qualification said they had used Discover Uni as an information source.

Cost of living

Just over half (55%) of pupils and learners in years 12 and 13 said that they had done some kind of paid work since September 2022, and 44% said they had done any paid work in the previous academic year (between September 2021 and July 2022).

If pupils and learners in years 12 and 13 had done any paid work, in either the current or previous academic year, they were asked whether they had increased the amount they worked alongside studying due to the rising cost of living. Around two in five (41%) said that they had increased the amount they worked.

Over two in five (45%) pupils and learners in years 12 and 13 who had done any paid work in the current academic year said that working interfered with keeping up with their studies.

Half (49%) of parents said that since the start of term in September 2022, they had cut back on household costs such as food and energy to be able to afford school related costs (items such as uniforms and textbooks). The same proportion (49%) felt that they would need to cut back on household costs during the rest of the school year to be able to afford school related costs.

All pupils and learners in years 7-13 were asked whether their mental health had improved, worsened, or stayed the same since September 2022. One in five pupils and learners (19%) said that their mental health had improved, while 27% said it had worsened and 43% thought it had stayed the same.

School lunches

Three-quarters of parents (76%) said their child ate lunches provided by the school, with around a third of parents (35%) stating that their child ate school lunches all of the time. Around a quarter (23%) said their child never ate school lunches.

Of parents who said their child ate school lunches, the majority (61%) said that the frequency was around the same this year than the year before. One in five (20%) said their child had eaten them less often this year than the year before and 16% said they had eaten them more often.

Parents who said that their child had eaten school lunches less often this year than last year were asked why this was the case. Half (50%) mentioned the cost of school meals, and a third (34%) said their child did not enjoy the taste of the lunches.

Among pupils and learners in years 7-13, two-thirds (67%) said that they ate lunches provided by the school or college, with 19% saying they ate them all of the time. A third (32%) said they never ate lunches provided by the school or college.

Of pupils and learners who said they ate lunches provided by the school or college, 27% said they had eaten them more often this year than last year, and 28% said they had eaten them less often this year. Around two in five (42%) said that the frequency was around the same.

SEND specialist support

Around two in five (42%) year 12-13 pupils and learners with SEND said they had been able to access the specialist support they needed when they moved to a new college or sixth form. However, 15% said they had been unable to access the specialist support they needed.

Parents that considered their child to have a special educational need or disability were asked if their child was receiving various types of specialist support. The most common types of support received were support with learning (63%) and support from a SEND coordinator (56%).

Just over a third of parents of children considered to have SEND (37%) said that their child needed support from an educational psychologist but was unable to access it, and a similar proportion for mental health support (33% unable to access it).

Three in five (60%) parents of pupils considered to have SEND were confident that their child's school was able to support their special educational needs or disability, with around one in five (18%) very confident. Around two in five (38%) were not confident.

Parents of pupils considered to have SEND were also asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they were with their involvement in the discussions and decisions regarding the support their child receives at school. Just under half (47%) said they were satisfied, while 31% were dissatisfied.

Pupils and learners in years 12-13 who considered themselves to have SEND were asked whether they were receiving various types of specialist support. The most commonly mentioned were support with learning (49%) and mental health support (31%).

A quarter (26%) of pupils and learners in years 12-13 who considered themselves to have SEND said that they needed support from an educational psychologist but were unable to access it. There were also reported difficulties accessing mental health support (23% unable to access it) and support with learning (21% unable to access it).

Pupils and learners in years 12-13 who were unable to access SEND support were asked why this was the case. The main reason given was that the type of support was not offered (40%). A quarter (26%) did not know why they could not access the support.

Pupils' mental health and well-being

Pupils and learners in years 12-13 reported a mean score of 6.3 for their happiness, 5.9 for satisfaction and 6.2 for worthwhileness.

Year 12-13 pupils and learners gave a mean score of 4.3 for anxiousness.

When asked how often they felt lonely, 26% of pupils and learners in years 12-13 said this was often and 45% said some of the time. One in four (25%) said that they hardly ever or never felt lonely.

Main challenges

Pupils and learners in years 12-13 were asked to describe in their own words the main challenges, if any, that they were facing in the coming months. The four most common themes to emerge were around exams and assessments; mental health; school work and homework; and financial concerns.

Introduction

The Department for Education (DfE) commissioned Kantar Public to recruit and maintain a panel of Parents, Pupils and Learners (PPLP) in England. DfE wanted to use the panel to conduct robust, quick turnaround research to explore the views and experiences of parents, pupils and learners starting from the autumn term of the 2021/2022 academic year. The research aims to help DfE make evidence-based policy decisions during recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and monitor the impact of existing policies. This is the second year of the PPLP. The [first years' reports](#) have been published. The research has been structured into two broad phases:

- The first recruitment wave between September and October 2022 invited pupils in years 6 to 10 and parents of pupils in reception to year 10 in the 2021/22 academic year to take part in a 15-minute online survey to join the PPLP. Panel members were sampled from the National Pupil Database (NPD) and contacted by letter, inviting them to take part in the online survey (push-to-web approach).
- A second recruitment wave in February 2023 invited pupils and learners in years 12 to 13 in the 2022/23 academic year to take part in a 15-minute online survey to join the PPLP. Panel members were sampled from the National Pupil Database (NPD) and Individualised Learner Record (ILR) and contacted by letter, inviting them to take part in the online survey (push-to-web approach).
- Subsequent reporting waves from the 2023 Spring term will involve inviting all panel members to take part in regular 10-minute surveys.

This report focuses on findings from the February 2023 research wave with parents and pupils in years 7 to 11, as well as the recruitment wave with pupils and learners in years 12 and 13. The February 2023 research wave took place between 1st February and 5th February 2023, and the recruitment wave took place between 14th February and 14th March 2023, as shown in Table 1.

For more information on the surveys background, aims and objectives please see the 2022/23 recruitment wave report.

Table 1 Parent, Pupil and Learner Panel (PPLP) year 2 waves to date

Wave	Audience	Fieldwork period	Fieldwork reference
2022/23 Recruitment and research wave 1	5,564 parents and 4,950 secondary pupils (years 7 to 11)	23 rd September to 21 st October 2022	September to October 2022

Wave	Audience	Fieldwork period	Fieldwork reference
2022/23 Research wave 2	2,976 parents and 2,245 secondary pupils (years 7 to 11)	9 th November to 14 th November 2022	November 2022
2022/23 Research wave 3	2,580 parents and 2,075 secondary pupils (years 7 to 11)	1 st February to 5 th February 2023	February 2023
2022/23 Recruitment wave 2	2,394 pupils and learners (years 12 to 13)	14 th February to 14 th March 2023	February to March 2023

Methodology

This report focuses on data from surveys with parents, pupils and learners which were conducted between 1st February to 14th March 2023.

Parents and pupils (years 7 to 11) were invited to take part in a 10-minute online survey by email and text. Reminders were sent by email and text during the five-day fieldwork period. Pupils and learners in years 12 and 13 were invited to take part in a 15-minute online survey by letter. A reminder letter was sent on 6th March.

More information, including key demographics for respondents are shown in the accompanying technical report.

Data tables

An accompanying set of data tables has been published with this report, which contain a wider set of responses to each survey question. Most findings can be found in the published data tables.

Moving to secondary school

The transition from year 6 to year 7, which marks the progression from primary to secondary education, is a critical time in the lives of young people. In many cases pupils will change schools, with according impacts on friendship groups, teacher relationships and travel routines. They will have to learn the new school rules and conventions, navigate around new – often larger - school buildings and learn which adults they should speak to if they need support. This period also marks the transition from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3, which means that pupils need to engage with new subjects and more complex concepts.

This section examines how much support year 7 pupils felt they received when they started in their new school. It also covers their perceptions of how well they settled in and how easy it was to make and maintain friendships.

Support received when moving to a new school

More than nine in ten year 7 pupils (94%) said that they had moved to a new school between years 6 and 7.

Overall, 43% of year 7 pupils that had moved schools said they had received lots of support from their secondary school to make sure the transition from primary to secondary school went well. Half of pupils (50%) said they had received some support. Pupils with CiN status were less likely to report they received any support (84% compared with 93% without CiN status).¹ Five percent said they have received no support.

Year 7 pupils who said they had settled into secondary school ‘very well’ were more likely to say that they received lots of support (68%) compared with those that said they settled in ‘quite well’ (31%).

Settling in and making friendships

Figure 1 shows how well year 7 pupils who moved to a new school felt they had settled in and made friendships in secondary school.

Nine in ten year 7 pupils (90%) said they had settled in well at secondary school, including 45% who said they settled in ‘very well’ and 45% who said they settled in ‘fairly well’. The proportion of year 7 pupils reporting they had settled in ‘very well’ was lower among pupils with SEN (31% compared with 48% of pupils without SEN) and pupils with CiN status (32% compared with 46% of pupils without CiN status).² Around one in ten

¹ This question was answer by only 85 pupils with CiN status. These findings should therefore be treated with caution.

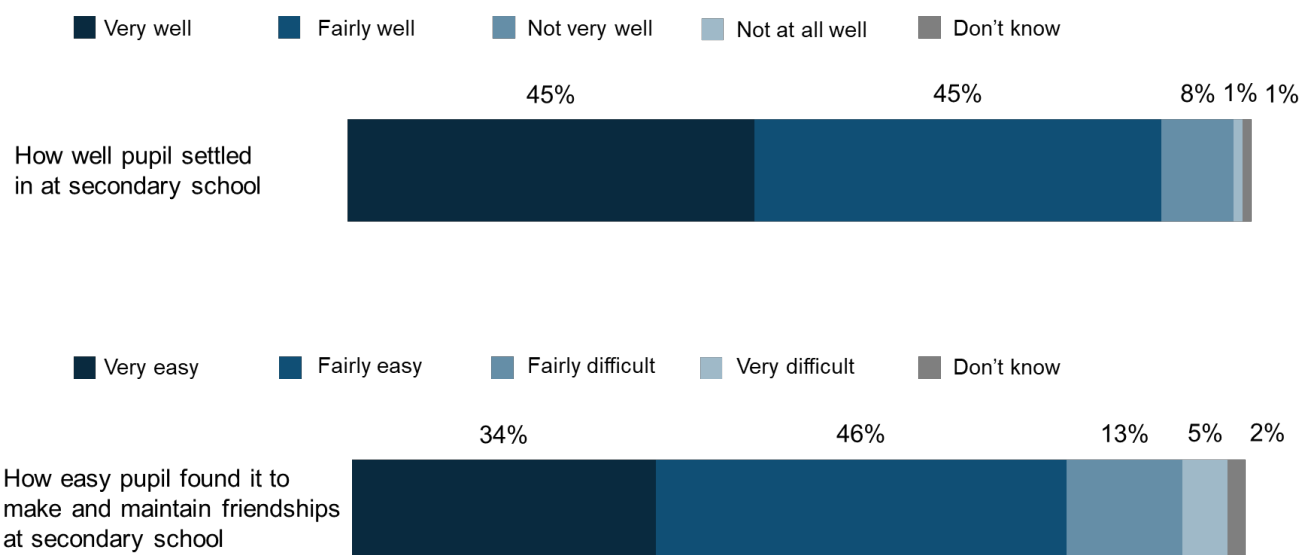
² Only 88 pupils with CiN status answered this question so results should be treated with caution.

(9%) pupils in year 7 said they had not settled in well at secondary school. This was higher for those who reported being a victim of bullying in the past 12 months at the September/October 2022 PPLP recruitment wave (18% compared to 5% of those who had not been a victim of bullying).³

Four in five year 7 pupils (80%) reported that they had found it easy to make and maintain friendships at secondary school and one in five (19%) said it had been difficult. Pupils eligible for FSM were less likely to say it had been easy to make and maintain friendships (71% compared with 83% of pupils not eligible for FSM). Pupils with SEN were also less likely to say it had been easy to make and maintain friendships than pupils without SEN (65% compared with 83%).

These findings were consistent with those obtained in the March 2022 PPLP survey.

Figure 1: Whether year 7 pupils who moved to a new school felt they had settled in and made friendships



Base: Year 7 pupils who attended a new school in September 2022 (390).

Source: PPLP 2023 RW3 pupils and learners survey. How well have you settled in at secondary school?
How easy have you found it to make and maintain friendships at secondary school?

Adapting to school rules and keeping up with school work

Figure 2 shows how well year 7 pupils who moved to a new school felt they had adapted to the school rules and kept up with school work.

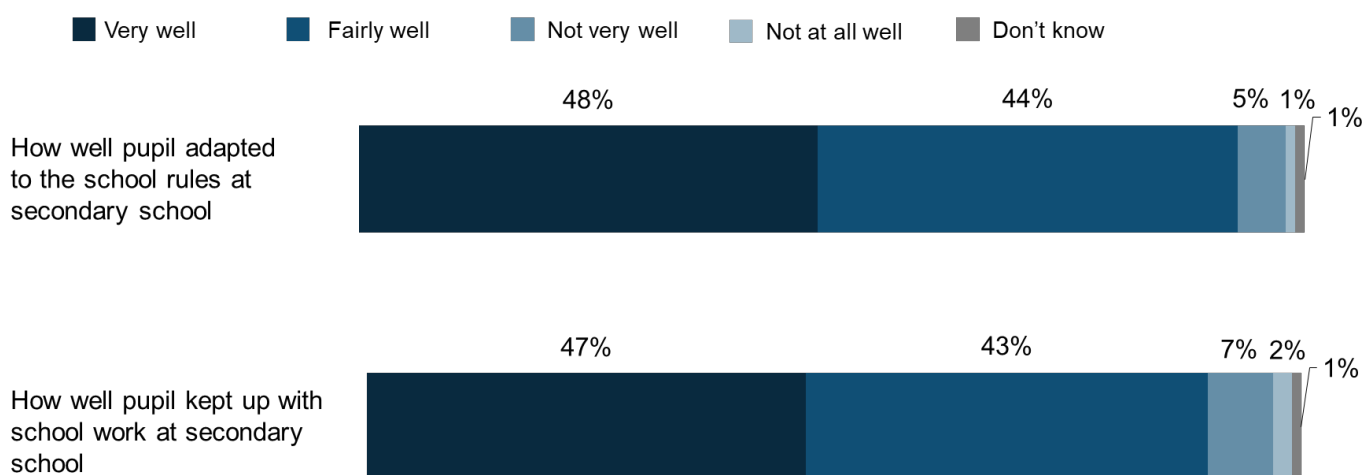
³ Year 7 pupils who moved school and reported they had been bullied in the past 12 months in the recruitment wave would likely have referred to bullying at a previous school in the recruitment wave.

More than nine in ten year 7 pupils (93%) said they had adapted well to the school rules at secondary school, including 48% who said they had adapted ‘very well’ and 44% who had adapted ‘fairly well’. The proportion of year 7 pupils reporting they had adapted to the school rules ‘very well’ was lower among pupils with SEN (34% compared with 51% of pupils without SEN) and pupils with CiN status (29% compared with 49% of pupils without CiN status).⁴

Nine in ten pupils (90%) said they had kept up with school work well at secondary school, including 47% who said they had kept up ‘very well’ and 43% who said they had kept up ‘fairly well’.

Around one in ten year 7 pupils (9%) said they had not kept up well with school work. This was higher among pupils eligible for FSM (16% compared with 7% of pupils not eligible for FSM), pupils with SEN (25% compared with 5% of pupils without SEN) and pupils with CiN status (22% compared with 9% of pupils without CiN status).⁵

Figure 2: Whether year 7 pupils who moved to a new school felt they had adapted to the school rules and kept up with school work at secondary school



Base: Year 7 pupils who attended a new school in September 2022 (390).

Source: PPLP 2023 RW3 pupils and learners survey. How well have you adapted to the school rules at secondary school? How well have you kept up with school work at secondary school?

⁴ Only 88 pupils with CiN status answered this question so results should be treated with caution.

⁵ See footnote 4.

Moving to a new college or sixth form

After year 11, pupils are able to stay in school, go to a sixth form college, go to a further education (FE) college, or join a work-based training provider. This section examines the experiences of pupils and learners in years 12 or 13 that moved to a new college or sixth form in the 2022/23 academic year. It considers how well they settled into their new college or sixth form, what helped them to settle in and what challenges they experienced.

