

## LEARNER JOURNEY: EDUCATION, TRAINING AND WORK

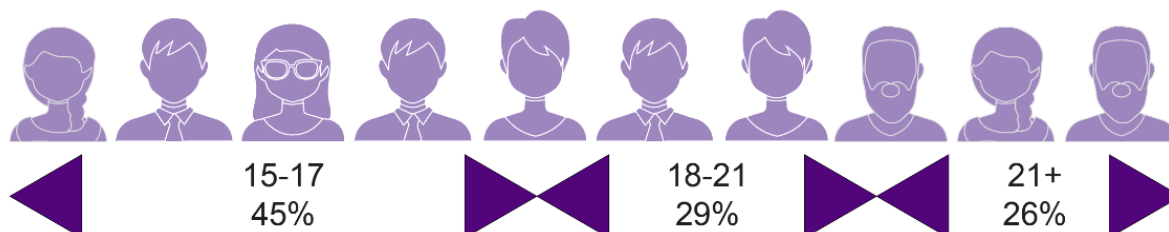
The Education and Skills Committee agreed to commission a survey to ask young people (aged 15-24) living in Scotland about their experiences moving from school and on to work. The online survey that ran until 24 April 2018 received 895 completed responses. A summary of the top-line results is provided in this briefing.

Given that online surveys will to some extent involve young people self-selecting to take part, the results should be used carefully. While the overall sample size is relatively large, it is not advisable to generalise the results to suggest that the findings hold true for all young people in Scotland.

### Who Responded?

Below is some information on the respondents to the survey:

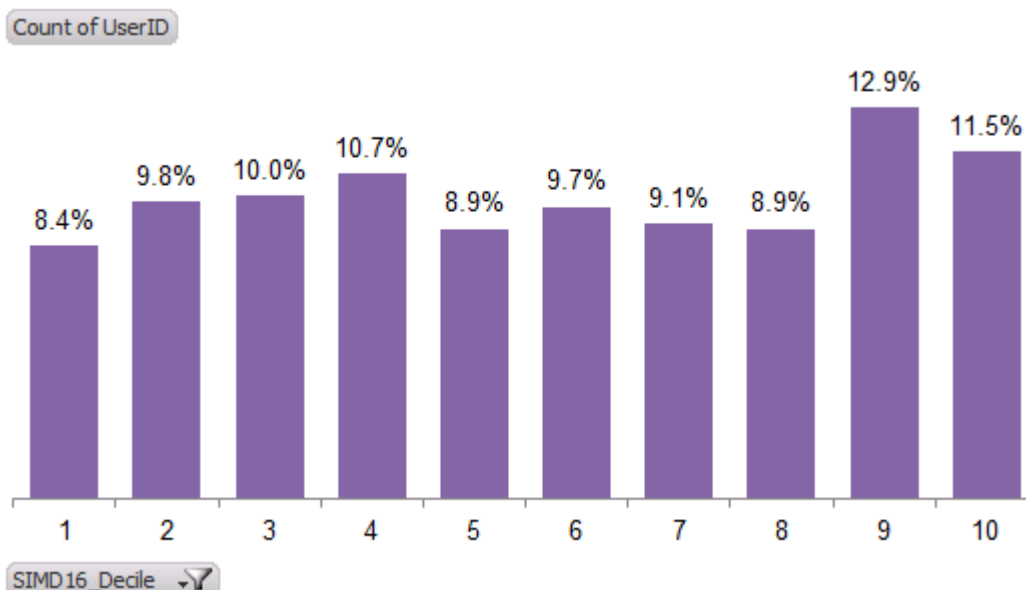
- Almost half (45%) were **aged 15-17**; 29% were aged 18-21; and 26% were over 21.



- Over two thirds (70%) were **female**; while 28% were male; and 2% reported their gender as non-binary.
- The vast majority (89%) attended a **mainstream state school**; 8% attended a mainstream private / independent school; less than 2% (14 respondents) a special school; and less than 1% (7 respondents) were home schooled.
- Almost 37% of respondents are currently **attending school** (36.1%); while a small number reported their main activity as home schooling (7 respondents); or Foundation Apprenticeship (1 respondent).
- Among those currently attending school, 87% attend a mainstream state school; and 11% attend mainstream private / independent school.
- Among respondents who have left school, the most common reported activities were: university (20.3%); working (17.1%); and college (11%).

