



Baseline Survey Partnership Report

May 2018

Produced by the HeppSY+ Data & Evaluation Team

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Foreword



I am delighted to help lead the work of the Higher Education Progression Partnership South Yorkshire Plus (HeppSY+) programme, which is working to increase the number of young people progressing to higher education. In order to help those young people, HeppSY+ must base its activities on evidence about what is needed and what works. This baseline survey is a critical part of gathering relevant data for that evidence base. I would like to thank the HeppSY+ team and all our partner schools and colleges who provided this vital data. We hope that the survey results presented here will offer a valuable tool for your school or college and I commend the report to your use.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Wyn Morgan'.

Professor Wyn Morgan

Vice-President for Education, The University of Sheffield
and Chair of HeppSY+

Executive Summary

The evidence shows that higher education participation of young people in South Yorkshire¹ is both low and much lower than expected based on GCSE-level attainment. The recent State of the Nation report (2017)² concluded that the social mobility divide is not just down to social or economic problems but that a geographical division is also playing a part.

The Higher Education Progression Partnership South Yorkshire Plus (HeppSY+) runs the National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP) in the Sheffield City Region, providing impartial information, advice and guidance to help local school and college students living in target wards make choices about higher education. Target wards were chosen on the basis that these areas have low progression rates into higher education.

NCOP's objectives by 2020 are to:

- double the number of young people accessing higher education from the target wards
- increase progression by black and minority ethnic (BAME) groups by 20 percent
- address the under-representation of young men progressing to higher level studies

This report provides an analysis of South Yorkshire students' aspirations, confidence and resilience regarding higher education, their higher education knowledge and their career knowledge at the outset of the HeppSY+ project.

The analysis derives from the HeppSY+ survey which was undertaken with students in 32 schools and six colleges in South Yorkshire between October 2017 and January 2018. The sample comprises of 10,037 students in the region, with approximately half being students from HeppSY+ target postcodes. A more detailed breakdown of the sample can be found in Appendix 1.

The methods of analysis used have provided descriptive statistics which indicate the percentage of students who responded to survey questions in particular ways. The analysis also breaks down survey responses according to year group, gender, HeppSY+ postcode status and ethnicity.

The report draws attention to several key findings which are pertinent to how activity can be organised and targeted going forward.

1 Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield local authorities

2 State of the Nation 2017: *Social Mobility in Great Britain* (2017) London: Social Mobility Commission

Key Findings

Aspirations and Influences

South Yorkshire students are likely to aspire to attend higher education:

- Over two-thirds say they definitely will, are very likely to or fairly likely to apply to higher education at age 18 or 19.
- Fifty-four percent of older students (Year 12s and Year 13s) in South Yorkshire aspire to attend a higher education institution after they finish their current studies.
- Students at a sixth form college were substantially more likely to want to apply to higher education than those at a further education college. In contrast, those in a further education college were twice as likely to want to secure work as soon as possible.

Younger students (those in Year 9 to Year 11) also have a clear desire to continue in education once they finish their current studies.

- Thirty-three percent of students in Year 9 to Year 11 want to study at a sixth form college after they finish school and 28 percent would like to study at a further education college.

Family are the key influencers for young people in South Yorkshire:

- Sixty-six percent of students say that their family have had the greatest influence on their decisions about what to do next in their progression and 71 percent of students surveyed had spoken to their family about what to do next.

Confidence and Resilience

Students in South Yorkshire were confident about higher education and their academic ability:

- Over two third of students agreed that they could go to higher education if they wanted to and that they had the academic ability to succeed and 56 percent agreed that that they could cope with the level of study required.

- Students were least likely to agree or strongly agree that higher education was for people like them, with a large proportion instead saying that they neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement.

Higher Education Knowledge

Students rated their knowledge of higher education favourably although their knowledge could be improved:

- Half of students in South Yorkshire felt they knew enough about higher education to make a decision about whether to go whilst the other half did not.

- The majority of students stated they knew a little about the courses that are available, what qualification they would need and the costs of study.
- Students were considerably less confident in their knowledge of how to apply through UCAS with 54 percent stating they knew nothing.

Career Knowledge

Students rated their knowledge of how higher education leads to careers they might be interested in very favourably:

- Fifty-nine percent of students stated they knew a little about this aspect of careers and an additional 26 percent said they knew a lot. Only 15 percent of students said they knew nothing.

Social Characteristics and Inequalities

There were distinctions between social groups which highlight key targeting areas for raising aspirations, confidence and knowledge regarding higher education.

Ethnicity

Ethnicity was the social characteristic which marked the most difference between young people in the South Yorkshire area:

- Black and Black British and Asian and Asian British students were the most likely ethnic groups to want to progress to higher education. Amongst older students, nearly three quarters of Black and Asian students wanted to study at a higher education institution after their current studies.
- In contrast, there was a larger appetite among White and Mixed Background students to begin full-time work or to begin an apprenticeship.

The differences in aspiration may reflect differing levels of confidence and knowledge between the groups. Black and Asian students consistently rated their confidence and knowledge more highly than other ethnic groups whilst Mixed Background students tended to be the most likely to rate their confidence or knowledge unfavourably.

Gender

Male and female students had differing aspirations:

- Female students were more likely to want to continue in institution-based education (at a sixth form college, further education college or higher education institution, depending on age) and were more likely to say they would definitely apply to higher education age 18 or 19.
- Males were more likely to want to begin an apprenticeship or start working.

However, there was little gender difference in perceptions of their confidence and resilience, higher education knowledge or career knowledge:

- Females tended to rate their confidence slightly more highly. The only aspect of confidence in which males rated their knowledge more highly was in the perception of whether they had the academic ability to succeed.
- Males rated their knowledge of the costs of study and the UCAS application process marginally more highly, whilst females rated their knowledge of careers slightly more highly.

White males from HeppSY+ localities did not differ substantially from the broader male group in terms of their confidence and resilience, higher education knowledge or career knowledge. However, the broader male group includes the group of White males from HeppSY+ localities and therefore distinctions may not be as pronounced as if the two groups were more distinct.

The key finding regarding White males from HeppSY+ localities is that they were the most likely group to say they would definitely not apply to higher education at age 18 or 19.

HeppSY+ Postcodes

Students from HeppSY+ and non-HeppSY+ localities were broadly similar in their aspirations, confidence and knowledge although there were subtle differences to highlight and address.

- Those from HeppSY+ localities were slightly more likely to want to start working after they finish their current studies compared with those from non-HeppSY+ localities.
- There was considerable similarity in the desire to attend a higher education institution after their current studies, with similar appetite for studying either locally or away from home between the two groups.
- There was tendency for students from non-HeppSY+ areas to rate their confidence and knowledge slightly more positively than those from HeppSY+ localities, but the differences were often marginal at around a one or two percentage point difference.

Recommendations

There are several recommendations which emerge from the findings of this report:

- Families should be engaged and equipped with knowledge regarding the range of higher education options available and the means through which applications and transitions to higher education are made, in order that they can guide their offspring.
- Although the majority of students feel they know a little about various elements of higher education, attempts should be made to improve students' knowledge of higher education including the courses available, the costs of study, the qualifications needed to get on to a course of interest and particularly the UCAS application process, in order that more students feel they know a lot about higher education. This may help to translate students' high aspiration to attend higher education into applications.
- Knowledge and confidence increased across year groups. Year 9s were particularly likely to answer 'don't know' on various confidence and knowledge measures. More engagement is therefore needed to increase knowledge and begin 'myth busting' at an early age.

There are key targeting considerations to be implemented to address inequalities between differing groups of students:

- More targeted work could be done to inform male students of the benefits of differing pathways to address the finding that males are more inclined to pursue an apprenticeship or employment compared with females and are more likely to agree that starting work or an apprenticeship is better than going to higher education.
- Activity should aim to broaden the horizons of younger HeppSY+ students to consider the opportunities at sixth form colleges.
- Efforts should be made to increase the confidence and resilience, higher education and career knowledge of students from HeppSY+ localities to give them parity with those from non-HeppSY+ localities.
- Particular focus should be given to students from a mixed ethnic background to raise aspirations, confidence and knowledge regarding higher education.

FULL REPORT

Introduction

The evidence shows that higher education participation of young people in South Yorkshire³ is both low and much lower than expected based on GCSE-level attainment. The recent State of the Nation report (2017)⁴ concluded that the social mobility divide is not just down to social or economic problems but that a geographical division is also playing a part.

The Gatsby Benchmarks (2013⁵) outline the importance of good careers guidance in terms of raising young people's aspirations and accessing available opportunities. Statutory guidance suggests that the Gatsby Benchmarks should be embedded within schools and colleges, with Benchmark seven suggesting that:

'...by the age 16, every pupil should have had a meaningful encounter with providers of the full range of learning opportunities, including...colleges, universities...By the age of 18, all pupils who are considering applying for university should have had at least two visits to universities to meet staff and pupils' (Department of Education, 2018, p8⁶).

The Higher Education Progression Partnership South Yorkshire Plus (HeppSY+) runs the NCOP programme in the Sheffield City Region, providing impartial information, advice and guidance to help local school and college students living in the target wards make choices about higher education. Target wards were chosen on the basis that these areas have low progression rates into higher education.

NCOP's objectives by 2020 are to:

- Double the number of young people accessing higher education from the target wards
- Increase progression by black and minority ethnic (BAME) groups by 20 percent
- Address the under-representation of young men progressing to higher level studies

Between October 2017 and January 2018 the HeppSY+ team ran a baseline survey with all participating schools and colleges. The survey explored key elements linked to the HeppSY+ logic model and its four barriers to progression to higher education (see Appendix 2⁷). This report discusses the findings from aggregated data from all 32 schools and six colleges who completed the survey during this time.

The total number of students whose responses could be analysed was 10,037. Appendix 1 shows the breakdown of survey responses for differing groups. If you would like more information about how the analysis was conducted, please contact the data and evaluation team.

The survey was carried out at target schools in the South Yorkshire region that have a high proportion of learners who live in HeppSY+ localities (a map of the locations of HeppSY+ target schools can be found in Appendix 3). Both students who lived in HeppSY+ localities and those who did not but who attended target schools, participated in the survey. The map in Appendix 3 indicates that some areas of the Sheffield region, particularly the more affluent areas in the South West of Sheffield, were not targeted for participation in the HeppSY+ programme. As such, the comparison between HeppSY+ and non-HeppSY+ students does not necessarily amount to a distinction between those from affluent and deprived areas.

The report begins by discussing young people's aspirations for the future, including their inclination to pursue further and higher education and who the key influencers on their decisions are. It then discusses confidence and resilience by focussing on learners' sense of self and academic ability in relation to higher education. Following this, the report explores students' higher education knowledge. Finally, it assesses students' career knowledge. The report also discusses how aspirations, confidence and knowledge varied across students of differing genders, ethnic backgrounds and HeppSY+ postcode statuses.

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3 Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield local authorities

4 State of the Nation 2017: Social Mobility in Great Britain (2017) London: Social Mobility Commission

5 Careers Guidance and Access for Education and Training Providers: statutory guidance for governing bodies, school leaders and school staff (2018) London: Department for Education

6 *ibid.*

7 Attainment not reported in the baseline survey

Aspirations and Influences

The first section of the report focuses on South Yorkshire students' aspirations for the future. It begins with a discussion of how likely students are to apply to higher education at age 18 or 19. It then explores further what students aspire to do after their current studies. It goes on to assess students' attitudes to apprenticeships and employment relative to higher education. Finally, it discusses the key influencers on young people's decisions about the future.

Applying to Higher Education

South Yorkshire students are highly aspirational. The vast majority stated that they were likely to, very likely to or definitely will apply to higher education. The percentage of students who said they were fairly unlikely to, very unlikely to or will definitely not apply was comparatively low at 16 percent. A further 16 percent of students said they did not know whether they would apply to higher education at age 18 or 19.

The older students were, the more likely they were to have a definitive sense of whether they would apply to higher education. Year 13s were the most likely year group to say they definitely will apply to higher education, but also the year group most likely to say they will definitely not apply, perhaps indicating that firm decisions have already been made by this point.

There were also considerable distinctions between students with differing social characteristics. In terms of gender distinctions, female students were more positive about their likelihood of applying to higher education at age 18 or 19:

- Female students were 10 percentage points more likely than male students to say they definitely will apply to higher education at age 18 or 19.
- In contrast, male students were six percentage points more likely than female students to say they were unlikely to or would definitely not apply.
- Male students were also more likely to say they did not know about their likelihood of applying compared with females.