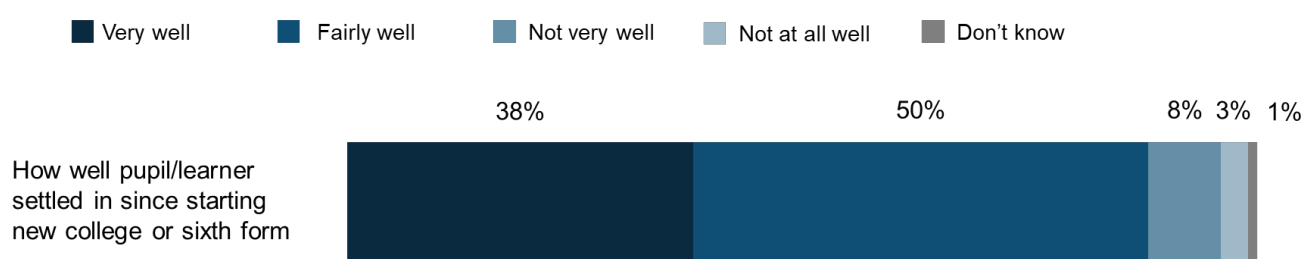
Whether pupils and learners moved to a new college or sixth form

Half (50%) of pupils and learners in years 12 and 13 said that they had moved to a new college or sixth form in September 2022. This was higher amongst those in year 12 (73%) than those in year 13 (24%). It was also higher among learners in college settings (65%) than among pupils in school settings (32%).

Settling in at a new college or sixth form

Almost nine in ten pupils and learners that had moved to a new college or sixth form in September 2022 said they had settled in well (88%). Around one in ten (11%) said they had not settled in well, as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3: How well pupils and learners felt they had settled in since starting a new college or sixth form

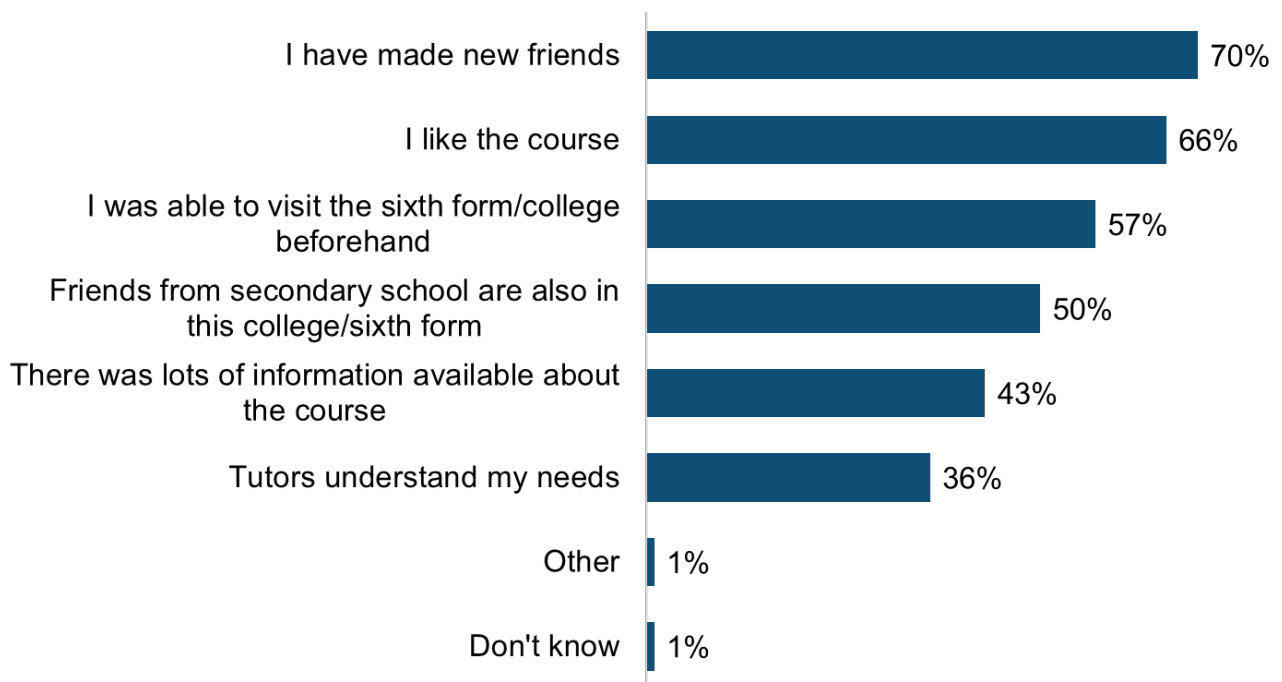


Base: Pupils and learners in years 12-13 who moved to a new college/sixth form in September 2022 (1,259).

Source: PPLP 2023 RW3 pupils and learners survey. How well have you settled in since starting college or your sixth form studies?

If pupils and learners said they had settled in well since starting a new college or sixth form in September 2022, they were asked what had helped them to settle into their college or sixth form. The most commonly reported factors were making new friends (70%), liking the course (66%) and being able to visit the college or sixth form beforehand (57%). Friends from secondary school who were also at the same college or sixth form was mentioned by half (50%). Details are shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4: What helped pupils and learners to settle into their college or sixth form



Base: Pupils and learners in years 12-13 who moved to a new college/sixth form in September 2022 and have settled in well (1,119).

Source: PPLP 2023 RW3 pupils and learners survey. Which, if any, of the following has helped you settle into your college/sixth form?

There were differences between pupils in school settings and learners in college settings. Pupils in school settings were more likely to say that they had friends from secondary school who were also at the same college or sixth form (65% compared with 44% of learners in college settings). However, learners in college settings were more likely to say they made new friends (74% compared with 58% of pupils in school settings), that there was lots of information available about the course (48% compared with 32%) and that their tutors understood their needs (39% compared with 30%).

Pupils and learners that had moved to a new college or sixth form in September 2022, and said they had not settled in well, were asked what challenges they experienced settling into their college or sixth form. Just over half (53%) said they had found it difficult to make new friends, while just under half (47%) said they were not enjoying their course. Other challenges reported by pupils and learners were that travelling to the college or sixth form was challenging (41%), they didn't feel supported by their tutors (36%) and the course was too hard (25%).

Pupil behaviour

All schools should be calm, safe, and supportive environments where pupils and staff can work in safety and are respected. No pupil should miss out on education because they feel unsafe, miss out on learning because their lesson is disrupted, or fall behind because their needs are not identified and supported. This section examines whether secondary school pupils have been sent out of class for reasons related to behaviour, where they were sent and how long it was for.

Whether teachers send pupils out of class for reasons related to behaviour

Parents

Seven in ten parents of secondary school pupils (71%) said that teachers in their child's school send pupils out of class for reasons related to behaviour. Parents of female pupils were more likely to say teachers at their child's school send pupils out of class (75% compared with 67% of parents of male pupils). Parents of white pupils were more likely to say that teachers send pupils out of class for reasons related to behaviour (75% compared with 60% of parents of Asian pupils, and 62% of parents of all ethnic minority pupils excluding white minorities).⁶

Pupils

Pupils were more likely than parents to say that teachers in their school send pupils out of class for reasons related to behaviour. Almost nine in ten pupils in years 7-11 (87%) said that this happened at their school.

Pupils with CiN status were less likely to say teachers in their school send pupils out of class (82% compared with 88% of pupils without CiN status).

Whether pupils have been sent out of class

Parents

One in six parents of secondary school pupils (17%) said that their child had been sent out of a classroom since September 2022 because a teacher was unhappy with their behaviour. This was higher among:

- parents of pupils eligible for FSM (26% compared with 14% of parents of pupils not eligible)

⁶ Only 75 parents of Asian pupils answered this question so results should be treated with caution.

- parents of pupils considered to have SEND (29% compared with 13% of parents of pupils not considered to have SEND)
- parents of pupils with CiN status (33% compared with 16% of parents of pupils without CiN status).

Pupils

Around one in four pupils in years 7-11 (24%) said that they had been sent out of a classroom since September 2022 because a teacher was unhappy with their behaviour. This was higher among:

- pupils eligible for FSM (35% compared with 20% of pupils not eligible)
- pupils with SEN (30% compared with 22% of pupils without SEN)
- pupils with CiN status (34% compared with 23% of pupils without CiN status)
- male pupils (29% compared with 18% of female pupils).

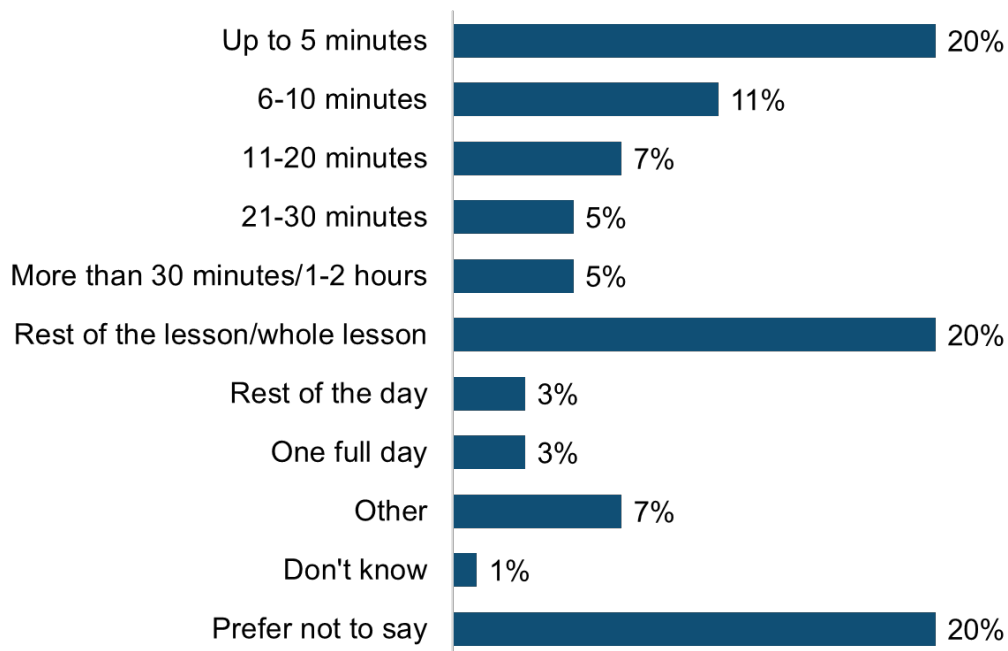
Where pupils were sent and for how long

Pupils that said they had been sent out of a classroom since September 2022 were asked an open text question about where they were sent, the last time this had happened. One in five (21%) said they were sent to a corridor, with a further 19% who did not provide further detail but just reported that they were sent outside of the classroom. A similar proportion (19%) were sent to another class or classroom. Smaller proportions mentioned being sent to isolation (6%) or to another teacher (5%).

A range of answers were given when pupils were asked how long they had been sent out for. One in five pupils that had been sent out of a classroom since September 2022 said that they were sent out for up to five minutes (20%) the last time this had happened, and a similar proportion said they were sent out for the rest of the lesson (20%). Details are shown in Figure 5.

Short spells out of the classroom of up to five minutes were more common in lower year groups. In years 7-9, 24% of pupils that were sent out of a classroom said it was for up to five minutes, compared with 13% of those in years 10-11.

Figure 5: How long pupils were sent out for, the last time they were sent out of a classroom



Base: All pupils in years 7-11 who have been sent out of a classroom due to their behaviour since September 2022 (481)

Source: PPLP 2023 RW3 pupils and learners survey. Thinking about the last time you were sent out of a classroom because of your behaviour, how long were you sent out for?

Digital skills

This section focuses on digital skills. Firstly, it examines which digital skills have been taught in schools and colleges, and then assesses how confident pupils and learners feel in using digital skills.

Digital skills taught in lessons

All pupils and learners were asked what digital skills, if any, they were taught at school or college since the start of this academic year from a list of options. Online security was one of the main areas covered: half of pupils and learners (51%) said they had been taught how to stay safe when talking to people online, while a third (34%) said they were taught how to identify suspicious links in emails, websites and social media.

Female pupils were less likely than male pupils to report that they had been taught many digital skills, most notably.

- how to identify suspicious links in emails, websites and social media (30% compared with 38% male pupils),
- organising digital content using files and folders (29% compared with 34% male pupils)
- how to use design/programming software (28% compared with 34% male pupils).

Pupils and learners also said they were taught technical skills since the start of this academic year, with 42% saying they were taught how to use applications to create documents, spreadsheets and presentations, 36% how to use a laptop, PC or Mac, 33% how to use search engines to find information and 31% how to use design or programming software. In addition, 31% were taught how to organise digital content using files and folders. Around one in five pupils and learners (19%) said they had not been taught any of the digital skills presented to them in the current academic year. Details are shown in Figure 6.

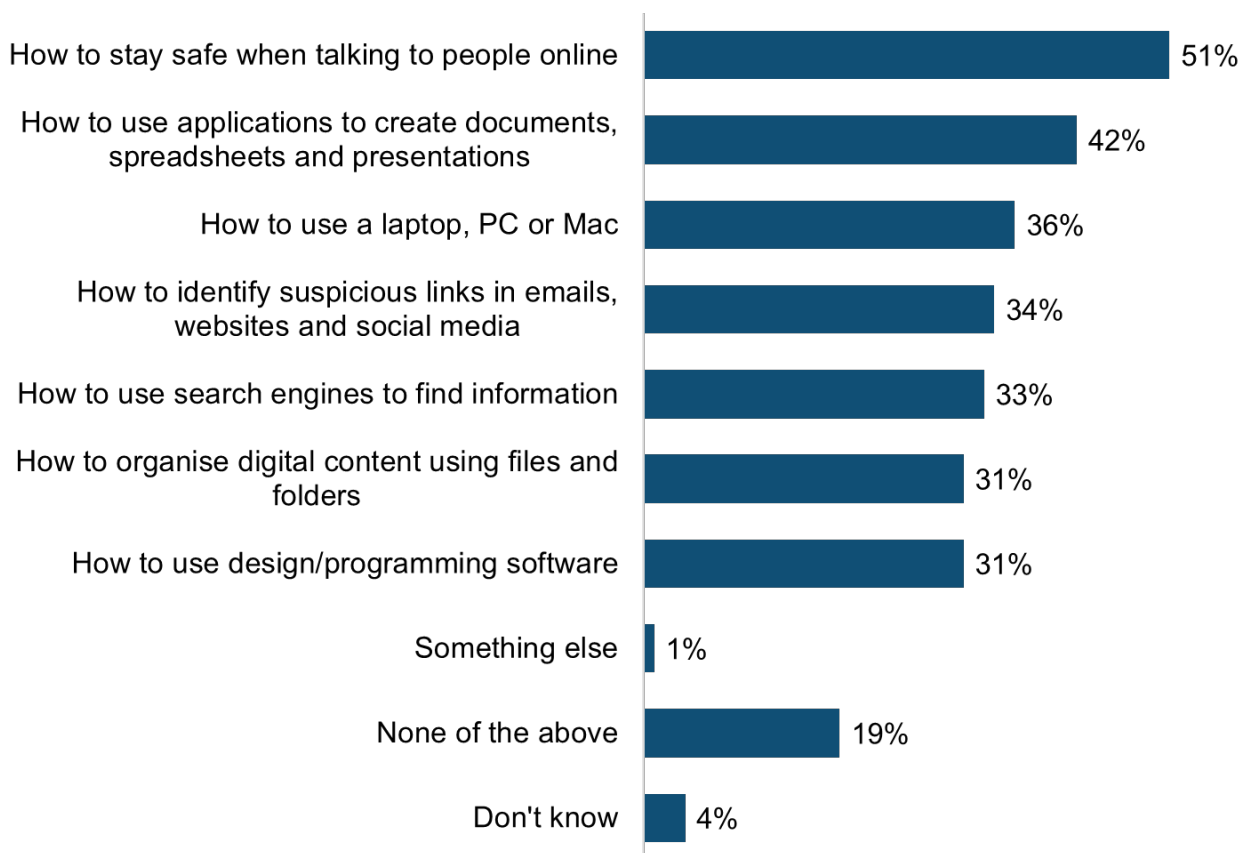
Pupils in years 7-9 were most likely to say they had been taught digital skills in the current academic year, especially how to stay safe when talking to people online (66% compared with 45% of pupils in years 10-11 and 45% of pupils and learners in years 12-13).