Full postcode information was provided by 549 respondents. Figure 1 indicates that responses were received from people living in all ten SIMD deciles.

**Figure 1: respondents who provided a full postcode, by SIMD quintile**



Annexe A lists the local authority area of those who provided a full or partial postcode. This indicates that responses were received from people living in all 32 local authority areas. People living in the two largest urban areas of Scotland - Edinburgh and Glasgow – were most likely to complete the survey (82 respondents each).

## School

A range of questions were asked about what support and advice was offered at school to help with making the transition to education, training and work. Table 1 shows that the vast majority of respondents felt they were told more about how to get into university than other options we offered.

**Table 1: Information about post-school options**

Which of these were you told more about at school than the others?	Percent	Number
How to find a job	5.7%	48
How to get into college	15.8%	134
How to get into university	60.1%	509
How to get onto a training programme	3.0%	25
Same amount of information about all above options	15.5%	131
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>847</b>

Looking at the type of school the respondent attends / attended, Table 2 shows that those who attend / attended private school report being told most about university

(84.5%) relative to all other options. Among those who attend / attended state school, university is again reported by the majority (58.3%) although other options are also mentioned.

**Table 2: Information about post-school options, by type of school**

Which of these were you told more about at school than the others?	State school	Private school	Special school
How to find a job	43 (5.7%)	2	3
How to get into college	126 (16.7%)	5	2
How to get into university	440 (58.3%)	60 (84.5%)	4
How to get onto a training programme	22 (2.9%)	1	
Same amount of information about all options	124 (16.4%)	3	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>755</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>11</b>

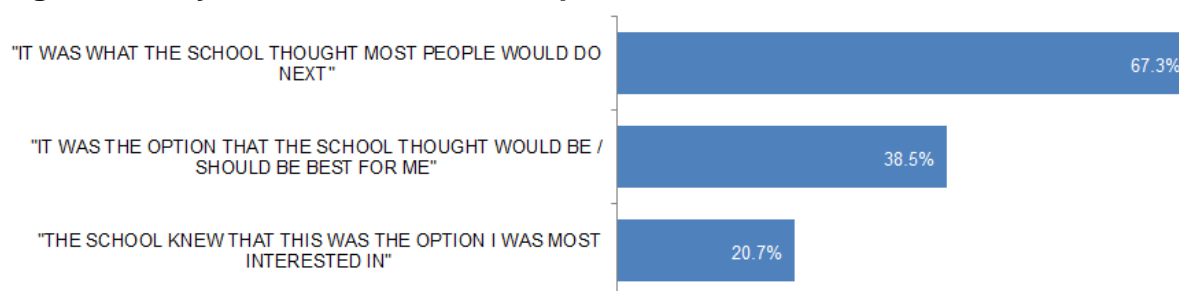
Note: Percentages have been provided only where the numbers are large enough; otherwise the number of responses is reported only. Where numbers are small (e.g. the private school and special school responses) caution should be exercised in drawing conclusions from these findings.

Terminology: “Private school” = mainstream private / independent secondary school; “State school” = mainstream state / local authority secondary school; “Special school” = special school (state or private / independent).

Annexe B shows the comments received from those that chose “other” rather than one of the above options. The majority (from a total of 34 responses) highlighted that they were told nothing or very little while at school.

Survey respondents were asked why they think they were told more about specific post-school options. Figure 2 shows that over two thirds of respondents to this question (67.3%) agreed with the statement: “it was what the school thought most people would do next”. Fewer agreed that they were told more about specific post-school options because “it was the option school thought would be best for me” (38.5%). And only one in five agreed that they were told about specific options because: “the school knew this was the option I was most interested in” (20.7%).