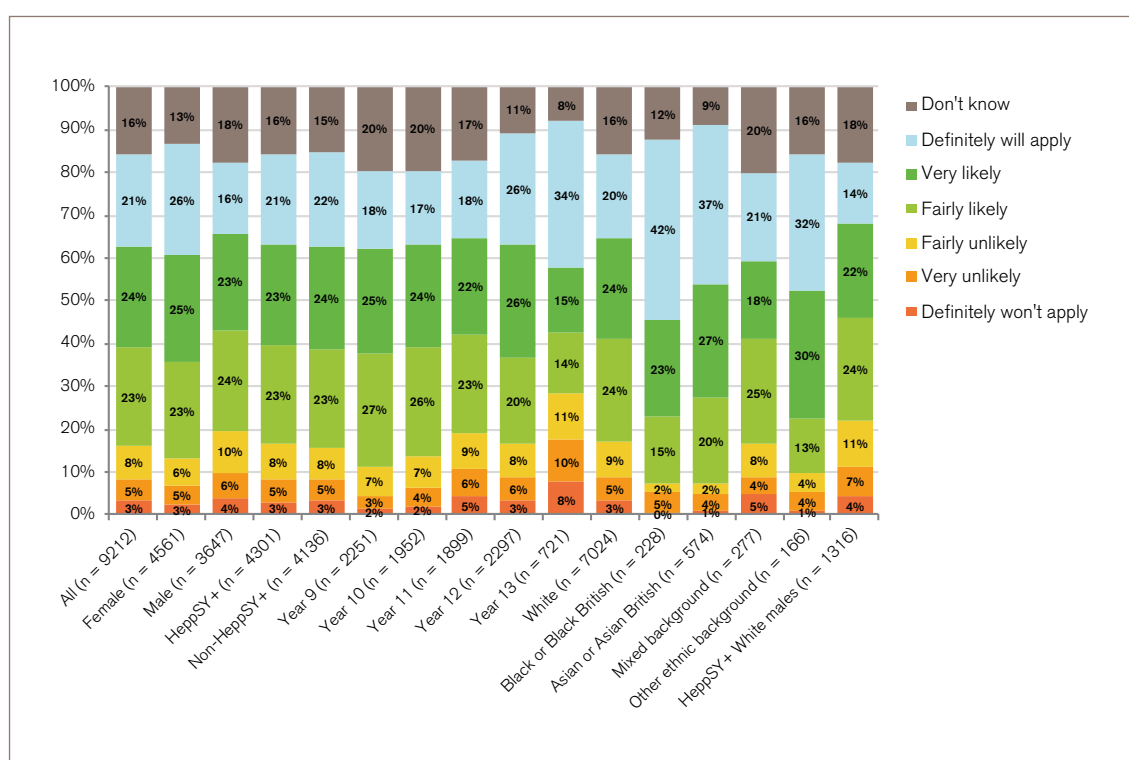
Although young people from all ethnic groups tended to aspire to apply to higher education, there were differences in attitudes between groups.

- Black and Black British students were the most positive about applying to higher education; 42 percent of this group said they would definitely apply to higher education. A further 38 percent stated they were very likely or fairly likely to apply.

- Asian and Asian British students were also likely to say they would definitely apply to higher education (37 percent). A further 47 percent stated they were very likely to or fairly likely to apply.
- In contrast, White students and Mixed Background students were considerably less likely to say they would definitely apply to higher education (20 percent and 21 percent respectively). These groups also contained a higher proportion of students who said they were very unlikely to or definitely would not apply to higher education compared with other ethnic groups.

There was relatively little difference between students from HeppSY+ localities and non-HeppSY+ localities in their perceptions of whether they would apply to higher education at age 18 or 19. Students from non-HeppSY+ localities were marginally more likely to say they would definitely apply or were very likely to apply (46 percent) compared with students from HeppSY+ localities (44 percent).

However, White males from HeppSY+ localities were the social group with the largest proportion of students saying they were unlikely to, very unlikely to or definitely would not apply to higher education.

Figure 1: How likely are you to apply to higher education age 18/19?

Next Steps

The survey asked younger students (those in Year 9 to Year 11) and older students (those in Year 12 and Year 13 or College Level 3 Year 1 and Year 2) about what they would like to do after their current studies.

Younger Students

Younger students tended to want to stay in education once their current studies have finished. The largest proportion of younger students stated they would like to study at a sixth form college (33 percent), whilst a further 28 percent said they would like to study at a further education college. In addition, 11 percent of younger students would like to begin an apprenticeship.

The inclination to employment was considerably lower. Only five percent of students stated they would like to get a full-time job after their current studies finish, whilst three percent said they would like to get a part-time job.

As expected, Year 9 students were most likely to say they did not know what they wanted to do next.

There were several key differences between young people with differing social characteristics. In terms of gender differences:

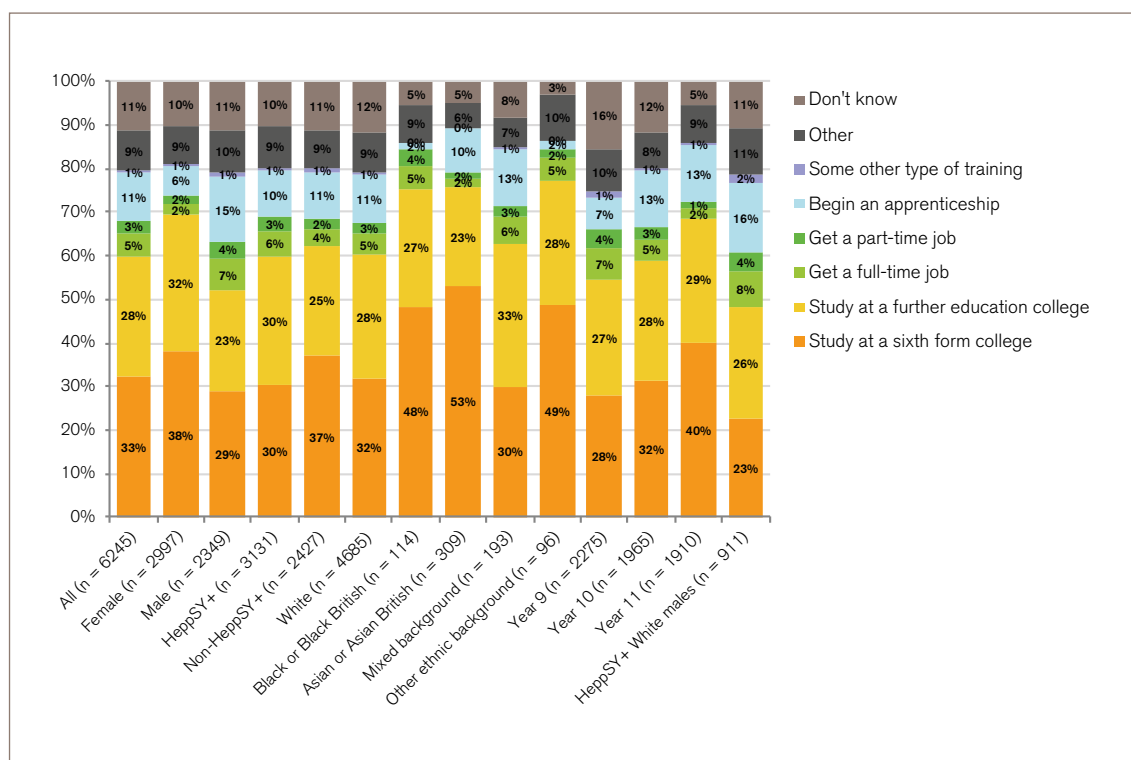
- Male students were considerably more likely to seek employment or an apprenticeship than female students. Young men were over twice as likely to want to start an apprenticeship than female students, at a rate of 15 percent compared to six percent. Eleven percent of male students stated they like to get either a full-time or part-time job, compared with only four percent of female students.
- In contrast, 70 percent of female students wanted to attend a sixth form college or a further education college (as opposed to 52 percent of male students).

The key distinction between students from HeppSY+ and non-HeppSY+ postcodes was that those from HeppSY+ postcodes were more likely to want to attend a further education college, whilst those from non-HeppSY+ localities were more inclined towards studying at a sixth form college.

There were substantial differences in aspirations between young people from differing ethnic backgrounds:

- Black and Asian students and students from Other Ethnic Backgrounds were more likely to want to study at a sixth form college compared with White and Mixed Background students. Mixed Background students were the most likely group to state they would like to study at a further education college.
- White students and Mixed Background students were least likely to know what they wanted to do next. Twelve percent of White students and eight percent of Mixed Background students said they did not know what they wanted to do after their current studies. By contrast, only five percent of Black and Asian students and three percent of students from Other Backgrounds said they did not know what they wanted to do next.
- A key point of difference was in aspirations for apprenticeships. White, Asian and Mixed Background students were the groups most likely to want to start an apprenticeship. Eleven percent of White students, 10 percent of Asian and Asian British students and 13 percent of Mixed Background students wanted to begin an apprenticeship. By comparison, only two percent of Black students and two percent of students from Other Backgrounds wanted to start an apprenticeship.

Figure 2: When you finish your current studies what would you most like to do next? *Younger students*



Older Students

The majority of older students (57 percent) would like to study at a higher education institution. This reflects the findings that the majority of students are likely to apply to higher education at age 18 or 19. There is a preference for studying away from home (30 percent) compared to studying locally (24 percent) and compared to studying higher education courses at a further education college (three percent).

Six percent of students would like to start an apprenticeship and four percent a higher or degree apprenticeship, whilst 11 percent of students would like to start a full-time job.

There are clear and substantial differences between young people with differing social characteristics. In terms of gender distinctions:

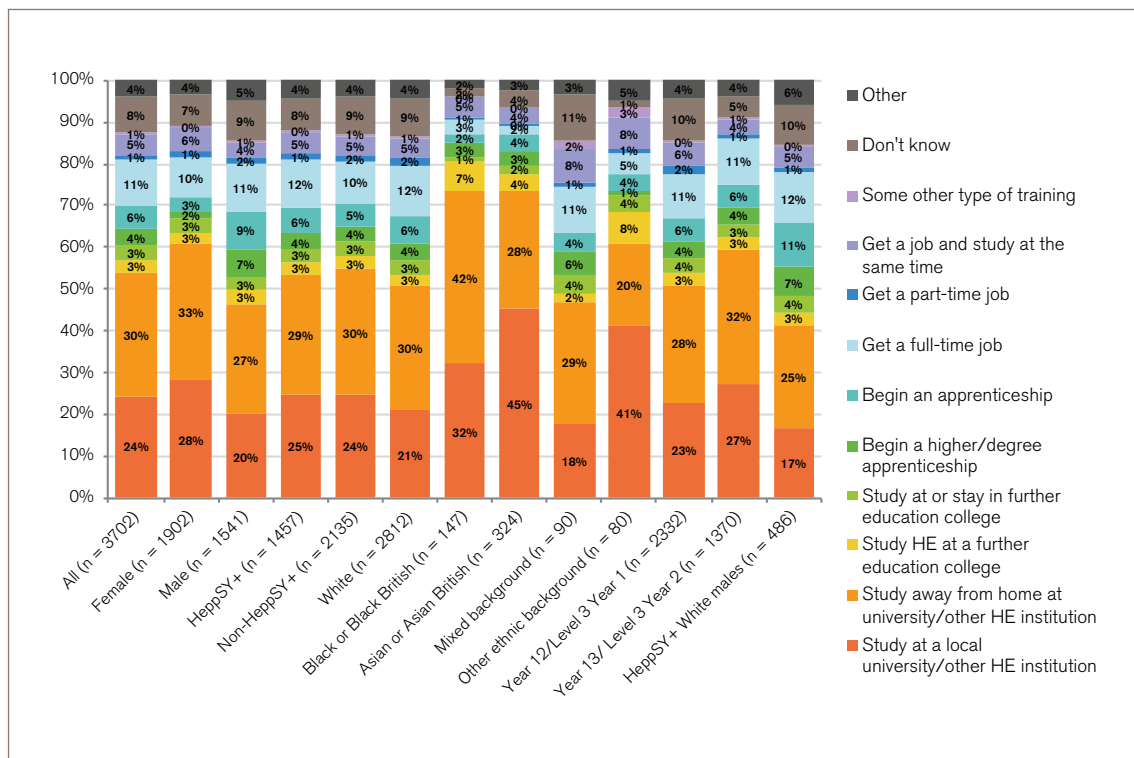
- Female students are more likely to want to study at a higher education institution than male students, either locally or away from home.
- The inclination to begin a full-time or part-time job is similar amongst male and female students. Eleven percent of males and 10 percent of females would like a full-time job.
- The difference in aspirations to start an apprenticeship was even greater amongst older students than it was amongst younger students. Sixteen percent of older male students would like to begin an apprenticeship or a higher or degree apprenticeship. In contrast, only five percent of female students preferred these options.

There are marked distinctions between students from differing ethnic groups.

- Nearly three quarters of Black and Asian students want to study at a higher education institution. This compares to 61 percent of students from Other Ethnic Backgrounds, 51 percent of White students and just 47 percent of Mixed Background students.
- Asian students are most likely to want to study in a local higher education institution, whilst Black students are the most likely group to want to study higher education away from home.
- White and Mixed Background students were the most likely groups to want to start a full time job (12 percent and 11 percent respectively) and also the most likely groups to want to begin either an apprenticeship or a higher or degree apprenticeship.
- White and Mixed Background students were also the most likely groups to say they did not know what they wanted to do next.

The aspirations of older students from HeppSY+ and non-HeppSY+ localities are highly similar, aside from a marginally greater preference amongst those from HeppSY+ localities to start working or begin an apprenticeship.