In years 12-13, learners in college settings were more likely than pupils in school settings to say they had been taught digital skills in the current academic year. This applied to all of the skills presented to them, and overall, 15% of learners in college settings said they had not been taught any digital skills, compared with 30% of pupils in school settings.

Pupils and learners eligible for FSM were more likely than pupils and learners not eligible for FSM to say they had been taught how to use a laptop, PC or Mac (41% compared with 35%), but were less likely to say they had been taught how to organise digital content using files and folders (27% compared with 32%).

Pupils and learners with SEN were less likely than pupils and learners without SEN to say they had been taught how to use applications to create documents, spreadsheets and presentations (36% compared with 43%) and how to organise digital content using files and folders (25% compared with 32%).

Figure 6: Digital skills taught at school or college this academic year



Base: All pupils and learners (4,469)

Source: PPLP 2023 RW3 pupils and learners survey. Since the start of this academic year, in September 2022, what digital skills, if any, were you taught in your lessons at school or college?

Confidence in using digital skills

All pupils and learners were asked how confident they were in using various digital skills. Nearly all pupils and learners (97%) said they felt confident using search engines to find information, and this included 78% who said they were 'very confident'. More than half of

pupils and learners said they were confident in staying safe when talking to people online (96%) and in using a laptop, PC or Mac (95%).

Around four in five pupils and learners said they were confident in identifying suspicious links in emails, websites and social media (83%), using applications to create documents, spreadsheets and presentations (82%) and organising digital content using files and folders (78%). Details are shown in Figure 7.

Levels of confidence increased by year group. This pattern applied to all of the digital skills but was most pronounced in relation to organising digital content using files and folders. Almost half (47%) of pupils and learners in years 12-13 said they were 'very confident' at doing this, compared with 36% of pupils in years 10-11 and 24% of pupils in years 7-9.

On two items, there was a difference among pupils and learners in years 12-13: pupils in school settings were more likely to say they were 'very confident' in using a laptop, PC or Mac (63% compared with 58% of learners in college settings) and organising digital content using files and folders (50% compared with 45%).

Pupils and learners eligible for FSM were less likely to say they were 'very confident' using search engines to find information (71% compared with 79% of pupils and learners not eligible for FSM) and organising digital content using files and folders (32% compared with 40%).

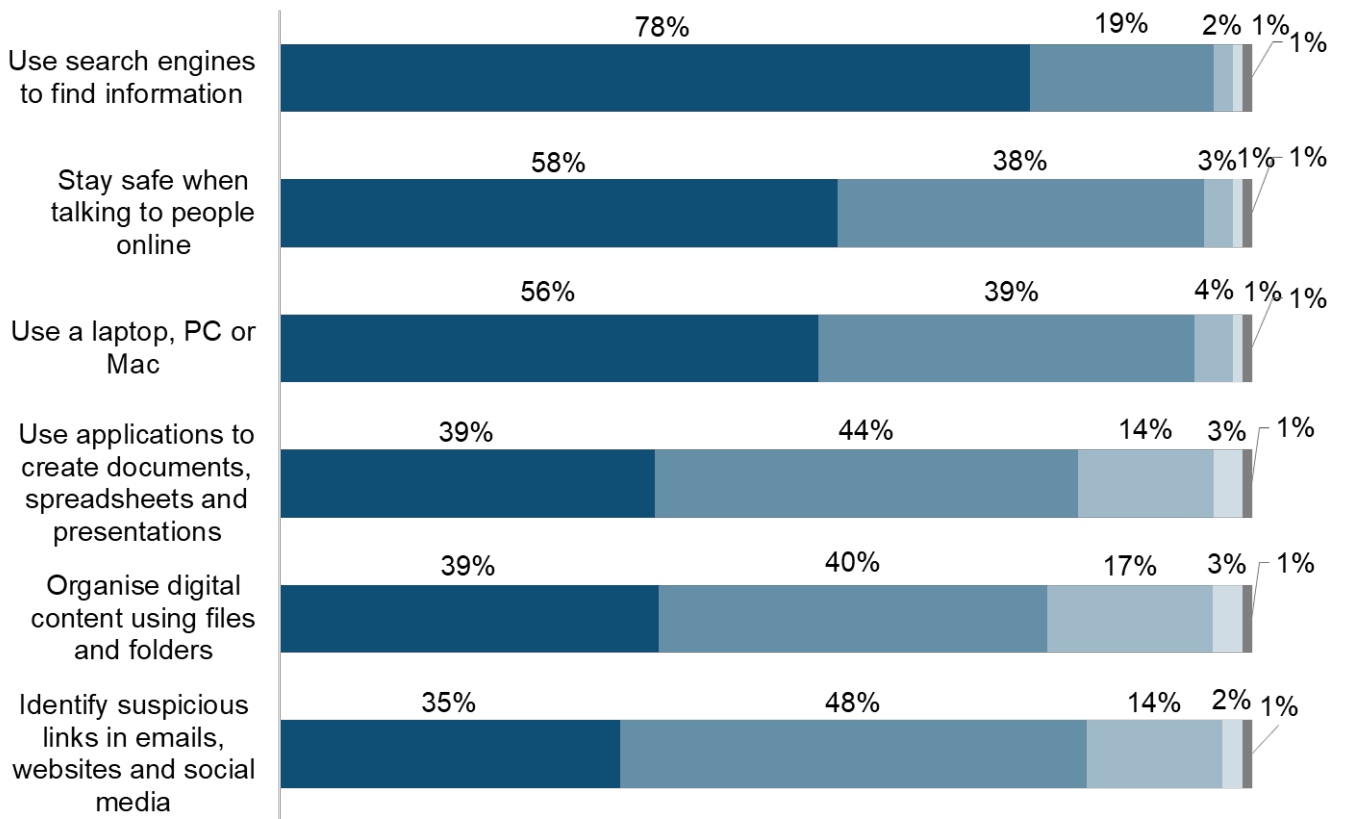
Pupils and learners with SEN were less confident in all of the digital skills, compared with pupils and learners without SEN. The difference was greatest in relation to staying safe when talking to people online (42% and 60% 'very confident' respectively).

Pupils with CiN status were less confident than those without CiN status in four of the skills: using a laptop, PC or Mac (46% and 56% 'very confident' respectively), using applications to create documents, spreadsheets and presentations (29% compared with 37%), using search engines to find information (67% compared with 76%) and organising digital content using files and folders (28% compared with 36%).

Three areas showed increased confidence amongst pupils and learners if they had been taught the skill in the last academic year. These were how to identify suspicious links in emails, websites and social media (43% who reported they had been taught were 'very confident' compared with 31% who reported they had not been taught); using applications to create documents, spreadsheets and presentations (45% who reported they had been taught were 'very confident' compared with 34% who reported they had not been taught) and how to organise digital content using files and folders (52% who reported they had been taught compared with 32% who reported they had not been taught).

Figure 7: Confidence in using digital skills

Very confident Fairly confident Not very confident Not at all confident Don't know



Base: All pupils and learners (4,469)

Source: PPLP 2023 RW3 pupils and learners survey. How confident are you that you can do the following?

Careers

This section examines whether pupils and learners know what career or job they want when they finish their studies. It also covers whether pupils in years 7-11 have received any careers advice, information or guidance from their school or college during the current academic year and, if so, whether that advice, information or guidance was useful.

Whether pupils and learners know what kind of job they might want

Three in ten pupils and learners in years 7-13 (30%) reported that they had a specific idea of the career or job that they want when they finish their education. Around half of pupils and learners (48%) said that they had a general idea of the career or job that they want, and around a quarter (23%) said that they did not know what type of career or job they want. These findings are consistent with those observed in the March 2022 PPLP survey.

Year 12-13 learners in college settings were more likely than year 12-13 pupils in school settings to say they had a specific idea of the career or job that they want when they finish their education (34% compared with 28%). Pupils and learners with SEN were more likely to say they did not know the sort of career or job they want (29%) compared with pupils and learners without SEN (22%).

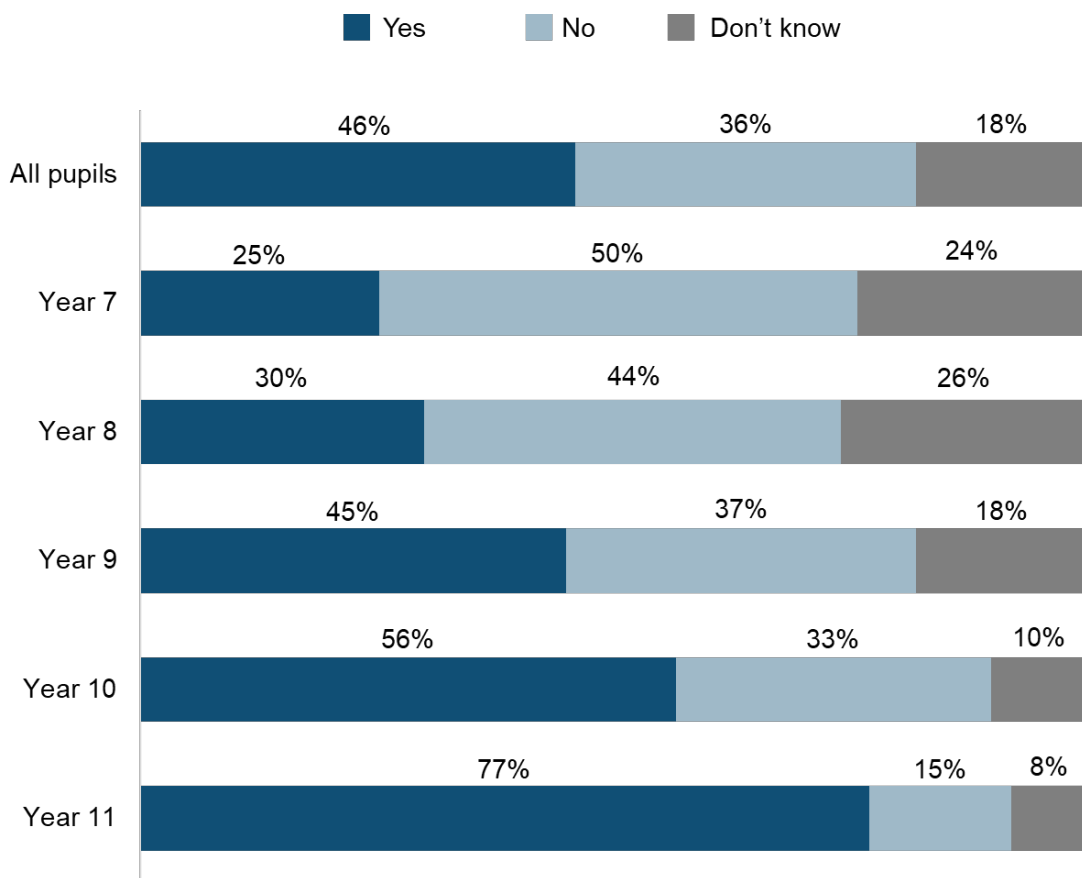
Whether pupils and learners have had any information, advice, or guidance on their future career

Just under half of pupils in years 7-11 (46%) said that they had received information, advice, or guidance on their future career from their school or college in the current academic year. Just over a third (36%) said that they had not received any information, advice, or guidance and 18% were uncertain whether or not they had received this support.

The proportion that reported they received information, advice, or guidance increased by year group, from 25% among year 7 pupils to 77% among year 11 pupils, as shown in Figure 8.

Across all year groups, pupils with SEN were less likely to say that they had received information, advice, or guidance on their future career from their school or college in the current academic year (38% compared with 47% of pupils without SEN).

Figure 8: Have you received any information, advice, or guidance on future career since the start of the academic year in September 2022?



Base: All pupils in years 7-11 (2,075)

Source: PPLP 2023 RW3 pupils and learners survey. Have you had any information, advice or guidance from your school or college on your future career since the start of this academic year in September 2022?

Usefulness of information, advice, or guidance

Pupils in years 7-11 who said that they had received information, advice, or guidance on their future career from their school were asked how useful it had been.

Attitudes towards this support were generally positive. Around one in six pupils (16%) said that they had found the support 'very useful' and three in five (62%) said that it had been 'quite useful'. One in six (17%) said the careers support had been 'not very useful' and 1% said that it had been 'not useful at all'.

The following groups were more likely to say they found the support 'very useful':

- pupils eligible for FSM (24% compared with 14% of those not eligible)
- pupils with SEN (24% compared with 15% of pupils without SEN)
- pupils with CiN status (29% compared with 16% of those without CiN status).

Post-16 plans

This section examines whether pupils and learners in year 13 have received any information, advice or guidance from their school or college to help them prepare for their next steps. It then looks at the types of support that schools and colleges have provided.

Information, advice or guidance on next steps

Almost nine in ten (87%) pupils and learners in year 13 said they had received information, advice or guidance from their school or college to help them prepare for their next steps (such as jobs, education and volunteering). One in ten (10%) said they had not received this support.

Year 13 pupils in school settings were more likely than year 13 learners in college settings to say they had received any information, advice or guidance on their next steps (92% compared with 82%).

Types of activity

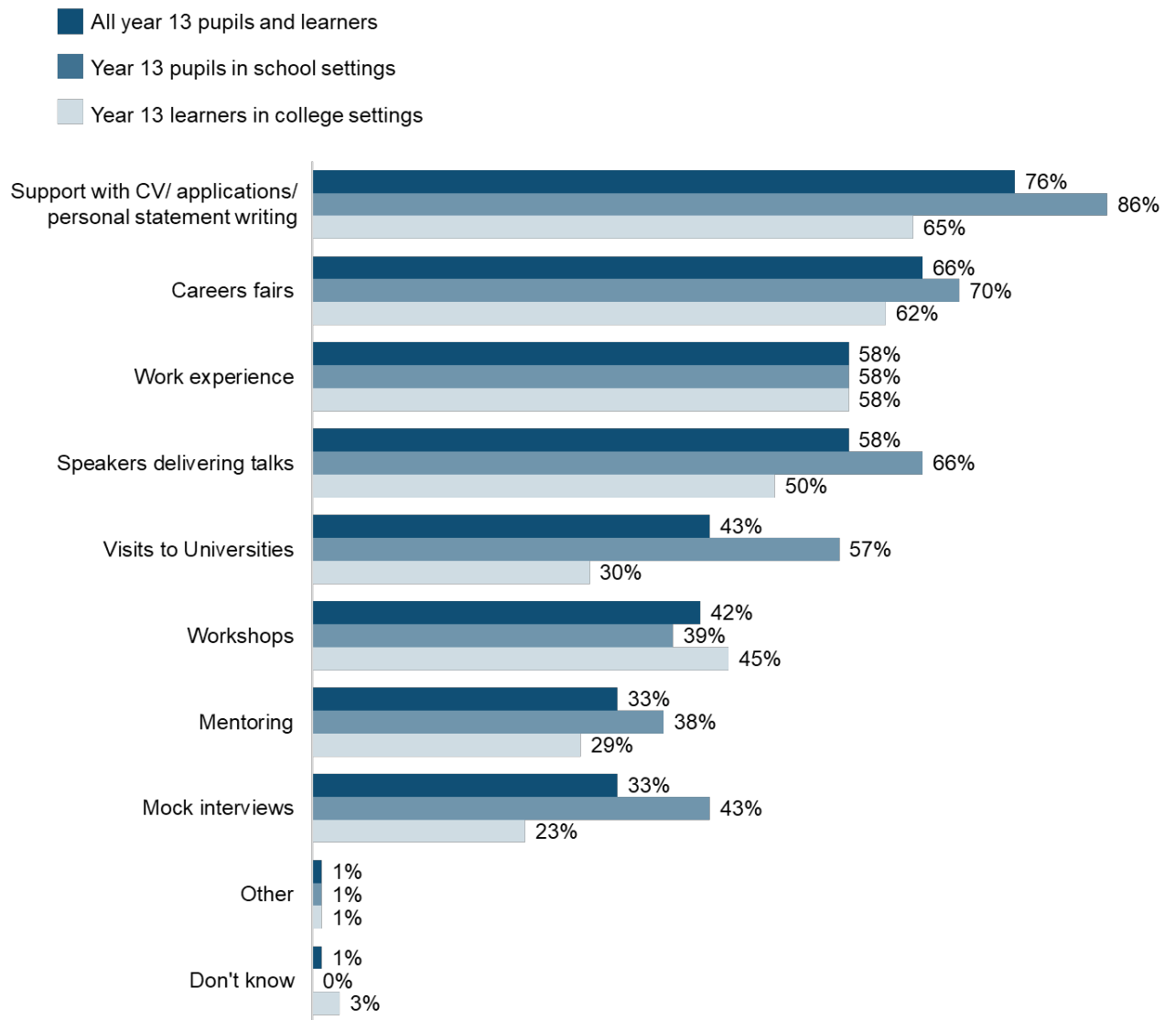
If year 13 pupils and learners said they had received any information, advice or guidance on their next steps, they were asked what activities their sixth form or college had provided. The most common activity reported by pupils and learners was support with their CV, applications or writing their personal statement (76%). Other common activities, mentioned by more than half of pupils and learners, were careers fairs (66%), work experience (58%) and speakers delivering talks (58%).