**Figure 2: Why told more about one option than others**



A number of the respondents chose to give their own reasons for why they were told more about one option than the others. The full range of comments is listed at Annexe C. The information provided indicates that many felt that university was prioritised at the expense of other options.

## SUPPORT AT SCHOOL

The survey included four statements intended to explore what support is on offer in schools. Table 3 shows the proportion of respondents who agreed (or strongly agreed) with each statement. Proportions of those agreeing are reported for all respondents and then separately just for those who are currently at school. The aim in extracting views from the current school population is to identify if support services have improved over time.

**Table 3: Support at school**

	All responses	School pupils (state)	School pupils (all)
My school offers / offered 'life skills' support to help with filling in applications, practicing interviews etc.	47.7%	50.8%	58.2%
My school offers / offered advice and support on what to do after leaving school	66.3%	67.0%	75.3%
My school offers / offered opportunities for work experience while at school	69.7%	64.1%	71.5%
My school provides / provided access to additional support services (e.g. counsellors or mentors) either inside or outside school	52.3%	57.5%	65.5%

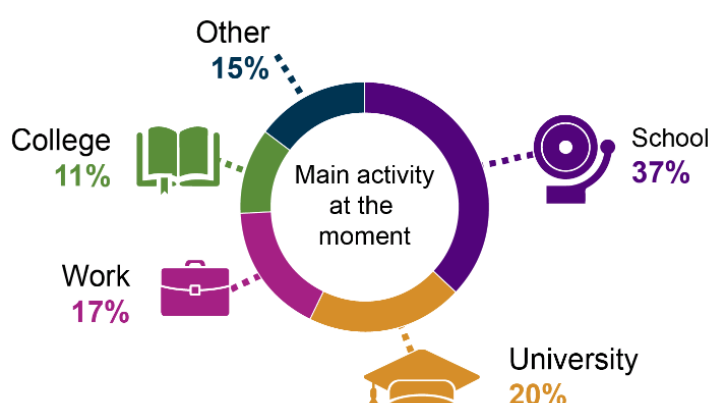
The responses show that work experience is the most common support recognised as on offer at school (69.7% of respondents), followed by advice and support on what to do after leaving school (66.3% of respondents). Fewer respondents agreed that their school offered 'life skills' support (47.7% of respondents) or access to additional support services inside or outside school (52.3% of respondents).

The responses from young people who are currently at state school were not significantly different to the general respondent group (see middle column of Table 3 above). However, once you include the views of those at independent school as well as those at state school, the response rate increases significantly across all four forms of support. In other words, those at private school were more likely to agree with statements about the availability of different forms of support at school.

## POST-SCHOOL TRANSITIONS

The survey asked respondents what the main activity is that they spend their time on at the moment. Figure 3 lists the activities reported. Over a third of respondents are still at school (37%), while 20% are at university, 17% are working and 11% attend college. Annex D lists the full range of options offered as well as the other answers that respondents provided in response to this question.

**Figure 3: Main activity at the moment**



Respondents who had left school were asked whether they were able to take the path they wanted to when leaving school. Table 4 shows that of the 572 respondents who answered this question, over two thirds (67.1%) had been able to take the path they wanted to, while 21% had not known what they wanted to do and 11.8% had not been able to take their chosen path.

While there is no significant difference in the views given by female and male respondents, male respondents were slightly more likely to say that they had been able to take the path they wished to (71.5%) compared with female respondents (65.7%). In contrast, female respondents were slightly more likely to say that they did not know what they wanted to do when they left school (21.7%) compared with male respondents (18.2%).

**Table 4: Were you able to take the path you wanted to when you left school?**

	Yes	No	Didn't know what wanted to do	Total
Female	65.7% (255)	12.6% (49)	21.7% (84)	100% (389)
Male	71.5% (118)	10.3% (17)	18.2% (30)	100% (165)
Non-binary	6	2	5	13
PNTS	4		1	5
N/A	1			1
<b>Total</b>	<b>67.1% (384)</b>	<b>11.8% (67)</b>	<b>21% (120)</b>	<b>100% (572)</b>

Notes: PNTS = prefer not to say; N/A = not answered. Percentages are only offered where respondent numbers are large enough to offer meaningful results. For non-binary, PNTS and N/A only the numbers are presented.