Figure 3: When you finish your current studies what would you most like to do next? *Older students*



Perceptions of Apprenticeships and Employment

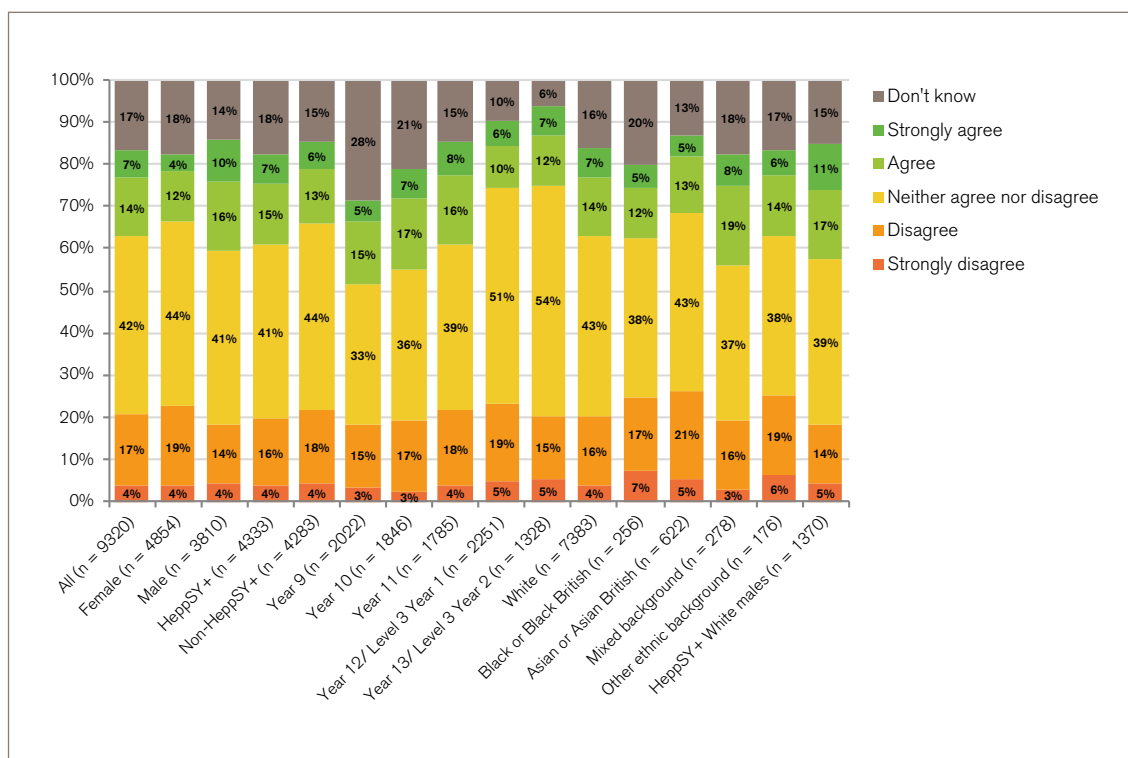
As seen above, differing groups have varying levels of inclination for starting an apprenticeship or employment. This may be explained by how young people perceive apprenticeships and jobs in relation to higher education.

The largest proportion of students neither agreed nor disagreed that it was better to start an apprenticeship than go in to higher education (42 percent). This suggests that apprenticeships and higher education tend to be viewed as having equal value. Aside from this, apprenticeships were viewed positively; young people were more likely to strongly agree that it was better to start an apprenticeship than they were to strongly disagree.

There were some key distinctions between young people with differing social characteristics. These distinctions reflect the above patterns which showed some groups are more likely to want to start an apprenticeship than others:

- Male students perceived apprenticeships more favourably than female students. Over a quarter of males agreed or strongly agreed that it is better to start an apprenticeship than go to higher education, compared with only 16 percent of female students. White males from HeppSY+ localities were the most likely group to agree or strongly agree that starting an apprenticeship is better than going to higher education (28 percent).
- Students from a Mixed Background were most likely to agree or strongly agree that starting an apprenticeship is better than going to higher education than other ethnic groups (27 percent).
- There was little difference between students from HeppSY+ and non-HeppSY+ localities in their perceptions of apprenticeships.

Figure 4: How much do you agree that it is better to start an apprenticeship than go in to higher education?

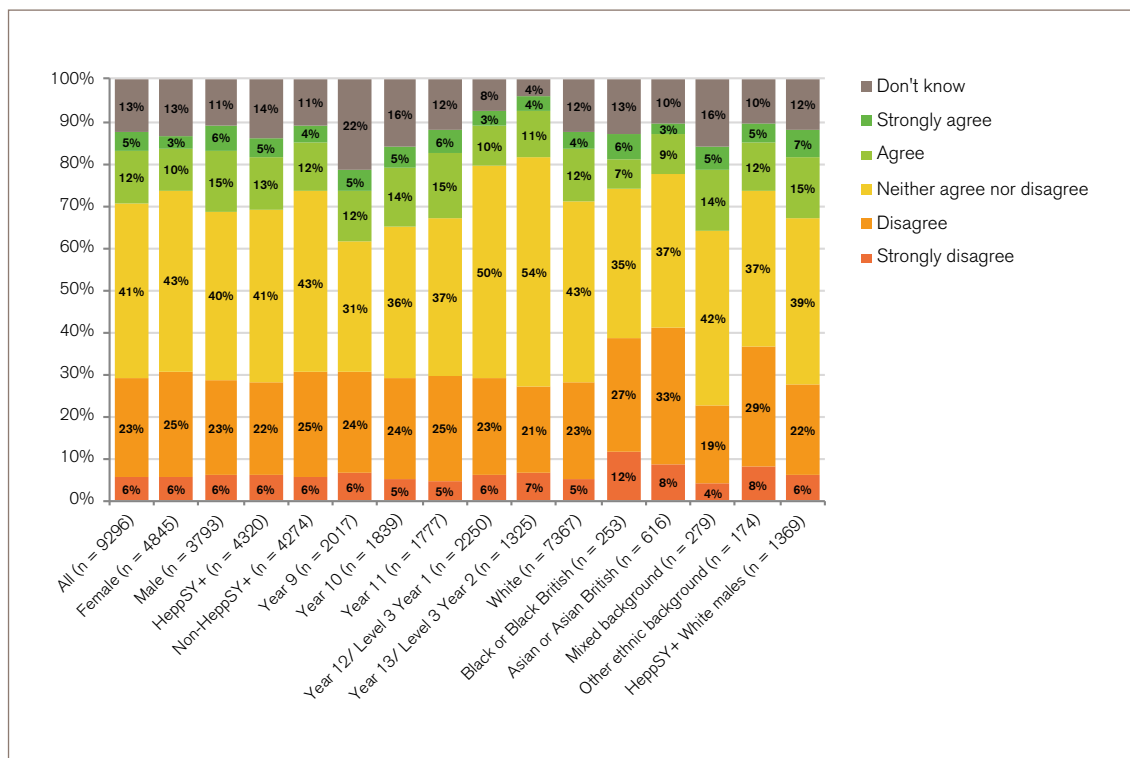


Students were also likely to neither agree nor disagree that getting a job is better than going to higher education (41 percent).

However, employment was perceived less favourably in relation to higher education than starting an apprenticeship. Twenty-nine percent of young people disagreed or strongly disagreed that it is better to get a job than go in to higher education. Only 17 percent agreed or strongly agreed that it is better to get a job than go to higher education.

- Again, there were some distinctions between groups:
- Twenty-one percent of male students agreed or strongly agreed that it is better to get a job than go to higher education. This was even higher among White males from HeppSY+ localities (22 percent). This compares to only 13 percent of female students.
- Black and Asian students were most likely to disagree that it is better to get a job than go to higher education compared with other ethnic groups.
- Students from HeppSY+ localities were marginally more likely than those from non-HeppSY+ localities to perceive that getting a job is better than going to higher education.

Figure 5: How much do you agree that it is better to get a job than go in to higher education?



Differences between Sixth Forms and Further Education Colleges

National data which focussed on National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP) students only, found stark differences between those who attended sixth form colleges and those who attended a further education college (HEFCE 2018⁸). HEFCE (2018) showed that NCOP learners at sixth form colleges were twice as likely to want to study in higher education away from home, whilst those at a further education college were twice as likely to want to pursue employment after finishing their current studies. The desire to begin an apprenticeship was similar for learners at sixth forms and further education colleges.

Focussing on the data for students in South Yorkshire, differences between sixth form and further education college students were found which mirror those seen nationally, despite

the fact that the analysis in this section considered both HeppSY+ and non-HeppSY+ students.

8 Tazzyman, S., Bowes, L., Morton, R., Madriaga, M. & McCaig, C. (2018) *National Collaborative Outreach Programme: year one report of the national formative and impact evaluation, including capacity building with NCOP consortia March 2018*. HEFCE: online http://www.hefce.ac.uk/media/HEFCE,2014/Content/Pubs/Independentresearch/2018/NCOP,Year,1,report,of,the,national,formative,and,impact,evaluation/2018_ncopyear1.pdf, accessed 21.5.18

Those studying at sixth forms were 10 percentage points more likely to say they would definitely apply to higher education at age 18 or 19 compared with those at a further education college.

Looking specifically at older students, those at further education colleges were more likely to want to move more quickly into the labour market, being twice as likely to pursue a full-time job after their current studies compared with students in sixth forms. Students at sixth forms colleges were more likely to want to study at a higher education institution overall compared with those at further education colleges. In particular, sixth form

students were more likely to want to study away from home, whilst there was a preference among those at further education colleges to study at a local higher education institution.

Focusing on younger students, there was a considerable preference for those studying at schools with sixth forms to want to attend sixth form after their current studies (42 percent), although 21 percent did want to move to a further education college. Of students at schools without sixth forms, there was a marginal preference to study at a further education college (33 percent) compared with 26 percent who wanted to attend a sixth form.

Figure 6: How likely are you to apply to higher education at age 18 or 19?
Older students in sixth form and further education colleges

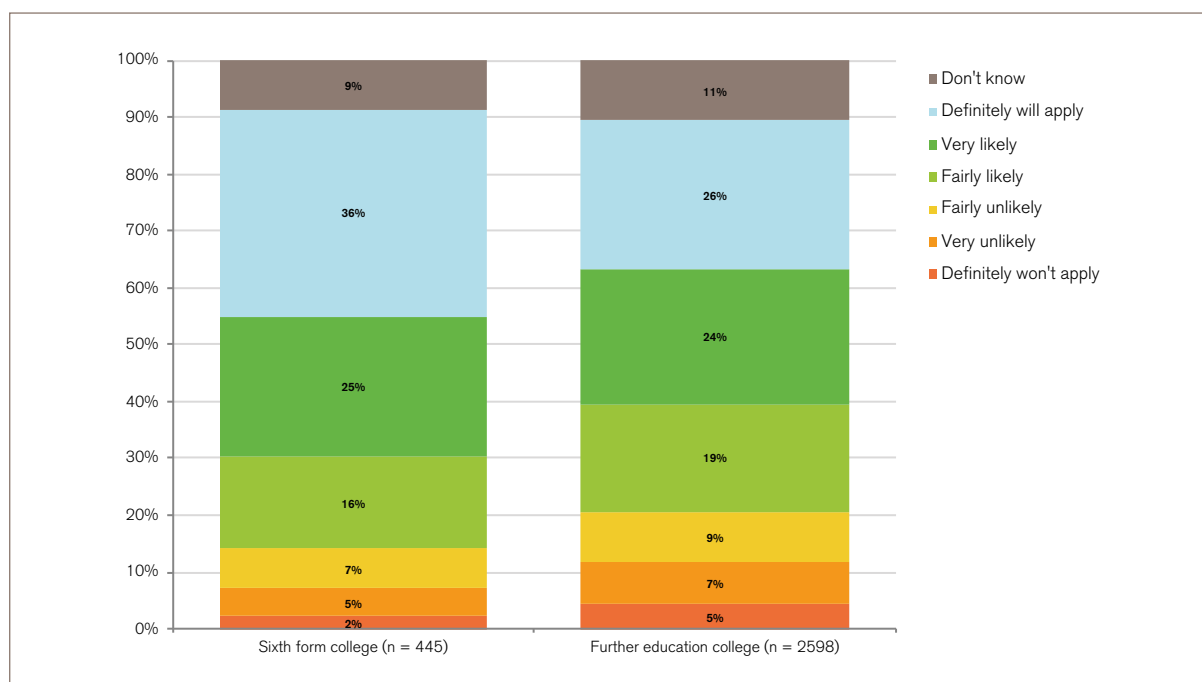


Figure 7: After you finish your current studies what would you most like to do next?
Older students in sixth form and further education colleges