Year 13 pupils in school settings were more likely than year 13 learners in college settings to mention most of the types of activity, as shown in Figure 9. The largest differences were for support with their CV, applications or writing their personal statement (86% compared with 65%), visits to universities (57% compared with 30%) and mock interviews (43% compared with 23%).

Pupils and learners eligible for FSM or FME were less likely to report getting support with their CV, applications or writing a personal statement (65% compared with 77% of those not eligible for FSM or FME)⁷.

⁷ Note, unweighted base size for pupils and learners eligible for FSM was 96

Figure 9: Activities provided by schools and colleges on next steps



Base: All pupils and learners in years 13 (884); year 13 pupils in school settings (433), year 13 learners in college settings (451).

Source: PPLP 2023 RW3 pupils and learners survey. What activities have your sixth form/college provided?

Higher education plans and sources of information

This section examines the plans of year 13 pupils and learners from September 2023, as well as their perceptions of how prepared they are for these plans and how confident they are in their choices. Year 13 pupils and learners were also asked whether they have changed their plans as a result of the rising cost of living. The section then looks at the sources of information that year 13 pupils and learners have used for going to university or studying for a HE qualification.

Plans after year 13

Pupils and learners in year 13 were asked about their plans from September 2023. Where they were considering more than one option, they were asked to select the one that would be their main focus.

Around half (48%) of year 13 pupils and learners said they were planning to go to university or study for a HE qualification, similar to the proportion seen in the May 2022 PPLP survey (53%). One in seven (14%) planned to start an Apprenticeship and 1% a traineeship. One in ten (10%) were planning to start paid work and 8% were planning to take a gap year, while 7% planned to continue at school or college.

A small proportion (4%) planned to take up other learning at an FE college or other training provider. Fewer than one in ten (7%) said they did not know or had not decided yet.

As shown in Figure 10, pupils in school settings were more likely than learners in college settings to be planning to go to university or study for a HE qualification (66% compared with 33%). Learners in college settings were more likely to be considering other options, such as paid work (15% compared with 4% of pupils in school settings) or continuing at school or college (11% compared with 3%).

Pupils and learners eligible for FSM were more likely to be planning to continue at school or college (13%), compared with those who were not eligible (6%).

Female pupils and learners were more likely than male pupils and learners to be planning to go to university or study for a HE qualification (55% compared with 39%), while male pupils and learners were more likely to be planning to start an apprenticeship (21% compared with 8%).

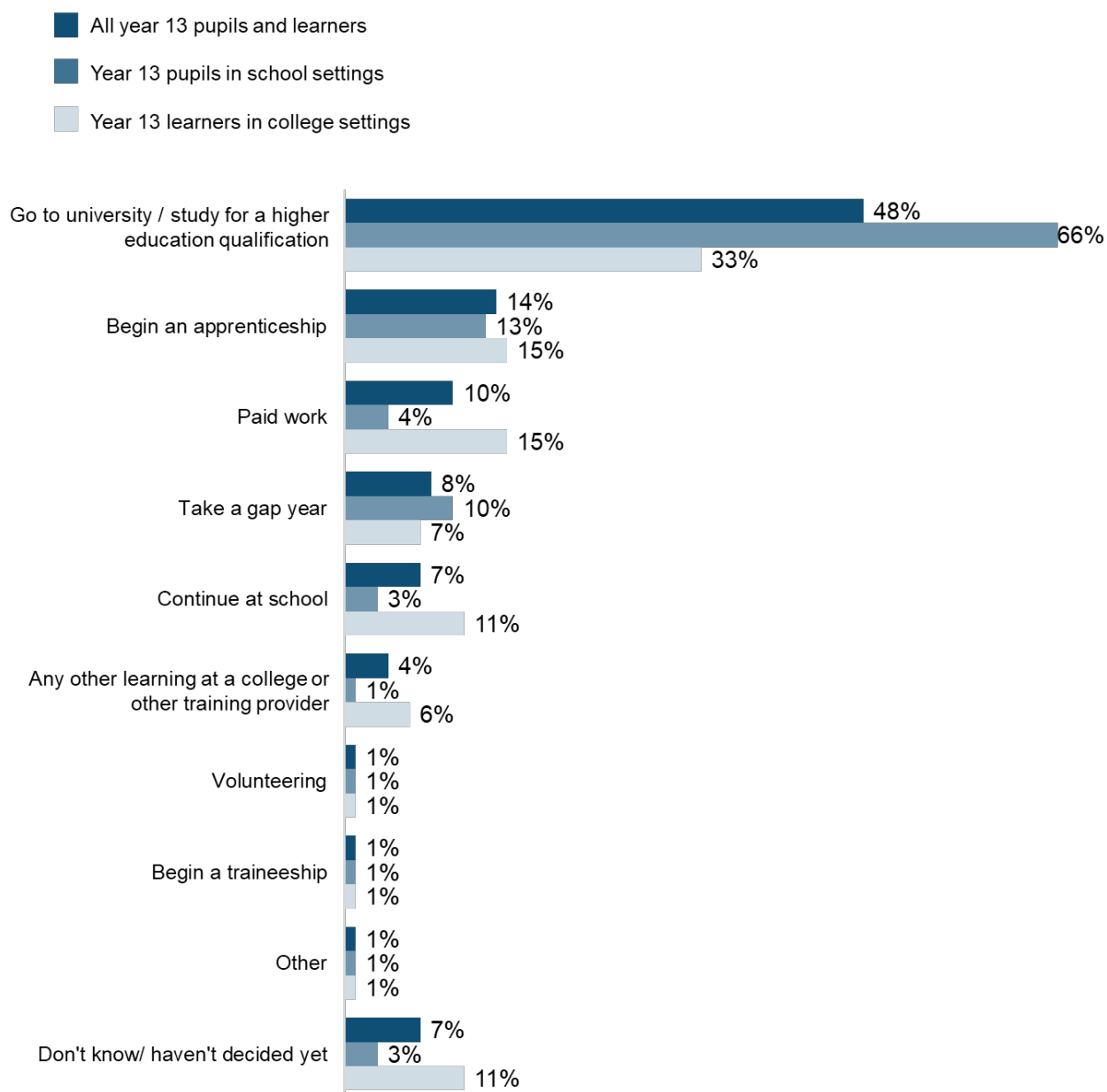
White pupils and learners were less likely than ethnic minority pupils and learners (excluding white minorities) to plan to go to university or study for a HE qualification (44% compared with 59%), while they were more likely to be planning to start an apprenticeship (16% compared with 9%) or start paid work (13% compared with 5%).

Pupils and learners living in London were more likely than those living outside London to be planning to go to university or study for a HE qualification (59% compared with 46%), while they were less likely to be planning to start paid work (2% compared with 12%).

Pupils and learners living in a single parent household were less likely to plan to go to university or study for a HE qualification (40% compared with 51% of other pupils and learners) and were more likely to plan to continue at school or college (12% compared with 5%).

Pupils and learners were more likely to plan to go to university or study for a HE qualification, if they had a parent who had attended university (60% compared with 43% of those whose parents had not attended university). They were also more likely to plan to take a gap year (12% compared with 6%), while they were less likely to be planning other options such as an apprenticeship (10% compared with 17%), paid work (7% compared with 12%) or continuing at school or college (4% compared with 8%).

Figure 10: Plans of year 13 pupils and learners



Base: All pupils and learners in years 13 (1,010); year 13 pupils in school settings (468), year 13 learners in college settings (542).

Source: PPLP 2023 RW3 pupils and learners survey. Are you planning on doing any of the following from September 2023? If more than one applies, please select the one that will be your main focus.

How prepared pupils and learners are for following their plans

Three-quarters of pupils and learners in year 13 (75%) said they felt 'prepared', including 20% who felt 'very prepared' and 55% who felt 'fairly prepared' to start their planned activity in September 2023. A quarter (24%) said they did not feel prepared, including 21% who did 'not feel very well prepared' and 3% that felt 'not at all prepared'. This

question was asked of all year 13 pupils and learners that had specified a planned activity.

Learners in college settings were more likely to report they felt 'very prepared' to start their planned activity (25%) compared with pupils in school settings (16%). Responses also varied according to the activity that pupils and learners were planning. Pupils and learners were more likely to feel 'very prepared' if they planned to start paid work (39%) or continue at school or college (36%), while this proportion was lower among those that planned to go to university or study for a HE qualification (17%), start an apprenticeship (14%) or take a gap year (13%)⁸.

The proportion that felt 'very prepared' to start their planned activity was higher among:

- male pupils and learners (24%) compared with female pupils and learners (17%)
- pupils and learners living outside London (22%) compared with those living in London (13%).

How confident pupils and learners were in their choices

Around nine in ten pupils and learners in year 13 (89%) said they were confident that their planned activity for September 2023 was the right choice for them. This includes 41% who were 'very confident' and 48% that were 'fairly confident'. One in ten (10%) were not confident, including 8% who were 'not very confident' and 2% that were 'not at all confident'.

This question was asked of all year 13 pupils and learners that had specified a planned activity. Pupils and learners were most likely to feel 'very confident' if they planned to continue at school or college (53%). This proportion was lower among pupils and learners that planned to go to university or study for a HE qualification (38%) or start an apprenticeship (36%)⁹.

Whether plans have changed because of the rising cost of living

One in four pupils and learners in year 13 (25%) said that their plans for education or training had changed because of the rising cost of living. Two-thirds (68%) said their plans had not changed and 6% preferred not to say. The results were consistent across different groups of pupils and learners. This was a lower proportion than in the May 2022

⁸ Note, unweighted base size for pupils and learners who planned to continue at school or college was 66. The unweighted base size for pupils and learners who planned to start paid work was 97. The unweighted base size for pupils and learners who planned to take a gap year was 86.

⁹ Note, unweighted base size for pupils and learners who planned to continue at school or college was 66.

wave of the PPLP, where 34% of year 13 pupils and learners reported their plans had changed because of the rising cost of living.

Among pupils and learners who said their plans had changed, a third (32%) said that they had changed because they couldn't afford university, while 12% said they were looking at other options instead of university. Some pupils and learners had changed their plans for where they would be living: 7% said they may have to choose a different location to go to university, while 6% had decided to stay at home rather than move out.

Sources of information for studying at HE level

Year 13 pupils and learners who said they were planning to go to university or study for a HE qualification were asked which sources of information they used when they were deciding what and where they wanted to study.

The most common source of information reported by pupils and learners was UCAS course pages (84%), followed by university prospectuses or websites (64%). Around half said they got information from conversations with teachers or staff members (48%), while pupils and learners also obtained information from members of their family (48%) or friends (41%). More than a third (37%) said they used league tables published in the media, while 29% used formal careers advice and guidance. Figure 11 provides details.

Year 13 pupils in school settings were more likely than year 13 learners in college settings to use multiple sources of information. In particular, they were more likely to have used UCAS course pages (87% compared with 78%), members of their family (52% compared with 41%), league tables published in the media (44% compared with 24%) and the National Careers Service website (6% compared with 1%).

Pupils and learners eligible for FSM were less likely to have got information from conversations with teachers and other staff members (32% compared with 50% of those not eligible) but were more likely to have used the National Careers Service website (10% compared with 3%)¹⁰.

Male pupils and learners were more likely than female pupils and learners to have used league tables published in the media (43% compared with 32%).

Pupils and learners living in London were more likely to have used league tables published in the media (45% compared with 34% of those living outside London) but were less likely to have used university prospectuses or websites (52% compared with 67%)¹¹.

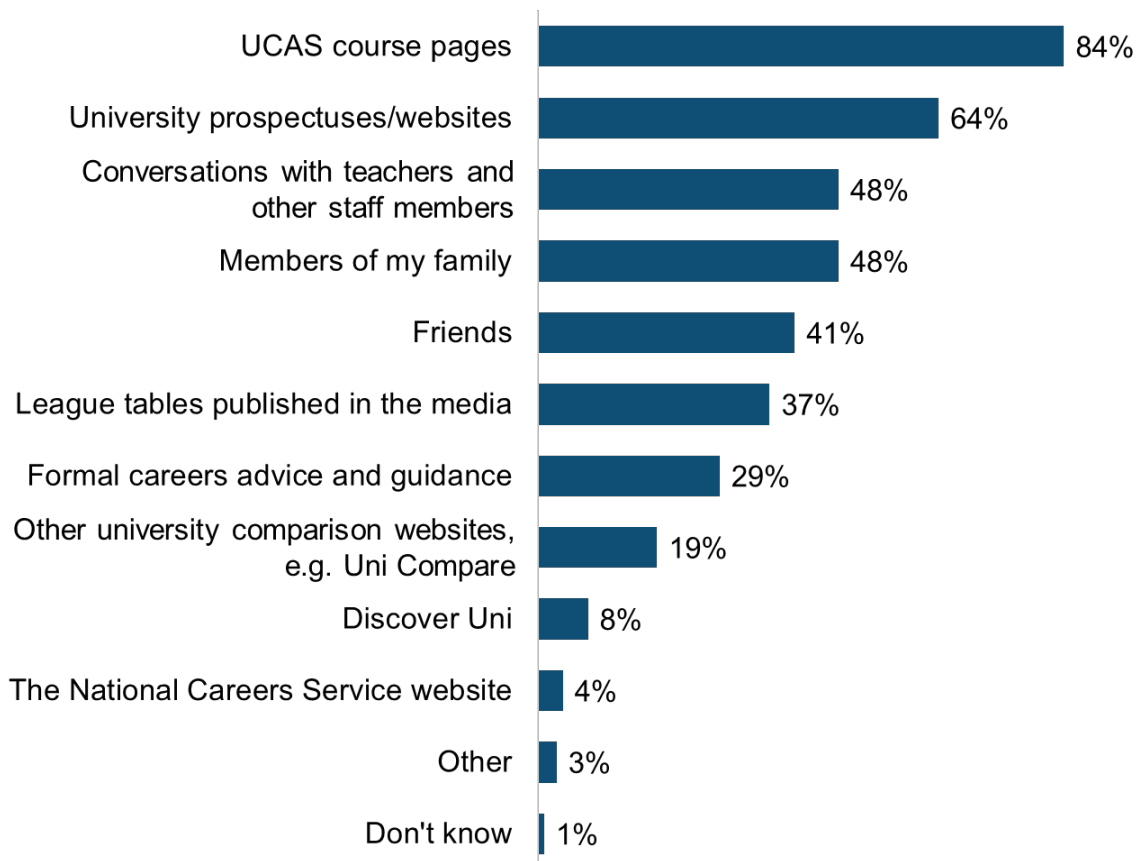
Pupils and learners were more likely to have got information from members of their family if they had a parent who had attended university (56% compared with 39% of those

¹⁰ Note, unweighted base size for pupils and learners eligible for FSM was 52.

¹¹ Note, unweighted base size for pupils and learners living in London was 98.

whose parents had not attended university). They were also more likely to have used league tables published in the media (46% compared with 28%).

Figure 11: Sources of information for going to university or studying a HE qualification



Base: Year 13 pupils and learners who were planning to go to university or study for a HE qualification (501).

Source: PPLP 2023 RW3 pupils and learners survey. You said you were planning to go to university or study for a higher education qualification from September 2023. What sources of information did you use when you were deciding what and where you wanted to study?

Discover Uni

In total, 8% of year 13 pupils and learners who were planning to go to university or study for a HE qualification said they had used Discover Uni as an information source. These pupils and learners were most likely to have found out about Discover Uni through an internet search (67%), while 21% heard about it through conversations with teachers or other staff¹².

¹² Note, unweighted base size for pupils and learners who had used Discover Uni was 40.

Year 13 pupils and learners that had used Discover Uni were then asked how useful they found the information about continuation rates on Discover Uni. Almost all pupils and learners said they found this information either very useful (27%) or fairly useful (67%), while 6% did not know¹³.