Respondents were also asked at what point they found it most difficult to take the path they wanted. Table 5 shows that, of those that answered (173 respondents), 60% stated that the period that was most difficult was at or leaving school.

Of this relatively small sample, female respondents were more likely to say that school was the point that they found most difficult (61.6%) compared with male respondents (52.4%). For male respondents, searching for a job was a point considered challenging (21.4%), more so than for female respondents (13.6%).

Given the small numbers being reported in the particular element of the survey, these findings should be treated with some caution.

**Table 5: When was it most difficult to take the path you wanted?**

	Total	Female	Male	N-B
When I was at or leaving college	13	9	3	1
When I was at or leaving school	103	61.6% (77)	52.4% (22)	4
When I was at or leaving university	22	13.6% (17)	11.9% (5)	
When I was searching for a job	27	13.6% (17)	21.4% (9)	1
When I was taking part in / finished a training programme	4	3	1	
When I was working	4	2	2	
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>6</b>

Notes: N-B = non-binary. Percentages are only offered where respondent numbers are large enough to offer meaningful results. Given that only 173 responses are included in this analysis, the results broken down by gender should be treated with caution.

## SUPPORT TO MAKE TRANSITIONS

The final question in the survey asked respondents if there had been one person or thing that really helped with making choices about education, training or work. Over 230 responses were received (as open text). The main groups cited as important were parents and teachers / lecturers. As well as this, respondents cited specific services as playing an important part in providing advice or information e.g. school careers guidance services.

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**SPICe Research**  
 May 2018

**ANNEXE A – LOCAL AUTHORITY OF RESPONDENTS WHO PROVIDED A POSTCODE (FULL OR PARTIAL)**

<b>Local authority</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
Aberdeen City	11	1.8%
Aberdeenshire	26	4.3%
Angus	13	2.2%
Argyll and Bute	9	1.5%
City of Edinburgh	82	13.6%
Clackmannanshire	4	0.7%
Dumfries and Galloway	19	3.2%
Dundee City	6	1.0%
East Ayrshire	15	2.5%
East Dunbartonshire	6	1.0%
East Lothian	17	2.8%
East Renfrewshire	4	0.7%
Falkirk	36	6.0%
Fife	29	4.8%
Glasgow City	82	13.6%
Highland	16	2.7%
Inverclyde	2	0.3%
Midlothian	7	1.2%
Moray	3	0.5%
Na h-Eileanan an Iar	4	0.7%
North Ayrshire	43	7.1%
North Lanarkshire	29	4.8%
Orkney Islands	4	0.7%
Perth and Kinross	15	2.5%
Renfrewshire	25	4.2%
Scottish Borders	9	1.5%
Shetland Islands	4	0.7%
South Ayrshire	21	3.5%
South Lanarkshire	23	3.8%
Stirling	17	2.8%
West Dunbartonshire	7	1.2%
West Lothian	14	2.3%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>602</b>	<b>100%</b>

**ANNEXE B – COMMENTS IN RESPONSE TO Q: “WHICH OF THESE WERE YOU / HAVE YOU BEEN TOLD MORE ABOUT AT SCHOOL THAN THE OTHERS”?**

Apprenticeship

College and apprenticeships

Due to catchment area I was not given any information left to find out on my own

How to get a modern apprenticeship

How to pass exams

How to study for exams and get good results

I am in care and school gave up on me

I can't remember to be honest.

I didn't get any support or information from Renfrewshire Council and I am still awaiting a transition package being put in place despite my original leaving date being 06/16 which was then pushed back to 06/17 to allow RC staff time to put a package in place. I left school without an appropriate positive destination.

I feel I got very little info on any of these options

I wasn't told how to do any of this at my school

I've only got information on Careers

Information very limited.

Limited information on all, except help when applying [to university]

Literally didn't get any information on any of them

my school only referred me to SDS

N/a left school early

No, i was not told that in school

None

None.