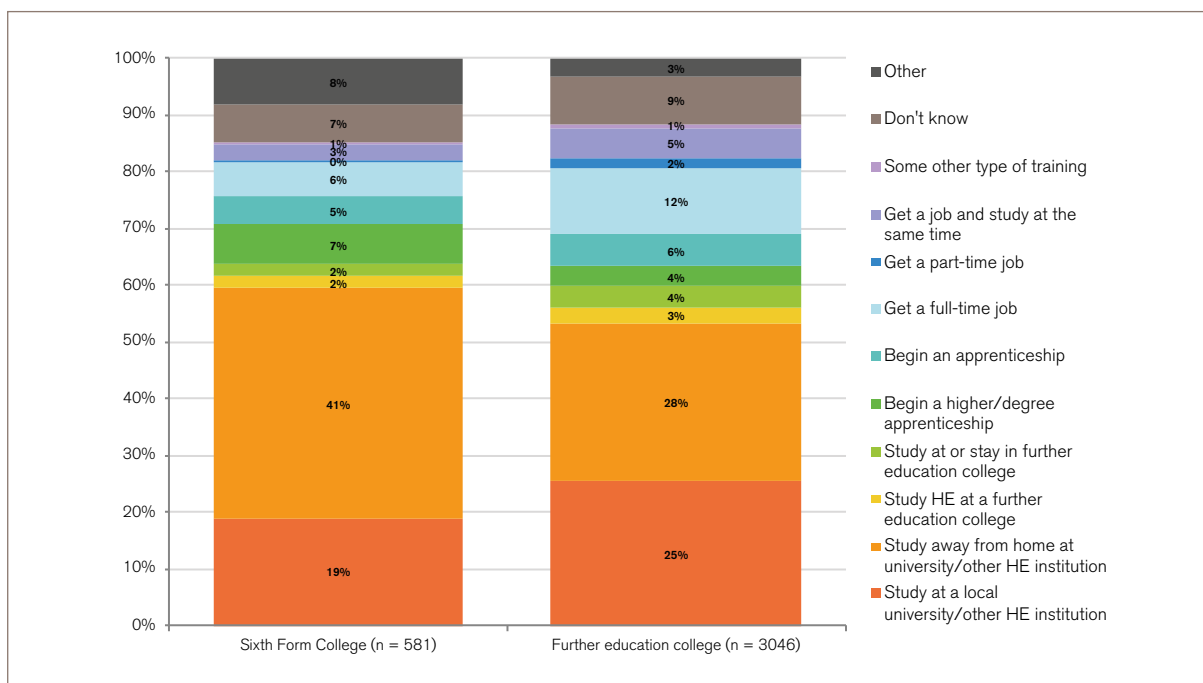
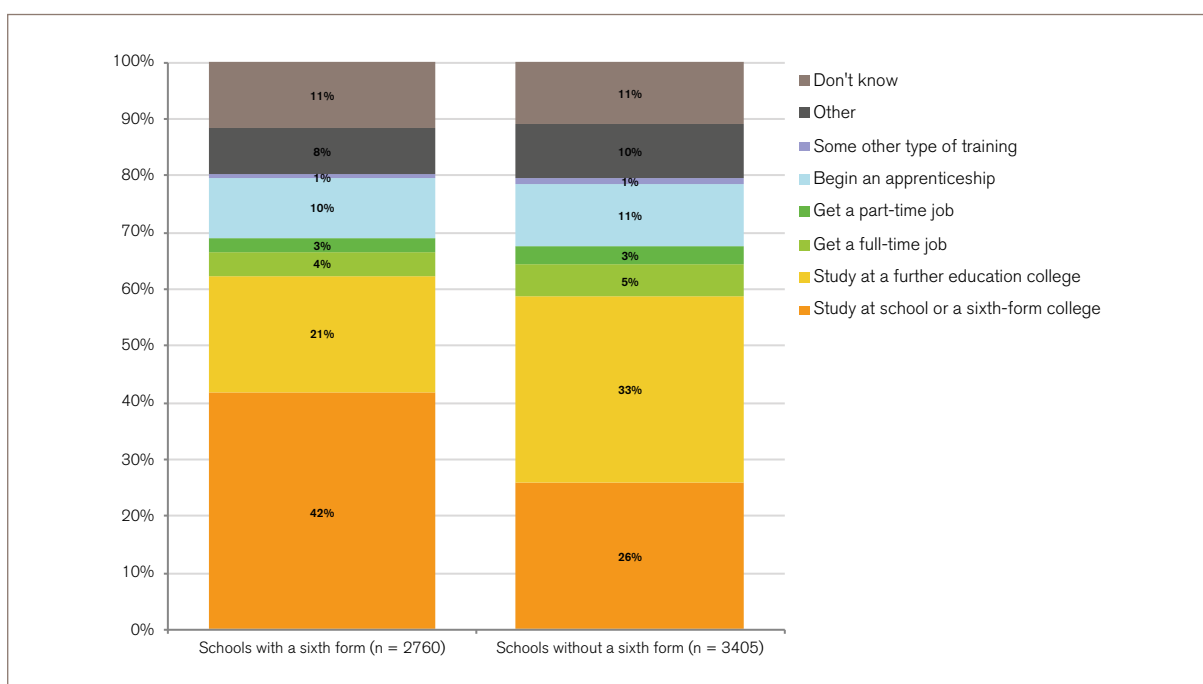


Figure 8: After you finish your current studies what would you most like to do next?
Younger students at schools with and without sixth forms



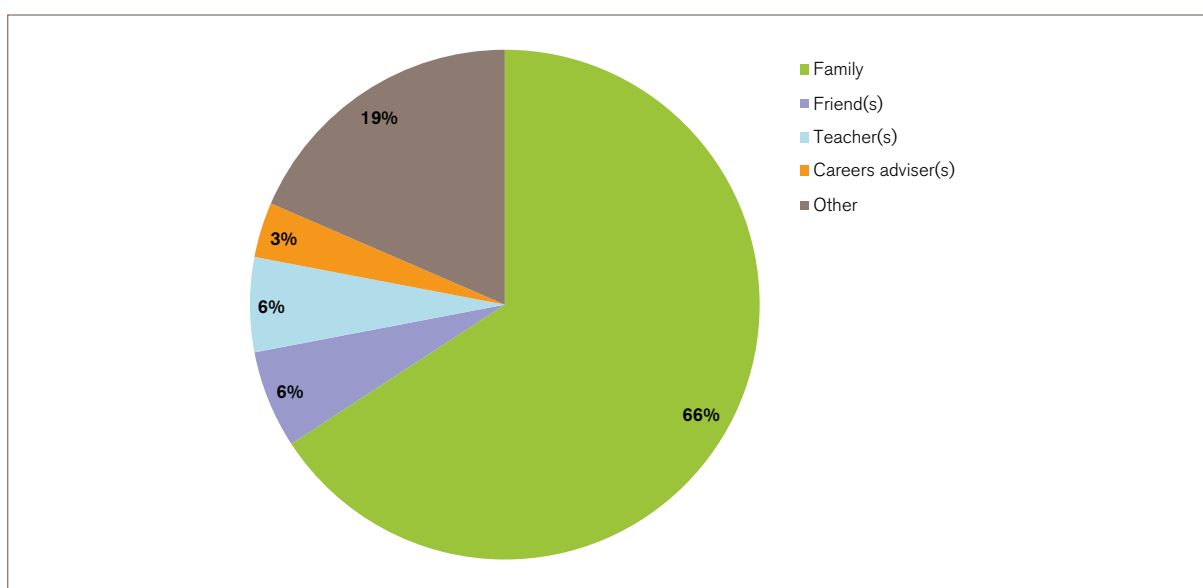
Key Influencers

Having discussed the aspirations and attitudes young people have towards higher education, this report now discusses the influencers who are pivotal in guiding young people's decisions.

The evidence overwhelmingly indicates that family are pivotal in shaping students' aspirations and attitudes. Two-thirds of students state that their family has had the greatest influence on their decisions about what to do next. This compares to friends (six percent), teachers (six percent) and careers advisers (three percent).

A large proportion (20 percent) said that someone other than these above groups had the greatest influence on their decisions. An exploration of who the 'other' is indicates that most young people selecting this option say that they themselves have the greatest influence on their decisions.

Figure 9: Who has the greatest influence on your decision about what to do next? (n = 9879)



The influence of family is also clearly demonstrated by the proportion of young people who said they have spoken to their family about what to do next. Seventy-one percent of students had spoken to their family about what to do after their current studies, whilst a further 16 percent would speak to their families about their options.

Research carried out on behalf of HeppSY+⁹ indicated that the influence of parents may provide differing opportunities for different groups of young people. The research, which focussed on Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) students and parents in Sheffield, indicated that some parents can be concerned about the student lifestyle at universities. Many of the students

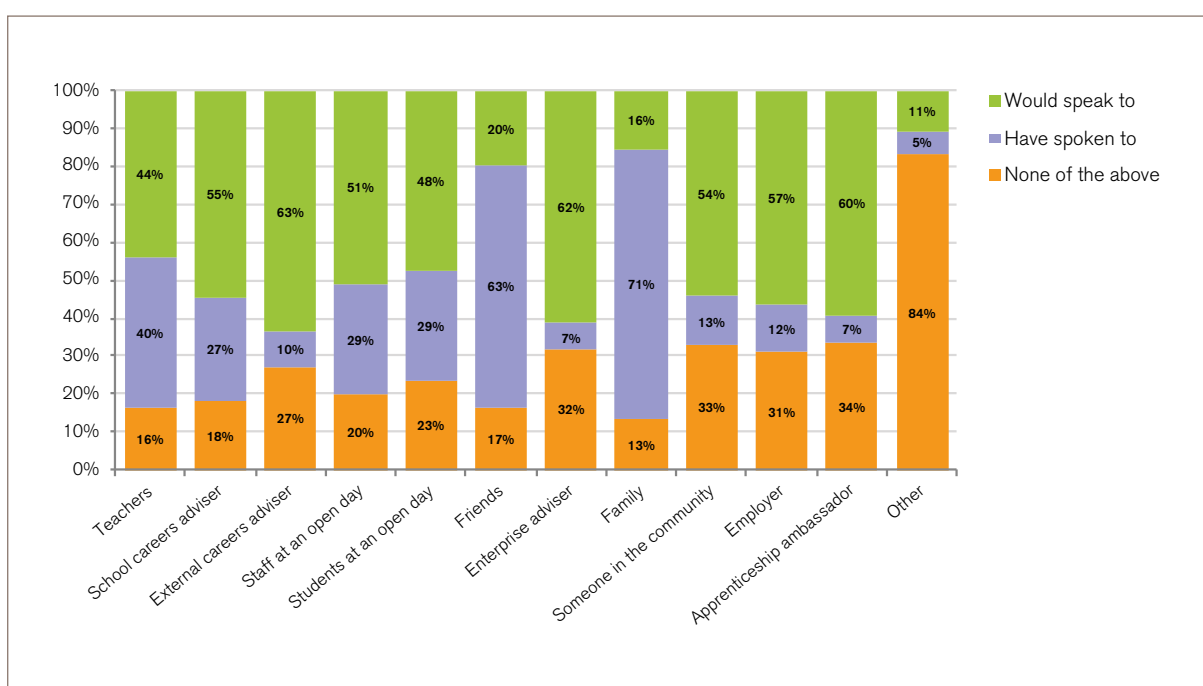
who participated said they would like to study away from the Sheffield area, but that they felt their parents would like them to stay locally. These findings may reflect differences between ethnic groups in their preferences for studying at a local institution or away from home. Asian and Asian British students in particular wanted to study at a higher education institution locally.

9 Rehman, N. (2018) [forthcoming] *Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Student and Parent Expectations and Perceptions of Higher Education Progression in Sheffield: A Report for Higher Education Progression Partnership South Yorkshire +*

Although the majority of students did not consider their friends to have had the greatest influence on their decisions, it is clear that aspirations for the future are a topic of conversation amongst peers. Sixty-three percent of students stated they had spoken to their friends about what to do after their current studies.

Teachers are another key point of contact in young people's decisions. Forty percent of students had spoken to their teachers about what to do next, whilst a further 44 percent said they would speak to their teachers.

Figure 10: Have you spoken to the following people about what to do after your current studies?¹⁰ (n = 10,037)



¹⁰ 'None of the above' category includes all responses which do not fall in to 'have spoken to' or 'would speak to' category. As such, this may include missing data where the respondent did not answer the question.

Confidence and Resilience

This section of the report discusses themes related to the HeppSY+ strand 'Confidence and Resilience' (Appendix 2). The aim of the Confidence and Resilience strand is to ensure that students are considering all higher education options and progressing positively by using outreach activity such as mentoring and motivational speakers. The theoretical underpinnings of this strand are in sociological literature which indicates that whether one will 'fit in' to a higher education setting influences young people's decisions about higher education¹¹. Perceptions of academic ability are another influence on young people's choices regarding higher education¹².

This section begins with a discussion of how strongly students agree that higher education is for people like them. It then examines student perceptions of whether they could go to higher education if they wanted to. Following this, it explores

whether students feel they have the academic ability to succeed. Finally, it assesses how far students feel they could cope with the level of study required in higher education.

'Higher Education is for people like me'

The baseline survey asked students how much they agreed that higher education was for people like them. Overall, students in South Yorkshire perceived higher education positively. Thirty-six percent agreed that higher education was for people like them and 11 percent strongly agreed that this was the case. The proportion of students who disagreed with this statement was low. Six percent disagreed and only three percent strongly disagreed. A large percentage, 31 percent, neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement, whilst a further 13 percent said they did not know whether higher education was for people like them.

There were considerable disparities between differing groups of students, particularly across year groups and between students of different ethnicities.

As year group increased, students were more likely to strongly agree that higher education was for people like them and less likely to say they did not know. This may be because older students have more knowledge and a better understanding of what higher education entails.

Students from every ethnic group were most likely to agree that higher education was for people like them. However, there were some substantial distinctions between differing ethnic groups. In particular, students from a mixed ethnic background were considerably more likely to disagree or strongly disagree that higher education was for people like them than other groups, at a rate of 16 percent. This compares with nine percent of

White students, eight percent of students from other ethnic background and six percent of Asian students.

Black students were most positive that higher education was for people like them. They were the least likely to disagree or strongly disagree with this statement (five percent). Black students, as well as students from other ethnic backgrounds, were the most likely to strongly agree that higher education is for people like them (17 percent).

Distinctions between male and female students and students from HeppSY+ and non-HeppSY+ localities were more marginal.