¹³ Note, unweighted base size for pupils and learners who had used Discover Uni was 40.

Cost of living

This section examines the impact of the rising cost of living on pupils, learners and parents. It starts by looking at paid work among pupils and learners in years 12 and 13 and asks whether they have increased the amount of work they have been doing due to the rising cost of living. It also looks at whether pupils and learners think that paid work interferes with their studies.

Parents were asked whether they had cut back on household costs to afford school related costs and whether they expect to have to do so in the future.

Paid work among pupils and learners

Just over half (55%) of pupils and learners in years 12 and 13 said that they had done some kind of paid work since September 2022. This was higher among pupils and learners in year 13 than among those in year 12 (61% compared with 50%).

Pupils and learners eligible for FSM were less likely to have done some kind of paid work since September 2022 (44% compared with 57% of those not eligible for FSM). The proportion of pupils and learners that had done any paid work since September 2022 was also lower among those living in single parent households (50% compared with 57% of other pupils and learners).

Pupils and learners in years 12 and 13 were also asked whether they had done any kind of paid work during the previous academic year, between September 2021 and July 2022. Just under half (44%) said they had done some kind of paid work at that time, and again this was higher among pupils and learners now in year 13 than among those in year 12 (58% compared with 32%).

Pupils and learners eligible for FSM were less likely to have done some kind of paid work between September 2021 and July 2022 (35% compared with 45% of those not eligible for FSM). The proportion of pupils and learners that had done any paid work at that time was also lower among those living in households with three or more children (38% compared with 46% of those living in households with one or two children).

Paid work and the rising cost of living

If pupils and learners in years 12 and 13 had done any paid work, in either the current or previous academic year, they were asked whether they had increased the amount they worked alongside studying due to the rising cost of living. Around two in five (41%) said that they had increased the amount they worked, while 47% said they had not, and 12% either did not know or preferred not to say.

Whether paid work interferes with studies

Pupils and learners in years 12 and 13 that had done any paid work since September 2022 were asked whether they found that working interfered at all with keeping up with their studies. Just under half (45%) said that working did interfere with their studies, and this was higher among pupils and learners in year 13 than those in year 12 (51% compared with 39%).

Cutting back on household costs

Whether parents have cut back on household costs to afford school related costs

Half (49%) of parents said that, since the start of term in September 2022, they had cut back on household costs such as food and energy to be able to afford school related costs (such as uniforms and textbooks). This was in line with the proportion in the PPLP November 2022 survey (51%).

Parents more likely to say that they had cut back on household costs to be able to afford school related costs included parents of pupils eligible for FSM (70% compared with 43% of those not eligible), parents of pupils considered to have SEND (61% compared with 46% of parents of pupils not considered to have SEND) and parents of pupils with CiN status (61%, compared with 49% without CiN status).

Parents living in single parent households were also more likely to report cutting back on household costs to afford school related costs (68% compared with 42% of parents in other households). The proportion was also higher where there were three or more children in the household (55% compared with 47% of households with one or two children).

Parents' expectations for cutting back on household costs in future

Around half (49%) of parents felt that they would need to cut back on household costs (such as food and energy) during the rest of the school year to be able to afford school related costs (items such as uniforms and textbooks). This proportion was identical to the PPLP November 2022 survey.

Similar groups to those who reported they had already cut back on household costs, also reported that they expected to cut back on household costs to be able to afford school related costs during the rest of the school year. This included parents of pupils eligible for FSM (64% compared with 44% of those not eligible), parents of pupils considered to have SEND (59% compared with 45% not considered to have SEND) and parents of pupils with CiN status (60% compared with 48% without CiN status). The proportion was also higher among parents living in single parent households (66% compared with 42% of those living in other households).

Perceived change in mental health since September 2022

As part of the same block of questions on cost of living impacts in this school year, pupils and learners in years 7-13 were asked whether their mental health had improved, worsened, or stayed the same since September 2022. One in five pupils and learners (19%) said that their mental health had improved since September 2022, while 27% said it had worsened, and 43% thought it had stayed the same. To see reported trends, please see findings in the Mental health and well-being section below and other reports from the panel which provide a time series of ONS validated measures of pupil wellbeing.

School lunches

The government encourages all schools to promote healthy eating and provide healthy, tasty and nutritious food and drink. This is why there are robust standards governing the food and drink that is served in schools. This section of the report explores how many children choose to eat school lunches and whether they perceive them to be appetising and good value for money. Considering the ongoing cost of living pressures both on families' finances and catering suppliers, this section also examines the impact of the current financial climate on families' choices concerning school lunches.

This section focuses on lunches provided by the school or college: whether pupils and learners have eaten these lunches in the current academic year, and whether they have eaten them more or less often than the previous academic year. It also examines the reasons why some pupils and learners have eaten lunches provided by the school or college less often this year.

How often pupils and learners eat school lunches

Parents

All parents were asked whether their child had eaten school lunches provided by the school in the current academic year, since September 2022. In total, around three-quarters (76%) said that their child ate school lunches. Specifically, 35% said that their child ate school lunches all of the time, while 14% said they ate them 'most of the time' and 27% 'some of the time'. Around a quarter (23%) said their child never ate school lunches.

Parents of primary school pupils were more likely than parents of secondary school pupils to say that their child ate school lunches (79% compared with 72%), and in particular they were more likely to say they ate them all of the time (44% compared with 25%). Details are shown in Figure 12. This likely reflects universal infant free school meal which offers pupils in reception, year 1 and year 2 funding for free school meals (although the PPLP only includes parents of pupils in year 1 and year 2)¹⁴.

Looking at primary school year groups, parents of pupils in years 1 and 2 were most likely to say their child ate school lunches (93% and 95% respectively, compared with 69%-75% in years 3-6), and to say they ate them all of the time (64% and 63% respectively compared with 29%-37% in years 3-6). As above, this likely reflects universal infant free school meal. In secondary schools, parents of year 7 pupils were most likely to say their child ate school lunches (85% compared with 65%-71% in years 8-11).

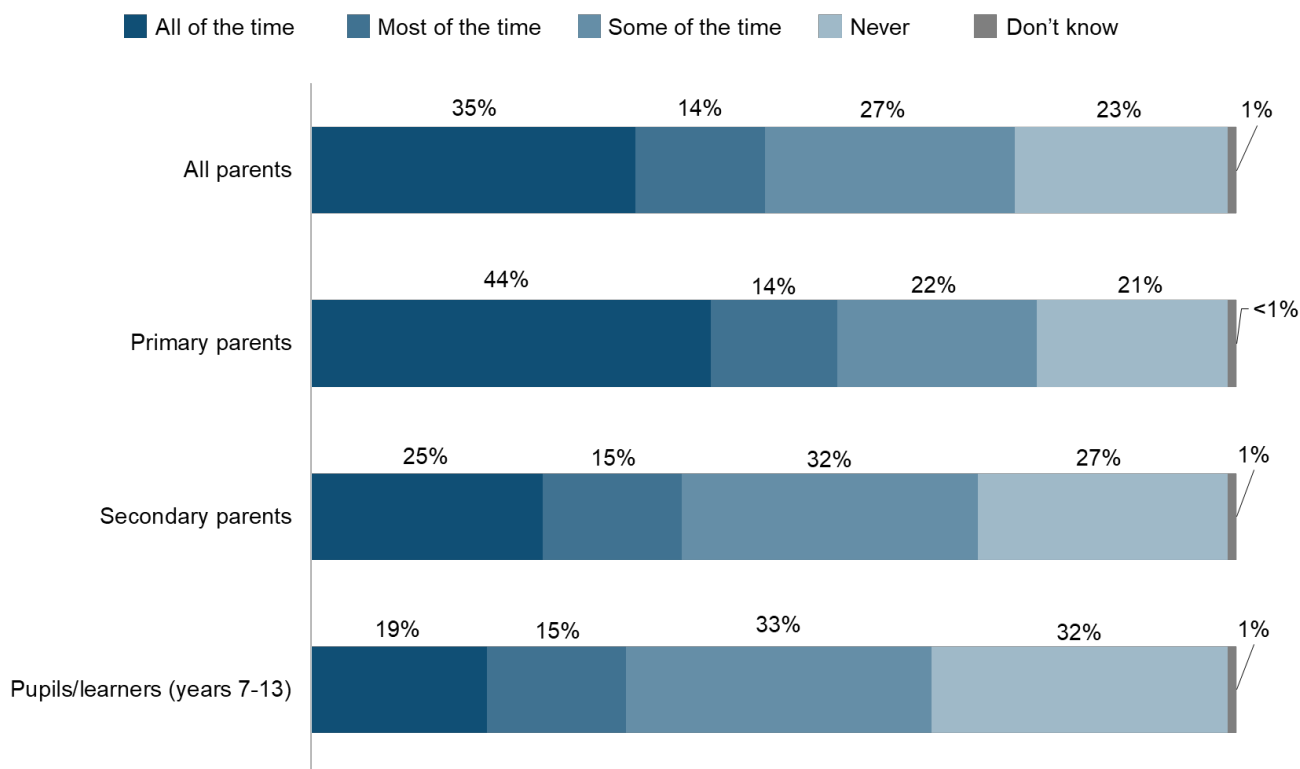
¹⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/universal-infant-free-school-meals-uifsm-2022-to-2023>

The following groups of parents were also more likely to say that their child ate school lunches provided by the school:

- parents of pupils eligible for FSM (91% compared with 71% not eligible)
- parents of pupils not considered to have SEND (77% compared with 69% of those considered to have SEND)
- parents of pupils with CiN status (86% compared with 75% of those without CiN status).

There was also variation by household income. Parents whose annual household income was less than £15,000 were more likely to say their child ate school lunches all of the time (59%) compared with those with an income of £15,000 or above (31%). This could reflect households with lower incomes being more likely to be eligible for FSM.

Figure 12: How often pupils and learners eat lunches provided by the school or college



Base: All parents (2,580); All primary parents (1,295), all secondary parents (1,285). All pupils and learners (4,469).

Source: PPLP 2023 RW3 parents survey; pupils and learners survey. Since September 2022, has [PUPILNAME] eaten school lunches provided by the school? Since September 2022, have you eaten school lunches provided by the school/college?

Pupils and learners

Pupils and learners were also asked whether they had eaten lunches provided by the school or college in the current academic year, since September 2022. In total, two-thirds (67%) said that they ate lunches provided by the school or college, with 19% saying they ate them all of the time, 15% 'most of the time' and 33% 'some of the time'. A third (32%) said they never ate lunches provided by the school or college, as shown in Figure 12.

The proportion that said they ate lunches provided by the school or college decreased by year group, from 86% of pupils in year 7 to 58% of pupils and learners in year 13. Pupils in year 7 were also most likely to say they ate school lunches all of the time (35%).

The following groups of pupils and learners were more likely to say that they ate lunches provided by the school or college:

- pupils and learners eligible for FSM (87% compared with 63% not eligible)
- pupils with CiN status (76% compared with 70% of those without CiN status).

Whether pupils and learners ate lunches provided by the school or college more or less often than the year before

Parents

If parents had said that their child had eaten school lunches at some point since September 2022, they were asked whether their child had eaten school lunches more or less often in the current academic year, compared with the year before. The majority of parents (61%) said the frequency was around the same, while 16% said their child had eaten school lunches more often than the year before, and 20% said they had eaten them less often.

Parents of primary school pupils were more likely than parents of secondary school pupils to say that there was no change in how often their child ate school lunches (66% compared with 56%), while parents of secondary school pupils were more likely to say they had eaten them less often than the previous year (24% compared with 16%). Details are shown in Figure 13.

Looking at primary school year groups, parents of pupils in years 1 and 2 were most likely to say their child ate school lunches about as often as the previous year (76% and 78% respectively, compared with 46%-67% in years 3-6). This likely reflects universal infant free school meal which offers pupils in reception, year 1 and year 2 funding for free school meals¹⁵. In secondary schools, parents of year 7 pupils were most likely to say

¹⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/universal-infant-free-school-meals-uifsm-2022-to-2023>

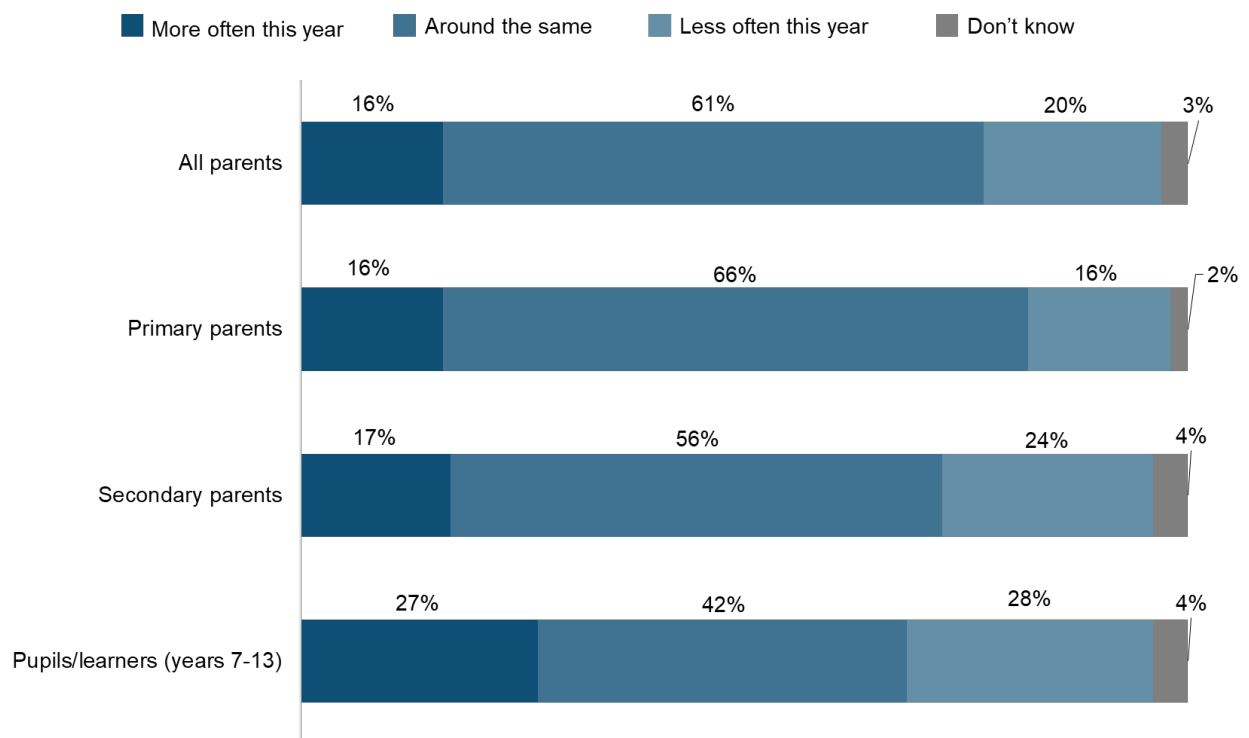
their child ate school lunches more often this year (33% compared with 5%-15% in years 8-11).

The following groups of parents were also more likely to say that their child ate school lunches more often this year:

- parents of pupils eligible for FSM (24% compared with 13% not eligible)
- parents of pupils considered to have SEND (23% compared with 15% of those not considered to have SEND)
- parents of pupils with CiN status (22% compared with 16% of those without CiN status).

There was also variation by household income. Parents whose annual household income was less than £15,000 were more likely to say their child ate school lunches more often this year (36%) compared with those with an income of £15,000 or above (14%).

Figure 13: Whether pupils and learners eat lunches provided by the school or college more or less often than the year before



Base: All parents of pupils who have eaten lunches provided by the school or college since September 2022 (1,947); primary parents (1,018), secondary parents (929). All pupils and learners who have eaten lunches provided by the school or college since September 2022 (3,026).

Source: PPLP 2023 RW3 parents survey; pupils and learners survey. Since September 2022, has [PUPILNAME] eaten school lunches provided by the school more or less often compared with the year before? Since September 2022, have you eaten school lunches provided by the school/college more or less often compared with the year before?

Pupils and learners

Pupils and learners who had eaten lunches provided by the school or college since September 2022 were also asked whether they had eaten them more or less often than the year before. Around two in five (42%) said that the frequency was around the same, while just over a quarter (27%) said they had eaten them more often this year, and a similar proportion (28%) said they had eaten them less often this year. Details are shown in Figure 13.