None. I left in school in 4th year, no one ever explained any of these options to me.

Not a lot about any of them

Not much info about any tbh

Not really given much information what to do after school finished

Nothing

Nothing

Nothing very much about any of them

There was lot of emphasis on apprenticeships; Uni wise - a teacher gathered up those who wanted to apply and helped us through the UCAS procedure

They chat mostly about college. For care leavers college is challenging for rent purposes. As well as other factors in their life

Told to go to SDS for advice

Was told very little about any.

We have been told about the World of Work website, to help us make our choices for Nat 5s

We have not had much information on this

Were not told anything



**ANNEXE C – OTHER COMMENTS IN RESPONSE TO Q: “WHY WERE YOU TOLD MORE ABOUT THIS OPTION?”** [Options provided in survey: school thought it was best for me; knew it was the option I was most interested in; or school thought this was what most people would do next]

My school did not have any support for pupils like me who wanted to leave school early - Teachers were not interested unless you were staying on to complete Highers

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As it was a private school, they want to promote students who go onto university to improve their image. No consideration was given to other paths.

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Was expected of us all - school was a bit of an exam factory and lots of pressure to get all As and go to uni because of the fees

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They wanted rid of me in particular as I was deemed a risk. College was there safest statistic to play for me.

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From what I understood there was definitely a push from the school to get as many pupils into further education as possible, which in some cases was not helpful for all students.

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It was what the school wanted most people to do so that they would look better in performance tables.

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More interested in children going to Uni - I didn't know what I wanted to do so no help given

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Very mixed school so nothing specific was emphasised. Most information was from universities themselves

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I believe the school were interested in their school leavers statistics, trying to increase the number of students they sent off to higher education in order to better their rating.

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Looks better on the school records

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I feel my school was more concerned with how good they look on paper than helping signpost students into different directions. University was presented as the next natural progression and did not give a great deal of support, if any, to students seeking employment, apprenticeships or college places.

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At The Glasgow Academy there was an expectation that you went to university.

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The school administration wanted to be able to have favourable statistics that showed their students went to university.

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I go to a school from a deprived area so gives us information to go to the local UHI. They didn't really give us information on higher education until S6 (Personal statement, SAAS, budgeting etc.)

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They seemed to focus on it more and if you needed help with finding a job or applying to college it was up to you to seek the correct members of staff (as opposed to the information about university being a whole year assembly)

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I want to go and join the armed forces but the school gets mad at that.

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It's what most people will go into [university]

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The school was focused on their stats and reputation - they needed to get a higher percentage of their students into university than the other local schools.

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None

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Nothing

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University wasn't my aim at that point, but there wasn't more advice in other options.

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This felt like the route the school wanted you to take [university] to meet quotas and increase the reputation

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The school had targets to meet [university]

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University was pushed for those who were more academic, i.e. they had highers. Whilst colleges and apprenticeships were pushed to people who were not seen to be "academic achievers". University was seen as the best destination, whilst college and apprenticeships were seen as lesser choices - not different choices. Schools should give parity of esteem to university, college and apprenticeships.

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It was the option that made the school look better [university]

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It looks better when more children are going to higher education so the school pushes this option.

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School was concerned that pathways aside from uni were not being emphasised enough. I am now in 5th year and I have little to no idea about the process of applying to a university but an abundance of knowledge on how to apply to apprenticeships I have no interest in

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My future was dependant on how the school looks. e.g. if I go to uni, I must be intelligent

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It looks good for the school if a high proportion of their pupils go to university. I'm lucky because I wanted to go, but people who didn't felt pressured by teachers into pursuing something they didn't want/ weren't ready for.

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It was the option the school most wanted there leavers to end up. Few other options were explored.

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I believe the school wanted to push people into Uni since it was from a poorer area with a low percent of students leaving into further and higher education

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The school wanted good stats of Uni leavers to compete with other schools

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The school has a below average number of pupils going to Uni and so needs to boost numbers

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They are told to teach us it [university]

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Not many people go to university from my school so there's a big push when someone has the grades

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It was what I thought may have been pushed by the school governors, council and local authority etc. as historically, a majority of my secondary schools colleagues entered into work opposed to attending university.