In terms of gender, there was a small difference in the perceptions between male and female students. Male students were more likely to disagree or strongly disagree that higher education was for people like them (10 percent) compared

11 Ball, S., Davies, J., David, M., & Reay, D. (2010) 'Classification' and 'Judgement': Social class and the 'cognitive structures' of choice of Higher Education, *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 23:1, 51-72

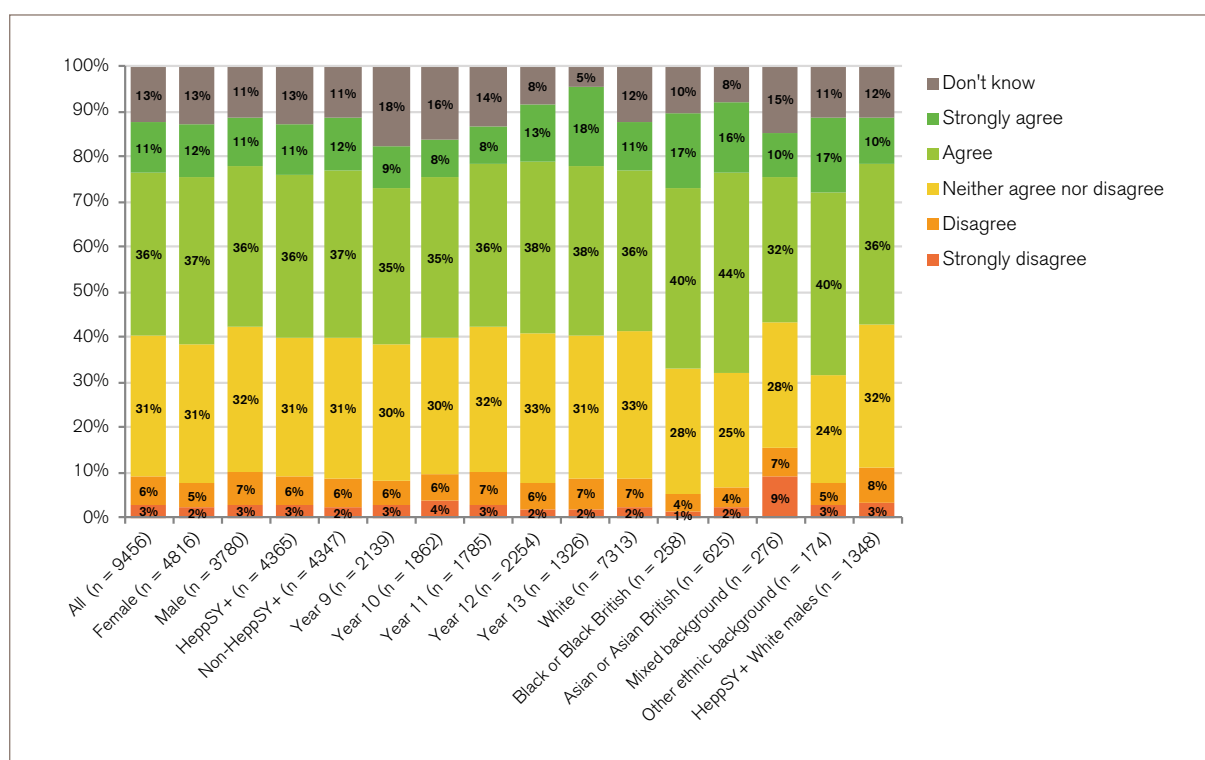
12 Henderson, M., Hansen, K., & Shure, N. (2017) *Does academic self-concept predict further and higher education participation?* London: Centre for Global Higher Education

with female students (seven percent) and marginally less likely to agree or strongly agree (47 percent) with the statement compared with female students (49 percent).

There was little difference between students from HeppSY+ and non-HeppSY+ localities. Those from non-HeppSY+

localities were one percentage point less likely to disagree or strongly disagree and two percentage points more likely to agree or strongly agree than higher education is for people like them compared with students from HeppSY+ localities.

Figure 11: How much do you agree with the following statement about higher education? *"It is for people like me"*



'I could go if I wanted to'

Students were asked if they believed that they could go to university when they leave school if they wanted to. The majority of students were positive that they could go to university if they wanted; half of students agreed with this statement and 19 percent strongly agreed. Only seven percent of students disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement.

Year 11 students in the Sheffield City Region were more likely than any other year group to disagree or strongly disagree that they could go to university if they wanted to. Year 13 students were the most likely to agree that they could go to university if they wanted. It may be that at this point, Year 13s were already pursuing this option.

Female students were more positive than male students that they could go to higher education. Fifty-three percent of female

students agreed and 21 percent strongly agreed that they could go to university when they leave school if they wanted. This compares to 48 percent of males who agreed and 17 percent who strongly agreed that they could go to university when they leave school if they wanted.

There were differences between ethnic groups which echo those discussed in the previous section. Again, students from a mixed ethnic background were the group most likely to

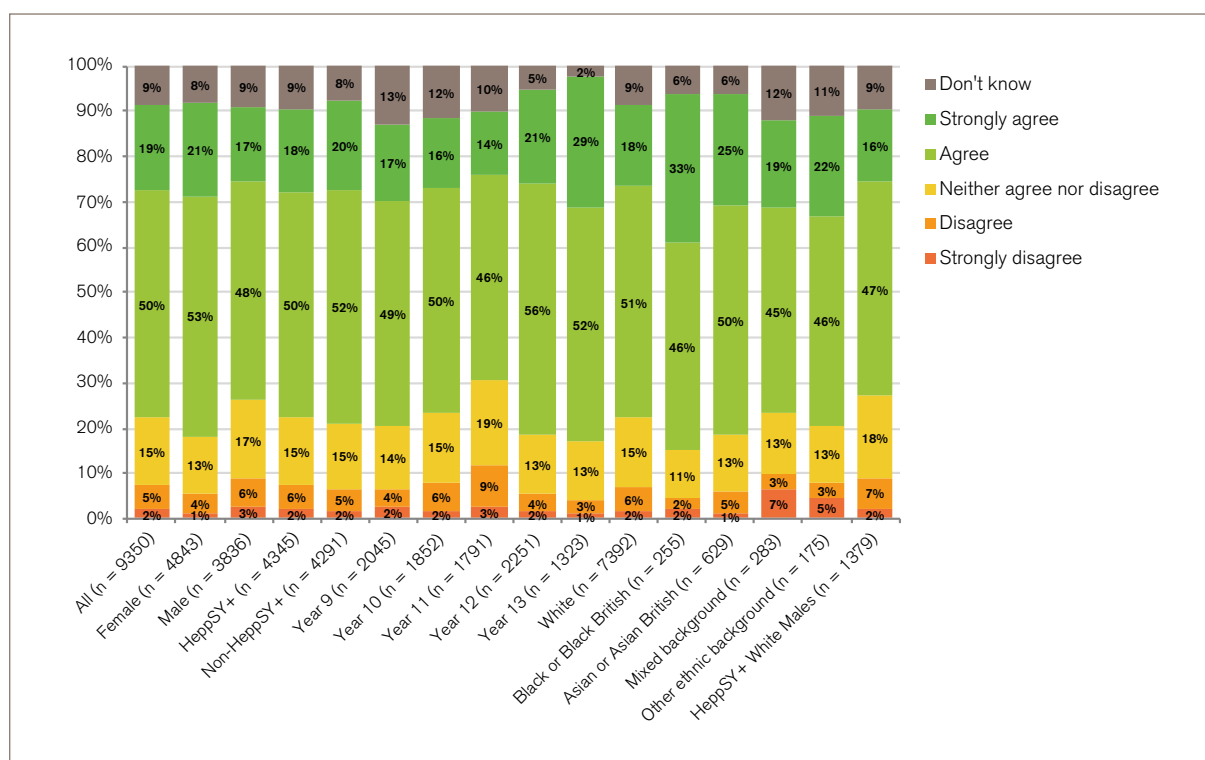
disagree or strongly disagree that they could go to university if they wanted (10 percent). This compares to eight percent of White students, eight percent of students from other ethnic backgrounds and six percent of Asian students.

Black students had the most positive self-perceptions. Only four percent of this group disagreed or strongly disagreed they could go to university if they wanted. Thirty-three percent of this group strongly agreed they could go to university if they wanted to. This compares with 25 percent of Asian students, 22

percent of students from other ethnic backgrounds, 19 percent of students from mixed ethnic backgrounds and 18 percent of White students.

There were very marginal differences between students from HeppSY+ and non-HeppSY+ localities, with those from non-HeppSY+ localities being slightly more positive that they could go to university when they leave school compared with HeppSY+ students.

Figure 12: How much do you agree with the following statement about higher education?
“I believe I could go to university when I leave school if I wanted to”



Perceptions of Academic Fit

Academic self-perception may be associated with students' opinions on whether they could go to university¹³ and links strongly to HeppSY+'s Confidence and Resilience strand. This section of the report firstly addresses how far young people agreed that they had the academic ability to succeed. It then explores how far young people agreed that they could cope with the level of study required in higher education.

13 Henderson, M., Hansen, K., & Shure, N. (2017) *Does academic self-concept predict further and higher education participation?* London: Centre for Global Higher Education

‘I have the academic ability to succeed’

Students in Sheffield City Region are confident in their academic ability. Over half agreed that they had the academic ability to succeed and a further 16 percent strongly agreed that they had the academic ability to succeed. Only five percent of students disagreed or strongly disagreed that they had the academic ability to succeed whilst 11 percent answered that they did not know.

As in the previous sections, older students were more likely to strongly agree that they had the academic ability to succeed and less likely to answer ‘don’t know’ as they are likely to be more familiar with the requirements of higher education and have a better sense of how their grades compare with the requirements of higher education.

In terms of social characteristics, the largest disparities in self-perception occurred across differing ethnic groups. Reflecting the findings of the previous two sections, it was again those from a mixed ethnic background who were most likely to disagree or strongly disagree that they had the academic ability to succeed (13 percent). This compares with five percent of White students, four percent of students from other ethnic backgrounds, three percent of Black students and three percent of Asian students.

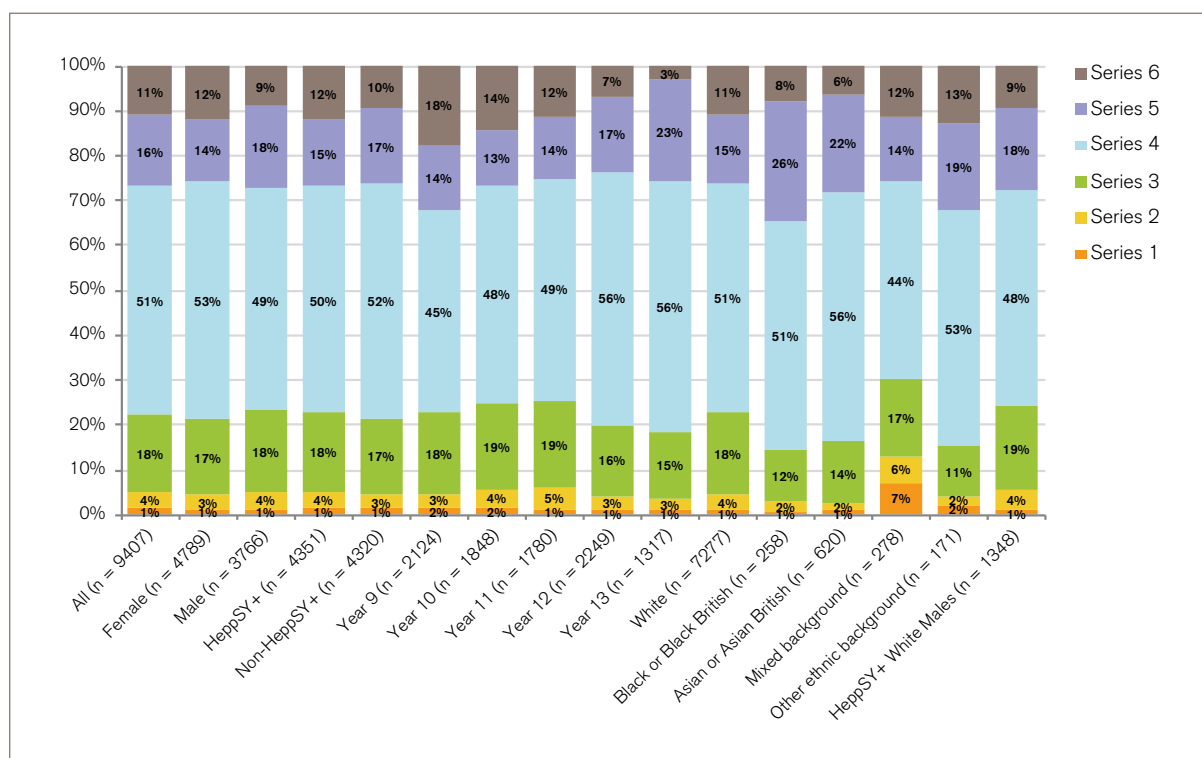
That Black and Asian students had more positive perceptions of their academic ability was also demonstrated by their high levels of agreement with the statement. Over three-quarters of

students in both of these groups agreed or strongly agreed that they had the academic ability to succeed. Black students were most likely to say they strongly agreed (26 percent).

Over two-thirds of male and female students agreed or strongly agreed that they had the academic ability to succeed. Male students were four percentage points more likely to strongly agree that they had the academic ability to succeed compared with female students. Female students were three percentage points more likely to say they did not know if they had the academic ability to succeed.

Students from both HeppSY+ and non-HeppSY+ postcodes were also highly likely to agree that they had the academic ability to succeed. There were only marginal differences between students from HeppSY+ and non-HeppSY+ localities; HeppSY+ students were two percentage points less likely to strongly agree that they had the academic ability to succeed.

Figure 13: How much do you agree with the following statement about higher education?
“I have the academic ability to succeed”



‘I could cope with the level of study required’

The majority of students (56 percent) agreed or strongly agreed that they could cope with the level of study required in higher education. However, students were less confident that they could cope with the level of study required in higher education compared with their perceptions of their academic ability. Eight percent answered that they disagreed or strongly disagreed, 20 percent answered that they neither agreed nor disagreed and 15 percent answered ‘don’t know’.