Pupils in year 7 were most likely to say they ate school lunches more often this year (45% compared with 19%-29% in years 8-13), while pupils and learners in years 12 and 13 were most likely to say they ate lunches provided by the school or college less often this year (35% and 31% respectively, compared with 18%-26% in years 7-11).

The following groups of pupils and learners were also more likely to say that they ate lunches provided by the school or college more often this year:

- pupils and learners eligible for FSM (32% compared with 25% not eligible)
- pupils and learners with SEN (34% compared with 26% of those without SEN).

Pupils with CiN status were more likely to say there had been no change (56% compared with 43% of those without CiN status) and were less likely to say they ate lunches provided by the school or college less often this year (14% compared with 27%).

Reasons why pupils ate school lunches less often than last year

Parents who said that their child had eaten school lunches less often this year than last year were asked why this was the case from a pre-coded list. Half (50%) said the cost of school meals, while a third (34%) said their child did not enjoy the taste of the lunches. Other reasons included there not being enough choice of lunches (14%), their child no longer being eligible for FSM (11%) and lunches not meeting dietary requirements (6%).

Parents of primary school pupils were more likely than parents of secondary school pupils to say their child ate school lunches less often because they did not enjoy the taste (46% compared with 24%) or because they were no longer eligible for a free school meal (21% compared with 2%). Other reasons were given more frequently by parents of secondary school pupils than by parents of primary school pupils: the cost of the meals (61% compared with 39%) and lack of choice (18% compared with 9%).

Parents of pupils considered to have SEND were more likely to say that the lunches did not meet their child's dietary requirements (19% compared with 3% of those not

considered to have SEND).¹⁶ Parents of pupils with CiN status were less likely to mention the cost of school meals (31% compared with 51% of those without CiN status).

¹⁶ Only 80 parents who considered their child to have SEND answered this question, therefore results should be treated with caution.

SEND specialist support

This section examines access to SEND specialist support for pupils and learners. It looks at the types of support accessed by pupils and learners, as well as the types of support they need but are unable to access. It then looks at the reasons why pupils and learners are unable to access the SEND support that they need. The section also examines parents' reported confidence in their school's support for their child's needs and their satisfaction with their involvement in discussions and decisions about SEND support for their child.

Accessing SEND specialist support

Year 12-13 pupils and learners who considered themselves to have SEND and had moved to a new college or sixth form in September 2022, were asked whether they were able to access specialist support they needed when they started at their new college or sixth form.

Around two in five year 12-13 pupils and learners who considered themselves to have SEND said they had been able to access the specialist support they needed (42%), while 27% said they had been able to access some of the required support. However, 15% said they had been unable to access the specialist support they needed, while 10% did not know.

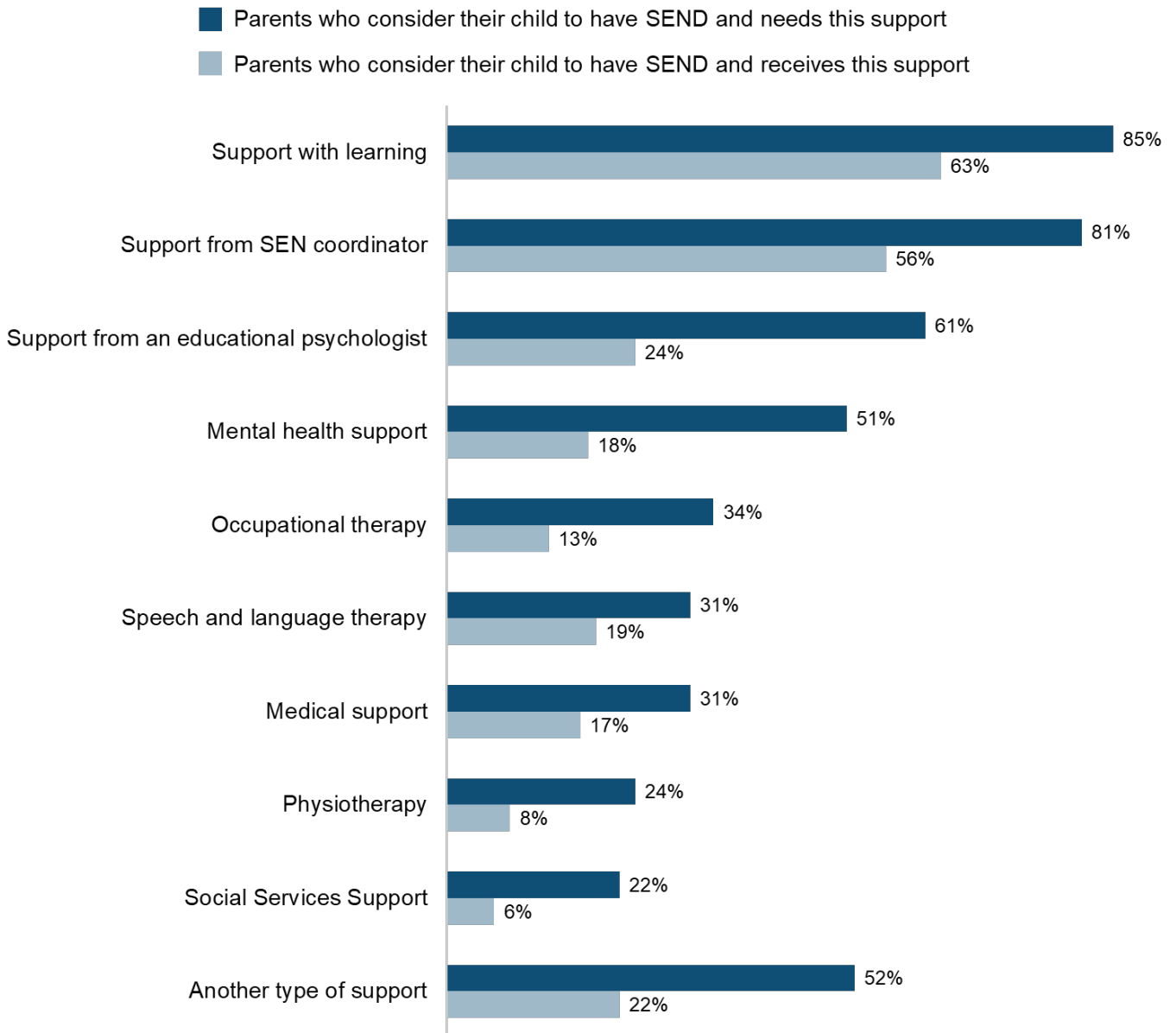
Types of SEND support

Parents

Parents that considered their child to have a special educational need or disability were asked if their child was receiving various types of specialist support. The most common types of support accessed were support with learning (63%) and support from a Special Educational Needs (SEN) coordinator (56%). Other types of support commonly received included support from an educational psychologist (24%), speech and language therapy (19%), mental health support (18%) and medical support (17%), as shown in Figure 14.

More than a third of parents of children considered to have SEND (37%) said that their child needed support from an educational psychologist but was unable to access it. Other areas where parents reported their child was unable to access support included mental health support (33% unable to access it), support from a SEN coordinator (25% unable to access), support with learning (22% unable to access) and occupational therapy (21% unable to access). Three in ten parents (30%) also reported that their child needed 'another type of support' but were unable to access it.

Figure 14: Parents' views of access to SEND support (parents of children considered to have SEND)



Base: Parents who consider their child to have SEND (599).

Source: PPLP 2023 RW3 parents survey. Is [PUPILNAME] currently receiving any of the following types of specialist support?

Parents of primary school pupils considered to have SEND were more likely than parents of secondary school pupils to say their child was receiving support from an educational psychologist (31% compared with 16%), speech and language therapy (30% compared with 8%) and occupational therapy (17% compared with 8%).

Parents of secondary school pupils considered to have SEND were more likely than parents of primary school pupils to say their child needed, but was unable to access, support from an educational psychologist (45% compared with 29%), mental health support (39% compared with 27%) and support with learning (28% compared with 15%).

Amongst parents of pupils considered to have SEND, parents of pupils eligible for FSM were more likely to say they were receiving mental health support (26% compared with 15% of those not eligible for FSM). They were also more likely to say their child needed, but was unable to access, physiotherapy (26% compared with 12% of those not eligible for FSM) and medical support (22% compared with 10%).

Amongst parents of pupils considered to have SEND, parents of pupils with CiN status were more likely to have received support through:

- mental health support (33% compared with 17% of those without CiN status)
- medical support (27% compared with 17% of those without CiN status)
- social services support (18% compared with 5% of those without CiN status)
- other types of support (31% compared with 21% of those without CiN status).

The parents of pupils with CiN status were more likely to feel that their child needed social services support but were unable to access it (24% compared with 15% of those without CiN status). They were also more likely to feel that their child needed, but were unable to access, speech and language therapy (24% compared with 11% of those without CiN status) and support from an educational psychologist (50% compared with 36%).

Amongst those considered to have SEND, parents of pupils with an EHCP were more likely to say that their child was receiving speech and language therapy (42% compared with 15% of those without an EHCP), occupational therapy (31% compared with 10%), support from SEND coordinator (76% compared with 53%) and support with learning (86% compared with 59%). The parents of pupils with an EHCP were also more likely to say that their child needed social services support but were unable to access it (36% compared with 13% of those without an EHCP).

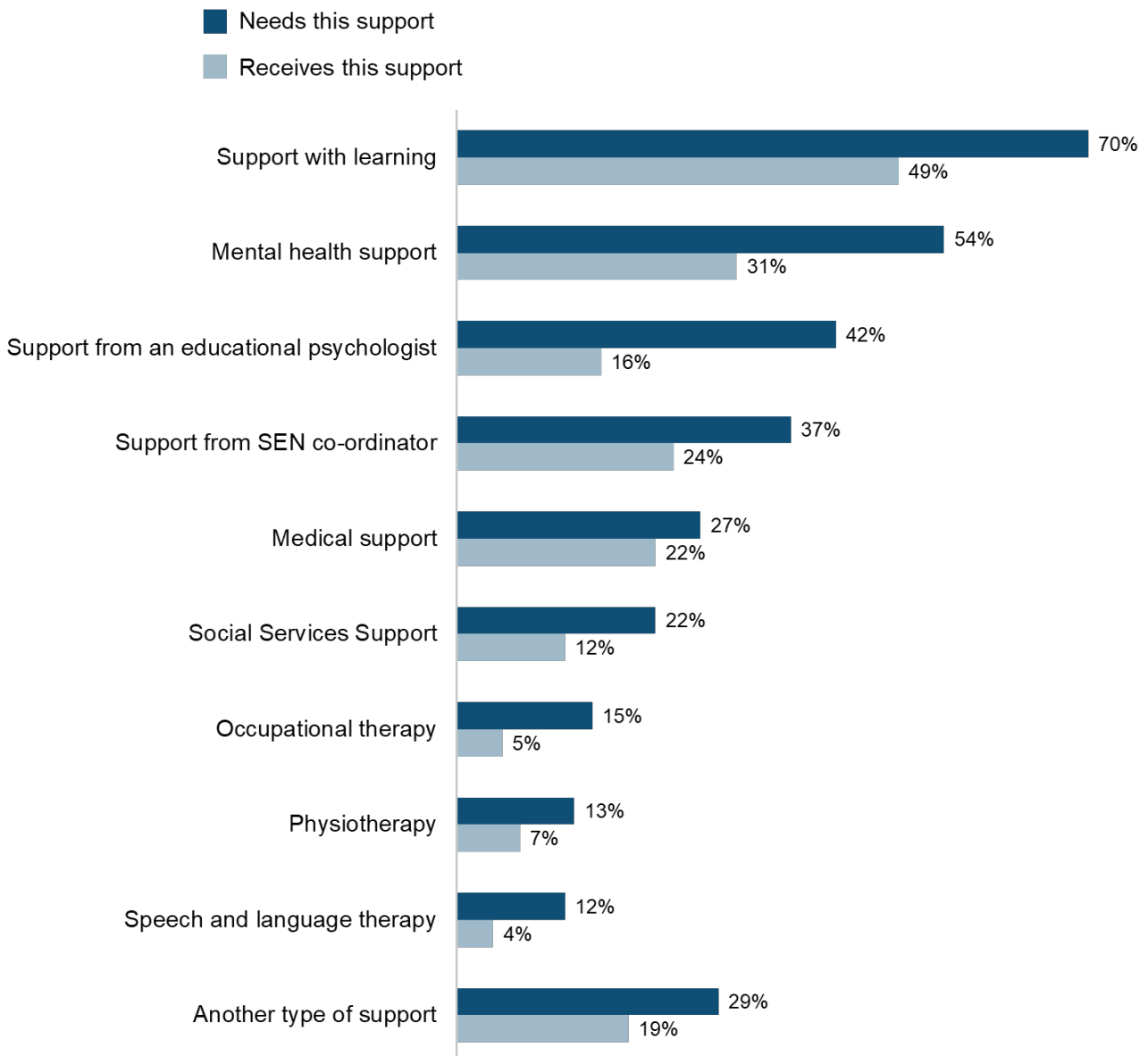
Pupils and learners

Pupils and learners in years 12-13 who considered themselves to have SEND were asked whether they were receiving various types of specialist support.

The most common types of support accessed were support with learning (49%) and mental health support (31%). Other types of support commonly received included support from a SEN coordinator (24%), medical support (22%), support from an educational psychologist (16%) and social services support (12%), as shown in Figure 15.

A quarter (26%) of pupils and learners in years 12-13 who considered themselves to have SEND said that they needed support from an educational psychologist but were unable to access it. Around a quarter (23%) were unable to access provision for mental health support and one in five (21%) were unable to access support with learning.

Figure 15: Access to SEND support (year 12-13 pupils and learners considered to have SEND)



Base: Pupils and learners in years 12-13 who considered themselves to have SEND (352).

Source: PPLP 2023 RW3 pupils and learners survey. Are you currently receiving any of the following types of specialist support?

Amongst pupils and learners in years 12-13 considered to have SEND, pupils in school settings were more likely than learners in college settings to say they were receiving support from a SEN co-ordinator (35% compared with 19%). Learners in college settings were more likely than pupils in school settings to be receiving support with learning (53% compared with 38%) and support from an educational psychologist (19% compared with 9%).

Reasons why pupils and learners are unable to access specialist support for SEND

Parents

For each type of specialist support that parents felt their child needed but was unable to access, they were asked the reasons why they felt this was the case. For all types of support, the most common reason for not receiving it was that the support was not offered. This reason was given by more than half of parents in relation to support from an educational psychologist (53%), physiotherapy¹⁷ (51%) and occupational therapy (51%).

Other reasons given by parents why pupils were not able to access certain types of support included:

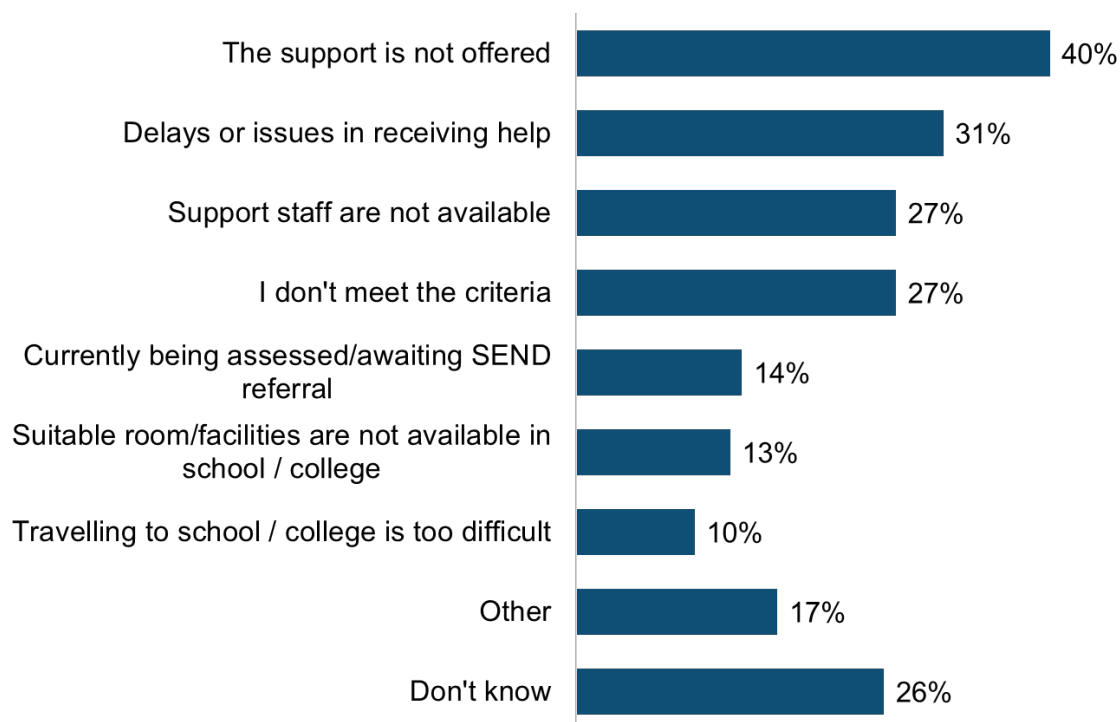
- delays or issues in receiving help, mentioned most frequently by parents in relation to mental health support (26%)
- the pupil not meeting the criteria, mentioned most frequently by parents in relation to speech and language therapy (24%)
- support staff not being available, mentioned most frequently by parents in relation to support with learning (24%).