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The school wanted to maximise the number of university applicants and thought it would be

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appropriate for many students.

The school pushed for people to apply for university to improve their statistics

The reputation of the school improves if more pupils advance to higher education.

N/A

Because I didn't know what I want to do

The school was trying to boost the number of people who attend university as it was lower than the Scottish average

We've simply had more people coming in giving information on this [university] in assemblies etc. than any other.

Unknown

If the number of pupils going to university was high it made me the school look good

No help

Ha!

It was standard that everyone got leaflets etc. on how to apply through UCAS for university. If u wanted help for any other pathways, I had to search myself for that help

My parents found out all the information before school

It was most students at my school do and not many go to university so they lack giving this information

They can't be arsed talking about college or Uni

My AA [Activity Agreement] worker suggested it

N/A

the school had their own one they wanted us to go through

It is the option upon which the school is judged upon

It is the only thing I could do at my age if I wanted to leave school.

Easiest to explain to pupils

It suited the school in terms of league tables etc.

Not at the age to start discussions about university

N/A

Well most people strive to be doctors or lawyers or some sort of profession as these, so experience would help these people greatly. However, I don't aspire to work in one of these professions and would rather be an entrepreneur, work in business, or somebody working in the creative industries. This advice was of little use to me.

It looks good on the school prospectus to have a high percentage of people going on to university

n/a

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The school wanted more people to go to university for their figures

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They wanted everyone to go to Uni however not everyone wanted to.

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The school seemed to know more about this.

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they just wanted to get rid of me

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We were not told much, i think it's because people are academic and are to be assumed to go to uni.

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We weren't told anything about this option

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If students weren't planning on going to university they didn't care.

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So the school could look good

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It was easier to run UCAS lessons than actually teach about CVs and interviews.

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I spoke with the careers advisor and she was telling me about modern apprenticeships.

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School was trying to encourage people who were not going to university to do a modern apprenticeship

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The school felt that I would not be able to succeed in life unless I attended university

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The school didn't bother to teach us. School was more about passing curriculum than how to survive on your own.

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It was so the school could get extra funding

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Subject teachers wouldn't tell you how to get to Uni, in my experience they would say "if you had a job doing ..." and then explain jobs within their subject

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They didn't explain anything. I think that they would explain to people who stayed on to 5th and 6th year how to get into university because that was what was expected.

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Because after the end of S4 pupils have the option to go to college which is the earliest stage at which you can leave the school

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None

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It's easier to get pupils to apply and easier for teachers [university?]

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Was not told anything

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I wasn't told anything at school

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Because only results matter to school

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It looks better on the school if they get more pupils in uni! People who had no interest in further education were pushed to go to uni or college at least.

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It was what looked best for the school

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Most people from working class back grounds dropped out by then so they just assumed that every one wanted to go to uni

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## ANNEXE D – WHAT DO YOU SPEND MOST OF YOUR TIME ON NOW?

### Options offered in survey:

Activity Agreement	32
Caring for a family member, partner or friend	8
College	96
Foundation Apprenticeship	1
Home schooling	4
Looking for work	32
Modern Apprenticeship	20
School	316
Training programme	8
University	178
Volunteering	14
Work	150
Living with a long term health condition or disability that prevents or limits any of the above	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>875</b>

### Other answers (individual responses):

Currently doing LLB degree (4th year) but most time is spent doing applications for traineeships

College, school and looking for work / apprenticeship

I am self-employed with my own landscaping business...

Full time job

Gap year, so working and doing my own study at home

I attend college which is more like a teenage babysitter.

I believe in the right not to work and earn of the government. Free state, squat the country.

I spend my time equally working and distance learning through a university

Part time work

School and being a member of Who Cares? Scotland

I volunteer as well as Activity Agreement

Work full time and study part time with Open University

Working at the moment, but have long term health condition that affects that

Working on my own... business until going to college in September