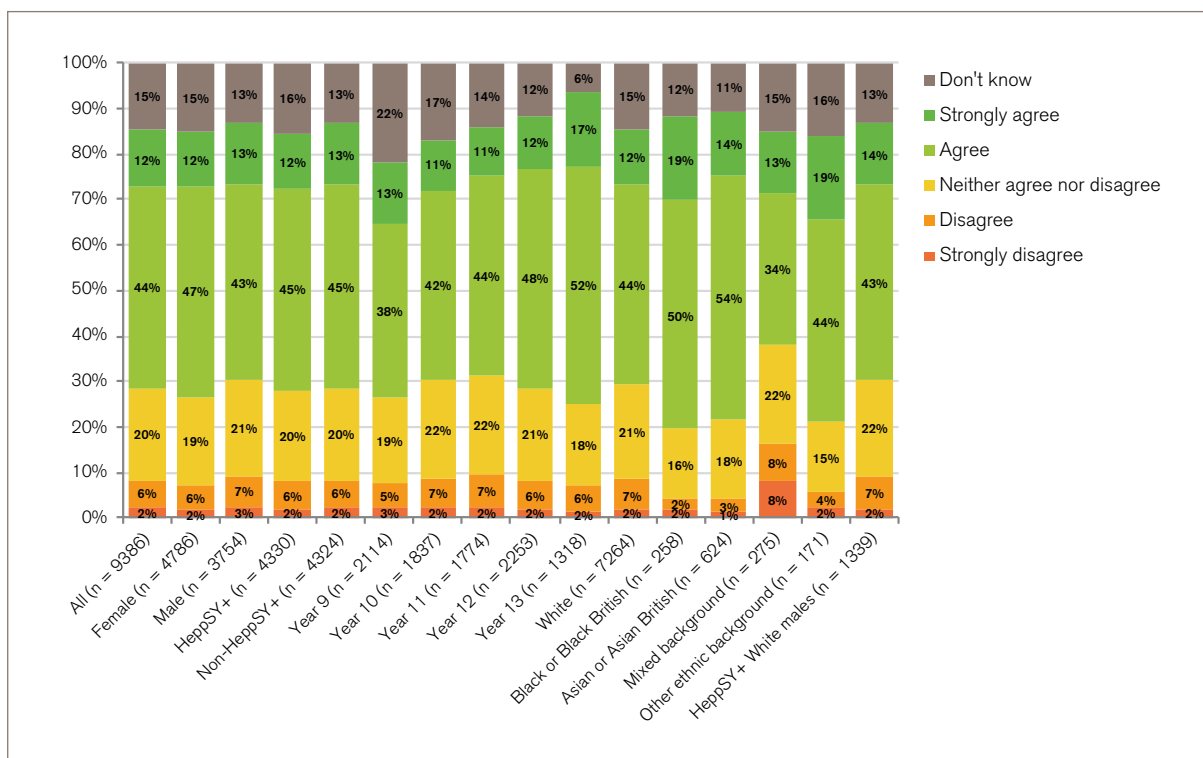
Breaking down the analysis by differing year and social groups highlights many similar patterns to students’ perceptions of their academic ability in the section above.

As year group increased, fewer respondents stated that they did not know if they could cope with the level of study required and there was also an increase in the percentage of students who agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.

In terms of social characteristics, there was very little distinction between male and female students or those from HeppSY+ and non-HeppSY+ localities.

Again, there were clear disparities between students from differing ethnic background which mirror those seen in the previous section. Those from Mixed Background were most likely to say they disagreed or strongly disagreed that they could cope with the level of study required (16 percent), followed by White students (nine percent), students from other ethnic backgrounds (six percent), Black students (four percent) and Asian students (four percent). Black students and students from other ethnic backgrounds were most likely to strongly agree that they could cope with the level of study required (19 percent respectively).

Figure 14: How much do you agree with the following statement about higher education?
"I could cope with the level of study required"



Higher Education Knowledge

This section explores the HeppSY+ strand 'Higher Education Knowledge' Appendix 2). The aim of this strand is to increase student knowledge of higher education, such as the practicalities of the application process and student finance, and to promote an understanding of the wider benefits of higher education, such as societies and work experience, through activities such as workshops and campus visits.

The survey measured young people's perceptions of numerous aspects of higher education. This section discusses students' opinions of their knowledge. It begins by exploring whether young people feel they currently know enough about higher education to make a decision about whether to go. It then

discusses how much students feel they know about the courses available in higher education, how to apply through UCAS, the costs of study and the qualifications needed to get on to a preferred course.

Knowing Enough to Make a Choice

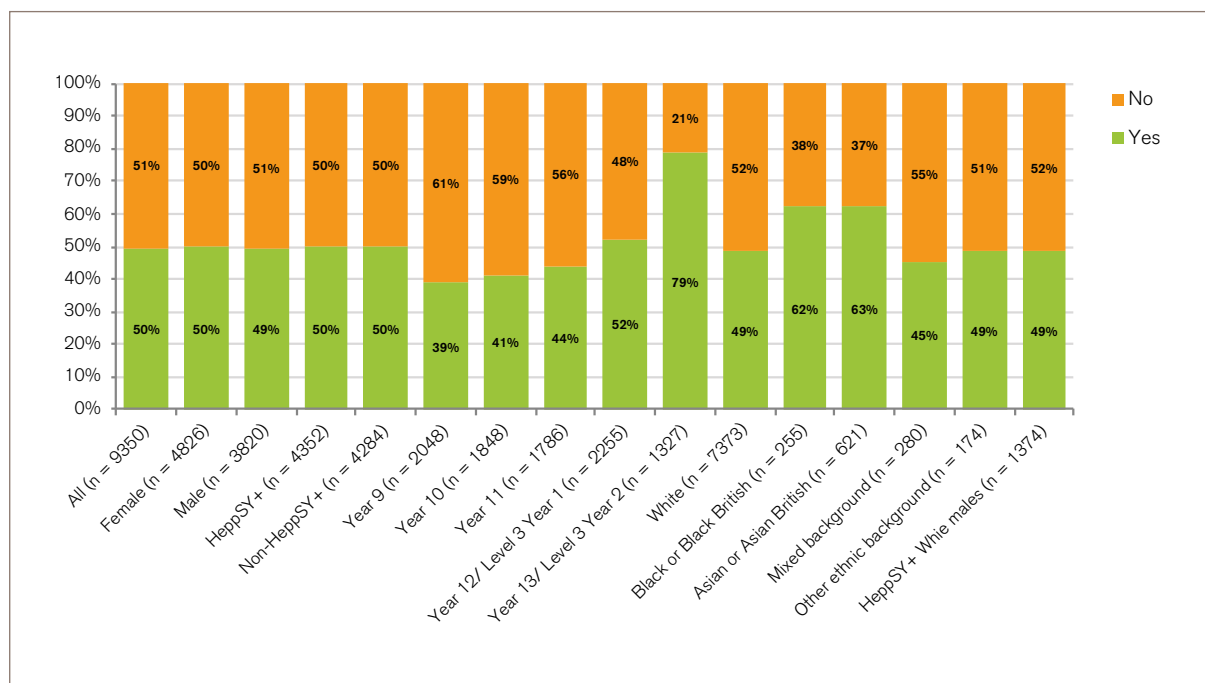
Overall, students were evenly split in their perceptions of whether they knew enough about higher education to make a decision about whether to go or not at this stage.

As may be anticipated, Year 13 students were most likely to say they knew enough about higher education at this stage. There was a moderate increase in the percentage of young people answering 'yes' to this question across year groups nine to twelve and then a substantial increase in students answering 'yes' to this question in Year 13. This may reflect that Year 13 students had already applied to higher education when answering this question or may be indicative of the drive to increase knowledge of higher education between Year 12 and Year 13.

There was very little difference between male and female students or between students from HeppSY+ and non-HeppSY+ localities and the percentage of each of these groups answering 'yes' or 'no' to this question mirrored the division between students overall.

There were, however, disparities between differing ethnic groups. Students from a Mixed Background were the most likely to state that they did not know enough about higher education to make a decision at this point (55 percent). This compares with 52 percent of White students and 51 percent of students from other ethnic background who stated that they did not now enough. Black and Asian students were the most positive about their knowledge. Only 38 percent of Black students and 37 percent of Asian students said they did not know enough.

Figure 15: Do you know enough about higher education to make a decision about whether or not to go at this stage?



Knowledge of Courses

The vast majority of students stated that they had some knowledge of the courses available in higher education. Two thirds stated that they knew a little and 19 percent stated that they knew a lot. Only 16 percent perceived that they knew nothing.

As expected, perceptions of knowledge tended to increase across the year groups with Year 9s being most likely to say they knew nothing (30 percent) and Year 13s being most likely to say they knew a lot (46 percent).

In terms of social characteristics, student perceptions of their knowledge of the courses available in higher education did not vary between genders, with female and male students rating their knowledge almost identically. Fifteen percent of male and female students stated that they knew nothing about the courses available in higher education, 66 percent of females and 65 percent of males responded that they knew a little and 19 percent of males and females said they knew a lot about the courses available in higher education. White males from HeppSY+ postcodes were only marginally more likely to say they knew nothing compared with males in general.

There was more variation seen between students from HeppSY+ and non-HeppSY+ localities, however the distinctions

between these groups was still not vast. Those from HeppSY+ postcodes were more likely to say they knew nothing about the courses available in higher education (17 percent) compared with non-HeppSY+ students (13 percent). Concurrently, those from non-HeppSY+ localities were slightly more likely to say they knew a lot (20 percent) compared with HeppSY+ students (18 percent).

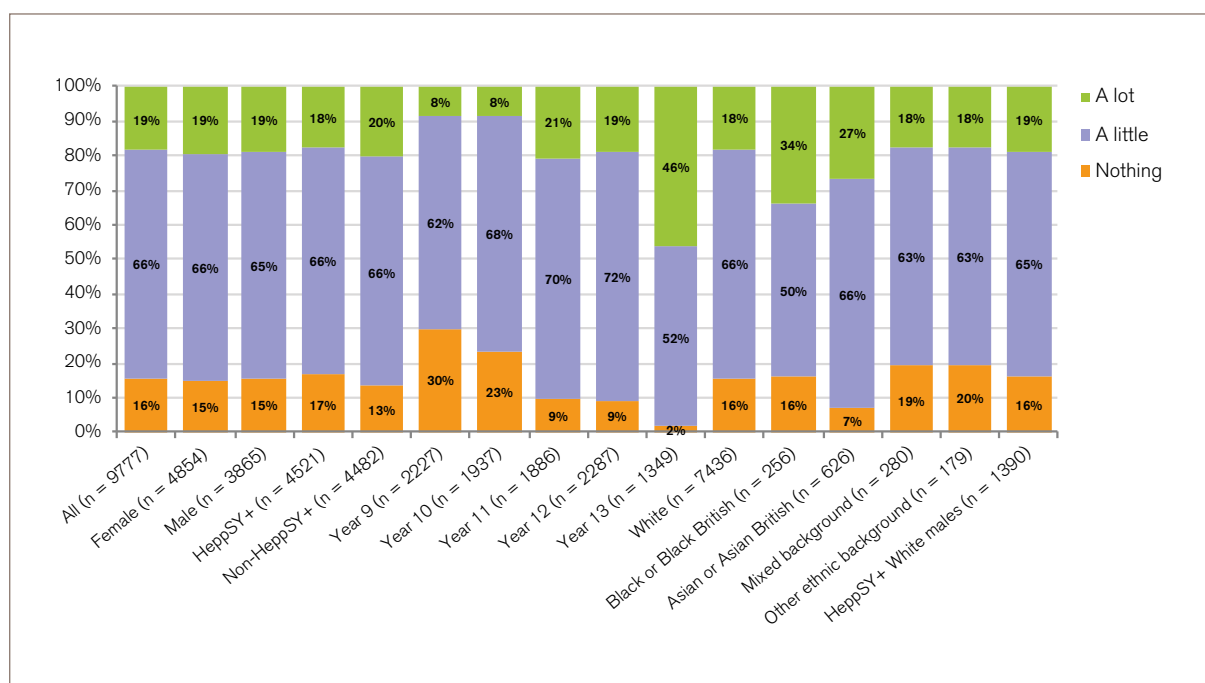
When considering how perceptions of knowledge varied across students of differing ethnicities, it is apparent that knowledge may underpin confidence as the trends seen here reflect those apparent in relation to the measures of confidence discussed above.

Black students were most likely to say they knew a lot about the courses available in higher education (34 percent) followed by Asian students (27 percent). This compares with 18 percent of Mixed Background students, White students and students from other ethnic backgrounds.

Students from other ethnic backgrounds were most likely to say they knew nothing about this aspect of applying to higher education (20 percent), followed by 19 percent of students from a mixed ethnic background and 16 percent of White and Black

students. Asian students were the least likely to say they knew nothing (seven percent).

Figure 16: How much do you know about the following aspects of applying to higher education? *The courses that are available*



Knowledge of How to Apply Through UCAS

Of all of the measures of knowledge covered in this report, students in South Yorkshire rated their knowledge of the costs of study least favourably. Over half (54 percent) stated they knew nothing about this aspect of applying to higher education, 30 percent said they knew a little and only 16 percent thought that they knew a lot.

There were also larger disparities between groups on this measure of knowledge compared with any other in this report.

Unsurprisingly, there were large distinctions between differing year groups with knowledge increasingly dramatically between Year 9 and Year 13. Eighty-two percent of Year 9 students and 83 percent of Year 10 students stated that they knew nothing about the UCAS application process. This compares with 47

percent of Year 11s, 37 percent of Year 12s and only eight percent of Year 13s.

Year 13 students were, by a substantial margin, the group most likely to say they knew a lot about how to apply through UCAS (53 percent) and it may be the case that many Year 13s had already made their applications or were working towards their applications at the time of this survey.

Male students rated their knowledge of the UCAS application process marginally more highly than female students. Male students were three percentage points less likely to say they knew nothing and three percentage points more likely to say they knew a little about applying to higher education through UCAS compared with female students.

This was not the case for White males from HeppSY+ localities however, who rated their knowledge less favourably than the broader male group. Fifty-six percent of White males from HeppSY+ localities stated they knew nothing about applying to higher education through UCAS.