Pupils and learners

Pupils and learners in years 12-13 who were unable to access SEND support were also asked for the reasons. As was the case with parents, the main reason given by pupils and learners was that the type of support was not offered (40%). Other reasons included delays or issues in receiving help (31%), support staff not being available (27%) and the pupil or learner not meeting the criteria (27%). A quarter (26%) did not know why they could not access the support. Full results are shown in Figure 16.

¹⁷ Note, unweighted base size for parents of pupils unable to access physiotherapy was 88.

Figure 16: Reasons why year 12-13 pupils and learners were unable to access SEND support



Base: All pupils and learners in years 12-13 who said they were unable to access SEND support (180).

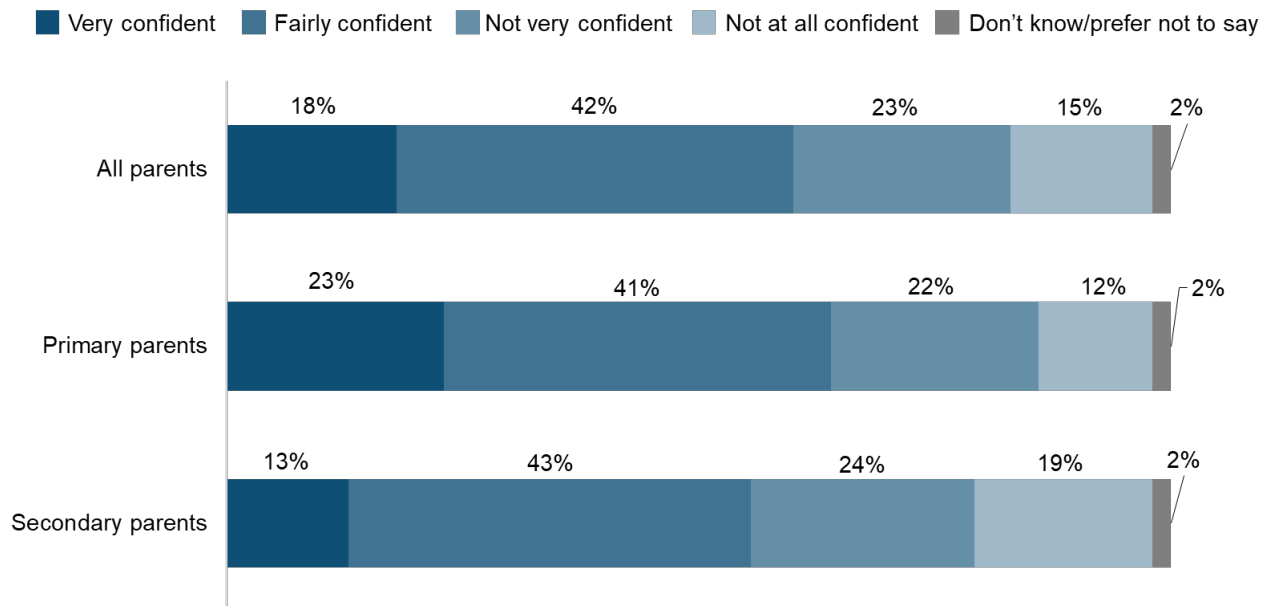
Source: PPLP 2023 RW3 pupils and learners survey. Why are you currently unable to access SEND support?

Parents' confidence in school being able to support pupil's SEND needs

Three in five (60%) parents of pupils considered to have SEND were confident that their child's school was able to support their special educational needs or disability, with around one in five (18%) very confident (Figure 17). Around two in five (38%) were not confident. There was a decrease in the proportion of parents of pupils considered to have SEND who were confident their child's school was able to support their special educational needs (60%) compared with the September/October 2022 recruitment wave (68%).

Parents of primary school pupils were more likely to be very confident in their child's school's ability to provide the necessary support than parents of secondary school pupils (23% compared with 13%).

Figure 17: Parents' confidence in school being able to support pupil's SEND needs



Base: Parents who consider their child to have SEND (599).

Source: PPLP 2023 RW3 parents survey. How confident are you that (PUPILNAME)'s school is able to support their special educational needs or disability (SEND)?

Parents' satisfaction with their involvement in discussions about SEND support

Parents of pupils considered to have SEND were asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they were with their involvement in the discussions and decisions regarding the support their child receives at school.

Just under half of parents (47%) said they were satisfied with their involvement in the discussions and decisions, including 17% who were 'very satisfied'. Around three in ten (31%) were dissatisfied, including 12% who were very dissatisfied.

Parents of primary school pupils were more satisfied than parents of secondary school pupils (53% compared with 40%). Parents of pupils with an EHCP were more likely to be satisfied than those without an EHCP (67% compared with 43%).

Mental health and well-being

Pupil and learner mental health and wellbeing is an ongoing priority for DfE.

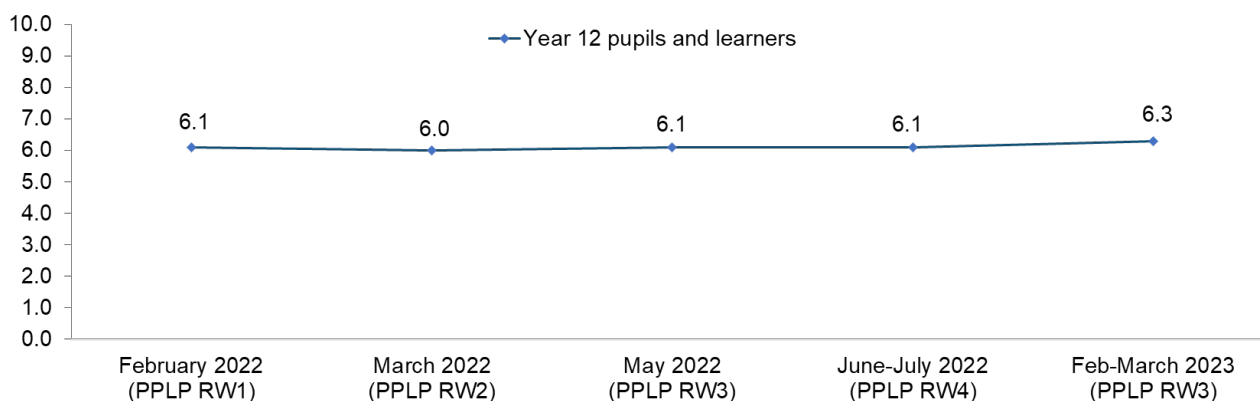
Pupils and learners in years 12-13, who were recruited to the PPLP during this research wave, were asked a series of ONS-validated questions about personal wellbeing, including how happy they felt yesterday, their life satisfaction, the extent to which they feel the things they do in life were worthwhile, and their anxiousness levels yesterday. Pupils in other year groups have been asked these questions in other waves. These questions are known as the 'ONS-4' measures and are answered using a scale from 0 to 10¹⁸. Responses have been reported as mean scores. Pupils were additionally asked how often they felt lonely, which used a scale from 'hardly ever or never' up to 'often'.

It is important to note that for happiness, satisfaction and worthwhileness, a higher mean score indicates greater wellbeing. Higher anxiousness mean scores indicate lower wellbeing.

Happiness

Overall, year 12-13 pupils and learners reported a mean score of 6.3 for happiness. Figure 18 and Figure 19 show comparisons with previous PPLP survey waves, for year 12 and year 13 pupils and learners.

Figure 18: Year 12 pupils' and learners' views of their own happiness (mean scores)

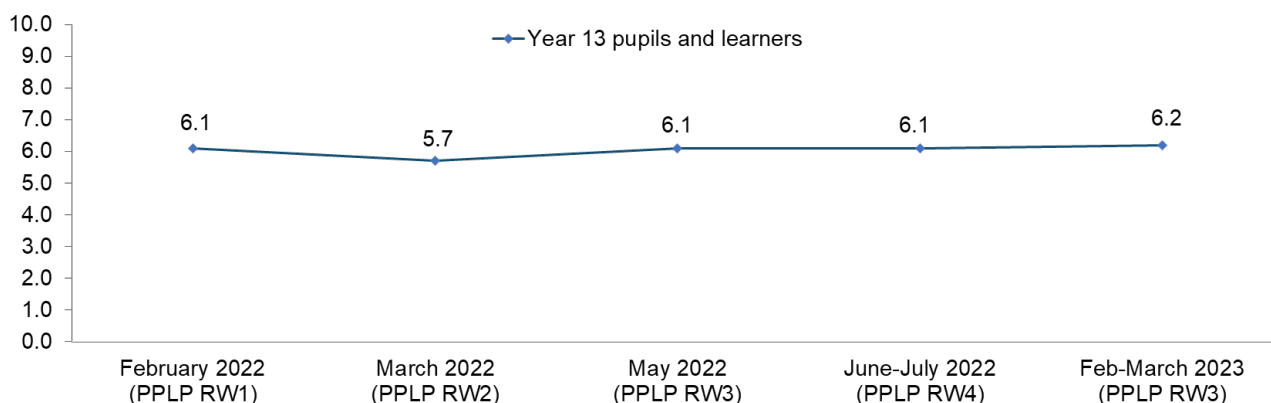


Base: All pupils and learners in year 12 (1,384)

Source: PPLP 2023 RW3 pupils and learners survey. Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday? Please give an answer on the scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is 'not at all' and 10 is 'completely'. Note: mean calculations exclude those who said, 'prefer not to say'.

¹⁸[ONS: Surveys using our four personal well-being questions](#)

Figure 19: Year 13 pupils' and learners' views of their own happiness (mean scores)



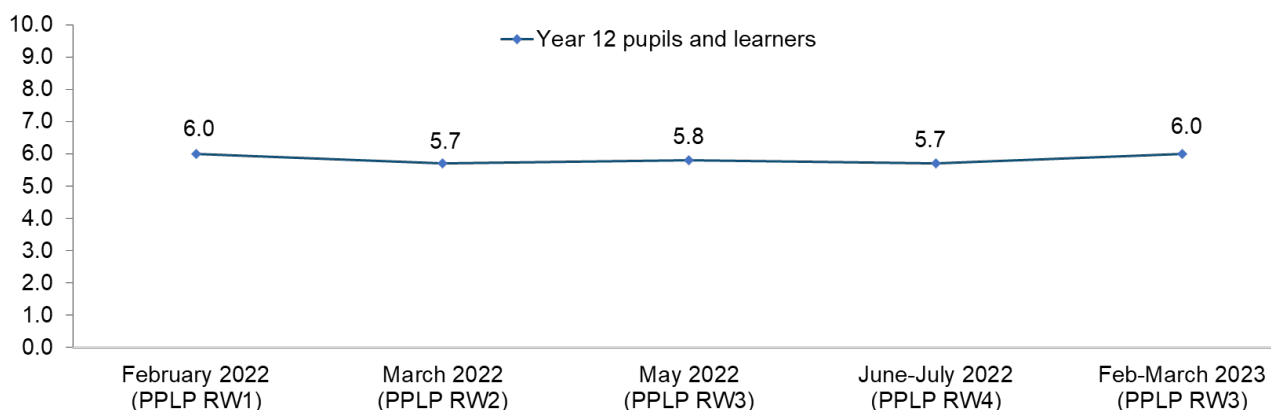
Base: All pupils and learners in year 13 (1,010)

Source: PPLP 2023 RW3 pupils and learners survey. Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday? Please give an answer on the scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is 'not at all' and 10 is 'completely'. Note: mean calculations exclude those who said, 'prefer not to say'.

Satisfaction and worthwhileness

Pupils and learners in years 12-13 were also asked to indicate a score between 0 and 10 for how satisfied they are with their life nowadays ('satisfaction') and to what extent they feel that the things they do in their life are worthwhile ('worthwhileness'). Overall, year 12-13 pupils and learners reported a mean score of 5.9 for satisfaction and 6.2 for worthwhileness. Figure 20, Figure 21, Figure 22 and Figure 23 show comparisons with previous PPLP survey waves, for year 12 and year 13 pupils and learners.

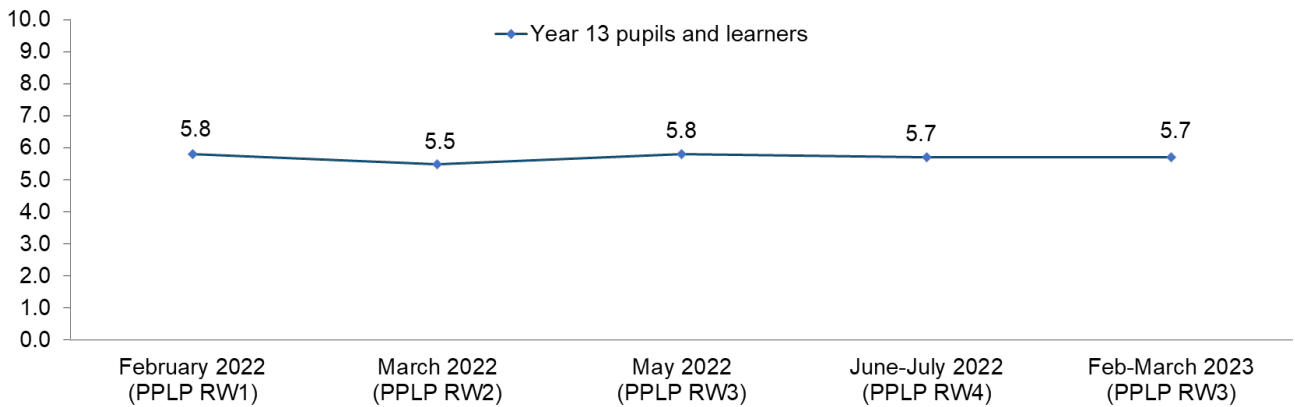
Figure 20: Year 12 pupils' and learners' views of their own satisfaction (mean scores)



Base: All pupils and learners in year 12 (1,384)

Source: PPLP 2023 RW3 pupils and learners survey. Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays, where 0 is 'not at all satisfied' and 10 is 'completely satisfied'? Note: mean calculations exclude those who said, 'prefer not to say'.

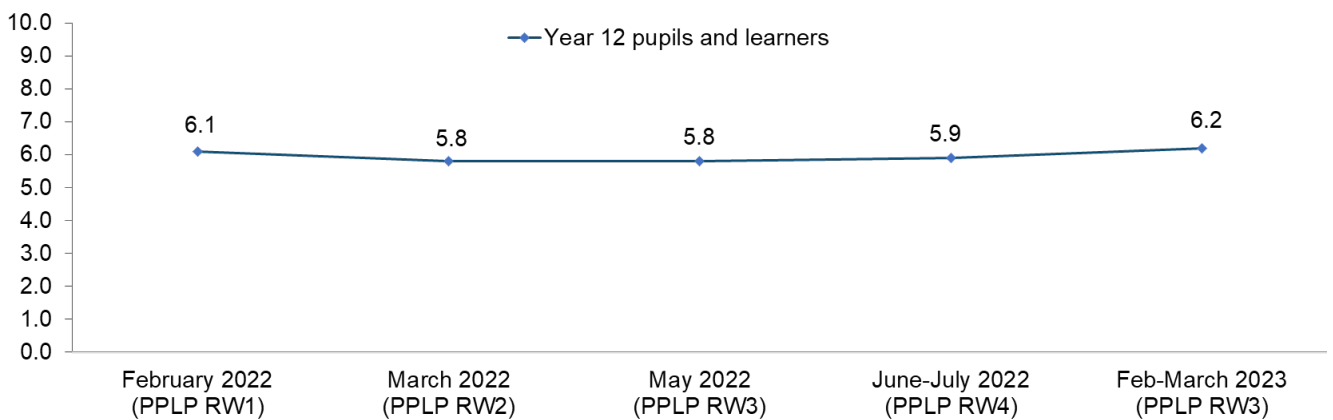
Figure 21: Year 13 pupils' and learners' views of their own satisfaction (mean scores)



Base: All pupils and learners in year 13 (1,010)

Source: PPLP 2023 RW3 pupils and learners survey. Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays, where 0 is 'not at all satisfied' and 10 is 'completely satisfied'? Note: mean calculations exclude those who said, 'prefer not to say'.