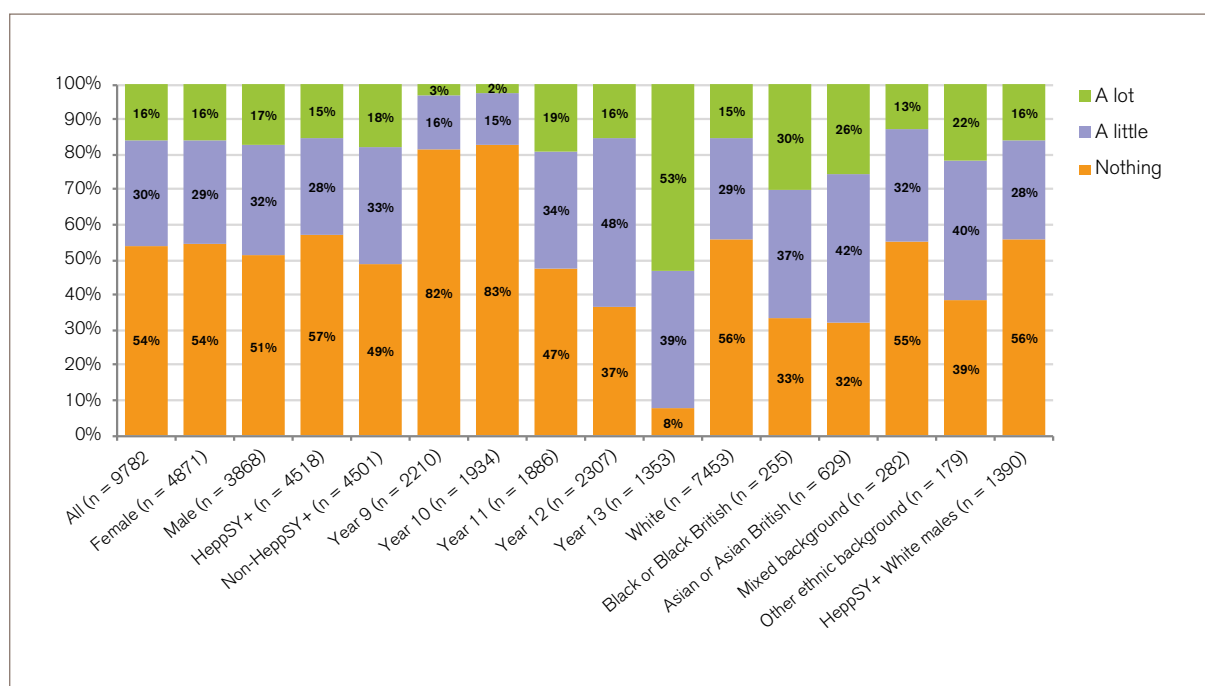
Exploring the differences between students from HeppSY+ and non-HeppSY+ localities more broadly indicates a wider issue in perceptions of knowledge. Fifty-seven percent of students from HeppSY+ localities stated they knew nothing about how

to apply to higher education through UCAS compared with 49 percent of those from non-HeppSY+ localities.

Again, ethnicity can be seen as the most substantial marker of difference between young people. White students were the most likely to say they knew nothing about applying to higher education through UCAS (56 percent) closely followed by those from a mixed ethnic background (55 percent). The disparity between these two groups and the other three ethnic groups analysed was large. Only 39 percent of students from other ethnic backgrounds, 33 percent of Black students and 32 percent of Asian students stated they knew nothing.

Black students were the most likely group to say they knew a lot about UCAS applications (30 percent) followed by Asian students (26 percent).

Figure 17: How much do you know about the following aspects of applying to higher education? *How to apply through UCAS*



Knowledge of the Costs of Study

The costs of study have been shown to be a barrier to higher education application particularly among less advantaged students¹⁴ and it has been shown in research conducted in conjunction with HeppSY+ by Heron (2017)¹⁵ that there are many misconceptions about the financial aspect of higher education study.

Twenty-seven percent of students stated they knew nothing about the costs of study. Despite this, the majority of students stated that they knew at least a little about this dimension of applying to higher education. Forty-seven percent stated they knew a little and a further 25 percent stated that they knew a lot.

As above, older students rated their knowledge more highly. Fifty percent of Year 13 students reported that they knew a lot about the costs of study and only seven percent stated they knew nothing. By comparison, only 17 percent of Year 9 students stated they knew a lot and 37 percent said they knew nothing.

In terms of social characteristics, males rated their knowledge of the costs of study marginally more favourably than female students. Males were two percentage points more likely to say they knew a lot than female students, at a rate of 27 percent and 25 percent respectively, and two percentage points less likely to say they knew nothing, at a rate of 26 percent and 28 percent respectively. However, this was not the case for White males from HeppSY+ localities, who rated their knowledge less favourably than the broader male group. Twenty-eight percent of White males from HeppSY+ localities stated they knew nothing about the costs of study and 25 percent said they knew a lot. Interestingly, this put White males from HeppSY+ postcodes on a par with the broader female group.

Distinctions between students from HeppSY+ and non-HeppSY+ localities in general were more pronounced than in relation to gender. Those from non-HeppSY+ localities rated their knowledge of the costs of study more favourably than those from HeppSY+ localities. Twenty-eight percent of those from non-HeppSY+ postcodes stated they knew a lot about the costs of study compared with 24 percent of those from HeppSY+ localities. Concurrently, 25 percent of those from non-HeppSY+ localities stated they knew nothing, compared with 29 percent of those from HeppSY+ postcodes.

Considering the implications of ethnicity indicates that there are moderate differences between groups and that there was less variation between ethnic groups on this dimension of knowledge than the variation seen in regards to the courses available and UCAS applications.

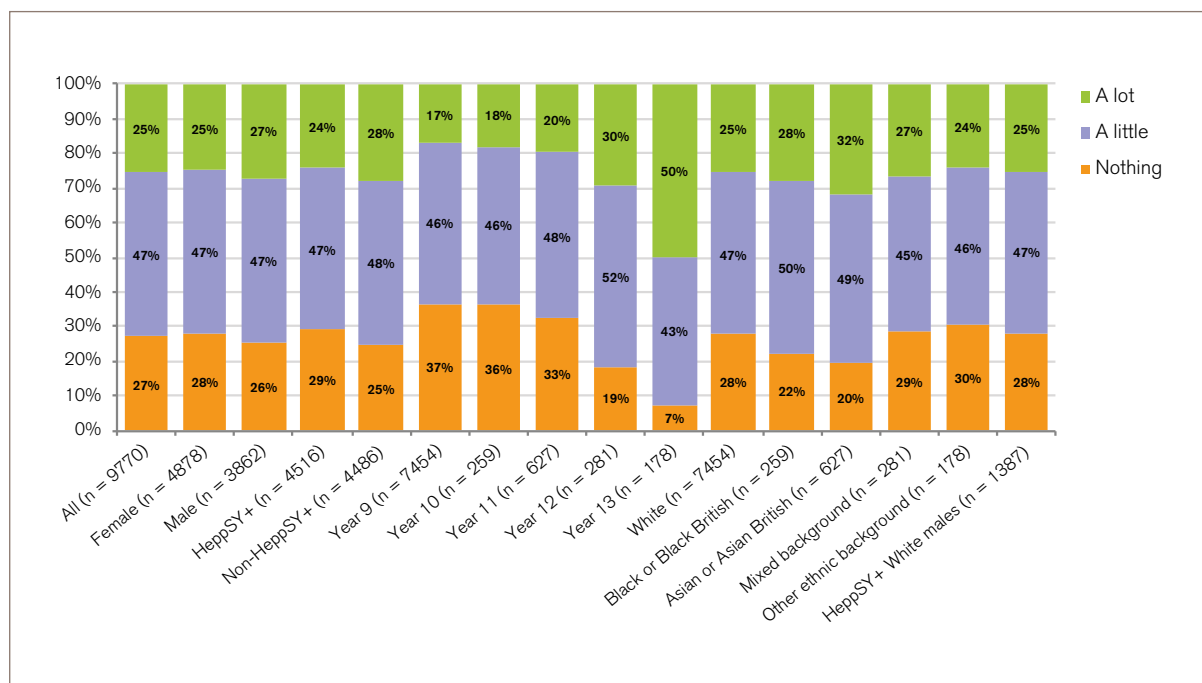
Asian students were most likely to say they knew a lot about this aspect of higher education (32 percent) compared with 28 percent of Black students, 27 percent of students from a mixed ethnic background, 25 percent of White students and 24 percent of those from other ethnic backgrounds.

Those from other ethnic backgrounds were also most likely to say they knew nothing about the costs of study (30 percent) followed by those from mixed backgrounds (29 percent) and White students (28 percent). Black students and Asian students were less likely to say they knew nothing, at 22 percent and 20 percent respectively.

14 Callender, C. & Mason, G. (2017) *Does student loan debt deter Higher Education participation? New evidence from England*. London: Institute of Education.

15 Heron, E. (2017) *Friendship as method. Reflections on a new approach to understanding the student experience*. Paper presented at SHULTA17 Conference The Quality Paradox: Creativity and Compliance in a TEF World June, Sheffield Hallam University: Slides: <https://blogs.shu.ac.uk/lead/2017/05/18/friendship-as-method-reflections-on-a-new-approach-to-understanding-the-student-experience/>

Figure 18: How much do you know about the following aspects of applying to higher education? *The costs of study*



Knowledge of Qualifications

The survey asked students how much they knew about the qualifications needed to get in to the course they want. Although it is likely that the youngest students will not know at this stage what course they want to take, student perceptions of their knowledge even at Year 9 could indicate how much students are engaging with the prospect of going to higher education.

Overall, students rated their knowledge of the qualifications needed to get in to the course they want highly; 33 percent stated they knew a lot, 50 percent said they knew a little and only 18 percent said they knew nothing.

Considering perceptions of knowledge by year group indicates that the level of knowledge seen amongst the group as a whole is, as would be expected, heavily skewed towards older students. Sixty-two percent of students in Year 13 stated they knew a lot about the qualifications needed to get on to the course they want. In contrast only 21 percent of Year 9 students felt they knew a lot about this aspect on applying to higher education.

Year 12 students did not rate their knowledge as highly as Year 13, but unexpectedly also did not rate their knowledge as highly as Year 11s. Only 30 percent stated they knew a lot about the qualifications required to get on to the course they wanted, and

18 percent said they knew nothing about this aspect of higher education.

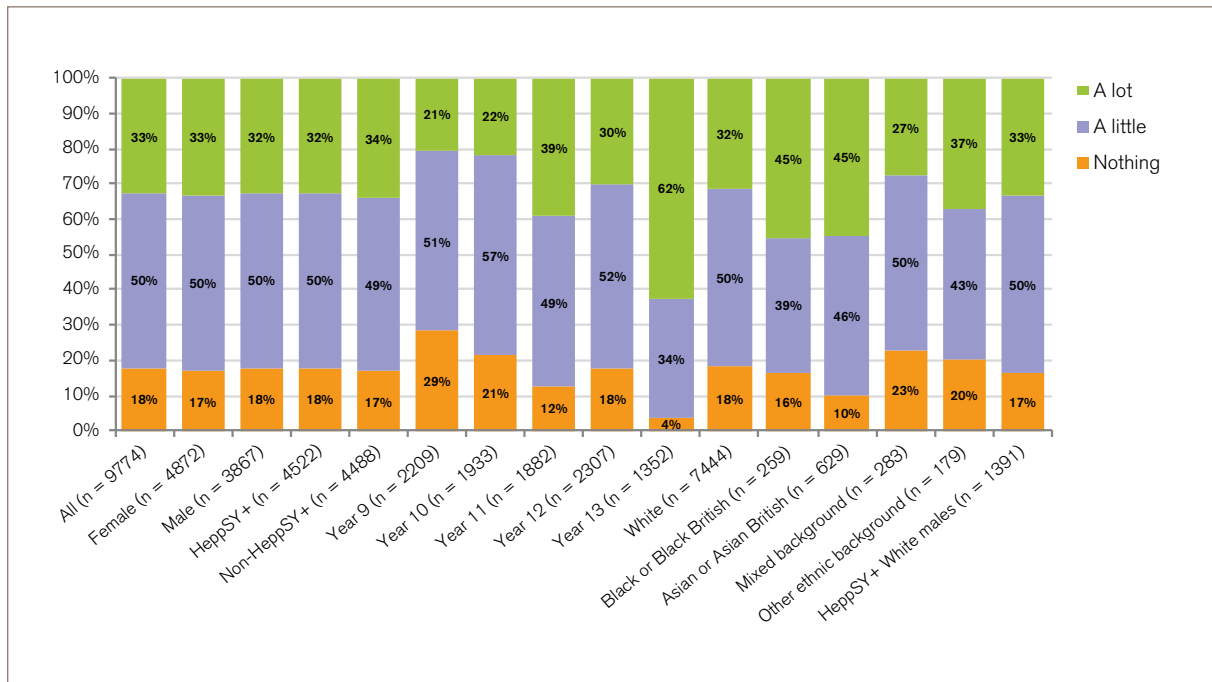
In terms of social characteristics there was little difference between male and female students or between students from HeppSY+ and non-HeppSY+ localities. White males from HeppSY+ localities also had similar responses to the broader group of males.

There was some disparity between students from differing ethnic backgrounds which follows a similar pattern seen in the knowledge measures above. Students from a mixed ethnic background were most likely to say they knew nothing (23 percent) compared with 20 percent of those from other ethnic backgrounds, 18 percent of White students, 16 percent of Black students and only 10 percent of Asian students.

Conversely, Black students and Asian students were most likely to say they knew a lot about this aspect of higher education with 45 percent of each group providing this response. This

compares to 37 percent of students from a mixed ethnic background, 32 percent of White students and 27 percent of students from a mixed ethnic background.

Figure 19: How much do you know about the following aspects of higher education study?
The qualifications and grades needed to get into the course you want



Career Knowledge

This section explores the HeppSY+ strand 'Career knowledge' (Appendix 2). This strand aims to facilitate students' understandings of job prospects and graduate employment routes, including course choices through activities such as careers information, advice and guidance sessions with Higher Education Progression Advisers. The survey asked students how much they felt they knew about how higher education leads to careers they may be interested in.

The majority of students had some knowledge about how higher education can lead to careers they may be interested in. Fifty-nine percent of participants stated they knew a little about this aspect of higher education and 26 percent said they knew a lot. Only 15 percent of students said they knew nothing about how higher education leads to careers of interest.

As year group increased, students rated their knowledge more favourably. However there was less variation between year groups on this measure of career knowledge compared to the measures explored in the previous report section about higher education knowledge. Forty-two percent of Year 13s stated they knew a lot about careers, compared to 20 percent of Year 9s.

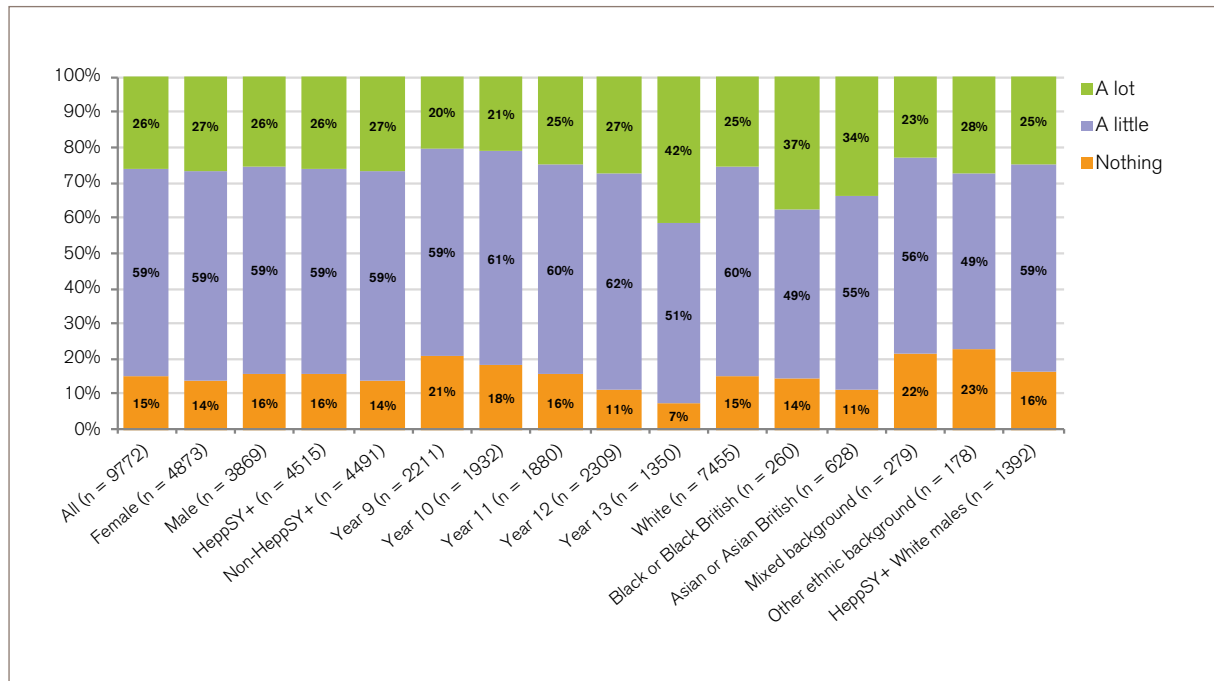
In terms of social characteristics, females rated their knowledge marginally more highly than male students. Only 14 percent of female students stated they knew nothing about careers compared with 16 percent of males. Female students were also one percentage point more likely to say they knew a lot about how higher education leads to careers or interest, at a rate of 27 percent compared with 26 percent for males. White males from HeppSY+ localities did not differ from the broader male group.

There were also marginal differences between students from HeppSY+ and non-HeppSY+ localities. Students from HeppSY+ localities were two percentage points more likely to say they knew nothing about how higher education leads to careers of interest and one percentage point less likely to say they knew a lot compared with those from non-HeppSY+ postcodes.

As seen in regards to higher education knowledge, ethnicity was the key point of difference between students in their knowledge of careers. Other Ethnic Background students were most likely to say they knew nothing about how higher education leads to careers they may be interested in (23 percent), closely followed by students from a Mixed Background (22 percent). This compares with 15 percent of White students and 14 percent of Black students. Asian students were least likely to say they knew nothing (11 percent).

Black students were most likely to say they knew a lot about how higher education leads to careers they may be interested in (37 percent).

Figure 20: How much do you know about how higher education leads to careers you may be interested in?



Appendices

Appendix 1: Respondent Characteristics¹⁶¹⁷

Respondent Characteristics	%	n
All	100%	10037
Female	56%	4912
Male	44%	3904
White	85%	7515
Black and Black British	3%	263
Asian and Asian British	7%	635
Mixed Background	3%	286
Other Ethnic Background	2%	179
Year 9	23%	2297
Year 10	20%	1974
Year 11	19%	1918
Year 12	24%	2347
Year 13	14%	1373
First Generation	45%	3044
Not First Generation	55%	3694
HeppSY+	50%	4617
Non-HeppSY+	50%	4603

16 The 'White' group consists of White English, White Irish, White Scottish, White Welsh, Other White Background, Irish Traveller and Gypsy or Traveller. 'Other' ethnic background consists of Arabic students and 'other ethnic background'.

17 The total number of responses are not consistent across each characteristic grouping (for example gender compared with ethnicity) because respondents did not answer all questions.

Appendix 2: HeppSY+ Framework

The HeppSY+ evaluation employs a logic model approach.

From initial consultation with local outreach practitioners, alongside a review of widening participation literature, HeppSY+ identified four barriers to progression to higher education, namely:

- higher education knowledge
- career knowledge

- confidence and resilience
- attainment

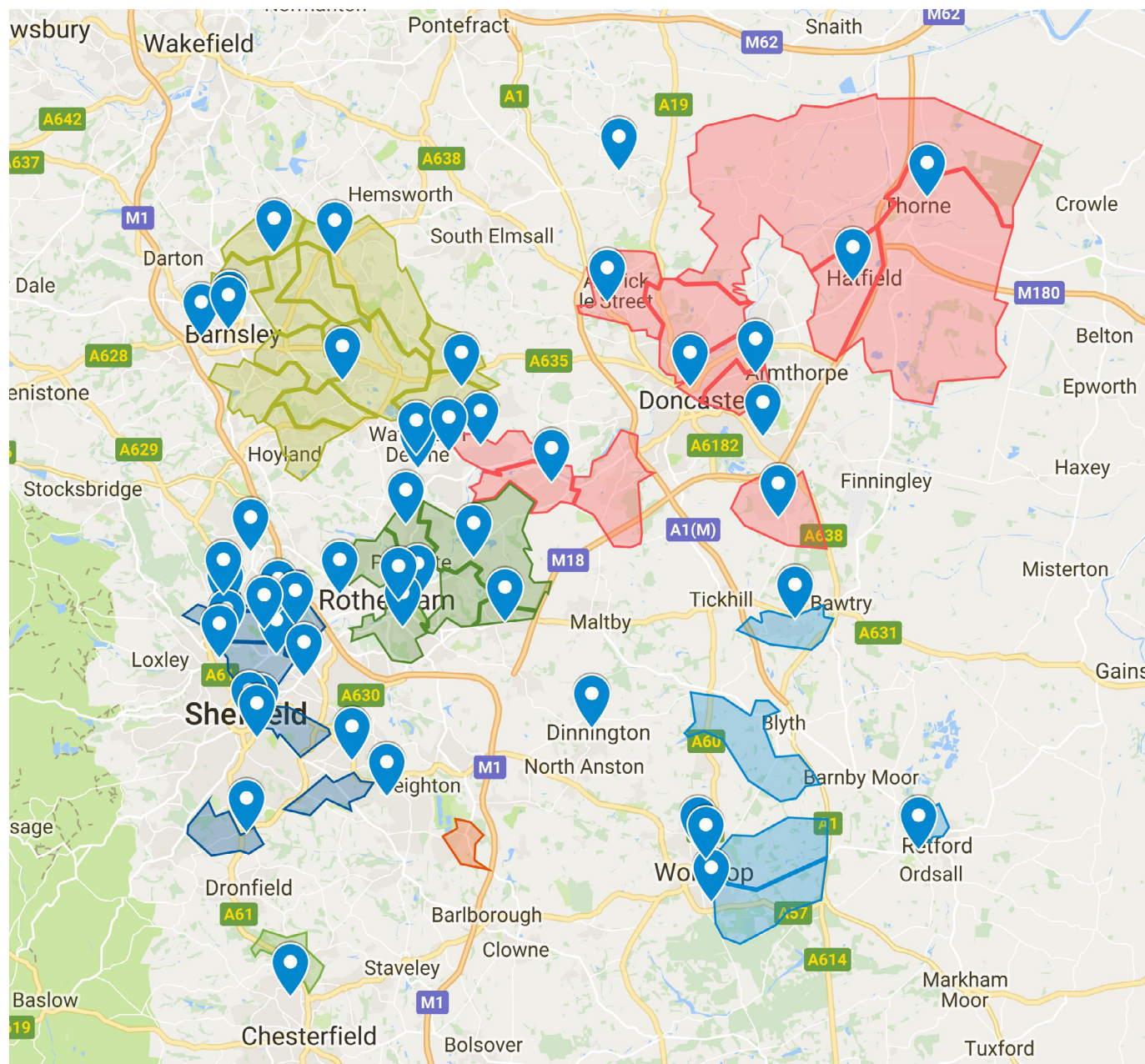
These have provided a framework which underpins the programme of delivery. This approach has been valued by schools, colleges and delivery partners and enabled effective and bespoke delivery to the HeppSY+ cohort.

The chart below provides further detail and examples of core activities provided by HeppSY+.

Barrier	Rationale	Barrier	Rationale
HE Knowledge	<p>To increase student knowledge of higher education (HE), for example the application process and student finance.</p> <p>To promote an understanding of wider benefits of HE including student life and opportunities such as societies & work experience.</p>	Confidence/Resilience	To raise confidence and aspirations to ensure students are considering all HE options and progressing positively.
Career Knowledge	To understand job prospects and graduate employment routes including course choices.	Attainment*	To support schools/colleges in improving attainment to enable wider choice of progression options
		Higher Education Progression Partners	
		▪ Business in the Community	
		▪ Mobile classroom sessions	
		▪ Higher Degree Apprenticeship Workshops	

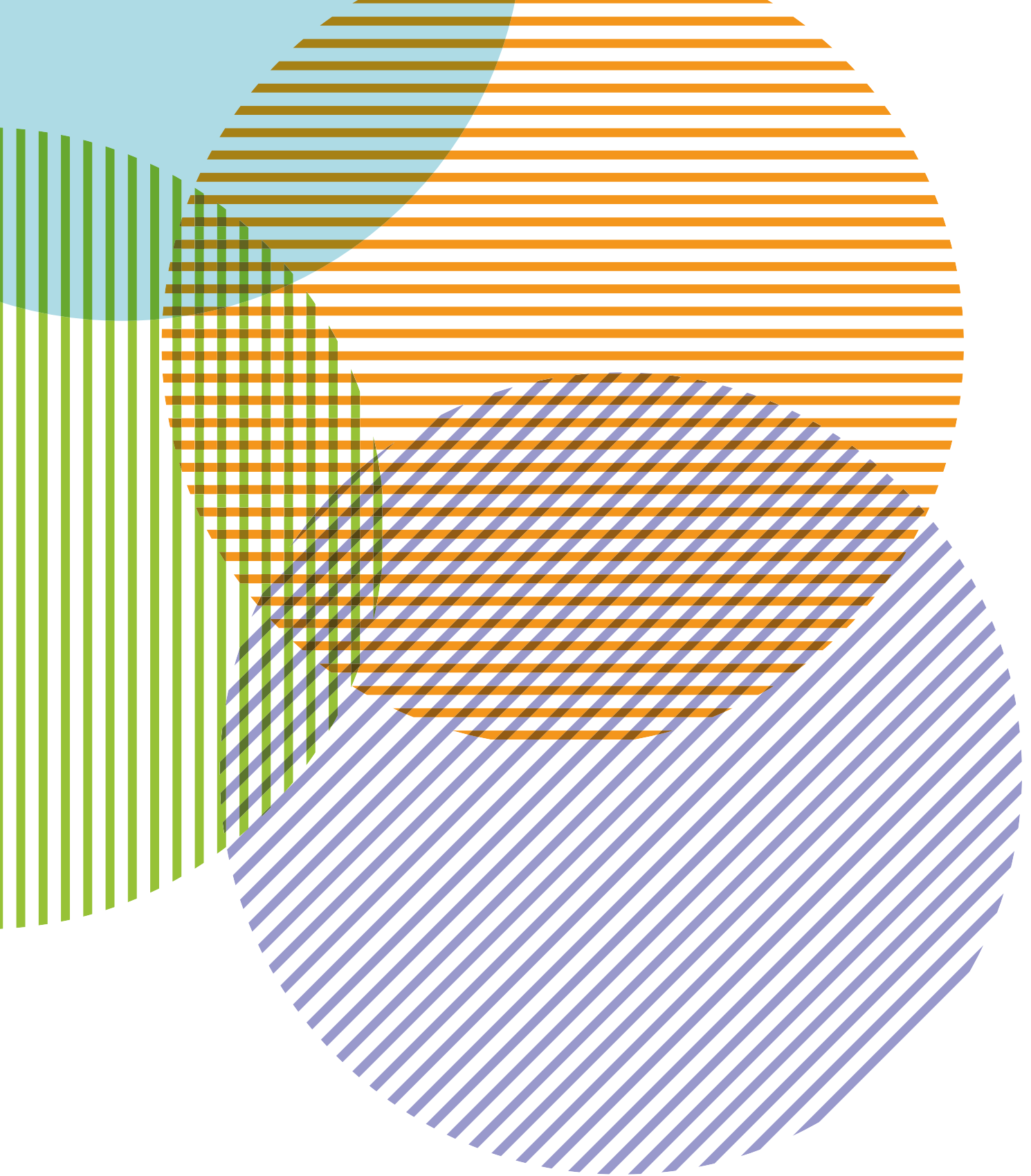
*attainment not reported in the Baseline Survey

Appendix 3: Map of HeppSY+ Target School and College Locations¹⁸



Map data ©2018 Google

18 Map includes 38 schools and colleges who participated in the survey



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