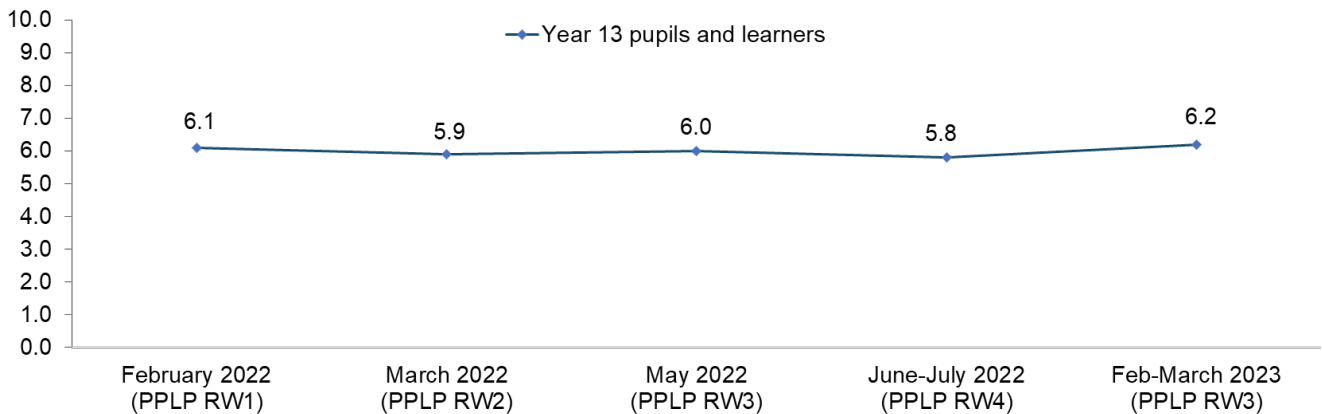
Figure 22: Year 12 pupils' and learners' views of their own worthwhileness (mean scores)



Base: All pupils and learners in year 12 (1,384)

Source: PPLP 2023 RW3 pupils and learners survey. Overall, to what extent do you feel that the things you do in your life are worthwhile, where 0 is 'not at all worthwhile' and 10 is 'completely worthwhile'? Note: mean calculations exclude those who said, 'prefer not to say'.

Figure 23: Year 13 pupils' and learners' views of their own worthwhileness (mean scores)



Base: All pupils and learners in year 13 (1,010)

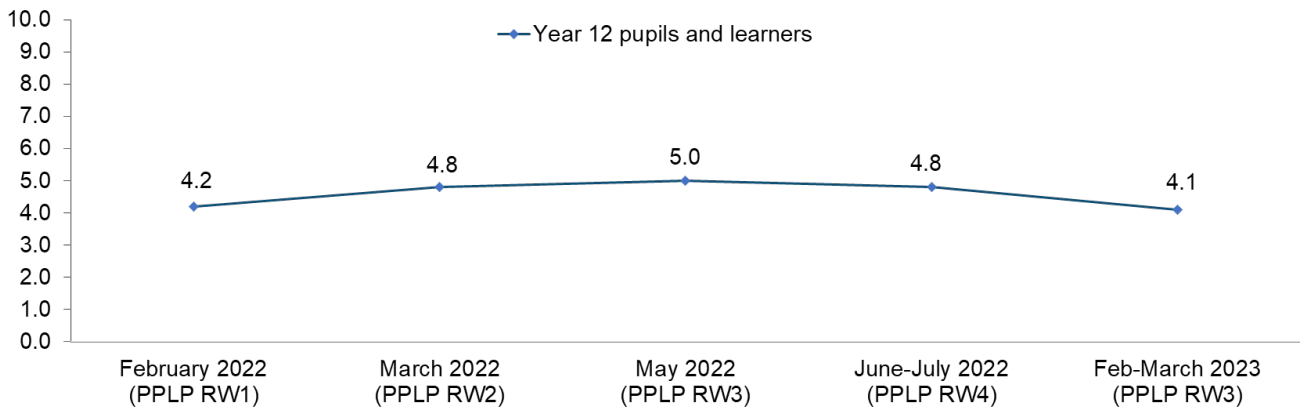
Source: PPLP 2023 RW3 pupils and learners survey. Overall, to what extent do you feel that the things you do in your life are worthwhile, where 0 is 'not at all worthwhile' and 10 is 'completely worthwhile'? Note: mean calculations exclude those who said, 'prefer not to say'.

Anxiousness

Pupils and learners in years 12-13 were asked to indicate a score between 0 and 10 for how anxious they felt yesterday ('anxiousness') giving a score between 0 and 10 (where 0 is 'not at all anxious' and 10 is 'completely anxious'). As noted above, for the anxiousness measure a low mean score represents low levels of anxiousness, while a high score represents high levels of anxiousness.

Overall, year 12-13 pupils and learners gave a mean score of 4.3 for anxiousness, with pupils and learners in year 13 reporting a higher score (4.6) than pupils and learners in year 12 (4.1). Figure 24 and Figure 25 show comparisons with previous PPLP survey waves, for year 12 and year 13 pupils and learners.

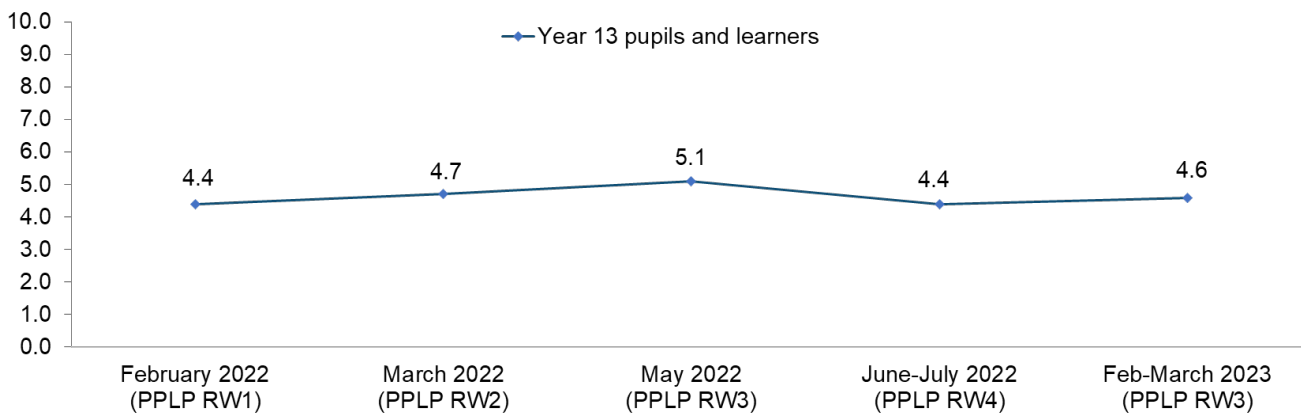
Figure 24: Year 12 pupils' and learners' views of their own anxiousness (mean scores)



Base: All pupils and learners in year 12 (1,384)

Source: PPLP 2023 RW3 pupils and learners survey. Overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday, where 0 is 'not at all anxious' and 10 is 'completely anxious'? Note: mean calculations exclude those who said, 'prefer not to say.'

Figure 25: Year 13 pupils' and learners' views of their own anxiousness (mean scores)



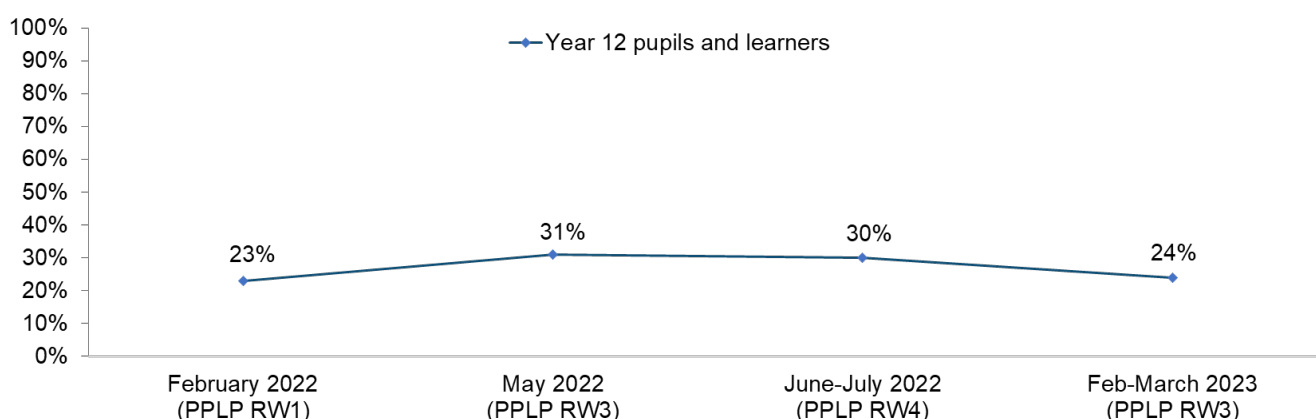
Base: All pupils and learners in year 13 (1,010)

Source: PPLP 2023 RW3 pupils and learners survey. Overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday, where 0 is 'not at all anxious' and 10 is 'completely anxious'? Note: mean calculations exclude those who said, 'prefer not to say.'

Loneliness

Pupils and learners in years 12-13 were additionally asked how often they felt lonely. One in four (26%) said this was often and just under half (45%) were lonely some of the time. One in four (25%) said that they hardly ever or never felt lonely. Figure 26 and Figure 27 show comparisons with previous PPLP survey waves, for year 12 and year 13 pupils and learners.

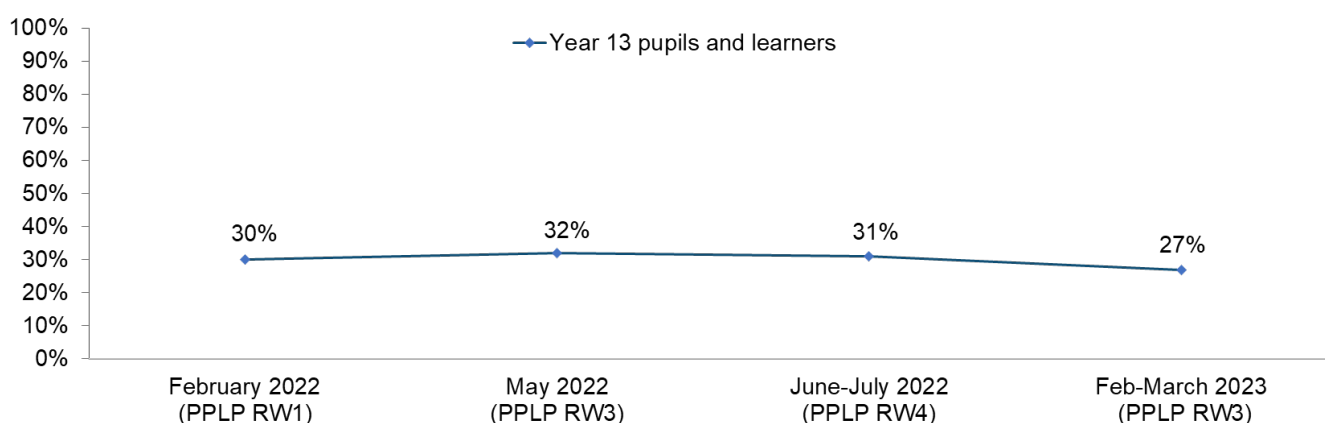
Figure 26: Proportion of year 12 pupils and learners that often feel lonely



Base: All pupils and learners in year 12 (1,384)

Source: PPLP 2023 RW3 pupils and learners survey. How often do you feel lonely?

Figure 27: Proportion of year 13 pupils and learners that often feel lonely



Base: All pupils and learners in year 13 (1,010)

Source: PPLP 2023 RW3 pupils and learners survey. How often do you feel lonely?

Main challenges

Pupils and learners in years 12-13 were asked to describe in their own words the main challenges, if any, that they were facing in the coming months. Just under two-thirds of pupils and learners (63%) were able to describe at least one challenge that they were facing, with 1% saying they were not facing any challenges and 36% that they did not know.

The most common themes that emerged related to:

- Exams and assessments
- Mental health
- Financial concerns

Other themes reported less frequently included finding work, the process of starting university, making choices about the future, learning to drive or driving tests, and family problems including bereavement and divorce.

Exams and assessments

Many pupils and learners in years 12-13 mentioned exams and assessments when asked about the main challenges they are facing. This was also the most common theme among pupils in year 7-11 when they were asked this question during the September/October recruitment wave.

“My year 12 exams are probably my biggest challenges at the moment, getting prepared for them and taking them will be difficult”

Pupil, year 12

“Mock exams and then actual exams in my course. It can be very stressful at times with things like having to keep up to date with work given and having to revise at home too”

Learner, year 12

“Passing my A-level exams. I feel a bit stressed because I know what I want to do and I have to get good grades to achieve this. It is a lot of pressure”

Pupil, year 13

“Exams are incredibly stressful and overwhelming considering that there is no pre-released information this year”

Mental health

Mental health, including stress, anxiety and depression was another frequently mentioned challenge for pupils and learners in years 12-13.

“I am facing issues with balancing college and my mental health as I always feel anxious and lonely but do not have the time to fix these issues as I am always doing exams”

Learner, year 13

“My anxiety is always a challenge that I have to overcome on a daily basis”

Pupil, year 13

“Mental Health / Anxiety - incredibly uncertain about the direction my life is taking”

Pupil, year 13

“Facing anxiety and depression, being able to stay caught up on college work and not overwork myself and become drained”

Learner, year 12

Financial concerns

Pupils and learners in years 12-13 also expressed concerns about their financial situation and the increased cost of living.

“Exam pressure, exams, cost of living crisis (not being able to afford the next step in learning or things for daily life)”

Pupil, year 12

“The cost of living crisis and not being able to get a job to support my family.”

Pupil, year 12

“Struggling financially to pay for food, transport, university and driving lessons”

Learner, year 13

“Finding a second job or increasing hours at my current job to save for moving away to uni + the costs associated with moving out”

Learner, year 13

Glossary

All ethnic minorities (excluding white minorities). For comparisons with the white group as a whole.

CiN – Children in Need. This is a broad definition spanning a wide range of children and adolescents, in need of varying types of support and intervention, for a variety of reasons. A child is defined as ‘in need’ under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, where:

- they are unlikely to achieve or maintain, or to have the opportunity of achieving or maintaining, a reasonable standard of health or development without the provision for them of services by a local authority
- their health or development is likely to be significantly impaired, or further impaired, without the provision for them of such services; or
- they are disabled

EHC Plan – Education Health and Care plan. This is a legal document that describes a child or young person’s special educational, health and social care needs and explains the extra help that will be given to meet those needs and how that help will support the child or young person.

FSM or FME – Free School Meal or Free Meal Eligibility. Eligibility for FSMs/FME is used as a proxy for socioeconomic status. Pupils and learners eligible for FSMs/FME were considered to be living in greater socioeconomic deprivation than those pupils and learners who were not eligible for FSMs/FME. FSM refers to data from the National Pupil Database (NPD) and FME refers to comparable data from the Individualised Learner Record (ILR).

SEND – Special Educational Needs and Disability. A child or young person has SEND if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them. A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if they:

- have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or
- have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions.

Many children and young people who have SEND may also have a disability under the Equality Act 2010 – that is ‘...a physical or mental impairment which has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities’. Where a disabled child or young person requires special educational provision, they will also be covered by the SEND definition. For more details, see the [SEND Code of Practice](#).



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